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Option: Linguistics

Enhancing Learners' Writing Proficiency through Self-Assessment
The Case of Third Year Students of English, University of 08 MAI 1945,
Guelma

**A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of English in Partial Fulfilment of the
Requirements for the Master Degree in Anglophone Language, Literatures and
Civilisations**

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Dedication

This Dissertation is dedicated to:

My dear parents, who have always been the major source of inspiration behind all my efforts and achievements, Words can't interpret my gratitude for their support and love

My sisters, my brother for their wise encouragement

My friends for their love and kindness

All my teachers

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In the Name of Allah the Most Merciful the More Gracious; all thanks to Allah the Lord of the Heavens and Earth and Peace be upon Mohamed and his companions.

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Abstract

Writing is an important component of language learning which covers cognitive abilities. So, supporting students' writing is essential factor for their success. The aim of the present study is to investigate the impact of self-assessment on enhancing student's writing proficiency. Accordingly, the sample of the research was randomly selected from third year students at the department of English, university of 8 Mai 1945, Guelma. To examine the effect of students' self-assessment in increasing the writing skill, we hypothesized that, if students assess their own performance, their writing proficiency would increase. The research hypothesis was confirmed on the questionnaire which was administrated to both students and teachers. The research findings displayed that, students and teachers are aware about the importance of student's self-assessment in enhancing teaching and learning. In addition, students confirmed that, this process gives them the opportunity to check their writing development through reflection and analysis. Consequently, some pedagogical implications are recommended that, teachers should motivate students to use self-assessment strategy to develop their own writing by giving them the sufficient time to reflect upon their performance.

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Effective writing is a process of human communication that creates language. Like the speaking skill, it relies on the same structures such as: vocabulary, grammar and semantics. It is a very helpful skill which enables writers to place ideas and thoughts on papers and giving them the opportunity to develop their citation format and grammar as a result to become good communicators. It is the simplest way which helps the writers to represent what they want to say and helps readers to understand their opinions in details.

Being responsible of their writing by making self-judgments, students can foster their writing. The process of rethinking of what have been written builds a sense of confidence which supports the writer to develop and increase his motivation towards writing. This encourages the type of learner autonomy or to be guided through the personal process. It is clear that making self- assessment help writers to detect errors, this detection encourages them to improve writing.

2. Statement of the Problem

The majority of students at the English department have a low writing proficiency, this is due to many factors such as: student's weaknesses in grammar and vocabulary. However the most influential factor is: the lack of student's self assessment. Most of the learners stated objectives from the beginning but they didn't check whether the stated objectives are achieved or not, they depend on their teachers to direct them and this affect their writing negatively. So it is very important that students should assess their own writing in order to diagnose their weaknesses, check what have been achieved and what it needs more improvement. Hence, our research posed the following question:

Could student's self- assessment lead to improve writing proficiency?

3. Aims of the Study

Self-assessment is very effective in language learning. It offers writers with an opportunity to review and reflect upon the development of their writing and communication skills and identify goals and strategies to further their development. Hence, the aim of this research is:

1. To increase learner's writing proficiency.
2. To shed light on the importance of self-assessment as a prior step to increase learner's writing proficiency.

4. Research Hypothesis

Self -assessment plays significant role in developing student's writing proficiency, it enables them to see what they have mastered and identify what they need further work. The lack of such process would lead to a low proficiency in writing. So, we hypothesize that:

If students make a self-assessment, their writing proficiency would increase. (H1).

The null hypothesis implies that no relation exists between the two variables:

If students make self-assessment, their writing proficiency would not increase. (H0).

5. Research Methodology and Design

5.1 Research Method

Our research have been conducted through the quantitative descriptive method, aiming at improving the research hypothesis using a well structured questionnaire as data gathering tool, which would provide us with a range of views concerning learners own responsibility towards learning in order to increase their writing proficiency in addition to teacher's opinions about students' level in English.

5.2 Population of the Study

Our sample has been chosen randomly; it will conduct and measure with third year students at English department, University, 8 Mai, 1945, Guelma. Because most of the time they are asked to prepare their lessons and provide their teachers with the written form. Thus they are supposed to make a self- assessment for such lessons.

5.3 Data Gathering Tools

To confirm the research hypothesis, using questionnaire as data gathering tool would provide us with a large amount of information about student's awareness to develop their writing proficiency, and about the importance of self- assessment on one hand, and gives us the necessary information of the teacher's opinion about students' level in English, their writing proficiency and the importance of self-assessment in increasing students' writing proficiency on the other hand.

6. Structure of the Dissertation

The present research is divided into three chapters: the first chapter would be devoted to the 'writing skill', in which we will provide its general definition, the nature of writing, writing and other skills, the challenge of writing, aspects for effective writing, approaches to teach the writing, and the importance of assessment and teacher feedback. The second chapter is dedicated to: 'Self-assessment', it examines the definition of assessment, evaluation, definition of self-assessment, types of assessment, self-assessment process, the strategies for effective implementation of self-assessment methods, and the importance of self-assessment in enhancing students' writing proficiency. The third chapter is called: 'Field of investigation', it includes description of both students' and teachers' questionnaire, analysis of the results driven from the questions, the interpretation of such results according to research

questionnaire and hypothesis. Finally a 'General Conclusion' it includes some pedagogical implications and recommendations in addition to, research perspectives and limitations.

CHAPTER ONE

THE WRITING SKILL

Introduction

Writing is the most important language skill and the most difficult one, as it requires rules and instructions. It is the basic skill in language learning, since the learner has to make significant efforts and powerful abilities and practice to reach a good level in writing. Indeed, writing is a means to successful learning and a powerful tool of communication that assists students learn how to build and arrange their thoughts and opinions. In fact, learning to write is typically one of the most difficult and challenging tasks because writing is an artistic work that involves imagination, intelligence, insistence, and talent. Thus, writing is a fundamental skill in language teaching/learning since it is critical for ensuring academic success. In this chapter, we will provide the reader with the writing skill in general, including different definitions, the nature of writing, its relation with other skills, the challenge of writing; aspects of effective writing, as well as the approaches to teach the writing skill, the difference between them, and the importance of assessment and teacher feedback.

1. Definition of Writing

Rivers (1978, p. 263) said “To write so that one is really communicating a message isolated in place and time, is an art requires consciously direct effort and deliberate choice in language”. So, writing is the process of exchanging thoughts and opinions into language, it requires mental efforts and much practice. Writing is a complex skill that learners have to master. Both native and non-native speakers may lack the ability required to make them effective writers because learners could not communicate their thoughts effectively without this competence. Writing down opinions and thoughts as a mean of communication is not simple as it seems to be “But writing is clearly much than the production of graphic symbols, just as speech is more than the production of sounds” (Byrne, 1979, p. 1). This means that, far

from being a matter of transcribing language into graphic symbols, writing is a process of arranging sentence in a particular order and connecting them in certain manners. In addition, writing is a form of thinking that enables learners to convey their thoughts and opinions. According to Giroux (1988, p. 54) “poor writing reflects poor thinking, and what teachers often view as simply an “error” in writing, in fact, is a reflection of an error in thinking itself”. In that, writing is not just a means to determine what we are thinking; more than that, it is a way to reveal gaps in our thinking. So, writing is regarded as the best way to develop the ability to think critically.

Above all, Writing is a skill that plays crucial roles in teaching languages. It helps students to be more involved in lessons, and understand all the concepts. Moreover, Emig (1997, p. 122-128) stated that, the cognitive functions increased only through the written language, it is a crucial skill for students’ success. Writing is kind of verbal communication through which students can express their ideas and feelings. Besides, the process of writing helps students to express their ideas in a well organized manner that will be clear for readers. Brown (1994, p. 25) confirmed that, writing is the result of thinking, drafting, and revising that involves specific skills, it helps students to master the grammatical rules, learn how to generate ideas, arrange them coherently, how to connect them, and how to create a final product.

1.2 Writing and Other Skills

1.2.1 Writing and Speaking

Both writing and speaking are clearly productive activities in that they create language results just as listening and reading are both passive activities. However, speaking and writing are two different skills. Vygotsky (1962, p.98) notes that “written speech is a separate linguistic function, differing from oral speech in both structure and mode of functioning”.

Learning to write is different from learning to speak in that, writing is not naturally acquired which creates problems for students to learn it, i.e.; they have to work hardly and go through much practice to develop the different skills of composing. In fact, in producing a written text of any length (a paragraph or an essay in our case), the student is generally expected to choose and direct the language forms that are more brief than those used in spoken contexts, but at the same time, "Written Expression" is more often complex in its syntax and more diverse and richer in vocabulary.

1.3.2 Writing and Reading

Writing and reading are two of the most important academic skills which have a very close relationship. When students read extensively, they become better writers, this means that reading offers prior knowledge, ideas that help students achieve their language, deepen and widen their thoughts and content. So, reading effectively results in the production of successful writing.

We believe that reading texts and passages that match students' interests and English proficiency provide learners with new vocabulary and make them familiar with the syntax of the language. White (1981, p. 101) pointed out that the writing skill involves the ability to be a reader– we cannot write successfully unless we know at each point how the reader will interpret our words and what s/he will be expecting us to say next. Indeed, the two skills are so closely related that we might consider to what extent writing can be taught without the student ever putting pen to paper. White goes on claiming that “any communicative writing course must contain a large component of reading comprehension of practice, that is, for writer as readers” (white, 1981, p. 101).

It seems that the two skills are separate in that, reading is a passive activity and that writing is a productive one; however, they are complementary and can be closely developed. In fact, reading affords students with a clear image about the format of English text, which enables them to further their writing ability, either by imitating those texts or by implementing the different styles and language aspects provided in these texts.

1.3. The Challenge of Writing

Writing is considered by certain cognitive psychologists as the most complex one, in the sense that it demands cognitive abilities and hard work to be mastered. Since, it is not a spontaneous activity, writing considered to be the most difficult task for learners to achieve. According to Byrne (1979, p.5), the difficulty of the writing skill can be divided into three categories; the first involves psychological problems, in the sense that the lack of interaction and feedback between the writer and the reader makes it difficult. The second category comprises the linguistic problems, in that, in writing the grammatical mistakes, incomplete sentences, and repetition are not premised like in speech, since they create ambiguities for readers. So, the writer has to produce well organized, more structured, and full developed sentences.

The last category concerns the cognitive problems; writing requires mental efforts and since it is not innate, students need to learn it through a process of instructions the process of expressing thoughts and ideas into a written language as a mean of communication with the reader entails clear and meaningful sentences. The lack of immediate feedback and face to face communication requires the writer to make the message easier and clear for readers to understand without his help.

1.4. Constructs of Effective Writing

1.4.1 Vocabulary

It is evident that the meanings of words play significant role in language comprehension; therefore vocabulary is one of the main keys for successful communication. In other words,

vocabulary refers to the total number of words that are needed to communicate ideas and express the speaker's meaning.

In production when a writer has a meaning which he wants to convey, he needs to have a store of words from which he can select to express his concept. Furthermore, writers cannot produce grammatical sentences if they don't have the vocabulary that is needed to express what they want to say. Hubbard (1983, p. 52) stated that, the writer can express the exact meaning he wants to say if he has a large amount of vocabulary knowledge. Besides, producing a well written composition is based on the large and sophisticated vocabulary the writers have, Duin and Graves (1987, p.311-330).

Above all, vocabulary is very important and limited vocabulary hinders communication, it means that understanding other's works depend on the matter of words the writers use. In addition, the comprehension of a text depends on the amount of words that are well known in that text. It means that, vocabulary is regarded as the crucial tool for second language learners to acquire a language. Therefore, the best way for learners to accurately convey their idea in writing is to select the right words and doing so, it enables the reader to understand what the writer says.

1.5.2 Grammar

It is absolutely true when we say that grammar is a key element not only in writing, but also in language as a system of communication in general. It means that we cannot make a sense without shaping grammatical and linguistic structures, so grammar is what gives a sense to language.

According to Schmidt (1994, p. 165-209) "grammar instruction is essential for second language learners to achieve their educational and professional goals" because writing entails

having a high knowledge of the parts of speech. It is stated by Hinkle (1992, 1997, p.289-314) that, the incorrect use of tenses may obscure the meaning of a passage which leads to produce a poor text. Writers should know all the grammatical concepts needed for successful communication.

Defective grammatical errors create a negative impact on readers' perception this indicates that, the quality of writing is based on grammatical accuracy. Improving student's writing accuracy is an essential factor in effective writing. Moreover, writing and grammar are inextricably intertwined and good writing derives from correct grammar.

1.5.3 Punctuation

Harmer (2007, p. 325) has said that as there are well-established mores for punctuation so the infringement of this makes a piece of writing look discomfited. Capitalization and punctuation marks are vital parts in the writing process. Furthermore, Murray and Hughes (2008, p. 185) have stated that punctuation and capitalization "Indicate pauses and sentence boundaries and also eliminate ambiguity. A well punctuated and capitalized piece of writing should make your work easier to read and understand and will therefore help it make a more favorable impression on your readers." So, punctuation marks help in the understanding of the reading process.

1.5.4 Organization of Ideas

The quality and the value of a written text are based on the organized ideas presented in that text and to do so, the writer should use appropriate relating words (Growet et al., 1995, p.113). The organization of ideas helps the reader to understand what the writer wants to convey. Furthermore, Starkey has stated that:

By following [an organized method of writing], you will guide your reader from your first to last sentence. He or she will be able to see how the various points you make in your [piece of writing] work together and how they support your thesis.

(2004, p. 2)

We advocate that information should be presented to readers in a structured and organized way; even short pieces of writing have regular and predictable patterns of organization. Hence, the organization of ideas is a crucial factor that contributes to overall text quality.

1.5.5 Coherence and Cohesion

Cohesion and coherence are two important elements that facilitate textual continuity. According to Haliday and Hassan (1976, p.40), all the parts of paragraph are connected together by cohesive ties; the meaning of a text is created by these cohesive devices. It means that the logical ideas which are presented through well connected words help the reader to understand the meaning of a text. Besides, the successful interpretation of a text can be achieved through the cohesive devices.

Unity and connectedness are the power full features of a well written text, which combine the fragmented sentences together. The unity of a written text can be created by employing various devices. Murray and Hughes (2008, p.185) have noticed that, the good writer is the one who joins his ideas together, each idea is linked to the one before it with the one after and the miss-link of these ideas breakdown the structure of the text; coherence can create logical progression in a text so that the reader can understand the entire text more easily through the connectedness presented by the cohesive ties.

1.6. The Process of Writing

Writing is a process; any writer must chase to have a successful product. Before this process takes place, the writer must gather his ideas about the topic he is going to write about.

The process of writing is made up of related stages known as: Pre-writing, Drafting, Revising, and Editing.

1.6.1 Pre-Writing

pre-writing is any activity that encourages writers to write. In this stage, the writer tries to organize his data and arrange them according to their priorities .i.e. he is going to choose the theme of the topic, what he has to say about this topic, which data is going to be the first (Byrne, 1979, pp. 4-5). The writer must take into account two concepts: the purpose of writing and the audience. The aim behind any piece of writing is to create communication. Concerning the second concept, it depends to whom the writer is going to write.

According to Lipson "good thesis writing begins with good planning". (2005, p. 14). Which means that, what begins well structured and well formed will end that way and will be really valued. So, planning is an effective way which helps the writer to organize his material and preparing him to write the first draft.

1.6.2 Drafting

Drafting is the process of writing down the ideas planned before. At this stage, the writer focuses on the fluency of writing and not preoccupies with grammatical accuracy. In other words, the writer is not to worry about spelling or punctuation because it will be taken into account in the later stage (Lipson, 2005, p. 124).

Kartz (2006, p. 52) Claimed that "as you translate your plans and records into words (...); you will see what you are doing in clear light". This means that the best way to join your ideas and to make them more organized is to put them on a paper. The organization of these ideas will help the reader move from one point to another in coherent way (Lipson, 2005, p. 124).

1.6.3 Revising

The best way for evaluating ones writing is revising. Brown and Hood (1989, p. 20) confirmed that revising is the stage where you ensure and confirm that you said what you really wanted to say in clear and understandable way. In other words, revising is the process of reexamine what was written; it helps the writer to see how effectively he has communicated his meanings to the reader.

This stage is the most important one, because it gives the writer the opportunity to know the errors he has made and for such purpose, revising means evaluating. In this step, the writer can omit some elements; add new ones and so on (Brown and Hood, 1989, p. 20). In order to communicate his ideas effectively and make sure that his ideas are clear to the extent that the reader can understand them without any ambiguity, the writer should give importance to punctuation.

1.6.4 Editing

The final step in the process of writing is editing. It is the stage of correcting all the final draft. The writer edits his own work for grammar, spelling, and sentence structure and so on. To ensure clarity and coherence, the writer must join the simple elements which are sentences and paragraphs in connected way (Dunleavy, 2003, p. 104).

1.7. Approaches to Teaching the Writing Skill

1.7.1 The Product Approach

The product approach, or the “controlled writing approach” was widespread in the mid-1960’s. It sees writing as an act of imitating a model text. Silva (1990, p.11-17), stated that this approach is used in order to highlight the form and syntax and the emphasis was in rhetorical drills, this means that this approach focuses on the linguistic knowledge through the

use of appropriate vocabulary, style and cohesive ties. The main interest of this approach is the mastery of linguistic features.

Prodromou (1995, pp. 1-5) confirmed that, this approach devalues learners potential both linguistic and personal, that is to say students are supplied with a model sample of a text and they are expected to follow it to create a new piece of writing. The errors in writing progress can be achieved through the imitation of the input. Besides, the product approach considers language as a process of habit formation that is, students responded to a stimulus provides by a teacher.

The product approach consisted of four stages:

The first one is familiarization, where students trained certain grammar and vocabulary through a text, they will identify the format of the text, and how it is organized and learned all the techniques that help them to organize a well structured essay. The second stage is called controlled writing, students manipulate fixed models; they have a practice in the highlighted features often in isolation. In the third stage which is called guided writing, students imitate the model text, students have to connect their paragraphs to get an organized text, and at this stage, teachers' attention is focused on the surface structure rather than the form one. The last stage known as the free writing, students use the guides they have developed to produce well organized essay of a given topic.

1.7.2 The Process Approach

The process approach has emerged at the end of the 1960s as a reaction to the product approach. It gives attention to the way of writing rather than the final product. Tribble (1966, p. 160) considers this approach as a mean of creativity and sees that it improves writing in the sense that, learners have to pass through a different stages for the purpose of producing a piece of writing, and this help them to rely on their own cognitive abilities and start writing in

creative way rather than imitating a model. Moreover, Kroll (1996, p. 96) quotes Applebee (1986) as saying that, the process approach “provided a way to think about writing in terms of what the writer does (planning, revising, and the like) instead of in terms of what the final product looks like (patterns of organization, spelling, and grammar)”, this means that, writing is no longer a final product, but rather a joint of stages.

According to Murray (1992, p. 16), this approach focuses on the process a writer engages in when building meaning. This teaching approach is ending with editing as a final stage in text creation, rather than an initial one as a product-oriented approach. The process-oriented approach may include recognized stages of the writing process such as: pre-writing, writing and re-writing. Writing is a thinking process, learners need to make the most of their abilities such as knowledge and skills to produce a purposed piece of writing, the process approach helps them to do so in the sense that, it gives them plenty of time and opportunity to reflect upon and revise their own writing before producing the final product.

The process approach gives more attention to writers and their writing process. Hedge (1994, p.123) proposes three characteristics of a good writer’s process. First, preparing activities that is, learners can plan for successful writing through engaging in different activities like brainstorming, exchanging information, discussing them, and arranging them in logical order. Second, the absence of face to face communication between the writer and the reader requires that writers have to be aware of their audience. Effective writers are conscious of their readers. So, Writers have to know to whom they are writing, what they have to write and how to make their ideas accessible to their audience. Third, successful writing involves writers to rethink and revise more so, writers have to reflect and revise in recursive way in order to ensure accuracy.

Differences between the Product Approach and the Process Approach: (Nemouchi, 2009, pp.81-84).

Product	Process
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Students focus on model text. . It gives importance to accuracy. . It follows the following steps: . Students first read the model and highlight the features of this text usually in isolation, and then they are required to focus on how the writer uses these techniques. . Then, the important stage which is The organization of ideas. . At the end of the learning process, students employ all the techniques and structures they have learned and produce a successful text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . It gives priority to fluency. . Students have to pass through a Process to produce a successful text. . The first stage is brainstorming, in which students gather ideas about the topic and discuss them. . Next, students enlarge ideas and connect them, as well as check the usefulness of ideas. . Subsequently, students have to write the first draft . Then, students have to exchange their drafts, this help them to develop their awareness about the writing process. . After that, students can make some changes based upon peer feedback. . Next, students have to write a final draft. . Finally, students once again exchange their final work and even can write a reply on each others' work.

Table 1.1 Differences between Product and Process Approaches.

1.7.3 The Genre Approach

The Genre approach to teaching writing gives attention, as the term suggests, to the teaching of particular genres that students require control of to do well in particular situations. The aim of such an approach is to depict students and teachers' attention to the variety of written texts which differ in terms of nature and purpose (Mercer, 1996, p.132-171). This means that different genres entail different constructions, for instance the amount of formality of an academic essay is to a certain extent different from a letter to a friend and even the organization of both texts are very similar. Furthermore, in the Genre Approach, "writing is seen as an essentially social activity in which texts are written to do things, the assumption being that if the reader cannot recognize the purpose of a text, communication will not be successful." (Tribble, 1996, p. 37). That is, this approach gives a greater importance to the social context in which writing is produced.

Badger and White (2000,p.157) sustain that this approach admits that, writing happens in a social situation and reveals a particular purpose and that learning can occur intentionally through imitation and analysis, which facilitates explicit instruction. This means that, language is a contextual based means of communication; language is always taking place in particular social and cultural contexts, and therefore, cannot be understood outside of its context. Moreover, the genre-based approach also trains students to be aware of a number of aspects such as the audience, the purpose of writing, the situation of writing. Importance is placed on how a particular genre will achieve certain roles or aims.

Differences between the Process and Genre Approaches (Nemouchi , 2009, pp. 95-96).

Process	Genre
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Writing is a thinking process. . Importance on innovative writer. . It needs skills in using language. . It stresses the importance of how to produce and connect ideas. . The process of writing is apparent and clear. . It gives less attention to production. . It believes that all written production use the same process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Writing is a social process. . Emphasis on reader outlook and product. . It requires knowledge about language . It gives importance to the context in which writing takes place. . It focuses on how to convey social purposes successfully. . It needs full understanding of texts. . Sufficient attention to production

Table.1.2 Differences between Process and Genre Approaches.

1.7.4 The Process-Genre Approach

A process-genre approach, as the name reveals, combines process and genre approaches to form a dual model. This indicates that it integrates ideas from the genre approach and from the process one. Moreover, this approach is created by Badger and White (2000, p.157), they assert that the process genre approach entails information about language and knowledge of the situation which the writing takes place, and also the purpose of writing and the ability in using language (Badger and White, 2000, p. 157). According to the process genre approach, any piece of writing always has given purpose that belongs to a particular context. This means that, the focal point in process-genre approach is that writing is set in a social situation.

Badger and White (2000, pp. 18-26) establish six stages in teaching writing under the process -genre approach: preparation, modeling and reinforcing, planning, joint constructing, independent constructing, and revising. In the preparation step, students can expect the structural aspects of particular genre right from the beginning since the teacher begins preparing them to write by introducing a specific genre. The second step is modeling; the teacher gives the students the modeling text and discusses its features like the structure and the style in order to reinforce their background knowledge of a particular genre. The third step is planning, it includes different activities like brainstorming, discussion and the aim behind these activities is to raise students' interest in the topic.

In the joint constructing step, students cooperate with their teacher to write a model. While doing so, students provide the teacher with ideas and information and he writes the created text in the board. The production of the final draft regards as a model for students to write their own text. In the independent construction, students write their individual text by following the previous model. The last step is revising, where every student has to revise and edit his/her own draft, students may confirm, discuss, and assess their work depending on peer evaluation or to their teachers' feedback.

1.7.5 The Communicative Approach

The communicative approach pushes students to be active applicants in the learning process not simply submissive recipients of knowledge. The ultimate role that teachers must assume in this approach is to generate communication. According to Brown (1994, p. 77) the crucial goal of communicative language teaching is to increase communicative competence, to move "beyond grammatical and discourse elements in communication" and explore the "nature of social, cultural, and pragmatic features of language". Thus, learners are not expected to construct correct sentences or to be accurate, but to be able to communicate and be fluent.

1.7.6 The Eclectic Approach

The eclectic approach refers to the process of combining different approaches and integrating them to produce a working whole. It offers better opportunities for better teaching. Brown (1994, p. 74) has confirmed that “enlightened eclectic” teacher should take an approach that contains most if not all of the doctrines, he has fulfilled. That is, teachers have to take into account all the principles related to cognition, affection and linguistics. The use of eclectic approach is extending in teaching writing, by taking the fundamental principles and knowledge from different approaches. So, the eclectic approach is really helpful and effective in teaching writing (Bright, 2002, p.8). Hence, in the eclectic approach the teacher should be selective. He should select the most appropriate principles of each approach and combine them to produce a working whole.

1.8. Techniques to Enhance Writing Skill

1.8.1 Assessment

Assessment and feedback are two important elements which play a significant role in developing learners’ achievement. In this respect, Miller (1995; in Urquhart and M. Lever, 2005, p. 27) defines it as “gathering information to meet the particular needs of a student”. So, assessment aims to determine students’ accomplishment of the learning process. It has two types, formative, which takes place while students writing and it aims to develop their writing ability (Lippman, 2003, pp. 203-204). Summative assessment, which happens at the end of the learning process, aims to judge how well students have achieved the writing activity (Lippman, 2003, p. 203). All in all, assessment with its two types plays a considerable role in the teaching-learning process and increases students writing ability.

1.8.2 Feedback

One way to fill the gap between what is understood and what is aimed to be understood is feedback which provides information relating to the task or course of learning, Sadler (1989,p119-144). Therefore, feedback helps students to take their own responsibility toward their learning. In this respect, Sadler (1989, p. 120) adds that feedback is “information about how successfully something has been or is being done”, emphasizing that students use feedback "to monitor the strengths and weaknesses of their performances, so that aspects associated with success or high quality can be recognized and reinforced, and unsatisfactory aspects modified or improved". This means that, feedback is a powerful instrument which influences learning and achievement. In addition, Keh (1990, p. 294) claims that feedback is the “input from a reader to a writer with the effect of providing information to the writer for revision”. This indicates that, the aim of feedback is to direct and raise student’s awareness toward learning.

Richard and Lockhart (1996) argue that teacher feedback may increase students’ motivation toward writing and not only let them to know how well they have performed. Moreover, Taras (2001, p. 609) suggested that feedback helps students to understand the positive qualities of their work and this let them to develop their thinking ability. According to Hyland (2003, p.217-230), feedback can serve as a guidance for successful writing development, teacher feedback can be a powerful tool to raise student’s awareness about the importance of writing. Hattie and Timperly (2007, p. 84) have noted that the most considerable improvement in students writing enhanced when they “got information feedback about a task and how to do it more effectively”. Hence, feedback raises student’s responsibility and awareness toward learning in general.

So, feedback on writing is any assist, suggestion, hint, or ideas afforded by a reader to a writer to enhance and improve his writing, to simplify ideas and thoughts that are unclear, or to help him notices where he goes wrong. Feedback on writing can happens at any stage of the writing process; though, it is more suitable and effectual if given when the writer can work on it. That is before the writer gives his final draft.

Conclusion

In order to reinforce and make the teaching/learning of the writing skill easier and important, learners and teachers need to have some necessary knowledge and information about the writing process. In addition to, teachers need to be aware of the different approaches of the writing process as well as the effective techniques of implementing them. Moreover, teachers' feedback is crucial in improving students' writing; it develops students' awareness toward writing. Above all, one of the ways to improve students' writing proficiency is to raise their awareness toward self-assessment, which helps them to know their strengths and weaknesses, in other words, self assessment leads to a broader understanding of the learning process. Self-assessment is a way to extend students' capacity toward learning; it encourages them to explore their learning beyond course requirements, and enables them to actively participate in the learning process. It, promotes students to reflect upon and think critically while writing. Hence, to enhance the learning process, teachers have to raise learners' awareness towards self-assessment strategy.

CHAPTER TWO

ASSESSMENT IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING

Introduction

Over the last decades in the field of language teaching and learning, a huge emphasis has been put on the side of the learner, which indicates that the learner became the centre of the classroom. This has led to the acceptance of learner-centred approach in the field of teaching and learning foreign languages. Learners are no more seen as passive but rather active; which has required the learner to be responsible and take control of his own learning. An approach has emerged “learner-centeredness”, which views students to have more active and participatory roles in the learning and teaching process than in traditional approaches.

The relationship between learning and assessment will be enhanced when students take control of their own learning and judge their performance on the basis of criteria and determine how they can prove it. Learners have to take charge of their own learning; and teachers should encourage students’ self-assessment for creating an effective learning. Hence, in this chapter we will deal with the different definitions of assessment, evaluation, self-assessment and its types, the process of self-assessment, theories for increasing self-assessment, reliability and validity, the effective strategies for implementing self-assessment, and we will also discover the importance of self- assessment on raising students’ writing proficiency.

2.1 Definition of Assessment

Assessment is one of the most considerable areas of an educational system. It identifies what students obtain to be important, how they spend much of their academic time and how they worth themselves. As Rowntree (1987, p. 1) says of assessment "If we wish to

discover the truth about an educational system, we must look into its assessment procedures." Besides its importance in the life of students, assessment methods can be regarded as the best indicator for how well students met the goals.

Furthermore, Brown and Knight (1994) stated that there are many reasons behind conducting assessment; among them is that it offers learners with opportunities to correct mistakes. So, it is an important element of mastering learning. Moreover, assessment is a way to give learners feedback about their strengths and weaknesses, which helps them to make decision about their personal development. According to Airasian (2000, p. 10), "assessment is the process of collecting, synthesizing, and interpreting information to aid in decision making". Thus, it plays a significant role for students, teachers and society. In other words, assessment information offers the basis for decision-making and preparing for instruction and learning. Therefore, assessing students' accomplishment is inevitable

Shepherd and Godwin (2004, p.25) demonstrated that, assessment is a means of getting facts from posing a set of questions to draw conclusion about the "knowledge, attitudes and characteristics of the learner". Thus, assessment can be seen as a procedure used to guess the progress of students learning by affording a report of what has been learned.

2.2 Definition of Self-Assessment

Self-assessment can be defined as the process by which students check and estimate the quality of their thinking and behavior when learning as well as recognize the strategies that develop their understanding and skills. It is argued by Rea (1981, p.66-68) that, self-assessment assists the learners to become aware of their own responsibility in preparing, performing and monitoring their language learning activities. It is a crucial tool to improve the effectiveness of curriculum program. Furthermore, it the act through which students can discover what they know and what they can to do. Besides, self-assessment has been defined

as “involvement of students in identifying standards and/or criteria to apply their work and making judgments about the extent to which they have met these criteria and standards” (Boud, 1995, p1). This means that, self assessment helps learners to review how well they are doing and what they need to improve.

With its prominence on learners’ responsibility toward learning, self-assessment is “a necessary skill for lifelong learning” (Boud, 1995, p.1). This means that, the process of self-assessment enables students to understand their own learning and identify where the difficulties come from. The process of self-assessing offers an opportunity for the students to check the progress of one’s own learning (Klenowski, 1995, p. 146). As it is stated by Harris (1997, p.3) that self-assessment can help learners “locate their own strengths, weaknesses and get them to think about what they have to do get better marks”. It is about developing a sense of self awareness to enhance language learning. Furthermore, Self –assessment encourages autonomous learning, it means learning which is “acquired in the absence of a teacher” (Oskarsson, 1984, p.4). This task promotes the learner responsibility and independence toward the learning process and encourages reflection on one’s own learning; this may motivate students for further learning. . Learners’ participations on their own learning enable them to see what they have mastered and understand their own skill (Sheerin, 1989, p.5).

As it is stated by J. Ross et al., (1998, p.463-477), self-assessment offers students with the information they could use to improve their work, in other words, the task of assessing helps learners to deepen their understanding and hence working to empower their performance. Students can become better language learners when they engage in a deliberate thought about what they are learning and how they are learning. In addition encouraging autonomous learning, self-assessment helps students “to understand the main purpose of their learning and there by grasp what they need to do to achieve” (Black and William, 1998, p.143).

According to the Common European Framework of Reference for Language (2001, p.65) the benefit of self- assessment is on its use as a tool of empowerment, it encourages learners to take charge of their learning, diagnose their weaknesses and value their strengths. Boud and Falchikove (2006, p.399-413) argue that, self-assessment opportunities promoted reflectivity, and constructed learners. In other words, self-assessment activities used to mirror how students' characteristics contribute to learning. Furthermore, the process of self-assessment supports reflection which builds the met cognitive ability (Mok et al., 2006, p.415-433). Self-assessment exercises help students to think critically about their learning and to be able to recognize the difficulties that challenged their own learning.

Kostopoulou (2008, p.119-135) argued that, self-assessment is one of the most powerful tools in education; it encourages students to take on a more active role and to be more critical. It is crucial that, this method of self- assessing represents a mirror for learners to know what they gain as a result of learning. The benefit of making self assessment is that, it develops the Meta cognitive abilities through making self reflection of learning (Lew et al., 2010, p.135-156).

2.3 Advantages of Students' Self-Assessment

Undoubtedly, it is clear that self-assessment is an important instrument in enhancing the learning process since it encourages students to become more engaged and empowered in their own learning. To sum up, these are some advantages of students' self- assessment:

First, it makes teachers conscious of their students' needs and offers them with extra lens through which to analyze their accomplishments, Blanche (1988, p.75-93). Besides, it presents direction for future learning (Chamot and O'Malley, 1994). Moreover, it encourages learners to exercise a variety of learning strategies and higher order thinking skill (Chamot and O'Malley, 1994). In this respect, it helps students get better marks, Harris (1997, p.12-

20). Also, it increases students' awareness of their own learning and thinking process and expands suitable study skills and strategies and promotes lifelong learning (Zohar, 2004). Likewise, self-assessment, supports learners' autonomy and brings a sense of responsibility and accountability to them (Asadoorian and Batty, 2005, p.1315-1323). Finally, it develops learners' knowledge of their learning goals and thus increases their motivation and goals orientation (Liang, 2006, p 22).

2.4 Types of Self-Assessment

Scholars identify three types of assessment

2.4.1 Formative Assessment

The concept of formative assessment was first introduced by Bloom, Hastings, and Maddaus (1966); they introduced the idea that assessment needs to be used to make summative information of students' performance. According to Salder (1989, p. 77), formative assessment is "specifically intended to provide feedback to improve and accelerate learning". This means that, formative assessment can be an effective tool to improve the learning process by offering feedback to students to highlight the areas which need further study. Formative assessment affords students with essential information to direct their own learning (Salder, 1989, as cited in Black, 2008).

The aim of formative assessment is to provide students with a useful feedback. According to (Nitko, 1993, p.3), formative assessment has two purposes: choosing and modifying learning procedures and select the appropriate remedies for enhancing weak points in learning and teaching. Black and William (1998, p. 7) stressed that, formative assessment "as encompassing all those activities undertaken by teachers, and/or by their students, which provide information to be used as feedback to modify the teaching and learning activities in

which they are engaged”. This means that, formative assessment helps students to become involved in developing their own learning. So, formative assessment affords feedback to learners in order to assist them learn, and feedback to teachers for deciding how a student’s learning should be taken in advance.

Formative assessment regarded as an ongoing process to improve learning, it takes place before and during teaching to inform instructions. The crucial aim of formative assessment is to advance learning that is, Formative assessment aims to gather evidence for the purpose of improving learning.

2.4.2 Summative Assessment

Like the name suggested, summative assessment is used to measure the result of students learning at the conclusion of specific instructional period. In other words, it is used to evaluate learning not to inform teaching and learning. Summative assessment “... is about whether the learner knows, understands or can do a predetermined thing” (Torance & Pryor, 1998, p.153). This means that, summative assessments are given periodically to establish at a given point what students know and do not know. Summative assessment gives an overall evidence of the ability, knowledge, and accomplishment of students.

Summative assessment is used to evaluate students learning and the effectiveness of a particular course. Besides, in summative assessment we look back at what learners have learned, it occurs at the end of a course, a unit, a semester. The main aim of this type of assessment is “to determine the success or failure only after a student’s performance” (Prins et al, 2005, p. 417). The information collected from summative assessment is necessary; it can help in appraising certain aspects of the learning process. Moreover, summative assessment aims to offer evidence of students’ attainment for the purpose of making a judgment about students’ performance.

Summative assessments are an attempt to prove student learning at some point in time and even though, they are not designed to provide them immediate, contextualized feedback is useful for helping teachers and students during the learning process, they can however contribute to the steps in the process of learning.

2.5.3 Ipsative Assessment

According to Swayer (2004, p.107), the ipsative assessment is an assessment which the student evaluates his own act next to his prior performance. He distinguishes between the three types as follows:

Types of assessment	Their features
Summative Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Jury/ instructor evaluation at the end of the Program or course. . It establishes how well student has learned and whether teaching is successful.
Formative Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Instructor evaluation during course of teaching. . Feedback into teaching and learning process.

<p>Ipsative Assessment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> . Self- evaluation by an insightful practitioner. . Evaluation of recent performance against Prior performance and performance of other participants. . Lifelong reflection on learning.
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Sawyer, 2004, p.107). Table 2.3 Difference between Types of Assessment.

2.5 Components of Self-Assessment

One of the important skills for effective self-assessment is self- monitoring, it entails focused attention to some aspects of behavior or thinking (Schunk, 2004, p. 40). Self-monitoring students pay attention to what they are doing, often in relation to external principles. As it occurs, self-monitoring concerns awareness of thinking and progress, and it identifies parts of what learners do when they self-assess. A second component of self-assessment is self-judgment which involves recognizing improvement toward targeted performance. It gives students a general idea of what they know and what they still need to learn (Bruce, 2001). Made in relation to create standards and criteria, which represents guidelines for interpreting the level of performance learners have established. The third step, is that students select subsequent learning goals and activities to improve correct answers, correct misunderstanding and to expand learning. Since students at this phase need skills in establishing learning targets and more instruction, they should be aware of options for further goals and instruction.

2.6 Strategies for Effective Implementation of Self-Assessment Methods

Different strategies are advocated by various researchers for effective implementation of self- assessment:

First, give direct, explicit, and step-by-step training in the use of self-assessment exercises beforehand; include practice time prior to implementation (Andrade & Valtcheva, 2009, p.12-19; Harris et al, 2008; Mowl & Pain, 1995, p.324-335; Oldfield & Macalpine, 1995, p.125-132). This means that, students will feel comfortable with the methods and can implement them effectively when they understand well how to use them. Thus, teachers should be trained on how to select the appropriate techniques and procedures.

Second, teach students the criteria for ranking their own work and the evaluation of specific features of writing (Andrade & Boulay, 2003, p.21-34; Andrade & Valtcheva, 2008; Diltz, 2006, p.14-45; Mowl & Pain 1995). Moreover, students should have a clear understanding of the criteria for a particular writing task and the tools used to evaluate it before they asked to self- evaluate.

Third, use writing models to demonstrate specific writing skills and to give students the opportunity to practice assessment. (Andrade et al, 2008, p.3-13; Andrade & Valtcheva, 2009, p.12-19 ; Harris et al, 2008; Orsmond et al, 1996; Orsmond et al, 2002, p.309-323). Furthermore, Writing models can help an understanding of the criteria of useful writing and can be used separately of self-assessment exercises to support learning of concepts. Also these models provide an opportunity to practice writing evaluation in their preparation for self-assessment exercises.

Forth, students should participate in the development of the marking criteria for self-assessment exercises (Falchikov,1986, p.146-166; Mowl & Pain, 1995, p.324-335; Orsmond

et al, 2002, p.309-323; Orsmond et al, 2004, p.273-290). This means that it necessary to help students understand the importance of good writing, it provides them with the opportunity to learn more. They will benefit from the progress of understanding all parts of good writing. This full understanding helps them to use self-assessment methods correctly.

Fifth, successful implementation of self-assessment exercises can only occur when teachers cope with student motivation challenges (Diltz, 2006; Keith, 1996, p.178-192; Longhurst & Norton, 1997, p.319-330; Zoller & Ben-Chaim, 1997, p.135-147). Moreover, teachers have to support students' self- assessment by providing motivational methods like: positive verbal prompts, written comments and providing grades. These help students to work thoughtfully.

Sixth, students should be provided sufficient independent time and space to complete self-assessment exercises, with most work taking place in class (Graziano-King, 2007, p.71-92). This means that, in the classroom teachers should give a sufficient time and space for learners to assess their work and continue their revision.

Seventh, students need teacher support, monitoring, and feedback during self-assessment exercises. Support should include student-teacher dialoging (Andrade & Boulay, 2003, p21-34; Sandmann, 2006, p.20-28; Yancey, 1998). Furthermore, successful learning demands a close relationship between teachers and students. Teachers must interact with their students during class activities to provide a feedback, clarify ambiguities and answer questions all of these encourage students to learn more.

Eighth, is to encourage students' sense of self efficacy and self esteem through positive feedback, reinforcement, and modeling (McCarthy, Romeo, 2008, p.25-51; Zimmermann & Kitsantas, 2002, p.6606-68). This means that building a sense of efficacy in students mainly

depends on teachers. It can be fostered through positive responses on their own writing thus; it enables students to recognize that writing develops through hard work.

The last, students should be given time to revise their work after completion of self assessment, and self-assessment exercises should be practiced frequently (Andrade & Boulay, 2003; Campillo, 2006; Graziano-King, 2007; Harris et al, 2008; Romeo, 2008; Yancey, 1998). That is to say, in order to increase students' skills toward the writing skill, they should be given the chance to revise their work following self-assessment exercises. This process of revising helps students to develop a good writing and produce an effective final writing.

2.7 Theoretical Rationale for Enhancing Self-Assessment

There three main theories which help in improving students' self-assessment, cognitive and constructivist theories of learning and motivation, Meta cognition theory and self-efficacy theory.

2.7.1 Cognitive and Constructivist Theories of Learning and Motivation

One of the major components of cognitive and constructivist theories of learning and motivation is self-assessment. Shepard (2001, p.20) noticed that students' self monitoring of learning and thinking is the knowledge creation that is lies at the heart of such theory. In other words, students build meaning, in part, by self-assessing before and during learning. Students organize, evaluate, and internalize when learning and self-assessment is a part of that process. Moreover, they have to connect the new information with the stored ones. Hence, self-assessment enhances their abilities to make such connections and such process improves their learning and results in increasing their motivation and confidence.

Black and William (1998, as cited in Kavaliaus Kene, 2004) stated that, one of the causes to incorporate self-assessment into language courses is that it enhances motivation and goal

orientation in learning. Learning achievement can only come out when learners have a higher motivation toward learning. Furthermore, Liang (2006) suggested that, self-assessment through increasing students' knowledge of their learning goals and their learning needs, increases their motivation and learning orientation.

2.7.2 Meta Cognitive Theory

Meta-cognition refers to the process of “thinking about thinking” (Flavell, 1976, p.231-236). It entails the power to monitor, evaluate, and know what to do to develop performance. According to Wenden (1991, p. 210) meta-cognitive strategies engage planning of learning, self-monitoring, and self-evaluation. He also has stated that the planning strategy is concerned with asserting the nature of language learning, arranging to learn, creating aims, considering task purposes, planning tasks and looking for chances to practice. Learners will certainly become ready to prepare and to make mindful decisions about what they can do to develop their learning with the help of this strategy.

Moreover, it is a set of skills that are connected positively to enhance accomplishment, and such skills can be taught to students (Shunk, 2004). Martinez (2006), added that meta-cognition entails the organization of states, and that the meta-cognition strategies can improve determination and motivation in the face of challenging tasks.

2.7.3 Self-Efficacy

The concept of self-efficacy is related to the belief that everyone has to evaluate his/her own abilities to perform a given task successfully. Albert Bandura (1997), defined self-efficacy as “beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce a given attainments”. This means that, self-efficacy is about students' abilities to

learn and make particular academic tasks. He added that, self- efficacy influences, how people think, feel, motivate themselves, and behave.

Self-assessment plays a considerable role in developing self-perceptions that lead to greater motivation. It is evident that students' engagement depends upon their self- efficacy beliefs; which refer to the perception of their capability to do well in specific activity, and the value of doing well (Pintrich and Shunk 2002; Shunk,2004). Self-efficacy involves students approximating what they can do. The self-perception of competence is part of self-efficacy and refers to the beliefs abilities and knowledge to do well.

Brophy (2004, p 112) suggested that learners with more expectation are more likely to continue; however, those with low expectations frequently avoid tasks or give up. Students need to self-assess to know when they are learning, how much attempt they must spend for success, what have been improved, which need more improvement, and which learning strategies work well for them. Accurate self-assessment enables students to see what they have mastered and recognize what needs further works.

To sum up, self-assessment symbolizes a process that every teacher can emphasize in order to increase learning.

2.8 Reliability and Validity of Self- Assessment

In order for self-assessment to be sound, one must refer to two very important concepts, Reliability and validity. These are crucial for assessing bias and distortion.

Reliability refers to the extent to which assessments are constant. It refers to tendency toward stability found in frequented dimensions of the same phenomenon. It is increased when the teacher is very precise to instruction to students. As Hughes suggested “the more items that you have on an assessment, the more reliable that assessment will be” (Hughes,

1989, p. 36). The more consistent the results given by the assessment, the higher reliability of the assessing procedure. So, reliability is an indicator of the extent to which a set of outcomes or interpretations can be generalize over time. For instance, is whether a score attained by a student on a test would stay the same if the student took the test the following day, the more sample of students' work we collect, the more reliable consistent will be.

Validity can be described as being “a quality of the conclusions and process through which these where reached” (Taft, 1988). This means that, validity refers to the accuracy of an assessment. The extent to which students' achievements of a particular skill are in agreement with their teachers. Ross explained that as it is “agreeing with the teacher's judgments. This agreement is higher when students have been taught how to assess their work” Ross (2006, p. 3). Moreover, Cameron argued that “the most valid assessments will be those that collect a lot of information about performance on several aspects of a skill” Cameron (2001, p. 22). Hence, validity is about how well a test measures what is supposed to measure.

2.9 Achievement Criteria

Understandable achievement criteria are often associated with feedback and can reinforce mastery learning goals and self-assessment. Moreover, clear assessment helps students think about and recognize what they previously know, identify gaps in their learning, and work out to meet the criteria (Black and William, 2003; Boud, 1995). In this respect, it is clear that, when students put goals with criteria they became more confident for their learning. Besides, clear criteria increases students' in their own learning. In addition to, Hattie (2009, p. 165) confirmed that, students need to know “where they are at, where they are going, what it will look like when they get there, and where they will go to next”. This means that, effective self-assessment requires students to ask themselves some key questions about where they are in

their learning, where they are trying to go, and how to get there. It is absolutely true, that clearly achievement criteria are fundamental to effective self-assessment.

2.10 Raising Students' Writing Proficiency through Self-Assessment

Writing is an essential skill that promotes learning and increased critical thinking; students need to be proficient writers in order to be academically successful. The possible reason for students' lower writing skills is that many students have a little opportunity to write. Thus, teachers should encourage them to write and express their own ideas as well as to take control of their own writing.

Elbow (1981, p. 7) has viewed that "writing calls on two skills that are so different that they usually conflict with each other: creating and criticizing". It means that students must use their own words and ideas; while simultaneously they should judge the use of those words in order to decide which ones to be used. Besides, Taras has endorsed the use of summative assessment when writing, to let students in on the underlying processes, and to focus on practice. He has insured that this is the way to bridge the students' path to independent learning as grades are linked to criteria (2002, p. 506).

Mury (1982, p.33) portrayed the process of writing and revising as a discussion with the writer's self. This means that, writing demands a continual meta-cognition, as writers have to learn and evaluate their own thoughts objectively for the purpose of making a frequent development

Of writing tasks and to further progress as writers, she suggested that, self- assessment prompts this kind of self- dialog. Self- assessment in writing implies any teaching methods that prompt writers to reflect upon, evaluate, and respond to their own writing. Thorough this

process, the writer develops both the finished written product and constructs a depository of writing and revising skills for later.

In addition, Bandura, (1977, p. 96) argued that, self-assessment methods are a means to increase learner's sense of self-efficacy and, thereby, their capability as writers. It is important to say that self-assessment questions and exercises help students to engage in their own writing holistically.

The process of self-assessment has attracted attention in emerging a number of disciplines where the writing is taught and evaluated (Boud & Flashikov, 1989, p.395-430; Flashikove & Boud, 1989). Gray (1991, p.22-34) noticed that students build a basis of strong writing skill, when instructors teach them with methods to encourage meta-cognition, or by teaching self-assessment. So, self-assessment is practiced to help students be aware of the specific qualities of good writing and lead them to revise their own work with these attributions in mind.

According to Holec, (1981, p.102) self assessment of writing is “an integrate part of autonomous learning”. This means that, the learner can take his own responsibility without the help of the teacher. Self-assessment encourages autonomous learning in the sense that it helps learners to control their own learning, and become aware of their own responsibility in planning, executing and monitoring their language learning activities. Also, students' involvement in their learning process allows them to develop a better understanding of their own skills, proficiency level and diagnose their strengths and weaknesses.

Self-assessment in writing helps students to be aware and conscious about their learning, through providing them with information concerning the quality of their learning (Taras, 2001, p. 609). Furthermore, Hanrahan & Isaacs (2001, p.53-73) suggested that encouraging students to assess their own work may construct the confidence and self-efficacy which are important to maintain writer progress and may also enhance motivation to write.

Several authors argue that self-assessment in writing promotes a much needed sense of confidence in one's own writing ability (Hanrahan & Isaacs, 2001, p.53-73; Longhurst & Norton, 1997, p.319-330; Luoma & Tarnanen, 2003, p.440-465). In other words, self-assessment methods encourage autonomous learning of writing strategies needed to increase the writing skill. It is crucial that this method of self-assessing represents a mirror for learners to know what they gain as a result of learning. In teaching learners to work through a method, self-assessment powers revision and can support the constructive habit of writing in sequence of steps (Bloom, 1997, p.360-371; Grazino-King, 2007; Warne, 2008, p.23-7).

Self-assessment in writing helps students to understand the positive qualities of their work. Deltz (2006, p.41-45) argued that, self-assessment methods may enhance inspired and analytical process in writing. In other words, self-assessment makes students believe that producing an effective piece of writing depends on their ability to make judgments. Besides, many educators observed that self-assessment is useful in promoting students to follow a process in writing rather than creating an essay in one step, as frequently occurs when students write their drafts at the last minute with no revision (Andrade & Boulay 2003, p.21-34; Harris et al, 2008). In addition, Warne (2008, p.23-7), suggested that the process of reflection encourages writing development. Self-assessment is a kind of reflection that is conveyed through writing process, this process of reflection helps students to know what they have learned, and how well they have learned it.

Conclusion

In fact, both learners and teachers need to have some essential facts and information about the writing process, in order to strengthen and make the teaching/learning of the writing skill easier and significant. One way to achieve this purpose is to increase learners' self-assessment in order to make them able to identify that they are responsible for their own

learning. This responsibility means their engagement in all parts of learning: planning, assessing, and evaluating. So, Students' assessment too is very important. Since, they are going to take the responsibility and control their own learning.

The relationship between students' self-assessment and their writing ability was stronger, in the sense that the implementations of self-assessment methods in the assessment of writing promote growth in their writing ability and transfer to future writing tasks. Self-assessment gives students significant chance to increase their awareness of the nature of their development and needs in writing. With consciousness can come a degree of ownership and manage of their writing development. Moreover, numerous theoretical models sustain self-assessment benefits to writing, the development of critical thinking and the fostering of positive learner behaviors. It is understandable that effective writing can be enhanced through the process of self-assessment. Accordingly, the aim of this study is directed towards an investigation of the importance of self-assessment in increasing students' writing proficiency. Thus, the following chapter is set out to determine this issue.

CHAPTER THREE

FIELD INVESTIGATION

Introduction

The present study is an attempt to shed light on the importance of self-assessment in enhancing learners' writing proficiency. For this reason, two data collection procedures are used, students' and teachers' questionnaires. Learners' questionnaire has been used to gain information about students' writing proficiency on one hand and their awareness about the importance of self-assessment on the other hand. Moreover, the teachers' questionnaire is designed for the purpose of getting information about teaching of writing in general, students' level in writing, the difficulties they face, and the importance of self-assessment in increasing learners' writing proficiency. Thus, the present chapter is dedicated to the analysis of both students' and teachers' questionnaires. The process followed consists of the analysis of each question separately, summary of the results and findings.

3.1 Sample of the Study

The sample has been chosen randomly. It has been derived from a population of 158 third year students at the Department of English, University of 8 Mai 1945, Guelma, registered for the academic year 2016-2017. The sample is a total of 79 students. We chose third year students because they are supposed to have some writing experience; that is they got courses in written expression during their three years. They are expected to gain the important features of the writing skill and have control of their own writing.

3.1.2 Description of Students' Questionnaire

The questionnaire is handed to gather some information about students, their perception of the writing skill as well as their awareness of the importance of self-assessment in improving their writing proficiency. It consists of twenty three (23) questions which are either close questions requiring yes/no answers or ticking up the appropriate answer from a series of options, and/or open questions asking the students to give their own answers. The questionnaire is provided in appendix 1. This questionnaire is divided into three sections. The first section (General Information), consists of seven questions (Q1- Q7), and aims at getting information about students' background knowledge. The second section (Writing Skill) contains of seven questions (Q8- Q15), aims at extracting students' opinion about the writing process, the most difficult skill for them, and their attitudes toward writing in English, whether it is easy or difficult, the most important element for effective writing, and their level in writing in English. The third section (Self-Assessment), composed of seven questions (Q16-Q23), the aim of this section is to collect information about students' views of self-assessment strategy and heir awareness about its importance in raising their writing proficiency.

3.1.3 Administration of Students' Questionnaire

The questionnaire has been administrated during the second semester, at the Department of English, university of 8 Mai 1945, Guelma for third year students on April, 10th, 2017. Students were very interested and cooperative which makes our research more valuable; they took one hour and half to answer all the questions.

3.2 Data Analysis and Interpretation

Section One: General Information (Q1-Q7)

Question One: Age.....years.

	Number	Percentage
21	2	2.54%
22	77	97.46%
23	0	0%
Total	79	100%

Table 3.1: *Students' Age*

Concerning students' age, the majority of students (97.46%) are 22 years, and only 2.54% are 21 years. This indicates that their cognitive ability to write is different.

Question Two: How long have you been studying English? years.

	Number	Percentage
9 years	2	2.54%
10 years	77	97.46%
11 years	0	0%
12 years	0	0%
Total	79	100%

Table 3.2: *Years of Studying English*

It is clear from the table that, the majority of students (97.46%) have studied English for 10 years. Two of students (2.54%) have opted for 9 years. This implies that all students have mastered this language, and they did not face failure since they started learning it at the middle school.

Question Three: is studying English your

	Number	Percentage
Own choice	70	88.61%
One of your choices	5	6.32%
Imposed	4	5.07%
Total	79	100%

Table 3.3: *Students' choice to study English*

According to the results obtained, the majority of students (88.61%) have chosen to study English; this means that, they are interested and motivated in studying it. 6.32% of students have answered that English was one of their own choices, that is they didn't ignore its importance. And only, 5.07% was imposed to them.

Question 4: Whatever your answer is, please justify.

Students' justification behind choosing English

The results obtained show that, the majority of students (88.61%) like the English language, they feel free to express themselves using this language. Moreover, they believe that since it is an international language, they have to learn it. 6.32% wanted to study English for pleasure. Unlike, four students (5.07 %) dislike this language and preferred to study other domains.

Question 5: Do you think that learning English as a foreign language is an easy task?

	Number	Percentage
Yes	60	75.95%
No	19	24.05%
Total	79	100%

Table 3.4: *Language learning difficulty*

According to the results obtained, the majority of students (75.95%) argue that it is difficult to learn English; this indicates that they have to make their own efforts to improve themselves. And only 19 students (24.05%) answered that it is an easy task.

Question 6: Whatever your answer is, please justify.

Students' justification

The majority of students (75.95%) who think that learning English is a difficult task; believe that this difficulty is due to the differences between the two languages (English and their mother tongue) and consider that mastering English language requires hard efforts and practice. Besides, 24.05% of students think that is an easy task to learn English.

Question 7: How could you appreciate your level in English?

	Number	Percentage
Very good	15	18.99%
Good	29	36.71%
Average	35	44.30%
Bad	0	0%
Total	79	100%

Table 3.5: *Students' appreciation of their level in English*

Concerning students' level in English, the majority of them (44.30%) have said that their level is average, this designates that they still need knowledge and efforts to acquire its principles. 36.71% of students have opted for good that is, they gained the major rules of this language. Only 18.99% of students have said that their level in English is very good which means that, they obtained a good knowledge and mastered all the rules and principles of this language and find it easy to learn.

Section Two: The Writing Skill

Question 8: Which skill is the most difficult?

	Number	Percentage
Reading	8	6.33%
writing	60	75.95%
speaking	11	13.92%
listening	0	0%
Total	79	100%

Table 3.6: *The Most Difficult Skill*

It is clear from the table that, the majority of students (75.95%) considered writing as the most difficult skill, which means that they are conscious that it is a complex skill, which requires mental efforts and resistance. Eleven students (13.92%) have said that speaking is the most difficult skill, which means that they give more attention to pronunciation and focus only on how to perform a meaningful communication. Only eight students (10.13%) opted for reading, this indicates that, they lack the desire for doing so.

Question 9: How do you consider writing in English?

	Number	Percentage
Very important	70	88.61%
Important	9	11.39%
Less important	0	0%
Not important	0	0%
Total	79	100%

Table 3.7: *Students' Appreciation of Writing in English*

Concerning students' appreciation toward writing in English, all most students (88.61%) have opted for very important, this signifies that they master this language and are able to

produce a coherent and understandable piece of writing. Only, 11.39% students have said that it is important to write in English, which means that they did not ignore its importance.

Question 10: How often do you write?

	Number	Percentage
Always	10	12.66%
Usually	45	56.97%
Often	15	18.98%
Sometimes	9	11.39%
Rarely	0	0%
Never	0	0%
Total	79	100%

Table3.8: *Students' Frequency in Writing*

The results obtained from the above table show that, the all most students (56.97%) have chosen usually to write, this designates that they valued this language and wanted to develop their writing skill. In addition, fifteen of them (18.98%) have said that they often write in English, this means that they still need efforts to master all its rules and principles. Besides, 12.66% have opted for always, this indicates that they feel free to express themselves using this language and have acquired all its rules. Furthermore, 11.39% of students have said that they rarely write in English, this means that they still face difficulties while writing and need much effort to develop their abilities to write.

Question 11: Difficulties in writing?

	Number	Percentage
Easy	10	12.66%
Difficult	69	87.34%
Total	79	100%

Table 3.9: *Difficulties in writing*

The majority of students (87.34%) have affirmed that, it is difficult to write in English, this means that they are aware that acquiring any language demands mastering its rules, and providing effective piece of writing requires correct grammar, appropriate use of vocabulary. Only 12.66% of students said that it is easy to write in English, this means that they mastered all the principles needed for effective writing.

Question 12: If your answer is difficult, is it because you:

	Number	Percentage
Worry about grammatical mistakes	65	82.27%
Don't have enough vocabulary	10	12.66%
Have few ideas to convey the message	0	0%
Worry about punctuation mistakes	4	5.06%
Total	79	100%

Table 3.10: *Reasons for writing Difficulty*

According to the results obtained from the previous table, the majority of students (82.27%) have opted for grammatical mistakes as source of difficulty; this indicates that students still need time and effort to master the entire grammatical rules, and they believed that the lack of grammatical accuracy leads to produce poor texts. Ten students (12.66%) considered the lack of vocabulary as the major obstacle, this designates that they believe that producing a well written composition depends on the matter of words the writers uses. Only four students (5.06%) have chosen punctuation, so they need more practice about punctuation.

Question 13: What is the most important element for effective writing?

	Number	Percentage
Spelling	0	0%
Grammar	45	56.97%
Punctuation	4	5.06%
Vocabulary	12	15.18%
Organization of ideas	3	3.79%
Cohesion and coherence	15	18.98%
Others	0	0%
Total	79	100%

Table 3.11: *The Most Important Element for Effective Writing*

It is clear from the table above that, the majority of students considered grammar as the major important element for effective writing; this implies that they know that grammar is what gives sense to language, and the quality of writing is based on the grammatical accuracy. Fifteen students (18.98%) have opted for cohesion and coherence, which means that they know that the unity of a written text can be created by employing various devices. 15.18% of students have chosen vocabulary; this indicates that they believe that writers cannot produce grammatical sentences if they don't have the vocabulary that is needed to express what they want to say. Only 5.06% of students have chosen punctuation and 3.79% organization of ideas, this implies that they know that punctuation and organization of ideas are crucial factors that contribute to overall text quality.

Question 14: What is the most important element for effective writing?

	Number	Percentage
Good	19	24.05%
Average	60	75.95%
Low	0	0%
Total	79	100%

Table 3.12: *Students' Appreciation of their Writing Proficiency*

As it is indicated in the previous table, the majority of students (75.95%) have said that their writing is average, which means that they still need to work hard to improve their writing skill. Only (24.05 %) have opted for good, this indicates that they acquired all the aspects needed to develop their writing proficiency.

Section Three: Self-Assessment in Writing

Question 15: Do you assess your own writing?

	Number	Percentage
Yes	79	100%
No	0	0%
Total	79	0%

Table 3.13: *Students' Assessment of Their own Writing*

As it is shown in the previous table, all students (100%) have said that they assess their own writing. This indicates that, they are aware about its importance.

Question 16: How often do you assess your own writing?

	Number	Percentage
Always	15	18.98%
Usually	64	81.02%
Often	0	0%
Sometimes	0	0%
Rarely	0	0%
Total	79	100%

Table 3.14: *Students' frequency of assessing their own writing*

Concerning students' assessment of their own writing, the majority of them (81.02%) have opted for usually; this indicates that they believe that it helps them to understand their weaknesses and strengths. 18.98% have said that they always assess their own writing; this implies that they are aware about their own responsibility toward learning.

Question 17: What kind of assessment does your teacher rely on?

	Number	Percentage
Teacher assessment	69	87.34%
Self-assessment	10	12.66%
Both	0	0%
Total	79	100%

Table 3.15: *Kinds of Teachers' Assessment*

It is clear from the table that, the majority of students (87.34%) have confirmed that teachers assess their own writing, which means that teachers believe that assessment is the helpful tool to develop students' writing proficiency. Only ten students (12.66%) have said self-assessment, this means that some teachers ignore their role in increasing students' level in writing.

Question18: Does your teacher advise you to make self- assessment in writing?

	Number	Percentage
Yes	25	31.65%
No	54	68.35%
Total	79	100%

Table3.16: *Teachers' advice to make self-assessment*

As it is shown in the previous table that most students (68.35%) have said that their teachers did not advise them to assess their own writing, this indicates that they ignore its importance. Only 31.65% of students have confirmed that their teacher advice them to assess their own writing, which means that some teachers the value of self-assessment and try to encourage their students to do so.

Question 19: To what extent is self-assessment important in writing?

	Number	Percentage
Not at all	0	0%
Less important	0	0%
Important	79	100%
Very important	0	0%
Total	79	100%

Table3.17: *The importance of self-assessment in writing*

According to the results obtained, all the students (100%) have said that self-assessment is important, this indicates that they believe that it is a crucial tool which enables them to engage in their own writing holistically, so that, to know what they have learned, and how well they have learned it.

Question 20: Whatever your answer is, please justify.

Students' justification

From the previous results, all students have justified and confirmed that self-assessment enables them to learn from their mistakes, diagnose their strengths and weaknesses. They argued that, it enables them to know where the difficulties come from and find ways to overcome them.

Question 21: Could you add other suggestions

This question is open one; it is about further information about the importance of self-assessment in raising students' writing proficiency, only thirty three students (41.77%) have provided suggestion, they argued self- assessment is beneficial process which helps them to know how well their general ad specific goals were met. It provides them with the chance to check their abilities, therefore, raise their awareness about what was achieved and what needs more improvement.

4. Summary of Results and Findings from the Students' Questionnaire

To sum up, in section one; we can say that the majority of the students are interested in studying English language although they find it difficult. The majority of students claimed that their English level is average; this implies that they are conscious about the importance of learning a foreign language. In section two; talking about the writing skill, most students consider the writing as the most difficult skill, which means that they are aware that this skill requires and an endless efforts to be mastered. Moreover, they argued that writing in English is very important, that is they believe that it is the best tool to communicate effectively.

When speaking about the source of difficulty in writing, mainly the whole students argue that grammar is the major obstacle they face; this indicates that students still do not know how to combine words correctly using correct tense. Besides, some of students suggest that producing a well understandable piece of writing requires having a large amount of vocabulary. Furthermore, students also confirm that grammar is the most important element for effective writing, they believe that acquiring the grammatical rules help them to achieve a better writing ability.

In section three, the majority acknowledge that they usually assess their own writing, this designates that they are responsible learners. Moreover, they declare that almost their teachers advise them to assess their own writing; this designates that teachers try to motivate their learners and make them responsible for their own learning in general. Furthermore, we can notice that most students confirm that self-assessment is a very important tool in increasing their writing proficiency; this implies that they are aware that self-assessment is the best way to extend their own capacities toward learning.

5. Teachers' Questionnaire

Teachers' questionnaire seeks to collect information about teaching writing in general, students' level in writing, the difficulties they face, and the importance of self- assessment in increasing their writing proficiency. The administration of the questionnaire was held on April, 10th, 2017, at the Department of English, University, 8 Mai 1945, Guelma. The questionnaire is collected week later. It consists of nineteen (19) questions divided into three sections.

5.1 Description of teachers' Questionnaire

Section one: General Information (Q1 to Q3)

It aims at gathering information about teachers' qualification and experience as well as their appreciation of students' level in English.

Section two: writing skill (Q 4to Q12):

It aims at collecting information about teacher's opinion concerning students' level in writing, the difficulties they face, and the techniques teachers use to develop students' writing skill.

Section Three: students' self-assessment (Q12 to Q19)

The aim of this section is, to gather information about teachers' awareness of self-assessment strategy, their frequency and attitudes toward the use of self-assessment in increasing students' writing proficiency.

The procedure followed consists of the analysis of each question separately

5.2 Administration of the Questionnaire

This questionnaire was distributed on May, 10th, 2017. Fifteen of questionnaires were given to the teachers of written expression at the department of English, university of 8 Mai 1945, Guelma. And only twelve of them were returned back.

5.3 Analysis and Interpretation of Questions

Section One: General Information

Question one: Specify your qualifications please?

	Number	Percentage
Magister/ Master (MA)	12	100%
Doctorat (Ph D)	0	0%
Total	12	100%

Table3.18: *Teachers' Qualification*

Concerning teachers' qualification, all the teachers have said that they have a Magister degree.

Question 2: How long have you been teaching English at the university?

Concerning the years of teaching at the university, the majority of them (58.33%) have opted for five years; two of them (16.67%) have said six years. Moreover, two of them have taught for seven years. Only one teacher opted for eleven years. This indicates that they gained the experience to teach.

Question 3: How could you appreciate learner's level in English language?

	Number	Percentage
Very good	0	0%
Good	0	0%
Average	12	100%
Very bad	0	0%
Total	12	100%

Table 3.19: *Teachers' Appreciation toward Students' Level in English*

As it is indicated in table3.19, all the teachers (100%) have opted for average. This indicates that students still need to work hard to improve their level.

Section Two: Writing Skill

Question 4: Specify the modules you teach?

	Number	Percentage
Written expression	10	83.33%
Applied linguistics	2	16.67%
Discourse analysis	0	0%
Grammar	2	16.67%
Total	12	100%

Table3.20: *Teaching Modules*

Concerning the modules which teachers teach, the majority of teachers (83.33%) teach written expression; this implies that they know students' level in writing. And only two of them (16.67%) have said that they teach grammar and applied linguistics..

Question 5: According to you, which is the most difficult skill for learners to develop?

	Number	Percentage
Listening	0	0%
Speaking	0	0%
Reading	0	0%
Writing	12	100%
Total	12	100%

Table3.21: *The Most Difficult Skill for Learners to Develop*

It is clear from the previous table that, all the teachers (100%) have said that writing is the most difficult skill for learners to develop. This designates that they are aware that good writing is achieved by intensive practice and learners' involvement.

Question 6: Justify, Please

Teachers' Justification

All the teachers agree that the writing skill involves many sub-skills and competences as grammar, punctuation, and spelling. Moreover, they confirm that this skill entails a high level of abstraction and demands conscious work. Furthermore, it requires appropriate thinking and correct use of words.

Question 7: in your opinion, effective writing is:

	Number	Percentage
Informative ideas	12	100%
Correct grammar	12	100%
Effective punctuation	12	100%
Precise vocabulary	12	100%
Total	12	100%

Table3.22: *Teachers' Opinion of Effective Writing*

According to the results obtained, all the teachers confirmed that effective writing requires all these aspects. They argued that effective writer should use clear and understandable words, related with the correct use of punctuation marks. Moreover, they stressed that students have to know all the grammatical concepts needed for successful communication, because good writing derives from correct grammar.

Question 8: How do you describe your student's level in writing?

	Number	Percentage
Very good	0	0%
Good	0	0%
Average	12	100%
Bad	0	0%
Total	12	100%

Table3.23: *Teachers' Appreciation toward Students' Level in Writing*

Concerning students' level in writing, all the teachers (100%) have stated that their level is average. This indicates that they did not acquire all the rules needed for successful writing, and need a lot of practice to improve it.

Question 9: Do you encourage your students to write?

Teachers' justification

In relation to the results obtained, all the teachers argued that they encourage their students to write however, learners still suffer from different problems; their writing products do not reflect their level as university students, as they do not respect the requirements of academic writing. So, they have to apply what they learned to be academic writers.

Question 10: If' yes, how often do you give them writing activities?

	Number	Percentage
Yes	12	100%
No	0	0%
Total	12	100%

Table3.24: *Teachers' encouragement for students to write*

As it is indicated in the table above, all the teachers (100%) have said that they encourage students to write, this signifies that they are aware about the importance of students own working in improving their writing level.

Question 11: When you ask your students to write, which teaching strategies do you follow?

	Number	Percentage
Always	12	100%
Sometimes	0	0%
Rarely	0	0%
Total	12	100%

Table3.25: *Teachers' frequency of giving writing activities*

According to the results obtained, all the teachers (100%) have said that they are always gave students writing activities. This indicates that they try to motivate them and raise their awareness toward developing their writing skill.

Question 12: When you ask your students to write, which teaching strategies do you follow?

Teaching strategies

All the teachers have said that they follow the process based approach; in which students have to go through stages of planning, drafting, revising, and editing. This enables them to reflect and revise in recursive way, and thus producing a purposed piece of writing.

Question 13: What are the difficulties that students face while writing?

	Number	Percentage
Grammar	0	0%
Vocabulary	0	0%
Punctuation		
Organization of ideas	10	83.33%
Coherence and cohesion	0	0%
Total	10	100%

Table3.26: *The Difficulties that Students Face While Writing*

Nearly, the majority of teachers (83.33%) have confirmed that students face a difficulty in organizing their ideas, in addition to the miss application of grammar rules and miss use of punctuation signs. Only two of them (16.67%) have said that influence of the mother tongue is the major problem which students face while writing. This indicates that students still need time and effort to develop their writing skill.

Section Three: Self- Assessment in writing

Question 13: What is your definition of students’ self- assessment?

Teachers’ Definition of Students’ Self-Assessment

All the teachers agree that self-assessment is process of forming judgments about one’s own learning without referring to the teacher or peer.

Question 14: do you think that students’ self assessment increase their learning achievement?

	Number	Percentage
Yes	12	100%
No	0	0%
Total	12	100%

Table3.26: Teachers’ Appreciation of The role of Self-Assessment in Increasing Students’ Learning Achievement.

It is clear from the table above that, all the teachers have declared that self- assessment is important enhancing students’ learning achievements. Moreover, they argued that, self- assessment enables students to judge their own learning, and monitor their own progress. Thus, it is an important tool for lifelong learning.

Question 15: Do you use self-assessment learning strategy?

	Number	Percentage
Yes	9	75%
No	3	25%
Total	12	100%

Table3.27: Teachers' Use of Self-Assessment Strategy

According to the results obtained, nearly the majority of teachers (75%) have said that they use self-assessment as a learning strategy; this signifies that they believe that it helps students to develop their self-awareness toward their learning as a whole as well as to know the real causes of their academic success. Only (25%) of them have declared the opposite, this means that they rely on their own efforts to increase students' level of learning.

Question 16: If yes, how often do you use it?

	Number	Percentage
Always	9	75%
Sometimes	0	0%
Rarely	3	25%
Total	12	100%

Table3.28: Teachers' Frequency of Using Self-Assessment Strategy

As it is indicated from the table above, the majority of teachers have said that they always use self-assessment. This implies that, they believe that this process provides students with the necessary information that they need to better develop their learning. Only three (25%) of them have declared that they rarely use it.

Question 17: When you give a writing activity, do you ask your students to assess their work?

	Number	Percentage
Individually	9	75%
In pairs	0	0%
In groups	3	25%
Total	12	100%

Table3.29: *Teachers' Views of Students' Self-Assessment in Writing*

As it is indicated in the previous table, the majority of teachers (75%) assumed that they give students the opportunity to assess their own writing; this implies that they want to make them conscious about the importance of controlling their own writing in ameliorating their level. 25% of teachers have said that they prefer to judge students' writing by themselves.

Question 18: Does students' self-assessment enhance their writing proficiency?

	Number	Percentage
Yes	12	100%
No	0	0%
Total	12	100%

Table3.30: *Teachers' Attitudes toward the Use of Self- Assessment in increasing Students' Writing Proficiency*

It is clear from the table above; all the teachers (100%) have declared that self-assessment is crucial tool for increasing students' writing proficiency. It develops their critical thinking and allows them to review their strengths and weaknesses.

Question 19: Could you please add your comments about the impact of self-assessment in raising student's writing proficiency?

Further Suggestions

Only four teachers (33.33%) add their comments concerning the impact of self-assessment in raising students' writing proficiency; they argued that it is beneficial in the sense that it allows students to learn from their mistakes, diagnose their weaknesses and strengths, and develops their autonomy and motivation. It has also a significant role in developing students' self-awareness, self reliance, and self-responsibility toward their learning in general. The rest of the teachers (66.67%) may find what have been mentioned sufficient, thus they did not give further information.

5.1 Summary of Results and Findings from the teachers' Questionnaire

The analysis of teachers' questionnaire reveals that, all the teachers agree that writing is the most difficult skill for students to develop; as it involves correct, clear, and logic use of words. Concerning the difficulty that students face, all of them demonstrate that students do not apply grammatical rules correctly, in addition to their miss use of punctuation signs. Furthermore, the majority of them agree that self-assessment is a crucial factor which helps students to use their cognition skills to write effectively. They argue that, this process allows students to feel more empowered and enable them to become more autonomous and more responsible. Besides, they confirm that, self-assessment provides learners with the necessary feedback which moves them forward, and helps them to be more active participants in the learning process, in other words, self- assessment is the most useful instrument for students to have a better learning in general.

Conclusion

The analyses of both students' and teachers' questionnaires have revealed that writing is a complex skill which involves time and hard efforts. The results also showed that both of them are aware about the importance of self- assessment in raising students' writing proficiency. The results of teachers' questionnaires showed that they are aware about the importance of students' self control over their own learning, they argued that, self-assessment enables them to understand themselves as learners, to develop themselves, and to increase their engagement in the learning process. Moreover, they assume that, self-assessment is helpful for students because it motivates and encourages them to write. The results of this study is parallel with the hypothesis, as students and teachers demonstrate that, self-assessment is a reliable tool which provides students with the opportunity to remedy the mistakes, and enables them to identify writing strengths and weaknesses, thus improving their writing skill. The central finding is that strengthening self-assessment can be enhanced through raising students' motivation toward the benefits of this strategy.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

1. Final Remarks

The aim of the present study is to highlight the importance of self-assessment in increasing students' writing proficiency. The focal point of this study is on discussing the importance of writing skill in general, discovering the areas of difficulty that students may face, its relation with other skills, and the importance of self-assessment. Thus, this study is based on questionnaires administrated to both teachers and third year students at the department of English, university of 8 Mai 1945, Guelma as data gathering tools. Three chapters were set down to investigate the impact of self-assessment in enhancing students' writing proficiency.

Writing is a complex skill which takes time to achieve proficiency. The present research based on the hypothesis that, if students assess their own performance, their writing skill would increase. The results from teachers' and students' questionnaires provided a clear picture concerning the effect of self-assessment in increasing learners' writing proficiency. Findings of the questions have shown that, both of them are aware about the importance of writing skill in achieving academic success on one hand, and the importance of self-assessment in the developing students' writing proficiency on the other hand.

In addition, students have acknowledged that self-assessment helps them to gain information about their own performance or progress, and to identify areas of strengths and weaknesses in their own work in order to make improvements and promote learning. Some students have admitted that self-assessment is very effective and could help them to do better work and get better grades. Besides, students have believed that self-assessment increases their motivation and make them feel more confident about their work. Few of students have demonstrated that they rarely assess their own work because of lack of support. Agreement has been found between all students that self-assessment helps them to improve the quality of

their performance through the process of rethinking which leads them to make fewer mistakes.

Moreover, results from teachers' questionnaires have confirmed that, self-assessment increases students' motivation and helps them to develop their writing skill which leads to better academic performance. Thus, they have argued that, this process helps students to be more conscious about the writing parts that need improvement. All in all the results obtained from teachers' and students' questionnaires have confirmed the hypothesis of this study that is self-assessment would increase students' writing proficiency.

2. Pedagogical Implications

The major scope of this research is to increase students' writing proficiency through the process of self-assessment. For this sake, the following pedagogical implications have been suggested:

First, teachers should teach students how to be more analytic about their own learning by offering them with the sufficient time to inspect their own work. Second, teachers have to provide their students with the positive feedback which fosters their ability to use self-assessment strategy. Third, they have to help students to define the criteria which would be used to evaluate their writing. Fourth, teachers have to encourage students to depend on themselves in developing their own writing.

Enhancing students' writing proficiency demands that learners have to read and judge their own drafts carefully. Through continuous effort, resistance, and determination, language use and vocabulary can be mastered in a short period of time. Hence, in order to provide a well organized piece of writing, students first, have to define the criteria that they want to develop by themselves; that is, in every composition they have to read it more carefully and many times, and at each time one factor should be taken in account. These factors are: content,

vocabulary, grammar, organization. Second, to ensure clarity, students have to check and correct the spelling mistakes through the process of reflection which helps them to ensure that they use the appropriate cohesive devices to exhibit the logical structure. Third, for the sake of gaining a large amount of knowledge, students have to memorize the spelling of words which enables them to increase their vocabulary to a significant extent.

3. Research Perspectives And Limitations

However, this study has some limitations. First, the study is limited in scope; it investigates how self-assessment can increase learners' writing proficiency in small number of third year students at the department of English, university of 8 Mai, 1945. Guelma. So that it cannot be generalized to other levels and contexts. A second limitation is time restricted, this research needs to be conducted in a longer period of time; some student did not feel comfortable when answering the questions. In addition, some teachers were absent. Hence, self-assessment is a beneficial which leads to better achievement. Thus, we recommended that, teachers should teach students how to assess their own work, give them positive attitudes on their self-assessment and provide students with the sufficient time for revision after assessment.

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Dear Students,

This questionnaire serves as data collection tools for a research that aims to investigate the importance of self-assessment on rising students writing proficiency. I would be grateful if you answer these questions to provide us with information about your writing proficiency and self assessment. Your answers hold a great significance for the completion of this work.

Please, cross the appropriate box(x) which indicates your choice and add further information when needed.

.Douis Rania

.Department of English

.University of 08 Mai 1945, Guelma

Section One: General Information

1. Age.....years.

2. How long have you been studying English? years.

3. Is studying English:

a. Your first choice?

b. One of your choices?

c. Imposed on you?

4. Whatever your answer is, please justify.

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

5. Do you think that learning English as a foreign language is an easy task?

yes	
No	

6. Whatever your answer is, please justify.

.....

.....

.....

7. How could you appreciate your level in English?

very good	
Good	
Average	
Bad	

Section Two: Writing Skill

8. Which skill is the most difficult?

Reading	
Writing	
Speaking	
listening	

9. How do you consider writing in English?

Very important	
Important	
Less important	

Not important	
---------------	--

10. How often do you write?

Always	
usually	
Often	
Sometimes	
Rarely	
Never	

11. Is it easy or difficult to write in English?

Easy

Difficult

12. If your answer is difficult, is it because you:

worry about grammatical mistakes	
don't have enough vocabulary	
have few ideas to convey the message	
you worry about punctuation mistakes	

13. What is the most important element for effective writing? (one option)

Spelling	
Grammar	
Punctuation	
Vocabulary	
organization of ideas	
cohesion and coherence	
Other	

14. What is the most important element for effective writing?

Good	
Average	
Low	

Section Three: Self-Assessment

15. Do you assess your own writing?

Yes	
No	

16. How often do you assess your own writing?

Always	
Usually	
Often	
Sometimes	
Rarely	

17. What kind of assessment does your teacher rely on?

Teacher assessment	
Self-assessment	
Both	

18. Does your teacher advise you to make self- assessment in writing?

Yes	
No	

19. To what extent is self-assessment important in writing?

Not at all	
Less important	
Important	
Very important	

20. Whatever your answer is, please justify.

.....
.....

21. Could you add further information about this topic, please?

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

Thank you for your incorporation.

Dear Teachers,

This questionnaire is part of a research work carried out at the department of letters and English language in order to prepare a master degree. It aims to investigate student's attitudes towards the use of Self- Assessment learning strategy as away to improve their writing proficiency. I would greatly appreciate if you could take the time to share you experience by answering the questionnaires below, by crossing the right answer(s) or write full statements whenever you feel necessary.

. Douis Rania

. Department of English

. University of 08 Mai. Guelma

. Academic year 2016/2017

Section one: General Information

1. Specify your qualifications please:

Magister/ Master (MA)	
Doctorate (PhD)	

2. How long have you been teaching English at the university?

.....years.

3. How could you appreciate learner's level in English language?

Very good	
Good	
Bad	
Very Bad	

Section two: The writing Skill

4. Specify the modules you have taught and teach?

.....

.....

.....

5. In your opinion, what is the most difficult English language skill? Why?

Listening	
Speaking	
Reading	
Writing	

Justify.....

.....

.....

6. According to you, which is the most difficult skill for learners to develop?

Listening	
Speaking	
Reading	
Writing	

7. Effective writing, in your opinion, is:

Informative ideas	
Correct grammar	
Effective punctuation	
Precise vocabulary	

8. How do you describe your student's level in writing?

Very Good	
Good	
Bad	
Very Bad	

Whatever your answer justify, please?

.....

.....

9. Do you encourage your students to write?

Yes	
No	

10. "If" yes, how often do you give them writing activities?

Always	
Sometimes	
Rarely	

11. When you ask your students to write, which teaching strategies do you follow?

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

12. What are the difficulties that students face while writing?

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

Section Three: Students' Self-assessment

13. What is your definition of students' self- assessment?

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

14. do you think that students' self assessment increase their learning achievement?

Yes	
No	

15. Do you use self-assessment learning strategy?

Yes	
no	

16. If yes, how often do you use it?

Always	
Sometimes	
Rarely	

17. When you give a writing activity, do you ask your students to assess their work?

Individually	
In pairs	
In groups	

18. Does students' self-assessment enhance their writing proficiency?

Yes	
No	

19. Could you please add your comments about the impact of self-assessment in raising student's writing proficiency?

.....

.....

.....

Thank you for your incorporation.

RESUME

Langues anglaises sont considérées comme complexes pour les apprenants dont ils ont besoin pour travailler et soutenir un grand effort pour atteindre un niveau élevé. Donc, ce trouble purement vise à évaluer l'importance de l'auto-évaluation du niveau de développement de l'écriture. Lorsque les élèves doivent pratiquer le processus d'écriture en permanence, leur permettant d'apprendre toutes les règles et techniques pour améliorer leur niveau. Comme l'auto-évaluation aide les élèves à comprendre leurs erreurs et de les corriger, ce qui leur permet de produire des textes de haut niveau.

Il a été sélectionné pour les étudiants de troisième année de l'anglais et de l'échantillon parce qu'ils sont considérés comme plus pratique par écrit. Après un questionnaire pour un échantillon de professeurs et d'expression écrite en ce qui concerne l'importance de l'auto-évaluation du niveau de développement de l'écriture était troublée sur les résultats ont révélé la prise de conscience à la fois l'importance de l'auto-évaluation du niveau de développement de l'écriture.

الملخص :

تعتبر اللغة الانجليزية اكثر اللغات تعقيدا بالنسبة للمتعلمين فهي تحتاج الى عمل مكثف و جهد كبير للوصول الى مستوى عال. لذا فاعن هذا البحث يهدف الى تقييم مدى اهمية التقييم الذاتي في تطوير مستوى الكتابة. حيث يجب على الطلاب ممارسة عملية الكتابة بصورة دائمة مما يسمح لهم من تعلم كل القواعد و تقنيات ضرورية لتحسين مستواهم . كما ان التقييم الذاتي يساعد الطلاب على فهم اخطائهم و تداركها مما يمكنهم من انتاج نصوص عالية المستوى.

تم اختيار طلبة السنة الثالثة ل م د انجليزية كعينة و ذلك لكونهم يعتبرون اكثر ممارسة للكتابة. بعد استبيان للعينة و لاساتذة التعبير الكتابي فيما يخص اهمية التقييم الذاتي في تطوير مستوى الكتابة فاعن النتائج اسفرت على مدى وعي كل منهما باهمية التقييم الذاتي في تطوير مستوى الكتابة.