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**Exploring the Effect of Peer Feedback on Improving EFL
Students' Written Production: The Case of Second-Year EFL
Students at the English department at Tlemcen University**

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requirements for Master's degree in Didactics of Foreign Languages

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Declaration

I, Nihel Rania BENKHALDI, hereby declare that this Master's dissertation is the product of my independent research. It does not include any material written, in whole or in part, by anyone else, nor has it been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma. I also certify that, except where explicitly stated, it is free from plagiarism.

10/06/2024

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Dedication

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious and Merciful, I dedicate this work to :

*my parents for their love, encouragement, and endless sacrifices, and for being
special parents and making me a special person*

my little sisters

my brothers

my friends, family and all my teachers

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Abstract

The objective of this study was to explore the effect of peer feedback on improving English as Foreign Language Teaching (EFL) written production. To achieve this objective, an exploratory case study was carried out that comprised twenty-eight second-year students and three teachers at the English Department at Tlemcen University. A mixed-method approach was utilized to gather both quantitative and qualitative data, employing teachers' and students' questionnaire. The questionnaire results showcased students' viewpoints regarding peer feedback. A significant proportion of students found the explanations given by their peers to be advantageous, with over 50% of them rating them as extremely valuable. These findings suggest that students held a high regard for the valuable viewpoints and ideas put forth by their classmates. In addition, the results indicated that students typically had a positive perception of the feedback provided by their peers. The comments proved beneficial in offering corrections and explanations, thereby enhancing their knowledge of specific problems in their writing

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Key to Abbreviations and Acronyms

CWE: Comprehension and Written Expression

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ELT: English Language Teaching

ESL: English as a Second Language

SCT: Sociocultural Theory

ZPD: Zone of Proximal Development

General Introduction

In English Language Teaching (ELT), writing is a vital skill that requires students to pay attention to both the structure and the content of their work. Successful completion of this task requires cognitive and affective engagement with their writing. For their viewpoints to be effectively communicated and well received by the intended audience, students need to express their ideas clearly and skillfully in their written work. Ferris (2014) emphasizes the importance of having specific inquiries in mind while providing feedback on students' work, such as what criteria should be focused on, how can a teacher provide feedback in a manner that is both accurate and clear, how can s/he ensure that students fully optimize the benefits of the provided feedback. The teacher's most essential responsibility is to provide written feedback on student written texts.

At university, second-year English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students are introduced to the challenging task of writing essays in English for the first time. Due to the complex nature of writing, many of them encounter numerous difficulties in different stages of the writing process. Teachers feel obligated to provide feedback that highlights these concerns and assists students in revising them. The primary aim of this study is to understand the writing difficulties faced by these students at the Department of English at Tlemcen University and evaluate the influence of peer feedback on improving their writing skills.

The present study explores the range of feedback that is used in EFL writing sessions, including input from peers and instructors. It also looks at how students view different kinds of feedback and what works best for them personally in a classroom setting. In order to achieve these objectives, the researcher addresses the following questions:

1. What effect can peer feedback have on the writing skills of second -year EFL students?
2. How do second year- EFL students perceive the feedback given by their peers?

The previously mentioned questions prompt the formulation of the following hypotheses:

1. Peer feedback can positively impact the writing skills of second-year EFL students, as it provides them with diverse perspectives on their writing abilities and offers constructive criticism.
2. Second-year EFL students may view their peers' feedback favorably since it can provide helpful corrections and explanations, and make them more aware of their specific errors.

To confirm or reject the above-mentioned hypotheses, the researcher carries out an exploratory case study that included twenty-eight second-year EFL students and three writing teachers at the Department of English at Tlemcen University. This case study collects qualitative and quantitative data using two research instruments: a questionnaire to teachers and a questionnaire to students. The study involved 3 teachers and 28 students. The data are analyzed employing descriptive analysis. The current piece of work consists of two chapters. The first chapter encompasses the literature review. It explores the primary theories of writing and peer feedback. The second chapter covers the methodology, data gathering, and analysis of the main results. The study concludes with a set of recommendations and limitations.

Chapter One

Literature Review of Writing and Peer Feedback

1.1. Introduction

The main focus of language learning has always been on how individuals attempt to communicate within the global community. It is important to note that writing plays a central role in this area, and the ability to write is seen as an essential skill. This chapter begins with a broad examination of the ability to write. It then clarifies the meaning, process and approaches used. It then discusses difficulties with written expression. Next, a brief definition of sociocultural theory is provided. It then introduces the concept of scaffolding in writing. The text explores the benefits and different forms of peer feedback. It compares written and oral feedback and distinguishes between teacher feedback and peer feedback. It also examines previous studies on the relationship between peer feedback and writing.

1.2. Writing

There is a common belief that the four language skills - listening, reading, speaking and writing - are complementary and necessary for both language acquisition and language teaching. The former is seen as a receptive skill, while the latter is seen as a productive skill. Most EFL teachers follow a predetermined sequence, with speaking, listening, reading and writing coming last. Thus, the main justification for delaying writing is that it is seen as the most crucial, important and challenging skill. Harmer (2004, p. 03) argues that writing needs to be taught because it cannot be acquired immediately like language. Harmer's main point in this paper is the distinction he makes between the two skills of speaking and writing. Here the learner is naturally exposed to it, so is in the process of acquiring it, but the ability to write has been consciously acquired.

1.2.1. Definition

Writing is a dynamic, mental and constructive skill in the process of language acquisition. According to Yule (2010, p.212), writing can be defined as the process of symbolically representing language through the use of visual symbols. As noted by Byrne (1991), writing is not simply a collection of symbols; rather, these symbols must be arranged in a precise manner to construct words and sentences. From the standpoint of Grabe and Kaplan (1996), writing can be analyzed from three different perspectives:

the writer, who actively produces the text; the text itself, as a written output; and the reader, who receives and analyses the written content. As Li (2021) points out, writing is the dynamic act of generating and modifying meaning in a clear way. Proficiency in writing enables writers to produce coherent and eloquent compositions that effectively convey their ideas, thoughts and feelings and make them easily understandable to readers.

Writing is commonly taught in educational institutions, starting with basic concepts and progressing to more advanced skills. Although the process is considered important, learners often find it difficult, whether in their mother tongue or in a foreign language. Byrne (1991) mentions the existence of three variables that contribute to the challenges that individuals face in writing. The psychological challenge arises from the lack of social interaction and the lack of information received. The linguistic challenge concerns the cognitive efforts of writers to express their ideas in a grammatically logical way. The third part belongs to the cognitive side and indicates that writing is acquired through specific instructions that enable the writer to consciously regulate the organization and structure of his/her own thoughts. The writing process can present several hurdles, requiring consistent practice to enhance writing skills.

Writing is an essential skill that can be valuable to everyone. According to Chappell (2011), one's personality is reflected in one's intellectual growth. It also makes concepts accessible to readers. When writers give or receive feedback, they have the ability to evaluate, transform and clarify their thoughts in an appropriate way. As a result, critical thinking and communication skills are improved.

1.2.2. Importance

To become skilled in a foreign language, one must achieve mastery in the four essential language skills. Therefore, the mastery of writing skills is essential for enhancing the academic advancement of individuals learning a foreign language. Within this specific context, the power of textual communication is so important that expressing one's feelings and personal experiences may offer psychological and physiological benefits. This technique has the capacity to cure depression, reduce blood pressure, and strengthen the immune system (McArthur et al., 2008, as cited in Ghodbane, 2010). It

has been said that writing skills influence both the psychological and physiological components of human beings. This is due to its importance and impact on the acquisition of a second or foreign language.

Considering that all language skills are interrelated, it is advisable to develop a correlation between the importance of writing skills and other skills. Harmer (2004) distinguishes between writing and speaking in terms of their respective skills. Writers use a combination of linguistic and stylistic elements to persuade their readers. Conversely, speakers rely exclusively on suprasegmental features such as changes in pitch, stress and intonation. Whereas writers rely on syntactic choices when using complex, compound and simple sentences, speakers use only uncomplicated statements. In addition, unlike speakers, writers use morphological density when employing a large vocabulary in written texts.

In addition to the skills mentioned above, reading is also related to writing. Accordingly, Harris (1993) makes a strong connection between the two. He advocates that both are fundamental components of communication and are related to both social and individual aspects. Moreover, the acquisition of knowledge can be achieved through the process of reading, which in turn contributes to the development of writing skills. He also believes that the absence of writers means the complete absence of readers. The connection is in realising that the skill of reading influences a writer's capacity to balance accuracy and flow in their writing.

1.2.3. Fluency versus Accuracy in Writing

Fluency, on the one hand, can be regarded as being equivalent to linguistic proficiency in a broad sense (Chambers, 1997). As per Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005), fluency refers to the ability to produce words without any pauses or hesitations. It is, as defined by Brand and Brand (2006), the capacity to perform tasks with ease, speed, and confidence, without any fear of making mistakes. Michel (2017) states that fluency consists of three dimensions. The first dimension refers to velocity, specifically the measurement of words per minute. The second feature is the breakdown, which includes both the quantity and duration of pauses. The final element is repair, which includes occurrences of repetition and self-correction.

Work fluency refers to a writer's ability to include a significant number of words or structural elements in their work within a given timeframe (Wolfe-Quintero et al., 1998). Fluency is closely associated with the smooth and logical flow of ideas, facilitated by grammatical structures that help the reader understand the text clearly and effectively (Lannin, 2007). Abdellatif (2013) categorizes measures of writing fluency into two distinct groups: the dimensions of goods and process-based metrics. While the former are contingent upon the specific methodology utilized to generate written words, the latter involve the ongoing monitoring of the writing process in real-time.

Casanave (2004) argues that promoting writing fluency motivates students to actively participate in the writing process and produce content without feeling constrained. Gelderen and Oostdam (2005) advocate that written works can serve as an indirect measure of writing fluency. This is because writers who have a high degree of linguistic proficiency are able to express their thoughts effortlessly and also assess them before putting them into writing. Many readers are often unaware of how quickly a document is created, how often it is revised, or how complex it is to create.

Accuracy, on the other hand, pertains to the extent to which precise norms of language usage are adhered to (Wolfe-Quintero et al., 1998). Skehan (1996) stipulates that accuracy refers to the extent to which the target language is created in accordance with the rules of the target language. It also relates to a learner's ability to handle the complexity of their inter-language at a specific time. From the standpoint of Gower et al. (2005), the degree of accuracy in language learning depends on three main factors: grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary.

Writing with precision ensures that writers effectively communicate their intended message and promotes a comprehensive understanding of the communication (Larsen-Freeman, 2003). Solfiyatuazzahro et al. (2019) contend that it is justified to give priority to precision while producing grammatically correct sentences. Consequently, it is quantified based on the rate of mistakes made in proportion to the quantity of language generated, such as mistakes per sentence or mistakes per one hundred words (Kuiken et al., 2010). Celce-Murcia (1991) observes that the prevalence of grammatical faults in

academic writing, averaging a value of mistakes per word, makes their writings obviously inappropriate.

1.2.4. Approaches

The history of teaching writing has undergone various paradigm shifts, with each approach being guided by its own distinct theoretical framework, and offering a distinct perspective on the concept, purpose, and application of writing. Four approaches exist, each of which will be explained in the sections below.

1.2.4.1. Product Approach

The product approach is a conventional method, which has been a part of many writing schools since the 1970s, comes from the traditions of rhetoric and is based on behavioral psychology ideas. However, as its name suggests, it concentrates on the written work itself. From Nunan's (1991) point of view, learners are evaluated based on their texts and are considered language users. This method of teaching writing concentrates on form and correctness. Educators focus more on text arrangement and grammatical faults than on the development of ideas inside the text (Ngubane, 2018). To show writing accuracy, students should write a piece that is well-written linguistically, including grammar and punctuation. According to Badger and White (2000), the product approach acknowledges the specific areas of linguistic ability that learners need to improve upon while dealing with different types of texts. Moreover, teachers must consider alternative writing approaches in addition to the product approach to effectively foster the growth of their students' writing abilities.

1.2.4.2 Process Approach

The process-focused approach to teaching writing emerged in the mid-seventies as a reaction to the constraints of the product-oriented approach and the traditional methods that were already being used (Kroll, 2001). Zamel (1982) argues that writing encompasses more than a mere acquisition of grammatical rules or imitation of rhetorical patterns. According to Hyland (2003), there are two main factors that contribute to the development of the process approach Emphasis on the writing process: This refers to putting the writing process's various phases such as planning, drafting,

revising, and editing front and center. The process approach places a high value on knowing how authors create and edit their writing. additionally Considering the specific demands of each writer: The process method recognizes that each writer has distinct requirements and preferences. It promotes individualized training and assistance designed to meet the unique needs and abilities of every writer. Researchers have begun the process of identifying the emerging field of ESL writing. In addition, educators have started recognizing the distinct needs of EFL as a separate field of study.

From the standpoint of Wardatul et al. (2021), educators employ the process approach to examine the elements that influence variations in students' academic performance. The educational process approach is based on Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural framework, which greatly impacts the way second language acquisition or learning takes place (Eliwarti & Maarof, 2014). The strategy of process focuses the processes involved in communicating concepts through writing, rather than focusing on the final result of the work. It promotes extensive writing practice among students to achieve mastery of language abilities. In accordance with Wardatul et al.'s (2021) claims, students in the classroom engage in collaborative work within small groups often including five individuals who belong to a group or organization. They collectively generate ideas and engage in discussions over the content of their written work. Each individual collaborates with the objective of assisting their peers through the process of identifying and rectifying errors, as well as evaluating their work

Wardatul et al. (2021) believes that the teacher's position is not limited to being a mere authority figure, but rather as a facilitator or coach, actively engaging with and responding to the students' written work. In such a role, the inductor replies to the students' writing instead of solely acting as a linguistic judge, as suggested by White and Arndt (1991). As stated by Kadmiry (2022), teachers offer guidance to students in areas where they require assistance, furnish them with constructive feedback, concentrate on students' writing process, and may address any deficiencies observed at the conclusion of the writing session. Writers strive to guide themselves during the writing process by setting objectives, generating ideas, and formulating an initial strategy. After completing the writing process, writers conduct a review where they

evaluate the objectives set during the planning stage, the topic, the target audience, and their level of competence in both fluency and correctness.

Steele (2001, as cited in Durga and Rao, 2018) presents a detailed series of processes in the process approach, encompassing brainstorming, planning/structuring, mind mapping, drafting, obtaining peer feedback, editing, producing the final product, and evaluating the work with feedback from teachers. First, learners engage in a classroom discussion, read relevant materials, or listen to recordings to produce ideas and gain knowledge about a certain topic, in preparation for their writing task. After that, they produce their thoughts into a concise format and evaluate their quality and relevance. Then, they have the option to either organize their ideas in a mind-map or in a linear format. This stage allows individuals to effectively structure their written works and create interpersonal communications that are based on relevant concepts and supported by specific illustrations.

Next, they start the process of writing the initial version within the limits of the classroom, either independently, in pairs, or collectively as a group. Subsequently, they engage in a process of exchanging their drafts in order to assess and criticize each other's writing. By doing so, they gain an understanding of the reader's wants or objectives. Additionally, they strive to enhance their own draft by incorporating proposals provided by their peers. In the following steps, teachers are given the final handwritten ones in order to supervise the progress of their pupils' writing skills. Finally, teachers assess the completed versions and offer essential input on them. Once again, students have the opportunity to share their work and receive feedback from others in the form of comments or ideas.

The process approach is regarded as an innovative method in educational writing that enhances writing education by using all of the students' writing abilities and pre-existing knowledge in the learning environment (Eliwartie & Maarof, 2014). Additionally, this method allows teachers to concentrate on various aspects of the writing process and offers learners more flexibility in comprehending their language. This orientation has the potential to assist learners in cultivating self-assurance and attaining a balance between accuracy and fluency.

1.2.4.3. Controlled Approach

The controlled approach is a crucial method for instructing individuals of all ages in the writing skill, even reading. It perceives language acquisition as a gradual development of behavioral patterns. This method prioritizes the focus on form. It allows pupils to focus on specific aspects such as accurate grammar patterns, proper sentence structure, precise punctuation, and suitable word placement in written language. Typically, students are given closed-ended tasks, which require them to provide a single accurate answer for each question in a specific assignment. Thus, students actively interact with the material that yields reliable results. Therefore, it is not necessary for them to have a particular degree of uniqueness. The supervised assignments can be rapidly assessed by the instructors and swiftly reviewed by the students themselves, contributing to the strengthening of their grammatical and vocabulary skills. Students develop the ability to express themselves effectively and accurately in the English language (Juriah, 2015).

1.2.4.4. Current Approach

This approach is traditional as it does not require students to generate ideas through brainstorming. Instead, students focus on analyzing and practicing a given text model within a specific timeframe. Zakime (2018) defines the product approach as a teaching method that emphasizes the final written output of students. Sowell (2020) contends that under the present methodology, educators utilize exemplar texts to influence students written compositions. Students frequently obtain writing tasks that necessitate the utilization of distinct discourse types, including expository, illustrative stories, and persuasive writing. It is anticipated that individuals will adhere to particular rhetorical norms, such as the format of a five-paragraph essay, which comprises an opening section, three main body paragraphs, and a concluding paragraph.

1.2.5. Writing Difficulties

As previously mentioned, the act of creating written material is a multifaceted endeavor that demands both cognitive and physical exertion. Consequently, numerous EFL learners produce compositions that exhibit grammatical accuracy yet encounter adverse repercussions. Dontcheva-Navratilova et al. (2009) propose that these learners

frequently prioritize linguistic accuracy over meaning and coherence, resulting in technically accurate but unclear and ineffective writing. According to Kroll (1990), the challenge lies not only in creating concepts, but also in effectively combining phrases in a cohesive manner. Writing can be especially challenging for EFL students who need to acquire the ability to produce written works that “demonstrate their expertise in using proper formats for presenting ideas effectively, as well as their command of all aspects of language[...] the general difficulty of writing is partly attributed to the variety of skills required” (Kroll, 1990, p. 140).

When students and writers take on a written assignment, they face various difficulties, including problems with grammar, spelling, punctuation, vocabulary, consistency, and cohesion. A thorough comprehension of grammar is crucial for writing with precision. Moreover, it is crucial for both teachers and students to recognize and comply with the fundamental rules and norms of grammar in order to successfully communicate the intended message. In addition, pupils are able to produce substantial, logical, and precisely structured arguments when they have a comprehension of different linguistic patterns (Dontcheva-Navratilova & Povolná, 2009).

Hamp-Lyons et al. (1997) enumerate some grammatical deficiencies encountered by learners. The user is seeking clarification on the distinctions between a clause, phrase, and sentence. They also want guidance on constructing grammatically accurate sentences, selecting appropriate conjunctions and connectors, and correctly using verb tenses. The dearth of language holds significant significance in the context of writing. Vocabulary is considered to be the fundamental component of a language, consisting of the words that make it up. Writing is essentially the act of expressing meaning and transmitting a message by carefully choosing appropriate words and presenting them in written form. EFL learners exhibit limited vocabulary knowledge due to little reading, little engagement in speaking sessions, and a scarcity of use dictionaries. The learners struggle to articulate their ideas effectively due to their restricted vocabulary (Ourghi, 2002).

Students often face spelling and grammar problems when writing. The occurrence of spelling mistakes can be attributed to the phenomenon where multiple

words are pronounced identically yet have distinct spellings and meanings. Furthermore, they exhibit a deficiency in accurately associating the sounds of words with their corresponding orthography. As an illustration, they use words such as their, and they're (Medwell et al., 1998). Likewise, punctuation problems hold significant relevance in writing. Accordingly, Moore et al. (2010) stipulate that punctuation marks serve a similar function as traffic signals that provide readers with guidance, indicating when to proceed, when to halt, and which direction to take.

Other important writing aspects that students have difficulties in are coherence and cohesiveness, which also facilitate the connection between phrases in a proper manner. A significant number of EFL learners have challenges when it comes to writing clearly. These learners tend to prioritize language aspects rather than focusing on conveying meaning (Dontcheva-Navratilova & Povolà, 2009). Hence, it is important for individuals to possess knowledge of both coherence and cohesion patterns to effectively generate and compose suitable, methodical, and precise passages. Comprehending the link between writing, Sociocultural Theory (SCT), and the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) can offer useful insights into the process by which learners enhance their writing abilities through social engagement and directed assistance.

1.3. Sociocultural Theory

Sociocultural theory (SCT) is based on the previous research conducted by Vygotsky (1978), a Russian psychologist, who proposed that the social environment plays a crucial role in influencing the cognitive capabilities of individuals. According to the theory, social interaction is the main element of the communication and learning process (Behroozizad et al., 2014). In order to provide a more detailed explanation of the idea, Vygotsky (1978) established the concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). This refers to the learner's capacity to surpass their current abilities by engaging in conversation with individuals in their immediate environment. Tzuriel (2000) offers a precise description of the ZPD to emphasize the distinctions between a learner's current level of development and his/her prospective level of development.

While several scholars have developed their own interpretations of the ZPD, Tzuriel's (2002) definition stands out for its clarity. Actual development refers to the

advanced degree of thinking abilities and problem-solving skills presented by kids, whereas potential development is assessed by their capacity to solve problems with the assistance of an adult or peer. The SCT suggests that teaching and learning are interactive procedures that rely on the active involvement of all participants (Eun, 2010; Steele, 2001). Passive learning is missing in the classroom as it involves a high level of engagement instead.

Storch and Aldosari (2013) argues that interaction provides learners with the chance to enhance their language acquisition. Effective communication is crucial in this process, particularly through the interchange of comments, since it facilitates the enhancement of writing proficiency. The main tool used is the ZPD. By employing it, educators will acquire discernment into the specific requirements of every student, enabling them to improve the educational encounter and proficiently elucidate intricate subjects that were previously challenging for pupils to comprehensively grasp (Eun, 2010). Levykh (2008) suggests that including the ZPD in the classroom might foster an environment that facilitates learners' enhancement of vocabulary and grammar skills, enabling them to successfully express their ideas.

1.4. Scaffolding in Writing

The Vygotskyan's (1978) SCT and the notion ZPD have greatly influenced the development of the scaffolding concept (Riazi & Rezaii, 2011). Scaffolding, as described by Donato (1994), refers to "the practice where a skilled individual establishes a supportive setting for a novice to participate in activities and improve their existing skills and knowledge in order to achieve higher degrees of proficiency" (p.40). It is an instructional method that helps learners develop problem-solving abilities and achieve learning goals (Piamsai, 2020).

Widiana and As-Sabiq (2021) show in their research how new knowledge is formed by building upon previous information. Scaffolding can be offered by an individual peer or by peers collaborating as a group. It is, based on Schwieter's (2010) definition, a method used in problem-based learning. The objective of education is to foster and augment an individual's capacity to resolve issues. Participants are assigned

a task and must evaluate and solve it. It is an instructional method used to offer assistance and guidance to learners, enabling them to effectively accomplish their tasks.

Yunusa et al. (2019) state that the scaffolding technique enables students to comprehend concepts relevant to their study and acquire knowledge that enhances their writing skills. Lhadon and Wangmo (2022) assert that the acquisition of proficient writing skills is crucial for achieving academic success. Hence, the utilisation of scaffolding instructions proves beneficial in cultivating the writing proficiency of English as a Second Language (ESL) learners. In their study, they outline a set of explicit guidelines for implementing scaffolding phases during the education of writing skills to students.

The first phase is entitled demonstration lesson. In this phase, the teacher exhibits to the students the process of composing high-quality essays, and students demonstrate a comprehensive comprehension of the material they are required to generate while engaging in the processes of verbalizing their thoughts and generating ideas through brainstorming. The second phase is the activating prior information. Educators should establish connections between students' existing knowledge and the skills they require to ensure a sense of ease and familiarity in their writing. The capacity of students to establish connections between ideas can facilitate the acquisition of novel skills.

In the third phase, students are introduced to writing by providing them with a written essay as a model. This will help them rapidly grasp the structure of an essay, including the opening paragraph, three body paragraphs, and a conclusion paragraph. In the last phase, peer discussion and feedback, educators should facilitate students in engaging in discourse and exchanging feedback on their work and ideas, as students acquire knowledge most effectively through interactions with their peers (Lhadon & Wangmo, 2022). Burger (2022) emphasises the use of teacher and peer feedback as a scaffolding technique, as it enables students to become aware of their writing demands.

1.5. Peer Feedback

Peer feedback, also known as peer response, peer review, peer editing, or peer evaluation, involves using learners as sources of information and participants for each other. In this process, learners take on roles and responsibilities typically performed by

a formally trained teacher, tutor, or editor. They provide comments and critiques on each other's drafts, both in written and oral formats, during the writing process (Liu & Hansen, 2002). Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory provides the explanation for peer feedback. It asserts that the development of the mind occurs through an individual's contact with the surrounding world. He stresses that learning is not a solitary endeavour, but rather a cognitive process that changes the emphasis on learning from the individual to the interaction within a social setting. Hence, peer interaction is crucial for enhancing students' learning since it enables them to build knowledge through social sharing and engagement (Liu et al., 2001).

1.5.1. Benefits

One often used technique in educational contexts to improve students' writing abilities is peer feedback. Peer comments, as claimed by Wakabayashi (2013), can have a big effect on the reviewers' own writing skills. Researchers at a Japanese university watched lower proficiency pupils who participated in peer text reviews. A strong association was discovered between the reviewers' score increases and how effective they thought the feedback task was. This implies that while it improves their critical thinking and self-assessment abilities, taking part in the peer feedback process benefits the reviewers as well as those who receive of the feedback (Wakabayashi, 2013). These results emphasize the two benefits of peer feedback, which makes it an important educational instrument in writing instruction.

The advantages of receiving feedback from peers in higher education are well recorded. According to Falchikov (2006), peer feedback is commonly seen as a valuable and reliable practice that enhances learning results. Students generally perceive peer evaluation as beneficial because it stimulates critical thinking and allows them to actively engage with the subject matter. Nevertheless, certain students articulate unease with the practice of evaluating their peers' work, especially within smaller, firmly established groups. However, Falchikov's (2006) study highlights the significance of critical feedback in comparison to grading, indicating that this feedback plays a crucial role in enhancing student performance and interpersonal skills. Therefore, peer assessment has multiple benefits in promoting both academic and social aptitudes.

Multiple studies have recommended the use of peer feedback due to its numerous advantages. Hyland (2000) states that peer feedback motivates students to actively engage in classroom activities and reduces their reliance on the teacher. From the viewpoint of Yarrow and Topping (2001), peer feedback is crucial in enhancing engagement and time spent on tasks, providing immediate and personalised assistance, setting goals, explaining concepts, preventing information overload, boosting learning, modelling behaviour, and reinforcing learning.

Furthermore, it can result in less writing anxiety and increased confidence, while also creating a social environment for writing. Yang et al. (2006) maintains that peer feedback is beneficial for fostering critical thinking, learner autonomy, and social interaction among students. Furthermore, its implementation enables students to obtain a greater number of personalised remarks, while also affording reviewers the chance to enhance and cultivate various language abilities (Lundstrom & Baker, 2009). Extending the benefits of prior research on peer feedback, Shute (2008) introduces a variety of feedback forms and highlights its critical role in improving learning outcomes and performance evaluation.

1.5.2. Types

As stated by Shute (2008), feedback refers to the process of giving learners information to assist them in adjusting their thoughts and behavior in order to enhance their learning. It can be characterized as either a unidirectional transfer of knowledge guided by academics or a process with two directions that requires active participation from students, which is considered crucial for its efficacy (Winstone, 2022). Elsayed and Cakir (2023) assert that feedback is a potent element of instruction or method as it effectively reveals the learner's needs, direction, and crucial steps to achieve the intended outcome. Let's distinguish between synchronous and asynchronous feedback before we look at the different kinds of feedback. Synchronous feedback, as proposed by Elsayed and Cakir (2023), allows for real-time engagement and quick interaction between the giver and the one who gets it. On the other hand, asynchronous feedback entails delayed communication and is usually expressed in the form of written remarks or recorded communications.

1.5.2.1. Asynchronous versus Synchronous Feedback

The transition to online learning has had an impact on assessment, specifically in the evaluation of EFL writing. The mode of feedback has transitioned from traditional paper-based methods to electronic feedback, as stated by Tatsanajamsuk and Saengboon (2021). Electronic feedback, often known as e-feedback, refers to feedback that is given to students by electronic means, such as computers. The feedback can be provided by either the instructor or classmates and is transmitted electronically to the learner. (Ene & Upton, 2014). Writers may receive several types of feedback from others, which therefore has an impact on their written work. Li (2021) classifies electronic feedback into two distinct categories: asynchronous and synchronous.

Ahmed et al. (2021) defines asynchronous feedback as a sequential procedure where the teacher gives a task, the student does it, submits their response, and subsequently receives written feedback from the teacher. Students receive asynchronous feedback on their electronically submitted work using multiple methods, including Google Drive, Word from Microsoft, emails, voice observations, and chats on WhatsApp (Al Damen, 2020). For Waller and Papi (2017), asynchronous feedback allows students to analyze and allocate their efforts and time in order to enhance their writing skills. Writers can enhance their critical thinking abilities by receiving feedback, scrutinizing it, reflecting about it, and actively pursuing information that is pertinent to the remarks. Furthermore, individuals have the ability to collect supplementary data in order to assess the feedback they are using as evidence. This helps them make well-informed decisions regarding whether to accept or reject the proposed feedback (Ahmed et al., 2021).

Synchronous feedback refers to the prompt feedback provided when both students and teachers are actively present (Tatsanajamsuk & Saengboon, 2021; Chong, 2019). Al Damen (2020) suggests that computer-mediated systems such as Google Hangouts, Skype, Zoom, Microsoft Docs, and Syntax can be utilized for delivery purposes. Using synchronous feedback in online writing sessions enhances students' writing proficiency by providing comprehensive instruction on the target language in an appropriate environment, increasing engagement with professors, and enabling students to produce ideas through brainstorming (Heift & Caws, 2000).

A study conducted by Van Beuningen et al. (2011) shows that synchronous feedback is successful in enhancing the grammatical accuracy EFL learners and attaining higher scores in forming arguments (Chong, 2019; Ahmed et al., 2021). The discourse surrounding asynchronous and synchronous feedback is a contentious subject. For certain academicians, synchronous feedback is considered to be more efficacious than asynchronous feedback. Abrams (2003) argues that certain students do not consider asynchronous work to be important. Therefore, providing synchronous feedback can be a more efficient method to enhance learning outcomes. Furthermore, the provision of prompt feedback serves to elucidate the learning environment and instigate student motivation towards enhanced progress (Ahmed et al., 2021). Similarly, Canals et al. (2020) argue that teachers may be unable to offer prompt feedback in distant language learning due to their overwhelming workload. Given the circumstances, opting for asynchronous feedback might be more advantageous. Students will be provided with chances to identify and rectify their mistakes, and generate precise texts in a fresh composition (Shintani et al., 2014).

1.5.2.2. Written Feedback vs Oral Feedback

Written feedback is a distinct form of written communication exchanged between students and professors (Feuerherm, 2012). According to Elfiza et al. (2021), annotations in student work include mistake modifications, remarks, queries, margins states, and footnotes. In their study, Sabat and Slamet (2019) categorize written input into two distinct groups: direct and indirect. On the one hand, direct written feedback refers to the practice of a writing instructor providing particular revisions to a student's work, such as rectifying grammatical errors in the sentences. The instructor offers implicit written feedback by directly addressing a particular mistake in the student's composition, such as highlighting an ungrammatical sentence.

Theoretically, it has been suggested that indirect written feedback can encourage students to work through problems and test hypotheses, which will help them build their second language skills and write accurately. Indirect written corrective feedback proponents contend that this type of feedback is particularly beneficial because it allows second language learners to participate in directed learning (Lalande, 1982) and it

encourages a deeper processing of knowledge that has only been partially internalised (Bitchener, 2012). It implies that learners who have some prior understanding of the targets may benefit more from indirect feedback than those who are learning entirely new linguistic elements.

Nicol (2010) proposes a series of characteristics that delineate proficient written feedback. It should be comprehensible in the sense that the text should be prepared using language that is easily understood the students. Moreover, it should be discriminating as it should provide commentary on a minimum of three matters that the student has the ability to take action on. Moreover, it should be precise by including include concrete examples where the feedback is mentioned. Furthermore, it should be transferable where the emphasis should be on the acquisition of procedures, skills, and self-regulatory capacities. Finally, the text should be descriptive rather than evaluative, meaning it should emphasize learning goals rather than performance goals.

The term oral feedback refers to feedback that is conveyed through verbal communication (Wiranatk, 2019). For Shieh et al. (2022), feedback given orally can be characterized from multiple perspectives. Oral feedback, from the learners' perspective, refers to the information that students receive in reaction to their achievement. Oral feedback, from the teachers' perspectives, is the act of providing comments to learners without any physical interaction. The third perspective on oral feedback emphasizes the crucial importance of teacher-student contact. The fourth perspective regards oral feedback as an all-encompassing process that incorporates all the aforementioned components (Shieh et al., 2022). Oral feedback can be communicated in either implicit or explicit ways. Implicit oral feedback conveys indirect information to language learners regarding the incorrectness of their work, whereas explicit oral feedback directly identifies errors through hints or suggestions (Zarei et al., 2019).

Lyster and Ranta (1997) classify oral feedback into six main categories: recasts, explicit correction, metalinguistic signals, elicitation, repetition, and clarification requests. Explicit correction refers to the act of clearly indicating to a pupil that they have made a mistake and need to rectify it. Recasts is used to rectify the wrong language or wording of the student's response. Explanation requests indicates that further

explanation is needed in order to fully comprehend the student's statement. Metalinguistic feedback involves delivering remarks on errors, along with specific explanations of the forms, without actually providing the correction. Elicitation relates to the act of posing more questions to prompt the pupil to rephrase and rectify their mistakes. Repetition involves emphasizing the student's mistakes by using an upward inflection in intonation.

It is widely accepted that providing oral feedback can lead to significant improvements in students' writing activities and overall learning outcomes. Gul et al. (2023) argue that it is essential for teachers to give students oral comments as a recommended approach to help them identify problems and prevent them from recurring in their future work. Sobhani and Tayebipour (2015) state that providing oral feedback has a substantial impact on reducing grammatical errors in trainees. Consequently, they propose that providing spoken feedback in addition to written feedback would enhance its effectiveness.

1.6. Previous Studies on Peer Feedback and Writing

Over the last twenty years, there has been a growing utilisation of feedback in the teaching of English as a second or foreign language (ESL/EFL) writing (Zhao, 2010). Several scholars argue that peer feedback which is an essential component during the reviewing and rewriting stages (Lee, 2015) that plays a crucial role in enhancing students' writing skills and academic performance (Topping et al., 2000; Plutsky & Wilson, 2004). These studies looked at the psychological and motivational effects, the viewpoints of the learners, and the impact of peer feedback on language and writing development (Lee, 2015).

As a case in point, Huisman et al. (2018) examined the utilization of peer feedback in the context of academic writing among undergraduate students. Their study examined three primary dimensions: the roles that students assumed in the feedback process (as providers or recipients of criticism), student perspectives on peer feedback, and the influence of peer feedback on essay performance. The authors examined the diverse characteristics of peer feedback in the context of undergraduate academic writing. Their research examined three crucial elements: student responsibilities (giving

or receiving criticism), student perspectives, and the influence on essay outcomes. Giving feedback helps those who receive them as well as the reviewer become better at seeing writing errors, broadening their knowledge of many writing issues, and identifying several rewriting strategies. This combined strategy emphasizes the many benefits of peer criticism, which helps the student providing and receiving it.

In an experimental study conducted by Richer (1992), the effects of two types of feedback, namely peer-directed feedback and teacher feedback, on the writing proficiency of first-year college students were compared. The study involved 87 participants. The findings suggest that utilising peer feedback offers a viable approach for college students to better their writing proficiency and enhance their academic performance. In their study, Lin et al. (2001) discovered that targeted peer feedback and constructive peer feedback can significantly enhance students' writing abilities. Furthermore, Plutsky and Wilson (2004) conducted a quasi-experimental study where they compared three different techniques for teaching student writing. Their findings indicated that peer feedback had a significant role in enhancing students' writing skills. Significantly, the majority of students perceive peer comments to be equally useful as feedback from instructors.

Jacobs et al. (1998) discovered an almost identical proportion. The survey found that 93% of EFL students in Hong Kong and Taiwan expressed a desire to get peer feedback as a form of feedback. Wakabayashi (2013) states that peer feedback involves learners critically evaluating each other's writing in order to provide assistance for correction. Reading and critically analysing other people's drafts can help learners improve their understanding of writing and revision. This process can also boost their knowledge of the elements that contribute to good and effective writing. Ultimately, learners can develop greater autonomy in their own writing skills (Maarof et al., 2011).

Moussaoui Samira (2012) studied how peer evaluation affected the positive affect and writing autonomy of EFL students. Second-year undergraduate EFL students from Setif University in Algeria participated in the study. The findings indicated that the target group had favourable attitudes regarding peer feedback, which led to an increase in writing autonomy and a decrease in writing anxiety.

1.7. Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to establish the contextual framework for the present study. The chapter began with an introductory section explaining the concept of writing, its importance, and approaches. Subsequently, it delved into the writing difficulties encountered by EFL students. Furthermore, it addressed sociocultural theory and the concept of scaffolding in the context of writing and peer feedback, along with its benefits and many forms. It concluded with the previous studies that tackled peer feedback and writing.

Chapter Two

Research Methodology and Data Analyses

2.1. Introduction

This chapter introduces the practical aspect of the research. The researcher aims to meet the research objectives and address research questions through the implementation of an exploratory case study. This study will explore the effect of peer feedback on improving the writing skills of second-year EFL students at the Department of English at Tlemcen University. This chapter highlights the research objectives, participants' profiles, and data collection instruments. In order to improve the understanding of the research, the researcher utilizes both quantitative and qualitative analysis methodologies to examine the data. In addition, she analyzes the data using visual representations and offers a thorough evaluation of the main findings. The last portion presents a summary of suggestions for future research.

2.2. Description of the Teaching/ Learning Situation

The analysis of the handout used to teach second-year EFL students portrays that the writing module focuses on a thorough syllabus that aims to improve students' academic writing abilities. It is carefully structured into two semesters, with each semester dedicated to specific parts of essay writing. It includes a range of evaluation exercises to evaluate and assist students in their development. The initial semester focuses on developing fundamental skills in essay writing, with modules dedicated to the essential aspects of paragraph and essay structures, including introductions, body paragraphs, and conclusions. Practical activities and tests aid students in comprehending and implementing the concepts, guaranteeing the establishment of a solid foundation for more sophisticated writing abilities.

In the second semester, the syllabus emphasizes many types of essays, including descriptive, narrative, opinion, comparison and contrast, and cause and effect essays. Students are able to utilize their fundamental knowledge in order to engage with different writing styles and objectives. Every lesson contains comprehensive information about the particular sort of essay, offering examples, ideas for structure, and advice for language usage. Practice exercises, peer review sessions, and feedback are essential components of the learning process, aiding students in honing their skills and becoming adaptable writers. The assessment activities for this semester consist of essay

drafting, peer review sessions, and written tests. These activities aim to evaluate students' proficiency in creating well-organized and logical essays in various formats.

2.3. Research Design

A research design is a combination of strategies and approaches used to collect and analyze data, with the aim of addressing research questions and confirming or rejecting a researcher's hypotheses. The research design is crucial since it ensures that the study is conducted in a systematic and methodical way, thereby saving the researcher time. Additionally, it promotes the practice of efficiently managing and organizing resources, leading to research that is more effective and reliable. Ultimately, this can contribute to the elimination of subjectivity and prejudice in research (Hammarfelt, 2018).

According to Kumar (2010), a research design is an organized structure that researchers must follow in order to effectively handle research concerns. From his viewpoint, it pertains to the methodology employed in sample selection, as well as the process of gathering, evaluating, and interpreting the data. The document provides justifications for the decisions that were made, while ensuring that the findings remain accurate and reliable.

De Vaus (2001) believes that selecting the right research design ensures that the data collection and analysis are consistent and logical, directly addressing the study problem. Given this issue, the researchers make a decision regarding the design that would most effectively achieve the objectives of the study. The author contends that the literature encompasses various research designs, including the longitudinal design, casual design, sectional design, descriptive design, exploratory design, historic design, meta-analysis design, observing design, applied research, case study, and study design. As for the present work, an exploratory case study was relied on to explore the influence of peer feedback on the writing skills of second-year English EFL students.

2.4. Sample Population

Sampling, as Polit et al. (2001) describe it, refers to the process of selecting a certain set of individuals, events, behaviors, or other components for the purpose of conducting

research. When individuals are seen as constituent parts, they are identified as subjects. The subjects are chosen from the designated target demographic in a manner that ensures the sample closely resembles the overall population as closely as feasible. This option significantly affects the significance and pertinence of the findings.

The sample population of the present study consisted of 31 informants: 28 second-year EFL students and three teachers of written expression at the English Department of the University of Tlemcen. The students, whose ages ranged from 18 to 32 and who were randomly selected, were chosen instead of other levels because essay writing is introduced in the second year of English. For this reason, the researcher wanted to accustom the students to the use of peer feedback and the scoring rubric starting from this particular year of study. It is also assumed that these students have developed a stronger understanding of grammar and writing patterns compared to their first year.

As for the teachers, they were permanent teachers with teaching experience ranging from 2 to 17 years. The team comprised experienced educators with diverse specializations. Teacher 01, an associate professor of sociolinguistics in the English Department at Tlemcen University, was teaching the writing module for over a decade. Teacher 02, who held a Magister degree in Educational Psychology, was an instructor since 2008. Teacher 03 specialized in didactics, with two years of experience teaching a writing module. Their selection was due to the fact that they were the teachers who were instructing second-year students. Since the study was directly concerned with that level, their selection was necessary.

2.5. Research Instruments

This study employed two research instruments: a questionnaire to teachers and a questionnaire to students. Consequently, the data will be analysed applying both quantitative and qualitative analysis to address and explore the main research inquiries. The findings will establish a solid basis for investigating questions related to research.

2.5.1. Teachers' Questionnaire

This study aimed to examine the ways in which teachers can assess students' written performance and investigate how feedback from teachers and peers contributes to the development of students' writing skills. Three EFL teachers participated in this research project. Among them, two were female and one was male. All of them were EFL teachers and are responsible for the written expression module. Therefore, they were selected according to their prior experience in teaching this subject.

The aim of the questionnaire was to examine the utilization of peer feedback sessions for writing assignments in EFL classes. It investigated seven important aspects: personal experiences, effective facilitation strategies, the role in improving writing skills, observed changes in student writing abilities, the use of scoring rubrics, challenges in integration, and strategies for addressing student concerns and enhancing the process. The purpose of this set of questions was to acquire a comprehensive comprehension of perspectives and experiences concerning the utilization of peer feedback sessions in EFL classrooms. The responses were intended to offer insights on the methodologies employed to facilitate productive peer feedback, the observed influence on students' writing proficiency, and perspectives on the implementation of guided scoring rubrics. The questions also sought to examine strategies for addressing students' concerns or resistance to participation, as well as the broader impacts of integrating peer feedback into the curriculum (See Appendix A).

2.5.2. Questionnaire to Students

A questionnaire is a collection of questions designed for collecting both quantitative and qualitative data regarding the experiences and perspectives of the respondents with relation to a specific subject (Bhandari, 2023). It can cover any topic and effectively reach a large population. It aims to ensure the confidentiality and privacy of the participants. As a result, respondents may be less likely to express their views honestly, which helps the researcher to obtain accurate results (Debois, 2022).

The researcher used a questionnaire in order to answer the research questions and explore the effect of peer feedback in EFL writing sessions by collecting data from second year EFL students. It was administered online via Google form, comprised nine

questions, including a mixture of closed ended and multiple-choice questions. The questions investigated participants' experiences receiving peer feedback, perceptions of their writing skills, exposure to peer feedback, comfort level with feedback, understanding of strengths and weaknesses, and the impact of peer feedback on their writing skills and self-awareness (See Appendix B).

2.6. Data Analysis

The data was analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative analysis, applying descriptive analytics to a questionnaire with teachers and another questionnaire done by learners.

2.6.1. Teachers' Questionnaire Results

The following sections are devoted for the analysis of the teachers' questionnaires.

Q1. Experience in Implementing Peer Feedback in EFL Writing Classes

Teachers used a variety of methods of obtaining feedback from their peers. Teacher 01 implemented a peer editing technique, in which students reviewed and corrected each other's work in accordance with classroom instruction. This approach enabled students to apply their knowledge and offer comments to their peers. Teacher 03 categorically confirmed the overall efficacy of peer feedback sessions, which incorporated student involvement. Although Teacher 02 did not provide specific methods, but rather combined ones whereby peer feedback was implemented in the classroom.

Q2. Strategies for Enhancing Productive Peer Feedback Sessions

Teachers employed a variety of methods to gather input from their colleagues. Teacher 01 relied a systematic approach with checklists and symbols to correct errors, whereas Teacher 02 preferred engaging in conversational discussions to explore deeper analysis. While not directly related to the approach, Teacher 03 highlighted the need of engaging content, such as hands-on activities and real-world topics, which can improve the peer feedback process.

Q3. Effects of Peer Feedback on Students' Writing Proficiency

Teachers emphasized the advantages of receiving criticism from peers in the context of writing. Teachers 1 and 2 highlighted the importance of recognizing flaws and deriving lessons from one another's errors, resulting in enhancements in both structure and the writing process. Teacher 3 noted a noticeable improvement in student confidence and the growth of their skills.

Q4. The Efficacy of Guided Scoring Rubrics in Peer Feedback Sessions

Teachers held divergent views on the motivational impact of using a guided scoring rubric for peer feedback. Teacher 01 believed that giving students comments on their performance was advantageous since it enabled them to evaluate their development and acted as a source of motivation for enhancing their performance. In contrast, teacher 02 viewed feedback as a possible obstacle to students' cognitive processes. Teacher 03 presented a more nuanced perspective, suggesting that it could motivate students to focus on topics that have higher point values, while also helping them prioritize based on importance.

Q5. Benefits and Challenges of Incorporating Peer Feedback into the Educational Curriculum

The teachers' viewpoints regarding the integration of peer feedback into the curriculum differed. Teacher 01 viewed it as a temporary strategy for providing timely feedback in the classroom, but did not believe it to be a necessary part of the curriculum. Teacher 02 perceived it as a highly effective assessment method that motivated students. However, Teacher 03 identified a major challenge: some students may not have actively engaged in the activities, which could have hindered the effectiveness of peer feedback for both the person giving the feedback and the one receiving it.

Q6. Dealing with Student Concern or Resistance to Peer Feedback

Teachers used different strategies to address student resistance. Teacher 01 suggested that students may feel anxious when faced with unfavorable assessment, particularly those who had lower levels of proficiency or competency. Teacher 02 emphasized the educational benefit for people, stating that by focusing on correcting

others, it improved their own writing abilities. Teacher 03 stressed the need of presenting peer feedback as a beneficial tool or method for learning, which has the ability to reduce negative attitudes and promote active engagement.

Q7. Recommendations for Enhancing Peer Feedback for Second-Year EFL Students:

Teacher 01 emphasized the importance of using peer feedback to lessen the teacher's workload and ensure that every student receives feedback. Nevertheless, the achievement of successful execution required the deployment of additional steps. Teacher 03 highlighted the need of considering student needs, talents, and interpersonal relationships when deciding how and when to use peer feedback. Teacher 02 offered valuable guidance on successful communication, suggesting the need of maintaining a positive and non-judgmental approach that encourages curiosity and open discussion.

2.6.2. Students' Questionnaire Results

The aim of this questionnaire was to examine the influence of peer feedback on the writing proficiency of EFL students.

Background information

Figure 2.1. illustrates that the majority of students were females, accounting for (96.4%) of the whole sample. In contrast, males only made up (3.6%) of the total sample.

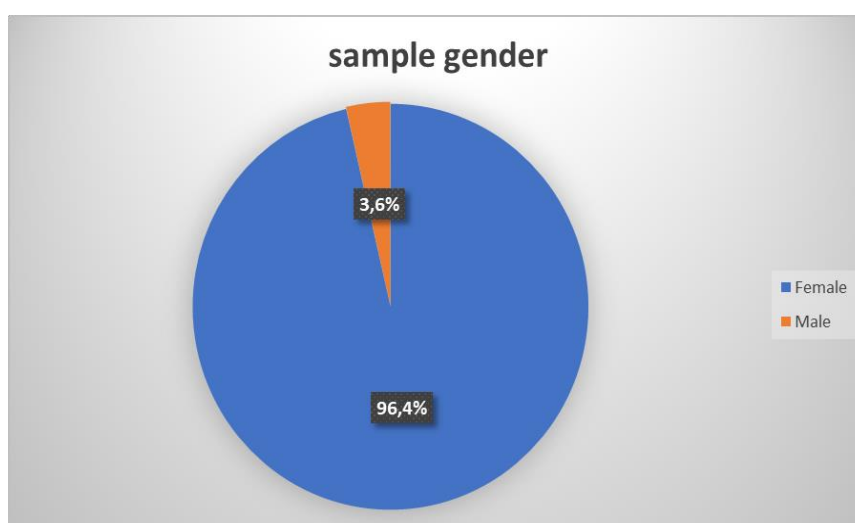


Figure 2.1: Students' Gender

Regarding students' age, Figure 2.2, highlight that their age ranged from 18 to 32 years.

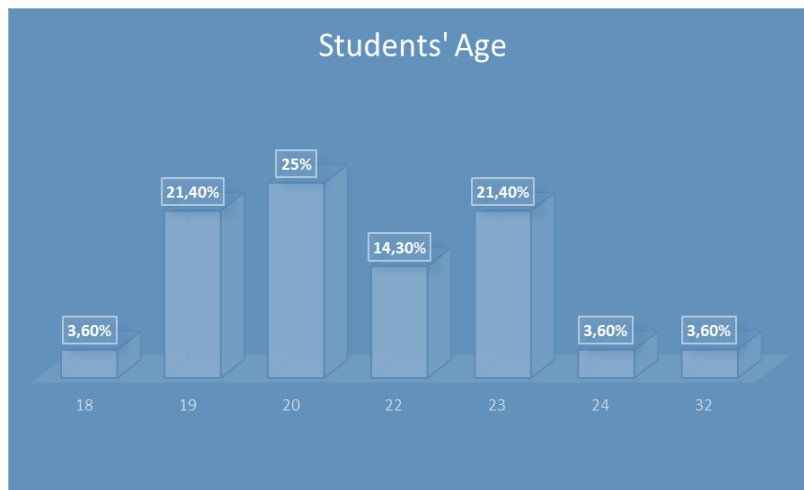


Figure 2.2: Students' Age

Q1: Students' Writing Abilities in English

When asked about their writing abilities in English, 67.9% of the students reported that their level was good, 21,4% rated it to be average, 7.1% claimed having a bad level, and 3.6% asserted having an exceptional level as illustrated in Figure 2.3.

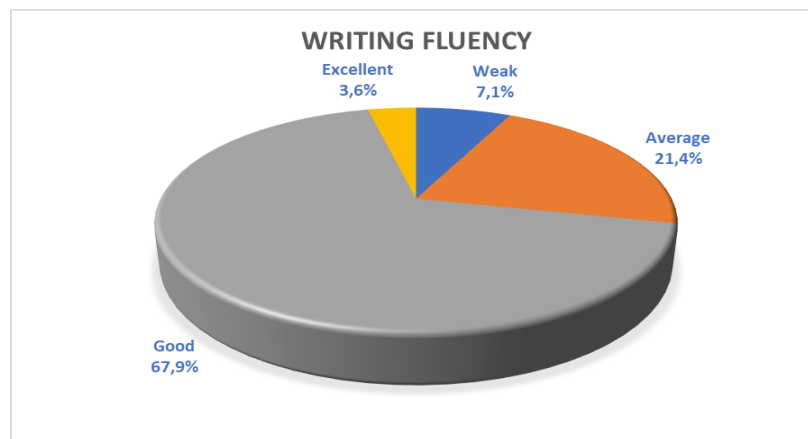


Figure 2.3. Writing Fluency

Q2: Exposure to Writing Feedback

While 96.4% of the participants confirmed their exposure to feedback regarding their writing productions, 3.6% claimed the opposite as shown on Figure 2.4.

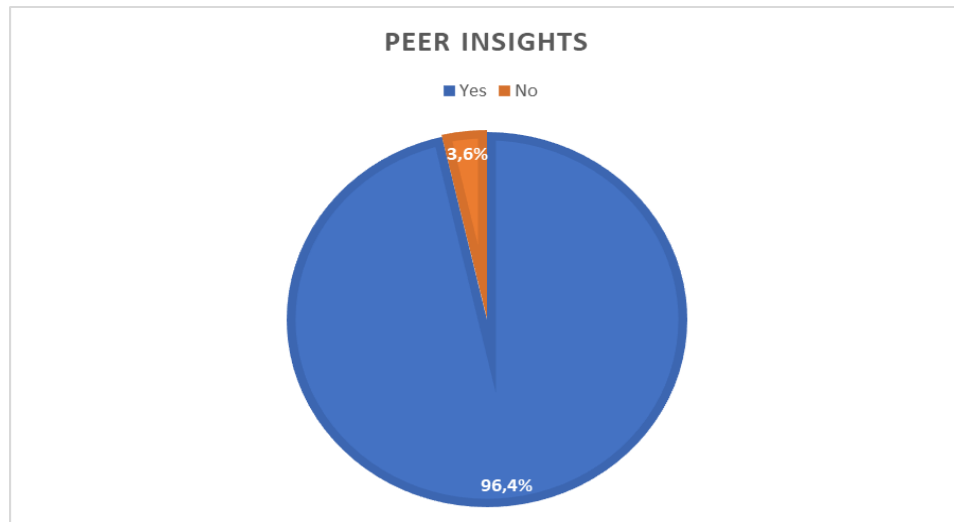


Figure 2.4: Feedback Existence

As to the origins of the received feedback, the majority of students (53.6%) reported receiving it from their peers, 50% from their teachers, and 39,30% from their friends.

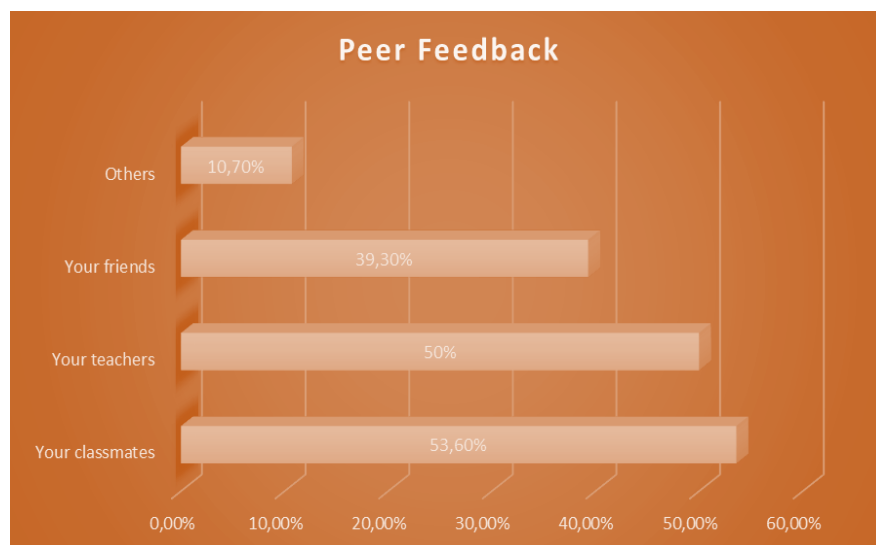


Figure 2.5: Peer Feedback Origins

Q3: Peer Feedback within the Writing Classroom

Figure 2.6. indicates that the majority of the students (53.6%) reported that peer feedback was included in the writing classroom; however, 46.4% advocated the reverse.

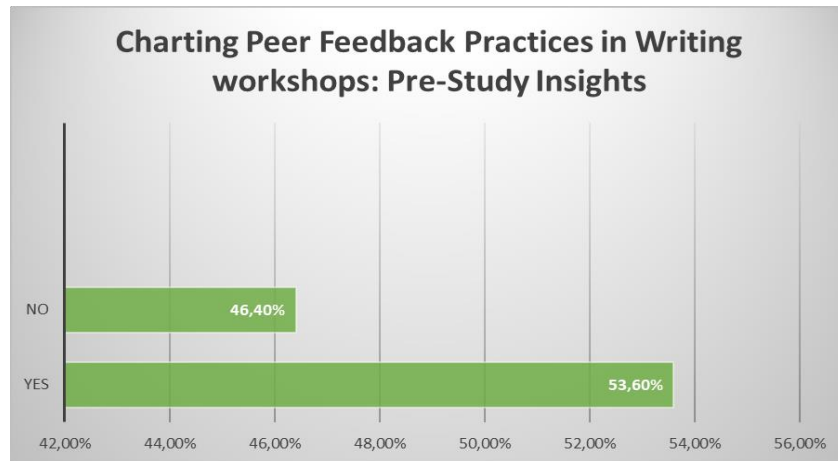


Figure 2.6. Peer Feedback Practices in the Writing Classroom

Q4: Students' Comfort Level with Peer Feedback

Figure 2.7. illustrates that 46.4% of the participants found the input from their peers very comfortable, whilst 42.9% somewhat comfortable, 7.1% not comfortable at all, and 3.6% not very comfortable.

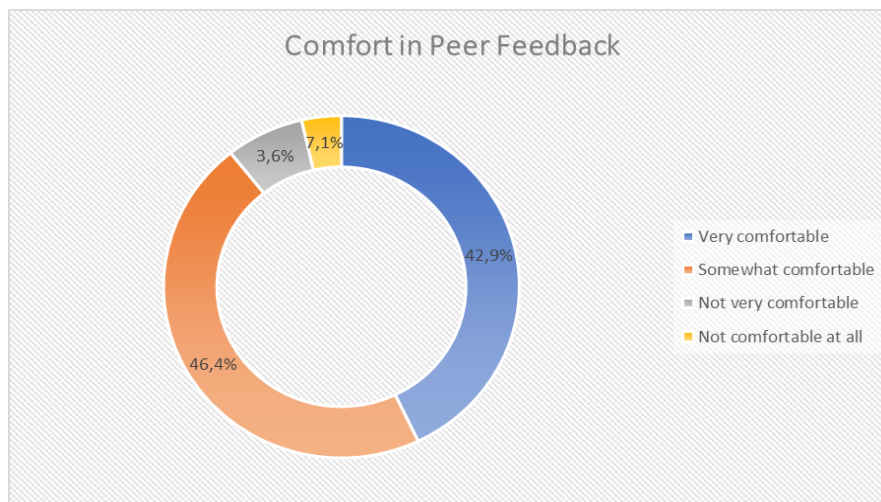


Figure 2.7: Comfort with Peer Feedback

Q5: Peers' Understanding of the Students' Strength and Weaknesses

According to Figure 2.8, a significant proportion of students (60.7%) acknowledged that peer evaluation was beneficial in recognizing their strengths and weaknesses. However, a lesser percentage (28.6%) strongly endorsed this assertion.

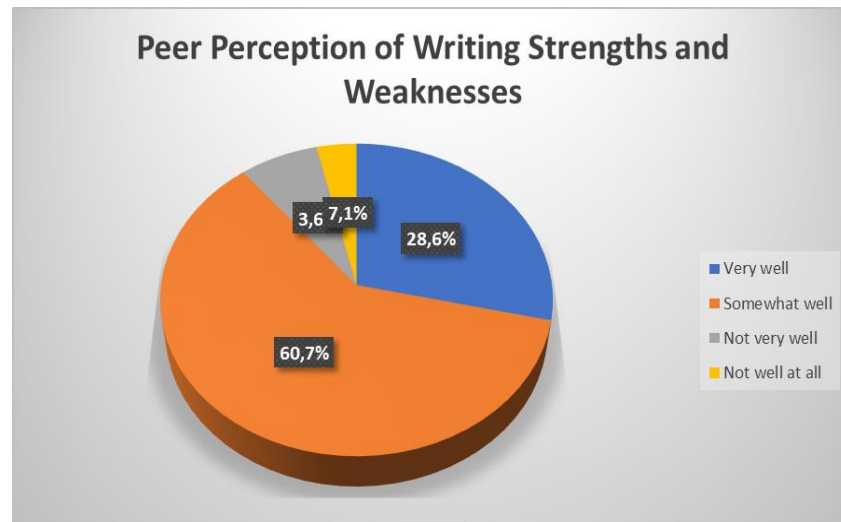


Figure 2.8 Peers' Perception of Writing Strengths and Weaknesses

Q6. Usefulness of the Peers' Explanations

Figure 2.9 illustrates that the majority of explanations supplied by their classmates were considered valuable, with 53.6% classified as highly helpful and 39.3% as moderately helpful.

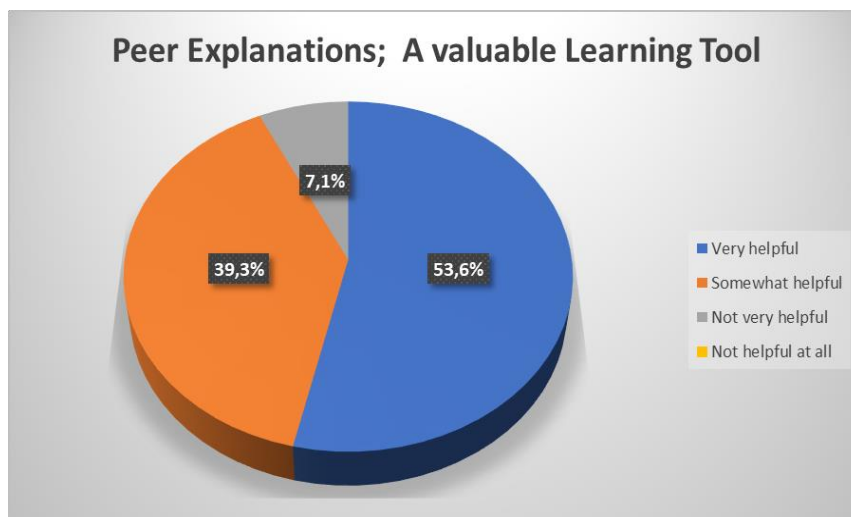


Figure 2.9. Peers' Explanations

Q7: Impact of Peer Feedback in Increasing Students' Mistakes Awareness

82.1% of the participants reported that most of the peer comments increased their awareness of writing errors, while 14.3% said that it was somewhat beneficial as shown in Figure 2.10.

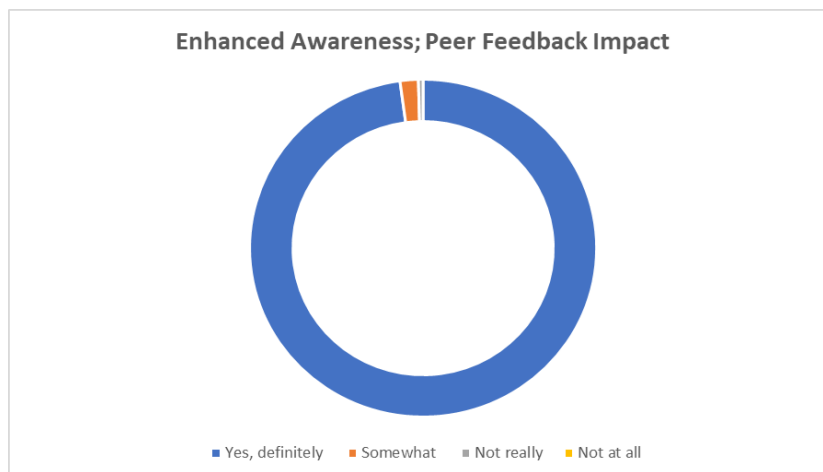


Figure 2.10: Peer Feedback Impact on Students' Awareness

Q8: Impact of Peer Feedback on Students' Writing Abilities



Figure 2.11. Peer Feedback Effect

Figure 2.11 spotlights that a significant majority of students (92.9%) expressed that their writing abilities improved after obtaining their peers' feedback. When asked about the aspects of their writing abilities that showed the most improvement, 57.1% of the participants reported that their peers' feedback ameliorated their grammar, 50% their vocabulary, 42,9% their clarity of their ideas, 32,1% their word choice, 28,6% their

content, 28,6% their sentence structure, and 21,4% sentence organization. The results are spotlighted in Figure 2.12.

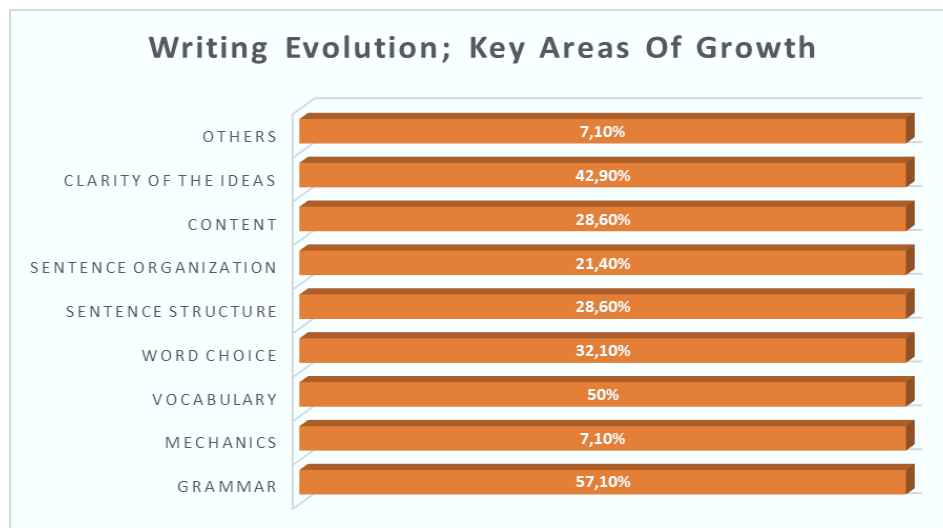


Figure 2.12. Areas of Improvement

Q9: Use of Guided Scoring Rubric

Regarding the use of a scoring rubric during the peer feedback session, 89,3% highlighted its occurrence; whereas, 10,07% reported the reverse as shown in Figure 2.13.

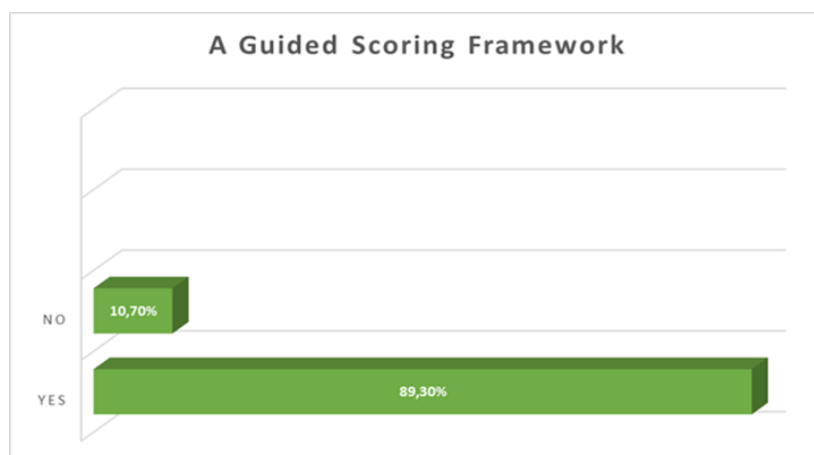


Figure 2.13. Use of Guided Scoring Rubric

2.7. Discussion and Interpretation of the Main Results:

The questionnaire's findings demonstrated that the input from peers had a positive influence on the writing proficiency of second-year EFL students. The majority of the participants (82.1%) reported a significant improvement in their error awareness,

indicating that peer feedback effectively pinpointed areas requiring improvement. 92.9% of the students noticed a substantial enhancement in their writing, potentially due to heightened consciousness. The positive effect seemed to be affected by prior exposure to peer feedback (53.6%) and the use of guided scoring rubrics (89.3%), potentially equipping students with the essential abilities to properly employ the feedback process.

Notably, the participants' level of comfort in getting feedback from peers varied, with nearly half of them expressing a moderate level of comfort. However, the explanations provided by peers were universally considered advantageous, with a proportion of over 92.9%. This suggests that students were able to benefit from the comments, even if they were not entirely at ease with them. To summarize, the findings of this survey suggested that peer feedback proved to be an effective approach in improving the writing skills of second-year EFL students. Peer feedback has the potential to promote students' writing development by promoting their recognition of errors and providing constructive suggestions.

The questionnaire results showcased students' viewpoints regarding peer feedback. A significant proportion of students found the explanations given by their peers to be advantageous, with over 50% of them rating them as extremely valuable. These findings suggest that students held a high regard for the valuable viewpoints and ideas put forth by their classmates. Furthermore, a substantial percentage of students believed that their peers had a certain degree of awareness regarding their writing skills and limitations, with a significant number expressing a strong level of comprehension. This underscored the degree to which students depended on their classmates' capacity to offer pertinent remarks.

There was a potential for enhancement, namely in the level of comfort students experienced when obtaining feedback from their peers. The questionnaire revealed a diverse range of answers, with almost 50% of the students expressing a moderate level of comfort. This highlights the necessity for techniques to foster a more optimistic and encouraging mindset during peer feedback sessions. Additional research could explore the underlying factors that impacted these degrees of comfort, enabling educators to

customize their approaches and optimize the advantages of peer feedback for each student.

However, the prevailing idea that feedback greatly improves writing skills indicates that peer feedback is still highly advantageous for second-year EFL students. The teachers provided several strategies for incorporating peer feedback in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) writing sessions, with the goal of increasing student involvement and improving learning outcomes. Teacher 01 employed a peer editing methodology, which engaged students in the process of evaluating and rectifying one another's work, enabling them to actively implement classroom instructions and offer constructive feedback. Teacher 03 verified that peer feedback is effective, highlighting substantial student engagement and favorable results. Teacher 02 employed a combination of different approaches to incorporate peer feedback, although they could not provide detailed details about these techniques.

This variant demonstrates the adaptable use of peer feedback strategies customized for various educational settings, confirming its efficacy in improving students' writing proficiency and involvement. Teachers used many techniques to enhance effective peer feedback sessions. Teacher 01 employed methodical methodologies such as checklists and symbols to rectify faults, whereas Teacher 02 favored conversational dialogues for more profound examination. Teacher 03 prioritized the use of captivating material and practical subjects to improve the feedback process. These strategies employ a combination of structured and open-ended procedures, indicating that both systematic and participatory approaches can effectively provide fruitful peer feedback sessions. Compelling content also has a vital function in sustaining student attention and involvement. The advantages of receiving feedback from peers are evident, but effectively implementing this practice necessitates resolving possible obstacles and cultivating a supportive and stimulating learning atmosphere.

The teachers witnessed significant enhancements in pupils' writing aptitude as a result of peer evaluation. Teacher 01 and Teacher 02 emphasized the significance of deriving lessons from the errors made by peers, which ultimately enhances writing

structure and processes. Teacher 03 observed a noticeable improvement in student self-assurance and the acquisition of new abilities.

These observations indicate that peer criticism is advantageous for developing students' writing proficiency by motivating them to identify and learn from their own and others' mistakes, enhancing technical writing abilities, and increasing student confidence. The divergent viewpoints about the utilization of guided scoring rubrics emphasize the intricate function of scoring rubrics in peer feedback. Although teachers can provide guidance and motivation to pupils, it is important to make sure that they do not impede cognitive engagement or become excessively prescriptive. Incorporating peer evaluation into the curriculum necessitates meticulous deliberation regarding student involvement and sufficient assistance to guarantee its efficacy.

2.8. Recommendations

Feedback is regarded as significant for improving student learning (Hattie & Timperley, 2007), and hence plays a vital role in developing academic writing proficiency. As noted by Black and Wiliam (2009), both teachers and peers play an integral role in the procedure for giving feedback.

Given the acquired results, the researcher suggests some solutions for both students and teachers. It is essential for students to accept criticism from their peers as a valuable chance to learn, recognizing both their talents and flaws. Participating actively in the peer review process, making notes, and appreciating the viewpoints of peers promotes a collaborative atmosphere. Effectively enhancing writing skills is achieved by prioritizing particular ideas for development. To boost the effectiveness of peer feedback sessions in EFL classes, teachers should organize targeted feedback activities that address specific writing components.

Additionally, instructors should teach students principles of constructive feedback, such as being explicit and respectful. This will promote meaningful learning experiences for students. In order to improve the efficiency of peer feedback sessions, it is advisable for instructors to incorporate a structured scoring rubric. The rubric should encompass explicit and precise criteria, such as grammar, punctuation, spelling, coherence, and organization. By equipping students with a well-defined framework,

they may provide more reliable and unbiased critique, enabling their peers to pinpoint and tackle particular areas of growth in their writing. In addition, it is important to organize training sessions to acquaint students with the rubric and instruct them on how to utilize it proficiently. This will guarantee that the feedback procedure is thorough and encouraging.

2.9. Conclusion:

Data analysis was conducted in the second chapter. The first section included an overview of the participants' characteristics and the study methods used for data collecting. The second section contained a comprehensive examination of data analysis employing both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. The third section centered on the examination of the main findings. Ultimately, the researcher proposed recommendations for improving students' writing proficiency, targeting both students and teachers.

General Conclusion

Writing is an essential step during the process of teaching and acquiring knowledge. Many universities structure the examinations they have to take based on tests that are written. Therefore, learners must acquire proficiency in it in order to achieve academic achievement. Furthermore, this proficiency necessitates teachers to employ effective techniques and methodologies in order to teach it, as well as to offer helpful feedback to enhance their students' writing abilities.

The present research was an exploratory case study that examined the influence of peer feedback on the writing skills of second-year English EFL students. The data collection process was based on two main sources: teachers' questionnaires and students' questionnaires. While the former centered around teachers' personal experiences in adopting peer feedback and the perceived influence it had on student writing, the latter investigated students' attitudes regarding the efficacy of peer feedback and their degrees of comfort.

The work comprised two chapters. In the first chapter, writing difficulties, methods, SCT, scaffolding, peer review, and its advantages were explored along with the types of feedback. The second chapter focused on the study methodology used for the gathering and analysis of data, along with a discussion of the findings. Additionally, it has offered recommendations that might help teachers in taking into consideration the needs of their students.

The research was guided by two basic questions. The first question revolved around the type of effect that peer feedback can have on the writing skills of second year EFL students. A positive effect was hypothesized due to its ability to provide different perspectives on students' writing skills and to offer constructive criticism. The second question investigated students' perceptions of peer feedback. A positive perception was hypothesized because it can provide helpful corrections and explanations and make them more aware of their specific errors.

The study confirmed that peer feedback had a beneficial influence on the writing proficiency of second-year EFL students. Students were found to derive benefits from hearing a range of viewpoints and constructive feedback, which facilitated their enhancement in multiple facets of their writing. In addition, the results indicated that

students typically had a positive perception of the feedback provided by their peers. The comments proved beneficial in offering corrections and explanations, thereby enhancing their knowledge of specific problems in their writing. Therefore, the study's findings confirmed both hypotheses.

It is ethically appropriate to recognize that this research had limitations as certain factors were neglected due to the nature of the topic addressed. Undoubtedly, the researcher failed to encompass all of the different aspects of writing and feedback, making it challenging to provide a comprehensive definition for these topics. Due to the investigation's use of a case study, it is not possible to make generalizations based on the findings. The size of the sample population is insufficient. Indeed, the findings cannot be generalized from a sample size of only twenty-eight students and three teachers.

Due to the inability in drawing conclusions on the effect of different multiple types of feedback about students' writing ability regarding fluency or reliability, the researcher had a restricted timeframe to observe other teachers' classes. Teachers were assigned to big classrooms with double the usual working hours, which had an impact on their involvement in the study. In addition to that, the researcher encountered difficulties in collecting questionnaires within a single day due to frequent student absences. Consequently, the researcher had to make many attempts to communicate with students in order to successfully complete the data collection process. Therefore, further research should be carried out to address the limitations of the present work. Furthermore, a much larger sample should be used for generalization purposes.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Teachers' Questionnaire

Dear teacher,

Thank you very much for taking from your time and accepting to participate in the study. This questionnaire will be kept confidential without any reference to your name during the entire phase of the study. The present questionnaire aims to explore the implementation of peer feedback sessions for writing assignments in EFL classes, investigating seven key aspects□ personal experiences, effective facilitation strategies, the role in enhancing writing skills, observed changes in student writing abilities, the use of scoring rubrics, integration challenges and strategies for addressing student concerns and improving the process.

1/Can you describe your experience with implementing peer feedback sessions for Writing Assignments in your EFL classes?

2/What strategies or methods do you use to facilitate peer feedback sessions effectively?

3/Have you noticed any changes in students writing abilities as a result of participating in Peer Feedback sessions? If so, what kind of changes?

4/Do you believe guided scoring rubrics enhance the effectiveness of peer feedback sessions? Why or why not?

5/In your opinion, what are the benefits and challenges of integrating peer feedback into the Curriculum?

6/How do you address student's concerns or resistance towards providing and receiving feedback from their peers?

7/What recommendations or advice would you offer to improve the peer feedback process for second-year EFL students?

Appendix B: Students' Questionnaire

Dear student,

Thank you for taking part in the present research which aims at investigating the impact of peer feedback (remarks that are given by your classmates regarding your piece of writing) on English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students' writing skills. All the answers that you provide for the sake of this study are appreciated.

Note that your identity as well as your answers will be kept in total confidentiality. Please put a ✓ where there is a small box, and answer the questions in the given space.

Before filling in the questionnaire, you are kindly invited to put ✓ in the following box to show your consent to participate in this research

I do agree to take part in the present study ☐

Age

Gender: Male ☐ Female ☐

1-How do you evaluate your writing abilities in English? (Choose one answer only)

Weak ☐

Average ☐

Good ☐

Excellent ☐

2- Have you ever received feedback on your writing production before?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, was it from: (You can choose more than one answer)

Your classmates ☐

Your teachers ☐

Your friends ☐

Other (Please, specify)

.....

3- Have you ever participated in peer feedback sessions as part of your writing class?

Yes ☐ No ☐

4- How comfortable did you feel about your peers' feedback?

Very comfortable ☐

Somewhat comfortable ☐

Not very comfortable ☐

Not comfortable at all ☐

5- How well do you think your peers understood your writing strengths and weaknesses?

(Choose one answer only)

Very well ☐

Somewhat well ☐

Not very well ☐

Not well at all ☐

6- How helpful did you find the explanations your peers provided for your mistakes?

(Choose one answer only)

Very helpful ☐

Somewhat helpful ☐

Not very helpful ☐

Not helpful at all ☐

7-Do you think peer feedback made you more aware of your specific mistakes in writing? (Choose one answer only)

Yes, definitely ☐

Somewhat ☐

Not really ☐

Not at all ☐

8-Have you felt that your writing skills have improved after receiving peer feedback?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, what aspects of your writing abilities showed the most improvement? (You can choose more than one answer)

Grammar ☐

Mechanics ☐

Vocabulary ☐

Word choice ☐

Sentence structure ☐

Sentence organization ☐

Content ☐

Clarity of the ideas ☐

Other (please specify)

.....

9- Was as a guided scoring rubric (a guide that contains criteria like grammar, punctuation, spelling etc. used when giving remarks about a given piece of writing) used during the in-class feedback sessions?

Yes ☐ No ☐

Thank you for your collaboration

الملخص:

وتبحث هذه الدراسة أثر دورات تعليقات الأقران على دورات كتابة اللغة الإنكليزية كلغة أجنبية في السنة الثانية في جامعة تلمسان، الجزائر. وتقيم الدراسة تأثير تقييم الأقران على مهارات الطلاب في الكتابة وتجمع وجهات نظر الطلاب والمدرسين عن طريق دراسات استقصائية مستقلة. وتُجري الدراسة تحليلاً مقارناً لعدة نُهج تعليمية وتبحث أوجه التفاوت في التغذية المرتدة التي يقدمها الأقران والمدرسون. وتشمل استراتيجيات جمع البيانات استخدام دراسات استقصائية مصممة خصيصاً للطلاب والمدرسين. وتبين النتائج حدوث تحسينات كبيرة في الكفاءة الكتابية، ولا سيما في مجالات معينة، يمكن ربطها باستخدام تعليقات الأقران. وتنطوي الاقتراحات الرامية إلى تحسين إجراءات التغذية المرتدة من الأقران على وضع مبادئ توجيهية صريحة، وزراعة بيئة غرف الدراسة، وتعزيز دعم المدرسين. وتوفر هذه النتائج أفكاراً ثاقبة مفيدة للمدرسين الذين يرغبون في تعزيز تعليم الكتابة باللغة الإنكليزية كبيئة للغة الأجنبية.

كلمات مفتاحية: تأثير، جلسات التغذية الراجعة من الأقران، تحسين

Résumé:

Cette étude examine l'impact des séances de rétroaction par les pairs sur les cours d'anglais comme langue étrangère (EFL) de deuxième année à l'Université de Tlemcen, en Algérie. L'étude évalue l'influence de l'évaluation par les pairs sur les compétences d'écriture des élèves et recueille des points de vue d'étudiants et d'enseignants par le biais de sondages distincts. L'étude effectue une analyse comparative de plusieurs approches d'enseignement et enquête sur les disparités dans les commentaires fournis par les pairs et les enseignants. Les stratégies de collecte de données comprennent l'utilisation d'enquêtes personnalisées conçues spécifiquement pour les étudiants et les enseignants. Les résultats démontrent des améliorations substantielles de la compétence en écriture, en particulier dans certains domaines, qui peuvent être liés à l'utilisation de la rétroaction par les pairs. Les suggestions pour améliorer les procédures de rétroaction par les pairs comprennent l'établissement de lignes directrices explicites, la culture d'environnements de classe nourris et le renforcement du soutien des formateurs. Ces résultats fournissent des renseignements utiles aux instructeurs qui souhaitent améliorer l'éducation en écriture en anglais comme langue étrangère (EFL) environnements.

Mots clés : impact, séances de rétroaction par les pairs, amélioration.

Summary:

This study examines the impact of peer feedback sessions on second-year English as a Foreign Language (EFL) writing courses at Tlemcen University, Algeria. The study evaluates the influence of peer evaluation on students' writing skills and collects viewpoints from students and teachers via distinct surveys. The study does a comparative analysis of several instructional approaches and investigates disparities in feedback provided by peers and teachers. Data gathering strategies encompass the utilization of customized surveys designed specifically for students and teachers. The results demonstrate substantial enhancements in writing proficiency, specifically in certain domains, which can be linked to the use of peer feedback. Suggestions for improving peer feedback procedures involve setting explicit guidelines, cultivating nurturing classroom environments, and boosting trainer support. These findings provide useful insights for instructors who want to enhance writing education in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) environments.

Keywords: impact, peer feedback sessions, improvement.