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MASTER THESIS

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On:

Effective Feedback Strategies for EFL Students' Written Assignments: A Comparative Study of In-person and Online Methods.

**Case study master two Students at Mohamed khider university
of Biskra**

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Dedication

In the name of Allah, most merciful, most compassionate

Allah who gave us the strength and patience to continue our career despite the Obstacles.

Hence, thank you Allah for this blessing. I dedicate this work:

To my parents for their unconditional love and support through my research. May Allah
bless you and always guard you.

To my dear sisters, brother, relatives, and best friends.

To whoever reads this dissertation

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Abstract

At the Master's level, academic writing is a fundamental skill that EFL students are expected to master, especially when producing a range of written assignments such as essays, reports, and research papers. However, many students face difficulties in generating coherent, well-structured academic texts, often due to limited exposure to effective feedback practices. This study investigates the effectiveness of feedback methods both 'online and in-person' in enhancing the academic writing performance of EFL Master two students. It hypothesizes that clear, constructive feedback, regardless of the delivery mode, significantly improves writing outcomes. To test this hypothesis, a mixed-methods approach was adopted. Quantitative data were gathered through a semi-structured questionnaire administered to forty Master 2 EFL students at Mohamed Khider University of Biskra, while qualitative data were obtained through structured interview with five academic writing teachers from the same department. The findings indicate that although students held positive perceptions of both feedback modes, most teachers favored in-person feedback due to its immediacy, clarity, and interpersonal engagement. Nevertheless, both students and teachers agreed on the crucial role of feedback in improving academic writing. The results confirm the initial hypothesis and highlight the pedagogical value of integrating diverse, well-structured feedback strategies. It is recommended that teachers adopt a blended approach, combining both online and in-person methods, with a strong focus on clarity, specificity, and active student involvement in the feedback process.

Key words: Feedback, in-person feedback, online feedback

List of acronyms

EFL: English as a Forging Language

CF: Corrective Feedback

ECF: Electronic Corrective Feedback

L2: Second Language

FWF: Focused Written Feedback

UFWF: Unfocused Written Feedback

ZPD: Zone of Proximal Development

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General introduction

Introduction

In the field of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education, developing students' writing competence has become a crucial objective, as it reflects their ability to express ideas clearly, accurately, and appropriately in written form. To reach this objective, teachers have investigated a variety of instructional strategies, especially concerning how feedback affects writing performance. As educational settings include digital technologies more and more, there is rising interest lately in assessing the efficacy of several feedback modalities—particularly between online and in-person contexts. This change draws attention to a larger realization that appropriate and context-sensitive comments is absolutely essential for students to notice their writing flaws, edit their work, and grow more independent learners. Whether given in-person or via online channels, written comments, peer review, and interactive conferencing help students to ponder their writing, participate in the revision process, and progressively enhance their composition abilities. Effective comments also encourage clarity, boost language usage awareness in academic settings, and serve to inspire learners. Still, teachers need to tailor their feedback approaches to the delivery method and specific student needs to guarantee that the support given is relevant, easily available, and helpful for learning.

1. Problem Statement

Feedback on written assignments plays a crucial role in supporting the development of written assignments performance among EFL learners. With the increasing adoption of digital technologies in education, both online and in-person feedback methods are commonly employed. However, there is a lack of consensus regarding the relative effectiveness of these modalities in enhancing students' writing performance. Although each mode presents unique pedagogical benefits and challenges, limited research has explored how the mode of feedback delivery influences learner engagement, clarity of

feedback, and subsequent revisions. This ambiguity presents a challenge for instructors aiming to apply the most effective feedback practices in EFL writing contexts.

2. Aim of the study

The aim of this study is to investigate and compare the effectiveness of online and in-person feedback strategies in enhancing the performance of EFL learners in written assignments. The research focuses on identifying the benefits and challenges of each method, particularly in the context of improving students' written assignments performance. By examining these feedback approaches, the study to provide practical insights into how different feedback delivery methods shape the development of written assignments performance and contribute to more effective language learning practices.

3. Research questions

This study aims to address several questions about EFL students' experiences and perceptions of feedback in both face-to-face and online contexts.

- Are master students aware of feedback importance in enhancing them to progress their written assignments performance?
- Which type of feedback online or in-person helps EFL students improve their writing more?
- Do teachers find it easier to give feedback online or in-person?

4. Research Hypothesis

Improvement of EFL students' writing abilities depends on good feedback. This study looks at how students' performance is affected by the form of feedback and the way of delivery. This leads to the following suggested hypothesis:

Hp : Clear and constructive feedback, whether delivered in-person or online, contributes significantly to improved writing performance among EFL Master's students in language learning contexts.

5. Research Methodology

5.1. Population and Sampling

Since the present study seeks to examine the effectiveness of in-person and online feedback strategies in enhancing EFL students' written assignments, the population consists of Master Two EFL students at Mohamed Khider University of Biskra during the 2024/2025 academic year. This group was selected because they are at a critical stage in their academic journey, where strong writing skills are essential for producing advanced assignments and completing their dissertations. Furthermore, many of these students still struggle with various aspects of academic writing, particularly in structuring and revising their work effectively. A sample of forty (40) students was selected to represent this population, allowing for focused data collection and manageable analysis.

5.2. Data Collection Tools

The data collection process involves the use of a questionnaire and structured interview. The questionnaire is administered to students to gather data about their perceptions, experiences, and preferences regarding both online and in-person feedback methods. In addition, semi-structured interviews are conducted with teachers to gain insights into the strengths and challenges of each approach, as well as their impact on students' written assignment performance. This comparative study aims to analyze feedback strategies from both learner and teacher perspectives, contributing to a clearer understanding of effective practices in EFL writing instruction.

5.3. Data Analysis Procedure

The present comparative study is conducted at Mohamed Khider University of Biskra to examine the effectiveness of in-person and online feedback on the written assignment performance of Master two EFL students. To achieve this, a mixed-methods approach is adopted, combining both quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques to offer a comprehensive analysis of the research problem.

6. Significance of the study

This study contributes to the field of EFL writing instruction by examining the comparative effectiveness of online and in-person feedback strategies on students' written performance. Given the increasing integration of digital tools in language education, this research addresses a crucial pedagogical concern: the impact of feedback delivery mode on the quality of students' academic writing. By investigating students' perceptions and responses to both feedback types, the study offers evidence-based insights that can inform instructional practices and enhance formative assessment. The findings aim to guide educators in selecting contextually appropriate feedback strategies, supporting learner development, improving writing proficiency, and fostering greater autonomy. Additionally, the study bridges the gap between traditional and technology-mediated feedback methods, offering practical recommendations for EFL instructors, curriculum designers, and institutions aiming to enhance writing outcomes in diverse educational settings.

7. Research Structure

This study is divided into two main parts. The first part is the theoretical part, which consists of two chapters, while the second part is devoted to the fieldwork and data analysis.

The first chapter in the theoretical part provides a comprehensive overview of feedback in the context of language learning. It presents definitions of feedback, its main characteristics, and various types, including formal, informal, formative, and summative feedback. It also discusses key learning theories related to feedback—namely Behaviorism, Cognitive Theory, Socio-Cultural Theory, Constructivism, and Connectivism—and outlines the role of feedback in enhancing EFL students' writing performance, focusing on facilitative and directive approaches.

The second chapter examines the two primary feedback modes investigated in this study: online and in-person feedback. It explores types of online feedback such as synchronous, asynchronous, and electronic corrective feedback, along with their respective advantages and challenges. It also addresses in-person feedback, detailing oral and written forms, including focused and unfocused feedback, as well as content-level and surface-level feedback, and evaluates their impact on students' writing development.

The final chapter is dedicated to the practical part of the study. It outlines the research methodology, including the adopted approach, research design, target population, and sampling. It describes the two data collection tools used—students' questionnaire and teachers' interview—and provides a detailed analysis and discussion of the gathered data.

Chapter one:
**Theories of feedback in language
learning**

Introduction

In this chapter, the focus is on how various learning theories conceptualize the role and function of feedback, particularly in relation to language learning and written assignments. Feedback is a critical component of the learning process, especially in language learning and writing development. It provides learners with essential information about their performance, helping them understand what they are doing well and where improvements are needed. In educational settings, feedback acts as a powerful tool to reinforce positive behaviors, correct misunderstandings, and encourage further learning. Without feedback, learners may struggle to gauge their progress and make meaningful advancements.

1. Feedback definition

Feedback is a pivotal element in the educational process, serving as a bridge between teaching and learning. In language education, feedback provides learners with critical information about their performance, guiding them toward improved proficiency. It encompasses various forms, including oral, written, formal, and informal, each contributing uniquely to the learning experience. Effective feedback not only corrects errors but also reinforces positive behaviors, fosters motivation, and promotes self-regulated learning (Shute, 2008).

Lightbown and Spada (1999, as cited in Zhang, Zhang, & Ma, 2010, p. 1) describe corrective feedback as any signal given to learners indicating that their use of the target language is incorrect. Similarly, Ur (1996, p. 242) defines feedback as the information provided to learners regarding their performance on a learning task, typically aimed at enhancing that performance. Based on these definitions, it can be concluded that the primary purpose of feedback is to foster the improvement of learners' proficiency levels.

Moreover, Wechersky (2005) emphasized that the concept of feedback is closely tied to a fundamental issue in motor learning, namely the learner's ability to evaluate their own behavior and performance (Tayeb, & all, 2024)

Another definition of feedback is offered by Hattie and Timperley (2007, p. 81), who describe it as "information provided by an agent regarding some aspects of one's task performance." Furthermore, feedback can be understood as the process of offering additional information or suggesting modifications to a learner's performance, with the aim of guiding them toward the correct and most appropriate response. This process helps learners internalize the corrections and apply them in their future productions.

A more detailed definition of feedback is provided by Ur (1996), who explains that "feedback is information that is given to the learner about his/her performance. Some examples in language teaching include words like: 'Yes, right' said to a learner who has answered a question; a grade of 70 in response to a mistake in grammar; or a comment written in the margin of an essay" (p. 242, as cited in Leyla, 2016).

This definition highlights the various forms feedback can take in the context of language learning, ranging from simple verbal affirmations to written evaluations.

Feedback is widely recognized as a crucial element in facilitating learning and improving performance. Numerous studies have emphasized its importance in guiding learners toward achieving better outcomes. However, research has also shown that feedback does not always lead to positive results; in some cases, it has no significant effect or even negative effects on learning outcomes. Studies by Bangert-Drowns et al. (1991), Kluger and DeNisi (1996), and Mory (2004) have provided evidence of these nonfacilitative effects, indicating that the effectiveness of feedback greatly depends on how it is delivered and perceived by learners (Shute, 2008).

2. Characteristics of Effective Feedback

Feedback in education is essential for promoting learning and development. It has six key characteristics: (Mili, & all, 2024)

Source of Feedback: Feedback can come from internal (learner's self-assessment) or external sources (teacher, peer, or device), and can be verbal, numerical, symbolic, or behavioral. The choice of source depends on the learner's needs.

Connotation (Positive or Negative): Positive feedback reinforces correct behavior, boosting confidence, while negative feedback highlights mistakes and areas for improvement. Both types are necessary, but negative feedback should be used cautiously to avoid demotivating the learner.

Focus Level: Feedback can target the task (specific errors), strategies (methods), self-regulation (independent learning), or the person (traits). Feedback focusing on processes and self-regulation is more effective than feedback on personal traits or task outcomes.

Quantity of Feedback: Too many corrections can overwhelm learners. It is better to focus on two or three key points at a time to ensure meaningful improvements.

Timing of Feedback: Immediate feedback is most useful for new tasks, while delayed feedback is more suitable for complex tasks that require deep thought or creativity.

Determination of Feedback: Effective feedback is planned, clear, specific, and behavior-focused. It should be precise, tailored to the learner's needs, and actionable to facilitate growth.

In addition, Effective feedback is characterized by several key attributes: (Hattie & Timperley, 2007).

- **Specificity:** Feedback should clearly identify what was done well and what needs improvement, avoiding vague statements.
- **Timeliness:** Providing feedback promptly ensures that learners can recall their performance and apply suggestions effectively.
- **Constructiveness:** Feedback should focus on guiding learners toward improvement rather than merely pointing out faults.
- **Clarity:** Language used in feedback must be understandable, avoiding technical jargon that may confuse learners.
- **Encouragement of Self-Assessment:** Effective feedback fosters learners' ability to evaluate their work critically, promoting autonomy.

3. Types of Feedback

Feedback can take various forms depending on its purpose, timing, and style. Understanding these different types helps educators choose the most appropriate method for supporting student learning.

3.1. Informal Feedback

Informal feedback occurs naturally during interactions between teachers and learners. It is often spontaneous, conversational, and immediate. Examples include verbal praise, correction during a lesson, or brief comments on a draft. Informal feedback helps maintain a dynamic learning environment and can quickly address misconceptions as they arise. Informal feedback occurs spontaneously during interactions between teachers and students. It includes verbal comments, gestures, or brief notes that provide immediate responses to student performance. This type of feedback is integral in maintaining an interactive and responsive classroom environment (Cambridge University Press, n.d.). Informal feedback is delivered through casual discussions, body language, tone, choice of words, and other non-

verbal cues (Bull & McKenna, 2004; Nichol, 2007). This can include informal conversations and the use of emoticons.

3.2. Formal Feedback

Formal feedback is structured and planned, often delivered through written comments, detailed evaluations, or official reports. It usually follows an assessment and provides comprehensive information about the learner's performance. Formal feedback is essential for documentation, progress tracking, and setting future learning objectives. Formal feedback is structured and often documented, such as written comments on assignments or standardized test results. It provides comprehensive evaluations of student performance and is essential for academic assessments and records (Cambridge University Press, n.d.). Formal feedback is given to enhance future performance and is typically linked to assignments, formal online discussions, and course or program evaluations (Bull & McKenna, 2004; Nichol, 2007). This includes structured discussions and major assignments.

3.3. Formative Feedback

Formative feedback is provided during the learning process to guide improvement. It aims to enhance learning by helping students identify strengths and areas for development before final evaluation. Examples include comments on a rough draft, peer reviews, or practice tests. Formative feedback supports continuous improvement and promotes active engagement with learning material. Formative feedback is provided during the learning process to monitor student progress and inform instructional adjustments. It is aimed at enhancing learning by identifying areas for improvement and guiding students toward achieving learning objectives (Shute, 2008). Formative feedback is used to give learners the

chance to refine their work and enhance their chances of success, as it allows them time to engage with the course content in a low-risk environment (Nichol, 2007). This may include unit tests, weekly assignments, lab work, interactive auto-feedback learning activities like drag-and-drop exercises, first drafts, or building assignments, as well as informal discussions.

3.4. Summative Feedback

Summative feedback is given after the completion of a task or course, summarizing overall performance. It often accompanies grades or final evaluations and is used to assess what a learner has achieved. While its primary function is evaluative, effective summative feedback should also provide insights that inform future learning efforts. Summative feedback is given at the end of an instructional unit or course, summarizing student learning and performance. It is typically associated with grades or final evaluations and serves to inform stakeholders about student achievement (Shute, 2008). Summative feedback occurs later in the course, typically associated with a capstone assessment (Nichol, 2007). This type of feedback is often linked to final exams, comprehensive exams or assignments, take-home exams, multimedia projects (such as creating a video or web page), or reflective papers.

Feedback can be informal (spontaneous and conversational), formal (structured and documented), formative (given during learning to guide improvement), or summative (provided at the end to evaluate achievement). Each type serves a different purpose and plays a key role in supporting student learning and progress.

4. Theories of Feedback

Various educational theories explain the role and importance of feedback in the learning process. Each offers unique insights into how feedback influences learner development.

4.1. Behaviorist Theory

The behaviorist theory, developed by scholars such as B.F. Skinner, conceptualizes feedback as a mechanism of reinforcement. Positive reinforcement encourages the repetition of desired behaviors, whereas negative reinforcement or corrective feedback seeks to eliminate undesired responses. Within this framework, immediate feedback is essential for effectively shaping behavior. Learning is viewed as the outcome of stimulus-response associations, with feedback serving to reinforce correct responses and extinguish incorrect ones (Thompson, Simonson, & Hargrave, 1992). Consequently, feedback functions as an external stimulus that facilitates observable behavioral changes, commonly reinforced through structured repetition and reinforcement schedules (Baulo & Nabua, 2019).

4.2. Cognitive Theory

Cognitive theory centers on the internal mental processes that underpin learning. Feedback is interpreted as informational input that assists learners in constructing and adjusting mental representations. It serves to correct misconceptions and deepen comprehension by prompting learners to reflect and reorganize their cognitive structures. Cognitive theory underscores the significance of feedback in error correction and in refining understanding to promote the development of complex cognitive frameworks (Thompson, Simonson, & Hargrave, 1992). Moreover, motivation is considered a critical component of student learning, and feedback plays a pivotal role in maintaining this motivation. Educators contribute to the learning process not only by providing engaging content but also by delivering constructive feedback that directs students toward meaningful improvement and academic success. At advanced levels, instructional tools such as handouts, charts, PowerPoint presentations, and statistical analyses are employed to clearly convey

information, while feedback helps learners assess their development and identify areas for enhancement (Malik, 2021).

4.3. Socio-Cultural Theory

The socio-cultural theory, grounded in Vygotsky's work, emphasizes the inherently social nature of learning. Feedback is conceptualized as a form of social interaction that supports learners within their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Through collaborative engagement with more knowledgeable individuals, learners incrementally internalize new competencies and knowledge. This theory underscores feedback as a scaffolding tool whereby instructors and peers provide guidance to facilitate cognitive and linguistic development (Vygotsky, 1978). In this paradigm, education is understood as both a social and developmental endeavor. Educators are encouraged to not merely assess students' current competencies but to design pedagogical experiences that cultivate their future potential. Learning is characterized as an ongoing maturation process in which learners' evolving abilities are actively supported. Corrective feedback, within this theoretical framework, is essential to advance learner development (Balbay, 2018).

4.4. Constructivist Theory

Constructivist theory posits that learners actively construct their own understanding and knowledge through experiences. Feedback serves as a vital element that enables learners to test, refine, and expand their conceptual frameworks. Rather than passively receiving information, learners interpret and integrate feedback as part of their cognitive growth. This theory holds that learning is most effective when individuals engage with content reflectively and critically. Feedback provides learners with opportunities to evaluate their own comprehension and address misunderstandings, thereby fostering meaningful learning

(Thompson, Simonson, & Hargrave, 1992). Within the constructivist paradigm, feedback often takes the form of dialogic interaction, wherein learners articulate their reasoning and consider alternative viewpoints. This method promotes critical thinking and learner autonomy, as individuals are encouraged to take responsibility for their educational progress. Effective feedback in this context is characterized by its timeliness, specificity, and alignment with explicit learning objectives, which together contribute to enriched educational experiences (O'Mahony, 2017).

4.5. Connectivist Theory

Connectivism, a contemporary learning theory introduced by George Siemens, highlights the importance of technology and networked environments in the learning process. Feedback in a connectivist framework is not centralized; rather, it is distributed across networks of peers, digital resources, and technological platforms, illustrating the interconnected dynamics of modern knowledge acquisition. Connectivism posits that learning emerges through the formation and navigation of knowledge networks. Feedback, therefore, is received from diverse sources, including online forums, social media, and digital learning environments, fostering a continuous learning process (Siemens, 2005). The individual is the entry point into the learning network, where personal knowledge is shaped through various connections that later contribute to larger organizational and institutional systems. These collective systems not only benefit from individual inputs but also provide reciprocal feedback that sustains the learning cycle. This iterative process — transitioning from individual learning to broader knowledge structures and back — enables learners to remain informed and professionally relevant (Siemens, 2005). Supporting this concept, Landauer and Dumais (1997) contend that individuals often possess more knowledge than

can be attributed to direct instruction alone. They argue that many domains of knowledge consist of subtle and distributed associations which, when properly leveraged, enhance learning through inference and pattern recognition. This capacity to identify and synthesize fragmented knowledge significantly enriches both personal and professional development.

Feedback is understood differently across learning theories. Behaviorism sees it as reinforcement to shape behavior. Cognitive theory treats it as information that corrects errors and strengthens understanding. Socio-cultural theory views feedback as social support within learners' developmental zones. Constructivism frames it as a tool for self-reflection and conceptual growth. Connectivism emphasizes feedback as networked input from digital and social platforms.

5. Functions of Feedback in Language Learning and Written Assignments

Feedback serves multiple functions in the context of language learning and written work. It not only corrects errors but also promotes autonomy, improves performance, and enhances motivation.

5.1. Facilitative Feedback

Facilitative feedback aims to support learners in discovering their own solutions. It encourages critical thinking and self-correction rather than providing direct answers. Examples include prompting questions, hints, or comments that guide the learner toward improved outcomes.

Facilitative feedback Also refers to comments or suggestions that guide students toward revising and improving their work on their own. Instead of providing direct solutions or corrections, facilitative feedback encourages students to think critically about their writing. It often takes the form of questions, prompts, or reflections that allow the writer to

discover areas for improvement independently. This type of feedback helps promote self-regulation and autonomy, as students are given the opportunity to explore their own thought processes and identify ways to improve their work. (Underwood, 2008)

Research indicates that facilitative feedback can be more effective than directive feedback in promoting long-term writing improvement. In a study conducted in two essay writing classes at the Royal University of Phnom Penh, facilitative feedback helped students better understand their writing shortcomings and ways to improve, leading to more meaningful revisions (Sou, 2010)

In a study by Ransdell (1999), facilitative feedback was found to be helpful for students who appreciated having the freedom to expand their ideas and revise their work in their own way. For instance, comments like "Can you clarify this idea further?" or "What might be another way to express this?" invite students to reflect and make decisions about how to improve their writing. However, studies also suggest that some students may overlook facilitative feedback if it is too vague or indirect, as it can sometimes leave them unsure about what exactly needs to be fixed.

5.2. Directive Feedback

Directive feedback involves providing explicit corrections or instructions on how to rectify errors in a student's writing. This approach is particularly beneficial for novice writers or those dealing with complex grammatical structures, as it offers clear guidance on what needs to be changed. Examples include comments like "Replace this word with..." or "Use the past tense here."

While directive feedback can lead to immediate improvements in writing accuracy, it may not always promote independent problem-solving skills. However, in contexts where learners require clear and direct guidance, such as in English as a Foreign Language (EFL)

settings, directive feedback has been shown to be effective in helping students understand and correct their mistakes (Gedamu & Gezahegn, 2021).

Directive feedback, on the other hand, provides explicit instructions or corrections, guiding students directly toward what needs to be changed in their work. This type of feedback often focuses on specific aspects such as grammar, structure, or word choice and typically provides clear directives on how to make revisions. For example, a teacher might write, "Change this sentence to passive voice" or "Use a different word here for clarity." (Underwood, 2008).

Directive feedback is beneficial for students who are new to writing or less confident in their ability to identify and correct errors on their own. According to Zamel (1985), explicit, directive comments were more helpful in improving writing for college freshmen than suggestive comments. Directive feedback is less open to interpretation, leaving little room for confusion about what needs to be revised. However, some students, particularly those who are more experienced, may feel that directive feedback undermines their autonomy or that it restricts their creativity. McGee (1999) found that some students felt frustrated by overly directive comments, perceiving them as attempts to control their writing.

While each type of feedback has its advantages, the key to effective feedback lies in balancing directive and facilitative approaches. A study by Ransdell (1999) revealed that students appreciated both types of feedback, with some students preferring directive comments for their clarity and others preferring facilitative feedback for the freedom it provided. Teachers can be most effective when they combine both types of feedback, using directive comments to provide clarity and facilitative feedback to encourage critical thinking and independence. McGee (1999) suggests that balancing directive feedback with

facilitative, less controlling comments can make the teacher seem like an engaged reader rather than a critic, enhancing the learning experience for students.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we conclude by highlighting the significance of feedback in the teaching and learning process. In conclusion, feedback is a vital element of effective teaching and learning. Its characteristics, types, theoretical foundations, and functions reveal its complexity and importance. Effective feedback fosters learner growth, enhances motivation, and supports skill development, especially in language learning and writing tasks. Understanding how to deliver and utilize feedback appropriately is essential for both educators and learners striving for continuous improvement.

Chapter two

**Feedback in in-person and online
Learning Environments**

Introduction

Following the theoretical overview of feedback in language learning presented in Chapter One, this chapter focuses on the practical application of feedback through two primary delivery modes: in-person and online. It examines the main characteristics, advantages, and challenges of each method, with particular attention to how they function in EFL contexts. By comparing these modes, the chapter sets the stage for the empirical analysis that follows, aiming to understand their role in supporting students' writing development.

1. In-person feedback

In-person feedback is the direct, face-to-face contact a teacher makes with a student regarding performance or work. This kind of feedback enables dynamic dialogue, emotional signals (such body language and tone), and instant clarification, so improving motivation and understanding.

According to Hattie and Timperley (2007), effective feedback—especially in-person—“provides cues or reinforcement to the learner, is timely, and is focused on specific learning goals.” Face-to-face feedback supports a richer communication context, which can contribute to better student engagement and deeper learning.

2. Types of in-person feedback

Feedback is an invaluable aspect of guiding learners' writing skills in EFL settings. Two of the most common types are oral feedback and written feedback, which help students learn in different ways. When providing oral feedback it is delivered in a spoken form of interaction, this enables immediate and often dialogic feedback support. [In contrast, written feedback can help learners go back in time and explore commented issues in a detailed way.] Both these types of evidence are facilitating language development, but they

influence linguistic learning in divergent ways, particularly with respect to the mode, the timing, and the type of dialog elicited. Navigating through the following sections, each will explore these forms more thoroughly, noting their features, why we may prefer one over the other, and their application within the writing classroom.

2.1. Oral feedback

Creating dynamic and encouraging learning environments depends greatly on oral feedback, which can be given either in-person (face-to-face) or via synchronous online tools like Zoom or Skype. It permits real-time clarification, so allowing kids to quickly pose questions and react to teacher comments. C yland and Hyland (2019)

“Oral feedback, especially in synchronous formats, facilitates a dialogic learning experience where students can engage with their instructor’s input dynamically” (p. 5).

Because of this dialogic character, oral comments are especially successful in dealing with challenging or more complicated problems such idea development, argument strength, and textual cohesion. Oral communication also conveys tone and feeling, which can make comments more complimentary and encouraging and therefore improve student motivation and openness.

Moreover, writing conferences or one-on-one meetings where pupils may discuss their work in depth with an instructor often employ oral comments. Low-proficiency students in particular will find it particularly helpful as they might require immediate help in grasping comments or fixing mistakes. That said, one difficulty with oral feedback is that it is not always documented ; hence, unless it is accompanied with written notes or audio recordings, students may forget or misunderstand what was said.

2.1.1. Praise oral feedback

In language classrooms, praise is regarded as a unique form of oral feedback that is used to support, encourage, and favorably reinforce student behavior and performance.

Mahdi and El Saadany (2013) found that the most common form of feedback in the EFL classrooms they observed was praise. In one lesson, for instance, the instructor used praise “twenty-three times out of thirty-nine feedback moments” (p. 36), demonstrating its crucial role in classroom interaction. Teacher comments like “Very good,” “Nice answer,” or “Excellent” were common examples of praise. When students gave accurate answers to grammatical questions, listening comprehension exercises, or class discussions, these expressions were typically used. Such praise was frequently given to recognize appropriate answers and increase learners’ self-confidence.

As one teacher started : “It is important that I, as a teacher, acknowledge when the students have done something right. One must be positive and provide them with praise – make them dare to say something next time” (Mahdi & El Saadany, 2013, p. 28).

The study warns that, despite its motivational advantages, praise needs to be targeted and contextualized. When praise is unclear, students might not know exactly what they did well. According to Mahdi & El Saadany (2013), Waring and Wong (2009, as cited in) clarify : “Praising is described as something vague and unclear. What specific part of the exercise does the teacher evaluate as good... ?” (p. 14).

Additionally, rather than providing real reinforcement, generic compliments like “very good” can act as a transition signal and possibly cut off additional conversation (p. 14). Praise should therefore be used carefully, focusing on particular student behaviors or responses, and presented in a way that encourages ongoing participation and reflection on the part of the learner.

2.1.2. Explicit versus implicit oral feedback

Explicit feedback refers to a direct and unambiguous approach to correcting learner errors. It typically involves two main strategies: explicit correction and metalinguistic clues. In explicit correction, the teacher clearly indicates that an error has been made and provides the correct form. For example, if a student says, “He go to school yesterday,” the teacher may respond, “No, you should say, ‘He went to school yesterday.’” This method eliminates uncertainty by explicitly stating both the error and the correction. Alternatively, metalinguistic clues offer comments about the nature of the error without providing the correct form. For instance, in response to “She can sings well,” the teacher might say, “Remember, we use the base form of the verb after a modal like ‘can.’” While explicit feedback promotes clarity and immediate correction, it must be applied with sensitivity. Mahdi and El Saadany (2013) note that overt correction, especially in front of peers, can discourage student participation and confidence. To mitigate this, some educators choose to restate the correct form subtly, avoiding direct confrontation of the learner’s error in public settings.

In contrast, implicit feedback provides correction in a more indirect manner, encouraging learners to notice and self-correct their errors. Common forms include recasts, clarification requests, and repetition with intonation. Recasts involve the teacher reformulating the learner’s incorrect statement within the flow of conversation. For example, if a student says, “She doesn’t enjoy pizza,” the teacher might respond, “Oh, she doesn’t like pizza?” This subtle correction avoids interrupting the communicative exchange. Clarification requests prompt learners to rephrase unclear or incorrect statements, such as asking, “Sorry, what did he do?” after a vague or erroneous utterance. Similarly, repetition with questioning intonation draws attention to the error without explicitly labeling it. Although these techniques are generally less intimidating and help preserve learner confidence, their effectiveness relies heavily on the learner’s ability to notice the correction.

As Mahdi and El Saadany (2013, p. 12) observe, younger learners are particularly at risk of overlooking recasts, which may limit the instructional value of implicit feedback. Nonetheless, its supportive nature makes it a valuable tool for encouraging learner autonomy and maintaining a positive learning environment.

2.1.3. Oral feedback effectiveness

Because of its dialogic nature, personal tone, and immediacy, oral feedback is very effective in writing instruction. It makes it possible for students and teachers to communicate directly, which promotes emotional support, engagement, and clarification—all of which are frequently lacking in written-only formats. Oral feedback, particularly when given synchronously (for example, during live online sessions or in-person meetings), promotes a more responsive and interactive environment, according to Hyland and Hyland (2019): “Oral feedback, especially in synchronous formats, facilitates a dialogic learning experience where students can engage with their instructor’s input dynamically” (Hyland & Hyland, 2019, p. 5).

Students can ask follow-up questions, get individualized advice on language, organization, and content, and gain a deeper understanding of complex writing issues thanks to this dialogic style. Additionally, the spoken tone of oral feedback can help students feel less anxious, which makes it simpler for them to take constructive criticism. When combined with individual writing conferences or draft review sessions, oral feedback works especially well because it allows students to make revisions in real time. Additionally, it is helpful for addressing more complex issues than just minor mistakes, like argument development and textual coherence.

Despite these advantages, oral feedback can be constrained by time constraints and might not be available to all students if it is not documented or followed up on in writing,

according to Hyland and Hyland (2019). As a result, it works best when paired with other forms of feedback, particularly written remarks that act as a permanent record.

2.2. Written feedback

Considered as a major instructional technique for promoting student progress in writing, written feedback appears to be a basic component of L2 writing pedagogy. Many teachers, according to Park (2006), view providing written feedback as a crucial component of their professional obligation even if it can be exhausting and demanding. Simultaneously, students increasingly view teacher feedback as essential for their development as authors. Written comments can take form-focused, content-based, or integrated approaches among other kinds. Though generally thought that their proper application would help to improve students' writing ability, each type may fulfill different educational goals.

2.2.1. Focused and unfocused written feedback

Focused written feedback (FWF) is a pedagogical method in which teachers focus a restricted set of linguistic mistakes (typically one or several grammatical categories such as article usage or verb tense) in their response to student work. This focused attention on particular forms is predicated on the idea that linguistic elements have different acquisition pathways and thus could benefit from more directed teaching focus (Ferris, 2001). By lowering cognitive load, FWF has been said to enable more noticing and deeper processing, therefore maybe improving the uptake and retention of the targeted structures by learners. Though results are not always definitive, several studies (e.g., Farrokhi & Sattarpour, 2011) have given empirical evidence that FWF is more successful than its unfocused equivalent, especially in second language writing in grammatical accuracy promotion.

On the other hand, unfocused written feedback (UFWF) commonly consists in giving feedback on a great variety of error types inside one writing assignment. This approach aims

to tackle most of the mistakes a student makes, therefore providing a more comprehensive picture of the learner's linguistic competence, rather than emphasizing specific grammatical constructs. Although this approach might provide more general corrective input, it has been argued (Ellis, 2009) that it may also impose more cognitive load on students, therefore reducing its teaching efficacy. Some studies (e.g., Frear, 2010 ; Rouhi & Samiei, 2010) seem to indicate that UFWF, when opposed to FWF, does not always results in notable increases in accuracy. Especially when combined with other feedback techniques, though, one might contend that unstructured feedback might still be quite useful in increasing students' overall awareness of their language usage.

2.2.2 Content-level and surface-level written feedback

Content-level called content-based or meaning-focused feedback, content-level criticism emphasizes the clarity, coherence, and logical development of ideas in student work instead of the correction of grammatical mistakes. Park (2006) notes that this type of feedback typically concentrates on organizational structure, idea development, and argumentation while avoiding direct correction of surface-level grammatical problems. Since development of writing ability is dependent on higher-order thinking skills and deeper cognitive involvement, it has been asserted that content-based feedback might encourage these qualities. Though not without drawbacks, empirical studies quoted by Park imply that this approach might be more successful than form-focused feedback in improving students' general writing performance, especially in terms of content quality and critical thinking.

On the other hand, surface-level classified as form-focused feedback, surface-level responses concentrate mostly on linguistic correctness including grammar, punctuation, and spelling. Park (2006) claims that this type of response commonly focuses on fixing surface aspects of the text. Although such feedback have historically been common in writing

classes, their educational worth has been hotly contested. Some experts contend that while form-focused feedback can not produce major improvements in general writing quality, it may even distract students from content-level concerns. Still, it's important to point out that many students seem to appreciate explicit correction, maybe because of its directness and perceived clarity (Park, 2006). Thus, even if its effectiveness might be restricted in some circumstances, form-focused comments could still be especially helpful when in line with preferred learning and skill levels.

3. Advantages of in-person feedback

In-person feedback provides several pedagogical advantages that enhance both the delivery and reception of feedback in higher education contexts.

- In-person feedback supports effective communication by enabling the use of nonverbal cues such as body language, facial expressions, and tone of voice. These cues help clarify the emotional intent behind feedback, making it more empathetic and easier for students to interpret and accept (Stevenson, 2021).
- Face-to-face interactions foster a supportive teacher-student relationship, as the immediacy and human presence create a more personal and trusting learning environment. This emotional connection can enhance students' receptiveness to feedback and encourage active participation in the learning process.
- In-person feedback allows for real-time clarification and dialogic exchange, where students can immediately ask questions and engage in a two-way discussion. This promotes deeper understanding, reduces confusion, and facilitates a more student-centered approach to learning.
- Such feedback enables the co-construction of personalized improvement plans, shifting the purpose of feedback from purely evaluative to developmental. This

dynamic process empowers students to take ownership of their learning and progress based on specific, actionable guidance (Stevenson, 2021).

- Consistent in-person feedback can increase student accountability, reduce anxiety around assessments, and build a culture of openness and continuous improvement. The regular presence of feedback in the classroom environment reinforces expectations and encourages reflective learning behaviors.

4. Challenges of in-person feedback

In-person feedback in higher education faces several significant challenges that can reduce its effectiveness in supporting student learning.

- First, delays in providing in-person feedback are common, especially in higher education settings with large student numbers and limited staff capacity. These delays reduce the instructional value of feedback and hinder timely student improvement (Williams, 2024, p. 477).
- Second, there is often a misalignment between teacher feedback and student expectations, which can decrease student engagement and satisfaction with the feedback process (p. 476).
- Third, the emphasis on grades rather than formative, constructive comments limits feedback's usefulness as a tool for learning and skill development (pp. 476–477).
- Fourth, when feedback is unclear or lacks specificity, students struggle to interpret it correctly and apply it effectively to their work (p. 477).
- Fifth, institutional constraints such as heavy workloads and large class sizes restrict educators' ability to provide detailed, personalized feedback tailored to individual learner needs (pp. 483–484).
- Sixth, feedback perceived as overly critical can negatively impact students' motivation and self-confidence, potentially discouraging further effort (p. 480).

- Seventh, the absence of dialogic exchange during feedback sessions limits opportunities for clarification and reflection, reducing feedback's overall effectiveness (p. 484).
- Eighth, standardized feedback practices and anonymous marking systems make it difficult to customize feedback according to each student's unique learning needs (pp. 480–481).

Together, these challenges demonstrate the need for more responsive, student-centered approaches to feedback in in-person higher education contexts.

5. Online feedback

Online feedback is the procedure of giving students through technological channels—like Learning Management Systems (LMS), emails, discussion boards, or video conferencing tools—evaluative or corrective remarks. It plays a crucial role in self-controlled learning and student engagement (Espasa & Meneses, 2010) and can be synchronous (real-time, for example, live chats, video calls) or asynchronous (delayed, for example, written remarks, recorded audio/video feedback).

5.1. Synchronous Feedback

An internet academic environment in which teachers and students engage in real-time digital systems is known as synchronous e-learning. This approach encourages immediate communication and collaboration, thereby increasing lesson interactivity and maintaining student engagement.

Synchronous e-learning presents both advantages and challenges. It allows instant communication between students and teachers, facilitating quick clarification of doubts and enhancing comprehension. Real-time interaction fosters deeper engagement and reduces confusion, resulting in improved learning outcomes (Mick & Middlebrook, n.d.).

Additionally, class recordings can be revisited to reinforce understanding of key concepts (Perveen, 2016). This method also creates a comfortable environment for students who may feel more at ease learning from home. However, fixed class schedules can limit flexibility and cause conflicts. Moreover, reliable internet access and appropriate digital tools are essential, and their absence may hinder full participation.

5.2. Asynchronous Feedback

Asynchronous feedback is provided with a time delay between a student's submission and the teacher's response. It is commonly delivered through digital tools such as emails, recorded video/audio comments, discussion boards, or learning management systems.

This type of feedback offers several benefits and limitations. It provides flexibility, allowing students to review and reflect on feedback at their own pace, fostering critical thinking and thoughtful revision. Teachers can also provide detailed and structured responses. The absence of immediate pressure allows deeper reflection and accommodates students with diverse schedules or those in different time zones. Asynchronous feedback remains accessible for ongoing learning. However, the lack of real-time communication can delay clarification and may lead to misinterpretation. Written or recorded comments might seem impersonal compared to live discussions. Technical competence is necessary for effective use, and the absence of direct interaction may result in feelings of isolation or decreased motivation (Perveen, 2016).

5.3. Electronic Corrective Feedback

Electronic corrective feedback (ECF) involves using digital tools and platforms to address errors in students' written or spoken language. Feedback may be provided manually through tools like emails, Google Docs, or LMS, or automatically via spell checkers and grammar correction software (Farshi & Safa, 2015).

The benefits and drawbacks of ECF are widely recognized. Immediate digital corrections support language retention by helping students internalize correct forms. Its accessibility enables self-paced learning, and automated systems offer consistent and unbiased feedback, improving accuracy. Interactive tools enhance engagement and motivation (Farshi & Safa, 2015). ECF also allows for tracking progress and promoting learner autonomy through independent revisions. Nevertheless, it may lack personalization and fail to address broader issues such as coherence and appropriateness. Technological limitations, including software scope and internet reliability, may pose barriers. Students might also apply changes passively without understanding them, and limited teacher interaction reduces opportunities for clarification and feedback discussion (Farshi & Safa, 2015).

6. Advantages of online feedback

Improving EFL learners' writing expertise offers several significant benefits by means of online comments.

- First, its encouragement of contacts beyond normal class hours helps to circumvent classroom time constraints: "Providing online feedback allows teacher and students to communicate outside the classroom. It breaks the time limitation in the classroom and brings a virtual learning environment" (Vadia & Ciptaningrum, 2020, p. 178).
- Second, it enhances especially when the teacher offers students' writing performance. Particularly in grammar and mechanics, the research reveals a substantial increase in students' writing scores from pre-tests to post-tests : "The results revealed that the online feedback strategies improve students' writing performance" (Vadia & Ciptaningrum, 2020, p. 180).

- Third, teacher feedback was determined to be more beneficial than peer feedback. Students favored teacher comments since they were more thorough and simpler to grasp. “It was very helpful (teacher feedback). The teacher showed us which parts were error and he gave us explanation to correct them” (Vadia & Ciptaningrum, 2020, p. 181).
- Fourth, online feedback help students to become more creative and sure in their writing. Students were more ambitious and self-aware once they started getting feedback and evaluating their performance with that of others. “I feel more confident because I know my mistakes and know how to correct them. Thanks to the comments and suggestions” (Vadia & Ciptaningrum, 2020, p. 181).
- Finally, websites such as Edmodo let peer-to-peer conversation and input, therefore fostering reflective and collaborative learning. “Peer feedback enhances community building as the students actively cooperate by commenting on their peers’ writing and sharing ideas” (Vadia & Ciptaningrum, 2020, p. 179).

Online feedback of students’ work has many advantages. It allows writing guidance to exist independent of class time restrictions. The study discovered that online comments notably raises students’ writing grades. Although teacher feedback had a more overall influence, especially on linguistic elements like grammar and mechanics, both peer and instructor comments helped to boost writing performance. Moreover, internet opinions improved youngsters’ enthusiasm and certainty for writing. Still, effective peer review relies on training as well as adequate group size (Vadia & Ciptaningrum, 2020).

7. Challenges of online feedback

Online feedback in educational settings presents several significant challenges that can undermine its effectiveness.

- First, delays in providing feedback are common in online learning environments, which can hinder students' ability to promptly understand their errors and improve accordingly (Nguyen & Duong, 2021). Timely feedback is crucial for effective learning, and any lag can disrupt the learning process.
- Second, the feedback given in many online settings tends to be overly general, lacking specificity tailored to individual students' needs. This generalized feedback fails to address unique learner difficulties or misconceptions, limiting its usefulness in fostering meaningful improvement (Nguyen & Duong, 2021).
- Third, the absence of face-to-face interaction poses a significant barrier to clear communication. Without non-verbal cues and immediate dialogue, online feedback may be misunderstood or less impactful, reducing its overall effectiveness (Palvia et al., 2018).
- Fourth, students often experience decreased engagement and motivation in online learning due to reduced interaction with instructors and peers. This diminished social presence can negatively affect learners' investment in their progress and responsiveness to feedback (Vershitskaya et al., 2020).
- Fifth, technical issues and unequal access to necessary digital tools create additional obstacles. Students facing connectivity problems or lacking adequate devices may not receive feedback consistently or be able to respond effectively, exacerbating educational inequities (Mahyoob, 2020).
- Sixth, peer feedback in online environments is prone to inconsistency and superficiality, especially when students lack proper training or clear guidelines on how to provide constructive comments. This undermines the potential benefits of peer assessment and collaborative learning (Mizrak & Cilduz, 2023).

- Finally, the credibility of online feedback can be questionable, particularly when it originates from unverified sources. This raises concerns about the reliability and academic validity of such feedback, which can affect learners' trust and the value they place on it (Palvia et al., 2018).

Collectively, these challenges highlight the pressing need for online feedback to be timely, personalized, clear, and well-structured to maximize its effectiveness in digital learning environments.

Conclusion

This chapter has critically reviewed the key characteristics, benefits, and limitations of online and in-person feedback strategies as they pertain to the development of EFL students' writing skills. Online feedback (comprising synchronous, asynchronous, and electronic corrective modalities) offers notable advantages in terms of flexibility, accessibility, and learner autonomy. However, it is often constrained by delayed interaction, limited personalization, and reduced emotional immediacy. In contrast, in-person feedback provides real-time clarification, non-verbal support, and dialogic exchange, fostering deeper engagement and learner confidence. Despite its pedagogical strengths, it remains challenged by time constraints, large class sizes, and inconsistent delivery. The literature reviewed supports the integration of both modes in a blended feedback approach, which may more effectively address diverse learner needs and enhance the overall quality and impact of writing feedback. These insights form the conceptual foundation for the comparative analysis undertaken in the subsequent chapter.

Chapter three

Research findings and data analysis

Introduction

The current chapter focuses on the practical aspect of this investigation. It is organized into two principal sections. The first section provides an overview of the methodological procedures followed in conducting this comparative study on effective feedback strategies. It offers a detailed account of the research approach, tools used for data collection, participant selection, and the steps undertaken during the research process. The second section delivers an in-depth analysis of the data obtained from both students and teachers to assess the impact of online versus in-person feedback on EFL learners' written assignments. It also interprets the results in light of the research questions and examines the extent to which the hypothesis is supported.

1. Research methodology

1.1. Research Approach

This study adopts a mixed-methods approach, which is deemed suitable for the objectives and nature of the research. The combination of quantitative and qualitative methods allows for a more comprehensive examination of both students 'and teachers' perceptions regarding the effectiveness of online and in-person feedback strategies in enhancing EFL learners' written performance. This approach also ensures the credibility and depth of the findings through methodological triangulation, enabling the researcher to capture both measurable outcomes and contextual insights that may not emerge through a single method alone.

2. Research Design

This study adopts a case study design, which is appropriate considering the nature, scope, and time constraints of the research. The case study enables an in-depth investigation of the phenomenon within its real-life context, allowing for a comprehensive understanding

of participants' experiences and interactions. It also facilitates the collection of detailed, context-specific data, which contributes to the richness and depth of the analysis.

3. Sampling and Population

To collect relevant and reliable data to address the research questions, this study involved both EFL students and teachers from Mohamed Khider University of Biskra.

Out of approximately 50 English language teachers at the university, five (5) were selected to participate in structured interview. These participants were chosen based on their experience in providing feedback—either online or in person—on students' written work. Their input was essential to assess the perceived effectiveness and challenges of both feedback methods.

The student population comprised 110 EFL students (Science of the Language stream), totaling 110 individuals. This group was selected because Master students are actively engaged in producing various academic writing tasks such as research papers, reports, and written assignments, and they are expected to complete a dissertation in their final year. As such, they represent a relevant population for investigating the role of feedback in developing academic writing. From this population, forty (40) students were randomly selected to complete a questionnaire aimed at exploring their perceptions and experiences with online and in-person feedback strategies for improving their written performance.

4. Data Collection Methods

In this study, we dealt with both a questionnaire (semi-structured) to gather data from master EFL students and a teachers' interview (structured).

4.1. Students' Questionnaire

A semi-structured questionnaire was designed for Master two EFL students to explore their opinions and attitudes toward the use of online and in-person feedback strategies in improving their academic writing performance. The questionnaire aimed to gather data on students' experiences with both feedback methods, their preferences, perceived effectiveness, and the challenges they encounter when receiving feedback on their written assignments.

4.1.1. Description of Students' Questionnaire

The questionnaire is the first data collection tool used in this study. It was a semi-structured online questionnaire administered to Master two EFL students at Mohamed Khider University of Biskra. The questionnaire consists of fifteen (15) questions divided into two (2) main sections. The first section focuses on students' experiences and views regarding feedback strategies in general. The second section investigates their perceptions and preferences concerning the use of in-person versus online feedback methods for improving their academic writing performance.

Section One: Feedback Strategies (Items 1–5)

The first section of the questionnaire aims to gather insights into students' general experiences with feedback on their written assignments. It examines their preferred feedback type (in-person, online, or both), the clarity of the feedback they receive, and their views on the usefulness of written versus spoken feedback. In addition, it explores the value students place on feedback that includes examples and suggestions, and how essential they believe feedback is in identifying and addressing their writing strengths and weaknesses.

Section Two: Online vs. In-Person Feedback (Items 6–15)

The second section focuses on students' perceptions of online and in-person feedback approaches. It investigates students' comfort levels with each method, the effectiveness of

teacher-student interaction, and the extent to which each mode facilitates understanding, motivation, and engagement. This section also explores the challenges associated with both feedback types, such as lack of verbal explanation, distractions, and limited opportunities for clarification. The aim is to evaluate which method students perceive as more effective for enhancing their academic writing, and whether they believe both approaches present obstacles that influence the application of feedback.

4.1.2. Aims of the Study's Questionnaire

The primary aim of this questionnaire was to collect data from Master two EFL students at Biskra University regarding the effectiveness of feedback strategies in enhancing their written assignments. Specifically, it sought to explore students' attitudes toward both online and in-person feedback, their preferences, and the challenges they encounter with each method. Additionally, the questionnaire aimed to assess how students perceive the clarity, usefulness, and impact of feedback on their academic writing performance. This tool was essential for understanding learners' experiences with feedback and identifying which approach they believe contributes more effectively to the development of their written assignments.

4.1.3. Administration of the Final Questionnaire

The final questionnaire was distributed through the official Facebook group of Master two EFL students at Biskra University. Within one week, a total of forty (40) complete responses were collected. Using Facebook as a distribution platform proved effective, as it allowed for easy access, quick interaction, and clear, complete responses from the participants without any reported difficulties.

4.1.4. Analyzing students' questionnaire

Section One: Feedback Strategies

Preferred Type of Feedback

Feedback Type	Frequency	Percentage (%)
In-person	19	47.5
Online	1	2.5
Both equally	20	50.0
Total	40	100.0

Table 1: Preferred Type of Feedback

The findings reveal a notably balanced distribution of preferences, with 50% of participants expressing equal appreciation for both in-person and online feedback. This suggests that a considerable portion of learners are adaptable and open to multiple modes of instructional support. Meanwhile, 47.5% demonstrate a marked inclination toward in-person feedback, underscoring the enduring value of direct, face-to-face engagement in the feedback process. The minimal preference for online-only feedback (2.5%) points to potential limitations in digital methods when used in isolation, possibly due to a lack of immediacy, clarity, or personal connection. These insights emphasize the need for a blended approach that caters to diverse learner expectations and maximizes the effectiveness of written assignment support.

Clarity of Received Feedback

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Always	1	2.5
Sometimes	31	77.5

Rarely	7	17.5
Never	1	2.5
Total	40	100.0

Table 2: Clarity of Received Feedback

The data indicates that 77.5% of respondents only sometimes find the feedback they receive to be clear, reflecting a recurring issue with consistency in the delivery or articulation of evaluative comments. This irregular clarity may hinder students' ability to effectively act upon suggestions and improve their writing. Additionally, 17.5% report rarely understanding the feedback, and a small percentage (2.5%) state they never do, further underscoring the communication gap that exists between instructors and learners. Only one participant (2.5%) consistently perceives feedback as clear, highlighting that clear and accessible commentary is not the norm. These results signal an urgent need to refine feedback strategies, possibly by incorporating more structured, explicit, and learner-centered approaches—especially for EFL students who may struggle with language nuance and instructional ambiguity.

Helpfulness of Written vs. Spoken Feedback

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	30	75.0
No	10	25.0
Total	40	100.0

Table 3: Helpfulness of Written vs. Spoken Feedback

Three-quarters of the participants (75%) perceive written feedback as more useful than spoken alternatives. This preference may stem from the tangible and lasting nature of written comments, which learners can revisit at their own pace for deeper comprehension and revision. Such permanence allows for repeated engagement, particularly beneficial for EFL students who often need additional time to process linguistic and structural corrections. Conversely, the 25% who do not find written feedback more helpful may value the immediacy and interactive nature of spoken responses, suggesting that learning styles and communication preferences play a significant role in feedback effectiveness. These results highlight the potential of integrating both modalities to accommodate diverse learner needs.

Why is written or spoken feedback more helpful?

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Written feedback is easier to review and reflect on later.	16	23.5%
It gives me time to understand and process the comments.	16	23.5%
I feel less pressure compared to live spoken feedback.	11	16.2%
It helps me focus on specific parts of my writing.	7	10.3%
Spoken feedback is faster and more interactive.	4	5.9%
I understand things better when someone explains them verbally.	6	8.8%
I can ask immediate questions during spoken feedback.	8	11.8%
Total	68	100%

Table 4: Reasons why written or spoken feedback is more helpful

The responses reveal a diverse set of reasons behind learners' feedback preferences, with a notable inclination toward written formats. Many students (47%) appreciate written feedback because it allows for reflection and deeper cognitive processing—highlighted by the equal number of responses indicating it is easier to revisit later and helps in understanding comments over time. A considerable number also reported that written feedback reduces the pressure commonly associated with real-time spoken interactions (16.2%), while others emphasized its value in enabling them to concentrate on specific aspects of their writing (10.3%).

On the other hand, spoken feedback appeals to learners who favor real-time dialogue and personal interaction. Some value the immediacy it offers for clarifications (11.8%) and believe verbal explanations enhance comprehension (8.8%). A smaller group (5.9%) also cited the interactive nature and speed of spoken feedback as advantageous.

These findings suggest that while written feedback supports independent learning and gradual improvement, spoken methods fulfill a communicative and supportive role. The distribution underscores the importance of offering both modes to meet the differing cognitive and emotional needs of EFL learners

Importance of Examples in Feedback

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	39	97.5
No	1	2.5
Total	40	100.0

Table 5: Importance of Examples in Feedback

The responses strongly affirm the essential role of examples in feedback, with nearly all participants (97.5%) expressing that the inclusion of concrete illustrations enhances their understanding. This overwhelming agreement highlights students’ reliance on tangible, contextualized input to bridge gaps between abstract critique and practical application. By anchoring comments in real excerpts or model responses, feedback becomes more accessible and instructive for EFL learners, especially in written assignments where nuances in language use and structure are critical. The near-unanimity in this result underscores a clear demand for feedback strategies that go beyond general remarks and offer precise, targeted suggestions that students can emulate or learn from.

Role of Feedback in Understanding Writing Strengths and Weaknesses

Importance Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Extremely important	21	52.5
Very important	16	40.0
Moderately important	2	5.0
Slightly important	1	2.5
Total	40	100.0

Table 6: Role of Feedback in Understanding Writing Strengths and Weaknesses

A substantial portion of the participants (over 90%) view feedback as highly valuable in recognizing both their writing capabilities and areas needing refinement. The prominence of responses labeling it as “extremely” or “very” important reflects a deep awareness of feedback’s formative role in the writing development process. Such a

perspective suggests that students do not merely see feedback as evaluative but as a roadmap for growth. This strong consensus reinforces the need for feedback strategies that not only point out errors but also highlight what the student does well—an approach particularly beneficial in the EFL context, where confidence and clarity are essential for progression.

Section Two: Online vs. In-Person Feedback

Comfort with In-Person Feedback

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Always	19	47.5
Sometimes	21	52.5
Total	40	100.0

Table 7: Comfort with In-Person Feedback

The findings show that 47.5% of the participants consistently feel at ease receiving in-person feedback, while 52.5% indicate occasional comfort with such exchanges. Notably, none of the participants reported feeling uncomfortable in these settings, suggesting a universal baseline of acceptance or adaptability toward face-to-face interactions. This wide acceptance reinforces the pedagogical value of in-person feedback in the EFL context, where nuanced explanations, body language, and tone can aid comprehension and reinforce language acquisition. The data also implies that learners may find it easier to clarify ambiguities or seek elaboration when interacting directly with instructors—an aspect that could be harder to replicate through asynchronous or text-based online platforms.

Engagement through Teacher's Physical Presence

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	37	92.5
No	3	7.5
Total	40	100.0

Table 8: Engagement through Teacher's Physical Presence

An overwhelming 92.5% of participants acknowledge that the physical presence of the teacher significantly boosts their engagement during feedback sessions. This strong response underscores the relational and communicative advantages of in-person interaction, such as immediate clarification, non-verbal cues, and a stronger sense of accountability. The minimal percentage (7.5%) who do not find it impactful may reflect individual learning preferences or greater comfort with autonomous or digital environments. These findings reinforce the idea that, despite technological advances, human presence remains a powerful element in effective feedback delivery.

Necessity of Maintaining In-Person Feedback

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	38	95.0
No	2	5.0
Total	40	100.0

Table 9: Necessity of Maintaining In-Person Feedback

A striking 95% of participants emphasize the importance of maintaining in-person feedback, despite the increasing prevalence of digital tools. This strong preference highlights the enduring effectiveness of face-to-face interactions, likely due to the immediacy of responses, the opportunity for direct clarification, and the personal connection that enhances the overall learning experience. The small minority (5%) who feel that in-person feedback is less necessary may be more accustomed to or prefer digital formats, but their views seem to be in the minority. This result suggests that, even as technology plays a greater role in education, the traditional method of in-person feedback is still viewed as an indispensable component of effective learning.

If yes, why do you prefer in-person feedback?

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
It allows for clearer communication.	20	30.8%
It helps build a stronger student-teacher relationship.	21	32.3%
I understand feedback better when it's explained in person.	17	26.2%
It motivates me more than online feedback.	7	10.8%
Total	65	100%

Table 10: Reasons why preferring in-person feedback

The most common reason participants prefer in-person feedback is that it allows for clearer communication, cited by 30.8% of respondents. This suggests that face-to-face interactions are seen as more effective for conveying feedback, possibly due to the ability to clarify nuances and the opportunity for immediate follow-up questions.

In addition, 32.3% of students feel that in-person feedback strengthens the student-teacher relationship, indicating that the personal connection made in these sessions is valued and contributes to a more supportive learning environment. This is further underscored by the 26.2% of students who find they understand the feedback better when it's explained in person, highlighting the significance of verbal explanations and the ability to ask questions in real time.

Lastly, 10.8% of participants noted that in-person feedback is more motivating than online feedback. This suggests that the direct engagement with instructors may offer more encouragement and a sense of accountability, which can be motivating for students. Overall, these reasons illustrate that in-person feedback is valued not only for its clarity but also for the relational and motivational benefits it offers

Supportive Learning Environment through In-Person Feedback

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	39	97.5
No	1	2.5
Total	40	100.0

Table 11: Supportive Learning Environment through In-Person Feedback

The results indicate that an overwhelming 97.5% of participants view in-person feedback as a key factor in creating a supportive learning environment. This underscores the importance of face-to-face interactions in building strong student-teacher relationships and fostering a positive, encouraging atmosphere. The vast majority of students recognize that

direct, personal feedback enhances their sense of support and engagement, contributing to improved learning experiences.

Only 2.5% of participants disagreed, suggesting that while in-person feedback is widely valued, there may be a small group with different perspectives or preferences. Nonetheless, the near-unanimous agreement suggests that for most students, in-person feedback remains a crucial element in nurturing an environment conducive to learning and growth.

Quality of Teacher-Student Interaction in Online Feedback

Rating	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Excellent	4	10.0
Good	21	52.5
Fair	11	27.5
Poor	4	10.0
Total	40	100.0

Table 12: *Quality of Teacher-Student Interaction in Online Feedback*

The ratings of teacher-student interaction during online feedback reveal a range of experiences, with 52.5% of participants rating the interaction as "Good". This indicates that for many students, the quality of online feedback is generally satisfactory. However, a significant proportion of students, 27.5%, rated the interaction as "Fair", and 10% found it "Poor", pointing to areas where improvements could be made. The "Excellent" rating, given by just 10% of respondents, suggests that while some students experience highly effective online interactions, this is not universally the case. These mixed responses highlight the need

for refining digital communication strategies to ensure that online feedback becomes more engaging, clearer, and more impactful for all students. Enhancing the quality of online interactions could help bridge the gap between in-person and online feedback experiences.

Time to Process Online Feedback

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Always	10	25.0
Sometimes	23	57.5
Rarely	6	15.0
Never	1	2.5
Total	40	100.0

Table 13: Time to Process Online Feedback

The responses regarding the time available to process online feedback show that 57.5% of participants report receiving feedback with adequate time to reflect, marking "Sometimes" as their answer. Additionally, 25% always feel they have enough time, indicating that for a substantial portion of students, online feedback is structured in a way that allows for thoughtful review. However, 15% of students feel that they rarely have enough time to process the feedback, and 2.5% never feel they have sufficient time, which points to a potential issue in feedback delivery or the need for adjustments in the pacing of feedback. Overall, the majority of students benefit from a sufficient timeframe to comprehend and incorporate feedback, suggesting that online feedback, when timed appropriately, can enhance learning and application.

Missing Details Due to Lack of Verbal Explanation in Online Feedback

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	40	100.0
Total	40	100.0

Table 14: Missing Details Due to Lack of Verbal Explanation in Online Feedback

Every participant (100%) reported experiencing the absence of important details in online feedback due to the lack of verbal explanations. This indicates a clear challenge in the effectiveness of online feedback, where the absence of verbal interaction may hinder full comprehension. It suggests that students may struggle to grasp nuances or clarifications that could be provided through face-to-face dialogue. This finding underscores the potential benefits of integrating verbal or interactive elements into online feedback to ensure a more comprehensive understanding of the comments and suggestions provided.

Q12 – If yes, why did you prefer spoken feedback over written feedback?

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
The written feedback was not clear enough.	10	15.6%
There was no opportunity to ask follow-up questions.	17	26.6%
I understand things better when they are explained verbally.	13	20.3%
I was not fully engaged during the online session.	12	18.8%
I needed examples or clarification that were not provided.	12	18.8%
Total	64	100%

Table 15: Reasons why preferring spoken feedback over written feedback

The primary reason students preferred spoken feedback over written feedback was the opportunity to ask follow-up questions, with 26.6% of participants highlighting this as a key factor. Another significant reason was the perceived clarity of verbal explanations, as 20.3% of respondents felt they understood things better when explained verbally. Additionally, a portion of participants (18.8%) mentioned that they were not fully engaged during the online session or lacked the necessary examples or clarifications in the written feedback. These responses suggest that spoken feedback can enhance engagement and understanding, particularly when students have the chance to interact and clarify doubts in real time. The need for more comprehensive and clear written feedback, possibly supplemented with interactive elements, also emerges from the data.

Difficulty Staying Focused During Online Feedback Sessions

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	37	92.5
No	3	7.5
Total	40	100.0

Table 16: Difficulty Staying Focused During Online Feedback Sessions

An overwhelming 92.5% of participants, or 37 out of 40, indicated that they find it difficult to remain focused during online feedback sessions. This indicates a strong trend of engagement challenges within virtual learning environments. In contrast, only 3 participants (7.5%) reported not facing such difficulties, suggesting that for a minority, online feedback may not be as disengaging.

The high percentage of participants struggling to maintain focus during online sessions points to potential issues such as distractions in home settings, lack of immediate personal interaction, or the absence of a physical presence that could otherwise help maintain student concentration. Given that 92.5% of participants identified focus as an issue, this suggests that improvements in the structure, delivery, or interactivity of online feedback may be necessary to enhance student attention and overall learning outcomes in virtual environments.

If yes, why is online feedback sometimes ineffective?

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
I get distracted by my surroundings.	14	20.9%
The internet connection is not stable.	21	31.3%
The feedback is not engaging or clear.	4	6.0%
I prefer face-to-face interaction.	18	26.9%
I find it hard to concentrate when using a screen for a long time.	10	14.9%
Total	67	100%

Table 17: Reasons why online feedback is sometimes ineffective

The reasons behind the perceived ineffectiveness of online feedback vary, with the most common factor being unstable internet connections, as reported by 31.3% (21 participants) of respondents. This suggests that technical difficulties are a significant barrier to the effectiveness of digital feedback, potentially leading to interruptions and a lack of clarity in communication.

Another notable reason, selected by 26.9% (18 participants), is a preference for face-to-face interaction, indicating that many students still feel that in-person feedback offers more value and better engagement. This highlights a potential gap in the virtual feedback experience, where the personal connection in traditional settings is missing.

Other contributing factors include distractions from surroundings (20.9%, or 14 participants) and difficulty concentrating on screens for extended periods (14.9%, or 10 participants). These issues suggest that environmental factors and the nature of screen-based interactions can detract from the effectiveness of online feedback, further emphasizing the need for strategies to minimize distractions and increase engagement in virtual settings.

Finally, 6% of respondents (4 participants) found the online feedback neither engaging nor clear; indicating that there is also room for improvement in the way feedback is delivered digitally to ensure clarity and interaction.

Clarity and Usefulness of Online vs. In-Person Feedback

Comparison Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Much clearer and more useful	10	25.0
Slightly clearer and more useful	10	25.0
About the same	4	10.0
Less clear and useful than in-person	16	40.0
Total	40	100.0

Table 18: Clarity and Usefulness of Online vs. In-Person Feedback

The comparison of clarity and usefulness between online and in-person feedback reveals distinct preferences among students. A significant portion, 40% (16 participants),

feels that online feedback is less clear and useful than in-person feedback. This suggests that students may find face-to-face interactions more effective in terms of communication, where immediate clarification and personalized explanations are possible.

Meanwhile, 25% (10 participants) perceive online feedback as much clearer and more useful; indicating that for some students, the structured nature of written feedback might offer greater clarity and allow for easier reflection. Another 25% (10 participants) find online feedback only slightly clearer and more useful, implying that, while it may offer some benefits, it is not necessarily superior to in-person feedback.

On the other hand, 10% (4 participants) consider both feedback methods to be about the same in terms of clarity and usefulness, showing that for a small group, the format of feedback might not significantly affect their experience or understanding.

15. Challenges in Applying Feedback from Different Methods

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes, both have challenges	30	75.0
Only online feedback has challenges	9	22.5
Only in-person feedback has challenges	1	2.5
Total	40	100.0

Table 19: Challenges in Applying Feedback from Different Methods

A considerable number of students, 75% (30 participants), acknowledge that both online and in-person feedback come with their own set of challenges. This suggests that while feedback in both formats has its advantages, there are also inherent difficulties with

each method. These challenges might include issues such as clarity in written feedback, limited engagement in online sessions, or logistical hurdles in receiving in-person feedback.

A smaller proportion, 22.5% (9 participants), specifically identify online feedback as the main source of difficulty. This could be attributed to factors like the lack of verbal interaction, distractions during online sessions, or technical issues such as unstable internet connections, which hinder the effectiveness of the feedback process.

Only 2.5% (1 participant) report challenges with in-person feedback alone, which may reflect the rarity of problems in face-to-face settings or suggest that the benefits of in-person feedback outweigh potential drawbacks for most students.

These results emphasize the need for tailored approaches to feedback delivery, as students encounter varied challenges with different feedback methods, and a hybrid approach might be ideal to cater to diverse learning needs.

4.1.5. Discussion of the results of students' questionnaire

The findings of this comparative study on in-person and online feedback methods for EFL students' written assignments reveal distinct preferences and challenges associated with both approaches. While the majority of students (47.5%) prefer in-person feedback, valuing the personal interaction and immediate clarification it provides, a significant portion (50%) appreciates the flexibility offered by online feedback. Despite the convenience of online feedback, the study shows that face-to-face interactions are considered superior in terms of engagement and clarity. Nearly all participants (97.5%) emphasized the importance of examples and verbal explanations, which are often missing in online feedback, leading to misunderstandings and a lack of clarity.

Moreover, in-person feedback was overwhelmingly viewed as fostering a more supportive learning environment, with 97.5% of students agreeing that the direct interaction between teacher and student enhances their learning experience. This contrasts with online feedback, where maintaining focus and processing the comments proved more difficult for many students (92.5% had trouble staying engaged). Online feedback also presented challenges such as distractions from the surroundings, unstable internet connections, and difficulty in concentrating for long periods, all contributing to its perceived ineffectiveness for some students.

The study also pointed to the clarity and usefulness of in-person feedback, with 40% of students rating it as much clearer and more useful compared to online feedback. In contrast, 25% of students found online feedback to be less clear and useful. Despite the evident strengths of in-person feedback, many students still encounter challenges in applying feedback, regardless of the method used. This indicates that while both forms of feedback offer valuable insights, students face different obstacles in implementing the suggestions effectively.

In conclusion, while online feedback offers flexibility and time for reflection, in-person feedback excels in fostering engagement, clarity, and a supportive learning environment. The study suggests that a blended approach, combining the advantages of both methods, would be the most effective in supporting EFL students' development in written assignments.

4.2. Teachers' Interview

The teachers' interview represented the second data collection tool in this study. It was designed to gather in-depth insights from EFL teachers at Mohamed Khider University of

Biskra regarding the use of online and in-person feedback strategies to support Master two students in improving their academic writing.

4.2.1. Description of the Teachers' Interview

The interview targeted EFL teachers currently teaching academic writing. It was structured, consisting of six (6) open-ended questions aimed at exploring teachers' preferences between online and in-person feedback methods, students' comprehension of feedback, challenges encountered, recurring student errors, and any observed emotional or motivational differences. The interview was created via Google Forms and distributed electronically to five (5) academic writing instructors at Biskra University.

4.2.2. Aim of the Teachers' Interview

The primary aim of the interview was to examine teachers' attitudes and practical experiences regarding the effectiveness of online versus in-person feedback in guiding Master 2 students' written assignments. It also sought to determine which mode fosters clearer communication, stronger student engagement, and improved academic writing performance.

4.2.3. Administration of teachers interview

The interview was administered to five (5) EFL teachers at Mohamed Khider University of Biskra. The data collection spanned approximately fifteen days. Due to non-responses from some initially selected participants, the researcher contacted additional instructors of written expression. Some respondents also required up to two weeks to submit their answers. Despite these delays, the collected data offered meaningful and detailed perspectives on the comparative effectiveness of in-person and online feedback strategies for Master 2 EFL students.

4.2.4. Analysis of Teachers' Interview

Preferred Method of Feedback Delivery

When asked which mode of feedback—in-person or online—they found easier to provide, most teachers favored in-person feedback. Teachers 2, 3, and 5 highlighted the benefits of immediate clarification, richer interaction, and the ability to observe students' reactions and non-verbal cues, which aid in adjusting explanations on the spot. Teacher 3 emphasized that in-person feedback is more effective in the Algerian context where online methods are still underdeveloped. Teacher 4 offered a nuanced view, stating that while in-person feedback is more meaningful due to its interactive nature, online feedback is easier to deliver and can provide useful insights. In contrast, Teacher 1 preferred online feedback, stressing its structured nature, the ease of highlighting and annotating documents, and the ability to keep records of the feedback provided.

Clarity of Online vs. In-Person Feedback

Regarding whether students understand online feedback as clearly as in-person feedback, most teachers reported that in-person feedback promotes clearer understanding. Teachers 1, 2, and 5 noted that students often misinterpret the tone or fail to fully grasp suggestions in online feedback due to the lack of real-time dialogue and vocal cues. Teacher 3 described student understanding of online feedback as uncertain, pointing out that digital feedback remains largely undefined in Algerian universities. Only Teacher 4 believed students understood online feedback as clearly as in-person feedback, especially when the feedback is powered by AI tools, although this opinion diverged from the more critical views of the others.

Challenges of Online Feedback

All five teachers described notable challenges in delivering online feedback. Teacher 1 pointed to the lack of immediate interaction and the risk that students may delay or

overlook the feedback. Teachers 2 and 5 echoed this, emphasizing the reduced impact of asynchronous communication and the difficulty in knowing whether students internalize the feedback. Teacher 2 also mentioned digital literacy and technological barriers. Teacher 3 referred to a general lack of student interest and the technical issues that limit the quality of online feedback. Teacher 4 identified the main challenge as providing precise, relevant feedback tailored to student needs, suggesting that online feedback can sometimes lack focus or personalization.

Mode Allowing for Clearer Communication

All teachers agreed that in-person feedback allows for clearer and more effective communication. Teachers 1, 2, 3, and 5 emphasized the importance of face-to-face communication, body language, and the opportunity for immediate clarification. Teacher 2 particularly highlighted how in-person feedback creates a more logical and dynamic exchange through vocal tone, facial expression, and gesture. Even Teacher 4, who saw value in AI-enhanced online feedback, ultimately conceded that in-person feedback currently offers superior clarity and interpretive depth.

Recurring Student Mistakes despite Feedback

There was broad consensus among the teachers about the types of mistakes students continue to repeat even after receiving feedback. Teachers 1, 2, 4, and 5 observed persistent grammar, citation, and vocabulary errors. Teachers 2 and 5 noted weak argument development and poor essay structure as common recurring issues. Teachers 1 and 2 further stated that some students fail to apply the feedback they have received, instead focusing on surface-level edits rather than making deeper structural or conceptual changes. Teacher 3 highlighted problems with coherence and paragraph unity, suggesting a lack of understanding of overall organization and flow in writing.

Emotional and Motivational Impact of Feedback Type

On the emotional and motivational impact of feedback mode, most teachers observed that students responded more positively to in-person feedback. Teachers 1, 2, 3, and 5 reported that face-to-face interactions foster a sense of support, encouragement, and personal connection, which increases student motivation and engagement. Teacher 3 emphasized the emotional contact that in-person communication allows, which is harder to achieve in online formats. However, Teacher 4 offered a contrasting view, stating that some students feel more motivated and responsive to online feedback because in-person feedback may cause anxiety or discomfort, especially when it is perceived as overly critical or direct.

5. Synthesis of the findings

The findings from both the student questionnaire and teacher interview contributed directly to the development of this synthesis. The data collected from both tools were largely consistent and helped answer the research questions while supporting the hypothesis concerning the effectiveness of feedback strategies in enhancing EFL students' written performance. Both teachers and students at Mohamed Khider University of Biskra recognized the critical role of feedback in academic writing, particularly at the Master level, where high-quality written expression is essential. However, their perceptions of the most effective feedback method varied.

Four out of the five interviewed teachers expressed a clear preference for in-person feedback. They highlighted its advantages in providing immediate clarification, allowing for real-time interaction, and fostering emotional engagement. In-person feedback was seen as more dynamic, personal, and easier to interpret due to non-verbal cues and direct dialogue. Only one teacher favored online feedback, pointing out its convenience and potential for detailed commentary, particularly when supported by digital tools. In contrast, students showed a more balanced view. The majority reported that both methods—online and in-person—were useful, as long as the feedback was clear, relevant, and actionable. They

valued the accessibility and flexibility of online feedback, while also appreciating the clarity and personal support that comes with face-to-face communication.

Teachers also noted that online feedback often suffers from issues like misinterpretation, lack of engagement, and the absence of immediate response. They stressed that while online feedback can be effective, it often lacks the emotional connection and spontaneous clarification that in-person interaction offers. These findings partly support the research hypothesis: feedback is vital in improving EFL students' writing, but in-person feedback—according to the majority of teachers—remains more effective in fostering understanding and motivation.

In conclusion, the study answered all the research questions and confirmed the main hypotheses. While students value both online and in-person feedback, the majority of teachers strongly support in-person methods for their clarity, emotional impact, and pedagogical effectiveness. The results reinforce that well-delivered feedback—particularly face-to-face—plays a vital role in helping EFL learners address their writing challenges and improve their academic performance.

Conclusion

This chapter examined the effectiveness of online and in-person feedback in improving the writing performance of EFL Master two students at Mohamed Khider University of Biskra. Through the analysis of student questionnaires and teacher interviews, the findings revealed that while students appreciated both modes of feedback, most teachers favored in-person feedback for its clarity, immediacy, and interactive nature. Overall, the results confirmed that clear, constructive feedback—regardless of delivery

method—significantly contributes to enhancing students’ academic writing, with in-person feedback showing stronger pedagogical impact in this context.

General Conclusion

Conclusion

This study investigated the impact of online and in-person feedback methods on improving the academic writing performance of EFL Master two students. The research aimed to determine whether clear and constructive feedback—regardless of delivery mode—enhances students’ written assignments, and whether teachers’ approaches to feedback influence the effectiveness of writing instruction.

The findings drawn from both the student questionnaires and teacher interviews confirmed the initial hypotheses. First, students demonstrated improved writing performance when exposed to structured, detailed feedback, especially when it addressed both strengths and areas for improvement. Second, while both online and in-person methods were acknowledged as valuable, in-person feedback was generally favored by teachers due to its immediacy, clarity, and emotional connection, which help students better interpret and apply suggestions.

Despite students’ growing familiarity with digital tools, challenges persist in online feedback, such as delayed interaction, limited engagement, and potential misinterpretation of written comments. In contrast, in-person feedback allows for dynamic dialogue, non-verbal cues, and more personalized guidance. However, the study also highlighted the practical advantages of online feedback, particularly for documentation, accessibility, and asynchronous communication.

The results emphasize the pedagogical importance of adopting a balanced feedback approach that combines the strengths of both modes. Clear, specific, and student-centered feedback—whether delivered face-to-face or online—remains a key factor in enhancing the quality of EFL students’ written assignments. Teachers are encouraged to diversify their

feedback practices while maintaining a strong emphasis on clarity, encouragement, and actionable guidance to support learners' academic writing development.

Limitations of the Study

While conducting this research, several challenges were encountered. The most significant limitation was the short timeframe allocated for data collection, which created pressure to complete the study within tight deadlines. Additionally, there was a notable delay in receiving responses from the interviewed teachers, which slowed down the analysis process and limited opportunities for follow-up clarification. Despite these obstacles, the researcher was able to gather relevant and meaningful data from both students and teachers, allowing the study to fulfill its objectives and confirm the validity of its hypotheses.

Implications of the Study

Based on the study's findings, several pedagogical implications can be drawn to guide teachers in enhancing the effectiveness of their feedback practices for EFL students' written assignments.

- Teachers are encouraged to adopt a blended feedback approach, combining online and in-person methods to better meet students' diverse needs. Online feedback offers flexibility, detailed commentary, and time for reflection, while in-person feedback allows for direct clarification, immediate support, and interactive discussion.
- Effective feedback, regardless of format, should be clear, focused, and actionable, guiding students toward specific improvements in their writing.
- The use of model texts, both in the classroom and through digital platforms, can help students understand writing standards. Teachers should provide structured support and targeted feedback to build students' academic writing skills step by step.

- Feedback practices should go beyond identifying errors. They should also aim to motivate students, increase their engagement in the revision process, and promote a positive attitude toward writing.

In light of the research findings, the following recommendations aim to help students make more effective use of feedback to enhance their academic writing skills.

- Students should be encouraged to actively engage with both written and spoken feedback, using it as a tool to reflect on their strengths and areas for development.
- By using feedback from both online platforms and in-person discussions, students can improve their understanding of academic writing conventions, including organization, coherence, and argument development.
- Feedback should be seen as more than correction; it is a chance to revise thoughtfully and improve the overall quality of writing at deeper levels.
- Recognizing the value of both online and in-person feedback can help students become more independent writers and contribute to their long-term academic success.

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Appendices

Appendix 01: students Questionnaire

This questionnaire is a part of a Master's dissertation research project comparing in-person and online feedback. Your answers will remain anonymous and will be used solely for research purposes.

Instructions:

Please tick the answer that best represents your opinion.

Section One: Feedback

1. What type of feedback do you prefer for improving your writing assignments?

☐ In-person

☐ Online

☐ Both equally

☐ Neither

2. Have you ever been confused or unclear about the feedback you received?

☐ Always

☐ Sometimes

☐ Rarely

☐ Never

3. Do you find written feedback more helpful than spoken feedback for evaluating your writing?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Why? (Choose one or more):

- ☐ Written feedback is easier to review and reflect on later.
- ☐ It gives me time to understand and process the comments.
- ☐ I feel less pressure compared to live spoken feedback.
- ☐ It helps me focus on specific parts of my writing.
- ☐ Spoken feedback is faster and more interactive.
- ☐ I understand things better when someone explains them verbally.
- ☐ I can ask immediate questions during spoken feedback.

4. Is feedback more helpful when it includes examples and suggestions for improvement?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

5. How important is feedback in helping you understand your strengths and weaknesses in writing assignments?

- ☐ Extremely important
- ☐ Very important
- ☐ Moderately important
- ☐ Slightly important
- ☐ Not important at all

Section Two: In-Person vs. Online Feedback

6. Do you feel more comfortable when receiving in-person feedback?

- ☐ Always
- ☐ Sometimes
- ☐ Rarely

☐ Never

7. Does the physical presence of a teacher during in-person feedback make it more engaging?

☐ Yes

☐ No

8. Do you think in-person feedback should be maintained even with the availability of digital tools?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, why? (Choose one or more):

☐ It allows for clearer communication.

☐ It helps build a stronger student-teacher relationship.

☐ I understand feedback better when it is explained in person.

☐ It motivates me more than online feedback.

☐ I can ask questions and get immediate answers.

9. Do you believe in-person feedback allows for a more supportive learning environment?

☐ Yes

☐ No

10. How would you describe teacher-student interaction during online feedback?

☐ Excellent

☐ Good

☐ Fair

☐ Poor

11. Do you find online feedback gives you more time to process your teacher's comments on writing assignments?

☐ Always

☐ Sometimes

☐ Rarely

☐ Never

12. Have you ever missed important details because online feedback lacked verbal explanation?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, Why? (Choose one or more):

☐ The written feedback was not clear enough.

☐ There was no opportunity to ask follow-up questions.

☐ I understand things better when they are explained verbally.

☐ I was not fully engaged during the online session.

☐ I needed examples or clarification that were not provided

13. Do you find it difficult to stay focused during online feedback sessions for writing assignments?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, why? (Choose one or more):

☐ I get distracted by my surroundings.

☐ The internet connection is not stable.

☐ The feedback is not engaging or clear.

☐ I prefer face-to-face interaction.

☐ I find it hard to concentrate when using a screen for a long time.

14. How would you evaluate the clarity and usefulness of online feedback compared to in-person feedback for writing assignments?

- ☐ Much clearer and more useful than in-person feedback
- ☐ Slightly clearer and more useful
- ☐ About the same
- ☐ Less clear and useful than in-person feedback

15. Do you believe that both in-person and online feedback methods have challenges that affect how you apply the feedback to improve your writing assignments ?

- ☐ Yes, both have challenges
- ☐ Only online feedback has challenges
- ☐ Only in-person feedback has challenges
- ☐ No, neither has significant challenges

Thank you for your participation

Appendix 02: Teachers' Interview

This interview is part of a research study on effective feedback strategies for EFL students' written assignments, focusing on comparing online and in-person methods. Your insights as a teacher will help us better understand which approaches support students' writing development. Your responses will remain confidential and used only for academic purposes.

Questions

1. Which method do you find it easier to provide feedback on students written assignments online or in-person? Why?

..... ,.....

2. Do student understand online feedback on their written assignments as clearly as in-person feedback?

.....

3. What challenges have you faced when giving online feedback on student's written work?

.....

4. In Your opinion, which mode -online or in-person- allows for clear communication and understanding?

.....

5. What are some common mistakes student repeat on their written assignments even after getting feedback?

.....

6. Have you observed any emotional or motivational differences in students based on the type of feedback they receive (online vs. In-person) ?

.....

Thank you for your participation

الملخص

تُعَدّ الكتابة الأكاديمية مهارة أساسية ينبغي على طلبة الماستر في تخصص اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية اكتسابها وإتقانها. غير أن العديد منهم يواجهون صعوبات في إنتاج نصوص مترابطة ومنظمة، وذلك نتيجة محدودة تعرضهم لتغذية راجعة فعّالة. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تقصّي فاعلية استراتيجيات التغذية الراجعة بنوعها: الإلكترونية والحضورية، في تحسين الأداء الكتابي الأكاديمي لدى طلبة السنة الثانية ماستر بجامعة محمد خيضر - بسكرة. ولتحقيق هذا الهدف، تم اعتماد منهج بحثي مختلط، حيث جُمعت البيانات الكمية عبر استبيان وُجّه إلى أربعين (40) طالبًا، في حين تم جمع البيانات النوعية من خلال مقابلات شبه موجهة مع خمسة (5) أساتذة مختصين في تعليم الكتابة الأكاديمية. كشفت النتائج أن الطلبة عبّروا عن مواقف إيجابية تجاه كلا النوعين من التغذية الراجعة، بينما فضّل أغلب الأساتذة التغذية الراجعة الحضورية لما تتميز به من فورية ووضوح وتفاعل مباشر. وأجمع الطرفان على الدور الجوهرى الذي تلعبه التغذية الراجعة في تطوير مهارات الكتابة الأكاديمية. وعليه، تؤكد النتائج صحة الفرضية المطروحة، وتوصي الدراسة باعتماد مقاربة مدمجة تجمع بين الطريقتين، مع التأكيد على ضرورة وضوح الملاحظات وتخصيصها، وتعزيز تفاعل الطلبة معها بشكل فعّال.

Résumé

La maîtrise de l'écriture académique constitue une compétence essentielle pour les étudiants en Master d'anglais langue étrangère. Toutefois, nombre d'entre eux rencontrent des difficultés à produire des textes cohérents et bien structurés, en grande partie en raison d'un accès limité à une rétroaction pédagogique de qualité. La présente étude vise à examiner l'efficacité comparative de deux formes de rétroaction — en ligne et en présentiel — dans l'amélioration des performances en écriture académique des étudiants de deuxième année Master à l'Université Mohamed Khider de Biskra.

Adoptant une approche méthodologique mixte, la recherche s'est appuyée sur deux outils de collecte de données : un questionnaire administré à quarante (40) étudiants et des entretiens semi-directifs menés auprès de cinq (5) enseignants spécialisés dans l'enseignement de l'écriture académique. Les résultats ont révélé que les étudiants affichaient une attitude positive à l'égard des deux types de rétroaction. Cependant, les enseignants interrogés ont exprimé une nette préférence pour la rétroaction en présentiel, en soulignant ses avantages en termes de clarté, d'immédiateté et de richesse d'interaction directe.

Les deux parties — étudiants et enseignants — s'accordent à reconnaître le rôle fondamental de la rétroaction dans le développement des compétences en écriture académique. Les résultats viennent confirmer l'hypothèse selon laquelle la rétroaction, qu'elle soit numérique ou en face à face, est un levier essentiel de progrès. En conclusion, l'étude recommande l'adoption d'une approche intégrée combinant les deux modalités, en mettant l'accent sur la clarté des commentaires, leur personnalisation, et l'implication active des étudiants dans le processus de révision.