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An investigation into face to face feedback for second language writing in the Libyan higher education context

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy University of Huddersfield, School of Music Humanities and Media

By

Aziza Ibrahim Ghgam

September 2015

In the Name of Allah

''The Most Gracious, The Most Merciful''

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

وقل ربي زدني علما

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the most Merciful

''O My Lord Advance me in Knowledge'' (surah Ta-Ha; 20: 114)

الذي علم بالقلم علم الانسان مالم يعلم

''He who taught (the use of) the pen''

''Taught man that which he knew not'' (Al- Alag verses 5-6)

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Dedication

I dedicate my dissertation work to my family and many friends but especially:

To the souls of my father and my mum who did a lot for me and whose words of encouragement, prayers and push for tenacity still ring in my ears.

To the people with cheerful smiles on their faces that brighten other people's days.

To the people who are willing to help others from their hearts with nothing to gain. To the people who work all their lives in the shadows to make the lives of others better.

Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis, which is submitted for a PhD degree, is the result of my own humble work and effort except where clear reference is specifically made and acknowledged. This research has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Huddersfield or any other university.

Signature

Aziza Ghgam

Abstract

There is no doubt that feedback plays an indispensable role in both the teaching and the learning of writing skills, especially when it comes to a second or foreign language. However, despite substantial research showing the effectiveness of feedback, some teachers do not use the feedback technique to help their students improve on their writing. This study has grown out of interest during teaching practice at university level in Libya. It is common practice in Libya for teachers of English writing not to provide their students with either written or oral feedback on their written work. The purpose of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of face to face feedback on second language writing in the Libyan higher education context. To fulfil the mentioned intention, a combination of both qualitative and quantitative methodologies was employed. The study assessed face-to-face feedback by assessing whether and the extent to which this feedback technique led to an improvement in writing skills as measured by students' performance in writing before and after the course in which this technique was employed. In addition, an examination was conducted of both students' and writing teachers' attitudes towards face-to-face feedback. This was in order to investigate their attitudes towards the use of face-to-face feedback in learning writing as well as to explore the advantages and disadvantages of this method.

The participants of the study consisted of 200 third year undergraduate students who were studying in the English Department in two Libyan universities in the academic year 2012-2013. The students were randomly allocated either to a control or to an experimental group. The experimental group was given the treatment, which is face-to-face feedback (also known as conferencing feedback) whereas; the control group received written feedback. The study found a statistically noteworthy difference in students' performance between the control and experimental groups. In other words, students who engaged in face-to-face feedback improved their test scores more than those who received only written feedback. This difference in revised writing performance between the treatment group and the control group is attributed to the use of learning strategies for writing and engagement with the learning. These findings suggest that face-to-face feedback allows writing skills to develop faster and more smoothly than does written feedback. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with ten of the participant students (the treatment group) from only Tripoli University along with their writing teacher to look into their attitudes and perceptions about feedback in general, as well as their opinion on face-to-face feedback in particular. Observation was also carried out on the treatment group in the classroom, with several objectives in mind: to explore how students learn, to see if they engage in face-to-face feedback, and to confirm what they had said in the interviews. Analysis of the findings showed that students viewed face-to-face feedback as a worthwhile experience and expressed their preference for this form of feedback as compared to the written one. The improvement in students' writing ability was noticed during the

observation and in the samples of students' writing that was collected. In other words, the technique helped in improving the students' assignments.

The thesis offers some recommendations as well as some implications drawn from the findings. Despite the fact that the study has some limitations like any other research, this study is expected to be beneficial to teachers of writing and learners of English as well as researchers in related fields

List of Abbreviations

Explained below are abbreviations and acronyms used in this study:

CAEL   Canadian Academic English Language Assessment

EFL   English as a Foreign Language

ESL   English as a Second Language

FL   Foreign Language

IELTS   International English Language Testing System

PTE   The Pearson Test of English Academic

PET   Preliminary English Test

L2   A language which is non-native for its user (used with respect to individual)

TOEFL   Test of English as a Foreign Language

WR   Written Feedback

Definition of Terms

EFL: English as used by non-native users in relatively special circumstances, mainly to communicate with native speakers

ESL: English as used by non-native speakers in everyday life

English majors: English majors are higher education (undergraduate studies) students who study English as a specialisation to become English teachers after they complete the program.

Face-to-Face feedback: Feedback sessions conducted orally in which teacher and student(s) participate face-to-face (see 3.8.3 for information about the various way in which this can take place)

L1: L1 means the native or the first language and it is also known as a mother tongue.

L2: any language that is not L1 and used with respect to individual.

Coherence: The property of a piece of writing by which its ideas are logically connected

Teacher written feedback: Teachers' feedback on students' written work provided in written form and it is the most traditional and common type of feedback.

Writing conference / face to face feedback (also known as conferencing feedback): Discussion between a student or a group of students and a teacher about the student/ students' writing - "it simply evolves as the two parties talk" (Carnicelli, 1980).

Formative assessment: On-going assessments or feedback on writing drafts as an alternative to the final draft. The aim of this assessment is to modify teaching and learning activities to improve students' learning.

Summative assessment: This assessment is usually at the final draft. Its goal is to evaluate students' learning against some standard or benchmark.

IELTS: International English Language Testing System is used to determine the language ability of people who need to use English for study or work in countries where English is the main language in use. The test is managed by the University of Cambridge and the British Council.

TOEFL: The Test of English as a Foreign Language, which is a test, used to determine the ability of non- native speakers of English to understand the English language in academic settings. It is used especially for people planning to study in institutions that use English as a language of instruction.

PTE: This is The Pearson Test of English which is a computer based English language test administered to non- native speakers of English who want to study abroad. The test comprises of reading, writing, listening and speaking sections as the previous tests.

CAEL: English language proficiency test used for admission to higher education institutions throughout Canada.

Chapter One: Background of the Study

1.0. Overview of Chapter One

This chapter provides an outline of the study by presenting the introduction, the statement of the problem and motivation to undertake this research; it then explains the aims and objectives of the study. The significance of the study is also presented as well as the contribution of this study to the body of knowledge regarding how to help students improve their writing. The chapter then ends with an overview of the thesis. Overall, the chapter attempts to delineate an overview of the study.

1.1.   Introduction

It is common knowledge that for both EFL and ESL learners', writing is an essential part which, in most cases, students as well as teachers consider as the most difficult of all language skills to master. Successful writing skills are acquired over time with lots of practice which can be very challenging and frustrating for students.

> ''the difficulty lies not only in generating and organizing ideas, but also in translating these ideas into readable text. The skills involved in writing are highly complex. L2 writers have to pay attention to higher level skills of planning and organizing as well as lower level skills of spelling, punctuation, word choice, and so on. The difficulty becomes even more pronounced if their language proficiency is weak.'' (Richards, J & Renandya, W; 2002, p 303).

Therefore, it is our goal as teachers to help students develop writing skills. It is equally important for learners to improve their writing in an academic context and write more effectively; the ability to write clearly and effectively is an important and treasured passport that can be carried throughout our lives as learners, teachers, doers and thinkers. Good writing skills allow us to enter many great venues, including the realms of academia, as well as professional and personal success (McCunn, 2004:1)

Responding to student writing is considered as one of the most controversial topics in second language (L2) instruction and theory (Ashwell, 2000; Fathman and Whalley 1990; Ferris and Roberts 2001; Kepner 1991; Polio *et al.* 1998; Semke 1984; Ferris 1995a, 1997). The reasons that make responding to students' writing debatable can be elicited from the following questions: do students really benefit from teachers' corrections and comments on their writing? If so, does it apply to all students? Finally, are some types of feedback more effective than others? The answers to these questions partly depend on what kind of feedback and error correction learners prefer and consider the most useful. It is therefore essential to investigate English as second language and English as a foreign language, as well as ESL/EFL students' preferences for teacher feedback on writing, with the purpose of finding out and determining whether these preferences and expectations match those

of their teachers. Various studies investigate students' beliefs about what constitutes efficient feedback on writing and students' expectations regarding teacher marking techniques, which may influence the effectiveness of such feedback (Schulz, 1996). As a result the main thrust is to investigate the relative effectiveness of different types of feedback on students and whether there is improvement based on their tests.

Feedback is one of the strategies used by teachers to make their students more aware of their writing and help them do their revision more easily. In other words; feedback "helps students identify areas for improvement as well as commending them for evident achievement'' (Coffin *et al.*, 2003: 103).

Generally speaking, students usually obtain written feedback on assignments either from teachers, peers, or both. There are many studies that have been carried out on the issue of feedback and its effect on students' writing (e.g. Beason 1993; Dheram 1995; Kluger & Delisi 1996; Sitdo 1993; Han 2001; Perpignan 2003). Some studies discuss teachers' feedback while others talk about peer feedback, but there is no study in Libya that compares the two types of teacher feedback (written feedback (henceforth, WF) and face to face feedback in order to determine which one is more efficient for writing effectively. In addition, as conference feedback for writing was established in the United States of America (USA), the majority of the studies on writing conferences (face-to-face feedback) have been conducted in the L1 context rather than L2 context (Carnicelli, 1980, Graves, 1983, and Murray, 1985). In other words, there is a need for a study that would provide information about the type of feedback that students focus on more and there is a need for deducing the effectiveness of face-to-face feedback in the L2 context.

Therefore, the aim of this study is firstly to conduct face-to-face feedback in the L2 context and secondly to examine students' reaction to both kinds of feedback to discover which one helps students more.

1.2. The Statement of the Problem

The background for this research is due to the desire to develop an efficient and practical approach to the teaching and learning of academic writing especially in a Foreign Language setting (FL) such as in Libya.[1] The seeds of this study were gathered from a variety of various experiences gained as a student and a teacher of English as an FL; I realised that the method of teaching writing is inappropriate in the Libyan context, and there is clear dissatisfaction among teachers and students in regards to the students' writing skills.

At a personal level, I faced many problems in writing when studying at undergraduate level where I did not get any feedback from teachers/lecturers. Thus when I achieved a certain grade, it

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[1] EFL means English is being taught in a country where it is a foreign language. In Libya therefore the practice is referred to as EFL.

made me question myself what the problem was with my writing (what is right and what is wrong). In other words, there was no feedback on the writing. The starting point was therefore a personal experience that made me think about pedagogical practice.

Eventually I went to Canada to study for a Master's degree prior to which I had some courses in ESL before starting the degree and this time feedback was given. However, the feedback was not clear to me; for example, in some cases there were just question marks beside a paragraph or certain lines. I was very confused about what should be fixed: grammar, content, or organization? Practices such as these are not explicit so I thought that it was maybe because there were problems for student writers which could be overcome by informing and teaching them through improving feedback practices.

This problem also happens with other students from Libya who when they study abroad struggle a lot in order to satisfy their teachers in academics. This arises because their writing is not appreciated most of the time since they do not meet the set standards especially at the beginning of their study.

At a professional level, as an English teacher for many years, I had often been frustrated by the students' writing inabilities and their weak writing skills. Therefore, when I started teaching at university level, I started thinking about how students could improve their writing and how teachers could be effective in their teaching of writing. I thought about feedback and I wanted to know exactly how it works and its relation to the progress of writing. As a general rule, I wanted to find out something that could be beneficial to teachers, students and researchers in the related subjects; learning and teaching writing.

For that reason, there is a need for teachers of English as FL/SL to reconsider how to teach writing and help learners improve their writing.

> "The ultimate aim of any form of feedback should be to move students to a more independent role, where they can critically evaluate their own writing and intervene to change their own processes and products where necessary''
>
> (Hyland & Hyland, 2006: 92)

Moreover, although the topic of feedback has been discussed in many studies with its various types (teachers' feedback and peer feedback), none of these studies was carried out in the Libyan context. Furthermore, to the best of my knowledge none of the studies looked at teachers' written feedback and face-to-face feedback at the same time. This research has been carried out to test the efficacy of face-to-face feedback in a Libyan context and to determine whether or not face-to-face feedback is better than WF in improving the overall quality of revised drafts and in improving writing

quality in new tasks. On the whole, the reason for this study is the hope that useful conclusions can be drawn.

1.3.   Aims and Objectives

I believe that the approach to the teaching of writing in Libyan universities may be seriously deficient is based on experience which includes the results of students' writings in previous years.

The main aim of the study is to make a specific contribution to the general field of English Language Teaching (ELT), and especially ELT in Libya by focusing on writing as one of the major skills. In particular, this study aims to compare the effectiveness of face to face feedback and WF into English writing classes in order to develop good writing skills among Libyan students, as well as to investigate students' perception of the importance of feedback. Therefore, the objectives of this research are:

1. To find out if feedback really works and helps students in their writing as well as if they use it or not.

2. To find out which feedback works better in a specific setting: WF or face to face feedback, and to determine if face-to-face feedback helps students improve their writing. In other words, the most important aim of this research is to find out whether teacher-student face-to-face feedback can lead to writing improvement as Carnicelli mentioned that "The conversation between these two parties two parties, rather than statements or written comments by only one, is the strength of the conference method" (1980, p.101).

3. To evaluate and compare students' writing before and after receiving the two types of feedback.

4. To investigate students' preferences for different feedback techniques (written and face-to-face).

5. To find out the practical difficulties in implementing feedback. In other words, to investigate problems that students face after receiving feedback as well as teachers' difficulties in giving feedback.

6. To deduce implications that teachers face based on the findings.

7. To investigate gender difference regarding their use to the feedback.

The main purpose of the study then is to conduct research and develop practices related to academic writing in L2 with the support of lecturers and students. Based on the researcher's experience, she believes that teacher-student writing conferences are somehow helpful in improving the effectiveness of teachers/ lectures' responses to learners writing, as the face-to-face feedback provides a vital chance to interact, negotiate and to clarify difficult issues.

Based on the aims and objective of the study, the following research questions cover the main research concerns. The study attempts to answer the following questions based on the research gap that is mentioned above.

RQ1: Which is more effective in the Libyan higher education context; face-to-face feedback or WF?

In attempting to answer this question, the following subsidiary questions are addressed:

1a: what is the rate of improvement in writing performance of a group of students given face to face feedback?

1b: what is the rate of improvement in writing performance of a group of students given WF?

RQ2. What are Libyan students' attitudes before and after getting face- to-face feedback?

RQ3. What are the writing teachers' views towards face to face feedback within the treatment and control groups?

RQ4. How do both the teachers and learners at Libyan higher education deal with face to face feedback in practice

The researcher's intention is to investigate how FL/ SL students perceive different techniques of feedback, as well which kind of feedback they prefer and why, so as to have an idea about students' attitudes and beliefs which is important for the study.

1.4.   Significance of the Study

As earlier mentioned; many Libyan students face problems with writing in English especially at the university level. As one reaches a higher level in education, advanced writing performance is expected. Even though, writing is a personal activity, it depends on a student's motivation to engage with writing task which can be significantly improved through practice and coaching whereby feedback is given to enhance learning and increase competency. Daiker draws attention to the importance of helping students to gain confidence in writing by avoiding adverse feedback or any kind of responses that lead to writing apprehension and lack of motivation (1989, p.106).

It is vital to address the issue of using feedback and to examine ways to improve writing in Libyan higher education as well as to investigate the students' attitudes towards the use of feedback strategy as a new method in English Departments. I believe the present research can help the teaching of students as well as it encourages students to develop their ability to receive and give comments about their writing. This will eventually result in students improving their overall writing in form, content and quality. The research is motivated by the belief that face-to-face feedback carries learning benefits that are encapsulated in the Chinese proverb which goes "Tell me and I will forget. Show me and I may remember. Involve me and I will understand''.

Another advantage is that instructors will gain more insight into the face-to-face feedback during writing process. The researcher believes that this research can report the experience of the practice of face to face feedback by some Libyan students in undergraduate studies at Libyan Universities. I believe the learners' performance in the pre and post-writing tests (see 4.10.3) as well as their work on their composition through the term can give a vital insight to teachers of writing in Libyan institutions. Moreover, the recommendations from this research work contribute to enhancing the effectiveness of using face-to-face feedback in writing classes in the future.

1.5. Contribution to Present Research

The research investigates the effect of face-to-face and written feedback on students' writing using a multistage data collection approach, which makes use of both quantitative and qualitative methods. Therefore, the study is intended to contribute to the field of Teaching English as a FL/SL, specifically writing, which aims to develop an effective and practical approach through feedback that hopefully will help English learners to write more effectively.

This research aims to get various benefits such as:

1. Theoretical Benefit: The result of this research could be used by the other researchers to conduct a study of the same topic and in other settings.

2. Practical Benefit: The writer hopes that the result of this research can offer contributions to the process of teaching English writing for the teachers of English and for the students.

a. For the students: They can feel more comfortable and motivated in learning English writing.

b. For the teachers of English: The result of this research can add to the strategies of teacher's feedback in teaching writing and provide effective grounds to justify face to face feedback in teaching composition in English as an FL/SL.

1.6. Organization of the Thesis

This thesis consists of six chapters. The chapters are as follows:

➢ Chapter one: Introduction

This chapter sets out the background of the study as well as the need of this study where I highlight how I chose my study area and my research topic. The statement of the problem and the purpose of the study are also illustrated here. The chapter also presents the organization of the thesis and the chapter summary.

➢ Chapter two: Educational Context of Libya

This part of the study highlights the educational context of Libya, starting with Libya's location, population, and historical background to present the context of the study. The second part of this

chapter is about the education system and Libyan education policy; starting from primary education and teaching English at this level and ending with teaching English in higher education. The chapter also discusses the context of teaching and learning academic writing in English, and related issues.

➢ Chapter Three: Literature review

This chapter reviews the literature concerning writing, as well as the importance of writing and writing in FL/SL generally and in higher education, with a particular focus on Libyan learners' problem and their challenge when they write in English. The chapter also presents approaches to teaching L2 writing, their advantages and disadvantages. Furthermore, it sheds light on feedback, types of feedback, and teacher responses to students' writing. The effectiveness of types of feedback on both teaching and learning writing and their limitations are discussed with emphasis on face to face feedback which leads to the research questions of the current study.

➢ Chapter Four: Research Methodology, Research design and Procedures

This chapter sees a discussion of the research methodology that is used in the study. Qualitative as well as quantitative approaches are used in this research. It also provides information about the procedures of data collection, the subjects, and the materials used to assess students writing. This covers the procedures utilized in the quasi-experimental study on the effectiveness of face to face feedback, the use of the observation of writing learning and feedback practices at the Libyan universities and the details of semi-structure interview conducted with teachers and students. An account of the ethical principles is included in this part.

➢ Chapter Five: Findings (Data Presentation and Analysis)

Data that is collected from the participants involved in the study is presented in this chapter. It includes the data that was obtained from both quantitative (pre-post writing tests) and qualitative method (students' interviews- teachers' interview-observation as well as sample from students writing during the term). This chapter details and summarizes the findings of the quasi-experimental study and the result of the pre and post-test of both control and treatment groups. It also summarizes the findings of the interview and observation conducted with students and teachers, discussing their beliefs and attitudes about the effectiveness of face to face feedback.

➢ Chapter six: Discussion

This section covers the discussion of the research's findings with reference to research data and the literature. It discusses the research questions based on the findings.

Generally based on the data collection and research questions, the discussion will mainly focus on what kinds of feedback are needed in order to make students more successful re-viewers and conversers, what students feel are the most helpful ways of getting feedback and how well both teachers' and students' perceptions match

➢ Chapter seven: Conclusion

This chapter presents a summary of the study. It then proposes some recommendations based on the results before presenting the implications and limitations as well as providing recommendations for future research.

• References and Appendix are presented at the end of the study.

In the next chapter, the context of the education system in Libya will be discussed with focus on English teaching and learning in general, with particular focus on teaching and learning writing in FL/SL since the research concerns improving writing skill through feedback.

Chapter Two: Context of Education System in Libya

2.0.Overview of Chapter Two

This chapter provides a summary about the Libyan education system, especially about teaching English in higher education and, more specifically, about teaching writing skills. This chapter is divided into two main parts: the first section offers background information about Libya's geographical area, population and languages spoken followed by the country's historical background. The second part presents an overview of the education system and its policy along with the general objectives of education in Libya. EFL teaching in Libyan schools and teaching at university level are illustrated with a focus on teaching and learning academic writing in English. In addition, an analysis of the problems encountered in the teaching of English writing in Libya is also presented. In the last section, I conclude with a summary that provides a general review of what has been discussed in this chapter.

2.1. Libya's Location and Population

Libya is one of the largest countries in North Africa; however it has a very small population with only 6 million people and therefore is considered the smallest population as compared to its neighbours amongst other Northern African countries. Libya borders the Mediterranean Sea and it is along this coast where the majority of Libyans live. The country includes much of the Sahara desert and shares borders with 6 countries which are: Egypt to the east, Algeria and Tunisia to the west, and Chad, Niger and Sudan to the south. Figure 2.1 shows a map of Libya and its borders with surrounding countries. Libya's strategic location provided an ancient trade route to central Africa, which has been useful for hundreds of years.

More than half of Libyans are less than 15 years of age. Therefore it is known to have a youthful population. According to the 2007/2008 statistics run by The General Peoples' Committee of Education, there were about

1. 939,799 students enrolled in basic education with about 119,313 teachers.
2. 226,000 students were enrolled in secondary schools and there were about 39,847 teachers.
3. 279, 150 students were in higher education taught by 2,770 teachers.

Figure 2.1: Map of Libya with borders with surrounding countries
(Libya country map, 2014)

2.2. Languages of Libya

The main languages of the country are Arabic and Amazigh (Berber) which makes Libya a bilingual country (Imssalem, 2001; Agnaia, 1996). Arabic is the official language whereas Amazigh is not used officially. The Arabic language in Libya is used in three different varieties; first is the classic form, the language of the Quran, which dominates but is not limited to religious contexts. The second variety is spoken Arabic which is used as a Libyan dialect. Modern Standard Arabic is the third dialect and is used in the press and other media. Classical Arabic is used in both written and spoken forms in a prestigious way, and it is used and taught in formal educational contexts as well as for religious purposes. On the other hand, Modern Standard Arabic is much simpler than the classical form and is used in formal settings, public speeches and newspapers[2]. The Libyan Arabic dialect, meanwhile, is only transmitted orally and is the language used at home and in everyday conversations. This Arabic dialect is different from Classical Arabic in its phonology and its flexibility in word order, however Classical Arabic is not spoken by everyone, whereas the Libyan dialect is (Cowan 2000:29).

Besides Arabic, Amazigh; also known as the Berber language is spoken by many Libyans. The majority speakers of Amazigh language are concentrated in Tripolitanian region which includes: Nafusi and Zuwara. It is also spoken in Ghadamies, Awjilaa, Saukna and Tuaregs. Most of the speakers of this language do not know how to write it; Amazigh was ignored by the former government and was therefore not recognized or taught in schools.

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[2] Currently, there are many words in classical Arabic that cannot be understood. Also, the structure of Modern Standard Arabic less complex than that of classical Arabic.

English is taught as a foreign language; recently it has become a second language for some Libyans, especially for those who live in English speaking countries or for those who travel abroad to seek education and employment. It is also considered the medium of instruction for technology, in medical schools and in some science departments. Students learn English through reading specialized books in medicine or science (Imssalem 2001, p.10-11) as well as by learning certain terms needed for their courses. In the past one of the popular languages that was taught and spoken amongst some Libyans was Italian; a result of the Italian occupation of Libya in the colonial times. Nevertheless, Libyans who spoke Italian were very few as some refused to attend schools and learn it (further explanation in the following section 2.1.3) and some only knew the language orally and did not learn how to write or read it, having picked it up by living around Italians and dealing with them on a daily basis.

2.3. Historical Background

Libya is one of the countries that endured colonialism for more than four centuries (1551-1951) and it has faced a variety of foreign control. It was colonised by the Ottoman's from 1551 to1912; and the Italian's from 1912 to 1942; and lastly by the British from1942 to1951 (Clark 2004:1). During these periods Libyans lived in the darkness of illiteracy and ignorance except for the religious schooling when the Turkish Rule encouraged 'Kuttab' or what is now known as Quran schools (Arabsheibani and Manfor 2000:140). This type of education was the only type of education available for the Libyans and it only existed in some parts of the country. Although it was free and everybody was welcome, it was not possible for many to attend due to reasons such as financial constraints. For the people to be able to attend and study it would be costly. Apart from finance, distance from these *kuttabs* was also a factor that played a role in keeping the literacy rates low. During the Italian occupation, Italian was the language of schooling whereas the Arabic language was taught only as a subject. Therefore, most Libyans refused to send their children to schools since the focus was on the Italian language and its culture as well. As a result, only elderly people speak Italian as the language did not become established in Libya to the extent that French language did in Algeria and Morocco and the English language in Egypt.

After a long struggle, Libya gained independence in 1951. As well as being considered one of the poorest countries in the world at that time, only 10% of its population had gone to school (Minister of Education, 1974). After independence, it became essential to create a considerable demand for education by creating learning programs. Furthermore, **"***the lack of human resources, and the scarcity of expertise and leadership at all levels, prompted the authorities to seek the help of some international organizations such as UNESCO"* (The Libyan National Report on Adult learning and Literacy Education). The government embarked on a series of educational

improvements including a massive schooling campaign at all levels of education, especially at the basic education level, and guaranteed the right of education to all Libyans.

However, the discovery of oil in the 1960s has changed the history of the country, transforming Libya's "geographical and social profile'' (Fisher, 1978).This discovery had a great effect on the education in the past as well as the present, as schools were established and the teaching of languages such as English was encouraged. This encouragement came from foreign companies based in Libya and from the need to know English to work at these firms. As Villano observes, the emphasis on the personal benefits of learning a foreign language became evident at this stage of the country's development;

> Introducing students to alternative ways of expressing themselves and to different cultures gives greater depth to their understanding of human experience by fostering an appreciation for the customs and achievements of people beyond their own communities. Ultimately, knowing a second language can also give people a competitive advantage in the workforce by opening up additional job opportunities (Vallino, 1996 cited in Marcos, 2001, P.2).

However, the benefits of learning a foreign language go beyond the sake of job opportunities; it positively influences learners' cognitive abilities, and "students who receive second language instruction are more creative and better at solving complex problems than those who do not'' (Bamford and Mizokawa,1991, P.6)

2.4.   Education System

As it has been mentioned in section 2.1.3, the long period of foreign control had its negative impact and resulted in higher illiteracy rates. This made the independent governments view education as a priority in post- independence Libya. Moreover, the rapid development in science and technology throughout the rest of the world has made it necessary for Libyans to invest more in education and especially in foreign language education. "Education is widely accepted as a leading instrument for promoting economic growth" (Bloom, Canning& Chan 2005).

Education was considered as one of the most important sectors; therefore, the Libyan policy made it free and compulsory especially between 6 and 15 years of age. In other words, it is compulsory for one to attend primary and preparatory education and as a result, student populations increased significantly. Education is also free in high school (secondary) as well as at university level. By 2010, it was indicated by World Bank Organization (2015) that adult literacy is at a 90% high compared to about 20% in 1951 (St John, 2011). The dramatic changes in Libyan education brought about different difficulties and challenges (see table 2.1 for the growth in education)

Table 1.1: Growth in Education in Libya

Growth in Education in Libya		
Year	Number	Literacy
1951	34000	Population literacy less than 20%
1962	150000	
1977	980000	Overall literacy 51% but female 31%
1986	1245000	Literacy:54% male, 46% female
1996	360000	
2004	1477000	Literacy:92% male, 72% female

In modern day Libya, children start school at the age of six and attend primary school for six years and preparatory school for three years. After that, they transfer to secondary school for another three years (15 -18 years old). However, some of them attend technical or vocational school where they learn some skills that help them obtain jobs.

2.4.0. The Libyan Educational Policy

In this part I present an overview of the various stages (schooling years) of education and the objectives outlined in the current educational curriculum.

2.4.1. The General Objectives of Education in Libya

There are various objectives for the educational sectors in Libya which show the desire to integrate humanistic and democratic ideas into the Libyan education. The purpose of these objectives is to develop the education system in Libya; this was outlined in the National Report of the General People's Committee of Education (GPCE). Some of these objectives can be shown in the following points:

- It enables students to understand Islamic values and help students to acquire the proper use of Arabic language while encouraging them to learn foreign languages and to remain in contact with the rest of the world.
- It develops the students' sense of national belonging.
- It enables students to obtain a positive attitude as well as social and cultural values that are appropriate to their needs as well as to gain the required use of language skills.
- It provides the opportunity of education to all people regardless of age or gender and it helps them specialize in an area that is closest to their abilities and in their comfort zone as well as where they are best oriented. This also enables them to achieve a sustainable human development which meets the society's needs.
- It develops students' capacity to interact with other cultures and open up to the world, qualifying them as citizens able to live positively and jointly in the global community.

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Based on the above objectives, the main schooling years are divided as follows.

2.4.2.   Primary Education

Primary education consists of 6 years of primary school and 3 years of preparatory education; which is known as secondary or high school in England. Children in primary school study for 4 hours every day in the first three years (grade 1- grade 3) and for 4.5 hours until 6th grade. Pupils are taught a variety of subjects and they start studying English from grade 5 in the last five years whereas before they (2010) started studying English when they reached grade7.

After 9 years of study pupils have to have a national exam, which is marked by specifically chosen teachers from around the country in order to obtain reliable results and with the ultimate goal being for pupils to achieve the Basic Education Certificate.

The primary and preparatory stages are called the Basic Education stages which consist of 9 years of compulsory study for all the students aged from 6 to 15. The primary stage focuses on the Arabic language in order to build and improve students' linguistic ability. Only a few years ago, English language has been introduced to year 5 to expose the language at an early age.

The preparatory stage starts at the age of 12 and students study different subjects. Regarding English, a series of textbooks (*English for Libya* by Terry Phillips) are used to teach English with a focus on the basic rules of grammar such as forming questions and using tenses. Most of the teachers of English have limited skills to teach the subject and are usually directed by inspectors who visit the classes and evaluate their teaching to verify adherence to the curriculum. Students get the Basic Education Certificate after they have complete the nine years of basic education and have a national exam at year 9. They can then either enrol in high school or enrol in vocational programmes. Those who do not complete the nine years can enrol in a vocational programme which lasts about three years.

The following table shows the syllabus that is taught at the basic education level which is designed by the General Administration of the Curriculum. The content of the syllabus keeps changing for development except for maths and science. This makes life very difficult for teachers. Equally, it is very difficult for parents to guide their children when the system has changed so much since they were at school.

Table 2.2: Programs taught at the Basic Education

Curriculum in Libyan Schools		
Grade 1-3	Grade 4- 6	Grades 7-9
Arabic	Arabic	Arabic (3 books: reading, Grammar, literature and poetry text)
Mathematics	Mathematics	Mathematics (a text book for Algebra and another for Geometry)
Religion	Religion	Religion
Drawing	Science	History
Physical education	History	Geography
	Geography	Chemistry
	Drawing	Physics
	Physical education	Biology
	English (grades 5& 6)	English
	Jamahiri society: cancelled from 17th February 2011 and substituted by Al tarbya Alwatanya (teaching students about their country and the constitution)	Drawing – Physical education
	Computer (grade 6)	Computer
		Jamahiri society: cancelled from 17th February 2011

2.4.3. Secondary Education

Secondary education is generally 3 years, although for a short period of time in the past it was 4 years. Up to 1990, students who enrolled in secondary school to prepare for universities and other higher institutions studied all subjects (science and humanities) in the first year and in the second year they specialized in either the science department or humanities. After that, a new curriculum has been established to provide students with a specialization field they want to continue in at university. So, from the first year of secondary school they have to study in a certain field and as a result they have to gain a good score in that field. For example, if they want to study science they

must achieve no less than 80% in a science subject when they graduate from preparatory school. The specializations that are in secondary school are science, engineering, economics, languages, and social sciences. Nation-wide, students in the last year must take final exams and are subsequently awarded the Secondary Education Certificate (GSES) if they pass. If a student does not pass, he/she has to repeat the same academic year.

Therefore the secondary stage is the first step in academics which leads to higher education. At another level, some students choose another option that leads to the general teacher training institutes and are prepared to be teachers for primary education. Regarding English, it is considered to be one of the most important subjects. "English for Libya" is a series of course books that are used to teach English in Libyan schools. This series is organised around activities based on a communicative approach.

The following table shows the specialized secondary education and the departments in which students can study at university after getting their specialized certificate.

Table 2.3: GPC (the General people's Committee for Education, 2008:8)

No.	Division	University Faculties- Students enrol in
1-	Basic Science	Sections of The Faculty of Sciences: Maths, Statistics, Physics, Earth Sciences, Computer Science, Meteorology Teacher training colleges and higher vocational training centres
2-	Engineering Science	Various sections of the faculty of Engineering and teacher training colleges and higher vocational training centres
3-	Life Science	Medicine, Dentistry, Pharmacy, Veterinary Science, Medical Technology, Teacher training colleges, Higher institutes of Health, Faculty of science Departments (plant and animal).
4-	Economic Sciences	Economy, Accounting, Administrative Sciences, and the college of teacher training and higher vocational training centres
5-	Social Sciences	Literature, Law, Political Sciences, Physical Education, Arts and Media
6-	Languages	Languages, Departments and faculty of Arts And Teacher training.

As illustrated in previous sections of this thesis, formal education in Libya involves thirteen years with students entering primary at the age of six. Table 2.4 below shows the levels of school education.

Table 2.4: Three Levels of School Education

Stage	Year Group	Ages	Period
Primary	1-6	6-12	6 years
Preparatory	7-9	12-15	3 years
High (secondary)	10-13	15-19	3 years

2.4.4. Vocational Programs

Vocational programs are typically for pupils who do not complete the 9 basic years or who complete the basic years without achieving a good result. This program lasts 3 years and aims to train students for work life. There are 44 different programs in 7 major fields: Electrical; Mechanical; Carpentry; Building and Architecture. The female vocations include; Service industry; Agriculture; and Marine fishing. English is one of the subjects taught in the vocational program where the syllabus varies based on the different fields. Students who graduate from this program are awarded the Intermediate Training Diploma.

2.4.5. Higher Education

After obtaining the Secondary Education Certificate especially with good results, students join higher education which is provided by universities as well as higher technical and vocational institutions. Higher education is free with the exception of the Open University where the tuition fee is paid by students as well as by private institutions. Students may continue their studies in higher education based on their result as well as their ambition through one of the universities, technical and vocational institutions or in higher learning institutes.

The Secondary Education Certificate, which successful students get at the end of the 'intermediate' or secondary school cycle, is required for admission to both university and non-university program. Since 1990, all universities require a score of 65 percent or better on the Secondary Education Examinations as an admission requirement to enrol in a university program. University education lasts four to seven years; for example, medical students have to study for seven years to get the degree, whereas, engineering students need about 5 to 6 years based on the branch they choose. While other faculties such as economics, Islamic studies, humanities, languages and basic science last for about 4 years.

Some faculties, such as medicine and engineering, require scores exceeding 75 percent for admission. Students who have an average below 65 percent are admitted to higher training and vocational institutes whose programs are in fields such as electronics, mechanical engineering, finance, computer studies and medical technology. Students from specialized secondary schools are strongly encouraged to continue their field of specialization at the tertiary level.

Higher education consists of an undergraduate degree, where students take 4 or 5 year programs to obtain their Bachelor's, and postgraduate studies where these studies can be done either in Libya or abroad and, most of the time, scholars get scholarships from the institutions they work at.

Regarding the history of higher education, the first university in Libya, Gar-Yunis, was established after Libyan independence in 1951. It was located in Benghazi until 1957 when it was split into Tripoli University (previously Al-Fatah University) in Tripoli and the original remained in Benghazi because of the rapid increase in the number of students. Due to the increasing number of students enrolling in higher education, the number of universities and institutions of higher education expanded too. For example, in 1995 the number of universities was 13 consisting altogether of 76 specialised faculties and more than 344 specialized scientific departments. More than a third of the students (about 35.4% based on some statistics) who are enrolled in higher education are between 18-24 years of age.

"*The number of university students has increased from 13,418 students in 1975–76 to 269,302 during the 1999–2000 academic year. The total number of students registered at different educational levels in Libya was 1,786,270 in 1996 representing 40.3% of the population*". Figure 2.2 shows the students enrolment in higher education as adopted from Ali Al hwat (*2003, pp. 391-402*) about higher education profile in Libya.

Figure 2.5: Higher Education in Libya between 1975-2000

Year	No. of Students in Universities	No. of Students in Higher Technical Institutes	Total
1975-76	13,418	-	13,418
1980-81	19,315	1,130	20,445
1984-85	32,770	3,080	35,850
1989-90	50,475	3,916	54,391
1992-93	101,093	12,921	114,014
1993-94	116,473	16,912	133,385
1995-96	160,000	28,106	188,106
1996-97	160,112	54,080	214,192
1997-98	168,123	58,512	226,635
1998-99	165,447	58,877	224,324
1999-00	204,332	64,970	269,302

Although there are many universities and institutions in the country, both public and private, these universities are managed in the same way by the universities People's Committee that is led by a secretary (dean). Regarding the faculties, each head of department is a member in the faculty's committee and the secretaries of the faculties are members of the university.

2.5.   EEL Teaching in Libyan Schools

In the early 1950's English was included as a main part of the syllabus in the Libyan preparatory and secondary schools. The aim was to expose the younger generation to the modern world as English was becoming a universal lingua Franca during the period of Franco-British administration, 1944-1951. The method of teaching English was primarily dependent on textbooks.

"Textbooks used an 850 word basic vocabulary and reading books employing the same vocabulary, and adopted a traditional, grammar-based approach, focusing on reading and writing". (Basic way to English by K. C. Ogden-mentioned in Al-Hussein (2014)).

In order to cope with the various achievements in all fields of knowledge, English became a priority for science, technology, business, diplomatic corps, vocational training, media and all kinds of global communication. The syllabus was based on publications of graded series of books from Egypt and Iraq.

Later some special courses were prepared by local experts with the aid of some British advisers; 'Living English for Libya', and 'Further English' (English for Libya by M. Gusbi,1966 and Further English for Libya by M. Gusbi and R.John, 1974,1984). The series "Living English for Libya'' textbooks (1, 2 and 3) were used in all 3 year preparatory schools. Since this course was written by a Libyan, the examples given were related to Libyan culture to make the text more relevant and understandable to the student. Each book contained thirty lessons and each lesson comprises of a simple reading task or conversations followed by several grammatical exercises. Most of the lessons, if not all, were supplemented with pictures. Whereas the "Further English for Libya''; 1 and 2; were designed for first and second years of high school (secondary school), the third year of high school used "readers of Longman's Simplified and Structural English" in both the Arts and Science sections. For Arts pupils there is more emphasis on literary English while for the Science pupils the emphasis is mostly on scientific English (Suhbi, 1982 p.10).

Teaching English as a school subject has faced many changes, the most considerable was the Ministry's abolition of English teaching in 1984 for preparatory schools and secondary schools as well as university, except for pupils on the science pathway who studied English in the second year and third year because most of them would study medicine, for which English is required. The prohibition of English language education was applied as a reaction to the American air attacks and the USA Sanctions on Libya. This ban was due to the political forces form the former regime (Gadhafi regime) which deeply influenced the educational system. At that time students were unaware of the problem until they finished their high/secondary school and became university students where the failure to study   many subjects in English was evident. "After a while the Libyan

educationalists realised the fault and determined to incorporate English in the curriculum again'' (Sawanin, 2009). Furthermore, in 1993, following improved relations with the West particularly the USA and the UK, English language was re-introduced for grades 7-9 but it was allocated less time than before. It was also not suitable for students because it lacked a lot of language skills, especially writing and speaking skills, which are important for students.

After many years using different English textbooks, the Ministry of Education in Libya attempted to develop a new national curriculum for English books. Therefore; new books have been designed by native speaking authors (Phillips *et al.*; 2002a, 2002b, 2008, 2008a) and were published by Garnet Education. Textbooks such as the 'English for Libya' series, which is used for grades 7 to 12 (both preparatory and secondary) were introduced. The new course books adopt the communicative approach in contrary to the previous books that focused on the grammar approach as mentioned earlier. For secondary students; the course books are different depending on certain specializations. In other words, English specialization has been written with the specific needs of Libyan students who have chosen certain subjects for their future studies as mentioned. Each section in each specialized secondary school has its own specialized subjects. For example, students who study in English specialization study English skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing), language lab, grammar, conversation and phonetics. These parts are all in one subject book and the topics are related to social issues. Meanwhile, for students who study science, their books are about science fiction and other topics that are related to scientific matters.

Many efforts have been made to improve the teaching of ESL and EFL by investing more on training teachers as well as providing the majority of necessary equipment and aids in schools, such as laboratories and teaching material. However, there are many problems that both of teachers and students face in using these books.

2.6.   English at the University Level

As has been mentioned earlier, in the early 1950s English was included as a main part of the syllabus in the Libyan preparatory and secondary schools. It was used at the university level as well. English was at first used in all the faculties and departments in Al- Fateh and Gar Younis universities and then later, it also started to be taught in other universities.

'The general aims of teaching English at the university level include: (a) to enable the students to understand and use English for purposes of communication in everyday life situations; and (b) to enable the students to read and understand scientific and specialized literature in the field of their study'' Suhbi (1982; p 12).

Moreover, in order to sustain the country's economic development, the study of English was crucial especially in the oil trade, which requires communication with foreign companies. English was therefore made one of the main subjects for engineering, science and technical departments.

In addition, English is taught as a subject of specialization in both Education and Arts Faculties. In these faculties, the plan is to improve the students' English – since they study different courses – and to prepare them to be English teachers at high school (secondary level) as well as at other institutions such as technical and teacher training colleges. Although the universities are managed in the same manner by the universities People's Committee that is led by a secretary (dean), and while there is a head of the department in the faculties, the teaching of English is the responsibility of the Department of English in all of the faculties. As a result, any department that requires an English teacher has to contact the English department. The teaching staff includes both Libyans and non-Libyans who are often holders of postgraduate qualifications.

Regarding the curriculum, the university level is different from the secondary level where they have certain books they should study. However, university only has an outline syllabus for each faculty which shows what courses are to be covered every year. The details of what to include as well as the choice of course books are left to the teachers based on their experience and knowledge. Generally university teachers are responsible for selecting the appropriate approach to teaching, and the materials, tasks, and activities for their students. However, the head of the departments usually ask for a report of what is used in case any further discussion is required. As a general rule, general English language, in which students learn different skills, is taught in all departments with concentration on teaching grammar. Moreover, for some departments students are exposed to special terminology where it is required. For example, students who study medicine need certain terminology that is different from that which is used by engineering students.

When it comes to assessment, exams and quizzes are the main tool for evaluation in the Libyan education system, in all departments of university level study as well as in schools. There are distinct marking systems used in Libyan schools and universities (for all subjects) which are based on percentages to show the students level. The following table illustrates that:

Table 2.5: Grading System Table

85-100 %	The result is excellent
75-84 %	Very good
65-74%	Good
50-64 %	Pass

35-49%	Weak
0-34%	Very weak

2.7. English Language Teacher Education

As it has been pointed out earlier, Education and Arts Faculties are responsible for teacher training in order to prepare them for high school level teaching. English departments in both faculties train English teachers. The faculty of the Teachers Training College in Tripoli, the capital city, has been the central of EFL teacher's preparation in Libya because "its program is followed literally by other institutions in the country" (Elhensher, 2004:46).

Students who study in the faculty of Education are prepared for teaching by carrying out teaching practice in their third and fourth years. Students get the experience of teaching by being conveniently placed in schools near the university, and supervisors attend the teaching sessions in which the students are involved order to evaluate them as well as to give them feedback on their work. An initial class observation session is first attended by the students before starting their teaching practice which is scheduled by the school. During teaching practice, students teach once a week for two or three terms and they have to show full teaching responsibility since they are evaluated by their supervisors. At the end of the four years study, students have to take exams in addition to their teaching practice. When the students graduate, they are awarded a Bachelor's degree in Art and become qualified teachers in secondary schools. However, this system does not apply to English teachers only, but also for other departments of education. Considering the syllabus of the English department, three categories of courses are included and they are covered during the 4 years of study. Some of these courses are studied repeatedly at different levels such as: writing, reading comprehension, and speaking. The following table illustrates the syllabus:

Table 2.6: The Syllabus of English in Libyan Universities

1-Core Teaching Courses	2- core Intellectual Courses	3- Specialisation Courses
• Fundamentals of education • Introduction to psychology • Curricula • Developmental psychology • Teaching methods	• Arabic language and literature • Islamic studies • General history of the Arabs	• Language acquisition • Grammar • Conversation • Composition • Translation

• Technology and techniques of education • Assessment and evaluation • Psychology: well-being in psychology • Management in education • Teaching training	• Politics • Modern foreign language (French)	• Phonetics • Language Lab • Literature (drama, novel, poetry) • Writing (some universities have creative writing) • Oral practice • Applied language science • Theoretical language science • Literary criticism • Sociolinguistics

Concerning teaching in English departments at universities, some teachers hold Master's degrees and others have PhD degrees in English language teaching or applied linguistics. For the Master's degree, some have been obtained from Libya (either in Tripoli University or in the Academy of Higher Studies); however, the majority of masters and PhD holders study abroad due to the Libyan government's encouragement and offering of scholarships. Therefore, huge numbers of university teachers have their degrees from English speaking countries such as the USA, Canada and the UK. Although there are a number of Libyan teachers who teach English, universities do not have the sufficient number of English language teachers which results in hiring or recruiting foreign teachers from Arab and Asian countries (Egypt, Iraq, Syria, India and Philippines) to take up jobs in the language teaching positions in Libya.

2.8.   Libya's Programs and Degrees

The Programs and Degrees that are considered as a higher education are divided into three stages. The stages as shown in the Libyan education system are as follows:

Stage I: The first stage of university education requires four to five years (five years in architecture and as and engineering) of full-time study leading to a Bachelor's Degree. There is a common curriculum for all first-year students. Undergraduate medical programs closely follow the British

model. Degrees are conferred after five years of study, which is often preceded by a preparatory year and includes a one-year residency. Examinations are often conducted by the British Royal Colleges of Medicine and conferred by the Libyan Board of Medicine.

***Stage II:** The Higher Diploma and the Master's Degree (MA or MSc) are awarded after two years of study beyond the bachelor's degree. These programs are mainly offered at the large universities, particularly Gar-Yunis and Tripoli. Postgraduate studies in Libyan universities cover a wide range of subjects, but are generally dominated by Arabic, Islamic studies, Social Sciences, and Humanities.*

***Stage III**: The Doctorate requires a further two years of research and the submission and defence of a dissertation; however, only a few students gain their Ph.Ds. from Libyan universities. As of academic year 1999/00, 100 students had attained Ph.Ds. from Libyan universities; mainly in fields such as Arabic, Islamic studies and the humanities. Libyan universities have not yet started doctoral programs in science, technology, and engineering. As a result many students pursue their doctorates abroad.*

Students who study abroad must obtain certain qualifications; in order to join foreign programs they need to meet both academic and English language entry requirements before they start the program. For example, for entry to master or PhD program, students will need to have an IELTS of 6.0 (in England) or more, which depends on the specialization requirement, or its equivalent in other countries. Students need to take English courses before starting their study because the level of English knowledge in Libya is generally poor especially in the last few years. In addition, some students often need between 3 and 12 months pre-sessional English courses in order to be prepared for academic study, especially with writing skills, since most Libyan students face problems with writing. Many students cannot write effectively and most of them do not pass the English tests (IELTS, TOFEL, and CAEL) the first time around because of their low scores in writing (see appendix 1.2 for IELTS test result). This means that even if the students could write some English after studying English for some years, they cannot meet the requirements for academic writing.

2.9. Teaching and Learning Academic Writing in English

Teaching and learning academic writing is a challenging task for both parties involved. In general, when a Libyan student is asked to write a composition in English, the composition, for most of the students, is a direct translation of Arabic into English which makes it an improper piece of writing. Some of the many reasons why this is the case is that the rules of English sentence structure, tense agreement, and meanings are not followed.

When students make mistakes , these are not explained to them well by their teachers nor do they get any sort of feedback about it which results in a non-effective type of writing with bad results most of the time. However, some universities are fortunate enough to have some qualified English writing teachers who attempt to do as much as they can to address the mistakes made in students' pieces of writing. Generally speaking, the issue of writing issue is particularly problematic, as students continue to face these issues when they pursue postgraduate degrees abroad. There are various problems that influence both teaching and learning in Libya and these are discussed in the next section.

2.10.   Analysis of the Problems in Learning and Teaching English Writing in Libya

There are several factors which contribute to and influence the quality of the teaching and learning of English, especially in writing in higher education in Libya. Some of these causes are related to the teachers, some to the schools, some to the students and others to materials. Among the factors that play a vital role in learning and teaching English are the following:

2.10.1. Political Factors

The Libyan government decided to ban the teaching of English in Libyan schools and universities across the country for several years. This was due to an incident in 1986, when the USA bombed Libya (explained above in 2.2). Because of this incident and the prohibition of English, both teachers and students were affected. Students were not able to continue their progress in the language and this resulted in them forgetting the language skills they had previously learnt. Furthermore, teachers and educators were told to stop teaching the language. This affected their ability to update their knowledge of English (such as learning new phrases, vocabulary and teaching skills) and also led some teachers to give up their careers and/or change to a different specialization of teaching.

In the mid-nineties, English language teaching started to fully re-enter the educational system, which had suffered from the consequences of English language teaching prohibition. This procedure was beset by various challenges and problems. One of these problems was that there was a shortage of Libyan English teachers as a result of the closure of the English language departments in the country. In addition, as previously mentioned some teachers took a different career path during the ban and therefore it was difficult for them to restart teaching English after the long period of time of being away from practicing the language. The lack of teachers and the level of teachers' education was not the only issue, but even the sudden unplanned return of the language was a problem for students and teachers. Students at university level were allocated the subject to study although they did not have any knowledge of the basis of the language as it they had not been taught English   in primary or in secondary school. I myself experienced this problem, as English was brought back when I first started university where I did not have any Basic English skills; this was very challenging for students as they were expected to pass English exams at university level. A report by UNESCO

summarized the state of English language teaching during this period as being very tough and challenging.

However, after all the issues discussed, a new curriculum for English was introduced in 2000 in order to develop students' skills but it was faced with the lack of teaching strategies which would help learners improve and overcome their difficulties.

Therefore, it is important that teachers' prior knowledge and practices should be critically examined. Carless states that "teachers need to acquire the skills and knowledge to implement something, particularly if it is slightly different to their existing methods'' (1999:.23)
The author (ibid) also mentioned the importance of retraining teachers, as neglecting the training of teachers' leads to negative consequences.

> If teachers are not equipped to deal with the implications of a new approach, they are likely to revert to the security of their previous behaviour and the desired change may not take place. Without sufficient retraining, even teachers initially enthusiastic about an innovation can become frustrated by the problems in innovation and eventually turn against it. (1999:23).

The problem of not retraining English teachers, after reintroducing English in the educational system, has the same outcome that Carless (1999) highlights.

2.10.2. Students' Low Proficiency in English

In general, students in Libya are weak and experience various problems when it comes to writing in English. Some of the issues in writing that Libyan students find difficult to overcome are mainly in vocabulary, syntax, grammar and discourse. Libyan students who have taken part in international English exams such as IELTS, TOFEL, and PEARSON (PTE) have all claimed that the lowest mark they achieved was in writing.

The problems faced by Libyan writers are numerous, starting with organization. Libyan learners face various difficulties; for example, they do not often bear in mind their target readers when they write, as they can sometimes be unaware of the importance of the impression they make on their audience. Therefore, students face difficulties in setting their writing targets and prioritizing their thoughts and ideas. In addition, some students are neither able to follow a suitable writing structure which shows an awareness of the needs of the reader, nor can they divide their writing into the three main parts (introduction, body and conclusion). Some students also lack the basic writing skills, as some of them cannot introduce their compositions with proper topic sentences and do not know when to use paragraphs or how to organize their thoughts and separate their ideas into independent units.

Not only do students face problems with organization but they also have problems with the discourse level, where they cannot write cohesively or produce well connected sentences. Generally

speaking, they face challenges when they write in different genres. Students are not usually aware of the language vocabulary and style that are essential for certain writing tasks.

In addition to these are difficulties with the skill of writing itself, students writing in English make a lot of grammatical errors such as in the use of appropriate verb tense, auxiliaries (which is completely different in Arabic), word order (as in adjective and noun), cohesion, linking words, definite and indefinite articles and other features.

As an English lecturer and a previous student in Libya I see that one of the reasons behind the difficulties faced by Libyan students concerning writing is due to the fact that writing is viewed as a very difficult skill as compared to the other language skills that the students are taught (such as speaking and reading). This causes the students to be demotivated and almost lose hope in succeeding in the subject. Compounding these attitudinal problems is the fact that students' abilities in English are very limited as they have insufficient exposure to the language, as they do not use it outside the classroom. Moreover, all sources that can aid in improvement such as books, magazines and articles do not exist as the only ones available are written in Arabic.

A further factor, which causes Libyan students to lack skills in English writing, is the influence of their mother tongue. Arabic markedly differs from English, and as students habitually compose in Arabic and then translate into English; this has a negative effect on their English writing. This effect is called interlanguage or language transfer. In other words, this is where the students transfer their ideas, forms, sayings, idioms, meaning and sentence structures from L1 to L2. This leads to a conflict in the language system and therefore results errors in their writing. Many studies state that there tends to be interference from students' L1 in the process of writing for ESL/EFL (Benson, 2002; Cedar, 2004; Chen& Huang, 2003; Collins, 2002; Jarvis, 2000; Jiang, 1995; Lado, 1957; Liu, 1998; Mori, 1998; Yu, 1996). Writing in another language, either as L2 or a foreign language of the country of the learners, is usually considered a great challenge at all stages, mainly when students write academic essays, as it is more demanding than other types of writing such as writing short paragraphs or summaries.

To achieve successful writing skills, learners need careful preparation for their tasks and in this case both teachers and materials play a role. Students need to learn how to write effectively, and therefore they need to be motivated and encouraged by their teachers' usage of certain techniques on top of using provided materials outside the classroom (e.g. English texts).

2.10.3. Teachers' Recruitment in Libyan Schools

As mentioned previously, teachers of English are often recruited from different countries either from Asia or from other Arabic speaking countries due to the lack of Libyan English instructors (described in Section 2.5). This can be a problem because it means that students can be exposed to different

models of the language, which can be confusing. In any case, some teachers lack efficient teaching skills and teaching methodology which can influence the learners' writing negatively.

A more everyday problem is the teachers' work load, which makes it difficult for them to lend a hand to their students in writing and follow their writing step by step. As a consequence, students tend to hate writing and are afraid to submit their work. This lack of love for writing emerges not only from the difficulties lots of students have with writing, but also from the reality of teachers who do not provide students with adequate and substantive feedback. Students at all levels of the educational pipeline, including those situated in higher education, need their instructors to give them substantive feedback on their writing (Daniel, 2010).

The teaching of English writing in Libyan higher education commonly lacks the techniques that teachers should use in order to help students learn how to write in better way. One of the main reasons is that teachers, partly because of their heavy workload, generally tend to treat each piece of writing handed in by the student as a final draft which makes students not aware of how to write in a better way. I mentioned in the introduction section of this thesis that when I got a mark, I was bewildered and asked myself what the problem was with my writing (what is right and what is wrong).

According to Norrish (1983) "students should not produce a large number of incorrect written forms, since if they do, it is not psychologically rewarding for them, and it is costly in terms of the teacher's time and effort." (p. 115).

Therefore, EFL/ESL learners should be prevented somehow from making errors in writing by being given a great deal of guidance in the early stages and not being asked to do exercises for which they have not been sufficiently prepared.

At the same time, and notwithstanding the opinion of Norrish above, English language teachers should be aware that writing instruction should not focus on grammatical concerns more than the construction of ideas and clarification of meaning. This can be attained through engaging writing learners with different strategies.

Feedback is one of the strategies that help learners write effectively. This practice opens the possibility of allowing students to gain confidence in their handling of written language. Since, as mentioned above, insufficient teaching techniques (such as providing feedback and talking with the students about their writing) are used in teaching writing to the Libyan learner of English, most of students cannot produce a good piece of writing.

2.10.4. The Gap between School and University English

Many students become discouraged when they enrol in higher education, as they find out that the way of learning English which they experienced in school is completely different from that at university. They are also discouraged with the teaching methodologies; they are no longer spoon fed by the teacher and they have to work harder and more independently. One of the issues that students face is the lack of vocabulary, knowledge of genre and discourse to meet the requirements of their colleges and specializations, which results in difficulties with language skills. The level of English taught in schools at both the preparatory and secondary levels usually does not prepare students for higher education level English. For example, students do not practice writing skills in school which may be attributed to reasons related to inefficient teaching. Students face another problem regarding developing writing skills at university because the teaching approach to writing at the higher education is product-approach and old fashioned. The writing process is neglected and the students either try to produce the required piece of writing, or get frustrated and do not practice their writing which results in failing in this skill. Teachers' knowledge is very important because this knowledge can include what influences teachers' teaching practice such as knowledge about learning difficulties, subject matter and teaching strategies according to Verloop *et al.* (2001: 446).

According to university records, no single study has been carried out by the faculty members on the writing problems or teaching English writing and how it can be improved through feedback. One factor that can inhibit students' learning and success in higher education is the mismatch between their expectations of learning and those of the program (Moore, 2010). Therefore, understanding learners' conceptions of learning at the very beginning of their enrolment in higher education is of paramount importance. This involves understanding their epistemological beliefs as well as their conceptions of their abilities and roles in and responsibility for learning. It also involves accommodating and privileging the students' voices over their learning, which are rarely heard in most contexts (Kenny, 1993; Lamb, 2005)

This study attempts to shed some light on the writing problem and tries to investigate the importance of feedback especially, face to face feedback which is a conversation between the writer (students) and the reader (teacher) about a piece of work in progress. As mentioned in the introduction, and based on my experience, I wanted to investigate the face to face feedback method to see if it works better than the written feedback or not and to see if there is any differences between male students and female students to the use of feedback. The focus on communication in face-to-face feedback is a strong sign of a major basis theory: the social constructivism. Myles (1998: 162) indicated that social constructivism provides a ''psycholinguistic explanation'' for students' learning improvement through interactive pedagogical practices. Teacher-student conferencing is an example

of the social constructivist theory whereby the teacher interacts with the student writer face-to-face in the reconstruction of the current draft.

Newkirk (1995) points out the importance of the teacher working with the student; their interaction can increase student engagement and participation that could result in improvement of writing (1995: 195). This emphasises Vygotsky's (1978: 50) claim that learning occurs through dialogue.

In addition, in the opinion of this researcher, Libyan students are arguably in a particularly good position to benefit from this kind of interaction because of social structure and attitudes. These make the teacher/student relationship very clearly and starkly hierarchical. At the same time, this researcher's native intuition is that Libyan interactional norms, like those in other Mediterranean cultures (e.g. Sifianou 1992, Bou-Franch & Lorenzo-Dus 2013) value directness. This relative directness has been found specifically of Libyan students in a study by Youssef (2012).

For both these reasons, students have no sense of self-face-threat when being shown face-to-face how an aspect of their writing performance is wrong. Indeed, the fact that attention – of any kind - is being paid to their work is likely to be experienced by them as face-enhancing (see O'Driscoll 2011: 239-242 for examples and argument as to how bald criticism can be experienced this way).

These circumstances constitute an additional reason as to why the effectiveness of face-to-face feedback is worth investigating in the Libyan context.

2.11.   Chapter Summary

This chapter, which is devoted to the educational system in Libya, presented firstly a general picture of Libya's location, population, languages and history. It is observed that, in the beginning, the Libyan parents avoided to send their children to the Italian schools because the schools were based on the occupation culture and due to their failure to teach Arabic. Therefore, Libya was affected by the colonization period, which resulted in absence of learners in school with the exception of studying in Quranic schools for some children. However, after independence there was recognition of the importance of education so the number of students greatly increased. The discovery of oil and the economic development have increased the value of education. The second part of the chapter, on the other hand, outlined a description of the education system and the various stages of education. It can be concluded that education has made satisfactory progress with some indication of education policy and its general objectives. The Committee of education in Libya has made an effort in improving the educational systems through upgrading the curricula, introducing English language from primary stages as well as offering scholarships for students to study abroad.   This part of the study also presents some information regarding how English is taught in different stages of education

in Libya. Some factors that influence the quality of the teaching and learning of English at the university in Libya are also illustrated. The table that follows shows the structure of education in Libya.

Table 2.7: The Structure of Education in Libya

No.	Grade	Age	Stage	
5-			Advance studies	Post graduate-Masters and PhD (Doctorate) degrees.
4-			Higher education	Higher institutions, higher and vocational centres.
				University education
3-	12	17	-High school (secondary school) - in the second year, students choose their specialization in science or arts and after that they achieve the General Secondary Certificate Examination (GSCE) at the end of the third year. -Secondary training	General – technical & vocational
	11	16		
	10	15		
2b-	9	14	Preparatory school	Basic education
	8	13		
	7	12		
2a-	6	11	Primary school	
	5	10		
	4	9		
	3	8		
	2	7		
	1	6		
1-		4-5	Kindergarten	

The following chapter reviews the literature which focuses on writing and ways of teaching writing (product- process). In addition, feedback will be discussed as well as the types of feedback.

Chapter Three: Literature Review, Feedback and Writing Effectively

''The difficulty of literature is not to write, but to write what you mean; not to affect your reader, but to affect him precisely as you wish'' (Robert Louis Stevenson)

3.0. Overview of Chapter Three

This chapter reviews previous research that looked at feedback with focus on face to face feedback. This was performed in accordance with Hart's apt observation that a review of the literature is important because: "without it you cannot acquire an understanding of your topic, of what has already been done on it, how it has been researched, and what the key issues are'' (1998, p.1).

As indicated in chapter two, Libyan students face a lot of challenges when writing at the higher levels of education (i.e. university level). They struggle to meet the requirements of the writing tasks at any particular course level. Teachers in Libya are usually responsible for their own courses starting from their design to their evaluation. This requires choosing the appropriate writing approach to use in the writing course, the kind of feedback that supports their students' learning, and the strategies and material needed to improve writing skills.

For the purposes of this research, I looked in this literature review at studies that addressed the issue of teacher's feedback in writing. I start with a review of the definition of terms, writing and feedback in L1 and ESL/EFL writing theory. The chapter incorporates four main sections to review available literature on this topic. The first section introduces writing and ways of teaching writing, product, process and genre approaches. The second section focuses on the feedback definitions in general, and the importance of feedback in teaching writing for EFL and ESL, in particular. The third one presents the types of feedback, such as teacher feedback, peer feedback and face to face feedback. Finally, the gaps in the research and the research questions are discussed.

3.1.   Definition of Writing

Writing is the representation of language in a textual medium that is used for different purposes such as transmitting information, maintaining historical records and keeping various documents in different sectors.

Writing is an essential skill for communication among people in general and in the academic sector in particular. The concept of writing is related to literacy; if a person does not know how to write and read that means s/he is illiterate. Writing is known to be a difficult skill to teach or learn as it needs a lot of hard work and time to be mastered. Through writing people can share ideas, arouse feelings, persuade and convince others. Just like speaking, writing is a main component of language; without these components, it is difficult to communicate in the society.

Various researchers have proposed their own perspectives and definitions of writing and consequently they presented different views and approaches. For example, Byrne (1998) defines

writing as "the act of forming graphic symbols'' (p.1) which is associated with physical and mental activity. However, Nudelman and Troyka (1994) view writing as a process consisting of different stages. Their argument is based on Hedge's (2000, p.302) definition of writing which is "the result of employing strategies to manage the composing process, which is one of gradually developing a text''. Developing text means going through the writing processes such as generating ideas, writing a draft, editing and so on. Similarly, Shaughnessy (1977) describes writing as "a messy process that leads to clarity''. Frank Smith (1982) represents this messy process in terms of the ways in which the text is moved around, modified, cut, or expanded. All these writers agree that the writing process is a complicated process and needs substantial amount of work. Therefore, unlike speaking, writing cannot be considered an innate ability or capacity. It is a skill that has to be learned. O'Grady *et al.* (1996:591) indicated writing needs not only to be taught and learnt but also it needs deliberate effort whereas for spoken language there is no need for formal instruction: it is acquired without this instruction. Raimes (1994: 14) also had the same belief that with speaking we learn it without instruction while people are usually taught how to write even in their own mother tongue.

3.1.1. The Importance of Writing

No one can ignore the importance of writing either in daily life or at work; if there weren't any writing we would not learn about other civilizations and cultures.

It is common knowledge that the person who writes something is called a writer, but who could be a writer? A writer is usually someone who is connected with the word author, or it can be a person who writes creatively and professionally such as novelist, journalist, playwright and others. In addition, a writer often has to write in a particular situation and submit what they have produced in the form of writing: a report or an academic paper, for example. Most ESL and EFL students cannot write professionally unless they study writing in an academic setting. When people learn writing, whether it is for professional reasons or to succeed in their studies, they need to go through lots of steps and long journeys to manipulate writing in their language. However, it is harder and more important to learn how to write in other languages as SL/FL in order to communicate successful. Writing in SL/FL, generally, is faced with "social and cognitive challenges related to second language acquisition'' (Myles 2002). Myles's argument means that SL or/and FL writing, especially in academic contexts, is highly complicated as it involves both cognitive processing (mind interaction) and social activity (interpersonal interaction).

With respect to good writing; there have been many suggestions made by countless authors. However, there appears to be an agreement about what makes a good piece of writing. Researchers agree that a good piece of writing is one that provides readers with required information which can be easily understood. It is important, therefore, to ensure that the piece of writing is clear and can be understood without confusing the reader. For example, according to Reynolds (1993) an easy to

understand piece of writing that gives the readers the necessary information indicates good writing. This is when the reader can get his idea/message across without having to try to grasp it.

Hairston (1998) suggests that good writing "has three characteristics":

- That it says something significant,

- Is aimed at a specific audience, and

- Is meant for some purposes. (Cited in Trang 2009: 26)

In other words, writers have to have a strong awareness of purpose and audience when they write. They need to think about the readers and the reason for writing. Therefore, the vocabulary, formality and overall format or genres of the writing vary depending on the purpose and audience. Consequently, good writing provides the necessary information for certain readers, similar to when the students write texts for their teachers to evaluate.

In addition, some researches evaluate good writing in terms of four main bases which are "unity, support, coherence, and sentence skill'' (Langan, 1997:p.139-140). Each base has its unique step towards a good piece of writing. For example:

1- The writing will have unity when the writer advances a single point and sticks to that point,

2- The writing will have support when the writer supports the point with specific evidence.

3- The writing will have coherence when the writer connects and organizes the specific evidence.

4- The writing will demonstrate effective sentence skills when s/he writes clear, error-free sentences.

 Moreover, these four points are connected to each other and cannot be separated. Writing at its most basic level starts with a sentence, and the sentence has to have certain elements in order to be error-free. The elements that should be taken into consideration are illustrated hereunder:

Table 3.1: Elements of Good writing (Adopted from Langan, 1997, p.95)

Grammar	- Subjects and verbs - Fragments - Run-ons - Regular and irregular verbs - Subject verb agreement - Consistent verb tense - Additional information about verbs(infinitives, participle, gerund, active and passive) - Pronoun agreement, reference and point of view(first, second, third pronouns) - Pronoun types(subject and object, possessive, demonstrative) - Adjectives and adverbs

	➤ Misplaced modifiers
	➤ Dangling modifiers
	➤ Faulty parallelism
Mechanics	➤ Manuscript form/ format (papers look attractive, neat and easy to read)
	➤ Capital letters
	➤ Numbers and abbreviations
Punctuation	➤ Apostrophes
	➤ Quotation marks
	➤ Commas
	➤ Other punctuation marks
Word use	➤ Spelling improvement
	➤ Vocabulary development
	➤ Commonly confused words
	➤ Effective word choice
	➤ Sentence variety

Briefly, although different criteria are suggested for good writing and these criteria are clear and thorough, Langan's (1997) set of criteria are regarded as the best way to evaluate a good piece of writing. Tricia Hedge elaborates on the requirements of effective writing

"Effective writing requires a number of things: a high degree of development in the organization of ideas and information; a high degree of accuracy so there is no ambiguity of meaning; the use of complex grammatical devices for focus and emphasis; and careful choice of vocabulary, grammatical patterns, and sentence structures to create a style which is appropriate to the subject matter and the eventual readers.'' (Hedge, 1998, p. 5)

Therefore, the care that the writer has to take with his/her writing starts with the organization of the sentences into a text and a coherent whole which has to be as explicit as possible in order to communicate successfully with the reader throughout. In other words, good writing does not happen naturally; it needs a lot of effort. For example, even the best writers work a lot – thinking, rewriting, and editing- to produce a cohesive and coherent piece of writing and this takes a lot of time. By looking at the main characteristics of a good piece of writing, appropriate feedback seems to be the crucial element that needs to be provided by teachers. Writing, as a general rule, has certain features but is different for L2 writing. Criteria for assessing writing is inevitably subjective for example even if the Langan's list is adopted, different markers are likely to attach different degrees of importance to items on the list

3.1.2. L2 Writing

Undoubtedly writing and learning to write in English as an L2 is different from writing as a native speaker. Many studies about ESL writing; such as Ferris and Hedgcock (2005); Hinkel (2004); and Zhang (1995) highlight the differences between first language and second language because every language has its unique social and pedagogical features. Not only do languages have their own culturally related structures and forms, but also the learners have different linguistic competence and learning skills. Thus, most non-native students struggle a lot and face many difficulties in writing. Advanced students also experience these same challenges albeit to a different degree. Johns (1997) found that even if students learn ESL for many years, some of them struggle to produce clear and well- structured pieces of writing. Composing or writing a clear text in an L2 is exceedingly complicated in both producing the text and in the process of writing.

3.1.3. Academic Writing in FL/ SL and Composition Studies (EAP)

Writing always plays an important role in higher education and it is known or is defined as "academic writing"; which is different from how a person speaks, although in both cases it is a way of communicating with others. When speaking, the speaker usually does not face challenges because the audience may agree with the person or know what he is trying to say, or they may not want to put him on the spot. Meanwhile, in writing, when people read something there are many questions that occur because they do not know the writer and what s/he means or they may not agree with that. Hence, if the writer wants to "communicate effectively with readers'', s/he "must provide solid evidence for any point'' s/he makes (Langan, 1997: p.6) in an academic writing the writer must avoid using informal language and the writing has to be structured carefully.

Academic writing has to be formal, impersonal and objective as well as give credit to work written by others. Myles (2001: 1) notes that "Academic writing requires conscious effort and much practice in composing, developing". Myles (2001:1) explains that

> The ability to write well is not a naturally acquired skill; it is usually learned or culturally transmitted as a set of practices in formal instructional settings or other environment. Writing also, involves composing, which implies the ability either to tell or retell pieces of information in the form of narratives or description, or to transform information into new texts, as in expository or argumentative writing.

Hence, academic writing is the form of writing students are expected to create and produce in response to the content they learn about in an academic setting, which makes it a real a challenge for many students. Errors in academic writing make the students' work sloppy and unprofessional, while it needs to be flawless.

What makes academic writing complex is also the fact that it is a communication between learners and educators and not the general public. It tends to be to a certain extent formal in tone. Moreover, the most important aspect is clarity; a text should convey its meaning as accurately as possible. EFL writing in higher education is mainly part of language learning since it is one of the language skills that must be developed. When students learn writing they could "adapt their writing to the conventions of the discipline community to which they belong" (Haoucha, 2012) and, they must undergo assessment. Another issue in academic writing is the role of genre awareness. When a writer is mindful of a particular genre, it would be easier to master his writing and write better. Stainton (1992) emphasises the importance of genre awareness. Her argument indicates that genre helps learners to be more aware of what they write and how to write more clearly and professionally.

Academic writing is often assessed by EFL instructors. It has to meet the appropriate criteria and must be learned by study and experiment.

In the following section I look at what makes academic writing a challenge particularly for the Libyan learner.

3.2.   Libyan Learners' Problems and the Challenge of Writing in English

"Writing is a difficult skill, even in one's language'' (Rubin & Thompson, 2000: 101). Needless to say, the writing skill is difficult to master as well as a struggle for EFL learners in Libya since the writing system in Arabic is completely different from that of English. Some studies such as (AbiSamra, 2003; Khuwaileh & Al Shoumali, 2000; Khalil, 2000; Diab, 1996).have looked at the challenges the Arabic speaker encounters while writing in English, which are outlined below.

Certain features that are related to the syntax and morphology of Arabic present a challenge to Arab EFL learners, such as the indefinite article and the omission of the copula verb. The indefinite article does not exist in Arabic, leading to its omission when English requires it. In spite of the existence of a definite article, its use is not identical to the use of the definite article in English. Additionally, with respect to orthography, Arabic has no capital letters. However, each letter has different forms when it is written in initial position, medial position, final position, and alone, which is different from the writing system in English.

Furthermore, syntax in the Arabic language is different from the English one. For instance, the writer cannot start a sentence with a verb in English, unless it is a command, whereas in Arabic a sentence can begin with a verb. "Verb tenses, including time, aspect and modal verbs are different enough to be a challenge'' (Howell, 2008, p.58). Arabic has no auxiliary verbs such as the verb "to be'' in the present tense and the auxiliary "do''. Moreover, there is a single present tense in Arabic, as compared to English, which has the simple and continuous forms.

These differences reflect some of the problems that native Arabic speakers face in L2 English writing. Furthermore, word order regarding adjectives, for example, is completely different in Arabic. In Arabic, adjectives follow the noun they qualify in a sentence which confuses the Arabic learners when they use adjectives in English and word order mistakes occur. "A common syntactic error that students commit as a result of transfer is faulty word order" (Diab, 1996).

Hence, Arabic speakers struggle to create a good piece of writing especially when it comes to higher education study where the writer has to improve his writing in order to meet the requirements of writing in a second language. Libyan students share the same problem especially that most of them are unfamiliar with the writing task and they are also socio-cognitively and psychologically burdened by the task. Writing is struggle for students, and teaching is equally challenging.
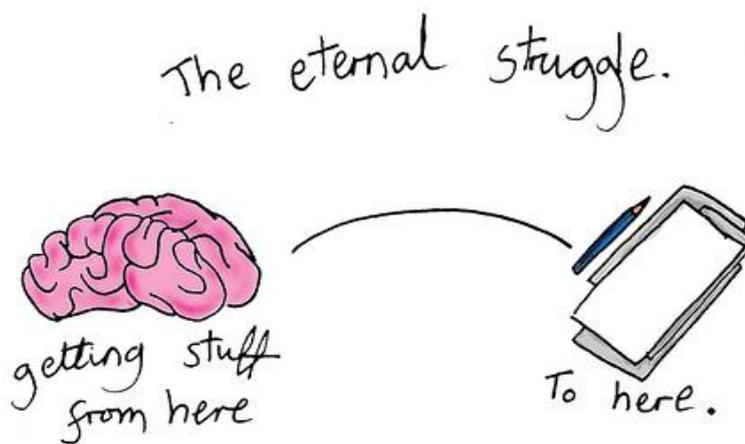
3.3.   Teaching and Learning Writing

Teaching and learning writing is generally known as challenging and more complicated in second language contexts, especially when the target language is not from the same root as the mother tongue. It is not only different in being a second language but also, as Cumming (1989) states, teaching low proficiency students as EFL learners to write whole texts is often fraught with difficulties (as cited in Firkins 2007: 1). Many language teachers are aware that writing is more difficult than any other language skill and that the difficulties are reflected both in teaching and learning it. When English learners try to write in the target language, they do not carry out the necessary writing processes in English, instead translating their thoughts word by word from the mother tongue to English.

Teaching writing skills differs enormously from the teaching and learning of other language skills. One reason is that the writing process involves different stages and one of the most difficult skills that EFL students suffer from. Therefore, students may be reluctant to write or sometimes even

try to do so unless they are encouraged by their teachers (as I observed when I was teaching and asked students to write). Daoud (1999: 1) indicates in his study regarding learning and teaching academic writing that "in the case of Arab learners and teachers, the task is formidable in many cases, mainly because of students' lack of proficiency and insufficient motivation to write''.

Lee (1998) carried out a study about teachers' beliefs on the subject of the teaching and learning of writing. She (or he) found that English language teachers may lack an adequate knowledge about the nature of writing or are not fully aware of the appropriate techniques for teaching writing in the classroom. Cohen's (1987) study, which found that teachers' beliefs on their teaching writing efficiency may not really reflect reality, is similar to Lee's (1998) findings. Cohen (1987: 66) concludes that teacher feedback "as currently constituted and realized, may have more limited impact on the learners than the teachers would desire''

It could therefore be argued that both teaching and learning how to write needs certain techniques to be done in the right way. In other words, greater support is needed in learning how to write in a foreign language in the modelling of a text and joint construction. One of the important factors in developmental writing is through feedback. Before discussing feedback, it is better to have an understanding of the ways of teaching writing. The following section discusses the various ways of teaching writing as reflected in the literature on the topic.

3.4. Ways of Teaching Writing

Teaching L2 writing was almost neglected in the past because most of the focus had been mainly placed on teaching L1 writing. Zamel (1976: 67) drew attention to this issue and he stated that " it is disappointing to find that, except for one pilot study (Briere, 1966) almost no research has been done on the teaching of composition to learners of a second language''. However, in recent years the situation has changed and during the 1980s EFL/ESL writing started to be an important area for language researchers. Therefore, more studies have been conducted as there has been awareness that L2 writing is different from L1 writing.

There are several ways to approach writing in the classroom. Literature on the teaching of L2 writing has plenty of different suggestions and different approaches on how to teach writing "based on the experiences of the authors and their theories on what the teaching of writing entails" (Zamel, 1976). Some of the common approaches in writing are product and process approaches as well as a genre approach. More details about how these approaches are taught, their advantages and the criticism they have received are illustrated below.

3.4.1. Product Writing

Product writing is a traditional approach that is used in many EFL classes, where students are provided with a model and encouraged to mimic it to produce the replicated one. For example;

students are given a letter and asked to write their own following the model; with this traditional strategy students "focus on the formal correctness (e.g. spelling and grammar) of the final piece of writing" (Al-Jardani, 2005). Students in the product approach focus on linguistic knowledge, including the appropriate use of vocabulary, grammatical rules and cohesive devices (Tribble 2003:37). Although product approach to writing can help learners to reinforce their knowledge of language, it does not seem to help them become more skilled writers (Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998; Hyland, 2002; Zamel, 1987). This approach focuses on the ability to produce 'correct' text, and the final product is highly valued (McDonough & Show, 2003; Badger & White, 2003). In general, there are four stages in writing instruction when using the product approach (Ferris and Hedgcock, 2005), these stages are:

1. Familiarization.
2. Controlled writing
3. Guided writing
4. Free writing

Familiarization, which is the first stage, aims at making learners aware of certain features of a particular text. In the familiarization stage students are exposed to grammatical and lexical exercises through texts. Whereas in the controlled and guided writing stages, the learners practice the writing skills with increasing freedom, until they are ready for the free writing section. Lastly, in the free writing stage, the students use their writing skills in an authentic activity such as letters, stories or essay writing.

In his argument about second language learning and language teaching, Cook (1992) points out that the role of the teachers in product approach is to develop good language habits in learners, which is done for the most part by pattern drills, memorisation or repetition of structural patterns. The explanation of the rules is generally given when the language has been well practised and the appropriate habits have been acquired (p.136). Brooks and Brooks (1999: 7) argue that teachers often transfer their thoughts to the passive students. In this method there isn't much opportunity for students to ask questions, think critically or interact with each other (Grabe and Kaplan, 1996: 31) In the product approach, EFL writing classes mainly focus on sentence structures as a support for the grammar class. This approach was used in order to highlight form and syntax and the emphasis was on rhetorical drills (Silva, 1990). It is therefore teacher-centred, as the teacher becomes the arbiter of the models used (see Brakus, 2003).

As discussed, some researchers see this approach to teaching writing as mindless, repetitive and counter-productive because students do not practice their writing and cannot get feedback as is the case in the process approach. Littlewood (1985) believes that the product approach is not effective because the role of students is usually a passive role and there isn't an opportunity for them

to learn from their mistakes. In other words, this neglects the process of writing as students do not engage in the actual process of interaction and analysis to learn more effectively. Similarly, Hedge (2000: 302) argues that writing successfully depends not only on the ability to write a proper sentence but far more than that, as it consists of several activities such as "setting goals, generating information, selecting appropriate language, making a draft, reading and reviewing it, then revising and editing. It is a complex process".

3.4.2. Process Writing

Process writing is a gateway to learning writing. According to Stone (1995: 232), "process writing is learning how to write by writing''. This emphasis on writing instruction highlights the process of writing more than the product. This approach has replaced the older and the more traditional 'product' approach, because the focus shifts from the text to the writer. In other words, in the process approach the focus is on what students think and do as they write the assigned work, not on the final product (text). The aim of process writing is to produce quality content as well as to learn the genres of writing through the feedback that is provided at the various stages of the writing process. In addition, the process approach helps learners use different techniques such as brainstorming, exploring new ideas, peer or teacher feedback and of course rewriting. Numerous studies provided evidence that process writing is a fruitful method of teaching which can improve learners' writing (Holst, 1987 cited in Hyland, 2002; Scott & New, 2005). Similarly, Al-Jardani (2005) highlights the importance of process writing in improving students' writing as well. The reason for taking the position that the process approach can improve writing is because learners are transformed from passive learners to active learners who participate in the learning process which is usually guided by the teacher.

By using the process method, the teacher's role changes from an evaluator to a facilitator who uses writing as an activity for students to move from one stage to another starting with the generation of ideas and the collection of data and then proceeding to the production of text. Several authors argue for the importance of the role of teaching as a facilitator in process writing (Wyse and Jones, 2001).

Process writing is usually associated with various stages; many authors indicate how these stages can be taught for example: (Harriess, 1993; Blanchard & Root, 2004; Gardner& Johnson, 1997; Tompkins, 1990; Nudelman & Troyka , 1994).

The next section discusses the various stages involved in the writing process

3.4.2.1.Stages of Academic Writing

The writing process involves different stages. Harriss (199: 45-46) argues that the process of writing consists of the three following stages:

- Prewriting
- Drafting
- Revising and editing.

Other studies agree on these three stages (Blanchard & Root, 2004) but add the proofreading and publishing stages. Numerous researchers (Gardner& Johnson, 1997; Tompkins, 1990; Nudelman &Troyka, 1994) argue for a five-stage writing process which consists of: *prewriting, drafting, revising, editing and proofreading or publishing*. In general, at each stage, different sets of functions and activities are emphasized. For illustration purposes; the following are the writing processes and the main activities based on the authors' outcome:

- **Prewriting:** This is the planning and thinking stage *(brainstorming)*.
- **Drafting:** This is the stage of writing a rough draft and using the ideas developed during prewriting.
- **Revising**: This is the process of improving the draft where a person writes in more detail, or takes out unnecessary work. In this stage, feedback is usually used to improve the writing.
- **Editing:** This is the process of correcting linguistic errors (Such as grammar, punctuation and spelling).
- **Proofreading**: This is the stage of re-reading the paper in order for students to hand it to their teacher.

It could be suggested that one of the most valuable facts about process approach is that at each stage of the writing process students are guided by their teachers. Usually, teachers make an effort to help their students by:
- Raising motivation and interest where students' awareness increases and they pay more attention to the importance of writing skills
- Helping students to research a topic and engage with it, at this stage the students do not have to focus on the accuracy of text which makes them feel less frustrated.
- Asking for multiple drafts where students could reorder, rewrite and revise as required for fluency and coherence. Here, the students have a chance to interact with either their peers or teachers and focus on the audience.
- Providing basic expectations for the final draft (product).

Most people – including professional writers - agree that writing is neither an easy nor a spontaneous activity, especially for English learners. For that reason, the continuous practice of each stage is vital. Dheram (1995) postulates that teachers should assist learners in each revision process in order to produce a better text.

In this approach, feedback is provided between drafts and not at the end of the task after the students hand in their composition to be marked. Therefore; the process approach is vital for writing effectively.

Additionally, in the process writing approach the roles of both teachers and students change; the teacher moves away from being a judge as a marker while students are encouraged to think about the audiences and what they need to inform them: ''well- written (pieces) don't fall from the sky. Rather, they are the result of a long, laborious, intensely personal process'' (Gocsik, 2005). Thus, students realise what they put in their writing and what they should change based on the feedback they get.

Figure 3.1: Process Writing (Adapted from Janette. M. Hughes)

Based on the illustration above, the process writing approach can be summarized in three steps, which are: prewriting, writing and post writing. The illustration below with traffic light colours reflects the current approach being used in Libya. There are three colours that have different messages and give different connotations. For example, the yellow colour shows the starting step or warning where the students have to prepare themselves by selecting the topic and brain storming as well as planning what to write. The second step, which is the red colour, means that there has to be a pause for a while; in this stage students have to start writing their draft which consists of ideas and it is where they construct sentences. Finally the last and final stage is when they 'start' to review their work, polish and evaluate what they have written.

Pre-writing	While- writing Drafting- Revising- Editing	Post-writing

-Selecting a topic and brain storming planning what to write

-putting a draft version on paper

- organizing ,making changes to improve the writing

-publishing

-Evaluation
-Assessment of the written work

Figure 3.2: Process Writing Stages

Although the process approach is appreciated by many authors, some argue that this method is difficult to use. Hedge (2000) argues that there are many reasons why this approach has drawbacks such as: 1) Although the process approach allows the students to revise and write the drafts, they have to be able to complete writing in the given time period during the exam 2) the multiple draft approach is inappropriate for timed examinations 3) In classes that are large in number, process writing can be very time consuming and tiring for the teachers when it comes to giving feedback on multiple drafts and specifically in EFL/ESL classes. Hedge's argument is similar to Horowitz's (1986). The latter argued that multiple drafts cannot lead to the ability to write in- class examination essays quickly and easily. Also, he argues that the process approach does not teach a variety of types

of formal writing which is needed in their study such as reports and annotated bibliographies. Horowitz also highlights another problem that students may face because of process-oriented approach; some students may get a negative impression about their abilities because of the continuous feedback and corrections, which results in the fear of how their writing will be evaluated particularly in the exams.

Even though, these limitations do exist, we cannot ignore the advantages of this approach as compared to the product approach.

Overall, there are several differences between the process and the product approach based on different studies. The following table shows these differences.

Table 3.2: Differences between process and product approach (Adopted from Soonpaa, 2007)

Product approach	Process approach
- Model text to be imitated - Emphasis on organization of ideas - One draft - Emphasis on end product - Teacher as audience - Teacher as authority - Importance of teacher corrected papers	- Model text as resource - Emphasis on ideas and idea development - Multiple drafts - Emphasis on process - Various audiences - Peer feedback as valuable tool - Importance of face to face and interactive feedback

3.4.3.   The Genre Approach

The word *genre* is a Latin word that means "kind'' or "class''. This term has been used widely in different aspects such as in rhetoric, literary theory, media theory, and lately linguistics, to refer to a unique type of text. According to Carolyn Miller "the number of genres in any society…depends on the complexity and diversity of society'' (Miller 1984, cited in Freedman & Medway 1994a: 36). A significant consideration has been paid to the genre approach on teaching writing starting from the mid-1980s. In terms of writing in a second language, *The Routledge Encyclopaedia of Language Teaching and Learning* has defined the genre approach as " a framework for language instruction'' (Byram, 2004: 234). Swales (1990: 58) identified a genre as "a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes''.

The genre approach is different from the process approach because the latter focuses more on the writer whereas the genre approach focuses more on the reader. Whereas the focus of the process approach is the process of writing, starting with planning and brainstorming and ending with the editing stage; the genre approach focuses on the reader, and on the conventions of writing to be

accepted by its readership (Muncia, 2002). Some researchers (Silva 1990; Li Waishing 2000; Coffin *et al.* 2003) consider the genre oriented approach as an extension to the product-based approach, while some researchers consider the genre process as a different paradigm in the teaching of writing (Johns, 1990; Raimes, 1991; Hyland, 2003; Paltridge, 2004). For example, Paltridge (2004: 1) believes that the genre oriented approach focuses on "teaching particular genres that students need control of in order to succeed in particular settings".

Several studies show that genres are social processes because people who share the same profession use a special language within their contexts: the genre approach. This approach is a product of the communicative language teaching approach which emerged in the 1970s as mentioned in Hyland (2007). Hyland also stated that the genre approach emphasizes that writing varies depending on the social context in which it is produced and that is why there are various kinds of writing: it depends on the purposes, for example business letters versus scientific reports. This approach agrees that writing is a social activity with particular power relations and social conventions. It also explicitly identifies the social and linguistic conventions of different types of texts.

According to Tribble (2003), the text is seen as an attempt to communicate with readers which confirms the readers' role in writing. In addition to that, a social aspect to writing research through elaborating how writers engage with an audience in creating coherent texts is also expanded upon.

Ivanic (2004) and Badger and White (2000) believe that since this approach focuses on the reader, the genre approach is similar to the product approach: it focuses on a piece of writing as a product. In other words, the genre approach regards writing as linguistic tool, although it does differ from product approach in that it emphasizes the variation of writing with social context as mentioned earlier. In addition, genre approaches and product approaches have several similarities in terms of writing development.
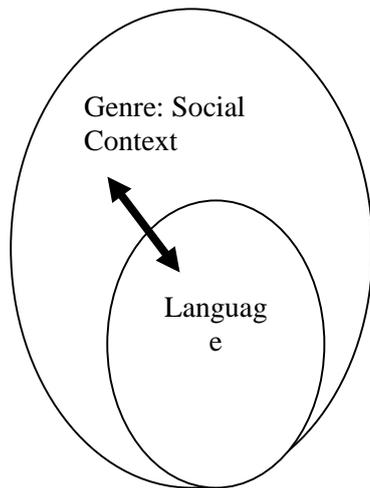
Figure 3.3 Language as the realization of social context (Martin 1993)

A genre-based approach is based on "learning through guidance and interaction" (Painter, 1986 cited in Machen-Horarik 2001: 26), which is in other words a teaching-learning cycle. The teaching-learning cycle requires certain stages: modelling a text, joint construction of a text and independent construction of a text. Genre therefore involves three stages. The first stage is a model of a certain genre that is introduced to students. Secondly, students practice an exercise, and the third stage is where students produce a short text. In this sense, the genre approach is similar to the product approach. While using this approach, the students analyse the text identifying some grammatical structures and take into consideration the social context, its purpose, and the audience. This will result in texts being individually produced by students as demonstrated by Badger and White (2000).

In sum, "the approach clearly assists students to organize their writing and understand the nature of a text within an activity based context with texts that can be deconstructed using concrete examples'' (Firkins *et al.* 2007: 11).

The genre approach has many advantages as illustrated by some studies. One of the advantages is that it brings an important concept to writing which is the reader. Secondly, it gives equal attention to both the constraints of the writing situation and the writer's mental process; a dimension which is neglected in the product approach. Another advantage as discussed in Pasqarelli (2006) is that students' attainment in writing can be improved through this approach.

Similar to the other approaches in writing, the genre approach has been criticised by its opponents because it highlights forms and styles rather than the process of writing**.** Caudery (1998), for instance, demonstrates that teachers do not in fact help their students by trying to use explicit teaching of a particular genre. In his point of view, the genre approach could become counterproductive, as he believes that this approach may not require students to convey their own ideas or may be too dependent on the teacher finding suitable materials as models (p. 11-13).

Teaching and learning writing approaches use different pedagogical methods such as focus on structure or focus on content, and students cannot be familiar with these differences unless they are exposed to the feedback.

As mentioned above regarding writing, feedback is a factor that helps students improve their writing. Thus, the next section attempts to highlight different aspects of feedback and will start with some definitions of feedback.

3.5.   Feedback Definitions

In general, feedback is considered as an essential tool for the improvement of writing at all levels, regardless of age or the level of study. This means that feedback can be provided for students from kindergarten to college and university students who take writing courses as well as to post graduate students who work on dissertation projects. Likewise, feedback has been also considered crucial for both L1 and L2 writing development.

As noted in the introduction of this thesis, numerous studies researched the issue of feedback and its role in writing as well as skill acquisition (Hyland and Hyland, 2006). Feedback, generally, is a form of response to an event/phenomenon, and has been defined as the information that is given by teachers to their students about their performances (Barduell *et al.*, 1981: 4). It can also be viewed as the teacher's input to writer's composition in the form of information which can be used to carry out revision. According to Nicole and Macfarlance (2004), feedback is the information which is provided by teachers to help learners trouble-shoot their performance.

Feedback is an essential element in education and training programmes. It plays an important role in instruction (Mory, 2004; Topping, 1998) and is crucial to students' learning as many theorists indicate; for example Driscoll, 2000. Feedback helps learners become familiar with their strengths and aware of areas which need improvement.

Moving to define feedback in general, Kepner (1991: 41) defined feedback as any procedure used to inform a learner whether an instructional response is right or wrong. Lamberg (1980: 60) defined feedback as "information on performance which affects subsequent performance by influencing students' attention to particular matters so that those matters undergo a change in the subsequent performance''. Keh (1990) provides a similar definition, stating that feedback relates to the response or the information that a reader or an information's receiver responds to. Keh (1990: 294) points out that feedback is "the input from a reader to a writer with the effect of providing information to the writer for revision''.

In general, feedback is a firm and certain response to something which can be positive or negative. The core reason for feedback is to show the right way or to guide towards better work. In other words, feedback is used to illustrate how to fill the gap between where the learner is and what

is the goal required. Hill (1997) points out that feedback is the way that we influence people's performance. Feedback lets ones recognize what needs to be done, why and how.

Researchers have looked at feedback in two ways. Some consider feedback as a response while others consider it as a synonym for correction, error correction, peer feedback or teacher feedback. For example, Brookhart (2008) in her book, *How to Give Effective Feedback to Your Students*, states that feedback is "teacher feedback on student schoolwork'. Some terms have been used as substitution for the term feedback such as "comments'', "respond'', "or correction'' (Kepner 1991:141). Generally, teacher feedback has been extensively accredited as an essential element in the writing process because it leads to successful revision more than other kinds of feedback. Nicol & Macfarlane- Dick (2006) suggest that feedback is used as a form of formative assessment, which is designed to develop and accelerate learning. They describe feedback as ''anything that might strengthen the students' capacity to self-regulate their own performance'' (p.206)

Regarding the history of feedback, the first studies and theories about this issue date back to a century ago (Thorndike. 1913). There were two kinds of feedback: positive, considered as positive reinforcement, and negative, considered as punishment. Furthermore, in the 1970s there was an emphasis on the importance of reader response when the growth of learner-centred approaches and the interaction theories started to evolve.

Recently, scholars in education attempted to explain "learning with behaviourist theories about stimulus-response connections'' (Brookhart, 2008). In other words, learning is a result of associations forming between stimuli and responses. For learning readiness, suitable motivation must be used; therefore, feedback could be a stimulus for increasing learners' practices and doing more revision. Feedback is commonly seen as the crucial factor in education because of its importance in both encouraging and consolidating learning (Hyland and Hyland, 2006).

It has been reported by various researchers that feedback is significantly more effective when it's delivering precise details on how to improve answers rather only indicating if the piece of work is appropriate or not. (e.g., Bangert-Drowns *et al.*, 1991; Pridemore & Klein, 1995). Feedback lacking in specificity may cause students to view it as useless and/or frustrating (Williams, 1997). It can also lead to uncertainty about how to respond to the feedback (Fedor, 1991) and may require greater information processing activity on the part of the learner to understand the intended message (Bangert-Drowns *et al.*). Uncertainty and cognitive load can lead to lower levels of learning (Kluger & DeNisi, 1996; Sweller *et al.*, 1998), or even reduced motivation to respond to the feedback (Ashford, 1986; Corno & Snow, 1986). (Shute 2007:15)

For the purposes of this thesis, I will be working with Myles's (2002) definition of feedback as can be seen in the following section.

3.6.   Feedback in the Process of Writing

Carroll (2002 cited in Howell 2008:184) argued that writing develops as academic literacy proceeds idiosyncratically and over time. Writing improvement does not take place without practice and sufficient feedback. The ability to write well and effectively is not an innate skill; rather, writing is learned through practice and needs a lot of effort. The process of writing necessitates different techniques in order to meet readers' expectations; these are usually the teachers who evaluate their students' writing. Feedback in the process of writing is very important although it is a complicated issue in L2 writing. The reason of the complexity is that teachers in L2 writing subjects are overwhelmed when things are complicated as they are both language teachers and skills teachers. The teachers consider whether feedback should be given or not and if so, what kind of feedback and how it should be presented.

With regard to defining feedback, Russell (1995) defined feedback as "letting trainees (in this students) know what they have done that has reached the standard, and how to progress towards the required standard''. Another definition is that feedback is an input from a reader to a writer with the objective of providing information to the writer for revision, and "feedback is of utmost importance to the writing process'' (Myles, 2002: 13). Additionally, feedback is a powerful communication skill. Giving and receiving feedback on performance is a highly significant part of the process of skills development, and the way in which it is given is extremely important. When it is specifically targeted towards students it can build confidence and competence. On the other hand, if given poorly it can have a negative impact and may lead to deterioration in performance.

Through feedback, students get know the quality of their writing and whether it meets the requirement or whether they need to work harder. This is especially the case when most teachers evaluate their students based on solid criteria. Tomlinson states that "An important feature of successful teaching is to obtain a close relationship between what is expected of students, and the learning experiences that are provided to them'' (1976: 15).

Several researchers point out that the writing skill requires frequent and guided practice inside the classroom (Ferris, 2003). As a general rule, students need thorough instruction through their writing starting from planning to revision of their compositions (this is also known as process approach to the teaching of writing), as explained in section 3.4. Students can follow the instructions throughout, encouraging them to think critically about their writing, which is achieved when their work is corrected. I strongly agree with scholars who think correction is not only putting a mark on the work but also provides feedback which helps students and facilitates revision. To give effective feedback, teachers should have an idea of each student's individual writing problems in order to provide an appropriate feedback that encourages students to improve their writing and this is not at all an easy task for teachers.

Feedback can be given in either written form or verbally. For example, written feedback can take different forms such as direct correction, indirect correction and coding. These can be explained as follows:

➢ Direct correction is when teachers indicate students' errors and amend them by providing the corre

➢ ct structural or lexical form on their scripts

(Laland, 1982; Robb *et al.*, 1986; Semke, 1984; Van Beuningen *et al.*, 2008, 2012).

➢ Indirect correction is when feedback only indicates errors in students' writing by either underlining them or circling them with no corrections (Bitchener and Knoch, 2010b; Van Beuningen, 2008).

➢ Coding is when the type of error is located and defined through certain codes for example S for spelling and WW for word order.

In contrast, verbal or oral feedback is relatively distinct from written feedback, although it is possible to an extent to draw parallels between the approaches to written feedback outlined above and the forms of oral feedback delineated below. Oral or verbal feedback can take many forms, as mentioned by Park (2010). Below is one of the main approaches to oral feedback:

• One to one face to face or dialogue as described in Williams (2002).

During the face to face feedback sessions, positive or negative oral recast where the teacher verifies an utterance by repeating it, or by indicating what is inaccurate and reformulating it (Afitska, 2012) may take place. Also, explicit corrections by directly indicating the incorrect form the student used and then providing the correct form (Lyster and Ranta, 1997) can occur during the session. This enhances the leaning process and provides the learners with a comprehensive, clear and direct input, where the learners can ask about unclear ideas and comments.

Feedback needs to be handled with care by both teachers and learners. Teachers have to provide feedback based on the students' needs and what the teachers expect their students to learn from it. On the other hand, students have to know that in order to revise their work accurately it takes more than just copying the teachers' correction. It involves revising their drafts carefully to find the reasons beside these errors**.** Therefore, feedback is not only to be written but also it should be in a way of discussion with the students as it is one of the most helpful ways of reviewing the mistakes that were made. Bearing in mind Russell's (1995) definition of feedback above, feedback is particularly important for writing skills; if there is no feedback the students do not know where the mistakes are and whether what they produce in their writing is right or wrong, and they will therefore not know if there is need to change, especially when it is in a way of a conversation. Accordingly, Russell states that "only through feedback can development be achieved, or, according to the "input-process-output'' model; only with feedback can progress be made'' (1995:22). The present study

examines the efficacy of two techniques of feedback in teaching writing: teachers' written feedback and face to face feedback.

3.7. The Significance of Feedback

There have been many studies that show the significance of feedback, and which recognize its importance in increasing students' successes, and its vital role in the development of writing (Biggs, 2003; Brown, Bull, & Pendlebury, 1997; O'Donovan, Price, &Rust, 2004; Race, 1999). Moreover, some researchers such as Ferris (2002), Hyland and Hyland (2001) and Ashwell (2000) suggest that feedback is valuable and helpful for both beginners and expert writers, since it makes them aware of their weaknesses. These researchers state that feedback motivates students to work more and do something different in their next draft. Based on the comments, learners revise and improve their writing. On the other hand, if there are no comments from their readers (teachers or peers) the following would happen:

1- Students would revise their writing, if they are asked to do so, in a piecemeal way.

2- They may think there is no need for revising, assuming that their writing meets the requirement and there is no problem with it.

3- They may be confused as to whether or not their writing needs revising.

Hence, feedback makes students generally and L2 learners in particular realise their performance level and how to improve it - if there is need for improvement.

Feedback can be useful both for students and teachers since it can promote academic progression. The reason is that feedback gives teachers of writing the opportunity to diagnose the main problems in their students' writing, and allows them to construct a supportive teaching environment. Juwah *et al.* (2004) discussed the value of feedback and its advantages. They argue that feedback:

- Facilitates the development of self-assessment (reflection) in learning.
- Encourages teacher and peer dialogue around learning.
- Helps clarify what good performance is (goals, criteria, and expected standards).
- Provides opportunities to close the gap between current and desired performance.
- Delivers high quality information to students about their learning.
- Encourages positive motivational beliefs and self-esteem.
- Provides information to teachers that can be used to help shape their teaching.

Juwah *et al.*'s (2004) demonstration concurs with Baume's point of view about the guidelines for feedback; which is informative assessment as he indicated. However, various questions have been raised such as the type of feedback and how much feedback a learner needs, whether feedback works

effectively or not and lastly what kind of feedback students prefer. The following section discusses the various types of feedback that can be provided to students

3.8.   Types of Feedback

Some researchers investigated different types of feedback such as peer feedback and computer-assisted feedback as well as teacher-student face to face feedback (Carnicelli, 1980; Zamel 1985; Goldstein, L., & Conrad, S. 1990; Hyland, 1998; Orsmond *et al.* 2002; Hyland & Hyland, 2006). In this section, I shed some light on these studies that investigated these types and discus the various advantages and disadvantages of each type.

3.8.1. Peer Feedback

One of the audiences that provide feedback for the writer is his or her peers. Peer feedback is a practice in which a person or a group of people give feedback to another. Some studies state that peer feedback follows naturally from implementation of the process approach to teaching writing (Emig 1967; Flower and Hayes 1981; Zamel 1976).

According to Dippold (2009), peer feedback is "a technique that is increasingly used by educators instead of, or in addition to, tutor feedback, due to its potential to develop students' understanding of standards, to initiate peer feedback, and to engage the student in the process of learning and assessment''. Peer feedback is usually used in writing classes where students work together to check each other's work and provide feedback to each other. Their feedback could take different forms such as opinions, making suggestions, asking questions, correction, giving additional related information and so on. Peer feedback also illustrates the basic principles of cooperative learning as recommended by Johnson and Johnson (1998) which are:

1-Positive interdependence

2-Individual accountability

3-Face-to-face promotive interaction

4-Interpersonal and small group skills

5-Group processing

Peer feedback is important in that students have the opportunity to learn from each other and benefit from others ideas or opinions; "peer feedback was said to provide a means of both improving writers' drafts and developing readers' understanding of good writing'' (Hyland, 2003: 103).

3.8.1.1.Effectiveness of Peer Feedback

The effectiveness of peer feedback has been discussed in the pedagogical literature of both the higher education and language teaching field. One of the studies which examined peer feedback is Nelson and Murphy (1993). It was a case study consisting of four EFL learners who were examined to see

if they use peer suggestions in revisions. The results showed that students were influenced by their peers' response and made some changes in their writing. These results were similar to Johnson and Mendonca's (1994) study which found that students used their peers' comments in more than half of their revisions.

Rolliston (2009) argued that some of the main advantages of peer feedback in L2 writing is that students write for an audience, and they are therefore encouraged to "formulate their writing in line with the characteristics and demands of the reader''. Dippold argues that "peer feedback can encourage a collaborative dialogue with two-way interaction, and it operates at a level that is less formal and potentially more accessible than tutor feedback'' (2009: 20). These studies have shown that peer feedback is one of the cornerstones of writing as a process, because students get the opportunity to do more practice in writing. Also, students do not stick with the class routine that encourages them just to listen to teachers' instructions, but work with their peers and share opinions. Not only do students have to read others' work but they also take more responsibility that they both receive and provide feedback. This strategy works in some cases as a motivation tool for students.

3.8.1.2.<u>Limitations of Peer Feedback</u>

Despite the advantages of peer feedback, it also has its drawbacks, especially in ESL/ EFL classrooms. One of the most common problems that students face is the lack of ability to give feedback; other students may have insufficient knowledge and struggle with providing feedback, as observed by Dippold (2009): "the fact is that no guidance was offered to students as to how to give feedback, what to give feedback on, how to use this feedback and how to react to it.'' (2009:.33).

While some researchers found that writers benefit from peer feedback as mentioned previously, some researchers' findings were quite the contrary. For instance, Zhang (1995: 214) conducted a study of ESL university students to examine the advantage of peer feedback in their writing. Their response indicated that they preferred teacher feedback in comparison with peer feedback, with learner-centered self-feedback the least popular option. Min (2006) interviewed university students in Taiwan, regarding the types and the quality of revision. The study identified that the lack of peers' concrete suggestions was one of the reasons of the failure of the peer review. The study concludes that with extensive training trained peer review feedback can positively impact on EFL Students' revision. Moreover, further studies (Amores, 1997; Chaudrom, 1984; Sengupta, 1998) have shown that students cited their preference for teacher feedback as they and their peers lack the necessary experience to provide effective feedback (Nelson & Carson 2006: 43). This confirms Liu & Hansen's (2002) belief that EFL students generally trust and appreciate teachers' feedback; while they do not appreciate the feedback from their classmates who have the same language abilities as themselves which results in them feeling discouraged about revising their

writing. Allaei and Connor (1990) consider peer feedback useless as they think students are weak themselves; thus, they do not have the ability to spot weaknesses in their colleagues' essays and provide them with feedback.

Moreover, some researchers claim that students do not trust each other's comments (Carson and Nelson, 1996) and that some students cannot provide feedback because they think it is a problem when they criticize their peers.

Thus, it seems that peer feedback loses track of its original rationale to help others improve unless the learners are trained and guided on certain criteria for providing feedback. Based on the above factors, teacher feedback has more influence on students' work.

After reviewing surveys taken by ESL learners concerning feedback, Hyland and Hyland (2006) concluded from this research that teacher feedback is generally more valuable than peer feedback (cited in Dippold 2009: 21).

3.8.2. Teacher Feedback

Teacher feedback is the most typical type of feedback provided to learners in all educational contexts, and students therefore count on receiving it. Chaudron (1988) states that feedback is "an inevitable constituent of classroom interaction (…) learners derive information about their behaviour from the teacher's reaction'' (p. 133). However, the quantity of feedback as well as the type varies from one educational context to another. In addition, the importance of feedback is different from one teacher to another as some take feedback as an integral part of their work procedure.

With respect to the L2 context, the efficiency of feedback is seen as essential, and its benefit to students' progress is one of the major claims of the argument.

3.8.2.1. Effectiveness of Teacher Feedback

Based on some studies, researchers have shown that ESL students value teachers' feedback; although some researchers rejected the notion of feedback. Truscott (1996), for instance, rejects every possible kind of feedback and thinks it does not lead to improvement for the students. Grami (2005), in his study concerning the effect of teachers' written feedback for ESL students, highlights some significant points. One of these points is that written feedback in an ESL context is "crucial and of great significance" – a stark contrast to Truscott's recommendation. In addition, Keh (1990) indicates that teachers of writing respond to their students' writing as a "concerned reader to a writer as a person, not a grammarian or a grade-giver" (1990: 301). In addition, Ferris (1997) conducted a study about teachers' comment by examining 1,600 marginal and end comments on 110 drafts paper of 47 advanced ESL writers. The study showed positive effects on students' revision since the comments were helpful.

Moreover, Ferris, Pezone, Tade & Tinti (1997), in their argument about teacher commentary on student writing, state that "teacher response to student writing is vital" (1997: 155). They indicate that although responding to students' writing is one of the most difficult and frustrating thing for teachers because it is time consuming and because of the effort that is used by teachers when they write their comments, teachers do it because they believe in its importance.

In their study, 'Improving Text Flow in ESL Learner Compositions', Alonso & McCabe (2003) focus on the progression of information through "thematic patterning". This study looked at teachers' suggestion to students on how to improve their writing. The authors conclude that teachers' feedback "illustrates its usefulness as a discourse tool for aiding students in rewriting their essays'' (p.5)

Othman & Mohamad (2009) looked at students' responses to teachers' feedback on multiple-draft compositions in ESL classroom. The researchers found that feedback is of extreme value to the writing process because in the absence of sufficient feedback on errors, progress did not take place. They argued that the improvement of writing is highly dependent on providing feedback. They also argue that it is the teacher's responsibility to lend a hand to their students:

"L2 writers require and expect specific overt feedback from teacher not only on content, but also on the form and structure of writing. If this feedback is not part of the instructional process, then students will be disadvantaged in improving both writing and language skills" (2009:18).

According to McGareel and Verbeem (2007), teacher feedback could motivate students' revision, which is indispensable for the improvement of writing. Therefore, teacher feedback is crucial and highly effective.

Overall, studies show contradictory findings on students' preferences with respect to the different types of feedback. The reason for this is that some students prefer teacher feedback. For example as expounded by, Berger 1990, Zhang 1995, Zamel 1985, Hyland and Hyland 2001, Hyland 1998, Ferries and Hedgcock 1998 and others who point out "that students want, appreciate and apply the corrections they get from their teachers'' Grami , 2005 :10). Jacobs *et al.* (1998) on the other hand found that students prefer peer feedback. I think teachers' feedback is more vital especially if they pay attention to the students' needs and try to guide them in the right way and at the same time we cannot ignore the importance of peer feedback as one of the types of feedback; although peer feedback has to follow certain criteria prepared by the teacher of writing.

3.8.2.2. The Role of Teacher Written Feedback

Written feedback cannot be ignored in both teaching and learning especially in a second language context. Researchers (Leki, 1991; Saito, 1994; Zhang, 1995) indicate that "ESL students greatly value teachers written feedback and consistently rate it more highly than alternative forms, such as peer feedback''(cited in Hyland & Hyland, 2006:3).

There has been a debate in the literature on feedback about what type of written feedback should be focused on. Graffin (1982) points out that "the major question confronting any theory of responding to student writing is where we should focus our attention'' (cited by Fathman & Whalley, 1990, p.299). This question is based on teachers' differences; some teachers focus their feedback on form while others focus on content. These two approaches are explained as follows:

- *Form feedback* is the type that concentrates on spelling, grammar and punctuation which is known as "grammar or surface-level feedback'' as illustrated by Grami (2005).
- *Content feedback* concentrates on organization, choice of words, cohesion and coherence and the genre of the language.

While some researchers debate about which type of feedback teachers should pay attention to, some agree that feedback should place emphasis on both content and form (Krashen, 1984; Raimes, 1993; Song, 1998). In my opinion, that is right because it is really important to focus on both of them to improve students' writing since a good writing successfully communicates to the reader what it wants to communicate. From this perspective, although content is more often crucial in this respect, both form and content are involved in communication.

In addition, there is another debate regarding the role of teacher feedback. The basis for this is that some believe in giving feedback, in general, to develop students' writing and some do not. For example, Leki (1990: 60) questioned whether written feedback can do any good. Orsmond *et al.* (2002: 1) pointed out that the quality of the feedback is an important factor in improving students writing and "Tutors are in a difficult situation with respect to providing student feedback''. For effective feedback, both the learners and the tutors should have a common understanding of how the feedback could be implemented (Orsmond *et al*. ibid) According to Orsmond *et al.* , teachers' responsibility is to ensure that they give real feedback, and not just comments that the learners will easily dismiss. On the same token, students revise their writing in a "consistently, narrow, and predictable way (Sommers, 1982: 233).

Furthermore, the role of feedback is not only to point out the learners' strengths and weaknesses in writing, but also to monitor the learners' progress and identifies what they should work on. Therefore, written feedback can "promote learners' self-study skills" (Trang 2005). Since working with second/foreign language writing has to take into account both language acquisition and the writing process, the problems facing both teachers and learners in writing in a foreign language cannot be over emphasised. In conclusion, teachers in higher education should be consistent about the feedback they provide to facilitate learning and they should not only stick to the written feedback but should try other kinds as well. The following section will discuss another form of feedback: face to face.

3.8.3. Face to face (Conferencing)

Face to face (Conferencing) is a strategy used to provide feedback as well as clarify the ambiguous written work. With this technique, teachers and students can be involved in face-to-face interactions. Face-to-face feedback between teachers and students on a one-to-one basis started in North America and has progressed and moved forward as its significance was realised (Hyland & Hyland 2006: 1-2).

In my opinion, face to face feedback can be considered a form of constructive feedback as it involves face to face interaction, which when present "information is communicated to a learner that is intended to modify the learner's thinking or behaviour for the purpose of improving learning'' as Shute indicated in (2007). In literature, teacher-student interaction (face-to-face feedback) is recommended; it is considered a highly important form of feedback for writing development as it helps with clarification of meaning (Calkins 1986, Carnicelli 1980, Gere & Stevens 1985, Murray 1985, Zamel 1982).

Carnicelli (1980) looked at face to face feedback in native speakers in the context of teaching writing. He found that face to face feedback is more effective than when written feedback is used for two reasons. The first reason is that it gives students the opportunity to express their opinion and needs and the second reason is that teachers can verbally clarify their comments if they are unclear; "if a teacher's response is unclear the student can simply ask for an explanation" (Carnicelli, 1980: 108). Goldstein and Conrads (1990) (cited in Zamel 1985 and Sokmen 1988) made similar conclusions on face to face feedback. Zamel found out that ESL students often found written feedback hard to understand. The suggestion was that it is essential to hold conferences between teachers and their students.

Furthermore, Sokmen concurs by stating that "responding in conferences is more effective than in writing because you, the teacher, can interact dynamically with the students to understand the intent" (Goldstein and Conrads, 1990: 69).

Conferences were at the heart of Graves' (1983) writing program. He discussed many authentic conferences in details and believed that teachers need certain skills that help learners handle problems in their writing. In addition, he believes that writing teachers have a big responsibility which not only involves teaching but also being in control of the technique of writing. According to Graves, conferences should be divided into three stages which are as follows:

1- The first one should focus on content: in this stage the teacher directs questions which improve learners' knowledge on the content.

2- In the second stage the focus should be placed on organization where the learners learn how to order the content.

3- In the third stage, teachers' questions should help learners pay more attention to sentence structure. With this technique students could improve their writing and meet the necessary requirements.

However, to the best to my knowledge, this kind of feedback has been discussed in fewer studies than written feedback, and it is the least practised. One of the difficulties with this kind of feedback is that, it requires time. Ferris (2003:121) states that "not all teachers of writing have the time and space to hold regular one-to-one conferences with their students (due to heavy student loads and/ or lack of office space)". Some teachers have a lot of students and it is hard to use this method as an effective feedback method. Face to face feedback gives a chance to both teachers and students to be clear about the main point in writing. "Students need individual or small group feedback on their work in order to be able to learn how to improve" (Race, 1999). Additionally, face to face performance can be considered as an affective and affective factor in language learning through students' motivation.

Feedback, in general, has received the attention of several researchers who have reported that feedback is significantly more effective when it provides details of how to improve the answer, rather than when it just indicates whether the student's work is correct or not (e.g., Bangert-Drowns *et al*., 1991; Pridemore & Klein, 1995). Feedback lacking in specificity may cause students to view it as useless and/or frustrating (Williams, 1997). It can also lead to uncertainty about how to respond to the feedback (Fedor, 1991) and may require greater information processing activity on the part of the learner to understand the intended message (Bangert-Drowns *et al*.). Uncertainty and cognitive load can lead to lower levels of learning (Kluger & DeNisi, 1996; Sweller *et al*., 1998), or even reduced motivation to respond to the feedback (Ashford, 1986; Corno & Snow, 1986). (Shute 2007:15)].

Countless students, teachers and researchers think that conference feedback is in actual fact beneficial, for example Shin (2003) suggests that conferences allow "students to control the interaction, clarify their teachers' responses, and negotiate meaning". As for teachers' comments as feedback, research indicates that learners, generally, do expect and value such feedback on their writing (as mentioned by Muncie, 2000:50)

Belk (2012) discusses the three conferencing (face to face) formats and their limitations:
1) One-to-one conference: this is conducted individually is very focused as well as productive. Additionally, it is helpful for students who need more attention, extra help and those who approach their teachers on their own. Although it has advantages, it can be difficult to apply to all students as it is time consuming.

2) Group conference: this is another format that is used and an alternative to the first format mentioned. With this format a group of about five or more students can confer with their teacher yhjand discuss their writing and its issues: This kind of face to face feedback makes students feel more comfortable and under less pressure, as they are in a far less formal group environment.

3) Online conference: this is also known as a non-traditional form of face to face feedback and is carried out using computers. Students like this kind of face to face feedback as they are interested in exploring the role of technology to improve their writing. However, this type of feedback also has disadvantages, mainly as it is time- consuming. It is not only time which is an issue in an online conference but also teachers face difficulties in trying to involve all students in this face to face feedback. Moreover, internet connection and other equipment are required but these facilities are sometimes not accessible.

In face to face feedback, the teacher usually meets individually with students but sometimes meets with students in a group. In the context of assessment and response to student writing, one-on-one conferences facilitate the process of discovering the educational backgrounds and needs specific to individual students. Sommer (1989) further suggests that the teacher should make arrangements with students to confer with him or her on a one-on-one basis after the students have finished writing their compositions.

The studies that have been carried out concerning face to face feedback are illustrated below:

Table 3.3 Studies on face to face feedback

Reference	Country / participants	Context	Method
Carnicelli (1980)	University of New Hampshire/	The writing conference a one-to-one conversation	Freshman compositions
Ferris, D. (1995)	California state University /155 students in two levels of a university composition	Students reaction to teacher response in multiple-draft composition classroom	Survey
Goldstein & Conrads (1990)	United states (21 ESL from different culture)	Student input and negotiation of meaning in ESL writing conferences.	The study looked at the students' texts
GONZÁLEZ *et al.* (2010)	Mexico (10 student who study in an EFL class)	Impact of Teacher/Student face to face feedback and Teacher Written Feedback on EFL Revision.	Case study
Orsmond *et al.* (2002)	Staffordshire University/ 20 students	The student use of tutor formative feedback in their learning. Paper presented at the Learning Communities and Assessment Cultures Conference	Semi structured interview

Qureshi, Z (2010)	UK, University of Central Lancashire/ two international students	Teacher- student talk in the one to one writing conference: who talks more and why?	Questionnaire, semi-structured interview, students drafts
Newkirk, T. (1995)	University of New Hampshire	The writing conference as performance	Case study
Pica, T. (1996)		Second Language Learning Through Interaction	
Pica, T. (1994)	Australia/ L2 learners	Research on Negotiation: What does it reveal about second language learning conditions, processes, and outcomes?	Negotiation and its effect on conditions, process and outcomes of L2
Bitchener *et al.* (2005)	53 ESL students at an Australian university	The effect of different types of corrective feedback on ESL students writing	Data Commentary Text

3.8.3.1. Limitations of face to face feedback

Just as there are many advantages of using face to face feedback in writing classes, there are also several drawbacks. Hyland and Hyland (2006) argued that some students face psychological pressure; they are unable to speak to their teachers face to face as they feel that their teachers represent a higher authority. In addition, L2 students do not always have the ability to make use of individual attention that is given to them through discussions. However, although the students may not have the ability, power relations are also an obstacle that they face. For instance, students find it difficult to approach their teachers freely or even ask questions due to cultural issues as they see their teacher as superior to them or they assume it is not polite to ask. As a result of feeling uncomfortable to ask and discuss with their teachers, students might not benefit from their teachers as they lack speaking skills and vocabulary. This prevents them from participating comfortably in and benefiting from face to face feedback. Based on these studies, in spite of the advantages and disadvantages of face to face feedback, there is still a need for further investigation into teacher-student face to face feedback (Hyland and Hyland. 2006). Face to face feedback remains uncommon among writing teachers.

3.9. Theoretical Grounds

The cognitive and social constructivist model for learning is the theoretical (conceptual) framework for this study as it relates to writing conferences. With conferences, social interaction occurs, which is important for learning according to Vygotsky (1987).

Interaction in face to face feedback is very important and it is considered to be the key indicator of a major underpinning theory: social constructivism. Teacher-student face-to-face feedback is an exemplification of the social constructivist theory through which the teacher interacts with the student writer in the reconstruction of the progress draft through face-to-face interaction. Based on constructivism theory, teachers are meant to be facilitators who provide an environment for the learners to construct their knowledge rather than acquiring it. In other words, constructivism theory emphasizes active learning. The social constructivist theory was introduced in composition theory by Bruffee (1986). His argument states that language is a social product in nature and people have to deal with each other via communication, sharing knowledge and meaning that they construct. With respect to writing, a writer is connected to others when s/he shares ideas and expresses thoughts through the language the writer is using. Social constructivists argue that language learning occurs when individuals are engaged in social activities.

According to Piaget's theory, social interaction is one of the variables that facilitate cognitive development. In his opinion, social interaction is any behaviour (e.g., conversations, play, games) that involves an actual exchange between two or more individuals (Duffy and Cunningham 1996: 173).

A constructivist learning intervention is thus an intervention in which contextualised activities (tasks) are used to provide learners with the opportunity to discover and collaboratively construct meaning as the intervention unfolds……..instructors act as facilitators rather than as teachers(Alao et al; 2010); face to face feedback is an opportunity for students to incorporate the task being written.

With this feedback tool, the instructors play an important role as experienced writers who offer their support to students to help them progress. Vygotsky (1978) drew attention to language development and he stated that students have two levels of language development which are:

1) Actual developmental level, where students can work without support.
2) Potential development, where students work with the help of their instructors.

He also, pointed out that there is space between the two levels of language development which is called "zone of proximal development''; meaning that teacher-student face-to-face feedback can be seen as a tool that helps foster the language development of student writers.

3.9.1. Theoretical Framework

With face to face feedback, social interaction occurs between the teacher and the leaners. As a result, it enhances the learning process, as suggested by Vygotsky (1987). Learners need to be

aware that language is social in nature and a writer is a part of society as well as connected to others through the fact that they express in their piece of writing through the language.

3.9.2. Pedagogic Models

Traditionally, face to face teaching practices have been highlighted and emphasized by the behaviourist, cognitivist, and constructivist models outlined (Joyce *et al*. (2009). The table below illustrates a description for each model as well as the practical implication for each one.

Table 3.4 Table of pedagogic models illustration

Model	Description	Practical Implications
Behaviourist	Direct structured instruction from the teacher provides a learning response in the learner. It is assumed that any student can learn any objectives with time and good instruction. Outcome in tests is generally better than other models.	- The learner is told what to do exactly. -The material is ordered and structured. -Testing against the objectives is carried out. -Feedback is provided.
Cognitivist	Emphasis is put on the interpretation and categorization of information, with motivation, memory and the mental process being more of a priority. Tests need to be modified to measure the mental processing skills. More weight is given to inquiry, inductive thinking and thought formation.	-What the learner is required to know is identified. -Information is organized in a way to give the learner time to think and to apply individual styles of learning. -The learner should evaluate and synthesize information. -The learner is motivated by intrinsic activities such as simulations from real life.

Constructivist	Learner-centred models encourage the individual's potential using activities designed for this purpose. This gives high self-concept and self-esteem, and provides more creativity, curiosity and independence. The aim is not so much to give a positive impact on standardized tests but to have a positive impact on the learner.	-Social interactions are contextualized for the learners -Activities are used from meaningful situations known to the learners. -Learners are encouraged to build on existing knowledge with their own knowledge, after being provided with the right tools and information.

3.10. Summary and Research Gap

As mentioned above, there have been many studies regarding feedback. Most studies either discussed one kind of feedback or compared peer feedback to teacher written feedback. Furthermore, most of these studies were carried out in Asia and none has been done in the Libyan context. It is important, however, to investigate diverse educational contexts.

Thus the efficacy of feedback on improving FL/SL students writing needs to be further investigated especially with more focus on using combined methods which are face to face and written feedback. This study attempts to see whether face to face feedback is more useful to Libyan EFL learners or the WF. This study will also use multiple measures to investigate the effectiveness of feedback on Libyan EFL students at the department of English at a university in Libya. In addition, as mentioned in the first chapter the study will involve students who are not exposed to the English language outside the classroom in order to minimize the factors that can influence the result. The study aims at answering the research questions regarding the importance of feedback and learners' attitude to this technique.

3.11. Research Questions

The study attempts to answer the following questions based on the research gap that is mentioned above:

1- What is the rate of improvement in writing performance of a group of students given face-to-face feedback?

o What is the rate of improvement in writing performance of a group of students given written feedback?

2- What are Libyan students' attitudes before and after getting face- to-face feedback?

3- What are the writing teachers' views towards face to face feedback within the treatment and control groups?

4- How do both the teachers and learners at Libyan higher education deal with face to face feedback in practice?

The researcher intention is to investigate how EFL students perceive different techniques of feedback and which kind of feedback they prefer and why. Having an idea about students' attitudes and beliefs is important for the study.

3.12. Affective Factors in Language Acquisition

Within the context of learning writing and language acquisition, there are factors that play a role in learning in general and acquiring an L2 in particular. These factors are not related to the methods of teaching or to the syllabus but they are related to the learner. The learner's attitude about the language and the degree of motivation they show influence their success in learning the various language skills. As mentioned previously, feedback motivates students to learn, so, the following discussion will focus on the influence/impact of motivation on enhancing writing.

3.13. Feedback and Motivation as an Effective Factor in Writing

Motivation is very important, particularly, in learning a foreign language as many researchers have emphasized. Lennon (1993: 41) points out that motivation is "the most important single factor influencing continuing development in oral proficiency''. Although Lennon mentioned oral proficiency and not writing, his observations can be applied to writing too. Gardner (1985: 147) offered an imperative definition of motivation which is "the effort, want (desire) and affect associated with learning a second language'' (as cited in Graham 1997: 96). Motivation is an important factor in the learning process and can be achieved through giving feedback to students, in other words when there is a path or guide for learning by pointing the student in the right direction learners tend to work harder and are more motivated to complete their tasks and achieve their aims. "Feedback motivated students by stimulating them to pursue their learning. Students showed a desire to succeed or grasp better understanding" (Orsmond *et al.* 2002). When teachers provide an effective feedback, the feedback steers the learner in the right way especially in the writing process and when students need to revise their writing.

3.14. Chapter Summary

This part of the study discussed the relationship between providing feedback to students and writing effectively. Firstly, it highlighted what makes writing a hard job in one's own language as well as in an L2. I discussed, what makes writing a challenge in the Libyan EFL classroom. I introduced academic writing discussing the various approaches to L2 writing (i.e., the product approach, the process approach and the genre approach). This chapter also presented a historical background of the three writing approaches and their characteristics, and limitations.

Feedback was the second part of this chapter; various definitions of feedback were provided based on different researchers' views. Moreover, the chapter outlined the main types of feedback such as teacher written feedback, peer feedback and face to face feedback in L2 writing with more focus on face to face feedback (Also known as face to face feedback). The chapter also discussed the effectiveness of each type of feedback as well as its limitations. Developing the writing skill through feedback is one of the strategies required because it is essential for the EFL/ESL student to be aware of the strengths and weaknesses of their writing so they can revise their work more effectively. It has been shown that feedback can be effective when:

1- It attempts to meet and rely on the students' needs.

2- It addresses the meaning and the form of the piece of writing but they do not have to be at the same time; as mentioned in the previous point, feedback should focus on the students' necessities as "fair is not everyone getting the same thing. Fair is everyone getting what they need in order to be successful".

Considering these points, feedback enables students to develop the quality of their writing in general. Developing the writing skill through feedback is one of the strategies that lead to a successful product. As indicated in (2.1.1), product writing fulfils its communicative goal when it contains the main criteria which are: appropriate length, logic and coherence, and a readable format. It is a pleasure to read if it is composed of well-constructed sentences and a rich variety of words that clearly express the writer's intended meaning. This study investigates the usefulness of face to face as feedback strategy in a Libyan context taking into accounts that: 1) negotiation with students about their writing is needed to enhance learning and promote a learning goal orientation via this kind of feedback. 2) Students' preference for forms of feedback depends on their learning style and 3) applying this method in a different culture may result in a different outcome. The following chapter will investigate the research methodology used.

Chapter Four: Research Methodology, Procedures and Ethical Concerns

> *''Not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted''* (Albert Einstein)

4.0 Overview of Chapter Four

Research methods illustrate how the study's questions are articulated. They refer to techniques and procedures in the process of data gathering. Therefore, this chapter describes the research methods used to investigate the effects of face-to-face on English Language (EL) writing performance among a group of Libyan students. It provides the rationale for using the mixed methods approach (both quantitative and qualitative approaches) and the philosophical stance of the research, the aims, the context and participants of the study as well as the process of data collection.

4.1 Aims and Objectives of the Study

The overall target of the study is to undertake an empirical as well as an exploratory investigation of the effects of face-to-face on proficiency in writing in English as a Second Language or Foreign Language (ESL/EFL) context in Libya. Based on the findings reached in this study, pedagogical implications will be drawn for promoting EFL Libyan students' and teachers' awareness and augment their English writing.

The research aims to examine the effectiveness of using face-to-face feedback as an efficient strategy in the teaching of writing in English. The objectives are:

➢ To contribute to the body of knowledge regarding the teaching and learning of writing by providing insight into academic writing in the Libyan EFL/ESL context.

➢ To investigate the effect of the face-to-face on students' writing improvement, as well as students' and teachers' attitudes towards conferencing

➢ To utilize multiple instruments to investigate the strategy

➢ To create a framework for analysing the relationship between conference discourse and improvement in text revision in a Libyan higher education context

4.2 Research Questions

There is no doubt that research question/questions are an important element in any study. Bordage and Dawson (2003) emphasise that 'the single most important component of a study is the research. It is the keystone of the entire exercise' (p.378)

Based on the research gaps which were identified in the previous chapter (i.e. the lack of research in Libya, with most of the research in this topic having been conducted in Asia or English speaking countries), this study attempts to answer the following question:

Which is more effective in the Libyan higher education context: face-to-face feedback or written feedback?

In attempting to answer this question, the following subsidiary questions are addressed:

5- What is the rate of improvement in writing performance of a group of students given face-to-face feedback?

    o   What is the rate of improvement in writing performance of a group of students given written feedback?

6- What are Libyan students' attitudes before and after getting face- to-face feedback?

7- What are the writing teachers' views towards face to face feedback within the treatment and control groups?

8- How do both the teachers and learners at Libyan higher education deal with face to face feedback in practice?

The first two of these questions investigate the objective evidence for which kind of feedback works better. The other questions try to reveal students' and teachers' preference, attitudes and beliefs, both because students' opinions influence their performance in learning a language especially in writing (see Kepner 1991 and Ferris 2002) and also because these matters help to indicate whether, the objective evidence notwithstanding, what kind of feedback actually works in the specific context.

4.3 Hypothesis of the Study

Research done on the nature of teacher-student interaction shows that the degree of usefulness of conferences can vary (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996). Research findings suggest that conferences are effective on student writing when students actively participate and negotiate meaning (Goldstein &Conrad, 1990

This researcher's hypothesis is that teacher-student face-to-face feedback can help improve the writing ability of Libyan university students better than written feedback and that it also motivates students to revise their writing by developing positive attitudes about this kind of feedback.

4.4 Methodology

Trying to produce a definitive definition of methodology as used in the social sciences and to serve the purposes of all researchers is rather like trying to catch water in a net. Different researchers offer slightly differing definitions according their own training, discipline and purposes (Clough and Nutbrown, 2002, p.27).

This part focuses on defining and clarifying the methodology of my research project.

Based on the above quotation, methodology is defined differently by different authorities, however; all the definitions have almost a common idea of justification. My aim in this part is not to examine the different views about methodology, for my study methodology has to be in concord with some

views, for example Wellington, et al (2005) says '' methodology refers to the theory of generating knowledge and the activity of considering, reflecting upon and justifying the best methods''(p.97). Their point of view was explained in 2002 '' one of the tasks for a methodology is to explain and justify the particular methods used in a given study'' (Clough and Nutbrown, p.27). Also, Sikes's (2004) view is that "methodology is concerned with the description and analysis of research methods rather than with the actual, practical use of those methods. Methodological work is, therefore, philosophical, thinking work'' (p.16)

As it has been noticed from the previous quotation there is an obvious distinction between method and methodology. Generally, research methods aim at finding solutions to research problems while research methodology aims at the employment of the correct procedures to find out solutions. In other words, it can be said that methodology paves the way for research methods to be performed appropriately.

4.5 Epistemological and Philosophical Stance of the Research

Epistemology in general is the kind or the nature of knowledge where ontology is nature of beliefs about reality (Richards 2003:33). The study of knowledge has two contrasting views which are:

1- objectivist epistemology: ''things exist as meaningful entities independently of consciousness and experience, that they have truth and meaning residing in them as objects'' (Crotty,1998:5).

2- Subjectivists / constructionists who reject the objectivist view. Here knowledge is something created through interaction between the world and the individual (Richard 2003:35). Therefore, meaning is constructed, and different people may construct meaning in different ways, even in relation to the same phenomena (Crotty 1998:8-9)

A philosophical stance is a theoretical point of view "informing the methodology and thus providing a context for the process and grounding its logic and criteria''(Crotty 1998 :3). Everyone has a theoretical view and every research method is based on a theoretical perspective. Positivism and constructionism are the main types of philosophical paradigms.

- Positivism is based on the assumption that the world is governed by laws (cause-effect relations) which can offer answers to many questions.

The central tenet of constructionism (constructivism, interpretivism or naturalism) is that meaning is socially constructed (Richard 2003: 38). It attempts to understand and interpret the world of subjective experience within a natural context (Nunan 1992: quantitative research methods are associated with positivism/empiricism while qualitative research methods are associated with constructionism / interpretivism

Constructivism involves social and cognitive processes of learning. Kaufman's (2004) argument regarding the social aspect of constructivism is based on sociocultural theory by Vygotsky (1978)

and the cognitive aspect is based on developmental theory by Piaget (1970). Sociocultural theory looks at learning as a mental process and this process involves and needs mediation. Therefore, learners' engagement in a given task as well as their negotiation of meaning is construed as a fundamental factor to the learning outcome. Usually, in FACE-TO-FACE FEEDBACK students engage in encouraging dialogue with their teacher which helps them improve their writing and "reach higher levels of performance than they are able to achieve on their own'' (Daib, 2001: 274). In addition, learners usually need to focus their attention on the output and become aware of the difference between the output and their existing information before they gain new information. As is well known, noticing is a very important element in learning and this element gives a chance to students to reflect on their output and try to clarify and restructure their product based on the information they gain. Noticing and focused attention are basics of cognitive process as discussed by Anderson (1985) and Schmidt (2001).

4.6 Research Design

The study utilizes a classroom-based and quasi-experimental design as outlined by Cook and Campbell (1979). The research uses mixed methods of data collection, starting with a quasi-experimental study to estimate the causal impact of an intervention on its target population where there are two existing groups, one treated as a treatment group and the other as a control group. Those participating in the study are not randomly assigned as they were already separated in their different classes.

The quasi-experimental design was used to answer the central question about the most effective method of feedback in the Libyan higher education context: face to face feedback or written feedback. The pre- and post-tests (section 4.10.3) provided quantitative data which were analysed to determine the impact of written and face-to-face feedback on the participants' written performance and which kind is more helpful. The samples of students writing (4.10.2) during the term and the qualitative interviews and observation, on the other hand, were intended to answer the other research questions, whether students implement each type of feedback and the attitudes of the participants', both students and teachers. These qualitative methods provided additional interpretation relevant to the quantitative results. It was intended that the qualitative data collected in the interviews would allow a more detailed explanation of how the participants handled the new technique (face-to-face feedback), their motivation and the difficulties they may have faced.

The student participants consisted of a treatment group and a control group, with both groups containing the same amount of students. The treatment group received face to face intervention, whereas the control group received written feedback only. A comparison was made to measure the effect of the two types of feedback and to investigate which approach was more effective in improving students' writing.

As both types of feedback are new in Libya (see chapter one), the possibility of familiarity and ingrained habits acting as an interfering variable could be discounted. The overall aim was to gather knowledge and understanding of the effectiveness of face-to-face feedback and evaluate the changes that occur through the use of this method over a period of time.

4.7 The Context and Participants of the Study

As mentioned before, most Libyan students learn English in public universities where the standard is not high. Some students are able to study extra classes in private schools (as additional courses). In addition, Libyan students generally study English in their classes only. They do not have the opportunity to use it in daily life in speaking, reading, writing and listening. Those who live in the capital where there is an opportunity to find different nationalities who work there and communicate in English gives them a better chance to practice the language at least for speaking and listening.

AlJabal al Gharbi University, the researcher's workplace, is a large public university situated in the west of Libya (Western Mountains). It provides undergraduate and graduate levels of education. It was established in 1991. The main campus is in Garyan and there are 12 regional campuses in the cities of Yefren, Zentan, Nalut and a number of other cities. Al Jabal al Gharbi University has many faculties with about 19,512 students. Generally, students in all faculties are required to study English but it is not learnt uniformly in terms of the number of hours and the curriculum since some faculties have a curriculum which includes specialist terminology.

This researcher conducted the experiment in this university with English department students studying in their third year who all have approximately the same level of English knowledge and the same material and teaching methods for studying writing. The researcher also conducted the same experiment in Tripoli University which is a public university too. Although students were from two separate universities and two different areas, this study does not differentiate or compare between them. The aim of this study as mentioned at the beginning is to show the effectiveness of face to face feedback among a group of Libyan students. This also confirms that students tend to have the same level of English regardless of their teachers or the areas where they live.

A research population is defined as "the set of individuals about which the researcher wants to be able to generalise'' (Fogelman, 2002:97). In this study, the population was 200 students, most of which (168 = 84%) were female. They were undergraduate students at English departments of Tripoli and Yefren campus from Aljabal al Gharbi Universities. Students from both universities have approximately the same level of English since they study at public universities. For these students, using English outside class is almost absent; which is why I think it is important for the reliability of the results as there are no factors affecting the purity of the results although we cannot guarantee the reliability of any study at 100%. The students were aged between 18- 22 and all of them study English using almost the same method of teaching and the same material. The participants' general

English-language proficiency level was intermediate and all of them from both universities were enrolled in the Writing 3 Class (EL 216), which all were required to take as part of their B.A. requirements. Also, these participants were required to have passed Writing 2 (EL 110). All the students were Libyan and native speakers of Arabic but some of them also speak Amazigh (see 2.1.2 above). By and large, the students were homogeneous in terms of age, educational background, English language experiences and general English proficiency level.

Table 4.1: Participants in the Study

Total number of students	200
Nationality	All students are Libyan
Gender	19 (M); 81(F) for the control group, 13 (M); 87(F) for the treatment group
Age	18-22

4.8 Fieldwork Plan

The main aim of the empirical research was to gain a sufficient amount of information from the participants' test results and interviews with some students and teachers. The first step was therefore the gaining of access and establishing of contact with the participants. The second was getting their permission to volunteer in the study and finally the fieldwork study was conducted.

The steps that were followed in this study were:

4.8.1 Gaining Access

First I got a letter from my supervisor which explained my research work and the objectives of my study. This letter was forwarded to the Libyan Embassy in London in order to seek their permission for field work in Libya (see Appendix A1).

Once in Libya I took the supporting letter to the English Department in both AlJabal Al Garbi and Tripoli Universities where I planned to conduct my fieldwork. Before starting the fieldwork, the project required ethical approval which was the next step.

4.8.2 Ethical Issues

With reference to the importance of ethical approval prior to conducting research that involves human subjects, official approval was obtained from AlJabal Al Garbi and Tripoli universities (see appendix A.1.3).

At the beginning of the study the subjects were told that their participation in this experimental study was entirely voluntary. There were two main different groups of participants and each group had to sign the consent form relating to their involvement before participating in the project including interviews, which were:

1) informed consent for experimental groups participation
2) Informed consent for interview participation. (pre- post conferencing)

The participants were informed that all the data collected would be confidential and that their participation in the tests and informal interview would be anonymous.

4.8.3 Procedures

1. The study was completed within one term and the classes were taught by their regular teacher. The researchers did not teach the classes because it was the assumption of this study that any teaching effects in the experiment should not have a major impact on the reliability of the findings of the study. If the researcher taught, there would be a focus on a desired result and the result could have been affected by the researcher's effort and not the method, I therefore was a non-participant observer only in order to minimise any possible effects on the results.

2. The students were encouraged to write paragraphs (such as summaries about certain texts or reading) and weekly essays and submit their work for assessment. The control group got only written feedback on their paragraphs and essays; the treatment group discussed their writing with their teacher (face to face feedback). Both groups were asked to revise their work once and then submit the revised piece to be evaluated. By the end of the term, the students had been practicing writing based on either the written comments or the face-to-facecomments and discussion. They thus, revised, reorganized and edited their writing several times as it was done weekly. Upon completion of the term, the post test and post interviews were conducted.

3. In both groups, learners were required to write two drafts for each writing assignment. Teachers asked learners to bring in their first draft for correcting them. In the treatment group, the students came to see the teacher for one –to-one where they had a chance to discuss their writing with their instructor and enabled them to seek clarification and negotiate meanings to avoid misunderstanding However, due to time constraints and the number of the students, the instructors sometimes discussed students' writing in groups having marked the students' papers beforehand. With FACE-TO-FACE FEEDBACK strategy, teachers can provide an environment which is suitable for students who suffer from anxiety and shyness in front of others "provide a non-stress environment for learners who are shy or overly concerned about their oral language proficiency" (Huang, 1998: p.2).

4.8.3.1 Pedagogical design of the writing program

➢ Course Title: Writing 3 (English Department) - credits: 4; it is the third course in a sequence of five writing courses.

➢ Date of Introduction: October 2012

- Course Duration: The course is about four months, taught four hours twice a week (Two two- hour sessions).
- Department Responsible for Teaching: English Language Department, Faculty of Education at Tripoli University.
- Duration of the program: 4 years.
- Students: Third year English majors, writing is a required course.(see Appendix for the program requirement for both universities where the study have been done)
- Materials: There is no certain materials that have to be followed, one of the basic materials that have been used is a book called College Writing from paragraph to essay(see Appendix 6 A). This book was chosen because provides the variety of activities for learners
- Teachers of writing: one of them has two years' experience in English language teaching at Tripoli University and the other teacher has many years in Aljabal AlGarabi (Yefren).
- Assessment scheme followed in the course is out of 100 which contain midterm exam 40% and final exam 60%. The table below illustrates that :

Table 4.2: Assessment Scheme for the Writing Course.

Assessment Tool	Percentage out of 100%
Test one (assignments and activities as part of midterm exam)	20%
Test two (midterm exam)	20%
Final Exam	60%

4.8.3.2 Course Aims

a. According to the official course description as written in the university documents, the course is to develop third year students' ability in academic writing skills. Also, the course aims to help students feel more confident while writing in English and improve students' ability to write coherent short essays. In general, the course objective is to develop students' writing in ways which would benefit them in their academic studies in the English Language Department since they are being prepared to be English teachers. I think the course aim is hard to enhance because I believe that would only happen if students learned how to write good paragraphs and, good essays from the first year. The first part of the term was too basic for this and just gave a basic introduction to writing essays and academic writing such as how to write an outline, how to organize the ideas and develop the topic.

b. In the four-month term period, both theory and practice with a view to writing clearly organized and simple argumentative paragraphs and essays had to be covered. As indicated by the official course description, the ''writing 3'' course is to

Teach the students the writing modes, rhetorical devices and language points required for academic success. Students are given the opportunity to explore their opinions, discuss their ideas, and share their experiences through written communication. Students are introduced to practice writing short essays on different topics.

4.8.3.3 Some Features of the Course

1- The role of grammar in writing is recognized in general and students were encouraged to follow the grammatical rules and use them in their writing.

2- Some punctuation worksheets and exercises were given to the classes as an activity in the writing lesson.

3- Some useful linking words and phrases for essays were provided for students as well (see Appendix: 6:B)

4- Some exercises regarding linking words were provided for students to develop coherence within their writing through FACE-TO-FACE FEEDBACK.

4.9 Research Instruments

Different data collection methods were used in this study to gather the necessary data through the following tools: pre-test and post-test writing tasks, pre and post face-to-faceinterview (participants from the treatment group and their writing teachers), observation and samples of students' writing were also used.

4.9.1 Justification for Choosing Data Collection Tools

The study attempted to follow a tradition of studies that utilized the pre/ post-test technique to measure students' progress. Semi-structured interviews were used to investigate the participants' attitude besides other qualitative means of collecting data as mentioned earlier.

4.9.2 Obtaining Writing Samples: Pre-test, and Post Test.

The idea of pre and post-test is used as a viable tool to measure and evaluate the extent to which an intervention has had an impact on student learning. In this study pre -test is used to obtain knowledge about the students' level of writing in English at the beginning of the experiment, while post- test is used at the end of the experiment in order to help track the students' improvement. Some authors have discussed some issues regarding obtaining writing samples and they state that:

"There is considerable debate about what constitutes a representative sampling of second language writing, whether brief tasks or students' written samples collected during a period of time (Hamp-Lyons, 1990; Henry, 1996; Raimes,1998). Although in a few cases researchers collected a number of course- related assignments on the assumption that this procedure would be in consonance with ordinary class writing (Edelsky, 1982; Zamel,1983), the vast majority of

studies, in line with problem- solving approach followed (Pozo, 1989), opted for short time-compressed compositions.'' (De Larios, Murphy &Mar in, 2002:17)

4.9.3 Pre and Post Writing Tests

At the beginning and at the end of the semester in the academic year 2012-2013, both groups of students took pre and post writing tests. The aim was simply to establish the level of each individual student and later to compare that level with the same student's post-test level. The aim of the post test was to see if there were statistically significant differences after feedback and also to determine which kind of feedback worked better. After the post test the rate of improvement for students was measured in order to draw conclusions on the effectiveness feedback.

4.9.4 Testing Procedures

Testing procedures were done in three- steps:

4.9.4.1 <u>Pre-test</u>

1. In the first week of the field study and after reading the consent forms that showed students what the researchers was doing and her purpose of doing this research; students from both classes (experimental group and control group) did the pre-test. They did the writing test during the normal classroom hours within a specific period of time. Chairs were arranged in a different way from how it is normal in their lecture; the arrangement was in such a way that enough space had to be created between them. They were asked not to use dictionaries for any reason and their phones had to be switched off in order for them not to use their electronic dictionaries. They were also notified that this task was not to be assessed as part of their final result in the course. The students were asked to write an argumentative essay about "watching TV'' where they were to give two different opinions on this matter (see Appendix).Students were told to feel relaxed and write about the topic. They were also told to support their argument with proper examples from their experiences, reasons, and evidence if they had any, in order to produce an informative piece of writing. In general the purpose of the test was to measure core writing skills that are required in an effective piece of writing which are: the main idea, supporting details, organization and coherence as well as grammar and spelling conventions.

2. The test took up between 30-45 minutes and it was monitored carefully by both the researcher and their teacher.

3. Once they finished their writing, students wrote their names on the paper and handed in their papers to the researcher in order to be evaluated.

4.9.4.2 <u>The treatment stage (intervention)</u>

The treatment/intervention stage was started a week after the pre-test. The students in the experimental group were exposed to teacher-student face-to-face where verbal comments were given. The comments were on the students' writing performance and included identification of errors, and also showed areas for improvement in terms of the relevance, coherence and organization of the content as well as language form and mechanics of the writing..

Students received feedback on each particular piece of work in the week following its submission. The treatment group received group feedback in normal class time. The teacher indicated the major problems that most students faced and asked them questions that helped them to re-evaluate their own work and to offer their own suggestions in order to revise productively, with students learning from each other's mistakes. The in-class time spent on group conferences was between 25 and 40 minutes on each occasion. In addition, one-to-one FACE-TO-FACE FEEDBACK sessions took place outside class time. The number of these during varied based on the individual student's need (e.g., 4 times for the strongest students to 12 times for the weakest during the term). To these figures for teacher-time must be added the time spent reading the student scripts (about 3 minutes per script)

Participants in the control group were provided with written feedback. The nature of written of feedback was various, sometimes it was correction of the error and sometimes it was indications of the type of error. There were typically about 10 interventions on each script. The time spent by the teacher on this activity was approximately 5-6 minutes per script. The students in both groups had the same teaching materials and were taught on the same day by the same teacher. Both groups practiced writing for the same amount of time and had to submit their revised paper after performing the corrections based on the feedback they got.

Students who were not part of the face-to-face are control group who got written feedback only, they amend their task based on the comments they got from their teachers which were regarding content, organization, and language use of their writing. They also did other activities regarding writing. In addition, sometimes they worked in a group and learned from one another by working together on some tasks.

Furthermore, as the purpose of feedback is to keep students revising their work, grades were not assigned in their first drafts.

- ➢ Principles and theory
  - ▪ students learn how to write through face-to-face feedback
  - ▪ research results
- ➢ Goals
  - ▪ To develop students' writing in academic context.
  - ▪ To increase students' motivation and participation.

- To enjoy writing and makes it less frustration
- To increase general knowledge about the writing structure, organization and unity.
- To encourage students participate and ask questions either in one to one face-to-face or as a group in the class.

➢ Procedure

- Students learn how to write through face-to-face feedback and practice writing. The face-to-face sessions were used regularly and with different styles sometimes individually and sometimes in a group based on the students' need and the time. Each conference lasted for about 10 minutes or more. The teacher gave oral comments on the required assignments in the term. The feedback included different aspects such as relevance, coherence, organization of the content and the mechanics of students' writing. The students were involved in the face-to-face and they are required to do different tasks.

➢ Requirements

- Students had to write different assignments during the term.
- Students had to participate either one on one with their writing teacher; or as a group on face-to-face feedback where the teachers highlighted the major errors that were made by the students in their writing and they identified their own errors and discussed how to improve their writing. Successful conferences were identified through literature as the ones where students participated actively in their writing evaluation as Walker & Elias (1987) indicate.
- Students were motivated to produce a better quality of their writing rather than correct their drafts.

4.10.4.3. Post Test

1- The design of post-test was similar to the pre - test design. Identical tests were used for both the control group and the treatment group; identical techniques and data collections were used at the end of the term together with the post face-to-face interview and that was on the 17th of January 2013. The entire control group attended the post- test. However, there were four students from the treatment group that were absent for the post test.

2. The post-test consisted of the same task as in the pre-test, and in addition other writing tasks which were used for the final exam of the term were used. (see Appendix 7). This latter test was known as the delayed post- test. The reason for including both elements in the post test was to evaluate students objectively. The pre-test task was repeated in order to determine if the students really recognized

what they should change and improve, while the other tasks was to gain more insight into students' more general abilities in writing. It was important to bear in mind the timing of the post-tests because timing has a critical impact on the results obtained. As Newton (1999) highlights, there is relation between the result of post testing and how soon the test is administered. He states "ideally if the test is administered immediately after the learning session additional follow up tests at later dates should be used to provide some evidence of application and impact of what has been learned''. In general, both pre and post-test are used to estimate the change in the student's abilities that can be attributed to the intervention of using face-to-face feedback in the student's learning.

4.11 Rating Scale

According to Srivastava et al (2013) assessment of students' academic achievement is one of the fundamental and crucial steps in any educational project; the assessment tool is used to provide information about attainment of specific learning objectives (p.47)

Evaluation is one of the elements in this study used to reveal the students' proficiency in their writing as well as to measure their improvement. Both groups-experimental and control- were required to make writing corrections based on either the FACE-TO-FACE FEEDBACK or written feedback. Although the purpose of this study was not concerned with the final result of students' writing, the multiple trait scoring used for evaluation was used as it is one of the holistic methods for writing assessment (Hamp-Lyons 1991). Hamp-Lyons indicates that "Multiple trait scoring implies scoring any single essay on more than one facet or trait exhibited by the text'' (1991, p. 247).

4.11.1. Rating

Those who did the rating of the work were both the researcher and the teachers of writing who taught the groups under the study. Both teachers have their PhD from UK with many years of experience in teaching English in Libyan universities. They marked pre- and post-tests sample essays using both holistic and analytical scoring criteria "Research has shown that reliable and valid information gained from both analytic and holistic scoring instruments can tell teachers much about their students' proficiency levels'' (Bacha, 2001, p.371). Holistic scoring assesses students' papers as a whole and balances strengths and weaknesses on certain criteria to assign the score for the effectiveness of a piece of writing, whereas analytic scoring provides students with a rating score for each criterion and analytic scoring feedback can be given. The assessments were made using certain marking criteria, once all criteria were taken into consideration an overall mark was given for each paper. The scale rating for the test was from 0 to 10 (total of 10 scores). As writing is usually scored 'subjectively' and not 'objectively' as either right or wrong (such as in math subject where 1+1=2); there were some procedures that were used to reduce the subjectivity as much as possible. The procedures were as follows:

The researcher marked the essays first but did not put the mark on the paper, she wrote the mark beside the name of each student in the students' list. Then the essays were handed over to their teacher to mark them again following the same procedure that the researcher did in that; the marks were written in the student's list. The reason for evaluating the essays with such method was to avoid any bias in judgment. Then, the researcher and the teacher compared the marks which were mostly the same the mark. Generally, the average of the two raters' scores was considered as the final grade. It was just in very rare cases that there were score discrepancies, the marks of both markers were summed up and the average (mean) was considered.

However, for the delayed post-test the marking was done by their teacher only and it was blind marking (blind marking is usually used in Libyan exams system starting from primary school to university level at the end of the term or school year). Blind marking is anonymous marking where the students' names are not shown on the exam paper. Students ID and desk number are usually used to identify the students later. This type of marking policy is used in order to ensure equality of marking process and it is usually applied at the end of term or year exam. This kind of marking confirms that it had been done objectively and the result is considered impartial.

On the whole, the evaluation was based on the general rules that are needed in writing which are content and language accuracy. Thus, in this study, the essay were evaluated and scored out of ten on how well the essay showed the following:

A: Content , organization, style and format; and the evaluation is about:

1- Clear and logical organization as well as coherence in presentation and a well-constructed paragraph and the writing as a whole.

2- Specific supporting examples and details where the ideas in the piece of writing must be relevant to the topic.

3- Is the format of writing appropriate to the question?

B: Language accuracy which includes mechanics and the evaluation is about:

4- Proper grammar, punctuation and spelling

5- Proper use of a variety of vocabulary and the choice of the words and level of formality.

Generally, the evaluation measured: firstly, the students' ability to produce coherent texts within common university expectations and requirements where the piece to writing should flow coherently and logically; starting from an introduction that attracts a reader to a well- demonstrated conclusion. Secondly, it measured the students' ability to develop an argument and organize supporting details where the paragraphs flow coherently and examples are provided to support the ideas presented. In addition, especially in regard to the post test which was done after applying face-to-face feedback, the improvement in the evaluation measured the students' ability to revise and improve on their writing skill and show how their writing is clear and easy to read and follow.

In general to evaluate students' writing, it is important to look at the following features of Academic writing style:

1. Precise

The information in the text is expressed exactly and does not use expressions that could be misunderstood by the readers.

2. Concise

Concise – expresses complete ideas using as few words as possible

3. Objective/ impersonal

Objective/ impersonal – emphasises the information rather than the writer

4. Responsible – uses sources without plagiarising (if there is need for sources, although in this study the writing was essays)

5. Conventional

Conventional – formal, impersonal and follows the expectations of the academic community it is written for, e.g. uses formulae, cites sources accurately

6. Accessible

Accessible – clearly structured and planned

7. Reader friendly

Reader-friendly – ideas are expressed explicitly using logical links to help the reader

Appendix 8 shows the criteria that were used as a guide for teachers to evaluate students' writing since there are no certain criteria that are used in Libyan higher education.

4.12. Instruments and Data Collection

As known in many studies, research data can be collected from the natural setting. According to Johnson, naturalistic observations, interviews, verbal reports, and the collection of written materials are common techniques in the field of second language learning (1992 8: 6). In this study, the mentioned techniques were used. The main methods of the research were: observation, sample of students' writing, interviews, pre-tests and post-tests. This study followed a mixed approach of both quantitative and qualitative analysis in order to obtain a more reliable understanding of the results of the study. "By combining the two methods, we can obtain a much richer understanding. In other words, using a rigorous design the quantitative methods can tell us *what* works, while the qualitative methods can tell us *how* it works'' (Condelli & Wrigley, 2004:2). Therefore these methods were used to capture the whole picture about the relation between face-to-face feedback and improving writing. For example, Gillham's view (2000) about observation is "the most direct way of obtaining data'' (p.46); where interview is seen as "the main road to multiple realities'' as said by Stake (1995: p.64). However, pre/ post-test were used to measure students' level before and after the treatment.

4.12.1. Qualitative Methods

The qualitative methods employed were: semi-structured observation, document analysis of essays/ compositions, and semi-structured interviews as discussed in this section.

4.12.1.1 Document Analysis of Compositions (sample of students' writing)

Sample of students' writings were collected at the beginning of the study, during the course and at the end of the study. Document analyses of first drafts and second drafts of selected essays were carried out to find out how students reacted to face to face feedback. The essays, in this study, were studied to provide extra detailed information on how students revised their work based on the feedback they got during the course. They were used as support for the assessment of their improvement. Giving of a pre-test and a post-test assesses students once whereas with a collection of essays, I could find out more about their exact problems with writing and how it was improved accordingly. It was therefore worth looking at the suggestions and comments the students received and how they tried to act on them. The purpose of this instrument was to get an idea about the students' way of writing and to inform the researcher about the problems faced by students in their written essays. "A number of research papers in the Arab world have spotlighted students' coherence problems in English writing. For example, Arab students' written texts revealed that repetition, parallelism, sentence length, lack of variation and misuse of certain cohesive devices are major sources of incoherence and textual deviation'' (Abdel Hamid, A. 2010:p.212). Document analysis has several advantages, because it can contribute to the triangulation of results generated by quantitative methods used in this study to determine students' essay writing, their editing after getting feedback, and their language abilities (Placier, 1998).

In addition and most importantly, the students' writing in this study could provide actual and authentic knowledge about what the students really did when they edited and revised their essays and show if it was different from what they thought or claimed they did based on the interviews.

Some of the samples of the students' assignments did not contain any feedback in regards to the corrections that needed to be made; whereas some of them contained the teacher's feedback that had been given on the first draft of writing. Students had to produce their writing (assignments) either individually or in a group of three. The topic of their individual assignments was assigned by their teacher; but in the other assignment where the topic that was written about as a group-; the topic was the students' choice. The teacher assigned different topics and the group had to write about one of them such as 'Climate Change', 'Body Language', 'Difficulty of Teaching English',' My Hobby' and these topics were evaluated as group work.

What's more, students had to write at least two pieces of writing on different topics to be evaluated individually. The collected writing samples for evaluations were on various topics such as 'opening a university in each city' and 'Climate Change'. The compositions ranged in length based

on how much information students had about the topic (vocabulary was one of the problems that students encountered).

For purposes of evaluation, some of these samples were evaluated twice; one was done by their teacher and one by the researcher. To confirm the accuracy of my interpretations and to counteract the problem of subjectivity; I had to evaluate the writings and write the grades on another paper, and then I asked their teacher of writing to evaluate the writing and inform me about his evaluation (see 4.11.1)

Therefore, document analysis helped me enhance the credibility of my research by checking the students' actual abilities through their own writing and editing.

4.12.1.2. <u>Interviews</u>

Another method of data collection used in this research is the interview. The interview is a tool of getting information and gaining knowledge through conversation. Throughout interviews, both interviewer and interviewee can discuss a considered issue and their interaction can be the fundamental of knowledge production. Bryman (2004) suggests that the interview is "important for detailed analysis required in qualitative research and to ensure that the interviewees' answers are captured in their own terms'' (p. 317)

Researchers have classified interviews into various different types including structured, unstructured, and semi-structured. Although, each type of interview has its strengths and weaknesses (Patton 1980:206), the purpose of this method is generally the same, which is to obtain data "the social situatedness of research data." (Cohen et al. 2000: 267). As a result, the interview is very essential and valued in social research.

The differences between the types of interviews are following:

✓ Structured interviews generally apply close-ended questions and the questions are in a specific order "the agenda is totally predetermined by the researcher, who works through a list of set questions in a predetermined order" (Nunan 1992: 149).

✓ Unstructured interviews, as a general rule, include open-ended questions where interviewees get a full chance and can express their opinions about a certain issue.

✓ a semi-structured interview lets the interviewer do and control the interview by creating the structure of the interview, while at the same time giving the interviewees sufficient freedom to express subjective opinion at length (Wragg, 2002)

The present study adopted the semi-structured interviews and was guided by a list of questions in order to help the interviewer gain a clear understanding of the interviewees' stance (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2000). Also, Bryman, (2001, p.314) points out, "the interview has a great

deal of leeway in how to reply. Questions may not follow on exactly in the way outlined on the schedule. Questions that are not included in the guide may be asked as the interviewer picks up on things said by interviewees''. With regard to the fitness for purpose, I think the semi-structured questions are the most suitable to answer the research question concerning both students and their writing teacher's opinions and their attitudes to the different methods of feedback especially face to face feedback as a learning and teaching method of writing English as an FL/SL. The research question as mentioned before is:

> What are Libyan students' attitudes before and after getting face to face feedback and what are the writing teachers' views?

In other words, Will EFL/ESL Libyan students who participate in the study (experimental group) hold a positive attitude toward face to face feedback as investigated by an interview?

Will the writing teacher who teaches both groups have a different attitude toward the groups during the term as investigated by an interview?

Regarding interviews' disadvantages, the interviewer may not get all the necessary information. There are many reasons for that; for instance, Wragg (2002) indicates interviewees may not express what they really think and believe. In addition, interviewees maybe try to avoid embarrassment or provide answers which they think would please the interviewer (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2000). Another weakness is that interviewees may perhaps reply with their perceived behaviour, and not their actual one.

To avoid the impact of such weaknesses, I dealt with this issue by informing the interviewees (students and their teacher) about the aim of the study before the interview. Also, I had to use different strategies to make students respond honesty through following:

i. The students were encouraged to speak freely and express what they really feel about their writing skills and whether the face to face feedback is a useful method or not. In other words, students were informed that their authentic reply would help both teachers and students (in teaching and learning if the method worked), and were reassured there would be no effect on their marks for the current course. Oppenheim (1992, p.81) concurs with this procedure and argues that: ''interviews should encourage respondents to develop their own ideas, feelings, insights, expectations or attitudes and in doing so it allows the respondents to say what they think and to do so with greater richness and spontaneity''.

ii. At the beginning of each interview, I kept telling the students to be as honest as possible in their responses in order to examine which kind of feedback is more helpful.

iii.   The students were informed from the beginning that the study will not depend on their verbal respond only but also on their written work to encourage them to answer in a straight forward manner.

Furthermore, the participation was not obligatory and their signature was taken as permission to participate before starting the interview after I read the consent form for them. Concerning selecting interviewees, the students were self-selecting that some of them offered to volunteer. Also, there was a variety of levels among the participants; some of them got high grades, some had weak lower level skills.

Students and teacher's Interview (Pre and Post Interview):

An interview (Appendix B) was conducted to some students and to their teacher too. I interviewed the participants at the faculty of education at Tripoli University and each interview lasted about 15 minutes, although the precise length was determined by the participants' need to speak. It was done twice; the first interview was before applying the face to face feedback method (conferencing) and the second one was after the end of their course. This instrument was constructed to enquire about the students' opinions of the effectiveness and helpfulness of different kinds of feedback with which the students were lately familiar, for instance: teacher correction, comments, teacher correction with comments, error identification, self-correction after getting feedback, teacher-student face-to-face (definitions are given below). The interview also asked about the students' strategies for the usage of feedback as well as their preferences for feedback and why.

During the interview, I was taking notes besides the audio recording. These notes were made in order to work as a backup for the audio recording. For example, if something would happen to the recording such as getting lost, getting damaged, or there's a problem with the sound; I would have my notes as a backup. Moreover, the interview was done in the students' first language, Arabic, in order to make students more comfortable and express themselves clearly with more details without worrying about the language. Also, this reiterates the point that the interview was not a test.

I informed the participants at the beginning that the two interviews (pre- post interviews) are part of my study I am conducting about the face -to –face feedback as a method of teaching and learning English writing to ESL learners in general and university students in particular; and thus, their responses is very vital to the study. I explained that their responses and cooperation would enhance my understanding of the students' problems in EFL/ESL writing with a view to improving the learning and teaching conditions. For the interview, I prepared a list of questions as a guide to gain information. In general, the participants' views were informative and students expressed their opinions and attitudes enthusiastically.

The participants for the interview in this study were students from treatment group and their teacher of writing. These students were females, who are aged between 18- 22, and all of them were Libyan. All the ten students who were interviewed volunteered to participate in the study. It was also

explained to the participants that they were free to withdraw from the study at any point. It was impossible to interview all the students so I asked those who had time to participate in the interview to volunteer. Only the female students volunteered to participate in the interview, I did not however get involved in choosing students. This could limit the representativeness of the study slightly.

However, in the pre and post-tests there were participants were of mixed gender i.e. male and female because the tests were done in the class and it had to be for all the third year students to see whether they would benefit from the feedback or not. I used the interview as method to support the results of the study.

Furthermore, all the participants were asked to sign the Consent Form (see appendix C for sample of consent form) , which I had created, for them to use to confirm that they agreed to participate in this study and provided me with the information I would asked for. Also, anonymity was offered to the participants as it says in the Consent Form. Not only would the information be treated confidentially but also all the recordings would be destroyed at the end of the study.

Regarding the teacher's interview, it was one of instruments used to elicit data. The aim of this was to investigate teachers' conceptualizations of issues related to teaching and learning EFL writing in the English language department particularly in Libyan universities since the teacher, who was interviewed, had had experience teaching in different places. The time for the interview was agreed in advance. It was a semi-structured interview where I prepared some questions to be covered. However, there was some flexibility and the questions were only used as a guide and the teacher had the chance to talk about different points without being interrupted. The smooth running of the interview was crucial to get essential data for the study. Besides that, there were some additional informal talks with other writing teachers in English departments who teach in other faculties either in Tripoli or Yefren city. The objective of these discussions was to investigate the problems that both writing teachers and their students encounter in the teaching/learning process and if these problems are the same or different.

Definitions:

1-Teacher correction: The teacher corrects the entire surface which is usually grammatical errors by crossing out or underlining errors and providing right answers.

2. Comments: The teacher provides written feedback by making comments or questions on the writing but error corrections are not provided.

3. Teacher correction with comments: The teacher corrects the errors and explains that with comments.

4. Error identification: The teacher indicates where the error is exactly by underlying or circling it without any corrections.

5. Self-correction after getting feedback: Students correct their own work by using teacher's comment in previous writing.

6. Teacher-student conferencing: The teacher and student talk about a piece of student writing individually during the writing or after it is finished. Teacher-student face-to-facecan be, also, with all the students in the class where the teacher discusses with his/her students the problems in their writing.

4.12.1.3. <u>Observation</u>
Observation is considered as an extremely useful tool in both quantitative and qualitative research. Usually, the data that is gathered from observations consist of detailed descriptions and the situation within which the observation was made.

Classroom observation is commonly recognized (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000; Mackey & Gass, 2005; Wajnryb, 1992) as a central component of teacher preparation and development. In addition, the idea of observation has been used as a tool in research generally and classroom research specifically. For example, it has been argued that observation is a useful and crucial tool in learning to teach (Gebhard, 1999; Wajnryb, 1992). So, in addition to my purpose of the study, I got depth understanding about how to develop my teaching methods.

Research on this matter (Gebhard, 1999; Wajnryb, 1992) supports the view that observation is a useful tool in learning to teach. So, getting the knowledge and understanding classroom through observation is very essential.

There are three types of observation: structured, unstructured, and semi-structured observation (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2000; Moyles, 2002) and each type has certain procedure. Structured observation is to some extent systematic because the observer collects data at specific time and usually uses a checklist for the categories that are planned to be observed. Whereas, unstructured observation is different in that it has a wide description of the event and the people observed. Richards (2003) points out that unstructured observation may take note of everything that happens in a certain place or look for nothing in particular. Also, this type of observation concentrates on the interactions taking place between the observed (Bell, 2002).

In this study, informal, semi-structured observation was used as a method of data collection. The observation generally focused on the students' attitude towards face to face feedback and monitored their interactions with each other and with their teacher while they wrote. I noted the exchanged ideas, the time the students needed to write and edit their writing after getting feedback, as well as the difficulties they faced during the writing of the assigned task. Being the researcher, I intended to investigate how observation can help me understand the writing class and students' engagement. In this respect, the major objective of observation in this research was to find out how feedback works and the effect of various types especially face to face feedback and how this feedback facilitate writing skill as an FL/SL. With the observation method, I had an opportunity to grasp 'the dynamics

of the situations, the people, the personalities, contexts, resources, roles etc' (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2000, p.311). Informal notes were taken in class when the students engaged in face to face feedback with their teacher. Observation was carried out over most of the term.

The main strength of observation is that it offers the observer direct access to the considered social phenomena. "Instead of relying on some kind of self-report, such as asking people what they would do in a certain situation, you actually observe and record their behaviour in that situation…. In an interview situation or in response to a questionnaire item, for example, a person may not always provide accurate or complete information, or they might answer in ways that correspond to what is socially desirable''. I used the observation method as a complementary to the interview as well as to avoid any wrong information I may get if I depended on the interview only as Denzin and Lincoln (1998) indicate that observation findings are more reliable when combined with other methods. This is strength of observation; in other words, observation can effectively complement other approaches and as a result increase the quality of evidence available to the researcher.

Based on Patton (2002) description observation is:"descriptions of activities, behaviours, actions, conversations, interpersonal interactions, organisation or community processes or any other aspect of observable human experience."

Therefore, in terms of fitness for purpose, informal semi-structured observation let me completely and without restraint to monitor the participants and their interactions with the teacher without restriction to the time or certain points or to the categories listed following a given schedule. This method provided a clear and a good explanation of what went on between the students and between the students and their teacher in the class; which confirms that observation is regarded as the process of capturing the events of the classroom (Maingay, 1988; Sheal, 1989; Wajnryb, 1992; Williams, 1989).

However, Wajnryb (1992) and Wallace (1991) indicated some disadvantages of observation of both the class and the students. For example, observation may have an impact on the class dynamics and cause frustration to the students because of the observer (observer effect). So, I tried to avoid any impact on the classroom or to cause any frustration or stress to students by making sure that I went to every group within the class in turn and equally. This helped to make them feel comfortable and to observe the others at the same time. However, one of the main weaknesses of observation is its practicability because it is time consuming for the researcher. Also, it is noteworthy that observation can be a good strategy to explore certain research questions, but it is not easy for a researcher with limited time.

Through observation I knew how can get information via their interaction with the teacher and how face-to-face feedback motivate most of them to learn and ask for clarification. Observation provided me the access to the classroom under study, instead of relying on just the interview where I could observe the students behaviour during the treatment. For example, students may not provide

an accurate information or they answer to what they think is desirable or the opposite. It was another supplementary method to support the result of the study and to confirm the data that I got from the interview. An interview and observation were analysed by using transcribing and themes.

4.12.2. Quantitative Methods

In this section, I examine the quantitative research methods used in this study which include: quasi experiments,

4.12.2.1. Quasi-Experiments

A Quasi-experiment, pre-test/post-test control group design is used. Quasi-experiment has certain objectives such as:

1. It involves a pre-test to assess students' abilities before the intervention, an intervention, and a post-test that measures students' abilities after the intervention.
2. It includes two groups: the experimental group/treatment group and the control group, the groups are formed randomly.
3. The control group allows the researcher to measure the change, if any, between the two groups as a result of the intervention (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2000).
4. It also requires random selection of students.

For the reasons mentioned, a quasi-experimental design involving a pre-test/post-test control group was used in this study as I think it is the most appropriate one to determine whether face to face feedback can help students improve their writing and reduce language errors.

However, according to Gall et al. (1996) and Cohen et al. (2000, 2007) there are several issues in using an experiment and control group study. The participants were subjected to different treatment forms and, therefore, they were treated unequally. Usually, the treatment groups obtain special training, at the same time the control group receives either nothing or a conventional program.

In this study, the experiment group got face to face feedback method in their writing classes. On the other hand, the control group received normal teaching classes and written feedback was provided from their writing teachers.

The matter of experiment and control group is a controversial because some researchers believe that the control group is treated unfairly because of not getting the training as well as the benefit of the program that experiment group receives. But, in this study subjects of the control group can benefit from the written feedback since they did not get any feedback before (usually, Libyan students do not get any kind of feedback). Also, the students in the control group eventually benefit from the results of the study.

Students who were assigned from the same department and year of study were divided into two equal groups and they were randomly assigned to either the treatment or the control groups. In other words, the general level of the two groups was likely to be the same. When the students who registered for writing 3 had been distributed into two groups, the researcher randomly chose group B as the experimental group and started to observe it while the other section, A, was considered to be the control group. Both groups were taught by the same teacher with the same materials and met the same course aims; there was no factor that might affect their performance. The choice of groups was decided by the students based on their convenience because one of the groups had lessons from 8.00 to 10.00 and the other from 10.00-12.00 morning times. The treatment was done as mentioned above. The same pre- and post-tests were given to both groups at the same time. Adopting the conventions established by Campbell and Stanley (1963); Brown and Rodgers,(2002); and Cohen, Manion and Morrison, (2007), the experimental design of this study is a way of exploring and discovering if feedback really helps students in their writing in natural social settings.

4.13. Validity and Reliability in Relation to the Research Design

One of the main concerns for all types of studies is to get both valid and reliable knowledge and findings. Validity and reliability can be achieved through careful attention to how the data is collected, analysed, and finally how it is interpreted. Condelli & Wrigley state that "only through sound research designs can we eliminate threats to validity and draw scientifically valid conclusions to inform practice'' (2004:2).

Triangulation involves the use of qualitative and quantitative methods in an effort to reach convergence of findings.

In this study validity and reliability have been suited to* the experimental study, the semi- *-structured interviews and the follow- up observation. This part will deal with the methods used more explicitly.

4.13.1. Validity and Reliability in the Experimental Study:

Experiments are usually at risk of technical and procedural errors. To ensure that the findings in any experiment are meaningful and trustworthy, appropriate measures should be taken to safeguard against errors of this nature. The researcher must be confident that factors such as extraneous variables have been controlled and have not produced an effect that might be mistaken as an experimental treatment effect. The validity of experiments refers to the extent in which the results of the study can be generalised. Reliability and validity are very important for the research data to be of value and of use.

4.13.2. Validity and Reliability in the Semi- Structured Interviews

Validity and reliability are the two most important and fundamental characteristics of any measurement in the research. Validity is described as the appropriateness, meaningfulness and usefulness of the deduction that researchers obtained; whereas reliability is the consistency of these deductions over time, location and circumstances (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2005). There are many factors that may affect the reliability of the interview findings; therefore, consideration was given in order to avoid any falsifiable outcome.

One of the factors that may affect the validity is when the interviewees' attempt to satisfy the interviewer by providing answers which they think the researcher would like. To overcome this issue, I designed the consent form which stated clearly the aim of the study and prior to each interview I asked the students to answer honestly as the strategy of face to face feedback could be subsequently used if it is effective to help them in their courses, then they should be encouraged to co-operate. In this way, it was expected that the students would respond honestly. I also, avoided selecting students in order to avoid subjectivity or choose the keen students. The students who had time and felt they liked to talk about the issue of writing and feedback strategy were self- selecting. Asking leading questions is another factor and the most common problem that may affect the validity of a research. I attempted to avoid this issue by asking non leading questions that had short answers which were either a yes or a no; the questions were to provide more information rather than elicit some certain answers.

Also, one of the main problems with the interview is failure to listen closely, thus recording the interview and writing notes were some of the techniques that I used to avoid losing concentration in order to get valid data. Using interview in the participants' first language, Arabic, was used to make students answer with confidence and in more depth and to avoid any misunderstanding which in turn made the result of the study more valid.

4.13.3. Follow up Face-to Face feedback and Interviews

Both of the follow up face-to face and interviews were strategies to improve the validity and reliability of the research. The interview was conducted by me as I had not been involved in the teaching in order to make students more relaxed, honest and open when they answer the questions and to avoid providing any fake information. In other words, authentic answers were required for the purpose of ensuring validity. In addition, as mentioned in the interview procedure, the interview was conducted in Arabic: the first language of all the students (although some of them speak the Amazigh language), to have more spontaneous responses without facing any difficulties of interpreting if it was conducted in English.

4.13.4. Content Validity

Content validity, according to Meterns (1998), is one of the important elements in research especially when there is a comparison between different curriculums, teaching strategies or school placements. It has been said that if all students are taking the same test but are not exposed to the same information, the test is not content valid.

Content validity is also used for measurement of skills and knowledge that are applied in evaluation studies. This study investigates two different types of feedback where the control group receives written feedback while the treatment group receives FACE-TO-FACE FEEDBACK to measure the effect of each strategy "in this context, content validity usually refers to the degree to which a measure captures the program objective (or objectives)'' (Siddiek, 2010:p.137).

4.13.5. Population Validity

Population validity, (external validity), is one of the criteria in a study that involves the degree to which the results of a study can be applied beyond the sample. In other words, the findings of the study can be applied to other people (generalizability) in other places and at other times. Galls et al., (1994) defines population validity as '' the extent to which the results of an experiment can be generalized from the sample that participated in it to a larger group of individuals, that is, a population.'' (1994:217). To improve external validity, there are various procedures that have to be followed. For instance, in this study, the participants were randomly selected as well as randomly allocated to either the control or the treatment group. This selection was done to eliminate any threat to validity and in order to match the criteria for which the generalization was required. The result of this study could be generalised to all higher education institutions in Libya, empowering students to improve their grades and enhance their writing skills. On the higher note, the result could be to some extent generalised universally to all universities.

4.13.6. Reliability of the Study

As I used observation as a method for collecting data and I observed the treatment group twice a week for two hours a day for the whole term, the ''Hawthorne Effect''[3]/ observer effect was reduced with increasing confidence among students as they passed the stage of impressing the observer, researcher, and worked to improve their writing skills.

In addition, I was able to enhance a comprehensive data by mixing both quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative research counts on numerical data and statistical analysis; on the contrary, qualitative research counts on verbal data and subjective analysis and rarely makes use of numbers or statistic (Gall, Gall and Borg ; 1999: 13)

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[3] - Hawthorne Effect: refers to the fact that people modify their behaviour because they are being observed.

Reichardt and Cook's (1979) draw attention to the importance of using mixed method "researchers cannot benefit from the use of numbers if they do not know, in common sense terms, what the numbers mean'' (p.23).

From the foregoing, reliability of the study must be considered as different tools used to make sure of a well-grounded study "the value of, and need for, objective, methodologically sound research is undeniable'' (Condelli & Wrigley, 2004:2).

4.14.Data Analysis

After collecting all data, analysis was applied using different methods and as the study also employed mixed methods, the data was analyzed with a traditional statistical analysis tool that is used in comparing groups with pre-test and post-test data (ANOVA) as well as non-parametric test The Mann-Whitney test and Wilcoxon test are used. The Mann–Whitney–Wilcoxon (U-test; Wilcoxon, 1945) is a rank-order; nonparametric test improved by H. B Mann and D.R Whitney in 1947. The Whitney test is used as an alternative to the t-test where the data are not normally distributed and/or the sample is large. The test can detect differences in shape and spread as well as just differences in median value. The Mann-Whitney test is applied to evaluate whether the medians on a test variable differ significantly (95% confidence level) between two groups of students.

This tool was used to show whether there was any difference in the students' writing in their pre-test and post-test for both groups (control and treatment) with the objective of determining statistical differences (Connolly 2006). An interview and observation were analyzed by using transcribing and themes.

Table of Methodology Approaches

Table 4.3: Table of Methodology Approaches

Research questions' aim	Data	Collection methods	Analysis
1-improvement in students' writing	1-Test score	Quasi- experiment (pre- post-test)	-ANOVA (quantitative) - non-parametric test
	2- sample of students' writing	Composition/ text	document analysis (qualitative)
2- Libyan students' attitude towards conference feedback	Students' view	-Interviews (record)	-transcribing and coding (qualitative)

3- writing teachers' attitude towards face-to-face feedback	Teachers' view	-Interviews (record)	-transcribing and coding (qualitative)
	Teacher- students interaction	Observation	-transcribing and coding (qualitative)

Table 4.3: Table of Methodology Approach 1

An Overview of Data Collection

Table 4.4: An overview of data collection

Data Collection Method	Participants	Data Format
Quasi-experiment	1Control and 1 Treatment group (one term)	Pre- test (first week) post test (at the end of term)
Pre- face to face interview	Students from treatment group (10)	Audio record , written notes
Post- face to face interview	The same group who involves in pre- conference interview	Audio record, written notes

4.15.Summary of Chapter Four

This chapter is generally about research methodology and how the data collection was done.

As mentioned, mixed research methods have been used in this study where I combined elements of qualitative and quantitative research approaches "for the purposes of breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration'' (Johnson et al. 2007: p.123).

Additionally, the aims and questions are presented which are followed by an overall description of the procedures that are used in the study. Finally, the chapter discusses the validity and reliability in relation to the study. Then, the last section describes how the data was analysed and the tables above summaries that. Findings and results from the analysis of the data are present into the following chapter.

Chapter Five: Findings, Data presentation and Analysis

5.0 Overview of Chapter Five

In this part, the results of the study will be presented and analyzed based on the variety of aspects of the research project. It begins firstly with the result of the quantitative analysis. In (5.1) and (5.2) the result of the quasi-experimental pre-test/ post-test will be presented followed by the illustrations of the document Analysis of Compositions (sample of students' writing). In (5.3) and (5.4) the results of the responses to the interviews with both students and teachers are presented and also the interpretations of the classroom observations. In the fifth part (5.5) it includes with the themes that are derived from both interview and observation. Finally, the last part of this chapter (5.6) is a summary of the findings and the conclusion.

5.1 Results of Quasi-experimental Pre-test& Post test

Pre-test& post-test revealed the importance of face-to-face feedback in learning writing skills for learners. A table that shows the students' scores in both groups has been illustrated (see Appendix 5). Based on the students' scores, a comparison that measures student ability is shown below along with the results of the quasi- experimental pre-test and post-test as well its analysis.

5.1.1   Quantitative Method: Quasi-Experiment

In general, this study is based on the interpretive paradigm, which understands human behaviour in terms of individual description and interpretation. Quasi-experiment, pre-test/post-test control group, is used since comparison and quantitative measurement is the classical experiment (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2000). Quasi-experiment has certain objectives such as:

1.   It involves a pre-test to assess students' abilities before the intervention, on intervention, and a post-test that measures students' abilities after the intervention.

2.   It includes two groups: the experimental group/treatment group and the control group, the groups are formed randomly.

3.   The control group allows the researcher to measure the change, if any, between the two groups as a result of the intervention.

4.   It also requires random selection of students.

Objective

Determine whether face-to-face feedback can help, students improve their writing and reduce language errors.

Type of intervention

Treatment group = face-to-face feedback

Control group = written feedback

Analysis

Data usded in this study (Table 5.1) have been arranged and analysed using a NOVA test to compare written feedback versus FACE-TO-FACE FEEDBACK:

Table 5.1a: A random sample of students

New_id	Time	Treat	treat_time	Sex	Score
44	0	0	0	0	5
44	1	0	0	0	7
164	0	1	0	0	3
164	1	1	1	0	5
58	0	0	0	0	4
58	1	0	0	0	5.5
113	0	1	0	0	5
113	1	1	1	0	6
154	0	1	0	1	7
154	1	1	1	1	8
165	0	1	0	0	3
165	1	1	1	0	4
93	0	1	0	0	6
93	1	1	1	0	6
67	0	0	0	0	6
67	1	0	0	0	7

The variables:

- The variable score is the mark given to the student corresponding to the variable time which has values 0 (representing before the intervention) and 1 (representing after the intervention).
- The variable treatment has values 0 (representing the control group) and 1 (representing the treatment group).
- The variable sex is coded as 0 for female students and 1 for males.
- I have also created an variable treat*time which enables us to assess the combined impact of the treatment group and the intervention i.e. we can ask the question "does the intervention have a different impact for the two treatment groups?"

The following output shows the treatment group mean scores before and after the intervention:

```
Mean when treat==0 & time==0

    variable |       obs        Mean    Std. Dev.         Min         Max
-------------+-----------------------------------------------------------
       score |        90    4.683333    1.228066           2         7.5

Mean when treat==1 & time==0

    variable |       obs        Mean    Std. Dev.         Min         Max
-------------+-----------------------------------------------------------
       score |        90    4.933333    1.254654           2         7.5

Mean when treat==0 & time==1

    variable |       obs        Mean    Std. Dev.         Min         Max
-------------+-----------------------------------------------------------
       score |        86    5.494186     1.23549           2           8

Mean when treat==1 & time==1

    variable |       obs        Mean    Std. Dev.         Min         Max
-------------+-----------------------------------------------------------
       score |        90    6.344444     1.27342           3           9
```

The data showed that, there is a relationship between the effect of the variables treat and the time on the score. Where there is positive correlation between the variable treatment and the group allocation. In addition, the interventions have an important impact and that the scores after the interventions differ significantly from the scores before the interventions

5.1.1.1 <u>Model 1</u>

A series of ANOVA test: Two-Factor without replication at confidence level 95% used in this study to analysis the statistical association within a number of parameters. Since the P-value is less than the significance level (0.05), the null hypothesis cannot be accepted. In this study, a series of ANOVA test: Two-Factor without replication is used to and the following output is obtained:

```
                    Number of obs =      356    R-squared     =  0.9426
                    Root MSE      = .477344    Adj R-squared =  0.8836

      Source |   Partial SS     df        MS                F     Prob > F
-------------+----------------------------------------------------------
       Model |  654.880618    180  3.63822566             15.97     0.0000
             |
       treat |        6.25      1        6.25             27.43     0.0000
      new_id |   516.53311    178   2.9018714             12.74     0.0000
        time |     111.375      1     111.375            488.79     0.0000
             |
    Residual |      39.875    175  .227857143
-------------+----------------------------------------------------------
       Total |  694.755618    355  1.95705808

Between-subjects error term:  new_id
                    Levels:   180         (178 df)
       Lowest b.s.e. variable:  new_id

Repeated variable: time
                               Huynh-Feldt epsilon         =  1.0056
                              *Huynh-Feldt epsilon reset to  1.0000
                               Greenhouse-Geisser epsilon  =  1.0000
                               Box's conservative epsilon  =  1.0000

                               ------------ Prob > F ------------
      Source |     df       F     Regular     H-F      G-G       Box
-------------+----------------------------------------------------------
        time |      1   488.79   0.0000    0.0000   0.0000    0.0000
    Residual |    175
-------------+----------------------------------------------------------
```

97

5.1.1.2 Model 2

However, if I also include the interaction between treatment group and the intervention, we obtain the following output:

```
                   Number of obs =      356      R-squared      =   0.9535
                   Root MSE      = .431093      Adj R-squared =   0.9050

        Source |  Partial SS     df       MS            F      Prob > F
    -----------+----------------------------------------------------
         Model |  662.419313    181   3.65977521        19.69    0.0000
               |
         treat |   4.8171187      1   4.8171187         25.92    0.0000
        new_id |  516.05801     178   2.89920231        15.60    0.0000
          time |  29.3081395      1   29.3081395       157.71    0.0000
    treat_time |  7.53869509      1   7.53869509         40.57    0.0000
               |
      Residual |  32.3363049    174   .185840833
    -----------+----------------------------------------------------
         Total |  694.755618    355   1.95705808


Between-subjects error term:  new_id
                    Levels:   180        (178 df)
       Lowest b.s.e. variable:  new_id

Repeated variable: time
                                 Huynh-Feldt epsilon         =  1.0056
                                *Huynh-Feldt epsilon reset to  1.0000
                                 Greenhouse-Geisser epsilon =  1.0000
                                 Box's conservative epsilon =  1.0000

                                 ------------ Prob > F ------------
        Source |    df      F      Regular     H-F        G-G        Box
    -----------+----------------------------------------------------
          time |     1   157.71    0.0000     0.0000     0.0000     0.0000
      Residual |   174
    ----------------------------------------------------------------
```

5.1.1.3 Conclusion

Model 2 (ANOVA with repeated measures and an interaction between treatment and time) is the right model for this situation. From the last set of results, we can see that the variables for the treatment group (treat), the variable representing pre and post-intervention (time), and the interaction between treatment and the intervention (treat_time) all have a significant effect on the score. The reasoning is that they all have values in the "Prob > F" column that are less than 0.05 (circled in red). A further result is given (circled in blue) that shows that the intervention is significant after controlling for all other factors.

The conclusion is that both the treatment group and interventions are significant but that the intervention has a greater impact in the treatment group than the control group.

5.1.1.4 Additional Comment on the Validity of the Model

In the output, the values for R-squared and Adj R-squared represent the overall fit of the model to the data. They can take values between 0 and 1 with 0 representing a poor fitting model and 1 representing a good fitting model. The models above (in the analysis section) both provide a very good fit to the data. The models in the following discussion are not nearly as good. Further reasons why the models in the analysis section are superior are provided in the following discussion section.

5.1.2 Method 2 of Data Analysis

The researcher used marks to assess the level of students and hence quantitative methods were followed. The data of interest was entered into the computer in order to analyse it using the statistical software SPSS 21, since the interest was to compare the difference in marks before and after feedback. The comparison was done in two different ways: independent groups (control group vs experimental group) and dependent groups (before and after feedback for control and experimental group, separately).

The majority of parametric tests suppose that data is normally distributed, where the normal distribution is the generally and most ordinary type of distribution. Normally distributed data is usually required for several statistical tools and tests that suppose normality. This page gives some information about how to deal with not normally distributed data. For the normally distributed data, parametric tests are used and usually they have more statistical power than nonparametric tests. Data are not normally distributed is known by a non-normal distribution. Non-parametric statistics uses data that is often ordinal, meaning it does not rely on numbers. The non-parametric tests are based on less assumption. Furthermore, it is usually less powerful than corresponding tests designed for use on data that come from a specific distribution

For the independent groups, the Mann-Whitney design was used for comparing the difference in the marks between the control and the experimental group. The difference was significant if the resulting p-value <.05

For dependent groups, the Wilcoxon test was used to compare the difference in marks resulting from before and after intervention (this test is applied to each group separately). The difference is significant if the resulting p-value <.05

Spearman correlation was used to measure the strength of relationship (correlation) of marks before and after feedback. The value of correlation lies between -1 and +1. The marks will move in the same direction if the sign of correlation is positive and strong when it is close to one. If the sign is negative, then the marks after feedback move in a different direction from before feedback. The correlation is significant if the resulting p-value <.05

5.1.2.1 Result of Data Analysis

According to Table 1, the test of normality using the Kolmogorov-Smirnovand Shapiro-Wilk tests showed that the marks for the control and experimental groups was not normally distributed (p-value<.05) in the case of before and after intervention. As a result, non-parametric test was to be used.

Spearman correlation is to be used to measure the strength of relationship (correlation) of marks before and after feedback. The Mann-Whitney test is used for comparing the difference in the marks

between control and experimental group, whilst the Wilcoxon test is used to compare the difference in marks resulting from before and after intervention (this test is applied to each group separately).

Table 5.1b: Tests of Normality for feedback before and after intervention for control and experimental group

	Group	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]		Shapiro-Wilk	
		Statistic	Sig.	Statistic	Sig.
His/her mark before	Control	.154	.000	.952	.002
Con feedback	Experimental	.151	.000	.951	.001
His/her mark after Con	Control	.136	.000	.968	.020
feedback	Experimental	.171	.000	.959	.003

5.1.2.2 Marks Correlation

The degree of association between marks before and after feedback is important to help identify whether the students were still consistently moving in the same direction as before intervention and by how much. Figure 1 showed that for control and experimental groups there was a clear positive pattern between the feedback before and after intervention, namely students with higher marks before intervention tend to obtain higher marks after intervention. From Table 2, the degree of correlation reached 0.858 with p-value<.001 which was very highly significant, for control group, indicating that there were a very good positive correlation. Also, the correlation was 0.852 with p-value<.001, which was a very highly significant, for the experimental group, indicating that there were a very good positive correlation. The same trend and result of association was observed when the correlation was computed in terms of gender, see Figure 2 and Table 2, where the males and females showed very similar values of very highly significant correlation. However, the female members of the experimental group showed somewhat lower correlation, which was 0.738, as compared to the others. The results of correlation do not indicate clearly the procedure resulted in increase the improvement, but it just showed that the student results before and after the procedure were significantly consistent.

Table 5.2: Correlation between marks before and after feedback

Group	Correlation between mark before Con feedback & mark after Con feedback (p-value)	Gender	Correlation between mark before Con feedback & mark after Con feedback
Control	.858 (<.001)	Male	.853 (<.001)
		Female	.860 (<.001)
Experimental	.852 (<.001)	Male	.862 (<.001)
		Female	.738 (<.001)
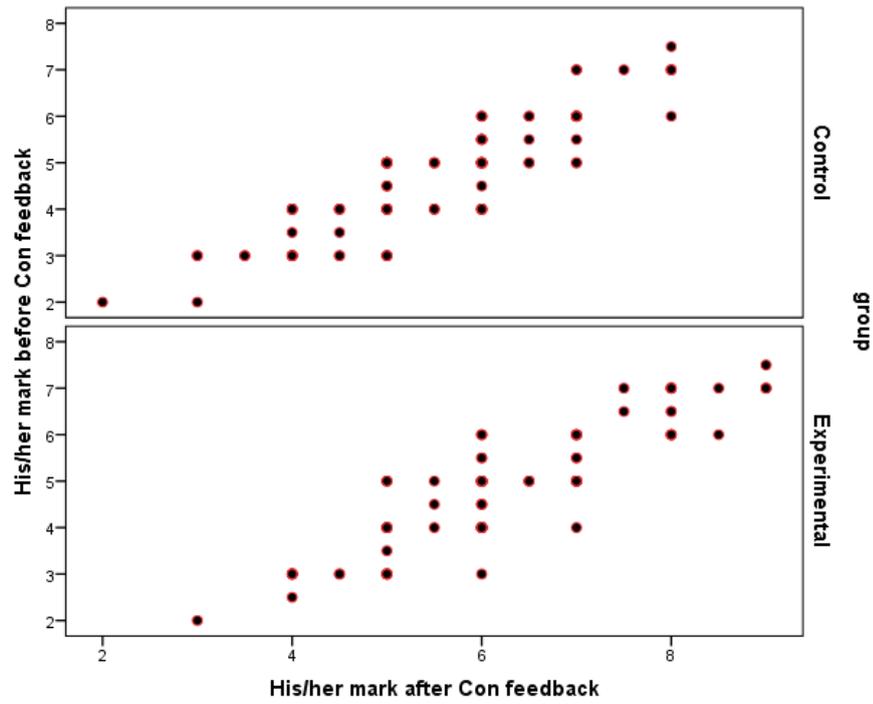
Figure 5.1: Scatter plot for marks of before and after feedback for two groups
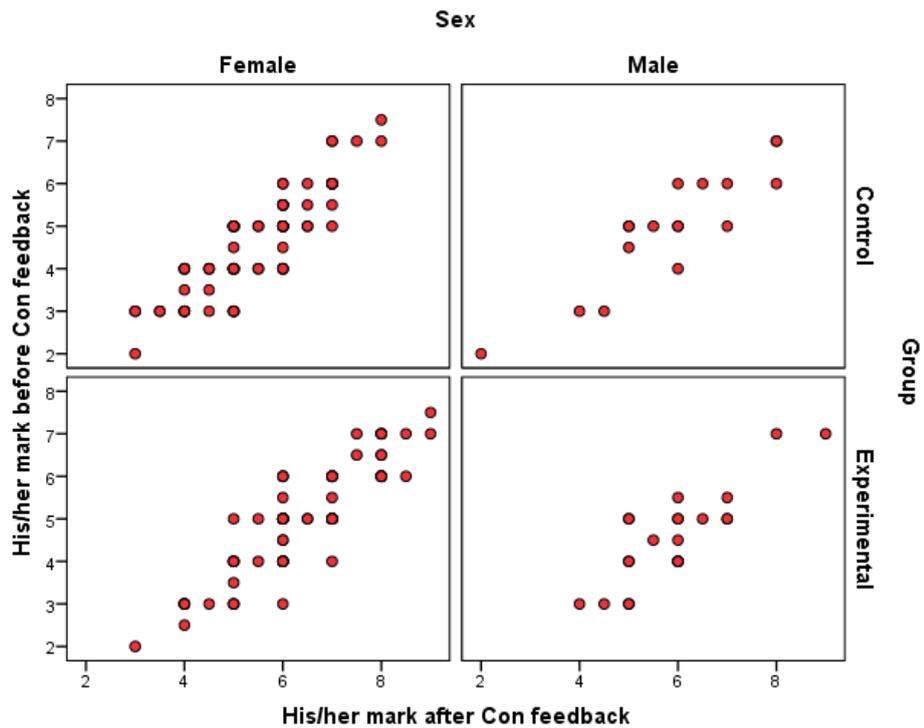
Figure 5.2: Scatter plot for marks of before and after feedback for the two groups in terms of gender

5.1.2.3 Comparison of Control and Experimental Groups

For the marks before feedback, Table 3 showed that the two groups showed similar values of mean and median, where means were 4.68 and 4.86 for control and experimental groups, while medians

were 5.00 for the both groups. Using the Mann-Whitney test, there was no significant difference in marks before feedback between the two groups (z= .956 and p-vale=.339). Looking at the marks after feedback, the control group showed lower marks (mean =5.51 and median =5.51) than the experimental group (mean=6.24 and median=6.00). The Mann-Whitney test indicated that there was a very highly significant difference in marks after feedback between the two groups which was in favour of experimental group.

Table 5.3: Manny Whitney test for comparing experimental and control group

	Group	Mean	Median	SD	Mann-Whitney test	p-value
His/her mark before feedback	Control	4.68	5.00	1.230	Z=-.956	.339
	Experimental	4.86	5.00	1.256		
His/her mark after feedback	Control	5.51	5.50	1.255	Z=-3.69	<.001
	Experimental	6.24	6.00	1.286		

In terms of gender (see the table below), the marks before feedback were very close between males (mean =4.74 and median =5) and females (mean =4.78 and median =5). The Mann-Whitney test showed that the males and females had no significant difference in marks before feedback (Z=-.197, p-value=.851). Similarly, the marks after feedback were very close between males (mean =5.90 and median =6) and females (mean =5.88 and median =6). The Mann-Whitney test showed that the males and females had no significant difference in marks before feedback (Z=-.058, p-value=.954).

Table 5.4: Manny Whitney test for comparing sex

Mark	Group	Mean	Median	SD	Mann-Whitney test	p-value
Mark before feedback	Male	4.74	5.00	1.225	Z=-.187	.851
	Female	4.78	5.00	1.251		
Mark after feedback	Male	5.90	6.00	1.321	Z=-.058	.954
	Female	5.88	6.00	1.324		

5.1.2.4 Comparison of Marks before and after Feedback

The aim here was to find whether the marks after feedback led to improvement in marks of student, this was implemented to for each group. Figure 3 showed that there were differences in the marks before and after feedback. Table 5 depicted for control group that the mean and median of marks after feedback (5.51 and 5.50) were higher than the marks before feedback (4.68 and 5.00). The Wilxcon test showed that the difference in marks before and after feedback was very highly significant (Z=-7.58, p-value <.001), indicating that the marks after feedback result in improving in the marks for the control group. Regarding the experimental group, the improvement after feedback

using mean and median (6.24 and 6.00) seemed to better than before feedback (4.86, 5.00). The Wilxcon test showed that the difference in marks before and after feedback was very highly significant (Z=-8.48, p-value <.001), indicating that the marks after feedback result in improving in the marks for the experimental group.

Table 5.5: Manny Whitney test for comparing experimental and control group

Group	Mark	Mean	Median	SD	Wilcoxon test	p-value
Control	mark before feedback l	4.68	5.00	1.230	Z=-7.58	<.001
	mark after feedback	5.51	5.50	1.255		
Experimental	Mark before feedback l	4.86	5.00	1.256	Z=-8.48	<.001
	Mark after feedback	6.24	6.00	1.286		

As mentioned in chapters one and two that I was interested to investigate whether there exist any gender differences with regard to the use of feedback, the table below showed for females that the mean and median of marks after feedback (5.81 and 6.00) were higher than the marks before feedback (4.78 and 5.00). The Wilcoxon test showed that the difference in marks before and after feedback was very highly significant (Z=-10.13, p-value <.001), indicating that the marks after feedback result in improving in the marks for the females. Regarding the males, the improvement after feedback using mean and median (5.90 and 6.00) seemed better than before feedback (4.74, 5.00). The Wilcoxon test showed that the difference in marks before and after feedback was very highly significant (Z=-5.15, p-value <.001), indicating that the marks after feedback result in improving in the marks for the males.

Table 5.6: Wilcoxon test for comparing male and Female

Group	Mark	Mean	Median	SD	Wilcoxon test	p-value
Female	mark before feedback l	4.78	5.00	1.251	Z=--10.13	<.001
	mark after feedback	5.88	6.00	1.324		
Male	Mark before feedback l	4.74	5.00	1.225	Z=-5.15	<.001
	Mark after feedback	5.90	6.00	1.32		

Before giving any feedback, the control and experimental group showed statistically the same average mark. It was observed while comparing the control and experimental group after feedback, that the face-to face feedback group showed higher average marks than the written feedback group, namely, there was greater improvement in the marks using face-to-face compared (experimental group) with written feedback (control group) (see figure 3 below).
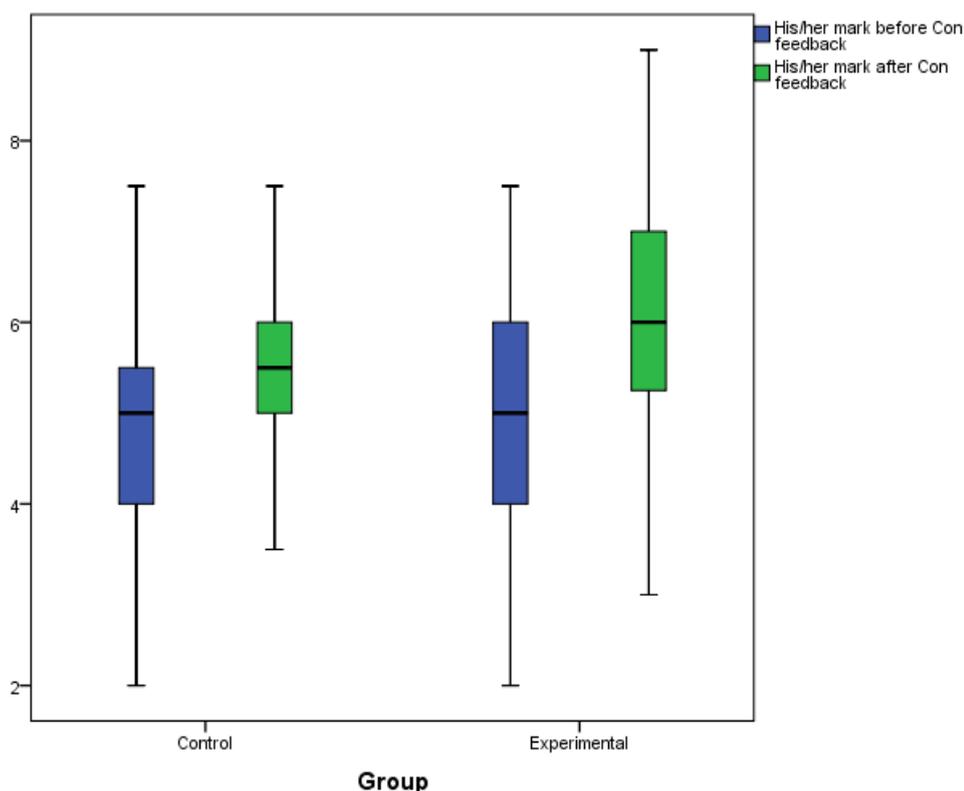
Figure 5.3: Box-plot of marks for control and experimental groups

5.1.2.5 <u>Conclusion</u>

The focus of analysis was based on the importance of feedback in teaching and learning writing skills at the university level in Libya in the academic year 2012-2013. The students were randomly allocated either to the control or experimental group; the experimental group is given the treatment which is face to face feedback (face-to-face feedback), where, the control group received written feedback. The statistical analysis indicated that there was high correlation between the marks of students before and after feedback in terms of experimental group. The same result was obtained for the control group. The sub-group analysis further revealed that the feedback worked equally well for both males and females. Both control and experimental groups showed the same average mark before intervention, however, it was observed that face-to-face feedback showed higher average marks for the experimental group. No significant difference was observed by comparing the marks of males with females.

For control group (difference between before and after feedback), the written feedback was found to increase the average mark. Also, the face-to-face feedback was found to increase the average mark the experimental group. By considering the gender, males and females also showed better results after feedback.

5.1.2.6(a) <u>Summary:</u>

Based on the both conclusions (5.1.1.3 and 5.1.2.5), the findings in this study according to the tests that have been done for students indicate that feedback has a vital part in Libyan students' revision of writing. When feedback is utilized, it leads to productive revision. Also, the findings presented that the impact of face to face feedback and written feedback is different in that students were able to revise successfully in response to face to face feedback more than written feedback.

Therefore, face-to-face feedback has been an important factor in the writing course for Libyan higher education students and appears to result in higher rates of improvement.

5.1.2.6 (b) <u>Improvement in students writing</u>

This section will explore the ways in which the students' writing was improved by looking at the writing samples that were collected for example:

- ➢ Organization of the paper and dividing the essay to introduction, body and conclusion. The study showed that before the intervention and at the beginning of the term about 70% of the students were unable to correctly divide their essay in both control group and treatment group. By the end of the term 95% of the students in the treatment group were able to correctly divide their essay. This contrast to only 50% of students in the control group. This shows a much larger proportion of students were able to improve in the treatment group.
- ➢ Grammar was also identified as a problematic area for the students in that most of the students have problems with subject-verb agreement. They used the auxiliary verb wrongly or omitted it all together. For example; based on the pre-test 90% of the scripts had one error or more in their writing where students omit the auxiliary: 'be' (e.g. we watching TV); omit the main verb be (e.g., I student in English department) ; while in the post test, this figure was reduced to more than a half(only 40% still had a problem with using auxiliary verb).
- - In the pre-test, 87% of the scripts had at least one error of SV agreement. In the post- test, this figure was reduced to 24%.
- - In the pre-test 80% of the student scripts showed at least one error in the position of adjectives (it was used to post-modify a noun, as in Arabic) (for example: it is program useful). However, only 35% of scripts had an error in adjectives in the post test.

In a comparison to the control group who had the same problem with grammar, on the pre-test 89% of the scripts have one error or more in their writing with auxiliary verb; while in the post test, this figure was reduced but not as much as the treatment group where about only 20% improved and the 69% still had the problem. Also, in the pre-test, 89 % of the control group

scripts had errors with subject verb agreement, while the post-test had 34%. Regarding adjectives, 85% of the students use adjectives incorrectly but after the treatment the number of errors was decreased to 50%. The tables below illustrate the participants' errors in both groups (control and treatment).

Table 5.7 treatment groups' error in pre-test and post-test

Type of errors	No. with at least one error. (pre-test)	No. with at least one error of errors (post-test)
Organization	70%	5%
Auxiliary 'be'	90%	40%
Subject verb agreement	87%	24%
Adjectives	80%	35%

Table 5.8: control groups' error in pre-test and post-test

Type of errors	no. with at least one error.of errors (pre-test)	No. with at least one error.of errors (post-test)
Organization	70%	50%
Auxiliary 'be'	89%	69%
Subject verb agreement	87%	34%
Adjectives	85%	50%

- One kind of error appeared to be almost immune to improvement for both groups. Omission of article or misuse of article is one of the serious problems that students have in their writing. Almost all of the students (90-99%) have one error or more regarding the article in their writing (e.g., I student or I am student), (The tv is a good thing). However, with face-to-face feedback some students used the article in their writing correctly while most of them still had the problem as the table shows below.

Table 5.9: students' problem with article

Type of articles	no. of errors (pre-test)	No. of errors (post-test)
Indefinite articles Definite articles	150 60	145 50
Total	210	190
Types of errors	No. of errors (pre-test)	No. of errors (post-test)
Omission	85	80
Insertion	60	55
Wrong article	55	55
Total	210	190

From the figure (below), we can determine that, cohesion was relatively problematic for the students. Cohesion here refers to the degree of student ability to write in a systematic and coherent fashion. In the diagram below this ability has been labelled as rightness rate (writing correctly) and wrongness rate (writing incorrectly). Only 25% of students had no difficulties whereas the other 75% had difficulties in the use of cohesion. However, after getting feedback and discussing with their teachers the flow of sentences and paragraphs and tying information together; students' awareness to the cohesion problem was noticed through their improvement in that 68% of students used cohesion better than before whereas 32% of them still faced the problem.

Pre-test

Post-test

Cohesion Rightness and Wrongness Rates

In the following figure, punctuation seemed also problematic for the students. Almost 80% of students had problems with the use of punctuation marks, and only 20% of them could use punctuation but not completely correct. The problems were related to the wrong use of capitalization as the first issue, misuse of the full stop, the comma and the colon. Although, students improved at the end of the term; punctuation was still a problem for many students in that 40% of students improved in using punctuation whereas 60% of them still faced the problem.
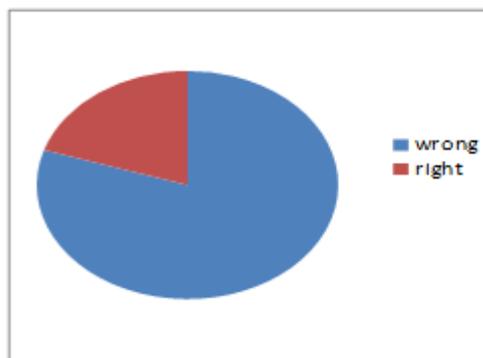
The beginning of the term
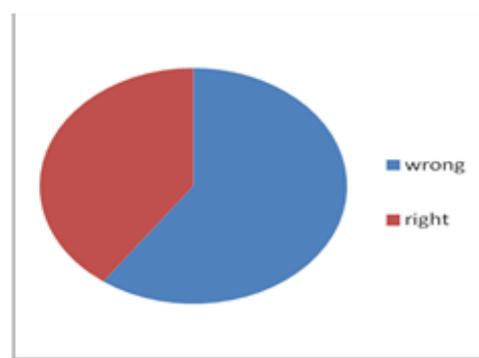
The end of the term

punctuation Rightness and Wrongness Rates

Results of the document analysis of compositions (sample of students writing)

Samples of students' writing were collected throughout the term in order to examine their improvement week by week, to identify the difference from the beginning of the term to the end of the term and to give more balance and variety to the writing using different topics.

The topics of the assignments were assigned usually by the teacher, however; students had also a chance to choose their topics in order to be more motivated to write.

The topics that were covered are shown in the table below.

Table 5.10: Some topics that are covered during the course

Traffic problems (reasons and solutions	Difficulties in teaching English in Libyan primary schools
Overpopulation (problems and solution)	Watching TV
Global Warming (causes and effects)	Friends

Document analysis of the first drafts, and second drafts of the chosen essays were carried out to find out how students reacted to face-to-face feedback on their essays. The advantage of document analysis in this study is to look at ongoing students writing to understand and find out what students writers can do and this tool is used because document analysis has several advantages (Placier, 1998). One of them is that it can contribute to the triangulation of results generated by quantitative and qualitative methods used in this study to determine essay writing, editing, and language abilities.

Additionally, document analysis is a method used to collect data but it is unobtrusive as the student is not present and is not engaged when it's being done. The texts are permanent as they are authentic and are the main source of information.

Samples of students' writing in this research provided me with more insight about what the students did when they edited and revised their essays. Therefore, these samples were used as a supplementary tool to the pre-test and post-test result as well as to confirm what the students, who were interviewed, claimed they did in their writing class for this term since it was the first time for them to use face-to-face feedback. With document analysis of the students' writing, I attempted to increase and confirm the credibility of the study.

Although there are many advantages for this method, it also has limitations such as time consumption, because to look at students' drafts and the revised papers for a large number of students consumes a lot of time and energy. Moreover the documents /essays editing styles may be

incomplete, and that could affect their analysis. Also, I had to look at these samples twice because the first reading was used to evaluate the papers; scoring them privately without the teacher knowing the score given by me. I then gave them to their teachers to read and evaluate them in order to check whether the evaluation was the same or not; this was a very tiring process. At the end of this process the result showed there were very similar scoring given by both the teacher and the researcher which showed an agreement in the students' levels.

5.2 Results of Interviews

The aim of the interviews was to get an insight about the students' attitude towards face to face feedback as well as the teachers' perspective about students writing before and after getting face to face feedback. The interviews started with general questions about academic writing and the importance of different types of feedback. This study utilized Semi-structured interviews to clarify, gain more information and confirm what had been investigated in this research. The interviews were carried out by the researcher on a one-to-one and comprehensively twice during the term. The student participants were from the experimental group because the aim of the research was to explore the impact of face-to-face feedback on students' improvement and their attitudes. The interview was transcribed into written form in order to conduct a thematic analysis.

5.2.1 Analyzing the Interview

According to Flick (2002) "if data have been recorded using technical media, their transcription is a necessary step on the way to their interpretation'' (p.171), therefore, all the recorded interviews had to be transcribed. The interviews were conducted in Arabic and later translated into English by the researcher. Firstly, data analysis began with listening to the audio tapes and transcribing all interviews, both the students' and the teacher's interviews word for word exactly with the intention of carrying out a content analysis and it was then followed by reading and rereading the verbatim transcripts. I had to read the texts, transcripts, carefully and precisely in order to sort the related ones into themes. I then grouped the participants' responses to each question. Translating and transcribing the interviews was very intensive work, taking a lot of time to transcribe each interview. Also some authors such as Edwards and Westgate (1987) assumed that transcription take about 15 hours for one hour of audio recording, I think it is really time consuming especially it takes more than 15 hours per one hour recording as I experienced, as not only did I transcribe but also translated each interview since it was done in Arabic.

The interview is used as the support source of data in this study in order to examine the attitudes and views of Libyan students in higher education regarding face to face feedback.

5.2.2 Results of Teachers Interviews

Based on pre-test and post-test teacher interviews, very significant and interesting data was obtained concerning both the teaching and the learning of EFL/ESL writing. The data was summarized in certain points, which are:

- The difficulty of implementing a process approach to teach writing. Also, multiple-draft essays cannot be done because of the many issues such as time, lack of feedback….etc.
- Lack of time to respond to students' writing as well as the difficulty of responding to each student's writings because of the large number of students and their levels.
- Lack of motivation among the majority of students.
- Students' lack of interest in correcting and revising.
- The unfeasibility of teacher feedback such as face to face feedback (conferencing), also because of the many issues such as time and the number of the students.

According to the teachers of writing in Tripoli University, using feedback especially face to face feedback in teaching writing in the English language department is neither possible nor practical. Not only can't teachers use this kind of feedback, but also the idea of introducing multiple draft essays was not much appreciated by teachers.

According to one of the teachers "it is impossible to correct many drafts and if I gave feedback I do not have time to see whether they use the written feedback or not, so I am not able to follow it''.

As I assumed, the teacher indicated that one of the reasons is due to the large class sizes, however, feedback techniques are not provided by most of the teachers even if the groups are smaller. According to one tutor 'I have many students and I teach many different subjects so providing feedback is not practical or possible'

Face-to-face is therefore a rare, and often absent type of teacher feedback in Libyan universities. In this situation, one might expect teacher written feedback to make up for this lack of face-to face meetings. However, written feedback is not being used to its highest potential, because of two reasons; one of the reasons is, most of the writing teachers have never used the technique of giving feedback to their students before. Secondly, teachers who provide written feedback do not provide a sufficient and effective one. Moreover, even if they provide helpful feedback, students still need oral feedback in order to discuss their problems and focus more. Based on both of the students and teachers' responses derived from the interviews, university students face various difficulties in their writing in English. These are some of the difficulties:

- Vocabulary
- Grammar
- Organization
- Translating from first language (L1) to English.

- Coherence and cohesion

5.2.3   Results of Students' Interviews

Similar to teacher's interviews, students' interviews were done twice. The first interview was a pre-conference interview which was employed before applying face to face feedback method, where the second one was post-conference interview and this was made after utilizing the mentioned method. The first interview was mainly about the students' opinion about what makes writing difficult in English generally and the difficulties they experienced when they write a paper. Also, during the first interview, students were asked about the importance of feedback and if they experienced and had received any kinds of feedback before and what is the most important thing they want to talk about if they got a chance to have a face-to-face feedback. The participants' responses revealed that most of them did not experience having feedback in their study either at university or in high school which resulted in an academic challenge for them where they face many problems during writing a piece of paper. In addition, they mentioned that it is really important to be guided in their writing through feedback.

However, the post conference interviews were about students' attitude towards face-to-face feedback and what they think they had learned from this kind of feedback as well as if they enjoyed it or they felt nervous and uncomfortable. In addition students were asked about the advantages and disadvantages of teachers' written comments and teachers' conference. Students who participated showed their interest in getting feedback especially the face to face feedback since they engaged more and learnt better. So, in general, students insisted on having their errors corrected and discussed with their teachers. More illustration about the students' responses is in the themes (for the interview and observation) section.

5.3 Result of Observation
The researcher also used observation to collect further data. Observations were conducted by the researcher during the first term which was between the mid of October 2012 and the 17 of January 2013. I made earlier arrangements with the writing teacher in Tripoli University to enable me to have access to his class during each writing class for the whole term and he agreed. He was a very welcoming person that he showed me the class and gave me the schedule for the writing classes and he introduced me to the students explaining the purpose of my visit to the school. During my attendance to the writing class I did my best to write notes and descriptions of each stage. I followed the Richards and Lockhart (1995) tips for classroom observation ensuring things such as arriving before the lecture starts and remaining an observer not an evaluator in order to be as objective as much as possible.

The contents of the field notes written whilst observing were analyzed and interpreted to address: The strategies of the teachers and the behaviour of the students during the classes according to the RQ#4: "How do both the teachers and learners at Libyan higher education deal with face to face feedback in practice? The duration of the classes was two hours twice a week. Although, it was a compulsory course for students, students' attendance was variable. The total number of students enrolled in each class was 50 students; however, the attendance was inconsistent. The number of students attending as a percentage varied from 45% to 80%. This proportion was based on the list of the students' names which was generally checked in each class. Teachers had different procedures in taking attendance. Some of them checked to see how many students were attending before the class started, whereas others took the attendance at the end of the class because they started the class right away and gave a chance to students who were sometimes late.

Observation was used as complementary to interviews in terms of collecting more information about my investigation to the effectiveness of face-to-face feedback, so observation and watching the classroom in a real lesson with using the face-to-face feedback helped me to identify the amount of time given to different lesson features. This tool allowed me to review both the level and the quality of students' engagement with their writing teacher. I observed how they did at each stage of the lesson, what questions were asked by students and the teacher, how they respond to each other, and how the questions and answers sequences engage students, motivated them. In other words: how effectively do students utilize the feedback within a lesson?

During the observation, I had a chance to see the materials that the teachers used to teach writing including printed and teacher generated material. They were usually taken from books that are commonly used by the participants namely: College Writing by Dorothy Zemach and Lisa Rumisek (first published 2003) (see appendix for the materials that is used) as well as other materials that was used by the teacher.

As soon as the lesson ended, I discussed with the teacher different issues such as students struggle with writing, the reasons behind this struggle, how did the students engaged and who engaged.

Therefore, I used this method for collecting data; however, I did not depend on this method only since I used additional strategies such as interviewing, document analysis, beside the quantitative method (quasi-experiment) so the validity could be stronger.

5.4 Themes for the Interview and Observation

Based on both of the interview (both teachers and students) and the observation I came up with the following themes:

5.4.1   Problems and Academic Challenges

Generally speaking, Libyan students in higher education regardless of the universities they study in (public or private) struggle with their academic writing. For example writing an essay may seem like a huge obstacle to overcome. This challenge lies in the lack of effective teaching and learning in writing and in not using some strategies that help students to remedy their problems because of that the students lack the ability to write productively and clearly. Also according to the observation and as derived from the students and teachers interviews, EFL students face various challenges in their writing as mentioned above in (5.3.1) and the following table illustrates the types of problems supported with some extracts from the interview, which was later translated into English.

Table 5.11: Most Common self-assessments of difficulties in EFL Writing

Type of problem	clarification (participants' quotes)
Vocabulary difficulty	➢ Vocabulary is indispensible ''*Vocabulary is very important, if a student does not have the vocabulary needed he/she can't write''.* ➢ *'' writing is difficult when I do not know enough words''* students said. ➢ When there are several synonyms for one word, students get confused which one is more accurate and appropriate to use. *'' writing needs an ability to know which vocabulary is better, more descriptive and stronger''.* ➢ *'' I can't find the right word quickly''.* ➢ *'Sometimes I know the words in Arabic but I don't know it in English''.* ➢ *Some students said that their teacher confirmed such problem '' I don't know a lot of vocabulary''.* ➢ Vocabulary is indispensible ''*Vocabulary is very important, if a student does not have the vocabulary needed he/she can't write'' , '' writing is difficult when I do not know enough words'' students said* ➢ When there are several synonyms for one word, students get confused which one is more accurate and appropriate to use. *'' writing needs an ability to know which vocabulary is better, more descriptive and stronger''* ➢ *'' I can't find the right word quickly''*

	➢ *'sometimes I know the words in Arabic but I don't know it in English''* ➢ *'' I don't know a lot of vocabulary'', some students said and their teacher confirmed such problem.*
Organization and idea generation (Coherence and cohesion)	➢ Logical progression and completeness of ideas is one of the crucial elements in writing; which result in making the piece of writing is easy to read and understand; however most of students suffer from this problem. Most of the students lack an awareness of how information should flow through the assignment, as they move from one idea to another. ➢ *'' I have difficulty in organizing my writing''* ➢ *''I have a lot of ideas but I don't know how to put them down''* ➢ *'' logical organisation of ideas is very important but I did not learn how to organize my ideas''* ➢ *'' sometimes I have problem in generating the idea, so when we talk with the teacher we got some ideas''*
Translating from first language (L1) to English	➢ Some students do not know the exact word or they do not know how to translate it in a right way from Arabic , most of them translate the individual words not the meaning of sentences *''sometimes I know the words in Arabic but I don't know it in English''* ➢ *''the problem is that I translate from Arabic to English which is sometimes wrong''* ➢ *'' I need to think in English because it is better ''*
Other	
	➢ Some students and the teachers too mentioned that punctuation is one of the problems that students face in that they do not know how to use the punctuation

| | which leads to misunderstanding because any error in punctuation can convey a completely different meaning to the one that is intended. |
| | ➢ The majority of students had difficulty with punctuations as one student stated '' *I have a problem in using punctuations''.* |

5.4.2 Teacher Attitudes and Perspectives and their Impact on the Writing practices

The interviewed teachers were in agreement about the difficulties they faced which were mainly the number of students and lack of time, as well as the low level in the language knowledge of most of the students. All the teachers of writing, who were interviewed, think the students' mixed and low levels are the main difficulties that are faced. In addition to that teacher workloads is one of the main factors that affects teachers in Libyan universities, because English language teachers generally have a heavy load and a large number of students which makes it difficult to provide students with feedback based on their needs because it is really time consuming. Hence, although some teachers believe in the importance of feedback, they cannot use it due to the mentioned reasons.

One of the teachers said "I think the level of students' knowledge is quite low according to their ability in writing skills'' and he indicated that the students' low level and the problems that they face in writing are due to the inappropriate teaching methods especially in writing which make students not possess good writing skills. In addition, some students lack the interest and are not motivated towards their writing activities and tasks. However, the teacher mentioned that there are some students who are talented and they need some care and guidance from their teachers to help them in order to write well and survive in their academic journey.

However, teachers value the importance of feedback because they think feedback works sometimes effectively if the students are willing to learn and make a change. Face to face feedback is one of the effective methods in both teaching and learning writing as an FL/SL language. According to the writing teachers students can learn writing when they are given the opportunity of learning different writing techniques and receiving feedback about their work; he said ''when I discuss something with the students they want to learn and they want to write but the problem is that we don't give them the technique to do that so I do not blame them that much''. When I arranged a face-to-face feedback session we discussed with the students about their mistakes from previous work and put their work up for them to see which in return helped the students look at their level of

work and their mistakes. I found them engaging in the discussion by asking questions, writing notes and showing interest.

5.4.3 Students' Attitudes and Perspectives and their Impact on Writing Practices

Students' interviews at the beginning revealed that they were unsatisfied with the way they were taught writing because there was no technique in the teaching to show them how to improve their writing. There was a negative attitude from the students towards this subject, which resulted in poor performance.

However, at the end of the term, students were happy and they engaged very well with the face to face feedback approach as a new learning and teaching strategy. As they were using this method for the first time to learn the subject of writing it helped them learn how to amend their errors or clarify their points of view in the required assignment.

The majority of students shared the following sentiment; *"most of the teachers did not give feedback to the students''*

And some of them confirmed that it was the first time for them, as one of the students said:

'' this is a first time for me that I have a chance to discuss my paper, I really like it'' '' I suggest to have a face-to-face feedback one by one. When feedback is for all the students, it will not be helpful for some of the students because the teacher will talk about the writing problem in general, however when feedback is one by one , I will have the opportunity t ask any question and know what I have to do exactly and be acquainted with what's right and what's wrong''

The participants reported that with applying face to face feedback they were provided with a helpful guideline on how to improve their writing and they were engaging happily in their writing class. The students really valued the interactions they had with their teacher because they got a chance to ask him/her and to get things clarified which as a result motivates and sustains students' interest in improving their writing skills.

One of the participants said *'' I prefer face to face feedback and I would like to get it more than written feedback, because through face to face feedback the teacher can help me more and give e a chance to ask about what I need which accordingly facilitate my learning whereas in written feedback I will not read the comments if there is any comments and thus my writing will not improve''*

For example regarding the question: How much do you feel face-to-face feedback is helping you improve your writing tasks (from 1 to 5)? Where score 1 means no improvement, 2 means little improvement, 3 is undecided, 4 means much improvement and score 5 means excellent improvement. The results are as shown below:

Score	Number of students	Percentage
1	0	0%
2	0	0%
3	0	0%
4	7	70%
5	3	30%

Students' response indicated that about seventy percent improved after using face-to-face feedback where 30% felt that there was an excellent improvement in their writing.

These finding agree with Orsmond et al (2002) in their discussion about the student use of tutor formative feedback in their learning, when they state that

> Feedback motivated students by 'stimulating them to pursue their learning about a topic in a more independent fashion'. Students showed a desire to succeed or grasp better understanding of a subject thereby achieving a higher level of understanding of the topic. Student responses revealed that motivation could occur even with negative comments (p.5)

Furthermore, like teachers and regarding practicality, some students indicated that using face-to-face feedback must be difficult for teachers because of the number of the students if they use it individually. However, the students stated that the most effective type of feedback is face-to-face communication because most of the time you can say exactly what you are thinking in your head and get the exact message across without confusion. In my opinion, it is very essential that the people whom we are communicating with understand and be aware of the meaning and the message we are trying to get across in our writing.

5.4.4   Engagement with the Feedback

One of the themes that is drawn from the interview is students' engagement with the feedback. Students said in the interview, they are capable of understanding their teachers' verbal feedback. Which I also, noticed through the observations as the students were able to show their ability to handle and process information they received, which helped in the way they improved their writing skills as it became better, clearer, more organized and more analytics.

Furthermore, through the face-to-face feedback the students got an opportunity of challenging and simulating thinking activities. Therefore, feedback is a viable and effective mechanism for providing learners with the information they need about their writing skills since they have a propensity to be more alert and attentive in class.

Drawing on educational literature on students' engagement (Handley, Price and Millar, n.d.), engagement with feedback involves two important levels that are really needed. These levels are:

1- Readiness to engage: this level involves eagerness and ability to pay attention to and act upon feedback.

2- Active engagement: this level involves the behavioural component of engagement, ranging from an individual reflection on feedback to interaction with peers and tutors aimed at making sense of the feedback given

Students' engagement with feedback is certain to be affected by the context in which it is received. Students' responses to the interview point to some interesting findings in this respect.

One of the students said '' I will focus more in face to face feedback. Also, the teacher will give me the important points instead of just written feedback when the teacher cannot provide the students with a target comments or appropriate feedback; because teachers have a lot of students and need to correct a lot of papers which is , for them , very hard and time consuming as well as exhausting. So, in this case teachers will may either write just general comments or do not comment because of the reasons mentioned. However, when a teacher talks with students about writing, s/he can point out and draw attention to the main problems in the writing and a student has a chance to ask the teacher for clarification and therefore face to face feedback is really helpful''.

Also another student said that '' oral feedback is very important for students to learn from their mistakes especially when the teacher points out the students' mistakes in class in general without mentioning the names of students or, the teacher should give each student feedback a lone in order not to be impressed in front of others''.

Based on the previous quote, some students prefer general feedback to learn from other students' mistakes as well as theirs and to avoid embarrassment; whereas some students do not mind receiving constructive criticism and being told about their mistakes as they see it as a step to improve their work. Generally, students believe that by getting feedback especially the face-to-face one, they would strengthen their abilities in university writing because they can be familiarized with the writing demands.

A table below illustrates the students' ways of handling feedback in treatment group (10 participants in interview)

Table 5.12: students' ways of handling feedback in treatment group

Reaction	Yes	No	Notes
Reading written feedback	30%	70%	The majority of students do not pay attention to the written feedback they are given and sometimes some do not even look at the paper unless it has been evaluated (graded).
Feeling shy to discuss	30%	70%	Students, who feel shy and uncomfortable to discuss their thoughts, prefer to have teacher- students' discussion in group in order not to be the focus.
Prefer to have one to one discussion (student/ teacher)	50%	50%	Students who favour one to one discussions to written feedback believe that teachers will provide more details about their work. Also they think that it gives them the opportunity to ask questions freely as they have time on a one on one basis, Whereas for the students who don't prefer one to one discussions it is because they are either shy or they don't feel very comfortable to respond to questions and comments made by their tutor as they feel they are put in the spot light. So when they are in a group they think they can respond more comfortably because

			there is no focus on only one student.
Prefer to have discussion with their teacher in a group	60%	40%	The 60% of students who prefer to have discussions in groups feel that they learn more from other students' mistakes and that gives them the opportunity to see different opinions and ideas especially when the topic is new for them as they can learn new vocabulary. On the other hand the 40%think that having a one to one or a group discussion isn't the issue as long as they learn something

5.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter presents the findings of the study and how the data in this study were analysed.
The findings of this study revealed a statistically significant difference in students' performance in writing between the experimental and control groups. The scores of both experimental and control groups were similar in the pre-test. However, after applying the treatment, which is face-to-face feedback, the post-test scores in the experimental group were higher than the control groups' scores. Based on that, it can be concluded that providing feedback on students' writing via teacher-student face-to-face has a positive impact on the overall improvement of students' writing and more importantly a great positive impact than that of written feedbck. As Orsmond et al highlight that " feedback was seen to enhance learning by being used as guidance to improve an assignment or assignments and thereby indicating that students have contextualised the feedback and so developed some wider awareness'' (2002:6)

Therefore, the first research question about whether face-to-face feedback has an effect on students' writing (post-test scores) was answered positively by the study. In other words, improvement in the content of writing was noticeable.

The second question: ''Will EFL/ESL Libyan students who participate in the study (experimental group) hold a positive attitude toward face to face feedback as investigated by an interview?'' was answered through using the semi-structured interviews and observation. The data gained showed that participants responded positively to face-to-face feedback, as well as expressed that written feedback is insufficient if it is used as the only method of feedback. Based on the observation, constructive criticism was noticed, where the students were told what is wrong and also what to do about it. Thus, there was a positive connection between improved writing activities and motivation.

The main findings in this study are the following

- Students acknowledge the importance of feedback and its effect in writing.
- Students pay more attention to face-to-face feedback (face to face) than written feedback for various reasons.
- Students' samples of writings show that the revision is better than the first draft which confirms the effectiveness of feedback on writing.
- Observation showed the active engagement of students with their teacher during face-to-face feedback either individually or in groups.

In general, the result (findings) can be discussed and interpreted within Vygotsky's theory of constructivism which states that a real dialogue about writing to get assistance from real readers is constructive.

The following chapter will provide a discussion of this study. The discussion will go over the findings and offer a detailed clarification.

Chapter Six: Discussions of Findings

'*'Without feedback from their teachers, low students cannot know how well they are doing'' (Thomas. L. Good)*

6.0 Overview of Chapter six

After reviewing the literature, revising the methodology, collecting the data and analysing it, I achieved a certain result; now in this chapter I will discuss the findings and interpretations of the data.

In this chapter, I am going to outline my responses to the research questions drawing on the data presented in chapter 5 and the consulted literature presented in chapter 2 and connects these findings with the previous studies in the field of languages. Generally based on the data collection and research questions, the discussion will mainly focus on what kinds of feedback is needed in order to make students more successful re-viewers and conversers, what do students feel are the most helpful ways of getting feedback and how well do both teachers' and students' perceptions match.

In addition, this study considers how students use written and oral formative feedback (the teacher feedback that is received during the preparation of an assignment) and summative feedback (teachers' feedback that indicates to their students what they have achieved in the assignment).

6.1. Response to Research Question 1

Which is more effective in the Libyan higher education context; face-to-face feedback or written feedback?

In other words, do EFL/ ESL Libyan students who participate in the face to face feedback groups (experimental group) and the control groups differ in post-test scores on writing as measured by tests?

Based on the result an INCORRECT (but often used) approach would be to apply a two-way ANOVA with the factors treat and time included as independent variables as follows:

```
           Number of obs =      356    R-squared     =  0.1991
           Root MSE      = 1.25548    Adj R-squared =  0.1946

   Source |  Partial SS    df       MS              F     Prob > F
----------+----------------------------------------------------
    Model | 138.347508      2  69.1737541          43.89    0.0000
          |
    treat |  26.5916061     1  26.5916061          16.87    0.0000
     time | 110.506032      1  110.506032          70.11    0.0000
          |
 Residual |  556.40811    353  1.57622694
----------+----------------------------------------------------
    Total | 694.755618    355  1.95705808
```

This is often extended using the interaction term (treat*time):

```
         Number of obs =     356    R-squared     =  0.2107
         Root MSE      = 1.24817    Adj R-squared =  0.2039

    Source |  Partial SS    df       MS            F     Prob > F
-----------+----------------------------------------------------
     Model |  146.361303     3   48.7871009       31.32   0.0000
           |
     treat |     2.8125      1      2.8125          1.81   0.1799
      time |  28.9142706     1   28.9142706       18.56   0.0000
treat_time |  8.01379459     1   8.01379459        5.14   0.0239
           |
  Residual |  548.394315   352    1.5579384
-----------+----------------------------------------------------
     Total |  694.755618   355   1.95705808
```

However, neither of these models is correct as the scores before and after the intervention are made on the same students and the standard ANOVA approach assumes that they are marks for different students in the "before" and "after" intervention categories. The CORRECT approach is to treat the scores before and after the intervention as "repeated measures" on the same students. This takes into account the relationship between marks for the same student at different time points rather than treating them as different students.

The present study showed that both the treatment and control group are significant but that the intervention has a greater impact in the treatment group than the control group as shown in the previous chapter (result and analysis 5.1).

Therefore, based on the analysis although both types of feedback (written and oral) are effective, but the face to face feedback is more significant as it is measured by both pre and post-tests. I think students writing improved and hence obtained better grades when they were exposed to the face to face feedback strategy as the study revealed a statistically significant difference. A number of research studies (Kepner,1991; Robb, Ross, & Shortreed, 1986; Sheppard, 1992) examined the effectiveness of written feedback on students' writing and their investigation showed that there was no noteworthy difference in the writing accuracy of students, while Fathman and Whalley's study (1990) indicated that students who received error feedback had fewer grammatical errors in their second drafts. Rezaei et al (2011), in their article regarding corrective feedback in SLA, refer to the importance of negotiation of meaning because it eases the process of learning which confirms the guidance of feedback. In essence, feedback especially the oral one is like a roadmap that drives the students to their goal (writing effectively) and get better result/ grade; not only does it help learners but it can also lend a hand to teachers of writing as it can help them plan the next steps for different levels of learners and the entire class. Dahlman et al (2008) indicates that:

"The notion of feedback is part of the act of communication between the instructor and the learner, which plays a crucial role in learning. Communicating feedback effectively to the learner is a special pedagogic skill that needs to be practiced in order to be mastered. This skill is called guidance'' (p. 9). Furthermore, Wiggins (2004) puts emphasis on the importance of guidance when he mentioned that the learners cannot learn effectively unless they get both feedback and guidance. According to Wiggins, feedback is any information for the learners about what happened (the result

or effect or an action); while guidance is the direction that has to be done in the future based on what happened. In other words, feedback tells the learner whether s/he is on the right track or not and guidance shows ways to achieve the required goals. According to Ozer the Vygotskian classroom stresses assisted discovery through teacher- student and student- student interaction. Also, in a Vygotskian classroom, dynamic support and considerate guidance are provided based on the learner's needs (Ozer, 2004). Not only does face-to-face feedback help students, but it also helps teachers because they can focus on the main issues and discuss it with students instead of writing a lot of detailed comments. Mistakes may be several and in various areas (such as grammar, vocabulary choice, spelling of words etc); therefore, correction of written work boils down to how much correction should be done. In other words, when we ask the question should teachers correct every single mistake, or, should they give a value judgement and correct only major mistakes?; I strongly suggest using face-to-face feedback in this case to help both students and teachers.

To give another clear example from my experience, when this study was carried out, I was teaching writing in a private university for students in the English department. Also, I was teaching an English course in the institute of banking and financial studies in Libya for trainees from the Libyan banking sector in order to prepare them for studying in UK. The writing course at the university was the same as the one in the public university where the field study had been done, while the writing course for the other group (trainees) had to prepare them for IELTS exam starting with PET (Preliminary English Test) courses and tests. During my teaching of both groups, I used the face-to-face feedback strategy and there was an obvious difference between the students writing at the beginning of the course and their writing at the end of the course. Their writing was much more improved, as they knew where their low points and mistakes were so they had certain points to work on which overall improved their writing skills. The students' scores changed noticeably when they revise their drafts. Their writing was marked out of 10; the lowest mark was 3 and the highest was 6.5 at the beginning. After that, the lowest score was about 5.5 and the highest was 8.5 that were really more than a satisfactory result as compared with the time for the course. In addition, even though not all the students got higher marks in their revised draft, the result was still positive. The progress of students was based on the comparison of marks, the content improvement and mistakes frequency between the two versions before and after face-to-face feedback with the teacher. The data obtained was helpful because it confirmed the efficacy of face-to-face feedback for the group under investigation, which showed the result validity and reliability.

This confirms the studies that I now accept as true that many students, teachers and researchers believe that conferences are beneficial as they allow "students to control the interaction, clarify their teachers' responses, and negotiate meaning" (Shin, 2003). As for teachers' comments as feedback, research indicates that learners, generally, do expect and value such feedback on their writing (see Muncie, 2000:50)

As shown in this discussion, there are many reasons that make face-to-face feedback (conferencing) preferable to written feedback as well as be considered as a good strategy in learning a language generally and improving writing specifically, which are:

- o Face-to-face or oral feedback is faster and easier because when a teacher and his students discuss an issue, they can ask questions and receive an answer more quickly than the written feedback.

- o During oral feedback, students can ask for clarification right away if something is not clear as well as teachers can know how much detail the learner needs to solve the problem to improve the writing. a crucial issue for the writing teacher is when and how to correct students' English mistakes and help them improve their writing

- o Through oral feedback or communication, human relationships can be established and improving each other's morale can be done which in turn helps students reduce the anxiety and develop their learning skills.

- o With face to face feedback, writing teachers can lead the students in their writing journey from where they are to where they are wished to be in the writing proficiency.

- o With face-to-face feedback teachers can modify, adapt and improve their teaching method and therefore help develop their students' writing.

- o Face-to-face feedback may be less labour-intensive, and more satisfying for instructor.

Also, regarding the students' samples of writing; I have mentioned previously that these samples were collected in order to be analysed. These samples were the students' work over the whole term; the purpose of this collection was to investigate the students' progress during the use of face-to-face feedback and to see what students have done and what they have learned as well as if they their marks are better. This concurs with the importance of portfolio assessment, which is the best-known and most popular form of alternative writing assessment that is used recently.

The content analysis of the sample collections indicate that through their engagement in writing and product, the students experienced and demonstrated some aspects such as knowledge development in academic writing and learning through social support.

Face-to-face feedback, in this study, provided a realm for students to process and re-construct knowledge through social interaction with their teachers, which resulted in the improvement of their writing. "Social constructivist theory believes that the development of knowledge requires active engagement and social interaction on the part of the learners (Jenkins, 2000). The social process serves as a means of internalizing ideas encountered in the socio-cultural realm (Nyikos & Hashimoto, 1997)''.

Libyan students like other second language learners face difficulties in writing especially in academic writing, which needs certain genre and features to be clear to a reader. "Academic writing especially essay writing is central to achieving academic success and is often the major form of

assessment in many courses. Hence, academic writing is an essential skill that students need to master in order to be successful in their studies'' (Ramoroka, 2012, p. 33).

Different researches have investigated the Arabs learners' problems in English language acquisition such as: Abbad, 1988; Hisham, 2008; Rabab`ah, 2003; Zughoul and Taminian, 1984. For example, Zughoul and Taminian's study (1984: 4) they showed that "Jordanian EFL students commit serious lexical errors while communicating in English". This applies also to Libyan students since they learn English as a FL (foreign language) and they do not get the chance to learn writing with good techniques.

Darus, et al (2012) states about ESL students' attitude, learning problems and needs that learners '"anguish and apprehension towards writing seem to worsen at the university level since a higher level of writing performance is expected of them'' (p.1089)

Also, other studies regarding Arab learners point out the problems that learners encounter when they write in English, such as not knowing how to organize their ideas. As it is a new experience for them, students need to immerse themselves in a language learning environment to succeed in a foreign language generally, and writing skills specifically. In the Arab world case, learners have very few opportunities to use the foreign language in their society. As a result, it becomes difficult while they are studying in university as they are expected to be able to have a high level in English writing.

Organizing ideas and not using English regularly aren't the only issues that Arab students face. Kambal's (1980) research sheds light on the other problems Students in the Arab world face. He showed how he analyzed errors in free compositions written by first year Sudanese university students. The study took into consideration the major syntactic errors made by these students in the verb phrase and the noun phrase. Kambal (1980) illustrated that the main errors made in the verb phrase are three kinds; the errors are verb formation tense and subject-verb agreement. Also, he pointed out five categories of errors in tense such as tense sequence, tense substitution, tense marker, deletion, and confusion of perfect tenses.
The study found that the students use third-person singular marker redundantly, and they misuse the form of the verb to be.

All the problems in the studies mentioned above were found in the Libyan students' writing during my research. Also, the students themselves indicated that they have these problems as deduced from the interview. For example; subject verb agreement is really an issue in students' writing; repeating the subject by using a noun and a pronoun is another issue that makes students' writing poor, as I came across in one of the many students' writing e.g. *'the advantage of the TV it is'* . Therefore, using face to face feedback could be used to demonstrate to the students their errors and how they can fix them through asking them questions such as where is the subject in this sentence, which one is better the noun or a pronoun and why. When the face-to-face feedback was

used, there was a noticeable change in students' writing from the beginning of the term to the end; scores became higher than before receiving the treatment. This suggests that the use of face to face feedback (conferencing) has a positive impact on the progress of students' writing.

To sum up, Patthey-Chavez and Ferris (1997) highlight the importance of conferences. They relate its success to the fact that learners have an opportunity to participate rather than getting only feedback ''in the most successful conferences students participate actively, ask questions, clarify meaning, and discuss their writing rather than just accepting the teacher's advice. In cases where oral conferences are successful, they not only lead to revisions in the drafting process, but also have subsequent effects on the improvement of the writing ability in later assignments''

6.2.   Response to Research Question 2
What are Libyan students' attitudes before and after getting face to face feedback?

Do EFL/ESL Libyan students who participate in the study (experimental group) hold a positive attitude towards face to face feedback as investigated by the interview?

It was an interest to me to establish whether the adoption and use of face-to-face feedback has an impact on students' ideas about improving their learning skills in writing.

At the beginning of the interview, I asked the participants to explain what they considered to be good writing as I was interested in finding out whether students have different views and what they think is important in academic writing. Also my aim was to know if they are in concord with their writing teachers or not. Most of the students shared identical perception of what they want their writing to be like and also what they expect their teachers to want them to do during the course. The participants put emphasis on the structure and organization of ideas as well as the language. They stated that writing at university is a challenge and the most demanding tasks

The information derived from student interviews provided significantly explicit information about their attitude towards several fields such as: the use of face-to-face feedback, opportunities they get when this feedback is used, and the problems they may face. The qualitative analysis of the interview responses complemented and expanded upon the observation and the quantitative analysis of the quasi -experimental result.

All the mentioned methods pointed out that Libyan students who participated in the study held a positive attitude towards the face-to-face feedback and they started to be interested in writing more than before since-as mentioned above- at the first interview most of the students had a negative attitude towards writing, which later on changed. Chuo's (2004) study showed that besides language difficulties that has an effect on students' success in higher education composition; one of the obtrusive issues affecting the students is "the students' attitude towards their writing task". Therefore, he urges teachers of writing to come up with innovative and interesting instructional methods…..which encourage students to actively participate in their writing tasks.''(Darus et al,

2012, p.1090). Drawing on students' attitude which discussed previously in the analysis of interviews and observation, in my opinion face to face feedback can be considered as an interesting instructional method if this feedback strategy is used by tutors effectively. As with such method, students' involvement increases and they become more enthusiastic to work and they become more motivated to improve and develop their writing skills. They mainly asserted that the feedback helped them to generate ideas, improve their writing organization, and improve their grammar. They indicate that although it was the first time for them and it is embarrassing somehow they had engaged in a fruitful discussion.

According to Lightbrown and Spada (1999), "When learners are given the opportunity to engage in meaningful activities they are compelled to 'negotiate for meaning,' that is, to express and clarify their intentions, thoughts, opinions, etc., in a way which permits them to arrive at a mutual understanding. This goes back to Houpt's (1984) suggestion regarding the ways to use classroom conversation effective activities. She advocates a three-step process to writing which is: in-class conversations, a written draft and discussing various topics for in- class conversation and how these steps lead to successful writing assignments. Needless to say, Houpt's recommendation is very significant for instructors who work hard to improve their students writing and anticipate effective writing assignments.

As derived from the interview and observation I think this is true when the face to face feedback is used because when the students interact with their teachers, they can change and reorganize their writing based on their teachers' comments.

My point of view is confirmed by Pica (1994), when he considered this interaction as a negotiation and he defined it as a "modification and restructuring that occurs when learners and their interlocutors anticipate, perceive, or experience difficulties in message comprehensibility" (p.495). With modifications, students can gain a better understanding of what they need to change in their writing such as repetition, clarification, and conformation checks.

In addition, Gulcat & Ozagac (2004) in their suggestion about correcting and giving feedback indicate that;

> "Face-to-face is a particularly useful technique to show the learners the errors in their papers. Students can directly ask the teacher questions on the issues they have trouble with. At the same time the teacher may check the students' meaning and understanding.'' (p. 4).

This is in line with the idea of Ferris (1995), Ferris and Hedgcock (1998); for example, Ferris indicates that learners usually come across problems in understanding their teachers' comments because the instructions or comments are not clear. Ferris and Hedgcock explain that learners may ignore revision when they cannot interpret a teachers' question whether it is a suggestion or request for information. Hence it is suggested that teachers can get students attention when they explain their responding behaviour (Zamel, 1985).

I think this is completely true based on what was obtained from the interview, as I found the following results:

1. Increased student's enjoyment of writing and engagement when they know how to change and what to change in order to get a good piece of writing.

2. Development of critical thinking skills which helps students to ask questions and recognize their mistakes.

3. Increased students' attentiveness in class as students were motivated to pay more attention during face to face feedback.

4. students get techniques for effective learning for writing such as:

   a) Preparation where the students are prepared to discuss and ask questions with more concentration

   b) Exploration where the students explore their weaknesses and their strengths.

   c) Clarification when students have the chance to ask about the ambiguity issues as well as to clarify what they mean in their writing. On the contrary written feedback would not offer this chance to students as it has been suggested that "there may be a mismatch between the written feedback teachers provide and the feedback learners would like to perceive'' (Owens,2012)

   d) Note taking, as students learned when to write notes themselves instead of the teacher's written comments. So students could read their notes without struggling with handwriting or vague questions/ comments.

   e) Students who lacked in confidence while participating changed and became more active in lectures, by asking questions and raising comments.

On the whole, I want to elucidate that with face to face feedback four important factors affect students during the process of writing. These factors are:

   f) Individualized attention where there is attention from the teacher to each student or each problem that is faced by students if the discussion is for the entire class.

   g) Learner developmental readiness and eagerness because students pay more attention and try to make more effort to improve their writing skill.

   h) The intensity of the treatment because both the process and the product of the task are evaluated by the teachers which in return makes students more recognizable in their own work.

   i) Consistent focus and linguistic focus where students pay more attention to both writing in general and their linguistic weaknesses in particular.

6.3.   Response to Research Question 3

What are the writing teachers' views towards face to face feedback within the treatment and control groups?

Based on the interview, the teachers who taught writing to both groups developed a different attitude. Pre-face-to-face interviews indicated that the problems that both the teachers and students face such as; time pressure and number of students makes giving feedback difficult to apply. Also, some of the teachers of writing pointed out that there are other factors which affect students learning such as teaching methods, not providing feedback, lack of motivation among some students as well as other issues that relate to the university's administration as mentioned in chapter five *(5.3.2 .(a) Results of teacher interviews)*. This confirms Abbad' study (1988) where he mentions that "their problems are due to the inappropriate methods of language teaching and the learning environment which some judge are unsuitable for learning a foreign language'' as cited in Al-Khasawneh (2010) . Also, Hyland (2002:81) draws attention to the biggest problem that students face in learning writing and this is that they are provided with insufficient advice with regard to structuring their writing experiences in accordance to the demands and constrains of target contexts.

On the whole**,** teachers of writing indicated that it is difficult to evaluate students sufficiently.

> '' very often, teachers pleading lack of time have compressed responding, editing and evaluating all into one. This would, in effect, deprive students of
>
> that vital link between drafting and revision- that is responding- which often makes a big difference to the kind of writing that will eventually be produced''(Richards, J & Renandya, W; 2002, p 319).

Moreover, some of the teachers who were interviewed pointed out that some students are not motivated to write or learn how to write which makes it more difficult for them to survive in the academic jungle. The teachers admit that lack of providing helpful feedback especially the one to one discussion is one of the main reasons. When there isn't feedback or a chance for students to know their strengths and/or weaknesses, students feel discouraged to work as hard and to put more effort. This matches Darus's study (2012) regarding ESL Students' attitude, learning problems when he found:

> "The lecturers felt the majority of the students have negative attitudes towards writing as they would procrastinate. They are also careless and dislike writing. The findings of the participants also revealed that they perceive writing in English as difficult and they dislike it'' (p. 1089).

However, after applying the method of the face to face feedback; teachers' recognized the importance of feedback to the students' writing and how they discuss with them their writing processes "it seems important to address ESL students' ongoing needs for efficiency in language processing, including vocabulary retrieval'' (Like &Carson, 1994; p. 99).

Also, as the literature review shows; Goldstein and Conrad's (1990) study about student input and negotiation of meaning in ESL writing conferences has concluded that learners who negotiate the meaning of their writing during the conference represent more successful revisions, on the other hand students who do not negotiate meaning are more apt to make only surface-level changes.

In addition, from my observation, teacher's feedback especially the face to face feedback is undeniably a key component to the learners because it is really an essential element in the process of writing. ''It is supposedly the guide which students follow throughout the process of writing and the means which enables them to produce a readable end product.'' (Lounis, 2010; p. 2). Moreover, not only does the importance of face-to-face feedback strategy lay on guidance, the strategy also reveals any confusion or misunderstandings. According to Kroll (1991, p. 259), one advantage of face-to-face "allows the teacher to uncover potential misunderstandings that the student might have about prior written feedback on issues in writing that have been discussed in class.'' This is in line with the idea of Lee (1997) who thinks it is crucial for teachers to prioritize the errors that their students need to focus on most.

6.4. Response to Research Question 4

How do both the teachers and learners at Libyan higher education deal with face to face feedback in practice?

As indicated earlier in chapter five, observation was one of the methods that were used to examine the students' interaction with their teachers during the writing class. As it was shown from the interviews; Libyan students encounter a number of problems in all language skills and in particular the writing skill. Therefore students need certain techniques to develop their writing.

In accordance with Brookes and Grundy's approach to teaching writing (1990) which "combines communicative practice, an integrated approach and humanistic principles." They suggest that communicative language features six important elements which can help students. These elements are:

1) Having something meaningful to say

2) Reaching an audience,

3) Working in small groups

4) Working collaboratively

5) Developing register awareness

6) Talking naturally

Through the observation of the classroom interaction, it came to light that the students wanted to be guided using the face to face feedback method. With this method, teachers can be the fundamental factor for deeper and sustained exploration of ideas.

❖ Face to face feedback inspires students' meaningful articulateness.

As, discussed by Orsmond et al (2002), who believe that over a period of time students seem to be inwardly digesting the feedback they receive and there's a possibility of incorporating it into a type of learning cycle where the feedback confirms new knowledge as valid. They processed the new knowledge into an existing framework of learning.

❖ Creative ideas for supplementary activities, so students can write more and better which result in a better grading.

❖ It is a kind of thought-provoking activity that makes students more engaged and challenges them to think analytically; so they could be prepared well to work on their writing and the demands of the course. Writing development requires learner engagement

❖ It is a communicative approach which can be used to encourage writing learners' awareness and consider their readers, who are the teachers of writing. Therefore, it helps students gain the writing skill and build self-confidence.

In general, I think that with face to face feedback and the interaction between students and their teachers, students listen intently to their writing and ''are brought to a more conscious level of rethinking and re-seeing what they have written'' (Richards, J & Renandya, W; 2002, p 318). In fact, when the writing learners hear their piece of writing (texts) read out to them; texts which are unclear become more apparent   and clear, so; revision becomes motivating.

Moore and Kearsley (1996), in their study about Distance Education, point out that most learners regard learner-instructor interaction in distance learning environments as essential. Their views indicate that the instructor's role' is vital and how it is there to present content and maintain the learners' motivation and interest, at the same time assisting them as they interact with the content. It is also essential to give each student individualized attention as it addresses the needs, motivation, and performance of each individual learner. The authors also state that "The instructor's responses to the learners' application of content are seen as especially valuable, as they provide constructive feedback concerning learners' achievement of instructional objectives''. I think although the previous argument regards the education distance, it also applies to the students-instructors interaction in general as I have noticed it in the classrooms through the observations and as mentioned by students in their interviews.

Also, Seow (2006) supports the writing process and process writing in language teaching which applies to the importance and effectiveness of face to face feedback. He mentions that when learners listen to their writing carefully they start to look back at their writing with more consideration and thoughtfulness and therefore they review their writing with more focus.

In addition, through my observation; at the beginning most of the students were reluctant to write because of the mentioned reasons that make them anxious. Writing anxiety has been investigated by several researchers; according to Chuo's words "writing apprehension (anxiety), an

affective factor, has been proven to have a negative influence on first language learners' writing competency (Daly, 1978; Walsh, 1986) as well as on EFL/ESL learners' writing performance and quality (Cheng, Horwitz,&Shallert,1999; Hassan, 2001; Masny &Foxall,1992)'' (2007,p.3-4) . However, after applying the face to face feedback strategy students felt less nervous and tried to write more and better (for all the students who I did not teach and the students that I taught) . For this reason, it is suggested for teachers of writing to use face-to-face feedback in order to help their students learn in a more comfortable environment because as it has been noticed the more constructive and encouraging perception a learner has about feedback as a good technique in writing instruction, the more the learner puts more effort and his/her writing apprehension will decrease.

Barnett claims that the advantages to both students and the teachers of process writing and writing for communication include: greater quantity, higher student motivation, and more efficient use of grading time. So, generally one of the reasons most advocated for using face-to-face feedback is that it is considered an effective tool for engaging students during the writing lessons. Engagement is not just participation in class but it has been explained by Bruff (2009, p.6) "engaged students are those who are actively involved in class discussions and thinking intentionally about course content during class''. As students pay more attention with the feedback strategy and are engaged more or participate constructively, teachers can observe and become aware that such a method can be more efficient than the methods they use where the teacher teaches writing without any interactive engagement. Also,

It has been noted that feedback that is meaningful, of high quality, and timely helps students become cognitively engaged in the content under study (Higgins et al, 2002).

6.5.   Chapter Summary

This discussion chapter addresses the study's research questions, which asked whether face-to-face feedback is effective in EFL writing or not.

Writing in a second language is really a daunting task for most of ESL/EFL learners and is the most difficult skill to master.

Face-to-face (oral feedback), which is a one-to-one interaction or a conversation between a teacher and a student/ group of students, is really an efficient means of teacher response to student writing. A short talk of more or less than 10 minutes-based on the piece of writing and its issue - can be priceless for both the teacher and the students in the target text and the latter in writing. In my point of view conferences shows the importance of teaching and learning earnestly because it make teachers of writing better acquainted with their students especially the SL learners. There is a Chinese proverb that says "do not give me a fish but teach me how to fishing''. In my point of view face-to-face is teaching how to fish because teachers know more about learners and clarify to them what they should do. Also, research on learning styles (Oxford1990, 2001; Reid 1998) has confirmed that

because people learn differently, some students are predominantly auditory rather than visual learners. In other words, these kinds of students learn best by listening more willingly than reading; which confirms that some learners learn more when they get verbal feedback via a face-to-face feedback, instead of through written comments on their writing. These findings are supportive of the work of Orsmond et al who mention that "One type of feedback doesn't fit all and learning requires a diverse approach'' (2002:12). However, one could argue that face-to-face feedback is not always better than written feedback because there are always some students who are visual learners.

On the whole, there are many advantages and disadvantages for both oral feedback and written feedback as illustrated below:

Table 6.1: advantage and disadvantages of oral and written feedback

	Advantages	Disadvantages
Written Feedback	• In Written feedback, students can review the comments by reading them. • Students can review the comments any time as they'd be written on the paper. • It is given privately and personally, because they are directly written to each student on their performance and work. • It benefits shy and weak students as they will be given feedback privately.	• Most students do not read the comments. • Sometimes the hand writing is not clear. • Sometimes the comments are not clear in directing the student. • Teachers usually hand in the papers without discussion to the errors or students' problem. • Some teachers do not propose any useful comments or notes in their feedback for example, sometimes they just put a one word description such as; 'excellent or good' or on the other hand some give indirect feedback which is not useful like 'work on your writing' instead of specifically pointing out what writing skill to work on. • Negative comments so discouraging that they make students lose interest in revising their drafts.
Face to face feedback	• Students get feedback and are directed immediately. • Teachers discuss with students their needs and clarify what's unclear in the students' writing. • Students get motivated to improve their writing and therefore pass the course.	• No disadvantages for some students. • It can be uncomfortable for some students as they would feel embarrassed to be corrected by their teachers and asked questions about their mistakes.

	• It helps students to get more ideas through talking with the teacher. • Students have an opportunity to ask about the right vocabulary since most of them use wrong words. • This type of feedback benefits weak students very much as they are given reasons to getting poor grade for example, and they are able to discuss and explain their mistakes and what points to work on and that way they are given more attention. • It helps stronger students as well; as they are told their strong points and what they can do to reach higher aims which can benefit other students (if feedback is given in a group).	• Some students indicate that it is embarrassing when it is done in front of other students. • Some of the students feel like they are being put on the spot. • The lack of a face-to-face deprives students of the opportunity to negotiate meaning and ask for clarifications.

Based on what have been discussed above, the following chapter is the last chapter and the conclusion in this study. It presents a summary of the study; the limitation as well as some recommendations.

Chapter Seven: Conclusions and Recommendations for Future Research

7.0. Overview of Chapter Seven

This is the last and conclusion chapter of this study and it is divided into four parts:

1. It comprises a summary of the present study (conclusion).
2. It shows the contributions of the study: both the general contribution and the contribution in the Libyan context specifically with regard to the different types of feedback used in both teaching and learning writing in higher education.
3. It also provides some implications for ESL teaching, limitations and
4. The fourth part presents recommendations for future research.

7.1. Summary of the Study

This study aimed to investigate the effect of face-to-face feedback on Libyan students' writing. Although a lot of studies have investigated feedback, it is the first such study conducted in Libya. This research was based on the review of literature and offered context specific insights on teaching and learning FL/ SL writing. In general, the study has indicated the importance of face-to-face feedback as an approach for improving writing skills as well as for increasing motivation to practice writing. Providing some kind of feedback with its different types is recognized as an effective method in the teaching of writing either in L1 or L2. However, in spite of this recognition of helpfulness, Libyan university English teachers, for a variety of reasons, do not generally use this approach. As an English student and teacher in a higher education institution in Libya, I was interested in examining whether feedback would have an effect on Libyan learners' writing improvement and what their attitudes are towards it.

The data used in this study comprised drafts of students' writing, observation notes, interviews (which give a perspective on how teachers and students perceive feedback techniques) and, most importantly, pre/ post-tests.

At the general level, the results revealed that feedback techniques such as feedback comments and the face-to-face feedback can influence Libyan students' revision outcomes. However, participants were more positively influenced by face-to-face feedback sessions than by written feedback. With the written feedback method, the students made more surface-level revisions concerning tense, spelling, number, modality and punctuation based on the teacher's notes. In fact, though, even this kind of revision is not made by all of the students because some do not use the teachers' comments for different reasons (e.g. they do not understand the comments, they cannot decipher the handwriting, they ignore the comments because as became clear from the participants' interviews, they think about the grade more than the comments).

On the other hand, face-to-face feedback was found to influence the revisions of students more profoundly because it encourages them to address the point of their writing and "focus on the overall intention of the writing and any text based aspects that may improve the meaning of the text'' (GONZÁLEZ, et al ; 2010, 69-70). Therefore, their revision contains more text-based modifications involving the reorganization, deletion and addition of information in their piece of writing in order to make it understandable.

This finding indicates that face to face feedback is more effective and helpful than WF because if the meaning of a piece of writing is obscured or does not match the writer intends to communicate, then the student's needs and how they can be helped becomes apparent. In general, as Wilhoit (2008) points out, 5 minutes of one-on-one discussion and conference with students can be more productive than covering the same material for an hour in class.

In addition to this central advantage, the evidence shows that face-to-face feedback also plays an active role in helping the learners increase their attention to grammatical forms. Thus, it helps not only with meaning-focussed instruction but also with form-focussed instruction. The reason for these effects seems to be the fact that f2f provides language learners with a vehicle to interact and communicate meaningfully with their teacher of writing. As such, it additionally serves as a useful medium for enhancing students' interactive ability.

Additionally, the data gained from the interviews indicates that this interactive nature of face-to-face feedback is reason why most students prefer face-to-face feedback over written comments. Observation, also, revealed and confirmed how students interacted with their teacher and were more active when discussing their writing.

The findings thus support Sperling's (1991: 135) argument that "it is not surprising that teacher-student conferences, which theoretically capitalize on one- to-one interaction is regarded by both instructors and students as an especially effective form of writing instruction'' (p.135)

All these findings can alert Libyan writing teachers as to how to help their students improve their writing and gain the writing skill efficiently.

7.2. Contribution to Knowledge

This research attempted to contribute significantly to the learning and teaching EFL/ESL writing in higher education generally and in the Libyan context specifically. With this study, there is a possibility to improve English language teacher education in Libya in a number of ways such as:

1) The study shows an understanding of the problems faced by Libyan students in their written essays and in writing in general. This, in turn, is significant for teacher educators since it aims to provide implications for developing their essay-writing syllabus, methods of teaching, and assessment.

2) Students need the support to achieve higher education expectations and need to understand that writing in the academic context might be different from what they experienced in schools.

3) The study attempts to demonstrate how it is important to trace students' needs and how to satisfy theses needs through face-to-face feedback, which can be a successful and unforgettable learning method.

4) the study has demonstrated a number of points about the advantages and disadvantages of different feedback procedures

In connection with educational and language research, the current research creates an important contribution which is summarized in the following respects:

- It can be used as a model for further studies in education and languages in terms of using the interpretive constructivist research framework. This approach has been entirely neglected in Libya, as mentioned in the introduction section of this research; no previous study has used an exploratory approach to investigate the effectiveness of face-to-face feedback in learning writing and the problems that are faced by Libyan students of English.

- Moreover, it is as an example of the triangulation of research methods such as: the use of observation, quasi-experimental and semi-structured in-depth interviews. This mixed research methods have not been used in Libya before to study Libyan learners.

In the long run, the researcher used a different technique in doing this research that, I did not teach the students under investigation as other researchers do. As indicated before, I wanted to avoid subjectivity. Finally yet importantly, the study highlighted a range of factors that led to the students' poor writing. Therefore, we cannot simply blame the students for their low level and poor writing skill. If the Libyan higher education is willing to overcome the problems mentioned, more effort has to be put in.

7.3. Limitation of the study

In this section, I examine the limitations of this study firstly considering the general limitations and then considering specific limitations.

7.3.1. General Limitations of the Study

Researchers should be honest in reporting all the issues of their researches including any limitations (Cohen et al, 2007:116). Similar to numerous others, this study is not one hundred percent perfect, and it has got some limitations which will be demonstrated hereunder. One obvious possible shortcoming was the researcher's own prior positive attitude to f2f feedback. Although every effort was made to appear impartial during the interviews, the fact that the interview was about a (for the students) 'new' method of feedback must have suggested to them that their interviewer held this

positive attitude. It is therefore likely that their responses converged towards this presumed attitude. Nevertheless, in view of the inevitability of this kind of co-construction of meaning in any kind of interaction, this 'bias' can be seen as an advantage, and even itself an additional indication of the benefits of feedback given face-to-face.

Even though the teachers and students who participated in this study volunteered to do that; there were some deficiencies. For example, the students participants were females and no male students participate in the interview which could be a shortcoming because these students may have different views and attitudes towards face-to-face feedback that are different from the female. In addition to these limits on generalisability, there are practical limitations in conducting this kind of research. For illustration, the interview was really time consuming and tiring because I had to wait some times for a long time to meet the students. Also, the interview was cancelled many times because students had either exams or forgot about it and sometimes they had an extra lecture which made students fail to meet me on the specified date. The interview was done with participants from the treatment group only whereas there were none from the control group that was interviewed which is another limitation for the study, therefore we do not really know how the control group felt about written feedback, and they might have had some interesting opinion about both face-to-face and written feedback.

In addition, the researcher lent a hand to the teacher who was observed with corrections, and monitoring of exams and regarding the observation as mentioned earlier, it was only done for the group who got the face-to-face feedback (treatment group); therefore my presence might have inadvertently affected the attitude and behaviour of the teacher. In addition, the study depended more on the treatment group as the main tool to collect information from the participants while it would be much better to interview and observe the control group to ensure better understanding of this group views.

The study's main interest was to find out the effectiveness of face-to-face feedback compared with written feedback, therefore further studies are recommended to investigate the effect of other kinds of feedback in Libyan students writing. In addition, another limitation is that, it was applied for only a short period of time and as such, time constraint was one of the issues affecting the study. It might be valuable to conduct a longitudinal study, which is a study that involves repeated observations of the same variables over long periods of time.

A different kind of limitation now has to be considered. This matter concerns how the quality of writing was assessed. As Li (1996) argues on the basis of cross- cultural study of teachers' reaction to students writing, the criteria for '' good writing'' are a cross cultural variable , therefore the teachers' criteria ''are shaped, transformed, and determined to a large extent by the historical, cultural forces that are beyond an individual's control'. The result of the pre and posttests are derived from the marks awarded by Libyan teachers. Although, efforts were made to avoid subjectivity (see

marking guide in appendix 8) it is probably inevitable that some degree of culture specific orientation was applied. The results obtained in this study, therefore, while reliable for the Libyan context, may not necessarily be so elsewhere in the world. (An additional limitation on the wider applicability of the findings here concerns face-to-face feedback itself, which is considered in 7.4.1 below; what is at issue here is simply the reliability of the quantitative findings.)

This cross-cultural variability, however, is not the same thing as variation in quality. Canagarajah (2002a) argues that students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds should not be viewed as making them more or less capable than others of critical thought or analysis, or of preventing them from becoming successful writers in English. He point out elsewhere (Canagarajah 2002b, p.101) that "everyone has agency to rise above their culture and social conditions to attain critical insights into their human condition".

7.3.2. Limitation in Libyan Universities
This study is derived from Libyan participants. The results, therefore, can be generalized to all Libyan students but may not be generalizable to other ESL students in other countries.

In addition, there are various shortcomings in Libyan universities that have an effect on both of teaching and learning writing. Examples of these issues are; time, administration and the number of students in each class.

7.3.2.1. Time
- Time is one of the biggest issues that both teachers and learners face; this is because students cannot get what they need in writing with the time given, in order to improve their writing skills.

- Teachers do not have an adequate amount of time to provide face to face feedback for students individually. As the lesson is either short or the number of students make it impractical to provide face to face feedback for each student.

- Tutors are not able to meet their students even after lectures to discuss their work, provide them with extra help or give face to face feedback, as the universities lack of facilities such as offices for teachers to see the students and to give them extra time.

7.3.2.2. Class
There is a big number of students in each class, which makes it unsuitable for learning especially now that the students are learning another language, which requires a lot of effort and attention from both the student and the lecturer. This large number has a negative effect on their motivation whilst learning. In other words, lack of motivation among most of students is obvious based on the work level. Also, the classes contain students with mixed abilities and different levels which is another issue because it is a dilemma that affects both students and their teachers. This effects students as

the weak students feel shy to participate or ask questions and it affects the stronger students as they will feel like they are being pulled behind by the weaker students. As for the teachers it is an issue because they work with different levels and it can be difficult to meet their needs in teaching writing skills, also due to the large number it is very difficult to give direct (face to face) feedback to the students.

<u>7.3.2.3. Administration</u>
English departments in Libyan universities are required to have a firm plan towards improving their students' knowledge. Teachers should work together to smooth the progress of learning for their students. In other words, teachers have to discuss what they teach to be more aware of what their students need and how to evaluate them.

To illustrate this; as mentioned in this study students' lack of vocabulary, and sentence structure problems are some of the many problems that students face in their writing. If teachers of writing discuss with the teachers of reading and teachers of grammar what they cover in their class, teachers of writing can help their students in an easier way. For example, when the students learn about X topic, it is supposed that they get some vocabulary about the topic; so when the writing teacher asks them to write a topic where the students can use X information it would be easier for the teacher to evaluate students and to provide sufficient feedback.

Therefore, the mentioned areas need to be addressed by following:

1- In service training is required as a professional development activity to develop their skills.

2- Learning and teaching ESL especially at university needs to be enriched with providing more time to students in order to make teachers aware of the students' issues and meet their needs, as a result, they could help them improve through different activities and techniques rather than through using lectures only.

3- Examinations need to be done before enrolling the university in order to place students in the right level as group and therefore, working with different levels can be easier for the both teachers and learners.

4- Department of English curriculum and organisation have to be re-thought completely in order to overcome the problems that students face

7.4. Recommendations for Further Research

To my knowledge this study has been the first research to investigate the effect of face-to-face feedback and investigate the students' attitude to this strategy in Libya.

Some recommendations are suggested in this study based on the evidence obtained from the use of the interviews, classroom observations and other data collection equipment. They are provided with full recognition of the constraints at Libyan Universities.

7.4.1. Pedagogical (practical) Implications:

The empirical evidence of this study has yielded insights into the use of feedback in writing, especially face-to-face feedback, in the Libyan higher education context The results of the study showed face to face feedback producing positive outcomes in terms of improving students' academic writing (as evidenced by the tests), attitudes to writing and self-confidence during both writing and discussing their writing with the instructors (as evidenced by the interviews and observations). They therefore suggest that in this Libyan context, f2f feedback is more effective than written feedback. There are a number of possible reasons why this appears to be the case. One is that more information that is detailed can be gained by students during discussion with teachers than from their written comments. In addition, with discussion clarification can be sought immediately, whereas this cannot happen with written feedback; only a five-minute conversation could eliminate a lot of time needed in a paper for both teacher, where s/he has to write comments, and students, where they have to figure out what is ambiguous.

As mentioned in chapter two, English is completely different from Arabic as a language and a culture. Although cultural barriers existed before (see 2.3 historical backgrounds) due to factors such as beliefs and social customs, these have been largely removed because of the different situation. Also, the emphasis on the personal benefits of learning a foreign language became evident in the country's development. In addition, many students have got scholarships to study abroad and most of them choose English speaking countries. These developments require from the teachers that they develop and renovate their teaching process and update it with issues and progress at international level.

Based on data collection from the interview, there appears to have been a general satisfaction with face-to-face feedback in this study. Most of the respondents (both students and teachers) agreed that face-to-face feedback was positively applied. In other words, they feel optimistic that face-to-face feedback could be positively applied in Libyan HE institutions because of their experience of the face-to-face feedback trial. However, these positive signs will need to be tested out in actual practice in other Libyan HE institutions, as it is always possible that the particular circumstances of the research reported in this thesis are not generalizable.

A study by Miliszewsk & Rhema (2010:432) concluded that "the traditional classroom setting is not sufficient to assure effective and efficient communication between instructors and us

and that other means of communication and education have to be found." F2f feedback is one example of such other means. The participants' views and tests' result of this study showed that students improve their writing and understand how to avoid their errors through negotiation with their teachers. Therefore, face-to-face feedback can be considered as an important solution to academic writing problems. Below, I suggest some points for teachers to bear in mind for giving face-to-face feedback to students.

7.4.1.1. <u>Points to bear in mind when giving Face to Face Feedback to Students</u>

The points below are adapted from Race & Brown (2005) to the situation investigated in this thesis. Giving face-to-face feedback has both advantages and disadvantages. The points below may help teachers and students gain maximum benefit from verbal feedback.

1. Face-to-face is more than just words:

   When verbal feedback is given, more information is passed across than in written feedback because one is able to use other extra literary devices such as tone of voice, facial expressions, gestures and other body language. The immediacy of the advice and criticism offered under these circumstances does not appear to be face-threatening to Libyan students, as it can be for students in other cultures. They appreciate directness, interpreting it as an indication of good faith. Indeed, Mills & Grainger (2016:122-148) attest that directness is valued in Libya and not seen as rude because it indexes belonging and closeness, whereas indirectness can be seen as rude because it is viewed as dishonest communication. (See section 2.10 for further references to this effect.)

2. Verbal feedback is transient:

   The problem with verbal feedback is that people remember what was said only in bits, so that it is not easy for listeners to reflect accurately on what was said.

3. The mood of the listeners also varies:

   The reaction of students to the information given to them can vary depending on their mood and state of mind. When they are feeling good, they are more likely to remember the information than when they are in a bad mood.

4. Because face-to-face feedback is interactive, one can judge the reaction of interlocutors and adjust one's feedback accordingly. Teachers should make the most of this two-way nature of face-to-face feedback, in which they can act as a facilitator along the lines of Harmer's (2001: 57-64) learner-centred approach. Harmer points out that this approach involves encouraging students to ask for information rather than getting spoon-fed, but at the same time teachers can offer discrete suggestions (such as words or phrases) when students lose their fluency, so that the sense of frustration felt when the student comes to a dead end of language or idea

is diminished, but in a manner which is sensitive and sympathetic so that the student does not lose the sense of initiative.

5. Choose wisely what kind of feedback to give in a group and what kind is better given 1:1:

   Number is an important point to factor in. A teacher should consider carefully whether to give feedback in a group or individually. This is because some students may get embarrassed whether the feedback is positive or negative so it may be better to give general feedback to a group and only give specific feedback to individuals. Although Libyan students generally are happy to receive direct critical feedback from their teacher in a 1:1 encounter (see point 1 above), the presence of peers makes their faces more vulnerable (see, for example, comment in table 6.1)

   Notwithstanding the general orientation to directness and the acceptance of a large power differential between teacher and student in Libyan culture, it is clear from the interviews (see 5.5.3-5.5.4) that many students who are happy with blunt criticism of their own work in a 1:1 situation are uncomfortable about it in a group with their peers. While they experience no threat to face in the former situation, they do so in the latter. In terms of O'Driscoll's (2007: 251-253) suggested computation for the size of a face-threatening act, it seems that face is much more salient to these students in the latter situation than it is in the former. Perhaps this is because of the greater number of participants together with a presumed greater social distance between teacher and student in this situation.

6. Proper preparation of script:

   Preparation of the script is important because it enables the teacher to take into account all points that need to be addressed. Also, the teacher can give the scripts to students to take away as notes.

7. There is danger of causing tension and confusion in students when the teacher appears as too much of an expert or authority figure. If this happens, students do not understand the feedback. The teacher should try to meet the learner at his/her own level. Fortunately, in Libya, the fact that the students feel comfortable in their subordinate status relative to the teacher means that there is little pressure on teachers to emphasise their expertise for the sake of it. Rather, they can concentrate on communicating successfully to the student.

8. Give timely feedback:

   If students continuously look for the teacher and cannot find him/her, they may get frustrated especially when they are eager to get feedback first. It would be useful if the teacher pinned a notice of their availability times so that the students can find them more easily.

9. Sometimes feedback can be hard on students:

   When the feedback involves highly critical comments, some teachers may be tempted to give written feedback instead   in order to avoid severe damage to the student's face.

However, as argued above, this danger is low in the Libyan context. In addition, it is important to remember that giving face-to-face feedback also offers the chance for the teacher to offer comfort and support.

10. Respond to non-verbal cues

Face-to-face feedback is advantageous in that the teacher can estimate the kind of effect it is having on the learner. The teacher can monitor the facial expressions and if the student shows signs of being negatively affected by the feedback, a softer approach should be taken.

11. One on one conferences

Race & Brown (2005) mention the danger of students pretending to understand feedback comments, for example by nodding and giving affirmative responses, when actually they do not. Such student behaviour is not unknown in Libyan classrooms and in these cases, a more probing approach should be taken where the teacher can ask more questions to get more than one word answers. An error that was noted in writing can be picked up for discussion and similar errors discussed in detail. However, once again, pretence of this kind is extremely rare in 1:1 sessions in Libya, where students do not feel the need to defend their self-images.

Finally, I think teachers have to organize their time. For example; the teachers can give a lecture in writing and the other lecture can be as a seminar where teachers discuss the general problems that occur in their students' writing and in some cases when there is really a need for face- to face interactions; teachers have to do it. I think face-to-face feedback is one of the most effective strategies in improving ESL/EFL learners' writing. When a teacher identifies the error or provides feedback without illustrations, the students could get confused, whereas if teachers provide explanations, students can learn from their mistakes.

7.4.2. Areas for Further Research

The results of this research suggest further areas of research relevant to the issue of feedback and improving writing.

Even though the learners participating in this study were introduced to two types of feedback for the purpose of scrutiny, this research in actual fact required introducing further feedback methods like coding and peer feedback for the sake of achieving more informed feedback preferences from students and which one is more effective in the teachers' view. Introducing feedback, where it has not been applied before, requires a longer interval of time for such a study to be accomplished; a fact which is considered as a limitation to the present research. For that reason, a long-term piece of research that lasts for over a period of one year should be carried out and the learners should be presented with more than one type of feedback. With more time, students can get an opportunity to

experience different types of feedback and have more insight about these kinds which would reflect in more accurate response from them.

In this study, learners who participated had almost the same level of English knowledge and they were in the same term; their level is almost intermediate. It is recommended to replicate this study with learners of advanced and beginner's level of proficiency.

Finally, the subjects of the study were all Libyan students with one mother tongue and the same level of education. This avoided introducing other variables caused by difference language background. It, then, would be relevant to see whether the results of research on other language and educational backgrounds differ from the findings of this study.

POSTSCRIPT

The education system in Libya, as explained in chapter two, has developed at a noteworthy rate and this study showed that the students are interested in learning English language but they need certain techniques to be successful in their learning journey. The work in this study has identified a number of areas where improvements might be made (see above. 7.3.2). Therefore, there is a need for a major paradigm shift for teachers and the university system in Libya to overcome the shortcomings mentioned. Also, the researcher hopes that the outcomes of this study will be able to make a small contribution to help with education development especially with regard to the teaching of English at university.

It attracts attention to the importance of improving students' writing in order to succeed academically. Therefore, Libyan students will be helped to be successful scholars when they study abroad (for those who want to continue their studies); or to be well qualified teachers of English who can write well.

Reflection on work and self-Improvement

As a final point, here concise comments on how this research has contributed to my personal development. As a novice researcher, this study is probably the largest single piece of academic work I have carried out so far and of course, it had its impact on me academically and personally. In spite of the challenges that I faced through this journey, it was immensely interesting and crucial project for me. As Schostack (2002) stated that, the researcher usually has a 'double tracked journey'. The journey of my study helped me by being better prepared for future research than when I started my PhD programme, which is considered as a personal self- development. Because when I carried out this research, I was able to acquire and develop new skills such as research methodology skills. This skill gives me confidence to carry out further research needed in both English language teaching and learning as an EFL/ESL. This has occurred not only through enhancing new skills in research methodology but also through reading various articles and books. Reading different texts about different issues regarding teaching and learning how to write in FL/SL, feedback and its effect, theories of learning and methods of teaching has had a real impact on my understanding of teaching and improved my critical reflection on my own teaching. Furthermore, it helped me to integrate my new learning with my practical teaching experience in the classroom, in a way which was exciting and challenging. This was also a path that opened up new avenues for my own professional development. Having identified the complications that the teachers face in Libya especially the teachers of writing, I think organizing meetings for them is very important where they can discuss, share knowledge and experience. In accordance with Hismanglu (2010:111), English language teachers are often 'in need of effective professional development to keep pace with the rapidly changing and developing educational setting.

Last but not least '' A good teacher is like a candle- it consumes itself to light the way for others''
as the proverb goes.

Appendices

Appendix 1:

1.1 The main public universities are:

1. Tripoli University (Al-Fateh University before). Students: over 45,000- staff:2,500- 2,999
2. Al-Jabal Al-Gharbi University
3. 7th October Misurata University
4. Academy of Graduate Studies
5. Tripoli University for Medical Science
6. Al-Tahadi University
7. Arab Medical University
8. Asmarya University for Islamic Studies
9. Civil Aviation and Meteorology Higher Institute
10. Elmergib University
11. Garyounis University
12. Higher Institute for Engineering Science
13. Higher Institute of Electronics Bani-Walid
14. Higher Institute of Industrial Technology
15. Libyan International Medical University (LIMU)
16. Libya Open University
17. Omar Al-Mukhtar University
18. Sebha University
19. Seventh of April University

1.2 Libyan Student IELTS scores

Upon entry:

Applicant	Year of Entry	IELTS Score
Student 1	September 2011/12	Listening: 4.0 Reading: 4.5 Writing: 5.0 Speaking: 5.0
Student 2	September 2012/13	Listening: 4.5 Reading: 5.0 Writing: 4 Speaking: 4.5
Student 3	September 2009/10	IELTS Waived
Student 4	January 2012	IELTS Waived
Student 5	September 2012/13	Attended a University Foundation course
Student 6	September 2013/14	IELTS Waived, attended an external college Intermediate English Language course
Student 7	January 2013	Listening: 6.0 Reading: 6.0 Writing: 5 Speaking: 6.0
Student 8	September 2012/13	Listening: 5.0 Reading: 5.0 Writing: 4.5

		Speaking: 6.0
Student 9	September 2013/14	IELTS Waived
Student 10	January 2012	Listening: 5.5 Reading: 5.5 Writing: 5.5 Speaking: 6.0
Student 11	January 2013	Listening: 6.5 Reading: 5.5 Writing: 6.0 Speaking: 7.0
Student 12	January 2012	Listening: 4.0 Reading: 4.5 Writing: 4.5 Speaking: 6.0
Student 13	September 2012/12	Listening: 5.5 Reading: 6.0 Writing: 5.0 Speaking: 6.0
Student 14	January 2013	IELTS WAIVED
Student 15	September 2013/14	IELTS WAIVED DUE TO ALREADY HOLDING UK DEGREE
		Listening: 3.5 Reading: 4.0

Student 16	January 2010	Writing: 4.5 Speaking: 4.5
Student 17	September 2010/11	Listening: 4.5 Reading: 4.5 Writing: 4.5 Speaking: 5.0
Student 18	January 2010	IELTS Waived, attended an external college Intermediate English Language course
Student 19	January 2010	IELTS Waived, attended an external college Intermediate English Language course
Student 20	September 2012/13	Listening: 6.0 Reading: 5.5 Writing: 5.0 Speaking: 6.0
Student 21	January 2013	Listening: 5.5 Reading: 6.5 Writing: 5.5 Speaking: 5.5
Student 22	September 2013/14	Listening: 5.0 Reading: 5.0 Writing: 5.5 Speaking: 5.0
Student 23	January 2010	Attended a University Foundation course

Student 24	September 2013/14	Listening: 4.5 Reading: 4.0 Writing: 4.5 Speaking: 4.5
Student 25	September 2012/13	Listening: 4.5 Reading: 4.0 Writing: 4.0 Speaking: 4.0
Student 26	September 2012/13	IELTS Waived, attended an external college Intermediate English Language course
Student 27	September 2012/13	Listening: 5.0 Reading: 5.0 Writing: 5.0 Speaking: 45

A .1.3 Request for Permission Letter for Research at Aljabel Algharbi University/ Tripoli University.

School of Humanities and Media

University of Huddersfield

Queens gate Huddersfield HD1 3DH

United Kingdom

To Whom It May Concern:

I am an existing English lecturer at aljabal algarbi and currently a PhD student in Department of History, English Languages and Media, in the School of Music, Humanities and Media at the University of Huddersfield, Uk. I am sponsored by Aljabal algarbi University. At present I am in the process of conduction a research project as part of my doctoral dissertation under the supervision of Jim O'Driscoll School of Languages of the University of Huddersfield, UK. My research study is entitled "An investigation of face to face feedback on Second language writing in the Libyan higher education context ''.

The study aims to investigate the effects of face to face feedback on writing. Tests will be used to assess students' writing product whereas interview will be utilized to gather data on attitudes from both students and teachers.

The benefit of this project for the second and foreign language teachers is that they will help students improve their writing with certain technique.

Therefore, I would like your permission to conduct the research through Aljabal Algharbi University by using the third year English department students as my research participants. The participants which will be recruited are about 200 with about four classes and syllabus that will be used is the regular one that is used in the university.

The research project will last for four months, a one semester experimental study which will be started as soon as I get the permission.

Yours Faithfully,

Aziza Ibrahim Ghgam

A1.5 Consent form;

The research will mainly be for higher education. The age of the students is 18 and over. In this study appropriate arrangements will be made with university generally and the English department and the teacher who will be interviewed specifically. I will abide by the institution requirements and procedures of engaging with the students. The participants will have the right to withdraw from the study whenever they want to do so without prejudice or penalty. Although this arrangement could cause some limitation to the data, however, it is better than compromising ethical issues. If that occurs I will return to my supervisor's advice and support.

Referral:

Before I conduct the interview with students I will make them aware of the importance of the study. Anonymity would be preserved and none of the participant's names would be disclosed for any other reason unless they would like their names to be used in the paper. Regards, the instructors they will be interviewed in their mother tongue in order to enhance more information.

Recruitment of participants:

As mentioned before, a full explanation of intentions of the study will be explained and issues of confidentiality and anonymity will be clarified.

 I will work according to the ethical approval and I will do my best to meet the required standards. As an experienced teacher for a long time I am familiar with the requirements of how I conduct myself when working with others both students and teachers.

Participant's Informed Consent Form

Please read carefully. This form is to ensure that you understand the purpose of this research project and the nature of your requested participation so that you can decide whether you wish to participate in this learning project. There are no penalties of any sort, regardless of your decision.

Name of university and department	University of Huddersfield , Department of History, English, Languages and Media. Course of study: PhD
Name, affiliation, and means of contacting the research supervisor	Jim O' Driscoll

Student/s Conducting Learning Project		
Name (Please Print)	Contact Information	Signature
Aziza Ibrahim Ghgam	e-mail: aziza1993g@hotmail.com	Aziza Ibrahim

Title of the research project:	Investigating the effectiveness of face to face feedback in learning writing on Libyan EFL learners: Evidence from the Libyan higher education context
Purpose of the research project:	In order to learn how to teach writing effectively and help ESL students writing for my future students in my home country, I would like to examine Libyan students' writing needs as well as their attitude to the face to face feedback that instructors endeavour to respond to their needs.
Procedures:	I would like to interview you for 20 to 30 minutes on a) the kinds of Feedback you think you need to improve your writing in order to complete your programme of study successfully and without suffering from the problems that you face when you write; b) what kind of skills you think you gain from feedback you are currently getting.

Duration and location:	two interviews (pre- post face to face feedback) of about 30 minutes at Tripoli university
Anonymity/Confidentiality:	Anonymity will be offered to you.
Potential benefits/potential discomfort/Probable risks (if any):	No discomfort is expected in this project and if you feel any discomfort, please do not hesitate to let me know
Right to withdraw:	You have the right to withdraw at any time without prejudice or penalty.
Debriefing:	Debriefing will be offered to you.

Consent

I have read the above description of the learning project and understand the conditions of my participation. My signature indicates that I agree to participate in this learning project.

Participant's Name (Please print)   Participant's Signature   Date

Appendix 2:

A.2.1 Subjects Studied by English department Students of Tripoli University

<div align="center">

Tripoli University

English Department

</div>

Subjects Studied by English department Students of Tripoli University as a requirement for BA in English.

5- English Departments' Course Requirements (1st Semester)

No	Subject	Language
1st Semester		
1	English Grammar 1	English
2	Reading Comprehension 1	English
3	Listening & Speaking 1	English
4	Writing 1	English
5	Phonetics 1	English
6	Arabic Langauge1	Arabic
7	Psychology	Arabic
2nd Semester		
8	English Grammar 2	English
9	Reading Comprehension 2	English
10	Listening & Speaking 2	English
11	Writing 2	English
12	Phonetics 2	English
13	Arabic Language 2	Arabic
14	Islamic studies 1	Arabic
15	Computer 1	Arabic
16	Foundations of Education	Arabic
3rd Semester		
17	English Grammar 3	English
18	Reading Comprehension 3	English
19	Listening & Speaking 3	English
20	Applied Linguistics 1	English
21	Linguistics 1	English
22	Computer 2	Arabic
23	Arabic Language 3	Arabic
24	Educational Psychology 2	Arabic
25	Principles Statistic	Arabic
4th Semester		
No	Subject	Language

26	English Grammar 4	English
27	Reading Comprehension 4	English
28	Listening & Speaking 4	English
29	Creative Writing 1	English
30	Theoretical Linguistics 2	English
31	English literature 1	English
32	Arabic Langauge4	Arabic
33	Psychology	Arabic
34	General Teaching Methods	Arabic
35	Islamic studies 2	Arabic
	5ᵗʰ Semester	
36	Advanced Listening & Speaking 1	English
37	Grammatical Structures 1	English
38	Advanced Reading 1	English
39	Writing 3	English
40	Academic Writing	English
41	Methods of Teaching	English
42	Foundation curriculum	Arabic
	6ᵗʰ Semester	
43	Assessment and Evaluation	English
44	Strategies 1	English
45	Translation	English
46	Teaching English Language Skills	English
47	Computer assisted Language Learning	English
48	Elective Course	
49	Teaching aids	
50	Research methods	
	7th semester	
51	Strategies 2	English
52	English Literature 2	English
53	Research Methods in English Language Teaching	English
54	Elective course	
55	Mental Health	
	8th semester	
56	Teaching Practice	
57	Graduation Project	

Elective courses

No	Subject	Language
1	Academic Writing 2	English
2	Advanced Reading 2	English
3	Advanced Reading 3	English
4	Creative Writing 2	English
5	Vocabulary Development	English
6	Psycholinguistics	English
7	Applied Linguistics 2	English
8	History and Varieties of English	English
9	Advanced Listening and speaking 2	English
10	Advanced Listening and speaking 3	English
11	Teaching English to Young Learners	English
12	Grammatical Structure 3	English

Adopted from English Department- Tripoli University

A.2.2 COURSE DESCRIPTION OF ENGLISH DEPARTMENT for Al-Jabal Al Garbi University

FIRST YEAR:

SUBJECT	NUMBER OF UNITS	NUMBER OF hours
Grammar	4	4
Reading comprehension	4	4
Writing 1	4	4
Vocabulary building	2	2
Introduction to literature	2	2
Phonetics 1	2	2
Listening	4	4
Conversation	2	2

Second year:

SUBJECT	NUMBER OF UNITS	NUMBER OF hours
Grammar 2	4	4
Reading comprehension 2	2	2
Writing 2	4	4
Conversation	2	2
Listening	2	2
Phonetics 2	2	2
Introduction to novel	2	2
Introduction to poetry	2	2

Third year:

SUBJECT	NUMBER OF UNITS	NUMBER OF hours
Grammar 3	4	4
Reading comprehension 2	2	2
Writing 3	2	2
Conversation	2	2
Listening	2	2
Phonetics 3	2	2
Novel	2	3
Poetry	2	3
Short story	2	3
Introduction to linguistics	2	2
Language acquisition	2	2
Applied linguistics	2	3
Research methods	2	2

Fourth year

SUBJECT	NUMBER OF UNITS	NUMBER OF hours
Grammar structure	4	4
Reading comprehension 2	2	2
Writing 4	2	2
Conversation	2	2
Listening	2	2
Phonology	2	2
Novel	2	3
Criticism	2	3
Short story	2	3
Theoretical linguistics	2	2
Research paper	4	4

Appendix 3:

<div align="center">Indicative Questions</div>

Simi-structured interviews

3.1 Students' interviews

3.1.1 Pre- Face-to-face feedback interviews

These are some of the questions that I will ask students about their expectations on the conferences before they start the conference.

- What is good writing?
- What makes writing difficult in general?
- How do you find writing in English?

- How do like your draft so far? What do you think about your drafts?
- What do you think are the strong points and weak points of the draft?
- What would you like to revise in the next draft?
- What difficulties did you experience when writing a paper in general and this paper especially?
- How do you like the written comments from your teacher?
- What would you like to tell your instructor if you get a chance to have face to face feedback?
- What is the most important thing you want to talk about at the conference?
- Do you think the conference will help you with your paper? Why or why not?
- Do you feel nervous or uncomfortable about the conference? Or are you happy to talk about your paper?

3.1.2 Post- Face-to-face feedback interviews

Dear Student,

Now that your writing class has come to a close, I would appreciate it if you could think retrospectively about what it has been covered in the class and the writings that you have completed so far as well as the conferencing feedback method that you experienced in order to answer my question as a follow to the interview that we have done at the beginning of the term

Thank you in advance for your co-operation

- How did you feel about the conference and how do you feel now?
- What did your teacher say about your paper? And what suggestions did the teacher make?
- What did you think about these comments and suggestions?
- Will you incorporate these suggestions in your next draft (revision)? Why, why not?
- What type of feedback have you benefited from and enjoyed more?
- What do you think you have learned from the conference?
- Do you think the conference is helpful to improve writing? How?
- What would you like to suggest about the conference? What do you want to do more and what do you want your teacher to do at the conference?
- When you revise your drafts which feedback do you tend to consider more than the other, teacher comments, conference or both? Why?
- Do you think feedback (which one) will help you in your future writing?
- How much do you feel face to face feedback is helping you improve your writing tasks (from 1 to 5)?

  1) No improvement   2) less improvement   3) undecided   4) better improvement   5) excellent improvement.
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of teacher comments, conference?

Thank you for your participation.

Appendix 4

4.1 Teacher Interview Questions

Teacher Interview Sample Questions on Teacher's opinion about students writing before and after getting face-to-face feedback.(part 1 at the beginning of the study and part 2 at the end of the study)

The purpose of teacher interview questions is to further scrutinize the importance of face to face feedback in helping students improve their writing.

4.1.1 Part 1

2. Can you please talk about the writing activities that you often conduct in your class and do they prove to be useful to all the students?

3. What are your general expectations from your students when they write something? How do you find that when you read their writing?

4. What are your students' strengths and weaknesses when they write? Do they ask for illustration about their writing results? Do they pay attention more to the grading or learning?

5. What do you think about giving feedback (does it work or not)?if yes, which kind of feedback do you think help students more ; written feedback, peer feedback, face-to face feedback? Why?

6. You must have come across times when students' writing is very weak in class. How do you manage to help them (in other words, how do you help students who are struggling to achieve better result)?

7. How do you keep your students engaged 90-100% of the time?

8. How do you encourage students to learn? Can a student be forced to learn?

9. What do you think the teacher should focus on more the quality or quantity of writing? Why?

10. Should teachers provide opportunities for students to express their understanding, classroom dialogue that focuses on exploring understanding and feedback which includes opportunities to improve and guidance on how to improve?

4.1.2 Part 2

1. How did you feel about the face to face feedback and how do you feel the students' attitude?
2. How did your students response to face to face feedback? And are there any changes in their writing?
3. Will they incorporate these suggestions in their next draft (revision)? Why, why not?
4. What type of feedback have they benefited from and enjoyed more?
5. What do you think they have learned from the conference?
6. Do you think the conference is helpful to improve writing? How?
7. What would you like to suggest about the conference? What do you want to do more and what do you want your students to do at the conference?
8. When students revise their drafts which feedback do you tend to consider more than the other, teacher comments, conference or both? Why?
9. Do you think face to face feedback will help students in their future writing?
10. What are the advantages and disadvantages of face to face feedback or conference?

Appendix 5: Students scores on Pre-& Post Test: control and treatment group.

5.1: students' marks before and after face-to-face feedback (treatment group).

No	Sex	Academic year	His/her mark before Con feedback	His/her mark after Con feedback
1-	F	3	7/10	8/10
2-	F	3	6/10	8/10
3-	F	3	6/10	6/10
4-	F	3	7/10	8/10
5-	F	3	5/10	7/10
6-	M	3	5/10	6/10
7-	F	3	4/10	6/10
8-	F	3	5/10	5/10
9-	F	3	4/10	6/10
10-	F	3	7/10	8/10
11-	F	3	6/10	7/10
12-	F	3	5/10	7/10
13	F	3	5/10	6/10
14-	F	3	5/10	7/10
15	F	3	4 /10	7/10
16	F	3	6/10	8/10
17	F	3	7.5/10	9/10
18	F	3	4/10	6/10
19	F	3	6/10	6/10
20	M	3	3/10	5/10
21	F	3	4/10	6/10
22	M	3	5/10	5/10
23	F	3	5/10	6/10
24	F	3	6.5/10	8/10
25	F	3	7/10	7.5/10
26	F	3	5/10	5.5/10
27	F	3	6/10	7/10
28	M	3	4/10	6/10
29	F	3	5/10	6.5/10
30	F	3	6/10	7/10

31	F	3	4.5/10	6/10
32	F	3	6/10	7/10
33	F	3	6/10	8/10
34	F	3	6.5/10	7.5/10
35	M	3	3/10	5/10
36	M	3	5/10	6.5/10
37	M	3	4/10	5/10
38	M	3	5.5/10	6/10
39	M	3	4/10	6/10
40	F	3	6/10	8.5/10
41	F	3	6/10	8/10
42	F	3	5/10	6/10
43	F	3	6/10	7/10
44	F	3	5.5/10	7/10
45	F	3	5/10	6/10
46	F	3	6.5/10	8/10
47	F	3	5/10	7/10
48	F	3	5/10	6.5/10
49	F	3	5/10	6/10
50	M	3	5.5/10	7/10
52	F	3	7/10	8.5/10
53	M	3	4.5/10	5.5/10
54	F	3	3/10	4/10
55	M	3	3/10	4.5/10
56	F	3	4/10	5/10
57	F	3	5/10	6/10
58	F	3	4/10	5/10
59	F	3	4/10	5.5/10
60	F	3	5/10	6/10
61	F	3	3/10	4.5/10
62	F	3	3/10	6/10
63	F	3	4/10	5/10
64	F	3	3/10	4/10
65	M	3	7/10	8/10
66	M	3	4/10	6/10

67	F	3	5/10	7/10
68	F	3	5/10	6/10
69	F	3	3/10	4/10
70	F	3	4/10	6/10
71	F	3	3.5/10	5/10
72	F	3	5/10	7/10
73	F	3	2/10	3/10
74	F	3	5/10	6/10
75	F	3	3/10	5/10
76	F	3	3/10	4/10
77	F	3	2.5/10	4/10
78	M	3	5/10	6/10
79	F	3	5/10	6/10
80	F	3	5/10	7/10
81	F	3	7/10	8/10
82	M	3	4.5/10	6/10
83	M	3	4/10	6/10
84	F	3	5.5/10	6/10
85	F	3	4.5/10	6/10
86	M	3	7/10	9/10
87	F	3	5/10	7/10
88	F	3	6/10	8/10
89	F	3	3/10	5/10
90	F	3	3/10	4/10
91	M	3	4/10	5/10
92	M	3	3/10	4/10
93	F	3	3/10	5/10
94	M	3	5/10	5/10
95	F	3	6/10	6/10
96	F	3	4/10	6/10
97	M	3	5/10	7/10
98	F	3	4/10	5/10
99-	M	3	5/10	7/10
100-	F	3	7/10	9/10

Total			480	615

Table (1) illustrates the students' marks before and after face to face feedback

(treatment group)

5.2: students' marks before and after written feedback (control group)

No	Sex	Academic year	His/her mark before written feedback	His/her mark after written feedback
1-	F	3	5/10	6/10
2-	F	3	6/10	6/10
3-	F	3	5.5/10	6/10
4-	F	3	7.5/10	8/10
5-	F	3	6/10	7/10
6-	F	3	5/10	5/10
7-	F	3	4/10	4.5/10
8-	F	3	5/10	5/10
9-	F	3	4/10	5/10
10-	F	3	7/10	7/10
11-	F	3	5.5/10	6/10
12-	F	3	4/10	4/10
13	M	3	5/10	5.5/10
14-	F	3	4/10	5/10
15	F	3	4 /10	4.5/10
16	F	3	6/10	7/10
17	F	3	7/10	8/10
18	F	3	3/10	3.5/10
19	F	3	4/10	6/10
20	F	3	3/10	4/10
21	F	3	4/10	4.5/10
22	F	3	5/10	5/10
23	F	3	5/10	5/10
24	F	3	6/10	6.5/10
25	F	3	7/10	7.5/10

26	M	3	5/10	5/10
27	F	3	6/10	7/10
28	M	3	6/10	6/10
29	F	3	5/10	6.5/10
30	F	3	4/10	Absent
31	M	3	4.5/10	5/10
32	F	3	3/10	5/10
33	M	3	6/10	8/10
34	F	3	4/10	5/10
35	F	3	3/10	5/10
36	F	3	5/10	6.5/10
37	F	3	4/10	4/10
38	F	3	5.5/10	6/10
39	F	3	4/10	Absent
40	F	3	5.5/10	7/10
41	F	3	5/10	6/10
42	F	3	5/10	5.5/10
43	F	3	6/10	7/10
44	F	3	5/10	7/10
45	F	3	4.5/10	6/10
46	F	3	3/10	4/10
47	M	3	5/10	5/10
48	F	3	5/10	5.5/10
49	F	3	4/10	5/10
50	M	3	5/10	6/10
52	M	3	7/10	8/10
53	F	3	5.5/10	6.5/10
54	F	3	5/10	Absent
55	M	3	3/10	4.5/10
56	M	3	3/10	4/10
57	F	3	4/10	5/10
58	F	3	4.5/10	5/10
59	F	3	4/10	5.5/10
60	F	3	5.5/10	6/10
61	F	3	3.5/10	4.5/10

62	F	3	5/10	6/10
63	F	3	3/10	5/10
64	F	3	2/10	3/10
65	M	3	2/10	2/10
66	F	3	3/10	5/10
67	F	3	4/10	5.5/10
68	F	3	6/10	7/10
69	F	3	3/10	3.5/10
70	F	3	4/10	4/10
71	F	3	3.5/10	4/10
72	F	3	6/10	7/10
73	F	3	5/10	5/10
74	F	3	5/10	6/10
75	F	3	3/10	4/10
76	F	3	3/10	3/10
77	F	3	5/10	5/10
78	F	3	4/10	4/10
79	F	3	3/10	4.5/10
80	F	3	5/10	6/10
81	F	3	4/10	6/10
82	F	3	7/10	7/10
83	F	3	4/10	6/10
84	F	3	5 /10	6/10
85	F	3	4/10	5/10
86	M	3	6/10	7/10
87	F	3	5.5/10	6/10
88	F	3	3/10	4/10
89	M	3	6/10	6.5/10
90	F	3	3/10	4/10
91	F	3	6/10	6/10
92	M	3	7/10	8/10
93	M	3	5/10	6/10
94	M	3	4/10	6/10
95	F	3	5/10	5/10
96	M	3	5/10	7/10

97	F	3	4/10	6/10
98	F	3	3/10	3/10
99-	F	3	5/10	6/10
100-	F	3	7/10	Absent
Total			463.5	520.5

Table (2) illustrates the students' marks before and after written feedback (control group)

Appendix 6.A:

Some materials that was used in the course

Looking at an outline

| Read the outline on page 65. Answer the questions.

  a. What will be the thesis statement of the essay?
  b. How many body paragraphs will the essay have?
  c. How many supporting points will the third paragraph have? What will they be?
  d. How many details will the fourth paragraph have? What will they be?

Writing an outline

How to write an outline

Before writing an outline, you must go through the usual process of gathering ideas, editing them, and deciding on a topic for your writing. Writing an outline can be a very useful way of organizing your ideas and seeing how they will work together.

To show how the ideas work together, number them. To avoid confusion, use several different types of numbers and letters to show the organization of the ideas. Use roman numerals (I, II, III, IV, V, VI, etc.) for your essay's main ideas: your introduction and thesis statement, your body paragraphs, and your conclusion. Write all of these first, before going into more detail anywhere.

  I. Introduction
  II. First main idea
  III. Second main idea
  IV. Third main idea
  V. Conclusion

Next, fill in more information for your body paragraphs by using capital roman letters (A, B, C, etc.). Use one letter for each supporting idea in your body paragraph. Complete this information for each body paragraph before going into more detail.

  I. Introduction
  II. First main idea
      A. First supporting point
      B. Second supporting point
      ... and so on.

Finally, use Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3, etc.) to give details for your supporting points. Not every supporting point will have details, and some points will have several. It is not important to have the same number of details for every supporting point.

  I. Introduction
  II. First main idea
      A. First supporting point
          1. First detail
          2. Second detail
      B. Second supporting point
          1. First detail
          2. Second detail
      ... and so on.

9 Outlining an Essay

In this unit, you will learn …
the purpose of an outline.
how to write an outline.

What is an outline?
An outline is a list of the information you will put in your essay. You can see an example of an outline on page 65.

An outline …

- begins with the essay's thesis statement.

- shows the organization of the essay.

- tells what ideas you will discuss and shows which ideas will come first, second, and so on.

- ends with the essay's conclusion.

Writing an outline before you write an essay will …

- show you what to write before you actually begin writing.

- help make your essay well organized and clearly focused.

- keep you from forgetting any important points.

"Picture your skeleton: although you don't see it, it supports your body. In the same way, although your reader won't see your outline, making an outline in advance will support your essay by providing its structure. In fact, adding more information to an outline is called 'fleshing it out.'"

WRITING AN OUTLINE

I. Xxx xx x xxx
   A. Xx xxx xxx
   B. Xx xx xxx
II. Xx xxxx xx
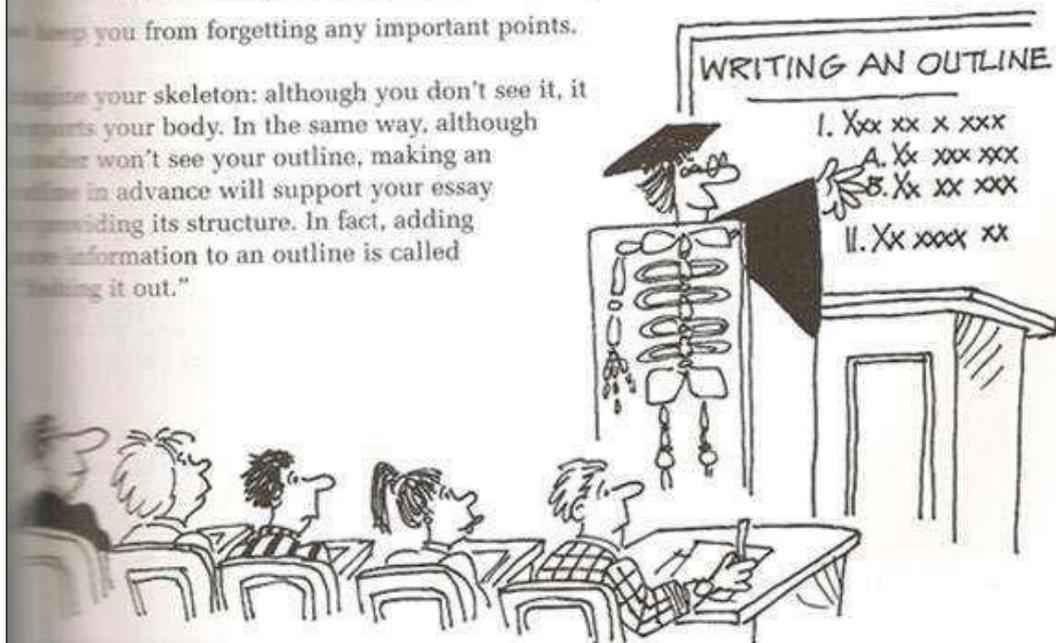
Looking at an outline

I   Read the outline on page 65. Answer the questions.

   a. What will be the thesis statement of the essay?
   b. How many body paragraphs will the essay have?
   c. How many supporting points will the third paragraph have? What will they be?
   d. How many details will the fourth paragraph have? What will they be?

Writing an outline

How to write an outline

Before writing an outline, you must go through the usual process of gathering ideas, editing them, and deciding on a topic for your writing. Writing an outline can be a very useful way of organizing your ideas and seeing how they will work together.

To show how the ideas work together, number them. To avoid confusion, use several different types of numbers and letters to show the organization of the ideas. Use roman numerals (I, II, III, IV, V, VI, etc.) for your essay's main ideas: your introduction and thesis statement, your body paragraphs, and your conclusion. Write all of these first, before going into more detail anywhere.

   I. Introduction
   II. First main idea
   III. Second main idea
   IV. Third main idea
   V. Conclusion

Next, fill in more information for your body paragraphs by using capital roman letters (A, B, C, etc.). Use one letter for each supporting idea in your body paragraph. Complete this information for each body paragraph before going into more detail.

   I. Introduction
   II. First main idea
      A. First supporting point
      B. Second supporting point
      ... and so on.

Finally, use Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3, etc.) to give details for your supporting points. Not every supporting point will have details, and some points will have several. It is not important to have the same number of details for every supporting point.

   I. Introduction
   II. First main idea
      A. First supporting point
         1. First detail
         2. Second detail
      B. Second supporting point
         1. First detail
         2. Second detail
         ... and so on.

Don'tSuppotlN1ffifEncfJ:Y:

I. NuclearpowerisnotagoodenCflVsourceforthe"orld.

1. Veryexpensive

   A. Nuclearfuelisexpensive

   6. Nuclearpowerplantsareexpensi"et obuildnndoperj\C
     1. Costofconslruc.1io11
     2. Costoftrainingworkers
     3. Costofsafct•featuresIll

.Nuclearmaterials:ireno1snfe

   A. Nuclearruelsaredangerous
     1. Miningfuelsproducesradioactivegas
     2. .Workingwithradioactivefuelsc anhannworkers

   Jl.Nuclearwasteproductsaredangerous
     1.Veryradioactive
     2.Difficulttodisposeoforstoresafely

rV.Thereisarcatpossibilityofaccidents

   A. Nuclearpowerplantscanfail
     1. ThreeMileIsland.U.S.A.(1979)
     2.Tarapur.India(1992)
     3.Darlington,Canada(1992)

   B. Workerscanmakemistakes1. Chernobyl.U.SS.R.(1986)
     2. Kola,nussia(1991)
     3. Tokaimura.japan(1999)

   C. NaturaldisasterscanOCC\ir
     1. Earthquake:Kozloduy,Bulgaria(1977)
     2.Torllitdo:Moruroa,thePacific(1981)

\/.BecauseofthecOStnndthedanger.theworldsho ulddevelopdifferenttypesofenergytoreplacen uclearpower.

9

2 Fill in this outline for the essay in Unit 8, exercise 1 on page 57. Then compare with a partner.

The Changing Vocabulary of English

I. Thesis statement: ....

II. Words introduced by ....

    A. ....

        1. From an African language

        2. Now used all over the world to mean ....

    B. Jazz

        1. Came from ....

        2. Exact origin unknown

III. ....

    A. Cool

        1. ....

        2. New meanings

    B. ....

        1. "Original" meaning

        2. ....

IV. ....: Existing ethnic groups in the United States as well as new immigrants will surely continue to bring new words to English and give fresh meanings to existing words.

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3   Label each statement T for thesis statement, M for main idea, S for supporting point, or C for conclusion.

Title: The Benefits of Yoga

a.   .... Develops clear thinking

b.   .... Physical benefits

c.   .... Improves concentration

d.   .... Reduces fear, anger, and worry

e.   .... Mental benefits

f.   .... Improves blood circulation

g.   .... Improves digestion

h.   .... Helps you feel calm and peaceful

i.   .... Develops self-confidence

j.   .... Practicing yoga regularly can be good for your mind, your body, and your emotions.

k.   .... Makes you strong and flexible

l.   .... Therefore, to build mental, physical, and emotional health, consider practicing yoga.

m.   .... Emotional benefits

4   Arrange the ideas in exercise 3 above into an outline. Compare your finished outline with a partner.

I.   ....

II.   ....

   A.   ....

   B.   ....

III.   ....

   A.   ....

   B.   ....

   C.   ....

IV.   ....

   A.   ....

   B.   ....

   C.   ....

V.   ....

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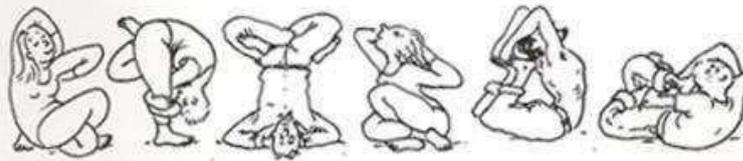
Evaluating an outline

⟳ **The outline checklist**

Before you start writing your essay, check your outline for organization, support, and topic development. If possible, have a friend or your instructor check your outline too.

Organization

❑ paragraphs in the right order
❑ supporting points and details in the right order

Support

❑ each main idea related to the thesis statement
❑ each supporting point related to the paragraph's main idea
❑ each detail related to the paragraph's supporting points

Topic development

❑ enough (and not too many) main ideas to develop the thesis statement
❑ enough (and not too many) supporting points for each main point
❑ enough (and not too many) details for each supporting point

5 With a partner, check the outline on page 69 for organization, support, and topic development. What should the author add, subtract, or change in this outline? Share your ideas with another pair. Did you make the same recommendations?
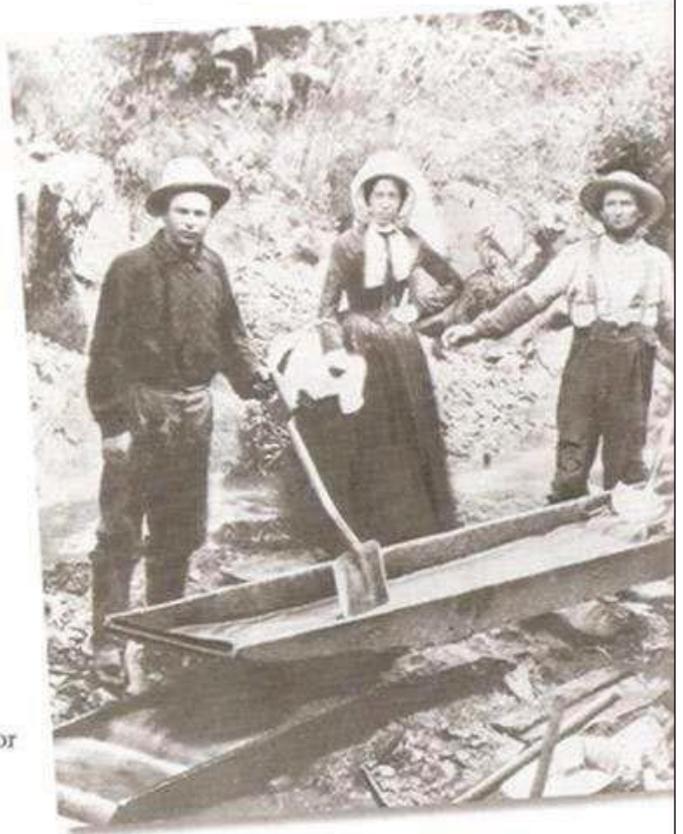
In 1848, gold was discovered in California. People from all over the world rushed to California to look for gold—they wanted to become rich. This was called "the gold rush."

The Effects of the California Gold Rush on the City of San Francisco

I. The California gold rush changed San Francisco in ways that we can still see today.

II. History of the gold rush
    A. 1848
        1. Gold was discovered near San Francisco
        2. The U.S. president tells the country there's gold in California
    B. 1864: the gold rush ends
    C. 1849: the gold rush begins as people from all over the world go to California to look for gold. Gold is very easy to find.
    D. 1850s: gold becomes more difficult to find; big, expensive machines are now needed to find gold
    E. Gold rushes in other countries
        1. Australia (1851–53)
        2. South Africa (1884)
        3. Canada (1897–98)

III. Effects on San Francisco today
    A. People still come to San Francisco hoping to get rich
        1. Computer industry
    B. Sightseeing is very popular in San Francisco
    C. San Francisco is still an expensive city
        1. Houses and land
        2. Food & clothing
        3. Many new fast-food restaurants sell cheap hamburgers
    D. Still problems in the city
    E. Technological development is still important
    F. There is no gold mining today
    G. Character of San Francisco today

IV. Changes in California in the 1800s
    A. Population increased—more than 40,000 people moved to California in 1848–50
    B. Everything became more expensive
        1. Houses and land
    C. Problems with crime and violence
    D. Technology to find gold improved

V. The special personality of San Francisco can be traced in part to the famous gold rush of the 1800s.

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6 Look at the thesis statement and topic sentences you wrote in Unit 8, exercise 8 on page 62. Write an outline for your essay. Then write the essay.

7 Exchange the essay you wrote for exercise 6 above with a partner. As you read your partner's essay, write an outline of the main ideas, supporting points, and details. Your partner will outline your essay. Discuss the outlines.

Review

8 Write a simple outline of yourself or your life. First, outline only the "body paragraphs." Your main ideas could include physical characteristics, your personality, your habits, your family, places you have lived, jobs you have had, things you like and dislike, and so on.

9 Explain your outline to a partner. Your partner will then add a "thesis statement" and "concluding statement."

10 Join another pair and present your complete outlines.

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Appendix 6B.1:

<u>LINKING WORDS:</u>

When you want to add to your argument or emphasise a statement	*Moreover- further- Additionally- Next- secondly, thirdly.* *And-In addition-As well as-Also-Too-Furthermore-Moreover-Apart from-In addition to-Besides*
When you want to make comparisons	*Similarly- Likewise- in the same way- equally*
When you want to highlight contrast	*Although- for all that- on the contrary- conversely- otherwise, yet- even so-But However- Although / even though- Despite / despite the fact that -In spite of / in spite of the fact that- Nevertheless- Nonetheless- While- Whereas-Unlike In theory… in practice…*
When you want to show differences or similarities	*Yet- even so- despite- notwithstanding.*
When providing reasons	*for this reason- to this end- for this purpose- because- since* *so that.*
When explaining results	*as, as a consequence- as a result- hence- thus-inevitably- Therefore- So- Consequently-This means that*

When providing examples	*for example, for instance, in other words, by way of illustration, such as, this demonstrates.*
Summarizing	*as has been noted- Finally- in brief- in short- to summarise-consequently-therefore- in conclusion- so- in other words- accordingly- In short-In brief- In summary- To summarise- In a nutshell-To conclude- In conclusion*

6.B.2: Useful Linking Words and Phrases For Essays

To indicate a contrast:

however	on the other hand	alternatively	in contrast
instead	conversley	on the contary	infact
rather	in comparison		
another possibility	but	better/worst still	
despite this	in spite		
of	nevertheless	notwithstanding	
for all that	yet	although	all the
same			

To provide an illustration

for example	that is	that is to say
in other words	namely	such as
typical of this/such	on such	a typical/particular/key
example		
including	especially	not
least		
cheifly	mainly	most
importantly		

To extend a point

simirlarly	equally	likewise	also
furthermore	Indeed	in the same	
way			
besides	above all	as well	in addition

To show cause and effect/conclusion:

so	therefore	thus

then	as result/consequence	resulting from
in this/that case	consequently	
for this reason	owing to/due to the fact	
it follows that	this suggests that	
	accepting/assuming this	
in conclusion	it might be concluded from this	this implies
in short	to conclude	in all

To show the next step:

first(ly) second(ly) place	to begin/start with	in the first/second
first and foremost	first and most importantly	first
another	then	after
next	afterwards	then
finally	ultimately	lastly

From:

Appendix 7: Sample writing task for the main study

7.1 Pre- test writing for main study

Watching TV is considered as an interested and effective for some people when other think it is really bad. Is television a positive or negative influence on our lives?

Write an argumentative essay about this topic. Use reasons and specific examples from your personal experience and knowledge to support your essay .You will have 45 minutes to plan, write, and proofread the essay.

7.2 Post- test writing for main study:

Watching TV is considered as an interested and effective for some people when other think it is really bad. Is television a positive or negative influence on our lives?

Write an argumentative essay about this topic. Use reasons and specific examples from your personal experience and knowledge to support your essay .You will have 45 minutes to plan, write, and proofread the essay.

7.3 delayed post- tests. (Choose two of the following topics)

1-Write a short essay about the causes and effects of the popularity of Fast Food Restaurants in Libya. Make sure your use appropriate transition words when you write your essay.

2- Smoking is a bad habit and should be avoided. Do you agree or disagree?

3- Most of the people use internet a lot these days. Some people say it has lots of positive sides, others believe that internet has more negative aspects that positive ones. What do you think about this technology and what are pros and cons of internet as well as which sides have more impacts?

Appendix 8

Criteria used as a guide for evaluating students' work

8.1 Content

Score	Relevance	Coherence	Organisation
9	- Fully address all parts of the task. - Presents a fully developed position in answer to the question with relevant, fully extended and well supported ideas.	- Uses cohesion in such a way that it attracts no attention.	- Skilfully manages paragraphs
8	- Sufficiently addresses all parts of the task.	- Manages all aspects of cohesion well.	- Uses paragraphing sufficiently and appropriately
7	-Addresses all parts of the task. - Presents a clear position throughout the response	- Presents, extends and supports main ideas, but there may be a tendency to over-generalise and/ or supporting ideas may lack focus. - Uses a range of cohesive devices appropriately although there may be some under-/ over-use	- Presents a clear central topic within each paragraph.

6	- Addresses all parts of the task although some parts may be more fully covered than others. Presents a relevant position although conclusions may become unclear or repetitive. - Presents relevant main ideas but some may be inadequately developed/ unclear.	- Arranges information and ideas coherently and there is a clear overall progression. - Uses cohesive devices effectively but cohesion within and/ or between sentences may be faulty or mechanical. - May not always use referencing clearly or appropriately.	- Uses paragraphing but not always logically.
5	-Addresses the task only partially; the format may be inappropriate in places - Expresses a position but the development is not always clear and there may be no conclusions drawn. - Presents some main ideas but these are limited and not sufficiently developed; there may be irrelevant detail.	-makes inadequate, inaccurate or over-use of cohesive devices - May be repetitive because of lack of referencing and substitution.	-Present information with some organization but there may be a lack of overall progression - May not write in paragraphs, or paragraphing may be inadequate.
4	-Responds to the task only in a minimal way or the answer is tangential; the format may be inappropriate.	- Presents information and ideas but these are not arranged coherently and there is	- May not write in paragraphs or these use may be confusing.

	-Presents a position but it is unclear. - Presents some main ideas but these are difficult to identify and may be repetitive, irrelevant or not well-supported	no clear progression in the response - Uses some basic cohesive devices but these may be inaccurate or repetitive.	
3	-Does not adequately address any part of the task. -Does not address a clear position. -Presents few ideas, which are largely undeveloped or irrelevant.	-Does not organize ideas logically - May use a very limited range of cohesive devices, and those used may not indicate a logical relationship between ideas.	- Presents few ideas, which are largely undeveloped or irrelevant. - Does not organize ideas logically
2	-Barely responds to the task. - Does not express a position	- May attempt to present one or two ideas but there is no development. - May use a very little range of cohesive devices, and those used may hardly indicate a logical relationship between ideas.	- May attempt to present one or two ideas but there is no development. - Has very little control of organizational features.
1	- Answer is completely unrelated to the task.	- May use a very little range of cohesive devices, and those used may hardly indicate a logical	- Answer is completely unrelated to the task. - fails to communicate any message.

		relationship between ideas.	
0	- fail to write anything	- fail to write anything	- fail to write anything

8.2 Grammar (Language).

Score	Vocabulary	Language Use	Mechanics
9	- Uses a wide range of vocabulary with very natural and sophisticated control of lexical features; rare minor errors occur only as 'slips'.	- Uses a wide range of structures with full flexibility and accuracy.	- An excellent mastery of writing conventions, free from spelling, punctuation, capitalization errors
8	- Uses a wide range of vocabulary fluently and flexibly to convey precise meanings - Skilfully uses uncommon lexical items but there may be occasional inaccuracies in word choice and collocation.	- Uses a wide range of structures. - The majority of structures are error-free. Makes only very occasional errors or inappropriacies.	- A good mastery of writing conventions with a few spelling, punctuation, capitalization errors
7	-Uses a sufficient range of vocabulary to allow some flexibility and precision. - Uses less common lexical items with some	- Uses a variety of complex structures. - Produced frequent error- free sentences.	- A sufficient mastery of writing conventions with a few spelling, punctuation, capitalization errors

	awareness of collocation and style. - May produce occasional errors in word choice, spelling and/ or word		but meaning is not obscured.
6	- Uses an adequate range of vocabulary for the task. - Attempts to use less common vocabulary but with some inaccuracy	- Uses a mix of simple and complex sentence forms. - Makes some errors in grammar and punctuation but they rarely reduce communication	-.Demonstrate an understanding of the writing conventions but some errors in grammar and punctuation which do not impede communication of ideas
5	- Uses a limited range of vocabulary, but this is minimally adequate for the task. - May make noticeable errors in spelling and/ or word formation that may cause some difficulty for the reader.	- Uses only a limited range of structures. - Attempts complex structures but these tend to be less accurate than simple sentences. - May make frequent grammatical errors and punctuation may be faulty; errors can cause some difficulty for the reader	- May make frequent grammatical errors and punctuation may be faulty; errors can cause some difficulty for the reader
4	-Uses only basic vocabulary which may be used repetitively or which may be inappropriate for the task.	- Uses only a very limited range of structures with only rare use of subordinate clauses.	- Some structures are accurate but error Predominate, and punctuation is often faulty.

	- Has limited control of word formation and/ or spelling; errors may cause strain for the reader.	- Some structures are accurate but errors predominate, and punctuation is often faulty.	
3	- Uses only a very limited range of words and expressions with very limited control of word formation and/ or spelling. - Errors in lexis may severely distort the message.	-Attempts sentence forms but errors in grammar and punctuation predominate and distort the meaning.	- Attempts sentence forms but errors in grammar and punctuation predominate and distort the meaning.
2	- Uses an extremely limited range of vocabulary; essentially no control of word formation and/ or spelling.	- Uses an extremely limited range of vocabulary; essentially no control of word formation and/ or spelling. - Cannot use sentence forms except in memorized phrases.	- No mastery of writing conventions, a piece of writing predominated by errors of spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing and illegible handwriting OR not enough0 to evaluate.
1	- Can only use a few isolated words.	- Can only use a few isolated words.	- Can only use a few isolated words.
0	- fail to write anything	- fail to write anything	- fail to write anything

Adapted from Hughey, J. B. (1983) Teaching ESL Composition: Principles and Techniques, Wormuth, D. R., Hartfiel, V.F., Jabcobs. H. L. and Zinkgraf, S. A. Rowley, MA: Newbury House p.140

8.3 Holistic Scoring Rubric

Score of 5: An essay at this level largely accomplishes all of the following:
- ➢ Effectively addresses the topic and task
- ➢ Is well organized and well developed, using clearly appropriate explanation, exemplification, and/ or details
- ➢ Displays unity, progression, and coherence
- ➢ Displays consistent facility in the use of language, demonstrating syntactic variety, appropriate word choice, and idiomaticity, though it may have minor lexical or grammatical errors.

Score of 4: An essay at this level largely accomplishes all of the following:

- ➢ Addresses the topic and task well though some points many not be fully elaborated
- ➢ Is generally well organized and well developed, using appropriate and sufficient explanation, exemplification, and/ or details
- ➢ Displays unity, progression, and coherence, though it may contain occasional redundancy, digression, or unclear connection.
- ➢ Displays facility in the use of language, demonstrating syntactic variety and range of vocabulary, though it will probably have occasional noticeable minor errors in structure or word form or idiomatic language use that do not interfere with meaning.

Score of 3: An essay at this level largely accomplishes all of the following:

- ➢ Addresses the writing topic and task using somewhat developed explanation, exemplification, and/ or details.
- ➢ Displays unity, progression, and coherence, though connection of ideas may be occasionally obscured.
- ➢ May demonstrate inconsistent facility in sentence formation and word choice that may result in lack of clarity and occasionally obscure meaning.
- ➢ May display accurate but limited range of syntactic structures and vocabulary

Score of 2: An essay at this level largely accomplishes all of the following:

➢ Limited development in response to the topic and task.

➢ Inadequate organization or connection of ideas.

➢ Inappropriate or insufficient exemplification, explanations, or details to support or illustrate generalizations in response to the task.

➢ A noticeably inappropriate choice of word forms.3

➢ An accumulation of errors in sentence structure and/ or usage.

Score of 1: An essay at this level largely accomplishes all of the following:

➢ Serious disorganization or under development.

➢ Little or no detail, or irrelevant specifics, or questionable responsiveness to the task.

➢ Serious and frequent errors in sentence structure or usage.

Appendix 9: Time schedule

The time schedule of the research activities is outlined in the following Table.

Date	Activity	Description of activity
October 2012	Permission for field work	A letter was requested to state the reasons for undertaking field work. A letter was sent, stating the need to visit both Tripoli University and Ajabal Al gharbi University to conduct interviews, perform observations, and collect data. I was given permission to carry out two terms of field work from November 2012 to the end of May 2012.
November 2012-January 2013	Classroom Observations	Weekly class observations at Tripoli University were done personally by me for the whole of first term. This information was documented in writing by the use of field notes.
November 2012-January 2013	Interviews with Teachers	Face to face interviews with the two writing teachers were conducted by me in The English Language department at Tripoli University. Throughout the interview I looked at the teachers' views regarding the use of feedback techniques and the issues that they face when they apply them. The interviews were voice recorded.
November 2012-January 2013	Interviews with Students	Face to face interviews in an informal context were conducted personally with 10 students (treatment group) from the English Language department at Tripoli university. The students' perceptions and attitudes regarding the use of types of feedback were elicited. The interviews were recorded both written and by voice. The interview was conducted before and after the experiment to validate the study results, where students' scores are compared before and after the face to face feedback.
November 2012- January 2013	Pre- post writing tests	Pre-test/ post-test control groups and treatment groups were used in this study in order to determine whether or not face to face feedback can help students improve their writing and reduce language errors.

February 2013- June 2013	Interview translation and writing the research method	Translating the interview that is done in Arabic
June 2013- December 2013-	Analysis and discussion of results	The collected data was analyzed, interpreted, and written up in the dissertation.

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