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**Enhancing Master Students' Dissertation Writing Through Effective  
Feedback: Electronic versus Face-to-face Feedback**

**The Case of Second Year Master Students at the Department of  
English, University of 08 Mai 1945 –Guelma-**

**A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of Letters and English Language in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for Master's Degree in Language and Culture**

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## **Dedication**

In the name of Allah, the most merciful, and the most compassionate

I dedicate this work to the most precious people in my life

My parents

**Mrs. Hassiba BENSOKHRI and Mr. Ahmed MERABTI**

My brother,

My Relatives

**Fayrouz MERABTI**

## Acknowledgements

“Do not let the sun go down without saying thank you to someone and without admitting to yourself that obviously no one gets this far alone”

(Stephen King)

The first and foremost thanks go to the almighty Allah for giving me the strength, patience and willingness to achieve this work

This Humble piece of work would not have been accomplished without the contribution and support of many people.

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My dear friend **Ms. Mouna MENAI** for her support and precious assistance.

### **Abstract**

Providing supervisory feedback on students' written drafts is, by all means, crucial for their progress. The current research attempts to investigate the notion of which mode of feedback, electronic or face-to-face, is more effective in enhancing second year Master students' dissertation writing. Further, the present investigation intends to explore students' perceptions, rationales, and attitudes vis-à-vis the impact of different modes of feedback provision on their dissertation writing proficiency. Hence, it is hypothesized that electronic feedback is more effective than face-to-face feedback in enhancing second year master students' dissertation writing. To have an in-depth analysis of the previously mentioned hypothesis and accurate answers to the theoretical questions, the descriptive method was adopted. Further, it was realized through the administration of students' online questionnaire by sending a digital version to second-year Master students at the department of English, 8 Mai 1945 University-Guelma. The achieved findings highlighted the different impact electronic and face-to-face modes of feedback have on master students' dissertation writing proficiency. Furthermore, the analysis of the achieved results revealed that with respect to the quality of feedback, nearly 30% of the participants preferred e-feedback for its accessibility, timeliness, and legibility. Yet, the majority of the research sample preferred face-to-face feedback, as they perceived this type of feedback as more constructive, personal, and informative. Besides, the current research results uncovered that face-to-face feedback is more effective in enhancing second year Master students' dissertation writing. Therefore, academic supervisors ought to take into serious account the adoption of this mode of feedback provision in future supervision processes.

**Keywords:** academic supervisors, effective feedback, electronic feedback, face-to-face feedback, dissertation writing.

## **List of Acronyms and Abbreviations**

**AW:** Academic Writing

**CF:** Corrective Feedback

**CGF:** Computer-generated Feedback

**E-:** Electronic

**EFL:** English as a Foreign Language

**ESL:** English as a Second Language

**FTF:** Face-to-Face

**DWP:** Dissertation Writing Proficiency

**SF:** Supervisory Feedback

**WP:** The Writing Process

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**Appendix A: Students' Questionnaire**

**Arabic Summary: ملخص**

**French Summary: Résumé**

## **General Introduction**

In higher education research, Master Dissertation is regarded as students' hardest and most voluminous piece of academic writing ever accomplished, it contributes significantly to students' academic and professional achievements as it demonstrates their capacities and skills as researchers. Nevertheless, the dissertation-writing process requires a variety of planning and research skills; in addition to receiving effective supervisor feedback, which is a fundamental constituent in foreign language (FL) writing as it enhances, regulates, and promotes students' writing proficiency. Furthermore, there are two modes of feedback provision, face-to-face feedback also known as handwritten feedback; it is considered as a traditional method through which instructors provide comments and responses directly to students in classroom settings. Yet, it is worthy to mention that with the emergence of computer-based teaching and learning facilities, a new mode of feedback known as electronic feedback appeared. It is characterized by the instrumentality of technology and electronic mediums such as emails and the like, to provide instructional and corrective comments to students beyond classroom settings. Undoubtedly, in EFL master dissertation writing, teachers' facilitative or directional feedback helps in stimulating students to progress in their writings and to produce better later drafts. However, it is assumed that different modes of feedback have different impact on the elaboration of students' written drafts.

### **1. Statement of the Problem**

In the field of higher education, supervisor feedback on students' dissertation drafts is undoubtedly the most useful source of information. As it makes them more aware of their writing strengths and weaknesses and the parts that need improvement. Henceforth, in distance-learning settings, feedback provision and reception become a challenging task for both supervisors and supervisees. Due to the lock down and the distance-learning context. In this regard, an informal discussion with second year master students 2020 promotion at the department of English,

university of 8 Mai 1945 revealed that they had a difficulty in receiving face-to-face feedback because of the lock down measures; consequently, their supervisors used e-feedback to provide them with corrective and instructional comments. In this respect, many students appreciated the use of technology based feedback, which facilitated the interaction with their supervisors while, others remained unsatisfied proclaiming that face-to-face feedback is more informative and effective. Therefore, this research attempts to investigate which form of feedback is more effective in enhancing second year master students dissertation writing.

## **2. Aims of the Study**

Feedback as a pedagogical practice plays a significant role in the dissertation writing process; however, different forms of feedback may have a different impact on the quality of students' writing. The aim of this research is therefore threefold:

- 1) To investigate the effect of electronic and face-to-face feedback on master students' writing quality
- 2) To determine which feedback electronic or face-to-face is more effective in enhancing second year master students' dissertation writing
- 3) To raise both students and teachers' awareness towards the importance of feedback in master dissertation writing and the variety of types and modes that exist

## **3. Research Question**

Achieving a well-structured Master dissertation with a high writing quality requires continuous feedback from supervisors throughout the writing process. The current research addresses the following questions:

- 1) Are master students' aware of feedback importance in enhancing them to progress in their dissertation writings



- 2) Do different modes of feedback provision have different effects on master students' dissertations writing quality?
- 3) Which mode of feedback, electronic or face-to-face feedback, is more effective in enhancing second year master students dissertation writing?

#### **4. Research Hypothesis**

In FL dissertation writing, feedback provides students with a set of information on their writing strengths and weaknesses with the aim of enhancing their progress in writing their dissertations; however, effective improvement depends on the form through which this feedback is provided. Thus, we hypothesize that:

**(H1):** Electronic feedback is more effective than face-to-face feedback in enhancing second-year master students' dissertation writing.

**(H0):** Electronic feedback is less effective than face-to-face feedback in enhancing second-year master students' dissertation writing.

#### **5. Research Methodology Design**

The current research adopts a qualitative-quantitative design in order to collect in-depth information about the theme under investigation.

##### **5.1 Research Method**

Formulating a deep view about the investigated topic necessitates the use of one research tool. Henceforth, a students' questionnaire will be administered to second-year master students from the department of English, University of Guelma. During the second semester of the academic year 2020/2021, to investigate their perceptions about whether or not different modes of feedback have different impact on their writing proficiency, as well as to figure out which mode of feedback is more effective; electronic or face-to-face in enhancing students during their master dissertation

writing. Furthermore, a comparative quantitative analysis will be adopted to diagnose and analyze the results gathered from students' questionnaire.

## **5.2 Research Population**

This study involves haphazardly chosen second-year master students (N=87), at the department of English, University of Guelma to answer the questionnaire in order to explore and collect their opinions about which form of feedback provision is more effective in ameliorating their writing pieces as they are writing a dissertation and receiving feedback from their supervisors. However, only 50 participants of the research population responded to this questionnaire. Hence, they provided very beneficial and accurate information that helped in the conduct of the current research.

## **5.3 Research Tools**

This research is conducted to collect qualitative and quantitative data. The gathered data is interpreted and systematically demonstrated in tables, in the quantitative analysis. Whereas, the qualitative analysis encounters a deep analysis of the collected samples upon which a conclusion is constructed.

## **6. Structure of the Dissertation**

The research has been organized into two parts. The theoretical part includes two chapters. The first chapter entitled dissertation writing involves an overview about FL dissertation writing, its strategies, and its significance as an academic research. The second chapter entitled electronic versus face-to-face feedback, presents the most significant comparative studies concerning electronic and face-to-face feedback, their effectiveness in enhancing EFL students writing skills. The practical part entitled field investigation, provides a detailed description, administration, and results of the students' questionnaire. Finally, conclusions, pedagogical implications, limitations, recommendations and future research goals are formulated based on the achieved result

**Chapter One**  
**Dissertation Writing**

## **Introduction**

Master dissertation is regarded as the longest and the most important piece of independent research ever conducted and achieved by the student. However, writing a master dissertation is not an easy process as it necessitates a lot of time and hard work. Moreover, accomplishing a well-structured master dissertation requires the student to develop a variety of skills and abilities, and to display all the knowledge s/he has earned through his/her studies. Accordingly, a master dissertation manifests students' intellectual and research capacities.

This chapter is entirely devoted to the discussion of dissertation writing; it is initiated with the definition of a set of key concepts related to EFL writing skill, such as the definition of writing and the writing process, the main characteristics of effective writing, and the six traits model of effective writing. Moreover, it tackles a brief discussion of academic writing and its main types. In addition to the process-oriented and the product-oriented approaches to writing. Furthermore, this chapter sheds light on the concept of dissertation writing; its definition, empirical and non-empirical types of dissertation, and their common structures. Additionally, it presents the dissertation outline under which a standard structure of the research proposal and the MA dissertation are discussed. Finally, the difficulties faced by EFL students while writing their dissertation and the role of dissertation supervisor are tackled.

### **1.1.The Writing Skill**

Like any other language, mastering the English language requires mastering its four skills. In fact, writing is considered as one of the most difficult skills to master especially in higher education and academic research contexts; however, achieving an advanced level of writing proficiency necessitates acquiring and developing a set of effective skills. In what follows, a detailed discussion of basic concepts and elements of writing is provided.

### 1.1.1. Definition of Writing

Acquiring language productive skills is mandatory when attempting to communicate or convey a given thought or meaning via the English language, one of these skills is writing that is perceived differently by scholars and researchers. As explained by Nunan, (2013, p. 88) "writing is the physical and mental act of thinking, discovering, and developing ideas into statements, which carries a comprehensible meaning". In his definition, Nunan tackled the act of writing from a cognitive perspective considering it as a process of rendering language sounds into written symbols, by transmitting abstract thoughts into concrete written passages. Further, Rivers (1981) viewed writing as a performance accomplished through the integration of several skills; he claimed that, "Writing mainly involves conveying ideas, thoughts, and expressions successively in a written language" (p.294).

Moreover, Douglas and Frazier (2001, p.336) defined writing from a different perspective. They perceived it as a process in which the writer should go through different stages while writing, so they defined writing as "a thinking process, which can be planned and unlimitedly revised before being released or published". In their definition, Douglas and Frazier moved away from regarding writing only as "a mental and cognitive process" to considering it as "a performed action that ends up with a concrete written piece that may be reviewed and edited". However, Elbow (1973, pp. 14-16) argued, "the process of discovering the meaning and the process of rendering it into a written language are the two main stages of writing which is the codified representation of our thoughts and reflections" (As cited in Douglas & Frazier, 2001, p. 366). Elbow integrated the two definitions of writing arguing that it is both a cognitive process of thinking and constructing ideas and writing them in a codified manner.

In the light of these definitions, we can define writing as a productive mental process, through which our abstract language is reflected in a set of symbols organized in a consecutive meaningful

manner; moreover, it is the linguistic manifestation of individuals' intellectual and affective sides, which may go through a multistage process.

### 1.1.2. The Writing Process

In the educational field, high writing proficiency has a significant influence on language acquisition and use; however, achieving an advanced writing performance requires having sufficient knowledge about this cognitive process and its different stages. According to Kroll (1990, p. 2), this process is gaining growing attention precisely in the late 1970s due to its significance in the fields of education and research. She claimed, "Linguists, researchers, and teachers renewed their interest in investigating the newly produced philosophies and conducted researches, which aim at exploring the different stages a student/writer goes through to achieve his final written product" (Kroll, 1990, p. 2).

In line with this, Harmer (2004, pp. 5-6) introduced a new vision of the writing process by declaring, "Writing is not a linear process" i.e. it does not go through linear stages as represented below

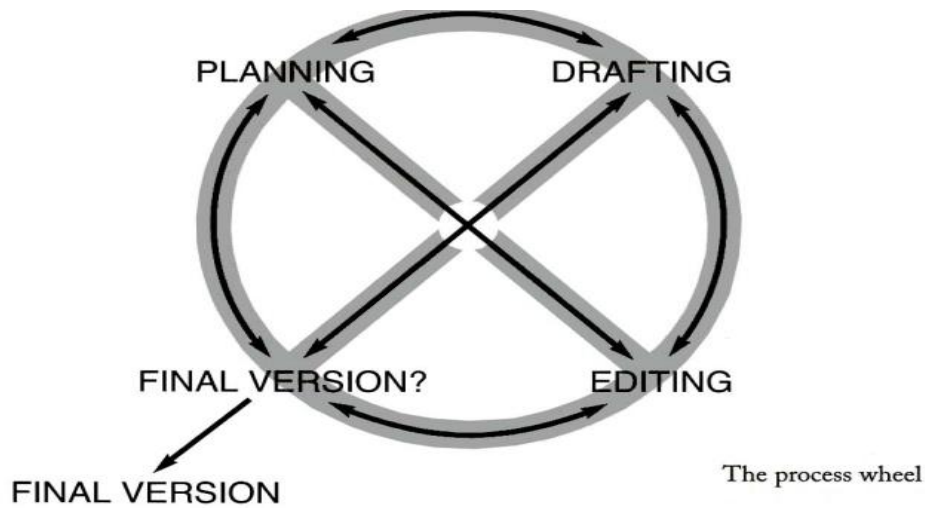
**Figure 1.1** The linear Process of Writing.

**planning ➡ drafting ➡ editing ➡ final draft**

Adopted from: Harmer, 2004, p. 5.

However, he stated that the WP is "more recursive; consequently, the previous diagram is not satisfactory since it provides less information about the weight dedicated to each stage". Additionally, he emphasized, "the writer not only plan, draft, and edit but also he may re-plan, re-draft, and re-edit". By denying that the writing process is a one-way process and claiming that the writer may re-perform any stage as he goes through the WP, Harmer brought a new definition of the writing process. Henceforth, he suggested the "process wheel" as presented below.

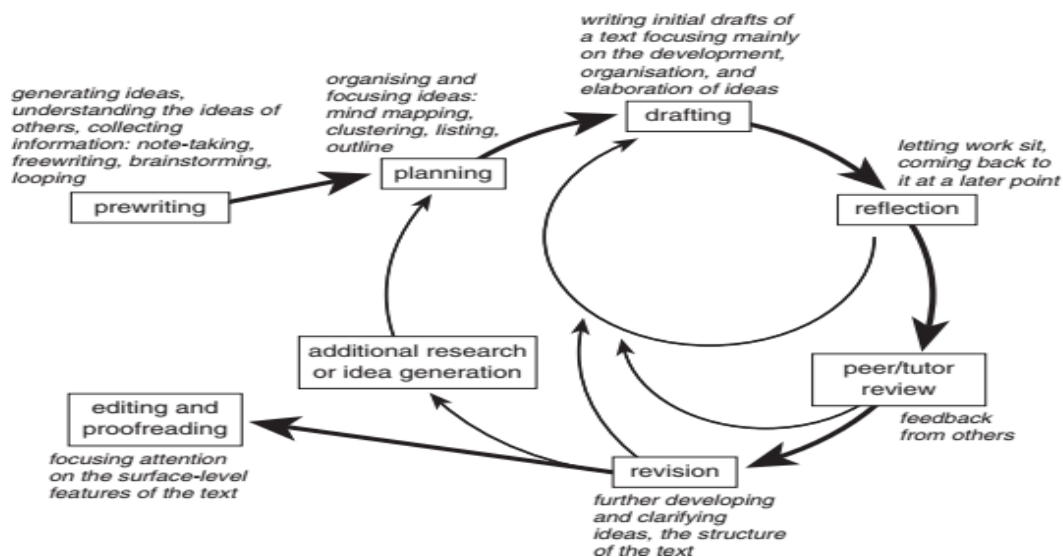
**Figure 1.2** The Process Wheel.



Adopted from: Harmer, 2004, p. 6.

It clearly shows all the possible forward and backward directions a writer may take through his writing process, which reaches its culmination only when the exact final version is produced. In the same vein, Coffin et al. (2003, p. 33) argued that “writing is a recursive sequence of different stages” and they adopted the following detailed and summative presentation of the writing process and all its stages and procedures.

**Figure 1.3** The Writing Process.



Adopted from: Coffin et al., 2003, p. 34

### **1.1.3. Effective Writing**

Writing effectively in a given language necessitates the acquisition of various skills. It is regarded as “the process of collecting and exposing the most significant information about a particular topic in a successive logical flow not only by clearly demonstrating the parts of the written piece, arranging the main points, supporting ideas, and details in a meaningful order, but also through the use of appropriate terminologies” (“the qualities of effective writing”, 2016). Additionally, Starkey (2004, p. 86) stated that “writing effectively requires being organized, clear, and accurate”. He summarized all the characteristics of effective writing introduced above into three main features organization, clearness, and accuracy. More importantly, he highlighted that effective writing “should follow the basic punctuation, spelling, and grammar rules of the used language” (Starkey, 2004, p. 86).

In the same vein, Rao (2017, p. 80) affirmed, “The writing process is very difficult due to the variety of steps and standards that should be followed to achieve an effective written piece”. According to him, the writer should develop a “linguistic repertoire and acquire the grammatical standards as the first and the main steps towards writing effectively”. Hence, Rao (2017, p. 80) sheds light on the lexical and the grammatical knowledge regarding them as the foundation of effective writing.

#### **1.1.3.1. Six Traits Model of Effective Writing**

This model was developed to be used in a classroom context in order to ameliorate the effects of students' writing. It details the elements of effective writing and facilitates the writing process as presented below.



#### **1.1.3.1.1. Ideas**

For writing to be effective, the writer should provide sufficient information about the topic that is reflected in the ideas of the written piece. As explained by Spandel (1997), they are regarded as “the essence of the message” as they are the manifestation of the written piece's “purpose, theme, and content”. Moreover, he focused on the factors that lead to a well-constructed written piece by demonstrating that “writing strong ideas and organizing them in a meaningful order rather than stating them randomly” leads to achieving “clearness, richness, originality, and high orientation” of the final product (p. 6). In his definition, Spandel covered all the features of effective writing such as connectedness and the clarity of the message that should be integrated into the presented ideas.

#### **1.1.3.1.2. Organization**

The organization is a highly significant feature of effective writing, it was tackled by researchers from different angles; Steineger (1996), claimed that the organization is described as “the structure of the written work including captivating and purposeful lead, strong transitions linking ideas, and thoughtful conclusions” (p. 7). In her inclusive definition, Steineger highlighted all the aspects of a well-organized written piece. Furthermore, Spandel (1997, p. 7) emphasized Steineger definition and described it as “what holds the whole written piece together”. Moreover, Smith (2003, p. 4) highlighted the standard outline that any organized writing should follow, he claimed that any writing should start with “an introduction” which includes the required information that makes it clear for the reader what will be tackled in the following parts. “The next part is the body “where the writer should be careful not to go too fast or too slow when “successively demonstrating the developing ideas”, and finally the writer should “formulate a conclusion” that includes the restatement of the most significant ideas mentioned earlier.

#### **1.1.3.1.3. The Voice**

The voice of the paper refers to “the unique tone and flavor of the written piece and the writer’s way of connecting to the audience” (Steiniger, 1996, p.7). According to her, the voice is a unique feature that the writer uses to connect with the target readers of his work. In line with this, Spandel (1997) suggested that the voice is not only the way a writer addresses his audience, but also is “the personal imprint of the writer” illustrating that “Edgar Allan Poe does not sound like Ralph Waldo Emerson or Maya Angelou, Roald Dahl does not sound like Erma Bombeck ( ... ) Each voice is unique”(p. 8). He described the voice of the written word as “the identity of the writer and the special print used to distinguish him from other co-existing writers” (p. 8). Therefore, the writer should be evident, honest, committed, and persuasive based on the requirements of the text he is writing.

#### **1.1.3.1.4. Word Choice**

The selection of words is not an easy task especially for “professional writers who carefully select accurate, precise, and concise words that vividly convey the exact intended meaning by the writer and captivates the target reader’s attention” (Smith, 2003, p.4). Based on his vision, word choice is a highly important element of effective writing, as Smith believes that meaning should be communicated via the exact terms and he rejected the use of words with an approximate meaning. In addition, he went further arguing that there would be a huge difference when using “the right and the almost right words”. Moreover, other researchers like Spandel placed a huge emphasis on the lexical side and regarded it as the basis of a meaningful written piece arguing that: “the appropriate terminology is very significant when rendering an idea into a concrete statement”. Additionally, he quoted “Mark Twain once said that the difference between the right word and the almost right word is the difference between lightning and the lightning bug” (Spandel, 1997, p. 9). From this quotation, it is apparent that a skillful writer should use the word that represents the exact meaning he intends to transmit to his target readers.

#### **1.1.3.1.5. Sentence Fluency**

Writing fluently gives an extra sense of connectedness to the written piece, some researchers described it as the sound the sentence makes when being read like Stieneger (1996) who defined sentence fluency as “the rhythm and flow of word patterns; how a piece sounds when read aloud” (p.7). In her words, he tackled the rhythmic and musical features of fluent sentences. From a different side; Spandel (1997) identified the main linguistic tools used to reach the features presented by Steiniger claiming that “in writing fluency is demonstrated mainly by using parallelism, alliteration, and logic”, which creates “rhythmic, musical, readable sentences that sound natural and simple when pronounced loudly” (p. 10).

#### **1.1.3.1.6. Conventions**

One of the most important factors of effective writing is punctuation, which is the direct written parallel of intonation, stress, and all the supra-segmental features. In the field of writing and composition, the conventions are “the spelling, grammar, and punctuation used to realize the connectedness of the written piece” as introduced by (Steiniger, 1996, p.7). In line with this, Spandel (1997, p. 11) claimed that it is “included in the final editing phase”. He identified the factors introduced by Steiniger above as all that an editor of a written work deals with, and he emphasized that conventions may be “spelling, grammatical standards, the use of capitalization, paragraph indentation, and spacing” which effectively promote the readability of the written word; however, he excluded handwriting and neatness from these latter (Spandel, 1997, p. 11).

### **1.1.4. Approaches to Teaching Writing**

In the field of education, there is a variety of teaching approaches adopted by teachers to enhance and ameliorate their students writing proficiency, among these approaches:

#### **1.1.4.1. The Product-Oriented Approach**

As the title indicates, this approach is based on assimilating and copying the model texts. It is concerned with the final product of the writing process that will be taken as a model. According to White (1998, p 5), there are “three main phases in this approach” as presented in the figure below:

**Figure 2.1** The product-Oriented Approach

*Study the model* —————→ *Manipulate elements* —————→ *Produce a parallel text*

Adopted from: White, 1998, p. 5.

The first phase is “the study of the model” which is regarded as the starting point in which the writer or the learner analyses “the grammatical and structural rules of the language”, in addition to its “rhetorical patterns”. The second phase includes “the manipulation of elements” in which the learners go through the above-mentioned rules of language in a detailed manner i.e. He analyses the content, sentences, organization, and word selection of the model text. In the third and final phase, the learner is asked to "produce a parallel text similar to the analyzed model" on a new topic.

Many linguists criticized this approach because of many inconveniences such as Robbins (2014) who argued that learners in this approach “stuck in doing the same thing several times till it becomes boring” in addition to this, it prevents them from “being more creative” and discovering other writing methods ( as cited in Ben Aissa, 2018, p. 5).

#### **1.1.4.2. The Process-Oriented Approach**

In opposition to the product approach, this approach shifted the learner's attention from focusing on the final product to focusing on the entire process of writing; the following quote emphasizes the preceding notion and highlights more data about the process-oriented approach.

The process-oriented approach refers to a teaching approach that focuses on the process a writer engages in when constructing meaning. This teaching approach concludes with editing as a final stage in text creation, rather than an initial one a

product-oriented approach. The process-oriented approach may include identified stages of the writing process such as pre-writing, writing, and rewriting once the draft has been created, it is polished into subsequent drafts with the assistance of peer and teacher conferencing (Murray, 1992, as cited in Hamadouch, 2010, p. 21).

On his behalf, Murray highlighted that the process-oriented approach focuses on the stages that the learner should go through to produce a written piece, claiming that it is highly adopted by teachers due to its significant contribution in enhancing the learning outcome. Moreover, he emphasized that this approach reflects the stages of the writing process, which enhances the credibility of the final draft produced by the learner (as cited in Hamadouch, 2010, p. 21).

However, researchers had opposing views regarding its effectiveness. On the one hand, Nemouchi (2008) argued that this approach is time-consuming because reaching the final draft requires the learner to go through many different stages starting from "generating the ideas, planning these ideas, selecting the type of audience, drafting and redrafting before achieving the final product" (as cited in Hamadouch, 2010, pp. 20-21). On the other hand, Avellino (2012) advocated that in this approach' learners are "free in their writing and more creative than just imitating other written pieces". Despite the contradicting views, this approach still receives huge attention from teachers and novice writers (as cited in Ben Aissa, 2018, p. 6).

## **1.2.Academic Writing**

In the field of Academia or higher education, acquiring and developing the academic style of writing is considered significant, especially for undergraduate students, as they will use it in conducting research as well as in generating other academic writings. Presented below are some definitions of academic writing and its main types used in higher education and research writing contexts.

### **1.2.1. Definition of Academic Writing**

Academic writing is a type of writing that is constructed or produced for academic purposes. Kerboua claimed that academic writing is “a structured writing style used in colleges and universities” Generally, in the field of Academia or higher education; professors, academic scholars, and students use it "to compose scholarly materials". In other words, intellectuals use the academic style of writing to research in a particular field of study (Kerboua, n.d., para. 1). Additionally, he emphasized, “It addresses subject-oriented research issues of interest to anyone searching for faculty-based and objectively presented data on a specific subject”. Moreover, it aims at presenting new knowledge about a certain topic as a “foundation for the writers’ new insights or philosophies”. (Kerboua, n.d., para. 1). In his general definition, Kerboua suggested that academic writing stands as a background for newly conducted researches.

However, Bahar (2014, p. 213) defined academic writing from a narrow perspective arguing, “Academic writing refers to all the considered principles while conducting and reporting an academic research” (as cited in Akkaya & Aydin, 2018, p. 129). In the same path, Day (2005) introduced it as “written and printed reports” which present and describe “original research results”. For him, the term academic writing includes a variety of written works such as “Theses, dissertation, articles, research papers, essay and so on”. Further, Akin (2009) highlighted that the main characteristics of academic writing claiming that regardless of its type, academic writing should be clear and concise, understandable and cohesive in all its sub-sections” (Day, 2005; Akin, 2009, as cited in Akkaya & Aydin, 2018, p. 130).

### **1.2.2. Types of Academic Writing**

Academic writing has many types each has its characteristics and is used to fulfill a specific academic purpose. In the following paragraphs, four commonly used types of academic writing are identified.

### **1.2.2.1.Descriptive**

Descriptive writing is the most used type of AW as it can be adopted by teachers regardless of their students' writing proficiency from beginners, intermediate or advanced. It is based on providing "sensory descriptions, facts, illustrations, about a particular object, experiment, or a phenomenon and so on" ("Learn How to Distinguish the 4 Types of Academic Writing", n.d., para 2). It is perceived as the simplest type of academic writing since it includes "identifications, reports, record, and summaries". Moreover, in this type of AW, the writer tends to develop a particular "sensory description through the provision of descriptive details", which enhances the reader to "visualize" the elements of the theme under investigation ("Types of Academic Writing, 2021, para. 2). as it provides a detailed description of the theme from all perspectives which enables the reader to gather all pieces to have a full image of the topic.

### **1.2.2.2.Analytical writing**

Analytical writing is a more advanced type of AW because it requires "high critical thinking and analytical skills" (Whitker, 2009, p. 2). On his behalf, Whitaker defined an analytical writer as the one who "integrates factors, analyzes consequences, determines effectiveness, evaluates problem-solving methods, discovers different concepts inter-relation, and interprets other writers or researchers arguments". However, he highlighted that "the core purpose of this type is realized when the writer puts all the pieces together and provides his answer based on his own analysis" (Whitker, 2009, p. 2). In other words, the analytical writer should look at the provided details and depend more on the observation of the available data to reach a final result.

### **1.2.2.3.Persuasive Academic Writing**

Persuasive academic writing is a type of writing used to convince or to support a given idea or belief. It is mainly characterized by the use of "logic and evidence to support one idea over

another”; further, it is highly recommended that the user of such type “should have sufficient knowledge that facilitates his argumentation”(“Learn How to Distinguish the 4 Type of Academic Writing”, n.d., para. 3). From its name, its main purpose is to “convince the target reader to adopt a certain notion or to perform a particular action”. This type of writing includes “facts, reasonable arguments, supportive details, illustrative examples, and quotation by experts” (“Learn How to Distinguish the 4 Type of Academic Writing”, n.d., para. 3).

#### **1.2.2.4. Expository Academic Writing**

As its name indicates, expository writing is mainly about reviewing and exposing the already existed data and findings of a certain topic. According to (“Expository Writing”, n.d., p. 1) it provides “facts and critical knowledge about a particular topic”. In this type of AW, the writer introduces “the concepts and elements” related to the subject being investigated, and expands on them with “evidence and illustrations”. Further, since its main aim is to inform, the writer “gathers, summarizes, and organizes” the available information and use it to construct a result to the issue under investigation (“What is Expository Writing-Definition & Examples”, 2015, para. 1). To sum up, the expository writer collects information from different sources to use them in a certain topic investigation.

### **1.3. Dissertation Writing**

In higher education, writing a thesis or a dissertation is the final stage of each educational level. Whether they are undergraduates or postgraduates, students are required to conduct academic research to obtain their diplomas. In the following sub-titles, key concepts related to dissertation writing are detailed.

#### **1.3.1. Definition of Dissertation Writing**

Writing a dissertation is mandatory for final year students, it is regarded as the longest written piece students ever constructed. In their definition, Bailey and Scarow (2010, p. 1) argued that a



master dissertation is “an innovative piece of research submitted under the guidance of a college supervisor”. Although a MA dissertation resembles doctoral theses, they distinguished between the two terms arguing that a master dissertation "is usually short and more targeted in its focus". Despite this, it entails an “extensive and significant type of writing and research conduct”.

However, they explained that "length and content of the MA dissertation primarily depend on the investigated field", for instance, theoretical fields tend to have longer dissertations than the practical ones (Bailey & Scarow, 2010, p. 1). Undoubtedly, master students in particular are expected to produce a critical analysis at this level by creating "clear philosophies and methodological paradigm for their writing", which leads to the achievement of a more "focused and thoughtful viewpoint" (Bailey & Scarow, 2010, p. 1).

In the same vein, Caulfield (2020, para. 1) argued that dissertation is a “substantial research conducted at the end of a degree program”. In addition to this, it entails a “deep examination of an issue or a query selected by the student”. In other terms, it is perceived as the largest, and the last piece of writing accomplished as a part of the graduation program. Moreover, Caulfield defined it not only as "the manifestation" of students' capacities and abilities to conduct independent research, but also as "the preparation for their future academic or professional career" (Caulfield, 2020, para. 2).

### **1.3.2. Types of Dissertation**

There are two distinct types of dissertation, distinguished mainly in terms of the theme, methodology, and data collection methods and tools. A detailed review and distinction between both types is provided.

#### **1.3.2.1. Empirical Dissertation**

The empirical type of dissertation is highly adopted by researchers from the scientific fields; it aims at "collecting and analyzing previously existed original data" as introduced by (Caulfield, 2020, para. 6). Moreover, he provided the main data gathering tools and methods that are used to undertake this research type declaring, "experiments, observations, surveys, and interviews are empirical research methods" (Caulfield, 2020, para. 6). In line with this, Dan (2017) supported the definition provided by Caulfield proclaiming that empirical methods or approaches usually entail systematic data collection and interpretation "observation and evidence". Moreover, she emphasized that Empirical research methods are mainly used in "quantitative analysis" which involves the gathering of original information, yet they are "increasingly used in qualitative research standards" (para. 2).

#### **1.3.2.1.1. Structure of an Empirical Dissertation**

The empirical type of dissertation "commonly includes an introduction, literature review, methodology of data gathering and analysis, and a conclusion"(Caulfield, 2020, para. 8). In a more detailed manner, the introduction involves a description of "the topic and research questions". Literature review, which includes "a reflection and analysis" of previously conducted research on the topic under investigation, "methodology of data collection and analysis". In addition to that, a small explanation of the research results and a brief interpretation of their indications, then a conclusion through which "research question answers, research findings, and contribution to the field of study" are briefly presented (Caulfield, 2020, para. 8).

#### **1.3.2.2. Non-empirical Dissertation**

Unlike empirical dissertation, non-empirical dissertation is mainly used in historical and theoretical researches. As introduced by Dan:

Non-empirical methods can be divided into two categories. On the one hand are methods meant to review the progress in a certain field of research (e.g. systematic

literature review, meta-analysis). On the other hand, there are non-empirical methods that draw on personal observations. Reflection on a current event, and/or the authority or experience of the author (e.g. critical studies, editor's introduction). (Dan, 2017, para. 3).

On her behalf, Dan suggested that non-empirical methods would reflect the amelioration of the newly introduced studies in a particular field as they may be used when editing or criticizing a certain concept. Accordingly, Bouchirka (2021, para. 15) argued that a non-empirical dissertation is the "polar opposite of the empirical one". Hence, he claimed that it is very "time and effort consuming" even though it does not reflect an "original research".

#### **1.3.2.2.1. Structure of Non-Empirical Dissertation**

In this type of dissertation, the structure or the outline is "more flexible". Caulfield (2020, para. 16) suggested the following structure; "an introduction of the topic and research questions, the main body divided into three or four chapters, data analysis, and research development, and a summative conclusion of all research findings, answers, and contributions" (Caulfield, 2020, para. 17).

#### **1.3.3. Structure of the Dissertation**

As the largest and most complicated piece of academic research, the structure of the dissertation is flexible and differs from one field of study to another. Below a standard outline of both, research proposal and master dissertation are discussed.

##### **1.3.3.1. Research Proposal**

A research proposal is the primary summary of the research under investigation. Mohd Sidik defined it as "a study plan" that reflects the required "skills, methods, and materials" for the conducting of future research. Further, he highlighted that regardless of the research field and topic, it should target the following questions "what, why, and how" this research will be conducted (2005, p. 30). Further, it is outlined as follow

#### **1.3.3.1.1. Introduction**

The introduction is the first title in the RP outline that contains all “the theoretical and contextual background” of the current research as introduced by Creswell it is the research “foundation that contributes in its placement in a broader framework” (1994, p. 42).

#### **1.3.3.1.2. Statement of the Problem**

Statement of the problem is perceived as the gap in the literature that requires a study. On his behalf, Creswell claimed that it might be defined as "the issue" that exists in the "literature, theory, or practice" that presents a need for a deep investigation. Moreover, he emphasized that the research problem has to be “clearly, simply, and concisely introduced”(Creswell, 1994, p. 50). Moreover, it has to be the answer to" why does this research need to be conducted" (Pajares, n.d., p. 1).

#### **1.3.3.1.3. Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study: is an explicitly written statement that starts with "the purpose of this study is ..." (Pajares, n.d., p. 2). Moreover, it is regarded as a "concise and accurate" summary of the Maine purpose behind the current research conduction (Locke et al., 1987, p. 5).

#### **1.3.3.1.4. Literature Review**

The review of literature: is a fundamental element in the research process as it provides other studies' results and findings related to the research topic (Fraenkel & Wallen, 1990). Further, Wiersma claimed "The review of the literature provides the background and context for the research under investigation" (Wiersma, 1995, p. 406, as cited in Pajares, n.d., p. 3)

In the same path, Guba (1961) claimed that writing a well-elaborated literature review indicates a high level of awareness about the relevant “substantive and methodological developments” recently made in the field in addition to how research “improve, reform, or broaden” what is already available ( p. 1).

#### **1.3.3.1.5. Questions and Hypotheses**

Questions are the "reflection of the research purpose" that are supposed to be answered by the end of the research. However, the hypothesis is believed to be "grounded in the theoretical framework"; moreover, it is adopted only in "the quantitative method" (Pajares, n.d., p. 3). The hypothesis is generally "a declarative statement, which indicates the relation between two or more variables" (Kerlinger, 1979; Krathwohl, 1988, as cited in Pajares, n.d., p. 2).

After adopting the scientific method in the field of social science, the most used hypothesis types are "the null hypothesis" that indicates that there is no relation between the investigated variables and "the alternative hypothesis", which suggests that there is a directional relation between the dependent variable and the independent one. That is why "knowing and making a clear distinction between them" is very important (Pajares, n.d., p. 4)

#### **1.3.3.1.6. The Design, Methods, and Procedures**

The methodological procedures and design section are defined by Wiersma (1995, p. 409) as "the heart of the research proposal", that should provide as much outlined and detailed data as possible with a "clear sense of unity and interrelatedness" between its sub-sections (as cited in Pajares, n.d., p. 5). In the same path, Guba (1961) claimed that it indicates, "The steps you will take to answer every question or to test every hypothesis in the previous section" (p. 1). In other words, in this section, all the methods, procedures, and tool used to collect or analyze the data required for the research investigation are provided in a detailed manner.

The first important step is the selection of the research population that is highly crucial for the validation of the results, by selecting "the appropriate randomized sample", the results are going to be validated, and could be "generalized legitimately over the whole research population" (Pajares, n.d., p. 5). In other words, research participants should be randomly allocated from the research population, to have a varied and legible sample. The next step in this section is the selection of "the appropriate data gathering tools and materials" in which "a well-described and detailed discussion"

of the selected research instruments has to be provided including the "availability, accessibility, and usage protocol" (Guba, 1961, p. 5). The final step in this section is "the analysis of the collected data" by firstly identify "the procedure and all analytical tools" that are expected to be used throughout your research conduction (Pajares, n.d., p. 7). In a nutshell, this section provides the research sample, the data gathering tools, and the materials for these data analyses and interpretation.

#### **1.3.3.1.7. Structure of the Research**

This section is entirely devoted to the structural divisions of the dissertation in a detailed manner; the number of chapters and their titles are provided in this part, in addition to the main key terms tackled in each chapter. This section also provides a well-structured outline of the whole dissertation that gives a summative insight of what exactly will be found in it.

#### **1.3.3.1.8. Conclusion and References**

All the provided information in the previous sections of the proposal will be summarized in the conclusion as briefly as possible. In addition to that, a detailed reference list has to be included, with all the sources of information and data used throughout the research proposal development (Pajares, n.d., p. 8)

#### **1.3.3.2. Dissertation Outline**

A dissertation outline is the structural division of the whole dissertation, which relatively provides the main parts, sections, and titles included. each dissertation is unique; however, there are many commonly shared elements (Hon, 2008, p. 2). In this regard, dissertation outline is remarkably flexible as it differs from one field of study to another; hence, the English Department,

University of 8 Mai 1945, Guelma adopts the following structure of the dissertation. Some dissertation outline may be the same; others may contain extra sections or sub-sections

#### **1.3.3.2.1. The Front Page**

It contains the name of The Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, the name and slogan of the University, field of study, the title of the dissertation and the case study, supervisor and supervisees' full names, jury members' full names and positions, and the academic year. Moreover, it may include the title of the dissertation, students full name, the departement and institution, in addition to the degree programme and the date of submission (McCombes, 2019, para. 1).

#### **1.3.3.2.2. Dedication and Acknowledgment**

It is a short paragraph signed by the student, through which he recognized all the assistance obtained throughout the whole dissertation writing process. However, he should focus on those who provided direct assistance. I.e. family members' dedication should be held to the minimum possible. In other words, it includes acknowledging the help of all who helped in the conduction of the research; generally, it is the section where both personal and professional acknowledgments are included (Gahan, 2019, para. 1)

#### **1.3.3.2.3. The Abstract**

Writing a strong abstract is not an easy task to accomplish because it can be written only after writing the complete dissertation since it has a summative purpose. Moreover, it provides a concise overview of thesis findings, consequently, provides other researchers or students with a clear description of what has been done in the whole research process without having to go through the entire dissertation. In other words, writing a well-structured abstract will reduce the time people spent when reading the whole research (koopman, 1997, p.1)

#### **1.3.3.2.4. Table of Content**

In this part, all that was written in the dissertation will be provided, it is very important as it helps the reader find the information he wants to retrieve. As explained by Mark, "the chapter headings, appendices, sources, and the pages where they can be found" should all be mentioned in the contents table (Mark, 2017, p. 1). In addition to "Numbers, charts, and abbreviations" that should all be mentioned separately.

#### **1.3.3.2.5. The Theoretical Part**

This part generally includes a review of the main theoretical findings of the two research variables and their key concepts. It is generally divided into two chapters; each one dedicated to the discussion of one research variables additionally it generally includes the following headings:

##### **1.3.3.2.5.1. General Introduction**

The thesis introduction should stand as the background of the research study and analysis. Mark (2017, p. 1) suggested that it should include the following elements; "define the problem, research hypothesis, purpose of the study, research questions, data gathering/analysis tools and methods, significance of the study, definition of terms, delimitations of the study assumptions, and organization of the study/thesis". Further, this title includes the theoretical justification of why this research should be investigated i.e. why there is a need for this research conduction.

##### **1.3.3.2.5.2. Dissertation Chapters**

This section is also know as the theoratical part, generally is standes as the theoratical fundation of the research that includes the discussion of different conceptes related to the research scoop (Kent, 2001, p. 5). In this regard, this section may be consisted of the first chapter, which includes an introduction that revolves around the first variable of the research, titles, and sub-titles tackling the main themes related to the first variable, then ends up with a conclusion. Additionally, the second chapter contains an introduction of the second research variable; in addition to, titles and sub-titles inter-related with the second variable of the research, and ends up with a conclusion.



#### **1.3.3.2.6. The practical part: Field Investigation**

This chapter is highly practical, the content of this chapter depends on the theme selected, i.e. it may include a brief introduction, data gathering and analyzing tools, aims of the selected tools, its description and administration to the selected population, analysis of the results and findings collected, a summary of the findings, and a conclusion (Kent, 2001, p. 5). This latter could be utilized when adopting the scientific approach as a research method; however, when conducting a purely theoretical inquiry, the research population would be substituted by a case study.

#### **1.3.3.2.7. General Conclusion**

The general conclusion a summative paragraph of all that was introduced in the research. Here, the dissertation's work is puttogether by demonstrating how the initial research plan is dealt with; so that conclusions can be drawn from dissertation evidence and findings. The findings should state how far every purpose and goal has been fulfilled. It also Provides practice recommendations list of many items for teachers, writers, managers, etc. who work on the subject in addition to further research Suggestions (Mark, 2017, p.1; Kent, 2001, p. 6).

#### **1.3.3.2.8. References and Appendices**

Citing all references used in writing the dissertation (whether direct quotes or paraphrases) is organized in alphabetical order. Moreover, Appendices are used for the supply of relevant supporting information mainly about the data provided in the research. The original evidence of the main text, questionnaires, or interview instructions is included in this section.

### **1.4. Characteristics of a Good Dissertation**

Achieving a well-written dissertation is a very challenging task. To be qualified as a good dissertation, the following factors are mandatory to display. first and for most, “the originality of the conducted research” which should cover a newly introduced topic that aims to fill a certain gap in the knowledge of the studied field by “generating new data or formulating new interpretations”

of the existing ones as well as “modifying and improving already existed theories and methods” (“Originality”, n.d., para 1). Second, “the relevance of the research topic” to academia i.e. the research should tackle an important and worthy topic that will bring an addition to the field of investigation (Vinz, 2016, para. 1). Third, “manageability of time and research goals”, which requires the student to master time management and goals setting/planning skills so that he will be able to accomplish all the pre-set research goals within the allocated time. Fourth, a good dissertation should provide a “clear description of the research problem, well-determined research goals, and objectives, and introduce the statement of the research problem as clear, simple, and precise as possible” (Pakniker, 2017, para. 3).

### **1.5. MA Dissertation Writing Difficulties in English as a Foreign Language**

MA dissertation writing is not an easy task, especially for non-native students. Generally, EFL/ESL writers are more likely to commit many “writing and methodological errors”, which affect “the quality” of their dissertation (Fatahipour&Nemati, 2016, p.17). Furthermore, Hinkel (2004) provided a general analysis based on the linguistic and methodological references of students’ errors claiming “those errors may be a result of “inappropriate or insufficient knowledge of the grammatical and syntactical standards” of the foreign language as they may be due to “the difficulty of the dissertation writing process” (as cited in Fatahipour & Nemati, 2016, p. 19). In light of this, EFL/ESL students generally commit more writing and methodological errors due to the insufficient linguistic background or the difficulty of the research writing process itself.

On their behalf, Boufeldja and Bouhania (2020, p. 244) identified another possible source of difficulty based on the skills and abilities acquired by the student. They suggested that students face a remarkable number of challenges because “they are required to possess several skills and competencies” such as “developing a critical thinking, independent research conducting and planning, acquiring the grammatical and punctuation standards of the foreign language and

selecting the appropriate words”. For them, they believe that researchers should focus on dissertation writing as a process rather than a product as well as acquiring all the skills integrated in the WP.

Although many researchers view that those challenges have an unfavorable effect on the final product whereas, Okamura (2006) argued that a significant number of “non-native students reach an advanced level of writing proficiency due to the errors and difficulties they face”(as cited in Fatahipour & Nemati, 2016, p. 19). Differently said, those committed errors push students to ameliorate their writing competence and consequently achieve a well-constructed dissertation.

### **1.6. The Role of Academic Supervisor**

According to Mhunpiew (2013, p. 120), the role of an academic supervisor is critical to the success of their theses or dissertation writing. She claimed, “Ending up the research with the best output requires the supervisor to be a good manager of time; schedules, meetings, deadlines, and goals”. Moreover, he has to be “supportive and helpful in solving administrative issues” that may face the student, and guide him through the whole writing process. In the same vein, Northouse (2010, p. 44) defined a good academic supervisor as “the one who possesses leadership skills”, which are a mixture of “technical, conceptual, and human skills”. To sum up, an academic supervisor performs many roles such as a guide, a trainer, a coach, a manager, a supporter, and so on, depending on his students' needs.

### **Conclusion**

In the light of what was introduced in this chapter, it is evident to conclude that master dissertation is a highly significant piece of writing as it reflects students' intellectual and academic research competencies. Moreover, a plenty of research concerning the dissertation process, types, approaches, and outline were offered aiming at bringing new insights and apprehensions about the whole process. Undoubtedly, the dissertation writing process is not an easy task to accomplish, as

it requires the possession of variety of skills, knowledge, and competencies and awareness of not only the different features of EAW, but also the different types, styles, approaches, and stages of the writing process itself. In this regard, selecting the appropriate dissertation type that appropriately matches with the research aims and orientations is a crucial step towards achieving a well-structured Master dissertation. Further; as an attempt to: enhance students' dissertation writing in English as a foreign language, reduce students' writing errors, and overcome administrative and academic research concerns AS share their expertise through performing a variety of roles; such as a guide, supporter, or motivator, depending on their supervisees' needs and expectations.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Electronic Versus Face-to-face Feedback**

## **Introduction**

In a higher education context, providing effective feedback has always been a challenging task for academic supervisors. Whether it is usually delivered electronically via emails, software, applications, or computer programs beyond classroom settings or through face-to-face interaction inside classroom settings, the concept of supervisor feedback is perceived as a fundamental element in second or foreign language dissertation writing due to the significant role it has in enhancing, ameliorating, and motivating students' writing proficiency. In fact, the effectiveness of feedback depends more or less on teachers' way of delivery as well as on the students' level of proficiency and perceptions.

In the light of the previously presented ideas, this chapter deals with general information about feedback in the field of education, such as its characteristics, types, and functions. This chapter is also devoted to the discussion of electronic feedback, its modes and types of delivery, and the most common applications and software of computer-mediated feedback. Moreover, it covers the most significant data about face-to-face feedback, and all the related concepts, types, and strategies. Furthermore, the chapter tackles the most important data about academic supervisor feedback influence on ESL/EFL dissertation writing. Finally, it concludes with a discussion of e-feedback and face-to-face feedback's effect on enhancing master dissertation writing quality.

### **2.1. Feedback**

In the field of academia or higher education, teacher feedback is increasingly integrated into the teaching process; especially, in the LMD system where the learner is perceived as the center of the teaching-learning process while the teacher performs a more directive role. In this regard, some clarifications and discussions of the most relevant concepts related to feedback are provided below.

#### **2.1.1. Definition of Feedback**

Feedback is a crucial element in the teaching/learning process. According to Winne and Butler (1994, p. 5740), feedback refers to a variety of “information that can be validated, added, or restructured” by the learner, regardless of its nature “contextual awareness, metacognitive knowledge, assumptions about self and activities, or cognitive techniques and strategies” (as cited in Saiful & Yusoff, 2013, p. 6). In line with this, Hattie and Timperley (2007) provided a more basic definition arguing that feedback is conceived as “knowledge” about aspects and areas of “success and comprehension”, provided by an agent such as “teachers, colleagues, books, parents” (p. 81).

From a different perspective, Ferguson (2011) stressed the importance of feedback claiming that “it is regarded as one of the most important elements in the educational field” since it stands as a “foundation” to the teaching-learning process “promotion and regulation” (as cited in Mamoon-Al-Bashir et al., 2016, p. 38). However, Hattie (2011, p. 3) added that feedback could be provided by “an external agent”, such as a peer or an instructor. Whereas in the case of “learner’ auto-monitoring” feedback can be “self-generated”.

Furthermore, Hounsell (2003, p. 3) reinforced the previous definitions by highlighting that feedback has a “crucial and decisive role” in the learning process within and outside classroom contexts. In fact, in higher educational settings, the reception of feedback is beneficial for “both students and teacher”, as argued by Saiful and Yusoff (2013, p. 8) who added that students need feedback to improve their learning outcomes and teachers need feedback to improve their instructional teaching design. In a nutshell, Mamoon-Al-Bashir et al. (2016) summarized the significance of feedback provision in terms of its crucial role in the “professionalization” of the teaching-learning process (p. 38).

In other words, feedback has a huge influence on students' level of proficiency and teachers' instructional methods efficacy. In this respect, it is evident to say that feedback highly contributes to the amelioration of the teaching-learning process at all levels.

### **2.1.2. Characteristics of Effective Feedback**

A variety of features and characteristics were provided concerning the effectiveness of feedback. For instance, Archer (2010, p. 101) described effective feedback as “instructional and corrective information” about a previous performance, intending to enhance “future” positive amelioration. In a nutshell, since feedback is regarded as a response to learner performance, Ramsden (2003, p. 187) highlighted its significance by emphasizing that effective feedback is one of the “mandatory key factors” of the quality teaching-learning process.

From his perspective, Mackay (2017, para. 10) highlighted that effective feedback is “specific, timely, meaningful, and goal-oriented”. According to him, EF is specific in terms of the “narrowed goal” it targets. It has to be provided “as close in time as possible” to the committed error. Further, it is “meaningful and actionable” with the purpose of “adjusting, ameliorating, or enhancing a certain action”; furthermore, EF is “goal-oriented”. Additionally, Mackay (2017, para. 12) declared that “the biggest mistake” in the process of feedback provision is focusing on “the past action or event”; however, effective feedback has to focus on correcting or maintaining a future action.

On their behalf, Hattie and Timperley (2007) argued that effective feedback needs to be “clear, purposeful, and compatible with students’ prior knowledge and to provide logical connections” (p. 104). Further, Iron (2008) proposed that “the consistency and timeliness” of feedback are important aspects of the student educational experience and the teacher-student interaction (p. 1). In this respect, Gupta (2013, para. 1) advocated the following characteristics of effective feedback; she argued that:

- Effective feedback has to be “Goal-aligned” as it stands as a background reference for students to “improve their future performance” and facilitate the achievement of their goals.



- Effective feedback has to be “constructive and valuable” to students, and that teachers have to be conscious about the differences between “being critical” and “providing constructive feedback”.
- Feedback is more effective when provided “as soon as possible” i.e. Receiving instant feedback on students’ performance enables them to correct their errors and to effectively achieve their intended goals
- Feedback is valuable and effective only when it is not “vague, confusing, and hard to understand” in contrast it has to be provided in “a clear and user-friendly manner”.

In light of the previous data, it is evident to say that the majority of researchers agreed that consistency, clearness, and timelessness are the most prominent features of effective feedback.

## **2.2.Types of Feedback**

In a classroom context, teachers use a variety of feedback types. Regardless of its nature and intention, feedback is highly beneficial in improving teaching-learning outcomes. The following types are the most used ones in academic settings.

### **2.2.1. Informal Feedback**

Informal feedback is a method of providing notes and comments” spontaneously” at any stage of the teaching-learning process “in or outside” classroom setting.(“Federation University Australia”, 2019, para. 1) its main aim is to effectively “promote, mentor or lead” students to develop “task-based management and decision-making skills”. Furthermore, this type of feedback is regarded as the best method to make learners more "engaged in the classroom" and help teachers "ameliorate their teaching techniques" ("Federation University Australia", 2019, para. 1).

On her behalf, Klimova (2015, p. 173) emphasized that not only learners, "teachers also utilize this type of feedback to identify the gaps in their teaching techniques and methods", which

facilitates their professional developments and enhances the effectiveness of their teaching. This type of feedback takes place when a teacher "facilitates classroom interaction", "improvises answers to discussion questions" in an unplanned manner, and "manages to resolve" any issue raises during his teaching or course delivery ("Types of Feedback", n.d., para. 1).

### **2.2.2. Formal Feedback**

Formal feedback is generally perceived as "deliberate and systemic" attempts of providing well-structured feedback to learners in a classroom context. It is also known as "well-arranged input" that is regarded as "amelioration and preceding proof" towards the achievement of the pre-determined goal. Generally, it is related to "the evaluation and advancements" made at the level of "requirements, skills, and competencies" acquired or used by both teachers and learners ("Federation University Australia", 2019, para. 2).

As a matter of fact, receiving inconsistent formal feedback is mandatory for learners' development regardless of its nature whether it is "recommendations" on writing to students, "examination questions or an assessment section" ("Types of Feedback", n.d., para. 2). From her perspective, Klimova (2015) claimed that teachers' institutions "utilize formal feedback" to discover the "teaching quality and educational standards" in a given institution (p. 173). In other words, the quality of teaching and educational methods adopted in a particular educational institution is reflected and measured by the formality of feedback used by its teachers.

### **2.2.3. Formative Feedback**

As its name indicates, formative feedback is regarded as "a set of information transmitted" to the learner, with the intention of "ameliorating" his/her thinking and behaviors and consequently enhancing his/her learning (Shute, 2007, p. 1). Additionally, this type of feedback is also used by teachers to reflect upon their "teaching quality" and to "professionally develop" their teaching skills and strategies (Shute, 2007, p. 1). In detailed words, novice or trainee teachers receive such

feedback during their training or beginner phase to fill the gaps and inconveniences of their teaching methods and skills.

Many researchers and experts agreed that formative feedback has an ameliorative purpose. For instance, D. Johnson and R. Johnson (1993) stressed that effective formative feedback has the intention of “marking the progress and fixing the errors” made by the learners; in addition to, providing their teachers with continuous feedback “to improve both their teaching and students’ level of proficiency”( as cited in Shute, 2007, p. 2). In the same vein, Shute (2007) identified the main target of formative feedback is to “optimize students’ skills, expertise, and comprehension” in a certain field of study, or a particular skill (p. 6); Such as critical thinking or problem-solving techniques.

On their behalf, (Brophy, 1981; Schwartz & White, 2000, as cited in Shute, 2007, p. 2). Provided an inclusive definition of formative feedback highlighting that it is recognized to be a "Conceptual, non-evaluative, constructive, learner-controlled, relevant, accurate, reliable, infrequent, and contextual” type of input.

#### **2.2.4. Summative Feedback**

Unlike the previously identified types of feedback, summative feedback takes place at the end of the learning process. In this regard, Miller (2018) provided a narrower definition of summative feedback claiming that it usually comes at "the end of a course or semester" and it is generally provided in relation to a score or grade (para. 2). They emphasized that it does not only "evaluate students' achievements at the end of the learning process, but also this type of feedback, when generated concerning "the learning objectives of a particular course", provides teachers with "the quality" of their teaching and "the effectiveness" of their course design (Miller, 2018, para. 2).

In line with this, Dekker (2018) reinforced Miller's definition by stating that summative feedback is "a set of marks or grades provided to learners at the end of the learning process (para.

2). Furthermore, ("Federation University Australia", 2019; para. 5) shed light on a more inclusive and detailed definition of summative input, stressing that teacher "comprehensive reflection" outlines precisely the errors made by the student and how the mark was obtained and provides "constructive suggestions" on improving particular aspects using a pre-determined criteria as a reference.

### **2.2.5. Constructive Feedback**

Constructive feedback is perceived as "an effective tool" that enables learners and teachers to "personally and professionally improve" (Hamid & Mahmood, 2010, p. 224). In other terms, it empowers teachers to provide "well-prepared, competent and practical recommendations" for their students to "academically progress" (Hamid & Mahmood, 2010, p. 224). In the same vein, Nibras (2017, p. 45) commented upon Hamid and Mahmood (2010) definition and added that constructive feedback occurs when there are "two-way communication" between the learner and the teacher in the form of an "effective interaction" about "what has improved and what has to be improved" (p. 45)

In the same respect, Irons (2008) highlighted the ultimate function of constructive input, as "a positive learning technique" is to enhance teaching and learning in higher education. From his perspective, Irons believes that providing "guidance" to students will help them become more "self-regulated learners", and consequently help them to "develop motivational values and self-esteem" (as cited in Du Toit, 2017, p. 32).

On their behalf, Hamid and Mahmood (2010) provided a summative identification of constructive feedback features saying that "Descriptive, prompt, useful, friendly, straightforward, problem-specific, action-driven, solution-oriented, collaborative and insightful" are all qualities that constructive input can reflect and possess (p. 225).

#### **2.2.5.1. Positive Feedback**

Positive feedback is a type of CF that is concerned with “providing comments and instructions” to “validate previous actions” i.e. it emphasizes constructive behavior that should be maintained (Federation University Australia, 2019, para. 8). Additionally, Marsh (2019, para. 10) introduced a more detailed definition assuming that Positive inputs “motivate people, enhance their confidence, and indicate that their actions are appreciated”. In other words, positive feedback raises students’ awareness of their abilities and motivates them to shape and develop their skills; consequently, it enhances students’ motivation and learning.

From their point of view, Mitrovic et al. (2013, p. 7) claimed that the appropriate situations where constructive positive reinforcement has to be provided are when “student is unsure about what and how to perform, yet he performs correctly”. Moreover, they highlighted that “beyond the basic affirmation that the action performed was accurate; a constructive positive input message can convey three pieces of descriptive details”. The “circumstances” that lead to perform such an action, a “logical explanation” of why exactly this action is performed (Mitrovic et al., 2013, p. 7). In addition to, the “major changes or solutions” brought to the occurring situation or problem by the performed action (Mitrovic et al., 2013, p. 8).

From a psycho-pedagogical perspective, Binu (2020, p. 3) claimed that providing positive input allows students to improve “self-esteem, consciousness, and a willingness to learn”. In addition to “promoting and reinforcing a positive feeling of achievement” in the students; hence, motivating and encouraging them to proceed in their learning process.

#### **2.2.5.2. Negative Feedback**

In contrast with positive feedback, negative feedback occurs mainly when teachers provide “corrective comments” when the learner produces utterances or actions that are “somewhat

inaccurate” by following “an ungrammatical learner corrective system” (Long, 1996, as cited in Muhsin, 2016, p. 26). In simpler words, constructive negative comments are only provided for learners when they produce or perform unsuccessful actions. In this regard, it is evident to say that it focuses on “Former performance correction” mainly “unsuccessful behavior” that should not re-occur (Federation University Australia, 2019, para. 9).

Concerning its effectiveness, Binu (2020, p. 4) argued that negative feedback is more beneficial if it occurs at an individual manner claiming that; although negative input is more" conducive to students learning improvement", it can be more “efficient at the individual level" since it is based on the “learners' devotion” to their objectives, competence or performance focus, and students’ self-efficacy”. Kernis et al. (1989) claimed that “high-proficient learners” use negative input as a driving force and perceive it as “effective reinforcements” of their skills as developing learners. Hence, “low-proficient learners” have a different perception of these constructive comments as “they may respond to negative feedback with negative attitudes” which demonstrate less engagement on ongoing projects. Further, low-proficient students relate negative feedback to “skill rather than effort”; in other words, they relate such errors to the skills they do not possess rather than the amount of effort they did not make (Kernis et al., 1989, as cited in Binu, 2020, p. 5).

## **2.2. Functions of Feedback: Facilitative and Directive**

Feedback is regarded as a highly efficient pedagogical instrument that enables both teachers and students to promote the teaching-learning process. In this respect, Underwood and Tregidgo (2006, p. 81) advocated that the function of feedback depends on “the purpose it serves”. According to their declaration, the teacher may have the intention of giving “direct and explicit directional input” such as “correcting words, conventions, or proofreading”, by clarifying directly what has to be “corrected or modified” in the revision phase. Also, he may have “the intention of facilitating

the error correction process”, by providing comments that enhance students “self-correction” in the form of “questions or reflections” (Underwood & Tregidgo, 2006, p.81)

However, students' perception of these feedback functions is contradictory. McGee (1999) claimed that students "receiving directive feedback" argue that the teacher is selective and wants to "control their writing" because those comments are "unclear, uninformative, and restrictive". They preferred "facilitative feedback" as it gives them "the freedom and the opportunity to correct and expand their writing"; in contrast, others assumed that "directive comments” are more effective as they communicate “directly and explicitly” what is supposed to be “fixed” in their writings (as cited in Underwood & Tregidgo, 2006; pp. 81-82).

### **2.3. Modes of Feedback Delivery**

For many years, the traditional face-to-face feedback was the major feedback mode adopted in the educational field, however with the adoption of technological facilities a new mode appeared, the modern electronic feedback. This paved the way for a wealth of research on which mode is more effective. The following titles will tackle these two modes in details

#### **2.4.1. Electronic Feedback**

In contemporary technologically oriented educational approaches, Chang (2011, p. 16) claimed that e-feedback is defined as “comments, responses, instructions and recommendations” provided by a teacher to students' written activities or learning experiences "delivered electronically via internet mediums". Accordingly, (Dennen et al., 2007; Hong; 2002; Young & Norgard, 2006) claimed that electronic feedback is a highly "professional and quick” way of feedback delivery. Highlighting that whether it is “via emails or via other electronic mediums”, e-feedback allows learning to take place at “any time or location” regardless of students learning preferences or teachers teaching strategies (as cited in Chang, 2011, p. 17).

In the same vein, Tuzi (2004) provided a more detailed definition considering electronic feedback as a set of “numerical and written data delivered electronically” (p. 217). In line with Chang, Ene and Upton (2014, p. 82) argued that it is becoming a “very common method” of providing instructional and corrective input to students (as cited in Aldamen, 2020, p. 67).

#### **2.4.1.1. Synchronous E-Feedback**

Synchronous electronic feedback is a kind of feedback that is delivered as soon as possible to the committed error; in this respect, Chong (2019, p. 2) stressed that synchronically provided e-feedback is immediately delivered when both “teachers and students are online at the same time”. Through “Skype, Google Hangouts, Zoom, Google Docs, and Grammarly”.

From a wider perspective, Long (2007, p. 77) shed light on its significance arguing that when students perform their written texts “electronically while being monitored by their instructors”, simultaneous input may be “significantly advantageous to improve their writing quality” as it stands as an “immediate correction and guidance”( as cited in Al Damen, 2020, p. 67). Besides the definition presented by Long (2007), Shintani (2016) suggested that synchronized feedback is provided to enhance more “effective self-correction” as it has a persistent emphasis on” form and context” (as cited in Chang et al., 2017, p. 4).

#### **2.4.1.2. Asynchronous E-Feedback**

Unlike synchronous feedback, asynchronously is a delayed mode of feedback delivery provided to students “after submitting their assessments electronically”, it is mediated through different mediums such as “Google Docs, Microsoft Word, e-mails, voice comments, and chats on WhatsApp” (Al Damen, 2020, p. 67). Sharing the same view, Chang et al. (2017, p. 3) argued that probably the most “frequent and well-known form” of e-feedback is asynchronous written e-feedback, which may be provided through “online and offline” mediums such as “e-mails, discussion platforms, course management systems and blogs”.



Concerning learners' preferences, Weirick et al. (2017) affirmed that learners preferred "asynchronous electronic input" because it was more "informative and less intimidating" (as cited in Al Damen 2020, P. 67). Consequently, this type of electronic feedback has a significant impact on both students' "anxiety reduction and their writing performance and quality amelioration" (Chang et al., 2017, p. 3).

#### **2.4.1.3. Electronic Corrective Feedback**

Electronic corrective feedback is a set of corrective information provided to students electronically. In this respect, AbuSeileek and Al-Olimat (2015) defined it as "a process rather than a technique" insisting that corrective feedback refers to "the process" through which teachers provide students with information about their performance and correct their incorrect responses "via computer-based mediums" (p. 5).

Furthermore, this type of feedback is increasingly integrated in the teaching learning process due to its helpfulness. In this regard, AbuSeileek and Al-Olimat (2015) asserted that, "Computer-mediated corrective feedback is a vital tool to improve language learning (p. 10). Concerning its effectiveness, AbuSeileek and AbuSa'aleek (2012) highlighted that receiving electronic corrective feedback on students' writing performance "guides them towards their errors correction". Consequently, it improves their writing competence (p. 30).

#### **2.4.1.4. Types of Corrective e-Feedback**

Due to the increasing interest in computer-mediated feedback, many software and applications were created and developed to cope with teachers and students' expectations. Below are the most common types of e-feedback.

##### **2.4.1.4.1. Direct-indirect Corrective E-feedback**

This type of feedback is regarded as the most used pedagogical instrument through which teachers' corrective "comments and instructions are electronically provided" Seiffedin and El Sakka (2017, p. 167). It incorporates "direct and indirect techniques" of error corrective feedback manifested in two main types. In the first type, known as "the encoded indirect type", the teacher only "demonstrates and identifies" his students' mistakes without providing neither "any sign that indicates the type of error made nor the correction of it". This phase enhances students' "critical thinking" and allows them to be more engaged in "the detection" of error type and correct it on their own (Seiffedin & El Sakka, 2017, p. 167)

In the same vein, Ellis (2009a) provided a more detailed definition of indirect techniques assuming that "indirect correction" involves the indication of the error in student assignment with "the use of crossers" to indicate the missing words or "underline" the miss-spelled words without correcting them. However, it is highly appreciated by teachers because it involves "guided learning strategies" and enhances students' problem-solving techniques (p. 100).

### Figure 2.1 Indirect feedback

A dog stole X bone from X butcher. He escaped with XhavingX X bone. When the dog was going XthroughX X bridge over XtheX river he found X dog in the river.  
 X = missing word  
 X \_\_X = wrong word

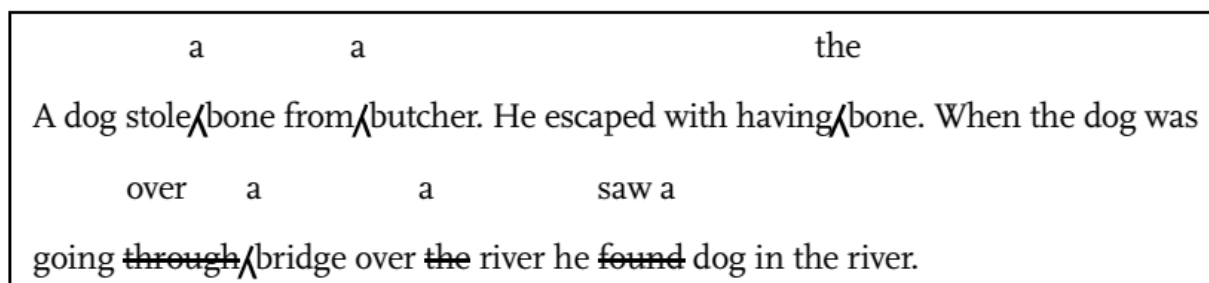
Adopted from: Ellis, 2009a, p. 100.

Hence, in the direct corrective e-feedback mode of delivery, Seiffedin and El Sakka (2017) highlighted that the teacher "directly corrects" the inaccuracies that his students seemed unable to adjust by writing, "the appropriately correct form over or behind the underlined error" (p. 167).

In the same respect, Ellis (2009a) argued that direct corrective e-feedback incorporates providing the student "directly with the correct form"; however, this may be generated in a variety

of forms, either through “substituting the error with the correction or writing the correction above or near the mistake” (p. 99), as illustrated in the following figure.

**Figure 2.2 Direct Feedback**



Adopted from: Ellis, 2009a, p. 99.

To sum up, these techniques of corrective e-feedback provision are significantly beneficial in enhancing students’ self-correction and developing their critical thinking skills as well as improving their writing proficiency through error correction.

#### **2.4.1.4.2. Automated Feedback Vs Corpora-based Feedback**

Teachers ambitions to save “effort, time, and money” were a driving force towards the creation of automated feedback generators that are “an advanced computer software and applications” that can provide “instant analytic and reflective feedback” on student written texts electronically (Ware & Warschauer, n.d., p. 5).

Recently automated feedback generating tools are in an increased sophistication. Seliem and Ahmed (2009) provided a more inclusive definition highlighting that this type of "computer-generated input" has a significant influence on feedback provision over students' writing assignments. It integrates feedback with the use of "innovative, sophisticated software and computer programs" which go through students' written text and generates immediate corrective and evaluative input (p. 7).

Further, those advanced software and programs made it easier for teachers to generate feedback as well as to analyze students' responses. In this respect, Mirmotahari and Berg. (2018; p. 1) argued that teachers are "easily generating more realistic solutions" due to the emerging "technologies of increased sophistication". Common to all these applications are that answers can be expressed in a formal way, which makes it feasible to automatically analyze them". Additionally, such computer-based programs provide a variety of feedback generating modals, varying from "personal reports on grammatical mistakes to comprehensive assessments of content, organization, and form" (Liou, 1994; Warden & Chen, 1995; Burston, 2001 as cited in Selim & Ahmed, 2009, p. 8).

As a matter of preference, F. Hyland and K. Hyland (2006) claimed that many teachers "preferred and adopted this kind of software" as they found them highly helpful in providing individual support and extensive feedback to their students with "low amount of time and effort" regardless of class sizes or students drafts. Moreover, they allow them to focus more on other teaching-learning issues (p. 94).

Another type of CGF is corpora-based. It was generally defined by F. Hyland and K. Hyland (2006) as "language corpus or a frame" that is regarded as a "set of relevant written pieces", in which students can search for "specific words, expressions or grammatical structures via computer-concordance software" that show their frequency and regular use in other patterns (p. 95). I.e. these corpus or model texts are perceived as a database reference, which enables teachers to easily review and provide feedback by comparing students' produced text with corpus texts through computer software, which in turn will give students a better understanding of their errors and their appropriate use and context.

Concerning their functionality, Seleim and Ahmed proclaimed that this software works with more "text-retrieval oriented websites", which permits students to have a more clarified selection of certain words in more meaningful and relevant contexts (2009, p. 9). In simpler words, corpus

text gives the appropriate use of students' words and utterances in different contexts by comparing their drafts with others existing in its database through "attaching mistakes in students' article to concordance documents", whereby students can analyze the meanings and language structures of the terms they have misused.

### **2.4.2. Face-To-Face Feedback**

Face-to-face feedback is another pedagogical technique used to provide "comments, instructions, and recommendations" on students' performance through "face-to-face interaction". It is constructive feedback carried on "one-to-one bases" between teacher and students (F. Hyland & K. Hyland, 2006, pp. 1-2). In simpler terms, this mode of feedback integrates communicative and one-to-one discussion between the teacher and the learner (as cited in Ghgam, 2015, p. 85).

In this respect, a more detailed definition was the one of Brown et al. (2005) who affirmed that FTF feedback provides extra clarification because it integrates "nonverbal cues, facial expression, tone of voice, stress, and so on" with the provided comment. Moreover, they introduced that this type of feedback "enables teachers to have a clear and instant input" about how their students "perceive his comments and instructions" and adjust them accordingly (p. 132). Regarding its functionality, Shute (2007) argued that through FTF feedback, information is communicated to "modify learner's reasoning or behavior" to improve his learning outcomes (as cited in Ghgam, 2015, p. 85).

In the light of the previous definitions, when using this type of input, teachers provide instructional and corrective comments to students to enhance and improve their four skills performance immediately and in an interactive face-to-face medium, that integrates the use of both verbal and non-verbal cues. Furthermore, it allows teachers to adjust their feedback following their students' needs, perceptions, and understanding.

#### **2.4.2.1. Types of Face-to-Face Feedback**

In a classroom context, FTF feedback is one of the fundamental elements of the teaching-learning process, it may be provided orally or in written form. The following titles discuss both types of feedback in addition to some related concepts and aspects.

#### **2.4.2.1.1 Oral Feedback**

As its name indicates, oral feedback is a set of comments and information provided orally to students, it is the most known and commonly used type of feedback. A general definition for the term was provided by Brookart (2008, p. 91) who claimed that this type of face-to-face feedback is "provided orally" by the teacher in form of an "interaction between the speaker and the receiver", with the intention of "enhancing, correcting, or fixing" a particular performed action, it may occur before "during or after" the learning process (as cited in Ashrafi et al., 2018, p. 7). However, Hadzic (2016) defined oral feedback as all "the natural verbal interactions" that take place in classroom context "between teachers and students or between students only" emphasizing that it occurs "during the learning process" only (p. 6).

As a matter of significance and efficacy, Ashrafi et al. (2018) argued that the most significant thing when using this type of feedback is that "the student can receive explicit and immediate input" on his performance in "an interactive and more effective manner that integrates verbal and non-verbal codes" (p. 7). Moreover, Hattie and Gan (2011) shed light on another positive aspect of face-to-face feedback, announcing that it may be provided to each student along with an individual focus, as it may be provided to the whole class with, a group focus. This latter takes place by "collecting common errors" in students' writing assignments and providing "collective correction" to the whole class rather than "pointing out each student individually" (as cited in Ashrafi et al., 2008, p. 6).

##### **2.4.2.1.1.1.Praise Oral Feedback**

As the word praise indicates, this type of face-to-face oral feedback is concerned with providing positive comments and appreciation statements to the learner. On their behalf, F. Hyland and K. Hyland (2001) defined it as “teacher attempts of giving credit to the learner” for some “aspect, feature, performance, or skills” they appreciated (p. 186)

From the same perspective, Ellis (2009) defined this type of oral feedback as "all the positive constructive comments" the teacher provides to his student "during or after" his performance, adding that it enhances his motivation and "reinforces" his learning aptitude such as "using good, ok, yes, and well done" (as cited in Hadzic, 2016, p. 7). The same idea was reconfirmed by Petchprasert (2012, p. 1114) who advocated that this type of feedback “enhances students learning, ameliorates their performance, and makes them more motivated in their learning process” (as cited in Hadzic, 2016, p. 7).

#### **2.4.2.1.1.2. Implicit Vs. Explicit Oral Feedback**

There has been a growing interest in the role of oral corrective feedback in classroom context, among which the dichotomy explicit and implicit oral feedback proved its significance. In this respect, Mashrah (2017, p. 1) defined explicit oral feedback as “a direct and clear correction” of students erroneous utterances, claiming that in most times it takes “the form of recasts”, especially in EFL/ESL classroom contexts through one-to-one interaction with the learner. Further, she presented the following example “no it is not eaten, it is ate” (Mashrah, 2017, p. 1).

Following this line of inquiry, Ellis et al. (2006, p. 341) argued that explicit feedback may be provided in “two different forms, “explicit correction” through which the teacher directly corrects students errors; for example “no, not goed, went”. In addition to, metalinguistic correction, in which direct indication of the error and its correction; for example, “use the past form”.

By contrast, implicit oral feedback is realized as “covert or indirect” errors correction; in EFL/ESL classroom, the teacher may use different forms of implicit correction. The most common

ones are the repetition of students' errors and the request for clarification like using "pardon?" (Mashrah, 2017, p. 1).

As a matter of preference, Seedhouse (1997, p. 572) claimed that although "teachers prefer the implicit correction" as it enhances students' critical thinking and self-correction, it is perceived "as embarrassing and problematic". He further argued in favor of more "direct and overt corrective feedback"; so that "pedagogy and interaction would then work in tandem" (as cited in Ajabshir, 2014, p. 464). To sum up, the explicit and implicit dichotomy in oral corrective feedback are similar to direct and indirect written feedback, hence the only difference is in the mode of provision oral or written.

#### **2.4.2.1.1.3. Oral Fact-to-Face Feedback Effectiveness**

Oral face-to-face feedback provision is viewed to be more effective in enhancing students learning abilities as well as developing teachers teaching methods. In this respect, Carnicelli (1980) justified oral feedback effectiveness for two main reasons. First, he stressed that "if a teacher's response is unclear, the student can simply ask for an explanation" (p. 108). This may imply that this type of feedback allows students to share their opinions and needs concerning the teacher's feedback provision strategies or his teaching methods and techniques.

The second reason is that through this type of feedback, teachers are provided with "immediate input about students' perception" of his feedback, which enables them to make the necessary changes to fit any learning situation (Carnicelli, 1980, p. 108). Consequently, they would professionally develop their teaching skills and become more effective teachers.

#### **2.4.2.1.2 Written Feedback**

In addition to oral feedback, written feedback is also regarded as a significant pedagogical instrument through which the teacher provides his student with face-to-face written comments concerning his performance. In this regard, Hadzic (2016) proclaimed that written feedback is "a



natural part of the teaching-learning process, it is provided in form of written comments on students' assignments" (p. 10). It is not as immediate and effortless as oral feedback. In this respect, Ferris (2003, p. 41) stressed that this type of feedback may represent "the single biggest investment of time by instructors, and it is certainly clear that students highly value and appreciate it" (as cited in Lounis, 2009, p. 26). In other terms, although written feedback is a time-consuming process that has to be done through a particular method and target particular error types, it still receives high appreciation from learners.

#### **2.4.2.1.2.1.Focused and Unfocused Written Feedback**

Many researchers have categorized written feedback into two main categories; focused and unfocused. Among these researchers, Hadzic (2016, p. 12) highlighted that "focused feedback occurs mainly when the teacher corrects students' written assignments in accordance to pre-determined errors". This could mean that the teacher focuses on a particular error type such as focusing on correcting the inappropriate use of "English preposition, articles, or sequencers only and neglecting other mistakes in grammar, vocabulary and so on"(Purnawarman, 2011, as cited in Hadzic, 2016, p. 12). However, when the teachers adopt an unfocused feedback strategy, "they tend to provide corrective comments and instructions on any error made by their students" (Hadzic, 2016, p. 12).

In the same vein, Ellis (2008) commented upon the inconvenience of unfocused feedback claiming that, "the correction process is relatively difficult in the unfocused feedback" because the teacher corrects a variety of errors. Therefore, the student is less likely to "understand and reflect upon teacher's corrective comments". Whereas, in the focused feedback, teachers' corrective comments are "significantly effective" because they enable the learner to "understand why/what he wrote is erroneous and what is the correct form", which enhances his writing proficiency (p. 102).

#### **2.4.2.1.2.2. Content-level and Surface-level of Written Feedback**

Providing written feedback on students' drafts is highly beneficial in enhancing their writing proficiency as it targets their errors and attempts to overcome them. According to Ferris and Dana (1995), teachers' provision of feedback may "target two levels", overall correction reflecting errors in content, organization, mechanics, and grammar or in-depth correction reflecting errors in vocabulary (as cited in Underwood & Tregidgo, n.d., p. 4). In this dichotomy, teachers' written comments may shed light on different error types in the written piece. They may focus on the form and the structural features of the written paper, as they may focus on the spelling and the grammatical structure.

In the same vein, Beason and Larry (1993) reinforced Ferris and Dana definition and went further saying "that teachers have to provide feedback based on the criteria it reflects whether it is the content, focus, development, grammar, expression, or validity" (as cited in Underwood & Tregidgo, n.d., p. 4). These elements are categorized according to the level of feedback they target, "global" (feedback on form, structure, organization, and content) or "local" (feedback on grammar, mechanics, vocabulary, and spelling); further, the global and local feedback are also known as "content level and surface level" of feedback (Underwood & Tregidgo, n.d., p. 4).

#### **2.5. The Significance of Supervisory Feedback in Master Dissertation Writing**

Supervisor feedback refers to all the corrective and instructional comments and recommendations provided by the supervisor to his supervisee concerning his dissertation writing progress and amelioration. According to this perspective, Bitchener et al. (2010) assumed that supervisor written feedback on students' drafts during the dissertation writing process is regarded as "a relatively significant source of input", which stands as "a background for students' progress". However, he went further emphasizing that written feedback may be provided when the supervisee

produces his written draft whereas oral feedback may be provided at any stage during the dissertation writing process (p. 80).

On his behalf, Mouton (2001) claimed that the supervision process may be integrated into four main supervisor roles who should continually stand in “an advisory role, quality control role, monitoring supportive role, and guidance or coacher role” ( as cited inAzman et al., 2014, p. 154). Additionally, Bitchener et al. (2010) said that the main aim of supervisory feedback provision is “to help supervisees as novice researchers to conduct their first independent research with the experience of the supervisor”; so that they became able to reach the objectives of their dissertation writing and achieve a quality final product (p. 80).

## **2.6. The Impact of Face-to-Face Feedback and e-Feedback on Dissertation Writing**

In the field of higher education research, feedback is regarded as a crucial element of the dissertation writing process, due to its significant impact and contribution in enhancing students’ dissertation writing quality. In fact, there is a wealth of research on feedback in the educational field; many pieces of research were conducted to investigate its impact on the teaching-learning process in addition to teachers and students' perceptions of different types of feedback provision effect on the writing quality. Hence, few attempts were made to comparatively investigate which type of feedback face-to-face or electronic feedback is more effective in enhancing master dissertation writing quality.

Many researchers argued that feedback has a significant impact on second language writing. For instance, Brown (2001) emphasized that feedback is “a fundamental element that should be given in the writing process”; it has a remarkable effect on students’ writing performance (p. 336). Moreover, Wahyuni (2017) argued that feedback “is crucial in second/ foreign language writing”, it aims at providing the learner with "detailed information about his writing strengths and weaknesses" to help him improve his writing performance (p. 40). However, the increasing

adoption of technology-based educational approaches lead to the appearance of contradictory views between those who prefer traditional modes of feedback and those shifting to new ones.

In this regard, many attempts were made to explore students' perceptions towards the impact of electronic and face-to-face modes of feedback provision on their dissertation writing proficiency. The most prominent research was the one conducted by Brown et al., which revealed that some students assume face-to-face feedback to be “more effective” as it allows students to “ask for further clarifications from their supervisor or enter into a detailed discussion with him”. In addition to that, it is supported by “the tone of the voice” i.e. it incorporates both verbal and non-verbal cues (2004, pp. 119-120). Furthermore, Dickinson (1992) emphasized that, “The face-to-face supervisor and supervisee interaction is significantly effective in reducing, clearing, and reassuring students writing performance” (as cited in Chang, 2012, p. 3).

From the same perspective, (Bridge & Appleyard, 2008; Ferguson, 2011; Scott, 2006; Price et al., 2010) showed unfavorable views towards e-feedback, arguing that it lacks “the social interaction as they consider it as the most prominent feature of effective feedback”. They went further in their argumentation, claiming that students do not “trust the delivery systems of e-feedback”; consequently, they prefer face-to-face feedback as it “incorporates one-to-one discussion” arguing that it is “more clear and informative”.

By way of contrast, Brown et al. (2004) disconfirmed the previous views and arguments and favored e-feedback more than face-to-face feedback. They estimated that it is “highly appreciated by supervisors as it allows them to provide their input on students’ electronically submitted drafts at any time and place”; in addition to, enabling them to “edit the feedback before generating it via computer-based applications and software”(p. 126). At the confidential level, Brown et al. (2004) claimed that it may “be privately generated” which permits students to comfortably read the feedback provided (p. 126). In line with this, Seliem and Ahmed (2009) viewed that e-feedback

characteristics such as “timelessness” made it increasingly adopted by supervisors in the modern technology-based teaching-learning settings. They also advocated that electronic feedback be highly appreciated by “both students and teachers” due to “the variety of facilitations it offers”. Furthermore, they argued that electronic feedback “promotes students’ responsibility, participation, and involvement” in the error correction process (as cited in Chang et al., 2012, p. 3).

### **Conclusion**

The data reviewed in this chapter makes it highly evident to conclude that in the field of higher education, feedback as a pedagogical practice is regarded as the most prominent element of the ESL/EFL dissertation writing process. Due to its significance, it is increasingly implemented in the supervision process through emphasizing its different roles, intentions, and functions. Though, it is worthy to highlight that academic supervisors have to be aware of all the available types of feedback and their appropriate usage in different contexts. In this regard, he/she has to possess the required knowledge concerning the proper use of these feedback types, their intentions (facilitative or directive), manner of provision (oral or written), the level of error correction it targets (content or surface), and most importantly the different modes of feedback provision (electronic or face-to-face). However, the impact and the contradictory perceptions of different modes of feedback provision are still being debated, whether the traditional face-to-face feedback that enhances one-to-one interaction or modern computer-mediated feedback that fulfills the majority of effective feedback characteristics; no clear results favoring one mode are yet made.

**Chapter Three**  
**Field Investigation**

## **Introduction**

As the theoretical examination and discussion of both variables have been tackled in the two first chapters, the current chapter is devoted exclusively to the practical part of the research. It is entirely directed to exploring which mode of feedback; electronic or face-to-face feedback is more effective in enhancing second-year master students' dissertation writing. Additionally, this chapter deals with the methodology and tools adopted in the current research. It is initiated with a definition of the methodological framework and the sample group; furthermore, it describes the students' questionnaire and its administration process. Moreover, it provides an analysis and examination of the results and a summary of the current study findings. Finally, the chapter affords some pedagogical implications, limitations of the study, and few suggestions for further research.

### **3.1. Description of Research Methods**

The current research attempts to explore which mode of feedback is more effective in enhancing second-year master students' dissertation writing by the use of students' questionnaires. The present research adopts the descriptive, comparative, quantitative method. The descriptive method was selected to investigate the “conditions or relationships that exist; practices that prevail; beliefs, points of views, or attitudes that are held; processes that are going on; effects that are being felt; or trends that are developing” (Best, 1970, as cited in Cohen et al., 2000, p. 205). Moreover, the comparative method is adopted to compare between the results, preferences, and facilities concerning different feedback modes of delivery. Furthermore, the questionnaire is highly required to generate numerical data that could be easily interpreted and analyzed to reach valid results and a full understanding of the theme under investigation (Mujis, 2004, p. 1). Hence, the descriptive quantitative method perfectly allies with the research aims and orientations.

### **3.2. Students' Questionnaire**

### **3.2.1. Population of the Study**

The current inquiry was directed to second-year Master students at the department of English, 8 Mai 1945 University-Guelma. The eminent reason behind designating such a level was that all participants are working on their master dissertation. Henceforth, they are more or less familiar with academic writing and research process. Furthermore, they are assumed to be aware of the Master dissertation writing process, supervisory feedback, its significance, and the impact of different modes of feedback on their writing proficiency. Quite understandably, due to the distance learning system, they have experienced both modes of feedback delivery electronic and face-to-face. Consequently, they could help provide evident information and a deeper vision about which mode of feedback is more effective in enhancing second-year master students' dissertation writing. Hereupon, with no preliminary conditions or specific requirements, 50 second-year master students answered the questionnaire delivered online to 87 second-year Master students who are inscribed in four groups.

### **3.2.2. Aims of Students' Questionnaire**

The current questionnaire sought to explore second year master students' perspectives about the importance of supervisor feedback in the dissertation writing process. Furthermore, the questionnaire aimed at investigating the notion of whether students properly use their supervisor feedback to ameliorate their writing proficiency, in addition to exploring whether or not they are aware of its significant contribution in enhancing their writing quality. Additionally, the questionnaire aimed to further discover the feedback mode students prefer to receive. In this respect, it was administered to discover if students face problems or difficulties in receiving supervisor feedback. Finally, the ultimate purpose was to discover students' perspectives about which mode of feedback; electronic or face-to-face is more effective in enhancing their master dissertation writing.



### **3.2.3. Description of Students' Questionnaire**

The arrangement of the ongoing research questionnaire was elicited by the data displayed in the theoretical part of the research. Being exclusively the only tool for investigation, the online-administered questionnaire results were expected to either validate or reject the research hypothesis. It mainly consists of four basic sections with a total of thirty-six questions, which are mostly of a close-ended nature since multiple-choice and dichotomous yes/no format dominated. Evidently, this would facilitate both answering and analyzing the results. Nevertheless, few questions allow for short responses, exclusively justifications. This would significantly minimize ambiguities and generate accurate and perspicuous responses.

#### **Section One: General Information (Q1-Q3)**

The first section of the questionnaire stands as both students' profile constructor and an eliminator. It aims at gathering background knowledge information about master to students such as their level, preferences, and attitude vis-à-vis the English language.

#### **Section Two: Dissertation Writing (Q4-Q12)**

The second section of the questionnaire is allocated to the investigation of students writing proficiency and different concepts related to master dissertation writing. Particularly, it comprises questions concerning dissertation writing approaches, difficulties, types, and characteristics. Furthermore, it covers questions related to the role of an academic supervisor in master dissertation writing.

#### **Section Three: Enhancing Second Year Master Students Dissertation Writing Through Effective Feedback: Electronic versus Face-to-face Feedback (Q13-Q30)**

The third section of the questionnaire is predominantly dedicated to investigating students' perception of different feedback modes' effectiveness in enhancing their dissertation writing. It mainly incorporates questions that target the concept of effective feedback in general, its

characteristics, types, and modes of delivery. Besides, it consists of questions that deal with the electronic and face-to-face modes of supervisory feedback provision; in addition to, their characteristics, genres, inadequacies, and inconveniences. This section is ends with questions that attempt to explore students' perception of which mode of feedback is more effective in enhancing their dissertation writing electronic or face-to-face feedback.

### **3.2.4. The Administration of the Questionnaire**

Due to the coronavirus pandemic and the lockdown procedures, the questionnaire was only administered in its online format on June 11<sup>th</sup>, 2021 through an online Facebook, messenger, and email group of second-year Master students of 8 Mai1945 university, Guelma. The process of answering the questionnaire took about 10 days from June 11<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup>, 2021. Further, in the online version students were promised that their answers will remain confidential and that they will only be used for the sake of research, to avoid any misunderstanding or ambiguity issues, the language of the questionnaire was simple, clear, and direct. Unfortunately, the number of the respondents did not reach the expectations held; nonetheless, it was sufficient to validate the research results.

### **3.2.5. Analysis of Results and Findings from the Students' Questionnaire**

#### **Section One: General Information**

**Question One:** For how long have you been studying English?

**Table 3.1**

*Students' Educational Years*

Options	Number of students (N)	Percentage (%)
5 Years	18	60 %
6 Years	6	20 %

7 Years

6

20 %

As it is noticed in table 3.1, the majority of the students (18) have been studying English for 5 years with a percentage of (60%). Additionally, an equal percentage of 20% was given to 6 and 7 years where 6 students have picked this option. This indicates that they dropped a year or two, and they failed at some point in their academic career. In general, the results manifested in table 3.1 indicate that the sample have an advanced level in English, this evidently guarantees that their answers would be accurately generated.

**Question Two:** Was studying English your first choice?

**Table 3.2**

*Studying English as Students' First Choice*

Option	Number of Students (N)	Percentage (%)
Yes	35	63.3%
No	15	36.7 %
Total	50	100%

According to the findings demonstrated in the previous table 3.2, high percentage of students (63.3%) have answered that studying English was their first choice; however, 15 students (36.7%) have answered that it was not their first option at University. This entails that, the majority of the sample have chosen English as their first choice; thereupon, they will be more motivated and apt to learn the language and they will achieve better results than others who have not selected it.

**Question Three:** How could you describe your level in English?

**Table 3.3***Students' Level of English*

Options	Number of Students (N)	Percentage (%)
Poor	1	2%
Below Average	0	0 %
Average	8	16%
Above Average	25	50%
Good	16	32%

According to the results displayed in the table 3.4, (25) students assumed that their level in English is above average (50%). Moreover, (16) students claimed that they have a good level in English (32); however, the average level was selected by (8) students with (16%). As it is noticed, high percentage of students have above average. This indicates that the majority of the research sample have a good English level and this will positively reflects upon the results and the ongoing research findings. Further, a considerable percentage admitted that they have an excellent level this will guarantee varied responses for the current questionnaire.

**Section Two: Dissertation Writing**

**Question Four:** How could you evaluate your writing proficiency?

**Table 3.4***Students' Writing Proficiency*

Options	Number of Students (N)	Percentage (%)
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High	20	40%
Average	30	60%
Low	0	0%

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The table 3.4 demonstrates students writing proficiency results. As it indicates, more than half of the students (60%) answered that they have an average writing proficiency; further, a considerable percentage (40%) of students claimed that they have a high level of writing. Additionally none of them selected the third option (0%). The analysis of the results exhibited that the majority of the students have an average level of writing this signifies that they will accelerate receiving corrective and directive input from their supervisors, and this positively serve the current inquiry.

**Question Five:** Which factors could increase the effectiveness of your writing?

**Table 3.5**

*Factors Which Increase the Effectiveness of Students' Writing*

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Options	Number of Students (N)	Percentage (%)
Rich linguistic repertoire	18	36%
Advanced grammatical and contextual knowledge	9	18%
Elaborated ideas	8	16%
Organization	4	8%
Writing style	11	22%
Word choice	12	24%

Sentence fluency	12	24%
Convention	3	6%
All of the above	10	20%

---

As it is demonstrated in the table 3.5, seemingly, the most prominent feature of effective writing is rich linguistic repertoire since the highest percentage of students (36%) selected it. The second significant features are word choice and sentence fluency that received an equal percentage (24%). Successively, the writing style (22%), advanced grammatical and contextual knowledge (18%), elaborated ideas (16%), and the last two were convention and organization with (8% and 6%). However, 20% of the informants approximately one-fifth of the sample (10 students) claimed that all the mentioned characteristics are prominent features of effective writing. The precedent results suggests that having a rich vocabulary and linguistic repertoire; in addition to, possessing the compulsory knowledge about word choice and use and how to realize sentence fluency is what makes writing effective.

**Question Six:** Which approach to writing do you think is more effective?

**Table 3.6**

*The most Effective Approach to Teaching Writing*

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Options	Number of Students (N)	Percentage (%)
Product-oriented approach	21	42%
Process-oriented approach	29	58%

Total	50	100%
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From the results displayed in the table 3.6, it is noticed that merely above half of the students (58%) appointed the process-oriented approach arguing that the writing process is very important. and that knowing its stages and sub stages and all the details that have to be taken into consideration will enhance their writing efficiency. Further, they proclaimed that having sufficient knowledge about the writing process from the beginning until the end would ameliorate their writing efficacy. However, merely below half of them (42%) agreed upon the effectiveness of product-oriented approach and advocated that having a sample to follow is more helpful; further, they claimed that the process-oriented approach works better with beginners; hence, as advanced learners product-oriented approach enhances their autonomous learning. In the light of the results and students arguments provided it is evident to say that both approaches are effective and that each of them targets a different element of the writing process. Moreover, both of them may lead to an effective writing if used appropriately in a proper context.

**Question Seven:** What type of Academic writing you are using to write your master dissertation?

**Table 3.7**

*Types of Academic Writing Used to Write Master Dissertation*

Type	Number of Students (N)	Percentage (%)
Descriptive	11	22%
Analytical	17	34%

Persuasive	9	18%
Expository	13	26%

The results displayed in table 3.7 reveals that the analytical academic writing is the most type used by students (17), with the percentage of (34%), followed by the expository (26%) and the descriptive (22%). However, the persuasive writing is the less used type of academic writing since only 9 students use it with a percentage of (13.3%). The results retreated from table 3.7 denote that the most used types of academic writing are the analytical and the expository as they are regarded as more advanced types of writing that require advanced critical thinking skills and writing competencies.

**Question Eight:** What type of dissertation you have adopted?

**Table 3.8**

*Types of Dissertation Adopted by Master Students*

Options	Number of Students (N)	Percentage (%)
Empirical dissertation	26	52%
Non-Empirical dissertation	24	48%
Total	50	100%

The table 3.8 shows the findings of exploring the most used type of dissertation. It reveals that almost half of the students (52%) are adopting the empirical type of dissertation writing; however, less than half (48%) are using the non-empirical type. The results showed in this table perfectly match with the ones retrieved from the previous one (table 3.8). Where it was found that the



expository writing used in conducting the non-empirical type and the analytical writing used in writing the empirical type are the most used types of academic writing. Consequently, this implies that the research sample have miscellaneous dissertation fields and themes which lead to the use of distinct types and structures of dissertation. This would create a variation in the results and findings of the current research.

**Question Nine:** What is the theme of your dissertation?

**Table 3.9**

*Themes of Master Dissertation*

Options	Number of Students (N)	Percentage (%)
Linguistics	18	36%
Civilization	12	24%
Literature	15	30%
Translation	4	8%

According to the results of the survey conducted on the themes used in master dissertation presented in the table 3.9, it is noticed that almost 18 students with the percentage of (36%) are writing their dissertation in linguistics, whereas the remaining ones are divided between civilization (24%), literature (30%) and translation with (8%). In the light of these results, it is evident to say that the majority of the students are carrying their researches in different fields and with different themes, this variation entails that the students will provide rich answers from different perspectives and research areas.

**Question Ten:** How much have you progressed in your dissertation writing process?

**Table 3.10***Students Progress in Master Dissertation Writing*

Progress	Number of Students (N)	Percentage (%)
Chapter one	14	28%
Chapter two	25	50%
Chapter three	11	22%

The results manifested in the above table 3.10 shows that half of the students (50%) are writing their second chapter of the dissertation; however, (28%) are in the first chapter, and only 11 students have reached the third chapter with (22%) percent. In this regard, it is highly appropriate to say the majority of them have progressed in their dissertation writing and this entails that they have the sufficient knowledge and experience to give accurate answers in the present study.

**Question Eleven: a-** Do you face problems in your dissertation writing?

**Table 3.11***Facing Problems in Dissertation writing*

Option	Number of Students (N)	Percentage (%)
Yes	36	72%
No	14	28%
Total	50	100%

According to the results displayed in the table 3.11, it is obvious that merely the majority of the students (72%) face difficulties in their dissertation writing and only (28%) claimed that they do not have problems in their writing process. In total, the results indicate that large number of students encounter writing problems, this would give deeper insight about these problems nature; in addition to, the writing process, its common obstacles and the effective ways to overcome them.

**b-** If yes, what type of problems you frequently face?

**Table 3.12**

*Most Frequent Problems of Master Dissertation Writing*

Options	Number of Students (N)	Percentage (%)
Methodological	16	32%
Grammatical	8	16%
Syntactical	6	12%
Lexical	9	18%
All of the above	5	10%
Others	7	14%

As it is shown in table 3.12, the most frequent writing problems faced by master students is at the methodological level with the percentage of (32%), where 16 of them claimed that they face methodological problems; whereas 18% students claimed that the most faced problem is at the lexical level. Additionally, merely 16% students face difficulties at the level of grammar and syntax. However, 14% of the participants declared that they do not face all the above-mentioned problems; instead, they claimed that their most frequent problems are the lack of sources related to

their research variables, in addition to time management and organization skills. Further, they declare that they have limitation problems, as they cannot keep their writing as precise and concise as possible. Put in nutshell, the most frequent problems faced in the dissertation writing process are methodological, lexical, and referential. This indicates that the academic supervisor have a crucial role in helping the students to overcome those problems and reduce the amount of errors related to these difficulties. In other words, having such difficulties will require the intervention of an academic supervisor.

**Question Twelve:** What are the characteristics of a good dissertation?

**Table 3.13**

*The Characteristics of Good Dissertation*

Options	Number of Students (N)	Percentage (%)
Originality	14	28%
Relevance	12	24%
Manageability of time and research goals	7	14%
Research validity	6	12%
All of the above	12	24%

In accordance to the findings presented in the table 3.13, the originality of the conducted research is the most significant characteristic of a good dissertation. 14 students picked it out of five other options with a percentage of (28%), whereas (24%) of them agreed that the relevance of the conducted research and its additive contribution to the field of research is what characterizes the good dissertation. Similar percentage was received by the fifth features, where 12 students

assumed that originality, relevance, manageability, and validity are the characteristics of good dissertation. Apparently, time and research goal management (14%) and research validity (12%) have received less intention from the students as contributing factors in achieving a well-elaborated dissertation. In the light of these results, it is evident to say that originality and relevance are the most prominent features of a good dissertation. Further, realizing these features will call for an experienced academic supervisor assistance.

**Question Thirteen:** Which role among the following do you think a good academic supervisor should perform?

**Table 3.14**

*Roles of Academic Supervisor*

Options	Number of Students (N)	Percentage (%)
Guide	15	30%
Trainer	1	2%
Supporter	10	20%
Informer	3	6%
Motivator	0	0%
All of the above	21	42%

As it is demonstrated in the table 3.14, merely half (21) of the students assumed that an academic supervisor should perform the role of a: guider, trainer, supporter role, informer, and motivator with a percentage of (42%). However, 15 of them agreed upon the guider role, where (30%) claimed that a good academic supervisor should stand as a guide during the dissertation writing process. Almost equally, 10 of them with (20%) believe that a good academic supervisor should

be a supporter. While only few students (3 or 4) opt for the informer and trainer roles. Unexpectedly none of the students opted for the motivator role of an academic supervisor. These results indicate that the majority of the students agree that the role of the academic supervisor cannot be limited to one role and that he/she should perform a variety of roles according to his/her supervisee needs and expectations.

### **Section Three: Enhancing Second Year Master Students Dissertation Writing Through Effective Feedback: Electronic versus Face-to-face Feedback.**

**Question Fourteen:** Do you know what supervisory feedback is?

**Table 3.15**

*Students Familiarity with the Term Supervisory Feedback*

Option	Number of Students (N)	Percentage (%)
Yes	38	76%
No	12	24%
Total	50	100%

The table 3.15 indicates that 76% of the research sample are aware of what exactly supervisor feedback is since 38 students answered that they know what supervisory feedback is. However, almost 24% of the participants do not actually know what is meant by supervisor feedback. In total, according to the results displayed in the table, it is evident to claim that the majority of the research sample have a clear idea about supervisor feedback; this implies that they have the required knowledge to provide accurate and insightful responses to the present questionnaire.

**Question Fifteen:** How often do you receive feedback from your supervisor?

**Table 3.16***Frequency of Supervisor Feedback Reception*

Options	Number of Students (N)	Percentage (%)
Always	13	26 %
Sometimes	25	50%
Rarely	9	18%
Never	3	6%

The results displayed in table 3.16, show that half of the research sample (50%), almost 25 students declared that they sometimes receive feedback from their supervisors, while 13 (26%) of them assumed that they always receive feedback from their supervisors. Also, 11 of them responded by rarely (18%) or never (6%). In this regard, it is appropriate to claim that the majority of the research sample receive feedback irregularly; this indicates the existence of feedback provision difficulties that resulted in hindering its frequent reception.

**Question Sixteen:** What types of feedback you frequently receive from your supervisor?

**Table 3.17***The most Frequent Types of Supervisors' Feedback*

Options	Number of Students (N)	Percentage (%)
Informal	11	22%
Formal	17	34%

Formative	5	10%
Summative	2	4%
Constructive	13	26%

---

The results presented in the table 3.17, demonstrate that 17 students receive formal feedback from their supervisors, 34% of them selected the formal type of feedback provision. Almost equally, 13 students opted for the constructive type of feedback, yet merely two-fifth of them (26%) claimed that they receive constructive feedback from their academic supervisors. Further, 11 students (22%) agreed upon the informal feedback while only 10% of the students selected formative and 4% selected summative feedback. The results indicate that three main feedback types are more likely used by the academic supervisors informal, formal, and constructive. This implies that these types are found to be more understandable, appreciated, and effective in enhancing students' dissertation writing.

**Question Seventeen:** To be effective, supervisory feedback has to be:

**Table 3.18**

*Characteristics of Effective Supervisor Feedback*

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Options	Number of Students (N)	Percentage (%)
Specific	4	8%
Timely	8	16%
Meaningful	8	16%
Goal-oriented	14	28%
Constructive	6	12%



Valuable	10	20%
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The table 3.18 indicates that 28% of the students asserted that supervisor feedback has to be goal-oriented. In other terms, an effective feedback should intend to reduce the distance towards achieving the intended goal that is in this case a well-structured dissertation. Further, 10 students with (20%) claimed that effective feedback has to be valuable, although it is timely and meaningful received the same attention from 16% of the students. Unexpectedly, few students (12% and 8%) opted for the specific and constructive features of effective feedback. The results indicate that effective feedback should be goal-oriented and provided in meaningful, valuable, and timely manner. Put differently, these characteristics should be taken into account by teachers when generating feedback to enhance its efficacy.

**Question Eighteen:** What are the main function of supervisory feedback? (more than one option)

**Table 3.19**

*The main Functions of Supervisor Feedback*

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Options	Number of Students (N)	Percentage (%)
Facilitative	15	30%
Corrective	18	36%
Directional	21	42%
Motivational	12	24%

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The results presented in table 3.19 indicate that the highest percentage of students (42%) agreed upon the directional function of supervisor feedback, while (36%) of them opted for the corrective function of supervisor feedback. Further less attention was given to facilitative (30%) and motivational (24%) functions of feedback. In this respect, it is evident to affirm that the majority of the sample appreciate the directional instructions from their supervisor. This implies that the main functions of effective feedback are put in this order directional, corrective, facilitative, and motivational.

**Question Nineteen:** To what extent could supervisory feedback improve your dissertation written proficiency?

**Table 3.20**

*The Extent of Supervisor Feedback Influence on Dissertation Writing Quality*

Options	Number of Students (N)	Percentage (%)
To a very limited extent	0	0%
To a limited extent	7	14%
To a high extent	26	52%
To a very high extent	17	34%

According to the findings reviewed in the table 3.20, more than half of the sample (52%) accredited that supervisor feedback influences their dissertation writing to a high extent, while 17 of them with (34%) assumed that it improves their dissertation writing to a high extent. However, 14% of them supposed that it has a limited influence on their writing quality. In total, it is apparent that the plurality of the research sample believe that supervisor feedback has a huge influence on

their dissertation writing. This allude that they designate receiving feedback from their supervisors and that they are aware of its significant influence on their dissertation writing amelioration.

**Question Twenty: a-** Do you receive electronic feedback?

**Table 3.21**

*Electronic Feedback Reception*

Options	Number of Students (N)	Percentage (%)
Yes	34	68%
No	16	32%
Total	50	100%

As the results presented in table 3.21 uncover, the majority of students (68%) approved that they receive feedback from their supervisors through electronic mediums, hence (32%) of them denied the reception of such feedback type. Generally speaking, large amount of students; 34 receive electronic feedback from their supervisors. This denotes that they are more or less familiar with this mode of feedback provision and they have the imperative background and experience that enable them to give accurate and reliable responses to the current research investigation.

**b-** If yes, do you receive it

**Table 3.22**

*Types of Feedback Reception*

Option	Number of Students (N)	Percentage (%)
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Synchronously	15	30%
Asynchronously	35	70%
Total	50	100%

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The results displayed in the table 3.22 mirror the investigation made on the use of asynchronous and synchronous e-feedback. As it is indicated, the most used type of feedback provision is the asynchronous type (70%) since 35 students opted for this option. While (30%) of them receive it in a synchronous manner. From these results, it is highly relevant to say that the majority of academic supervisors generate feedback on their students' drafts in a delayed manner. This highlights the fact that students appreciate timely feedback as indicated in the results of the table 3.19. Further, this reinforces the assumption that effective feedback should be provided as soon as possible.

**Question Twenty-one:** Does your supervisor provide corrective feedback in:

**Table 3.23**

*Types of Supervisory Corrective e-Feedback*

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Options	Number of Students (N)	Percentage (%)
Direct CF	19	38%
Indirect CF	11	22%
Direct-indirect CF	20	40%

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As manifested in the table 3.23, 40% of students declared that they receive direct-indirect corrective feedback from their supervisors; while, 38% of them claimed that they receive direct

corrective feedback. Meanwhile, 22% students opted for the indirect corrective feedback. In the light of these results, it is safe to say that the majority of supervisors go for the integration of direct and indirect errors correction to enhance their students' critical thinking skills and self-correction. Whereas others use each method separately according to the type of error committed.

**Question Twenty-two:** Are you familiar with computer generating feedback software and applications?

**Table 3.24**

*Students Familiarity with Computer Generated Feedback Software*

Options	Number of Students (N)	Percentage (%)
E-mails	48	96%
Automated feedback	2	4%
Corpora-based feedback	0	0%

As it is disclosed in the table 3.24, almost all students (96%) are familiar with receiving feedback through e-mails, however only two students (4%) know automated feedback generators while none of them (0%) have been exposed to corpora-based feedback. This indicates that the most used e-feedback generator is the e-mail application, while their academic supervisors have never used automated and corpora-based feedback generator. This may be interpreted either by the complexity of these software usage or by supervisors ignorance that such software exist.

**Question Twenty-three:** what are the most frequent problems you face with e-feedback reception?

**Table 3.25**

*The most Frequent Problems in e-Feedback Reception*

Options	Number of Students (N)	Percentage (%)
Access and materials	16	32%
Timing	12	24%
Personal interaction	11	22%
Comprehensibility	8	16%
More details	8	16%

The obtained results from table 3.25 show that the major problem faced by students is the access and the materials required in the e-feedback reception (32%). Unexpectedly, the second one is timing (24%) although it is assumed that e-feedback can be generated or received at any time. Moreover, 11 students claimed that e-feedback lacks interaction (22%) while 8 students equally selected comprehensibility and details with the lowest percentage (16%). In the previous results, the majority of student have network and digital materials issues this lead to placing such emphases on access, materials, and timing. While the last three options are more or less inter-related since the lack of interaction leads to insufficient details, which in turn reduces the comprehensibility of supervisor feedback. This implies that supervisors should pay more attention to these features to enhance their feedback effectiveness.

**Question Twenty- four: a-**Do you receive face-to-face feedback?

**Table 3.26**

*Face-to-face Feedback Reception*

Options	Number of Students (N)	Percentage (%)
Yes	32	64%
No	18	36%
Total	50	100%

A survey on students' reception of feedback through the traditional face-to-face medium results are shown in the table 3.26. Apparently, the most the students (64%) receive face-to-face feedback from their supervisors since 32 of them opted for the first option. This denotes that they are familiar with this mode of feedback delivery. However, 18 of them rejected the face-to-face provision of supervisor feedback (36%) may be because their supervisors adopt a different mode of feedback delivery. In total, these results accent the fact that the majority of the research sample are familiar with face-to-face supervisor feedback, and this entails that they will give accurate results based on their experience with this mode. Hence, their answers will be of high significance for the validation of the current research results.

**b-** If yes, what type of face-to-face feedback you usually receive?

**Table 3.27**

*Type of Face-to-face Feedback Received by Master Students*

Options	Number of Students (N)	Percentage (%)
Oral	16	32%
Written	8	16%
Both	26	52%

According to the results displayed in the table 3.27, above half of the research sample (52%) claimed that they receive both oral and written face-to-face feedback from their supervisors; whereas 16 of them proclaimed that they receive only oral feedback (32%). just 8 students receive written feedback (16%) only. In the light of the results revealed in the above table, it is evident to claim that academic supervisors use both types of face-to-face feedback oral and written. This implies that the answers provided by the research sample will be of high significance as they are based on their experience.

**Question Twenty-five:** Which type of face-to-face written feedback does your supervisor use the most?

**Table 3.28**

*The most Used Type of Written Feedback by Supervisors*

Options	Number of Students (N)	Percentage (%)
Explicit	16	32%
Implicit	3	6%
Focused	13	29%
Unfocused	8	16%
All of the above	4	8%

According to the findings displayed in the table 3.28, 16 respondents selected explicit feedback (32%), as they receive direct error indication and correction, and 13 chose focused feedback (26%) as they receive feedback on pre-determined error types. Moreover 8 students picked up the third



option, where (16%) of the respondents selected unfocused feedback. Additionally, 4 students claimed that they receive feedback in all the mentioned types (8%). Further, the lowest percentage was of the implicit feedback with (6.8%) due to that fact that implicit feedback does not help in the error correction of dissertation drafts as students expect to receive more direct and clear input. In the light of these results, it is evident to herald that the academic supervisors accord a considerable amount of significance to focused/explicit feedback. Consequently, this realizes effective feedback main feature that is to be provided directly in relation to a particular error type, which would facilitate the error correction process and would reduce the amount of the committed errors by time.

**Question Twenty-six:** Which level of your written drafts does your supervisor feedback target?

**Table 3.29**

*Levels that Supervisor Feedback Targets*

Options	Number of Students (N)	Percentage (%)
Surface level (methodological, organization, form)	12	20%
Content level (content, grammar, vocabulary)	13	30%
Both	25	50%

As it is noticed from the findings of the table 3.29, half of the respondent (50%) asserted that they receive feedback from their supervisor, which targets both levels, while (30%) claimed that they receive feedback regarding the content level of their drafts. Finally, (20%) of them declared that they receive feedback on methodology, organization, and form. The analysis of these results show that most of supervisors' feedback target both levels of students' draft, yet there are cases

when only one level is corrected. This suggests that both levels are equally important and that targeting one particular level dates back to students' level of proficiency and at what level errors are committed.

**Question Twenty-seven:** What are the most frequent problems you face with face-to-face feedback reception?

**Table 3.30**

*The most Frequent Problems of Face-to-face Feedback Reception*

Options	Number of Students (N)	Percentage (%)
Readability	12	24%
Timing	14	28%
Meeting	18	36%
Confidentiality	6	12%

According to the results presented in the table 3.30, (36%) claimed that they have problem with organizing meetings and workshops with their supervisors, and (28%) said that they have problems with the suitable time of feedback reception. This may be related to the lock adown resulted from the corona virus epidemic; students face traveling problems and find difficulty in meeting their supervisors regularly. Moreover, (24%) claimed that they face difficulties in reading their supervisor written feedback; this may be due to their supervisors' handwriting quality or the use of sings and abbreviations to refer to error types. Only (12%) faced confidentiality problems may be due to the lack of privacy or meeting rooms. Hence, the analysis of these results indicates that the research sample in total have problems with timing and organizing meetings and the readability of

the communicated input; thus, this will negatively affect the quality of feedback provided and leads to hindering its effectiveness.

**Question Twenty-eight:** Which mode of feedback reflects the following characteristics of effective feedback?

**Table 3.31**

*Characteristics of Effective Feedback Realized in Different Modes of Feedback Delivery*

Option	Number of Student		Percentage (%)	
	F-T-F	ELEC	F-T-F	ELEC
Accessibility	17	33	34%	66%
Legibility	24	26	48%	52%
Timelessness	18	32	36%	64%
Inter-personal	25	25	50%	50%
Quality	28	22	56%	44%
Feed forward	24	26	48%	52%
Readability	22	28	44%	56%
Interaction	30	20	60%	40%
Constructiveness	23	27	46%	54%

According to the findings manifested in the table 3.31, it is shown that the sample of the research had the opportunity to select between the two modes of feedback (electronic and face-to-face feedback) which one reflects the mentioned characteristics of effective feedback. As it is shown,

(66%) of the respondents agreed that electronic feedback is more “accessible” than face-to-face feedback which was picked by (34%) of the students, moreover, (52%) claimed that electronic feedback is more “legible” than face-to-face feedback which was selected by (48%) of the students. Additionally, (64%) of the respondents agreed that electronic feedback is “timeless” unlike face-to-face feedback which was chosen by (36%) of the respondents. Besides, they gave equal responses to electronic and face-to-face feedback as both incorporate “inter-personal” interaction (50%). While, (56%) of the sample argued that face-to-face feedback has more “quality” than e-feedback that was picked by (44%) of the students. Further, (52%) of the students agreed, that e-feedback has more futuristic intention with “feed-forward” than face-to-face feedback that was selected by (48%) of the research sample. Moreover, (56%) of the students selected e-feedback for being more “readable” than face-to face feedback which was favored by (44%) of the respondents. Hence, they claimed that face-to-face feedback (60%) is more “interactive” than e-feedback that was opted for by (40%) of the students, whereas (54%) of the research sample asserted that e-feedback is more “constructive” than face-to-face feedback which was selected by (46%) of the students. In the light of these comparative results, it is evident to say that the research sample agreed that electronic feedback is (accessible, legible, timely, inter-personal, readable and constructive); however, face-to-face feedback is (inter-personal, interactive, and has quality). This entails that e-feedback is more effective because it has more characteristics of effective feedback than face-to-face feedback.

**Question Twenty-nine: a-**Which mode of feedback does your supervisor usually use?

**Table 3.32**

*Modes of Feedback Used by Supervisors*

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Options	Number of Students (N)	Percentage (%)
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Electronic feedback	23	46%
Face-to-face feedback	7	14%
Both	20	40%

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As shown in the table 3.32, (46%) of the students claimed that they receive only e-feedback from their supervisor. This denotes that they are exposed to such mode of feedback. Hence, it can be interpreted by its accessibility or facility to generate. While, (40%) of them asserted that they receive electronic and face-to-face feedback. Only 7 (14%) students said that they receive face-to-face feedback from their supervisors. The results indicate that the students are familiar with both modes of feedback, they have the sufficient knowledge, and the appropriate experience to decide which mode is more effective.

**b-** Which one do you prefer?

**Table 3.33**

*Students' Preferred Mode of Feedback*

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Options	Number of Students (N)	Percentage (%)
Electronic feedback	15	30%
Face-to-face feedback	29	58%
Both	6	12%

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Through this question, students were asked about their preferable mode of feedback delivery. The results displayed in the table 3.33 reflect the sample students' preference, where it is

unexpectedly noticed that above half of them (58%) prefer to receive face-to-face feedback, while (30%) prefer to receive e-feedback. However, only 6 students prefer both modes of feedback delivery. In total, it is appropriate to say that the research sample prefers to receive supervisory feedback through the traditional face-to-face mode.

**Question Thirty: a-**Do different modes of feedback provision have different impact on dissertation writing quality?

**Table 3.34**

*Students' Perception about the Impact of Different Feedback Modes on Dissertation Writing Quality*

Options	Number of Students (N)	Percentage (%)
Yes	35	70%
No	15	30%

This question's responses have a huge significance on the validity of the ongoing research. Besides, from the results presented in the table 3.34, a large number of students 35 agreed that different modes of feedback delivery have different impact on dissertation writing quality with a percentage of (70%). However, only 15 students believe that there is no difference between the impacts of electronic or face-to-face modes of feedback with a percentage of (30%). In general, this indicates that the assumption that different feedback mode have different impact on dissertation writing quality and proficiency improvement is valid.

b- If yes, which mode of feedback provision you think is more effective in enhancing master students dissertation writing

**Table 3. 35**

*The most Effective Mode of Feedback Provision in Enhancing Dissertation writing*

Options	Number of Students (N)	Percentage (%)
Electronic feedback	18	36%
Face-to-face feedback	32	64%

This question is highly related to the purpose of conducting this research and it reinforces this study's significance as it aims to explore which mode of feedback is found to be more effective in enhancing master dissertation writing. From the results communicated in the table 3.35, (64%) of the students believe that face-to-face feedback is more effective in enhancing their master dissertation writing. They justified their preference by claiming that face-to-face feedback "assured the effective transmission of supervisor feedback" as it integrates the use of "physical and facial expressions" with the verbal input and this enhances" the comprehensibility of the generated feedback". Moreover, they advocated that face-to-face feedback is more effective as it "allows supervisee to ask for further clarifications" and "discuss the types of errors, the reasons behind committing such errors, and the applicable correction". Further, they perceived face-to-face feedback as "more informative" as it incorporates details and explanations. Further, arguing that as it "incorporates one-to-one interaction" this allows supervisors to assure "the proper apprehension of their feedback". By way of contrast, (36%) argued that electronic feedback is more effective as it facilitates the reception of feedback at any time and at any place. Besides, they maintained that they "found it helpful" as they live far from the university and "meeting their supervisors regularly is highly difficult due to several reasons", consequently, they found "e-

feedback the appropriate alternative”. Further, they advocated that with “the new social media applications such as messenger, viber, or whatsapp”, e-feedback is becoming more “interactive, informative, and detailed”. Moreover, they claimed that e-feedback can be “easily referred back” i.e. they can go back to supervisors notes at any time as it is “organized, understandable and readable input” with no difficulties such as readability, remembering oral notes, or losing feedback papers. In addition, they claimed that manually recording teachers’ oral or written feedback is very tiring, time and effort consuming process. However, electronic mediums made it easy to generate, receive, and retrieve supervisor input regardless of the time or place. In general, the results indicated that face-to-face feedback is more effective although the comparative results were in favor of e-feedback effectiveness (66.6%) as indicated in the previous table 3.32. In the light of these results, it is unanticipatedly evident to say that the majority of the research sample believe that face-to face feedback is more effective than e-feedback in enhancing second year master students dissertation writing.

**Question Thirty-one:** Feel free to add any further comments or suggestions concerning the current research.

Half of the research sample added their comments and suggestions in this section of the questionnaire. In addition to good luck wishes and compliments on the originality and the value of information unveiled by the end of this research, students provided some comments that are summarized in the following points:

- In fact, supervisory feedback should be perceived as a process that has many stages and sub stages; besides, it cannot attain its purpose unless both supervisor and supervisee collaborate. Apparently, feedback or its types and modes are not what promote the dissertation writing quality; hence, it is the collaboration, organization, self-discipline, and support between the supervisor and supervisee.



- The research problem could have been tackled from a different perspective away from comparison, as face-to-face feedback and electronic feedback are complimentary for each other they can be used in parallel to enhance the dissertation writing process. In distance learning settings or in regular learning setting, it is more effective to integrate both modes in the feedback provision process.
- Supervisees should have a training on the dissertation writing process during the academic year, there should be a module designed to form students in the dissertation writing process and allow them to experience all its stages; so that they have sufficient knowledge to conduct a totally independent research.
- As a matter of fact, feedback is important in the dissertation writing process, but most importantly, supervisor and supervisee should agree upon a pre-determined schedules and research goals; so that they will be able to manage the whole process in its pre-set timeframe.
- It is a very interesting topic and enjoyable questions to answer. However, it was somehow long few questions with justifications would have been better.
- Quit understandably, different modes of feedback have different influence on students writing proficiency, yet they should be appropriately used each in its fitting circumstances. In other words, some students cannot regularly attend workshops, so their supervisor should consider the use of e-feedback more than face-to-face feedback and vice versa.

### **3.3 Summary of Results and Findings from the Students' Questionnaire**

Grounded on the precedent findings gathered from the students' questionnaire, the analysis of the first section reveals that the majority of the students picked English as "their first choice"; this may make them more apt and motivated to study it and achieve an advanced level in it. These results were proved by the findings of the third question, where the majority of them "have been studying for 5years at the University". This by all means indicates that they have a good English

level and they have not failed any academic year. Undoubtedly, the results of the fourth questions validate the findings and interpretations of the former questions. The analysis of the fourth question showed that the majority of the research sample selected “above average and excellent English level”; advantageously, the devastating majority of the participants have advanced level in English. Hence, they provided more constructive and valid comments.

Section two entitled “dissertation writing”, the diagnosis of this section findings uncovered that the majority of the research sample have either “average to high writing proficiency”. Besides, they claimed that “possessing the compulsory linguistic repertoire, acquiring the accurate grammatical and lexical standards of the target language; in addition to, picking the exact meaningful words and arranging them in fluent sentences is what enhances the effectiveness of their writing”. Moreover, they claimed that “the process-oriented approach and the product-oriented approach” to writing are “both effective” in ameliorating students writing proficiency if “used appropriately in the adequate context”.

Furthermore, the results of the ongoing inquiry revealed that there is “a diversity in the academic writing types and a variety of dissertations themes, topics, and fields”. Such diversity ensures the accuracy and validity of the responses generated by the research sample concerning the investigated research problem. Likewise, the majority of them “proceeded in their dissertation writing process”; favorably, this allowed them to provide reliable answers based on their expertise.

For good measures, the majority of students claimed that “they faced methodological, grammatical, and lexical problems”; further, others argued that the most frequent difficulties they face are the “lack of sources and inability to narrow their research”. Additionally, the majority of them “agreed that good dissertation should be original, relevant, and provide valid results”. They also advocated that fact that “an academic supervisor contribution” to the dissertation writing

process “cannot be limited in one role hence, he perform a verity of roles depending on their students’ needs”.

The third section is concerned with “enhancing second year master students dissertation writing through effective feedback: electronic versus face-to-face feedback”. The exploration of this section revealed many significant data and findings about the current research. The majority of students “know what supervisory feedback is”. In addition, they are “familiar with the electronic and the face-to-face modes” of feedback provision. This contributed significantly to the accuracy and validity of the responses they provided to the present inquiry. Likewise, they asserted that the most common types of feedback they frequently receive from their supervisors are, “informal and constructive”. Further, they believe that effective feedback should be “goal-oriented, valuable, timely and meaningful”. However, they proclaimed that the main function of supervisor feedback is “corrective and directional”.

The analysis of student’s responses varied from “high to very high extent” concerning the extent to which supervisor feedback improves their writing proficiency. Furthermore, the findings of the third section entailed that the majority of research sample are “familiar with electronic and face-to-face mode of feedback delivery”. Their responses indicated that “the most frequent types of e-feedback” they often receive are “asynchronous, direct-indirect corrective feedback mainly through e-mails”. Additionally, it is evident to say that “the most frequent face-to-face feedback” received by the majority of the research sample are “oral and written face-to-face feedback”; further, they preferred the “explicit and focused feedback” as it provides them with the direct errors type and the applicable why to correct it. The majority of them further proclaimed that they receive feedback on “the surface and the content level” of their written drafts. Besides, they claimed, “the most frequent problems they face with e-feedback reception” are “accessibility and materials, personal

interaction, and lack of details”. Whereas with “face-to-face feedback” they faced difficulty in “readability, meetings and timing, and confidentiality”.

The last questions in this section were directly related to the research problem and hypothesis. Analyzing students’ responses lead to the following results. It was revealed that “Electronic feedback is more effective than face-to-face feedback” because it has “six features among nine of effective feedback” while face-to-face has only “four features”. Further, the majority of the research sample declared that they receive supervisory feedback “through both modes electronic and face-to-face”. The analysis of their preferences showed that they “prefer receiving feedback through face-to-face mediums”, as they believe it to be more “informative, detailed, interactive, and constructive”. Moreover, the majority of the research sample believe that “different modes of feedback have different influences on their master dissertation writing”. Further, concerning the “most effective mode of feedback delivery”; unexpectedly, the results uncovered that a tremendous majority of the research sample assume that “face-to-face feedback is more effective in enhancing master students’ dissertation writing”. By further arguing, that face-to-face feedback allows “one-to-one interaction” to take place and this pave the way for “more information and more details” to be provided about their errors correction process. Moreover, they assumed that “the integration of both verbal and non-verbal” language enhances “the comprehensibility” of the provided input, which “promotes its effectiveness”.

All in all, the current inquiry tended to explore which mode of feedback is more effective in enhancing master students dissertation writing. Results showed that face-to-face feedback is more effective than e-feedback in enhancing aster students’ dissertation writing. Consequently, we can claim that the second hypothesis of the research is confirmed.

## **Conclusion**

The third chapter is entirely devoted to the investigation of the practical framework of the ongoing inquiry; it has put under examination the research hypothesis via utilizing students' questionnaire. The analysis of the findings from the students' questionnaire has revealed that the majority of the participants are aware of supervisor assistance in promoting the quality of their dissertation. Further, they are familiar with different modes of feedback reception; hence, they have some experience concerning the effectiveness of both types. Further, the research has uncovered that master two English students are conscious about the characteristics, types, and modes of effective feedback. The primary investigation revealed that e-feedback is more effective statistically speaking. Though, exploring students' perception revealed that face-to-face feedback is more effective in enhancing second year master students dissertation writing due to a variety of reasons such as one-to-one interaction, integration of verbal and non-verbal cues, and the richness of information and details.

## **General Conclusion**

### **1. Concluding Remarks**

The current inquiry has attempted to extensively investigate which mode of feedback is more effective in enhancing second year master students dissertation writing. Likewise, it has intended to theoretically and practically delve into the research topic; henceforth, provide answers for the research questions and put its hypothesis under experimentation. Each of the two first chapters has exclusively uncovered one of the research variables and provided an extensive detailed description of concepts, approaches, and notions in relation. However, the last chapter was more pragmatic. It has predominantly tackled the practical part of the present research data gathering and analysis. Whereby, the findings have revealed students' perceptions about different modes of supervisory feedback provision, and their different impact on their dissertation writing proficiency. Moreover, accurate responses to the pre-set research questions have been achieved. First, students are aware of the significant impact supervisory feedback has on enhancing their writing proficiency; further, it was revealed that different modes of feedback provision have different impact on master dissertation writing quality. Finally, face-to-face supervisor feedback is more effective than electronic feedback in enhancing second year master students dissertation writing.

### **2. Pedagogical Implications and Recommendations**

Having the compulsory knowledge about types of feedback and its modes of provision is very important in enhancing academic supervisors' efficacy. Hence, it is necessary for EFL master supervisors to be aware of the vital role their corrective and instructional comments have in assisting, promoting, and enhancing their supervisees' research skills and competences

amelioration. Further, in order to generate effective feedback, supervisors should have an in-depth and clear idea about their supervisee's preferences, needs, strengths, and weaknesses in the whole research conducting processes. Consequently, this will allow them to provide effective, constructive feedback. Furthermore, they have to be aware of all the difficulties their students face with feedback reception, and develop the applicable solutions to overcome them. Most importantly, supervisors and supervisees should agree upon a pre-determined schedule that comprises a detailed timeframe for the whole dissertation writing process that set the appropriate time allocated for each stages and research goals. The followings are some pedagogical implications and suggestions for future research projects:

- Master students should receive a training on dissertation writing process so that they would be able to go through the whole process individually. This training should cover all the stages and sub-stages of this research process to provide students with the theoretical and instructional bases before involving them in the actual performance.
- Feedback is highly beneficial if used in the proper manner. Hence, supervisors need to consider the integration of more than one type or mode of feedback to share their expertise and assist their supervisees.
- Organizing workshops to share other second year master students' tips and experiences that may be beneficial for other novice researchers.
- Creating a data base website similar to Academia or Researchgate by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research that guarantee the accessibility and freeness of the sources provided such as books, articles, and the like to facilitate the online research and retrieval of information.

- Supervisors as expert researchers should assist their supervisees in accessing to some information retrieval websites and provide them with all the online research techniques to reduce their suffer from the lack of sources.
- Consider the integration of feedback provision techniques in the teacher training, in addition to, organizing workshops and trainings about the use of computer-based facilities to enhance supervisors' efficacy.
- Academic supervisors should diversify the types and modes of feedback used to generate instructional comments on their supervisees' drafts.
- Dissertation writing process is not only about feedback provision and reception, yet it is a very vast field that includes a variety of skills and competences.
- Feedback is crucial in the teaching-learning process, yet students do not use it as an educational instrument to enhance their leaning and improve their educational level. Further, teachers should rise their students' awareness of its importance and its contribution in boosting their learning outcomes.
- Due to the current situation and its constraints, this study was only explored from second year master students' perception via using a questionnaire. Substantially, the use of other tools like experiment, interview or analysis; in addition to, exploring the perception of other research samples like teachers' may be of significant value, it may help drawing a fuller and clearer image about the topic for future similar interests.
- An in-depth theoretical investigation of the two variables was provided in addition to, results and findings exclusively built upon students' answers. The use of analysis, experiments, or observations may widen the current research horizons and reveal lots of credible information about the effectiveness of different modes of supervisory feedback provision.

### **3. Limitations of the Study**



As any original research projects, this study had its share of obstacles and difficulties. The comings are the most remarkable limitations encountered during the whole research process.

- Collecting valid, authentic, reliable, and accessible resources was the major difficulty. Since the topic of the research is an original one, although there is a wealth of research on the general concepts, little was done in investigating different feedback modes effectiveness. Consequently, finding related data and legitimate sources was a very tiring task.
- The corona virus pandemic and the distance learning settings made the use of the questionnaire's hard version and the use of other research tools such as experiment or observation out of questions. Consequently, it was only provided online. Yet, many people just ignored the Facebook posts, and messenger messages, while others promised to answer but never did, not to forget those who opened the link out of curiosity and answered just for the sake of moving to the next step and not for the sake of providing reliable responses.
- In spite of all the efforts made to distribute the students' questionnaire, it is not fully guaranteed that answers are accurate. In other words, one cannot tell for sure if answers were introduced accurately and honestly.

The number of students who have answered the questionnaire (50 students out of 87) was insufficient to generalize the current research results over all the research population.

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**Appendix A**  
**Students' Questionnaire**

Dear student,

You are kindly invited to go through this questionnaire, which is a part of a research work undertaken as a part of Master degree in Language and culture fulfilment program at the Department of English, University of 08 Mai 1945 Guelma. It aims at exploring students' perceptions of supervisors' feedback significance in their dissertation writing process; more specifically, it seeks to investigate which type of feedback provision; electronic or face-to-face feedback is more effective in enhancing second year master students' dissertation writing.

I shall be very grateful if you could answer the following questionnaire by either ticking the answer perceived as the most appropriate for you or by providing full statements, justifications, comments, and suggestions whenever necessary. Please be sure that it is highly confidential since no personal information are required and you will go through it anonymously. Moreover, your answers are crucial for this research validity.

Thank you for your valuable time and cooperation.

**Miss. Fayrouz MERABTI**  
**Second year Master Student**  
**Faculty of Letters and Languages**  
**Department of Letters and English Language**  
**University of 8 Mai 1945, Guelma**

**Section One: General Information**



1. For how long have you been studying English? ( including this year) .....years
2. Was studying English your first choice?

Yes	
No	

3. How could you describe your level in English?

Beginner	
Intermediate	
Advanced	

**Section Two : Dissertation Writing**

4. How could you evaluate your writing proficiency?

Low	
Average	
High	

5. Which factors could increase the effectiveness of your writing? (more than one option)

Rich linguistic repertoire	
Advanced grammatical and contextual knowledge	
Elaborated ideas	
organization	
Your writing style	
Word choice	

Sentence fluency	
Convention	
All of the above	

6. a- Which approach to writing do you think is more effective?

Product-oriented approach	
Process-oriented approach	

b- Please justify your choice

.....

.....

7. What type of academic writing are you using to write your master dissertation?

Descriptive	
Analytical	
Persuasive	
Expository	

8. What type of dissertation you have adopted

Empirical dissertation	
Non empirical dissertation	

9. How much have you progressed in your dissertation writing process?

Chapter one	
-------------	--

Chapter two	
Chapter three	

**10. a-** Do you face problems in your dissertation writing?

Yes	
No	

**b-** If yes, what type of problems you frequently face?

Methodological	
Grammatical	
Syntactical	
Lexical	
All of the above	

**c-** If there are others please specify

.....

.....

**11. a-** What are the characteristics of good dissertation?

Originality	
Relevance	
Management of time and research goals	
Research validity	
All of the above	

b- If there are others please mention

.....

.....

12. Which role among the following do you think that a good academic supervisor should perform?

Guider	
Trainer	
Supporter	
Informer	
Motivator	
All of the above	

**Section Three: Enhancing Second Year Master Student' Dissertation Writing Through Effective Feedback: Electronic versus Face-to-face Feedback**

13. Do you know what supervisory feedback is?

Yes	
No	

14. How often do you receive feedback form your supervisor?

Always	
Sometimes	
Rarely	

Never	
-------	--

15. a- What type of feedback you frequently receive from your supervisor?

Informal	
Formal	
Formative	
Summative	
Constructive	
Others	

b- If others please specify

.....

16. To be effective, supervisor feedback should be: ( rank from the most important)

Specific	
Timely	
Meaningful	
Goal-oriented	
Constructive	
Valuable	

17. What are the main functions of supervisor feedback?

facilitative	
corrective	

directional	
motivational	

18. To what extent could supervisory feedback improve your dissertation writing proficiency?

To a very limited extent	
To a limited extent	
To a high extent	
To a very high extent	

19. a- Do you receive electronic feedback from your supervisor?

Yes	
No	

b-If yes do you receive it

Synchronously( immediate)	
Asynchronously(delayed)	

20. Does your supervisor provide corrective e-feedback in:

Direct CF	
Indirect CF	
Direct-indirect CF	

21. Are you familiar with computer generated feedback software and programs?

E-mails	
Automated feedback	
Corpora-based feedback	

22. What are the most frequent problems you face with e-feedback reception? (more than one option)

Access or materials	
timing	
Personal interaction	
Comprehensibility	
More details	

23. a- Do you receive face-to-face feedback from your supervisor?

Yes	
No	

b- If yes, what type of face-to-face feedback you usually receive?

Oral feedback	
Written feedback	
Both	

24. Which type of face-to-face written feedback does your supervisor use the most? (more than one option)

Explicit	
Implicit	
Focused	
Unfocused	
All of the above	

25. Which level of your written drafts does your supervisors' feedback target?

The surface level (methodology, organization, form...)	
The content level (content, grammar, vocabulary...)	
Both levels	

26. a- What are the most frequent problems you face with face-to-face feedback reception? (more than one option)

readability	
timing	
meeting	
confidentiality	

b- Please state if there are others



.....

.....

.....

**27.** Which type of feedback reflects the following characteristics of effective feedback ( E for electronic feedback) and ( F for face-to-face feedback)

Accessibility		
legibility		
timeliness		
Inter-personal		
quality		
Feed-forward		
readability		
interaction		
constructiveness		

**28. a-** Which mode of feedback usually used by your supervisor?

Electronic	
Face-to-face	
both	

**b-** Which one do you prefer?

.....

29. a- Do different modes of feedback provision have different impact on dissertation writing quality?

Yes	
No	

b- If yes, what mode of feedback delivery do you think is more effective in enhancing master students dissertation writing?

Electronic feedback	
Face-to-face feedback	

c- Please justify your answer

.....  
.....

30. Feel free to add any further information, suggestion, or recommendations concerning the current research.

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

**Thank you for your cooperation**

## ملخص

يعد تقديم ملاحظات إشرافيه حول مسودات الطلاب المكتوبة، بكل الوسائل، أمراً بالغ الأهمية لتقدمهم. يحاول البحث الحالي التحقيق في فكرة أي نمط من ردود الفعل -الإلكترونية أو وجهاً لوجه -أكثر فعالية في تعزيز كتابة أطروحة الماجستير لطلاب السنة الثانية. علاوة على ذلك، يهدف هذا الاستقصاء إلى استكشاف آراء الطلاب، الأسباب المنطقية، والمواقف تجاه تأثيرا مختلف أنماط تقديم الملاحظات على إتقان كتابة أطروحاتهم. يُفترض اما أن تكون الملاحظات الإلكترونية أكثر فعالية أو أن التعليقات وجهاً لوجه أكثر فاعلية في تعزيز كتابة أطروحة الماجستير لطلاب السنة الثانية. ولإجراء تحليل معمق للفرضية المذكورة سابقاً والوصول الى إجابات دقيقة للأسئلة النظرية، تم اعتماد المنهج الوصفي. تم تحقيق ذلك من خلال أداة استبيان الطلاب عبر الإنترنت عن طريق إرسال نسخة رقمية إلى طلاب الماجستير في السنة الثانية في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية، جامعة 8 ماي 1945 قالمة. أبرزت النتائج التي تم تحقيقها التأثير المختلف لأنماط -الإلكترونية ووجهاً لوجه-للتعليقات على إتقان كتابة أطروحة طلاب الماجستير. علاوة على ذلك، أظهر تشخيص النتائج المحققة أنه فيما يتعلق بجودة التعليقات، فضل ما يقرب من 30٪ من المشاركين التعليقات الإلكترونية لإمكانية الوصول إليها وحسن توقيتها ووضوحها. ومع ذلك، فضلت غالبية عينة البحث التعليقات المقدمة وجهاً لوجه، حيث أدركوا أن هذا النوع من التعليقات بناءة وشخصية وغنية بالمعلومات. إلى جانب ذلك، كشفت النتائج أن التغذية الراجعة وجهاً لوجه أكثر فاعلية في تعزيز كتابة أطروحة الماجستير لطلاب السنة الثانية. لذلك، يجب على المشرفين الأكاديميين أن يأخذوا في الاعتبار بجدية تكييف هذا النمط من تقديم التعليقات في عمليات الإشراف المستقبلية.

**French Summary : Résumé**

Fournir des commentaires de supervision sur les ébauches écrites des étudiants est, par tous les moyens, crucial pour leurs progrès. La recherche actuelle tente d'étudier la notion de quel mode de rétroaction ; électronique ou face-à-face, est le plus efficace pour améliorer la rédaction des mémoires des étudiants de deuxième année de master. En outre, la présente enquête vise à explorer les perceptions, les justifications et les attitudes des étudiants vis-à-vis de l'impact des différents modes de rétroaction sur leur compétence en rédaction de thèse. Par conséquent, il est supposé que la rétroaction électronique est plus efficace ou la rétroaction en face à face est plus efficace pour améliorer la rédaction de la thèse des étudiants de deuxième année de master. Pour avoir une analyse approfondie de l'hypothèse mentionnée précédemment et des réponses précises aux questions théoriques, la méthode descriptive a été adoptée. Il a été réalisé grâce à l'instrumentation du questionnaire en ligne des étudiants en envoyant une version numérique aux étudiants de deuxième année de master au département d'anglais, 8 mai 1945 Université-Guelma. Les résultats obtenus ont mis en évidence l'impact différent des modes de rétroaction électronique et en face-à-face sur les compétences en rédaction de mémoire des étudiants en master. Par ailleurs, le diagnostic des résultats obtenus a révélé qu'en ce qui concerne la qualité du retour d'expérience, près de 30 % des participants ont préféré le retour électronique pour son accessibilité, son actualité, et sa lisibilité. Pourtant, la majorité de l'échantillon de recherche préférait les commentaires en face à face, car ils percevaient ce type de commentaires comme plus constructifs, personnels et informatifs. En outre, les résultats ont révélé que la rétroaction en face-à-face est plus efficace pour améliorer la rédaction des mémoires des étudiants de deuxième année de master. Par conséquent, les superviseurs académiques devraient prendre sérieusement en compte l'adaptation de ce mode de retour d'information dans les futurs processus de supervision.

