Managing EFL Students' Writing Errors through Cooperative Learning

The Case of Second Year LMD Students at Ouargla University

Thesis submitted in the fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
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Submitted by: **Supervisor:**   **Co-supervisor:**

Mrs. Amina OMRANI   Prof. Djamel GOUI   Dr. Touria DRID

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DEDICATIONS

I dedicate this work to the memory of my father, who helped and encouraged me through this doctoral journey but he left before my work has seen light

To the memory of my brother Fayçal who would have been so proud to see my success

To my mother for her endless love, support and encouragement

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To my nieces and nephews

To all my family in law

To all my friends

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Abstract

The purpose of the present study is to investigate the effectiveness of implementing peer feedback technique within cooperative learning instruction in minimizing EFL students' local writing errors and enhancing their writing accuracy. More precisely, the study aims to determine whether engaging EFL second year Licence students in cooperative writing sessions could help minimize their grammatical and mechanical writing errors. Furthermore, this study, also accounts for the teacher and students' attitudes towards the implementation of cooperative learning instruction and peer feedback technique in the EFL writing course. In order to achieve these goals, a mixed methods research design was adopted to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. First, a pre-experiment semi-structured questionnaire directed to written expression teachers at the English Department of Kasdi Merbah University, Ouargla (Algeria) was conducted so as to explore the practices of these teachers regarding the teaching of the writing skill and the methods of corrective feedback they adopt. Second, a quasi-experiment, which involved 30 second year Licence students who were selected conveniently, was conducted. The quasi-experiment, according to the one group pretest-post-test design, lasted for 3 weeks; it started with a pre-test followed with two cooperative learning and peer feedback training sessions that were held within one week. After that, the students were engaged in two weeks cooperative learning treatment, in which the writing skill was taught within a cooperative learning instruction and according to the process approach of writing while peer feedback technique was adopted for responding to students' errors. After the cooperative learning treatment, students had a second writing test (post-test) to determine whether or not their writing accuracy was enhanced. Finally, the third research instrument used in the present study was post-experiment semi-structured interviews with some of the students who participated in the experiment, chosen purposively, and the writing teacher who conducted it. The aim of conducting these interviews was to account for the participants' perceptions and attitudes towards the implementation of PF and CL in the EFL writing course and to have deep insights on how this classroom instruction has benefited them in the pre-writing, revising and editing stages. As for the results, first, a gap in the teaching/learning context of the writing skill at the English Department of KMU, Ouargla was detected. The inefficiency of some of the teaching methods and classroom instructions adopted by some of the written expression teachers have participated considerably in students' lack of motivation towards leaning writing and their low level of writing accuracy. Second, after the implementation of peer feedback technique within a cooperative learning instruction in the EFL written expression courses, a significant decrease in students' local writing errors was recorded and a remarkable enhancement of their writing accuracy was detected. Finally, the analysis of the interview findings revealed the teacher and students' positive attitudes towards the implementation of cooperative learning instruction and peer feedback technique in the writing sessions. Moreover, it yielded other positive effects of cooperative learning on students' cognitive and social skills such as the enhancement of their critical thinking, communication and team work skills.

Keywords: Cooperative Learning, EFL writing, local errors, Peer Feedback, writing accuracy.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CA: Contrastive Analysis

CF: Corrective Feedback

CL: Cooperative Learning

CLT: Communicative Language Teaching

CW: Cooperative Writing

EA: Errors Analysis

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ESL: English as a Second Language

FL: Foreign Language

FLA: Foreign Language Acquisition

FLT: Foreign Language Teaching

GI: Group Investigation

GTM: Grammar Translation Method

KMU: Kasdi Merbah University

LA: Language Acquisition

LT: Learning Together

L1: First Language

L2: Second Language

M: Mean

NNS: Non Native Speaker

NS: Native Speaker

P-Value: Probability, margin of error ranging from 0.00 to 1.00

Q: Question

SD: Standard Deviation

SL: Second Language

SLT: Second Language Teaching

SPSS: Statistical Package for Social Sciences

STAD: Student Teams-Achievement Divisions

S/V: Subject/Verb

TL: Target Language

TGT: Team-Game-Tournament

WCF: Written Corrective Feedback

ZPD: Zone of Proximal Development

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Introduction

1. Background of the Study

The acquisition of the four language skills is the heart of FL courses since these skills are the corner stone of language learning and teaching. Among the four language acquisition skills, namely: listening, speaking, reading and writing, the latter is considered a difficult, complex and challenging skill to master. This productive skill, through which students' mastery of language is assessed as it requires the reinvestment of all the acquired knowledge about language, is one of the most demanding tasks students face when they learn a foreign language (Usó-Juan, Martínez-Flor & Palmer-Silveira, 2006; Graham, Harris & Mason, 2005; Bailey, 2011). Thus, EFL students are expected to develop a high level of writing ability to cope with the demands of academic community and professional status. However, though its importance and position as a "central element of language" (Suleiman, 2000, p 155), EFL students still find it difficult to master the writing skill as claimed by Stephen Baily (2011) "students who are not native speakers of English often find the written demands of their courses very challenging" (p. xiii). This is due mainly to the complex nature of the writing process and to the requirements an academic piece of writing should meet, such as the vocabulary of academic English, the conventions of style, critical thinking skill, and the accurate and effective use of language (ibid, 2011). Hence, students, when trying to cope with all these requirements, will be subject to errors making.

Generally, writing errors are one of the major factors that affect the quality of EFL students' writing and make essays' correction a challenging task for EFL writing teachers. Consequently, the analysis of students' errors and the methods of their corrections sprang out. The literature shows that there were different methods of corrective feedback, which developed along with the different approaches of language teaching. Accordingly, writing errors correction history is strongly related to the way writing skill was viewed within the different language teaching approaches. On that count, to trace back the development of the concept of error correction, it is inevitable to link it to the development of writing skill within the different language learning approaches.

Till the late 1960's, writing skill was neglected in FL language teaching and this was due mainly to the environmentalist view of language acquisition. Environmentalists, whose theory of language acquisition and FL learning was rooted in structural linguistics and behaviourist psychology, considered language as speech and viewed the process of language learning as "a mechanical process based on stimulus - response – reinforcement chain" (Usó-

Juan, Martínez-Flor & Palmer-Silveira, 2006 , p. 384); thus, writing was classified in a secondary position to speech because it was considered as only mere orthographic representation of this latter and a tool for reinforcing students' grammatical competencies and vocabulary knowledge so as to achieve oral correctness. That being the case, the teaching of writing was based on imitations of specific model forms of sentences and their manipulation through related activities such as sentences combination with the goal of reinforcing the formal correctness of students' writing and preventing errors that result from first language interference (kroll, 2001). Obviously, within this approach to language teaching, where writing was seen as only a tool for practicing language and assuring correctness, accuracy, and formality, no significance of students' errors was discussed. By contrast, students' errors were considered as a result of failure in the teaching/learning process and the appropriate remedy to that failure was repetitions and imitations of different language structures. So, there was a need for a teaching approach that goes beyond the study of speech and appropriate forms of language and covers other important research areas in the teaching of writing and errors treatment.

It was at the end of 1960's that the focus on the form of the written text shifted towards the process of text writing and its development. This shift was mainly due to Chomsky's theory of language acquisition (1957-1965) in which he clarified that children are "innately predisposed to acquire the language" (as cited in Usó-Juan, Martínez-Flor& Palmer-Silveira, 2006, p.385) and the contribution of psycholinguistics (Slobin, 1970; Brown, 1973) and cognitive psychology (Schank and Abelson, 1977), which highlighted the role of the learner in the learning process and emphasized the mental processes that take place during text composition. In the light of this view, students were considered as active writers who generate ideas, write drafts of their texts, revise them and edit their writings. Also, the first consideration of students' writing errors might be within this approach with Flower and Hayes' (1981) cognitive recursive writing model, which divided the writing process into three stages, namely and respectively: the planning stage, the translating stage, and the reviewing stage. This latter is the final stage in the writing process through which students can revise their texts and correct the potential errors. Thus, contrary to the previous approach, where errors were seen as a failure in the teaching/learning process, errors were considered in the innatist approach as *natural*, and to be corrected in the revising stage (Keren 2000). Although this approach shed light on the cognitive processes during writing and the ways of generating ideas and composing texts, yet it did not extend to the external circumstances that may affect the writing process and to the communicative and sociocultural aspects of the written texts.

Hence, after the appearance of the communicative and interactionist approaches to language teaching at the 1970's and the development of discourse analysis field, the focus on the cognitive and mental process of writing has shifted to the sociocultural context of the writing act. While the previous approaches did not approximately extend beyond the sentence level, the interactionist approach emphasized the use of language in context and its functions within the different social contexts. Gradually, these notions have grown with Halliday's functional approach to language (1978) which emphasized the importance of the communicative purpose of the text over its formal features. Therefore, the interest in grammatical errors and oral correctness has shifted towards matters of appropriateness and relevance. Moreover, in her research, Conner (1996) described language and writing as cultural phenomena and claimed that each language has its unique rhetorical conventions and therefore the linguistic and rhetorical conventions of L1 may interfere with writing in the second language. For this reason, the concept of errors, within this view of language and writing, has extended to include the difference between cultures and notions of interference between L1 and L2 or FL, and how they can result in error making.

In summary, the notions of writing errors and error correction appeared in the early reflections on language learning and developed with the evolution of the different approaches of language teaching and learning; however, within these approaches writing errors and methods of reflecting on them were not tackled independently. Furthermore, these approaches did not elucidate the significance of students' errors in FL learning, the methods of their analysis or the ways of their correction. Hence, it was with Corder's contribution (1967), with his famous article "The Significance of Learners' Errors", that Errors Analysis appeared as an independent field of applied linguistics. In his research on errors, Corder identified the significance of errors analysis to the teachers, researchers, and students. He also introduced the distinction between the non-systematic errors, which occur in one's native language, termed by Corder as "mistakes" and systematic ones, which occur in the SL/FL, termed as "errors" (Ellis, 1994). Ultimately, after the establishment of errors analysis as an independent field of applied linguistics, many approaches that tackled errors, errors classifications, and errors correction methods sprang out (Ferris 2002; Tsang 2004). Accordingly, this enriched the body of literature on the subject matter for the last four decades (Lee, 2007).

Through literature, three methods of error corrective feedback are frequently distinguished, namely: teacher feedback, self-feedback and peer-feedback. The first method implies teachers' written or direct immediate feedback on students' errors without leaving any

responsibility to the learner (Debreli & Onuk, 2016). Although teacher feedback is a direct and quick method that remedies students' errors immediately, however, this traditional method for responding to students' writing errors was widely criticized in EFL and ESL research (Robb et al, 1986; Semke, 1984; Paulus, 1999; Sultana, 2009; Derbeli & Onuk, 2016) for its failure in encouraging learner-independence and its demoralizing effects on students' motivation and attitudes towards learning writing (Robb et al, 1986). Therefore, with the shift in EFL teaching from GTM, and Audiolingualism towards a communicative teaching, the idea of the teacher being the only feedback provider was no more accepted in EFL classes and new methods of corrective feedback, that are learner centred, appeared.

One of the learner centred feedback methods that was introduced as an alternative to teacher feedback was self-feedback, also termed as self-assessment and self-response. Within this method, students are responsible for monitoring their own performances and correcting their errors themselves with some guidance from the teacher (Ferris, 2002 as cited in Debreli & Onuk, 2016 p.77). In fact, this method of providing feedback is adequate for enhancing students' autonomy and making them responsible for their own learning (Rief, 1990 as cited in Sultana, 2009), however, it is considered as a time consuming process and demotivating for students who fail to self-correct while their mates do. Thus, it was necessary to find a method of responding to students' writing error that encourages interaction and cooperation among students in a positive and friendly atmosphere, where the student does not feel threatened by his/her classmates, but, on the contrary supported by them.

Hence, in reaction to the shortcomings of self-assessment, peer feedback was introduced as a method for responding to students' errors in which students are supposed to help one another when experiencing a difficulty while the teacher is not expected to interfere in the error correction process, yet only to monitor and guide the students and offer help when necessary (Freeman, 2000). This method has been defended by many theories of language teaching such as humanism and CLT (Sultana, 2009) because it was regarded as a method that encourages collaboration among students and involves them in the learning process as well developing their critical thinking and analysis skills (Chaudron, 1984; Keh, 1990 as cited in Paulus, 1999). However, though peer feedback is backed by many linguists and language practitioners (Chaudron, 1984; Keh, 1990; Sharle & Szabó, 2000; Paulus, 1999; Sultana, 2009; Dheram, 1995), peer response process "is extremely complex, requiring careful training and structuring in order for it to be successful" (Paulus, 1999, p. 267). Thus, peer feedback, if not performed appropriately, it risks being a "disastrous unproductive experience" in the FL

classroom (ibid, 1999, p. 268). This unsatisfactory outcome may be the result of several factors such as the different cultural and social backgrounds and personalities of EFL students which makes it difficult for the teacher to make them work all together in groups and rises the risk of potential conflicts and disagreements .Additionally, some students would resist this type of feedback because they are familiarized with teacher feedback and they feel embarrassed to receive feedback from a peer because they do not want him/her to know about their weaknesses (Harmer, 2004;Paulus, 1999;Sultana, 2009). On the other hand, some students would rely completely on their mates' correction and will not make any effort; ultimately, this negative collaboration will have a negative impact on the learning outcomes. Therefore, though peer feedback is "largely welcomed for its cognitive, social and effective value" (Sultana, 2009, p.12), it can be unproductive and inappropriate method for responding to students' errors unless structured effectively in an absolute cooperative atmosphere.

Therefore, based on these considerations the present researcher suggests the implementation of cooperative learning instruction in the EFL writing course in order to create a positive cooperative learning atmosphere governed by positive interdependence between group members which is assumed to have positive effects on students' writing performance. Moreover, given the shortcomings of the different feedback methods and their inefficiency in managing EFL students' writing errors while maintaining their motivation towards learning this crucial skill, this research suggests the integration of peer feedback technique within a cooperative learning instruction in the EFL writing course for an effective minimization of students' writing errors.

2. Statement of the Problem

Writing correct and accurate texts has always been a challenging task for language learners in general and EFL students in particular. Hence students of EFL, when fulfilling their writing courses' requirements, are usually subject to errors making which consequently affects the quality of their writing (Baily, 2006; Ferris, 2011). Algerian students of EFL are no exception as many studies conducted in the Algerian university context revealed that various types of writing errors, particularly grammatical ones, manifest in EFL students' writing (Hemaidia, 2016; Ghouali & Benmoussat, 2019; Ouskourt, 2008). Therefore, given students' linguistic deficiencies and frequent writing errors' making, errors correction becomes "the most exhausting and time consuming aspect of teachers' work" (Ferris, 2002; Mantello, 1997 as cited in Lee, 2005, p. 1). Similarly, Baily (2006) asserted that "what may be individually minor

problems with prepositions, word endings, spelling or articles can result in essays that are barely comprehensible to the best-motivated marker" (p. i). Moreover, with the diverse methods of written errors' treatment, "teachers come to class with no predetermined decisions as to how to correct students' errors" (Ganji, 2009, p.120). Consequently, most of those writing teachers will opt for the traditional direct way of error correction i.e. teacher correction since other methods of correction require preparation and effective planning. Another factor that may lead written expression teachers to opt for teacher feedback method and consequently deprive their students from experiencing and benefiting from the qualities of effective group work, is that most of teachers regard writing as a "solitary activity" that must be performed individually (Wigglesworth & Stroch, 2012, p.364). Furthermore, even when teachers adopt cooperative learning instruction they usually apply it only to oral classes, though many studies have proved that "collaborative writing is far from unusual" (Wigglesworth & Stroch, 2012, p.364), and it has fruitful effects in enhancing the quality of students' writing and changing students' negative attitudes towards the writing course. Also, despite the fact that cooperative learning, which is a classroom instruction that involves students working in small carefully structured groups to accomplish a common goal (Johnson & Johnson, 1998), stands on solid theoretical and pedagogical basis, "there are only few studies which have documented the advantages of collaboration in written work, and in dealing with written feedback" (Wigglesworth & Storch 2012, p. 364). Accordingly, the research on cooperative corrective feedback is scant and the existing literature consists only of small-scale studies (ibid, 2012). Hence following these considerations in addition to the observed lacunas in the traditional approach of teaching writing and managing students' errors in Kasdi Merbah University, Ouargla (Algeria), this study is conducted to enrich the existing body of literature on the effects of CL instruction on EFL students' writing performance as it investigates the effectiveness of implementing CL instruction in the writing course in minimizing EFL students' local writing errors and enhancing their writing accuracy.

3. Rationale of the Study

"Cooperative learning has been well documented in the educational research as a successful pedagogy to improve students' academic achievement" (Hossain & Tarmizi, 2013, p.473). However, this learning approach has not been used in FL didactics until recently and even when introduced in EFL classes, cooperative learning was limited to oral classes, since writing is usually regarded as an activity that must be carried out individually. Accordingly, Storch (2005) claimed that "although pair and group work are commonly used in language

classrooms, very few studies have investigated the nature of such collaboration when students produce a jointly written text" (p.153). In fact, compared with the research that examined the benefits of cooperative learning for the spoken discourse, research investigating its effectiveness for the written discourse in FL, especially cooperative writing is scarce (Storch, 2005; Storch & Wigglesworth, 2007 as cited in Shehadeh, 20011). Nevertheless, even the few studies that endeavoured cooperative learning and its effects on enhancing writing skills (e.g., Wigglesworth & Storch, 2012; Shehadeh, 2011; Storch, 2005; Fernandez Dobao,2012) were mainly held in ESL contexts rather than EFL ones. Additionally, most of these studies focused on the process of writing (brainstorming, drafting, scaffolding) or on the students'/teachers' attitudes towards cooperative writing, yet only few (Wigglesworth & Storch 2012) reflected on corrective feedback and minimizing students' writing errors.

Moreover, except for Azizinezihad, Hashemi & Darvishi (2012), almost all the studies referred to cooperative learning as: group/ pair work, or collaborative work, although not all students sitting round a table form a group and "not all pairs work as effectively as other pairs" (Wigglesworth & Storch, 2012, p.367). Therefore, for a course to be described *cooperative,* it should meet five conditions which are: positive interdependence, individual accountability, face to face promotive interaction, appropriate use of collaborative skills, and group processing (Johnson, Johnson & Smith, 1998). Apparently, only few previous studies (Azizinezihad, Hashemi & Darvishi, 2012) considered the five pillars of effective and successful cooperation when dealing with cooperation and its effects on students' writing and errors making.

Following these facts, it appears that there is a gap in the previous research concerning the implementation of cooperative learning instruction in the writing course and how it could be used as a tool of reinforcing EFL students' writing competency and effectively responding to their writing errors. Therefore, there is a need for an exhaustive empirical study that further investigates the effects of integrating CL instruction in the EFL writing course on students' writing accuracy and accounts for EFL students' attitudes towards this classroom instruction. Therefore, the present research is an attempt to fill the existing gap in the research literature through empirically investigating the effectiveness of involving EFL students in cooperative writing sessions in enhancing their writing accuracy and minimizing their local writing errors. Finally, this study is attempted to contribute to the body of research on CL in the EFL writing classroom and the findings of the present study will pave the way for further studies in this area of research.

4. Research Objectives

The main objective of the present study is to investigate the effectiveness of using cooperative learning instruction in the EFL university classroom in minimizing EFL students' writing errors and enhancing their overall writing accuracy. Particularly, this study attempts to achieve the following research objectives:

1. To explore the context of teaching/learning of EFL writing skill in the English Department of Kasdi Merbah University, Ouargla (Algeria).

2. To investigate the effectiveness of implementing PF technique within CL instruction in the EFL writing course in minimizing EFL students' local writing errors.

3. To investigate the effects of the integration of PF technique within CL instruction in the EFL writing course on EFL students' writing accuracy.

4. To account for EFL students' attitudes towards the implementation of CL instruction in the written expression sessions.

5. Research Questions

With regard to these objectives, the following research question was formulated:

Does the implementation of peer feedback technique within cooperative learning instruction (Learning Together) in the writing course minimize EFL students' local writing errors?

Thus, in order to answer the main research question, the following sub-questions will be investigated:

1. What are the teaching practices of EFL teachers at the English Department of Kasdi Merbah University, Ouargla (Algeria) concerning the teaching of the writing skill and the methods of responding to students' writing errors?

2. Does the use of peer feedback technique within cooperative learning instruction (Learning Together) in the EFL writing course minimize EFL students' grammatical errors?

3. Does the use of peer feedback technique within cooperative learning instruction (Learning Together) in the EFL writing course minimize EFL students' mechanical errors?

4. Does the implementation of peer feedback within cooperative learning instruction (Learning together) in the EFL writing course enhance EFL students writing accuracy?

5. What are the teacher's and students' attitudes towards the integration of peer feedback within cooperative learning instruction (Learning Together) in the writing course?

6. Research Hypothesis

In light of the study's research questions, the researcher hypothesizes that the implementation of peer feedback technique within cooperative learning instruction (Learning Together) will minimize EFL students' local writing errors and will enhance their writing accuracy.

7. Research Methods

In order to test the suggested hypothesis and answer the research questions of the present study, the researcher used a mixed methods research design to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. Hence, given the different nature of data sets required for this research, the use of different research tools is required, thus three data collection instruments were designed namely, a pre-experiment semi-structured questionnaire, one group pretest-post-test quasi-experiment and a post-experiment semi structured interview.

7.1 The Questionnaire

The pre-experiment semi-structured questionnaire, which was directed to EFL written expression teachers at the English Department of Kasdi Merbah University, Ouargla (Algeria), aimed at exploring the teaching/learning context of EFL writing skill in the department and accounted for the challenges that written expression teachers face when teaching this skill to EFL university students.

7.2 The Quasi-experiment

The one-group pretest-post-test quasi-experiment, which involved 30 second year Licence students at the English Department of Kasdi Merbah University, Ouargla (Algeria), was conducted so as to investigate whether or not there was a significant improvement in students' writing accuracy after the implementation of CL instruction.

7.3 The Interviews

In order to answer the last research question, which accounted for the teacher and students' attitudes towards the implementation of CL in the writing sessions, a semi-structured interview was conducted with both the teacher and some of the students involved in the study's experiment.

8. Structure of the Thesis

This thesis is presented in five chapters divided into two parts. The first comprises two chapters, which are devoted for the review of literature regarding the various issues related to the topic of the study with the aim of delimiting the theoretical framework of the research, and thereby arriving at practical implications. As for the practical part, it consists of three chapters that include the methodology of the study, implementation of the experiment, presentation and discussion of research findings and eventually pedagogical implications and suggestions for future research.

The first chapter of this thesis was devoted for constructing a conceptual and theoretical framework for the study; it comprised three sections. The first section tackled the nature of EFL writing and its difficulties; it also traced back the different approaches of teaching the writing skill in the literature. As for the second section, it shed light on the establishment of EA as an independent field of applied linguistics and highlighted its importance in investigating and treating EFL students' errors. Furthermore, this section accounted for the different types of EFL students' writing errors, reviewed their taxonomies and classifications and discussed their main sources. Finally, the first chapter's last section was mainly concerned with corrective feedback as it highlighted the importance of providing feedback for EFL students and presented the different methods of providing feedback with a main focus on peer feedback method, being the one used in this research.

The second chapter, similarly to the first one, continued with the review of literature relevant to the research topic and was concerned mainly with cooperative learning instruction. This chapter started with defining cooperative learning and explaining its principles and its different structures. Moreover, it presented different strategies for facilitating the implementation of cooperative learning in the EFL classroom and highlighted its documented benefits. Furthermore, a discussion was raised concerning the utility of CL instruction in the university classroom and the obstacles that accompany its implementation in the EFL university

context. Finally, the chapter attempted to clearly delineate the concept of cooperative writing and accounted for the various activities that could be used in a cooperative writing session. As well as discussing its incorporation in the EFL writing courses and its documented benefits, which were yielded in the previous studies.

The third chapter of the thesis accounted for the design and the methods used in the present research. It provided information about the participants, the procedures of data collection, the data analysis processes and discussed the statistical tests used in the analysis. On the other hand, the fourth chapter was devoted for the presentation and analysis of the data yielded from the questionnaire, the quasi-experiment and the interviews. The results were then evaluated and discussed and conclusions were drawn.

The last chapter of the thesis aimed at providing EFL written expression teachers with pedagogical implications that could contribute to the enhancement of EFL students' writing competency and the facilitation of writing skill teaching, particularly providing corrective feedback to students. Moreover, this chapter included the limitation of the study and implications for future research.

9. Definitions of Terms

Some concepts are essential for the present study and have to be clarified and delineated in advance. Hence, brief operational definitions of these concepts are introduced in this section.

Cooperative Learning

The term cooperative learning refers to a classroom instruction that involves students working in small "carefully structured" groups to achieve a common goal with the aim of maximizing their own and each other's learning. In addition to that, in order to identify a teaching instruction as cooperative, it should meet the five pillars of cooperative leaning, namely: positive interdependence, individual accountability, face-to-face promotive interaction, interpersonal and small group skills and group processing (Johnson, Johnson & Smith, 1991, p. 12).

Local Errors

"A local error … is a linguistic error that makes a sentence appear ungrammatical or unidiomatic but, nevertheless, causes a native speaker of English little or no difficulty in understanding the intended meaning of a sentence, given its contextual framework" (Hendrickson, 1976, p.3).

Peer Feedback

The term peer feedback, within this thesis, refers to

> The use of learners as sources of information and interactants for each other in such a way that learners assume roles and responsibilities normally taken on by a formally trained teacher, tutor, or editor in commenting on and critiquing each other's drafts in both written and oral formats in the process of writing.
>
> (Lui & Hansen, 2002, p. 1)

Learning Together

It is a cooperative learning structure that implies gathering students in small groups and getting them work cooperatively on assignments. The most important characteristics of this CL model are task interdependence (while working to achieve shared goal), sharing opinions and materials, and group rewarding. It is also characterized by the diversity of group members in terms of gender, ethnicity, race and achievement (Johnson, Johnson & Smith, 1991).

CHAPTER ONE:

EFL Writing, EFL Writing Errors and Corrective Feedback

Introduction

In EFL teaching context, the aim of any teaching activity whether designing a course, introducing a practice, planning or giving a lecture is to develop the students' communicative competence through focusing on one or more than one skill of the four language acquisition skills, namely: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Among the four skills, writing is deemed the most challenging to EFL students as many errors occur in their academic writing (Kroll, 1990; Tribble, 1996; Raimes, 1983; Hyland, 2003). Therefore, many applied linguists analysed students' writing errors with the aim of understanding these errors and their underlying causes so that they can develop the appropriate techniques for responding to them. Nevertheless, with the diverse methods of writing errors' correction, adopting an adequate method of corrective feedback has become a challenging task for EFL writing teachers. Thus, the first chapter of this thesis aims at considering the theoretical concepts underlining the teaching of the writing skill in EFL context, EFL students' writing errors and corrective feedback. Hence, the present chapter is divided into three sections. The first section provides an overview of the teaching of the writing skill, EFL writing and its major challenges, in addition to the different approaches to teaching writing. The second section sheds light on Errors Analysis and its importance in FLA. It also provides the classifications of writing errors according to different scholars with focus on the one used in this thesis. As for the last section, it deals mainly with errors' management as it accounts for the different methods of responding to students' writing. It focuses on peer feedback, being the method adopted in this research; thus, it represents its benefits and shortcomings and suggests practical procedures to facilitate its implementation in the EFL writing classroom.

1. EFL Writing

1.1 Introduction

In language teaching, writing occupies an influential position in all the different stages of life starting from early education until university level and beyond. It entitles students to develop creativity and critical thinking, build confidence, and communicate their ideas in different situations with close, distant, known or unknown reader(s). Such communication became indispensable in nowadays modern world whether it has the traditional paper-and-pencil writing form or the advanced electronic mail one, ranging from the informal writing like social networks to the formal writing of academic studies. Thus, the acquisition of writing skill is considered an important priority as it contributes to students' academic success and may be of great help in professional career. Therefore, the writing skill has to be sharpened and enhanced in any language course for EFL learners (Olshtain, 2001; Lee, 2017).

1.2 The Nature of Writing Skill

In spite of its importance, it is needless to say that among the four language acquisition skills, writing is the most challenging. Celce-Murcia (2001) described the ability of expressing one's ideas in writing while maintaining coherence and accuracy as a "major achievement" that many native speakers cannot achieve. Accordingly, Raimes (2002) declared that teaching language fosters anxiety and that anxiety increases when writing is involved. The difficulty in mastering this productive skill does not lie only in generating and organizing ideas, yet also in transforming these ideas into a readable text (Richards & Renandya, 2002) since writing is not "simply speech written down on paper"; therefore, "learning to write is not a natural extension of learning to speak a language" (Raimes, 1983, p.4). This difficulty is due also to the complex nature of writing which needs the involvement of "highly complex" skills such as planning and organizing as well as lower level skills like spelling, punctuation and word choice (Raimes, 2002). Furthermore, Widdowson (1983) believes that the majority of people seem to have a difficulty in setting their thoughts on a paper, while Raimes (2002) goes beyond that and asserts that "many teachers themselves do not feel entirely comfortable with writing in English, even if it is their native language" (p.306).

1.3 The Challenges of EFL Writing

The difficulty in coping with the high demands of the writing task increases when English is the student's second or foreign language since learning writing for a non-native

speaker student (NNS) poses other additional challenges. According to Hinkel (2004) most of NNS students, even the highly trained ones, face problems and shortfalls when composing their texts, especially if they are required to produce an academic piece of writing. Hinkel (2002) clarifies that in spite of the time, effort and the resources devoted for the teaching of EFL students; the quality of the texts they produce differs considerably from those produced by native speakers of similar academic standing. Johns (1997) has already confirmed that NNS students after being exposed to EFL writing for many years were still unable to recognize and effectively use the conventions of academic English writing and produced vague, confusing, and rhetorically unstructured texts. The difficulty and complexity of mastering the writing skill according to Kroll (1990) is due mainly to two compound reasons: the first is the difficulties inherent to learning a foreign language, and the second is the first language literacy skills that might transfer to or distract from acquiring the second language skills. Raimes (1983) considered that the difficulty of EFL writing results from the demands required for producing a piece of writing, which she summarised as follows:
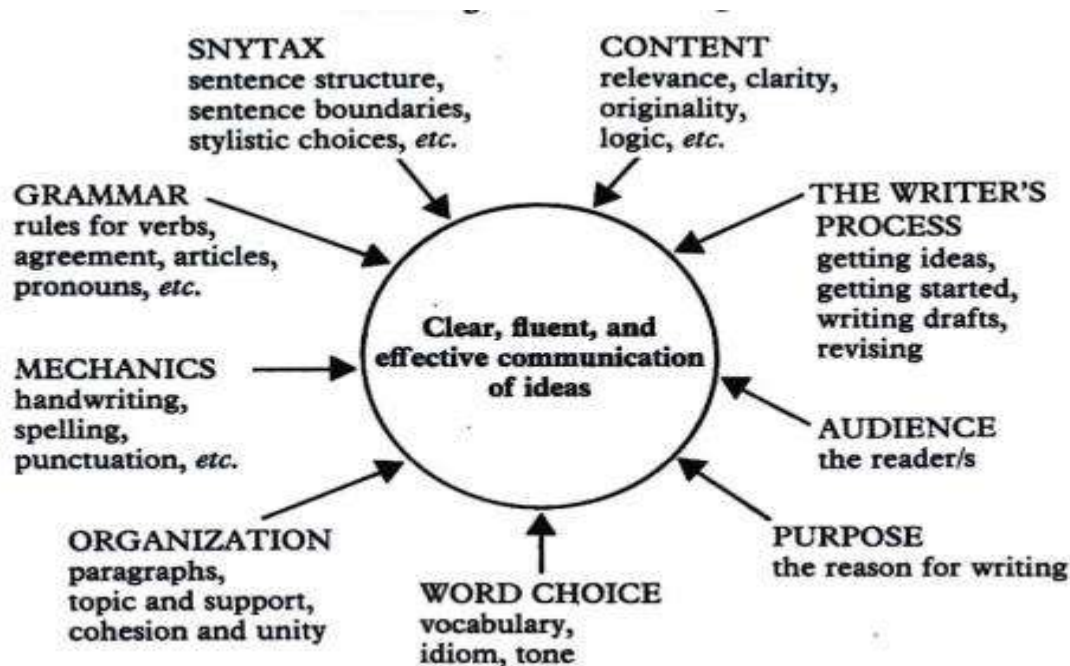
Figure 1. The requirements of producing a piece of writing (Raimes, 1983, p. 6)

In fact, even the nature of EFL writing differs from that of L1 writing. According to Leki and Carson (1997), non-native writers experience writing differently from native ones. Furthermore, Kroll (2001) explains that NNS students may not approach writing tasks nor attend to feedback in the same way their NS counterparts do. She also insists that the act of writing in one's first language is totally different from the act of writing in one's second

language. Moreover, the teaching context of EFL differs from that of L1 teaching, in terms of students' language proficiency and literacy skills in addition to the other social, academic and pedagogical features (Ferris & Hedgcock, 2005; Hinkel, 2004).

Kroll (2001) summarizes the complexity of teaching writing to EFL students as follows:

> Producing a successful written text is a complex task which requires simultaneous control over a number of language systems as well as an ability to factor in considerations of the ways the discourse must be shaped for a particular audience and a particular purpose. Given that language use is both culturally and socially determined, it is no less the case that written texts are shaped by factors that differ not only from one culture to another but also within a single culture. Teaching ESL/EFL students to become successful writers, able to weigh and factor in all of these issues, is an especially complex task (p. 230)

More practically, EFL students' difficulty to produce an academic piece of writing might be related to different factors that are summarized as follows:

1.3.1 Difficulties in Grammar

Grammar, according to Harmer (2001), is "the description of the ways in which words can change their forms and can be combined into sentences in that language" (p. 12). The ways in which words are appropriately used by the language user are called grammar rules, which are fundamental elements in any language, particularly in producing written texts (Hartwell, 1985). Hence, in order to write appropriately, the writer should have a thorough knowledge of parts of sentence, the different structures of the language and its linguistic devices. Accordingly, Brooks and Penn (1970) stated that "for one thing in writing, we must understand the structure of the language, what the parts of speech do, how the words are related to one another, what the individual words mean, the rules of grammar and punctuation" (p. 20). With all these requirements that students have to cope with when writing, EFL students usually find writing a daunting task and probably students' major writing difficulty in relation to grammar is the poor understanding of grammar rules which will result in obstacles when producing proper piece of writing (Bahri & Sugeng, 2010). While Seely (1998) considered that the grammatical points that may affect the students' writing ability are on the level of: 1) sentence: verbs, objects, adverbials, 2) coordinating conjunctions and, 3) word order. In summary, grammar knowledge can have a great impact on the quality of students' writing and its correctness. Therefore, EFL

students are expected to develop their comprehension of grammar rules and employ them effectively when producing written texts.

1.3.2 Difficulties in Vocabulary

The use of appropriate vocabulary can be one of the main difficulties students face when writing. EFL students usually have a problem of poor vocabulary which may lead to failure in recalling important words, and will consequently make them use inappropriate vocabulary or vague one. Seely (1998) listed the main elements in vocabulary problems: 1) active vocabulary: which refers to the words used by students in their writing, 2) passive vocabulary: which concerns words that students comprehend however not necessarily use in their writing, 3) vocabulary that students never deal with, 4) vocabulary that is seen to be passive, and finally 5) vocabulary words, which students have seen before, but their meaning is not clear. Therefore, since vocabulary is a key element that can lead to success or failure of the writing process, students are encouraged to learn new vocabulary and to recognize new words within their context of occurrence, while trying to identify their meanings.

1.3.3 Difficulties in Spelling and Punctuation

Both spelling and punctuation errors are common feature of EFL students' writing. Learning spelling normally takes place during the early stages of education (middle, secondary schools); however, EFL university students still struggle to avoid spelling errors. Harmer (2001) asserted that the difficulty behind spelling words correctly is due to the ambiguity of correspondence between the sound of a word and the way it is spelt and to the "fact that not all varieties of English spell the same words in the same way" (p. 256). Bancha (2013) indicated that the writing difficulties that are related to spelling generally include the misspelling of words which is due mainly to the irregularities of English spelling system such as the similarities of vowels, homophones, etc. Bancha (2013) also added that spelling errors and/or mistakes may result from students' lack of concentration, their tiredness or carelessness about their writing correctness.

On the other hand, punctuation, which possesses a crucial position in both reading and writing according to Seely (1998), often poses challenges on EFL learners. According to Caroll and Wilson (1993), this difficulty is due mainly to the fact that punctuation is complex and has no exact rules as it depends on the writer's style to determine the meaning. Thus, students need

to be prudent when using punctuation in order to transmit their ideas to the reader in a correct way and avoid ambiguity.

1.3.4 First Language Interference

Interference, also termed negative transfer, is the result of the negative influence of student's mother tongue on his/her writing in the foreign language (Lado, 1964). In this vein, Jackson (1987) asserted that interference happens "when an item or structure in the second language manifests some degree of difference from, and some degree of similarity with the equivalent item or structure in the learner's first language" (p. 101). In fact, Interference can cause serious writing problems to students; hence, EFL students should avoid thinking in their first language during writing in the FL. Accordingly, Weigle (2002) stated that "in order to write good English, I know that I had to be myself actually meant not my Chinese self. It meant that I had to create an English self and be that self" (p. 37).

1.3.5 Difficulties in Organization and Clarity

Though organization is one of the main requirements in academic writing, the majority of EFL students still struggle to organize their ideas and thoughts in a piece of writing. Starkey (2004) argued that the main cause of organization problems is that EFL students face great deal of difficulty when they start writing their texts; hence, they just start writing whatever comes to their minds and consequently the texts they produce will not be organized appropriately. Thus, he insisted that "it is important to recognize that in order to do it well; you must commit yourself to a process" (p. 1).

On the other hand, clarity is one other important factor an academic piece of writing should acquire. However, university teachers usually complain that EFL students often produce ambiguous written texts which lack organization and clarity. Starkey (2004) explains that since the writer's objective is to convey meaning, that objective cannot be achieved if the reader does not understand the first few sentences or paragraphs and will consequently stop reading as the intended meaning is not comprehensible even if he/she reads the whole passage. Thus, Starkey (2004) stated that "learning how to be a clear and accurate writer will help make your essay readable and will guarantee that those who read it understand exactly what you mean to say" (p. 11).

Thus, considering the complex nature of writing and the challenges that writers face when transforming their ideas into readable texts, in addition to the high stakes of FL writing,

teachers of composition often find planning and teaching a course in writing an exhausting task, especially with the so many conflicting theories and approaches on the teaching of writing skill. While Raimes (2002) compares planning a writing course to 'walking a minefield' and Richards & Renandya (2002) describes it as a 'daunting task', Kroll (2001) considers that the knowledge of different theories and approaches of teaching writing might help teachers in fulfilling the requirements of teaching a writing course successfully. She claims that EFL/ESL writing teachers should have a "solid scholarly training to develop their own approach to the teaching of writing" (p.221); this training will also help writing teachers to choose methodologies effectively and select materials and classroom activities which are based on principled decisions that they can explain and discuss with others.

Ferris & Hedgcock (2005) accordingly confirmed this claim as they consider that formal theories with the insights of empirical research can and ought to play a significant role in teachers' work such as instructional planning, practice and assessment. They also highlighted the great practical utility of theory in overcoming the challenges teachers face in their day-to-day teaching since without background knowledge of theoretical principals, teachers will not have a vision of important tools for instructional lesson planning and classroom decision making. Kroll (2001) also emphasized the importance of background knowledge in facilitating teachers' work; she considered that teachers can better understand recent attitudes and practices in the teaching of writing if they have a historical background of the theories and approaches that tackled this subject in the past. Of course this will raise teachers' awareness concerning the development of the field and how theories and approaches evolved to how they are now.

The "historical accounts" of EFL theory yield a thorough understanding of how EFL theory and practice have developed and how the field of EFL writing gained its status as an independent discipline (Ferris & Hedgcock, 2005), in addition to the awareness of the roots of prominent ESL/EFL writing approaches (such as product, process and genre approaches) and the way they sprang out. Hence, the development of the EFL writing theory will be traced back in order to have a clearer and well-founded view on EFL writing and so as to better understand the ongoing development of the approaches of teaching writing.

1.4 The History of the Development of EFL Writing Theory

It was until 1980's that EFL writing first appeared as a distinctive area of scholarship (Hyland, 2003); yet, its origins date back to the early advances of L1 rhetoric and composition

research, applied linguistics, and TESLO [1](Ferris & Hedgcock, 2005). Hence, it is undisputable that the development of EFL composition has been influenced by, and nearly parallel to, the evolving of L1 composition (Silva, 1990).

Before the 1960's, the principles of L1 composition instruction were inspired by an educational tendency that focused on analysing and responding in writing to literary texts. Native speaker students of high school and university levels within this tradition were first taught principles of rhetoric and organization in a form of "rules" for writing, and then they were provided with literary texts (novels, plays, short stories, essays and poetry), which they were required to read, discuss, analyse and interpret in a written composition or "themes". Consequently, with this extensive focus on the understanding and interpreting of literary texts, only little instructional time was devoted to planning, drafting, revising and editing students' texts. This approach is usually referred to as "the traditional paradigm" (Ferris & Hedgcock, 2005; Kroll, 2001).

1.4.1 Controlled Composition

In the 1960's, the teaching of EFL writing was dominated by controlled composition, also called guided composition, which can be traced back to Fries' oral approach in the mid-1940's. EFL writing, within the audio-lingual method of second language teaching, had a secondary position as a tool of reinforcement of oral habits; and this was due to this method's basic notions inspired by structural linguistics, which regarded language as speech, and of behaviourist psychology, which considered learning as a habit formation (Silva, 1990).Rivers (1968) described the function of writing skill according to this theory as "the handmaid of the other skills... which must not take precedence as a major skill to be developed"; also, he added that writing was "considered as a service activity rather than an end in itself" (Rivers, 1968 as cited in Silva, 1990, p.13). Pincas (1962), a pioneer of this method, explained how scientific habit-forming teaching methods are ideal ones by saying that "the use of language is the manipulation of fixed patterns; ...these patterns are learned by imitation; and that not only until they have been learned can originality occur in the manipulation of patterns or in the choice of variables within the patterns" (Pincas, 1962 as cited in Silva, 1990, p.12).

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[1] TESLO: Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages. It is an annual international convention organized by TESLO association in which Scholars and educators discuss different topics related to the teaching of EFL.

Accordingly, within this view of language learning, EFL writing teachers focused on formal accuracy and correct use of language by using fixed controlled patterns and systematic language habit formation in order to avoid errors that may result from L1 interference and consolidate second or foreign language behaviour (ibid, 1990). Therefore, any writing practice such as the expression of one's ideas, the organization of texts, and style conventions was limited to the imitation and manipulation of previously learned units of language. Kroll (2001) explained the position of EFL writing in the controlled composition model by saying "whatever writing took place was meant to serve primarily as reinforcement of language rules (and not, for example, for purposes such as addressing a topic or communicating with an audience)"; moreover, "the writing task was tightly controlled in order to reduce the possibility for error" (p. 220).

In short, the context of EFL writing teaching/learning in the controlled composition era can be summarized as follows:

The student (the writer) was simply an imitator and manipulator of previously learned patterns while the teacher (reader) had the role of proof reader, who only seeks correctness of linguistic features and formal accuracy, and rarely pays attention to the ideas expressed by the student. The text was considered as a set of sentence patterns and vocabulary elements and a tool for language practice, ultimately, no attention was neither given to the process nor to the audience or the purpose of writing. Thus, this method was found rigid by scholars like Erazmus (1960) and Brière (1966), who rejected it and called for free composition method that, is writer-centred (as cited in Silva, 1990).

1.4.2 Current-traditional Rhetoric

With the rising voices against the controlled- composition method and the EFL students' need for a writing method that enables them to produce extended texts, the idea that this method is insufficient became a fact. As a result, in the mid-1960's, scholars called for a writing instruction that bridges the gap between controlled-composition and free writing. Hence, EFL current-traditional rhetoric was introduced as writing approach that combined the basic notions of current-traditional paradigm of L1 composition instruction with the theory of contrastive rhetoric pioneered by Kaplan (1967) and Silva (2001). Accordingly, in order to construct a deep understanding of EFL current-traditional rhetoric, an overview of both current-traditional paradigm of L1 instruction and contrastive rhetoric should be represented.

The current-traditional paradigm of L1 instruction was characterized by its focus on the issued product rather than the process of composing (also referred to as product approach, which will be later discussed in this chapter); in addition to the analysis of discourse and dividing it into: words, sentences and paragraphs; and the classification of discourse into different types such as description, narration, exposition...etc. This instruction also gave great importance to the correct use of syntax, spelling and punctuation along with the appropriate usage of style (economy, clarity, emphasis) (Richard Young, 1978 as cited in Silva, 2001).

As for contrastive rhetoric, Kaplan (1967) defined rhetoric as "the method of organizing syntactic units into larger patterns" (Kaplan, 1967 as cited in Silva, 2001, p.13). He assumed that EFL writers violate the expectations of the native reader(s) via their inappropriate use of rhetoric and sequence of thought because of L1 interference. Hence, since L1 interference was thought to cause problems that exceed the syntactic level to alter the rhetorical one, EFL writers had to be provided with "form within which they may operate (Kaplan, 1966, as cited in Silva, 2001, p. 14).

Thus, when the two theories (current-traditional paradigm of L1 instruction and contrastive rhetoric) are related and the way they influenced EFL current-traditional rhetoric is analysed, the following two central elements of EFL current-traditional rhetoric are deduced:

- The main concern of this approach was "the logical construction and arrangement of discourse forms" (Silva, 2001, p 14). First, the focus was on the paragraph; its elements, and the different ways of its development. Then, the focus shifted to essays development and their organizational patterns (ibid, 2001).
- The pedagogical focus of this approach was to direct students' attention on form via classroom activities that make students choose the appropriate sentence, among a variety of sentences, that fits in given paragraph. Other more complex type of activities was asking students to analyse a model, and then imitate it to produce an original piece of writing (ibid, 2001).

To conclude, within this instruction model, the context of EFL writing was as follows:

The student (writer) was supposed to produce paragraphs and essays via imitating already existing forms to express his/her own or provided content while the readers were considered as naïf and easily disoriented by any new language structure. The text was considered as a set of

highly "complex discourse structures" and writing was perceived as aligning and fitting sentences into "prescribed patterns"; as for the learning of writing, it required basically the skill of "identifying, internalizing, and executing these patterns" (Silva, 2001, p. 14). Yet, when compared to the previous approaches, although it did extend to the paragraph and essay level; however, it could not exceed the *form* circle.

Despite the attempts of the controlled composition and the current-traditional rhetoric to understand the composing rules and facilitate the writing task for EFL students, the instruction models they suggested did not reflect a comprehensive understanding of the writing skill or of the demands the writer have to deal with when composing a text, such as content, purpose, the writing processes, the audience and like. Hence other approaches, which had a deep understanding of one or more than one aspect of the demands of the writing act, sprang out.

1.5 The Approaches of Teaching EFL Writing

According to Raimes (1991), there are three main writing approaches, namely: the product approach, which is concerned mainly with the form; the process approach, which focuses on the processes that take place during the different stages of writing; and the genre approach, which gives importance to the reader of the text. Hence, the present section thoroughly reviews these writing approaches according to the chronological order of their appearance. The aim behind reviewing the writing approaches is to trace back the development of EFL writing teaching within these different approaches and to understand how these writing approaches perceived errors and how they dealt with them. Also, it aims at investigating the relationship between these writing approaches and the different feedback methods.

1.5.1 The product Approach

Among the prominent approaches to teaching writing, the product approach is deemed as the most traditional. The origins of this approach can be traced back to the audio-lingual method of ESL teaching, where writing, which was considered a secondary skill, was a tool to reinforce speech, which was a primary skill, and to ensure students' mastery of grammatical and syntactical forms (Ferris & Hedgcock, 2005; Hyland, 2003; Raimes, 1983; Silva, 1990). The origins and also the basics of this approach are clearly noticeable in the controlled composition and current-traditional rhetoric approaches aforementioned. The product approach was called so because it focused mainly on the final 'product' (texts produced by the students)

and emphasized its correctness (Richards, 1990). According to Hyland (2003), the orientation towards 'product' resulted from the marriage of structural linguistics and behaviourist learning theories of SLT. Thus, within this approach, writing was considered as product "constructed from the writer's command of grammatical and lexical knowledge" while the writing development was perceived as the imitation and/or manipulation of already learned structures (Hyland, 2003, p. 3).Young (1978) described it as an approach that focuses on the composed product and ignores the composing process, it also emphasizes the correct usage of syntax, punctuation... etc and accentuates style, economy, clarity...etc (as cited in Silva, 2001). This view was also shared by Badger and white (2000) who declared that "product-based approaches see writing as mainly concerned with knowledge about the structure of language" (p.154). Hence, since this approach emphasizes language structure as a tool for teaching writing, Hyland (2003) suggested a four-stage process to achieve this goal.   The   first   stage   is *familiarization;* it aims at teaching students' useful grammar and vocabulary to be reinvested later through the analysis of a text. Pincas (1982) describes the familiarization stage as "preparing students for actual writing by demonstrating one or other of the skills that are to be practised" (p.78), which can be achieved via a variety of activities such as providing students with contrasting examples then asking them to demonstrate the differences existing between them in writing, another activity that can be practised at this stage is reordering jumbled sentences to get a coherent text (ibid, 1982).

The second stage is *controlled writing,* it is the stage where students are provided with fixed patterns and are asked to manipulate them. In order to do so, students are usually given a substitution table as shown in the table below (Hyland, 2003).

There are The	Y	types kinds classes categories	of X	: A, B, and C. . These are A, B, and C. are A, B, and C.
X	Consists of Can be divided into classes	Y	categories classes kinds types	. These are A, B, and C. : A, B, and C.
A, B, and C are	kinds types categories	of X.		

Figure 2. Example of substitution table (Hyland, 2003, p. 4)

The third stage is *guided writing,* in which students go beyond the sentence level, since they are asked to imitate model texts. According to Pinca (1982), guided writing stage is a bridge between the second stage (controlled writing) and the last one (free writing). The types of exercises tackled in this stage are: completion exercises like filling the gaps or matching words with their corresponding pictures in addition to re-production, comprehension and paraphrasing exercises. While the fourth and last stage is *free writing,* in which students reinvest the learned patterns and writing techniques to write essays, letters ... etc.

In light of these four stages, it is concluded that the main concern for this approach to teaching writing was the text (the final product), which was considered as a collection of correct grammatical structures while writing was regarded as "combinations of lexical and syntactic forms"; thus, a good writer is the one who demonstrates his/her competence at managing these forms and shows his/her knowledge of grammatical rules used to build texts (Hyland, 2003, p.4).

However, although the product approach is traditional, many of its teaching techniques are still used in writing classes today, especially for beginner students who have a lower level of language proficiency. These techniques are very beneficial in terms of vocabulary acquisition, accuracy and scaffolding development (Hyland, 2003). Particularly, the product approach seems to have many advantages in enhancing students' mastery of appropriate grammatical structures and enriching their vocabulary with words and their synonyms and/or alternatives (Raimes, 1991; Hyland, 2003; Zamel, 1983). However, this approach was widely criticised by many researchers. According to Hyland (2003), students' dependence on short-sentences forms learned in the classroom may prevent them from developing their writing beyond those patterns and it can also mislead them when they want to write in situations different from the ones they have already dealt with in their writing course. Moreover, writing is a complex process, way to be restricted in imitation and manipulation of grammatical structures; the same applies to the writing instruction which cannot be limited to training in clarity and accuracy as writing is usually a response to a certain communicative situation. While Silver & Leki (2004) criticised this approach for neglecting the reader and the purpose of writing and Badger & White (2000) reproached it for not paying attention to the writing process skills such as planning and outlining texts. Similarly, Silva (1990) argued that product approaches did not promote ideas or the ways of their expression; furthermore, they hindered creative thinking and writing. In another line of argument, Hairston (1982) argued that this writing approach discourages students from practicing writing as it does not really show them

how writing is done in real life situations; he explained that students, in order to write appropriate texts, must have a purpose for writing (more exactly, an authentic situation where writing a text is needed) and not only a collection of grammatical forms and rules. Moreover, Ferris & Hedgcock (2005) proceeded with the rising voices against this approach as they claimed that "in product-oriented writing classrooms, little if any effort was dedicated to the strategies and other cognitive operations involved in putting pen to paper (or fingers to keyboard) and drafting a coherent, meaningful piece of connected discourse" (p. 5).

As for errors, feedback, and error correction, within product approaches to teaching writing, errors were undesired features of the composed texts because they were regarded as results of failure in the learning process, which refers to the misapplication of grammatical rules or the inappropriate manipulation of syntactic patterns. Hence, within this approach, the focus was only on the surface level errors that have to do with the text's accuracy (grammar, syntax and mechanics) whereas issues like fluency and originality were neglected and this provides an idea on how feedback was performed within this approach (Raimes, 1991; Hayland, 2003; Badger &White, 2000). Since the product approach, as already mentioned, focuses on the final product, thus, feedback on written errors can only be provided after the students finish writing their texts; therefore, students would not really benefit from their teachers' remarks as the majority of students pay more attention to their marks and ignore the feedback of the teacher. Thus, if provided during the writing process, feedback would have been more effective (Paulus, 1999). As for errors correction, just like feedback, it was done as final stage and it was concerned mainly with accuracy, and precisely with grammatical errors. Yet, the correction of final drafts' grammatical errors was refused by many scholars (Semke, 1984; Truscott, 1996; Kepner, 1991; Sheppard, 1992) as it was believed to have a demoralizing impact on students and no effect on enhancing their writing performance (Silva, 1990; Raimes, 1983; Hyland, 2003; Kroll, 2001; Scott, 1996; Ferris & Hedgcock, 2005; Badger & White, 2000). Consequently, there was a need for a writing approach that takes into consideration the purpose of writing, the writing process and the writer as a generator of ideas and creator of the text.

1.5.2 The Process Approach

During the mid-1960s the focus on product has shifted towards the process of writing (Kroll, 2001; Silva, 1990; Leki, 1991), this was due mainly to the dissatisfaction with the product approach and the call of scholars and educators to a writing instruction that focuses on how writing is produced. However, it was with Janet's Emig contribution (1971) via her "think

aloud" procedure that the attention was given to the process of writing and it was approved that students can produce texts without necessarily following the models that were usually used in the product approach. Also, the traditionally promulgated perception that writing is produced in a straightforward linear sequence has been challenged by Emig, who, through her observations, suggested that students can produce texts in a non-linear manner (as cited in kroll, 2001). Accordingly, Taylor (1981) shared Emig's point of view declaring that "writing is not the straightforward plan-outline-write process that many believe it to be" (as cited in Silva, 1990, p. 15). Those notions shared by many scholars were the roots of this approach to teaching writing, which were articulated gradually with the development of the approach. Zamel (1983), described the writing process as a "non-linear, exploratory and generative process whereby writers discover and reformulate their ideas as they attempt to approximate meaning" (p. 165). Thus, this view of writing, shared by many scholars, as a recursive non-linear process gives the writers the opportunity to move forward and backward at any moment they feel they need to modify the plan or reformulate or adapt what was already written at the previous stages (Hyland, 2003). Hence, this makes the writing journey a process of discovery of new ideas and new text structures to express those ideas (Raimes, 1983). Likewise, Scott (1996) explained that the process approach focuses on the experience of writing rather than knowledge about writing, which will engage the teacher and students in a collaborative process towards creation of meaning. Hyland (2003) described the process approach as an approach that accentuates the writer as "an independent producer of texts" (p.10).

Concerning the different processes that take place during the writing process, Badger & White (2000) claimed that this approach enables students to comprehend the importance of different skills involved in the writing process as well as all the cognitive processes that take place when they write; it also recognizes the importance of what students bring to the classroom to the development of the writing ability. As for the main parts that formulate the process approach, probably the most original model of the writing processes is the planning-writing-reviewing framework established by Flower and Hayes (1981) (as cited in Hyland, 2003). Those parts, that compose the process approach, gradually developed with the development of the approach and its research. Thus, it can be noticed that scholars did not agree on one model to be applied in all the cases; yet, the models varied according to the perception of the cognitive processes that take place during texts' composing. Silva (1990), divided them into planning, drafting, revising and editing; whereas, White and Arndt (1991) saw that two steps take place in the writing process, which are pre-writing and actual writing activities. While, Seow (2002)

described the writing process as a 'private activity' that comprises four main stages, namely: planning, drafting, revising and editing, which are 'neither sequential nor orderly' as shown in figure 3 below.
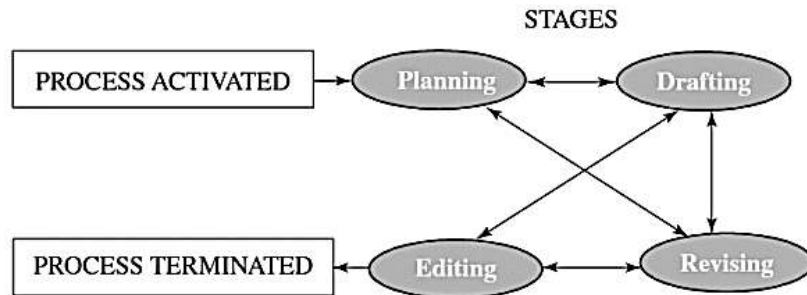
Figure 3. Stages of writing according to process approach (Seow, 2002, p. 315)

McDonough and Shaw (2003) suggested a five-step version, consisting of: pre-writing, drafting, redrafting, editing, and pre-final activities. Whereas, Hyland (2003) suggested a more profound and complex model for writing instruction that comprises ten recursive steps, which are: selection, prewriting, composing, response to draft, revising, response to revisions, proofreading and editing, evaluation, publishing and follow up tasks. These steps are depicted in figure 4 bellow. He also explained that writers can jump forward and backward among these activities whenever they need so.
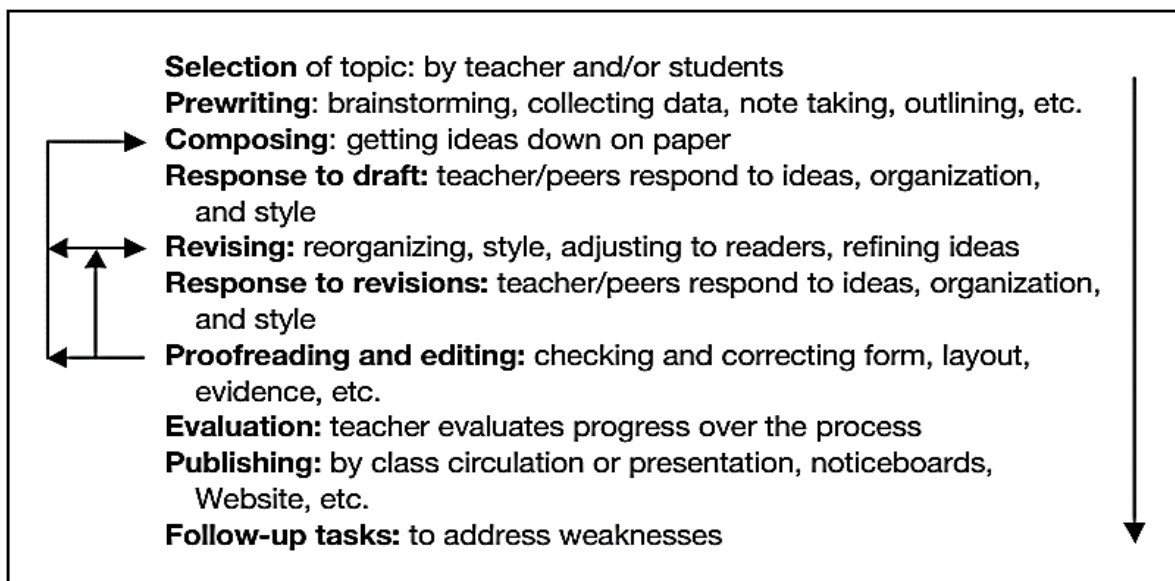
Figure 4.A process approach model for writing instruction (Hyland, 2003, p. 11)

In light of all the reviewed models of writing process, the researcher, in order not to be lost within all these divisions, opted for Tribbles' (1996) shortened list that includes the main elements of the process approach (pre-writing, composing, revising, and editing). Thus, the researcher used Tribbles' division depicted in figure 5 below because it is comprehensive as it includes all the important stages discussed by different scholars and manageable at the same time. Hence, the application of this instruction model may be convenient and pragmatic for all writing teachers.

PRE-WRITING $\longrightarrow$ **COMPOSING** $\longrightarrow$ **REVISING** $\longrightarrow$ **EDITING**

Figure 5. Important stages of the writing process (Tribble, 1996, p.39)

Since this model of writing instruction is selected to be used in the present research, its elements need to be explained thoroughly.

1.5.2.1 Pre-writing stage

Pre-writing stage is the first step in the writing process where teachers should help the students to select a topic, generate their ideas and information and plan their texts (Silva, 1990). Raimes (1983) named this stage 'brainstorming', which according to her, mean writing down words, phrases and/or ideas just like they occur in our minds and as soon as they do, without paying any attention to appropriateness or accuracy. This stage can be done out loud in the form of classroom or group discussion, or as an individual activity on paper; the produced piece of writing, within this stage, is not corrected or graded yet any response to it should address only the ideas expressed in this first piece of writing. Elbow (1973) considered the pre-writing stage as an important stage for students to discover themselves and their ideas through a variety of classroom activities that can be performed at this stage such as brainstorming, word clustering and free writing. On the other hand, White and Arndt (1991) defined brainstorming as a quick thinking that aims to collect ideas about a topic or problem. They stressed the importance that it should be performed freely and without any structure or correction; also in order to be effective, it has to be carried out in a collaborative learning atmosphere. And since the ideas are generated in a non-structured manner, White and Arndt (1991) suggest an ordering strategy to facilitate students' work. This strategy requires giving a name for each idea or a category in the form of headings or notes.

1.5.2.2 Composing/Drafting

Once the students select a topic, collect ideas and/or data, and outline their texts, the pre-writing stage is then completed and they have to start writing a first draft their texts. The composing stage, also referred to as drafting stage, is the second step of the writing process where students write their text concentrating on the fluency of writing and visualising the readers rather than its correctness or neatness. In most of the EFL cases the addressed reader is generally the teacher; however, encouraging the students to visualise larger audience such as peers, classmates, pen-friends or even family members can dictate a certain style in their writing (Seow, 2002). Gebhard (2000) suggested that students, during the composing stage, ought to continue writing their texts from the beginning till the end with no stop so as not to interrupt the flow of ideas and expressions. In short, this stage enables students to write their first drafts with great amount of freedom as the focus is on the actual writing and all the grammatical, syntactic and discursive errors are to be responded to in the following stages.

1.5.2.3 Revising

At this stage, writers reorganize their texts via adding interesting ideas and/or deleting unnecessary ones, relocating some sentences or paragraphs forward or backwards, and enhancing their writing style whereas responding to grammatical and spelling errors is left to the editing stage (Williams, 2003; Zamel, 1983, Seow, 2002). As for Hyland (2003), he divided this stage into two steps: the first step was revision, where students are required to reorganize the ideas, improve the style, adjust the text to the readers, and refine their ideas, while the second step was response to revision, in which teacher, peers and/or classmates respond to the ideas, organization, and the style. Seow (2002) summarises the purpose of the revising stage as "it is done to improve global content and organization of ideas so that the writer's intent is made clearer to the reader" (p. 317). Hedge (1988) accentuated that good writers focus on the appropriateness of the content first and keep the other details such as punctuation, grammatical and spelling mistakes to the final stage of the writing process.

1.5.2.4 Editing

Editing is the final step in the writing process; it is the stage where students write the final drafts of their texts before submitting them to the teacher. The students edit their own or their peer's work in terms of "grammar, spelling, punctuation, diction, sentence structure and accuracy of supportive textual material such as quotations, examples and the like" (Seow, 2002,

p. 318). He explains that formal editing is left till the end, in order not to interrupt the flow of ideas during the drafting and the revising stages. Silva (1990) defined editing as "attending to vocabulary, sentence structure, grammar and mechanics" (p.15) while Hyland (2003) named it proofreading and, according to him, it deals mainly with form checking and correcting and verifying the layout of the text.

Although these four stages (pre-writing, composing, revising and editing) are the most common and agreed upon strategies; yet, some scholars have added other stages after editing. For instance, Seow (2002) added two other stages (evaluating and post-writing) after the editing stage. In the evaluating stage, the teacher decides the type of scoring he/she will opt for (analytical or holistic) and after evaluating the students' texts he/she can provide a numerical score or grade to each student. Students may evaluate one another's texts if they are properly trained to do so, and this will make them feel more responsible when producing their own texts. Whereas, the post-writing stage includes any classroom activity that the teacher and the students perform with the produced texts such as publishing, sharing texts with classmates, read aloud activities, displaying texts in notice board ... etc. This stage may motivate students to write better texts and push students who do not like writing to produce texts and share them with their mates. On the other hand, Hyland (2003) suggested three post-editing stages: evaluation, publishing and follow-up tasks. In the evaluation stage, the teacher is supposed to evaluate the progress of students over the process, then in publishing stage, students are invited to share their texts in the form of class circulation or presentation, notice boards, or via publishing them in websites ... etc. While the follow-up tasks target the weaknesses.

The process approach, though it was subject to criticism such as excluding the context, the audience, the purpose of writing and the cultural norms as well as ignoring the text types and their influence on the writing process (Hyland, 2003); this approach has been praised and adopted by a significant number of writing teachers and it had a great impact on ESL writing research and teaching (Hyland, 2003; Flower and Hays, 1980). Through reviewing literature, a clear link was noticed between the process approach to teaching writing, peer feedback and cooperative learning. This approach, according to Silva (1990) encourages students to work in a positive collaborative workshop environment through their composing process, since the writing stages suggested in this approach can all be performed in a cooperative classroom environment, especially the prewriting and revising stages.

As for its relation with feedback in general and peer feedback particularly, Hyland (2003) claimed that this approach devotes major interest to responding to students' texts during the composing process which helps students to move through the writing stages and enhances their writing as well; hence, providing feedback is a crucial factor in this approach and can be done in many ways such as "teacher-student conferences, peer response, audio taped feedback and reformulation" (ibid, 2003, p. 12). Raimes (1983) argued that teachers who adopt the process approach in their courses support their students in two ways: first, via providing them with sufficient time to think and generate ideas; and second, by responding to their writing with effective feedback each time they write or modify their drafts. Accordingly, Seow (2002) declared that the failure in many teaching programs is because they leave feedback till after the students finish writing and submit their work, which will result in letting all the responsibility for the teacher to edit, correct and evaluate; however, the process approach gives the students several opportunities to receive feedback either from their teacher or their peers which will make them produce enhanced drafts each time and consequently approximate learning chances. Seow (2002) also emphasized the importance of peer feedback within this approach, saying that in the process approach to teaching writing "peer responding can be effectively carried out by having students respond to each other's texts in small groups or in pairs" (p. 317). Therefore, the process approach is the most convenient to be used when implementing a peer feedback technique to respond to students' writing. Finally, Lee (2017) argued:

> It must be emphasized that peer feedback can hardly be effective if it is conducted in product-oriented writing classrooms, where only terminal drafts are collected. The reason is that when students give feedback to their peers' single drafts knowing that revision is not required, they are not going to take their peers' comments seriously. Thus, peer feedback and process writing should go hand in hand (p. 96)

1.5.3 The Genre Approach

The genre approach appeared in EFL research as a corrective reaction against the student-centred discovery-oriented approaches which focused mainly on the principles of thinking and the composing process and neglected the ways through which meaning is socially negotiated (Hyland, 2004). The roots of this approach, since it considers writing as "an attempt to communicate with readers" (Hyland, 2003, p. 18), can be traced back to the communicative language teaching approach that appeared in the 1970's, which considered the purpose of writing and the audience as central parts of the writing act (Raimes, 1983; Hyland 2007).

Unlike the other approaches' learning philosophies, which focus on imitation or experiment and exploration, this approach is "underpinned by the belief that learning should be based on explicit awareness of language"; hence, students can improve their writing ability via analysing "expert" texts (Hyland, 2003, p. 22). Moreover, language within the genre approach prospective is seen as a major attribute of human behaviour which enables persons to construct meaning and social context while other approaches consider it as only a medium to transmit ideas.

The major concern of this approach is the purpose of writing and how this purpose is achieved within specific language genres which are "socially recognized ways of using language for particular purposes" (ibid, 2003, p.18). Hyland (2004), depending on extensive analysis of writing, explained how vocabulary, grammar and cohesion patterns form texts and make them different from each other, and it is via these patterns that we can distinguish between different types of texts. The text is also structured into stages according to those patterns, where each stage emphasizes the purpose of the genre; therefore, all texts can be recognized through the functions they serve and through how the component elements of the text are constructed to manifest these functions. Furthermore, texts are not there only to express their writers' inner meaning; however, both the produced texts and the processes are affected by communities, in which they are produced and their cultures. Hence, Hyland (2004) argued that "knowledge of text characteristics and of their social power should form part of any writing curriculum" (p. 51).

Hence, the writing instruction within this approach, according to Hyland (2003), starts with identifying the purposes of writing (communicating), then deciding the stages of a text that can express those purposes. Accordingly, the teacher can teach his/her students the structures of various genres in order to facilitate for them the distinction between different genres and help his/her students write them effectively. Whereas, Dudley-Evans (1994) argued that the writing instruction within this approach undergoes three stages. First, the students are exposed to a model of a particular genre; second, students are asked to produce structures that reflect that genre; at the end, following the second stage, they are asked to produce short texts.

Hyland (2007) attributes seven characteristics that best describe the genre approach; firstly, it is explicit, since it clarifies the targeted content to be learned at the very beginning of the learning process in order to facilitate its acquisition. Secondly, it is systematic, as it concentrates on both content and context within a coherent framework. Thirdly, since the

courses' objectives and content within this approach are designed to fit the students' needs, thus, this approach is needs-based. Moreover, it is supportive, because the teacher is the one responsible for scaffolding his/her students' learning. After that, this approach was described as empowering and critical for enabling students to access "the patterns and possibilities of variation in valued texts" and providing students with tools to comprehend and criticise those valued texts. Finally, the genre approach is consciousness-raising as it raises the teachers' awareness of texts and, consequently, provide them with experience to advise students about their writing.

Even though the genre approach to teaching writing has shed light on important research areas that were marginalized in previous research, such as the audience and context; yet, this approach was not beyond criticism. The extensive focus of this approach on genres may have made it underestimate the skills needed to compose a text and consider students as passive learners who are supposed to understand the patterns of different types of texts and produce texts building on that knowledge; consequently, this could limit students' creativity and restrict them or maybe deprive them from expressing their ideas freely. Hence, this approach if not introduced appropriately in the classroom can be a stereotyped and boring learning process that will probably demotivate students from learning the writing skill (Badgers & White, 2000; Kay & Dudley-Evans, 1998; Hyland, 2003).

1.6 Conclusion

With regard to the explored literature, it can be concluded that since its emergence, EFL theory supported teachers' efforts and attempts to comprehend FL writing and once a theory sprang out, it was immediately translated into practical methodologies and introduced to teachers so as to implement in their classrooms (Hyland, 2003). Thus, when listing historically evolving theories, movements or instructional traditions it is inconvenient to think that each emerging theory or movement will refute and gradually replace the previous one; yet, they have to be considered as "overlapping perspectives" that enable the understanding of the "complex reality of writing" (ibid, 2003, p.2). Furthermore, as there are different teachers and various teaching styles and consequently learners and learning styles; hence, an integration of more than one approach is the solution to cope with the diverse demands of the writing task (silva, 1990).

2. EFL Writing Errors

2.1 Introduction

It is out of question that students, when learning a foreign language, are subject to errors making; however, the reasons behind the repetition of certain errors even after teachers' corrections and clarifications remained unknown. Therefore, teachers of foreign languages, researchers and applied linguists started reflecting on the errors that learners commit when constructing a new system of language as they are the key to a better understanding of language acquisition and second/foreign language learning. As a result of this growing interest in students' errors, their sources and the ways of their management, Errors Analysis emerged as a field of applied linguistics and more attention was given to students' errors and feedback methods.

2.2 The Emergence of Errors Analysis

Before the 1960's, the dominant theory in LA and FLT was the environmentalist theory which was rooted in structural linguistics and behaviourist psychology. According to the behaviourist psychology the learning of a second or foreign language is behaviouristic, i.e. learning a second/foreign language is a question of learning a set of new language habits. Hence, errors were perceived as the result of the influence of first language habits in the foreign language and the study of learners' errors was limited to contrastively analysing the first and foreign language so as to predict and explain the sources of EFL students' errors (Corder, 1981). Consequently, Contrastive Analysis was the "favoured paradigm for studying FL/SL learning and organizing its teaching" (James, 1998, p. 4), with a central interest of analysing and understanding NNS students' errors via comparing the rules of L1 and L2. In order to achieve this understanding, the comparable feature of both the mother tongue and the target language were first described, and then compared in order to deduce the *mismatches* that can result in interference and accordingly to errors (ibid, 1998). This case, where EFL students wrongly transfer L1 system into L2, was named in contrastive analysis as negative transfer or interference. However, when it comes to the similarities that may exist between the two languages, if they result in positive constructive effect on the L2 learning, transfer, in this case, was considered positive (Wilkins, 1972).

In spite of the fact that CA had shed light on the negative results of relying on one's native tongue when writing in a foreign language and how it affects the quality of writing and

results in error making; yet, it could not spot all the causes of errors since there are other reasons of students errors that are beyond L1 interference and that has to do with language learning and aspects of English structure which are universally difficult for students coming from different language backgrounds (ibid,1972). Accordingly, in the late 1960's, the shortcomings of the CA started to be voiced, primarily because it depended on an outdated model of language description, which is Structuralism, and a "discredited" language theory, which is Behaviourism. Furthermore, it was highly criticized for its predictions about FL learners which were either uninformative for EFL teachers or inaccurate (James, 1998). Thus, Errors Analysis emerged, in reaction to the shortcomings of CA, as a branch of applied linguistics which took into consideration learners' cognition and the processes of language acquisition and learning in analysing learners' errors. This view to learners' errors was inspired by Chomsky's nativist theory, which considered language learning a complex cognitive process rather than a mere habit formation. Along with this view, Corder (1981) highlighted that the learning strategies and techniques used by NNS students to learn a foreign language are similar to those used by NS in their L1 acquisition. Hence, within this view to language learning, Errors Analysis understanding of errors and their causes was deeper and more comprehensive, which resulted in developing more effective ways of responding to students' errors.

2.3 Towards Defining Errors Analysis

Since its emergence, the field of errors analysis has known a great interest among scholars of applied linguistics and FL acquisition; hence, various definitions of the concept can be found. Considering that errors are "morphological, syntactic and lexical forms that deviate from rules of the target language, violating the expectations of literate adult native speakers" (Ferris, 2011, p. 3), Errors Analysis (EA) is the field of applied linguistics that is concerned with the analysis of those errors, which are made by SL and FL students, with the aim of understanding them and finding ways to eradicate them as well as achieving the comprehension of how a foreign language is learned via the analysis of FL students' errors (Corder, 1981). Accordingly, for Richards et al. (1985) "error analysis is the study of errors made by the second and foreign language learners" (p.96). Similarly, Brown (1980) defined it as "the process to observe, analyse, and classify the deviations of the rules of the second language and then to reveal the systems operated by learner" (p.166). Moreover, Crystal (1999) considered errors analysis as a "technique for identifying, classifying and systematically interpreting the unacceptable forms produced by someone learning a foreign language, using any of the principles and procedures provided by linguistics" (p.112). According to James (2001), EA

refers to "the study of linguistic ignorance, the investigation of what people do not know and how they attempt to cope with their ignorance" (p.62). While, Keshavarz (1997, 2006) asserted that the field of EA can be divided into two sub-branches which are:

a. **Theoretical Errors Analysis**: it is the branch of EA that tackles problems and topics related to language learning and explore the processes that take place during that learning; it also analyses the reasons of errors making among FL students.

b. **Applied Errors Analysis**: It is the branch responsible for designing materials, methods and techniques for solving the problems tackled in the theoretical EA.

Considering the above definitions, errors analysis can be defined as the branch of applied linguistics that deals mainly with identifying, describing, interpreting, evaluating and preventing errors made by FL learners.

2.4 The Significance of Students' Errors and their Analysis in EFL Teaching

Students, when learning a foreign language, are usually subject to errors making since committing errors is an inevitable feature of their process of learning. However, unlike they were seen in the past as failures in the learning process, errors are considered, in recent research, as important features that help deepen the understanding of the processes of foreign language learning. Corder (1981) claimed that the study of learners' errors is important for two main reasons; the first is pedagogical and the second theoretical. As for the pedagogical purpose for studying students' errors, it is to provide a deep understanding of the nature of errors before designing a systematic means for eradicating them. While the theoretical, Corder (1981) suggested that the study of learners' errors is a part of the study of learners' language which is an integral part in understanding the process of second language acquisition. He also highlighted that this knowledge is significant to design the appropriate techniques and procedures for enhancing and developing language teaching.

Weireesh (1991) considered learners' errors as an important step in the process of learning a foreign language; and EA is the tool for understanding and explaining the difficulties the students faced and which led them to committing errors. EA, according to him, is also a reliable source for providing an effective feedback strategies and remedial teaching methods. Furthermore, Corder (1967) explained the significance of students' errors and considered them as valuable information for teachers, researchers and learners. First, errors provide teachers with

information about the progress of their students; second, they give researchers evidence on how language is acquired; third, errors are a device that enables students to learn the language.

The studies regarding errors provide valuable information for language teachers and syllabus designers as they offer deep insights on the strategies students use in language learning; they also identify the causes of errors making. Moreover, they yield information about the main difficulties that students face in language learning and serve the development of the teaching techniques and materials (Richards et al, 1992). Actually, the findings obtained from analysing students' errors have a great importance that makes EA an integral part in language teaching. Thus, students' errors are of high significance for educators such as teachers, syllabus designers and test developers as they enable them to opt for appropriate teaching techniques and design materials that cope with different levels and needs of students as well as constructing tests successfully. Furthermore, the teacher, through analysing his/her students' errors, can find out how much his/her students have improved and what remains for them to learn; and this may help the teacher know what are his/her students' weaknesses and the causes behind them so as to reflect on his/her teaching strategy and decide the parts he/she needs to change or enhance to get better results. Accordingly, errors, when their sources are exactly identified, can be an indicator for their treatment (Corder, 1981; Dulay, Burt and Krashen, 1982). Since errors are significant in assessing teaching materials and developing them, syllabus designers should benefit from the findings of EA when deciding what items to include in the syllabus and what items to change or improve when recycling syllabi. Keshavarz (1997) argued that error-based analysis can offer reliable findings which can be used to construct remedial materials, especially when the findings of errors analysis reveal a high frequency of certain errors which require particular remedy programs. Moreover, as syllabi are built upon many factors, including students' needs, EA can aid syllabus designers' recognize the learners' difficulties and needs at a certain level of language learning.

2.5 Errors Taxonomies

Since the emergence of EA as a branch of applied linguistics, many classifications of errors occurred; however, till now there is no unified classification of errors. Some scholars classified them according to the linguistic categories in which they occur, while others categorized them into surface structure levels. Errors were also categorized according to their sources. Within this thesis, the focus will be on errors that relate to EFL writing and on the classification adopted in the empirical study of the present work.

2.5.1 Diagnosis-Based Taxonomy

Within this taxonomy, scholars and researchers classified errors according to their source and the causes that led to their appearance in EFL students' texts. Although none of the errors classifications of this taxonomy will be used in the empirical study; yet, they are included in this thesis so as to have an insight on the sources of EFL students' writing errors.

2.5.1.1 Interlingual Errors

Interlingual errors, also termed mother-tongue influence and interference errors, are the errors that result from the interference between the learners' mother tongue and the FL. The interference happens when an item or structure in the FL is different from and similar to a certain extent with an equivalent item or structure in the L1. However, it should be mentioned that "interlingua" was first introduced by Slinker (1972), when he used this term to refer to "the version of the target language used or known by the learner". Jackson (1987) related interference to negative transfer which refers to the negative influence of the learner's L1 in L2/FL production. Accordingly, he asserted that interference happens "when an item or structure in the second language manifests some degree of difference from, and some degree of similarity with the equivalent item or structure in the learner's first language" (p. 101). Thus, not only difference between L1 and L2 causes interference errors; yet, even similarity between the two languages systems can result in such type of errors (Richards, 1971; Dulay & Burt, 1974; Brown, 1982; Jackson 1987; James, 1998).

2.5.1.2 Intralingual Errors

Intralingual errors refer to producing wrong items in the FL, which does not reflect interference of L1; however, they result from wrong generalizations based on partial exposure to the TL (Brown, 1980). Furthermore, Touchie (1986) explained that they result from the difficulty of the target language. While Richards (1974) associated the term intralingual errors with developmental errors, he assumed that these errors appear during the learning process of the L2 before the learner acquire the needed knowledge as he/she may produce utterances that neither belong to his/her mother tongue nor the target language, as they can be also due to a difficulty in the target language. On the other hand, James (1998) stated that intralingual errors are caused by the target language itself and student's ignorance of the target language form at any level or class will lead them to one of these two options: either they will resort to their learning strategies to overcome this obstacle or they will may make use of different

communication strategies to fill this gap. Hence, James (1998) divided intralingual errors into two types:

2.5.1.2.1 Learning Strategy- based Errors

These errors are due mainly to:

a. False Analogy

It is the case when the learner wrongly thinks that the new item **A** behaves like the item **B.** For instance, a learner who knows that the plural form of the singular **(A) Boy** is Boy**s** may assume that **Child (b)** behaves in the same way and use Child**s** as its plural form. This strategy was termed as cross-association by George (1972). While Richards (1971) named it as overgeneralization; he defined it as the student's attempt to imitate existing structures in the TL to produce other ones, which results in deviant structures that are not used in this language. For example, a learner could write 'the woman spoke fastly' because he/she already knows the example of 'the girl spoke quickly'.

b. Misanalysis

It occurs when the learner misanalyses the TL as he/she uses a hypothesis about an L2 element, however the hypothesis is unfounded. For example, a learner uses: They are carnivorous animals and **its** (instead of **their**) name comes from… The learner in this situation had a false concept that 'its' is the plural form of it (ibid, 1998).

c. Incomplete Rule Application

This strategy is opposite to overgeneralization therefore it was also named "under generalization". It arises when the learner fails to fully develop a structure in the TL, such as the use of declarative word order in questions, e.g., 'you like drawing?' instead of 'do you like drawing?' (ibid, 1998).

d. Exploiting Redundancy

James (1998) explained that redundancy occurs in the system in the form of "unnecessary morphology and double signalling, for example signalling subjecthood both by word order and by inflection" (p. 186).

e. Overlooking Co-occurrences Restrictions

This strategy is also called ignorance of rule restriction (Richards, 1971); it occurs when learners apply rules to contexts where they are not applicable. For instance, a learner may use the following sentence: Americans speak more **quick** than British people do. The use of quick in this sentence is erroneous; first, quick is wrongly used as the synonym of fast. Second, since fast can be used both as adjective and adverb, the learner assumed that this rule applies for quick as well and did not use the suffix "ly" to form the adverb.

f. Hypercorrection/Monitor Overuse

According to James (1998) hyper correction happens when learners over-monitor their FL output seeking correctness and consistency. Plus, it can be caused by learners' deliberate suppression of a potential L1 negative transfer out of their fear of committing errors which may lead ultimately to hypercorrection and error making.

g. Overgeneralization/System Simplification

James (1998) defined this strategy as "the overindulgence of one member of a set of forms and the underuse of others in the set" for instance learners usually overuse the relative pronoun **that** and exclude **who.**

2.5.1.2.2 Communication Strategy-Based Errors

These are the strategies used by the learner to express his/her ideas in the FL when he/she fails to use the linguistic forms of the FL for certain reasons. They include: avoidance, prefabricated patterns, cognitive and personality style, appeal to authority and language switch (Brown, 1980). While James (1998) sub-divided them into:

a. Holistic Strategies

In this context, the term holistic is defined by James (1998) as "the learners' assumption that if you can say X in L2, then you must be able to say Y" (p. 187). Accordingly, when fulfilling their writing assignments, students are required to replace the lacking forms with near-equivalent L2 items which they have already learnt. Consequently, learners, when trying to use this approximation strategy may fall in the trap of committing errors.

b. Analytic Strategies

The main strategy used by students in this context is circumlocution i.e. expressing an idea or a concept using too many words instead of saying it directly. For instance, a learner who failed to express the concept of 'Decompression Chamber' in TL, hence he/she used this long sentence instead:

".. the big…medical…thing...you go inside and they put air, press air…yes…you go down for your ears, they test" (James, 1998, p. 188).

2.5.1.3 Induced Errors

The term induced errors was first introduced by Stenson (1983), who defined it as learner errors "that result more from the classroom situation than from either students' incomplete competence in English grammar (intralingual errors) or first language interference' (interlingual errors)" (p. 256). Hence, these errors are neither interlingual nor intralingual; however, they are caused by the classroom situation and they are divided into: material induced errors, teacher talk induced errors, exercise-based induced errors, and errors induced by pedagogical priorities.

2.5.1.3.1 Materials-Induced Errors

These errors are usually caused by the use of non-authentic materials such as course books of EFL designed for beginners. These books can contain many erroneous language forms and structures that mislead learners (James, 1998).

2.5.1.3.2 Teacher-Talk Induced Errors

While one of the basic roles of EFL teachers is to provide learners with models of the TL in all the sentences he/she uses in the classroom, many NNS teachers of language mislead their learners with erroneous utterances used during lessons presentations and classroom discussions. James (1998) states that "for NNS teachers of a language, their own command of the TL is often a cause for grave concern, and in many places young trainees' expertise in up-to-date methodology is far in excess of their command of the TL itself" (p. 191).

2.5.1.3.3 Exercise-Based Induced Errors

This type of errors occurs when the teachers' or textbook's input prompts errors from learners such as the case when students are required to perform certain manipulations on

language structures. One clear example is the case of combining exercises where learners are provided with simple sentences and are asked to combine them producing complex ones. For example, learners are taught that conditionals are combined with "if" or "unless", the teacher asks the learners to combine the following sentences:

a. I can't afford a new car

Which should yield ⇨ I can't afford a new car unless I win the lottery.

b. I shall win the lottery

However, some learners will produce erroneous sentences such as "Unless I can afford a new car, I shall win the lottery" since they have been taught that unless is equivalent to if…. not which will lead them to replace the negative element in can't with unless (ibid, 1998).

2.5.1.3.4 Errors Induced by Pedagogical Priorities

These errors happen when learners focus on their teachers' expectations and preferences and try so hard to convince them even at the expense of neglecting other important language components that are not given much attention by the teacher. For instance, some teachers are perceived by their learners to prioritize accuracy, whereas others concentrate on fluency or idiomaticity; hence, learners will focus on their teacher's preference and de-emphasize the other elements.

2.5.2 Descriptive Taxonomies

2.5.2.1 Linguistic Category Classification

Within this classification, errors are classified according to the linguistic category to which they belong and the location of the error in the TL system i.e. the linguistic item affected by the error (Dulay, Burt & Karshen, 1982). First of all, it determines in which **level** the error is located whether in graphology, grammar, lexis, text or discourse. Then, it moves to determining the **category** of the linguistic unit in which the error occurred. For instance, if the error occurs in the grammar level, the category of the grammatical instruction that the error affects should be identified whether it is the auxiliary system, sentence complements, passives… etc. After that, a specification of the error's **class** takes place. For example, taking into account that the error is grammatical, does it lie in the class of a noun, verb, adverb,

adjective, preposition, determiner, conjunction…etc.? Next, the error is classified according to its **rank**, depending on its position in the hierarchy of **units** that constitute its level. Given that the error is grammatical one and involves the class of noun, the error will be located then at the rank of morpheme, word, phrase, clause or sentence. Finally, the grammatical **system** that the error affects is identified e.g. tense, number, transitivity, voice, countability…etc. This error classification is thorough as these categories of level, class, and rank are "mutually defining" (James, 1998, p.105). The following example illustrates how this classification deals with errors:

 I **use to** go shopping every day.

The student attempts to use "used to" (that expresses past habit) in the present tense. The error is then in the grammar **level** and it involves the word **class** verb and the **system** of tense (ibid, 1998).

2.5.2.2 The Surface Structure Classification

The main concern of this classification is to identify 'the ways surface structures are altered" (Dulay, Burt & Krashen, 1982, p.150). This taxonomy was among the ones researched most by scholars and applied linguists; hence, it is not surprising to find a variety of errors categories within this classification.

James (1998) built on Dulay, Burt & Krashen (1982) classification that suggested that there are four ways in which a learner can alter the target language form: omission, addition, misformation and misordering. Yet, James (1998) added a fifth category which he termed blends.

2.5.2.2.1 Omission

It occurs when parts of speech or units of sentence are omitted. This does not include the case of ellipsis and zero elements which are grammatically correct and highly recommended grammatical resources.

2.5.2.2.2 Addition

According to Dulay, Burt & Karshen (1982) learners commit this type of error when they are too faithful to using certain rules, and they suggested the following subtypes of addition:

a. Regularization: It occurs when students overlook exceptions and apply rules to domains where they are no applicable, e.g. to produce the regular fighted for fought.

b. Irregularization: Contrary to regularization, this type of addition occurs when students wrongly assume that a certain form is an exception of the rule while it is not.

c. Double marking: It is defined by Dulay, Burt & Karshen (1982) as "failure to delete certain items which are required in some linguistic constructions but not in others" (p.156). For instance, it occurs when the student uses two negators or two tense markers instead of one, such as 'He doesn't work**s** hard'.

d. Simple addition: It comprises all the other types of addition that are not included in regularization, Irregularization and double marking.

2.5.2.2.3 Misformation

It is defined by Dulay, Burt and Krashen (1982) as "the use of the wrong form of a structure or morpheme" (as cited in James, 1998, p.108). They listed the following subtypes of misformation:

a. Archiform

It consists of one member of a class of forms to represent other forms of that class. For instance, the learner might use the form 'that' in different situations where he/she is supposed to use the other forms of this class (this, these and those). This type of error is referred to as overrepresentation by Levenston (1971) (as cited in James, 1998).

b. Altering forms

Dulay, Burt & Krashen (1982) defined it as "fairly free alteration of various members of a class with each other" (as cited in James, 1998, p. 108). For instance, if it is the case where only two members are involved, three possible pairings will occur: (right + wrong), (right + right) or (wrong + wrong). Considering the first case when the learner uses both right and wrong form of a particular language construction at the same stage of learning, e.g. a learner who uses I **don't** speak French and I **no** speak French alternately in his/her speech. As for the second case, it is disregarded since it is irrelevant in errors analysis. The third case is when the learner uses two wrong forms alternately such as He **taken** the car yesterday and He has just **took** the

car. The learner, in this case, has reversed the two rules concerning the past simple and past perfect which necessitates an urgent intervention by the teacher.

2.5.2.2.4 Blends

James (1998) defined it as the "category that complements the target modification taxonomy". In fact, "It is typical of situations where there is not just one well-defined target, but two" (p. 111). In such situation the learner will find himself/herself undecided about which target he/she will use and this will result in blend error, which is also named contamination, cross-association or hybridization error. To clarify the concept, James (1998) provides the following example: "*According to Erica's opinion"* which is the result of combining two alternative grammatical forms (According to Erica and in Erica's opinion). The combination of these two alternatives in one form resulted in an ungrammatical blend.   In   another   surface structure classification, Corder (1981) stated that there are three linguistic levels in which errors can occur, namely: graphological or phonological, grammatical and lexico-semantic. These errors according to him are classified under the following categories: (1) omission, (2) addition, (3) selection, and (4) ordering. Hence, when applying this classification, a "matrix for the categorization of errors" is formulated (p. 36).

	Graphological Phonological	Grammatical	Lexico-semantic
Omission			
Addition			
Selection			
Ordering			

Figure 6. Matrix of errors' categorization according to Corder (1981)

In spite of its usefulness in providing data for starting the analysis, yet this classification is still superficial. Hence, a more appropriate and systematic classification is the one that considers different *systems* like: tense, mood, number, gender, case …etc. For instance, consider the sentence "I am waiting here since ten o'clock"

If the teacher simply explains it as an error of wrong selection (am) and omission of the two words (have been); the explanation then will be superficial; however, a more detailed analysis will cover the system by explaining the wrong selection of tense non-perfective instead of

perfective and then deducing that the learner has not mastered the tense system of English.

Yet, even though this systematic analysis gives detailed information about the errors, it is still not enough to judge a sentence as correct since "superficial well-formedness alone is not a guarantee of freedom from error" (ibid, 1981, p.41). Hence, another factor that can determine the correctness of a sentence is the *acceptability* factor, since some sentences can be well-formed but not acceptable by the native speaker. Acceptable sentence is defined by Corder (1981) as the "one which could be produced by a native speaker in some appropriate situation and recognized by another native speaker as being a sentence of his language" (p. 39), and since the acceptability of a sentence does not depend only on the *competence* of the writer to produce well-formed acceptable sentences that are recognized by native speakers; however, it is bound by *appropriateness* (appropriate situation), which is the second factor mentioned by Corder (1981) to judge the correctness of a sentence. Therefore, for an utterance to be judged appropriate, it should have a proper relation with the context; and if the well-formedness is considered a matter of language code, appropriateness deals with the use of the code or what linguistics terms as "performance". Furthermore, Corder (1981) claimed that judging the adequacy of performance is more complicated and challenging than that of competence. Therefore, for an utterance to be correct, it should be well-formed (in terms of graphological, grammatical, and lexico-semantic levels), *acceptable* and *appropriate*.

acceptable	appropriate	free from error
acceptable	inappropriate	Erroneous
unacceptable	appropriate	Erroneous
unacceptable	inappropriate	Erroneous

Figure 7. Diagram of correctness criteria (Corder, 1981, p. 41)

In another classification, Touchie (1986) stated that "language learning errors involve all language components: the phonological, the morphological, the lexical, and the syntactic." (p.77). Particularly, the morphological errors involve the production of such examples; womans, advices, sheeps…etc. While lexical errors involve the use of wrong lexical items that can be the result of direct translation from the learners' mother tongue e.g. the *clock* is now six. As for the syntactic errors, they are errors in word order such as subject-verb agreement.

Ellis (1997) argued that classifying errors into categories can help in diagnosing students' learning problems at any stage of their development and arrange how changes in error patterns and types occur overtime. Accordingly, he classified errors as follows:

1. **Omission:** it happens when the learner omits a part of a word or speech. It is also divided into two sub-categories.

a. **Morphological Omission:** e.g. I visit her yesterday

b. **Syntactical Omission:** e.g. should go with her?

2. **Addition:** it occurs when the learner adds unnecessary items to the sentence. This category is also divided into:

a. **Addition in Morphology:** e.g. the pupils is here.

b. **Addition in Syntax:** e.g. The Paris

c. **Addition in lexicon:** e.g. I stayed there during six years ago.

3. **Selection:** it refers to the wrong selection of certain forms. This category is divided into:

a. **Selection in Morphology:** My sister is tallest than me.

b. **Selection in Syntax:** I want that he goes there.

4. **Ordering:** it happens when the learner produces a wrong structure in the L2 which results from a wrong order of items. It is divided into errors in:

a. **Morphology:** e.g. stand upping for standing up.

b. **Syntax:** e.g. He is a dear to me brother.

c. **Lexicon:** e.g. machine washing for washing machine.

Writing errors may vary from the smallest phoneme level to the paragraph level, hence another classification of errors distinguishes between *local* and *global* errors (Burt and Kiparsky, 1978).

1. **Local errors:** They are the ones that do not hinder the communication and the understanding of the message such as, noun and verb inflections, the inappropriate use of articles, prepositions and auxiliaries.

2. **Global errors:** They are errors that interfere with communication and interrupt the transmission of meaning (Burt and Kiparsky, 1978 as cited in Touchie, 1986).

Another definition that makes a clear distinction between local and global errors is that of Hendrickson (1976) in which he claims that

> A global error is a communicative error that causes a native speaker of English either to
>
> misinterpret a written message or to consider the message incomprehensible within the total
>
> context of the error. A local error, on the other hand, is a linguistic error that makes a sentence
>
> appear ungrammatical or unidiomatic but, nevertheless, causes a native speaker of English

little or no difficulty in understanding the intended meaning of a sentence, given its contextual framework (p.3)

Similarly, Corder (1973) classified learners' errors into *overt* and *covert* errors. Overt errors consist of using items that are grammatically wrong at the sentence level, yet those errors do not hinder communication. On the other hand, covert errors occur when the sentences are grammatically correct but not suitable for the context of communication. For instance, "I am a teacher" is a correct sentence in terms of grammar and syntax however it is not suitable to answer the question "What is your hobby?" which makes it a covert error.

In light of the previously discussed taxonomies and classifications of EFL writing errors, the researcher excluded the first taxonomy, which is the diagnosis-based errors, since this study does not aim at investigating the sources of students' errors or their causes. Thus, this research adopts the descriptive taxonomy, precisely, Burt and Kiparsky's (1978) classification of *global* and local *errors.* This classification was adopted by the researcher because it is flexible, which gives the researcher more freedom to focus on the types of errors that are common among the research population.

2.6 Conclusion

Many educators and researchers have emphasized the significance of FL students' writing errors for FL teachers, researchers and for FL students as well (Corder, 1967). As for the latter, making errors is considered an attempt towards learning the FL; while researchers use students' errors to analyse how the FL is learned. On the other hand, teachers, through analysing their students' errors, can have a clear idea on how far towards the goal students have advanced and what remains to be learned; however, teachers' work does not stop at this stage as they have another important task which is responding to those errors (ibid, 1967). According to Lee (2005), responding to students' writing errors and providing correction for them is "the most exhausting and time-consuming aspect of teachers' work" (p. 1). Thus, teachers need effective and manageable feedback methods that can reduce the errors' correction load and facilitate their job since "responding to student errors is a vital part of their job" (Ferris, 1995 as cited in Lee, 2005). Besides, they should adopt feedback methods that enhance their students' writing performance and minimize their writing errors. Therefore, many feedback methods were suggested by different researchers in the field of EFL writing; these methods will be presented and discussed in the next section.

3. Feedback in the Teaching of EFL Writing

3.1 Introduction

The mastery of EFL writing has become indispensable in our modern world; hence, writing instruction is becoming a significant part of any program of foreign language teaching. Hence, this explains writing skill's status as central topic of applied linguistics research and the continuous and evolving researches and debates over its different issues. Consequently, as the importance of enhancing the writing skill increases, researching the different methods and classroom practices in relation with managing EFL students' writing errors is becoming increasingly crucial. Therefore, issues such as how to respond to students' writing errors, what errors to correct and who should provide feedback are largely debated by applied linguists, scholars and educators; consequently, many methods of error correction sprang out (Fathman & Whalley, 1990; Ferris, 1997; Ferris & Helt, 2000; Ferris, 2002; Chandler, 2003). Thus, in this section, the different methods of responding to EFL students' writing errors' are going to be represented with a main focus on the method used in the present thesis.

3.2 Towards Defining Feedback

Since its emergence, the term feedback has been defined by many researchers and scholars; thus, it is difficult to find one common definition of this concept. According to Harmer (2004) feedback is the input and the means that entitle the writer with important information about his/her text such as reader's needs and expectations and whether his/her writings have met such expectations. Accordingly, Hyland & Hyland (2006) added that this term exceeds the traditional view of feedback to cover the social acts that affect the parameters of communication such as the context, the participants, the objectives and the medium. While, from a narrow pedagogical perspective, Kepner (1991) defined corrective feedback as "any procedure used to inform a learner whether an instructional response is right or wrong" (p. 141). Furthermore, Dulay et al (1982) considered feedback as the response of the listener or the reader on the learner's speech or writing. On the other hand, Freedman (1987) suggested a more comprehensive definition of corrective feedback as she considered that responding to students' writing errors "includes all reactions to writing, formal or informal, written or oral, from teacher or peer, to a draft or a final version"; she also added that "it can occur in reaction to talking about intended pieces of writing, the talk being considered a writing act"; furthermore, "it can be explicit or less explicit" (p. 5). In another line of argument, Majer (2003) defined feedback via distinguishing it from error correction when he asserted that "giving feedback is not

tantamount to merely correcting errors" since "error correction is part of language teaching, whereas feedback belongs in the domain of interaction. (…) Therefore, all error correction is feedback, much as its actual realization may depend on a particular pedagogical goal (…)" (as cited in Pawlak, 2014, p. 5). Moreover, Lee (2017) considered feedback as a significant component of classroom assessment since it "provides information about students' learning, performance, knowledge, or understanding and is often referred to as one of the most powerful sources of influence on student learning" (Hattie and Timperly, 2007 as cited in Lee, 2017, p. 4). Hence, based on the previous definitions, the term feedback in the present work refers to any response made on the students' texts, whether provided by the teacher or by a peer, in a written or an oral form, which influences students' EFL writing and FL learning in general.

3.3 The Importance of Feedback in EFL Writing Context

Corrective feedback is a crucial component for enhancing EFL learning in general and writing skill in particular since it helps EFL students produce accurate texts with clear and well-organized ideas. Thus, the importance of feedback in the EFL writing context was stressed by many researchers in the field of applied linguistics and errors analysis who considered it as central element in improving students' writing level. Accordingly, Straub (1997) considered feedback and error correction as main parts of teacher's work when he asserted that "it is how we receive and respond to student writing that speaks loudest in our teaching" (p. 26). In addition, Penaflorida (2002) considered that receiving feedback enables students "identify their strengths and weaknesses, which in the case of the latter, will make the students know how to go about improving themselves and become effective writers" (p. 346).

Concerning its effects on the writing skill, studies (Paulus, 1999; Ferris, 2002; Hyland & Hyland, 2001) proved that feedback is advantageous to both beginners and advanced writers as it helps writers evaluate their texts and recognize their weaknesses and stimulates them to keep developing through enhancing their texts in each draft. Furthermore, feedback provided on students' writing is not beneficial for them exclusively; yet, it benefits their teachers as well; since, it enables them diagnose the nature and the sources of students' writing errors and allows them to decide the adequate remediation for the persistent writing problems that frequently occur in their students' texts (Ferris & Helt, 2000; Ferris, 2002; Miao et al, 2006; Lee, 2017). Hence, when teachers use this pedagogical tool effectively, it will contribute to the enhancement of students' writing ability and students' overall foreign language acquisition (Ferris, 2002).

3.4 Types of Feedback

Through literature, three methods of feedback are frequently distinguished, namely: teacher feedback, self-correction method and peer feedback. The three concepts will be discussed thoroughly; however, the focus will be on peer feedback because it is the method adopted in the empirical study.

3.4.1 Teacher Feedback

Teacher feedback is the direct and traditional method of responding to students' writing with the aim of remediating students' errors immediately. However, in spite of the massive amount of time and effort that teachers devote to provide feedback on their students' texts, their work is "often fraught with frustration and uncertainty" (Ferris, 2014 as cited in Lee, 2017, p. 65). Therefore, this feedback method was largely researched and debated by many researchers and practitioners in the field of EFL teaching.

Teacher feedback is defined as "teacher immediately and directly correcting the error without leaving any responsibility to the learner" (Lewis & Hill, 1992 as cited in Debreli & Onuk, 2016, p.77). Considering this definition, teacher feedback might seem simple and very traditional as the typical picture of teachers holding red pen and correcting students' essays; however, this type of feedback can have many forms. Accordingly, Ellis (2009) divided teacher corrective feedback into six categories, namely: direct CF, indirect CF, meta-linguistic feedback, focused and unfocused CF, electronic feedback and reformulation feedback. While Lee (2017) considered three types of teacher feedback, which were: written corrective feedback (WCF), written commentary and oral feedback.

Generally, in the majority of EFL contexts, especially in large classes, "the written mode of teacher feedback has remained the major kind of feedback in writing classrooms" (Lee, 2017, p. 65). This type of feedback also has two variants: direct WCF and indirect WCF. Concerning direct written corrective feedback, it refers to the process of locating students' writing errors and providing corrections to them by the teacher (Bitchener & Ferris, 2012). Teachers, when providing direct WCF, usually use different strategies such as crossing out unnecessary words or phrases, inserting omitted items and circling or underlining errors and providing corrections. Furthermore, teachers can supply explicit grammatical information about the errors through providing metalinguistic explanations (Lee, 2017). While indirect WCF consists of indicating the errors without suggesting correct answers; it can be coded, which means that codes are used

to indicate the type of the error, or uncoded, in which teachers would just circle or underline the error (ibid, 2017).

In addition to written corrective feedback, EFL teachers usually provide their students with written comments on their texts; these are called written commentaries and can have different forms such as statements, imperatives, questions and hedges (Ferris 1997; Sugita 2006 as cited in Lee, 2017). Though this feedback method is widely used in EFL classrooms, researchers have found that some teachers "give vague, non-text-specific, and mostly negative comments" (Cumming 1985; Semke 1984; Zamel 1985 as cited in Lee, 2017, p. 70); consequently, these commentaries may confuse and discourage students instead of encouraging them and helping them learn from their own errors (ibid, 2017). Hence, in order to be effective, a written commentary should be "clear, concrete, and text-specifc, including both praise and constructive criticism" (Goldstein 2004; Hyland and Hyland 2001; Zamel 1985 cited in Lee, 2017, p. 70). Also, researchers (Goldstein 2004, 2006; Hyland and Hyland 2006) suggested that rather than appropriating their students with written comments, teachers had better deliver feedback through engaging and interacting with their students and building positive and promotive relationships with them such as involving them in face-to-face conferences.

Face-to-face conferencing, also termed oral feedback, is another type of teacher feedback which is defined as one-to-one interaction between the teacher and the student. According to Lee (2017), face-to-face conferences enable EFL writing teachers "respond to individual student needs by clarifying meaning, explaining ambiguities, and allowing students to ask questions" (p. 71). In addition to that, teacher and students conferencing benefits students via giving them a clear idea about their strengths and weaknesses as well instructing them about the most effective ways to revise their texts (ibid, 2017). Similarly, Kroll (1990) considered that conferencing "allows the teacher to uncover potential misunderstanding that the students might have about prior feedback on issues in writing that have been discussed in class" (p. 259). Yet, despite all these potential benefits of face-to-face conferencing, this feedback method couldn't be a regular feature of EFL writing classrooms for two main reasons. Primarily, teachers in EFL contexts suffer from large class size issue which makes them struggle with time constraints and think of how to cover the content of the prescribed syllabus. Of course this will make them think of other types of feedback that are less time consuming. Secondly, "the unequal power relationship between teacher and students makes it challenging for writing conferences to fulfil the purpose of encouraging active student participation and fostering learner autonomy" (Lee,

2017, p. 72). Furthermore, Biber et al (2011) reported that oral feedback is less effective in enhancing students' writing performance than written feedback.

To conclude, it is needless to say that all types of feedback which are provided by the teacher are of paramount importance to students' progress. Also, teacher corrective feedback is widely used and appreciated by many language teachers and practitioners; however, depending on it solely is lately considered "out dated" and receives many critics (Debreli & Onuk, 2016, p. 77). Furthermore, many researchers (Robb et al, 1986; Semke, 1984) emphasized this method's failure to develop learners' independence and highlighted its demoralizing effect on students as they receive their essays corrections all scribbled in red pen. They also documented students' negative attitudes and inattention to teacher corrections. Thus, within the shift towards communicative language teaching, the idea of teacher as the only feedback provider was no longer accepted and the need for more learner-centred error correction methods appeared.

3.4.2 Self-Correction Method/ Self-Feedback

Self-feedback is defined as "students monitoring their own performances and correcting their errors themselves with some guidance from the teacher" (Ferris, 2002, as cited in Debreli & Onuk, 2016). This feedback technique increases learners' autonomy and makes them responsible for their own learning (Rief, 1990 as cited in Sultana 2009). According to Boud & Falchikov (1989), this type of feedback involves the students in the learning process as it enables them to make judgments about their own learning, especially their weaknesses and their strengths. Similarly, Sambell & MacDowel (1998) asserted that asking students to revise and edit their own texts will "foster students' feeling of ownership for their own learning", also it "signals to students that their experiences are valued and their judgments are respected" (p.39).

However, in spite of its positive effects in fostering the role of EFL students as active participants in the learning process, as well as enhancing their critical thinking skills; self-feedback is considered a time consuming process in comparison with teacher correction which is up to the point and direct method. As a result, many EFL teachers would simply avoid using it because of time constraints and the length of the syllabus. Furthermore, this feedback method can be demotivating for students who fail to self-correct while their mates do. Therefore, a method of responding to students' writing error, which encourages interaction and cooperation among students in a positive and friendly atmosphere, where the student does not feel threatened by his/her classmates, but, on the contrary supported by them, should be introduced.

3.4.3 Peer Feedback

Peer feedback, also termed as peer response, peer review and peer editing, is a feedback method that uses students as sources of information and increases interaction between them in a way that students take roles and responsibilities that are usually taken by a teacher or an editor in commenting and editing their mates' drafts whether in written or oral form during the writing process (Liu & Hansen, 2002). According to Larsen-Freeman (2000), peer feedback is a method of responding to students' writing in which learners are expected to help one another when they face a difficulty in a cooperative way while the teacher is not supposed to interfere in the error correction process, yet only to monitor and guide the students.

In fact, the use of peer feedback in EFL writing assessment is backed by numerous well-established theories, including the process approach to writing, cooperative learning theory, Communicative Language Teaching and the sociocultural theory (Lee, 2017). More specifically, the link between peer feedback and the process writing approach is due to the way this approach considers writing since it defines it as "a nonlinear and recursive process of meaning making and knowledge transformation during which students engage in peer interaction to help their peers improve the quality of their writing" (ibid, 2017, p. 84). Therefore, peer feedback enables students to build that audience awareness and develop a better understanding of reader's expectations of good writing (Liu & Hansen, 2002). Similarly, according to Hyland (2009), peer response is part of the process approach to teaching writing that is widely used in both L1 and L2 contexts as a means of enhancing writers' drafts and raising awareness of readers' needs.

Additionally, peer feedback is underpinned by cooperative learning theory, which considers language learning as "socially instructed"; hence, via peer interaction and cooperation, peer feedback offers "a facilitative socio-interactive environment in which L2 learners receive social support and scaffolding from peers" (Hu & Lam, 2010 as cited in Lee, 2017, p. 84). Furthermore, from a pedagogical perspective and based on communicative and interactive language teaching and foreign language acquisition, peer feedback is regarded as source of language practice since it provides students with opportunities of meaning negotiation and fosters their production of more comprehensible input which, consequently, facilitates foreign language acquisition (Long, 1983; Long & Porter, 1985; Swain, 2006; Swain & Lapkin 1998, 2002, as cited in Lee, 2017).

Also, peer feedback is supported by sociocultural theory which considers language learning as "a social phenomenon embedded in specific cultural, historical, and institutional contexts" (Villamil & de Guerrero, 2006, p.23). Accordingly, researchers (Pica, 1996; Lantlof, 2000; Tuomey, 2014) reported that language learning is not restricted only to cognitive interactions with others; however, it comprises social interaction as well. Therefore, due to the limitless interaction opportunities that it offers to students, peer feedback is considered an effective classroom strategy that could have a very positive impact on students' linguistic, cognitive and social skills (Lantlof, 2000). Practically, Vygotsky's concept of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which is at the heart of sociocultural theory, is another proof of peer feedback effectiveness in language learning. This concept, which refers to "the distance between what a learner can do independently without assistance and what she/he can do with assistance, usually from more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1978 as cited in Lee, 2017, p. 84), suggests that students have certain domains that might not be reached without others' assistance. As a result, students' ZPD marks different levels of learning outcomes with and without receiving assistance (Aljaafreh & Lantolf, 1994). Thus, from that perspective, peer feedback is considered as an assistance tool that increases learning via helping students move from the stage of *other regulation* i.e., depending on others' assistance to the stage of *self-regulation* i.e., being capable of independent problem solving (Villamil & Guerrero, 2006 as cited in Lee, 2017).

To conclude, peer feedback is considered an important technique to teaching process writing as it "allows students to play the role of the authors and reviewers whose task is to give comments to their peers' written work" (Hansen & Lui, 2005; Lam, 2010 as cited in Kunwongse, 2013). Furthermore, it enables students to communicate, interact, negotiate meaning and generate a source of information with their peers (ibid, 2013). In that regard, Rollinson (2005) stated that peer feedback establishes a sense of real audience as it enables reader to tell the writer whether or not the message is clear while Ellis (2009) considered it as a means of promoting students' motivation and enhancing linguistic accuracy.

3.4.3.1 The Benefits of Peer Feedback

In spite of the historical dominance of teacher correction method in EFL writing classes, the implementation of peer feedback technique has interestingly become more frequent in EFL teaching with the emergence of learner-centred approaches to language teaching, especially after it was defended by many theories of language teaching such as humanism and

communicative ones (Sultana, 2009). Furthermore, the integration of this feedback technique in the EFL writing class was due mainly to the positive results that researches have yielded about its effectiveness in encouraging collaboration among students, involving all the students in the learning process and helping them develop critical thinking and analysis skills (Chaudron, 1984; Keh, 1990 as cited in Paulus, 1999).

The implementation of peer feedback in EFL learning is crucial for the success of the learning process. Lee (2017) declared that "peer feedback has a pivotal role to play in the writing classroom, especially in classroom assessment that serves the purpose of improving student learning and empowering students to become autonomous and self-regulated learners" (p. 83). Also, through peer feedback, students will think more deeply, observe how other students tackle problems, take notes and learn how to criticize others' texts constructively (Jones, 1998).

 According to Dheram (1995), peer feedback provides students with the opportunity to have a wide and diverse audience through classroom dialogues, conversations about different topics and discussion of subjects and issues. Furthermore, it enables students to critically analyse their own and their peers' writings and creates the occasion for them to play the role of the teacher which allows them to evaluate, comment their peers work, provide advice, correct errors and suggest new ideas. Likewise, Mittan (1989) pointed out that "collaborative peer review helps learners engage in a community of equals who respond to each other's work and together create authentic social context for interaction and learning" (p. 207). It also encourages students to write multiple drafts and undergo substantial revisions through the different stages of writing (drafting, revising and editing) till they produce meaningful and accurate texts.

In fact, many studies reported that the efficiency of peer feedback is not restricted to the development of foreign language writing and language learning only; however, it exceeds to cooperative and collaborative learning supports and social interactions (Kunwongse, 2013). For instance, studies like (Lee, 1997; Mendonca & Johnson, 1994; Min, 2005; Rollinson, 2005) have confirmed the positive effect of peer feedback on students' writing performance and showed that peer readers could supplement effective and useful feedback. They also confirmed that students revise more effectively when they depend on their peers' comments on their writings. Also, Berg (1999) declared that students, who were trained to comment on their peers' writing, made more meaning based changes on their drafts. Similarly, Wong, Kingshan & Ronica (1999) reported that the implementation of peer feedback technique in L2 writing class

led to fewer writing errors (as cited in Kunwongse, 2013); while, in another study (Hyland, 2000), EFL students declared that peer feedback on grammar improved their learning in general and their writing accuracy in particular.

As for the social skills side, peer feedback is a classroom technique that increases students' self-confidence and help them become more independent and active learners. According to Tsui & Ng (2000), peers' feedback improves the feeling of the ownership of the text because peers' comments are less authoritative than those of the teacher; hence, students can make their own decisions about whether or not applying their mates' comments. As a result, in long term effects, students will become less reliant on their teacher and gain more confidence in themselves as writers (as cited in Kunwongse, 2013). Furthermore, peer feedback boosts students' critical thinking and awareness of effective writing skills since when they critically respond to their peers' texts, students exercise the critical thinking processes that they should apply to their own texts (Mittan 1989). In adittion, students' metacognitive awareness is enhanced through practicing peer feedback technique. Since, so as to provide their peers with constructive critical comments, EFL students have to make an effort and put careful considerations to apply what they know (Wong & Story, 2006 as cited in Kunwongse, 2013).

Lastly and most importantly, since the present research uses peer feedback within cooperative learning instruction, peer response was documented as very effective in creating and fostering cooperative and collaborative learning environments. Hirose (2008) pointed out that the dynamic interaction between peers during peer feedback process, which include asking questions, providing information, making suggestions and writing comments, resulted in an improvement of students' cooperative work skills and communication skills and enhanced their writing performance. Accordingly, Hyland (2000) claimed that engaging students in peer talk during the writing process creates a peer support mechanism among students as the interactions that do not involve audience response to completed drafts permit students to ask for their peers' support. In fact, this support can extend beyond in class sessions as when students "help tutoring each other before the examination" (Kunwongse, 2013, p. 281). Moreover, "the socialization in small groups already trained to establish collaborative atmosphere also prevents tension and fears and facilitates student involvement" (Morra & Romano, 2008 as cited in Kunwongse, 2013, p. 281).

3.4.3.2 The Shortcomings of Peer Feedback

Although peer feedback method is backed by many applied linguists and language practitioners and researchers (Chaudron, 1984; Keh, 1990; Sharle & Szabó, 2000) for its effectiveness in managing EFL students' writing errors, this feedback process "is extremely complex, requiring careful training and structuring in order for it to be successful" (Paulus, 1999, p. 267). Thus, peer feedback, if not performed appropriately, risks being a "disastrous unproductive experience" in the FL classroom (ibid, 1999, p. 268). This unsatisfactory result is due to many factors that have to do with the EFL context itself, where students are generally of different cultural and social backgrounds, which makes it difficult for the teacher to make them work all together in small groups. This difference in cultures or even in personalities may lead to conflicts between students, especially if students are "defensive, uncooperative and distrustful of each other" and consequently "little productive work will occur in the classroom" (Carson & Nelson, 1996; Nelson & Murphy, 1993 as cited in Paulus, 1999, p. 268). Additionally, when the student is corrected by a more competent peer, this may let him/her feel as inferior to his/her peers (Harmer, 2004 as cited in Sultana, 2009). The student might also feel embarrassed to give his/her work to a peer for correction as he/she does not want him/her to know about his/her weaknesses (Sultana, 2009). Besides, some students might consider that receiving feedback on their texts from peers who have the same level as them or even a lower level as an invalid source of feedback in comparison with teacher feedback. As a result, they may resist group work peer review activities (Hyland, 2002). Another factor that has to be considered is that some students, especially lazy ones, will rely completely on their mates' correction and this will certainly result in a negative collaboration which will have a negative impact on the learning outcomes. Therefore, though peer feedback method is "largely welcomed for its cognitive, social and effective value" (Sultana, 2009, p.12), it can be unproductive and inappropriate method for error correction unless done carefully in an absolute cooperative atmosphere. Therefore, within the present work, so as to ensure an effective functioning of this method; peer feedback will be introduced in the EFL writing classroom within cooperative learning instruction. Furthermore, strict criteria (see section 3.4.3.3) will be taken into consideration in order to guarantee a smooth and successful implementation of this feedback method.

3.4.3.3 Implementing Peer Feedback in the EFL Writing Classroom

Despite the fact that many studies have stressed the efficacy of peer feedback in EFL writing classroom (Berg, 1999; Hayland, 2000; Rollinson, 2005; Ferris & Hedgcock, 2005), many EFL teachers still hesitate to integrate this feedback technique in their writing courses and depend completely on teacher feedback method. In fact, EFL teachers' reluctance to use peer feedback is maybe due to their fear that such an experience could be noisy, chaotic or even unmanageable (Saito & Fujita, 2004). However, when planned and implemented carefully, these undesirable results will be avoided. Thus, before integrating peer feedback technique in the university writing class, teachers and tutors should prepare and plan for this step (Hansen & Lui, 2005) and follow certain measures that are explained as follows.

First of all, the most important factor and key element for a successful implementation of peer feedback is students' training, which has been approved by numerous studies (Hu, 2005; Goldberg, 2012; Hu & Lam, 2010; Min, 2005) as beneficial for enhancing students' revisions and writing quality. Thus, before engaging students in peer feedback activities, it is necessary for teachers to conduct a number of training sessions in which they can model the whole process, supply examples, explain and provide guidelines of peer review or engage students in simple peer response activities (Kunwongse, 2013). Furthermore, through peer feedback training, students will provide their peers with more constructive and effective comments; also, they will be familiar with the steps of peer editing and the use of peer response checklists (Lee, 2017). As for the training strategies, Lee (2017) asserted that teachers can choose any strategies that suit their classroom and students; these strategies include:

> awareness raising (e.g., through explaining purpose, spelling out expectations, and
>
> encouraging students to share experience and concerns), demonstration (e.g., using sample
>
> peer feedback on selected student essays or video demonstration of different peer interaction
>
> patters), student practice (asking students to review a draft written by a previous student),
>
> instruction in appropriate response behaviour (e.g., the need to acknowledge strengths and
>
> to give constructive and text-specific comments), and explanation of the peer feedback
>
> procedure (e.g., explaining how different peer feedback sheets are to be used) (p. 96)

Concerning the usefulness of peer feedback training, Hu (2005) investigated the impact of peer feedback training on ESL university students and found that it has a positive impact in maximizing students' positive attitudes towards peer feedback and enhancing their writing.

Besides, Ruegg (2015) reported that students who were trained on peer feedback outperformed their peers who were not engaged in peer feedback training.

Another essential factor that can contribute to the success of peer feedback method, which "is likely to be a novel activity" for a lot of EFL learners, is briefing students on this feedback technique and explaining the purpose of its implementation in the EFL writing classroom (Lee, 2017). Hence, when students are given a clear rationale for the integration of PF and the procedures of its implementation are explained, students are likely to be more interested and engaged in the peer feedback process (ibid, 2017).

Furthermore, in order for it to be effective, peer feedback should be implemented within cooperative, collaborative and interaction learning via the use of pair work or group work activities (Kunwongse, 2013). Hence, to achieve a better functioning of peer feedback technique, students' cooperation should be fostered and reinforced constantly in order to enable students to share information and develop mutual trust and feel responsible for their own learning and for the learning of their peers as well (ibid, 2013). Accordingly, Lee (2017) asserted that "peer feedback can hardly succeed when students feel insecure and uncomfortable about learning" (p. 91); thus, teachers are required to create a cooperative, supportive and secure learning environment.

In addition to the previously mentioned measures, peer feedback sheets can play a pivotal role in the implementation of peer feedback technique in the EFL writing class. Peer feedback sheets can take many forms, such as: rating scales sheets, open-ended questions sheet and checklists (Lee, 2017). These PF sheets help teachers and students to establish common grounds as what elements should be checked? how are they checked? and at what stage? Hence, without such guidance, students might be lost during the peer revising and peer editing or they might focus on one or two elements and neglect the other ones. Particularly, among the previously mentioned PF forms, checklists have been widely recognized as effective tools that help revision (Dimento, 1988; Freedman, 1992 as cited in Alhamzi & Scholfield, 2007) via prompting writers to check points that they might overlook (ibid, 2007). Moreover, when the teacher decides to use PF checklists, he/she can either design a format that suits his/her students or adapt one of the existing formats. Also, it is important to introduce the PF checklist as the training stage so as to familiarize students to using it (Min, 2006).

Another important point to consider when implementing peer feedback technique in the writing course is giving students different focuses for peer feedback at different stages of the

writing process (Lee, 2017). Some teachers limit the use of PF to the final stage of the writing process i.e., editing; however, it can be used at different stages of the writing process. For instance, in the pre-writing stage, students can revise their peers' outlines; while in the revising stage, peers could give each other comments about the content and organization. At the editing stage, students can help their mates edit their final drafts (ibid, 2017). Thus, it should be pointed out that "peer feedback can hardly be effective if it is conducted in product-oriented writing classrooms"; therefore, "peer feedback and process writing should go hand in hand" (ibid, 2017, p. 96).

Finally, in addition to all the above mentioned procedures, teachers, especially if they are dealing with less experienced or less proficient students, can use teacher feedback to model and supplement peer feedback. This could be achieved through face-to-face conferencing or written commentaries on final drafts of students (Lee, 2017).

3.5 Conclusion

In conclusion, the use of peer feedback in the EFL writing course is "not an innovation" yet it is "not readily embraced" by EFL teachers, also some EFL students' resistance to this feedback method still presents a real challenge for teachers in EFL contexts (Yim & Cho, 2016 as cited in Lee, 2017, p. 98). Therefore, EFL students need "a significant amount of initial persuasion" of the value and benefits of peer feedback (Rollinson, 2005, p. 26). Besides, even if the teachers are convinced of the importance of this feedback method and approve its integration in the EFL writing classroom, they will struggle with a lot of contextual issues during its implementation (Lee, 2017). Therefore, in this research work, peer feedback will be implemented in the EFL writing course through cooperative learning classroom instruction so as to mitigate the risks that accompany its implementation.

Conclusion

The first chapter of this thesis was devoted to the discussion of EFL writing, EFL students' writing errors and the different methods of responding to students' writing errors; thus, the chapter comprised three sections. The first section, which was entitled "EFL writing", was concerned mainly with exploring the nature of the writing skill and highlighting its importance for EFL students; it also accounted for the major challenges that EFL students face when learning this essential skill. Additionally, this section traced back the development of the EFL writing theory and discussed the main approaches of teaching writing in the EFL context via pointing out the strengths and weaknesses of each approach. While the second section of the present chapter dealt with EFL students' writing errors. It started with tracing back the emergence and the development of Errors Analysis as an independent field of research and highlighted its importance for EFL teaching theory. Then, the EFL students writing errors and their significance were discussed and the different taxonomies and classifications of errors were represented. As for the last section, it was devoted to the discussion of the different feedback methods used in responding to EFL students' writing errors with main focus on peer feedback since it is the technique used in the empirical study. Hence, the benefits and drawbacks of this technique were listed and practical measures for its implementation were suggested.

CHAPTER TWO:

Cooperative Learning in the EFL Writing Classroom

Introduction

In spite of the various teaching/learning theories, methods and techniques that appeared within the last decade, university teaching seems to be locked in the traditional lecturing mode. Lately, many of the modern teaching methods such as collaborative, active and cooperative learning have proved their efficacy at both theoretical and academic levels; however, researchers (Faust & Paulson, 1998; Weimer, 2008; Fink, 2004) asserted that university teachers still show resistance and reluctance to abandon the traditional lecture mode and shift into cooperative learning instruction (Jones & Jones, 2008). In fact, the reason behind this resistance and reluctance is their belief that this instruction will be an alternative to, rather than an enhancement of the academic lecture (Faust & Paulson, 1998). Therefore, in the second chapter of the present thesis cooperative learning instruction will be presented and its main principles will be pointed out. Moreover, the implementation of this instruction in the university classroom in general and in the writing courses particularly will be highlighted and the studies that investigated its effectiveness will be accounted for and discussed.

1. Towards Defining Cooperative Learning

During the 70s, cooperative learning emerged as a significant teaching instruction in the field of foreign language education. It stemmed from progressive researches in language acquisition theories such as communicative language teaching approach, social constructivism and social interdependence theory (Johnson & Johnson, 2008). Cooperative learning also has its roots in scientific and well-developed language research areas such as "humanistic education, experiential learning, systemic-functional linguistics, and psycholinguistically motivated class-oriented research" (Nunan, 1992, p.1). Since its emergence, cooperative learning attained the attention of language teachers, researchers and applied linguists because of the pedagogical and psychological rational of its application in language classrooms and the possible benefits of its integration in ESL and EFL classrooms.

The term cooperative learning is widely used to describe any situation where students work together in small groups; however, this is not the right use of the term. Also, because cooperative learning is largely debated among scholars, there are many definitions of this instruction method which have points in common but each stresses specific elements over the others. According to Johnson, Johnson & Smith (1991) cooperative learning is an instruction that involves students working in small "carefully structured" groups to achieve a common goal with the aim of maximizing their own and each other's learning (p. 12). Similarly, Jolliffe

(2007) stated that "in essence cooperative learning requires pupils to work together in small groups to support each other to improve their own learning and that of others" (p. 39). It is evident, after considering these two definitions, that cooperative learning is much more complicated than just placing students in groups and asking them to collaborate with each other. Furthermore, one of the basic premises of cooperative learning is that students' knowledge is constructed through interaction with their peers (Johnson et al, 1991). This element was validated by Mandal (2009) who asserted that "in the field of language, cooperative learning values the interactive view of language, which is known as developed combination of structural and functional views of language" (p. 98).

According to Oslen and Kagan (1992) cooperative learning is an educational group activity in which learning depends on "socially structured exchange of information" between students in groups while each learner is accountable for his/her own learning and is stimulated to increase the learning of others (p. 8). Accordingly, Mandal (2009) defined cooperative learning as an instructional classroom strategy that is based upon the human instinct of cooperation. It also depends on "the utilization of the psychological aspects of cooperation and competition for circular transaction and students learning" (p. 97). Therefore, in order to achieve a real cooperation between students and make them responsible for their own and each other's learning, CL instruction is built upon collective rewarding. That is to say, when group is rewarded rather than individuals, students will be eager to help each other because it is the only way to accomplish the common goal and be rewarded. Accordingly, Slavin (1980) defines cooperative learning as placing students in small groups in order to accomplish a common goal, the students then are given rewards and recognition based on the group's performance. On the other hand, Goodsell, Maher & Tinto (1992) defined it as gathering students in groups of two or more who work collaboratively to achieve an understanding of a topic, find solutions or create meaning or product. Another definition of cooperative learning was suggested by Artz & Newman (1990) who perceived it as an instruction that implies the use of small groups of students who work together as a team to achieve a common goal, solve a problem or complete a task. Although these definitions depict the essence of cooperative learning which is the cooperation of group members to achieve their common goal; however, they are still in the more general category of group work or collaborative learning.

Therefore, contrary to the common belief cooperative learning is not a mere group work. This is because group work does not guarantee the equal participation of group members, sometimes some students benefit from a free ride without contributing to the group's work and

achievement. Therefore, not all students working collaboratively or in groups or sitting round a table are engaged in a cooperative learning experience since the latter implies specific criteria to be described so. Hence, Johnson, Johnson & Smith (1991) have set five pillars for cooperative learning that distinguishes it from other teaching instructions such as collaborative or active learning; these pillars are: positive interdependence, individual accountability, face-to-face promotive interaction, interpersonal and small group skills and group processing. As these pillars are of great importance and they are the essence of cooperative learning, they will be discussed and analysed in order to have a better understanding of this instruction method.

2. The Five Pillars of Cooperative Learning

Cooperative learning instruction can be distinguished from the other collaborative and group work classroom structures through the five pillars of CL that characterize a group work as "cooperative".

2.1 Positive Interdependence

The first element that guarantees a real and effective cooperation between students is positive interdependence which implies that all group members should depend on one another to accomplish the goal, and if one of them fails to do his/her part of the work, all his/her group mates will suffer from the results of that failure (Johnson & Johnson, 1987). Hence, students "are required to work in a way so that each group member needs the others to complete the task" which gives the feeling of "one for all and all for one" (Jollife, 2007, p. 3). Thus, teachers are required to arrange classroom tasks in a manner that makes students come to believe that they sink or swim together; they must also have the conviction that they are not only required to complete their part of the work but to ensure that the others do likewise (Gillies, 2003). Accordingly, Johnson & Johnson (2008) pointed that "knowing that one's performance affects the success of group mates seems to create responsibility forces that increase one's efforts to achieve", obviously this will increase productivity among group members. Also, research findings show that students working under positive goal interdependence achieved higher performance than those working individualistically and had the opportunity to interact with classmates (ibid, 2008). Hence, when positive interdependence is effectively established between the group members, students conceive that their efforts are indispensable for the success of the group and realize that it is not possible to get a "free ride"; moreover, they will feel that their contribution is unique which will make them increase their efforts (Kerr, 1983 as cited in Johnson & Johnson, 2008). Therefore, strong positive interdependence is achieved

when all the members of the group work together effectively and successfully (Kagan, 1994). Furthermore, Johnson et al (1991) declared that positive interdependence describes the degree to which group members are motivated to help each other to succeed. Hence, it is no surprise that positive interdependence is considered the foundation and the heart of cooperative learning given the many significant effects it has on both students' academic achievement and social relationships (Graham, 2005; Kagan, 1994). Some of these benefits were reported by a number of studies which have been conducted so as to investigate the effectiveness of CL and which yielded very positive results concerning the implementation of positive interdependence in EFL classes.

First, Positive Interdependence fosters higher achievement and better productivity than does the other competitive and individualistic classroom strategies (Johnson et al, 1991). Second, Positive Interdependence does not only teach students how to be an effective and collaborative group member; yet, it also makes them enhance their individuality and social identity (Johnson & Johnson, 1987). Third, Positive Interdependence establishes mutual advantages for students. At first, it creates a sense of collective responsibility that makes them care not only about their personal performance and success but also about that of their group mates. Then, it creates a positive and supportive social environment which leads to the promotion of students' motivation, self-confidence, mutual trust and more importantly higher academic achievement (Nunan, 1992). Furthermore, positive interdependence "does more than simply motivate individuals to try harder, it facilitates the development of new insights and discoveries through promotive interaction" (Gabbert et al, 1986; Johnson & Johnson 1981; Skon et al, 1981 as cited in Johnson & Johnson, 2008). Finally, Nam Zellmer (2011) stated that depending on Positive Interdependence in educational settings can enhance group achievement via the emphasis on group rewards, motivation and enhanced understanding of role activities. It also leads to positive conflict management which develops group effectiveness and cohesiveness (Deutsch, 1977).

2.2 Individual Accountability

Individual accountability or personal accountability is a crucial element of cooperative learning. It is based upon a strong sense of community where each member of the group is required to do his/her part of the work towards the achievement of the common set goal and is accountable for the mastery of all the learned content.

Gillies (2003) declared that individual accountability "occurs when members accept responsibility for their part of the task and actively facilitates the work of the others in the group" (p.38). Johnson and Johnson (2008) link individual accountability to positive interdependence which creates "responsibility forces" that make group members assume responsibility and accountability for completing their assigned part of the work as well as facilitating the work of their group mates. Generally, when students feel that their individual performance affects the outcomes of others, they automatically feel more responsible and consequently work harder. Particularly, it is the feeling that they will not only fail themselves if they do not do well but they will also fail their group mates as well, which makes them increase their effort. Accordingly, "the shared responsibility created by positive interdependence adds the concept of "ought" to group members' motivation." Consequently, this will make students feel that "one ought to do one's part, pull one's weight, contribute and satisfy peer norms" (Johnson 2003; Johnson & Johnson, 1989, 2005 as cited in Johnson & Johnson 2008, p.22). Therefore, Individual Accountability is very important to make cooperative learning work in educational settings in general and EFL classroom particularly as it enables group members to identify the students who need more support and assistance. This will result in achieving one of the main purposes of CL which is to strengthen every member of the group (Graham, 2005).

Furthermore, when conducting cooperative group work tasks teachers should not confuse between group accountability and individual accountability. Group accountability takes place when the global performance of the group is assessed "and the results are given back to all group members to compare against a standard of performance" (Johnson & Johnson, 2008, p.22). While individual or personal accountability concerns situations where the output of each student is evaluated, then the results are given back to the individual and the group so as to compare against a standard of performance. Eventually, "the member is held responsible by group mates for contributing his or her fair share to the group's success" (ibid, 2008, p.23). In another line of argument, Hooper et al (1989) found that implementing CL in language classroom resulted in higher achievement when individual accountability was effectively structured than when it was not. Similarly, the findings of Archer-Kath et al (1994) research on CL showed that the increase of individual accountability among group members resulted in a noticeable positive interdependence between group mates. Hence, teachers should make sure that not only group members are working cooperatively, yet every student takes personal responsibility for doing his/her part of the job effectively.

Finally, there are many techniques that teachers can use to structure individual accountability, like giving members of the group questions or a test to answer individually. Also, they can choose one student randomly to represent the whole group. In addition to that, teachers may ask one member of the group to teach what he/she has learned to the whole class (Johnson et al. 1991). Depending on these techniques, teachers can ensure that all members of the group are involved in the learning process and that no student can "hitch a ride" on the work of his group mates. Accordingly, Johnson & Johnson (1990) explained that Individual accountability can be established in two ways. First, it can be established via structuring for positive interdependence among the members of the group in a way that makes them feel responsible for facilitating each other's work. Second, individual accountability can be set when teachers establish the requirements for Individual Accountability so that each member's contribution to the group's efforts can be identified. As a result, teachers ensure that each student is responsible for doing their assigned work in the group (as cited in Gillies, 2003).

Furthermore, Johnson & Johnson (2008) added another important factor that has a direct impact on individual accountability which is group size. They indicated that when the group size gets larger "members are less likely to see their own personal contribution to the group as being important to the group's chances of success" (Kerr, 1989; Olson, 1965 as cited in Johnson & Johnson 2008, p.23). Additionally, large group size has a negative effect on communication among members. It was noticed that when group size increases, students tend to communicate less frequently, which will consequently reduce the amount of information used in arriving at decisions (Gerard et al, 1965; Indik, 1965 as cited in Johnson & Johnson, 2008). Hence, the smaller the size of the group is, the greater individual accountability (Messik & Brewer 1983 as cited in Johnson & Johnson, 2008).

2.3 Face-to-Face Promotive Interaction

Face-to-face promotive interaction is promoted by positive interdependence. According to Johnson & Johnson (2008), "positive interdependence results in individuals promoting each other's productivity and achievement". Hence, promotive interaction exists when individuals encourage and assist each other's efforts to achieve the group's goal (Johnson & Johnson, 2008, p. 23). Therefore, face-to-face promotive interaction can be defined as the situation in which all members of the group help and encourage one another to learn, and although some of the work can be performed individually, members of the group should sit

together and interact with one another, clarify, provide feedback, teach and support one another (Johnson & Johnson, 1987).

It is needless to say that face-to-face promotive interaction has significant effects on individual members of the learning groups as it increases their motivation towards developing their productivity as well as the productivity of the others. Moreover, it decreases the levels of stress and anxiety among students. It also encourages students to challenge the conclusions of each member which results in improving the quality of peer feedback and decision making (Johnson & Johnson, 1987). However, in order for it to be established, face-to-face promotive interaction requires the existence of specific characteristics between the group members:

1- Group members are required to provide each other with efficient and effective assistance.

2- Students belonging to the same group should exchange resources, information and materials in addition to any other tools that may facilitate the execution of the task.

3- Group mates are asked to provide each other with feedback so as to enhance the subsequent performance of their assigned activities. They are also required to advocate the exertion of effort to attain their common goals.

4- Individuals of the same group should test and argue about each other's views, conclusions and reasoning so as to promote better insight into the problem that is being discussed or solved.

5- Students ought to behave in trusting and trust worthy ways (Johnson & Johnson, 2008).

2.4 Interpersonal and Small Group Skills

When they work in cooperative learning groups, students are asked and encouraged to develop social skills necessary to achieve effective communication among group members and efficient conflict resolution and problem solving (Johnson et al, 1991). Hence, the more socially skilful students are, the higher productivity they will achieve (Graham, 2005). On the other hand, students who are not equipped with the social skills necessary for group communication can block the cooperative efforts of the group. Consequently, groups who acquire effective social skills will survive group conflicts that usually hamper the group from reaching agreement and erase the positive effect of cooperation, especially if the conflict is the result of personal differences or disagreements. However, group mates who have a solid social connection often engage in task-related conflicts which result in higher cognitive complexity (Curseau, Janssen, & Raab, 2011).

Johnson & Johnson (2008) declared that "interpersonal and small group skills form the basic nexus among individuals". Hence, if students are to work together collaboratively and cope with the stress and pressure of doing so, "they must have a modicum of these skills" (p.24). Therefore, before students are required to achieve a high level of cooperation, they must be taught interpersonal and small group skills and should be motivated to use them. In order to accomplish shared objectives, group members must become more acquainted with and trust one another, communicate precisely and clearly, acknowledge and assist one another and settle conflicts in a constructive manner (Johnson & Johnson, 2006).

Gillies (2003) distinguished between interpersonal skills and small group skills. He considered that interpersonal skills facilitate communication between the members of the group and they include:

- Listening carefully to each other when having a group discussion.
- Respecting mates' perspectives on discussed issues.
- Expressing ideas freely without fear of reporting comments.
- Assuming responsibility of personal behaviours.
- Providing constructive feedback to others' work.

While small group skills facilitate the contribution in cooperative learning tasks; they include:

- Exchanging turns to present ideas or share information.
- Dividing tasks equitably among group members.
- Settling conflicts and disagreements peacefully.
- Ensuring that all members of the group participate in making decisions that may affect the group.

Certainly, both interpersonal and small group skills are indispensable to promote students' social interactions and assist them resolve conflicts successfully.

As for the positive effects, the appropriate use of social skills can have on student's motivation and academic achievement, empirical studies on the long term implementation of cooperative teams have revealed very positive results. Lew & Mesch (1986) demonstrated that effective establishment of positive interdependence and interpersonal and small group skills fostered students' achievement and motivation (as cited in Johnson & Johnson, 2008). Similarly, Archer-Kath et al (1994) discovered that giving students individual feedback about the frequency of their engagement in targeted social skills had more positive impact in

enhancing students' academic achievement than had group feedback (as cited in Johnson & Johnson, 2008). Furthermore, training students on effective use of social skills will not only promote higher achievement; yet, it establishes positive and healthy relationships between group mates. Accordingly, Putnam et al (1989) found that when students were trained on appropriate use of interpersonal skills, and were observed, then were given individual feedback that documented how frequently they engaged in these skills, students' relationships became better (as cited in Johnson & Johnson, 2008). Gillies and Ashman (1996), in a study that investigated the effects of training in interpersonal and small group skills on students' interactions and achievement, found that students who received a training in cooperative learning, had better social skills and used language that was more inclusive of others. They also assisted their group mates with detailed explanations while students who were not trained on using these skills failed to cooperate and assist each other in the same manner. Another positive effect of interpersonal skills that was noticed among students of the trained groups was increased autonomy and higher academic achievement. These positive outcomes ensure that when students were taught how to interact with each other successfully, they were more encouraged and supported. Consequently, they were "more willing to work together on their problem solving activities" (as cited in Gillies, 2003, p.38). Accordingly, Johnson & Johnson (1996) stated that students who acquired interpersonal and small group skills in cooperative learning setting were able to use these skills successfully in real conflict situations. Moreover, they were able to generalize them to conflict situations that took place outside the classroom such as those at home. Furthermore, results of empirical research have proved that the integration of social and small group skills in the school curriculum resulted in higher academic outcomes. Stevahn et al (1997) declared that students who received conflict resolution training performed better than their untrained peers both in the reliable information they acquired and the interpretations and conclusions they deduced (as cited in Gillies, 2003).

2.5 Group Processing

Group processing is the last element in the five pillars of cooperative learning. It involves group members reflecting on their common goal, discussing what has been achieved and how it was done and making necessary changes to achieve a more effective functioning in the future. Johnson & Johnson (2008) defined it as "reflecting on a group session to: (a) describe what member actions were helpful and unhelpful and (b) make decisions about what actions to continue or change" (p. 25). On the other hand, Gillies (2003) considered it as "giving group members the opportunity to reflect on the learning process" (p. 39). He also declared that

students' discussions of the learning process and achievement of goals have significant academic and social benefits. Therefore, several studies have documented the positive effect of group processing on students' achievement. Yegar et al (1986) investigated the impact of using group processing in enhancing students' achievement within an experiment that consisted of three learning groups. The first group's members worked cooperatively and discussed what they have done well and what should be improved to achieve better group functioning while the members of the second group were working cooperatively but without any group processing. As for the third group, students were working individually. The results of the study indicated that the members of the first group (high, medium and low achieving participants) achieved better results (concerning daily achievement, post-instructional achievement and retention measures) than students in the two other groups (as cited in Johnson & Johnson, 2008). Similarly, another study held by Putnam et al (1989), which compared between cooperation with social skills training and group processing and cooperation without social skills training and group processing, revealed that students in cooperative groups that involved social skills training and group processing developed more positive relationships. Furthermore, this positive atmosphere and social interaction between students continued to post-instructional and free time situations. Also, Johnson et al (1990) declared that high school students, who were member in cooperative learning groups that involved teacher and group processing, demonstrated better individual and group problem-solving performance than students in cooperative groups that did not involve teacher or group processing, and students who worked individually. Therefore, group processing is an indispensable element of cooperative learning instruction as it has great positive impact on students' achievement.

To conclude, it should be noted, after discussing the five pillars of cooperative learning, that CL is not simply gathering pupils in small groups and allowing them to work together. Also, it is not giving an assignment to group members, where one or two students do all the work and the other group members earn the mark. Furthermore, CL is beyond assigning a project to a group in which students divide the tasks and work individually on their part of the project. Cooperative learning is a classroom instruction in which students work in highly and carefully structured small groups, where cooperative learning pillars coexist to create a positive and effective CL environment. Nevertheless, the term cooperative learning is used interchangeably with other terms such as collaborative learning and active learning because of the common points between these concepts. Hence, a distinction should be made between cooperative learning and other terms that are usually used synonymously to it.

3. The Difference between Cooperative Learning and Collaborative Learning

As mentioned previously, the terms cooperative learning and collaborative learning are used synonymously not only by non-specialists but also by some teachers and language practitioners as both of these classroom instructions involve students working in small groups. However, even though the two methods are student-centred, depend on peer learning and students' discussions, a lot of differences exist between them.

First of all, the difference between the two concepts springs from the assumptions of the two methods to cover their emphases and implementations (Bruffee, 1995). On the one hand, cooperative learning is built upon the assumption that competition may hamper learning. However collaborative learning, on the other hand, originated with the speculation that systematic authority structure might hinder learning. Hence, since they started from different assumptions, cooperative learning and collaborative learning have different emphasis. While cooperative learning emphasizes positive interdependence among group members and individual accountability, collaborative learning focuses on group members' autonomy over structure. Consequently, cooperative learning is built upon elements that are less important or with no importance in collaborative learning such as goal interdependence and outcome interdependence. Also, students' responsibility of assisting each other and collective accountability are important elements of CL that are not stressed in collaborative learning. Another difference between cooperative learning and collaborative learning that should be highlighted is the mechanisms used in group formation. In cooperative learning group formation is systematic, well-studied and pre-instructional while in collaborative groups it is spontaneous and done during the session (Johnson et al, 1991; Bruffee, 1995). Similarly, Panitz (1997) declared that cooperative learning is the most structured approach to group learning whereas collaborative learning is less structured. Furthermore, group structuring in cooperative learning is decided and planned by the teacher while in collaborative learning, which has an autonomous nature; students are the governing body that takes group structuring decisions.

4. The Types of Cooperative Learning Groups

Cooperative learning is a classroom instruction that can be applied to teach any lesson in any subject and for all kinds of students whether they are children or adults, studying in public, private schools or institutions (Johnson & Johnson, 2008). Hence, teachers have only to rethink of their lessons and restructure them to be cooperative. Also, they should choose the

type of cooperative learning group that suits their teaching/learning situation, their class size, students' attitudes and the objectives of their lesson. Therefore, when planning their lessons, teachers can choose from the three distinct categories of cooperative learning groups, namely: informal, formal and base groups, or they can adopt the integrated groups method.

4.1 Informal Cooperative Learning Groups

It is the simplest type of gathering students in small groups as it can be performed on the spot. Johnson & Johnson (2008) defined it as "having students work together to achieve a joint learning goal in temporary, ad-hoc groups that last from a few minutes to one class period" (p. 29). The objective of using informal cooperative learning groups during a lecture is to grasp students' attention and make them focus on the content to be learned, establish a classroom mood that helps students learn a specific material, ensure that students understand and rehearse the learned information, solve problems related to the lesson or a concept that is being covered in the lecture, summarize what was learned during the session or to give a closure to an instructional session. Hence, if the teacher aims to achieve one of these objectives, he/she can opt for a pause at any moment during the lesson and have his/her students get into small learning groups to discuss a topic, go back over their notes to define a concept or work out a lesson related problem.

In order to fulfil their set goals, informal cooperative groups must be implemented effectively. Thus, teachers should consider two important aspects of using informal cooperative learning groups: First, the instruction has to be explicit and precise. Second, assign the groups to produce a certain product at the end of the group work such as a written answer (Johnson & Johnson, 2008). Accordingly, cooperative learning groups if implemented appropriately can involve students in the lesson and facilitate understanding. They also provide the opportunity for teachers to move round the class and listen to their students' discussions and assess their understanding. Informal cooperative learning groups are also an effective tool to increase students' individual accountability for participating in classroom discussions (ibid, 2008).

4.2 Formal Cooperative Learning Groups

Formal cooperative learning groups are composed of students who work together from one session period to several weeks so as to achieve common learning objectives and fulfil certain tasks or assignments cooperatively (Johnson et al, 1998). Formal groups are suitable for complex tasks that need longer periods of time to be achieved and require students to produce reports or essays since this type of group is more structured and the teacher has the opportunity

to determine the size and the composition of the group and take all the pre-instructional decisions according to his/her classroom criteria.

Therefore, when implementing formal cooperative learning groups in their sessions, teachers have four main tasks: First, teachers are required to make important pre-instructional decisions such as formulating both academic and social skills objectives, determining the size of the groups and the method of assigning students to groups as well as assigning roles to each group member and arranging the room and the materials needed for completing the assignment. Second, teachers should explain the instructional task and cooperative structure. This is achieved through a sequence of steps: (1) the teacher explains the assignment to his/her students and clarifies the criteria of success; (2) he/she structures positive interdependence and individual accountability among group members; (3) he/she should clearly identify the social skills and behaviours he/she expects his/her students to use and stress inter-group cooperation. Third, when the formal group cooperation is taking place, teachers are required to monitor students' learning and provide help to their students so as to complete the assignment successfully and use the targeted interpersonal and social skills effectively. Finally, teachers should assess their students' learning and help them reflect on their own learning and to which extent their groups functioned appropriately. Hence, in order to achieve this final stage, teachers should: (1) put a closure to their lesson (2) evaluate their students' outcomes (3) direct learners to discuss how effectively their groups functioned and put plans for future improvements (4) celebrate students' hard work (Johnson & Johnson, 2008).

4.3 Base Cooperative Learning Groups

Johnson & Johnson (2008) defined base groups as "long-term, heterogeneous cooperative learning groups with stable membership" (p. 31). These groups are usually formed at the beginning of the year/term and remain the same during the course which enables students to develop long-term, supportive relationships. Therefore, students have lots of responsibilities towards each other, such as: making sure that all the members of the group are achieving a high academic outcome (goal interdependence), ensuring that every member in the group is making an effort and he/she is accountable for his/her learning (individual accountability) and assisting one another during the learning process and providing support and encouragement for group members (promotive interaction). The teacher's role is crucial to guarantee the effective functioning of cooperative base groups. He/she is responsible for: (1) forming heterogeneous groups of three or four students; (2) arranging and scheduling group meetings; (3) creating agendas/routines for base group students to follow during their meetings; (4) ensuring the

implementation of the five pillars of cooperative learning; (5) asking students to periodically assess and reflect on the effectiveness of their base groups (ibid, 2008). Johnson & Johnson (2008) explained the benefits of implementing cooperative base groups as follow:

> The longer a cooperative group exists, the more caring their relationships will tend to be, the greater the social support they will provide for each other, the more committed they will be to each other's success, and the more influence members will have on each other. Permanent cooperative base groups provide the arena in which caring and committed relationships can be created that provide the social support needed to improve attendance, personalize the educational experience, increase achievement, and improve the quality of school life (p. 32)

4.4 Integrated Groups Method

Teachers may use the three types of cooperative learning groups together in an integrated method of cooperative learning groups (Johnson & Johnson, 1999). The teacher can start the session with a base group meeting followed by short lecture in which he/she opts for informal cooperative learning groups' arrangement. After that, the teacher introduces the lesson with a cooperative learning instruction. When the session approaches its end, another short lecture can be delivered with the use of informal cooperative learning groups. Finally, the session ends with a base group meeting (Johnson & Johnson, 2008). It should be noted that teachers who are not acquainted with the use of cooperative learning instruction are advised to use only one type of the three groups at first; when they get familiar with the instruction, they can opt for other types of cooperative groups or use the integrated groups method.

To conclude, it is evident that gathering students in cooperative learning groups, no matter their type, will have positive effects on students' outcomes and social relationships. Furthermore, "the academic and social benefits that accrue to students who work cooperatively to achieve a common goal are unequivocal" (Cohen, 1994, as cited in Gillies, 2003, p 40). In addition to that, Johnson & Johnson (1999) argued that it is highly confirmed that cooperative learning is one of the "strongest principles of social and organizational psychology" (p, 72). However, making cooperative learning groups work effectively and productively is a challenging task for teachers who have to consider several issues such as how to form the groups, what roles to give to students within the groups, how much time cooperative activities will consume, and many other issues that can make preparing cooperative learning lessons a daunting task for teachers. Therefore, it is important to account for the instructional issues in

establishing cooperative learning groups and strategies to make this instruction applicable in EFL classrooms.

5. Strategies for Facilitating Cooperative Learning Implementation in the EFL Classroom

Cooperative learning is "one of the most heavily researched areas of education" that has yielded tremendous positive effects on students' "achievement, interpersonal relationships and health and social competence" (Joffllie, 2007, p. 6). However, this teaching/learning instruction that "has such an extensive pedigree" is still being marginalized by some syllabus designers and teachers in EFL contexts (ibid, 2007, p. 8). The reason for this lack of interest and sometimes lack of success in cooperative learning is because this latter can be 'problematic' since it requires students to interact, solve problems, comment on each other's work, produce texts …etc, which may make teachers "feel a loss of control over a class" (ibid, 2007, p.8). Moreover, some teachers have other issues that are related to students' assessment and evaluation as these two operations become more difficult when students work in groups. Therefore, it is evident that asking students to work in groups and providing some cooperative learning structures and activities will not ensure the success of the learning process as the effective functioning of CL lies on a clear programme of teaching where both the teacher and the students play crucial roles. Furthermore, researchers and experts in the field of education and EFL teaching have suggested some strategies for EFL teachers that can facilitate the implementation of CL in the writing courses; these strategies and procedures are discussed below.

5.1 Training

Training students to work together is a fundamental factor for the success of cooperative group work (Johnson & Johnson, 1990). This view is validated by the empirical studies that investigated the importance of group training for the effective functioning of CL groups. Gillies and Ashman (1996) declared that learners who received training on cooperative learning techniques were more cooperative and offered more help and guidance to each other and obtained better learning achievements than learners who did not receive any prior training. Furthermore, training students is not restricted to interpersonal and small group skills only; yet, it covers teachers' understanding of how the groups function and how to implement cooperative learning activities in their classrooms (as cited in Gillies, 2003).

Training is also important for teachers; Gillies (2003) declared that "training teachers in the procedures needed to implement cooperative, small-group learning in their classrooms is also crucial for the success of the groups" (p. 41). Accordingly, Lou et al (2000), in a review of a fifty-one studies on the impact of small group learning on different classrooms, found that teachers who were trained on implementing small group instructional strategies, were more skilful in adapting small group instructions in their classrooms and managing instructional problems; also, they were more successful in using and controlling these new instructional techniques than teachers who did not receive any training. Similarly, Gillies (2003) argued that training is crucial for assisting teachers shift to small group cooperative teaching and learn how to use diverse instructional techniques and overcome possible obstacles in managing this instruction method. Thus, training both students and teachers is indispensable for the success of cooperative group learning.

5.2 Group Size

The size of the group plays an important role in the process of cooperative learning and determines the extent to which group work will be effective. Hence, the teacher is required to select the optimal size of the group that preferably should not exceed four students since crowded groups can cause many problems. Accordingly, Gillies (2003) asserted that "groups of three or four members are preferred to larger groups because members cannot opt out of the activity or loaf at others' expense" (p. 41) while small groups help the teacher observe students' work and ensure that all students are involved in the task. Likewise, Shindler (2010) argued that typical cooperative group comprises of two students and the optimum number of students within one group is four. Smith (2000) shared the same view as he declared that the groups that comprise two or three students "maximize the involvement and help create a sense of interdependence and accountability" (p. 8). On the other hand, the use of large groups can result in overlooking and marginalizing some students and reducing interaction among group members.

5.3 Group Composition

Group composition is another important factor that affects the process and the product of cooperative learning groups. Therefore, teachers should be mindful when dividing the class into groups since this pre-instructional step has a significant impact on students' interaction and outcomes. Kagan (1994) argued that the most used group composition in cooperative learning is that of heterogeneous groups which comprise mixed-abilities students of both genders and of

different ethnic and racial backgrounds. The same view was shared by Johnson & Johnson (1994) who noticed that creating cooperative learning groups develops heterogeneity of students in small groups; thus, students have to be involved in groups that are diverse in terms of students' academic ability, social skills, attitudes and personality, gender and race. Accordingly, Webb (1985) found that "in mixed-ability groups, high ability students give more help to their peers than in same-ability groups" (as cited in Gillie, 2003, p. 42). In fact, in such groups, both high-ability and low-ability students are more active and engaged in peer tutoring interaction (ibid, 2003). Similarly, Shindler (2010) declared that gathering students in mixed abilities groups created more interaction opportunities as it allowed excellent students to take the role of peer tutors and slow learners to benefit from their excellent group mates' assistance and feedback. Moreover, "the rationale for heterogeneous groups argues that this produces the greatest opportunities for peer tutoring and support as well as improving cross-race and cross-sex relations and integration" (Kagan, 1994, as cited in Doston, 2001, p. 8). In addition to that, it has a significant impact on the quality of students' discussion and achievement as students who are placed in mixed abilities groups give higher quality explanations to help their mates understand the learned content than those placed in uniform-ability groups (Webb et al, 1998 as cited in Gillies, 2003).

5.4 Assigning Students with Different Roles

Generally, when students are asked to work together in cooperative learning groups, they may feel confused or maybe lost as they do not know what they should do exactly, and sometimes they argue about who should be doing a particular task. Therefore, giving them specific tasks or functions to do within the group will make the group work more organized and will help students assume responsibility of their own actions (Jolliffe, 2007). Hence, there are many roles that could be given to students working in the same group, for instance a student can be a leader, an expert, a gofer (source manager), a reporter, a noise monitor, a time keeper …etc. In fact, it is up to the teacher to choose the types of roles he/she needs in his/her classroom; it also depends on the number of the students in the group, their background and the tasks to be performed by them. Moreover, roles have to be taught in the same way the other CL skills are taught, for instance, "explicit modelling by the teacher and joint definitions with the class would be very beneficial". In addition, the use of role cards would be very effective to identify the students and act as 'cue cards' (ibid, 2007, p. 51). As for the benefits of this CL strategy, Jolliffe (2007, p. 50) declared that assigning students with roles helps to:

- Foster positive interdependence - everyone must play their part if the group is to succeed.

- Help develop team work – teachers can introduce skills and functions needed in a group through the use of assigned roles for specific tasks.

- Assigning roles moves responsibility into the group and away from the teacher.

5.5 Group Task

Cohen (1994) argued that the type of tasks that teachers give to their students determines the type and quality of interaction. Therefore, when they opt for cooperative learning instruction, teachers should choose activities that are applicable within this instruction such as role plays, debates, panel discussions, cooperative writing, games, work at the board…etc. Also, Dörnyei (2001) stressed the importance of tasks' selection for the success of cooperative learning. He argued that teachers are not only required to opt for a variety of tasks; yet, they should also select an interesting and attractive content to keep the students involved since he found that "varying the tasks is important but not even the richest variety will motivate if the content of the task is not attractive to the students-that is, if the task is boring" (p.80). Furthermore, Gillies (2003) declared that "high-level cooperative tasks promote higher reasoning interactions which, in turn, affect the learning that occurs" (p. 44). Accordingly, Crandall (1999) stressed the importance of task quality and considered it crucial for the effectiveness of cooperative learning; he also suggested that the topics have to be diverse, interesting and of different styles and strategies.

Another important factor about tasks is preparing students to do them. Hence, before grouping students and directing them to do the task, teachers are required to prepare their students and make all task related issues clear. Thus, Shindler (2010) declared that "preparing a group of students for a cooperative learning activity is like preparing a team for a game" (p. 231). Similarly, Crandall (1999) pointed out that the success of cooperative learning instruction within FL classes depends on preparing learners for cooperative learning tasks and giving them the opportunity to practice cognitive and linguistic skills and assess each other's work. Moreover, in order to ensure that students engage in the cooperative learning task and achieve the set goal, teachers should not introduce two variables at a time; that is to say, they should "never ask students to process new content and a new process at the same time" (ibid, 1999, p. 231). Also, setting time framework for the tasks is fundamental for the effective functioning of

the groups as students must pace their work to finish the task in the allotted time (Shindler, 2010).

5.6 Structuring Interaction

Interaction among group members is a criterion that determines the success or failure of the cooperative learning task. Therefore, teachers should design group tasks carefully to make sure that all students participate in the interaction among group members. King (1991) argued that teaching students how to use specific guided questioning strategy with their group mates to solve problems related to the studied content makes students engage in an effective process of interaction and ask more strategic questions. The results of King's study also revealed very positive impact of structured interaction on students' performance since guided questioners outperformed the unguided ones on a follow-up written test. Similarly, Gillies (2003) declared that teaching students specific questioning strategies such as guided questioning or scripted interactions and training them to use them in problem solving tasks will make students ask "more strategic and thought-provoking questions and provide more elaborated help" (p. 47). Moreover, it will also make them engage in "more complex knowledge construction and awareness of their problem solving or metacognitive skills that, in turn, enhance learning" (ibid, 2003, p. 47).

5.7 Cooperative Incentive Structure

Cooperative incentive structure also known as reward structure is a significant tool for promoting students' motivation and increasing their engagement in the learning content; thus, it should be clearly fixed before forming the groups. Good & Brophy (2008) considered that reward structure is an effective method to motivate students and mentioned that teachers can choose from a variety of incentives such as marks, gifts, symbolic rewards … etc. Within cooperative reward structure, rewards are distributed equally among members of groups depending on the entire group's outcome.

6. The Models of Cooperative Learning

Cooperative learning instruction can be applied in different ways depending on the nature of the studied subject, the teacher and the students (their background, grade, and level of ability). Hence, cooperative learning has many models that are practiced in languages classrooms around the world; within this thesis, the focus will be on the five primary and widely researched models which include: Learning Together model, Jigsaw model with its variations

(jigsaw II and reverse jigsaw), Team-Game-Tournament model, Student Teams-Achievement Divisions model and Group Investigation model.

6.1 Learning Together (LT)

This model of cooperative learning was introduced by Johnson et al (1991). It implies gathering students in small groups and getting them work cooperatively on assignments. The most important characteristics of this model are task interdependence (while working to achieve shared goal), sharing opinions and materials, and group rewarding. It is also characterized by the diversity of group members in terms of gender, ethnicity, race and achievement. According to Johnson et al (1991) a group work cannot be identified cooperative unless it involves the five pillars of cooperative learning, namely: positive interdependence, individual accountability, face-to-face promotive interaction, interpersonal and small group skills and group processing (See section 3 of this chapter).

6.2 Jigsaw

The jigsaw method was developed by Aronson et al (1978) so as to encourage peer cooperation and tutoring via a jigsaw method that creates positive interdependence among students, which is achieved through assigning specific learning content to individuals in each group and structuring peer interaction among them. In other words, jigsaw model implies dividing students into heterogeneous groups and one member of each group is required to work on a specific portion or section of the task. Then, students with similar content assignments meet together in 'expert groups' to study and discuss their sections. After that, students return to their jigsaw groups to teach their group mates the content of their sections. The final step of this model is a quiz on the studied topic that is performed individually, which makes jigsaw method ideal in maximizing students' individual accountability (Aronson, Stephan, Sikes, Blaney & Snapp, 1978). The founders of this cooperative learning model described it as follows:

> The material to be learned was divided into as many parts as there were group members. Each student learned only one part of the total material and was, in turn, responsible for teaching his part to his group mates. However, each group member was responsible for learning all the curriculum material for testing (Blaney, Stephan, Rosenfield, Aronson, & Sikes, 1977, p. 123)

Furthermore, Mandal (2009) explained the interdependence among group members in jigsaw model by declaring that "the group product cannot be completed unless each member does his or her part, just as a jigsaw puzzle cannot be completed unless each peace is included" (p. 98). Therefore, for an effective implementation of jigsaw model, groups should go through several training sessions to enhance students' communication and tutoring skills. In addition to that, groups supervise their own interpersonal processes through self and peer assessment, group discussions and feedback (Sharan, 1980). Finally, in order to have successful jigsaw groups, teachers are required to form their groups on the basis of academic heterogeneity i.e. groups that are diverse in terms of ethnic background, gender, ability and race. They can also help their students to better understand the studied content via distributing cards that include important information about the lesson (expert sheets) on students then "the jigsaw groups temporarily disband, and counterpart groups are formed consisting of all pupils in the class who received the same card". Then, students in expert groups, depending on the information cards, help each other learn the content and prepare the presentations they will use to teach their mates in the jigsaw group (ibid, 1980, p. 244).

The jigsaw cooperative model has two other variations known as Jigsaw II, developed by Slavin (1980), and Reverse Jigsaw, elaborated by Timothy Heeden (2003). Jigsaw II model requires giving all students common information; then, members of each jigsaw group are assigned with the same topic and each member focuses on a sub-topic. After that, each member is required to be "expert" in his/her sub-topic so as to effectively teach it to his/her group mates. Finally, students take a quiz, on the studied material, individually and the scores are published in a class newsletter. As for the Reverse Jigsaw, it differs from the original jigsaw model in the stage of sub-topics teaching. Within this new model of jigsaw, students in the expert groups teach the learning content to the whole class instead of getting back to their original groups to teach their group mates.

6.3 Team-Game-Tournament (TGT)

This model of cooperation is competitive and depends mainly on classroom reward systems. In essence, TGT method is a cooperative model that replaces interpersonal competition with between-group competitions, which is attained via within group cooperation (Sharan, 1980). Particularly, within this model, the learning content is incorporated into academic competitions held to foster motivation and attract students' attention. Hence, TGT model functions as follows: First, the teacher divides the class into groups of four or five students depending on their ability, that's to say "group composition is intended to reflect a cross-section

of academic ability levels in the class" (ibid, 1980, p. 245). Moreover, groups should include diverse population in terms of gender, ethnicity and race. Secondly, group members are tasked with preparing the group, via peer tutoring, to participate in a learning-game tournament the next day. The preparation for the tournament is done through rehearsing the content presented earlier by the teacher. Thirdly, the tournament begins and the teacher asks the students to join tournament tables, which match three students from different groups with similar ability level. When the game is over, students are ranked and given scores (the student who gets the highest score gets 6 points, the second gets 4 points while the last one gets only 2 points). Finally, the cooperative group scores are obtained by calculating the points that its members gained in the tournament groups. This procedure will certainly maximize "reward interdependence" among group members since the more students cooperate and help each other, the better they will perform in the tournament. Generally, the tournament lasts for approximately 40 minutes; it is held once a week and the questions are usually short answer questions that cover the academic material. Moreover, in order to foster students' motivation for winning the tournament, groups' scores are published in a class newsletter with encouraging comments about the winners at each table (ibid, 1980). Therefore, group contingency reward system is believed to have high motivation value that leads to increasing the chances of students' academic success (Slavin, 1978).

6.4 Student Teams-Achievement Divisions (STAD)

Slavin's Student Teams-Achievement Divisions technique is adapted from GTG method; yet, it eliminates the games and tournament element (Slavin, 1978). STAD focuses on mainly on two basic elements: (a) the review of the previously studied content through peer assistance and (b) rewarding team members through a scoring system conducted by the teacher without engaging learners in tournaments or competitions. The STAD functions as follows: The teacher gives students written assignments on one of the various achievement divisions constructed on the basis of "equal-status achievement membership in light of past performance" (Sharan, 1980, p. 246). Additionally, with the aim of raising students' motivation towards having high grades, students' weekly tests' scores are compared to those of members in same division. Certainly, the implementation of such cooperative model requires a series of carefully structured instructional activities. Usually, these activities appear in a learning cycle that is implemented twice a week and is divided this way: a lecture of teacher/students discussion that last for 40 minutes, teams worksheet study that involves peer-tutoring for another 40 minutes, at last, the session is concluded with a 20-minute quiz that is taken individually (ibid, 1980).

6.5 Group Investigation (GI)

This model, which was developed by Sharan (1980), is considered a progressive process that comprises a sequence of six steps. The first step concerns the selection of subtopics by the students from a unit that is studied by the whole class; they then form task-oriented groups of 2 to 6 members in order to discuss and plan their projects. Groups' formation should depend on academic and ethnic heterogeneity. The second step is the cooperative planning of the learning procedures, the tasks and the goals by the students and the teacher. After that, students in different groups work on the plan of their project and choose their resources, which have to be varied and from both inside and outside the school. The teacher at this stage should observe the progress of each group and offer help if necessary. Then, students analyse and evaluate the information collected in the previous step and discuss about the ways they will summarize it and then present it to the class. The next step is projects' presentations, in which members of groups present their topics and try to make them interesting as much as possible in order to get their classmates attention and involve them in their presentation. The teacher's task at this stage is to monitor and coordinate the presentations. The final step of this process is projects' evaluation by the teacher and students in the form or individual or group assessment or both (Sharan, 1980).

7. Documented Benefits of Cooperative Learning Instruction

Cooperative Learning is a classroom instruction that requires small, heterogeneous groups of students working together for the ultimate aim of solving a given problem or producing a final written passage for the case of learning writing. This instruction, in comparison with many other types of learning/ teaching instructions, has shown a great beneficial impact on EFL students' achievement at both academic and social levels.

First of all, academic achievement is promoted in a significant way through cooperative learning. According to McWham et al. (2003), academic research conducted on cooperative learning has proved that this instruction leads to remarkable academic and cognitive benefits that result in promoting students' learning and achievement. Accordingly, Gillies & Ashman (2003) reported that contrary to individualistic and competitive learning, cooperative learning has a significant positive impact on a variety of dependent variables, namely: academic achievement, productivity, learning motivation, positive relationships with group mates and overcoming stress. Likewise, Hill & Hill (1990) confirmed that CL helped students to achieve higher learning outcomes, develop their thinking skills and deepen their understanding; it also

enabled them promote their leadership skills and build higher self-esteem. Moreover, Harmer (2004) argued that engaging students in CL activities would encourage them to learn from each other enable each one of them to access the others' mind and knowledge. In addition, what makes students achieve this higher academic achievement is not the information and skills they learn from the others only; yet, the knowledge they develop through this CL journey. In that regard, Vygotsky (1997) declared that "what a child can do in cooperation today will enable him to do it alone tomorrow" (p. 188); thus, CL does not only develop students' interdependence; however, it improves their autonomy as well.

Generally, when students work in CL groups, all the classroom activities that they used to perform with the teacher such as, learning from each other, commenting, correcting, collaborating, assisting, criticizing, and all the other actions, are now performed cooperatively within small groups with little interaction from the teacher. All of this according to Woolfolk (2004) promotes the interaction inside the group enabling students with poor language who used to rely mainly on the teacher to be challenged by their peers through contribution and sharing. Similarly, Gabriel (2007) in a study that examined the influence of higher achieving students on improving the achievement and comprehension monitoring of low achieving students indicated that low achieving students did benefit from high achieving ones who helped them improve and consequently get better results in the study's post-test. Moreover, students within CL groups are held accountable for each other, which lead them to make more efforts to achieve and receive group reward and recognition (Slavin, 1980). Hence, they collaborate, discuss and negotiate meaning, agree, disagree, direct each other, remind, clarify, suggest, praise and communicate; as a result, all of these speech acts or language functions are increased in CL (Jacobs, 1996; as cited in Crandall, 1999).

Basically, in traditional teacher-centred teaching classes, the Teacher Talking Time (TTT) is about 80% of the whole session whereas Students Talking Time (STT) is about 20%. Therefore, for a class of 30 students, each student has less than 30 seconds to speak every hour (Lie, 2008). Hence, in CL, Student Talking Time is increased even when Teacher Talking Time remains high. This is so important for learners of foreign languages to produce and articulate as much as they can of the target language in order to be fluent, eloquent and gain a high level of reasoning and generation of new ideas. Accordingly, engaging students in interactions that involve clarifying tasks such as asking questions, reviewing or explaining will make them negotiate more comprehensible input; consequently, this will lead them to adjust the output so as to make it comprehensible for others (Arnold, 1999).

Cooperative Learning groups are heterogeneous in nature in terms of sex, age, level of understanding, cultural background, personality and other individual differences which represent an obstacle for students to work together (Sharan, 1980, 1990, Sharan and Shachar, 1988, Slavin, 1990; as cited in Arnold, 1999). This diversity urges the group members to defy their differences and come up with good social and behavioural skills to promote interpersonal relationships. Hence, they develop a great sense of belonging via caring and respecting each other, establishing new friendships, cooperating with each other rather than competing against one another.

The learner centredness in CL helps the teacher on one hand to circulate freely in the classroom in order to assess and offer help. On the other hand, students feel free as they have time to rehearse and discuss the solutions with each other eliminating stress, fear and anxiety before sharing their answers with the rest of the class. Dornyei (2001) stipulates this saying "Cooperation situations generally have a positive emotional tone, which means that they generate less anxiety and stress than other learning formats" (p.101). Moreover, working within cooperative learning groups boosts students' motivation towards learning the foreign language or acquiring a particular skill such as writing or speaking as it reduces students' anxiety, shyness and fear. Additionally, Dornyei (2001) asserted that "cooperation is also motivating because the knowledge that one's unique contribution is required for the group to succeed increases one's effort (p. 101).

Furthermore, in the process of getting along, group members challenge each other; they argue ideas and opinions so that they unanimously approve the final decision. Also, they evaluate their own strengths and weaknesses then each student reflects them on him/herself which incites self-esteem, worth, and confidence. All of this sharpens and develops their critical thinking skills and cognitive strategies; this can hardly happen in traditional teaching methods (Williams, 2007). In that regard, McWham et al (2003) argued that the development of students' critical thinking skills results in an enhancement of social skills like communication, leadership, problem-solving and delegation. Similarly, Fawcett & Garton (2005) stated that cooperative learning is effective technique for developing students' problem solving skills.

Additionally, among the most important social skills, that work require of schools, and which cooperative learning successfully provides students with are "communication skills, interpersonal skills and initiative" (Dowd & Liedtka, 1994 as cited in Jones, 2008). These skills,

which students have to develop before they enter the business world, can be summarized as follows:

- **Sociability**: it means showing understanding, adaptability and friendliness.
- **Self-management**: to be accurate, motivated, self-controlled, to control thoughts, stress, and time and to set independent goals.
- **Team work**: including open and honest communication, set defined roles, responsibility, common goals above individual ones, and most importantly, team trust.
- **Leadership:** it includes creativity, motivation and the ability to persuade others and challenge existing procedures and policies.
- **Diversity:** to work with diverse people from different backgrounds (ibid, 2008).

Hence, through cooperating with their mates, solving problems, writing cooperatively and working on collective projects, students can develop such skills and get prepared for authentic situations.

To sum up, Slavin (1983) emphasizes the benefits of cooperative learning over traditional methods via saying that

> … the research done to the present has shown enough positive effects of cooperative learning, on a variety of outcomes, to force us to re-examine traditional instructional practices. We can no longer ignore the potential power of the peer group, perhaps the one remaining free resource for improving schools. We can no longer see the class as 30 or more individuals whose only interactions are unstructured or off-task. On the other hand, at least for achievement, we now know that simply allowing students to work together is unlikely to capture the power of peer group to motivate students to perform (p. 128)

8. The Implementation of Cooperative Learning in the University Classroom

Cooperative learning instruction has proved its efficiency in achieving higher academic achievement over the other competitive and individualistic structures (Johnson et al, 1998; 2000; 2007; Johnson & Johnson 1989; Salvin, 1996; Springer et al, 1998) ;however, the majority of studies ,that tackled the subject matter, focused on its use within primary and secondary school situations (Herrmann, 2013), and cooperative learning remained "underutilized method of instruction at the college level" (Jones & Jones, 2008, p. 63). In fact,

"due to the expert nature of higher education, much evidence suggests that many college professors still cling to the notion of expounding knowledge to their students rather than engaging them to discovering such knowledge through active learning" (Ediger, 2001; Murry & Murry, 1992; Felder, 1992 as cited in Jones & Jones, 2008, p. 62).

Accordingly, in his study, Weimer (2008) pointed out that 76 % of university teachers, who were questioned about the teaching method they used in their classes, said that they employed traditional lecture mode. It is evident that it is not possible to "advocate the complete abandonment of lecturing"; however, the use of lecture as the only mode of instruction causes problems (Faust & Paulson, 1998, p.4) such as passivity and lack of engagement among university students. Hence, with the increasing awareness of the need for a more motivating teaching instructional methods (Herrmann, 2013), cooperative learning was introduced as one of the solutions to promote students' engagements in the process of learning and therefore enhance the learning opportunities at the university classroom. Therefore, "in recent years, the scholarly interest in cooperative learning has increased in higher education research" (Cvanagh, 2011; Hammond et al., 2010; Hillyard et al., 2010 as cited in Herrmann, 2013, p.176). Thus, the effectiveness of this instruction in the university classroom should be discussed.

8.1 The Effectiveness of Cooperative Learning in the University Classroom

The majority of cooperative learning research studies, conducted at the university level, have reported positive results on the effectiveness of this instruction method (Felder & Brent, 2007). Moreover, the positive outcomes do not cover only the cognitive side, yet they include the social side as well. Hence, the benefits of using cooperative learning instruction in higher education are pointed out and carefully analysed in order to explore the effectiveness of this instruction when utilized in the university classroom.

First of all, Johnson, Johnson and Smith (1998) declared that since 1924 till 1997, more than 168 studies have proved that cooperative learning is effective for students over 18 years old. Second, students, working in a highly structured cooperative learning environment, showed more interest, understanding and mastery of the studied content than students working in competitive and individualistic environments (Johnson, Johnson & Stanne, 2000). Third, cooperative learning does not only improve the cognitive outcomes; however, it helps enhancing the affective ones as well. Students taught in a cooperative environment developed communication skills and teamwork skills; they also exhibited positive attitudes about the learning experience, the studied subject and the university. (Spinger, Stanne & Donovan, 1998; Johnson, Johnson & Smith, 1998; Towns et al, 2000). Moreover, according to Frederick (1987)

cooperative learning is significantly effective in large classes, which is the case in most of university classes especially lectures of undergraduates' classes. Therefore, when using small cooperative learning groups, instructors will overcome the challenges they usually face in teaching large classes such as opening a class discussion, monitoring the class, or even providing feedback (Weimer, 1987; Cooper & Mueck, 1990). Finally, in their study Active Learning in the College Classroom, Faust and Paulson (1998) reported that the use of active learning techniques within a cooperative learning environment is a useful and effective teaching method that can be applied in different university faculties as they declared that "the fact that a chemistry professor and a philosophy professor both can successfully employ the techniques…speaks well for the university of this teaching pedagogy" (ibid, p.19). When professor Paulson compared the classical lecture method he was using to teach organic chemistry for majors during the period 1984-1993 and the cooperative learning shift he made during the period 1994- 1998, Paulson found out that the overall retention rate increased from 0.38 to 0.75. Moreover, Paulson reported that students who were taught within an active learning instruction had better performance in laboratory sections of their course in terms of both average and retention rate. Whereas for professor Faust in the two introductory philosophy courses that he teaches 91 % of 700 students from five large lecture sections claimed that they benefited from group projects and their academic achievement has increased. In addition to the enhancement of their leaning outcomes, when students were asked about the positive aspects of cooperative learning, they listed social and psychological benefits such as the opportunity to hear different opinions and ideas, the ability to interact with classmates and make new friends and the ability to have fun which is not available in traditional lectures. Faust & Paulson (1998) stated that "such social benefits indirectly affect students' academic performance as well (p. 21).

8.2 The Obstacles of Implementing CL in the University Classroom and their Solutions

Despite the fact that cooperative learning has become a solid teaching method that is supported by both theory and classroom research (Felder & Brant, 2007), this teaching method is not without problems. In fact, most of its problems spring out from the unwillingness of university teachers to switch from the classical lecture method to cooperative learning environment believing that cooperative learning is an instruction suitable only for primary or secondary school classes. Furthermore, problems may occur as a result of "individual student resistance and dysfunctional teams" (Felder & Brant, 2007 p. 7). Hence, to overcome the

obstacles that may occur in the implementation of cooperative learning in the university classroom, here are the main possible obstacles and suggested solution for each one.

One reason that may lead to failure in adopting a cooperative learning instruction in the university classroom is the attempt of the instructor to use all the teaching models of cooperative learning at once. When he/she does so, the instructor will have to deal with many new techniques at once and consequently will end up with doing none of them in the appropriate way. At the same time the students will be annoyed by a range of unfamiliar classroom activities which may lead them to stop interacting with their teacher or even rebel against him/her (Felder & Brant, 2007). Therefore, instructors, who are not familiar with cooperative learning, had better choose the cooperative learning techniques that both them and their students are comfortable with, then they can add other techniques gradually, whenever they get used to the previous ones. Another factor that may make instructors hesitate to use cooperative learning is the "coverage problem" as many instructors avoid using cooperative learning or any other active learning techniques, which they consider time consuming and their adoption risks the coverage of all the content in the syllabus, and depend mainly on classical lectures, which they find time saving and helpful for finishing the program (Faust & Paulson, 1998, p. 17). Despite the fact that cooperative learning might be more time consuming in comparison with traditional lectures, yet a modest content taught in a cooperative instruction, that engages students in the learning process, is more beneficial for students than a vast content that they do not understand or cannot use in a complex situation. Silberman (1996) described the importance of engaging students in active learning activities and how it affects their learning outcomes as follows:

> What I hear, I forget;
>
> What I hear and see, I remember a little;
>
> What I hear, see, ask questions about or discuss with someone else, I begin to understand;
>
> What I hear, see, discuss and do, I acquire knowledge and skill;
>
> What I teach to another, I master (p. 97)

On the other hand, Faust and Paulson (1998) call instructors' choice to cover the content of syllabus over students' engagement "devil's bargain" which makes the instructors either choose to cover all the content and have their students learn less or teach less content and make their students learn more (p. 17). Accordingly, in order to avoid the problem where the content was covered but the students did not learn, it is preferable that instructors engage their students in the learning process and guarantee that their learners are really learning before assuring if they covered all the content of the syllabus or not.

A third reason that leads to the marginalization of cooperative learning in the university classroom is the instructors' fear that when implementing a cooperative learning instruction, they will lose control of the sessions by giving a margin of freedom to their students. However, if they apply the five pillars of cooperative learning, instructors will manage their classes better than they used to do in traditional lectures.

Lessons' preparation is another reason why university instructors avoid implementing cooperative learning in their classes since the time devoted for lessons' preparation will automatically increase with the adoption of new teaching techniques and this can be tiring and time consuming for instructors who already have many university-related tasks to fulfil. Moreover, the rejection of using cooperative learning instruction increases when the instructor is familiar with the module and he/she already has all the lectures prepared and he/she has already dealt with all the lessons. In fact, no one can deny the effort and time the instructors will have to deal with at the beginning of cooperative learning implementation in their classes; however, once they get familiar with the techniques of this method and the group formation strategies, they will be able to apply them easily to any course they teach (Faust & Paulson, 1998).

Finally, inviting university instructors to implement cooperative learning in their classes is not a call to abandon lecturing; yet, it is an initiative to try a new teaching instruction, that was approved by many scholars as effective and suitable for different disciplines, and to apply it in their classes to maximize learning, create a peaceful cooperative learning environment and enhance students' academic achievement.

9. Cooperative Writing

Bosley (1989) defined cooperative writing (CW) as a process that engages two or more students, who work together in groups to produce written documents. Similarly, Rice and Huguley (1994) considered that cooperative writing is the one performed by two or more writers to produce and/or complete a written text. According to them CW includes: brainstorming, outlining, composing, revising and editing stages. Furthermore, cooperative writing has been widely referred to in the literature as peer feedback (PF), peer review and peer response (Gebhardt, 1980; Storch, 2005; Al-Hamzi & Scholfield, 2007; Berg, 1999; Lundstrom &Baker, 2009); since PF engages students in cooperative revising and editing of essays. Therefore, in this research cooperative writing refers to a group of writers, who cooperate and work in a small group of three to four people to produce separate or shared piece of writing. Through CW, EFL students collaborate with each other to brainstorm, generate ideas, discuss about the adequate

vocabulary and even write a shared first draft. Cooperative writing also includes peer revising and editing through which students help each other to organize their texts and correct their errors.

In another line of argument, Murray (1992) insisted on implementing cooperative writing in the university writing courses so as to prepare EFL students for authentic situations, where they will have to write within groups and collaborate with different persons. In that regard, Ede & Lunsford (1990) reported that the majority of the documents produced in office and universities have at least two authors. Accordingly, Lee (2010) asserted that engaging EFL students in CW activities "offers an authentic learning environment where students do not only develop their writing skills but also critical thinking and decision making skills" (p. 159). Moreover, cooperative writing can also be viewed from a social perspective; thus, Murray (1992) considered cooperative writing as "essentially a social process through which writers looked for areas of shared understanding" (p. 103). However, in spite of its importance, cooperative writing can be a challenging task for EFL students and teachers. Accordingly, Ballard & Clanchy (1991) declared that cooperative writing is not an easy task, particularly for EFL students, since writing cooperatively requires the double of effort of individual writing as it implies sharing information and responding to others' writing and receiving comments from them. Therefore, in order to facilitate the integration of CW instruction, researchers and experts have developed a variety of activities that can be used at different stages of the writing task and that would make students fully engaged in the CW process.

9.1 Cooperative Writing Activities

When they implement cooperative writing in the written expression course, teachers can resort to a variety of active learning activities that are applicable in the writing course and that would facilitate the group work and motivate students to get involved in the writing process. Some of these activities are listed below.

9.1.1 Write Around

This cooperative writing activity aims at improving EFL students' creative writing and/or summarizing techniques. It implies giving students a sentence starter, such as "An old lady was walking in the forest in a dark night …" or "If Christopher Columbus hadn't discovered America …" then asking students in each group to complete the sentence and add other sentences to construct a story. Hence, students of different groups suggest a completion for the sentence and pass the paper to another mate, who will read what is written and add

another sentence then pass the paper to his/her group mate. After three or four rounds, an interesting story will emerge. After that, students are given some time to edit their stories, then a member from each group reads the story for the class and the best story can be written on the white board. The same technique can be used for summarizing a story, just instead of the sentence starter the teacher can read a story or provide his/her students with a written one. This activity guaranties the involvement of all the students in the writing process as all the group members should write when their turn comes (Mandall, 2009).

9.1.2 Round Table

In this activity, group members take turns to write on one shred piece of paper to brainstorm, answer a question or write a list. In general, students in such activities are not given much time, thus they have to harry and focus on what they will write. When the time allocated for the activity is over, the teacher asks the students to stop writing and a class discussion of students' answers/ideas starts (Kagan, 1994 as cited in Jolliffe, 2007). This activity when performed at the pre-writing stage is "excellent for capturing ideas in brainstorming, for developing common background information, and for identifying possible directions for future activities" (Crandall, 1999, p. 231).

9.1.3 Roam the Room

This activity is adequate for the revising and editing stages; hence, when the students write their essays, the teacher asks them to stick the essays on the walls of the classroom. After that, the teacher gives a signal and the students start moving about the room "often in a clockwise direction" to read and discuss what other teams have written. The teacher could also ask the students to spot and/or correct the errors they observe in the presented essays/paragraphs (Jolliffe, 2007, p. 117).

9.1.4 Roving Reporter

Within this activity, while the members of each team are working on a writing assignment, "one representative from each team may for a certain amount of time be a 'roving reporter' gathering information from other teams" (Jolliffe, 2007, p. 117). This activity can be used in the pre-writing stage, especially if the students are working on a topic that requires background information or specific vocabulary.

9.1.5 Buzz Groups

Buzz groups are teams that contain four to six students; they can be formal CL groups or informal ones. Members of buzz groups are asked to discuss about a particular topic and exchange ideas. This activity can be used as a warm up for a whole class discussion; it can also be used for gathering and generating ideas before writing an essay. This activity is very helpful for teachers who teach crowded classes as it gives opportunity for all the students to participate in the discussion and give their point of view, which cannot be achieved in whole-class discussion (Mandall, 2009).

9.1.6 Two Stay and Two Stray

Within this activity, while the group members are working on a particular topic, "two members of the team move to an adjoining team to share ideas. Pairs then move to their original teams to compare" (Jolliffe, 2007, p.116). This activity can be implemented in the pre-writing stage as it is effective for generating ideas or comparing outlines.

9.1.7 Think-Write-Share-Compare

In this activity students are given some time to think of the topic/question, and then they write down their answers/ideas individually. After that, students share their ideas/answers with their group mates and compare their ideas/answers so as to choose the most adequate ones. This activity is a good warm up for a whole-class discussion since students will be able to organize and develop their views before discussing them with the whole class. It can be also used as brainstorming activity before writing an essay (Jolliffe, 2007).

To sum up, there is a variety of cooperative learning activities that can be used in the writing class, and even the activities that might seem applicable only in the oral expression sessions like *Timed Talking, Doughnut* and *Class Value Lines* can be adapted to writing courses and can serve as great warm up activities that would activate the students and engage them in the writing process.

9. 2 Incorporating Cooperative Learning in the University Writing Courses

Cooperative learning has been widely documented as effective teaching instruction in different educational and academic fields and proved its efficacy over other individualistic and competitive methods (Johnson et al, 1998; 2000; 2007; Johnson & Johnson 1989; Slavin, 1996; Springer et al, 1998). Yet, the majority of studies on cooperative learning were directed to

primary and high school situations and the use of this instruction method remained under-utilised in the university courses (Jones & Jones, 2008). Eventually, after the early studies on CL held in university context, and the positive results they yielded, CL started to have a clear status in the university classroom scene.

However, in spite of its positive impact in increasing student's academic learning and personal growth as well, cooperative learning was not introduced in EFL didactics until recently. After its implementation in EFL teaching, investigation on CL have revealed excellent positive impact in almost all aspects of language acquisition (Kagan, 1995). Research conducted at the university level context documented numerous positive effects of CL in the improvement of teaching/learning of foreign language such as increasing the amount of students' participations and students' talk in the foreign language; it also reduces learning anxiety via creating a positive, supportive and less threatening learning environment. Furthermore, it emphasizes active interaction and interdependence among students (Azizinezhad, Hashemi & Darvishi, 2012). However, even after the incorporation of CL in EFL university classroom, it was at the beginning limited to the teaching of oral skills as writing was considered an activity that must be carried out individually (Wigglesworth & Storch, 2012). Yet after the few studies that documented its efficacy in the teaching and learning of the writing skill, university teachers of EFL writing started resorting to this teaching instruction. Furthermore, the increasing use of CL by EFL educators and curriculum designers is not only because of the recent empirical studies' findings; yet, it is also due to the numerous theoretical and practical benefits it provides over individual writing methods. Accordingly, Nunan (1992) declared that the recent empirical research has approved the theoretically motivated rational of CL instruction's implementation in EFL writing courses. Thus, the efficacy of integrating this instruction in the university writing class will be accounted for through a review of previous researches on the subject matter.

9.3 The Effectiveness of Cooperative Writing in the University Classroom

After its implementation in the university classroom, precisely in the teaching of EFL writing, many studies have been conducted to investigate whether CL instruction has a positive effect on the teaching and learning of writing skill and whether or not it enhances EFL students' writing ability.

Harmer (2001) indicated that group writing is a very effective writing approach as he reported that students engaged in cooperative writing activities found the process of writing motivating in terms of writing process itself and in the pre-writing stages such as collecting

ideas and topic discussions and final stages like peer review and evaluation. On the other hand, Elbow (1973) highlighted that cooperative writing is a very useful and important activity in language classrooms; since if a student faces a difficulty in his/her writing, they will contact one of their mates to help them. Accordingly, he claimed that "two heads are better than one because two heads can make conflicting material and interact better than one head usually can" (p. 49). Furthermore, after interviewing a sample of ESL students, Storch (2002) reported that collaborative writing helped ESL students improve their writing ability and encouraged them to share responsibility in making decisions on all aspects and categories of writing such as content, structures and language.

While there are scholars, who argued that cooperative writing is suitable only for final stages of writing (reviewing and editing), Gebhardt (1980) asserted that cooperative writing has yielded very satisfactory results in the improvement of primary stages of writing (brainstorming, planning and outlining). In the same line of argument, he stated that "collaborative writing strategies should be applied to finding a promising topic, generating details on the topic and locating the intended audience for a paper" (p. 73). Furthermore, in his studies on the effectiveness of cooperative learning in enhancing students' writing skill, Storch (1999, 2002& 2005) pointed out that the application of a cooperative learning instruction in writing classes has a positive impact in primary stages of writing and final stages as well. Accordingly, Legenhausen & Wolff (1990) indicated that cooperative writing is an effective method to enhance students' writing competencies and promote an efficient class interaction. Their positive views on cooperative writing were supported by Kagan & High's study (2002), which showed that students' writing performance had enhanced after cooperative learning was incorporated in the EFL writing course. The findings of the study revealed that students, who had a low level in writing skill, showed great improvement in their writing mastery level (from 49 % to 82 %). Plus, the results of a study on ten limited English proficient community college students, who were engaged in a four months cooperative writing session's program, were very positive and reported a tremendous improvement on students' writing skills (Jones & Carrasquillo, 1998).

In his study that investigated the effects and students' perceptions of cooperative writing in L2 context, which included 38 EFL first year university students, Shehadeh (2011) reported that the results of his statistical analysis have shown that cooperative writing had a significant effect in improving students' writing in L2, especially in the areas of content, organization and vocabulary. As for students' perceptions of cooperative writing, the data gathered from the surveyed students' responses yielded their positive attitudes towards CL. The majority of

students involved in the experiment claimed that CL did not only enhance their self-confidence and their writing ability but also improved other skills such as speaking. Students also stated that CW activities helped them generate ideas, organize them, discuss their ideas and plan their texts. It also helped them generate their texts collaboratively, provide each other with immediate feedback and structure their texts in a better way. Students' views concerning CW were generally positive and most of students have shown their willingness to have all their writing session within a cooperative learning instruction.

Storch (2005) in his study, which tackled collaborative writing as a product and process and investigated the use of small group and pair work in the teaching of writing in the university classroom, reported that the texts produced collaboratively were shorter but had greater grammatical accuracy and linguistic complexity than the ones produced individually. Whereas, concerning the process of writing, the analysis of dialogues that took place during the composition phase between the pairs revealed that students had significant opportunity to interact on different aspects of the writing process especially in generating ideas. Storch (2005) also reported the positive effect of CW in providing students with opportunities to give and receive immediate feedback. As for students' attitudes towards CW, Storch (2005) claimed that "the experience of collaborative writing was overall very positive" (p. 169).

Similarly, Storch & wigglesworth (2009) compared texts produced by pairs and others written individually in order to investigate the possible differences in accuracy, fluency and complexity. The analysis of data indicated that there were notable differences between texts written collaboratively and those carried out individually in terms of accuracy; yet, there were no significant differences in terms of fluency and complexity.

Finally, it is evident that most of the studies that tackled the implementation of cooperative learning in writing classes have approved its effectiveness in enhancing students' writing ability. It also increased their motivation and made them develop positive attitudes towards the writing activity through making them more responsible in the writing process and providing them with the opportunity to share their work with their peers.

Conclusion

Cooperative learning, which has been proved as effective teaching/learning instruction by many researchers and experts in the field of EFL teaching, was the main concern of the second chapter of the present thesis. First of all, the chapter began with defining cooperative learning and highlighting the importance of CL five pillars, which distinguish it from other types of group work instructions, namely: positive interdependence, individual accountability, face-to-face promotive interaction, interpersonal and small group skills and group processing. Furthermore, as mentioned previously in this chapter, the term cooperative learning is usually used interchangeably with collaborative learning; hence, the difference between the two terms was clarified. Moreover, the chapter discussed the different types of CL groups and suggested some classroom strategies for facilitating the implementation of this instruction. Also, it accounted for the models of CL and represented its documented benefits. However, even though CL was recognized as effective instruction for EFL teaching, it was considered suitable only for primary, middle and secondary schools and it was thought as less effective for tertiary level students. Hence, the implementation of CL in the university classroom was discussed and its effectiveness was emphasized. The last element of the present chapter was cooperative writing. Thus, cooperative writing was defined and its importance was highlighted; then, a variety of cooperative writing activities were presented. Finally, the incorporation of CL instruction in the university writing courses was discussed and its efficacy was pointed out.

CHAPTER THREE:

Research Methodology

Introduction

The present study investigates the effectiveness of integrating cooperative learning in EFL writing courses in minimizing students' writing errors and improving their writing accuracy. More precisely, it investigates the effects of implementing peer corrective feedback technique within cooperative learning instruction in second year Licence students' written expression courses. Furthermore, the present study accounts for students' attitudes and perceptions towards the integration of peer feedback technique and CL instruction in the writing course. The previous chapters were devoted to the presentation of theoretical concepts, the different approaches and literature relevant to the research topic while the present chapter discusses the practical part of this thesis, which is the research design and methodology. First of all, the general methodological framework of the research was addressed with a main focus on the adopted research method and design. Then, the methods used for collecting research data were thoroughly discussed and the participants involved in each stage of the research were presented with a clear justification of the sampling strategy. Finally, the chapter ends with the data processing and analysis procedures.

1. Research Design and Methodology

Concerning the research method, the present study opts for a mixed methods research which uses different combinations of qualitative and quantitative research (Dornyei, 2007). Mixed method research is considered a useful method for classroom research especially for examining issues that are embedded in complex educational or social contexts (Mertens, 2005 as cited in Dörnyei, 2007). The same view was shared by Dornyei (2007) who argued that "the understanding of the operation of complex environments-such as classrooms- lends itself to mixed method research" (p.186). Therefore, adopting mixed-methods research approach enables the researcher to look at the issue being examined from different angles (quantitative & qualitative), enrich understanding and help draw firm conclusions about the problem under study. Particularly, this research method is chosen by the researcher because it is thought as the most appropriate for answering the sub-research questions of this study, namely:

1. What are the teaching practices of EFL teachers at the English Department of Kasdi Merbah University, Ouargla (Algeria) concerning the teaching of the writing skill and the methods of responding to students' writing errors?

2. Does the use of peer feedback technique within cooperative learning instruction (Learning Together) in the EFL writing course minimize EFL students' grammatical errors?

3. Does the use of peer feedback technique within cooperative learning instruction (Learning Together) in the EFL writing course minimize EFL students' mechanical errors?

4. Does the implementation of peer feedback within cooperative learning instruction (Learning together) in the EFL writing course enhance EFL students writing accuracy?

5. What are teacher's and students' attitudes towards the integration of peer feedback within cooperative learning instruction (Learning Together) in the writing course?

The first sub-research question aims at exploring the teaching practices of EFL written expression teachers in Kasdi Merbah University; identifying the difficulties they encounter and accounting for the strategies they use to respond to their students' writing. Hence, to collect data to answer the first sub-research question, the researcher uses a purpose-built, non-standardized, semi-structured questionnaire directed to EFL written expression teachers in Kasdi Merbah University to collect both qualitative and quantitative data.

As for the second and third sub-research questions, they investigate whether or not the integration of peer feedback within cooperative learning instruction (LT) minimizes students' grammatical and mechanical errors; thus, the use of quantitative data collection tool is required. The same applies to the fourth research question which investigates whether or not the implementation of peer feedback within cooperative learning instruction (LT) enhances EFL students' writing accuracy. Therefore, experimentation is needed so as to measure the effect of using peer feedback within cooperative learning instruction "Learning Together" in the writing course (independent variable) on minimizing EFL students' writing errors and enhancing their writing accuracy (dependent variables) by identifying a causal relationship between the independent and dependent variables. Generally, there are different types of experimental research; the researcher has opted for the quasi-experimental design which is the most suitable for classroom research. Dörnyei (2007) claimed that "in most educational settings random assignment of students by the researcher is rarely possible and therefore researchers often have to resort to quasi-experimental research" (p.117). Since the quasi- experimental design also has different variations, namely: pre-experimental designs (the one group pretest-post-test design, the one group post-tests only design and the post-tests only non-equivalent design), pretest-post-test non-equivalent group design and one group time series (Cohen, Manion & Morrison,

2007); the researcher opts for the pre-experimental one group pretest-post-test design. The reasons behind choosing this particular design are explained in section (3.2) of this chapter.

Concerning the last research sub-question, which accounts for the writing teacher and students' perceptions of the integration of peer feedback technique and cooperative learning instruction (Learning Together) in the writing course, qualitative data are required so as to better understand the impact of peer feedback and Learning Together instruction on students' writing and the processes that took place during their implementation and to account for the teacher and students' attitudes towards cooperative learning instruction (LT). Therefore, semi-structured interviews directed to both teacher and students involved in the experiment are adequate to elicit the qualitative data.

Since this research requires different sets of data (quantitative and qualitative) which imply the use of different research tools, the research methods must be triangulated. Triangulation is defined by Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2007) as "the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of some aspect of human behaviour" (p. 141) which makes it a valid technique for checking the consistency of the gathered data and enhancing their validity and reliability (Bryman, 2004). It minimizes the disadvantages of using single-method research as well. Furthermore, the use of triangular techniques is considered a factor that could solve the problem of *methodboundless*. They are also "suitable when a more holistic view of educational outcomes is sought" (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007, p. 142). As triangulation has many types, namely: time triangulation, space triangulation, combined levels of triangulation, theoretical triangulation, investigator triangulation and methodological triangulation (Denzin, 1970 as cited in Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007), the researcher opts for the latter because it is the most adequate for this research. Methodological triangulation is the type of triangulation that uses different methods to investigate the same topic, which makes it a popular method among researchers in the educational field and "the one that possibly has the most to offer" (ibid, 2007, p. 143). Generally, methodological triangulation is achieved by using both quantitative and qualitative data gathering tools, while one data set validates the findings of the other; hence, for example the data gathered by observation can be cross-checked against data produced by an experiment. Given the fact that methodological triangulation uses different methods that eventually reinforce each other makes it ideal for this research, which seeks to merge between quantitative and qualitative data in order to arrive at valid and reliable findings. Particularly, methodological triangulation is achieved, in the present study, via the use of different data collection methods: quantitative data are gathered via the pre-test and post-

test, while the qualitative data are achieved through conducting interviews. As for the questionnaire, it collects both quantitative and qualitative data.

2. Participants

The present study engages two categories of participants. The first category is Algerian EFL writing teachers in Kasdi Merbah University (Ouargla), who responded to the pre-experiment questionnaire. On the other hand, the second category involved second year EFL students at the English Department of Kasdi Merbah University (Algeria), who constitute the population of the study and are engaged in the experiment and the post-experiment interviews. More details about the participants and the sampling strategies are provided in the next section.

3. Research Methods

In order to accomplish this research, two types of data (quantitative and qualitative) are required. Thus, due to the different natures of data, the researcher developed different research instruments to cope with the requirements of each type. First, a pre-experiment semi-structured questionnaire directed to EFL teachers of KMU. Second, an experiment according to the one group pretest-post-test design, which involves second year Licence students at KMU, is conducted. Finally, two post-experiment semi-structured interviews directed to both the teacher and the students who underwent the experiment.

3.1. The Questionnaire

The first aim of the present study is to explore the actual situation of EFL writing skill teaching at the English Department of Kasdi Merbah University (Ouargla, Algeria) with two main objectives:

- First, explore the teaching practices of second year EFL written expression teachers; identify the difficulties they encounter and account for the strategies they use to respond to their students' writing.
- Second, diagnose EFL second year students' writing proficiency level (from their teachers' perspective); account for the types of errors that are observed frequently in their writing and prove that they need a treatment to minimize their writing errors and improve their writing proficiency.

Thus, the researcher has opted for the questionnaire as a data gathering tool. In fact, questionnaires are one of the favoured and widely used data collecting tools in educational

research because they are very useful instrument for collecting information (Cohen et al, 2000; Dörnyei, 2007; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). Generally, questionnaires are frequently used by researchers because of their numerous advantages, which as well apply to the present research. First, due to their anonymous nature, questionnaires help the researcher elicit much information from the respondents, who will feel more conformable and may give much reliable information. Second, they save time and effort of both the researcher and the respondents; moreover, they can be administered without the presence of the researcher. Third, they allow the gathering of data in both small-scale and large-scale researches (Cohen et al, 2000; Dörnyei, 2007; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). Because there are different types of questionnaires (structured, semi-structured and unstructured questionnaires), the researcher had to choose the one that fits the present study. Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2007) declared that "the larger the size of the sample, the more structured, closed and numerical the questionnaire may have to be, and the smaller the size of the sample, the less structured, more open and word-based the questionnaire may be" (p. 320). Therefore, given the small size of the sample, the researcher depended on semi-structured questionnaire to collect data for the first sub-research question. However, the size of the sample was not the only motive for using semi-structured questionnaire; yet, the open ended feature of the questions of semi-structured questionnaire was considered the most suitable for eliciting qualitative data. In addition to that, there are other reasons that made the researcher opt for semi-structured questionnaire:

- Semi-structured questionnaires enable the researcher to collect both quantitative and qualitative data using one data collection tool. Accordingly, Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2007) asserted that "Between a completely open questionnaire that is akin to an open invitation to 'write what one wants' and a completely closed, completely structured questionnaire, there is the powerful tool of the semi-structured questionnaire" (p. 321).

- Semi-structured questionnaires make the respondents stay in line with the topic without presupposing the nature of the response.

- The exploratory nature of the first sub-research question makes semi-structured questionnaire, which depends mainly on open-ended questions, suitable for this research. Since "open questions enable participants to write a free account in their own terms, to explain and qualify their responses and avoid the limitations of pre-set categories of response" (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007, P. 321).

3.1.1. Objectives of the Questionnaire

A pre-experiment semi-structured questionnaire was conducted within this study so as to achieve the first aim of the study which is exploring the teaching/learning situation of the writing skill of second year Licence students in Kasdi Merbah University (Ouargla). Hence, so as to achieve this aim the questionnaire is designed by the researcher to achieve the following objectives:

1. Construct a clear image on how the writing skill is taught in the English Language Department of KMU.

2. Explore teachers' perceptions of second year EFL students' writing proficiency and motivation towards learning the writing skill, in addition to describing their students' weaknesses and the types of errors they frequently make.

3. Elicit teachers' perceptions of peer feedback and cooperative learning instruction.

3.1.2. The Participants

In educational research, teachers are considered a reliable source of information when assessing students' language proficiency and spotting their weaknesses are involved. Hence, the respondents to the pre-experiment questionnaire are teachers of written expression module at the English Department of Kasdi Merbah University, Ouargla, Algeria. As for the sampling strategy, the researcher opted for non-probability sampling, in which the researcher deliberately selects a particular section of a wider population to include in their research (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). As non-probability samples have different types, the researcher used convenience sampling strategy in the current study. Convenience sampling, also termed accidental and opportunity sampling, implies choosing available and accessible individuals to serve as respondents in the study. Accordingly, Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2007) declared that "captive audiences such as students or student teachers often serve as respondents based on convenience sampling" (p. 114). In spite of its non-generalisable results, this sampling strategy is the most adequate to achieve the main objective of the questionnaire which is exploring the teaching/learning context of EFL writing in the English Department of Kasdi Merbah University. Furthermore, since the present study is concerned with second year licence students, only the teachers who taught written expression module to second year students' (9 teachers) were involved in responding to the questionnaire.

3.1.3 Description of the Questionnaire

The present questionnaire (see appendix I) was divided into five sections:

The first section, which comprised four questions, aimed at eliciting information about the teachers' qualification and experience in teaching EFL writing at the university level.

The second section consisted of three questions. The main objective of this section was exploring the context of teaching writing skill at the English Department of Kasdi Merbah University. The focus in this section was on the different writing approaches used by the teachers of the department.

The third section, which contained three questions, was concerned with teachers' perceptions of their students' writing proficiency and their motivation towards learning the writing skill. It also accounted for the difficulties that the teachers face when they teach EFL writing to second year licence students at Kasdi Merbah University.

The fourth section was composed of five questions; it tackled second year EFL students' writing errors. It focused primarily on the type of errors frequently encountered in EFL students' essays and the type of corrective feedback teachers opt for to respond to their students writing errors.

The last section of the questionnaire comprised four questions and was devoted to elicit teachers' perceptions of the implementation of cooperative learning in the writing courses.

3.1.4 Piloting the Questionnaire

Before embarking on the administration of the questionnaire, piloting it with representatives of the research population was essential. According to Mertens (1998) and Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2007), piloting the data collecting tools is a basic step towards the validation of research instruments. In addition to that, they stress the importance of piloting all the aspects of the questionnaire starting from the main issues such as the clarity of the questions, their appropriateness and the length of the questionnaire to the smallest details like the typeface and the quality of paper. Hence, the researcher piloted the questionnaire with three experienced teachers at the English department of KMU with the aim of ensuring the validity and practicality of the questionnaire. More precisely, the piloting of the questionnaire aimed at:

- Checking the clarity of the questionnaires' questions, adjusting ambiguous ones and removing redundant questions.

- Identifying any misunderstood items.

- Evaluating the length of the questionnaire and the questions and checking the time needed for answering all the questions.

- Receiving feedback on the format, the sectionalizing and the attractiveness of the questionnaire.

The questionnaire was handed to three experienced teachers at the English Department of KMU, who asked for one-week period to complete the questionnaire and give their remarks about any inconveniences, ambiguity and/or redundancy. After one week, the research met with the teachers again, collected the questionnaires and discussed with each teacher about his/her remarks. The researcher, in the discussion with the teachers, focused on three main points: the convenience of the items, clarity of the questions and the time they took to answer all the questions. In fact, the questionnaire piloting helped the researcher adjust the length of the questionnaire and make it less time consuming through eliminating some questions which the teachers considered redundant since they were referred to indirectly in prior sections. Furthermore, two teachers noticed that some open ended questions were vague and confusing as they could have different interpretations. Thus, these questions were reformulated and some were transformed into close ended questions.

3.1. 5 Administration of the Questionnaire

After piloting the questionnaire and adjusting it according to the teachers' remarks, the final version was issued and the questionnaire was administered by the researcher. The questionnaires were delivered to the nine written expression teachers who were involved in the study. The teachers were given one-week period to complete the questionnaires. Eventually, all the questionnaires were returned within the allocated time except for two teachers who asked for another week to complete the questionnaire because of work pressure.

3.2 The Experiment

Due to the high degree of its results' validity and reliability, experimentation is considered one of the strongest research designs. Therefore, researchers in the educational field tend to use experiments since they enable them to have much control over the experimental environment and more flexibility in manipulating the independent variable. Moreover, researchers depend on experiments to "determine theoretical patterns by showing a distinctively

cause-and-effect relationship" (Abbott & McKinney, 2013, p. 41). Accordingly, Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2007) explained the frequent use of experiments in researches of different fields via clarifying the characteristics of this research method:

> The essential feature of experimental research is that investigators deliberately control and
>
> manipulate the conditions which determine the events in which they are interested, introduce
>
> an intervention and measure the difference that it makes. An experiment involves making a
>
> change in the value of one variable -called the independent variable- and observing the effect
>
> of change on another variable -called dependent variable- (p. 272)

Thus, as the present research investigates the effect of using peer feedback technique within cooperative learning instruction (independent variable) on minimizing EFL students writing errors (dependent variable), experimentation is the adequate research method to identify the causal relationship between the two variables.

Generally, there are three main designs of educational experimentation, namely, the controlled experiment (also called true experiment), the natural experiment, in which variables cannot be isolated and controlled, and the quasi-experiment (field experiment), which is undertaken in the natural setting instead of the laboratory with the possibility of isolating, controlling and manipulating the variables. Thus, among the three experimental designs, quasi-experiment is the most suitable for this research since this type of experiment enables the researcher to isolate, control and manipulate the variables, which makes it similar to laboratory (true experimental) research; yet, it is enrolled in a more natural setting (in the case of the present research "the university") rather than "the artificially constructed world of the laboratory" (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007, p. 274). In fact, when conducting educational research, it is quite difficult for researchers to undertake true experiments due to the challenges they encounter in the random assigning of participants. Hence, quasi- experiments are more suitable for conducting educational research. Accordingly, Kerlinger (1970) described quasi-experimental situations as 'compromise designs' which are suitable for educational research where the random assignments of schools/universities, classrooms and participants (teachers/learners) is almost impracticable (as cited in Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007).

Basically, there are three different types of quasi-experiments:

a) Pre-experimental designs: they include the one group pretest-post-test design, the one group post-tests only design and the post-test only non-equivalent design; b) Pretest-post-test non-

equivalent group design; and c) One-group time series. The researcher, in the current research, depended on the one group pretest-post-test pre-experimental design to conduct the experiment. This research design was chosen because it has proved its effectiveness in reporting the value of new teaching methods (ibid, 2007). It also enables the researcher to measure a group on a dependent variable (O_1); then introduce an experimental intervention (X); after that, the researcher measures the group's level (O_2) and compares between the results of the pre-test and post-test referring to the effects of (X) (ibid, 2007). This process is summarized as follows:

$$O_1 \longrightarrow X \longrightarrow O_2$$

Hence, this design is adequate for the current study which aims at investigating the impact of cooperative learning instruction on students' error making.

Measuring students' writing errors	→	Implementation of cooperative learning	→	Measuring students' writing errors
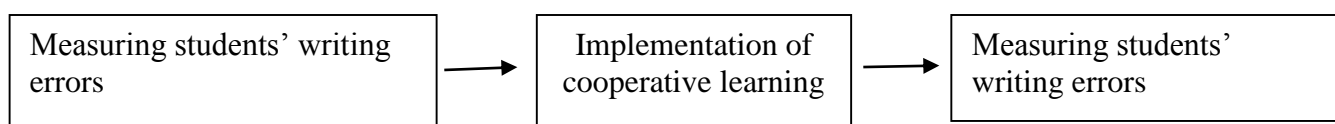
3.2.1 The Objectives of the Experiment

Given the students' low level of EFL writing accuracy and lack of motivation towards learning EFL writing skill, the main objective of the current research is to enhance EFL students' writing accuracy via minimizing their grammatical and mechanical errors. Hence, an alternative teaching instruction is needed to compensate for the existing lacuna in the actual teaching methods. Therefore, the researcher introduces cooperative learning instruction as a treatment for minimizing EFL students' grammatical and mechanical writing errors. Thus the one group pretest-post-test quasi-experiment will enable the researcher to:

- Measure EFL students' writing accuracy level before the intervention via the use of a pre-test.
- Introduce the treatment (cooperative learning instruction and peer feedback technique) through the classroom intervention.
- Measure EFL students' writing accuracy after the intervention through the use of a post-test.
- Measure the effect of using cooperative learning instruction LT (independent variable) on minimizing EFL students' grammatical and mechanical writing errors (dependent variables) via comparing the results of the pre-test and post-test and

consequently identifying the causal relationship between the independent and dependent variables.

3.2.2 The Sample

The participants in this quasi-experiment are second year licence students of EFL at the English Department of Kasdi Merbah University (Ouargla). The researcher conveniently chose one group among the six groups of second year to be the sample of the study. It should be mentioned that convenience sampling, which is a non-random sampling strategy that allows the researcher to involve any participants who can conveniently be studied, is generally criticized for its lack of external validity (Beins & McCarthy, 2012). However, owing to its time and cost effectiveness, convenience sampling was adopted by the researcher. The number of participants was 30 students (21 females and 9 males). All the participants have been studying English as a foreign language for at least 8 years starting from middle school (4 years), secondary school (3 years) and their first year at the university. All the participants studied their first year at the English department of Kasdi Merbah University, where they attended eleven modules: namely, grammar, written expression, oral expression, translation, literature, culture and civilization, study skills, reading texts, phonetics, linguistics, and French. Second year licence students were chosen as sample of the current study because essay writing is introduced only at the second semester of second year; hence, first year students were excluded because they are not concerned with essay writing. Thus, the choice had to be made between second and third year students. Second year students were selected because they are exposed to essay writing for the first time, hence, they are more motivated and open towards learning new writing and feedback techniques. Also, they are not yet acquainted to a certain writing pattern or approach; so, they are not expected to resist the new writing approach.

3.2.3 The Experimental Procedure

The experiment was conducted in three phases.

3.2.3.1. The Pre-test

The students participating in the study were assigned a writing test, in which they were asked to write a descriptive essay of about 180 to 200 words (see appendix II). The duration of the writing test was one hour and half (90 minutes) during an ordinary written expression session. The descriptive genre was selected for the pre-test, the CL treatment, and for the post-test because it is prescribed in the written expression syllabus of second year licence students

(see appendix III). Hence, the students engaged in the study would not be outpaced by their counterparts On the other groups because of this three-week experiment. The data collected from this pre-test are important for confirming the written expression teachers' assumptions about the students' writing ability before embarking on the experiment; and more importantly, they will be used to compare the students' performance before and after the treatment to measure the difference and/or the development.

3.2.3.2 The Treatment

After conducting the pre-test, the researcher embarked on the second phase of the experiment i.e. the treatment. Since peer feedback technique and cooperative learning instruction are new concepts for both the teacher and the students participating in the research; hence, briefing them on these concepts and preparing them for the implementation of cooperative learning instruction in the written expression sessions was the mission of the researcher. Thus, before the application of the treatment the students underwent two training sessions in which cooperative learning and peer feedback technique were introduced to them via a range of classroom cooperative writing activities. In addition to that, the researcher had three meetings with the teacher of the experimental group in order to brief her on cooperative learning, peer feedback and the mechanisms of forming CL groups and assigning roles to group members. The discussion also included the lesson plans and classroom management techniques.

The second step of the treatment was classroom intervention. During this instructional intervention, students of the experimental group were taught within a cooperative learning environment. The treatment lasted for two weeks with a total of four written expression sessions, in which students composed descriptive essays within cooperative learning groups following the process approach of writing. Correction of students' writing errors, during the CL instructional treatment, followed peer feedback technique. According to the process approach to teaching writing, students produce their essay through four stages, namely: pre-writing, drafting, revising and editing stages. Hence, the teacher and her students followed these stages respectively during all the writing sessions.

First, the pre-writing stage, which is the primary step of the writing process, where students brainstorm, collect ideas, discuss about the writing content and prepare an outline for the essay, was carried out within cooperative learning groups. During all the writing sessions, the pre-writing stage lasted for 20 minutes approximately and the students were engaged in different interactive cooperative learning activities such as two stay and two stray, roving

reporter, think-write-share-compare and roundtable. Students, through the five treatment sessions, worked cooperatively in their groups during the pre-writing stage; they exchanged ideas, shared vocabulary, discussed about the components and the form of the essay and planned their essays collectively.

Second, the drafting stage also termed composing stage, in which students write the first drafts of their essays, was performed individually. After discussing with their group mates and designing their outlines, students were given 20 minutes to write first drafts of their essays individually. At this stage, students were directed to write the whole essay without stopping and leave checking mistakes and errors to the following stages.

Third, after they wrote the first drafts of their essays, members of each cooperative learning group started revising each other's essays. The leader of each group gathered his/her mates' drafts and placed them in the middle of the table, then students took turns to read their essays while the other group members spotted any errors in the essay and provided their mate with corrective feedback. At the revising stage, students had to focus on the content of the essay rather than the form; hence, they were asked to use the checklists provided by the teacher to enhance the first drafts in terms of reorganizing sentences and/or paragraphs, supplementing more appropriate vocabulary and deleting unnecessary sentences or moving them forward or backward. As for grammatical and mechanical errors, they were left to the editing stage. The revising stage lasted for 25 minutes in three sessions; however, it was expanded to 30 minutes in one session.

Finally, editing, which is the last stage of the writing process, was also performed cooperatively. Students in each cooperative learning group were given 20 minutes to edit each other's essays. Thus, drafts of group members were placed in the middle of the table, where everybody could see them, and then students took turns to read their essays while their mates provided them with corrective feedback on their writing errors. The focus at this stage was on essays' accuracy; hence, students were asked to concentrate on grammatical and mechanical errors and to make best use of the provided checklists. After editing their essays and handing them to the teacher, students were offered 10 minutes to discuss on the functioning of their groups and suggest ideas or tips to achieve more effective functioning in the following sessions.

3.2.3.3. The Post-test

After the two-week treatment, the students had their exit writing test (post-test) in which they were assigned to write a descriptive essay respecting the language forms and the text organization appropriate for the purpose of the essay (see appendix II). The students performed the test, which lasted for one hour and half (90 minutes), individually. The data collected from the post-test will be used to assess the students' writing accuracy and when compared to the data from the pre-test, they will yield any possible difference/improvement of the students' performance.

However, in spite of their importance in yielding important data essential for analysing the effectiveness of different instruction methods and variant feedback techniques, writing tests may put students under high pressure, which can affect the results of the test negatively (Gall et al, 1996). Hence, the teacher of the experimental group, in coordination with researcher, tried to minimize students' test anxiety so as to elicit a performance that reflects the students' real level.

3.2.4 The Content of the Experiment

The experiment included the implementation of cooperative leaning instruction "Learning Together" and peer feedback technique in writing descriptive essays according to the process approach of writing. The experiment started in the second semester of the academic year 2019/2020, more precisely on February the 12th, 2020. It lasted for three weeks with an average of three sessions per week. The sessions' duration was one hour and half (90 minutes) and they were distributed as follows:

The first week	Session one	Pre-test
	Session two	Training
	Session three	Training
The second week	Session four	Treatment
	Session five	Treatment
	Session six	Treatment
The third week	Session seven	Treatment
	Session eight	Post-test

Table 1.The experiment schedule

3.2.4.1 Writing Tests

The experiment of the present study comprised two writing tests: pre-test and post-test. Generally, writing tests are considered valid research instruments since the analysis of the students' texts could reveal important and in depth data about "the features of effective writing in different genres or among different groups of users and perhaps also the influences that contribute to these features" (Hyland, 2003, p. 261). Since there are different types of writing tests, the researcher opted for the open essay form. The latter was selected by the researcher because it enables the participants to "integrate, apply and synthesize knowledge, demonstrate the ability for expression and self-expression, and to demonstrate higher order and divergent cognitive processes" (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007, p. 428).

Furthermore, both of the writing tests used in this experiment were designed by the researcher. In fact, opting for a researcher-designed test was because this latter gives the opportunity to the researcher to tailor the test according to the objectives and the context of the study. Thus, when designing the test "the purpose, objectives and content of the test will be deliberately fitted to the specific needs of the researcher in a specific, given context" (ibid, 2007, p. 417).

As for the essays' topics, the researcher intentionally used general topics which could have different interpretations (see appendix II), for instance in the pre-test students were asked to describe their favourite place for vacation. One's favourite place for vacation could be a country, a town, a village, a hotel or even a house; hence, this topic gives the students a certain amount of freedom to speak about something that they are interested in instead of very specific and guided essays' topics that, sometimes, block the students. Moreover, the nature of descriptive genre, which requires the use of vivid details that portray the writer's ideas and draw a picture of the described item in the readers' minds, implies the use of topics that students can relate to their personal experience.

3.2.4.2 Training

Training members of the experimental group on both cooperative learning instruction and peer feedback technique was of paramount importance. According to Storch (2005), "to truly prepare students for cooperative writing may require a re-conceptualization of classroom teaching" (p.169); thus, it was essential to schedule training sessions to both teacher and students of the experimental group before starting the cooperative writing treatment. More

details about the effectiveness of training the students on CL and peer feedback and the strategies for structuring them were thoroughly discussed in section (3.4.3.3) in the first chapter and (6.1) in the second chapter. Hence, the teacher of the experimental group, assisted by the researcher, dedicated extensive induction sessions so as to familiarize the students with the new instruction (Learning Together) and peer feedback procedures before the execution of the treatment.

The training started with briefing the students about cooperative learning instruction in general, the five pillars of cooperative learning, and Learning Together model. It also included an overview of the different feedback types with emphasis on peer feedback. The importance of using peer feedback was stressed and the strategies of its implementation were explained and clarified. Furthermore, since peer training and cooperative skills training are an ongoing developmental process that accompanies the learners through the entire learning experience (Gillies, 2003), training remained as a continued development process during the experiment and students were encouraged to inquire about any ambiguous or confusing items or procedures.

In fact, training teachers on the mechanisms of implementing cooperative learning and small-groups learning is also crucial for the effective functioning of the cooperative learning groups (Gillies, 2003). Hence, the researcher had three meetings with the teacher of the experimental group, where she explained the five pillars of CL; the structuring of the groups; insisted on the criteria of grouping students; explained the main issues that may lead to the failure of cooperative learning groups and suggested solutions for them. More details about the meetings with the teacher are represented in the following table:

Meeting	Duration	Content
The first meeting	40 minutes	The first meeting was devoted for briefing the teacher on the following points: • The objectives of the experiment and the study in general. • Cooperative learning instruction, Learning Together model and the five pillars of CL. • The process approach to teaching writing. • Peer feedback technique.

		• Elements to consider when implementing CL instruction in the university classroom, such as training, group size, group composition, group task, structuring interaction and cooperative incentive structure (see section 6 in the second chapter).
The second meeting	1 hour and half	In the second meeting, the researcher and teacher discussed the content which the students will be exposed to in the experiment. The six lesson plans, which were designed by the researcher for the CL treatment sessions, were discussed with the teacher in terms of: • Their conformity with the second year written expression module syllabus. • The topics of the essays. • The lessons' stages and time allotted for each stage. After taking the teacher's remarks into consideration, the researcher made few changes in the lesson plans to make them more practical and manageable.
The third meeting	1 hour	The third meeting was devoted to practical classroom measures. It included the following elements: • **Forming CL groups**: The main points which were taken into consideration when forming the groups were the groups' size and composition. As for the group size, since it had to be small, the researcher and the teacher agreed to form groups of four members. On the other hand, CL groups should be homogenous; therefore, the composition of the group had to be homogeneous in terms of students' gender, ethnicity, background, personality and writing level. Also, avoiding putting students who are close friends and those who have disputes in the same groups was taken into consideration so as to prevent any possible classroom management problems. In

fact, since she taught the students' in their first year and during the first semester of this year, the teacher of the experimental group was a reliable source of information and could give a lot of details about the students' level, background and personality. Consequently, this helped the researcher guarantee the homogeneity of the groups.

- **Assigning roles to group members:**

After distributing the students into their groups, different roles were given to each group member so as to achieve an effective functioning of the groups and involve all the students in the learning process (see section 6.4 in chapter two). Thus, the students were given different roles according to their writing competency and their personalities.

Based on their written expression mark of the first term exam, students who got the best marks were assigned experts of the groups while those of weak level were assigned as noise monitors.

Based on their personality types, students who have strong personalities and good communication skills were assigned leaders of groups whereas shy and less sociable students were assigned as time keepers.

- **Classroom management:**

When CL is implemented, the classroom is far from being calm; however, there are classroom strategies and techniques to ensure that all groups are following the teacher's instructions and working in an organized way. Therefore, the researcher briefed the teacher on the classroom management techniques that will be used in the treatment sessions; they also discussed about the different

		scenarios that might occur and the ways to deal with them. The discussion also included the sitting arrangement and the procedures to adopt in case of students' absences.

Table 2. Teacher's training meetings

These three meetings were held within two days. The first and second meetings were held right after the pre-test while the third meeting took place the day after.

After the three meetings, in which the teacher and the researcher have agreed on all the important elements of the experiment, the students' training sessions began. The researcher attended both of the sessions and she was introduced to the students as an expert in cooperative learning who is there to assist the teacher in implementing this new teaching instruction. Furthermore, since it is advised not to introduce two new methods in one session, the training went through two sessions. The first session was devoted to briefing students on CL and training them to write in CL groups; whereas, the second session focused on training students on providing peer feedback and on writing following the four stages of the process approach.

3.2.4.2.1 The First Training Session

The first training session aimed at briefing students on CL instruction, training them on working cooperatively in small groups and familiarizing them with cooperative writing activities.

First of all, in order to brief the students on CL instruction, the researcher introduced a small lecture on CL in which she defined this new instruction in a short and simple way to ensure that students would understand it. Then, she explained the essence of cooperative learning and clarified its difference from ordinary group work via explaining the five pillars of cooperative learning, namely: positive interdependence, individual accountability, face-to-face promotive interaction, interpersonal and small group skills, and group processing. Also, the researcher stressed the importance of these five pillars and clarified to the students that if these pillars are not respected, the group work is not considered cooperative. After that, the researcher spoke about the benefits of cooperative learning briefly and tried to raise students' interest and enthusiasm towards experiencing this new learning environment.

The second step of this session was training students on CL instruction. In order to train the students to be effective group members, they should be first distributed into groups. Thus, the training began with forming the CL groups. After distributing the students into their formal

(permanent) CL groups (See section 5.2 in chapter two), the teacher assigned the students with different roles, namely, expert, leader, time keeper and noise monitor and distributed the coloured role cards which included the position and the responsibility of each group member (see appendix V). After having the students sitting together in their groups and distributing the tasks among group members, the teacher started with the first CL activity which aimed at encouraging students to interact with their group mates and get to know each other. The teacher and the researcher's focus was on the functioning of the groups and the type of communication and interaction that was among the groups' members; hence, it was an opportunity to solve any problems or make changes in the groups' construction before the cooperative writing sessions start. The activity performed at this first stage of CL training was

team-building CL structure suggested by Joffllie (2007) in which group members take turns to tell two truths about themselves and a lie while their mates try to guess the lie. Through this activity the psychological boundaries that limit students' interaction such as shyness, insecurity about expressing their opinions and fear of making mistakes will be reduced since all the group members should participate in the conversation and express themselves. Also, team-building structures increase students' socialization as they give them the opportunity to present themselves to their group mates and know them better through listening to their presentations as well.

The third step of the lesson was training student on cooperative writing. Hence, in order to achieve this aim two CW activities were introduced at this stage. The first activity was Write Around, in which students are asked to take turns to write one shred story (see section 10.1 in chapter two) and it aimed at enhancing students' creative writing. While the second activity was "Rally Table", which aimed at increasing the cohesion among group members via training them on the techniques of writing rapidly within a group, evaluating what the others have written and building on others' ideas (for more details about the two activities check appendix X)

3.2.4.2.2 The Second Training Session

The second training session aimed at briefing students on the process approach of writing and peer feedback technique, training students on revising and editing essays cooperatively and familiarizing them with using peer feedback checklists.

At first, the teacher started with explaining the four stages of writing according to the process approach, namely, pre-writing, drafting, revising and editing stage. She gave a brief

explanation of each stage with a focus on the last two stages, where she introduced peer feedback as a new technique of error correction.

After that, so as to train students on PF technique, they were asked to revise and edit descriptive essays, which were written by second year students in another group, cooperatively with the use of checklists (more details about the activities are in appendix X).

At the end of the training, the researcher, through the notes taken during the two training sessions, decided to take some measures to make the cooperation between the group members more effective and ensure positive interdependence among group mates.

3.2.4.2.3 Measures for an effective CL implementation

After these two training sessions, the researcher drew some measures to ensure an effective implementation of CL instruction and peer feedback technique during the four cooperative writing sessions.

- Within CL writing class, teachers can assign the members of one group to write one collective essay; however, in order to ensure individual accountability each student will be asked to write his own essay. Thus, since they know that they should deliver an essay at the end of the session, students will be fully involved in the writing process and the group work.

- To ensure a positive interdependence among group members, students will be told that their individual marks will be added to the total marks of their mates and then divided by the number of group members to issue the students' final mark. Hence, students, after knowing that their marks are influenced by the ones of their group mates, will take revising and editing their mates' essays seriously as they are conscious that if their group mate fails, they will fail too.

- So as to increase students' promotive interaction, interactive activities will be designed to keep the students active and maximize communication between them.

- For an effective group processing, students will be given ten minutes at the end of each session to discuss about how well their groups functioned and suggest ideas for improving their group work.

- Time management is crucial for the success of CL experience; hence, specific time will be allocated for each writing stage and students will be stopped once the time is over for that stage. This will help students manage their time appropriately and finish their task on time.

3.2.4.3 Cooperative Learning Treatment Implementation

The cooperative learning treatment was implemented in four writing sessions, where the process approach of teaching writing was adopted and three writing stages, namely: pre-writing, revising and editing were performed collectively in CL groups while drafting stage was carried out individually. Within the four sessions, four writing courses were carried out cooperatively, namely, description of an object, description of a place, description of a person and description of an experience.

Firstly, all the sessions started in a pre-writing stage in which the students were engaged a variety of CL interactive activities, such as *round table*, *buzzgroups*, *roving reporter, two stay and two stray*, and *think-share-write-compare*. These activities were introduced at the pre-writing stage so as to grasp the students' attention, engage them in the cooperative writing process and maximize the cooperation and interaction among them. Within this stage, that last for 20 minutes in almost all the sessions, the students in all the CL groups brainstormed, communicated, interacted, discussed, generated ideas, collected useful vocabulary and designed outlines for their essays cooperatively.

Secondly, after they have collected information and vocabulary about the topic and designed the essays' outlines, the students start composing the first drafts of their essays individually. According to Gebhard (2000), in the drafting stage students ought to keep writing their drafts from the beginning till the end without stopping; therefore, the teacher reminded the students that they should not interrupt the flow of ideas; yet, at the same time they had to keep themselves guided by the outline. Thus, the students used the vocabulary and the ideas collected in the pre-writing stage and wrote the first drafts of their essays during the 20 minutes that were devoted for this stage.

Thirdly, after composing the first drafts of their essays, students started revising their essays collectively using peer feedback checklists (see appendix IV). In the revising stage, which lasted for 20 minutes in all the CW sessions, students focused mainly on the consistency of sentences, the choice of vocabulary, the organization of the paragraphs and the clarity and cohesion of ideas. While the correction of grammatical, punctuation and spelling errors was left to the editing stage. Hence, the students put their drafts in the middle of the table and started taking turns to read their drafts and the other group mates evaluated, spotted the errors and provided corrective feedback. In case of disagreement, the group members had to refer it to the group expert; however, if this latter couldn't solve the problem, the group could ask for the

teacher's help. After having revised all the essays, students corrected their drafts or rewrote second ones.

Finally, students arrived at editing, which is the final stage of the writing process, where students were allowed 20 minutes to edit their essays collectively. Thus, students placed their essays in the middle of the table and took turns to read their essays and the other group members, with the help of peer feedback checklists, commented on them, spotted the errors and suggested corrections. At this stage, students were reminded that they had to concentrate on grammatical and mechanical errors. Finally, each student edited his/her draft depending on his/her mates' feedback and produced the final essay.

At the end of all the sessions the students were given ten minutes for group processing (see section 3.5 in chapter two), where students discussed how they proceeded through the different CL activities, expressed the difficulties they faced and suggested mechanisms to overcome these obstacles in the following sessions. (For more detailed information about these CW sessions check appendix XI)

3.3 The Interviews

The last data collection stage of the present research consisted of interviews directed to both teacher and students involved in the experiment. In spite of the fact that interviews can serve as a primary data collection tool that resolves the research problematic; however, they can be used as an auxiliary checking tool so as to triangulate data gathered by another data collection tool (McDonough &McDonough, 1997). Hence, the interviews were used in this study to supplement and give in-depth insights to the data gathered by the preliminary instrument which is the writing tests. Accordingly, Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2007) declared that using interviews in research "marks a move away from seeing human subjects as simply manipulable and data as somehow external to individuals" (p. 349). Hence, interviews are a widely used data collection tool in educational research as they are flexible and enable the use of multi-sensory channels: "verbal, non-verbal, spoken and heard" (ibid, 2007, p. 349). Furthermore, interviewing students and reporting their views and perceptions of the learning process is of great importance and is a factor that had a significant impact on educational research because until the 20th century, the students' attitudes, impressions and views were not taken into consideration in the majority of educational researches (Tierney and Dilley, 2001).

As for the type of interview, the researcher opted for semi-structured interviews which are interviews "with a given agenda and open-ended questions"; they are generally used in educational research to "to gather data on the more intangible aspects of the school's culture, e.g. values, assumptions, beliefs, wishes, problems" (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2007, p 97). Hence, semi-structured interviews were used in the current study owing to the variety of advantages of their open-ended questions such as flexibility, the opportunity to probe in order to go into more depth or clarify any misunderstanding, encouraging cooperation and helping the researcher to make a valid assessment of what the respondents really believe (ibid, 2007). Furthermore, semi-structured interviews encourage the interviewee to express his/her thoughts or views freely without the interviewer interference or guidance towards answering the question in a certain way; hence, the researcher used semi-structured interviews so as to enable the teacher and students who participated in the study express their attitudes towards CL instruction and peer feedback technique freely.

3.3.1 Objectives of the Interviews

Post-experiment semi-structured interviews were conducted within this study in order to achieve the last aim of the study which is accounting for the teacher's and students' attitudes towards the integration of peer feedback within cooperative learning instruction (Learning Together) in the writing course. Hence, in order to achieve this aim, the interview was conducted by the researcher to fulfil the following objectives:

1. To have a deep insight on how participants of the experiment perceived the cooperative learning experience.

2. To elicit participants' attitudes towards the implementation of CL instruction in the writing courses.

3. To elicit participants' attitudes towards the implementation of CL peer feedback technique in the writing courses.

4. To account for the difficulties that the participants might have faced during the implementation of cooperative learning instruction and peer feedback technique.

3.3.2 Participants

The final stage of data collection for the present study included two semi-structured interviews directed to both the second year licence students who were subject to the experiment

and the writing teacher who taught them during the experimental procedure. As for the students who were interviewed, the researcher purposively chose ten students out of thirty to be respondents to the interview according to their marks of the written expression module in the first semester exam. Thus, the researcher selected three students with a good level of writing ability, two average students and three students of weak level. The researcher opted for purposive sampling because it enables the researcher "handpick the cases to be included in the sample on the basis of their judgment of their typicality or possession of the particular characteristic being sought"; it also gives him/her the opportunity to "build up a sample that is satisfactory to their specific needs" (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007, p. 114-115). However, although its results are non-generalizable and it is considered "deliberately and unashamedly selective", the researcher depended on this sampling strategy so as to meet a specific research purpose which is accounting for the attitudes of students of different levels (high, average and low) towards the use of CL instruction and peer feedback technique in their writing class.

3.3.3 Description of the Interviews

The different sections of the teacher and students' interviews and the questions directed to the interviewees are described as follows:

3.3.3.1 The Students' Interview

The interview, which was directed to EFL second year students who participated in the experiment, comprised nine questions (see appendix VII).

Questions from 1 to 5 were devoted to eliciting students' perceptions and attitudes towards the implementation of CL instruction in the writing courses. While the rest of questions (from 6 to 9), tackled students' perceptions of peer feedback technique and the extent to which they benefited from it.

3.3.3.2 The Teacher's Interview

The teacher's interview (see appendix VI) comprised six questions, which were grouped in three sections.

Section One (Q1, Q2 and Q3): It aimed at eliciting the teacher's attitude towards the implementation of cooperative learning instruction in the written expression sessions and the impact of this instruction on her students.

Section Two (Q4): This section was devoted to account for the teacher's perception of peer feedback technique and its effectiveness in responding to students' writing errors.

Section Three (Q5 and Q6): Within this last section, the teacher was asked to give suggestions on how to make the implantation of CL instruction and peer feedback technique more effective in the future and any other suggestion to enhance second year students writing accuracy.

3.3.4 Administration of the Interviews

Both the teacher's and students' interviews were personally conducted by the researcher. As for the students' interviews, they took place in the English Department of KMU and were conducted right after the post-test. Each student was interviewed individually in a quiet room and all the interviews were recorded (see the transcription of the interviews in appendix IX); the interviews lasted for 15 to 20 minutes and were all conducted in English. While the interview with the writing teacher was conducted three days after the post-test and it lasted for 40 minutes. The interview took place in the office of the vice head of the department and was recorded and transcribed (see appendix VIII). Furthermore, conforming to the research ethics, the consent of the participants was obtained concerning the recording of the interview and the reporting of the findings.

4. Data Processing and Data Analysis

After collecting the data, the ways of their processing and the tools that are used in their analysis shall be discussed.

4.1Questionnaire

After administrating the questionnaire, the researcher processed the gathered data following three stages:

4.1.1 Stage One: Questionnaire Editing

This first step of data processing aims at identifying and eliminating errors made by respondents (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007) and it was performed depending on three main steps:

a. Checking Completeness: All the collected questionnaires were checked in order to ensure that there is an answer for each question.

b. Checking Accuracy: At this stage a check was done to make sure that all the questions are answered accurately.

c. Checking Uniformity: The researcher, after checking completeness and accuracy of the questionnaires, had to ensure that the respondents have interpreted the instructions and questions of the questionnaire appropriately (ibid, 2007).

After checking the above mentioned elements, the researcher found that all the collected questionnaires were reliable and complete, except for one respondent who did not answer a whole section of the questionnaire. This respondent was contacted and she completed the questionnaire and returned it back to the researcher.

4.1.2 Stage Two: Data Reduction

The first step towards data reduction is coding, which refers to "assigning a code number to each answer to a survey question" (ibid, 2007, p. 348). Since the present questionnaire is semi-structured i.e. it merges between close-ended and open-ended questions, coding was performed before the administration of the questionnaire for the close-ended questions; whereas post-coding was developed for the open-ended questions.

4.1.3 Stage Three: Data Analysis

After reducing the data gathered from the pre-experiment semi-structured questionnaire in a form that makes them suitable for analysis, they were analysed via descriptive statistics, in which the frequencies and percentages of the responses were calculated using Microsoft Excel.

4.2 Writing Tests

The data analysis of the pre-test and post-test was conducted according to the following three stages.

4.2.1 Stage One

The first stage of data processing is coding, where each essay was given a code that consists of a number and two letters. The numbers were from 1 to 30, which is the total number of participants; whereas the letters, they were PR (referring to the pre-test) and PT (referring to the post-test). For instance, the code (20 PR) represents the twentieth students' pre-test while (20 PT) stands for his/her post-test.

4.2.2 Stage Two

This stage was devoted to the identification of the tests' scoring approach, the category of errors to be considered, and the types of errors that are included in the analysis.

This research adopts the primary trait scoring approach which implies the scoring of only one feature of the written text e.g., content, organization, accuracy …etc. The primary trait scoring is usually applicable when the researcher is interested in investigating a specific feature and scoring it (Weigle, 2002); hence, this scoring approach is the adequate one since the present research focuses mainly on improving students' writing accuracy. Generally, to measure students' writing accuracy, researchers reflect on students' writing errors; thus, students are considered more proficient in writing accuracy when they make fewer errors. However, "many advocates of error correction warn against attempting to mark all student errors" because this could be exhausting for the researcher/teacher and overwhelming for the students (Ferris, 2011, p.79). Furthermore, corrective feedback is more effective when it focuses on certain patterns of errors, enabling teachers and students to attend to three or four major types of errors rather than "dozens of disparate errors" (ibid, p 79). Hence, the researcher selected a specific category of errors to be considered in the data analysis procedure i.e. local errors. The choice of this particular type of errors was made based on the views of written expression teachers at the English Department of KMU, who claimed, when they answered the questions of the present study pre-experiment questionnaire, that they suffered more from students' local errors than global ones. Concerning the types of errors that the analysis includes, they are grammatical errors and errors of mechanics. These two types are chosen depending on three factors:

1. These two types are frequently mentioned as examples of local errors in many definitions of the term local errors (Burt and Kiparsky, 1978; Hendrickson, 1976 and Corder 1973); hence, they are the most adequate categories that represent local errors.

2. These two types were frequently repeated in the teachers' answers when they were questioned about the types of errors that appear most in the students' texts.

3. After conducting the pre-test, the researcher found that the errors that prevailed most in students' writings were grammatical and mechanical errors; thus, the focus in the data analysis will be on these two types of errors.

Since the terms grammatical and mechanical errors are still vast, the researcher specified four main sub-categories in each type depending on the occurrence of these errors in the pre-

test essays; hence, grammatical errors sub-categories are: subject/verb agreement, tenses, word order and prepositions errors while errors of mechanics included: punctuation, spelling, capitalization and indentation errors.

4.2.3 Stage Three

After locating and classifying the writing errors in the pre-test and post-test essays, the data were analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Particularly, descriptive statistics, as its name indicates, presents and describes data; thus, it was used in this study to report the results of the pre-test and post-test while inferential statistics was performed to make inferences and predictions about the gathered data (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007). First, the results of the pre-test and post-test were analysed separately depending on the mean scores and standard deviation of the different components of the tests so as to investigate students' writing performance before and after the treatment. Second, the inferential study was performed and the means of the two tests (pre-test and post-test) were compared through a t-test in order to determine whether there is a significant difference in the students' writing performance after the implementation of peer feedback technique within cooperative learning instruction. Since there are two types of t-tests: the unpaired t-test, also named independent t-test, which is used when the study includes two groups (control/experimental) and the paired-samples t-test, also termed dependent t-test, which is employed when there is only one group that is tested before and after the treatment (Mackey & Gass, 2005); hence, the researcher opted for the latter because this study uses a one group pretest-post-test pre-experimental design.

4.3 Interviews

After conducting the interviews with both the teacher and ten of the students who were involved in the cooperative learning treatment, the processing of data gathered from these post-experimental semi-structured interviews underwent three stages.

4.3.1 Stage One: Transcribing

The first step towards processing the data gathered from the interviews was transforming the format of data from audiotapes into written texts. This stage is very important since without it "there is the potential for massive data loss, distortion and the reduction of complexity" (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007, p. 365). Thus, all the conducted interviews were transcribed in full (see appendices VIII and IX).

4.3.2 Stage Two: Analysing

After having all the data in written format, analysing their content was the second step. Hence, in order to make the data manageable for analysis and interpretation, coding data, which implies categorizing the responses and identifying the emerging themes and categories, was necessary. Hence, the researcher followed Hycner's (1985) main procedures for coding interview data, which are represented in the following steps:

a. Listening to the interview for a sense of the whole: this implies listening to the entire interview several times and reading its transcription many times so as to build a context for the emergence of certain units of meaning and themes later on (Hycner, 1985 as cited in Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007).

b. Delineating units of general meaning: this step was defined as a "crystallization and condensation of what the participant has said, still using as much as possible the literal words of the participants" (Hycner, 1985 as cited in Cohen, Maion and Morrison, 2007, p. 370). Hence the researcher at this stage tried to elicit the participants' meanings as much as possible.

c. Delineating units of meaning relevant to the research question: after noting the units of general meaning, the researcher reduced them into units relevant to the research question and, then, eliminated any possible redundancies via checking the lists of relevant meanings and omitting those redundant to previously listed ones.

d. Clustering units of relevant meaning: after fixing the units of relevant meaning, the researcher tried to determine if any of these units cluster together and looked for any common themes that could unite several units of meaning.

e. Determining themes from clusters of meaning: at this stage, the researcher examined all the clusters of meaning to identify the central themes that reflect the essence of these clusters.

4.3.3 Stage Three: Reporting

After analysing the data and classifying it into measurable themes, reporting the findings is the last and most important stage of data processing. According to Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2007) the nature of data reporting depends on the nature of interviewing. Thus, a structured interview for instance may reveal numerical data that is reported generally in tables and graphs; whereas open-ended interviews, which are the case of the present study's interviews, yield "word-based accounts that take up considerably more space" (ibid, 2007, p.

372). Thus, the interview findings and their interpretations will be reported in a word-based form in the next chapter.

Conclusion

The present chapter tackled the research design and methodology adopted in this research. Therefore, the experimental design, the data collection tools and instruments were presented and reasons for choosing a certain design and specific tools were thoroughly discussed. Furthermore, participants, who constituted the sample of this study, were identified and the sampling strategies adopted for their selection were explained and justified. Moreover, this chapter provided a detailed description of the cooperative learning treatment sessions in which second year EFL students were engaged. Finally, the chapter addressed the data processing and data analysis procedures while the results and their interpretations are presented in the fourth chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR:

Results' Analysis, Discussion and Interpretation

Introduction

The present chapter is devoted for the presentation and interpretation of the results of the three data collection tools used in the present study. First, this chapter analyses the results of the pre-experiment questionnaire, which was conducted to explore the context of teaching/learning the writing skill in the English Department of Kasdi Merbah University (Algeria) and account for the challenges that written expression teachers face when they teach EFL writing. Second, it presents and compares the findings of the writing tests (pre-test and post-test) which were set to investigate the effectiveness of CL instruction in minimizing EFL students' writing errors and enhancing their writing accuracy. Third, the present chapter analyses the data gathered through the post-experiment interviews which aimed at providing in depth insights about the effects of CL on EFL students' writing and investigating the students' and the teacher's attitudes towards the integration of CL instruction and peer feedback technique in the writing course. More details about these data collection instruments and the reasons for selecting them are explained in the previous chapter (Research Methodology) as for this chapter, it is concerned mainly with the presentation, analysis and interpretation of the results.

1. The Results of the Questionnaire

In the present research, a pre-experiment questionnaire directed to EFL writing teachers at the English Department of Kasdi Merbah University, Ouargla (Algeria) was conducted with the aim of exploring the teaching/learning context, accounting for the challenges that the teachers face when they teach the writing skill (especially for second year licence students) and eliciting teachers' perceptions towards the implementation of CL in the writing course. Since these data are essential for conducting the empirical study, the present questionnaire was conducted and analysed before conducting the experiment. Therefore, the results of the questionnaire, which are represented in the following elements, helped the researcher design and conduct the experiment.

1.1 Teachers' Academic Qualification and Experience

The aim of this section is to shed light on the background and experience of the written expression teachers at the English Department of KMU. Hence, the information supplied by the teachers is displayed in the table below.

Informant	Degree	Experience in teaching at the university	Experience in teaching writing skill
1	PhD	6 years	3 years
2	PhD	3 years	3 years
3	PhD	12 years	10 years
4	PhD	14 years	11 years
5	PhD	3 years	3 years
6	PhD	13 years	2 years
7	Magister	11 years	7 years
8	Magister	4 years	2 years
9	Magister	1 year	1 year

Table3. Teachers' academic qualifications and experience

According to the data represented in the table above, six of the informants are PhD holders while the three others are Magister degree holders, who are conducting their doctoral research. Concerning teachers' experience in teaching at the university level, it ranges between 1 and 14 years. Particularly, five of them are experienced teachers with more than 6-year experience in teaching at the tertiary level while the other 4 teachers are relatively novice with less than 4-year experience. As for the teachers' experience in teaching the writing skill, it ranges between 1 and 11 years. As it can be noticed in the table above, 3 teachers have a respectful experience in teaching the writing skill at the university level, which ranges between 7 and 11 years whereas the others (6 informants) have a relatively short experience (less than 3 years) in teaching written expression module.

1.2 The Teaching of EFL Writing at KMU

So as to explore the context of teaching the writing skill to EFL students at KMU, Ouargla (Algeria), written expression teachers were asked about the approaches of teaching writing that they adopt in their classes.

Q1. Which writing approach do you opt for when teaching writing?

Teachers' answers are displayed in the following pie chart (figure 8).
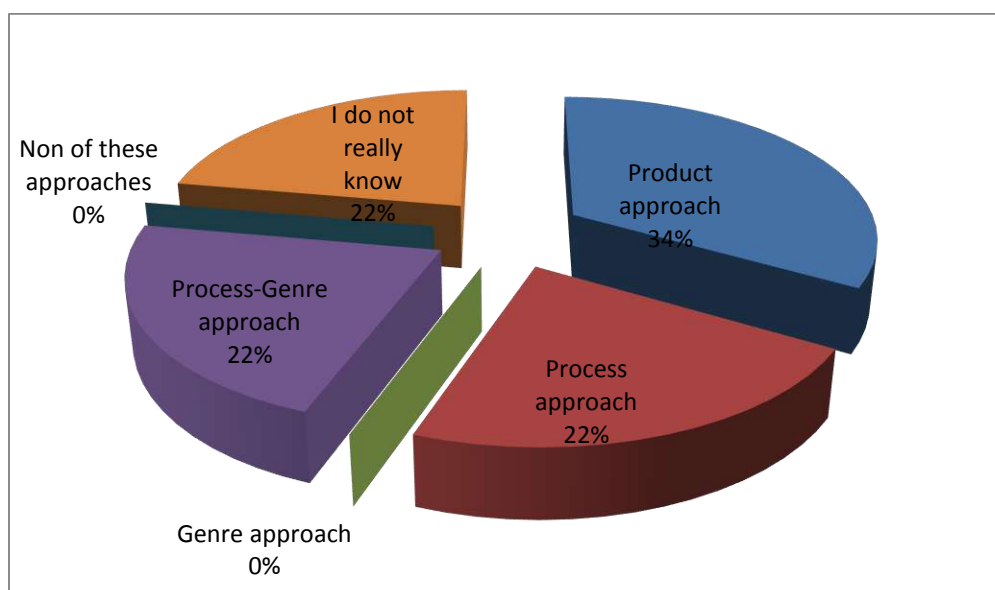
Figure 8. EFL teachers' adopted writing approaches

The informants' answers revealed that the writing teachers at the English Department of KMU use a variety of approaches to teach their students the writing skill, which means that there is not one unified approach that is widely used among them. As displayed in 'figure 8' above, the majority of writing teachers (34 %) declared that they are using the product approach, while the process approach and the process-genre approach were in the second place with 22 % for each. Ultimately, the genre approach was not selected by any teacher, which makes it at the last place with 0 % percentage.

Concerning teachers' awareness of the writing approach they are using in their classes, the results revealed that 78 % of the informants were aware of the approach that they use in their writing courses while 22 % of the teachers declared that they do not really know which approach they are using. Thus, since they do not know which approach they are using, these informants were asked to describe the procedure they follow in their writing courses. Informant 8 declared that he uses the following procedure: 1) Giving handouts which contain information and examples of the studied genre 2) Discussing the handouts with the students 3) practice 4) Students write essays 5) Teacher provides feedback. The stages that this teacher follows make his teaching procedure similar to the genre approach. While informant 9 stated that he does not have a specific procedure in teaching writing; hence, he adapts his teaching to the needs and the level of his students.

In fact, teachers' awareness of the existing writing approaches and of the one they adopt in their classrooms is of paramount importance (Kroll, 2001; Ferris & Hedgcock, 2005) (see section 1.3 in chapter one). Hence, the writing teachers were asked whether or not it is necessary to follow a certain approach to teach the writing skill to EFL students.

Q3. Do you think that teachers should follow a certain approach to teach the writing skill? Why or why not?

The teachers' answers to this question are represented in figure 9 below.
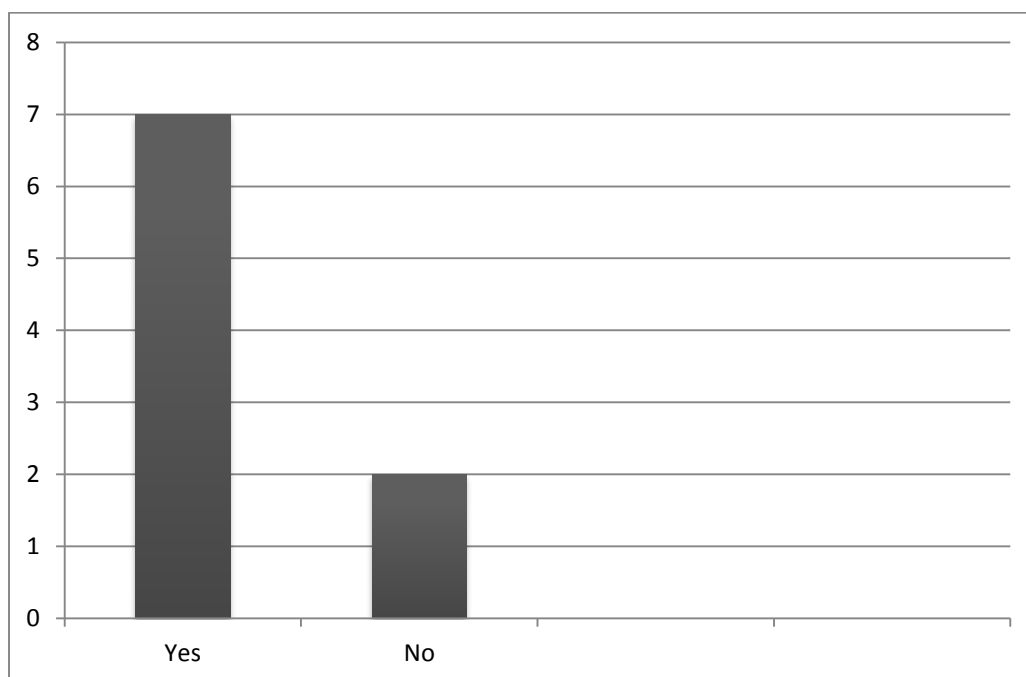
Figure 9. The importance of adopting a particular approach for teaching writing

The findings represented in figure 9 above reveal that the majority of teachers (80 %) are aware of the importance of adopting a particular approach when teaching the writing skill. As for the reasons that made them recognize the importance of following a specific approach in their writing courses, the teachers had different views and arguments. For instance, informant 3 stated that "teachers should be aware of the different approaches to teaching written expression", after that "they can either be eclectic or choose one particular approach. This depends on the vision of the teacher". On the other hand, informant 2 declared that

> *Using a particular approach gives a frame for all the lessons; all that you change is the*
>
> *content. Approaches that go in line with the nature of writing as cognitive, social and*
>
> *theoretical activity help learners use the full of their potential in their written productions*

The other reasons mentioned by the teachers are summarized as follows:

- Using a particular approach in teaching writing skill is a must to guide the students and motivate them to go forward in learning the targeted skill.
- Since there are clear objectives for the teaching of writing, this requires the use of specific approach.
- EFL teachers should choose the writing approach that fits their students' needs and level and the one adequate to the classroom atmosphere.

Concerning the second category of teachers (20 %), who considered that teachers' awareness of the writing approaches is not really necessary and teachers do not have to follow a particular approach in teaching EFL writing, they asserted that teachers should not limit themselves to a specific approach to teaching writing; however, they have to adopt classroom techniques and activities that meet the different needs of students. Moreover, informant 8 declared that "using one approach might not fit all types of students, and this could influence students' motivation and comprehension negatively". Actually, meeting students' needs and level should not be a motive for neglecting or intentionally excluding writing theories and approaches from teaching the writing skill since teachers, after researching the different approaches, can either adopt the approach that fits the teaching context in which they work or be eclectic and make best use of the different existing approaches.

1.3 EFL Teachers' Perceptions of their Students' Writing Proficiency and Motivation

The context of EFL writing skill teaching cannot be thoroughly explored without shedding light on a pivotal component of the teaching/learning process, which is the student. Hence, EFL teachers of KMU were asked about second year licence students' writing proficiency and their motivation towards learning this essential skill. The teachers' answers are displayed in figures 10 and 11 below.

1.3.1 Students' Motivation towards Learning EFL Writing

Motivation towards learning EFL in general and the writing skill particularly has a great impact on enhancing EFL students' writing performance. Thus, the teachers were asked about their students' motivation towards learning the writing skill and their answers are represented in figure 10 below.

Q1. How do you evaluate second year students' motivation towards learning writing?
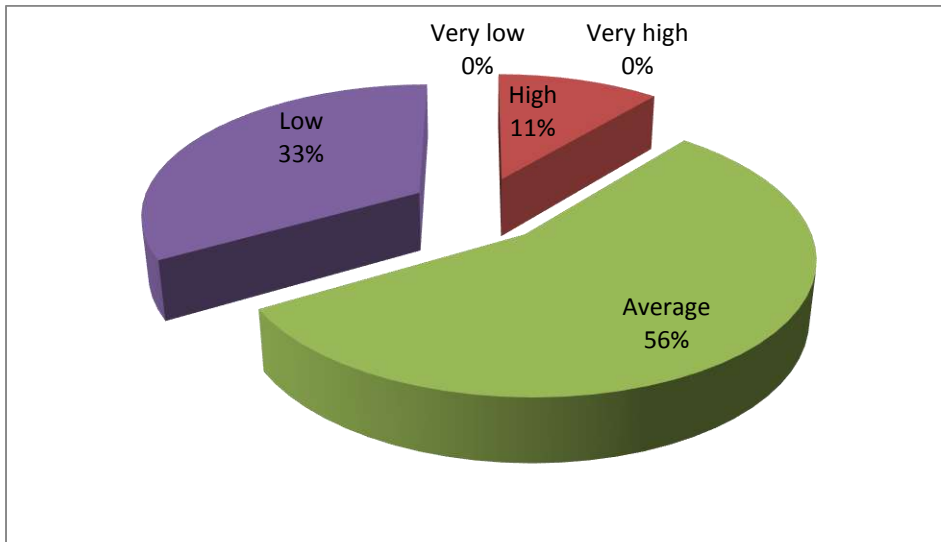
Figure 10. EFL second year students' motivation towards learning writing

As displayed in the pie chart above, the majority of teachers (56 %) reported that their students' motivation towards learning the writing skill was average, which is not enough for learning a complex and challenging skill such as writing. While the remaining teachers' views were split, the first category (33%) considered that second year licence students had a low motivation towards learning writing whereas the second category (11%) had an opposite point of view and declared that their students had a high motivation towards learning writing.

1.3.2 Second Year Licence Students' Writing Proficiency

So as to clearly depict the context of teaching/learning EFL writing at the English Department of KMU, the teachers were asked to evaluate their second year licence students' writing level since they are considered a valid source of information for assessing students and spotting their weaknesses.

Q2. How do you evaluate second year students' writing proficiency?
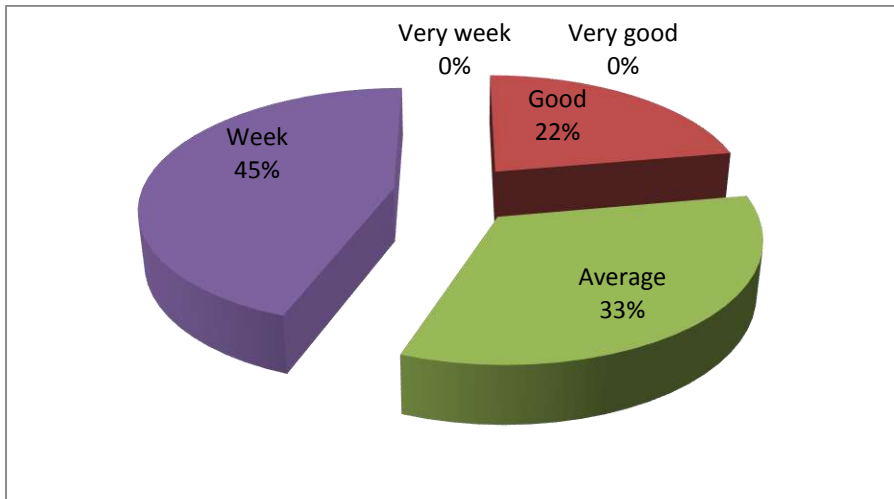
Figure 11. Second year licence students' writing level

The displayed findings indicate that the majority of teachers (45 %) described their students' writing level as "weak" whereas 33 % of them considered it as "average", while only 22 % of them declared that their students have a good level of writing proficiency. Therefore, in order to explore the reasons of students' weakness in writing, the teachers were asked about the major difficulties that they face when teaching the writing skill to second year licence students.

1.3.3 EFL Teachers' Challenges and Difficulties in Teaching Writing

When they were asked about the difficulties that they face when they teach writing to second year licence students, the teachers mentioned many factors that make their task challenging.

Q3. What are the difficulties that you encounter when teaching second year License students the writing skill?

Interestingly, 90% of the difficulties listed by teachers had direct reference to EFL students and the reasons of their weak level of writing proficiency. These factors are listed in the table below from the most to the least replicated.

Teachers' Difficulties in Teaching Writing Skill	Percentage
Lack of motivation	88.8 %
Serious problems with grammatical and syntactic accuracy	77.7 %
First language interference	77.7 %
Lack of reading	66.6 %
Lack of vocabulary	66.6%
Serous spelling and punctuation errors	66.6 %
Lack of background information about the assigned topics	55.5 %
Problems in the choice of words	33.3 %
Problems in outlining essays and organizing ideas	22.2 %
Repeated absences of students	11.1 %
The density of the writing course syllabus	11.1 %

Table 4. EFL teachers' difficulties in teaching the writing skill

As displayed in table 4 above, the written expression teachers at the English Department of Kasdi Merbah University, Ouargla listed the main difficulties that they face when they teach the writing skill to EFL students (particularly second year licence students). The majority of teachers (88.8 %) declared that one of the difficulties that they face when they teach writing to EFL students is their lack of motivation. According to the teachers, the reason for this lack of motivation is the difficulty and complexity of the writing skill, which make students prefer other skills such as listening and speaking. On the other hand, other teachers related it to students' low proficiency level and lack of vocabulary. While informant 1 declared that students lack motivation towards learning the writing skill because of "certain circumstances related to the students themselves such as psychological problems, illness and social problems".

Additionally, many teachers (77.7 %), who responded to the questionnaire, declared that second year licence students suffer from poor grammatical accuracy since they make a lot of grammatical errors when they write academic English. For example, informant 3 stated that students make a lot of grammatical errors, thus "as a teacher, I feel that they are speaking rather than writing". While informant 5 went beyond that when she asserted that EFL students lack the basic grammatical rules that can enable them to write correctly. The other reasons of students' poor grammar, which were mentioned by the informants, were students' low language proficiency level, insufficient practice of grammatical rules and the lack of motivation towards learning grammar.

Another difficulty that teachers face when they teach writing to EFL students is the mother tongue interference. Hence, 77.7 % of the informants declared that they suffer from this problem as their students think in Arabic (their mother tongue) and write in English (FL). For instance, informant 8 said: "students usually use their mother language style of writing", and in the same vein informant 3 declared that "in most of the time students think in Arabic while writing" or as mentioned by informant 1 "they translate their ideas from their mother language".

Another problem that teachers (66.6 %) have mentioned is serious spelling and punctuation errors. The teachers complained about the many and repeated spelling and punctuation errors that they usually find in their students' essays and declared that in spite of all the corrections and remarks, students usually repeat the same errors, especially in punctuation. Accordingly, informant 6 declared: "in addition to some students' bad hand writing, which we have to decode, students make a lot of spelling and punctuation errors, for example some students do not distinguish between the letters 'p' and 'b' and make the same mistake each time they write". Similarly, informant 2 stated: "students do not use punctuation and make a lot of grammatical and spelling mistakes".

Moreover, according to 66.6 % of the questioned teachers, students' lack of reading is one of the essential problems that hamper students' writing level improvement. Hence, many teachers asserted that the more students read the better they write and use grammatical structures appropriately while other teachers linked students' low writing proficiency level to students' lack of interest in reading.

Another problem that some teachers have signalled was the lack of ideas and background information. 55.5 % of informants declared that their students always face problems of ideas' generation, especially when dealing with some topics that need specific and accurate background information. For instance, informant 8 stated that "students usually have problems of not having enough background information about the topics they are to write about" while informant 7 declared that students suffer from the "lack of ideas especially if they are unfamiliar to the given topic". On the other hand, other teachers asserted that EFL students do not have a problem in finding ideas; however, they do not have the vocabulary baggage to express their ideas.

Thus, as highlighted earlier, many teachers (66.6 %) complained about students' poor vocabulary baggage. Some teachers inferred this problem to students' low language proficiency, the lack of language practice and students' limited use of English for

communicating their ideas. On the other hand, some teachers (33.3 %) asserted that students' vocabulary problems are not restricted to knowing the words only; yet, they exceed to using these words appropriately in context as the majority of students suffer from problems in the choice of words. In this context, informant 8 stated that "students have problems with using the right words in context".

The other issues, which were mentioned by only few teachers and disregarded by the others, were problems in outlining and organizing essays (22.2 %), repeated absences of some students (11.1 %) and the density of the writing course syllabus (11.1 %).

1.4 Second Year EFL Students' Writing Errors

The aim of this fourth section of the questionnaire is to account for the category of errors that appears frequently in second year licence students' texts (local or global errors). Therefore, the category of errors that is chosen by the majority of teachers will be the one analysed in the writing tests. The choice of the category of errors that will be subject to textual analysis was built on teachers' answers because they are the ones who know students' level and weaknesses due to the continuous assessment they perform inside the classroom and when they correct their students' writings at different tests and exams. Moreover, this section investigates the type of feedback that EFL teachers at the English Department of KMU use in their writing courses.

Q1. What type of errors that frequently appears in your students' essays?

When the teachers were asked about the category of errors that frequently appears in their students' essays, the majority of teachers indicated that local errors appear most in their students' texts. The percentages of teachers' answers are displayed in figure 12 below.
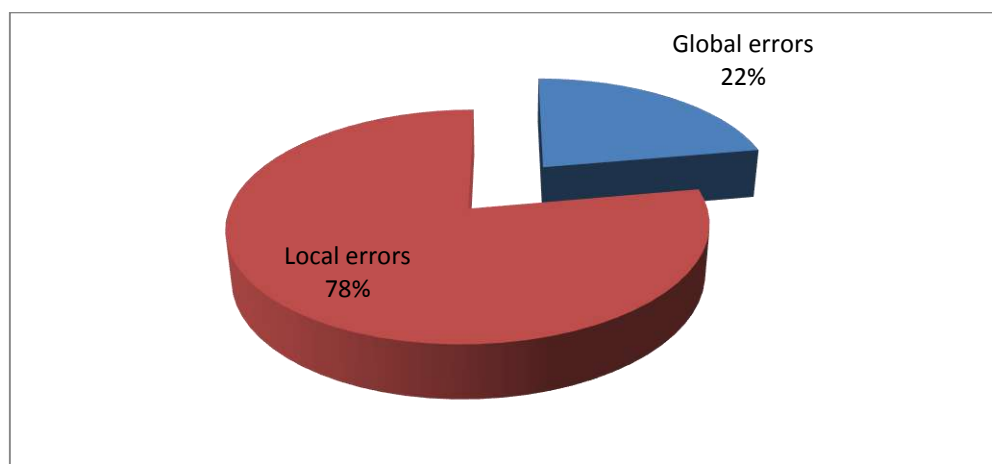
Figure 12. Second year licence students' writing errors

As the pie chart demonstrates, the majority of teachers (78 %) indicated that the category of errors that prevails most in their students' essays is local errors whereas only 22 % of the informants declared that global errors appear more than local ones in their students' essays. Thus, since the majority of informants stated that local errors frequently appear in second year students' essays, the researcher will focus her analysis of the writing tests on this category of errors.

Furthermore, in order to have a deeper view of students' errors, the teachers were asked about the types of writing errors that students commit frequently when they write essays. The types of errors mentioned by the teachers and their percentages are represented in the table below.

Types of errors	Percentage
Grammatical	88.8 %
Punctuation	66.6 %
Spelling	44.4 %
Capitalization	33.3 %
Cohesion and coherence	33.3 %
Subject/verb agreement	33.3 %
Tenses	33.3 %
Word order	22.2 %
Syntactic errors	11.1 %

Table 5. Most frequent EFL students' writing errors

As the results demonstrate, the type of writing errors that is most committed by second year licence students is grammatical errors since 88.8 % of teachers have mentioned it. Moreover, the second type mentioned frequently by teachers was errors of mechanics (punctuation 66.6 %, spelling 44.4 %, capitalization 33.3 %). While only 33.3 % of teachers indicated cohesion and coherence errors and 22.2 % of them referred to errors of word order, as for syntactic errors, they were the least mentioned with a percentage of 11.1 %.

The second question of this section was:

Q2. Which type of feedback do you usually use to respond to your students writing errors? The teachers' answers are displayed in figure 13 below.
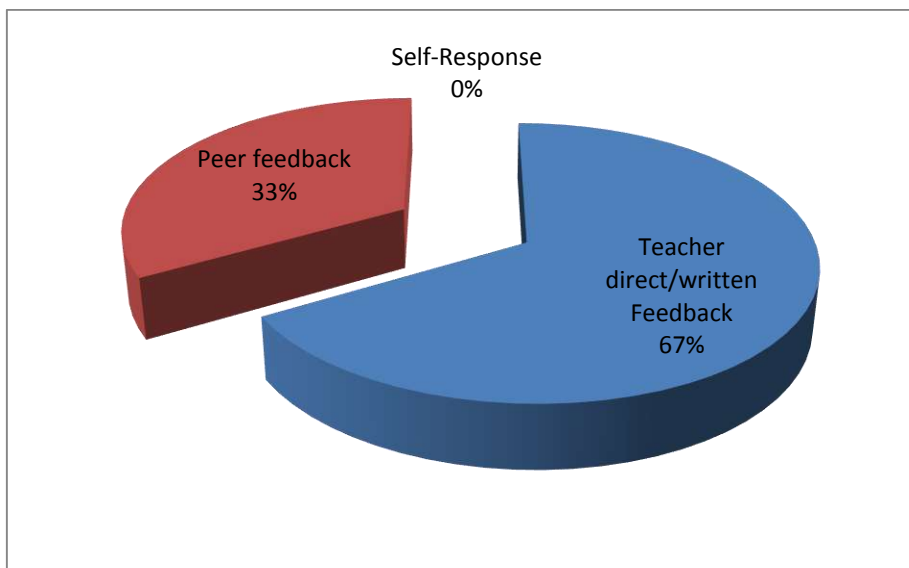
Figure 13. The types of feedback used by written expression teachers

The obtained data show that the majority of teachers (67 %) are using the traditional direct and/or written teacher feedback to respond to their students' writing errors whereas only 33 % of them are using peer feedback technique while none of them has declared that he/she is using self-response technique. Thus, in order to better understand the rationale behind the preference of a certain feedback method, the teachers were asked to justify the reason for using this type of feedback and rejecting the other types. First of all, the teachers declared that they preferred teacher feedback because it less time consuming and it allows students to learn directly from their errors. Also, some of the teachers stated that EFL students need their teachers' feedback to ensure that they are having reliable information; accordingly, informant 8 said: "I use teacher direct feedback because it is effective, faithful and makes an impact on students' memorization". Other teachers declared that they use teacher feedback because the other types of feedback are not effective due to students' low proficiency level, for instance informant 9 asserted that "a student of an average level cannot be trusted to provide his peers with feedback". On the other hand, the teachers who declared that they use peer feedback technique to respond to students' writing errors mentioned that they prefer it because it helps students learn from each other; however, they stressed that they do not rely on it all the time and they use it only in certain cases. For instance, informant 6 mentioned that "EFL students are not competent enough to provide their mates with corrective feedback unless they are guided by the teacher. That is why I rely on teachers' feedback as a first stage, and then I move to peer feedback" while informant 5 said that "it depends on the situation. Sometimes the teacher must

give direct feedback and other times it is the task of their peers". While the third teacher, who was in favour of this feedback technique described its use as follows:

> As a teacher, I believe in the following order: self-correction, peer-correction and teacher's
>
> correction because I need to give opportunity to the learner to correct him/herself and if
>
> he/she fails, another learner (the peer) is asked to correct. If the peer fails, the teacher
>
> provides them with the right answer.

Hence, given the present results, teachers' complete reliance on the traditional teacher feedback method should be reduced and other types of feedback that were widely proved effective in minimizing students' writing errors should be introduced in the EFL writing classroom in order to minimize students' writing errors and enhance their writing proficiency level as well.

1.5 Teachers' Perceptions of the Implementation of CL in the Writing Courses

The aim of including this section in the questionnaire was to investigate the extent to which EFL teachers at KMU were willing to implement new teaching instruction (cooperative learning) in their writing courses and whether or not they were open to the idea of implementing different teaching instruction to ameliorate the teaching and learning of EFL writing and enhance students' level. Hence, the first question that was directed to the teachers was: Q1. Do you think that the teaching of writing skill can be accomplished within cooperative learning groups? Why/why not?

The answers of teachers are represented in figure 14 below.
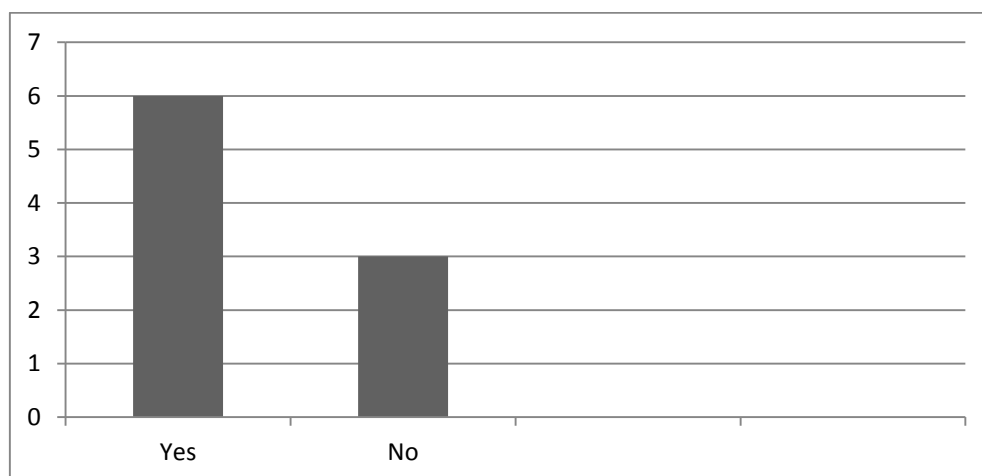
Figure 14. Teachers' perceptions of the implementation of CL in the writing course

The data displayed in the above histogram indicate that the majority of teachers (67 %) approve the implementation of CL instruction in the teaching of writing skill while 33 % of informants think that the teaching of writing skill cannot be accomplished within cooperative learning groups. Furthermore, when they were asked to justify their choices, the teachers, who disapproved the implementation of CL instruction in the writing course, declared that writing is a complex task that has to be performed individually. For instance, informant 9 asserted that "since writing is an individual skill, each student needs to write individually and develop his/her text by him/herself". Another factor that made these teachers refuse this instruction is time management as they thought that the use of this instruction would hamper them from managing the time allocated for each activity, for example informant 2 argued that "the time spent by the students off-task (on marginal talk) is more than the time spent on task (learning together). As for informant 8, he asserted that "writing can be performed in CL groups but students produce better when working individually".

On the other hand, the teachers, who were in favour of the use of CL groups in the writing course, indicated that the implementation of this instruction would raise students' motivation towards learning the writing skill and enable the students to cooperate and exchange ideas. For instance, informant 5 argued that "students feel more comfortable around each other and get more motivated" while informant 6 stressed that "CL gives learners the opportunity to exchange ideas and assist and correct one another. Furthermore, it strengthens the idea of team work". Accordingly, informant 4 stated that "EFL students feel more motivated when working in groups; thus, they need to be aware of the usefulness of learning from each other".

To sum up, the informants' answers reveal that EFL writing teachers in the English Department of KMU welcome the implementation of cooperative learning instruction in the writing courses; however, the rational of its use according to them was limited to the psychological and social factors such as raising students' motivation and strengthening team work skills and only few of them had spoken about the cognitive side such as enhancing students' writing competence or improving their critical thinking skills. Also, in spite of the positive effects that were recorded in many studies concerning the effectiveness of CL group work, it was noticed that some teachers are still resistant to CL activities and depend completely on the whole class lecture mode.

The second question within this section was:

Q2. At which stage(s) of the writing process do you think that cooperative learning can be implemented?"

The teachers' answers to this question are represented in the table below.

Writing stages	percentage
Pre-writing stage	77.7 %
Drafting stage	22.2 %
Revising stage	55.5 %
Editing stage	44.4 %
All the stages	00 %

Table 6. The implementation of CL in the different writing stages

Based on the provided answers, the majority of teachers (77.7 %) believe that cooperative learning is beneficial when implemented at the pre-writing stage and when they were asked about the reason, the teachers provided many justifications. According to informant 3, "cooperative learning helps students accumulate a satisfactory amount of ideas about the topic. Then it will be easier for each individual student to organize and finalize his/her own pie i.e., version of writing according to his/her own style". Other informants considered that the use of CL instruction in the pre-writing stage would increase the richness and development of ideas. Accordingly, informant 2 argued that "CL helps students brainstorm and outline, and then each student develops his/her text individually". Moreover, the data displayed in the table above demonstrate that 55.5 % of teachers think that CL instruction can be used in the revising stage and 44.4 % of them considered it applicable in the editing stage; however, these teachers did not supply clear justifications of their choice and only two teachers declared that they think so because they noticed that it helps students to be aware of their mistakes. Finally, only 22.2 % of the teachers thought that the drafting stage can be performed within a CL instruction, yet they also could not explain why they think so.

As for the last question in this section, the teachers were asked whether the implementation of cooperative learning instruction could minimize EFL students' writing errors. The teachers' views are represented in figure 15 below.

Q3. Do you think that the implementation of cooperative learning instruction can minimize EFL students' writing errors? Why or why not?
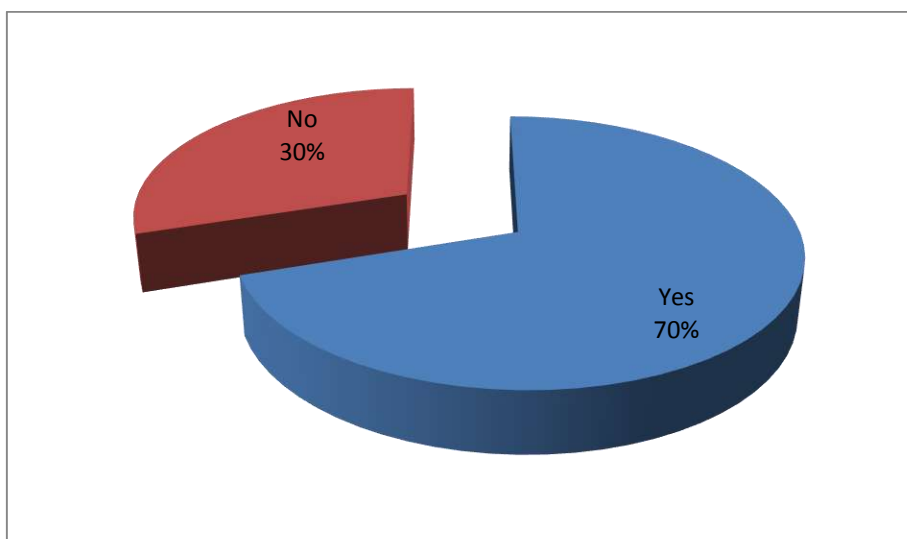
Figure 15. Teachers' views about the effect of CL in minimizing students' writing errors

Based on the teachers' answers, it was noticed that the majority of teachers (70 %) believe that the integration of CL instruction in the writing courses can help in minimizing EFL students' writing errors. According to them, this teaching/learning instruction allows students to learn from each other's errors, especially if they receive training on how to differentiate between the different types of errors. Accordingly, informant 2 stated that "overall, CL needs organizing the tasks and training the students", the same view was shared by informant 4 who asserted that "students learn from each other when they are involved in group work. In this case they will have the ability to overcome all the difficulties they face in writing essays". Cooperative learning, according to these teachers, helps raising students' awareness about the errors that they commit as via correcting their peers' errors they will reflect on their own errors, this can also happen through noticing their peers' errors. In this regard, informant 5 said that "sometimes students are not aware of the errors they make but when it is noticed by his/her peers, he/she starts to identify them". Moreover, other teachers spoke about the cooperation opportunities that CL creates between excellent students and low achievers, for example informant 9 asserted that "because CL is a group work and all the students work together, thus the high and low level students cooperate. As a result, they will improve their writing level and minimize their errors". While informant 1 highlighted the importance of implementing CL instruction in the writing course and its effects in minimizing students' errors by saying:

> As a teacher, I believe in cooperative learning in general and in writing in particular for it allows the learners to correct their different types of errors: grammatical, spelling, punctuation ...etc. Besides, it gives them the opportunity to exchange and organize ideas.

Furthermore, some teachers talked about the psychological factor and stressed some students' problems such as shyness, fear of talking in public and fear of making errors; hence, they argued that CL is the solution for these problems, for instance informant 5 stated that "sometimes students feel shy around teachers, so they prefer their classmates' explanation". On the other hand, 30 % of informants stated that they do not think that the implementation of CL instruction in the writing course could minimize students' errors making. According to them, CL can be used as a warm up in the writing session and it can help students generate ideas and collect vocabulary; however, it cannot be used in the revising and editing of essays, for instance informant 8 stated that

> Cooperative learning may help students to construct the skeleton of the piece of writing, but concerning errors, it depends on students' individual competence. This is because students are usually of the same level of competency; thus, reducing writing errors can be better achieved by the teacher feedback.

To sum up, teachers' answers revealed that even though only few of them (33 %) have declared that they are using peer feedback method in their classes and the majority depends mainly on teacher feedback method; yet, most of the teachers have positive attitudes towards the implementation of CL in the writing course and its effect in minimizing students' writing errors.

1.6 Summary of the Questionnaire Findings

The present questionnaire was conducted so as to explore the context of EFL writing skill teaching at the English Department of Kasdi Merbah University, Ouargla and to account for the EFL teachers' perceptions towards the implementation of cooperative learning instruction in the writing course.

First of all, concerning the context of the teaching and learning of the writing skill in the English Department of KMU, the data obtained from the analysis of the questionnaire show that the majority of teachers depend in their teaching on the traditional product approach of teaching writing. As for teachers' awareness of the importance of following a certain approach in teaching writing skill, positive results were recorded as most of the teachers were aware of

the importance of adopting a particular approach of teaching writing. However, although teachers' awareness of the existing teaching approaches and theories is of great importance as it helps them make a transition from theory to practice and make appropriate and accurate decisions about what and how to teach their writing courses (Grabe and Kalpan, 1996), there still some teachers who argue that knowledge of theory is not important in the teaching of writing skill. Moreover, some teachers go to the classroom without preliminary decisions about the content and the process of their teaching. Hence, in order to achieve an effective planning and teaching of their writing courses, teachers should follow a particular approach of teaching writing or they can be eclectic and merge various aspects of different approaches.

Another important component of the teaching/learning context is the students since their motivation towards learning the writing skill and their writing proficiency level are very important factors for the success of the teaching and learning of EFL writing. According to the gathered data, students have average (65%) to low (33%) motivation towards learning the writing skill. This lack of motivation towards learning EFL writing can be linked to the teaching approach that is used by most of the teachers in the department (product approach), which focuses on the final product of the student; thus students might get lost during the writing process or get bored as their teachers focus only on what they read in their essays. Furthermore, the product approach favours teacher feedback in responding to students' errors, which might be demoralizing for some students, especially weak learners as they receive their papers full of red pen scratches. Also, some students do not even read teachers' remarks about their writing and care only about the mark they got. Thus, a teaching method that guides students during all the stages of writing process and motivates them to write and express their ideas is needed. Moreover, an effective method for responding to students' writing errors, which helps them recognize their errors without demotivating them, has become a necessity in the EFL teaching/learning context.

Concerning students' writing level, the gathered data indicate that their writing proficiency is weak. This weakness, according to the writing teachers, is due to many challenges that they face when teaching EFL writing to second year licence students. Among these difficulties, the teachers focused on students' lack of motivation, serious problems with grammatical and syntactic accuracy, first language interference, lack of reading, lack of vocabulary, serious spelling and punctuation errors and lack of background information about the assigned topics. Based on the previous results and the difficulties that the teachers are facing, in addition to students' low writing proficiency and their lack of motivation towards

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learning this essential skill, the researcher assumes that there is a gap in the teaching/learning context of the writing skill in the English Department of KMU; thus, an intervention should be made and a teaching method that addresses all these issues should be implemented so as to enhance students' writing performance and minimize their writing errors.

Accordingly, in order to succeed in minimizing students' writing errors, the researcher had to focus on the category of errors that appears most in students' writing and since writing teachers are a reliable source of information about students' weaknesses and errors, their answers were of a high value. According to them, the category of errors that appears most in students' texts is local errors. As for the types of errors that they usually spot in their students' writing, they have mentioned: grammatical, punctuation, spelling, capitalization, cohesion and coherence, S/V agreement, tenses, word order and syntactic errors. Hence, the researcher, within the empirical study, will account for local errors and focus on types of errors that were mentioned by the writing teachers.

Moreover, so as to better understand the context of teaching/learning the writing skill, teachers' methods of responding to students' writing errors were investigated. The results of the questionnaire indicate that the majority of teachers are using teacher direct and/or written feedback to respond to their students' writing errors. This result supports the earlier assumption of the researcher and emphasizes the need for an effective and more motivating method for responding to students' writing errors.

Furthermore, concerning teachers' perceptions of the implementation of CL instruction in the writing course, the results obtained from the analysis of the questionnaire support the integration of CL in the EFL writing course since the majority of teachers approved the use of CL groups in the teaching of EFL writing skill. However, the rationale of its implementation seems to be limited or even obscured for these teachers as the majority of them stressed its integration in the pre-writing stage and highlighted its importance in raising students' motivation; yet, only few informants have mentioned its cognitive benefits and its significance in enhancing students' writing proficiency.

Finally, the findings of this pre-experiment questionnaire show that most of the subject teachers welcome the integration of CL instruction in the EFL writing course and believe that its implementation will have positive results on students' writing performance and will minimize their writing errors. All in all, the findings yielded from the analysis of the present questionnaire confirm the existence of a lacuna in the context of teaching/learning EFL writing

at the English Department of KMU, which requires a re-examination of the actual teaching practices and the implementation of an effective teaching instruction that improves the teaching/learning of the writing skill and produces better teaching/learning outcomes. Hence, the researcher, within this research, introduces cooperative learning instruction as a solution for the existing challenges in the teaching of EFL writing and predicts that its implementation in the writing course would enhance students' writing performance and minimize their errors.

2. The Results of the Experiment

After exploring the context in which EFL writing is being taught at the English Department of KMU, an experiment was conducted so as to investigate the effectiveness of CL instruction in minimizing EFL students' writing errors. Hence, the results of this quasi-experiment would either prove or refute the researcher's hypotheses. The analysis of the writing tests results starts with the analysis of the pre-test then the post-test, after that a comparison between the results of the two tests will be performed so as to measure the difference and check whether or not there is an improvement, and eventually make a decision about the effectiveness of the treatment.

2.1 The Results of the Pre-test

Since the present study aims at minimizing students' writing errors, more precisely local errors, the researcher focused in her analysis on spotting the existing local errors and classifying them into different types. It should be mentioned that, within the present study, students' local writing errors were counted according to their occurrences in students' text, which means that repeated occurrences of the same error were not counted. This method of error counting was supported by Lennon (1991), who suggested that researchers should not count repeat occurrences of the same error when the repeat is a lexical replica of a prior error, for example he *play[1] tennis very well but football he *play[2] badly, since play[2] is a lexical replica of play[1], it is not counted as a second error (as cited in James, 1998). Furthermore, the types of local errors that were frequently repeated in students' texts were grammatical and mechanical errors, interestingly these are the same types mentioned by the teachers who participated in the pre-experiment questionnaire. And since this classification is still broad, the researcher included in this study the sub-types of grammatical and mechanical errors that appeared most in students' texts. Hence, within grammatical errors, this research accounts for word order, tenses, prepositions, articles and S/V agreement errors while for the mechanical errors, the sub-types

that are included in the analysis of students' essays are punctuation, spelling, capitalization and indentation.

First of all, the analysis of the pre-test results starts with the total result of local errors in students' essays, which are presented in table 7 below; then more details about the types of errors and their means and standard deviations will be provided and analysed.

	N	Sum	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Local Errors	30	918	16	57	30.60	10.46

Table 7. Pre-test local errors' mean

As the table above displays, the sum of local errors made by the students in the pre-test is 918 errors within 30 texts that were between 90 and 180 word-long with a mean of 30.60 errors per text. In fact, this mean is considered very high for EFL students of second year licence as they are expected to have a certain level of writing accuracy that is much more respectful than theirs. This also confirms the teachers' views about their students' level, which they considered weak as well as their assumption that second year licence students make a lot of local errors in their writings. However, it was noticed that some students have committed more errors than the others for instance 57 local errors were documented within one essay while another essay counted only 16 errors and this explains the high standard deviation (10.46) , which makes the mean value less representative.

2.1.1 Grammatical Errors

	N	Sum	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Grammatical Errors	30	411	6	23	13.70	4.26

Table 8. Pre-test grammatical errors' mean

Grammatical errors were the first type of local errors that was analysed within this study. The number of grammatical errors committed by the students in the pre-test was 411 errors with a mean of 13.70 error per text; yet, this mean is also less representative since the SD is still high (4.26). This high value of SD is due to the fact that some students made few errors (minimum 6 errors per text) while others committed many grammatical errors (maximum 23 errors per text). However, even though the SD is considered high, the mean value is also very high and confirms the declaration of the 77 % of the teachers who declared that their students suffer from

serious grammatical and syntactical problems. As for the sums and means of the sub-types of grammatical errors, they are represented in the table below.

Grammatical Errors	N	Sum	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Word Order	30	128	0	8	4.26	1.91
Prepositions	30	89	0	8	2.96	1.60
Tenses	30	79	0	6	2.63	1.62
Articles	30	77	0	6	2.96	1.83
S/V Agreement	30	43	0	4	1.43	1.07

Table 9. Pre-test grammatical errors' sub-types means

The results represented in the table 9 above show that the type of grammatical errors that appeared most in students' texts was that of syntactic accuracy i.e., word order errors with a sum of 128 errors and a mean value of 4.26 errors per text. As for the SD value, it was relatively high (1.91), which reflects the fact that some essays were totally free from this type of error while other essays counted 8 word-order errors. The second type of grammatical errors that was frequently repeated in students' essays was that of preposition errors with a sum of 89 errors within the 30 texts and a mean of 2.96 errors per text and a SD of 1.60. The other types of grammatical errors that appeared in the students' texts are respectively: tenses errors (sum 79/M 2.63), articles errors (sum 77/M 2.96) and S/V agreement errors (sum 43/M 1.43). Still the relatively high value of SD in all the types of grammatical errors proves that students' texts are of variant levels of grammatical accuracy.

Therefore, in order to account for students' grammatical accuracy level and measure the differences between individual students, the essays were scored depending on the primary trait scoring (see section 4.2.2 in chapter 3). This type of scoring is used because it allows the researcher to assess only one feature of the written text, which is in the case of the present research writing accuracy. Since accuracy is defined as freedom from error (Pincas, 1982); thus, EFL students write accurately when they produce fewer errors in their writing. Therefore, the researcher depended on the number of different types of local errors made by each student to evaluate students' writing accuracy on the scale of 10 points, and since this study focuses on both grammatical and mechanical accuracy, the mark was divided into two marks: 5 points on grammatical accuracy and 5 points on mechanical accuracy. Actually, assessing students' writing accuracy was implemented within this study for two main objectives. First, since the analysis of students' writing errors considers only restricted types of local errors, thus it is not

expected to fully reflect students' writing accuracy level. Therefore, a score that effectively depicts students' writing accuracy level and accounts for all the local errors which appeared in students' texts (even the types of local errors excluded in errors' analysis) was needed. Second, the assessment of students' writing accuracy was performed in this study so as to validate the results obtained from the analysis of students' writing errors. Hence, the scores of grammatical accuracy are represented in the table below whereas those of mechanical accuracy are displayed in the following section.

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Grammatical accuracy score	30	1	4	2.13	0.68

Table 10. Pre-test grammatical accuracy scores

As shown in the table 10 above, students' scores on grammatical accuracy ranged between 1 and 4 with a mean value of 2.13. This mean value reflects students' low level of grammatical accuracy and explains that even though there are some good students who got 4 from 5, the general level of student' grammatical accuracy is low. This conclusion is also confirmed by the SD value (0.68) which makes the mean score relatively representative. Therefore, based on the high sum of grammatical errors committed by the students in the pre-test and their low scores of grammatical accuracy, it can be concluded that the majority of students, who participated in the present study, have a low grammatical accuracy level.

2.1.2 Mechanical Errors

The second type of local errors that was under investigation within this research was mechanical errors. Students' pre-test results regarding errors of mechanics are presented in the table below.

	N	Sum	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Mechanical Errors	30	508	7	36	16.90	7.57

Table 11. Pre-test mechanical errors' mean

As the displayed results of students' pre-test show, within the 30 analysed essays, 508 mechanical errors were counted with a mean of 16.90 errors of mechanics per text. This high mean value, even though it is less representative given that the SD is 7.57, shows that students suffer from serious mechanical accuracy problems, which goes along with the EFL teachers' views on their students' writing since they asserted that EFL students commit a lot of mechanical errors. Therefore, a thorough analysis of the sub-types of mechanical errors was performed and the sum and mean value of each type are provided in the table below.

Mechanical Errors	N	Sum	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Punctuation	30	194	2	14	6.46	3.20
Spelling	30	192	1	19	6.40	4.10
Capitalization	30	100	0	12	3.33	2.35
Indentation	30	22	0	4	0.73	1.22

Table 12. Pre-test mechanical errors sub-types' means

According to the data displayed in the table above, punctuation errors were the type of mechanical errors that appeared most in students' texts with a sum of 194 errors and a mean of 6.46 errors per text. However, with the high value of SD (3.20) this mean is not fully representative, which is reflected in students' individual texts as some texts counted very few punctuation errors (2 errors per text) while other texts' contained more errors (14 errors per text). Moreover, the number of spelling errors was near to that of punctuation errors as 192 spelling errors were counted in students' essays with a mean of 6.40 errors per text. As for capitalization errors, the students' texts counted 100 capitalization errors with a mean of 3.33 errors per text while indentation errors were the least found in students' essays with a sum of 22 errors and a mean of 0.77 errors per text, which signifies that the majority of students do not have this kind of problem in their writings. Yet, the high SD value in all the types of mechanical errors renders the mean values less representative; thus, students' mechanical accuracy level is better identified by students' scores.

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Mechanical accuracy score	30	1	3	1.96	0.76

Table 13. Pre-test mechanical accuracy mean score

The results represented in the table above show that students' mechanical accuracy scores ranged between 1 and 3 with a mean value of 1.96 and SD of 0.76. This result confirms students' low level of mechanical accuracy as the mean value is very low for second year licence students who are expected to have an acceptable level of mastery of writing mechanics.

2.1.3 Overall Pre-Test Writing Accuracy Achievement

Finally, so as to have a general overview of students' writing accuracy, the overall writing accuracy scores are represented in the table below.

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Overall writing accuracy score	30	2	7	4.10	1.26

Table 14. Pre-test overall writing accuracy achievement

As displayed in table 14 above, students' scores of writing accuracy in the pre-test ranged between 2 and 7 with a mean of 4.10. This mean shows that students' writing accuracy is low; yet given the SD value which is relatively high makes the researcher adopt another representation of students' results that depends on scores frequencies so as to have an accurate vision about students' writing accuracy.

Scores	Frequency
From 2 to 4	19
From 5 to 6	10
7	1

Table 15. Pre-test overall accuracy scores frequencies

The table above shows that 19 students out of 30 got low marks that ranged between 2 and 4, which are lower than the average mark 5. On the other hand, 10 students got average marks (from 5 to 6) while only one student got a good mark (7). These results go in line with the mean value of the writing accuracy score and validate the researcher's interpretation about students' level of writing accuracy.

In conclusion, based on students' high means of local errors (grammatical and mechanical errors) in addition to students' low mean scores of writing accuracy (both grammatical and mechanical accuracy), The researcher arrived at the following conclusions:

- The product approach to teaching writing, which is adopted by the majority of written expression teachers at the English Department of Kasdi Merbah University, was not efficient in developing second year students' writing accuracy; therefore, the adoption of a more efficient writing approach that could enhance students' writing ability in general and writing accuracy in particular has become a necessity. Accordingly, the researcher, within the intervention, depended on the process approach because it is the writing approach that is the most suitable for implementing CL instruction, and more importantly for its widely recognized effectiveness in improving EFL students' writing competence. Furthermore, the implementation of this writing approach within   a CL instruction will make it more effective since the latter is highly recommended for enhancing students' academic achievement.

- EFL written expression teachers' reliance on teacher direct and/or written feedback in responding to their students' writing errors did not result in minimizing EFL students' writing errors as these latter commit a lot of errors in their essays; hence, the researcher, within this study, adopts peer feedback method in responding to students' writing errors as it has been proved effective in minimizing students' writing errors in many previous research (see section 3.4.3.1 in chapter one).

- Teachers' main reliance on the traditional product approach to teaching writing and teacher feedback in addition to other factors related to the teaching/learning atmosphere led to students' lack of motivation towards learning the writing skill. Consequently, the researcher suggests the use of CL instruction in the writing course as it is recognized for its effectiveness in raising students' motivation towards learning the writing skill.

- After exploring the teaching/learning context of EFL writing skill at the English Department of Kasdi Merbah University, Ouargla and identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the teaching system in addition to the pre-test results that has proved the existence of gap in the teaching of EFL writing, the implementation of a teaching method that remedies the present problems has become a must. Therefore, the researcher, within the intervention phase of this research has engaged the students in a CL supportive environment where writing was performed in small CL groups and according the process approach of teaching writing. As for responding to students'

writing errors, peer feedback method was adopted and was handled within CL groups. Hence, so as to determine whether or not this teaching method is effective in minimizing students' writing errors (local errors) and enhancing students' writing accuracy, the results of the pre-test will be presented and compared with those of the post-test.

2.2 The Results of the Post-Test

After being engaged in a two weeks CL treatment, the students, who participated in the study, had their post-test so as to measure the difference in their writing achievement from that of the pre-test. Hence, the results of students' post-test local writing errors are represented in the table below.

	N	Sum	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Local Errors	30	424	8	26	14.13	4.75

Table 16. Post-test local errors' mean

As the above table displays, the post-test sum of students' local errors is 424 errors with a mean of 14.13 errors per text. The standard deviation mean is relatively high (4.75), which explains why in one text, only 8 local errors were documented while in another over 26 errors were counted. Again, so as to better analyse students' local errors, grammatical and mechanical errors are analysed separately.

2.2.1 Grammatical Errors

Students' post-test grammatical errors' mean and standard deviation are represented in the table below.

	N	Sum	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Grammatical Errors	30	224	4	12	7.46	2.28

Table 17. Post-test grammatical errors' mean

The recorded sum of students' grammatical errors in the post-test was 224 errors with a mean of 7.46 errors per text while the minimum number of errors within one essay was 4 errors and the maximum one was 12 errors per text. Thus, so as to have more details about the sum and mean value of each type of grammatical errors table 18 below is provided.

Grammatical Errors	N	Sum	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Word Order	30	61	1	4	2.03	0.88
Prepositions	30	52	0	4	1.73	1.11
Tenses	30	49	0	4	1.63	0.92
Articles	30	35	0	4	1.16	0.91
S/V Agreement	30	27	0	2	0.90	0.66

Table 18. Post-test grammatical errors' sub-types means

As can be seen in table 18 above, word order errors are still the type of grammatical errors that is most recorded in students' essays with a sum of 61 errors and a mean value of 2.03 errors per text and 0.88 SD, which makes this mean representative for the whole sample. As for errors of prepositions, 52 errors were spotted in the 30 analysed essays with a mean of 1.73 errors per text and a SD value of 1.11; moreover, some essays did not count any preposition errors. Concerning the other types of grammatical errors that were documented in students' post-test essays, they were errors of tenses (sum 94/ M 1.63), errors of articles (sum 35/ M 1.16) and S/V agreement errors (sum 27/ M 0.90). As for students' level of grammatical accuracy, it is identified through their scores which are displayed in the table below.

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Grammatical accuracy score	30	2	4	3.36	0.55

Table 19. Post-test grammatical accuracy mean score

As can be seen through the results presented in the table above, the mean score of students' post-test achievement in grammatical accuracy is 3.36. This result can be considered positive since the average score is 2.50 and the mean score is above the average, moreover the SD value, which is 0.55, is acceptable and renders the mean score representative for the whole sample.

2.2.2 Mechanical Errors

The second type of local errors which is under analysis is errors of mechanics. The total number of mechanical errors, committed by the students in the post test, in addition to the mean value and SD are represented in the table below.

	N	Sum	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Mechanical Errors	30	200	2	14	6.66	3.05

Table 20. Post-test mechanical errors' mean

As displayed in the table above, the sum of students' mechanical errors in the post-test was 200 errors with a mean of 6.66 errors per text and a SD of 3.05. The high value of SD is reflected in the minimum and maximum number of errors in students' essays as it is noticed that some individual students made a large number of errors (14 errors per text) which makes the mean value less representative of the whole sample. Accordingly, the analysis of the sub-types of mechanical errors might give deeper picture on students' mechanical errors making.

Mechanical Errors	N	Sum	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Punctuation	30	71	0	5	2.36	1.35
Spelling	30	99	0	10	3.30	2.30
Capitalization	30	29	0	3	0.96	0.96
Indentation	30	1	0	1	0.03	0.18

Table 21. Post-test mechanical errors' sub-types means

Unlike the results of the pre-test, in which the type of mechanical errors that was the most frequent in students' essays was punctuation errors, the results of the post-test show that the type of mechanical errors that is highly repeated in students' texts is spelling errors with a sum of 99 errors and a mean of 3.30 errors per text, as for the SD value it was 2.30. The reason for this high SD value is the differences between individual students as some of students' essays were free of spelling errors while other essays counted over 10 errors of spelling. Concerning the second most committed type of mechanical errors, it was punctuation errors with a sum of 71 errors and a mean of 2.36 errors per text. As for the third type of errors, it was capitalization errors, which counted over 29 errors with a mean of 0.96 errors per text. This result is very positive and shows that students did not commit a lot of capitalization errors, this is also exposed in the maximum number of capitalization errors which was 3 errors per text while some essays

did not count any errors of capitalization. As for the least committed type of mechanical errors, it was indentation errors with a sum of one error and a SD of 0.18. Hence, it could be said that nearly all students' essays were free of indentation errors. Finally, students' mechanical accuracy scores of the post-test will be used to validate these results.

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Mechanical accuracy score	30	2	5	3.56	0.67

Table 22. Post-test mechanical accuracy mean score

As shown in the table above, the mean score of students' achievement in mechanical accuracy in the post-test was 3.56 with a 0.67 SD value. This mean could be evaluated as positive given the low SD value and the maximum score 5 (full mark), which indicates that there are students who wrote mechanical errors' free essays.

2.2.3 Overall Post-Test Writing Accuracy Achievement

Finally, in order to have a general picture on students' writing accuracy level, the overall writing accuracy results of the post-test are presented in the table below.

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Overall writing accuracy score	30	4	8	6.93	1.08

Table 23. Post-test overall writing accuracy achievement

As displayed in table 23 above, students' scores of writing accuracy in the post-test ranged between 4 and 8 with a mean score of 6.93. This mean shows that students' writing accuracy level in the post-test is above average (5); however, given the SD value which relatively high (1.08) makes the researcher depend on another representation of students' results so as to validate these results.

Scores	Frequency
From 2 to 4	1
From 5 to 6	7
From 7 to 8	19

Table 24. Post-test overall accuracy scores frequencies

As shown in the table above, the results of students' overall achievement in writing accuracy in the post-test are very positive as the majority of students (n= 19) got good marks that ranged between 7 and 8 over 10 while 7 students got acceptable marks, which are above average and only one student out of 30 got the mark 4, which is lower than the average. Eventually, these results validate the positive results obtained previously, yet so as to decide whether or not there is an improvement in students' writing accuracy after the CL treatment, the results of the post-test should be compared with those of the pre-test.

2.3 Comparative Evaluation of Pre-test and Post-test Results

Within this section, the results of the pre-test and those of the post-test are compared so as to decide whether there is an improvement in students' writing accuracy and whether or not students' local errors have been minimized after the implementation of CL instruction in the writing course. The comparison of the results obtained within these two tests will either prove or refute the hypotheses reformulated in the present study concerning the effects of the independent variable (CL instruction) on the dependent variable (students' writing accuracy).

2.3.1 The Comparison of the Pre-test and Post-test Results of Local errors

After analysing the results of the pre-test and the post-test regarding students' local writing errors separately, within this section these results are compared and the differences are analysed. The comparison of results is displayed in figure 16 and table 25 below.
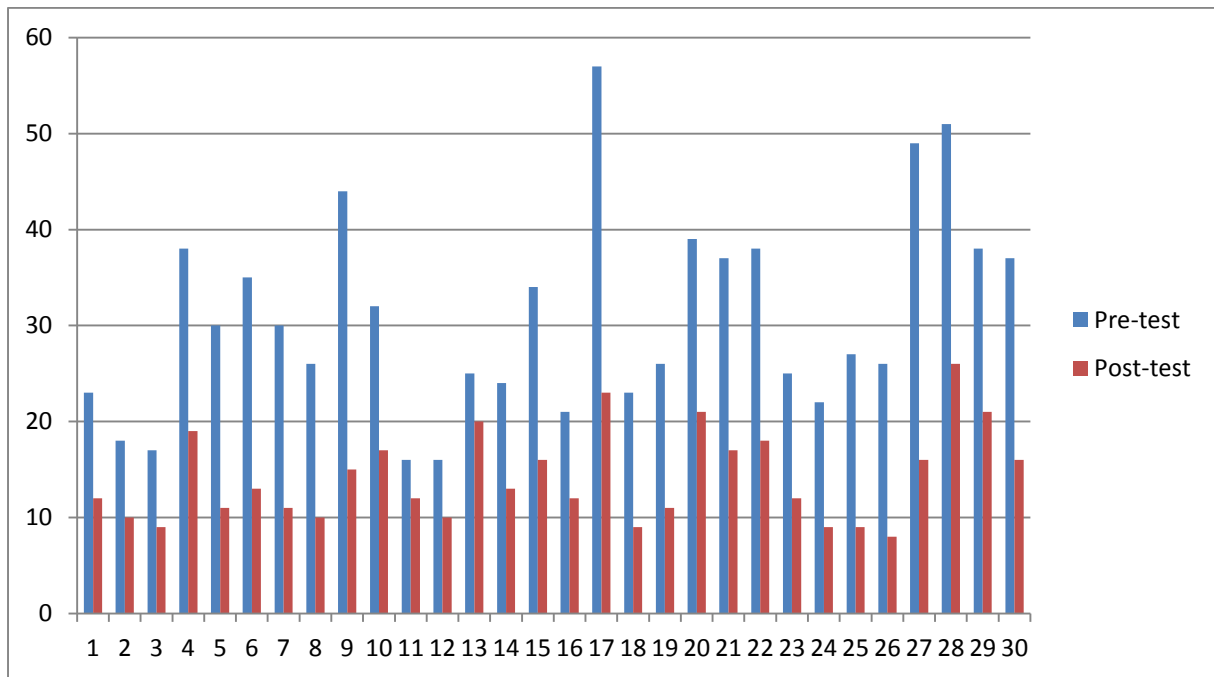
Figure 16. The comparison of students' pre-test and post-test local errors

	N	Tests	Means	Standard Deviation
Local errors	30	Pre-test	30.60	10.46
		Post-test	14.13	4.75
		Difference	16.46	5.71

Table 25. The comparison of pre-test and post-test results of local errors

As observed in figure 16 above, students, within the post-test, scored lower number of local errors in comparison with the number of the errors committed in the pre-test. Moreover, as displayed in table 25 above, the mean value of the number of local errors per text has dropped considerably from 30.60 in the pre-test to 14.13 in the post-test with a mean difference of 16.46 errors, which indicates a remarkable minimization of students' local errors. Yet, so as to better evaluate the differences in students' performance, each type of local errors is analysed separately.

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2.3.2 The Comparison of the Pre-test and Post-test Results of Grammatical errors

	N	Tests	Means	Standard Deviation
Grammatical errors	30	Pre-test	13.70	4.26
		Post-test	7.46	2.28
		Difference	6.23	1.98

Table 26. The comparison of pre-test and post-test results of grammatical errors

Likewise, local errors' results, the findings of the comparison of pre-test and post-test grammatical errors' results show a notable improvement in students' performance. As indicated in table 26 above, students' grammatical errors mean dropped from 13.70 errors per text to 7.46 errors with a mean difference of 6.23; also, the SD value has dropped from 4.26 in the pre-test results into 2.28 in the post-test, which indicates that all the students have improved since the differences between students' individual performances have been reduced. Hence, in order to identify in which areas of grammatical accuracy the students have improved and which type of grammatical errors have been minimized most, a comparison between the means of different types of grammatical errors is accomplished and the findings are presented in the table below.

2.3.3 The Comparison of the Pre-test and Post-test Results of Grammatical Errors' Sub-Types

Grammatical	Word Order		Preposition		Articles		S/V Agreement		Tense	
errors	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Means	4.26	2.03	2.96	1.73	2.56	1.16	1.43	0.90	2.63	1.63
SD	1.91	0.88	1.60	1.11	1.38	0.91	1.07	0.66	1.62	0.92
Difference	2.23		1.23		1.40		0.53		1	

Table 27. The comparison of pre-test and post-test results of grammatical errors' sub-types

As presented in table 27 above, students' different types of grammatical errors' means have dropped within the post-test in comparison with the pre-test results, which indicates an improvement in students' performance and a minimization of their grammatical errors. As for the recorded mean differences, the highest difference was recorded in word order errors with a mean difference of 2.23 while errors of articles dropped with 1.40 and those of prepositions with 1.23. As for the types of grammatical errors that did not have a high mean in the pre-test such as errors of tenses and s/v agreement, the mean difference was relatively low as the

reported mean difference of tense errors was 1 while that of s/v agreement was only 0.53. Furthermore, it should be noted that the SD of all the types of errors has decreased in the post-test, which shows that even students, who committed a lot of errors in the pre-test, have improved; it also indicates that a real cooperation was achieved since students' level of grammatical accuracy was comparable in the post-test and this indicates that students cooperated effectively with each other and helped their peers improve.

2.3.4 The Comparison of the Pre-test and Post-test Achievement in Grammatical Accuracy

Figure 17 and table 28 below illustrate very clearly the difference between students' achievement in grammatical accuracy in the pre-test and post-test.

Figure 17. The comparison of students' pre-test and post-test grammatical accuracy achievement

	N	Tests	Means	Standard Deviation
Grammatical accuracy	30	Pre-test	2.13	0.68
		Post-test	3.36	0.55
		Difference	1.23	0.13

Table 28. The comparison of students' pre-test and post-test grammatical accuracy achievement

As shown in figure 17 above, all the students who participated in the study have improved in the post-test and got better scores of grammatical accuracy. Plus, as table 28 above

indicates, students' mean score of grammatical accuracy has increased from 2.13 to 3.36 with a mean difference of 1.23, which confirms students' improvement in grammatical accuracy area. Furthermore, so as to figure out whether students have also improved in mechanical accuracy, the results of students' pre-test and post-test in this aspect are compared.

2.3.5 The Comparison of the Pre-test and Post-test Results of Mechanical errors

After comparing pre-test and post-test students' achievement in grammatical accuracy in the previous section, this section compares students' pre-test and post-test performance in mechanical accuracy and accounts for the difference in errors' making between the pre-test and post-test. At first, the means of students' mechanical errors are compared, and then the comparison will be performed between the different types of mechanical errors.

	N	Tests	Means	Standard Deviation
Mechanical errors	30	Pre-test	16.90	7.57
		Post-test	6.66	3.05
		Difference	10.23	4.52

Table 29. The comparison of pre-test and post-test results of mechanical errors

As can be inferred from table 29 above, the mean value of errors per text have decreased considerably from 16.90 in the pre-test to 6.66 in the post-test with a mean difference of 10.23, which indicates a notable minimization of students' mechanical errors. Furthermore, to find out the type of mechanical errors that recorded the highest decrease of errors' making and the mean difference of each type of errors, the comparison of the pre-test and post-test results of the different type of mechanical errors is represented in the next section.

2.3.6 The Comparison of the Pre-test and Post-test Results of Mechanical Errors' Sub-Types

Mechanical Errors	Punctuation		Spelling		Capitalization		Indentation	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
Means	6.46	2.36	6.40	3.30	3.33	0.96	0.73	0.03
SD	3.20	1.35	4.10	2.30	2.35	0.96	1.22	0.18
Difference	4.10		3.10		2.37		0.70	

Table 30. The comparison of pre-test and post-test results of mechanical errors' sub-types

As can be inferred from table 30 above, by investigating the same types of mechanical errors in the post-test, the mean of errors per text have dropped remarkably in the post-test and

within all the types of errors. As for the type of mechanical errors that recorded the highest decrease in the mean value was punctuation errors which have dropped from 6.46 to 2.36 with a mean difference of 4.10. Concerning the other types, spelling errors mean dropped by 3.10 while the mean of capitalization errors has decreased by 2.37 and that of indentation errors by 0.70. In general, these results reflect an enhancement of students' mechanical accuracy and a decrease in their mechanical errors' making.

2.3.7 The Comparison of the Pre-test and Post-test Achievement in Mechanical Accuracy

As noticed in the previous sections, students' mechanical errors have dropped notably in the post-test, which reveals an improvement in student's mechanical accuracy level. Thus, students' mechanical accuracy scores of the pre-test and post-test are compared so as to validate the results obtained previously.
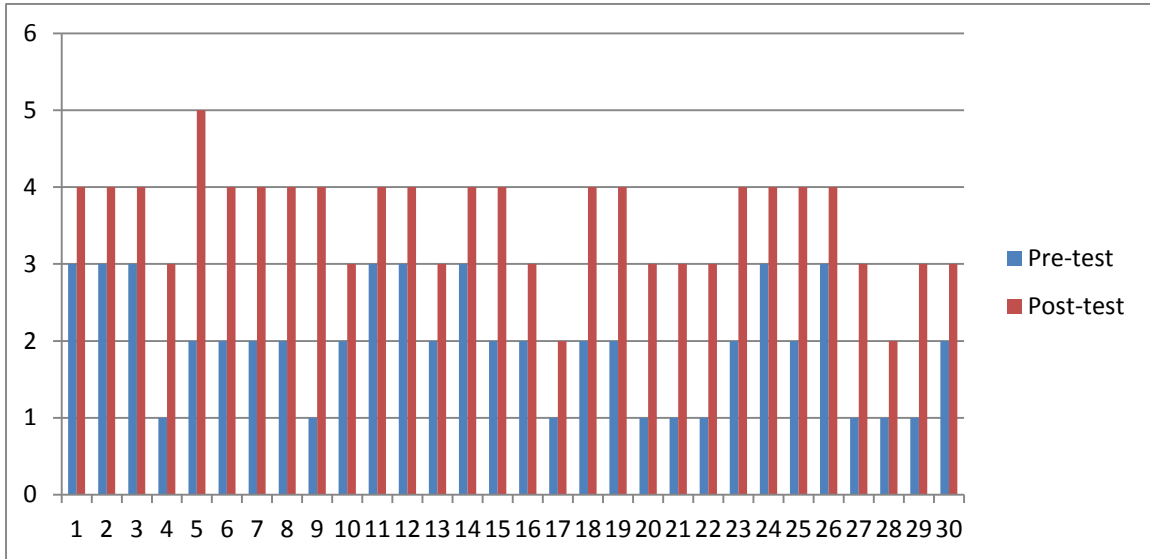
Figure 18. The comparison of students' pre-test and post-test mechanical accuracy achievement

	N	Tests	Means	Standard Deviation
Mechanical accuracy	30	Pre-test	1.96	0.76
		Post-test	3.56	0.67
		Difference	1.60	0.09

Table 31. The comparison of students' pre-test and post-test mechanical accuracy achievement

As figure 18 above displays, students' mechanical accuracy achievement has improved in the post-test since all the students, without exception, got better scores in the post-test. Plus, as inferred from table 31 students' mean score in the pre-test was below the average mark (2.50) whereas within the post-test it increased to 3.56 with a mean gain of 1.60. This result indicates that students' mechanical accuracy have been improved after the CL intervention.

2.3.8 The Comparison of the Pre-test and Post-test Overall Writing Accuracy Achievement

After analysing and comparing partial results of students' achievement in grammatical and mechanical accuracy, the pre-test and post-test overall scores of students' writing accuracy are compared in this section so as to decide whether or not there was an improvement in students' overall writing accuracy level.
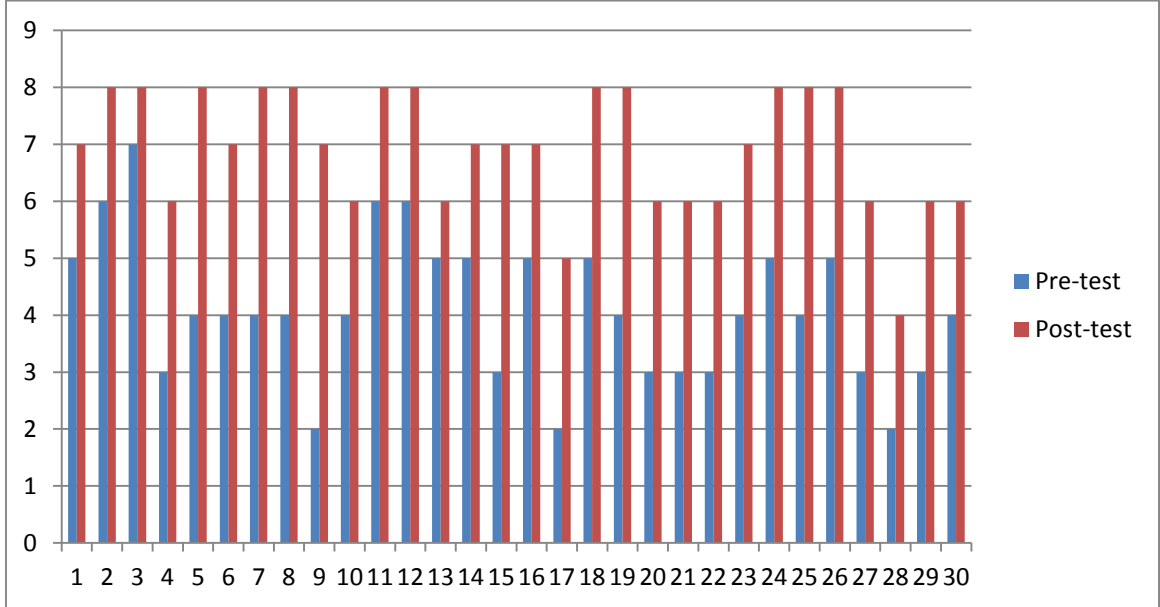
**Figure 19. The comparison of students' pre-test and post-test overall writing accuracy achievement**

	N	Tests	Means	Standard Deviation
Overall writing accuracy	30	Pre-test	4.10	1.26
		Post-test	6.93	1.08
		Difference	2.83	0.18

Table 32. The comparison of students' pre-test and post-test overall writing accuracy achievement

As shown in figure 19 above all students, who participated in the present study, got better scores in the post-test. Particularly, before they were involved in the CL treatment sessions, students' writing accuracy mean score in the pre-test was below average (4.10); yet, after the CL treatment, students' performance improved and the mean score of the post-test was 6.93, which is a good result in comparison with that of the pre-test with a high mean difference of 2.83. These positive results indicate the enhancement of students' writing performance in the post-test i.e., after the CL treatment. Hence, this proves the effectiveness of CL instruction in minimizing students' local errors and enhancing their writing accuracy; however, so as to prove that the observed difference between the results of pre-test and the post-test is statistically significant, a paired t-test should be performed and the research hypotheses should be tested.

2.4 Hypotheses Testing

After analysing students' local errors and writing accuracy in the pre-test and the post-test using descriptive statistics, the researcher uses inferential statistics so as to test the research hypotheses. Hence, a t-test was performed to compare the sample's means of the pre-test and the post-test and since there are different types of t-tests, the researcher opted for the paired-samples t-test because it the most suitable for the present research. According to Hatcher (2003) a paired-samples t-test is "a parametric procedure that is appropriate when you want to determine whether the mean score that is obtained under one condition is significantly different from the mean score obtained under a second condition" (p. 453). Hence, this test is adequate for the present study which measures students' mean before the implementation of CL instruction in the writing course (pre-test) and after it (the post-test) and seeks to compare the two means and prove that they are significantly different. Moreover, the main reason for conducting statistical tests is providing information about the likelihood of an event occurring by chance (Kanji, 2006).

When a paired-samples t-test is performed, two important elements are interpreted: the test of null hypothesis and the 95 % confidence interval for the difference between the means (Hatcher, 2003). First, after conducting the paired-samples t-test, SPSS computes an obtained t statistic and a p value (α) associated with that statistic and if the obtained p value is less than .05 ($p < .05$), the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H_1) is confirmed and the results (difference between means) are considered significant (ibid, 2003).

Second, the 95 % confidence interval for the difference between the means, which is calculated automatically by SPSS program when a paired-samples t-test is performed, is a range

of values that extends "from the lower confidence limit to an upper confidence limit" which contains "a population parameter with a stated probability, or level of confidence" (ibid, 2003, p. 462). According to Kline (2004) the confidence interval represents "a range of plausible values for the corresponding parameter" (as cited in Larson-Hall, 2010, p. 121) which means that "with a 95 % confidence interval, if the study were replicated 100 times, 95 % of the time the parameter would be found within the confidence interval range" (Larson-Hall, 2010, p. 121). Hence, "higher power in a study will result in smaller confidence intervals" (ibid, 2010, p. 121).

Since the research experiment was conducted so as to prove that the implementation of CL instruction in the writing course minimizes students' writing errors, more precisely local ones (grammatical and mechanical errors) and enhances students' writing accuracy; thus, the results of students' pre-test and post-test were examined via a paired-samples t-test and if the null hypotheses are rejected, this means that the CL treatment was significantly efficient. Plus, in order to obtain accurate and precise results, four null hypotheses and four alternative hypotheses were formulated and the results of hypotheses testing are represented in the following elements.

2.4.1 Hypothesis Testing of Local Errors

Before displaying the t-test results of comparing students' local errors' pre-test and post-test means, the formulated null and alternative hypotheses for the examined aspect (local errors) are represented as follows:

H_0 = There is no statistically significant decrease in students' local errors after the implementation of cooperative learning.

H_1 = There is a statistically significant decrease in students' local errors after the implementation of cooperative learning.

	Paired Differences							Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	
				Lower	Upper			
Pair : Local Err Pre-Post	16.46667	7.39400	1.34995	13.70570	19.22763	12.198	29	0.000

Table 33. Paired-samples t-test results of local errors

The results of the paired-samples t-test displayed in table 33 above revealed a significant decrease in students' local errors' means between the two tests (pre-test and post-test), $t(29) = 12.19$, $p < .000$. The sample means, which were presented previously in table 25, show that students' local errors, in the post-test, were significantly fewer than those of the pre-test (in the pre-test M= 30.60, SD= 10.46; in the post-test M= 14.13, SD= 4.75). The observed difference between the means was 16.46, and the 95% confidence interval for the difference between means extended from 13.70 to 19.22. Thus, based on these results, the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H_1) is confirmed, which leads to the conclusion that EFL students' local writing errors were significantly minimized after their involvement in cooperative learning writing sessions.

2.4.2 Hypothesis Testing of Grammatical Errors

After validating the first research hypothesis which claims that students' local writing errors are minimized after implementing CL instruction in the writing course, it is necessary to investigate whether both grammatical and mechanical errors were minimized after the CL treatment or the decrease in students' local errors' mean touched only one type of local errors. Hence, in this section, a null and alternative hypotheses are formulated, students' grammatical errors' means of the pre-test and post-test are compared via a paired-samples t-test and the results are displayed in the table below.

H_0= There is no statistically significant decrease in students' grammatical errors after the implementation of cooperative learning.

H_1= There is a statistically significant decrease in students' grammatical errors after the implementation of cooperative learning.

	Paired Differences							
			Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation		Lower	Upper	t	df	
Pair Gram Error Pre – Post	6.23333	3.28721	0.60016	5.00587	7.46080	10.386	29	0.000

Table 34. Paired-samples t-test results of grammatical errors

As shown in table 34 above and table 26 in the previous section, with regard to grammatical errors, the mean obtained in the pre-test was 13.70 while in the post-test it was 7.46, with a mean difference of 6.23. Hence, based on this mean difference and the t value

which was t(29)= 10.38, p < .000, it could be said that there is a significant difference between students' means of grammatical errors of the pre-test and post-test. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H_1) is proved. Hence, it could be stated that EFL students' grammatical errors had significantly decreased after their involvement in cooperative learning.

2.4.3 Hypothesis Testing of Mechanical Errors

After proving the effectiveness of CL instruction in minimizing EFL students' grammatical errors, students' means of mechanical errors of both pre-test and post-test were compared with a paired-samples t-test so as to statistically investigate the significance of CL instruction in minimizing EFL students' errors of mechanics.

H_0= There is no statistically significant decrease in students' mechanical errors after the implementation of cooperative learning.

H_1= There is a statistically significant decrease in students' mechanical errors after the implementation of cooperative learning.

| | **Paired Differences** | | | | | | | **Sig. (2-tailed)** |
| | **Mean** | **Std. Deviation** | **Std. Error Mean** | **95% Confidence Interval of the Difference** | | **t** | **df** | |
				Lower	Upper			
Pair : Mechanical Err Pre –Post	10.23333	5.82908	1.06424	8.05672	12.40995	9.616	29	0.000

Table 35. Paired-samples t-test results of mechanical errors

When the mechanical errors results of the pre-test and post-test were analysed with the paired-samples t-test, the analysis yielded a significant difference between students' mechanical errors' means of the two tests as t(29) = 9.61, p < .000. Furthermore, the comparison of the two tests means revealed that students made fewer mechanical errors in the post-test than in the pre-test with a mean difference of 10.23 while the 95% confidence interval of difference was estimated between 8.05 to 12.40. Thus, based on these results the null hypothesis (H_0), which states that there is no statistically significant decrease in students' mechanical errors after the implementation of cooperative learning, is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is approved. Consequently, it was confirmed, through this t-test, that the implementation of CL instruction in the writing course helped in minimizing EFL students' mechanical errors significantly.

2.4.4 Hypothesis Testing of Students' Overall Writing Accuracy Achievement

After having confirmed CL effectiveness in minimizing EFL students' local errors, students' writing accuracy scores of the pre-test and post-test were compared via paired-samples t-test in order to statistically validate CL efficiency in enhancing EFL students' writing accuracy. The hypotheses formulated for the t-test and its results are represented below.

H_0= There is no statistically significant improvement in students' writing accuracy achievement after the implementation of cooperative learning.

H_1= There is a statistically significant improvement in students' writing accuracy achievement after the implementation of cooperative learning.

	Paired Differences							Sig. (2-tailed)
				95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper	t	df	
Pair : Accuracy Pre-Post	2.83333	.94989	.17343	3.18803	2.47864	16.337	29	.000

Table 36. Paired-samples t-test results of students' writing accuracy achievement

After analysing students' scores via the pared-samples t-test, the analysis revealed a significant difference between students' scores of the two tests (pre-test and post-test) as t (29)= 16.33, p < .000. Moreover, the comparison of students' mean scores (see table 32 in section 2.3.6 above) show that students' scores of the post-test were significantly higher than their pre-test scores (in the pre-test M= 4.10, SD= 1.26 while in the post-test M= 6.93, SD= 1.08). The observed difference between means was 2.83 and the 95% confidence interval for the difference between means was between 3.18 to 2.47. Accordingly, given the obtained results, the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis, which states that there is a statistically significant improvement in students' writing accuracy achievement after the implementation of cooperative learning, is confirmed. As a consequence, cooperative learning has been proved, via this test, as significantly effective teaching/learning instruction that enhances EFL students' writing accuracy.

2.4.5 Discussion and Interpretation of the Experiment Findings

After conducting the descriptive and inferential analyses of the study findings, this section is devoted for the discussion and interpretation of these findings. Additionally, it provides a summary of the pre-test and post-test results.

First of all, when reflecting on students' pre-test results, it should be noted that their level of writing accuracy was notably poor, which has proved that there were lacunas in EFL writing teaching/learning context of the study, such as the use of inadequate teaching methods and sometimes the random choice of writing approaches, in addition to teachers' main reliance on the traditional teacher feedback, which resulted in a lack of revision opportunities and students' lack of motivation towards learning the writing skill. As for the post-test results, when considering the writing tests, all the students, who participated in the present study, showed a significant improvement in their writing performances from their corresponding results in the earlier pre-test. Accordingly, these students, who received a CL treatment in which they accomplished their writing tasks within CL groups and according to the process approach of writing while feedback was provided by their peers rather than the teacher, scored a highly significant lower number of local errors per text in nearly all the types of local errors that were investigated in the present study. For instance, grammatical errors' mean dropped from 13.70 to only 7.46 while that of mechanical errors decreased from 16.90 to 6.66. Moreover, the total sum of local errors dropped significantly from 918 errors in the pre-test to 424 errors in the post-test which indicates a significant minimization of students' local errors as a result of the integration of CL instruction in the writing course. Also, students' scores of writing accuracy has increased significantly in the post-test which reflects a notable improvement of their level of writing accuracy and leads to the conclusion that CL instruction is effective in enhancing EFL students' writing accuracy.

To conclude, it can be said that the experiment results were positive since none of the hypotheses predicted within the present research was rejected and the paired-samples t-test results confirmed the success of the CL intervention and proved that the implementation of this teaching instruction in the writing course is significantly effective in minimizing EFL students' writing errors and enhancing their writing accuracy. In fact, these results are not surprising as they go along with the findings of other studies (Shehadeh, 2011; Storch, 2005; Storch & wigglesworth, 2009) that tackled CL and its effectiveness in enhancing students' writing performance.

3. The Results of the Interviews

After analysing the quantitative results obtained from the empirical study, the qualitative results, gathered via the two post-experiment interviews with 10 students who participated in the experiment and the written expression teacher who conducted it, are represented in this section. As already mentioned in the methodology chapter, these interviews were conducted so as to supplement the findings of the empirical study as well as provide in-depth insights about the CL treatment and the experiment results. These types of interviews are very essential in studies that tackle new teaching methods and instructions as they give a more humanistic insight about the implementation of these methods and instructions. Moreover, Cohen et al (2005) declared that such interviews yield a rich material while Silverman (2006) asserted that they give more vigour, complexity and depth to research.

3.1 The Results of the Students' Interview

After conducting the experiment 10 students out of 30 were interviewed by the researcher right after finishing the post-test. These 10 students were selected purposively (3 students with a good level of writing ability, 4 students of medium writing level and 3 low achieving students). The interview was conducted so as to account for students' attitudes and perceptions of CL instruction and peer feedback technique and the benefits they gained from being involved in the cooperative writing sessions. Moreover, it aimed at identifying the effectiveness of CL instruction within the different writing stages and whether or not the provided checklists have helped students provide effective feedback for their peers. Finally, the interview investigated the challenges that EFL students faced when they were engaged in CL group work.

3.1.1 Students' Perceptions of Cooperative Learning

At the beginning, students were asked about their perception of CL before they were engaged in the CL sessions and whether or not their views changed after the CL experience.

Q1. What was your perception of cooperative writing before this experience? Did it change after the experience? Why/why not?

The majority of participants declared that they had negative perception of CL and they thought that it was a kind of classroom entertainment and a waste of time; however, after they had been engaged in the CL experience, most of them have changed their minds, for instance informant

10 asserted: "before this experience, I thought that working in groups would be a useless and noisy experience and we will just waste our time but after this experience my opinion changed and I found that it was totally the opposite". In fact, some students could not even imagine themselves working in groups in the writing sessions as informant 9 declared: "before this experience, I never imagined that we can study writing in groups, however after the CL experience that my classmates and I had, I changed my mind and I discovered that writing in groups is much easier and entertaining than writing individually". On the other hand, other students could not imagine themselves participating in group work as they were very shy and unsociable, yet after taking part in CL groups, these concerns disappeared, for instance informant 3 stated:

> Before this experience, I thought that CL was just a waste of time and in the past if someone
>
> asked me about the CW, I would tell him you will just waste your time and at the end you
>
> will not learn anything. But after this experience, I changed my mind because I found it an
>
> interesting experience and I learned a lot and I could beat my shyness because I am a very
>
> shy person and I don't talk with others and share information. It was like I was in a bubble,
>
> but in this experience I could contact with my group mates and I talked and shared
>
> information. I think that I really learned a lot from this experience.

Moreover, before being exposed to CL, some students were particularly anxious about dealing with other students, so they preferred to work individually as they thought that depending on other students would make them less competent or would mislead them. However, after experiencing cooperative writing, they enjoyed the positive interdependence between group members and their whole perception of group work has changed, for example informant 6 said: "I didn't deal with cooperative writing before, so I had a fear of group working but after this experience, I think that CL gave me self-confidence to improve my writing and engage in group work without hesitation. I even discovered new ways that made me write well". In the same vein, informant 4 declared:

> Before getting exposed to this experience, I preferred working individually because I didn't
>
> like to depend on other people and I used to depend only on myself. But after trying the
>
> cooperative writing, I found that it is a very good method of writing because everyone has
>
> his own information and ideas and when we share them we have better writing results

On the other hand, two informants had a positive attitude towards cooperative learning before being engaged in the cooperative writing sessions and this attitude was confirmed after the CL experience and they discovered other positive aspects of CL that they did not know before, for instance informant 1 commented: "I knew that it was useful and my perception of cooperative learning didn't change after this experience and I found it just as I expected it, full of excitement and fun" while informant 2 said:

> when I worked individually I had a problem finding the appropriate vocabulary so I thought
>
> that if I work with my mates this would make my essay richer with new vocabulary and
>
> ideas. In fact, my opinion didn't change because after experiencing CL I didn't face
>
> vocabulary problems when I wrote about any topic

In general, the data obtained from the analysis of the interview's first question show that all the interviewees had positive attitudes towards the implementation of cooperative learning instruction in the writing course.

After discovering this shift in students' attitudes towards group work in general and CL and CW in particular due to their participation in the CL treatment sessions, the interviewees were asked to describe the CL experience they have been through.

Q2. How do you describe the cooperative learning experience you have been through in the previous written expression sessions?

Actually, all the students without exception expressed their satisfaction with the CL experience and asserted that it was very interesting and beneficial. Accordingly, informant 7 declared: "The CL experience was very beneficial and really excellent for me because my group mates and I were helping each other, correcting each other's mistakes and exchanging ideas. Really, it was an excellent experience and I liked it very much" and another informant (8) said: "I think it was a good and amazing experience because I learned a lot of things in this experience and I discovered many things that I didn't know before". Also, most of the interviewees stressed that they did not only learn how to write better essays, but also enjoyed all the CW sessions and they entertained while writing, for example informant 1 declared: "It was a very good and exciting experience. Also, it was useful and fun at the same time. I guess it's a good way to benefit more from the writing sessions and understand better". Furthermore, nearly all the students were happy with the practice opportunities that they had within this experience, for instance informant 10 commented on the experience by saying: "In my point of view, I found

CL effective experience because in this way we understand very well and we practice what we understood" while another commented on how interesting the CL sessions were as: "I think that the CL experience that I have been through in the previous written expression sessions was very beneficial and useful from the side of gaining new information and sharing yours and managing time". All in all, most of the respondents declared that the CL experience was very interesting and beneficial.

3.1.2 The Benefits of CL Instruction

After accounting for students' perceptions and attitudes towards the CL experience they had been through, the students were asked about the benefits of this classroom instruction.

Q3. Did you benefit from working cooperatively with your group mates? How?

When they were asked whether they have benefited from the CL instruction, all the interviewees said that they did. Then, the respondents were asked to mention these benefits and explain the way CL helped them to write better. After analysing students' answers, the CL benefits that they have listed fell under two categories: cognitive benefits and social benefits.

3.1.2.1 Cooperative Learning Cognitive Benefits

Students, when they were asked about the benefits they gained from being involved in CL sessions, mentioned many cognitive benefits of this classroom instruction that helped them write their essays and enhanced their writing ability. First of all, most of students declared that before engaging in cooperative writing, they always suffered from lack of vocabulary and hesitation about the meaning of some words, which affected their choice of words and made them produce poor texts in terms of vocabulary. However, after they experienced cooperative writing, the interviewees said that they became more confident in their choice of words and did not face any vocabulary related difficulties in the drafting stage since they have discussed the vocabulary they will use in their essays with their group mates at the pre-writing stage. For example, informant 5 declared: "I learned new vocabulary and information" while informant 6 stated: "Yes it did. It helped me to get good vocabulary while exchanging ideas" Furthermore, some students commented that cooperative writing made them learn new expressions and writing techniques from their group mates, which made writing much easier for them, for instance informant 4 stated: "we shared new expressions, information, ideas and beliefs too". Also, other students mentioned that through cooperative writing and via revising their group mates' writings, they discovered new interesting writing styles that inspired them and from

which they learned a lot, as informant 7 commented: "I benefited from my group mates and they benefited from me. I discovered new thoughts and ideas and new styles of writing".

Secondly, students also expressed that cooperative writing was very beneficial and made writing very easy because they had more opportunities to discuss the topic with their group mates and collect ideas together. For instance, informant 10 declared:

> I found cooperative learning very beneficial especially in writing because each one of us has his own ideas, words and maybe his own background and through CL we can share these ideas and maybe we will benefit from new words because even if you are writing in your mother tongue, you cannot write anything without ideas, that's why I felt that sharing ideas with other students really helped me write better essays.

Moreover, students declared that they benefited a lot from the ideas shared by their group mates which made the drafting stage easier; informant 9 commented: "writing became very easy because there were a lot of amounts of information that we shared" while informant 8 added: "I have benefited from CL because everyone in my group had his/ her own information and we tried to share it together and maybe you have a wrong information about something and your mates try to correct it for you". Another student (informant 1) said: "I learned a lot of things with my group mates and I got different ideas". Also, the background knowledge shared by some students made it easier for other group members to write about the topic, for instance informant 3 said: "I benefited from my group mates background knowledge and shared information".

Additionally, planning and outlining essays has become less challenging within cooperative writing as students generate ideas collaboratively and discuss together so as to end up with an acceptable outline. For instance, informant 2 declared: "I learned new ideas and ways of writing and I benefited from my mates' corrections of my errors; also, collective outlining of essays made writing very easy". These results are in line with the findings of other studies (Gebhardt, 1980; Storch, 2002; Shehadah, 2011 and Storch, 2005).

Furthermore, students were particularly contented with the fact that they had more opportunities to discuss about their written texts and exchange comments and errors' corrections. Particularly, students mentioned that via reading and assessing their group mates' essays and through group discussions about the content and form of students' texts, they

discovered new expressions, writing styles and some types of errors that they used to commit frequently without paying attention to them.

Finally, some students stated that working in CL groups made them organize themselves, plan and make important decisions. Also sometimes they had to solve problems that are related to the studied content or to some conflicts that rose between group members which made them develop higher order and critical thinking skills.

3.1.2.2 Cooperative Learning Social Benefits

Through analysing students' replies on the third question of the interview, in which they were asked about what they have benefited from the CL experience, it was noticed that this classroom instruction did not affect students' cognitive skills only, but it also had a clear positive impact on their social skills as well. In general, through students' comments, it was obvious that they had positive attitudes about their educational experience and they have developed better social skills. In fact, the majority of students stated that CL helped them enhance their communicative competence via authentic interactions that took place during group discussions. For instance, informant 9 declared: "CL helped me develop my communication skills because I used to feel so confused to talk in public but now I feel more comfortable doing that" while informant 2 said: "I learned how to communicate with my mates and express my opinion without hesitation". Thus, when opposed to teacher-centred classroom, CL environment offers students more interaction opportunities, in which they learn from each other, generate ideas together, and develop their communicative and social skills as well as team work skills. More importantly, nearly all the interviewed students valued group interactions and stressed their role in creating a sense of community inside the classroom, where students got to know more about each other and became more sociable. In this regard, informant 1 said: "we shared ideas and suggestions and interacted with each other" and informant 3 added: "I knew more about my mate, their personalities, attitudes…etc".

Moreover, one particular characteristic that almost all the students were happy about was the opportunity of expressing their ideas and opinions freely, which was not available in the previous traditional teaching methods (teacher-centred classroom) where students had to be so prudent and precise when they discuss their points of view directly with the teacher. This made some of them, especially shy students, keep their ideas for themselves and never share them with the others. However, after being active group members and after participating in many group discussions, these students gained more self-confidence and became more

competent in expressing their ideas and points of view to the whole class. Among students' declarations, informant 4 said: "I made a good interaction with my group mates and learned how to express my opinion and share ideas with other students". Plus, through participating in different discussions and discovering the communicative skills that they possess, students developed higher levels of self-esteem. In this regard, informant 6 commented: "it gave me self-confidence to express my ideas as I said before" while informant 5 stated: "We also learned how to communicate with each other in an effective and respectful way. Plus, I learned how to work in a team and how to be sociable and interactive and how to be organized when communicating with others".

Another point raised by the interviewed students was motivation as many students declared that their motivation towards learning the writing skill has increased after they were engaged in cooperative writing. Accordingly, informant 5 commented: "After this experience, I became fond of writing" while informant 6 added: "through CL writing became so entertaining".

3.1.3 The Effectiveness of CL in Different Writing Stages

Students' answers on the previous questions showed that CL instruction had significant positive effects on students' writing performance. Accordingly, within this section the researcher sheds light on the different writing stages that were performed cooperatively in the experiment and accounts for the writing stages in which students benefited most from working in CL groups and the stage(s) that they prefer doing individually.

Q4. In which of the writing stages did you feel that you really benefited from cooperating with your group mates?

In fact, most of the students mentioned that they benefited from CL in all the writing stages, for instance informant 5 declared: "I benefited from working cooperatively in all the writing stages because the cooperation of each stage completes the other one" and informant 8 added: "for me, I enjoyed cooperating with my mates in all the stages because the discussion in the pre-writing stage, revising and editing was very interesting and it opened my eyes on new things and new writing techniques". However, there are some students who have emphasized its importance in particular writing stages. Accordingly, some of them declared that they benefited a lot from working cooperatively with their peers in the pre-writing stage as it helped them collect interesting ideas, new vocabulary and outline their essays effectively. For instance,

informant 1 stated: "I benefited from the pre-writing stage, when we exchanged ideas and helped each other with information" while informant 2 said: "the stage that I felt that I really benefited from my group mates was the revising and pre-writing stages. For the pre-writing, my mates helped me generate many ideas and provided me with new words". Moreover, informant 4 added: "I feel that I benefited from CL in all the stages of writing but mostly at the pre-writing stage because we enjoyed knowing new things and new words. It was beneficial and entertaining at the same time"; also informant 7 stressed the importance of CL in the pre-writing stage as she said: "The writing stage in which I felt that I really benefited from CL is the pre-writing stage because when they wrote words and sentences spontaneously, I got new ideas that helped me in writing my essay".

On the other hand, other students stressed the importance of cooperative group work in the revising stage as it helped them reorganize their essays and enhance their writing style. For example, informant 2 said: "As for the revising stage, when we corrected our mates' drafts, I benefited from the feedback that was given and the remarks that my friend made on the essays" and informant 6 declared: "I think the revising stage because I benefited a lot from my friends' remarks on my essay and this made writing the second draft very easy". Furthermore, there are students who mentioned that they benefited most from cooperative learning in the editing stage as informant 3 who said "The stage where I felt that I benefited from the cooperative learning was the editing stage". He also added: "When my mates edited my essay, this helped me discover mistakes that I always repeat in my essays. This helped me write correct sentences and improved my writing". Also, informant 10 said:

> Cooperating with my group mates was beneficial through all the writing stages especially in
> the editing stage in order to learn from our mistakes and through correcting others mistakes,
> we understand grammatical rules and when we write next time we remember the discussions
> and we will not make the same mistakes

All in all, it could be said that CL, according to the interviewed students, was beneficial in all the stages of writing.

Moreover, so as to validate the results of the previous question, the students were asked about the writing stage that they would have preferred doing individually.

Q5. Which of the writing stages you would have preferred doing individually?

Nearly all the students answered that they would not prefer to do any of the writing stages individually because they have benefited a lot from writing cooperatively with their group mates, informant 6 declared: "Actually I prefer to do none of the stages individually because I liked cooperating with my mates during all the stages". Moreover, informant 5 said: "Actually, I wouldn't prefer doing any of the writing stages individually because I really benefited from my mates' help and feedback".

3.1.4 Students' Attitudes towards Peer Feedback

After accounting for students' attitudes towards CL in general, within this section the focus was on one aspect of CL, which is peer feedback. Thus, students were asked whether they have benefited from their peers' feedback and how it benefited them.

Q6. Did you benefit from the feedback provided by your group mates? How?

Actually, all the students without exception have answered positively as they declared that they have benefited a lot from the feedback they received from their peers. Generally, the interviewed students pointed out that revising their essays collectively with their friends was very helpful and an effective strategy that improved their writing. Particularly, peer feedback helped students revise their essays effectively, especially in terms of text organization, cohesion and coherence, for instance informant 1 answered: "Yes, I benefited from peer feedback by knowing my mistakes and correcting them and by writing more coherent and organized texts" while informant 6 said: "it helped me correct my mistakes and organize my essay in a better way". Moreover, informant 9 added: "Yes, my group mates' feedback did help me because sometimes I forgot some important elements of the essay and my group mates reminded me to add them. Also, they helped me correct my mistakes". Additionally, peer feedback made essays' editing more effective as many students have mentioned that it helped them correct their spelling, grammatical and punctuation errors, for instance informant 7 commented: "Yes, I benefited from their feedback because they corrected my spelling mistakes, the tenses of the verbs, where I should put comma or full stop,...etc." and informant 2 commented: "Yes I benefited from the feedback provided by my group mates because they helped me correct my errors and they explained to me why they are considered so. Consequently, I didn't repeat these errors in the other essays". Moreover, many informants mentioned that practicing peer feedback helped them learn grammatical rules and consequently they committed fewer grammatical errors in the subsequent CW tasks, for instance informant 4 said:

> I learned new information and I discovered grammatical rules that I didn't know before. Also, through commenting on my mates' punctuation mistakes, now I pay more attention to punctuation when I write and do my best to put the appropriate punctuation mark in the right place

This goes along with the findings of previous research such as (Hyland, 2002) who emphasized the role of peer feedback on grammar in enhancing students' writing level.

Also, through peer feedback, students' awareness of effective writing skills and their critical thinking have been enhanced. In fact, via responding to their group mates' writing, students exercise critical thinking, which they have to apply to their own work. Hence, students' ability to evaluate their own writing and discover their own errors increases, for instance informant 5 said: "I learned from my friends' mistakes and how to use words and expressions appropriately" while informant 10 declared: "Yes, I benefited from the feedback provided by my group mates because it helped me recognize my weaknesses and work on some issues that were the cause of the majority of my mistakes like punctuation and tenses". These results go along with other research findings such as (Rollinson, 2005; Tsui & Ng's, 2000; Ronica, 1999).

Furthermore, so as to provide their peers with critical comments, students should make an effort and apply all their knowledge concerning the discussed element. Hence, their metacognitive skills are activated as informant 8 declared:

> Yes, I benefited because when my group mates provided me with feedback, I saw my mistakes and tried to correct them and not to repeat them in the future. So they corrected my mistakes and I corrected theirs and we exchanged information and benefited from each other's knowledge

These results are in line with previous research findings (Mittan, 1989; Wong & Storey, 2006 and Chen & Lin, 2008).

To sum up, it could be said that the use of peer feedback technique within CL instruction had significant positive effects on students' writing performance. It was a very useful, effective and beneficial technique of responding to students' writing errors which helped them write more effectively and commit fewer writing errors. These findings are in line with previous research (Hedgcock and Lefkowits, 1992; Paulus, 1999 and Min, 2006) that have found that peer feedback can result in meaningful revisions, also when they were compared with teacher

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feedback, revisions made through peer feedback were better in terms of vocabulary, organization, content and accuracy.

3.1.5 The Importance of Checklists in Providing Peer Feedback

Another element that was investigated within the post-experiment semi-structured interview was the importance of checklists in providing peer feedback. Hence, the students were asked if the checklist has helped them provide feedback to their peers.

Q7. Did the checklist help you provide feedback to your peers? How?

In fact, students' responses to this question were all positive as all of them have stated that peer feedback checklists provided by the teacher helped them give effective feedback to their group mates. Accordingly, students declared that due to peer feedback checklists, they could provide their peers with more effective and accurate comments on their writing errors. For instance, informant 7 declared: "it helped me organize my comments on my mates' essays", also informant 5 said: "Of course the checklist helped me in providing feedback to my mates by asking good questions about organization and the content of these essays" while informant 3 answered: "Of course yes. Because it is organized and simple and the questions are clear so they helped me spot my friends' errors".

Furthermore, checklists helped the students to detect the errors in their mates' essays because it contained questions about almost all the types of errors that students usually commit, for instance informant 1 stated: "actually it was very helpful because the questions in the checklist helped me detect my peers' mistakes and correct them". Other students commented on the guidance these checklists have provided as they reminded them of many elements that they have forgotten and helped them manage their time effectively and cover all the elements of correcting the essay. In this regard, informant 2 said: "it guided me when I was correcting my friends' essays and it helped me and my group mates to manage our time and focus only on the important things" while informant 10 commented: "checklist helped me very well. I felt that it guided me". Also, informant 4 has stated: "Yes, it did help me and my group mates because when we write we forget so many elements of the essay, but after using the check list we rewrote better essays". Accordingly, other students declared that the checklist helped them go step by step through the entire essay, for instance informant 9 stated: "it helped me a lot to go step by step and cover all the essay elements" and informant 8 said: "Yes, the checklist helped me very well in this experience because I put it in front of me and in each step I returned to the checklist

and I see if I included all the elements in my essay. Also, it helped me provide appropriate comments to my group mates". All in all, through analysing students' views it could be concluded that the use of peer feedback checklists was beneficial and helped students to produce more effective and organized critical comments on their peers' texts and guided them through the entire revision and editing process.

3.1.6 The Challenges of Cooperative Learning Group Work

As any teaching method or classroom instruction, CL instruction and peer feedback technique are not without drawbacks; hence, in this section of the questionnaire, the difficulties that the students faced when they were working cooperatively, especially when providing peer feedback, were addressed.

Q8. What are the difficulties that you faced when you cooperated with your group mates, especially when you provided and received feedback?

Among the problems that the students faced when they cooperated with their group mates was lack of organization, especially in the first session of CW, yet the majority of students who raised this concern have said that they did not face such difficulty when they got used to CL. For instance, informant 10 declared: "There were no difficulties, except at the beginning we lacked organization during discussions; but later we solved this problem and we became more organized", moreover informant 5 commented: "I didn't face a lot of difficulties jut some lack of organization in the first two sessions". The lack of organization at the beginning of CL implementation created time management issues for some groups as informant 1 stated: "The difficulty that I faced when I cooperated with my group mates is time management because sometimes we couldn't manage our time properly". Fortunately, these types of problems appear only in the first CL sessions and they disappear after students of different groups get used to each other, also teachers can avoid such problems via extensive CL training of students before implementing it in his/her classroom.

Another problem that was raised by some students was the personalities of some students who preferred individual work and were less sociable, which made them resistant to their mates' corrections or they simply neglected their group mates' remarks and comments. For instance, informant 2 said: "I had problems with some students' personalities because some of them do not accept correction", moreover informant 3 added: "The difficulty that I faced was sometimes my group mates didn't accept my feedback and they thought that I am insulting

them". Hence, in such situations the teacher has to interfere and solve these problems, for example he/she can make some changes in the composition of the group or speak with these students and try to engage them in their CL groups. Also, there are some interactive activities that teachers can resort to in order to engage all the students in the learning process and avoid any conflicts that can occur between group members.

Also, one of the main concerns raised by students about peer feedback was their peers' level which was around or even below their own, as one of the informants commented: "Actually, in my group we didn't face any difficulties. But sometimes I couldn't trust some of my friends' corrections because we have the same level" while another (informant 7) expressed her group mates' fear of receiving incorrect comments and their resistance to some of their peers' corrections by saying: "We didn't face difficulties, just small ones. For example, some of the group members were not convinced of the comments on their essays and they did not trust our corrections". Furthermore, this issue was present in other students' answers such as informant 4 who said: "Some of my group mates didn't accept our opinions and preferred working individually". This kind of concern had been reported in many similar studies like Hinkel, 2004; Hyland, 2002; Ferris, 2002; Rollinson, 2005; Hyland & Hyland, 2006; Jolliffe, 2007 and Kunwongse, 2013, which leads the researcher to assume that these problems are a natural part of CL classroom atmosphere that teachers should expect when they plan their course and should mitigate its potential risks. For instance, peer feedback extensive training, building positive CL environment, encouraging positive interdependence among group members could help teachers avoid such problems. Moreover, acknowledging these problems and discussing them with students before the implementation of CL (during first training sessions) would be very helpful and could reduce such students' concerns.

Furthermore, it should be mentioned that the negative comments about peer feedback and CL experience are very few in comparison with the massive positive comments that approved the use of peer feedback and CL instruction in the written expression sessions and stressed their effectiveness in enhancing EFL students' writing competence and their motivation towards learning the writing skill. Hence, it could be concluded that students' overall impression regarding CL and peer feedback was very positive and encouraging and this explains why all the interviewed students have expressed their willingness to have all their writing sessions within CL instruction.

Q9. Would you like to engage in similar cooperative writing activities in the future?

When the students were asked if they would like to engage in other CW sessions, all the interviewees answered positively and expressed their wish to have other CW sessions. For instance, informant 2 answered: "Yes, I would like to engage in similar cooperative learning activities in the future because it helped me improve my writing" while another informant (4) said: "Yes, I would like to, because it was very beneficial experience and delightful at the same time". Moreover, informant 7 commented: "Yes, of course because it was excellent and beneficial experience as I said I learned new things from my group mates and I want to do this in the future to improve my writing". This confirms students' positive attitudes towards CL and reflects their motivation towards engaging in cooperative writing activities which confirms the success of the CL treatment and its effectiveness in helping students write more effectively and accurately and improving their motivation towards learning the writing skill.

To conclude, it could be said that the data yielded from the interview analysis are in line with the experiment results since the qualitative data obtained from the first post-experiment interview (students' interview) validated the results of the experiment and provided the researcher with in-depth insights about the implementation of CL in the writing course. These data enabled the researcher construct awareness about the participants' perceptions and attitudes towards the implementation of CL and its efficiency in minimizing their writing errors and enhancing their writing accuracy. The data elicited from the students' interviews gave more depth and vigour to the present study since students' responses provided the researcher with more information about how CL sessions helped the EFL students write more accurately, which made the researcher construct a better understanding of how and to what extent this classroom instruction worked.

3.2 The Results of the Teacher's Interview

After conducting post-experiment semi-structured interviews with ten students, who have participated in the CL experiment, the written expression teacher who conducted it was interviewed as well. The aim of conducting this interview with the teacher was to account for her perception of CL instruction and her attitude toward implementing it in the writing course. Also, the teacher's point of view concerning the effectiveness of CL and peer feedback technique in enhancing EFL students' writing and minimizing their errors was sought. Furthermore, the teacher was asked to give some suggestions that would make the implementation of CL in the writing course easier in addition to general suggestions about improving EFL students' writing accuracy.

3.2.1 The Teacher's Attitude towards Cooperative Learning

Within this section, the researcher accounted for the teacher's attitude and perception of implementing CL instruction in the writing course and how it has affected students' writing performance and their motivation towards learning the writing skill. The first question within this section was about the teacher's attitude towards the use of CL instruction (Learning Together) in the writing course.

Q1. What is your attitude towards implementing cooperative learning instruction (Learning Together) in the writing course?

The teacher asserted that the implementation of CL instruction was so interesting because it had a lot of advantages both for the student and the teacher, which reflects the teacher's positive attitude towards the implementation of CL instruction in the writing course.

Q2. How do you think this instruction has benefited your students? Please tackle both cognitive and social sides.

When she was asked about the benefits of CL, the teacher declared: "I think that my students have benefited a lot from this classroom instruction". Concerning the cognitive aspect, the teacher stated that her students exchanged ideas and discussed about the content of the essay which made them develop their critical thinking skills, also through cooperative writing, students wrote better texts in terms of organization, coherence and accuracy. On the other hand, the teacher said that CL had positive effects on her students' social skills as well; she declared that after engaging them in CL, "students have become more sociable". In fact, this was confirmed by many previous studies such as (Spinger, Stanne & Donovan, 1998; Johnson, Johnson & Smith, 1998; Towns et al, 2000) which have confirmed that engaging students in CL activities develops their communication and interaction strategies and enhances their social skills and makes them more sociable and tolerant towards others. Moreover, the teacher stated that the implementation of CL in the writing course made the students more relaxed during the sessions.

Q3. Would you use this instruction in some of your future writing sessions? Why or why not?

In order to confirm the teacher's positive attitude towards the implementation of CL in the writing course, she was asked whether she would use this instruction in the future, the teacher's response was very positive as she declared: "of course, I'm thinking of using this

instruction in all the writing sessions because I was so impressed in the way my students interacted with each other and how they wrote better essays when they worked cooperatively". Finally, it could be said that the attitude of the teacher, who conducted the experiment, towards the implementation of CL in the writing course was very positive and encouraging and is in line with the students' attitudes towards this teaching instruction. Thus, these findings confirm the effectiveness of CL instruction in teaching the writing skill and its positive effects in enhancing EFL students' writing performance and the making the experience of teaching/learning writing more interesting and encouraging.

3.2.2 The Teacher's Attitude towards Peer Feedback Technique

In the second section of the interview, the focus was on peer feedback technique and its effectiveness in responding to EFL students' writing errors.

Q4. After applying it in your classroom, do you think that peer feedback, when implemented within a cooperative learning environment, is effective for responding to students' writing errors? Why or why not?

The teacher said that she believes that "the use of peer feedback and CL instruction is very effective for responding to students' writing errors", she added: "honestly, I was surprised in the way my students' writings improved when they wrote cooperatively, their essays became well-organized and they made fewer errors especially grammatical errors". Moreover, she asserted that after they were engaged in peer feedback activities, students paid more attention to punctuation and spelling. More importantly, the teacher claimed that "this technique makes the teacher's task easier and encourages students to rely more on themselves rather than depending on their teacher's corrections all the time". All in all, the teacher's perception of peer feedback technique was positive and its efficiency in responding to students' writing errors has been approved by her.

3.2.3 The Teacher's Suggestions

After accounting for the teacher's perception of both cooperative learning and peer feedback, the last section of the interview was devoted to teacher's suggestions on how to make the implementation of CL more useful and general suggestions about enhancing EFL students' writing accuracy.

Q5. Do you have any suggestions that could make the implementation of cooperative learning and peer feedback technique more useful?

The teacher declared that the use of white board is essential in the writing session; thus, she suggested that the teacher should give the students the opportunity to work in pairs or in groups, then errors correction will be performed on the board though students and teacher interactions. The teacher thinks that the use of this method in CL will "enable the teacher to have more control on students' suggestions and comments". In fact, the CL structure suggested by the teacher is very practical in the case of very crowded classrooms, where the teacher cannot control all the groups or when he/she is concerned about how to maintain order and manage his/her classroom. Also, teachers can resort to this option if they the allotted time for written expression sessions is restricted because this structure is less time consuming.

Since accuracy is an essential component of writing, the teacher was asked to give suggestions on how to enhance EFL students' writing accuracy in general.

Q6 : Do you have any other suggestions to enhance students' writing accuracy ?

The teacher stated that EFL students can enhance their writing accuracy through extensive reading; hence they are required to read a lot and make reading a daily habit. In fact, the importance of extensive reading and its efficiency in enhancing students' writing performance was acknowledged by many researchers and scholars such as (Hyland, 2004; Trosky & Wood, 1982; Tierney & Pearson, 1983; Tierney, Soter & O'Flahavand & McGinley, 1989). In fact, reading and writing are complementary skills, thus extensive reading will help EFL students enhance their writing performance through acquiring vocabulary and being exposed to different grammatical structures and texts' rhetorical features. Moreover, extensive reading helps students have a unique writing style. In this regard, Krashen (1984) asserted that "it is reading that gives the writer the 'feel' for the look and texture" as through extensive reading students acquire knowledge about the language syntax and learn a lot of grammatical and syntactical structures and rhetorical conventions that facilitate writing. Additionally, the teacher emphasized the importance of grammar exercises because effective grammar teaching/learning will lead to an improvement in students' writing proficiency. Therefore, a collaboration and coordination between the teachers of written expression and the teachers of grammar is needed so as to improve students' writing accuracy.

In a nut shell, the analysis of data gathered from the post-experimental semi-structured interview with the writing teacher who conducted the experiment are in line with the results of the empirical study and those of the students' interview since the teacher had a positive attitude towards the implementation of CL instruction and peer feedback technique in the writing course. Moreover, she stressed their importance in enhancing students' writing competency in general and their writing accuracy particularly.

3.3 Summary of the Interviews Analysis

The data gathered from the two post-experiment semi-structured interviews revealed to a great extent the success of the teaching instruction introduced in the present research (CL). On the one hand, the students, who were involved in the study, expressed their satisfaction with the CL instruction and peer feedback technique and declared that they have benefited a lot from experiencing cooperative writing, which helped them to develop not only their cognitive skills, yet they have also acquired important social skills such as communication, interaction and team work skills. Moreover, although students faced some difficulties when they cooperated with each other but this did not affect their positive attitudes towards CL and all of the participants expressed their wish to engage in cooperative writing activities in the future. On the other hand, the writing teacher, who conducted the experiment, confirmed the efficiency of CL instruction and peer feedback technique in enhancing EFL students' writing accuracy and minimizing their writing errors. Furthermore, she added that extensive reading and grammar exercises are very beneficial for enhancing EFL students' writing accuracy.

Conclusion

The analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data, which were gathered within this study, confirms the effectiveness of CL and PF in minimizing EFL students' writing errors and enhancing their writing accuracy. More particularly, the implementation of peer feedback technique within the cooperative learning instruction (LT) has minimized students' local errors (errors of grammar and mechanics) and improved their writing accuracy as confirmed by the descriptive and inferential statistics which were presented in this chapter. Moreover, involving EFL students in CL sessions had many cognitive benefits, which were reported by the students who participated in the experiment and the writing teacher who conducted it. First, it enriches students' vocabulary and enables them to discuss the topics together and share ideas, which makes planning and writing an essay cooperatively much easier than writing it individually. Second, CL group work puts the students in problem solving situations and creates many

decision making opportunities, which helps developing students' order and critical thinking skills. Third, cooperative writing has also enhanced students' writing in terms of accuracy, organization, coherence and cohesion of ideas. On the other hand, in addition to its cognitive benefits, CL had a positive impact on students' social skills as well, as it made students more sociable and enhanced their communication skills via authentic interactions of students during the group work. Moreover, it provided students with multiple opportunities for expressing their ideas and opinions freely which made them more self-confident, reduced their anxiety and made the classroom environment more relaxing. As for peer feedback, the study's findings confirmed its effectiveness in minimizing students' local errors and improving students' writing accuracy. Furthermore, peer feedback helped students revise their essays effectively, especially in terms of organization, coherence and cohesion of ideas. Plus, it made essay's editing easier and more effective as it helped students produce texts with fewer mechanical and grammatical errors. Moreover, peer feedback activities have enhanced students' awareness of effective writing skills and through responding to their peers' writings, students' critical thinking and metacognitive skills have been improved. However, it should be emphasized that the implementation of CL instruction and peer feedback technique in the writing course requires effective preparations such as students' training on CL group work and peer feedback, creating a cooperative and collaborative classroom atmosphere and designing classroom activities that are adequate to CL instruction; this would involve all the students in the learning process and motivate them to be active group members.

CHAPTER FIVE:

Pedagogical Implications for the Implementation of Cooperative Learning and Peer feedback in the Writing Course

Introduction

The significance of empirical educational research lies in providing teachers and instructors with information about students' needs and the different problems they face when learning the targeted skill. It also allows them identify the gap between students' actual proficiency in particular settings and suggest implications for enhancing students' proficiency, motivation and attitudes towards learning different skills (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Thus, the present study was conducted so as to investigate the effectiveness of CL instruction in minimizing EFL students' local writing errors (errors of mechanics and grammatical errors). Hence, to achieve this goal, the researcher conducted a quasi-experiment through which the effect of CL on students' writing was investigated and its effectiveness in minimizing students' local writing errors was proved in the present study's fourth chapter. As for the present chapter, it is devoted for the implications drawn from the study's findings, the limitations of the study and implications for future research.

1. Pedagogical Implications

Based on the results of the present study, the effectiveness of CL instruction and PF technique in minimizing EFL students' local writing errors has been proved. Moreover, their implementation in the writing course had a positive influence on students' critical thinking, metacognitive, communication and team work skills. Furthermore, the integration of EFL students in CL activities had positive effects on students' motivation towards learning the writing skill. As a result, the data gathered from the analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data gathered in the present research have several implications that could enhance the teaching and learning of EFL writing skill.

1.1 Pedagogical Implications Elaborated from the Teachers' Questionnaire

Written expression teachers' responses on the study's questionnaire have yielded profound insights about their pedagogical choices and practices; moreover, they provided deep insights about EFL students' writing proficiency level and the types of errors that hamper them from producing accurate texts. The data accumulated from the analysis of the questionnaire indicate that some of these teachers do not follow a certain approach in teaching writing and are not aware of the importance of adopting a certain writing approach. Furthermore, even the teachers who are adopting a certain writing approach, the majority of them do not have a specific rational for adopting it. Additionally, through the questionnaire's analysis, other

methodological and instructional inefficiencies were recorded. As for the students, the questionnaire findings revealed that second year Licence students have a low writing proficiency level and lack motivation towards learning this crucial skill. Moreover, they commit a lot of writing errors, especially grammatical errors and errors of mechanics, which are frequently repeated in their writings and hinder them from producing accurate texts. According to the majority of written expression teachers who were involved in the study, these errors are a real challenge for the writing teachers who spend a lot of time and effort correcting errors that will mostly be repeated in the future written productions of students. Hence, as a result of these findings, the following pedagogical implications were elaborated in order to solve EFL students' writing problems effectively and enhance the teaching and learning of EFL writing.

1.1.1 The Importance of Adopting a Writing Approach

Teaching EFL writing is generally a challenging task for EFL teachers who try to facilitate the mastery of this complex skill for their students, motivate them to learn it and provide effective feedback on their writing. These tasks, in addition to continuous planning and assessment, make the teaching of writing skill an exhausting task for EFL teachers. Therefore, in order to cope with these challenging requirements of EFL writing teaching, teachers should have a solid scholarly background about the different theories and approaches of teaching writing (Kroll, 2001). This knowledge will enable them, especially novice ones, choose the methodologies and classroom instructions effectively and select the appropriate activities and teaching materials based on principled rational that they can explain and discuss with others. Moreover, the knowledge of writing theory and the insights of empirical research has a positive impact on teachers' work such as instructional planning, teaching strategies, and students' assessment; it also helps teachers overcome their day-to-day teaching challenges (Ferris & Hedgcock, 2005). Furthermore, teachers' knowledge of the different writing approaches enables them to adopt the one they see appropriate for the content of their course, the teaching/learning context and the needs of their students; also, they can be eclectic and use more than one approach. More importantly, adopting an approach in teaching writing guides teachers and gives a framework for the lessons they are teaching and keeps them in line with the objectives of the course. Additionally, familiarizing students with a particular approach will make the writing process more organized and easy since they will have particular steps to follow when they write, especially during test and exams.

1.1.2 Reducing Written Expression EFL Teachers' Work Load through Peer Feedback

Responding to students' writing errors has always been a daunting task for EFL writing teachers, who usually complain from students' repeated errors and the heavy work load that they suffer from when correcting their students' writing errors. Hence, peer feedback technique is the solution for this problem, which is very common among EFL writing teachers. In fact, adopting peer feedback technique in responding to students' writing will save a lot of time and effort for teachers whose task will be just monitoring, assisting and guiding students. Of course, suggesting this technique as an alternative to traditional error correction methods, such as teacher feedback is not a call for abandoning this latter, yet a balance between the two methods can be very effective in responding to students' writing errors and reducing teachers' work pressure. Eventually, the long hours that teachers usually spend correcting their students' essays can be devoted for planning interactive peer feedback activities that would result in a better students' engagement in the learning process and an enhancement of their writing accuracy.

1.1.3 The Importance of Coordination between Teachers of Written Expression and Grammar Teachers

According to teachers, the majority of EFL students' writing obstacles are due to their low language proficiency level. Besides, the writing errors that they commit reflect their weakness in using the English language in an accurate and effective way, especially in terms of English grammar and mechanics. Therefore, the effective teaching of English grammar is indispensable for ameliorating EFL students' writing accuracy and helping them minimize their mechanical and grammatical errors. Hence, the present researcher suggests an adaptation of the existing grammar syllabi in coordination with the writing teachers and relying on students' needs so as to elaborate effective grammar syllabi that emphasize the use of grammar in context and eventually enhance students' writing skill. Furthermore, continuous coordination between the teachers of grammar and those of written expression is of great importance as it enables them to assess students' weaknesses and plan remedial activities to enhance students' writing ability.

1.2 Implications Drawn from the Quasi-Experiment

As indicated in the findings of the quasi-experiment, the implementation of PF technique within CL instruction in the EFL writing course contributed to the improvement of EFL students' writing accuracy and the minimization of their local writing errors, in addition to its other potential benefits in terms of communication and social skills as well as increasing

students' motivation of learning the writing skill. Thus, it is important to sensitize EFL teachers about the importance of the integration of CL and PF technique in EFL writing sessions. Moreover, EFL teachers have to be aware of the principles and the strategies of implementing CL and PF in their writing courses so as to be guided and obtain effective outcomes.

1.2.1 The Implementation of Peer Feedback Technique within a Cooperative Learning Instruction Enhances Students' Writing Accuracy

The EFL writing teacher is responsible for helping his/her students develop their writing ability through adopting effective teaching methods and instructions; hence, based on the findings of the present research, teachers are highly recommended to implement PF and CL instruction in the writing courses they teach. In fact, CL instruction and PF technique are very effective in minimizing EFL students' local writing errors such as mechanical and grammatical errors, which are very common in EFL students' writing. Thus, due to the massive opportunities of meaning discussion that CL group work offers and the multiple revision and editing comments that students get from their peers during peer response, their writing errors are reduced and their writing accuracy is enhanced as well. However, for them to be effective, CL instruction and PF technique should be implemented correctly. Therefore, the following elements comprise important implications for an effective implementation of CL instruction and PF technique.

1.2.2 The Importance of Cooperative Learning and Peer Feedback Training

Before implementing a new classroom instruction, teachers are required to brief their students on it and train them on how it works and what they are expected to do; this applies to CL instruction and PF technique. Hence, training students before implementing CL and PF plays a crucial role in the success of these classroom strategies; accordingly, Hansen and Lui (2005) argued that teacher planning and students' training are key elements for the implementation of peer response. At the beginning, teachers are required to brief their students on CL and PF and explain the purpose of their implementation and highlight their benefits. After that, teachers can start training their students on how to work in CL groups and equip them with effective response strategies and ways of providing accurate and constructive comments on their peers writing. Moreover, teachers should familiarize their students with the principles of CL as well as the steps of peer response and how to use PF checklists by providing them with checklists' samples and explaining their rubrics (Hansen and Lui, 2005; Min, 2006; Rollinson, 2005).

1.2.3 Establishing the Five Pillars of Cooperative Learning

Cooperative learning, in order to be effective and fruitful classroom instruction, it should be well planned and executed since it is different from ordinary group work that simply implies grouping students and allowing them to collaborate. More precisely, CL is an instruction that involves students working in small "carefully structured" groups to achieve a common goal with the aim of minimizing their own and each other's learning (Johnson, Johnson and Smith, 1991) and in order for it to be cooperative, group work should meet the five pillars of CL, namely: positive interdependence, individual accountability, face to face promotive interactions, interpersonal and small group skills and group processing (these pillars are thoroughly explained in section 2 in the second chapter). Generally, teachers can face some challenges in establishing these five pillars in their classrooms; yet with serious planning, efficient classroom strategies and effective classroom management, teachers can successfully establish supportive CL environment, where the five pillars of CL are respected. Accordingly, in order to facilitate teachers' task, the following instructions are drawn from the researcher's experience during the CL intervention.

In order to guarantee positive interdependence among group members, teachers should encourage students to help each other via incentive (reward) structures and the nature of the incentive; whether grades or concrete rewards, should be fixed before starting the group work (Good and Brophy, 2008). Within the CL incentive structure students are rewarded individually on all the group combined efforts, for instance, the teacher evaluates each member's essay individually then the marks of all the group members are accumulated and then distributed on the number of students. Hence, this kind of grading will make students help their peers and ensure that they understand the task because they know that their mark is influenced by their mates' mark. Therefore, if they want to be rewarded, they have to guarantee that all the group members are involved in the group work and everyone is doing his/her task towards achieving the common goal.

As for ensuring individual accountability during cooperative writing process, teachers should tell their students at the beginning of the session that they will work cooperatively but each student is required to deliver an essay, which he/she wrote individually. Although teachers, during CW sessions, can assign the members of one group to write only one essay collectively; however, this might threaten students' individual accountability as some of them would completely depend on their peers to write the essay while they would just watch them writing

or provide only little help. Thus, asking students to perform the drafting stage individually makes every student feel accountable for writing his/her essay and ensures his/her involvement in all the other stages of the writing process.

Concerning developing and maintaining students' promotive interaction during CL group work, teachers are advised to use a variety of interactive and active learning classroom activities that would raise students' motivation towards the learned content and maximize communication between them.

In order to equip students with interpersonal and small group skills, teachers should train their students on forms of the instructions, comments and questions they will use to interact with their peers to guarantee that no disputes or insults will appear during CL group work sessions. Additionally, other important small group social skills that every teacher should develop in his/her learners involve leadership, trust-building, communication and conflict management skills (Brody, 1998), such skills will facilitate the CL group work, improve student- student communication and create trust between the group members (Crandall, 1999). Also, students should be briefed on peaceful ways to solve problems and how to run their discussions in effective ways.

As for the last element in the five pillars of CL which is group processing, teachers are recommended to give group members ten minutes at the end of each session to discuss about what has been performed and how it was done. Also, they can give comments about the problems they faced and suggest the changes that should be done to achieve more effective functioning in the future.

Finally, teachers should be aware that these five pillars are very important for the success of the CL experience and without them students' group work cannot be termed as "cooperative".

1.2.4 The Importance of Assigning Roles to CL Group Members

Students, when accomplishing their activities in a CL group work, they can act in a chaotic way and fail to manage their time or even fail to do the task. Besides, students during CL group work can have disputes on how to share tasks or make decisions. Hence, in order to maintain order and avoid such problems, teachers are required to assign the group members with different roles depending on their level, age and personality type. In fact, there is a variety of roles that teachers can choose from, such as: leader, expert, participation checker, recorder, time keeper, noise monitor, materials manager, organizer, checker…etc (Jolliffe, 2007).

Besides, so as to make the role sound interesting, the teacher can use cards in which the name of the role is written on one side of the card while the explanation of this role is on the other side. When the teacher uses these cards for the first time, he/she asks each group member to read his/her role to the rest of the group, and then they will be asked to stick these cards to their shirts with paper clips.

1.3 Implications Drawn from the Semi-Structured Interviews

Cooperative learning has been proved as an effective and powerful classroom instruction that improves students' cognitive and academic skills; however, its positive impact affects students' social skills as well. Accordingly, several studies have documented CL positive effects on students' social and interpersonal skills and on their emotional intelligence as well (Jolliffe, 2007, Storm & Storm, 2003; Lie, 2008; Goodwin; 1999; Williams, 2007). Hence, when teachers use CL instruction in their writing courses, they are advised to help their students' develop their social skills as well because students' ability to be effective group members who can cooperate with their mates is a crucial skill that will help them succeed in their studies and enables them to have stable relationships with their classmates and work colleagues in the future or even inside their families.

1.3.1 Cooperative Learning as a Tool for Increasing EFL Students' Motivation

Motivation is an affective aspect of language learning that is defined as the combination of both effort and desire to achieve the mastering of particular language and having positive attitudes towards learning that language (Gardner, 1985). There are many factors that lead to improving students' motivation towards learning the FL in general and the writing skill in particular. Among these factors Dörnyei (1994) mentions classroom experience; therefore, if the teacher engages the students in an interesting and motivating language learning experience during the writing session, students' motivation towards learning this skill will increase. According to Krashen (1981) teachers who use classroom strategies and teaching styles that emphasize the importance of each student's contribution create a supportive classroom community and motivational learning environment. Hence, since CL is a classroom instruction in which each individual matters and comprises task structures that give every student the opportunity to participate in the learning process, it is considered very effective for maximizing students' motivation towards learning the writing skill. In another line of argument, Dörnyei (1997) asserted that peer cooperation fosters motivation as "the satisfaction that students experience after they complete a task successfully is increased by the shared experience and the

joint celebration" (p.489). Therefore, in order to increase their students' interest in the content they teach and foster their motivation towards learning the writing skill, teachers are advised to implement CL instruction in their writing courses. Moreover, the use of PF technique is also effective for improving students' motivation. Accordingly, Crandall (1999) declared that within PF activities "individuals know that they can get feedback and assistance in making their contribution as clear, relevant and appropriate as possible", thus this will motivate them to keep trying especially when their peers encourage and support them.

1.3.2 The Development of EFL Students' Critical Thinking Skills through CL and PF

The implementation of CL instruction and PF technique in the language classroom, and more precisely in the writing course is not effective in enhancing EFL students' linguistic competencies only; yet, it extends to improving their critical skills as well. In fact, engaging students in CL interactive activities, in addition to revising and editing their peers' writing help students become more skilful in reading their work critically. Thus, this will develop their mental processes and enhance their writing ability. Moreover, engaging EFL students in pre-writing meaningful activities, group discussions and peer feedback sessions is considered one of the powerful vehicles in developing their critical thinking skills. Particularly, involving students in peer response activities enhances their self-awareness in a way that makes them recognize the gap between how they perceive their writing and how others see it, which results in a development of their analytical and critical writing skills as well as an enhancement in students' reflexive thinking (Ferris, 2002). Also, when students give comments on their peers writing or defend their opinions and discuss the comments they receive from their peers, this will also contribute to the development of their critical thinking skills. Furthermore, students' group discussions on the content and form of essays as well as discussing their personal choice of words with their peers and explaining their points of view and their writing styles through the different stages of the writing process will help them gain self-confidence and improve their writing strategies and will make them efficient problem solvers inside and outside the classroom. Therefore, EFL written expression teachers' task is not limited to developing their students' writing ability only; however, they are also required to foster their students' critical thinking skill through engaging them in CL group work and PF sessions, in which they can develop this skill through interacting and writing with their peers.

1.3.3 Cooperative Learning and the Process Approach of Teaching Writing

The process approach of teaching writing was proved effective for the implementation of CL instruction and peer feedback technique. This was confirmed by students' responses in the post-experiment interview as nearly all the interviewed students declared that CL instruction has been beneficial in all the writing stages of process writing. Hence, it could be concluded that the process approach of teaching writing is suitable and facilitator of the implementation of CL instruction in the writing course; these findings are in line with those of (Lee, 2017; Paulus, 1999).

1.3.4 The Importance of Peer Feedback Checklists

During the peer response process, students' sometimes feel lost and do not know what aspects of the written text they have to focus on and which elements to correct during the revision stages and what to tackle at the editing stage. Thus, providing students with PF checklists, also termed as response sheets, will guide students and help them provide effective and constructive feedback to their peers. PF checklist also guide students through the writing stages and help them reflect on the appropriate elements of the different stages.

1.3.5 Cooperative Learning Effectiveness in Reducing Students' Anxiety

Language anxiety is the fear that EFL students have when they perform in a foreign language. Horwitz et al (1991) defined it as "a distinct complex of self-perception, beliefs, feelings and behaviours related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process" (p.31). Thus, language anxiety is generally linked to three performance anxieties: communication apprehension, negative evaluation and test anxiety (ibid, 1991). Ultimately, these anxieties will hamper EFL students from performing effectively in the language classroom as well as depriving them from learning the FL skills and practicing them inside and outside the classroom. Hence, in order to solve this sensitive psychological problem and fully engage the learners in classroom communication and liberate them from the psychological boundaries they set for themselves, CL instruction and PF technique are key components that every EFL classroom should implement.

First of all, concerning anxiety that results from communication apprehension, which is "a type of shyness characterized by fear or anxiety about communicating with people" (ibid, 1991, p.30), CL is considered a very effective classroom instruction that helps students develop their communication skills and overcome their communication problems. In fact, the variety of

group work activities in which students are engaged during CL writing and the authentic interaction that takes place during these activities such as discussions about the topic of the essay and the relevant vocabulary, planning and outlining the essay and the conversations during problem solving situations, help students build self-confidence and improve their communication skills. Moreover, due to the positive interdependence among group members in CL contexts, students who are usually reluctant to communicate with others or speak in public will be more encouraged to talk and express their opinions because via positive interdependence the CL group becomes like a small community, where students support and help each other. Therefore, even low achieving students' participation is valued and corrected in a manner that does not threaten their confidence. Accordingly, Kagan and McGroarty (1993) asserted that in language classrooms it is important to create a "learning environment that combines high interest with lowered learner anxiety and positive encouragement for communicative efforts" (p.51); certainly, the implementation of CL leads to creating such an environment since student-student cooperation was proved effective for reducing anxiety among EFL learners (Tsui, 1996; Liu, 2006). Besides, the integration of CL activities in the language classroom creates a supportive environment where students try out language in groups. In this regard, Crandall (1999) argued that group work activities enable the students to examine the correctness of their answers with their peers before delivering them to the whole class, which reduces their anxiety and reinforces their self-confidence.

As for the test and evaluation anxiety, they are "an apprehension about others' evaluation, avoidance of evaluative situations, and the expectation that others would evaluate oneself negatively" (Watson & Friend, 1969 as cited in Horwitz et al, 1991, p. 31). These types of anxiety increase in classrooms where the teacher is the only provider of corrective feedback, which leads students, who suffer from these anxieties, remain silent during the session even if they know the answer; it also deprives them from expressing themselves and demonstrating their knowledge and freely exhibiting their writing style in their written productions. Therefore, the implementation of CL in the EFL writing course is a necessity as it is an effective solution for all the above mentioned problems.

2. Limitations of the Study and Implications for Future Research

The results yielded in the present research provide a platform for future research which investigates the effects of the implementation of CL instruction on students' writing errors and writing ability. Additionally, in spite of the considerable effort that was made so as to cover all

the aspects of the topic under investigation and maintain objectivity in all research stages, there were some limitations and aspects of the topic that the researcher could not inspect. Hence, within this section, the limitations of the present study are acknowledged, which gives rise to several aspects that future research could consider when investigating the effects of CL instruction on students' writing performance.

First, the present study investigated the effectiveness of implementing CL instruction in minimizing EFL students' writing errors, however its investigation was limited to students' local writing errors only (grammatical and mechanical errors). Thus, further studies that inspect the effect of this classroom instruction on students' global writing errors are recommended in order to discover whether or not the implementation of CL instruction in the writing course will have the same positive effects that were yielded in this study.

Second, so as to explore the context of teaching/learning the writing skill at the English Department of Kasdi Merbah University, Ouargla (Algeria), the present study used semi-structured pre-experiment questionnaires directed to EFL written expression teachers at the department. However, the views, attitudes and perceptions of EFL students were not implemented in this research due to time constraints. Thus, future research may include EFL students in exploring teaching/learning practices that take place during the teaching/learning of the writing skill since students are considered a valuable source of information that could give more vigour and depth to the study's findings.

Third, the present study's intervention lasted for two weeks only, which is considered a relatively short period to achieve all research goals and trace the development of students' level. Thus, longitudinal studies such as action research that tackle similar topics would be of great significance since students involved in such studies will have more time to train and get used to CL and peer feedback strategies, hence more reliable and inclusive results about the effects of these classroom techniques would be yielded from these studies.

Moreover, the time factor has affected the researcher's choices of data collecting tools, therefore time consuming data collecting tools such as classroom observations, diary writing and think-aloud protocols were disregarded in favour of more time-efficient tools. Hence, the use of such data collection tools, though it is time consuming, is highly recommended for future research because they are thought to provide deep insights on how students interact during CL group work and peer feedback process. As a result, this would enable the researcher to explore students' actions and decisions during CL group work and peer response activities, which will

help him/her to have deep insights on how these techniques could possibly develop students' writing and minimize their writing errors. Furthermore, such data collection tools could yield more details on how EFL students benefit from cooperative writing and provide deeper insights about EFL students' attitudes towards the implementation of CL instruction in the writing course.

Finally, within data analysis, more precisely when assessing students' writings, researchers generally resort to two raters in order to guarantee the reliability of the research findings. Moreover, so as to ensure that the variance between the two raters is little and does not threaten the reliability of research, they use specific statistical tools such as Cronobach's alpha to measure the inter-rater reliability and if the variance between the two raters is considerable, the researcher should refer to a third party so as to arrive at reliable and valid results. Actually, in the present research, having a second or third rater was not available, thus the analysis of textual data was conducted by the researcher only. Therefore, future researches are highly recommended to refer to a second party for reanalysing students' essays so as to attain more reliable results and ensure that anyone who would analyse the data will arrive at similar results every time.

In fact, research which takes into consideration the previously proposed elements is expected to yield more valid and generalisable results. Also, it would provide deeper insights on how cooperative learning and peer feedback develop EFL students' writing competency and yield more interesting and detailed findings about the process of cooperative writing, peer feedback and on the interactions that take place during these processes and their effects on students' writing and revisions of essays. Ultimately, this leads to the elaboration of more effective classroom instructions and strategies that would help students write more effectively and accurately.

Conclusion

The purpose of the present chapter was to provide EFL writing teachers with pedagogical implications that could facilitate their task and help them achieve an effective teaching and learning of the writing skill as well as overcome the challenges that the teaching of this skill poses on them. Moreover, the presented implications can also help them raise their students' interest towards the content they teach and increase their motivation towards learning the writing skill. Furthermore, so as to encourage EFL teachers to adopt CL instruction in their writing class and facilitate its implementation, the researcher suggested in depth implications

concerning the implementation of CL instruction and PF technique in the writing course; these implications were elaborated from both theoretical and empirical findings of this study. Finally, the limitations of the study were stated and implications for future research were suggested.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

The purpose of this thesis was to investigate the effectiveness of implementing peer feedback technique within a CL instruction in the writing course of second year Licence EFL students in minimizing students' writing errors and enhancing their writing accuracy. The focus, within this thesis was on students' local writing errors, particularly errors of mechanics and grammar. In fact, the present researcher had a very little experience in university teaching that did not include the teaching of writing skill; thus, the choice of the category of errors to be studied in this research was referred to the written expression teachers in the English Department of KMU for two main reasons. First, these written expression teachers have a long experience in teaching this skill, which exceeds ten years for some teachers; hence, they are a reliable source of information about the type of writing errors that prevails most in EFL students' writings. Second, since the study's population is second year Licence students of EFL, the researcher resorted to teachers who have taught second year students as they are the ones who can evaluate these students' writing level and describe the writing difficulties that their students suffer from and the types of writing errors that affects their writing the most.

As for the choice of CL instruction as an alternative for the traditional teaching instructions usually used by EFL written expression teachers, it was based on the promising results of previous studies which investigated the use of this classroom instruction for developing students' skills and enhancing their levels in different areas. Moreover, the use of this classroom instruction in the EFL writing classroom was backed by many scholars and researchers (Kagan, 1995; Azizinezhad, Hashemi & Darvishi, 2012; Wigglesworth& Storch, 2012; Shi, 1998; Shehadeh, 2011; Storch, 2005; Storch & wigglesworth, 2009) who have reported its fruitful outcomes and recommended its implementation in different EFL teaching contexts. Furthermore, concerning the selection of PF technique for responding to students' writing errors, it was based on two main reasons:

First, among the available techniques for responding to students' writing errors, PF is the most adequate to be implemented in a CL writing course because the process and strategies of PF technique are in line with the principles of CL instruction. Thus, it is not surprising that some scholars classify PF technique as a cooperative writing activity. Secondly, PF technique is widely documented for its benefits in minimizing EFL students' writing errors and improving their writing accuracy. Therefore, given these research motives that emerged from the extensive and critical reading of both theoretical and empirical previous studies on CL and Pf, the present

research hypothesized that the implementation of PF technique within a CL instruction in the EFL writing course will minimize EFL students' local writing errors and enhance their writing accuracy. Thus, in order to inspect the correctness of this hypothesis the following research question was developed:

Does the implementation of peer feedback technique within cooperative learning instruction (Learning Together) in the writing course minimize EFL students' local writing errors?

Moreover, in order to answer the main research question, the following sub-questions were raised:

1. What are the teaching practices of EFL teachers at the English Department of Kasdi Merbah University, Ouargla (Algeria) concerning the teaching of the writing skill and the methods of responding to students' writing errors?

2. Does the use of peer feedback technique within cooperative learning instruction (Learning Together) in the EFL writing course minimize EFL students' grammatical errors?

3. Does the use of peer feedback technique within cooperative learning instruction (Learning Together) in the EFL writing course minimize EFL students' mechanical errors?

4. Does the implementation of peer feedback within cooperative learning instruction (Learning together) in the EFL writing course enhance EFL students writing accuracy?

5. What are teacher's and students' attitudes towards the integration of peer feedback within cooperative learning instruction (Learning Together) in the writing course?

Accordingly, in order to put this research work into its theoretical context and select appropriate data collection instruments for gathering data about the topic of the research, the relevant literature was reviewed. First of all, the nature of the writing skill in general and EFL writing in particular was inquired so as to understand the metacognitive processes that take place while writing and account for the requirements an academic piece of writing should meet. Furthermore, the challenges students face when they write in EFL were addressed and their potential sources were investigated. Moreover, this research shed light on the various approaches of teaching writing skill with a main focus on the process approach, being the writing approach adopted in this study. Secondly, the different classification and taxonomies of writing errors have been presented and critically analysed with the aim of selecting a flexible and practical classification of errors to be used in the present study. Third, the different methods

of errors' correction were tackled with a specific focus on peer feedback method, which was thoroughly inspected and a wide range of scholarly research related to it was consulted and analysed. Finally, the focus of the last theoretical section of this research was CL instruction. Hence, the origins of this instruction, its theoretical foundation, its principles and its advantages were addressed and the strategies that facilitate its implementation at the university classroom were surveyed.

Furthermore, to answer the previously stated research questions, the present researcher used three research instruments to gather both quantitative and qualitative data. At first, a pre-experiment semi-structured questionnaire directed to EFL written expression teachers at the English department of Kasdi Merbah University Ouargla, was conducted so as to explore the teaching/learning context of EFL writing in the department and discover any possible lacunas. Second, since this study is quasi-experimental, a pre-experimental one group pretest- post-test design was used in order to investigate whether or not the implementation of PF within a CL instruction in the EFL writing course is effective in minimizing EFL students' local writing errors and enhancing their writing accuracy. Finally, the researcher conducted post experiment semi-structured interviews with both the teacher and some of the students, who have participated in the study. The aim of conducting these interviews was accounting for the teacher and students' perception and attitudes towards the implementation of PF technique and CL instruction in the writing course as well as eliciting in depth insights on how CL and PF have helped EFL students write more accurate texts. As for the treatment of the data collected through these three research methods, descriptive statistics were used to analyse the quantitative data elicited from the teachers' questionnaire, as for the qualitative data, their content was coded into manageable categories before it was analysed following content analysis procedures. Concerning the analysis of quantitative data gathered from the quasi-experiment pre and post-tests, descriptive statistics were employed to describe the results of both the pre-test and post-test while inferential statistics (paired samples t-test) was used to compare between the means of the two tests and test the research hypotheses. As for the treatment of qualitative data yielded from the post-experiment semi-structured interviews, they were classified into measurable themes and then their content was analysed in word-based from. Accordingly, the methodological triangulation of quantitative and qualitative data gathered by the different instruments used in the present research enabled the researcher to investigate the effect of implementing PF technique within a CL instruction in the writing course on EFL students' writing performance.

As for the results, the findings of the present study were constructive. First, the data gathered from the semi-structured questionnaire yielded much information about the pedagogical practices of the EFL written expression teachers at the English department of Kasdi Merbah University, Ouargla. The questionnaire results show that the majority of written expression teachers depend on the traditional product approach of teaching writing and rely on teacher corrective feedback for responding to students' errors. However, though teachers' massive efforts, students' writing proficiency level was still weak as they were unable to produce fluent and accurate texts and many grammatical and mechanical errors were recorded in their writings. Obviously, the teaching approaches and classroom instructions adopted by the written expression teachers of the department, though they had many advantages, they demonstrated deficiencies as well, which resulted in a gap in the teaching/learning of writing skill in the English Department of KMU.

Second, the results yielded from the pre-test confirmed the questionnaire's findings. Particularly, the analysis of students' assays demonstrated students' low level of writing accuracy as they committed many local writing errors, especially word order, punctuation and spelling errors. After the pre-test, the students were involved in one-week CL and PF training sessions and two weeks of CW sessions, and then they had their post-test. The post-test results were very positive as they yielded significant improvement in students' writing accuracy and a remarkable decrease of local writing errors. These results have proved the effectiveness of CL instruction and PF technique in minimizing EFL students' local writing errors and enhancing their accuracy.

Finally, the qualitative data gathered via the post-experiment semi-structured interviews have shown that the teacher and students, who were involved in the experiment, had very positive perceptions and attitudes towards the implementation of PF technique and CL instruction in the writing sessions. Furthermore, in addition to its effectiveness in the pre-writing, revising and editing stages, the interview results yielded other positive effects of CL instruction, such as enhancing students' critical thinking, communication and social skills as well as improving their motivation towards learning the writing skill.

To conclude, based on the findings of the present study, the effectiveness of PF technique and CL instruction in minimizing EFL students' local writing errors and enhancing their writing accuracy was confirmed. Accordingly, cooperative learning and peer feedback are very effective pedagogical tools in the EFL writing classroom and when implemented

effectively, they can yield very positive effects regarding students' writing achievement and their motivation towards learning this skill. Hence, when using CL and PF in the writing classroom, teachers are required to train their students on how to work cooperatively with other group members and provide constructive feedback to their group mates before the implementation of CL and PF technique. Moreover, creating a cooperative and relaxing classroom environment, using active learning interactive activities and effective planning are crucial factors for the success of CL experience in the EFL writing classroom.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Teachers' Questionnaire

Teachers' Perceptions of the Teaching of Writing Skill

Dear Teachers,

This questionnaire serves as data collection tool for a doctoral study which investigates the effectiveness of implementing cooperative learning instruction in the teaching of writing skill at the university level. The researcher, through the present questionnaire, aims at exploring the context of teaching/learning writing skill in the English Language Department of Kasdi Merbah Ouargla University, more precisely at second year undergraduate level. Hence, your response to this questionnaire is of significant value as it enables the researcher identify the actual challenges of teaching writing to second year EFL students at KMOU and consequently suggest an alternative teaching instruction that could have a positive impact on students' writing proficiency.

<div align="right">Thank you for your cooperation</div>

Section One: Academic Qualification and Experience

1. Gender   Male ☐   Female ☐

2. Degree   ……………………………………..

3. Experience in teaching at the university   ……………………………………

4. Experience in teaching writing   …………………………………...

Section Two: The Teaching of Writing at the University Classroom

1. Which writing approach do you opt for when teaching writing?

a. Product approach   ☐

b. Process approach   ☐

c. Genre approach   ☐

d. Process genre approach   ☐

e. None of these approaches   ☐

f. I do not really know   ☐

2. If you are not using a specific approach, please describe the way you use to teach writing.

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3. Do you think that teachers should follow a certain approach to teach writing skill? Why or why not?

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Section Three: Teachers' Perceptions of their Students' Writing Proficiency and Motivation

1. How do you evaluate second year students' motivation towards learning writing?

Very high	☐
High	☐
Average	☐
Low	☐
Very low	☐

2. How do you evaluate second year students' writing proficiency?

Very good	☐
Good	☐
Average	☐
Weak	☐
Very weak	☐

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3. What are the difficulties that you encounter when teaching second year Licence students the writing skill?

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Section Four: Second Year EFL Students' Writing Errors

1. What type of errors that frequently appears in your students' essays?

Local errors[*]   ⬚

Global errors[*]   ⬚

Would you please indicate most frequent errors' categories?

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2. Which type of feedback do you usually use to respond to your students writing errors?

Teacher direct/written feedback   ⬚

Peer feedback   ⬚

Self-response   ⬚

Please explain why you use this type.

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3. If you are using another type of feedback, please indicate it and explain why do you use it?

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Section Five: Teachers' Perceptions of the Implementation of Cooperative Learning[*] **in the Writing Courses**

1. Do you think that the teaching of writing skill can be accomplished within cooperative learning groups? Why or why not?

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2. At which stage(s) of the writing process do you think cooperative learning can be implemented?

Prewriting stage

Drafting stage

250

Revising stage ☐

Editing stage ☐

All the stages ☐

None of these stages ☐

Would you please explain your choice?

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3. Do you think that the implementation of cooperative learning instruction can minimize EFL students' writing errors? Why or why not?

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Definitions:

Local errors: errors that do not hinder the communication and the understanding of the message such as grammatical and mechanical errors.

Global errors: errors which interfere with communication and interrupt the transmission of meaning such as syntactic, pragmatic and discourse errors.

Cooperative learning: It is a classroom instruction that involves students working in small "carefully structured" groups to achieve a common goal with the aim of maximizing their own and each other's learning (Johnson, Johnson & Smith, 1991).

Appendix II: The Pre-test and Post-test

1. The Pre-test

Write a composition of 180 to 200 words about the topic below. Use the language forms and organization you think are the most appropriate to convey the meaning you intend to transmit to the reader.

Topic:

- Describe you perfect place for vacation.

2. The Post-test

Write a composition of 180 to 200 words about the topic below. Use the language forms and organization you think are the most appropriate to convey the meaning you intend to transmit to the reader.

Topic:

- Describe the person whom you look up to (you consider him/her as example in this life).

Appendix III: Second Year Writing Syllabus

THE TEACHER'S SYLLABUS

Module: Written comprehension and expression
Level: 2nd year **LMD**
Semesters: 3, 4
Weekly time allowance: 4h 30 weekly (tutorials)

Course Description and overall goals

> Adopting a holistic approach, this two-semester course is aimed at developing students' skills in English written discourse after having acquired the basics of sentence and paragraph writing in semester 1 and 2. Focusing on the essay, it provides the students with the linguistic tools and skills necessary to construct a composition about topics that interest them personally or that are part of their curriculum, conforming to the norms of academic English writing. The course highlights the use of text reading as a basis for writing instruction.

MAIN OBJECTIVES

On completion of this course, students will be able to do the following:

1. Revise their writing to improve style by writing effective, varied sentences,
2. Revise their writing to improve style by using concise diction,
3. Revise their writing to improve style by avoiding wordiness in their texts,
4. Recognize the structure of an English essay
5. Practice the stages of essay writing: brainstorming, outlining, drafting, revising and editing
6. Use the appropriate linguistic tools and conventional discourse organizations to write a short, documented essay on a subject that interests them, following well-defined writer purposes: description, narration, exposition (comparison/ contrast, classification, definition, cause/ effect, process, illustration) and argumentation.

WEEK BY WEEK / DAY BY DAY

Sem.	M	W	Topic	Lesson objective(s)	Materials	Delivery/ Engagement
1	Oct	1	Review Key content of 1st & 2nd semesters	- To Activate students' previous knowledge about writing smaller units of discourse (sentences and paragraphs)	Reading texts + students' writings	Pair/ group work

		2	Review Key content of 1st & 2nd semesters	- To activate students' previous knowledge about writing smaller units of discourse (sentences and paragraphs)	Reading texts + students' writings	Pair/ group work
		3	Effective sentences: sentence variety	- To enable students to write effective sentences by varying them in terms of structure, length and openings.	- Reading texts	- Individual/ Pair/ group work - Take-home activities
		4	Effective language: wordiness	- To enable students to revise their writing to eliminate redundancies and to have a concise style	Reading texts	- Individual/ Pair/ group work - Take-home activities
	Nov	1	Effective language: exactness	- To enable students to select the right diction for the exact expression of meanings (distinguishing false friends, fixing the denotation/ connotation of words, avoiding lexical vagueness, creating emotional effects in writing through the use of figures of speech, stressing idiomatic word usages, avoidance of clichés, introducing the notion of collocations) - To train the students to use a bilingual / monolingual dictionary appropriately to select words.	Reading texts	- Individual/ Pair/ group work - Take-home activities
		2	Essay writing: the structure of an assay	- To introduce the schematic structure of English essays to the students with focus on format, thesis statement writing, purposes, audiences.	- Reading texts	- Individual/ Pair/ group work - Take-home activities
		3	Essay writing: stages of writing an essay	- To practise the preliminary stages of essay writing: narrowing	Models	- In-class activities

		4	Essay writing: stages of writing an essay	a topic, brainstorming and outlining		-Take-home activities
	Dec	1	Essay writing: introductions & conclusions	- To introduce the conventional strategies for writing essay introductions and conclusions	Models	In-class activities -Take-home activities
		2	Essay writing: Transitions & paragraph linking	- To make students acquainted with the various lexico-grammatical tools and logical orders used to link essay parts	Reading texts	In-class activities -Take-home activities
		3	Winter leave			
		4	Winter leave			
	Jan	1	Exams			
2		2	Describing a place	- To practise the skills of planning, outlining, drafting, revising and editing in order to produce a detailed, effective description of a place in essay form	Reading model texts	Group work/ peer feedback
		3	Describing a person	- To practise the skills of planning, outlining, drafting, revising and editing in order to produce a detailed, effective and well-organised description of a person in essay form	Reading model texts	Group work/ peer feedback
		4	Describing an event	- To practise the skills of planning, outlining, drafting, revising and editing in order to produce a detailed, effective and well-organized description of an event in essay form	Reading model texts	Group work/ peer feedback
	Feb	1	Exposition: cause / effect	- To practise the skills of planning, outlining, drafting, revising and editing in order to produce a detailed, effective and well-organized expository	Reading model texts	Group work/ peer feedback

				essay developed by cause and effect		
		2	Exposition: comparison / contrast	- To practise the skills of planning, outlining, drafting, revising and editing in order to produce a detailed, effective and well-organized expository essay developed by comparison and contrast	Reading texts	Group work/ peer feedback
		3	Exposition: Classification	- To practise the skills of planning, outlining, drafting, revising and editing in order to produce a detailed, effective and well-organized expository essay developed by classification	Reading model texts	Group work/ peer feedback
		4	Exposition: process	- To practise the skills of planning, outlining, drafting, revising and editing in order to produce a detailed, effective and well-organized expository essay developed by process	Reading model texts	Group work/ peer feedback
	Mar	1	Essay revising and editing	- To focus the students' attention on the various ways of essay revising and the editing process	Students' writings	Group work/ peer feedback
		2	Essay revising and editing	- To focus the students' attention on the various ways of essay revising and the editing process	Students' writings	Group work/ peer feedback
		3	Spring leave			
		4	Spring leave			
	Apr	1	Narration	- To practise the skills of planning, outlining, drafting, revising and editing in order to produce a detailed, effective and well-organized narrative essay	Reading model texts	Group work/ peer feedback
		2	Argumentation	- To practise the skills of planning, outlining, drafting, revising and editing in order to produce a detailed,	Reading model texts	Group work/ peer feedback

				effective and well-organized argumentative essay (focus on expressing opinions, using various sorts of evidence, balancing logical and emotional appeals, distinguishing deduction and induction in essay development		
		3	Revision checklist	- To train students on using revision checklists for the assessment of their own essays and those of their peers.	Students' texts	
		4	Evaluation	- Summative assessment of students' skills		
	Mai	1	Closing session	- Assessment of the course	/	/
		2	Exams			

ASSESSMENT (Grading policy)

- Formative assessment (30 %) / summative (70 %)

REQUIRED TEXTS (Bibliography)

1.	Fawcet, S. (2012). *Evergreen: A Guide to writing with readings* (9th ed.). Wadsworth, Cengage Learning
2.	Zemach, D.E, & Rumisek, L. A. (…..). *Academic writing: From paragraph to essay*. MacMillan.
3.	Wyrick, J. (2011)**.** *Steps to writing well (11th ed.).*Wadsworth, Cengage Learning
4.	Glenn, C. &, Gray, L. (2012).*Harbrace essentials.* Wadsworth, Cengage Learning
5.	Lunsford, A.A. (2010).**The Everyday writer** (4th ed.). Bedford / St. Martin's
6.	McWhorther, K. T. (2012). *Successful college writing* (5th ed.). Boston, M.A: Bedford/ St. Martin's.

Appendix IV: Peer Feedback Checklist

Peer Feedback Checklist

Tutor: **Group:**

Level: Second year   **Academic year:** 2019/2020

Rubric	Criterion
Purpose	Is the primary purpose (describing) clear?
organization and content	Is there an interesting title in the essay? **Introduction:** • Does the introduction contain an interesting lead-in? • Is there a well written thesis statement? • Is the length of the introduction appropriate to the essay? **Body:** • Are the paragraphs divided according to the main idea? • Do body paragraphs contain appropriate topic sentences? • Are the ideas rich? **Conclusion:** • Does the essay contain a strong conclusion? • Is the length of the conclusion appropriate to the essay?

Grammar	**1.** Are there any grammatical errors?
	   a. Do subjects and verbs agree?
	   b. Are verb tenses formed and used correctly?
	   c. Is an article needed? Has the right article been used?
	   d. Check the use of prepositions and adjectives.
	2. Are the sentences well structured?
	   a. Are there any words missing in the sentences?
	   b. Are there any words used incorrectly? Can you suggest a better word or word form?
	   c. Are there any run-on-sentences?
	   d. Are connectors used correctly and appropriately?

Mechanics	**1.** Are there indentations at the beginning of each paragraph? **2.** Are there any spelling mistakes? **3.** Is punctuation used correctly? **4.** Are capital letters used appropriately?

Appendix V: Role Cards

Leader	I have 2 tasks: - To ensure that everybody is participating in the group work. - To solve problems.

Expert	- I provide my mates with information. - I help them accomplish the task.

Time Keeper	My task is to ensure that the work is done in the allotted time

Noise Monitor	My task is to ensure that my group is quiet (one speaker at a time)

Appendix VI: Teacher's Interview Guide

Teacher's Interview Guide

This interview serves as data collection tool for a doctoral study which investigates the effectiveness of implementing cooperative learning instruction in the teaching of writing at the university level. Hence, in order to better understand the usefulness of cooperative learning in minimizing EFL students' writing errors, your perception of the cooperative learning instruction used in your writing course is of significant value for this research. You should know that the interview is recorded; however, the recording and findings will be used only for research purposes and the researcher assures anonymity of responses and findings.

Section One: Teacher's Attitude towards Cooperative Learning

1. What is your attitude towards implementing cooperative learning instruction (Learning Together) in the writing course?

2. How do you think this instruction has benefited your students? Please tackle both cognitive and social side.

3. Would you use this instruction in some of your future writing sessions? Why or why not?

Section Two: Teacher's Attitude towards Peer Feedback Technique

4. After applying it in your classroom, do you think that peer feedback, when implemented within a cooperative learning environment, is effective for responding to students' writing errors? Why or why not?

Section Three: Teacher's Suggestions

5. Do you have any suggestions that could make the implementation of cooperative learning and peer feedback technique more useful?

6. Do you have any other suggestions to enhance students' writing accuracy?

Appendix VII: Students' Interview Guide

Students' Interview Guide

This interview serves as data collection tool for a doctoral study which investigates the effectiveness of implementing cooperative learning instruction in the teaching of writing at the university level. Hence, so as to better understand the usefulness of cooperative learning in minimizing EFL students' writing errors, your opinions, perceptions and experience of the cooperative learning instruction used in the writing course, in which you were involved, are of significant value. Therefore, you are encouraged to answer the questions of this interview as truthfully as possible. You should know that the interview is recorded; however, the recordings and findings will be used only for research purposes and the researcher assures anonymity of responses of all the participants.

1. What was your perception of cooperative writing before this experience? Did it change after the experience? Why/why not?

2. How do you evaluate/describe the cooperative learning experience you have been through in the previous written expression sessions?

3. Did you benefit from working cooperatively with your group mates? How?

4. In which of the writing stages did you feel that you really benefited from cooperating with your group mates?

5. Which of the writing stages you would have preferred doing individually?

6. Did you benefit from the feedback provided by your group mates? How?

7. Did the checklist help you provide feedback to your peers? How?

8. What are the difficulties that you faced when you cooperated with your group mates? (Especially when you provided and received feedback).

9. Would you like to engage in similar cooperative writing activities in the future?

Appendix VIII: Teacher's Interview Script

Questions	Answers
Section One: Teacher's Attitude towards Cooperative Learning Q1. What is your attitude towards implementing cooperative learning instruction (Learning Together) in the writing course?	I believe that the implementation of CL instruction in the writing course is very important because it has a lot of advantages both for the student and the teacher.
Q2. How do you think this instruction has benefited your students? Please tackle both cognitive and social side**.**	I think that my students have benefited a lot from this classroom instruction, they have become more sociable, they think in very good way, they exchange ideas with one another they have become more relaxed during the sessions. All in all, they became better writers especially when it comes to coherence, organization and accuracy.
Q3. Would you use this instruction in some of your future writing sessions? Why or why not?	Of course, I'm thinking of using this instruction in all the writing sessions because I was so impressed in the way my students interacted with each other and how they wrote better essays when they worked cooperatively.
Section Two: Teacher's Attitude towards Peer Feedback Technique Q4. After applying it in your classroom, do you think that peer feedback, when implemented within a cooperative learning environment, is effective for responding to students' writing errors? Why or why not?	Honestly, I was surprised in the way my students' writings improved when they wrote cooperatively, their essays became well-organized and they made fewer errors especially grammatical errors. Also, they paid more attention to punctuation and spelling; therefore, I believe that the use of peer feedback and CL instruction is very effective for responding to students' writing errors. Also, this technique makes the teacher's task easier and encourages students to rely more on themselves rather that depending on their teacher's corrections all the time.
Section Three: Teacher's Suggestions Q5. Do you have any suggestions that could make the implementation of cooperative learning and peer feedback technique more useful?	I think that there are many options. For example, the teacher can give the students the opportunity to work in pairs and sometimes in groups, then errors correction will be performed on the board through students and teacher interaction. This enables the teacher to have more control on students' suggestions and comments. This is a way to implement CL in the writing sessions.
Q6. Do you have any other suggestions to enhance students' writing accuracy?	Students can enhance the writing accuracy through extensive reading. They are required to read a lot extensively and daily; also they can improve the writing accuracy through doing grammar exercises.

Appendix IX: Students' Interview Scripts

Questions	Student 1	Student 2	Student 3
1. What was your perception of cooperative writing before this experience? Did it change after the experience? Why/why not?	✓ My perception was that this experience would be full of noise and we cannot be unified and it will not be successful. ✓ Yes, I felt good when I tried it by sharing the work with my mates.	✓ When I worked individually I had a problem finding the appropriate vocabulary so I thought that if I work with my mates would make my essay richer with new vocabulary and idaes ✓ No, it didn't change because after experiencing cooperative learning, I didn't face vocabulary problems when I wrote about any topic.	✓ I knew that it is useful ✓ my perception of cooperative learning didn't change after this experience and I found it just as I expected it, full of excitement and fun.
2. How do you evaluate/describe the cooperative learning experience you have been through in the previous written expression sessions?	It was a good experience.	It was very good and exciting	It's good for us because it's useful and fun at the same time.
3. Did you benefit from working cooperatively with your group mates? How? (Mention both cognitive and social benefits)	Yes, I did. For the cognitive side, I learned a lot of things with my group mates and I got different ideas. For the social side, we shared ideas and suggestions and interacted with each other.	Yes, I benefited. I learned new ideas and ways of writing and I benefited from my mates' corrections of my errors. Also, collective outlining of essays made writing very easy / For the social side, I learned how to communicate with my mates and express my opinion without hesitation. Also, I learned how to solve problems peacefully and how to negotiate with others	Of course I did. I benefited from my group mates background knowledge. We shared information; I knew more about my mate, their personalities, attitudes…etc.
4. In which of the writing stages did you feel that you really benefited from cooperating with your group mates?	I benefited from the pre-writing stage, when we exchanged ideas and helped each other with information.	The stage that I felt that I really benefited from my group mates was the revising and pre-writing stages. For the pre-writing, my mates helped me generate many ideas and provided me with new words. As for the revising stage, when we corrected our mates drafts, I benefited from the feedback that was given and the remarks that my friend made on the essays.	The stage where I felt that I benefited from the cooperative learning was the editing stage. When my mates edited my essay, this helped me discover mistakes that I always repeat in my essays. This helped me write correct sentences and improved my writing.
5. Which of the writing stages you would have preferred doing individually?	The revising stage is the stage that I have preferred doing individually because it is a sensitive stage and I need to concentrate on my essay to correct the mistakes.	None of the stages.	I don't prefer to do none of the stages alone because working with my mates really helped me.

6. Did you benefit from the feedback provided by your group mates? How?	Yes, I benefited from peer feedback by knowing my mistakes and correcting them and by writing more coherent and organized texts.	Yes, I benefited from the feedback provided by my group mates because they helped me correct my errors and the explained to me why they are considered so. Consequently, I didn't repeat these errors On the other essays.	Yes, by correcting my mistakes and giving me more vocabulary.
7. Did the checklist help you provide feedback to your peers? How?	Yes, actually it was very helpful because the questions in the check list helped me detect my peers' mistakes and correct them	Yes it did because it guided me when I was correcting my friends' essays and it helped me and my group mates to manage our time and focus only on the important things.	Of course yes. Because it is organized and simple and the question s are clear so they helped me spot my mates mistakes.
8. What are the difficulties that you faced when you cooperated with your group mates? (Especially when you provided and received feedback).	The difficulty that I faced when I cooperated with my group mates is time management because sometimes we couldn't manage our time properly.	I had problems with some students' personalities because some of them do not accept correction.	The difficulty that I faced was sometimes my group mates didn't accept my feedback and they thought that I am insulting them.
9. Would you like to engage in similar cooperative writing activities in the future?	Yes, I would love to.	Yes, I would like to engage in similar cooperative learning activities in the future because it helped me improve my writing.	Yes, I wish that.

Questions	Student 4	Student 5	Student 6
1. What was your perception of cooperative writing before this experience? Did it change after the experience? Why/why not?		I thought that CL was just a waste of time and a joke but after the experience, this opinion has changed and I discovered new ways that made me write well.	I didn't deal with CW before, so I had a fear of group working. But after this experience I think CL gave me self-confidence to improve my writing and engage in group work without hesitation.
2. How do you evaluate/describe the cooperative learning experience you have been through in the previous written expression sessions?	I think that the CL experience that I have been through in the previous written expression sessions was very beneficial and useful from the side of gaining new information and sharing yours and managing time.	For me, CL was an important and beneficial experience.	I guess it's a good way to benefit more from the writing sessions and understand better.
3. Did you benefit from working cooperatively with your group mates? How? (Mention	Yes, because we shared new expression and information and ideas and beliefs too. We also learned how to communicate with each other in an effective and respectful	Yes, I did. Because I learned new vocabulary and information and I made a good interaction with my group mates and learned how to express my opinion	Yes, I did. It helped me to get good vocabulary while exchanging ideas and it gave me self-confidence to express

both cognitive and social benefits)	way. Plus, I learned how to work in a team and how to be sociable and interactive and how to be organized when communicating with others.	and share ideas with other students. After this experience, I became fond of writing.	my ideas as I said before. Also, through CL writing became so entertaining.
4. In which of the writing stages did you feel that you really benefited from cooperating with your group mates?	I feel that I benefited from CL in all the stages of writing but mostly at the pre-writing stage because we enjoyed knowing new things and new words. It was beneficial and entertaining at the same time.	I benefited from working cooperatively in all the writing stages because the cooperation of each stage completes the other one.	I think the revising stage because I benefited a lot from my friends' remarks on my essay and this made writing the second draft very easy.
5. Which of the writing stages you would have preferred doing individually?	Actually I didn't want to do any of the writing stages individually.	Actually, I wouldn't prefer doing any of the writing stages individually because I really benefited from my mates help and feedback.	None of the stages.
6. Did you benefit from the feedback provided by your group mates? How?	Yes, I did. I learned new information and I discovered grammar rules that I didn't know before. Also, through commenting on my mates' punctuation mistakes, now I pay more attention to punctuation when I write and do my best to put the appropriate punctuation mark in the right place.	Yes, I did. Because I learned from my friends mistakes and how to use words and expressions appropriately.	Yes, it helped me correct my mistakes and organize my essay in a better way.
7. Did the checklist help you provide feedback to your peers? How?	Yes, it did help me and my group mates because when we write we forget so many elements of the essay, but after using the check list we rewrote better essays.	Of course the check list helped me in providing feedback to my mates by asking good questions about organization and the content of these essays.	Yes, somehow. It guided me when I provided feedback to my mates.
8. What are the difficulties that you faced when you cooperated with your group mates? (Especially when you provided and received feedback).	Some of my group mates didn't accept our opinions and preferred working individually.	I didn't face a lot of difficulties jut some lack of organization in the first two sessions.	Actually, my mates and I didn't face any difficulties when we worked cooperatively.
9. Would you like to engage in similar cooperative writing activities in the future?	Yes, I would like to because it was very beneficial experience and delightful at the same time.	Yes, I'd like to engage in similar CL activities in the future.	Yes, I wish I'll be able to engage in similar activities in the future.

Questions	Student 7	Student 8	Student 9
1. What was your perception of cooperative writing before this experience? Did it change after the experience? Why/why not?	Before experiences CL, I thought that it was a waste of time and noisy and I liked working lonely in calm without noise but now I deleted this idea from my mind.	Before this experience, I thought that CL was just a waste of time and in the past if someone asked me about the CW, I would tell him you will just waste your time and at the end you will not learn anything. But after this experience, I changed my mind because I found it an interesting experience and I learned a lot and I could beat my shyness because I am a shy person and I don't talk with others and share information. It was like I was in a bubble but in this experience I contacted with my group mates and talked and shared information. I think that I really learned a lot from this experience.	Before this experience, I never imagined that we can study writing in groups, however after the CL experience that my classmates and I had, I changed my mind and I discovered that writing in groups is much easier and entertaining that writing individually.
2. How do you evaluate/describe the cooperative learning experience you have been through in the previous written expression sessions?	The CL experience was very beneficial and really excellent for me because my group mates and I were helping each other, correcting each other mistakes and exchanging ideas. It was an excellent experience and I liked it very much.	I think it was a good and amazing experience because I learned a lot of things in this experience and I discovered many things that I didn't know before.	Actually, it was a good experience we had with our mates especially in a module like written expression.
3. Did you benefit from working cooperatively with your group mates? How? (Mention both cognitive and social benefits)	Of course, I benefited from my group mates and they benefited from me. I discovered new thoughts and ideas and new styles of writing.	Yes, I have benefited because everyone in my group had his/ her own information and we tried to share it together and maybe you have a wrong information about something and your mates tried to correct it for you.	Yes, I did benefit from writing cooperatively from my friends. Writing became very easy because there were a lot of amounts of information that we shared. Also, it helped me develop my communication skills because I used to feel so confused to talk in public but now I feel more comfortable doing that.
4. In which of the writing stages did you feel that you really benefited from cooperating with your group mates?	The writing stage in which I felt that I really benefited from CL is the pre-writing stage because when they wrote words and sentences spontaneously, I got new ideas that helped me in writing my essay.	For me, I enjoyed cooperating with my mates in all the stages because the discussion in the pre-writing stage, revising and editing was very interesting and it opened my eyes on new things and new writing techniques.	Actually, I think that CL was beneficial in all the writing stages.

5. Which of the writing stages you would have preferred doing individually?	The editing stage, because I believe in what I have written in my paper.	Actually I prefer to do none of the stages individually because I liked cooperating with my mates during all the stages.	None of the stages
6. Did you benefit from the feedback provided by your group mates? How?	Yes, I benefited from their feedback because they corrected my spelling mistakes, the tenses of the verbs, where I should put comma or full stop,...etc.	Yes, I benefited because when my group mates provided me with feedback, I saw my mistakes and tried to correct them and not to repeat them in the future. So they corrected my mistakes and I corrected theirs and we exchanged information and benefited from each other's knowledge.	Yes, my group mates' feedback did help me because sometimes I forgot some important elements of the essay and my group mates reminded me to add them. Also, they helped me correct my mistakes.
7. Did the checklist help you provide feedback to your peers? How?	Of course, it helped me to organize my comments on my mates essays.	Yes, the check list helped me very well in this experience because when I put in front of me and in each step I returned to the check list and I see if I included all the elements in my essay. Also, it helped me provided appropriate comments to my group mates.	Yes, it helped me a lot to go step by step and cover all the essay elements.
8. What are the difficulties that you faced when you cooperated with your group mates? (Especially when you provided and received feedback).	We didn't face difficulties, just small ones. For example, some of the group members were not convinced of the comments on their essays and they did not trust our corrections.	The difficulties that I faced when I cooperated with my group mates were when we sometimes couldn't agree on specific points	Actually, in my group we didn't face any difficulties. But sometimes I couldn't trust some of my friends' corrections because we have the same level
9. Would you like to engage in similar cooperative writing activities in the future?	Yes, of course because it was excellent and beneficial experience as I said I learned new things from my group mates and I want to do this in the future to improve my writing.	Yeah, I would like to engage in similar writing activities in the future because I learned and not only me, I think all the students learned a lot of things in this experience and I found it as an interesting experience so I would like to engage in similar experiences in the future.	Yes, I would love to engage in similar CL activities in the next writing sessions.

Questions	Student 10
1. What was your perception of cooperative writing before this experience? Did it change after the experience? Why/why not?	Before this experience, I thought that working in groups would be a useless and noisy experience and we will just waste our time but after this experience my opinion changed and I found that it was totally the opposite.
2. How do you evaluate/describe the cooperative learning experience you have been through in the previous written expression sessions?	In my point of view, I found CL effective experience because in this way we understand very well and we practice what we understood.

3. Did you benefit from working cooperatively with your group mates? How? (Mention both cognitive and social benefits)	I found CL very beneficial especially in writing because each one of us has its own ideas, words and maybe his own background and through CL we can share these ideas and maybe we will benefit from new words because even if you are writing in your mother tongue, you cannot write anything without ideas, that's why I felt that sharing ideas with other students really helped me write better essays.
4. In which of the writing stages did you feel that you really benefited from cooperating with your group mates?	Cooperating with my group mates was beneficial through all the writing stages especially in the editing stage in order to learn from our mistakes and through correcting others mistakes, we understand grammatical rules and when we write next time we remember the discussions and we will not make the same mistakes.
5. Which of the writing stages you would have preferred doing individually?	None of the stages.
6. Did you benefit from the feedback provided by your group mates? How?	Yes, I benefited from the feedback provided by my group mates because it helped me recognize my weaknesses and work on some issues that were the cause of the majority of my mistakes like punctuation and tenses.
7. Did the checklist help you provide feedback to your peers? How?	Yes, the checklist helped me very well. I felt that it guided me.
8. What are the difficulties that you faced when you cooperated with your group mates? (Especially when you provided and received feedback).	There were no difficulties, except at the beginning we lacked organization during discussions; but later we solved this problem and we became more organized.
9. Would you like to engage in similar cooperative writing activities in the future?	Yes, I'd like to repeat this experience as it really benefited me.

Appendix X: CL and PF Training Sessions

The First Training Session

Lesson focus:
- Briefing students on CL instruction.
- Training students on working cooperatively in groups.
- Training students on cooperative writing.

Aim:

At the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Interact, share ideas and work cooperatively in their CL groups.
- Cooperate to write paragraphs collectively.

Materials: white papers, coloured role cards, paper clips.

Duration: 90 minutes.

Steps of the lesson:

1. Briefing students on cooperative learning (20 minutes).

The teacher told her students that she is going to adapt a new teaching method in the writing courses i.e. cooperative learning. At the beginning she asked her students whether they have heard of cooperative learning before and tried to interact with them about it, then she introduced the researcher as an expert of CL instruction and asked her to give the students an overview of this instruction method and talk to them about its benefits and its principles.

The researcher defined CL in a short and simple way to ensure that students would understand it. Then, she explained the essence of cooperative learning and clarified its difference from ordinary group work via explaining the five pillars of cooperative learning, namely: positive interdependence, individual accountability, face-to-face promotive interaction, interpersonal and small group skills and group processing. The researcher stressed the importance of these five pillars and clarified to the students that if these pillars are not respected, the group work is not considered cooperative. After that, the researcher spoke about the benefits of cooperative learning briefly and tried to raise students' interest and enthusiasm towards experiencing this new learning environment.

2. Training students on working in CL groups (30 minutes).

2.1 Forming the cooperative learning groups (15 minutes)

The first step was distributing students into their cooperative learning groups. The teacher told her students that these are formal CL groups, which means that they are permanent and students cannot change the groups. After that, the teacher told the students that they have different roles within the groups; then, she distributed the role cards (see appendix v) and asked the students to read to their group mates the instruction written on the back of the card then stick it to their shirts with the paper clips. The roles assigned to the students were: leader, expert, noise monitor and time keeper; each student knew his responsibilities through reading the instruction, which includes the tasks that each role imply, at the back of the cards. The cards were of different colours, for instance leaders' cards were orange while experts had blue cards, time keepers' cards were yellow and noise monitors had pink ones. Using different colours for each role made it easy for the teacher to recognize the student's role just through looking at the colour of his/her card. After having the students sitting together in their groups and distributing the tasks among group members, the teacher started with the first CL activity which aimed at encouraging students to interact with their group mates and get to know each other. The teacher and the researcher's focus was on the functioning of the groups and the type of communication and interaction that was among the groups' members; hence, it was an opportunity to solve any problems or make changes in the groups' construction before the cooperative writing sessions start.

2.2 Activity One: Two Truths and a Lie (15 minutes)

This activity is a team-building CL structure suggested by Joffllie (2007) in which group members take turns to tell two truths about themselves and a lie while their mates try to guess the lie. Through this activity the psychological boundaries that limit students' interaction such as shyness, insecurity about expressing their opinions and fear of making mistakes will be reduced since all the group members should participate in the conversation and express themselves. Also, team-building structures increase students' socialization as they give them the opportunity to present themselves to their group mates and know them better through listening to their presentations as well.

3. Training students on cooperative writing (40 minutes)

After creating a certain cohesion and harmony between groups' members in the first activity, students went through two cooperative writing activities that aimed at familiarizing students to writing in groups and consolidating cooperative learning group work skills.

3.1 Activity One: Write Around (20 minutes)

This type of activities is generally used to enhance students' creative writing or to practice summarizing (see section… in the second chapter). At the beginning the teacher provided the students with a two sentence starters, which are "if Tomas Edison had not invented the light …" and "I woke up one morning and found myself a seven years old kid…"; then, she asked the students in each team to choose one of the two sentences to work on. The students in each group chose the sentence that attracted them most; then the teacher asked leaders of different groups to complete the sentence and pass the paper to the student on their right, who will read the one he received and add a completion to that one. After two or three rounds, all the groups ended up with interesting stories. Finally, the teacher gave the students five minutes to write concluding sentences to their paragraphs and edit them; then, each group chose a representative to read their paragraph to the whole class.

3.2 Activity Two: Rally Table (20 minutes)

This activity aimed at increasing the cohesion among group members via training them on the techniques of writing rapidly within a group, evaluating what the others have written and building on others' ideas. The teacher asked questions and told the students to write their answers in a list form. The group that writes the longest list wins the competition. The first question was "what are the causes of students' stress during exams?" and students were given five minutes to write their answers. Students were not allowed to talk or discuss with each other; yet, each student had to write an answer and pass the paper to his group mate who will do the same. When time was over, the teacher asked the students to stop writing and deliver their lists; then the teacher makes the count and announces the name of the winning team. The same process was followed with the two other questions which were "why do people lie?" and "why do you like English?". The students were very enthusiastic and competed till the end of the activity and the lists got longer as long as students started getting used to working with each other.

The Second Training Session

Lesson focus:
- Briefing students on the process approach of writing and peer feedback technique.
- Training students on revising essays cooperatively.
- Training students on editing essays cooperatively.
- Training students on using checklists to provide feedback to their peers.

Aim:

At the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Use checklists to revise and edit their mates' essays.

Materials: white papers, coloured role cards, paper clips, peer feedback checklists and essays written by second year students.

Duration: 90 minutes.

Steps of the lesson:

1. Briefing students on the process approach of writing and peer feedback (20 minutes)

In the second training session, the teacher started with explaining the four stages of writing according to the process approach, namely, pre-writing, drafting, revising and editing stage. She gave a brief explanation of each stage with a focus on the last two stages, where she introduced peer feedback as a new technique of error correction. After that, the teacher asked the students to join their groups so as to start with the peer feedback activity.

2. Peer feedback activity

In order to train students on peer feedback technique, descriptive essays, which were written by second year students in another group, were given to the students in order to be revised and edited using peer corrective feedback. The students were sitting in their formal cooperative learning groups; they were asked to stick their role cards and they were also reminded that they should help each other and work together as a team. After that, the teacher distributed the essays on the groups (one essay for each group) and the peer feedback training went through three stages:

2.1 Stage One: Revising (30 minutes)

Students were directed to read the essays and start revising them. They were reminded that at the revising stage deals mainly with the organization of the essay; so, they were required to reorganize the texts via adding interesting ideas and/or deleting unnecessary ones and through relocating some sentences and/or paragraphs. They could also enhance the style and the choice of words whereas responding to grammatical and mechanical errors was left to the editing stage. The teacher, then, distributed the checklists (see appendix IV) to the students and explained their rubrics briefly. After that, students started revising the essays collectively with the help of checklists. When the thirty minutes were over, the teacher asked the students to stop revising the essays and move to the next step i.e. editing.

2.2 Stage Two: Editing (20 minutes)

During the editing stage, students focused on writing accuracy; hence, with the help of checklists they corrected the grammatical and mechanical errors in the essays collectively. After they spotted and corrected all the grammatical and mechanical errors, students were asked to rewrite the essays.

2.3 Stage Three: Rewriting (20 minutes)

At this stage, the students were asked to write the final draft of the essays. Hence, students wrote the final versions of the essays taking into consideration all the changes and corrections they suggested during the revising and editing stages. At the end of the session a representative of each group delivered the essay to the teacher.

At the end of the training, the researcher, through the notes taken during the two training sessions, decided to take some measures to make the cooperation between the group members more effective and ensure positive interdependence among group mates.

Appendix XI: Cooperative Learning Sessions

The First Writing Course: Description of an Object

Objective: At the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Practise the skills of planning, outlining, drafting, revising and editing in order to produce a detailed, effective and well-organized description of an object in essay form.

Materials: white papers, coloured role cards, paper clips and peer feedback checklists.

Duration: 90 minutes.

Instruction: Describe a Smartphone to someone from the 60s.

Steps of the lesson:

1. Prewriting stage: (20 minutes)

Within this stage, three interactive CL activities were used so as to engage the students in the cooperative writing process and maximize the cooperation and interaction among them. The two first activities were devoted for ideas' brainstorming while the third one dealt with the outlining of the essay.

Activity One: Round Table (5 minutes)

Round table is a cooperative writing activity in which students take turns to write in one shared piece of paper (see section 9.1.2 in the second chapter). Hence, after distributing white papers on the students they were asked to write any word they think they can possibly be used in the essay and they were told that they have only five minutes to do so; thus, time keepers in all the groups were urged to remind their mates of time limits. No talking was allowed at this stage, students had only to write their answer and pass the paper to his or her mate and the turns continued until the time was over. This activity was selected so as to elicit as many words as possible from students, which will solve the problem of lack of vocabulary especially for weak students. Furthermore, this type of activities guarantees the participation of all the members of the group and do not give the opportunity to students of advanced level to dominate the others since all students have equal participation opportunity.

Activity Two: Round Table (10 minutes)

In this activity students were asked to follow the same procedure of the first activity i.e. Round Table to write down ideas that can be developed in such essay. Hence, students started

writing their ideas and passing the paper to another member of the group to write his or her idea. In fact, writing any idea that comes to their minds without discussing it with their group mates helped elicit as much ideas from students as possible since students felt free to write anything they want; also, it encouraged students' creativity and ensured the diversity of ideas.

Activity Three: Buzz Groups (10 minutes)

At this stage, the students worked together in buzz groups (see section … in the second chapter) in order to design outlines for their essays. Before they started writing the outline, students had discussed about the vocabulary and ideas they have written in the previous activities so as to choose the relevant ones and include them in the outline.

2. The Drafting Stage: (20 minutes)

In the drafting stage students wrote the first drafts of their essays individually. The teacher reminded the students that they should use the vocabulary and the ideas they have collected in the pre-writing stage to compose a written text without taking into consideration the grammatical and mechanical errors; they have to keep writing till they make sure that they covered all the elements in the outline. Thus, the outline and the paper that included the vocabulary and ideas were placed at the middle of the table where all members of the group could see them.

3. Revising Stage: (20 minutes)

After composing the first drafts of their essays, students started revising their essays collectively using peer feedback checklists (see appendix IV). In the revising stage students focused mainly on the consistency of sentences, the choice of vocabulary, the organization of the paragraphs and the clarity and cohesion of ideas. While the correction of grammatical, punctuation and spelling errors was left to the editing stage. Hence, the students put their drafts in the middle of the table and started taking turns to read their drafts and the other group mates evaluated, spotted the errors and provided corrective feedback. In case of disagreement, the group members had to refer it to the group expert; however, if this latter couldn't solve the problem, the group could ask for the teacher's help. After having revised all the essays, students corrected their drafts or rewrote second ones.

4. Editing Stage: (20 minutes)

Editing is the final stage of the writing process where students were allowed 20 minutes to edit their essays collectively. Thus, students placed their essays in the middle of the table and took turns to read their essays and the other group members, with the help of peer feedback checklists, commented on them, spotted the errors and suggested corrections. At this stage, students were reminded that they had to concentrate on grammatical and mechanical errors. Finally, each student edited his/her draft depending on his/her mates' feedback and produced the final essay.

5. Group Processing: (10 minutes)

After they handed their essays to their teacher, group mates discussed how effectively their groups functioned and put plans for future improvements.

The Second Writing Course: Description of a Place

Objective: At the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Practise the skills of planning, outlining, drafting, revising and editing in order to produce a detailed, effective and well-organized description of a place in essay form.

Materials: white papers, coloured role cards, paper clips and peer feedback checklists.

Duration: 90 minutes.

Instruction: Describe your favourite place in your hometown.

Steps of the lesson:

1. Prewriting stage: (20 minutes)

As the students started getting familiar with cooperative learning instruction and they became more organized in their group work, more open discussions among the group members were allowed. Thus, the pre-writing stage in this course was carried out through an interactive cooperative learning structure named "*roving reporter*". Accordingly, after the teacher had read the instruction and explained it, the students brainstormed, discussed and planned their essays collectively and while students were working on their outline, one representative from each team could for a certain amount of time be roving reporter gathering information from the other teams. In fact, this activity was included in order to maximize interaction not only between group members but between groups as well.

2. Drafting Stage: (20 minutes)

Depending on the outline and the ideas gathered in the pre-writing stage, the students started composing their essays individually. They were encouraged to keep writing with nonstop till they incorporate all the ideas listed in the outline. This latter in addition to the vocabulary suggested by the members of the group were placed in the centre of the table and all students could refer to them at any time they needed that.

3. Revising Stage: (20 minutes)

After the time of the drafting stage was over, the students were asked to stop writing and to start revising their drafts. Hence, students in different groups started reading their essays and the other group members used the checklists and offered corrective feedback to their mates. At this stage of the lesson, students are usually fully involved with evaluating their mates' writing and helping them enhancing their drafts and correcting their errors which makes them speak loudly or speak at the same time. Thus, the teacher reminds noise monitors to control their groups' noise and remind their mates to speak quietly when they discuss. After the students had finished revising their essays, they wrote their second drafts.

4. Editing Stage: (20 minutes)

After they wrote their second drafts, students started editing their essays through reflecting on grammatical and mechanical errors. Hence, students put their essays in the centre of the table and started correcting the errors of grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization … etc. When they finished editing their essays, students wrote the final versions and gave them to the teacher.

5. Group Processing: (10 minutes)

At the end of the session, groups were given ten minutes to discuss how they proceeded through the different CL activities, express the difficulties they faced and suggest mechanisms to overcome these obstacles in the following sessions.

The Third Writing Course: Description of a Person

Objective: At the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Practise the skills of planning, outlining, drafting, revising and editing in order to produce a detailed, effective and well-organized description of a person in essay form.

Materials: white papers, coloured role cards, paper clips and peer feedback checklists.

Duration: 90 minutes.

Instruction: Describe your best friend.

Steps of the lesson:

1. Prewriting stage: (20 minutes)

In order to achieve an effective brainstorming and outlining, an interactive cooperative learning structure, called *two stay and two stray*, was introduced at the pre-writing stage. In fact, this CL activity was implemented so as to increase interaction, not only between group members, however, between students of different groups as well. Hence, the pre-writing stage went through three steps:

Step One: Students read the instruction, discussed the topic and agreed on the main ideas they will include in the essay, such as the main elements they will describe (physical appearance, personality, attitudes …etc).

Step Two: Two of the team members moved to other teams to share ideas while the two others stayed to receive members of other teams and discuss with them and write their suggestions.

Step Three: Students came back to their original teams to compare their ideas and choose the relevant ones to be included in the outline.

2. Drafting Stage: (20 minutes)

After they finished outlining, the students began composing their first drafts individually. According to Gebhard (2000), in the drafting stage students ought to keep writing their drafts from the beginning till the end without stopping; therefore, the teacher reminded the students that they should not interrupt the flow of ideas; yet, at the same time they had to keep themselves guided by the outline. Thus, the students used the vocabulary and the ideas collected in the pre-writing stage and wrote the first drafts of their essays.

3. Revising Stage: (20 minutes)

After writing the first drafts individually, students resumed the cooperative group work in order to carry out revisions of the composed drafts collectively. Hence, the students revised one essay at a time and the process continued till they revised all the drafts written by the members of the group. In fact, the focus during this stage was on the appropriateness of the

vocabulary and the organization and cohesion of ideas and the coherence of paragraphs. Then, after receiving their group mates' feedback, students wrote second drafts of their essays.

4. Editing Stage: (20 minutes)

When the final stage of the writing process i.e. editing started, students worked cooperatively on their second drafts and corrected the local errors in their essays such as grammatical, spelling and punctuation errors. After they had finished editing their essays, students wrote the last drafts and submitted them to the teacher.

5. Group Processing: (10 minutes)

Finally, the students were allowed ten minutes to evaluate their work as a group, describe the helpful actions made by group members, reflect on the unhelpful ones and decide which actions to maintain or change.

The Fourth Writing Course: Description of an Experience

Objective: At the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Practise the skills of planning, outlining, drafting, revising and editing in order to produce a detailed, effective and well-organized description of an experience in essay form.

Materials: white papers, coloured role cards, paper clips and peer feedback checklists.
Duration: 90 minutes.
Instruction: Describe your best childhood memory.
Steps of the lesson:

1. Prewriting stage: (30 minutes)

At the first stage of the writing process, given the personal nature of the instruction "childhood memory", students were engaged in a cooperative learning structure that allowed them time and privacy to think of a childhood memory that affected them deeply and they still remember. Thus, "*think- write- share- compare*" was the adequate CL activity that could facilitate working on such a topic collectively. At the beginning, group members were given fifteen minutes to think of a childhood memory that touched them, collect ideas and suggest an outline for their essay. Then, in the remaining fifteen minutes, students shared the ideas they

have written, compared the outlines and discussed the different elements they have incorporated in their outlines. Each student, then, adjusted his outline depending on his mates' remarks.

2. Drafting Stage: (20 minutes)

After writing their final outlines, each student wrote his essay individually. In order to ensure that all students would finish writing their drafts on time, time keepers were asked to remind their group mates of the remaining time each five minutes. When the composing time arrived to its end, the students were asked to stop writing and move to the next stage.

3. Revising Stage: (20 minutes)

At the revising stage, the members of CL groups used the peer feedback checklists and provided corrective feedback to their group mates focusing mainly on global errors such as clarity, organization, cohesion and coherence errors. After receiving their group mates' feedback, students wrote their second drafts.

4. Editing Stage: (20 minutes)

After having written their second drafts, students embarked the editing stage, where they worked collaboratively to enhance their writing accuracy via correcting grammatical and mechanical errors. Once they finished editing their drafts, students wrote the final versions of their essays and submitted them to their teacher. Since this was the last cooperative learning session, no group processing was performed by the students.

Appendix XII: Samples of Students' Essays (Pre-test)

Sample 1:

Algeria is a big country with different features from north to south and from est to west. It has distanguished nature and climate thats what give it name of the Ideal touristic country. The diesert is the widest place in Algeria that you can pass your winter vacation in, in sides of touristic nature places and traditional food.

The Algerian Sahar's nature places are distanguished from stat to anther. The Hogar for example is a fantastic place where you can watch the fired soi mogntains which are like a stronge men. The hylographic writing of the old people on rocks and caves, you are going to as you are going through the history. In addition, the diesert spaces show to you a beautiful image of spinal plants like cucltus the famous plant in Sahara. Also the diesert animals like (Kamel) the pacient animal the Kamels and wolfs and some beautiful bierds. The dunes (of) will be like an unreal picture spécially in the sun-set time; it will be like a drawing paper.

Sample 2:

Since childhood, I use to travel and visit new places, but still my favorit and preferable place is Germany. A place where many of my relatives live in. It is also a place fell of wonderfull touristic places and sites to visit.

Firstly, and personaly I used to go to Germany long time ago and still, because my aunt lives there. Since then, we go visit her regularely, and spent an enjoyable time with in there. Thus, helped me as well to improve my language "German". Espacly while interacting with my cousins.

Secondly, the German historical and touristic sites are fasinating. I can tell that my regular visit to there made me obssessed with learning about their history. Particularly after visiting the Capital, which is a place full of museums to learform more about the country. In the end, I hight invite adventures to visit that fantastic and amazing country

Sample 3:

Algeria is one of the best and fantastic place in the Arabic world. It has a good climate and spacious. It has a many place to pass the vacation and discover our tradition.

Algeria has a famous place specially to the tourist like a desert and historical place as "Makam El Chahid" and "El casbah".
The Algerien people belief in our tradition specially in the wedings as a clothes like "El caraKou, and Kouftan" and food as "El couskous, Chakchouka, and Rechta"

To conclude, Algeria is a big country that have famous tradition and greate place from 48 willaya to visit it and pass a wonderfull vacation.

Appendix XIII: Samples of Students' Essays (Post-test)

Sample 1:

CRISTIANO RONALDO the living legend

In our world no one can be so perfect only the prophet Mohamed, and of course we must take him as a higher example, but there are people who are near to the perfectness, and C. Ronald is (one of) one of them, he is a great persone.

C. Ronaldo has many qualities that make him special. He is always work hard and doesn't give up, he is a true leader by helping his teammates inside and outside the stadium. Even though he is a rich man, he is so generous because he gives money for charities like "GAZA", "Austuralia"...

C. Ronaldo loves the prussion situation and doesn't care to what critisints said about him, He gives all what he can do to make his team win and make critisints shut up.

C. Ronaldo is a living legend, we must take him as an example in our life. Taking someone as an example is a good thing because you will do anything to be like him.

Sample 2:

My Mother is the Ideal person in my life.

This days, is very hard to trust a person or a friend, you can not even try to do. And the only one person that I can trust and give her my life is my mother. She is the best thing in my life. In addition, she has the greatest personality in the world. She has all the qualitis that a son or a daughter look for.

My Mother is a beautiful and sociable person. She is allways kiding with me, and trining to make me laugh, she likes to make my hart ful of happyness. She is the solver of my problemes, she is the first person that help me when I need, and gives me advice. She saves my secrets, and makes them in her hart. She is allways trying to make me the best person. My mother is the protector of my life from I was a baby. In addition, she cares a lot of me from the day I came to life, I love her honesty!, she share with me my sadness and happyness. My mother is my best and honest friend in this world. My mother is a source of kindness. She is the greatest person that I love, respect, and care about.

My mother is the bigest beautiful grace that God give to me in this life. My mother is the ideal person in this life I am trying to emitate. She is my example in this world. My Allah bless you mother, and I wish you the longest life to give you at list a little bit of what you give me. I will try to make you allways hoppy. I am very thankful for you, mum, for every thing you have done with me.

Sample 3:

My mother

Women at all levels are a very important part of our society as teachers, nurses, doctors, even the one who do not work. But not every woman can be a mother, being a mother is a big responsibilit that not every woman can achieve. For me, my mother is the best mother in the world. She is the person whom I wish I would become a day. My mother is a wise and successful woman, and she is a great mother.

My mother is a wise and successful woman, she is very clever and responsible, in that, all of my family members even my grand parents ask fo her advice and her opinion in every thing. In addition, She is a successful and well educated working woman, She used to have good grades whe she was young, then she started working in a great job, the job that sh deserves, she is just the representation of the real women.

Beside of being a successful woman, my mother is a great mother, even s though she is a working women, she does all of her responsibilities perfectly. T did not lack any thing from her love and care ... . When I am sick she becames a doctor for me, when I don't understand something, she becames my teacher. and when ever I do something wrong or fall in trouble, she helps me and she guides me to the right way, she is the best mom ever.

My mother is the best gift that I have ever had, and all of the words and expressions can never describe her, I am proud to say that my mother is my model, she is the person whom I am inspired of and I will always be.

Résumé

Le but de cette étude est d'examiner l'efficacité d'utiliser la révision par les pairs intégré dans une instruction d'apprentissage coopératif pour éliminer les erreurs internes d'écriture et améliorer la compétence d'écriture chez les étudiants d'ALE. Particulièrement, cette étude vise à déterminer si l'engagement des étudiants de deuxième année License en ALE dans des séances d'écriture coopératif peut aider à réduire leurs fautes de grammaire et d'orthographe. De plus, cette étude a pour objectif de tenir compte des attitudes de l'enseignant et les étudiants par à port à l'application de la révision par les pairs et l'apprentissage coopératif dans le cours d'écriture en ALE. Pour effectuer ces objectifs, une méthode de recherche mixte a été utilisée pour collecter les données quantitatives et qualitatives. En première stage, un questionnaire semi-structuré qui est destiné aux enseignants d'expression écrite dans le Département de Langue et Littérature Anglaise à l'Université de Kasdi Merbah, Ouargla (Algérie) a été effectué à fin d'explorer les pratiques de ses enseignants en ce qui concerne l'enseignement de l'écrit et les méthodes qu'ils/elles utilisent pour corriger les fautes d'écriture de leurs étudiants. Deuxièmement, une quasi-expérimentation, dont 30 étudiants de deuxième année Licence en ALE ont été engagés, a été effectuée. L'expérimentation, qui a durée 3 semaines, a commencé par un pré-test suivi par deux séances d'entrainement sur l'apprentissage coopératif et la révision par les pairs. Après, les étudiants ont eu un traitement d'apprentissage coopératif pour deux semaines suivi par un post-test pour déterminer si la justesse d'écriture des étudiants a été développée. Finalement, une interview semi-structuré avec l'enseignent et quelques étudiants qui ont été engagé dans cette étude a été réalisé pour découvrir les attitudes de ces derniers par à port à l'apprentissage coopératif et la révision par les pairs et explorer comment ils ont aidé les étudiants à effectuer les révisions de leurs essais. Les résultats de cette étude montre qu'il y a une lacune dans le contexte d'enseignement et apprentissage de l'écrit à l'UKM, Ouargla. Cette lacune est due aux quelques pratiques pédagogiques de certaines enseignants et les méthodes d'enseignements qu'ils/elles adoptent. Apres l'implémentation d'apprentissage coopératif et la révision par les pairs, une diminution notable dans les fautes d'écriture internes des étudiants a été enregistrée et un développement remarquable dans la justesse d'écriture a été constaté. Finalement, L'analyse des résultats de l'interview a montré que les attitudes de l'enseignant et les étudiants auprès l'implémentation d'apprentissage coopératif ont été très positifs. De plus, cette méthode a eu des effets positifs sur les compétences cognitifs et sociales des étudiants comme le développement de raisonnement critique, les compétences de communication et de travail collectif.

Mots clés : L'apprentissage Coopératif, l'écriture en ALE, la révision par les pairs, les erreurs d'écriture internes, justesse d'écriture.

ملخص الدراسة

إن الهدف من إنجاز هذه الدراسة هو تقصي مدى فاعلية تطبيق تقنيتي التعلم التعاوني و التصحيح الجماعي للأخطاء الكتابية في التقليل من الأخطاء الكتابية الجزئية لدى الطلبة و تحسين مهاراتهم الكتابية. و على وجه الخصوص، تهدف هذه الدراسة لإثبات مدى نجاعة هاتين التقنيتين في التقليل من الأخطاء الإملائية و النحوية لدى طلبة السنة الثانية ليسانس للغة الإنجليزية كلغة ثانية. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، تتقصى الدراسة انطباعات الأستاذ و الطلبة بعد ادمجاهم في حصص كتابية تعتمد فلأساس على تقنيتي التعلم التعاوني و التصحيح الجماعي للأخطاء الكتابية. و من أجل تحقيق هذه الأهداف، تم تبني منهج بحثي يدمج كل من الوسائل البحثية الكمية و النوعية. بالنسبة للوسيلة الأولى، فقد تمثلت في إجراء استبيان لأساتذة اللغة الإنجليزية بقسم اللغة الإنجليزية و آدابها، جامعة قاصدي مرباح ورقلة من أجل معرفة كيفية تدريسهم للمهارة الكتابية والتقنيات التي يعتمدون عليها في تصحيح الأخطاء الكتابية للطلبة. أما الوسيلة الثانية، فقد تمثلت في إجراء تجربة وفقا لمنهج الاختبار القبلي و البعدي لنفس الفوج، و التي دامت لثلاثة أسابيع. في البداية أجرى الثلاثون طالبا المنخرطين في الدراسة اختبارا كتابيا اوليا ثم تم تدريسهم بتقنية التعلم التعاوني والتصحيح الجماعي للأخطاء الكتابية لمدة ثلاثة أسابيع. بعد ذلك، تم اختبار الطلبة لمرة ثانية لمعرفة مدى تحسن مهاراتهم الكتابية. بالنسبة للوسيلة الثالثة، اعتمد هذا البحث على المقابلة المباشرة، حيث أجريت مقابلات مع بعض الطلبة الذين شاركوا في التجربة و الأستاذة التي أجرتها. والهدف من هذه المقابلات هو معرفة انطباعات الأستاذة و الطلبة بعد تجربتهم لتقنيتي التعلم التعاوني و التصحيح الجماعي للأخطاء الكتابية و مدى استحسانهم للتجربة. أيضا من خلال إجراء هذه المقابلات يتمكن الباحث من أخذ نظرة عميقة عن كيفية استفادة الطلبة من هاتين التقنيتين. بالنسبة لنتائج الدراسة، فقد سجلت ثغرة في تدريس و تعلم المهارة الكتابية للغة الإنجليزية في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية و آدابها بجامعة قاصدي مرباح ورقلة، حيث أن بعض الممارسات البيداغوجية و التقنيات المتبعة من طرف بعض الأساتذة ساهمت في تدني مستوى الطلبة الكتابي و عزوفهم عن تعلم مهارة الكتابة. ثانيا، أثبتت نتائج التجربة تسجيل تحسن كبير في المستوى الكتابي للتلاميذ و انخفاض ملحوظ في عدد الأخطاء الكتابية المرتكبة بعد تدريس الطلبة بتقنيتي التعلم التعاوني و التصحيح الجماعي للأخطاء الكتابية. و في ما يخص تحليل نتائج المقابلات، فقد اثبت أن انطباعات الأستاذة و الطلبة المشاركين في التجربة حول استعمال تقنية التعلم التعاوني في تدريس المهارة الكتابية كانت جد ايجابية و أظهرت أن استعمال هذه التقنية له أثر ايجابي في تطوير المهارات الفكرية و الاجتماعية للطلبة كمهارة التواصل و العمل الجماعي و التفكير النقدي.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التعلم التعاوني، الكتابة باللغة الانجليزية كلغة ثانية، الأخطاء الكتابية الجزئية، التصحيح الجماعي ، دقة الكتابة.