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**The Collaborative Learning Strategy as a Tool to Enhance EFL
Learners' Writing Skills**
**A case Study: Second year Students of English at Mohamed Kheider
University of Biskra**

**A Dissertation Submitted to Mohamed Kheider University of BISKRA in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the Master degree in Science of language**

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DECLARATION

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to all my family members:

My dear mother: Merabtine Massika, and dear father: Saad

My four sisters and brother Amine

My grandparents and aunt

All my friends: Racha, Soundess, and Mohamed

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ABSTRACT

Teaching English as a foreign language (EFLT), teachers focus particularly on the improvement of learners' writing since it has a major significance. Therefore they adopt a range of teaching methods, as well as techniques to advance their students' level. The current research intends to investigate the effectiveness of the collaborative learning (CL) on the students' writing skills, shedding light on the teachers' and the learner's roles in collaborative classrooms. The study encloses four hypotheses; the main hypothesis supposes that the collaborative learning technique is an appropriate technique in solving EFL learners' poor writings problem. The method adopted in the present study is descriptive. Hence, two questionnaires were distributed; questionnaire for written expression teachers and questionnaire for second year students at Mohammed Kheider University of Biskra. The results have shown that students appreciate learning in cooperation; moreover, teachers affirm that it is a useful technique when implemented appropriately.

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

1. CL Collaborative learning
2. CLL Collaborative language learning
3. CW Collaborative writing
4. EFL English as a foreign language
5. FL Foreign language
6. Q Question
7. % Percentage

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General Introduction

In foreign language teaching and learning, teachers face a variety of learners' styles; consequently they are obliged to adopt a range of strategies to progress in these two processes. Teaching the four skills is almost certainly the issue of countless foreign language teachers; however, learners find the writing skill the most difficult.

Because the writing skill is very significant in language teaching and learning, teachers' main concern is the teaching and improving of that skill. Thus EFL teachers utilize a variety of techniques so as to ease the progress of the learning process for learners. As long as language learning is a social act by nature, many scholars assume that it requires a social context in order to make it more accurate.

The collaborative learning strategy is the tool that several EFL teachers implement in their classrooms in order to improve their students' level, particularly to teach writing; and to bring their learners to the social nature of the writing skill.

1. Statement of the Problem

Mastering the writing skill is almost the main objective of all foreign language learners especially, second year English learners at Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra at which students start to write complete paragraphs and essays by themselves. However, students find many difficulties while trying to develop that skill due to the lack of vocabulary, knowledge, and practice. In order to solve this problem, the collaborative learning is the technique that the researchers propose in this case.

2. Significance of the study

The researchers believe that collaboration in Learning the writing skill is a crucial method; that is the present work will help students to improve their levels in writing, including vocabulary, coherence, and cohesion. Also, it will encourage them to tackle

other related areas, such as literature. The mastery of these two skills, which has been sought for many years by teachers and scholars, is today a sign of the mastery of English as a foreign language.

3. Aims

The present study mainly aims at: first, showing the effectiveness of the collaborative learning technique in EFL classes. Second, encouraging teachers and students to include more collaboration in learning. Finally, improving the EFL learners' poor writings through the collaborative technique.

4. Research Questions

The study is based on four main questions:

1. What are the real causes of EFL learners' poor writings?
2. Why do EFL learners fail to master the writing skill?
3. Is the teacher's role in the class important?
4. Is the collaborative learning strategy the appropriate solution in this case?

5. Research Hypotheses

In the light of what has been said, we assume that:

1. We hypothesize that the real causes of EFL learners' poor writings might be the lack of vocabulary and lack of knowledge about the subject.
2. We do agree that EFL students fail to master the writing skill because of the lack of practice inside as well as outside the classroom.
3. We advanced that teachers may play a major role in improving their learners' level of writing by following a given technique.
4. We put forward that the collaborative strategy is an appropriate technique in solving EFL learners' poor writings problem.

6. Means of research

Researchers in this study choose the descriptive method and the questionnaire as a data collecting tool for its practicality and usefulness particularly in our context. The first questionnaire is for teachers in order to shed light on their experience in teaching and investigate about their perception of students' problems and about CL technique. On the other hand, the second questionnaire is for second year students at Mohammed Kheider University. It seeks to investigate about their difficulties in writing, their attitude toward CL and their teachers' role.

7. Research limitations

In fact, in the present study the researchers faced several limitations that have impeded the progress of the study; these limitations lie in the lack of primary sources related particularly to the research first variable which is the collaborative learning. On the other hand, during the field of investigation in this research paper, we intended to make the results more reliable through elicit all the written expression teachers' perception towards collaborative learning. Unfortunately, we have questioned only half of the total number of teachers.

8. Structure of the study

The present research is a whole of three main chapters; the first two chapters are about theoretical data and related literature, whereas the last chapter contains the practical part of the study.

The first chapter sheds light on the CL; beginning with an overview about this technique, its nature, definition, and presenting the significance of CLL. Then it highlights the role of the teacher in CL, as well as the learners' role, moreover stating four CL strategies, and as a final point presenting the benefits of that technique.

The second chapter deals with the nature of writing and its relationship with other skills. Also, writing approaches focusing on the process approach; its characteristics, stages, and advantages. Presenting the main linguistic and psychological writing problems. Finally, it presents how the CL is applied on writing and the models of collaborative writing.

The last chapter provides a complete analysis of the students' and teachers' questionnaires followed by a discussion of the results so as to compare the results to the study's assumptions and hypotheses.

9. Literature review

The following two chapters contain aspects that are associated with our research variables, the writing process and cooperative learning. The writing process approach considers writing not as an outcome, rather as a process that tries to make students writing as professional writers. According to Raimes (1983), throughout the writing process, students keep in numerous stages that comprise pre-writing, planning, drafting and post-writing activities. Learning to write is an acquired process via cooperative learning since it provides the shared construction for students to work cooperatively as teams and enhances their academic achievement. In this case, the achievement is the enhancement of the writing skills.

Kagan (1994) investigated the cooperative learning and stated that each member of the group has a unique contribution to get the goal (positive interdependence) so each one is responsible for a role, or a task (individual accountability). This way of working gives students equal chances to participate (equal participation) and major opportunities for providing each other with feedback, challenging conclusions, and teaching and encouraging each other (interaction). The affirmative interdependence develops trust and respectful interaction among group teammates; consequently they experience relaxed and

secure writing for the reason that they feel as a crucial component in the classroom writers' group. In addition, cooperative learning provides major opportunities to progress achievements. As Kagan (ibid.) argued, "Cooperative learning promotes higher achievement than competitive and individualistic learning structures across all age levels, subject areas, and almost all tasks".

Raimes in (1983) assumed that all the stages of the writing process require that students work with a group of peers to discuss and to collaborate until they can collectively produce a piece of writing. This sort of collaborative task takes the opportunity to retrieve information from assorted sources, discovering the topic by ways of prewriting activities (discussion, reading, brainstorming and list making, among others), planning, giving feedback and editing a final text.

On the other hand, in considering cooperative learning as a writing process approach, it might change the traditional role of the teacher. As Kagan (1994.) claims, cooperative classrooms change the view of the teacher from evaluator to adviser so the correction is not an evaluation but feedback provider. Finally, in the current research cooperative learning and the process approach of writing can be associated together in the accomplishment of an expected objective when writing a text; it increases motivation, lowers levels of anxiety; furthermore, it reduces linguistic problems concerning grammar, spelling and usage.

Chapter One: The Collaborative Learning Technique.

Introduction

- 1. Collaborative Learning**
 - 1.1 Positive Interdependence**
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6. Benefits of Collaborative Learning

6.1 Social Benefits

6.2 Academic Benefits

6.3 Psychological Benefits

Conclusion

Chapter One: The Collaborative Learning Technique

Introduction

This first chapter is about the collaborative learning, this learning technique which gives large opportunities for students to acquire, understand, and learn easily. Collaborative learning as well improves the communicative skills in learners, reduces the stress and anxiety that students currently express when they participate in front of the whole classroom. Since it is useful and helpful, the collaborative technique is widely used in all over the world classrooms nowadays.

In this chapter, we will present a set of definitions of the collaborative learning, as well as a general overview about collaborative learning, and the nature of collaborative learning. Also, this chapter presents the teacher's main role plus the learner's role in this technique, then the most important benefits of collaborative learning; social, psychological, and academic. Next, it shows the difference between the collaborative, cooperative and group work techniques. Finally it sheds light on the collaborative language learning.

1. The Collaborative Learning: a historical overview

Before the 1980's the collaborative learning technique was not fully accepted in the field of education yet. There were many other techniques applied inside the classroom, for instance during the period 1940 to 1960 the interpersonal competition was more adopted, till it was criticized by scholars and it was replaced by another technique the individualism that focuses on the learner as an individual; and neglected the interaction between students. This paved the way to collaborative learning to take place in the field. (Johnson and Johnson, 2009; p. 365). CL is generally based on three main elements:

1. 1. Positive Interdependence

The first pillar to make collaborative learning successful is to ensure positive interdependence among learners. Johnson, Johnson, & Holubec stated that “Positive interdependence is linking students together so one cannot succeed unless all group members succeed. Group members have to know that they sink or swim together.” (1998; p. 4:7). Here positive interdependence means that all group members are responsible for their own success or failure in the given task in addition each member must be aware that his/her effective contribution is a part of the whole group final outcomes.

1. 2. Promotive / Face-to-face Interaction

“Students need to do real work together in which they promote each other’s success by sharing resources and helping, supporting, encouraging, and applauding each other’s efforts to achieve” (Wandberg, Rohwer, 2010; p. 213). Meaning that students are expected to help each other through explanation and sharing their previous knowledge about the subject matter, thus interaction between students emphasizes the real goal of CL. As Wandberg and Rohwer stated “ It is through promoting each other’s learning face to face that members become personally committed to each other as well as to their mutual goals” (ibid, p. 215).

1. 3. Individual Accountability

The major goal of CL is making learners learn by themselves, through collaboration learners experience how to perform, create, or solve a problem by their own. “The purpose of cooperative groups is to make each member; a stronger individual in his or her own right” (Johnson, Johnson, & Holubec, 1998; p. 4:17).

Individual accountability “involves students’ understanding that they will be held accountable for their individual contributions to the group, that free-loading will not be tolerated, and that everyone must contribute” (Gillies, 2007; p. 5). According to Johnson,

Johnson, & Holubec (1998), individual accountability is: “the measurement of whether or not each group member has achieved the groups’ goal, assessing the quality and quantity of each member’s contributions and giving the results to all group members” (p. 4: 17). There are two levels of accountability; the first level is that the group in CL have to be accountable (responsible) for the goals that have been realized. The second level concerns each group member need to be responsible for his/her contribution. (Wandberg, Rohwer, 2010; p. 215).

2. The Nature of Collaborative Learning

CL is not just an adopted technique to accomplish a given task inside the classroom it is rather a philosophy or a theory that can be applied in any context in which a group of people are working together to achieve a certain goal or to solve a problem (Agarwal Nagar 2011; p. 20).

Nelson Le Gall (1992) states that

Learning and understanding are not merely individual processes supported by the social context, rather they are the result of a continuous, dynamic negotiation between the individual and the social setting in which the individual’s activity takes place. Both the individual and the social context are active and constructive in producing learning and understanding. (P. 52).

In this sense learning does not happen in isolation; it requires the association of learners and teachers at the same time learners with each other. Although it becomes widely believed that one can learn alone for instance using the Internet or a CD, it is not equivalent to classroom learning, thus collaboration is significant for better understanding thus a better learning,

In addition Millis characterized the nature of the collaborative learning strategy (1996, cited in McInnerney and Roberts, 2004)

1. Students work together in small groups.
2. Students work together on common tasks or learning activities.
3. Students use cooperative, pro-social behaviour to accomplish their common tasks or learning activities.
4. Students are positively interdependent and activities are structured so that students need each other to accomplish their common tasks or learning activities.
5. Students are individually accountable or responsible for their work or learning. (p. 210).

3. 1. Definition of Collaborative learning technique

There are a variety of definitions concerning the term collaborative learning? Sometimes is referred to as cooperative learning. This paper summarized the most appropriate and related definitions to reach the main objective behind this research.

One of the most effective famous definitions, is that of Johnson, Johnson, & Holubec they see CL as “the instructional use of small groups through which students work together to maximize their own and each other’s learning” (1998; p. 5). When CL is implemented in the classroom, learners are expected to learn together; learning together requires defining, analyzing, understanding together as well as helping each other to understand. In other words it is no more the teacher’s responsibility it is the learners.

Education is a broad community, in which learners come to learn what they, miss, or improve themselves in a certain skill(s). Learning cannot happen in isolation, it needs a permanent communication either with the teacher or between students. J.M Gerlach assumes that the learning process is a social act in nature; while learning learners communicate with each other, and as a result of this communication learning exists.

“CL is based on the idea that learning is a naturally social act in which participants talk among themselves, it is through the talk that learning occurs”. (Gerlach, 1994; p.12). Gerlach’s definition is not far from Golub’s definition of CL who regards learning as a process of talking with mates or with teachers; the usual speaking that happens in every normal session. Consequently learning exists throughout communication between learners and between learners and the teacher. “Collaborative learning has as its main feature a structure that allows for student talk: the students are supposed to talk with each other...and it is in this talking that much of the learning occurs” (1988; p. 87).

From the above definitions, collaborative learning is the tool that increases the opportunity for learners to speak and communicate; this useful communication is what makes the learning process happen, in other words when learners are given the opportunity to speak and discuss about an idea or an activity they understand more hence they learn more.

Another important definition of CL states that; in the CL technique students are grouped in order to achieve a certain objective throughout solving a problem, or completing a task. Working collaboratively leads students to achieve their or the teacher’s objective (s).

CL is an umbrella term for a variety of educational approaches involving joint intellectual effort by students, or students and teachers together. Usually students are working in groups of two or more, mutually searching for understanding, solutions, or meanings, or creating a product. CL activities vary widely, but most centre on student’s exploration or application of the course material, not simply the teacher’s presentation or explication of it. (Smith & MacGregor, 1992; p. 1).

According to Dillenbourg (1999)

CL is a situation in which two or more people learn or attempt to learn something together. Two or more may be interpreted as a pair, a small group (3-5 subjects) or a class (20-30 subjects). Learn something may be interpreted as follow a course; perform learning activities such as problem solving. Together may be interpreted as different

forms of interaction which may be face-to-face or computer mediated (cited in Laal & Laal 2011; p. 492).

In CL two or more learners are put in form of two or three or even more in groups in order to make these students grasp an idea or find solutions, in other words to learn something from each other and from the task being given in general. MacGregor asserted “Collaborative teaching and learning is a teaching approach that involves groups of students working to solve a problem, complete a task or create a product” (1990, cited in *ibid*) Consequently CL is a matter of making group of learners that are supposed to do some efforts and come with a result at the end, in other words learning comes through practice and experience.

In the other hand Brown et al consider CL as an act of grouping learners together so as to challenge or test their skills. “Collaborative learning activities immerse the students in challenging tasks or questions” (1989; p. 63).

Collaborative learning is a personal philosophy, not just a classroom technique. In all situations where people come together in groups, it suggests a way of dealing with people which respects and highlights individual group members' abilities and contributions. The underlying premise of CL is based upon consensus building through cooperation by group members, in contrast to competition in which individuals best other group members. CL practitioners apply this philosophy in the classroom, at committee meetings, with community groups and generally as a way of living with and dealing with other people.

(Panitz, 1997; p. 5).

From all the above definitions of the term collaborative learning, we can understand that there is no simple definition or explanation of collaborative learning; it is a wide term that compromises many aspects (learners, task, collaboration...). CL is more than an adopted method; it is an approach that has different forms. The teacher is the one who decide which form of CL to use in his/her classroom, according to the situation in which students are learning.

2.2. Collaborative Language Learning

Applying the CL technique in EFL classes aims not only promoting the students' communicative skills; rather it aims for improving their foreign language. Moreover collaborative language learning is a strategy "which affords students the opportunity to develop a range of cognitive, metacognitive and social as well as linguistic skills while interacting and negotiating in the classroom."(Crandall, 1999; p. 227). In this definition Crandall sheds light on four skills language students have to master especially the linguistic and the social ones; while they are working in collaboration it is an additional chance for them to use these skills at the same time, to enrich their vocabulary and to experience social interaction with other language learners.

2.2.1. Significance of CLL

McGroarty (1989; cited in Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 195) states six advantages of CLL in the field of second language learning:

1. Increased frequency and variety of second language practice.
2. Possibility for development or use of language in ways that support cognitive development and increased language skills.
3. Opportunities to integrate language with content-based learning.
4. Opportunity to include a greater variety of material to stimulate language.
5. Freedom for teachers to master new professional skills.
6. Opportunities for students to act as resources for each other.

Moreover CLL "gives each member of the collaboration access to others' minds and knowledge, and it imbues the task with a sense of shared goals which can be very motivating." (Harmer, 2005; p. 73).

2.3. Collaborative Learning, Cooperative Learning and Group Work

According to Woolfolk (2004) argues that the three terms do not imply the same thing because group work is simply several students working together-they may or may not be cooperating. (p. 492). In this technique learners are put in groups of three to five or maybe more, whereas as Woolfolk claims they are not surely cooperating with each other. She assumed that the group work technique can be defined as the beginning of cooperation/collaboration between students; for instance a teacher may use group work as a step in implementing collaboration among students. “Group work can be useful, but true cooperative learning requires much more than simply putting students in groups” (ibid).

Although many scholars use cooperative and collaborative terms interchangeably referring to the same meaning, there are others who believe that there is an apparent difference, Ventamiglia (cited in Lee, Zhao. 2015) in the collaborative learning the group members create their own direction and resources, in the other hand cooperative learning groups it is the teacher who plans, creates and organizes for the learners the activities..(51).

3. The Teachers’ Role in various Collaborative Learning Forms

Teachers are one of the essential pillars of the teaching learning process, and the head of the classroom. Although in collaborative learning the learners work together on a given task, the teacher is still the one who gives instruction, control, and evaluate. According to Gillies et al, there are three types of CL; formal CL, informal CL, and cooperative base groups.

3.1. Formal CL

In this type of learning the teacher’s central role comprises of four elements:

3.1.1 Making pre Instructional Decisions

This decisions are the choices the teacher takes in order to organize the whole circumstances under which the given task is going to be tackled; the situation surrounds learning and learners while are working in groups for instance, the number of members in each group and their roles, plan for the academic and social skills objectives, and the room arrangement. (Gillies et al, 2008; p. 26).

3.1.2 Monitoring Students Learning

After having taking decisions about the learning circumstances and explaining how to work together, the teacher let his/her learners work by themselves and begin to control them. He intervenes only when necessary. “Monitoring the learning groups creates individual accountability. Whenever a teacher observes a group members tend to feel accountable to be constructive members”. (ibid).

3.1.3 Explaining the Instructional Task and Cooperative Structure

Gillies et al state that “this eliminates the possibility of competition among students and extends positive goal interdependence to the class as a whole” (ibid; p. 29). Here the teacher provides the students with explanations about the given task or exercise, and clarifies for them how to work collaboratively.

3.1.4 Assessing Students’ Learning

In this final stage after the students have finished their task, the teacher concludes all what the lesson was about and evaluates each group work, and make sure that students have worked together effectively. This assessment of the learners’ achievements is significant for the reason that, it emphasizes the individual as well as group accountability, also it shows if the expected goals have been achieved or not. (ibid).

3.2 Informal CL

“informal cooperative learning consists of having students work together to achieve a joint learning goal in temporary, ad-hoc groups that lasts from a few minutes to one class period” (Johnson et al. 1998b, 2002 cited in Gillies et al 2008). According to Gillies et al in informal cooperative learning there are two main aspects: the first one is to make the instruction explicit and precise, while the second aspect is; require the learning groups to produce a specific product.

3.3 Cooperative Base Groups

Johnson et al (1998b, 2002) describe the term cooperative base groups as “...long-term, heterogeneous cooperative learning groups with stable membership” (cited in Gillies et al 2008, p: 31). In this form of collaborative learning, the teacher keeps the group members each time they are joined to accomplish the goal being set. According to Gillies et al, the group members in the cooperative base groups main responsibility is to increase positive goal interdependence, foster individual accountability, and to develop promotive interaction among students. While the teacher’s role is to form these heterogeneous groups, make a schedule for them to meet in order to work, then create a plan of tasks to be done, finally make sure that the basic elements of effective cooperative base groups are implemented and make them process the effectiveness of their own base groups. (ibid; p. 31).

Finally the three types of CL are useful as well as helpful inside the classroom, the teacher may use each type in isolation or use all of them, this is according to the circumstances surrounding the learning process, the time, and the students the teacher is dealing with.

Hyland (1991; in Richards, and Lockhart, 1996), states that the teacher’s role is to:
-Share the responsibility for managing both interaction and learning and with students.

- Structure the learning environment so that student cooperates to obtain learning goals.
- Stimulate interactive language use through group work and collaborative problem solving.
- Choose classroom tasks which involve information sharing, cooperative reasoning, opinion sharing, and values clarification.
- Coordinate group activities.
- Provide clarification, feedback, and motivation support. (p.102-3).

4. The Learner's Role in CL

As the teacher learners have their own role in CL, they should fulfill in order to achieve their goal effectively. "Each group member has a specific role to play in a group, such as noise monitor, turn-taker monitor, recorder or summarizer." (Richard and Rodgers, 2001; p. 197). Whereas Slavin assumes that learners "are expected to help each other, to discuss and argue with each other to assess each other's current knowledge and fill in gaps in each other's understanding." (1995; p. 2).

In the other hand Kagan (1994; in Woolfolk, 2004) believe that learners also have their specific roles while learning collaboratively; in order to make the collaborative work successful and achieve the main objectives behind the given task each group member has to participate usefully, as Kagan stated there are ten roles that learners should take in CL tasks completion; which are summarized in the following table:

Role	Description
Encourager	Encourages reluctant or shy students to participate.
Praiser/cheerleader	Shows appreciation of other's contribution and recognizes accomplishment.

Gate keeper	Equalizes participation and makes sure how one dominates.
Coach	Helps with the academic content, explains concepts.
Question commander	Make sure all students' questions are asked and answered.
Taskmaster	Keeps the group on task.
Recorder	Writes down, decisions and plans
Reflector	Keeps group aware of progress (or lack of progress).
Quiet captain	Monitors noise level.
Materials monitor	Picks up and returns materials.

Table: 1: "Kagan's possible students' role in cooperative learning groups". (Woolfolk, 2004: p. 496).

5. Collaborative Learning Strategies

According to Hari Srinivas there are four main CL strategies that the teacher may apply in his/her classroom: think-pair-share, three-step interview, simple jigsaw, and finally numbered heads together.

5.1. Think-Pair-Share

In this strategy the teacher poses a question to students this question may need an analysis or a synthesis, so that the instructor gives students time to think (about a minute). Then students share their responses with their pairs, as a final step they share their

responses within a larger team of three, four or five students or even more. This is a useful technique in increasing discussion in the classroom.

5.2. Three-Step Interview

Here students form what is called dyads; group consists of no more than two students then each one of the formed dyads asks his/her peer questions in terms of an interview, as a second step students switch their roles and finally they two dyads together so as to form a group of four students to share and discuss with each other.

5.3. Simple Jigsaw

In this strategy in each group one volunteered member is expected to work with other volunteered members of the other groups in order to become experts in a given task or activity, then this expert students are supposed to return to their original groups to share what they have learned with their group members.

5.4. Numbered Heads Together

Usually in CL groups consist of four students, in the present strategy each group member knows his number 1,2,3, or 4,the teacher asks a given question, then that all group members discuss together and agree on one answer, afterward the teacher pick a number to answer the question. While students have no idea which number the teacher is going to call, they are all obliged to participate within their groups.

Each one of these strategies has an advantage in facilitating the learning process; from the think-pair-share technique learn how to think individually at first then how to share their ideas with others. While they discover other classmates' ways of thinking and assumptions through the tree-step interview, from the simple jigsaw students experience a critical skill which is how to teach what they have learned; this can really help them in building their self-confidence and self-esteem. Finally the numbered heads strategy

creates interest about the learning process among learners. All these strategies help the teacher in reducing time and involve students in the teaching learning processes.

Unlike the other traditional learning techniques, the collaborative learning has a great number of advantages on the teacher, learner, and the learning process in general.

6. Benefits of Collaborative learning

CL as a learning technique has countless benefits on learners and the learning process as a whole; some of them are academic while others are social. In this chapter we presented a range of these benefits. First, Panitz (1999) divided CL's benefits into three main categories social, academic, and psychological, and they are classified as follow:

6.1. Social Benefits

Mainly concerns the students' communicative skill and spread positivity among students and in the entire classroom. Also CL build a kind of diversity understanding among learners, at the same time it improves the learning conditions. CL constructs strong social support between learners, and it enhances their contribution during the learning process through their social experiences. (P. 2).

6.2. Academic Benefits

When CL technique is applied learners become much more active and promote their involvement during the entire process of learning. Motivation is the most needed element to make learning possible thus CL is a useful technique to motivate learners. Moreover CL reinforces the learners' critical thinking skills. (P.3, 4)

Fogarty and Bellanca emphasize the effects that teachers have after having used the collaborative learning technique:

Surprisingly and almost unfailingly, once the philosophical shift begins, once teachers begin implementing cooperative interactions, the evidence of student motivation becomes so overwhelmingly visible that teachers are encouraged to try more. The momentum builds for both teachers and students, and before long the "new school lecture" becomes

the norm in the classroom. By then, the novelty of the models is no longer the challenge. The challenge becomes choosing the most appropriate interactive designs for the target lesson; it is choosing a design in which the final focus rests on the learner, not on the lecturer. (1992; p. 84).

As Fogarty and Bellanca assumed that after the implementation of CL in classroom, several teachers have noticed that their learners are more motivated to learn than when they are learning individually; consequently helps teachers in managing their classrooms and the groups and work in an appropriate atmosphere.

6.3. Psychological Benefits

First of all this technique is appropriate for the reason that it decreases the level of anxiety that exists among students, and increases the students' self-esteem. Furthermore CL creates in students such a positive attitude towards their teachers. (p. 5).

In addition Phobe. A Ezeanyanike claims that collaborative learning is not only a given technique used inside the classroom to accomplish a given learning task, rather it is a philosophy; Collaborative learning represents a philosophy of life as well as learning strategy. It says that whatever people get together in groups their purposes are best served when they work together collaboratively to reach their goals versus using competition among group members to address problems (2013; p. 85).

In the other hand, Murdoch and Wilson underlined the most significant benefits of the collaborative learning:

1. Using CL can be an effective strategy for saving time.
2. Working collaboratively fosters individual thinking and learning.
3. Collaborative learning demonstrates the social power of learning.
4. Effective collaborative learning boosts students' self-esteem and confidence, these two are the critical aspects to the learning process.

5. Using the collaborative technique offers for students the experience of learning from each other, as well as teaching each other, and can help students value diversity and difference.

6. Collaborative skills are fundamental to success in life beyond school.

7. Collaborative work boosts the learners' communicative skills, participation and responsibility /accountability. (2008; p. 24).

Furthermore, collaborative learning is beneficial for the teacher and the learners; the teacher benefits from the CL in monitoring the classroom, while students benefit from it in the learned experience, and the self-confidence they obtain, also it construct a positive atmosphere among the classroom during learning.

Conclusion

Language learning requires using various techniques to foster the four skills; speaking, listening, reading, and writing. In addition to these skills there are many other skills that are critical while acquiring a new foreign language, such as communicative skill. In order to develop these skills in learners the teacher has to apply the appropriate technique, regarding their students' different styles of learning, as well as the surrounding conditions. The collaborative technique has been one of the positive techniques utilized in language learning classes these days especially with beginners in reading and writing tasks.

Chapter two: The Writing Skill and the Implementation of the Collaborative Technique on Writing.

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4. Collaborative Writing

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Chapter two: The Writing Skill and the Implementation of the Collaborative Technique on Writing.

Introduction

The second chapter of this dissertation is about definition of writing, its nature, the main differences and similarities and relationship with other skills, and writing stages. Next, the writing approaches shedding light on the process approach and its characteristics. Then the main steps in writing process, advantages, and the role of the teacher also the main linguistic and psychological writing problems, at the end of this chapter the implementation of the collaborative learning technique on writing classes.

1. Writing Skill Definition

When defining the writing skill it is significant to shed light on the nature of writing. Simply, writing is the act of putting ideas and thoughts into graphic symbols of a certain given language in order to communicate. However, this traditional definition is not adequate, therefore, a number of scholars define it from other different perspectives. According to Neman, writing is "a craft, an artistic process with techniques and conventions that can be learned, employing skills that can be improved" (1995; p.4).

Byrne assumes that "Writing is clearly much more than the production of graphic symbols, just as speech is more than the production of sounds. The symbols have to be arranged, according to certain conventions, to form words, and words have to be arranged to form sentences" (1991; p.1).

In the same way Brown believes that writing is not only a series of graphic symbols, and stated that writing is concerning the ultimate written products, and he stated that those final products are " the result of thinking, drafting and revising procedures that require specialized skills" (200;1p. 335). He also adds that the "compositional" nature of

writing that makes students know how to generate and arrange their thoughts in order to produce a final cohesive, coherent and comprehensible piece of writing (ibid).

1.1. The Social Nature of Writing

Since it is utilized for delivering thoughts and sharing peoples' ideas, as well as used as a means of communication; writing letters or newspaper articles for instance, writing is seen as "social act" (Johns 1990; cited in Gabrielatos, 2002, p. 4). Similarly Hayes assumes that the nature of writing is totally social for the reason that it doesn't only serve the mission of conveying thoughts and information. Moreover, it absolutely occurs in the social environment i.e., people write in order to share their knowledge or opinions and this act of writing happens in society. Thus writing is considered one of the social acts (1996, p.5).

1.2. Writing vs. Speaking

Learning English language requires the mastery of the four skills, although not all L1 and L2 learners achieve that mastery in these skills; particularly the writing skill because of its difficulty, for instance it is not very complex to acquire L1 or learn to speak the foreign language while not all learners can write coherently and cohesively. Hence researchers make a distinction between writing and the speaking skills in the degree of their complexity and nature even though both of them are productive skills "Writing is not a natural activity. All physically and mentally normal people learn to speak a language. Yet all people have to be taught how to write" (White 1981; p.2, cited in Nunan, 1989; p.36). White also makes another difference between writing and speaking in that "Writing, unlike speech, is displaced evolved since it makes possible the transmission of a message from one place to another. A written message can be received, stored and referred back to at any time" (ibid). Harmer as well distinguishes between writing and speaking skills at the level of difficulty stating that "the process of writing is

usually more complex than the process of speaking, but not always.”(p. 8). He makes another distinction from the view that for a writer it is crucial to think about his/her readers; that is why writing is more complex, while a speaker has the advantage of the interaction with whom he is speaking (ibid). Byrne stated that the actual reason of writing difficulty is that “we are writing for a reader” (1991; p. 2).

1.3. Writing vs. Reading

In 1983, Stotsky published a review of correlational and experimental studies that investigated reading and writing relationships. Her correlational studies at that time showed that "better writers tend to be better readers (of their own writing as well as of other reading material), that better writers tend to read more than poorer writers, and that better readers tend to produce more syntactically mature writing than poorer readers" (p. 636). Furthermore she reported;

Studies that sought to improve writing by providing reading experiences in place of grammar study or additional writing practice found that these experiences were as beneficial as, or more beneficial than, grammar study or extra writing practice. Studies that used literary models also found significant gains in writing, On the other hand, almost all studies that sought to improve writing through reading instruction were ineffective (ibid).

Hanson et al also believe that "Reading and writing intersect in natural ways when literate persons are actively using reading and writing to learn" (1991; p. 58). The two skills are interrelated in the sense that learners need to read before they start practicing writing, in addition writers while writing utilize their background knowledge which is the result of reading.

1.4. Writing Stages

Native as well as nonnative learners pass through a number of stages during the learning of how to produce a comprehensible piece of writing, as Bashyal (2006) assumed that the writing stages are first copying i.e., writing letters and words from the blackboard

for instance, then reproduction; writing what have heard e.g., dictation. The next stage is the guided writing and finally the free writing here learners are free to choose their own topics to write about. (pp 48-49). The following three developmental stages of writing are suggested by (Teachers' Handbook, 2009 pp. 281; cited in Bashyal 2009; p. 15):

- a. Writing as a mechanical activity: at this stage the main focus is on writing as an end i.e. when a learner practice writing in order to develop the writing skill. Learners first come to learn the mechanics and the rules of writing such as spelling, punctuation, and handwriting.
- b. Writing as linguistic activity: at this stage writing is practiced in order to achieve a given linguist point; how to write correct sentences and paragraphs for example, learners while writing are controlled by their teachers.
- c. Writing as communication: to write for the sense of communication and this requires having variety of vocabulary, correct punctuation and spelling, organize the content and employ a suitable style that fits the purpose of writing and the reader.

2. Writing Approaches

In EFL learning classrooms teachers need to adopt one of the writing teaching approaches; teachers decide to implement a chosen approach according to the teacher's desired goals. Although there are many approaches to teach writing, the following three are the most adopted:

2.1. The Genre Approach

According to Hyland "genre refers to abstract, socially recognised ways of using language. It is based on the assumptions that the features of a similar group of text depend on the social context of their creation and use" (2003; p. 21). Swales (1990) defined the

term genre as “a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes” (p. 58 cited in Kim 2007; p.34). Kim commented on Swales definition stating that there are “certain conventions or rules associated with a writer’s purpose” (Kim 2007; p. 34). Moreover she claims that “most genres use conventions related to communicative purposes...an argument essay emphasizes its thesis since it aims at making an argument” (ibid). Byram (2004) in *The Routledge Encyclopedia of Language Teaching and Learning* defined the genre approach as “a framework for language instruction” (p. 234 cited in Kim 2007; p. 33).

2.2. The Product Approach

It is one of the approaches to writing that is considered as a traditional approach; mainly since it focuses on the final draft of writing. The product approaches gives much attention to what learners have produced as pieces of writing; spelling, punctuation, grammar and meaning in general. Voss and Keene define the product approach to writing as the approach which;

expects each student to figure out where and how things went wrong in that specific assignment, generalize from those instances carry the generalizations over the next assignment, and then see how to apply those generalizations to that next assignment’s (different) specific situation (ibid).

2.3. The Process Approach

The process approach to teach writing doesn’t focus only on the final product of students writing, yet it sees writing as a process. Zamel describes the process of writing as a “non- linear, exploratory and generative process, whereby writers discover and reformulate their ideas as they attempt to approximate meaning” (1983; p. 165 cited in Hyland 2003; p. 18). While writing in the second language was considered as a case of “habit formation” in the controlled composition approach, the process approach came as a “reaction” to that approach arguing that writing is totally a process. (Silva; 1990, cited in

Todd 2008; p. 52). Similarly Hayes and Flower stated that writers go through several steps while their writings; “This approach emerged from researchers’ study of the steps that accomplished writers engage in as they write: planning and organizing ideas, translating ideas into text and reviewing and revising the result” (1996 cited in Ahlsén and Lundh 2007; p. 6).

Teaching writing as a process means ‘opening up’ what goes on between the instant someone conceives of a writing task (for example, when a student receives an assignment) and the time that person declares emotional and psychological closure on the task (for example when a student gets a grade) (cited in Beer 2003; p. 274).

2.3.1 Characteristics of Process Approach

Silva and Matsuda describe the process approach to teach writing as one of the approaches that focuses more on the process than the final product of writing, this happens through “helping students discover their own voice; allowing students to choose their own topics; providing teacher and peer feedback; encouraging revision and using student writing as the primary text of the course” (2001; p. 67 cited in Vanderpyl 2012; p. 9).

Moreover Swales claims that the present approach does highlight “the cognitive relationship between the writer and the writer’s internal world” (1990; p. 220 cited in Bae 2011; p. 10). On the other hand, Spack states that it is;

- a.** a view of writing as a recursive process which can be taught.
- b.** an emphasis on writing as a way of learning as well as communicating.
- c.** a willingness to draw on other disciplines, notably cognitive psychology and linguistics.
- d.** the incorporation of a rhetorical context, a view that writing assignments include a sense of audience, purpose and occasion.
- e.** a procedure for feedback which encourages the instructor to intervene during the process.

f. a method of evaluation which determines how well a written product adapts the goals of the writer to the needs of the reader, and

g. the principle that writing teachers should be people who write.

(1984; p. 651 cited in Pratt 1987; p. 6).

2.3.2 Process vs. Product

Voss and Keene define the product approach to writing as that approach which “expects each student to figure out where and how things went wrong in that specific assignment, generalize from those instances carry the generalizations over the next assignment, and then see how to apply those generalizations to that next assignment’s (different) specific situation” (cited in Beer 2003; p. 274).

Teaching writing as a process means ‘opening up’ what goes on between the instant someone conceives of a writing task (for example, when a student receives an assignment) and the time that person declares emotional and psychological closure on the task (for example when a student gets a grade). (ibid).

2.3.3 Stages of the process approach

In the process of writing students pass through different stages to reach the final draft of their writing, yet not all scholars agree on the same steps and their order, also each one of them give different terms on these stages. First of all Zamel in 1976 stated three stages that occur in the writing process;

although I had anticipated presenting data that would reflect the various stages of the students’ composing processes, stages usually characterized as pre-writing, writing, and revising, the students’ writing behaviors were not entirely amenable to this type of breakdown, a fact which and of itself attests to the non-linear nature of writing

(P. 171 cited in Bae 2011; p. 15).

White and Arndt assume that in the process approach to teach writing students have to make a decision about what are they going to deal with at the next stage, hence these

stages are not linear; “some process occur simultaneously, with one influencing another” (1991; p. 4 cited in Bae 2011; p. 16).

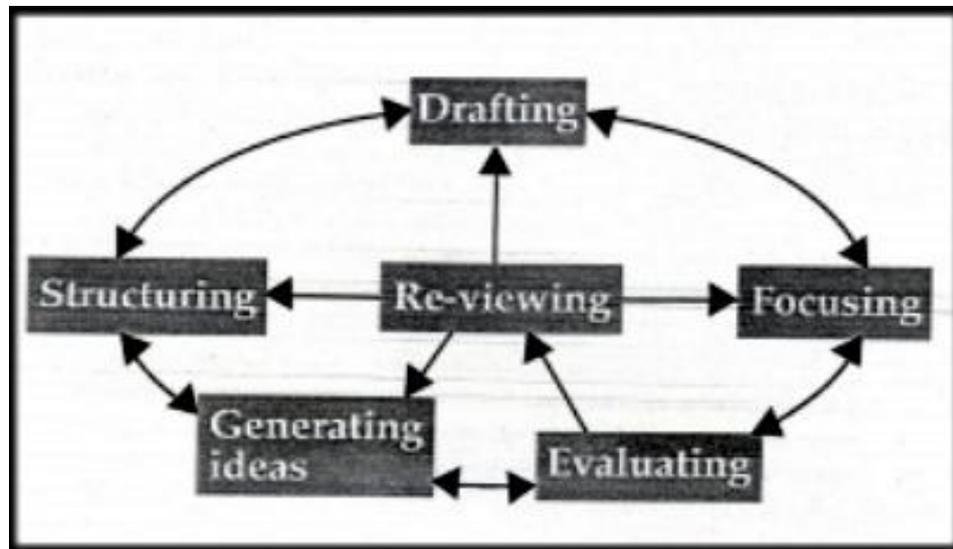


Figure 1.1 White and Arndt’s writing Process (cited in Bae, 2011; p. 16).

Likewise Tribble comments on White and Arndt’s model of writing process and stating the benefits of three elements; first, the generating stage which helps students to develop their creativity i.e., when students generate their own ideas they learn how to be creative not only in writing but also in other areas; second the focusing stage make students aware of what is beneficial for their piece of writing and what is not, finally the structuring stage in which students come to a final decision how to arrange the written text in a cohesive and coherent manner, in other words the final stage in White and Arndt’s model is concerned with the final draft of a written text. (1996; p. 107 cited in Bae 2011; p. 16). Moreover, Tribble claimed that “although there are identifiable stages in the composition of most extended texts, typically writers will revisit some of these stages many times before a text is complete” (p. 38 cited in *ibid*).

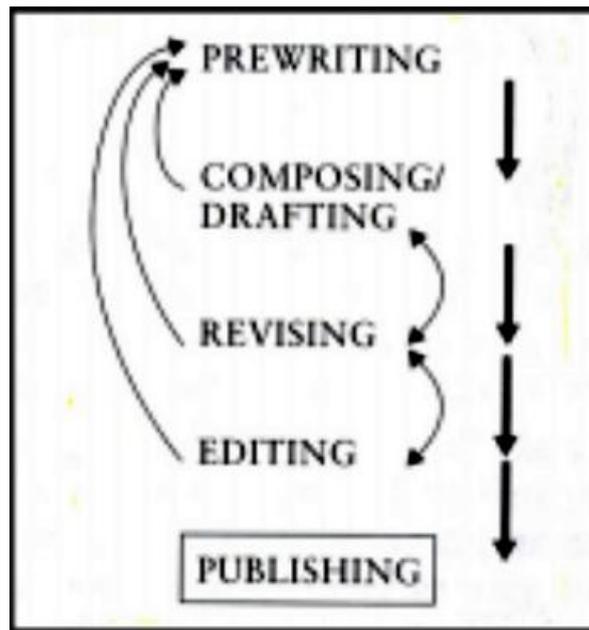


Figure 1.2 Tribble's writing process (cited in Bae, 2011; p. 16).

2.3.3.1 Pre-writing

During this stage a student thinks about the topic of writing and starts to gather ideas related to that topic using different strategies; brainstorming, clustering, or listing. This step is significant before any writing since it helps the student to realize what to include in his/her writing as well as it is the step at which a student activate the background knowledge Al Abed (1992 cited in Alodwan and Ibnian 2014) stated that "the pre-writing stage encourages effective writing because it prompts originality, creativity, and personal awareness" (p. 147). Peha defines pre-writing as "is a time that you can use to experiment, to jot down a few quick ideas, to try out something new without having to try very hard, to take a little time to gather your thoughts and choose a direction before you start drafting" (2002; para. 1). Elbow (1973) claimed "writing is a two-step process. First you figure out your meaning, then you put it into language: ... figure out what you want to say; don't start writing till you do; make a plan; use an outline; begin writing only afterward" (p. 14-16, cited in Brown 200; p. 336).

2.3.3.2 Drafting

After having decided what to write about and selected the ideas to include in the piece of writing as well as created a thesis statement, then comes the second step in the process approach; here a student tries to transform all the ideas into sentences and paragraphs in an organized manner; without giving attention to grammar, spelling, and punctuation while writing rather a writer “student” concentrate more on the content. Committed mistakes of grammar and spelling are left for the next other stages (Hedge 2005; p. 23 cited in Bae 2011; p. 21).

2.3.3.3 Revising

It comes after finishing drafting; through reading the first draft and make a few changes in the order of ideas, include or exclude sentences. Tompkins et al claimed that revision in the process approach is “revision is not just polishing writing; it is meeting the needs of readers through adding, substituting, deleting, and rearranging material” (2014; p. 49).

2.3.3.4 Editing

It is the stage that is concerned with the proof reading in order to check grammatical mistakes in addition to spelling and punctuation. Tompkins asserted that the editing stage is “putting the piece of writing into its final form” (1990; p. 88 cited in Bae 2011; p. 24). As Tompkins described “editing” as the last step in the writing before publishing the piece of writing with classmates or the teacher.

2.3.3.5 Publishing

It is also referred to as “sharing” and it is the stage in writing process at which students share their pieces of writing with peers, teacher, or audience. According to Tompkins sharing writing should exceed the classroom audience to outside audience in order to improve the level of writing as well as building learners self confidence. (ibid).

2.3.4 Advantages of the Process Approach

The process approach to teach writing has many positive effects on the students, teacher, and the learning process as a whole:

1. Writers write for a meaningful audience of peers throughout their writing process.
2. The teacher is a *member* of a writing community, not a gatekeeper faced with marking every spliced comma or split infinitive – the students provide the vast majority of feedback and response for one another.
3. A series of project deadlines throughout the process helps students spread their work over a longer period of time and helps them make better midcourse adjustments as they get feedback from other writers.
4. Time-on-task increases as students become more aware not only of how their own writing is being received but of how other student writers are approaching the same rhetorical tasks.
5. As time-on-task increases, so does student learning – usually in ways that are immediately evident (and demonstrable through assessment) to teachers and students alike. (“Word and the Writing Process” nd; p. 2).

2.3.5 The Teacher’s Role in the process approach

Teaching writing as a process liberates the teacher from the traditional mission as being a “leader”. Instead the teacher takes the role of “a facilitator”; Brown (2001) claimed that “the role of teacher must be one of facilitator and coach, not an authoritative director and arbiter” (p. 340). In other words writing teacher should not oblige his/her learners to write about given topics, they have the right to choose what to write about and to share their beliefs, feeling, and points of view, consequently the facilitator teacher tries to give simple instructions and help the students when necessitated. (ibid).

3. Writing Problems

Whether writing in first or second language, writers tackle various challenges during this process, it is significant to deal with these challenges unless they turn out to be problems or disabilities. Problems that occur in writing are not only those related to language (grammar, vocabulary, and spelling) for most of the time learners face psychological problems that lead to poor pieces of writing.

3.1. Linguistic problems

Linguistic problems of writing are the challenges that are faced by numerous learners in the writing process; Shoebottom (2014) classified four main problems:

3.1.1 Spelling

While writing a lot of students (writers) make spelling mistakes not only EFL students, it is the same for the native learners. Shoebottom described spelling mistakes as “[they] do not usually prevent the reader from understanding what the writer is trying to say, but they can create a negative impression” (n. d; para. 1).

3.1.2 Punctuation

Similarly to spelling mistakes punctuation is not a problem for both native as well as no native learners of English. It happens simply for the reason that students are not aware of the “English punctuation system”, for instance how to write the first letter of the first word in a new sentence, or when to put a comma. “These mistakes are due to the lack of a clear understanding of what a sentence is, and they result in fragments (incomplete sentences) or run-ons (‘sentences’ that do not end when they should)” (Para. 2).

3.1.3 Grammar

It is regarded as the most occurring error in writing especially for foreign language learners. Making grammar mistakes while writing for Shoebottom is because, “learners

often do not choose the correct English verb tense for expressing an idea or do not use it in its correct form. They may fail to use the articles (a/the) correctly, or place words in the wrong order in a sentence” (Para. 3).

3.1.4 Usage

It is a type of writing mistakes that is more concerned with EFL or ESL learners than native speakers; basically usage unlike grammar mistakes since it does not “break a grammar rule” yet, it is “a word or string of words that a native speaker would never use to express the particular meaning that the ESL student is trying to convey” (Shoebottom n. d, para. 4).

3.2. Psychological problems

The language learning process is like any other activity people express in their everyday lives, it does not happen without the engagement of other factors such as “emotions”. Arnold and Brown claimed that “the various emotions affecting language learning are intertwined and interrelated in ways that make it impossible to isolate completely the influence of any one of them” (1999; p. 8).

3.2.1 Motivation

Primarily motivation is a term that indicates the “mood” that a learner has while accomplishing an activity or a given task in learning; as well as it is the attitude of learners towards the learning process. According to Slavin motivation is “a product of many factors, ranging from the students personality and abilities to characteristics of particular learning tasks, incentives for learning, setting, and teacher behaviours” (2003; p. 329). According to “Psychology Campus” motivation is “a critical component of learning” (n. d; para. 1) consequently learners when writing need to be motivated; if they are asked to write about an “unexciting” or “boring” topic they will face a problem in their writing. Dornyei (1998) stated that “without sufficient

motivation, even individuals with the most remarkable abilities cannot accomplish long-term goals, and neither are appropriate curricula and good teaching enough on their own to ensure student achievement” (p. 117).

3.2.2 Anxiety

When it is related to education, anxiety usually defined as a feeling that a student expresses during learning activities; this feeling is described as uneasiness and fear. Writing as other learning skills is affected by internal and external factors that may prohibit learners’ achievement; Wynne (2010) stated five main situations that may cause anxiety while writing:

- a. Adapting to a new style of writing, such as your first semester of a college writing course or a form of writing you are not used to (a research paper, a senior thesis, a dissertation, ect).
- b. Writing for a tough audience
- c. Thinking about criticism you have received in the past (even if the person who has criticized you is not the audience for your paper).
- d. Tight deadlines.
- e. Not understanding the assignment.

Similarly Brown (2001) believes that anxiety occurs during writing especially if the piece of writing will be judged by the teacher without the opportunity to change, replace, or modify anything.

Whether linguistic or psychological issues that affect the students’ writing production, it is the teacher’s responsibility to undertake these issues through the implementation of various techniques and strategies so as to improve the students’ writing skill. In this research paper the suggested technique is the collaborative learning.

4. Collaborative writing

The term refers to the implementation of the collaborative learning strategy inside writing classes; in order to facilitate and improve the learners writing skills. Several researchers suggested the adoption of CL in writing classes. First of all Chandler (1995) affirmed that "all writing involves some degree of collaboration." (p. 208). One of the simplest definitions of CW is "process of multiple authors producing one document. It is not just the soliciting of ideas about the document but the actual contribution of the various sections which are then collated together to form the final document" (De Silva 2007; p. 9). Moreover Bashyal (2009) stated the benefit of the CW "... helps in producing a good product because the writers in a small number of groups can discuss at each other and reach to the conclusion after synthesizing the ideas of all". (p. 16).

4.1. Models of Collaborative Writing

CL has many models that are utilized in order to teach writing, one of these models is workshops;

4.1.1. Workshops

Strang (1984) defined workshop as "the process of sharing, analyzing, and critiquing in groups" (cited in Wynn & Cadet, 1996; p. 9). He also affirmed that students when writing in workshops are given a chance to develop ideas, and most important they "think" and write "critically" (ibid). Tiberius and Silver (2001) asserted that "workshops are teaching and learning arrangements, usually in small groups, that are structured to produce active participation in learning; traditionally workshops provide participants with the opportunity to practice skills and receive feedback" (p.7).

Williams described the situation of writing workshops stating that;

A teacher might direct students to brainstorm in their groups for a period of 10 minutes; at the end of this period, each group would report its results, thereby producing a whole-class discussion. Students exchange

papers with their group mates, and then the teacher might direct them to identify prepositional phrases to reduce nominalization or to combine sentences to increase sentence variety. (2003; p. 105)

Furthermore Williams stated three stages of workshops; bonding, solidarity and finally the working stage. He argued that during the bonding stage each group members should put in their minds that they must collaborate with one another, and “they are trying to get to know one another; trying to establish a sense of community” (ibid. p. 143). While in the solidarity stage they are expected to help each other since each member know his/her team mate skills. In the final stage learners are the support for one another correcting and giving fruitful advice. (ibid).

Conclusion

Teaching the writing skill is one of the difficult tasks language teachers do. Since writing is a social act in nature it needs to be taught within a social context; in order to decrease anxiety and increase motivation in writing tasks teachers implement the collaborative technique. This technique can facilitate the writing process and help teachers and students as well in tackling spelling, grammar, and punctuation problems especially when using workshops.

Chapter Three: Field Work and Investigation

Introduction

6. Students' Questionnaire
 - 6.1 Description of the Questionnaire
 - 6.2 Administration of the Questionnaire
7. Teachers' Questionnaire
 - 7.1 Description of the Questionnaire
 - 7.2 Administration of the Questionnaire
8. Interpretation of Students' Questionnaire
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10. Discussion

Conclusion

Chapter Three: Field Work and Investigation.

Introduction

After having presented the theoretical part concerning the writing skill and the collaborative learning technique in the previous two chapters, this chapter is about the practical part. The method chosen by the researchers for this research paper is the descriptive method since it is useful in investigating phenomena, considering time and the surrounding circumstances.

The questionnaire is conceivably the most appropriate data gathering tool in descriptive research, especially in our context. In our research, we have administered two questionnaires; teachers' and students' questionnaires. The present chapter comprises of the two questionnaires, their administration, description, and analysis (the two questionnaires are joined as Appendices).

1. Students' Questionnaire

1. 1 Description of the questionnaire

The researchers decided to use the students' questionnaire in order to know their perception of the writing skill, the collaborative technique, and the teacher's role in the classroom, using a variety of question types: yes/no questions, multiple choice questions, and open ended questions. The students' questionnaire is formed of twelve questions divided into three sections, which aim to answer the research questions.

Section one: the students' perception of the writing skill: (Q1-Q5)

The first section consists of six main questions, (Q1) seeks to know the students' most difficult skill in foreign language learning (speaking, listening, reading or writing), (Q2) inquire about the students' own judgment of their level in the writing skill. Students also are requested to tell how often they make spelling mistakes in writing in (Q3), while

(Q4) seeks to know if second year students enjoy writing tasks and if these tasks help them to improve their writing in (Q5). As a final question in this section (Q6) looks for the main difficulties that students have in writing.

Section two: the students' perception of the collaborative learning: (Q6-Q9)

The second section contains three questions; (Q7) inquires about which learning situation learners prefer; group work or individual work, and in (Q8) the researchers aim to know whether students find working (learning) in collaboration easy or difficult with justification. Finally, (Q9) asks for the students' engagement in collaborative learning.

Section three: the students' perception of the teacher's role inside the classroom: (Q10-Q12)

The last section of the students' questionnaire includes three questions; (Q10) is about if students see that their teacher of written expression uses a variety of techniques to teach this skill. The following (Q11) inquires about how often the teacher uses the collaborative technique, and what is the role he/she plays during this technique in (Q12).

1. 2 Administration of the Questionnaire

Since the number of students (population) in second year LMD is too large; researchers have administered the questionnaire to fifty five students (sample), only forty nine students handed back the questionnaire. The questionnaire was administered on 21st April 2015 in Bettaibi classes at Mohammed Kheider University.

2. Teachers' Questionnaire

2. 1 Description of the questionnaire

The teachers' questionnaire utilized in the current research is in order to see if the written expression teachers in section of English at Mohammed Kheider University implement the collaborative learning technique while teaching writing, and

how they see their learners' writings after using this technique. The questionnaire consists of thirteen elements and they are divided into three sections;

Section one: Personal information: (Q1-Q2)

The first section in the teachers' questionnaire is about personal information. The aim of this section is gathering data about the gender of written expression teachers' in English department (Q1), and the teaching experience in terms of years (Q2).

Section two: The teacher's perception of learners' writing: (Q3-Q7)

It consists of five questions (Q3-Q7) and it is concerned with how written expression teachers see their students' level in writing (Q3); if they are usually motivated to write (Q4); and their main difficulties in writing (Q5); the approach adopted to teach writing in (Q6); and if their students respect the process approach stages in their writings (Q7).

Section three: The teachers' perception of the collaborative technique: (Q8-Q13)

The third section in this questionnaire is developed in order to observe if the written expression teachers' use the collaborative learning in their classrooms, and if yes how they incorporate it. It is divided into six questions. (Q8) seeks to see how often teachers utilize the collaborative technique; while, (Q9) investigates which way teachers prefer their students to work collaboratively; in peers, small, or large groups. It also seeks if teachers usually interact with the groups in (Q10), and if yes how they act (Q11). (Q12) inquires about the seriousness of students in collaborative writing; finally (Q13) seeks to see the teacher point of view about the effectiveness of the collaborative learning technique in improving students' writing skills.

2. 2 Administration of the Questionnaire

The concerned population in our investigation is all written expression teachers in English department, for some circumstances researchers reduced the sample to ten teachers; unfortunately only seven teachers accepted to answer the

questionnaire; only six teachers have handed back the questionnaire and we are grateful for their help and collaboration.

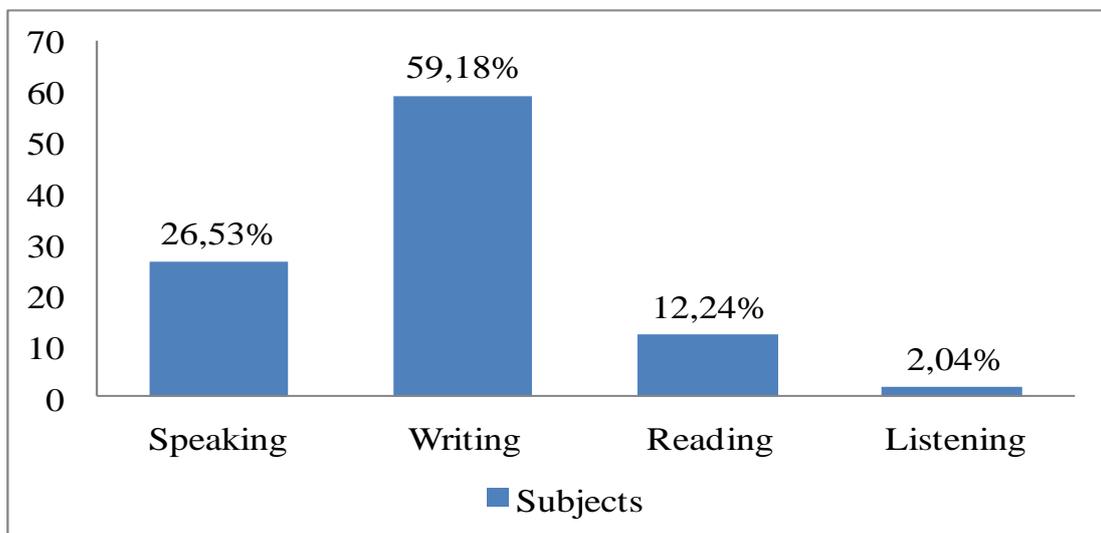
3. Interpretation of Students' Questionnaire

Section one: the Students' Perception of the Writing Skill

Q1: Which one of the following skills you find the most difficult?

Options	Respondents	Percentage %
Speaking	13	26.53
Writing	29	59.18
Reading	6	12.24
Listening	1	2.04
Total	49	100

Table 01: the students' most difficult skill



Graph 01: The students' most difficult skill

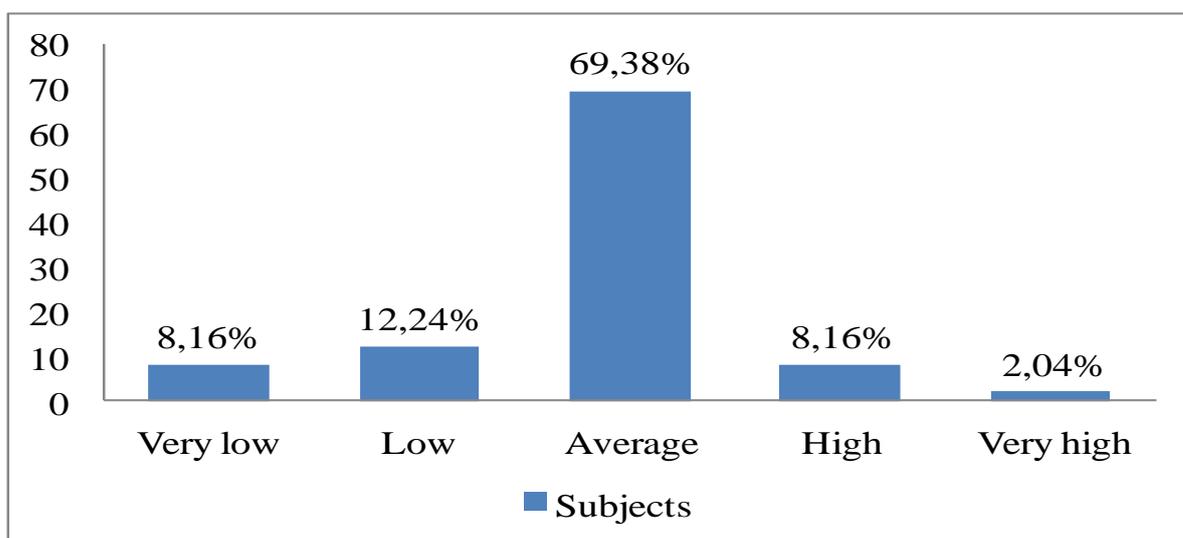
As can be seen from the graph (59.18%) of students have indicated that the writing skill is the skill that they face difficulties in; while, (26.53%) indicated that speaking is most difficult to them in comparison with writing, reading, and listening. Only (12.24%) from the questionnaire respondents claimed that reading is difficult to them, finally about

(2.04%) specified the listening skill as the most difficult skill in foreign language learning. It can be noticed that writing is the main difficult skill for a large number of students in the second year.

Q2: How do you find your level in writing?

Options	Respondents	Percentage %
Very low	4	8.16
Low	6	12.24
Average	34	69.38
High	4	8.16
Very high	1	2.04
Total	49	100

Table 02: The students' level in writing



Graph 02: The students' level in writing

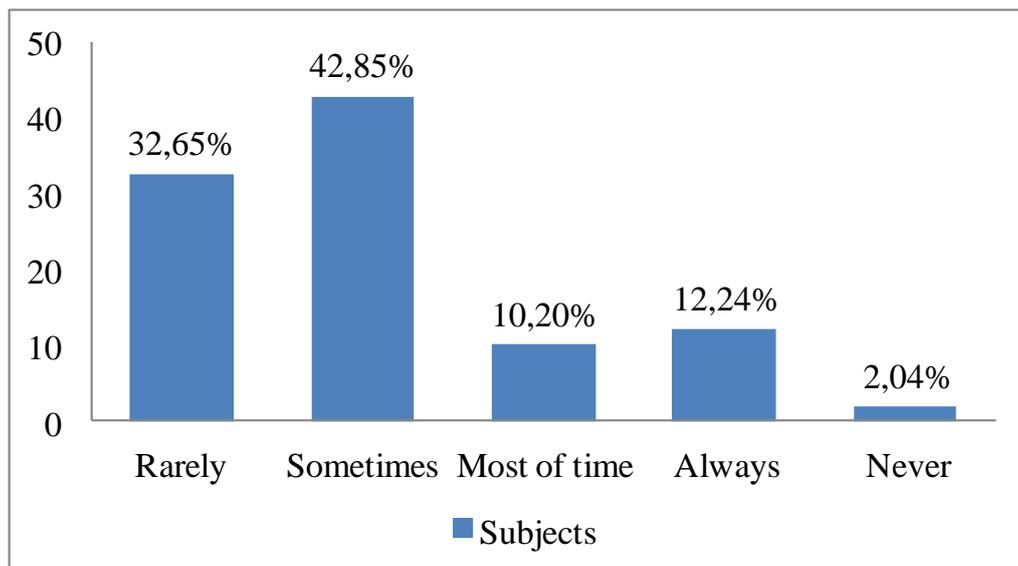
As is illustrated by the above graph (69.38%) of students rated their own level in writing as average; which can be considered to some extent as positive for second year students. While, (12.24%) admitted that their writing is low. Noticeably (8.16%) of

students rated their level as high, the same percentage of students rated themselves as having very low level in writing in English.

Q3: How often do you make spelling mistakes?

Options	Respondents	Percentage %
Rarely	16	32.65
Sometimes	21	42.85
Most of the time	5	10.20
Always	6	12.24
Never	1	2.04
Total	49	100

Table 03: The frequency of students' spelling mistakes in writing



Graph 03: The frequency of students' spelling mistakes

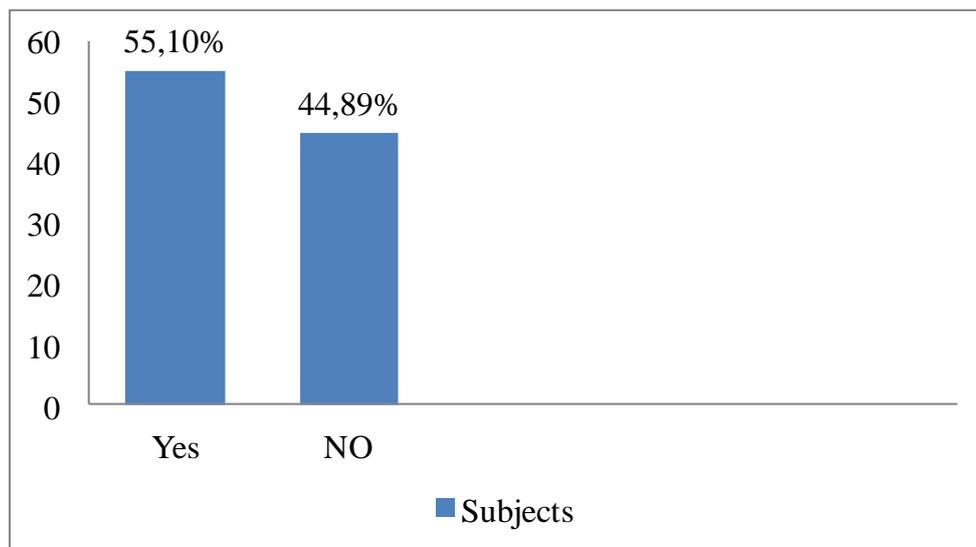
The aim of this question is to see the amount of spelling mistakes committed by respondents while writing; as statistics have shown (42.85%) of respondents selected the second option in this item which is (sometimes), while (32.65%) assume that they rarely make spelling mistakes in writing. On the other hand only (12.24%) of respondents

admitted that they are always produce pieces of writing with spelling faults, and about (10.20%) selected (most of the time) option; what can be noticed is that the majority of foreign language students have problems with spelling in writing since only (2.04%) respondents said that they never make spelling mistakes.

Q4: Do you enjoy writing tasks?

Options	Respondents	Percentage %
Yes	27	55.10
No	22	44.89
Total	49	100

Table 04: the students' attitude toward writing tasks



Graph 04: the students' attitude toward writing tasks

As the statistics show in the above table and the graph, (55.10%) of students who have answered the questionnaire said that they enjoy writing tasks, and (44.89%) of them said that they do not. It can be said that, number of respondents who do not enjoy writing tasks have their own reasons; for that this item was followed by:

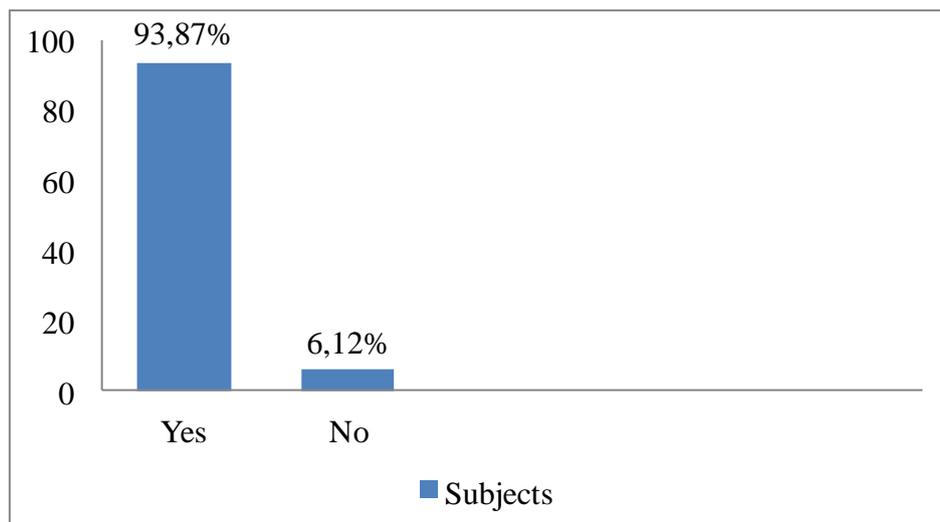
If no, please justify your answer:

From the 22 respondents or (44.89%) only fifteen students explained why they do not take pleasure in writing tasks. these justifications were all concerning the difficulty and complexity of the topics teachers suggest, others said that they have a negative attitude toward writing as a whole. One respondent said that “I personally find writing task boring”; many respondents justified their answer stating that “my writing is weak”. Clearly students do not enjoy writing for the complexity of the tasks proposed by their teachers. Moreover, teachers are supposed to give their students the opportunity to choose topic to write about so as to increase their motivation and build a positive attitude toward writing.

Q5: do writing tasks in the classroom help you to improve your level?

Options	Respondents	Percentage %
Yes	46	93.87
No	3	6.12
Total	49	100

Table 05: The students’ perception of classroom writing tasks role in writing skill improvement



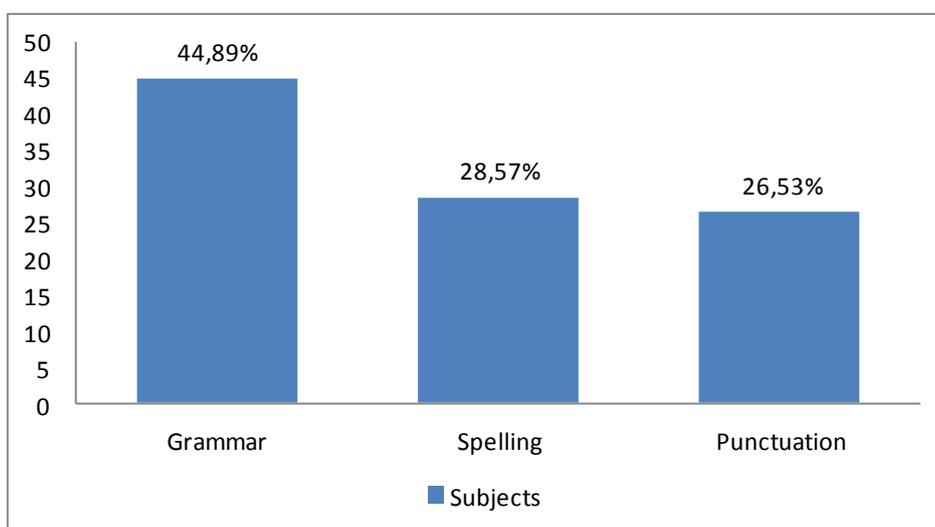
Graph 05: The students’ perception of classroom writing tasks role in writing skill improvement

After having discussed the students' attitude toward writing tasks in the previous item, the present item aimed to observe the significance of these tasks in improving students' level in writing. (93.87%) of respondents affirmed that writing tasks helped them to develop their skills in writing in English language, while only (6.12%) respondents said that those tasks did not increase their level.

Q 6: Which kind of problems do you face while writing?

Options	Respondents	Percentage %
Grammar	22	44.89
Spelling	14	28.57
Punctuation	13	26.53
Total	49	100

Table 6: The students' main difficulties in writing



Graph 06: The students' main difficulties in writing

The present item was asked in order to find out the main difficulties that second year students face in their writings, as can be noted from the graph the majority of respondents (44.89%) choose the first option (grammar). On the other hand approximately (28.57%) respondents said that their difficulty is in spelling, and (26.53%) have problems with punctuation in their writing productions. Consequently, second year students have

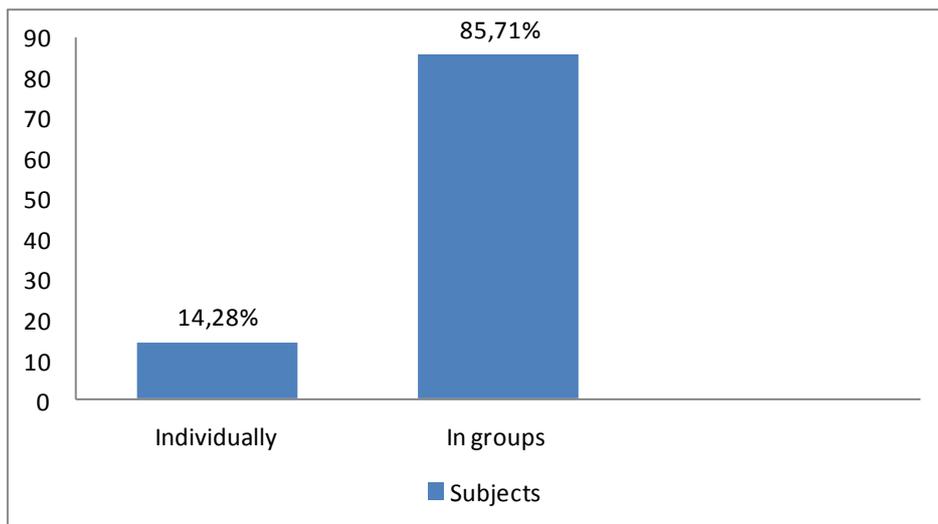
common problem since the majority selected grammar option, and this problem can be reduced in the grammar module session; while, spelling and punctuation are problems that can decreased with continuous practice.

Section two: the students' perception of the collaborative learning:

Q 7: Do you appreciate working: individually or in groups?

Options	Respondents	Percentage %
Individually	7	14.82
In groups	42	85.71
Total	49	100

Table 07: The students' preference in working



Graph 07: The students' preference in classroom working

As a first question in the second section concerning the collaborative learning in students' view, the present item is about the preference of students' working situations. The statistics showed that (85.71%) of the respondents prefer to work in groups (collaboratively), and about (14.28%) of respondents choose to work individually. Those who prefer to work individually were asked to clarify their preference;

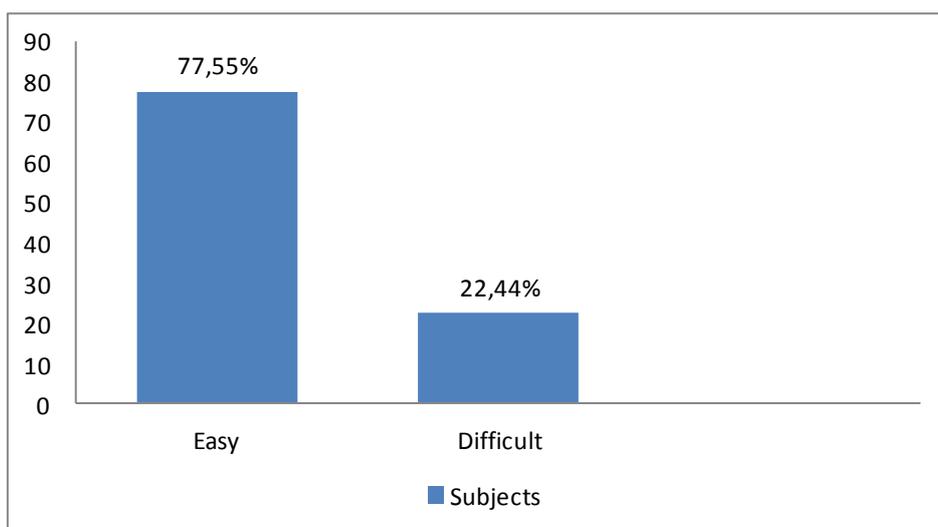
If you prefer to work individually, please clarify:

The aim of this question is to inquire about the students' preference in working individually, and what are their reasons, at the same time investigate about their negative attitude toward the collaborative learning. Several students who prefer to work individually explained their choice in terms of that, individual work allows them to see their real level particularly in writing since they need to develop their level in that skill; and thus they can evaluate themselves and progress. While others are likely to work individually in order to show their skills and abilities to teachers as well as colleagues, and to present their ideas and own point of views. Others claimed that they are looking for teachers' feedback.

Q 8: How do you find working in groups? , And why?

Options	Respondents	Percentage %
Easy	38	77.55
Difficult	11	22.44
Total	49	100

Table 08: The students' perception of collaborative learning



Graph 08: The students' perception of collaborative learning

The aim of the present question is to investigate the attitude of students toward the CL, and to observe their satisfaction while learning with each other. The statistics show that (77.55%) agree on the idea that CL is easy, on the other hand about (22.44%) of respondents said that it is difficult for them to complete a given task or a classroom activity in collaboration with other classmates.

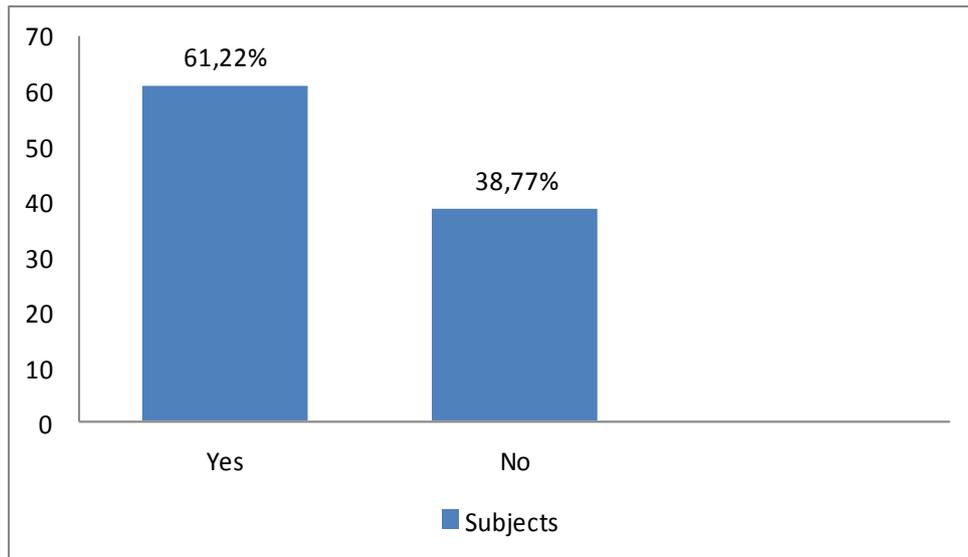
Please, say why:

Related to the previous item, this question seeks for the reasons behind students' chosen options; respondents who claimed that CL is easy explained their answers in different ways. For instance, some of them suppose that CL open the space for them to discuss their thoughts and exchange ideas with their mates, also it reduces the anxiety and the stress in learning compared to individual learning. Furthermore, others assume that when they are learning within groups they enjoy the learning tasks. Nevertheless respondents who argued that CL is difficult justified their responses in that group members usually do not agree on the same ideas, and each one of them has his/her own level and style of learning.

Q 9: When you are working in groups do all members engage in the task?

Options	Respondents	Percentage %
Yes	30	61.22
No	19	38.77
Total	49	100

Table 09: Students' engagement in collaborative learning tasks



Graph 09: Students' engagement in collaborative learning tasks

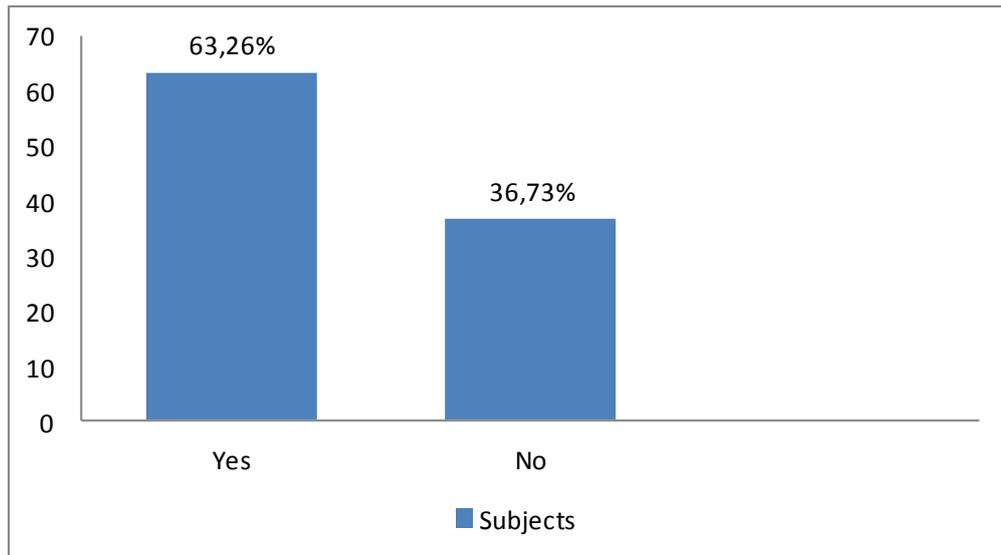
As the above graph indicates the majority of respondents (61.22%) agree on that when CL is applied in classroom; students generally take the work seriously and interact with other group members. While about (38.77%) of students assume that not all students appreciate or respect the group work; that is to say they are not serious about the CL situation, this type of students may keep silent or speak about another subject while students are in the middle of CL.

Section three: The students' perception of the teacher's role in CL:

Q 10: Does your teacher of written expression use different learning techniques in the classroom?

Options	Respondents	Percentage %
Yes	31	63.26
No	18	36.73
Total	49	100

Table 10: Frequency of teacher's use of different learning techniques



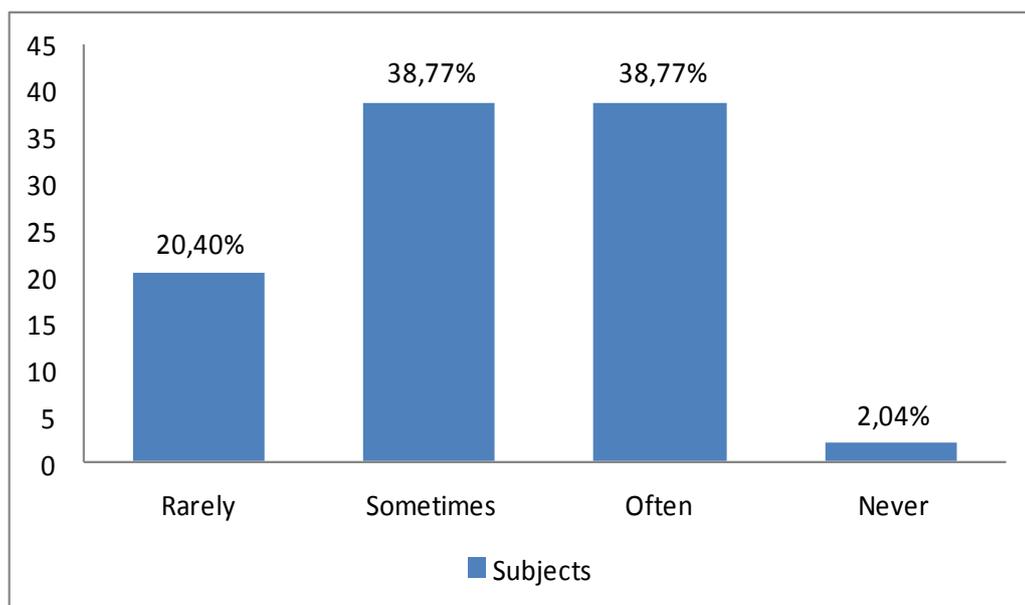
Graph 10: Frequency of teacher's use of different learning techniques

The current item inquires about the implementation of written expression teacher in English department of a variety of learning and teaching techniques; as can be seen from the graph the majority of respondents about (63.26%) claim that their teachers utilize a variety of techniques in learning and teaching processes. On the other hand (36.73%) of questionnaire respondents argue the opposite.

Q 11: How often does your written expression teacher use collaborative learning technique?

Options	Respondents	Percentage %
Rarely	10	20.40
Sometimes	19	38.77
Often	19	38.77
Never	1	2.04
Total	49	100

Table 11: Frequency of collaborative learning technique use



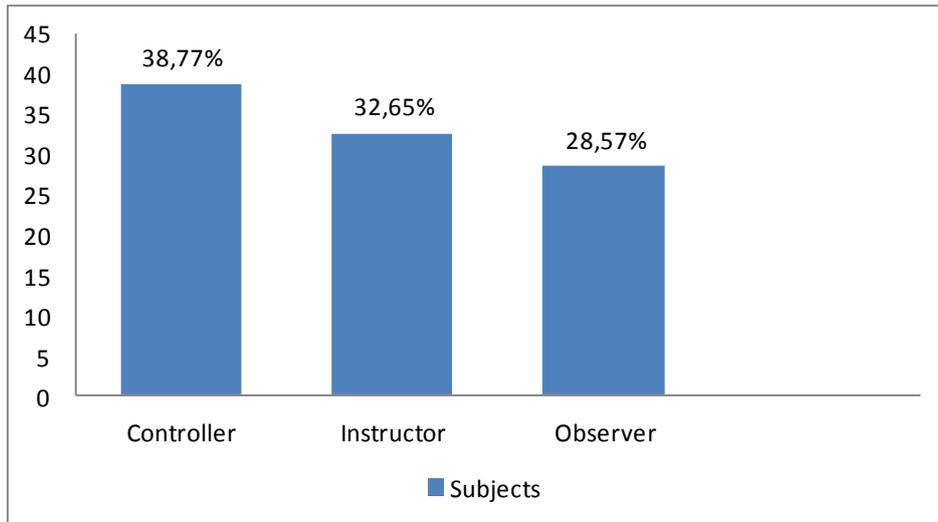
Graph 11: Frequency of collaborative learning technique use

The purpose behind this item is to measure the use of CL in classroom from students' perspective, and as the statistics has shown that the majority of respondents agree on that CL technique is often adopted by their teachers, the same percentage (38.77%) said that it is "sometimes" utilized. Moreover about (20.40%) of respondents claimed that their teachers "rarely" when apply this technique.

Q 12: What is the usual role of your written expression teacher when he/she asks you to write in groups?

Options	Respondents	Percentage %
Controller	19	38.77
Instructor	16	32.65
Observer	14	28.57
Total	49	100

Table 12: Students' perception of teacher role in collaborative writing



Graph 12: Students' perception of teacher role in collaborative writing

The main purpose of the present item is to investigate the real role the written expression teacher in CL activities or tasks; as the graph illustrates (38.77%) of subjects see that their teacher act as a controller. On the other hand, about (32.65%) see their teacher during CL as instructors, i. e, give students the task, the main instructions, and inform them about the objectives behind the task. While (28.57%) of subjects assume that usually their teacher observe among the groups; how they interact and complete the activity.

If others, please add:

Concerning this item none of the respondents answer this question.

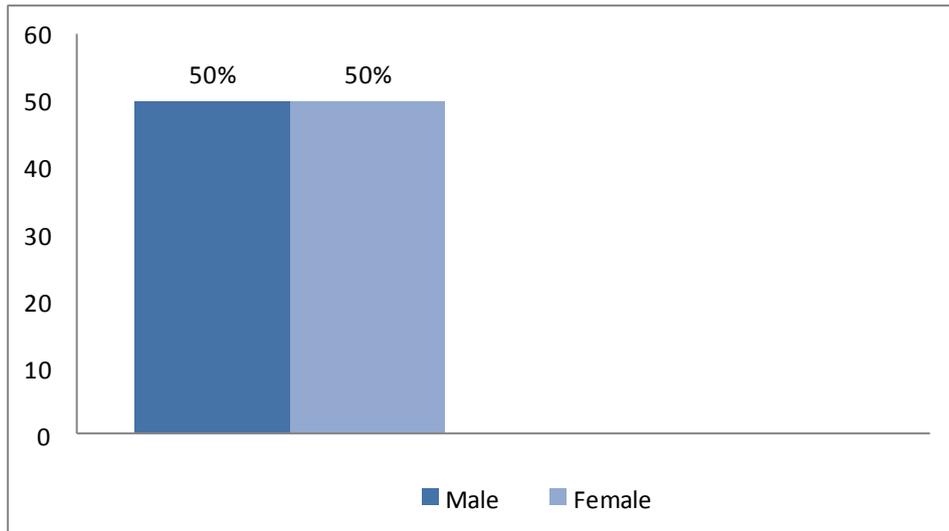
4. Interpretation of the Teachers' Questionnaire

Section one: General information

Q1: Gender

Options	Respondents	Percentage %
Male	3	50
Female	3	50
Total	6	100

Table 13: Gender



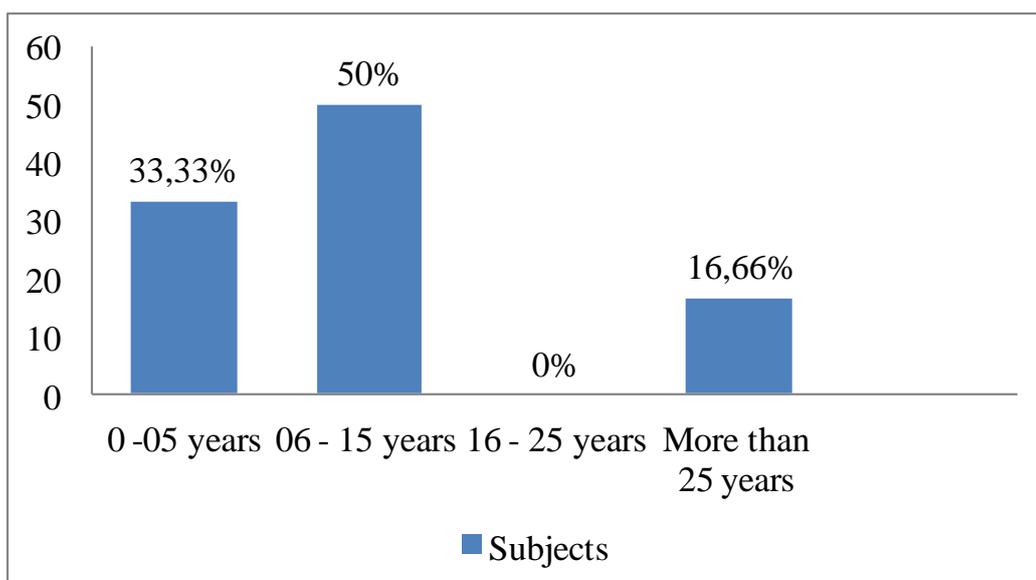
Graph 13: Gender

As can be seen from the graph (50%) of teachers are male in English department at Mohammed Kheider University. Consequently the same percentage is for female teachers.

Q2: How long have you been teaching English language?:

Options	Respondents	Percentage %
0-5	2	33.33
06-15	3	50
16-25	0	0
More than 25	1	16.66
Total	6	100

Table 14: Teachers' experience



Graph 14: Teachers' experience

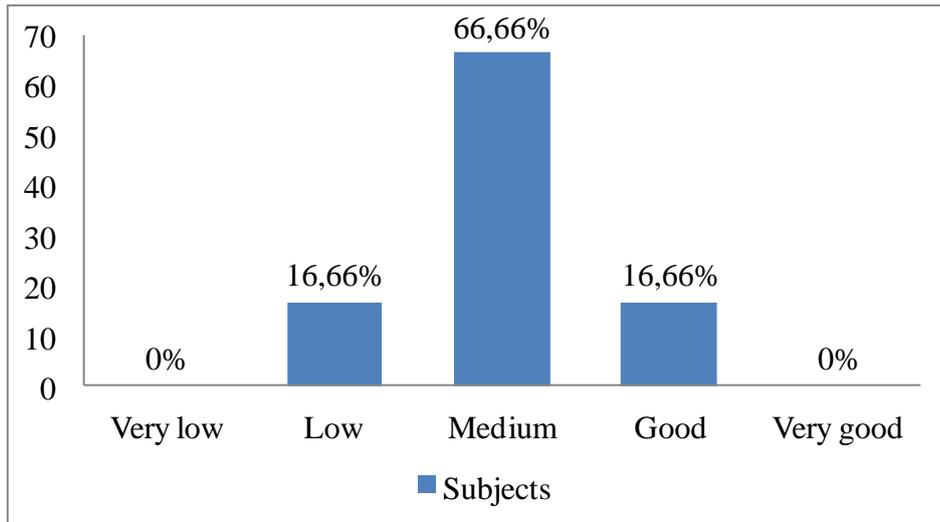
In the current item, teachers are required to state their own teaching experience in years; as the graph illustrates the majority of teachers (50%) have between six and fifteen years experience in teaching. While, about (33.33%) have five years or less in teaching, only (16.66%) of teachers have more than twenty five years in language teaching.

Section two: the teachers' perception of learners' writing:

Q 3: how do you rate your learners' level in writing?

Options	Respondents	Percentage %
Very low	0	0
Low	1	16.66
Medium	4	66.66
Good	1	16.66
Very good	0	0
Total	6	100

Table 15: Teachers' evaluation of learners' level in writing



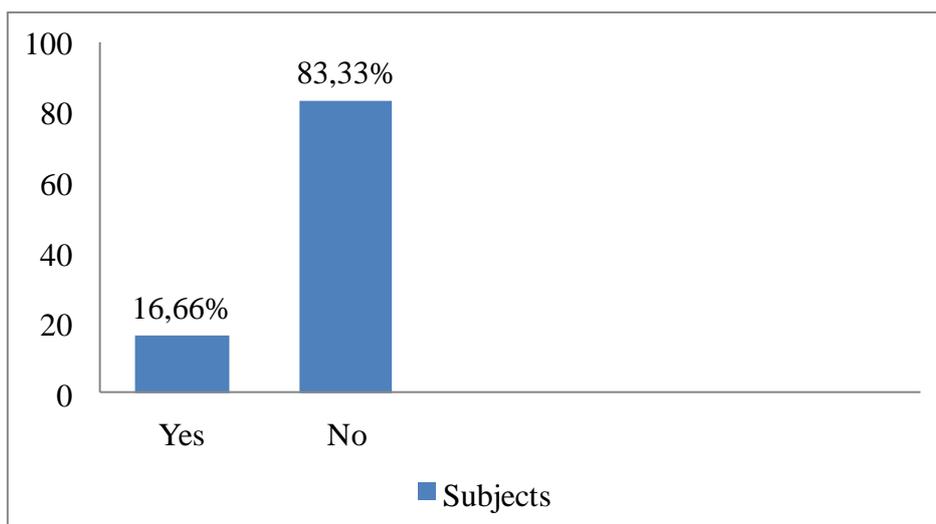
Graph 15: Teachers' evaluation of learners' level in writing

The purpose of the present item is to know the students' level in writing from teachers' perspective, the statistics have shown that (66.66%) of teachers assume that their students have a medium level in writing. However, about (16.66%) see their learners as low writers and the same percentage (16.66%) see their learners as good writers. Thus the level of students in writing varies from on student to the other; it is also related to the teachers' role inside the classroom that may enhance his/her learners' level not only in writing but in all skills.

Q 4: Are your students usually motivated to write in the classroom?

Options	Respondents	Percentage %
Yes	1	16.66
No	5	83.33
Total	6	100

Table 16: Students' attitude toward writing



Graph 16: Students' attitude toward writing

As can be seen from the graph, the majority of teachers argue that their students are not motivated at all to write in the classroom. On the other hand about (16.66%) of teachers believe that their students are motivated to write; this low percentage highlights the fact that foreign language learners have problems or difficulties in writing skill.

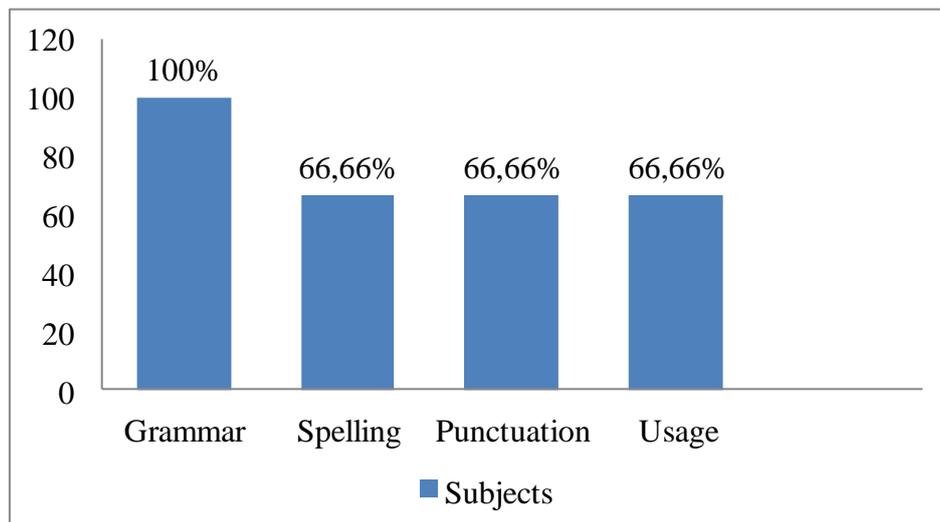
If no, please explain why?

Teachers who believe that their students are not motivated to write explained that, students usually find the writing skill to be difficult and a complex activity that requires more concentration, seriousness, and it is a time consuming. Also teachers confessed that students usually do not have plenty of ideas to utilize in their writings, i. e, students spend much time in generating ideas more than writing. Moreover, teachers clarified that students are unmotivated to write because they do not regularly practice writing only when they are asked to for instance when teachers ask them to write inside the classroom; or in the exams when they are obliged to do so.

Q 5: What are your students' main difficulties?

Options	Respondents	Percentage %
Grammar	6/6	100/100
Spelling	4/6	66.66/100
Punctuation	4/6	66.66/100
Usage	4/6	66.66/100

Table 17: Students' writing problems



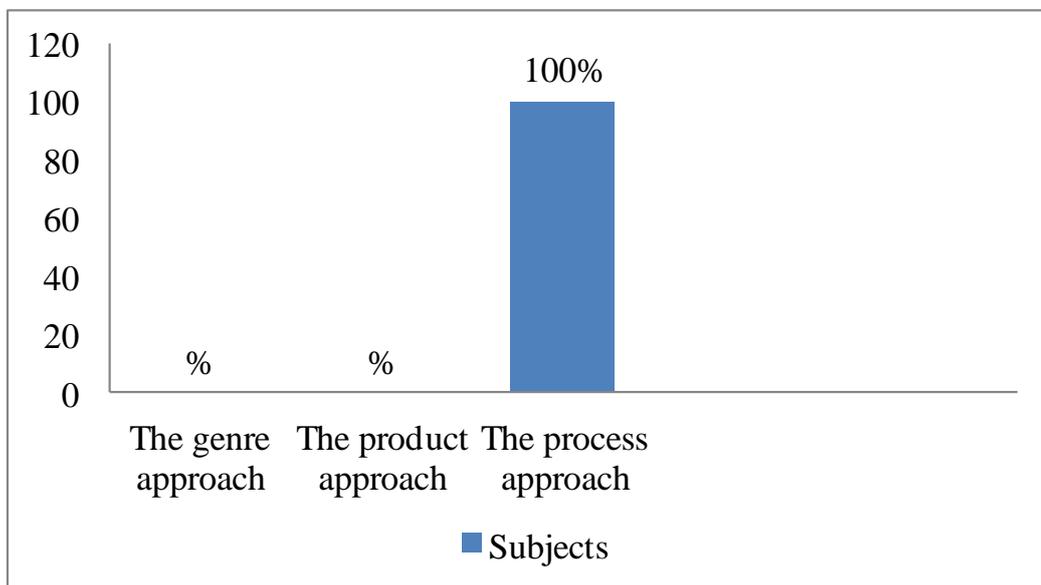
Graph 17: Students' writing problems

As the graph illustrates, all the teachers confirmed that their students have problems with grammar rules while writing; while, about (66.66%) of teachers considered spelling as their students' writing problem. The same percentage was given to the other two options "punctuation and usage".

Q 6: What is the writing approach that you adopt in your classroom?

Options	Respondents	Percentage %
The genre approach	0	0
The product approach	0	0
The process approach	6	100
Total	6	100

Table 18: Teachers' adopted approach in teaching writing



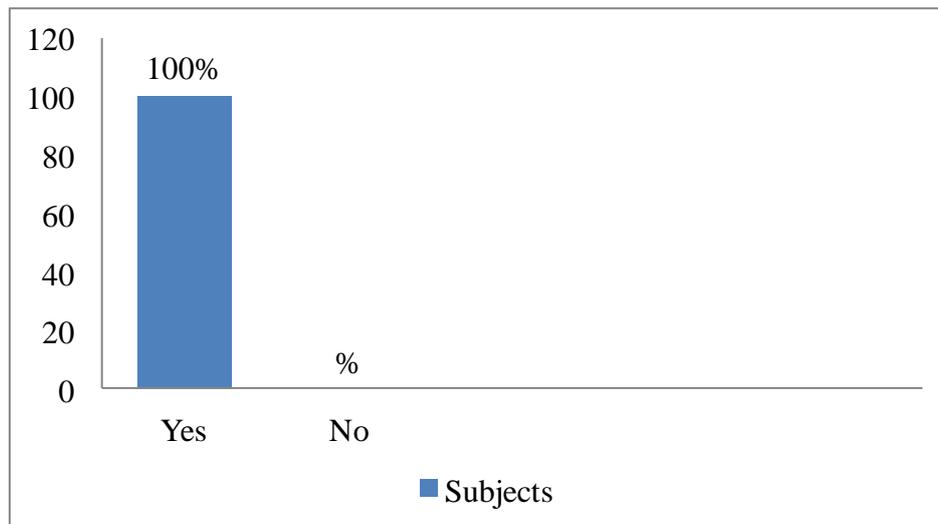
Graph 18: Teachers' adopted approach in teaching writing

Apparently from the graph, the process approach to teach writing in our English department is the only approach that is adopted by teachers; since (100%) of the teachers who answered our questionnaire confirmed that they usually use this approach to teach their students how to develop a piece of writing using the essential stages of that approach which are (pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing).

Q 7: Do your students develop their writings according to the process approach stages?

Options	Respondents	Percentage %
Yes	6	100
No	0	0
Total	6	100

Table 19: Students' awareness of the process approach stages



Graph 19: Students' awareness of the process approach stages

Related to the previous item, in the present item teachers are asked about their students' awareness of the process approach; its main stages and if they develop their writings according to these stages. (100%) of teachers confirmed that their students follow the steps of process approach (pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing).

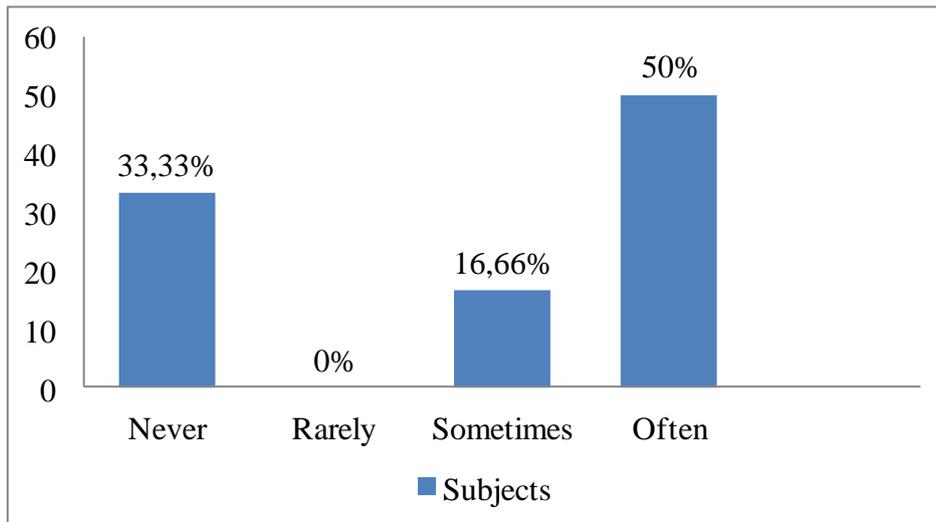
Section three: Teachers' perception towards collaborative learning:

Q 8: How often do you ask students to work collaboratively?

Options	Respondents	Percentage %
Never	2	33.33
Rarely	0	0

Sometimes	1	16.66
Often	3	50
Total	6	100

Table 20: Teachers' utilization of the CL



Graph 20: Teachers' utilization of the CL

As a first item in the last section of the questionnaire, which is concerned with the teachers' perception of CL; teachers are asked about their use of CL (50%) of teachers said that they often use CL in teaching writing, and only (16.66%) said that they do sometimes, but about (33.33%) assumed that they never use the CL in teaching. Thus, not all teachers support this technique, the majority is aware of its benefits on the learning/teaching process.

Whatever your answer is, please explain why?

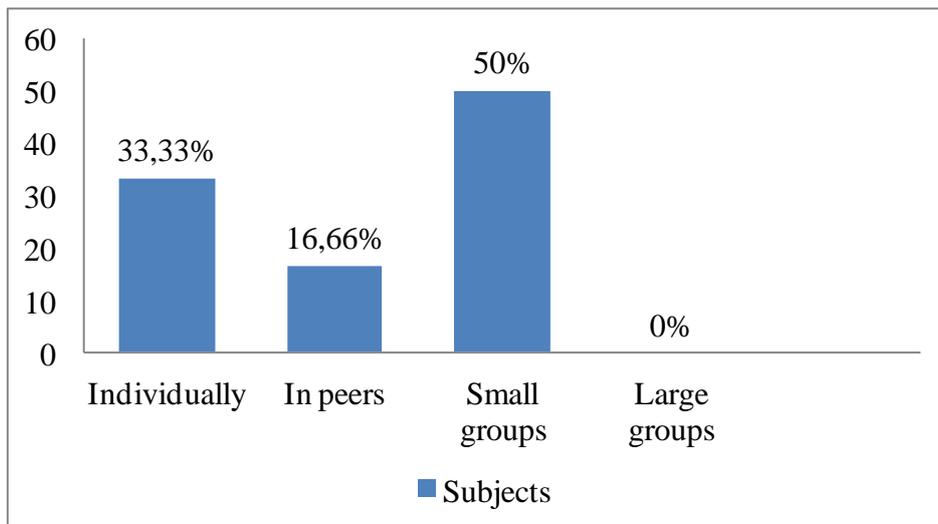
Teachers who never use the CL technique explained their choice stating that they are looking for improving the writing skill of each student alone; they are interested more in individual learning and development. On the other hand teachers who utilize the CL to teach writing clarified that when students are working collaboratively, they feel more

comfortable and relaxed. Furthermore, they claimed that CL help students in generating ideas easily as well as provides peer-feedback.

Q9: You usually prefer your students to work:

Options	Respondents	Percentage %
Individually	2	33.33
In peers	1	16.66
Small groups	3	50
Large groups	0	0
Total	6	100

Table 21: Teachers’ preference of students’ learning situation



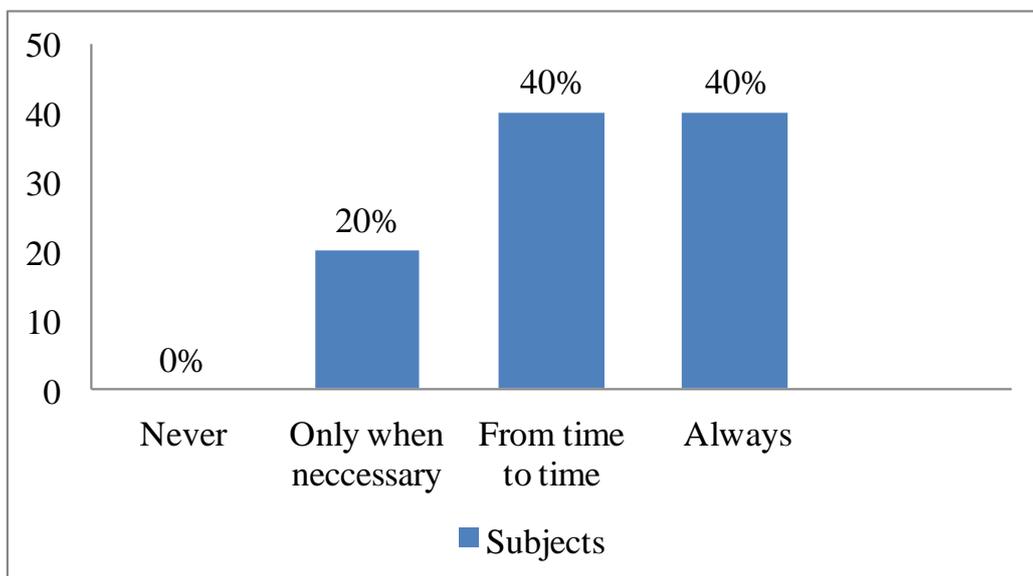
Graph 21: Teachers’ preference of students’ learning situation

It is clear from the graph that the majority of teachers prefer their students to work in small groups; however only (16.66%) of the respondents prefer peer work. On the other hand (33.33%) of teachers assumed that they prefer individual work that is to say, they do not support the implementation of collaborative learning in teaching the writing skill. What can be noticed is that none of the teachers prefer their students to work in large groups.

Q 10: Do usually interact with students when they are working in groups?

Options	Respondents	Percentage %
Never	0	0
Only when necessary	1	20
From time to time	2	40
Always	2	40
Total	6	100

Table 22: Teachers' interaction with students in CL



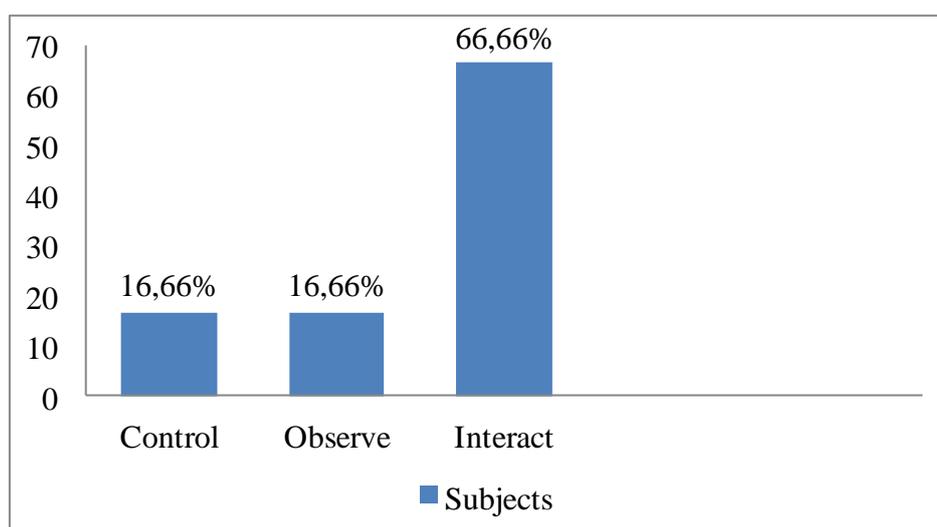
Graph 22: Teachers' interaction with students in CL

The main purpose of this question is to inquire about teachers' cooperation with groups while they are in the middle of a task completion; (40%) of teachers confirmed that they always interact with the groups, at the same time (40%) said that they do it from time to time i.e., they usually observe and do not interact with the groups. Moreover, only (20%) claimed that they interact with their students in CL only when necessary i.e., when students ask for help or explanation, or when they are giving them important instructions.

Q 11: How do you act among the working groups?

Options	Respondents	Percentage %
Control	1	16.66
Observe	1	16.66
Interact	4	66.66
Total	6	100

Table 23: Teachers' actions in CL



Graph 23: Teachers' actions in CL

In the present item, (66.66%) of teachers assumed that they usually interact with the groups in CL i. e., they are involved in the task completion through discussing the task with the students. Yet about (16.66%) claimed that they only observe; without interaction or assistance. On the other hand, only one teacher argued that during CL acts as a controller among the writing groups.

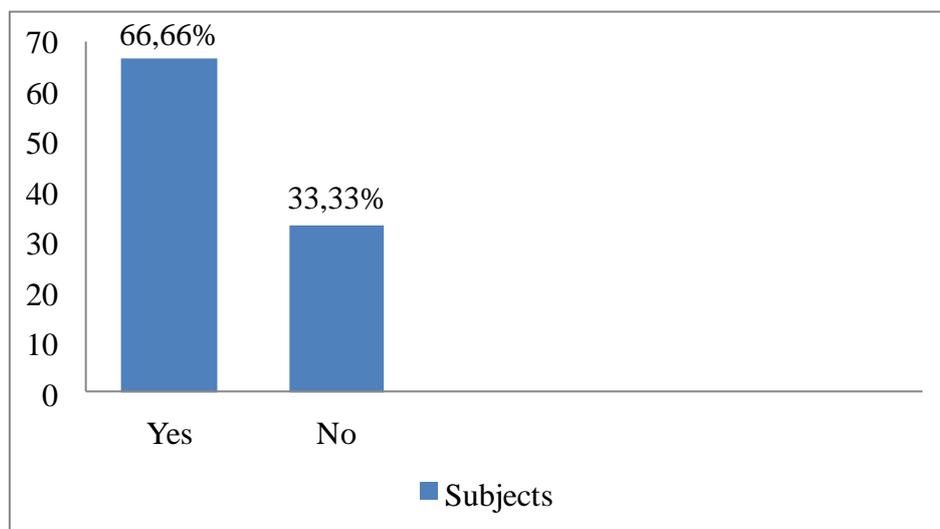
Add if any?

Actually only two teachers answered this item, and they added that in addition to the above options they guide the working groups.

Q 12: do students take the group work seriously?

Options	Respondents	Percentage %
Yes	4	66.66
No	2	33.33
Total	6	100

Table 24: Teachers' perception of students' seriousness in CL



Graph 24: Teachers' perception of students' seriousness in CL

As the statistics have shown, (66.66%) of teachers confirmed that their students work seriously when they are in groups; while, about (33.33%) said that they do not take the learning task seriously; students usually are not serious when they are not satisfied about the topic that they are asked to write about; another fact is that students may be more serious and responsible in CL depending on the teachers management of the groups and the way they control them.

Q 13: Can you say that collaborative learning technique is useful in written tasks?

As a final item in the teachers' questionnaire, teachers in the current item are requested to provide us with their own point of view concerning the effectiveness of CW;

from the six teachers only one argued that CL is not beneficial for the writing skill teaching. On the other hand, the rest of teachers who answered our questionnaire confirmed that it is a useful technique; stating that it would help students in improving their level through sharing thoughts and ideas, especially when setting mixed level groups thus poor writers benefit from the assistance of their group members; it also raises the sense of responsibility. However, these teachers argued that it should not be over used since students during exams write individually and they need to develop their own level.

5. Discussion

After the interpretation of both students' and teachers' questionnaires we have recognized a few facts concerning the teachers' as well as students' attitudes toward the writing skill and CL technique. First, concerning students even though writing is significant skill in foreign language learning the majority of EFL students at Mohamed Kheider University have problems with the mastery of that skill. They are also aware of their level in writing (69.38%) students rated their writing as average, at the same time students know their main difficulties (grammar, spelling....) which can be considered as a first step in enhancing their writings because when students know their weaknesses they may reduce them through practice. On the other hand most of students favor learning in collaboration since (89.71%) of the students confessed that they prefer group work than individual work.

From the interpretation of teachers' questionnaire we have come to a number of conclusions and facts that:

- 1- The majority of teachers utilize different techniques and strategies in order to improve students' level in writing; mainly the CL is most implemented.
- 2- Although not all teachers support the CL students prefer to learn in collaboration with their classmates.

3- Teachers confessed that they usually interact with groups while students argued that their teachers control them in CL.

Conclusion:

Finally, the analysis of students' and teachers' questionnaires ended with the confirmation of our hypothesis; that CL is a useful strategy to enhance students' writing skills. Also it has shown that teachers are conscious about the usefulness of this technique and they usually adopt in their classrooms. In addition about (85.71%) of students prefer to work in collaboration and (77.55%) find the CL as easy and do not have problems with this technique. Moreover, the majority of teachers confirmed that CW is effective for students' writing level improvement.

General Conclusion

Teaching writing in FL requires the adoption of a range of techniques to progress in this skill; cooperation between teachers and students as well as between students is necessary. The current research hypothesized that in order to enhance students' writing skills, they need to be given more opportunities to learn together and from each other; in other words, the collaborative learning technique is an effective strategy that should be implemented by the teacher in EFL classrooms.

The research enclosed three chapters, starting with the theoretical part in the first and the second chapters, ending with the practical part in the third chapter. The first chapter was devoted to the first variable; collaborative technique presented in terms of its nature and significance. Then, it highlighted the role of the teacher in CL as well as the learners' role; moreover, presented four CL strategies, and as a final point presented the benefits of that technique. The second chapter dealt mainly with the writing skill and the application of the collaborative technique in writing; writing and its relationship with other skills, writing approaches focusing on the process approach; its characteristics, stages, and advantages, then presented the main linguistic and psychological writing problems. Finally, the last chapter was concerned with the analyses of the data gathered from the two research tools followed by a discussion of these findings.

Along this study, researchers investigated the teachers' as well as learners' roles in implementing the CL technique. Accordingly, researchers used both teachers' and students' questionnaires that have been administered at Mohammed Kheider University of Biskra to the second year students and to the written expression teachers of English branch; the findings confirmed the research hypotheses, especially the hypothesis that the collaborative technique is a positive tool in EFL learners' writing skill enhancement.

Finally, we can say that both teachers and students have positive attitudes towards the collaborative technique, thus it should be adopted and implemented in written expression courses. Further research is undoubtedly needed in order to test the research findings applicability on larger population.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: students' questionnaire

**People's Democratic Republic of Algeria
Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
Mohammed Kheider University, Biskra
Faculty of Letters and Languages
Department of English**

Dear colleagues,

This questionnaire is about the collaborative strategy and its effectiveness in enhancing the writing skill: the case of second year LMD students. Therefore I would be so grateful if you answer the following questions.

➤ **Section one:** The students' perception of the writing skill

Tick the most appropriate answer (✓)

Q 1: which one of the following skills you find the most difficult?

Speaking

Writing

Reading

Listening

Q 2: how do you find your level in writing?

Very low

low

Average

High

Very high

Q 3: how often do you make spelling mistakes while writing?

Rarely

Sometimes

Most of the time

Always

Never

Q 4: do you enjoy writing tasks?

Yes

No

If no, please justify your answer

Q 5: do writing tasks in the classroom help you to improve your level?

Yes

No

Q 6: which kind of problems do you face during writing?

Grammar

Spelling

Punctuation

➤ **Section two:** The student s' perception of the collaborative learning

Q 7: do you appreciate working:

Individually?

In groups?

If you prefer to work individually, please clarify.....

.....

Q8: how do you find working in groups? And why?

Easy

Difficult

Say why,

.....

Q9: when your are working in groups do all members engage in the task?

Yes

No

➤ **Section Three:** The student's perception of the teacher's role inside the classroom

Q 10: does your teacher of written expression use different learning techniques in the classroom?

Yes

No

Q11: how often does your written expression teacher use collaborative technique (i.e., group work)?

Rarely

Sometimes

Often

Never

Q 12: what is the usual role of your written expression teacher when he/she asks you to write in groups?

Controller

Instructor

Observer

If others, please add

Thank you for your collaboration.

Appendix B: Teachers' questionnaire

People's Democratic Republic of Algeria
Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
Mohammed Kheider University, Biskra
Faculty of Letters and Languages
Department of English

Dear teachers,

I am a student in master degree making a dissertation about the effectiveness of the collaborative learning in writing tasks, the case of second year LMD students. It would very helpful if you answer this questionnaire, please tick the appropriate answer:

➤ Section one: Personal information

1- Male Female

2- How long have you been teaching English language?

0-5 years

6-15 years

16-25 years

More than 25 years

➤ Section two: The teacher's perception of learners' writing

3- How do you rate your learners' level in writing?

Very low

Low

Medium

Good

Very good

4- Are your students usually motivated to write in classroom?

Yes

No

If no, please you explain why?.....

.....

5- What are your students' main difficulties while writing?

Grammar

Spelling

Punctuation

Usage

6- What is the writing approach that you adopt in your classroom?

The genre approach

The product approach

The process approach

7- Do your students develop their writings according to the process approach stages?

Yes

No

➤ **Section three: teachers' perception towards collaborative technique**

8- How often do you ask students to work collaboratively?

Never

Rarely

Sometimes

Often

Whatever your answer is, please explain why?

.....

9- you usually prefer your students to work:

Individually

In peers

Small groups

Large groups (more than 5-6)

10- Do you usually interact with students when they are working in groups?

Never

Only when necessary

From time to time

Always

11- How do you act among the working groups?

Control

Observe

Interact

Add if any?

12- Do students take the group work seriously?

Yes

No

13- Can you say that collaborative learning technique is useful in written tasks?

.....
.....

Thank you for your collaboration.