

University of Warwick institutional repository: <http://go.warwick.ac.uk/wrap>

**A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD at the University of Warwick**

<http://go.warwick.ac.uk/wrap/1187>

This thesis is made available online and is protected by original copyright.

Please scroll down to view the document itself.

Please refer to the repository record for this item for information to help you to cite it. Our policy information is available from the repository home page.

THE UNIVERSITY OF  
WARWICK



**THE EFFECTS OF A FEEDBACK-BASED INSTRUCTION  
PROGRAMME ON DEVELOPING EFL WRITING AND REVISION  
SKILLS OF FIRST YEAR MOROCCAN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS**

BY

MALIKA HAOUCHA

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN ELT

CENTRE FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHER EDUCATION  
UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK  
UK

APRIL 2005

## Acknowledgements

My truly deep and profound thanks and gratefulness are due to Allah the Almighty who bestowed me with patience and perseverance to complete this study.

In the course of writing this thesis, many people have helped me directly or indirectly, without their support, this thesis would have never come to light. First of all, I am enormously indebted to my supervisor Dr. Tricia Hedge who, throughout this study, has provided extraordinary understanding, endless continuous help and guidance morally and academically. Her pertinent comments and suggestions were substantially illuminating. It is beyond description how much I owe Dr. Hedge especially when things were most difficult.

I am enormously also indebted to Dr. Ema Ushioda for her continuous insightful and constructive feedback.

Again my thanks are due to Allah who endowed me with an exceptional husband whose endless giving, sacrifice and support as well as for the months he had to take care of our lovely Meryem by himself. Majid has been extremely supportive academically, emotionally and morally. He has lived with me the ups and downs of my Ph.D. experience and to him I will be eternally indebted. I also thank my adorable Meryem who despite her young age managed to show great understanding and patience while waiting for me to go back to her.

I also thank my parents and my two sisters and brother who were with me with their prayers, encouragement and support. My thanks are also extended to my mother-in-law for her encouragements and prayers. I also thank my friends Ahmad for his valuable help and Badria for her extreme kindness and moral support.

## **Abstract**

The stimulus for this study was problems I encountered in my teaching of academic writing to first year undergraduates majoring in English at a Moroccan university. Their problems ranged from sentence, to paragraph to essay levels. Added to that was my realization that the teaching of writing is mainly product-oriented and that practice is far from theory. Students are expected to produce good writing, but the means for helping them attain the required writing standards are not clearly identified or provided. A focus on narrative writing seems not to serve the purpose of training students to make their voices heard in argumentative writing. Reliance on lecturing as a means of teaching writing robs the writing class of an appealing social environment. These problems combined with a personal desire to improve my teaching by researching my professional practice against the insights of theory; all these factors gathered to stimulate me to undertake the present research.

This project is based on the teaching of a writing programme I developed based on my previous experience as a writing teacher and on student need. In its progressive teaching of writing the programme follows a process approach; however, the product perspective is also important. Students are exposed to three types of feedback on multiple-draft writing: self-monitored feedback using annotations; peer feedback; and teacher written feedback and taped commentary. The aim is to encourage them to experience writing as an interactive process, from the pre-writing activities through the actual writing and revising to the writing of a final draft, rather than as a monotonous solitary activity performed under exam pressure.

Using a case study approach this qualitative inquiry looks into the extent to which students make use of the different types of feedback in their revisions, their attitudes to the feedback procedures, and whether text quality improves over the drafts during the course period. For this purpose various data collection tools have been used. These include questionnaires, in-depth interviews, students' writings, audio-taped recordings of student peer feedback sessions, teacher written and taped comments, and student diaries.

In line with previous research, the present study has shown that self-monitored feedback using annotations can help identify problematic areas in writing, but it has also added that annotations can unveil students' perceptions of what constitutes good writing. Moreover, the study has demonstrated that peer feedback activities are not only helpful in terms of encouraging revision but that they have other cognitive, linguistic and affective benefits. Finally, there is strong evidence that teacher written feedback is still considered by students to be a major source of help and that they do take it into consideration in their revisions. In addition, teacher taped commentary, a type of feedback which has received little attention in the literature, is an effective means of commenting on content and organisation and focusing student revision on these areas. Students have also appreciated it and acknowledged its cognitive, linguistic, affective, and practical benefits. Furthermore, the study has shown that although students' writings have not systematically, and regularly, improved from first to second drafts, i.e. after revision following peer feedback, there is a tendency for improvement from second to third drafts, i.e. after revision following teacher feedback. On the whole, improvement in text quality varied from one student to another and also from one draft to another for the same student.

The main implications are that the one-draft writing tendency in the context of the study should give way to multiple-draft writing. The motivating force of revision can be promoted and enhanced through the use of different types of feedback on separate drafts. More importantly; however, the writing class should cater for student need by making use of motivational instructional and feedback activities.

<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>Abstract</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>Table of Contents</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>List of Tables</b>	<b>viii</b>
<b>List of Figures</b>	<b>x</b>
<b>List of Appendices</b>	<b>xi</b>

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>CHAPTER ONE</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>1.0 Introduction</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>1.1 Motivation for the study</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>1.2 The linguistic situation in Morocco</b> .....	<b>5</b>
1.2.1 Berber, Arabic, and French .....	<b>5</b>
1.2.2 English.....	<b>6</b>
<b>1.3 English language learning and writing</b> .....	<b>7</b>
1.3.1 English in secondary schools.....	<b>7</b>
<b>1.4 The institutional setting of the study</b> .....	<b>8</b>
1.4.1 The department of English language literature and linguistics .....	<b>8</b>
1.4.2 Features of the Reform: teaching English for Academic Purposes (EAP).....	<b>9</b>
<b>1.5 Overview of the thesis</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>CHAPTER TWO</b> .....	<b>13</b>
<b>BASELINE STUDY</b> .....	<b>13</b>
<b>2.0 Introduction</b> .....	<b>13</b>
<b>2.1 Design of baseline study</b> .....	<b>13</b>
2.1.1 Participants.....	<b>13</b>
2.1.2 Summary of instruments .....	<b>13</b>
2.1.2.1 Schedule .....	<b>13</b>
<b>2.2 Instruments</b> .....	<b>14</b>
2.2.1 Teacher interviews .....	<b>14</b>
2.2.1.1 Transcribing and coding.....	<b>14</b>
2.2.2 Pre-course questionnaire .....	<b>15</b>
2.2.2.1 Piloting of pre-course questionnaire .....	<b>15</b>
2.2.2.2 Analysis of questionnaire .....	<b>16</b>
2.2.3 Student group interviews.....	<b>16</b>
<b>2.3 Analysis and Findings</b> .....	<b>17</b>
2.3.1 Analysis and findings of teacher interviews .....	<b>17</b>
2.3.2 Analysis and findings of student pre-course questionnaire.....	<b>19</b>
2.3.2.1 Findings of the closed questions.....	<b>19</b>
2.3.2.2 Findings of open-ended questions.....	<b>26</b>
2.3.3 Analysis and findings of group interviews (G.I).....	<b>30</b>
<b>2.4 Implications of the baseline findings for the main study</b> .....	<b>32</b>
<b>2.5 Research aims</b> .....	<b>33</b>
<b>2.6 Research questions</b> .....	<b>33</b>
<b>2.7 Summary of chapter</b> .....	<b>34</b>
<b>CHAPTER THREE</b> .....	<b>35</b>
<b>LITERATURE REVIEW: FEEDBACK AND REVISION IN THE PROCESS OF WRITING</b> .....	<b>35</b>
<b>3.0 Introduction</b> .....	<b>35</b>
<b>3.1 A definition of writing</b> .....	<b>35</b>
3.1.1 Spoken vs. written discourse.....	<b>35</b>
<b>3.2 The importance of writing in higher education</b> .....	<b>37</b>
3.2.1 EFL writing in higher education .....	<b>37</b>
<b>3.3 Cognitive variables in language learning</b> .....	<b>38</b>
3.3.1 Language learning strategies .....	<b>38</b>
3.3.2 The role of metacognitive variables in learning.....	<b>39</b>
<b>3.4 Affective factors in language learning</b> .....	<b>41</b>
3.4.1 Language attitudes and motivation .....	<b>41</b>
3.4.2 Language anxiety and self-confidence.....	<b>45</b>
3.4.3 Anxiety and competitiveness in language learning context .....	<b>47</b>

3.4.4 Anxiety in ESL/EFL writing .....	48
<b>3.5 Process approach to writing: a definition?</b> .....	49
<b>3.6 Process approach to writing and other approaches: what kind of a relationship?</b> .	50
3.6.1 Some features of writing in a process approach.....	51
3.6.2 Teaching/learning writing in an ESL/EFL context .....	54
<b>3.7 Process approach to writing: a more comprehensive view?</b> .....	55
<b>3.8 Revision in the process of writing</b> .....	57
3.8.1 Good writers and revision.....	57
3.8.2 Faigley and Witte's taxonomy of revision.....	59
<b>3.9 Feedback in the process of writing</b> .....	61
<b>3.10 Self-monitored feedback</b> .....	62
3.10.1 Student annotations .....	63
<b>3.11 Peer Feedback</b> .....	64
3.11.1 The use of peer feedback sheets.....	66
3.11.2 Training students to give peer feedback .....	67
3.11.3 Peer feedback and revision.....	67
3.11.4 Peer feedback: Potential problems .....	68
<b>3.12 Teacher feedback</b> .....	69
3.12.1 Teacher written feedback: What should be the focus? .....	70
3.12.2 Reformulation .....	72
3.12.3 Conferencing .....	73
3.12.4 Taped commentary .....	74
3.12.5 Teacher feedback and revision .....	76
<b>3.13 Student feedback preferences</b> .....	77
<b>3.14 A study on teacher and peer feedback</b> .....	77
<b>3.15 Summary of chapter</b> .....	81
<b>CHAPTER FOUR</b> .....	<b>82</b>
<b>RESEARCH METHODOLOGY</b> .....	<b>82</b>
<b>4.0 Introduction:</b> .....	<b>82</b>
<b>4.1 Research paradigms and the quantitative/qualitative controversy</b> .....	<b>82</b>
<b>4.2 The social constructivist perspective</b> .....	<b>87</b>
<b>4.3 The use of the case study method</b> .....	<b>87</b>
4.3.1 A problem of definition.....	87
4.3.2 The case study option .....	89
<b>4.4 Objectivity: the ultimate goal?</b> .....	<b>89</b>
<b>4.5 Validity and generalizability in case studies</b> .....	<b>90</b>
4.5.1 Validity .....	90
4.5.2 Generalizability .....	92
4.5.3 Triangulation.....	93
<b>4.6 Pedagogical design of the writing program</b> .....	<b>94</b>
4.6.1 The design of the course.....	94
4.6.2 Why a writing course? .....	95
4.6.3 Course aims .....	95
4.6.4 Nature and focus of the course .....	95
4.6.5 Consciousness-raising activities and strategy instruction.....	96
4.6.6 Other features of the course.....	97
4.6.7 Argumentative writing.....	97
4.6.8 Feedback methods and the sequence of use .....	101
4.6.9 Student response to teacher feedback .....	109
4.6.10 Language learning diaries .....	111
<b>4.7 Methods of data collection</b> .....	<b>113</b>
4.7.1 Participants.....	113
4.7.2 Instruments.....	113
4.7.2.1 Questionnaires.....	113
4.7.2.2 Interviews .....	115
4.7.2.3 Recordings of peer feedback sessions.....	117
4.7.2.4 Students' writings.....	118
4.7.2.5 Audio-recorded tapes.....	118
4.7.2.6 Student language learning diaries .....	118
4.7.2.7 Teacher-researcher's diary .....	119
<b>4.8 Analysis procedures</b> .....	<b>119</b>
4.8.1 Students' use of annotations.....	119

4.8.2 The effect of peer feedback on revision .....	120
4.8.3 The effect of teacher feedback on revision .....	120
4.8.4 Students' attitudes to the types of feedback and the writing course .....	121
4.8.4.1 The analysis of post-course questionnaire .....	121
4.8.4.2 The analysis of post-course interviews .....	121
4.8.5 Analysing text quality .....	122
4.8.5.1 The development of a rating scale for the study .....	122
4.8.5.2 Piloting of the rating scale .....	124
<b>4.9 Summary of chapter .....</b>	<b>129</b>
<b>CHAPTER FIVE .....</b>	<b>130</b>
<b>ANALYSIS OF INDIVIDUAL CASES .....</b>	<b>130</b>
<b>5.0 Introduction .....</b>	<b>130</b>
<b>5.1 Permanent pairing as one of the main criteria for case selection .....</b>	<b>130</b>
<b>5.2 Diagnostic writing .....</b>	<b>131</b>
<b>5.3 The presentation of case studies .....</b>	<b>132</b>
<b>Noureddine's Case .....</b>	<b>133</b>
Preliminary Perspectives .....	133
Noureddine's Response to Feedback .....	138
Noureddine's Development .....	151
<b>Saida's Case .....</b>	<b>155</b>
Preliminary Perspectives .....	155
Saida's Response to Feedback .....	159
Saida's Development .....	175
<b>Noura's Case .....</b>	<b>178</b>
Preliminary Perspectives .....	178
Noura's Response to Feedback .....	180
Noura's Development .....	195
<b>Karima's Case .....</b>	<b>200</b>
Preliminary Perspectives .....	200
Karima's Response to Feedback .....	203
Karima's Development .....	219
<b>Fatima's Case .....</b>	<b>223</b>
Preliminary Perspectives .....	223
Fatima's Response to Feedback .....	226
Fatima's Development .....	243
<b>Naima's Case .....</b>	<b>248</b>
Preliminary Perspectives .....	248
Naima's Response to Feedback .....	252
Naima's Development .....	270
<b>CHAPTER SIX .....</b>	<b>275</b>
<b>SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION .....</b>	<b>275</b>
<b>6.0 Introduction .....</b>	<b>275</b>
<b>6.1 Students' use of self-monitored feedback: annotations .....</b>	<b>275</b>
6.1.1 Annotations: Extent of use .....	275
6.1.1.1 Focus of annotations .....	275
6.1.1.2 Students' search for a new code of annotation .....	278
6.1.1.3 Issues and implications .....	278
<b>6.2 Students' use of peer feedback .....</b>	<b>279</b>
6.2.1 Peer feedback: extent of use .....	279
6.2.1.1 Language proficiency and the provision and implementation of peer feedback .....	282
6.2.1.2 Self-initiated revision .....	283
6.2.1.3 Self-initiated revision: frequency of use .....	284
6.2.2 Improvement on peer feedback .....	284
6.2.3 Strategies for providing peer feedback .....	284
6.2.4 Strategies for handling peer feedback .....	285
6.2.5 Students' attitudes to peer feedback .....	285
6.2.5.1 Peer feedback: Advantages .....	288
6.2.5.2 Peer feedback: Disadvantages .....	291
6.2.6 Individual differences in handling negative peer feedback .....	291
6.2.7 Tactful vs. less tactful pairs: the language of feedback .....	292
6.2.8 Tactful vs. less tactful pairs: the impact on outside class collaborative work .....	293

6.2.9 Peer feedback: focus on permanent pairs .....	293
6.2.10 Positive aspects of permanent pairs .....	293
6.2.11 Negative aspects of permanent pairs.....	294
6.2.12 Permanent pairs: some criteria for success .....	294
6.2.13 Peer feedback sheets: how helpful did the students find them?.....	295
<b>6.3 Students' use of teacher feedback .....</b>	<b>295</b>
6.3.1 Teacher feedback: Extent of use.....	295
6.3.2 Strategies of handling teacher feedback.....	298
6.3.3 Students' attitudes to teacher written feedback and taped commentary .....	298
6.3.3.1 Advantages of teacher written feedback.....	302
6.3.4 The Hawthorne effect: what measure was taken? .....	303
6.3.5 Advantages of teacher taped commentary .....	303
6.3.5.1 Linguistic benefits .....	303
6.3.5.2 Social/Affective benefits.....	304
6.3.5.3 Practical benefits.....	308
6.3.5.4 Other benefits.....	309
6.3.6 Disadvantages of taped commentary.....	311
6.3.7 Taped commentary: the impact of unfamiliarity and individual differences .....	311
<b>6.4 Overview of student use of teacher and peer feedback: some individual differences.....</b>	<b>312</b>
<b>6.5 Revision and text quality .....</b>	<b>313</b>
6.5.1 Assignment One.....	313
6.5.2 Assignment Two.....	314
6.5.3 Assignment Three .....	314
6.5.4 Assignment Four .....	315
<b>6.6 Student attitudes towards the writing course and EFL writing .....</b>	<b>316</b>
6.6.1 Metacognitive/task knowledge .....	316
6.6.2 Student change of attitude towards EFL writing.....	316
6.6.3 Frequency of EFL writing .....	317
<b>6-7 Summary of chapter.....</b>	<b>318</b>
<b>CHAPTER SEVEN .....</b>	<b>321</b>
SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY, IMPLICATIONS, LIMITATIONS, AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH .....	321
<b>7.0 Introduction.....</b>	<b>321</b>
<b>7.1 Significance of the study.....</b>	<b>321</b>
7.1.1 Annotations:.....	321
7.1.2 Peer feedback .....	322
7.1.3 Teacher written feedback and taped commentary.....	323
<b>7.2 Implications.....</b>	<b>323</b>
<b>7.3 Limitations.....</b>	<b>326</b>
<b>7.4 Suggestions for future research .....</b>	<b>327</b>
<b>7.5 Teacher-research: issues and insights.....</b>	<b>328</b>
7.6.1 Teacher research: harmony or conflict?.....	329
7.6.2 Teacher research and the educational reform .....	332
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY .....</b>	<b>334</b>
<b>APPENDICES .....</b>	<b>351</b>



## LIST OF TABLES

<b>Chapter</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>Chapter Two</b>	
Table 2-1	28
Table 2-2	29
<b>Chapter Three</b>	
Table 3-1	43
Table 3-2	59
<b>Chapter Four</b>	
Table 4-1	112
Table 4-2	126
Table 4-3	127
<b>Chapter Five</b>	
<i>Noureddine's case</i>	
Table 5-1	144
Table 5-2	144
Table 5-3	145
Table 5-4	151
Table 5-5	151
Table 5-6	151
<i>Saida's case</i>	
Table 5-1	167
Table 5-2	167
Table 5-3	167
Table 5-4	168
Table 5-5	174
Table 5-6	174
Table 5-7	175
<i>Noura's Case</i>	
Table 5-1	188
Table 5-2	188
Table 5-3	189
Table 5-4	189
Table 5-5	195
Table 5-6	195
Table 5-7	195
<i>Karima's Case</i>	
Table 5-1	211
Table 5-2	212
Table 5-3	212
Table 5-4	218
Table 5-5	218
Table 5-6	218
<i>Fatima's case</i>	
Table 5-1	234
Table 5-2	234
Table 5-3	235
Table 5-4	235

Table 5-5	Frequency of Fatima's handling of teacher-indicated errors and taped comments	242
Table 5-6	Fatima's revisions from 2 <sup>nd</sup> to 3 <sup>rd</sup> drafts (Feedback source: Teacher)	242
Table 5-7	Mean scores of Fatima's 2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> drafts	243
<i>Naima's Case</i>		
Table 5-1	Frequency of Naima's use of peer feedback per assignment	262
Table 5-2	Naima's revisions from 1 <sup>st</sup> to 2 <sup>nd</sup> drafts (Feedback source: Peer)	262
Table 5-3	Naima's revisions from 1 <sup>st</sup> to 2 <sup>nd</sup> drafts (Feedback source: Self)	262
Table 5-4	Mean scores of Naima's 1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> drafts	263
Table 5-5	Frequency of Naima's handling of teacher-indicated errors and taped comments	269
Table 5-6	Naima's revisions from 2 <sup>nd</sup> to 3 <sup>rd</sup> drafts (Feedback source: Teacher)	270
Table 5-7	Mean scores of Naima's 2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> drafts	270
<i>Chapter Six</i>		
Table 6-1	Frequency of students' use of annotations and their features	276
Table 6-2	Frequency of students' use of peer feedback in revisions from 1 <sup>st</sup> to 2 <sup>nd</sup> drafts of the four assignments	280
Table 6-3:	Total revisions from 1 <sup>st</sup> to 2 <sup>nd</sup> drafts of the four assignments (Source of feedback: Peer)	282
Table 6-4	Differences in total of offered peer feedback points according to proficiency levels	282
Table 6-5	Total of offered and implemented peer feedback points on the 1 <sup>st</sup> drafts of the four assignments	283
Table 6-6	Total of students' self-initiated revisions from 1 <sup>st</sup> to 2 <sup>nd</sup> drafts of the four assignments	283
Table 6-7	Students' perceptions of the advantages and disadvantages of peer feedback	286
Table 6-8	Frequency of students' use of teacher feedback in revisions from 2 <sup>nd</sup> to 3 <sup>rd</sup> drafts of the four assignments	295
Table 6-9	Total revisions from 2 <sup>nd</sup> to 3 <sup>rd</sup> drafts of the four assignments (Feedback source: Teacher)	297
Table 6-10	Total of offered and implemented teacher feedback points on the 2 <sup>nd</sup> drafts of the four assignments	298
Table 6-11	Students' perceptions of advantages and disadvantages of teacher feedback	299
Table 6-12	Percentages of implemented peer and teacher feedback	312
Table 6-13	Paired Samples Test of the three drafts of assignment 1	313
Table 6-14	Paired Samples Test of the three drafts of assignment 2	314
Table 6-15	Paired Samples Test of the three drafts of assignment 3	314
Table 6-16	Paired Samples Test of the three drafts of assignment 4	315

## **LIST OF FIGURES**

<b>Chapter</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>Chapter Two</b>	
Figure 2-1: Writing frequency in Arabic, French, and English	19
Figure 2-2: Students' self-rating of degree of confidence in EFL writing	20
Figure 2-3: Students' experience in EFL paragraph and essay writing	21
Figure 2-4: Students' rating of their previous EFL writing activities	21
Figure 2-5: Composing stages at which students need help	22
Figure 2-6: Degree of student involvement in teacher feedback	23
Figure 2-7: Teacher written feedback strategies	23
Figure 2-8: Types of teacher written comments	24
Figure 2-9: Teacher/student conferencing	25
Figure 2-10: Frequency of pair work	25
Figure 2-11: Use of checklists and type of comments	26
<b>Chapter Four</b>	
Figure 4-1: Argumentative paragraph and essay structure	101
Figure 4-2: The revision process using the three types of feedback	102
Figure 4-3: Paragraph peer feedback sheet	105
Figure 4-4: Essay peer feedback sheet	106
Figure 4-5: Paragraph/essay cover sheet	110

## **LIST OF APPENDICES**

<b>Chapter</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>Chapter One</b>	
Appendix 1-1: Dean's letter of confirmation of access and completion of study	351
<b>Chapter Two</b>	
Appendix 2-1: Teacher interview agenda	352
Appendix 2-2: Student pre-course questionnaire	353
Appendix 2-3: Student group interview questions	358
<b>Chapter Four</b>	
Appendix 4-1: A chart of transition signals	359
Appendix 4-2: A chart of correction symbols	360
Appendix 4-3: A sample of an exemplar text and a writing activity	362
Appendix 4-4: Transcript of student retrospective reactions to a peer feedback activity	364
Appendix 4-5: A sample transcript of teacher taped commentary	366
Appendix 4-6: A sample of a student language learning diary	367
Appendix 4-7: Post-course questionnaire	368
Appendix 4-8: Student pre-course interview agenda	371
Appendix 4-9: Student post-course interview agenda	372
Appendix 4-10: Transcript of a peer feedback session	373
Appendix 4-11: Sample of a student's writing (a cover sheet and a completed peer feedback sheet	375
Appendix 4-12: Post-course feedback evaluation sheet	384
Appendix 4-13: Jacobs et al. (1981) ESL Composition Profile	385
Appendix 4-14: A sample of a student scores	386
<b>Chapter Five</b>	
Appendix 5-1: A sample of diagnostic writing	387
Appendix 5-2: List of topics	388

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

### **1.0 Introduction**

This chapter provides a background to the study. It starts by giving some information about my motivation to undertake this piece of research; it then briefly sheds some light on the linguistic situation in Morocco. The important role of learning English as a foreign language, with special focus on English composition teaching, is also discussed. Then the chapter ends with an overview of the thesis.

### **1.1 Motivation for the study**

Teaching, and learning writing, is a demanding and challenging task whether it is done in one's first, second or foreign language. The reason for this is that writing involves the interaction of different types of competencies, including linguistic, rhetorical, cognitive, strategic, and pragmatic competencies. Learners may master these prerequisites fairly well in their first language (L1) and manage to write satisfactory academic essays, although experience has shown that writers may find it difficult to produce good academic writing even in their first language. However, one can imagine the degree of difficulty that learners of a second or foreign language might encounter in producing a piece of academic writing. This is certainly true of Moroccan learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Being in a non-English speaking environment, Moroccan university EFL writers have nobody to turn to in producing academic written work except their writing teachers, quite often during their academic writing classes. What should be inferred from this is the weight that writing instruction should carry in providing the students with the necessary tools to be able to handle, and meet the requirements of their studies. Therefore, educationists argue that writing instruction needs to rely on specific pedagogical measures that should derive from a research-based diagnosis of the learning context, and the difficulties of learners. Krashen expresses the same idea when he recommends that teachers of writing resort to theory, and not to rely only on "individual research results". He says,

My hope is therefore that teachers of writing will consider the theory, not simply believe it, and relate the theory and research to their own experiences in writing and teaching writing. My hope is also that they will gain some understanding of the current state of research and theory and be encouraged to read and examine the professional literature on their own. It may not contain all the answers, but it will add the experience of others to their own experience and can provide writing

teachers with additional insights and tools to help them in their difficult task (1984:3).

What Krashen says above could be said about L1 and L2 writing instruction, and it needs greater focus in the foreign language learning context. Krashen's statement above was based on an investigation among writing teachers (1984:1) to discover their methods in the teaching of writing. As he reports, the outcome of that investigation was that the writing teachers did not follow any specific method that had, as a basis, some research-based theory. Almost all the teachers said that they relied on "rumor", "fashion", or "tradition" (ibid). Sometimes, teachers used a method because a colleague used it with his/her students and it worked.

This comment was made by Krashen about twenty years ago, and it could be said that writing teachers have moved from such habits and made substantial improvement in their writing instruction by relying more on writing theories and becoming themselves involved in writing research. However, this change in attitude towards teaching and researching writing varies from one part of the world to another. While in western countries research seems to have made great leaps, there remains a substantial amount of work to be done in my context. Krashen's comment still applies to a large extent to the way writing is taught in the Moroccan context. What follows is a detailed account about my motivation for the study.

First, having taught writing to Moroccan university students for ten years, I have realized that the writing skill is of great importance to students in pursuing and succeeding in their academic studies. Yet students seem to encounter substantial difficulties in writing academic essays in English. It is not uncommon in Moroccan universities to find teachers who complain that their students' writing is well below the required university level, and also students who moan about their inability to write successful essays to meet the expectations of their lecturers. This problem with EFL writing is particularly felt by students who choose English as a major at university. Although Moroccan students usually learn English for three years in high school (state schools), and for more years in private schools, writing is not usually emphasised because the focus of classes is on grammar and spoken English. As a matter of fact, when students opt for English as a major at the university, writing manifests itself as the most difficult skill. What makes the situation even worse is the fact that students realize that they have to take a written exam at the end of the year in every subject in the English language department (more will be said about this in section 1.4.1 below). It is

sufficient here to highlight the difficulties that both teachers and students have to face as far as the learning and teaching of writing are concerned.

The other motivation for the study is based on my conviction that some formal research needs to be done informed by existing research insights and current theories of writing. For example, according to interview data, and data from informal discussion with writing teachers at a Moroccan university, I have found out that the process approach to the teaching of writing is still regarded as alien in the Moroccan university writing classes. Some of the reasons presented for not following the process approach to writing were the big class sizes; the fact that this approach was time-consuming; the fact that the teaching of EFL writing at Moroccan universities is exam-oriented, and lack of students' motivation towards writing. The large class size might be a genuine constraint, but one which can be overcome depending on the teacher's motivation and readiness to find a solution to the problem. However, this motivation might just not be present all the way through a teacher's career. One of the teachers I interviewed admitted that she used to be more enthusiastic about her teaching at the beginning of her career and would try to find a way of dealing with the large classes. She said, "...maybe from my own experience, when I started teaching I was really ambitious about it [teaching EFL writing]; I used to go and divide the group into subgroups and work with them separately." <sup>1</sup>(T.I.S) However, this depends on how much time teachers are ready to spend helping students with their writing. Given their belief that the process approach to writing is time-consuming and their struggle to comply with the exam-oriented system, writing teachers resort to lecturing in the EFL writing classroom. This was also put forward by the same teacher when she said, "it is just that you come to class and you lecture...we come to class, we have a handout we start lecturing. Then, may be an exercise at the end of the lecture, as you know the number of hours is just limited". This teacher, however, was aware of the fact that lecturing was not the best way to teach writing; she said, "...and lecturing is just not perfect for writing."

With regard to this type of EFL writing classroom, the learner will obviously be less motivated and may even develop a negative attitude towards writing. In the same interview, the writing teacher made the point that student motivation was usually very low in the EFL writing classes. She says, "so my experience has shown that it is really difficult, it is really difficult, especially when students are not really motivated; they think that it is really boring. You come to class and sit and do some exercise..." (T.I.S).

From what has been said above, the EFL writing class atmosphere is one of monotony, boredom, and lack of motivation. The method of teaching EFL writing is predominantly product-oriented. Students often write a one-draft essay, give it to the teacher who might provide some error correction, gives it a mark and returns it to students who might look at the mark and ignore any corrections since it is the mark that is of great importance eventually.

Another major issue that needs to be raised here is teacher awareness, knowledge and skill. Teachers' competence or confidence in teaching EFL writing needs to be further investigated. Some research has already been done; it examined the causes of students' ineffective writing and explored the writing teachers' competencies (Dahbi 1989). Some interesting findings of the study have related incoherent student writing to teacher attitudes to writing and their inadequate mastery of effective teaching techniques. The study suggests that teachers be trained in discourse analysis and text linguistics, and that students be exposed to genres of writing with a view to helping them write more appropriately structured texts. Hence, I am not alone in noticing that there are good reasons for more research to be done in this field, and more specifically in the Moroccan university context. However, in the present study my intention is not to criticize the way some teachers teach writing, but to illustrate some of the predominant problems in the context of the study that have been the basis of my motivation for undertaking this research.

From my conversations with the writing teachers they seemed to be aware that the teaching of writing at the Moroccan university should receive more attention. This attitude was shown through teacher enthusiasm about the present study: they expressed their willingness to help by offering their time for interviews.

The project was also welcomed by the Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences since he too believed that there was a substantial need for such a project and that I would be given all the help and the facilities to undertake my research. The study went smoothly and the Dean was kept informed of how it was progressing. His acknowledgment of the contribution of the study to the teaching of writing at his faculty was recorded in a letter that confirmed the completion of the study (see Appendix 1-1, p. 351). There was therefore a high degree of awareness from both teaching staff and administrative authorities that such a study was of substantial value in the context.

---

<sup>1</sup> (T.I.S): Teacher Interview S



As has been mentioned before, the teaching of writing in the context is currently product-oriented, and so is the research on writing. This appears to be the case with the teaching of writing in the Arab world as well (Asiri 1997). Most of the research that has been done on Arab ESL/EFL writers is product-based, with the focus usually on linguistic features and structural aspects of written products, e.g. sentence structure, errors, linguistic and rhetorical features of written essays, etc., (Kharna 1985; Doushaq and Al-Makzomy 1989). The exception is some recent studies carried out in the Middle East which focused on one particular aspect of the writing process, or one specific strategy such as the use of the first language (L1) in second language (L2) writing (Alam 1993) and revision strategies (Al-Semari 1993).

To date, no literature has been recorded in the Moroccan context on the use of a writing programme that is based on the process approach to writing, in other words, a programme that takes students step by step into the prewriting activities, brainstorming, planning, revising drafts, etc, in order to produce multiple-draft essays. The programme on which this study is based follows the process approach to writing. Special focus is on multiple-draft paragraph and essay writing. Four different feedback procedures: self-monitored feedback, peer feedback, and teacher feedback, both written feedback and taped commentary (see section 4.6, pp.94-112) are used to encourage students to revise their writings.

As far as the teaching and learning of EFL writing in Morocco is concerned, little research has been done in the past twenty years or so, and most of what has been done had as its focus the final written product rather than the process. For instance, some of the issues that such research dealt with were related to cohesion/coherence, grammar/syntax, rhetorical structure (Dahbi 1984; Ouaouicha 1986; Hmama 1989; Nemasi 1991; Bouziane 2003). Therefore, the present study intends to make a unique contribution to the teaching of writing in Morocco by attempting to explore the effects of a writing program which encourages multiple-draft writing and revision together with a consideration of student perception and reaction to these types of feedback.

## **1.2 The linguistic situation in Morocco**

### **1.2.1 Berber, Arabic, and French**

The subjects of this research live in a multilingual context; some of them will have up to three languages in their repertoire before they start learning English. These are usually:

- Berber: “the indigenous language” spoken in Morocco before the coming of the Arabs (Bentahila 1983:1), with its three dialects Tashlhit, Tamazight, Tarifit (Ennaji 1997).
- Arabic: Classical Arabic, the official language of Morocco, is used in government, education, and media. It is not natively spoken as a mother tongue, but it is learnt in schools. Moroccan Arabic, on the other hand, is the colloquial variety of Arabic which Moroccans acquire as their mother tongue.
- French became the language of instruction in Moroccan schools as a result of French colonialism. However, when Morocco got its independence in 1956, the need for the replacement of the colonial language by the country’s national language, Arabic, was one of the main concerns of the very first government to come to power in the country. This gave rise to Arabization, i.e. making Arabic the language of instruction.

The Arabization plan was halted by many factors among which there was lack of qualified teachers which led to a general “lowering of the teaching standards” (Bentahila 1983:125). As far as the mastery of languages is concerned, Moroccan pupils who were exposed to Arabization mastered neither French nor Arabic. In fact, French may be said to constitute more of an obstacle now than it did before Arabization because at that time pupils, at least, acquired the habit of using and working in French fairly early in their education. Nowadays, students with a more Arabic-based primary and secondary education may face serious difficulties when they reach university where a high level of French is still required. Bentahila believes that there might be a lot of truth in the claim made by Guessous (1976, Cited in Bentahila 1983) that the majority of Moroccan children’s failure in their examinations is due to problems with French. One direct effect of Arabization has been noticed in students’ weak writing skills in French.

### **1.2.2 English**

The teaching of English as a foreign language was introduced by the French into Moroccan secondary schools (Abu-Talib 1985). The importance of English as an international language has been realised by the Moroccan policy makers and educationalists; it became clear that Morocco’s international communication would not be achieved only through French but also through the use of English. The English language has been gaining ground in Morocco (Sadiqi 1991) for a substantial number of years now, especially in higher Education (Ennaji 1991). English as a Foreign Language

is taught in both state schools, universities, institutes of higher education, and also in private schools and institutions. There is a growing awareness, and a positive attitude, among educated Moroccans about the importance of the English language for the following realistic factors:

- English is an international language.
- It is the language of most sciences and documentation.
- The generation of Moroccan students who have been through the unsuccessful scheme of Arabization seem to be more keen on learning English as a means of making up for their loss, or lack of mastery, of the French language.
- Most students prefer to continue their studies either in England or the US.

### **1.3 English language learning and writing**

#### **1.3.1 English in secondary schools**

Most students start learning English as a Foreign Language at the age of fourteen or fifteen and for a period of three years. During these three years the focus is on reading and speaking at the expense of writing. The only common writing exercises at this stage are copying, arranging sentences, filling the blanks, and expanding prompts. Even as students reach the baccalaureate they will not usually have had enough, or rather adequate, composition writing practice since the teachers usually focus on the sentence level. This is nicely summarised by Ouaouicha when he says: "at the end of the three-year period of instruction in English in high school, the student...can hardly write a coherent paragraph on his own." (1980:6) Writing is still a major problem for students in high school in Morocco, and its teaching is still an arena for so much controversy as to what approach to adopt. The product approach is the prevailing method despite the claim of some practitioners that the process approach is being implemented.

Research in EFL has provided evidence that teachers of English in Moroccan secondary schools are not adequately trained in the effective teaching of writing, and, especially, in the writing process (Bourouis 1995; Chaibi 1996; Abouabdelkader 1999). What makes the situation even worse as far as the teaching of writing is concerned is the fact that secondary school teachers do not usually see writing as one of their major concerns. This view is supported by Bouziane when he says that "the status of Moroccan teachers of English being teachers of a language suggests that writing is an adjunct task to their mission of teaching, or only one among other language aspects they teach." (2003:3-4)

By considering writing as one of other aspects of language teaching and not as a major aspect, many teachers would not see it as an important skill for their students to master.

#### **1.4 The institutional setting of the study**

When students pass their Baccalaureate exams, they may choose to pursue their studies either in private institutions or in government universities. The subjects of this research come from a state university, hence my focus on this type of institutional setting. The degree of exposure to EFL at the university level in Morocco varies from one faculty to another and from one department to another. In the English language department English is the only medium of instruction. I need to mention here that the learning of English at the university level, both in the other faculties and in the English language department has witnessed a substantial change as a result of the new reform of higher education in Morocco (see section 1.4.2 below).

##### **1.4.1 The department of English language literature and linguistics**

Ben M'sik Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences is one of the fairly young faculties that have been created in Casablanca as a means of taking the pressure off the University of Hassan II and also as an attempt to decentralise higher education in Morocco. It offers students degrees in different areas of specialisation and it consists of the following departments: French Language and Communication; Arabic Literature and Linguistics; History and Geography; Islamic Studies; and English Language and Linguistics.

Students can opt to major in English after they pass their Baccalaureate and by this time they will, usually, have learnt English for three years only in high school. Once in the English language department, students spend the first two years focusing on the four language skills, reading, writing, listening, and speaking. The reading materials may range from short texts, short stories, to novels and plays. The writing skill, the most problematic skill for university students, starts with the paragraph as a basic component and moves on to essay writing. Students may do some listening and pronunciation practice depending on the teacher's selection of materials, and also on the availability of sound systems and language labs. However, students may not have any other chance of practising their speaking except inside the classroom with the teacher and their classmates. Speaking English outside class is almost absent among university students. During the third year of their Bachelor degree in English, students choose to specialize either in English literature or linguistics. In the fourth year students are required to sit

for a written exam and complete a dissertation. When they pass the written test, students take an oral exam in which they have to defend the dissertation. This explains the importance of EFL academic writing in the life of a university student who opts for English as a major. This also explains why the present study has focused on the writing skill.

#### **1.4.2 Features of the Reform: teaching English for Academic Purposes (EAP)**

This section will attempt to touch on some of the important features of the higher education reform by giving a brief description of its purposes and basic principles. The other aspect I will focus on is how the reform will influence the teaching of EAP in general, and, academic writing more specifically.

As explained in an official document, from the Moroccan Ministry of Higher Education, Professional Training, and Scientific Research (February 2001), the reform has come in order to make a substantial change in the old Moroccan higher education system. Some of the problems of the old pedagogical system are as follows:

- The pedagogical approach and methods of teaching do not allow for the development of a student's personality. This is due to the predominance of a single method of teaching that encourages passivity through the transmission of knowledge to students, ignoring their capacity for analysis and synthesis of information.
- Less time and scope are given to practical work (exercise) in a student's university life.
- The way the academic year is organised leads to the existence of a substantial gap between the learning period and the end-of-the-year exams.
- Many students fail their exams and keep repeating the year, then give up and leave the university without getting their degrees.

This is to mention only few of the many drawbacks of the old system against which the reform has been created.

The new pedagogical system that the reform has come up with is summarised in the following paragraph, in French with my translation into English, from the Ministry of Higher Education document (February 2001:8).

*L'approche sur laquelle s'appuie le nouveau système pédagogique s'articule autour de sa flexibilité, de la diversité de ses formations et de la progressivité de* *The approach on which the new pedagogical system is based is characterised by flexibility, diversity, and the progressive orientation, or rather*

*l'orientation de l'étudiant. Cette approche devrait être centrée sur l'apprenant. Outre ses missions traditionnelles l'enseignant en serait le tuteur, l'animateur et le facilitateur.* *guidance, of the student. This approach is learner-centred. The teacher's mission is that of an animator and facilitator.*

The flexibility of the new system is related to the fact that it is based on the module as a fundamental unit. A module might consist of different elements, such as, theory-based teaching, practice-oriented activities and training, field work activities. However, the different components have to be coherently integrated and will depend on what the subject of study is. From this brief overview of the reform, it seems that it is bringing in a substantial amount of change in the whole educational system of the Moroccan university. What is of great importance to us here is the effect of this reform on the English language department and the teaching of EFL writing.

As far as the teaching of EFL/EAP is concerned, the reform will enhance and help introduce the teaching of English in other departments and faculties. For example, some of the lecturers of English from the English department will have to teach English to students in other faculties, such as Medicine, Law, Economics, etc. This will create, within the English language department, some ESP courses which will cater for students' needs of different specializations in other departments.

Within the English Language Department, the reform will introduce the modular system. Students will have to choose modules they want to focus on during a given term. What follows from this is that the testing procedure will also change. Formative assessment will replace the summative one in the English language department; that is to say, continuous assessment will replace the one exam at the end of the year. To many students, this is going to be a relief, but it also means that a student should work on a regular basis, the thing which is normally recommended when it comes to language learning.

Another major amendment of the reform is smaller class sizes to make the teachers' task easier. The present study, therefore, seems to be well-timed because it coincides with the implementation of the reform. It is expected that the writing programme proposed will be easily implemented and more practical within the new framework of the reform.

## **1.5 Overview of the thesis**

*Chapter One* sets out the motivation for this piece of research. It has discussed the current state of English writing instruction at the university level in Morocco, the perceptions of teachers about the constraints and potential of the situation. It goes on to discuss existing research in this area and the need for research of the type this thesis presents. It has also given a brief overview of the linguistic environment of the study and its institutional setting. The chapter ends with an overview of the thesis.

*Chapter Two* gives the reader an idea about the design of the the baseline study and the instruments which were used for data collection. The findings are presented and their implications for the main study are considered. The chapter ends with a summary of the main points.

*Chapter Three* consists of a review of relevant literature. It gives an overview of the process approach to writing and identifies its characteristics in comparison with previous writing approaches. The nature of the writing activity and the importance of revision in a process approach are also presented. Then, different types of feedback are discussed together with some related issues from previous studies. A critique of one particularly relevant study which the present investigation has built on and sought to improve is also provided.

*Chapter Four* presents the main research rationale and methodology. It is divided into four main parts. The first part reports on the research paradigm and the philosophical framework within which the present research situates itself. A general overview of what a case study entails and a justification of its use in the present research are also highlighted. The issues of validity and generalizability are discussed in relation to the case study method. Triangulation as one feature of the present study is brought up in relation to the various methods of inquiry used. In the second part the design of the writing program is provided. The third part outlines the different data collection instruments used in the study and the fourth part explains the data analysis procedures.

*Chapter Five* presents the analysis of the individual cases. Each case is divided into three main sections. First section, *preliminary perspectives*, provides a general background to each case study. The second section focuses on how students handle the

different types of feedback and the extent to which they make use of them in their revisions. The third section comments on each participant's general development.

*Chapter Six* provides a summary and discussion of the main findings of the study.

*Chapter Seven* deals with the significance of the study, its implications, limitations and suggestions for further research. It also raises some issues related to teacher research in the context of the study together with throwing some light on my own experience as teacher-researcher.



## CHAPTER TWO

### BASELINE STUDY

#### 2.0 Introduction

As I mentioned in chapter one, my experience as a writing teacher at the university is at the origin of the identification of student problems in EFL writing and my decision to undertake the present study is based on this realization. However, I also believed that some detailed scrutiny of the context from other perspectives would clarify the issues and concerns. Hence, the aim of the baseline study was to achieve a comprehensive view of both the teaching and learning of EFL writing in the context of the study by examining teachers' and students' perceptions before undertaking the main study. Therefore, students' EFL writing problems, their perceptions as to what might be possible solutions to these problems, and their expectations from the writing teacher were highlighted. It is worth mentioning that this chapter is rather a contextualization than a pure baseline study. Some of the participants in the baseline study are also included in the main study.

#### 2.1 Design of baseline study

##### 2.1.1 Participants

As mentioned above, the participants of the baseline study were both teachers and students. Two first-year writing teachers were interviewed and forty five first-year English major students completed a questionnaire. In addition, two student group interviews were conducted.

##### 2.1.2 Summary of instruments

The baseline study made use of three main instruments:

1. Teacher interviews (Appendix 2-1, p. 352)
2. Student questionnaire (Appendix 2-2, p. 353)
3. Student group Interviews (Appendix 2-3, p. 358)

##### 2.1.2.1 Schedule

Teacher Interviews			Student Questionnaire			Student Group Interviews		
Participants	Location	Date	Participants	Location	Date	Participants	Location	Date
Teacher S	Staff room	4 Nov 2002	45 first-year students	Classroom	7 Nov 2002	2 Student group interviews	Classroom	13 & 14 Nov 02
Teacher J	Staff room	5 Nov 2002						

## **2.2 Instruments**

### **2.2.1 Teacher interviews**

Interviews were used as one of the main data elicitation tools for the baseline study. Teacher interviews aimed to tap teachers' conceptualisations of issues related to teaching and learning EFL writing in the English language department. In order to conduct teacher interviews, I had to approach teachers individually. In fact, only very few teachers in the department were found to have taught writing before, and even fewer were teaching writing at the time of data collection. Eventually I managed to find two first-year composition teachers, which was a good opportunity since the study focuses on first year students. The time for the interviews with each one of the teachers was agreed upon.

Some ethical issues and also issues related to building rapport with the teachers were considered (see section 4.7.2.2, pp. 115-117) in order to guarantee smooth running of the interviews. The interviews consisted of semi-structured questions. I prepared an agenda with the different items to be covered, but I also allowed some degree of flexibility in the proceedings of the interviews. There were moments where I felt the teacher wanted to elaborate more on a previous point, so I would let them continue without any interruption. This was done for two reasons: first, in order to minimise the effect of my position as researcher; second, I knew that by allowing the teachers' normal flow of ideas, I would get much more interesting data. That also meant that the interviewee was willing to express himself/herself without being reticent.

#### **2.2.1.1 Transcribing and coding**

I transcribed the teacher interviews verbatim in order to carry out a content analysis. I read the transcripts several times and grouped the responses to each question, making use of the wordprocessor cut-and-paste and highlighting functions (Wilkinson & Birmingham 2003:63), in order to identify themes and construct categories. One important aspect I took into consideration in deriving categories was that these should be "*exhaustive*" and "*exclusive*", i.e. the kind of statements that were included in one category should belong there and could not be placed anywhere (Gillham 2000:60). These two aspects of "exhaustiveness" and "exclusiveness" are usually related to the degree of how much developed and focused the interview is (ibid.:61). Therefore, I have to mention here that although the teachers were allowed to elaborate on their statements whenever they felt the need to do so, I managed to maintain the focus on the different topics that I intended to cover.

### **2.2.2 Pre-course questionnaire**

The second instrument used in the baseline study was the questionnaire. As can be seen from the baseline schedule above, forty five students completed the questionnaire in class under my supervision. The pre-course questionnaire was meant to investigate several issues related to students' writing in EFL by asking them to reflect on their previous writing classes and answer the questions that came under specific sections of the questionnaire.

The pre-course questionnaire consisted of eight sections, each one attempted to investigate a specific aspect of students' writing experience.

- Section one: frequency of writing in their L1 (Arabic), L2 (French), English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and their degree of confidence as EFL writers.
- Section two: familiarity with paragraph and essay writing in L1 and EFL.
- Section three: students' perceptions of the degree of difference between writing in their L1 and EFL.
- Section four: writing strategies initiated by previous EFL writing teachers.
- Section five: strategies their previous writing teachers used to give feedback on writing.
- Section six: activities previous teachers encouraged students to use in revising their own work, or in giving or receiving feedback.
- Section seven: the degree of student involvement in responding to the teacher's written feedback; i.e. whether students took the initiative to monitor teacher feedback, and the writing stage at which students believe they needed help with their writing.
- Section eight consisted of open-ended questions:
  - a) Students' attitude to writing in EFL.
  - b) Difficulties they face in EFL writing.
  - c) The type of writing students find more challenging: narrative, descriptive, or argumentative.
  - d) Students proposed solutions to their writing problems.
  - e) Type of help students expect from their writing teachers.

#### **2.2.2.1 Piloting of pre-course questionnaire**

The questionnaire was piloted twice in order to examine the clarity of the wordings and to see if there were any questions that might be incomprehensible to respondents. The

first piloting took place at the Centre for English Language Teacher Education (CELTE) with a group of overseas students who were taking the in-session language course. The piloting took place at the beginning of the term, October 2003. Although they were from different nationalities, the overseas students were considered to have similar language needs to Moroccan undergraduates. For both sets of students English would be used as a medium of instruction and they had to bring their language proficiency up to the required level in order to be able to understand lectures. The second pilot of the questionnaire took place at a Moroccan university with a small group of first year students. In both cases the questionnaire did not present any major problems for the respondents, except for some specialized terminology which I had to simplify.

#### **2.2.2.2 Analysis of questionnaire**

The questionnaire results were analysed by grouping items following the different sections mentioned above. The subjects' responses to closed questions were tallied and percentages calculated. The results of the closed questions will be presented, in section 2.3.2 below, in a systematic manner through the use of charts created with Excel. Each chart will be followed by an explanation and discussion of the findings in relation to the subjects and the context of the study. The section of open-ended questions yielded interesting data. Students' responses were read many times and categorized according to the emerging themes, namely *students' perceptions of their difficulties in EFL writing* and their *suggested solutions* (see Tables 2-1 and 2-2, pp. 28-29 for more details).

#### **2.2.3 Student group interviews**

Student group interviews were used to follow up on some questions and issues that were raised in the questionnaire. They were used as a means of giving a chance to students to voice their concerns, attitudes and perceptions of the way they had been learning EFL writing and to get a more complete picture of the context in which the program would be operational. I divided them into two groups of seven students each and the interviews took place in a classroom. I need to mention that among these students some were my potential students and some were attending my class out of interest and curiosity. However, they were all first year students. I informed both groups that the two interviews were part of a research I was conducting about the teaching of writing to first year students and that their responses would be treated in complete anonymity. Furthermore, I explained that their responses were of great importance to me because they would enhance my understanding of the students' problems in EFL writing with a view to improving the learning and teaching conditions.

I prepared a list of questions as a means of guiding the interviews, rather than imposing a strict structure, and made sure that each student had a chance to express his/her opinion. I also invited students to add items to the agenda as the interviews proceeded. There was some degree of flexibility in terms of allowing enough time, whenever needed, for students to elaborate, and for me to probe some answers with a view to getting greater depth of information. In general, the group interviews proved to be informative and students actively participated by expressing their opinions and attitudes.

I informed the interviewees at the outset that they could use either Arabic or French to answer the questions, but all of them expressed the wish to conduct the interviews in English. Although I was aware that the students' limited English proficiency might restrict the amount of information they would provide, I did respect their choice to conduct the interviews in English. These were students majoring in English and for most of them carrying out an interview in English was a challenge they wanted to face. Having understood that, I had to find a tactful way of getting the information without causing intimidation or embarrassment. Hence, I informed the students that they could resort to French, Arabic, or Berber if they found themselves unable to express an idea in English. This strategy worked as some interviewees resorted occasionally to either French or Arabic to express their ideas when they could not find the right vocabulary in English.

## **2.3 Analysis and Findings**

### **2.3.1 Analysis and findings of teacher interviews**

Teacher interviews yielded interesting data about the teaching of EFL writing. Important themes were as follows:

- *The difficulty of adopting a process approach to writing and multiple-draft essays*
- *The impossibility of some teacher feedback procedures, such as conferencing*
- *The difficulty of responding to individual students' writings*
- *Lack of motivation among students*
- *Lack of interest in revision among students*

According to teacher S, a process approach to the teaching of writing in the English language department was not feasible. The idea of introducing multiple draft essays would not, therefore, be much appreciated by teachers. I initially thought this was not possible due to the large class sizes, but according to teacher S, this type of activity might not be envisaged by some teachers even if the groups were smaller. She said,

“believe me...it is just impossible at the level of the university even with a smaller group that’s just impossible.” <sup>1</sup>(T.I.S) The teacher also believed that asking students to write multiple drafts was time-consuming by saying:

No. it is just not feasible. It could be perfect if we could do that, but it is just not feasible. If you try to ask them to write the first draft and you feel that they have problems in it and then you ask them to produce the same thing trying to avoid the mistakes that they have done then I try to do it otherwise. May be to move to something else and try always to come back to the same problems and see if they have improved or something, but to keep with the same drafts, um, it just not feasible. It is of course time-consuming and otherwise we are going to miss a lot of parts of our program. (T.I.S)

While students may have high expectations about help from their writing teachers (see Table 2-2, p. 29), the teachers may not be prepared to offer as much help as is required for their own reasons and constraints. Students are expected to work hard and autonomously with limited help from the writing teacher. This is clearly stated by the same teacher:

I believe that students could improve if they are working hard and so, by trying to help themselves. I cannot do the work for them, but I will try to guide them as far as basic principles are concerned, but to sit with them and go step by step and try to do all the work alone with them, that’s just impossible. (T.I.S)

What is also implied in this quotation is that conferencing or face-to-face conversation with a student on his/her writing is not a common practice among writing teachers. Talking about the effort which teacher feedback to students entails, teacher J made the point that “it requires patience especially with first year students; you have to start with them from the beginning. And not all the teachers are ready to do this work.” <sup>2</sup>(T.I.J) We should note, though, that teacher J is not trying to generalize this resistance to providing help for the students to all the teachers.

Another major problem reported by the teachers is related to lack of motivation among EFL learners to write. This may result in students not wanting to revise their essays because they believe that revision is worthless since it cannot make a difference in their writing performance. As teacher S put it “students think that revision wouldn’t be beneficial, ‘even when we come back to our paragraphs so what? What am I going to get?’ For them it is a waste of time.” Revision, then, may be seen by some students as a waste of time rather than a means of improving their writing. However, one should stop for a while here and reflect on what has been said so far. Some questions seem to

---

<sup>1</sup> (T.I.S): Teacher Interview S

<sup>2</sup> (T.I.J): Teacher Interview J

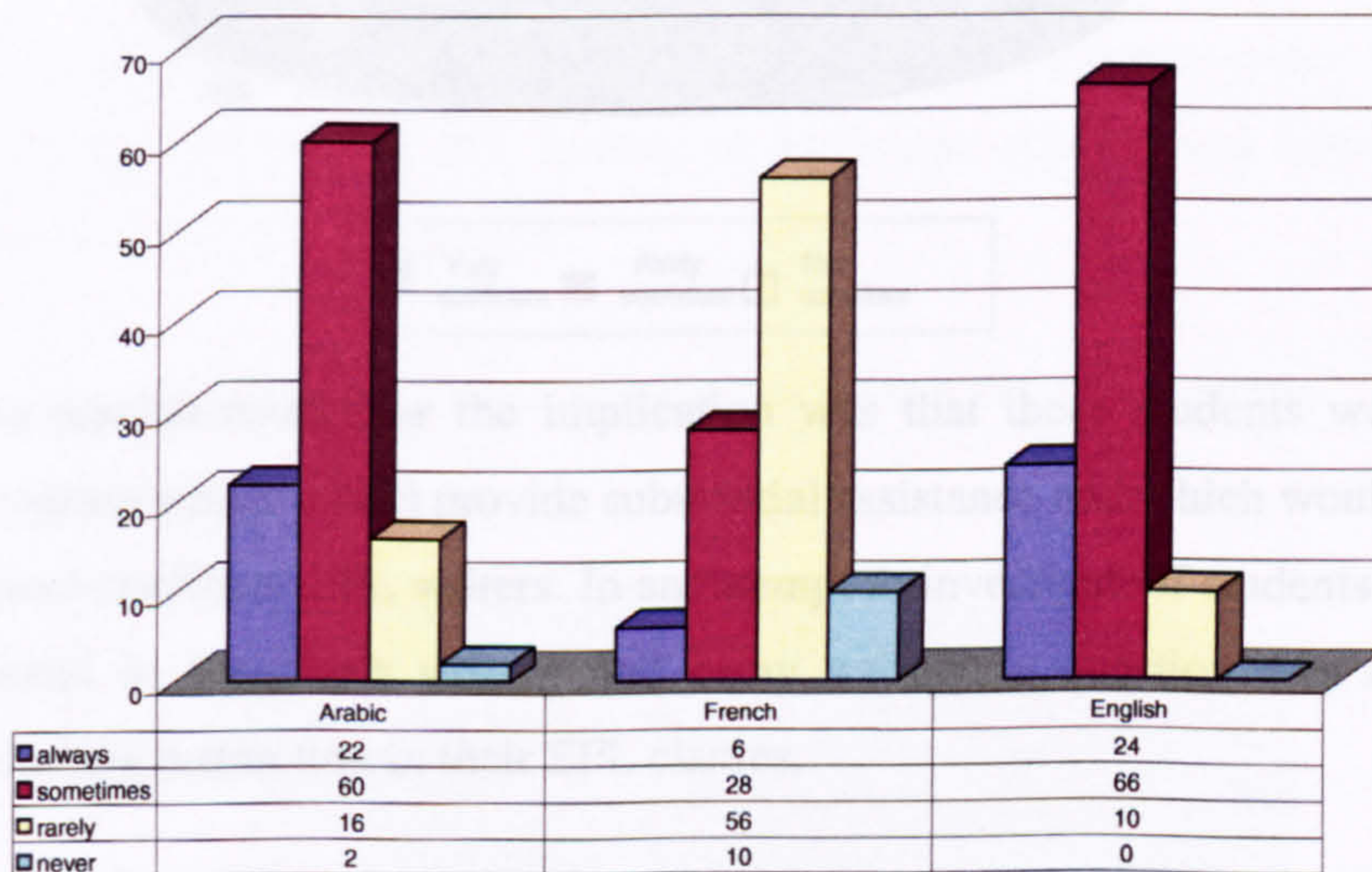
impose themselves here: isn't the students' lack of interest in revision an outcome of the way writing is taught? Do the teachers need to attend more to students' problems in writing by including more interesting tasks and activities? How much effort is made to raise students' awareness about the importance of revision in their composing process? Hence, in order to gain more insight into these issues students' responses were also sought.

### 2.3.2 Analysis and findings of student pre-course questionnaire

#### 2.3.2.1 Findings of the closed questions

The chart below shows how frequently students write in their L1 (Arabic), L2 (French), and EFL. The students were asked to say how often they wrote in each of these languages as a means of getting a general idea about how familiar they were with writing as a language skill. Although, this present study does not intend to compare students' writing performances in these languages, the responses can give us a clear idea about the linguistic context of the participants.

Figure 2-1: Writing frequency in Arabic, French, and English

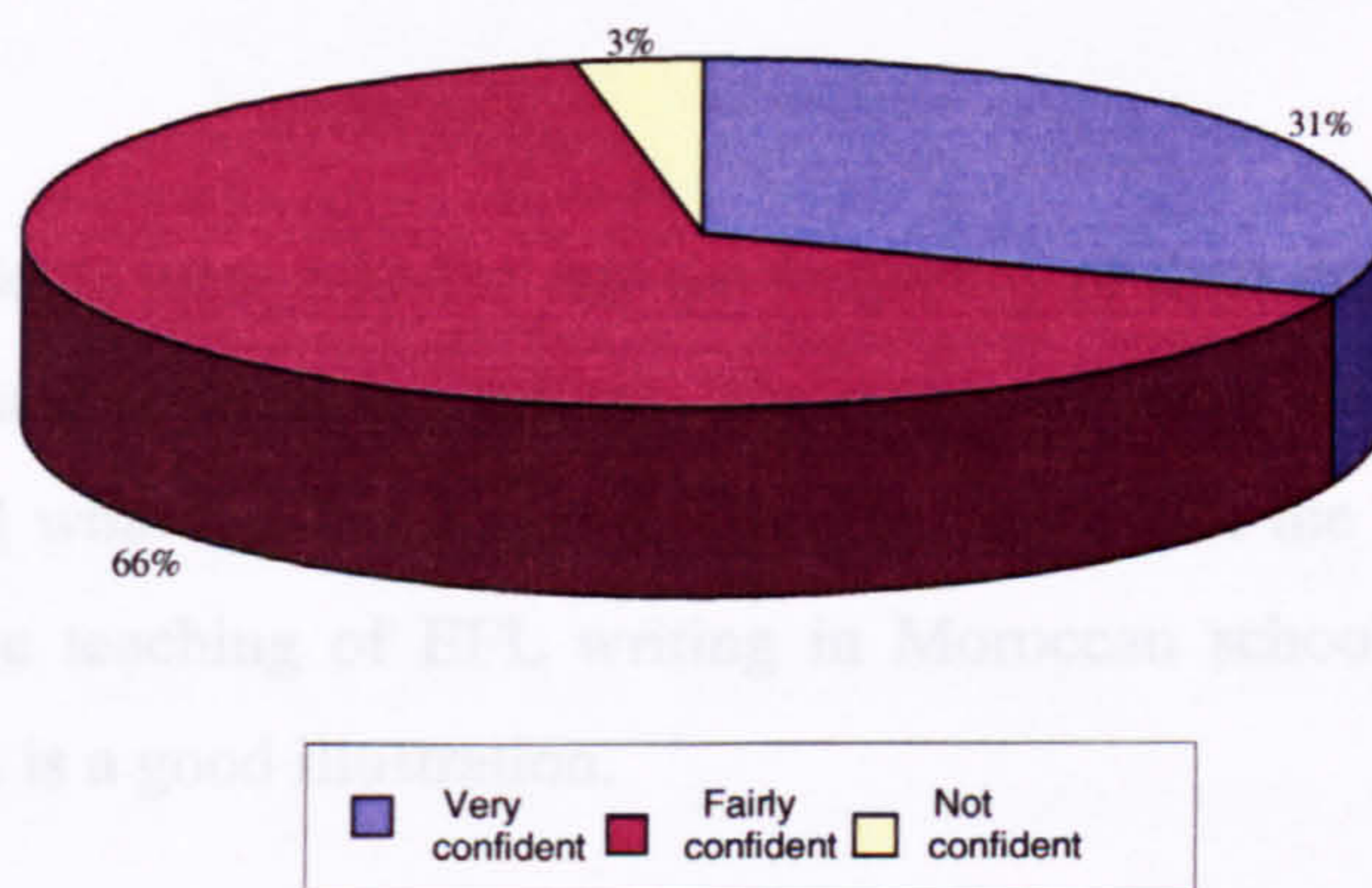


A quick look at the chart shows how students' writing frequency in French was influenced by French losing its position as a first language of instruction after the implementation of Arabization (see section 1.2.1, pp. 5-6). It also confirms that because of their problems with French, students tend to write more frequently in English and Arabic (66% said they sometimes write in English, 60% in Arabic). This is clearly justified as most subjects are taught through the medium of Arabic. On the other hand, it

is clear that students in this study have to write in English more often since they have chosen English as a major at the university.

However, students seem to be aware that their L1 (Arabic) rhetoric is different from the English rhetoric. A considerable number of the students (49%) reported that writing in Arabic was completely different from writing in English, and 51% said it was slightly different. The aim of this question was to examine how aware students were of those differences, and, at the same time, raise their awareness about the fact that learning EFL will also involve new writing skills which they may not necessarily have acquired in their L1 or L2. As far as confidence in EFL writing is concerned, students were asked to self-rate their degree of confidence. The following is a representation of their responses.

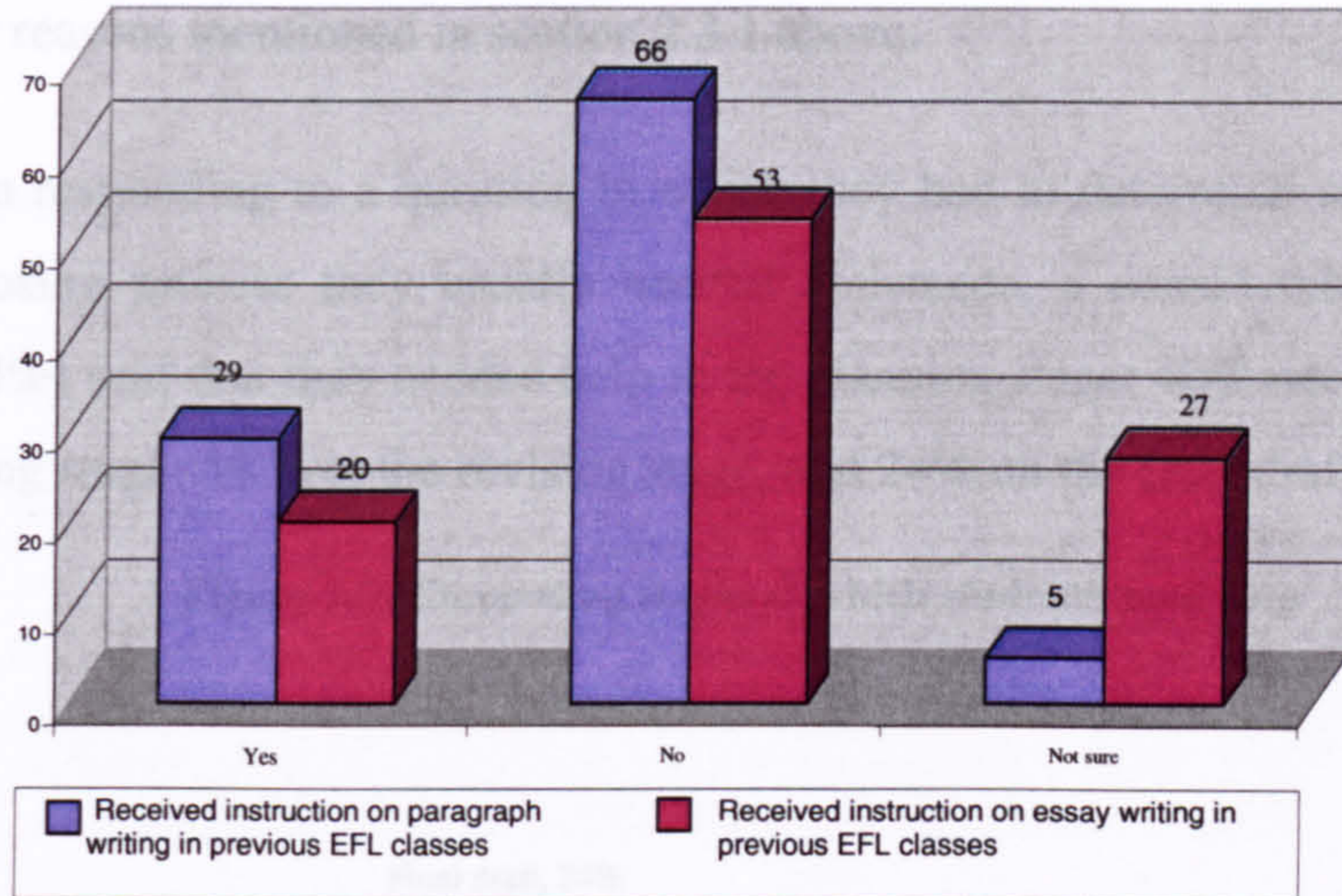
Figure 2-2: Students' self-rating of degree of confidence in EFL writing



For me as teacher-researcher the implication was that these students would need a writing program which would provide substantial assistance and which would help them become more confident EFL writers. In an attempt to investigate if students had already been initiated to paragraph writing and essay writing, a question was asked about previous writing instruction in their EFL classes.



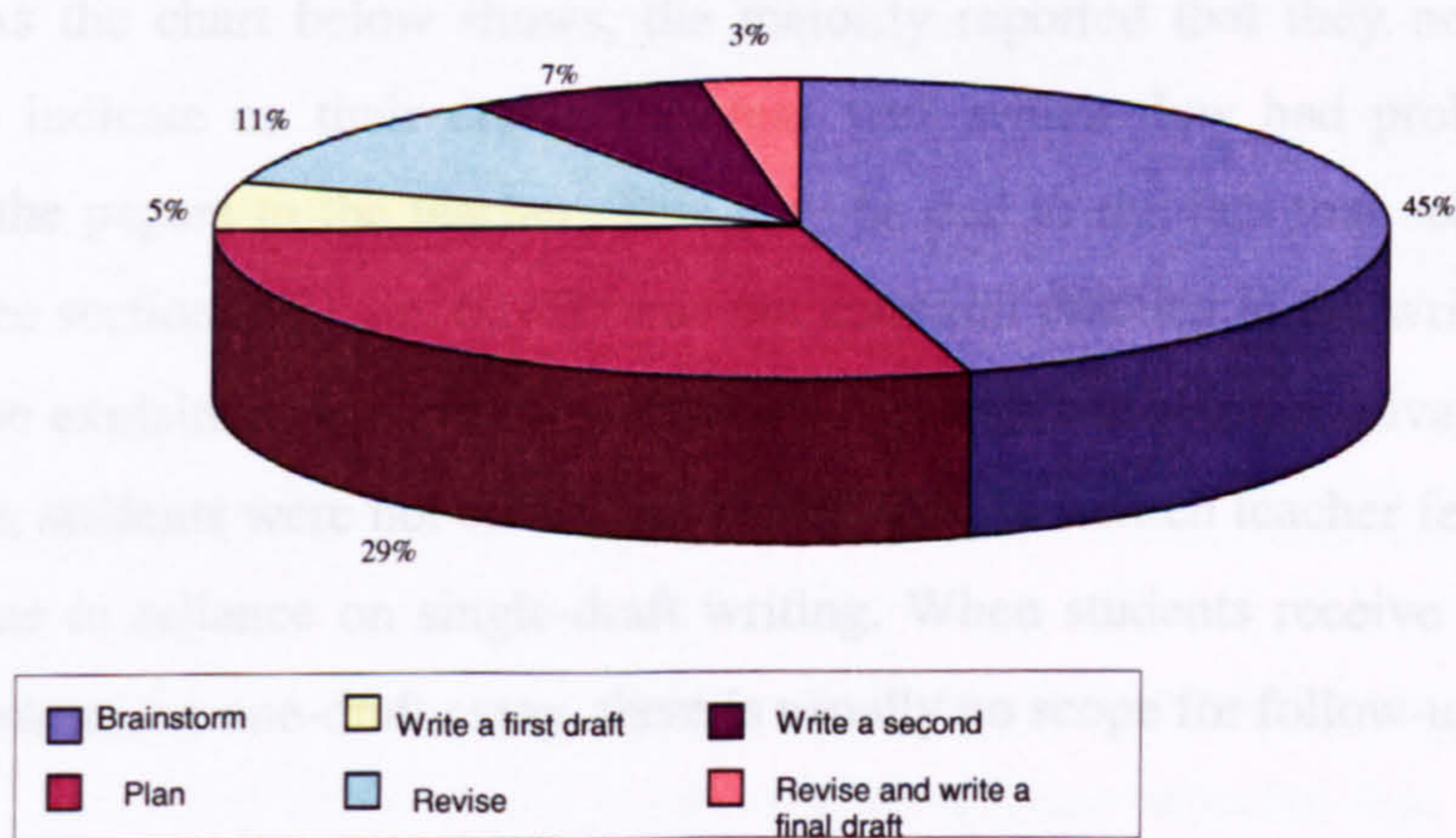
**Figure 2-3: Students' experience in EFL paragraph and essay writing**



As the chart shows, the majority answered that they had not received any instruction in their previous EFL classes. This minimal EFL writing instruction can explain lack of confidence.

Moreover, students were asked to rate the frequency of their previous EFL teachers' use of pre-writing and revision procedures. The responses were interesting in the sense that they confirmed what had been said in Chapter One about the prevalence of a product approach to the teaching of EFL writing in Moroccan schools and universities. The following chart is a good illustration.

**Figure 2-4: Students' rating of their previous EFL writing activities**

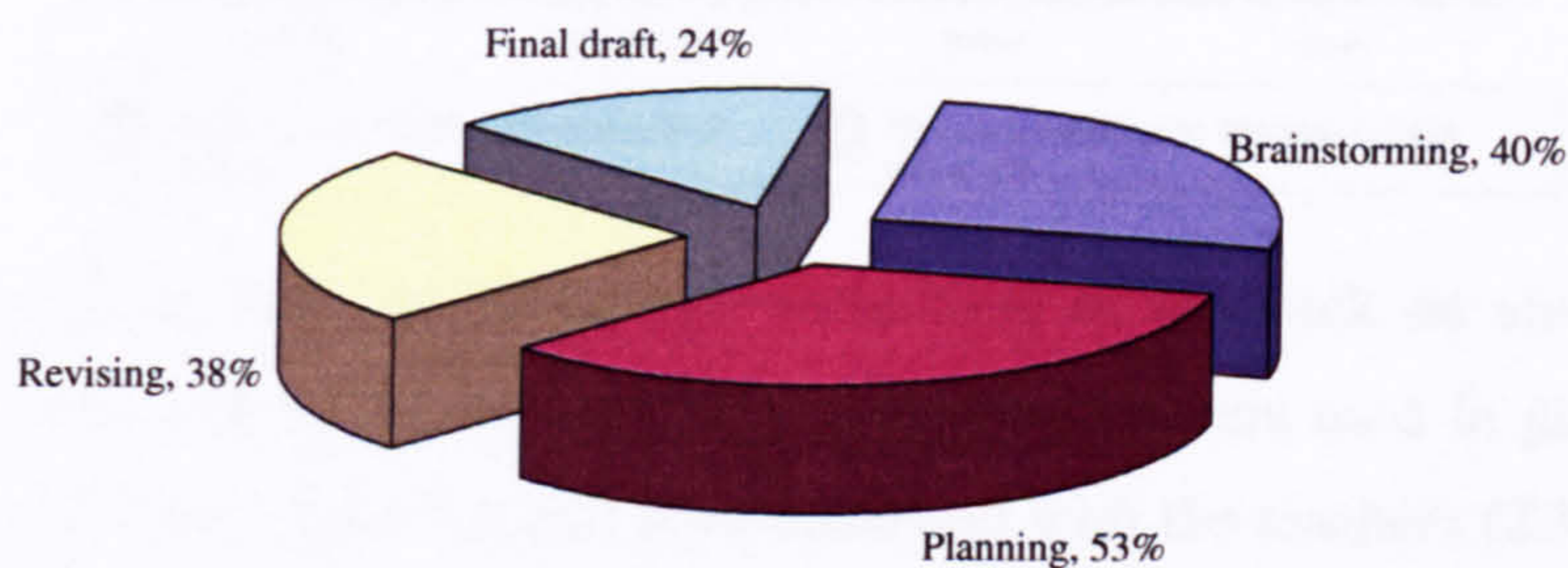


It is clear that some pre-writing activities such as brainstorming and planning were usually initiated by the teacher. However, the more we move on in the writing process the less focus there is on activities such as writing multiple drafts and revising at

different stages. It seems that the process approach is not emphasised by the writing teachers for reasons mentioned in section 2.3.1 above.

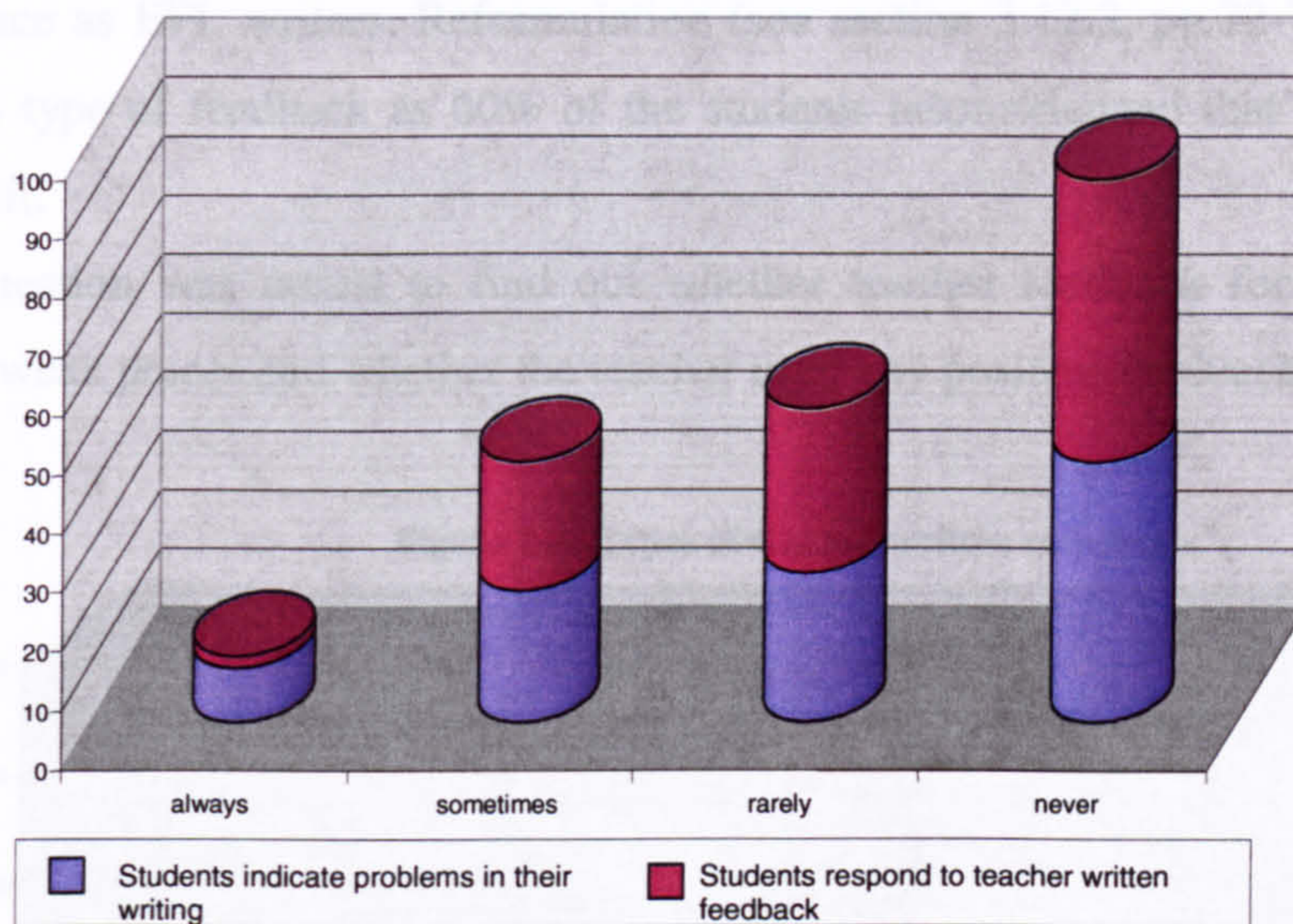
However, in responding to a question in which they had to determine at what stage of their composing process they usually needed assistance, a considerable majority of students (53%) said that they needed help at the planning stage; 40% needed help at the brainstorming stage; 38 % at the revising stage, and 24% on the final draft.

**Figure 2-5: Composing stages at which students need help**



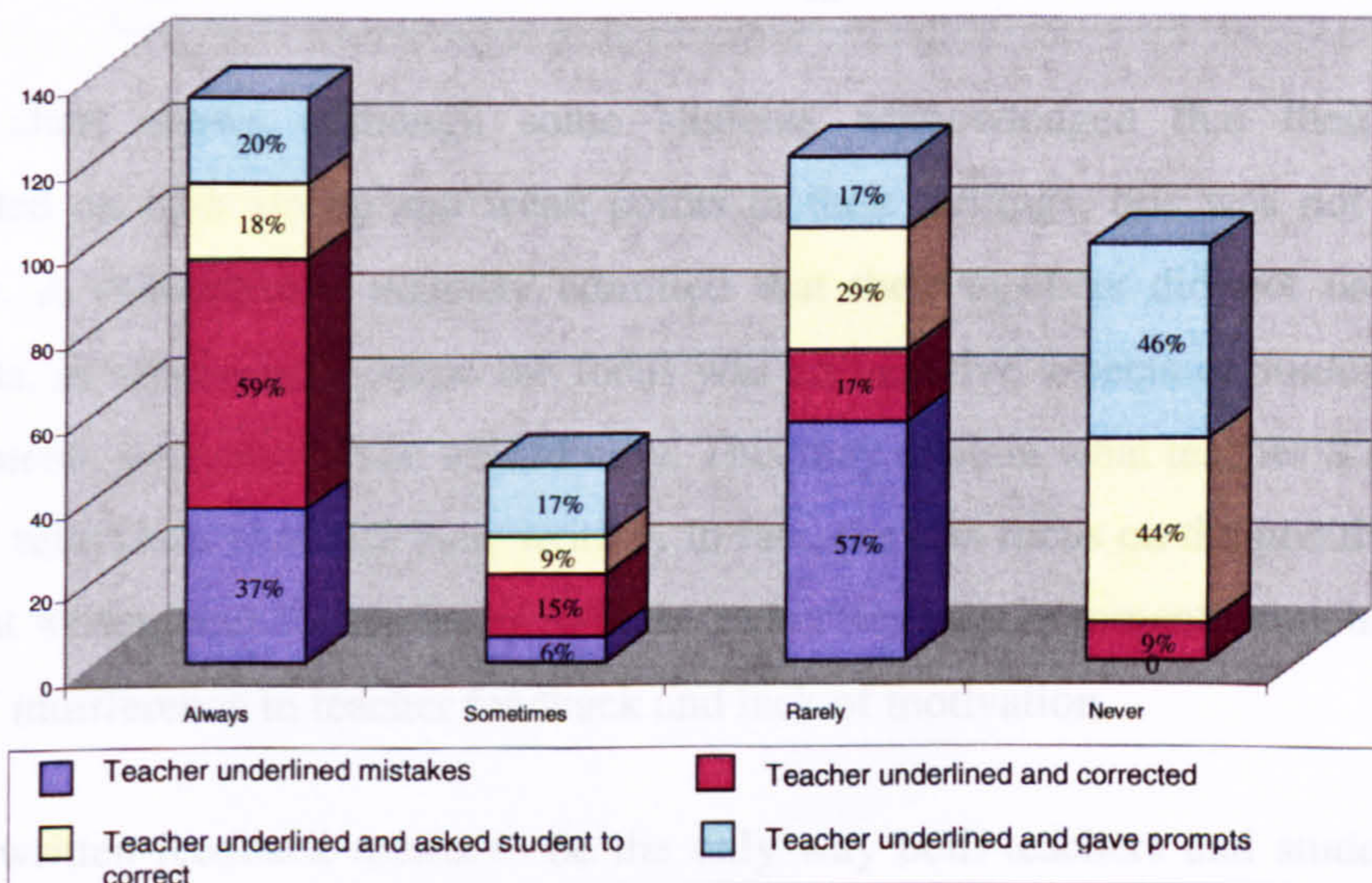
In general, a high percentage of students acknowledged that they needed help during the writing process rather than just with their final drafts. This explains the pedagogical orientation of the writing program in the present study (see section 4.6, pp. 94-112). Another aspect which the questionnaire investigated was the extent to which students were involved in making suggestions or expressing their needs in relation to teacher feedback. As the chart below shows, the majority reported that they never took the initiative to indicate on their drafts the areas with which they had problems before handing in the papers to the teacher. This may be due to the fact that self-monitoring feedback (see section 3.10, pp. 62-63) was not common practice in the writing class, or it can also be explained by teacher comment on students not being motivated to revise. Furthermore, students were not encouraged to respond to written teacher feedback. This is mainly due to reliance on single-draft writing. When students receive their teacher written comments on one-draft essay, there is usually no scope for follow-up.

**Figure 2-6: Degree of student involvement in teacher feedback**



Assuming that teachers would provide some kind of feedback on students' writing, some questions were meant to investigate strategies teachers used in giving feedback. This issue of teacher feedback had been discussed with the teachers (2.3.1, pp. 17-19), but I also wanted to examine student perceptions.

**Figure 2-7: Teacher written feedback strategies**

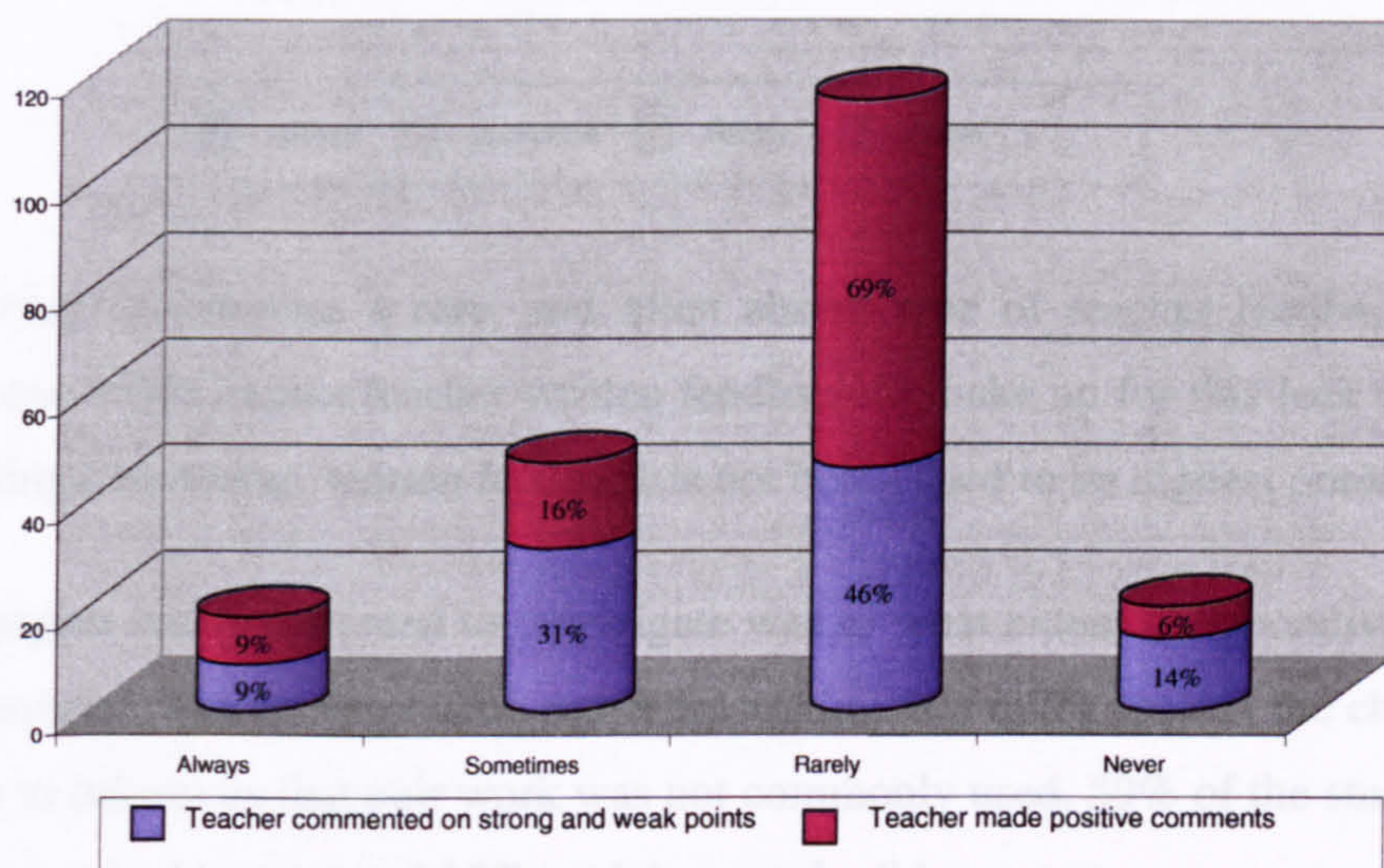


One common strategy used by teachers was underlining and providing error corrections. Underlining alone was not as much used for 57% students reported that it was a rare practice. An important finding is that students were not encouraged to self-correct. 46% of the students acknowledged that their teachers never underlined the mistakes and asked them to correct; and 44% said that teachers never used prompts to encourage them to correct their own mistakes. Hence, teacher written feedback strategies were

more geared towards direct error correction rather than enhancing students' independence as EFL writers. Reformulation (see section 3.12.2, pp.72-73) is another uncommon type of feedback as 60% of the students acknowledged that their teachers never used it.

Another question was meant to find out whether teacher feedback focused on both strong and weak points and whether the teacher used any positive feedback.

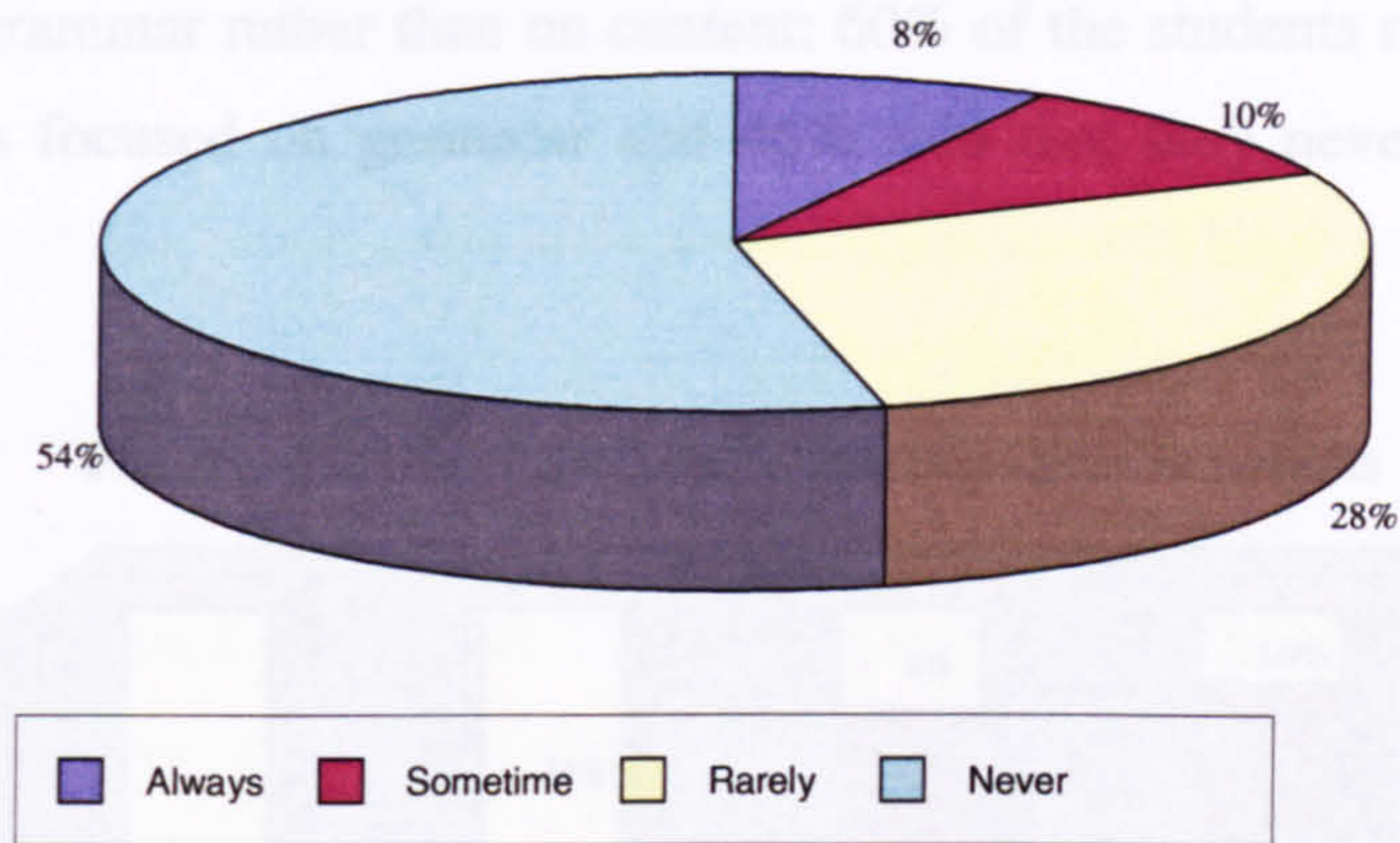
**Figure 2-8: Types of teacher written comments**



As the chart shows, although some students acknowledged that their teachers commented on both strong and weak points in their writings, this was not a general tendency. A considerable majority admitted that their teachers did not use positive comments. In other words, since the focus was on negative aspects of student writing, the comments were also given accordingly. This may explain what teacher S said about students' reluctance to revise their writing. In fact, the less focus on the positive aspects in student writing and the tendency to make rather negative comments may have led to students' indifference to teacher feedback and lack of motivation.

Teacher written feedback seems to be the only way both teachers and students could communicate since conferencing is not feasible in the context of the study. This was made clear from teacher interviews, but it was also confirmed by student questionnaire. The following chart provides a good illustration:

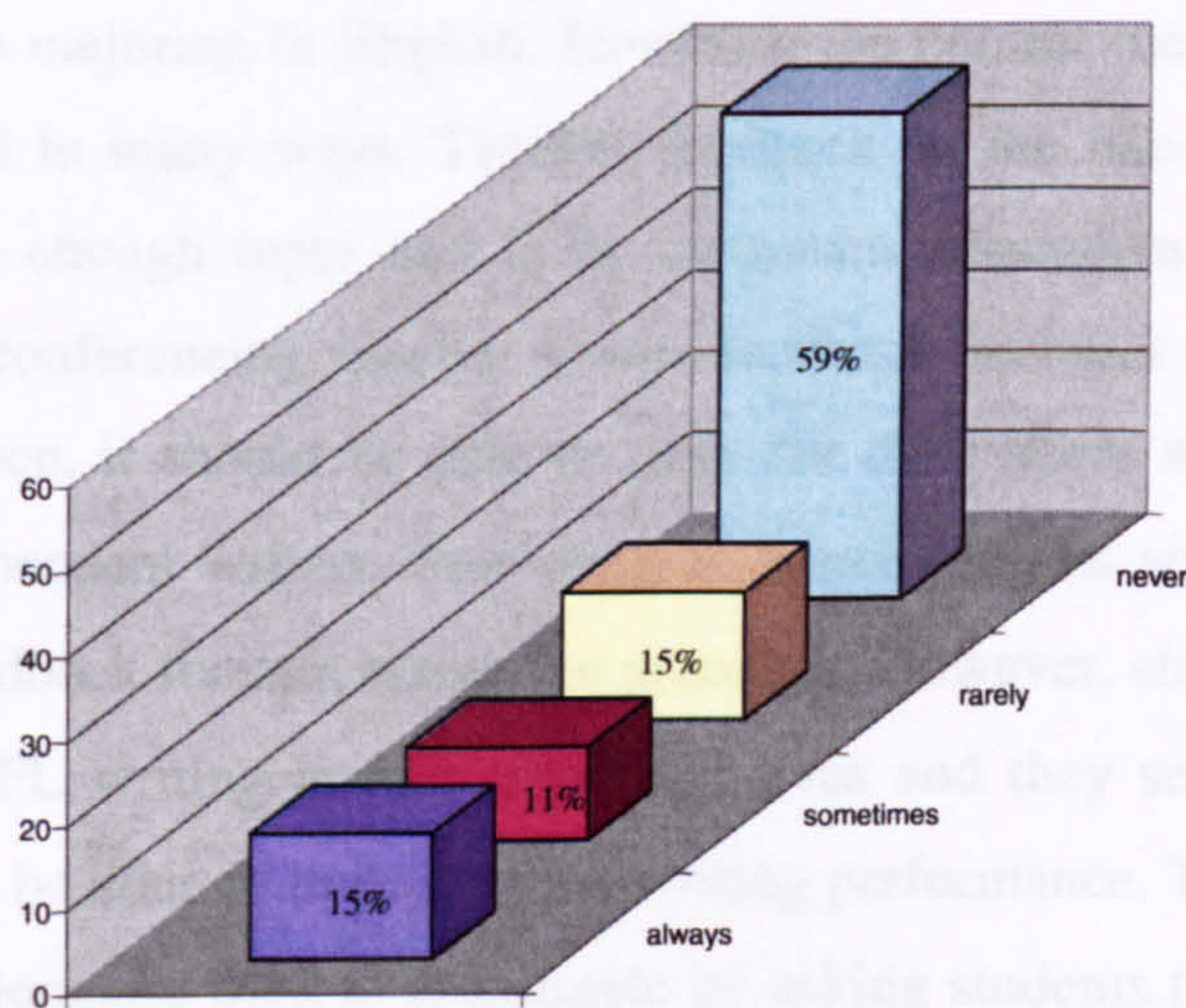
**Figure 2-9: Teacher/student conferencing**



Conferencing is therefore a rare, and often absent type of teacher feedback. In this situation one might expect teacher written feedback to make up for this lack of face-to-face meetings. However, written feedback is not being used to its highest potential.

Another aspect which I wanted to investigate was to what extent collaborative learning was encouraged. The findings were rather frustrating as a quick look at the chart below is enough to inform us that pair work was not commonly used. 59% of the students said they never worked in pairs and 15% said they rarely did.

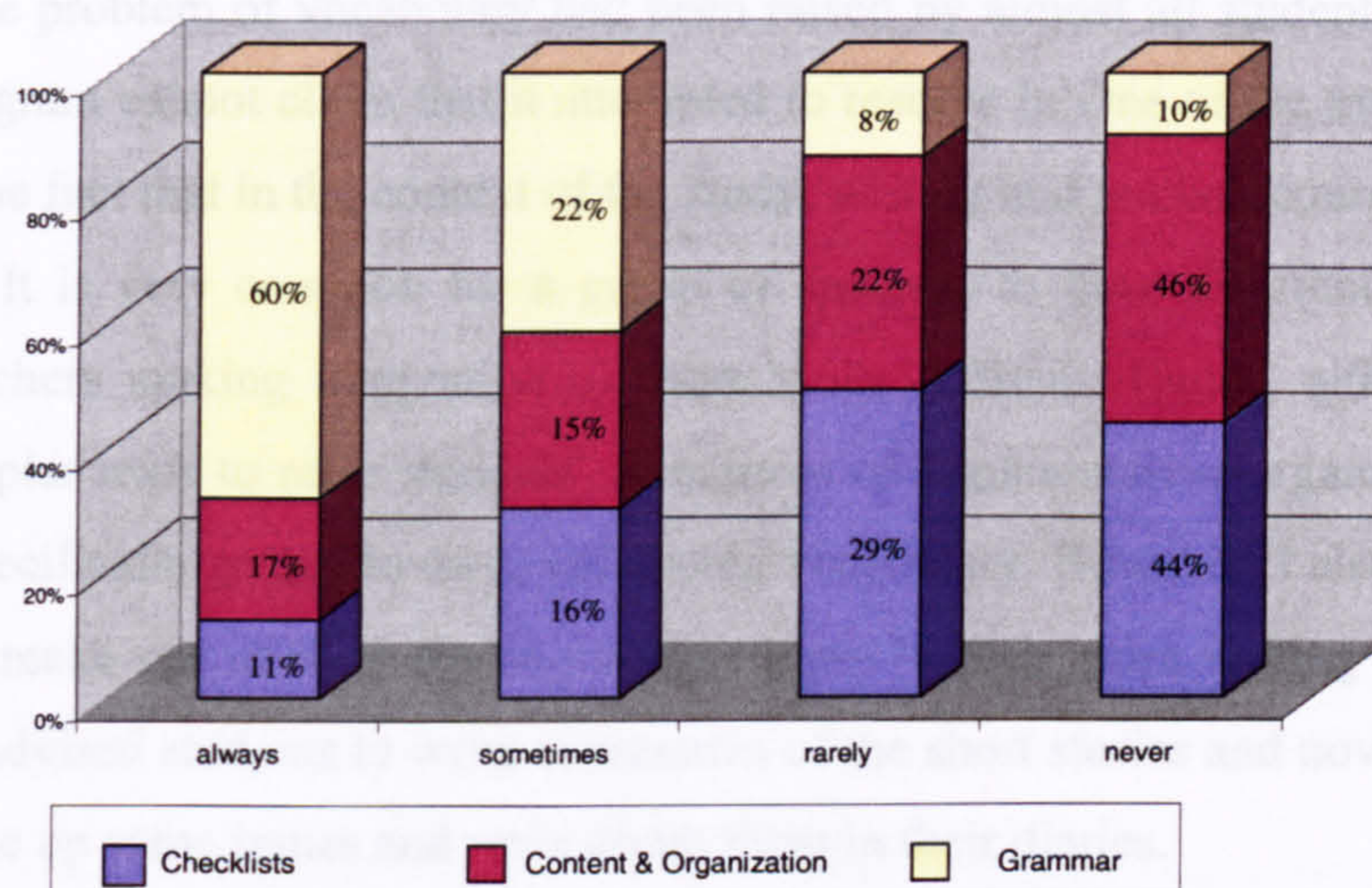
**Figure 2-10: Frequency of pair work**



The infrequent use of pair work in writing classes explains the unfamiliarity of peer checklists or as, I will be referring to them in this study, 'peer feedback sheets' which provide prompts for students to discuss peer writing. As the chart below shows, the use of checklists in giving peer feedback responses is not a common activity as 44% of the

students said they never used them and 29% reported they rarely did. According to student response, if ever they were given a chance to revise their peers' work, the focus was mostly on grammar rather than on content; 60% of the students reported that their revisions always focused on grammar and 46% said that they never commented on content.

**Figure 2-11: Use of checklists and type of peer comments**



Before I move on to the presentation and analysis of the findings of the open-ended questions, I will summarize the findings of the first part of the questionnaire. It is clear from all that has been said that EFL writing is a crucial skill for Moroccan university students who are majoring in English. However, the current method of instruction has proved unhelpful in many ways. Teacher feedback on the one-draft writing does not seem to provide enough input and is by no means conducive to revision. With the impossibility of conferencing, teacher written feedback becomes the only source of help for students, hence, it should be able to cater for their needs and encourage them to develop as independent writers. Pair work is scarce and, as students report, when it happens peer feedback focuses mainly on grammar. However, students are aware of the importance of EFL writing in their academic lives and they seem to understand that something has to be done to improve their writing performance. This is what the second part of the questionnaire tried to investigate by asking students to express in their own words what they believed to be their main problems in EFL writing; what they believed they themselves should do to solve the problem; and what they expected the writing teacher to do to help them find suitable remedies.

### 2.3.2.2 Findings of open-ended questions

The following table shows the categories derived from students' responses to the open-ended questions of the pre-course questionnaire. It can be seen that respondents seem to face different types of difficulties in their EFL writing. These range from vocabulary, grammar, stages of the writing process, organization, through to the unfamiliarity with EFL rhetorical patterns, and the need to translate from L1 into English.

The writing programme addressed some of these issues more than others. For example, although the problem of vocabulary had been raised by almost all students, the present writing program cannot claim that it attempted to resolve it. One of the main reasons is related to the fact that in the context of the study, writing and reading courses are taught separately. It is very common for a group of students to have different reading and writing teachers making integration of these skills difficult. Hence, although I used some exemplar texts to raise students' awareness of argumentative organization, these were not specifically geared towards enhancing vocabulary. However, I also encouraged students to make use of their reading classes input in their extra writing practice. For instance, I advised students to write summaries of the short stories and novels they read and also take up some issues and write about them in their diaries.

**Table 2-1: Students' Difficulties in EFL Writing**

Categories	Students' difficulties in EFL writing
Vocabulary difficulty/shortage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Firstly, I faced the problems of vocabulary (V)</li> <li>• I want to write a word which I know its meaning, but I don't know how to write it</li> <li>• I have a problem to find a new and good vocabulary in order to improve my essay and to make it better.</li> <li>• Also I can't control the language Because I don't know lot of vocabulary in it.</li> <li>• I have a poor vocabulary</li> <li>• I found a difficulties in vocabulary because I don't have a lot of word in my mind for this I can't write a good essays</li> <li>• when I don't know the vocabulary which I need in my writing I don't complete my writing because I become confusing.</li> <li>• I have problem with a important word</li> <li>• I can't find the right word easily</li> </ul>
Grammar & Mechanics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I write long sentences</li> <li>• spelling</li> <li>• I don't know when or where I can put some linking words</li> <li>• I have a problem of punctuation marks</li> <li>• I don't arrive to tense verbs, and I had a great doubt about what I write,</li> <li>• I have a problem in punctuation.</li> <li>• The last one is the conjugation of some irregular verbs.</li> <li>• Linking words</li> <li>• To link between paragraph</li> <li>• How I write or how I connect sentence</li> </ul>
Idea generation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I find a problem in finding ideas about the essay (Ideas)</li> <li>• I can generate a bit of idea.</li> <li>• Expressing the good ideas</li> <li>• The most important problem that I face is finding ideas and not to mix between words in English other languages.</li> <li>• How to make ideas</li> <li>• I have problem in how generating the idea</li> <li>• Actually, I find difficulties in brainstorming,</li> </ul>
Various stages of the writing process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The first one is at the brainstorming stage, the second one is at the planning stage when I need some helps from the teacher, but the third and the important one is the revising stage when I feel confused between different things.</li> <li>• Sometimes I find a difficulty to concentrate on the subject I have to write about</li> <li>• How to formulate the final version, avoid mistakes.</li> </ul>
Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I don't follow a specific plan, so as to have an organised essay</li> <li>• I find difficult on how to organize a good essay</li> <li>• I don't know how to write, in other words the method of writing and how can I organized my writing. the steps that I have to follow in order to bring up a good essay,</li> <li>• How to organize the ideas</li> <li>• I have a lot of ideas but I don't know how to organize it.</li> <li>• The logical organisation of ideas</li> </ul>
Rhetorical pattern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To know the characteristics of every kind of writing, such as, argumentative, narrative, descriptive, etc.</li> <li>• I have problems about the outline of narrative essay</li> <li>• I have a problem about argumentative paragraph</li> </ul>
The need to translate from L(Arabic) into L3 (English)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The translation the ideas from Arabic to English (Translation from Arabic to English)</li> <li>• I can't write any sentence without to change it in Arabic</li> <li>• I always need to change the meaning in Arabic.</li> <li>• I can't change my Arabic ideas to English ones</li> </ul>
Time management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I don't have enough time</li> <li>• The time (I need a long time)</li> </ul>
Unclassified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• And sometimes I find that the issue is very easy but I be confused.</li> <li>• I can't write easily</li> <li>• I have a lot of mistakes in writing</li> <li>• I often make mistakes and I have a problem in hand writing</li> <li>• When I write sometime I find errors</li> <li>• Topic is difficult</li> </ul>

In addition to being asked to state the different difficulties they had in EFL writing, students were also asked to suggest solutions to their writing problems. They managed to offer a comprehensive list of suggestions which is presented in the Table 2-2 below.



Student solutions can be summarized in two main categories:

- *Teacher-initiated solutions*: what students expected the teacher to do to help them overcome their writing difficulties and develop their own writing.
- *Student-initiated solutions*: what students believed they themselves could do to improve their writing.

The following table outlines the two categories with student perceptions divided into sub-categories:

**Table 2-2: Students' Suggested Solutions to their Writing Problems**

Teacher-initiated Solutions	Student-initiated Solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Feedback</b>            'show me the right way of writing by giving me the best structure which I have to follow in all my essays, and to give some <i>comments</i> about my essays, also to tell me if I have been successful in applying this rules.'            'give me confidence in my writing and tell me more about my writing (<i>evaluate</i> my writing and give me more details about my mistakes'            'To encourage us by giving us <i>feedbacks</i>'            'give me a feedback in every essay and why not to discuss it with me. It will be Fine.'</li> <li>▪ <b>Direct instruction of the writing skills</b>            'To learn us the skills of writing.'            'teach us the useful rules, or if I may say some skills that may help us to improve our writing, and of course to write a correct final draft.'</li> <li>▪ <b>Exam-oriented writing instruction</b>            'explain to us more and more if it is possible and trying to give us every week homework we can be able after it to write what we like. I think that the teacher must specify the subject of writing. I think that by this <i>we can be ready to the exam</i>'            'learning us step by step and encourages us to write an essay in order to get <i>good marks in composition.</i>'            'to give us <i>some examples of exams.</i>'            'give us a lot of exercises and academic exams, in order to know how <i>this exams are put, and how to treat with this exams. Moreover, give us the main causes make students fail in exams, specially in composition.</i>'</li> <li>▪ <b>Writing Teacher as source of all knowledge</b>            'give us the most possible of what he/she had learnt: (More vocabulary, technics of writing)'            'help us and give us some advice and <b>everything</b> (student circled the word), some vocabulary and about your experience.'</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Extra reading &amp; vocabulary practice</b>            'I must read a lot'            'Read a lot in everything so as to enrich my sentences and to develop my essay.'            'to read more in order to have more or good vocabulary.'            'to read the newspapers and books.'            'to borrow books of composition from the library or other places and to read a lot.'            'I need to have a lot of vocabulary because it's the best way to write'            'I should pick up vocabulary from dictionary, understand them and learn them.'</li> <li>▪ <b>Extra Writing Practice</b>            'try my utmost to write, to get used as much as possible to writing, even if I'm not going to write good essays, but from our mistakes we learn.'            'to do more practice/to write lot'            'I should practice writing to improve and increase my knowledge, Moreover, I think without practicing more and more there is no success.'</li> <li>▪ <b>Practice Grammar, mechanics &amp; sentence Structure</b>            'More practice on punctuation'            'More exercises on sentence structure, because we still have problems'            'to know how can I found the appropriate linking word.'            'more information about Grammar'            'To avoid the punctuation problem, I should see how and when the writers use comma, full stop, etc.'</li> <li>▪ <b>Use the teacher's feedback</b>            'In order to solve the conjugation problem, I should learn the list of irregular verbs by heart.'</li> <li>▪ <b>Use the teacher's feedback</b>            'to have my teacher's feedback and to take it on consideration.'            'to apply my teacher's comments'</li> </ul>

As can be noticed from Table 2-2, students' responses were very much indicative of the context of the study. Although they acknowledged substantial self-responsibility, the role of the teacher as a figure of authority and a source of information in their learning process was a prominent one. Students had high expectations about assistance from

their teachers. However, in the actual teaching environment, these expectations were not usually met for reasons explained by the writing teachers (2.3.1, pp.17-19). The kind of help students required, as shown above, which should take them step by step into the different stages of the composing and revising processes is considered by teachers as not feasible. For example, one of the suggestions was for the teacher to provide feedback on every piece of writing and discuss it with the student. As student Z put it: “give me a feedback in every essay and why not to discuss it with me.”

Another characteristic of the educational system that was disclosed through student responses was related to its exam-orientation. Students were anxious about the exam. They wanted to learn as much as possible so that they were ready to confront the challenge. Therefore, they believed that part of their practice, if not a substantial amount of it, should be based on previous exam questions in order to increase their chances of success. Furthermore, students sought to know the reasons why so many students failed their writing exam; this was made clear in some of the statements above: “give us the main causes make students fail in exams, specially in composition.” Students believed that teachers had the answer to this question.

### **2.3.3 Analysis and findings of group interviews (G.I)**

Group interviews were used in order to explore student perception of writing in English. They probed some of the issues arising from the pre-course questionnaire. I am going to focus here on some new points and elaborations from questionnaire responses. These cover:

- Student perceptions of their writing abilities in their L1, L2, and specifically EFL, together with some techniques they resort to when writing in EFL.
- Student perceptions of the importance of feedback.
- Student explanations of lack of motivation which was raised in the teacher interviews.

Students admitted that they were more comfortable writing in Arabic than in French due to their low level in French which, as mentioned in Chapter One, was a result of Arabization. However, they also acknowledged that they did not receive adequate formal instruction neither in Arabic nor in French. For instance, student H put it this way: “in Arabic the teacher just asked us to describe a weekend we have spent in our grandmother’s house in the countryside but we, um, he didn’t tell us how to do it...” (G.I.1). On the same line, student F said: “we just imagined what we will write in the

essay and that's all" (G.I.1). However, it seems that students' experiences in Arabic writing instruction varied as some mentioned that they did receive substantial help from their teachers and some said they did not. The degree of formal instruction seemed to depend on individual teachers.

However, despite their writing difficulties in Arabic and French, when they have to write in English all the interviewees admitted that they would resort to whatever skills they had developed in Arabic and French writing. They mainly reported translating from either Arabic or French into English. Nonetheless, they were convinced that this method was not always helpful because their word for word translations were always detected by the teacher who warned them about the danger of doing so.

The interviewees also admitted that their previous EFL classes in high school and university, for those who were repeating first year, were not geared to preparing them for academic writing. Hence, they were convinced that they needed to multiply their efforts with a view to improving their EFL writing. They also acknowledged that their problems in EFL writing, similar to the ones in Table 2-2, were serious and that they needed substantial assistance from the teacher.

One way the interviewees believed the teacher could help them was through feedback. They acknowledged that in their previous writing classes feedback was almost absent. When asked if ever they had a chance to have a conferencing session with their writing teacher, the majority answered "no, it is impossible". The explanation was that "the teacher just gave you the lesson and write the rules and you, you try to find the method that you practice about." (Student N, G.I.1) In order to probe this question, I asked if that meant that students did not get any feedback at all. The answer was that they did receive some feedback, but the focus was mainly on some surface structure errors. The teacher "gives [feedback], but only spelling and grammatical mistakes and don't tell you that it is good or not". (Student K, G.I.2) Another interviewee thought that the feedback she received was never enough and that "some teachers prefer to give just the mark, but some correct our grammar." (Student S, G.I.2)

Another issue raised by the teachers and which also came up in student group interviews allowing me to view it from a different perspective was the issue of motivation. Students gave two main reasons for their lack of motivation. These are twofold:

- Exam-oriented learning
- Uncertainty about the future (in relation to finding a job)

According to students exams were stumbling blocks as they represented a big threat to their self-confidence and motivation. This was expressed by student L when she compared how she felt when writing in class or at home to writing during an exam:

*We feel self-confident while we write in class or at home, but in the day of the exam we feel shock and depressed and panic. (G.I.1)*

Students who were repeating the year were even more affected. For example, student F strongly stated that “even if you work hard you don’t pass”, the other students joined her confirming “yes”, then student F continued “in fact those who worked hard did not pass.” (G.I.1) Agreeing with that, student Z added: “I like English and I want to study it, but in the exam it’s another thing, that kind of method I don’t like.” (G.I.1) In fact, all the interviewees acknowledged that the reason for choosing English as a major was that because they liked it, but once under the pressure of exams, and lack of adequate preparation in the EFL writing, they felt less confident and demotivated.

Lack of motivation also related to awareness of job market problems. Students informed me that the thought of finishing university and not finding a suitable job made them lose interest in studies in general. As student B put it “students know that there is no future, deep down students know that even if they work hard there is no chance for a job.” (G.I.2) Student Y added: “this make us lose confidence in ourselves because in job in Morocco even if we work hard we don’t get a job.” (G.I.1) Despite all these problems which students mentioned, it seems that there still is some hope since all of them agreed that their choice of English was based on their love for this language which if usefully exploited may yield some positive results.

Hence, it was in this kind of environment that the present study had to operate. This baseline study has, therefore, enlightened the main study in various ways. It made me aware of what to expect not just as teacher, but also as researcher. The writing program proposed in the present study was an attempt to make up for some shortcomings of the existing method of teaching writing in the Moroccan universities and it was a transition to the new educational philosophy of the reform (see section 1.4.2, pp. 9-10).

#### **2.4 Implications of the baseline findings for the main study**

It was clear from the baseline study that there was substantial need for a writing program that would encourage first-year university students to write more in EFL, not

only in preparation for exams but also in order for them to develop their writing skills. It was also clear that the writing classroom relied on lecturing and occasional production of one-draft essays which were corrected and returned to the student with a grade without any further reader/writer (teacher/student) interaction. Collaborative work among students was scarce, if not absent. Therefore, the baseline findings helped me design and implement a writing program whose focus was on the writing process and the interactive aspect of writing as a social activity through the use of different feedback procedures.

## **2.5 Research aims**

By undertaking the present study my main aim was to put into practice some of the ideas which I have always believed in as far as the teaching of EFL writing is concerned, together with solving some of the problems mentioned above. Hence, these research aims:

1. To help gain more insight into a hitherto inconclusive research area of the relationship between feedback and revision.
2. To make a specific contribution to the very little researched area of teacher taped commentary.
3. To make a contribution to the general field of ELT, and more specifically ELT in Morocco, by focusing on writing as one of the major language skills.
4. To make a specific contribution to EFL writing instruction at tertiary level in Morocco by adopting a process approach in an exploratory study and through disseminating its findings in order to demystify the confusion and hesitation that some writing teachers seem to have about this approach.

## **2.6 Research questions**

Bearing in mind the aims mentioned above, this study attempts to answer the following questions:

1. To what extent do students make use of the following types of feedback in their revisions?
  - 1.1 Self-monitored feedback using annotations
  - 1.2 Peer feedback
  - 1.3 Teacher written feedback and taped commentary
2. How do students perceive each type of feedback?

3. Are there any individual differences in the way students use and react to the three types of feedback?
4. Do students' writings show any improvement over the course period?
5. Have students' attitudes to EFL writing changed over the duration of the course?

The sequencing of the research questions has been meticulously considered because these questions, and hence their answers, are interconnected in a way or another. Therefore, the first research question is devoted to examining in detail the extent to which students make use of each type of feedback in their revisions. Then question two investigates students' perceptions of each type of feedback after a relatively long period of exposure. Question three follows up by pinpointing any individual differences with regard to both how student writers use and react to the three types of feedback. The fourth question seeks to examine whether student writing, paragraph and essay writing, has improved over the course period. Finally the fifth question is intended to shed some light on student attitudes to EFL writing after a fairly long period of exposure and practice over the duration of the course. This question is intended to present students' general views about EFL writing which would only emerge as a result of exposure to EFL writing as is planned in the present course. Hence, the first two questions investigate individual feedback mechanisms; the third considers any individual differences and the last two are more wholistic. Generally speaking, the sequencing of the research questions is chronological in essence, i.e. following the progression of the course.

## **2.7 Summary of chapter**

I started this chapter by explaining the rationale of the baseline study. Then I moved on to explain its design by shedding light on the participants and the data collection instruments. After that I reported the analysis of each instrument and the main findings. Then I explained the significance of the baseline findings in relation to the main study. I ended the chapter by focussing on the research aims and research questions.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

# **LITERATURE REVIEW: FEEDBACK AND REVISION IN THE PROCESS OF WRITING**

### **3.0 Introduction**

This chapter starts by setting out to determine the difference between spoken and written discourse with a special focus on the importance of writing in higher education. It then moves on to discuss the role of cognitive and affective factors in language learning and with specific emphasis on the learning of writing. Some controversial issues related to the definition of a process approach to writing are discussed and the process approach is then compared to other approaches with a view to shedding more light on its distinctive features. Revision, as one of the main characteristics of the process approach, is discussed in relation to what good writers are reported to do when they revise their writing. Then the characteristics of each feedback procedure are identified and discussed according to the literature. Finally, a critique of one particularly relevant study which the present investigation sought to improve on is provided.

### **3.1 A definition of writing**

In an attempt to define what writing is, or is not, the discussion of spoken and written language often comes up as an important issue.

#### **3.1.1 Spoken vs. written discourse**

A superficial view of writing tends to assume that writing and speaking are the same on the basis that in both cases the writer and the speaker are using language to communicate. This rather simplistic view assumes that written language is nothing but a mere graphic representation of spoken language; luckily enough, no one seems to adhere to this view any more (Brown 2001:335). Although spoken and written discourses have some points in common they also have many differences. For example, a common point is that both speakers and writers are usually involved in some kind of interaction. However, while the former have the advantage of immediate response from an interlocutor who is usually present, the latter, most often, have to anticipate the addressee's responses and make sure they cater for his/her understanding by following specific rhetorical conventions. This idea is clearly stated by Widdowson:

...writing discourse too represents an interactive process of negotiation. But whereas in spoken discourse this process is typically overt and reciprocal, in written discourse it is covert and non-reciprocal. (1983:39)

This implies that the task for writers is much more complicated than that for speakers for they have to shift their role from “initiator” to “recipient”, from “speaker” to “hearer” (ibid.:40). It follows that while the writer shifts from one role to another, the character of the information to be conveyed may change along this process. In other words, during this interaction the writer’s thinking process may change too. In Widdowson’s words, “the interaction not only *facilitates* the conveyance of information but also *generates* the thinking process.” (ibid.:41, emphasis in original) This explains how a writer usually arrives at “a destination not originally envisaged, by a route not planned for in the original itinerary.” (ibid.) Hence, the fact of asking student writers to make a plan and stick to it may hinder the interactive process which leads to written discourse (ibid.). In his turn Brown has expressed this difference between writing and speaking by stating that “[t]he permanence and distance of writing, coupled with its unique rhetorical conventions, indeed make writing as different from speaking as swimming from walking.” (2001:335) Unlike talking, writing is less spontaneous for a writer has less communication resources than a speaker who can “...interact with the listeners and adapt as [s/he goes] along.” (Broughton et al. 1980:116) Therefore, considering the writer’s effort in assuming both roles of “sender” and “receiver”, Bereiter and Scardamalia acknowledge that “simply learning to continue producing language without the prompting that comes from conversational partners turns out to be a formidable achievement.” (1983:21) As a matter of fact, one plausible inference from these differences between spoken and written discourse may be a potential source of writing problems in one’s L1 due to the inability of inexperienced writers to draw a line between spoken and written territory. This difficulty can only be multiplied for second or foreign language learners in an academic context, with EFL writers being no exception. The same point is made by Hedge in answering the question about what makes writing such a difficult task for English language students; she states: “possibly for the same reasons that large numbers of adult native speakers never achieve a high level of expressiveness in writing their first language. It is partly to do with the nature of writing itself.” (1988:5) However, with the increasing demand on students to develop good communication skills both within the university and in the larger world (Coffin et al. 2003:2; Kroll 2003:1) mastery of English is crucial not only in its spoken but also written forms.



## 3.2 The importance of writing in higher education

### 3.2.1 EFL writing in higher education

Student writing in higher education is at the heart of teaching and learning and it serves a variety of purposes in different contexts (Coffin et al. 2003:2). These purposes include “*assessment*”, such as producing an essay for an exam; “*learning*”, i.e. disciplinary-oriented knowledge; “*entering particular disciplinary communities*” whose writing norms and conventions students have to attempt “to approximate” as they progress in their studies (ibid.). These purposes, as they are set out by Coffin et al. can apply to any higher educational context. However, since the present study is based in an EFL context; it will be worth looking at how these very purposes of writing apply to this context, more specifically to the EFL writing of first year undergraduates majoring in English. EFL writing purposes consist of:

- “*assessment*”: students have to take written exams which require them to produce paragraphs and short essays in English. Their success or failure depends on their written performance.
- “*learning*”: the purpose of writing here is two-fold, it is a language skill which students have to acquire in its own right and it is a tool via which they get to know more about the content of the courses, such as, English language literature, history, culture, and linguistics.
- “*entering particular disciplinary communities*”: as the students progress in their undergraduate studies and as they choose their areas of specialisation, either literature or linguistics, they are expected to adapt their writing to the conventions of the discipline community to which they belong.

Hence the intricacy of EFL writing can be explained by the multiple functions it has to serve which may also testify to the difficulty faced by Moroccan EFL students majoring in English (see Table 2-1, p. 28). As mentioned above, one of the main purposes of EFL writing in the context of the present study is language learning; hence, one question which immediately comes to mind is as follows: what are the factors which influence how well a person will learn a second or foreign language? According to Gardner and MacIntyre there are three categories of variables which influence how well an individual learns a second language. These are “cognitive variables”, “affective variables”, and “socio-cultural experiences” (1992:211). What follows is a brief overview of how these variables can affect a person’s learning of a second/foreign language.

### **3.3 Cognitive variables in language learning**

These consist of "...different aspects of cognition from intelligence, to language aptitude, to language learning strategies, to previous training and experience." (Garnder and MacIntyre 1992:211) It is believed that these variables facilitate learning by allowing a smooth processing of information and learned material (ibid.: 212).

#### **3.3.1 Language learning strategies**

Language learning strategies are usually referred to as a person's endeavour(s) to facilitate his/her learning through organisation and structuring of his/her learning environment (Oxford 1990). Language learning strategies can also be used by teachers in order to facilitate learning. This can be done through consciousness-raising exercises with a view to making the learners aware of their existing learning strategies or through providing them with new ones. This is suggested by Rubin when she says:

It is assumed that once the range of possible learner strategies is identified, one important role of the teacher would be to provide an environment which facilitates the identification by students of those strategies which work best for them. Another role of the teacher would be to suggest alternative strategies for organizing and storing information and to encourage students to consider which strategies work best for them. It is assumed that this task would be an important part of the teacher's role. (1987:16-17)

Hence, once students develop understanding of what their learning process involves and what it entails, they can approach the learning task in whichever way they judge convenient for them. Rubin's rationale for this is that only students are able to keep track of their cognitive processes and should, therefore, take responsibility for their learning.

This call for encouraging learners to identify their learning strategies and make use of the ones which work best for them, and also recommending that teachers introduce strategy training through lectures and workshops (Oxford 1990; Dickinson 1992; Cohen 1998) underscores the idea that language learners come to language classes with some knowledge which has to be taken into consideration in their learning process. The same idea was stressed long ago by Chamot stating that "...second language learners are not mere sponges acquiring the new language by osmosis alone. They are thinking, reflective beings who consciously apply mental strategies to learning situations both in the classroom and outside of it." (1987:82)

With regard to the present investigation, this insight was made use of in two ways: both before and during the teaching of the course. First, before the implementation of the

writing program, the EFL participants' views and perceptions about their previous experiences in L1, L2 and EFL writing and feedback strategies, which they may have developed or been initiated to through instruction, were sought (see Chapter Two). In other words, I was aware of the fact that, given their multilingual context, the participants would not be coming to the course as blank slates but that their previous learning experiences must have a role to play in how they respond to the new program. Second, during the course, and through the use of insights gained from the process approach to writing, special focus has been put on initiating students to the different stages of the composing process and revision strategies. This is achieved through raising student awareness to the different pre-writing strategies such as narrowing down a topic, brainstorming, planning, etc. Furthermore, through drawing their attention to the importance of revision in multiple-draft writing and putting special emphasis on revising at the macro-level before the micro-level (see section 4.6, pp. 94-112). All this is done through a workshop environment in which students learn from each other and also from their work with the teacher.

Research into cognitive processes has provided a wealth of information about how humans reason, recall information, and solve problems. In the domain of literacy we now know a good deal about how learners go about reading and writing, for example. The emergence of metacognitive theory (e.g., Brown 1977; Flavell 1971, 1976) has furthered understanding into the complex cognitive phenomena, mainly those which require "awareness and control over cognitive activities." (Devine et al. 1993:204)

### **3.3.2 The role of metacognitive variables in learning**

In discussing learning strategies a distinction is made between cognitive and metacognitive strategies despite the difficulty of separating the two (Rubin 1987).

Flavell defines metacognition as follows:

*"Metacognition" refers to one's knowledge concerning one's own cognitive processes and products or anything related to them, e.g. the learning-relevant properties of information or data. For example, I am engaging in metacognition (metamemory, metalearning, metattention, metalanguage, or whatever) if I notice that I am having more trouble learning A than B, if it strikes me that I should double-check C before accepting it as a fact... Metacognition refers, among other things, to the active monitoring and consequent regulation and orchestration of these processes in relation to the cognitive objects or data on which they bear, usually in the service of some concrete goal or objective. (1976: 232)*

According to this definition, metacognition is divided into two components: "knowledge of cognition" and "regulation of cognition" (Devine et al. 1993:204). The

former category includes the information a learner has about his/her cognitive resources and abilities in relation to the requirements of the cognitive task. The second category involves the self-regulating and monitoring mechanisms used by the learner while dealing with a given task or solving a problem (Flavell 1971, 1976; Devine et al. 1993). According to Devine et al. metacognition has not been researched enough in the area of L2 writing in comparison with L2 reading. Moreover, the limited work on metacognition in L1 and L2 writing has not explicitly addressed the first aspect of metacognition, i.e., “knowledge of cognition”.

Knowledge of cognition consists of three components:

1. “personal variables”: the learner’s knowledge of himself/herself and his/her abilities, for example the tasks he/she is good at.
2. “task variables”: information about the demands of the task on the learner.
3. “strategy variables”: knowledge of the strategies available to the learner and their effectiveness in achieving a cognitive goal. (Devine et al. 1993:204)

The important role of the learner’s knowledge of these variables and their interaction in a successful cognitive performance had been noted (Flavell 1985; Wellman 1985). Hence, concerning the design of course materials and training of learners these variables have to be considered given their substantial role in students’ achievement and progress. This is succinctly expressed by O’Malley et al. as follows: “students without metacognitive approaches are essentially learners without direction and ability to review their progress, accomplishments, and future learning directions.” (1983: 6)

Concerning the present study, both the pedagogical design of the writing program and the classroom instruction have attempted to help students make use of the three variables and see how important their knowledge is. For example, by exposing students to writing and revision tasks and providing them with appropriate instruction, the aim was to make them familiar with the task requirements. As a result, students were expected to also gain some knowledge about themselves and how well they could handle the tasks. Moreover, since the program also provides students with writing and revision strategies, through feedback, this should also ease their use of such strategies. In other words, one of the main goals of the course was to help students build their own knowledge of those three variables in order to constitute their own “mental or cognitive model of the cognitive operation” (Devine et al. 1993:205), with “the cognitive operation” here consisting of the dual task of writing and revising. Besides the cognitive

and metacognitive variables, affective factors have a role to play in a learning process, namely, in language learning.

### **3.4 Affective factors in language learning**

Affective variables are defined as “those attributes that involve individuals’ reactions to any situation.” (Gardner and MacIntyre 1992:211) If we assume the situation here is a second/foreign language learning, then, how successfully a person learns this language will, in one way or another, be influenced by his/her “attitudes”, “motivation”, “language anxiety”, “feelings of self-confidence about the language”, “personality attributes” and “learning styles” (ibid.). However, since affective variables are not usually directly observable, data are often based on inferences by an observer on how a person really feels, thinks or would behave under certain circumstances. According to Bailey “...research into affective variables in language learning poses numerous challenging problems at all levels—definition, description, measurement, and interpretation.” (1995: 167) Therefore, empirical research on affect in language learning takes the form of correlation studies. Moreover, given the complexity of research on affective variables attempts have been made to minimize the problems of inference by resorting to the use of journals as a form of data for gaining more insight into affective variables in language learning. A good example is Bailey’s own (1995) diary study on competitiveness and anxiety.

In addition to the problems identified by Bailey above, it seems sometimes difficult to draw a line between the affective variables in order to see the effects of each one separately on a learner’s achievement and readiness to learn a second or foreign language since there can be overlap. However, researchers have tried to examine these variables by examining them as single units or in conjunction with others with a view to gaining more insight into their effects on language learning. Hence, the following discussion of the affective factors will be given in two main parts: language attitudes and motivation, and language anxiety and self-confidence.

#### **3.4.1 Language attitudes and motivation**

In line with Bailey’s idea that affective variables are difficult to define (1995), we find Dörnyei (2001b:1) asking if there is such a thing as ‘motivation’ and answering that in fact there is not. He, of course, later provides a definition by showing that the term refers to “...an abstract, hypothetical concept that we use to explain why people behave as they do.” (ibid.) It is, definitely, the attempt to explain the complexity of human

behaviour which makes the task of providing a precise definition such a tough one. To talk about motivation in the domain of language learning cannot be in any way easier either.

Learning a second or foreign language is a social activity which involves a variety of the target language culture (Dörnyei 2001b:15). Therefore, for a long period research on L2 motivation has focused on the effects of the learners' attitudes towards and perceptions of the L2 speakers and cultures on their desire to learn a second or foreign language. The leaders of this research trend are Robert Gardner, Wallace Lambert and Richard Clément (Gardner and MacIntyre 1993; Dörnyei 1998, 2001a). However, with the 1990's educational shift (Dörnyei 2001a; Crookes and Schmidt 1991) research on L2 motivation, without overlooking the social dimension, took a different direction by considering new constructs of enhancing language learner motivation. Hence, more elaborate L2 motivation frameworks were uncovered. Two elaborate frameworks are by Dörnyei (1994) and Williams and Burden (1997).

These frameworks have attempted to cover as many constructs as possible which are believed to influence the learning of a second/foreign language by examining motives which are both "internal" and "external" to the learner (Williams and Burden 1997). Despite the difference in terminology and the degree of detail, a close look at the frameworks proposed by Dörnyei and Williams and Burden shows that this "internal"/"external" dichotomy exists in both frameworks. As far as I see them, these frameworks are not exclusive but they complement each other and can be made use of simultaneously to obtain a comprehensive understanding of learner behaviour. Hence, for the purpose of the present study, although Dörnyei's (1994) framework will constitute the main backdrop to explain the participants' individual and group behaviour, Williams and Burden's (1997) framework will also be referred to whenever necessary. Therefore, for ease of future reference, what follows is a reproduction of Dörnyei's (1994) framework of L2 motivation:

**Table 3-1: Dörnyei's (1994) framework of L2 motivation**

<b>LANGUAGE LEVEL</b>	Integrative motivational subsystems Instrumental motivational subsystems
<b>LEARNER LEVEL</b>	Need for achievement Self-confidence *Language use anxiety *Perceived L2 competence *Causal attributions *Self-efficacy
<b>LEARNING SITUATION LEVEL</b>	Interest (in the course) Relevance (of the course to one's needs) Expectancy (of success) Satisfaction (one has in the outcome)
<i>Course-specific motivational components</i>	
<i>Teacher-specific motivational components</i>	Affiliative motive (to please the teacher) Authority type (controlling vs. autonomy-supporting) Direct socialisation of motivation *Modelling *Task presentation *Feedback
<i>Group-specific motivational components</i>	Goal-orientedness Norm and reward system Group cohesiveness Classroom goal structure (cooperative, competitive or individualistic)

From Dörnyei, Z. (2001b:18)

The framework above presents motivation from a classroom perspective and it conceives L2 motivation in terms of three main levels:

- The Language Level consists of various interwoven constituents, such as "...the culture and the community, as well as the intellectual and pragmatic values and benefits..." related to L2 (Dörnyei 2001b:18). In other words, this level represents the characteristics of L2 motivation related to integrative and instrumental factors. For example, if a learner's goal behind learning a second language is based on the desire to integrate or interact with the target language community, then his/her orientation is integrative. On the other hand, if the learning of a second language is a means to an end, such as getting a better job or achieving some financial benefits, that is known as an instrumental orientation.
- The Learner Level consists of the learner-specific characteristics which influence L2 learning. For example, elements such as self-confidence and need for achievement differ from one learner to another and are eventually expected to influence the extent to which a second language is learned.

- The Learning Situation Level involves various motives related to the L2 learning environment, namely the classroom setting. First, “*course-specific motivational components*” refer to the course content and method of teaching. Second, the aspects related to teacher personality, behaviour and method of teaching are summarised in “*teacher-specific motivational components*”. Finally, since learning usually takes place within a group or community, the “*group-specific motivational components*” are also expected to influence the learning process.

In spite of the great achievements of L2 motivation research in filling the gaps between theory of motivation and its practice in the L2 field, additional calls are made for a much comprehensive, holistic, concept of language learning motivation that includes the interaction between the individual and the social learning setting. This call is based on current theories of learning which conceive of the learning activity as a social construction of knowledge in which the learner plays a substantial role by interacting with the other components of the social setting. In other words, a learner’s motivation to learn, unlike what the positivists tried to demonstrate, does not emanate only from the learner alone or from his/her reaction to a set of stimuli, but it is a result of an interaction between the learner and the “learning situation.” (Dörnyei 2001b:18)

With regard to the EFL context of the present study, the social dimension of motivation (in Gardner’s sense) is limited to the immediate classroom learning environment. However, some constructs related to the language level, namely, “integrative” and “instrumental motivational subsystem” (Dörnyei 2001b:18) exist among EFL Moroccan university students. Most often, students who opt for English as a major at the university choose to do so because they like the language, or because they are interested in higher education abroad, either in the UK or USA. Hence, some ‘roots’ of motivation can be expected to come from within the individual student. However, since the larger contextual setting may not be motivating, the EFL classroom context seems to be the only alternative; it has, therefore, to include motivational factors which should make up for the lack in the learners’ environment. This presupposes a teacher who is ready to motivate students, or rather “[work] on and [increase]” (Dörnyei 2001b:25, brackets not in original) their motivation within the holistic framework mentioned above.

Of special interest is his emphasis on the provision of motivational feedback. The points he focuses on when describing “effective feedback” from a motivational perspective have been the basis of teacher feedback in the writing program in this study (see section



4.6, pp.94-112). The characteristics of motivational feedback according to Dörnyei are as follows:

- praise
- “trust and encouragement” to boost “self-concept” and “self-confidence”
- feedback should help students reflect on areas of their learning which need improvement (2001b:123)

Despite the fact that these suggestions may sound rather prescriptive as they delineate “teacher strategies for motivating learners” (Ushioda 2003:91), they are potentially useful when adequately used within a broader (ibid.), “multifaceted” (Dörnyei 1998; Williams 2004) framework of L2 motivation.

This increasing interest in researching and examining attitudes and motivation is based on the belief that affective factors must have a crucial role to play in learning a second/foreign language. There is no doubt that a “...secure, motivated learner is prepared to make a personal investment in learning.” (Edge 1993:19) This investment, for instance, can be seen in the form of the learners’ willingness and effort to make use of their cognitive and metacognitive strategies. In fact, this has already been testified to by many research findings which have demonstrated the effect of these two affective variables on second language proficiency, mastery of certain linguistic aspects, such as, vocabulary, learners’ persistence in language programs and classroom behaviour (Gardner and MacIntyre 1993:4). In addition to attitudes and motivation, anxiety and self-confidence are of equal importance in language learning.

### **3.4.2 Language anxiety and self-confidence**

Language anxiety is defined as “...the apprehension experienced when a situation requires the use of a second language with which the individual is not fully proficient.” (Gardner and MacIntyre 1993:5) The choice to discuss language anxiety and self-confidence at the same time is partly due to the fact that there is some connection between the two. A simple and straightforward reaction would be that when the former is absent, or lessened, the latter will be boosted. There is no doubt that in any kind of learning or teaching activity, namely language learning, the aim is to find ways of encouraging learners to overcome their anxiety and develop more self-confidence. In fact, when we discuss how teachers can motivate learners, the issues of anxiety and self-confidence seem to be implicitly touched on for these tend to come to the forefront once we ask a question like: What are some of the affective variables which may inhibit learners’ motivation to use a language and benefit from their learning? While many

answers can be provided, a possible one may be that they are too anxious and not confident enough to use the language. Hence, one possible connection can already be established between the degree of anxiety and self-confidence, i.e., anxiety may lead to lack of self-confidence. However, the reverse may also be possible, which takes us to the point above that there is some connection between these two personality variables.

However, an important point which needs to be made here is that despite the derogatory associations people may have with anxiety, the latter is not always a bad feature. In fact, a distinction is made between “debilitating anxiety”, which is seen as an obstacle, and “facilitating anxiety”, which leads to better achievement (Kleinmann 1977; Scovel 1978). In addition, a distinction is also made between “trait anxiety”, which is a permanent personality trait, and “state anxiety”, which is a short-lived type of anxiety (Scovel 1978).

Anxiety, mainly state anxiety, has been found to be a feature of language learning and negative correlations have been reported with grades in language course (Gardner et al. 1976; Horwitz 1986a). For example, Horwitz et al. (1986b) describe anxiety in the language classroom as a complex construct which is related to the learner’s apprehension of communication; social evaluation apprehension, i.e., the learners’ anxiety which originates from the fact that they have to present themselves in a language which they do not yet master; and the third point is test anxiety, which is relevant to the present study. It refers to the exams and tests related to the formal aspect of most language learning programs. Besides those three components, Horwitz et al. identify other elements, such as, “self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviours...” which constitute language learning anxiety and are related to the “...uniqueness of the language learning process” (ibid.:128).

Always in an attempt to examine the effects of anxiety, experimental studies have examined the effect of artificially induced anxiety. For example, in a study by Steinberg and Horwitz (1986) two groups were compared, in the first group anxiety was provoked through impersonal treatment and video recording students while they were describing two ambiguous pictures. The second group received friendly treatment and was not videotaped. The result was that the first group’s interpretation was not as elaborate and efficient as that of the second group.

For their part, and in their attempt to answer why anxiety should be a problem for language learners, Allwright and Bailey offer one possible answer which is that in

language classes where the learners' first language use is not allowed, learners feel that they are being deprived of "...their normal means of communication and so of the ability to behave fully as normal people." (1991:173) Such a deprivation is capable of nurturing anxiety about communicating with others and also negatively influencing the quality of learner performance in the target language both inside and outside class. Hence, because of their anxiety learners may not feel confident enough to practice the target language as they feel that "...they are representing themselves badly, showing only some of their real personality, only some of their real intelligence." (ibid.)

### **3.4.3 Anxiety and competitiveness in language learning context**

Another factor which deserves to be mentioned here is the issue of competitiveness in a language classroom. Bailey's survey (1995) of a substantial number of diary studies has shown a consistent connection between anxiety and competitiveness. The majority of the diarists reported that they were competitive in their language classes and this was a major source of anxiety for them as some were concerned about achieving high levels of proficiency in the language they were learning, others were concerned about being among the lowest achievers. In most cases, diarists suffered from debilitating anxiety rather than facilitating. Although these diary studies are not without disadvantages, as they rely on self-report and they can be highly selective (Allright and Bailey 1991:176), their potential for uncovering individual and personality variables should not be underestimated. This is clearly stated by Bailey when commenting on the usefulness of diary studies in allowing her to see, through the language she used, the development of competitiveness as a pervasive theme. She says: "it is unlikely that an observer or a videotape camera could have captured these intense feelings of inadequacy. It is also doubtful that I would have revealed them on a questionnaire." (1995:174) Hence, a possible causal relation is established between competitiveness, as another affective variable, and anxiety.

On the whole, in the area of language learning affective factors seem to function in a complex network of relations in both formal and informal contexts. Researchers have attempted to capture how these factors interplay and interact by providing working models; however, their advice is that "when considering the process of second-language acquisition, it is recommended that close attention be directed to the social context in which the learning is taking place." (Gardner and MacIntyre 1993:7)

While most of the studies on language learning anxiety have revealed its negative effects on verbal production, its effects on written production cannot be any less negative. In the area of EFL writing, given the complexity of the skill as described above, reports by teachers about student writers' anxiety, and also students' continuous complaints, are good proof that anxiety is pervasive in this aspect of language learning.

#### **3.4.4 Anxiety in ESL/EFL writing**

The idea of anguish and anxiety of a second language writer has been reported by Raimes while watching her own students write. She notes:

*Student writers chew their pencils, they shuffle their feet, they sigh, groan and stretch, they ask, 'How much do we have to write?' They thumb through their little dictionaries. They write a sentence, read back over it, cross out a word and substitute another... (1983:18).*

According to Raimes, this anxiety, from which native speakers also suffer is so much accentuated for ESL student writers. She explains this worry of ESL writers in terms of how overburdened they usually are with the acquisition of "phonology, grammar, syntactic structure, vocabulary, rhetorical structure, and idioms of a new language in addition to learning the mechanics of prose." (ibid.:259). Hence, the focus of many ESL composition courses is on the learning and production of rule-governed forms of the second language. A similar point is made by Widdowson who also notes that writing is "usually an irksome activity and an ordeal to be avoided whenever possible." (1983:34) It is extremely difficult to get the best of words in writing and this difficulty is multiplied when we think of a writer who has to make use of words which are not in his/her linguistic repertoire (ibid.). For the participants in the present study, their experience of anxiety as EFL writers is even accentuated by test anxiety. This type of anxiety makes some students, more than others, always "alarmed about the consequences of inadequate performance on a test..." (Sarason 1984, cited in Arnold 1999:64). It is hoped that their exposure to more writing practice within the framework of a process approach will help decrease their anxiety. It seems that the inherent nature of writing as a painstaking activity cannot be completely eradicated, but only relatively reduced by making use of the insights gained through writing research and pedagogy. The process approach to writing seems to have brought some solutions and illuminating ideas about how to learn and teach writing.

### 3.5 Process approach to writing: a definition?

I would like to begin by briefly shedding some light on a widely controversial issue in the area of teaching and learning writing. This has to do with a term which both teachers and researchers tend to use with some degree of ease and familiarity: it is the term 'process', or sometimes used as a noun 'process'. What do we actually mean by a process approach to writing? Does 'process' refer to a theory or a name of a writing pedagogy or both? These questions I have asked myself and found, so much to my consolation, that I am not the only one to have done so. It has been a controversial issue and attempts have been made by authorities to clarify the matter.

One important focus of heated discussion of L1 and L2 writing instruction has been 'process'. While some welcomed it as a "paradigm shift" (Hairston 1982) others criticised it as being "abstract" (Gilsdorf 1987:27), the "process religion" (Hagge 1987:89). In his attempt to clarify what process means, Susser (1994: 32) states three different ways in which the term has been used:

- To refer to the very act of writing.
- To characterise writing pedagogies.
- To refer to a theory of writing.

One of the important points he makes is that a source of confusion and controversy has been that "*process* has been used incorrectly ...to refer to a theory or theories of writing." (ibid.:33, emphasis in original) As Susser, and other authorities, inform us process is not the name of a writing theory, if what is meant by theory of writing is a rhetorical system "based on epistemological assumptions about the nature of reality, the nature of the knower, and the rules governing the discovery and communication of the known.": (Berlin 1987:4) According to Berlin, process is not a theory of writing, but it emerged as a component of most twentieth century writing theories, such as the "objective" and "subjective" theories (ibid.). For example, "behavioural rhetoric" within the framework of "objective theories" makes use of some elements of process writing (ibid:142). Finally, process is even more valued and emphasized by cognitive theories. In an attempt to identify the characteristics of the process approach to writing, it has usually been compared to the preceding approaches.

### **3.6 Process approach to writing and other approaches: what kind of a relationship?**

Dissatisfaction with ‘the controlled composition’ and ‘the current-traditional’ approaches is thought to be the main motivation behind the introduction of the process approach to ESL writing (Silva 1990:15). Both approaches had been criticized for their inability to enhance thought or encourage its expression (ibid.). The former conceived of writing as less of a major skill to be developed or stressed in language learning since it was meant to be merely “a service activity” (Rivers 1968) The latter focused more on the composed product rather than the composing process. The main concern of this approach was the logical organisation and arrangement of discourse. Therefore, ESL writers had to be trained in what Kaplan calls “pattern drill,...at the rhetorical level rather than at the syntactic level” (Kaplan 1967:15).

However, we need to acknowledge that, given the variety of ESL contexts and educational systems, the two approaches, ‘the controlled composition’ and ‘the current-traditional’, may not have completely disappeared from ESL pedagogy and ESL composition books. This is clearly stated by Silva when he says that “...one could make a strong case for the notion that the current-traditional approach is still dominant in ESL writing materials and classroom practices today.” (ibid.:15).

This is an important issue raised by Silva because the appearance of a new approach does not necessarily mean the complete disappearance of the other. In certain educational or learning contexts what is conceived by some to be an outdated approach may still be a practical and useful one for others. This continuous shift from one approach to another may be the outcome of a rather artificial and “...unproductive approach cycle.” (1990:18) Silva explains how an approach is brought to life in a rather “limited fashion”; it is celebrated; then taken for granted; it is soon discarded; and a brand new approach replaces it (ibid.). He states that this:

...merry-go-round of approaches has a number of negative effects on the discipline: It generates more heat than light and does not encourage consensus on important issues, preservation of legitimate insights, synthesis of a body of knowledge, or principled evaluation of approaches. (ibid.)

Silva makes the point that for ESL composition teachers, such a lack of consensus creates a sense of confusion and “insecurity”. In other words, and as Silva notes, each of the existing theories is limited to a specific point, despite its importance, which makes it rather ineffective and shows that there “...are no comprehensive theories of L2 writing,

and it does not seem prudent to assume that theories of first language writing alone will suffice.” (ibid.:20) which means that a more comprehensive and solid theory of L2 writing has to be established. Silva’s first suggestion is that this endeavour should take into consideration pertinent issues related to ESL writing, namely, the interaction of the writer, reader, text and context. The second suggestion is that the role of approaches should be considered within a “coherent model” which takes into consideration ESL writing theory, research and practice (ibid.).

Recently, however, discussing the same issue, Kroll suggests using the terms “methodology or widely held belief” instead of “theory” for, as she explains, methodology seems to be the core of what is usually presented as “a *theoretical* breakthrough.” In Kroll’s words:

When [“the composing process” and “process theory”] were first introduced and popularized, many felt that focusing the writing course on the process of writing itself was a *theoretical* breakthrough. In retrospect, a more accurate claim would be that process insights gave rise to a *methodological* breakthrough in the teaching of writing...We should recognise the importance of the methodological breakthrough engendered by insights from research into the composing process of L1 and L2 writers; these findings assist teachers in helping less skilled writers alter their writing behaviors so they can write more successfully. But no matter how much we help student writers “improve” their composing process(es), we are still talking about methods and not theory, and this is just one variable in the multifaceted enterprise known as “writing.” (2003:6-7)

It is worth noting that if ESL composition teachers seem to suffer from this situation of “insecurity” (Silva 1990) and confusion as to what “approach”, “theory”, or “methodology” to opt for, this feeling may even be more accentuated among EFL writing teachers.

### **3.6.1 Some features of writing in a process approach**

Unlike the way writing was viewed in the ‘controlled’ and the ‘current-traditional’ approaches, writing in a process approach is best understood as “a set of distinctive thinking processes which writers orchestrate or organize during the act of composing.” (Flower and Hayes 1981:366) Writing then consists of various activities, such as “setting goals, generating ideas, organizing information, selecting appropriate language, making a draft, reading and reviewing it, then revising and editing.” (Hedge 2000:302). Furthermore, in line with these activities, research into what strategies skilled and unskilled writers make use of has revealed that skilled writers engage in a process of composing activities which is neither linear nor simple. For example, and as Raimes

puts it, “the process is not the linear one of pre-writing, writing and revising. These three activities are, rather, inseparable and intertwined, all going on all the time throughout the process.” (1983:263) Zamel also announced the idea that the writing process was a “non-linear, exploratory, and generative process whereby writers discover and reformulate their ideas as they attempt to approximate meaning.” (1983:165). The same thing has been commented on by Hedge when she talks about what activities characterize the writing process in relation to what good writers do when they write. For instance, in discussing how skilled writers plan, Hedge makes the point that this activity involves a constant interaction between thinking and writing. Therefore, any methodology which fails to acknowledge and encourage this relationship could be seen as simplistic and possibly ineffective. In her own words,

if, indeed, episodic planning allows for an interplay between writing and thinking, a methodology which encourages students to plan in detail before writing and to keep to that plan, is naive and possibly counter-productive. A more flexible approach is required. (2000:306)

The degree of flexibility, however, will definitely vary from one context to another and from how much process-oriented a pedagogical design is.

Hence, for some the process approach is seen as liberating (Grabe and Kaplan 1996:86). It has brought about a substantial change in the way writing instruction was generally perceived and also the ways students learnt to write. As a result, the writer as “language user navigates through the task of producing or understanding text.” (Spelman Miller 2000:124). Writers were encouraged to write about topics of interest to them; invention and pre-writing task activities came to be recognised as part of the composing process and feedback between multiple drafts highly recommended, etc (Grabe and Kaplan 1996:87). Therefore, writing does not have to be a solitary activity all the way through since the writer can turn to some real audiences be they his/her peers or the teacher as a participator or external readers. Student writers can work in pairs or small groups, by themselves, or with the teacher for constructive feedback or evaluation. Learners can be engaged in a variety of writing modes such as journal writing and free writing which will provide them with additional practice in order to gain more familiarity with the writing skill. This idea is also put forward by Silva who explains how when applied to the classroom context, the process approach “calls for providing a positive, encouraging, and collaborative workshop environment within which students, with ample time and minimal interference, can work through their composing processes.”



(1990:15) The role of the teacher, then, is that of a helper and facilitator who provides students with 'viable strategies' throughout the different stages of the writing process.

Another important aspect of process approach is that writing activity became a means of "self-discovery and authorial 'voice'" (Grabe and Kaplan 1996:86). However, the issue of 'voice' is still controversial. The first cause of disagreement seems to be the definition of the term 'voice' itself. In relation to writing, voice has been given various definitions. For example, Elbow (1981, cited in Stapleton 2002) describes it as writing that "capture[s] the sound of the individual on the page" (p.178). Atkinson makes the point that voice remains "a devilishly difficult concept to define" (2001:110). Stapleton describes the various definitions of voice as "broad" and "vague". He also adds that what complicates the issue are recent discussions which have employed the terms "authorial presence" and "authorial identity" which, as he explains, "...are related to voice in the sense that they often identify similar discursive features associated with individualism found in written texts." (2002: 178)

In ESL writing pedagogy the issue of voice is no less controversial and it has appeared in research as a result of claims that certain L2 learners' cultural and social backgrounds inhibit the emergence of their individualized voices and authorial identities when they write in English. In his survey and critique of the studies based on such claims, Stapleton unveils many flaws. He summarizes that by saying:

Specifically, the notion of voice as defined by the authors critiqued...has done one of two things: (a) assumed the rhetoric of English or the contrasted language is static and essentialized it for the purposes of highlighting different expressions of identity or (b) identified an individual lacking in confidence and then attempted to link his or her difficulties with authorial identity in his or her writing. In effect, the foundations upon which these studies rest appear weak. (2002:183)

The issue of voice is of substantial importance in L2 writing pedagogy and attempts are being made to encourage L2 writers to make their voices heard through their writings by consciousness raising or through the teaching of some specific features such as the use of the first pronoun "I". However, as Stapleton warns, in doing so educators are running the risk of overemphasising the voice issue and overlooking other important aspects of writing such as content. He says that this whole discussion "...sends the message to teachers that voice is critically important, and this message, if passed down to students, may result in learners who are more concerned with identity than ideas." (2002:187) Hence, as teachers and educators, we should acknowledge the value of voice

but should also strike a balance between what we want our students to achieve in/from their writings.

### **3.6.2 Teaching/learning writing in an ESL/EFL context**

Although ESL writing is usually used as inclusive of EFL writing, I believe that there are some important differences which we have to consider in order not to generalise ESL matters to the EFL context. For example, students in an ESL environment usually have the advantage of being in a context in which English is much more used and their exposure to it is more frequent than EFL learners. This will, definitely, have some bearing on the teaching and learning of the language skills. With their infrequent exposure to English, namely writing skills, students may need more basic teaching than some ESL students. The audience is not necessarily an L1 reader; it is usually a non-native writing teacher or peer. Hence, a comprehensive approach to the teaching of EFL writing should be able to cater for the contextual characteristics. On the other hand, Silva's second suggestion may not apply to an EFL context since this view of a more "coherent model" (1990:20) may not be as yet well developed. All these elements may be considered as hurdles in the EFL teaching/learning activity; however, one may want to look on the bright side and remember that EFL writing teachers have a rich source to draw from while waiting for more fully fledged EFL-related research and practice to be developed, which may eventually lead to a more coherent EFL writing approach. Hence, what Silva refers to as an artificial cycle of approaches may also be seen and used positively by EFL teachers by selecting, from each approach, that which is more suitable for their student needs.

On the other hand, given the importance of each element, which each approach seems to single out and focus on in writing, for example, the "writer" in process-oriented approaches, and "texts" for product-driven approaches, a more sensible and comprehensive approach should be able to accommodate all these different elements. Hence, instead of talking about antagonisms and differences we may want to talk about complementarities of approaches. This is something which Hyland (2003) suggests in discussing genre and process approaches to writing.

Despite the substantial contribution of process approaches to writing in unveiling the cognitive aspects of the writing activity and providing more insight into what expert and novice writers do when they write, they have been criticised for making the writing experience more of an isolated and individualised activity. In other words, process

approaches have been accused of overlooking the social aspect of writing as a human activity.

### **3.7 Process approach to writing: a more comprehensive view?**

The individual solo aspect of writing as advocated by the process approach has been challenged by social constructivist views which stress the idea that the writing process is social in essence (Rubin 1988; Janda 1990; Nystrand 1990; Sperling 1991). This trend in writing theory and practice has been previously commented on by Arndt saying that writing is "...seen not as a decontextualised solo-performance but as an interactive, social process of construction of meaning between writer and reader." (1993:90) Hence, within the framework of social constructionism, writing ceased to be viewed as a mere channel of communicating objective and "independently existing truths." (Hyland 2000:6) The social aspects of writing have been emphasised and the view of academic writing as a social construction of knowledge through the use of language in given contexts (Hyland 2004) has unveiled some forgotten, or rather overlooked aspects of the writing activity as it has been depicted by the "cognitive" process approaches. Hyland makes the point that process approaches represent writing as "a decontextualised skill by foregrounding the writer as an isolated individual struggling to express personal meanings." (2003:18) The writer's use of language is then the result of an individual's endeavour and the use of "general principles of thinking and composing to formulate and express his or her ideas." (ibid.) This line of thought is helpful as it gives us some insight into how a writer works actively in processing information but at the same time it fails to recognise how language is systematically used, or "patterned" (ibid.19), in a given context. Genre approaches, however, stress the fact that the writing activity is purposeful and language use varies following contextual features.

The second point Hyland makes is that in process models the teacher is powerless and his/her role is limited to

...developing students' metacognitive awareness of their writing processes and responding to writing. Response is potentially the most influential step because this is the point at which overt intervention and explicit language teaching are most likely to occur. Unfortunately, however, in learner-centred classrooms this is necessarily a reactive and extemporised solution to learners' writing difficulties. Because language and rhetorical organisation tend to be things tacked on to the end of the process as "editing," rather than the central resources for constructing meanings, students are offered no way of seeing how different texts are codified in distinct and recognisable ways in terms of their purpose, audience and message. (ibid.:19)

The third reservation is that in the process approach students are not provided with explicit teaching in the genre of texts they are supposed to produce on the basis that these will be a direct outcome of students' discovery of their own forms as a result of imitating expert writers, or through teacher feedback. Hyland warns that this may disadvantage some learners within the same L1 while in the L2 context the situation can be even more dramatic since learners lack knowledge of how texts are organised in a language which is not theirs. (ibid.)

Hyland's points are well taken, yet I also think that when it comes to teaching, as long as the practitioners are aware of the different approaches, they should be free to take what they perceive useful for their students in their context. Hence, as they are laid out the precepts of the process approach may not be taken in their totality or followed without any attempt to take into consideration the context and also the learners' needs. So, the writing teacher's task then is to be selective and attempt to make use of the different options he/she has. For example, what Hyland suggests concerning the direct instruction of text patterns, within the genre approaches, is feasible in a writing course which adopts a process approach pedagogy (the course of the present study focuses on direct instruction of argumentative genre while making use of elements of a process approach; see section 4.6, pp. 94-112). As a matter of fact, Hyland himself does not reject process concepts in teaching L2 writing, yet he recommends that they should be complemented by insights from genre approaches.

My teaching approach draws on both process and genre approaches, and their position with regard to current post-process debates. Some aspects of a process approach have been adopted, for instance, raising student awareness to the fact that what matters in a writing activity is not only the product but also the process. Therefore, the writing course included various activities, such as setting goals, generating ideas, organising information through planning, selecting appropriate language, writing multiple drafts, revising, and peer-reviewing. Moreover, following recommendations of genre approach advocates (e.g. Hyland 2003) that students be provided with explicit teaching in the genre of texts they are supposed to produce, the students in the present study have been exposed to explicit instruction of the argumentative essay writing genre. In the same line, students were also provided with exemplar texts which were meant to raise their awareness of the argumentative writing. Furthermore, although I have made use of some aspects of process approach to writing in designing and teaching the present course, I

have also been aware of the extent to which such an approach could be functional in the context of the study. In other words, the adoption of some aspects of process approach has been guided by what the post-process debates have revealed about the shortcomings of a strictly-defined process pedagogy (Matsuda 2003) which tends to focus on writing simply as “a *highly cognitive, individualist, largely asocial* process (Atkinson 2003: 10). However, post-process advocates see writing through different lenses; writing is a human activity which touches on all other areas of human endeavour. More specifically, “the complex activity of L2 writing [is seen] in its full range of sociocognitive situatedness...” (ibid.).

One element on which, I believe, all the different approaches have to agree is the importance of revision in the writing process.

### **3.8 Revision in the process of writing**

One of the direct outcomes of the process approach to writing has been the emphasis on revision as a substantial component in the writing process in both L1 (Faigley et al. 1985; Onore 1989) and L2 (Arndt 1993; Leki 1990a). Its vital role has made of it one of the main criteria used to distinguish proficient from novice writers.

#### **3.8.1 Good writers and revision**

Research concerned with what happens in the writing process has defined revision as the key element of good writing. Many researchers came to the conclusion that revision is the key feature that distinguishes “expert” from “novice” writers, with the former being more able and willing than the latter to make substantive revision to their drafts with a view to making their writing meaningful (Perl 1979; Bridwell 1980; Sommers 1980; Faigley & Witte 1981; Matsubashi & Gordon 1985). For example, Sommers (1980) compared expert writers (journalists, editors, and academics) and student writers and reported that the focus of revision for student writers was vocabulary. As she puts it, students saw revision as “...requiring lexical changes but not semantic changes.” (ibid.:382) For experienced writers, however, the aim of revising is to find the line of thought and the first drafts functioned as a means of helping them “define territory” (ibid.:384), while further revisions helped them to continue their meaning creation. In other words, experienced writers felt as if they “can go forever” (ibid.) in writing and rewriting.

Faigley and Witte (1981) studied six expert adult writers, six advanced college writers who were enrolled in upper-division writing courses and six inexperienced writers

(college freshman with weak writing skills). The subjects had to write on an assigned topic over three sessions. The first day was for planning, the second for writing a first draft, and third day for writing a second draft. Faigley and Witte reported that the advanced college writers made the biggest number of revisions, but there were substantial differences between the groups with regard to revision type. The group of expert writers made fewer revisions than the advanced ones. The inexperienced student writers made the smallest number of revisions which were, in Faigley and Witte's words, "overwhelmingly Surface Changes." (ibid.: 407). There were also differences with regard to when the changes were made. Both advanced groups delayed their mechanical and lexical revisions until the second draft while the inexperienced student writers had already finished their revisions on the first draft.

However, in second language writing research, Belcher (1989) undertook a case study with a group of twenty-two English Second Language (ESL) student writers. They were divided into two sub-groups consisting of Chinese, Japanese, Korean and Spanish graduate and undergraduate students of different language proficiencies. Belcher's study showed that even though most of the subjects were rated as being unskilled writers, they demonstrated their ability to revise in some rather sophisticated ways. These student writers made more meaning than surface changes. The study also showed that subjects from different language backgrounds revised in different ways, making generalisations about ESL writers a rather difficult task. Belcher claims, therefore, that "ESL basic writers do make global changes when they revise than simply correcting surface errors." (1989:1237-A)

In contrast, using a case study approach with four native speakers of Spanish, Gaskill (1986) found completely opposite results to those reported by Belcher. In his investigation Gaskill reports on the revisions and composing processes of four case study participants as they wrote argumentative essays in Spanish and English. The writers were categorized according to writing ability as "more proficient" and "less proficient". Students were video-taped as they wrote and thought aloud during two 90-minute sessions. The writer analysed the revisions using data from video tapes and written products. The types of revision changes were identified using Faigley and Witte's (1981) taxonomy of revision. The findings of the study indicated that all four writers revised more while composing than before or between drafts. Unlike Belcher's subjects, Gaskill's student writers made an overwhelming majority of surface rather than meaning changes in both Spanish and English. Moreover, the study showed that

despite some slight differences, composing processes and revisions in English were similar to those in Spanish. Furthermore, although there were some differences between more proficient and less proficient writers in revision complexity, the differences were found to be much greater in composing behaviours such as planning and reading. The more proficient writers were judged to need instruction in critical thinking, specifically in considering their reader's counter-arguments. While less proficient writers had similar difficulties, they mainly needed help with generating ideas and developing them.

The study of revision as part of an ongoing text construction or on a finished draft resulted in the identification of a set of criteria which assist in the examination of the types of revision. One of the well-known taxonomies to-date is Faigley and Witte's (1981) as in Gaskill's study.

### 3.8.2 Faigley and Witte's taxonomy of revision

Their taxonomy is based on the distinction between changes which alter the text meaning and those which do not. It categorizes revisions into two types: surface changes and text-based changes. As Faigley and Witte put it, their

*taxonomy of revision changes is based on whether new information is brought to the text or whether old information is removed in such a way that it cannot be recovered through drawing inferences. We call changes that do not bring new information to a text or remove old information Surface Changes...Meaning changes...involve the adding of new content or the deletion of existing content. (1981:402, italics in original)*

The taxonomy is shown in Table 3-2 with subsequent explanation of each category:

**Table 3-2: Faigley and Witte's (1981) Taxonomy of Revision Changes**

Formal Changes		Text-Based Changes	
<i>Formal Changes</i>	<i>Meaning-Preserving Changes</i>	<i>Microstructure Changes</i>	<i>Macrostructure Changes</i>
Spelling	Additions	Additions	Additions
Tense,	Deletions	Deletions	Deletions
Number,	Substitutions	Substitutions	Substitutions
and Modality	Permutations	Permutations	Permutations
Abbreviations	Distributions	Distributions	Distributions
Punctuation Format	Consolidations	Consolidations	Consolidations

As further explanation of the different components of the taxonomy shown in the table above, surface changes are divided into two subcategories:

**Formal changes:** these include "most, but not all, conventional copy-editing operations" (1981:402)

**Meaning-Preserving Changes:** these consist of changes which "paraphrase" the concepts in the text without altering them.

- *Additions* add a word or a phrase without changing the overall meaning of the sentence. “You pay two dollars” can be revised to “You pay a two-dollar entrance fee” (Faigley & Witte, 1981, p. 403).
- *Deletions* omit a word or a phrase but do not change the meaning of the sentence. For instance, “several intelligent, educated Moroccan women” is revised to read “several educated Moroccan women.”
- *Substitutions* exchange words with a synonym: “A large house” changes to “A spacious house.”
- *Permutations* are rearrangements of words or phrases: “All her friends attended the wedding except for Khadija” becomes “Except for Khadija, all her friends attended the wedding.”
- *Distributions* are revisions in which one segment is divided into more than one: “she thought that since she worked hard, she should at least have passed the written test!” becomes, “she should have at least passed the written test. She worked so hard!”
- *Consolidations*, the opposite of distributions, combine two or more segments into one. “The girl was blonde. She was European.” becomes “The blonde girl was European.”

Text-based changes are divided into similar subcategories. The difference, however, is that revisions affect a group of sentences, paragraphs, or the entire text.

***Micro-text-based changes:*** These do not alter the summary of a text; they only rework sentences and paragraphs.

***Macro-text-based changes:*** These change the overall summary of the text by altering the direction or the gist of the idea presented. New paragraphs or sections may be added, deleted, rearranged, or combined. Finally, one idea originally presented as a paragraph may be distributed over several paragraphs.

Faigley and Witte, however, acknowledge that the issue of meaning is complicated, mainly in dealing with the interpretation of literary text, since inferences vary from one reader to another, and whether these inferences are based on “concepts in the extant text...or those...which can be reasonably inferred from it.” (ibid.: 402) However, they explain that the idea behind their taxonomy is much simpler than the interpretation of a literary work. In other words, their taxonomy is not concerned with literary interpretations of texts. They justify that by the fact that “[they] have only to account for



those inferences that the writer raises to the surface by adding explicit text or requires by deleting explicit text during revision. Most of these cases are obvious.” (ibid.)

Helping student writers become efficient revisers of their work, and probably that of their peers, is undoubtedly one of the main goals of any writing teacher and this need may be even stronger when we are dealing with EFL learners. Achieving the goal, however, requires substantial amount of practice and perseverance. This is stated by Arndt when she says: “...becoming skilled at *re-viewing*...is both a long-term and difficult developmental process...” (1993:91, emphasis in original)

Following the call of recent research for considering the social construction of texts, response from readers to a text under construction or in progress has a substantial role to play in helping the writer judge how effectively his/her message has been mediated through written words. Hence, readers, as feedback providers, can be said to make a crucial contribution towards the development of a piece of writing. In the same vein, in an article discussing the effects of readers on developing writers, Nystrand suggests that writing and reading should be seen as “social communicative processes between writers and readers.” (1990:4) Considering this aspect of texts, writing teachers following a process approach can encourage a workshop environment within which students can read and respond to each other’s writing. On the other hand, the teacher can also find appropriate time for his/her intervention. Hence, student writers will have a chance for two types of readership/readers: teachers and peers.

### **3.9 Feedback in the process of writing**

Feedback is defined by Lamberg as “information on performance which affects subsequent performance by influencing students’ attention to particular matters so that those matters undergo a change in the subsequent performance.” (1980:66) Another definition by Keh sees feedback “...as input from a reader to a writer with the effect of providing information to the writer for revision.” (1990:294) Both definitions seem to agree that feedback brings in some kind of “input” or “information” from a reader to a writer on the basis of which some kind of “change” or “revision” will take place. Hence, the underlying reason for giving feedback or seeking feedback is that it is assumed to lead to better performance. However, this assumption has been questioned and people are reminded that the direct link between feedback and performance may not always be straightforward. This is clearly stated by Kluger and DeNisi when they say:

Fortunately, several FI [Feedback Intervention] researchers have recently recognized that FIs have highly variable effects on performance, such that in some conditions FIs improve performance, in other conditions FIs have no apparent effects on performance, and in yet other FIs debilitate performance. (1996:254)

While the statement above may be said about any area of learning, it is also the case in the field of learning and teaching writing. This is mainly noticeable in relation to the effect of feedback on revision. This relationship has been questioned and a substantial number of studies have been conducted to further explore and investigate this issue. The findings are both interesting and diffuse.

However, some types of feedback have been more used in writing classrooms and, therefore, more researched than others. For example, while a number of studies have been conducted on the effectiveness of teacher written and peer feedback in revision, teacher taped commentary, to use Hyland's (1990) terminology, has been widely ignored. Hence, by focusing on teacher taped commentary, this study attempts to fill this gap. Another type of feedback that seems to be ignored in writing textbooks and very little researched is student self-monitored feedback using annotation (Arndt 1993). This feedback strategy has also been chosen for the purpose of this study for its usefulness (Charles 1990) and also as a means of filling the gap that exists in research on this particular type of feedback. Generally speaking, the types of feedback which can be used in a writing class can be categorised as follows:

1. Self-monitored feedback, i.e. student writers are given the chance to identify the parts of their texts on which they need help, for example, by using annotations (a difference is made between self-monitored and self-provided feedback, see the explanation below).
2. Student/student feedback, what I refer to here as peer feedback.
3. Teacher/student feedback (in this study this type of feedback includes: teacher written feedback and taped commentary).

### **3.10 Self-monitored feedback**

One distinction seems to be important at this stage between self-provided and self-monitored feedback, at least in the sense I will be using the latter in this study. Self-provided feedback as it has been discussed by Lamberg is a form of feedback which involves students providing feedback on their own writing through the use of checklists. These are designed by the teacher and cover the 'skills' or 'qualities' to be stressed in students' texts following the focus of the writing (1980:67). On the other hand, the term

used in this study is self-monitored feedback, using annotations, implies that the student writer directs the reader's, editor's, feedback. In a sense the writer controls the focus of feedback by requiring a special kind of help with his/her writing. For example, the student writer may think that sentence structure is problematic in his writing, so he/she asks the reader to put a special focus on that in providing feedback. Therefore, the focus in this study is on self-monitored feedback through encouraging students to use annotations rather than self-provided feedback.

### **3.10.1 Student annotations**

In his identification of the advantages of annotation as a self-monitored feedback method, Beck mentions "authorial maturity" (1982:322). That is to say, when students manage to concentrate their attention on how they try to convey meaning, they move from their role as passive to active writers. The second positive characteristic of annotations according to Beck is that they "enhance the effectiveness of teaching." (ibid.) By performing the annotation task which instructs them to mark how they used one skill or the other, such as coherence or providing supporting details, students seem to show a better understanding of the assignment. The third advantage is that annotations encourage student-teacher communication. Although annotation does not rely on verbal communication, it can ensure some degree of communication between the teachers and students. This is clearly stated by Beck when he says that "from reading a set of annotated exercises, [he] can see instantly, as if from x-ray plates, how well the whole class and each individual too, are understanding and controlling the writing skills" (1982:322-323).

Beck distinguishes between two main types of annotations: "descriptive" and "evaluative" annotations. In the former a student writer identifies where he/she has used a certain writing technique and labels it using specific terminology, for instance, "analogy", "anecdote", "dialogue", "concrete image", etc. As the name suggests, "evaluative" annotations involve the writer's judgement of how good his/her writing is. They usually come after the paper has been completed. For example, one of Beck's students' commented on his/her paper: "I feel I improved my structural flow this time, less mechanical, but I still feel I may be weak on showing not just telling." (ibid.:324). Moreover, according to Beck, some kind of "informal pre-annotation on the working drafts as part of the writing process itself" (ibid.: 323) should be encouraged.

Although the sample of annotations as suggested by Beck (1982) seems to have substantial potential for both the student writer and teacher, it entails some high degree

of control from the teacher at least as far as training students to use annotations is concerned. First, in order to name the techniques used in their writing students need to memorize the terminology, which can be very challenging for first year EFL learners (the subjects of this study). In fact, Beck does not specify the type of students who can use this strategy. The second problem is that the use of annotations as described by Beck involves a great amount of teacher involvement in giving students instructions as to how to go about it.

A more flexible and simple use of annotations is suggested by Charles. She explains the process as follows:

Students underline and number those parts of the text with which they are dissatisfied, either during the process of composing or on completion of the draft. They then annotate these problem areas with their queries, difficulties, comments, or judgements. In short, they note on their draft text any information that they want the teacher/editor to know. (1990: 288)

A study using annotations to explore what both non-native (NNS) and native (NS) university students say about their own writing has come up with some interesting findings. Like Beck (1982), Storch and Tapper believe that by using annotations to articulate their perceptions of their own writing, students can gain a certain degree of independence and guide teacher feedback (1997:245). In their study Storch and Tapper analysed students' annotations with a view to identifying the areas of writing where student annotations take place and the distribution of positive annotations and expressions of concern. Both NNS and NS annotated their own research papers. The results of the study showed that there were differences between the two groups in terms of the 'categories' and 'sub-categories' of their annotations. One of the main findings is that NNS annotations focused most frequently on content, followed by grammar and structure. On the other hand, NS students annotated most frequently on structure followed by content. Although their focus in this study was not on how student annotations helped guide teacher feedback, this was noted as one of the important implications of the project.

### **3.11 Peer Feedback**

Peer feedback is a direct outcome of the implementation of the process approach to teaching and learning writing (Emig 1971; Flower and Hayes 1981; Zamel 1976), an emphasis on the social aspect of the writing activity (Nystrand 1986), and the influence of theories of collaborative learning (Bruffee 1984). Peer feedback in writing has as an aim the provision of an audience for a writer's production. The underlying meaning is

that a writer does not write only for himself or herself, but for an audience. However, the audience in peer feedback, to a writer's advantage or disadvantage, is in the same position as the writer, a peer. Hence, for students who have never experienced peer feedback but who come to a language class which emphasises this activity, the first contact should not be expected to be a great success. The reason is that students usually come to an English class with a view to benefiting from the teacher's knowledge and feedback. The last thing these students can think of is to revise their work based on their classmates' feedback. Therefore, smooth initiation to this type of feedback should be envisaged by the teacher.

In line with preparing students to accept peer feedback, McKendy reports an interesting technique of "legitimizing peer response" (1990:89). He basically used an exercise in which he demonstrated to the students that their peers' judgements on their writing were as valid and reliable as their teachers'. From a file of student placement tests he would take five essays of students who were assigned to composition classes and mix with them another half dozen of writers who were exempt from taking composition making sure that he selected only essays on which the three graders had agreed. Then in class, without revealing the grades, he would give students similar instructions as the ones used by the faculty to mark the papers, i.e. to read the essays quickly and to rate them on the basis of overall impression dividing them into "two roughly equal piles, representing the upper and the lower half of the group...the one or best essays were to be given 4's, the one or two worst were to be given 1's, and the rest should be assigned 2's and 3's. After about thirty minutes [he] tabulated the scores on the blackboard." (ibid.:90) Each essay received more than one score; however, McKendy focused on the degree of consensus among students and every essay was eventually placed either in the upper or the lower half of the group by the majority of the class. Thus, it was found that the students' consensus scores coincided with the teachers' and the clear message from this activity to the students was that as peers or groups, students were able to tell good from bad writing. Therefore, McKendy was sure that "this understanding gave a new legitimacy to the idea of peer response and to the work [he] wanted them to do with drafts in small groups." (ibid.)

The emphasis and aim of feedback can vary depending on when and at which stage of the composing process it is introduced. The terminology used to refer to peer feedback shows that. For example, some of the names used are peer response, peer editing, peer critiquing, and peer evaluation. According to Keh (1990), for example, peer response

can come as early as the first draft with a focus on content, and peer editing towards the final stages on the second or third draft.

Teachers may choose to use peer feedback as a means of saving time for more constructive instruction. Peer feedback is also considered to be more suitable for the learners because it is at their level of development. In addition to developing a greater sense of audience, students can learn more about writing by reading other's papers (ibid.:296). In the present study, peer feedback is introduced at an earlier stage of student composing process; students respond to each other's first drafts. The aim is to alert students from the very beginning that their writing will be read by someone else other than themselves. The focus is mainly on content through the use of peer response sheets which are meant to guide students (see section 4.6, pp.94-112).

### **3.11.1 The use of peer feedback sheets**

Although some researchers suggested that peer feedback should be left unstructured (Elbow 1973; Dipardo & Freedman 1988; Lockhart & Ng 1995; Nelson & Murphy 1992/93) and others warned against the overuse of feedback sheets since they have been found to restrict respondents' freedom in the peer feedback activity (Hyland 2000), peer response sheets are a common practice among writing teachers. They have also been recommended by some researchers (Mittan 1989; Reid 1994, Ferris & Hedgcock 1998; Berg 1999) as useful means of guiding novice EFL respondents and encouraging them to take the activity seriously. Keh, for instance, suggests students be supplied with what she calls "very structured check-lists" which should progress to being "less structured", to, eventually, no guidelines at all (1990:297). According to Keh, this progressive movement is a reflection of students' developing competence in peer reading. Most importantly, however, these guidelines are based on the course objectives. This suggestion has been considered in the design of peer response sheets for the present investigation. However, I did not try to follow Keh's advice concerning the progressive work towards no guidelines. That is to say, students used peer response sheets all the way through the course since they found them helpful, and also because I thought that response sheets, given the students' unfamiliarity with the activity, would keep them more focused. Two types of peer feedback sheets have been designed for the purpose of this study: paragraph response sheets and essay response sheets (see pp.105-106). Related to this issue of providing students with guidelines is the importance of training them to give peer feedback.

### **3.11.2 Training students to give peer feedback**

Research has shown that when responding to their peers' writing, students tend to focus more on surface and mechanical errors referred to as 'lower order concerns' LOCs, rather than the overall development of ideas and organization, known as 'higher order concerns' (HOCs) (Keh 1990). It is usually difficult to get students to respond to their peers' texts by focusing on higher order concerns; the activity may not always be successful. Yet, as Keh puts it "the rewards are worth the problems or unsuccessful sessions." (ibid.: 296)

In line with this, some studies (Berg 1999; Hedgcock and Lefkowitz 1992; Paulus 1999) have confirmed that by training students to be good peer feedback providers the rewards would be even greater. A study carried out by Stanley demonstrated that the participants who received 'coaching' showed a substantial amount of involvement in the peer evaluation task; they produced good communication about writing, and clear guidelines for the revision of drafts (1992: 217). Students in this study were exposed to a fairly lengthy coaching procedure, which consisted of role playing and analysing peer evaluation sessions, discovering the characteristics of effective communication, and studying the genre of student writing (ibid.). In order to analyse the effectiveness of the coaching both the audio-taped peer evaluation sessions and student writings were analysed. It should be noted, however, that this coaching is time-consuming and might not be possible in contexts where time constraint is a factor.

### **3.11.3 Peer feedback and revision**

Another problematic aspect of peer feedback, and rather inconclusive area of research, is related to the amount of revision students make to their writings based on their peer comments. A study by Connor and Asenavage (1994) was discouraging as they found that only 5% of student revisions resulted from peer feedback. In contrast, a study by Mendonca and Johnson found that 53% of students' revisions were attributable to peer comments.

On the other hand, studies which investigated the type of revisions made to the drafts based on peer feedback were contradictory. While some researchers found that writers made more meaning than surface changes (Connor and Asenavage 1994; Paulus 1999), others (Bereiter and Scardamalia 1987; Berger 1990) found that the majority of changes focused on the surface structure. More importantly, however, peer feedback has also been found to stimulate revision after the completion of peer feedback activities

(Villamil and DE Guerrero 1996; Paulus 1999), suggesting that students continued to consider their peer feedback when revising on their own.

#### **3.11.4 Peer feedback: Potential problems**

Research has also shown that peer evaluation, as a social activity, may be affected by some cultural and social factors. Therefore, in an ESL context where the students with different cultural origins may be asked to work together, special care has to be taken of how those factors may influence the running of the activity. ESL teachers should be aware of this fact and need to be ready to deal with any misunderstandings that may originate as a result of that.

Accordingly, Carson and Nelson (1994:17) draw our attention to the fact that in an ESL context there may be potential problems in using activities that require group work. They explain that students from a 'collectivist' culture, such as Japan and China, may find it difficult to carry out work within a writing group as used in the US. The reason is that in the US groups function differently than groups in collectivist cultures. Instead of targeting the whole group, writing groups in the US function for the benefit of the individual writer. Moreover, as a result of their collectivist cultures, ESL students may be more concerned about how to maintain a harmonious group atmosphere instead of providing their peers with needed comments on their composition. In addition to that, the relationships outside the groups for ESL students from collectivist cultures may be characterised by hostility, strain and competition, which may negatively influence group interactions. What this implies is that before thinking of using group work, such as peer evaluation, ESL teachers may want to consider their students' cultural backgrounds.

In the context of the present study this is not an issue since students have the same cultural background. However, one of the problems that I anticipated was related to students' educational background, i.e. whether students had their secondary education in private or government schools. The implication is that in private schools the group size is usually reasonably smaller than the group size in government schools. Therefore, students in the former educational context are more likely to have had a chance of participating in group activities than students in the latter educational environment. This was one of the things that I had to find out from the participants ahead of time in order to avoid any possible clashes. However, this issue was not a major concern because from student records, it was clear that all of them had their secondary education in government schools. Moreover, the students were informed from the very beginning



that group work was a means of getting them to interact and work cooperatively. Although it is usually hard to tell from observation alone what students do while working in pair or groups, the recording of students' peer feedback conversations helped me check whether this activity was useful and whether it was worth continuing to do. This worry about what actually happens when students are responding to each other's work has been examined by some researchers.

Villamil and DE Guerrero conducted a study whose aim was to investigate the type of activities students engaged in while working in pairs; the strategies that they used in order to facilitate the revision task; and some characteristics of the social behaviour involved in such activities. They recorded and transcribed the interactions between pairs. The analysis of the transcripts showed that students engaged in some kind of social-cognitive activities, such as "reading, assessing, dealing with trouble sources", etc. and mediating strategies which were used to facilitate the revision process, such as, using "symbols and external resources, using the L1, providing scaffolding", etc. Their interactions also presented aspects of social behaviour, such as, "management of authorial control, affectivity, collaboration", etc. (1996:51). According to the researchers, the study reveals an intricate interactive process and highlights the importance of activating cognitive processes through social interaction in the L2 writing classroom (ibid.).

### **3.12 Teacher feedback**

Teacher feedback is generally the most expected type of feedback by many students in different contexts, or as Chaudron claims, in relation to classroom interaction, it is "an inevitable constituent of classroom interaction, for no matter what the teacher does, learners derive information about their behaviour from the teacher's reaction, or lack of one, to their behaviour." (1988:133) However, the amount and type of feedback may vary from one educational context to another. Just as students systematically expect the teacher to give them feedback on their writing, some teachers, more than others, tend to think of this activity as an integral part of their teaching. In the traditional writing approaches, teachers responded to student writing by correcting extensively, usually a one-draft essay, hoping that students would learn from these corrections and avoid repeating the same mistakes. However, with the development in the teaching of writing, the teacher's role changed too. A writing teacher is advised to respond to a student's writing as a "concerned reader to a writer as a person, not a grammarian or a grade-

giver.” (Keh 1990:301) A teacher may choose to respond to a student’s writing using different methods. One of the very common methods is written commentary.

### **3.12.1 Teacher written feedback: What should be the focus?**

Research has raised and attempted to answer various questions concerning teacher written feedback. The overall image of teacher feedback was not encouraging (Leki 1990a) as the findings showed that despite the variety of teacher feedback (Fazio 2001) students’ writing did not improve in subsequent productions. Moreover, questions as to how much written feedback should be concerned either with form or content and whether focus should be first on form then content, or the reverse, (Ashwell 2000; Kobayashi 1992) yielded very little consensus among practitioners and researchers.

In early L1 research Arnold (1964) undertook an experiment with tenth grade students to find out whether focus on all errors or only one type of error per paper made any difference. No significant difference in writing ability was noted. With the emergence of the process approach to writing, some researchers believed that until they knew what students’ writing processes were and what writers actually did as they wrote, any attempt to design an appropriate form of feedback would be of no help to learners (Emig 1967; Murray 1968). Furthermore, earlier L1 studies on teacher feedback were criticised for focusing on student writing and feedback comments in isolation from the writing class and the teacher-student relationship, i.e. contextual issues (Reid 1994; Mathison-Fife and O’Neill 1997).

In the early L2 research findings varied and have generally been inconclusive. Focus on form in some cases proved to be more effective than in others. For example, while Henderickson (1978) found that noting the error and providing the correct form had no statistically significant effect, Lalande (1982) found that providing information on the kind of errors made contributed to significant improvement. The few positive effects of error correction on student writing (Kepner 1991; Semke 1984; Robb et al. 1986) constituted a strong evidence and support for process advocates who argued against grammar-focused feedback and advised teachers to avoid it (Zamel 1985).

The debate seems to be continuing even in the recent years between those who believe that “grammar correction is a bad idea” (Truscott 1999:111; 2004) and those who claim that using specific types of error correction, such as, direct correction and simple underlining may be more helpful in reducing error in the long term (Chandler 2003)

than describing the type of error using codes and underlining (Ferris & Roberts 2001), in improving students' accuracy. However, and despite the persistence of such a debate about error feedback, a general change in the L2 writing instruction and teacher response to student writing should be acknowledged.

It seems that Silva's call for a more "comprehensive model" (1990) for L2 writing and Ken Hyland's recommendation of the genre approach to complement the process approach (2003), have been answered. As a matter of fact, and apparently, being influenced by insights from both the process approach and social constructionism, writing teachers seem to have adopted a more comprehensive approach in teaching and responding to student writing. The emphasis has been put on "...student ideas, mastery of rhetorical strategies and awareness of audience." (Ferris 2003:123) This positive change has been reported by recent investigations, using both survey research and textual examination of teacher commentary, which show that teachers provide feedback that attends to content, organization, and errors in grammar and mechanics (for example, Cohen & Cavalcanti 1990; Ferris 1995, 1997; Hedgcock & Lefkowitz 1994). This holistic view of teaching and responding to writing has also benefited from research findings which have shown that ESL writers are well able to manage different types of feedback on the same draft (Fathman & Whalley 1990; Ferris 1997).

While some teachers may choose to provide feedback on all aspects of students' writing at the same time and others focus on one aspect at a time, whatever the procedure, this confirms that writing teachers are concerned about the effectiveness of their feedback and will always seek the best ways to enhance its efficiency. One way of doing that is through examining student reactions to the feedback procedure(s) they are exposed to (Enginarlar 1993). In line with these concerns, a recent paper by Goldstein (2004) provides guidelines for what teachers can do to provide their students with effective feedback which will enable them to revise and become more effective writers. The first element Goldstein emphasises is the role of context in determining how teachers provide written commentary and how students would respond. Contextual factors consist of program, institutional, and socio-political constraints, crowded classrooms and heavy teaching load (2004:65-66). In addition, special attention should be paid to finding the best ways teachers and students can work together "by communicating their intents, needs, difficulties, and successes." (ibid.: 68) Some of the ways Goldstein suggests for teachers to know their students' intentions are through asking them to complete cover sheets and annotate their texts (both methods are used in the present

study) and introducing in the writing class exercises whose aim is to educate students about teacher commentary practices. However, this communication should move from teacher to students and from students to teacher for it to be effective (ibid.: 70). Concerning what should be commented on, Goldstein advises teachers to read their students' writings and try to listen to what they want to say, then read the cover sheets carefully before reading the paper a second time, then read the paper again with focusing on the rhetorical context and examine if the student writer has achieved his/her intended aim in relation to the stated audience. Moreover, teacher commentary should include praise and teachers may want to respond to students' processes for writing and their revisions by looking at the preceding drafts as well as the final versions. Finally, the writer makes the point that the extent to which these guidelines may be followed is left to the teachers' discretion, depending on each one's contextual factors.

### **3.12.2 Reformulation**

As research on teacher feedback continues to generate divergent findings, further suggestions are being made. For example, Allwright suggests that instead of spending too much time identifying surface structure errors in students' writing and trying to correct them ignoring other important aspects, such as, organization and content, teachers should "reformulate". Reformulation is defined as "...an attempt by a native writer to understand what a non-native writer is trying to say and then rewrite it in a form more natural to the native writer." (1988:109) By reading and making sense of a text, a reformulator will possibly attend to issues of organisation, cohesion, and content without putting so much focus on superficial textual aspects. However, Allwright notes that using reformulation as a feedback strategy requires a relatively small and fairly homogeneous group. Students are usually provided with some basic content for their writing and they are assigned to small groups to read the basic information and do further brainstorming. Students, then, write up their texts outside class giving priority to organising content and leaving grammar and mechanics for later. When students hand in their drafts, the teacher selects a text of average quality for reformulation. Allwright makes the point that in selecting a text a student's personality should be considered so as to avoid offence. Then both the reformulated and the original versions are typed and copied for the whole class. Students are given the original text first to read for clarity of meaning, then the reformulated text is given to students who work in groups or pairs to examine the two versions noting the similarities and differences and the possible reasons for the changes and their effects on the text. After a fairly lengthy discussion,

students report their ideas to the teacher who confirms or corrects them. This part of the activity is of great importance as it allows the writer to “reflect on his or her writing and consider the implications for future writing.” (ibid.:114) The other students also benefit from the activity as they too can reflect on their writing and follow the same procedure of handling similar problems in their writing. However, this strategy is not without problems. Some writers may be highly defensive and other students may refuse to learn from their peers’ mistakes. On the other hand, some learners see that the comparison of their writing to that of native writer is “unreasonable and unrealistic” (ibid.). Always in an attempt to find the best ways for teacher feedback to effectively cater for student needs, another form of feedback was introduced, namely, the use of teacher-student conferencing.

### **3.12.3 Conferencing**

By allowing teachers and students to be involved in face-to-face interactions, conferencing seems to be an appealing alternative to teacher written feedback. However, this type of feedback is not always feasible as it requires both time and space facilities. This is clearly expressed by Ferris when she says that “not all writing teachers have the time and space to hold regular one-to-one conferences with their students (due to heavy student loads and/or lack of office space).” (2003:121) On the other hand, students may have aural comprehension problems which may limit their effective use of teacher feedback through conferencing; others may not be able to see the teacher’s point in trying to encourage them to take control of and “retain ownership of their writing” (ibid.: 129). These are very realistic problems facing teachers who try to use conferencing and should, therefore, be seriously considered before implementing this type of feedback. Thus, Ferris and Hedgcock (1998) suggest that teachers explain the purpose and nature of conferences to students if these are to be successfully implemented. In addition students should take notes or audio record conferences so that they can easily retrieve teacher comments. If teacher-student conferencing is not always possible, and even when it is there may still be problems, some other alternative should be found besides teacher written feedback. Teacher taped commentary has been suggested as another means of providing interactive teacher feedback on student writing. However, this type of feedback seems to have been the least researched so far and, to the best of my knowledge, it is the least practiced among writing teachers.

### 3.12.4 Taped commentary

Teacher taped commentary as a source of feedback is one of the areas which has received little attention in both research and pedagogy. Hence, the present study attempts to fill this gap. The limited literature claims that this method of feedback has benefits for both teachers and students. Hyland admits resorting to taped commentary whenever he needed to respond to some challenging aspects of his students' writings. He states that "where a response to more sophisticated difficulties is needed, [he has] found that the technique of recorded commentary is useful in encouraging students to respond to feedback." (1990: 282, brackets not in original). This teacher response technique can be used as an alternative to teacher written comments through the recording of remarks on a tape recorder (ibid.).

This technique has been recommended for its advantages as it can be more detailed than written feedback, more natural, and more informative. The few reports about this method from practitioners and also researchers who have analysed taped commentary transcripts have shown its usefulness in commenting on some complex issues in student writing and raising writers' audience awareness (Boswood and Dwyer 1995; Alexander 1999). For example, teachers tend to provide more comments on a student's writing than they usually do in written commentary. This is clearly stated by Hyland when he says:

Clearly, students get far fuller and more useful feedback using this method—essentially, because a recording is more *personal* and *informative* than written comments. I find that I mention things I wouldn't normally take time to write, being more positive about points I might otherwise take for granted, simply because talking is faster than writing. (1990:284, Italics not in original)

The two words I italicised are key words in this feedback method. The former is usually related to building rapport with the student writer since the feedback is directed to the individual by pronouncing his/her name (Judd 1973; Hyland 1990) and responding not only to the linguistic and formal aspects of his/her writing, but also to the ideas and their development in the text. The mention of the writer's name is seen as an important feature of taped commentary. In his study, Judd instructed the teachers to "use the student's first name and try to make comments as natural as if [they] were sitting next to him as [they] correct the paper." (1973:74, brackets not in original) This was done, as Judd puts it, in order "to capitalize on the personal contact afforded by taping." (ibid.: 73-74) Furthermore, the interaction between teacher-as-reader and student writers is usually made easy since the teacher responds to the ideas as they develop in the text

showing areas where communication is made easy and where it is hindered. This process itself is directly reported to the writers giving them an idea about how well they managed to express their ideas and also see for themselves how difficult responding to a piece of writing can be. Therefore, in addition to encouraging them to listen to teacher response, taped comments should make students more aware of their teacher's effort to understand their writing, and should, possibly, lead to some appreciation. Hyland positively reports that when he says:

students obviously take the time to listen to what [he has] to say and appreciate [his] efforts at comprehending their work. [He] is often thanked afterwards. Therefore, simply in terms of increased rapport, the technique is a valuable exercise. (1990:285, brackets not in original)

On the other hand, taped commentary seems to allow teachers to provide more feedback for speaking is usually quicker than writing (Hyland 1990). In line with this idea and in a recent small scale exploratory study which focused on identifying the characteristics of taped-oral comments compared to written ones by the same tutors, Gardner found that "taped-oral feedback is longer, more intricate, and less lexically dense..." (2003: 14). This extensive oral feedback is a deviation from the routine of red ink teacher written comments which are usually viewed as threatening and "demoralizing" (Hyland 1990: 284). Moreover, for ESL/EFL learners, taped-oral feedback can be seen as part of the second language learning process in which the written assignment is supplemented and reinforced with "an authentic listening exercise" (ibid.).

The early attempt by some writing teachers to use tape recorders in the classroom came as a result of their conviction that the ideal method of responding to student writing is through regular and frequent individual conferencing. However, as mentioned above, this is not always possible for all writing teachers in different contexts. Therefore, teachers had to do with the old method of marking papers. This resulted in a general frustration among teachers and even a reluctance to teach writing. This was confirmed through some research findings which demonstrated that much less time was devoted to the teaching of composition in comparison with other subjects such as literature (Judd 1973:8). According to Judd, this frustration among writing teachers continued "as they watched a parade of technological aids come to the assistance of the other departments – the television camera for science, the computer for the administration's scheduling responsibilities, and the film for teaching social studies" (ibid.). Therefore, when the magnetic tape recorder appeared, writing teachers saw in it a means of achieving more interaction with their students which was considered impossible before. Its potential for

voice reproduction suggested its use as a substitute for face-to-face of teacher/student encounter (ibid.:9). As a matter of fact, the use of tape recorders as a means of teacher/student conferencing and evaluating students' writing has been suggested for its advantages.

In advocating the use of tape recorders in the ESL composition class, Patrie stresses the natural aspect of taped teacher response by focusing on the piece of writing as a whole. He states that the writing teacher "...will naturally respond to the writing as a whole unit of discourse and [his/her] response will also become a dialogue between [the teacher] and the writer." (1989: 88) In fact, it is this dialogue that most teachers and learners seek mainly in EFL contexts in which students do not have much chance of practicing their English outside class. Although the recent tendency is to use computer technology for educational and research purposes, namely in the teaching and researching of writing (Spelman Miller 2000), this technology is not yet easily accessible to all teachers in different parts of the world. This makes the use of tape recorders, for instance in the context of the present study, one of the valuable means of instruction. It is clear that teachers have different feedback options available to them, yet the contextual factors, such as resources and facilities, student needs, teachers' pedagogic approaches and convictions play a substantial role in guiding their choice of a particular type of feedback.

Therefore, in responding to students' writing in the present study the elements of content, rhetorical organization, and surface structure have been stressed, together with raising student awareness to audience, through peer and teacher feedback. However, by emphasising these aspects the present study is in no way ignoring the substantial amount of research which is already done, but it is an attempt to contribute to more understanding of the different aspects of this research area whose findings have been inconclusive. For example, making error correction one of the tasks of teacher written rather than peer feedback was mainly a response to students' needs. Second, it is an attempt to examine its effectiveness in my context hoping that some more insight may be gained in this rather incomplete research area (Ferris 2004:50).

### **3.12.5 Teacher feedback and revision**

Whichever feedback method teachers opt for the underlying question, and concern, is whether students make use of teacher feedback in revising their writings and whether this leads to any improvement in text quality. In order to address this issue, different



types of research have been undertaken using student surveys, text analysis, and experimental methods. Some important insights have, for instance, been gained from ESL research which has looked into the effects of teacher feedback in multiple-draft settings. It was noticed that students attend to their teachers' feedback (Cohen & Cavalcanti 1990; Fathman & Whalley 1990; Ferris 1995, 1997, 2001; Hedgcock & Lefkowitz 1994). In the same study mentioned above (see 3.11.3, pp. 67-68) Connor and Asenavage (1994:267) found that 35% of revisions made by the students to their second drafts could be attributed to teacher comments. More importantly, however, 72% to 82% of these revisions were predominantly surface changes. For her part, in a study which compared the effect of peer and teacher feedback on student writing, Paulus (1999) found that teacher comments were approximately as influential as those reported by Connor and Asenavage as 34% of revisions could be attributed to teacher feedback. However, unlike Connor and Asenavage's finding, in Paulus's study 59% of student revisions were meaning changes.

Using a case study approach, Hyland (1998) also showed that despite the substantial variety among students in using teacher feedback, the general tendency was that students attended to teacher feedback in their revisions. Hyland demonstrated that use of teacher written feedback varied following individual differences in students' needs and perceptions of writing. Added to that are the different experiences students bring with them to the classroom environment.

### **3.13 Student feedback preferences**

Given the variety of feedback sources, research has also been concerned with investigating student attitudes and preferences of feedback. Some studies have surveyed student preferences in relation to peer and teacher feedback. The findings are contradictory and inconclusive. For instance, Berger 1990 and Zhang 1995 found that when they are asked to choose between either teacher or peer feedback, students tend to favour teacher feedback. However, Jacobs et al. (1998) found that a significant majority of students (93%) prefer to have peer feedback as one type of feedback on their written production.

### **3.14 A study on teacher and peer feedback**

In a recent study Hyland (2000) examined the effects of feedback on ESL writers. This study will be examined in detail for it has touched on different types of feedback which are relevant to the present study. Hyland's primary concern was teacher written

feedback, but she also examined how this type of feedback interacted with other feedback procedures such as teacher oral feedback in writing conferences and peer feedback. Hyland notes that with developments in writing research and pedagogy, various types of feedback are used which have as their main concern the involvement of student writers in the writing activity. Therefore, peer and conferencing feedback strategies are now becoming widely used in the writing courses. However, some problems might happen while using these feedback procedures in the classroom. For example, students might be denied the freedom to make full use of the peer feedback by a teacher who over-controls the activity. Moreover, the productive use of peer feedback might be culturally hindered in an ESL writing context where students from different cultural backgrounds may have different perceptions of this kind of activity.

Hyland makes use of the case study method. The total number of students in the study is six, but for the detailed analysis and discussion only two cases are fully reported. The data have been collected from an English Proficiency Programme (EPP) course which prepared ESL students for university study in New Zealand. The study focused on two classes: one class preparing students for undergraduate courses and another preparing them for postgraduate studies. The data collection methods consisted of questionnaires, interviews, teacher think-aloud protocols and classroom observations. In addition, students' writings including drafts and revised versions of written assignments, together with teacher and peer written feedback constitute the written data collected over a three-month period writing course, with a two-hour class a week. The classes took the form of writing workshops. The materials consisted of writing tasks and feedback offered during the course; there was no intervention from the researcher's part.

Hyland came up with some interesting findings. First, the use of feedback response sheets was not very useful for the students. Peer written feedback had only a marginal influence on students' writings. Students managed to support and help each other but without providing specific written comments. Some students sought feedback outside the classroom by resorting to some family members and others pursued their individual learning aims and resisted their teacher's control. This created conflict between teachers and students due to their divergent attitudes about the use of peer and teacher written feedback.

On the basis of these findings, the researcher made the point that more communication between teachers and students is needed on a one-to-one basis, with a view to bringing

their opinions and goals closer to each other. By imposing their teacher-directed peer feedback, teachers marred its communicative purpose. Therefore, less rigid control of peer feedback should be considered by writing teachers. However, teachers might want to consider the cultural and educational backgrounds of the students since in some other contexts students might prefer teacher guidance.

Hyland suggests that the effect of written peer feedback was marginal in this study and that students did not take much interest in filling in the peer response sheets. I believe that she could have supplied the reader with a sample of the peer response sheets because it is possible that the students' lack of interest in using them is partly related to their design. According to Hyland's comment, it seems that the response sheets were in the form of 'yes/no' questions. One of the questions she gave as an example is "...does the essay have a clear introduction?" (2000: 41). She says that one of the respondents answered 'yes', ignoring the blank lines for further comments. In fact, if the student was asked a yes/no question, I do not see why he/she should care to elaborate. Yes/no questions are not useful in this context. Hence, the claim that the use of peer response sheets is unhelpful and ineffective, without considering how these sheets were constructed, seems to be unsound and it should not stop teachers from using peer feedback sheets as long as these are designed to meet a specific objective of the writing course.

Moreover, it seems that there was little communication between students and teachers. Although teachers are shown to be trying out some communicative activities in their writing classes, there is no general agreement on what has to be done and why it has to be done. My belief is that if the students had been informed about the purpose of the feedback sheets and if their opinions were initially sought there would have been less damage and both teacher and student aims could have been achieved. The lesson I have learnt from this was of great value to me when I was teaching in the sense that I made sure that some of the new activities, such as, asking students to annotate their drafts, responding to their peers' writing, teacher taped commentary, were explained to the subjects before they were introduced.

Another neglected factor in Hyland's study, by both the teachers who were trying to help by introducing feedback activities and by the researcher who was trying to understand why these activities did not work, is the age factor. Students' age range was between 19 and 30. These are mature learners who seem to have, according to their

reported reactions, a clear idea of what they want to achieve and might have their own ways and means of doing that, but who are also in need of some degree of guidance. Hyland stresses the cultural factor and its effect on student perceptions and use of peer feedback, but I strongly believe that the teachers' lack of consideration of students' age and its effect on their learning goals must have had a substantial role to play in the student/teacher conflicts reported in the study.

Furthermore, it seems that the failure of the formal peer feedback activity was very much related to its misuse by the teachers in Hyland's study. Peer feedback sessions did not seem to give students the freedom to undertake the tasks among themselves as peers because of the teacher's constant interference, which turned the feedback sessions from being student-centred to teacher-controlled. This is clearly stated by Hyland when she says:

...when providing guidelines for the students to follow while they gave feedback, the teacher effectively 'took over' the peer feedback, so that the focus was teacher directed. At this point, the peer response became just another class task and lost its meaning for many of the students as a communicative event. (2000:44)

In fact the teacher's behaviour might be interpreted in two ways. On the one hand, depending on how teacher-oriented the educational context was, the teacher's behaviour could be seen as a natural and normal behaviour of a teacher who sees herself as an information provider in a context that required and expected her to be so. On the other hand, it could be that because of the 'threatening' presence of the researcher as an observer of the classes, the teacher wanted to show that she was doing her job. In fact both interpretations are valid since we do not know much about the context of the study and also the relationship between the researcher and the observed teachers.

In relation to what has been said above, as readers of this article we are not given detail about the teachers' experience and their approaches to the teaching of writing. All that Hyland says about them is that they "had wide experience of teaching and both had an interest in writing and teaching writing." (2000:36) Therefore, we do not know how much these teachers have been using the peer feedback procedure and whether their misuse of it might have been an outcome of a lack of sufficient experience.

However, on the whole, some of the suggestions of this study are very insightful and should be taken into consideration by teachers who plan to use peer and teacher written feedback as one way of encouraging communicative collaboration among students and ensuring interaction between teachers and students in the writing classroom. In order to

guarantee that students will benefit from peer feedback, teachers, as Hyland puts it, "...may also like to consider relinquishing control of the peer response." (2000:51) Furthermore, Hyland's suggestion that some communication between teachers and students be highly recommended not only about "texts and writing problems, but also about approaches to writing and learning feedback approaches" (ibid.:50) should be a point well taken. This communication will certainly ensure better teaching and learning conditions.

Moreover, a methodological inference that can be made from Hyland's study is related to the importance of using case studies to explore some individual problems and some issues that may pass unnoticed in a large scale study. By focusing on a small number of students and teachers, Hyland has managed to unveil some crucial issues related to the teaching and learning of ESL writing. Hence, this study, besides others (Sommers 1980; Selzer 1983; Zamel 1983; Hyland 2003), helped me settle on my choice of the case study approach and gave me more insight into its potential in investigating the effects of feedback on my EFL student writers.

### **3.15 Summary of chapter**

I have started this chapter by shedding some light on the difference between speaking and writing, with special emphasis on the importance of the latter in higher education. Then I moved on to discuss the crucial role of the cognitive and affective variables in the language learning activity, with specific reference to learning to write. The process approach to writing, with its distinctive features, is discussed in relation to previous approaches and recent recommendations in the literature for a broader view of this approach. Revision and feedback, as two pillars of writing in the process approach are also discussed with reference to previous studies and their findings. The chapter ends with a critique of one particularly relevant study.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **4.0 Introduction:**

The aim of this chapter is to discuss the philosophical underpinnings which have influenced the methodological and pedagogical choices of the present research. It is, therefore, divided into four main parts. The first part attempts to shed some light on the choice of a qualitative approach for the present study, together with its positioning within a social constructivist paradigm, as the latter has informed the pedagogical design of the course. The choice of case study option is also briefly discussed and with it the controversial issues of validity and generalizability of case studies. The second part provides a detailed description of the writing program and its pedagogical tools. The third part gives a detailed rationale for the data collection instruments and also explains how some pedagogical tools served as data collection instruments and vice versa. The fourth part explains the data analysis procedures.

The fundamental decisions I had to make in the design of this study related to the research paradigm within which I wish to work. This section therefore explains my thinking as I positioned myself as a researcher with regard to the major distinction between quantitative and qualitative approaches.

#### **4.1 Research paradigms and the quantitative/qualitative controversy**

Research is often described as a careful and systematic investigation whose aim is to broaden our understanding in a particular domain. Nunan defines research as “a systematic process of inquiry consisting of three elements or components: (1) a question, problem, or hypothesis, (2) data, (3) analysis and interpretation of data.” (1992:3) These constitute the basic characteristics of any human endeavour which aims to be considered research. However, how a researcher approaches each of these components is very much influenced by the way he/she views the world and conceives of the extent to which knowledge of truth is achievable. As Nunan puts it:

In developing one's philosophy on research, it is important to determine how the notion of 'truth' relates to research. What is truth? (Even more basically do we accept that there is such a thing as 'truth?') What is evidence? Can we ever 'prove' anything? What evidence would compel us to accept the truth of an assertion or proposition? These are questions which need to be borne in mind constantly as one reads and evaluates research. (1992:10)

While attempting to answer these questions, researchers have taken different directions and given rise to different research paradigms. These could be broadly categorised as follows:

- Positivism, whose elements are lucidly summarized by Reichardt & Cook 1979, is based on the assumption that the world constitutes a stable reality and that human behaviour is rule-governed; cause-effect relations can offer answers to many questions through the use of the methods of natural sciences.
- Post-positivism (which advocates the idea that reality cannot be fully grasped, but only approximated).
- Naturalism/interpretivism (which focuses on the individual and attempts to understand and interpret the world of subjective experience within its natural context (Larsen-Freeman & Long 1991; Nunan 1992)).

This distinction between the epistemological orientations of paradigms is even better expressed in the quantitative/qualitative dichotomy, although the extent to which this dichotomy is realistic is controversial. Quantitative research methods are often associated with positivism while qualitative research methods tend to characterise the naturalistic/interpretive paradigm.

Through the use of quantitative research methods, positivists assume a stable reality that can be objectively studied by identifying causal relationships between different constructs. Through the use of statistical methods objective results can be reached by verifying or falsifying hypotheses. There is little scope for consideration of the details of context or the subjects of the investigation. Therefore, quantitative research has been criticised for amounting to “a quick fix”, involving little or no contact with people or the ‘field’” Silverman (2000:7). Critics agree that the problems of quantitative research stem from its defective basic assumptions (Denzin 1970; Hammersley and Atkinson 1983; Gubrium 1988). For example, they argue that data gathered through experiments and official statistics may not be appropriate to some aspects of social science since they exclude the observation of behaviour in natural situations (Silverman 2000:7).

A further criticism is made by Johnson who questions the general underlying assumption of pure positivistic quantitative research by stating that “an assumption of the conventionalist [positivistic/scientific] paradigm is that if research is properly carried out, it can be free of bias, free of subjectivity, and free of value.” (1992:32, brackets not in original). However, this claim of quantitative research to be unbiased is

controversial and the simple fact of speaking of the philosophical underpinnings of different paradigms is in itself a recognition of bias in research. In the last sentence of the quotation given on p. 82, Nunan (1992:10) informs (or rather warns) us that there are some questions we need to bear in mind when we 'read' or 'evaluate research'. I see this as a way of saying that all research is biased and it is, in fact, this bias or philosophical orientation that has allowed the distinction between quantitative and qualitative research to continue to exist. Nunan explains this by saying that

...the two approaches represent different ways of thinking about and understanding the world around us. Underlying the development of different research traditions and methods is a debate on the nature of knowledge and the status of assertions about the world, and the debate itself is ultimately a philosophical one. (1992: 10)

From this brief overview of the basic assumptions of quantitative research, it becomes clear why many researchers preferred an alternative option. Since quantitative research opens just one window through which the "truth" and social reality could be seen; more windows should be opened to give us further insights. The need for this alternative is well put by Silverman when he says, "...an insistence that any research worth its salt should follow a purely quantitative logic would simply rule out the study of many interpreting phenomena relating to what people actually do in their day-to-day lives..." (2000:7). This alternative 'logic' came with what is known as the naturalistic interpretive paradigm.

The naturalistic interpretive paradigm, and with it qualitative research, constitutes "alternative ways of making sense of social reality" (Hitchcock and Hughes 1992:28). In its purest sense, qualitative research is based on the belief that there is no stable reality, but a constantly dynamic and subjective one. Therefore, qualitative research, being "multimethod in focus" (Denzin and Lincoln 1998:3), aims at providing a broad understanding of the world by taking into account the way individuals interpret and make sense of the world. By employing naturalistic data procedures, qualitative research tries to capture certain elements such as individual subjective experiences and attitudes to various topics, which cannot be grasped by employing only statistical and numerical data. In spite of the difficulty of abstracting the complex underlying doctrines of qualitative social research, qualitative researchers seem to share some general preferences (Hammersley 1992). For example, they share a preference for qualitative data, i.e., words rather than numbers; naturally occurring data collected through observation rather than laboratory experimentation, less rather than more structured



interviews. Meaning is more important than behaviour (they seek to see the world from the point of view of the people studied (Silverman 2000:8, 2005; Bryman 2001:276-280). Qualitative researchers try to get as close as possible to their subjects in their natural environment with a view to understanding the particular and seeing through the eyes of the people being studied. This preoccupation stems from the fact that, unlike the objects of natural science, the objects of the social science are people who are able to give meaning to their environment. It is not surprising then that qualitative methods of investigation are chosen with great care and consideration for their subjects. In elaborating on the way qualitative researchers choose their methods and make use of them to solve a problem, Flick says,

here, the object under study is the determining factor for choosing a method and not the other way round. Objects are not reduced to single variables but are studied in their complexity and entirety in their everyday context. Therefore, the fields of study are not artificial situations in the laboratory but the practices and interactions of the subjects in everyday life. (2002: 5)

In addition to their preference for undertaking investigations in their natural settings, qualitative researchers use their subjects as determinants of their methods. In other words, methods of inquiry are chosen in accordance with, and in order to suit, the participants in the study. What this implies is that there is some degree of flexibility in methods since they allow for consideration of both the participants' and the researcher's perspectives and subjective experiences. This is made clear by Flick when he says:

The subjectivities of the researcher and of those being studied are part of the research process. Researchers' reflections on their actions and observations in the field, their impressions, irritations, feelings and so on, become data in their own right, forming part of the interpretation, and are documented in research diaries or context protocols. (2002: 6)

Therefore, for qualitative researchers every stage of their research process is documented and reported. This, inevitably, influences the style of reporting qualitative research which allows for narrative and anecdote. However, qualitative research has been criticised for this very aspect of 'anecdotalism' which is viewed by its critics as offering less sound explanations that rely on selected examples from data. Such selection may overlook 'contradictory' or 'less clear' items in the data (Silverman 2000:10) and, thereby, jeopardise validity of much qualitative work.

Hence, it is obvious that qualitative research is not without its critics. Further criticism relates to one of the major characteristics of qualitative research, that of 'extended immersion' (Silverman 2000:11). Qualitative researchers take pride in long involvement

in their field of study. However, critics see this immersion as a substantial threat to validity since, it is argued, qualitative researchers do not make any clear attempt to consider contrary cases. The counter-argument is that their subjects are not like those of natural science which can be studied by using purely quantifiable data and controlling variables. The subjects of social science are human beings who are able to attribute meaning to this world through a dialogic interaction both among themselves and with the researcher.

From this brief overview of the two approaches, it seems that the quantitative/qualitative dichotomy is rather arbitrary and open to question. It is obvious that what one approach considers its strengths can equally be seen as the weakness of the other. This is a fact that many moderate researchers are aware of, see as potentially dangerous and try to overcome by avoiding the rigid polarization of the two approaches in the field of social sciences. Silverman considers that, at best, the dichotomy exists for pedagogical purposes; it helps students to get into grips with the jargon of a difficult field. At worst, this dichotomy epitomises a degree of reluctance in researchers to learn from each other (2000:11). While some authorities believe that the issue of which method is best is less important than making objectivity the ultimate aim of all social science (Kirk and Miller 1986:10-11), others find the extreme distinction between quantitative/qualitative rather simplistic, unnecessary, or even absurd (Hammersley 1992; Silverman 2000).

According to Hammersley, the nature of research, its context and the available resources are the main factors that should guide a researcher's choice of one methodology. Mindful of these considerations my study follows a naturalistic/interpretive approach using a case study method to investigate a pedagogical issue emanating from my experience as a writing teacher. The study is based on the teaching of a writing program (see section 4.6, pp. 94-112) which I designed relying both on my previous teaching experience and also the needs of the participants (see section 2.3, pp.17-32). The collection of data took place while the teaching was in progress, i.e. in a naturalistic environment. The teaching of the course was based on interaction between myself as teacher-researcher and the students, and also among students themselves. The aim of this interaction was to create meaning through both verbal and written communication. The general underlying philosophy of the present study is in essence constructivist, which "...assumes a relativist ontology (there are multiple realities), a subjective

epistemology (knower and subject create understandings), and a naturalistic (in the natural world) set of methodological procedures.” (Denzin and Lincoln 1998: 27).

## **4.2 The social constructivist perspective**

More specifically, this investigation could be better seen within a social constructivist approach which is based on the assumption that “the terms by which the world is understood are social artefacts, products of historically situated interchanges among people” (Denzin and Lincoln 1998:240). In the social constructivist approach, construction of knowledge is one of various coordinated activities, and in this study both the participants and the teacher-researcher worked collaboratively in order to create meaning and understanding. As Denzin and Lincoln put it,

...the focus here [in social constructivism] is not on the meaning-making activity of the individual mind but on the collective generation of meaning shaped by conventions of language and other social processes. (1998:240)

The implications of this view of collective generation of meaning for learning means that some key factors should be present and their dynamic interaction is vital for any learning to take place. Williams and Burden lucidly express this idea in their discussion of social interactionism:

Social interactionism emphasises the dynamic nature of the interplay between teachers, learners and tasks, and provides a view of learning as arising from interactions with others...we also recognise the importance of the learning environment or context within which the learning takes place. (1997:43)

Such a view of learning underpins the design of the program for the present study and the choice of feedback activities (see section 4.6, pp.94-112). This active participation and interaction among learners and between learners and teacher was the main purpose of design and the study took place in a naturalistic environment, in a normal classroom environment, in which a set of research instruments were used for data collection (see section 4.7, pp. 113-119). Before I move on to discuss the choice of research instruments used in the present investigation, I will, first, discuss my choice of the case study method. The issues of validity, generalisability, and triangulation will also be tackled in relation to the case study method.

## **4.3 The use of the case study method**

### **4.3.1 A problem of definition**

Providing a clear cut definition of ‘case study’ is a rather intricate task and there seems to be little consensus on what case study research involves and how one proceeds in this type of research (Merriam 1988; Nunan 1992; Richards 2003). This difficulty stems

partly from the confusion caused by the different uses of the term itself. In an attempt to decrease the confusion, some authorities have preferred to determine what case study is not. Adelman, Jenkins, and Kemmis (1976) made the point that case studies should not be considered as merely preparing the ground for experimentation, which some tend to consider to be the only and limited task of case study. The other characteristic of case study is that it is not “a standard methodological package” for two main reasons. First, a case study can make use of a variety of methods depending on the nature of the study, its context, and its aims. Second, and as Stake puts it “as a form of research, case study is defined by interest in individual cases, not by the methods of inquiry used.” (1998:86). In their ever-laborious attempt to determine what case study is, some authorities have gone even further as to consider all research a case study. For example, Gomm et al. state that “...in one sense all research is case study: there is always some unit, or set of units, in relation to which data are collected and/or analysed.” (2000:2).

After much speculation about the term case study, and as case study research is becoming popular in different fields of inquiry, there has evolved some degree of agreement about the basic constituents of a case study. For instance, it is posited that case study research is, or should be concerned with, a particular instance or instances (Adelman et al. 1976; Merriam 1988; Yin 1993, 2003; Stake 2000; Gillham 2000a; Richards 2003). This particular instance could be a second or foreign language learner, a language classroom, a school, etc. In the field of education, as Stake (1995) points out, those cases of interest are people and programs. Furthermore, although he admits that the definition of case study tends to be “ambiguous”, Smith (1968), cited in Nunan (1992) introduced the term “bounded system” to define the case study method.

The crux of the definition is having some conception of the unity or totality of a system with some kind of outlines or boundaries. For instance, take a child with learning disabilities as the bounded system. You have an individual pupil, in a particular circumstance, with a particular problem. What the researcher looks for are the systematic connections among observable behaviours, speculations, causes, and treatments. What the study covers depends partly on what you are trying to do. The unity of the system depends partly on what you want to find out. (p.75)

In order to build a clearer and more insightful definition of the term, some have tried to contrast case study with experimental research. For example Gomm et al. in discussing the naturalistic case state that “...in experiments, the researcher *creates* the case(s) studied, whereas case study researchers construct cases out of naturally occurring social situations.” (2000:3)

### **4.3.2 The case study option**

The choice of the case study method in the present research is based on the belief that it is the only means of unearthing the particularities and complexities of the situation with a view to answering the research questions in much more detail and depth than would be possible through any other approach. In other words, the case study seemed to be the approach to adopt to further the understanding of private and individual behaviour: the giving and receiving of feedback in the writing process. Inherent in the situation were affective and social factors which were best probed and interpreted through the naturalistic (Johnson 1992; Stake 1998) and meticulous perspective of a case study. It would be less effective to study feedback procedures by relying, for instance, on the results of surveys from large numbers of participants, and without encountering the participants face-to-face. As Yin notices, the richness of the context of a case study means that “the study cannot rely on a single data collection method but will likely need to use multiple sources of evidence” (1993:3). This characteristic seems to also suit the study of feedback and revision as complex behaviours which need to be examined from different perspectives.

Furthermore, case studies may be either longitudinal or conducted over a short period of time (Stake 1998:87; Johnson 1992:83). This present study has been undertaken over a reasonably long period of time, six months, compared to some studies done both in the Moroccan context and elsewhere. However I need to mention that, having perceived the advantages of case study, my choice of this approach was made with awareness of what some researchers see as its weaknesses (Nisbet and Watt 1984, cited in Cohen and Manion 2000:184). For instance, validity and generalisability are the most controversial issues in case study research.

### **4.4 Objectivity: the ultimate goal?**

Researchers in both natural or social sciences share a common aspiration to “cumulative collective knowledge that is of interest on its own merits.” Kirk and Miller (1986:13). Therefore, objectivity is a common goal of both sciences. Two ways have been identified that are believed to lead to objectivity, these are “validity” and “reliability”. Validity is another word for truth and it is interpreted as “the extent to which an account accurately represents the social phenomena to which it refers.” (Hammersley 1990:57) Reliability refers “to the degree of consistency with which instances are assigned to the category by different observers or by the same observer on different occasions.” (Hammersley 1992:67) However, although social scientists seem to agree with natural

scientists on the principle of objectivity, the description of reliability and validity by nonqualitative researchers is seldom appropriate to the way qualitative researchers conduct their work. Therefore, as Cohen et al. suggest, “it is important that validity in different research traditions is faithful to those traditions.” (2000:106) Given the qualitative nature of the present study, the foregoing advice will be followed and the discussion of validity and generalizability will be undertaken in relation to qualitative case study approach.

## **4.5 Validity and generalizability in case studies**

### **4.5.1 Validity**

As far as validity is concerned in case study research, there are two different points of view (Nunan 1992). For some, while internal validity is important, external validity is irrelevant. However, some researchers argue that tests of validity should be as strictly applied to the case study as to any other type of research. One of the advocates of the first point of view is Stake (1995); he believes that the difference between case studies and other research studies is that the focus of attention is the case rather than the whole population of cases. Stake’s argument is seen to represent an extremist attitude towards the importance of validity in case study; therefore, a counter-argument has it that validity is just as vital for case study as for any other type of research (Yin 1984).

#### **4.5.1.1 Construct validity:**

As Cohen et al. (2000) define it, ‘a construct’ is an abstract; this separates it from other types of validity. In qualitative research construct validity must demonstrate that the categories the researcher uses are meaningful to the participants themselves (Eisenhart and Howe, 1992:648). That is to say, the categories should reflect the way in which the subjects actually experience and construe the situations in the research. However, construct validity is problematic in case study research due to the case study researchers’ frequent failure to develop sufficiently operational measures and because ‘subjective’ judgements are used to collect the data (Yin 1984; Nunan 1992). One possible solution to this problem seems to be ‘convergent validity’ (Cohen et al. 2000:110), which suggests that different methods for searching the same construct should provide a relatively high inter-correlation.

Although the issue of construct validity is claimed to be a stumbling block in case study research for reasons mentioned above, we should not overemphasize it. My judgement is that in qualitative research the relationship between the researcher and the participants

has as its ultimate aim understanding and making sure that the constructs used are mutually comprehensible. This can be a way of minimising the problem of construct validity. Therefore, the issue of subjectivity could be seen rather positively as it adds more insight into some aspects which cannot otherwise be revealed. If the issues in construct validity are to make sense of some constructs to ensure that understanding is shared between researcher and participants (Cohen et al. 2000:110); and to ensure that both sides share perception as to what truth is, then qualitative case study stands a better chance of demonstrating construct validity. The second test of validity that case study research has to confront is internal validity.

#### **4.5.1.2 Internal validity**

According to Yin (1984:38), this is a problem mainly for causal or explanatory studies in which an investigator attempts to determine why event A led to event B. If the investigator incorrectly concludes that there is a causal relationship between A and B without knowing that some third factor 'C' may have influenced 'B', the research design may be said to have failed to deal with some threat to internal validity. Another problem related to internal validity is the need for case study researchers to resort to inferencing whenever an event cannot be directly observed. Thus, the investigator may need to infer that an event may have resulted from a previous occurrence basing his/her inference on some data collected as part of the case study (ibid.).

In its general definition as a means of seeking "to demonstrate that the explanation of a particular event, issue or set of data which a piece of research provides can actually be sustained by the data" (Cohen et al. 2000:107), internal validity seems to be a major concern for all types of research, not only case study research. According to some, internal validity is even more important than external validity because without internal validity results are meaningless, and that "there is no point in asking whether meaningless information has any general applicability" (Guba and Lincoln 1981:115)

Considering how crucial the issue of internal validity is to qualitative research, attempts have been made to find some way of ensuring 'credibility' in naturalistic inquiry. For example, Guba and Lincoln suggest the following means of addressing credibility in naturalistic research:

- prolonged engagement in the field
- persistent observation
- triangulation (of methods, sources, investigators and theories)
- peer debriefing
- negative case analysis

➤ member checking (respondent validation) (1985: 219-301)

In the present investigation, some of Guba and Lincoln's suggestions for achieving credibility are followed as much as possible given the context and the constraints of the study. For example, this study has been undertaken over a fairly long period of time in order to ensure some degree of engagement in the field. A substantial amount of persistent observation has been possible for me as teacher-researcher through following what students actually do in class and how that corresponds to what they are able to achieve in their writings. In this study, persistent observation is also assumed to continue through analysing students' written work. The third aspect that is of great importance in the present study, and that is believed to contribute to a high degree of credibility, is triangulation of methods. This will be elaborated on in the following section. Furthermore, member checking (respondent validation) may be said to have happened quite frequently in this study. My informants are my students and their responses have been sought on many occasions through the use of both formal and informal procedures, such as questionnaires, interviews, checklists, conversations. These have been used with a view to offering participants opportunities to give further information which can yield more insights into the issues in the teaching and researching activity. This has been possible given the naturalistic nature of the study and the communicative aspect of the course. Another controversial issue in case study research is related to the concept of generalizability.

#### **4.5.2 Generalizability**

Some researchers seek to gain an understanding that overlooks the uniqueness of individual cases with a view to generalising beyond particular entities. As Stake puts it, researchers "search for what is common, pervasive, and lawful" (1988:256). However, a case study may or may not have generalisability as an ultimate aim since the most important thing is the case itself in its particularity and complexity (ibid.). In their attempt to provide solutions to the problem of generalisability in case studies, theorists have suggested a new conceptualisation of the term "generalisability", as well as a new name. In order to do this, theorists based themselves on a personal, experiential reaction of the reader of the case. The re-conceptualization of the term has been referred to as "resonance" (Freeman 1991), "transferability" (Guba & Lincoln 1985), "fittingness" (Guba & Lincoln 1981), and "*vicarious* experience" (Stake 1978). Donmoyer (1987), using Piaget's theory, explains the concept as an ability to understand, accommodate, integrate and differentiate information. All of these interpretations of the concept



depend on the reader's "visceral knowledge", supplied by experience (Donmoyer 1990:189), rather than on statistical results of surveys.

It is to this kind of generalisation, triggered by the readers' experiential knowledge, that the present study aspires. The behaviours and perceptions of the participants in this case study toward the feedback on their written work by peers and teacher cannot be expected to represent the behaviours and perceptions of all students in similar writing programs. However, an interpretive description, I hope, will provide a picture to inspire constructive comparisons with other teachers, and students, in similar contexts and experiences.

I find Woods' declaration of his own aspirations concerning the generalisability of his study of the decision-making, planning and beliefs of eight ESL teachers suitable for the present study:

The notion of validity which underlies this study is not based upon generalisability of results to other settings, but rather on a more dynamic notion of "resonance" to individual readers of the study who process the resulting discussion according to their own interpretive process...and look for their own coherence. (Woods 1996:46)

Mindful of all these issues, I have in the present study tried to minimise the threat of invalidity by using multiple data sources, having triangulation as an aim. For example, in order to ensure some degree of objectivity of the data collection, I have collected two types of data. There are data related to students' perceptions and attitudes and those have been collected using questionnaires, interviews, and diaries, but there are also data related to what students actually did in the form of recorded interaction and written productions.

#### **4.5.3 Triangulation**

Qualitative research is "inherently multimethod in focus" (Flick 1998:229). This multimethod tendency is known as triangulation. It is generally defined as the use of two or more methods of data collection in the investigation of some aspect of human behaviour (Cohen et al. 2000:112). Its aim is to provide an in-depth and rigorous understanding of a given phenomenon. Triangulation in qualitative research is also related to the image of the qualitative researcher as "bricoleur and quilt maker" (Denzin and Lincoln 2000:4). Therefore, the qualitative researcher as "the methodological bricoleur is adept at performing a large number of diverse tasks, ranging from interviewing to self-reflection and introspection" (ibid.:6). The combination of multiple methods is meant to add rigor, breadth, richness, and depth to any kind of inquiry (Flick

1998:231). In using a multiple range of methods, triangulation may draw on either normative or interpretive techniques, or a combination of the two. There are different types of triangulation. Denzin (1970) extended the term triangulation in such a way that it includes other types besides the multi-method type, which he calls 'methodological triangulation'. These are as follows:

- time triangulation
- space triangulation
- combined levels triangulation
- theoretical triangulation
- investigator triangulation
- methodological triangulation

Considering the time span of the present research it can be considered a longitudinal study during which data have been collected from the same group at different points over the whole period of the investigation. Different methods have been used to collect data, in accordance with the case study method which allows and favours the use of different data sources, from the same subjects with a view to achieving a methodological triangulation. The ultimate aim is to ensure that I have enough data that will provide appropriate answers to the research questions and also in order to avoid the problem of "method-boundedness" (Cohen et al. 2000:113).

#### **4.6 Pedagogical design of the writing program**

- *Title of the Course: Writing in English as a Foreign Language*
- *Date of Introduction: November 2002*
- *Course Duration: The course was implemented over a period of six months. Two two-hour sessions per week.*
- *Department Responsible for Teaching: English Language Department (Ben M'Sik University/Casablanca/Morocco)*
- *Students: 1<sup>st</sup> year English majors, need English writing for academic purposes (EAP), some students were repeaters.*
- *Teacher: Ten years experience in English language teaching (ELT) at a Moroccan university (Al Akhawayn University) and a private institution; MA in ELT (from Warwick University, UK)*

##### **4.6.1 The design of the course**

In designing this course I had to draw on both my experience as a writing teacher and on existing theories of teaching writing. In other words, I was aware that I needn't reinvent the wheel but that I could select and develop existing ideas to suit my students' needs and context. This approach is supported by Graves when she says: "Both the

efforts of others to provide models and the teacher's own experience and understanding of that experience are part of how teachers make sense of what they do." (1996:2) Hence, on this premise I set out to design the writing course on which the present study is based.

#### **4.6.2 Why a writing course?**

- a. Moroccan students who opt for English as a major at university will have had almost no instruction in writing in English, or any other languages they speak, i.e. Arabic and French, before they join the university. Therefore, a sound writing programme, which would give them a clear idea about what writing in English as a foreign language involves, becomes a priority even from the first year at university.
- b. My proposal of undertaking the study while teaching at the University was welcomed because there was a substantial need for a new writing programme in the English Language Department.

#### **4.6.3 Course aims**

- a. The course was meant to develop first year students' academic writing skills in ways which would benefit them in their academic studies in the English Language Department. I believe that if students learned how to write good paragraphs, good essays, they would be well prepared to write longer papers.
- b. In this six-month course, students were exposed to both theory and practice with a view to writing clearly organized and simple argumentative paragraphs and essays.

#### **4.6.4 Nature and focus of the course**

Silva (1990) made the point that some elements of what might be considered old fashioned approaches to writing may exist in current theories of writing. This is probably true of the design of the present writing program. For example, some characteristics of the current-traditional rhetoric approach may be found in the conceptual framework of the program. This is partly due to the fact that one of its concerns was to train students to write within a specific pattern of organisation, namely the argumentative pattern. However, although the program aimed at encouraging students to focus their attention on producing paragraphs and essays following a specific rhetorical pattern, the pedagogical approach was also an attempt to make use of the best elements of the process approach with a view to achieving a better product. Students were taken step by step through the various stages of the writing process and

their awareness was raised through activities of writing, rewriting, and working collaboratively to provide feedback on each other's writing.

The nature of the course can also be explained in terms of two important characteristics of the process approach: "awareness" and "intervention". The former means that students are made aware that writing is a process, and that different processes can be used for different types of writing (Susser 1994:34). The latter, "intervention", is based on the fact that writing is a "complex problem-solution process. This viewpoint provides a useful orientation to writing instruction. It could enable teachers to intervene at points in the writing process that could do writers the most good as they are actually engaged in the act of writing." (Flower and Hayes 1981:55) In this way, through constant writing practice, the aim was that student writers would become aware of the process nature of writing, with my intervention taking place at different stages through providing appropriate input and feedback. Some of the features of this course are as follows:

#### **4.6.5 Consciousness-raising activities and strategy instruction**

- a. The course used a process-based approach and taught writing in a straightforward manner. Each session was divided into two parts; the first part consisted of an interactive mini lecture including some writing exemplars whose aim was to help students see how paragraphs and essays were organised using a specific rhetorical component, namely the argumentative pattern of organisation to be studied. Issues of unity, coherence, content and organisation were also discussed and enhanced through subsequent practice exercises in the second part of the class. Since the nature of most academic writing is expository, the course rhetorical components were deliberately limited to exposition.
- b. The course moved on progressively from the teaching of paragraph into essay structure.
- c. In addition to enabling students to use the various strategies of writing, such as, *narrowing down a topic, brainstorming, planning, writing and revising drafts*, the course aimed at developing students' confidence and making them, eventually, more responsible for their writing.
- d. Planning and revision strategies were the main focus of the course. Therefore, three types of feedback are used: student self-monitored feedback using *annotations*; *peer feedback*; teacher written and *taped commentary*. The three types of feedback, in italics,

mark the innovative nature of the course since they were new to the students. Teacher written feedback was the only common type of feedback.

e. The topics of exemplar texts and tasks were of a current and general nature. The topics of the assignments were assigned by the teacher. However, students were also encouraged to choose their own topics for extra practice.

f. Since the students in this study were first year students, there was a need for enhancing their fluency; therefore, language learning diaries were used as fluency-aimed writing both in class and outside class. They were also believed to be an efficient way of getting students used to writing in English.

#### **4.6.6 Other features of the course**

a. The role of grammar in writing accurately is recognized, but because of the time limit, students were encouraged to make use of what they learned in their grammar course in their writings.

b. A chart of transition signals was provided as well (see Appendix 4-1, p. 359).

c. A lesson on punctuation was given and exercises were provided for students to do as homework.

d. A chart of correction symbols for use by teacher is included (see Appendix 4-2, p. 360).

e. A list of topic suggestions for out of class practice was included.

f. A written form of peer feedback was employed as a basis for discussion and in order to facilitate the students' task of active exchange of feedback, they were given paragraph and essay feedback sheets to use in responding to their peer writing.

#### **4.6.7 Argumentative writing**

##### **4.6.7.1 Why argumentative writing?**

When they get to the tertiary level most, if not all, Moroccan university students who opt for English as a major find the task of writing expository and argumentative writing extremely difficult. The reason is that, with the minimal focus on writing in high school, they are not prepared for this type of writing which requires a substantial amount of practice. Without this students at tertiary level find themselves unable to cope with the writing demands of different subjects. It seems that Moroccan students are not alone when it comes to the shortage of practice in argumentative writing. Grabe and Kaplan, more generally, discuss the challenges that students have to confront when they move into more demanding educational contexts in which writing instruction takes a different dimension:

unfortunately, research has revealed that, for the majority of students, emphases on expository and argumentative writing have not been a consistent part of the educational curriculum...It is well known that expository and argumentative forms of writing require much practice in a variety of contexts...A writer can not move to an advanced level of writing without such extensive practice, even if these students do find themselves in a tertiary environment and believe themselves to be ready for tertiary-level work. (1996:304)

In their answer to the question why students cannot write arguments, Freedman and Pringle offer an answer which I see applicable to the subjects of the present study. They explain that from their earliest years children are exposed mainly to the narrative mode through stories which are read to them, or which they themselves choose to read. Therefore, "they do not read arguments, nor are arguments read to them." (1989:76) On the same line, Varghese and Abraham state:

Disappointingly...most academic disciplines still do not teach students this genre, with the result that undergraduates struggle with both the discourse and process of argumentation. Increasingly, therefore, the need for undergraduate writing instruction enabling students to master skills in argumentation is being recognized. (1998:288)

This is very much the case for Moroccan students learning a language be it their L1 (Arabic), L2 (French), or EFL, the focus is usually on narrative writing.

The emphasis on the narrative mode for Moroccan students can also be related to culture. Our cultural heritage is basically oral and relies on narration as a means of transmission from one generation to another. This has influenced people's way of thinking and writing in the sense that argumentation may be viewed as a mode for disagreement, or dispute. So, when students reach a certain level in their academic studies, the struggle with this kind of writing is an area of substantial difficulty. This entails a learning of another skill, or rather another kind of thinking (Kutz et al. 1993:52), which the student has not had the chance to develop. In Freedman and Pringle's words, it involves "the ability to discover/or create a rigorously logical structure which will unify and order the individual points generated." (1989:76) It is certainly this ability to 'order' and 'unify' their ideas that most Moroccan students lack. Awareness of the problem has been the main reason for my choice to focus on argumentative writing in teaching first-year students.

However, the prevalence of narrative writing does not mean that the argumentative mode is absent in Arabic. In fact, argumentative written discourse in Arabic has its own distinguishing characteristics which when transferred to the writing of academic English

might create incoherence. For example, Al-Jabbouri (1984) reports that Dudley-Evans and Swales (1980) compare a translation of an article from an Arabic newspaper to a similar version of the same article written in a journalistic English style; they notice different ways of handling the same content. The Arabic version starts with two topic sentences, but it then “ ‘makes its points very largely by a series of loosely connected anecdotal facts, many of which reiterate earlier points’ while the English is ‘much more one of situation--Evidence--Exemplification’” (1984:99). Other features which Dudley-Evans and Swales detected include the different use of ‘and’, and the length of the sentences. According to Dudley-Evans and Swales, if these features are transferred to the writing of English, they can lead to incoherence (ibid.:99-100).

However, Al-Jabbouri makes the point that in their comparison Dudley-Evans and Swales did not discuss the kind and extent of the use of repetition (1984:100). Therefore, in a paper entitled “The role of repetition in Arabic argumentative discourse”, Al-Jabbouri claims that “the differences between English and Arabic in the use of repetition are largely, although not solely, responsible for the differences in the approach to the development of an argument.” (ibid.:100). After examining three Arabic texts each written by a different Arab writer, Al-Jabbouri makes the point that repetition in Arabic discourse takes place at different levels. He suggests three levels: “the morphological level, the word level, and the ‘chunk’ level” (ibid). Although the aim of this study is not contrastive rhetoric, some of the examples of repetition in Arabic discourse might explain some of the difficulties Arab students face when writing in English. For instance, while repetition at the word level is something which a writer might be encouraged to use in Arabic discourse, this very feature can be considered unnecessary in English as it causes a redundant style, the thing which many writing teachers complain about in their Arab students’ writings.

#### **4.6.7.2 Argumentative paragraph and essay writing**

The aim of the writing course in this study was to prepare students for their academic university studies for which they would have to produce expository and argumentative writing. Students started with writing a paragraph in which they were taught to make their standpoint clear in the topic sentence, i.e. they had to show whether they were for or against a given issue. In developing the topic sentence students were expected to use at least one counter-argument which they presented in a clearly stated supporting point, which was in turn developed through the use of supporting details. Then, students presented at least two supporting points in which they argue “for” a certain idea by

elaborating and providing enough supporting details with a view to convincing the reader. Then, a concluding sentence was written in which the writer made sure once more that his/her standpoint was clearly stated either by summarising the points made in the paragraph, or by paraphrasing the topic sentence.

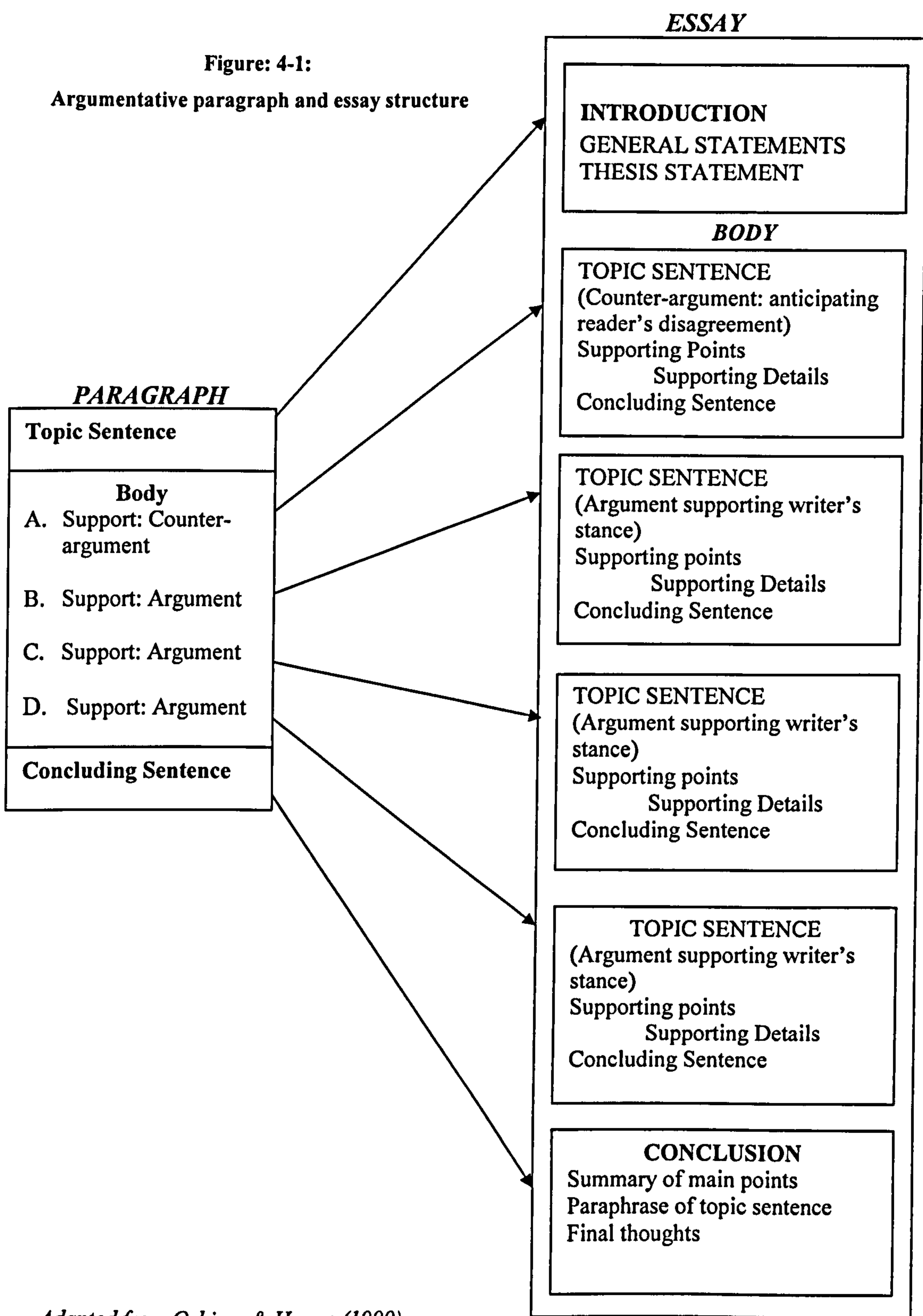
The type of writing students were exposed to in this program can be best explained in terms of what Axelrod and Cooper call “*reasoned argument*” (2002:445) in which student writers learn to support their positions rather than just state them. Writers also learn to respect others’ right to disagree with them as they may themselves disagree with others. Moreover, students are asked to write about controversial issues which have no “right” or “wrong” definite answers. However, although it is not possible to prove that a position on a controversial issue is right or wrong, “...it is possible to convince others to consider a particular position seriously or to accept or reject a position. To be convincing, a position paper must argue for its position by giving readers strong reasons and solid support. It also must anticipate opposing arguments.” (ibid.)

Paragraph writing was meant to provide students with adequate preparation for essay writing. Students were made aware of the fact that if they managed to write a good paragraph, writing an essay would be an easier task. Student attention was drawn to the similarities between paragraph and essay writing. The following diagram, which was adapted from Oshima and Hogue (1999), was distributed to the students in order to show them the relationship between paragraph and essay writing. Note, however, that the focus was on how students were supposed to present their arguments in an argumentative paragraph and essay writing. Students were also occasionally provided with some argumentative text as exemplars, rather than models to imitate for parallel writing, as a means of helping them see how an argumentative piece of writing was organised (see Appendix 4-3, p. 362 for an exemplar text and a writing activity). As is shown in the diagram, the basic constituents of a paragraph and those of an essay are the same:



**Figure: 4-1:**

**Argumentative paragraph and essay structure**



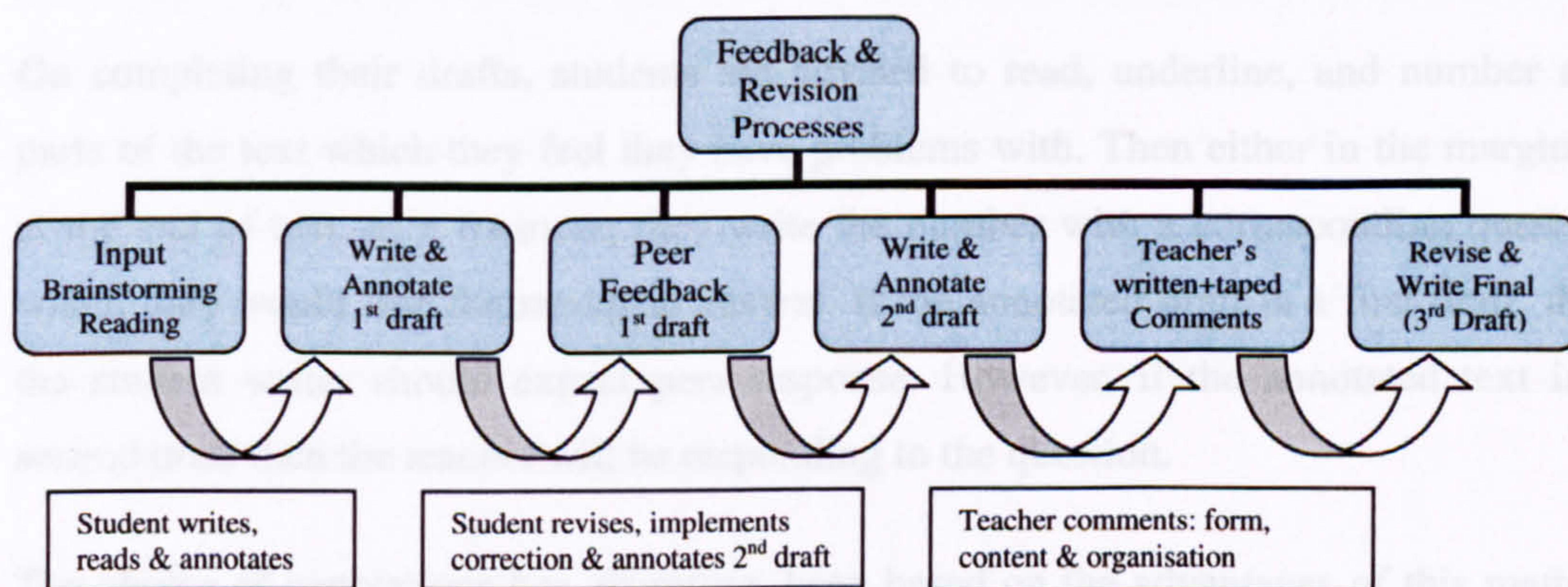
*Adapted from Oshima & Hogue (1999)*

#### 4.6.8 Feedback methods and the sequence of use

In this writing course students were required to produce three drafts for each assignment. The brainstorming was done as a group in class with the teacher. The ideas,

which students suggested, were written on the board and students were also encouraged to find reading materials related to the topic discussed in class before they started writing. They were given exemplar texts to read and their attention was drawn to both organisation and content. When students produced the first draft they were advised to review and annotate it before they brought it to class to discuss in a peer feedback workshop (which is explained in detail below). When the peer feedback sessions were over, each student received both his/her first draft and the feedback sheet, which contained the peer's written comments. The next step was for the student to write a second draft using peer comments as much as possible to revise his/her draft. When the second draft was written students were also supposed to review and annotate it before handing it in to the teacher. The teacher then read the second draft and provided both written feedback and taped commentary (these will be explained in detail below). The second draft was then returned to the student with the teacher's written and taped comments and the student revised the draft relying on teacher feedback, then a final draft was produced. The chart below illustrates the revision and feedback processes which students used in producing their multiple draft writings:

**Figure: 4-2: The revision process using the three types of feedback**



#### 4.6.8.1 Annotations:

In the Moroccan university context, the teacher is seen as a figure of authority. Students expect their teachers to be the source of information. This is the case in all subject areas and it is even more so in the area of teaching English as a foreign language. Being in a non-English speaking environment, students rely heavily on teacher instructions and guidelines. With writing, the problem is more serious as students usually lack appropriate writing skills. In the three years of learning English in high school the focus is mainly on reading and grammar. Students produce a limited amount of writing and a

few written comments on the margin and a mark are usually the expected teacher feedback. Students are not usually encouraged to take the initiative by asking the teacher further questions about their writing. This was made clear in the baseline study (Chapter Two, pp. 13-34) which demonstrated that little importance was given to student queries. Hence, my choice of using self-monitored feedback in this study is an attempt to examine how it will work in the Moroccan university context where there is increasing demand for students to be more active and take more responsibility for their writing.

However, the present study encouraged a rather flexible and general use of annotations. This is due to two main reasons. First, in considering the language proficiency of the participants as first year students and the heavy burden of not only the EFL writing class but also other required EFL skills, it would be unfair to ask them to learn and use the metalanguage of some annotation techniques, as suggested by Beck (1982), (see section 3.10.1, pp.63-64). The second and related reason is that if students were required to label the writing with Beck's very specific suggestions we would run the risk of restricting a full use of annotations. As a matter of fact, the way the participants in this study had been instructed to use annotations was more flexible, and in this I chose to follow the model suggested by Charles (1990), which is explained as follows:

On completing their drafts, students are advised to read, underline, and number any parts of the text which they feel they have problems with. Then either in the margin or at the end of text, as a footnote, they write the number with a corresponding question which they would like the reader to answer. If the annotated draft is a first draft, then the student writer should expect peer response. However, if the annotated text is a second draft then the teacher will be responding to the question.

The choice of annotations has, therefore, been based on the advantages of this method as reported in the literature. Also, I was hoping that some kind of student/student and student/teacher interaction would be encouraged and student writers' awareness about audience would also be raised. Moreover, in order to enhance interaction and audience awareness among students and their peers, peer feedback was introduced as a second type of feedback.

#### **4.6.8.2 Peer feedback**





Peer feedback is provided on the first draft of each assignment. A peer feedback session is organised as a pair activity and student writers exchange their drafts and use peer feedback sheets to examine both content and organisation of their peers' writing. Pair membership was fixed for the duration of the course. This model assumed that pair "cohesiveness" (a term used by Dörnyei and Murphey in relation to groups 2003:62) and effectiveness are more likely to develop if pairs remain constant. Since during the course period the focus has been on paragraph writing first then essay writing, two types of peer feedback sheets have been designed to assist and guide students in responding to their peers' writings. In addition to helping students focus on content of their peers' writings, the design of the feedback sheets is expected to aid students visually to internalise both paragraph and essay physical organisation (see the samples below).

Student training on how to provide peer feedback took place in conjunction with the course. Students were made aware of the distinction between surface structure, content and organisation aspects of a text through classroom exercises and instruction on argumentative paragraph and essay writing. Moreover, the use of peer feedback sheets was meant to provide substantial guidance to students when responding to peer writings.

As students were responding to each other's drafts in pairs, I moved around the room, answering their questions and attending to the overall functioning of pair work as needed. For the first two peer feedback sessions, I asked for students' immediate reflections and responses about the use of peer feedback in order to find out whether they were ready to carry on with this type of activity or not. This was done by asking students questions about how important they found peer feedback and if they thought it was a useful activity. Students' responses were audio-recorded (see Appendix 4-4, p. 364 for a sample transcript).

Figure 4-3: Paragraph Peer Feedback Sheet

Read your peer's paragraph and transfer the sentences from each part of the paragraph into the chart below to see if anything is missing. Then rate the paragraph

<p>Is there any transition? (1<sup>st</sup> &amp; 2<sup>nd</sup> supporting points) <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Write the transition Word or phrase below: .....</p> 	<p>Rate the paragraph by ticking the appropriate box</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Very good <input type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Poor</p> <p>Explain your rating to your peer .....</p>
<p>Is there any transition? (2<sup>nd</sup> &amp; 3<sup>rd</sup> supporting points) <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Write the transition Word or phrase below: .....</p> 	
<p>Is there any transition? (3<sup>rd</sup> &amp; 4<sup>th</sup> supporting points) <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Write the transition Word or phrase below: .....</p> 	
<p>Is there any transition? (4<sup>th</sup> supporting point &amp; concluding sentence) <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Write the transition Word or phrase below: .....</p> 	
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Topic Sentence: ..... .....</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> First Supporting Point: .....</p> <p>◆ Supporting Details: 1. .... 2. .... 3. ....</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Second Supporting Point: .....</p> <p>◆ Supporting Details: 1. .... 2. .... 3. ....</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Third Supporting Point: .....</p> <p>◆ Supporting Details: 1. .... 2. .... 3. ....</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Fourth Supporting Point: .....</p> <p>◆ Supporting Details: 1. .... 2. .... 3. ....</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Concluding Sentence:.....</p>	

**Figure 4-4: Essay Peer Feedback Sheet**

Read your peer's essay and transfer the sentences from each paragraph into the chart below to see if anything is missing. Rate each paragraph by ticking the box:

<p>Is there any transition?                  Yes No                  Write the words, phrases or sentences in the box (Transition)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Introduction</b></p> <p>General statement(s)                  .....                  .....                  Thesis statement.....                  .....                  Transition                  .....</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Very good  <input type="checkbox"/> Good  <input type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory  <input type="checkbox"/> Poor                  Explain your rating to your peer.                  .....                  .....</p>
<p>Is there any transition?                  Yes No                  Write the words, phrases or sentences in the box (Transition)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Paragraph 1</b></p> <p>Topic Sentence                  .....                  Supporting Sentences                  .....                  .....                  Concluding Sentence                  .....</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Very good  <input type="checkbox"/> Good  <input type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory  <input type="checkbox"/> Poor                  Explain your rating to your peer.                  .....                  .....                  .....</p>
<p>Is there any transition?                  Yes No                  Write the words, phrases or sentences in the box (Transition)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Paragraph 2</b></p> <p>Topic Sentence                  .....                  Supporting Sentences                  .....                  .....                  Concluding Sentence                  .....</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Very good  <input type="checkbox"/> Good  <input type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory  <input type="checkbox"/> Poor                  Explain your rating to your peer.                  .....                  .....                  .....</p>
<p>Move on to the next page</p>		

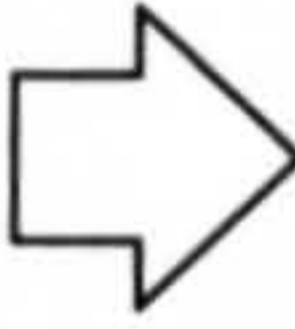
Is there any transition?  
 Yes No  
 Write the words, phrases  
 or sentences in the box  
 (Transition)

Is there any transition?  
 Yes No  
 Write the words, phrases  
 or sentences in the box  
 (Transition)

**Paragraph 3**

Topic Sentence  
 .....  
 Supporting Sentences  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 Concluding Sentence  
 .....  
 .....

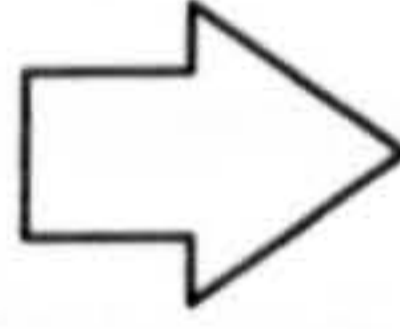
Transition  
 .....



**Paragraph 4**

Topic Sentence  
 .....  
 Supporting Sentences  
 .....  
 .....  
 Concluding Sentence  
 .....  
 .....

Transition  
 .....  
 .....



**Conclusion**

Concluding Sentence:  
 .....  
 Summary of the main points  
 .....  
 Paraphrase of the thesis  
 .....  
 Final Comments  
 .....  
 .....

Very good  
 Good  
 Satisfactory  
 Poor  
 Explain your rating to your peer.  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

Very good  
 Good  
 Satisfactory  
 Poor  
 Explain your rating to your peer.  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

Very good  
 Good  
 Satisfactory  
 Poor  
 Explain your rating to your peer.  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

### **4.6.8.3 Teacher feedback**

In addition to peer feedback, students also receive teacher feedback in two different forms: teacher written feedback and taped commentary.

#### **4.6.8.3.1 Teacher written feedback**

Moroccan university students view the teacher as a source of knowledge; therefore, their expectations are high when it comes to teacher feedback on their writing. This I know from my experience as a writing teacher and from the results of the baseline study. In both their questionnaire and interview responses students made it clear that they needed a great deal of assistance from the writing teacher. As a matter of fact, my choice of teacher written feedback was guided by this awareness of students' needs and my experience. However, in line with my conviction that teacher feedback should not spoon-feed students through constant provision of corrected forms, I opted for a mixture of "minimal marking" through the use of "correcting codes" (Hyland 1990), underlining, occasional provision of correct forms, and both underlining and using correcting symbols, whenever necessary. Mindful of the shortcomings of this method, since there are usually less symbols than there are error types (ibid.:282), I sometimes write short comments on the margins. It is worth mentioning that written feedback focused mainly on the surface structure of student writing. In addition to written feedback, I also chose to use teacher taped commentary in order to deal with complicated issues (Hyland 1990) related to content and organisation which require more elaborate comments.

#### **4.6.8.3.2 Teacher taped commentary**

Given the impossibility of using face-to-face conferencing in the context of the study (see Chapter Two), taped commentary was opted for with a view to achieving some degree of interactivity and individualized rapport between the teacher-as-reader and student writers as far as meaning is concerned rather than a mere focus on grammatical correctness. This idea is clearly stated by McAlpine when she says that "...the teacher's verbalization of his or her thought processes highlights the creation of meaning and the dialogue between writer and reader rather than the grammatical accuracy of the written form." (1989:64) Hence, taped commentary focuses on problems of content and organisation in students' writings, following Hyland's recommendation that taped commentary be used when "...a response of more sophisticated difficulties is needed..." (1990:282) The problematic areas are identified and numbered on the student's text, then, I start the recording of my comments. The recording always starts



with an overall positive comment on the whole piece of writing (Daiker 1989). Then the student is told about the order in which the comments will be given. For example, if I am commenting on a paragraph I inform the writer that I will be looking at the topic sentence first, then move on to the supporting points and the supporting details and finishing with the concluding sentence. While moving gradually from one item to another I inform the student about the problems and issues in the draft. I sometimes also read out the part of the text which I think needs to be revised, accompanied by telling the student what the problem is and, possibly, suggesting some solutions. I also provide a brief comment on the surface structure and remind the student to refer to his/her draft in order to make the necessary amendments. (See Appendix 4-5, p. 366 for a sample transcript of teacher taped commentary) Finally, students receive their second drafts with both teacher written comments and a tape which contains the comments on content and organisation. Students are also encouraged to respond to teacher feedback either in writing using a cover sheet (see Figure 4-5 below) or by recording their comments on the same tape.

#### **4.6.9 Student response to teacher feedback**

##### **4.6.9.1 Paragraph/essay cover sheet**

Together with their second draft students receive a cover sheet which contains teacher's general comment on their writing and some questions and space for them to write their responses to teacher feedback. Also for the purpose of this study, the cover sheet is used as a data collection tool in which students are asked to express their attitude towards the two types of teacher feedback. See the sample below:

### Figure 4-5: Paragraph/Essay Cover Sheet

Composition Course: First Year / 2002-2003

---

*Student Name:*

*General Comment:*

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

(For detailed comments, please listen to the cassette)

---

1. Did you find it more helpful to have spoken comments on the cassette than just written comments?

Yes                      No

2. If your answer is yes,

What in particular did you find helpful about it?

What do you think the advantages are of this method of giving you feedback on your writing?

Please write your comments below or record them on the cassette.

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

3. If you wish to reply to any of my comments or ask me about any of my comments, which might seem unclear to you, please write your own comments on the back of this form or record them on the cassette, after my comments.

**PLEASE DO NOT ERASE MY COMMENTS BY RECORDING OVER THEM!**

**Please return the cassette and a copy of this form with your comments together with your final draft to me as soon as possible.**

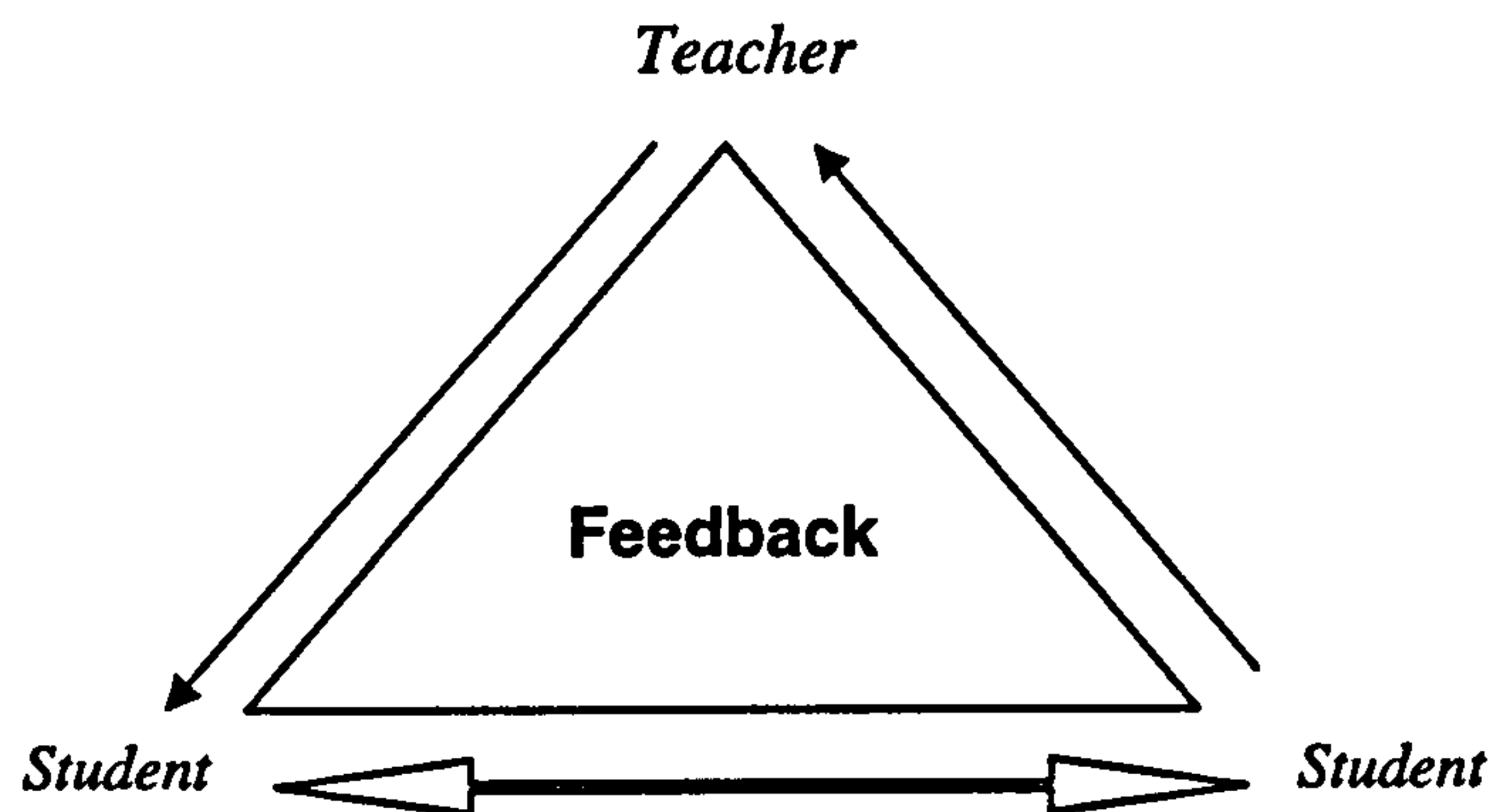
---

*Adapted from Hedge, T. 2005*

#### 4.6.9.2 Using the tape recorder

Students were also given the option of recording their reactions to teacher feedback. They were asked to record their comments right after the teacher's and they were reminded to make sure that they didn't erase teacher taped comments (see the instructions on the cover sheet above).

The following diagram is a representation of the feedback interactions which are encouraged in the writing programme.



#### 4.6.10 Language learning diaries

In addition to writing their assignments students were also asked to keep a language learning diary (see Appendix 4-6, p. 367 for a sample). In order to encourage them to develop their fluency, students were initially asked to keep a personal diary in which they wrote about their daily lives in English. I warned the students that they might want to consider not including anything private because I would be randomly asking some of them to hand in their diaries for me to read and check at some point during the course. Students were also asked to reflect on their learning and write about it whenever they felt like doing so. By the second week of the course, I asked the students to focus mainly on their learning of English and more specifically their learning of academic writing. This idea of keeping a diary by starting on daily topics or events then moving on to focus on their language learning experience, and more precisely their EFL writing experience came to me from Latulippe's (1992) dichotomy: "focused" and "unfocused entries". I distributed a handout which explains the guidelines for keeping a language learning diary. The guidelines were read and discussed with the students in class. Then, in addition to writing their diaries at home, another time slot at the beginning of each

writing lesson was devoted to the writing of the language learning diary. What follows is an example of the handout distributed to students.

**Table 4-1: Guidelines for keeping a language learning diary**

### **Keeping a Language Learning Diary**

**What is a diary?**

A diary is a record of your daily language learning experiences. Independent learning is important in any language learning programme.

In order to do this, you need to reflect on your learning day by day, and to evaluate the experiences you have both in and out of the classroom.

**Why should I keep a diary?**

There are three main reasons for keeping a diary:

1. It encourages you to write in English every day so that you improve your productive skills.
2. It makes you think about your educational/language learning experiences, your feelings about these experiences and your progress.
3. As you will experience many things in these few days after (starting the new writing course), the diary will help you make some sense of them so that you are able to learn from them and to remember what you have learnt.

**What should I write in my diary?**

(At the beginning of each lesson, write for at least 10 to 15 minutes on your thoughts and feelings about what you do in the classroom. Also describe your thoughts and feelings about how you used English inside and/or outside the classroom. You might want to ask yourself some of the following questions?

Did I speak in English today? With whom? Was I successful in conveying my ideas?

Did I learn something new about writing in English? Was it useful? In what way was it useful or not useful?

Did I achieve any new goals today?

Did I have any failures? Why? How do I feel about it? What can I do about the failure?

How do I feel about the writing course? What have I learnt about writing in English

today? Has the writing course helped me change my attitude towards writing in English?

How? Has the writing course changed my attitude towards writing in general? How? Do

I feel I can write more now?

Do I get along with my classmates *when we are working in pairs*? Why?

How do I feel about today's class?

How do I feel about today? Do I feel positive or negative about today?

**Note:** Do not worry about making grammar and spelling mistakes in your diary. Do not edit your grammar. Write continuously in your diary, without stopping to correct mistakes.

Sometimes you may not find suitable English words to express what you mean. You can write some of it in your L1 (Arabic) or L2 (French) to express your opinions and feelings. You can translate these entries by checking with your teacher or friends after you have completed the diary entry for the day.

**Your last entry should reflect whether your expectations of the course have been met.**

**Please state what you feel now that the course has come to an end.**

*Adapted from Lakshmy, A.K., and L. Hoon. 2002.*

## **4.7 Methods of data collection**

### **4.7.1 Participants**

The participants in this study are a group of first year Moroccan university students. They volunteered to take part in the study on the understanding that they would fulfil two main conditions: regular attendance and completion of the four assignments. Initially ten students volunteered, out of a group of twenty students, but three cases had to be overlooked in the analysis, as they did not manage to meet the specified conditions because of drop-out, employment, financial hardships and family problems. Hence, the seven cases are the main informants for the study. Case study students and other students received the same classroom instruction except for teacher taped commentary which was given to the former only. My concern as a teacher about unequal treatment of students was partly resolved by explaining my research to the non-volunteers.

### **4.7.2 Instruments**

In case study research data can be collected from the natural setting without being obtrusive, or through elicitation techniques. Naturalistic observations, interviews, verbal reports, and the collection of written materials are common techniques in the field of second language learning case studies (Johnson 1992:86).

In the present study some of the teaching tools have also served as data gathering instruments, namely peer feedback sheets, cover sheets, and student diaries. The main methods that have been used are questionnaires, interviews, audio recordings of peer feedback sessions, students' writings, students' diaries, teacher-researcher's diary.

#### **4.7.2.1 Questionnaires**

Questionnaires tend to be the most commonly used method of data collection in general educational research (Cohen et al. 2000; Oppenheim 1992) and in language learning research (Nunan 1992; Johnson 1992). They are useful instruments for providing structured data that can be obtained without the presence of the researcher and which yield a relatively straightforward analysis (Wilson and McLean 1994). However, developing, piloting, and refining a questionnaire can be a painstaking and time-consuming task. A researcher using this method should also consider its drawbacks in terms of possible limited flexibility of response and subsequently limited and unsophisticated data (Cohen et al. 2000:245). The researcher has to judge whether using

a questionnaire is appropriate for his/her work, then the next step is to decide what kind of questionnaire it has to be.

My choice was among the three main types (Cohen et al. 2000; Nunan 1992; Denscombe 2003). Questionnaire items can be closed or open ended. Therefore, in a questionnaire which consists of closed items the range of responses is limited by the researcher; whereas, respondents in an open item questionnaire decide what to say and how to say it. The choice of which type to use is also guided by the size of the sample: “the larger the size of the sample, the more structured, closed and numerical the questionnaire may have to be, and the smaller the size of the sample, the less structured, more open and word-based the questionnaire may be” (Cohen et al. 2000:247). Between the two types of questionnaires mentioned above, there is a third type which may consist of a mixture of closed and open questions (Nunan 1992:143).

Both closed and open questions have some shortcomings. In general, closed questions are easy to complete and to code, and the responses are not influenced by how articulate the respondents are (Wilson and McLean 1994:21). However, closed questions do not allow for respondents’ remarks or any addition to the categories. In addition to that, the categories determined by the researcher may not be “exhaustive and there might be bias on them” (Oppenheim 1992:115). On the other hand, open questions offer respondents the chance to write in their own words, explain and elaborate on their answers without any limitations of categories of responses. However, the coding and classification of such responses is difficult (Cohen et al. 2000:248). Generally speaking, whatever type of questions a researcher opts for and whatever wording is chosen, there will always be some problem of some kind. Concerning the ambiguity of the wording for a respondent of a questionnaire Cohen et al. make the point that

though it is impossible to legislate for the respondents’ interpretation of wording, the researcher, of course, has to adopt a commonsense approach to this, recognising the inherent ambiguity but nevertheless still feeling that it is possible to live with this ambiguity. (2000:250).

Two questionnaires, which consist of both closed and open-ended questions, have been administered during the present study:

#### **4.7.2.1.1 Pre-course questionnaire**

The pre-course questionnaire was used for information gathering about the students and the context before the implementation of the writing program (see Appendix 2-2, p. 353)

#### **4.7.2.1.2 Post-course questionnaire**

The second questionnaire, post-course questionnaire, was administered towards the end of the course and it was meant to capture students' opinions about and attitudes to the course, and their EFL writing experience using the different types of feedback procedures they had been exposed to. The post-course questionnaire was also designed using closed and open-ended questions (see Appendix 4-7, p. 368). Students were asked in the open-ended questions to state both the advantages and the disadvantages of each type of feedback. I have to clarify here that although the present study did not rely heavily on questionnaires they proved helpful in making students think retrospectively about their learning to write in EFL. In this way they were not only research tools but also a means of awareness-raising. Moreover, the use of questionnaires helped prepare the ground for the in-depth interviews which yielded a substantial amount of useful data.

#### **4.7.2.2 Interviews**

The use of interviews in research marks a move from seeing human subjects as simply manipulable and data as somehow external to individuals, towards regarding knowledge as generated between humans, often through conversation (Kvale 1996:11). Thus interviews allow both interviewers and interviewees to discuss their interpretations of an issue of mutual interest. Interaction between people becomes then the basis of knowledge production, which results in "the social situatedness of research data." (Cohen et al. 2000:267). Thus interviews are valued in social research not only as a means of collecting data about life, but because they can be part of life itself. Hence, their "human embeddedness is inescapable." (ibid.).

In using interviews I had to make a choice about the degree of structuring. In a formal, structured interview, "the agenda is totally predetermined by the researcher, who works through a list of set questions in a predetermined order" (Nunan 1992:149). In a less formal, semi-structured, interview the interviewer is fully aware of the direction of the interview and what the outcome should be, but does not work from a predetermined list of questions. In the third type, the completely informal, unstructured interview the interview is more directed by the interviewee's responses rather than the agenda of the interviewer. (Nunan 1992:149; Cohen et al. 2000:268-269). However, like any other research tool, each type of interview has its strengths and weaknesses (Patton 1980: 206).

Semi-structured interviews have been conducted as one of the main tools for data collection in this study. For both teacher interviews in the baseline study and pre- and post-course student interviews a list of questions was prepared ahead of time with a view to guiding the interviews. However, a certain degree of flexibility was necessary with both teachers and students in order to give them more freedom to express their ideas about multiple issues that they found interesting and worth elaborating. I followed the guidelines set by Cohen et al. (2000:279) for a semi-structured interview schedule which may include:

- The topic to be discussed.
- The specific possible questions to be put for each topic.
- The issues within each topic to be discussed, together with possible questions for each issue.
- A series of prompts and probes for each topic, issue and question.

While interviewing both teachers and students I was particularly aware of what Nunan refers to as “the asymmetrical relationship between the participants” (1992:150). This ‘asymmetrical relationship’ can be a source of bias since the interviewer and the interviewees do not have the same rights. Even in an unstructured, less formal relationship, the interviewer is in a much more powerful position than the interviewee (ibid.). Indeed this was a preoccupying issue for me in my interviews with both the teachers and the students. For the former case, my worry was that some teachers might see me as an intruder who was trying to find fault with their teaching, and the result could be that some of them would be reticent and provide no useful information. However, I dealt with this issue by informing the teachers about the aim of the research and explaining that my intention was to try some ideas with one group of students and that the findings of the research would be made available to them once the thesis was complete. I also promised that the materials and the method would be made available to them if they wished to try the same program with their own students in the future. The teachers were very helpful and supportive.

With the students I had to be careful not to let my position of power influence their responses. This worry was probably not serious in the pre-course interviews which aimed to get background information about the participants, but it became more prevalent as the course progressed when interviews aimed at getting student perceptions of the course and their attitudes to the different methods of feedback. I had to remind students that they had to be as honest as possible in their responses because my aim was not to hear flattering comments, but to see how they perceived their learning progress and whether the new course was of any help to them. The other strategy I used in order



to encourage students to respond as objectively as possible was by telling them that in my analysis of their progress I would not have just their spoken words to rely on, but also their written work, which would give an objective way of assessing their degree of improvement. So, their straightforward and honest answers would be much appreciated. All this was, in fact, a way of minimising rather than completely avoiding bias in interviews.

#### **4.7.2.2.1 Student group interviews**

Two group interviews were conducted before the actual implementation of the course for the purpose of the baseline study (see Appendix 2-3, p. 358). They were meant to follow up and probe different issues which were raised in the pre-course questionnaire.

#### **4.7.2.2.2 Teacher interviews**

Teacher interviews were used in the baseline study as a means of gaining more insight into the teaching of EFL writing in the context of the study. (See Appendix 2-1, p. 352 for interview questions).

#### **4.7.2.2.3 Student pre-course interviews**

These semi-structured interviews (see Appendix 4-8, p. 371) were conducted individually with the ten students who volunteered to take part in the study. These in-depth interviews were meant to gather as much information as possible about the participants' previous writing experiences in Arabic, French, and with special focus on EFL writing. Student perceptions of their roles as writers and readers were sought, together with what they expected from their readers. The interviewees were also encouraged to reflect on their previous EFL writing classes and report any special activities, such as peer and teacher feedback practices, they were familiar with.

#### **4.7.2.2.4 Post-course interviews**

Individual in-depth interviews were conducted with the participants at the end of the course in order to find out about their perceptions about the course and, more specifically, their attitudes towards the different types of feedback they were given and their effects on student writing performance (see Appendix 4-9, p. 372).

#### **4.7.2.3 Recordings of peer feedback sessions**

These recordings took place during student peer feedback sessions. After reading their peers' work students used the feedback sheets (see Figures 4-3 and 4-4, pp.105-106) to respond to both content and organisation of the written work and rate it. They then took turns to provide spoken comments on each other's work. These conversations were

tape-recorded as a useful means of gaining more insight into what actually happens when peers are giving and receiving feedback. They are important in analysing how students make use of the feedback sheets to comment on each other's writings. In addition, they are helpful in showing whether what actually happens during feedback sessions has any bearing on the way students make use of their peers' comments in revisions. (See Appendix 4-10, p. 373 for a sample transcript of a peer feedback session)

#### 4.7.2.4 Students' writings

Students' drafts of the four written assignments, two paragraphs and two essays, were collected in three stages:

<i>Stage One</i>	<i>Stage Two</i>	<i>Stage Three</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First drafts</li> <li>• Completed peer feedback sheets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Second drafts</li> <li>• Teacher written feedback</li> <li>• Taped commentary (Tapes)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Third drafts</li> <li>• Cover sheets</li> </ul>

Each student produced a total of 12 drafts, which makes a total of 84 drafts from the seven case study students. (See Appendix 4-11, p. 375 for a sample of student essay, a cover sheet and a completed peer feedback sheet)

#### 4.7.2.5 Audio-recorded tapes

The tapes which contained teacher spoken comments were copied and each student was given a copy, as the participants wanted to keep their own copies. These tapes also provide a source of data which is used to examine students' use of taped comments in their revisions. (See Appendix 4-5, p.366 for a sample of taped comments).

#### 4.7.2.6 Student language learning diaries

Diary study has been defined as "a first-person account of a language learning or teaching experience, documented through regular, candid entries in a personal journal and then analyzed for recurring patterns or salient events." (Bailey 1990:215) So, diaries can be kept by teachers or learners to focus on teaching or learning activities, habits, or any other general teaching and learning concerns. Although their focus in identifying some of the benefits of diary studies is related to teacher education, some of the points that Porter et al. (1990), cited in Nunan (1992:120) make may also be applicable to second language learning. I will only mention some of the benefits as I see suitable for my students. These are

- “students can articulate problems they are having with course content and therefore get help.”
- “diaries promote autonomous learning, encouraging students to take responsibility for their own learning.”
- “keeping journals can lead to more productive class discussion.”

From the beginning of the course, participants were asked to start by keeping a personal diary, which later developed into a language learning diary. In order to encourage students to get into the habit of keeping their journal, it was integrated in the course. I would ask them to spend the first five to ten minutes writing their diaries in class. They were then encouraged to continue this activity outside class. By the end of the course, except for one student, all participants managed to get a substantial amount of writing done in their learning diaries.

#### **4.7.2.7 Teacher-researcher’s diary**

As teacher-researcher I kept a diary in which I recorded my observations about the participants, the course, my daily worries and joys of juggling the two roles of teaching and researching. One of the immediate consequences of this double responsibility was that I could not write regularly in my diary, but even so, I would write down that “today I just can’t write anything”. However, generally speaking my diary proved useful at different stages of my teaching-researching tasks.

### **4.8 Analysis procedures**

This part will explain the analysis procedures followed to try to provide answers to the research questions. The first question is related to the extent to which student writers made use of annotations, peer feedback, and teacher feedback.

#### **4.8.1 Students’ use of annotations**

In order to answer this question students’ drafts were examined and the different instances of annotations were recorded for each draft. The location, frequency and type of annotation were noted, i.e. if the annotation was in the margin, as a footnote, within the text; the number of times the writer used annotation, and whether it was related to content, organisation or surface structure. Then I also examined the degree to which annotations have been responded to by the peer, if the annotation is in a first draft, and by the teacher, if the annotation happens in the second draft.

#### **4.8.2 The effect of peer feedback on revision**

To analyse the extent to which students made use of peer feedback in their revisions the following steps were followed:

- First drafts were examined for any written peer feedback points such as direct correction, underlining or circling a word or words, referring to a mistake using symbols, etc.
- The tape-recorded peer feedback sessions were transcribed verbatim.
- Peer feedback sheets were examined for the extent to which students identified the different components of their peers' paragraphs and essays. Their rating of text quality was also noted and compared with what is said during the peer feedback sessions.
- Both written and spoken comments were examined and identified as "usable" (Hyland 1998:261-262) feedback points in terms of whether they could be used to revise a draft. For instance, if a peer offered an evaluative comment such as "this is a satisfactory paragraph", it cannot be used in revision, but if he/she used a symbol SVG to refer to a subject-verb agreement it was a usable feedback point.
- A frequency count of all usable feedback points was conducted.
- Usable peer feedback points were categorised as either surface structure or meaning-related.
- All revisions made by students in their second drafts were identified. The usable feedback points were then cross-checked against the revisions to see the extent to which they were used by writers. The percentage of usable feedback points employed by the students in their revisions was calculated.
- Using Faigley and Witte's (1981) taxonomy of revision, each revision made to the first draft was categorised as either a surface change (formal or meaning-preserving) or meaning change (microstructure or macrostructure change) (See Table 3-2, p. 59)
- The revisions which could not be cross-linked to peer feedback points were considered to be the writer's self-initiated revisions.

Hence, the analysis of how individual cases made use of peer feedback to revise their drafts was also done by linking revisions to other forms of data such as students' conversations while giving and receiving feedback, interviews and student diaries.

#### **4.8.3 The effect of teacher feedback on revision**

A similar procedure as above was followed in analysing students' use of teacher feedback. The fact of focusing teacher written feedback on text surface structure and

taped commentary on content and organisation facilitated the task of identifying the feedback points.

Since the main feedback procedure I followed in commenting on surface structure was indicating the errors through the use of symbols, underlining, and circling, all teacher-indicated errors were identified and counted.

- Taped commentary was transcribed verbatim and usable feedback points were identified and counted.
- Second and third drafts were compared to see the extent to which students utilised usable feedback points in their revisions. The percentage of usable teacher feedback points employed by the students in their revisions was calculated.
- Detailed categorisation of students' revisions was also obtained through the use of Faigley and Witte's (1981) taxonomy.
- Transcripts of student recorded and written responses to my feedback were also sometimes referred to in the analysis of individual cases as a means of explaining students' behaviours and attitudes to my comments.
- Revisions which were not triggered by my written or taped comments were considered to be students' individual endeavours to revise their work, i.e. self-revisions.

#### **4.8.4 Students' attitudes to the types of feedback and the writing course**

The sources of data available for answering this question are as follows:

- Post-course questionnaire
- Post-course interviews
- The post-course feedback evaluation sheet (see Appendix 4-12, p. 384)

##### **4.8.4.1 The analysis of post-course questionnaire**

Students' answers to the closed questions were used in the analysis of individual cases, namely in the last part of the analysis of each case which comments on development (see the analysis of individual cases in Chapter Five). Concerning the open-ended questions, these were identified and linked to the categories from the interviews. Since the interviews took up the same issues as the open-ended questions, in much more depth, the links were already established between questionnaire and interview data.

##### **4.8.4.2 The analysis of post-course interviews**

I transcribed the interviews in their entirety and read them many times. Despite the fact that the main points were already clear from the questions, I read through all the interviews with a view to finding common patterns in students' responses. For instance, one of the main questions was related to the usefulness of each type of feedback. So, I used three different colours to highlight students' responses to each type of feedback. Once that was done, I looked for all instances of responses which were related to "advantages" and "disadvantages" of each method. After this broad categorisation, I decided to divide each broad category into subcategories. For example, for the advantages I noticed that students' responses touch on different types of benefits of peer feedback. Some are linked to the importance of peer feedback in developing students' linguistic abilities, for instance, when a student says that his/her spoken English improves as a result of speaking with his/her peer during peer feedback sessions. Other responses were found to relate to the social/affective benefit of peer feedback as students believe that peer feedback activities enhance their inter-personal relationships. I followed the same procedure in identifying the broad and subcategories for students' perceptions of teacher feedback and their attitudes to the course.

The post-course feedback evaluation sheet was used in conjunction with the interview data since students' responses to feedback types were the same.

#### **4.8.5 Analysing text quality**

##### **4.8.5.1 The development of a rating scale for the study**

For the purpose of the present study, which is not concerned with the final pass or fail mark of students' writings, the 'multiple trait' scoring, as one of the holistic methods for evaluating writing, (Hamp-Lyons 1991) was chosen. According to Hamp-Lyons, "Multiple trait scoring implies scoring any single essay on more than one facet or trait exhibited by the text." (1991: 247).

Therefore, in order to evaluate the improvement in students' drafts, it was necessary to develop a rating scale which would be used by the three graders. In building the present rating scale I was aware of the fact that in order for it to be an adequate means of measuring students' writing progress over the writing course period, the rating scale had to be composed of the criteria which had been emphasized during the instructional writing course. This is a point which is advocated by White when he says: "if a class, or an entire program, stresses certain matters in relation to writing, a responsible measurement device also will emphasize those matters." (1985: 121)

Furthermore, in developing the present rating scale I have benefited, and also borrowed some descriptions of the writing criteria outlined in some existing rating scales (Jacobs, Zingraf, Wormuth, Hartfiel, & Hughey 1981 (see Appendix 4-13, p. 385); UCLES 1990). However, the present rating scale has distinctive features which, as I said before, are related to both the requirements of the instructional course and also the context of the study.

As an example of the course requirements, the present rating scale has to contain some elements of argumentative writing which students were asked to include in developing both their paragraphs and essays. For instance, the student writers were supposed to produce a counter-argument whether they were writing paragraph or essay assignments (during the course students had to write two argumentative paragraphs and two argumentative essays.) Besides, students were encouraged to follow a certain pattern of organization in which they were expected to start their discussion by tackling the counter-argument first, followed by their own arguments in order to convince the reader.

However, in order to build the different categories of the rating scale and the various descriptors, a sample of students' writings had to be examined by the researcher herself and another scorer with a view to deciding what aspects of the students' writings should be considered. A list of categories was made which initially consisted of four separate items: 'content', 'organization', 'accuracy', 'vocabulary and style'. Since students' assignments were divided into two sets: two paragraphs and two essays, I felt the need to come up with two separate rating scales, one to measure improvement in paragraph writing and the other to measure students' improvement in essay writing. Therefore, I started with developing the paragraph rating scale first which consisted of the four categories and the scale is a 0 to 5-point categorical scale. With 0 = very poor, 1 = poor, 2 = average, 3 = good, and 4 to 5 = very good/excellent. Therefore, the total mark of an assignment is to be calculated by adding up the four scores of each category and the total is out of 20 points.

Marking an essay out of 20 is very common in the Moroccan university composition classes, although the teachers may not choose 'the multiple trait scoring' procedure, but they are used to marking students' writings, and other subjects, out of 20. So, in designing the rating scale I thought it might be easy for colleagues who might be interested in using this rating scale to know that they can mark out of 20.

#### **4.8.5.2 Piloting of the rating scale**

However, when this initial version of the rating scale was given to two colleagues to pilot on sample drafts of students' writing from this study some substantial changes were suggested and these had to be implemented as they were pertinent to the rating scale. Hence, another version of the rating scale was produced.

One of the suggestions made by one of the colleagues was related to the last column of the rating scale which combined the points 4 and 5 = very good/excellent. The colleague suggested that the rating scale would be much more flexible and easy to use if 'very good' and 'excellent' were put in separate columns with 'very good' corresponding to point 4 and 'excellent' corresponding to 5. As a result of this amendment, the rating scale consisted of six columns. Another change made to the initial rating scale had to do with the 'very poor' column which I myself judged to be of no use as the levels of the subjects vary between low-intermediate and intermediate (according to the students' self-ranking and their results in the baccalaureate exam). The column 'very poor' was, therefore, deleted and the rating scale consisted of five columns instead of six.

The third amendment was suggested by the third grader who, compared to the researcher and the second grader, had much more experience in the teaching of writing and pedagogy. Her two remarks after the first pilot of the rating scale were first that the 'vocabulary and style' seemed "a weird combination", since style is also affected by other factors, and suggested that a category be created in which 'appropriate style' would be considered as a separate item. The second point she made was that there needed to be a band between the point 2 and 3 in the rating scale because as she put it "there's a jump between 'generally inadequate' to 'adequate'." (From written comments produced by the third scorer after the pilot of the rating scale.) I explained that one way I had resolved the problem was by asking scorers to give half points in order for the assessment band scale to yield fair scores. In fact the decision of giving half a point was made even before the third scorer's remark, but when she raised the point I realized that this piece of information should be added as a footnote to accompany the rating scale instead of just mentioning it orally to the scorers before they start assessing students' writings. As a result of creating a new category called 'appropriate style', students' papers were then marked out of 25 points instead of 20.

As mentioned above, during the course students were required to produce four pieces of writing: two-multiple-draft paragraphs and two-multiple-draft essays. Therefore, in



order to distinguish between the two types of writing assignments and to make the markers' task easier, I decided to have two rating scales: a paragraph-rating scale and an essay-rating scale. See the examples:

Table 4-2: Paragraph Rating Scale

	Poor	Average	Good	Very good	Excellent
	1	2	3	4	5
<b>IDEAS AND ARGUMENTS</b>					
Relevance of arguments Counter-argument(s): anticipating the reader's disagreement Enough detail	Inadequate handling of the topic; irrelevant ideas; no clear arguments; no counter-argument; almost no useful detail; Or not enough to evaluate.	Handling of topic generally adequate; some irrelevant ideas; reasonable amount of argument, but no counter-argument(s) provided; little variety of ideas; lacking detail.	Good handling of the topic; most ideas are relevant; reasonable amount of argument; counter-argument(s) presented and reasonably developed; reasonably accurate detail.	Very good handling of the topic; ideas are relevant to topic; substantive arguments; counter-argument(s) very well developed; accurate and useful detail.	Excellent handling of the topic; all ideas are relevant to topic; substantive arguments; counter-argument(s) are very well-developed; highly accurate and useful detail.
<b>ORGANIZATION</b>					
Paragraph structure: Topic sentence: (shows writer's position/stance) Supporting points: (presenting both counter-argument(s) and supporting arguments according to the writer's stance) Concluding sentence Coherence & Cohesion	Very weak paragraph structure; no sense of logical sequence; Transition not used; Or not enough to evaluate.	Somewhat loose paragraph structure, but main idea stands out; limited support; logical but incomplete sequencing; transition is generally present, but may not always be appropriate.	Adequate paragraph structure; logical sequencing of arguments and counter-argument(s), but may not be in the best order to suit the writer's stance; good use of transition, but some problems may occur.	Very good paragraph structure; very good logical sequencing of both arguments and counter-argument(s) to suit the writer's stance; problems with transition almost absent.	Excellent paragraph structure; excellent logical sequencing of arguments and counter-argument(s) which accurately suits the writer's stance; excellent use of transition.
<b>ACCURACY</b>					
Language (grammar & sentence structure) Mechanics (capitalization, spelling, punctuation)	Inability to produce a variety of sentence structures; frequent errors of negation, agreement, tense, number, word order/function, articles, pronouns, prepositions and/or fragments, run-ons, deletions; meaning confused or obscured. Dominated by spelling errors, punctuation, capitalization, handwriting illegible. OR not enough to evaluate.	Insufficient, but acceptable, range of structures: predominant use of simple structures with some errors; errors of agreement, tense, number, word order/function, articles, pronouns, prepositions. A few errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization; sometimes meaning is not straightforward, but not obscured.	Effective but simple structures; some problems in complex structures; few errors of agreement, tense, number, word order/function, articles, pronouns, prepositions. Limited errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalisation; meaning not obscured.	Effective complex and simple structures; very minor errors of agreement, tense, number, word order/function, articles, pronouns, prepositions. Demonstrates mastery of mechanics conventions: errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization almost non-existent.	Highly effective complex and simple structures; no errors of agreement, tense, number, word order/function, articles, pronouns, prepositions. Demonstrates mastery of mechanics conventions, no errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization.
<b>APPROPRIATE STYLE</b>					
Adapting style and language use to task	Inability to adapt style and use of language to the task.	Use of language and style broadly appropriate to the task but no subtlety is expected.	Use of language and style in some respects appropriately adapted to the task, with some degree of subtlety.	Use of language is in all respects appropriate to the task; a clear evidence of the ability to adapt style to the task with a fairly high degree of subtlety.	Use of language is in all respects appropriate to the task; a clear evidence of the ability to adapt style to the task with a very high degree of subtlety.
<b>VOCABULARY</b>					
Vocabulary range Word choice	Essentially translation from L1 or L2; little knowledge of English vocabulary, idioms, word form, informal words. OR not enough to evaluate.	Limited range, but generally acceptable; a few errors of word/idiom form; occasional informal word choice, usage; meaning not obscured.	Adequate range; some errors of word/idiom form, choice, usage; meaning not obscured.	Effective range; very few errors of word/idiom form, choice, usage; very good mastery of word form.	Sophisticated range; excellent word/idiom choice and usage; highly sophisticated mastery of word form.

<sup>1</sup> The students were advised to organize their arguments in such a way that the counter-argument is placed before the arguments. Please note that for this assessment band scale to yield more effective and fair scores, you can give half a point (1/2), i.e. 1.5, 2.5, etc.

Table 4-3: Essay Rating Scale

	Poor	Average	Good	Very good	Excellent
	1	2	3	4	5
<b>IDEAS AND ARGUMENTS</b>					
Relevance of arguments Counter-argument(s): anticipating the reader's disagreement Amount of detail (facts, concrete examples, showing students' general knowledge about the topic and ability to use it in supporting his/her stance)	Inadequate handling of the topic; irrelevant ideas; no clear arguments; no counter-argument; almost no useful detail. Or not enough to evaluate.	Handling of topic generally adequate; some irrelevant ideas; reasonable amount of argument, but no counter-argument(s) provided; little variety of ideas; lacking detail.	Good handling of the topic; most ideas are relevant to topic; reasonable amount of argument; counter-argument(s) presented and reasonably developed; reasonably accurate detail.	Very good handling of the topic; ideas are relevant; substantive arguments; counter-argument(s) well-developed; accurate and useful detail.	Excellent handling of the topic; all ideas are relevant to topic; substantive arguments; counter-argument(s) very well-developed; highly accurate and useful detail.
<b>ORGANIZATION</b>					
Essay structure: <i>Introduction</i> : general statement(s); clearly stated thesis; writer's position/stance made clear. <i>Body</i> : each paragraph develops one main idea. At least one paragraph presenting a counter-argument. The organization of the body according to the writer's stance. <i>Conclusion</i> : a summary or paraphrase of the thesis, or raising a new related issue. Transition: clear signposting between paragraphs.	Very weak essay structure; no sense of logical sequence; Transition not used; Or not enough to evaluate.	Somewhat loose essay structure, but main idea(s) stand(s) out; limited support; logical but incomplete sequencing; transition is generally present, but may not always be appropriate.	Adequate essay structure; logical sequencing of arguments and counter-argument(s), but may not be in the best order to suit the writer's stance; good use of transition, but some problems may occur.	Very good essay structure; very good logical sequencing of both arguments and counter-argument(s) to suit the writer's stance; problems with transition almost absent.	Excellent essay structure; excellent logical sequencing of arguments and counter-argument(s) which accurately suits the writer's stance; excellent use of transition.
<b>ACCURACY</b>					
Language (grammar & sentence structure) Mechanics (capitalization, spelling, punctuation, handwriting, paragraphing)	Inability to produce a variety of sentence structures; frequent errors of negation, agreement, tense, number, word order/function, articles, pronouns, prepositions and/or fragments, run-ons, deletions; meaning confused or obscured. Dominated by spelling errors, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing. OR not enough to evaluate.	Insufficient, but acceptable range of structures: predominant use of simple structures, with some errors; some errors of agreement, tense, number, word order/function, articles, pronouns, prepositions. A few errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing; sometimes meaning is not straightforward, but not obscured.	Effective but simple structures; some problems in complex tense, number, word order/function, articles, pronouns, prepositions. Limited errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing; meaning not obscured at any point.	Effective complex and simple structures; few errors of agreement, tense, number, word order/function, articles, pronouns, prepositions. Demonstrates mastery of mechanics conventions, very few/to almost absent errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing.	Highly effective complex and simple structures; no errors of agreement, tense, number, word order/function, articles, pronouns, prepositions. Demonstrates mastery of mechanics conventions, no errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing.
<b>APPROPRIATE STYLE</b>					
Adapting style and language use to task	Inability to adapt style and use of language to the task.	Use of language and style broadly appropriate to the task but no subtlety is expected.	Use of language and style in some respects appropriately adapted to the task, with some degree of subtlety.	Use of language is in all respects appropriate to the task; a clear evidence of the ability to adapt style to the task with a fairly high degree of subtlety.	Use of language is in all respects appropriate to the task; a clear evidence of the ability to adapt style to the task with a very high degree of subtlety.
<b>VOCABULARY</b>					
Vocabulary range Word choice	Essentially translation from L1 or L2; little knowledge of English vocabulary, idioms, word form, informal words. OR not enough to evaluate.	Limited range, but generally acceptable; a few errors of word/idiom form; occasional informal word choice, usage; meaning not obscured.	Adequate range; some errors of word/idiom form, choice, usage; meaning not obscured.	Effective range; very few errors of word/idiom choice and usage; mastery of word form and appropriate register.	Sophisticated range; excellent word/idiom choice and usage; highly sophisticated mastery of word form and register.

The students were advised to organize their arguments in such a way that the counter-argument is placed before the arguments. Please note that for this assessment band scale to yield more effective and fair scores, you can give half a point (½), i.e. 1.5, 2.5, etc.

The final versions of the paragraph and essay rating scales were then given to the two independent raters, another native speaker who is a lecturer in the department, not the same person used for the piloting, and the other is the Ph.D. student who took part in the grading of the diagnostic writing and the piloting of the two rating scales, to assess a randomly selected paragraph and an essay of one of the participants. The two raters' grades were compared by examining their marks for each category of the rating scale and the agreement was significantly high.

#### **4.8.5.3 Using the rating scales to measure text quality**

The two rating scales were used to evaluate the writing quality of the participants' writings over the course period. For this purpose, two independent raters, a native speaker and the same non-native speaker Ph.D. student, were given photocopies of all the first two written assignments and copies of the paragraph rating scale. I also participated in the marking. After the marking of the first set, i.e. students' writings on the first paragraph assignment the two raters and I had a standardisation session in which we discussed and resolved some discrepancies. Some of the issues were found to be related to some of the markers' tendencies to mark higher or lower based on their expectations of improvement after the first draft. For example, the Ph.D. student seemed to be convinced that there had been a high improvement in some students' writings after they received peer feedback while the native speaker saw no improvement. However, the agreement among the raters was reached most of the time. The same procedure was followed for the rest of the students' assignments. The scores were then checked for the inter-rater reliability and the Pearson correlation coefficient obtained was .9.

Hence each draft of the four assignments received three grades whose means were calculated using Excel. The mean scores of each draft constituted the final scores (See Appendix 4-14, p. 386 for a sample of a student's scores). For each case the difference between the mean scores of the first and the second drafts was considered to be the amount of improvement after revision based on peer feedback and self-initiated revision in some cases. Similarly, the difference between the mean scores of the second and third drafts was considered to be the amount of improvement after revision using teacher written feedback and taped commentary. In addition, a paired t test was conducted using SPSS in order to examine the significance of improvement from first to second drafts, from second to third drafts and from first to third drafts of all case study students. This was done with a view to gaining more insight into the amount of improvement after revisions using peer and teacher feedback. By comparing first and third drafts the

purpose also was to examine the degree of improvement in students' writings over the course period.

#### **4.9 Summary of chapter**

This chapter started by identifying the philosophical and paradigmatic underpinnings of the study which have also informed the design and teaching of the programme. It then moved to explain the different data collection tools and the analysis procedures followed in this investigation.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **ANALYSIS OF INDIVIDUAL CASES**

#### **5.0 Introduction**

Two strategic ways that researchers reach new meanings about cases are through direct interpretation of the individual instance and through aggregation of instances until something can be said about them as a class. Case study relies on both of these methods (Stake 1995: 74)

With a view to shedding some light on the issues raised in this study and reaching “new meanings”, Stake’s idea has been followed in analysing the cases. In fact, this method of analysis has also imposed itself on the presentation of the data in such a way that individual cases are presented in full before something is said about them as a whole. What follows is an explanation of some criteria which have been considered in the choice of which case to present and how each case is presented.

#### **5.1 Permanent pairing as one of the main criteria for case selection**

My choice of the case study approach for the present study is based on my conviction that the case study is in step with the naturalistic aspect of the present investigation which has as one of its aims to follow students’ progress over a reasonably long period of time of exposure to a writing course (see section 4.3.2, p.89 for the choice of the case study approach). This idea is supported by DePoy and Gitlin when they identify some of the circumstances in which a case study is useful. They put it this way: “a case study approach is useful...when it is desirable to determine intervention outcomes or change in behavior over time as a consequence of one or multiple interventions.” (1998:142)

The outcome of the writing course here is expected to have some bearing, of some kind, on the participants’ response to the programme and the feedback types they were exposed to, their attitudes to feedback, and their behaviours/gains as feedback givers and receivers. The following presentation of the individual cases is meant to provide a clear and a comprehensive picture of each participant and also a clear idea about how peers function as feedback providers and receivers.

In addition to the initial criteria for participant selection (see section 4.7.1, p. 113), permanent pairing was one of the main factors considered in the analysis. Hence, out of the seven cases I have chosen to present only six in full detail. One case, Soumia’s, will

not be presented here since her peer, Salwa, had to drop out of the course, which necessitated finding another peer for Soumia. However, the data from her case, analysis of drafts, responses to interviews and questionnaires, etc. are made use of in the study.

## 5.2 Diagnostic writing

Before the beginning of the course, all students produced a piece of writing. They were given one hour to write on one of the following topics:

**Topic 1:** It is your first day in the English writing class, write a short essay in which you inform your writing teacher about how much you write in English, for what purpose (reason), and what kind of problems and difficulties you have in writing in English. Try to explain how you deal with these problems by giving some examples of solutions you think are useful in facing the writing problems you have.

**Topic 2:** In a short essay try to tell your writing teacher about the reasons why you have chosen to study English at the university. What are the advantages and the disadvantages of choosing English as a major at the university in Morocco?

The topics above had a double function: they were meant to get more information about the students' level of writing proficiency and also some more insight into issues related to their learning of EFL writing in general.

Students' papers (see Appendix 5-1, p. 387 for a sample diagnostic writing) were assessed by an external rater and the teacher researcher herself using Jacobs et al. (1981) ESL Composition Profile.

In order to examine the degree of agreement between the two graders (M and A), a correlation test was conducted using the Pearson Correlation test which showed that there was a high degree of agreement between the two raters. The correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

### Correlations

		M	A
M	Pearson Correlation	1	.970*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	10	10
A	Pearson Correlation	.970*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	10	10

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level








### 5.3 The presentation of case studies

Over the course period students produced four three-draft pieces of writing (see Appendix 5-2, p. 388 for a list of topics). Since on each draft a specific type of feedback was used, the following analysis will attempt to show how each student made use of each type of feedback and what effect(s) it had on her/his writing performance by examining each piece of writing separately. Students' attitudes towards each type of feedback will be referred to whenever necessary and cross-checked against the use they made of it in their revisions. Hence, the first section will focus on the use of annotation; the second section will give a detailed account of how peer feedback is used and its impact on text quality, if any. The third section will focus on students' use of teacher written feedback and taped commentary in their revisions and the effect on text quality. Wherever necessary, other sources of data are referred to with a view to explaining or elaborating on the way students make use of the different types of feedback. Hence, the overall presentation of each case study will consist of the following parts:

1. **Preliminary Perspectives:** this part sets the scene by providing background information about each case study student and other useful information related to students' previous experience in learning to write in English and in other languages, their perceptions of the writing task and what it involves, their worries and concerns about writing, etc.
2. **Student's Response to Feedback:** this part, which is explained above, examines students' drafts with respect to each type of feedback and its impact on text quality.
3. **Student's Development:** this third part looks into the students' development over the course period.

It is worth mentioning that the names used in this study are students' first names as each case study student's permission and agreement were obtained.

A series of icons and abbreviations which have been used in the text are explained in the chart below:

List of icons and abbreviations	
	Peer written feedback
	Peer conferencing
	Teacher written feedback
	Teacher taped commentary
	Student written response to teacher taped commentary.
	Student recorded response to teacher taped commentary
	Student language learning diaries
	Pre.C.I: Pre-course Interview
	Pre.C.Q: Pre-course Questionnaire
	Post.C.I: Post-course Interview



# Noureddine's Case

## Preliminary Perspectives

### Background information

- Noureddine passed his Baccalaureate exam in 2001. He was 22 years old at the time of data collection and he was repeating the first year.
- His score in the diagnostic writing is between 48 and 50, according to Jacobs et al. (1981) ESL composition profile, placing him, therefore, at a lower level than the rest of the participants.
- Noureddine belongs to the low-intermediate level of English language proficiency according to the Baccalaureate English language test and his self-rating.
- He is the only male participant after Youness was eliminated due to his irregular attendance and incomplete number of assignments.
- Noureddine and Saida worked as a pair over the course period and the analysis of Saida's case has shown that there were some issues with this pair which we may be able to gain more insight into by exploring and presenting the two cases.

### Motivational Issues

#### Noureddine's behaviour

Noureddine was well aware of his low level in English and was prepared to increase his efforts so that he could pass the final exam. Noureddine acknowledged that he had worked hard during his first year, but not hard enough to pass. He said: "I worked hard, but that wasn't enough to pass the exam." (Pre.C.I) However, Noureddine believes that teachers have a share of responsibility in his failure. In fact, this is a common feeling in the Moroccan educational context, even at the university level, where students still view the teacher as a source of knowledge and fail to recognise responsibility for their own learning. This feeling is more accentuated among first year university students who come straight from high school where the perception of the teacher as authority figure is predominant.

Noureddine came to the university with high expectations but expressed disappointment and frustration with his first year's experience.

Before I came to university I used to think that I could do a lot of things, I could do research, I could work with my friends, etc, but all those dreams are gone because I don't find what I was...I was disappointed. (Pre.C.I)

What Noureddine means here is that he found working on his own at the university a solitary process. He explained later that most of the time all he had to do was attend the lectures and take notes with infrequent opportunity for peer interaction.

#### Noureddine's feeling about writing

## Language issues

Like other participants, Nouredine learned to write in Arabic and French before learning to write in EFL. However, he felt that he had not been taught academic writing properly in Arabic. Concerning proficiency in French Nouredine admitted that it was lower than Arabic or English. His reasons go back to the nature of the learning environment in his early years of learning. He says:

may be we had some problems at the beginning of education of elementary with the teachers, or may be when we were punished by our teachers...something like that stopped us to learn French as much as we can

Concerning his writing in English Nouredine thinks that it is better than his writing in French. He also thinks that the difficulty of writing in English is determined by the degree of difficulty of the topic, i.e. whether he has enough background information about a topic or not. This is clearly stated in the following extract (unless I state otherwise, the following quotations are from the pre-course interview).

Teacher: you said that you don't write that often in French and that it is more difficult for you to write in French than in Arabic, do you have the same feeling about writing in English?

Nouredine: sometimes, that depends on the subject, for example, if we have to write about globalization, I will have no problem, but if you ask me to write about <Ataarib> [i.e. Arabazition], I don't have enough information I find it difficult to write.

When asked about what makes writing generally a difficult task, Nouredine replied that "information" is the main source of difficulty, the specific type of information which is found in books. He is clearly referring here to schematic knowledge, particularly topic knowledge. What follows is an extract in which Nouredine makes his point clear about the difficulty of a writing task and the necessity of having adequate information in order to be able to write:

Teacher: yes, you mean you need to have enough information in order to be able to write...usually when we talk about writing, be it with teachers or students, we always hear that writing is a difficult task...what do you think makes writing difficult?

Nouredine: sometimes I think the main problem, the major problem which makes students unable to write in some specific writing, or specific topic is a lack of reading because...um...a lack of information

Teacher: so, you think what makes writing difficult is lack of information?

Nouredine: yes not any information...information which we can find it in the books, not in journals, we can sometimes find it in journal, but...

Teacher: what do you mean journals? [Nouredine seems to mix up the French word <journal> with the English word 'newspaper'], do you mean newspapers?

Nouredine: yes, newspapers, sometimes we find it in documents...

With further probing, Nouredine acknowledges information alone is not enough. Writing also involves organising the information clearly and appropriately.

Teacher: now imagine I give you a text to read in order for you to get information and then ask you to write about the same topic you have read about, would that make your writing task easier?

Nouredine: I will be able to write if I have the information and the method of writing.

Teacher: so you mean that you don't need only the information but also how to write

Nouredine: yes you need to organize your ideas because when you read you have a lot of ideas you should organize them

### **Nouredine's perception of good writing**

Nouredine's perception of good writing is that it should express the writer's opinion. He says: "I think that good writing should express my opinion". He adds to this the criterion of logical, coherent organisation in the argument.

Teacher: what do you think are the criteria of good writing? When you read a piece of writing and you say that it is good or bad, how do you decide on that?

Nouredine: the organization...even if they [readers] are against my opinion I will respect because the organization of this person gives me the restriction, the organization and how they can or how they give the reason logically step by step so as to make me say: yes I agree with you

So good writing, according to Nouredine, is a combination of appropriate information and organisation. Thus, Nouredine started the writing course with ideas about what good writing involves. Whether this is put into practice in his writing is another issue.

Concerning good writing in Arabic Nouredine has some interesting perceptions. For example, he believes that good writing in Arabic is about "the self and the mind"; he goes on to explain that in reading a text in Arabic he is able to tackle "meaning" in some depth rather than stop at the surface of the text. He admits that gaining this depth is not feasible for him in reading French or English texts. The point Nouredine makes here is highly pertinent to the peer feedback tasks in which he was to be involved during the writing class and it was interesting for me as teacher to hear his perceptions of how he would react to a text in his mother tongue and a text in his second or foreign language. This showed that Nouredine was already aware of the obstacle which language would constitute when it came to his appreciation of a text in English. This is made clear in the following extract:

Nouredine: I find good writing in Arabic talks about the self and the mind of people...in Arabic you don't stop just at the words, you go to the meaning of the words...this is something we can't find it easier in French or English because in these languages you just focus on subject verb object and..., I don't mean that

English is empty or French, but I can't find myself superior to understand what is in the mind of...

Teacher: you mean reading between the lines?

Noureddine: yes, in English I just find myself fighting with the words, what does it mean, what does it mean? That makes me, makes us less concentrated on the idea

It seems from this examination of Noureddine's ideas about his general writing abilities in Arabic, French, and English, and also his perceptions of difficulty in writing that he was well aware of how much effort writing would involve. This was a good starting point for him. It is also significant that Noureddine's experience with writing in Arabic and French is limited, and fraught with bad memories and this has influenced his general motivation. So this was useful information for me to take into consideration as Noureddine's writing teacher.

### **Noureddine's role as a writer: some initial beliefs**

Concerning his role as a writer Noureddine shows great awareness of the importance of the audience. He believes that if he is writing for his teacher, he should do his best to meet her/his expectations. For Noureddine this attempt to meet the requirements of the teacher's discourse community is made with a view to gaining "the mark" he wants. However, if he is doing, what he calls, "real writing" he will express his ideas without any constraints, since he does not have to "please anybody" and since writing, according to him, is a representation of his belief which he cannot change. See the following extract:

Teacher: let me ask you another question Noureddine, what do you think is your role as a writer?

Noureddine: we have here two points...if I write for my teacher, I will try to do the best I can in order to make the teacher give me the mark that I want...then I will say everything that she wants me to say whereas in the real writing I say what I think without any...um...any need to please anybody

Teacher: what do you mean no "need to please anybody"?

Noureddine: yes, because it is my belief I can't change this

It seems that what Noureddine means by the word "belief" is the equivalent of the term "voice", more specifically, "authorial identity" (Grabe and Kaplan 1996:86). One can infer that when he is writing for a non-academic purpose his voice is more heard than when he is doing academic writing for the latter is more oriented to meeting the teacher's expectations. This raises the issue of how far we expect to hear our student writers' voices in their academic writing as well and whether Noureddine's beliefs are appropriate.

Another perception Nouredine holds as to his role as a writer is that he sees the task of writing as a problem and his role is to solve this problem. This relates to the process view of writing as a struggle, a dynamic process, of selecting and organising content and expression. He also relates his success in solving his writing problems to his general ability to solve problems in his life. He puts it this way:

Nouredine: I will say that everything all over the world has to manage. You are obliged to organise your ideas in order not to confuse the reader. If I solve the problem in my writing, I will be competent to solve the problem of my life because writing is just like a mirror

Teacher: you are being a bit philosophical here!

Nouredine: [laughing] yes, I find for education like that not just read for read or and when I find a problem I can't solve it, that doesn't mean anything.

As we can see, for Nouredine this problem-solving ability also relates to the whole issue of education in that education should help one solve her/his problems, otherwise, it would be useless.

### **What Nouredine expects from the reader**

Besides seeing the role of the writer as a problem-solver Nouredine assigns an active role to the reader. He wants the reader to attend to meaning, to read between the lines, to respond, react, agree or disagree. This view comes across in the following excerpt:

Nouredine: I am not obliged the reader to respect my ideas, I um...

Teacher: you mean you don't oblige the reader to accept all your ideas

Nouredine: to accept or respect, I want him just to think about what I say and turn his mind on...to know what I want to say beyond the line

Teacher: so you expect the reader not to be passive...you think that you have written something, so you want the reader to react critically

Nouredine: yes, critically because he is a human being and he has idea...he has may be opposite idea and I should respect his ideas as he should respect mine.

I tried to take Nouredine's views into consideration in selecting his peer. I opted for Saida because I thought that given her higher language proficiency and my initial impression about her personality, she would be an appropriate person for Nouredine to work with. It would be interesting to monitor Nouredine's reaction to peer feedback activity in light of his attitudes expressed above.

As Nouredine's teacher it was valuable for me to know some of his viewpoints about writing in order to be able to attend to them in my teaching. Unlike the other participants, he expressed some interesting ideas about the role of the writer and the writer-reader relationship. He seemed to enjoy the whole conversation. In fact, despite his low English proficiency level, he refused to use Arabic or French during the pre-

course interview when I told him that he had that option. He insisted on using English saying that it was his opportunity to practice his speaking with the teacher.

## Noureddine's Response to Feedback

### *Noureddine's use of annotation*

#### **Annotation in the 2<sup>nd</sup> draft of assignment 1**

Noureddine uses annotation twice in this draft. The first annotation focuses on the use of singular/plural forms and articles. He annotates his text and asks: "what should I write here a woman or women?" He refers to the following part of the sentence:

A woman as member of society has (the)/a right like man to occupy any position...

Notice that in the same sentence Noureddine also seeks help with the articles. He writes both "the/a" in a different colour so that he can get some feedback as to which one to use in the sentence. In fact, this search for help with the use of articles happens three times in Noureddine's paragraph. For example, in the following sentence, he is not sure whether to use the article 'a' or 'the':

The fact is that we find ("shall I put 'a/the' here?") woman is more responsible than the ("what should I do here a/the?") man.

I responded to Noureddine's first annotation by advising him to use the plural form in order to avoid any problems of reference later on in the text. I also reminded him that if he used the plural form "women" he would have to make the necessary changes for the conjugated verbs as well. I also made sure that Noureddine's inquiries about the definite/indefinite articles were responded to.

Noureddine manages to implement the teacher suggestions in his new draft. The sentence above then becomes:

women as members of society should have *the* right, like *men*, to occupy any position and show their proficiency.

In addition, the second sentence is also amended; it reads: "But the fact is that we find *women* more responsible than *men*."

Besides the grammatical problems, Noureddine also seeks assistance with punctuation. (Note that Noureddine's annotations are here placed within the text, but in the original they were written on the margin with arrows pointing to their location in the text.)

Day by day, (can I put a comma here?) a woman has proven her proficiencies and has challenged the force of circumstance to make herself a powerful existence in this unfair world. Indeed, (can I put a comma here?) her determination to succeed, (it would be better if I omitted a comma here) makes her a scientist, a doctor, a teacher, and

authoress such as (is there any punctuation here?) Lisa Mitnan, Eugene Wigner, and Katherine Mansfield. In conclusion, there is no need to be sexist towards the woman, whereas (what about a comma here) the religion of Islam gives her the great responsibilities in the society.

I responded to Nouredine's queries by either confirming his use of a punctuation mark or by asking him to amend it. As is the case for some of the other participants, Nouredine's annotations focus mainly on language. He seems to have a major problem with the use of definite and indefinite articles, and with the appropriate use of commas. Nouredine annotates his text using arrows to point to the place where help is needed and asks questions on the margin. Underlining is sometimes also used.

Nouredine values annotations for the following reasons:

- They help him reread his work.
- Identify his spelling mistakes.
- Amend paragraph organisation problems.
- Help him revise content by adding or deleting some ideas.

Although Nouredine's use of annotation has focused only on language, his positive attitude towards annotation may help him extend its use to other aspects of his writing.

### *Nouredine's use of peer feedback*

#### **Peer feedback on assignment 1**

The peer, Saida, rates Nouredine's paragraph as being 'satisfactory' and comments:

✍ His [Nouredine's] essay still need some ideas, which I think will complete the meaning and give such a good clearness to his attitude and point of view towards the topic.

She does not however attempt to provide any elaboration on the comment above. She does not attempt to correct anything in Nouredine's paragraph either. Since he has not received any concrete help from his peer, Nouredine resorts to annotating his second draft in order to get some feedback from the teacher. (See the section on Nouredine's use of annotations above). Nouredine's behaviour can also be explained in terms of his attitude to peer feedback. During the post-course interview he admitted that one of his worries was that his peer might provide some "confusing" comments, but this worry usually stopped when he remembered that the teacher could provide him with "the correct" feedback. See the extract below:

Nouredine: may be when I say that my friend can make me confusing

Teacher: confuse you?

Nouredine: Yes, confuse me on my first draft, but after that I am sure that my teacher will, will give me the correct, so there is no need to be worried. (Post.C.I)

## Peer feedback on assignment 2

Saida rates the paragraph as “good” and provides the following comment:

☛ Your paragraph is good, Nouredine, you have employed the things acquired in the writing lessons, you have expressed the counter-arguments in a good way. However, you still have some problems in using some words and punctuation marks including some problems in the arrangement of ideas.

Nouredine does not seem to see exactly what his peer means by the arrangement of ideas, so he asks:

☛ Nouredine: what do you mean by arrangement of ideas?

Saida: you need more transition words to organise your ideas and also some concrete examples

Nouredine: yes, but I have examples like the computers, machines, etc. to say how technology is bad for our environment, um, I think that's clear

Saida: yes, but you need more and more transition

After this general comment, Saida identifies the transition signals used in the text to move from one supporting point to another. It seems that while Saida was examining the use of transition signals, Nouredine felt that he had to say something:

☛ Nouredine: You see! I have transition words: “furthermore”, “in conclusion”...

Saida: yes, but when I read I think you should have more.

In addition to commenting on content and organisation, Saida offers some feedback on the surface structure by underlining, direct correction, crossing out the mistake, and a combination of underlining and direct correction. See the table below for the peer’s suggestions:

Points raised by the peer	Response
<p><b>1. Grammar</b></p> <p><b>a. Plural form:</b> The peer directly corrects the word “human being” in the following sentence by adding the “s” of the plural form: “Nowadays technology has complicated our life...as humanbeing.”</p> <p><b>b. Auxiliary and the definite article:</b> The peer crossed out the auxiliary “been” and underlined the article in the following sentence: “It’s really true that technology has <u>been</u> revolutionized the position and the mind of humankind since the appearance of <u>the</u> industries, <u>the</u> transport, and <u>the</u> mass media...”</p> <p><b>2. Vocabulary</b> The peer suggests: “organised” ⇒ (tidy) “last time” ⇒ (before) in the following sentence: “... which has made our life comfortable, <u>organized</u>, and more easier than <u>last time</u>; but even so technology...”</p>	<p><b>1.</b></p> <p>a. Suggestion implemented.</p> <p>b. Nouredine deleted the auxiliary and kept the definite articles.</p> <p><b>2. Suggestions implemented.</b></p>



### 3. Mechanics

#### a. Punctuation & Capitalisation:

The peer suggests using a full stop instead of a comma and capitalising the first letter of the word "this": "...which sends and receives high radioactivities, this can cause cancer..."

### 3. Suggestions implemented.

### Peer feedback on assignment 3

An important remark to be made here is that Nouredine's peer, Saida, does not attempt to make any suggestion related to the surface structure of the essay. She, closely follows the feedback sheet, rates every paragraph of the essay, and examines transition signals between paragraphs. Therefore, Nouredine's introduction is rated as 'good' with the following comment:

☛ You start by generalization then you enclose your topic.

The 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph in the body is rated as 'good' and Saida makes the following comment:

☛ You state people's position and the positive side of fashion.

Saida also notices that this paragraph has "no concluding sentence." Then, the 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph is rated as 'good' and Saida comments:

☛ You support your topic sentence by four supporting ones that what make the reader get your position.

She also notices that there is "no concluding sentence" for this paragraph. Finally, the conclusion is rated as 'good', with Saida commenting:

☛ He [Nouredine] closes his essay by a good summary.

In response to his peer comments Nouredine makes sure that the first paragraph in the body has a conclusion. Since the peer has not made any suggestions towards surface structure, Nouredine does not attempt to make any amendment in this area.

### Peer feedback on assignment 4

Saida identifies the different components of each paragraph following the feedback sheet. First, she rates Nouredine's introduction as 'satisfactory' and comments:

✍ The introduction is not very clear it seems you talk about education.

Second, the 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph of the body has been rated as 'good' and the comment says:

✍ He [Nouredine] states people position.

Third, the 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph of the body is rated as 'good' and Saida comments:

✍ He states his position.

Saida, however, does not evaluate the conclusion and Nouredine asks for the reason:

☛ Nouredine: why you didn't correct the conclusion?

Saida: I think it's good

Nouredine: yes, but you must write that [referring to the box on the feedback sheet].

Saida: yes I know but I think it's not necessary.

Nouredine: it's necessary because it will help me to know if my essay, um, my conclusion is good.

Saida [laughing]: ok, next time I will do it.

As we can see from the interaction above, Nouredine expects Saida to be more thorough in her response. His behaviour may be explained in terms of his sceptical attitude to peer feedback in general. However, although Nouredine believes that peer feedback can sometimes be confusing he also thinks it is a means of appreciating some problems in one's writing. Given his determination to improve, Nouredine can be demanding as he expects more input from his peer. Hence, Nouredine acknowledges that his revision of the first drafts is based on the peer comments which he never ignores and uses when available. This is clearly stated in the following extract:

Nouredine: I focus...um...or I stopped on my mistakes or what is new in the feedback and try to rewrite a new draft.

Teacher: yes, you write a second draft.

Nouredine: yes, it depends on what my friend noticed in my writing.

Teacher: has it ever happened that you ignored your peer comments?

Nouredine: no, not at all because I am interested in these comments. (Post.C.I)

In addition to rating each paragraph in the essay Saida also provides feedback on some surface structure errors:

Points raised by the peer	Response
<p><b>1. Grammar</b></p> <p><b>a. Plural form:</b> The peer suggests using "these changes" in the following sentence: "Today all over the world has faced a lot of changes. Throughout <u>this change</u> Education has developed..." (the peer provides a direct correction)</p> <p><b>b. Word order and addition of missing words.</b> "The problem <u>that is</u> how can we touch with the feedback of this methods..." The peer suggests putting the sentence this way: "The problem <i>is that</i> how can we <i>be in</i> touch..." (The peer uses arrows to indicate the right word order and directly adds the words "be in" where they should be placed.)</p> <p><b>2. Mechanics</b></p> <p><b>a. Punctuation:</b> The peer suggests using a comma after the expression "as it were" in the following sentence: "As it were teacher should be able..."</p> <p><b>3. Vocabulary</b></p> <p><b>a. Word choice:</b> The peer suggests:</p>	<p><b>a. Suggestion implemented.</b></p> <p><b>b. Suggestion implemented.</b></p> <p><b>2. Suggestion implemented.</b></p> <p><b>3. a. Suggestion implemented.</b></p>

"and" ⇒ (thus) in the following sentence: "Some people believe that lecturers...and have high degree, and none can judge..."

### Self-initiated revision

Although uncommon in Nouredine's previous drafts, self-initiated revision is used in the fourth assignment. It has focused on the surface structure of the text. For example, in his first draft Nouredine writes:

It is a good idea...the opposite, but some students can judge the work of their lecturers more much better than the colleagues do, depend on...

In the second draft Nouredine makes a slight change to the sentence above:

It is a good idea...the opposite. But some students can be have a good judgement on the work of their lecturers more much better than the colleagues themselves...

It is clear that Nouredine's sentence in the rewrite is not without errors, in fact some errors did not exist in the first draft, but he has managed to make some revisions as far as punctuation goes by using a full stop instead of a comma in order to make two sentences. On the other hand, he has used the noun form of the verb "to judge" and the reflexive pronoun "themselves" to put more emphasis on the word "colleagues". Nouredine's low level of language proficiency is apparent in his attempt to introduce some self-initiated revisions. He is a highly motivated student who has shown a tremendous interest in the writing course and who has tried hard to improve his writing over the course period, yet his low level of language proficiency remains a handicap.

It seems that Nouredine has managed to implement a substantial amount of the peer suggested corrections; however, he also overlooks some when he is not sure about them. During the post-course interview Nouredine makes the point that although peer feedback is important, it can sometimes be "confusing". Therefore, he believes that he can get much more help from the teacher as expressed in this extract:

Nouredine: I am really...I really take teacher comments because the teacher know what's the real mistakes or what causes it because he/she is sure from the comments whereas students are not sure that you will or that they can give me the real mistakes because these students are as I am and he can be confusing

Teacher: so, you think that your peer comments can confuse you?

Nouredine: yes they can confuse me

Teacher: normally when you get peer feedback, as we have been doing it, peer feedback is on the first draft and then the teacher's comments are given on the second draft, so when you are given your peer comments on the first draft do you look at them, do you take some of them into consideration?

Nouredine: it helps me to reread my draft.

Teacher: So, at least you reread your draft when you are given peer comments

Noureddine: yes and to recognize what is the mistake what is the fault I have  
 Teacher: but in general you think that the comments from the teacher are  
 Noureddine [interrupting]: are more helpful (Post.C.I)

It is clear that Noureddine does not rule out the role of peer feedback as a means of encouraging him to reread his writing and identifying problems. However, he seems to prefer teacher feedback as it is more certain.

In providing feedback on Noureddine's essay, Saida makes use of different styles of correction:

- Direct correction
- Crossing out some irrelevant words when this does not affect meaning.
- Crossing out and providing direct correction.
- Circling the error and providing a direct correction.
- Underlining the error.
- A combination of underlining and direct correction.

Noureddine uses peer feedback in the following ways:

- Direct implementation of peer-suggested corrections.
- Overlooking some peer suggestions when these are not considered important or not believed to be correct.
- Resorting to annotation when no help can be obtained through peer feedback.

**Table 5-1: Frequency of Noureddine's use of Peer Feedback per assignment**

	Surface suggestions		Meaning suggestions	
	No. of peer Suggestions	No. implemented	No. of peer Suggestions	No. implemented
Assignment 1	0	0 (0%)	0	0 (0%)
Assignment 2	28	22 (78.5%)	1	0 (0%)
Assignment 3	0	0 (0%)	2	1 (100%)
Assignment 4	16	15 (93.7%)	0	0 (0%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>37 (84)</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1 (33.3%)</b>

**Table 5-2: Noureddine's revisions from 1<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> drafts (Feedback source: Peer)**

	Surface changes		Meaning changes		Total
	Formal	Meaning-preserving	Microstructure	Macrostructure	
Assignment 1	0	0	0	0	0
Assignment 2	20	2	0	0	22
Assignment 3	0	0	1	0	1
Assignment 4	12	3	0	0	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>32 (84.2%)</b>	<b>5 (13.1%)</b>	<b>1 (2.6%)</b>	<b>0 (0%)</b>	<b>38</b>

### Peer feedback and improvement in text quality

According to the three text evaluators Noureddine has made no improvement in the second draft of the first and second assignments. However, a small improvement has been made at the levels of organization and accuracy of the second drafts of the third and fourth assignments respectively.

**Table 5-3: Mean scores of Nouredine's 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> second drafts**

<b>Assignments</b>	<b>Draft 1</b>	<b>Draft 2</b>
Assignment 1	12.3	12.3
Assignment 2	10.1	10.1
Assignment 3	11	11.5
Assignment 4	10.8	11.3

### *Nouredine's use of teacher written feedback and taped commentary*

#### **Teacher feedback on assignment 1**

#### **Nouredine's use of teacher written feedback**

Nouredine has managed to correct and implement all the 36 teacher-indicated errors (100%). He also included all the 5 direct corrections.

#### **Nouredine's use of teacher taped comments**

One of the first teacher taped comments draws Nouredine's attention to the fact that he should include a counter-argument in his writing. The comment reads:

☛ The topic sentence is clear and states your position in a very straightforward manner. The reader understands that you are for the idea that Moroccan women should be voted for as members of parliament. However, as we have already mentioned in our previous classes, even if you are for an idea, the reader expects you to present at least one argument that is "against", i.e. a counter-argument. This counter-argument is not present in your paragraph and I think you may want to provide one.

In response to the above comment, Nouredine introduces a counter-argument in the following way:

The idea that women are not qualified to work in some jobs is true. Because some jobs need someone who is powerful and resilient as construction, driving or military. But women as member of society should have the right, like men, to occupy some political positions and show their proficiency.

Although not appropriately stated, the counter-argument above shows Nouredine's willingness to implement teacher taped comment. In the second comment I indicate that the following sentence does not make much sense in relation to the other sentences and advise Nouredine to provide further elaboration. The sentence reads:

First of all, a woman is equivalent (equal) to man in the same rights, but inspite of that both of them are responsible for the family.

In his 3<sup>rd</sup> draft Nouredine rewrites the sentence as follows:

First of all, women have the same responsibility as men in the society. But the fact is that we find women more responsible than the men.

The new version of the sentence is much more appropriate in its context.

The third taped comment draws Nouredine's attention to the fact that he should keep to the topic by giving examples of Moroccan women only rather than including examples of some famous foreign women. This comment is made in relation to the following sentence:

Indeed her determination to succeed makes her a scientist, a doctor, a teacher, and author such as Lisa Mitnan, Eugene Wigner, and Katherine Mansfield.

The teacher taped comment reads as follows:

☛ Don't forget Nouredine that you are writing about Moroccan women and not foreign ones. Therefore, your examples should focus on some successful Moroccan women's names.

In his rewrite Nouredine simply deletes the examples above without attempting to replace them by examples of Moroccan women's names. I also comment that the conclusion is too general by saying:

☛ The concluding sentence is too general and does not seem to be suitable for what you have been discussing. Try to relate your conclusion to what has been said about women becoming members of parliament in Morocco.

The concluding sentence in Nouredine's second draft reads as follows:

In conclusion, there is no need to be sexist towards the woman, whereas the religion of Islam gives her the great responsibilities in the society.

Therefore, Nouredine rewrites the sentence above in the following way in his third draft:

In conclusion, there is no need for Moroccan men to be subjective towards women's positions, or even argue about the membership of women in parliament.

It is important to note that the changes Nouredine made following the teacher taped comments led to substantial meaning changes since they changed the direction of some ideas.

## **Teacher feedback on assignment 2**

### **Nouredine's use of teacher written feedback**

Nouredine has managed to correct and implement 6 of the 16 teacher-indicated errors, while also making use of the 7 teacher-provided corrections.

### **Nouredine's use of teacher taped comments**

I remind Nouredine that he should provide further elaboration by saying:

☛ I am going to start my feedback on your paragraph by looking first at your topic sentence, then supporting points, supporting details, and the concluding sentence. As far as your topic sentence is concerned, I can say that it is fairly good. It states your position about the topic clearly and simply. Concerning your supporting points, you have written fairly good ones, but you could have elaborated more on some points by giving some concrete examples. Refer to the numbered parts in your text and try to provide some elaboration. For example, in number (1) you need to give some concrete examples of how technology has made our lives comfortable, tidy...and also how it has made our lives complicated.

I ask Nouredine to give some concrete examples in order to support the points he makes in the following part of the text:

It's really true that technology has revolutionized the position and the mind of humankind since the appearance of the industries, the transport, and the mass media, which has made our life comfortable, tidy, and more easier than before; but even so ①technology has made our life more complicated because of the new existance of equipments, computers and elaborate machines, which are very difficult and confusing.

In response Nouredine tries to amend the text and provide some elaboration (in italics):

*Today everybody believes that technology has revolutionized the position and the mind of humankind since the appearance of the industries, the satellites, the spacecrafts and so on which have made our life advanced, tidy and much easier than before. However, technology has made our life more complicated because of the new existence of equipment such as, computers and elaborate machines, which are very difficult and confusing, take as an example some programs of computers which can be connected with satellites, banks, alarms, and none can manage with it except some specialists.*

### **Teacher feedback on assignment 3**

#### **Nouredine's use of teacher written feedback**

Nouredine has managed to correct and implement all the 32 (100%) teacher-indicated errors in his final draft. He also included the 27 direct corrections.

#### **Nouredine's use of teacher taped comments**

The first teacher taped comment draws Nouredine's attention to the fact that one point in the thesis statement has not been developed in the body of the essay. The comment reads:

☛ In the thesis statement you have mentioned that the aim of fashion designers is financial benefit, but you haven't talked about it in the body of your essay. You can have a separate paragraph in which you elaborate on this idea.

However, in his rewrite Nouredine does not attempt to respond to the above comment. The second comment on content is related to the first paragraph in the body of the essay. I ask Nouredine:

- 👉 What is your topic sentence? Make sure you have a clearly stated topic sentence and provide appropriate support and elaboration for it.

The first paragraph reads:

Nowadays, men and women have to take care from their clothes and their characters so as to seem respectful and nice in the society. Besides that clothing fashions show the culture of people and their traditions all over the world.

Noureddine responds by providing a rather limited elaboration. In fact, all that he does is add one more sentence (in italics) to the paragraph besides some language amendments. The paragraph then reads:

Nowadays, men and women have to take care of their clothes and their characters so as to seem respectable and nice in the society. Besides, clothing fashions show the culture of people and their traditions all over the world, *so fashions has become an important things these days.*

In the third comment I ask Noureddine to explain and elaborate more the following point, more specifically what he means by the expression “disrespectful clothes”:

Firstly, some fashions clothing affects on the personality of women and creat them a lot of problems in their society, such as, disrespectful clothes that we see nowadays.

In addition to implementing the corrections related to accuracy which have been suggested by teacher written feedback, Noureddine has tried to respond to the comment by providing some elaboration (in italics):

Firstly, some clothing fashions affect on the personality of women and create a lot of problem for them in their society, *such as disrespectful of other people towards them especially when women wear tight clothes or short ones they usually face problems in the street from the adults or teenagers.*

#### **Teacher feedback on assignment 4**

##### **Noureddine’s use of teacher written feedback**

Out of the 20 teacher-indicated errors Noureddine manages to correct and implement 15 in his final draft (75%). He also makes use of the 14 direct corrections.

##### **Noureddine’s use of teacher taped comments**

The teacher taped comment reads:

- 👉 You need to elaborate more on some ideas in this essay. For example, you haven’t talked about why ‘colleagues’ and ‘superiors’ cannot be good evaluators of a university lecturer’s work. You need to have one paragraph in which you discuss and explain this point because you have to convince those who might disagree with you about the idea, which you support, that students are the ones who should evaluate



their lecturers. In other words, you need to have a counter-argument in your essay.

What I advise Nouredine to do is write a paragraph in which he discusses a counter-argument. Nouredine supports the idea that university lecturers have to be evaluated by their students rather than by their colleagues, but does not attempt to provide enough elaboration on the counter-argument. All he writes are a few lines at the beginning of a paragraph in which he discusses why students can be good evaluators of their lecturers' work. He puts it as follows:

Some people believe that lectures are cultivated and have high degrees, thus none can judge their work except their colleagues, or superiors. It is good idea believe that, and none can say the opposite.

The two sentences above do not present a good development of a counter-argument as Nouredine intended them to do. In response to my comment Nouredine provides some elaboration on why colleagues cannot be as good evaluators of university lecturers as students, but not in a separate paragraph as he had been advised to do. The following extract from Nouredine's essay shows the added elaboration (in italics):

*...Finally, a teacher needs to get the feedback about his work from students' work, because it is the students who can say 'yes', I get the idea not the lecturer's colleagues. to be colleagues it doesn't mean that you are always right in your judge on the work of your fellow. Because you are not student in his classroom to know he manage with his lectures. Sometimes when two colleagues meet with each other, each one pretend that he is excellent and of course neither of them knows the fact or the weak of an other.*

Although, the paragraph is not without problems, by attempting to follow teacher feedback Nouredine is confirming his positive attitude to both written and taped teacher feedback although he tends to show much more preference for taped commentary. Nouredine feels satisfied with the amount of practice he has had over the course period. He also seems to enjoy the novelty and the usefulness of teacher taped commentary. He puts it this way:

☑ I'm really very pleased with the number of argumentative essays with its feedback on writing at this year. I find it new method at this university to take spoken comments on the cassette from your teacher than just written comments. It is more helpful and useful at the same time for the student who will be able to make his/her sense to recognize his/her mistakes.

Like the other participants, Nouredine finds taped commentary more useful and helpful than just written feedback. He believes that it encourages him to pay more attention to what the teacher says with a view to improving his writing. It is worth noting that Nouredine sees taped commentary as useful not only for the students but also for the

teacher who can develop new ways of informing students. The following quotation is a good summary of Nouredine's points:

☑ Thank you teacher for your efforts to help us. First of all, I find spoken comments more useful and helpful for me than just written comments as I said before. Because this new method of education makes you more attentive to what your teacher says. As far as concerned the advantages of giving feedback on writing is good and useful for both the student who will manage to improve his work, and for the teacher who can develop his methods or his way of giving information to students.

In the following interview extract Nouredine reiterates some of the points made above and makes some additional ones. For example, besides his belief that taped teacher commentary helps students be more attentive, he describes it as a "unique" "strategy" which makes him work more. See the extract below for a more comprehensive view of Nouredine's attitude to both teacher written and taped commentary:

Teacher: what type of teacher feedback do you think you have benefited from more than the other, is it taped commentary or written feedback?

Nouredine: taped comments, because taped comments make you...um how do I say it? um more care about what the teacher says.

Teacher: You care more

Nouredine: yes, care more about the teacher's comment, about what is your problem in writing...as for the written comment.

Teacher: so you think that both teacher written and taped commentary are important?

Nouredine: Both, especially the comments on the cassette, the taped comments.

Teacher: what is it that you find so special about taped comments? Why do you think that taped comments are "especially" important? You have said that you have benefited from both types of feedback "especially taped comments", why?

Nouredine: taped comments have a real meaning because all teachers write comments, but none of them can give taped comments...it's a strategy that makes me work because it's unique (Post.C.I)

As the tables below show, Nouredine's implementation of teacher feedback ranges from 37.5% to 100% of teacher written feedback, and from 66.6% to 100% of taped commentary. The pattern below is followed by Nouredine in dealing with teacher feedback:

- Direct implementation of teacher-suggested corrections.
- Provision of corrections for teacher-indicated errors.
- When the teacher requests further elaboration Nouredine behaves in one of the following ways:
  - Providing limited elaboration
  - Deleting the part of the text which requires further elaboration
  - Ignoring teacher's advice

**Table 5-4: Frequency of Noureddine's handling of teacher-indicated errors and taped comments**

	Surface suggestions		Meaning suggestions	
	No. of teacher-indicated errors	No. of implemented corrections	No. of teacher taped comments	No. of revisions
Assignment 1	36	36 (100%)	4	4 (100%)
Assignment 2	16	6 (37.5%)	1	1 (100%)
Assignment 3	32	32 (100%)	3	2 (66.6)
Assignment 4	20	15 (75%)	1	1 (100%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>89 (85.5%)</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>8 (88.8%)</b>

**Table 5-5: Noureddine's revisions from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> drafts (Feedback source: Teacher)**

	Surface changes		Meaning changes		
	Formal	Meaning-preserving	Microstructure	Macrostructure	Total
Assignment 1	22	14	1	3	40
Assignment 2	4	2	1	0	7
Assignment 3	22	10	2	0	34
Assignment 4	9	6	0	1	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>57 (58.7%)</b>	<b>32 (32.9%)</b>	<b>4 (4.1%)</b>	<b>4 (4.1%)</b>	<b>97</b>

### Teacher feedback and improvement in text quality

Noureddine has made substantial use of teacher written feedback and taped commentary. Improvement in the final draft of the first assignment is displayed at the levels of content and accuracy. Moreover, Noureddine has made a fairly satisfactory improvement in the final draft of his second assignment, mainly at the levels of accuracy and vocabulary. In the final draft of assignment 3 Noureddine implemented 100% of teacher written feedback and 66.6% of taped commentary, which has resulted in some improvement at the levels of content, organization, and accuracy. The final draft of assignment 4 has shown a substantial improvement in all areas: content, organisation, accuracy, style and vocabulary.

**Table 5-6: Mean scores of Noureddine's 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> drafts**

	Draft 2	Draft 3
Assignment 1	12.3	13.6
Assignment 2	10.1	11.5
Assignment 3	11.5	13.3
Assignment 4	11.3	14.5

## Noureddine's Development

### A general development over the drafts

An examination of Noureddine's scores shows that there has been improvement in his writing over the course period. Although the degree of improvement between first and second drafts is limited, the amount of progress between second and final drafts is considerable. This may be explained in terms of the type of feedback received on each draft and the extent of implemented revisions (see the sections on *peer feedback and improvement in text quality* and *teacher feedback and improvement in text quality*).

## **Noureddine's realisation of improvement in his writing: the effect on his self-confidence**

The progress in his writing proficiency has been recognised by Noureddine himself who is able to compare his writing in the year before the course with his writing over the course period. He says responding to my question:

Teacher: have you at all benefited from this course?

Noureddine: of course, I have seen a great change from last year. I make a similation...um...I compare between last year and this year I feel progress in my composition. (Post.C.I)

Despite Noureddine's positive answer I wanted to find out more about whether he thought the improvement in his writing was a result of only the writing course or that other courses might have influenced his writing. Hence, the following probing:

Teacher: Has there been any improvement in your writing as a result of this course? Do you think this course has helped you improve your writing?

Noureddine: Of course, I...I am very delighted because this course helps me to improve my method in writing and my, um, especially the method of writing an...um...

Teacher: Ok, so you are saying that your writing, you noticed that your writing has improved, now what aspect of your writing do you think has been improved.

Noureddine: Both the argumentative and the narrative essays.

Teacher: I mean is it the organisation, content, or style, what aspect of your writing do you think has improved?

Noureddine: All of this, because when I practice argumentative essays I find myself able to write narrative essays too. (Post.C.I)

According to Noureddine the course has been useful because it provided him with the "method of writing", i.e. how to organise his writing. He later explains that by saying:

I wasn't able to organize what I should do or I need to do, but after the lessons of composition this year I find myself I can write at any subject narrative or argumentative. There is no problem. (Post.C.I)

He also believes that the improvement in his writing has covered many areas, such as, organisation, content, and style and that this improvement extends to narrative essays as well. I need to remind the reader here that the focus of the writing course has been mainly on argumentative writing and the narrative mode was encouraged mainly in the writing of the language learning diaries.

This can be taken as evidence of Noureddine's gain in self-confidence which was an additional aim of this course. This feeling of self-confidence relates to Noureddine's realisation that he has developed writing skills which he can rely on both in the present and in the future. He says:

...for example I find some method that you give us more helpful for me not just this year but next year <inshaallah> [God willing]. (Post.C.I)

### **The impact of the writing course on Nouredine's frequency of EFL writing**

Nouredine admits that as a result of attending the writing course, the frequency of his writing in EFL has increased. He says:

I have become more connected with writing because I have to write almost everyday in English now. Not just focus on the subjects you give us but on other subjects I like also. (Post.C.I)

In fact Nouredine was one of the students who did not suffice with writing only on the assigned topics, but would also write on topics of his own choice and ask for my feedback. Nouredine, therefore, became more motivated to write in English as a result of gaining more confidence in his abilities as a writer. This is clearly stated in the following extract:

Teacher: can you tell me what your attitude to writing in English is now?

Nouredine: I have what is important I have **trust and confidence** to write at any time at any subject. This is what is very important for me.

Nouredine has come to realise that practice is one of the means of improving his EFL writing. He admitted that although he had started writing his language learning diary, he did not manage to continue and that he regretted it. Nouredine puts it this way:

I find that I need to keep practicing my writing in English and one of the ways to do that is by keeping a language learning diary. I regret not having continued. (Post.C.I)

Nouredine was the only participant who did not keep a regular language learning diary. Despite the fact that he wrote extra essays, he later found from his peers that diary writing was beneficial and felt sorry that he did not maintain it. As a matter of fact, he promised to get into the habit of keeping a language learning journal in the future. He says:

"God willing I will continue write language learning journal so as to build up my language." (Post.C.Q)

### **Member checking**

Almost two years after the completion of the study, I managed to arrange a meeting with Nouredine with a view to getting some feedback from him concerning his case. I gave Nouredine his case to read and comment on any aspect he wished. The first comment Nouredine made was about my writing which he said was "good" and that the style resembled some of the books he read in the American Language Centre. In fact, I initially thought that Nouredine's comment was only a way of complimenting or

some kind of flattery and that it would not be worth reporting here, but later, after some further reflection, I managed to see the other aspect of it. Nouredine's comment after reading his case is of substantial importance because it shows an active reader. It also indicates that his involvement in peer feedback activities was not a waste of time. The ability to react to what he read was still there, which was one of the major goals of writing programme in which Nouredine took part. In addition, it was also interesting to find that some of Nouredine's attitudes to the task of learning had changed. He admitted that his initial tendency to blame the teachers for his own failure was not a prevalent one anymore. Nouredine now believes that his learning is his own responsibility and that the teachers are there just as facilitators. Again, I find such a realization to be one of the greatest achievements in Nouredine's academic life.

Another 'confession' which Nouredine made when I met him was of great importance to me not only as teacher-researcher but also as a human being, as an educator, who hopes her efforts might make a positive difference in some other individuals' lives. Nouredine admitted that because he had failed and been obliged to repeat the year he had already been thinking of dropping out of the university. However, he thought he would attend the first composition class before putting his decision into practice. Nouredine informed me that his plan then had been to sit for the Baccalaureate exam a second time as that would allow him to opt for new choices in his academic life. He also told me that when he attended the first composition class he had his file for the Baccalaureate registration with him. However, after this first class his plans changed completely. He decided to repeat the year in the English Language Department and give himself another chance. He confirmed to me, in all honesty, that attending the first composition class was a turning point in his student life. He said that the course had a lot of potential and seemed to offer the kind of instruction he believed he needed. He also informed me that his volunteering for the study was also instigated by the fact that he believed he would benefit from the whole process.

# Saida's Case

## Preliminary Perspectives

### Background information

- Saida came to the writing course with an intermediate level of English language proficiency.
- She passed her Baccalaureate exam in 2001 and was 22 years old at the time of data collection.
- Her score on the pre-course diagnostic writing is between 77 and 79, using Jacobs et al. (1981) ESL composition Profile.
- Saida's personality, her worries, high expectations from both herself and her peer, have significantly impacted her behaviour both as a peer and also as learner/writer.
- Saida's initial resistance of teacher taped commentary and her attitude change during the course period make of her case an outstanding one and worth presenting in detail.

### Motivational issues

#### Saida's behaviour

Saida was quiet and hard-working. All her work was meticulously presented and handed in punctually. Her attendance was regular except for one or two classes missed through illness, but even then she made sure her draft was written and handed in by a classmate. Saida mostly worked individually and showed the considerable amount of independence needed for university studies. However, unlike the other students, Saida carried around substantial anxiety about the exam.

#### Exam anxiety

Throughout the academic year Saida seemed to be over anxious about the exam and all her work and energy focused on passing the final exam. Although this issue applies to all the students, Saida seemed to over-emphasize it whenever she had a chance to do so. It came up many times during my pre- and post-course interviews with her and in almost every entry of her language learning diary. For example, reflecting on the conversation which took place between us in class, she says:

☞ I said also that at that moment, I want to be a good writer just for the exam because in the exam we face a lot of problem and as a result we get bad marks. At the end I said that I chose English because I like it and I want to study it but the exam is another thing.

Saida's wish to become a good writer in English has the exam as its underlying incentive. She seems to like English but the exam is a hard fact which she cannot deny. She was repeating her first year at the university. So, Saida had tasted the bitterness of failure and she seemed to have learnt the hard way that success does not come easily but only through hard work. Through failure Saida has developed a tendency for self-

criticism. For example, in the following excerpt she asks herself questions and answers them as a means of criticising and reprimanding herself. The exam anxiety and her conviction that hard work is the only key to success are reiterated.

☞ I haven't written my diary for a long time. Why? Because I didn't have time. No, it's not a good reason. If I said that I would be laughing on myself. In reality because my teacher hasn't asked us about our diary lately. However, these days I'm worried about the exam. I'm preparing for it but I don't know if am preparing in a good way or not. In fact, I'm not satisfied with my preparation. What should I do? That is the question. Who will answer me? That is another question? I want to succeed; I have a strong feeling that I will succeed because I know that God will help me, but we are told that God helps those who help themselves. So, success does not come just by hoping but by work and not any work, but hard work.

Saida's anxiety should not be looked at wholly negatively but also seen as a strong source of motivation. Hence, Saida's anxiety can be considered as a "facilitating" rather than a "debilitating" (Allwright and Bailey 1991) one for she continued to show the best of her performance as a learner and a writer.

### **Saida: the reflective learner**

Saida's self-criticism and high expectations of herself are related to her personality and her philosophical and reflective tendencies. This is something we sense in the following extract:

☞ What am I doing here? I am created by God to worship Him. I am a human being. I have a feeling and thought. I have a body and soul. Am I leaving [she means living] with my body or my soul or both? I will answer and say with both but in reality I am just leaving with my body because I want to sleep, eat...but I don't think, don't produce, don't make efforts. I am here to contemplate everything to see the beauty of the Creator. I must think look for abstract [she means abstract] thing like truth, reality...

Her reflective skill is not used only in such philosophical speculations, but is also used in order to investigate the causes of her failure. She reflects on her previous exam preparation and manages to find what the problem was. She says:

☞ I still remember that I didn't begin my preparation for the exam until March, which is not enough time. I worked but not very hard. The big mistake which I made and I have not to make it again this year, is that I studied for grammar very hard but I didn't for comprehension and composition.

Saida seems to realize that in order to succeed she should not focus all her attention on one specific subject and ignore the others. In fact, her realization unveils a common belief among first year Moroccan university students. Often students invest a lot of time in the grammar section with a view to gaining the maximum of marks because they are convinced that they cannot achieve well on other subjects such as writing and reading



comprehension. So, Saida has become critically aware that her work needs to be balanced if she is to be successful.

### **Saida's work in other courses**

#### **Seizing every learning opportunity**

In addition to the composition course, Saida took a guided reading course, which focused on short story, play and novel reading; reading comprehension, with its focus on general texts; a spoken English course, with an emphasis on pronunciation, and finally, a grammar course which focused on tenses, modals, prepositions, etc. Following her new conviction about a balanced curriculum Saida is reluctant to miss any chance of learning in any course. In the following excerpt she expresses her worry that the rescheduling of a grammar class may clash with another class, saying:

☞ I was very worried because I was told that we will have a class of grammar which we normally do not have on Saturday. Fortunately, when I was looking for the teacher I found him and I told him that we have a class of spoken and how can we have grammar he told me that he was told by the administration that we are free I told him that group 1 and 5 are free but we are group 4 have spoken class. At the end he found a solution and he told me that he will give us another section.

She also expresses how keen she is on learning in this way:

☞ I want to speak write and read English accurately. I want to learn a lot from my composition teacher.

Such initial positive attitudes to learning and strong motivation were a good spring board from which I could begin teaching.

Saida has also learnt that time is a precious thing not to be wasted for any cause. For instance, the lecturers were once on strike and classes had to be cancelled for three days. Saida was very unhappy about the event and was determined not to waste time.

☞ This day was the first day of the strike which will be 3 days. This strike is for teachers. I don't know what they are asking for but what I know is that they are wasting our time. However, I will not waste my time. I will revise my lessons, especially of grammar.

Here again we see her intention to focus on grammar and might wonder if she had forgotten about her "balanced" learning and preparation procedure. Probably not, for Saida informs us at a later stage that she is intending to follow a plan.

☞ What I think about is to make a programme and I want to follow it, not like the previous ones because the April is very near and I should start my preparation very seriously.

### **Saida's feeling about writing**

## **Language issues**

Like most Moroccan students, Saida speaks at least four languages: Moroccan Arabic as her mother tongue; classical Arabic as the official national language; French as the first foreign language; and English as a second foreign language. During the pre-course interview Saida acknowledges a weak level in French; therefore, she does not write in French. However, she thinks that writing in Arabic is much easier than French and she likes it. (Unless I stated otherwise, the extracts below are from the pre-course interview)

Saida: For me writing in Arabic is easy, it is not like in the other language

Teacher: Which language do you compare it to here?

Saida: English

Teacher: How about if I ask you to compare it to writing in French?

Saida: I never write in French [laughs]

Teacher: Why? What is the problem?

Saida: I have a problem in French and I don't speak it

Teacher: Ok, well, almost all the students I talked with, they all find writing in French difficult, what do you think is the cause?

Saida: Because we don't read in French, we don't...we don't... we are not interested in French. The program was in French and students used to speak much French everywhere, but for us we use Arabic.

Teacher: Are you referring to the phenomenon of Arabization here?

Saida: Yes.

Saida believes her French is not good enough as a result of the government's policy of making Arabic the language of instruction of all scientific subjects which has negatively influenced students' proficiency in both spoken and written French. She has taken the alternative option of English which she likes. She puts it this way:

Teacher: Why did you opt for English at the university?

Saida: It's just because I like English, when I learnt it at the first time I said that I don't speak French so I must learn another language. So, I learnt it, I worked in it very hard and chose it in the university.

When asked if she finds writing in Arabic, her first language, much easier than English, Saida, surprisingly enough, answered that the reverse is true. She puts it like this in the following extract:

Teacher: Ok, so if we just move on to talk a little bit about writing, so you said you don't write in French, but you write in Arabic and that you find writing in Arabic a lot easier than French and may be even easier than English, is that what you mean?

Saida: No, English is more easy than Arabic.

Concerning frequency of writing, Saida admits that she tends to write more frequently in English rather than in Arabic.

Teacher: All right, and how about the frequency of writing? Do you tend to write more often in Arabic or in English?

Saida: No, in English not Arabic.

This can be explained by the fact that Saida had now opted for English as a major at the university and her enthusiasm for doing well in English is related to some of the factors I have discussed above, such as exam anxiety and her determination to achieve good results.

However, Saida also reported that although she enjoyed writing in English, this does not mean she has no problems. In fact, she admitted that there were many issues with her writing academic English, such as organisation, content and mechanics.

Saida: It is, um, we must write in formal language and put the ideas in order, so it's very difficult.

On the same line, she writes:

☞ ...the difficulties of writing in English comes from lack of ideas and my problem comes especially from linking words esp. in the addition I repeat one a lot of times.

She also believes that writing in English entails more skills and techniques than writing in Arabic. She says:

In Arabic I just take the pen and start writing, but now I need to follow some rules because it is not my language, not freewriting, just take the pen and write, I don't know where should I put this idea or the other one. (Pre-C.I)

Hence, it is clear that although she has initially started by thinking that writing in English is easier than Arabic, Saida is also aware that producing academic writing in English may not be at all that easy. Generally speaking, Saida seems to bring not only a positive attitude to writing in English, but also certain awareness that more work will be required on her part as a non-native writer of English, which is a good starting point for her as a learner.

## **Saida's Response to Feedback**

### *Saida's use of Annotation*

Saida has made use of annotation in three drafts. She has, therefore, made more use of annotation in comparison with the other student writers.

#### **Annotations in the 2<sup>nd</sup> draft of assignment 1**

Saida's annotation in the 2<sup>nd</sup> draft of her first assignment focuses on a grammar aspect, namely the use of the preposition "to" after the verb "contribute". The sentence reads:

They [women] enter the field of literature and become a great famous writer and the field of science and contribute to the invention of so many things.

Saida asks: “is ‘to’ the right preposition?” I respond that “‘to’ is fine after the verb ‘contribute.’”, which she then keeps in her rewrite.

### **Annotations in the 1<sup>st</sup> draft of assignment 2**

In the first draft of her second assignment Saida seeks some assistance with the use of vocabulary; she asks if the verb in the following sentence is correct:

...we can say that transportation is the main factor of improving communication because it has shortened distances between people.

The peer, however, does not respond to Saida’s question and Saida makes no change to the whole sentence.

### **Annotations in the 2<sup>nd</sup> draft of assignment 2**

In the second assignment Saida’s annotation also focuses on grammar. She asks if the preposition “of” can be used with the verb “deprive”. She puts it this way: “is this verb correct with ‘of?’” The sentence reads:

It [technology] also deprived people of communication...

My answer was: “yes, it is correct. We say “deprive somebody of something”, for example.

Saida keeps the verb intact in her third draft after being reassured that it is correct.

Saida’s annotations focus mainly on issues related to vocabulary and grammar, and the grammar problem is the same throughout the two annotations, i.e. the use of a preposition after a verb. In annotating her text, following the course instructions, Saida underlines the part of the text on which she requires feedback and asks the question about it in the margin. Her attitude towards annotation is positive. In responding to the post-course evaluation of the different types of feedback, Saida explains the benefit of annotation saying:

Although I have used it [annotation] only in three drafts, I think that annotations are useful because they make me reread my writing and correct the mistakes that I have without forgetting them.

It is worth noting here that the use of annotation initiates the notion of revision at an early stage, which is a good preparation for more extensive and elaborate revisions after the student writer receives both peer and teacher feedback.

### ***Saida’s use of peer feedback***

Like the other participants, Saida did not have any experience in pair or group work in previous writing classes. In her diary she wonders what it is like working in groups and hopes that she will learn from it.

📖 Today I have a class of composition in which we will work as groups and correct our paragraphs. How will be the work in groups? What will be my friends feedback to me? I think this experience will be a good one and I will learn from it a lot.

### Peer feedback on assignment 1

The peer, Nouredine, starts by evaluating Saida's paragraph as 'satisfactory' and commenting:

👁️ On the one hand [Saida] doesn't give more convincing supporting details in the second supporting point. On the other hand it [the paragraph] is logically connected.

Then Nouredine identifies the different components of Saida's paragraph and the transition signals used to connect the supporting points. He does not attempt to correct any grammar mistakes but he provides some suggestions concerning vocabulary and content.

Points raised by the peer	Response
1. Vocabulary: "Moroccan women are good wives and mothers, who serve their husbands and <u>rear</u> their children." The peer suggests: "rear" ⇒ (look after)	1. Suggestion implemented.

Nouredine suggests some elaborations. For instance, in the following sentence, Saida writes:

They are also successful career women outside the house.

He suggests that Saida add the following clause to the sentence above:

✍️ *...because they do their work as better as possible",* which Saida makes use of in her second draft without any attempt to modify it.

In both the examples above, Saida makes a close implementation of her peer's suggestions; however, she sometimes chooses to improve on his feedback before implementing it.

### Improvement on peer feedback before implementation

Saida writes:

Secondly, they [women] won years ago their struggle for education which has helped them to have high degrees and become university graduates in many fields, such as literature, science...

The peer suggests that Saida add the following sentence as an elaboration:

✍ In these days we can find a lot of famous writers who are women and successful and they also contribute to the invention of so many things.

Saida makes use of her peer's suggestion, but she doesn't implement it as such; she makes some changes to it. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> draft she puts the sentence this way (the modified sentence is in italics):

*...university graduates in many fields. For example, they enter the field of literature and become a great famous writer and the field of science and contribute to the invention of so many things.*

After experiencing peer feedback for the first time Saida reflects on the activity saying:

📖 This day will be a memorable day in my studies. It is a day which I have been waiting for a long time. I wanted to know how can we work in pair and how to correct my friend paragraph. So today I have known all that. I worked as teacher. At the beginning my teacher gave us a sheet in which I analysed my friend's paragraph and I give him my evaluation to his writing.

Saida has clearly enjoyed the peer feedback activity and, more importantly, the fact that she has played the role of teacher, a role which, as we will see from the way she deals with her peer comes up as a form of control and authority. In addition, Saida expresses high expectations from peer feedback on many occasions. For example,

📖 I told her [the teacher] that this experience will help us a lot in our writing and that we will work with it in correcting each other paragraphs.

## Peer feedback on assignment 2

Noureddine has rated Saida's paragraph as 'satisfactory' commenting:

🗣 I think there is enough ideas. There is enough supporting details. The ideas were very long. The linking words are used appropriately.

Noureddine then identifies the linking words used by Saida to provide transition between the supporting points. However, he does not attempt to provide much elaboration on his feedback and Saida gets a little pushy and asks him:

🗣 What can you say about my paragraph?

The following extract from the recording of the peer feedback session should give us a clear idea about what actually happened:

☛ Nouredine: I think writing, um, of Saida is satisfactory since it composites enough topic, enough supporting points and of course supporting details. I think it is enough linking words and, um...

Saida: What about linking words?

Nouredine: About linking words, I think it enough but sometimes you repeat the linking words.

Saida: The same linking word?

Nouredine: The same and you make them one link word

Saida: Where? Where there is the repetition?

Nouredine: For example in the third supporting point, you make "first" and "most"

Saida: "and foremost", "first and foremost", not like the "first of all", there is a difference between them. There is no repetition. What else? You talked about the linking word and?

Nouredine: That's all

Saida: That's all?!!

In this conversation between Saida and Nouredine some issues which she has referred to in the post-course interview are confirmed. For example, she has mentioned that she would usually discuss the feedback points with her peer before implementing any corrections. She says:

I discuss them [peer feedback suggestions] with my friend, I ask him about his comments, then I take them into consideration if they are correct. (Post-C.I)

It is clear from Saida's tone in the extract above that she was not very pleased when Nouredine could not understand the phrase "first and foremost" and thought it was a mistake. As a matter of fact, although Saida has acknowledged the benefits of peer feedback, she has also expressed the idea that wrong peer feedback makes her "angry".

The extract below is a good illustration:

Saida: Peer feedback make me discuss my mistakes with my friend and read the other's writing and to correct my mistakes, but it has negative, um, especially when someone corrects my essays and she or he doesn't know what is academic writing. They are not knowledgeable of the structure of the paragraph or she says that I have some mistakes that I don't have or...um

Teacher: You mean sometimes when the comments are not correct?

Saida: Yes.

Teacher: In that case how do you feel?

Saida: Angry

Teacher: Angry?

Saida: Yes. (Post-C.I)

Another thing which we can notice in the peer conversation above is that Saida was surprised by Nouredine's brief feedback on her paragraph. It seems that she was expecting more input. This is very clear from the last part of the extract. This shortage of peer feedback does not hinder Saida's revision of her paragraph as she decides to introduce some self-initiated revisions.

### **Self-initiated revision**

Saida's self-initiated revision covers the organisation of her paragraph. While in the first draft she starts her discussion by talking about the advantages of technology, in the second paragraph she chooses to start with the disadvantages.

Compare the following two passages:

Extract from draft 1:

There is a fact, which no one can deny, that technology is an attempt to make our life better and easier; however, it has some disadvantages. On the one hand, technology has two most important advantage. First of all, technology has improved communication...Moreover, communication makes life more easier than before because people nowadays do not need to travel for learning all what they need is in front of them on screens..

Extract from draft 2: Saida changes the order of her arguments:

There is a fact, which no one can deny, that technology is an attempt to make our life better and easier; however, it has some disadvantages. On the one hand, technology has caused a huge increasing of unemployment by replacing human beings by machines...It has also deprived people of communication, especially, when we talk about television, which is a splendid medium of communication, but it prevented people from communication with each other. Moreover, people today travell by cars and do all their work by machines, which help in the spreading of diabetes because there is a lack in physical efforts.

This amendment is due to Saida's close attention to what was dealt with in the writing class since one of the methods students were encouraged to use in writing argumentative paragraphs and essays was to start with the counter-argument. Saida was very keen on learning these writing techniques and making use of them. Therefore, in the example above, since change was not initiated by her peer, Saida makes use of what she has learnt in class and manages to amend her writing accordingly.

### **Peer feedback on assignment 3**

Although Nouredine's comments are generally positive, some advise Saida to make amendments to her essay. He rates the introduction as 'very good' commenting that

✍ it is a well written introduction.

The first paragraph in the body has been rated as 'satisfactory' with the peer commenting:

✍ it is satisfactory because it has all the elements of the paragraph.

Moreover, the second paragraph is judged to be 'good' and the comment reads:

✍ it is good paragraph which contain strong supporting sentences.



The third paragraph has been rated as 'satisfactory' and the peer says that

✍ [Saida] respected the order of statements.

In addition to that, the fourth paragraph is rated as 'good' although

✍ the topic sentence is not coherent enough.

Finally, the conclusion has been rated as 'poor' and the peer comments that

✍ [Saida] should give more explanation to be understood.

The conclusion reads:

In conclusion, although new fashions in clothing have brought a lot to the economy of the world and especially to the most famous fashion designers, these new fashions have enslaved women and made them lose all what they have had without awareness.

In spite of the peer's low rating of the conclusion, Saida does not attempt to change anything in it. Although there are no major peer suggestions for correction, Saida takes the initiative to revise her writing by considering some issues related to sentence structure, grammar, and mechanics.

### Self-initiated revision

After rereading her draft, Saida chooses to delete the bracketed part of the following sentence in the 1<sup>st</sup> draft:

Thus, the designers have imported some materials, such as, garment, nylon, rayon...with cheap prices [and exported ready clothes with great prices.] (Brackets not in original)

Another type of self revision is grammar-related. For instance, in the first draft, Saida writes:

new fashionable clothes are nothing more than the deliberate creation of money's waste.

In the second draft she drops the possessive 's' and writes:

...the deliberate creation of money waste.

Saida also makes some punctuation amendments to her draft. For example, in the first draft she writes the following sentence:

...have brought a lot of the economy of the world and especially to the most famous designers...

In the second draft, she puts the word "especially" between two commas.

## Peer feedback on assignment 4

As in the previous drafts, Nouredine evaluates every paragraph in the essay. He rates the introduction as 'good' but without providing any explanation. The first, the second and the third paragraphs in the body are rated as 'satisfactory', with one written comment explaining that

✍ no transition is used between supporting points in the third paragraph.

Nouredine also identifies the different transition signals between paragraphs, but it is only through Saida's continuous questioning that Nouredine provides some oral elaboration on the quality of the essay. In this extract we can see how keen Saida is on getting some explicit feedback:

☛ Saida: You, you say that second paragraph is satisfactory, but you don't tell me why!

Nouredine: I think it's ok, it's satisfying to me; I find the topic sentence, the supporting points and so on.

Saida: what do you mean so on?

Nouredine: [laughing] you follow the rules; you put all the things which we have taught in the writing class about a paragraph. I think it's good.

Saida: why do you say there is no transition in the third paragraph? I have transition [refers back to the third paragraph in the body]. I have write "finally" and "in summary".

Nouredine: Yes, but you should have more signals.

Saida: I don't think so; too many transitions can make problems, you know.

Nouredine: [agreeing] yes, um, may be.

As is the case in the previous drafts, we see Saida controlling the peer feedback session and requesting her peer to clarify and elaborate.

As a result of his focus on the use of transition in Saida's essay, Nouredine makes some suggestions as to what connectives Saida should use. For example, he suggests that Saida use (moreover) instead of "therefore" to connect the following sentences:

Colleagues are fit to evaluate each others lectures because they know more than any other person what are good lectures and what are good ways to give these lectures. Therefore, they can advise each other...

Saida implements her peer's suggestion although there is no real need to change the transition word "therefore" but she seems to accept her peer's advice. This correction, therefore, will not necessarily lead to text improvement. However, the next peer suggestion is much more beneficial as Nouredine also suggests that Saida use the transition signal (however) instead of "In contrast and secondly" in the following sentence:

In contrast and secondly, students have the right to evaluate university lecturers because they are the people who receive these lectures.

Saida follows her peer's advice and uses a connective which is a more appropriate means of moving from the preceding idea to the following one. In addition, and for the first time, Nouredine provides some feedback on the surface structure:

Points raised by the peer	Response
<b>1. Grammar:</b> a. "colleagues are fit to evaluate <u>each others</u> lectures because they know more..." The peer suggests that Saida put it this way: "...are fit to evaluate the lectures of <i>each other</i> ..." b. "...student have..." peer suggests (students)	<b>1.</b> a. suggestion implemented  b. suggestion implemented

Peer feedback on Saida's drafts covered the following areas: content, organisation, with almost no focus on grammar. Since other areas such as mechanics and sentence structure are scarcely covered by the peer comments, Saida deals with them in self-initiated revision.

In responding to peer feedback Saida has implemented the following strategies:

- Close implementation of peer-suggested corrections.
- Improvement on peer feedback before implementation
- Self-initiated revision(s)

**Table 5-1: Frequency of Saida's use of peer feedback per assignment**

	Surface suggestions		Meaning suggestions	
	No. of peer Suggestions	No. implemented	No. of peer Suggestions	No. implemented
Assignment 1	1	1 (100%)	1	1 (100%)
Assignment 2	0	0 (0%)	0	0 (0%)
Assignment 3	0	0 (0%)	1	0 (0%)
Assignment 4	2	2 (100%)	2	2 (100%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3 (100%)</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3 (75%)</b>

**Table 5-2: Saida's revisions from 1st to 2<sup>nd</sup> drafts (Feedback source: Peer)**

	Surface changes		Meaning changes		Total
	Formal	Meaning-preserving	Microstructure	Macrostructure	
Assignment 1	0	1	1	0	2
Assignment 2	0	0	0	0	0
Assignment 3	0	0	0	0	0
Assignment 4	1	1	2	0	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>1 (16.6%)</b>	<b>2 (33.3%)</b>	<b>3 (50%)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>

**Table 5-3: Saida's revisions from 1<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> drafts (Feedback source: Self)**

	Surface changes		Meaning changes		Total
	Formal	Meaning-preserving	Microstructure	Macrostructure	
Assignment 1	0	0	1	1	2
Assignment 2	0	0	0	1	1
Assignment 3	2	0	1	1	4
Assignment 4	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>2 (28.5%)</b>	<b>0 (0%)</b>	<b>2 (28.5%)</b>	<b>3 (42.8%)</b>	<b>7</b>

## Peer feedback and improvement in text quality

Table 5-4: Mean scores of Saida's 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> drafts

	Draft 1	Draft 2
Assignment 1	10.1	12.5
Assignment 2	13.5	13.6
Assignment 3	18.2	20
Assignment 4	19	19

As the scores in the above table show, Saida's second draft of the first assignment shows a substantial improvement. As I have explained above, Saida has relied on both her peer feedback and also her individual endeavour to improve her first draft. Despite the fact that Saida has not received any peer feedback which can help her revise her second assignment, she has attempted to amend her text by relying on what she has learnt in class. She, therefore, reorganised her arguments in such a way that she complies with the argumentative writing instructions. Hence, her second draft shows a slight improvement in organisation. According to the text evaluators Saida has made a substantial improvement in the second draft of the third assignment at the levels of accuracy and style. However, Saida's second draft of the fourth assignment has not shown any improvement, but her first draft is already good enough and it shows that she has made a substantial improvement over the course period.

### *Saida's use of teacher written feedback and taped commentary*

#### **Teacher feedback on assignment 1**

#### **Saida's use of teacher written feedback**

Saida has managed to correct and implement all the 14 teacher-indicated errors. In addition, she made use of the 7 direct corrections.

#### **Saida's use of Teacher taped comments**

Unlike the other students who have shown a high degree of excitement about the teacher taped commentary from the first time they were exposed to it, Saida needed some time before she was completely convinced about the usefulness of this new feedback procedure. She began by saying that she found teacher written feedback more helpful than taped commentary. Then, by the third assignment, her attitude to taped commentary becomes positive. In the following excerpt Saida explains her earlier view that written feedback is interesting.

☞ I think, the written comments are more helpful than the spoken comments on the cassette because the written comments I can keep reading them many times and I can follow comment by comment in the editing of my paragraph. But when I

listened to the spoken comments on the cassette I forget a lot of comments which you gave me about my paragraph, especially the mistakes that I had made.

It would be interesting to know more about how she actually deals with taped comments since these are more content and organisation oriented and she would have to refer to them if she wanted to revise these aspects of her writing.

The taped commentary on Saida's first paragraph starts by praising her writing and the things which have been done well, then moves on to draw her attention to some problems:

☎ I am going to start my feedback comments by looking first at the overall organization of your paragraph. On the whole, you have written a fairly good paragraph. The topic sentence is quite clear and shows your position clearly to the reader. Your supporting points are fairly convincing, but you could have provided more supporting details by giving some concrete examples. For instance, you need to give some concrete examples to support the sentence which I have indicated as number (1)...However, since you are writing an argumentative paragraph, the reader expects you to present both your argument and a counter-argument, but you haven't done so.

The sentence which I refer to above reads as follows:

...they [women] enter the field of literature and become a great famous writer and the field of science and contribute to the invention of so many things.

However, in her rewrite Saida does not provide any concrete examples, but she includes a counter-argument. In order to see how Saida has improved on her second draft by following the teacher taped commentary, we might want to compare these two sections of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> drafts. First, consider the following extract from the 2<sup>nd</sup> draft:

Women in Morocco have shown a great sense of responsibility in many fields; so they deserve to be voted for as a member of parliament. First and foremost, they are responsible inside and outside the house. Moroccan women are good wives and mothers...

Note that Saida's topic sentence does not mention anything about the counter-argument and she directly moves on to talk about the reasons why Moroccan women have to be voted for. However, in the rewrite she makes sure she has a counter-argument which she develops before tackling the other arguments. See the example below:

Although many people have been against the idea of voting for women as members of parliament, women in Morocco have deserved to be voted for as members of parliament because they have shown a great sense of responsibility in many fields. On the one hand, people who are against the idea of voting for women as members of parliament may be right because it is known about women that they are emotional. As a result, women can be afraid in front of big problems and they can look for any solution which may lead to a bad consequence. Besides they can be sympathetic with any person and that person can

sometimes play a trick on women. On the other hand, Moroccan women have deserved to be voted for as members of parliament for many reasons...

In order to encourage Saida for her effort I end the taped comment on a positive note:

☛ Your paragraph shows that you have a lot of potential as a writer. Keep up the good practice and the diligence and I am sure that you will make a lot of progress.

After the examination of Saida's first assignment, it is clear that she has attempted to implement both the teacher written and taped comments as much as possible. Her rather negative attitude towards taped commentary has not influenced her implementation of teacher feedback. This can be related to Saida's strong motivation to improve her writing regardless of her preferences for the type of teacher feedback.

### **Teacher feedback on assignment 2**

#### **Saida's use of teacher written feedback**

Saida has managed to correct and implement all the 11 (100%) teacher-indicated errors, in addition to the two direct corrections.

#### **Saida's use of teacher taped comments**

The taped comment starts as follows:

☛ A fairly good paragraph on the whole, but it is not without some problems.

Then the problems are indicated consecutively:

☛ Your topic sentence needs to be rewritten in a much better way so that the reader gets a clear idea about your position. By reading your topic sentence alone, the reader may understand that you are against technology, which is not true because when we read the whole paragraph, we find out that you are for the idea that technology has liberated Man. Therefore, you are for technology. I advise you, then, to rewrite your topic sentence.

Saida's topic sentence in the 2<sup>nd</sup> draft reads as follows:

There is a fact, which no one can deny, that technology is an attempt to make our life better and easier; however, it has some disadvantages.

In response to the comment above, Saida rewords her topic sentence in such a way that her standpoint becomes clearer to the reader:

Although technology has had some disadvantages, this technology has been an attempt to make life better and easier.

The second comment is related to the use of supporting examples in the text:

➡ Concerning the supporting points, you have generally managed to provide some convincing and interesting points. However, as a reader I sometimes feel that you need to add some more elaboration, such as concrete examples.

I then draw Saida's attention to the fact that the following statement needs more support:

Technology has also helped in saving time and in curing a lot of diseases.

As a result, she elaborates by adding some examples:

Technology has also helped in saving time by replacing a lot of traditional machines with new ones and in curing a lot of diseases, which has been difficult to be cured for a long time.

Saida has managed to respond to the taped comments as much as she has done for the written feedback. However, her attitude is still the same; she is still convinced that teacher written feedback is more helpful for her than the taped commentary. She states in the cover sheet of this assignment:

✉ I think the written comments are more helpful than spoken comments on the cassette because the first one helped me a lot in the correcting of my paragraph by re-reading it many times and by following every comment and rechanging the parts that I had problems with them. But the spoken comments on the cassette are not so helpful because I couldn't remember all the comments and I couldn't listen and correct at the same time.

Saida's rather negative attitude towards taped commentary may not necessarily be due to the factors that she has stated above but may possibly be due to the fact that she is more used to written comments than the taped ones. As Hyland puts it, "...the novelty value gets a few interested at the beginning, then the rest join in later after hearing good reports from the others." (1990: 283) Saida will be part of those who join in later, not necessarily after hearing good reports from the others, but probably after she is completely convinced that taped commentary may be of some use to her. She has shown that she is able to follow the teacher taped comments, but she needs time to verbally acknowledge their worth. On the one hand, Saida's attitude towards taped commentary can be explained in relation to her strong personality and caution. On the other hand, her anxiety to pass the exam seems to inhibit her readiness to try new methods of learning. She wants to play it safe and focus on the written feedback because her grammar mistakes are indicated and also corrected making her feel more secure about the final grammar exam. Although Saida acknowledged that she made a mistake by focusing solely on grammar and ignoring other subjects in her first year, she seems to be still thinking in the same direction by preferring written feedback to taped commentary.

### **Teacher feedback on assignment 3**

#### **Saida's use of teacher written feedback**

Saida has managed to correct and implement all the 16 (100%) teacher-indicated errors in her 3<sup>rd</sup> draft.

#### **Saida's use of teacher taped comments**

By the third assignment Saida's writing has shown substantial improvement. This is clearly expressed in the following taped comment:

🗣️ Before I start giving you any feedback comments on your essay, I would like to say that I am very happy to read such a good piece of writing. You have managed to write a very good essay, Saida. There is definitely a substantial amount of improvement.

As far as content and organisation are concerned, the more Saida moves on with her writing practice the less problems there are. For example, in her 3<sup>rd</sup> assignment the only thing Saida is asked to do is to elaborate on the following sentence:

Thus, the designers have imported some materials such as garment, nylon, etc, with cheap prices.

In her rewrite she makes sure she provides some elaboration for the sentence above.

Thus the designers have imported some materials, such as, garment, nylon, etc with cheap prices and exported ready clothes with high prices. Besides, the designers may keep changing small parts of the same dresses and buy these dresses as if they were new ones with high prices, too.

In addition, I briefly comment on Saida's use of grammar and mechanics:

🗣️ Concerning grammar and mechanics, there are no serious problems. Except for some occasional reference and tense choice errors, there are no major problems. This is also a very big improvement, Saida, because you seem to master the use of grammar and mechanics in your writing. I am very happy that you are making this progress, Saida. Keep up the good work and the good practice, and I am sure that you'll do a lot better.

This improvement in Saida's writing has also been accompanied by a substantial change in her attitude towards teacher taped commentary. She admits, for the first time, that she finds it more useful to have teacher taped commentary than just written feedback. She says:

- 🗣️ Spoken comments on the cassette helped me to avoid my mistakes and also
- Changed my attitude to feedback from the teacher.
  - Compare of spoken to written feedback.



The feedback from the teacher has encouraged me to work hard and to think seriously about my writing, especially, when I noticed my improvement.

I feel that oral comments are directed to me more than the written ones which gave me a lot of motivation to improve my writing skills.

This change in Saida's attitude towards teacher taped commentary is important at this stage because, as I have mentioned before, Saida was not the type of student who was usually easily convinced. She definitely needed time before being fully reassured that this new type of teacher feedback could be useful for her. In fact she has explicitly said it above: "the feedback from the teacher has encouraged me to work hard and to think seriously about my writing, especially, when I noticed my improvement." This positive shift in Saida's attitude to teacher taped commentary can be explained in terms of her "expectancy of success" (Dornyei 2001a: 20) which has developed as a result of her noticing that this type of feedback activity can lead to some improvement. Saida has taken all the time she needed in order to arrive at a decision that she can attain her goal of becoming a good EFL writer, and therefore pass her exam, by investing in this kind of task (ibid.).

#### **Teacher feedback on assignment 4**

##### **Saida's use of teacher written feedback**

In addition to the 2 direct corrections, Saida managed to correct and implement all the 14 (100%) teacher-indicated errors.

##### **Saida's use of teacher taped comments**

Saida's second draft was well written and I had no comments concerning content or organisation. This shows that Saida made a substantial improvement in her writing throughout the course. The taped comment is as follows:

👍 Before I start my feedback comments, I would like to say that there is a lot of improvement in your writing. It is such a good thing to see that after some time of practice and hard work you have managed to make a substantial amount of progress. The overall organisation of your essay is good enough. The introduction presents fairly good general statements and the thesis statement is clear and shows your position towards the topic in an appropriate manner. The paragraphs in the body of your essay support the thesis statement by discussing one idea at a time. Therefore, each paragraph has unity and the ideas run smoothly and logically. Concerning the grammar and mechanics, there are no major problems, except for very few reference problems and spelling mistakes, which I am sure you'll be able to get rid of in your 3<sup>rd</sup> draft. On the whole, you have succeeded in writing a very good essay. Persevere!

Saida's attitude to teacher taped commentary has become even more positive towards the middle of the course. She states:

☞ I have found that having spoken comments on the cassette are helpful because they have given me a lot of encouragement to work hard in order to improve my writing.

However, despite an increasingly positive attitude towards the usefulness of teacher taped commentary, the role of teacher written feedback is still important for her. In fact she believes that both types of feedback have to be used if a student wants to improve:

Teacher: What type of teacher feedback do you think you have benefited from more, taped or written commentary?

Saida: Both, yes. They have to be used both if I want to improve. (Post.C.I)

Finally, Saida seems happy with the concept of receiving teacher feedback since this is scarce in her context. Hence, she sees the opportunity of receiving teacher feedback, be it written or taped, is a golden chance for her and the other students. She mentions some advantages of teacher feedback by saying:

☞ The advantages of this method of giving me feedback on my writing are a lot. Firstly, I have learnt how to improve my writing especially by using drafts. Secondly, I have learnt from my teacher's comments how to use what I am learning in my grammar class in my writing which has made me avoid a lot of major problems of grammar that I used to make. Finally, I have learnt how to correct my mistakes, both in language and structure, by following the teacher's advice.

Saida has handled teacher feedback in the following ways:

- Direct implementation of the teacher-suggested corrections.
- Provision of the corrections for teacher-indicated errors.
- Avoiding some teacher comments when further elaboration is required.
- Implementation of teacher taped commentary despite her initial negative attitude to it.

**Table 5-5: Frequency of Saida's handling of teacher-indicated errors and taped comments**

	Surface structure		Content & organisation	
	No. of teacher-indicated errors	No. of implemented corrections	No. of teacher comments	No. of revisions
Assignment 1	14	14 (100%)	2	1 (50%)
Assignment 2	11	11 (100%)	2	2 (100%)
Assignment 3	16	16 (100%)	1	1 (100%)
Assignment 4	14	14 (100%)	0	0 (0%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>55 (100%)</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4 (80%)</b>

**Table 5-6: Saida's revisions from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> drafts (Feedback source: Teacher)**

	Surface changes		Meaning changes		Total
	Formal	Meaning-preserving	Microstructure	Macrostructure	
Assignment 1	8	6	0	1	15
Assignment 2	6	5	0	2	13
Assignment 3	10	6	0	1	17
Assignment 4	9	5	0	0	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>33 (55.9%)</b>	<b>22 (37.2%)</b>	<b>0 (0%)</b>	<b>4 (6.7%)</b>	<b>59</b>

### Teacher feedback and improvement in text quality

As the scores in the table below show, Saida has managed to make a substantial improvement on the second draft of her first assignment. The improvement has covered the five areas: content, organisation, accuracy, style and vocabulary. Saida has used 100% of both teacher written feedback and taped commentary making, therefore, a fairly considerable improvement at the level of organisation and accuracy in the final draft of her second assignment. Likewise, the final drafts of the third and fourth assignments have been improved at the levels of accuracy and style.

**Table 5-7: Mean scores of Saida's 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> drafts**

	Draft 2	Draft 3
Assignment 1	12.5	15.1
Assignment 2	13.6	14.8
Assignment 3	20	21
Assignment 4	19	20

## **Saida's Development**

### **A general development over the drafts**

An examination of Saida's scores shows that there has been a substantial increase in the scores over the four assignments, showing significant improvement in her writing proficiency over the course period. This improvement is felt by Saida herself since during the post-course interview she informed me that she had benefited from the course and that she could already appreciate a substantial improvement in her writing as far as language and organisation were concerned:

Teacher: Have you benefited from the present writing course?

Saida: Yes, of course.

Teacher: What aspect of your writing do you think has improved?

Saida: The structure, the use of, um, I had in the past the problem of sentences structure and also in the grammar.

Teacher: Can you tell me in what way has the composition course helped you?

Saida: Especially in the structure.

Teacher: What do you mean by structure?

Saida: The organization of paragraphs and essays (Post. C. I)

Furthermore, in addition to the development of writing performance, and her perception of the writing process, Saida has also gained on the affective side by gaining more confidence.

### **Writing is re-writing**

It is worth noting that over the course period Saida has gained substantially in terms of developing both the quality of her writing and also her attitude towards writing in general. For example, her strong sense of text ownership has been replaced by a belief that writing is re-writing. She has become more flexible and accepts that her text may

change for the better. This is what she attempts to express in her language learning diary:

📖 It's the first time when my paragraph is written on the black board...I was quite happy with it but what happened is that they [peers and teacher] changed it completely. I know now that every writing can change to a better one, but why didn't I write a good introduction like this one? However, I have learnt how to develop my writing and how to change it. It's really a matter of hard work and practice. I read it in the classroom (it's the first time).

This a great achievement for Saida because not only has she managed to accommodate new ideas about how to write, but she has also managed to reach a certain growth in her thinking about one of the main elements involved in the writing process: revision.

### **Gaining more self-confidence as a writer**

Saida has admitted that she has benefited from the writing course and she believes that the aspects of her writing which have improved are “organisation”, “content”, and “style”. This realization seems to be related to the amount of practise she was exposed to. She puts it this way:

📖 I was having a clear idea about the argumentative essay but it became more clear because I have written two essays, and what I want is to write more than ten essays.

She also makes the point that writing in English is now less of a challenging task for her because she has a much clearer idea about how to organise her ideas in a paragraph or an essay:

Teacher: How did you feel about writing in English before this course?

Saida: It was difficult for me to take a pen and start writing

Teacher: Why?

Saida: Because, um...I didn't know how to organize my ideas...what is an essay in English but now I can write easily (Post. C. I)

It is clear that Saida has gained enough self-confidence not only to work to the teacher's course goals but also to set some targets for herself as a writer. This is not unusual for Saida who has always had high expectations from both herself as a learner, and writer, and also her peer.

### **Saida: the independent writer**

In dealing with peer feedback Saida has shown a great sense of independence as a writer. She has shown that she is well able to revise her writing even when the peer does not provide enough input and is also capable of improving on her peer feedback before implementing it.

### **Text ownership: is it an issue?**

From the recorded peer feedback sessions, the post-course questionnaire, and the interview with Saida it seems that she has high expectations from peer feedback. She does not seem to tolerate her peer's wrong comments or mistakes in his feedback, mainly when she is sure that what she has written is correct. Therefore, she is usually ready to defend her writing and prove that the peer is wrong. Saida has a substantial sense of text ownership. She makes it clear in the following quotation:

**I think that there is one disadvantage and it comes from the corrector when he/she does not know what is an academic writing and wants to change everything in the essay/paragraph. (Post.C.Q)**

So, Saida's apprehension that the peer may "change everything" in her text is also based on her belief that the peer is not completely knowledgeable about academic writing, a feeling which most participants in this study can be said to share. Most participants have shown some degree of caution, if not suspicion in dealing with peer feedback on the grounds that their peer is not "knowledgeable enough". This sense of text ownership is probably expressed by almost all participants in relation to peer feedback, but some more strongly than others.

# Noura's Case

## Preliminary Perspectives

### Background information:

- Noura passed her Baccalaureate Exam in 2000. According to her score on the Baccalaureate final exam, and also her self-rating, her level of English language proficiency was low-intermediate.
- Her score on the pre-course diagnostic writing, using Jacobs et al. ESL composition profile, is between 55 and 62.
- She was 22 years old at the time of data collection.
- Her work with Karima throughout the course period necessitates a detailed presentation of her case, together with Karima's, so that we can have a full picture of what has contributed to their success as a pair in giving and receiving feedback and also their collaborative work outside class.

### Motivational issues

#### Noura's behaviour

Noura was a serious and hard working student, she was aware of her low level of English language proficiency. She was repeating the year and determined to make progress. Her assignments were handed in on time and her attendance record was regular. Like most of her classmates, Noura suffered from exam anxiety, but, compared to Saida's case, this feeling did not seem to have such a strong hold on Noura's life.

#### Exam anxiety

Unlike Saida, whose exam anxiety started way before the final exam, Noura's worry started as the exam date drew closer and she was lagging behind in her preparation. This is clarified in the following quotation:

☐ Today I feel sad for the exam's near and I don't finish yet my revision and preparation. Specially, in grammar because the lesson is too long and the sestem of the exam has changed<sup>1</sup>. Because the exam becomes a system Canadian means if I do any mistakes, the corrector will omitt one point to me and this thing is difficult to except because it will cause me some problem. So I hope profoundly to have an easy exam.

The change in the exam method increased Noura's worry. Her anxiety, however, may be said to have a positive effect because she felt that the only way to succeed was through hard work and greater interest in her courses. This type of anxiety can be described as, in Bailey's terms, "Facilitating Anxiety" (1995:201), although Bailey relates this kind of anxiety to competitiveness. It is difficult to judge whether Noura had

---

<sup>1</sup> The grammar teachers decided to change the format and the scoring procedures of the first year grammar test.

any feeling of competitiveness towards her peers because, unlike Fatima, she has not overtly shown any signs of it, but this may not completely eliminate the possibility that Noura may have had some kind of covert feelings of competitiveness. Having said that, it can be suggested that Noura was competing with her “idealized self-image” (ibid.:183), i.e. that of becoming a good writer in EFL and passing her exam.

### **Noura’s Feeling about writing**

#### **Language issues**

Like all Moroccan students Noura experienced writing in at least three languages. First, writing in Arabic as her first language, which she finds easy since all subjects are taught in Arabic. She says:

Noura: I think writing in Arabic it is easy because I learn it in primary school, um, and all the level, um, or all the education Islamic and all the lessons we write in Arabic

Teacher: So you mean all the subjects that you took were in Arabic that’s why it’s easy for you to write in this language.

Noura: And in writing in Arabic is easy because the teachers who learn it for me was good teacher, they learn me a lot

Teacher: They taught you

Noura: Yes, rules and, um, so I find it easy. (Pre.C.I)

However, although she feels comfortable writing in Arabic, Noura admits that her writing in Arabic is not very good and rather limited in genre.

Teacher: But does that mean you write very well in Arabic?

Noura: No, not very well but I know to write in Arabic a little.

Teacher: What kind of writing do you do in Arabic now?

Noura: When my mother told me to write a letter to my cousin or to my grandparents and when I write a CV (Pre.C.I)

Noura also believes that ease in writing Arabic relates to the good quality of her Arabic teacher. However, Noura blames her inability to write well in French on insufficiently qualified teachers. Arabization has also had a negative impact on her writing in French. She says:

Noura: Yes, because if we already studied the lessons in French we don't find this difficulty. Because before my brother and my sister, they learnt the lessons in French.

Teacher: You mean the subjects?

Noura: Yes, and this helped them to speak or write French better. (Pre.C.I)

In fact, Noura’s writing in French is limited to helping her younger brother do written assignments in French. Her frequency of writing in Arabic is thus much greater than in French.

Concerning writing in English Noura found it both “easy” and “difficult”. Her writing purposes are both academic and non-academic, i.e. writing assignments and keeping her personal journal.

Teacher: So you don't feel really that comfortable writing in French, how about writing in English?

Noura: I find it easy and difficult at the same time because writing English is a big one, last year the teacher comes only for one lesson [Noura laughing]

Teacher: How often do you write in English?

Noura: I write the assignments and I practice writing at home, I write my secrets in English so at home nobody can read. My brothers and sisters don't know English, they study Spanish. (Pre.C.I)

Generally speaking, for Noura the writing teacher plays a substantial role in either making or breaking the student. She makes that clear in the following excerpt:

Teacher: What do you think makes writing generally difficult?

Noura: In English?

Teacher: In general, whether it is in French, English or any other language.

Noura: What make the writing difficult is first of all the teachers because if they are good they help us to understand better and to write better, but if the teachers are not good they weak us, make us weak

This emphasis on the role of the teacher, as is made clear in the above quotation, is much related to Noura's educational context. It is important to see how this attitude may have influenced her way of dealing with both peer feedback and teacher feedback.

## **Noura's Response to Feedback**

### *Noura's use of Annotation*

#### **Annotation in the 2<sup>nd</sup> draft of assignment 1**

Noura makes use of annotations only once during the course period. She seeks feedback on the following sentence by asking: “is this a good sentence?”

So that they are a good example of successful inside and outside the house also; such as, sports, science, education, leterature, arts, and so on.

As in Fatima's annotation, Noura's question is too general. I clearly needed to provide feedback both on the syntactic structure and the meaning of the sentence. I realised that she had already mentioned the idea of women's success inside the house in a previous sentence in which she says:

First of all, women have a sense of responsibility; for example, as a mothers of a family inside the house, they can do all the activities that is needed inside it.

I therefore responded saying: “you can do without this part of the sentence since you talked about the idea of success inside the house.” Following my advice, Noura dropped



the redundant part of the sentence and kept the part which talks about the role of women outside the house. She writes in her 3<sup>rd</sup> draft:

in addition, women have also shown a great deal of success outside houses...

Unlike the more limited, vocabulary-focused annotations of other students, Noura's annotation focuses on a whole sentence, necessitating feedback on both the syntactic and semantic aspects of the sentence. Her annotation strategy is to underline the part of the text on which she seeks feedback and ask the question on the margin.

Noura's use of annotations is explained by her attitude when asked to evaluate the three types of feedback used during the course. In addition to ticking the following two statements about annotations:

- They help me identify sentence structure problems
- They help me identify paragraph organisation problems

Noura adds other items to the list saying that annotations "help [her] to identify grammatical mistakes" and "to underline the sentence which [she feels] problems with." As a matter of fact, there is a match between what she says and what she actually does.

### *Noura's use of peer feedback*

#### **Peer feedback on assignment 1**

The peer, Karima, rates Noura's 1<sup>st</sup> draft as "satisfactory" after having identified all the paragraph components, i.e. topic sentence, supporting points, supporting details, and the conclusion. She has also identified the transition between supporting points. Her comment is as follows:

✍ Well, I can not deny that you mentioned many important arguments regardless of the mistake you might have done. But, what is noticeable is the repetition; some spelling mistakes, the misuse of the linking words, such as 'indeed', it means really, or in reality, and not in addition to, and other similar mistakes were underlined. "Practice makes perfect."

As we can see from the comment above, Karima acknowledges that Noura's arguments are important in spite of some surface level structure problems. However, during the peer feedback session Karima elaborates more on the above written comment by showing both the positive and negative aspects of Noura's paragraph. The following extract from the peer feedback session is a good illustration:

🗨 I think that Noura's paragraph is satisfactory for the fact that it contains all the rules that we have seen in class, in the class of composition, um, as she wrote all what is needed as a topic sentence followed by supporting details and with a concluding sentence. But her, but actually you have some problems that are not,

um, that will be, um, that catch my attention. You make some, um, some mistakes [Karima laughing], such as, the repetition of some, um, of some details that you have mentioned before and the misuse of the linking words. You put some linking words that are, um, that don't work in some situations. Moreover, the spelling mistakes; it's not strange things. We all may have, um, we all may make spelling mistake. And at the end I want to tell you don't be offended if I said that and I want to tell you that simply "practice makes best".

It important to note that Karima sees some surface structure errors, such as spelling, as not problematic since these are common errors among students when she says: "...we all may make spelling mistakes; it's not strange things." Therefore, although her feedback on Noura's writing touches on some surface level structure errors, spelling is not one of them. Karima then offers Noura some concrete feedback related to content, organisation and surface structure.

In general, Karima seems to be satisfied with the amount of information and arguments presented in the paragraph. She elaborates on this a little later when it is Noura's turn to provide feedback on Karima's paragraph (see Karima's case).

Karima does not focus only on the negative aspects of Noura's writing but she also spells out the positive characteristics. As a result, the whole peer feedback session between Karima and Noura goes smoothly and there seems to be a substantial amount of understanding and a readiness to exchange opinions about each other's writings.

In her attempt to provide feedback on some parts of Noura's paragraph, Karima puts the following sentence between brackets without any guidance to help Noura correct it:

[then, she is a good example of successful inside the house as a mother and wife...]

Noura, uncertain, does not make any amendment. However, in her 2<sup>nd</sup> draft, Noura annotates this sentence asking the teacher if it is a good one. Since she did not receive any help from her peer, Noura turns to the teacher's assistance. This is a great advantage because the student writer has more than one source of feedback; if one fails the other may be able to assist. Although she seems satisfied with the amount and quality of content of Noura's writing, Karima has attempted to provide some feedback concerning organisation, namely the use of signposting to ensure smooth movement from one point to another. In the following sentence:

After that or finally, women have managed to get into some areas...

instead of “after that or finally” Karima suggests the sequence word “thirdly” thinking that it is the best linking word to follow “firstly” and “secondly” which introduced the previous arguments. Noura, however, does not implement the suggestion. Moreover, in response to her peer’s suggestion Noura deletes the word “indeed” and puts “furthermore” in the sentence below. So, the sentence in the 2nd draft reads:

*Furthermore, when she has a decision, she thinks of it with wisdom and responsibility.*

Noura also deletes the phrase “in fact” and puts “to conclude”, which fits better in the concluding sentence. It is worth mentioning here that Karima only underlined the linking word “in fact” without providing any correction, but Noura manages to see the need for a better linking word since it is the concluding sentence. As a result, the concluding sentence in the first draft:

*In fact, she [woman] can do her duty inside and outside the house...*

is amended:

*To conclude, women could do other duty inside and outside the house...*

Karima also provides some suggestions related to the surface structure of the text:

Points raised by the peer	Response
<p>1. Grammar:</p> <p>a. “...<u>woman</u> have a sense of responsibility...”</p> <p>“Woman” ⇒ women</p>	a. Correction implemented.
<p>b. “...more knowledgeable and more experience...”</p> <p>The peer adds a (d) to the word “experience”</p>	b. Correction implemented.

## Peer feedback on assignment 2

Karima comments on Noura’s paragraph saying:

*Well, your paragraph is satisfactory, you’ve tried to respect the rules of a good paragraph, there are all the elements, but you still have some problems that you should get rid of, besides there is a progress, this paragraph is good comparing with the previous one. “Practice makes perfect”.*

Karima judges this present paragraph as better than the previous one. It is interesting that she has developed ability to see some progress in her peer’s writing.

Karima’s feedback on Noura’s second piece of writing covers content, organisation and surface structure of the text. She makes the following comment on how Noura should present her arguments by putting it this way:

☛ You said that technology has made people's lives easier than before, so the reader expects you to speak about the advantages at first.

In doing this, Karima is referring to the topic sentence in Noura's paragraph:

in spite of the fact that technology has enslaved human being in some domains, it has liberated them from many difficulties and made their lives easier than before.

It seems that Karima expects Noura to start by discussing the advantages of technology while Noura, following the in-class instructions, starts with a counter-argument.

However, in the second draft Noura follows Karima's advice by reversing the order of her arguments in such a way that she discusses the advantages of technology first, then, she mentions one disadvantage at the end. It is very interesting how Noura implements this change without questioning it. In fact, this readiness to accept peer feedback matches Noura's positive attitude to peer feedback as a means of exchanging ideas with her peer. She says:

...yes, this method [peer feedback] help me to exchange the ideas with my classmates. (Post.C.I)

It should be mentioned here that the way Noura has initially organised her arguments is in accordance with the way students were encouraged to present their arguments in a piece of writing during the course. However, since this is only the second assignment Noura might not have grasped the classroom instructions well; she, therefore, accepts Karima's suggestion without discussing it. Note that this change will not be considered as an improvement according to the rating scale developed to evaluate students' writings according to the course requirements (see the paragraph rating scale, Table 4-2, p.109). In other words, Noura does not see any problem with implementing her peer's suggestion; otherwise, she would have ignored it. At least that is what I would expect her to do based on what she told me during the interview. Noura acknowledged ignoring her peer comments sometimes but only "when [she feels] that the peer [gives her] a false idea" (Post-C.I). So, as long as Noura does not see any problem with her peer feedback she will take it into consideration in her revisions. Karima also offers some feedback on grammar and mechanics.

Points raised by the peer	Response
<p><b>1. Grammar:</b>            "...in addition, the internet <u>give</u> us more information about the countries and their traditions..."            The peer underlines the incorrect verb form and provides the correction ⇒</p>	<p><b>1. Correction implemented.</b></p>

<p>(gives)</p> <p>2. Mechanics:</p> <p>a. spelling</p> <p>"...technology help <u>recheachers</u> to discover..." ⇒ (researchers)</p> <p>b. "... transportation, travelling by <u>plan</u>, make us arrived in a short time <u>and also</u> the internet give us more information..."</p> <p>The peer underlines the mistake and provides the correct spelling ⇒ (plane)</p> <p>She underlines the words "and also" without providing any suggestion.</p>	<p>2.</p> <p>a. Correction implemented.</p> <p>b. Spelling correction implemented.</p> <p>"and also" ⇒ (in addition)</p>
--	--

It is clear that even in cases where Karima does not offer any direct suggestions for correction, Noura attempts to find the right correction.

### Self-initiated revisions

Noura has implemented some self-initiated revisions in relation to grammar and mechanics. For example, in the first draft she writes the following sentence:

Such as, transportation, travelling by plan, make us arrived in a short time...Fourthly, technology is useful for health. For instance, technology...

In the second draft the correct verb form "makes" is used and instead of a full stop before "for instance", a semicolon is used. Note that the use of a full stop is correct but the writer chooses a semicolon instead. This can be attributed to a class focus on punctuation at that point in the course and Noura probably felt like experimenting with different punctuation marks. Punctuation is also one of the exercises on which students usually hope to gain more marks in the exam.

### Peer feedback on assignment 3

One of the first things Karima notices is a lack of clear physical organisation in Noura's essay. That is to say, there has been no clear division of the essay into paragraphs. Therefore, in order to evaluate each paragraph using the peer feedback sheet, Karima tries to identify the paragraphs following the sign posting used by Noura to move from one idea to another. This activity is also beneficial for Karima, as a feedback provider, because she shows awareness that the essay should be broken into separate paragraphs and tries to create these. This awareness must have been initiated and enhanced by the peer feedback sheet which encourages the respondent to rate and evaluate each paragraph separately.

Karima draws Noura's attention to the problem by saying:

✍ You need to have paragraphs in your essay. It's confuse me when I read it because I can't see paragraphs.

Having then imposed a paragraph structure on Noura's essay, Karima examines every paragraph by rating and commenting on it. For example, she rates the introduction as "satisfactory" commenting:

✍ In this introduction Noura shows clearly her point in which she discussed about it in following paragraphs. She gives the general statement and thesis statement.

The first paragraph in the body is rated as "good" and the explanation is that

✍ Noura didn't write a concluding sentence in order to make her paragraph completed.

The second paragraph is rated as "satisfactory" and the comment is that

✍ Noura didn't write more ideas to have strong paragraph in which she should convince the reader.

The third paragraph is rated as "good" and Karima's comment reads as follows:

✍ Noura respects all the structure of the paragraph.

Finally, the conclusion is rated as "good" and the comment is that Noura

✍ has a good conclusion because she express her comment in this essay.

In addition, Karima identified the different transition signals which Noura used to move from one paragraph to another. However, Karima did not attempt to provide any grammar or language suggestions apart from underlining one spelling mistake.

Noura does not attempt to reorganise her essay into clearly identifiable paragraphs as Karima had advised her to do. However, in response to her peer comment about the first paragraph not having a conclusion Noura provides a short concluding sentence:

So, women should change their styles.

### **Self-initiated revision:**

In addition to responding to peer feedback Noura introduces some self-initiated revisions. For example, she attempts to provide some elaboration, although this does not make much difference to the quality of essay content:

In the first draft Noura writes the following sentence:

First of all, women follow fashions to please themselves specially when they wore new clothes, they feel happy and beautiful and also to pleased men by their new styles.

Noura adds the following sentence to the one above:

Women try to satisfy themselves and men.

#### **Peer feedback on assignment 4**

As is the case for the third assignment, Karima notices that Noura's essay does not have a clear physical organisation. Karima puts it this way:

☞ You have not done the first paragraph, second, third, um, you need to have clearly, um, show when there is one paragraph and then another. I think you need organisation Noura.

Noura agrees that her essay lacks physical organisation by responding:

☞ Yes, you are right because I was writing and copying from the draft and I forget the paragraphs. But I have clear ideas and transition from one idea to the next idea.

In a similar way to the third assignment, Karima attempts to identify the different paragraphs of the fourth assignment and evaluate them. First, the introduction has been rated as 'satisfactory':

☞ It's a satisfactory introduction but I think that it needs something.

Karima does not specify what the problem is with Noura's introduction and even during the peer feedback session she was not able to give Noura any clear idea. Therefore, Noura makes no change to the introduction in her rewrite.

The first paragraph in the body is rated as 'good' and the peer comment is as follows:

☞ A good paragraph even there are some mistakes in the organization of ideas.

Apart from indenting it, Noura does not attempt to make any amendment to the ideas in this paragraph. However, she manages to implement some corrections which are related to grammar and mechanics (see the table below).

The second paragraph is rated as 'good' with Karima commenting that it is

✍ a good paragraph but there is a lot of repetition of some words.

The third paragraph is rated as 'good' and Karima makes the point that it is

✍ a good paragraph with organization and respect of unity and coherence of the ideas.

Finally, the conclusion is evaluated as being

✍ Satisfactory with some grammatical mistakes.

Karima also identifies the different transition signals used by Noura to move from one paragraph to another. In her rewrite Noura tries to organize her essay by having a separate introduction, indenting the first paragraph in the body and separating the conclusion from the body.

Besides examining content and organisation, Karima also identifies some language and grammar mistakes. She has underlined some errors and underlined and offered direct corrections on others. The example is quoted in full below:

Points raised by the peer	Response
<p>*...students who have had the opportunity to evaluate their university lecturers because they are the only who communicate with <u>their lecturers</u> (them) and who...they think that they are like <u>a masters</u>... colleagues have not been the good ones <u>who should be evaluated to university lecturers</u>...<u>students</u> (they) work with their lecturers ...</p> <p>...when the lecturers give <u>to</u> the students the lesson...so, (the peer introduced a comma here) <u>they are a</u> deffirence between the students and the colleagues...Although some education specialists confirmed that colleagues evaluated <u>the</u> university lecturers...</p>	<p>...students who have had the opportunity to evaluate their university lecturers because they are the only who communicate with them and who...they think that they are masters... colleagues have not been the good ones to evaluate university lecturers...</p> <p>...when the lecturers give the students the lesson...so, there are differences between the students and the colleagues... Although some education specialists have confirmed that colleagues evaluate the university lecturers...</p>

It is clear that Noura has implemented the majority of her peer suggestions in her rewrite. In general, Noura has shown a certain readiness to accept peer feedback and implement it in her revisions even though she initially thought that peer feedback was a “strange” activity. Noura seems to have followed the same pattern as the other participants in making use of peer feedback:

- Direct implementation of peer-suggested corrections.
- An attempt to provide the correction when the peer only indicates the error.
- Self-initiated revision.
- Overlooking unhelpful, unclear, peer feedback.

**Table 5-1: Frequency of Noura’s use of peer feedback per assignment**

	Surface structure		Content & organisation	
	No. of peer Suggestions	No. implemented	No. of peer Suggestions	No. implemented
Assignment 1	4	4 (100%)	3	2 (66.6%)
Assignment 2	10	7 (70%)	1	1 (100%)
Assignment 3	1	0 (0 %)	2	1 (50%)
Assignment 4	10	6 (60%)	2	0 (0 %)
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>17 (68%)</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>4 (50%)</b>

**Table 5-2: Noura’s revisions from draft 1 to draft 2 (Feedback source: Peer)**

	Surface Changes		Meaning changes		Total
	Formal	Meaning-preserving	Microstructure	Macrostructure	
Assignment 1	4	0	2	0	6
Assignment 2	5	2	0	1	8
Assignment 3	0	0	1	0	1
Assignment 4	6	0	0	0	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>15 (71.4%)</b>	<b>2 (9.5%)</b>	<b>3 (14.2%)</b>	<b>1 (4.7%)</b>	<b>21</b>



**Table 5-3: Noura's revisions from draft 1 to draft 2 (Feedback source: Self)**

	Surface Changes		Meaning changes		Total
	Formal	Meaning-preserving	Microstructure	Macrostructure	
Assignment 1	0	0	0	0	0
Assignment 2	2	0	0	0	2
Assignment 3	0	0	1	0	1
Assignment 4	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>2 (66.6%)</b>	<b>0 (0%)</b>	<b>1 (33.3%)</b>	<b>0 (0%)</b>	<b>3</b>

### Peer feedback and improvement in text quality

Noura has made a small improvement in the second draft of the first assignment at the level of organisation, but there is a fairly considerable progress in the second draft of the second assignment at the levels of accuracy and style. However, no improvement is achieved in the second drafts of the third and fourth assignments.

**Table 5-4: Mean scores of Noura's 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> drafts**

	Draft 1	Draft 2
Assignment 1	11	11.5
Assignment 2	10.3	11.3
Assignment 3	13.1	13.1
Assignment 4	10.8	10.8

### *Noura's use of teacher written feedback and taped commentary*

#### Teacher Feedback on assignment 1

##### Noura's use of teacher written feedback:

Noura has managed to correct and implement all the 15 (100%) teacher-indicated errors. She also implemented the four direct corrections.

##### Noura's use of teacher taped commentary:

Noura was advised to provide some examples to support the following sentence:

First of all, women have a sense of responsibility; for example, as a mothers of family inside the house, they can do all the activities that is needed inside it.

She responded by providing some elaboration (in italics):

First of all, women have a sense of responsibility; for example, as mothers of families inside the house, they can do all the activities. *such as, the housework (in the kitchen, prepare the food, etc.)*

Although the elaboration is not perfect, it is a useful attempt from Noura to respond productively. In addition, Noura was advised to adopt a less general tone by using the word "usually" instead of the simple present in the following sentence:

Furthermore, when they [women] have a decision, they think of it with wisdom and responsibility.

I commented:

☛ Try to sound a little less general by using "usually" instead of simple present tense because not all women may "think with wisdom and responsibility" all the time.

Noura rewrites the sentence according to the teacher suggestion:

Furthermore, when women have a decision to make, they *usually* think of it with wisdom and responsibility.

The third comment was in response to Noura's annotation: "is this a good sentence?" referring to:

So that they are a good example of successful inside the house and outside the house also...

I replied:

☛ You can do without this part of the sentence since you talked about the idea of women's success inside the house in the previous sentence.

Noura had already mentioned the idea of women's success inside the house in a previous sentence in which she says:

First of all, women have a sense of responsibility; for example, as a mothers of a family inside the house, they can do all the activities that is needed inside it.

Following the advice, Noura dropped the redundant part of the sentence and kept the part which talks about the role of women outside the house. She, then, writes in her 3<sup>rd</sup> draft:

in addition, women have also shown a great deal of success outside houses...

In addition to that, I asked Noura to elaborate on the following sentence by clarifying who she was comparing women with:

Secondly, women are more knowledgeable and more experienced; for instance, Moroccan women are educated, university graduated and have high degrees.

Noura does not attempt to provide any elaboration on the comparison, but she simply deletes the comparative "more". However, in response to the following comment about the second part of the sentence above:

☛ You need to mention why you are talking about educated Moroccan women. You need to relate this to the argument you are making when you say that Moroccan women deserve to be voted for.

Noura attempts to elaborate by adding the italicised part:

*...for instance, Moroccan women are university graduated. So this high degrees help them to enter to the society and to be voted for as members of parliament.*

### **Teacher Feedback on assignment 2**

#### **Noura's use of teacher written feedback**

Out of the 11 teacher-indicated errors, Noura manages to provide 8 corrections. She also made use of the 8 direct corrections.

#### **Noura's use of teacher taped commentary**

I advised Noura, contrary to what the peer had asked her to do, to re-organize her arguments in such a way that she started by mentioning one of the drawbacks of technology, a counter-argument, before discussing the advantages. I commented first on the topic sentence saying:

☛ You have written a fairly good topic sentence in which you make your position clear to the reader. As a reader I understand that you support the idea that technology has liberated Man rather than enslaved him.

Then I made the following comment which was meant to remind Noura to rearrange her arguments appropriately:

☛ The reader understands from your introduction that you want to show how technology has liberated human beings, but you would like to show that it has some drawbacks as well. Therefore, you should have started with the drawbacks and then the positive aspects of technology. We did talk about this in class and we said that it is always better for the readers to end their reading on the points which you would like them to retain and remember. Therefore, in your final draft you may want to start by discussing one of the negative aspects of technology before you move to the positive ones.

Therefore, in her final draft Noura rearranges her arguments following the advice.

The second comment requested her to elaborate on and clarify some examples in order to legitimise their use in the text. I put it this way:

☛ You need to explain in what way "cloning" and "sexual reproduction" can be considered as positive inventions of technology. You shouldn't expect the reader to understand what you mean by these two examples without explaining them.

The two examples are mentioned in the sentence below:

...technology helps researchers to discover antidotes or medicines to some disease and leads to lots of inventions like cloning and sexual reproduction.

In her rewrite, Noura simply deletes the two examples together with the idea of “inventions”. The third point I made was related to the following sentence:

...technology kills communication between parents and children. When they spend a lot of time in front of computers, they become addicted; so the communication between them disappeared.

Although Noura’s idea is fairly clear, it could be better with some more elaboration.

Therefore, I advised her to provide concrete examples in order to support her ideas.

In response Noura attempted to elaborate by rewriting the sentence in this way:

First of all, technology has killed communication between parents and children, when parents bought computers to the children, this latter has spent a lot of time in front of it which has made them addicted; so communication between them has disappeared and this latter deals with lack of human value; for example, emotions, feelings, etc.

Although the sentence above is not without language problems, it shows Noura’s attempt to comply with the teacher taped commentary.

### **Teacher Feedback on assignment 3**

#### **Noura’s use of teacher written feedback:**

Out of the 27 teacher-indicated errors Noura was able to provide 18 corrections. She also included the 4 direct corrections.

#### **Noura’s use of teacher taped commentary**

I drew Noura’s attention to her major problem related to organization. Her paragraphs were not separated, making the whole essay look like one long paragraph. This may be due to the fact that this was the first essay Noura had written after spending time on paragraph writing. I commented as follows:

☛ There seems to be a major problem of organisation with your essay Noura. You haven’t separated the paragraphs in such a way that the reader can see the three main parts: introduction, body, and conclusion clearly. The whole essay looks as if it were one long paragraph, and this creates a big confusion for the reader who has to struggle in order to identify the paragraphs in your essay. Make sure you organise your paragraphs appropriately in such a way that each paragraph discusses one main idea and is physically identifiable from another.

In response, Noura amended the organization of her essay.

The second comment related to the amount of elaboration made on each point. For example, I noticed that one of the points in the thesis statement had not been appropriately elaborated on in the body of the essay. Hence the following comment:

☛ It seems that you have a thesis statement that is quite clear as it shows the subdivisions of the essay. The sentence reads as follows: "although fashion designers may be said to financially exploit women, they have also had a bad influence on women by making them lose their identities, time, and money." However, in the course of your writing, the reader doesn't see how fashion designers make women "lose their identities" because you don't elaborate on the idea. In fact, you don't even mention the idea of "losing identity" in the paragraph in which you are supposed to discuss it. Therefore, the reader doesn't feel that this issue of "women losing their identities" has been raised and discussed properly.

Noura then rewrites her thesis statement in a different manner, excluding the point about "women losing their identities". The rewritten thesis statement reads as follows:

One of the areas in which change has been witnessed strongly is the field of clothing fashions, specially for women clothing because they tend to be more influenced and exploited by fashion designers than men.

The third comment advised Noura to make the following statement less general:

In fact, the fashion industry contributes nothing to society.

Following the advice Noura rewrites the statement as follows:

In fact, fashions lead women to waste their money.

#### **Teacher Feedback on assignment 4**

##### **Noura's use of teacher written feedback**

Noura managed to correct and implement all the 21 (100%) teacher-indicated errors in her rewrite. She also made use of the 10 direct corrections.

##### **Noura's use of teacher taped comments**

Compared to the first essay, the second was much more organised. It had a clear introduction, body and a conclusion. However, the body was written as one block with no clearly identified paragraphs. The first taped comment draws Noura's attention to this issue:

☛ Make sure you separate your paragraphs in the body. Remember that each paragraph deals with one main idea; therefore, you can't have all your paragraphs in the body as one block.

In her 3<sup>rd</sup> draft Noura made use of the comment and provided appropriate organisation for her essay.

My second comment asked Noura to elaborate on the following sentence:

...they [colleagues] refuse to do a little effort with university lecturers because they think that they are masters.

Noura provided the following elaboration:

...for example when lecturers went to them and asked them for help on some lesson, colleagues refuse and said that was not their matter.

Although the elaboration here may be naïve and simplistic, it still shows a worthy attempt to respond to teacher feedback. In the third comment I also advised Noura to provide more elaboration on the following part of one of the paragraphs:

...students work with their lecturers together means that when the lecturers give the students the lesson, the students have to understand the lesson and have to do their exercises; as a result, students are like their lecturers so they should do their best.

In her rewrite Noura simply corrects the language mistakes in the paragraph above without attempting to provide any elaboration.

After experiencing both teacher written feedback and taped commentary, Noura admits that both of them are useful “because in written [she] can see [her] mistakes in symbols, but in the taped comments [she] can listen to [her] mistake and repeat it and listen and listen again.” (Post.C.I)

However, Noura seems to find it more helpful to have verbal comments on the cassette than just the written ones. She puts it this way:

☑ This method help us not only to write our comment but also speak freely about it, this is the first idea. The second is that in writing we only write and write what the teacher told us to do, but to have spoken (taped) comment on the cassette helps us to communicate and discuss with our teacher and change our ideas with her.

Like the other participants, Noura sees taped commentary as a means of communication between her and the teacher, the thing which is uncommon in usual writing classes, at most Moroccan universities, which rely on one-draft essay writing, if any, and teacher written comments. In addition, Noura believes that by getting teacher taped comments, she has learnt more about essay structure, mainly argumentative essay organisation. She says:

☑ This method helps us to give a good structure, organization and logical order. It helps us to write a good paragraph with a good structure; for example, the topic sentence, the supporting point, the supporting details, etc.

Students' attitudes to peer and teacher feedback are taken up for discussion in the next chapter.

From the examination of Noura's use of teacher feedback on the four assignments, it is possible to summarize the way she handles teacher feedback in the following ways:

- Direct implementation of the teacher-suggested corrections.
- Provision of correction for teacher-indicated errors.
- When teacher comment requires further elaboration, Noura resorts to two ways:
  - Deletion of some parts of the text.
  - Provision of limited elaboration.

**Table 5-5: Frequency of Noura's handling of teacher-indicated errors and taped comments**

	Surface suggestions		Meaning suggestions	
	No. of teacher-indicated errors	No. of implemented corrections	No. of teacher taped comments	No. of revisions
Assignment 1	15	15 (100%)	5	4 (80%)
Assignment 2	11	8 (72.7%)	3	3 (100%)
Assignment 3	27	18 (66.6%)	3	3 (100%)
Assignment 4	21	21 (100%)	3	2 (66.6%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>62 (83.7%)</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>12 (85.7%)</b>

**Table 5-6: Noura's revisions from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> drafts (Feedback source: Teacher)**

	Surface Changes		Meaning changes		Total
	Formal	Meaning-preserving	Microstructure	Macrostructure	
Assignment 1	12	3	4	0	19
Assignment 2	6	2	2	1	11
Assignment 3	13	5	2	1	21
Assignment 4	17	4	1	1	23
<b>Total</b>	<b>48 (64.8%)</b>	<b>14 (18.9%)</b>	<b>9 (12.1%)</b>	<b>3 (4.0%)</b>	<b>74</b>

### Teacher feedback and improvement in text quality

There has been some improvement at the level of accuracy in the final draft of Noura's first assignment. However, concerning the final draft of the second assignment the raters noticed a slight improvement at the levels of organization and vocabulary. Furthermore, as a result of implementing teacher feedback, a substantial improvement has been shown in Noura's final drafts of both her third and fourth assignments in all the five components: content, organisation, accuracy, style and vocabulary.

**Table 5-7: Mean scores of Noura's 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> drafts**

Assignments	Draft 2	Draft 3
Assignment 1	11.5	12
Assignment 2	11.3	12.3
Assignment 3	13.1	16.1
Assignment 4	10.8	13

## Noura's Development

### A general development over the drafts

An overall examination of Noura's scores shows that there has been a fairly good improvement in her writing. However, compared to the degree of improvement of the students who had started the course with higher language proficiency, for example, Saida's case, Noura's progress remains modest but also significant given her low level of language proficiency. Besides the concrete improvement in Noura's writing, other aspects have also witnessed some change, such as her attitude to peer feedback and the role of the writing teacher, and her self-confidence.

### **Gaining more self-confidence**

Noura acknowledged that there had been some improvement in her writing in both "content" and "organisation". She also admitted that she had gained more self-confidence in writing in English, and more specifically in argumentative writing. She says:

☞ Today, I feel somehow relaxed for our courses in composition because I find that I could write an argumentative essay without any difficulties for I have the rule and the structure how to write an argumentative essay and also I have done a lot of exercises about punctuation even if I do a few mistakes but with some practice, I can omit this mistakes.

Noura's self-confidence, as she explained above, was a result of her feeling that she was developing mastery over "the rule and the structure" of how to write an argumentative essay. In other words, Noura believed that she became better equipped to write after a period of extensive practice and training. However, she was still aware of the fact that her writing was not without problems, but she felt confident that these could be overcome through further practice.

In addition to the importance of the in-class instruction and writing practice, Noura saw that keeping a language learning diary had contributed to boosting her self-confidence.

She puts it this way:

☞ I think there is some confidence specially when we write our diary because we write about all the things that comes in our mind and also about our courses what we had done in it.

### **Classroom practice as a source of motivation**

As far as the composition course is concerned, Noura found the collaborative work of both the teacher and students on the different writing tasks highly motivating. In other words, Noura perceived the relevance of the course and the activities (Dörnyei 2001b:18) and became more committed to learning and developing her writing skills in general (see Table 3-1, p.38). She explained that her decision to attend the composition



class on a regular basis was related to this. She commented on a classroom activity saying:

☞ Today, in my composition class I study about a topic. My teacher give us a topic about women in Morocco who can not be a member of parliament. So the teacher asks us to write a topic sentence and supporting sentences. After that when we had wrote our topic sentences, some of the students stood up and went to the blackboard and they wrote their topic sentences then my teacher and us tried to correct them in the right sense. That what make me very interested to be present in every course (regular) and don't miss any ones.

This teaching environment in which both the teacher and students work together to create meaning is a novelty for Noura who is used to a teacher-centred approach to teaching and learning.

### **Noura's experience with peer feedback**

When introduced to peer feedback for the first time, Noura seized the opportunity and expressed her mixed feelings about this “good” but rather “strange” method. She puts it this way:

☞ Today, my teacher give us a new methode...she give us a sheet to complete it with the topic sentence and the supporting point and supporting details but about the paper of my friend and what to do in this lecture is to write a Feedback about her paragraphe. This method, I find it good but a little bit strange because we know that the teacher who give us the feedback and correct our paper but in this case, the classmates who correct the paper and give their opinions about it.

As she put it, Noura was used to the teacher as a figure of authority, source of feedback, source of knowledge. Therefore, the fact that a peer offering her feedback on her writing was a substantial change in the way she conceived of learning in her context.

It is worth noting, however, that Noura's attitude towards peer feedback changed quickly during the course period. She showed great ability to understand how peer feedback worked and she managed to be an effective feedback provider and receiver. (For an example of Noura's reaction as a feedback provider, see the peer feedback section on Karima's case).

Furthermore, Noura realised the importance of collaborative work as she opted for extra peer collaboration even outside class. Both Noura and Karima were successful in their work as a pair and this success was taken even further and exploited beyond the writing class as they agreed to prepare for the final exam together. This was testified to by Noura's following account:

📖 Today, I don't know what I should write about but I will try to write something, oh! I forget. Today afternoon, when I was walking in the faculty thinking about the exam and also for my preparation alone because I want someone who share with me my ideas and prepare with me, unexpectedly, I met my friend Karima, who is also my classmate and I asked her what had she done? But Karima told me that she didn't find anyone to prepare with her, so I suggest to her my help and also told her that I'm also I want someone to prepare with me. So finally we found an answer to our problem.

It should be mentioned here that Noura and Karima did not know each other before the course. Their friendship grew as a result of working as a pair in the writing class. Both Noura and Karima reported on this during our informal discussions.

### **Teacher feedback as a means of communication**

An important change in Noura's attitude towards the role of the teacher was observable over the course period. Instead of seeing the teacher as the one "who give us the feedback and correct our paper" only, this limited role was upgraded to the teacher as an interlocutor, as someone with whom students could communicate. This new perception of the teacher was linked to the type of teacher feedback, mainly taped commentary, which Noura and the other students were exposed to throughout the academic year.

Noura puts it this way:

📖 I think that this year I have a good method because our teacher gives us a new method which helps us to write a good essay and also to communicate with us and her.

### **The development of Noura's metalanguage**

It is worth emphasising the benefit gained by giving and receiving feedback through the use of feedback sheets. One of the benefits is that students put into practice the input from the writing course and were also able to talk about what they actually did using the terms and the metalanguage which they might never otherwise have the chance to use. This was very clear from the peer sessions as students provided feedback on each other's writing using the terms in an efficient way, which showed that they had not only learned the terms but were knowledgeable about their meaning and what each one entailed in the writing activity. For example, in the following extract from her language learning diary Noura seemed to have grasped, internalised, the essay structure and was able to make use of it in her writing and also in responding to her peer writings. She says:

📖 Today, I write about the lesson which it told about the step of the essay, for example, Introduction, it contain general statement and thesis statement, the body contain topic sentences, supporting sentence, supporting details and

concluding sentence for each paragraph, and conclusion, but it is not talk about a narrative essay, it's about an argumentative.

In fact, an overview of Noura's writings shows a very good grasp of both paragraph and essay structure as they have been introduced in the writing class. I have noticed that although the content of Noura's writing may sometimes seem naïve, perhaps due to the generality of the topics and also to the fact that she did not attempt to use further reading, she did show a great mastery of paragraph and essay structure.

# Karima's Case

## Preliminary Perspectives

### Background information

- Karima passed her Baccalaureate in 2002 and was 21 years old when she started university, i.e. her first year in the English language department during which the data for this study were collected.
- According to her Baccalaureate English language test and also her self-rating, Karima was at an intermediate level of English language proficiency when she joined the course.
- The results of her diagnostic writing before she started the course were between 76 and 79 according to Jacobs et al. (1981) ESL composition profile.
- Unlike some of the other participants, Karima was not repeating the year.
- The success of her pair work with Noura necessitates some deep analysis of Karima's case in order for us to gain more understanding and insight into the mechanisms underlying such success.

### Motivational Issues

#### Karima's behaviour

Karima was an active student in class; she was also very conscientious and hard-working. Her attendance was regular except for the time when she had an operation and was obliged to miss a few classes. She expresses that in her diary saying:

☐ It has been a long time that I didn't attend composition class, in fact the university in general, it was beyond my will, I was operated on my foot.

In fact Karima's absence coincided with a period of holidays, which did not affect her peer feedback sessions.

#### Exam anxiety

Like most of her classmates Karima suffered from exam anxiety. However, her anxiety relates more to the fact that she was new to the whole university system as a freshman student. Unlike Saida and Noura who had already experienced the university exams, Karima felt insecure. So, her fear was mostly of the "unknown":

☐ In fact I'm so upset about this year, I mean my studies. Everyone seems to be trusted in, but I think that it's not that easy at all, it requires special hard work, and special chance as well.

Karima felt that the other students were more confident than her, that's what she means by "trusted in", while she was sure that passing the final exam was not going to be an easy task. Her freshman status was a challenge for Karima who seemed to lose her enthusiasm and confidence at times. She expresses this disappointment about herself as follows:

☞ I don't know I used to have more confidence in my abilities, but this year I feel myself weak, a little bit lazy, unable to make a pace forward.

However, given her determination to adjust to the new learning environment and succeed, Karima realized that she needed to make extra efforts and regain her enthusiasm. She puts it this way:

☞ I must get out from my gloomy hole, from my deep sleep, I must get rid of that lethargy. In fact I should get rid of all these things, otherwise it will be my doomy day.

Hence, Karima was aware that she had no other alternative but to face the potential obstacles, for her success was not only to fulfil her own aspiration but also that of her family, mainly her mother.

☞ I'll be really embarrassed, for fear that if I fail this year, that I will frustrate my mother who always pray for me.

Hence, Karima's motivation was triggered by both her anxiety and fear of failure and also as a result of parental expectations (Williams and Burden 1997 in Dörnyei 1998: 126). As a matter of fact, Karima showed that she was well able to adjust and benefit from the courses she took. I will first give the reader an overview of Karima's feeling about writing before she started the course and then move to discuss the effects of the writing course on her learning experience and her attitude towards giving and receiving different types of feedback.

### **Karima's feeling about writing**

#### **Language issues**

Unlike Saida and Noura, Karima finds writing in French easier than writing in Arabic. She thinks that her writing problems in Arabic are related to her lack of knowledge of Arabic writing skills since she did not benefit from what she was taught. This is made clear in the following extract:

Karima: Um... my experience, I find writing in Arabic it's difficult even if it is my mother tongue. I find it difficult to find good expressions to tell my attitudes towards the subject, and um...

Teacher: what do you think is the problem?

Karima: I think it is my general problem of knowing how to write, um, organising my ideas, sometimes I find myself blocked, and in brainstorming and I cannot express myself.

Teacher: Do you think you have been taught how to write in Arabic?

Karima: They...actually they try to learn us, to teach us, some rules of writing in high school, but I think that it wasn't efficient for the fact that we didn't benefit from it. (Pre.C.I)

Karima also makes the point that the way she was taught writing in Arabic was not efficient. Instead of being encouraged to think and write freely, students were required to “give back what they were taught in the classes.”

Karima: They gave us a subject to discuss, um, and write about what we were taught, give back what we were taught in the classes.

Teacher: What do you mean by give back what you learnt? Could you explain more?

Karima: We have to memorise the lessons and write about them in the exam, our information we need to show it in writing.

So Karima sees writing in Arabic as problematic because she did not feel that she was encouraged to be creative and her voice was not heard since all she had to do was “memorise” and put what she memorised into writing. In other words, writing was not given much importance and the writing techniques were not focused on. Hence, writing instruction in Arabic for Karima was not a successful experience the thing which made her believe that writing in Arabic was a difficult task.

On the other hand, Karima felt her writing in French was easier and much better. One reason she gives is that her French teachers were not as demanding as her Arabic ones.

Karima: Um...in French I don't find difficulty in French writing because if they [teachers] gave us a topic in French, they didn't expect more complicated language than in Arabic. In Arabic, the teacher doesn't accept a poor language as in French.

Teacher: So your Arabic teachers would expect a high standard and you knew that, you were aware of that, but in French, may be because it is your second language, the teachers wouldn't set high standards.

Karima: Yes. (Pre.C.I)

Concerning her experience in writing in English Karima said that she was good at writing when she was in high school; at least that is what her teacher told her about her writing, and also compared to her classmates she was much better.

Teacher: How about your writing in English, what can you say about it?

Karima: Actually in high school I was the best of my colleague in writing, maybe it doesn't mean that I write very well, but compared to them I was the best and I used to write very long essays with a very good way... um, um teacher used to tell me.

Teacher: The teacher used to tell you.

Karima: She used to give me good marks.

Teacher: What do you think helped you (or helps you) write better in English?

Karima: Oh, well I read a lot and while reading when an expression draw my attention I wrote it down in order to use it in my essay, also I read some essays, and I used to work in a book which is called “Against and For”

Teacher: “For and Against”, it includes mainly argumentative topics. (Pre.C.I)

As we can see Karima has come to the course after positive experiences of writing in school and some degree of confidence. However, her confidence is also based on the

fact that the teacher used to give her “good marks”. This is significant in the sense that it informs us about writing pedagogy and methods of evaluation used by high school teachers. As the results of the baseline study (Chapter Two, pp. 11-29) have shown, the product approach to writing is predominant in writing instruction in Moroccan high schools and universities. Thus, the one-draft method was common and the mark on a student’s one-draft essay counted most. As we see, Karima judges her writing proficiency solely by the “good marks” she used to receive. However, after attending the writing course and participating in the present study, there has been a substantial change in Karima’s perceptions. She has been able to realize what writing involves in terms of skills and its importance in her life as a student majoring in English. This shift in Karima’s perception of writing and other related issues will be discussed in detail after the following analysis of her writing over the course period and the use she makes of the different types of feedback.


### **Karima’s Response to Feedback**

#### *Karima’s use of annotation*

#### **Annotation in the 1<sup>st</sup> draft of assignment 2**

Karima’s annotations focus on content and organisation. Not quite sure about how good her topic sentence is, Karima seeks some advice from the reader; she says: “I write this introduction and I don’t know if it is no use of it.” Although she refers to it here as “introduction” what Karima means is a topic sentence because the second assignment consisted of paragraph writing.

The peer, Noura, advises her saying:

 in the introduction, you might write only the topic sentence without writing your point of view.

Karima responded by amending her topic sentence. Therefore, instead of two sentences:

Some people argue that technology has not liberated Man, but has enslaved him, this subject should be looked at from several views, since it has been up to now a subject of discussion, and a question mark that bothers all walks of life. Is it a cure or a blessing?

Karima writes a short and straightforward topic sentence:

Technology has improved human life.

A second annotation focuses on mechanics, and more specifically on punctuation. Karima refers to the following part of the paragraph and says: “as for punctuation, in additional information, I put a period, but at the end of paragraph I feel that the comma

will be better.” What Karima refers to here is the punctuation mark which should precede the linking words in the following extract:

...incurable. Besides housework which was thought to be a hard task for women to do has become easier and easier thanks to the practical and beneficial machines that don't cost a lot. Moreover means of transport, that was poor and simple, has been developed into cars, planes, ferries, motorcycles, and even spaceships. And other similar examples. However, looking for the best surely would cost a great deal... Furthermore the number of unemployment has gone up, as the factories are no longer in dire need of labour hand. in addition to the dangerous...

As Noura doesn't provide her with any feedback, Karima makes no attempt to change the way she punctuates her sentences. In general, Karima's annotations have touched on content, organisation and mechanics.

Following the course instructions, Karima underlines the part of the text on which she requires feedback and asks questions about it on the margin.

Karima seems to have a positive attitude towards annotations. She believes that “they make [her] re-read [her] work and consider the parts [she] has problems with; they help [her] identify spelling mistakes in [her] work; identify sentence structure problems; paragraph organisation problems; revise content by adding or deleting some ideas; they also show her grammatical mistakes.” As a matter of fact, Karima uses annotations to seek assistance with all these aspects.

### *Karima's use of peer feedback*

#### **Peer feedback on assignment 1**

During the peer feedback session Noura makes some interesting comments on Karima's paragraph by pinpointing the problematic areas. For instance, she starts by rating Karima's paragraph as being 'good' before moving on to talk about the shortage of supporting details for the second supporting point. This is made clear in the following extract:

☛ Noura: This is a good paragraph but there is some mistakes. She [Karima] doesn't give more supporting details in um [Noura laughing]. You [addressing Karima directly] don't give more supporting details and exactly when, um, in the second supporting point and in the third.

Karima: Where, where exactly?

Noura: When we, you just, for the second supporting point you don't give some examples of, about, about, um

Karima [interrupting]: Some words, some domains of...

Noura: Heh, yes, but you don't give more, more concrete examples [Karima repeats agreeing with Noura: "supporting details, yes, examples"]



Karima attempts to improve her writing by adding more supporting details. The elaboration is in italics:

...in addition to her good role as a mother; bringing up children, looking after the husband, and doing the washing up, she is a good example of success, she always fulfills the great achievements in almost all domains, *Sport, Science, Education, Literature, Arts...ect, and no wonder it is a pride for her country.*

Furthermore, Noura draws Karima's attention to the fact that the concluding sentence may need to be more related to the topic sentence:

☛ Noura: ...and also you give a, a concluding, concluding sentence which is not connected.

Karima [looking for clarification]: Which is not mentioned in the topic sentence?

Noura: Yes

Karima: But I underline it, which you notice, I underline it and I wrote [referring to her annotation] that I think that all my paragraph, that this not logically connected with what I have said before, yes.

As we can see Karima seems to understand what her peer means by "a concluding sentence which is not connected"; she seems to realise that the concluding sentence should relate, in a way or another, to the topic sentence. Therefore, in her rewrite Karima amends her concluding sentence in such a way that it is a restatement of the topic sentence.

The topic sentence reads as follows:

It is unfair not to vote for a woman member of parliament in Morocco, since women have proved to be reliable inside and outside house.

The concluding sentence reads:

Eventually, after all these accomplishments, how could we prevent her from the membership of parliament?!!

As she clarifies in the foregoing peer exchange, Karima is also aware that her paragraph may lack unity. This point is also made by Noura in the extract below:

☛ Noura: And also you give a, some information that is not either supporting point nor supporting details when you, you...

After receiving the above comment Karima remembers that Noura made use of useful information in her own writing. She then interrupts Noura saying:

☛ That's what I touched in your essay and I forgot to tell it in my speech [referring to her comments on Noura's paragraph]. I was impressed by the information you had given and, you gave, um, important information but I myself, I didn't manage to make such a, or to put such information. I kept talking about

women formerly and nowadays. Really, it was the only thing that impressed me in your essay.

The comment above is interesting in the sense that the peer, Karima, did not only evaluate Noura's writing but she was also comparing the quality of content, as she put it "information", in Noura's writing with that in her own writing. More importantly, however, Karima seems to remember the good quality of information in Noura's writing: this means that she had read Noura's writing carefully and that she had been "impressed", indeed. An important implication of this is that even after completion of the peer feedback session, Karima continued to think about it.

In response to the comment above, Karima makes sure that some irrelevant information is deleted from her first draft.

In addition, Noura comments on Karima's paragraph organisation and comments on her insufficient use of transition signals. The following extract is a good illustration of what goes on between Noura and Karima during the peer feedback session:

☛ Noura: This one, um, this is another point and also the, you don't write a lot of linking words, transition words.

Karima: I avoid, um, I avoid using a lot of linking words for fear that I don't want to make mistakes, to make mistakes, yes.

That's why I avoid using a lot of linking words, but if I feel that it's necessary I can't do that. I avoid it when it's not matter; it's not necessary.

Note that although Karima is generally very receptive of what her peer says about her writing, this time she is ready to defend herself by explaining why she is reluctant to overuse the linking words. Noura seems to understand Karima's point as she does not make any additional comments.

Besides her feedback on content and organisation, Noura comments on the surface level structure of Karima's writing.

☛ Noura: But we don't forget that you do some mistakes in grammar.

Karima: Grammar? Yes. I underlined another time [referring to her annotations] a sentence which I doubt, I doubt that there was a mistake, if you noticed [reads her underlined sentence aloud to her peer] "unless they were reliable...."

Although she mentions that Karima's writing contains some grammar mistakes, Noura does not attempt to identify them in the text. However, Karima shows that she is aware of the fact that her writing may contain some grammar errors because she has annotated them and she expects some feedback from her peer.

In spite of her criticism of Karima's writing, Noura makes a positive summative comment:

☛ Noura: But in spite of all this, you have a good paragraph.

However, being a modest and an easy going peer, Karima admits that she feels she has more to learn as a freshman writer.

☛ Karima: I wrote a good paragraph, yes, but I am still a beginner, yes I am still a beginner and I want, I should brush up my style, my way of writing. And also I should follow what we have been taught about in our composition class otherwise I will never make progress.

Noura: Yes,

Karima: So, thank you

Noura: Not at all

### Peer feedback on assignment 2

Noura rates Karima's paragraph as 'satisfactory' and makes the following comment:

✍ In the introduction, you might write only the topic sentence without writing your point of view. You don't give a lot of details especially in the second supporting point and third one, and you don't write the logical linking words like, first of all, second, etc. You give a lot of details in the drawback and you forget about the supporting point which you agree with it. So, if you wrote this details about the drawback, you must have been against technology. If you are for the technology, you must give more supporting point and its supporting details.

In response Karima rewrites her introductory sentence in such a way that instead of two sentences she has a very short and straightforward topic sentence. The sentence is quoted above in relation to Karima's response to her peer's comment on her annotation (see Karima's use of annotation).

In addition she implements her peer's comment concerning the second supporting point by adding more details. So, instead of the following sentence:

Besides, housework which was thought to be a hard task for women to do, has become easier thanks to the practical and beneficial machines that don't cost a lot.

Karima provides some elaboration (in italics):

Besides, housework which was thought to be a hard task for women to do, has become easier thanks to the practical and beneficial machines that don't cost a lot *comparing with the great tasks they do, and among those machines we find the washing machine, the vacuum cleaner, ...and other similar things.*

Always in response to her peer feedback Karima provides more elaboration on the third supporting point:

Moreover, means of transport, that was poor and simple has been developed into cars, planes, ferries, motorcycles, and even spaceships, to facilitate trips, and make distances shorter.

In order to meet her peer's expectation as to how many arguments she needs to mention in order to support her position in favour of technology, Karima makes sure that she mentions one more advantage and deletes one drawback. The advantage she adds reads as follows:

In addition, to the most important device, that is Internet, which remains a visa and a passport, that crashes all the boundaries that are built between countries, creates a link between nations, and from an other angle remains a wide source of interests for the researcher to benefit from and explore.

Concerning the arguments against technology Karima mentions three in her first draft: "pollution, unemployment, and weapons", but she deletes the third one in her rewrite.

### Peer feedback on assignment 3

Noura wrote the following general comment about Karima's essay:

✍ It is good argumentative essay, as a reader I was able to recognise your position, However be careful of some spelling mistake and verb and subject agreement may be it is due to quick writing, it happens.

Note that the peer recognises her role as a reader who is able to see the writer's stance. This ability to distinguish between her role as a reader and that of the writer shows that peer feedback activity helps develop such awareness. The peer does not comment on content and organisation of the essay. However, for the first time she turns her attention to surface structure providing some suggestions through the use of symbols, underlining, and offering direct corrections.

Points raised by the peer	Response
<p><b>1. Mechanics</b></p> <p>a. Punctuation "Fashion becomes such an important condition in women's life(,) that takes a big..." The respondent put the comma between brackets (,) and commented: "never use (,) with "that".</p> <p>b. Spelling "To begen with, fashion can give women a nice look..."</p> <p><b>2. Grammar</b></p> <p>a. verb tense &amp; agreement "it may turns out to be worse than that, and <u>has</u> some drawbacks..."</p> <p>b. Reference "Even though they are ugly and unpleasant, <u>they</u> may look attractive by a beautiful dress..." The peer comments: " 'women' " is better than 'they'</p>	<p><b>1.</b></p> <p>a. Correction not implemented.</p> <p>b. "To begin with..."</p> <p><b>2.</b></p> <p>a. "it may <i>turn</i> out to be worse...<i>have</i> some drawbacks..."</p> <p>b. "Even though they are ugly and unpleasant, <i>women</i> may look attractive..."</p>

to avoid confusion."

c. Articles

"...the fashion also helps in developing..." The peer comments: "no need of (the)

d. Pronouns

"All those elements..." The peer suggests using "these"

c. "...fashion also helps..."

d. Suggestion not implemented.

As the table shows, Karima has implemented the majority of the suggested corrections, but she ignores two of them. This relates to what Karima says about the way she tends to deal with peer feedback. She admits that she sometimes feels obliged to ignore corrections, mainly when she believes that what she has written is correct and what the peer offers as a suggestion seems incorrect or merely gratuitous negative feedback. This is made clear in the following extract:

Teacher: In general, what is your feeling about the idea of your peer giving you some negative feedback? How do you feel about that?

Karima: It bothers me.

Teacher: Really? Why?

Karima: Because when I write I think that it's a good work, when my peer has another idea I feel really disappointed.

Teacher: Ok, but the same is also possible for you; you can also give your peers some negative comments.

Karima: Yes, if it's right, but sometimes I find some negative comments which are not true. (Post.C.I)

#### Peer feedback on assignment 4

Noura starts by commenting that the introduction lacks general statements. She addresses Karima as follows:

✍ Try to discuss the topic in general as an introduction then discuss the main topic.

During the peer feedback session Karima asks her peer the following question:

🗣 Karima: What do you mean by "discuss the topic as an introduction and then discuss the main topic"?

Noura: What it mean is you need to give more general statements and then the main topic.

Karima: But I think my thesis statement is clear!?

Noura: Yes, but it will be good if you give more details.

Noura, however, rates the introduction as satisfactory. In her second draft Karima keeps the same introduction and does not attempt to add any general statements, probably because she believes that her thesis statement is "clear" and does not see any need for general statements.

Moreover, the first paragraph is rated as being "good" and Noura comments:

✍ Good paragraph in general. Try to avoid translation from Arabic to English. For example, 'the doors of work open.'

Karima does not change the expression "the doors of work open" simply because she thinks that there is nothing wrong with it. She puts it this way:

☛ Karima: I am sure we can say this in English; it's not translation from Arabic. Why do you say it's translation from Arabic?

Noura: [laughing repeats the equivalent expression in Arabic: <Tuftahu abouabu ashurghl>]

Karima: Yes, it's the same idea but we can say it in English, too.

Noura rates the second paragraph in the body as "good", but she comments:

✍ There is unclear ideas in your paragraph, such as "...when a lecturer forget a small detail, he will not be forgiven by the students, and will be blamed strongly, while his colleagues and superiors will understand his attitude."

However, Karima does not attempt to make any change to her second paragraph because she does not see the need to do so. She manages to convince her peer by making her ideas clearer during the peer feedback session.

☛ Noura: ...some ideas are not clear, for example, "...when a lecturer forget a small detail, he will not be forgiven by the students, and will be blamed strongly, while his colleagues and superiors will understand his attitude."

Karima: I mean that other colleagues understand lecturers better than students. For example when a lecturer makes a mistake his colleagues will know what is the problem but students will not know.

Noura: Yes, I understand now.

Note here that Karima and her peer are discussing meaning rather than focusing merely on the surface structure of the text. Moreover, as evident from the extract above and as Karima states in the post-course interview, peer feedback is a chance for "cooperation" and an "opportunity to discuss and question the feedback with [her] peer..." (Post.C.I)

Finally, the conclusion is rated as "satisfactory" with the following elaboration:

✍ A short conclusion. Absence of summarisation of the main point that you've discussed in your paragraph. You've just expressed your opinion that you'd already explained along the text.

It seems that Noura expects Karima to conclude her essay by summarising the main points discussed in the essay and writing a more elaborate conclusion. However, Karima suffices with a very short conclusion which restates the thesis statement. During the peer feedback session Karima makes the point that there are many ways of writing a conclusion and that the way she has chosen to conclude her essay is one of them. She puts it this way:

☛ Yes, I know that I can write a summary of the main points I have discussed before as conclusion, but I want to express the thesis statement again in the conclusion in order to make the reader remember it.

Once again Karima resists the peer suggestion and makes no change to her conclusion. This resistance, however, is justified as she offers some valid reasons for not implementing the feedback. In addition to providing feedback on content and organisation, Noura also advises Karima concerning some surface structure aspects. Some of the suggestions are implemented by Karima and others are ignored, see the table below:

Points raised by the peer	Response
<b>1. Grammar:</b> a. Prepositions The peer suggests that the writer use the preposition "in" instead of "for" in the following part of the sentence "...they are the only people who can touch amelioration at the end of the year, not only for the examinations, but also for their lives."	1. Not implemented.
<b>2. Mechanics:</b> Spelling: "discover"; "feild"; "lectere"	2. "discover"; "field"; "lecturer"
<b>3. Vocabulary</b> The peer also makes some wrong suggestions. For example in the following part of the sentence: "...they are more qualified to give an evaluation, and that qualification has come from long and hard years of searching..." she suggests using "has acquired" instead of "has come from." The suggested form is not correct; it should be in the passive mode "has been acquired".	3. Not implemented (peer suggestion is incorrect)

As is the case for the other participants, Karima seems to make use of peer feedback in the following ways:

- Direct implementation of peer-suggested corrections.
- Resisting/ignoring peer feedback when this is not helpful after negotiating with the peer.

**Table 5-1: Karima's frequency of peer feedback use per assignment**

	Surface suggestions		Meaning suggestions	
	No. of peer Suggestions	No. implemented	No. of peer Suggestions	No. implemented
Assignment 1	0	0 (0%)	4	3 (75%)
Assignment 2	0	0 (0%)	4	4 (100%)
Assignment 3	7	5 (71.4%)	0	0 (0%)
Assignment 4	9	4 (44.4%)	4	0 (0%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>9 (56.2%)</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>7 (58.3%)</b>

**Table 5-2: Karima's revisions from 1<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> drafts (Feedback source: Peer)**

	Surface changes		Meaning changes		Total
	Formal	Meaning-preserving	Microstructure	Macrostructure	
Assignment 1	0	0	3	0	3
Assignment 2	0	0	3	1	4
Assignment 3	5	0	0	0	5
Assignment 4	4	0	0	0	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>9 (56.2)</b>	<b>0 (0%)</b>	<b>6 (37.5%)</b>	<b>1 (6.2%)</b>	<b>16</b>

### **Peer feedback and improvement in text quality**

As the scores below show, there has been no improvement in Karima's second draft assignment 1, but there is a slight improvement in the second draft of assignment 2. However, no progress has been noticed in the third and fourth assignments. This can be explained by the fact that the few revisions in the last two assignments were only formal.

**Table 5-3: Mean scores of Karima's 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> drafts**

Assignments	Draft 1	Draft 2
Assignment 1	10.3	10.3
Assignment 2	12.6	13.1
Assignment 3	11.6	11.6
Assignment 4	12.8	12.8

### ***Karima's use of teacher written and taped commentary***

#### **Teacher feedback on assignment 1**

#### **Karima's use of teacher written feedback**

Out of the 14 teacher-indicated errors Karima manages to correct and make use of 13 (92.8%) corrections. Karima also implements the 19 direct corrections in her rewrite.

#### **Karima's use of teacher taped commentary**

After a positive comment on Karima's paragraph, I move on to comment on how she provides support for the different points she makes saying:

☛ You have made some interesting supporting points, but you have failed to provide enough supporting details sometimes. See the two sentences which I have indicated as (4) and (5). These two ideas need further elaboration by providing some concrete examples for the reader to understand what you want to say. This problem of lack of enough support seems to stem from the fact that you want to say so many things, but you didn't spend enough time organising your ideas. This kind of a problem could be avoided if you spend more time planning and outlining your writing. You need to make sure that your supporting points are supported and elaborated on enough by providing details and examples. The concluding sentence is fairly good.

The first sentence which I refer to reads as follows:

(4) Besides, woman has an instinctive sense of responsibility; in addition to her good role as a mother; bringing up children, looking after the husband, and doing the washing up, she



is a good example of success, she always fulfills the great achievements in almost all domains, Sport, Science, Education, Literature, Arts...

Karima is advised to:

- ☛ Try to elaborate on the idea of "instinctive sense of responsibility" and how it helps a woman become an MP, i.e. show what the connection is between these two things. You can also give some concrete examples of some Moroccan women who have been successful in the domains you mention in your paragraph.

In response, Karima deletes the word "instinctive" from the text since the main phrase is the "sense of responsibility", or it could be a way of avoiding any further elaboration. However, she manages to provide some concrete examples of some names of successful Moroccan women.

The rewritten sentence then reads:

Besides, women have a sense of responsibility, in addition to their good role as mothers, bringing up children, looking after the husband, and doing the washing-up, they are good examples of success. They always fulfil the great achievements in almost all domains, *Sports, like Nezha Bedwane and Nawal Al Moutawakil, Literature, like Khnata Banouna, Arts, like Naima Al Mcharki, and the famous painter Chaibia, ...and others.*

Karima is also asked to elaborate on the following idea:

(5) Finally and more importantly, she was given the ability to convince, and negotiate, which always helps her to resolve the most delicate cases. [she means "delicate" cases]

In response, Karima provides the name of a Moroccan TV reporter: "Nassima El Hor" as an example of a woman who deals with delicate cases in TV programs. She, then, writes:

Finally and more importantly, women were given the ability to convince, and negotiate, which always helps them to resolve most delicate cases. *Like Nassima Alhor in 2M channel, the way she speaks, and treats her visitors, makes her more convincing and persuading.*

Karima has, therefore, responded to teacher taped comments, although in one instance she simply deletes one word which she had been asked to elaborate on. Bearing in mind that this paragraph is the first piece of writing that Karima has produced during the course, she has responded positively. Therefore, the teacher taped end comment has been worded as such:

- ☛ Again, the paragraph, on the whole, is good, knowing that it is your first piece of academic writing. However, you should bear in mind that there is always scope for improvement in writing.

## Teacher feedback on assignment 2

### Karima's use of teacher written feedback

Karima has corrected and implemented 15 out of the 17 (88.2%) teacher-indicated errors. She also makes use of 15 out of the 21 direct corrections.

### **Karima's use of teacher taped commentary**

The teacher taped commentary starts as follows:

☛ On the whole, you have managed to write a fairly good paragraph Karima. However, there are some issues which you need to take into consideration when you write your 3<sup>rd</sup> draft. I am going to start my feedback by commenting on your topic sentence first. It is a fairly good topic sentence but it does not include the idea of a counter-argument. By saying that "technology has improved human life", you leave the reader under the impression that you will talk mainly about how technology has improved human life without considering its negative side, which you actually do mention towards the end of the paragraph. You may want to rewrite your topic sentence in such a way that it mentions that you'll talk about both the positive and the negative aspects of technology.

Karima responds to the comment by rewriting the following topic sentence:

Technology has improved human life.

In her 3<sup>rd</sup> draft the above sentence becomes:

In spite of all the drawbacks of technology, we cannot deny that it has improved human life.

Furthermore, I draw Karima's attention to an organisation-related issue. The following extract explains what needs to do be done:

☛ Your supporting points are fairly good and you have managed to use enough supporting details as well. As I have said before, you should have started with some negative aspects of technology since your intention is to argue "for" technology not "against" it. You could have started your paragraph by mentioning some drawbacks of technology first, then move on to talk about its advantages. The reason why you need to do that is first because you need to show the reader that in spite of the fact that you are arguing for technology, you are also aware of the fact that it has some drawbacks. Second, in order to have a good impact on the reader and make sure that s/he is convinced about what you say, you need to leave the points you want the reader to remember till the end. As you may know, as readers, we tend to remember the last things we read much better than the first ones.

In response to the comment above, Karima changes the order of her arguments in such a way that she starts by mentioning some disadvantages of technology before moving to discuss its advantages.

The other comment is related to the following sentence which comes towards the end of the paragraph but which seems not to make sense. I ask Karima to clarify what she means by:

However, looking for the best would surely costs a great deal.

Karima, however, does not attempt to clarify the meaning, but she simply deletes the sentence. From the example in the previous draft of the 1<sup>st</sup> assignment and also this present example, Karima sometimes resorts to deletion as a means of responding to teacher taped comments. In both cases so far Karima's deletions do not affect the meaning of the whole piece of writing. That's probably why she feels free to do so. It may also be a means of avoiding extra revision on some unnecessary points.

In response to teacher taped commentary on her 2<sup>nd</sup> assignment, Karima seizes the opportunity to communicate how she feels about teacher comments on her draft and she also takes the chance to thank the teacher for her efforts. Karima shows how she was initially "surprised" by the teacher's feedback because she did not expect to see any problems with her writing. She puts it this way:

☒ In fact I was surprised by your feedback, I thought that I had done a good work and that there was no mistake. Actually I find your feedback logical, especially when you talked about where I should put the advantages and disadvantages. But what I don't understand, and really confuse and bother me a lot is the punctuation, I wish I would get rid of this problem.

It should be mentioned that surface structure errors are not commented on in the taped commentary but Karima uses this chance, using the cover sheet, to express her worries and frustrations as a writer about her persistent mistakes.

In addition, Karima thanks the teacher for the efforts made to help student writers by giving them feedback. She says,

☒ Thank you Madam for your help, and I want to tell you that your work seems to be fruitful at the end of the year, or rather all our university years, since we feel and touch improvement in our writing, thank you once more.

This idea of students being thankful to the teacher after receiving taped commentary is also expressed by Hyland when he says: "students obviously take the time to listen to what I have to say and appreciate my efforts at comprehending their work. I am often thanked afterwards." (1990: 285)

### **Teacher feedback on assignment 3**

#### **Karima's use of teacher written feedback:**

Karima has corrected and made use of 12 out of the 14 (85.7%) teacher-indicated errors.

On the other hand, she implemented 30 out of the 37 direct corrections in her rewrite.

### **Karima's use of teacher taped commentary:**

After a general positive comment, I proceed to the introduction. There are no major problems with it except for the last sentence, the bracketed sentence, which reads like an early conclusion. I therefore advise Karima to delete it. The introduction reads:

Fashion becomes such an important condition in women's life that takes a big part from their interests. On the one hand, it is a good thing since it helps them to have a nice look, and no wonder reach a kind of well-being. But on the other hand, it may turn out to be worse than that, and have some drawbacks that can be on the cost of women's principles and manners. [Thus fashion isn't useful to that extent to be taken all our interests.]

In response to the advice, Karima deletes the sentence.

The second taped comment relates to the second sentence in the fourth paragraph. Karima is asked to rewrite the sentence clearly and elaborate on the point she makes.

The sentence reads as follows:

...they [fashion designers] abstract and remove [women] from their personalities and principles, though [she means through] imposing on them some sorts of clothes that sometimes can not cope neither with their customs, nor with their religion. (Brackets not in original)

In the 3<sup>rd</sup> draft Karima breaks the above sentence into two much simpler and clearer sentences. However, she does not provide any elaboration as suggested. The rewritten sentence then reads:

Fashion designers impose on women some sorts of clothes that don't suit their personalities and manners. Therefore, they push women to lose and give up their manners and principles.

Another problem which I warned Karima against is "sweeping generalisations" which may occur through the use of plural forms. Karima has used the word "women" many times in her essay, but I draw her attention by making the following comment:

☛ You need to be careful about "generalization". Instead of saying "women", you can avoid "sweeping generalizations" by adding the word "some". For example, in your fifth paragraph you say: "Moreover it is noticeable that women are more extravagant than men in terms of buying clothes, they squander a lot of money..." Not all women are extravagant, so you don't want to sound too general.

Karima implements this advice in her rewrite.

### **Teacher feedback on assignment 4**

#### **Karima's use of teacher written feedback**

Karima has corrected and implemented all the 28 (100%) teacher-indicated errors. She also made use of the 14 direct corrections in her rewrite.

### **Karima's use of teacher taped commentary**

Karima has written a good essay on the whole, with each paragraph discussing one main idea and providing appropriate support for it. However, she fails to provide enough detail and elaboration for the fourth paragraph. Hence the following comment:

📧 Your fourth paragraph needs to be developed further. Try to explain and elaborate on the topic sentence by providing some concrete examples and explanations.

The fourth paragraph reads:

From another angle, the lecturer can cheat anybody and make him believe that he is clever, hard working, and a good researcher for the sake of the students, but he can not play it on his colleagues and superiors, as they all work in the same feild and know everything about it.

In response to the comment above, Karima rewrites the paragraph:

From another angle, the lecturer can cheat anybody and make them beleive that he/she is clever, hard working, and a good researcher, but he can not play it on his colleagues and superiors, as they all work in the same field and know everything about it. *also they might have worked for ages which make them experienced enough to judge and criticize each other's work, the experience also makes them more fair and a subject of confidence.*

Karima has made an effort in order to provide some elaboration as she has been asked. Although the elaboration is limited, it shows Karima's willingness to implement the comments as much as she can in her rewrite. This relates to Karima's positive attitude to teacher feedback in general and, more specifically, to taped commentary. Her attitude and impression about the teacher taped commentary and the course as a whole are summarized in the following passage:

📧 Honestly speaking, I find spoken comments on the cassette more helpful and efficient than the written comments because I feel that the teacher is having a direct speech that concerns nobody but me, also it is a dynamic and active method that gives me a kind of self-confidence, and no wonder a will to work harder so as to satisfy my teacher and myself of course. As far as the changes are concerned, it is noticeable that my level has been improved since we began. Formerly I didn't pay attention to the organization of the essay, I tried hard to look for nice language and difficult vocabularies to show off myself, and neglect what is important like supporting points, topic sentence, supporting details, etc, which I didn't even know. To conclude, I want to thank you Madam for your help, and congratulation you've done a good work.

In general, we can see that Karima's attitude to teacher taped commentary, unlike Saida's, was positive from the outset and remained so all the way through the course. Furthermore, it is clear from the extract above and also the different comments which

Karima made that she has come to some important realizations as a result of attending the course and also being exposed to the different types of feedback. For example, issues related to self-confidence in writing in English, motivation, and grasp of the basics of paragraph and essay writing. These points will be tackled in more detail below in relation to Karima's development as a writer over the course period.

From the examination of Karima's use of teacher feedback, the following patterns have been identified:

- Direct implementation of teacher-suggested corrections.
- Provision of corrections for teacher-indicated errors.
- Deletion of some problematic parts of the text, or provision of limited elaboration.

**Table 5-4: Frequency of Karima's handling of teacher-indicated errors and taped comments**

	Surface suggestions		Meaning suggestions	
	No. of teacher-indicated errors	No. of implemented corrections	No. of teacher taped comments	No. of revisions
Assignment 1	14	13 (92.8%)	3	2 (66.6%)
Assignment 2	17	15 (88.2%)	3	2 (66.6%)
Assignment 3	14	12 (85.7%)	3	3 (100%)
Assignment 4	28	28 (100%)	1	1 (100%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>68 (93%)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8 (80%)</b>

**Table 5-5: Karima's revisions from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> drafts (Feedback source: Teacher)**

	Surface changes		Meaning changes		Total
	Formal	Meaning-preserving	Microstructure	Macrostructure	
Assignment 1	5	8	2	0	15
Assignment 2	8	7	0	2	17
Assignment 3	7	5	3	0	15
Assignment 4	20	8	1	0	29
<b>Total</b>	<b>40 (52.6%)</b>	<b>28 (36.8%)</b>	<b>6 (7.8%)</b>	<b>2 (2.6%)</b>	<b>76</b>

### Teacher feedback and improvement in text quality

**Table 5-6: Mean scores of Karima's 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> drafts**

	Draft 2	Draft 3
Assignment 1	10.3	12.5
Assignment 2	13.1	16.1
Assignment 3	11.6	14.6
Assignment 4	12.8	13.6

By implementing a substantial amount of teacher written feedback and taped commentary, Karima has managed to significantly improve on the second draft of her first assignment at the levels of content, organisation and accuracy. She has also managed to write a better final draft of her second assignment by improving content, organisation, accuracy and style. Moreover, considerable progress has been achieved at the levels of content, organisation, accuracy, style and vocabulary in the third draft of the third assignment. Similarly, Karima's final draft of the fourth assignment has improved at the levels of content and accuracy.

## **Karima's Development**

### **Karima's initial perceptions about the course**

As a perceptive and attentive student, Karima was able to detect the difference between the new writing course and her previous ones. She comments on the novelty of the programme:

☞ We began this year with a different system, and a new style of studying that we've never dealt with. I mean writing, which was thought to be an easy task, a small part of our interest; to our dismay it becomes an independent branch that not only does it has its own rules, and its own skills, but also it requires hard work as well as special attention.

This realization came early in the course and, I believe, it was beneficial for Karima because she became aware that more work and effort would be needed in order to understand and adjust in the new university environment and also to be ready for more work on her EFL writing in the English language department. At the beginning of the course Karima was worried about how she would manage her studies at the university, so this early-gained awareness that more skills needed to be developed was beneficial for Karima.

### **Experiencing writing as a process**

#### **Pre-writing as a collective activity**

For Karima, and the other participants, the writing course brought a substantial number of new ideas. For example, the fact that the teacher and students put their heads together to brainstorm a topic was a new element. Karima comments on this activity saying:

☞ It's amazing, the first time for me to work with the teacher and my friends all of us to find ideas. We began brainstorming to come out with many ideas, among them, Moroccan women are graduated, they have many high degrees, moreover, they have a sense of responsibility...

She makes a similar comment about brainstorming on a different topic, but this time showing how both the teacher and students work together to generate ideas, evaluate and choose the best text. She says:

☞ We did the brainstorming. We had two charts, one of "Liberate" and the other "Enslave". We found a lot of ideas in both attitudes. After that we wrote our Topic sentences, Noura's and Fatima's were the ones chosen by us and the teacher, but unfortunately they still had some problems in grammar, coherence, ...In fact, we all still have these problemes but we are optimistic, we wish we could get rid of all those problems.

Karima can already see that writing is not a finished product from the first attempt. There is always more work to be done and she seems to realize that by expressing her

“optimism” that the problems will disappear. Note that although Karima refers to the problems of grammar and coherence in Noura’s and Fatima’s writing, she later uses the pronoun “we” which shows that this problem is a general one, i.e. including herself. Hence, the more Karima is exposed to the writing course the more maturity she gains as a writing apprentice.

### **The teacher is not the only source of feedback**

Another aspect of Karima’s learning relates to her realisation and acceptance of the fact that the source of feedback cannot always be the teacher but that it can also be one of her peers. She states:

☞ We expect the teacher to give us our paragraph corrected, then she gave us our paragraphs with the paper our classmates feedback and asked us to rewrite them, but this time to learn from our mistakes and try to write a second draft that is better than the first one. In fact it is a beneficial method.

Note that, together with using the peer as a source of feedback, Karima also expects that the following draft should be better than the previous, which implicitly highlights the importance of revision in Karima’s developing writing process. We can then say that this cyclical use of the different feedback methods at different stages of students’ writing does help in anchoring revision at each one of these stages. This is expressed by Karima too as she expects her writing to be even better after receiving teacher feedback. She says:

☞ Anyway I’ll be waiting for the teacher comments, and I’m sure that next draft will be better than the too last ones.

### **Karima’s realisation of her improvement and its effect on her self-confidence**

One of the important achievements for Karima has been the fact that she herself can see and feel that she has improved as a writer. The thing which has tremendously helped her to cope with all the worries she had at the beginning of the course. She comments on her improvement and its effect on her self-confidence by putting it this way:

☞ I have already, myself touched a changing in my paragraph in terms of organization, coherence, and language. I feel confident of myself now, I can write any topic I find.

Karima also informed me that her writing improved mainly as far as organisation, or as she calls it “form”, is concerned. See the extract below:

Teacher: Ok, do you feel that there been any improvement in your writing?

Karima: Yes, especially the form. I didn't use to pay much attention to the form of the paragraph or essay before, but this year I have learnt how to do that.

Teacher: Why didn't you do that before?



Karima: Because we didn't have a class that concern the form of paragraph or essay, we just, um, we were just asked to write an essay without telling us about how to do it. (Post.C.I)

Another aspect of Karima's maturity over the course period consists of the development of her sense of reflection and criticism. She compares some aspects of her previous writing course to the present one saying:

☞ After that we move to another exercise which was about punctuation, in fact we have already done that with another teacher, but honestly speaking, I didn't understand at all, he had stuffed us with many papers (courses and exercises) as if the exam would have be only on punctuation; but now, we are given examples with a simple explanation, that is not confusing, and it seems practical.

Karima is able to see the difference between a teaching method which is more exam-oriented and which relies on quantity of information rather than quality, an approach that Karima has adequately expressed using the term "stuffed". Karima is criticising a situation in which pressure is exercised on teachers who are required to finish the program within a limited period of time at the expense of practice and training which students should normally receive.

### **The development of Karima's metalanguage**

By using peer feedback sheets to give and receive feedback students have developed their metalanguage, i.e. I have noticed that after a short time of using feedback sheets students are comfortable using the terminology introduced in class to refer to the paragraph and essay components. In fact, not only are they able to use these terms but they also fully understand their meaning and their functions. Another thing which has proven to be of great help for students in developing their metalanguage is the use of the language learning diary. For most participants the language learning diary has been a chance to report on their daily learning and also a means of reviewing what has been done in the writing class. For example, in the following extract Karima focuses on some important features of writing and elaborates on them in such a way that shows both her understanding of these concepts and also, possibly, an ability to make use of them when judging her own writing and that of her peers. She states:

☞ Today our course was on the main elements of a good paragraph. In addition to the main elements of a paragraph, a well organized paragraph should contain both unity and coherence, that can not be avoided since they make the paragraph more convincing, impressing, and no wonder worth reading. As far as unity is concerned, firstly it means that we should stick to the main idea that is mentioned in the topic sentence, and expand it by adding a supporting idea that can be itself followed by supporting details that may be written in form of examples. Secondly and more importantly, we should not add an idea that is not mentioned in the topic sentence,

no matter how much influence it can have on the reader. As far as coherence, it plays the major role in convincing the reader, since it makes sentences logically connected, accepted to be read, easy to understand, and no wonder more persuading to attract the reader.

Finally, there may well be other factors influencing Karima's development but it would be hard to deny that a substantial amount of improvement in her writing performance and also her attitude to writing are an outcome of attending the writing course.

# Fatima's Case

## Preliminary Perspectives

### Background information

- Fatima came to the course with an intermediate level of English language proficiency and the analysis of her case may give us more insight into writers of a similar proficiency level.
- Her attitude to peer feedback as a source of "competitiveness" makes her case worth analysing in detail. It will be interesting to see to what extent Fatima's attitude has any bearing on her behaviour with her peer.
- She was 20 years old at the time of data collection.
- Her score on the pre-course diagnostic writing is between 57 and 60, according to Jacobs et al. (1981) ESL Composition Profile.
- She was repeating her first year at the university.

### Motivational issues

#### Fatima's behaviour

Fatima was a hard-working student, keen on improving her English. She was aware that she needed to make extra effort in order to bring her English proficiency up to the desired level. She was, more specifically, aware that she needed more practice on her writing. Therefore, she made sure her attendance was regular throughout the course period and her assignments were meticulously done and handed in on time.

#### Fatima's feeling about writing

#### Language issues

In general, Fatima seems to have a positive attitude towards writing in Arabic and she likes reading in Arabic, which she believes helps her write well. She expresses this idea in the following extract:

Fatima: I used to like writing in Arabic because I have been interested all the time to read more...um...stories and novels in Arabic of course and this help me to have a good writing in my Arabic writing

Teacher: do you mean that you find writing in Arabic easy?

Fatima: perhaps because it's my mother tongue I find it easy to write in Arabic (Pre.C.I)

Concerning the type of writing she does in Arabic and its frequency, she reports as follows:

Teacher: What type of writing to you usually do in Arabic?

Fatima: um...[silence]

Teacher: Is it academic writing or non-academic, some kind of informal writing?

Fatima: Academic writing

Teacher: Do you write in Arabic regularly these days?

Fatima: No (Pre.C.I)

Most Moroccan university students do not have to write in Arabic unless they opt for a subject in which it is the medium of instruction. Writing in the science subjects, for instance, is done in French and if the major is English or another foreign language, even writing in French may become uncommon.

Fatima seems to like writing in French. The reason she gives for liking writing in Arabic and French is that her teachers used to praise her for having a good style. This point is important in the sense that it shows how Fatima's positive attitude to writing in Arabic and French is directly linked to the encouragement she used to receive from her teachers. She says:

For me I like writing in general and of course if I like writing in Arabic, I think that I will automatically like writing in French and English writing...um...because my teachers, my previous teachers told me I have a good style in writing in French and in Arabic even though I, um, even if I make some mistakes but in general the style is a good one. (Pre.C.I)

However, Fatima later admits that she does not like writing in English per se but since it is a part and parcel of her language work she knows that she has to inevitably work on it. She also acknowledges that writing in English is a rather challenging task because of the language system. The following extract is an illustration of Fatima's ideas:

Fatima: Yes of course I chose English because I like it and automatically I will like every subjects and my intention is to work on all the subjects so as to enrich my vocabulary to have a good essay

Teacher: Do you mean to say that you like writing in English?

Fatima: not really but I have to work on it because I like English and I need to work hard on every subject.

Teacher: And writing is one of these subjects

Fatima: Yes


Teacher: Do you find writing in English difficult?

Fatima: Yes

Teacher: In general we say that writing is difficult, what do you think makes writing difficult?

Fatima: What makes writing difficult I think rules, tenses, grammar, punctuation all this makes writing difficult. (Pre.C.I)

Fatima also acknowledges that she has problems with organising her writing. For example, in the following quotation she expresses her frustration with discourse, organisation, and coherence:

 I haven't found what I want to write. The ideas are here, but what miss me how to join these ideas. I tried and tried but in vain. So I decided to postpone the writing for another time. I would like to move on from this unpleasant feeling. Anyway I have already written a few lines.

This kind of experience is not uncommon even among native writers of English, but as an EFL writer Fatima may think that it is a sign of her failure and become demotivated. Another source of writing difficulty for her is when the topics are imposed by the teacher, which is the case in the exam-oriented Moroccan university context. She explains this by saying:

Sometimes they [teachers]...they have some topics which are difficult and complex...um...you find the ideas are sometimes difficult to elaborate. (Pre.C.I)

### **Fatima's perception of what makes good writing**

In response to my question about what makes good writing, Fatima's immediate answer was "good vocabulary". Then she added that good writing also involved "good grammar, tenses and punctuation also...um...language" (Pre.C.I). These criteria, according to her, are true of writing in Arabic, French and English. She says:

Fatima: Language is the most important thing

Teacher: Does that mean that when you write you pay more attention to language?

Fatima: Yes, I try to make my language as clear as possible (Pre.C.I)

### **Fatima's role as a writer: some initial beliefs**

From my discussion with Fatima about what she considers her role as a writer to be, it was clear that she had a sense of "audience". She sees her role as writer is to make the reader's task easier by being clear.

Fatima: Give a clear idea about what you want to say and um...[silence]

Teacher: To whom do you give a clear idea?

Fatima: To the reader

Teacher: So you mean that you bear in mind the reader

Fatima: Yes (Pre.C.I)

### **What Fatima expects from the reader**

Concerning the role of the reader Fatima believes that she/he should be attentive to what the writer wants to say and, more interestingly, try to get the hidden message of the written text since that is not always straightforward. As she puts it, the task of the reader is "to be conscious of every written word and to be, um, sometimes to read beyond the lines, sometimes there is something which is not clear but inside, deep inside there is something more important." (Pre.C.I)

It is clear that Fatima came to the course with some ideas about what her roles as a writer and as a reader were. One of the reasons I insisted on raising these issues during the pre-course interviews with the participants was firstly as a means of raising their awareness about their roles as writers and readers. Secondly, for me as a teacher-researcher knowing the initial beliefs of the participants would make me more alert to

the kinds of problems or difficulties to expect during the course period, namely in relation to their tasks as feedback givers and receivers.

## **Fatima's Response to Feedback**

### *Fatima's use of annotation*

#### **Annotation in the 2<sup>nd</sup> draft of assignment 3**

Fatima sought feedback on the following sentence by asking: "is this expression correct?"

Moreover, students can prove to what extent the lecturers behave with them.

Fatima's annotation seems to necessitate feedback on a complete sentence, but her question is too general. The reader may wonder whether Fatima is seeking help with the syntactic or the semantic aspect of the sentence. It is clear that the sentence is syntactically correct, but the main problem is the choice of words. Therefore, I invited Fatima to explain what she meant by "behave with them" and whether she could find a better word, or words, to express what she wanted to say.

Fatima, however, did not make any change to her sentence in the third draft. She writes:

...the evaluation of lecturers should be based on the qualifications, publications, course outlines, and so on. Relatively, students are the most convenient ones to evaluate their lecturers, because there is always a state of contact between them. Moreover, students can prove to what extent the lecturers behave with them, in other words, the way of dealing with different problems and unexpected issues. This can be a turning point in a lecturer's work life, which nobody can know, but students.

However, she has responded to comments from the teacher asking her to elaborate on the ideas put forward in the paragraph. Perhaps Fatima had many other amendments to take care of and therefore overlooked the teacher's response to her annotation.

Compared to Naima and Saida, Fatima hasn't made a substantial use of annotations. However, her annotation remains interesting because it focuses on a much bigger chunk of words: a sentence.

In annotating her text, Fatima abides by the instructions provided during the writing course; she underlines the part of the text on which she seeks feedback and numbers it, then in front of the number she writes her question.

Fatima says that she prefers annotations for the following reasons:

- They make me re-read my work and consider the parts I have problems with.
- They help me identify sentence structure problems.
- They help me identify paragraph organisation problems.

## *Fatima's use of peer feedback*

### **Peer feedback on assignment 1**

The peer, Naima, reads through Fatima's paragraph and rates it as 'good' without making any suggestions for change. Her spoken comment was brief:

☛ Your paragraph is good Fatima and I think you have no problem.

This very short comment from Naima can be related to two factors. First, her tendency to be quiet, second, it can be due to the fact that this is the first peer feedback session in which Naima had to comment on her peer's writing. It is also worth mentioning that Naima does not attempt to provide any feedback towards surface structure.

### **Peer feedback on assignment 2**

The paragraph has been rated as 'satisfactory' and Naima's comment reads:

✍ Your paragraph is satisfactory but I think you haven't follow the outline that you have made. It's better to follow a structure in order to have a clear paragraph without any difficulties to understand what you mean.

Naima also makes the point that since Fatima writes as her topic sentence: "Technology as everything else has a double edged weapon..." she should, in addition to advantages, discuss at least one disadvantage of technology. She says:

☛ You have to give one of the disadvantages since you have mentioned that technology has a disadvantage.

However, in her rewrite Fatima does not follow Naima's suggestion. She, therefore, does not manage to provide full support for her topic sentence (note that Naima's comment is to the point and by not implementing it Fatima is missing a chance to improve her text). The peer's comment is pertinent and shows that she has read Fatima's paragraph carefully. That is to say, the reading did not stop just at the level of surface structure, but it has also tackled content and organization of the paragraph.

Another remark Naima makes concerns organisation:

☛ You have mentioned one supporting point in your outline but you miss it in your paragraph.

In fact Fatima has not left out this supporting point but she has not clearly marked its beginning with an appropriate discourse marker, which confused Naima. In her rewrite Fatima attempts to implement her peer's suggestion by using the sequence word "thirdly" to mark her third supporting point. An examination of Fatima's first draft shows that she is not consistent in using the sequence markers. She uses the word "firstly" to introduce the first supporting point, but no "secondly" and "thirdly".

However, when her attention is drawn to this, Fatima tries to amend her use of the sequence words in such a way that the arguments are appropriately organised.

In addition to content and organisation Naima offers some minor suggestions towards surface structure:

Points raised by the peer	Response
<p><b>1. Mechanics:</b>  <b>a. punctuation:</b>            "...services to humanity in a lot of domains such as health..." (The peer suggests using a comma after "such as")  <b>b. "...thanks to technology many cures were discovered..."</b> (The peer suggests using a full stop after "discovered")</p>	<p>a. Not implemented.             b. Suggestion implemented.</p>

**Self-initiated revision:**

In addition to using the sequence words to mark the beginning of her supporting points, Fatima also provides elaboration as self-initiated revision. For example, in the first draft she writes:

In addition to that technology has another important role, which is the connection between people all over the world. Currently communication becomes part of our modern life, thanks to internet, fax, telegraph...etc. all these inventions have facilitated the lifestyle. Moreover because of the high technology the world becomes a small village.

In the second draft, Fatima writes:

Secondly, technology has also another important role in our modern life, which is connection between people all over the world. Communication becomes part of our daily life, thanks to these inventions: internet, fax, telegraph, ...etc. the lifestyle becomes easy. Because of the satellites, the viewers have choice and freedom to choose the suitable channel at any time and with different point of view. Furthermore, satellites give the viewers an idea about different cultures and bring to them the latest news easily, which makes the globe a small village.

It is clear that in the second example, Fatima elaborates on the idea of "the globe" becoming "a small village" which, in the first draft, has been introduced without support.

For another concrete example of self-initiated revision see how the following sentence from the first draft has been elaborated:

Nowadays time becomes a monster one should do plenty of things, but with the help of mechanization the daily life of a woman (housework) can be done in a few minutes.

In the rewrite the sentence reads:



Thirdly, technology has helped man to create machines, so as to save time because our modern life demands a lot of work, especially, for women; women are obliged to work outside house and inside house, so the mechanization has facilitated the housework. Nowadays, it doesn't take most of women's time.

It is clear that in her revised draft Fatima gives elaboration on her supporting points. However, in spite of this the content remains rather simplistic and naïve on the whole.

### Peer feedback on assignment 3

Naima rates Fatima's introduction as 'satisfactory' and comments:

✍ The introduction is satisfactory but we are confuse when we want to choice the thesis statement.

And takes this up during the feedback session:

🗨 I think Fatima, you, um, you can make clear the thesis statement.

Fatima attempts to amend her introduction. Compare the following two introductions:

#### Draft 1: Introduction

New fashions have great influence on both sexes, men and women. That does not mean we are obliged to follow whatever fashion creates blindly. In other words, we should select from the new fashions what goes with our environment where we live. So as not to go beyond the common sense within society. We have to put in our consideration that there are some concepts, which should be respecting such as, customs and traditions,...etc. In spite of that, new fashions with their colors, variety and beauty give to our lives a kind of vitality.

#### Draft 2: Introduction

New fashions have great influence on both sexes, men and women. But does not mean we are obliged to follow whatever fashion creates blindly. In other words, we should select from the new fashions what goes with our environment where we live. So as not to go beyond the common sense within society. *Furthermore*, we have to put in our consideration that there are some concepts which should be *respected*, such as *religion*, customs and traditions,...etc. *We should not give to our appearances an exaggerated importance so as not to neglect other important things.* In spite of all the previous negative aspects but new fashions with their colors, variety, and beauty give to our lives a kind of vitality. (Additions in italics)

Fatima has made an effort to implement her peer suggestion, but she has not made any major changes to the thesis statement. All she does is add a few linking words and a sentence which does not contribute much to content but which sounds rather like an anticipated conclusion. Although Fatima should be given credit for attempting to follow peer feedback, her endeavour does not necessarily contribute to textual improvement.

The first paragraph in the body has been rated as 'poor'. Fatima reacts to this as follows:

☛ Naima: You have transition signal from introduction to first paragraph, *first*, yes, um, now the first paragraph. I think it is poor

Fatima: Poor? Why?

Naima: The reader find it difficult to find a supporting sentence. Also this paragraph without concluding sentence. That's why it is poor.

Fatima: But I think there is examples. If we read [reads the examples from her first paragraph] "for example, Russians can't ..."

Naima: Yes, but I can't understand what's that means

Fatima: You just need to read more and understand what my examples means.

Naima: Ok, [rereads the paragraph quickly], yes, I can understand now, but you haven't done a concluding sentence.

Fatima is surprised when Naima rates her paragraph as 'poor' and she attempts to convince her peer by inviting her to read "the examples". After rereading the paragraph, Naima is partly convinced that Fatima has provided some supporting details, but she still finds fault with the paragraph as there is no concluding sentence. However, the positive comment on the second paragraph eases the tension as Fatima is pleased to hear that her paragraph is good. The following extract is a good illustration:

☛ Naima: But, but in the second paragraph, um in the second, I think it is good, very good. Any way it is a good step, but also no concluding sentence. I can't find it. You have the transition word: "second". That is good.

Fatima: [laughing] Thank you.

The third paragraph is rated as 'poor' with Naima commenting:

☛ You need to write clearly. You seem to have taken so much space writing about psychology.

It seems that Naima has read the paragraph carefully and has not stopped only at the surface level structure issues but she has attempted to examine other aspects such as unity. This is clear in the following extract:

☛ Naima: from, um, from paragraph two to paragraph three, there are, um, there is no transition. You need to write clearly, you seem to have taken so much space writing about psychology. I can't see why you talk about psychology and colors and life has become spicy. I am confuse, um, I think you should have *unity*. There is many ideas in this paragraph. And no concluding sentence.

Fatima: Well, I am explaining that [reads from her writing] "psychology has discovered that colors have an influence on human psychology. That is a new sort of medicine..."

Naima: Yes, but too many idea in one paragraph. The topic sentence has no link with what you, um, said in the paragraph.

Fatima: Yes, may be I need to mention that in the topic sentence.

The comment about unity is relevant as Fatima seems to insert an idea which has nothing to do with the topic sentence. However, in spite of the comments above Fatima does not undertake any major changes in her rewrite; she simply adds a concluding

sentence. The problem of unity has not been tackled by Fatima because for her, may be, what the peer considers to be irrelevant detail is in fact an elaboration.

This lack of implementation of peer feedback cannot be deliberate because in the post-course interview, Fatima has expressed a positive attitude, mixed with some kind of competitiveness, towards peer feedback. She believes that she can remember peer comments more than she would do the teacher's. The reason for this is that she feels that if the teacher finds fault with her writing that is normal because he/she is more knowledgeable than a student. However, if the peer corrects her mistakes she will remember them more and in detail because it means that the peer "knows better than her." Fatima says: "yes, the teacher it's normal, she knows everything, but if a classmate knows better than me, what's this? I feel I must work hard and be good." (Post.C.I)

Finally, the concluding paragraph is rated as 'good' and the peer feedback session comes to an end with Naima claiming feedback on her essay too, as shown in the following extract:

☛ Naima: Yes, now the conclusion I think it's good...you have linking word "eventually"...it is a fairly acceptable attempt Fatima. I am sure that you can do better [laughs] [This phrase seems to be a result of the student's intake from the teacher's comment on the writing]

Fatima: Thank you

Naima: You are welcome. How about my essay?

Another aspect of the essay which receives the peer's attention is transition between paragraphs. For example, she notices that there is no transition between the second paragraph and the third. Therefore, in the second draft Fatima uses the sequence word: "third" to provide the necessary transition. In addition to the comments on content and organisation, Naima offers some advice concerning grammar, mechanics, and vocabulary.

Points raised by the peer	Response
<p><b>1. Grammar:</b> The peer identified a mistake in the following sentence and marked it as wrong form (wf): ...there are some concepts, which should be <u>respecting</u> (wf)...</p> <p><b>2. Mechanics:</b> The peer combines the use of symbols to identify errors such as (SP) for spelling, (P) for punctuation and also direct correction. For example in the following sentence the peer indicates the type of error but also includes a comma where it should be placed:</p>	<p>1. Fatima provides correct form: "respected"</p> <p>2. a. correction implemented</p>

<p>a. In other words, (p) we should select from the new fashions..."</p> <p>b. The peer indicates the error using a symbol (SP) "testless" without providing the correction.</p> <p><b>3. Vocabulary</b> The peer also identified one sentence used by the writer and underlined it commenting that it is a translation from French: "<u>And as the proverb says</u> (F. Translation)</p>	<p>b. Not implemented</p> <p>3. Not implemented</p>
---	---

In addition to implementing some of her peer suggestions, Fatima also makes some self-initiated revisions related to content, grammar, and mechanics. The following section gives a brief illustration.

### Self-initiated revision

The following concluding paragraph shows how Fatima has attempted to revise the content by adding and deleting some words and sentences, together with the correction of spelling and grammar mistakes. For this purpose compare the first draft of the conclusion with the second draft. The second draft is not without problems, yet it shows the writer's individual endeavour to revise.

#### Draft 1: Conclusion

Eventually, new fashions on one hand, have some negative aspects, which should be avoiding, because nowadays, cloths reflect our personalities, occupations, believes, and of course religion. In the other hand, new fashions have entered some positive changes particularly in our modern life, which characterise by its stress. So new fashions have created some new designs which are practical and flexible for all people.

#### Draft 2: Conclusion

*Eventually*, new fashions on one hand, have some negative aspects, which should be *avoided*, because nowadays, *our way of dressing* reflects our personalities. *So we should give a good impression about ourselves*. In the other hand, new fashions have entered some positive changes particularly in our *stressful lives*. So, new fashions have created some designs which characterise by it flexibility. Which make people total comfort.

Notice how at least a spelling and a grammar mistakes have been corrected. Besides, some words such as "occupations, believes, religion" have been deleted. Note also how some word forms have been changed, such as, "stressful" instead of "stress" and "flexibility" instead of "flexible".

### Peer feedback on assignment 4

Following the same pattern, Naima starts by rating and evaluating every paragraph in Fatima's essay. For example, the introduction is rated as "satisfactory" with Naima commenting and Fatima responding in the following way:

☛ Naima: It's a good introduction but I think that is a little bit long.

Fatima: I have general statements and the thesis statement.

Naima: Yes, but I think you make introduction long, more long than some other paragraphs.

One of the problems Naima has faced in evaluating Fatima's essay is that of unclear paragraphing. The first and the second paragraphs in the body are not separated. So, Naima takes the trouble to read and identify the two paragraphs before evaluating them. This is clear from Naima's comment:

☛ Fatima, your essay is good one on the whole, however, you have to make the body of the essay in paragraphs in order to show your position clearly and to make it clear for the reader.

Moreover, Naima advises Fatima to separate the third paragraph from the conclusion and develop the topic sentence further. She says:

☛ You have to make this idea as paragraph by giving more supporting sentences.

In her rewrite, Fatima follows the suggestion by separating the first paragraph in the body from the second one; however, she does not attempt to separate the third paragraph and the conclusion.

Once she identifies the second paragraph Naima underlines part of the following sentence:

Moreover, students can prove to what extent the lecturer behaves with them.

She then asks Fatima to give further clarification by providing some examples. The comment reads:

☛ You have to clarify more this idea by giving examples.

Therefore, in response to her peer comment Fatima attempts to provide some elaboration. She writes (the elaboration is in italics):

Moreover, students can prove to what extent the lecturer behaves with them, *in other words, the way of dealing with different problems and unexpected issues..., etc. This can be a turning point in a lecturers' life work, which nobody can know it but students.*

However, it seems that the message is still not fully comprehensible. The reader is left with more unanswered questions as to what the "different problems and unexpected issues" are. Despite the fact that Fatima shows some willingness to follow peer feedback, she sometimes also chooses to challenge her peer by not implementing her comments if she happens to disagree with them. For example, she refuses to make any amendment to her concluding paragraph despite the peer's slightly negative comment:

✍ Your conclusion is satisfactory but you didn't follow the steps of good conclusion because you should have mentioned all the point of conclusion such as summary of the main points.

Fatima reacts to the comment above by explaining that she is not supposed to conclude her essay by only summarising the main points; she says:

☛ I don't want summary; I give the result, my opinion about how lecturers can be evaluated better by hard working.

It is clear from Fatima's response that she is aware of the different ways of writing a conclusion and she insists on making that clear to her peer. This reaction confirms what has been mentioned above about Fatima's attitude to peer feedback as a means of triggering a sense of competitiveness; she does not accept the fact that the peer may know better than her. Therefore, her reaction above could be seen as a means of showing off her knowledge and informing the peer that her comment is not valid all the way through as there are other ways to write conclusions. In addition to the comments on content and organisation, the peer also offers advice concerning grammar and mechanics.

Points raised by the peer	Response
<b>1. Grammar:</b> "...because there are two opposite(s) opinions..." the peer crosses out the (s) commenting: "opposite doesn't take (s)" <b>2. Mechanics:</b> a. spelling: "appearence"	<b>1. Correction implemented</b>  <b>2. (appearance)</b>

Fatima has made use of peer feedback in the following ways:

- Direct implementation of peer-suggested corrections.
- Overlooking some peer comments after negotiation and showing evidence that the peer's judgement is incorrect.
- Self-initiated revision

**Table 5-1: Frequency of Fatima's use of peer feedback per assignment**

	Surface suggestions		Meaning suggestions	
	No. of peer Suggestions	No. implemented	No. of peer Suggestions	No. implemented
Assignment 1	0	0	0	0
Assignment 2	2	1 (50%)	2	1 (50%)
Assignment 3	5	3 (60%)	2	1 (50%)
Assignment 4	2	2 (100%)	2	1 (50%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>6 (66.6%)</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3 (50%)</b>

**Table 5-2: Fatima's revisions from 1<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> drafts (Feedback source: Peer)**

	Surface changes		Meaning changes		Total
	Formal	Meaning-preserving	Microstructure	Macrostructure	
Assignment 1	0	0	0	0	0
Assignment 2	1	0	1	0	2
Assignment 3	3	0	1	0	4
Assignment 4	2	0	1	0	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>6 (66.6%)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3 (33.3%)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>9</b>

**Table 5-3: Fatima's revisions from 1<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> drafts (Feedback source: Self)**

	Surface changes		Meaning changes		Total
	Formal	Meaning-preserving	Microstructure	Macrostructure	
Assignment 1	0	0	0	0	0
Assignment 2	0	4	2	0	6
Assignment 3	2	3	1	0	6
Assignment 4	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>2 (16.6%)</b>	<b>7 (58.3%)</b>	<b>3 (25%)</b>	<b>(0%)</b>	<b>12</b>

**Peer feedback and improvement in text quality:**

The raters agree that Fatima's second draft of the first assignment shows no improvement. However, some progress at the levels of content and accuracy is noticed in the second draft of the second assignment. As is made clear from the detailed account of Fatima's use of peer feedback, some important suggestions such as the issue of unity and counter-argument have been overlooked. Hence, the little improvement in the second draft of the third assignment has been limited to accuracy. However, there has been no improvement in the second draft of the fourth assignment.

It is worth mentioning that the extent to which Fatima responds to her peer feedback has clearly affected the quality of her drafts. She has also attempted to rely on herself in revising her drafts. In addition, Fatima's handling of peer feedback has been substantially influenced by her general attitude. She tends to see peer feedback as a source of competitiveness and a source of help which she does not have to accept easily, but which she sometimes has to challenge and question.

**Table 5:4: Mean scores of Fatima's 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> drafts**

Assignments	Draft 1	Draft 2
Assignment 1	11.1	11.1
Assignment 2	13.8	14.8
Assignment 3	14.6	15.1
Assignment 4	14.5	14.5

***Fatima's use of teacher written and taped commentary*****Teacher feedback on assignment 1****Fatima's use of teacher written feedback**

Out of the 24 teacher-indicated errors Fatima manages to implement 15 (62.5%) in her rewrite. She also includes the 14 direct corrections in her rewrite. The rest of the corrections were not needed in the rewrite as Fatima made changes to her draft which did not necessitate their implementation.

**Fatima's use of Teacher taped comments**

After a positive comment at the beginning, Fatima's attention is drawn to some issues with her paragraph. For example, the topic sentence is not appropriately stated, hence the following comment:

☛ It seems that you haven't been able to state your topic sentence clearly and in a straightforward manner. As a reader, I didn't feel that your topic sentence is strong enough. You really have to make your position clear to the reader in your topic sentence. You seem to agree that women should be voted for in order to occupy positions in parliament, so make sure your topic sentence carries this standpoint.

In response to the above comment Fatima makes some amendment. In her second draft the topic sentence reads:

Currently Moroccan woman has proved her demonstrations to be a dependable member, in other words it is high time to give to the Moroccan woman the opportunity to participate in political life; Because the Moroccan woman has shown by the years that she has courage and also capacities to do so many hard tasks.

She rewrites the topic sentence above in such a way that it is more concise and shows her standpoint:

Currently, Moroccan women have proved on many occasions that they are dependable members of society, so they deserve to be voted as a member of parliament.

Although not perfect, the new version of the topic sentence shows that Fatima has understood the taped comment and has reacted accordingly.

In addition, the following comment turns to consider Fatima's use of the transition signals. The taped comment reads:

☛ You have written some interesting supporting points, but you haven't been able to link them through the right transition signals. The reader needs to make an effort in order to identify the different supporting points you have in the paragraph. This problem could be solved by introducing transition words such as, "the first reason why women have to be voted for is...; the second reason is..."

In response, Fatima revises her use of transition making her supporting points easy to follow. Other aspects of Fatima's paragraph which need more work are the supporting details. Hence the following taped comment:

☛ As for the supporting details, it seems that you sometimes make a point, but you fail to support it or elaborate on it. For example in the following sentence: "Furthermore women all over the world are known by their hard working, and honesty", you are making a very general statement and you are not supporting or elaborating on it. As a reader, I can see that you need to give more details and examples in order to support your arguments.



In her 3<sup>rd</sup> draft Fatima does not attempt to amend the sentence as she has been advised to do, but she simply deletes the whole statement. Moreover, I draw Fatima's attention to the fact that her conclusion needs to be made less general by saying:

☛ Since your topic sentence has not been stated strongly and clearly, your concluding sentence also seems to lack some degree of strength. Try to make your concluding sentence sound stronger and try to relate it to your topic sentence in such a way that you restate the topic sentence or just make the concluding sentence a summary of the different supporting points you make throughout the paragraph.

The conclusion in Fatima's second draft reads as follows:

All in all both man and woman have to be side by side to go on further and further.

She then attempts to amend it as follows:

All in all, in the third millennium, Morocco is in need of people who are honest and hard-working. And of course nobody can deny that women will be the voice of Moroccans in the parliament.

## Teacher feedback on assignment 2

### Fatima's use of teacher written feedback

Fatima manages to correct and implement all the 14 teacher-indicated errors in her final draft and she also includes the 5 direct corrections in her rewrite.

### Fatima's use of teacher taped comments

In her third draft Fatima manages to implement the three taped comments related to content and organisation. First, I ask Fatima to clarify what she means by the last part of the following sentence:

Because of the satellites, the viewers have choice and freedom to choose the suitable channel at any time and with different point of view. (underlining not in original)

In response Fatima writes:

Because of the satellites, the viewers have choice and freedom to choose the suitable channel *with different languages.*

I also advise Fatima to mention at least one of the disadvantages of technology since in her topic sentence she states that technology is "a double-edged weapon", i.e. it has both advantages and disadvantages, but that its advantages outweigh its disadvantages. The taped comment reads:

☛ ...your topic sentence is fairly good and it gives the reader an idea about your position. As a reader, I understand that your attitude towards technology is a positive one although you recognize that it might have some drawbacks when you

say that technology is "a double-edged weapon". However, when I read your paragraph, I noticed that you haven't mentioned any negative aspect of technology. As a matter of fact, I would advise you to include at least one supporting point in which you discuss one of the drawbacks of technology. This should be presented as a counter-argument in order to show your reader that although you are for technology, you are also aware of its disadvantages.

In her third draft Fatima follows the advice by including one disadvantage. She writes:

In brief, technology still a gift to humanity, because it has so many positives sides, even though it has some drawbacks. The production of nuclear weapons can be a touching example, because of this latter (nuclear weapons) hundreds of people have been killed.

The third comment draws Fatima's attention to the fact that her supporting points need more elaboration in the form of concrete examples and details:

Concerning the supporting points, I see that you have been successful in choosing the right ones and that you have been able to elaborate on them in a fairly acceptable manner. However, some supporting points seem to lack some degree of detail and you could have avoided this problem by providing some concrete examples. For instance, when you talk about the role of technology in helping people save time through the invention and use of machines, you could have given some examples of those machines, such as vacuum cleaners, washing machines, etc.

In response to the above comment, Fatima includes some concrete examples in her third supporting point. So, instead of the following sentence:

Thirdly, technology has helped man to create machines so as to save time.

Fatima writes:

Thirdly, technology has helped Man to create machines such as hoovers, washing machines, printers,...etc so as to save time.

It is clear from the close examination of Fatima's drafts of the second assignment that she has been very keen on following both teacher written and taped comments and has managed to implement all the suggested corrections.

### **Teacher feedback on assignment 3**

#### **Fatima's use of teacher written feedback**

In addition to implementing 12 direct corrections, Fatima has managed to correct and implement 28 out of the 34 teacher-indicated errors (82%). However, due to some text modifications some of the direct corrections and also teacher-indicated points were not needed in the third draft.

#### **Fatima's use of teacher taped comments**

The first comment draws Fatima's attention to the issue of unity, i.e. discussing only one main idea per paragraph. In the first paragraph of the body of her first essay, Fatima talks about the importance of considering the environment in creating and following new clothing fashions. The topic sentence reads as follows:

First, new fashions can be one of the modern life signs, but that does not allow us to follow these new fashions without any consideration to the surroundings where we live...

However, towards the middle of the paragraph, she introduces an irrelevant idea saying:

(1) In addition to this, there are some fanatic people who say: "to be respectable with society you should be fashionable." But if we had taken this as a condition to behave with the others we would have neglected an important thing which is people's hearts. And as the proverb says: "All that glitters is not gold." In other words, appearances are deceptive... [the quotation marks in original]

In response to my comment, Fatima develops the new idea in a separate paragraph. Moreover, in the same paragraph Fatima writes:

The designer in this case has one purpose which is expressing both himself and thoughts throughout some bizarre designs.

I therefore ask her to elaborate by giving examples of what she means by "bizarre designs", which she does as follows:

*...some bizarre designs, for example, there are some clothes made of feathers, or transparent cloth, and most of time accompany with strong color of make-up.*

Commenting on the second paragraph I remind Fatima that if what she means by "community" is the Islamic community she, then, needs to specify that for her reader. The sentence reads:

Islam has also insisted on women to wear on veil...Customs and traditions also go with religion... (2) Community never accepts mixture between modern and traditional suits.

In her third draft Fatima is specific:

*...The Islamic community never accepts mixture between modern and traditional suits, because our parents and grand parents prefer that the traditional suits keep their particularity.*

In addition, I make two comments about the third paragraph. The first one concerns the bracketed section which doesn't seem to make much sense in the paragraph. The second asks Fatima to provide concrete examples to support the underlined sentence. The paragraph is as follows:

Third, thanks to new fashions and their vivid colours, life has become different and spicy... (3) [That is why a new sort of medicine has been used, so as to cure some psychological problems with the help of a small dose of medicines.] (4) New fashions have also added vitality in our busy life. They -New fashions- have broken monotony, especially, in women's life, who always like to be renewal. It is clear that new fashions have a positive role in our lives. (Brackets and underlining not in original)

Fatima makes some amendments in response. She deletes the bracketed part and provides some examples to support the underlined sentence. She then writes:

Fourth, thanks to new fashions and their vivid colors, life has become different and spicy. Furthermore, new fashions have added vitality to our busy life, *which characterise by it monotony and stress. The different designers give to consumers the opportunity to chose what's are the most suitable to their personalities, occupations, customs, religion.*

It is worth noting that Fatima has followed and implemented all the teacher taped comments. This may justify the improvement in the text quality of the third draft in comparison with the second.

#### **Teacher feedback on assignment 4**

##### **Fatima's use of teacher written feedback**

Fatima has corrected and implemented all the 29 (100%) teacher-indicated errors in her final draft. However, due to some deletions, the direct corrections have not appeared in the third draft.

##### **Fatima's use of teacher taped comments**

It seems that the problem of unity is still an issue in Fatima's writing. The first taped comment draws her attention to the fact that she needs to discuss only one main idea in each paragraph. For example the following paragraph lacks unity:

On the contrary, colleagues can be the suitable ones to evaluate lecturers, because they have experience and wide knowledge about the subjects and also have the means of judging the academic quality of lecturers. Nonetheless, I am still wondering myself if the colleagues will be fair when evaluating. So as to contrive this complex issue, the evaluating of lecturers should be based on the qualifications, publications, course outlines, and so on. Relatively, students are the most convenient ones to evaluate their lecturers, because there is always a state of touching (contact) between them...

The teacher taped comment addresses Fatima as follows:

- ☛ Are you introducing/starting a new idea in the middle of the paragraph? If yes, then you shouldn't make it part of the same paragraph. In this paragraph you start by talking about colleagues and their role in evaluation, but towards the middle you shift your focus and you start talking about students and their role in the evaluation of teachers. Decide what the topic sentence of this paragraph is and try to stick to it in the whole paragraph.

Fatima responded by dividing the paragraph into two different paragraphs. The first paragraph reads as follows:

However, colleagues are said to be the most suitable ones to evaluate lecturers because they have experience and wide knowledge about the subjects, and they have means of judging the academic quality of lecturers. Nonetheless, one is led to wonder if the colleagues will be fair when evaluating their peers. *There might be some obstacles which affect the friendship between lecturers, such as, competition, personal problems, etc.*"  
(Elaboration in italics)

The second paragraph reads as follows:

So as to contrive this complex issue, the evaluation of lecturers should be based on the qualifications, publications, course outlines, and so on. Relatively, students are the most convenient ones to evaluate their lecturers, because there is always a state of contact between them. Moreover, students can prove to what extent the lecturers behave with them...

The problem of the supporting points not being appropriately selected to support the topic sentence is still an issue in Fatima's second newly created paragraph. However, the way she handles teacher feedback, both written and taped, shows that she is very keen on paying close attention to every detail.

Towards the end of the third paragraph, Fatima writes:

All in all it is up to the students to decide whether the lectures are interesting or boring.

I, therefore, advise her to elaborate on the idea above by showing how students can be objective in their evaluation of lecturers. I ask the following question:

☛ How can students do that (evaluate their lecturers) in an objective way?

In response Fatima provides some elaboration (in italics) by saying:

*...whether the lectures are interesting or boring, because students would not have any benefits for them, and neutrally could be one of their characteristics, because students at this stage are far from any doubts.*

In spite of the fact that Fatima has made an effort to provide some elaboration, this elaboration seems to need further clarification. However, her substantial effort to implement teacher feedback is noticeable. Fatima makes use of the teacher feedback in the following ways:

- Direct implementation of the teacher-suggested corrections.
- Provision of corrections for teacher-indicated errors.
- Deletion of some problematic parts of the text.

**Table 5-5: Frequency of Fatima's handling of teacher-indicated errors and taped Comments**

	Surface suggestions		Meaning suggestions	
	No. of teacher-indicated-errors	No. of implemented corrections	No. of teacher taped comments	No. of revisions
Assignment 1	24	15 (62.5%)	4	3 (75%)
Assignment 2	14	14 (100%)	3	3 (100%)
Assignment 3	34	28 (82%)	5	5 (100%)
Assignment 4	29	29 (100%)	2	2 (100%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>86 (85%)</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>13 (92.8%)</b>

**Table 5-6: Fatima's revisions from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> drafts (Feedback source: Teacher)**

	Surface changes		Meaning changes		Total
	Formal	Meaning-preserving	Microstructure	Macrostructure	
Assignment 1	7	8	2	1	18
Assignment 2	8	6	1	2	17
Assignment 3	18	10	1	4	33
Assignment 4	18	11	2	0	31
<b>Total</b>	<b>51 (51.5%)</b>	<b>35 (35.3%)</b>	<b>6 (6.0%)</b>	<b>7 (7.0 %)</b>	<b>99</b>

It is clear from the tables above that Fatima has made a substantial use of both written and taped comments. The implementation of teacher feedback ranges between 62.5% and 100% for written commentary, and between 75% and 100% for the taped comments. However, it should also be noted that Fatima has made a full use (100%) of taped comments over three assignments in comparison with only two assignments for the written feedback. This may be explained in two ways: first, Fatima has shown a great enthusiasm towards teacher taped comments. This is clearly stated in the following extract from the post-course interview:

**Fatima:** To tell you the truth, your feedback was very helpful, both the written and the taped feedback. I think that it's a good method, but I find the taped feedback more interesting because I feel it more. Um, I can listen to your voice and understand if you were in a good mood or not.

**Teacher:** What do you mean by good mood?

**Fatima [laughing]:** I mean if you are angry with my writing or if it's ok. And I feel that your comments are directed to me; it makes me more careful. I can also repeat the comment again and again. (Post.C.I)

Some important points can be drawn from the extract above. Fatima believes that through taped comments she can understand from the teacher's tone of voice if she is satisfied with Fatima's writing or not. Moreover, she feels that taped comments are meant for her; they are "directed" to her as a writer. Therefore, she pays more attention to them.

The second point is that some of the written comments were not implemented as Fatima made some amendments to her writing which did not necessitate their inclusion. Therefore, if we take this point into consideration it will be possible to say that the discrepancy between Fatima's implementation of teacher written and taped feedback is not a significant one. This can also be supported by Fatima's positive attitude to both

written and taped comments. Although she may be enthusiastic about taped feedback for its novelty, she also clings to the written feedback as an important component in the revision process. This is clearly stated in the following extract:

Teacher: does that mean that you used the spoken comments more to correct your writing?

Fatima: no, but I correct the mistakes you have in writing, then I listen to the cassette and correct more mistakes.

Teacher: would you then prefer to have just spoken comments in the future?

Fatima: no, both written and spoken. (Post.C.I)

### **Teacher feedback and improvement in text quality**

As the table below shows, there has been a considerable improvement in Fatima's final drafts over the course period. According to the raters, the development has been noticed at the levels of organization, accuracy, style and vocabulary for the first assignment. For the second assignment, some progress has been made in organization and accuracy while the third assignment improved at all levels: content, organization, accuracy, style and vocabulary. Moreover, some improvement at the levels of accuracy and vocabulary has been made in the fourth assignments.

**Table 5-7: Mean scores of Fatima's 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> drafts**

	<b>Draft 2</b>	<b>Draft 3</b>
Assignment 1	11.1	13.1
Assignment 2	14.8	15.8
Assignment 3	15.1	18
Assignment 4	14.5	15.6

### **Fatima's Development**

#### **A general development over the drafts**

As I have mentioned above, the improvement in Fatima's writing proficiency is shown by her developmental scores over the completed assignments. As is the case for the other participants, the development from first to second drafts has been minimal in comparison with the development from the second drafts to the final ones. This may be related to the type of feedback and the degree of its implementation in each draft. This point will be taken up in the following chapter and the degree of significance of improvement in relation to feedback type will be examined using a t test to compare first with second drafts and second with third drafts.

#### **Fatima's realisation of improvement in her writing: the effect on her self-confidence**

The development in Fatima's drafts has been concrete evidence of her improvement over the course period which she herself has acknowledged. In fact, she finds the whole

composition class environment different from what she had expected. This is what she expresses in the following extract:

Fatima: For me, I expected to find at the beginning of the year a routine composition class like other classes and ideal system.

Teacher: What do you mean by "ideal system"?

Fatima: Idle!

Teacher: Ok, idle, I see, but what do you mean by that?

Fatima: Yes, an idle system with a blackboard and chalk and chairs, and that's all. But this year I find something specially different because I benefit from all; I grasp all what we have learnt and I touch this in my writing, I touched the improvement in my writing. (post.C.I)

This feeling of progress and improvement is so important for Fatima at this stage because it boosts her confidence as a writer and makes her overcome the feeling of frustration which she used to have when she felt unable to write in English and, therefore, hated it. She expresses this by saying:

In fact I used to feel unable to write and I used to hate writing in English because I don't have what to say, what to write; I didn't have any tools of writing, but now I have tools, rules and I am accustomed to write. (Post.C.I)

Frustration has been replaced by confidence. She says: "yes, I have a lot of self-confidence to write good essays." (Post.C.I) Furthermore, this eases her feeling of exam anxiety, since the exam has always been a lurking threat. She expresses happiness about her improvement and hopes that this will also mean her success in the exam. She says: "I am happy and I hope to pass the exam." (Post.C.I)

### **The impact of the writing course on Fatima's frequency of EFL writing**

Fatima admits that as a result of attending the writing course she now writes more frequently in English. She has come to realise that the more she practices her writing the more confident she feels about it. She writes:

📖 I am so happy because in two days I was able to write two essays this is a good sign of my ability to write an academic writings. Moreover, the more I write the more I have confidence in myself.

Fatima's practice of writing went beyond the course requirements for she also wrote outside class about other topics of her own choice. For example, she decided to write a narrative essay and commented on that saying:

📖 I decided to write a narrative essay about an unforgettable event in my life. I felt that I was able to write it with no problem.



Fatima feels that after having practiced more argumentative writing during the course period, writing a narrative essay is much easier to do. This is a relief because one of the essays she has to write in the exam is narrative. She puts it this way:

I can do narrative essay because I think that argumentative writing is more difficult than narrative and also thanks to the diary which helped us work on narrative writing. We narrate all what we do during the whole day. (Post.C.I)

It should be mentioned that Fatima has managed to keep a regular and rich language learning diary throughout the course period.

### **Fatima's reflection on and evaluation of her EFL learning**

Fatima continues to see her improvement not only as far as EFL writing is concerned but also her general English language proficiency. She has developed a certain degree of awareness about her EFL learning and has become more conscious about her endeavours as a learner. For example, she now pays more attention to the amount of time she spends writing and speaking English. She states:

📖 What concern my learning English in general there is a remarkable improvement. All in all today is a positive one, because I have written and spoken English for about three hours though outside classroom with my friends and classmates, so as to have a fair accent and pronunciation.

She also adds on another occasion:

📖 I can say that today I have spoken English more than three hours, I was successful in conveying in ideas.

Hence, Fatima is able to judge her own performance both as a speaker and as a writer of English.

### **Fatima's evaluation of her learning of EFL writing**

Concerning her writing performance, we find Fatima commenting on one of her writing tasks and explaining how she managed to overcome its complexity by saying:

📖 At the beginning I've found a big difficulty to find ideas and to make a plan and develop them. But after hours of reflection I was able to reach my target. I think I've written a good Essay about fashion.

This ability to judge her own writing, and her spoken performance, is one of the positive outcomes of peer feedback since throughout the whole course period Fatima has had to read and evaluate her peer's written work. In addition, the writing course seems to have equipped her with the criteria she needs to judge how good a paragraph or an essay is. This is something which Fatima herself testifies to:

☞ For me I can admit that I have understood the essential characterisations of an introductory paragraph to have a proper paragraph we should begin with the most general statement first then add the less general until the introduction becomes more specific. I've added a new term which is the "thesis statement" which we should keep this one till the end of the introductory paragraph.

She also adds:

☞ I have learnt another things about writing English. How to develop an idea and make it clear for the reader. It was an important addition to me because I still have problems such as, write too general and this is not good especially in our Academic writing. I should write precisely and logically, so as to declare the message to the reader.

It seems that Fatima's recognition of the problems she has in EFL writing and also her motivation to master the skill have pushed her to devote even her free time to more writing practice. She says:

☞ Even though it is a free day, but a lot of works should be done. I've written three paragraphs. It is hard but it is beneficial at the same time because the more I write the more I master the rules of writing.

Most importantly, however, Fatima's awareness does not stop at the level of what she is currently doing but also reaches out to further planning for learning. She comments on the type of activities she indulges in outside class with a view to improving her English by saying:

☞ To improve in my learning English I try to do my best by watching English films, News and anything has a relationship with English.

This motivation to improve her spoken and written English relates to her general interest in the English language. She says:

☞ What I can say is that I really got hooked to learn more and more about English language and culture as well.

Her exposure to more writing practice has helped boost her confidence and motivation to write in English.

### **Fatima's reflection on her experience with peer feedback**

#### **Peer feedback as a novelty**

Like most of the other participants, Fatima had never experienced peer feedback before. She has made a good use of it during the course period and has managed to benefit substantially from it both inside class and out of class. It seems that her view of peer feedback as a source of "competitiveness" has been more positive. She comments on the whole activity saying:

☞ I've experienced for the first time how to correct a paragraph, so to make things easier our lecturer provides us with some sheets, in order to help us to find out the topic sentences, supporting ideas, and transitions. I like so much this method, because I've never dealt with a method such as this one. Eventually I can say that this method help me a lot to avoid some difficulties and mistakes, and learn from others mistakes.

It should be mentioned that although Fatima viewed peer feedback as a source of competitiveness, this did not negatively influence her peer feedback activities with Naima. On the contrary, it was a good incentive for her to keep up the good work. The other factor which may have helped keep this feeling of competitiveness positive could have been that as a peer, Naima was more relaxed and easy going, which can be said to have turned Fatima's competitive tendency into more collaborative pair work even outside class.

### **Collaborative pair work outside class**

After seeing for themselves the benefits of working as a pair in class, both Fatima and her peer, Naima, decide to extend their pair work to the second drafts of their essays. Although peer feedback was done in class on the first drafts only, Fatima and Naima chose to use it to revise their second drafts as well before handing them to me. This is done mainly on the fourth assignment as the topic was rather challenging. Fatima explains that saying:

☞ Naima and I have spent our time working on the second draft of the essay, because the subject which our lecturer chose demande a lot of time and effort as well.

For Fatima and Naima this choice to opt for more collaborative pair work has not been limited to this writing assignment, they have also decided to prepare for the final exam together. It seems that if the peers manage to see the benefit of their work inside class, there is more chance of developing stronger collaboration out of class as well (see Karima and Noura's pair). Fatima puts it this way:

☞ Today my friend, Naima, and I had decided to prepare for the exam. We came to the university at 8:00 o'clock morning we attended to a grammar's course, then had a small pause after that we moved to the liberary, so as to continue doing some exercises of grammar. What I can say about working in pairs that is a good and fruitful experience. Naima and I will work hard till the end of the year if God wills.

# Naima's Case

## Preliminary Perspectives

### Background information

- Naima's English language proficiency was at the low-intermediate level when she joined the course, according to her Baccalaureate English language test and also her self-rating.
- Her score on the pre-course diagnostic writing is between 54 and 55, according to Jacobs et al. (1981) ESL Composition Profile.
- Her development over the course period from a "shy, hesitant, introvert" to a more "self-confident, extrovert, collaborative" learner makes her case worth presenting in detail.
- She was 20 years old at the time of data collection and she was repeating her first year at the university.
- Her case may give the reader a full picture about her pair work with Fatima over the course period.

### Motivational issues

#### Naima's behaviour

Naima is generally a quiet, hard-working and conscientious student. Her attendance throughout the course had been regular, except for the time when she had an accident and had to miss a few classes. This incident took place half-way through the course and in order to be able to follow the writing course Naima asked her classmate, Fatima, to collect the handouts and the notes for her and also keep her informed about any writing assignments, which she managed to produce. However, one thing I noticed about Naima from the very beginning of the course was that she tended to be shy and this did sometimes interfere with her classroom learning experience by limiting her participation. However, it was reassuring that Naima seemed to be aware of this tendency and showed a determination to overcome it. She states:

☐ Today in the classroom we have a discussion about writing and why do we write it was really important to know the answer of this question even though I didn't participate because I was a little bit shy but I think that I must throw away this shyness in order to face any problems or obstacle. I will try to avoid this problem but I don't know if I will succeed or not but I will do my best.

With this determination and also her exposure to learning situations in which she has had to express herself both in writing and in speaking Naima manages gradually to overcome her shyness and integrate into the group.

#### Naima's feeling about writing

#### Language issues

Like the majority of the other participants Naima attributes the ease of writing in Arabic to the fact that Arabic is her first language. However, unlike some of the students who believe that their writing skills in Arabic are weak due to the quality of instruction and the extent of exposure, Naima admits that she is well aware of “the structure” of writing in Arabic and can, therefore, write in Arabic without any problem. However, she raises an important issue concerning her inability to write well in French by attributing it to the fact that French is nowadays taught by non-native speakers.

As far as her writing in English is concerned Naima admits that she has not been practicing it; therefore, she does not seem to like it that much. (Unless I stated otherwise, the following quotations are from the pre-course interview)

Teacher: How about your writing in English? Do you like writing in English?

Naima: Not too much...um...I didn't practice it

Teacher: Do you mean that you don't like writing in English just because you haven't had enough practice or that you just hate it in general?

Naima: I don't have the tools, how to write...um...how to find the words, the organisation

Teacher: So, does that mean you haven't had enough practice writing in English?

Naima: Yes, but I like studying English...um...I like it and I want to learn it in the university

Teacher: Did you have any English writing courses when you were in high school?

Naima: Yes, but we learn only words and some sentences...um...they don't learn to us...um...they don't teach to us how to write.

Naima's comment about the shortage, or rather lack, of EFL writing practice is realistic since, like most Moroccan students who opt for English as a major at the university, the amount of practice in the years prior to university will not usually have provided her with appropriate preparation in EFL writing (see section 1.3.1, p: 6). However, what is reassuring about Naima's situation is that she likes English and is ready to invest in it.

### **Naima's perception of what makes writing difficult**

Naima seems to attribute the difficulty in writing to two main components: “vocabulary and organisation”. This is clear in the following extract:

Teacher: When we talk about writing we usually refer to it as one of the difficult skills, what do you think makes it difficult?

Naima: Vocabulary and organisation, because we have to have vocabulary and organise ideas.

### **Naima's perception of what makes good writing**

On the same line, Naima sets vocabulary, clarity of ideas and organisation as three main criteria for good writing. This is also clear in her response below:

Teacher: Right, well when we talk about writing we usually say this is good or bad writing, what do you think makes good writing Naima?

Naima: Vocabulary...um...the ideas clear and the structure

Teacher: What do you mean by structure?

Naima: Organisation of ideas to make the reader understand what you mean, what you want to say.

She also strongly believes these criteria create good writing in both Arabic and English.

Teacher: What do you think is good writing in English?

Naima: The same, vocabulary and organisation.

### **Naima's role as a writer: some initial beliefs**

Naima sees her major role as a writer as to convince the reader. She recognises that this is mainly her task in academic writing and when discussing an issue.

Teacher: Right, now as a writer what do you think your job is?

Naima: To convince the reader

Teacher: To convince the reader, ok, do you think that's your task in any kind of writing?

Naima: In academic writing...um when I discuss something

Teacher: Yes, for example when you argue for or against something.

However, from my discussion with Naima it seemed that her perception of who the reader of her writing can be is limited to "the teacher".

Teacher: Now, before you start writing Naima, what are some of the things you consider, things that you think about?

Naima: [silent/thinking]

Teacher: [clarifying] Do you, for example, consider who is going to read your writing?

Naima: Yes, of course um...the teacher

Teacher: Is it always the teacher?

Naima: Yes, it is the teacher who read and correct my writing.

Naima's reaction is very much related to her context in which the immediate source of feedback is traditionally the teacher. The last statement in the extract above informs us about her expectations as well: "...it is the teacher who read and correct my writing." Most importantly, however, and regardless of her focus on the teacher as the main reader of her writing, Naima seems to have a notion of "audience", which is a positive thing at this stage. Furthermore, she seems to be aware of the fact that having an audience in mind when writing tends to influence how she writes. Her ideas are clearly expressed in the following excerpt:

Teacher: Ok, if as you said you consider the reader when you write, how do you think that influences your writing?

Naima: It makes you write it with...um...it makes you do good writing

Teacher: What do you mean by good writing? What do you try to do?

Naima: You try to draw the reader's attention in order to make him or her have more attention to read your writing.

Nonetheless, Naima is aware of the fact that attracting a reader's attention is not an easy task. She believes that some "knowledge" is necessary and, as far as she defines it, this knowledge is "the way to organise the ideas". She puts it this way:

Teacher: Is it always easy to attract your reader's attention?

Naima: Not easy, it demands knowledge

Teacher: What do you mean by knowledge Naima?

Naima: The way you organise the ideas.

### **What Naima expects from the reader**

Naima thinks that the reader's job is to "judge" the writer's work, and more specifically, "to criticise" it.

Teacher: We have discussed the role of the writer, now let's turn to the role of the reader, what do you think is his/her job?

Naima: Judge your writing

Teacher: Huh

Naima: To judge and to criticise may be

Teacher: So you expect your reader to be critical! Sometimes the reader can be...

Naima: [interrupting]: The teacher

Teacher [continuing]: one of your peers or the teacher (Pre.C.I)

Note that in interrupting me above Naima still insists on the idea that the reader is "the teacher" as she cannot think of anyone else as a potential reader. However, it is interesting to know that she expects the reader to be critical of her work and since the reader according to her is the teacher, I thought it would be worth investigating what she means by "critical" and also find out what kind of help she expects from the teacher, hence my following conversation with her:

Teacher: What kind of help do you expect from your writing teacher?

Naima: First of all he or she will tell me her point of view about my writing and tell me something I have to change...um...in order to write better

Teacher: You mean that you expect advice and some guidance

Naima: I prefer the teacher to correct my mistakes and to tell me the problems in my writing.

Teacher: What kind of problems do you think the teacher should focus on?

Naima: All problems and especially vocabulary and organisation.

As we have seen above Naima identifies "vocabulary and organisation" as important criteria of good writing and she also seems to emphasize them in relation to the reader's/teacher's feedback on her writing. It will be interesting to see how this focus has persisted throughout the course period and how it has influenced her use of annotation.

## Naima's Response to Feedback

### *Naima's use of annotation*

#### Annotation in the 2<sup>nd</sup> draft of assignment 1

Naima uses three annotations in the 2<sup>nd</sup> draft of her first writing which focused on vocabulary. For example, in the first annotation, Naima asks: "is this sentence true?"

...[which **cram** (1) their heads and become knowledgeable to steer any position.] (Brackets and number in the original annotation, the word "cram" is highlighted in original text).

Naima then asks if the word "cram" is suitable in the sentence.

In the second annotation Naima seeks the teacher's help with the word "liability", saying: "I am not sure that is the exact word."

Then, Moroccan women have sense of liability (2) which...

In the third annotation she asks about the following part of the sentence. She highlights it and asks: "is this a repetition?"

Then, Moroccan women have sense of liability which, on the one hand stems from their functions inside houses as mothers, since they have a great deal of responsibility (3) towards their children. (The words in bold are highlighted in the original text.)

In response to Naima's queries, I tried to comment on each annotation separately. For example, in response to the first I commented:

✎ The idea of 'cramming' one's head is pejorative. Try to find another word which will convey a positive idea. You can, for example say: '...university graduates who are 'knowledgeable enough' to steer the wheel of any position they occupy.'

Concerning the second annotation I suggested the word 'responsibility' instead of "liability".

In responding to Naima's third annotation, I suggested the use of the relative pronoun 'who' as one way of solving the problem. The sentence then reads:

...on the one hand stems from their functions inside houses as mothers who have a great deal of responsibility towards their children.

In the 3<sup>rd</sup> draft Naima implements all the suggestions.

#### Annotation in the 1<sup>st</sup> draft of assignment 2

Naima's annotations continued to focus on vocabulary in the second assignment. The following examples are a good illustration. It will be interesting to see how much help she will get from her peer on the questions she asks. In the first annotation Naima asks: "is this form correct?" about the following underlined part of the sentence:



...first, it helps them to improve their productions in industry by (1) allowing to them to produce a new machines and Appliances with efficiency.

In the second annotation she seeks help with the following underlined words by asking “can we say that?”

Second, technology has been useful in medicines, as with the modern equipment, medicines can cure (2) a substantial deal of grave diseases.

The peer, Fatima, tries to respond to Naima’s first annotation by providing a noun, “the allowance”, instead of a verb. However, Fatima does not offer any help concerning the second annotation. On the one hand, Naima doesn’t use the noun form but she manages to find the verb form and use it, although she doesn’t use the correct verb tense. She puts it this way:

...first, it helps them to improve their productions in industry, Because it *allow* to them to produce new machines and appliances with efficiency.

On the other hand, since she hasn’t received any suggestion from her peer, Naima also keeps the expression “a substantial deal”.

### Annotation in the 2<sup>nd</sup> draft of assignment 3

Naima’s annotations on the 3<sup>rd</sup> piece of writing are also vocabulary-oriented. For example, in the first annotation she seeks help with the use of “despite of” in the following sentence by asking: “is this word correct?” (Notice that the words in bold are highlighted in original.)

...yet (1) despite of how nice and attractive this fashions seem to be...

I respond by crossing out “of”. In the second annotation Naima asks if the phrase “to luck of respect” in the following sentence is correct.

in addition (2) to luck of respect towards our relegion. In short it's better to be fashions-conscious person than to be fashionable.

I also respond to this annotation by offering a direct correction of the misspelled word “luck” (lack) because it is clear from the context that Naima meant “lack” not “luck”. She seems to have confused the two spellings and since her preoccupation with vocabulary is the main worry she does not see that the problem as merely one of spelling.

Naima implements my response to the first annotation by using the word “despite” appropriately in the sentence below:

... *yet despite* the fact of how nice and attractive new fashion seems to be...

Naima has also added the phrase: “the fact of” which shows that she has tried to check the use of the word “despite” elsewhere as I did not suggest it. Naima also follows my advice and corrects her misspelling of the second annotation.

Naima’s annotations are all related to vocabulary, although this does not necessarily mean that her writings are without other problems of content, organisation, language and mechanics, etc. However, her focus on vocabulary problems can be linked to her general perception of what makes good writing and also to some of the major problems she said she had faced in EFL writing.

Naima’s strategy for annotating her writing is to highlight the words, but she also highlights some words/or parts of the sentence she wants to have feedback on and numbers them, then at the bottom of the page she writes the question corresponding to each number.

Naima seems to value annotations for the following reasons:

- They make her reread her work and consider the parts she has problems with
- They help her revise content by adding and deleting some ideas.

In addition to these reasons, Naima adds that annotations can “help her revise her words and if they are fitting in the paragraph”. This last point is clearly illustrated in the foregoing analysis.

### *Naima’s use of peer feedback*

#### **Peer feedback on assignment 1**

The peer, Fatima, starts her comments by rating the whole paragraph as ‘satisfactory’ and stating:

- ☛ Miss Naima needs more supporting ideas. It would be better if she cares more about spelling, and punctuation.

A general examination of the type of peer feedback comments on Naima’s first assignment shows that these are related mainly to content, language (sentence structure and grammar), vocabulary, and mechanics. Although the peer suggests that “more supporting ideas” are needed, in her rewrite Naima has not attempted to make any amendments. It is worth noting here that in their first peer feedback session both Fatima

and Naima tended to provide short spoken comments. However, it seems that Fatima has taken some time to provide feedback on surface structure. In response Naima implements the corrections she is certain about but ignores others. The following examples are provided as an illustration of Naima's selective method.

Points raised by the peer	Response
<p><b>1. Language and mechanics:</b></p> <p>a. Naima writes:            "...since they [women] have a great deal of responsibility towards their children. On the other hand, it [responsibility] <u>doesn't allow</u> them to commit anything against law for example they can't <u>accept</u> bribes."            The peer suggests:            "doesn't allow" ⇒ (they don't allow)            "to commit" ⇒ (committing)            "accept" ⇒ (accepting)</p> <p>b. Some of them have university graduates with high degrees, (P) which cram <u>there</u> heads and <u>became</u> knowledgeable to steer any position.            The peer offers direct corrections:            Punctuation: ,            "there" ⇒ (their)            "became" ⇒ (become)</p> <p>c. "...such as Nezha Bedoin who has implemented lot of successful work ...in other domain."            The peer's direct corrections:            "lot of" ⇒ (a lot of); "domain" ⇒ (domains)</p> <p><b>2. Vocabulary:</b>            "Then Moroccan women have sense of <u>liability</u>..."            The peer suggests the use of the word: (dependent) instead of "liability". (Note that the peer suggestion is not suitable neither is the word "liability" in the sentence.</p>	<p><b>1.</b></p> <p>a. Not implemented (incorrect).</p> <p>b. Naima implements the correct verb form and the possessive pronoun, but overlooks the use of comma.</p> <p>c. Implemented</p> <p><b>2. Not implemented.</b></p>

As we can see from the examples above, Naima does not take all of her peer's suggestions for granted. She implements the ones she thinks are useful and feels free to overlook the incorrect or uncertain suggestions. However, in case of doubt Naima would make use of peer feedback workshops in order to discuss the suggestions. She explains this in the post-course interview:

Naima: Yes, I consider, I would discuss with my peer about the recommends that he/she has for me.

I discuss with my peer about what she give me as a comment and then if they were correct I will use them.

Teacher: If you were convinced you will introduce them or implement them in your writing. Does it happen that you just accept your peer's comments just like that; I mean, do you happen to take them for granted?

Naima: No.

Teacher: No?

Naima: Perhaps his comments were wrong.

Teacher: So you have some doubt.

Naima: because, yes, we are at the same level and I can't take them just like that.

Teacher: Ok, all right. Sometimes your peers might give you some negative comments, how do you usually feel about that?

Naima: Yes, I accept that if it's correct.

Teacher: And if they are not right what do you do?

Naima: I don't take them into consideration. (Post.C.I)

Two major points can be elicited from the dialogue above: first that there is useful interaction between Naima and her peer and her implementation of peer feedback is based on negotiation. Second, Naima seems to be suspicious about her peer comments and will not incorporate them unless she is certain about their 'correctness' through peer 'discussion'. In fact, this is a very healthy environment which I, the teacher-researcher, have aimed for in encouraging the learning atmosphere of workshops.

### Peer feedback on assignment 2

Fatima starts by rating Naima's paragraph as being 'satisfactory' and commenting:

✍ There are some foggy expressions. Naima's paragraph needs more clarification, good vocabulary, and avoiding spelling mistakes. Exaggeration in using transitions.

She identifies the different transition signals Naima has used to move from one supporting point to another. These are mainly sequence words: "first of all, secondly, finally, all in all."

It is clear from the peer comment above that some work which is 'meaning/content-oriented' needs to be done, for example Fatima says that "Naima's paragraph needs more clarification." However, she doesn't specify which aspect of the paragraph needs clarification; therefore, Naima feels obliged to ask the following question:

🗨 Naima: Where do I need clarification?

Fatima: I think you need more supporting details and examples

Naima: Yes...um... but this is um this examples are enough I think

Convinced that her paragraph does not need any further examples, Naima does not attempt to make any changes to her draft as far as content and organisation are concerned.

An examination of the first and second drafts shows that the majority of Fatima's surface structure suggestions have been taken into consideration by Naima in her rewrite. See the table below:

Points raised by the peer	Response
1. Grammar: a. "...for instance through the internet we can get <u>informations</u> from computers..." The peer comments that "information never takes 's'	1. a. Correction implemented.

<p>b. "Finally, technology <u>is creature</u> comforts, since it makes the housework easier with the washing machine and the vacuum cleaner and so on and so for."</p> <p>The peer advises Naima to use the verb form (has created) and the singular form of the word (comfort).</p> <p>2. Vocabulary:</p> <p>a. "Second, technology has been usefull in medicines, as with the modern equipement, medicines can cure a substantial deal of grave <u>diseases</u>."</p> <p>The peer suggests that Naima substitute the word (illnesses) for "diseases".</p> <p>b. "All in all, we can't <u>do</u> without technology..."</p> <p>The peer suggests that Naima use the word (live) instead of "do"</p> <p>3. Mechanics:</p> <p>"...in addition to that, we can learn easily by computers, eventhough, that kills the traditional ways of learning, but it saves time."</p> <p>The peer adds a comma before the coordinating conjunction "but" in the sentence above.</p>	<p>b. Correction implemented.</p> <p>2.</p> <p>a. Correction implemented.</p> <p>b. Not implemented.</p> <p>3. Correction implemented.</p>
--	---

### Peer feedback on assignment 3

While Naima tended not to respond to peer comment on content in the early assignments, in her third assignment she does take this kind of comment into account and makes some interesting changes accordingly. It is worth mentioning that some of the changes to content and organisation are a direct result of peer feedback and others are an outcome of Naima's 'self-initiated' revisions. The following analysis shows these two types of amendments both in content and organisation of Naima's drafts.

Fatima rates the introduction as 'satisfactory' and comments:

 You can do more Naima. I feel that there is no coherence in your introduction.

By examining the recorded oral peer discussion related to this section it is also clear that some time is spent discussing every paragraph. For example, as far as the introduction is concerned, Fatima proceeds in the following way:

☛ I am going to give you my opinion about your essay...I start by the introduction...um...I think that it is satisfactory, but you can do more Naima. I feel that there is no coherence in your introduction...may be you have to rewrite it and pay more attention to coherence. You have linking word between introduction and first paragraph, that's good.

Second, she rates the 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph in the body as 'poor' and comments:

☛ Your topic sentence does not go to the point. There is a kind of repetition. Naima try to concentrate what you want to say in an exact words. Avoid repetition in your coming essays.

Third, the 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph is rated as 'satisfactory', with the comment:

☛ The same problem of repetition. You express the ideas with different ways.  
Lack of strong supporting sentences.

Fourth, Fatima rates the 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraph as 'poor' and says that there is

☛ lack of strong supporting sentences.

The fifth point Fatima makes is that there is "no clear concluding sentence." What Fatima means here is a concluding paragraph rather than a concluding sentence since the writing piece is an essay. In addition to the comments on the individual paragraphs, Fatima chooses to make a general comment on the whole essay. She puts it this way:

✍ In general your essay contains some good ideas, but you wasn't able to develop them properly. You still have problems in spelling, reference. Make sure to revise your lessons, so as to avoid these problems. You've also problems with the choice of the specific words which suit the topic. Try to avoid repetition because you miss other important ideas.

Providing a general comment is not required by the peer feedback sheet, but it is Fatima's own endeavour to do a more thorough job.

The following example shows how Naima has managed to respond to her peer's comment by providing a conclusion, but also how she introduces self-initiated revisions by reorganising her ideas into three separate paragraphs created from the original one. This gives a better sense of unity as each paragraph deals with one main idea. The original paragraph reads as follows:

as a matter of fact this fashion has several out comes in women's appearance. on the one hand, women looked odd in some way when the fashion's designers make some bizarre cloths and the women wear them and make different hair styles without any complement. So the women's general appearance is slightly ludicrous with this strange clothes. on the other hand there are somethings fashions that are against our religion because there are often too short skirt or something nearly nude. most of time in new fashion we found unshamed cloths the thing that deffer completely with our religion. then comparing men and women we found an abvious conclusion have to be drawn, as we know that women are more intersted in new fashions than men probably because women are lot of interst in outward appearance. in the contrary of men who have successfully resisted all attempts to make them change their style of dress since men are too sensible to let themselves be bullied by fashion's designers. So new fashions are not always good to follow. we wouldn't be taking things by arbitrary but with great attention to this elements.

The paragraph above comes last in Naima's essay and Fatima finds it difficult to judge whether it is a third paragraph or a conclusion. She says:

☛ I don't know if this paragraph is conclusion or third paragraph.

Naima confirms that she hasn't actually written a conclusion:

☛ ...yes, I haven't written concluding paragraph; I forgot.

Therefore, in the second draft, Naima writes two paragraphs in addition to a conclusion.

These are as follows:

As a matter of fact this fashions have several drawbacks in women's appearance. On the one hand, women looked odd and unfacinated when the fashions are bizarre cloths such as knee-length skirts and three-quarter length sleeves and the women wear them without complaining. Hence, women's appearance become slightly ludicrous...

Another negative aspect exist in new fashions which differ from our relegion, it is that we have most of the time cloths nearly nude or too short skirts...; nonetheless, our relegion ordered us to wear long cloths in order to cover our body...

These examples show that new fashions are not always good to follow. we wouldn't take thing by arbitrary but with great attention, so as to avoid failing in negative sides, like, wasting time and money, and looking odd, in addition to luck of respect towards our relegion. In short it's better to be fashions-conscious person than to be fashionable person.

It is clear that the paragraphs above are not without problems, but they constitute clear evidence that the writer has attempted to make some revision to organisation and content.

As in the first two assignments, Fatima also offers some feedback on surface structure as is shown in the table below:

Points raised by the peer	Response
<p><b>1. Grammar:</b>            "No one can deny the <u>attractivity</u> ...when you are <u>new fashions</u> person...this fashion seems to be, <u>they</u>..."            The peer suggests:            (1) attractiveness            (2) fashionable            (3) (Ref) it</p> <p><b>2. Mechanics:</b>            "Actually, (P) new fashion..."            The peer provides a direct correction of punctuation by inserting a comma and using a symbol (P).</p> <p><b>3. Vocabulary:</b>            "...the most important of them is to please themselves by being <u>punctual</u> and modern."            The peer suggests that Naima use a different word instead of "punctual". She comments:  <i>"This word cannot be used hear because it has no link with fashion. Try to place it with another one, such as smart, fashionable"</i></p>	<p>1. Naima implemented (1) and (2) and for (3) she used "this fashions" instead of the pronoun "it" (Note that while trying to implement the correction Naima makes another mistake "this fashions" [agreement problem])</p> <p>2. Correction implemented.</p> <p>3. Correction implemented (Naima uses the word: "fashionable".</p>

Following the same pattern as in the previous drafts, Fatima starts by rating the introduction as ‘satisfactory’ and commenting:

☛ But Naima there are some fuzzy expressions if you can make them clearer you would have a very good introductory (in general your thesis statement shows your position) paragraph.

However, in her second draft Naima does not identify and improve these, probably due to the fact that Fatima’s comment is generally positive. It reassures her that the “thesis statement” is clear.

The 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph in the body is rated as ‘good’ and the comment is as follows:

☛ Your 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph shows a clear idea about what you want to say but there are some ideas which need more elaboration try to make them.

Naima, however, makes no change to the content.

Then Fatima rates the 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph as “satisfactory” and comments:

☛ You need to clarify your ideas because the reader gets lost when he read [and the peer refers Naima back to the beginning of the paragraph: “provided that...with information...”] Try to avoid big words and unclear ones.

Naima again makes no changes presumably because she does not see any need for that. In fact, Naima’s paragraph is pretty clear and does not require any major change in content. Moreover, Fatima comments that the 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraph is “satisfactory” and says:

☛ Naima you have repeated some previous ideas in the third paragraph. Avoid translation from Arabic to English.

Fatima illustrates her comment with an example from the essay:

The staff system will be changed from taking to taking and giving.

In response Naima deletes the part of the sentence: “from taking to taking and giving” as Fatima manages to convince her that the phrase is an inappropriate translation of one in Arabic. However, except for this Naima makes no change to the content of the paragraph.

In response to the peer comment about repetition, Naima manages to convince her peer that what she is referring to is not a repetition in fact; it is a means of transition between the paragraphs. That is to say, at the end of each paragraph Naima introduces the idea which will be discussed in the subsequent one. Naima puts it this way:

☛ ...that’s how I tell that I talk about another idea. This is not repetition...



The following sentences are an illustration of what Naima is trying to explain to her peer:

The last sentence of the second paragraph reads:

In brief, additionally to demystifying the teaching process and improving university teaching, the student's evaluation helps to improve the student experience.

The first sentence of the third paragraph reads:

Actually, evaluating lecturers...helps to improve student's experience because the feedback forms force students to think about the quality of their courses and give them the opportunity to express their point of view.

Convinced by Naima's argument, Fatima replies: "yes, I thought it is a repetition actually." Therefore, except for deleting some phrases, Naima does not attempt to make any major change to the content or organisation of her paragraphs.

In addition to that and in the same paragraph, Fatima underlines one part of a sentence and advises Naima to:

 try to replace this idea by another one.

Actually, evaluating lecturers or something else helps to improve student's experience...

Naima's responds by simply deleting the phrase.

Moreover, the 4<sup>th</sup> paragraph is rated as "good" with Fatima's comment:

☛ Except from some spelling mistakes your paragraph is a fairly good one.

Naima, therefore, keeps the paragraph intact in the second draft. In addition, the conclusion is rated as "good", with Fatima commenting:

☛ Your conclusion is a good one in the whole because it summarise the essay."

After this positive comment Naima feels no need to change anything about her conclusion. In general, the peer feedback on content and organisation of Naima's draft is positive and in revising her draft Naima has considered some suggestions which she finds reasonable and useful; however, she has also managed to resist some by convincing Fatima through discussion and negotiation. As in the previous drafts, Fatima's feedback has also focused in part on some surface structure issues. It is worth mentioning that some of Fatima's suggested corrections are incorrect and Naima simply overlooks them.

Points raised by the peer	Response
1. Grammar: "... <u>student's</u> evaluation...and <u>that</u> lecturers	1. Naima uses (students'), but overlooks (those) as there is no need for change.

<p>should ...” The peer suggests the following changes: (students’); (those)</p> <p><b>2. Mechanics:</b> “...student’s evaluation is, (P) for the most part, a charade...” The peer suggests that Naima delete the commas.</p> <p><b>3. Vocabulary:</b> “It is believes that...” The peer suggests replacing the word: “believes” ⇒ (true)</p>	<p>2. Not implemented.</p> <p>3. Not implemented.</p>
--	---

The workshop discussion between Naima and her peer focused mainly on content and organisation although some surface structure errors were also identified.

Naima has handled peer feedback in the following ways:

- Direct implementation of peer-suggested corrections.
- Overlooking some doubtful/incorrect peer suggestions.
- Deletion of some problematic items
- Self-initiated revision

**Table 5-1: Frequency of Naima’s use of peer feedback per assignment**

	Surface suggestions		Meaning suggestions	
	No. of peer Suggestions	No. implemented	No. of peer Suggestions	No. implemented
Assignment 1	12	6 (50%)	1	0
Assignment 2	9	7 (77.7%)	1	0
Assignment 3	25	16 (64%)	2	2 (100%)
Assignment 4	15	9 (60%)	5	2 (40%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>38(62.2%)</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>4 (44.4 %)</b>

**Table 5-2: Naima’s revisions from 1<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> drafts (Feedback source: Peer)**

	Surface changes		Meaning changes		Total
	Formal	Meaning-preserving	Microstructure	Macrostructure	
Assignment 1	6	0	0	0	6
Assignment 2	7	0	0	0	7
Assignment 3	13	3	1	1	18
Assignment 4	7	2	2	0	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>33 (78.5%)</b>	<b>5 (11.9%)</b>	<b>3 (7.1%)</b>	<b>1 (2.3%)</b>	<b>42</b>

**Table 5-3: Naima’s revisions from 1<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> drafts (Feedback source: Self)**

	Surface Changes		Meaning changes	
	Formal	Meaning-preserving	Microstructure	Macrostructure
Assignment 3	0	0	0	1

### Peer feedback and improvement in text quality:

Naima has not attempted to make any major revisions to the second draft of her first assignment as far as content and organisation are concerned, and the few surface changes which she has implemented have not led to any improvement in text quality. Similarly, no major improvement has been made in the 2<sup>nd</sup> draft of the second assignment. Assignment three stands out in that the three raters unanimously agree that

Naima has made substantial improvement at the levels of content, organisation, accuracy, and style. This can be attributed to the revisions made as a result of peer feedback and also Naima's individual attempt to improve her organization. However, the second draft of the fourth assignment shows no improvement.

**Table 5-4: Mean scores of Naima's 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> drafts**

	Draft 1	Draft 2
Assignment 1	11	11
Assignment 2	10.6	10.6
Assignment 3	14.3	16
Assignment 4	18.8	18.8

### *Naima's use of teacher written feedback and taped commentary*

#### **Teacher feedback on assignment 1**

#### **Naima's use of teacher written feedback**

Naima has managed to successfully correct 24 out of the 27 teacher-indicated errors (88.8%). In addition, Naima included only a few of the direct corrections because others were not needed due to the substantial revisions made to her draft.

#### **Naima's use of teacher taped comments**

Naima receives a positive taped comment at the beginning, it reads:

🗣️ Bearing in mind that this paragraph is your first attempt, I have to say that it is fairly good on the whole. You've respected the paragraph structure and you've been able to put into practice what you've learnt in class. You seem to have a lot of potential and with more practice and diligence you'll be able to improve your academic writing.

There is no problem with Naima's topic sentence; however, there are some issues with the amount of supporting details provided.

🗣️ You have managed to provide enough supporting points in order to support your position in the topic sentence. The supporting details are generally made clear enough; however, as a reader, I feel that you could have elaborated more by giving some concrete examples where these are sometimes needed. See the numbered parts on your text.

I then draw Naima's attention to the following sentence and ask her to provide some concrete details:

Similarly to other Moroccan women in other domains like, literature; science, art and so on...

Naima responds by providing names of some Moroccan women who have done good work in different domains. The sentence then reads:

Similarly, Moroccan women have achieved a lot of success in other domains, such as, Khnata Benouna in literature, Chaibia Tallal in Art, and Yassmina Badou in Politics.

I also comment on the use of transition saying:

👉 Concerning the use of transition to move from one supporting point to another and also from one supporting detail to another, you have, most of the time, been successful in using the right transition signals.

Before closing my comments I also remind Naima to fix the surface structure problems which have been indicated through written comments and then provide a general positive comment:

👉 Make sure you fix the problems that I have indicated on your paper and write a final draft. Again, the paragraph is good on the whole and I would advise you to keep up the good practice in order to bring your writing up to the desired level, Naima.

### **Teacher feedback on assignment 2**

#### **Naima's use of teacher written feedback**

Naima has managed to successfully correct 20 out of the 24 teacher-indicated errors (83.3%) and has also included the 2 direct corrections.

#### **Naima's use of teacher taped comments**

In addition to responding to teacher written comments, Naima has also paid close attention to the three teacher taped comments.

She is advised to provide enough elaboration where needed:

👉 Your supporting points are fairly good on the whole; however, you need to elaborate on some points. You need to assume that the reader doesn't know anything about what you say and you need, therefore, to provide him/her with all the necessary information in order to make your arguments as clear as possible. As a matter of fact, you need to provide some concrete examples in order to make your points clear for the reader. Look at your second draft for the numbered points that need to be elaborated on more and make sure you provide enough supporting details and examples.

One of the sentences indicated as requiring further elaboration is shown below:

On the other hand, we can travel wherever we want or move from one place to another in a short time.

In the 3<sup>rd</sup> draft, Naima elaborates in this manner (in italics):

On the other hand, we can travel wherever we want or move from one place to another in a short time. *for example, in the past travel took days, regardless of nowadays due to plane we can travel from Morocco to France in 2 hours.*

Although the elaboration contains some mistakes, it shows Naima's readiness to respond to teacher taped commentary.

A second sentence requiring elaboration is as follows:

Second, technology has been usefull in medicine, as with the modern equipement, medicines can cure a substantial deal of grave illnesses.

Again, Naima responds positively:

On the other hand, technology has been useful in medicine, as with the modern equipement, medicine can cure a great deal of grave illnesses, *such as, cancer, heart attack,...etc.*

The third comment draws Naima's attention to both organisation and content in the following part of the paragraph:

Finally, technology has created confort, since it make the housework easier with the washing machine and the vacuum hoover, and others. also with entertainment such as television, with programs transmitted by satellite, we are exposed to many cultures. [in addition to that, we can learn easily by computers, eventhough, that kills the traditional ways of learning but it saves time.]

I then make the following point:

☛ You need to remind the reader that you are still talking about the positive role of technology, and that now you are showing this positive role concerning "entertainment". Make sure you use appropriate transition words. You can start your sentence like this: 'Another positive contribution of technology could be seen in the field of entertainment...'

In addition, I ask Naima to elaborate on the bracketed part of the text by commenting as follows:

☛ This part needs to be explained in much more detail. So, make sure you elaborate on this point by giving some concrete examples.

In response to the above comments, Naima rewrites the passage in the following way:

Finally, technology has created comfort since it makes the housework easier with the washing machine and the vacuum cleaner, and other appliances. Another positive contribution of technology could be seen in the field of entertainment, such as, television, with programs transmitted by satellite, we are exposed to many cultures. In addition to that, we can learn easily by computers, even if it saves time, it kills the traditional ways of learning *and we can clasify this point in the negative side of technology.*

It is interesting to see that towards the end of the above passage, Naima attempts to respond to the following teacher taped comment in which she is advised to include a counter argument:

☛ As a reader, I expect you to talk about the positive side of technology and I assume you'll mention at least one negative aspect of technology because your topic

sentence makes that point: "dispite the fact that technology could be harmful for human beings, it has enormous positive sides."

By adding the last sentence: "...and we can clasify this point in the negative side of technology", Naima's aim is to respond to the teacher's comment above, which requires her to include a counter-argument. However, in her attempt to do so she fails to provide enough elaboration on the negative aspect of technology.

Although there may still be some problems of sentence structure, mechanics, and lack of sufficient elaboration, Naima has rewritten her paragraph in such a way that the teacher taped comments are taken into consideration.

### **Teacher feedback on assignment 3**

#### **Naima's use of teacher written feedback**

Out of the 92 teacher-indicated errors Naima has managed to correct and implement 80 (86.9%) in her rewrite. However, due to some deletions and changes in the text the other suggestions were unnecessary.

Naima's substantial use of teacher written feedback can be attributed to the fact that she is aware of the teacher's general aim to help her correct her surface structure mistakes:

✉ In addition, this method helps me to correct my mistakes, for example, if I had made a "ww" mistake in my essay, I'll try to avoid it in my next essays by using a good dictionary, the same thing for spelling mistakes.

Although she believes that both written feedback and taped commentary are important, Naima also makes the point that teacher taped commentary is more helpful and exciting. She says that "written comments are helpful because they complete the taped comment" (Post.C.I).

#### **Naima's use of Teacher taped comments:**

I start the taped commentary on Naima's fourth assignment as follows:

✉ I am going to start my feedback comments on your first essay by looking first at the overall organisation. The essay is well-organised on the whole. Your introduction has good general statements and a clear thesis statement. The first paragraph presents a positive aspect of new clothing fashions and the following paragraphs take up the negative points as has been put forward in the thesis statement. This is a very good way of organising an argumentative piece of writing.

I then come across an unclear sentence in the fourth paragraph and Naima is advised to consider the problematic sentence by revising it carefully:

☛ In general, the topic sentences in the second and third paragraphs are very well supported through appropriate supporting points and details. However, there is one sentence in the fourth paragraph (see the numbered sentence) that is not very clear. Try to make it clear. In addition to that, you need to specify what religion you talk about in the fourth paragraph in the body of your essay because you shouldn't expect or assume that the reader knows what religion you are talking about.

In response to the above comment Naima attempts to provide some clarification to the following sentence:

Also by being fashionable, yet to what extent good you look by being fashionable, yet to what extent you respect your relegion.

In the third draft the rewritten sentence reads:

Also in our Islamic society it is no longer how good you look by being fashionable, yet to what extent you respect relegion.

Note that Naima has produced clearer syntax and has also specified what religion she talks about.

Although some negative aspects of her essay are also pointed out, the last comment is made more positive:

☛ On the whole, and bearing in mind that this is your first essay, I can see that you have learnt a lot and that there is a lot of potential in your writing. Keep up the good practice Naima, and I am sure that you'll do very well.

#### **Teacher feedback on assignment 4**

##### **Naima's use of teacher written feedback:**

Naima manages to correct and implement 56 out of the 60 (93.3%) teacher-indicated errors in her rewrite.

##### **Naima's use of teacher taped comments:**

I advise Naima to improve the following sentence by saying:

☛ Try to rewrite the numbered sentence in the fourth paragraph of the body of your essay in a much clearer way. Make sure the sentence is complete and also try to break it into shorter and meaningful sentences instead of a long confusing one. Reread the sentence and make sure you know what you want to say and then write it in a very simple way.

The sentence which is referred to reads:

Since, as we know, professors know that evaluations are important to their careers especially from students, because students' evaluation can give a clearer vision about the lecturers' worth or ability to convince or to be accountable to their demands and wants about lectures.

In response to the above comment Naima rewrites her sentence by linking ideas more closely through changing the punctuation using a comma instead of a full stop, and by deleting some parts. The amended sentence then reads:

In other words, the students' feedback can be used to assess the worth of individual lecturers, since students' evaluation can give a clear vision about the lecturers' worth or ability to convince or to be accountable to their demands and wants about lectures. *Also the students' evaluation can judge if the course material and lecture were good or not.*

In addition, Naima provides further elaboration (in italics).

Naima has responded positively to both written and taped teacher comments, but prefers the latter. What follows is a good illustration of what she thinks:

☞ In my opinion, I think that having spoken taped comment is more beneficial and helpful than written comment. Since it allow to me to understand more the comment of my teacher, Because I hear her voice and I feel that she is with me.

This method has many advantages in evaluating my writing. First of all, it helps me to learn from my mistakes and it gives me the opportunity to know the level of my academic writing. Second, this method allow to me to speak and to give my opinion which help me to improve my spoken activity in addition to my written activity.

It is interesting to note that some of the advantages which Naima points out above are supported by the literature. For example, Hyland states that taped commentary "...allows more detailed, natural, and informative remarks while increasing teacher-student rapport." (1990: 282) Naima expresses this when she says that through teacher taped commentary she can "hear [the teacher's] voice and...feel that [the teacher] is with [her]." In addition to that, the following point Naima makes is also supported by Hyland's finding:

☞ This method [taped commentary] allow to me to speak and to give my opinion which help me to improve my spoken activity in addition to my written activity.

According to Hyland, taped commentary:

...provides a useful second-language-learning experience in itself. It helps to reinforce the written assignment with an authentic listening exercise which has the extra motivating factor of being directly relevant to the student's progress. (1990:284)

This willingness to pay close attention to teacher taped commentary, as has been shown throughout the four assignments, is supported by Naima's positive attitude towards this type of feedback. She says:

☞ Actually, what I find in particular helpful about this method is that it helps me to understand more my teacher's comments, because while listening to them I have



to pay a great attention to what she is telling me to do, for example, when I hear my teacher telling me that I have to clarify a specific sentence in my essay I feel that I have to do it in the best way in order to improve my essay.

Naima believes that taped commentary is a source of motivation. She puts it this way:

☑ I think that the advantages of this method exist in improving my writing, because when my teacher gives me their feedback on my writing it will make me more motivated to work more, and to do what she is advising me in order to bring a good writing.

Naima feels that she is taking on responsibility for improving her own writing. Therefore, her willingness and motivation to work harder may be related to the fact that the teacher shows interest in her writing by providing more personalised feedback. She states:

☑ This spoken comments helps me to memorise and keep them in my mind... Furthermore spoken comments are addressed to me which encourage me to do my best.

This idea is also advocated by Hyland when he talks about his students' appreciation of taped commentary as opposed to the written feedback; he says:

Students tell me that this suggests much more clearly than a written assessment that I am making an effort to understand their scripts and help them make improvements. Consequently, they are encouraged by my interest to go over their work and reread it with my comments in mind. (1990: 285)

This issue of taped commentary as a source of motivation and as a means of enhancing teacher-student rapport has been voiced by the participants in their response to teacher feedback, and will therefore be taken up in more detail in the following discussion chapter. Naima's handling of teacher written feedback and taped commentary follows the pattern below:

- Direct implementation of the teacher-suggested corrections.
- Provision of corrections for teacher-indicated errors.
- Positive response/attitude as key elements in successful implementation of teacher taped commentary.

**Table 5-5: Frequency of Naima's handling of teacher-indicated errors and taped comments**

	Surface suggestions		Meaning suggestions	
	No. of teacher-indicated errors	No. of implemented corrections	No. of teacher comments	No. of revisions
Assignment 1	27	24 (88.8%)	1	1 (100%)
Assignment 2	24	20 (83.3)	3	3 (100%)
Assignment 3	92	80 (86.9)	2	2 (100%)
Assignment 4	60	56 (93.3)	1	1 (100%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>203</b>	<b>180 (88.6%)</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7 (100%)</b>

**Table 5-6: Naima's revisions from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> drafts (Feedback source: Teacher)**

	Surface changes		Meaning changes		Total
	Formal	Meaning-preserving	Microstructure	Macrostructure	
Assignment 1	18	6	1	0	25
Assignment 2	16	4	2	1	23
Assignment 3	72	8	1	1	82
Assignment 4	45	11	1	0	57
<b>Total</b>	<b>151 (80.7%)</b>	<b>29 (15.5%)</b>	<b>5 (2.6%)</b>	<b>2 (1.0%)</b>	<b>187</b>

**Teacher feedback and improvement in text quality:**

Naima has used 88.8% of teacher written feedback and 100% of taped commentary making; therefore, a substantial improvement at the level of content, organisation, accuracy, style and vocabulary in the final draft of her first assignment. Similarly, the raters agree that there has been considerable improvement in Naima's final draft of the second assignment at the five levels. However, Naima's final draft of the third assignment showed some improvement at the level of accuracy and vocabulary only. This rather limited improvement, compared to the first two assignments, may be related to Naima's negative attitude to this topic. She mentioned in her diary that she did not like the topic and she even considered asking me to change it for her, but she never did. Naima's final draft of assignment 4 has shown considerable improvement at the levels of organisation, accuracy, and style. On the whole, there has been development in Naima's scores over the drafts after the implementation of teacher feedback.

**Table 5-7: Mean scores of Naima's 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> drafts**

	Draft 2	Draft 3
Assignment 1	11	14.5
Assignment 2	10.6	13.5
Assignment 3	16	17.5
Assignment 4	18.8	20.3

**Naima's Development****A general development over the drafts**

As can be seen from Naima's scores on the multiple draft assignments, there has been some improvement in her writing over the course period. The score of the third assignment is interesting in that the degree of improvement from first to the second draft was almost double the improvement from the second to the third draft (see Table 5-4, p. 263 showing the mean scores of first and second drafts and Table 5-7 above showing the mean scores of second and third drafts). This can be related to Naima's substantial effort to implement her peer feedback and also her self-initiated revisions. It is rather ironic, however, for this is the topic which Naima did not like. We can, therefore, probably attribute Naima's effort to improve her first draft to the fact that she

was so anxious about her achievement on this topic that she multiplied her efforts in order to overcome the difficulty, which has resulted in better performance. This may be explained in terms of what Bailey (1995: 183) refers to as competing with a “self image” since Naima does not show any kind of competition with the other learners. This is made clear from her reflection on this topic and its difficulty:

**I was embarrassed Because I have nothing to say in this topic.**

So, the fact that Naima wants to justify to herself first, and may be also to the peer and the teacher, that she can do well on this rather intimidating topic may have pushed her to spend more time and energy in order to produce a better piece of writing. On the other hand, the marked improvement could possibly be attributed to Naima’s strong sense of “self-efficacy” (Dörnyei 2001a:23) which has helped her approach this rather challenging topic. This sense of “self-efficacy” is enhanced by Naima’s feeling that, at this stage of the course, she is fairly well-equipped and prepared to produce a good piece of writing (ibid.: 23). She expresses this feeling by stating:

**I know very well the situation and what I have to do if I want to have a good essay but the problem here is that I don’t like the topic itself and I find it boring...**

Hence, Naima does not give in to the difficulty of the topic but she faces it by considering her strengths and reminding herself that she is well able to write “a good essay”; in other words, Naima decides to approach the situation with confidence rather than lose faith in her capability. Her willingness to stand up to the challenging learning tasks must have been enhanced by Naima’s realisation of her continuous learning and progress over the course period.

### **Naima’s realisation of improvement in her writing: the effect on her self-confidence**

Naima admits that attending the writing course has substantially benefited her. Initially, she did not feel that enthusiastic about writing in English despite the fact that she has always liked the language. The reason for this was lack of adequate practice; however, her attitude to EFL writing has changed as a result of attending the course. She says:

**I am satisfied with my writing now because before I felt that I couldn’t write a good paragraph or essay, but now I am quite happy that I could write well and I feel I can write any kind of essay (Post.C.I)**

Naima’s satisfaction is related both to the input which she has received from the classroom instruction and the different peer activities which she has taken part of. The

former is accounted for in terms of the writing skills and strategies which Naima has become aware of:

☞ Today we have a lesson about how to write a topic sentence and how it have to be. It must be a sentence which show your position and your opinion if the topic is argumentative you have to show your agreement or disagreement if not you have to summarize in some way the idea that you want to talk about in your paragraph and try to give it an appropriate form. Then you have to give more details and explanations to support the topic sentence in order to have a coherent paragraphe in this way and by the help of some of linking words you will have a cemented paragraphe which can convince the reader.

The extract above shows that not only has Naima been able to understand the paragraph structure but also that she has, probably, internalized it in such a way that she will make use of it in her writing. On the other hand, Naima is also gaining a lot by reflecting on and writing about what she has learnt in class. So the whole process can only enhance her EFL learning/writing.

Most importantly, however, Naima seems to realise the importance of every stage of her learning of EFL writing. In the following extract she chooses to talk about a different aspect which is related to essay writing, more specifically the writing of a thesis statement. She puts it this way:

☞ Today I have a composition course, it was about how to write a thesis statement and what a thesis statement is. First of all we identified the meaning of the thesis statement, which is the most important sentence in the introduction, it states the specific topic and often lists the major subtopics that will be discussed in the body of the essay. Furthermore, it may indicate the method of organisation such as, chronological order or order of importance. Secondly, we dealt with the composition of the thesis statement and how it could be written, it must states the main topic. Then it often lists the subdivisions of the topic or subtopics, next the thesis statement may include the method of organisation of the entire paper. The last one is that the thesis statement is usually the last sentence in the introductory paragraphe. At the end we did some practice in writing a thesis statement and our lecturer asked us to write an introductory paragraphe about New fashions in clothing.

In addition to her meticulous recording of what she has learnt in the writing class Naima seems to be well aware of the fact that in order to improve, she needs to put what she learns into practice. It is important to see that Naima is also able to evaluate her work and see the signs of improvement, which boosts her confidence and increases her motivation to be productive.

### **Naima's evaluation of her learning of EFL writing**

Naima is able to notice some improvement in her writing even as early as the second assignment. She comments on her draft saying:

📖 Today is Sunday I decided to write my final draft of the essay about technology and I try to follow my lecturer's instruction. While doing that I noticed that I have some improvement in my writing except some mistakes of spelling which I have to pay attention in order to avoid them. I think with more practice I will be able to have a good Academic writing.

Note that what Naima refers to here is the use of teacher feedback to write her final draft. This is indicative of the positive effect of teacher feedback on Naima's attitude. It seems to give her reassurance and help her become more confident about her EFL writing performance. Note that, except for some spelling mistakes, Naima does not seem to find any major problems with her writing.

### **The impact of the writing course on Naima's frequency of EFL writing**

Another direct positive influence of the course on Naima's EFL writing can be seen in the frequency of writing. She admitted that she wrote her language learning diary daily besides the assignments. As a matter of fact, Naima also managed to write on a few topics of her choice and handed in the work to me for feedback. In the following excerpt she promises to keep writing her language learning diary in the future:

Teacher: How often do you write in English these days?

Naima: Very often.

Teacher: I know that you have written all the required assignments and you have also been writing your journal. How often do you write your diary?

Naima: Daily

Teacher: Ok, so you write in your diary every day. Will you continue to write your language diary Naima after this year's course?

Naima: I think I will continue to write because it helped me a lot (Post.C.I)

### **Naima's reflection on her experience of peer feedback**

#### **Peer feedback as a novelty**

Like the other participants Naima had not experienced peer feedback before. So the novelty element, although not the only appealing characteristic, must have had a role to play in the way Naima saw this classroom activity. In fact she quickly perceived the learning potential of peer feedback:

📖 Today we had a composition course it was about a paragraphe which our teacher had asked us to write about Moroccan women in parliament. It was a good course. I learnt lot of things. Since we had follow a good methode in which we did a feedback with our classmate in other words we exchange paragraphes and each one correct the paragraphe of the other really it's an important method since it allowed to us to learn from the mistakes of others. After that when we finished we have to discuss with our classmate about the kind of mistakes she had made and we try to justificate our correction.

An important effect of working with her peers in class for Naima is that she has managed to change some of her rather negative attitudes about asking for help. She has

become more receptive to the idea that she can approach her peers, or classmates from previous classes for help if necessary. She comments on this change in her attitude saying:

☞ I had had the idea that I can't accept any help from someone who had studied with me last year and who succeeded until I experienced peer feedback. I have learnt that asking for help is neither a bad thing nor a shame oppositly it's a good thing as you will have the opportunity to Benefit from her or his experience and I decide to ask for help if I need it.

Note that Naima refers to the students who used to be her classmates in the previous year, i.e. her first year at university. Bearing in mind that Naima was repeating her first year, the fact of asking for help from her successful classmates may have been a sensitive issue for her, "a threat to the student's self-esteem" (Dörnyei 2001a: 23). However, her new experience has taught her that she can resort to her peers for help without fearing to lose her self-esteem and this is a substantial achievement for Naima as far as her attitudinal change is concerned.

Another major change in Naima's behaviour is the strong realisation that her shy character is not doing her any good when it comes to learning. It is important to see that this awareness has been developed in relation to positive self-diagnosis and her realisation that she can be good, as good as her other classmates, but all she needs is a certain degree of courage and sense of initiative. For instance, we find her commenting on an incident in the classroom and arriving at a very positive conclusion:

☞ We mustn't hesitate to do something or tell something that we think it's true even if we can't find a suitable form to it. We can tell the key word. We have to tell it what ever it could be the result. This is what I have learnt today in the course of composition. We had a topic about technology and we have to write the advantage and disadvantage of technology. Every one gave an idea. I have also an idea about advantage. I try to gave it but I hesitated a little and another girl spoke before me. To my surprise she gave that idea that I wanted to say then I blamed myself. The same thing we did for the disadvantage. I had also a good idea which was about cloning. I didn't hesitate to tell it but while trying to gave it an appropriate form, another student raised his hand and told it without thinking of its form. I was really shocked that's why I took a decision that I would never hesitate to tell anything I think it's true.

Naima's development over the course period can be noticed at different levels, namely academic and affective, and saying which has been responsible for which is rather difficult. However, it can be suggested that Naima's realisation of self improvement and her involvement in the writing course and her collaborative work with her peer Fatima have brought about positive change which can only boost her confidence as an EFL writer/learner.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **6.0 Introduction**

This chapter will be devoted to answering the research questions by summarising the findings and discussing them in relation to the findings of other studies. Each research question will be followed by the main findings and discussion. In answering the first and second research questions the types of feedback will be dealt with consecutively: annotations, peer feedback, teacher feedback.

***Q1: To what extent do students make use of the following types of feedback in their revisions?***

*1.1 Self-monitored feedback using annotations*

*1.2 Peer feedback*

*1.3 Teacher written feedback and taped commentary*

***Q 2: How do students perceive each type of feedback?***

#### **6.1 Students' use of self-monitored feedback: annotations**

##### **6.1.1 Annotations: Extent of use**

Annotations have been comparatively underused by students. This can be partly due to the flexibility of course instructions; students were encouraged but often not obliged to use annotation on every assignment. Students were verbally reminded that they should annotate their drafts, either while writing or after completion of the draft, but most students interpreted it as optional.

##### **6.1.1.1 Focus of annotations**

From the analysis of students' drafts it is clear that annotations have been used to seek feedback on a whole range of issues: content, organisation, vocabulary, language and mechanics. It is worth noting that the choice of which component to focus on corresponds to each student's perception of what good writing is and also the type of writing problems they think they have. For example, Karima's focus on content, organisation, and mechanics in her use of annotation is a case in point. Karima says of good writing:

*...it is good organisation of ideas, good language as well, um good expression. If we use good expressions, it will improve our writing and make our essays more convincing and persuading, no wonder impress the reader. (Pre.C.I)*

She also expressed her concern that she sometimes goes off topic and would prefer some feedback on that.

Karima: Um...about...um sometimes I [laughing] I am <hors sujet>  
[in French]

Teacher: You mean *off topic*... so you go off topic

Karima: Yes, I go off topic and I expect the teacher will notice that (Pre.C.I)

Karima's use of annotation, although not frequent, has revolved around the issues that she sees pertinent to her writing. Naima is another example. Her focus on vocabulary illustrates well both her perception of what makes good writing, although she thinks that organisation is equally important, and also the problems she faces as an EFL writer. A third example is illustrated by Fatima's focus on larger chunks of discourse, sentences, in annotating her drafts. This is related to her belief that "language" is the most important thing and that in order to succeed as a writer she has "to make her language as clear as possible." (Post.C.I)

From what has been said above, it seems that this study confirms what Charles has said about one of the advantages of annotation which is that "...it can reveal the concerns of the student/writer...what they consider their problems to be..." (1990:293). However, this study has also demonstrated that not only do students' annotations reveal their concerns about their writing but also their perceptions about the important components of writing. In fact, there seems to be a chain relationship connecting students' perceptions about writing to their concerns about their problems in EFL writing to their annotations. This rather intricate relationship could not have been possible for us to see if students had not been given the chance to use annotations.

Student annotations also varied in terms of frequency over the assignments and over the drafts. See the following table for a summary of students' use of annotations:

**Table: 6-1 Frequency of students' use of annotations and their features**

Name	Assignment 1		Assignment 2		Assignment 3		Assignment 4		Features of annotations	Examples of annotations
	D1	D2	D1	D2	D1	D2	D1	D2		
Naima		3	2			2			Lexis (Vocabulary)	"Is this sentence true?" "I am not sure that is the exact word" "Is this a repetition?" "Is this form correct?" "Can we say that?" "Is this word correct?" "Is this sentence true, can I say it other words?"
Saida		1	1			1			Lexis (Vocabulary) & Grammar	"Is 'to' the right preposition?" "Is this verb correct word?" "Is this verb correct with 'of'?"



Fatima								1	Sentence structure	"Is this expression correct?" (referring to a sentence)
Karima			2						Content, Organization & Mechanics	"I write this introduction and I don't know if it is no use of it in ideas and organisation" "punctuation"
Noura		1							Sentence Structure	"Is this a good sentence?"
Noureddine		4							Grammar & Mechanics	"What should I write here 'a woman' or 'women'?" "Shall I put 'a/the' here?"

From the distribution of annotations in relation to the drafts and regardless of which assignment, the total number of annotations on second drafts is higher than that on the first drafts. That is to say, there is a tendency among student writers to annotate their second drafts rather than the first ones. This may be explained in two ways. First, students may have deliberately delayed their annotations to second drafts so that they could receive teacher feedback. Second, it could be that after peer feedback, when students do not get satisfactory answers from their peers, they resort to annotating the second draft with a view to receiving help from the teacher. While both explanations are possible, there is evidence for the second one in the work of Noureddine and Noura. After the peer fails to provide them with adequate feedback, both annotate their second drafts to seek the teacher's help (See the analysis of Noura's and Noureddine's use of peer feedback in assignment 1).

Despite the fact that annotation has not been heavily used it has been beneficial in many ways. First, students have been encouraged to read their drafts before handing them in. This confirms Charles's idea that

*self-monitoring also encourages students to look critically and analytically at their writing; to place themselves in the position of readers; and to locate and identify the sources of their dissatisfaction with the text. Thus they learn to take more responsibility for what they write, and for getting their meaning across to the reader..." (1990:292)*

It was clear from student annotations that they have read their drafts and identified the problems, as far as they could see them, as readers of their own work. In this way, by reading and reacting to potential problems in their drafts students participate in a dialogue concerning the text as they "...are no longer simply passive recipients of feedback, but become active participants in discussion." (ibid.) This participation is achieved through clearly articulated requests for help and willingness to question both their peers and the teacher. As in Storch's and Tapper's (1996) study, students in the

present study have not reported any reluctance to question the teacher; on the contrary they were more prone to question the teacher than their peers.

#### **6.1.1.2 Students' search for a new code of annotation**

In general students followed course instructions in using annotation by underlining, numbering and writing their questions either in the margin or as end- notes (Charles 1990). However, there have been attempts to use other means, such as using a highlighter and underlining the word/words in the text (see Naima's use of annotation) and using arrows to refer to the part of the text on which help is needed (see Nouredine's use of annotation). This may be understood as the students' endeavour to attract the reader's attention to their annotations, thereby facilitating the reader's task.

#### **6.1.1.3 Issues and implications**

It follows from what has been said above that the use of annotations has been beneficial for the students and it can be even more useful if some lessons can be learnt from the findings of this present study.

At least as far as the Moroccan first year university students are concerned, the use of annotation can help them develop a sense of revision by reading their own writing and identifying its problems before handing it in for peer or teacher feedback. The degree of flexibility which participants enjoyed in this study as far as the use of annotation is concerned has not benefited all of them since some student writers underused it. This may be related to the students' prior experience in high school where learning is usually limited to what the teacher requires the students to do; i.e., students are used to being spoon-fed by the teachers. Hence, at least for first year students, some strict guidelines as to how often they should be using annotation in their writing can be recommended. Teachers may want to ask students to annotate all their drafts so that the technique becomes more internalised and systematic.

On the other hand, teachers may want to encourage students to link their annotations to what is being taught in the writing class. This might sound as if students will be deprived of the freedom which is considered to be one of the major constituents of annotations. However, it can be beneficial if students are made aware that they can be free to annotate their writing not only by identifying personal concerns but also by attempting to use the input which they receive in the writing class. Moreover, the degree of sophistication of student use of annotations should go hand in hand with the students'

development as EFL writers. For example, students may be encouraged to move gradually from what Beck calls “descriptive annotation” in which “the students identify exactly where they think they used which specific writing techniques” to “evaluative annotations” which “...state the paper’s good features, plus definite or possible problems remaining...” (1982:323).

Another important point which has risen from the way annotations have been used in this study is related to the students’ lack of adequate terminology to ask questions about some aspects of their writing. Although the underlining helped me identify the type of annotations, some of the students’ annotations could have been more accurate if they had known the terminology to use. For example, Naima used the following annotation: “is this sentence true?” to refer to a vocabulary problem, and Fatima used this annotation: “is this expression correct?” to refer to a sentence structure problem. This problem which some participants faced is understandable for two reasons. First, at this stage, first year at the university, students were not yet able to name the different parts of discourse. Second, this is a new technique for them and they did not have any prior training. Therefore, the idea put forward above which recommends that students be advised to annotate according to the course input may be helpful as it may provide students with adequate metalanguage to use when annotating their writing. Otherwise, some training in which students are familiarised with the terminology to use when annotating their work may be planned.

Students have attempted to create their own codes for annotating their drafts, hence, teachers may want to either include these methods of annotating in their class instructions and ask students to use them, or probably encourage them to add their own. However, if they want students to use a unified code of reference, teachers may ask students to adhere to the same method outlined in the course instructions. (See Chapter Seven for further implications)

## **6.2 Students’ use of peer feedback**

This part will answer the second part of the first research question:

### **6.2.1 Peer feedback: extent of use**

Despite the fact that all students expressed concern about the efficiency of peer feedback, all of them attempted to make use of it in their revisions. The extent of use, however, varies from one student to another and also from one draft to another. In this

part, I will try to show the extent of student use of peer suggestions as a group, their common strategies in handling peer feedback, and their general attitudes towards peer feedback after exposure. The table below shows the frequency of student use over the four drafts of peer feedback on both surface and meaning-related issues:

**Table 6-2: Frequency of students' use of peer feedback in revisions from 1<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> drafts of the four assignments**

Name	Surface suggestions		Meaning suggestions	
	No. of suggestions	No. implemented	No. of suggestions	No. implemented
Fatima	9	6 (66.6%)	6	3 (50%)
Naima	61	38 (62.2%)	9	4 (44.4%)
Saida	3	3 (100%)	4	3 (75%)
Noureddine	44	37 (84%)	3	1 (33.3%)
Karima	16	9 (56.2%)	12	7 (58.3%)
Noura	25	17 (68%)	8	4 (50%)
Soumia	9	6 (66.8%)	3	1 (33.3%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>167</b>	<b>116 (69.4%)</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>23 (51.1%)</b>

As the figures show, students used between 56.2% and 100% of total peer feedback on surface structure they received. They were not encouraged to comment on surface structure, yet they did. The peer feedback sheets (see Figures 4-3 & 4-4, pp. 105-106) did not have any slot for such comments. Feedback on surface structure was therefore inconsistent. It seems that on the whole, except for Naima, Noureddine, and Noura who received high numbers of surface structure feedback points: 61, 44, and 25 respectively, students did not systematically offer surface structure feedback on each draft. Indeed, some pairs did not offer or receive any on some drafts. For example, Saida did not attempt to offer any surface structure feedback on Noureddine's first and third assignments; nor did Noureddine on Saida's first, second, and third assignments. More interestingly, however, some pairs seem to believe that some surface structure errors are less important than others. This is voiced, for example, by Karima when she draws Noura's attention to some spelling mistakes in her writing, but she also reassures her that everybody makes such mistakes (see Noura's case). Moreover, when we consider some cases in which the number of peer feedback points on surface structure did not go beyond 3 or 9 over the four drafts, this is a clear indication, despite overall percentages, that peer feedback did not have surface structure as its main focus. In fact, the analysis of oral feedback sessions showed that students spent all the time discussing and evaluating content and organization. Feedback on surface structure usually took place during the time when each student was reading his/her peer's draft and before they used the peer feedback sheet to comment on content and organization. What this also indicates is the important role of the peer feedback sheets in helping students

concentrate their attention on what their peers were trying to say and how they organized it.

Students have implemented between 33.3% and 75% of content and organization-oriented (Meaning) feedback. This is a clear indication that, when appropriately guided, students can be a reliable source of constructive feedback for each other in relation to larger chunks of text i.e. sentence and paragraphs. Some previous research findings claimed that students would focus on surface structure when asked to revise their work or respond to their peers' writing (Cumming & So 1996; Leki 1990b). However, this study does not completely support those findings for the students demonstrated their ability to be good feedback providers, and receivers, on issues related to content and organization as well. This is mainly due to the fact that students were guided through the use of peer feedback sheets. It would suggest therefore that leaving peer feedback largely unstructured (Elbow 1973; Lockhart & Ng 1995; Nelson & Murphy 1992/93) cannot be pedagogically sensible in all contexts. What the present study has found, in fact, in line with previous research (Mittan 1989; Reid 1994) is that novice EFL student writers, namely Moroccan freshmen writers, may lack appropriate schemata to provide helpful feedback and frame it using accurate terminology. Hence, the use of feedback sheets has proven to be a good means of monitoring peer feedback sessions and encouraging students to take the activity seriously (Ferris & Hedgcock 1998, Berg 1999).

While Connor and Asenavage (1994) were disappointed to find that only 5 per cent of student revisions were attributable to peer comment, in this current study peer feedback has been used in 65 per cent of student revisions of their first drafts. This percentage is higher than the one reported in Mendonca and Johnson's (1994) study: (53%).

Overall, this study has shown students making 83.4% of surface changes and 16.5% changes to content and organisation. A more detailed analysis of the types of changes using Faigley and Witte's taxonomy (1981) showed that the majority of surface changes were formal (72.6%), with only (10.7%) as meaning-preserving changes. On the other hand, the majority of meaning changes were microstructure changes (14.3%), with only (2.1%) as macrostructure changes. The present study contains interesting parallels and contrasts with previous research. Connor and Asenavage (1994) reported that at least some of their subjects made more global changes after receiving peer feedback, and Paulus (1999) found that (63%) of second draft peer-influenced revisions were meaning

changes. The present study supports Berger's (1990) findings which showed that the majority of her subjects made surface changes.

**Table 6-3: Total revisions from 1<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> drafts of the four assignments (Source of feedback: Peer)**

Name	Surface changes		Meaning changes		Total
	Formal	Meaning-preserving	Microstructure	Macrostructure	
Fatima	6	0	3	0	9
Naima	33	5	3	1	42
Saida	1	2	3	0	6
Noureddine	32	5	1	0	38
Karima	9	0	6	1	16
Noura	15	2	3	1	21
Soumia	5	1	1	0	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>101 (72.6%)</b>	<b>15 (10.7%)</b>	<b>20 (14.3%)</b>	<b>3 (2.1%)</b>	<b>139</b>

However, as can be noticed from the table above, the low-proficiency students tend to implement the highest surface changes than do their higher-proficiency peers. This may be related to the amount of feedback received and implemented by each student.

#### **6.2.1.1 Language proficiency and the provision and implementation of peer feedback**

A notable point is that the level of language proficiency seems to have played an important role in the amount of peer feedback offered. Comparing the total feedback points offered by peers to each other, it seems that peers whose language proficiency is high tend to provide more feedback points to their peers whose language proficiency is low. See the table below:

**Table 6-4: Differences in total of offered peer feedback points according to proficiency levels**

High proficiency to low proficiency	Total feedback points	Low proficiency to high proficiency	Total feedback points
Fatima to Naima	70	Naima to Fatima	15
Saida to Noureddine	47	Noureddine to Saida	7
Karima to Noura	33	Noura to Karima	28

This is sometimes also clear in the interaction during peer sessions. For example, in one of the peer sessions Saida was dissatisfied with the limited comments made by Noureddine on her draft (see Saida's case for more details). However, this imbalance in the amount of offered/received feedback points did not hinder the implementation of peer feedback. In other words, all students attempted to implement their peers' comments. This is shown in the table below:

**Table 6-5: Total of offered and implemented peer feedback points on the 1<sup>st</sup> drafts of the four assignments**

Names	Total feedback points	Total and % implemented
Fatima	15	9 (60%)
Naima	70	42 (60%)
Saida	7	6 (85.7%)
Noureddine	47	38 (80.8%)
Karima	28	16 (57.1%)
Noura	33	21 (63.6%)
Soumia	12	7 (58.3%)

On the other hand, although some peers did not manage to achieve a high degree of cohesiveness in their collaborative work, for instance Saida and Noureddine; Soumia and Salwa (Salwa's case had to be dropped as she did not manage to complete all the drafts), this did not stop them from attempting to implement fairly high percentages of peer feedback.

However, table 6-5 shows, the low proficiency students are the ones who have implemented the highest peer feedback points. This is a direct result of attending to their peers' feedback.

#### 6.2.1.2 Self-initiated revision

Self-initiated revision here refers to the change(s) which a student writer makes to his/her draft without being prompted by either peer or teacher feedback. The following table provides a summary of the total number and types of self-initiated revisions made from first to second drafts of the four assignments:

**Table 6-6: Total of students' self-initiated revisions from 1<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> drafts of the four assignments**

Name	Surface changes		Meaning changes		Total
	Formal	Meaning-preserving	Microstructure	Macrostructure	
Fatima	2	7	3	0	12
Naima	0	0	0	1	1
Saida	2	0	2	3	7
Noureddine	2	0	0	0	2
Karima	0	0	0	0	0
Noura	2	0	1	0	3
Soumia	6	0	2	1	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>14 (41.1%)</b>	<b>7 (20.5%)</b>	<b>8 (23.5%)</b>	<b>5 (14.7%)</b>	<b>34</b>

It is clear that even when students resort to self-initiated revision the focus still is on surface structure, which comprises (61.7%) of the total of self-influenced revisions. Meaning changes account for (38.2%) of self-initiated revisions and, although lower by comparison, this is still quite a substantial figure. It is also notable that the percentage of meaning changes resulting from self-initiated revision is considerably higher than the percentage of meaning changes made after implementation of peer feedback (16.5%).

What is definitely reassuring is that students' awareness has been raised as to the importance of revision on both aspects of text. More interestingly, however, almost all participants have resorted to self-initiated revision at least once, which also demonstrates that students were developing a sense of revision as an integral part of the writing process. The other important point is that self-initiated revision is resorted to more frequently after receiving peer feedback than after teacher feedback.

### **6.2.1.3 Self-initiated revision: frequency of use**

Although all student writers, except for Karima, resorted to self-initiated revision at least once over the four assignments, the frequency of its use varied from one student to another. For example, while Saida, Fatima, and Soumia made use of self-initiated revision in three assignments, Noura used it in two, and Nouredine and Naima used it only in one assignment. It seems that students with higher language proficiency resorted to self-initiated revision more frequently than the lower proficiency ones. However, language proficiency did not impact the type of changes made to the text for low and high proficiency students attempted to make both surface and meaning changes, except for Nouredine who focused only on surface changes in the one time he resorted to self-initiated revision.

### **6.2.2 Improvement on peer feedback**

Another strategy which was noticed in one particular case is the student's attempt to improve on peer feedback before implementing it. In the first draft of assignment 1 after receiving Nouredine's suggestion, Saida attempted to modify the sentence before including it in her rewrite (see Saida's case). This is not a common behaviour among students, but, together with self-initiated revision, there are two possible explanations. On the one hand, peer feedback encourages revision because it helps writers see their texts' caveats through the eyes of their readers. On the other hand, students resort to self-initiated revision because they are not completely sure about peer abilities as feedback providers. These two points will be taken up later when I discuss students' attitudes towards peer feedback and some of the main themes which have emerged from the data. Before that, I will give a brief overview of the strategies students used to provide and also handle peer feedback.

### **6.2.3 Strategies for providing peer feedback**

It is worth noting, as a first point, the actual strategies used on the page.

The following strategies were used by peers to provide feedback on surface structure:



- Direct peer-suggested corrections
- Crossing out some irrelevant words
- Circling the error and providing a direct correction
- Underlining the error
- A combination of underlining and direct correction
- Using symbols

The list above reflects almost all the methods I used to provide written feedback on student writings. Hence, not only did students take the initiative to provide feedback on surface structure but they also attempted to emulate the teacher's method. In fact, in most cases students used the symbols appropriately to refer to peer error, which implies that students understood and mastered the use of such symbols and techniques from the way they were used by the teacher. As a matter of fact, no student complained about their written feedback since the procedure was explained to them from the start (Ferris 2003:135). Furthermore, some students also tried to imitate my style by using similar phrases I employed in giving taped comments, such as, "a substantial amount of", "fairly good on the whole", "I am sure that you can do better", etc. This is a direct "uptake" from teacher feedback. Students also followed specific strategies; some were commonly used by all peers and some characterized the behaviour of only few students.

#### **6.2.4 Strategies for handling peer feedback**

From the analysis of the individual cases, a pattern of student behaviours has been identified. The following strategies have been used in different ways, i.e., by making use of all of them in a single draft or some more than others at a time:

- Direct implementation of peer-suggested corrections.
- Resisting peer feedback in cases of uncertainty, i.e. when there is doubt about the correctness or relevance of the peer suggestion. This is related to students' general cautious treatment of peer feedback.
- Deletion of some problematic parts of text.

#### **6.2.5 Students' attitudes to peer feedback**

From the analysis of student post-course questionnaire and interviews, it is clear that students do not hold strong negative opinions towards peer feedback. Therefore, in line with other studies (Leki 1990b; Mangelsdorf 1992; Mendonca & Johnson 1994), students in the present study have generally reported that they enjoyed some positive aspects of peer feedback despite their concerns and doubt about their peer's ability to evaluate their work.

Hence, having been exposed to peer response as one form of feedback, students were able to pinpoint both its positive and negative aspects. Therefore, four overarching categories have been identified in relation to the advantages and disadvantages of peer feedback. Namely, cognitive, social, linguistic, and practical, which are similar to the categories identified by Liu and Hansen (2002:7). These four categories will be discussed from both students' perspective and also from my own perspective as a teacher-researcher with a view to gaining more insight and understanding into this feedback technique. The following table summarizes the themes that have emerged from the analysis of student post-course questionnaires and post-course interviews, together with some illustrative quotations:

**Table 6-7: Students' perceptions of the advantages and disadvantages of peer feedback**

<u>Advantages of peer feedback</u>	
<b>Cognitive</b>	
1. <i>Practice thinking about the writing task</i>	<p>“Peer feedback is very useful to any students at any subject in this department, especially the freshman because it helps them to organise their work properly and easily.”</p> <p>“It gives opportunity to the student to know what he/she to do in order to have a good and proper style and proper academic writings.”</p>
2. <i>Enhances sense of revision and control over one's text (text ownership)</i>	<p>“It helps me to reread my draft”</p> <p>“I focus on I stopped on my mistakes or what is new in the feedback and try to rewrite a new draft”</p> <p>“To write the second draft I look, I read my peer feedback and <i>see if it's useful to use them and to benefit from them</i> and then I write the second draft.”</p> <p>“I read my feedback, second I read my first draft and make a comparison so as to know where there is the mistakes and then <i>when I am sure that that's a mistake I will write it.</i>”</p>
3. <i>Encourages students to take active roles by raising awareness about strengths and weaknesses</i>	<p>“It gives more details about the point of weakness and strength in the future writings.”</p> <p>“Some useful feedback helped me to go behind my mistakes which improve my writing.”</p>
4. <i>Helps the writer see his/her work with a reader's eyes (develop audience awareness)</i>	<p>“First, the peer feedback draw my attention to some mistakes I made. Second, the peer feedback helps me to know the opinion of my peer in my writing.”</p> <p>“I have learnt that my friend can see some mistakes which I don't find in my writing.”</p>
<b>Linguistic</b>	
1. <i>Helps students recognize their language mistakes</i>	<p>“At the beginning I used to be shocked and asked ‘why do they say that this is a mistake? I am sure that this is not a mistake’, but after some time I trust that I can make mistakes, I believe that I can make mistakes.”</p> <p>“I can't ignore my peer comment, how can I find my mistakes if I don't read my peer's comments.”</p>
<b>Social/Affective advantage</b>	
1. <i>Peer feedback develops interpersonal</i>	<p>“It creates a kind of <i>friendship</i> between the students”</p> <p>“It gives us the opportunity to know each other”</p>

*relationships*

"There is one special thing about peer feedback which is that it is good for friendship with students because for the first time *we were strange to each other and with peer feedback we are used to deal with each other.*"

*2. Enhances dialogue/negotiation*

"It gives sense of discussion"

"Exchange of ideas when reading a peer feedback."

"When I receive my peer feedback I read them and I discuss them with my peer. I explain my point of view concerning this passage which he/she has commented on

"The peer feedback helps me to avoid some mistakes and it is a good method because it helps me to exchange my ideas with my classmate."

*3. Develops sense of collaboration*

"this method have good influence on us, Because it gives us the habit of working together as groups"

"As far as concerned the advantages of this method of giving feedback on writing, I find very useful and helpful at the same time. Because you have to be *collaborator* with you friend to give your best work."

*4. Encourages learning in a confident and non-threatening environment*

"I can discuss his feedback and have a kind of self-confidence to show my attitude."

"I *feel relieved* to work, there is *no complex* to tell me to work in order not to make mistakes."

*5. Creates healthy sense of competitiveness*

"If a classmate knows better than me, what's this? I feel I must work hard and be good."

*6. Students enjoy playing the role of the teacher*

"It also helps me to play the role of the teacher because by the using of the peer feedback I have learnt how to find and correct my friends' mistakes."

**Complementary**

*1. peer feedback is better in conjunction with teacher feedback*

"I take both peer comments and teacher comments because each one has it's specific use, for instance, the peer feedback make me aware of the mistakes to which I didn't pay attention and the teacher comments give me general comments about the whole writing and about some mistakes to which my peer didn't pay attention or was unable to identify them".

"The peer comments help me to avoid some mistakes but not all of it, and the teacher comments complete the first one because our teacher give me all the mistakes I have, for example, mechanics and grammatical."

**Disadvantages of peer feedback**

**Linguistic**

*1. Concern about peers' competency to provide clear and constructive feedback*

"Sometimes the peer feedback may be wrong or not clear enough to follow, there is always a doubt about the peer feedback."

"Usually the peer don't understand what you want to say and give you negative comments that don't help you at all."

"First, it may sometimes be wrong as we are at the same level. Second, sometimes I may be right and my peer feedback make me doubted about something which is correct."

"Yes, a poor level um he may made some mistakes which may influence badly your mind."

*2. Concern about inadequate pair formation with regard to language proficiency*

"I think that the only disadvantages of peer feedback is when the weak students correct for each other which means confusing to the weakest one."

“Sometime my peer instead of correcting my mistakes she did mistakes which might have influenced badly my essay if I had followed them so it is very important to choose your peer, (the right one).”

“Sometimes when you do not choose the right peer. If it is that he has less level”

#### 6.2.5.1 Peer feedback: Advantages

*Cognitively* speaking, through the use of peer activities students in the present study have been encouraged to express what they think rather than passively accepting information from the teacher (Mittan 1989). They are forced to think about what they write and how they present it to the reader, which develops their audience awareness. Assuming that this audience will also react to what they receive, either positively or negatively, this will encourage the writer to “reconceptualize their ideas in light of their peers’ reactions” (Mendonca and Johnson 1994:746) and modify their texts to meet the needs of their audience. Moreover, responding to peers’ writing by pinpointing strengths and weaknesses of the written work will help to build the critical skills needed to revise one’s own writing (Leki 1990a). This has been reiterated by the students in the current study who say that if they manage to find what the problems are in their peers’ writing, they will avoid making such mistakes in their own writing. For example Nouredine says: “It [responding to a peer’s writing] has helped me in avoiding and correcting a lot of mistakes, which will never do again.”

Moreover, using peer response to revise their work also nurtures the sense of text ownership (Tsui & Ng 2000). All students have reported that they would examine peer feedback before using it in their revisions. This control over one’s text has been stylistically expressed on many occasions through the use of the pronoun “I”. For example, in the following quotations, there is a clear indication, whether conscious or unconscious, that students take full control of their texts and would only accept to include suggestions which they see fit: “To write the second draft I look, I read my peer feedback and *see if it’s useful to use them and to benefit from them* and then I write the second draft”; “I read my feedback, second I read my first draft and make a comparison so as to know where there is the mistakes and then *when I am sure that that’s a mistake I will write it.*”

On the other hand, text ownership is also manifested in students’ endeavours to improve their writing by resorting to self-initiated revision. In addition, students in the present study tended to use self-initiated revision more frequently after peer feedback than after

receiving teacher feedback. As a matter of fact, except for Soumia who did only once, none of the students resorted to self-initiated revision after teacher feedback.

An important point which students have not been able to identify as an advantage of peer feedback, but which I have noticed as a teacher, is that students in feedback sessions were talking about what they were learning. Instead of working individually on their writing, students were talking about their writing and reinforcing knowledge they already gained in class but felt uncertain about; hence, filling in gaps in their understanding of what they have learned (Hirvela 1999). This is, for example, clear from some comments in which students refer to their peers' writings as either respecting, or not respecting, what has been done in class (see for example one of Karima's comments on Noura's first assignment). Another concrete example is when the peer reads the writer's text which does not have a clear physical structure and attempts to organize it by dividing it into clearly identified paragraphs (see for example Naima's feedback on Fatima's fourth assignment). This activity is in itself a means of making sense of both the writer's text and also putting into practice the knowledge gained through class instruction.

Peer feedback activities also offer *linguistic* benefits. Although students perceive this benefit only in terms of the correction of some written language mistakes, the advantage is even broader since students were also using English to communicate verbally. In addition, students were also making use of the terminology they learnt in class, such as, words related to paragraph structure, topic sentence, supporting points, supporting details, concluding sentence; essay structure, general statements, thesis statement, body, conclusion; and also the argumentative genre structure, counter-argument and arguments. This enhances students' metalinguistic knowledge (Liu & Hansen 2002:8). For example, in one of Fatima's comments on Naima's third assignment she says:

☛ I am going to give you my opinion about your essay...I start by the introduction...um...I think that it is satisfactory, but you can do more Naima. I feel that there is no coherence in your introduction...may be you have to rewrite it and pay more attention to coherence. You have linking word between introduction and first paragraph, that's good

Hence, by employing such words as "introduction", "coherence", students are not only responding to their peers but they are also reinforcing and internalising such concepts.

Student responses to peer feedback have also unveiled the *social* benefits of this activity. For instance, students have acknowledged that working collaboratively helped

them create new friendships with their peers (Hirvela 1999). As Soumia states, “it [peer feedback] creates a kind of *friendship* between the students.” (Post.C.I) On the same issue, Noura says: “the advantages are share the ideas with my classmates and ,um, and the peer feedback help me to avoid some mistakes and also *know my classmates better.*” (Post.C.I) Students who were repeating the year reported that in their first year they did not even know each other’s names, but through peer feedback activities they remembered each other’s names and used them to address each other. This is a substantial achievement which will only foster student/student interaction and “warrant a more detailed discussion” (Dörnyei & Murphey 2003:26). Moreover, students also recognised that they were able to express their attitudes freely with their peers and managed to discuss and negotiate suggestions before implementing them (Mendonca and Johnson 1999). This may be due to the fact that students felt they were working with a peer who was in the same position as themselves which may have enhanced the feeling of confidence while working in a non-threatening collaborative environment. This is expressed by Fatima when she says: “I can discuss his or her feedback and have a kind of self-confidence to show my attitude.” (Post.C.Q)

Another important aspect of peer feedback is that students are able to see their peers’ strengths and weaknesses in writing which may reduce their own apprehension and enhance their self-confidence (Leki 1990). This can be inferred from students in the present study when they say that by getting to know the type of mistakes their peers made, they would avoid making the same errors in their own writing. This is, in itself, a way of gaining more knowledge about what one needs to improve in one’s own writing and what is already good enough. In turn this will foster self-confidence. As Naima put it: “it [peer feedback] allows to me to know the kind of mistakes my friend have made and try to avoid them in my essays.” (P.C.Q)

On the other hand, students believe that the relationship between peer feedback activities and teacher feedback is *complementary*. For all the participants, peer feedback is more helpful when it is used as one among other feedback options, namely teacher feedback. As Noura put it: “the peer feedback help me to avoid a little mistakes, but my teacher’s feedback complete all the, um, complete the peer feedback.” (Post.C.I) This supports Jacobs et al.’s (1998) finding that students tend to accept peer feedback as one form of feedback.

It is clear that students have not rejected peer feedback but have expressed a willingness to use it as a complement to teacher feedback. This can be explained in terms of students' growing audience awareness and also the method in which peer and teacher feedback were introduced to the students, with peer activities used to comment on first drafts and teacher feedback on the second drafts. This order may also have played a role in the way students perceived the two types of feedback.

As teacher-researcher, I have found the use of peer feedback on the first drafts to be practical in many ways. For example, it helped enhance the idea of process in composition teaching and learning. Students were able to follow the progress of their own texts and those of their peers. They also became aware of the fact that their writing needed to be read and revised before they could pass it on to the teacher. In addition, peer feedback activities helped me gain more insight into each student's writing abilities and their understanding of what constitutes good writing in relation to what was taught in class (Mittan 1989).

#### **6.2.5.2 Peer feedback: Disadvantages**

However, despite all the advantages of peer feedback, students were concerned that their peers may not have the linguistic abilities to provide helpful and relevant response. Students were even more specific and made the point that their major concern was about weak peers. This worry seems legitimate and justified, and it is incumbent on the teacher to make appropriate pairing in peer feedback activity.

There are also some cases, although infrequent, in which peers gave invalid comments. For example, in the second assignment Karima advised Noura to rearrange her arguments in such a way that contradicted the method explained in class and Noura implemented the suggestion. This could actually be seen in a positive light as it confirms that students were attending to meaning and organization in their peers' writing. It was one of the areas against which marked individual differences in handling peer feedback were brought to light.

#### **6.2.6 Individual differences in handling negative peer feedback**

There is a general agreement among students that peer feedback has both advantages and drawbacks. However, some individual differences have also been noted in handling peer feedback and more specifically negative peer feedback. (Unless I state otherwise, the following quotations are from post-course interviews). For example, while the other

students acknowledged that they would consider both positive and negative peer comments, Saida was the only one who said that she was more interested in negative comments. She put it this way: "I ask him or her [peer] about his/her comments, then I take them into consideration, especially the negative one." Nonetheless, Saida admitted her reluctance to accept gratuitous negative comments. In other words, if a peer is to give negative feedback, this latter has to be legitimate; otherwise, Saida would not be happy about it. She even uses the word "angry" to describe her feeling towards such feedback. In contrast, we find Fatima (for more details see Fatima's case) who sees peer feedback as a source of competitiveness, but which proved to be a rather healthy reaction as it was more conducive to hard work. For her part, Soumia acknowledges that negative peer feedback is welcome when it is valid. She says: "It doesn't upset me to receive negative comments from my peers if it is, if I have made mistakes because it is the same as negative comments from my teacher." Soumia also expects peer negative comments to be valid, but unlike Saida, she equates negative comments from a peer to the teacher's. In other words, Soumia adopts a more flexible attitude towards negative peer feedback.

### **6.2.7 Tactful vs. less tactful pairs: the language of feedback**

The language used to provide peer feedback has been found to differ slightly from one pair to another. I have opted for the terms 'tactful' and 'less tactful' in order to distinguish two peers whose interactions during peer sessions revealed some lack of cohesiveness and empathy, although in terms of seriousness in implementing peer feedback these peers were among the best. (See for example Nouredine's and Saida's high percentages of implemented peer feedback). What I have called tactful pairs tend to use phrases of encouragement for each other and appreciate each other's work more frequently than the latter (see for example the two pairs: Naima/Fatima and Karima/Noura), while the less tactful sounded more authoritative and rather pushy at times. This is mainly noticed in the pair of Saida and Nouredine and, as mentioned in Saida's case, this type of behaviour is mainly due to Saida's high expectations from her peer. More interestingly, however, is that although Nouredine was generally easy going and more flexible than Saida, he too tended to become more pushy and demanding sometimes, mainly when Saida failed to provide feedback on some aspects of his writing. For instance, when Saida did not comment on the conclusion of his fourth assignment, Nouredine's language became rather emphatic as he ordered her to comment in writing: "you must..." (See Nouredine's case). Nouredine's behaviour



can be seen as either a direct reaction to Saida's authoritative stance, or a manifestation of his self-confidence as a feedback receiver who is able to voice his concerns about the quality of feedback he is given.

#### **6.2.8 Tactful vs. less tactful pairs: the impact on outside class collaborative work**

Another important observation was also made about the relationship between the degree of success of students' collaborative work inside class and their extended collaborative work outside class. Pairs that managed to build successful relationships during peer feedback sessions, through the use of tactful and positive language, were also able to work collaboratively outside class. For example Fatima and Naima, Karima and Noura continued to exchange feedback on subsequent writings, on topics of their choice, besides preparing for the exam together.

#### **6.2.9 Peer feedback: focus on permanent pairs**

Ferris (2003:135) made the point that some suggestions from previous research such as "...carefully grouping students into permanent response pairs, providing structured peer response forms, and implementing mechanisms to hold peer feedback givers and receivers accountable for taking the process seriously..." have not been investigated in order to examine whether they make a difference in the nature and outcome of peer feedback. The present study has come to fill this gap by considering such issues which seem to have been less catered for in recent research. For example, permanent pairing of students was observed in peer response sessions throughout the course period. Structured peer feedback sheets were used and students' duties as feedback givers and receivers were clarified to them from the outset of the course. What follows is some elaboration on the positive aspects of permanent pairing and also the use of peer feedback sheets. The importance of peer feedback sheets in relation to focusing students' attention on content and organization has already been discussed above, so the following addition will focus mainly on what the students found interesting about the use of peer feedback sheets.

#### **6.2.10 Positive aspects of permanent pairs**

Despite some slight problems between peers, as mentioned above, keeping permanent pairs throughout the course period proved to have some advantages. For instance, peers manage to see not only their own progress as writers but also their peers' development from one assignment to another. This is testified to by one of Karima's comments on

one of Noura's drafts saying: "this draft is better". On the other hand, students develop the ability to compare the peer's work to their own. For example, Karima manages to see the difference between the quality of information in her text and Noura's (see Karima's case). On the other hand, permanent pairs may help to maintain collaborative work outside class as well, although this is not always guaranteed. The fact of having two peers work together as a pair throughout the course period is not necessarily enough to develop stronger collaborative work relations.

#### **6.2.11 Negative aspects of permanent pairs**

One of the negative points about keeping fixed pairs over the course period has been noticed when one of the peers was absent, which meant allocating a different peer or asking the peer whose partner was not available to join one of the other permanent pairs. Although this did not present a major problem in the present study as the participants kept regular attendance except for some rare occasions (see the individual cases), this factor should be taken into consideration in deciding to use permanent pairing.

#### **6.2.12 Permanent pairs: some criteria for success**

Although I cannot claim that the following criteria are the only ones which affect the success of permanent pairs, I can say, from what I have observed and experienced with the participants, that some criteria should be present. For example, the peers should have some common points, such as, the willingness and motivation to learn. For example, Soumia and Salwa did not manage to develop as a collaborative pair because Salwa was not as much interested in developing her writing skills as Soumia was. Salwa ended up not completing all the required assignments while Soumia managed to complete the course successfully. On the other hand, it seems that some compatibility between the peers as far as the language proficiency is concerned is desirable as its lack may be a handicap to the degree of collaboration within the pair. This is clear from Saida's and Nouredine's pair. Given Saida's higher language proficiency she seems to have higher expectations of her peer feedback which Nouredine has not always been able to offer (see Saida's case for more details). Gender may be an issue as with Saida and Nouredine and personality is another. Both Saida and Nouredine seem to come from conservative families and they are themselves very conservative, which may not have helped their collaborative classroom activities to be extended to out of class collaboration. Hence, by showing both the positive aspects of permanent pairs and also some of the conditions which should be considered for their success I hope that I have

managed to shed some light on this one aspect which has not been considered by previous investigations into peer work in writing.

### 6.2.13 Peer feedback sheets: how helpful did the students find them?

The use of peer feedback sheets has proved to be helpful for the students in the present study. One of the advantages is that students can keep them as a record of their peers' comments on their work. This is stated by Fatima as follows:

I think that the feedback sheets are good because we can keep them and any time whenever we want to remember what we have done we can go back to those feedback sheets. (Post.C.I)

On the other hand, students seemed to enjoy the progressive nature of the feedback sheets. As Karima put it:

I like using these sheets because we can first of all write and second throughout this exercise we can show to the classmate the main problems that he has and we can also evaluate our classmate's paragraph or essay. I can also follow step by step the topic sentence, supporting points and supporting details. (Post.C.I)

Besides the importance of feedback sheets in raising students' awareness about the paragraph and essay content and organization, they have proved to be a good means of holding students accountable for responding to these two aspects of their peers' texts. For example, we have seen how Nouredine tried to draw Saida's attention to the fact that she ignored the conclusion of his essay. Hence, the simplicity and clarity of the peer feedback sheets design has been suitable for the students in the present study.

## 6.3 Students' use of teacher feedback

### 6.3.1 Teacher feedback: Extent of use

As the table below shows, students' implementation of teacher written feedback, surface suggestions, ranges between 80.8% and 100%, which demonstrates that students were well able to correct more than 80% of their errors once they were indicated to them through the use of symbols or underlining.

**Table 6-8: Frequency of students' use of teacher feedback in revisions from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> drafts of the four assignments**

Name	Surface suggestions		Meaning suggestions	
	No. of suggestions	No. implemented	No. of suggestions	No. implemented
Fatima	101	86 (85%)	14	13 (92.8%)
Naima	203	180 (88.6)	7	7 (100%)
Saida	55	55 (100%)	5	4 (80%)
Nouredine	104	89 (85.5%)	9	8 (88.8%)
Karima	73	68 (93%)	10	8 (80%)
Noura	74	62 (83.7%)	14	12 (85.7%)
Soumia	99	80 (80.8%)	7	6 (85.7%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>709</b>	<b>620 (87.4%)</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>58 (87.8%)</b>

This finding is encouraging as it indicates that minimal marking (Hyland 1990) can be usefully used with EFL Moroccan freshman writers. Moreover, students' use of taped comments, which involve meaning suggestions, ranges between 80% and 100%, which is also a clear indication that taped commentary was taken seriously by students in their revisions. The substantial use of teacher feedback is in line with previous research findings that L2 writers attend to and address their teachers' feedback (Cohen & Cavalcanti 1990; Fathman & Whalley 1990; Ferris 1995, 1997, 2001; Hedgcock & Lefkowitz 1994).

Although participants in the present study did sometimes resort to deleting the part of text on which they were asked to elaborate by providing examples or details, their responses were most of the time successful as they managed to attend to more than 80% of teacher taped comments. This finding does not totally support Conrad and Goldstein's (1999) finding that students revised more successfully when they had to attend to problems which did not involve development of text such as providing examples and detail. They also noticed that revisions were even less successful, only 10%, when students had to attend to problems involving argumentation, explanation, and analysis. Students in the current study have been more successful in responding to teacher comments which required meaning changes, more than 80%. This contrast can be explained by the fact that while in Conrad and Goldstein's study students had to attend to teacher written comments, students in the present investigation were responding to teacher taped comments which were more text-specific (Goldstein 2004), as the student writers were verbally guided as to which sentence or part of the text they should attend to. Moreover, this text-specificity of taped commentary was also one of the factors which motivated students to pay closer attention to teacher comments and revise more thoroughly than, probably, did the participants in Conrad and Goldstein's (1999) study.

Before we move on to examine the types of revisions made by the writers, an important point needs to be made. As the table above shows, written feedback points outnumber taped comments. However, this does not necessarily mean that teacher feedback focused more on surface structure than content and organization, but it is mainly due to the fact that written feedback is provided at the word and sentence level while taped commentary focuses on bigger chunks of the text, i.e. sentences and paragraphs. On the other hand, during the frequency count of both teacher-indicated errors and taped comments, only "usable" feedback points (Hyland 2003) were considered, i.e. only

those feedback points which students could use to revise their writing. For example, a comment which only praises or encourages a student is not a usable comment. So, even if the initial number of teacher taped comments was large, when this criterion is applied the number of comments decreases.

**Table 6-9: Total revisions from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> drafts of the four assignments (Feedback source: Teacher)**

Name	Surface changes		Meaning changes		Total
	Formal	Meaning-preserving	Microstructure	Macrostructure	
Fatima	51	35	6	7	99
Naima	151	29	5	2	187
Saida	33	22	0	4	59
Noureddine	57	32	4	4	97
Karima	40	28	6	2	76
Noura	48	14	9	3	74
Soumia	46	34	5	1	86
<b>Total</b>	<b>426 (62.8%)</b>	<b>194 (28.6%)</b>	<b>35 (5.1%)</b>	<b>23 (3.3%)</b>	<b>678</b>

The majority of changes (91.4%) made to the second drafts as a result of implementing teacher feedback are surface changes. This is similar to the findings of Connor and Asenavage (1994) who reported that 78% of revisions based on teacher feedback were surface changes, although the percentage in the present study is a little higher. Of the total surface changes formal changes account for 62.8% and meaning-preserving changes 28.6%. This finding also supports Gaskill's (1986) claim, although in different writing conditions, that most revisions his Spanish writers of English made in their argumentative essays were primarily surface changes.

On the other hand, meaning changes represent 8.5% of the total changes, with 5.1% microstructure and 3.3% macrostructure changes. While this study has not found that the majority of changes made as a result of teacher feedback are meaning changes as Paulus (1999) claims to have found (59%) and also Belcher (1989) who found that her ESL writers made more meaning than surface changes, what it has managed to show is the significant relationship between teacher comments and revision, the thing which Paulus was unable to do due to the chosen research design which did not permit any "statistical determination of which feedback source influenced which types of revisions." (ibid.:276) as both teacher and peer feedback were given at different stages of the revision process.

Despite the fact that the majority of changes made to the second drafts are surface changes, what the overall examination of revisions has reassured us about is that students have attended to both written feedback and taped commentary by implementing 87.4% of teacher feedback. The table below summarizes the total of

teacher feedback points offered on the four assignments and the extent to which students implemented them in their rewrites.

**Table 6-10: Total of offered and implemented teacher feedback points on the 2<sup>nd</sup> drafts of the four assignments**

<b>Names</b>	<b>Total feedback points</b>	<b>Total and % implemented</b>
Fatima	115	99 (86%)
Naima	210	187 (89%)
Saida	60	59 (98.3%)
Noureddine	113	97 (85.8%)
Karima	83	76 (91.5%)
Noura	88	74 (84%)
Soumia	106	86 (81.1%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>775</b>	<b>678 (87.4%)</b>

In responding to teacher feedback individual students have reported using the written feedback and the taped comments in a different order depending on what they felt suitable for them. For example, while some would start by listening to the tape for comments on content and organization, others would examine their drafts for written comments on surface structure. For example, while Fatima, Noura, and Karima acknowledged that they listened to the tape first, Saida, Noureddine, Soumia and Naima said they referred to their texts first for any teacher written comments.

### **6.3.2 Strategies of handling teacher feedback**

Some common features of students' response to teacher feedback have been identified:

- Implementation of teacher-provided correction
- Provision of correction for teacher-indicated errors
- Provision of limited elaboration
- Deletion of parts of text which required elaboration

It is important to note that all students attempted to correct their teacher-indicated errors and, with the less frequent teacher-provided correction, students simply implemented the correction. However, although the general tendency among students was to attend to teacher comments on content and organization, in some cases where the required amendment involved elaboration, students used one of two strategies: they either provided limited elaboration, or they simply deleted the part of text which needed elaboration.

### **6.3.3 Students' attitudes to teacher written feedback and taped commentary**

Students' attitudes towards teacher feedback have been elicited through the use of post-course questionnaire; in-depth interviews, student written responses, using paragraph and essay cover sheets; and tape recorded responses (as students were given the option to record their responses after they finish listening to teacher taped comments). It should

be mentioned, however, that most students preferred to write their comments rather than record them. The following is a discussion of the common themes which have emerged from the data. As is the case for peer feedback, student responses to teacher feedback have been divided into two main categories: advantages and disadvantages.

**Table 6-11: Students' perceptions of advantages and disadvantages of teacher feedback**

<p><b><u>Advantages of teacher feedback</u></b>  <b>Written feedback:</b>  <i>Linguistic benefits</i>            1. <i>Raising students' awareness about surface structure problems</i></p> <p>2. <i>Learning from mistakes and attempting to avoid them in the future.</i></p>	<p>"The advantages of giving me written feedback on my writing are:            pointing out my mistakes which helps me to correct them easily.            helping me to know from what kind are my mistakes to avoid making such them."</p> <p>"It is when I give you my paper to correct it, you give me a feedback about it which helps me to avoid the mistakes and to try in the future to keep it in mind."</p>
<p><b>Taped commentary:</b>  <i>Linguistic benefits</i>  <i>Speaking &amp; Listening practice</i></p>	<p>"This method allow to me to speak and to give my opinion which help me to improve my spoken activity in addition to my written activity."            "That is to say it encourage us to work more and helps us in listening as well."            "it helps us how to speak fluently."            "It is more helpful to have spoken taped comments on the cassette than just written comment because this method help us not only to write but also to speak freely about it"            "It is a new method which help us to speak fluently and to listen to your own feedback on the cassettes."            "I think that the taped comment is similar to the written one. However, the former is preferable as it contains both comments and pronunciation."</p>
<p><i>Raising writer's awareness of content &amp; organisation</i></p>	<p>"This method helps us to give a good structure, organization and logical order."            "Helps us to write a good essay with a good structure; for example, the topic sentence, the supporting point, the supporting details, etc."            "It helps me to evaluate my writing and write with a unity and coherence."            "It helps me to elaborate my writing."            "It also helps us to avoid mistakes and to write with a good structure, logical order and transition signals etc."            "Helps us to write an essay with a good structure, for example, Introduction (thesis statement, general statement), body (Topic sentence, supporting points, supporting details, and concluding sentence for each paragraph), conclusion."            "It helps us to know what should we do in our essay, for instance, I wrote on my essay one paragraph in the whole of it, what made a confusion for the reader because I didn't separate my essay in a three parts (introduction, body, conclusion), but when I saw your feedback, I noticed my mistakes so your feedback helps me to not do this mistakes for next time."</p>
<p><i>Social/Affective benefits</i>  <i>Enhancing teacher-student rapport through personalised message: a possible alternative to face-</i></p>	<p>"Honestly speaking, I find spoken comments on the cassette more helpful and efficient than the written comments because I feel that the teacher is having a</p>

### *to-face conferencing?*

direct speech that concerns nobody but me...”

“In my opinion, I think that having spoken taped comment is more beneficial and helpful than written comment. Since it allow to me to understand more the comment of my teacher, Because I hear her voice and I feel that she is with me.”

“Both spoken and written comments helped me. But concerning the spoken comments, it is beneficial because it makes me feel as if I was talking with my teacher face to face. And I feel also that these comments are peculiar to me which gives me a great desire to work more and more. What is strange, is when I hear my teacher’s comments on the cassette I can know if she is happy with my work or not.”

“You can help me either by a spoken comment or by a writing one. But with the taped comment, and particularly when I heard your voice, I felt your situation and how did want to send me your message, as if I was talking with you.”

“ from the way the teacher talks in, I can know if she is really satisfied by my writing or not. Finally, it’s live and dynamic.”

### *Enhancing self-confidence*

“...it is a dynamic and active method that gives me a kind of self-confidence, and no wonder I will to work harder so as to satisfy my teacher and myself of course.”

“the teacher’s feedback reassure me about my writing, for instance, if I had some doubt about my essay or I wasn’t sure if I had respected the plan or the instructions, my teacher’s spoken feedback will give me some confident in myself.”

### *A source of motivation*

“I think that the advantages of this method exist in improving my writing, because when my teacher gives me their spoken feedback on my writing it will make me more motivated to work more, and to do what she/he is advising me in order to bring a good writing.”

“When I manage with a new method at any domain, I find myself enthusiastic to continue the work.”

“I have found that having spoken comments on the cassette are helpful because they have given me a lot of encouragement to work hard in order to improve my writing.”

“Furthermore spoken comments are addressed to me which encourage me to do my best.”

### *Practical benefits*

*Ease of comment replay and memorability.*

“Having spoken comments on the cassette is more helpful because it gives me the opportunity to listen to them several times. In addition to that this spoken comments helps me to memorise and keep them in my mind so as to avoid them in my writing practice.”

“I can repeat the comment again and again”

### *Clarity and liveliness of message*

“What I find more helpful of the two (taped comments and written ones) is the spoken comments because it makes the message clear and live as well.”

“This method of giving feedback has some advantages for example when you take feedback you realize how you should manage your essays from the beginning till the end without any confusion, and you know to what extent you can easily organize your ideas.”



*Opportunity for Student-teacher discussion:*

"The spoken comments on the cassette gives to both teacher and student opportunity to say or discuss different problems concerning writing."

"It is more helpful to have spoken (taped) comment on the cassette than just written because this method help us not only to write our comment but also speak freely about it, in writing we only write and write what the teacher told us to do but to have spoken (taped) comment on the cassette helps us to communicate and discuss with our teacher and change our ideas with her."

"I find to have spoken comment on the cassette more helpful than just written comments because it helps us to communicate freely."

*More Teacher input*

"It helps also the teacher to instruct their students and give them what he cannot give in the classroom."

*Other Benefits  
Attentiveness*

"I find spoken comments more useful and helpful for me than just written comments as I said before. Because this new method of education makes you more attentive to what your teacher says."

"Actually, what I find in particular helpful about this method is that it helps me to understand more my teacher's comments, because while listening to them I have to pay a great attention to what he/she is telling me to do, for example, when I hear my teacher telling me that I have to clarify a specific sentence in my essay I feel that I have to do it in the best way in order to improve my essay."

"I feel that your comments are directed to; it makes me more careful."

*Novelty value*

"Actually the method of having spoken taped comments is a helpful way in learning, since it helps us to understand better. What is helpful in this method in particular is the fact that is a spoken comments not written ones as we know we didn't have this spoken comments in any course which is something new."

"it is a new method which I had never practiced it before"

"Generally, this method of giving me feedback on my writing is very useful and new for me."

"Concerning the comments on the cassette, I find it very helpful because It is break the routine of just writing."

*Recognition and appreciation of teacher efforts*

"Thank you Madam for your help, and I want to tell you that your work seems to be fruitful at the end of the year, or rather all our university years, since we feel and touch improvement in our writing, thank you once more."

"I want to thank you Madam for your help, and congratulation you've done a good work."

"Thank you teacher for your efforts to help us."

"First of all I want to thank you teacher for your comments. I feel a very happy when I know that is in our university found a good and exuberant teacher who can follow her students step by step to emprove their working until the end. Believe me teacher when I say that this is the real work which we need to be excellent students."

"Finally, thank you so much for your help, and I want

to tell you that without you I could never reach this level.”

**Disadvantages of taped commentary**  
*Teacher speaking too fast*

“There is one special thing for the oral comment when you were speaking fastly, yes, I don’t understand some words so I find difficult to spell in order to get the idea.”

### **6.3.3.1 Advantages of teacher written feedback**

#### **6.3.3.1.1 Linguistic benefits**

##### *Raising student awareness about surface structure problems*

Students acknowledged that teacher written feedback helped them pay more attention to language problems in their writings. This is for example expressed by Fatima when she says: “the written feedback on our writing has lots of advantages such as, know what our writing miss for example grammar, sentence structure, punctuation, etc.” In the same way, Naima comments that “this method helps me to correct my mistakes, for example, if I had made a “ww” mistake in my essay, I’ll try to avoid it in my next essays by using a good dictionary, the same thing for spelling mistakes”. Moreover, students were not only made aware of their language problems but they were also encouraged to benefit from other courses such as the grammar class. This is clearly stated by Saida:

☑ I have learnt from my teacher’s comments how to use what I am learning in my grammar class in my writing which has made me avoid a lot of major problems of grammar that I used to make. Finally, I have learnt how to correct my mistakes, both in language and structure, by following the teacher’s advice.

What is important about student reactions is that they seemed to understand the purpose of written feedback in the course, i.e. focusing on surface structure. On the other hand, they also were receptive to the idea that this type of feedback was mainly indicating the type and location of the errors. Hence, not only has the present study found that students were able to correct the majority of their errors once they were pointed out to them, but also that they reacted positively to this method.

The receptive attitude towards this type of teacher written feedback has been supported by the fact that students were informed from the outset about the kind of help they would get through written feedback as it has been suggested that responding strategies be explained to students (Leki 1992, Ferris 2003). Another factor which may have affected students’ attitude is the fact that in previous writing classes they didn’t get enough writing practice and also not much teacher feedback on their writings (see Baseline Study, pp. 13-34). Hence, they were able to see the benefits which the present

program offered them and to recognize its importance in developing one of the skills in which they were weak. This was manifested in expressions of gratitude, which were mainly voiced after receiving taped commentary. This positive attitude was also shown when the students were asked to state the disadvantages of teacher feedback, and all of them said that there were no drawbacks.

#### **6.3.4 The Hawthorne effect: what measure was taken?**

The *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* defines the term “Hawthorne effect” as “the alteration of behaviour by the subjects of a study due to their awareness of being observed.” (p.1208) For the purpose of the present study and in order to encourage objectivity of student judgement of teacher feedback some factors proved helpful. For example, students’ participation in the study was voluntary and they were informed from the outset that the teacher-researcher would not be marking their final exam papers. Hence, the effort has been made to minimise the Hawthorne effect (Dörnyei 2001a) on both students’ writing performance and also their reactions to the different activities in the program. The two measures above were judged to be sufficient in serving this purpose because if students made any extra effort to improve their work it was not in order to please the teacher-researcher or because they were taking part in the study. It was rather done with a view to improving their writing skills whose importance they were aware of in both the short term achievement, i.e. final exams, and the long term benefit, i.e. their general academic success. Another important factor which was believed to have reduced the Hawthorne effect was the fact that although students knew they were taking part in a study, they were not informed about the exact aim of the project.

#### **6.3.5 Advantages of teacher taped commentary**

A detailed examination of the categories, which have been derived from the four data sources used to elicit student attitudes to teacher feedback, showed that there are four main overarching categories. These are linguistic, social/affective, and practical benefits of taped commentary.

##### ***6.3.5.1 Linguistic benefits***

###### ***Speaking and listening practice***

Taped commentary was seen by students as an extension of language practice. They all acknowledged that it provided them with listening and speaking practice. This is expressed by Fatima saying:

☑ Spoken (taped comment) gives us opportunity to speak to write and listen, because at university there is lack of spoken courses. And as everybody knows learning language is divided into many skills: listening, speaking, writing, reading.

This finding confirms Hyland's statement that taped commentary "...provides a useful second-language-learning experience in itself. It helps to reinforce the written assignment with an authentic listening exercise which has the extra motivating factor of being directly relevant to the student's progress." (1990:284) The motivating factor which Hyland refers to here has also been reported by students on many occasions and seems to be related not only to the fact that the comments are relevant to students' progress but also to the fact that student writers are able to see the teacher's effort to understand and make sense of what they say. These points will be discussed further in the following sections. In addition to enhancing language learning through the spoken mode, taped commentary harnesses student writers' knowledge of the written text by raising their awareness of content and organization as opposed to surface structure.

#### *Raising writer's awareness of content and organization*

The underlying message is that in order for a writer to be understood he/she must cater not only for the surface aspect but also for the organization of information. Taped commentary seems to have served this purpose for students became more aware of this aspect in their writing. As Noura put it:

☑ this method helps us to give a good structure, organization and logical order.

On the same line, Karima said:

Formerly I didn't pay attention to the organization of the essay, I tried hard to look for nice language and difficult vocabularies to show off myself, and neglect what is important like supporting points, topic sentence, supporting details, etc, which I didn't even know. (Post.C.I)

Karima's statement shows that through taped commentary she also became aware of the shortcomings of her previous inadequate practice and that she was now clear about what the writing task should involve.

#### **6.3.5.2 Social/Affective benefits**

##### *Enhancing teacher-student rapport through a personalised message: a possible alternative to face-to-face conferencing?*

Taped commentary seems to provide an opportunity for narrowing the physical gap that characterises the reader/writer communication. Students in the present study have reported that teacher taped comments had a human touch to them. They felt that there

was more to taped comments than the written ones. This idea is, for instance, expressed by Fatima when she says:

☒ The spoken comments on the cassette has several benefits, such as have a kind of contact or state of touching with the teacher, which is in my opinion a very important thing in student life working, because throughout this contact he/she will benefit from the teacher's advices and corrections.

The teacher-student rapport seems to be furthered through personalised messages which the teacher provides through the use of students' first names. The importance of teachers' knowing their students' names and using them in class has been astutely emphasised by Dörnyei & Murphey:

A teacher knowing a student's name, and the student knowing that the teacher knows it, is extremely important for that student's constructed identity in that class. A student who even thinks the teacher does not know their name will often feel they are invisible in the group. Being anonymous is almost as if you do not exist in the group. And indeed, we fear, many students feel they do not exist in many classes all over the world where time is not taken to at least get to know each other's names." (2003:27)

Hence, by encouraging students to work in pairs and addressing each other by first names and also the teacher using first names to provide taped comments, the potential for student-student and teacher-student interaction was high.

In addition, it seems that the fact of hearing the teacher's voice enhances teacher-student rapport. This has been expressed by students on different occasions during the course. For instance, Karima says:

Honestly speaking, I find spoken comments on the cassette more helpful and efficient than the written comments because I feel that the teacher is having a direct speech that concerns nobody but me. (Post.C.I)

Naima also states:

☒ Furthermore spoken comments are addressed to me which encourage me to do my best.

Similarly Soumia puts it this way:

☒ You can help me either by a spoken comment or by a writing one. But with the taped comment, and particularly when I heard your voice, I felt your situation and how did want to send me your message, as if I was talking with you.

Saida also says:

☒ I feel that oral comments are directed to me more than the written ones which gave me a lot of motivation to improve my writing skills.

While we cannot claim taped commentary can replace face-to-face teacher-student conferencing, it is possible to say that in cases where the latter type of feedback is not possible, which is the case in many teaching/learning environments (Ferris 2003), taped commentary is the closest both writing teachers and students can get to face-to-face conferencing and, therefore, benefit from the increasing teacher-student rapport. Hence, the present study has once again practically confirmed Hyland's finding that taped commentary enhances teacher-student rapport (1990:282).

#### *Enhancing self-confidence*

Another positive aspect of taped commentary which participants reported is that it promotes self-confidence. As Naima put it;

☞ The teacher's feedback reassure me about my writing, for instance, if I had some doubt about my essay or I wasn't sure if I had respected the plan or the instructions, my teacher's spoken feedback will give me some confident in myself.

Self-confidence is then a result of being reassured by the teacher's comment that the writer is on the right track which is even more enhanced by hearing the teacher's verbal comments. This feeling may also be due to the fact that taped comments provide students with more input (see the following discussion of the *practical* aspect of taped commentary) by pointing out both the positive and negative aspects of their writing and, therefore, helping them to see writing "...as a means of learning rather than demonstrating learning." (Hyland 1990:185) As a matter of fact, a student's anxiety as a foreign language writer is decreased. Self-confidence has also been expressed by students in relation to what the writing program has helped them achieve in terms of metacognitive/task knowledge (see the subsequent discussion of this point). Another interesting point made by the students concerns the motivational aspect of taped commentary.

#### *A source of motivation*

All participants acknowledged that receiving taped commentary increased motivation to revise their writing and do their best to improve it. Student motivation, however, can be broadly explained, using Dörnyei's (1994) framework (see Table 3-1, p.43), in terms of "Course-specific motivational components" and "teacher-specific motivational components" (2001b:18). For the former, although students were initially motivated to learn EFL writing, they became even more aware of its relevance to their needs as a result of exposure. Moreover, as the course progressed, participants started to see improvement in their writing (see for example Saida's positive change of attitude towards taped commentary as a result of noticing her writing improvement), in other

words, they expected a successful outcome of their efforts in the course, which then resulted in course satisfaction. This is, for instance, expressed by Fatima when she says:

✎ Personally I have touched a great improvement in my writings since I have begun.

Similarly, Soumia says:

✎ I want just to say that I'm so happy Because I achieve this level by improving my writing.

For her part, Naima shows her expectation of success as follows:

✎ I will benefit from the information which my lecturer gives to me about the Academic writing in this way I can be able to write a good academic writing.

All these factors ensured that students remained motivated throughout the course period. However, besides course-specific motivational factors, taped commentary, as one of the teacher-specific motivational components, has enhanced participant motivation. This is stated, for instance, by Naima when she says:

✎ I think that the advantages of this method exist in improving my writing, because when my teacher gives me their spoken feedback on my writing it will make me more motivated to work more, and to do what she/he is advising me in order to bring a good writing.

On the same line, Saida states:

✎ I have found that having spoken comments on the cassette are helpful because they have given me a lot of encouragement to work hard in order to improve my writing.

Another important point which has enhanced the motivational quality of taped commentary is the fact that the comments were more text-specific. Despite the difficulty of determining what a text-specific comment is (Ferris 1997), "...there is agreement that text-specific commentary is that which could only apply to that writer's text at that place within the text." (Goldstein 2004:75) By providing text-specific taped comments, the teacher/reader shows the type of difficulties she is having with the text and their location, such an act can be motivating as it shows the reader's involvement with the writer's text. This has been evidenced by Naima's statement:

✎ Actually, what I find in particular helpful about this method is that it helps me to understand more my teacher's comments, because while listening to them I have to pay a great attention to what he/she is telling me to do, for example, when I hear my teacher telling me that I have to clarify a specific sentence in my essay I feel that I have to do it in the best way in order to improve my essay.

Furthermore, taped commentary seems to have some practical benefits.

### 6.3.5.3 Practical benefits

#### *Ease of comment replay and memorability*

One of the practical aspects of taped commentary has been reported to relate to the ease of listening to teacher comments over and over again and the ability to remember them. Naima's following statement summarizes these two points:

Having spoken comments on the cassette is more helpful because it gives me the opportunity to listen to them several times. In addition to that this spoken comments helps me to memorise and keep them in my mind so as to avoid them in my writing practice. (Post.C.I)

#### *Clarity and liveliness*

Besides other advantages students acknowledged the "dynamic" and liveliness of taped commentary. More importantly, however, unlike written comments, taped commentary provides students with "a revealing tone" (Hedge 2005) which students have found helpful and suggestive of how the teacher felt about their writing. For instance, Karima says:

☒ From the way the teacher talks in, I can know if she is really satisfied by my writing or not. Finally, it's live and dynamic.

#### *Opportunity for student-teacher discussion*

Despite the fact that taped commentary still did not guarantee the same environment as would have been possible through face-to-face conferencing, it has shown that a substantial discussion can take place between the teacher/reader and student writers. This has been voiced by Noura in the following statement:

☒ It is more helpful to have spoken (taped) comment on the cassette than just written because this method help us not only to write our comment but also speak freely about it, in writing we only write and write what the teacher told us to do but to have spoken (taped) comment on the cassette helps us to communicate and discuss with our teacher and change our ideas with her.

By responding to teacher taped commentary either on the cover sheets or by recording their comments, students managed to communicate with the teacher on many aspects of their writing by either agreeing with the teacher comments or by querying them. As an example of this communication, see the following excerpt from Soumia's cover sheet in which she responds to teacher taped commentary:

☒ You were right when you said that my ideas in general are not easily identified, and they need to be dig out by the reader. It seemed to me too, because when I finished writing my first draft and read it I felt that it would be difficult a little bit to understand. Censerning the problem of control which you said that I should have on my suporting details, I think that it refers to the substantial number of ideas which I included in order to make the job of the reader easier, and Make



them get my point. All in all, I believe that with your help and practice my writing is going to improve. And I hope to succeed in my second draft.

As we see, Soumia agrees with the teacher's comment besides showing her metacognitive awareness of what went wrong with her writing and trying to offer an explanation.

#### *More teacher input*

Students have also acknowledged that taped commentary provided them with more input from the teacher confirming, therefore, Hyland's (1990) claim that taped commentary is much more informative than written feedback. As Fatima puts it:

☒ It [taped commentary] helps also the teacher to instruct their students and give them what he cannot give in the classroom.

#### **6.3.5.4 Other benefits**

In addition to the foregoing benefits, others have been identified. These are "attentiveness", "novelty value", and "recognition of teacher efforts"; however, given their inter-relationship and also the connection with the other advantages discussed above, they have been categorised as "other".

#### *Attentiveness*

Students reported that receiving taped commentary made them more attentive to what the teacher was saying. However, this attentiveness seems to be triggered by the text-specific comments which are a source of motivation, as explained above. Moreover, attentiveness seems to also relate to the novelty value of taped commentary. As Nouredine states:

I find spoken comments more useful and helpful for me than just written comments ...Because this new method of education makes you more attentive to what your teacher says. (Post.C.I)

The definition of attentiveness, at least as far as students have used it, is the equivalent of the term "attention" categorized by Allright and Bailey under the general term "receptivity" which consists of, besides attention, "...anxiety, competitiveness, self-esteem, and motivation." (1991:183) Such factors, according to the authors, have a major role in how receptive learners will be and how effective their learning will also be. Hence, if students in the present study have found that taped commentary makes them more attentive, i.e. receptive to what they were taught, some effective learning should be expected to take place.

#### *Novelty value*

As mentioned above, students also acknowledged that the novel aspect of taped commentary was one of the factors which also made them attentive to it. In other words, the activity triggered students' curiosity and wanted to discover more about despite some challenges (see the disadvantages of taped commentary below). Hence, the activity presented some internal motivating factors, such as "intrinsic interest of activity" through "arousal of curiosity" and "optimal degree of challenge" (Williams and Burden 1997 in Dörnyei 2001b:20) which kept students highly motivated throughout the course period. The novelty aspect has been commented on by Nouredine when he says:

☒ Concerning the comments on the cassette, I find it very helpful because It is break the routine of just writing.

Noura acknowledges that taped commentary is a completely new method for her:

☒ It is a new method which I had never practiced it before.

Saida also says:

☒ Generally, this method of giving me feedback on my writing is very useful and new for me.

#### *Recognition of teacher efforts*

As mentioned above the type of text-specific comments which the teacher offers through taped commentary allow students to see the other facet of being a writing teacher, it's that of being an involved reader of their texts. In other words, the teacher is no longer the distant figure of authority who tries to prescribe rules and expect learners to follow them, but rather a collaborative reader who tries to build a relationship of understanding and creation of meaning with his/her students. This effort has proved worthwhile for students can trace it through taped commentary and the teacher is thanked for that. This recognition of teacher effort has been expressed by the participants in the current study on many occasions. For instance Karima said:

☒ Thank you Madam for your help, and I want to tell you that your work seems to be fruitful at the end of the year, or rather all our university years, since we feel and touch improvement in our writing, thank you once more.

Soumia also expressed her gratitude saying:

☒ Finally, thank you so much for your help, and I want to tell you that without you I could never reach this level.

This student reaction also confirms Hyland's finding that "[s]tudents obviously take the time to listen to what I have to say and appreciate my efforts at comprehending their

work. I am often thanked afterwards.” (1990:285) Despite the overall positive attitude towards taped commentary, some shortcomings have also been noted.

### **6.3.6 Disadvantages of taped commentary**

As is the case for written feedback, students acknowledged that taped commentary did not have any major problems apart from the fact that the teacher was sometimes speaking too fast for them to follow every comments. As Soumia reports:

There is one special thing for the oral comment when you were speaking fastly, yes, I don't understand some words so I find difficult to spell in order to get the idea. (Post.C.I)

While such a problem will normally tend to happen since the message is spoken, students' difficulty is also due to their weak listening skills, which has some implications for both writing teachers who intend to use taped commentary and also for listening/speaking teachers (see chapter seven for implications).

### **6.3.7 Taped commentary: the impact of unfamiliarity and individual differences**

Although there was a general positive attitude towards taped commentary, some individual differences had risen. One main case in which taped commentary was initially met with some scepticism was the case of Saida. As mentioned in the analysis of her case, Saida was not enthusiastic about taped commentary when it was first introduced to her. She thought that written feedback was more familiar and interesting as she could easily track the teacher's corrections and suggestions on the text. She puts it this way:

☒ I think, the written comments are more helpful that the spoken comments on the cassette because the written comments I can keep reading them many times and I can follow comment by comment in the editing of my paragraph. But when I listened to the spoken comments on the cassette I forget a lot of comments which you gave me about my paragraph.

She also adds:

☒ The spoken comments on the cassette are not so helpful because I couldn't remember all the comments and I couldn't listen and correct at the same time, which possible with the written comments.

This reaction has a lot to do with Saida's personality as a student who was anxious about success and wanted to make sure she was doing the right thing for the one and only purpose of passing the final exam. Any new activity which might distract her from this main target was not welcome. However, Saida's attitude changed as she started to notice improvement in her writing and her comment on the cover sheet of the third

assignment shifted from a rather negative tone to a positive agreeing one. Unlike the other students, Saida needed more time to be reassured that taped commentary had something positive to offer her before completely accepting it (see Saida's case for more details).

***Q 3: Are there any individual differences in the way students use and react to the three types of feedback?***

The answer to this question is not limited to this particular section for, I hope, the reader will have already touched some individual differences by reading the individual cases and also the previous sections of this chapter. Hence, in this section what I have done is basically aggregate some of the points which may have already arisen but which needed to be brought together.

**6.4 Overview of student use of teacher and peer feedback: some individual differences**

**Table 6-12: Percentages of implemented peer and teacher feedback**

Name	Percentage of implemented teacher feedback	Percentage of implemented peer feedback
Fatima	86%	60%
Naima	89%	60%
Saida	98.3%	85.7%
Noureddine	85.8%	80.8%
Karima	91.5%	57.1%
Noura	84%	63.6%
Soumia	81.1%	58.3%

As the figures show, students attended more to teacher feedback than peer feedback. However, some variation among students in the use of both types of feedback is also noticeable. For example, some students who implemented a high percentage of peer feedback also made a substantial use of teacher feedback, for example, Saida and Noureddine. However, while Karima and Soumia used low percentages of peer feedback, they implemented higher percentages of teacher feedback. Similarly, Fatima, Naima, and Noura made a substantial use of teacher feedback than peer feedback.

As was shown above (section 6.1, pp. 275-279), students also differed in their extent of use and focus of annotations.

The individual differences were also manifested in the students' attitudes and reactions to peer feedback. For instance, while all participants expressed their cautious tendency in dealing with peer feedback, Fatima thought that peer feedback also instigated in her a feeling of competitiveness (see Fatima's case). On the other hand, some individual

variation was also noticed in students' reactions to negative peer feedback (see section 6.2.6, pp.291-292).

As far as taped commentary is concerned, we saw how Saida was not very receptive to the idea, although she made use of it, on the belief that written feedback was more helpful (see 6.3.7, pp. 311-312).

*Q 4: Do students' writings show any improvement over the course period?*

## 6.5 Revision and text quality

### 6.5.1 Assignment One

Table 6-13:

Paired Samples Test of the three drafts of assignment 1

		Paired Differences				t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower				Upper
Pair 1	A1D1 - A1D2	-.414	.895	.338	-1.242	.414	-1.224	6	.267
Pair 2	A1D2 - A1D3	-2.057	1.005	.380	-2.986	-1.128	-5.417	6	.002
Pair 3	A1D1 - A1D3	-2.471	1.409	.533	-3.775	-1.168	-4.640	6	.004

After having investigated the individual cases and the development of each student's writing over the four assignments, now it is time to look at the overall achievement of the group. Hence, to determine whether there was a significant improvement made from the first to the second draft of the first assignment (A1D1-A1D2), after the implementation of peer feedback, and from second to the third drafts (A1D2-A1D3), after the implementation of teacher feedback, a paired t test was performed. Moreover, the first and the final drafts (A1D1-A1D3) were also examined using the same test in order to check the significance of the overall improvement made on the first assignment. The paired t-test was conducted using the mean rating scores assigned to the three drafts (D1, D2, and D3) of the four assignments (A1, A2, A3, and A4) by the three raters.

As the table above shows, there is no significant difference between the first and second drafts of students' first assignment. The t value is -1.224, with df 6, and non-significant. This can be explained by the limited number of revisions implemented by students as a result of peer feedback. However, the difference between the second and third draft is significant. The t value is -5.417, and significant for  $p < 0.01$  for df 6. This can be attributed to the substantial number of revisions made by the students after receiving teacher feedback. Similarly, the t test shows that there is a significant improvement

from the first draft to the third. The t value is  $-4.640$ , and significant for  $p < 0.01$  for df 6.

### 6.5.2 Assignment Two

Table 6-14:

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	A2D1 - A2D2	-.471	.415	.157	-.855	-8.74E-02	-3.004	6	.024
Pair 2	A2D2 - A2D3	-1.586	.963	.364	-2.477	-.695	-4.355	6	.005
Pair 3	A2D1 - A2D3	-2.057	.862	.326	-2.854	-1.260	-6.315	6	.001

Unlike the first assignment, students' improvement from the first to second draft in the second assignment (A2D1-D2) is significant. The t value is  $-3.004$ , and significant for  $p < 0.05$  for df 6. This can be explained by the substantial revisions made as a result of peer feedback and also self-initiated revisions (see the individual cases for examples of self-initiated revisions). The significance of improvement is even higher between the second and third draft (A2D2-A2D3) with t value being  $-4.355$ , and significant for  $p < 0.01$  for df 6. Students managed to make considerable use of teacher feedback in their revisions. More important, however, is the high significance level of improvement from the first to the third draft. The t value is  $-6.315$ , and significant for  $p < 0.01$  for df 6, which shows the overall progress students were making in their writing as they were exposed to more writing practice and revision strategies.

### 6.5.3 Assignment Three

Table 6-15:

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	A3D1 - A3D2	-.643	.789	.298	-1.373	8.704E-02	-2.155	6	.075
Pair 2	A3D2 - A3D3	-2.129	.824	.311	-2.891	-1.368	-6.834	6	.000
Pair 3	A3D1 - A3D3	-2.771	.585	.221	-3.313	-2.230	-12.531	6	.000

Assignment three represents the students' first experience in essay writing after the completion of the first two paragraph assignments. As the results of the paired t test show, there is no significant difference between students' first and second drafts of the third assignment (A3D1-D2). This lack of significant improvement is due to the fact that some student writers received little feedback and, therefore, revised less, (see for example Karima's and Naima's cases).

As is the case for the first two assignments, there is significant improvement from the second to the third draft. The t value is -6.834, and significant for  $p < 0.01$  for df 6. Similarly, there is a high level of improvement from draft one to draft three showing the development in the students' writing performance.

#### 6.5.4 Assignment Four

**Table 6-16:**  
**Paired Samples Test of the three drafts of assignment 4**

		Paired Differences				t	df	Sig (2-tailed)	
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower				Upper
Pair 1	A4D1 - A4D2	-7.14E-02	.189	7.143E-02	-.246	.103	-1.000	6	.356
Pair 2	A4D2 - A4D3	-1.514	.891	.337	-2.339	-.690	-4.494	6	.004
Pair 3	A4D1 - A4D3	-1.586	1.054	.398	-2.561	-.611	-3.980	6	.007

As far as assignment four is concerned, there is no significant improvement from the first to the second draft (A4D1-D2). The t value is -1.000, with df 6, and non-significant. This lack of improvement can be explained in two ways. First, the topic of this essay was unfamiliar to the students' educational, and also cultural, context. Students were asked to take a position concerning the issue of whether university lecturers should be evaluated by their own students or by colleagues. Although students seemed to like the topic and found it interesting during the brainstorming workshop and came up with some useful ideas, when it came to putting it into writing they may have found it difficult given the fact that they had never been exposed to such a subject. Another important point is that the majority of the students had written very good first drafts, the thing which might have led the peers and the writers themselves to think that there was little, or no need, for serious revision.

However, the results of the paired t test show that there is significant improvement in students' second and third drafts (A4D2-D3). The t value is -4.494, and significant for  $p < 0.01$  for df 6. This improvement can be attributed to the substantial revisions made as a result of implementing teacher written feedback. Moreover, there is a high of improvement from the first to the third draft (A4D1-D3). The t value is -3.980, significant for  $p < 0.01$  for df 6. Again, this is a clear indication that the students' writing performance continued to develop as a result of regular practice of writing and revision over the course period.

***Q 5: Have students' attitudes to writing in EFL changed over the course period?***

## **6.6 Student attitudes towards the writing course and EFL writing**

There was general consensus that the course was beneficial as it met students' needs as first year EFL writers. Some of the aspects which have been highlighted are the role of the course in enhancing learners' metacognitive and task knowledge, the increase in the amount of EFL writing through assignments and journal writing.

### **6.6.1 Metacognitive/task knowledge**

One of the important benefits of the writing course is that students gradually realized what the writing task entailed. This was one of the obstacles for them before they joined the course. In other words, students did not have appropriate schemata to undertake the task. Therefore, the present writing program provided them with the tools which they needed to feel confident enough to write. This is clearly stated by Karima when she says:

I've learnt a lot of things, such as, making outlines, organization of the essay, punctuation, etc. Before, I used to write without paying attention to those things. (Post.C.I)

In addition, through metacognitive knowledge, developed both through direct instruction and practice through giving and receiving feedback, students became well able to be critical of their own writing. For example, Soumia commented on her own writing saying:

✉ I noticed that I have had many mistakes in this essay. Apart from my grammatical mistakes, I think that the others refer to my ideas which are limited in this subject.

### **6.6.2 Student change of attitude towards EFL writing**

Student development of metacognitive and task knowledge helped them change their attitudes towards EFL writing. While most of them initially saw the writing task as a rather daunting task, they all acknowledged that the writing course helped them to understand what paragraph and essay writing involve, which made the task of writing a lot easier and more approachable. For instance, in the following extract Saida explains how she felt about writing before and after attending the writing course:

Teacher: can you talk to me a little about your attitude to writing in English before this course and after the course.

Saida: I didn't have any idea about writing argumentative paragraphs and essays, especially argumentative, but now I have a very good, clear idea. I can write easily not like before.

Teacher: How did you feel about writing in English before this course?

Saida: It was difficult for me to take a pen and start writing.



Teacher: Why?

Saida: Because I didn't know how to organize my ideas, what is an essay in English, but now I can write easily. (Post.C.I)

On the same line, Naima admitted that her attitude to writing in English changed as a result of taking part in the course. She states:

I am satisfied with my writing now because before I felt that I couldn't write a good paragraph or essay, but now I am quite happy that I could write well and I feel I can write any kind of essay. (Post.C.I)

She also could see how what she learnt in the present course could be helpful in her subsequent years of study when she responds to the question:

Teacher: In what way will this year's course help you in the coming years? Naima: Yes, it will help me because I have learnt how to build my writing, how to write and I will continue to do it. (Post.C.I)

### 6.6.3 Frequency of EFL writing

All participants acknowledged that they wrote more as a result of attending the writing course in which they had to complete both assignments and journal writing. They admitted that this was the first time they had done so much writing in the whole period of their EFL learning. This is clearly stated by Karima in the following extract:

Teacher: Has the present course affected the frequency of your writing in English in any way?

Karima: Yes,

Teacher: How often do you write in English these days?

Karima: I write a lot, from the beginning of the year until now I have written a lot.

Teacher: In a word, how often do you write in English these days?

Karima: I write often. (Post.C.I)

Except for Nouredine who did not pursue journal writing, all the other participants produced a substantial amount of writing. Moreover, all those who diligently kept journals expressed the intention to continue in the activity in the future. Even Nouredine admitted that he regretted not having persevered and also expressed his intention to start writing his journal.

On the whole, it seems that the feeling of suspicion about the efficiency of peer feedback has led to two different views among participants:

1. Peer feedback is welcomed in conjunction with teacher feedback.
2. If this combination is not possible and if only one type of feedback is available, then it has to be teacher feedback since there is uncertainty about peer comments.

The first view expressed by the students in the present study confirms previous research findings which have demonstrated that a significant percentage of participants (93%) preferred to have feedback from other students as one type of feedback on their writing (Jacobs et al. 1998). Likewise, although in the current study students were exposed to both peer and teacher feedback, the second view supports previous research which has found that when asked to make an 'either/or' choice between teacher feedback or peer feedback, the overwhelming majority of ESL students stated a preference for teacher feedback (Berger 1990; Zhang 1995).

However, what the present investigation has also demonstrated is that students appreciate the method of having different types of feedback on each draft, i.e. self-monitored feedback, peer feedback and teacher feedback. When asked to complete the post-course feedback evaluation sheet (Appendix 4-12, p.384), all the participants said that they had enjoyed the different feedback procedures. The post-course in-depth interviews also confirmed this finding. Therefore, it can be said that the way feedback procedures are introduced to students seems to have a substantial impact on the way they eventually conceive of it. As mentioned above, it is also clear that students are well able to distinguish between the positive and negative aspects of each type of feedback. As a result, they have become aware of the fact that these types of feedback, when used on each draft, are not mutually exclusive but that they rather form a complete whole.

Another important point which needs to be made here is that if teachers can use a combination of self-monitored, teacher and peer feedback, the idea of querying student feedback preferences may be unnecessary or even unhealthy. At least in the context of the study in which students need considerable amount of help with their EFL writing this seems to be the case.

## **6.7 Summary of chapter**

This section will provide a summary of the different insights gained from the present study. These will be presented in bullet points for ease of reference.

This study has demonstrated that **annotations**

- help reveal problematic writing areas.
- reflect student perception of what makes good writing.
- when used in multiple drafts, they give writers the opportunity to seek feedback from the teacher when peers fail to provide help.

- are considered by students to be useful and some student writers tend to use them more frequently than others.

It was also found that students attempt to create their own code of annotating their texts.

Concerning **peer feedback** the study has shown that

- Students do take peer comments into consideration when they revise despite their doubts about the relevance of their peers' feedback. 65% of student revisions are attributable to peer comments.
- Although peers tend to comment on surface structure, the use of peer feedback sheets helps focus peer discussions on issues related to content and organization.
- Students tend to self-revise more frequently after receiving peer feedback than they do after teacher feedback.
- Low proficiency students are the ones who implemented the highest percentages of surface changes after receiving peer feedback.
- Language proficiency level seems to influence student ability to offer feedback: higher level proficiency students tend to offer more feedback points than their lower proficiency peers.
- Despite their tendency to focus on surface changes in self-revisions, students also attempt to revise at the level of meaning.
- There are individual differences in the frequency of use of self-initiated revision. High proficiency writers resorted more often to self-revision than did their low proficiency peers.
- In giving feedback peers imitate the teacher's style.
- Peer feedback has cognitive, linguistic, and social/affective benefits.
- Permanent pairing is useful as it allows peers to become familiar with their peers' writings and appreciate their improvement.
- Peer feedback activities within the framework of permanent pairing can promote collaborative work outside class.
- Students find peer feedback sheets helpful as they guide them in giving feedback and raise their awareness of paragraph and essay organization.

In relation to **teacher feedback written and taped commenatry** the study has demonstrated the following:

- Students do attend to teacher feedback in their revisions.

- The majority of revisions based on teacher written feedback are surface changes (91.4%).
- Despite the fact that the majority of revision changes are surface-related, students have also attempted to revise at the meaning level.
- Student attitudes to teacher feedback are generally positive; however, there is a tendency to prefer teacher taped commentary over written comments.
- There are some individual differences in the way students make use of and react to the different types of feedback they are exposed to.

With regard to improvement in **text quality** the study has indicated the following:

- Student writing has not shown systematic improvement after revisions based on peer feedback and that there are variations among students and also variations from one assignment to another.
- A paired t test has shown that there is a significant improvement in students' second drafts of the second assignment while there is no significant improvement in the second drafts of assignments 1, 3, and 4.
- There was significant improvement after revisions based on teacher feedback.
- Students' first and third drafts showed significant improvement which indicates that student writing improved over the course period.

## **CHAPTER SEVEN**

### **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY, IMPLICATIONS, LIMITATIONS, AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

#### **7.0 Introduction**

This concluding chapter is divided into five sections: The first section (7.1) highlights the contributions of the study both general contribution and also with regard to the different types of feedback used in the instruction of the writing programme. The different implications of the findings are then outlined in section (7.2). Section (7.3) provides a list of the limitations of the study, and section (7.4) presents suggestions for further research. The final section (7.5) discusses some issues related to teacher research with special reference to the present study and its context.

#### **7.1 Significance of the study**

The study has made a substantial contribution to the teaching of EFL writing and the use of different feedback procedures in relation to revision. Its findings are expected to enlighten practitioners and students on various issues left unresolved in the literature. The investigation has, therefore, managed to demonstrate the following:

- Introducing a different type of feedback on each draft helped generate and sustain student motivation throughout the course period. Therefore, the usual complaint that writing multiple-draft essays can be monotonous was not an issue among students in the present study.
- Some studies have used both peer and teacher feedback on the same draft (Paulus 1999) and therefore found difficulty in identifying which feedback influenced which revision. The present study has the advantage of clearly identifying and cross linking the source of feedback and the corresponding revisions since each type of feedback is used on a separate draft.

In particular the study has demonstrated a number of points about the different feedback procedures.

##### **7.1.1 Annotations:**

- The use of annotations in the present investigation has helped uncover students' concerns about their writing besides revealing their perceptions of good writing.

- Being the first study ever to introduce self-monitored feedback in the teaching of EFL writing in the context of the Moroccan university, this study has shown that annotations can be used with university students to raise their awareness of the importance of revision. This is valuable given that teachers acknowledged students usually resisted revision (see Chapter Two, pp. 13-34).

### **7.1.2 Peer feedback**

Although the present study cannot claim to have provided definite answers to the various questions related to peer and teacher feedback, it has filled a gap in this rather inconclusive research area by confirming some previous research findings and disconfirming others. Therefore, the significance of this research resides in the following:

- It has confirmed that students do take peer comments on board when revising despite their doubts about the relevance of what peers say.
- Peer feedback activities can lead to a fair amount of revision at the macrostructure level despite students' tendency to provide feedback on the microstructure aspects of text.
- Despite the fact that peer feedback does not lead to an across-the-board improvement in text quality, it has other cognitive, linguistic, and social/affective benefits which students generally enjoy (see Table 6-7, p. 286).
- Generally speaking, Moroccan first year university students find peer feedback activities useful and tend to take them seriously.
- This study has provided some insights into the rather little researched issue of permanent pairing in peer feedback activities. It has shown that permanent pairing is fruitful as it can lead to development of interpersonal relationships and enhance collaborative work outside class. In addition, by regularly reading the same peer's writing, students can follow the progress of each other's writing and develop as readers of each other's work.
- Unlike some previous studies which claimed that peer feedback sheets restrict students in giving and receiving feedback (Dipardo and Freedman 1988; Hyland 2000), the present study has shown the importance of peer feedback sheets in keeping students focused on content and organisation.
- Language proficiency can influence the amount of feedback provided, i.e. peers with higher language proficiency tend to provide more input than do peers whose language proficiency is low.

### **7.1.3 Teacher written feedback and taped commentary**

- The present investigation has shown that even at their low intermediate and intermediate levels, the participants were most of the time able to provide corrections for more than 80% of teacher-indicated errors. This implies that minimal marking can be used with Moroccan first year students.
- All revisions made to the second draft resulted from teacher feedback which explains the importance attached to this type of feedback.
- The present investigation has made a substantial contribution to the scarcely researched produce of taped commentary. It has demonstrated that this type of feedback does not only encourage revision at macrostructure level, but that it also has other benefits, namely linguistic, affective, and practical (see Table 6-11, 299).
- Language learning diaries helped to develop writing fluency. Students can be initiated to diary writing in class and encouraged to keep up the activity outside class as well.
- There are individual differences in student use of different types of feedback in revisions and also differences in their reactions to different feedback procedures.

## **7.2 Implications**

I have undertaken this study based on my belief, and experience, that writing is one of the major hurdles facing Moroccan students who choose English as a major. The completion of the present investigation has reassured me that the remedies to the problem are not impossible. Adequate writing instruction which takes into consideration student need and attempts to bring students and teachers together into the writing and revising processes should be able to help students become more motivated to write and produce good texts. This type of instruction, however, should start at an earlier stage, i.e. in high school, before students reach university where the requirements are usually high. Hence, the teaching of EFL writing in high school should provide students with the basic writing knowledge which will facilitate their task once they join university. In this way, students will move on in their learning to more demanding matters.

The use of different types of feedback on separate drafts has proved to be beneficial. Hence, the pedagogical implication of this finding is that teachers should consider multiple draft writing as a means of encouraging revision through writing and rewriting. In other words, students should be given the opportunity to experience revision as a “motivating force” which takes them through “the process of seeing what [they’ve] said

to discover what [they] have to say...” (Murray 1982:121). Rewriting should not be taught as punishment for not getting it right the first time for the simple reason that “...few, if any writers ever get it right the first time...” (ibid.) This is a very important point which teachers, mainly in the Moroccan context, should try to understand and also help their students to grasp. The reason is that the prevalent view of rewriting among educators and students in the context of the study tends to be that of punishment, or an indicator that one is not good enough to get it right the first time.

Students’ writings improved over the course period; however, the progress was uneven. That is to say, the degree of improvement varied from one draft to another and from one assignment to another. This has implications for the assessment of students’ writing performance which should not be based on a single draft produced under exam conditions but rather on multiple drafts written over a long period of time. In other words, the prevalent summative assessment should give way to formative assessment as the value of the latter has been recognised in higher education in general (Boud 1995). Moreover, this will be a fair means of judging student performance and helping reduce the high failure rate among Moroccan university students due to failing the writing exam.

In the Moroccan university context the common practice of teaching writing skills in isolation from the reading skills is rather unproductive. Although the underlying idea is that students can resort to the content of their reading comprehension classes in their writings this link is usually neither perceived nor made by the students who are often struggling with learning the basic language/writing skills. This is one of the major problems I had to deal with as a writing teacher in this study. One way I resolved it was by providing students with some exemplar texts. However, in doing so I encountered a problem with time. Since I was supposed to focus on writing only, there was not enough time for reading. Hence, in order to ensure that students have adequate content schemata, i.e. background knowledge about the topics of their writing, the writing and reading skills should be taught in conjunction.

The extent of use of annotations varied among student writers, but a general underuse of this technique was noticed (see section 6.1.1, p. 275). I have explained this by the fact that I only reminded rather than required students to annotate their drafts, so they might have interpreted it as a rather unnecessary practice. An implication is that, given the context of the present study, where the teacher is seen as a figure of authority, and



where first year students are not yet completely independent learners, teachers who plan to use annotations should find a means of enforcing this technique. One method could be to ask students to reread their drafts in class and annotate them before handing them in for peer or teacher feedback.

It was also interesting that, as explained in section 6.1.1.2, p. 278, students tried to use their own codes in annotating texts. These were different from those I had instructed them to use. Teachers may want to gather these student-generated codes, such as using a highlighter or arrows, and present them in a comprehensive list to the whole class for future use.

Hence, given their importance in indicating students' writing problems and also encouraging revision, annotations should be incorporated in the writing course throughout the four years at the university.

Peer feedback activities can usefully be employed with Moroccan first year students when some degree of instruction and guidance is provided. Hence, teachers who plan to use peer feedback may consider the use of peer feedback sheets. These allow the teaching and learning of writing to focus on more complex issues of genre and style, and to be more content-based as students' writings move from focus on general to more specialized academic topics. Teachers may therefore want to design peer feedback sheets which will assist students to write with such complexity and discuss their writings accordingly

The present study has also shown that peer feedback should be encouraged because it leads to revision which is directly related to peer comments. In addition, students resort to self-initiated revision more often after peer than teacher feedback. This indicates that the concept of revision is even more enhanced after peer feedback; and is another reason why teachers should consider using peer feedback in their writing classes.

There is a clear implication that teacher written feedback should continue to provide a major source of help. Teachers should attempt to indicate the errors rather than rely solely on provision of direct corrections; alternatively, in order to meet student expectations, teachers may want to use a mixture of both techniques. Taped commentary is another important option for teachers to use either separately or in conjunction with written feedback. In fact, from my experience taped commentary is more informative as the teacher can provide a substantial amount of feedback in a short

time. There is also a possibility of using taped commentary with a larger group of students when attendance is regular and students become familiar with this type of feedback.

Finally, besides being a useful means of developing writing fluency, student diaries proved to be an exceptionally efficient means of looking more deeply into their conceptual understanding of, and reactions to, what was being taught in relation to writing. In other words, language learning diaries reflected some of the learners' thoughts which no other research tool was able to unveil as they were hidden in the deep recesses of each learner's mind and emerged only when the learners had the chance to write in their diaries. On this basis, diaries should be highly recommended for the kind of research where the learner perspectives are sought.

### **7.3 Limitations**

An important limitation of the present study has been time. I believe that more insights could have been gained into the different issues raised if the research had been undertaken over a longer period of time. For instance, it would have been interesting to follow up the effect of the novelty value which students reported to be one of the important aspects of teacher taped commentary. Moreover, due to time constraints it was not possible to schedule individual meetings with students in order to discuss the reasons why they implemented some peer comments and ignored others. Most of the time I had to rely on the recorded peer sessions and the written comments in order to infer why a certain peer suggestion was not considered. Similarly, it was not possible to probe students' revisions in relation to teacher feedback through individual meetings to seek students' explanations.

Another limitation of this study is related to participants. The case study students were volunteers who were initially motivated by their need for achievement (Dörnyei 2001b:18) both in EFL writing and their academic studies. This makes it difficult to make recommendations beyond this category of students. However, the participants acknowledged that the writing course had made them more motivated. Hence, as a result of the extra motivation generated and sustained during the course there is hope that some less motivated students may become motivated when exposed to a similar program and instruction. A second limitation related to participants is the fact that out of the seven cases only one was male. It would be interesting to follow through in future research any issues of gender difference in dealing with feedback.

Another limitation is due to the focus on one particular genre, argumentative writing. As explained in the design of the course (see section 4.6, pp. 94-112), the emphasis on this specific genre was grounded on the actual fact that students had not been initiated into the type of writing which would encourage them to make their voices heard by taking a position on a given issue. However, this does not exclude the fact that other genres such as narrative, letter, and report writing are just as important. Hence, future studies can investigate the issue of genre further.

Due to the fairly long time span between the completion of the course and writing up of the case studies I have not managed to keep in touch with the participants as much as I had planned to. This made it extremely difficult to do any member checking. After many attempts to contact the participants, I was able to meet only one student, Nouredine to whom I gave a copy of his case to read and comment on (see Nouredine's case). The other participants took different directions in their academic and private lives making it, therefore, impossible to arrange any meetings with them at times which would be suitable for me and them.

Finally, the teacher in this study is the researcher herself, which might be seen as a disadvantage with regard to credibility and validity of the project. However, this can also be seen from a positive perspective. Had more than one teacher-researcher been involved this would only have increased the variables which might have affected the results of the study in relation to how teacher feedback was given and responded to.

#### **7.4 Suggestions for future research**

- Due to the fact that I intended to encourage students to reread their writings before handing them in, I did not choose to restrict their use of annotation. However, a study which limits annotation to either surface structure or content and organisation would be useful.
- More studies are needed which introduce the use of annotations among student writers with higher language levels. For instance, second, third and fourth year students can be asked to annotate their writings with a view to gaining more insight into their concerns. This would allow us to compare the findings of different studies. It may also inform the teachers as to what the students consider to be their major writing problems at different stages of their studies.

- More studies are needed which investigate the impact of peer feedback on revision at higher levels. For instance, a replication of this study could be undertaken with second, third and fourth year students.
- In the present study low-intermediate and intermediate participants worked together. Future research could focus on pairs of the same language proficiency level.
- More studies are needed which examine the relationship between teacher feedback and revision. More specifically, further research is needed in order to examine the impact of teacher taped commentary on student revision and also their attitudes to this type of feedback.
- Since conferencing is another area which has not been sufficiently researched, it would be interesting to undertake a study which compares the influence of the two types of feedback on revision: taped commentary and conferencing.
- More case study research which looks deep into students' particularities in relation to composing and revising processes is needed.

### **7.5 Teacher-research: issues and insights**

Although the present study may manifest some elements of action research, I cannot claim that it fulfils all the requirements of action research. For instance, the element of collaboration considered by some (Kemmis and McTaggart 1988; Cohen et al. 2000) as one of the defining characteristics of action research is not present. Moreover, this project does not take the form of "...an ongoing cycle in which the teacher reflects on, returns to, and extends the initial inquiry." (Nunan 1992:19) The way I describe my research is that it belongs to a type of teacher research which has the aim of gaining more understanding of a pedagogical issue through naturalistic investigation. It is research which has a view to improving teaching and learning in my own classroom with my own students. Change, therefore, will be implemented inductively.

Teacher research is now a well established genre (Cochran-Smith & Lytle 1993) and more insights are being gained into teaching and learning through research undertaken by individual teachers in their own classrooms. This type of research has the potential of enriching the field by relying on teachers'

...sophisticated and sensitive observation skills grounded in the context of actual classrooms and schools...to provide a truly emic view that is different from that of an outside observer, even if that observer assumes an ethnographic stance and spends considerable time in the classroom. (Baumann 1996:18)

Hence, just as much as I believe that my case studies will fit with some readers' and practitioners' contexts and experiences, I am also convinced that my own experience as teacher-researcher will, to use Freeman's (1991) term, 'resonate' in some readers' experiential knowledge; or otherwise, provide a completely new dimension on the different issues raised by the study. Therefore, I seize this opportunity to report on some aspects of my teacher-researcher experience together with shedding some light on teacher research in the context of the study.

### **7.6.1 Teacher research: harmony or conflict?**

The dilemmas of teacher-researcher have been expressed by many of those involved in the field. The task of teacher/researcher is sometimes described as rife with conflict between instruction, which is supposed to respond to students' needs and help them learn and grow, and research purposes, which may influence the way one teaches (Wong 1995, cited in Baumann 1996). On the other hand, although they acknowledge some occasional hurdles, some teacher-researchers find no tension between "the process or acts of doing research and those of teaching." (Baumann 1996:30) Agreeing with that, Wilson's (1995) point is that there is no "tension" but rather harmony between teaching and researching. She sees research as an organic part of teaching.

Looking back at my teaching researching experience I feel I have to agree with Wilson and Baumann. Despite some sporadic challenges the teaching researching activities were most of the time harmonious. For instance, the teaching tasks were to a great extent enhanced by the research process. This is due to the fact that research tools, such as student questionnaires, interviews, peer feedback sheets, students' written and recorded responses to my feedback, all served a double function of teaching and collecting data, which allowed a smooth running of instruction and research. This can also be attributed to the naturalistic/interpretive orientation of the present study which allows for healthy flexibility. As a matter of fact, the process of engaging in research and teaching, most of the time, resulted in compatibility rather than conflict.

More importantly, however, since teacher research is considered a genre of its own (Cochran-Smith & Lytle 1993), there is a call for ceasing to view the issues of conflict and compatibility separately. That is, as an independent genre, teacher research should, eventually, be able to accommodate both compatibility and conflict. As Baumann puts it:

If we begin to think of teacher research as its own genre and teacher researchers as methodologists trying to solve vexing logistical and philosophical problems in classroom inquiry, conflicts or tensions become a natural, if not healthy, aspect of the research evolutionary process... Rather than viewing the conflict/compatibility issue as an either/or phenomenon, the new-genre perspective provides a broadened horizon on which one can conceive of, implement, and interpret classroom research that accounts for both dissonance and compatibility. (1996:34)

There is no doubt that a teacher who wants to assume the double function of teacher-researcher will face some challenges. The difficulty of such an endeavour is expected to be more accentuated for a novice teacher-researcher. However, a good deal of information and preparation should help to overcome the obstacles. As far as I see it, the best source of information should be the story-telling of other teacher-researcher experiences. On the other hand, what I mean by preparation is partly related to gathering as much information as possible about the different aspects of the context in which one intends to undertake research. Concerning the substantial importance of teacher-researcher story-telling, Knoblauch and Brannon's statement is a good summary:

The story-telling of the teacher-inquirer in a classroom devoted to language practices has its peculiar features and makes a distinctive contribution to our knowledge of school experience...The telling aims not at selectivity or simplification but at richness of texture and intentional complexity. (1988:24)

For the purpose of the present study, and always in an attempt to be well informed about teacher research in the Moroccan context, my discovery was rather frustrating. Apart from a limited number of studies in secondary education, no teacher research on the teaching of EFL writing was reported at the tertiary level. The few existing studies were all experimental investigations which focused on written products collected from students who were taught by other teachers, i.e. not the teacher-researcher, and studied most of the time in isolation from their writers and the context in which they were written. Although I cannot deny that I was disappointed by such a discovery at the time, my enthusiasm was also boosted about my own research, which I hoped would make a special contribution by filling the large gap in teacher research in the Moroccan higher education context.

As far as collecting information about the context of the study, my experience is that no matter how much we think we know our context as teachers, we still need to be ready for some sacrifice and willingness to do with what we have. I am going to focus here on the problem of resources which at some point in my teaching researching process posed a certain amount of difficulty. For instance, in order to be able to collect students' writings I had to make copies of every draft besides the copying of the handouts for

classroom use. The English language department did not have a photocopier of its own, there were two photocopiers which had to be shared by all departments in the Faculty. Hence, most of the time I had to resort to making copies at my own expenses in order to avoid wasting time waiting for my turn to use the photocopier.

Furthermore, my awareness of the limited equipment in the classrooms was very helpful as I planned my teaching materials accordingly. For instance, I did not opt for the use of transparencies due to the lack of overhead projectors. Moreover, in order to record student peer conferences I had to bring my own tape recorders as the department did not provide any sound equipment. The acoustics of the classroom were marred by the lack of carpeting, which affected the quality of the recordings.

Another contextual problem I had to deal with was related to controlling the number of students who attended my class. Students were usually assigned to different groups but since attendance was not mandatory students felt free to attend whichever class they wanted to. This freedom did create a problem for me because I wanted to focus just on the number of students in my group. After consulting with the head of the department and the Dean, I felt reassured because I could stop the students who did not belong to my group from attending my class. However, since I had divided my larger group into two separate smaller ones, I informed the students who expressed their wish to attend my class that they could attend one specific group and that they should abide by its timetable. This was a means of controlling the extra freedom which students had as far as attendance was concerned and also a means of making sure that it did not interfere with my plans as a researcher. I have reported this problem in my diary saying:

*Entry 07/01/03:* Today I had a really full classroom. Students came from other groups to attend my class. I have allowed them to attend the Tuesday class as long as they stick to the schedule and don't try to attend the other class in which students volunteered to participate in the project. At the end of the class, a lot of students came to me and thanked me for allowing them to attend. (Teacher-researcher diary)

This issue of attendance will not, however, arise for teachers who intend to do teacher research in the future due to the reform which has made student attendance mandatory within the group they are assigned to.

All the above issues were, I thought, manageable. However, nothing could be worse than having to stop in the middle of your teaching researching activities, or finding out first thing in the morning, after miles driving to the university, that the classes were

unexpectedly cancelled because of a strike. This happened at least three times in the course of the present research. According to my diary the following were strike days: 18<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup> of March; 15<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> of April 2003. What this meant for me as teacher-researcher was that appropriate time had to be found for make up classes, which teachers do not usually have to do if it is a student strike. However, in my case it was a must because I had a teaching researching schedule to follow. Finding appropriate time which would suit both students' timetable and my own was not usually possible, but I had to opt for the time slots which were more convenient for the students as they had other classes to attend. While some may see this effort as over-zealous, I personally believe that it is a direct outcome of accepting to take on the dual function of teacher-researcher, which, after all, cannot be anything but productive.

### **7.6.2 Teacher research and the educational reform**

The present study took place one year before the implementation of the educational reform in Moroccan higher education. The reform was generally expected to bring some positive change for both faculty and students (see 1.4.2, pp. 9-10). However, one of the main points to be made here is that the reform will be even more beneficial if it is based on constant and continuous communication with teacher research. In other words, the positive innovations brought about by the reform will have to continue evolving within a context which promotes new ideas emanating from practitioners' experiences and academic research findings. So far, in the Moroccan context, this is not really the case as teacher research is not the basis of innovation and change in education.

Indeed, teacher research should be further encouraged if the reform is to continue to serve the coming generations. Teachers should take the initiative to research their own practice and attempt to understand its impact on their students by investigating the teaching/learning relationship in their classrooms. In fact some authorities have even gone as far as to consider that no educational change can take place without such insight into/from teacher's research on practice. As Loughran puts it:

Within this understanding of teacher's work there is also a realization that there is no educational change without teacher change so by focusing on personal practice and experience, teachers can undertake genuine inquiry into practice that might lead to better understanding of the complexities of, and improvements in, teaching. (2003:181)

Hence, if the improvement of teaching is the ultimate aim of the reform, teachers should be encouraged to make use of their "authority of experience". That is, teachers should be encouraged "to place more faith in their own experience and knowledge that, in turn,



can help them to meet the demands of teaching.” (Munby & Rusell 1994, cited in Clarke 2003:181) It is only through this important position as both practitioners and researchers that teacher/researchers will have so much to offer their students and the educational community as a whole.

Moroccan teachers are not usually encouraged to undertake research on their personal practice due to the lack of any short-term gains or incentives. Therefore, some awareness should be raised to the fact that doing teacher research offers opportunities not only for improving professional practice but also for professional development of teachers. Teachers should become more receptive to the idea that teaching is also a means of learning. There is, definitely, more chance of this idea being more successful if some effort is made by the stakeholders provide incentives to encourage teachers to undertake research as part of their teaching. Having always believed that a there is a little more to teacher’s job than just teaching, I find Cochran-Smith’s and Lytle’s call for “learning from teaching across the life span” (1993:63) such a pertinent summary of my beliefs:

Here we take the more radical position that learning from teaching ought to be regarded as the primary task of teacher education across the professional life span. By “learning from teaching,” we mean that inquiry ought to be regarded as an integral part of the activity of teaching and as a critical basis for decisions about practice. Furthermore, we mean that classrooms and schools ought to be treated as research sites and sources of knowledge that are most effectively accessed when teachers collaboratively interrogate and enrich their theories of practice. (ibid.)

Although the idea of teachers individually researching their practice may be appealing and suitable in a world where individualism has gained much more ground, I strongly believe that, no matter how idealistic it may sound, collaborative teacher research should start to be a source of inspiration for practice. In the Moroccan university context, collaborative teacher research will definitely help solve a substantial number of problems for both teachers and students.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abouabdelkader, M. 1999. The teaching of process writing. *Proceedings of the XLIXth MATE Annual Conference: 73-86.*
- Abu-Talib, M. 1985. Morocco's journey through English. A paper presented at the 5<sup>th</sup> MATE Annual Conference, (March), Meknes, Morocco.
- Adelman, C., D. Jenkins., & S. Kemmis. 1976. Rethinking case study: notes from the second Cambridge Conference. *Cambridge Journal of Education* 6/3:139-150.
- Alam, M. 1993. *The Use of Arabic in the Composing Processes of Arab University Students Writing in English (Kuwait)*. Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation. Indiana University of Pennsylvania. Dissertation Abstracts International (9319447).
- Alexander, O. 1999. Raising audience awareness in EAP writing. In P. Thompson (ed.). *Issues in EAP Writing and Instruction* (pp. 121-134). The University of Reading: Centre for Applied Language Studies (CALs).
- Al-Jabbouri, A. J. R. 1984. The role of repetition in Arabic argumentative discourse. In Swales, J., and H. Mustafa (eds.). *English for Specific Purposes in the Arab World* (pp. 99-117). Birmingham: Language Studies Unit, University of Aston.
- Allwright, D., & K.M. Bailey. 1991. *Focus on the Language Classroom: an introduction to classroom research for language teachers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Allwright, J. 1988. Don't correct – Reformulate! In P.C. Robinson (ed.). *Academic Writing Process and Product: ELT Documents 129* (pp.109-116). Modern English Publications in association with The British Council.
- Al-Semari, O. 1993. Saudi Students' Revising Strategies in Arabic and English Essays. Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Michigan State University.
- Arndt, V. 1993. Response to writing: Using feedback to inform the writing process. In M.N. Brock., & L. Walters. *Teaching Composition around the Pacific Rim* (pp. 90-116). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters LTD.
- Arnold, L. 1964. Writer's cramp and eyestrain - are they paying off? *English Journal* 53: 10-15.
- Arnold, J. 1999. *Affect in Language Learning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ashwell, T. 2000. Patterns of teacher response to student writing in a multiple-draft composition classroom: Is content feedback followed by form feedback the best method? *Journal of Second Language Writing* 9/3: 227-257.
- Asiri, I.M. 1997. *University EFL Teachers' Written Feedback on Compositions and Students' Reactions*. Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Essex.
- Atkinson, D. 2001. Reflections and refractions on the *JSLW* special issue on voice. *Journal of Second Language Writing* 10: 107-124.

- Atkinson, D. 2003. L2 writing in the post-process era: Introduction. *Journal of Second Language Writing* 12: 3-15.
- Axelrod, R.B. & C.R. Cooper. 2002. *Reading Critically Writing Well: A Reader and Guide*. Boston (6<sup>th</sup> edn.) Bedford/St. Martin's.
- Bailey, K. 1995. Competitiveness and anxiety in adult second language learning: looking at and through the diary studies. In H.D. Brwon. & S. Gonzo. *Readings on Second Language Acquisition* (pp.163-205). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Bailey, K.M. 1990. The use of diary studies in teacher education programs. In J.C. Richards. & D. Nunan (eds.). *Second Language Teacher Education* (pp.215-226). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Baumann, J.F. 1996. Conflict or compatibility in classroom inquiry? One teacher's struggle to balance teaching and research. *Education Researcher* 25/7: 29-36.
- Beck, J.P. 1982. Asking students to annotate their own papers. *College Composition and Communication* 33/3: 322-326.
- Belcher, L.R. 1989. ESL composition: analysing revision (Doctoral dissertation, Illinois State University, 1989). *Dissertation abstracts International* 50(05), 1237A.
- Bentahila, A. 1983. Language Attitudes among Arabic-French Bilinguals in Morocco. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Bereiter, C. & M, Scardamalia. 1983. Does learning to write have to be so difficult? In A. Freedman, I. Pringle, J. Yalden (eds.). *Learning to Write: First Language/Second language* (pp.20-33). London and New York: Longman.
- Bereiter, C. & M, Scardamalia. 1987. *The Psychology of Written Composition*. Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Berg, E.C. 1999. The effects of trained peer response on ESL students' revision types and writing quality. *Journal of Second Language Writing* 8/3:215-241.
- Berger, V. 1990. The effects of peer and self-feedback. *CATESOL Journal* 3:21-35.
- Berlin, J.A. 1987. *Rhetoric and Reality: Writing instruction in American Colleges, 1900-1985*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Boswood, T. & R.H. Dwyer. 1995. From marking to feedback: Audiotaped responses to student writing. *TESOL Journal* 5: 20-23.
- Boud, D. 1995. Assessment and Learning: Contradictory or Complementary? In P. Knight (ed.). *Assessment for Learning in Higher Education* (pp.35-47). London: Kogan Page.
- Bourouis, A. 1995. *Process vs. Product Writing: between Theory and Practice in Moroccan High Schools*. Unpublished B.A. Dissertation, Casablanca: Faculty of Arts II.

- Bouziane, A. 2003. *Linguistic and Rhetorical Features in Moroccan EFL Pupils' Narratives: A Longitudinal Study*. Unpublished Doctorate Thesis, Rabat: Faculty of Education.
- Bridwell, L.S. 1980. Revising strategies in twelfth grade students' transactional writing. *Research in the teaching of English* 14: 197-222.
- Broughton, G., et al. 1980. *Teaching English as a Foreign Language* (2<sup>nd</sup> edn.) London, Henley and Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Brown, A. 1977. Knowing when, where and how to remember: A problem of metacognition (Tech. Rep. No.47). Urbana: University of Illinois, Center for the Study of Reading.
- Brown, H.D. 2001. *Teaching by Principles: An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy* (2<sup>nd</sup> edn.) San Francisco State University: Longman.
- Bruffee, K.A. 1984. Collaborative learning and the "Conversation of Mankind." *Journal of Second Language Writing* 46/7: 635-652.
- Bryman, A. 2001. *Social Research Methods*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Carson, J.G. & G. L. Nelson. 1994. Writing groups: Cross-cultural issues. *Journal of Second Language Writing* 3/1: 17-30.
- Chaibi, A. 1996. *Investigating Problems Constraining the Implementation of Process Writing in the Moroccan EFL Classroom*. Unpublished Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of diploma of inspector of English, Rabat: CFIE
- Chamot, A.U. 1987. The learning strategies of ESL students. In A. Wenden. & J. Rubin (eds.). *Learner Strategies in Language Learning* (pp. 71-83). Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
- Chandler, J. 2003. The efficacy of various kinds of error feedback for improvement in the accuracy and fluency of L2 student writing. *Journal of Second Language Writing* 12: 267-296.
- Charles, M. 1990. Responding to problems in written English using a student self-monitoring technique. *ELT Journal* 44/4: 286-293.
- Chaudron, C. 1988. *Second Language Classrooms: Research on Teaching and Learning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Clarke, A. & G. Erickson (eds.). 2003. *Teacher inquiry: Living the research in every day practice*. London: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Cochran-Smith, M. & S.L. Lytle (eds.). 1993. *Inside/Outside: Teacher Research and Knowledge*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Coffin, C., et al. 2003. *Teaching Academic Writing: A Toolkit for Higher Education*. London and New York: Routledge.

- Cohen, A. 1998. *Strategies in Learning and Using a Second Language*. Harlow, Essex: Longman.
- Cohen, A.D. & M. C. Cavalcanti. 1990. Feedback on compositions: Teacher and student verbal reports. In B. Kroll (ed.). *Second Language Writing: Research Insights for the Classroom* (pp.155-177). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Cohen, L. et al. 2000. *Research Methods in Education* (5<sup>th</sup> edn.). London and New York: Routledge Falmer.
- Connor, U. & K. Asenavage. 1994. Peer response groups in ESL writing classes: How much impact on revision? *Journal of Second Language Writing* 3:257-276.
- Conrad, S. & L. Goldstein. 1999. ESL student revision after teacher written comments: Texts, contexts and individuals. *Journal of Second Language Writing* 8: 147-180.
- Crookes, G. & R. Schmidt. 1991. Motivation: re-opening the research agenda. *Language Learning* 41: 469-512.
- Cumming, A. & S. So. 1996. Tutoring second language text revision: does the approach to instruction or language communication make a difference? *Journal of Second language Writing* 5:197-226.
- Dahbi, M. 1986. Teaching English as academic discourse in secondary and higher education. *Proceedings of the Sixth Annual Conference of MATE*: 87-96.
- Dahbi, M. 1984. *The Development of English Writing Skills by Moroccan University Students*. Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis. Washington, D.C: Georgetown University.
- Dahbi, M. & D. Britten. 1989. Beyond the staircase: A comparison of the reliability of six composition scoring methods. *Proceedings of the LXth Annual Conference of MATE*: 36-46.
- Daiker, D.A. 1989. Learning to praise. In C.M. Anson (ed.). *Writing and Response: Theory, Practice, and Research* (pp. 103-113). Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.
- Denscombe, M. 2003. *The Good Research Guide for small-scale social research* (2<sup>nd</sup> edn.). Philadelphia: Open University Press.
- Denzin, N. 1970. *The Research Act in Sociology*. London: Butterworth.
- Denzin, N.K. & Y.S. Lincoln (eds.). 1998. Introduction: entering the field of qualitative research. In *Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials* (pp.1-34). Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.
- Denzin, N. K. & Y.S. Lincoln (eds.). 1998. *The Landscape of Qualitative Research Theories and Issues*. London: Sage Publications.
- Denzin, N.K. & Y.S. Lincoln (eds.). 2000. *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (2<sup>nd</sup> edn.). London: Sage Publications.

- DePoy, E. & L. N. Gitlin. 1998. *Introduction to Research Understanding and Applying Multiple Strategies* (2<sup>nd</sup> edn.). London: Mosby, Inc.
- Devine, J., K. Railey. & P. Boshoff. 1993. The implications of cognitive models in L1 and L2 writing. *Journal of Second Language Writing* 2/3: 203-225.
- Dickinson, L. 1992. *Learner Training for Language Learning*. Dublin, Ireland: Authentik Language Learning Resources Ltd.
- Dipardo, A. & S.W. Freedman. 1988. Peer response groups in the writing classroom: Theoretical foundations and new Directions. *Review of Educational Research* 58: 119-49.
- Donmoyer, R. 1987. Why case studies? Reflections on Hord and Hall's three images. *Curriculum Inquiry* 17/1: 91-102.
- Donmoyer, R. 1990. Generalizability and the single-case study. In E.W. Eisner & A. Peshkin (eds.), *Qualitative Inquiry in Education: The Continuing debate* (pp. 201-232). New York: Teachers College Press, Columbia University.
- Dörnyei, Z. & T. Murphey. 2003. *Group Dynamics in the Language Classroom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Dörnyei, Z. 1994. *Motivation and Motivating in the Foreign Language Classroom*. *Modern Language Journal* 78:273-284.
- Dörnyei, Z. 1998. *Motivation in second and foreign language learning*. *Language Teaching* 31: 117-135.
- Dörnyei, Z. 2001a. *Teaching and Researching Motivation*. Harlow: Longman
- Dörnyei, Z. 2001b. *Motivational Strategies in the Language Classroom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Doushaq, M.H. & K. Al-Makzoomy. 1989. A study of teachers' evaluation of English composition in secondary schools in Jordan. *Arab Journal for Humanities*. Kuwait University Publications 9/22: 388-404.
- Dudley-Evans, T. & J. Swales. 1980. Study modes and students from the Middle East. *ELT Documents* 109, the British Council, London.
- Edge, J. 1993. *Essentials of English Language Teaching*. London: Longman.
- Eisenhart, M.A. & K.R. Howe. 1992. Validity in educational research. In M.D. LeCompte, W.L. Millroy. & J. Preissle (eds.). *The Handbook of Qualitative Studies in Education* (pp.643-80). New York: Academic Press.
- Elbow, P. 1973. *Writing Without Teachers*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Elbow, P. 1981. *Writing with Power*. New York: Oxford University Press.

- Emig, J. 1967. On teaching composition: Some hypotheses and definitions. *Research in the Teaching of English* 1: 127-135.
- Enginarlar, H. 1993. Student response to teacher feedback in EFL writing. *System* 21/2: 193-204.
- Ennaji, M. 1991. Aspects of multilingualism in the Maghreb. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 87: 7-25.
- Ennaji, M. 1997. The sociology of Berber: change and continuity. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 123: 23-40.
- Faigley, L. & S. Witte. 1981. Analysing revision. *College Composition and Communication* 32/4: 400-414.
- Faigley, L., R. D. Cherry., D. A. Joliff. & A.M. Skinner. 1985. *Assessing Writers' Knowledge and Process of Composing*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing.
- Fathman, A. & E. Whalley. 1990. Teacher response to student writing: Focus on form versus content. In B. Kroll (ed.). *Second Language Writing: Research insights for the classroom* (pp. 178-190). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Fazio, L.L. 2001. The effect of corrections and commentaries on the journal writing accuracy of minority- and majority-language students. *Journal of Second Language Writing* 10: 235-249.
- Ferris, D. 1995. Student reactions to teacher response in multiple-draft composition classrooms. *TESOL Quarterly* 29:33-53.
- Ferris, D. 1997. The influence of teacher commentary on student revision. *TESOL Quarterly* 31: 315-339.
- Ferris, D. 2003. Responding to writing. In B, Kroll (ed.). *Exploring the Dynamics of Second Language Writing* (pp. 119-140). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Ferris, D. 2004. The "Grammar Correction" debate in L2 writing: Where are we, and where do we go from here? (and what do we do in the meantime...?) *Journal of Second Language Writing* 13: 49-62.
- Ferris, D.R. 1995. Student reactions to teacher response in multiple-draft composition Classrooms. *TESOL Quarterly* 29: 33-53.
- Ferris, D.R. 1997. The influence of teacher commentary on student revision. *TESOL Quarterly* 31: 315-339.
- Ferris, D.R. 2001. Teaching Writing for Academic Purposes. In J. Flowerdew. & M. Peacock (eds.). *Research Perspectives on English for Academic Purposes* (pp. 298-314). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ferris, D. & B. Roberts. 2001. Error feedback in L2 writing classes: How explicit does it need to be? *Journal of Second Language Writing* 10: 161-184.

- Ferris, D. & H. Hedgcock. 1998. *Teaching ESL composition: Purpose, process, and practice*. Mahwah, NJ: Laurence Erlbaum.
- Flavell, J.H. 1971. First discussant's comments: What is memory development the development of? *Human Development* 14: 272-278.
- Flavell, J.H. 1976. Metacognitive aspects of problem solving. In L.B. Resnick (ed.). *The Nature of Intelligence* (pp.231-235). Hillsdale, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.
- Flavell, J.H. 1985. *Cognitive Development* (2<sup>nd</sup> edn.). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Flick, U. 1998. *An Introduction to Qualitative Research: Theory, Method, and Applications*. London: Sage.
- Flick, U. 2002. *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*. London: Sage Publications.
- Flower, L. & J.R. Hayes. 1981. A Cognitive process theory of writing. *College Composition and Communication* 32/4: 365-387.
- Flower, L. & J.R. Hayes. 1981. Plans that guide the composing process. In C.H. Frederiksen & J. F. Dominic (eds.). *Writing: The nature, development, and teaching of written communication: Vol. 2. Writing: Process, Development and Communication* (pp.39-58). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Freedman, A. & I. Pringle. 1989. Contexts for developing argument. In R. Andrews (ed.). *Narrative & Argument* (pp.73-84). Philadelphia: Open University Press.
- Freeman, D., D. Larsen-Freeman, J. Handscombe. 1991 (April). Understanding Second Language Teaching. Symposium at TESOL Conference, New York.
- Gardner, R.C. & P.D. MacIntyre. 1992. A student's contribution to second language learning. Part I: Cognitive variables. *Language Teaching* 25: 211-220.
- Gardner, R.C. & P.D. MacIntyre. 1993. A student's contribution to second-language learning. Part II: Affective variables. *Language Teaching* 26:1-11.
- Gardner, R.C. et al. 1976. Second language acquisition: a social psychological perspective. *Canadian Modern Language Review* 32: 198-213.
- Gardner, S. 2004. Knock-on effects of mode change on academic discourse. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes* 3/1: 23-38.
- Gaskill, W.H. 1986. Revising in Spanish and English as a second language: a process-oriented study of composition (Doctoral dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1986). *Dissertation Abstracts International* 47(10), 3747A.
- Gillham, B. 2000a. *Case Study Research Methods*. London: Continuum.
- Gillham, B. 2000b. *The Research Interview*. London: Continuum.



- Gilsdorf, J.W. 1987. More "process": A luxury? An illusion? A millstone? *Journal of Business Communication* 24/1: 27-28.
- Goldstein, L.M. 2004. Questions and answers about teacher written commentary and student revision: teachers and students working together. *Journal of Second Language Writing* 13:63-80.
- Gomm, R., M. Hammersley., P. Foster (eds.). 2000. *Case Study Method* (pp.19-26). London: Sage Publications.
- Grabe, W. & R.B. Kaplan. 1996. *Theory and Practice of Writing*. Harlow, England: Pearson Education.
- Graves, K. 1996. Teachers as course developers. In K. Graves (ed.). *Teachers as Course Developers* (pp. 1-11). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Guba, E.G. & Y.S. Lincoln. 1998. *Competing paradigms in qualitative research*. In N.K. Denzin. & Y.S. Lincoln (eds.). *The Landscape of Qualitative Research: Theories and Issues* (pp. 195-220). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Guba, E.G. & Y.S. Lincoln. 1981. *Effective Evaluation: Improving the Usefulness of Evaluation Results through Responsive and Naturalistic Approaches*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Guba, E.G. & Y. S. Lincoln. 1985. *Naturalistic Inquiry*. Beverley Hills: Sage.
- Gubrium, J. 1988. *Analyzing Field Reality*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Hagge, J. 1987. The process religion and business communication. *Journal of Business Communication* 24/1: 89-120.
- Hairston, M. 1982. The winds of change: Thomas Kuhn and the revolution in the teaching of writing. *Composition and Communication* 33/1: 76-88.
- Hammersley, M. 1990. *Reading Ethnographic Research: A Critical Guide*. Longmans: London.
- Hammersley, M. 1992. *What's Wrong with Ethnography: Methodological Explorations*. Routledge: London.
- Hammersley, M. & P. Atkinson. 1983. *Ethnography: Principles in Practice*. London: Tavistock.
- Hamp-Lyons, L. 1991. Scoring procedures for ESL contexts. In L. Hamp-Lyons (ed.). *Assessing Second Language Writing in Academic Contexts* (pp. 241-276). Norwood, New Jersey: Ablex Publishing Corporation.
- Hedgcock, J. & N. Lefkowitz. 1992. Collaborative oral/aural revision in foreign language instruction. *Journal of second Language Writing* 1/3: 255-76.

- Hedgcock, J. & N. Lefkowitz. 1994. Feedback on feedback: Assessing learner receptivity to teacher response in L2 composing. *Journal of Second Language Writing* 3:141-163.
- Hedge, T. 1988. *Writing*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hedge, T. 2000. *Teaching and Learning in the Language Classroom*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hedge, T. 2005 Feb. Responding to writing: Writing revisited plenary paper. *IATEFL Research SIG*. Cambridge.
- Henderickson, J. 1987. Error correction in foreign language teaching: Recent theory and practice. *Modern Language Journal* 62: 387-398.
- Hichcock, G. & D. Hughes. 1992. *Research and the Teacher: A Qualitative Introduction to School-based Research*. London & New York: Routledge
- Hirvela, A. 1999. Collaborative writing instruction and communities of readers and writers. *TESOL Journal* 8/2: 7-12.
- Hmama, A. 1989. *A Study of Linguistic and Cognitive Constraints in Learners' Written Discourse*. Unpublished D.E.S. Thesis. Rabat: Faculty of Letters.
- Horwitz, E.K. 1986a. Preliminary evidence for the reliability of a foreign language anxiety scale: *TESOL Quarterly* 20: 559-62.
- Horwitz, E.K., M.B. Horwitz. & J. Cope. 1986b. Foreign language classroom anxiety. *Modern Language Journal* 70: 125-132.
- Hyland, F. 1998. The impact of teacher written feedback on individual writers. *Journal of Second Language Writing* 7/3: 255-286.
- Hyland, F. 2000. ESL writers and feedback: giving more autonomy to students. *Language Teaching Research* 4/1: 33-54.
- Hyland, F. 2003. Focusing on form: student engagement with teacher feedback. *System* 31:217-230.
- Hyland, K. 1990. Providing productive feedback. *ELT Journal* 44/4: 279-285.
- Hyland, K. 2000. *Disciplinary Discourses: Social Interactions in Academic Writing*. London: Pearson Education.
- Hyland, K. 2003. Genre-based pedagogies: A social response to process. *Journal of Second Language Writing* 12: 17-29.
- Hyland, K. 2004. Patterns of engagement: dialogic features and L2 undergraduate writing. In L.J. Ravelli. & R.A. Ellis (eds.). *Analysing Academic Writing: Contextualized Frameworks* (pp. 5-23). London: Continuum.

- Jacobs, G.M. et al. 1998. Feedback on student writing: taking the middle path. *Journal of Second Language Writing* 7/3: 307-317.
- Jacobs, H.L., S.A. Zingraf, D.R. Wormuth, V.F. Hartfiel, & J.B. Hughey. 1981. *Testing ESL Composition: A Practical Approach*. Rowley, Massachusetts: Newbury House Publishers, Inc.
- Janda, M.A. 1990. Collaboration in a traditional classroom environment. *Written Communication* 7: 291-315.
- Johnson, D.M. 1992. *Approaches to Research in Second Language Learning*. New York & London: Longman.
- Judd, K.E. 1973. *The Effectiveness of Tape Recorded Evaluations of Composition Written by Seventh and eighth Grade Students*. Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis: The University of Connecticut, USA.
- Kaplan, R. 1967. Contrastive rhetoric and the teaching of composition. *TESOL Quarterly* 1:10-16.
- Keh, C.L. 1990. Feedback in the writing process: a model and methods for implementation. *ELT Journal* 44/4: 294-304.
- Kemmis, S. & R. McTaggart (eds.). 1988. *The Action research planner* (3<sup>rd</sup> edn.). Geelong, Australia: Deakin University Press.
- Kepner, C. 1991. An experiment in the relationship of types of written feedback to the development of writing skills. *Modern language Journal* 75: 305-313.
- Kharma, N. 1985. Problems of writing composition in EFL: A contrastive rhetoric approach. *Abhath al-Yarmouk* 3/1: 7-29.
- Kirk, J. & M.L. Miller. 1986. *Reliability and Validity in Qualitative Research*. London: Sage Publications.
- Kleinmann, H. 1977. Avoidance behavior in adult second language acquisition. *Language Learning* 27: 93-107.
- Kluger, A.N. & A. DeNisi. 1996. The effects of feedback interventions on performance: A historical review, a meta-analysis, and a preliminary feedback intervention theory. *Psychological Bulletin* 119/2: 254-284.
- Knoblauch, C.H. & L. Brannon. 1988. Knowing our knowledge: A phenomenological basis for teacher research. In L.Z. Smith (ed.). *Audits of meaning: A festchrift in honor of Ann E. Berthoff*. Portsmouth, NH: Boyton/Cook, Heinemann.
- Kobayashi, T. 1992. Native and nonnative reactions to ESL compositions. *TESOL Quarterly* 26/1: 81-112.
- Krashen, S. D. 1984. *Writing: Research, Theory, and Applications*. Oxford: Pergamon Institute of English.

- Kroll, B. 2003. Introduction: Teaching the next generation of second language writers. In B. Kroll (ed.). *Exploring the Dynamics of Second Language Writing* (1-10). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kutz, E., S.Q. Groden., V. Zamel. 1993. *The Discovery of Competence Teaching and Learning with Diverse Student Writers*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Kvale, S. 1996. *InterViews: An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.
- Kwan-Terry, A. (ed.). 1988. *Interactive Writing: An Advanced Course in Writing Skills Student's Book*. London: Prentice Hall.
- Lakshmy A.K. & L. Hoon. 2002. Diaries: listening to 'voices' from the multicultural classroom. *ELT Journal* 56/3: 227-239.
- Lalande, J.F. 1982. Reducing composition errors: An experiment. *Modern Language Journal* 66: 140-149.
- Lamberg, W. 1980. Self-provided and peer-provided feedback. *College Composition and Communication* 31/1: 63-69.
- Larsen-Freeman, D. & M. Long. 1991. *Introduction to Second Language Acquisition*. London: Longman.
- Latulippe, L.D. 1992. *Writing as a Personal Product*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall Regents.
- Leki, I. 1990a. Coaching from the margins: Issues in written response. In B. Kroll (ed.). *Second Language Writing: Research insights for the classroom* (pp.57-68). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Leki, I. 1990b. Potential problems with peer responding in ESL writing classes. *CATESOL Journal* 3: 5-19.
- Leki, I. 1992. *Understanding ESL writers*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Liu, J. & J.G. Hansen. 2002. *Peer Response in Second Language Classrooms*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Lockhart, C. & P. Ng. 1995. Analyzing talk in peer response groups: Stances, functions, and content. *Language Learning* 45:605-655.
- Loughran, J. 2003. Exploring the nature of teacher research. In A. Clarke. & G. Erickson (eds.). *Teacher Inquiry: Living the research in every day practice* (pp.181-189). London: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Mangelsdorf, K. 1992. Peer reviews in the ESL composition classroom: What do the students think? *ELT Journal* 45:274-284.
- Mathison-Fife, J. & P. O'Neill. 1997. Re-seeing research on response. *College Composition and Communication* 48:274-277.

Matsuda, P.K. 2003. Process and post-process: A discursive history. *Journal of Second Language Writing* 12: 65-83.

Matsuhashi, A. & E. Gordon. 1985. Revision, addition, and the power of the unseen text. In S. W. Freedman (ed.). *The Acquisition of Written Language: Response and Revision*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

Maxwell, J.A. 1992. Understanding and validity in qualitative research. *Harvard Educational Review* 62/3: 279-300.

McAlpine, L. 1989. Teacher-as-reader: Oral feedback on ESL student writing. *TESL Canada Journal* 7/1: 62-67.

McKendy, T.F. 1990. Legitimizing peer response: A recycling project for placement essays. *College Composition and Communication* 40/1: 89-91.

Mendonca, C.O. & K.E. Johnson. 1994. Peer review negotiations: Revision activities in ESL writing instruction. *TESOL Quarterly* 28/4:745-769.

Merriam, S.B. 1988. *Case Study Research in Education: A Qualitative Approach*. San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

#### **Ministry of Higher Education Document**

“Contribution à l’élaboration de la réforme pédagogique de l’enseignement supérieur”, Document 1: ORGANISATION GENERALE. Ministère de l’enseignement Supérieur, de la Formation des Cadres et de la Recherche Scientifique. Comité d’Animation, de Pilotage et de Suivi de la Réforme (CAPESUR).

Mittan, R. 1989. The peer review process: Harnessing students’ communicative power. In D.M. Johnson. & D. H. Roen (eds.). *Richness in Writing: Empowering ESL Students* (pp. 207-219). New York: Longman.

Munby, H. & T. Rusell. 1994. The authority of experience in learning to teach: messages from a physics method class. *Journal of Teacher Education* 45/2: 86-95.

Murray, D. 1968. *A Writer Teaches Writing: A practical Method of Teaching Composition*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Murray, D.M. 1982. *Learning by Teaching: Selected Articles on Writing and Teaching*. Boynton/Cook Publishers, INC.

Nelson, G.L. & J.M. Murphy. 1992/93. Writing groups and the less proficient ESL student. *TESOL Journal* 2/2:23-26.

Nemasi, M. 1991. *An Investigation into the Written English of Moroccan Secondary School Pupils*. Unpublished D.E.S. Dissertation. Rabat: Faculty of Education.

Nisbet, J. & J. Watt. 1984. Case study. In J. Bell, et al. (eds.). *Conducting Small-scale Investigations in Educational Management* (pp.79-92). London: Harper & Row.

- Nunan, D. 1992. *Research Methods in Language Learning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Nystrand, M. 1986. *The Structure of Written Communication: Studies in Reciprocity between Writers and Readers*. New York: Academic.
- Nystrand, M. 1990. Sharing words: The effects of readers on developing writers. *Written communication* 7: 3-24.
- O'Malley, J.M., et al. 1983. *Learning Strategies Utilized in Developing Listening and Speaking Skills in English as a Second Language*. Rosslyn, Va: InterAmerica Research Associates.
- Onore, C. 1989. The student, the teacher, and the text: negotiating meanings through response and revision. In C.M. Anson (ed.). *Writing and Response: Theory, Practice and Research* (pp. 231-260). Urbana IL: National Council of Teachers of English.
- Oppenheim, A.N. 1992. *Questionnaire Design, Interviewing and Attitude Measurement*. London: Pinter Publishers Ltd.
- Oshima, A. & A. Hogue. 1999. *Introduction to Academic Writing*. Addison Wesley Longman.
- Ouaouicha, D. 1986. *Contrastive Rhetoric and the Structure of Learner-produced Argumentative Texts in Arabic and English*. Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis. Austin: The University of Texas.
- Oxford, R. 1990. *Language Learning Strategies: What every teacher should know*. New York: Newbury House.
- Patrie, J. 1989. The use of the tape recorder in an ESL composition programme. *TESL Canada Journal* 6/2: 87-90.
- Patton, M.Q. 1980. *Qualitative Evaluation Methods*. Beverly Hills: Sage Publications.
- Paulus, T. M. 1999. The effect of peer and teacher feedback on student writing. *Journal of Second Language Writing* 8/3:265-289.
- Perl, S. 1979. The Composing processes of unskilled college writers. *Research in the Teaching of English* 13: 317-66.
- Porter, P.A., L.M. Goldstein, J. Leatherman, & S. Conrad. 1990. An ongoing dialogue: learning logs for teacher preparation. In J. Richards. & D. Nunan (eds.). *Second Language Teacher Education* (pp. 227-240). New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Raimes, A. 1983. Anguish as a second language: remedies for composition teachers. In A. Freedman, et al. *Learning to Write: First Language/Second Language* (pp. 258-272). London and New York: Longman.
- Reichardt, C. & T. Cook. 1979. Beyond qualitative and quantitative methods in education research. In T. Cook. & C. Reichardt (eds.). *Qualitative and Quantitative Methods in Education Research*. Beverly Hills: Sage Publications.

- Reid, J. 1994. Responding to ESL students' texts: The myths of appropriation. *TESOL Quarterly* 28:273-292.
- Richards, K. 2003. *Qualitative Inquiry in TESOL*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Rivers, W. 1968. *Teaching Foreign Language Skills*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Robb, T., S. Ross., I. Shortreed. 1986. Salience of feedback on error and its effect on EFL writing quality. *TESOL Quarterly* 20/1: 83-91.
- Rubin, D.L. 1988. Four dimensions of social construction in written communication. In B.A. Rafoth. & D.L. Rubin (eds.). *The Social Construction of Written Communication*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex.
- Rubin, J. 1987. Learner Strategies: Theoretical assumptions, research history and typology. In A. Wenden. & J. Rubin (eds.). *Learner Strategies in Language Learning* (pp. 15-30). Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall
- Sadiqi, F. 1991. The spread of English in Morocco. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 87: 99-114.
- Sarason, I.G. 1984. Stress, anxiety, and cognitive interference: Reactions to tests. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 46: 929-938.
- Scovel, T. 1978. The effect of affect on foreign language learning: A review of the anxiety research. *Language Learning* 28: 129-142.
- Selzer, J. 1983. The composing process of an engineer. *College Composition and Communication* 34/2:178-187.
- Semke, H.D. 1984. The effects of the red pen. *Foreign Language Annals* 17: 195-202.
- Silva, T. 1990. Second language composition instruction: developments, issues, and directions in ESL. In B. Kroll (ed.). *Second Language Writing: Research insights for the classroom* (pp.11-23). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Silverman, D. 2000. *Doing Qualitative Research: A Practical Handbook*. London: Sage Publications.
- Silverman, D. 2005. *Doing Qualitative Research*. London: Sage Publications.
- Smith, L. & W. Geoffrey. 1968. *The Complexities of an Urban Classroom*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Sommers, N. 1980. Revision strategies of student writers and experienced adult writers. *College Composition and Communication* 31/4: 378-388.
- Spelman Miller, K. 2000. Academic writers on-line: investigating pausing in the production of text. *Language Teaching Research* 4/2: 123-148.

- Sperling, M. 1991. Dialogues of deliberation: Conversation in the teacher-student writing conference. *Written Communication* 31: 378-88.
- Stake, R.E. 1978. The Case-study Method in Social Inquiry. *Educational Researcher* 7: 5-8.
- Stake, R.E. 1988. Case study in educational research: seeking sweet water. In R. M. Jaeger (ed.). *Complementary Methods for Research in Education*. Washington, DC: American Educational Research association.
- Stake, R.E. 1998. Case Studies. In N.K. Denzin. & Y.S. Lincoln (eds.). *Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry* (pp. 86-109). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Stake, R.E. 2000. The Case Study Method in Social Inquiry. In R. Gomm., M. Hammersley., P. Foster (eds.). *Case Study Method* (pp.19-26). London: Sage Publications.
- Stake, R.E. 1995. *The Art of Case Study*. London: Sage Publications.
- Stanley, J. 1992. Coaching student writers to be effective peer evaluators. *Journal of Second Language Writing* 1/3: 217-233.
- Stapleton, P. 2002. Critiquing voice as a viable pedagogical tool in L2 writing: Returning the spotlight to ideas. *Journal of Second Language Writing* 11: 177-190.
- Steinberg, F.S. & E.K. Horwitz. 1986. The effect of induced anxiety on the denotative and interpretative content of second language speech. *TESOL Quarterly* 20: 131-136.
- Storch, N. & J. Tapper. 1996. Patterns of NNS student annotations when identifying areas of concern in their writing. *System* 24/3: 323-336
- Storch, N. & J. Tapper. 1997. Student Annotations: What NNS and NS university students say about their own writing. *Journal of Second Language Writing* 6/3: 245-264.
- Susser, B. 1994. Process approaches in ESL/EFL writing instruction. *Journal of Second Language Writing* 3/1: 31-47.
- Trumble, W.R. & A. Stevenson (eds.). 2002. *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary Volume 1 A-M* (5<sup>th</sup> Edn.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Truscott, J. 1999. The case for "The case against grammar correction in L2 Writing classes": A response to Ferris. *Journal of Second Language Writing* 8/2: 111-122.
- Truscott, J. 2004. Evidence and conjecture on the effects of correction: A response to Chandler. *Journal of Second Language Writing* 13: 337-343.
- Tsui, Amy.B.M. & M. Ng. 2000. Do secondary L2 writers benefit from peer comments? *Journal of Second Language Writing* 9/2:147-170.
- University of Cambridge Local Examination Syndicate International Examinations. 1990. Certificates in Communicative Skills in English. Teacher's Guide.



- Ushioda, E. 2003. Motivation as a socially mediated process. In D. Little., J. Ridley., E. Ushioda (eds.). *Learner Autonomy in the Foreign Language Classroom: Teacher, Learner, Curriculum and Assessment* (pp. 90-102). Dublin: Athentik.
- Varghese, S.A. & S.A. Abraham. 1998. Undergraduates Arguing a Case. *Journal of Second Language Writing* 7/3: 287-306.
- Villamil, O.S. & M.C.M. DE Guerrero. 1996. Peer revision in the L2 classroom: Social-cognitive activities, mediating strategies, and aspects of social behavior. *Journal of Second Language Writing* 5/1: 51-75.
- Wellman, H.M. 1985. The origins of metacognition. In D.L. Forrest-Pressley., G.E. Mackinnon. & T.G. Waller (eds.). *Metacognition, Cognition, and Human Performance* (Vol. 1, pp. 1-31). New York: Academic.
- White, E.M. 1985. *Teaching and Assessing Writing*. London: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Widdowson, H. G. 1983. New starts and different kinds of failure. In A. Freedman., I. Pringle., J. Yalden (eds.). *Learning to Write: First Language/Second language* (pp. 34-47). London and New York: Longman.
- Wilkinson, D. & P. Birmingham. 2003. *Using Research Instruments*. London and New York: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Williams, M. 2004. Motivation in foreign language learning. In M. Baynham., A. Deignan., G. White. *Applied Linguistics at the Interface: Selected papers from the annual meeting of the British Association for Applied Linguistics* (pp. 167-180). British Association for Applied Linguistics in association with equinox London Oakville.
- Williams, M. & R.L. Burden. 1997. *Psychology for Language Teachers: A social constructivist approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Wilson, N. & S. McLean. 1994. *Questionnaire Design: a Practical Introduction*. Newtown Abbey, Co. Antrim: University of Ulster Press.
- Wilson, S.M. 1995. Not tension but intention: A response to Wong's analysis of the researcher/teacher. *Education Researcher* 24/8: 19-22.
- Wong, E.D. 1995. Challenges confronting the researcher/teacher: Conflicts of purpose and conduct. *Education Researcher* 24/3: 22-28.
- Woods, D. 1996. *Teacher Cognition in Language Teaching: Beliefs, decision-making and classroom practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Yin, R. 1984. *Case Study Research*. Beverly Hills, California: Sage Publications.
- Yin, R. K. 1993. *Applications of Case Study Research*. London: Sage Publications.
- Yin, R.K. 2003. *Applications of Case Study Research (2<sup>nd</sup> edn.)*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.

Zamel, V. 1983. The Composing process of advanced ESL students: Six case studies. *TESOL Quarterly* 17/2: 165-187.

Zamel, V. 1976. Teaching composition in the ESL classroom: What we can learn from research in the teaching of English. *TESOL Quarterly* 10: 67-76.

Zamel, V. 1985. Responding to student writing. *TESOL Quarterly* 19: 79-101.

Zhang, S. 1995. Reexamining the affective advantage of peer feedback in the ESL writing class. *Journal of Second Language Writing* 4/3:209-222.

**Appendix 1-1**  
**Dean's Letter of Confirmation of Access and Completion of Study**

**Access Letter**

To whom it may concern:

This is to inform you that Malika Haoucha has been given the permission to teach a composition course to first year Moroccan university students. The course started on 21 November 2002 and finished on 18 April 2003. This is done within the framework of her data collection for her Ph.D. research, as the latter necessitates the teacher intervention. Malika's help with the teaching of composition at our faculty this year has been highly appreciated by both teachers and students for Malika has introduced a new method of teaching composition in the English Language Department.

Should you need further information, please contact me.

Dr. Abdelhak Hamam, Dean

University Hassan II  
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences  
BEN M'SIK – CASBLANKA  
B.P. 7951 – Hay Al Baraka  
Tel: 022 70 50 96/97/98/99  
Fax: 022 70 51 00

 Le Doyen P.J  
*Hamam*  
HAMAM Abdelhak

## Appendix 2-1

### Teacher Interview Agenda

1. Do University students majoring in English need to learn academic writing in your opinion? If yes, why do you think they need it?
2. Are these students motivated to learn academic writing? If yes, what do you think motivates them?
3. If students are not motivated to learn academic writing, what do you usually do to make them more motivated and interested in learning it?
4. It is sometimes said that Moroccan University students might not need to learn how to write in their L3 (English) because they can rely on their L1 (Arabic) and L2 (French) writing skills in order to produce good writing in English. Do you agree with this idea? If yes, why? And if no, why?
5. How does the large class size influence the way you work with students? Do you manage to work with all the students and give them equal attention?
6. Students, as you know, have different levels and interests, what do you do to cater for their different needs in your writing class?
7. Where do you usually ask your students to complete their writing tasks/assignments, in class or at home?
8. Do you choose the topics for your students or do you ask them to choose the topics themselves?
9. Do you think that asking students to write on general topics of the type that interests them can encourage students to write on academic topics later?
10. What do you place more importance on in evaluating or grading your students written work: organisation, content, or language? Why?
11. What approach to writing do you tend to follow in teaching writing: product or process approach? Why?
12. Do you think that process writing, in which students write multiple drafts, is suitable for Moroccan University students?
13. Process writing is time-consuming but very beneficial for students because it takes them step by step into the different stages of writing, do you think teachers will be willing to sacrifice more of their time in order to help students become good writers?
14. In correcting your students' writing, what method do you usually follow?
15. How much do you encourage students to revise their own writing?
16. Do you give your students the chance to indicate (to annotate) on their writing the parts that they have problems with so that your feedback is guided and, in a sense, monitored by the student?
17. Do you encourage students to correct each other's essays, or what is also known as peer feedback/peer evaluation depending on what the purpose of the activity?
18. If you do encourage the use of peer feedback procedure, at which stage of the writing process do you introduce it, i.e., on which draft do you encourage students to give peer feedback?
19. Do you prefer to give written or oral feedback on your students' writing? Please explain why you prefer one method more than the other?
20. One way of giving oral comments on students' writing is through conferences (discussion with students either individually or in groups), what do you think of this method?
21. Another way of giving oral feedback is by recording your comments on a tape and giving it to the student to listen to and implement the corrections on his/her writing. Do you think this method could be feasible with our Moroccan university students? Would you ever use this method of giving feedback with your students? Why?
22. What do you think is the importance of peer feedback in the learning of writing? Should it be part of every writing activity?
23. If you were to choose between the amount of feedback to give on students' writing, what type of feedback would you give more weighting to: student-to-student feedback (peer feedback) or teacher-to-student feedback? Why?
24. Do you think that writing should be taught separately or should it be integrated with one of the other skills? Why?

## Appendix 2-2

### Student Pre-course Questionnaire

Dear Student,

This questionnaire will be part of a study about the teaching/learning of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) *academic writing* to first year Moroccan University students majoring in English. Academic writing is here used to mean the type of formal writing that you are required to do at university, or school. In this questionnaire I would like you to refer back to your previous English classes and respond to the following questions.

Please note that I will also conduct some follow-up interviews with some students. If you would like to volunteer for the interview session please write down your name and your telephone number so that I can contact you and agree on an appropriate time for the interview.

Please also note that I will only use your name and your telephone number to contact you for the interview, if you volunteer. All the information you provide will be strictly confidential and anonymous.

The data from this questionnaire will be used in order to help improve and develop the teaching of writing for university students; therefore, I would appreciate it if you would answer as honestly and accurately as possible.

Name:-----

Do agree to be interviewed?  Yes  No

If yes, please write down your contact number.

Telephone Number: -----

*Thank you in advance for completing the questionnaire.*

---

**Section One:**

Please tick one appropriate answer.

1. How frequently do you write in Arabic?

- Always                       Sometimes                       Rarely                       Never

2. How frequently do you write in French?

- Always                       Sometimes                       Rarely                       Never

3. How frequently do you write in English?

- Always                       Sometimes                       Rarely                       Never

4. Why do you need to write in English?

- For studies (academic)                       for fun (hobby)  
 Other (please specify) .....

5. Please indicate how confident you are in writing in English. Tick the appropriate box.

- Very confident  
 Fairly confident  
 Not confident
- 

**Section Two: Tick *one* response: Yes, No, or Not sure**

1. I had already received some instruction on how to write a paragraph in my first language.

- Yes                       No                       Not sure

2. I had already received some instruction on how to write an essay in my first language.

- Yes                       No                       Not sure

3. I had already received some instruction on how to write a paragraph in my previous English writing classes.

- Yes                       No                       Not sure

4. I had already received some instruction on how to write an essay in my previous English writing classes.

- Yes                       No                       Not sure
- 

**Section Three: Tick *one* box.**

5. Writing in English and writing in my first language (Arabic) are

- Completely different                       Slightly different                       Similar

6. During my previous English writing classes, I wrote my essay(s)

- a. at home  
 b. in class  
 c. both in class and at home
- 

**Section Four: Tick *more than one* box if necessary**

7. Before starting to write essays in English the teacher taught me

- a. how to generate ideas (Brainstorm)
  - b. how to plan my essay
  - c. how to write a first draft
  - d. how to revise my draft
  - e. how to write a second and then a final draft
  - f. how to edit my work to make a final draft
  - g. other (please specify)
- .....

---

**Section Five: Tick *one* appropriate response.**

8. In giving me feedback on my writing (written feedback),

a. the teacher underlined (or put a mark x near) my language mistakes.

- Always                       sometimes                       Rarely                       Never

b. the teacher underlined and corrected my language mistakes.

- Always                       sometimes                       Rarely                       Never

c. the teacher underlined and requested me to correct my language mistakes.

- Always                       Sometimes                       Rarely                       Never

d. the teacher underlined and gave me ideas (prompts) on how to correct the mistakes myself.

- Always                       Sometimes                       Rarely                       Never

e. the teacher made more comments on content and organisation.

- Always                       Sometimes                       Rarely                       Never

f. the teacher commented only on the first draft (not the revised version)

- Always                       Sometimes                       Rarely                       Never

g. the teacher commented on both the strong and the weak parts of my essay.

- Always                       Sometimes                       Rarely                       Never

h. the teacher wrote positive comments and that made me more motivated to revise and improve my essay

- Always                       Sometimes                       Rarely                       Never

i. the teacher would ask me to go see him and have a discussion about my essay.

- Always                       Sometimes                       Rarely                       Never

j. the teacher encouraged me to respond to his/her comments if I did not agree with him/her.

- Always                       Sometimes                       Rarely                       Never

k. The teacher would choose one student's paragraph or essay, reformulate it (i.e. write it in a better way without changing the meaning) and ask students to compare it to the first version, then ask them to improve their own essays following the same model.

- Always                       Sometimes                       Rarely                       Never
- 

**Section Six: Tick *one* appropriate response**

9. In revising their essays in class,

a. Students were encouraged by the teacher to work in pairs and respond to each other's essays

- Always                       Sometimes                       Rarely                       Never

b. Students were asked to work in groups of three or four, if the classes were large, to give feedback to their classmates about their essays using a checklist (a list of guidelines about what to look for in the essay) given to them by the teacher.

- Always                       Sometimes                       Rarely                       Never

10. In revising their own essays or giving feedback on other students' work

a. Students were encouraged to revise and comment on content and organisation first.

- Always                       Sometimes                       Rarely                       Never

b. Students were encouraged to revise and comment on grammar, vocabulary and sentence structure first.

- Always                       Sometimes                       Rarely                       Never
- 

**Section Seven: Tick *one* item as appropriate**

11. How often do you respond to your writing teacher's written comments?

- Always                       Sometimes                       Rarely                       Never

11. If you did, how did you respond to your teacher's written comments?

- a. by reading through them quickly and ignoring them.  
 b. by reading them and trying to use them to correct my errors.  
 c. by reading them and trying to understand how I could improve my writing.  
 d. any other way (please specify):  
.....

12. How often do you take the initiative to indicate on your writing the parts on which you would like the teacher to give you feedback?

- Always                       Sometimes                       Rarely                       Never

13. At what stage of your writing, do you usually feel you need help from your teacher or a classmate? Tick *one or more* items as appropriate

- at the brainstorming (idea generating) stage  
 at the planning (outlining) stage  
 at the revising stage  
 at the final drafting stage
-



**Section Eight:**

a. In a few lines, please explain how you feel about writing in English (i.e., do you like writing in English? Do you dislike it?, etc. Please try to give some reasons why you like writing in English or why you dislike it).

I like writing in English

.....  
.....

I dislike writing in English

.....  
.....

b. Please state the difficulties you have in writing essays in English. Some of the difficulties I face in writing in English are the following:

.....  
.....  
.....

c. Which type of writing do you find more difficult in English: narrative (e.g. telling a story), descriptive (e.g. describing an object), or argumentative writing (in which you have to discuss and argue for and against a subject)?

In a few lines state the type of writing you find difficult and explain why?

The type of writing I find difficult is

.....  
.....

The reason is that.....

.....  
.....

d. In a few lines, please give some suggestions on what you think you need to do in order to improve your writing.

In order to improve my writing in English, I need to.....

.....  
.....  
.....

What do you expect from your writing teacher?

I expect my writing teacher to

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

*Thank you for completing this questionnaire*

## Appendix 2-3

### Agenda of Student Group Interview

1. Writing in English as a foreign language.
  - Problems/difficulties
  - Sources of difficulty
  - Possible solutions
2. The role of the writing teacher in easing EFL writing difficulty.
  - Actual help provided
  - Type of help required by students
  - Amount of help students need
3. The role of EFL learners in improving their EFL writing proficiency.
4. English Language Department and administration contribution to the promotion of EFL writing.
  - Facilities
  - Group size
  - Library
5. Additional items: students could add any other relevant items to the agenda.

Appendix 4-1





A Chart of Transition Signals

Meaning/Function	Sentence Connectors	Clause Connectors		Others (Adjectives, Verbs, And Prepositions)
		Coordinators	Subordinators	
To introduce a similar additional idea	also, besides, furthermore, in addition, moreover, too	and, nor, ("and not")		another, an additional
To compare things	also, likewise, similarly, too	and, both...and, not only...but also, neither...nor	as, just as	as...as, like/alike, just like, similar to, be alike, be similar
To introduce an opposite idea, and to contrast things	however, in contrast, instead, in/by comparison, nevertheless, nonetheless, on the other hand, on the contrary, still	But, yet	although, even though, though, whereas, while	despite, in spite of, compared to/with, be different (from), be dissimilar, be unlike, differ (from)
To introduce and example	For example, for instance			such as, an example of
To emphasize	in fact			
To explain and restate	Indeed, that is			
To introduce an alternative	otherwise	or	If, unless	
To signal chronological order	first, second, etc. first of all, then, next, now, then, soon, last, finally, meanwhile, gradually, after that, since then		after, as, as soon as, before, since, until, when, while	the first, the second, the next, the last, the final, before lunch after the war since 19_ in the 20_ (any time expression)
To Indicate order of importance	above all, first and foremost, more/most importantly/significantly primarily			a more important the most important the second most significant the primary
To introduce a cause or reason		for	because, since, as	result from, be the result of, due to, because of, the effect of, the consequence of, as a result of
To introduce an effect or result	accordingly, as a result, as a consequence, consequently, hence, thus, therefore	so		result in, cause, have an effect on, affect, the cause of, the reason for
To conclude	all in all, in brief, in conclusion, in short, in summary, indeed			It is clear that... We can see that... The evidence suggests that... These examples show that...

From Oshima and Hogue (1999)

## Appendix 4-2

### A chart of Correction Symbols

Meaning	Incorrect	Correct
<i>P.</i> punctuation	<sup><i>P.</i></sup> I live, and go to school here. <sup><i>P.</i></sup> Where do you work.	I live and go to school here. Where do you work?
 word missing	 I working in a restaurant.	I am working in a restaurant.
<i>Cap.</i> capitalization	<sup><i>cap.</i></sup> <sup><i>cap.</i></sup> It is located at main and baker <sup><i>cap.</i></sup> <sup><i>cap.</i></sup> streets in the City.	It is located at Main and Baker Streets in the city.
<i>V.t.</i> verb tense	<sup><i>v.t.</i></sup> I never work as a cashier until <sup><i>v.t.</i></sup> I get a job there.	I had never worked as a cashier until I got a job there.
<i>agr.</i> subject-verb agreement	<sup><i>agr.</i></sup> The manager work hard. <sup><i>agr.</i></sup> There is five employees.	The manager works hard. There are five employees.
 make one word or sentence	Every one works hard. We work together. So we have become friends.	Everyone works hard. We work together, so we have become friends.
<i>sp.</i> spelling	<sup><i>sp.</i></sup> The <u>maneger</u> is a woman.	The manager is a woman.
<i>pl.</i> plural	She treats her employees like <sup><i>pl.</i></sup> <u>slave</u> .	She treats her employees like slaves.
 unnecessary word	My boss <del>she</del> watches everyone all the time.	My boss watches everyone all the time.
<i>w.f.</i> wrong word form	Her voice is <sup><i>w.f.</i></sup> <u>irritated</u> .	Her voice is irritating.
<i>W.W.</i> wrong word	The food is delicious. <sup><i>W.W.</i></sup> <u>Besides</u> , the restaurant is always crowded.	The food is delicious. Therefore, the restaurant is always crowded.

## Appendix 4-2 (Continued)

	Meaning	Incorrect	Correct
ref.	pronoun reference error	The restaurant's specialty is fish. <sup>ref.</sup> They are always fresh. The food is delicious. Therefore, <sup>ref.</sup> it is always crowded.	The restaurant's specialty is fish. It is always fresh. The food is delicious. Therefore, the restaurant is always crowded.
W	wrong word order	Friday <u>always is</u> our busiest night.	Friday is always our busiest night.
RO	run-on	Lily was fired she is upset.	Lily was fired, so she is upset.
CS	comma splice (incorrectly joined independent clauses)	OR Lily was fired, she is upset.	Lily was fired; therefore, she is upset. Because Lily was fired, she is upset. Lily is upset because she was fired.
FRAG	fragment (incomplete sentence)	She was fired. <u>Because she was always late.</u>	She was fired because she was always late.
Ⓟ	add a transition	She was also careless. <sup>Ⓟ</sup> She frequently spilled coffee on the table.	She was also careless. For example, she frequently spilled coffee on the table.
S.	subject	<sup>S.</sup> <u>^</u> Is open from 6:00 P.M. until the last customer leaves.	The restaurant is open from 6:00 P.M. until the last customer leaves.
V.	verb	The employees <sup>v.</sup> <u>^</u> on time and work hard.	The employees are on time and work hard.
prep.	preposition	We start serving dinner <sup>prep.</sup> <u>^</u> 6:00 P.M.	We start serving dinner at 6:00 P.M.
conj.	conjunction	The garlic shrimp, fried clams, <sup>conj.</sup> <u>^</u> broiled lobster are the most popular dishes.	The garlic shrimp, fried clams, and broiled lobster are the most popular dishes.
art.	article	Diners expect <sup>art.</sup> <u>^</u> glass of water when they first sit down <sup>art.</sup> <u>^</u> at table.	Diners expect a glass of water when they first sit down at the table.
¶	Symbol for a paragraph		

From Oshima & Hogue (1999)

## Appendix 4-3

### A Sample of an exemplar text and a writing activity

#### Argument and Counter-argument

*The text you read here, about student evaluation of lecturers, is from a student newspaper. It is an example of a successful presentation of argument and counter-argument. You can see how the writer has carefully considered the possible objections his reader might raise to his argument and attempted to deal with them.*

Anyone who has ever attended a university knows that the quality of lecturers varies greatly. A few are very effective communicators, conveying the substance of their lectures clearly and interestingly and inspiring students to want to know more about the subject. Others produce dull, rambling and sometimes even incoherent lectures from which the students learn little and which are likely to kill any interest they may have in the subject. Lecturing is a major part of a lecturer's job and it would seem reasonable that effectiveness in this task should be a major criterion in assessing a lecturer for promotion, tenure and so on. However, it is very often the case that far more weight is given to such factors as participation in research, number of publications and even performance of administrative duties. It is my contention that a lecturer's performance in the lecture hall should be regularly evaluated and that the best people to carry out this evaluation are those directly on the receiving end - the students.

It could, of course, be argued that students, particularly undergraduates, are not competent to evaluate the academic quality of lecturers. They may know little of the subject and have no means of judging whether a particular lecturer is giving them outdated or irrelevant information and concepts or whether he or she is accurately reflecting the current state of the discipline. If anyone should evaluate lecturers, the argument goes, it should be their colleagues. However, I am not arguing that students should be asked to comment upon the academic content of lectures. The academic calibre of lecturers can still be assessed in the usual way through their qualifications, publications, course outlines, performance at staff seminars and so on. What students are best placed to do is to evaluate the effectiveness of the teaching which goes on in a lecture. Lecturers often have little time to regularly attend one another's lectures. Moreover, their comments are likely to be affected by personal or academic prejudices. Students, on the other hand, know perfectly well when they are learning something and are normally quite clear about which lectures are interesting and give them a clear understanding of the subject and which are boring and leave them baffled.

Another common objection is that the students do not know what is good for them. They are likely to rate highly lecturers who do not demand much of them, who keep their lectures very simple, give few assignments and award good grades for mediocre work. They might even be influenced by such irrelevant factors as whether a lecturer is good looking or how friendly he or she is. This argument assumes very low levels of maturity, motivation and intelligence among students. University students, after all, are no longer school children. They come to the university to learn and normally expect a certain amount of stimulation and challenge. Anyone who has mixed with undergraduates will know how critical they can be of lectures which are uninspiring, dull or too elementary. I am certain that most students care far too much about the quality of education they receive at university to treat the evaluation of lecturers as a mere popularity contest.

I suspect that many of the objections to student evaluation of lecturers stem from the fear some lecturers have of being subject to criticism by their students. However, lecturers should see such evaluation as an opportunity to become aware of defects in their lecturing techniques and thus to become better lecturers. Such a system could benefit both students and lecturers as well as help department heads to more realistically assess the strengths and weaknesses of their teaching staff.

*From Kwan-Terry, A. (1988)*

The text above is used more as a means of awareness-raising about arguments and counter-arguments rather than as a model for students to imitate.

1. Students read the text individually to get the gist of it.
2. In pairs, students answer the following questions:
3. Where does the author introduce his thesis statement?
  - (a) Write down the thesis statement
  - (b) Where is its place in the paragraph?
  - (c) Why do you think it has been placed there?
  - (d) What is the author's position towards the topic?
4. Where does the writer anticipate the reader's possible counter-arguments?
  - (a) What are these counter-arguments?
  - (b) What expressions does the writer use to indicate that he is not presenting his own standpoint?
  - (c) Find the place where each counter-argument ends and how the writer handles it by doing the following:
    - (i) Showing that a counter-argument does not apply to the argument he is putting forward.
    - (ii) Criticising the counter-argument and showing its drawbacks.  
Which counter-argument is dealt with in the way described in (i)?  
Which counter-argument is dealt with in the way described in (ii)?
5. What does the writer do in paragraph four?
  - (a) What reasons does he give for people's objections/counter-arguments?
  - (b) Does the writer present any additional arguments in favour of his position? If so, what are they? And why do you think he is doing so?
6. Are the writer's arguments in favour of students' evaluations convincing?
7. Can you think of any other arguments you might want to use if you were taking the same position as the writer's?
8. Always working with your peer, try to think of other counter-arguments.
9. Students and the teacher then go over the questions to ensure that the text is understood and that each question has been answered appropriately.
10. Students' new arguments and counter-arguments are written on the board and discussed.
11. Students are asked to produce an essay at home based on the arguments and counter-arguments they brainstormed. Students are reminded that they have to make their standpoints clear to the reader.
12. Students come to class with their first drafts and a peer feedback session is conducted in which students comment on each other's essays using the essay feedback sheet.
13. A second draft is written based on peer comments. This draft receives teacher written feedback and taped comments.
14. Students write a third (final) draft in which they implement teacher feedback.

## Appendix 4-4

### Transcript of Student Retrospective Reactions to Peer Feedback Activity

Teacher: What do you think of giving your classmate feedback on her writing?

Aziz: I think that it is a good method that help us speak good English and simple English. So, it is a good method.

Teacher: How do you think it will help you in your own writing? You are now working on your peer's paragraph, but how will it help you do your writing?

Aziz: It will help me with revise, to avoid her mistakes. Because I have seen her mistakes, I can't repeat them. I also lean a new vocabulary.

Teacher asks Kadija: How is this helping you? How do you see your paragraph now?

Kadija: From his remarks, it helps me write another paragraph without these mistakes.

Teacher: What are you going to do now when you take this paragraph corrected by your peer?

Kadija: I will read the remarks.

Teacher: Are you sure you will?

Khadija: yes, for example when I write another draft I can come back to this sheet

Teacher: To the peer response sheet. What else do you think this exercise helps you do?

Students [Thinking about the answer]

Teacher: Have you done this activity before?

Students [answering all at once]: No, first time

Teacher: Do you find it a difficult exercise?

Students: No

Khadija: It makes good communication and ...with classmates. In other classes it is just like sitting.

Aziz: Just sitting and we have a conversation just like in Arabic

Teacher: [asking Khadija]: How did you feel when your peer gave you negative comments?

Khadija: I accept

Teacher: You do!

Khadija: Yes

Aziz: I accept, too if she corrects to me

Teacher: Today you have worked on your paragraphs, but would this exercise encourage you to write something and give it to your classmate to correct another time?

Khadija and Aziz: Yes, no problem.

Khadija: If our teacher asks us to do this, we will do it.

Noureddine: When I do their writing, as I want to say, [laughing], they write four or five writings, I know their mistakes. So, I would correct their mistakes as I would correct my mistakes.

Tami: From the papers of our colleagues, we can identify our mistakes and write. For example, I can make the same mistakes as my friends do, but I can rectify it when I read it and I will not repeat it again.

Tami [commenting on the feedback sheet]: even this sheet, it can make us evaluate our work and if we practice everything here required for the writing, we will make a very good paragraph because here we have first supporting point and supporting detail, we can practice the same thing in order to write in an accurate way.

Teacher: So, you think that this sheet is helpful?

Tami and Noureddine [simultaneously]: Absolutely

Teacher: Don't you think that it is restricting your freedom in responding to your peers' writing?

Tami and Noureddine: No, no,

Tami: I think that with such a form we can find it easy to write, in fact it makes it easy for us to write because now we know the point, what we have to do is just to practice it and to



express ourselves in practicing the same things. We can consider it as a technique of writing because we have the details.

Noureddine: It is a unique idea as far as writing is concerned

Youness: That's why it is different from narrative writing

Karima [commenting on the peer feedback method]: It is very good this method because we know our mistakes and also we can see how we write and the obstacles we have in writing. We have a lot of problems in writing.

Assya: Sometimes, I can't separate supporting points from supporting details. This sheet is too formal, but my writing is um not very well organized as sheet.

Teacher: Don't you think then that you need to work on your writing and make it more organised?

Assya: Yes I know this problem because I have problem to organise my idea

Teacher: Did you write an outline for your paragraph

Assya: What? (she has been absent lately)

Teacher: An outline, a plan, did you plan for this paragraph before writing it?

Assya: No

Teacher: This is the problem, you see. Try to plan, remember last time I gave you an easy way to plan in which you identify your topic sentence and then you choose two or three, or as many as you wish, supporting points and for every supporting point I have to find supporting details, so which means you really have to have, at least, some kind of mind plan.

Karima: Sorry, I did that but I didn't do the supporting details. I just explained the supporting ideas

Teacher: No supporting details you mean?

Karima: Yes, it is a problem which I face

Teacher: But you should really have some supporting details in order to make your ideas clear in your mind first and then clear to the reader.

Teacher: How about annotations? Could you tell me in what way they help you in your writing?

Assya: Yes, sometimes we are not sure about the structure of some sentences, where to put the verb, the noun and gerunds.

Teacher: This is the paper you have corrected Assya, yes? Your peer has underlined some words, what's problem, do you think, with this part of the sentence which your peer has underlined?

Assya: [reading the annotated sentence] "But she can also to be out of the house working in a job made to the men"

Teacher: "She can also be"

Assya: she can also be

Teacher: "made for men". But this idea of underlining your mistakes before others correct them for you, how does that help you in your writing?

Assya: It helps me to criticise myself and to remember this mistake and to try to correct it

Teacher: Did you try to correct it yourself?

Assya: [Laughing], if I tried to correct it I don't think if it is correct.

Teacher: But at least you were able to identify some of your mistakes by annotating your writing before giving it to your peer or teacher.

Aziz: Sometimes I underline some phrase because I don't find the appropriate word in English, so I translate from Arabic to English and it is a big problem.

Naima [going back to the issue of feedback sheets]: Using the feedback sheet helps us respect the structure of the paragraph.

Noura: It is a strategy that helps me looking for all the points in a paragraph.

## Appendix 4-5

### A Sample Transcript of Teacher Taped Commentary

I am going to start my feedback on your first essay by looking at your introduction. You have written some interesting general statements and a fairly good thesis statement. However, you have gone into much more detail than you should. If, as I seem to understand, the last sentence is your thesis statement: "In spite of all the previous...new fashions with their colors, variety, and beauty give to our lives a kind of vitality." Then you need to show that in the body of your essay. However, what you have done is discuss some points that have been mentioned in the general statements. As a matter of fact, I suggest you make your thesis statement much clearer by stating what your position is.

While reading the first paragraph in the body of your essay Fatima, I can see that it lacks unity. Towards the end of the paragraph you introduce a new idea which has nothing to do with the main idea of the paragraph. See number (1) part in the first paragraph of the body of your essay. I suggest you revise this paragraph and make sure you discuss one main idea in order to provide unity.

The second paragraph discusses fashion in relation to religion, but you need to specify what community you mean when you say: "community never accepts mixture between modern and traditional suits..." Do you mean Islamic community? If yes, then you need to make that clear for the reader. Otherwise you'll be making some unnecessary generalizations. Refer to the sentence numbered (2) in your text and try to revise it.

In the third paragraph you have written a sentence which doesn't seem to make much sense. I have numbered it as 3 and I think you can do without it. However, the sentence which I have numbered as (4) needs to be elaborated and supported by providing some concrete examples. I understand your point but I think that you need to show the reader how new fashions and their vivid colours make life different and spicy. I see that you have tried to explain that in relation to psychology, but you need to be very clear and specific by giving some concrete examples.

I think that your conclusion can be made much stronger by taking up your thesis statement and stressing your position towards the topic. In order to do that you'll have to, as I suggested earlier, write a clearer and straightforward thesis statement.

Concerning grammar it seems that you need to pay attention to problems of agreement, reference, and prepositions. As far as mechanics are concerned, you seem to make more mistakes in using commas. Pay attention also to capitalization.

I am sure that with some more efforts on revision of this essay, you'll be able to write a better essay. I can see that there is a lot of potential in your writing and I am happy that you are making progress. Good luck Fatima. Keep up the good work and diligence.

## A Sample of a Student Language Learning Diary

8 I spent this morning at home, because I have  
 9 plenty of things to do. But when I began to  
 10 write the events during 2002, I haven't found  
 11 what I want to write. The ideas are here, but  
 12 what miss me how to join these ideas. I tried  
 13 and tried but in vain. So I decided to postpone  
 14 the writing for another time. I don't know  
 15 how to express my feeling at the time of  
 16 writing my diary. I feel boredom. I would  
 17 like to move on from this unpleasant  
 18 feeling. Anyway I have already written  
 19 a few times as a presentation, and tomorrow  
 if God wills I'm going to finish what I had  
 began to write.

8 Today at 10.45 I've attended to composition's  
 9 class. I've experienced for the first time how to  
 10 correct a paragraph, so to make things easier  
 11 our lecturer provides us with some sheets, in order  
 12 to help us to find out the topic sentences, supporting  
 13 ideas, and the transitions. I like so much this  
 14 method, because I've never dealt with a method  
 15 such as this one. Eventually I can say that this  
 16 method helps me a lot to avoid some difficulties  
 17 and mistakes, and learn from the others' mistakes.  
 18 The afternoon I went to "British Centre" I've had  
 19 an interesting course about spending a holiday  
 in an island what should we take with us as  
 necessities.

8 At the beginning I should mention my improve-  
 9 ment in my learning English. In other words  
 10 there are many signs show that I go on in my  
 11 studies, except some problems especially in  
 12 grammar (These problems bother me). Today I  
 13 attended to my favourite course (composition)  
 14 I am not complimenting this is the truth, because  
 15 from the beginning of the year up till now, I've learned  
 16 plenty of things that I'd ignored before such as:  
 17 (Topic sentence its position, role --- etc) (support-  
 18 ing ideas, supporting details)  
 19 Today I've rewrite a paragraph that I'd already  
 written putting in my consideration my classmate's  
 opinion, for example: if there is lack of  
 supporting details or ideas and all things have  
 relationship with grammar and spelling as well.  
 what I can say about the method that is followed by  
 Mrs Hatifa is a successful one. what concern my  
 attitude towards this method it's really a beneficial  
 and successful one.

**Appendix 4-7**  
**Post-course Questionnaire**

Dear Student,

Now that our composition course has come to a close, I would appreciate it if you could think retrospectively about what we have covered in class and the writings that you have completed so far in order to complete the following questionnaire.

Thank you in advance for your co-operation.

Name:.....  
\_\_\_\_\_

Please tick the right answer. (For some questions you can tick more than one item if necessary.)

1. Have you benefited from the present writing course in writing academic paragraphs and essays?

Yes                       No

2. Has there been any improvement in your writing as a result of the writing course?

Yes                       No

3. If yes, what aspect of your writing do you think has been improved?

- Organisation (paragraph & essay structure)
- Content
- Grammar & Mechanics (punctuation, capitalization, etc.)
- Style

Any other, please specify

.....

4. What do you think about the amount of writing practice you have had during the composition course?

Too much                       Enough                       Not enough

5. What type of feedback have you enjoyed and benefited from more than the other?

Teacher feedback (written and taped comments)     Peer feedback                       Self-monitored feedback (annotations)

6. What type of teacher feedback do you think you have benefited from more than the other?

Taped comments                       Written comments                       Both

7. Which feedback comments do you take into consideration when you revise your paragraphs/essays?

Peer comments                       Teacher comments     Both                       None

Please explain your answer.

.....  
.....

8. How do you usually deal with your peer feedback comments when you receive them on your first draft?

- I question them and try to discuss them with my peer before I take them into consideration in my revision.
- I accept them easily without any questioning
- I consider only the positive comments
- I consider both the positive and the negative comments.
- I ignore them
- Any other? Please specify

.....  
.....  
9. Please state some advantages and disadvantages of peer feedback according to your experience in this year's composition course.

**Advantages of peer feedback:**

.....  
.....  
**Disadvantages of peer feedback:**

.....  
.....  
10. When you receive the teacher's oral comments (on the tape), what do you do with them? *Please number the answers according to what you do first, second, etc, using the numbers 1, 2, 3....*

- Listen to the tape in order to get an idea about all the comments.
  - Refer to my essay first to check the written comments.
  - Read my teacher's positive comments.
  - Read my teacher's negative comments.
  - Correct the grammar mistakes.
  - Make the necessary corrections related to organisation of ideas.
  - Make corrections related to the sentence structure.
- Any other? Please specify

.....  
.....  
11. Please state some advantages and disadvantages of teacher written and taped feedback according to your experience in this year's composition course.

**Advantages of teacher written feedback:**

.....  
.....  
**Disadvantages of teacher written feedback:**

**Advantages of teacher taped feedback:**

.....  
.....  
.....

**Disadvantages of teacher taped feedback:**

.....  
.....  
.....

12. Has the present composition course affected the frequency of your writing in English?

- Yes             No

13. If yes, how often do you write in English these days?

- Always             Sometimes             Rarely             Never

14. Have you been writing the language Learning Journal?

- Yes             No

15. How often do you write your Language Learning Journal?

- Always             Sometimes             Rarely             Never

Please add any comments concerning your experience in writing the Language Learning Diary.

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

16. Will you continue to write your Language Learning Journal after this course?

- Yes             No

Please explain why you would, or would not continue to do so.

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

17. Please add any comments that you may have about this year's composition course. Any comments, negative or positive, will be highly appreciated.

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

*Thank you very much for completing this questionnaire.*

## Appendix 4-8

### Student Pre-course Interview Agenda

1. How do you find writing in your L1 (Arabic)?
2. What about writing in your L2 (French)?
3. What can you say about writing in your L3 (English)?
4. If I ask you to compare between writing in L1 and L2, which one do you find more difficult and why?
5. If you had to compare writing in your L1 and L3, which one do you find more difficult and why?
6. In which language do you like writing more?
7. What makes writing difficult in general?
8. What is good writing?
9. What do you think is good writing in L1?
10. What do you think is good writing in L2?
11. What do you think is good writing in L3?
12. What is your role as a writer?
13. What is the role of the reader?
14. What kind of help do you expect from your peers in the writing class?
15. How often in the previous classes did you have to work together with your Peers to revise your drafts?
16. What type of feedback do you expect from your writing teacher?
17. What type of teacher feedback did you actually get on your writing in your English classes?
18. What type of writing do you find more challenging in the EFL writing class: narrative, descriptive or argumentative?
19. Where would you place yourself in terms of English language proficiency: low intermediate, intermediate, upper-intermediate, advanced?

## Appendix 4-9

### Student Post-course Interview Agenda

1. Have you benefited at all from this year's composition course?
2. Do you feel any improvement in your writing?
3. What do you think has mainly improved in your writing? In other words, what aspect of your writing has improved?
4. Do you think that by knowing paragraph and essay structure that helps you to write better?
5. What do you think of the amount of writing practice that we have had this year?
6. What type of feedback have you benefited from and enjoyed more than the other(s).
7. In teacher feedback we have been exposed to both written and taped comments, what type of teacher feedback do you think you have benefited from more than the other?
8. Do you prefer one type of teacher feedback more than the other?
9. Now when you revise your drafts which feedback comments do you tend to take into consideration more than the other, teacher comments, peer comments or both?
10. Do you consider your peer's comments in revising your first drafts?
12. How do you deal with peer feedback when you receive it? What do you usually do? What are the steps you follow?
13. Do you happen to ignore your peer comments?
14. Do you happen to take them for granted?
15. Sometimes your peers might give you negative comments, how do you usually feel about that?
16. You have been receiving both written and taped teacher comments, what do you usually do with these two types of feedback when you receive them? For example, when you get a tape with spoken comments and your draft with written comments, how do you go about them?
17. How do you find the taped comments?
18. What are the disadvantages and advantages of taped commentary?
19. Which type of teacher feedback do you prefer then, written or taped feedback?
20. Has the frequency of your writing been in any way influenced by this year's composition course?
21. How often do you write in English these days?
22. How often do you write your diary?
23. Will you continue to write your language journal diary after this year's course?
25. Is diary writing something you enjoy doing?
26. In what way has diary writing helped in your composition course?
27. Do you have any comments to make about this year's composition course? Feel free to make both negative and positive comments.
27. Do you already see in what way this year's course will help you in the coming years?
28. Do you think it will help you in your second, third and fourth year?
29. What is your attitude to writing in English now?
30. I know that one of the main worries of students is the exam. How confident are you now about writing for the exam?



## Appendix 4-10

### Transcript of a Peer Feedback session: Naima responding to Fatima's Essay

Naima: I am starting to read Naima's essay. Um I look in, at the introduction first. The introduction is satisfactory, *but we are confuse when we want to choice the thesis statement.* I think Fatima, you um you can make clear the thesis statement. You have transition signal from introduction to first paragraph, *first*, yes um, now the first paragraph.

I think it is poor

Fatima: Poor? Why?

Naima: The reader find it difficult to find a supporting sentence. Also this paragraph without concluding sentence. That's why it is poor.

Fatima: But I think there is examples. If we read [reads the examples from her first paragraph] "for example, Russians can't ....".

Naima: Yes, but I can't understand what's that means

Fatima: You just need to read more and understand what my examples means.

Naima: Ok, [rereads the paragraph quickly], yes, I can understand now, but you haven't done a concluding sentence. But, but in the second paragraph, um in the second, I think it is good, very good. *Any way it is a good step, but also no concluding sentence.* I can't find it. You have the transition word: second. That is good.

Fatima: Thank you [laughs]

Naima: From hm from paragraph two to paragraph three, there are hm there is no transition. You need to write clearly, you seem to have taken so much space writing about psychology. I can't seen why you talk about psychology and colors and life has become spicy. I am confuse, hm I think you should have unity. There is many ideas in this paragraph. And no concluding sentence.

Fatima: Well, I am explaining that [reads from her writing] "psychology has discovered that colors have an influence on human psychology. That is a new sort of medicine..."

Naima: Yes, but too many idea in one paragraph. The topic sentence has no link with what you hm said in the paragraph.

Fatima: Yes, may be I need to mention that in the topic sentence.

Naima: Yes. Now, the conclusion. I think it's good. You have linking word "eventually". It is a fairly acceptable attempt Fatima. I am sure that you can do better [laughs] [This phrase seems to be a result of the student's intake from the teacher's comment on the writing]

Fatima: Thank you

Naima: You are welcome. How about my essay? [Asking for her peer's feedback on her essay]

**(Appendix 4-10 continued)**

**Fatima responding to Naima's Essay**

Fatima: Hello Naima

Naima: [laughs], hello Fatima

Fatima: I am going to give you my opinion about your essay. I start by the introduction. I think that it is satisfactory, but you can do more Naima. I feel that there is no coherence in your introduction. May be you have to rewrite it and pay more attention to coherence. You have linking word between introduction and first paragraph, that's good.

But, but in the coming paragraph, you have a problem. I think that it is not good, it is poor because your topic sentence does not go to the point. There is a kind of repetition. Naima try to concentrate on what you want to say in an exact words. Avoid repetition in your coming essays.

There is no transition between paragraph one and paragraph two, but um I can see that it is satisfactory. The same problem repetition. You express the ideas with different ways. And there is lack of strong supporting sentences.

Naima: But I have explanation, um for example [reads from her text] "women waste hours of their times, time when they are altering the dresses they have. We can see also that women...". All this to support what is, what I said before in topic sentence.

Fatima: Yes, but you have repetition. And also you have some mistakes, vocabulary and tenses and reference. I have write them here.

Naima: [Agreeing] ok.

Fatima: The next paragraph, you have "all in all", linking word. Um this paragraph, I think it's poor because for lack of strong supporting sentences again. You have no clear conclusion. I don't know if this paragraph is conclusion or third paragraph.

Naima: No, yes, I have not written concluding paragraph. I forgot.

Fatima: Yes, you have to write a conclusion.  
In general, your essay contains some good ideas, but you wasn't able to develop them properly. You still have problems in spelling, reference. Make sure to revise your lessons so as to avoid these problems Naima [laughs]. You have also a lot of problem with the choice of the specific words which suit the topic. Try to avoid repetition because you miss other important ideas. That's all.

Naima: That's all? [laughs] [In French: <la punition>, i.e. punishment]

Fatima: No, I just say the truth [they both laugh]

## Appendix 4-11

### Sample of a student's writing (a cover sheet and a completed peer feedback sheet)

Composition Course Year 1/ Term 2  
Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences  
Ben M'sik - Casablanca

Student's Name: Fadima

General Comment:

Your essay is fairly satisfactory on the whole. Fadima Ezahra, however, and as I have mentioned in my taped comments, you need to revise the whole essay and try to reorganize your ideas in a much better way in order to provide unity in your paragraphs.  
(For detailed comments, please listen to the cassette)

1. Did you find it more helpful to have spoken comments on the cassette than just written comments?

Yes

No

2. If your answer is yes,

a) what in particular did you find helpful about it?

b) what do you think the advantages are of this method of giving you feedback on your writing?

Please write your comments below or record them on the cassette.

First of all and as I've mentioned before, the spoken comments on the cassette has several benefits, such as have a kind of contact or relate of touching with the teacher, which is in my opinion a very important thing in student life working, because throughout this contact he/she will benefit from the teacher's advices and corrections. The spoken comments on the cassette gives to both teacher and student opportunity to say or discuss different problems concerning writing, punctuation, sentence structure, etc. In other words, with a large number of students a teacher is unable to say all things to every students. It is impossible, but with this new system the students can benefit from the teacher's comments and also the teacher

will be aware of the different problems that a students have, and this way → he/she can work on them

3. If you wish to reply to any of my comments or ask me about any of my comments, which might seem unclear to you, please write your own comments on the back of this form or record them on the cassette, after my comments.

**PLEASE DO NOT ERASE MY COMMENTS BY RECORDING OVER THEM!**

Please return the cassette and a copy of this form with your comments together with your final draft to me as soon as possible.

## First Draft

New fashions have great influence on both <sup>sexes</sup> sexes, men and women. That does not mean we are obliged to follow whatever fashion creates blindly, in other words we should select from the new fashions what goes with our environment where we live. It cannot go beyond the common sense within society. We have to put in our consideration that there are some concepts which should be respected such as, religion, customs and traditions, etc. In spite of that, new fashions with their colors, variety and beauty give to our lives a kind of vitality.

First, new fashions can be one of the modern life signs, but that does not allow us to follow these new fashions without any consideration to the surroundings where we live. For example, Russians cannot wear sandals, simply because the weather there most of time freezing, and it is obvious that nobody can endure this low temperature with a scandal in his or her feet. This means we should not consume all what fashion creates, because there are some fashions, which are useless or silly. There are some people who say: "To be respectable within society you should be fashionable." But if we had taken this as a condition to behave with the others, we would have neglected an important thing, which is people's hearts. <sup>For Translation</sup> And as the proverb says: "All that glitters is not gold." In other words appearances are deceptive. If we consider people's clothing, we would lose the ability to distinguish between who is good, and who is bad.

Second, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century some of the new fashions go against religion's principles. Moreover, fashion has exploited women as a merchandise, which is forbidden in most of religions. Islam can be a good example, because it has given to women a great position in society. Islam has also insisted on women to put on veil, as a way to protect them from sin as far as possible. Customs and traditions also go with religion on the same path. Community never accepts mixture between modern and traditional suits.

## First draft (continued)

Because our parents, and grand parents prefer that the traditional suits keep their particularity. But unfortunately, recently some designers have kept on adding some changes in our traditional (Cafans), which have been returned <sup>S.P</sup> ~~less~~ and also have lost their beauty and rhythm.

<sup>For food and unity</sup> Thanks to new fashions and its vivid colors, life has become different and spicy as well. Furthermore, psychology had discovered that colors have an influence on human psychology. That is why a new sort of medicine has been used, ~~is able to~~ cure some psychological problems with the help of a small dose of <sup>useless</sup> medicines. New fashions have also added vitality in our busy life. They have broken (New fashions) monotony, especially in women's life, who always like to be renewed and smart.

Eventually, new fashions on one hand, have some negative aspects, which should be avoiding, because nowadays, clothes reflect our personalities, occupations, beliefs, and of course religion. In the other hand, new fashions have entered some positive changes particularly in our modern life, which characterize by stress. So new fashions have created some new designs which are practical and flexible for all people.

First draft.

## Peer Response Sheet

Read your peer's essay and transfer the sentences from each paragraph into the chart below to see if anything is missing.

Rate each paragraph by ticking the appropriate box:

- Very good  
 Good  
 Satisfactory  
 Poor

Explain your rating to your peer:  
 The author's choice is a satisfactory choice but we were a bit confused when we were asked to choose to choose a student

<p>Is there any transition?  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes   <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>Write the words, phrases or sentences in the box opposite: (Transition)</p>		<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Introduction</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> General statement(s)                  New fashioning have great influence on both sexes, men and women. They also make the people who are interested in fashion what they are. I will be interested in it.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Thesis statement                  The thesis statement is clear in introduction.</p> <p>Transition                  first</p>
<p>Is there any transition?  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes   <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>Write the words, phrases or sentences in the box opposite: (Transition)</p>		<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Paragraph 1</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Topic Sentence                  New fashioning is very nice.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Supporting Sentences                  This means we should not consume get what fashionists are. It is a very nice and simple.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Concluding Sentence                  P</p> <p>Transition                  second</p>
<p>Is there any transition?  <input type="checkbox"/> Yes   <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>Write the words, phrases or sentences in the box opposite: (Transition)</p>		<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Paragraph 2</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Topic Sentence                  In the 21st century some of the new fashion go against religion's</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Supporting Sentences                  fashioning is applied in many ways. It is a new fashion which is for the better in most of the things.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Concluding Sentence                  P</p> <p>Transition                  P</p>

Very good  
 Good  
 Satisfactory  
 Poor

Explain your rating to your peer:  
 The author's choice is a satisfactory choice but we were a bit confused when we were asked to choose to choose a student

Very good  
 Good  
 Satisfactory  
 Poor

Explain your rating to your peer:  
 The author's choice is a satisfactory choice but we were a bit confused when we were asked to choose to choose a student

Very good  
 Good  
 Satisfactory  
 Poor

Explain your rating to your peer:  
 The author's choice is a satisfactory choice but we were a bit confused when we were asked to choose to choose a student

Move on to the next page

Is there any transition?  
 Yes  No  
 Write the words, phrases or sentences in the box opposite: (Transition).

Is there any transition?  
 Yes  No  
 Write the words, phrases or sentences in the box opposite: (Transition).

**Paragraph 3**

Topic Sentence  
 New fresh ones and do it well... answer

Supporting Sentences  
 New fresh ones are added weekly on our busy life. Therefore be a keen student and smart.

Concluding Sentence  
 D

Very good  
 Good  
 Satisfactory  
 Poor

Explain your rating to your peer.  
 You need to write clearly you seem to have taken some points you're willing about psychology

**Paragraph 4**

Topic Sentence

Supporting Sentences

Concluding Sentence

Very good  
 Good  
 Satisfactory  
 Poor

Explain your rating to your peer.

Transition  
 For example, etc.

**Conclusion**

Concluding Sentence:  
 After finishing... on the other hand... by its own

summary of the main points

paraphrase of the thesis

Final Comments  
 The new fresh ones are added some may think it's not worth it but it's a good idea for all people

Very good  
 Good  
 Satisfactory  
 Poor

Explain your rating to your peer.  
 A fairly good attempt. Folio I am sure that you can do better.

Topic Sentence

Supporting Sentences

Concluding Sentence

## Second Draft

New fashions have great influence on both sexes, men and women. But that does not mean we are obliged to follow whatever fashion <sup>is</sup> created blindly. In other words, we should select from the new fashions what goes with <sup>the</sup> our environment where we live, <sup>as</sup> <sup>not</sup> to go beyond the common sense within society. Furthermore, we have <sup>to</sup> put on our consideration that there are some concepts which should be respected, such as religion, customs and traditions, etc. We should not give to our appearances an exaggerated importance <sup>as</sup> <sup>not</sup> to neglect other important things. In spite of all the previous negative aspects <sup>of</sup> but new fashion with their colors, variety, and beauty give to our lives a kind of vitality.

First, new fashions can be one of the modern life signs, but that does not allow us to follow these new fashions without any consideration <sup>of</sup> <sup>the</sup> <sup>prop</sup> <sup>environment</sup> surroundings where we live. For example, Russians cannot wear sandals or light clothing, simply because <sup>it</sup> <sup>is</sup> <sup>not</sup> fashionable. And <sup>as</sup> <sup>we</sup> <sup>know</sup>; <sup>Russian's</sup> <sup>wf</sup> weather <sup>is</sup> <sup>most</sup> <sup>of</sup> <sup>the</sup> <sup>time</sup> freezing, and it's absurd that nobody can endure this low temperature with light <sup>clothes</sup> or sandals. The designer in this case has one purpose, which is expressing both himself <sup>and</sup> <sup>his</sup> <sup>thoughts</sup> through out some bizarre <sup>designs</sup>. In addition to this, there are some fanatic people who say: "To be respectable <sup>with</sup> <sup>society</sup> you should be fashionable." But if we had taken this as a condition to behave with the others we <sup>would</sup> <sup>have</sup> <sup>neglected</sup> <sup>an</sup> <sup>important</sup> <sup>thing</sup>, which is people's health. And as the proverb says: "All that glitters is not gold." In other words, appearances are deceptive. All in all, clothes are made to protect people's bodies against cold <sup>and</sup> <sup>heat</sup> <sup>and</sup> <sup>warm</sup> <sup>no</sup> <sup>more</sup>. ①

Second, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century some of the new fashions go against religion's principles. However, fashions <sup>has</sup> <sup>exploited</sup> women as a merchandise, which is forbidden in most of religions. Islam can be a good example, because it has given to women a great position in society. Islam has also insisted on women to wear <sup>an</sup> <sup>veil</sup>, as to protect them from him as far as possible. Customs and traditions also go with religion on the same path. <sup>Community</sup> <sup>never</sup> <sup>accepts</sup> <sup>mixture</sup> <sup>between</sup> <sup>modern</sup> <sup>and</sup> <sup>traditional</sup> <sup>suits</sup>. <sup>Because</sup> <sup>our</sup> <sup>parents</sup> <sup>and</sup> <sup>grand</sup> <sup>parents</sup> <sup>prefer</sup> <sup>that</sup> <sup>the</sup> <sup>traditional</sup> <sup>suits</sup> <sup>keep</sup> <sup>their</sup> <sup>particularity</sup>. But <sup>unfortunately</sup>, recently some designers have kept on



## Second Draft (continued)

adding some changes <sup>sp</sup> in our traditional (Craftsmen), which have been <sup>turned</sup> returned <sup>sp</sup> patterns and also have lost their beauty and ornaments.

Third, thanks to new fashions and their vivid colors, life has become different and spicy. Furthermore, <sup>if</sup> psychology had discovered that colors have an influence on human <sup>psyche</sup> psychology. That is why a new <sup>3</sup> type of medicine has been used, so as to solve some psychological problems with the help of a small dose of medicines. [New fashions have also added <sup>4</sup> vitality in our busy life.] They - New fashions - have broken monotony, especially in women's life, who always like to be renewed. It is clear that new fashions have a positive role in our lives.

Eventually, new fashions, <sup>sp</sup> on one hand, have some negative aspects, which should be avoided, because <sup>p</sup> nowadays, <sup>p</sup> our way of dressing reflects our personalities. So we should give a good impression about ourselves. <sup>sp</sup> On the other hand, new fashions have <sup>brought</sup> entered some positive changes particularly in our stressful lives. So, new fashions have created some designs which <sup>are</sup> characterized by <sup>p</sup> flexibility, which <sup>are</sup> make people totally comfortable.

### Third Draft

New fashions have great influence on both sexes, men and women. But that does not mean we are obliged to follow whatever fashion creates blindly. In other words, we should select from the new fashions what goes with the environment where we live, and as not to go beyond the common sense within society. Furthermore, we have to take into our consideration that there are some concepts which should be respected, such as religion, customs and traditions, etc. In spite of all the previous negative aspects, new fashions with their colors, variety, and beauty give to our lives a kind of vitality and flexibility to our modern life, which characterize by its dynamism.

First, new fashions can be one of the modern life signs, but we should not give to our appearances an exaggerated importance by following insignificant designs, which do not suite the environment where we live. For instance, Russians cannot wear sandals or light clothing, simply because they are fashionable. And as it is known that Russian weather is most of the time freezing, and it is obvious that nobody can endure this low temperature with light clothes or sandals. The designer in this case has <sup>one</sup> purpose, which is expressing both himself/herself and his/her thoughts throughout some bizarre designs, for examples, there are some clothes made of feathers, or transparent cloth, and most of time accompany with strong color of make-up. In brief, as consumers we should be aware of our way of dressing, because it reflects our personalities.

Second, there are some fanatic people who say: "To be respectable within society you should be fashionable." But, if we take this as a condition to behave with the others we will neglect an important thing, which is people's hearts. And as the proverb says: "All that glitters is not gold." In other words, appearances are deceptive. All in all, clothes are made to protect people's bodies against cold and heat.

Third, in the 21 century some of the new fashions go against religion's principals. However, fashions have exploited women as a merchandise, which is forbidden in most religions. Islam can be a good example, because it has given to women a great position in society. In Islam as also insisted on women to wear a veil as to protect them from

### Third Draft (continued)

him as far as possible. Customs and traditions have emerged with religion on the same path. In other words, our traditional suits prove that elegance is one of the main characteristics. The Islamic community never accepts mixture between modern and traditional suits, because our parents and grand parents prefer that the traditional suits keep their particularity. But unfortunately, recently some designers have kept on adding some changes to our traditional Caftans, which have been turned into blouses and also have lost their beauty and elegance.

Fourth, thanks to new fashions and their vivid colors, life has become different and spicy. Furthermore, new fashions have added vitality to our busy life, which is characterized by its monotony and stress. The different designers give us consumers the opportunity to choose what is the most suitable to their personalities, occupations, customs, religion. New fashions have also broken monotony, especially women's lives, who always love change. Indeed, it is clear that new fashions have a positive role in our lives.

Eventually, new fashions may have negative aspects, such as exploiting women as a merchandise, flamboyant designers, which go against religion, but they have created some designs which are characterized by flexibility, which makes people totally comfortable.



Jacobs et al. (1981) ESL Composition Profile

ESL COMPOSITION PROFILE			
STUDENT	DATE	TOPIC	
	SCORE	LEVEL	CRITERIA
CONTENT	30-27		EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD: knowledgeable • substantive • thorough development of thesis • relevant to assigned topic
	26-22		GOOD TO AVERAGE: some knowledge of subject • adequate range • limited development of thesis • mostly relevant to topic, but lacks detail
	21-17		FAIR TO POOR: limited knowledge of subject • little substance • inadequate development of topic
	16-13		VERY POOR: does not show knowledge of subject • non-substantive • not pertinent • OR not enough to evaluate
ORGANIZATION	20-18		EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD: fluent expression • ideas clearly stated/ supported • succinct • well-organized • logical sequencing • cohesive
	17-14		GOOD TO AVERAGE: somewhat choppy • loosely organized but main ideas stand out • limited support • logical but incomplete sequencing
	13-10		FAIR TO POOR: non-fluent • ideas confused or disconnected • lacks logical sequencing and development
	9-7		VERY POOR: does not communicate • no organization • OR not enough to evaluate
VOCABULARY	20-18		EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD: sophisticated range • effective word/idiom choice and usage • word form mastery • appropriate register
	17-14		GOOD TO AVERAGE: adequate range • occasional errors of word/idiom form, choice, usage <i>but meaning not obscured</i>
	13-10		FAIR TO POOR: limited range • frequent errors of word/idiom form, choice, usage • <i>meaning confused or obscured</i>
	9-7		VERY POOR: essentially translation • little knowledge of English vocabulary, idioms, word form • OR not enough to evaluate
LANGUAGE USE	25-22		EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD: effective complex constructions • few errors of agreement, tense, number, word order/function, articles, pronouns, prepositions
	21-18		GOOD TO AVERAGE: effective but simple constructions • minor problems in complex constructions • several errors of agreement, tense, number, word order/function, articles, pronouns, prepositions <i>but meaning seldom obscured</i>
	17-11		FAIR TO POOR: major problems in simple/complex constructions • frequent errors of negation, agreement, tense, number, word order/function, articles, pronouns, prepositions and/or fragments, run-ons, deletions • <i>meaning confused or obscured</i>
	10-5		VERY POOR: virtually no mastery of sentence construction rules • dominated by errors • does not communicate • OR not enough to evaluate
MECHANICS	5		EXCELLENT TO VERY GOOD: demonstrates mastery of conventions • few errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing
	4		GOOD TO AVERAGE: occasional errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing <i>but meaning not obscured</i>
	3		FAIR TO POOR: frequent errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing • poor handwriting • <i>meaning confused or obscured</i>
	2		VERY POOR: no mastery of conventions • dominated by errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing • handwriting illegible • OR not enough to evaluate
TOTAL SCORE	READER	COMMENTS	

## Appendix 4-14

### A Sample of a student's scores

	Assignment 1			Assignment 2			Assignment 3			Assignment 4		
Scorer T	D 1	D2	D3	D 1	D2	D3	D 1	D2	D3	D 1	D2	D3
Content	2	2	2.5	2	2	2.5	3	3.5	3.5	4	4	4
Organization	2	2	2.5	2	2	2.5	3	3.5	3.5	4	4	4.5
Accuracy	2.5	2.5	3	2	2	2.5	2.5	3	3.5	3.5	3.5	4
Style	2.5	2.5	3	2	2	2.5	3	3.5	3.5	4	4	4.5
Vocabulary	2.5	2.5	3	2	2	2.5	3.5	3.5	4	4.5	4.5	4.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>11.5</b>	<b>11.5</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>12.5</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21.5</b>
<b>Scorer A</b>												
Content	2	2	2.5	2	2	2.5	3	3	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5
Organization	2	2	3	2	2	3	3	3.5	3.5	4	4	4.5
Accuracy	2	2	3	2	2	3	2	2.5	3	3.5	3.5	4
Style	2	2	3	2.5	2.5	3	3	3	3.5	3.5	3.5	4
Vocabulary	2.5	2.5	3	2.5	2.5	3	3	3	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>10.5</b>	<b>10.5</b>	<b>14.5</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>14.5</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19.5</b>
<b>Scorer M</b>												
Content	2.5	2.5	3	2.5	2.5	3	3	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5
Organization	2.5	2.5	3	2.5	2.5	3	2.5	3	3	3.5	3.5	4
Accuracy	2	2	3	2	2	2.5	2.5	3	3.5	3.5	3.5	4
Style	2	2	3	2	2	2.5	3	3.5	4	4	4	4.5
Vocabulary	2	2	3	2	2	2.5	3	3	3.5	4	4	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>13.5</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17.5</b>	<b>18.5</b>	<b>18.5</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Scorer T</b>	<b>11.5</b>	<b>11.5</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>12.5</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21.5</b>
<b>Scorer A</b>	<b>10.5</b>	<b>10.5</b>	<b>14.5</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>14.5</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19.5</b>
<b>Scorer M</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>13.5</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17.5</b>	<b>18.5</b>	<b>18.5</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Mean</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>14.5</b>	<b>10.6</b>	<b>10.6</b>	<b>13.5</b>	<b>14.3</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17.5</b>	<b>18.8</b>	<b>18.8</b>	<b>20.3</b>

## Appendix 5-1

### A Sample of Diagnostic Writing

Because we are students and especially ~~we~~ we are studying English, so it's necessary to write in English, but how often we write in English? and why.

Concerning me, I often do this, in writing essays in English class particularly in lycee, since we haven't began writing in the university yet, and I also write in English, when I was so happy, or so sad, which makes me feel freedom, and I find myself in this case as well.

But when I write in English I face many difficulties especially the problems of vocabulary, and also the lack of information about the topic, without forgetting the spelling ones, but I think it's normal because we are ~~foreign~~ foreign English learners, but to say this don't give me the law to break the rules of English and make error, but this makes me work hard as more as I can, to get rid of my writing problems, so that I'm trying to read more and to improve my spelling by looking up in the dictionary to make sure of its meaning, and <sup>the word</sup>

How can I write it

Finally I hope to be excellent in writing English and also ~~to~~ get good marks

## Appendix 5-2

### List of Topics

#### Topic 1

An eminent scholar in Morocco has said that he would not vote for a woman to become a member of parliament (MP) because women are not fit for executive positions. Do you agree or disagree with this statement. Write an argumentative paragraph in which you show your position and anticipate a counter argument.

#### Topic 2

Some people argue that technology has not liberated Man, but has enslaved him. Write a paragraph in which you argue either for or against technology. Remember, some people may have a different opinion to yours, try to anticipate their counter-argument(s).

#### Topic 3

"New fashions in clothing are created solely for the commercial exploitation of women." Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Write an essay in which you develop your arguments and anticipate the reader's counter-argument(s).

#### Topic 4

Some education specialists argue that university lecturers should be evaluated by their own students rather than by their colleagues. Do you agree or disagree with this idea? Write an essay in which you clarify your position and anticipate the reader's counter-argument(s).