Graduate School of Education

Towards more effective EFL writing revision strategies: Omani Basic and Post Basic students' perceptions, practices and encountered challenges

**Submitted by**

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# Abstract

Research on the writing process over the last four decades suggests that revision as a sub process in writing is crucial because it contributes to the development of learning to write in general, and compensates for the discrepancy between the writer's intended writing and the text already written with regard to the intended reader. Although much is known about the usefulness of revision, and the distinct difference between expert and unskilled writers in the English language, little is known about secondary and high school students' perspectives and practices of revision in EFL school writing. Whilst a reform of Basic Education in Oman has advocated for learner-centered learning and the implementation of a process approach in the teaching of writing, research in the Omani context has revealed that it was not fruitful try to develop the students' writing skills nor the process of revising their work. Instead, textual issues continue to be a problem in various areas, for example difficulties in writing coherent, concise, and well-reasoned texts. Research also revealed that high school students rarely reflected on their awareness of the encountered challenges in writing revision compared to first year tertiary students. Whilst there is a necessity to understand Basic and Post Basic students' perceptions and practices with respect to revision in EFL writing to better support students in developing their revision skills, studies in this area tend to be sparse. Hence, this study aims to address this gap. It attempts to develop an understanding of how Omani Basic and Post Basic student writers perceive the purpose of revision, understand the revision process, understand the success criteria for revision, and address the challenges that are encountered during revision. It also aims to comprehend the nature of progress in students' writing revision by contrasting any differences in practices between Basic and Post Basic Education which are two different phases in the Omani educational system.

Working with four classes of students (two Basic level; and two Post Basic level), the study used a two-phase design. Through focus group interviews, the first phase investigated students' opinions of writing revision. With a sub-sample of students in each class, a detailed investigation of students'

perceptions of writing revision processes was conducted in the second phase. This included observing students revising their writing in class, conducting semi-structured interviews with each student, and collecting their drafts and final revisions.

While one of the limitations of this study is that the findings are suggestive, the analysis of Basic and Post Basic EFL student writers' comments and reflection on their own writing revision efforts provides useful insights into how individuals conceptualize the revision process, and how they focus their thoughts, while handling writing challenges. Students' reflection on their practice as well as their actual practice suggests that they perceive writing revision at a local level where they revise at word and sentence levels with a tendency towards technical accuracy, such as grammar, spelling or punctuation. Students also perceive the writing process as a linear process, and they evaluate their success and set parameters based on external factors such as their reader examiner. They also encountered some linguistic challenges and most importantly psychological and motivational challenges. While theoretical models stipulate that the quality of revision skills depends on students' language ability, the research results on Post Basic students' revision performance were insignificant. In fact, different instructional, social and cultural factors seem to account for a better performance rather than the cognitive and metacognitive strategies that students may use. These findings will hopefully provide policy makers with more guidance in their endeavour to design more relevant curricula, addressing more comprehensive criteria, in order to develop the students' writing skills with particular reference to the process of revising throughout the activity of writing.

# Acknowledgments

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# Abbreviations and Acronyms

**BE**      **Basic Education**

**EFL**    **English as a Foreign language**

**ESL**    **English as a Second language**

**EFM**   **English For Me: Basic Education course book**

**EWT**   **Engage With English: Post Basic Education course book**

**L1**      **First language**

**L2**      **Second language**

**GE**      **General Education**

**SET**    **Senior English Teacher**

**TESOL**   **Teaching English to Speakers of Other Language**

**FG**        **Focus Groups**

# CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

## 1.1. Introduction

This chapter introduces the thesis and provides a synopsis of what will be covered in the subsequent chapters. It explains the nature of the research problem, the rationale for the investigation and the significance of the study, and outlines the research aims and questions. It also outlines the thesis and illuminates the way it is structured.

## 1.2. Study problem

Learning to write is a long and complicated journey which requires abundant skills, strategies, and a deep cognitive, as well as metacognitive, knowledge. Writing incorporates range of different complex procedures such as revision. Research on the activity of writing has revealed that revision, although considered as a sub-process in the writing course, seems to play a crucial and pivotal role in elaborating the writing process in general and in compensating for the peculiarity between the intended writing and the text already written with consideration of the expected reader (Porte, 1996; Sommers, 1980; Victori, 1999; Zamel, 1982). The discrepancies in revision competences between novice and skilled writers have been exposed. Whilst the efficiency of revision towards better writing is quite obvious especially among talented and unskilled L1 writers, less evidence is identified with regards to secondary and high school students' perceptions and revision practices in EFL school writing.  In Oman, due to the application of the process approach to writing pedagogy, students are expected to employ complicated strategies based on their conceptualization about the revision process. Nevertheless, supervisors, teachers, society and stakeholders claim that Basic and Post-Basic students have not demonstrated any progress  in EFL writing- they have not been successful with revision practices, even though they were asked to rewrite a second or a third draft. Al Seyabi and Tuzlukova (2014) revealed that this failure would result in engendering poor writing skills when students join tertiary level. Al Seyabi and Tuzlukova (2014) add that although instructors at higher

education institutes expect that students would acquire a prospective advanced ability compared to their writing competencies at their earlier school levels -in other words instructors assume that students' prospects about writing coherent, concise and well -reasoned essays- have not been apprehended (p.38). Paradoxically, students have not shown any improvement in writing. Unfortunately, textual problems continue insistently to be even worse. This failure might be associated either with the inadequate teaching methods that have not provided enough room for students to advance a thoughtful and critical practice on their writing (Emig, 1971; Sommers, 1980; Yagelski, 1995) or to students' lack of the essential resources-metacognitive and cognitive to become effective revisers (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1986; Flower & Hayes, 1981; Kellogg, 2008). This failure also seems ostensible in contexts where English is the native language as in the United States. Beach and Friedrich (2006), have discovered that US secondary school students of various levels do not have sufficient room to revise in an expansive, consistent or in a detailed manner (substantive revision).

Murray (1978a) proposed that "writing is rewriting". Murray highlighted the concept of functional revision as more than a simple proofreading activity. To better comprehend this interpretation, it is necessary to delineate the ambiguity between proofreading and substantive revision. According to Elbow (1998), Emig (1977) , Faigley and Witte (1981), and Sperling and Freedman (2001), proofreading formally analyzes the obvious linguistic features of the language such as grammar, spelling or punctuation. In contrast to proofreading, they clarify that the construction of meaning is mainly based upon substantive revision.

Research has identified a big gap between the awareness about the writing process in general, and revision practices in particular especially among high school students and tertiary level students. Understanding the students' perspectives about revision is of high importance, though it remains sparse. Correspondingly, the current study attempts to scrutinize this gap.

Al Seyabi and Tuzlukova's (2014) survey confirmed that a gap emerged between students at Post-Basic and those at tertiary level with regard to issues pertaining to the writing process such as choosing the precise lexical items and pertinent knowledge to articulate their ideas, constructing sentences, achieving a coherent organization of ideas, and availing appropriate decision making skills while processing texts. Burns (2013) explained that the extensiveness and depth addressed in the English language skills at Basic-C2 and Post Basic (secondary and high school) for students in Oman seemed unsatisfactory for tertiary level instruction in English. Barkaoui (2016) asserted that revision, despite being essential, appears to play a limited role in developing ESL novice writers' writing.

As a response, English Language Curriculum Development Department in Oman initiated a reform called 'Basic Education, English For Me', applying a learner-centred approach that underscores the process approach in the teaching of writing. This was meant to assist students in manipulating effective strategies during the various sub-processes of writing such as taking notes, planning, drafting, redrafting and revising (Ministry of Education, 2015). In fact, this endeavour has never led to tangible progress, as textual issues still persist, for example, this has been made evident through the students' poor achievement in writing a coherent text (Al Seyabi & Tuzlukova, 2014) . Therefore, no development has been recorded either in the students' revision practices in particular, or in their writing skill as a whole. Hence the emergent need for a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the students' requirements in order to achieve an acceptable level in revision practices. Interestingly, the scarcity of studies related to students' perception and practices about writing revision in Oman makes this endeavor even more challenging. Correspondingly, while L2 experience involves, among other aspects, editing for errors and accuracy, a legitimate question that still needs to be addressed is whether L2 writers will be able to carry out the revision task successfully when they are instructed to do so. Alternatively, could pedagogy also provide enough support to address grammar, lexis, and the other language features like punctuation and discourse? The current study

aims to address this divergence, and attempts to figure out the students' perception and practices with regards to revision with optimistic expectations for possible improvement on these practices.

## 1.3. Rationale for the study

My motive for undertaking this study emanates from my son's difficulties in writing in English. My son, a Grade 8 student, was requested by his teacher to rewrite his text. However, he was struggling to finalize his first draft. I realized, as a parent, that my son necessitated some kind of support to assist with his writing, especially in understanding the matter of the potential writing review process. Thus, this encouraged me to make some investigations into his real needs on how to improve his writing skills. I debated this issue with my colleagues; Educational Supervisors of English and the school teachers as well. We scrutinised the syllabus and we conversed on the subjects of teaching, curriculum, assessment, and teacher education. We concluded with some concern that students are unwilling to write in class and this is a real issue that is worth investigating. Notably, students seem to have an over prominence on correctness and focus on their own writing intentions. They seem to misinterpret revision as primarily reforming texts for grading rather than reproducing them in a more effective form. Inopportunely, most if not all modifications which aim to develop students' writing are top down and seem to neglect students' perspectives. It is vital to contemplate students' voices if we intend to comprehend the actual progress and the writing pedagogy they are exposed to. For Cottrell (2019), learners seem to be able to reflect on their own learning in the various learning sides; such as on how they observe facets of erudition, whether they are interested in learning something and how they feel about it, their proficiencies in adopting strategic selections that best report the request of certain tasks, also their understanding of shortfalls in their knowledge and skills. Accordingly, it would be a revolutionary idea to make use of students' viewpoint to support them to better revise and write. Bearing this in mind, I found it significant to investigate these areas of concern by exploring students' perceptions and practises in revising their EFL writing.

## 1.4. Significance of the study

According to Porte (1997), the majority of L2 studies (see for example, Porte, 1996; Porte, 1997; Sommers, 1980; Victori, 1999) focused on contrasting skilled and unskilled writers. They suggest that revision perspectives appeared to be responsible for a significant portion of the heterogeneity in their written work. This indicates that understanding the student writers' respective approach in revising their writing is of great significance, if we want to attempt to assist their writing development.

Given that, there is a scarcity in researching EFL student writers' perspectives in regards to writing in general and particularly to revision, as most of these studies targeted participants at tertiary level (Porte, 1996). Furthermore, recent studies continue to place a great emphasis on tertiary level student writers. Sangeetha (2020) conducted a study in Bahrain, targeting tertiary level and investigated the effects of intervention on students' revision skills, rather than exploring their own understanding of the revision process. This study focuses on investigating how self-editing during the revision process might help students improve their writing skills. It seems that EFL research on adolescent writers' perspectives is sparse. Along with that, the development of intermediate stages of writing, on the other hand, are not well defined, and our knowledge of the construct and potential of adolescent revision seems to be imprecise (Alamargot & Chanquoy, 2001b). According to Andrews and Smith (2011), adolescent writing development is particularly difficult, with little apparent improvement in written products throughout the teen years, as well as a lack of clarity concerning developmental markers.

Given the scarcity of information on adolescent writers' perspectives and revising process, further study is needed to uncover what adolescents understand about revising EFL school writing, and the way such understanding is manifested in their actual practice. In Oman, there were some studies (see for example, Al Abri, 2006; Al Seyabi & Tuzlukova, 2014) that investigated the writing difficulties

secondary and high school students encountered. However, these studies focused on the writing strategies and/or the difficulties that student writers' encountered, neglecting students' perspectives or the reasons behind their behaviours. These studies also quantified the strategies used by EFL student writers rather than exploring their perceptions of the process of writing, particularly in revision. So far, there is no evidence of how Omani Basic and Post Basic student writers perceive themselves as writers in terms of revision. As a result, there is a necessity to comprehend the nature of students' revision conceptualizations in EFL writing, as well as the way conceptions are performed in their actual practice. Hence, this study is notable because, to my knowledge, it is the first to investigate the perceptions and behaviours of Basic and Post Basic student writers towards revision in EFL writing, as well as an endeavour to define the critical aspects that influence the students' opinions on the subject.

This study uses theoretical frameworks such as the cognitive psychology and writing as a socio-cultural process which both address student writers' viewpoints on revision. It will hopefully help raise awareness about the importance of students' perspectives in the development process and expectantly create an account for future research in this arena, which will inform  stakeholders' decision making in their endeavour to improve on the students' writing skills in general, and on their ability to revise in particular.

## 1.5. Research aims and Research questions

The current study endeavours to examine the way Basic (Grade 9) and Post Basic (Grade 12) Omani students writers conceive revision in EFL school writing and the way that success purpose and procedure, success criteria, and encountered challenges are reflected through practice. The study attempts, as well, to determine a definition of what might constitute a notable development in students' writing with respect to revision. Overall, this study is oriented by the following research questions:

1. How do Basic and Post Basic Omani students perceive and define the purpose of revision in EFL school writing?

2. How do Basic and Post Basic Omani students understand the process of revision in EFL writing and what steps do they usually follow?

3. What is the Basic and Post Basic Omani students' understanding of success criteria for EFL writing revision?

4. What challenges do Basic and Post Basic Omani students face during the revision of their EFL writing?

5. How do Omani students develop their EFL writing revision practices from Basic Education to Post Basic Education?

## 1.6. Structure of the thesis

There are eight chapters in the current thesis. Following this introductory chapter, the second chapter provides some background information on the educational situation in the Sultanate of Oman, where this research was conducted. It includes accounts of important changes in the educational system, a brief description of Basic Education (BE) reform, the importance of English in Oman, and the way the new education reform aligns with this concern. The chapter concludes with the teaching of writing in an Omani EFL environment, as well as the new paradigm that methodology and assessment have adopted in response to Basic Education reform.

In the third chapter, a survey of relevant literature is presented in an attempt to offer a conceptual and theoretical framework for the investigation detailed in this thesis. The review focuses on theories and research about revision in EFL writing. To better understand revision in writing, the chapter opens with a comprehensive account on how writing is developed. It then presents how revision is conceptualized; how theories and models graphically represent the process of revision in writing. It also discusses the notion of effective revision and the factors affecting such an effective practice. The

review also highlights any tension between L1 and L2 writing and illuminates the significance of listening to students' perspectives with regards to revision. It also reports the available studies in English as second language writing revision processes and attempts to identify the sizeable gap.

The current study's research approach is outlined in chapter four. It deals with philosophical assumptions as well as research paradigms. It then presents the research methodology, including the way data are collected and analyzed. It then discusses ethical issues, research quality and the research design's strengths and limitations.

The findings of this investigation are presented in chapters 5 and 6. Thematic analyses of both focus groups and semi-structured post-hoc interviews are used in chapter 5 to gain a better understanding of how participants think about revision in EFL writing. The findings from the second part of the study analysis are presented in chapter 6. To get insights into student writers' revision practices (such as developing sentence accuracy, finding a better choice of words, and /or altering the content), the study of classroom observations and text analysis were carried out utilizing analytical framework categories. It also compares and contrasts the development between Basic and Post Basic levels. Tables indicating frequency and examples of student writers' revisions are shown in this chapter.

Chapter seven discusses the main findings of this study in light of the reviewed literature, the study setting, as well as being guided by both cognitive and socio-cultural theories informed by the research questions. Finally, chapter eight concludes the thesis with a summary of the main findings, implications to theory, practice, teacher education, and future research. It ends with an account of reflections on my PhD journey.

# CHAPTER TWO: BACKGROUND TO RESEARCH CONTEXT

## 2.1. Introduction

For a better interpretation of the research, this chapter provides background information about the context of the study. The first section provides an overview of the Omani educational system. This account is crucial to figure out the changes that have occurred in the evolution of such an educational system, highlighting its efforts to promote a viable quality educational experience for the new Omani generation. The second section sheds light on the reform of Basic Education in Oman; its aims, the major changes and the actual implications of such a reform. The chapter then elucidates the significance of learning English in Oman and how the curricula align with such significance. Subsequently, the chapter depicts English writing in the new reform of the curriculum. Finally, the chapter discusses the constraints that the EFL learners in Oman might encounter as well as a summary of the main points covered in this chapter.

## 2.2. Oman's Educational system: An overview

His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Saeed became the monarch of Oman in 1970, and within his smart political environment, a great development in all dimensions and areas of life, particularly in education, began. The original schooling system consisted of six years of elementary education, three years of preparatory education, and three years of secondary education. The Omani government offered a vision dubbed 2020 in 1998, during which time the educational system would be altered. The present schooling structure, which began in 1998, is depicted in Figure 2.1.

| GRADE | AGE | Level of Education |
|---|---|---|
|  | 18+ | Tertiary Education |
| 12 | 17 | Post Basic Education |
| 11 | 16 | |
| 10 | 15 | Basic Cycle Two |
| 9 | 14 | |
| 8 | 13 | |
| 7 | 12 | |
| 6 | 11 | |
| 5 | 10 | |
| 4 | 9 | Basic Cycle One |
| 3 | 8 | |
| 2 | 7 | |
| 1 | 6 | |
| KG 2 | 5 | Pre-School - (Private) |
| KG 1 | 4 | |

*Figure 2.1. The structure of the Educational System in Oman*

Correspondingly, Basic Cycle One (C1) schools run from Grade 1 to Grade 4, with mixed gender classes and exclusively female teachers teaching the youngsters. Basic Cycle Two (C2) runs from Grade 5 through Grade 10 (Lower Secondary School), and students are streamed into gender-wise schools. The next four levels are two-year Post Basic schools that prepare students for higher education; schools are divided again by gender in Grades 11and 12 where students must take mandatory subjects and can pick from a list of subjects at this level. Notably, English is taught from Grade 1 to Grade 12, and some fortunate pupils can attend private pre-school KG1 and KG2 where they learn Arabic and English in these bilingual schools.

## 2.3. Basic Education (BE) in Oman

With reference to the massive transformation in all aspects and spheres of life, particularly in education, as discussed above, the Ministry of Education in Oman has moved from focusing on enhancing the quantity as far as possible throughout Oman into concentrating on the quality of Education (Issan, 2011). This decision was informed by studies, see for example Al Barwani as

referred to in Issan (2011). Al Barwani's research identifies several flaws in the education system. For example, teaching methods did not appear to meet the needs of the learners. The educational system also did not appear to abide by contemporary improvement in the field of educational technology, and the country's emphasis was on expanding the number of schools rather than improving on learning quality. Al Barwani's study also sheds light on the assessment system as it was centering on memorization of facts and information. With regards to English language learning, Al Barwani points out that English language abilities did not appear to be well-developed. Furthermore, teacher education programs appeared insufficient to properly equip teachers with relevant training that would assist with better teaching and learning. Another possible justification for the Basic Education reform according to Al-Hammami (1999), is a response to demands and needs implied by international recommendations, as well as to national demand. These national demands, according to Al-Lamki (2009), urged the start of education reform. The demands can be better explained by Oman having experienced major changes in various aspects of life during the 1990's, for example, technology (computers, mobile phones and televisions) influenced the way people live and think, and people became more educated and aware of the type of education they wanted for their children (Al-Lamki, 2009).

Basic Education as system was implemented during the academic year 1998/1999. Education goals, curricula, teaching methodologies, administrative structures, monitoring and student performance were various facets that the reform addressed. To facilitate students' learning, Al-Issa and Al-Bulushi (2012) report that schools are currently provided with computers, laboratories and other cutting edge technology. The Basic Education reform, according to (Education, 2002a), intends to provide learners with a consistent ten year education to meet their basic education needs. These requirements include the knowledge, abilities, attitudes, and values that will enable students to continue their education depending on their aptitudes and dispositions (ELCS, 2010). It also aims to prepare learners to tackle

the problems of their existing situation and future developments, as well as contribute to overall societal development.

There are some key features of the Basic Education reform in terms of curricula, teacher education, and assessment. With regards to the development of the curriculum, textbooks and materials, Basic Education is learner-centered, assuming that students will be active learners who would be able to develop and build their learning from prior knowledge, attitudes and experiences (MOE, 2004). Hence, it is centered on practical and real life situations and application, and allows students to engage in experiential learning rather than being overburdened with theory and abstract notions, and not confined to textbook knowledge (Education, 2004b). Teacher education programs were also restructured, according to the MOE ( 2001), to better facilitate students employing learning strategies that focused on building independent and cooperative learning along with problem solving, exploratory abilities and/or problem solving skills. In terms of assessment, the reform avoids relying solely on examinations as the primary tool for assessing students' academic achievement. Instead it opted towards introducing formative assessment, which includes observation, portfolios, projects and self-assessment (MOE, 2001).

Furthermore, students move on to Post Basic Education (Grade 11 and 12), after finishing grade 10 Basic Education. Here students choose to focus on either a science stream or arts stream. Hence, they choose subjects from a given list that suit them in addition to obligatory subjects like English. At the end of the Grade 12 Post Basic academic year, students take National Exams that are worth 70% of their marks while 30% is for continuous assessment, which determine where they will continue their studies at the tertiary level.

Having covered a comprehensive background of the Basic Education reform, the next section sheds light on the status of teaching and learning English in Oman.

## 2.4. EFL learning in Oman

The significance of English in Oman, according to Al Seyabi and Tuzlukova (2014), may be seen in areas like the national economy's globalization, modernization, and internalization. As a result, English is the medium of teaching for the majority of tertiary subjects. Donn and Issan (2007), illustrate that language policies in Oman, as in many other countries, take into account the demands of globalization and its strain on human resources development, which require mastery of English as a method of communication between countries. According to Al-Jadidi (2009), English enables people from varied linguistic backgrounds to communicate and interact successfully in the workplace and across countries. For Al-Lamki (2009), the Basic Education reform deems English to be crucial to Oman's prosperity in the twenty first century. He adds that it has long been known that the Sultanate of Oman faces a difficult task in preparing students for life and work in the modern global economy. Furthermore, to deal with fast changing technologies and expanding worldwide business prospects, this situation necessitates a high degree of agility and good English language background (Al-Lamki, 2009). According to Al-Hammami (1999), it is therefore the Basic Reform that makes English a compulsory school subject beginning in Grade 1 with students aged 5-6 years learning it throughout the remainder of their official schooling, thereby increasing the total number of hours of English language teaching to 1200 hours.

To match the goals of the new system, the English syllabi and teaching methods in Basic and Post Basic education have been revised. First, since the ultimate goal of English language education and learning is to enable students to use language communicatively, the communicative approaches have been widely accepted, hence, in attempting to provide students with enough exposure to comprehensive language input, students attend 5-7 English classes per week, each class lasting 40 minutes (Education, 2002b).

Second, EFM (English For Me) was designed for Basic Education level Grades 1 to 10 and EWE (Engage With English) for Post Basic (Grades 11-12). According to Education (2002b), these textbooks were designed to match the new reform project and based on the needs, abilities, and interests in each grade. In addition to textbooks, teachers are provided with all the materials and resources they need to teach the curriculum, including listening CDs, Resource packs and Teacher's manuals (ELCS, 2010). According to ELCS (2010), schools are provided with a Language Resource Centre that houses materials like computers, videos, cassette players and a variety of English books and stories to facilitate students learning English.

Third, according to MOE (2012), in addition to exams, the reform employs a variety of assessment tools. This involves portfolios, classroom observation, and classwork. Also included are project work, quizzes, classwork, presentations, generic tasks, offering feedback to learners and self-evaluation.

The last point to be discussed is about teacher education programs. As the BE system was created to provide students with opportunities to learn through a range of teaching and learning methods, teacher education programs were reconfigured to meet these needs (MOE, 2014b). Hence, according to the MOE (2014b), the in-service English teacher educational programs have placed greater emphasis on the use of teaching tactics that better help students develop their abilities and attitudes for example independent and cooperative learning, critical thinking, problem solving, research and investigating techniques, as well as creativity. Through such educational programs, teachers are supposed to assist students in developing their abilities and methods by assisting them in working individually, in small groups, and as a full class. Such training assumed to foster students in using problem solving strategies, using available resources, and cooperating with others to better learn and make optimum use of support during the learning process. The Ministry of Education decided to offer a three-year Bachelor degree in TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) for Omani English teachers who had a Diploma. Run by the University of Leeds, the program was designed to support

and assist the Omani English teachers in improving their teaching skills, focusing in areas such as best classroom practices and teaching methods for better implementation of the Basic Education Reform program.

Correspondingly, the English Curriculum Framework,(ELC, 2010, p.3), highlights the characteristics of BE reforms with particular reference to English teaching. These features replicate the following points:

- The school programme should be expected to produce a higher level of achievement.

- Recognition of learner centred methodology.

- In general, transmission-oriented techniques of instruction are not often acceptable.

- Less emphasis on the language product as a result of each instruction.

- More emphasis on the significance of English in advancing global knowledge and continuous technological economic progress.

However, the implementation of this Basic Education vision appears to have encountered some difficulties, so the question to ask is what are the challenges that face EFL learners which might affect their benefits of Basic Education reform in developing their abilities in English?

## 2.5. Challenges facing EFL learners in Oman

There are some challenges that EFL Omani learners might encounter in learning English. Among these is being less exposed to the English language. Al-Jardani (2012) notes that outside the classroom, most Omani students are rarely exposed to English. Exclusively, a small percentage of Omani children have the opportunity to practice English in and outside the home, and such cases are likely to be found only in large cities like Muscat. Some children may be exposed to English via television, the World Wide Web and/or social media, although this is quite limited. For Al-Jardani (2012), such insufficient exposure to English may pose challenges for teachers attempting to apply

the Basic Education syllabi, as they will need to give interactive chances for students to utilize the language in their classrooms in an engaging and entertaining manner.

Another challenge might be the contextual factors. For example, large class sizes, or the relatively short periods of time spent learning in class. The former refers to the situation where sometimes there are 30 students in a classroom. Copland, Garton, and Burns (2014) claim that large class sizes would impede the implementation of communicative approaches to teaching the language. This means that students in such large classes would not be able to work in groups or interact with each other's, meanwhile the class teacher might not be able to afford ample opportunities for students to practice the language due to the large numbers of students in class. The latter factor refers to the language input that students get in the classroom. Students in Oman attend five 40 minute classes per a week, giving them a relatively limited opportunity to get intelligible input from the teachers who focus on meaning through interaction (Kabooha, 2018). This would add an extra challenging factor combined with the aforementioned factor of having few opportunities to be exposed to the English language outside the classroom.

Furthermore, according to studies conducted in Oman (see for example, Al- Mahrooqi, 2012), teachers and textbooks were the primary causes of pupils' inadequate English proficiency. Al-Mahrooqi (2012)  used a questionnaire and a focus group to investigate what students at an Omani University believed were the causes of their low English proficiency level. Students stated a variety of reasons, including lack of motivation, teachers neglecting weak students, teachers not speaking in English with students outside the classroom, and dull teaching methods. Approximately 85% of students believed that their teachers were the main cause of their poor level of competence. According to Al Rasbiah (2006), teacher education programs in Oman appeared insufficient to address the instructors' needs as well as paying little attention to the issues teachers experience when teaching English as a foreign language. This might be attributed to the implementation of theoretical

approaches to educate teachers. For example, one of the issues of using communicative approaches in EFL, according to Copland et al. (2014), is that teachers may only receive theoretical training and hence struggle to use these approaches effectively in the EFL classroom. As a result, teacher education programs should be developed in response to teacher requirements and based on the challenges they confront in applying these approaches in Omani EFL classrooms.

Another significant culprit, according to over 80% of the students who participated, is the curriculum (AL Mahrooqi, 2012). These students believe that their teachers taught them while relying heavily on boring textbooks with irrelevant, inappropriate and uninteresting content.

Despite the fact that Basic and Post Basic Omani students English skills were supposed to improve, this was not recognized (AL Mahrooqi, 2012). Instead, these students continue to struggle, particularly in terms of communicative abilities; writing and speaking (Al Hosni, 2014; Al Seyabi & Tuzlukova, 2014). Since the current study targeted exploring students' revision perspectives and practices in EFL writing; the following section elucidates a brief account of the teaching and learning of writing in the Omani EFL context.

## 2.6. Writing in Omani EFL classroom

Unlike previous curricula, Our World Through English (OWTE), English for Me (EFM) for Basic Education, and Engage with English (EGW) for Post Basic Education place a strong emphasis on the student as the core of the educational process. They introduce new teaching approaches, such as communicative methods, and the process writing approach, which replaces the previous traditional model that dominated writing instruction (Education, 2004a, 2015).

Students are also introduced to four different types of writing genres; informative, interactive (writing emails and letters), narrative and evaluative (persuasive writing). The learners are required to create

stories, emails, and argumentative texts, for example. Meanwhile, assessment includes modern strategies such as continuous assessment, the use of portfolios as a learning tool, the encouragement of multiple drafts of writing, and alternative feedback models such as peer review and the inclusion of self-evaluation (MOE, 2005). According to Lightbown and Spada (1999), this shift in pedagogy predicts an improvement in educational trends, which in turn is based on research findings in the area of ESL and language acquisition.

However, without underestimating the effort of policymakers and schools, the follow up of student tasks has revealed that students' attainment in writing was less than expected. The assumptions that students would develop their skill in writing do not pertain to research findings as Al Seyabi and Tuzlukova (2014) argue. On the contrary, the assumptions rather emanated from the sheer presumptions about students' writing performance through particular assessment, and instructional methods. Teachers' application of both assessment and instructional methods, as they struggle to integrate new approaches into traditional teaching patterns could be one of the reasons. It could also be the stringent specified assessment arrangements, as well as the limited time to write, that have an impact on students' writing habits. According to my experience as a teacher educator, most students write or revise solely to earn appropriate grades and marks. This may be exacerbated by teachers' feedback, which is still influenced by their established notions that micro level text development, such as spelling, grammar, or mechanical writing, is more important than shaping texts for better readability, developing the quality of ideas, and revising for better coherent texts. This might contribute to shape student writers' conception of revision in EFL writing which is part of the study's intentions. In addition to teachers' implementation of the contemporary targeted pedagogy, a mismatch appears to exist between what a learner-centred policy advocates and what assessment needs are for students to achieve. Overall, most of what we know about Basic and Post Basic students' revision skills in EFL writing is informed by impressions and ideas from the field of teaching, informed by theories, or based on studies conducted in L1 contexts. Whereas studies in EFL Omani

contexts with regards to revision in writing seems sparse, there is a real necessity to investigate students' perspectives of their revision practices. The current study aims to address this gap.

## 2.7. Summary

This chapter sheds light on the educational system in Oman, particularly in terms of the Basic Education reform. It discusses the targeted development in areas like curriculum, teacher education and assessment. It also highlights the constraints that might have affected the development in students' English competency levels. Finally, it provides a brief account of the teaching of writing in Oman and the real need to investigate the area of revision in the EFL writing process. The next chapter reviews the literature to situate this study among available and evidence-based theories.

# CHAPTER THREE: LITERATURE REVIEW

## 3.1. Introduction

This review focuses on theories and research about revision in writing English as a foreign language. It examines how cognitive theories and models attempt to represent the process of writing with reference to revision as well as to how later models and theories focus on the development of the writing process in students. It also discusses the social dimension of the nature of the writing process focusing on the skill of revision due to the pivotal role that it plays in the development of students' English writing skills, assuming that revision can help writers to compensate for any discrepancies between the students' intended writing and their written text aiming at meeting the intended readers' needs, and beyond that, how revision is regarded as a significant resource in becoming a skilled writer. The review also discusses theories and research about skilled writers with respect to revision and the factors that might influence the practice of revision as well as how second and foreign language contexts are distinct compared to a first language context. Moreover, the review scrutinizes theories and research to pinpoint what is known about the extent to which the second language learner conceptualizes revision in writing, how students' reflection on their writing can reveal their cognitive and metacognitive knowledge and strategies in writing, as well as highlighting the effects that might influence any of the tension between the use of L1 and L2 in EFL writers' revision practice.

Following this short introduction, five primary sections make up the literature review. Since revision is a sub process of the writing skill, to better understand revision, the following section delves into the nature of writing development. This section discusses theories and models about writing development as well as shedding light on how writing in a second language is different compared to writing in L1. The next section elaborates on revision in writing in areas pertaining to conceptualizing the notion of revision, the importance of revision, the sub process of revision, the notion of better writing, factors influencing revision skill, and the way that revision in a second language is distinct

compared to revising in L1 writing. The subsequent section discusses theories and research about the importance of listening to students' perspectives. It also elucidates the significance of students' perceptions as this can assist us with understanding the way in which student writers conceptualize revision. The penultimate section reviews the research of second language revision in writing and pinpoints the gap in areas that necessitate further research. Finally, the review ends up with a section summarizing this chapter and addressing the gap that this study attempts to bridge.

## 3.2. An overview of writing development

To better understand revision in writing process - since it is a sub-process of the writing process- it seems reasonable to have a comprehensive understanding of the whole writing process. Fitzgerald (1987) criticises researchers for their attempts to study revision as a separate part of the writing process neglecting the actual embedded nature of revision into the holistic process of writing. Accordingly, this section presents the theoretical framework of writing development. Let us first clarify how writing is developed.

### 3.2.1. The nature of writing development

There seems to be a steady agreement among researchers that, unlike listening and speaking, reading and writing are not naturally acquired (Kellogg, 2008; Myles, 2002; Grabowski, 1996; Vygotsky, 1978) hence they must be learned. To more readily comprehend this view, it is important to uncover any vagueness between acquisition and learning. According to Krashen (1985), whilst acquisition tends to be implicit, of a subconscious nature, takes place in informal settings, with grammar usage depending on feeling and usually dependent on the person's attitude. Furthermore, in acquisition learners often get a mastery of their skills and develop proficiency in the language in a constant linear order. On the other hand, learning seems to be conscious, explicitly obtained in more formal settings, emphasizing the subsequent use of grammatical rules, and is more dependent on aptitudes than on attitudes, and is gradually developed from a simple order of learning into more complex ones.

Focusing on writing, these arrangements is not straightforward. Vygotsky (1978) contends that written language is changed over time into an arrangement of signs that straightforwardly symbolize the essence and relations between them, in other words, the meaning in the text is of beyond the literal meaning of the words themselves. This means that such an unpredictable sign framework cannot be accomplished by simple mechanical and outside strategies, rather it is a decision of a long procedure of advancement of complex social capacities within a child. In the same vein, Kellogg (2008) asserts that the development of learners' writing lasts for a period of over two decades through a designed program that involves 'cognitive apprenticeship' and which ensures 'a deliberate practice' that aims to assist students to better develop their writing skills (p.1). For Grabowski (1996), figuring out how to compose is a predominantly cognitive process, and it may very well be viewed as a more institutionalized framework which must be obtained through distinctive guidelines. Furthermore, Myles (2002) believes that the capacity to compose well is not normally gained simply through developing expertise; it is typically learned or socially transmitted as an arrangement of practices in casual instructional settings or different environments. This indicates that classrooms shape texts, and different classrooms to produce different kinds of texts because the social context is a key aspect of the learning that is absorbed by the developing writers. Overall, writing must be learned.

Pedagogically, according to Ferris and Hedgcock (2013) and Hyland (2009), to assist students to better develop their writing, there have been three different rationales for instruction and approaches since the second half of the twentieth century: structuralism, cognitivism and social constructivism. In the 1970s studies explored the act of writing and pointed out that composing processes are not linear, for example Emig (1971) and Perl (1979). These studies preceded the writing process approach that became influential in the 1980s and continues to prevail in the pedagogy of writing today, and it is these different perspectives that are discussed later in this review. In addition, other methods were drawn on to assist learners to better develop their writing, such as the genre approach, however the most widely spread method has been the process writing approach informed by cognitive theories.

Nevertheless, it has been argued that to better support the development of students' writing, there is a real necessity to understand the students' needs. Latif (2008), for example, argues that understanding the pathway that students take as they compose would provide an understanding that can be used to promote development. He believes that such an understanding can ease the educators' effort to assist the less proficient writers by fully understanding the tactics that are used by the expert ones. Accordingly, Stapleton (2010) notes that researchers attempted to break down the writing process into recognisable segments that precisely mirror the profoundly intellectual behaviours which writers undertake, as he regarded both writing and understanding the writing process to be a challenging task. Such a set of concerns has led to the emergence of cognitive models. Flower and Hayes (1981) and Bereiter and Scardamalia (1986) are examples of these models. Both are regarded as influential models that have contributed to research and pedagogy in writing and hence can be regarded as blueprints for both researchers and educators. These models are further discussed as they have motivated studies, among them the current one, to investigate and focus on some of these sub-processes, and is the reason why this study scrutinizes the perceptions and practices of Omani Basic and post-Basic students with respect to EFL revision in writing. This can provide a genuine understanding of students' real needs, the patterns they utilize in revising their EFL writing, their learning opportunities, the challenges they encounter and how they perceive revision in their EFL contexts. To sum up, three main themes emerge from this introduction: (1) writing is taught not acquired, (2) writing is both a cognitive and a social activity, and (3) writing is a complex activity. Given that, the following section discusses the theories and the cognitive models of writing development.

### 3.2.2. Theories about learning to write

Myhill and Watson (2011) state that composition has been researched from alternate points of view, through psychological cognitive research, the socio-cultural perspective, as well as the linguistic

perspective. They add, that to better facilitate students in developing their writing, an informed teaching method for composing needs to draw on each of the three. Myhill and Watson (2011) reviewed the context of teaching writing in England between 1950 and 1970 and claimed that a product approach that focuses solely on the students' writing product was the dominant approach. Even in other different contexts, the focus on the writing product continues to dominate, for example in Oman the shift to the process approach emerged as an initiative of the Basic Education program in 1998 (Moe, 2010). In contrast to the focus of the product approach that mainly centers on the product of writing, the process approach views the writer as the focal point of consideration (Hyland, 2009).Whereas much of the research into writing has been done with L1 writers-there is evidence of similar issues and patterns of contrasting research perspectives within L2 research (see for example,Raimes, 1983).

The early 1970s witnessed a shift from the dominant paradigm of the product approach. In response to the work of Emig (1971), who proposed the writing process approach following her exploration of her twelfth-grader students' writing behavior in the United States, stating that the writer's act to discover the meaning in a text was recursive, not linear as it was assumed to be. Zamel (1982) clarifies recursive behavior as "writers go back in order to move forward" (p. 197). This was the beginning of a changing focus emphasizing the writing process in order to understand what occurs in the writers' mind when writing. However, a more complete conceptualizing of the writing process emerged in the 1980s when Flowers and Hayes' (1981) model was developed. This model is regarded as influential since it was attempting to graphically represent what occurred in students' minds when writing, and hence, was the blueprint for the later cognitive models, and since then many of these forthcoming models were developed based on the Flowers and Hayes' model (Myhill, 2009b).

Metaphorically, Hayes and Flower (1980) view the writer as "a very busy switchboard operator trying to juggle a number of demands on her attention and constraints on what she can do" (p.33). According

to this cognitive perspective, the writing process is being regarded as "a set of distinctive thinking processes which writers orchestrate or organize during the act of writing" (p.366). Their model represents the writing process as involving three main processes: planning, translating, and reviewing.

Planning refers to the generation of ideas, organizing them and defining goals. Translation is where the writers turn their plan into the inscription of written language. Finally, revision is about the evaluation and judgment of the ideas and the written language with the purpose of developing them. According to Flower and Hayes' model, these processes and the sub-processes are orchestrated via the composer, where the writer is constrained by external factors as well as internal ones. The former refers to the writing task, the expected audience and the evolving text, whereas the latter is concerned with what Sharples (1999) clarifies as realizing what to state and how to state it. Hence, for the writers to overcome such constraints, required knowledge about the topic, audience and/or the stored writing plans, which Flower and Hayes (1981) place under the taxonomy of the writer's long-term memory. Broadly speaking, the seminal model discussed above has emphasized the act of composing as a progression of reasoning procedures that are interconnected, it is a goal-directed task as well as of a hierarchal and recursive nature, the principle objectives include delivering sub-objectives and switching attention between the different processes now and again, and these are executed by every writer to a certain degree within the composition procedure (Bayat, 2014).

Whilst Flowers and Hayes' seminal model is representative of what is occurring in the writers' mind during the process of writing, this model cannot be regarded as a developmental model as it represents the mental abilities without consideration of different abilities and writers' preferences. It states that their model is of skilled writer, hence Scardamalia and Bereiter (1987) suggested two different models: the knowledge telling model and the knowledge transforming model in order to differentiate between two levels of composers. According to these two models, Grabe and Kaplan (1996) clarify

that whilst complex writing creates difficulties that are beyond the capacities of novice writers, more able writers can handle them.

Notably, the knowledge telling model, see figure 3.1, has been proposed for less-skilled writers, for example, foreign language learners, or young learners, with the aim of keeping the task of writing simple. Scardamalia and Bereiter (1987) characterized it as 'think-say' tactic to writing (p.5), in other words when less-experienced writers perceive the demands of the tasks, they utilize their own ideas as well as their plans to translate them in a simple way into composing. Myhill (2009a) explains that the knowledge telling model suggests that the inexperienced writer's development route adopts a composing strategy moving from one sentence to the next, with a focus on the specific information to be conveyed being translated into the formulation of familiar sentences constructions so that one idea triggers the next idea with no real sense of purpose other than to chain-link the ideas together. Myhill found that students' weakest writing, even at the secondary level, showed a significant number of the attributes of the knowledge telling stage, with little proof in terms of choices either in rhetorical interaction or text shaping. Figure 3.1 shows certain stages that novice writers need to proceed through, hence when the novice writers receive the writing task, they perceive the mental representation of such a task: the genre, lexical items and the topic. Accordingly, they retrieve two types of relevant knowledge from their long-term memory: content knowledge and discourse knowledge. Thus, this can assist those novice writers in tackling the text, as the former supports the writers in managing the text content, whereas the latter assists writers in manipulating the linguistic information, for example lexical and syntactic knowledge. The chaining of ideas strategy therefore has content knowledge generating the ideas as they occur and the discourse knowledge translating them into written forms.

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                    ┌─────────────────────────────────┐
                    │   MENTAL REPRESENTATION OF      │
                    │          ASSIGNMENT             │
                    └─────────────────────────────────┘

                          KNOWLEDGE TELLING
                              PROCESS

    ┌──────────┐   ┌──────────────┐        ┌──────────────┐   ┌──────────┐
    │          │   │ LOCATE TOPIC │        │ LOCATE GENRE │   │          │
    │          │   │ IDENTIFIERS  │        │ IDENTIFIERS  │   │          │
    │          │   └──────────────┘        └──────────────┘   │          │
    │          │                                              │          │
    │          │         ┌─────────────────────────┐         │          │
    │          │         │       CONSTRUCT         │         │          │
    │          │         │    MEOMORY PROBES       │         │          │
    │          │         └─────────────────────────┘         │          │
    │          │                                              │          │
    │ CONTENT  │         ┌─────────────────────────┐         │ DISCOURSE│
    │KNOWLEDGE │         │ RETRIEVE CONTENT FROM    │         │KNOWLEDGE │
    │          │         │        MEMORY            │         │          │
    │          │         │     USING PROBES         │         │          │
    │          │         └─────────────────────────┘         │          │
    │          │                                              │          │
    │          │         ┌──────────────────┐   FAIL         │          │
    │          │         │   RUN TESTS       │               │          │
    │          │         │      OF           │               │          │
    │          │         │ APPROPRIATENESSS  │               │          │
    │          │         └──────────────────┘               │          │
    │          │              PASS                            │          │
    │          │         ┌──────────────────┐               │          │
    │          │         │     WRITE         │               │          │
    │          │         │ (NOTES, DRAFT, ETC)│              │          │
    │          │         ├──────────────────┤               │          │
    │          │         │ UPDATE MENTAL     │               │          │
    │          │         │REPRESENTATION OF TEXT│            │          │
    └──────────┘         └──────────────────┘               └──────────┘
```
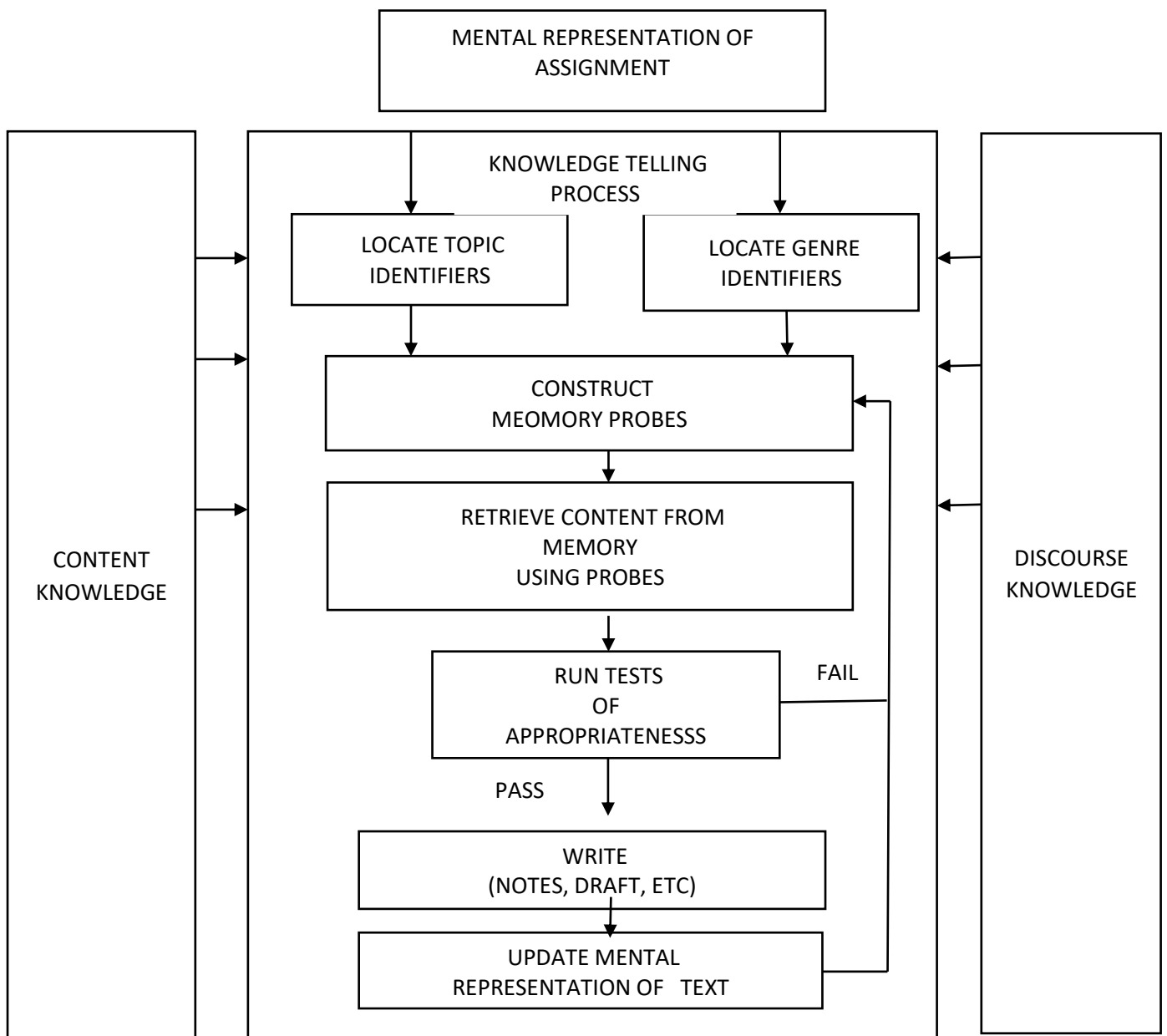
*Figure 3.1. The knowledge telling model (Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987)*

Scardamalia and Bereiter (1987) argue that the knowledge telling model seems unsuitable for complex

writing tasks and, as Grabe and Kaplan (1996) point out, the knowledge telling model does not

consider compositional tasks that require further processing of information, such as the audience

prospect, and a consistent framework of rhetorical purpose that demonstrates greater sophistication in

composing. Hence, Scardamalia and Bereiter suggested another model for the expert writer called

knowledge transforming (see figure 3.2) when it is required to explain how more expert writers process the different aspects of a given task. Knowledge transformers are assumed to analyze the problems and to set goals from the moment they are receiving the task. Unlike knowledge telling where the writers move in a one way from content knowledge to discourse knowledge, the writer in transforming knowledge moves back and forth between what Scardamalia and Bereiter note as the content problem space and rhetorical problem space. Grabe and Kaplan (1996) comment on this interaction between the two types of knowledge stating that "the output of one becomes input of others" (p.123). Overall, the knowledge transforming model proposes that learning can occur amid composing, since the demands of the assignment may require the writer to modify or change their knowledge and also the message of the text.

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┌─────────────────────────────────────────┐
│   Mental Representation of Assignment    │
└─────────────────────────────────────────┘

┌─────────────────────────────────────────┐
│      Problem Analysis and goal setting   │
└─────────────────────────────────────────┘

   Content                      Discourse
  Knowledge                    Knowledge

  Content          Problem          Rhetorical
  Problem        Translation         Problem
   Space                              Space

                   Problem
                 Translation

                 Knowledge
                  Telling
                  Process
```
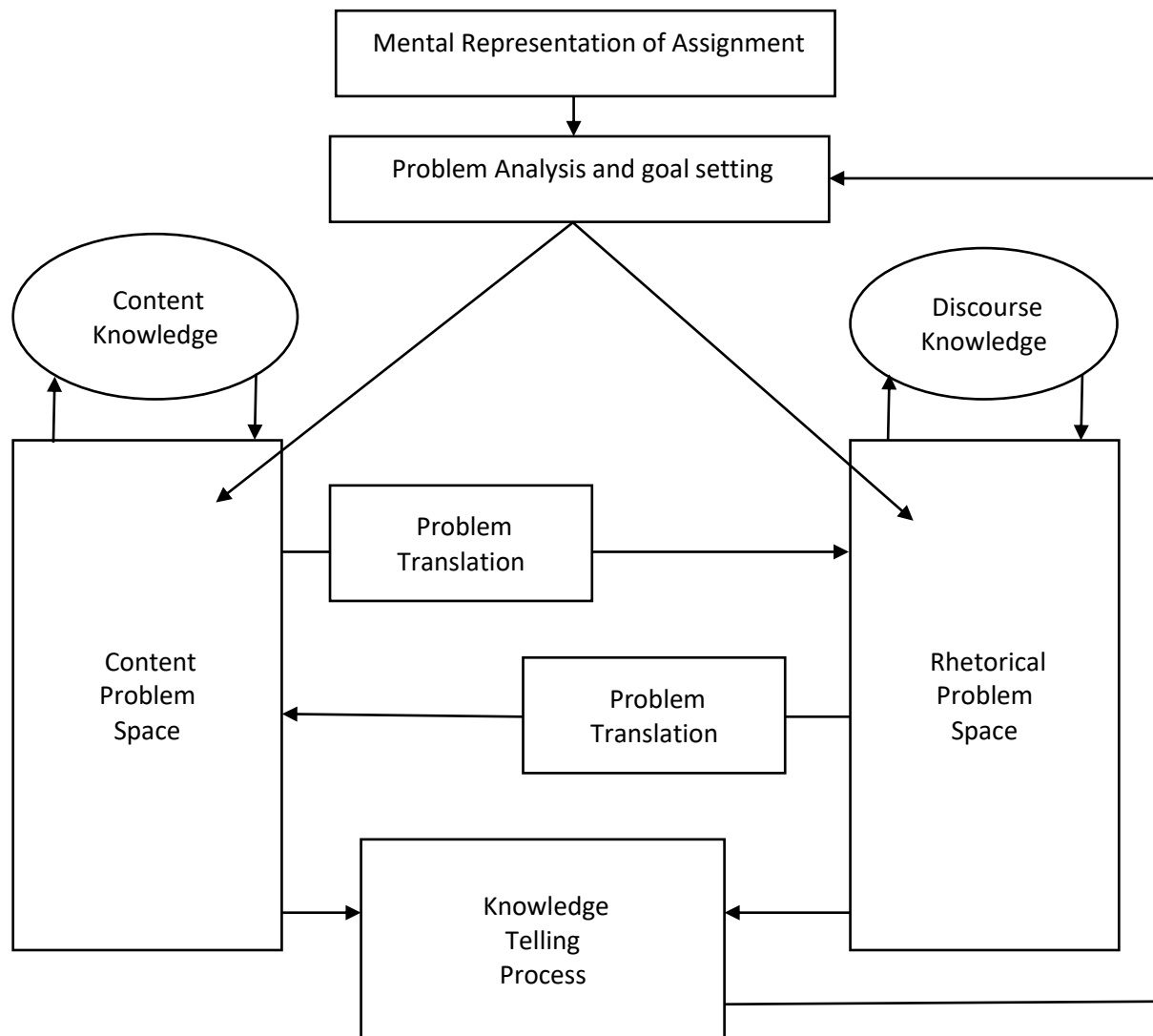
*Figure 3.2. The knowledge transforming model (Scardamalia and Bereiter, 1987)*

There seems to be a consensus in other models that have been suggested, (see for example Berninger & Swanson, 1994; Hayes, 1996), that the key processes in composing involves mainly planning, translating and revision (Alamargot & Chanquoy, 2001b).

These cognitive models, though influential, have been criticized. Stapleton (2010), for example, has challenged the method the models used, namely think aloud protocol, where the writer was encouraged to voice what he/she was thinking at the moment of writing, which has been seen as unnatural where the writer has to engage in writing in a setting which is different from real life writing. Allal and Chanquoy (2004) also recognize that these cognitive models do not pay much heed to the

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results of instructional research that have been put into practice. An additional critique has been the emphasis on the individual mind as the only source for writing. In contrast, the sociocultural theory seems to offer an alternative point of view as it perceives the writer as someone who internally dialogues with the reader and is influenced by socially constructed norms about what good and appropriate writing might be in any given setting.

The cognitive theories of writing process are also criticized by researchers (see for example, Matsuda, 2003; Atkinson, 2003) for perceiving the writer as an individual who is acting against a set of restraints, thereby failing to account for how power relations influence the sort of choices writers make. Accordingly, Atkinson advocates for a new paradigm where second language writing be characterized in terms of writing as a social action and should be perceived from a post-process era's perspective, literacy as an ideological arena, and composition as a cultural activity. Such a shift in pedagogy is based on improved educational trends, which are based on research findings in the field of ESL acquisition (Lightbown & Spada, 1999). Notably, as a well-known researcher in the field of second language acquisition, Block (2003) examined the input-interaction-output model to uncover some of the paradigm's underlying assumptions and propose a more interdisciplinary and socially conscious approach to second language research (p. VII). The 'social turn' in writing had a significant impact on many varied disciplinary manifestations. For example Hayes (1996) claims that cognitive models of the writing process have been refined to better account for variables such as audience and collaborators. Likewise, Flower (1994) offered socio-cognitive theories to describe how cognition and surroundings interact. Concerning writing revision, according to Street, and Lankshear, as cited in Myhill and Jones (2007), it is a socially mediated action within a construct of writing as a social practice, determined and impacted by social, cultural, and historical circumstances. When applying that to second language writing, it appears that the social turn focus is on the functional use of language which assumes to provide Omani L2 learners with a less formal, and more dynamic, approach to writing and writing revision.

Despite the above criticism of the cognitive models, the current study is not aiming to challenge these models, instead, it advocates being mindful of how such cognitive models shed light on the complexity of the writing task whereby a consideration of many things needs to be taken by the writer, particularly in the case of an EFL writer. In addition, there is a real need to involve the sociocultural perspectives when investigating such a writer because of the influence that the social and cultural context might have in shaping his/her writing.

Overall, it appears that learning to write in the L1 contexts is a challenging and a complex task, and this seems magnified in contexts where the writers compose in their second language. As Stapleton (2010) claims, before words appear on the page or computer, more steps are required to decode thoughts into language. Whilst most studies and pedagogies in second or foreign language contexts are informed by studies and models in L1 contexts, there is a real need for specific theories, or at least mediation of these models in second or foreign language settings due to the extra demands that are faced by the learners in these contexts. Hence, the pressing need to research and discuss why the writing process in L2 is more challenging.

### 3.2.3. Writing in L1 versus writing in L2

Whilst writing seems to constitute a serious issue for students' writing in their native language (Myhill, 2005), Al Kamil and Troudi (2008) regard it as the most difficult skill for Arab learners to write in their second language. This is due to the various demanding processes, as well as the required skills and strategies that the writer needs to follow in composition, such as understanding what conventions might need to be shared between writers and readers, or the extent to which the writer is familiar with the rhetorical conventions and genres in both language contexts (Matsuda, 2000; Olshtain & Celce-Muricia, 2003), especially given that there are several differences between the first language (Arabic), and the second language (English), in areas such as linguistic differences, conventions and socio-cultural differences.

Linguistically, there are differences between English and Arabic which might result in negative transfer in writing English as a foreign language. Crompton (2011), for example, analyzed advanced Arabic native speakers who wrote in English and found that most errors caused by those learners were misusing the 'definite article of generic reference' (p.4). He concluded that this was due to the negative transfer because unlike English where generics are marked by 'indefiniteness', in Arabic they are marked by 'definiteness' (p.28). Another example is the frequent use of coordination in Arabic than using subordination (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996). This can be also explained in terms of convention due to the nature of Arabic conventions. Al-Khatib (2001) analyzed the letter writing in Jordanian schools and found that students tend to repeat and, but, and or. For Al-Khatib (2001), mastery of style is often gauged by a degree of coordination employing conjunctions, in contrast to English style which is frequently judged by degree of subordination. Even in Arabic, when writing the hand movement is from right to left compared to English where the writer moves conversely from left to right. Regarding prepositions, there are some similarities, however it was found that some of the differences between the use of preposition by Arabic speakers in writing English have resulted in errors due to negative transfer (Lakkis & Malak, 2000). Similarly Mourtaga (2004) analyzed English texts written by Arabic Palestinian participants, highlighting frequent errors in articles, punctuation and tenses that are caused via the interference of Arabic into English writing. In general, these are only some of the differences in terms of the variances between the two languages, however, cultural differences also constitute a major additional challenge.

Culturally, Kaplan (1966) believes that rhetoric is diverse among cultures. He gives an example claiming that where the English audience expect to meet a discourse that is developed in a linear, concise and coherent way, Arabic writers have shown a very complex approach, such as a parallel of negative and positive construction. Allen, as cited in Sa'Adeddin (1989), gives a reason for why Arabic text is organized in a non-cumulative or a circular way, where the writer tackles the point

repeatedly from different angles. One of the big differences is that Arabic writing is commonly following the audial mode whereas English is of the visual mode (Sa'Adeddin, 1989). Consequently, when Arab writers write in English they tend to fail to consider their readers (Abu Rass, 1994). For Feghali, as cited in Rass (2011), Arabic native speaker's communication in writing shares the following features: 'repetition, indirectness, elaborateness and effectiveness of emotion style' (p.207). Beyond these examples of cultural differences, Connor (2002), claims that differences in second language writing stem from numerous bases, such as the influence of the native language, the background of education in the native language, the culture, the genre, or the discrepancy in anticipation between the writers and the readers. Accordingly, Al-Mutawa (1997) suggests that to better assist the EFL learners in the Arabian context is to develop their EFL writing skills, and there is a real need to expose them to the English socio- cultural context.

Regarding research into second language writing processes, it appears that research has revealed that the second language writer follows a different approach to writing tasks compared to the writing of the native language speaker (Hyland, 2004; Raimes, 1985; Silva, 1990; Weigle, 2002). For Matsuda, Ortmeier-Hooper, and Matsuda (2009), this is because of the tremendous challenges and issues that they face during writing compared to their counterparts of native speakers. These issues include the tendency not to plan that much, they also do not set their goals like L1 learners and they rarely review their writing. The Hayes and Flowers' model was clearly undertaken in English speaking settings and conforms to the writing conventions of this particular context.

Research has shown contradictory results, for example researchers like Edelsky (1982) and Cumming (1989) assert that transfer of skills learned from L1 writing to L2 writing can assist in the development of L2 writing text. On the contrary, other researchers, for example Grabe and Kaplan (1996) and Silva (1990) claim that transfer may interfere with the quality of writing in L2. In the absence of coherence in the findings of research into second language writing, particularly in the EFL context, there is a

real need to address an understanding of the effects of such transfer between L1 and L2 writing processes. Thus, this is one of the issues that this current study aims to address. Having discussed the nature of writing, the theories and models related to the writing development, and the distinctive nature of second language and foreign language writing, the next section focuses on the sub-process of revision in writing.

## 3.3. Revision in Writing

Emig's (1971) study, discussed earlier, brought a new conceptual view of revision which contrasted with the dominant understanding known as editing. Her seminal study revealed that her twelfth-grade students had not paused to reflect on their own writing and had not spontaneously revised it. For Emig (1971), the students did not do that because of the pedagogical way they were taught, in other words teachers followed strategies which had not given student enough room for reflection on their own writing. Her study foregrounded the emergence of the process approach that was informed by cognitive psychology, which in turn has been informed by numerous studies in writing revision. There were studies (Faigley & Witte, 1981; Flower & Hayes, 1981; Sommers, 1980) that focused on the behaviour of the revisers, studies (Chenoweth & Hayes, 2001; Porte, 1996; Victori, 1999) that scrutinized the factors that contributed to the writers' revision practices, and research on the differences between skilled and less-skilled writers with respect to the efficiency of their revision practice (see for example, Witte, 1985; Zamel, 1983). Notably, the discourse on the concept of effective writing was a target for many contentious perspectives, Faigley and Witte (1981), for example, have revealed that effective revision impacted not only the writing substance but also its form. This impact is obvious on the linguistic level. In contrast, Murray (1978b) and (Hillocks 1982) considered revision as heuristic, i.e. revision is an intrinsic and essential dynamic part of the writing process that covers the semantic level as well. The literature has also documented those researchers' attempts to define the concept of revision, and so different definitions appeared. So, what is revision?

### 3.3.1. Conceptualizing the process of revision in writing

To better develop an operational definition for the current study, there is a real need to review the definitions found in the literature and to analyze them critically. Whilst some of these definitions have emphasized the process of evaluation and change, they have not always considered detailing the complex nature of revision. For example, (Reid, 1993) defines revision as "seeing again" (p.233). What this means is that the writer rereads what is written, evaluates something, and makes the changes that correct or improve it. Similarly, Williams (1998) defines revision as "re-seeing the text with the goal of making large-scale changes so that text and plans match" (p.107). His definition seems more explicit since it explains the type of change that is targeted, the endeavor of the writer to create a match between the discrepancies of the plan and the text, as well as illustrating that the process of revision is a goal-directed task. However, his definition does not mention any ideas about the hierarchal or the recursive nature of the revision practice, such as the evaluation of the writers' original ideas even before inscription took place. Hence, in his definition, Piolat (1997) has slightly clarified the notion of hierarchy in revision by stating that revision practice is about the assessment and modification of the written text, made by the writer at any point during the development of such a text, including the revision of plans. A more complex definition found in the literature is that proposed by Fitzgerald (1987). He states:

> Revision means making any changes at any point in the writing process. It involves identifying discrepancies between intended and instantiated text, deciding what could or should be changed in the text and how to make desired changes, and operating, that is, making the desired changes. Changes may or may not affect meaning of the text, and they be major or minor (p.484).

More recently, researchers have suggested other definitions, for example, in her explanation of Flower and Hayes' (1981) model, Myhill (2009b) defines revision as a process that entails evaluation and judgements of the ideas that take place in the writers' mind even before inscription takes place or

evaluating and judging the writing being shaped. In short, revision encompasses the following: evaluating, proofreading, editing, and reviewing. The evaluation and change that revision entails is of a recursive nature, in other words, it is done at any given phase in the writing process, and pre-written text is frequently reviewed and changed in the light of new texts being written. Revision is also driven by the revisers' intention since it is a goal-oriented task. For the purpose of this study, revision is perceived as a recursive goal-oriented cognitive writing sub-process that entails sub-processes such as editing, evaluating, proof-reading, and reviewing. It is assumed that this cognitive process goes beyond detecting and modifying the micro level revision, such as spelling, grammar or mechanical writing, into putting a greater emphasis on macro level revising such as development at discourse level; generating ideas for the purpose of discovery, namely to learn something new and to revise for better readability and impact (substantive revision). To get a better insight into this concept of revision, we might ask about how this sub-process might be characterized?

An interpretation of revision can be derived from multiple points of view. First, revision is of a hierarchal nature (Flower & Hayes, 1981). From this point of view, revision seems to be interpreted as a recursive act that is informed by the writer's intention and needs. The revision act can occur at any point in the writing process. As an example, at the point of translating one expression onto the page, the writer might concurrently review whether the statement is right (Myhill, 2009b). Pedagogically, sometimes the policies of curricula and institutions misunderstand the recursive nature of revision. Myhill and Jones (2007) give an example from the National Curriculum in England that represents the composing process in a chronological way which might lead institutions to view revision as a discrete stage; where the writer starts with planning and postpones the revision as a last stage. Compared to this cognitive point of view, revision can also be interpreted as a substantive act that characterizes it as linguistic in nature. According to Beach (1976) , whilst writers are expected to rework their own written text, they are probably assumed to go beyond the superficial level, creating some major changes in order to develop the text quality by attending to purpose and meaning. The

current study attempts to understand whether EFL learners edit their text for substantive features alongside the editing at micro-level revision, such as spelling, grammar or mechanical writing which is often regarded as an essential part of EFL writing expertise and so receives the most pedagogic attention. Murray (1978b) and Hillocks (1982) have shed light on an ideal perspective that views revision as being of a heuristic nature. They conceive the act of the reviser when reviewing their text to involve investigating new thoughts, as well as taking in new aptitudes and thoughts that can upgrade their general learning and conceivably result in adaptations to the content which reflect this new learning. This means that revision might afford discovering new ideas and so goes beyond revising simply to develop the text, but also to generate new ideas that would not have been learned unless revision had opened up this potential for the leaner and thus revision can be regarded as having the capacity to develop students' second language. Moreover, revision also seems to be a collaborative act. Bruffee (1983) states that the writing choices of the writer seem to be driven by the broader shared discourse within their own classroom culture or within their community. In short, revision as a sub-process in the writing development is a complex evolution for the writer, as it entails substantial sub-processes, which in turn add extra demands to the less experienced writer's working memory, particularly those writing in their second language. In the light of the discussed complexity of such sub-processes, let us address the reasons why revision is important.

### 3.3.2. The importance of revision in writing

The significance of revision emanates from the pathway that authors follow in developing their writing through imagining, reconsidering their thoughts, considering their anticipated audience, reviewing, and envisioning. Reflecting on her experience as a writer, Lamott (1995) concurs with other writers' points of view that what distinguishes the writers' third draft compared to the transformed first draft are the processes of rethinking and revising that the authors follow. This has encouraged researchers and educators to rethink the discrepancy between what the authors have described about their own experiences of being writers and the way that textbooks represent writing

pedagogy. Revision offers a huge resource that can create opportunities for writers to develop their writing and also their thinking about the content. Accordingly, there is a steady agreement among researchers that what marks the difference between expert and novice writers is revision (see for example, Fitzgerald, 1987; Hillocks, 1986; Porte, 1996; Sharples, 1999; Victori, 1999; Yagelski, 1995). Revision is important as it can not only help writers use strategies that can compensate for any discrepancy between their intention and their written text when considering their anticipated reader, but it can also reveal new intentions and hence develop their own writing. Murray (2001) conceives revision beyond the development of the written text stating that 'writing is rewriting' (p.2). This suggests that the process of revision seems to be of as much importance as the writing itself. This is also related to perceiving revision as a skill that plays a central role in education where a writer revises their own writing to discover and learn new ideas (Hillocks, 1995; Murray, 1978b, 1982). Having discussed the importance of revision, the question is how revision as an act is processed in writing and how the cognitive models represent the distinctive thinking process of revision?

### 3.3.3. The process of revision in writing

In order to understand the pathway that writers follow when they revise their writing, it is necessary to review the cognitive models related to this concern. In her review of research informed by cognitive process, Becker (2006) explains that Flower and Hayes' (1981) model aimed at providing a comprehensive understanding of the principle steps and thought patterns that happen all through the composition procedure. Hence, with reference to Flowers and Hayes' (1981) writing models discussed earlier, it represented reviewing in two sub-processes or strategies; these are evaluation and revision. Given that, researchers have proposed specific models for the revision sub-process (see for example, Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1983; Faigley & Witte, 1981; Hayes , Flower, Schriver, Stratman, & Carey, 1987). Some of these models focused on the product of revision, whereas others focused on the process of it (Barkaoui, 2007).

Regarding the models that focused on the revision outcome, a good example of these is (Faigley &
Witte, 1981's) model (Figure 3.3.). According to this model, writers create two types of changes: text-
based changes that can affect the meaning and the overall written discourse and surface changes that
might not seriously affect the written discourse, for example, spelling.

## Revision changes

```
┌─────────────────────────────┐     ┌─────────────────────────────┐
│   ┌─────────────────┐       │     │       ┌─────────────────┐   │
│   │ Surface change  │       │     │       │Text based changes│  │
│   └─────────────────┘       │     │       └─────────────────┘   │
│                             │     │                             │
│  ╭────────╮   ╭─────────╮   │     │  ╭─────────╮   ╭─────────╮   │
│  │ Formal │   │ Meaning │   │     │  │  Micro  │   │  Macro  │   │
│  │        │   │preserving│  │     │  │structure│   │Structure│   │
│  ╰────────╯   ╰─────────╯   │     │  ╰─────────╯   ╰─────────╯   │
│                             │     │                             │
│  ┌────────┐  ┌──────────┐   │     │  ┌─────────┐  ┌─────────┐   │
│  │        │  │ Addition │   │     │  │ Addition│  │ Addition│   │
│  │Spelling│  │ Deletion │   │     │  │ Deletion│  │ Deletion│   │
│  │Punctua-│  │Substation│   │     │  │Substation│ │Substation│  │
│  │ tion   │  │Restructu-│   │     │  │Restructu-│ │Restructu-│  │
│  │        │  │ring      │   │     │  │ring     │  │ring     │   │
│  │        │  │Reversion │   │     │  │Reversion│  │Reversion│   │
│  └────────┘  └──────────┘   │     │  └─────────┘  └─────────┘   │
└─────────────────────────────┘     └─────────────────────────────┘
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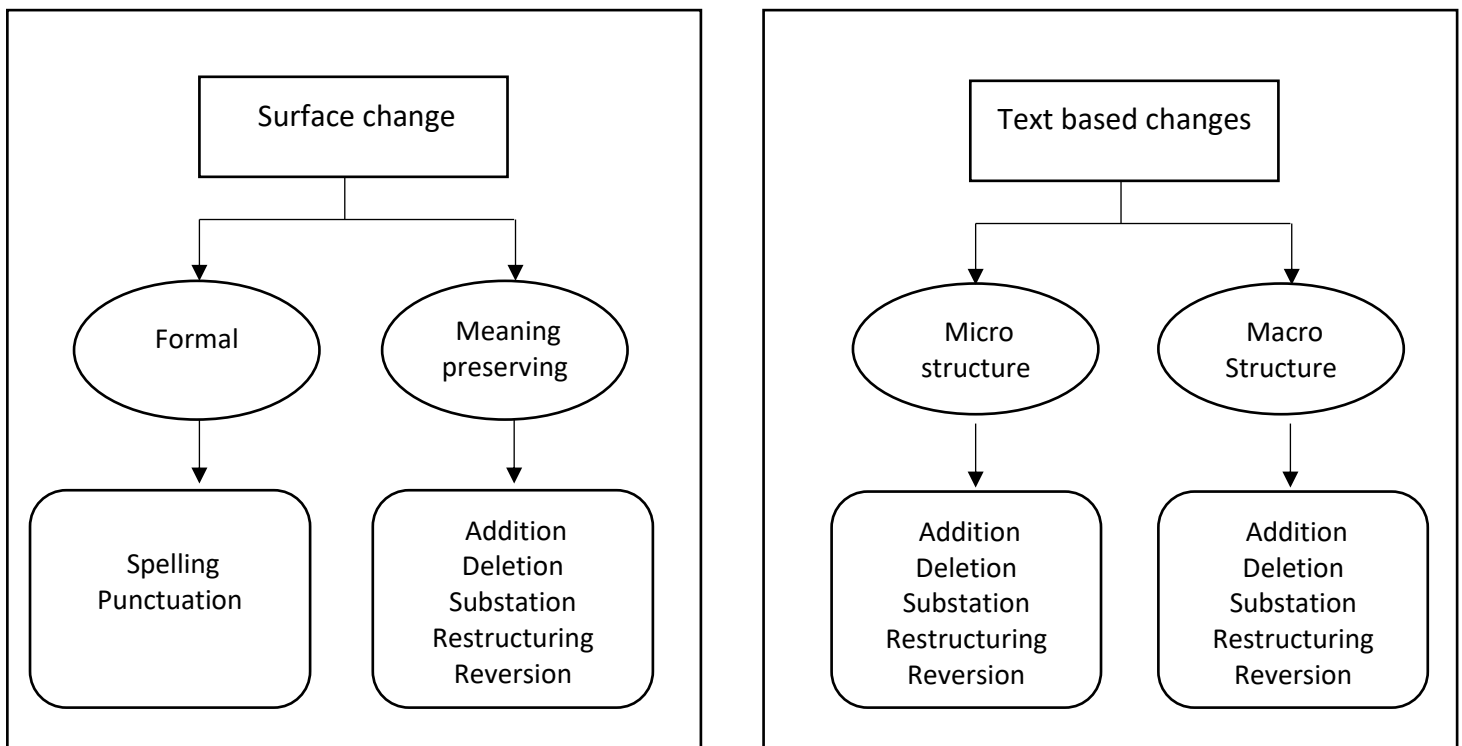
*Figure 3.3. Taxonomy of revision changes (Adapted from Faigley and Witte, 1981)*

Based on several studies that they had conducted with primary schools' students, Bereiter and
Scardamalia (1983) designed a model that explained the process of revision in writing. Compared to
(Faigley & Witte, 1981's) model, according to Barkaoui (2007), their model focuses on  the process
of revision rather than merely focusing on the outcomes of the revision act. According to Becker
(2006), the Bereiter and Scardamalia revision model aims at developing the reviewing process that

was represented in Flower and Hayes' (1981) model which has categorized the sub-process of reviewing into two categories: these are 1) evaluation, where the writers appraise the written text and 2) revision, where they make changes. Bereiter and Scardamalia (1983's) model has represented the revision sub-processes in three strategies that are acted on by the writers when revising their writing. These strategies are: compare, diagnose, and operate (CDO). Becker (2006) explains that the behavior of the writers following these three strategies follows this pathway: writers contrast their mental content and what they have composed, if a problem is perceived, they diagnose what should be changed in the wake of thinking about amendment alternatives, they then work on the content to finish the revision. Notice that these three processes are not occurring linearly but in a recursive way. However, Bereiter and Scardamalia (1983) discovered that children's revisions usually did not improve their writing and they explained this as a consequence of the absence of diagnostic abilities that, they argue, almost no novice writers have.

The most developed model that represented the processes of revision in writing was suggested by Hayes et al. (1987), see figure 3.4. Basically, this model represents the revision in four key processes. These are 'task definition', 'evaluation', 'strategy selection' and 'text modification' (Hayes et al., 1987, p. 24).

**Processes 1**                    **Knowledge**

Text Definition

Goals, Criteria and Constraints for Texts and Plans

Evaluation

Read to:

Comprehend

Evaluate

Define Problems

Problem Representation

Detection          Diagnosis

Ill-defined        Well-defined

delay

ignore

search

Strategy Selection

Set Goal

Rewrite          Revise

Redraft or Paraphrase

Enter Means-Ends Table

Procedures for Improving Text

Means-Ends Tool

Modify Text and/or Plan

*Figure 3.4. Hayes et al (1987): Cognitive revision process*

To begin with, in order to eliminate any subsequent ambiguity, a clear introduction of both identified levels of revision that are Global and Local, should be presented. The distinction between global and local revision is defined by Ramage, Bean, and Johnson (2003). They claim that global revision is concerned with a text's overall picture. They go on to say that organizing texts and developing ideas are two respective examples. Local level revision on the other hand, is primarily concerned with changes on the sentence level, such as replacing words to clarify a message or correcting grammatical or spelling errors.

Task definition is concerned with identifying the objectives for revision, where the writer decides on his/her correction plan, for instance, to redesign the thoughts in a specific section. Undertaking task definition is additionally about investigating the qualities of the content, for example whether to look at a global level or similar perspectives. It is furthermore about the strategy used to accomplish the objectives (i.e., what apparatuses will the reviser use to satisfy their objectives), for instance, whether the examination of the writings will be done once, or on multiple occasions.

Evaluation is where the writers revise the composed content and the plans to recognize any issues experienced. A conceivable assessment act is that revisers may think there is an issue, yet they struggle to recognize it, or they may locate an all-around characterized issue that they unmistakably recognize and can articulate, for instance some incorrectly spelled words. In any case, Barkaoui (2007) claims that the two revisers' aptitude and the substance of the issue often decide the revisers' behaviour as it is frequently very simple to handle an issue with spelling compared to the somewhat more complex example, such as moving a subordinating clause or resolving a coherence problem. In fact, the models of revision tend to assume that it is easy for the writer to identify problems and then be able to put them right. However, as a writer, I still find difficulty in working out the writing faults correctly.

Text modification is where the writers have potential strategies to select from. As indicated by the strategic choices, Figures 3.1 and 3.2, there are two decisions for the reviser to choose from, either to adjust their own correction procedure or to alter the composed content.
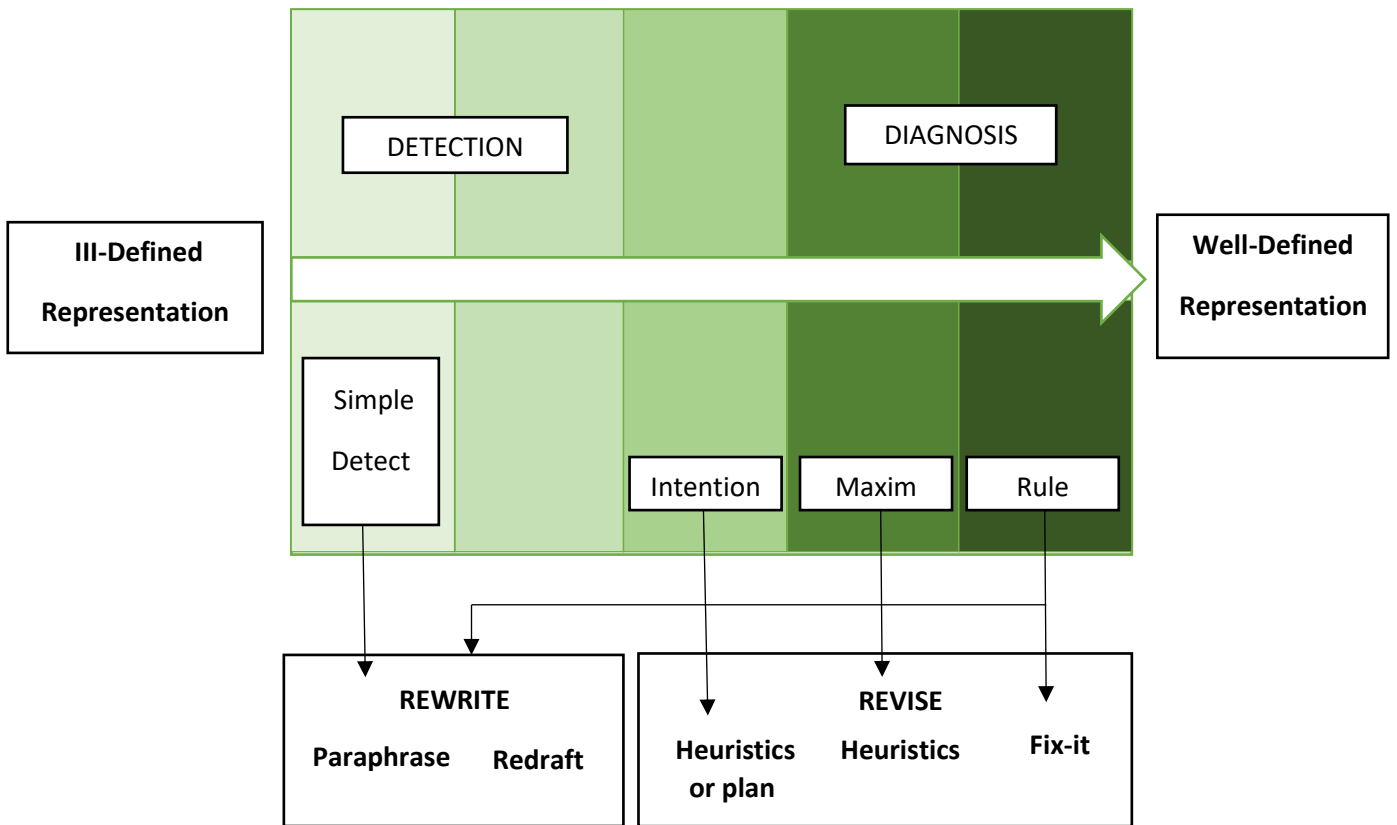


*Figure 3.5. The Strategic Choices (Hayes et al, 1987)*

Correspondingly, the reviser may look for additional information to further understand the issue or they could delay their choice or most likely disregard it. Revisers can likewise choose the option of altering the content, either adjust their ideas but maintain the content or change while keeping the same ideas, or perhaps change and safeguard either their thoughts or content where required. In view of their attention to their points and what they wish to impart and the diverse semantic levels of their writings, the writers can postpone, embed or supplant in order to adjust the text. Notably, the procedure that the writers may experience while adjusting their text, for example, can be to understand that the audiences were given a background to the content which seems insufficient to allow them to

follow the line of argument, so the writers may choose to include additional evidence or they may include other examples to help their audience understand their claim (Schriver, 1990). For Barkaoui (2007), such modification processes seem determined by factors, for example, the writers' capability, the writing task, or contextual constraints such as time. Overall, Hayes et al. (1987) proposed their model to create an account of an in-depth understanding of what makes an expert writer distinctive compared to the novice ones with regards to revision. This can assist researchers and educators to better understand the concept of writing efficiency.

### 3.3.4. The notion of better writing

With reference to the contested context of investigating and exploring revision as discussed above, comparing expert to novice writers' revision practice seems to be a highly relevant topic when aiming to support novice writers to become more expert, especially if this expertise is located in more sophisticated revision practices. Such research has shed light on the different aspects that distinguish expert from novice writers with respect to revision, for example, their perception of revision, how often and when, the way they process revision, and/or the product of their revision practice.

To begin with, Zamel (1983), Witte (1985), Scardamalia and Bereiter (1987), and Sperling and Freedman (2001) state that expert writers perceive revision as recursive and holistic, and hence they act to reshape and alter writings relating this procedure to their purposes and their own goals of composition, as well as considering different variables, such as the topic, organization and their readers, which in turn directs their amendment practice towards the global aspect of their composition.

In contrast, novice writers tend to have a narrower view of revision that results in them failing to appreciate the difference between revising and editing, and in tending to position revision towards the end of the writing process, thus, assuming revision is a discrete stage and so confining their revision practice to mere cosmetic changes and procedures such as focusing on the development of the text's

appearance (Pianko, 1979). In the same vein, Becker (2006) adds that whilst the novice writers' stance towards revision seems to be a negative construct, conceiving it as disciplinary and thus causing their reviewing to be solely focused on micro-level revision, expert writers, in contrast, posit revision as a positive construct that creates the potential for discovering something new and so as they rewrite they tend to adopt more comprehensive revision practices. This distinction in perceiving revision practice between novice and expert writers is also supported by other studies, for example Victori (1999) and (Dix, 2006).

Victori's (1999) study revealed that expert writers showed a wider and a more complex stance to any problems they encountered highlighting their awareness of 'personal knowledge', task challenges– 'task knowledge' and the way they are accessing the task, 'strategy knowledge' (p.549). She clarifies, that for able writers to develop their composition, they revised in ways that supported their text with new ideas in addition to restructuring the text that had already been composed, while unskilled writers seem to be missing the mindfulness that informed these practices, for example, they regularly conceived effective writing in formulating sentences using easy and simple vocabulary. Likewise, Dix (2006), examined three fluent writers' revision practices revealing that they displayed self-confidence in revising their texts, as well as being able to articulate their metacognitive awareness of their own revision acts. They figured out how to revise their texts in order to reconsider and alter their composing either at substance or surface levels.

Writers' awareness of their audience is another aspect of the comparison between skilled and unskilled writers. For Sperling and Freedman (2001), Sommers (1996), Schriver (1990) and Zamel (1983), expert writers devote considerable time to considering how to represent themselves or their message to their audience, considering the readers' interest and bearing in mind their needs, for instance, the background knowledge needed to satisfy their reader. In contrast, unskilled writers tend to be confined to the topic itself and devote insufficient time to think about their audience (Barkaoui, 2007).

Another distinction between the expert and the novice writer is the way they process revision. Whilst both skilled and unskilled writers seem able to detect problems that they encounter when writing, expert writers seem cognitively distinctive both in modifying texts and in explaining their problem compared to their counterparts (Bartlett, 1982). Barkaoui (2007) explains that expert writers tend to examine their writing at various levels and for several purposes such as retrieving new ideas while evaluating the content and form in their text. He adds that novice writers, in contrast, tend to utilize a set of limited revision strategies and often revise at sentence or word level, lacking any strategies that are related to substantive revision.

Three other dimensions can also distinguish between the two groups with regard to the frequency of revision that takes place, the focus of revision and the revision outcome. First, whereas able writers extensively, frequently and globally reflect on and revise their writing, novice writers hardly ever allocate enough time to revise their writing, regularly postponing revision to their final-draft, then revising at micro and local plan levels (Scardamalia & Bereiter, 1987; Sommers, 1980; Sperling & Freedman, 2001). Regarding revision outcomes, Daiute (1985) and Schriver (1990) claim that the better writers' revision practice influences their writing to positively produce a text of higher quality, because of their consideration of their readers' needs, the effective use of suitable strategies, their metacognitive and cognitive knowledge, and their broader perception of revision. They add that due to revision being directed toward local details in the text, less planning, and postponing revision to the final stage of the writing process, means that unskilled writers' revision can lead to the production of meaningless or incoherent composition.

In short, Scardamalia and Bereiter (1987) conclude that expert writers are distinct in their interpretation of personal or required success criteria, and follow a way that can lead to effective revision. Such a comparison can clarify what a concept of better writing involves and how better writers acts of revision contribute to this. This can assist the endeavor of policy makers, educators,

and teachers to support developing writers in adopting better revision strategies that mirror those of expert writers in order to support the writing development of novice writers. Whilst considerable knowledge is available about what makes the expert writers distinctive compared to the unskilled ones, writers are of different abilities and their revision practices are influenced by contextual factors.

### 3.3.5. The influencing factors in revision practice

Barkaoui (2007, 2016) states that writers' revision acts can be impacted by individual factors, such as language proficiency, learners' beliefs or writing expertise. He adds that it is also influenced by contextual factors, for example, task type, writing mode, or time constraints.

To begin with, language proficiency seems to be an individual factor that can affect writers' revision practices, in that the dilemma in processing revision can be magnified due to the writer being less skilled in language (Broekkamp & Van den Bergh, 1996; Chenoweth & Hayes, 2001; Stevenson, Schoonen, & De Glopper, 2006). Broekkamp and Van den Bergh (1996) note that when second language writers who struggle with the conventions and knowledge about the target language encountered in a text which adopts the use of complex language, they are possibly distracted in considering these diverse text demands, in other words their incompetency in the target language seems to hinder their ability to understand some of the content in the text. For example, in developing their line of argument to persuade their reader, writers with insufficient corpus vocabulary might focus at word level, restricting themselves to a limited choice of vocabulary, instead of developing their discourse which might operate at sentence or text level. The study of Whalen and Menard (1995) concur with the mentioned claim, suggesting that the second language writer being focused on language itself can be impeded and distracted from devoting attention to other text features, for example, higher order aspects of processing writing or focusing on generating ideas. Researchers have observed the dual relationship between revision and language proficiency. Chenoweth and Hayes

(2001), for example, observed that writers who managed to produce precise pieces of writing that need a smaller amount of revision was the result of their language proficiency. On the contrary, Porte (1996) pointed out that low proficiency second language learners tend to revise at a surface level, for example spelling and punctuation. Furthermore, a correlation has been observed between a second language learner's ability in detecting problems during text production and their language abilities (Kobayashi & Rinnert, 2001). For Myhill (2009b), dissimilar writing profiles were presented because of disparate language capability. In the light of this finding, and since the students participating in the current study are from two different levels in the education system, it is assumed that Post Basic student writers became better in terms of language proficiency. Hence, it is likely that they display a wide range of possible outcomes given that success with revision relies upon their own capability levels in their second language. Therefore, part of the rationale for the current study is to explore how Basic and Post Basic Omani students' perception and practices in revising EFL writing are impacted by their second language abilities.

Another factor that can impact the writers' revision act is their beliefs. For Barkaoui (2007, 2016) , self-confidence is highly influential in someone becoming a competent writer as low self-confidence may lead to the writer exerting less effort in revising their writing or worse is that this might result in students' revision resistance. Moreover, the matter of exerting effort while writing has been observed in some revision studies. On the one hand, feeling competent with respect to writing can lead the learner to increased intentional exertion in revising their writing and to keep on working longer once engaged with a thought-provoking task (Zimmerman & Bandura, 1994). On the other hand, Hayes et al. (1987), Victori (1999) and De Larios, Murphy, and Marín (2002) contend that unskilled writers are less aware of the commitment and exertion involved in doing the writing task. This might explain the common belief that better writing emanates simply from being talented rather than from effort and hard work.

Revision practices can also be impacted by students' writing experiences. Porte (1996) observed unskilled second language writers' strategies in revising their writing, and concluded that a writers' previous learning expertise has a definite impact on strategies. This influence can be in the form of fallacy, or of apprehension and understanding about the revision process, or generally about the whole process of writing, all of which might be due to writers being exposed to negative experiences.

Having discussed individual factors, there are also some contextual factors that can also affect writers' revision practice. For Barkaoui (2007), task difficulty, the writers' mood and the allocated time to complete the task are examples of such factors. By first asking whether a revisers' act can be impacted by the type of writing task, in her study comparing the writing process of a cohort of second language students writing in two different genres: argumentative and narrative, Raimes (1987) observed students' performed better when processing narrative texts compared to processing argumentative ones. For instance, in writing the narrative task learners exerted more effort in planning, rehearing, editing and revising. This might be explained by students having a better sense of writing in general and particularly of revision for narrative. A possible interpretation is that learners might have a superior understanding of what they need to state and the impact they want to make. Interestingly, argument is a more conventional type of writing, thus learners may have a sense that this writing is concerned with pre-determined forms and structures and they have less feeling about their own purposes in composing. It appears to me that there is a possibility of better revision practice when students have a powerful feeling of ownership of the composition task. This seems of considerable importance because having a powerful sense of authorial intention can result in assisting students towards better revision practice. Paradoxically, whilst educational institutions assume they offer a context to better advocate for authorial intention, they often seem to emphasize and focus too much on the form and substance of the content which can result in the removal of any personal intention. Another factor that might contribute to influencing revision in writing is the writing mode. Here we can shed light on two types of mode that students might be in, and these are writing using paper and

pen and word processing. Van Waes and Schellens (2003) and Li (2006) showed that adults who utilized computers tended to revise frequently and comprehensively, hence this indicates that the mode can play a role in the revision act. The last contextual factor to be discussed is when students are given a task with restricted time to complete it, and whether this could affect their revision practice. To answer this, Khuder and Harwood (2015) studied a group of 10 second language writers' revision practices by asking them to do a timed-task (test) and non-timed task. The study revealed that students revised in a superficial way when doing the timed task, whereas they revised beyond micro-level changes for the untimed task, revealing evidence of substantive revision (a focus on meaning).

In conclusion, whilst the above review has reflected a steady agreement among researcher concerning the definition of better writing by comparing expert to novice writers and the factors that can impact the writers' revision practice, most of these points discussed were informed by studies that took place in the L1 context with fewer studies that were conducted in L2 contexts. Since the current study takes place in the EFL Omani context, there is a question as to whether revision practice is different for L2 writers?

### 3.3.6. Revision in EFL context: An Omani perspective

As discussed, it appears that research in EFL is sparse where most of what is known about students' revision behavior is informed by studies in L1 with a scarcity in L2. Porte (1996) claims that whilst studies in L1 have shed light on the revision strategies used by expert writers and which pedagogically has advocated tactics to support novice writers, little research has focused on the EFL unskilled writers' revision strategies, or tried to delve into the conceivable purposes behind such revision acts. This means that EFL teaching and learning of revision is informed by studies either in L1 or ESL contexts, though the EFL context seems different. This section discusses this different dimension and supports Port's (1996) claim of a real need to understand EFL students' revision strategies and the

reasons behind such behaviors. According to Reichelt, Lefkowitz, Rinnert, and Schultz (2012), EFL writing seems different compared to L1 and ESL for several reasons, such as the environment where learning takes place, the difference in learners' characteristics, and/or the paucity of research into EFL writing processes, particularly at school level.

First, EFL students lack cultural and social support. In the EFL learning context, for example in Oman, Kabooha (2018) notes that students are exposed to a schooling context that does not offer them ample exposure to the target language, in that they are only immersed in the target language for about 45 minutes a day in a class that involves over 30 students. Al-Mahrooqi and Denman (2014) also pointed out that students rarely felt motivated or engaged in the classroom, some believed they learned English more from life than from school, and different students being researched announced that learning English was about achieving satisfying grades or marks, which made it exhausting. Given that, they often communicate outside school in their native language and they also have few opportunities to be supported in developing their L2 by their society or their own culture. Reichelt et al. (2012) highlight that some aspects that are more typical of ESL writers as contrasted with EFL. They document that while EFL writers appear to be impeded by not being submerged in the target language, ESL writers get the benefit of different opportunities to experience genuine composition since they are encompassed by local speakers and authentic usage of the targeted language which gives contextual support to their composed input. They clarify that EFL writers are regularly presented with inauthentic English use that is limited to the classroom setting and to the composed assignments they may be requested to do. This can influence the EFL students' purposes for writing in general and specifically in revision as they find it difficult to engage with real purposes for writing. Such a disadvantaged learning environment, according to Dörnyei and Schmidt (2001), can lead students into a state where they feel demotivated and hence their writing development might be impeded.

Second, whereas writing expertise seems confirmed as a personal factor that can impact developing students' revision strategies towards better writing, whether the schooling system can provide enough practice and guidance to EFL learners to develop their writing is questionable. Myhill (2009b) reports that research reveals that writing expertise can be sustained when learners are assisted in developing awareness of their own writing process, however this emphasis seems less visible in many classroom contexts. For Sergon (2011), teachers in Oman are overloaded, they are expected to undertake many duties related to assessment, planning, teaching and administrative work. In addition, whilst educational policies have placed a high responsibility on teachers, they are not allowed to take decisions about their teaching (Kabooha, 2018). Without underestimating the teachers' effort in developing their EFL students' revision skills, such a context might influence the support given to EFL learners in developing their perceptions and practices with regards to revision in writing.

Finally, since pedagogy is often informed by the outcome of research, little is known about the act of the EFL Omani adolescents' revision practice and the rationale behind that. A few studies were conducted and most of them focused more on teaching rather than on learning. As an example, Al-Shabibi (2004), scrutinized the secondary school teachers' beliefs about their teaching strategies. Reviewing the research about students' EFL writing in general and particularly on the skill of revision in Oman revealed that studies of this type seem sparse. Only a few studies were found to be investigating students' difficulties in writing. Al Abri (2006) investigated the difficulties encountered by grade 12 Omani students with writing, through utilizing two research methods, namely a survey targeting 40 teachers and an interview with 10 students. Whilst this study has not provided a clear picture of the challenges that grade 12 students faced in EFL writing, it recommended future research for scrutinizing the way the students engage in the writing process. Likewise, Al Seyabi and Tuzlukova (2014), researched Post Basic learners' issues in composing by contrasting their issues to those at University level using a survey method. As with similar studies, this investigation has not given an insight into students' challenges in composing. Interestingly, a small part of the study seems

to highlight tertiary level students were more competent in implementing self-editing strategies focusing on micro level revision such as revising spelling, grammar and the cosmetic aspects of their first draft in order to develop it. Nevertheless, there was not any evidence of utilizing revision strategies at macro-level (substantive revision). It seems alarming that high school students reflected that they hardly revise their writing, adding that they only do that at a micro-level revision and as a response to their teachers' feedback.

In short, it appeared that research into understanding EFL students' perception about revision is a real need due to research in this area being sparse. At this point, we might ask whether revision in L2 writing is more challenging than for the L1 writer and whether substantive revision would be possible for EFL writers. For an answer, we need to listen to the students' perspective to provide understanding of such points. Therefore, the current study advocates listening to students' perspectives about their writing development in general and specifically about revision in writing as a prerequisite if we are looking towards a successful impact of implementing the process approach in students' writing development. The next section discusses this point.

## 3.4. The importance of considering students' perspectives

The value of listening to students' views can be justified by three main reasons; these are benefits to educators, benefits to students and benefits to researchers. These points are discussed as follows.

First, Rudduck and Flutter (2000) state that to better achieve school enhancement, schools should be seen from the students' point of view, in other words, educators need to take into account students' expertise and their perspectives, and provide them with opportunities to be involved as active members. They add that students can inform us about their own thinking of what can assist them in making a difference to their commitment, which consequently can help them to develop their own progress in achieving the goals. At this point, whether students seem able to state their views is

questionable. To answer, Rudduck and Flutter (2000) claim that although students presented an inability to express their opinions about the challenges and difficulties they face at school, there is a lot that can be understood and revealed from their commentaries. According to Rudduck and Flutter (2000), students can learn from observation, yet they sometimes develop strategies and ways that hinder learning. This is harmful to their progress. Rudduck and Flutter (2000) assert that a real need to exploit pupils' insight to help them learn should be considered, as their experience of learning at school can strengthen their commitment to learning. For Soohoo (1993), Fletcher (2004) and Mitra (2014), listening to students can also provide educators and adults with an opportunity to understand and thus help students to be more responsible and involved at school. Undoubtedly, this makes them more self-confident and increases their interest in studying and learning, hence they become more mature and develop adulthood skills. Likewise, Lamb (2011) advises secondary school teachers to create a learning environment that can support learners to engage, foster their learning and protect students' identity via constant chances for autonomy. Furthermore, students' experience and their social maturity should be recognized through creating opportunities for involving them in decision making (Hodgkin, 1998).

Secondly, listening to students' voice can benefit students, in that their input can allow them to contribute to curriculum development as well as in empowering them to take on the responsibility for their own learning concerns (Ngussa & Makewa, 2014). This will also allow learners to participate in their schooling, contribute to their own learning via deciding upon what and how they learn and how their learning achievement is assessed (ibid.). Students can also gain advantages by being qualitatively researched, such as exploring their identity with the possibility of them becoming better in self-understanding, and so, developing their agencies and capabilities (Ranson, 2000).

Thirdly, listening to students' views can add benefits to educational researchers. Coyle (2013) states that successful learning can emanate from collecting data and reflecting on it. She adds that listening to students helps detect the changes that need to be made for learning to become successful (Coyle, 2013). Changes need not only be confined to learning, they can also reach school policies. For Nieto (1994), school policies can be changed by starting the process of listening to students' views, however, she claims that a focus on students' voices seems understudied, and debates that school success and failure are not being heard, thus, research in this area seems sparse and recent. Hence, to assess students' achievement, Suskie (2010) suggests that both teachers and educational researchers need to assess the students' learning process. She regards assessing the learning process as a significant component due to its assistance in understanding the reason behind students' failure to learn. She gives an example of students who are not writing well and the benefits of knowing the reason that might cause this through researching the way they learn to write throughout the writing program. Hence, the educational researcher gains insights into the way that students learn, and the challenges they might encounter by listening to their perspectives. She also adds that researchers can also use gathered relevant evidence through getting students to reflect in interviews, to explore students' beliefs, their attitudes and values, and their understanding of any targets that they need to develop as well as asking students about the extent to which they believe they are successful.

In general, qualitative educational researchers can provide the educational field with ample practical benefits by listening to students' perspectives. Theoretically, learning can be promoted and enhanced when students are provided with enough room for reflecting on their own learning via reflective tasks (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 2000; Driscoll, 2002) .The importance of leaners' insights, according to Groves and Welsh (2010), stems from the idea that they can be used as a source for learners being actively and productively involved in the process of their own learning, providing a genuine intention to develop students' learning. This seems evident in Grooves and Welsh's (2010) study where students were found to be able in articulating their perspectives regarding their school experience and

their own learning. Students, for example, perceive those aspects that can influence their schooling and learning, such as their own responsibility for their learning, their own voice, teaching qualities, their relationship with their teachers and other school members, as well as the actions to be taken to meet their needs. In addition, students claimed that they expected a role as an influencing partner in their experiences, however this was not realized.

Bell and Aldridge (2014) argue that teachers can profit a lot as they contemplate students' reflections and responses during the tasks they do. Accordingly, considering students' reaction and perceptions especially during revision practice is strongly required to reform the appropriate approaches that might enhance development. For Cottrell (2019), discussed in Chapter 1, students show an ability to contemplate the ways and strategies they adopt and must follow in their learning process. They also have manifested a clear understanding of their competency level and the deficiencies in their own knowledge and skills. Thus, utilizing students' ability to reflect on their learning can assist educators to make use of such input to scaffold students towards effective revision practice and better writing.

In conclusion, with respect to writing in general and particularly to revision, listening to students' perspectives can provide an in-depth understanding of how they perceive revision in writing, of their attitude towards the process of revision, and their conceptual understanding about revision in different dimensions, such as how students define the revision goal, how they understand the process of writing, how they define success criteria for further effective revision practice, and for their metalinguistic awareness. The following sections discuss these points in detail.

### 3.4.1. Students' perceptions matter

Perception is where people utilize their senses to understand or notice things; the way they think about such things and their awareness of what they like (*Longman English dictionary*, 2004). Perception is about something frequently seen as learning when the general population trust it as knowledge. For

Moustakas (1994), perception is when people connect their sentiments, make pictures, and recover past significance as a disposition either good or negative to a given object. Regarding revision in writing, perception can be explained in different dimensions; for example, how do students conceptualize revision, what are their attitudes or how do they feel about revision and what are their beliefs about it.

Philippakos (2017) inquired about the reason students find revision tasks challenging. To answer such a question, MacArthur, Graham, and Schwartz (1991) state that a possible reason can be concerned with the way students conceptualize the revision as a process. They add that students may conceive revision in an inadequate way as simply proof reading, they could perceive it as rewriting their text with a purpose of substituting some words or aiming to make changes for cosmetic revision or neatness. Since the current study proposes substantial revision as an intended revision, it assumes that students are directed towards a global improvement to generally develop the quality of their writing and specifically improving their skills of organizing and presenting ideas, in addition to developing the line of argument through their texts (Bridwell, 1980). For MacArthur (2016) , students may also believe that revision includes massive changes, since they do not have the capacity to decisively assess their composition, or analyze where in a content they may experience issues. Of these reasons, as Hayes et al. (1987) propose, is students' deficiency of strategies that can be utilized to handle revision through having the capacity to analyze the issues. Moreover, it may be the case that students do not have a wide understanding of their audience and what needs they demand (Midgette, Haria, & MacArthur, 2008). Sometimes, students' concept of revision might be developed due to instructional factors, where teachers reinforce a narrowing concept of the revision purposes and what success criteria students have of good writing (Sommers, 1980). Finally, Yagelski (1995) concurs with Sommers, he found that high school students conceived a traditional conceptual understanding of better writing, due to being reinforced by their teachers. Overall, for students to better perform their

revision practice, a real need for developing their concept of revision is needed. This is also related to revisers' metacognitive awareness.

Metacognition, according to Flavell as cited in Efklides (2008) is "cognition of cognition that serves two basic functions, namely the monitoring and control of cognition" (p.278). This means that what we know about what we know, Meta means beyond. In writing, metacognitive awareness can mark the distinction between skilled and unskilled writers, discussed in 3.2.4. For Victori (1999), skilled writers have displayed three types of knowledge. These are 'task knowledge', 'person knowledge' and 'strategy knowledge' (p.52). Likewise, Jones (2014) observed that students reflected a varied understanding, 'metacognitive knowledge', of their own writing (p.52). This alludes that metacognitive awareness seems to play a dynamic role in developing students' writing in general and particularly in their revision skill. Barkaoui (2007) believes that it would be better for students to develop metacognitive awareness as suggested by Victori (1999).

Students' beliefs are an important dimension in the students' perceptions of revision, which is also connected to their concept, and can influence students' revision practice. For Elbow (1986), the extent to which revision can be an effective practice is formed by what beliefs students have concerning the purpose of revision and what strategies they ought to use. For Barkaoui (2007, 2016), discussed in 3.2.5., having a belief that revision ability is a matter of talent will lead the writers to produce less effort in re-examining their composition or in worst cases, this may result in writers' revision impediment. Regrettably, studies documented a gloomy view of students' development in conceptualizing revision. Students had not realized the potentials that revision might allow them to understand, modify or develop their ideas. Furthermore, they conceived no purpose in revising their writing, and they limited their view to a micro level of revision - in other words, editing texts at a surface level (Applebee, 1981; Sommers, 1980).

Whereas the process of writing in general and the sub-process of revision is of a recursive nature, studies like Myhill and Jones (2007) and Morris (2007) observed a linear view of students' revision practice. Students reported deferring revision until they completed their writing texts. Even though this example is likely to be dictated by existing classroom practices that in general promote writing as a linear process, where students start planning their writing and end up the process with revising their writing as a post-composition task. Even though many students were seen to have made changes amid texting, an examination of post-hoc interviews information make it obvious that they conceptualized revision as a separate phase (Myhill & Jones, 2007).

From another point of view, students may have a misconception in understanding revision which may confuse them and yield an inadequate revision practice. They regularly accept that their insight is unchangeable, and they should maintain it. For Vygotsky, as cited in Benko (2016), all knowledge is in fact integrated in an existing knowledge and through such process of social interaction it evolves and changes. Accordingly, students should know about the genuine need to refresh their knowledge, welcome existing information, and to communicate with others to build up their knowledge.

In Oman, even though studies with respect to this area appears overlooked, Al-Saidyah (1996) surmises that applied convictions and comprehension of students, as well as that of teachers mirror the embedded convictions of an instructor's strength of criticism in composing, as such when their conviction uncovers that instructors are the main hotspot for giving remedial input in composing. Al-Saidyah likewise reports educators center around surface dimension updates where the examination underscores that instructors are more worried about grammar, punctuation and spelling errors. It seems that other perspectives hardly get any consideration. Omani institutions still encompass the above discussed entrenched beliefs, which is alarming, despite the policies advocating a reflective dimension to learning, learner-centered approaches and focusing on coherence in writing to communicate meaning. Given that, it seems unlikely that L2 students will be able to develop their

revision strategies unless teachers change their entrenched beliefs as discussed and stop implicitly coercing students to follow such messages. Having discussed the significance of student writers' perspectives, listening to students' perspective can also highlight their understanding of metalinguistic knowledge that can assist students' choices of language when revising their writing and may have an impact on their cognition and metacognition resources.

### 3.4.2. Metalinguistic knowledge and revision.

As discussed earlier in 3.1.1, the nature of writing is complex, it is not acquired, and must be learned, thus, it involves much knowledge and various strategies. Among these is learning how to create meaning (Halliday, 1993). It is about semiotics; semiotics contemplates how meaning is created. This is known as metalinguistic knowledge (meaning-focused) which seems essential in contributing to writing development beside metacognitive strategies (writing process). This might add extra challenges to students writing in their L2. According to Kellogg (1999), writing is a decision- making act that involves several decisions such as decisions about word choice, structuring the text, the audience or how to communicate the content. Given that, Myhill (2011) argues that writing as an act that involves decisions about how to shape, how to reflect and how to revise composition. Myhill and Jones (2015) explain the argument raised by Fortune (2005) and Tolchinsky (2001) which claimed that when text is to be produced, metalinguistic activity seems inevitable. They comment that writing without being engaged in metalinguistic activity seems impossible, hence, it seems that metalinguistic knowledge is essential to better development of writing in general and particularly in revision.  This means that when students revise their writing, for example, when word choice may be influenced by their metalinguistic awareness, the question to be asked is so what is metalinguistic understanding and why is it important?

 Myhill (2011) provides the literature with a definition that draws on interdisciplinary psychology, sociology, and linguistic perspectives. She states that metalinguistic understanding is 'the explicit

bringing into consciousness of an attention to language as an artifact, and the conscious monitoring and manipulation of language to create desired meanings grounded in socially shared understandings' (p. 250). Metalinguistic awareness seems important as when improvement will help raise students' ability to use grammar effectively as they express their language choices in writing (Hacker, 2018) . For El-Daly, as cited in Alhaisoni (2012), whilst adult learners in the Arab World seem to display a rich knowledge of English grammatical rules, they have shown an inability in utilizing this knowledge when producing and communicating in writing. He adds that this is because they have not developed their conceptual understanding of communicative use of language, in other words they have not been provided with opportunities to learn grammar in context. Myhill, Jones, Lines, and Watson (2012) concur with this claim, suggesting that to effectively get students to develop their metalinguistic understanding, teaching grammar should be contextualized.

Overall, listening to students' perspectives can provide a better understanding not only about their development of linguistic knowledge but also their awareness of metalinguistic knowledge. However, reviewing the literature has not shown a clear relationship between metalinguistic understanding and cognitive writing strategies. Although this study intended to understand how students perceived revision in EFL writing and how this may impact their actual revisions, listening to students' perspectives can also shed light on the influence of students' metalinguistic understanding on developing their writing with respect to revision.

Having discussed the different aspects of students' perceptions about revision in writing, the next section provides an in-depth review and examines research on second language revision to pinpoint what is known about students' perceptions and practices with relation to revision in second language writing, and to identify the gaps that need to be addressed. Notably, some examples of second language revision were briefly introduced earlier for the purpose of clarifying some points.

## 3.5. Research on second language revision in writing

There are several gaps in the literature on secondary and high school student writers' revision in EFL writing. The majority of revision research in second language settings focuses on quantifying learners' techniques or investigating the level of revision, whether at the local or global levels. Some research looks at how pedagogical approaches affect revision in writing, while other look into revision in computer assisted language acquisition. Only a few studies have looked into how student writers think about revision, and most of them have not gone into great detail about how they think about it. Most of these studies targeted students at tertiary level where there is a dearth of research at secondary and high school levels. There is also a dearth of research on revision from sociocultural perspectives in the EFL environment, with most studies focusing on cognitive and linguistic views. This section reviews the available evidence-based research pertaining to revision in second language writing.

Ferris (1997) examined L2 revision research and asserted that it is uncommon, occurring largely in doctoral theses rather than published papers and books. L2 revision research, according to Ferris (1995), focuses on topics, including the types of revisions students make, pedagogical approaches to assist students in revising, and the impact of peer or instructor feedback on student's revision. To begin, research seems to focus on the different types of revisions that second-language student writers make. As an example, Ferris (1995) points out, Gaskill considers revision to be a proofreading exercise that concentrates on the word level. Similarly, L2 student writers, according to Porte (1997), value revision activities that impact solely the text's surface features rather than its content. Porte means that the participating university students in his study were inclined to focus on revising their text at local level, at sentence and word levels. Porte (1996) adds that this was evident in their frequent revisions at word and sentence level, which he termed as surface level changes, compared to less frequent changes in the quality of ideas. However, Porte (1996) has not clarified the way students perceived the purpose, their evaluative criteria, the way they process revision, or whether they followed linear or recursive strategies. In addition, Porte (1996) attributed students' revision practice

to past learning experience and contextual factors such as time or the writing task. Whilst this study has revealed some contribution to knowledge with respect to revision in writing, this study has not delved into other challenges that students encountered when reviewing their writing such as the ones corresponding to cognition, metacognition, textual, social or textual factors. Furthermore, such a study like the majority of studies in this arena targeted tertiary level students whereas studies in exploring secondary and high school students are scarce. About a decade after Ferris (1995) claimed the scarcity of revision studies in L2, Sze (2002) looked at the revising process of a reluctant ESL student writer in high school. She backs up previous research that showed this student made more surface-level adjustments than those connected to structure and content; notably, he made more revisions and high-level revisions in response to written comments than when working alone. Whilst this study has shed light on some strategies that this reluctant student writer utilized in revising his writing, it has not clarified the student's understanding of the revision purpose, their success criteria, the revision process or the challenges he encountered. This study can be also questioned for its sample as it targeted only one student, so its findings can be considered less trustworthy due to the lack of number of the targeted participants. It also can be questioned in terms of the sample of texts being analyzed as it examined only two topics, one which was familiar to the student and another which was not.

Maarof and Murat (2013) conducted another study with the goal of examining essay writing techniques among 50 high intermediate and low proficiency ESL secondary school students and determined any significant differences in strategy utilization between the two groups. Despite the fact that the study's goal was not to look into revision, the findings revealed that student writers in this study focused more on revising grammar and vocabulary while writing, and that while they were little concerned about the organization of the ideas in their essays, their revising strategies were limited to ensuring that they followed certain school requirements. Overall, this study was helpful in shedding light on some challenges faced by ESL student writers, such as being limited in their revisions to meet school standards. However, it did not expand on any pertinence to students' knowledge of revision as

a process that may lead to more effective development of written essays. In the same vein, according to recent research by Allen and Katayama (2016), six undergraduate Japanese EFL students were more concerned with forms than with substance. In peer feedback activities, Allen and Katayama (2016) linked such concentration on forms to peer language proficiency. However, such a study did not go into great detail on the relationship between language proficiency and students' focus on forms, nor did it go into detail about how students perceive revision. Similarly, while second language research has extended to include revision in ESL/EFL writing as a part of computer assisted language learning, studies like Razak and Saeed (2015) continue to confirm the tendency of second language learners to place more emphasis on local than global level revisions. This study looked into peer writing revision with 14 EFL Arab university students in a Facebook group, using three research methods: content analysis of learners' original and modified written paragraphs, online interactional modification, and responses to post-revision reflection sessions. Razak and Saeed (2015) concluded that EFL students' inclination to revise at local level might be attributed to the narrow scope of their study as it looked at paragraph alterations, not essays, which limited the opportunities of participants in reviewing the entire sections of the text. This could also be attributed to the lack of adequate training before the primary study and the investigation's short duration, which prevented them from focusing properly on developments in local level revisions. However, this study, like the one discussed above, has not delved into the rationales for students' preference for local level revision, neither did it examine students' understanding of the revision process or the factors that might have contributed to such a tendency.

Second language research also examined some pedagogical approaches to enhance student writers' revision skills. Sengupta (2000), for example, looked into the impact of explicit revision tactics teaching in L2 secondary schools in Hong Kong. For instance, students were given a topic with language problems that they highlighted and corrected. According to Sengupta (2000), explicit educational methods have a measurable impact on writing performance and may help to create an

understanding of discourse-related aspects in second language writing. Luo and Liao (2015) also investigated the impact of employing corpora in revising essays written in English as a second language. According to Luo and Liao (2015), corpora is a web based fourth generation corpus tool that provides student writers with collocation, concordance, frequency lists and keywords among other features. The experiment enlists the participants of 30 undergraduate students from two college English classes. The findings revealed that the corpora as a reference tool assisted learners in making proper corrections and reducing errors in free output. According to the results, individuals have generally positive feelings towards using corpora in writing. Another study that examined the effect of using pedagogical intervention is a study conducted by Huang (2015) which examined the impacts of goal setting for revision in an EFL college where freshmen classrooms were divided into three groups and assessed for learning. Before commencing to revise, the objective group and the goal + group were instructed to identify a revision aim. Then a list of strategies was also supplied to those in the goal+ group. The control group did nothing before the revision and only reflected on what they had done. A comparison between the three groups in terms of the quality of the drafts and revision, as well as the improvement from draft to revision, revealed the goal+ group outperformed both the other two groups. As a result, when training and scaffolding are offered, the goal setting can be a beneficial tool for effective revision. Regarding research on the impact of feedback intervention on revision, two groups of 122 EFL female students aged 18 to 30, studying at a high intermediate institute in Tehran, were studied to find out if the most positive benefits of peer review can be noticed in either offering or receiving comments (Sotoudehnama & Pilehvari, 2016). The findings revealed that, regardless of skill level, feedback givers improve more than receivers in both global and local areas of writing.

Regarding studies in second language revision in writing using computer assisted language learning, a very good example is a study by Yang, Harn, and Hwang (2019). This study sought to explore how utilizing a bilingual concordancer could enhance college students' EFL writing through text

modifications (Chinese and English). Two groups, an experimental of 15 students and a control group of 17 students, participated in this study. The experimental group used the concordancer database, whereas the control group used Yahoo's Chinese English online dictionary. The experimental group improved their text revision more than the control group, as they raised metalinguistic awareness to analyze word choices and sentence forms. The bilingual concordancer offered the experimental group with rich linguistic situations in which they could compare the contrasts between the two languages and can infer the rule of the target language (English).

There were also some studies that pointed out the relationship between L1 and L2 during students' revision of their writing. Two studies found in the literature: these are Alhaisoni (2012) and Elola and Mikulski (2013). Alhaisoni (2012) examined tertiary level Saudi EFL student writers' revision strategies in writing both in English and in Arabic. Two research procedures were applied: think-aloud reporting and semi-structured interviews. The investigation revealed that students implemented strategies more frequently when writing in English rather than in Arabic. Revision was applied only after finishing each paragraph and after the completion of the whole passage. Furthermore, it was revealed that in English composition, students relied on the same specific strategies they applied when writing in Arabic and vice versa. However, this study has not revealed the factors behind such revisions. It has not determined students' revision priorities or concerns, their revision processes and the various challenges they encountered. Most importantly, it has not clarified and illustrated the rationales behind the transfer of revision strategies between the two languages (Arabic and English).For 12 'Spanish as a heritage language' learners engaged in a third-year Spanish course, a study conducted by Elola and Mikulski (2013), gives statistics on the sorts of revisions and the time spent revising paragraph length of comparative essays in English and Spanish. Although most participants revised both surface features and meaning in both languages, when writing in English, students spent more time on meaning revisions and total (surface and meaning) modifications. The fact that both English and Spanish editing practices were virtually the same implies cross linguistic

transmission. Like Alhaisoni (2012), this study also has not elucidated any rationales for the transfer between English and Spanish or the factors that can explain such a transfer.

In Oman, as discussed, studies on revision seem to be overlooked, just a small part in a study conducted by Al Seyabi and Tuzlukova (2014) that was aimed at exploring the gaps between Post Basic and University student writers' difficulties encountered while writing in English as well as the techniques they employed to overcome these difficulties. A gap appeared to exist between Post Basic and Tertiary students in issues relating to the writing process, such as selecting the appropriate lexical items and relevant knowledge to articulate their ideas, constructing sentences, achieving a coherent organization of ideas, and using appropriate decision-making skills while processing texts. Though this study was not aiming to investigate revision in EFL writing, the findings revealed that tertiary level students were more adept at employing self-editing solely at sentence and word levels. On the contrary, Post Basic student writers reported that they seldom revise their writing and only do that at local level and as a response to teachers' feedback.

Overall, research on revision on EFL writing is still young, though it has contributed to the literature in multifaceted dimensions of revision practice. However, most of the studies focused either on quantifying the types of revision or investigating the impact of feedback and other instructional tactics. Studies exploring students' perspectives with respect to revision are sparse, and little is known about the way EFL student writers conceptualize revision and implement such thoughts in revising their writing. Moreover, most of these studies focused on students as tertiary level learners with a neglect of adolescent students. To conclude, if policy, researchers, and educators are looking to support student writers towards effective revision and better writing, there is a real need to understand students' perspectives in regards to revision in writing. We need to figure out students' perception of the purpose, the process they followed in revision, their understanding of success criteria, and/or their perceptions of the difficulties they encounter when revising their texts. It is also of much importance

to understand how students' perspectives are implemented in their revision practice. Whilst considering developmental models as discussed and assuming that students' ability in revision is developed as they become mature with sufficient practice, it seems reasonable to trace students' revision practice as they graduate from one level in schools to the next level. Therefore, we need to examine Post Basic revision practice among Basic student writers' revision practice.

**3.6. Summary**

This chapter lays forth the theoretical foundations for the current research, both in terms of the nature of writing development in general and specifically in terms of locating the research within revision in EFL/ESL contexts. It elucidates the nature of writing development and how such complicated writing skill is magnified when students write in a second language. It also aims to operationalize a concept of revision based on the existing definitions in the literature, as well as illustrates how revision as a process is carried out and developed. In addition, the chapter explores the concept of better writing and identifies several factors that may influence revision practices, as well as sheds some light on revision in EFL contexts. It also discusses the various components that must be grasped in order to effectively comprehend revision in EFL writing, as well as provides appropriate justifications for listening to students' opinions. Finally, a summary of existing studies in second language revision was presented, along with analysis of the significant gaps.

Editing, evaluating, proofreading and reviewing are all considered sub-processes of revision, which is recursive goal oriented cognitive writing sub-process. This cognition process is thought to go beyond detecting and modifying micro level revision like spelling, grammar, or mechanical writing to a greater emphasis on macro level revision like discourse development, generating ideas for the purpose of discovery, namely learning something new, and revision for better readability - in other words to develop the quality of ideas and logic organization of the discourse components. However,

students' perceptions of purpose or attribution while revising are effective as they may determine attainment and serve as significant indicators of the process how students' revising strategies or their understanding of such potential strategies determines the types of outcomes that are possible.  It is therefore meant to better support students in improving on their revision, in accordance with the competencies of skilled writers as we need to understand the way student writers' conceptualize revision in EFL writing in four main dimensions. These refer to their perceptions of the purpose of revision, their understanding of the process, their success criteria for better revision, and their understanding of the difficulties they encountered. We also need to know how understanding is implemented in the students' actual practice. Furthermore, to better understand any development as students graduate from one grade to another grade, we need to trace any potential development in practice as students become more mature. Therefore, to expect students' achievement, it is necessary to discern motivation and various affective factors such as beliefs, feelings and attitudes being of great influence on the written product.

A review of studies on students' revision in writing in ESL/EFL contexts was conducted. These study findings highlight intricacies of revision and, to some extent, shed insight on the amount of revision made by student writers, the type of revision made, as well as on the difficulties they experience in seeking to improve their writing. There have been few studies of EFL students' attitudes and perceptions of revision in EFL writing. To date there is no study that focusses on the development of EFL students' revision in Oman. In addition, the research described above has some gaps that need to be filled. The current research endeavour is intended to contribute to this body of knowledge.

To sum up, writing is not naturally acquired. It must be learned. It is very interesting to notice that revision, although it is a crucial element in the writing process that could help students become skilled writers, it remains challenging even for native speakers of English. Many studies have agreed on the fact that expert writers are outstanding when it comes to modifying their written products and this is due to several reasons. They have a holistic understanding of their problems. They revise their work

with several purposes in mind and they perform a multi-level revision. They allocate time and effort to revision. Their revision practices influence their writing product positively because they process suitable strategies and success criteria, cognitive and metacognitive knowledge. They possess a broad perception of revision that could include their thinking of their readers' needs. This is finally a result of the sociocultural aspect. Their society and surroundings introduce great contributions to help them develop. They learn from their parents who are native speakers, from their peers and especially from their teachers' feedback. Of course this has a great impact on language learning and on the learner's writing revision development.

As for ESL and EFL learners the revision sub-process is even more challenging. They need to know not only the conventions of writing but also the theories needed for successful and fruitful revision. It is not an easy task to help them move from local superficial revision to the global and substantial revision. The social environment is almost futile as far as the contribution to their learning or their individual development are concerned. Their parents, peers and even teachers sometimes are not educated enough to provide them with suitable advice and opinion. Most of the time teachers do not give the right feedback that could help students develop their language or improve their learning to better revise their writing. Most of the time, learners consider the revision sub-process as being a separate stage. They usually tend to delay it until they have finished writing their product. Revision for them does not exceed the micro-level which means that they only make changes on the word or the sentence level but rarely on content level. The purpose of teachers, researchers and educators, therefore, is to shed light on the theoretical level that makes EFL or ESL student writers capable of moving from this superficial micro-level revision to the substantial macro-level revision. Research in this respect is really sparse and much effort needs to be undertaken in this direction.

As a result, the conceptual framework (Figure 5.6) below is adopted in this thesis as an attempt to explore the complexities of writing revision processes. As a result, it is assumed that assisting student writers in developing more effective revision strategies is subject to understanding the complexity of

student writers' writing revision processes in developing more effective revision strategies and the interdependence of this process' components, as well as the influence of social and cultural factors in shaping student writers' perceptions and practices of EFL writing revision strategies.



*Figure 3.6. The conceptual framework of the thesis*

Grasping student writers' understanding of revision, as well as their actual use of that knowledge in their desire to engage in efficient revision process, is thus recommended to be crucial. Hence, if we want to develop a context-specific strategy for gaining better writing revision, we need to first identify the variables that can empower or disempower student writers to achieve this goal.

The next chapter delves into the study's conceptual and methodological underpinnings, which influenced how data were collected and analyzed. It also discusses the ethical issues and quality procedures that were used to ensure the legitimacy of my inquiry.

# CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

## 4.1. Introduction

This chapter addresses the methodological approach adopted for this study. It sheds light on the theoretical framework that is underpinned by a socio-constructivist paradigm and encompasses exploratory interpretive research based on a pragmatic stance in attempting to provide an understanding of Omani Basic and Post-Basic EFL students' perceptions towards revision practice in EFL school writing revision processes. In other words, how they perceive their own writing with respect to implementing revision skills. The chapter elucidates the research aims and research questions followed by the philosophical stance as well as the discussion of the socio-political considerations and the relationship factors between theory and practice. Based on that, it attempts to clarify the adopted methodology for the research paradigm. This will be followed by an outline and a detailed description of the research design and the methods being utilized to achieve the research aims together with a detailed description of how data were gathered and analyzed. Then, it explains and discusses the adopted action being taken to ensure a high quality of the research as well as to make sure that it is aligned with the ethical consideration. Finally, it provides an account of the limitations and strengths of this study, as well as a summary of this chapter.

## 4.2. Research aims and Research questions

The research questions of this study attempt an exploratory investigative study into how Basic (Grade 9) and Post-Basic (Grade 12) Omani student writers conceive revision in EFL school writing, and it follows a pragmatic approach as it focuses on the way EFL student writers perceive the practical purpose, procedure, success criteria, as well as the challenges they encounter in writing revision and how these are revealed in their actual practice. It additionally looks to coin out a definition of what might constitute positive and feasible developments in students' writing with respect to revision via

attempting to find out and understand the specific features of such anticipated developments by identifying any distinctions in practice between Basic and Post Basic Education. Overall, this study is oriented by the following research questions:

1. How do Basic and Post Basic Omani students perceive and define the purpose of revision in EFL school writing?

2. How do Basic and Post Basic Omani students understand the process of revision in EFL writing and what steps do they usually follow?

3. What is the Basic and Post Basic Omani students' understanding of success criteria for EFL writing revision?

4. What challenges do Basic and Post Basic Omani students face during the revision of their EFL writing?

5. How do Omani students develop their EFL writing revision practices from Basic Education to Post Basic Education?

## 4.3. Philosophical Stance

This study follows approaches informed by beliefs and concepts, as introduced by Jerry Wellington, and referred to in Jerry Wellington, Bathmaker, Hunt, McCulloch, and Sikes (2005). While it is argued that it is hard to adopt only one technique or approach while scrutinizing any research topics, most research topics are investigated from a variety of theoretical and philosophical standpoints thereby applying convenient and available methods and techniques that consequently often lead to different conclusions. Jerry Wellington et al. (2005) clarify that these standpoints involve the researcher's attitudes, feelings, values, and these are encompassed under an umbrella that is called a paradigm which governs the researcher's ontological and epistemological assumptions and choice of methodology, procedures and process, and eventually the writing up of the whole study. It is for these

reasons that an interpretivist pragmatic research approach has been chosen for this study to explore EFL students perceptions of the purpose and process of writing revision, the challenges they face, and evaluating students understanding of success criteria in order to effectively monitor the practical methodologies they use. The following section provides a detailed explanation regarding my theoretical assumptions as a researcher.

### 4.3.1. Ontological and epistemological stance

To begin with, ontology refers to a reality perspective or more specifically the nature of reality (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018; Guba,1990). Ontology examines the nature of this reality which could be single, multiple, or debated. Assuming that reality needs to be interpreted is an epistemological conviction pertinent to the ontological belief that there are multiple realities rather than a single one. This assumption informs a constructivist research paradigm adopting particular research methods like qualitative research tools. It is necessary to recognize and explore students' understanding about revision, as well as their purposes, their preferred approach to the development of the composing process with respect to revision, their ways while defining their criteria for effective revision as well as their understanding of the challenges they encountered. This is useful to trace any developments in the revision perceptions amongst these students across their stages of education in mainly secondary and high school education. Therefore, a relativist ontology is viewed as the most suitable to achieve these intended aims. Notably, relativism ontology is encompassed by the interpretivists who reject reality as being objective and single, instead, they assume that reality is multiple and based on experience (Guba & Lincoln, 1994b). In other words, the accounts of reality are constructed and based on experiences. With this in mind, it is likely that students' writing experiences at school, as they graduate from one level to another, are based on their good interaction with teachers' comments and guidance which are assumed to have helped them to improve their writing skill and sculpture their specific way of writing. Students also tend to carefully consider their teacher as their reader and they

attempt to please him/her to get good marks. They are likely to conceive that the more accurate their work is, the better marks they will get. Social reality is also assumed by the interpretivist stance to be more subjective, changing and incorporating various perspectives (Hennink, Hutter, & Bailey, 2010). Hence, my research intends to make a sense of the way Basic and Post Basic Omani students perceive their context and construct reality as well as exploring how they understand revision in writing. Accordingly, reality is conceived as being constructed and dependent on the participants' perspectives.

From another perspective, Crotty (1998) introduces epistemology as the way to provide a detailed explanation of our understanding and the process of knowledge acquisition. Guba & Lincoln (1994a) conceived epistemology as a relationship between knowledge and the researcher and this is a fundamental baseline of this research design.

Being exploratory in nature, and endorsing, as its main objective, the understanding of what goes on, and what is involved in the writing revision task from students' perspectives, the study also deems that those students' efforts are heavily influenced by particular social realities which definitely formulate their endeavours. This study is underpinned by the social constructivist point of view. Social constructivism , assumes that knowledge is constructed during individuals' interactions with each other and is informed by their surrounding social environments, school context, and their socio-educational life (Williams & Burden, 1997). O'Dowd (2003), being a constructivist, shares the same idea and believes that knowledge is constructed via the way people socialize and interact. Such an epistemology does not believe in a universal law that is outside of people's interaction which seems to be waiting to be discovered by the researcher. Therefore, I consider that interacting with Basic and Post Basic students is a key component in order to gain insight into how participants account for or construct their understanding. In summary, whilst this study adopted a methodological stance which seems underpinned by philosophical and theoretical assumptions, other factors can also contribute to

their methodological stance, such as the socio-political context and the persistent controversial issue between theory and practice. These two factors are discussed in the next two sections.

### 4.3.2. Socio-political factors

Educational research, according to Hammersley (as cited inRobson, 2002, p. 72) "cannot be value free or politically neutral" and might be shaped by such social and political contexts. Therefore, to achieve the social research, two approaches are suggested: Practical and Academic. The practical approach intends to provide knowledge that can be useful and practical for practitioners and policy makers as well. Whereas the Academic approach meditates the theoretical literature contribution in the creation of theoretical accounts upon which prospective researchers might interpret their own findings.

Although most researchers in Oman adopt the practical approach in their inquiries, my research is informed by both academic and practical perspectives. On the one hand, as far as the findings of this study are concerned, it is clear that this study considers theoretical frameworks such as cognitive psychology and writing as a socio-cultural tool to hold both of these theoretical perspectives in tension. It also intends to figure out a clear and deeper understanding of revision from students' perspectives. This will promote an awareness policy of the significance of students' points of view in what might be used to construct development. It is expected that this study would create a conspicuous understanding of students' requirements, behavior and improvement, and the effect of their educational context on this as well as the impact of inclining policy and social awareness towards these factors. On the other hand, this study aims at providing some pedagogical inferences via understanding student writers' real needs mainly in revising their EFL writing, and in general attempting to look for techniques, based on the research findings, to help students better elaborate their writing strategies. Having a long debate on the socio-political context factor, this factor also appears to be interconnected with the quandary of the rapport between theory and practice.

### 4.3.3. Theory and Practice

Historically, the relationship between theory and practice has been controversial. Kessels and Korthagen (1996) criticize educational research for putting an emphasis on constructing theories which have accordingly prolonged the gap between theory and practice. Researchers had two different views regarding theory; whilst Hargreaves (1996) sheds light on the theory's inability to seize the intricate nature of real life, Atkinson (2000) estimates theory as a vital structure that can help practitioners like teachers in their everyday practice. Regardless of whether its support is either in the field of theory or in practice, educational research can impact the decisions taken by policy makers and often lead policy towards more conversant decisions. Accordingly, this study endeavors to bridge the gap between practice and theory; whilst it intends to understand revision from students' perspectives and focus on their writing behavior and how it develops, it also aims at raising policy makers' awareness of the significance of applying theories in understanding and teaching revision. Thus, this will assist decision makers to re-conceptualize what might institute a development in students' writing skills in general and principally to revision.

### 4.3.4. My role as a researcher

Following an interpretivist approach will yield ample occasions to engage myself in the communication process, hence I will effectively communicate with targeted participants in a practical and pragmatic way. In the meantime, this will also help me locate participants' explanations of their social world historically and socially (Crotty, 1998). This method will also aid me capture the real and natural everyday communication of these participants. Being an interpretive researcher, I am seeking clarification for the examined subject as well as creating a new interpretation for it rather than investigating current knowledge (Richards, 2014), or analyzing an identified supposition. I esteem myself as a key research instrument and hence this indicates that the findings will be mediated via my analysis and meaning maker- as a researcher (Snape & Spencer, 2003). Whilst I am aware that my

role as an interpretive researcher is a fundamental part of the entire study procedure, I believe that being a highly reflexive researcher as Randon (2002) recommended is of much importance to me as a qualitative researcher. Hence, to better act as a reflexive researcher, I oblige myself, as suggested by Jerry Wellington (2000) and Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007) , to scrutinize my own assumptions, any potential bias when either gathering or analyzing data, or my roles in proceeding the research (Cohen et al., 2007; Jerry Wellington, 2000). Accordingly, I am aware that my position as an Educational supervisor (School Inspector) might impact on the participants' decision to participate, or might also influence their participation towards developing a biased data due to my authority. Hence, to minimize any effect that might impact the research findings, I sat with teachers and told them to inform students that I was not acting as a supervisor but as a researcher. I also sat with students and informed them that I would act as a researcher and that this study was only intending to fulfil its intentions. In terms of analyzing data, I attempted to construct themes that consistently and logically reflected the gathered data. Overall, I am aware that due to the subjective nature of being an interpretive researcher, I would be exposed to inescapable roles in the study process particularly in data collection and data analysis. Hence, to minimize any potential effects or any potential for biased inferences, I followed Lichtman's (2013) recommendations of considering trustworthiness via triangulation and member checking, these are discussed in section 4.14.

## 4.4. Research Design

Following my philosophical framework and its aligned methodological stance, my priority would be to adopt an appropriate research design that would assist me in successfully processing the enquiry of the research. Therefore, the pragmatic approach of this study aims to focus on what works in any given situation, and analyze the problems and challenges that EFL students encounter during the revision process. Using an exploratory interpretivist approach, this study adopted a two- phase design, working with four classes of students (two Basic level; and two Post Basic level). The first phase explored 36 students' perceptions of revision through focus group interviews. In the second phase, a

detailed analysis of 12 students' perceptions of revision, and revision processes was undertaken. This involved observations of the students revising their writing in class, semi-structured interviews with each student, and a collection of the draft and final revision of their writing. According to Bryman (2012), a research design pinpoints the overall strategy that clarifies the different phases of the study.

Henceforth, figure 4.1 sheds light on this overall exploratory qualitative study strategy and its different phases. Notably, due to the incremental nature of gathering data for this study, data collection methods were sequentially proceeded in the two phases of this study. Figure 4.1 presents the sequential process of data collection for each of the four classes. It seems obvious that the first phase data collection methods for each of the four classes would inform the construction of semi-structured post-hoc interviews in phase 2. Similarly, classroom observations and text analysis would support the semi-structured interviews with prompts and stimuli to assist student writers reflect on their revisions. Therefore, intended data sets would be sequenced in a planned incremental manner. Furthermore, to better clarify the data samples, Table 4.1 shows the type and quantity of the data samples.
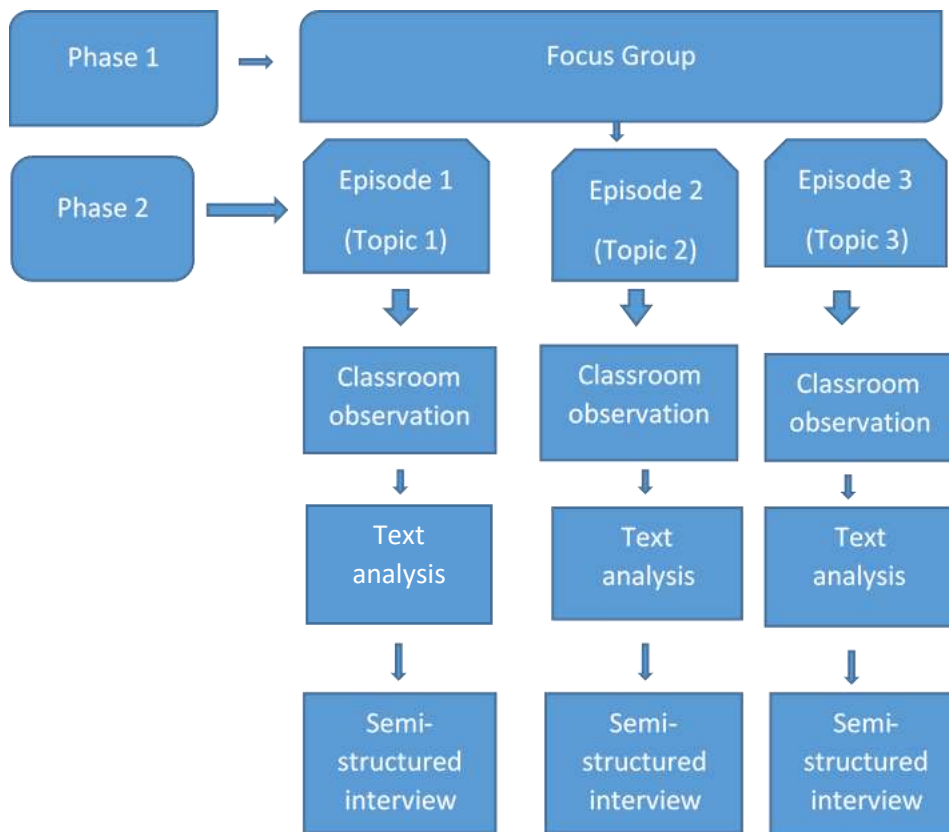
*Figure 4.1. Research design phases*

*Table 4.1. Quantities of data samples*

| Type of data | Number of transcripts/reports/texts |
|---|---|
| Focus Groups | 4 transcripts |
| Semi-structured Post-hoc interviews | 36 transcripts |
| Classroom observation reports | 36 reports |
| Students' written texts | 36 (First draft) |
| | 36 (Final draft) |

 In addition, Oppenheim (2003) recommends an illustration of the research methods that would be utilized to achieve the intentions of the inquiry. Thus, a research design provides a blueprint for the researchers that facilitates their processing of the procedures involved in the endeavor to achieve the study intentions. Notably, two main factors informed this adopted design; (1) the study questions and (2) the nature of the topic to be explored. Therefore, the adopted following design (See Table 4.2.)

attempts to explore and understand the contextualized and multiple realities of Omani Basic and Post

Basic students' perceptions and practices about revision in EFL writing.

*Table 4.2. The research design*

| RQ | Data Collection Method | Participants | Data analysis methods |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. How do Basic and Post Basic Omani students perceive and define the purpose of revision in EFL school writing?<br><br>2. How do Basic and Post Basic Omani students understand the process of revision in EFL writing and what steps do they follow?<br><br>3. What is the Basic and Post Basic Omani students understanding of success criteria for EFL writing revision?<br>4. What challenges do Basic and Post Basic Omani students face during the revision of their EFL writing? | Focus group<br>Post- hoc interviews | Phase 1:<br>Grade 9: 18 students<br>Grade 12: 18 students<br>Phase 2:<br>Grade 9: 6 students<br>Grade 12: 6 students | Qualitative thematic analysis |
| 5. How do Omani students develop their EFL writing revision practices from Basic Education to Post Basic Education? | Classroom Observation.<br>Text analysis | Phase 2:<br>Grade 9 : 6 students<br>Grade 12: 6 students | Analytical framework |

Notably, some points have been considered in adopting such a design. To begin with, the selection of methods adopted was informed by my own experience as an Educational Supervisor (School Inspector) - in other words, this is at the heart of my tasks as I am involved in interviewing teachers, students and educators, appraising students' achievement, following up students' learning, and so forth. Some of the research methods were also developed based on previous studies of students' composing processes. For example, the rational of using the post-hoc semi structured interview using stimulated recalls was due to it being used in Myhill and Jones (2007). This study sought students' understanding of in-process revisions. The classroom observation methods used to observe students' in three different writing classes was adapted to this study following the implementation of such methods in Myhill and Jones (2007), Jones (2014) and Myhill (2009b), and these data collection methods are detailed in the subsequent sections. For the text analysis, a model utilized by Sze (2002) was adopted to gather data about revision changes that students made; how their writing changes between the first and the final draft.

Secondly, gathering data followed incremental process, thus data obtained via focus group interviews were used to acquire those salient ideas concerning students' perceptions and experiences with relation to their revision in writing, as well as to inform the semi-structured interviews in phase2. Classroom observations and text analysis were used for stimulus recalls to prompt students during the one-to-one semi structured interviews which were utilized to get them reflect on their own understanding of their revision practice. This would also help in triangulating other data collected via other methods. In the same vein, the study design aimed to obtain in-depth and rich data via the engagement with students' proceeding process from their pre-writing strategies to completing their final text. Meanwhile, to provide potentials for the emergence of evidences about students' understanding over time, the quality of data collection procedure has been considered in order to meet this development. For this reason, data collection process was repeated in three episodes during phase two.

Finally, as the sample in this study design involves students participants from two different levels, namely Basic (Grade 9) and Post Basic (Grade 12), it is likely that the writers in these two levels share some common understanding due to being educated in the same educational and social contexts. However, the involvement of student writers from these two different levels would also sustain contrast and development between these different phases in education.

Overall, whilst the above points provide a brief account of my research design framework, subsequent sections present more details about the components of this adopted research design.

## 4.5. The Sampling strategy

Mason (2002) describes sampling as those implemented conventions and measures having as a purpose to determine, select, and guarantee admittance to pertinent information origin which will serve to develop more data using the researchers' selected methods. For Mason (2002), the accountability of the research findings as a whole, pertains to the implemented sampling process, and that the researchers' choice for optimal techniques should be primarily informed by a combination of two considerations. While the initial one addresses the research focus, the latter pertains to practical as well as resource-based matter. The current research focuses on understanding EFL Omani Basic and Post Basic students' perceptions and practices about revision of their school writing. It also considers that to better achieve the intention of the study, some points relating to practicality need to be addressed, such as easy access, participants' willingness to participate, and participants' tolerance for researchers who are strangers. In addition, it was of paramount importance to expect the group of selected participants to come up with relevant data to meet the research aims in this study, and to provide a better understanding of what the qualitative research is intending to do (Silverman, 2015). Accordingly, my study adopted both convenience and purposive sampling techniques in order to fulfil this criteria.

Convenience sampling, according to Etikan, Musa, and Alkassim (2016) and Taherdoost (2016), is introduced as a non-probable or non-arbitrary sample as the topics are hand-picked according to certain practical standards including accessibility, obtainability, time restrictions and participants' willingness. The illustration for this study was selected according to the interests of the investigator and comfort of access, as well as the inclination of the school Principal, Senior English Teacher (SET), class teachers, parents and students to partake in the study. Figure 4.2 overviews the overall participants' sample.
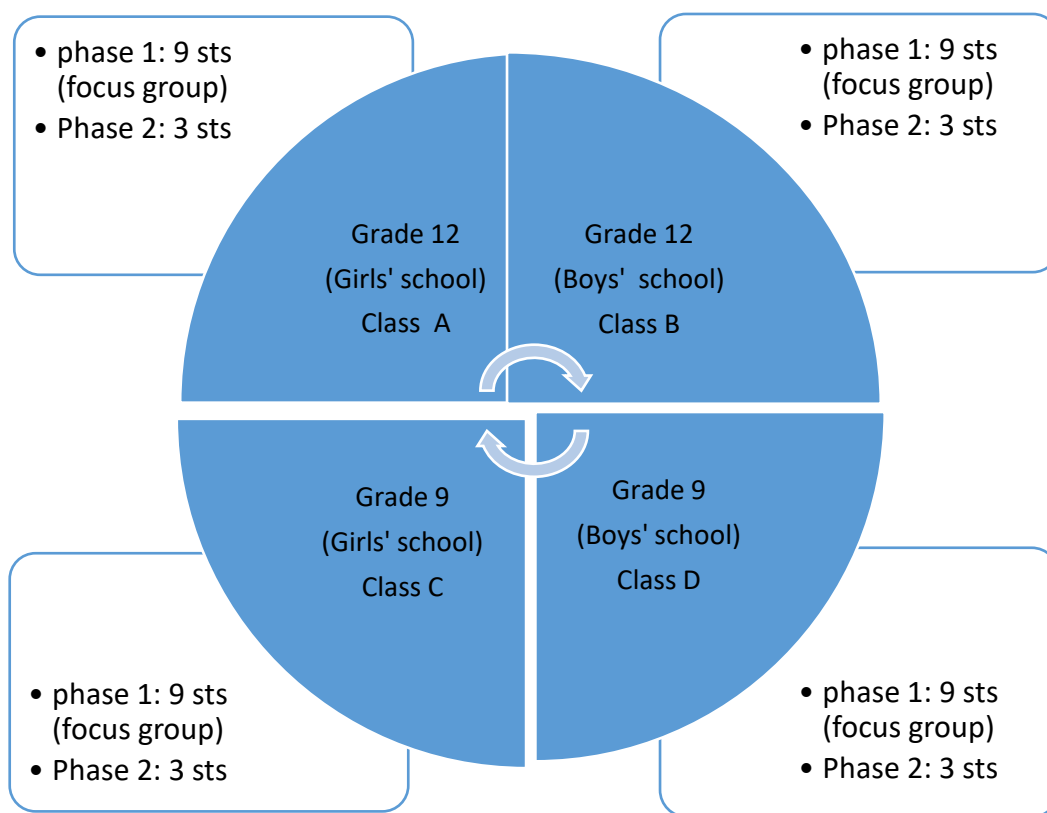


*Figure 4.2. An overview of the participants' sample*

Following the rationale suggested by Seidman (2006) of the real need to understand the setting to better proceed with the research, I have chosen four schools from Batinah South Province, the area where I live, to better access these schools and to be able to process my research within the time available. I have also considered the willingness of the school administration, teachers, senior English teachers, parents and students to cooperate, accept and allow me conduct the research. Out of these

four schools, I selected 4 classes, and it is of note that these four schools are not co-education schools as the system in Oman divides students based on gender from Grade 5 to Grade 12. Furthermore, the students in these four classes were classified into three sub-levels of achievements: low, average and high, according to their previous semester assessment reports. Then I selected 9 students from each class, three from each level, Low, average and high attainment, as a focus and I conducted a focus group. The total number of students selected for the first phase of focus group were 36 students. A key concern for me as a researcher was attempting to ensure that my sample could represent the population, for this is regarded as a success criterion for effective sampling (Sapsford, 2007). Hence, I considered selecting participants of different academic achievements, of different gender, of different geographical contexts, therefore two schools were selected from rural and two from urban areas.

In the second phase of this study, the sampling was handled purposefully by people who are endowed with specific characteristics that may support and assist the relevant research (Silverman, 2015). Accordingly, it was necessary to select articulate participants who are fluent speakers and can properly express properly their reflections on their revision practice. This is typically used in qualitative research to recognize and select the information-rich cases for the most proper exploitation of accessible sources. Therefore, 3 students of different attainment levels and who have the ability to express their understanding were selected from each class with a total number of 12 students. Table 4.3 illustrates phase 2 participants' background.

*Table 4.3. Phase 2 participants' background*

| Educational Level | Class | Gender | Grade | Participants' Pseudonyms | Attainment | Age |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Post Basic | A | Female | 12 | Rand | Higher | 17 |
| | | Female | 12 | Jawaher | Average | 17 |
| | | Female | 12 | Ibtihal | Low | 17 |
| | B | Male | 12 | Naif | Higher | 17 |
| | | Male | 12 | Rami | Average | 17 |
| | | Male | 12 | Fahad | Low | 17 |
| Basic | C | Female | 9 | Shrooq | Higher | 15 |
| | | Female | 9 | Abeer | Average | 15 |
| | | Female | 9 | Jinan | Low | 15 |
| | D | Male | 9 | Misfer | Higher | 15 |
| | | Male | 9 | Qusai | Average | 15 |
| | | Male | 9 | Anees | Low | 15 |

Unlike quantitative research, qualitative research is an arbiter on the sample size being limited (Englander, 2012). This is obvious as the scope and scale of qualitative research opts towards depth rather than breadth (Agee, 2009; Creswell, 2009; Mason, 2002). Therefore, random sampling is excluded in the current study. Regardless of the exclusion of probability sampling due to the nature and the practicality issues of the current qualitative multi-case study, this study aimed at creating an account for further research via attempting to explore and provide understanding of the phenomenon being investigated.

Notably, Grade 9 students have already completed 8 years of schooling and have been studying English for 8 years from Grade 1. Grade 12 students have already completed 11 years of studying English. Students are taught English, 5 encounters, each of 40 minutes, per week in Grade 9, and 6 lessons in Grade 12. These students are exposed to a variety of approaches in writing such as narratives, descriptive, evaluative (argumentative), and interactive (writing emails and letters) writing. They are also taught via the process writing approach and they keep portfolios where from time to time they are expected to reflect on their writing. They are also required to submit multi drafts and redrafts of their written texts. Students are assessed in writing via both summative assessment using written tasks and via final term tests.

## 4.6. Research methods

The use of qualitative methods which attempts to understand the world through participants' perspectives is compelling while adopting an interpretive research methodology. Whilst the nature of such qualitative enquiry questions often addresses questions of why and how, these questions appear relevant to explore complex issues, provide in-depth understanding about of the phenomenon, and ensure rich data about the researched topic. The nature of interpretive enquiry also requires a particular setting to study people, where subjectivity and reflexivity would assist the researchers to develop their awareness of understanding, reasoning and setting (van Teijlingen & Forrest, 2004). Additionally, to better gain an in-depth insight of the phenomenon, adopting a two phase design emphasizes the use of various data collection methods such as observations, interviews or document analysis (Stake, 1995; Yin, 1994). Hence, this study uses four types of data collection methods, namely focus group, classroom observation, text analysis and semi-structured interviews- these are discussed later in this section.

Nevertheless, whilst the current study aims at exploring students' perceptions and practices about revision of their EFL writing, this seems challenging for the researcher to decide about particular data collection methods. Exploring students' cognitive process, or those related to human psychological facets seems complex, and methods used might sometimes fall short of precisely disclosing or capturing such unobservable cognitive process. Levy and Olive (2002) elaborate that the scarcity in empirical research about the writing process is due to effective scrutiny of such process. This means that finding suitable methods to examine such complex issues seems difficult, for instance, the researcher might find it difficult to fulfil the aims of understanding the sub-processes of revision because of the lack of suitable methods that can permit the revision cognitive process to be recognizable (Alamargot & Chanquoy, 2001a). In addition, revision as a process is embedded with other writing sub-processes, such as planning and translation, therefore it cannot be observed as a separate activity. To make the situation more perplexing, Witte (1985) claims that due to the impeded nature of the sub-process of writing, revision can occur at the pre-texting stage which may impose extra challenges for the researcher to gain insight into the strategies that take place prior to the text production. However, the possibility that the issues discussed above may impede the accurate investigation results does not mean that the aims of the current study would not be achieved. To minimize such difficulties, I applied many approaches and techniques; interviews, as well as live classroom observations. In an attempt to obtain accurate finings, the process of data collection was repeated many times. Meanwhile, students were given prompts from their class observation and text analysis to help them remember which process they had gone through to better reflect on during post-hoc interviews. During post-hoc interviews, students were asked about their pre-text revision. Perry (2011), contends that the priority of researchers' choice to select any data collection methods does not solely depend on how comfortable such a method is to the researcher, but the extent to which it can better answers the research questions. Table 4.4 elaborates the sequences of data sets. The following sections illustrate my own decision on prioritizing and selecting research methods for the components of the research design that I adopt for this study.

*Table 4.4. Sequences of the data set*

| Sequence of data collection | Data set |
| --- | --- |
| Focus group interview | A general response to the points concerning the points; the purpose of revision, strategies used, challenges encountered and success criteria. |
| One- to-one observation of writing | Contextual evidence pause-write patterns and revising behavior. |
| Examination of final draft compared to the first draft | The nature and frequency of revision behavior. |
| Post-hoc interview | Reflection on writing process and evaluation of finished text using stimulus recalls from: students' writing, observation and focused group interview. |

### 4.6.1. Focus Group

This study opts towards this method as a preliminary stage to attain data about the salient and overall perspective of the discussed points from the group of participating student writers prior to their starting to perform writing tasks in the spring semester, 2019. This concurs with Kitzinger (1995) who suggests that a focus group can be used at an initial phase of a study to explore the objectives of the study being conducted. It means that using a focus group in the first phase of the current study would pave the way for in-depth understanding of students' perceptions and practices about revision in EFL writing. The data obtained from this method will be combined with the data obtained from semi-structured interviews to answer the first four research questions.

According to Wilson (1997), a focus group discussion is a group interview that involves between 4 to 12 participants, discussing a topic in a stress-free environment. Krueger and Casey (2000) elaborate that this method can provide insights about multi-facet dimensions of participants' cognition, behavior and experiences, such as feelings, attitudes or perceptions via motivating interaction among the group of participants. They add that such experiences and ideas would emerge during the discussion and can be socially shared. Morgan (1998) emphasizes on the interaction that occurred during the focus group interviews as a distinctive feature of such a method, compared to other qualitative methods. He claims that the researcher can manifest the interaction among the group of participants to obtain in-depth insight into the discussed issues as well as to attain divergent views that could be explicitly discussed.

I conducted four focus groups interviews, once for each class, 9 students in each class were representative of the four classes being adopted for this study. Each focus group discussion lasted between 50 to 60 minutes. Despite the fact that the participating students are exposed to social and educational context, involving students from different abilities in each focus group would sustain having diverse perspectives. In line with the purpose of utilizing this method, this method would also help me to select 3 'articulate participants' and those who are able to speak well about their reflection on their revision practice to achieve the research intentions. These students were of different levels from each class, with a total number of 12 students selected purposefully for the second phase to obtain rich data by focusing on a small number of participants.

Focus groups as a qualitative method can benefit the interpretive researchers in various ways. For instance, it appears possible for the researcher to gain different perspectives of a phenomenon (Cohen et al., 2007). Another advantage is that the researcher can gather rich data in a short time and at a low cost. Focus groups can also allow me as a researcher to evaluate various issues in a diverse group and setting.

However, like any other type of methods, a focus group has also some down sides. Cohen et al. (2007) claim that sometimes the data gained may not reflect the entire group perspectives due to the dominance of some individuals' views. What this means is that some participants in the focus group interview might influence other participants' views on particular matters. Bryman (2016) also draws attention to the impact of obtaining a huge amount of data as an issue for the researcher to transcribe as it seems time consuming as well as being challenging to manage and analyze. Bryman (2016) adds that the moderator may have difficulty in monitoring the interaction among the group due to having less control over the discussion. For instance, student writers participating in the current study were sometimes inclined to forget about respecting turn taking, so they interrupt others when speaking. This has caused trouble for me as a researcher to grasp what they were trying to express.

Regardless of the abovementioned disadvantages of the focus group discussion, it appeared that its advantages are more significant and outweigh the above discussed disadvantages. However, to better utilize this method, there are some key aspects that I have considered. First, I developed the focus group schedule (see appendix 1 for both English and Arabic versions of the schedule) which Creswell and Creswell (2017) characterize as a loose structured schedule, similar to the schedule used to conduct semi-structured interviews. Notice that I used students' native language due to their limited second language ability to get them better discuss the points intended for discussion, I formulated open-ended questions to help student writers reflect on their experience about their revision practice. In order to help students focus on the topics being discussed, I used some prompts that I displayed via power point. I also used examples of revised texts written by students of similar ages to help student writers articulate their perceptions of the revision purposes, revision processes, how successful any revision was, and the challenges they might encounter when revising their writing. Second, Winlow, Simm, Marvell, and Schaaf (2013) suggest a convenient setting is of much significance when conducting a focus group interview. Accordingly, I contacted the school to make sure that the time suggested to conduct the focus group would not conflict with any other scheduled tasks. I also selected

a comfortable room, with all the resources needed. Students also sat in a U- shape to get them sit close to each other. Third, following the importance of preparing participants for the discussion (Longhurst, 2003), students were oriented about the topic, the aspects to be discussed as well as the study intentions in order to better proceed in such a discussion.

Regarding my role as a moderator, (Kitzinger, 1995) claims that the participants should be encouraged to engage in discussing with each other than engaging with the moderator. Therefore, I only worked as a facilitator and intervened only where needed; such as in cases where silent participants needed to be motivated to participate. I also attempted to establish a trusting atmosphere by telling students that there were no wrong or right answers and that their points of view were welcomed. I also thanked the participants at the end of the discussion.

### 4.6.2. Semi-structured post-hoc interview

Interviews, as a qualitative method, are applied by interpretive researchers to give a chance to inspect the participants' viewpoints. Kvale (2009) elucidates this idea as he confirms that interviews allow investigators to appreciate the value of the interviewees' expressions. Interviewees themselves are afforded with multiple chances to discuss their understanding of their world and their private apprehension about any given situations (Cohen et al., 2007). Following my interpretive stance and the questions that addressed this study, interviews form the core source of data. The nature of the research questions necessitates listening to students to comprehend their insights about revision. Along with the focus groups interviews, post-hoc semi-structured interviews can also help to clarify some ambiguities that might result from using other methods. This indicates that listening to the different contributors would help in understanding why students follow certain revision techniques or undertake particular approaches for revising their first draft. This research assumes that using post-hoc interviews would shed light on challenging experiences that students might come across and their

personal advances as well. Henceforth, interviews would help to answer the first four research questions for this study.

Compared to other types of interviews, Robson (2002) believes that exploiting Semi-structured interviews is typical as it affords inclusive understanding of the phenomenon. According to Kvale (1994), to achieve this, researchers can adjust, alter and acquaint the questions according to responses attained from applicants. Seidman (2006) thinks that interviewers in semi-structured interviews can benefit from the investigation to obtain a deep understanding about the participants' lives by using the interviewees' narratives and language. Moreover, Robson (2002) proposes that the interviewer in semi-structured interviews may use investigations to get the interviewees to develop their answer to the questions. For example, if the participant states 'I was thinking of what to write, 'very cold' or 'freezing' and at the end I decided to put 'freezing' as it is more suitable for this context. Then the interviewer might interrupt them by asking another question like 'Why do you think that freezing is more suitable for this context?' to help the participants justify their choice and to understand the participants' decision making.

However, there are some drawbacks of applying interviews. Some of these pertain to the personal nature of the interview. For Sellitieze et al., as mentioned in J. Bell (1987), such a subjective tendency can arise and impact the responses of the respondents. Borg as mentioned in J. Bell (1987) elaborates that two mechanisms may lead to subjectivity; the former refers to the case where framework of the interview being observed by the interviewees as time sensitive and the interviewers' inclination to pursue any replies that strengthen their own presumptions. It seems arguable that the problem of subjectivity may be unsolvable (Gavron as mentioned in J. Bell, 1987). Certainly, from the interpretivist standpoint, this is not a problem to be addressed but simply the nature of reality- it is socially constructed and so all the truth is subjective. Another censure against interviews is that they are time consuming. I will try to be as vigilant as I could be with regards to my suppositions. It takes

significant time to design and schedule interviews, wording comprehensible questions, as well as demanding substantial time to examine the contributors' replies (J. Bell, 1987).

Hence, I have adopted some steps in my endeavour to minimise the impact of the subjectivity when interviewing the participants. I used various methods: focus group interviews, class observation, text analysis, and post-hoc interviews to triangulate the sources of data, so as to improve the research quality. I also recorded all the interviews using an mp4 recorder, to ensure that the data represents students' perspectives, thoughts and attitudes. I also tried my best to avoid using any question that can affect students' answers towards my predispositions. Arguably, irrespective of the cons, interviews qualities seem to surpass its shortcomings.

Regarding scheduling and conducting my semi- structured interviews, there were some key aspects that I have taken into considerations. According to Doody and Noonan (2013), to better create an environment for a good rapport and interaction, it is significant to prepare a convenient interview schedule that would assist achieving such an aim. The findings that were revealed during the focus group interviews helped me construct the same questions though in a more elaborate and contextualized way. These constructs were linked to the objectives intended from this study. For this objective I intended to work out a schedule, see appendix 2. Hence, this schedule is divided into four main sections. The first part intends to assist students' ability reflect on their writing experience about the topic. This is followed by getting students to focus on their revision priorities and concerns to get a better understanding of their perceptions of the revision purpose. The subsequent part goes in details to ask students to reflect on their focus and the success criteria when revising their writing. Finally, the last part asks students about their challenges and the support they are provided with to better revise their writing. Since the participants' language seem limited to reflect on their revision practice, I used their L1 (Arabic), to provide an opportunity for the student writers to easily reflect, discuss and get involved in in-depth discussion. The data were then translated into English and uploaded in NVIVO

program. To ensure genuine data have been transcribed, I asked an interpreter to check my translation. Therefore, the schedule was prepared in English and then translated into Arabic (see appendix 2, for English and Arabic versions). Another key aspect that I considered and which was suggested by Hove and Anda (2005) about creating a stress-free atmosphere during the actual conducting of the semi-structured interviews, to encourage student writers to share their perspectives and experiences with me. I briefed student writers on the points that were going to be discussed. I also selected the best avenue for interviewing these students, in a comfortable room and of the time they agreed on to be interviewed, as well as ensuring their voluntary participations in the interviews.

### 4.6.3. Classroom Observation

Cohen, Monion, and Morris (2000) place great emphasis on the classroom observation method as a valuable strategy to collect data due to its ability to provide rich, genuine, live data which can assist in structuring genuine situations where it can be obtained, set in normal setting. In fact, I opted to adopt such a method for two main purposes: (1) to obtain data that would contribute to answer research question 5: *How do Omani students develop their EFL writing revision practices from Basic Education to Post Basic Education?* And (2) to gather data about students' pauses and in process changes that would serve as prompts and stimuli to assist student writers reflect on their revision practices. Students were prompted during the post-hoc semi structured interviews, using data gathered from the observations reports (see examples of this data in appendix 3), to assist them to retrieve and reflect on their practice. As an example, the interview schedule, appendix 2, shows how the proposed questions asked students about some pauses, for example 'Let's focus on some pauses', 'Tell me what you were doing?' Likewise, Question 7 also reads 'Let's focus on some changes, why did you decide to make these changes?' Appendix 8 clearly shows the way that observational data was integrated as a set of prompts to assist students reflect on their writing revision practice as in the following extracts from appendix 8:

*Interviewer:*   *Let's look at some of the changes you have done, so if you like in line 2, at the beginning of the sentence you have decided about capitalization, please explain?*

*Participant:*   *It's a habit, though I knew that at the beginning of each sentence, I should start with a capital letter, but during this writing I was not concentrating, then after writing I realized that I should capitalize 'T' in 'The'' and I corrected it.*

For the purpose of this study, in phase two, I observed three student writers, from each class, in three episodes of writing. The total number of observation reports was 36 reports (see an example in appendix 3). The nature of this type of observation, according to Jerry Wellington (2000), provides the researcher with very limited opportunities to interact with the participants. Bryman (1984) adds that such little interaction can avoid distracting such a participants' performance. Hence, the observation task requires sitting nearby to the writers to take notes about their pause-write patterns and to note any on the spot revisions made. I assigned two teachers from each school to observe the other two students performing writing in class while I was observing the other student. The 12 observed students in three different writing classes during the semester, were observed using a method used by Myhill (2009b) and Jones (2014) as it has allowed me to figure out when students write and when they pause as well as the potential revision made during the pauses. Following this method, the two cooperating teachers and I used digital stop watches to frame when students wrote and when they interrupted their flow of writing to possible rereading, reflecting or thinking. The method also used a blank paper with numbered lines to locate the occurring pauses and to take notes of the revisions taking place during writing. Notice that I trained the cooperating teachers to make optimum use of this methods to obtain the relevant data.

Nevertheless, a thorough understanding of the reflexive data cannot be restricted to visible conducts since these are interlinked with individual purposes and goals, hence we have to make sure that the way members parse the situations is fully understood (Pring, 2000). Likewise, Jones (2009) reflected palpably that comparative examples of behavior might be inspired by a variety of different expectations, troubles and inspirations: the desire to embrace given composition patterns in no way,

shape or form tells the whole story. Albeit observation is a valued technique, there is an actual need to exploit some self-reporting approaches such as post-hoc interviews to look for unnoticeable impacts of a specific principle, standpoints, attitudes and considerate viewpoints (Jerry Wellington, 2015). Hence, this study also adopted a design that can compensate for such challenges- in other words, I also used retrospective post-hoc semi-structured interviews.

### 4.6.4. Text analysis

Denzin and Lincoln (2011) define text analysis as a method that aims at analyzing texts to draw some inferences based on interpreting such texts being analyzed. Lichtman (2013) indicates that these written texts can be written for the purpose of the study or may serve other intentions. Taking this into consideration, these texts were gathered in natural settings; this means that these collected texts were done as a classroom activity and for the purpose of ongoing assessment. This text analysis method was adopted for this study to obtain insights into the nature and frequency of revisions student writers made during their first draft of writing and their final submitted drafts. According to Johnson (2008), such a method can shed light on the potential development in writing between drafting and redrafting, as well as foreground for an analysis of what the reviewing opportunities might have had on students' writers revision processes. This data would be analyzed qualitatively to triangulate the data gathered via other research methods. It would contribute to answer question 5 of the research questions: *How do Omani students develop their EFL writing revision practices from Basic Education to Post Basic Education?* Additionally, this data would also be used as a stimulus and prompt to assist participating student writers' recalls on their revision practice during the semi-structured post hoc interviews. Thus, as a researcher using such stimulus and prompts, obtained from text analysis, in retrospective post- hoc interviews would enable assisting participating student writers to discuss their understanding and provides a justification for their own decisions about revisions of their writing.

For the purpose of obtaining data about observable revisions via text analysis, I gathered 36 samples of student writers' written texts. These written texts involve the first and final draft of each topic (see

an example in appendix 4). I adapted a model used by Sze (2002) to analyze the gathered texts (Appendix 5). The adapted model is comprised of the types of revisions: accuracy, lexical, phrasing, structural and content changes. It also involves the sub-elements of these types such as punctuation. The model also has a column for frequency, the occurrence of sub-elements, and a column to provide evidences from the written texts (see an example of text analysis in appendix 6).

Whilst, in-depth analysis of written texts would fruitfully generate a visible record of revisions occurring among drafts, it was proposed that student writers' conceptualization of the revision process would inform any inferences made rather than solely relying on findings obtained via text analysis (Rijlaarsdam, Couzijn, & Van Den Bergh, 2004). Likewise, Witte (1985) claims that gaining a whole vision about the revision processes or attaining confident conclusions appeared undesirable via the reliance on analyzing written texts. With this in mind, this study would utilize other sources for data that could create a context for interpretation of any of the methods in light of other different methods.

## 4.7. Piloting

After gaining access to schools, an extra school was also contacted for piloting the research methods. This school was excluded from participating in the actual study. A Grade 12 class in a girls' school in Batinah South Province was chosen to conduct the piloting study and the same procedures were followed to gain access and to get consent as in the actual study. 9 students were interviewed in a focus group interview and were recorded using an mp4 device with their consent. After the focus group, I listened to the recording and checked the questions, and the procedure as well as, I reviewed as well the field notes that I took with the focus group. It was found that students were eager to discuss their perspectives, attitudes and experiences as they were waiting for someone to listen attentively to their own perspectives. The piloting revealed some points that needed to be taken into consideration when conducting the actual study. Students seemed in need for more prompts and there was a real

need to use examples of previous students' written work as stimuli to assist students reflect on their experience, and prompts were better displayed via power point where the Learning Resource center would be the ideal venue for conducting focus groups. Moreover, I learned that the focus groups required at least 50 minutes, so I had to inform the participating students about that and also I had to arrange for the scheduled time. The focus group questions were found convenient to fulfil the aims, since students at the piloting stage were able to comprehend and to respond, based on listening to the recorded focus group. However, the piloting study revealed some issues when transcribing data as it appeared difficult to figure out who was speaking? As a result, this has helped me as a researcher to assign someone to help me take notes about the student writers' turn taking to pinpoint who was speaking.

For the second phase of the piloting, I purposively selected three students who can better articulate and speak well for the next stage. Unfortunately, only two students accepted to participate. The following day me and another volunteering teacher from the school sat near the two students while they were writing and utilized the proposed sheet to capture the write-pause patterns and most importantly the spontaneous revisions that took place during writing. Then, the teacher and I prepared the reports and asked the two students to redraft their writing and submit the final drafts after they had been marked and commented on by their teacher. Notice that, at the beginning, I evaluated the students' work with the help of their teachers, then I discovered that the students might get embarrassed. Therefore, to avoid this during the actual data collection, I intended to get support from some other different teachers during the observation process. The next day I received the final draft and I analyzed it using the grid developed from Sze (2002), appendix 5. Overall, I prepared the interview schedule based on the focus group, classroom observation and text analysis. Then, at the last school day of the week, I interviewed the two students. I have not recorded these students but I took notes. I found that the questions scheduled were fine and students responded well to them. However, the two interviews were different in the time required and I realized that I had to specify

between 30 to 40 minutes for each session of interviews. I also found that I had to select the most significant points from the focus group ,classroom observation, and text analysis that could assist the students reflect on their revision practice without the need to prepare a long list of their practice.

## 4.8. Data collection

Having piloted the research methods instruments, I started to schedule the time with the different schools. I prepared a plan for collecting data that lasted for about three months; from the last week of February till the third week of May. It was very challenging, since students attended writing classes just once a week and I had to monitor the time among the four participating schools. During the last week of February, I conducted the four focus groups, once at each school, and it was time consuming to transcribe and to summarize the main points for the next phase. I listened to the recorded focus groups, transcribed and decided about the selection of the small group of participants for the next phase. Then, I started with school C as there was a class of writing at the beginning of the first week of March. Notice that I always kept in touch with the school senior teachers to update me of any inconvenient changes in timetables or if any of the participants were absent on that day. A major challenge was if a student were absent in the interviewing day, I had to drive to school for about an hour the next or another day to interview him/her. Another challenge appeared related to the submission of the final draft, hence if some students had not submitted, I had to postpone the interviewing day. However, I was very pleased that the schools, teachers and students cooperated, regardless of challenges, which was fruitful for me in gathering the targeted data that enabled me to answer the addressed research questions.

## 4.9. Data analysis

According to Marshall and Rossman (2014), data analysis in qualitative research is an important element in engaging with the produced research data. They go on to say that it entails bringing the gathered data together, structuring it, and attempting to analyze it. The nature of the incremental

approach to gathering data, adopted for this study, had created a situation where initial analysis began in phase 1 (focus groups). Hence, initial analysis of each focus group was intended to select those students who are confident enough to speak about their revision in writing for phase 2. Focus groups were also analyzed to obtain those salient ideas about students' perceptions and experiences with regards to their revision in writing in order to inform the semi-structured interviews in phase 2. This was done through listening to the scripts and summarizing the main points that would be discussed in the semi-structured post-hoc interviews, which were transcribed, and combined with a summary of the main points found in observations and text analyses. In phase 2, the 12 student participants' observation and text analysis for each topic were scrutinized to distinguish the points that were discussed via the post-hoc interviews after each topic was completed. However, a comprehensive and a thorough analysis was then devised after completing the whole process of data collection. The following sections elaborate the process of data analysis that proceeded for the data collection phase from different methods to articulate the final report.

### 4.9.1. Focus groups and interviews

Researchers (see for example, Braun & Clarke, 2006; Creswell & Poth, 2016; Jamieson, 2016) have suggested a range of qualitative data analysis methods. These proposed approaches share similar core concepts that are based around principles, such as the way the researcher familiarizes himself /herself with the data, explores it, classifies it using coding and interprets and presents it. However, the approach proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006) offers the most convenient approach to implement in analyzing focus groups and interviews for this study as it illustrates a more-in-depth research process, based on the development of themes and codes. It also provides a versatile and useful analysis that has the potential to provide a rich and informative, but complex account of data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Figure (4.4) elucidates the six steps proposed to follow in this approach.
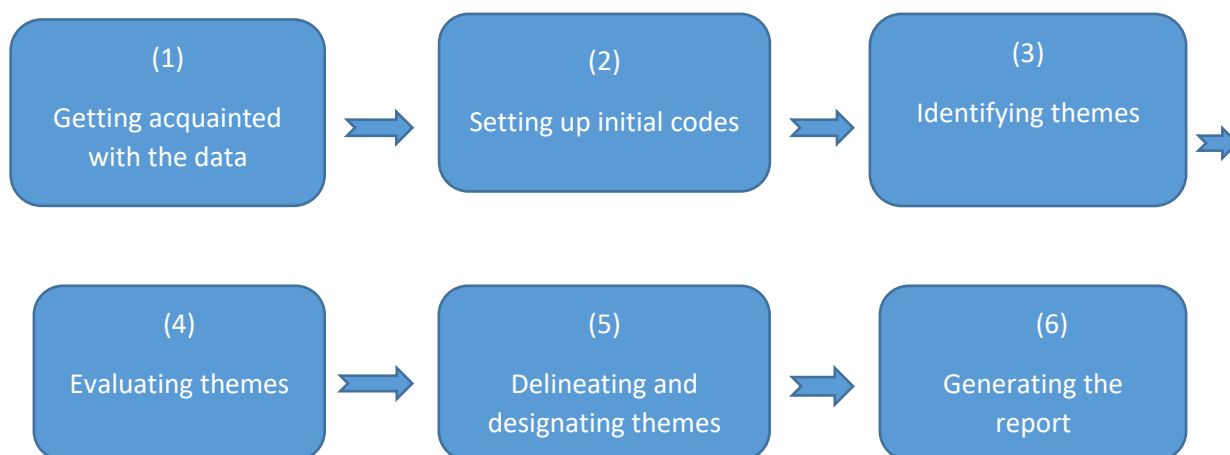
*Figure 4.3. Thematic Data analysis process (Braun and Clark, 2006, p.87)*

### 4.9.1.1. Getting acquainted with the data

The first stage began with a full transcription of the recorded focus groups and semi-structured interviews into written forms in order to gain a thorough understanding of the entire conversation. It has been argued that transcription of spoken word recordings should be considered a valuable part of the qualitative data analysis method in and of itself, since careful listening and meticulous transliteration would enable the researcher to gain a better understanding of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Braun and Clarke (2006), place great emphasis on the importance of the additional time spent on familiarizing myself with the details and double-checking the transcripts for consistency against the audio recording. Such a time spent on transcription, according to them is not wasted because it informs the early stages of the research, and having transcribed data allows developing a much more thorough understanding of it.

Accordingly, I began by transcribing all the focus groups' discussions and all the interviews in Arabic, since they were conducted in that language except for one of the students' interviews which used English as a medium as she is fluent in English and chose to be interviewed in English. The Arabic version was then translated into English (see an example of a focus group in appendix 7 and an

example of semi-structured interview in appendix 8). The Arabic and English versions were then given to a colleague who works as an interpreter for reviewing, and he provided his own feedback and suggestions for improvement. I repeated the transcriptions several times, listening to the taped focus groups and interviews over and over again paying closer attention to every single detail. With this in mind, I have tried to stay alert and attentive, so that I do not miss any crucial, interesting, or relevant information. All the transcripts were entered in NVIVO, a qualitative data analysis program, which prepared such transcripts for analysis. Students in focus groups were given a code and a number, such as FGS1, while students in interviews were given pseudonyms, such as Rand.

Having entered all the transcripts in NVIVO, I implemented Braun and Clark's (2006) immersion approach. Correspondingly, I endeavored to figure out the data both in depth and breadth by reading them more than once and by trying to situate these data in relevant contexts and matching patterns. Braun and Clark's (2006) add that such reading through the entire data assists in forming ideas and recognition of potential patterns. Having familiarized myself with the data, I started to set up the initial codes.

**4.9.1.2. Setting up initial codes**

Creswell (2013) describes the process of coding as the segmentation and tagging of data in order to identify general trends and make descriptive analysis easier. Hence, I segmented the participants' responses, with intrinsic elements of knowledge in each segment I extracted. Whilst I held instrument items in view during the coding process, I also labelled segments that appeared important and meaningful in terms of the overall study intentions as well. I then extended this process to all the focus groups and interviews, with the aim of inductively creating codes and segments of either current or new codes as the process progressed. This process has created a long list of initial codes (See appendix 9), that were required to be classified, organized and some had to be excluded to select the codes that are allied and to construct potential themes.

**4.9.1.3. Identifying, evaluating, delineating and designating themes**

Having a long list of initial codes as discussed, the process then went into three more steps (steps 3, 4 and 5 suggested by Braun and Clark, see figure 4.4.) to identify the themes, review them and finally define and name such themes. The stage of identifying themes, according to Braun and Clarke (2006), starts with sorting the codes into themes, then collating all of the codes within a thematic structure and grouping such codes into themes and sub-themes. This has allowed to build a broader view of trends within the data, and a wider set of themes emerged as a result of this process. I also made use of a distinctive feature of the NVIVO called memos to make notes related to the codes and extract themes which has enabled me to monitor and continuously refine the evolving data base structure. In short, I used some initial codes to create themes, some others to construct sub-themes and I made sure that the coded data extracts were relevant to these themes and sub-themes.

Having identified the themes, I then moved to reviewing these themes. This process, according to Braun and Clarke (2006), entails a review of the coded data extracts through reading all the compiled extracts for each theme and determining if they seem to form a logical pattern. They explain that as a researcher, I need to ensure that the evolving thematic framework accurately represented the flow of thoughts and ideas generated by the data. I reviewed the analysis and developed it. In accordance to this, there were some decisions that I made. First, I realized that the long list of codes that I had identified to support the sub-theme required more synthesis with my sub-themes. Hence codes were checked and were recorded into a set of conceptual codes. As an example, in accordance to the first overarching theme of students' perception of revision purposes, the initial 9 identified sub-themes were synthesized and clustered under four sub-themes, some were discarded as being irrelevant and others were involved as a second level codes to support the sub-theme. Some sub-themes components such as 'Revision to develop the language', were found to be overlapping with earlier points about the reader, so it was sorted out and some relevant points were extracted to support other sub-themes.

Finally, themes were finalized, defined and presented at the beginning of chapter 5, and a full detailed thematic map was prepared via NVIVO (see appendix 10 for an example of NIVIVO screen shot). The generated second level codes were collated to construct First level codes (sub-themes), for example 'Revision for the reader'. Arguably, four overarching themes were constructed informed by the research questions. These are: (1) students' perceptions of the purpose, (2) students' perceptions of the process, (3) students' perceptions of success criteria and (4) students' perceptions of the challenges they encountered during the revision of their EFL writing. All the allied sub-themes were clustered under the relevant overarching themes (see appendix 11 for the thematic map).

### 4.9.1.4. Generating the report

This is the final phase of thematic data analysis. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), this is the phase when results are presented in a convenient, worthy and valid way to the reader. They explained that such a report provides a succinct, descriptive, rational, non-repetitive, and engaging account of the story that the data tell, both within and across themes. They clarify that it is of much critical importance that extracts of participants' responses must be embedded within the analytic narrative that vividly depicts the tale that the researcher is telling about his/her data. They further illustrate that such analytic narrative must go beyond a summary of the data to make a case for the research's query.

Accordingly, the findings in the current study are reported in chapter 5 (Conceptualizing Revision in EFL Writing) as follows. First Unit 5 introduces the overarching themes are presented via table 5.1 at the beginning of chapter 5. These overarching themes display student writers' perspectives in areas pertaining to perception of the writing revision purpose, the process of revision, the success criteria and the challenges student writers encounter when revising their EFL writing, whereas subsequent tables depict details about the allied codes, for example, table 5.2 illustrates four main codes, these are: 'Revision for the reader, Revision for technical accuracy', 'Revision for clarification of meaning', and 'Revision for self-accountability'. These are clearly defined in the table and they have some sub

codes, such as 'revision to recognize and edit faults'. Following these subsequent tables, in each section, participants' perspectives with regard to the allied codes were detailed. Excerpts from students' focus groups and interviews were replicated verbatim and presented to drive the discussion of the claims discussed. These were presented in a way that supported the claims while also elucidating how they connect to the research questions. Notably, since the interpretation of the findings usually takes place at the discussion chapter (Paulus, Woods, Atkins, & Macklin, 2017), this study follows the suggested analytic narrative (Braun & Clarke, 2006), through drawings on some initial interpretations by providing short concluding summaries at the end of each section and at the end of this chapter as well.

### 4.9.2. Classroom observations and text analysis

To generate the findings about students' revision practice, I followed a slightly different way compared to the way I followed to analyze the focus groups and interviews. The observations' reports were summarized in a grid that was developed by the researcher (appendix 3). Then the frequency of the revision types and the examples of students' revisions were again summarized in the model adapted from Sze (2002), this was done to obtain data about the students' in-process revisions. Likewise, the same procedures were followed for text analysis. Then a summary of the frequencies for the type of changes for all the two Basic cases were computed and the computations of the observations conducted and the text analysis data are displayed in Appendix 12 clearly showing the findings in chapter 6 which were clearly produced in a table that elucidated the means for the total percentages of each type of change. Similarly, Post Basic analyses followed the same procedure. This has assisted in contrasting any development in revision between the Basic and the Post Basic cases. This also supported the qualitative findings as indicators of any accrued progress. Arguably, in chapter 6, examples from observational data and text analysis were integrated to provide concrete evidence of both online and post-hoc revisions and to support the contrast of any inferences among the data computed in the tables. For example, in chapter 6 section 6.3.2 the tables

clearly show that the word style substitutions were the dominant pattern of lexical revision. This inference was supported with examples from student writers' online revision which was driven by the observation data, as an example, '~~All in all~~ overall, *what is mentioned above is some advantages of teamwork'.* This example is again integrated with an example from text analysis post-hoc revision, *'We also have negatives, like the population in towns is way bigger than the population in villages if you come to compare the two, you will find a ~~big~~ huge difference between the two'.*

Then a qualitative analysis of categories using an analytical framework was conducted. The codes, found in the adopted model from Sze (2002), were used deductively for coding students' revisions, however, these codes were inductively clustered under two main categories: Global level revisions and Local level revisions. According to Ramage et al. (2003) as thoroughly introduced in chapter 3, local level revision is mainly concerned with sentence level revision, such as replacing words to make a statement clearer or addressing grammatical or spelling errors. In contrast, they elaborate that global revision is concerned with the broader picture of the text. This might entail ideas and text organization.

Finally, the findings were reported in chapter 6 through providing an overview of students' revision practices using summary tables. It also provides detailed explanations of students practice in each theme, making some inferences and contrasts between the two groups' revision practice as well as the way students' understanding of revision was incarnated in their actual practice. Extracts from students' writings were also involved as evidence of their actual practices.

## 4. 10. Research Quality

There is a pressing need to ensure when conducting any educational research that the data are checked and that rigorous testing has been conducted to ensure accuracy. Validity and reliability are concepts that are often used when discussing the importance of educational enquiry (Silverman & Marvasti, 2008). Denzin and Lincoln (2011) claim that although these concepts are sometimes used as a

principle substance for objectivist epistemology, subjective studies, on the other hand typically use other terms to denote meaning that may reflect interpretive perspectives. According to Creswell and Miller (2000, p. 125), a constructivist viewpoint appears to see reality as "pluralistic, interpretive, open-ended and contextualized (e.g. sensitive to place and situation)''. In line with such a perspective, Y.S Lincoln and Guba (1985) stipulate that the concept of trustworthiness to determine the consistency of constructivist research is considered as an alternative to the commonly used measures of objectivist research. For Bryman (2008), trustworthiness as a notion is about adopting a collection of standards advocated by some writers for evaluating the quality of qualitative research. Y.S Lincoln and Guba (1985) confirm that applicability and accuracy are verified using these techniques and parameters. Notably, trustworthiness as a concept that encompasses four different techniques to obtain research quality. These are credibility, dependability, transferability and confirmability (Y.S Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Accordingly, the following sections discusses how these techniques were adopted in the current study.

### 4.10.1. Credibility

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2011) , credibility refers to how well a report represents the phenomenon being studied. Bearing this in mind, as a researcher, I am aware that I had to consider credibility as a technique from the start of my research project in areas such as the focus of my research, the targeted participants, the site of the study, and the data collection and data analysis methods. To establish credibility to my study, I employed three techniques; triangulation, prolonged engagement and member check.

To begin with, triangulation was adopted in the current study in two dimensions; namely using various data collection methods and generating data from students in two different phases in the Omani education system. The former refers to the point that when several sources answer the same query, this is known as triangulation. Combining data from multiple sources, according to Creswell and Miller (2000), enables creating patterns or categories that can be used to back up confirmations

gathered via various research methods. The data for this study were obtained using four methods; focus groups, written text analysis, classroom observation and interviews, all of which may increase the accuracy of explanation of the subject under investigation. Data obtained from focus groups, for example was combined with data from semi-structured post-hoc interviews to construct themes that were used to answer the first four research questions about conceptualizing revision in EFL writing. Likewise, data gathered via classroom observations and text analysis were combined to answer question 5 about EFL students' revision practice. In addition, my research design followed an incremental approach to gathering data. Hence, data from focus groups, classroom observation and text analysis were used as prompts and stimuli to help participant student writers reflect on their revision practice. Combining data from various research methods would also compensate for any shortcomings of such methods which can enhance obtaining credible findings.

The latter refers to the involvement of two different groups of students from different levels of the Omani education system; namely Basic and Post Basic education. It is likely that students from the two levels share similarities in terms of their own understanding and their own practices. However, since Grade 12 Post Basic students became more mature and were likely to have experienced different writing practices, they appeared to have some slight differences either in conceptualizing or practicing revision in EFL writing. The findings revealed some slight differences in terms of their perspectives and their practices which also adds an additional factor that can enhance credibility.

Another technique I have employed is called prolonged engagement. I attempted to make the most of all of my time, about four months in the field, in order to accomplish specific goals, such as learning about the contributors' educational philosophy, reviewing any case from misinterpretation of data provided by either plaintiffs or by myself as an investigator, and building trust with colleagues and most importantly with participant student writers (Y.S Lincoln & Guba, 1985). As a result, maintaining a positive relationship with the members would ensure credible results.

Finally, I allowed participant student writers some opportunities to re-examine their reflections to check or what is called member check. For instance, after focus groups discussions, I asked students to summarize their views and then I debriefed them of their discussed ideas to check the accuracy. I also did the same thing following each meeting in semi-structured interviews. In addition, I checked text analyses with the school teachers to enhance credibility of the analyses in order to obtain trustworthy results.

## 4.10.2. Dependability

The concept of dependability states that if a researcher's study is replicated in a similar setting, with similar sample groups and procedures, the result would be similar (Shenton, 2004). To address dependability in my study, I adopted two techniques; providing what is what Creswell and Miller (2000) called 'rich and thick description' (p.128) and adopting repeated collection of data. The former refers to providing an in-depth-comprehensive account that sheds light on the procedure of the research. This would assist such a prospect reader in making informed decisions to their specific situations. For example, the prospect reader might decide to replicate a similar research in different settings. In my endeavor to provide such rich description, I described the research context in chapter 2. I also discussed the theoretical framework that was informed by both cognitive psychology and socio-cultural theory to fulfil the aim of understanding Basic and Post Basic Omani perceptions and practices about revision in EFL writing. I also provided a detailed account of the paradigmatic stance, methodological stance, research design, how data were collected and analyzed. Such an account would enable the prospect researcher to conduct similar research. The latter technique addressed dependability in repeating collections of data. Due to the nature of my research design of adopting an incremental strategy in collecting data, data were collected in phase two from the 12 participating students in three episodes. Hence, in every topic of the three episodes, observation, text analysis and interviews were repeated to collect data. Such procedures can enhance dependability.

### 4.10.3. Transferability

According to Shenton (2004), the degree to which the study results can be transferrable to another environment is referred to as transferability. Despite the fact that this study, like any qualitative research, has no intention of generalizing its findings (Johnson, 2008), it used discourse metrics for trustworthiness. It is primarily warranting a comprehensive picture as Borg (2012) believes this will enable readers, potential investigators, and experts to assess if the research findings can be applied in other contexts. Henceforth, I handed over a detailed description of various methodologies and procedures, which will undoubtedly assist other future investigators in applying the applicable procedure model in appropriate contexts.

### 4.10.4. Confirmability

Confirmability can be compared to objectivity in quantitative research. It refers to ensuring that the results, as well as the interpretations that derive from participants' perspectives and experiences, are familiar to them and ring a tune for them. This can ensure that the researcher's bias has the least impact on study results and that the published findings are participants' direct thoughts and experiences (Shenton, 2004). Given (2008) adds, even if it illuminated a past encounter, the goal for the participants is to understand the study is a relevant and accurate record of their own experience. K. Richards (2009) clarifies that confirmability is determined by making data accessible to the reader, which is determined by the openness of representation.

Accordingly, this study adopts some steps to ensure confirmable results. To begin with, I considered that the report has acknowledged the importance of student writers' perspectives. Hence, it represented rich accounts of their various opinions, feelings and experiences as well as a transparency of the frequency of their comments and very clear direct quotes from the transcribed focus groups and interviews from NVIVO. The chapter about the student writers' revision practice also includes real examples from the student writers' pieces of writing. Second, I followed the advice suggested by

Radnor (2002) of sharing the results with the participating students, so I asked students to summarize the main points that were discussed in the focus groups at the end of each meeting. I also shared the main points that were discussed with individual students during interviews and asked them to confirm that these were their points. This is according to Radnor (2002), to confirm and ensure that the interpretations resonate and are relevant to their own interpretations.

From another perspective, Lichtman (2012) and Finlay (2002) clarify the importance and significance of reflexivity, advising me as a researcher to take a step back and recognize my stance, as well as how it can affect my research findings. Although researchers' subjectivity is inescapable, as a researcher, I realized the significance of keeping in mind how it can both bind and expose. Hence, I discussed my position and the action I took to minimize the nature of subjectivity in my research, (see section 4.4.3.). Furthermore, to maximize the chances of availing non-biased and insightful data, I attempted to use the students L1 to create a friendlier atmosphere in which the students can speak freely and express themselves in a better way. This also has helped them overcome their L2 difficulties in finding the appropriate words. As a result, the students have become eager to participate in phase 2.

Having discussed the criteria adopted to enhance the research quality, another aspect of much significance that appeared for the quality of the research is considering the research ethics. The following sections address ethical considerations that were taken into account when proceeding this project.

## 4.11. Ethical Consideration

The concept of ethics refers to the analysis of the study's moral actions and the arising questions about its appropriateness (Wiles, 2012). This demonstrates the critical importance of paying close attention to ethical concerns when conducting research, particularly when human subjects are involved. This significance, according to Verma and Mallick (1999), stems from the need to protect the rights of

research subjects, which is especially important in classroom research because it can include personal information about students. This entails avoiding the impression that participants are merely a means to an end. According to Gray (2004), social research is conducted from a particular esteem place in which everyone retains certain beliefs that are a part of his or her socio-cultural situation and personal identity. As a result, the researcher's morals will be concerned with the appropriateness of their activities in relation to the study's subjects or those who are affected by it (Gray, 2004). In a similar vein, May (2003) indicates that it is important for the researcher to understand how individuals' beliefs are expressed in the decisions he or she makes during the research process, from the initial research design to the translation and implementation recommendations. Overall, as quoted in Robson (2002), Reynold argues that ethics is fundamentally about achieving a set of principles.

However, Wiles (2012) argues that the suggested guidelines for considering ethics do not provide adequate guidance on how to monitor the specific conditions that the researchers could encounter during their research. Ethics is particularly important to researchers, because it allows them to strike a balance between their interests as observers and the participants' rights, as well as hypothetical issues posed by inquiry (Cohen et al., 2007). With this in mind, it is my responsibility, as a researcher, to consider any ethical problems that could arise during the conduct of my study, as well as the implications of the participants' positions. Being aware of such responsibilities, I endeavored to predict any ethical problems, recognize those which are likely to arise, and try my best to minimize their effect on participants. The following sections shed light on the issues that I have considered.

### 4.11.1. Access and informed consent

Prior to the actual task of data collection, some principal actions were taken. First, I applied for ethical approval from the University of Exeter, precisely from the Graduate school of Education. Hence, I applied a form that comprises an explanation about the research topic, a brief summary of the project, research methods and participants and the considerable actions that would be taken into account when

conducting the study, such as the assessment of potential harm. After completing this form, it was reviewed and checked by my supervisor several times. Once approved by my supervisor, the form was finally submitted to the ethical committee for additional approval. The process of getting the ethical approval certificate took around a month, from 25/11/2018 until I received the approved certificate (appendix 13) on 12/12/2018.

Obtaining ethical approval from the University of Exeter was the first step in gaining access to the participants. Once I was granted the Certificate of Ethical Approval (appendix 13). I had to send an email in Arabic to The Omani Ministry of Education (Technical Office of Studies and Development) (appendix 14), that is the department in charge to grant a site approval for the researcher by giving me a permission to conduct research in schools. This email involves attaching some files in English about my proposal that includes a summary of my research, research intentions, an explanation of my data collection methods, and the schedules of my proposed research instruments reviewing my application. The Technical Office then sent an email to The Directorate General of Batinah South Province to issue a letter in two versions (Arabic and English) that enabled me to contact schools (see appendix 15). The next step was to get the participants' consent.

To get the participant student writers' consent, they were required to sign a written informed consent form. Informed consent is a way to reassure participants of what their involvement would require them to do, and whether they agree or disagree with taking part in the project, based on the fundamental concerns arising from the British Education Research Association's guidelines (BERA, 2018) and the advice notes by Wiles (2012). On my first visit to the schools, I informed student writers by speaking with them, and with their teachers, about the study goals and their right to withdraw at any time as their participation is voluntary, before asking them to sign a no objection form as suggested by Hammersley and Traianou (2012). Despite the claim that participants are unlikely to be informed about all aspects of the study, especially those that are unexpected (Cohen et al., 2007), I

made certain that participants were informed about the essence of their involvement as well as the objectives of the study. Students were given Arabic translated informed sheets (See appendix16) with the information they would be required to provide. The informed sheet elucidated data privacy and confidentiality, as well as its likely usage. In addition, it also clarified the participants' right to withdraw at any time without giving a reason, as well as the voluntary nature of their participation. Then a clear consent form in their native language was developed for the young learners to ensure that they completely understood and that their consent was based on full knowledge of participation.

Since the participants were under the age of 18, their parents or guardians were also asked to give their informed consent. To achieve that, I sent information sheets in Arabic (see appendix 16) to inform the parents or the guardians about the study intentions, their children involvement, and their children's right to withdraw because participation is voluntary. To verify their permission for their children to participate, parents or guardians were asked to sign consent forms and to attach these with consent forms signed by their children (see consent forms for both students and their parents in appendix 16).

### 4.11.2. Confidentiality and anonymity

Confidentiality is described by Altricher, Feldman, Posch, and Somekh (1993) as the protection of participants' privacy, in which data gathered should not be passed or used for any reason without the participants' permission. As a result, I adopted the following techniques to protect the participants' privacy. First, the data collected for this project were saved password-protected and kept in my personal computer, and specific codes and pseudonyms were used to encrypt interviews and student writers' written texts. Hard copies of students' texts and observations reports were kept in a cabinet in my office and always kept locked up. Thus, it could not be used by anyone and was only used for the research purposes. I also made sure that this data would be removed once my research was over, unless I wanted to publish it after asking participants for permission.

Anonymity is another aspect of confidentiality; when documenting the results, participants should be identified using pseudonyms to protect their identities. In similar vein, I avoided words that referred to a specific school or background. Accordingly, I did all I could to avoid using real names or other details that could reveal or suggest the participants' identities. I also kept a hard copy list of student writers' names and any sensitive details about them in a cabinet that is always locked and only seen by me. I also expected students to be concerned about their challenges or their academic achievements being revealed or made public. To avoid this, all results, records and other information about study participants were kept strictly confidential. The study findings were reported anonymously. Data from focus groups were reported using codes to identify the participants like FGS1. Likewise, data from both semi-structured post-hoc interviews, text and observations analysis were reported using pseudonyms to identify the participants, such as Shrooq, Naif or Anees.

### 4.11.3. The risk of potential harm

Since social research is so personal, there is a risk of harm. These are linked to embarrassment, humiliation, diminished prestige or sense of being distributed (Yvonna S Lincoln & Tierney, 2004). Accordingly, I considered any behavior that could cause students to feel uncomfortable. The following are some of the practical actions I adopted:

- To prevent students from getting nervous as a result of their knowledge that they were being observed while writing, during student writers' observation, I and the two cooperating teachers attempted to reduce such an effect of this awareness by maintaining distance between us and the observed students during observation period.

- To reassure students about the essence of the observation and that it was not a negative assessment of their skills, I asked teachers to clarify the nature of the observation to them prior to the observation itself.

- Students may believe that analysing their written work contributes to their evaluation or grades. Hence, when gathering their texts, I made it clear to them that analysing their texts had no bearing on their grades or assessment. I also asked teachers to stress the importance of this issue.

- Students' time in class may be wasted as a result of being interviewed. Hence, I have tried to ensure that nothing like this happens by allowing students to select the time and I also consulted with the class teachers. Furthermore, I avoided conducting any interviews with students at break times.

- A further issue that I had to deal with as a researcher, was the necessity to make participants overcome their reluctance to engage in the research because of their linguistic competence being not developed enough. The solution was to ask those participants to respond using their mother tongue, assuming that this would make them feel more comfortable and less inhibited. Although a few of them could cope with the difficulties encountered when using a foreign language, I opted towards this option even though I knew that I had to make an extra effort in translating the participants' remarks.

- Another concern that I had considered in order to guarantee the smooth accumulation of data relates to the identity of the participants themselves being naturally not very explicit and spontaneous with their feelings about something unless in very limited contexts and circumstances. To make sure participants did not feel that they were being constrained to avail their feedback, the situation had been addressed by reassuring them that there would not be any right or wrong feedback, and whatever they mentioned would definitely remain confidential without any impact on their performance in the classroom.

### 4.11.4. Reciprocity and the researcher

The principle of reciprocity relates to the idea that both supporting society and offering advanced expertise should be top priorities in research (Yvonna S Lincoln & Tierney, 2004). Although participants help the researcher achieve his or her goals, the researchers may be able to make a greater contribution by providing shared service to the participants and their society (Trainor & Bouchard, 2013). With this in mind, I did my best to ensure that participating student writers got the most out of this study by raising their understanding of the essence of revision and what they could do to improve their skills in this field. Interestingly, some students appeared to reflect on this concern as follows:

> *I learnt from being interviewed in reflecting about my writing, for instance what I have discussed with the interviewer I became aware of the points being discussed and I made use of them in the next writing. I am sure that these will contribute to my future writing development* (Naif:G12).

> *I benefited from this project in that I became more aware of rereading and revising. It also added more to my revision strategies, as one of the checklists was presentable and I learnt how to do that. I also benefited from being a part of a confrence and allowed to reflect on my writing and revison. Honestly, thank you for this experience, it was such a pleasure in an amazing person like you.You should be very proud that you have left a good impact in the society ( Shrooq:G9).*

I assume that teachers, policy makers, and society will all profit from this study, because it will expand their awareness and peak their interest in writing issues, especially those concening revision. To achieve that, I intend to create an account by disseminating the report and making it accessible to the general public regarding the topic of revision and the possibility of applying idealized views of substantive revision in the L2 context, in addition to micro-revisions of vocabulary, grammar and mechanical elements of writing.

In terms of my responsibity to develop my research abilities, as a researcher, I spent some time honing my research skills, especially those related to ethics, which can assist me in monitoring 'ethical probity' (Doyle & Buckley, 2017, p. 9). For instance, I attended some workshops and seminars delivered at the University of Exeter. I also made of optimun use of training found via the World Wide Web.

## 4.12. Strengths and Limitations of the research design

The adopted research design appeared to provide an exploration and in-depth-insights into student writers' revision practice and their reflection on such a practice. The student writers contributed well in providing data that could successfully achieve the research intentions. The design has some features that enhance gaining such an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon. The research design allows for triangulation of methods as well as to employ the nature of incremental approach to data collection had strengthened gaining rich data. Such a design would provide data that represent students' revision act as they progressed through the writing process from pre-writing techniques to final text completion. It also provided potential for the emergence of evidence about students' understanding over time. The findings from each component had also enabled comparing such findings among these components. In addition, since studies regarding secondary and high school in EFL context appeared sparse and pedagogy in such contexts is informed by studies in L1, the nature of this study design has created opportunities to compare the findings to previous studies that relied on a single method to investigate revision with students at similar ages. The study conducted by Yagelski (1995), for example, utilized only a single method for data collection namely, analysis of text versions. As a result, this study is likely to add insights and contribute to the knowledge about EFL adolescent writers' interpretation of EFL school-related revision. The research design also adopted collecting data in a naturalistic context where students were observed writing in their normal classes. This is in contrast to studies that created classroom environments for writing, such as the study conducted by

Chanquoy (2001) which deliberately deferred the revision act for the purpose of the study. As a result, the pragmatic stance of gathering data in a natural setting, which the current study followed, appeared to enhance research trustworthiness as students were doing their writing tasks in the natural context without being asked to do tasks for the purpose of the research. It also allowed for genuine contextual understanding and behavior to be captured by the research.

However, the research design has also some constraints, such as the impact of sampling strategy in creating opportunities for selection bias and the possible impact of utilizing a retrospective self-report technique. Regarding the selection bias, this study adopted a purposive sampling strategy for recruiting participants for the second phase. These student participants were selected based on their ability to speak well, so they could articulate their reflection on their revision practice. A number of students had been ruled out as a result, especially those who lacked confidence in their verbal abilities or motivation to discuss writing. The adoption of retrospective self-reporting to get student writers to reflect on their revision practice appeared also as another limitation of the adopted research design. Such an impact appeared two-fold. First, student writers were not able to remember what happened during writing, and the potential that their perceptions might not reflect their perspectives. As a clarification, in some cases during the semi-structured post-hoc interviews student writers could not answer the interviewer's question due to not being able to retrieve what they were thinking about at that time. The following example illustrates this point:

*Interviewer: In line 9, you paused after the word 'remember', can you please explain why?*

*Participant: Sorry, I can't remember (Rand: G12).*

The second fold is about the potential that student writers' reflected perceptions, beliefs or claims might not represent their true perspectives. It is possible that such reflective understanding may

have been influenced by the researchers' or teachers' expectations or it might reflect the school context. With this in mind, due to the incremental approach to data collection this study adopted, students' interpretations were revisited over multiple interviews and the findings found aligned to the findings of observed writing methods and text analyses, which bolstered the inferences reached. Despite these constraints, the presented findings and the discussion in the following chapters offer insights into EFL student writers' perceptions and practices about revision in EFL school writing. Hence, the point in addressing these limitations is for transparency purposes that can assist future research project on revision in EFL writing.

## 4.13. Summary

This study aims at understanding Omani EFL Basic and Post Basic student writers' perceptions and practices about revision in their EFL writing. Hence, to achieve that, this research adopted an exploratory interpretive strategy. This chapter has provided enough details about the philosophical assumptions that were underpinned by an interpretive paradigm with a pragmatic stance that encompasses a relativist ontology and a constructivist epistemology which informed this study as well as the other factors that could affect the adopted methodological stance. The adopted research design utilized 4 classes of students from different schools. It involved a variety of methods that were used to obtain credible, in-depth and rich data through focus groups, classroom observation, text analysis and semi-structured post-hoc interviews. The procedures were fully explained as well as the many considerable actions taken were also elaborated. Data analysis followed qualitative thematic analysis. To achieve high quality research, I established positive trustworthiness using techniques to improve credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. I also shed light on the ethical considerations being taken into account to ensure obtaining a trustworthy research endeavour. The scope of the study and its limitation are also explained at the end of the unit.

Having discussed the research methodology, the following two chapters present the analysis of data obtained via the data collection methods mentioned above. Chapter 5 presents the findings obtained

via analyzing both the focus groups and the semi-structured post-hoc interviews about student writers' perceptions of revision in EFL writing. Chapter 6 drew on the data obtained via classroom observation and text analysis to trace the extent to which the students' perceptions were incarnated in their revision practice. Chapter 6 also attempts to coin out the extent to which Post Basic student writers' revision practice has developed compared to that of the Basic student writers.

# CHAPTER FIVE: CONCEPTUALIZING REVISION IN EFL WRITING

## 5.1. Introduction

This chapter reports on the findings that were constructed via successive and iterative analysis of two data sets; namely focus groups and semi-structured post-hoc interviews. Four groups of EFL Basic and Post Basic student writers, two Basic levels and two Post Basic level classes, were selected to explore their conceptions of the sub-processes of revision in EFL school writing. To better understand these conceptions, students were invited to reflect on their revision practices. Notably, four main dimensions were investigated; these refer to the student writers' understanding of the purpose of revision or task definition, a concept that is concerned with outlining the revision objectives, as introduced by Flower and Hayes (1981, p. 24), their conceptions of revision process, their understanding of success criteria, and their interpretations of the difficulties they encountered when revising their EFL school writing. This reflection was obtained via focus groups and one-to one semi structured interviews, and was analyzed using thematic analysis, discussed in chapter 4. To ensure confidentiality and anonymity of the participants, in presenting the findings from the focus groups, I used acronyms for the participants, for example FGAS1 (Focus group A student 1), and in presenting data from semi-structured interviews, I gave the participants pseudonyms, such as Rand. Comments from interviews and focus groups were analyzed and coded both inductively and deductively, in other words the over-arching themes were derived from the research questions raised, whereas the codes and the sub-codes emerged from the data. Table (5.1) below defines these deductive themes, while subsequent tables will show how each theme is supported by several individual codes.

*Table 5.1: Definitions of the main themes in conceptualizing revision*

| Themes | Definition |
|---|---|
| Students' perceptions of the purpose of revision in EFL writing | *Comments referring to student writers' intentions, task definition, priorities, purposes, or rationales for revising EFL school writing.* |
| Students' perceptions of the process of revision in EFL writing | *Comments referring to the strategies, procedures, ways, or opportunities of revisions.* |
| Students' perceptions of the success criteria for revision in EFL writing | *Comments referring to the criteria student-writers' perceived qualities and parameters they took into consideration to determine their revision behavior and consequently influence their writing quality development.* |
| Students' perceptions of the challenges they encountered when revising their EFL writing | *Comments referring to the student -writers' understanding of the difficulties they encountered when revising EFL school writing.* |

## 5.2. Students' perceptions of the purpose

This major theme accommodates EFL student writers' reflections on their own revising intentions, purposes or goals on the assigned writing tasks aiming at investigating their understanding of the purposes of revising the assigned writing tasks. These assigned tasks were either informative or interactive ones (writing emails and letters) for Grade 12 (Class A&B) or varied from informative, narrative, opinion writing to interactive (writing emails and letters) ones for Grade 9 (Class C&D). After successive thematic analysis and several iterations, 10 codes were raised, and these were clustered under 4 main codes. Table (5.2.) illustrates these codes and provides a comprehensive coding framework. Notice that quantifying the number of references was provided for the purpose of transparency. The subsequent sections attempt to offer a comprehensive response to the fundamental question addressing Basic and Post Basic Omani students' perception of the purpose of revision in school writing, using English as a foreign language. The following sections present details about students' perspectives with regards to these codes.

*Table 5.2: Coding framework related to EFL students' perceptions of the purpose of revision*

**Theme 1: Students' perceptions of the purpose of revision**

| Codes | Definition | Sources | References | | Sub-codes |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Basic | Post Basic | |
| Revision for the reader | *Comments referring to the purpose of revisions student writers made to the text or their thoughts to meet what they thought their target reader(s) expected from them.* | Focus Groups | 5 | 9 | Revision for teacher/parents /self/others |
| | | Interviews | 30 | 36 | Revision to enhance the language for an implied unknown reader |
| Revision for technical accuracy | *Comments referring to the purpose of revisions student writers made to the text or their thoughts focusing on small scale to make their writing perfect, rather than reshaping it.* | Focus Groups | 8 | 8 | Revision to proofread |
| | | Interviews | 36 | 32 | Revision to recognize and edit faults |
| Revision for clarification of meaning | *Comments referring to the purpose of revisions student writers made to the text or their thoughts to develop the overall meaning, the content, and for better ideas.* | Focus Groups | 5 | 7 | Revision to edit for meaning |
| | | | | | Revision to elaborate |
| | | | | | Revision to reconstruct writing |
| | | Interviews | 34 | 35 | Revision to improve the content |
| Revision for self-accountability | *Comments referring to the purpose of revisions student writers made to the text or their thoughts focusing on self-accountability, such as having a sense of writer's identity which might lead them to institute their style of writing.* | Focus Groups | 11 | 15 | Individualizing self-accountability |
| | | Interviews | 21 | 30 | Socializing self-accountability |

### 5.2.1. Revision for the reader

Most of the Post Basic and the Basic student writers' comments indicate that they have some basic understanding and appear to realize the significance of thinking about the reader, even though they were novice writers and writing in English as a foreign language. Their comments show that they set a task definition that considers their targeted reader, for example Naif stated, *'I faced difficulty in*

*knowing the meaning of some words, therefore, I tried to find a synonym that I know to overcome my difficulty and therefore I can pay attention to what my reader needs to get him/her to reach my points'.* He further explained, *'I did my best to make it clear and use my knowledge to get the reader to reach my ideas'.* Some other writers thought of entertaining their targeted reader: *'Meanwhile the reader enjoys reading my writing'* (Rami: G12); *'I put some comedy into the writing, so the reader will enjoy it'* (Shrooq: G9). Ensuring not misleading their targeted reader was also obvious: *'I decided to emphasize the positive things than negatives ones and choose a softer way to express the cons ... I thought the reader is going to be confused and might ask why she is trying to persuade me to live in a town?'* (Shrooq: G9). Some participants' comments go further to indicate the use of some strategies to persuade the reader: *'To explain and make it clear that Oman is an interesting place to visit through shedding light on some nice places, developing and generating the ideas to persuade the reader of some of these places and advising people of visiting Oman.'* (Misfer: G9). Similarly, to stimulate the reader interest, Rand claimed that she replaced the word 'famous' with the word 'popular'. She reasoned that stating, *'I felt that I should put 'popular' because it is a better word and can attract the reader'.* Furthermore, Ibtihal thought of ensuring that her writing has an interesting and concise introduction that can assist the reader to absorb the overall ideas of her text. She states:

> *I struggle with how to begin writing, as the reader expected a writer starts his/her writing by giving short introduction. Thus, this short introduction will affect the reader decision to read this piece of writing or not. It is therefore as a writer I perceive that writing depends on how I begin where the introductory line should be interesting to attract the reader.*

The above quotes also show that revision was perceived by EFL student writers as an opportunity to improve the language via replacing words and phrases or formulating reasonable introductory lines to pursue the intention of persuading readers.

Whilst attending to the reader when revising is a high skill regarded as a knowledge transforming stage or might also be beyond that into knowledge crafting, (see Kellogg, 2008; Scardamalia & Bereiter, 1987), where writers reshape their writing according to the expected reader, and most EFL student writers in this study set task definitions that consider the teacher-examiner. Bearing this in mind, although students were ideally expected to think of their targeted reader as a much wider group of people, they actually tended to think of the reader as examiner (teacher). The findings reveal that most student writers, from both Basic and Post Basic levels, were inclined to set goals considering their teacher as a reader for the purpose of scoring high grades and marks. They confirm that they revise to *'impress the teacher for high grades'* (FGCS3), or sometimes, when asked about their targeted reader, commented that they were confined to the teacher as their targeted reader: *'It is all the ones who are going to mark my writing. It is my teacher.'* (Fahad: G12). They did not account for why they thought of the teacher as the only reader for their written text. This seems a narrow definition of a reader, hence such a narrow definition might be attributed to their partial understanding of their targeted audience. Notably, only a Basic student writer (Shrooq) and two Post Basic student writers (Naif and Rami) commented that they imagined a reader other than the teacher- examiner. Shrooq, for example, responded when asked about her targeted reader: *'My parents because they are part of my life, they are very supportive'*. In another interview she said: *'I imagined like you and somebody who is older than me'*. Naif also indicates, *'I really imagine other readers than my teacher'*, and adds, *'I usually imagine that I am two persons, me and my colleague, so I compare my ideas to the other imagined person, and I try to satisfy him. Some sentences when I speak to myself sound good and some others I feel not, so I try my utmost to attract the reader'*. Rami also commented that he was imagining readers other than their teacher: *'Of course, my teacher and someone other than the teacher'*. However, their definition seems imprecise about who were their expected readers as in Naif's comments or in Shrooq's contradicting view as she stated her intention *'To impress my teacher as she is our main reader'* (FGCS1). Rami also comments, *'I expected my teacher will be impressed of my own ideas and as well as my accurate language. Hence, I expect that my teacher will give me*

*at least a very good mark'.* This shows that they consider their teacher for the purpose of scoring high grades and marks which revealed an ambivalent view about the concept of considering reader.

To sum up, comments in most investigated cases revealed a tendency for attending to the reader examiner despite a few which indicate attending to readers other than the reader examiner but they seem imprecise, in other words this might shed light on what a reader, as a concept, means in an educational context.

### 5.2.2. Revision for technical accuracy

EFL student writers' comments in this study revealed that most of them perceived revision just as a proofreading task. Hence, revision seems perceived as a task of spotting mistakes and making changes like word choice, spelling, grammar, accuracy, extending ideas rather than revising to reshape or revising the content. This was salient even from the first phase of data collection, where the focus group student writers commented that their priority was to examine their writing for flaws and to do their best to amend them. For example, FGBS3, stated:

> *In English there are some grammatical rules about tenses, adjectives, adverbs. Hence, when I revise my writing, I sometimes examine some sentences to see if there is any mistake. This is very important as it can affect the meaning of the sentence as well as affecting the main idea of the text. For me I go back to a grammar reference and check the mistake if it is about grammar or to a dictionary if it is about vocabulary and spelling. I also sometimes ask others for help.*

Some others' comments seem to be more explicit and specific-revision to spot the deficiencies in words, grammar, misplaced word(s) in a sentence, or incorrect spelling: *'Then when I revise, I realize that I mean to change the word into plural, but I wrote the wrong word, so I need to consider this point by considering correct words and grammar'* (FGCS2). FGDS4 also commented, *'Sometimes I*

*put the word in wrong place in the sentence, and when revising I ensure to put it in the right place in the sentence. I also focus on correct spelling'*.

However, it appears that they have some divergent views or concerns. Most EFL student writers from both Basic and Post Basic levels focused on very minor enhancement. Jawaher, for example commented; *'mostly, I will focus on spelling'*. Some student writers also stated that they prioritized very minor changes: *'I will go through the sentences to examine punctuation marks and capitalization'* (Rami: G12). Ibtihal and Jinan were concerned about the teacher's commentary when setting their goals for revision, they explained: *'The teacher will look at my mistakes and will ask to develop mechanical ones like punctuation such as apostrophes and others like spelling since I was writing fast to cope with the tight time'* (Ibtihal: G12). Jinan also shared this view commenting, *'I will also work on minor changes like punctuation as my teacher will find them easy to spot'*. These quotes indicate that the social context probably informs the students' perceptions of the purpose of revision as they are writing in a context that is oriented by an overemphasis on accuracy, hence they often focus on cosmetic enhancement of their texts. This is related to self-accountability that will be discussed further in 5.2.4.

In contrast, few EFL student writers from both Basic and Post Basic levels, set a personal task definition that considers better word choice or correct use of grammar: *'I will focus on finding better words and I will write 'Yours sincerely'. I will also look at the grammatical mistakes to better develop my writing'* (Naif: G12). They are also concerned with omission, repetition, and reformulating sentences. Rand, for example commented, *'I want to say that words and the way I formulate the sentences sometimes do not help reach the intended ideas. Therefore, I rub out a lot and create many changes to achieve the aim of writing about the topic'*. Naif contended that he had intended to avoid repetition: *'I wrote 'I think' above, so I thought it would be better not to repeat the same phrase, so I thought 'in my opinion' would be better'*. Shrooq also explained the reason behind adding the phrase

'mud and everyone hates mud'; *'I added the phrase to make more sense and to add extra explanation to the text'*. Similarly, Misfer thought that his decision of rubbing out the phrase 'are very' and replacing it with the phrase 'really care about', so the sentence reads as follows, *'The good thing about these places is that the government really care about them and keep them clean and neat'*. He explained; *'it is better now, more suitable and seems to be correct'*.

To conclude, despite some EFL student writers' attempts to set a task definition that moved slightly beyond merely focusing on local level changes, most student writers' scope for revision choices seems confined to slight improvement, and had little impact on the development of the text. Accordingly, in all the investigated cases, student writers' task definition reflected in their own actual revisions as the majority were ones of accuracy; these revision practices are discussed in detail in chapter 6. Thus, students seem to be barely thinking of choices that focus on developing ideas, creating reshaping or readability, at least for EFL school writing context. It seems that substantive revision choices in developing writing are less feasible in EFL school context and probably indicates the influencing factor of social context, in other words the teachers' marking and its emphasis on error correction seemed to determine students' revision choices.

### 5.2.3. Revision for clarification of meaning

Revision is recognized to be undertaken at many different levels. At a minor level, discussed above, the revisers concentrate on making their writing perfect such as setting a task that focuses on cosmetic changes for example. On another level, revisers go beyond that to focus on rethinking the substance, reshaping the text, discovering new avenues or better readability. Students writing in their second language rarely think of setting task definition for substantive revision (Ferris, 1997; Porte; 1997; Sze, 2002). However, these findings reveal that EFL student writers were able to revise for some substantive features to clarify the meaning in different forms. They revised to edit meaning, rethought

the content via elaborating and reconstructing sentences or sometimes paragraphs. Hence, this code was generated to accommodate students' comments regarding these concerns.

First, some Post Basic EFL student writers expressed their intention to edit for meaning. FGBS3, for example, commented that editing flaws was of much importance as it had an impact on reaching the wanted points: *'When revising my writing, I sometimes examine some sentences to see if there are any mistakes. This is very important as it can affect the meaning of the sentence as well as affecting the overall meaning of the text'*. Naif shows that his attention to errors is not simply about grammatical accuracy but because he realized these errors *'might lead to a different meaning from the intended ones'*. He gave an example: *'For the second change I intended to use 'will' to express the expected reaction of the guests'*. Some other Post Basic student writers rethought the contextual meaning or words; Rand for example, stated, *'I wrote 'was', then I thought about the idea that the interviewee has not been in the interview yet and hence I changed 'was' into 'will be'*. Another student writer also shared the abovementioned point: *'I wrote 'path' and then I realized that 'path' might mean something like 'road', so I decided to change it into 'ways' as it is simple and gives clear meaning'* (Rami: G12). Some student writers also attempted to clarify the meaning through shortening sentences, for example Fahad replaced the phrase 'see you soon' with 'good bye'. He intended to make his sentence *'simple, short and easy to be understood'*. A Basic student writer who shared the abovementioned view of attempting to clarify the meaning commented, *'I decided to add the article 'the' to the word 'a boat' so it read 'since that day…., he gave them the boat', thinking about their feeling as it means a lot to them, to make it like a greater thing for them'* (Shrooq: G9).

To clarify the meaning, some Post Basic student writers attempted to elaborate and extent the substance of their topic, mainly at the word or the sentence level. They recognized the significance of setting a task definition to elaborate their ideas. FGAS1 for example, commented *'I also consider adding something to the text where possible. I felt then that my writing became better as it might have*

*some clear ideas, explanation, more examples and quite reasonable for me to submit'.* Naif also reasoned his choice of expanding a sentence about hospitality: *'because this is a fact, and to add about Omani's hospitality to add more sense'.* Likewise, Rand expanded a sentence via adding some advice, *'but do not spend much long time watching it'.* The paragraph read: *'*In my opinion, TV is the best way of getting news, but do not spend long time watching it'. She explains: *'I wanted to explain that TV also has some disadvantages, so I gave a tip for people to avoid spending much time watching it'.* Likewise, Jawaher showed her inclination to extend her sentences aiming at clarifying the meaning, she illustrated: *'To make my sentence clear, I added some extra information like some websites, also broadcast some news, it is not only TV channels'.* Whilst, all the above discussed views were about Post Basic student writers, interestingly, Jinan, a Basic student writer, expressed her revision's intention: *'I added some words and phrases like 'amazing Iranian market' to the sentence to make its meaning more clearly'.*

Nevertheless, some Post Basic student writers' comments made it clear that they attempted to clarify the meaning through reconstructing their text beyond words and sentence levels. FGBS5, for example, stated: *'Re-organizing paragraphs helps me link ideas, thus producing a meaningful text'.* Similarly, in revising a topic about 'The advantages of teamwork', Rand managed to add three lines to create a short new paragraph, paragraph two, and reorganized the paragraphs by moving paragraph two to three and vice versa. Curiously, this shows that even though these student writers were inclined to revise for minor improvement to their text, they also reflected that they were willing to revise for some substantive features such as clarifying the meaning via rethinking the content. However, Rand rationalized her decision to compensate for her ineffective planning for the assigned topic rather than reshaping her text. She commented:

> *I first planned quickly and then while writing I changed some ideas. Even some ideas I was*
>
> *not able to plan and write about during writing; I thought about the overall ideas, and I*

*decided about them when I wrote the second draft like the one in paragraph 2 where I added*

*a new short paragraph.*

A few student writers from both levels also attempted to clarify the meaning through changing almost all the texts when writing their final drafts but their decision was due to either a failure in absorbing the task or experiencing an inability to understand what they had written. Fahad states: *'When writing the first draft I had not understood the task requirement, so I produced a text that was irrelevant, however when writing the second draft I was able to write better as I absorbed the task requirement and the topic's area'.* Abeer also emphasized that she was not able to understand what she had inscribed: *'I changed almost everything; I wrote about all the ideas in mind'.* She explained the reason behind changing almost everything: *'I could not write independently, I felt I needed some assistance while writing. The second thing I faced was that when I reread my writing, I could not understand what I had written.'*

To conclude, for the purpose of clarifying the meaning, the findings revealed some attempts that encompassed some substantive features. Some students clarified that they were editing for meaning, expanding some sentences as well as reorganizing them. Furthermore, some Post Basic student writers attempted to clarify the meaning via adding some paragraphs or restructuring their whole text, though they were aiming at compensating their inefficiency to plan well for their writing whereas, a few EFL student writers from both Basic and Post Basic levels adopted reformulation of the content at paragraph level to address their failure to meet the writing task requirements.

### 5.2.4. Revision for self-accountability

Self-accountability refers to the individual's responsibility for his/her own choices and decisions that will determine his/her subsequent techniques and strategies to fulfil his/her targets (Bregman, 2016; Frink & Ferris, 1998). According to McLaren (2002), self-accountability could be classified in two sections: individualizing concerns that are interlinked with self-serving behaviour and the socializing

concerns which imply discipline and reliance feeling improvement. While applying this same definition to the current study, we discovered that EFL student writers' self-accountability concerns were well manifested in their obvious awareness of the objectives they sought during the revision process .

To begin with, student writers' comments revealed some individualizing accountability concerns in three main ways: revising to earn better grades, considering a sense of their identity as EFL writers, and /or undertaking the revision process for exploring ideas. It appeared that the majority of the student writers belonging to different levels agreed on the paramount priority given to getting better marks and grades. Some Post Basic student writers, for instance, considered thinking about grades as an incentive that, *'motivates to revise'* (FGBS3), and *'score higher grades and marks'* (Rami: G12). Accordingly, some student writers found it necessary to *'focus on task requirement to avoid losing marks'* (FGAS7). In the same vein, revision was also defined by a Basic student writer as an instrument to *'achieve better attainment'* (Jinan: G9).

However, a few EFL student writers, from both Post Basic and Basic levels, comments about revision intentions indicated having a sense of writer's identity. Notably, as discussed in chapter 2, English has become an important language in Oman; due to globalization, it is significantly used in many fields such the economy, globalization, innovation, tertiary level education and job markets as well as nationalization purposes ( Al-Issa, 2007 ; Al-Mahrooqi & Tuzlukova, 2014). Students' identity could obviously be incarnated in their way of writing. Accordingly, some EFL student writers, from both levels, intended to develop their English writing. They manifested individualized self-accountability when setting a personal task definition for revision. FGBS3, for example, considered two aims 'beyond grades and marks': academic and social. The first addresses 'academic' and intrinsic motives that assist mastering revision skills and consequently developing writing skills for future higher study demands and thus he would be *'able to write reports and assignment at the*

*University level'.* Similarly, Shrooq shared this same attitude as she tried her best *'to achieve success criteria'* and be *'a better writer'.* This also might reflect their deep concern in the writing activity. Some other student writers thought of future social communication. The social aim, according to Naif, was attained while travelling abroad as he *'needed to revise and focus on developing the language and ideas and even bring in some elaboration to the content', to meet 'the social needs'.*

Some other EFL student writers, from both levels, also intended to satisfy external factors such as satisfying parents' or society's expectations. Shrooq commented on the incentive role of her father. She asserted '*I consider my father as a reader, because he is part of my life and he is supportive'.* She explained, *'My father motivates me to revise my writing. He usually advises me that I do need to develop my writing for future studies and for my career. Therefore, I want to revise my writing to satisfy my father'.* FGBS3 contended, *'Our community is looking forward to achieving its expectation of us as good writers for our future'.* The spread of English language all over the world has traced some identity lines, in Oman for instance, someone who is competent in English is considered as a unique and well-educated person.

Notably, revision might provide opportunities for heuristic purposes to explore some new ideas (Hillocks 1982; Murray, 1978b) . For some Basic student writers like Shrooq, revision seemed to be an opportunity for contriving ideas; she was thinking of the main character in the story whom the two children had helped could be *'their father or their brother or some of their relatives' or even 'a stranger'* but then she decided to call him *'the fisherman'.* Misfer, another Basic student writer, realized that drafting and redrafting were opportunities to try out ideas to select the best that helps *'achieve the expected aims'.* However, it seems unclear which of the targeted aims he speaks about, in other words whether they are school initiated aims or his own personal aims.

Two Post Basic student writers perceived revision as an opportunity to develop their language. Rami, stated: *'Revision helped me learn some new words, develop my grammatical knowledge. This will motivate me to read more and enrich my knowledge of both vocabulary and grammar'*. Ibtihal shared this point: *'I make a list of spelling mistakes I encountered and review again, so if they commence again, I will get them right'*.

Interestingly, a Post Basic student writer managed to develop his writing skill with respect to revision by using a portfolio, *'to compare writing drafts'* and find out the strengths and weaknesses' which enabled him *'identify the priorities when drafting and redrafting writing as well as making the utmost use of the teacher's feedback'* (FGBS7).

Although comments about revision for individualized concerns seem to be frequent, particularly revision to score better grades and marks, some comments from both levels, indicate students' concern regarding their accountability for socializing factors which mirror the impact of the social context on revision decisions. Students' interpretation of the social context aligns with the tradition that accuracy and perfect English are prerequisites in the conventional teaching model and assessment arrangements. Shrooq, for example, insisted that the teacher could be impressed more by such *'good words and not like simple words'*. Curiously, writing under circumstances like the pedagogical instructions and the assessment criteria distracted setting goals for major enhancement *'because of the way writing is taught and the assessment arrangements which focus on minor changes for revision'* (Shrooq: G9).

Social context might have impacted on changing students' decisions of revising their writing into something that is unsatisfactory:

*'I intended to write the word' sincerely', but I have not known the correct spelling of that word. Hence, I wrote 'faithfully' though I assumed that I knew the person for the purpose of getting good marks and not losing marks because of a spelling mistake'* (Naif: G12).

From another perspective, whilst some Basic student writers perceived that reflecting on writing may assist new avenues in exploring the substance of the topic, they were disposed to some extent, to put out information that supported the first idea that came to mind. Shrooq, for example, assumed, *'I was intending to add some new ideas about the winter clothes but then I said I have a lot more to write and I do not have enough space, so I just wrote 'winter' instead of further developing the ideas'* (Shrooq: G9). Notably, the writing task restricted her to write with limited words and in a tight space, by which I mean a narrow perception of what teachers expect. Whilst most EFL adolescent writers in this study seemed to pursue external purposes rather than intrinsic ones, a few Post Basic student writers were willing to pursue personal goals. However, they were disrupted while revising their writing by the obligatory requirements, revising prerequisites as requirements and school initiated aims due to the imposed school context. FGBS2, for example, commented: *'First of all, I am looking to satisfy myself that I wrote good writing about the targeted topic, meanwhile I am thinking about my reader (my teacher), so I can achieve better grades'.* Jawaher added that she *'tried to make better use of the teacher's feedback to get adequate grades'.* However she realized her *'inability to manage revising'* got in the way.

A Basic student writer, from another perspective, commented that the lack of interest in school aims was the basis of unsatisfying levels, he illustrated that:

> *'The school assessment hinders my own creativity in writing, I must focus on correcting my mistakes to get high score, and otherwise I will score disappointing grades. Unfortunately, I would like to imagine someone other than my teacher as a reader, but*

*my teacher just focuses on my own mistakes, underlines them, and deducts some marks*

*where I score very low grades'* (FGDS4).

Another Basic student writer also targeted exaggerating their expressions to persuade the reader examiner: *'I believe that the difference in population between villages and cities in is not big, hence to avoid sending a message to my reader of underestimating the population in town, I changed the word 'big' into 'huge'* (Shrooq: G9).

To sum up, most EFL student writers in this study seemed to seek better grades and marks to account for individualizing self-accountability while revising. Interestingly, few of them expressed their intention to set task definition for personal purposes such as intrinsic motives that reflected having a sense of identity as an EFL writer or revise for heuristic purposes. However, their comments suggest that their intentions seemed superseded by their account for the social context.

## 5.3. Students' perceptions of the process

This theme puts emphasis on EFL Basic and Post Basic student writers' understanding of the process of revision in EFL school writing. It accommodates comments related to students' revision strategies, their procedures in revising their writing, opportunities of revision, and understanding revision potentials that might be applied to develop writing. This theme also sheds light on how revision is handled amongst other composing processes, such as planning and translation. To elaborate a comprehensive understanding of the holistic nature of the writing development, EFL student writers were asked to reflect on their own revision process, their preferred ways of revision in developing their texts as well as the revision strategies they employed to deal with the assigned writing tasks. In fact, the several iterations and the successive thematic analyses have generated 7 codes. These are clustered under four main codes. Table (5.3) illustrates these codes and provides a comprehensive

coding framework to yield a meticulous answer to the intricate question on the potential ways Basic and Post Basic Omani students figure out the revision process in EFL writing. The following sections put forward details about students' perspectives with regards to these codes.

*Table 5.3: Coding framework related to EFL students' perceptions of the process of revision*

**Theme 2: Students' perceptions of the process of revision**

| Codes | Definition | Sources | References | | Sub-codes |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | | | Basic | Post Basic | |
| Revision in the writing process: students' approach | *Comments referring to EFL student writers' preferred approach to writing and revision processes, the strategies they utilized and how that impacts their revisions in EFL writing.* | Focus Groups | 8 | 11 | Linear vs recursive approach |
| | | Interviews | 56 | 64 | Revision as a retrospective vs formative chore |
| Revision in EFL writing: Planning, generating ideas and revision | *Comments referring to strategies students employed in prewriting activities and generating ideas and how that interplayed with revision.* | Focus Groups | 15 | 11 | Impact of ineffective planning on revision |
| | | Interviews | 24 | 27 | Spontaneous generation of ideas vs pre-writing chore |
| Revision in EFL writing: Translation and revision | *Comments referring to strategies students employed in translating ideas into written English and how that interplayed with revision.* | Focus Groups | 1 | 3 | Revision as a strategy to compensate for the challenge of translation |
| | | Interviews | 63 | 80 | |
| Insight into revision processes: Rereading, reviewing and reflecting | *Comments referring to students' revision strategies they employed to better develop their writing.* | Focus Groups | 6 | 9 | Rereading as a revision strategy |
| | | Interviews | 30 | 25 | Procedural vs reflective approach |

### 5.3.1. Revision in the writing process: Students' approach

The writing process- according to a strong body of literature (see for example, Ferris; 1995, Porte, 1997; Sze, 2002) has been universally conceived as non-linear, interactive, recursive, generative and non-stop process as it exposes even the whole work to further reconsideration and evaluation. However, the majority of student writers in this study argued that the writing sub-skills such as planning, translation and revision occur in a very clear linear process. Accordingly, revision is conceived now as a retrospective chore.

In fact, the study of comments provided by two Post Basic student writers has revealed controversial and contradictory claims. For instance, Naif, on the one hand, insisted on the linearity of the writing process. He explained:

*First, I read the task thoroughly and translated the comments into Arabic. Some discussion was required to start generating new ideas. Then, I was able to formulate and translate them into English. I organized these ideas and put them into sentences. Finally, I reviewed my writing.*

On the other hand, Naif contended on the difficulty to implement the steps in such a linear way, *'because these skills were interrelated'*. He clarified, *'it was difficult to proceed in writing if I had an incorrect or a senseless sentence'*. He had to 'pause to think and then return to write'. For Naif, revision was introduced as *'an ongoing activity that involves thinking during planning and discussing task requirements at an early stage, rethinking about ideas and words to be used and continue reviewing what was written even after completing each sentence'*. Rand revealed that writing sub-skills are arranged sequentially and the revision is implemented at the end of the process. She illustrated, *' First, I focus on planning how to write an attractive introduction, I plan the ideas in mind, and then I start to translate the ideas in the body which is sometimes about a paragraph or two, completing writing and then revising the text'*. On the contrary, she divulged that she integrated

revision along with planning to think ahead and she managed to bring out some changes *'while writing I rethought some ideas and managed to change like the one in line 7, where I extended the sentence by adding another sentence'*. The above quotes might also confirm that these student writers follow a dual revision process; they follow a revision approach of both formative and retrospective nature.

Similarly, Misfer a Basic student writer, excluded the integration of the different writing sub-skills as it was challenging for him to do even two activities at the same time. He comments, *'I first plan well and then I start to translate my ideas and then I revise'*. Therefore, applying the activities would be in the actual linear way. This might be interpreted as a possible example of cognitive load because of L2 younger are writers similar to their counterparts in L1 who cannot manage these processes simultaneously because it is too effortful. However, he manifested his inability to concede revision until the end of the writing process because *'revising occurs on the spot while writing'*. He referred to his slow pace in writing to his frequent stopping to *'think about the next ideas and sentences'*.

From another perspective, Shrooq, a Basic student writer, had an eminent awareness about writing sub-processes. She could show an ongoing maintenance of a purpose, while displaying a clear inclination to ponder undertaking planning, drafting and revising in one go. She states:

> *In intending to get the reader to reach my ideas, sometimes the writing fails to get the reader to figure out the ideas compared to the speaking conversation. I want to say that the words and ideas I planned and the way I formulate the sentences sometimes does not help to reach the intended ideas, hence I need to pause, rethink and re-plan and create many changes concurrently to achieve my intention.*

For Shrooq, reviewing appeared a formative process: *'Before moving to a new idea, I made sure that the previous idea was accurate, good, finished and well translated'*. Despite her ability in shuttling between various sub-skills and her great understanding of the significance of revision in her comments, Shrooq exposed a great awareness in translating some sub-skills more than the other sub-

skills, this might reflect this student's priority in getting her ideas written: *'You know about the chain; I wanted to connect everything together. I wanted to get the biggest part out of the way, I have a lot of information'.* Shrooq reflected that her experience of being educated in Coventry in England has helped her to monitor her approach to process writing in general and to effectively tackling reviewing and revising her writing. She shed light on the importance of her teacher's guidance while writing and the importance of the students' confidence in making a decision about what to change,

> *When I went to my school in England, I remember that me and my class were given a paper if we are going to write a story, for example, with a blank diagram to write our own ideas as a guidance, and then guided by my teacher towards being very open either while writing the first draft or in writing the second draft to add any further ideas, amend, delete or to add any things that might be suitable'.*

Such an experience has helped her *'at least to be more aware of how to monitor planning ideas, translating them, rethinking, revising and overall developing writing',* though she claims that *'it seems a bit difficult to implement such an approach in my current school'.*

Most student writers from both levels declared that they perceive the writing processes as disconnected sub-skills and in a linear way. Rami for instance mentioned, *'I intended to end up writing as quick as possible and postpone the focus on revising and rereading till I finish my draft'.* Equally Anees reflected on his experience by saying:

> *I went through the task and I tried to organize my ideas. I wrote the meaning of some difficult words like the word 'tourisms'. I translated my ideas mentioning that Oman is an interesting and attractive place to visit. Finally, I checked the written text.*

Their comments indicated that their insights and performance are guided by the social framework and their school originated approach. Conventionally, planning, writing and reviewing the whole text

happens in subsequent stages. Conspicuously, students are always under time pressure since they are required to submit their first draft within the time allowed. For this reason some Basic and Post Basic student writers leave revision until the end of the writing process: *'This helped bringing out some changes concerning spelling, rubbing out some phrases that might be redundant...etc.'* (Ibtihal: G12); *'in order to achieve the assessment criteria and score better marks'* (Qusai: G9).

To conclude, it appeared that EFL student writers in this study see the writing process as a series of steps or stages in producing a text. Some Post Basic student writers and a few Basic student writers had contradictory claims about their favorite methods of writing, which seemed obstructed by the academic and the societal context. They were referring to the recursive process while reflecting on their implementation of the linear approach to the process of writing. This might indicate that they were not fully aware of what the recursive process might entail. Only one student demonstrated a distinguished degree of metacognitive awareness as she was able to express out her feelings while writing and could explain which activities she managed to develop. This student might be influenced by her experience of being educated in a different social context. On the contrary, the majority of EFL Post Basic and Basic student writers' comments seemed to reveal that they perceived revision as a formative retrospective macro strategy act carried out during writing revision. Notably, it appeared that the majority of EFL Post Basic and Basic student writers looked to identify the dominant importance of revision in developing their texts. However, their awareness was less than expected because they just sought to do the assigned tasks.

### 5.3.2. Revision in EFL writing: Planning, generating ideas and revision

The following code accommodates EFL Basic and Post Basic student writers' comments on pre-writing and idea-generating techniques, as well as how they interacted with revision. Most EFL Post Basic student writers' comments showed a deep awareness of the usefulness of the planning activity in developing EFL writing. FGAS2, for instance, stated:

*I often plan mentally. This helps me to create a link between ideas. So I planned to start*

*with some simple information. Then, I thought about the second idea which I assumed to*

*be the closest to the first point and shed light on the following point.*

FGAS3, commented *'sometimes I am short of time, so I do not do brainstorming. I actually think that doing so would help me generate ideas and consequently develop my writing better'*.   Likewise, Jawaher claimed that, while writing about some topics, she could not decide on words choice or at least to reformulate her phrases and sentences because she had not *'thought about ideas or put some effort to retrieve different words at the pre-writing stage'*. Planning, henceforth, was perceived at the origin of the difficulties that might hamper reviewing and improving writing. The writers' perspectives seemed to influence their revision activity in different ways.

Some Basic student writers argued that they did not have any idea about procedures for planning. However, their effort was mainly oriented to master how to write good introductory sentences. Anees, for example stated: *'I tried to organize my ideas. I promoted further the meaning of some difficult words like 'tourism'*. He mentioned, *'Nobody guided me to plan. I planned the topic in my own way, I focused on planning for the first few lines and then tried my best to find some more ideas while writing, I did not know if I was right or not'*. He referred to his inability to write that much in his essay to the lack of good planning and then after, his inability to make such a significant change on the spot. Qusai claimed that his school had not given enough attention and support to his different needs. He argued that his teacher's explanations were not suitable for everyone. His teacher did not used to comment on the way he planned. *'My teacher asked me to plan, I did not really know how to do that. So, I focused on some unknown words, even though I could not think of selecting the suitable ones or correcting the flaws in the previous sentences as I was busy focusing on the next ideas'*.

Obviously speaking, these students were inclined to put up and generate their ideas during the writing process. However, in certain situations, some students were not eager to bring out changes. Two Basic

and a post Basic student writer reflected that when they wrote the first sentence, they often focused on triggering the next idea rather than rereading what they had written. Abeer was not satisfied with the formulation of the sentence *'I think that town boring as featured in the town is that services be available'*. She could not rephrase this sentence because she was *'Thinking of what to write for the next idea'*. Similarly, Qusai commented that the mistake he made with the phrase 'Oman has' being written 'Oman his' instead, was due to his *'thinking of the next idea for the first reason'*. Fahad thought that *'thinking of the next idea'* was important for the coherence and unity of his writing. Therefore, he *'postponed the revision till the end and was not able to make on spot changes'*.

In contrast, despite proving an ability to generate ideas while writing, most Post Basic student writers showed heavy dependence on planning or revising as they were trying to formulate and reformulate their ideas in a more logical and verbal way. Naif, for example, planned in advance to write a reasonable rationale to sustain his claim of supporting a volunteer for a prize when writing an email. However, he was not satisfied with the reasons he provided. Hence, he reread his writing. He paused to *'regenerate the ideas'*. Rand sometimes imagined readers other than her teacher. Hereafter, she felt worried about her writing and revised her plan to make sure that it was contingent with her planning. She commented, *'I reviewed my writing to make sure that I followed what I had planned. Thus, this often led me to re-plan and think of some other ideas to be covered'*. Notably, Rand justified restructuring her paragraphs as discussed in 5.2.3 to compensate for her ineffective planning.

It seemed, then that Post Basic student writers attempted to manifest revision to regenerate and develop their writing. It appeared that their revision activity and their writing process had become more disciplined, and their ideas appeared to be more controlled.

Overall, planning is conceived by most student writers as an influencing factor not only in improving but also in impeding writing as well. Most Basic student writers relied on generating ideas while

writing to compensate for their challenges of not being aware enough in planning and coping with time constraints. This has led them to become reluctant in making effective changes. Henceforth, they were either unable to revise better or postpone revision till the end of the task. On the contrary, most Post Basic student writers followed a dual planning process. They were generating and regenerating ideas at both, pre-writing and on the spot stages. They manipulated revision to assist re-planning, and regenerating ideas. Their strategies appeared fruitful in becoming more disciplined, as they attempted to develop their ideas.

### 5.3.3. Revision in EFL writing: translation and revision

The following code illustrates students' strategies for converting ideas into written English, as well as how this interacted with revision. EFL Basic and Post Basic student writers' comments appeared to reflect that translation constitutes a major challenge for all the student writers from both Basic and Post Basic levels. They conceive their methods to translation in diverse ways and consequently compensate for this challenge in divergent ways.

For some student writers, from both levels, the major challenge was how to manage putting ideas in the most appropriate structure and most accurate written language. Therefore, their revision performance was regarded as an act of compensating strategy to get better translation of their ideas.

Shrooq, for example, contended that during this activity she was thinking of how to make her grammar and structure more 'accurate' and 'appropriate' to help the reader reach her ideas:

*I first wrote 'can rain', I had some doubt about the appropriate grammar to communicate my idea to the reader. Then I thought it would be better to change it into 'it could rain' because it was more accurate. I was thinking about both grammar and the readers' expectations.*

Rand also added, *'I thought about what I had written and realized that there was something missing. I was wondering how the advice I gave could be better explained'*. Naif also experienced a difficulty in writing an attractive introduction for an email:

> *I was trying to translate the idea about the rationale for writing this email to the receiver, however I could not retrieve the sentence. So I paused to regenerate the sentence, 'I am writing this email for you to tell you about the importance of volunteer activities in our life…' but I thought I was not really satisfied with the way I wrote this sentence because I wanted to introduce about a good example of a volunteer called Muneer.*

Some other EFL student writers, from both levels, also illustrated some other additional challenges, such as cultural differences between Arabic and English when translating their ideas into written English and accordingly they reformulate sentences and texts mentally. Rand, a Post Basic student writer for example, attempted to use Arabic convention when introducing an email without a need to link to the topic:

> *It is an Arabic style to ask someone about their health and updated good news, however I could not manage to link this idea to the targeted topic about giving advice for someone having an interview. Therefore, I spent much time restructuring this idea into clear sentences.*

A Basic student writer found expressing abstract ideas such as feeling so challenging; *'I was trying to describe the feeling, but it was hard because it was just like being in an ocean. It was phenomenal and you couldn't easily describe. So it required much rethinking and reformulation'* (Shrooq: G9). Misfer, another Basic student writer, experiences a challenge in creating a link between ideas. He explained, *'I intended to write a sentence that started with 'The tourists want some knowledge', then I rethought about it and changed the sentence into 'The tourists want to watch ….'. This helped me to create a link with other sentences and overall add more sense to the text'*. Naif, a Post Basic student writer, also claimed that meeting their teacher's expectation in building paragraphs was difficult to achieve:

*'Building up a paragraph was not easy, sometimes I felt that the sentences I formulated were convenient for me but not for my teacher'.* He added, *'after writing a paragraph I rethought about the way I followed to build it bearing in mind my teacher'.* Taking this into consideration, it was noticed that some EFL student writers, from both levels, attempted to re-organize ideas to make the whole text meaningful. Their comments suggest that they mentally revised their writing before and during translation. The findings revealed also that their online revision incarnated features of some global level changes.

On the contrary, other Post Basic and Basic student writers focused on sentence and word levels. Fahad for example commented, *'forming sentences is so difficult. I had an idea but I couldn't find the right vocabulary to build up these sentences'.* He added, *'In addition to the difficulty of generating ideas, I faced trouble in deciding on the accurate words to develop and the exact sentences'.* These achievers also experienced difficulties in managing what ideas they can put on paper. They listed the ideas in short sentences and then tried their utmost to elaborate and discuss them:

> *After briefly listing ways of getting news in sentences, I realized that most people, particularly teenagers, nowadays are using social media. Henceforth, I was struggling to find some extra information to extend these sentences. Some websites do broadcast news now, it is not only TV'* (Jawaher: G12);

*'I was thinking about how I could discuss the reasons that I tried to convey'* (Qusai: G9). Some Post Basic student writers also seemed to be involved in a constant struggle to put out and juggle words in a comprehensible way to make sense and formulate clear sentences. Fahad exerted much effort in finding and rethinking about *'correcting words, trying to put them together and thinking about how to start a new sentence'.* Similarly, Rami commented, *'I knew the ideas quite well, but then I could not translate them into written English sentences due to my insufficient vocabulary. I spent much time on rethinking of the correct words and kept on changing them, hence I couldn't finish earlier'.*

For some Post Basic student writers, to compensate for the difficulties they encountered, they utilized some strategies like using L1 in L2 writing. This has helped some of them to translate ideas better. However, it additionally magnified the challenge of translation as they could not find equivalent English words or it impeded their attempts to translate their ideas due to the differences between the two languages. Thus, in keeping on reviewing their formulated sentences:

*Sometimes I had the ideas, but did not have the words to translate them. This challenge hindered my work. Even due to the differences between Arabic and English grammar, I kept trying to make sure that my ideas were well-translated and accurate as I was a bit worried of the possibility of mixing between tenses'* (Rami: G12).

Broadly speaking, for all the EFL student writers in this study, it appeared that translation proved to be a significant challenge. Their responses, on the other hand, represent a wide variety of perspectives on how to deal with such a problem. Some of them perceived revision as a strategy to achieve the aim of better presenting their ideas in writing. They reconsidered their ideas before writing, while writing and post writing. Redrafting for them, was as important as drafting. Some others manifested revision to overcome some translation challenges, such as cultural differences between their own language and English, translating abstract ideas, and/or meeting their reader examiner expectations. This may reflect on their implementation of some substantive features in their actual changes. In contrast, some student writers did not expand beyond word and sentence level. Accordingly, revision was conceived as a strategy to utilize words skillfully to build up sentences. For some Post Basic student writers, they used L1 to compensate for their inefficiency in English. However, this often magnified their challenge when they could not find the equivalent words in English.

### 5.3.4. Insights into revision sub processes: rereading, reviewing and reflecting

Revision as a sub-skill in the writing processes includes some procedures. For writers to make authentic changes, they use a strategy called rereading. Rereading as a technique for revising was introduced in the original model of Hayes and Flower (1980) as a sub strategy to identify dissonance in order to implement some required changes afterwards. The findings revealed that the majority of students from both Basic and Post Basic levels appreciated the value of rereading as a primary and contributory strategy to review and better decide about actual changes. FGAS3, for example, stated *'I read the text many times and examined it, if the sentences were connected, if the meaning is clear, I will check the sentence structure, the correct words, spelling and punctuation".* Similarly, Misfer realized a deep incongruity while *'rereading the sentences and comparing them to'* his *'knowledge'.* He, for example, paused in line 8 when writing a persuasive topic, about giving tourists advice of whether *'visiting Oman or going somewhere else', "To reread, reformulate the ideas and rephrase sentences".* While writing, Rand sometimes needed to stop when she felt there was something to be changed. She paused *"to reread to detect the issue".* For Shrooq, rereading is an everlasting strategy,

> *I actually reread every sentence I complete, I also read every completed paragraph and when I had completed my draft, I started from the beginning to examine my writing for whether an improvement was needed, that was my planning of going through the whole text, writing and then again rereading the sentences and then detecting if there were any mistakes to be corrected.*

Two Post Basic student writers also stated that rereading has helped them to decide about some vocabulary choice: *'rereading the text has helped me in remembering the exact words and thus omit and replace some long expression that I wrote with convenient meaningful words'* (Jawaher: G12); *'rereading the text carefully has helped me to detect if there are any incorrect words'* (Fahad: G12).

However, rereading sometimes lacks productivity if students are not able to implement any fundamental new changes. Two Post Basic student writers reflected on their revision practice, stating that they reread their writing more than once, however, *'could not decide about adding some information to the current paragraph or starting new paragraph'* (Rand: G12); or struggling to find ways to attain their own or school intentions *'I want to develop this sentence to accomplish the targeted aim but I did not know how or what to add'* (Naif: G12).

Whilst two Post Basic and a Basic student writers perceived revision as a retrospective chore, thus in a timed writing task their review was quite speedy. Fahad, for example stated, *'After finishing writing, I spend about two minutes to reread the written task quickly and review it'*. He explained that he was *'busy translating ideas when writing first draft'*. This might have diminished the reasoning demands while struggling to find ways to achieve their personal or school intentions *'I want to develop this sentence to accomplish the targeted aim but I did not know how or what to add'* (Fahad: G12).

Whilst Fahad was not able to apply adequate reviewing due to restricted time, rewriting seems a very good occasion to appraise his writing, *'writing the second draft helped me to focus on some wrong words, I looked up these words in dictionary'*. Abeer, a Basic student writer, also intended to review her script when redrafting. She explained that this helped her *'focus on probing whether the words can be understood and to explain the meaning intended'*.

Most Basic and a Post Basic writer consider revision as a predetermined task. Hence, they view reviewing as a quick task that if done again would become a dull activity. Abeer described her revision process as follows, *'After completing my text, I read the topic quickly, examined the words if I have understood their meaning and then rewrite the topic with the corrected words'*. She completed, *'That is all, I feel that if I check my text again I am going to do some more mistakes, so just leave and hope it will be fine'*. Similarly, Ibtihal revealed that when she was checking spelling mistakes, she *'encountered difficult words like 'desirable',* she *'just checked once and attempted to correct the*

*spelling'*; and if she cannot spell it *'well just leave it'*. Although Ibtihal has inferred her inclination to revise, she clearly mentioned that the activity has become a tedious and painful task for her. Some Basic student writers, once they completed their writing, it was abandoned. Hence, their review would unlikely be based on in-depth reflection. They often reflect on their writing when prompted and reminded. Anees, for example when asked why he wrote *'big teeth'*, responded *'Oh I have not realized that, I wanted to say that its teeth are small, but I wrote the wrong words'*. Similarly, Abeer commented, *"I was thinking about what question the fisherman asked the boys, but then I was busy writing and forgot about it and just realized now"*. Some Post Basic student writers' explanations reflected that their revision depends on a procedural method to writing- in other words they intend to follow some purposeless directions being learned rather than revise their writing based on in-depth reflection, for example FGAS2, clarified:

> *When revising, I imagine that the writing task requires many skills and much knowledge about both the content and the language, so I try to retrieve as much as I can depending on the issue and then try to put the correct thing or the best alternative.*

On the contrary, a few student writers, from both levels, opted to conceive revision as a never-ending task, so they are doubtful about their writing which leads to further modifications, changes and evaluation. Shrooq noted,

> *When writing the second draft, I searched for better ideas and words. However, though I felt that my writing became better and more reasonable as it might have some good ideas and clear explanations, I often felt that it would be better to keep on reviewing it.*

Therefore, a more critical reflection has also helped Shrooq to appraise the coherence of the narrative and reflect on the dissonance of the incoherent events in her written story *"Yeah like they were catching fish and then should be sometimes before jumping to another event"* (Shrooq). She thinks

that redrafting also seems to create an opportunity for a more critical reflection, and she reflected on her experience of being educated in England:

*Despite the fact that my writing was adequate, reviewing the first draft to redraft has helped me to make some decisions about developing some phrases and some vocabulary. I want to mention here that I have experienced this when I was studying at Coventry in England.*

Equally, Misfer perceived his writing from an oblique and an anonymous audience; he commented *"I imagined that someone is going to read my text and hence I focused on constructing good writing, well-organized, spotless and purposeful".* Therefore, he *'felt that the meaning was not clear to get people reach the points, meanwhile the writing was not that predictable to be produced'.* Misfer insisted on the teacher's consistent follow up during his experience at an international school in Dubai. He reported, *"When I was a student at the American Academy in Dubai, my teacher used to ask us to think critically about our writing and imagine the one who would be going to read it. This has helped me to ponder deeply when reviewing my writing though my current school has not asked for that".*

Naif often reviews his writing, even after completion. He stated that it is necessary to *'go through strengths and weaknesses and annotate these points in a writing portfolio'* and from time to time check his *'own progress'.* Naif perceived reviewing as an instance for heuristic purposes to elaborate his writing. Therefore, writing is not put aside after achieving the task. He always reflects on his own progress. It seems obvious that the three writers conceive revision as an ongoing, cyclical process.

To sum up, although revision as a subskill encompasses some sub procedures such as rereading, reviewing and reflecting, most students realized the worth of rereading as a beneficial approach for developing their writing. Nevertheless, it sometimes seems to be a fruitless activity due to being unable to decide on actual suitable charges. It appeared that a few Basic and Post Basic student writers perceived revision as an unlimited task that is often based on in-depth reflection. Conversely, most EFL student writers from both levels conceived revision as a finite, tedious task that if repeated would

lead to meaningless improvement. This indicates that a few student writers' explanations echoed elements of a thoughtful method to writing, whereas the majority of EFL student writers intended to follow a technical and a routine approach. Additionally, it appeared that some educational contexts might have contributed to the composition of developing a reflective approach to writing for some Basic student writers, which highlights the important implications of the social and educational contexts.

## 5.4. Students' perceptions of the success criteria

The following theme sheds lights on EFL Basic and Post Basic student writers' understanding of their evaluative criteria, perceived qualities and parameters they consider to regulate their revision behavior as well as the potential subsequent impacts on their writing quality. It was necessary to avail a relevant answer to the fundamental question that addresses the way Basic and Post Basic Omani students perceive success criteria for revision. To achieve this objective, EFL student writers were asked to reflect on their own evaluation benchmarks, their enunciated concerns and/or the parameters they set when revising the assigned writing tasks. Effectively, the several iterations and the successive thematic analysis have generated 10 codes. These are clustered under three main codes. Table (5.4) illustrates these codes and provides a comprehensive coding framework. The following sections put forward details about students' perspectives with regards to these codes.

*Table 5.4: Coding framework related to EFL students' perceptions of the success criteria*

**Theme 2: Students' perceptions of success criteria for revision**

| Codes | Definition | Sources | References | | Sub- codes |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Basic | Post Basic | |
| Linguistic accuracy parameters | *Comments referring to the linguistic accuracy criteria, such as word choice, correct grammar or accuracy, students' concerns to determine their revision behavior that could influence the development of their writing.* | Focus Groups | 6 | 2 | Vocabulary |
| | | | | | Punctuation |
| | | Interviews | 62 | 65 | Grammar |
| Text features parameters | *Comments referring to the criteria about features of text development, such as explanation and elaboration parameters student writers set or concern to ascertain their revision performance that could impact the writing development.* | Focus Groups | 3 | 3 | Literary techniques |
| | | | | | Organization, unity and coherence |
| | | Interviews | 40 | 10 | Writer's opinion/personal style |
| | | | | | Description, explanation and elaboration |
| Self-accountability parameters | *Comments referring to the criteria students set or concerned focusing on accountability measures such as considering audiences' needs to ensure their revision behavior that therefore could affect their writing improvement.* | Focus Groups | 8 | 11 | Self-satisfaction |
| | | | | | Audience consideration |
| | | Interviews | 21 | 26 | Assessment checklist |

## 5.4.1. Linguistic accuracy parameters

The following linguistic accuracy criteria code reflects on Basic and Post Basic student writers' concerns about vocabulary, punctuation and grammar accuracy to delineate their revision performance features in their writing activity.

To begin with, the findings revealed that the majority of both EFL Basic and Post Basic student writers endeavor to use the most accurate words that convey the most suitable meaning they intend to express. This appeared to be identified in their tendency to address two facets of vocabulary; selecting the best word and/or ensuring their correct spelling. Word choice appeared to be perceived by EFL writers as a predominant concern as it seemed to be considered as a key to success in revising writing and enhancing their composition. The term *'better words'* (Anees, Shrooq, Qusai: G9) or *'correct words'* (Abeer, Jinan) was frequently articulated by most Basic student writers as a definition for good vocabulary. Most Post Basic writers coined their perception of this parameter as *'most suitable word'* (Naif, Rand, Rami, Ibtihal: G12). This might indicate that Post Basic writers have become more aware of their mental process when deciding to make a change about a selected word by seeking the appropriate words that can elaborate the meaning of the sentence. Some Post Basic comments tend to confirm this understanding. Ibtihal, for example, reflected on her decision of changing the word 'trustable' into 'real' in the sentence 'TV news come from trustable organizations', *'I want to make sure that the word I have chosen could make more sense for the reader to reach my idea. Therefore, I spent much time thinking about the available words or sometime synonyms I knew to select the appropriate ones'.* Similarly Rami changed the word 'raises' to 'reaches' in the sentence 'In the middle of Africa the weather is very hot and the temperature raises fifty'. He commented, *'I read the sentence again and found that it might be better read 'the temperature reaches fifty' because it is about approximate. It is more suitable and made sense to the sentence'.*

Taking this into consideration, better selection of words was sometimes perceived by almost all students from different levels as the key for coherence, though mainly at a word level, some comments revealed the students' attempt to select the best word that makes sense. Shrooq, for example, stated, *'I was thinking of whether to write 'very cold' or 'freezing' as it was more suitable for the context'.* Likewise, Rami recognized that contextually the word 'path' can be interpreted as 'road'. He explained, *'I decided to change it into 'ways' as it is simple and gives clear meaning'.* Rand

commented that she needed to alter some grammar to be more accurate. She clarified her decision stating, *'I intended to make changes concerning the tense when I replaced the word 'was' with the phrase 'will be' because I realized that the interviewee has not been in interview yet'.*

However, in some cases it can be argued that the social context might have suppressed students' personal parameters to word choice, so they narrowly perceive their criteria for revising their vocabulary to consider their reader examiner. Naif, for instance, commented, *'Though I knew that the suitable word was 'sincerely' but I wrote 'faithfully, because I was not sure of the correct spelling of the word 'sincerely', I do not want to lose marks because of a spelling mistake'.* From another aspect, due to the students' inclination to score better grades, they often tend to judge the effectiveness of their writing through manifesting their word choice to achieve such a purpose. Some students of different levels reasoned their use of low frequency words and much more sophisticated synonyms helps them attract their teacher's attention and henceforth score better grades.

> *I looked up the synonyms of the word 'pollution' and I came across the word 'contamination'. I thought that replacing such word could show my teacher that I was able to use some sophisticated words in my text.* (Naif: G12).

> *I tried to make it the grandest, most interesting in using better words that can help my teacher get the impression. I felt that using the word 'new' to describe cities would have made it seem a little bit less. Henceforth, I replaced the word 'new' with 'modern'; modern can give a more positive connotation compared to new.* (Shrooq: G9).

In the same vein, but from different perspective, some Post Basic student writers seemed distinctive as they inclined to conceive repetition of words as an undesirable practice. For Naif to avoid repetition, he claimed, *'I wrote 'I think' above, I thought it would be better not to repeat the same phrase, so I assumed 'in my opinion' would be better'.* Rami intended to expand the sentence 'In Africa.....' by adding details, he wrote, 'exactly in the middle of Africa'. Rami was not satisfied of the redundant

words 'In Africa'. He explained, *'I decided to rub out the redundant words 'In Africa' and make the sentence read more specific as 'In the middle of Africa'.* This could be inferred as a slight development as students became more mature and gained more experience towards developing a coherent text.

Another facet of vocabulary that was frequently mentioned by the majority of EFL students of all levels was about spelling. Rami, for example, conceived spelling as a significant concern as it can influence the meaning intended. He commented, *'I detected that some words I wrote have some missing letters, so I corrected them to ensure that the audience can reach my ideas'.* FGCS3 also adds, *'correct spelling is very important for revising my writing'.* For Anees to compensate for his challenge of vocabulary lack, he commented, *'I used some very simple keywords that can be easily spelled, such as 'wadi', 'tourism' or 'place'.*

Predictably, in addition to word choice and spelling, student writers', from different levels, overemphasis on accuracy also seemed to pertain to punctuation concerns. They tended to set evaluative criteria that appeared to align with teachers' evaluation criteria. Ibtihal, a Post Basic student writer reflected, *'spelling and punctuation marks are of much importance for me as my teacher will ask to correct such mistakes'.* Jinan, a Basic student writer, is inclined to consider punctuation and spelling. She reasoned that commenting, *'my teacher will find spelling and punctuation easy to spot'.* This revealed the potential influence of the pedagogical and social context on the students' success criteria, as the school overemphasis on teaching leads students consider cosmetic changes.

Most EFL student writers of both levels deemed punctuation as a key to successful revision of their writing as it can affect the meaning. This appeared conspicuous in Basic student writers' comments.

> *I want to add here some punctuation marks as they are important, the full stop for*
> *example helps the reader know the end of the sentence. Therefore, I spend some time in*

*revising and checking my mistakes with regards to capitalization and punctuation* (Shrooq: G9).

*I first thought of putting a full stop but then I assumed to complete the sentence, because I realized that the ideas in the two sentences are linked, so I decided to change it to a comma* ( Misfer: G9).

On the contrary, some Post Basic student writers have a different perspective. They argued that if they are given a choice, punctuation would be less important for them, if they feel that the reader could reach the meaning. In revising her text, Rand capitalized the letter 'g' because the word 'getting' was at the beginning of a new sentence. She commented, *'If I was the reader, I still can get the message, therefore if given a choice I would spend much time on focusing on important things that can distract the reader from understanding my translated ideas'*. Similarly, Rami explained that his decision of capitalizing the 'b' on the phrase 'best wishes' at the end of his written email,' *'could be left as a lowercase as it will not add anything to the text, but leaving it will get me to score less'*.

Finally, most student writers from both levels place a great emphasis on grammar. The most observable concerns about grammar in students' comments were in dimension such as correct form or tenses, and/or some simple grammar rules like countable and uncountable nouns or pluralization. Rami recognized a dissonance of incorrect form of present simple. He reflected,

*It is very important to ensure writing the correct form. Accordingly the verb 'take' when used with the third person singular pronoun should have an's'. It should be formed as 'takes' not 'take' when it comes after 'He', the third person singular, so the tense should have an 's', it should be formed as 'takes', not 'take'.*

Anees added the definite article 'the' to the word 'equator'. He explained, *'The equator is only one in this world and therefore it should be proceeded by 'the''*. Qusai also emphasized

the significance of implementing grammar rules in writing to produce accurate text. He stated,

*In the sentence I wrote about Oman, I missed the helping verb 'has', as I wrote 'Oman many places to visit'. I thought about that in order to make it grammatically correct, it was important to put a verb to follow the subject 'Oman', hence I added 'has'.*

Overall, most EFL student writers' comments mirrored their emphasis on accuracy in areas like word choice, spelling, punctuation and grammar. The most predominant concern was about word choice and that was reflected in the way student writers define this concern. However, Post Basic student writers' metalinguistic knowledge shows that they became more aware as they focused more on the most suitable choice rather than merely focusing on better and more accurate words. Post Basic writers also perceived the repetition of words in a text as an undesirable act. This indicates a slight improvement towards developing coherence to their text. Whilst Basic students place great emphasis on punctuation, some Post Basic students conceived it as a secondary concern. However, it appeared that most student writers' criteria for linguistic accuracy were affected by the social context- as while reviewing their writing, the students often consider some requirements imposed by teachers and schools.

### 5.4.2. Text features parameters

This code involves Basic and Post Basic student writers' remarks that refer to the standard measures which reflect on the characteristics of text improvement such as explication and improvement factors that influence and impact student writers' revision performance. Student writers' commentaries have revealed that the students were concerned with providing extra explanation, better organization and coherence of ideas, applying imaginary approaches to their writing and/or individual writing styles as

prevailing concerning aspects that may help in evaluating their revision development, and overall endeavor to improve their EFL writing.

To begin with, some student writers from both Basic and Post Basic levels associated fruitful writing with expansion of the ideas they interpreted in their written text. Shrooq, for example, rethought of reinforcing her argument 'towns are better places to live in than living in a village' when asked what she would do if she would redraft her writing. She commented, *"I would put more examples of what makes life in a town better than living in a village, to support my opinion"*. She also commented on adding a word to a phrase in writing a narration:

> *In describing the boys' leisure activities, I thought of writing 'going fishing' or just 'fishing' because 'going fishing' will make more sense than just 'fishing' which might lead to a doubt in the reader's mind like what it is and hence, I decided to add 'going fishing'.*

Likewise, Abeer thought of making her narrative exciting through *"extending sentences by adding attractive words"*. Naif also commented, *"I added some words like asking about health to extend the introductory sentence in writing an email"*. Some others rethought of attempting to elaborate the sentences when redrafting: *"I decided to explain some sentences to make sense to the text"* (Fahad: G12). It appeared that the above quotes indicate that student writers' concerns were about expanding their writing at a word or sentence levels, so they set criteria that focused on expanding texts at small scale revisions.

Whilst some student writers tended to afford extensive explanation to their text, they claimed that they were constrained by either being less knowledgeable or writing in constricted space; writing a limited text:

*I wanted to describe Salalah as an interesting destination to visit, and my teacher advised me to elaborate this paragraph through adding some sentences about other cities. I intended to write about other destinations like the city of Sur and Fanja, but unfortunately I knew nothing about other cities* (Anees: G9).

*I was thinking of giving an example about the idea that teamwork can provide an opportunity for a group of people to distribute the work among them equally and so work can be completed quickly and with good quality. However, I do not have enough ideas to explain such an example* (Jawaher: G12)

*I was thinking of whether the two boys in the story had free time or they were free, hence I thought of adding a sentence here. However, the sense of making it shorter to have more space and to not exceed the number of words allowed in the text.* (Shrooq: G9).

Some student writers also articulated their apprehensions about the arrangements of meaning and the necessity to expand and avail coherence. They conceived that writing should proceed in a steady direction. This seems clear in Post Basic student writers' comments. Naif, for example, reflected his concerns as to the significance of organizing his ideas in writing an email to support his argument. He commented:

*I thought of organizing my ideas to make my text looks better and assist reaching my points. I considered the basic layout of the emails and the language to be used. For instance, how to start asking the person about health and his good news, moving to the body of the emails, and most important to consider which evidence would be the best to support my argument of awarding Muneer for his voluntary human activity.*

Likewise, FGAS9, appeared to place great emphasis on the organization of the paragraphs in a text. She commented:

*I realized the importance of organizing my paragraphs; the introduction should be clear, the conclusion also should be clear. The body paragraph should be quite lengthy and linked to my main idea in the text, but not too long for the reader to reach my ideas.*

Two Post Basic student writers were also concerned about creating a unity to their texts, but at a paragraph level:

*'In reviewing my paragraph, I focused on how to create a link between ideas to follow the line of argument, support the topic sentence with supporting ideas'* (Fahad: G12).

*I would create a link between sentences to make them coherent, which makes my writing meaningful* (Rand: G12).

Shrooq was the only student writer who shared the above discussed concern with Post Basic student writers, but mainly in using cohesive devices to create unity in her text. She commented; *"The thing I want to write second of all, then I stopped to think, because I have a list of things in mind, so I decided to begin the sentence with the word second".*

In addition to setting parameters for the expansions of ideas and considering the organization of ideas in their texts, a few EFL student writers from both levels also consider using some fictional methods in their texts. They conceived such use of literary methods as a means of demonstrating their writing abilities and thereby gaining good grades. Two Post Basic student writers were well concerned with writing good introductory sentences to make their text attractive to read via using some language expressions. They commented:

*The topic was about 'Ways of getting news': my priority in reviewing my written introduction for this topic was to ensure that it was very interesting which could give the reader an overall idea about news. Hence, I reformulated my introduction using some expressions that could*

*make my text attractive to read by telling that I am sending you this message wishing you are being well, and hope you make use of it* (Ibtihal: G12).

*First, I focus on writing an attractive introduction. I believe that in order to inform people about ways of getting news, I need to use some nice expressions to get the people's attention for example, asking questions like think of watching the TV news at nine, what do you like to know* (Rand: G12).

However, Naif, a Post Basic student writer, appeared to be struggling to develop his introductory sentences when writing an email. He states,

*I thought of rewriting my text to ensure an interesting introduction for this email through shedding light on asking the receiver about health, hoping that he was fine and considered asking about his feeling wondering that he was feeling relaxed. However, I could not retrieve this sentence, so I paused a long time to translate such an idea but I thought about this idea in Arabic and it was difficult to find the equivalent words in English.*

On the contrary, Naif appeared to grasp the specific implication of a concluding sentence. He commented on adding the phrase 'hope you like this advice':

*This would add an interesting conclusion to my email, that shows my interest in satisfying my reader, I also changed 'your friend' to 'yours', because it is more social and shows the entire friendship and my respect to my friend.*

Methods like the use of metaphorical language was hardly mentioned in EFL students' reflections in this study. The only example that demonstrated such an interest was introduced by Shrooq, a Basic student writer. She commented on adding the idiomatic phrase, 'fishing that's it' to her story, though she might not have chosen the suitable idiomatic phrase to achieve her intention:

*You know in summer everyone associates summer as a fun holiday, so it did not make*

*sense for the reader to be boring as somebody from Oman would agree not but not*

*anybody else would agree, so I rubbed the word boring and I added the phrase 'fishing*

*that's it, I intended to make it more exciting, it will make more sense for the reader.*

Rand, a Post Basic student writer, considered the use of a question tag to create a context where readers engage and dialogue with her email. She commented:

*I reviewed the language that I used for my email and I thought that using something like a question tag in my text would not add an information but to ensure that the email receiver would be engaged.*

Another noteworthy aspect of using fictitious methods that student writers' comments revealed was about characterization. Since Basic student writers were asked to write a narrative, two student writers designated the suitable vocabulary which would present the speaker's character. Abeer paused in line 15 of writing a story about fishing. She stated, *"I was thinking about what question has the fisherman asked the boys"*. Shrooq also reviewed the paragraph started in line 32 of her narration. She commented:

*The fisherman was inspired that the children were his sons, and he liked them so much. He worried for them, so I tried to explain the idea by reporting his worrying, he told them to 'never let go of their dreams'.*

Shrooq also commented on how the children treated the small fish. She said:

*First why throw the fish, because 'Greed got the best of them', so they throw it back to the sea, thus I explained this event and I extended the sentence with such expression to make it clear to reflect on their real characters.*

Shrooq reflected on her experience of using such literary techniques, she commented:

*I feel that I have such an advantage of having studied in the UK where I shared ideas with my classmates and discussion of creative ideas in my writing. I knew what everything meant and knew what everything stood for, it was very fast, and I do not ever feel confused.*

Conversely, two Basic students observed that they were less concerned about the use of some fictional methods or any creative ideas in their writing. They reflected:

*I will better focus on correcting spelling, punctuation and using better words and phrases. I will also focus on how to answer and complete the task. For me expressing myself in a creative way will not help me obtain good marks* (Jinan: G9).

*The most important thing for me is following what my school wants, not what I want to do in my writing as my teacher will not take care of how I wrote* (Anees: G9).

Finally, despite the significance of personal style in writing, it was not really reflected in students' criteria to ascertain their revision in writing. Only Shrooq seemed to construe personal style in terms of personalization. Shrooq reflected on her concerns about employing her personal style to her written texts through personalization:

*I was going to write about the schoolteachers here, but I would not be able to know every single schoolteacher, so I decided to make it more personal and I wrote 'My school teacher'.*

She also commented on adding the long phrase, 'I know I am still small ……': *'Here it sounds like I am an old lady because what I have written appeared to indicate that. Therefore, I expanded the sentence with a long phrase to make the meaning clear and ensure that my reader anticipates that I am not an old lady, but instead a young girl'.*

In short, the findings seemed to clarify EFL student writers' perceived quality of text features in different facets, such as extending their ideas, organizing the meaning, using fictional techniques and

considering involving personal style to their writing when reviewing it. It appeared that associating fruitful writing with expansion of their ideas was predominately successful, though mainly at word and sentence levels. However, some students were hampered by either not being knowledgeable enough, or when asked to write a text with limited words. Post Basic student writers were inclined to place great emphasis on organizing the meaning to obtain coherent texts. Some other student writers also added some fictional methods in their texts such as good introductory sentences, good ending, though some struggled to reformulate a good introduction. Personal style and metaphorical language were uncommon except for a Basic student writer which appeared to be attributed to the fact of being educated in different educational contexts.

### 5.4.3. Self-accountability parameters

The following code represents the self-accountability concerns of Basic and Post Basic student writers, such as understanding audiences' needs, self-satisfaction and or using assessment checklists, to ensure the efficiency of their revision behavior, which could affect their writing progress in general.

First and foremost, concerns about audience were raised by most Basic and Post-Basic EFL student writers. They believed that good writing could elicit emotions from the reader. FGAS2, for example, commented, *'I do focus on what this story was about and try my best to reread and amend, so that it stimulates and attracts the reader'*. Rand also empathized the reader's feeling to reassure that she could attract the reader's feeling. She claimed, *'Sometimes, particularly if it is a story, to stimulate my reader's interest, I imagine that I am part of the story, I am there'*. For Naif, to engage the reader in his writing, he *'changed 'your friend' into 'yours' because it is more social and shows the entire friendship and more respect to a friend'*.

In a similar vein, the following two EFL student writers' comments, a Basic and a Post Basic student, appeared to explicitly articulate that their reviewing of their writing should consider entertaining the reader as a target:

> *I explained and clarified that Oman is a great place and I tried my best to get the reader not only to reach my points, but to enjoy my writing and inspire such a reader to visit Oman. Hence, I imagined that I am the reader and looked at what I have changed if it is better, easy to understand and enjoyable, then I could say that I succeeded in my changes* (Misfer: G9).

*I imagined that I am the reader, reread my writing and see how the reader would react to my writing; whether the reader enjoyed or liked my ideas. This would help me cope with the reader's needs* (FGAS6).

Some EFL Post Basic student writers set the criterion for conveying meaning as a priority in considering the reader. FGAS9, for example, commented, *'I imagined that I am the reader and examined my writing, if it is understandable or not. Sometimes, I give the topic to someone to read and then ask them if my ideas can be reached, accordingly I would judge if it is ready to submit'* (FGAS9). Rami also checked his language reformulation to ensure that the reader can understand his ideas. He explains, *'I imagined the reader as the one who sent this email. This has affected my writing to better deliver the best tips via using the most suitable language to ensure that my writing is understandable and hence I can judge that I was successful in revising my writing'.*

While valuing readers is a criterion that shows a development in the understanding of EFL student writers, it also seems that these students at both levels, consider the reader examiner for extrinsic goals such as scoring better grades and marks. FGAS6, for example commented, *'to attract my teacher I wrote something like 'Amna said…..', 'Marwa said……', 'Mona answered…' these things attract the marker and feel it is not boring but interesting and where I can score better marks'.* Qusai

also appeared to consider someone as a reader, however, his comment seemed clear that he was targeting his teacher:

*I reached the reader through writing about the reasons that Oman has interesting places to visit, hence I knew to do that , my teacher would focus on the words I used, correct spelling ,correct sentences, as well as if my writing is relevant to the topic.*

Similarly, Fahad reflected, *'Rereading my second draft and seeing that my teacher can reach my ideas would help me produce better writing and score better marks'*.

Some Basic student writers expressed their concerns to the reader examiner via the way they conceived teachers' feedback. Jinan stated, *'I think that I need to write accurate text and follow exactly my teacher's feedback'*. Qusai also added, *'For me I, often depend on the teachers' feedback to support me, the advice that I get from the teacher would help me to decide what I need to change because at the end my teacher is going to read and mark my writing'*. However, Shrooq reflected that she regards teachers' feedback as, *'a guidance, not to restrict myself to such feedback, I want to use my creativity'*.

The above-mentioned viewpoints appeared to make it evident that audience concern is more directly linked to the subject of presentation than to the interaction with the actual reader. From another perspective, with regards to the discussion in section (5.2.1) addressing revision for the reader, a few statements made by student writers from both Basic and Post Basic levels, such as Shrooq, Rami and Naif suggested paying attention to a reader, other than the reader examiner, but this appears imprecise. In other words, it might be necessary to clarify what 'a reader' means as a term in educational settings. Accordingly, student writers' evaluative criteria in considering the reader is likely to align with setting parameters for extrinsic aims, particularly considering the reader examiner for the purpose of scoring marks rather than considering intrinsic personal goals.

Another evaluative criterion that appeared relevant to considering the reader examiner is about considering an assessment checklist as a criterion to ascertain better reviewing of EFL writing. Two Basic student writers reflected that assessment checklists offered a significant evaluative indication for fruitful revision in writing. FGDS4 claims, *'The teacher will follow the assessment checklist when marking, not to look at my creativity or my better revision of my writing'*. He added, *'To judge that my writing is fine, I need to reread and compare it to the assessment checklist, thus I can see nothing is missing and nothing is irrelevant'*. Likewise, Anees' following comment indicates his concerns about an assessment checklist: *'I have tried my best to develop my writing through revising and redrafting making sure that I followed the assessment criteria through correcting errors, spelling mistakes, developing relevant ideas and trying to extend my writing to better express my ideas'*. Almost all Post Basic student writers shared the same perspective. Ibtihal commented, *'I go through the 'to do list' and follow these criteria when revising my first draft, I also compare it with the second draft in the light of such checklist'*. Similarly, FGAS3 also claims, *'I revise to make sure that I made the least mistakes, making sure my writing is well-organized and neat and at the end to ensure that it was almost following the assessment checklist to impress my teacher and score better grades'*.

Finally, 'sounding right' was the catch phrase for the removal of dissonance on a local basis revision with few possibilities of global scale ones. Three Post Basic student writers and one Basic student writer reflected that they had set themselves a criteria of self-satisfaction to judge the success of their revision, though they struggled to articulate the cause of their satisfaction or dissatisfaction when reviewing writing. Jawaher, a post Basic student writer, for example stated:

> *I feel that from the mistake point of view, I did my best to correct these mistakes, my writing looks better. Concerning ideas, I am sure that after rewriting my second draft to certain extent that my ideas sound better. However, I feel that I need to work more on my ideas as I am not pretty sure that these ideas sounds right.*

Naif , another Post Basic student writer, also reflected that *' comparing the second draft to the first draft, to a certain extent, it sounds better as I feel that it is clear in terms of meaning, grammar looks fine, and tenses appeared correct'*.  FGBS2, the third Post Basic student writer, also evaluates his writing according to his feeling, he commented, *'First of all, I am looking to satisfy myself that I wrote a good writing about the targeted topic, hence when rereading and reviewing my text, if I feel that it sounds better, then it is time to submit it'*. Jinan was the only Basic student writer who shared the same idea of creating a sound set of criteria as with the abovementioned Post Basic student writers' view. She claims, *'After adding some extra words to my writing, I felt that my writing looks good, it really sounds fine for me'*.

The above quotes indicate that EFL student writers' judgment seemed not to be based on factors or real understanding of the situation. It appeared based on intuitions of how things should look. Their previous experience might be the basis of their intuition, probably with little understanding of the problem in their subconscious mind.

In conclusion, the majority of comments show that EFL student writers set evaluative standards based on extrinsic factors such as school or instructor perceived characteristics rather than intrinsic intentions. Accordingly, despite the fact that a few of the EFL student writers, from both Basic and Post Basic levels, were concerned about accountability to readers, other than reader examiner, most EFL student writers set parameters to measure their revision behavior to consider their reader examiner (teacher), probably for the purpose of scoring higher grades and getting  better  marks. This also seemed evident in their comments about considering assessment checklists to evaluate their progress in developing writing through the revision act. Self-accountability was also perceived by a few EFL writers from both levels in the form of a self-satisfaction checklist, they set criteria for better revision according to their intuition and often struggled to justify their decision.

## 5.5. Students' perceptions of the challenges

The following theme investigates the answer findings of a fundamental question that addresses the challenges that Basic and Post Basic Omani students face during the revision of their writing. It sheds lights on EFL Basic and Post Basic student writers' understanding of the challenges they faced while revising EFL school writing. EFL student writers were asked to reflect on the difficulties they encountered when revising the assigned writing tasks. Effectively, the several iterations and the successive thematic analysis have generated 11 codes. These are clustered under four main codes. Table (5.4) illustrates these codes and provides a comprehensive coding framework. The following sections put forward details about students' perspectives with regards to these codes.

*Table 5.5: Coding framework related to EFL students' perceptions of the challenges*

**Theme 2: Students' perceptions of the challenges encountered in revision**

| Codes | Definition | Sources | References | | Sub-codes |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Basic | Post Basic | |
| Language challenges | *Comments about the difficulties of leaning and applying EFL writing linguistic rules students face when revising, such as handling English grammar correctly and providing enough vocabulary to grasp the sense meaning in order to better review and improve their writing.* | Focus Groups | 8 | 9 | Vocabulary |
| | | | | | Grammar |
| | | Interviews | 26 | 44 | Meaning at a discourse level |
| Textual and writing process challenges | *Comments about the difficulties student writers face when revising their work have been linked to their textual and writing mental writing processes, which can monitor their revision choices and can influence their writing development.* | Focus Groups | 4 | 5 | Coherence, cohesion and unity |
| | | Interviews | 5 | 14 | Cognition and metacognition |
| Constraints on revision caused by instructional practices | *Comments on how instructional factors and social norms, such as writing in a limited amount of time, using a limited number of words, and adhering to their teachers' marking standards, hampered EFL student writers' revision practice and hampered their writing progress.* | Focus Groups | 4 | 3 | Time |
| | | | | | Perceived reader examiner |
| | | Interviews | 9 | 11 | Word limit |
| Motivation and support challenges | *Comments on the difficulties student writers' encounter when revising their writing related to being familiar with the task, attracting their interest, having enough background knowledge, or the type of teacher feedback. It is also related to the pedagogical support that they get to improve on their revision practice.* | Focus Group | 13 | 22 | Task familiarity, interest and background knowledge |
| | | Interviews | 7 | 28 | Teachers' feedback |
| | | | | | Pedagogical support and assessment |

### 5.5.1. Language challenges

The following code describes the language difficulties that EFL Basic and Post Basic student writers faced when revising their EFL writing. It focuses on EFL students' commentaries that concentrate on the difficulties that occurred when these student writers apply linguistic rules to EFL writing, such as grammar consistency and word use. Such commentaries appeared to indicate that such difficulties would affect their attempts to understand and communicate the overall meaning when endeavoring to better review and develop their writing.

To begin with, the EFL student writers' comments indicate that there are some lexical issues that these EFL students encounter when reviewing their writing, for example, limitations in their vocabulary, word meaning, contextual sense and/or spelling. Most comments from both Basic and Post Basic student writers indicate that the limitations in their vocabulary, particularly not having the vocabulary they need for the task, created a major challenge to skillfully review their writing. Post Basic student writers, for example, FGAS1, claims, '*When I am writing in English, I sometimes have enough ideas, so I try to develop such ideas, but I do not have enough vocabulary that can attract the reader to reach my ideas'*. FGAS4, also generates her ideas in Arabic, then tries to translate those ideas into English. However, she struggled to achieve that due to the limitation of her vocabulary. She commented:

> *I think that I usually think of the ideas in Arabic and translate them into written English, but this technique might be dangerous, hence I must be cautious. Sometimes I cannot find equivalent words and a sentence that suits the ideas. There are also some differences between the two languages which can lead reviewing the translation of such ideas to producing nonsense sentences, rather than developing these ideas.*

Similarly, Naif claimed that he failed to implement his strategy of translating his ideas into English. He commented:

> *In English it is difficult to formulate a sentence even when I planned the idea unless I have enough vocabulary and know how to build it in a sentence. For example, if I want to say that a woman has disappeared, sometimes I do not know what words to use. The problem is therefore I am thinking of planning how to formulate this sentence to translate my idea, but not finding the correct or suitable word. Accordingly, I will rethink and review many times, but unfortunately, not having enough vocabulary will hinder my thinking and hence, I cannot implement such a strategy.*

Fahad felt that he had to think of other ideas due to being unable to translate his ideas caused by his lack of vocabulary. He stated, '*I found it difficult to express my ideas due to my deficiency in the English language as I do not have enough vocabulary to make use of expressing my ideas. Therefore, sometime when I redraft my writing I am used to changing my ideas to find an easy way to express my topic'.* Two Basic student writers also expressed their challenges to review their writing due to their limited vocabulary. Jinan struggled to narrate the events in the story due to her limited vocabulary. She commented, *'I knew about some of the events in the story, but I did not have enough English words to express my understanding'.* In a similar vein, Qusai was unable to extend his sentences about justifying his reasons to support his opinion, he claimed: *'I focused on writing about the reasons, then I thought that they were not reasonable, however, I could not extend my ideas because of my limited vocabulary'.*

Word meaning is another dimension of vocabulary that has created a challenge for both Basic and Post Basic student writers. Most Basic student writers' comments focused on the challenges they encountered mainly at word and sentence level. FGC1, for example, claims; *'I sometime search for alternative words that can better deliver the meaning of the sentence, but find it difficult because I*

*often know just one meaning of each word. This hinders me from developing my writing'.* Similarly, Qusai comments, '*I sometimes added some extra words to elaborate the sentence, however, because I did not know the meaning of such words they were irrelevant and make my sentence nonsense'.* Anees could not decide about omitting some words or phrases as he could not make sense of his sentence. He claims, '*There were some words or phrases in some sentences that I was not sure about and I wanted to rub out, but I could not decide because I was unable to understand these sentences'.* The word meaning sometimes created a major challenge for students to do the writing task, FGCS8 for example, argues; '*most of the words provided in the task I could not know their meaning. They seemed difficult for me to understand and this has hindered me in performing the task'.*

Conversely, Post Basic student writers' comments regarding word meaning reflect their experience of encountering difficulties related to areas such as meaning at a discourse level, for example, '*The words that I have selected, my teacher could not understand, I thought that I was trying to select words that were simple and easy, unfortunately my teacher could not reach the meaning'* (Jawaher: G12). Naif also shared a similar view, however, he utilized an alternative word strategy. He commented: '*I faced difficulty in knowing the meaning of some words, therefore, I tried to find synonyms that I know to overcome my difficulty and therefore can pay attention to my readers needs to get him/her to reach the point'.* Rami also reflected on his strategy of putting words in phrases or extending the sentence to better explain the meaning, though it was often fruitless: '*I focused on the overall meaning by putting words in phrases to better explain or sometime wrote long sentences to explain the meaning. However, this sometimes was not effective as the overall meaning was not clear for my teacher'.* With regards to word meaning, Rami also claimed that he encountered difficulties in finding the correct collocations for words. He states, '*In reviewing my writing, I sometimes rethought of the right collocation for a word, but often my choice was irrelevant or unsuitable'.* Naif also was concerned about his difficulties in selecting the best word for the suitable register*; 'I had some doubt about which word to select for this context, whether to put sincerely or faithfully'.*

Spelling is another facet of EFL student writers' difficulties in vocabulary. Three Basic student writers claim that spelling creates a challenge for them in reviewing their writing. FGDS8, for example, appeared to face the difficulty in spelling words that involve silent letters or words with graphemes that do not correspondent to phonemes: *' I have the problem when spelling some words with silent letters like the word 'knife' or words which find their spelling odd such as 'pharmacy' or 'delicious'. I usually spell these words incorrectly and hence lose marks, so I always feel fear that to prevent such spelling mistakes will affect my writing fluency'.* Qusai attempted to replace some words with better ones, but he could not, he commented, *'I wanted to put another word instead of the word 'sat', but I could not spell it, so I kept the word 'sat' because of that, though I feel it was not suitable'.* Similarly, Anees states*, 'Mostly my big challenge is in selecting some words that I can spell correctly, for example in this topic about tourism, I thought of adding words that better explain my sentences such as 'tourist', 'interesting', 'destination', unfortunately, I could not because I was not sure of their spelling'.* Post Basic student writers also appeared to encounter some difficulties related to spelling, though this seems slightly different compared to Basic students. Ibtihal, attempted to use some sophisticated words that explain people's feelings, she commented: *'In expressing my ideas about people's personality and feeling, it was much more difficult for me to elaborate some sentences with words like 'personality', 'ambitious' or 'humor', as these words appeared difficult to spell'.* Fahad also reflected on his difficulty of spelling words that explained his ideas: *'I intended to extend a tip for the email receiver advising him about being cautious when dealing with his friend as his friend might get a bad idea, however, I do not know the spelling of some words like 'information', 'empathy'...etc. These seemed difficult to spell, so I gave up and thought of not extending such a sentence'.* Naif experienced difficulty in spelling some words that are exceptions in terms of spelling, he explained, *'I was in a doubt about the spelling of the word 'pollution' , whether it is spelled with 'l' or double 'll'. I also sometimes mix between 'c' and 's' such as 'advice' as a noun and 'advise' as a verb'.* Rami claims that he *'endeavored to understand the meaning of some words when rethinking about word choice, but could not use such words because of being unable to spell them'.*

Finally, implementing grammatical knowledge when reviewing writing seems to be a further challenge that both Basic and post Basic student writers encountered. Two Basic student writers' comments indicated their real difficulties with grammar. FGCS2, for example, commented,

> *'Since English grammar is different from Arabic, this might cause me to mix between tenses. For example, the verb in the sentence in present perfect, but I might get confused and put in past simple tense'.*

She clarified:

> *I would like to comment on the challenges related to grammar that we face when writing in English. I would probably think that the reason behind this difficulty is the way we were taught. I remember that I had some difficulties in grammar when writing from Grade 5 onwards and these difficulties continue with me right now. Most of what have been studied and written about was focusing on the past simple tense. This has caused trouble for me as I sometimes could not differentiate between past tense and present perfect.*

The above comment appeared to shed light on two main issues that student writers have experienced. The former is related to the tension between writing in L1 and writing in L2, and the latter seems to be related to pedagogy where teachers seemed to focus on certain aspects of grammar such as the simple past tense. Abeer also clarified another major challenge as she displayed negative attitudes towards grammar due to pedagogical factors. She commented, '*I do not really care because I do not like grammar, I usually feel what is right and what is suitable for developing my writing. My teacher always criticized my grammatical use in writing. I would say we had not had enough practice on how to use grammar in writing'.* This view seemed to be supported by some Post Basic student writers. FGBS3, for example, claims, *'The challenge that I face when reviewing my EFL writing is about grammatical rules, I cannot remember some of these grammatical rules because I did not have enough*

*room for recycling and practicing'.* Naif remarks that structuring sentences seemed a complicated task. He argues:

> *Building up a paragraph is not easy, sometimes I feel that the sentences I reformulate*
>
> *are convenient for me but not for my teacher, I also faced the problem of forgetting about*
>
> *some grammatical knowledge as this is not recycled in the following classes. In addition,*
>
> *I sometimes found it difficult to put these grammatical rules in use because I do not have*
>
> *enough practice in this area. Therefore, I feel that formulating and reformulating*
>
> *sentences creates a major challenge for me when reviewing my writing.*

To sum up, most EFL student writers seem to have encountered language difficulties in different areas, such as the limitations in their vocabulary, word meaning, spelling and grammar. This seemed to create major challenges for them to adequately revise their writing. However, such challenges have represented slightly divergent views. Whereas most Basic student writers encountered such difficulties when they reviewed their writing at a word and a sentence level, some Post Basic student writers experienced difficulties when dealing with the overall meaning at a discourse level. The findings also revealed that some EFL student writers from both levels claimed that they experienced grammatical difficulties in reviewing their writing due to being educated in educational contexts that have not created ample opportunities for practice, nor how to put grammatical knowledge to good use.

## 5.5.2. Textual and writing process challenges

The following code explains how student writers' problems with revising their work have been related to their writing textual issues as well as to their mental processing difficulties, which can track their revision choices and influence their writing progress.

To begin with, the most salient challenge appearing in Post Basic students' commentaries pertains to cohesion and coherence which relates to textual issues. They appeared to be struggling to create a link between orgnising their ideas to make better sense of their texts. FGAS5, for example, attempted to use connective words to create a link between her ideas. She commented:

*When writing in English, I face many difficulties, for instance, I have many ideas but I have the problem of organizing these ideas. I do not know how to link these ideas together. When reviewing my writing, I sometimes decide to use connecting words like 'whereas', or sometimes synonyms but I do not know if the meaning of the ideas is linked or not.*

Likewise, Fahad attempted to utilize connective words, however, it does not bear fruit: *'I was confused, in that I intended to use the time order signal words such as, first, second…etc., however, I could not manage to make sufficient use of these connective words because I was not sure when the first idea ended and when I should start to use the second connector'.*

Similarly, FGBS2, deemed creating a link between story events as a major challenge. He claims, *'For me, I feel difficulty in reorganizing the story events, I sometimes do not know which connecters I shall use to create a link between the series of events. As a result, I sometimes end up producing a story that is difficult to be understood by the reader'.* Rand also reflected on her decision about using synonyms to avoid repetition and tried to create more sense for her paragraphs. She noted, *'I sometimes feel that I could not select the matching words or phrases in English that can help the reader follow the development of the point I discuss, so I tried to repeat the same words which resulted sometimes in making my paragraph being lousy and ambiguous'.* Some student writers tried to elaborate their sentences by adding adjectives to create a link between sentences. Jawaher, for example, comments,

*I used some nouns, however, when developing the paragraph, I found that I needed to elaborate these nouns by finding adjectives that explain such nouns, this also created*

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*another difficulty for me as I was not sure whether these adjectives are suitable and whether they are helpful in developing the meaning of my paragraph and can create a link between ideas.*

Two Basic student writers shared the above view about the use of connectives. Misfer claims,

*In reviewing my writing, I reread the sentence that I rephrased such as, 'These are old ideas about villages not new' and 'the Omani care to make it clean'. By rephrasing these phrases, I was intending to create a link to my ideas by adding adjectives that better create a link to my ideas. However, I am not sure that the meaning of my ideas was linked'.*

Anees also tried to use some connective devices to create a link between his sentences, though it was a very difficult task for him. He claims, '*I have tried to use the words 'but', 'and' or 'or' to create a link between some sentences, particularly when I want to give a reason or justify my claim but I do not know when to use such words'*.

Halliday and Hassan, as referred to in Concha and Paratore (2011), provide an excellent explanation of the meaning and function of the various connectives, which describe how different sections of the text can be semantically connected outside the sentence, resulting in the texture that defines cohesion. As a result, the above comments revealed that these EFL student writers endeavored to create a unity of their ideas in their text, however, they appeared to be less aware of these connective devices, and probably they did not know how to use them effectively. This also appeared pertinent to metalinguistic activity. This metalinguistic activity according to Myhill and Jones (2015) entails both understanding and defining patterns of language, as well as the ability to control one's own language use and language choices. This seems especially important in the context of writing, which involves so much decision making. It is likely that the growth of metalinguistic experiences that EFL student

writers acquire, may have a coincidental relationship with their improved writing capacity (Hacker, 2018). Children's metalinguistic knowledge, according to Ruan, as cited in Hacker (2018), can be used as a predictor of their abilities to analyze and control writing. However, it appeared that EFL student writers from both levels are lacking metalinguistic knowledge which has resulted in creating a major challenge for them to create a link, or linkages, between ideas. This may be attributed to insufficient pedagogical teaching approaches.

Post Basic EFL student writers also appeared to be encumbered by mental processing difficulties when reviewing their writing, which resulted in not being able to decide or make a decision about how improve. FGAS3, for example reflected on her challenge of rephrasing sentences to better reconstruct sentences. She remarks, '*I think the difficulty of revising while writing is about reformulating sentences as it is a bit difficult for me to maintain sentences that are structured well'.* FGBS2, faces the difficulty of selecting better ideas from his available generated ideas. He comments, '*I have some other personal or individual problems, such as having about 20 ideas, but I cannot put them all in writing, I don't even know how to select the best. Hence, during revision, I found it difficult to refine and select the most suitable ideas'.* For Rand, translating her ideas into written English seemed so difficult. She claims: '*I thought of the ideas in Arabic, and when I translated these ideas into written English I faced a big challenge, in that I did not know how to translate them. The thing is that because I could not translate, so I found it difficult to improve when reviewing my writing'.* Ibtihal reflected that getting started was so complicated for her, '*The first thing that I worried about is how I can put the first lines to attract my reader. As a result, I sometimes was in doubt about whether to change the idea, rethink about, reformulate or continue to write about such an idea'.* For Fahad, he encountered a difficulty in finding ideas. He comments, '*The biggest problem I suffered from was about generating ideas, so when I commenced writing, I could not rethink of how I could reformulate or develop the sentences, I even I think that they were irrelevant'.*

Basic student writers also encountered some difficulties in revisions that are related to the mental process of writing, however, their difficulties appeared different compared to the ones that Post Basic student writers encountered. FGDS3, claimed that he was able to detect the dissonance in his writing, however he was not able to utilize the suitable strategy to perform. He commented, *'The biggest difficulty for me is when I know that I have made a mistake, but I do not know what the right correction for that is'.* Similarly FGDS3 reflected that he *'sometimes sees things that are correct but unfortunately, they seemed wrong'.* FGDS3 also attempted to communicate his ideas to the reader, however, he was unable to do. He notes, *'I do not know how I can get the reader to reach my ideas'*

In short, most EFL Post Basic student writers' comments reflected their difficulties in attempting to create a link between ideas in their texts (cohesion and coherence) with a few Basic students who shared the same difficulties in utilizing connective devices or using synonyms or adjectives to create a unity of meaning to their texts. This appeared interrelated with the lack of metalinguistic knowledge and may be attributed to ineffective pedagogical contexts. Some EFL student writers, from both levels reflected on some other challenges. The salient ones for Post Basic student writers were their inability in reformulating sentences, generating ideas, getting started or translating ideas, whereas Basic student writers reflected on some other difficulties like their inability to decide about a revision strategy or inability to better evaluate the effectiveness of such a decision they made.

### 5.5.3. Constraints on revision caused by instructional practices

The following code focuses on how pedagogical practices hindered Basic and Post Basic EFL student writers' revision practice and hampered their writing development, such as writing in a limited period of time, using a limited number of words and adhering to their teachers' marking requirements.

First, the comments of EFL student writers reflect time management issues; they often thought that they did not have enough time to complete their writing tasks and therefore did not have enough time to review their writing in the manner they desired. Most EFL Post Basic student writers' comments

reflect their inability to manage a better review their writing because of time constraints. FGAS7, commented, '*I do sometimes have enough explanation for my ideas, but because of the time allocated I could not think of how I can develop them'*. FGAS3, claimed that she could not plan which often affects her reviewing task due to limited time allowed to perform the task. She states, '*I think that because of time tension, I sometimes do not brainstorm, though this is important for planning and which often hinders me later to decide on what to change when reviewing my writing in attempting to develop it'*. From another perspective, Ibtihal conceives that limited time created further major challenges for her to monitor the different processes of writing which she thought could magnify her challenge of better reviewing her writing. She claims:

> *I am not competent enough in English, as I am short in vocabulary, as well I also experienced difficulties in making word choices. In addition, I often encountered some other difficulties in planning and translating ideas. I feel that such various challenges are also magnified by being asked to write in a short time, so it restricted my ability to review and develop my writing.*

Likewise, the following comments reflected EFL student writers' inability to achieve their revision intentions while performing the task in class due to limited time allowed to perform the task:

> *'I learned how to write, how to conclude an email, whether it is formal or informal, ones from a clip via You Tube. However, in class it was difficult to think about this because of the restricted time, but then when I wrote the second draft at home, I was able to retrieve more and I thought of implementing such an idea to my second draft'* (Rami: G12).

> '*I could not manage to complete the task within the time available. While revising I decided to focus on sentence structure and words as well as concentrating on the correct tenses, but I was short on time and could not manage to achieve most of these aims*' (Fahad: G12).

EFL Basic student writers also described their difficulties in managing the revision task due to limited time. FGCS1, reflected on her inclination on giving up thinking of developing some vocabulary due to time constraints. She claims, '*Concerning time allocated for writing, I feel that it is not enough, I mean for most of the task I have done, I was under tension to complete the writing task. Therefore, I will change my mind and just focus on using simple words and phrase available for me rather than seeking for better ones*'. Shrooq was ambitious to expand her ideas but could not do due to limited time; *'I thought like everything in writing. I thought that I felt sad for things that I intended to include but had not done that because I was writing in a lesson, which was obviously insufficient time to rethink ideas and to write better'*. Anees reflected that he was not able to implement revision strategies to develop his writing due to time constraints. He remarks,

'*I was not ready to write, in that I spent much time planning, though it was not effective. Accordingly, it took me much time to write particularly when moving from a sentence into another. Hence, I found myself not able to manage to reread the text as the time was over*'. Some EFL student Post Basic writers' comments were about the value of time. FGBS7, for example, comments;

> *For me I think that I should focus more on ideas, meaning of the words and phrases, but frankly speaking feel that I am not given enough time to revise how ideas can be connected. If I have enough time, I will reread the introduction and revise it whether it is suitable within the context or not. I then can reread the writing from the readers' point of view to see if I have achieved the task, and then examine the spelling, grammar and punctuation to get better grades and marks.*

Similarly, Fahad explained: *'The teacher gave me just a day to redraft my writing, if I was given enough time to rewrite my second draft, I would be able to get enough support from my family and friends'*.

Another dimension of instructional constraints which might also pertain to contextual difficulties that EFL student writers encountered, when reviewing their writing, which is related to the narrow conception of the reader examiner. Three Basic student writers' comments reflected their challenge of pursuing personal intentions when reviewing their writing due to limited time. Jinan comments, '*I rethought of some words that required a kind of development, but I realized that my teacher would focus on easy to spot mistakes such as punctuation and spelling, so I focused on correcting such flaws'*. Shrooq also adds, *'I was intending to elaborate some sentences via giving more explanation, however, my priority was given to proofreading my text and focusing on surface level changes as my teacher would be more focusing on these types of changes'.* Abeer, also, shared the abovementioned view. She states:

> *I expected that my teacher would focus on spelling such as the word 'important', she also would look at my ideas whether I have answered the task, and most important would evaluate the extent to which my writing was free from mistakes. It is unlike when I am taught to focus on how to develop my writing through trying to use my creativity, and making my text enjoyable and interesting.*

Finally, two Basic student writers argue that they could not implement their revision strategies about extending ideas because of being asked to write a task with word limit. They commented:

*'I intended to add some sentences to the text, but I could not because I thought that the task asked me just to write not more than 60 words, so I could not exceed this number of words'* (Anees: G9).

*'I was intending to add some new ideas about the winter clothes, but then I said I have a lot more to write and I do not have enough space, so I just wrote 'winter' instead of further developing the ideas'* (Shrooq: G12). It can be argued that the aforementioned two quotes reflected Basic student writers' demotivation in elaborating their ideas via extending sentences because of social context constraints.

In other words, they are encountering difficulties with maintaining a narrow expansion of the written task.

In short, most comments about revision practices of EFL Basic and Post Basic student writers reflected that the students were hampered by perceived social norms and contextual constraints that may have hampered their writing progress. These constraints imply that students write in a limited amount of time, with a limited number of words and in accordance with their teachers' marking requirements. Post Basic student writers reflected that their endeavor towards elaborating or explaining their ideas was restricted, and as a result, they could not manage to plan, which had a negative effect on the quality of their revision. Some Basic student writers complained that they could not achieve their revision aims due to limited time. Some of them also claimed that they were hampered in pursuing personal goals due to writing in a tight space. In other words, adhering to a narrow view of teachers' expectations.

### 5.5.4. Motivation and support factors

The code for motivation and support factors accommodates EFL Basic and Post Basic student writers' comments on the difficulties they face when revising their writing. This may include how familiar are student writers with the topic, the extent to which it can attract their attention, whether it provides sufficient background knowledge, and the form of the teachers' feedback. It also has to do with pedagogical guidance student writers get in order to develop their revision skills.

First and foremost, some Basic and Post Basic student writers' comments reflect that they encounter difficulties in proceeding successfully in the revision of their writing when they are given unfamiliar topics to write about. As a result, this may demotivate them in better reviewing their writing. Misfer, for example reflected*;' I did not have enough information about this topic, so I only relied on the given information'*. Shrooq also added,

*During planning, I did not know a lot about the topic, so it was outside the box thinking, like I did not have time to go to open the internet and learn more about such an unfamiliar topic about towns, villages and the differences. And then I had just started writing and just got into the flow of the writing when I experienced difficulties while writing about this topic, and as a result I could not think of any kind of elaboration of ideas or any development as I did not do enough planning for it due to being unfamiliar with such a topic.*

In a similar vein, FGAS6, a Post Basic student writer, also comments, *'My difficulties mostly are concerned with the situation where I do not have enough content and ideas about unfamiliar topics. Hence, it will be difficult for me to decide about the ideas that I am going to write about. Meanwhile, how I can develop the text if I do not have enough ideas'.*

From another perspective, two student writers, a Basic and a Post Basic, reflected that they were not familiar with the topics due to cultural differences. They commented:

*To a certain extent I like to write in English, however, it is challenging and difficult. For instance, I attempted to elaborate the idea about 'How do Omani people welcome visitors', and since the topic asked me to write to an English magazine, I was not able to decide about any changes, due to not being familiar with the expected visitors' culture, and even did not know the difference between the way they welcome guests compared to the way Omani people welcome the guests* (Qusai: G9).

*When we start communicating with others in Arabic, we take a long time asking the person about health, family and good news. This is probably unlike in English where they do have a different style. I knew that I was short in writing about the introductory sentence of writing this email. I have tried to rewrite and to improve but I could not*

*because I am not familiar about the English culture, at least to be aware when writing about topics like this task* (Naif: G12).

Another challenge that was salient in Basic student writers' comments was about the extent to which the topics are of students' interest. FGCS2, for example, reflected that most of the topics that were given to her to write on were dull. She comments, *'One of the things that I do not really like is that every year my English teacher asks us to write about how did we spent our summer holiday. Frankly speaking, I feel it is boring, hence to better write and develop my writing and rethink of ideas, I would like to be given some new topics and of my interest'*. Another Basic student writer, FGCS1, also reflected that the written tasks given were not that challenging and neither did they attract their imagination. She states:

> *We need the writing task to be challenging to develop our writing. We do not have to write about the same ideas in different ways that look much better. I think to better revise, we need some topics that help us to imagine like giving us a task, 'Imagine that you……' and let us write. I mean free writing.*

Similarly, Misfer criticized the task he did about 'The Whale Shark'. He claims, *'There is no room for creativity, the only thing I did was to put the provided information given into the text, so I expected my teacher was looking for accurate language and well-organized sentences'*. Some other Basic student writers, for example FGCS2, suggested that students should be given a choice between different topics to select from. She states:

> *I would like the writing lesson to be more interesting, not a compulsory task to do. I want for example to be given an opportunity to choose a topic from an alternative and give me some free writing to use my own creativity with some kind of support from my teacher as well as given enough time to redraft and develop. I need my teacher to explain well and not to rush us to write.*

Ibtihal, a Post Basic student writer, shared the abovementioned views, however she criticized the materials for not being supportive enough to improve both her revision and writing. She remarks: *'I feel that the textbook has not enough writing tasks, has not involved a kind of guidance for me to review my writing. Most of the tasks are boring and mainly for assessment purposes'*.

The above comments indicate that students who reported high levels of ownership of the writing process are likely to increase their motivation to better revise and write. The right to choose the topic emerged as an important factor and the ability to follow their preferred approach, predictably, linked to increased reflection and revision.

Low self-efficacy appeared to add another major challenge for EFL student writers to better review their writing. The concept of self-efficacy refers to a person's evaluation of their own ability to prepare and carry out the steps required to achieve specific goals (Bandura & Cervone, 1986). In accordance to the current study, self-efficacy refers to student writers' belief in their ability to effectively improve their writing evaluation and as a result utilize a revision strategy to develop such a writing task. It is likely that EFL student writers with low self-efficacy are inclined to experience writing apprehension and might end up avoiding performing the revision task in particular, and in general the writing task (Bandura, 1997). Some Post Basic student writers, such as FGBS8, have their work reviewed by an expert second reader, which may mean that they are not confident in their work. He states:

> *I first detect any grammar and vocabulary mistakes, then I often feel that it was not that effective work, so I give it to someone whom I feel has better experience in writing than me, like my classmates or any of my relatives such as my father or my brother, to double check the correction of mistakes and then sometimes might ask for advice about whether I could have done such a revision task better.*

Rand also thought that she was not confident enough to give her writing for someone other than her teacher to read. She claimed, *'I always think that my teacher is going to read my writing, but since I have thought that you also are going to read it, I was nervous because I want my writing to be perfect and I am not pretty sure that my writing looks like that'*.

Some other Post Basic student writers' comments appeared to reflect their low-self efficacy in reviewing their writing. Rand commented: *'Regarding writing in pencil, for me I feel it is better because it is easy to create any changes. I am not confident enough to write in pen; I feel secure when writing in pencil'*. Similarly, Fahad, explained, *'I was not confident enough to write in pen as I believe that I am going to make many mistakes and hence writing in pencil will make it easier for me to rub out'*. Jawaher also claimed that some other contextual and personal factors have led her to feel unconfident about her revision: *'I feel that I was not confident, because I do not have enough ideas about the topic, not having enough words and you know the time pressure, so I was not sure whether I had made the right decision to develop my text when I reviewed it'*. In a similar vein, Misfer, a Basic student writer, shared Jawaher's view. He noted: *'I did not have enough information about the 'The Whale Shark', so I only relied on the given information. As a result, I feel that my attempt to reformulate the sentences was not that successful to develop my text'*.

Whilst the abovementioned obstacles focused on personal difficulties, the EFL Basic and Post Basic student writers' reflected on other complications that are related to pedagogical supports. Basic student writers' comments reflected that they value teachers' feedback. However, most of them were inclined to perceive such feedback as unhelpful due to being ambiguous rather than being detailed and conducive. FGCS3, for example, commented: *'My teacher does not explain to me how I can correct the grammatical mistakes. This does not help me decide about revision changes. To better review my writing, I really need my teachers' feedback to be clear and straightforward feedback'*. Shrooq also claimed: *'my teacher wrote 'wrong word', and I do not know what that stands for, I mean what she wants exactly. Thus, such feedback was not specific and it confused me rather than*

*guided me towards better revision'.* Likewise, Misfer claims: *'My teacher gave me the feedback, but has not clarified, discussed, not even asked me about how would I make a decision about changes'.* For Anees, feedback from his teacher during the process of writing was crucial: *'I would like to get immediate feedback during writing where the teacher advises me of what to change if I get stuck'.* However, Ibtihal, a Post Basic student writer claimed that her teacher could not afford feedback for individual students due to being overloaded. She states: *'Because my teacher is overloaded, she cannot deal with challenges faced by all students and she cannot discuss the feedback with individual students'.* She suggests, *'I would like my teacher at least to see the common challenges that students' faced and the most frequent mistakes that occurred and, based on that, guide us by explaining such common mistakes in class. This can help us to better revise writing'.*

Finally, EFL student writers' comments, from Both Basic and Post Basic levels, indicate their difficulties in revision are due to lack of practice, not enough guidance from textbooks, or deficient support from their school. FGCS1, considered interaction and pre-writing task as a support for them to assist them in better reviewing their writing. She commented: *'I need to be given an opportunity to do a preview task before commencing writing. I mean to give us a chance to speak and discuss in groups about the topic. This will help me better revise and better write about the topic'.* Rand also values reading and claims that she was hindered to better revise because she had not enough room to practice her reading skill. She states: *'In school I felt that my teacher just asked us to write the topic and review to submit, but nobody in schools thought of assisting us to read better, I do not know how to scan the text for main ideas. Hence, I cannot generate or rethink about the ideas for the topic'.* She also claims that she could not get enough support whether from the materials or the community to better develop her writing. She argues, *'The syllabus does not give enough support. It aims at developing us towards being autonomous, but you know that we are learning English as a foreign language. The class or the society also does not help that much, so we need enough support to better revise and write'.* Jawaher also suggests that the textbook should include some guidance on how to

revise: *'I would like to see some simple tips in my textbook about how to revise. I would also like my teacher to support us with examples of how to revise the first and second draft'*. Shrooq also complained about the school model for teaching revision. She remarks, *'Our school focuses on teaching us grammar, spelling and accuracy. I feel that we need to be taught on other dimensions such as how develop ideas, elaboration and organization. We are also not supported enough on how to better revise and write'*.

To sum up, most comments reflected that EFL student writers encounter difficulties when reviewing their writing related to being familiar with the topic for writing, whether the topic attracts their interest, though this was salient in Basic student writers' comments. Student writers from both levels also faced difficulties due to being less confident in evaluating their abilities to revise. Teachers' feedback was valued by most EFL student writers from both levels but students reflected that they experienced difficulties due to this feedback being ambiguous and not conducive enough to improve on revision. Finally, student writers from both levels articulated their challenges in revision which they attributed to the lack of pedagogical support.

## 5.6. Summary

This chapter addresses the findings of the investigation about Omani Basic and Post Basic students' conceptions of revision in EFL writing. Four dimensions were considered by EFL student writers. These dimensions relate to the four research questions which focus on students' comprehension of the purpose of revision, the revision process, success criteria and the challenges they might have encountered when revising.

Concerning the first dimension addressing the students' awareness of the purpose of revision, this activity was conceived as a mere editing task, rather than an attempt to improve on readability of the

text. This attitude pertains to the fact that both Basic and Post Basic students seem to pay more attention to the examiner rather than to any other different type of audience.

With regards to the second dimension dealing with the writing process, the majority of the students perceived the writing process in terms of steps in the writing composition rather than an assumption of cognitive theorists stipulating that the writing process occurs in a recursive way. Hence, the consideration of the revision task as a retrospective rather than a formulation chore.

Regarding success criteria, it appeared that most EFL student writers in this study focused their evaluating criteria on extrinsic variables such as school or teachers' intentions. They, for instance, reflected their attention on linguistic accuracy areas such as word choice, spelling, punctuation and grammar. Remarkably, it appeared that Post Basic student writers' metalinguistic understanding became conscious as their metacognitive activities focused more on the most appropriate decision rather than on just improved and precise words and phrases. They also tended to focus on organizing their ideas in the texts to produce cohesive and coherent compositions. A few EFL student writers felt self-accountable when they created criteria for better revision based on their intuition, though they frequently struggled to justify their choices. Some of them also were inclined to link productive writing with expansion of their ideas, which was mostly successful, though mainly at word and sentence levels. However, some of them were hampered by the lack of knowledge, by being required to write a text in a limited number of words, or by being asked to write in a limited time. Other students also included fictional elements in their texts, such as effective starting phrases, and a good conclusion. However, they claimed that they were struggling to reformulate an adequate introduction.

With regards to student writers' perceptions of the challenges they encountered when revising their writing, there was quite a divergence of opinions. While most Basic student writers had trouble reviewing the writing at word and sentence levels, some Post Basic student writers reflected that they had trouble with the overall meaning at a discourse level. Hence, most EFL Post Basic student

writers' remarks highlighted their struggle with connecting ideas in their writing, with a few Basic student writers who appeared to have had similar problems using connectives, synonyms or adjectives to forge a sense of unity to their text. This seems to pertain to a lack of metalinguistic understanding and could be attributed to inadequate instructional circumstances. Basic student writers cited that lack of familiarity with topics was an issue that inhibited their revision. In short, student writers at both levels described their difficulties with revision, which they blamed on the lack of pedagogical support and on the contextual academic writing factors.

Having shed light on students' perceptions of revision in writing, chapter 6 presents the findings on how such perceptions are reflected in the students' revision practice. It also focuses on how revision practice has evolved from Basic to Post Basic levels.

# CHAPTER SIX: Insights into EFL student writers' revision practice

## 6.1. Introduction

The following chapter presents selected findings based on the text analysis and follows up on the observation of some subset groups composed of L2 students chosen from four EFL classes, Basic and Post Basic levels, to explore their revision practices in EFL School writing revision. Throughout this chapter, a comparative analysis will be implemented on the selected students to explore similarities and differences in their revision practices in order to assist deductions to answer the following research question: *How do Omani students develop their EFL writing revision practices from Basic Education to Post Basic Education?*

These groups of students were observed during their revision activity of the writing task in order to pinpoint an outline of the online changes. As discussed earlier in chapter 4, to track the students' revision in order to explore the post-hoc revisions, the students' first and final manuscripts of the three assigned topics, totaling 36 samples of first and second drafts, were collected and inspected using a framework developed by Sze (2002) (see appendix 5). Notably, online revisions refer to cognitive revisions made during the transforming of thoughts into written text, whereas post-hoc revisions are those made after the text has been produced (Myhill & Jones, 2007). First the mean scale score of frequencies was computed to determine the percentage and type of revisions, and to investigate the areas where students were mostly concerned.

Deductive categories were also created using the specified codes in the framework adapted from Sze (2002) (see appendix 5). These categories refer to local level revisions and global level revisions, discussed earlier in chapter 4. Local level revision, according to Ramage et al. (2003), is primarily focused on sentence level modification, such as substituting words to clarify a point or correcting grammatical or spelling errors. On the other hand, they explain that global revision is concerned with

the overall picture of the text. This could refer to text's themes and structure. This chapter aims to investigate how students' revision conceptions are manifested in their writing practice to identify any differences between Post Basic level participants' revision practices compared to Basic level participants' revision practices.

The chapter starts with an outline of how students revise their EFL school writing, and the findings are linked to the local level revisions, such as accuracy, lexical and phrasal modification, which are then displayed. The chapter also focuses on global level modifications such as structural and content modifications. It also includes a summary of the important points stated previously in this chapter.

## 6.2. An overview of EFL students' revisions

In this study, the Local level revision category addressing accuracy, lexical and phrasal changes, seemed to exceed the global revision levels relating to structural organization and content. However, the current findings reveal that this difference becomes insignificant if we focus on the comparison pertaining to local and global levels between Basic and Post Basic student writers. This is suggested by the classroom observations' analysis findings of group mean frequencies of 100 words, and drawing on the sum for both Basic and Post Basic students. As can be seen in Table 6.1, of the total number of online revisions, Basic student writers make up 88% local level revisions and 12% of global revisions, while Post Basic student writers show local level revisions of 85%, and global revisions of 15%. However, Basic student writers' post-hoc local level revisions appeared to reflect an increase compared to their online local level revisions as shown in table 6.2. It can be seen that the Basic student writers made up 81% in post-hoc local level changes decreased compared to 88% in the online revision. The global level of their revisions reached 19% of the total revisions made at post-hoc level, compared to 12% of the online level revisions. Conversely, the total percentage of Post Basic student writers' post-hoc revisions at local level increased to 94%, compared to 85% of online

local level revisions, however their global level revisions at post-hoc level dwindled down to 6% compared to 12% in online revisions.

*Table 6.1. Online local and global level revisions (group mean frequencies and percentages at levels)*

| Level | Type | Basic | | Post Basic | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Group mean Frequency | Percentage | Group mean Frequency | Percentage |
| Local Level | Accuracy | 11 | 46% | 9.5 | 49% |
| | Lexical | 5.5 | 24% | 4.3 | 22% |
| | Phrasal | 4 | 18% | 2.8 | 14% |
| Global Level | Structural | 0 | 0% | 0.16 | 1% |
| | Content | 2.8 | 12% | 2.7 | 14% |
| Overall | | 23 | 100% | 19.46 | 100% |

*Table 6.2. Post-hoc local and global level revisions (group mean frequencies and percentages at levels)*

| Level | Type | Basic | | Post Basic | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Group mean Frequency | Percentage | Group mean Frequency | Percentage |
| Local Level | Accuracy | 9.2 | 42% | 18.2 | 58% |
| | Lexical | 6.2 | 29% | 5.8 | 18% |
| | Phrasal | 2.1 | 10% | 5.7 | 18% |
| Global Level | Structural | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% |
| | Content | 4.2 | 19% | 1.8 | 6% |
| Overall | | 21.7 | 100% | 31.5 | 100% |

These findings might suggest that Post Basic student writers are either likely to respond to teachers' commentaries that appeared to focus on local changes, or that Post Basic student writers were accustomed to paying more attention to local changes since their final year work will be graded according to those parameters. Having briefly outlined the nature of Basic and Post Basic student writers' revision practice, the following sections provide details about the nature of student writers' revisions with regards to the two categories, namely global and local level revisions. The sections involve extracts of student writers' written work as evidence of their revision practice. Notice that these extracts are presented as they appeared in students' texts without any correction at either form or meaning levels.

## 6.3. Local level revisions

As discussed above, this category involves the predominant types of revisions that student writers from both levels appeared to pay more attention to. Local level revisions involved accuracy as well as lexical and phrasal changes.

## 6.3.1. Accuracy

To begin with, it appeared that accuracy, which entails punctuations, capitalizations, grammar such as word formation, tenses, and subject verb agreements or spelling, was the most dominant revision level in both Basic and Post Basic levels.

According to tables 6.1 and 6.2., Basic student writers' revisions belonging to this sub-category made up 46% of the total online revisions. In the same vein, Post Basic student writers' revisions belonging to this sub-category made up 49% of their online revisions. The predominance of accuracy also appeared in post-hoc revisions. Basic student writers made up 42% of their post-hoc revisions with a slight decrease of 4% compared to their online revisions. In contrast, Post Basic students made up slightly more revisions at accuracy level, 58% of the total post hoc revisions compared to 49% of their online revisions accuracy level. This might also suggest that, according to chapter 5, Basic and Post Basic student writers adhered to the revision goals and to the success criteria in line with the conception that revision is a mere proofreading task, or an attempt to maximize accuracy at both word and sentence levels. They seemed to focus on accuracy over other aspects of revisions. Accuracy appeared salient in areas such as punctuation, capitalization, grammar such as word formation, tenses and plurization and spelling. This may reflect the student writers' beliefs related to their conception of revision being a task of proofreading where they focused on technical accuracy such as spelling, punctuation, capitalizations, word formation, tenses or subject verb agreements, whereas a few students revealed a clear concern for the potential of accuracy in clarifying the meaning. Table 6.3

and Table 6.4 outline the different facets of online revisions and post-hoc revisions respectively with reference to accuracy. Notice that the total numbers of frequency, correct and incorrect attempts, reflect the group mean revision frequency per 100 words of text.

*Table 6.3. (Online revisions: Accuracy)*

| Dimensions | Basic | | | Post Basic | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Frequency | correct | incorrect | Frequency | correct | incorrect |
| Punctuations and Capitalizations | 15 | 12 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 0 |
| Grammar | 21 | 18 | 3 | 19 | 12 | 7 |
| Spelling | 27 | 19 | 6 | 34 | 20 | 14 |

*Table 6.4. (Post-hoc revisions: Accuracy)*

| Dimensions | Basic | | | Post Basic | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Frequency | correct | incorrect | Frequency | correct | incorrect |
| Punctuations and Capitalizations | 10 | 7 | 3 | 27 | 18 | 9 |
| Grammar | 20 | 16 | 4 | 32 | 27 | 5 |
| Spelling | 25 | 21 | 4 | 50 | 39 | 11 |

Firstly, spelling seemed to be the most salient feature of accuracy that appeared of high concern for both Basic and Post Basic student writers. Table 6.3 shows that Basic student writers made an average of 27 of the online revisions per a 100words of text in contrast to the other facets of accuracy. Similarly Post Basic student writers made up the highest frequency of online revisions concerning spelling compared to the other two facets of accuracy (an average of 34 revisions per 100 words of text). Post-hoc revisions also revealed the highest number of spelling changes (Basic student writers made up an average of 25 changes while Post Basic made up an average of 50 changes per 100 words text). As can be seen in Table 6.4, it seemed that Post Basic made more revisions with regards to spelling in both online and post-hoc revisions.

The following example from a Post Basic student writer's, Ibtihal, text about *'The advantages of teamwork'*. Her post-hoc revisions appeared to confirm the overemphasis of student writers' revisions on spelling (notice the density of spelling changes in just three lines).

> *To begin with, you* ~~*most*~~ ***must*** *use* ~~*mantal*~~ ***mental*** ~~*ablites*~~ ***abilities*** ~~*becuse*~~ ***because*** *when you use your* ~~*mantal*~~ ***mental*** ~~*ablites*~~ ***abilities*** *you can be more creative. Also you* ~~*most*~~ ***must*** *have* ~~*silfe confidence*~~ ***self-confidence***, ~~*becuse*~~ ***because*** *you can be great person.*

A further example from Post-Basic post-hoc revision is from Fahad's text about writing an email to his friend advising him on how to make friends.

> *Second, the respect very* ~~*amportant*~~ ***important*** *to make new* ~~*frind*~~ ***friends***, ~~*God*~~ ***Good*** ~~*cummuntion*~~ ***communication*** *with new* ~~*frind*~~ ***friends***, *so do not give negative* ~~*idia*~~ ***idea***.

The above extracts appeared to confirm that spelling was a salient feature in Post Basic Post-hoc revisions.

Notably, both Basic and Post Basic student writers' attempts to correct the spelling errors revealed that they were to a certain extent able to manage correcting the dissonance regarding spelling (see Table 6.3 and 6.4). However, the findings revealed some difficulties that Basic and Post Basic student writers encountered concerning spelling. The findings of some student writers' post-hoc revisions from both Basic and Post Basic levels revealed that they experienced some confusion between similar phonemes which generated further ambiguity between the correct spellings of noun/verb form. In reviewing his text about '*Would you advice tourists to visit Oman or go outside Oman?'*, Misfer, a Basic student writer, changed the spelling of the word advice into advise in the following example probably because he might have realized that it should be a verb and that it should be spelled with /s/ not /c/.

> *I really* ~~*advice*~~ ***advise*** *tourists to visit Oman and discover the amazing sights.*

Similarly, in revising her text about giving someone advice on how to perform well in an interview, Rand, a Post Basic student writer seemed to have noticed a dissonance in the following sentence, as she aimed to make the word choice of a noun rather than a verb, so changed advise into advice:

*I write in this email some ~~advise~~ advice for you for your interview.*

Students also appeared to have some other difficulties which have created challenges for them while they were revising in online revision such as mixing between voiced and voiceless sounds, dealing with odd spelling of words, spelling of long words with more than two syllables, and /or dealing with the spelling of words with double letters. These difficulties in turn have led students to a failure in spelling the words and they only managed to spell most of them at post-hoc revisions. Basic student writers experienced difficulties in differentiating between voiced /p/ and voiceless /b/. This often presents a problem for students as there is no /p/ sound in Arabic alphabet e.g. drinking a bebsi vs a pepsi and some students often write lap experiment, or labtop. Jinan, for example wrote*: I don't agree that life in the towns is more **peautiful** than the village.* Hence in her online revision, she tried to spell *'beautiful'*, but she could not and left it incorrect as *'peautiful'*. Shrooq also experienced a difficulty in applying her knowledge of odd spelling such as the sound combination /ough/ pronounced as /f/. In the following example, she could not spell the word 'enough', however she was able to spell in her post-hoc revisions:

*Ahmed felt a pull in his string, he pulled the fish out and was so upset that the fish was not big ~~enouph~~ enough to eat.*

For Post Basic student writers, they also experienced some difficulties, however it was slightly different for the Basic student writers. The following example from Naïf's post-hoc revision appeared to reveal his difficulty in attempting to spell long words with double consonants. Naif could not

correct the spelling of the word *'rubbish'* in his first draft and did that during the redrafting phase of his text.

> *He worked with his friends in the valley to carry* ~~*rubish*~~ ***rubbish*** *from water to save the eco-system.*

Some other Post Basic student writers encountered some other challenges. Rami, for example, found the spelling of long words with more than two syllables most challenging. For example, the word 'temperature' in his online revision. However, he was able to correct the spelling of this word in his post-hoc revision in the following example:

> *In middle Africa the weather is very hot and the* ~~*teamreather*~~ ***temperature*** *reaches fifty.*

The above examples appeared to confirm student writers' claims of contending with several challenges when dealing with dissonance related to spelling. This, in turn, could cause the student writers' to make unsophisticated decisions at times when facing these kinds of challenges, and also reflect on the poor quality of instruction they have been exposed to, which is also unlikely to help the improvement of the student writers' receptive skills. However, these students' attempts to recognize errors and correct them more frequently may as well be worthy of some recognition.  This in turn might have contributed to make them pay less attention to other aspects of revisions concerning global level ones such as content.

Secondly, grammar such as tenses, word formation, subject verb agreements and/or pluralization appeared to be of much concern for both Basic and Post Basic student writers but were slightly less serious than spelling (see tables 6.3 and 6.4). In general students were able, to a certain extent, to correct the grammatical errors, however, again the student writers' revisions at both levels revealed some challenges they encountered while revising their writing. For instance, Post Basic students were prone to facing difficulty in grammar related to subject verb agreements. The following examples

from Rand's texts appeared to make it evident that subject verb agreements and word derivation were a salient difficulty as their occurrence seemed very frequent in Post Basic student writers' post-hoc revisions.

*TV always ~~give~~ gives you the true news from its main source.*

*Being nervous is not the problem but when it ~~affect~~ affects you this is the issue that you have to deal with.*

*Because there ~~is~~ are a lot of people working on the project.*

Notably, subject verb agreements also appeared as a challenging issue for Post Basic level students during online revisions. In the following examples, Naif appeared to frequently revise for subject verb agreements:

*After that, Muneer helped poor family and ~~take~~ took a lot of things to them.*

*These ~~is~~ are famous Omani habits when we welcome guests.*

Some other Post Basic student writers' revisions seemed to reflect another major grammar difficulty that is related to word derivation. In online revising of a text about 'How do Omanis welcome guests to their homes?' Rami initially wrote the adjective about the nationality as 'Oman'. Hence, at his post-hoc revision he noticed a dissonance about the wrong derivation of the word and corrected it as in the following example;

*The must benefit from ~~Oman~~ Omani people to tourist ask them about yourself and family.*

Rami again repeated the same error when writing a text about *Making new friends* by forming adjectives as in the following example, and corrected via his post-hoc revision.

*Also when you go to school, you should be clean and have a beautiful face. You should use ~~attract~~ attractive phrases to attract students.*

Similarly, in her online revision, Jawaher identified a dissonance about the form of the word that follows the modal verb in the following example and she was able to correct it.

*To begin with, you should ~~feeling~~ **feel** very confident and imagine the nice moment.*

Some other post Basic student writers' revision revealed some difficulties about the conventions of grammatical knowledge. The following examples from post-hoc revision shed light on some of these difficulties. The first example highlights the usage of tenses when a writer expresses his/her ideas about general truth/routine instead of using a tense to clarify a completely finished action.

*As a result, a number of people who ~~used~~ **use** the technology has increased recently.*

The second example from Ibtihal's text appeared to clarify stating the purpose where the writer could either use present simple (focuses) or the future tense (will focus).

*This essay ~~focus~~ **will focus** on the advantages of teamwork.*

Basic student writers' revisions reflected some challenges but were slightly different from the Post Basic ones. In their online revisions, Qusai was not able to write the correct form of the plural for the uncountable noun, whereas Abeer made an incorrect decision about using a helping verb.

*Oman has long beaches and hot **weathers**, you can visit.*

*I **am agree** with the topic.*

Basic student writers also appeared to encounter difficulties in their post-hoc revisions. The following example shows that despite being able to correct the tense, Jinan seemed to encounter a difficulty in mixing tenses.

*Once upon a time, Ahmed and Ali ~~go~~ **went** to the beach.*

For Shrooq, the correct form of comparative adjective seemed to create a challenge for her. In the following example, she tried her best to correct the form of the adjective in her online revision but she was only able to do that in her post-hoc revision.

> *Everything in town is ~~fast~~ faster than in village.*

In general, both Basic and Post student writers' online and post-hoc revisions appeared to reveal that they might have been distracted by fixing grammatical aspects for frequent fossilized errors at the expense of revising other aspects related to the global level such as content. This is probably due to two factors: the straightforwardness of the task making it easy for students to spot the errors, as well as the pertinence of such an attitude to the contextual factor prioritizing the focus on grammar in implemented pedagogical approaches in the classroom.

Finally, both Basic and Post Basic online revisions carried out appeared to show that student writers were able to apply some of the punctuation rules that they had learnt, though they only focused on punctuation changes in accordance with full stops, commas and capitalization. The following examples from Basic student writers seemed to show evidence of the use of full stops and commas. The first example is about a dissonance at online revisions that Shrooq discovered in writing an email, she first put a comma after the word *'palace'* in the following sentence, then she realized that it should be split into two sentences because the next subsequent part of the sentence after the word was not directly relevant to where the Queen lived.

> *Queen Elizabeth is the current ruler and she lives in Buckingham Palace. It's very cold*
> *here and sometimes it gets freezing.*

Hence Shrooq changed the comma into full stop to make her writing regarding punctuation more accurate. Likewise, the following example from Misfer's informative text about *'The Blue Whale'*

shows that this student realized that his long sentence had more than one idea, so he changed the comma after the word 'equator' to a full stop to split it into two sentences.

*They live in warm water around the equator. Whale sharks live one hundred and fifty years.*

For Post Basic student writers, punctuation was of less concern at online level revision (see Table 6.3), hence fewer revisions regarding punctuation were made. In her online review of the topic 'The advantages of teamwork', Rand changed the comma after the phrase *'new things'* into a full stop and consequently she capitalized the first letter in the word '*although'* (see the changes in bold) since it occurs at the beginning of the sentence. The sentence reads,

*This will help you learn new things. Although exchanging the ideas is useful, sometimes one or two of the members wants the other members to choose their idea.*

Notably, there was not much difference at post-hoc level revisions concerning punctuation, except that revision became more frequent in Post Basic while it appeared slightly less in Basic student writers' revision practice concerning this facet of accuracy. The following examples are from Basic student writers' post-hoc revisions.

*Oman has many wadis such as wadi Quryat and wadi **D**arabt.*

*In Oman**,** there are some wadis for example wadi Quryat.*

In the first extract, Qusai realized that 'darbat' is a name of a valley, so he capitalized the first letter, 'd'. However, in the second extract, Anees seemed to be selective in making decisions; he added a comma after Oman, but he did not add a comma before the phrase for example.

Post Basic student writers appeared to apply what they have learned about punctuation and capitalization conventions at post-hoc revisions. Rami, for example noticed that he mistakenly

capitalized the first letter of the word *'he'* that followed a comma, in the following example, and he changed it into a lowercase letter.

> *Before the trip, ~~He~~ he thought about anything to assist people.*

However, some Post Basic student writers seemed to overcompensate or sometimes made inaccurate revisions to their writing. In the post-hoc reviewing of his email, Rami has changed the following phrase by adding a comma which appeared imprecise and added nothing to the text, but in fact it seems incorrect: *Dear Hamed,*

Fahad also changed the comma in the following example into a full stop, but unfortunately he changed the initial letter in the word following the full stop into lower case as follows,

*~~,.Good~~ good communication*

It appeared that students focused mainly on the usage of commas and full stops. Other punctuation usage such as the use of question marks, hyphens or semi-colons were not visible. It might be that students have not yet experienced using such punctuation marks, or that the scope of the task has not created opportunities for them to use such punctuation marks.

### 6.3.2. Lexical:

A further analysis of student writers' revisions at a local level appeared, to a certain extent, to reveal that the students made some lexical changes, though these changes were perceived as a less serious concern compared to accuracy. Table 6.1shows that Basic student writers' lexical revisions made up 24% of their total online revisions. In a similar vein, Post Basic student writers made up 22% of their total online revisions. Student writers' post-hoc revisions appeared disparate in terms of frequency. Basic student writers' lexical revisions made up 29% of their total post-hoc revisions with a slight increase of 4% compared to their online revisions. On the contrary, Post Basic student writers' post-hoc revision at lexical level decreased slightly to only 18% compared with 22% of their online

revisions. Lexical revisions were noticeable in areas such as stylistic substitutions, addition and deletion. Table 6.5 and Table 6.6 below show student writers' revision frequency in the three different dimensions of lexical changes (notice that the data displayed in the group mean frequency per 100 words of text). Lexical word style stands for substituting a single word with another for stylistic purposes, while deletion refers to deleting a single word in a sentence, and addition is about adding a single word to the sentence (Sze, 2002).

*Table 6.5. Online lexical revisions*

| Dimensions | Basic | Post Basic |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Word style | 3.0 | 3.0 |
| Addition | 2.0 | 1.0 |
| Deletion | 0.5 | 0.3 |

*Table 6.6. Post-hoc lexical revisions*

| Dimensions | Basic | Post Basic |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Word style | 3.7 | 3.7 |
| Addition | 2.0 | 1.9 |
| Deletion | 0.5 | 0.2 |

As can be seen in table 6.5 and table 6.6, word style substitution was the dominant pattern of lexical revision. Basic and Post Basic student writers made up an average of 3 online revisions per a 100 words text. Their post-hoc word style substitution was also the most frequent revision compared to the addition and deletion of words. Word style as a lexical change appeared to be used to impress the teacher. In their online revision, some Post Basic student writers changed some words into possible synonyms, probably to please their reader examiner as discussed earlier in chapter 5. Rand made a stylistic substitution in the following example:

> ***All in all** **overall**, what is mentioned above is some advantages of teamwork.*

Likewise, Jawaher made a change to the following sentence by substituting 'not useful' with the word 'useless'.

*The newspaper has a lot of words, it is ~~not useful~~ **useless.***

Some Basic student writers, for example Shrooq, made some stylistic word substitutions. The following examples show her stylistic substitutions revisions:

*We also have negatives, like the population in towns is way bigger than the population in villages if you come to compare the two, you will find a ~~big~~ **huge** difference between the two.*

*It is very different here, it's nearly the opposite of home, there are flower beds everywhere, and the whole city is so old and ~~new~~ **modern** in the same time.*

Student writers made also some stylistic substitutions at post-hoc revision which they reflected about in their post-hoc interviews, stating that they made use of a dictionary to find some synonyms or sometimes used applications like *Thesaurus* for the same purpose. In his revision, Naif, a Post Basic student writer, for example, changed the word '*pollution*' into '*contamination*' probably thinking that using low frequency words will impress his teacher:

*He worked with his friends in the valley to carry rubbish from water to save eco-system and solve ~~pollution~~ **contamination** problem.*

There are further examples from another two Post Basic student writers' post-hoc revision which pertain to stylistic substitution. Rami decided that his word choice of the lexical item *'path'* was not convenient for him, and according to his post-hoc reflection he reasoned that to better clarify the meaning, he changed into '*ways*':

*You can make a new friend in school by a lot of ~~path~~ **ways**.*

Likewise, in the following example Ibtihal has changed the word 'trustable' into 'real' for the same reason, to better clarify the meaning of the sentence:

> *To start with, TV is very important in our life because it gives us real news, TV news come from very* ~~*trustable*~~ *real organization*.

Basic student writers like Shrooq, made also some stylistic substitutions in the following examples:

> *We* ~~*want*~~ *prefer everything to be easy and fast.*

> *He felt* ~~*a pull*~~ *a tug on his string.*

Misfer also changed the word 'huge' into 'big' in the following example;

> *Oman has* ~~*a huge*~~ *a big history.*

Lexical changes also involve adding some words to the sentences. In their online revisions, Basic student writers, for example Shrooq, added some words to clarify the meaning as in the following examples:

> *Everybody here is so nice and welcoming, **my** school teachers are very nice and so all my classmates.*

> *Then an idea popped out in Salim's mind. He thought of **going** fishing.*

Some other Basic student writers' online revisions reflected their attempts to emphasize or elaborate the meaning. Jinan, for example enumerated more items to elaborate the meaning in the following extract;

> *In Iranian market you can buy **dress, plate,** tray and knife*.

Similarly, Misfer probably attempted to emphasize the meaning by adding the word 'strongly' to the following sentence;

> *I **strongly** recommend visiting Oman.*

Post Basic student writers appeared to make less online revisions with regards to addition, compared to Basic student writers. However, while their revision seems to indicate that they have become more sophisticated as their writing and, to a certain extent it appears to be at a more global level, in reality, it is actually at a sentence level. In the following example, Rami added the connective word 'second', probably to make the text more cohesive, well organized and logical.

> **Second**, *the respect is very important to make a new friend.*

Ibtihal also added the words *'advice'* and *'it develops'* to the following examples, which can also be regarded as a global level revision, although they are at sentence level:

> *Next* **advice**, *it is desirable to be realistic.*

> *Firstly,* **it develops** *the work in group became more creative.*

In the previous two examples, Ibtihal added the word 'advice' to the sentence, however, since the text was about giving tips to someone who is going to be interviewed, adding the word 'advice' somehow added to the meaning of the title which indicated an attempt to produce a more coherent text. Ibtihal also added the two words 'it develops' to the second example. This also appeared to add extra meaning to the title about *'The advantages of teamwork'*.

In the same vein, the following examples from Post Basic student writers' post-hoc revisions reflected the students' attempts to develop the overall meaning of the text, although they only added single words to sentences.

> *Also, TV is more enjoyable to watch with your family* **and relatives** *and also you can chat the news.*

> *In Oman, when we welcome guest, we start asking about news,* **health** *and events which is an old habit in Omani homes.*

The previous examples revealed that Rand added the words 'and relatives' to elaborate and extend the idea, so this might add to the title about 'Ways of getting news'. Likewise, Naif added the word 'health' to the second extract, which is also related to the title about 'How do Omanis welcome guests to their home?'

Shrooq, a Basic student writer shared an attempt of addition for coherence purposes. In the following example, she added the words *'education system'* to the sentence. This may reflect her use of lexical cohesion, specifically repetition to strengthen the meaning of the text. This also might reveal her previous learning experience of being educated in some different educational contexts as she reflected in her post-hoc interviews that were discussed in chapter 5.

*The education system here is very different than the Oman**'s education system.***

Some other Basic student writers made some post-hoc revisions with regards to addition to elaborate the meaning and make it more complex and figurative as Misfer did in the following example:

*Different kinds of things to **discover and** see.*

Or to give the impression of not giving an exact fact to avoid blame if the figures are not correct, as Qusai added the word *'around'* in the following example;

*It weighs **around** 500 kg.*

Finally, the deletion of words appeared to be of a minor concern for both Basic and Post Basic student writers (see tables 6.5 and 6.6). As examples of deletions that student writers made, Anees, a Basic student writer made an online deletion in the following example, probably to reduce the number of words through deleting the adjective 'wild':

*Whale ~~wild~~ shark never attacks humans.*

Likewise, Shrooq's post-hoc revision reflected her attempt to be more concise through deleting the word 'history', probably because of her understanding that the word 'culture' is a general word and it includes the meaning of history.

> *Our Omani ~~history and~~ culture is dying in our hands and we are doing nothing.*

Post Basic student writers generally made fewer deletions compared to Basic student writers. An example from an online revision was made by Rami as in the following example. He appeared to notice that the expression '*do slaughter'* would be suitable in spoken language but not in written texts, so he deleted the auxiliary **'do';**

> *Omani people ~~do~~ slaughter animals, camels and goats.*

Having shed light on students' lexical revisions, the analysis also appeared to reflect that the students made some local level revisions at phrase level. The following section elucidate such phrasal patterns changes.

### 6.3.3. Phrasing:

The third sub-category of local level revision relates to phrasing. The findings in tables 6.1 and 6.2 indicate that revision at phrasal level was a less frequent pattern regarding local level changes. Basic student writers made 18% of phrasal changes in their total online revisions and just 10% of their post-hoc changes. On the contrary, Post Basic student writers' post-hoc revision with regards to phrasing increased slightly to 18% compared to 14% of their online revision alterations. Phrasing entails syntactic and structural modifications, and both syntactic and structural changes aim to preserve meaning. However, syntactic revision involves adding or removing words, whereas structural modification entails sentence reorganization (Sze, 2002). This means that in structural approaches students attempt to make ideas clear and repair any ambiguity in the written sentence. More accurately, in syntactic approaches students intend to proofread and edit any grammar mistakes, and there is not any big change from the original sentences or word choice selection. Table 6.7 and table

6.8 show that the majority of both Basic and Post Basic student writers' phrasal changes were of a syntactic nature which appeared significantly relevant at post-hoc level of Post Basic student writers' revisions.

*Table 6.7. Online phrasal revision*

| Dimensions | Basic | Post Basic |
|------------|-------|------------|
| Syntactic | 1.8 | 5.0 |
| Structural | 0.3 | 0.7 |

*Table 6.8. Post-hoc phrasal revision*

| Dimensions | Basic | Post Basic |
|------------|-------|------------|
| Syntactic | 3.5 | 2.0 |
| Structural | 0.5 | 0.8 |

Syntactic revision is applied at post-hoc revision as can be seen when Shrooq, a Basic student writer, added the reflexive pronoun 'to himself' to the following sentence:

*He thought **to himself**, it's a beautiful day to go fishing.*

Likewise, Rand, a Post Basic student writer rephrased the following sentence by adding the phrase 'and rapidly':

*To begin with, you can finish work faster **and rapidly**.*

Regarding structural changes, below are some examples from Basic student writers. In his online revision, Misfer has rephrased the following sentence by restructuring it:

*Yes, I think Oman is a good place.*

After restructuring, the sentence reads:

*For me, Oman is the best country.*

Shrooq also rephrased the following sentence at post-hoc revision:

*They were both hungry* into *They both wanted to eat.*

In the same vein, these examples explain some of the structural phrasing made by Post Basic student writers. The first example is from Fahad's post-hoc revision. The first sentence is the original sentence whereas the second is the restructured one.

*This three advice…..*

*These pieces of advice….*

The second example is from Rand's online revision. She rephrased the first sentence into the second one:

*TV is the best way of getting news.*

*In my opinion, TV is the best way of getting news.*

The following are examples that show an application of a combination of syntactic and structural changes at online revisions. Rand, a post Basic student writer, for example has rephrased the following sentences:

*Secondly, through social media, people get news wherever they are.*

*Secondly, social media has enabled people to get news wherever they are.*

The syntactic change is embodied in the omission of the word *"through"* and then the addition of the phrase *"has enabled"*. Whereas the structural modification is embedded in the placement of the phrase 'has enabled' to be as a verb for the sentence. Accordingly, the meaning of the sentence has changed.

Another example, from Misfer's online revision, can be seen in the following sentence:

*They eat small plants and animals to live*

After the revision the elaborated sentence reads as follows:

*To survive, they eat small plants and animals*

The syntactic modification is manifested in changing the verb 'to live' into 'to survive' in an attempt to impress the reader and grasp their attention by using some strong words. Whereas the structural alteration is embodied in the new placement of the phrase 'to survive'. It was inserted as an introductory subordinated clause, intended to put the emphasis on the importance of survival in the sentence.

## 6.4. Global level revisions

This section focuses on Basic and Post Basic student writers' online and post hoc revision practice at a global level. Revision practice at global level involves structural and content level revisions.

### 6.4.1. Structural revisions

To begin with, moving entire paragraphs from existing ones are examples of structural level modifications (Sze, 2002). The findings reflect that both Basic and Post Basic revision practice at structural level were barely visible. The only evidence derived from observation analysis was online revision made by Rand, a Post Basic student writer. The following example, shows that she added the paragraph in italics and bold.

*Dear Muna*

*How are you? How is your family? I hope all fine. How is life going? I heard that your sister is getting married next month, isn't she? I will write in this email some advice for you for your interview.*

*To begin with, you should be very confident and proud of yourself. Also you have to prepare very well for any question that will cross you.*

*Moreover, you have to be very calm and try not to be very nervous, do may be some yoga to calm you. Furthermore, think about clothes you have to wear appropriate clothes and do not put a lot of makeup. Being nervous is not the problem but when it effect on you this is the issue that you have to deal with.*

***Also you should read about the company, so that you can answer any question that is related to the company. I mean you need to know about the company and to be ready to answer any question that would be asked to you.***

*In conclusion, I hope you do well in the interview and get the job. Also don't forget to tell me how the interview will be?*

*Best Wishes*

*Basma*

Rand then moved paragraph 4 into paragraph 3 and moved paragraph 3 into 4.

*Dear Muna*

*How are you? How is your family? I hope all fine. How is life going? I heard that your sister is getting married next month, isn't she? I will write in this email some advice for you for your interview.*

*To begin with, you should be very confident and proud of yourself. Also you have to prepare very well for any question that will cross you.*

***Also you should read about the company, so that you can answer any question that is related to the company. I mean you need to know about the company and to be ready to answer any question that would be asked to you.***

*Moreover, you have to be very calm and try not to be very nervous, do may be some yoga to calm you. Furthermore, think about clothes you have to wear appropriate*

*clothes and do not put a lot of makeup. Being nervous is not the problem but when it*

*effect on you this is the issue that you have to deal with.*

*In conclusion, I hope you do well in the interview and get the job. Also don't forget to*

*tell me how the interview will be?*

*Best Wishes*

*Basma*

Rand attempted to clarify the meaning of the entire text, so she first elaborated the text by adding a paragraph probably to add another piece of advice. Then she reorganized the paragraphs to make her text more coherent.

## 6.4.2. Content revisions

Secondly, global level revisions may also involve content revisions. This type of revision can take a variety of forms. According to Yagelski (1995) and Sze (2002), content revisions can be in the form of adding information to the content, illuminating information or changing ideas. There is more to addition or deletion than simply adding or deleting one or two words as in lexical changes, while altering is about changing the ideas. The findings reveal that content revisions were of less frequent types. Basic student writers made up 12% of their online revisions whereas Post Basic students made up 14% of their online revisions. On the contrary, Basic student writers' post-hoc revision increased slightly to 19%, whereas, unexpectedly, Post Basic student writers' content revisions decreased to less than half of their online content revisions. However, it appeared that most of the content changes were on a small scale and mostly addition types rather than deleting or altering materials (see table 6.9 and 6.10). This appeared more salient in Basic student writers' post-hoc revisions (See table 6.10) - notice that the findings show the group mean frequency per a 100 words text.

*Table 6.9. Online content revisions*

| Dimensions | Basic | Post Basic |
|---|---|---|
| Addition | 3.2 | 1.0 |
| Deletion | 0.5 | 0.3 |
| Altering | 0.5 | 0.5 |

*Table 6.10. Post-hoc content revisions*

| Dimensions | Basic | Post Basic |
|---|---|---|
| Addition | 1.8 | 1.5 |
| Deletion | 0.7 | 0.7 |
| Altering | 0.3 | 0.5 |

Basic student writers extended the length of texts by adding to the ideas, though their additions were on a minor scale. In her online revision, Shrooq, for example extended her description of Big Ben clock tower, by adding *'it is 96 meters high and it's about 11 floors'*:

> *Big Ben is actually a clock tower and it was built in 1859 and now it has completed 160 years,* ***it is 96 meters high and it's about 11 floors.***

A further example from a Basic student writers' online revision was made by Qusai. He extended his paragraph by giving examples of valleys (wadis) in Oman to clarify the meaning as follows:

> *Oman has many wadis,* ***such as wadi quryat, wadi darbat and wadi AL hoqain.***

There was not any difference in Basic student writers' post-hoc revisions with regards to adding materials. As an example, Anees extended his description of the Whale Shark probably to clarify the meaning, although his addition does not seem to make his ideas clearly linked, as follows:

> *The whale shark is the biggest shark and can grow to 14m long. It has tiny teeth.* ***It eats small animals and plants.***

Post Basic student writers' also added new materials to the content, however, their addition seemed to be better in clarifying the meaning, probably because they became more experienced in attempting

to make their text more coherent. For example, as presented earlier in 6.4.1, in her online revision, Rand added a paragraph of about three lines, and her addition seemed to make her text more coherent.

Some other Post Basic student writers' post-hoc revision at content level revealed additions to their texts which could have made those texts more coherent. Rami, correspondingly, added a concluding sentence to his email in the following example:

> *In conclusion, what I am trying to say is that Muneer has created a new idea and*
>
> *he deserves to win a prize. **I am looking forward hearing from you.***
>
> ***Your faithfully***
>
> ***Dawood.***

Similarly, Fahad added a sentence about the importance of 'good communication', that appeared to add meaning to the text as follows;

> *Do you need to make new friends, Read these pieces of advice. First, the respect*
>
> *is very important to make new friends. **Good communication with new friends***
>
> ***makes them love you very much.***

Deleting and altering some ideas were the least frequent types of content revision for both Basic and Post Basic students either at online or at post-hoc revision levels. The following are two examples from Post Basic and Basic student writers' deletion of content respectively. The first from Rami's online revision whereas the second is from Shrooq's Post-hoc revision.

> *I am writing to tell you some advice that can help you ~~to improve in making~~*
>
> *~~friendship relationship~~ **make** ~~a~~ new friends in school.*
>
> *We can't forget that villages are a part of our culture **~~and our generation should~~***
>
> ***~~keep these sites in mind~~**, people shouldn't destroy and instead should improve*
>
> *the villages that are hundreds of years old.*

With regards to altering ideas or content, it also appeared to be of a little concern for both Basic and Post Basic student writers. It appeared that there were not any differences between the Basic and the Post Basic groups. As an example from Post Basic student writers' post-hoc altering, Rami altered the following idea:

*When he went to Africa, he made a new idea to protect people from death. The idea is import water from the sea.*

The following sentence shows how Rami altered the idea:

*Muneer did new things related to water desalination. These ideas aid poor people to drink healthy water.*

A further example is from Basic student writers' online revision. Shrooq altered the following idea:

*They always looked up to the fisherman on the boats and how they were satisfied even they returned back with few small fish.*

Changed into:

*Greed got the best of them, and even when they caught descent sized fish throw them back….despair set them.*

## 6.5. Summary

This chapter attempts to look into how students' revision ideas are reflected in their practice in order to depict if there are any differences in revision practices between Post Basic and Basic level participants. The findings revealed that both Basic and Post Basic student writers' documented revision was of local level types. In fact, the salient patterns were of technical accuracy with the majority focusing on spelling. Unexpectedly, Post Basic student writers paid more attention to accuracy at a post-hoc revision compared to their online revision. This might reflect their conception

of revision as a mere attempt to improve on their texts' accuracy. This might pertain to the influence of context-related factors where the students often attend to the reader examiner requirements. It could also emanate from students' conviction that being in their final year, their written texts would be assessed according to accuracy criteria. In general, students' revision practice appeared to correlate with their conceptions of revision that were discussed earlier in chapter 5.

Local level revision practices also involved lexical changes such as stylistic substitution which was the dominant type, along with addition and deletion of words. However, some Post Basic student writers' local revision practices at lexical level revealed those students' attempt to make their text more coherent which makes such attempts to local level revision rather global in approach. Revision at local level also entails phrasal changes such as syntactic via rewording sentences with adding words or removing others, or via restructuring those sentences.

However, the findings also revealed students' attempts to revise at a global level, even though this was considerably low in terms of frequency. Reorganization of paragraphs was rarely done except for only one student from Post Basic level, whereas both Basic and Post Basic student writers carried out a few content level changes. Nevertheless, Post Basic student writers' extension to the content seems to add more meaning to the overall text compared to the Basic revision at this level. In general, despite their high concern to local level revision, both Basic and Post Basic student writers made some global level revisions, although these revisions were relatively low in frequency.

Having presented the findings related to students' revisions conception and how this was reflected in their practice, the next chapter will discuss these findings in relation to the literature and the research context.

# CHAPTER SEVEN: DISCUSSION

## 7.1. Introduction

The current study aims to bring to light the way Basic and Post Basic Omani student writers understand revision in an EFL context, as well as how their perception is implemented in the students' revision practice. It also aims to pursue the progress of student writers' revision practice from Basic to Post Basic levels, in order to gain a better grasp of what constitutes writing revision development.

To achieve its goals, this study uses a two phase exploratory qualitative study with focus group interviews in the first phase to figure out the main points of view of Basic and Post Basic student writers on revision in EFL writing. In the second phase; using three different topics, a subset sample of students were observed while revising their texts, the initial and final drafts of their written texts were examined and they were eventually required to reflect on their revision practice via post-hoc semi-structured interviews. A thematic analysis approach was followed to generate the main themes of students' perceptions beside the use of an analytical framework which was utilized to compute students' revision types as well as examples from students' revision practice that have been classified into two main categories; namely local level revision and global level revision in order to construe the implementation of their conceptions in actual practice and to identify any possible development between the Basic student writers and among the Post Basic ones.

The investigation of students' revision reflection and actual practice revealed a lot about how they think about revision and how they put that understanding into practice when handling a writing task. The main findings of this study are shown in figure 7.1 below. The findings are divided into three categories: 'writing revision conceptualization' (blue), 'writing revision in practice' (brown), and challenges and strategies' (green).
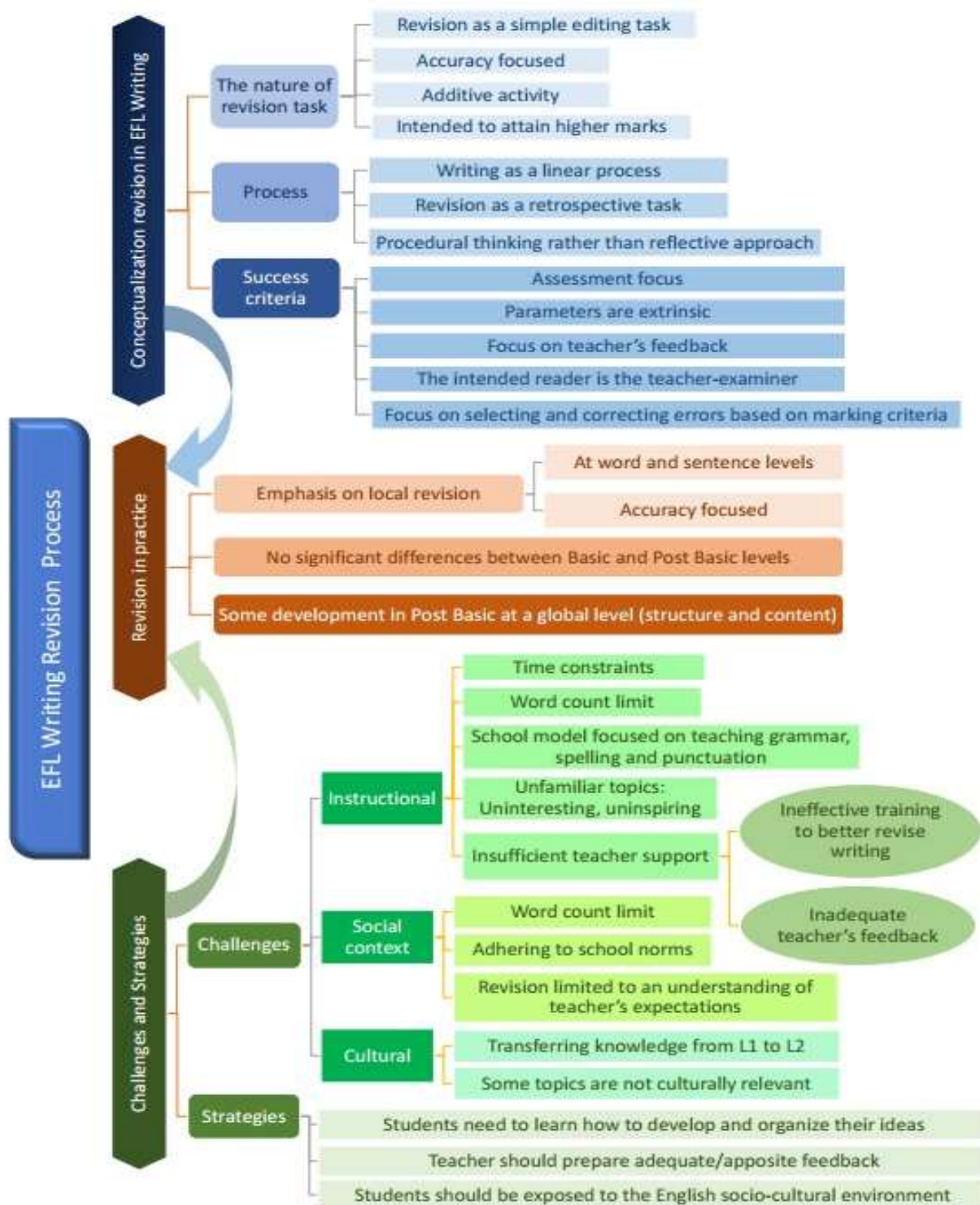
**EFL Writing Revision - Process**

**Conceptualization revision in EFL Writing**

The nature of revision task
- Revision as a simple editing task
- Accuracy focused
- Additive activity
- Intended to attain higher marks

Process
- Writing as a linear process
- Revision as a retrospective task
- Procedural thinking rather than reflective approach

Success criteria
- Assessment focus
- Parameters are extrinsic
- Focus on teacher's feedback
- The intended reader is the teacher-examiner
- Focus on selecting and correcting errors based on marking criteria

**Revision in practice**

- Emphasis on local revision
  - At word and sentence levels
  - Accuracy focused
- No significant differences between Basic and Post Basic levels
- Some development in Post Basic at a global level (structure and content)

**Challenges and Strategies**

Challenges

Instructional
- Time constraints
- Word count limit
- School model focused on teaching grammar, spelling and punctuation
- Unfamiliar topics: Uninteresting, uninspiring
- Insufficient teacher support
  - Ineffective training to better revise writing
  - Inadequate teacher's feedback

Social context
- Word count limit
- Adhering to school norms
- Revision limited to an understanding of teacher's expectations

Cultural
- Transferring knowledge from L1 to L2
- Some topics are not culturally relevant

Strategies
- Students need to learn how to develop and organize their ideas
- Teacher should prepare adequate/apposite feedback
- Students should be exposed to the English socio-cultural environment

*Figure 7.1. Summary of the research key findings*

These findings are compared to earlier research findings and are theoretically related to cognitive and sociocultural theories to better understand students' conceptions and practices pertaining to revision process in EFL writing.

This chapter delves into the study's findings in terms of context, goals, and the body of research in the field. It synthesizes the key findings of the study with regards to Basic and Post Basic student writers' understanding of revision in EFL writing, as well as how this very understanding is reflected in practice. This chapter covers seven different topics. The first pertains to the inclination of Basic and Post Basic student writers' revision at word and sentence levels, addressing research question number one. The second section focuses on student writers' better comprehension of EFL writing accuracy. The subsequent section delves into students' perception of audience in an educational setting, in line with research question one and three. This is followed by a section about students' understanding of success criteria, which also addresses research question three. The next section follows a discussion of research question number two about the students' grasp of the writing process in terms of revision. Research question number five is discussed in the subsequent section, with regards to the possibilities for revision practice to evolve at the Post Basic level. Finally, the study portrays the difficulties and the factors that may have influenced students' revision perspectives and practices, addressing research question four.

## 7.2. Students' inclination to local level revision

In this study, student writers' representation of the revision task, both stated in chapter 5 and enacted in chapter 6, imply that the students prefer to revise at local level, that is, at the level of words and sentences. Students corrected spelling mistakes, grammatical errors, punctuations error, substituted words with synonyms, made stylistic changes, or rephrased sentences at phrase level. However, this does not mean that student writers have not attended to global level revision. The findings recorded student writers' endeavour to revise at a paragraph and discourse level, however these revisions were

by far less frequent compared to the local level ones. As EFL secondary and high school student writers are not yet competent writers, the findings appeared in harmony with earlier studies suggesting that inexperienced writers tended to review their writing from a restricted perspective, limiting substantial changes to surface and grammatical structure (see for example, Ferris, 1995; Porte, 1997; Sommers, 1980) . Likewise, recent studies like Allen and Katayama (2016) and Razak and Saeed (2015) pinpoint that forms received more modifications and comments from students than content; though accuracy sometimes has a slight effect on the clarity of the sentence meaning. To better understand students' tendency to focus on local level revision when revising their writing in the Omani EFL context, it might be better to examine those students' own perspectives in accordance with their revision purposes.

### 7.2.1. The nature of students' representations of purpose

The development of English language learners' writing skills, according to Woo, Chu, and Li (2011) is assumed to encompass both local and global revision. While all writers, including EFL students, must be as accurate as possible, the findings revealed that Basic and Post Basic students' perceptions and practices of revision are primarily concerned with accuracy, stylistic choice of lexical items, extending sentences or rephrasing sentences at the phrase level. Moreover, student writers are less concerned with broader issues, such as the quality of ideas or the strength of arguments. This suggests that student writers did not place a high priority on global level revision which highlights the significance of revision goals that could also be limited by time and social context constraints. The issues of time and social constraints are further discussed in section 7.8.

The goal setting significance was represented graphically in cognitive models (see for example, Flower & Hayes, 1981), as an essential component of the effectiveness of the revision process in writing development. Huang (2015, p. 367) clarifies that revision is difficult to automate as it involves intentional effort and self-monitoring, a process in which goal setting may play a role. The findings

reveal that both Basic and Post Basic student writers' understanding of the purpose of revision stems from the idea that revision is about modifying the texts rather than considering the writers' own personal goals or considering the wider reader needs. As a result, students' task definition is informed by external factors such as the teacher, school requirements, or their attempt to score better grades and marks. These findings are in harmony with studies in second language contexts as Chen (2011) discussed where student writers prioritize altering lexical and grammatical components rather than revising at discourse level. Likewise Maarof and Murat (2013) found that while writing, the majority of students concentrated on grammar and vocabulary because their revision procedures were limited to ensuring that their essays met the specified criteria. This result is also in line with secondary students' counterparts in L1 contexts as stated by Lavelle, Smith, and O'Ryan (2002), who acknowledged that the participating secondary students in their study revealed beliefs and enacted revision strategies that are unlikely to be aligned with the analytical, critical components of a sophisticated grasp of revision, hence students profoundly perceived a narrow purpose for revision. For Al Fadda (2012), it is critical for student writers to review their ideas because it is essential in the development of writing. Conversely, Sangeetha (2020), places a great emphasis on supporting student writers in recognizing and rectifying their errors to produce error-free and well-structured texts. This is thought to be significant to the kinds of goals that student writers perceive or set for themselves. Those goals could be intrinsic that student writers see as personal or extrinsic goals that they see as legitimate.

The findings revealed that student writers' understanding of revision purposes is likely to be contingent with implicit and explicit classroom teaching in schools, as discussed in the section addressing the pedagogical pertinence of the implemented teaching approaches. As an example of explicit reflection on schools' informed purposes, Shrooq (G9) claimed that she opted to focus on local level revision, *'because of the way writing is taught and the assessment arrangements which focuses on minor changes for revision'*. Likewise, Naif (G12) referred to the inadequate teaching

approaches when he commented that, *'Building up a paragraph was not easy, sometimes I felt that the sentences I formulated were convenient for me but not for my teacher'*. This appeared to confirm the claim raised by Olson (2003) that schools have their own unique forms of discourse, as well as a set of universally non-negotiable rules and standards. This also suggests that the aims are school deemed which are unimportant to people's daily lives (Sheeran & Barnes, 1991). Whilst most students tend to abide by perceived task definitions informed by school requirements, some student writers from both Basic and Post Basic levels attempted to set a personal task definition that is intrinsically informed. However, their attempts seem to be superseded by their accountability to the contextual factors. The following examples appeared to confirm the influence of the contextual factors on students' revision task definition:

> *The school assessment hinders my own creativity in writing, I must focus on correcting my mistakes to get high score, and otherwise I will score disappointing grades. Unfortunately, I would like to imagine someone other than my teacher as a reader, but my teacher just focuses on my own mistakes, underline them, and deduct some marks where I score very low grades (FGDS4).*

> *'I was intending to add some new ideas about the winter clothes but then I said I have a lot more to write and I do not have enough space, so I just wrote 'winter' instead of further developing the ideas' (Shrooq: G9).*

This might lead us to examine the difference between student writers' inclination to set their revision goals in terms of whether they are extrinsically or intrinsically motivated. The given findings revealed that both Basic and Post Basic student writers either followed the schools perceived aims or might have been obliged to follow such aims, which may have led them to opt to focus on local level revisions at the expense of global ones. Without underestimating the necessity for EFL students to develop their local level revision, such a narrow conception, according to Carey and Flower (1989) may help to limit the students' creative potential, hinder them from learning new insights or views,

and even affect the quality of their composition. Lavelle et al. (2002), add that intrinsically driven objectives are associated with deep learning, whereas extrinsic goal fulfilment is associated with surface learning and less enjoyment. Meanwhile, such extrinsic goals are less likely to assist students in uncovering new knowledge (Galbraith, 2009). The current findings contradict with those stated by Huang (2015) who suggested that goal setting could aid learners in revising their writing efficiently, provided that learners evaluate and improve their own text predetermined standards and give their learning more direction. Therefore, it might be that student writers in this study were obliged to follow school perceived revision goals rather than being supported to construct their own personal goals to revise their writing, and that is why students opted to follow school requirements by probably just focusing on revising at word and sentence levels.

As a result, it seems evident that allowing students to define writer-based as well as text-based revision goals is critical. It would be better to assist students identify their own goals, rather than imposing a purpose on them, working towards involving them in effectively revising their own compositions (Lee, 2000). Correspondingly, how can we deal with the binary division between local and global level revision?

## 7.2.2. The binary division between local and global level revision

The binary division between students local and global level writing revision processes has revealed the persistence of a large breach between the applications of the two revision levels. Scholars, for example Ramage et al. (2003), perceived local revision as mainly focusing on sentence level modifications, such as replacing words to elucidate an idea and editing linguistic or spelling issues. On the other hand, global level revision reflects on the general depiction of the text which could be relevant to the thoughts and organization of the discourse. The binary division between local and global level revision has been addressed in previous research projects, (see for example, Allen & Katayama, 2016; Faigley & Witte, 1981; Razak & Saeed, 2015). Therefore, the intersection between

these two levels needs be reconsidered in order to avail clear, ambiguity-free findings that may inform pedagogy, and raise the students' awareness about the significance of the revision task which should not limited to a binary division. To maximize the chances of getting student writers to address both local and global levels in their revision, the students need to be exposed to a particular syllabus which allows for a clear intersection of the binary division. This could be achieved by adopting an eclectic approach to syllabus design. The implementation of such a syllabus, informed by particular learning goals, would not prioritize the synthetic type of syllabus, focusing on decontextualized bits of knowledge (White, 1988) over the analytical one, focusing on how the language is to be learned (Hyland, 2006). Practitioners should not confine themselves to a particular syllabus, they can draw on the skills-based syllabus while designing writing tasks, for this type of syllabus is based on one or more of the four language skills, also called the macro skills of language. "A syllabus organized around one or more of the four skills is called a skills-based syllabus" (Graves, 2000, p. 48). Hence, the constituent components can be considered as sub-skills or a micro-skill. Graves (2000) states that writing sub-skills involve, among other things, the implementation of relevant rhetorical structures, the adjustment of the writing for a particular audience, and the editing of the written product.

## 7.3. Accuracy prevalence in EFL student writers

Student writers' comments about accuracy revealed that they have good understanding of accuracy, in areas like punctuation, grammar and spelling. The revision practice revealed that they have done well in accuracy changes, in that most of accuracy revisions were correct. Furthermore, Post Basic post hoc revision was more frequent and accurate. This might reflect students' attitudes towards accuracy which appeared informed by pedagogy. The following comment may clarify such an attitude;

*I will better focus on correcting spelling, punctuation and using better words and phrases. I will also focus on how to answer and complete the task. For me expressing myself in creative way will not help me obtain good marks (Jinan: G9).*

This also appeared in Al Siyabi (2019), as she concluded that despite the fact that student writers had done some English writing in school, the emphasis was on word choice and grammar rather on writing development. Likewise Dajani and Omari (2013) claim that EFL students accept the grammar and structure that is presented to them without making an effort to understand why. Dajani and Omari (2013, p. 704) provide a rationale for such student attitudes, they state that the presentation of the rules of grammar through both the morphological form and the syntactic function in a sentence within a text, make a language easier to learn. Mere repetition of given sentence models, on the other hand, will not make the comprehension task easier.

Whilst there is something good in EFL Basic and Post Basic student writers becoming better in understanding accuracy, it is not enough for them to become competent in revision in writing as they need also to work on the quality of ideas, as well as the content and organization of the topic. This seems evident as a reason for the findings suggest in Al Seyabi and Tuzlukova (2014), that student writers continue to experience textual difficulties.

In his study of designing methods for TESOL, Bougherra (2008) indicates that most students, especially during their recent years of study, have been used to learning English through deductive approaches focusing on grammar, which accounts for the learning style they deem conductive to learning. They believe, and so do their parents, that learning English should enhance their opportunities in successfully passing exams, and in maximizing their job opportunities. Likewise, Basic education reform advocates a communicative teaching approach to learning English, however, it teaches grammar, spelling and punctuation in a decontextualized way.

The findings revealed that students seem to set linguistic accuracy parameters as a consequence of being taught in an environment that overemphasizes accuracy. They are taught grammar, spelling and punctuation in decontextualized ways and these skills are also assessed in a separate way. The marking of writing is heavily dependent on a focus on accuracy. Hence, for all of these reasons, students perceived accuracy as the most important element in writing and thus they were less concerned about fluency and ideas with reference to revision in writing. This accounts for the students' definition of the revision task and success criteria being rather limited to accuracy.

A further reason accounting for the prevalence of accuracy in native speakers of Arabic EFL writing pertains to religious considerations. Grammatical knowledge and mastery of Arabic is of paramount importance for the understanding of the Holy Quran (Wali & Abubakar, 2015). Failure to achieve this has often led to misinterpretations which have always been at the origin of controversy and at times confrontations (Wali & Abubakar, 2015) . Those whose interpretations are taken seriously are often those who have mastery of the grammatical rules of the language (Wali & Abubakar, 2015). Hence, Basic and Post Basic student writers might have culturally transferred their knowledge and skills from L1 into L2 writing when revising their texts, in line with research questions one and two addressing the students' perception and understanding of writing and revision processes.

## 7.4. Addressing audience in EFL writing

The findings reflected student writers' tendency to attend to the reader examiner (teacher), despite the few students who mentioned that they attend to other readers as well, however their reflection about attending to the reader was imprecise. This might have obliged students to set task definitions and set evaluative criteria based on this tendency. Compared to expert writers, these student writers have a narrow conception of their reader, which influences their success criteria and setting revision goals, and which is reflected in their actual practice that is focused on revising at local level. This might also

explain why expert writers are concerned about global level revision. Previous studies (Sommers, 1996; Sperling & Freedman, 2001; Zamel, 1983) elucidate that expert writers' respectful view towards revision has led them to allocate enough time to thinking about how to present themselves or their message to their audience, taking into account the readers' interests and needs, such as the background knowledge required to satisfy the reader. Conversely, unskilled writers, like the Basic and the Post Basic EFL writers in the current study, are more likely to be focused on the topic at hand and allocate insufficient time to considering their audience (Barkaoui, 2007). The importance of paying attention to the reader can be supported by Hyland's social viewpoints as referred to in Kurniawan and Hidayati (2016), which states that writing is a social activity, meaning that writing is only meaningful in social situations where writers engage with readers. Learners' ability to address an audience is limited to language use, such as syntax and vocabulary, and they have no idea how to engage with the reader utilizing discursive or rhetorical aspects (Kurniawan & Hidayati, 2016).

The findings shed light on the idea that the reader was framed principally as the teacher. It is very normal to conceive of the teacher as a reader, as the piece is written for the teacher. Cheng (2005, p. 57) appeared to elaborate these findings, stating that while students are often expected to address different types of audiences, which could be the student himself, his tutor, or a particular reader, or readers, the real audience for students remains the hypothetical one which is that the teacher defines in the writing topic. However, it is the same teacher who assesses the students' writing task.

An example from students' comments as in the following:

> *I think that teachers need to exert more effort on giving enough guidance and support*
>
> *for students to become competent in writing. I need the teacher to tell me what is right*
>
> *and what is wrong and how I can do that, as I feel difficult to decide about a decision*
>
> *(Naif: G12).*

For Tayjasanant and Suraratdecha (2016), students writers in ESL contexts still expect the teacher to provide them with what is termed as 'the correct answer', and teaching is still viewed as a means of imparting knowledge rather than allowing for exploration and debate.

However, as educators, what opportunities might we ensure to help these EFL student writers step beyond merely focusing their attention on the reader examiner when revising their writing. Hence, Ryder, Lei, and Roen (1999) urge that teachers advise their student writers to be the designated reader and then assess the success of their writing accordingly.

## 7.5. Students' understanding of the writing process

According to a wide body of literature, see for example, (Ferris, 1995; Porte, 1996, 1997; Sze, 2002), the writing process is universally viewed as a non-linear, interactive, recursive, generative and non-stop activity because it exposes the entire work to extra reconsideration and evaluation. Sze (2002) clarifies this fundamental assumption of this recursive process as a loop that continues until all dissonance has been addressed or until the writer no longer sees the need for additional reviewing. With regards to the writing process, and with particular respect to revision, Myhill (2009b) provides an example of a possible student writer recursive act. She claims that while translating one expression on the page, the student writer could also double-check whether the statement is correct. Given the assumption that cognitive psychology sees the writing process as a set of mental processes that interact recursively, most Basic and Post Basic student writers' comments in the current study revealed that they perceived the writing process as a sequence of phases or stages in producing a text. As a result, revision appeared to be viewed as a retrospective activity, one that occurs after the text has been produced and is frequently done in a perfunctory manner probably due to the time constraints facing student writers. It is possible that this resulted in a minor improvement of student writers' written work as a result of their revision act and this might clarify their prioritization for revising at local level. The findings support prior research, such as Myhill and Jones (2007), who found that, similar

to L2 student writers, participating L1 student writers had a tendency to postpone revision until after the writing was finished, despite describing many of the revision activities to be engaging during the writing process.

In spite of the majority of students' tendency to deem the writing process as linear, and to perceive revision as a retrospective task, the findings also revealed a few divergent viewpoints, some of which were confusing, ambiguous and contradicting ones with regards to students' perspective to the nature of the recursive process of writing, and in particular regarding students' perspectives on the nature of recursive writing process, particularly the perceived nature of revision as a formative rather than retrospective action. A few Basic and Post Basic student writers thought of writing as a linear process, while reflecting on the formative act of reviewing at a specific point in the process. The following two comments are examples that elucidate such a divergent viewpoint that students had:

> *'First I focus on planning how to write an attractive introduction, I plan the ideas*
> *in mind, and then I start to translate the ideas in the body which is sometimes about*
> *a paragraph or two, completing writing and then revising the text' (Rand: G12).*

> *'While writing I rethought some ideas and managed to change like the one in line*
> *7, where I extended the sentence by adding another sentence' (Rand: G12).*

This could suggest that these student writers were not aware of the way the recursive process could be implied. Only one Basic student writer displayed an adequate level of metacognitive awareness, as she was able to convey her emotions while writing and explains which activities she was able to master. This student's education level may have been the result of an exposure to a particular pedagogical theory or to particular teaching approach. This little evidence appeared to be supported by Porte (1996), although he targeted tertiary level students, that past experience influences students' current perceptions and practices when revising their writing. This also sheds light on the way that the majority of the student writers' revision perception and their practices have been shaped by their instructional, social and cultural factors. In regards to the instructional factor, this appeared to be in

line with Myhill and Jones (2007, p. 339) who claim that students are taught to think of the writing process as a sequential one, beginning with preparation and progressing to producing the first draft, revision and final draft. According to Moe (2014a), the curriculum policy, in theory, promotes discussion on the planning and drafting stages of the writing process, as well as enabling students to rectify their own errors and observe how others, such as the audience, value their writing ideas. For Moe (2014a) the concept of process writing, on the other hand, is thought to require constant direction through the many stages beginning with planning and ending with revising and editing of the final draft, thus recognizing the importance of planning, drafting and redrafting. This means that, whereas policy suggests helping students develop their writing skills in general and revision in particular, the policy proposes to implement that through the imposed perceived conceptions of the writing process in chronological order which is similar to the claim raised by Myhill and Jones (2007) about the National Curriculum in England that depicts the writing process in a chronological manner, which may lead institutions to perceive revision as a discrete stage where the writer begins with planning and leaves revision till the end. The findings suggest that the majority of EFL Post Basic and Basic student writers sought to recognize the central role of revision in the development of their texts. However, their awareness of the importance of revision was lower than expected because they were only concerned with completing the task allocated to them and, given some of the challenges that were encountered, these Basic and Post Basic student writers might have been influenced in their conceptions and practices with respect to revision in EFL writing.

In illuminating the difference between L1 and L2 approaches to writing. Matsuda et al. (2009) regard planning as one of the issues that second language writers confront when writing. They claim that L2 writers lack planning skills. The findings revealed that most Basic student writers compensate for their issue of not being aware enough of planning and managing within the time limits through relying on developing ideas while writing. As a result, they were hesitant to make effective adjustments. They were either unable to revise more effectively or postponed revision until the end of the task. This

could be another reason to defer revision till the end of the written task. On the contrary, most Post Basic student writers used a two-step preparation method. At both the pre-writing and on-the spot stages, they were generating and regenerating ideas. They used revision to help with re-planning and idea generation. As they worked to refine their ideas, their techniques appeared to be slightly better than Basic students who depended mainly on generating ideas while writing.

Some student writers, from both Basic and Post Basic levels, focused on the level of words and sentences when translating their ideas, probably due to their incompetency in English. As a result, revision was envisioned as a mechanism for effectively using words to construct sentences. This may confirm the findings found by Whalen and Menard (1995), suggesting that when writers focus on language alone, they can be hindered and diverted from paying attention to the text qualities, such as focusing on developing ideas.

Another issue related to cultural differences is the fact that most Basic and Post Basic student writers used revision to address obstacles like cultural disparities between their native language and English, such as translating abstract ideas and/or satisfying the expectations of their reader examiner. For instance, students reflected that they faced difficulty in generating ideas in English, so they relied on generating ideas in Arabic, hence this magnified their problem with finding equivalent words in English. Although this might be an issue related to having limited English vocabulary, Alrishan and Smadi (2015) regard it as an impact in which students applied their L1 expertise to English lexical expressions. The participants' ability to produce accurate translation of English lexical items was further hampered by a lack of familiarity with particular concepts and a lack of awareness of the target culture (Alrishan & Smadi, 2015). Such an obstacle might have motivated students to defer revision until the end of their writing task and may not have helped them to better reshape their ideas or rework the content at a global level.

From another perspective, such perceptions of revision as a retrospective task rather than a formative activity are related to the students' perspective, and their approach to perceiving and developing their writing as based on a procedural approach rather than following a reflective approach. The findings show that most of the Basic and Post Basic student writers follow a procedural approach, despite the fact that a few of them claim that they abide by a reflective approach. Whilst Lavelle et al. (2002) places great emphasis on revision as one of the main dimensions for secondary students to improve their writing skills, they recommend that revision tactics should be integrated into writing activities rather than being taught as separate and final procedures. This means that planning, translation, and revision are frequently inextricably linked in practice. For Lavelle et al. (2002, p. 401), when the student writers' intention is just to comply with the task demands, this leads these student writers to perform the written task with a low level of critical thinking. In contrast, when student writers are completely engaged in the task with a knowledge drive, their emphasis is often on manipulating layers of meaning at higher conceptual levels (Lavelle et al, 2002, p.401). Whilst Sharples (1999) claims that the techniques that writers use to acquire insight and generate new ideas can be studied and taught, the question of whether the reflective approach to writing is teachable or not; a question that might need further investigation due to the complexity of such an approach. It might be preferable to adopt the approach advocated by cognitive theories, in which skilled writers use a balanced approach to problem solving when revising their writing, employing a variety of strategies for evaluating dissonance in their written texts, and employing a flexible response to revising their composition.

## 7.6. The nature of students' representation of success criteria

The findings revealed that the majority of the students tended to judge the success of revising their EFL school writing in linguistic terms, in line with the representations of goal and process. They based their evaluation criteria on extrinsic variables such as school or teacher intentions. For example, they focused on linguistic precision in areas like word choice, spelling, punctuation, and grammar.

This is a very good development in terms of better understanding of accuracy. However, students tended to overemphasize accuracy over other dimensions of revising their writing which may not have assisted students in better developing their writing at a global level such as content and organization at a discourse level. They inclined towards local level revision because they evaluated their success based on accounting for the reader examiner rather than on their own intrinsic goals for developing their writing. From a critical standpoint, Lee (2000) notes that effective revision may necessitate defying established rules and conventions, or modifying classic genres or styles. For Beach and Friedrich (2006), students can only make significant revision if they are assisted in assessing the quality of their writing themselves. This suggests that both Basic and Post Basic student writers' parameters for evaluating their success appeared aligned with their perception of school and teacher evaluation norms and criteria. They appeared not to critically evaluate their writing success according to intrinsic factors.

Despite the fact that research in revision appears sparse in Oman, studies in writing such as Al-Saidyah (1996) infer that conceptual beliefs and understanding of not only students, but also teachers, reflect entrenched beliefs in teachers' dominance in the feedback of writing, in other words, their beliefs reveal that, within the school context, teachers are the only source for providing corrective feedback in writing. Teachers, according to Al-Saidyah (1996), are more concerned with grammar, spelling and punctuation issues than they are with in-depth review. Other revising views are given little or no consideration. This may provide an adequate rational for students' perceptions of success criteria and as a result their inclination to local level revisions at the expense of global ones. This also seems evident in students' revision practice as accuracy, word choice and revising at a phrase level were occurring with high frequency compared to global level revision like content and organizing ideas. This also confirms the claim raised by Bangert-Drowns, Hurley, and Wilkinson (2004) that writing's cognition function will undoubtedly be influenced by the expectations placed on it, as well as how it is perceived and valued in the classroom. The importance of supporting students in setting

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their own evaluative criteria in revising their writing has been documented in the literature, with Huot and Perry (2009) arguing that until student writers can examine and  update  their writing, they will stay students rather than writers. Myhill and Jones (2007) criticized approaches that tend to involve writers in the processes such as editing, but there has been less pedagogic focus on creating explicit awareness of these processes. This seems relevant to student writers in the current study as they appeared in need of some support on how to better evaluate their writing, so that they could effectively create balanced parameters between local and global level changes.

However, Post Basic student writers' metalinguistic knowledge appears to have become conscious as their metacognitive action was focused on making the best decision rather than just improving on precise words and phrases. This suggests that their language has improved marginally, particularly in terms of cohesion. This seems evident in their practice as they attempted to use connective words that are actually lower level changes but this can be regarded a global level as these additional lexical words contribute to the cohesion at discourse level. These attempts were less frequent compared to the high frequency revisions at local level, particularly in accuracy at post-hoc revision. This again suggests that these student writers adhere to such an evaluative criteria not because they do have not enough cognitive and metacognitive sources as suggested by previous research (see for example, Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1986; Flower & Hayes, 1981; Kellogg, 2008), but based on their perception of the school and teachers' requirements.

In line with students' attempt to set other success criteria, a few EFL students tended to concentrate on structuring their thoughts in texts, thereby creating criteria for better revision based on their intuitions, the student writers felt self-accountable, although they usually struggled to justify their choices.

Some of them also tended to associate creative writing with expansion of their thoughts, which was usually successful, albeit primarily at word and sentence levels. Other students included fictional elements in their writing as well, such as a strong opening or a strong conclusion. They said, however, that they were having difficulty in rewriting an appropriate introduction. Overall, student writers perceived criteria of school requirements has led them to set parameters that focus on lower level revisions at the expense of global ones.

## 7.7. EFL Post Basic revision practice: insight into potential development

The current study intends to explore the potential development in adolescent writers' development in revision in writing by comparing Post Basic student writers to Basic level student writers. The findings have not shown any significant difference with regards to frequencies between Basic and Post Basic student writers in terms of local and global level revisions. However, at post-hoc revision, Post Basic student writers paid more attention to accuracy, which may reflect their understanding of revision as a proofreading task. Post Basic student writers' accuracy revision seems better than the other types of revision. However, their overemphasis on accuracy at the expense of other facets of development such as content or organization needs to be reconsidered, and may suggest the benefits of offering more assistance to those students in order to improve on this task. Given that, the adolescent writing development is particularly difficult, with apparent improvement in written products throughout the teen years, in contrast to a lack of clarity regarding development markers (Andrews & Smith, 2011).

However, Post Basic student writers' focus on accuracy when revising their writing does not mean that they have not attempted to develop their writing at global level revisions. The number of students' attempts to revise at global level are much less significant than their attempts at local level. The findings elucidate that some Post Basic student writers' local level revision practices at a lexical level revealed that those students' attempts to make their text more coherent, which makes such attempts local revisions rather global in approach. Whilst reorganization of paragraphs was rarely made, one

student from Post Basic level, during her online revision attempted to make her text more coherent by adding a new paragraph of about three lines and then restructuring the paragraphs in her text. Although this appeared little evidence, however, it seems a good sign for development. The findings also revealed that both Basic and Post Basic student writers attempted to carry out a few content changes, mainly adding to the content with a few revisions for altering ideas. Post Basic student writers' extension to the content seems to add more meaning to the overall text compared to the Basic level ones. Nevertheless, it is questionable, why at a discourse level, Post Basic student writers are more concerned with correctness of words, grammar and punctuation than with reshaping the content, or working to develop the quality and organization of ideas. A possible answer according to cognitive theories might be attributed to having insufficient resources of cognitive and metacognitive strategies. However, the essence of the issue would be oversimplified in this way. If research wants to sustain students' development as writers in schools, Sperling and DiPardo (2008, p. 72) argue that it must first investigate the nuances of classroom difficulties in order to properly comprehend what it means to read and write using school materials. Coker and Lewis (2008) clarify this point arguing for the necessity of understanding adolescent writing in real classrooms in terms of how cognitive, social and motivational variables interact. The study by Al Seyabi and Tuzlukova (2014), discussed and confirmed a gap existing between Post Basic and Tertiary students in issues relating to the writing process such as selecting the appropriate lexical items and having knowledge on how to articulate their ideas, constructing sentences, achieving coherent organization of ideas, and using appropriate decision-making skills while processing a text. It is therefore of much importance to understand what challenges that EFL student writers encounter when revising their writing. Hence the next section provides an account of such constraints.

## 7.8. Perceived constraints on EFL revision practice

Students' inclination to local level revision might be accounted for by challenges that student writers encountered when revising their writing. These difficulties pertain to pedagogical and socio-cultural factors.

### 7.8.1. Instructional factors

To begin with, the majority of Basic and Post Basic student writers reflected that they struggled with revision due to insufficient instructional support. The data revealed that several Basic and Post Basic student writers claimed that they had grammatical issues in reviewing their writing because they were taught in educational institutions that did not provide adequate and ample opportunities for practice in applying grammatical knowledge. For example Abeer (G9) explicitly comments:

> *I do not really care because I do not like grammar, I usually feel what is right and what is suitable for developing my writing. My teacher always criticized my grammatical use in writing. I would say we had not enough practice on how to make grammar in use.*

These findings are in line with EL-dally, as reported in Alhaisoni (2012) that adult learners in the Arab world appear to have a rich grasp of English grammar rules, but they have shown an inability to use this knowledge in generating and communicating writing. He further explains that this is because the students have not established a conceptual knowledge of communicative language use, or that they have not been given opportunity to learn grammar in context. This notion is supported Myhill et al. (2012), who believe that teaching grammar should be contextualized to help students improve their metalinguistic understanding. The findings also revealed that some Post Basic and a few Basic student writers attempted to make use of connective words to create cohesion and unity to their texts, however, they struggled to effectively create cohesion probably due to their partial understanding of metalinguistic knowledge, or they might not have been able to implement that in revision practice.

Another linguistic knowledge issue encountered by Basic and Post Basic student writers when revising their EFL writing, that the findings revealed, and which pertains to pedagogy, was about student writers' limited vocabulary, particularly not having the vocabulary they needed for the task. The following two examples clarify this point:

> *'I knew about some of the events in the story, but I did not have enough English words to express my understanding'* (Jinan: G9).

> *'I focused on writing about the reasons, then I thought that they were not reasonable, however, I could not extend my ideas because of my limited vocabulary'* (Qusai: G9).

Some Post Basic student writers also reflected their intention to think of developing the overall meaning at a discourse level via extending the sentences to better explain their ideas, however, it was not effective as the following example explains:

> *'I focused on the overall meaning by putting words in phrases to better explain or sometime write long sentences to explain the meaning. However, this sometimes was not effective as the overall meaning was not clear for my teacher'* (Rami: G 12).

Whilst limited vocabulary appeared a self-imposed constraint, student writers' comments revealed that the issue is relevant to pedagogical factors. The following examples illustrate such an issue:

> *So, for example in our school syllabus I am taught about topics of tourism, these topics restricted me to write using limited vocabulary that only restricted to this topic. On the contrary, when I am sitting for the exam I am sometime asked to write about a topic in tourism about unfamiliar place for me like writing about a place in Oman called 'Doqum', hence I cannot write because I do not have the suitable vocabulary to write with for such topic. I mean I need some assistant to be aware of a wide range of vocabulary that better help me to develop my writing* (FGBS2).

*It might be the less practice in writing English, the less vocabulary I have and the worst thing that through Grade 1 to 4 I was asked to memorize some words without being given enough room for usage as well as have not given enough recycling and practice, so I forgot* (FGBS6).

It appeared that insufficient language proficiency may hinder student writers' attempts to revise at a global level. This is in line with Broekkamp and Van den Bergh (1996) who observe that when second language writers struggle with knowledge of the target language, they become distracted in considering diverse text demands such as student ability to understand some of the content in the text. Hence, it is likely that Basic and Post Basic student writers' limitation in vocabulary may have distracted them from focusing on revising at global level and restricted them to focus at word and sentence level changes. Correspondingly, student writers in this study attributed this issue to inadequate pedagogy as they seemed to have not been provided with ample support to develop their vocabulary.

Furthermore, with regards to pedagogical instructions, some Basic student writers also claim that the topics given to them to write about were not of their interest and sometimes unfamiliar which does not help them to rethink the content. This is related to motivational factors. According to Hidi, Renninger, and Krapp (2004), one of the motivational elements that has a beneficial impact on students' cognitive performance and successful experiences is interest. The following two comments illustrates students' attitude towards such topics:

*One of the things that I do not really like that every year my English teacher asks us to write about how did we spent our summer holiday. Frankly speaking, I feel it is boring, hence to better write and develop my writing and rethink of ideas, I would like to be given some new topics and of my interest* (FGCS1).

Hence, some of them suggests;

> *We need the writing task to be challenging to develop our writing. We do not have to write about the same ideas in different ways that look much better. I think to better revise, we need some topics that help us to imagine like giving us a task, 'Imagine that you……' and let us write. I mean free writing* (FGCS1).

Student writers' comments revealed that they associated choosing the writing topic with enhancing contemplation and revision.

A further aspect of pedagogical constraints is about timing, EFL Basic and Post Basic students claimed that they were imposed on by time where they were restricted from rethinking at global level:

> *For me I think that I should focus more on ideas, meaning of the words and phrases, but frankly speaking, feel that I am not given enough time to revise how ideas can be connected. If I have enough time, I will reread the introduction and revise it whether it is suitable within the context or not. I then can reread the writing from the reader point of view to see if I have achieved the task, and then examine the spelling, grammar and punctuation to get better grades and marks* (FGBS7).

These findings are in harmony with Khuder and Harwood (2015), who concluded that when students were given a timed task, they conducted superficial changes only. They mean they work at local level. However, their study used a timed text situated in exam conditions whereas student writers in the study do a normal activity in the class which seems slightly different.

Another challenge that student writers' comments in the current study revealed corresponds to teachers' support. There are two main things that students mentioned they had not enough support in. The former refers to the ineffective way teachers train them to better revise their writing, whereas the latter is about inadequate teachers' feedback on writing. In regards to

training, student writers claimed that their teachers never assisted them to revise, they do not know how to revise and they explicitly claimed that they require support on how to revise. The following is an example of such comments:

> *In school I felt that my teacher just ask us to write the topic and review to submit, but nobody in schools thought on assisting us better read, I do not know how to scan the text for main ideas. Hence, I cannot generate or rethink about the ideas for the topic* (Rand: G12).

Student writers also claimed that their school model just focused on teaching them grammar, spelling and punctuation, and they needed to be taught how to develop their ideas and organization. This confirms Sengupta (2000), who suggests that explicit training can help students become aware of discourse – related elements in their writing in a second language. Teachers' feedback was valued by most EFL student writers from both levels but students reflected that they experienced difficulties due to this feedback being ambiguous and not conductive enough to improve on revision. This is in harmony with Zamel (1985),who argues that the majority of ESL teachers act as a judges of the writing qualities rather than feedback providers. For Leki (1990, p. 59), the teacher ought to respond to the students' writing as a genuine reader, but pretending to be one is unrealistic. It is therefore recommended that teachers at least provide adequate feedback that assist students better revise their writing.

Overall, students encountered the above challenges that may be attributed to pedagogical factors, this may also have influenced students' confidence to revise their writing. Low self-efficacy appeared another barrier for student writers in the current study in their effort to improve their writing. Some of the student writers for example, clarify that they were hesitant to write in pen, so they wrote in pencil. Some others felt that they were not sure of their decision of revision due to not having enough vocabulary. Hence this might be a consequence of

insufficient pedagogical support and guidance which probably needs further investigation. While the focus of this study has been on student perceptions of writing revision, an important aspect it has revealed is that there appears to be a pedagogical gap in effective teacher input and support of this process. Therefore, a consideration for future research would be to elicit teacher perspectives on writing revision and giving feedback in order to design and implement teacher training strategies aimed at bridging this gap. Having discussed the issues in relation to pedagogical factors, there are some other issues pertaining to social and cultural factors, the next section elucidates such issues.

## 7.8.2. Social and cultural factors

The rationales for student writers' perceived goals, their depiction of revision process, the evaluating criteria they set for successful revision, as well as the effects they had on their individuals' revision behaviour, seem noteworthy. In addition, to the influence of pedagogical factors that might have led students to prioritize and enact revision at local level, other factors appeared to have influenced such conception and practice. The abovementioned factors imply that the students have to consider a variety of criteria during the revision phase. Such criteria constitute barriers towards a successful implementation of the skill of revision. Furthermore, since language and culture are bound together, students appeared imposed on by cultural constraints such as transferring knowledge and skills from their L1 to L2 and/or their unfamiliarity with the cultural demands of writing on topics in L2.

First the findings revealed that student writers from both levels appeared obliged by contextual constraints. Student writers reflected that they were not able to extend ideas since the task asked them to write only 100 words or even sometimes 60 words as the following comments elucidates such constraint.

*'I intended to add some sentences to the text, but I could not because I thought that the task asked me just to write not more than 60 words, so I could not exceed this number of words'* (Anees: G9).

*'I was intending to add some new ideas about the winter clothes, but then I said I have a lot more to write and I do not have enough space, so I just wrote 'winter' instead of further developing the ideas'* ( Shrooq: G9).

Another facet of the social context challenge that EFL student writers in this study faced while revising their written work is the reader examiners' limited perspective. Thus, students stuck to a limited understanding of teachers' expectations:

*I expected that my teacher would focus on spelling such as the word 'important', she also would look at my ideas whether I have answered the task, and most important would evaluate the extent to which my writing was free from mistakes. It is unlike when I am taught to focus on how to develop my writing through trying to use my creativity, and making my text enjoyable and interesting* (Abeer: G9).

Myhill and Jones (2007, pp. 324-325) note, "writing, including revision, is not a set of decontextualized skills to be mastered and deployed but a meaning-making activity, rooted in social contexts, and reflecting power relations between different groups". It is likely the teachers reflect their power on students which led the students to perceive their revision in the way that the teacher expects. According to Kalikokha (2008), better academic writing is necessitated thorough an understanding of the target audience, including their expectations and demands, which are likely to be met during the writing process. As a result, the findings report that students were inclined to revise in accordance to their teacher perspectives which appear to overemphasize local level revision. These findings are in line with similar findings in studies (see for example, Leki, 2017; Maarof & Murat, 2013; Porte, 1996; Vardi, 2003).

The second factor that seemed to influence students' revision practice is the cultural factor. The findings report on three main rationales relevant to the cultural dimension. As language and culture are inextricably linked (Dörnyei & Schmidt, 2001), student writers from both levels reflected that they were inclined to think in Arabic and then translate their ideas into English, hence such translation would not always beneficial. Grabe and Kaplan (1996) and Silva (1990) noted that such a transfer can affect the quality of writing. With this in mind, students are likely to have encountered difficulty when attempting to rethink their ideas as their writing was based on translating ideas from Arabic into English writing. This was discussed earlier in this chapter (see section7.5). Some student writers also claimed that they have tried to develop a good introduction but it was not effective. Some of them spend much time rewriting about asking the guest or the email receiver for their news and then they returned again to the same point from another dimension, which unfortunately they have not linked to the topic sentence or not in line with their argument. This seems due to the tension between Arabic and English as Sa'Adeddin (1989) claims, that a significant contrast is that Arabic writing is typically audial, whereas English is typically visual. As a result when Arab writers write in English they frequently neglect to consider their audience (Abu Rass, 1994). This is according to Feghali as referred to in Rass (2011) due to the way that native Arabic communicators often follow characteristics which involve  repetition, indirectness, extensiveness and effectiveness of emotion style.

Some EFL student writers in this study commented that they were not able to write about culturally specific topics, neither could they develop via revising due to being unfamiliar with such topics, for example:

> *'I think that it is a bit difficult to write immediately about a topic in a different culture, for example to write about Christmas or about how English people*

*welcome guests. I think I do need to be aware of other cultures to write about such*

*topics'* (Naif: G12).

These students comments are in line with the Al-Mutawa (1997), who proposes that in order to better aid EFL learners in the Arabian context in developing their EFL writing, they should be exposed to the English socio-cultural environment.

## 7.9. Summary

This chapter discusses the main findings in the light of research intentions, available literature, and research context and in accordance with cognitive and socio-cultural theories. The findings provide insights into the way EFL Basic and Post Basic student writers perceive revision in EFL writing and how they enacted such thoughts in their revision practice. Students appeared inclined to local level revision with particular focus on accuracy. This might be interpreted due to their perceived purposes which they set according to their school requirements. Their perception of the writing process being a set of linear strategies (moves) led to identifying revision as a mere retrospective rather than a formative act. Their understanding of success criteria was likely to incline to revise at local level where the important parameters for them are those with correcting mistakes and selecting the best words. This is also seemed influenced by the social context where students might have obliged to follow school norms. Post Basic student writers reports on some slight development in areas like cohesion and unity, better selection of words, and/or the quality of content changes, although there was no significant development compared to Basic student writers. Finally, whereas cognitive theories regard effective revision as a solitary activity that requires a set of efficient skills, knowledge, and strategies that students ought to develop, this study revealed that other factors may contribute to student writers' development to revision in writing such as socio-cultural factors. This sheds light on revision as a social practice and not merely an individual act.

Having discussed the main findings, the next chapter sheds light on the implication, conclusion and recommendations of this study.

# CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSION

## 8.1. Introduction

The purpose of this study is to examine how Basic and Post Basic student writers perceive revision in an EFL context, as well as the way such perspective is reflected in their revision practice. It also aims to track the progression and make a comparison between Basic student writers' revision practices and others in the Post Basic levels, in order to better understand what factors influence writing revision development. The findings shed light on how student writers think about revision and how such understanding manifests itself in their revision practices. In chapter 7, these findings were addressed in light of research goals, relevant literature, context, and cognitive and sociocultural theory. This concluding chapter outlines the entire thesis. It begins with a summary of the study's principal findings. It then discusses some implications for policy and practice in light of these findings. It also discusses some study limitations and in accordance, identifies some future research directions. Finally, it overviews my PhD experience.

## 8.2. Summary of the main findings

The findings shed light on how EFL Basic and Post Basic student writers think about revision in EFL writing and how they put those ideas into practice during revision. Student writers seemed to prefer revising at the local level with an emphasis on accuracy. This appeared evident in their representations of revision as an act in the current study, both articulated in chapter 5 and enacted in chapter 6. They revised at the level of words and sentences, for instance, student writers reworded phrases at the phrase level, corrected spelling errors, grammatical errors, punctuation errors, substituting words with synonyms, made stylistic modifications, and rewrote sentences. This is not to say that student writers have not gone over their revision at a higher level. The findings revealed that student writers attempted

to revise at the paragraph and discourse level, but that their interventions were significantly less common than those at the local level.

The findings provide insights into students' prioritization to revise at local level at the expense of global level. First, rather than being an attempt to improve on the text's readability, the revision goal was envisioned as a simple editing chore. While it is commendable that EFL Basic and Post Basic student writers have improved their awareness of accuracy, it is not enough for them to become proficient in writing revision; they must also concentrate on the quality of their ideas, substance, and topic structure. The improvement of English language learners' writing skills is expected to include both local and global revision (Woo et al., 2011). Hence, this study attempts to delineate the intersections of the binary division between local and global level revision to better help student writers develop their writing.

From a different perspective, student writers portrayed the writing process as a series of linear tactics, with revision viewed as a retrospective rather than as a formative act. This might have led student writers to follow a procedural approach that has not helped them to develop critical thinking when reviewing their writing and that was why they probably focused on local level revision. The findings also shed light on student writers' perception of success criteria which is likely to have led them to revise at local level. The most salient parameters for them were correcting errors and selecting the finest terms. This appears to be influenced by the social milieu, where students may have felt obliged to adhere to school norms.

Regarding the challenges students encountered when reviewing their writing, several Basic and Post student writers complained that they experienced linguistic difficulties. For example, they faced grammatical challenges when reviewing their writing since they have been taught in educational institutions that did not provide sufficient and extensive opportunities for practicing grammatical skills in context. The findings also revealed that some Post Basic and a few Basic student writers

attempted to use connective words to create cohesion and unity in their texts, but they struggled to do so effectively, most likely due to their impaired understanding of metalinguistic knowledge or their inability to apply that knowledge in revision practice. Another linguistic difficulty that Basic and Post Basic student writers faced when revising their EFL writing, which was revealed by the findings, pertained to pedagogy, and particularly to student writers' deficient lexical knowledge which is necessary for writing. Some Post Basic student writers also expressed their intention to think about improving the overall meaning at a discourse level by extending sentences to better describe their view, but this was not successful due to their limited ability to understand the overall meaning.

Insufficient language proficiency appears to be impeding student writers' attempts to revise their text at a global level. While language proficiency is often thought to be a self-imposed constraint, students in this study ascribed the problem to inadequate education, claiming that they were not given enough help to expand their vocabulary or to put their grammar skills to use in context.

From a motivational perspective, student writers claim that topics assigned to them to write about were not of their interest and were frequently unknown, which makes it difficult for them to rethink the content. Two other issues related to pedagogical factors that this study revealed are teachers' input on training and inadequate teachers' feedback on writing. Hence, student writers claim that they require some kind of support to better revise, as well as adequate feedback on their writing.

Students also encountered some social context constraints, such as being asked to write in tight space with limited time, as well as being restricted to revise in accordance with a set of norms predetermined by schools.

Furthermore, students encountered some issues related to cultural factors, for instance, when students transfer their knowledge and skills from L1 writing into L2 where culture seems to be different. There

are some differences in rhetorical skills, word meaning, and students' unfamiliarity with the L2 culture when writing, for example writing about Christmas.

In regards to the potential development in Post Basic student writers' revision practice, although there was no significant improvement over Basic student writers in areas such as cohesion and unity, better word selection, and for content quality change, Post Basic student writers report on some slight improvements in these areas.

Overall, these discussed findings have several implications for policy, practice and future research.

## 8.3. Implications for policy, practice, and future research

Despite the limits of this study, in light of the above discussed key findings, I believe it may be considered as a contribution to the expanding body of research on adolescent EFL students' experiences with revision in EFL writing. Hence, this study can be regarded as a contribution to knowledge for the following:

- It examines students' performance in real time and elicits immediate feedback from the participants.

- It addresses those literacy features related to the students' socio-cultural context pertaining to the students' attitudes, and those deeply rooted beliefs they hold about the importance of accuracy emanating from the nature of Arabic as their native language, which prioritizes accuracy, for the reasons discussed.

- The current study suggests, as well the implementation of more adequate teaching approaches which promote, among other things, the consideration of the discursive dimension of the language being taught, this means teaching not only form, as in the grammatical features for example, but also other features like discourse analysis which allows students to be able to

decide on the appropriacy of the utterance. As language is also about written discourse, a number of approaches in EFL teaching suggest addressing the discursive dimension of language in syllabuses such as the communicative approach which supports both L1 and L2 students' writing skills.

The above discussed findings and the suggested contributions can be used to inform curricula, assessment and teacher education policy, pedagogy and future research. The following sections shed light on these implications.

## 8.3.1. Implications for the curriculum and assessment policies

The study can safely claim that it shed light on the concept of revision and delineated the binary division between local and global revisions. The curriculum and assessment policies should specify the need for the revision tasks, as effective revision necessitates specific task definition. However, there appeared to be some misunderstanding about what revision in EFL writing entails as a notion. According to ELCS (2010, p. 17), students are required to enhance their writing fluency and correctness across a range of texts. They should also use strategies that are suited to the various stages of the writing process. As a result, this elucidates two main issues; namely the binary division between local and global level revisions, and the de-prioritization of the recursive nature of the writing process.

Firstly, students' comments from both levels delineate their priority for local level revision with an overemphasis on accuracy. Though student writers attempted to revise at a global level, however, their revisions at this level appeared less frequent compared to the local level. This might be an influence of the curriculum policy definition of revision as a task, as such an expectation placed on writing, as well as the way it is conceived and valued in classrooms, would impact on student writers' cognitive processes (Bangert-Drowns et al., 2004). While all writers, including EFL students, must be as accurate as possible, this appeared insufficient for effective writing. Both local and global revisions are thought to be part of the development of such effective revision in writing (Woo et al.,

2011). It can be argued that oversimplifying composition models in terms of revision by advocating the binary division of local and global levels will likely limit students' ability to critically reflect on their writing in order to improve their text. For a better comprehension of the complexity of student writers' revision practice, the binary separation between local and global level revision needs to be reassessed by converging both revision levels. Students would then be better exposed to a syllabus that allows for the sought intersection of the binary division in order to improve the way they address both local and global levels in their revision. This would be possible by suggesting an implementation of what Graves (2000, p.48) termed as 'a skilled-based syllabus'. She suggests that writing subskills should include, for example, the adoption of relevant rhetorical structures, the adaptation of writing for a certain audience, and the editing of the written product.

Secondly, since the findings revealed that the majority of student writers perceived the writing process as a linear process with revision as a retrospective task, this suggests that they followed a procedural approach, which may limit opportunities for critical thinking and reflection. The curriculum policy may need to reconsider the way that curricula asks teachers to train students on the writing process by clearly outlining what is involved in the writing process while keeping in mind that it is a recursive.

The study also suggests the implementation of syllabi which consider the cognitive, sociocultural, and linguistic aspects of writing and address adequate and relevant teaching methodologies. Student writers' reflections revealed that their tendency to revise at local level revision might be attributed to sociocultural factors rather than a matter of self-imposed factors that student writers might not have developed, such as cognitive and metacognitive resources. Students claim that they were writing in a tight space within a limited time for school purposes. They also encountered challenges such as difficulty when translating their ideas from their native language (Arabic) into English. Students also relied on transferring their Arabic writing skills into English ones which are different. They also claim that they would not be able to develop their writing due to being unfamiliar with topics which are

culturally different to their culture. It also appeared that students' better understanding of accuracy has led them to overemphasize accuracy over other aspects of writing which might have been informed by their native Arabic language where accuracy plays a significant role in understanding Arabic, particularly in understanding the Holly Quran. Hence, the curriculum policy might better understand revision from interdisciplinary perspectives: cognitive, linguistic and sociocultural points of view. This would help in the design or redesign of syllabi and activities that would offer a clearer understanding of student writers' needs and support them in overcoming their difficulties. As a result, this might better help them to consider different levels when revising their EFL writing and develop towards effective revision processes. Such an effort will also definitely adjust assessment techniques which will have a direct effect on teaching approaches in general, and teaching of writing in particular.

The findings of the current study report on student writers' association of their success and assessment requirements. Hence, if student writers are expected to make better choices, then the curriculum and assessment policies had better focus on emphasizing on the development of those student writers' skills of evaluation. This appeared to be a better alternative than demonstrating approaches or structures for assessment purposes. As discussed in chapter 2, Basic Education reform introduced alternative techniques for assessing student writers' performance, such as self-assessment and students' portfolio, however, these need to be activated. The curriculum and assessment policy might better illustrate the way that student writers should be helped to utilize such assessment methods in the curriculum framework documents as there is no clarification of how these methods can be implemented. EFL students might be asked to assess their written texts and discuss with their peers about their success criteria. EFL Students would also supported to evaluate their performance and articulate about their revision practice. EFL student writers would be more likely to think of themselves as writers rather than as deliverers of predetermined materials if they used such assessment techniques.

Finally, student writers claim that their teachers have not provided them with ample support to better revise and neither did they receive any adequate feedback on their writing from their teachers. As discussed in chapter 2, teacher education programs were inadequate in meeting the needs of instructors who were paid little to challenges teachers face when teaching English as a foreign language (Al Rasbiah, 2006). This is in accordance with Copland et al. (2014), who states that this could be related to the use of theoretical approaches to teacher education. As a result, teacher education programs should be tailored to their needs and based on the issues faced in the classroom. Exploring the approach suggested by Bruning and Horn (2000, p. 35) of focusing on instructors' viewpoints of writing as 'transactional', where a production and 'problem solving' activity could be more beneficial. This is also relevant to responding to the students' writing, hence, teacher education policy needs to equip teachers with enough strategies to support student writers with proper feedback techniques based on responding to students' writing from a perspective of a genuine reader as suggested by Leki (1990).

### 8.3.2. Implications for practice

This section elucidates three main implications for practice as informed by the findings of the current study. These implications refer to approaches pertaining to providing students with enough time, equipping and enabling them to better evaluate and revise their writing, as well as involving those students in voicing their opinion with regards to the choice of the writing topics.

To begin with, the recommendations emerging from the study advocate allocating students more time for the writing and revising tasks. Practitioners should reconsider the allocated time for Basic and Post Basic student writers to evaluate their writing. These student writers appeared to place a high value on time in order to more thoroughly reread their written work or to feel less pressured to write quickly. Since EFL Basic and Post Basic student writers often encounter with tremendous challenges such as difficulty in planning and translating their ideas, it would be better, according to Porte (1996)

to alleviate the anxiety that appears to be caused by timed writing, if revision is to be more productive. Porte (1996) confirms that writing with a time limit would lead student writers to focus on error forms and correction rather than taking an excessive risk on something they do not feel competent doing. This might explain why Basic and Post Basic student writers were inclined to focus on local level revision and hence they probably require enough time to better proceed in their revision task. Porte (1996) suggests that by judiciously distributing time across a number of sessions, distance can be built between the writer and his/her writing. This might be a good idea to support Basic and Post Basic student writers to develop their revision skills.

Student writers also need to be equipped with tools which enable them to better evaluate and to reflect on their own writing. To better support student writers in improving on their writing, it would be more convenient to advocate a critical reflection for students to get them to evaluate their writing. This can be done via asking students to evaluate some pieces of their writing from their writing portfolio. Then get them to swap such ideas in peer or group discussions. From another perspective, since Basic Education reform brought new evaluation procedures, such as peer review and self-assessment, this study recommends that these techniques should be better organized to direct EFL student writers' attention to goals and criteria rather than language choice and accuracy. These techniques can be used to help students understand the revision task definition, as discussed earlier in chapter 7. It would be preferable to support student writers in identifying their own aims and involving them in the efficient revision of their compositions (Lee, 2000). This may be done by getting students to reflect on their writing via peer review or via a discussion with their teacher. In addition to raising student writers' awareness of revising goals, they also need to gain a grasp of success criteria. This may be achievable by engaging student writers in quality argument. This would maximize student writers' skills in becoming more self-reflective reviser. Furthermore, teachers should try to create more opportunities for students to revise and to receive adequate feedback at the formative stages of the writing process. They should also work harder to make their students realize the necessity of getting back to the text

to improve on it, as well as providing those student writers with a sense of audience. This will definitely help the students to adopt a recursive approach to writing, and to avoid the linear strategies.

Finally, the study also calls for more involvement of the students in the whole endeavour, especially in giving them the right to have a say with regards to the choice of the writing topics. Practitioners need to reconsider the topics that students like and are of interest to them. This is related to motivational factors. Interest is one of the motivational aspects that has a positive impact on students' cognitive performance and successful experiences (Hidi et al., 2004). Therefore, teachers had better give students a choice from a list of topics to help them better revise their writing. This will help inspire them with authorial ownership and help them feel that they are writing about topics that really inspire them and hence write well and revise better.

### 8.3.3. Implications for future research

This study adds to existing knowledge concerning the perspectives of revision among EFL secondary and high school student writers, as well as the way these student writers put such understanding into practice. There are, nevertheless, some limits that may provide a basis for additional inquiry. This section sheds light on some suggested points for further research.

To begin with, since EFL Basic and Post student writers are bilingual; they speak their native language, Arabic, and their second language is English, so they have access to more than one language, which makes L2 writing different from L1 writing (Wang & Wen, 2002) . Mu and Carrington (2007) illustrate that the differences pertain to strategy, rhetoric and linguistics. In addition, language and culture are intricately intertwined (Dörnyei & Schmidt, 2001). Despite the fact that the nature of students' reflections has been contextualized in the current study, further research could perhaps address, with more focus, what happens when the students carry out revision tasks in their native language. This may pave the way for in-depth understanding of revision from

sociocultural perspectives. It would provide insights into students' transferring skills and strategies from L1 into L2 which can provide an understanding to better support them in L2 revision practice.

Secondly, this study advocates listening to students' perspectives about their understanding of revision as a concept as well as their understanding of the learning context. The study provides insights into students' conceptualization of revision and their understanding of the pedagogical and social context. Furthermore, involving teachers via investigating their perceptions, beliefs and practices about revision would maximize our understanding and may assist researchers to have a holistic understanding of the phenomena. Therefore, further research into teachers' perceptions concerning revision would validate students' perspectives about the teaching and learning contexts and provide an understanding from different perspectives.

Next, there was little evidence about the effect of past learning experience on students' revision practice. A student who was educated in England has reflected on her past experience and how such pedagogical and social context have contributed to her perceptions and practices with respect to revision in writing. Whilst this little evidence supports the findings found in Porte (1996), where he found that underachiever tertiary level students' revision practice is probably shaped by their past leaning experience. Accordingly, similar research in EFL Basic and Post Basic student writers might add an in-depth understanding of the impact of past experience on students' revision practice.

Another point that might need further study is about the slight development that this study revealed in Post Basic students' revision practice corresponding to cohesion and unity of texts. This is related to metalinguistic understanding, where Post Basic student writers reflected some partial understanding of connectives and they attempted in their local level revision to think of word choice that better connected to the discourse level or the text title. Such a little evidence should be further

investigated to explore how these student writers develop their metalinguistic understanding and how such understanding is manifested in their revision practice.

Furthermore, the current study targeted exploring the potential development in the revision practice of Post Basic students among Basic students. There were no significant differences in frequencies of revision types, however, there was some slight development in areas like the quality of content revision, reorganization of ideas at discourse level, and better understanding of accuracy. However, a longitudinal study could be conducted following the same students' progress from Grade 9 to Grade 12 to ensure a more valid result as the students' revision strategies could then be monitored, and they would likely experience nearly the same contextual factors and learning experience.

This study also focuses on exploring students' perceptions and practices in correspondence to EFL revision in writing and investigates the rationales that might have shaped such revision practice such as the approaches to teaching. However, the impact of such approaches on revision practice may need further studies via probably mixed methods that involve experimental methods.

Finally, this study targeted a small sample of student writers in four schools in one province in Oman and it only used agreement qualitative research methods to explore students' revision perceptions and practices. Further research could also come up with more reliable results if it addresses a larger sample, and uses more research techniques like quantitative tools. It could also involve more institutes from different locations like the interior regions of the country.

## 8.4. Reflections on my PhD journey

My incredible journey has tremendously enriched my knowledge and comprehension of a wide range of essential educational challenges particularly those pertaining to revision in writing, as well as enabling me to maintain my abilities and techniques as an educational researcher.

To begin with, I believe that assessing students' cognitive abilities and motivational feelings would most probably aid in the construction of an environment in which EFL student writers may effectively review and improve their writing. Hence, my thoughts regarding writing revision and how it might be a difficult skill for second language learners have been realized and assimilated. Being myself a second language learner, I faced various writing obstacles, particularly in reviewing my texts, while proceeding in my study. Fortunately, my supervisors' valuable and constant input in order to generate a well-written thesis, as well as the writing environment that I was provided with, have inspired me to complete this thesis as an EFL learner.

Personally, my PhD research in education has provided me with ample opportunities to gain valuable knowledge, study, and research skills. For example, I gained more critical skills. The PhD voyage began with the introduction of complex and vague terminology for me, such as epistemology, ontology, and other terms linked to research philosophy. However, throughout my first year of the MSC program, I took up a variety of courses, including a course about the nature of educational inquiry, which helped me grasp such terms. Other modules I took, such as the ones about interpretive methodologies, and creating and disseminating research, allowed me to broaden my research abilities and understanding. Furthermore, I was able to improve on my critical skills during my study, such as how to analyze and critique themes and research in light of research strengths, limitations, as well as ethical and research quality issues. Most importantly, I have improved my ability to incorporate my own voice throughout the thesis and provide sufficient proof to support such a claim. In addition, such a PhD experience has provided me with opportunities to present about revision as well as about professional development in TESOL in the GSC conferences, which also sustained my presentation skills and assisted me in refreshing and developing my ideas about curricula and instruction in TESOL. Whilst this project provided me with terrific opportunities to learn about essential challenges linked to teaching and learning writing in an EFL context, it has also helped me improve my research skills. In addition to my research skills, this experience has aided in the development of my technology

abilities, since I have become proficient in the use of tools such as Endnote, which has aided me with citations and references. I also learned how to organize my qualitative analysis using the NVIVO application. Furthermore, by maintaining my research abilities in discovering the essential literature, I have learnt how to make the most of the electronic library.

The process of the study, on the other hand, has been fraught with dissatisfaction and challenges. Lack of confidence, boredom, anxiousness, stress, doubt and confusion were among the issues I had to put up with. To address these obstacles, I communicated my sentiments with supervisors and colleagues, and devised strategies for dealing with them which helped me keep enthusiasm in continuing the study. Despite the fact that a PhD is a difficult task, it is also a highly educational and fulfilling experience that will last long after it is completed.

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# APPENDICIES

*First, let us discuss the nature of writing.*

**Focus A. (Introductory question) Describe how do you feel when you write in English?**
**Tell me about your experience in writing English. (Students' perceptions about writing)**
**Prompts:**

1- Which writing do you prefer more writing in Arabic or English? Explain.

2. Tell me about your experience in learning how to write in English?

*You may discuss the following:*

1-How do you start your writing task?

2-     What do you know about the types of writing? Which type do you like most? Why?
3-     What are the steps you follow while writing?
4-     How do you prepare for writing?
5-     What objectives do you bear in mind when you write?
6-     What are your strengths/weaknesses in English writing? 7- What support are you looking for to write well?

**Focus B.: Revision in writing: What?**

**In the second part of this discussion, we will focus on revision in English writing**

**What is revision in writing? (*Students' perception of revision in EFL writing*).**

**Prompts:**

1. Let's look at these pieces of writing, focusing on changes that student has made? Can you tell me about these changes?

2. What do you focus on as you reread your work?

3. What do you do as you reread your work? (Revision strategies)

4. What areas of writing do you like to focus more when you revise your work?

5. What type of changes you usually apply /experience you achieve in your revision?

6. Tell me about your word choice, grammar and your intention when revising?

*Focus C. Revision purposes:*

**Why do you revise your English writing?**

**Prompts:**

1. What are your priorities when revising your EFL writing?

2. Is it possible to make changes on the purpose of your writing? Explain.

3. What points do you consider when revising your work? (Assessment criteria, your teacher, your own priorities, your reader/audience)

*Focus D. Revision process:*

 **Prompts:**

1. How do you understand that the piece of writing has evolved and could be submitted?

2. How do you evaluate your piece of writing?

 3. What do you expect to change when redrafting?

*Focus E. success criteria*

 **How do define a good writer/what is a good writer?  How do you know that this is a good writer or a bad writer?**

1. Look at this memo from students' written work, what criteria could you use as you compare between the first draft and the final draft?

2. In general, what success criteria do you consider when you revise your English writing?

3.1. How do you identify the items that require to be changed?

 *Focus F. Challenges, difficulties and support:*

 **What are the difficulties you face when revising your writing?**

   **What support do you get?**

 **Prompts**:

1. What are the difficulties you face during revision (before you start writing/while writing/after you write?

2. What type of feedback is more important for you for revising your writing-peer review or teacher feedback? Do you stick to this feedback or you rely on your own revision strategies?

3. What helps you revise your writing well? What strategies you follow?

4. What resources do you use in order to correct your errors?

5. What challenges do you face as you evaluate your work?

 **Focus E. Conclusion:**

 **Can you summarize what we have discussed in this session?**

 *Thank you very much, I appreciate your participation.*

<u>المقابلة البؤرية ( الحلقات النقاشية)</u>

**أولا ، دعونا نناقش طبيعة الكتابة.**

**الحلقة النقاشية الأولى :أ. (سؤال تمهيدي) صِف كيف تشعر عندما تكتب بالإنجليزية؟**

<u>*أخبرني عن تجربتك في الكتابة باللغة الإنجليزية. (تصورات الطلاب حول الكتابة)*</u>

يمكنك التحدث عن النقاط التالية:

ما هي الكتابة التي تفضلها أكثر هل تفضل الكتابة باللغة العربية أم باللغة الأنجليزية ؟

هل يمكنك ايضاح ذلك؟

2. حدثني عن تجربتك في تعلم الكتابة باللغة الإنجليزية؟

يمكنك مناقشة ما يلي:

1-كيف تبدأ مهمة الكتابة الخاصة بك؟

2- ماذا تعرف عن أنواع الكتابة؟ أي نوع تفضله أكثر؟ لماذا ا؟

3- ما هي الخطوات التي تتبعها أثناء الكتابة؟

4- كيف تستعد للكتابة؟

5- ما هي الأهداف التي تضعها في اعتبارك عند الكتابة؟

6- ما هي نقاط قوتك / نقاط ضعفك في الكتابة باللغة الإنجليزية؟

<u>**الحلقة النقاشية الثانية: المراجعة الكتابية: ماذا؟**</u>

في الجزء الثاني من هذه المناقشة ، سنركز على المراجعة في الكتابة الإنجليزية

ما هي المراجعة الكتابية؟ (تصور الطلاب للمراجعة في كتابة اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية).

يمكنك التحدث فبي النقاط التالية:

1-دعونا نلقي نظرة على هذه القطع الكتابية ، مع التركيز على التغييرات التي قام بها الطالب؟
هل يمكن أن تخبرني عن هذه التغييرات؟

2- ما الذي تركز عليه عندما تعيد قراءة ماكتبته؟

3. ماذا تفعل عندما تعيد قراءة ما كتبته؟ (استراتيجيات المراجعة)

4- ما هي مجالات الكتابة التي ترغب في التركيز عليها أكثر عند مراجعة تعبيرك الكتابي؟

5- ما نوع التغييرات التي تطبقها عادة / الخبرة التي تحققها في المراجعة؟

6. أخبرني عن اختيارك للكلمات والقواعد النحوية وأهدافك عند المراجعة؟

## الحلقة النقاشية الثالثة – أهداف المراجعة:

لماذا تقوم بمراجعة كتابتك باللغة الإنجليزية؟

يمكنك التحدث عن التالي:

1. ما هي أولوياتك عند مراجعة كتابات اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية؟

2- هل تخضع اهدافك لمراجعةتعبيرك الكتابي للتغيير ؟ أشرح ذلك.

3-ما هي النقاط التي تأخذها في الاعتبار عند مراجعة تعبيرك الكتابي؟

على سبيل المثال(معايير التقييم ، معلمك ، أولوياتك ، القارئ / الجمهور)

## الحلقة الرابعة: عملية المراجعة:

يمكنك التحدث عن النقاط التالية:

1- كيف تحكم على أن النص الكتابي الذي انجزته قد تطور ويمكن تقديمه؟

2- كيف تقيم مقالتك الكتابية؟

3. ما الذي تتوقع تغييره عند كتابة المسودة الثانية لنصك الكتابي؟

## الحلقة النقاشية الخامسة : معايير النجاح

ما هومفهومك للكاتب الجيد / ما هو الكاتب الجيد؟ كيف تعرف أن هذا كاتب جيد أم كاتب ليس بجيد؟

1. انظر إلى هذه المدونة التي اعدها احد الطلاب المكتوب ، ما هي المعايير التي يمكنك استخدامها عند المقارنة بين المسودة الأولى والمسودة النهائية؟

2- بشكل عام ، ما هي معايير النجاح التي تضعها في اعتبارك عند مراجعة كتابتك باللغة الإنجليزية؟

3. كيف تحدد العناصر التي تتطلب التغيير؟

## الحلقة النقاشية السادسة: التحديات والصعوبات والدعم:

ما هي الصعوبات التي تواجهها عند مراجعة كتاباتك؟

ما هو الدعم الذي تحصل عليه؟

يمكنك تالتحدث في النقاط التالية:

1- ما هي الصعوبات التي تواجهها خلال مراحل المراجعة (قبل البدء بالكتابة / أثناء الكتابة / بعد الكتابة؟

2- ما هو نوع التغذية الراجعة الأكثر أهمية بالنسبة لك لمراجعة كتابة مراجعة الزملاء أو ملاحظات المعلم؟

هل تتقيد بهذه الملاحظات أم أنك تعتمد على استراتيجيات المراجعة الخاصة بك؟

3. ما الذي يساعدك على مراجعة كتابتك جيدًا؟ ما هي الاستراتيجيات التي تتبعها؟

4- ما هي الأدوات التي تستخدمها لتصحيح أخطائك؟

5. ما هي التحديات التي تواجهها أثناء تقييم كتابتك؟

## الحلقة الختامية:الخلاصة:

هل يمكنك تلخيص ما ناقشناه في هذه الجلسة؟

شكرا جزيلا لك ، أنا أقدر مشاركتك

**Appendix 2: Semi structured interview schedule (English version):**

**A. How students go about writing this topic?**

1.What was the aim of writing this topic?

2.Who were your targeted reader?

3.What did you do to manage your writing to produce a good text?

4.What challenges have you anticipated in writing about this topic? Have you met any?

5.In focus group you said……..how do you feel about when you revise this piece of writing?

**B. Students' concerns**

1.What makes you confident that you have developed your first draft when you submitted your final draft?

2.What was your aim of revising this piece of writing?

3.Any others?

4.Tell me about how did you revise?

5.Let's look at some in process changes you made during writing:  What were you thinking about?

6.Let's look at some pauses. Tell me what you were doing?

7.Let's focus on some changes: why you decided to made these changes in your final submitted draft?

**C.  Goals for improvement:**

1.What makes you confident about the above changes?

2.What were your success criteria for revising this writing?

3.What about attending to reader when revising your writing?

4.What challenges encountered you when revise this piece of writing?

 5.What do you focus on when developing this piece of writing?

5.If you are given a chance to redraft again, what will you change?

**D. Support**

1.Tell me about how are you taught writing?

2.What about your teacher's feedback? How helpful for you to develop your writing?

3.What about the syllabi and your textbook, how helpful in supporting you revise your writing?

**Appendix 2: Semi structured interview schedule (Arabic Version):**

<u>**أ. كيف يبدأ الطلاب في كتابة هذا الموضوع؟**</u>

**1**. ما هو الهدف من كتابة هذا الموضوع؟

2. من كان القارئ المستهدف؟

3. ماذا فعلت لإدارة كتابتك لإنتاج نص جيد؟

4. ما هي التحديات التي توقعتها في الكتابة حول هذا الموضوع؟ هل قابلت مثل هذه الصعوبات اثناء الكتابة؟

5. في مجموعة التركيز قلت ...... .. كيف تشعر عندما تراجع هذا الجزء من الكتابة؟

<u>**ب. اهتمامات الطلاب**</u>

**1**. ما الذي يجعلك واثقًا من أنك طورت مسودتك الأولى عندما سلمت مسودتك النهائية؟

2. ما هو هدفك من مراجعة هذا الموضوع؟

3. أية اهداف أخرى؟

4. أخبرني كيف راجعت؟

5. دعنا نلقي نظرة على بعض التغييرات في العملية التي أجريتها أثناء الكتابة: ما الذي كنت تفكر فيه؟

دعونا نلقي نظرة على بعض التوقفات. قل لي ماذا كنت تفعل؟

دعنا نركز على بعض التغييرات: لماذا قررت إجراء هذه التغييرات في مسودتك النهائية المرسلة؟

<u>**ج ـ أهداف الطالب للتطوير:**</u>

1. ما الذي يجعلك واثقًا من التغييرات المذكورة أعلاه؟

2. ما هي معايير نجاحك في مراجعة هذه الكتابة؟

3. ماذا عن استحضارك للقارئ عند مراجعة كتاباتك؟

4. ما هي التحديات التي واجهتك عند مراجعة هذا المقال؟

5. ما الذي تركز عليه عند تطوير هذا الجزء من الكتابة؟

6. إذا أتيحت لك الفرصة لإعادة كتابةالموضوع لمسودة اضافية اخرى ، فما الذي ستغيره؟

<u>**د. الدعم المقدم للطالب لمراجعة كتابته**</u>

1. أخبرني كيف تعلمت الكتابة؟

2. ماذا عن ملاحظات معلمك؟ ما مدى فائدتها لك لتطوير كتابتك؟

3. ماذا عن المناهج وكتابك المدرسي ، ما مدى فائدتها لمراجعة كتابتك

3. ماذا عن المناهج وكتابك المدرسي ، ما مدى فائدتها لمراجعة كتابتك

**Appendix 3: An example of Observation report**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Ibtihal completed this writing task in 19.25 minutes. | | | |
| A summary of pauses | | | |
| Line | Where she paused | Pause duration | Any changes |
| 1 | Before writing any single word | 10 seconds (0.34-0.44) | |
| 2 | After writing line 10, exactly after the word 'organization'. | 80 seconds (12.40-14.00) | She added the sentence in line 2, '*However, nowadays, you get the news easily*'. |
| 6 | At the middle of the sentence after the word 'with' | 50 seconds (5.00-5.50) | Rubbed out some words in the sentence to rephrase it; 'To start with, ~~TV the~~ TV is very important in our life.' |
| 8 | At the middle of the sentence after the phrase 'in our life' | 4 minutes (6.45-10.45) | |
| 10 | Paused at the middle of the sentence at the word (trustable) | 30 seconds (11.20-1.50) | She was not sure of the meaning and the form and the meaning of the word '*trustable*'. She also was not sure of the spelling of the word '*organization*' but then she wrote 'organization' correctly. |
| 13 | Paused after 'it' at the middle of the sentence, at the phrase 'social media'. | 20 seconds (13.20-13.40) | She rubbed out the phrase social media and replaced it with 'the social media'. The sentence reads. 'Secondly, ~~social media~~ the social media gives us new |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | news about anything and easier find news.' |
| 21 | At the middle of the sentence exactly after the word 'Instagram' | 30 seconds<br><br>(17.10-17.40) | She was not sure of the spelling of the phrase *'what's up'* and she wrote it incorrectly as *' watsapp'* |
| 26 | At the word 'different', at the middle of the sentence | 25seconds<br><br>(18.30- 18.55) | She asked her teacher for the spelling of the word different and then she has not changed until writing the second draft. |

**Appendix 4: An example of first and second draft of students' written texts**

Complete the following task. Write at least 100 words.

**Situation:** Your friend Hamed is unable to make new friends in his new school even though he had many friends in his old school.

**Task:** Write a letter /an e-mail to your friend Hamed telling him what to do in order to make new friends. Your writing should be clear and interesting.

1 Dear Hamed
2 Hello, how are you? how is your family? I hope
3 you are keeping well. I am writing to tell you
4 about some advises to ~~improve a new~~ make
5 a new friends in school.
6 you
7 When ~~he~~ went to another places and
8 stay with my family, they are feeling unhappy
9 and confused. but, they can live a beautiful life.
10 You can make a new friend in school
11 by a lot of bath. ~~A first~~ In school you
12 need a beautiful communication with my
13 student in class and he feel a possitive
14 idea yourself. Also, when you go to school
15 you should be clean and beautiful ~~face~~
16 fac. You should use attract ~~Pre~~ phrasses
17 to attract student.
18
19 ~~Therefon~~
20 To sum up, what I am ~~Priiy~~ trring to say
21 is. that you should be ~~clean and comfi~~
22 comfortable ~~fo~~ from yourself.
best wishes.
Dawood.

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Name:..................................................... Date ...........................

Class:................ Mark:....................

Dear Hamed,

Hello, how are you? how is your family? I hope you are keeping well. I am writing to tell you ~~about~~ some ~~abv~~ advice to make new friends in school.

When you go to ~~other~~ other places and stay with your family, you feel unhappy and confused. But, you can live a beautiful life. You can make a new friend in school by a lot of ways. In school you need a beautiful communication with your classmates in class and you feel a possitive idea about yourself. Also, when you go to school you should be clean and have beautiful fac. You should use attractive phrasses to attract students.

To sum up, what I am trying to say is that you ~~so~~ should be comfortable about yourself.

Best wishes,

Dawood

**Appendix 5: Text analysis: adapted from Sze (2002) coding scheme for revision**

| Types of changes | Element changes | Frequency | Evidence from students' texts |
|---|---|---|---|
| Accuracy | Punctuation | | |
| | Capitalization | | |
| | Grammar | | |
| | spelling | | |
| Lexical | Word style | | . |
| | deletion | | |
| | addition | | |
| Phrasing | Syntactic changes | | |
| | Structural changes | | |
| Structural | Structure changes at paragraph or discourse levels | | |
| | Moving or add any paragraphs | | |
| Content | Add new materials | | |
| | Delete any material | | |
| | Alter ideas or arguments | | |

**Appendix 6: An example of text analysis**

| Types of changes | Element changes | Frequency | Evidence from students' texts |
|---|---|---|---|
| Mechanical (Surface) | Punctuation | | |
| | Capitalization | | |
| | Singular or plural | 1 | Line 12: These is a famous Omanis hapits *into* These are famous Omani habits. |
| | Word formation | 2 | Line 12: These is a famous Omanis hapits *into* These are famous Omani habits |
| | | | Line 18: He'll proud *changed into* He'll be proud. |
| | Substitutions of words | 1 | Line 11: and cooking it with rice *changed into* and cook it with rice. |
| | spelling | 1 | Line12: hapits changed into habits. |
| Lexical | Word style | 2 | Line 8: is old habit in Omanis houses *changed into* is an old habit in Omani homes. |
| | | | Line 16: due to you *changed into* because when you. |
| | deletion | | |
| | addition | 2 | Line 7: news and events *changed into* news, health and events. |
| | | | Line 15: hospitality is very important changed *into* hospitality is a very important. |
| Phrasing | Syntactic changes | | . |
| | Structural changes | 5 | Line 2: It's old habit *changed into* It's an old habit. |

| | | | Line 2: we using it *changed into* we use it. |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Line 8: It's old habit in Omanis houses *changed into* It's an old habit in Omani homes. |
| | | | Line 9: and he starting eat first *changed into* and he starts eating first. |
| | | | Line 17: he will feeling good *changed into* he feels good. |
| Structural | Structure changes at paragraph or discourse levels | | |
| | Moving or add any paragraphs | | |
| Content | Add new materials | | |
| | Delete any material | | |
| | Alter ideas or arguments | 1 | Line 15: Finally the hospitality is very important *changed into* In my opinion hospitality is a very important. |

*Adapted from Sze (2002) coding scheme for revision*

Summary:

| Type of change | Frequency |
|---|---|
| Mechanical | 5 |
| Lexical | 4 |
| Phrasing | 5 |
| Structural | 0 |
| Content | 1 |

**Appendix 7: An example of focus group interview**

**Introduction**: Good morning and welcome to this session. First, I would like to thank you for agreeing to participate in this focus group discussion. There are some refreshments please feel free to have some. My name is Zahran AL Subhi. I am an Educational Regional supervisor, but currently, a PhD student at the University of Exeter. I am interested in knowing about your perception and practices regarding revision in English writing. This focus group is a preliminary task about my project. Out of this group, I will select three students to continue participating in this project. This focus group will focus on your perspectives about your writing development before you start your writing tasks this semester. It will focus on revision in writing. Notice that I am interested in your own views, so feel free to tell us about your opinions. There are no right or wrong answers. Please do respect others when they speak, respect turn taking. One more thing is that remember not telling anything about this focus group. It is confidential. I will ensure that the report will be anonymous, and all the data will be confidential. It is your choice to continue with us or if you are not willing you can withdraw at any time you like. This focus group will take about an hour. We will spend about 12 minutes in each focus. I will work as a moderator.

Moderator: Describe your experience in writing in English? Here you may discuss about the following:

The moderator displays the questions and the points for discussion via a slide show power point. For those young learners, the moderator gave them some papers and pens to write down the points for discussion to make it easy for them to speak about these points. The moderator explains these points in Arabic and get the participants to take notes.

Here are the questions:

- **Tell me about your feeling in writing in English.**

- **Which writing do you prefer to write more; writing in English or writing in Arabic? Explain.**

- **How do you start your writing task?**

- **What do you know about the types of writing?**

- **What are the steps you follow when writing about a topic?**

- **What are your strengths and weakness in English?**

- **What support are you looking for to write well?**

S1:        I do have a problem in writing in English as I take much time to write and it is sometime difficult to cope with the allocated time.

S2:        When I am writing in English, I feel it challenging, in that I start to write the sentences, but I cannot complete them.

S3:        For me I do know how to express my ideas in speaking but when it is time to write I feel sometimes that I cannot translate these ideas into written English.

S4:        I agree with S3, thus when writing in English I feel that because it is my second language, I do not have all the words that I can use in writing compared to my Arabic vocabulary. When I write in Arabic, I feel that I have much vocabulary to express my ideas. Even the complex words in Arabic I can use, whereas in English I feel that I am confined to limited and simple words to write. My experience of being studying in a private International school (American School) in UAE from Kg2 till I finished Grade 8. This school was focusing on developing students' writing; for instance, we were usually asked to write narratives in English. Our teachers were demonstrating and explaining for us the steps, procedures and process in writing. They were asking us to think of events' and to write in brief about and then ask us to gather these events and to write the narrative. This experience has helped me to realize the process that can assist me better write.

S5:        When I write in English I do not know how to differentiate between words. I do have a problem of the meaning of some words that hinder my thinking when planning to write about a topic.

S6:        I feel that I am weak in English and I do not really absorb the tasks given. Sometimes with some assistant I can generate ideas but the problem that I cannot translate into written English.

Moderator:        Fine, can anybody discuss about the process you follow when writing about a topic and the aims you consider when writing about any task.

S2:        I think that I prefer to write in Arabic, because I can understand what to write about.

S3:        I agree with S2, because Arabic is my first language, so it is easy to write in Arabic. In English I need to use simple words, simple phrases and simple sentences, so that the reader can understand my ideas. If I try to use some difficult words and phrases, I might not understand them and hence my writing might be ambiguous for the reader. I would say that I can easily speak in English and audience can understand but it is difficult to write a meaningful text.

Moderator:        Great, What about your favourite types of writing in English?

S3:        I do prefer to write informal letters as I feel that it is social, and I am involved.

| S2: | Yes, informal letters because I do have most of the ideas and the content to write about a topic. |
|---|---|
| S7: | I feel also that writing letters particularly informal ones is more interesting, in that I imagined that I am sending it to someone in real life, so it is more interactive writing. |
| S2: | I do have the difficulty of writing many sentences, particularly long sentences. I also feel difficulty in creating a link between these different sentences. |
| S3: | I think I also like to write informative writing provided by a box of some assistant words and phrases. But I feel that the most difficult writing for me is the argumentative writing where I do need to support my argument with reasons, evidence and examples which is sometimes difficult to generate and find. |
| S4: | My weaknesses are about finding words to express my ideas, understanding the task requirements, the way my teacher explain the task. |
| S3: | The most weakness I have is about selecting the best words and phrases from alternatives in order to write. |
| S2: | I feel that I am under tension when writing when I cannot understand the meaning of some words. |
| S4: | Grammatical rules are not easy to be absorbed in English. If I am able to understand, then it will be easier to implement in my writing. |
| S8: | For me I know the grammatical rules but find it difficult to implement. |
| Moderator: | What about the teacher's support? |
| S3: | We need more support in finding the meaning of words in English. |
| S2: | I think I need some guidance and examples of some writing that help me better write. |
| S3: | One of the problems that our teacher gives us the task and ask us to write. I need to discuss about the topic to generate some ideas. I also need some guidance on how to write about a topic. I need to know how I can start my writing, how I can plan, how I can organize my ideas. Because of this problem I usually score low grades. |
| S2: | I would like to have a constant support, not feedback after writing. I need one to one support when writing. |
| Moderator: | Based on the examples you have gone through, what do you focus on when you reread your writing? |
| S2: | Sometimes some unknown words distract me from formulating correct sentences. |
| S7: | I have some difficulties with punctuation marks. |

S2:        I also have a problem in mixing tenses such as mixing the present perfect with the past simple.

Moderator:    We will move now to talk about revision in writing. I am asking you now to write down the points that we need to discuss. The moderator distributes copies of some of the students' writing to get students have an idea of the changes and the types of changes that those students made and have an idea of the concept of revision.

The moderator asked the participants the following question; look at the examples of students' writing and compare the first draft with final draft, tell me some examples of changes and the type of changes and why do you think that students did that changes?

Look at the examples you have some of you have emails, other have stories. Just look at some examples of the changes, I just want to give you some examples.

S2:        I can see some examples of capitalization where students change some small letters into capital letters.

S3:        I can see some examples of grammatical changes based on grammatical rules. And some words changed because of meaning and finding better words.

S7:         Some punctuation marks like comma.

S1:         Some added some extra words to expand the sentences and to make more sense.

S4:        In the example I am having this student had changed the whole text.

S8:       I have an example of sentences organization, where this student moves some sentences to other places. I can see also some words were cancelled because they were wrong words or probably extra ones.

S6:          I can see some spelling correction.

The moderator explains to the students that these are some types of changes, so they can see that some do different types of changes, even some change their ideas and some others change their writing and revision aims. The moderator explains and asks the participants about real life writers and their way of revising their writing tell they publish or submit their written work. The moderator tells the students the point that they are going to discuss and explain it to them well. Here are the points;

When you reread you writing after you completed writing about a topic, what do you focus when you reread the writing, what do you do? What strategies do you do in order to change? What steps do you follow when you revise your writing?  What are the elements in your writing you are focusing in when revising? Tell me about the way you select words or your word choice and the grammar. What are the aims when you revise your writing? What are your success criteria for revising your writing? What challenges you face when you revise your writing? What support do you need to better revise and develop your writing?

Now let us talk and discuss these points.

S3: I will focus on spelling, finding better words or suitable synonyms. There some problems need to be solved when revising my writing that I have not focus on while writing.

S2: We need also to focus on tenses to make sure that there are correct tenses as well as to solve other grammar problems and mistakes. I will also work out if I need to add some words or some sentences.

S3: In revision I will also consider selecting the suitable words and phrases.

S4: When I am revising, I imagine myself that I am the reader. I reread the text and see all the mistakes and I correct all of them.

S2: Concerning the things that I am focusing on when revising, I consider the beginning of each sentence. I also focus on how to create a link between a sentence and the next sentence and if I am writing a story, I will try to make sure that my writing follows the line of the story. I mean the events are linked and the events are in series, one follows the previous one.

S4: Sometimes I feel that when I am rereading my writing that I intended something but when I understand the meaning of my writing, I think about changes to achieve the intended aims.

S4: About selecting words and phrases, sometimes it is difficult to find some words.

S3: Sometimes I do not know the spelling of the words, so I might write incorrect spelling that make these words nonsense or replaced with different words because of spelling. Sometimes I also know the word, but I do not how can put it in the past tense or as an adjective, so this is because of my deficiency in grammar.

The moderator asked volunteers to read these success criteria as an example to help students focus on what they are going to discuss.

Moderator: Ok, let us now talk about the aims of revising your writing. Hence, what are your priorities of revising your writing? In other words, what do you consider when revising? What are your goals when revising? Is there any possibility of changing your aim of revising while revising your writing? Why? Do you follow the 'to do' check list for marking writing or you have your own criteria for checking and revising your writing?

Write down these points and start to talk and discuss about these points.

S2: My aims are to check my spelling, punctuation, grammar and suitable words and phrase and to make sure that my writing become well after revision.

S3: I will focus on spelling; the way sentences are organized and the punctuation marks

S4: My priority on the way my sentences are formulated, to deliver the ideas for the reader. The words syntax. Sometimes I put the word in wrong place in the sentence, and when revising I ensure to put it in the right place in the sentence. I also focus on correct spelling.

S2:     I said earlier that if the paragraph does not deliver the intended meaning or does not achieve the aim of writing I need to do some changes on this paragraph and maybe change the whole paragraph. Here I can change the aims of revising according to the needs.

S8:     I When I revise my writing I focus on the meaning of the words and sentences. I usually follow the teacher's feedback to make changes.

S3:     I do not always follow the teacher's feedback I sometimes have my own success criteria to follow in addition to my teacher's criteria for marking my writing. I have the aim of developing my language not only correcting the mistakes.

S8:     Sometimes I have more than what my teacher guides me to revise.

S4:     Regarding the reader, we mostly imagine the teacher as the reader because he is the only one who is going to read my writing. Unfortunately, I would like to imagine someone else, but my teacher just focusses on my mistakes underline them and deduct some marks to get me scoreless.

S3:     I agree with S4, my teacher does not make it clear for me of what should I do to correct my mistake, only busy with marking and giving me less marks.

S4:     The school assessment hinders my own creativity in writing, I must focus on correcting my mistakes to get high scores, and otherwise I will feel frustrated. The teacher will follow the checklist when marking, not to look at my creativity or my better revision of my writing.

Moderator:     Let us discuss about the following: when do you think that your writing is revised well and ready to be submitted? What is the process you follow in revising your writing? What do you expect to change in your first draft when writing the second draft?

S2:     I do decide about my writing of whether it is ready to submit if my paragraph is correct. I will check if the words are correct and meaningful. I will check if my ideas are clear and linked coherently.

S8:     I give this topic for someone to read and then ask them for another feedback, and then I would judge if it is ready to submit.

S3:     I will see if I am satisfied about my writing. I will examine this writing starting with ideas moving down into spelling and punctuation marks.

S4:     To judge my writing is fine, I need to read and see nothing is missing and nothing is irrelevant.

S2:     I think the moderator means that I have revised my writing and now how I can ensure that is ok and ready for submission.

S6:	When I see that I have answered the question. I mean I successfully achieved the aims of the writing task.

S4:	When I wrote the required number of words, the task for example the task asked me to write at least 60 words. I am afraid of losing marks.

S3:	I disagree with S4; the most important thing is to write about the topic; I mean write a meaningful text with relevant ideas than merely focusing on the number of words.

Moderator:	Anybody wants to add something about your expectation of what you change to your second draft.

S8:	Neat writing.

S4:	spelling and words, sentence structure and correct the tenses.

S3:	words needed to make the meaning of the sentence clearer.

The moderator displayed an example of a student's success criteria for revising their writing and get volunteers to read and understand. For example, the student wrote' I can recognize the parts that are interesting in my writing and the parts that are not interesting'. 'I can change the less interesting parts'

Moderator:	Now tell me about your success criteria when you revise your own writing?

S4:	Mostly make sure the reader reaches my ideas. And the writing is interesting.

S2:	sentence structure and word formation. I also consider getting high grades.

S3:	Make use of my grammatical knowledge. I also consider of the criteria that my writing is comprehensible and easy to be understood.

S8:	Correct punctuation marks.

S3:	I can understand and read my own writing.

Moderator:	How do you know that this is a mistake that require some change?

S4:	Through rereading the sentences and compare them to my knowledge.

S3:	Detecting if there is any mistake in any word by carefully rereading these words.

Moderator:	Fine, now talk about the challenges that you face when revise your writing and the support you think you need to better revise and towards better development of your writing.

S3:     The biggest difficulty for me when I know that I have made a mistake, but I do not what is the right correction for that.

S2:     If I want to add a sentence but I cannot write it in a way that translate my idea.

S4:     I do not have enough words to select from when revising for better writing. I sometimes do not have synonyms that can help me make better choice

S8:     I have the problem when I spell some words with silent letters or exceptions like' pharmacy' or 'delicious'

S2:     I use some strategies to help me better revise my writing like translating the words into Arabic to better check the meaning. I also think a lot of how I can connect the sentences to create a coherent text.

S3:     Sometimes I pause for some time to rethink about this word or phrase, this can help me spend some time on retrieving the correct or the suitable word or phrase. I also ask some people for help.

S2:     I use the mobile phone services to help me in deciding about a change.

S3:     Make use of the experienced writers on advising me of how to revise well and develop my writing. I also rely on my teacher and my computer.

S4:     I make use of the dictionary and some websites.

S4:     I have the difficulty in examining and judging about my writing that I cannot examine from other's point of view.

S3:     I sometimes see things that are correct but unfortunately, they are wrong.

S2:     I do not how I can get the reader reach my ideas.

S6:     I do not know the best ideas.

Moderator:     I would like some of you to give us a brief summary of what we have discussed today.

S4:     Today we talked about writing as the most important element and skills in Learning English as a foreign language. We also focused on revision in writing; for instance, when revising my writing what do I focus on. We also talked about our challenges in both writing and revision.

S3:     We also discussed about our success criteria when revising, our aims and the support we might need to develop our writing.

S4:     Overall, we agreed about the effects of our shortage in vocabulary in developing our writing. We also talked about how complicated is to translate our ideas into written English.

S2:     The importance of creating a link between ideas in my writing.

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S4:       Overall, I believe that revision in writing is very important skill. Unfortunately, my teacher does not pay enough attention for this skill to help us better develop my writing

S3:       We do need our teacher not to ask us write and mark our writing, but to give us enough training and provides us with some examples of students' writing. We need also to be helped with the process of writing particularly training us on how to revise our writing and deciding about better changes.

S9:       I think the time given to us for revising our writing is not enough.

**Appendix 8: An example of semi-structured interview**

Interviewer:    Tell me how do you write?

Participant:    First I focus on writing an attractive introduction, I plan the ideas in mind, and then I start to translate the ideas in the body which sometimes is about a paragraph or two.

Interviewer:    Ok, what was your aim of writing this topic?

Participant:    It is about informing people about ways of getting news.

Interviewer:    I see, and what have you used to persuade them?

Participant:    Selecting suitable vocabulary that can help the readers reach my points.

Interviewer:    And who were your targeted readers?

Participant:    Those who are 18 years and above, or at my age.

Interviewer:    Good, and what did you to manage your writing and produce a good text?

Participant:    I considered the suitable vocabulary to write, grammar, ideas, and correct language.

Interviewer:    I see, and what challenges have you expected when first you went through the task?

Participant:    Mostly, how to generate and write about ideas that can persuade the reader.

Interviewer:    What makes you confident that you have developed your first draft when you submitted your final draft?

Participant:    Correcting the mistakes, adding ideas, adding some words like the word 'conclusion', and making sure that my voice throughout the text is clear to the reader.

Interviewer:    Good, and what was your aim of revising your writing?

Participant:    Correcting my mistakes.

Interviewer:    Any other aims?

Participant:    Yes, writing better. I believe that practicing writing will help me better develop my writing, and redrafting can enhance my cognitive skills.

Interviewer:    When did you revise?

Participant:    First I focused on translating my ideas, completing writing, and then revising the text.

Interviewer:    And what is next after completing your writing?

Participant:    Asking my teacher for feedback to assist me revise better.

Interviewer: Let's look at some of the changes you have done, so if you like in line 2, at the beginning of the sentence you have decided about capitalization, please explain?

Participant: It's a habit ,though I knew that at the beginning of each sentence, I should start with capital letter, but during this writing I was not concentrating ,then after writing I realized that I should capitalize 'T' in 'The" and I corrected it.

Interviewer: Ok, and what about changing the word 'famous' to 'popular' in line 5?

Participant: I felt that I should put 'popular' because it is better word and can attract the reader.

Interviewer: I see, and you changed this word, what source have used or just from your mind?

Participant: I asked my teacher and I knew about this word from searching the net.

Interviewer: Good, what about the change you decided in line 7?

Participant: I thought to extend the sentence about TV, so that to shed the light on the fact that TV use different sources for news.

Interviewer: Do you mean that you developed this sentence after revision?

Participant: Yes.

Interviewer: What did you change?

Participant: the type of words, for example I changed some verbs into nouns.

Interviewer: What else have you added?

Participant: Some extra information like some website do broadcast some news, it is not only TV channels.

Interviewer: I see, and why did you add the word 'relative' to line 8?

Participant: Because we can watch TV together with either family or friends, so I decided to.

Interviewer: In line 12, you added some extra information to this sentence?

Participant: I wanted to explain that TV also have some disadvantages.

Interviewer: I would like you ask you about two things that I could not understand, first you write on one line and you leave the next, and then you write in pencil not in ink, can you explain?

Participant: leaving line to make it neat, because my handwriting is not that good, so I want to impress my teacher. Regarding writing in pencil, for me I feel it is better because it is easy to change. I am not enough confident to write in pen; I feel secure when writing in pencil.

Interviewer: What were your success criteria for revising this writing?

Participant: Correct grammar, suitable words and phrases and of course generating bright ideas.

Interviewer: What about attending to reader when revising your writing?

Participant: Sometimes, particularly if it is a story, I imagine that I am part of the story, I am there.

Interviewer: What challenges you encountered when you revised this writing?

Participant: It is not only this writing, but I usually when I revise my writing, I think of the ideas in Arabic and when I start to translate into English I face big challenge in that I do not know how to translate, and when I revise the same thing that I could not improve., I also feel in tension because of the limited time that restricted me from thinking of more development for my writing.

Interviewer: How did you select words?

Participant: I feel that I do not have enough vocabulary and I do not know how to translate, so I usually tend to choose simple words.

Interviewer: What about grammar?

Participant: I usually select basic grammar, such as using coordination than subordination, I tend to keep sentence basic not complicated ones.

Interviewer: Tell me how are you taught writing?

Participant: My teacher discusses with us orally about how to write and explain to us about the better to follow when writing.

Interviewer: What about the syllabus and your textbook?

Participant: The syllabus does not give enough support, it aims to develop us towards being autonomous, but you know that we are learning English as a foreign language and even the class or the society does not help that much, so we need enough support to write.

Interviewer: Overall, what do you focus on when developing your writing via revision?

Participant: Selecting words and using correct tenses.

**Appendix 9: A list of initial codes:**

- **Revision to extend**

- **Revision to elaborate meaning**

- **Revision for the reader**

- **Revision for grades and marks**

- **Revision for technical accuracy**

- **Revision for internal factors**

- **Revision for external factors**

- **Revision for stylistic change**

- **Revision for accountability measures**

- **Revision for minor enhancement**

- **Editing**

- **Formulate the sentence**

- **Correcting grammatical mistakes**

- **Correcting words**

- **Learning from my mistakes**

- **Rubbing out/ replacing**

- **Working on minor changes**

- **High tendency, revision task as proof read**

- **Concerned with omission and repetition**

- **Planning(thinking how to structure the sentence)**

- **Organize sentence/ ideas**

- **Value planning**

- **Finishing**

- **Used what available to translate his ideas**

- **Generating ideas while writing and thinking how he can translate**

- **Mind planning**

- **Value teacher's feedback for better revision**

- **Ask for teacher assistant**

- **Value Time**

- **Using Arabic style in English unity**

- **Not satisfied of revision (infinite)**

- **Explanation for meaning**

- **Asking for support from teachers and mates**

- **Revision for minor change**

- **Linear process (writing)**

- **Generating ideas (difficult)**

- **Revising as a retrospective act**

- **Reflecting, attending to the reader**

- **Story (attending to reader)**

- **Performed personal strategies (keeping simple unity)**

- **Perceive revision as infinite.**

- **In process change (formative)**

- **Reflecting/revision an opportunity to generate more idea.**

- **Planning as you write.**

- **Using simple word.**

- **Revision process patterns.**

- **Personal strategies.**

- **Pedagogy to create a content that develop the input.**

- **Affective Vs ineffective strategies.**

- **Translation as challenge.**

- **Preferred strategies (unity in brief).**

- **Thinking of reader.**

- **Strategies to perform.**

- **Redrafting and potential revisions**

- **The impact of planning on revision**

- **The recursive nature of translation and revision**

- **Procedural Vs reflective strategies.**

- **Revision as retrospective Vs formative act.**

- **Ineffective unity development strategies.**

- **EFL Student writer's ideas generation.**

- **The impact of familiarity and teacher's feedback.**

- **The impact of other forms of interaction.**

- **Linguistic parameters**

- **Textual parameters**

- **Value description and elaboration**

- **Patterned revision process.**

- **63. The feasibility of revising for substantive feature.**

- **Conceptualizing unity on revision.**

- **65.Revising while translation, (divergent view)**

- **Linear process.**

- **Revising on spot**

- **–Complains about  support / guidance**

- **Perceives development progress.**

- **benefits of participatory with in project**

- **Intuitions parameters**

- **Rationales for why not planning.**

- **Mind planning of vocabulary to use.**

- **personal problem**

- **Cohesion and coherence issues**

- **Analogy to correct sentence /diagnose.**

- **Generating ideas While writing**

- **pausing to trigger the next idea**

- **Preference of L1 or L12**

- **organizing ideas/ selecting vocabulary**

- **A challenge of selecting the best ideas.**

- **Literary techniques**

- **focusing on the reader/using some techniques)**

- **Rereading strategy**

- **Metalinguistic awareness challenge**

- **Translating the sentences into Arabic to check.**

- **Redraft more than twice.**

- **Revise for grades and marks**

- **Instructional support**

- **Not having enough ideas**

- **Translating ideas**

- **Grammar reference/ dictionary or look for help from someone.**

- **Good translation of ideas.**

- **Detect, diagnose and operate**

- **Topic familiarity (revision/ideas/knowledgeable).**

- **Telling how tell a story.**

- **Translation/recursive/translating/ revising.**

- **Value reading for better revision.**

- **The impact of planning.**

- **Reflecting on her experience in English.**

- **Comparing his unity is other classmates.**

- **Revision strategy: translate the sentence to Arabic check.**

- **Redrafting More than twice.**

- **Strategies to overcome the difficult.**

- **Reading to practice Vocabulary.**

- **Revise for language development.**

- **Strategies: using electronic advice, dictionary and website.**

- **Translate the word to Arabic and how to create link between sentences.**

- **Revise to elaborate meaning**

- **Restricted to contextual factors**

- **Revising for parents**

- **Revising for self-satisfaction**

- **Accountable for identity**

- **Assessment checklist**

- **Revise to organize text, paragraph and sentence structure.**

- **Explanation end elaboration.**

- **Personal Satisfaction.**

- **Layout and presentation.**

- **Flow and unity.**

- **Text feature.**

- **Audience consideration.**

- **Ideas, meaning and context.**

- **Accuracy**

- **word choice**

- **Grammar.**

- **Multiple criteria.**

- **Layout, presentation and personal satisfaction.**

- **Text Structure, Unity and coherence.**

- **Tension/reflecting.**

- **Getting support.**

- **Pros and cons of translating using L1 in L2 writing revision.**

- **Interest of their own chance.**

- **Topic: interest ad and familiarity.**

- **Planning bit by bit.**

- **Flow of ideas**

- **Require constant support.**

- **Personal Strategies.**

- **Spelling easy to detect.**

- **Factors (task).**

- **Concern revision as correcting mistakes.**

- **Difficulty in Starting a topic.**

- **Mental planning.**

- **Make use of part experience.**

- **Reviewing and reflecting**

- **Re-planning.**

- **Perception of redrafting.**

- **Language difficulties**

- **Cohesion and coherence challenges.**

- **Topic, Vocabulary, grammar Challenges.**

- **Textual issues.**

- **Process issues.**

- **Contextual factors.**

- **Motivational factors.**

- **Teachers' feedback**

- **155. Self-efficacy**

- **Time constraint.**

- **Revision to develop the language**

- **Revision to develop the content**

- **Personal style**

**Appendix 10: A printed screen of NVIVO nodes (codes):**

| N | Overarching themes | Codes | Sub codes | Quotes from the transcripts |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | EFL Student writers' perceptions of the purpose of revision | Revision for the reader | Revision for teacher/parents/self/others | *'I really imagine other readers than my teacher'*, he adds, *'I usually imagine that I am two persons, me and my colleague, so I compare my ideas to the other imagined person, and I try to satisfy him. Some sentences when I speak to myself sound good and smoothers I feel not, so I try my utmost to attract the reader'(Naif:G12)* |
| | | | Revision to enhance the language for an implied unknown reader | *'I felt that I should put 'popular' because it is better word and can attract the reader'(Rand:G12)* |
| | | Revision for technical accuracy | Revision to proofread | *'Sometimes I put the word in wrong place in the sentence, and when revising I ensure to put it in the right place in the sentence. I also focus on correct spelling' (FGDS4).* |
| | | | Revision to recognize and edit faults | *Then when I revise, I realize that I mean to change the word into plural, but I wrote the wrong word, so I need to consider this point by considering correct words and grammar'* (FGCS2). |
| | | | Revision to edit for meaning | *When revising my writing, I sometimes examine some sentences to see if there are any* |

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| | | Revision for clarification of meaning | | *mistakes .This is very important as it can affect the meaning of the sentence as well as affecting the overall meaning of the text'(FGBS3).* |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | | | Revision to elaborate | *'I also consider adding something to the text where possible. I felt then that my writing became better as it might have some clear ideas, explanation, more examples and quite reasonable for me to submit'* (FGAS1).<br><br>' |
| | | | Revision to restructure writing | *'Reorganizing paragraphs help me link ideas, thus producing a meaningful text'* (FGBS5). |
| | | | Revision to improve the content | '*I changed almost everything; I wrote about all the ideas in min*d'(Abeer:G9) |
| | | Revision for self-accountability | Individualizing concerns | 'My *father motivates me to revise my writing. He usually advises me that I do need to develop my writing for future studies and for my career. Therefore, I want to revise my writing to satisfy my father'* *(Shrooq: G9).* |

| | | | Socializing concerns | *'First of all, I am looking to satisfy myself that I wrote good writing about the targeted topic, meanwhile I am thinking my reader (my teacher), so I can achieve better grades' (FGBS2).* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | EFL Student writers' perceptions of the process of revision | Revision in the writing process: students' approach | Linear Vs recursive approach | *I went through the task and I tried to organize my ideas. I wrote the meaning of some difficult words like the word 'tourisms'. I translated my ideas mentioning that Oman is an interesting and attractive place to visit. Finally, I checked the written text(Anees:G9)* |
| | | | Revision as a retrospective Vs formative chore | *'I intended to end up writing as quick as possible and postpone the focus on revising and rereading till I finish my draft'(Rami:G12)* |
| | | Revision in EFL writing: planning, generating ideas and revision | Impact of ineffective planning on revision | *'My teacher asked me to plan, I did not really know how to do that. So, I focused on some unknown words, even though I could not think of selecting the suitable ones or correcting the flaws in the previous sentences as I was busy focusing on the next ideas'(Qusai:G9)* |
| | | | Spontaneous generation of ideas Vs pre-writing chore | *'Sometimes I am short of time, so I do not do brainstorming. I actually think that doing so would help me generate ideas and consequently develop my writing better'.(FGAS3)* |
| | | Revision in EFL writing: Translation and revision | Revision as a strategy to compensate for the challenge of translation | *'I knew the ideas quite well, but then I could not translate them into written English sentences due to my insufficient vocabulary. I spent much time* |

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| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | *on rethinking of the correct words and kept on changing them, hence I couldn't finish earlier' (Rami: G12).* |
| | | Insight into revision processes: Rereading, reviewing and reflecting | Rereading as a revision strategy | '*Rereading the text has helped me in remembering the exact words and thus omit and replace some long expression that I wrote with convenient meaningful words*'. (Jawaher: G12) |
| | | | Procedural vs reflective approach | *When writing the second draft, I searched for better ideas and words. However, though I felt that my writing became better and more reasonable as it might have some good ideas and clear explanation, I often felt that it would be better to keep on reviewing it(Shrooq:G9).* |
| 3 | EFL Student writers' perceptions of success criteria for revision | Linguistic accuracy parameters | Vocabulary | '*I want to make sure that the word I have chosen could make more sense for the reader to reach my idea. Therefore, I spent much time thinking about the available words or sometime synonyms I knew to select the appropriate ones*'(Ibtihal:G12) |
| | | | Punctuation | *I want to add here some punctuation marks as they are important, the full stop for example helps the reader know the end of the sentence. Therefore, I spend some time in revising and checking my mistakes with regards to capitalization and punctuation (Shrooq: G9).* |

| | | | | Grammar | It *is very important to ensure writing the correct form. Accordingly the verb 'take' when used with the third person singular pronoun should have's'. It should be formed as 'takes' not 'take' ,it comes after 'He', the third person singular, so the tense should have 's' , it should be formed as 'takes' ,not 'take'(Rami:G12)* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Text features | Description, explanation and elaboration | *I wanted to describe Salalah as an interesting destination to visit, and my teacher advised me to elaborate this paragraph through adding some sentences about other cities. I intended to write about other destination like the city of Sur and Fanja, but unfortunately I knew nothing about other cities (Anees: G9).* |
| | | | | Organization, unity and coherence | *'In reviewing my paragraph, I focused on how to create a link between ideas to follow the line of argument, support the topic sentence with supporting ideas'(Fahad : G12).* |
| | | | | Literary techniques | *I reviewed the language that I used for my email and I thought that using something like a question tag in my text would not add an information but to ensure that the email receiver would be engaged(Rand:G12).* |
| | | | | Personal style | *I was going to write the schoolteacher here, but I would not be able to know every single schoolteacher, so I* |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | *decided to make it more personal and I wrote 'my school teacher' (Shrooq: G9).* |
| | | Self – accountability parameters | Audience consideration | *'to attract my teacher I wrote something like 'Amna said…..', 'Marwa said……', 'Mona answered…' these things attract the marker and feel it is not boring but interesting and where I can score better marks'* (FGAS6). |
| | | | Assessment checklist | *' I revise to make sure that I made the least mistakes, make sure my writing is well-organized and neat and at the end to ensure that it was almost following the assessment checklist to impress my teacher and score better grades'* (FGAS3). |
| | | | Self-satisfaction | *I feel that from the mistake point of view, I did my best to correct these mistakes, my writing looks better. Concerning ideas, I am sure that after rewriting my second draft to certain extent that my ideas sounds better. However, I feel that I need to work more on my ideas as I am not pretty sure that these ideas sounds right(Jawaher:G12).* |
| 4 | EFL Student writers' perceptions of challenges revision they encountered when revising EFL writing | Language challenges | Vocabulary | *'I knew about some of the events in the story, but I did not have enough English words to express my understanding' (Jinan: G9).* |
| | | | Grammar | *'I knew about some grammatical rules, but unfortunately, I do not know* |

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| | | | | | *how to implement in writing. Particularly when writing and revising a story. I mix between tenses, in that I write the sentence in the present. And sometimes I mix between the past simple and the past perfect'.* She also adds;' *'Since English grammar is different from Arabic, this might cause me mix between tenses. For example, the verb in the sentence in present, but I might confuse and put in the past tense. Most of what have studied and wrote about was focusing on the past tense'* (FGCS2). |
| | | | | Overall meaning (meaning at discourse level) | '*I focused on the overall meaning by putting words in phrases to better explain or sometime write long sentences to explain the meaning. However, this sometimes was not effective as the overall meaning was not clear for my teacher' (Rami: G12).* |
| | | | Textual and writing process challenges | Coherence, cohesion and unity | *I was confused, in that I intended to use the time order signal words such as, first, second…etc., however, I could not manage to make sufficient use of these connective words because I was not sure when the first idea end and when I start to use the second connector'(Fahad:G12).* |

| | | | Cognition and Metacognition | *'The biggest problem I suffered from is about generating ideas, so when I commence writing, I could not rethink of how I can reformulate or develop the sentences, I even I think that they were irrelevant' (Fahad: G12).* |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | | Constraints on revision caused by instructional practices | Time | '*I think that because of time tension, I sometimes do not brainstorm, though this is important for planning and which often hinder me later to decide of what to change when reviewing my writing in attempt to developing it'*( FGAS3). |
| | | | Perceived reader examiner | *'though I knew that the suitable word was 'sincerely' but I wrote 'faithfully, because I was not sure of the correct spelling of the word 'sincerely', I do not want to lose marks because of spelling mistake'(Naif:G12).* |
| | | | Word limit | *'I intended to add some sentences to the text, but I could not because I thought that the task asked me just to write not more than 60 words, so I could* |

| | | | Motivation and support challenges | Task familiarity, interest and background knowledge | *'My difficulties mostly are concerned with the situation where I do not have enough content and ideas about unfamiliar topic. Hence, it will be difficult for me to decide about the ideas that I am going to write about. Meanwhile, how I can develop the text if I do not have enough ideas'* (FGAS6). |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | *not exceed this number of words'*(Anees: G9). |
| | | | | Teachers' feedback | *'My teacher does not explain for me how I can correct the grammatical mistakes. This does not help me decide about revision changes. To better review my writing, I really need my teachers' feedback to be clear and straightforward feedback'* (FGCS3). |
| | | | | Pedagogical support and assessment | *'The syllabus does not give enough support. It aims at developing us towards being autonomous, but you know that we are learning English as a foreign language. The class or the society also does not help that much, so we need enough support to better revise and write'* (Rand: G12). |

# Appendix 12: Computing observation and text analysis data



**Online revision (means of percentages)**

| | | Accuracy | | Lexical | | Phrasal | | Structural | | Content | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Shrooq | Total | 32 | | 14 | | 12 | | 0 | | 8 | | |
| Abeer | Total | 5 | | 6 | | 2 | | 0 | | 3 | | |
| Jinan | Total | 5 | | 3 | | 2 | | 0 | | 3 | | |
| Misfer | Total | 7 | | 4 | | 5 | | 0 | | 1 | | |
| Qusai | Total | 9 | | 3 | | 3 | | 0 | | 1 | | |
| Anees | Total | 5 | | 3 | | 0 | | 0 | | 1 | | |
| Basic | | 11 | 46.0% | 5.5 | 24.1% | 4 | 18% | 0 | 0% | 2.8333333 | 12% | 23 |



**Post Basic: Observation analysis (Online revisions)**

| Name | | Accuracy | | Lexical | | Phrasal | | Structural | | Content | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | F | P | F | P | F | P | F | P | F | P | |
| Rand | Total | 13 | | 3 | | 6 | | 1 | | 5 | | |
| Jawaher | Total | 9 | | 4 | | 0 | | 0 | | 4 | | |
| Ibtihal | Total | 8 | | 7 | | 1 | | 0 | | 2 | | |
| Rami | Total | 11 | | 5 | | 8 | | 0 | | 2 | | |
| Naif | Total | 9 | | 3 | | 1 | | 0 | | 2 | | |
| Fahad | Total | 7 | | 4 | | 1 | | 0 | | 1 | | |
| Post Basic | | 9.5 | 49% | 4.3333333 | 22% | 2.8333333 | 15% | 0.16666667 | 1% | 2.6666667 | 14% | 19.5 |

**Basic: Text analysis (Post-hoc revisions)**

| Name | | Accuracy | | Lexical | | Phrasal | | Structural | | Content | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | F | P | F | P | F | P | F | P | F | P | |
| Shrooq | Total | 16 | | 13 | | 3 | | 0 | | 5 | | |
| Abeer | Total | 4 | | 2 | | 4 | | 0 | | 3 | | |
| Jinan | Total | 5 | | 3 | | 3 | | 0 | | 3 | | |
| Misfer | Total | 14 | | 10 | | 1 | | 0 | | 4 | | |
| Qusai | Total | 8 | | 6 | | 2 | | 0 | | 4 | | |
| Anees | Total | 8 | | 3 | | 0 | | 0 | | 6 | | |
| Basic | | 9.16667 | 42% | 6.1667 | 28% | 2.167 | 10% | 0 | 0% | 4.1667 | 19% | 21.7 |

**Post Basic: Text analysis (Post –hoc revision)**

| Name | | Accuracy | | Lexical | | Phrasal | | Structural | | Content | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | F | P | F | P | F | P | F | P | F | P | |
| Rand | Total | 16 | | 4 | | 0 | | 0 | | 2 | | |
| Jawaher | Total | 22 | | 7 | | 0 | | 0 | | 1 | | |
| Ibtihal | Total | 19 | | 4 | | 2 | | 0 | | 1 | | |
| Rami | Total | 28 | | 6 | | 13 | | 0 | | 2 | | |
| Naif | Total | 15 | | 13 | | 12 | | 0 | | 1 | | |
| Fahad | Total | 9 | | 1 | | 7 | | 0 | | 4 | | |
| Post Basic | | 18.1667 | 58% | 5.8333 | 19% | 5.667 | 18% | 0 | 0% | 1.8333 | 6% | 31.5 |

**Appendix 13: Ethical Approval certificate**

**GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION**

St Luke's Campus
Heavitree Road
Exeter UK EX1 2LU

http://socialsciences.exeter.ac.uk/education/

## CERTIFICATE OF ETHICAL APPROVAL

Title of Project: **Understanding revision in EFL writing: Basic and Post Basic Omani students' perceptions and practices**

Researcher(s) name: Zahran Mohamed Saif AL Subhi

Supervisor(s):    First supervisor:    Dr Susan Jones
                  Second supervisor:   Professor Debra Myhill

This project has been approved for the period

From:  10/02/2019
To:    10/02/2020

Ethics Committee approval reference: D1819-013

Signature:                                    Date: 12/12/2018
(Professor Dongbo Zhang, Graduate School of Education

**Appendix 14: An email to the Ministry of Education for site approval:**

**Appendix 15: Site approval (Arabic and English versions)**

سلطنة عُمـان
وزارة التربية والتعليم
المديرية العامة للتربية والتعليم لمحافظة جنوب الباطنة

الرقم
التاريخ ٦ / ٦ / ١٤١٦هـ
الموافق ١١ / < / ٨٩/م

الإخوة والأخوات الفضلاء / مديرو ومديرات المدارس      المحترمون

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته ،،، وبعد ، ، ،

الموضوع / تسهيل مهمة باحث

نود إفادتكم بأن الفاضل / زهران بن محمد الصبحي، طالب دراسات عليا دكتوراه بجامعة إكستر يقوم حاليا بإعداد دراسة بعنوان "Understanding revision in EFL writing: Basic and Post Basic Omani students' perceptions and practices"،

ورغب الباحث في تطبيق أدوات الدراسة على عينة من الطلبة. راجين التكرم بتسهيل مهمة الباحث حسب الإجراءات المتبعة لديكم مع ضرورة أخذ موافقة أولياء أمور الطلبة المشاركين في الدراسة،

شاكرين لكم حسن تعاونكم

وتفضلوا بقبول فائق التقدير والاحترام

سيف بن بدر بن محمد الكعبي
الخبير التربوي
رئيس فريق الدراسات والبحوث التربوية

فاكس: ٢٤٠٨٧٨٤، ص.ب: ٣، الرمز البريدي: ٣١٩ ـ الرستاق
البريد الإلكتروني: s-batinah.net موقع الوزارة: www.moe.gov.om

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سلطنة عُمان
وزارة التربية والتعليم
المديرية العامة للتربية والتعليم لمحافظة جنوب الباطنة

**Dear Schools' Principals,**

We would like to inform you that Mr. Zahran Mohamed AL Subhi, a PhD student at the University of Exeter, is currently preparing a study entitled: Understanding revision in EFL writing: Basic and Post Basic Omani students perceptions and practices. The researcher intends to apply the study tools to a sample of students. I would kindly ask you to facilitate the researcher's task. Please make sure that the researcher needs to obtain the consent of the participating students' parents.

**Thank you for your cooperation**

Saif Bader AL Kindi
The Educational Expert
Head of Educational Studies and Research Team
South Batinah

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# Appendix 16: Information sheets and consent forms:

*Information sheet (English version)*

UNIVERSITY OF
EXETER

**Participant Information Sheet**

*Students*

**Title of Project:** Understanding revision in EFL writing: Basic and Post Basic Omani students' perceptions and practices

**Researcher name:** Zahran Mohamed Saif AL Subhi

**Dear students,**

Your class has been chosen to participate in this study. The study focuses on understanding your writing development. It particularly focuses on how you perceive the purpose of revising EFL writing, the process of revision in writing, the success criteria that you might use in revision and the challenges that you encounter while revising your writing. The study is concerned with what you revise and why you revise it, and why you think these changes improve your writing. Such an understanding can contribute to our knowledge about how we develop as writers and has implication on teaching, learning and curriculum development. It will also help you reflect on your own writing development, in that you may become more aware of your writing choices. With this in mind, I would like to invite you to participate in this study on a voluntary basis, if you decide to participate, then you will be involved in the following:

- **Focus group interview**: If you agree to participate you will be a member of a group of 9 students from your class that are selected to be interviewed. The focus group interview will take place before you do any writing task as part of this study and aims at finding out a general idea about your group understanding of the process and purpose of revision, the choices you make and the challenges you might encounter when revising your writing. This focused group will take place during the time available with you and your group choice of time as well as with your teachers' permission. In arranging these focus groups care will be taken to minimize any loss of your classes. The focus group will be audio recorded with your group's permission. Your participation in this study may only involve the focus group but a smaller group of students will be needed to participate in the second stage. This group will aim to be as representative as possible of the larger group and so the researcher will construct the most representative sample possible from those willing to participate in the second stage. The second stage will involve:

- **Observation of your writing**: You will be observed writing your first draft text in three different English writing tasks. In writing these three different pieces of writing, your writing will be traced to know about when you pause and when you write as well as observing any potential changes to the text that you might make. As a researcher I will be non-participant observer-I will only sit near you and observe you write. You will get a chance to talk about the changes that you made and why you might have paused at different points in the writing task in a post observation interview.

- **Written text analysis**: After you complete your first and final draft, I will take them to analyze and compare between your first and second draft. This will help to know what revision changes you might make. This has nothing to do with your assessment or grades, it is only for the purpose of this study. Notice that this analysis will involve three first drafts and three final drafts writing.

- **A one- to-one interview:** you will be interviewed three times after each session has been observed and the texts analyzed. You will see how you wrote the texts, such as where you paused the longest or when you wrote the greatest fluency and be invited to reflect on why. You will also see the texts wrote and comment on which bits were easier or more difficult to writer and where and why you made changes. These prompts will be used to help you reflect on your writing decision in general and particularly in revising your writing. You will be invited for interviews in a comfortable separate room. You will be asked to decide upon the time for interview. However, you might miss part of the lesson. With your permission the interview will be audio recorded.

**In addition to the above information about the study, here are some other information that you might need to know:**

- All participation is entirely voluntary-in other words it is your choice to decide whether to participate or not. Hence, you can withdraw at any time you wish without any reasons.
- The participation is a part of the normal school day and any payment will entirely inappropriate.
- There are no potential risks of harms to taking part in this study. You may miss some teaching, but every care would be taken to conduct interviews at time that suit you.
- You can be confident in this research because it has the support and financial packing of The Ministry of Higher Education.
- All the data you supply will be analyzed by the researcher, made anonymous and where used in publication there will be no means by your school or you could be identified.
- I will first keep the list of the participants' names and any personal information related to them in a cupboard that is locked if the information is in a form of a hard copy, and if in a soft copy I will save it in a folder that is pass worded. All the field notes, interviews and students' texts will be encrypted using unique code and pseudonyms. I will ensure that any personal information will be securely stored and saved.
- In addition, when reporting the findings, I will ensure that all the findings will be reported publish or presented anonymously. Students will not also be asked about personal information.
- The data will be stored till a period of about 4 years, then the data that is saved in the laptop will be deleted and the hard copies that are stored will be destroyed.

**Title of Project:** Understanding revision in EFL writing: Basic and Post Basic Omani students' perceptions and practices

**Researcher name:** Zahran Mohamed Saif AL Subhi

**Dear parents/guardians,**

Your son's/daughter's class has been chosen to participate in this study. The study focuses on understanding your son/daughter's writing development. It particularly focuses on how he/she perceives the purpose of revising EFL writing, the process of revision in writing, the success criteria that he/she might use in revision and the challenges that he/she encounters while revising his/her writing. The study is concerned with what your son/daughter revises and why he/she revises it, and why he/she thinks these changes improve his/her writing. Such an understanding can contribute to our knowledge about how we develop as writers and has implication on teaching, learning and curriculum development. It will also help him/her reflects on his/her own writing development, in that he/she may become more aware of his/her writing choices. With this in mind, I would like to invite you to accept your son/daughter to participate in this study on a voluntary basis, if you decide that your son/daughter to participate, then you son/daughter will be involved in the following:

- **Focus group interview**: If you agree that your son/daughter to participate, he/she will be a member of a group of 9 students from his/her class that are selected to be interviewed. The focus group interview will take place before he/she does any writing task as part of this study and aims at finding out a general idea about his/her group understanding of the process and the purpose of revision, the choices he/she makes and the challenges they might encounter when revising their writing. This focus group will take place at time that works best for your son/daughter and his/her group as well as with their teachers' permission. In arranging these focus groups care will be taken to minimize any loss of your son/daughter's classes. Your son's/daughters' participation in this study may only involve the focus group but a smaller group of students will be needed to participate in the second stage. This group will aim to be as representative as possible of the larger group and so the researcher will construct the most representative sample possible from those willing to participate in the second stage. The second stage will involve:

- **Observation of your writing**: Your son/daughter will be observed writing his/her first draft text in three different English writing tasks. In writing these three different pieces of writing, your son/daughter writing will be traced to know about when he/she pauses and when he/she writes as well as observing any potential changes to the text that he/she might make. As a researcher I will be non-participant observer-I will only sit near your son/daughters and observe him/her writes. Your son/daughter will get a chance to talk about the changes that he/she made and why he/she might have paused at different points in the writing task in a post observation interview.

- **Written text analysis**: After your son /daughter complete his/her first and final draft, I will take them to analyze and compare between his/her first and final draft. This will help to know what revision changes he/she might make. This has nothing to do with your son/daughter's assessment or grades, it is only for the purpose of this study. Notice that this analysis will involve three first drafts and three final drafts writing.

- **A one- to-one interview:** your son/daughter will be interviewed three times after each session has been observed and the texts analyzed. He/she will see how she/he wrote the texts, such as where he/she paused the longest or when he/she wrote the greatest fluency and be invited to reflect on why. Your son/daughter will also see the texts wrote and comment on which bits were easier or more difficult to writer and where and why he/she made changes. These prompts will be used to help him/her reflect on his/her writing decision in general and particularly in revising his/her writing. Your son/daughter will be invited for interviews in a comfortable separate room. He/she will be asked to decide upon the time for interview. However, he/she might miss part of the lesson. With your son's/daughter's permission the interview will be audio recorded.

**In addition to the above information about the study, here are some other information that you might need to know:**

- All participation is entirely voluntary-in other words it is your son's or daughter's choice to decide whether to participate or not. Hence, he/she can withdraw at any time you wish without any reasons.
-  The participation is a part of the normal school day and any payment will entirely inappropriate.
- There are no potential risks of harms to taking part in this study. Your son/daughter may miss some teaching, but every care would be taken to conduct interviews at time that suit your son/daughter.
- Your son/daughter can be confident in this research because it has the support and financial packing of The Ministry of Higher Education.
- All the data your son/daughter supply will be analyzed by the researcher, made anonymous and where used in publication there will be no means by your son's/daughter's school or your son/daughter could be identified.
- I will first keep the list of the participants' names and any personal information related to them in a cupboard that is locked if the information is in a form of a hard copy, and if in a soft copy I will save it in a folder that is pass worded. All the field notes, interviews and students' texts will be encrypted using unique code and pseudonyms. I will ensure that any personal information will be securely stored and saved.
-  In addition, when reporting the findings, I will ensure that all the findings will be reported publish or presented anonymously. Students will not also be asked about personal information.
- The data will be stored till a period of about 4 years, then the data that is saved in the laptop will be deleted and the hard copies that are stored will be destroyed

In general, as a researcher, I will ensure that any data your son/daughter gives will be used confidentially and reported anonymously.

If you still have any questions, please discuss this with me via emails or you can contact my supervisor (Dr Susan Jones) via this email: susan.m.jones@exeter.ac.uk

Thank you for your interest in this project

Zahran AL Subhi (researcher)

 Za233@exeter.ac.uk

**Information Sheet (Arabic version)**

ورقة معلومات المشارك

عنوان الدراسة: تصورات وممارسات الطلاب العمانيين في مرحلةالتعليم الأساسي وما بعد الأساسي لمهارة المراجعة فيمراجعة التعبير الكتابي لمادة اللغة الأنجليزية
اعزائي الطلبة،
تم اختيار صفك للمشاركة في هذه الدراسة. تركز الدراسة على فهم تطور كتابتك و بشكل خاص على كيفية إدراكك لغرض مراجعة كتابة اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية ، وعملية المراجعة في الكتابة ، ومعايير النجاح التي قد تستخدمها في المراجعة والتحديات التي تواجهك أثناء مراجعة كتابتك. وفي الوقت نفسه ، ستركز الدراسة أيضًا على كيفية فهمك للتحديات والصعوبات التي قد تواجهك اثناء ممارستك لمهارة المراجعة  من أجل تطوير تعبيرك الكتابي- وبعبارة أخرى كيف يتم استخدامك لاستراتيجيات المراجعة عن طريق تصوراتك. مثل هذا الفهم يمكن أن يسهم في المعرفة وله تأثير على التعليم والتعلم وتطوير المناهج. وسوف يساعدك أيضًا على التفكير في تطوير كتابتك ، حيث يتوقع أن  تصبح أكثر وعيًا بتطور كتابتك. مع أخذ هذا في الاعتبار ، أود أن أدعوك للمشاركة في هذه الدراسة على أساس طوعي ، إذا قررت المشاركة ، فسوف تشارك في ما يلي:
• مقابلة جماعية مركزة: ستكون عضوًا في مجموعة مكونة من 9 طلاب من صفك يتم اختيارهم لإجراء مقابلة معهم. ستجرى المقابلة الجماعية المركزة قبل القيام بأي مهمة كتابة وتهدف إلى معرفة فكرة عامة حول فهم مجموعتك لفهم الغرض من المراجعة وعملية المراجعة ومعايير النجاح المستخدمة والتحديات التي قد تواجهها عند مراجعة الكتابة. ستتم مقابلة  هذه المجموعة المركزة خلال الوقت المتاح لك واختيار مجموعتك من الوقت بالإضافة إلى إذن المدرسين. سيتم تسجيل المجموعة التي يتم التركيز  عليها بالصوت من خلال إذن مجموعتك. لاحظ أن الباحث سيبذل قصارى جهده لمنع أو تقليل أي خسارة لفصولك الدراسية. بعد هذه المجموعة المركزة ، سيتم اختيار ثلاثة طلاب للمرحلة الثانية. إذا كنت أحد هؤلاء الطلاب الثلاثة ، فستشارك في ما يلي.

• مقابلة جماعية مركزة: ستكون عضوًا في مجموعة مكونة من 9 طلاب من صفك يتم اختيارهم لإجراء مقابلة معهم. ستجرى المقابلة الجماعية المركزة قبل القيام بأي مهمة كتابة وتهدف إلى معرفة فكرة عامة حول فهم مجموعتك لفهم الغرض من المراجعة وعملية المراجعة ومعايير النجاح المستخدمة والتحديات التي قد تواجهها عند مراجعة جاري الكتابة. ستتم هذه المجموعة المركزة خلال الوقت المتاح معك واختيار مجموعتك من الوقت بالإضافة إلى إذن المدرسين. سيتم تسجيل المجموعة التي يتم التركيز  عليها بالصوت من خلال إذن مجموعتك. لاحظ أن الباحث سيبذل قصارى جهده لمنع أو تقليل أي خسارة لفصولك الدراسية. بعد هذه المجموعة المركزة ، سيتم اختيار ثلاثة طلاب للمرحلة الثانية. إذا كنت أحد هؤلاء الطلاب الثلاثة ، فستشارك في ما يلي.

• مراقبة كتاباتك: سوف يراقب الباحث كتاباتك أثناء الكتابة في دروس اللغة الإنجليزية.في ثلاثة مواضيع مختلفة  ، وسيتم تتبع كتاباتك لتعرف متى تتوقف ومتى تكتب بالإضافة إلى مراقبة أي تغييرات محتملة قد تقوم بها. بصفتي باحثًا ، سأكون مراقبًا غير مشارك ـ سأجلس بالقرب منك فقط وأراقبك.

• تحليل النص المكتوب: بعد الانتهاء من المسودة الأولى والثانية ، سآخذها للتحليل والمقارنة بين مسودتك الأولى والثانية. سيساعد هذا في معرفة التغييرات التي قد تجريها على المراجعة.أنوه أن هذا لا علاقة له بتقييمك أو درجاتك ، إنه فقط لغرض هذه الدراسة. لاحظ أن هذا التحليل سيتضمن ثلاث مسودات أولى وثلاث مسودات كتابة ثانية.

• مقابلة شخصية: سوف يتم مقابلتك ثلاث مرات بعد كل جلسة ملاحظة وتحليل النصوص. ستستخدم استدعاءات التحفيز  لمساعدتك على التفكير في قرار الكتابة بشكل عام وخاصة في مراجعة كتاباتك. ستتم دعوتك لإجراء مقابلات في غرفة منفصلة مريحة. سيطلب منك تحديد موعد المقابلة. ومع ذلك ، قد تفوتك جزءًا من الدرس. بعد الحصول على إذن منك ، سيتم تسجيل المقابلة الصوتية.

بشكل عام ، وبصفتي باحثًا ، سوف أضمن استخدام أي بيانات تقدمها بشكل سري ويتم الإبلاغ عنها بشكل مجهول.
إذا كان لا يزال لديك أي أسئلة ، يرجى مناقشة ذلك مع معلمك.
شكرا لأهتمامكم بهذا المشروع
زهران الصبحي (باحث)

إشعار حماية البيانات ـ سيتم استخدام المعلومات التي توفرها لأغراض البحث وسيتم معالجة بياناتك الشخصية وفقًا للتشريعات الحالية لحماية البيانات وإشعار الجامعة المقدم إلى مكتب مفوض المعلومات. سيتم التعامل مع بياناتك الشخصية بسرية تامة ولن يتم الكشف عنها لأي طرف ثالث غير مصرح به.

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الفاضل ولي أمر الطالب/الطالبة:

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته

الموضوع : مشاركة ابنكم/ ابنتكم في دراسة باحث
عنوان الدراسة: تصورات وممارسات الطلاب العمانيين في مرحلةالتعليم الأساسي وما بعد الأساسي لمهارة المراجعة فيلمراجعة التعبير الكتابي لمادة اللغة الأنجليزية
نفيدكم علما بأنه قد تم اختيار فصل ابنك / ابنتك للمشاركة في هذه الدراسة التي تركز الدراسة على فهم تطور ابنك / ابنتك في الكتابة. ويركز بشكل خاص على كيفية إدراكه للغرض من مهارة مراجعة الكتابة في مادة اللغة الإنجليزية ، وعملية المراجعة الكتابية ، ومعايير النجاح التي قد يستخدمها في المراجعة والتحديات التي تواجهه / تواجهها أثناء تنقيح كتابته. ناهيك أن هذه الدراسة ستركز أيضًا على كيفية فهمه لهذه النقاط ذات الأهميه بإعلامه بممارساته التي اتخذها في المراجعة - وبعبارة أخرى كيف يتم الاستفادة من استراتيجيات المراجعة من خلال تصوراته. أن مثل هذا الفهم يمكن أن يسهم في المعرفة وله تأثير على التعليم والتعلم وتطوير المناهج. كما سيساعده على التأمل في تطوير كتابته ، حيث يتوقع أنه سيصبح أكثر وعيًا بتطوره في الكتابة. ومع وضع ذلك في الاعتبار ، أود أن أدعوك إلى قبول مشاركة أبنك/ابنتك في هذه الدراسة على أساس طوعي ، إذا كنت توافق ، فعندئذٍ سيشارك أبنك/ابنتك في ما يلي:

• مقابلة جماعية مركزة: سيكون ابنك / ابنتك عضوًا في مجموعة مكونة من 9 طلاب من صفه / صفها الذي تم اختيارهم لإجراء مقابلة معهم. ستجرى المقابلة الجماعية المركزة قبل قيامه بأي مهمة كتابية وتهدف إلى معرفة فكرة عامة عن تصورات المجموعة لفهم الغرض من المراجعة وعملية المراجعة ومعايير النجاح المستخدمة والتحديات التي تواجهها/ تواجهه عند مراجعة كتاباتهم. ستعقد هذه المجموعة المركزة خلال الفترة الزمنية المتاحة مع ابنك / ابنتك وفريقه المختار للوقت بالإضافة إلى إذن المعلمين. سيتم تسجيل المجموعة التي يتم التركيز عليها بالصوت من خلال إذن مجموعة ابنك / ابنتك. لاحظ أن الباحث سيبذل قصارى جهده لمنع أو تقليل أي خسارة لفصول ابنك / ابنتك. بعد هذه المجموعة المركزة ، سيتم اختيار ثلاثة طلاب للمرحلة الثانية. إذا كان ابنك / ابنتك أحد هؤلاء الطلاب الثلاثة ، فسوف يشارك في ما يلي.

• مراقبة كتاباته: سيتم ملاحظة ابنك / ابنتك في ثلاث مناسبات أثناء كتابته في دروس اللغة الإنجليزية. في كتابة هذه الامواضيع الكتابية الثلاثة المختلفة ، سيتم تتبع كتابات ابنك / ابنتك لمعرفة متى يتوقف مؤقتًا ومتى يكتب / تكتب بالإضافة إلى مراقبة أي تغييرات محتملة قد يقوم بها. وبصفتي باحثًا ، سأكون مراقبًا غير مشارك - سأجلس بالقرب من ابنك / ابنتك وأراقبه / اثناء الكتابة.

• تحليل النص المكتوب: بعد أن يكمل ابنك / ابنته مسودته الأولى والثانية ، سوف آخذهم لتحليل والمقارنة بين مسودته الأولى والثانية. سيساعد هذا في معرفة التغييرات التي قد عملها الطلاب من خلال عملية التنقيح.أنوه بأن هذا ليس له علاقة له بتقييم ابنك / ابنتك أو الدرجات ، بل هو فقط لغرض هذه الدراسة. لاحظ أن هذا التحليل سيتضمن ثلاث مسودات أولى وثلاث مسودات كتابة ثانية.

• مقابلة شخصية: سيتم إجراء مقابلات مع ابنك / ابنته ثلاث مرات بعد كل جلسة ملاحظة وتحليل النصوص. ستستخدم استدعاءات التحفيز لمساعدة ابنك / ابنتك على التفكير في قراره في الكتابة بشكل عام وخاصة في مراجعة كتابته. ستتم دعوة ابنك / ابنتك لإجراء مقابلات في غرفة منفصلة مريحة. سيطلب منه أن يقرر وقت المقابلة. ومع ذلك ، قد يغيب عن جزء من الدرس. بعد الحصول على إذن منك ، سيتم تسجيل المقابلة الصوتية.

وبوجه عام ، وبصفتي باحثًا ، سوف أضمن استخدام أي بيانات يقدمها ابنك / ابنتك بشكل سري ويتم الإبلاغ عنها بشكل مجهول.
إذا كان لا يزال لديك أي أسئلة ، يرجى مناقشة هذا معي عبر البريد الإلكتروني أو يمكنك الاتصال المشرف (الدكتورة سوزان جونز) عبر البريد الإلكتروني التالي:

susan.m.jones@exeter.ac.uk
شكرا لأهتمامكم بهذا المشروع
زهران الصبحي (باحث)
Za233@exeter.ac.uk

**UNIVERSITY OF EXETER**

- **CONSENT FORM (Participants)**

**Title of Project**: Understanding revision in EFL writing: Basic and Post Basic Omani students' perceptions and practices

**Name of Researcher**: Zahran Mohamed Saif AL Subhi

Please
initial box

1. I confirm that I have read the information sheet for the above project. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason and I will experience no negative consequence as a result of this decision.

3. I understand that relevant sections of the data collected during the study, may be shared in an anonymized form between any of the other researcher(s) participating in this project or individuals from the University of Exeter. I am willing for this data to be shared knowing that, other than the researcher in the school, other working with the data, will be unable to identify those participating.

4. I understand that taking part involves focus group interviews, one-one interviews, observation of my writing and analysing my written texts and that none of this analysis is related to assessment of either the student or the text.

5. I understand that my data will be used for the purposes of the study, but it can be published in anonymous form. However, I have the right to refuse permission for the publication of any personal or identifiable   information about me.

6. I agree to audio record my answers for both focus group and individual interviews.

7. I agree to take part in the above study.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Name of Participant | Date | Signature |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Name of researcher | Date | Signature |
| taking consent | | |

- **When completed: 1 copy for participant; 1 copy for researcher/project file**

- **CONSENT FORM (Parents and Guardians)**

**Title of Project**: Understanding revision in EFL writing: Basic and Post Basic Omani students' perceptions and   practices

**Name of Researcher**: Zahran Mohamed Saif AL Subhi

Please

initial box

8.  I confirm that I have read the information sheet for the above project. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.

9.  I understand that my son's/daughter's participation is voluntary and that he/she is free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason and he/she will experience no negative consequence as a result of this decision.

10. I understand that relevant sections of the data collected during the study, may be shared in an anonymized form between any of the other researcher(s) participating in this project or individuals from the University of Exeter. I am willing for this data to be shared knowing that, other than the researcher in the school, other working with the data, will be unable to identify those participating.

11. I understand that taking part involves focus group interviews, one-one interviews, observation of my son's/daughter's writing and analyzing his/her written texts and that none of this analysis is related to assessment of either the student or the text.

12. I understand that my son's/daughter's data will be used for the purposes of the study, but it will be published in an anonymous form. However, my son/daughter and I have the right to refuse permission for the publication of any personal or identifiable information about him/her.

13.  I agree to audio record my son's /daughter's answers for both focus group and individual interviews.

14. I consent that my son /daughter can take part in the above study.

_____  _____  _____
Name of Participant             Date                    Signature




_____  _____  _____
Name of the parent/guardian          Date                      Signature




_____  _____  _____
Name of researcher              Date                    Signature
taking consent



- **When completed: 1 copy for participant; 1 copy for researcher/project file**

UNIVERSITY OF
EXETER

عنوان الدراسة: تصورات وممارسات الطلاب العمانيين في مرحلةالتعليم  الأساسي وما بعد الأساسي لمهارة المراجعة في التعبير الكتابي لمادة اللغة الإنجليزية

اسم الباحث: زهران محمد سيف الصبحي

**عزيزي الطالب/عزيزتي الطالبة:**

يرجى قراءة البنود الآتية قبل التوقيع بالموافقة:

1. أؤكد أنني قد قرأت ورقة المعلومات الخاصة بالمشروع المذكور أعلاه وأنه أتيحت لي الفرصة للنظر في المعلومات وطرح الأسئلة للاستفسار بشأنها, وأنّ جميع استفساراتي قد أجيبت بشكل مرض.

2. أدرك أن مشاركتي تطوعية وأنني حرّ في الانسحاب في أي وقت دون إعطاء أي سبب ودون أن تتأثر حقوقي القانونية.

3. أتفهم أنه قد يحتاج  الباحثون الآخرون المشاركون في هذا المشروع أو أفراد من جامعة إكستر  الاطلاع على بياناتي التي تمّ جمعها, ونظرا  أن البيانات ستكون في صيغة مجهولة المصدر, فإنني لا أمانع في أن يطلع هؤلاء الأفراد على بياناتي.

4. أنا أفهم أن المشاركة تنطوي على مقابلات جماعية مركزة، ومقابلات فردية, مراقبة كتاباتي, وتحليل نصوصي المكتوبة.

5. أتّفهم أنه سيتم استخدام بياناتي لأغراض الدراسة، ولكن يمكن نشرها في صيغة  مجهولة المصدر, وأنه لديّ الحق في رفض نشرها.

6. أوافق على التسجيلات الصوتية لإجاباتي على الأسئلة المطروحة في المقابلات الجماعية والمقابلات الفردية.

7. أوافق على المشاركة في الدراسة المذكورة أعلاه.

اسم المشارك                                        التوقيع

تاريخ التوقيع

اسم الباحث الذي                                    التوقيع
أخذ الموافقة                          تاريخ التوقيع

**عند الانتهاء: نسخة واحدة للمشارك ؛ 1 نسخة للباحث / ملف المشروع**

إشعار حماية البيانات ـ سيتم استخدام المعلومات التي توفرها لأغراض البحث و معالجة بياناتك الشخصية وفقًا للتشريعات الحالية لحماية البيانات وإشعار الجامعة المقدّم إلى مكتب مفوض المعلومات. سيتم التعامل مع بياناتك الشخصية بسرية تامة ولن يتم الكشف عنها لأي طرف ثالث غير مصرّح به. سيتم نشر نتائج البحث في صيغة المجهول.

**نموذج موافقة ولي الأمر**

عنوان الدراسة: تصورات وممارسات الطلاب العمانيين في مرحلةالتعليم  الأساسي وما بعد الأساسي لمهارة المراجعة في التعبير الكتابي لمادة اللغة الإنجليزية

اسم الباحث: زهران محمد سيف الصبحي

عزيزي ولي الأمر

يرجى قراءة البنود التالية قبل التوقيع بالموافقه:

1. أؤكد أنني قد قرأت ورقة المعلومات الخاصة بالمشروع المذكور أعلاه وأنه أتيحت لي الفرصة  للنظر في المعلومات, وطرح الأسئلة للاستفسار بشأنها,  وأن جميع استفساراتي أجيبت بشكل مرض.

2. أدرك أن مشاركة ابني/ابنتي تطوعية وأنه لديه/لديها  الحرية  في الانسحاب في أي وقت, دون إعطاء أي سبب ودون أن تتأثر حقوقي القانوني.

3. أتفّهم أنه قد يحتاج  الباحثون الآخرون المشاركون في هذا المشروع أو أفراد من جامعة إكستر  الاطلاع على بيانات ابني / ابنتي التي تمّ جمعها, ونظرا لأن البيانات ستكون في صيغة مجهولة المصدر, فإنني لا أمانع في أن يطلع هؤلاء الأفراد والباحثون على   بيانات ابني/ ابنتي.

4. أنا أفهم أن المشاركة تنطوي على مقابلات جماعية مركزة، ومقابلات فردية ، مراقبة كتابات وتحليل نصوص ابني/ابنتي المكتوب.

5. أتفّهم أنه سيتم استخدام بيانات ابني/ابنتي لأغراض الدراسة، ولكن يمكن نشرها, في صيغة  مجهولة المصدر, وأنه لديه الحق في رفض نشرها.

6. أوافق على التسجيلات الصوتية لإجابات ابني/ابنتي على الأسئلة المطروحة في المقابلات الجماعية والمقابلات الفردية.

7. أوافق على مشاركة ابني/ابنتي في الدراسة المذكورة أعلاه.

اسم الطالب/الطالبة                                              التوقيع

تاريخ التوقيع

اطلعت على البنود الخاصة بابني/ابنتي ولا أمانع في مشاركته في هذه الدراسة

اسم ولي الأمر                                                     التوقيع

تاريخ التوقيع

اسم الباحث الذي                                                التوقيع

أخذ الموافقة                                                        تاريخ التوقيع

عند الانتهاء: نسخة واحدة للمشارك ؛ 1 نسخة للباحث / ملف المشروع

إشعار حماية البيانات ـ سيتم استخدام المعلومات التي توفرها لأغراض البحث ومعالجة بياناتك الشخصية وفقًا للتشريعات الحالية لحماية البيانات وإشعار الجامعة المقدم إلى مكتب مفوض المعلومات. سيتم التعامل مع بياناتك الشخصية بسرية تامة ولن يتم الكشف عنها لأي طرف ثالث غير مصرح به. سيتم نشر نتائج البحث في صيغة المجهول.

عند الانتهاء: نسخة واحدة للمشارك ؛ 1 نسخة للباحث / ملف المشروع