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INVESTIGATING THE ROLE OF EFL LEARNER' SELF-ASSESSMENT TO ENHANCE WRITING PROFICIENCY:

The Case of First Year Students at the Section of English in the University of Biskra

Dissertation submitted to the Department of Foreign Languages as a partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of **Master in Sciences of Languages**

PRESENTED BY:

SIAD Chahrazed

SUPERVISED BY:

Dr. HOADJLI Ahmed Chaouki

BOARD OF EXAMINERS:

Mr. CHENINI Abdelhak	(Chairperson)	(University of Biskra)
Dr. HOADJLI Ahmed Chaouki	(Supervisor)	(University of Biskra)
Dr. MEHIRI Ramdane	(Examiner)	(University of Biskra)

Academic Year:

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DECLARATION

I, SIAD Chahrazed, do hereby solemnly declare that the work I am going to present in this Dissertation is my own, and has not been submitted before to any other Institution or University for a degree.

This work is to be carried out and completed at Mohamed KHEIDER University of
BISKRA, ALGERIA.

Certified:

Miss SIAD Chahrazed

Master Student, Section of English.

DEDICATION

***In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful, All the Praise is due to Allah
alone, the Sustainer of all
the World***

*I Dedicate this work to the source of my success, to the one who makes my dreams real, to
the bit of my heart, to the sign of challenge and sacrifice, the one who has drawn to me
The path of success and has urged me to discover the world through his eyes,
to my dear father:*

ZERARI

*I deeply offer this work to the light of my eyes, to the world of compassionate, to the
entire beauty of this universe, to my paradise, to my angel, to the holy gift I have,
to my beloved mother:*

AALIMA.

*To my Soule, to my wonderful brother, to the one who reflects everything incredible in my
life, to my lonely brother, the one who is always present in my prayers
For his happiness and success,
to my dear brother:*

MIHOUB

*To the roses of my life, to my sweetheart, to my sisters: SIHEM, ZINEB, CHAIMA, AHLAM,
and to my little bird:*

WIAM.

*To my wonderful teacher and supervisor, to my ideal teacher for his inspiration, support,
and guidance, the one who enlightened my way towards knowledge, and provided me
with the golden key of this treasure that would never be
obtained without his efforts. Thank you*

Dr. HOADJLI Ahmed Chouaki.

To my fiancée, for his kindness and care, thank you for being in my life.

"RABIE"

*To my twin, the reason behind my smile, to my close friend every time. To my colleague,
who helped me to make this work possible by her patience and care, to my sister:*

MENASERIA Romaina.

*To my sisters, my sweetheart, whom I passed with them great moments that will never be
forgotten, I dedicate this work to them, and to each member of their families;*

**Aicha, Fatima, Widad, Karima, Zaineb
, Rachida, Salma, Fatima.**

FOR EVERY ONE WHO LOVES ME AND CARES ABOUT ME

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Abstract

Learner-centered-approach has made a revolution in the learning and teaching processes, it has proposed many educational systems and strategies where the learner is urged to learn. Learner' self-assessment defines this approach in another way with the same concepts. In order to measure the frequency of applying learner' self-assessment inside the classroom, our current study attempts to investigate the role of EFL learner' self-assessment to enhance writing proficiency at the Section of English in the University of Biskra. Therefore, our research aimed to highlight the importance of using learner' self-assessment among EFL learners, and to describe to what extent our two variables self-assessment and writing are related. In this respect, we hypothesized that if EFL learners and teachers use self-assessment, EFL learners will be able to write proficiently. Moreover, from a research methodology perspective, we believed it is more appropriate to opt for the use of qualitative approach to generate the effectiveness of learner' self-assessment on both EFL teachers and learners. To reach our objectives, we relied on two data collection methods: a questionnaire that was administered randomly to 95 first year EFL learners that aimed to identify learners' attitudes towards assessing their own writing; and also we employed interviews that were carried out with seven teachers of the Written Expression course. However, the obtained results revealed that both learners and teachers have positive attitudes towards the use of learner' self-assessment in writing. Learners have shown that they are more responsible to maintain self-assessment as a motivational strategy to control their performance in writing. Likewise, the teachers emphasised on the use of this technique because it provides a direct feedback about learners' weaknesses and strengths. Finally, we have to assert that the reached results confirmed our hypotheses.

Key Words: Learner-centered-approach, Learner' self-assessment, Writing proficiency, Motivational strategy, Direct-feedback.

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

CA: Communicative Approach

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ESL: English as a Second Language

ESP: English for Specific Purposes

FA: Formative assessment

LMD: License, Master, Doctorate

SA: Self-Assessment

Q: Question

T: Teacher who participated in the interview

TV: Television

%: Percentage

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General Introduction

Writing is considered as the most important skill that students have to master for academic success. It is more than reflecting thoughts on papers; it requires more attention since it is a productive skill that has been of concern for a long time. The ability to write efficiently is becoming increasingly important in recent studies to convey the message accurately and effectively; thus, writing plays a vital role in conveying information, and in transforming knowledge to create new knowledge. When coming to educational settings, the writing proficiency goes together with assessment and when coming to assessment, writing is a good area for investigation either by teachers or learners themselves. As a result, assessing learners' writing may empower their abilities and measure their academic achievement.

Recently, as methods of teaching language have changed, assessment methods also have been influenced with that change. The shift from Teacher-Centered-Approach to Learner-Centered- Approach has led to a variety of assessment strategies because learners have become active participants in class and not passive one. As a matter of fact, self-assessment has come hand in hand with learner-centered-approach. Furthermore, learner' Self- assessment is defined as process by which learners monitor, evaluate the quality of their thinking to improve their language proficiency. In this sense, it is a chance for learners to assess and judge their own work.

Learner' Self-assessment in writing enables the learners to be involved in the learning process. In addition; this process can encourage learners to sort out the qualities of a good piece of writing, and make adjustments on their work by being autonomous, and independent .Therefore, learner' Self-assessment is needed to improve learners' writing proficiency, and create critical thinking. It mainly allows them to receive their strengths and weaknesses to see how to continue growing.

1. Statement of the Problem

Learning a foreign language implies learning how to read, listen, speak and write in that language. The ability to write well is not a naturally acquired skill it is usually learnt; thus, writing skills must be practised and learnt through experience, and since writing is considered as the most complex process, EFL learners face many difficulties to introduce a well presented piece of writing; to achieve that, learners must be surrounded with good knowledge of vocabulary, grammar, spelling, and punctuation. In addition, learners have to be prepared with various techniques to be engaged in the writing process because the majority of EFL learners have serious problems with writing skills, and they are not also motivated enough to face the writing challenges.

Students think that assessing their own work may improve their writing proficiency in class. It also helps to create powerful abilities. Furthermore, self assessment is defined as an alternative method of assessment in which learners have the chance to closely engage themselves in assessment; learners become more aware of the overall assessment process and its effects upon their language proficiency. Teachers find difficulties in enhancing learners' writing proficiency since they ignore the efficient ways to imply and use self-assessment in class balanced with class size and the appropriate given time. In addition, teachers have focused just on summative and formative assessment to test their learners in a compulsory way which has led to many psychological problems, such as: anxiety , lack of self-confidence, and fear to make mistakes when taking part in the learning process, and ignoring the fact that progress can be made only by learning from mistakes.

Consequently, First Year learners in our section encounter many difficulties in writing, especially, at the beginning of their studying career. Therefore, it has been well demonstrated by a great deal of teachers of the Written Expression course- in particular -, about the use of self-assessment in class that the students fear to produce meaningful piece

of writing in class. For these reasons, we have thought that tackling the issue of self-assessment can be a good strategy that many EFL learners need to improve their writing proficiency.

2. Research Questions

Out of the stated problematic above, this dissertation relies on the following questions:

RQ1: How do EFL learners apply self-assessment in writing successfully?

RQ2: What is the importance of using self-assessment in writing among EFL learners in the section of English?

RQ3: What are the teachers and learners' views and attitudes towards the use of learner' self-assessment to improve the writing proficiency?

3. Research Hypotheses

The present research is based on the following three hypotheses that shall be verified through this study:

1. We hypothesise that if EFL learners rely on self-assessment in their classes, they will be able to enhance their writing skill.
2. We do agree that if teachers have well prepared and designed classroom techniques by using self-assessment, EFL learners will be able to write proficiently.
3. We advance that our case study of First Year EFL learners in the Section of English may have positive attitudes towards using self-assessment in writing in EFL classes.

4. Research Aims

The general aim of this study is to investigate the importance of teaching the use of learners' self-assessment to improve learners' writing proficiency. To realise this overall research aim, we state the following specific aims. So, these specific aims are:

1. to highlight the importance of using self-assessment in writing skill in case of EFL learners,
2. to investigate the frequency of using self-assessment among learners at the Section of English in the University of Biskra,
3. to identify teachers and learners' views and attitude towards Self-assessment, and finally,
4. to seek the successful ways to demonstrate that Self-assessment is a strategy that can enhance the writing proficiency of EFL learners.

5. Significance of the Study

This study addresses and focuses more on how teachers and learners respond to learner' self-assessment in writing since it is believed that the latter is an achievable assessment that goes with recent learning processes, where the learner is the central part in the learning process. Therefore, our study is meant to empower the role of self-assessment in enhancing the writing proficiency. Also, this study clarifies the positive effects of self-assessment that serve as benefits for teachers who find obstacles to motivate learners towards the writing skill, and to urge them to be active and involved in the learning process. This can be achieved: by giving them the suitable directions, the needed instructions, and the chance to assess their own work following certain standards. Hence, this type of assessment may provide them with deeper insights about their students' needs and abilities. For students, self-assessment treats learners in their learning abilities providing them with critical thinking. Furthermore, this research offers positive views addressed to both learners and teachers, to emphasise on the use of self-assessment as an effective method that can enable EFL learners to be engaged in the learning process, and for teachers to give the chance for learners to assess themselves before, during and after the class.

6. Research Methodology

The researchers intend to use the qualitative approach to acquire and gather data for this dissertation. Moreover, the researchers plan to derive information from any material relevant to their field of interest which is a new and a fresh area in their section as far as they are concerned. In addition, they will rely on two data collection methods: questionnaire for EFL learners (First Year students at the Section of English in the University of Biskra) to investigate the frequency of using self-assessment among them, and an interview for teachers to see how learner' self-assessment is important in teaching writing. So, we shall rely on the questionnaire and interview to cater for both theoretical and applied research. The results of the questionnaire and interview will be included in the dissertation.

7. Structure of the Study

In order to understand the role of EFL learner' self-assessment in enhancing writing proficiency, and to yield clear facts and perspectives about our research topic, we attempted to conduct this study that comprised three chapters.

The **First Chapter** is devoted to clarify learner's self-assessment in promoting success and progress for EFL learners. This chapter is an attempt to provide what teachers and students need to know about the impact of this technique on student' progress, in general and writing proficiency, in particular.

The **Second Chapter** specifies the basic considerations of the writing proficiency. It also reveals how writing is taught under the rules of certain strategies, and procedures. Hence, it deals with the relationship between our two research variables; learner' self-assessment, and writing proficiency, in order to provide a clear picture on our research topic.

Finally, the **Third Chapter** deals with the fieldwork and data analysis. This chapter includes a detailed analysis of students' feedback questionnaire, teachers' feedback interviews, and ultimately a summary of the results obtained in this research work. Throughout this chapter, there are four main Sections: a theoretical background about the research methodology used in the investigation, research design, the results and discussion, and finally a synthesis of these results.

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CHAPTER ONE: EFL LEARNER' SELF-ASSESSMENT

Introduction

In this chapter, we shall discuss the important elements of assessment process, starting from its nature and types, to self-assessment. We also shall talk about the definitions, purposes, and the importance of self-assessment. In order to give more concern on self-assessment, we try to shed more light on the different techniques used in self-assessment, its taxonomy, and implementations.

1.1 The Nature of Assessment

Effective student learning occurs when there is a change in knowledge, skills and dispositions. To see and determine if students are improving and have impact on their learning and where progress is needed, there must be an engagement in a variety of assessment methods. Assessment in education must, first and foremost, serve the purpose of supporting learning (Gardner, 2006, p. 6). Thus, studies over many years have shown that assessment is an important aspect of learners' classroom work and that attention to improve its practice can enhance the learners' achievement.

Generally, assessment is seen as something done to learners by teachers. It is synonymous with testing, where a test or an exam conditions are established and when the two other conditions are present, which are the teacher and the learner. In this sense, it is regarded as something that happens after learning. Thus, assessment is the essential ingredient used for academic progress to monitor student progress throughout the year, to ensure and measure if learners can do well (ibid). In other words, assessment is the process of gathering and discussing information for multiple and diverse sources in order to develop a deep understanding of what learners know, understand, and what they can do with their knowledge as a result of their educational experiences; the process culminates when assessment results are used to improve subsequent learning, make inferences about

learning, and development of learners since it is the systematic basis and the process of defining, selecting, designing, collecting, analysing, interpreting, and using information to increase learner’s learning and development. From the above definitions, we can summarise assessment as the following:

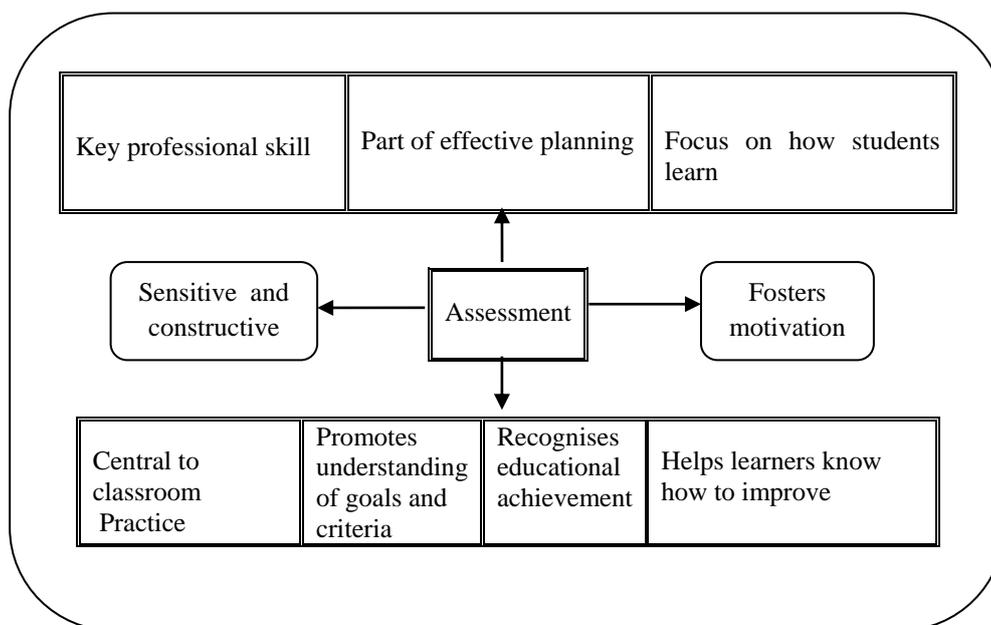


Figure 1.1: Assessment definition and purposes

Assessment varies according to the treated subject and to the selected object, and since our academic concern is about assessing learners’ progress during their learning experiences, for that reason, learners are likely to receive teacher assessment in terms of praise or blame; praise is a vital component in a student’s motivation and progress. Blame or praise will have little positive effect, but a combination of appropriate praise together with helpful suggestions about how to improve in the future will have a much greater chance of contributing to student improvement (Harmer, 2007, p. 139).

Assessment, as an academic technique used to see where the student has arrived in his/her improvement, has certain ways by which teachers assess students’ work. Harmer (ibid) declared that this concerns:

1. Comments: commenting on learners' performance happens at various stages in and outside the class; thus, saying « good » is a clear sign of positive assessment. However, when we wish to give a negative assessment, we might do so by indicating that something has gone wrong.

2. Marks and Grades: each level has its own special grade and students are always motivated and curious to know which grade they have arrived to. So, giving positive assessment for a speaking activity are clear indicators that students have done well. Thus, when students get good grades, their motivation is often positively affected, unless bad grades can be extremely disheartening. In giving grades, teachers need to decide on what basis they are going to do that.

3. Reports: reports are usually done at the end of a term or year by teacher about their students' performance, either for the students, the school, or the parents of the students. Those reports should give clear indication of how well the student has done in past and future assessment. Moreover, in writing those reports it is important to make a balance between the positive and negative feedback, if it is possible. With all feedback, students have the right to know not only what their weakness, but also, what strengths they have been able to demonstrate. Keeping writing reports as such may lead to future improvement and progress.

According to Harmer (ibid), many teachers and other education professionals spend a lot of time testing, evaluating and assessing students to measure their abilities and qualification using effective types. Summative assessment is the kind of measurement that takes place at the end of the year. Formative assessment is a kind of feedback that teachers give to students as a course is progressing in order to improve their performance. And the most important one is student' self-assessment; student can also be effective at monitoring

and judging their own language production. So, assessment as a means of evaluating student's performance can be positive or negative. It depends on how teachers mediate the impact of assessment on students. On this point, assessment should be well designed that the users of the results, students, their parents or their teacher, can have confidence in the results.

1.1.1 Background History of Assessment

Previous studies tied with the recent ones have shown that assessment basis was built upon different issues of learning. According to Huba and Freed (2000), in the 1950s and 1960s, college enrolment was expanding, and many Second World War veterans were seeking college educations. Until that time, the value of college education had been assumed, and universities were not expected to reveal to external audiences what was happening in their classrooms. In the 1970s, several changes occurred in higher education. (Office of Assessment Services, nd).

Many universities faced financial crises. The population of students attending college became more diverse, and concerns were raised that college graduates did not have the skills and abilities needed in the work-place. The value of higher education came into question by the public and politicians (ibid).

As a result, in 1984 and 1985, four reports were issued addressing the need for college reform

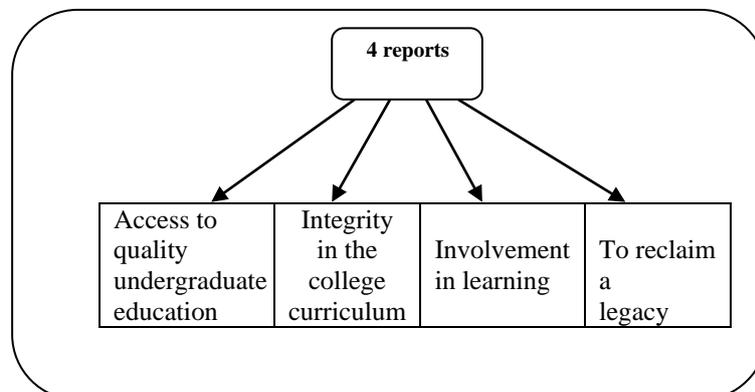


Figure 1.2: Reports of the college reform needs

According to the Office of Assessment Services (nd), these reports stated that the higher education needed to become learner-centered, and that learners, faculty, and institutions all needed feedback in order to improve. Following these reports, some states implemented performance funding programmes where money was given to institutions that met performance targets (e.g.; retention rates, graduation rates, student learning). Then, regional accreditation agencies got involved and required member institutions to conduct outcomes assessment in order to maintain their status as accredited institutions. In 1989, the commission on institutions of Higher Education of the North Central Association of colleges and schools introduced the requirement that every affiliated institution conducted outcomes assessment. Afterward, specialised accrediting bodies (e.g.; those for veterinary medicine, engineering, counselling, architecture, etc) adopted an outcomes approach to programme evaluation.

Consequently, the education commission of the states released a report about making quality counting undergraduate education. This report proposed 12 qualities attributes of good practice in delivery an undergraduate education. The attributes addressed aspects of an institution’s organisational culture and value, its curriculum, and the type of instruction that should take place within it (ibid).

Table 1.1: The education commission of the states 12 attributes of good practice in undergraduate education (Office of the Assessment Services, nd).

Attributes		
Organizational culture	Quality curriculum	Quality instruction
-High expectations -Respect for diverse -Talents style and learning -Emphasise on the early years of study	-Coherence in learning -Synthesising experiences -Ongoing practice of learned skills -Integrating education and experience	-Active learning -Assessment and promote feedback -Collaboration -Adequate time on task -Out of class contact with faculty

According to Gardner (2006), historically, much assessment practice was founded on the content and methods of psychology. This concerned the kind of psychology, especially the one that dealt with mental traits and their measurement. The focus tended to be on whether some behaviour or quality could be detected rather than the process by which it was acquired. During the twentieth century, the understanding of how learning occurs has developed quickly; it is no longer seen as a private activity, but as a general intelligence; for instance, interaction between people and mediating tools such as, language that has crucial roles in learning. Thus, the assessment of learning outcomes needs to have more considerations about the social, as well as the individual processes through which learning occurs.

Concerning classroom assessment, teachers used to rely on assessment models borrowed from elsewhere because teacher's assessment was influenced by external assessment. There is a need, therefore, for teachers to have a view about the kinds of learning that were most valuable for their students, and to choose and develop approaches to teaching and assessment accordingly (ibid, p. 49).

In brief, assessment in the past provided recent theories with various effective views to be raised correctly, and used efficiently in the suitable space, time, gender and topic.

1.1.2 The Purposes of Assessment

As we have mentioned above, the nature of assessment and assessment in education must, first and foremost, serve the purpose of supporting learning. When hearing the word "assessment" in any classroom setting, thought becomes negative because the anticipation of assessment is always accompanied by feelings of anxiety and self-doubt. Assessment, on the other hand, is an ongoing process that encompasses a much wider domain. Whenever a student responds to a question, offers a comment, or tries out a new word or

structure, the teacher subconsciously makes an assessment of the student's performance (Brown, 2004, p. 4).

Gardner (2006) stated that a report in 1988 has distinguished between assessments for four different purposes: formative, diagnostic, summative and evaluative. Formative is used to identify assessment that promotes learning by using evidence about what students have reached, linked to their goals in their learning, to decide how to plan for the next step, and know how to take the plan. Formative assessment includes diagnostic assessment, which is concerned by both difficulties and positive achievements. Moreover, summative assessment provides a summary of achievements since it is an important part in the assessment system that gives information to those who have interest in students' progress: parents, other teachers, and students themselves. Gardner (ibid) added also -in addition to these purposes- assessment serves as evaluative purpose when the performance of group of students is used to report on the work of a class.

In terms of its functions, assessment has various functions. It can serve primary functions, or secondary functions as Cohen et al., (2004) noted. First, assessment serves primary functions which are used for certification that includes how students live beyond school. Diagnostic functions are often meant to identify students' strengths, weaknesses, difficulties and needs, and even check the improvement of learning and teaching that can be arranged through providing feedback to students and teachers orderly. Second, assessment may also serve secondary functions, such as, accountability for students and teachers relying on certain standards, the evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning, curricula, students, teachers, and schools (ibid) . Likewise, assessment for motivation can also encourage students and teachers to achieve what they want in teaching and learning processes.

1.1.3 Criteria of Assessment

Assessment criteria are the aspects of an assignment or examination which the assessor will take into account when making their judgement (Bloxham and Boyd, 2007, p. 87). The assessor may rely on several standards to achieve an appropriate assessment under certain rules and decisions. Assessment criteria may focus solely on the learning outcomes to be demonstrated. But, they are likely also to include relevant generic attributes. Examples of assessment criteria are to:

- demonstrate evidence of a sound knowledge of the topic, and use the appropriate terminology accurately;
- show an ability to analyse the subject using the principles /ideas introduced during the module;
- make use of relevant reading and reference it accurately;
- help to make the argument and discussion clear and coherent about the essay structure
- use language and display a good standard of English with few grammatical errors or spelling mistakes and it is written in an academic style;
- follow directly some criteria from the learning outcomes being assessed;
- reflect criteria of the level of the students' course;
- discuss with other teachers to help ensure that they reflect the real basis on which they make their judgements; and
- clarify assessment criteria as just important for examinations as for coursework, for instance, in an examination, quality of grammar, spelling and presentation may not be as important as quality of content, and;
- help in writing feedback to students with clear and concise criteria (ibid, p. 89).

According to McCann and Michael (1994), assessment must be done constructively, focusing on achievement rather than on failure. It should allow learners to demonstrate what they know, rather than trying to catch them out. Moreover, assessment must also have some degree of reliability, i.e., that it is consistent, under the same conditions and with the same performance by learners. Hence, assessment can produce the same or at least similar results. Thus, if we do not establish clear criteria and work out clear procedures, there is a danger that will discriminate against some students.

Importantly on this matter, learners must be informed -at least- the basic outlines of assessment. It is also crucial to be clear about what to assess to ensure that we are assessing that and not something else (ibid). Furthermore, assessment should reach the goal of validity, for instance, having clear assessment objectives in the first place and then try to make sure that these objectives are reached.

1.2 Types of Assessment

Making assessment as an integral part of daily instruction is a challenge. It requires planning specific ways to use assignments, and discussions to discover what students do and do not understand. It also requires teachers to be prepared to deal with students' responses. Thus, the insights gained by making assessment as a regular part of instruction enable us to meet the needs of the students who are eager for more challenges, and to provide intervention for those who are struggling.

To many, the word "assessment" simply means the process by which we assign students grades. Assessment is much more than this; however, assessment is a mechanism to provide instructors with data to improve their teaching methods and to give and motivate students to be actively involved in their own learning. As such, assessment provides important feedback to both instructors and students (Cohen et al., 2004, p. 14).

According to Cohen et al., (ibid), there are several types of assessment, some of them are:

- Norm-referenced assessment: measures students' achievement compared to other students;
- Criterion- referenced assessment: provides a set of standards for students to which extent they achieve them;
- Domain-referenced assessment: it is an area of subject that will be tested, the content or the domain which will be assessed;
- Diagnostic assessment: is designed to identify particular weakness, strengths and problems in student's learning;
- Formative assessment: it provides feedback for teacher and students on the current performances, achievement, strength and weaknesses;
- Summative assessment: it comes at the end of the programme to assess student's knowledge and practice;
- Performance assessment: it is an assessment which is undertaken of activities, or tasks in which students can demonstrate their learning through performance in real situations; and
- Authentic assessment: it refers to the assessment of the learner's knowledge performance in real situations.

Since, we are concerned only with assessment for learning, assessment of learning, and assessment as learning. We will discuss only three important types: summative assessment (assessment of learning), formative assessment (assessment for learning), and our main concern will focus on assessment as learning "self-assessment".

1.2.1 Summative assessment

According to Gardner (2006), summative assessment has been a part of education for centuries. It provides, as the term suggests, a summary of achievements at a particular point. It is a necessary part of an assessment system as it yields information to those with an interest in students' achievement; namely, parents, other teachers, employers, further and higher education, institutions and students themselves.

Moreover, assessment of learning is the snapshot in time that lets the teacher, students and their parents know how well each student has completed the learning task and activities (ibid). It provides information about student achievement, but it has little effect on learning. Furthermore, summative assessment records the state of student learning at certain end points in a students' academic career; at the end of a school year, or at certain grades, in other words, it sums up what students have learnt.

Brown (2004) notices that summative assessment aims to measure or summarise what a student has grasped and typically what occurs at the end of a course or unit of instruction. The following figure clarifies briefly what is summative assessment.

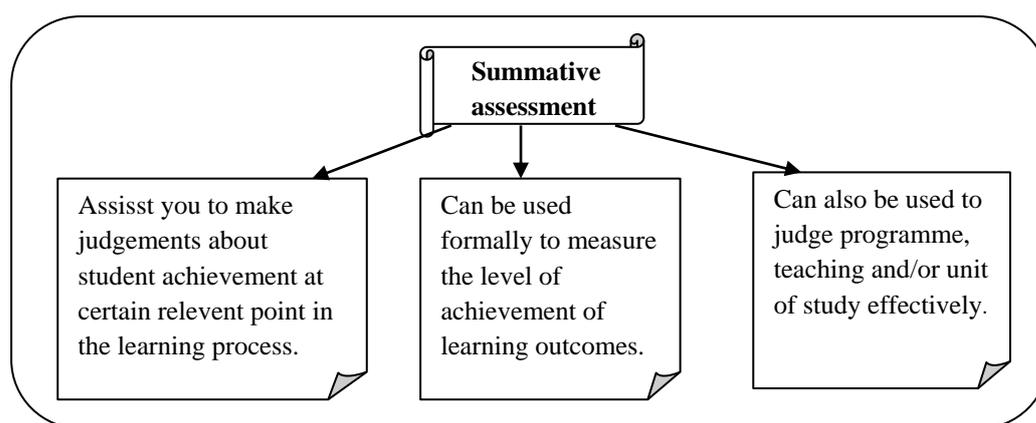


Figure 1.4: Some explanations of summative assessment

1.2.2 Formative assessment

According to Brown (2004), formative assessment means evaluating students in the process of "forming" their competences, and skills with the goal of helping them to continue that growing process. It is another type of evaluating students relying on different forms and means; but, it has the same aim as the other types. It aims to evaluate and monitor students' growth and process after learning has finished. FA entails intervening during the learning process to gather feedback which is used to guide subsequent teaching and learning (Cohen et al., 2004, p. 329).

Cohen et al (ibid) state that assessment for learning provides feedback to teacher and student on their current performances, achievements, strengths and weaknesses. In other words, formative assessment is used to measure to what extent has the learner arrived in the learning process and to ensure that s/he reached the needed goals.

Furthermore, according to Brown (2004), formative assessment is similar to diagnostic assessment, but differs, in that; it provides ongoing feedback to the teacher about the effectiveness of instruction. Thus, formative assessment encompasses a variety of strategies used selectively to accomplish one or more of the following purposes:

- monitor students learning and provide feedback to them, and to their parents;
- identify the areas of growth;
- motivate students and provide incentive to study;
- help focus attention and effort;
- emphasise what is important to learn;
- provide practice in applying, demonstrating, and extending knowledge, skills and attitudes; and
- encourage goal-setting and monitor achievement of goals

Formative assessment is clarified through the figure below:

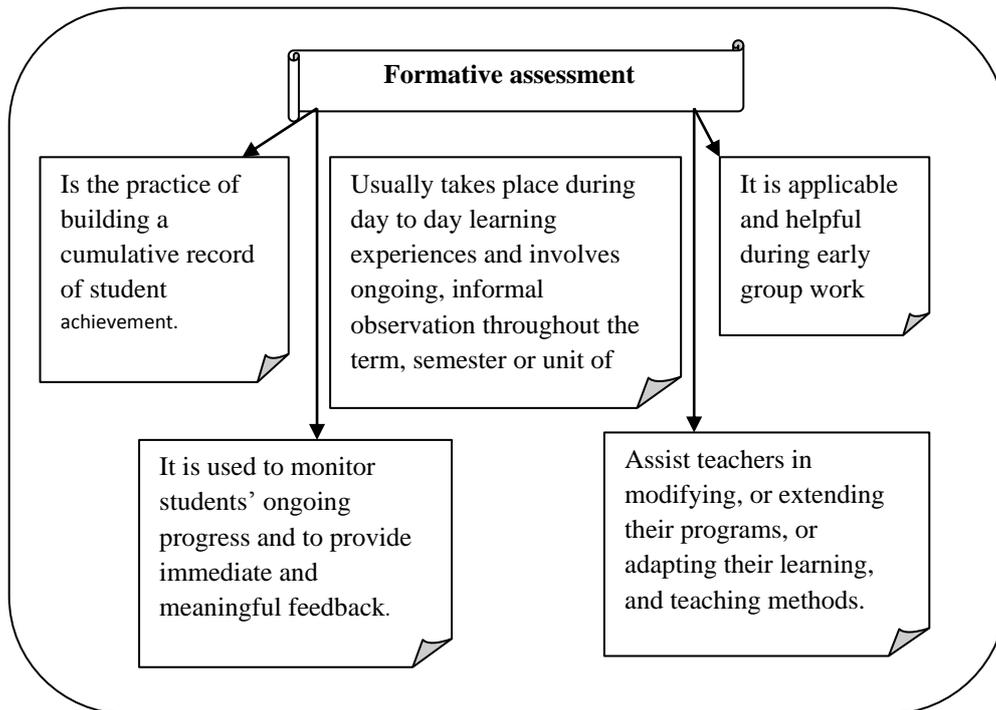


Figure 1.5: Some explanations of formative assessment

The table below provides clear ideas about summative and formative assessment:

Table 1.2: A comparison between assessment for learning and assessment of learning

(Source: Gardner, 2006, p. 103)

Assessment for learning (formative assessment)	Assessment of learning (summative assessment)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Checks learning to determine what to do next and then provides suggestions of what to do (teaching and learning are indistinguishable from learning). ✓ Is designed to assist educators and students in improving learning. ✓ Is used continually by providing descriptive feedback. ✓ Usually uses detailed, specific and descriptive feedback in a formal or informal report. ✓ Is not reported as part of an achievement grade. ✓ Usually focuses on improvement. ✓ Involves the students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Checks what has been learned to date. ✓ Is designed for the information of those not directly involved in daily learning and teaching (school, administration, parents...etc). ✓ Is presented in a periodic report. ✓ Usually compiles data into a single number, score or mark as part of a formal report. ✓ Is reported as part of an achievement grade. ✓ Usually compares the student's learning either with collaborative and individually focused. ✓ Does not always involve the student.

1.2.3 Self-assessment

According to Harmer (2004), students can also be extremely effective at monitoring, and judging their own language production. They frequently have a clear idea of how well they are doing or have done. If we help them to develop this awareness, we may greatly enhance learning; i.e., students can take the role of the teacher in evaluating their tasks or by finding the errors during the learning process, and try to correct them relying on themselves. Thus, the learner can be an active assessor before, during, and after the task.

Moreover, involving students in assessment can be done through different techniques, for instance, by asking them direct questions during the lecture, or at the end of an activity about how well they think, and how well they have moved on, or by asking them to add a written comment to a piece of written work in order to engage them in the written activity through giving them the chance to correct their own words using marks and grades compared at the end with the teacher's marks, which will create a sort of critical thinking among students' thoughts.

Recently, teachers are receiving various kinds of assessment to apply them on learners; but, they are ignoring an extremely useful source of information that resides in students themselves. Furthermore, self-assessment can provide us with useful information about students' expectations and needs, their problems, and worries, and how they feel about their own progress.

In addition, self-assessment develops and supports students' metacognitive skills. This form of assessment is crucial in helping students to become lifelong learners. That is, as students engage in self-assessment, they learn to make sense of information, relate it to prior knowledge, and use it for new learning. In fact, it is an effective assessment practice since it goes with the recent learning strategies (learner-centered approach) (Harmer, *ibid*).

1.3 Definition of Learner' Self-assessment

According to Harris and McCann (1994), self-assessment is another important type of assessment that helps teachers to get a fair picture of their students' problems and a reasonably accurate measure of their progress. On that point, self-assessment is an effective method that provides teachers with an extremely useful source of information. Self-assessment refers to the involvement of learners in making judgements about their own learning, particularly about their achievement and the outcomes of their learning (Lew, 1989). In other words, self-assessment means to allow students to be active

participants in the learning process in order to meet what they need, and also see how to achieve that and what obstacles can restrict their achievements.

However, Harmer (2004) states that self-assessment can be more formal in a number of ways. For instance, at the end of a course book unit, we might ask students to check what they can now do. And, when the student knows how to get meaning across in conversation using simple past or interrupt politely, this helps this learner become more engaged. When a student realises self-assessment, this means that s/he has the ability to criticise his/her own work respecting certain standards to be accurate and beneficial.

1.3.1 What is learner' self-assessment?

When students take the role of evaluating tasks, correcting errors, criticising ideas, showing their own arguments, they become assessors. Students should assess their activities not randomly, but in a precise and clear plan following certain standards. For instance, in presenting a conversation about historical event in the classroom, the student must respect specific instructions to present a well-done work, including past tenses, and certain standards of sentence structure. Thus, when students are self-assessors, means they have the chance and the ability to assess their own work, and then have critical thinking on their own works like their teachers.

Students can also be extremely effective at monitoring, and judging their own language production (Harmer, 2004, p. 140), i.e., they can have a great impact on the learning process through evaluating, and using their own experiences, check their weaknesses, and strengths to see to what extent they have arrived in the learning process. When students are involved in their own assessment, there is a good chance that their understanding of the feedback which their teacher gives them will be greatly enhanced as their own awareness of the learning process increases (ibid).

Students will not become assessors if they are not provided with a good training. Moreover, students can be competent and good assessors if they follow teacher' feedback, and share it with other students. In addition, as suggested by Harmer (ibid), students can be encouraged to be engaged in self-monitor by getting them to write a checklist of things to look out for when they evaluate their own work during the drafting process. The more we encourage them to be involved in giving feedback to each other, or to evaluate their own work successfully, the better they will be able to develop a successful student.

1.3.2 The importance of self-assessment

Self-assessment, as a method in learning and teaching processes, has a great impact on students' performance, and teachers' achievements. It is a vital part of the learning process because it creates an atmosphere, where students are active participants in their classroom. Students' self-assessment is the first step in seeking their career, and the ability to reflect and articulate their values, interests, abilities, and personality.

Harris and McCann (1994) state that there are many benefits to be derived from self-assessment; firstly, it can take up a lot of time, which is premium in most classes; and, secondly, self-assessment implies a knowledge about language and learning which the majority of learners do not have. Therefore, self-assessment can only work if it is accompanied by learner training.

Self-assessment has a great significance in recent studies since any learning or teaching strategies are ruled by learner-centered approach. Self-assessment is a good area for this approach. It urges students to be as a part of the learning, or teaching process. Besides, it provides them with critical thinking that may help them to develop their own abilities.

1.3.3 The use of learner' self-assessment

Learner' self-assessment, as suggested by different applied linguists, has many contributions to the learning process. It can be used in different situation and for different aims. The following are certain important ways of using learner' self-assessment (University of reading, nd).

1.3.3.1 Assess understanding, as well as knowledge

Some assessment methods only measure students' ability to use knowledge, not how well they understand the topic. Learner' self-assessment can provide insight into students' true comprehension, and can help to identify gaps in students' knowledge.

1.3.3.2 Promote student centered learning

Encourage students to examine their own learning, and levels of understanding can also be an important step in identifying areas that require improvement. This approach promotes a shift towards student-centered learning in which a student defines his/her own goals and the steps required to meet them.

1.3.3.3 Consolidate learning

Reflecting on the things that they have learnt requires students to consider new knowledge in the light of their previous experiences.

1.3.3.4 Promote deeper learning

Students must have an understanding of both the subject matter, and the assessment task in order to gauge how well they have met the criteria.

1.3.3.5 Improve student engagement

The transfer of own ship that takes place through discussion of assessment criteria can lead to a greater degree of student engagement, and encourage them to apply these criteria objectively, and consciously.

1.3.3.6 Develop judgement skills

In order to assess their own work, students must develop their skills to know what is good and bad to develop their own critical thinking.

1.4 Theories to Improve Self-assessment

There are different theories that discuss student learning and assessment of their learning. And since our focus is on self-assessment, we attempt to discuss two major theories: the constructivist theory and metacognitive theory.

1.4.1 The Constructivist theory

The Constructivist theory regards learning as an active process in which learners construct and internalise new concepts, ideas and knowledge based on their own present and past knowledge and experiences (Cohen et al., 2004, p. 181). In other words, knowledge is constructed rather than received.

We can say, students are usually constructing their own knowledge with the guidance of the teacher. When students apply self-assessment, they become constructivists since knowledge and understanding are constructed internally by the learner rather than transmitted from an external source as the teacher. Moreover, self-assessment implements creative, individual, and personal knowledge. Thus, the constructivist theory considers learning as self-regulated and higher order thinking.

1.4.2 The Metacognitive theory

Metacognition's main aim is to identify how to improve student's learning. Metacognition means that students understand their own learning, how they learn, how they learn best, how they learn less effectively (Cohen et al., *ibid*, p. 185), i.e., a process of self-evaluation of their learning strategies and successes. In other word, students have the ability to judge and criticise their work, using their mental capacities through understanding, thinking, memorising...etc, to make their learning effective and achievable.

1.5 Techniques for learner' self-assessment

When teachers give the chance to their learner to assess their own work, they should train them to assess their performance in an effective way. Here are some techniques to be followed in self-assessment that are stated by McCann and Harris (1994);

1.5.1 Descriptions

- **Profiles:** when they write reports of their language use and give them to their teachers.
- **Learning diaries:** through keeping writing diaries, students may record what they have done in classroom, and the problems that they have done.
- **Counselling sessions:** The teacher may rely on this technique to talk to their students individually about their progress.

1.5.2. Rating

- **Rating scales:** students can rate their own progress using a rating scale, e.g., a scale of 1 to 10.
- **General rating:** when students evaluate themselves through a mark for different areas e.g., writing skill.
- **Graphs:** student may rate their amount of understanding using graphs.
- **Adjective:** using a list of adjectives, (e.g., hard, good...) can describe their own attitudes.

1.5.3 Monitoring

- **Self-editing:** this happens when students correct their own language production, e.g., when correcting errors in their own compositions.
- **Correction codes:** students use correction code, eg., Pr = preposition, to try to correct their own mistakes

- **Taping:** students listen to the recording of them and try to correct mistakes.
- **Grading mistakes:** students grade mistakes in order of seriousness.
- **Test yourself:** students do short tests to find how much they know.

1.5.4 Questionnaire

- **Listing:** students can make a list of difficult words in pronunciation.
- **Ranking preference:** students rank activities in terms of which they enjoy, e.g., 1= writing, 2= reading, 3= listening to songs.
- **Ranking problems:** students rank areas that are difficult for them, grammar: tenses.

1.5.5 Survey

- **Group survey:** students find out about each other's learning problems and then report the group results for the rest of the class.
- **Class survey:** students ask questions about learning to the others, and then they report the results to the whole class.

1.6 Guidelines for Learner' Self-assessment

Self-assessment as an effective strategy used to evaluate and monitor students' performance has a great significance in recent educational systems. It is the most rewarding assessment that must be carefully designed and administered for them to reach their potential. Brown (2004) states that there are four guidelines that may help teachers to bring this intrinsically motivating task into the classroom successfully.

- Tell students the purpose of the assessment: self-assessment is a process that any students -especially those in traditional educational systems- will initially find quite uncomfortable. It is therefore essential that you carefully analyse the needs

that will be met in offering self-assessment opportunity, and then convey this information to students.

- Define the task «s» clearly: make sure that the students know exactly what they are supposed to do. Here, teachers should provide their students with the needed models, and guidelines to clarify the procedures.

1.7 Taxonomy of Self-Assessment

When applying self-assessment in classroom, it is helpful to consider a variety of tasks within each of the four skills as Brown (ibid) argues;

- **Listening skill:** by listening to TV or radio broadcasts, and check comprehension with a partner, listening to a bilingual version of a broadcasts and checking comprehension, or by asking when things are not clear in pair or group work.
- **Speaking task:** by reading passages with self-check comprehension questions following, taking grammar, and vocabulary quizzes on the internet or conducting self-assessment of reading habits.
- **Writing task:** by revising written work on your own, using journal writing for reflection, assessment, and goal-setting, or by revising written work with a paper.

1.8 The Implementation of Self-assessment

Boud (1995) argues that the way in which self-assessment is implemented needs the acceptance by students, and the implementation process needs to include:

- A clear rationale: this includes the needed purposes of a particular task.
- Explicit procedure: this includes what the teachers expect from their students.
- Confidence: other students will do likewise, and that cheating or collusion will be detected and discouraged.

Moreover, students must be conscious about the standards of their activities to take the teacher' role in monitoring, and evaluating their own development or abilities. Besides,

students should also take part in choosing criteria to evaluate their own work; then, students' self-assessment needs to be designed appropriately for a particular discipline, and therefore, it should be integrated into the most learning activities.

Conclusion

To sum up, the first chapter has dealt with assessment, in general, its types, and importance, in particular. In this chapter in our dissertation, we have focused on self-assessment as an effective type in recent educational systems. In order to clarify self-assessment, we have discussed its main purposes, importance, and its uses. Following that, we have concluded this chapter by suggesting certain important techniques, and to implement and support our arguments.

Our next concern will be on how we shall apply self-assessment on the writing skill, and the suitable strategies that one needs to follow in order to achieve proficiency in writing through this technique.

CHAPTER TWO: BASIC CONSIDERATIONS IN THE WRITING PROFICIENCY

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CHAPTER TWO: BASIC CONSIDERATIONS IN THE WRITING PROFICIENCY

Introduction

In this chapter, we shall discuss the writing skill through various perspectives, starting from teaching writing to its different approaches. Next, we will attempt to rely on effective writing, and its main reasons. In addition, we are going to focus more on writing in the classroom. In order to make the picture, we shall answer the question of how to assess writing. In this respect, we will try to give an explanation to assessment and its role in the writing skill. Finally, we shall also tackle the use of self-assessment in the writing skill since it is the core of this chapter.

2.1 Teaching the Writing Skill

The ability to write well is not an easy task. Among years many scholars, linguists, and other researchers have examined various techniques to study the writing issue through different perspectives. It is believed that writing is one of the important skills that EFL learners need to develop, and test among all the other skills.

The process of teaching the writing skill has taken a wide range of interest for a long time. It involves using the suitable techniques, and procedures to engage EFL learners in the writing process, and urge them to write obeying to certain rules. Nevertheless, teaching EFL learners the writing skill effectively needs a considerable effort since they would teach students from non-English writing, or speaking background (EFL learners). More specifically, their main task is to meet the needs of those who are or will be trained to write in a foreign language.

According to Hayland (2003), the effective teacher is the one who can make informed choices about the methods, materials, and procedures to use on the classroom based on a clear understanding of the current attitudes, and practices in her or his profession. Teaching writing depends mainly on the teacher's training. Hayland (ibid) states that every act of

writing is in a sense both personal and individual. It is also interactional and social, i.e., teaching writing can be addressed for different purposes according to the writer and reader.

Harmer (2004) notes that how to teach writing starts by looking at the process that a competent speaker of English language goes through after what s/he decides to write a piece of text, and at how our understanding of this has implications for the way one should approach the teaching of writing.

When learning a foreign language, we learn to communicate with other people: to understand them, talk to them, read what they have written and write to them. In other words, teaching writing in a foreign language means learning to use that language effectively as when using the first language or to communicate using the foreign language effectively in reading or listening to what people have written and to be able to convey correct meaning through writing (ibid).

Teaching the writing skill goes through various techniques, Raimes (1983) points out that a great deal of writing that goes on in EFL lessons, especially in elementary level classes, are mainly sentence writing. Students repeat or complete given sentences to reinforce the structure, grammar, and vocabulary they have learnt.

Therefore, the main purpose of teaching the writing skill is to enable EFL learners to produce a meaningful piece of writing obeying to certain rules, such as: grammar, vocabulary, punctuation...etc., to be able to communicate through that thought. The following figure shows clearly what is involved in producing a piece of writing.

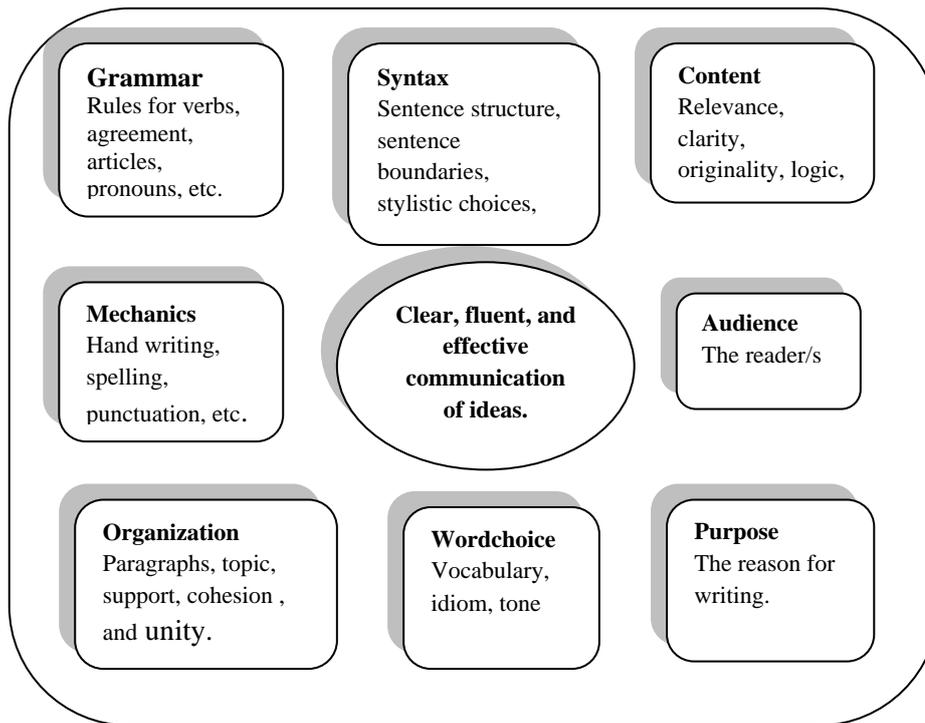


Figure 2.6: Factors involved in the fluent communication of ideas (Source: Raimes, 1983, p. 6).

Therefore, teaching writing is based mainly on the teacher who is the main part in the teaching process who takes the responsibility of combining many various reasons, and features of teaching this skill.

Moreover, as teachers have stressed on different factors that are mentioned in the above figure combining these features with how they think writing is learnt, they have developed a variety of approaches to the teaching of writing.

2.2 Approaches of Teaching Writing

In order to provide clarity in the writing skill to both teachers and students, many researchers and linguists have suggested different approaches and methods for the teaching of writing. Some of the common approaches/methods are:

2.2.1 The Controlled- to- Free Writing

The controlled- to- free approach in writing is sequential as reported by Raimes (1983). Thus, students are first given sentence exercised, then paragraphs to copy or manipulate

grammatically by, for instance, changing questions to statements, present to past, or plural to singular. They work on a given material, and perform strictly operations on it. Raimes (ibid) reports that in this approach, students have a limited opportunity to make mistakes. The teacher's job of marking papers is quick and easy. However, students can be allowed to try some free compositions in which they express their own ideas. This often comes only after reaching a high, or intermediate or advanced level of proficiency.

2.2.2 The Free- writing approach

In this approach, researchers and teachers have emphasised on the quantity of writing rather than quality. Raimes (ibid) claims that the teaching of writing pay attention on assigning a vast amount of free writing on given topics with only minimal corrections of error. In addition, intermediate-level learners should put content and fluency first and not worry about the form.

To achieve fluency, some EFL teachers begin their classes by asking their students to write freely about any topic without worrying about grammar and spelling, but this seems difficult. Whereas, others find that to write more fluently, and to put words on papers is not so frightening after all. Here, the teachers do not correct these short pieces of free writing. They simply need to read them and perhaps comment on the ideas the writer expresses (ibid).

Furthermore, in this approach, some students might volunteer to read their own writing aloud to the class since the free writing often revolves around subjects that the students are interested in. In what follows, those subjects then become the basis for other more focused writing tasks.

2.2.3 The Paragraph –pattern approach

According to Raimes (ibid), the paragraph-pattern approach stresses on another feature of some clear communicated ideas which is organisation. The learners here copy

paragraphs, analyse the form of the model paragraphs, and then imitate model passages. For Raimes (ibid), learners can put scrambled sentences into paragraph order, or, they can identify general and specific statements. Besides, they may choose or invent an appropriate topic sentence. Additionally, they have to insert or delete sentences. This approach focuses on the order of sentences instead of accuracy of grammar or the fluency of content.

This approach is based on the principle that in different cultures, people construct and organise their communication with each other in different ways. For students, they organise their ideas well in their first language; but, they still need to see, analyse and practise the particularly English features of a piece of writing (ibid).

2.2.4 The Grammar-syntax-organisation approach

Following the principles of this approach and teachers' beliefs, writing cannot be seen as composed only of separate skills which are learnt one by one. According to Raimes (1983), they devise writing tasks that lead students to pay attention to organisation while they also work on the necessary grammar and syntax; for example, to write a clear set of instructions on how to operate a calculator, the writer needs more than the appropriate vocabulary.

Learners see the connection between what they are trying to write and what they need to write. In this way, this approach links the purpose of a piece of writing to the forms that are needed to convey the message (ibid).

2.2.5 The communicative approach

The communicative approach emphasises the purpose of a piece of writing and the audience for it (Raimes: 1983, p. 8). When students are writing means they are behaving like writers in real contexts. In the past, the teacher was the only audience for students' writing. But in the recent years, when writers do their efforts and test their capacities when

writing, they are addressing all the readers including, teachers, learners, and other professions; certainly, this is truly a communicative act.

Raimes (ibid) consider that teachers using the CA have extended the relationship. First, they have spread it to other students in class who not only read the piece of writing, but actually do something with it, such as, respond, rewrite in another form, summarise, or make comments, but not correct. Or, some other teachers may specify readers outside the classroom, by providing students as writers with a context in which they should select appropriate content, language, and levels of formality.

2.2.6 The Process approach

The teaching of writing starts to move away from a concentration on the written product to an emphasis on the process of writing. According to Raimes (ibid), in the process approach, students do not write on a given topic in a restricted time and hand for the teacher to correct, i.e., to find the errors.

However, in the process approach, students usually generate a topic while writing, and show to the teacher and others their drafts. Also, they use what they write to read, think, and move to new ideas.

Through the process approach teachers may give their learners two important supports: time to try new ideas, and feedback on the content of what they have written in their drafts (ibid). In other words, teachers find that the writing process becomes a process of discovery, and creating new ideas for the learners.

2.3 Effective writing as the basis for success

Learners use their pen for several hours in lectures, seminars, practical classes, etc. But the amount of effectiveness differs and shifts each time since it is a necessary condition for success. Noticeably, the writing skill is important in studying all subjects, and professions.

Students can show a good picture as learners just by writing well. Barrass (2005) assumes that only by students' own writing people can judge them. He expresses his idea in these words:

If you are to achieve your full potential as a student, and progress in your chosen career, the ability to express yourself clearly, concisely and persuasively in writing is an essential skill that you should be trying to develop (p. 1).

Barrass (ibid) sees that assessors can find out what the writer knows and how much s/he understands, mainly by the quality of his/ her writing and thinking. Barrass (ibid) notes that in any assessed work, if two students are equal in the ability and intelligence, then the assessors would expect the one who is able to convey his/ her thoughts effectively in writing to score the higher marks.

So, effective writing does not depend on the one's own ability or intelligence, but on the suitable way to convey the intended message through the piece of writing.

To conclude, any written work should depend on the understanding and effective use of language. Thus, the main purpose of education should be to help students to develop the ability to think critically, and then to write effectively by expressing effective thoughts.

Table 2.3: Judged by your writing (Source: Barrass, 2005, p. 02).

Characteristics of your writing	Impression created
<p>(a) <u>Desirable</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Clearly expressed ✓ Spelling correct ✓ Punctuation and grammar good ✓ Well presented ✓ Helpful <p>(b) <u>undesirable</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Badly expressed ✓ Spelling poor ✓ Punctuation and grammar poor ✓ Badly presented ✓ Handwriting illegible 	<p><u>Favourable</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Clear thinking ✓ Well educated ✓ Competent ✓ Well organized ✓ Considerate <p><u>Unfavourable</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Inconsiderate ✓ Lazy ✓ Careless ✓ Incompetent ✓ inconsiderate

2.4 Reasons for Writing

Much of what writers and students write is intended for other people, for instance, to influence their thoughts and convey messages to them or to communicate through words. Barrass (ibid) argues that we write as part of our day-to-day work. Writing can help to remember, to observe, and to think, as well as to communicate.

2.4.1 Writing to remember

Barrass (ibid) gives clarifications for this relying on what students have learnt in early years at school when copying complete sentences from a book or dictated by a teacher, i.e., the early strategies that teachers use in schools are based on writing for the sake of remembering a rule or a sentence form, or for other purposes. However, the main purpose is to train the learners to remember, and for better understanding. Students mainly rely on writing in order to take notes during the lecture or to do homework and some other tasks.

2.4.2 Writing to observe

Any observation process depends on the five senses which can give clear description of various things. Observation is clearly important in some subjects than in others; but, it is important in the arts and humanities, as well as in sciences (Barrass. *ibid*, p. 16). In other words, for him, observation is the basis of everything. Besides in writing nothing will be effective and recorded without observing.

2.4.3 Writing to communicate

Although people can converse with others anywhere in the world through a small screen, telephone, and other means, writing remains the important means of communication. Before the invention of the telephone in 1875, and radio in 1901, verbal communication with anyone out of earshot was possible only by writing (Barrass, *ibid*, p. 18).

Barrass (*ibid*) notices that in preparing letters, reports, or any other written communication, there is more time for thoughts, deciding on what to say, and deciding on how best to say it than what would be possible in a telephone conversation. In other words, any act done to communicate can never be well transmitted to the audience without having a considerable time for the written preparation to discuss what ideas and order would be involved in the oral communication. Indeed, this is demonstrated when regarding a play in the theatre; hence, every act, show, or scene, are recorded acts before being a play or an oral thought.

2.5 Writing in the Language Classroom

Meaningful communication is at the heart of foreign language education. Thus, providing EFL learners with the opportunity to engage in a variety of writing experiences can enhance their ability to learn the subject matter of a course and to communicate their

knowledge to others. Therefore, students can write for two main concerns: writing for learning and writing for writing.

2.5.1 Writing for learning

Writing has formed part of the syllabus in the teaching of English language; it can be used for many reasons. According to Harmer (2007), the importance given to writing can differ from teaching a situation to another teaching situation. Indeed, writing can be meant for a learning role where students write predominantly to increase their learning of grammar, vocabulary, and syntax of the language. Moreover, writing for learning implements mental efforts since it urges to think and discover new knowledge.

When writing, learners frequently have more time to think than they do in oral activities (Harmer, *ibid*, p. 31). Students can rely on their pre-existing knowledge, and even check dictionaries, grammar books, or other materials in their learning process. In this sense, writing may encourage students to focus on accurate language use. Because they think as they write, writing may provoke language development as they resolve problems that writing put into their minds. Furthermore, students-*here-* are separate from the writing processes and genres since they are writing for the sake of learning (*ibid*).

2.5.1.1 Reinforcement writing

Writing has always been used as a means of reinforcing language that has been taught (Harmer, *ibid*, p. 32). *i.e.*, writing main focus is to empower and reinforce language learning. Through writing students can learn different rules of grammar; for instance, when the teacher asks his/her learners to write sentences using the passive voice, this stents for the reinforcement of language. The author notices that reinforcement writing here may help students not only to write short sentences, but also to write paragraphs or longer compositions.

Therefore, the teacher may help his/her learners to apply what they have learnt by asking them, for instance, to write a description of someone as a manner to get them use the vocabulary that they have learnt (ibid). The main aim of such an activity is to give students the opportunity to remember a 'new' language better. In this way, the act of writing sentences makes them think about the new grammar or vocabulary in a more considered way than if they are asked to provide instant spoken examples.

2.5.1.2 Preparation writing

As writing can be used to reinforce language development, it is also useful for the preparation of other activities in particular. For instance, when students are asked to prepare a topic that will be discussed in the class as a whole about going to parties, they can either read out what they have written, or use what they think as they write to make their points. In this respect, Harmer (ibid) states that learners can make written notes during the discussion phase as a technique when a discussion topic is given to students in groups to prepare their arguments.

2.5.1.3 Activity writing

Writing can go beyond reinforcement and preparation to be as an integral part of a larger activity where the focus is on language practice. Harmer (ibid) reports that teachers may ask their learners to write dialogues which they will be useful if planned to practise particular activities.

The same author point out that writing may also be used in questionnaire type activities. A group of students may be asked to design a questionnaire for instance about 'ISLAM'; then, the teacher asks them all to stand up and turn around the class asking the classmates the questions that they have previously prepared. In the last step, they write down the answers and report back to the class. This example has shown a manner that may be used by teachers and learners for the writing activity.

2.5.2 Writing for writing

Teaching writing for writing is entirely different; he claims that the main objective is to help students to become better writers and to learn how to write in various genres using different registers (ibid).

Teaching writing is more than just dealing with features, such as handwriting, orthography, and punctuation. It is about helping learners to communicate real messages in an appropriate manner (Harmer, 2007, p. 36). In this respect, teaching writing for writing exceeds the rules of grammar, syntax, and spelling. It is on the content produced in a correct and suitable effective manner to convey meaningful messages.

2.5.3 Purposes of writing

Effective writers usually have a purpose in mind to construct their writing with a view of achieving that purpose. The most effective learning of writing skills is likely to take place when learners are writing real messages for real audience (Harmer. ibid, p. 39), this means that good writers are never judged by their own opinions and views. It is the reader/audience decision to check the amount of the purpose achieved.

The choice of writing tasks depends, therefore, on why students are studying English language; as a second language (ESL), foreign language (EFL), or for specific purposes (ESP). The figure below shows the main categories of learning that direct the purpose of writing (ibid).

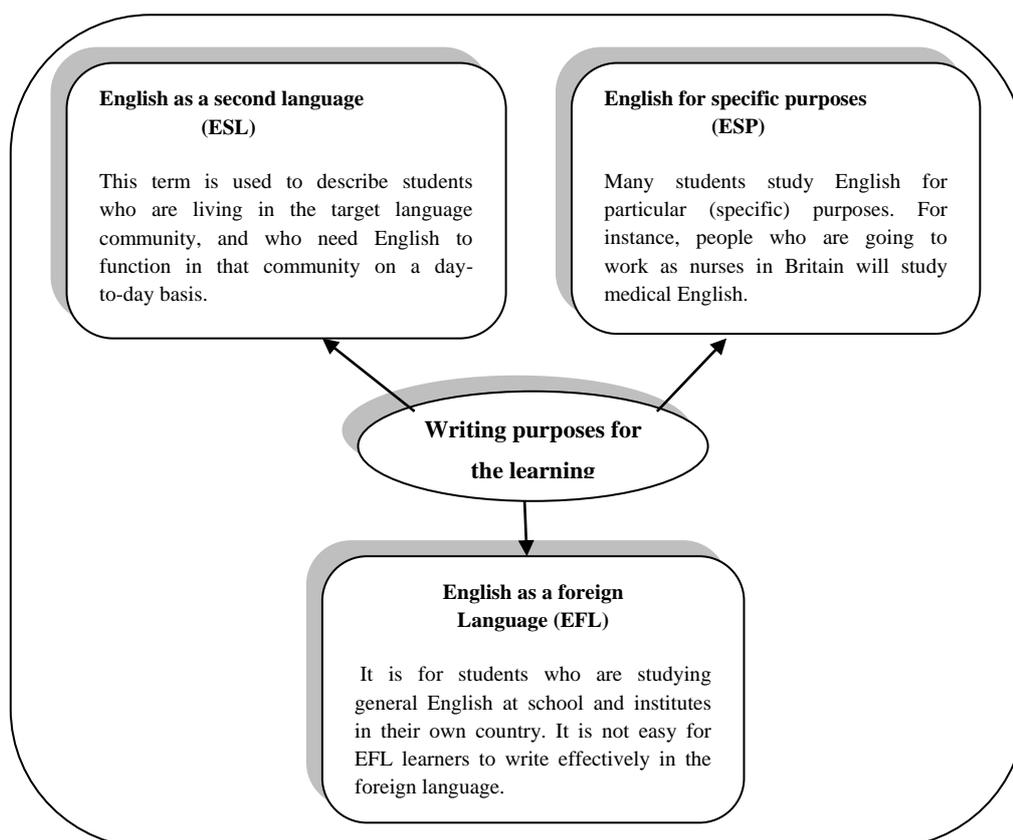


Figure 2.7: Writing categories and their influence on writing purposes (Source: Harmer, 2004, p. 39).

2.6 Writing and Assessment

According to Urquhart and McIver (2005), only teachers who recognise the importance of writing as a tool for learning in any content area will progressively understand that writing would help students to connect their thoughts, deepen their knowledge, and communicate with others. However, some other studies view that if teachers keep giving students regular writing assignments, they will notice that their overall writing skills improve, and their thinking crystallised. Teachers are likely to do more writing tasks in the classroom, but their first challenge is not just finding the time to fit it into their curriculum, Urquhart and McIver (2005) believe that it is about finding the efficient way to measure student learning through writing.

What if we could write without being careful, without planning, without thinking about readers, without coherence or correctness or even a topic (Elbow. 2000, p.453)?

Assessment is not simply a matter of examinations and scores, Hyland (2004) point out that scores and evaluative feedback often contribute enormously to the learning of individual students, and to the development of an effective and responsive writing course. As a result, the understanding of assessment procedures is needed to ensure that teaching is having the desired impact, and that students are being judged fairly. In other words, teachers, in general, and scholars, in particular, should treat careful assessment procedures in the appropriate context.

Besides, teachers often regard assessment as an unwelcome task with the potential to undermine the relationship they have created with their students, and the confidence students have gained in their writing. Assessment generally refers to the different ways used by the teacher to collect information on a learner's language ability or achievement. Additionally, assessing students writing includes specific methods, and procedures to test learner's writing proficiency (ibid).

2.6.1 The role of assessment in the writing skill

The role of assessment may help both novice and expert teachers to learn and seek different ways and strategies to use writing assignments to assess students' progress in their learning, in general, and writing skill, in particular.

2.6.1.1 Measuring results

According to Miller (1995), measurement is composed of two separate and distinct components: assessment and evaluation. Assessment means gathering information to meet the particular needs of a students, and evaluation as judging the information that results.

Whereas, other linguists and scholars view that assessment is comprehensive, avoid judgment, and describe what is happening rather than what has happened, evaluation adds judgments and criteria to the process. Urquhart and McIver (2005) view that this distinction may help students to think about evaluation as writing-to- demonstrate what

was learnt”, and assessment as writing -to- learn. Consequently, both are integral aspects of teaching and learning, and both of them contribute to learners’ scores.

2.6.1.2 Using writing assignments for evaluation

According to Urquhart and McIver (2005), writing -as- evaluation holds learners and teachers accountable for content learning. When learners write to demonstrate what they have learnt, teachers use tools that:

- measure the content that is covered;
- are designed and evaluated by the teachers themselves; and
- provide information that teachers can use to modify future instruction.

Above all, they have observed that when students write-to-demonstrate, teachers do not evaluate only their writing for grammatical correctness, but also for the level of knowledge and understanding.

2.6.1.3 Using writing assignments for assessment

Writing for assessment (writing-to-learn) is a much more powerful. Through writing; learners become active learners and are able to make connections to prior-knowledge (Urquhart and McIver, 2004).

With such an assumption, any piece of writing would never be progressed without assessment. Indeed, as writers receive different critical views, learners should have a continuous control and guidance from their teachers, and take those procedures used by the teacher to judge their own productions before being judged by the teacher. Thus, writing assignments have an effective role to measure assessment tools, and procedures during, after, or before the writing task to know how assessment is important in the learning processes, on one hand, and writing tasks on the one hand.

2.7 Technology and writing assessment

According to Weigle (2009), new technologies have brought a great change to the way of writing. New technologies are changing writing in ways that we can only begin to imagine. As a result, the impact of technology has affected writing through the recent strategies and approaches used in writing assessment.

The same author also discusses three implications of the growth of technology for writing assessment. First, new technologies are affecting the nature of writing itself in terms of the writing process, the norms and standards for written texts, and the progress of new genres of writing. Second, advances in technology are being applied to the scoring of writing by computer. Finally, technology, particularly, the growth of internet has increased global access to information, and has contributed the dominance of English language as an international language (ibid).

In the same vein, the new dominated approach in education, learner-centered-approach, has brought various changes to the learning and teaching processes. In writing assessment, it is the learners' turn to evaluate and monitor their own work in different ways which illustrate another trend of assessment that has been affected by technology, which is learner "self-assessment".

2.8 Learner' Self-assessment and Writing

According to McCann (1994), teachers have relied on certain types of assessment like; summative assessment and formative assessment, ignoring an extremely useful source of information, the students themselves. He adds self-assessment can provide teachers with the useful information about students' expectations and needs, their problems and worries, how they feel about their own progress. In this way, it is clear that; self-assessment can also be a much more direct and efficient way to enhance the writing skill than teacher assessment.

Assessing our students 'written work can be very time consuming, and unless you are careful, you can find yourself with many hours of marking which takes time away from other aspects of teaching like lesson planning.

(McCann. 1994, p. 12)

McCann (1994) claims that, it is necessary to do learner training activities that could help to make students aware of the various stages in the writing process. So, it is particularly important for students to realise their needs to check and assess their own work when they produce a draft.

Giving students the chance to assess their own writing may not only prepare them to be good writers, but also to select the appropriate ways to learn the language without any obstacles.

Conclusion

To sum up, this chapter has dealt with basic considerations on the writing proficiency. We have provided different explanations from different perspectives about teaching the writing skill. In addition, we have emphasised on certain approaches of teaching this ability, which may help to provide useful information about our research topic. Moreover, in order to distinguish between simple writing and good writing, we have attempted to give some brief details about effective writing as the basis for success. We have also depicted some reasons for the writing issues to explain various writing perspectives. In this respect, we have shed light on writing in the classroom including certain features. In order to target our research topic, we have dealt with assessment and its role in this skill. Basically, we have tackled the impact of technology on writing assessment to consider different writing aspects affected by technology. We have concluded this chapter by a brief explanation of self-assessment in writing.

The next chapter will be about the field work and data analysis. In this chapter, we are going to display the theoretical background and research design of the methodology we

opted for in our study, to analyse both the interview and the questionnaire, and discuss the obtained results.

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CHAPTER THREE: FIELDWORK AND DATA ANALYSIS

Introduction

This chapter is concerned with four sections. In the first section, we shall provide a brief literature review about the employed research methodology in this study; the research approach, research strategy, data collection methods, and research sampling. Then, our concern will be shifted towards research design through giving a clear picture of the methodology that we used, this includes; research approach, research strategy, and the data collection methods. We attempted to go in-depth to look for the aim, structure, pilot and validation of the two data collection methods that we have used. The third section will be about with the results of both the questionnaire and the interview. We will conclude this chapter by yielding a synthesis of the results obtained through the two data collection methods.

3.1 Research Methodology: Theoretical Background

Research is a way of finding out answers to questions. Its main aim refers to a search for knowledge. Kothari (2004) views research as a scientific and systematic search for pertinent information on a specific topic. It is, moreover, an art of scientific investigation with a certain methodology. However, Mackey et al., (2005) consider research as the primary tool used in extremely all areas of sciences to expand the frontiers of knowledge. Thus, research is constructed upon questions which are raised to find answers of some questions as a contribution to the field of knowledge.

Research studies come in many different forms. The used methods vary according to the nature of the issue treated. Hence, research methodology is an important area that should be well clarified among researchers, in general, and practitioners in particular, to make them understand the way of doing a research since almost every researcher links methodology with a research plan, or to the tools used to treat the validity of what s/he

researches. However, it is believed that research methodology goes beyond that perspective. It is a way to systematically solve the research problem, and not only to do research.

3.1.1 Research Approach

There are different approaches that deal with research. Two of the most common ones are known as quantitative and qualitative research.

Mackey et al. (2005) think that a quantitative research generally starts with an experimental design in which a hypothesis is followed by the quantification of data; herein some sort of numerical analysis is carried out. Moreover, quantitative research is initialised by means of a closed-question that results in a problem definition appearing at the start of the research (Jonker and Pennink., 2005, p. 66). This simply means that researchers may use closed-questions by giving choices on the part of the researcher to take statistics as standards for the validation of the research. Indeed, closed-questions items may include likert scales, multiple choice, rank order items, or even rating scales. Jonker and Pennink. (2005) point out that on this approach the hypotheses may play an important role, i.e., hypotheses here expresses theoretical expectations that will be confronted with the empirical results gathered during the research activities.

According to Kothari (2004), a quantitative approach can be further sub-classified into: inferential, experimental, and simulation approaches to research. The purpose of inferential approach to research is to form a data base from which to infer characteristics or relationship of population. However, in the experimental approach, some variables are manipulated to observe their effect on other variables. Thus, the latter is characterised by greater control over the research environment. Whereas, the simulation approach involves the construction of an artificial environment within which relevant information can be

generated. The simulation approach, in this sense, can also be useful to build models for understanding future conditions (ibid).

For the qualitative approach, the researcher is concerned with the subjective assessment of attitudes, opinions and behaviours. It is the researcher insights and impressions that guide the research. Mackey et al. (2005) define qualitative research as a research which is based on descriptive data that does not make use of statistical procedures. In other words, a qualitative research often seeks to find out opinions and views about the research topic to measure the validity of the research.

In this respect, a qualitative research relies on meanings, concepts, context, description and settings as suggested by Bray et al (2007) since quality here refers to the essence of things, unlike quantity that refers to the amounts of things. Moreover, a qualitative approach sees researchers themselves as instruments of data collection. For them, the main purpose of a qualitative research is to capture the research subject's perspective, and views of values, actions, processes and events. Furthermore, qualitative research can therefore be more easily characterised as inductive and explanatory rather than deductive and confirmatory (Bray et al: 2007, p. 43). To explain this assumption, a qualitative research is characterised by the fact that the researcher works on the basis of open questions which give to the respondents a flexible space to express their own opinions and views.

According to Jonker and Pennink (2005), qualitative research is based on the fact that knowledge about reality can only be obtained through, 'the eyes of someone else'. All this may enable the researchers to validate their researches.

3.1.2 Research Strategies

There are various research strategies for each research approach. Research strategies can shift from correlational to test a relationship between or among variables and then

make predictions. For Mackey et al. (2005), predictions are dependent on the outcomes of a strong relationship between or among variables. On this assumption, for the experimental and quasi-experimental research, Mackey et al. (2005) add that this type of study usually uses comparison or control group to investigate research question. Herein, randomisation is usually viewed as one of the important features of experimental research. However, the design type can range from truly experimental (with random assignment) to what is known as quasi-experimental (without random assignment).

Furthermore, the ethnographic research aims to describe and interpret the cultural behaviour, including communicative behaviour, i.e., behaviour is one of the key principles of ethnography as claimed by Mackey et al (2005). Ethnography can be viewed as a qualitative research strategy that generally focuses on the group rather than on the individual. In addition to the ethnography method, the phenomenological strategy or studies seek to understand the lived experience of the individuals being studied. This research strategy involves studying a small group of people intensively over a long period of time.

Another research strategy is the case study. The latter concerns the provision of a holistic description of language learning or use within a specific population and setting, i.e., it tends to give specific and detailed description of specific learners. According to Gillham (2000), a case study can be individual. It can also be a group as a class. It can be an institution as a school. Those cases represent single cases. However, there are studies about multiple cases, such as several schools, or two different professions. So, the case study is the one which investigates the above cases to answer specific research questions. The case study then aims to yield a range of different kinds of evidence which have to be abstracted to get the best answers to the research questions (p. 1).

3.1.3 Data Collection Methods

The most common methods used to gather data in foreign language (FL) are: focus group, tests, observation, interview, questionnaire and other methods. These methods can be used in both quantitative and qualitative approaches.

First, according to Mackey et al (2005), observation can frequently take place within a classroom context. The latter often allows the study of behaviour at close range with many important contextual variables. Conceived in such a way, classroom observation, as a data collection method in any research, is an important and useful means for gathering in-depth information about any researched phenomena.

In addition, a second data collection method is the questionnaire, which can be written in many different ways to be used in many different situations and with many different data gathering media. Brace (2004) states that the main role of a questionnaire is to provide a standardized interview across all subjects, i.e., questionnaire is about written questions by which the researcher meets the respondent opinions individually as in the interview. Furthermore, the questionnaire is the medium of communication between the researcher and the subject. It can thus be described as the medium of conversation between two people (p. 4).

In addition to these mentioned two data collection methods, focus group is a significant instrument in recent research used among researchers, in general, and EFL learners in particular. According to Dawson (2002), a focus group may be called also a discussion group or group interviews, i.e., the researcher here is attempted to treat his/her research topic among a group through a discussion, and works to take their opinions and reactions as standards to be analysed for the validation of the research. For the same author, a focus group is when a number of people are asked to come together in a group to discuss a topic.

The important point here is that through this tool the researcher can receive a wide range of responses during one meeting.

Moreover, an additional data collection method is the test. Singh (2007) insists that tests are most commonly used in recent educational research. In general there are two types of tests: norm-referenced tests and criterion-referenced ones. The difference between them is in the kind of information they are intended to provide.

Finally, the last tool is the interview. Interviews involve asking questions and getting answers from participants in a study. The task of interviewing has a variety of forms, such as: face to face, group interviewing, and others. Dawson (2002) believes that, in social research, there are many types of interviewing. The most common ones are: unstructured, semi-structured, and structured interviews. The author adds that in the unstructured interview, the researcher attempts to achieve a holistic understanding of the interviewees' point of view. In the semi-structured interview, which is used in the qualitative social research, the researcher wants to know specific information which can be compared and contrasted with information gained in other interviews. Concerning the structured interviews, the interviewer may ask a series of questions with ticking boxes of responses. Very often, those latter are used in quantitative research, they can be conducted face to face, or over the telephone, and sometimes with the aid of lap-top computers (Dawson, *ibid*, p. 29).

3.1.4 Research Sampling

Sampling means in general choosing a smaller, more manageable number of people to take part in their research (Dawson, *ibid*, p.47). Sampling means to involve a certain number of populations in the research to treat the problem applied on that population. Singh (2007) defines a sample as a finite part of a statistical population whose properties are used to make estimate about the population as a whole. When dealing with people, it

can be defined as a set of target respondents selected from a longer population for the purpose of survey (ibid).

3.2 Research Methodology: Research Design

In this section, a detailed outline of the research approach, strategies, and data collection method will be provided by explaining how data will be collected.

3.2.1 Research approach

Qualitative research is used to understand how people perceive and understand value and perceptions that underlie and influence behaviour. In our research, we opted for the qualitative approach to investigate the role of First Year EFL learners' self-assessment in writing at Biskra University through their opinions and views. We will rely on the qualitative approach, in order to attain our goal which is, to describe the effectiveness of learner'-self-assessment on writing proficiency. Moreover, through qualitative approach, we seek to explore answers to the problem raised in the research questions.

The nature of our research aims and research questions has directed us to explore learners and teachers' views and opinions as standards for results that will be obtained. Since a qualitative approach studies things in their natural settings, and interprets phenomena in terms of meanings people bring to them, we have attempted to analyse our subtracting problem on both learners and teachers, and take their opinions as standards by which our research questions will be answered.

3.2.2 Research Strategies

We have attempted to use the case study as a research strategy to emphasise on a limited number of EFL learners, and provide the basis for the application of our research topic to be investigated with its real life context.

3.2.3 Data Collection Methods

In our current study, we have relied on two data collection methods a questionnaire for 1st year EFL learners and an interview for EFL teachers of written expression, in order to investigate the role of using learner' self-assessment among them.

3.2.3.1 Questionnaire

- **Aim**

Through the questionnaire, we may draw certain aims to be fulfilled by asking certain questions to a sample of First Year EFL learners to gain different opinions from different learners in the same level. Our main aim is to investigate the frequency of using EFL learners' self-assessment in writing.

- **Structure**

Our questionnaire consists of (16) questions in four different sections. The first four questions include background knowledge about learners' gender, the reason behind studying English, and their level in English language. The Second Section consists of questions from four to eight which seek to investigate learners' knowledge about writing proficiency, including their attitudes, impressions and behaviour before, during and after the writing tasks. Moreover, the Third Section includes questions from nine to (12) which aim to check the frequency of EFL learners towards the use of self-assessment in their tasks of written expression. The Fourth Section is about learners' application of self-assessment in writing. Through this section, we have tried to check the effectiveness of learners' self-assessment on the writing skill.

- **Pilot and Validation Stage**

In order to make the questionnaire valid before the final questionnaire, we submitted it to the pilot stage. This pilot stage was to hand the questionnaire in the second semester to 20 First Year EFL learners at Biskra University, with a brief section that included an

opinionnaire, through which we aimed to ask about the lay out, comprehension, and if there was any repetitions in the questions. From the pilot stage, we did not remark or receive any comment to make changes in the lay out, the language used or the questions. Their positive comments motivated us to carry on in our research and make it valid for the needed sample.

3.2.3.2 Interview

- **Aims**

The interview is the most common methods of data collection used in qualitative research. Through the use of interviews, we have attempted to explore the views, experiences, beliefs of each teacher mainly of written expression. Indeed, through the use of interview, we have aimed to get a deeper understanding of our research topic from each teacher's perspective.

- **Structure**

The interview consists of six questions. The first question is concerned with the teaching experience for each teacher. The second and third questions seek to obtain teachers' opinions about the assessment strategies used by them in assessing their learners' writing. While the main concern of the fourth and fifth questions were to get the frequency of applying self-assessment by teachers. The sixth question main focus was the importance of giving learners the opportunity to assess their progress. The interview was recorded from seven teachers who had a good experience in teaching the written expression course.

- **Pilot and Validation Stage**

In order to make the interview valid, we asked five teachers during the second semester for the sake of piloting the interview. As a result, only one expert teacher accepted to record his responses, as well as to evaluate the formulation, and the layout of the first

version in the opinionnaire section. In that way, we met him in the staff room and did the interview. Throughout the interview, he remarked the presence of some spelling mistakes: E.g.: In what way you assess your students' writing? → In what way **do** you assess your students' writing?

Concerning the questions, meanings, repetitions, and language, we didn't remark any comments that would urge us to make changes in the interview.

3.2.4 Population and sampling Technique

In this study, our population is First Year LMD EFL learners at Biskra University. Its number was estimated 789, which were distributed in 12 groups. Because it was so difficult to work with the whole population, we chose a probability sampling relying on a simple random sampling. However, our sample is 120 learners from 4 groups, but only 95 of them answered the questionnaire. In addition, we have randomly chosen 7 teachers of Written Expression course for the interview.

3.2.5 Data Collection Procedures

For the questionnaire, we asked more than five teachers to submit the questionnaire in their sessions, but surprisingly they refused. To overcome this problem, we got the permission from our supervisor to carry out our investigation with two groups that he taught since he teaches First Year students. We submitted the questionnaire to 70 students. Other 50 Questionnaires were submitted randomly to students from two other groups.

For the interview, we got the schedule of each teacher from the administration. We asked them to arrange with us a meeting for recorded interviews. We asked 15 teachers, five of them refused to be recorded. And three other teachers refused because of time constraints. Finally, we managed to obtain the permission to interview seven teachers using a mobile for recording.

3.2.6 Data analysis procedures

For the current study, we attempted to use the descriptive method to analyse the data that we collected from the questionnaire because it helped us to describe, show, or summarise these data in a meaningful way. Through the descriptive method, we described data through statistics and tables that we have displayed in the next section. Indeed, we believe that the descriptive method can help us to generate conclusions from the statistics we did on our sample. Consequently, the descriptive statistics that we realised could provide information about our immediate group of data.

Concerning the interview, we used the content-based-approach as a method to summarise any form of content by counting various aspects of the content, which may enable an objective evaluation of that content.

3.3 Results and Discussion

This sub-section summarises the results on the interview:

3.3.1 Interview

Q01. How long have you been teaching written expression?

Our sample has been teaching written expression from three to 20 years. Three teachers are experienced from 10 to 20 years; however, four teachers are novice. They have been teaching written expression from three to eight years. This means that they have the experience in teaching written expression. Besides, they are aware of the difficulties of teaching and learning the writing skill. Indeed, their experience would help us to find answers to our research questions.

Q02. In what way do you assess your learners?

From teachers' responses, we can deduce that there is a tendency between assessment criteria and the aim of the course. All the teachers claimed that they rely on formative assessment including peer-editing and self-evaluation as part of teaching and learning

processes; they assess home works and a variety of activities in either written or oral form, and this whether in groups, pairs, or individuals. T₁ has mentioned that he always asks his students to do home works. T₂ thinks that her students are often assessed orally and sometimes in a written form. However, T₃, T₄, and T₅ confirmed that they used formative assessment including various assignments, and quizzes at the last five minutes of the sessions. In addition, T₆ and T₇ added that they considered many aspects of the language to be consulted at each time. Thus, their students are usually assessed in terms of different criteria; such as grammar, punctuation, vocabulary, and other aspects of the languages.

As a result, our targeted sample preferred to set activities where the students are engaged in the task.

Q03. What are the kinds of assessment that you use to assess your students' writing?

From teachers' responses, we can understand that they are using formative and summative assessment to measure their learners' progress in the writing skill. T₁ saw that he uses generally formative and summative assessment, T₂ agreed with T₁ but the form differs either written or oral. Besides, T₃, T₄, and T₅ said that formative assessment is the useful strategy that can be applied by students to practise writing inside or outside the classroom. According to T₆, in the written expression course, formative assessment is the prevailing one. In previous years it was just summative assessment but in recent years it is formative. Also T₇ has confirmed that he uses formative assessment, including different techniques peer-editing, student' self-assessment, and other techniques when doing assignments or classroom activities.

Q04. How can you define learner' self-assessment?

Noticeably, teachers have agreed with one definition. They have converged to say that it is a technique in formative assessment which meant to give the opportunity to the students to be engaged in the learning process. An attractive response was provided by an

experienced teacher in our sample (the one who taught the course for more than 20 years). In his words, 'It has been said by William Kennedy that it is 80% and 20%; the 80% is the learner' job and 20% is the teacher' job in the assessment process'. However, another teacher remarked that there is a new technique in written expression called peer-editing, by which the students can exchange their work to each other; for him, this technique is related to learner' self-assessment. So, the teacher here is a guide and s/he tends to leave something to the learner to do.

Q05. Tell us if you give your learners the chance to assess their own writing?

From the recorded answers from our sample, the results imply that the aspects of learner' self-assessment have taken a wide range, but we noticed that just experienced teachers gave their students the chance to assess their own work with a certain criteria to be followed when doing that. This implies that whenever it is possible the teachers can proceed to this practice. Whereas, the novice teachers rarely do that; this is may be due to many reasons, for instance; an experience to impose any suitable rule in the class, or the ability of how to control the students.

Q06. What is the importance of using learner' self-assessment as a strategy to enhance writing?

To make sure that learner' self-assessment has positive effects on writing, we asked our sample about the importance of using self-assessment to enhance writing. Consequently, most of them declared that this technique is important when it is carefully applied in writing. For instance, T₁ said that self-assessment makes students feel positive, active, and creative. T₂ thought that self-assessment can help to increase their self-confidence. In this way, the students would not see their teacher as a threat. He added that this technique could make the student hobby, motivated, and autonomous. Indeed, T₃ and T₄ have confirmed that SA is a good practice when a learner has his/her own reflection on writing, so that, it

will enable him/her to discover the committed mistakes. T₅ said that SA is important for three reasons; comprehension, memorisation, and retention. However, T₆ and T₇ claimed that the students will have self-feedback and will know about their main weaknesses.

3.3.2 Questionnaire

This sub-section summarises the results on the questionnaire:

Section One: Background Information

Q01. Choose your gender?

- a. Male
- b. Femal

Table 3.1: Students' Gender

Gender	Number	Percentage
Female	76	80%
Male	19	20%
Total	95	100

The results show that 80% of the respondents are females, while 20% of them are males. These results can be explained by the natural growth for females over males during the recent years.

Q02. You have selected to study English as a;

- a. Personal desire
- b. Compulsory desire

Table 3.2: Students' attitudes towards English

Response	Number	Percentage
Personal	90	94.73%
Compulsory	05	5.26%
Total	95	100

The table represents students' attitudes towards studying English language. Results show that 94.73% of the students chose to study English because they like it, and only 5.26% were imposed.

- **Why?**

90 students have explained their personal desire because they like English and it is their favourite language, whereas five students said that it was the choice of their parents.

Q03. Your level in English is:

- a. Good
- b. Acceptable
- c. Bad

Table 3.3: Students' level in English

Response	Number	Percentage
A	23	24.21%
B	67	70.52%
C	05	05.26%
Total	95	100

The above table shows that the majority of the respondents have an acceptable level in English 70.52%, and 24.21% of them are good in English. However 5.26% of students

have a bad level in English. These results are expected from First Year students since they are still beginners.

- **What is the reason behind that?**

67 learners have justified that their level in English is acceptable because they already have a pre-existing knowledge from the middle and secondary school levels. They always try to learn the language outside the classroom. While 23 of the respondents claimed that their level is good because they practice the language through listening to music and watching movies, and also by writing about several topics using dictionaries to check for the difficult words. Whereas five students, who think their level bad, justified that they have not any concern in the language and it was not their own choice. Some of them said that English as a foreign language is too difficult to be mastered.

Section Two: Students' Views about the Writing Skill

Q04. How can you define the writing skill?

- a. The ability to write effectively
- b. The capacity to convey meaningful messages
- c. The ability to produce something of your own

Table 3.4: Students' views about the writing proficiency

Response	Number	Percentage
A	23	24.21%
B	24	25.26%
C	48	50.52%
Total	95	100

The results indicate that half of the students (50.25%) defined writing as the ability to produce something of their own. And 25.26% of them saw it as the capacity to convey

meaningful messages, whereas, 24.21% of those students agreed with the idea that sees writing as the ability to write effectively as paramount. On the whole, results show that the students consider writing, mainly, when they write their own production.

- **Justify ?**

Since the majority of students have escaped from giving justifications, we have taken just 30 respondents from 48 who defined writing as the ability to produce something of their own because writing for them means creativity; they believe that when they write they become creative. Besides, they claim that writing means reflecting their own thought to written words. 10 students from 23 justified the choice (a) claiming that when they can attract people through their writing it means they write something effective. For the choice (b), only 15 learners from 23 said that when the reader understands the meaning, they want to convey, this means that they are proficient in writing.

Q05. What is your impression when your teacher asks you to write?

- a. You feel anxious
- b. You feel fear to make mistakes
- c. You feel motivated

Table 3.5: Students' impression towards writing

Response	Number	Percentage
A	11	11.57%
B	45	47.36%
C	39	41.05%
Total	95	100

Table 3.5 displays that the majority of the students (47.36%) feel fearful to make mistakes when the teacher asks them to write, about 41.05% feel motivated to write, while

the lowest percentage is 11.57% for those who feel anxious to write. Results show that the students are still struggling with shyness resulted from mistakes, ignoring that learning becomes easy just from learning from mistakes.

- **Why ?**

For (a), five respondents said that they are fearful because they dislike to be hesitated or punished by the teacher. Others believed that they are weak in the writing skill. While for the answer (b) 30 students from 45 have justified that they are not able to write in a good way. 20 of the respondents have argued the answer (c) that they prefer writing their ideas better than expressing them orally.

Q06. How you behave when you write your assignments?

- a. You seek for help
- b. Ask for teacher’s feedback
- c. Rely on your self

Table 3.6: Students’ behaviour when assessing their assignments

Response	Number	Percentage
A	14	14.73%
B	20	21.05%
C	61	64.21%
Total	95	100

The results show that more than half of the respondents 64.21% rely on themselves when writing their assignments, while 21.05% of them ask for teacher’s feedback. The rest 14.73% seek for external help when doing their assignments.

- **Explain ?**

For answer (a), only five respondents said that they seek for an external help like friends or internet then they ask for teacher’s help. While ten students have said that they have selected answer (b) because the teacher has the experience to provide a help. Whereas, the majority of learners (50 from 61) said that they need to test their level and progress whenever it is possible before the official examinations.

Q07. In what way the term "writing skill" corresponds to your level?

- a. Very much
- b. Much
- c. Little

Table 3.7: Students’ level in writing

Response	Number	Percentage
A	14	14.73%
B	50	52.63%
C	61	32.63%
Total	95	100

52.63% of the results show that students are proficient in writing, while 32.63% of the respondents are little proficient in writing. Whereas, 14.73% of the results indicate that students are very proficient in writing. From the above table, we can deduce that the First Year students still have difficulties in writing.

- **Justify ?**

Only four students have justified the answer (a), they consider the writing skill as the main reason behind any successful EFL learner. 30 respondents have argued that with answer (b) because they think they can write in a good way, while only 15 of students have

justified with answer (c) because of the difficulty of writing meaningfully in a foreign language.

Q08. You consider writing skill as a:

- a. Difficult task
- b. Easy task
- c. Complex task

Table 3.8: Students' attitudes towards the writing skill

Response	Number	Percentage
A	49	51.57%
B	25	26.31%
C	21	22.10%
Total	95	100

The above table shows that 51.57% of the respondents said that the writing skill is a difficult task. 26.31% of them consider writing as an easy task, while 22.10% of them see writing as a complex task. This implies that the majority of First Year students consider writing as a difficult task. This percentage was expected since they are still beginners in studying the written expression as a course.

- **Justify ?**

About 30 respondents from 49 think writing as a difficult task because according to their opinions, only good students can write effectively. However, 15 students from 25 claim that it is an easy task because the first thing they learn from any language is how to write, so, it is easy to write, others said that they like writing and for this reason they can write. While only 10 students believe that writing is a complex task because it requires the mastery of grammar, vocabulary and other language components.

Section Three: Students' Use of Self-Assessment

Q09. What does self-assessment mean for you?

- a. A good strategy to assess your work
- b. An important chance to evaluate your own work
- c. Less important than teacher's assessment

Table 3.9: Students' attitudes towards self-assessment

Response	Number	Percentage
A	53	55.78%
B	36	37.89%
C	06	06.31%
Total	95	100

The above table represents three different opinions. 55.78% of the respondents defined self-assessment as a good strategy for evaluation. 37.89% of them saw it as a chance given by the teacher to assess their own work. 06.31% of students prefer teacher's assessment than evaluating their own work. Above all, these results show that the students prefer to be engaged in the learning process through guessing their weaknesses and strengths.

Q10. How often do you assess your own work?

- a. Always
- b. Sometimes
- c. Never

Table 3.10: Frequency of students' self-assessment

Response	Number	Percentage
A	16	16.84%
B	73	76.84%
C	06	06.31%
Total	95	100

Table 3.10 indicates that the great majority 76.84% of students evoked that they sometimes assess their own work. 16.84% said that they constantly assess their own work. However, 6.31% of students think that they never assess their own work.

- **Why ?**

Five learners have justified for their answers (a) because they always check their strengths and weaknesses while writing their own production. 60 respondents chose the answer (b) because they believe that their teachers do not give them the chance to evaluate their own work. Two respondents said that they never assess their work because they rely just on their teachers.

Q11. In what way can self-assessment help you?

- a. Increases your self-confidence
- b. Encourages you to participate
- c. Nothing

Table 3.11: Students' self-assessment contribution

Response	Number	Percentage
A	39	41.05%
B	53	55.78%
C	03	3.15%
Total	95	100

The above results show that 55.78% of respondents believe that learner' self-assessment often encourages them to participate while 41.05% of them argue that assessing their own work may increase their self-confidence. Whereas 3.15% claim that assessing their own work may have no contribution. This indicates that a great majority of those students want to participate and agree with the application of self-assessment technique.

- **Justify your answer ?**

20 respondents from 39 have justified their answer (a) through self-assessment. They can through this strategy, decrease anxiety and learn from mistakes. While 45 from 53 have justified with answer (b), saying that it helps them to decrease shyness and increase participation in the class. For answer (c), three students see that self-assessment can never help them. They just rely on their teachers in everything.

Q12. How do you assess your own work?

- a. You assess your mistakes individually
- b. You ask about teacher' feedback
- c. You cannot assess your own work

Table 3.12: Student's way of assessment

Response	Number	Percentage
A	53	55.78%
B	37	38.94%
C	05	05.26%
Total	95	100

55.78% of the respondents claimed that they assess their own work individually. While 38.94% of them confirmed that they ask for teacher's feedback. 5.26% argued that they cannot assess their work. The results show that students want to evaluate their work before the teacher final assessment, which confirms that the respondents agreed with the use of self-assessment to learn from mistakes.

- **Why ?**

40 from 53 of the respondents declared that they prefer assessing their own work to decrease anxiety, to learn from mistakes, and avoid failure in front of the teacher and the class, while 45 from 53 have justified their need of teacher's feedback because they consider him/her as the source of knowledge. S/he is the one who has more experience, and the one who knows more about them. Whereas, two students think that they cannot assess their work because they have not the needed experience to do that. In brief, they do not know how to assess themselves.

Section Four: Students' Application of Self-Assessment in Writing

Q13. Tell us about your reaction when you assess your own work?

- a. Very satisfy
- b. Satisfy
- c. Not satisfy

Table 3.13: Students' reaction towards assessing their own writing

Response	Number	Percentage
A	20	21.05%
B	56	58.94%
C	19	20%
Total	95	100

The obtained results show that 58.94% of the respondents declared that they feel satisfied when assessing their writing while 21.05% of them said that they are very satisfy to use this technique, 20% of the respondents feel satisfy. Results confirm that although they are still beginners, they have shown their agreement towards the use of self-assessment.

- **Justify ?**

10 learners out of 20 justified the answer (a). They remarked that they feel very satisfied to learn from mistakes. 30 respondents from 56 are satisfied to use this technique to enhance their writing and level. 5 students out of 19 confirm that they are not satisfied because they do not prefer assessing their own writing.

Q14. How you feel when you assess your own writing?

- a. Active participants
- b. Passive participants
- c. Anxious and incapable

Table 3.14: Students' impressions towards assessing their own writing

Response	Number	Percentage
A	70	73.68%
B	12	12.63%
C	13	13.68%
Total	95	100

The above results indicate that 73.68% of the respondents claimed that they feel active participants when applying self-assessment in writing. Whereas, 13.68% of them said that they feel anxious and incapable to assess their writing. 13.68% of the same respondents feel as if they are absent or passive. On the whole, these results clarify that the majority of them have strongly agreed with that assessing their own writing production may involve them in the learning process.

Q15. Is using self-assessment as a strategy to enhance your writing:

- a. Very important
- b. Less important
- c. Not important

Table 3.15: The importance of self-assessment in the writing skill

Response	Number	Percentage
A	83	87.36%
B	10	10.52%
C	02	02.10%
Total	95	100

Table 3.15 shows that 87.36% of the respondents thought that self-assessment is very important to enhance writing while 10.52% of them said that it is less important than other strategies used by the teacher. The lowest percentage 2.10% claims that it is not important. From the results we can deduce that self-assessment is very important among EFL learners.

Q16. Do you think that assessing your writing can help you to;

- a. Write effectively
- b. Construct critical thinking
- c. Nothing

Table 3.16: Students' self-assessment contribution in writing

Response	Number	Percentage
A	73	76.84%
B	19	20%
C	03	03.15%
Total	95	100

From the above table, we deduce that 76.84% of the respondents claimed that self-assessment can help them to write effectively while 20% of them agreed with the construction of critical thinking. 3.15% saw that self-assessment has no contribution in their writing production. The results show that when the respondents assess their own writing, they can write effectively through learning from their mistakes.

3.4 Synthesis of the Results

Using learner' self-assessment among the teachers of Written Expression course is our fundamental objective. It also identifies their attitudes towards its effectiveness in writing proficiency. In order to obtain clear answers, we attempted to ask the teachers (our sample

included seven teachers) six questions. To begin we asked them about their experiences in teaching this course. Overall, we got these responses:

First, response one elucidated that the interviewed teachers are experienced enough for the validation of our results. They have been teaching this course from three to 20 years. In this respect, we obtained various answers about the strategies and methods of teaching and learning the writing skill. Indeed, we believe that their experience contributed to the success to gain insightful feedback. However, it is worth mentioning that we attempted to ask for teachers' experience in teaching Written Expression because each teacher can provide different strategies in his/her teaching career. Above all, it is important to highlight that experience might not necessarily make the 'best' teacher, but it almost always results in the most enduring lessons.

Second, in response two, according to the different responses obtained from asking about the ways used by the teachers to assess their students' progress, the results identified the over use of formative assessment among EFL teachers of written expression. Moreover, they considered such a way of assessment as a part of the teaching and learning processes. Noticeably; three teachers confirmed that they prefer assessing their students with the strategies, and activities that urge the students to be involved in the learning process before, during, or after the classroom activities. Through the use of such activities, these teachers suggested that they need usually to check many aspects of the language, among these we can account for performance, fluency, accuracy, punctuation, and many other ones.

Third, the third question aimed to highlight the kinds of assessment used by EFL teachers of Written Expression, the recorded responses revealed that the interviewed teachers are using formative assessment to assess their students' writing, either orally, or in a written form. Indeed, summative assessment is generally used at the end of each

semester, or at the end of each lecture in terms of quizzes, and achievement tests. In this respect, we have observed that assessing writing has shifted from summative assessment as a main dominant strategy to formative assessment as a part of learning and teaching processes.

Next, in question four, we aimed to generate teachers' perspectives towards the definition of learner' self-assessment. As a feedback, the results obtained from the recorded responses showed that all the teachers agreed with one definition. In this way, they agreed upon the definition posited that it is a chance given to students in order to assess their own work.

Moreover, our aim behind asking the fifth question was to know more about the use of learner' self-assessment. After analysing the teachers' responses, the results revealed that only the experienced teachers are giving their students the opportunity to assess their own writing, but, following certain criteria of assessment. This can be explained in terms of experience, and the fact that these teachers are well-versed, and well trained. Whereas, the novice teachers reported that they sometimes use this technique or other cases, they rarely use it; their argument was that they find it complicated to manage time. And, this is may be due to their experience.

Finally, in order in order to give answers to our research questions, and hence to confirm or disconfirm our hypotheses, we asked the teachers about the importance of using learner' self-assessment to enhance writing proficiency. Noticeably, we remarked that almost all the teachers had different insights towards this technique. Generally, they argued that learner' self-assessment has many useful contributions to writing. It may urges EFL learners to be positive, active, and creative. In this way, this technique may help students to write better through being engaged in the classroom activities. In addition, learner' self-

assessment may also help these students to reach a certain level of awareness towards the different mistakes they usually make in writing.

Above all, concerning the use of learner' self-assessment in teaching the Written Expression course, and from the results we got after the analysis of teachers' recorded interviews, we can deduce that most of the interviewed teachers considered learner' self-assessment as a recent workable technique, and since they are aware of their students' needs to develop their writing, they tend to leave something for the students to do in order to be engaged in the learning process. Indeed, the majority of the teachers are applying this technique in their classes since they are aware of its importance. For this reason, they often work to guide them through setting certain criteria and standards of assessment, and give them the freedom to evaluate their writing production. From this given fact, we can deduce from the analysis of the teachers' recorded interviews that learner' self-assessment is in fact important and needed to enhance writing proficiency.

Furthermore, concerning the students' questionnaire, the analysis of the latter afforded us with facts and data that helped us to make a decision to confirm or reject our research hypotheses. Indeed, it provided us with every individual's insights and opinions towards the use and the importance of learner' self-assessment in writing.

To start, in the first section, we attempted to discuss some background information concerning; student' gender, level, and the reasons behind choosing to study the English language. We started our questionnaire by such questions in order to make the respondents motivated to complete the coming questions. The issue of gender is important in our research to demonstrate that the administered questionnaire is randomly submitted among First Year EFL learners, so that there are a precise number of students between females and males. Another important reason was that in recent years we have witnessed various

factors that affect the allocation of students' gender in the field of foreign languages, for instance, learning a foreign language has become a scope of interest for both females and males. Also, another reason is to display the natural growth for females over males during the recent years. Indeed, including the gender item in our research was important to show objectivity in the analysis of the sample, and to demonstrate precisely the distribution of gender along our research analysis. In this sense, 80% of respondents were females, and 20% of them were males. In addition, we tried to look for the reasons behind studying English language, the analysis showed that 94.73% of respondents' choice was personal because they like this language, and it is their favourite language. Whereas, only 5.26% of them thought that the choice was imposed either by their parents, or the administration. Additionally, we suggested three choices to check for the level of our sample, either; good, acceptable, or bad. The results revealed that the great majority of our respondents have an acceptable level, and the lowest degree has a bad level.

In the second section, the results attempted to know students' views towards learning the writing skill. The majority of them defined the writing proficiency as the ability to produce something of their own because they prefer to be assessed freely. However, when we asked them about their impressions about writing, the majority of them answered that they usually feel afraid to make mistakes. Indeed, from their answers, we deduce that they prefer relying on themselves when doing their assignments rather than to rely on others. In this sense, they showed a kind of independence and responsibility when learning to write. According to the analysis of these opinions, it seems that, they are much proficient, even though, they considered writing proficiency as a difficult task. Consequently, this result was expected because they are still at the beginning of their graduation.

However, section three aimed to shed light on the amount of using learner' self-assessment among our sample. Significantly, from the analysis of the responses, we

understand that the questioned students consider learner' self-assessment as a good strategy to assess their own work. Besides, the majority of them believe that they are sometimes assessing their own work sometimes because this may encourage them to participate in the classroom activities. Contrary to these claims, most of our respondents thought that they prefer correcting their mistakes individually to avoid them the next time.

In the fifth section, first, we attempted to ask our sample about their reactions when assessing their own work. They declared that they are satisfied because -as they believe- it is a good technique to learn from mistakes. They also argued that this technique may urge them to be active participants. And it is important to enhance their writing since the latter can affect writing proficiency by writing effectively.

All in all, and referring back to all what has discussed so far, the main aim of this conducted research is to investigate the role of EFL learners' self-assessment to enhance writing proficiency. The findings of this research regarding the views of First Year EFL learners showed clearly how much they are interested to apply the self-assessment technique in writing tasks and activities. Through the questionnaire items we found the needed answers to our research questions. Consequently, our research hypotheses are confirmed since the majority of First Year EFL learners see learner' self assessment as a good strategy to enhance their writing. Also they agreed with the application of this technique while learning to write.

Conclusion

This chapter has presented both a literature review and a research design about research methodology. Therefore, the results collected by the two research instruments used in the current study, including the questionnaire of the students and the interview for the teachers, show that students and teachers have a positive attitude towards the use of learner' self-assessment to enhance the writing proficiency. Concerning the analysis of teachers' recorded interviews, teachers shed light on the importance of being at the correct trend that represents the recent international approach "learner-centered-approach". Noticeably, teachers have emphasised on the use of learner' self-assessment during the different phases of learning the writing skill in order to achieve better progress.

Consequently, the results deduced from the study concerning the role of learner' self-assessment to enhance writing has confirmed our research hypotheses, which means that there is a positive influence of this technique to improve writing.

General Conclusion and Recommendations

Enhancing the EFL learners' writing is increasingly difficult at the University of Biskra; it requires much more accurate strategies and convenient remedies in different pedagogical levels to raise learners' interest towards the writing skill. Noticeably, the teachers are evaluating their learners traditionally which make them consider this skill as boring, difficult, and a waste of time. This fact is clearly observed among First Year EFL learners who neglected the situation in which they are passive, ignorant, and waiting to absorb what the teacher provides them. From the above facts, we have thought to carry out this research trying to sensitize EFL learners to engage in learning the writing skill through assessing their own works, which is increasingly implemented in international institutions and academic settings.

The process of learner' self-assessment plays a major role in enhancing learners' writing proficiency. Therefore, teachers need to work to create a positive environment for the learners to increase their interest in the writing skill. In clear words, teachers are responsible for directing and approaching them by giving them certain criteria and standards of assessment and urge them to assess their own work. In this way, learners' self-assessment technique may help them to understand both learning intentions, and success criteria. And hence, it enables them to use these criteria to judge what they have learnt, and what they still need to learn. It also helps them to act on the received feedback from their teachers and peers.

Moreover, the present study aimed to identify the importance and the effectiveness of learner' self-assessment in writing proficiency. Hence, this study was carried out to confirm or reject the hypothesis stating that learner' self-assessment can enhance writing proficiency, and create positive attitudes among EFL learners and teachers. First Year EFL learners were chosen to be the case study of our research with a limited number of written

expression teachers. The results that we got from the analysis of both questionnaires of learners and the interviews of teachers have confirmed our hypothesis. They have also shown positive attitudes towards the use of this technique in writing among EFL learners and teachers.

Since our main purpose from this study is to yield beneficial suggestions in order to shed light on the role of learner' self-assessment to enhance the writing proficiency, some recommendations are suggested for both teachers and students in order to apply learner' self-assessment in EFL classes, particularly, in the written expression course:

❖ **For teachers**

- Teachers are invited to create learners' self-assessment awareness to develop their capacities in the writing skill.
- All university teachers are invited to make self-assessment as part of their classroom activities under their own guidance to enhance learners to become independent, autonomous, and active participants.
- Teachers should give more opportunities for learners to be engaged in the learning process. They should also change learners' negative attitudes towards self-assessment by raising their own awareness of the benefits of this type of assessment.
- Teachers should always be conscious of the students' difficulties, and they have to direct their intentions and interest towards the usefulness of this strategy.
- Self-assessment should not be free in the classroom assessment because most of the learners do not develop this skill independently. It should be made clearer for the learners.
- Before applying this technique, there must be carefully designed and prepared criteria of assessment as a guidelines through which learners can assess their own work.

❖ **For students**

- Students should be engaging on self-assessment to promote their learning.
- Students should be open minded, have positive attitudes, high self-assessment and self-confidence.
- Student' self-assessment is in need to practise it with teacher feedback.
- Students should be aware about the difficulties that they face, and they should make self judgment about it.

To sum up, learner' self-assessment as a recent beneficial technique cannot be improved in any field without the teacher's ongoing support. This research can be a step for further researchers to enlarge the scope of students' engagement in the learning process, hence, to emphasise on the use of this technique among EFL learners and teachers. Indeed, this research is meant to suggest accurate strategies to enhance writing proficiency, this would be achieved only if self-assessment technique will be included in further researches with much more concern and interest.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Transcription of teachers' recorded interviews

(Interviewer = Researcher/Candidate, Interviewee = Teacher)

Question One: *How many years have you been teaching written expression?*

Interviewer: Good morning, first of all, I would like to thank you for accepting doing this recorded interview with us. This interview is a part of our research work proposed to enhance writing proficiency through learners' self-assessment; it aims to identify the importance of this technique in writing. We would appreciate your collaboration if you answer these questions, my first question is: how long have you been teaching written expression?

Interviewee (T1): Before answering any question –of course – you are welcome; it is a pleasure and a duty to help Master Two candidates. I have founded that the topic is very interesting in itself; it is directly related to education, and the teaching of FL, it is concerned with all teachers of all modules. But, it is noticed that it is a neglected part of the teaching methods. Coming back to your first question, i have been teaching written expression for four years at the University level.

Interviewee (T2): I have been teaching this module for – now - nearly four years, i started with third year, now I'm with first year.

Interviewee (T3): Well.., I have been teaching this module - now - for probably four years.

Interviewee (T4): I taught written expression for more than 20 years, the first 10 years i taught them in Batna University and the 20 last years, I taught them here in Biskra University.

Interviewee (T5): Actually, I've been teaching the written expression course for three years.

Interviewee (T6): OK my dear student, I have a long experience in teaching written expression since i started my career, I started along 10 years teaching written expression.

Interviewee (T7): So, generally speaking; I've been teaching at the university level for 10 years, and I've eight years of experience with teaching written expression.

Question Two: *In what way do you assess your students' progress?*

Interviewer: In what way do you assess your students' progress?

Interviewee (T1): Ask them to do home works, generally it is summative, sometimes it is formative.

Interviewee (T2): In writing, they are assessed sometimes orally, and sometimes in a written forms. In written forms, they are asked to write sentences to see if they have understood, for example; the use of punctuation. In oral forms, they are asked maybe to give examples after an explanation for instance; of a grammatical rule.

Interviewee (T3): Usually through assigning home works, sometimes, through official tests, doing quizzes at the last five minutes of the lecture. But, i prefer during the classroom practice to check their performance, whether in groups, in pairs or individuals.

Interviewee (T4): I rely on a variety of activities and assignments; it depends on the situation of the student, and the level. Usually, i give them activities sometimes in groups, individuals or in pairs.

Interviewee (T5): Writing skill is assessed in terms of different criteria like; grammar, punctuation, vocabulary, and other aspects in forms of home works.

Interviewee (T6): I rely on formative assessment through different techniques. Assessing writing is up to the teacher aim of the lecture, through formative assessment we can assess different angles of teaching; knowledge, attainment, the skill, the aptitude of the learners. There are many techniques, for example; a guider composition, fill in the gaps, finishing sentences, guessing games, and strip stories.

Interviewee (T7): In fact, I consider many aspects of the language to be consulted each time; I tend to check performance, fluency, accuracy, punctuation, and sentence structure

Question Three: *What are the kinds of assessment that you use to assess your students' writing?*

Interviewee (T1): I tend to use generally formative assessment, and sometimes summative assessment.

Interviewee (T2): I use formative and summative assessment, but it differs in its forms, orally or written. Formative assessment is used more, and it is in the spot, we can have at the end of the lecture summative assessment.

Interviewee (T3): I'd like to see the progress of students, I do prefer formative assessment, every time we finish a lesson, I asked to write paragraphs in the class, or as a homework; starting at the class, and finish it at home.

Interviewee (T4): In written expression, formative assessment is the prevailing one, in previous years it was just summative, but in recent years it is formative.

Interviewee (T5): I always rely on formative assessment in every step in teaching with all its techniques, to make them focus on their studies. Summative assessment, I think just at the end of the semester.

Interviewee (T6): There are various kinds, up to the nature of the questions, and the objectives of the teacher. The techniques of assessment depends on the lecture itself.

Interviewee (T7): I use formative assessment always, and summative assessment at the end of the lecture sometimes in forms of quizzes.

Question Four: *How can you define student' self-assessment?*

Interviewee (T1): Now, we have a technique used in written expression called peer-editing, learners may exchange their works to each other, to benefit from their remarks and mistakes; this is related to self-assessment, the teacher is the guide, and they tend to leave something to the learner to do.

Interviewee (T2): Assessment in general means evaluation, by adding the prefix 'self' means auto, the person evaluates himself. It is a kind of assessment that the teacher does in the class to let some freedom, and to give some autonomy for the learner to participate in the work, in terms of self-judgment, and self-criticism.

Interviewee (T3): It is a technique in formative assessment which means giving the opportunity to the learner to be engaged in the learning process, through assessing his own work to look for mistakes with the guidance of the learner.

Interviewee (T4): Self-assessment is a field of study, it is not a strategy that we cannot start with, but it comes after another step, it is an ultimate objective of the lecture.

Interviewee (T5): It was said by William Kennedy, " it is 80% and 20%, the 80% is the learner's job in the class, and 20% is the teacher's work in the class. Generally, it is the learner' role to assess his /her own work.

Interviewee (T6): Learner' self-assessment means that the learner is asked to produce a piece of writing, and then he is asked to correct it to see if s/he is able to detect their mistakes.

Interviewee (T7): Learner' self-assessment means to give the students the chance to practise assessing their writing before being assessed by the teacher. It is a technique done by the learner to know the standards of assessment relying on a certain criteria or check lists given by the teacher. Students are invited to take part in the evaluation process.

Question Five: *Tell us if you give your students the chance to assess their own work?*

Interviewer: Tell us if you give your students the chance to assess their own work?

Interviewee (T1): Of course I give them the opportunity to assess their own work. Sometimes, when I give them homework to do, I ask them to exchange their views with their classmates, or to check their mobiles to look for the spelling of some words. I insist on their work individually then collectively.

Interviewee (T2): Yes I do, but not for all the time because of time constraints, and the problem of large classes.

Interviewee (T3): If I do that, it is in very rare occasions because the learner even with a check list, he is not aware of his/her mistakes.

Interviewee (T4): Yes, I give them the opportunity to assess their works; when I collect their home works, I correct them -but without writing the marks- then, I tell their peers to correct the copies. At the end it's the learner turn to evaluate his/her work based on my remarks, and peer's comments.

Interviewee (T5): Yes, I give to my students the chance to evaluate their own work; I give first the opportunity to the one who has committed any mistakes, and then I shift to the whole group to make them participate. Once they grow and search by themselves, they will be able to understand the targeting comprehensible input of the questions, and to memorise the correct form of a rule.

Interviewee (T6): Yes, I give them the opportunity to assess their own work sometimes, but personally I mix the work, not just individually, but in peers.

Interviewee (T7): Of course, I give my students the chance to evaluate their own writing, personally speaking, I have two main ways, and I tend to do that whenever it is possible, first, I may ask them to write a paragraph after a theoretical background of how to write it. After they finish, I give them a checklist to evaluate their writing following the criteria that I gave them.

Question Six: *What is the importance of giving your students the opportunity to assess their own writing production?*

Interviewer: What is the importance of giving your students the opportunity to assess their own writing production?

Interviewee (T1): It makes them positive; they will be active and creative.

Interviewee (T2): It helps to increase student' self-confidence, students will not see their teacher as a Threat, it makes the learner hobby, motivated, and promotes autonomy.

Interviewee (T3): It is good to have one's own reflection his/her own writing, it is important for students to discover their own mistakes. It encourages students to improve their writing.

Interviewee (T4): It is so important to write better through being engaged in the classroom activities.

Interviewee (T5): It is important for three main reasons: comprehension, memorization, and retention for accurate writing.

Interviewee (T6): To reach a certain level of awareness towards different mistakes of writing.

Interviewee (T7): They will have self-feedback, know about their main weaknesses, and enable them to try to overcome the main mistakes they can find for each time.

Appendix 2

Pilot Teachers' Interview

Dear teacher,

This interview is a part of our research work proposed to enhance writing proficiency through learners' self-assessment. And it aims to identify the importance of learner' self-assessment in writing proficiency. We would appreciate your collaboration if you answer the following questions.

1. How long have you been teaching written expression?

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2. In what way do you assess your students' progress?

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3. What are the kinds of assessment that you use to assess your students writing?

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4. How can you define "learner' self-assessment"?

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5. Tell us if you give your students the opportunity to assess their own writing?

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6. What is the importance of giving the students the chance to assess their own writing production?

.....
.....



1. Are all the questions appropriate?

.....

2. Does the questions helpful to collect the information we want?

.....

3. Does each question measure what it is supposed to measure?

.....

.....

****Thank you so much for your help****

Appendix 3
Teachers' Interview

Dear teacher,

This interview is a part of our research work proposed to enhance writing proficiency through learner' self-assessment. And it aims to identify the importance of learner' self-assessment in writing proficiency. We would appreciate your collaboration if you answer the following questions.

1. How long have you been teaching written expression?

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2. In what way do you assess your students' progress?

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3. What are the kinds of assessment that you use to assess your students writing?

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4. How can you define "learner' self-assessment"?

.....
.....

5. Tell us if you give your students the opportunity to assess their own writing?

.....
.....

6. What is the importance of giving the students the chance to assess their own writing production?

.....
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.....

****Thank you for your help****

Appendix 4

Pilot Student' Questionnaire

Dear students,

This questionnaire is designed to take your opinions as standards for the validation of our investigation. You are kindly requested to answer this questionnaire about the role of EFL learners' self assessment to enhance writing proficiency. We hope that you give your answers sincerely to guarantee the success of our research.

Please tick (✓) the appropriate box and try to explain your choice.

Section one: Background Information

Q01. Choose your gender:

a. Male

b. Female

Q02. You have selected to study English as a;

a. Personal desire

b. Compulsory desire

Q03. Your level in English is:

a. God

b. Acceptable

c. Bad

What is the reason behind that?

.....
.....

Section Two: Students' Views towards Writing Proficiency

Q04. How can you define "writing proficiency»?

a. The ability to write effectively

b. The capacity to convey meaningful messages

c. The ability to produce something of your own

Justify?

.....
.....

Q05. What is your impression when your teacher asks you to write?

- a. You feel anxious
- b. You feel fear to make mistakes
- c. You feel motivated

Why?

.....

.....

Q06. How you behave when you write your assignments?

- a. You seek for help
- b. Ask for teacher' feed back
- c. Rely on your self

Explain?

.....

.....

Q07. In what way the term writing proficiency corresponds to your level?

- a. Very much
- b. Much
- c. Little

Justify?

.....

.....

Q08. You consider writing proficiency as a;

- a. Difficult task
- b. Easy task
- c. Complex task

Justify?

.....

.....

Section Three: Students' Use of Self-Assessment

Q09. What does student' self-assessment mean for you?

- a. A good strategy to assess your work
- b. An important chance to evaluate your own work
- c. Less important than teacher's assessment

Explain your choice?

.....
.....

Q10. How often you assess your own work?

- a. Always
- b. Some times
- c. Never

Why?

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.....

Q11. In what way can self-assessment help you?

- a. Increase your self-confidence
- b. Encourages you to participate
- c. Nothing

Justify your choice?

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.....

Q12. How can you assess your own work?

- a. You correct your mistakes individually
- b. You ask about teacher's help
- c. You cannot assess your own work

Why?

.....
.....

Section Four: Students' Application of Self-Assessment in Writing

Q13. Tell us about your reaction when you assess your own work?

- a. Very satisfy
- b. Satisfy
- c. Not satisfy

Justify?

.....
.....

Q14. How you feel when you assess your own writing?

- a. Active participant

- b. Passive participant
- c. Anxious and incapable

Justify?

.....

.....

Q15. Is using self-assessment as a strategy to enhance your writing:

- a. Very important
- b. Less important
- c. Not important

Explain your choice?

.....

.....

Q16. Do you think that assessing your own work can help you to;

- a. Write effectively
- b. Construct critical thinking
- c. Nothing

Section Five: Opionaire

- Are all the questions appropriate?

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- Is the layout clear?

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- Do the questions motivate you to respond?

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- Any other comments ?

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****Thank you for your help****

Appendix 5

Student' Questionnaire

Dear students,

This questionnaire is designed to take your opinions as standards for the validation of our investigation. You are kindly requested to answer this questionnaire about the role of EFL learners' self assessment to enhance writing proficiency. We hope that you give your answers sincerely to guarantee the success of our research.

Please tick (✓) the appropriate box and try to explain your choice.

Section one: Background Information

Q01. Choose your gender:

a. Male

b. Female

Q02. You have selected to study English as a;

a. Personal desire

b. Compulsory desire

Q03. Your level in English is:

a. Good

b. Acceptable

c. Bad

What is the reason behind that?

.....
.....

Section Two: Students' Views towards Writing Proficiency

Q04. How can you define "writing proficiency»?

a. The ability to write effectively

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Justify?

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Why?

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- a. You seek for help
- b. Ask for teacher' feed back
- c. Rely on your self

Explain?

.....

.....

Q07. In what way the term writing proficiency corresponds to your level?

- a. Very much
- b. Much
- c. Little

Justify?

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Q08. You consider writing proficiency as a;

- a. Difficult task
- b. Easy task
- c. Complex task

Justify?

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Q09. What does student' self-assessment mean for you?

- a. A good strategy to assess your work
- b. An important chance to evaluate your own work
- c. Less important than teacher's assessment

Explain your choice?

.....
.....

Q10. How often you assess your own work?

- a. Always
- b. Some times
- c. Never

Why?

.....
.....

Q11. In what way can self-assessment help you?

- a. Increase your self-confidence
- b. Encourages you to participate
- c. Nothing

Justify your choice?

.....
.....

Q12. How can you assess your own work?

- a. You correct your mistakes individually
- b. You ask about teacher's help
- c. You cannot assess your own work

Why?

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.....

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Q13. Tell us about your reaction when you assess your own work?

- a. Very satisfy
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- c. Not satisfy

Justify?

.....
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Q14. How you feel when you assess your own writing?

- a. Active participant
- b. Passive participant
- c. Anxious and incapable

Justify?

.....

.....

Q15. Is using self-assessment as a strategy to enhance your writing:

- a. Very important
- b. Less important
- c. Not important

Explain your choice?

.....

.....

Q16. Do you think that assessing your own work can help you to;

- a. Write effectively
- b. Construct critical thinking
- c. Nothing

****Thank you for your collaboration****

Glossary

Accountability: The obligation of an individual or organisation to account for its activities, accept responsibility for them, and to disclose the results in a transparent manner.

Accreditation: Certification of competence in a specified subject or areas of expertise, and of the integrity of an agency, group, or person, awarded by a duly recognised and respected accrediting organisation.

Authentic assessment: Is the measurement of "intellectual accomplishments that are worthwhile, significant, and meaningful," as contrasted to multiple choice standardised tests.

Assessment: The evaluation of a situation or person.

Bilingual: Using two languages in some proportion in order to facilitate learning by students who have a native-proficiency in one language and are acquiring-proficiency in the other: *bilingual training; bilingual education*.

Broadcasts: To communicate or transmit a signal, a message, or content, such as audio or video programming, to recipients simultaneously over a communication network.

Costs: An amount that has to be paid or given up in order to get something.

Criterion-referenced assessment: Evaluation that attempt to uncover the strengths, and weaknesses of a student or trainee in terms of what he or she knows, or doesn't know, understand or doesn't understand.

Diagnostic assessment: It assesses what the learner already knows and/or the nature of difficulties that the learner might have, which, if undiagnosed, might limit their engagement in new learning. It is often used before teaching or when a problem arises.

Domain-referenced assessment: Is the concept that an examinee's scores on a test are interpreted with reference to the particular cognitive ability being assessed rather than in comparison with the performance of a population of individuals.

Earshot: The range of distance within which it is possible to be heard or to hear what someone is saying.

Enrollment: To enter (someone) as a member of or participant in something.

Evaluation: The making of a judgment about the amount, number, or value of something.

Formative assessment: Is an integral part of teaching and learning. It does not contribute to the final mark given for the module; instead it contributes to learning through providing feedback.

Intervention: Take part in something so as to prevent or alter a result or course of events.

Learner-centered-approach: Learner-centered teaching is an approach to teaching that is increasingly being encouraged in higher education. Learner-centered teachers do not employ a single teaching method. This approach emphasizes a variety of different types of methods that shifts the role of the instructors from givers of information to facilitating student learning.

Metacognition: Metacognition is a deeper level of thinking that includes the ability to think about your thinking; how you understand, adapt, change, control, and use your thought processes.

Norm-referenced assessment: Refers to standardised tests that are designed to compare and rank test takers in relation to one another.

Outcomes: A conclusion reached through a process of logical thinking.

Performance assessment: It measures students skills based on authentic tasks such as activities, exercises, or problems that require students to show what they can do.

Quiz: A test of knowledge, especially as a competition between individuals or teams as a form of entertainment.

Snapshot: A quick view or a small amount of information that tells you a little about what someone or something is like.

Summative assessment: It demonstrates the extent of a learner's success in meeting the assessment criteria used to gauge the intended learning outcomes of a module or programme, and which contributes to the final mark given for the module.

Verbal communication: The sharing of information between individuals by using speech.

المخلص

نتج عن محور الطالب للعملية التعليمية ثورة في عمليتي التعلم والتعليم لاقتراحه العديد من الأنظمة التعليمية التي تهدف لإدراج الطالب ضمن هذه العملية، تعرف تقنية التقييم الذاتي للطالب هذا المنهج بمنوال آخر يحمل نفس المفاهيم. ولأجل قياس مدى تطبيق هذه التقنية ضمن حصص التعبير الكتابي، تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى معرفة دور التقييم الذاتي للمتعلم في تحسين مهارة الكتابة في شعبة اللغة الإنجليزية بجامعة بسكرة. وبالتالي هدفنا الأسمى من هذا البحث هو تسليط الضوء على دور هذه التقنية في الارتقاء بمهارة الكتابة، وفي هذا السياق افترضنا انه باستطاعة طلبة اللغة الإنجليزية الرقي بهذه المهارة إذا تم استخدامها من طرف جميع أساتذة وطلبة الشعبة. وفي هذا الصدد اعتمدنا المنهج النوعي مع إدراج وسيلتين للبحث وهما: الاستبيان لطلبة سنة أولى لغة إنجليزية بهدف معرفة انطباعهم حول مدى فعالية التقييم الذاتي للمتعلم في تحسين مستوى الكتابة لديه. أما بالنسبة للمقابلات المسجلة التي عُقدت مع أساتذة التعبير الكتابي، فقد هدفت إلى معرفة أهمية تطبيقهم لمثل هذا النوع من التقييم. ولقد خلصت نتائج الدراسة إلى مدى فعالية التقييم الذاتي للمتعلم في تحسين مهارة الكتابة، حيث أبدى الطلبة جاهزيتهم ومسئوليتهم للتمسك بالتقييم الذاتي لأنفسهم كتقنية تحفيزية لمراقبة أدائهم، بينما عرضت نتائج المقابلات المسجلة تركيز الأساتذة الفعال على أهمية شمولية استخدام هذه التقنية بين جميع الأساتذة لأنها تعمل على التقديم المباشر لنقاط القوة والضعف لكل طالب.