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Self-Assessment Versus Instructor's Evaluation of the Written Product in an EFL Context

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Abstract

The focus of this paper was on some EFL students' self-assessment (vis-à-vis their actual performance) in one writing course at the university level. In addition to contributing to the value of research on ESL learners' self-assessment, the study attempted to triangulate students' opinions with the grades those students received on their writings in one socio-cultural setting. Fifty EFL English majors taking a required writing course participated in this study. A pretest (the first drafts of the untimed writing) and a posttest (the timed writing) were used to collect data for this study over a whole semester. Oral and written corrective feedback was provided on content, organization, form, word choice, and mechanics. The findings revealed that although the majority of student writers generally claimed that the instructor's corrective feedback helped them improve their writing performance on all aspects of writing, the figures confirmed two specific findings: (1) there was some correspondence between students' claims and their actual improvements on form, word choice, and mechanics, and (2) there was no correspondence between students' claims and their actual improvements on content and organization.

Keywords: Self-Assessment; Instructor's Evaluation; Corrective Feedback; Students' Claims; Actual Performance; Written Product.

Introduction

To ameliorate second language learners' academic writing skills, writing instructors and writing curriculum planners have mainly been concerned with the research findings on the question of students' writing needs. Research has shown that self-assessment, which according to Chen (2008, 245) helps "students achieve desired learning outcomes", is one such need. Not only this, but self-assessment may also be a good predictor of actual learning since it taps students' beliefs about their learning capabilities, which can in turn influence academic motivation and learning (Schunk 1996). However, when considering classroom assessment practices, it turned out that there is some discrepancy between teachers' beliefs and students' beliefs about writing in general and about teachers' feedback practices in particular. This is probably so because the views, needs, and goals of both do not always match (Zhan 2016). Leki and Carson (1994, 95) argued that, "students' sense of their own needs and our sense as

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professionals of what they need do not match". Lemos (1999, 487) contended that "students' goals do not always match teachers' goals". Wang (2010, 140), therefore, called for teachers to "find out what their students think and feel about what and how they want to learn".

Research showed that students' self-evaluation of writing improvement has been impacted by (1) their attitudes towards teachers' approach of scaffolding, which mainly refers to the instructor's planned assistance of tutoring in problem solving (Wood et al. 1976), and (2) their attitudes towards writing instructor's error feedback. All in all, for self-evaluation to be effective and productive, it has to be reflective, thus promoting students' long-term language acquisition (James 1998). Writing, as claimed by Hawe and Dixon (2014, 69), is "constructed as a purposeful communication rather than completion of a task for the teacher" provided that "teachers establish an environment where students can freely exchange views about texts and mutually construct meaning in a thoughtful and reflective manner". The advantages of involving students in judging their own learning (viz. their self-assessment) has become almost indisputable in advocating learner's agency and autonomy and in gaining life-long learning skills (Chen 2008). Khonamri, Králik, Vítečková and Petrikovičová (2021, 77) have shown that learners need "to monitor themselves and reflect on their own work", a finding that was corroborated by the significant difference between the pretest and post-test.

Students' perceived capabilities were approached, albeit a little unalike, under different technical terms such as self-evaluation, self-appraisal, and self-judgment (Schunk 1995), self-assessment (Chen 2008), self-efficacy (Schunk 1996), rating (Saito and Fujita 2004). Although what these technical terms exactly mean is still a subject of heated debate among scholars in psychology and mainstream education (see Sullivan and Hall, 1997), one area that is still under-researched is finding out the correlation between students' perceived capabilities and achievement outcomes in second/foreign writing research. In this regard, Schunk (1996, 19) pointed out that "[f]uture research can examine differences in accuracy of self-appraisal across different types of contexts". However, little research has been conducted so far on the cognitive, social, pedagogical, and linguistic concerns that direct students' participation in classroom assessment practices across a wide range of contexts (Littlewood 1999).

One main concern to us has been that learners in some EFL contexts (such as ours) are rarely put in charge of evaluating their own learning (Luoma and Tarnanen 2003). In such contexts, students still believe that it is the teacher who has the sole authority and requisite knowledge to assess their learning (see Chen et al. 2002). At the practical front, it is difficult to figure out students' judgment of their learning. To date, there are at least two approaches: (1) conducting a correlation analysis of self- and teacher-awarded marks and (2) conducting a correlation analysis of self- and teacher-ability to assess according to already prescribed criteria of judgment (Matsuno 2009). Research findings on correlating students' evaluation with evaluation from other sources (including teacher and peer evaluation) have been conflicting (see Hajian et al. 2014). Whereas some studies reported similarities (e.g. Saito and Fujita 2004), others reported discrepancies (Yang 2002). Our current research endeavor is a modest attempt into this theoretical debate that awaits further field verification from diverse sociolinguistic contexts outside, to use Leki's (2001) terms, 'the Inner Circle' in the UK and the USA and 'more prominent nations' in East Asia and Eastern Europe. Hence, the socio-educational challenges that EFL teachers need to cope

with are surely different outside these circles. A considerable portion of research has shown how a variety of factors (internal and external) could shape foreign language writing instructions and feedback practices in different international settings (Reichelt 2009; Authors 2017)

Problem of the Study

Despite the relatively large portion of scholarship available to date on the critical role of teacher, peer, and self-evaluation of student writing (Ferris and Hedgcock 2014), no consensus has been reached as regards which properties of work (content, form, organization, word choice, and/or mechanics) teachers and students should exchange views on the most The general trend that gained momentum among scholars is that teacher feedback should be focused on issues of content and organization early in the writing process so as to get a feel for the overall quality of the piece of writing, saving grammar and mechanics issues to the end of the writing process (see Hawe et al. 2008). Therefore, what is still under-researched is cross-cultural field investigations that primarily focus on particular qualities or properties of the work and which of these properties the learners could benefit from the feedback the most (Sadler 2009). However, to prove the match (or lack thereof) between students' claims and their actual achievement, we need organized in-depth analyses of students' evaluative knowledge versus their productive expertise in the different aspects of their ESL/EFL writing in different socio-cultural contexts (see Chen 2008 for the Chinese context). As yet, a number of renowned experts in composition studies disseminated "holistic judgments as suggestions or even prescriptions about writing classroom practices". For example, whereas Paulus (1999) showed that peer assessments, for example, were mostly meaning-level revisions, Diab (2011) demonstrated that they caused more revisions of idea and organization. Rahimi (2013) showed how peer feedback could be shifted from focus on formal aspects of EFL writing to focus on content and organization.

Believing that the writing process is a socio-cognitive activity, we have not found enough studies that primarily provide sufficient details on how students perceive and actually benefit from teacher instruction and feedback for improving the different aspects of their ESL/EFL writing in different socio-cultural contexts. Studies on contrastive rhetoric and composition (e.g. Kaplan 1966) showed that "what goes in the mind" surely does not coincide one-to-one with "what comes out of the mouth". Following our hunch from field work, the thrust of the argument we dare to make here is that our learners' evaluative knowledge and their productive expertise on the different aspects of their ESL/EFL writing in the context in which this study was conducted do not always match. The researchers, as writing teachers in one part of the world, have always noticed that learners of English in their EFL context, despite acknowledging that their writing teachers' feedback practices are primarily content-oriented, often over-emphasize the structural (often superficial) characteristics of a piece of writing, thus relegating content and organization to only a marginal role.

The present study sought to examine a group of students' perceptions of self- and teacher feedback on their EFL writing vis-à-vis their actual achievement on the various properties of work, namely content, form, organization, word choice, and mechanics. However, due to the complexity of the research as it

pulls social, cognitive, and pedagogical concerns together, we need to lay down the theoretical constructs underlying this humble research endeavor.

Aims and Questions

The current research paper was an attempt to explore how the learners in one specific socio-educational context perceive their own writing abilities vis-à-vis their teacher's perception of their writings. To be able to meet the broad aim of the study, the following two research questions were posed to guide the design of the research:

1) Did the instructor's comprehensive corrective feedback provided on students' writing assignments throughout the semester help them improve their writing performance, and if so, How?
2) Was there any statistically significant difference between the learners' self-assessment and the instructor's evaluation on the written products in this EFL context?

Pedagogical givens in this EFL environment

As the current study mainly focused on triangulating students' opinions with the teacher's grades they received on their writings, a few points about this EFL environment are in order here. First, the learners are all graduate of public and private schools where writing is largely reduced to a focus on formal, mechanical aspects, and the goal of writing is no more than a means to achieving overall language proficiency (learning-to-write not writing-to-learn). Because of this, assessment methods in these schools EFL context are largely conventional, i.e. to see how far the learners are successful in acquiring the knowledge the instructor has already conveyed to them. Students are, therefore, ascribed a grade (for ranking and comparing purposes) mainly based on their ability to "snapshot" (i.e. recall and reconstruct some knowledge of the content). In other words, actual writing practices in this context still give more value to information gathering. Teachers pardon themselves by the "diverse realities" of the learning environment such as heavy workload, classroom size and, above all, learners' cognitive maturity (authors 2017). The evaluation process is totally teacher-centered. By measuring students' proficiency through paper and pencil tests, the teacher is the sole evaluator and the students are the evaluatees.

However, at the university level, the syllabus of writing courses requires that assessment be content-based, process-oriented and socially-mediated, so the writing instructor is expected to guide students into managing their own learning about issues relevant to their personal lives and practical current and future needs by (1) providing them with many avenues of learning and (2) monitoring how they apply what they have learned in meaningful ways (i.e. supervising how the knowledge can be demonstrated by performing relevant tasks). Learners are, therefore, expected not only to recall and reconstruct, but more importantly to analyze, synthesis, and apply knowledge of the content. As a result, learners are not only expected to be involved in the learning process but also in the assessment process, too. All in all, the syllabus requires shifting the meta-language at the preparation, teaching, and assessment stages of writing away from the canonical grammar-focused classroom drilling to a socially-situated classroom practice (Hyland 2011; Ortega and Carson 2010). What this means is that although we acknowledge that writing is a cognitively demanding task (Riazi 1997; Schoonen et al. 2009), we also contend that human cognitive activities, as

socioculturalists (e.g. Resnick 1990) would argue, cannot be devoid of the social context in which they take place. Inherent in this line of reasoning is the belief that the social context is an integral part of the activity, not just the surrounding environment where that activity takes place.

Theoretical Framework

Advocates of the constructivist approach to learning strongly believe that a line of demarcation should be drawn between knowledge on the one hand and knowing on the other. Whereas knowledge, to them, is transferrable, knowing is "an adaptive activity in which one continually modifies one's knowledge of the world based on interaction with the environment" (Chen 2008, 240). Through continuous active involvement, the learners keep constructing their knowledge. An area of research in writing in a foreign/second language that still warrants further attention of research is the (mis)match between learners' perceived competence and their actual performance. Whereas the learners' competence' is their psychological or mental capacity of the language, performance is their actual production in that language. In short, there is always this (mis)match between what the learners know about language and what they do in that language. Drawing a line of demarcation between the learners' competence (knowledge of language stored in the minds of speakers) and their performance (the actual use of this knowledge by those speakers in concrete situations) is primarily needed in corrective feedback provision, primarily to distinguish between writing errors that learners make after receiving instruction and those they make without being instructed on. This is probably needed because oftentimes teachers target the learner's actual errors via meta-linguistic feedback (i.e. abstracting the problem by creating new language or vocabulary to better understand actual language productions). A serious problem that could arise in second language writing research is then like this: Although teachers' feedback in fact targets the learner's competence, their assessment is often made on the learners' actual performance.

As learners are often not able to use the information once they have learned it (a state of affairs evidenced by L2 learners' persistent fluctuations between correct and incorrect usage of the same structure), it becomes difficult for teachers to assess whether an error is due to lack of competency or limitations of performance. One major goal of research should, therefore, focus on whether the errors L2 learners make are a result of imperfect knowledge of L2 rules or a result of imperfect processing. Writing instructors' assessment of their students' writing requires a balanced focus on both their competence and their performance. A central question that arises when assessing learners writing products is like this: Is a learner's performance in an EFL writing class an accurate measure of what s/he actually knows about writing in that language?

To attempt an answer to such nontrivial question, there must be, we believe, an ongoing diagnosis of the learners' current level of competence and performance in writing in the foreign language. The goal should be two-fold: to provide appropriate corrective feedback and to make fairer assessment of students' writings. Both of these goals should, we believe, accord with the learners' developmental stage and the progress they make in their foreign language learning journey, giving, of course, the conditions under which feedback is provided and assessment is made.

Method

Participants and Setting

This study was conducted at Yarmouk University, Jordan. Fifty EFL undergraduate students participated in this study over a semester of 16 credit hours of writing instruction. The participants were all second-year English majors taking a required Engl. 205 writing course (Essay Writing) in the English Department, and they provided verbal informed consents to participate in the study. Their English language proficiency can be rated as low-intermediate, or as Basic users A2 (Waystage), with reference to Common European Framework (24). What matters here is that their foreign language proficiency skills were judged to be homogeneous in that they all had the same native language background of 10 years of English language instruction in a foreign environment, most of them got similar scores in the High school leaving exam which was an indispensable criterion for admission to the program, and their writing abilities were evaluated in terms of their general English language proficiency level by the researchers themselves.

Data collection instruments

The data collection instruments used were a pretest (the first untimed writing draft) and a posttest (the timed writing). Only timed writing, which was performed at the end of semester in a two-hour class, was subjected to statistical analysis. Both instruments were verified as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Construct Validity and Reliability of the Instruments

Component	Pretest		Posttest	
	Difficulty Index	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Difficulty Index	Corrected Item-Total Correlation
content	0.66	0.92	0.76	0.91
form	0.64	0.93	0.71	0.92
organization	0.68	0.94	0.70	0.92
Word choice	0.65	0.92	0.70	0.94
mechanics	0.57	0.79	0.63	0.84
Cronbach's α	0.96		0.97	

As measured by the coefficients of difficulty, the values of the constructive validity of the pretest ranged between (0.57 and 0.68), but as measured by the discrimination coefficients, these values ranged between (0.79 and 0.94), and their internal consistency was (0.96). The values of the constructive validity of the posttest, on the other hand, ranged as measured by the coefficients of difficulty between (0.63 and.76), but as measured by the discrimination coefficients, these values ranged between (0.84 and 0.94), and their internal consistency was (0.97). What these figures tell is that the internal consistency of both tests were truly valid.

Students were asked to write at least a one draft 5- paragraph essay entitled 'What effects has the instructor's provided corrective feedback had on improving your writing performance'. The instructor researcher intentionally chose the topic for this assignment, first to see to what extent the students benefited from the corrective feedback provided on the five aspects of writing (Content, form,

organization, word choice, and mechanics) and second whether their claims would match with their actual performance.

Treatment and procedure

All the participants in this study took a paragraph writing course as a prerequisite for the essay writing course. The writing approach adopted in teaching this writing course (essay writing) was process writing in which students went through three stages of writing: Prewriting in which the students were asked to brainstorm, outline, and organize their ideas, writing stage itself in which students were involved in writing and revising their ideas, and finally, post-writing in which students were asked to edit and polish their ideas. The participants claimed they had never experienced such an approach before, and that was the first time they were subjected to such a teaching practice. They claimed that what they did in the prerequisite writing course (Paragraph Writing) was writing topic sentences, combining sentences, doing grammar exercises, sometimes writing a single draft with few corrections on grammar only.

Before students got involved in actual writing, the instructor researcher spent the first three weeks of the semester explaining to and training students on how to write a coherent and cohesive essay through showing and discussing a number of sample essays followed by exercises and activities that demonstrate these domains. After this period of training and throughout the semester, students were trained on writing multiple drafts accompanied by the instructor's feedback. This happened by subjecting students to two treatment sessions, which were not subjected to statistical analysis. In these sessions, students were asked to write two untimed 5- paragraph assignments, with two drafts each on different topics of their own choice, under no time constraints, and at different intervals. The first draft was used as a pretest. For this, students started writing in the class, but the students were asked to finish the work at home and hand it in approximately four to five days later. After students handed in back their first drafts, the instructor researcher corrected their assignments and provided written feedback on the five areas of their writing (content, form, organization, word choice, and mechanics).

Upon finishing revision of the first draft, students were asked to write the second draft making use of the instructor's feedback, and the instructor provided his feedback again on the second draft. In order to encourage students to take the feedback seriously, the second draft was corrected and given a score based on the student writer's positive use of the feedback. The two untimed writing tasks (treatment), which were not subjected to statistical analysis, were assigned 25 points each. Twelve points were given to the first draft of both tasks, and thirteen points were given to the second draft. The students' range of scores was maximally (23) and minimally (12).

As for the written feedback, indirect coded feedback on form, word choice, and mechanics by using symbols above the error on the first draft was provided (e.g. *agr.* for S-V agreement, *art* for articles, *ww* for wrong word, *p* for punctuation). For content feedback, the feedback was provided in the form of questions and enquiries such as *What do you mean by this? How did this happen, elaborate, add examples, unclear, provide evidence*. The feedback included comments on five areas: form, content, organization, word choice, and mechanics of writing (punctuation, spelling, and capitalization), and students were asked to revise it in light of the comments provided on their writing products. Students are

likely to be more motivated to attend to feedback if they know that it is provided by their instructor (Ferris 2004).

After handing in back the corrected assignments to students, the researcher instructor, in addition to the written feedback, provided oral classroom feedback in which he drew the attention of students to the type of errors they made in their first drafts and how to avoid such errors when submitting their revised drafts of the assignment for grading purposes. He also made a class discussion in which students were given the opportunity to ask any question, express concerns, and inquire about any comments they did not understand or found difficult to understand. In his turn, the instructor researcher responded to all the questions and inquiries with an open mind. We can say that when students are provided with responses to their questions and inquiries about their errors, they will work as hard as possible to attend to this feedback and give it more attention.

To find out to what extent the students made use of the corrective written and oral feedback provided on their untimed writing tasks, they were asked to write a third assignment (timed) which was subjected to statistical analysis. This task was considered a posttest, and it was performed toward the end of the semester. Liu and Brown (2015, 79) claimed that "timed class writing may under-represent students' progress because of limitation of the task conditions such as time pressure, multiple cognitive demands, and resultant anxiety". Since this timed writing task took place in the classroom, it was allocated two hours, and there was no time for students to write two drafts. This assignment received written corrective feedback similar to that provided on the two untimed writing assignments on five writing aspects (content, organization, form, word choice, and mechanics). Because it was one draft, it was assigned (50) points, 10 points for each of the five aspects of writing. Grading is an important affective factor which could affect students' attitudes and motivation (Bruton 2010; Plonsky and Brown 2015).

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively. As for the qualitative analysis, students' positive and negative responses to the five elements of writing (content, form, organization, vocabulary choice, and mechanics) were considered. Examples of responses of the students to each element were provided and explained. Regarding the quantitative analysis, the researchers counted the frequency of students' responses to each of the five elements. For example, student number (1) made recourse to content feedback only once, but student number (3) made recourse to content feedback five times. On the other hand, student number (2) didn't make recourse to word choice at all, and student number (3) made recourse to mechanics of writing twice. What this means is that not all students paid equal attention to all the five areas of feedback. In other words, whereas student (3) paid more attention to content, student (2) paid more attention to the mechanics of writing. Overall, students paid most attention to content in that it was mentioned by students (67) times, followed by form (40), mechanics (34), word choice (26), and finally organization (20). A Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to account for descriptive statistics of the correspondence between the student writers' actual improvement in their writing performance and their claims about having achieved such an improvement. For such analysis, a paired Sample T-test was used to address the research inquiry.

Literature Review

Learners' self-assessment (as a process-oriented task) of their writings in EFL context might not match teachers' evaluation (as a product-oriented job) of those students' writings. However, learners' satisfaction with their teachers' evaluation could surely have strong ramifications on their receptiveness to learning (Horwitz 1987). Specifically, learners' need to perceive the importance of their teachers' specific error corrections (Leki 1991) and teachers' general feedback provision (Authors 2016) in enhancing their receptiveness to such feedback, and thus in improving their actual performance. Baker (2014, 38), for example, put it like this: "For students to benefit from feedback, they need to view comments as helpful for future writing, not as individual teachers' comments about individual assignments". Upon investigating students' perceptions of peer feedback on their EFL writing in a Chinese classroom, Wang (2014) claimed that students' perceived usefulness of peer feedback could be affected by students' attitudes towards the peer feedback.

Probably for all this, a number of studies (Wang 2014) showed the need for students' self-assessment to be used as a complementary assessment resource in different teaching contexts. Despite the repeated calls for such a dire need, very little has been done so far regarding writing students' claims about their actual performance in composition classrooms. What is worth noting is that most of the research in this direction was conducted under the umbrella of self-efficacy (see Bandaura 1986), which roughly refered to the learner's perceived capabilities to perform learned actions, often assessed through learners' own performance. In order to show how students view their ability, Bandura (1986) put forward a hypothesis known as "Self-Efficacy Theory" which advocates the claim that learners who are confident of their capabilities tend to be more persistent and work harder to accomplish a given language task, whereas those who doubt their cognitive abilities give up working on the task easily or avoid it altogether. Hence, Bandura (1986) adopted the view that assessment of self-efficacy is mainly cognitive.

Oscarson's (2009) study, for example, was an attempt to explore how some Swedish students perceived "their own writing abilities collectively as well as individually". His findings were mainly two. First, students' estimation of their own general level of writing in EFL differed from their assessment of more particular EFL tasks. Second, students tended to focus more on specific language skills when assessing their writing in EFL writing classes. As reported in other previous research (McMartin-Miller 2014), students appreciated more sentence-level corrections (i.e. low-level language skills such as vocabulary expansion) as such corrections help students build real confidence in their writing. For example, Saville-Troike (1984, 199) argued that vocabulary knowledge was "the single most important area of second language competence".

Upon comparing self-, peer-, and teacher-assessments in the Japanese context, Matsuno (2009, 80) found that assessment was 'somewhat idiosyncratic'. Concisely, whereas high-achieving students assessed "their own writing lower than predicted", peers rated "high-achieving writers lower and low-achieving writers higher". Only teacher assessments were found to be consistent though each teacher displayed 'a unique bias pattern' of assessment. Matsuno's explanations were mostly social in that many Japanese "display a degree of modesty". However, the researcher acknowledged that assessment of

formal 'mechanical' errors might "differ from other assessment criteria such as organization and content" (Matsuno, 2009, 95). However, Fei (2006) already found the majority of the Chinese EFL learners who took part in his study considered peer feedback (compared to teacher feedback) as not useful for draft revision.

Sullivan and Hall (1997) found the match between the teacher's assessment and student's assessment was relatively high (77%). Despite this, they found that 39% of writing students overestimated their performance and (18%) of students underestimated their grades. What this means is that students more often overestimate than underestimate their grades. Given the intricacies of the subject matter, the students attributed discrepancies to their belief that (1) they provided what the teacher wanted, (2) they put much into it, (3) they did not have specific guides to evaluate, (4) they went beyond merely meeting the perceived requirements.

Although such studies showed that whether students are able to asses themselves correctly was context-dependent, thus prompting the dire need for further studies across a variety of contexts, very few ESL/EFL researchers (Saito and Fujita 2004) investigated how effectively students could manage as raters. The findings showed inter- and intra-variations of assessments. For example, Saito and Fujita (2004) reported high/low correlations between self- and teacher assessments, thus casting doubt on using self-assessment as a formal assessment. Oldfield and Macalpine (1995, 125) found "high correlations between students' and lecturers' assessments of individual essays and presentations". The experimental group in Diab's (2011) study was found to reduce their rule-based errors (namely subject/verb agreement, pronoun agreement) more in revised drafts than in non-rule-based errors. All in all, research found that students' attention to the different aspects of their writing varied across different contexts. Whereas some students paid their utmost attention to form and organization errors, others turned most of their attention to meaning-related errors (Ferris 1995). Whereas a few studies showed that students preferred teachers' comment on both form and content (Cohen and Cavalcanti 1990), very few showed that students preferred teachers' comments to be mainly form-oriented (Hedgcock and Lefkowitz 1996). Zhan (2016) found that students mostly benefited from teacher's feedback on grammar, organization and vocabulary. Chen (2008, 238) found that learners' self-assessment improved with training in that "self- and teacher ratings differed significantly in the first cycle of assessment, but were closely aligned in the second."

The current research paper, therefore, focused on two intertwined goals: (1) reporting EFL assessment practices in one teaching/learning context, namely, the Jordanian context, and (2) showing which properties of work (content, form, organization, word choice and mechanics) teachers and students exchanged views on the most when assessing revised drafts of essay writing.

Results

This study was quantitatively and qualitatively analyzed. In response to the first research question, *Did the instructor's comprehensive corrective feedback provided on students' writing assignments throughout the semester help them improve their writing performance, and if so, How?*, the qualitative analysis showed that the majority of students writers claimed that the instructor's feedback helped them

improve their writing quality in many aspects of writing such as content, form, organization, word choice, and mechanics with varying degrees, as shown in the section below.

Students' Reactions to the Process of Self-Assessment

As far as qualitative analysis is concerned, the researchers read the participants' assignments and chose the excerpts that showed the students' positive responses to the instructor's feedback on the five elements of writing. The following hierarchy which shows student's' claims regarding the extent to which they benefited from the instructor's written corrective feedback reflects students' priorities regarding the five elements of writing in a descending fashion.

Content > form > mechanics > word choice > organization

The (mis)match between students' claims and their actual performance on these five areas of writing is discussed below with some illustrative examples showing their positive reactions to the instructor's feedback on each area.

Claims mismatching with performance

Though in reversed fashion, students' claims mismatched with their performance on content and organization feedback. As for content, it turned out that although students claimed that the corrective feedback they received from the instructor had a positive impact on their writing improvement, their actual performance was less than what they claimed.

The following examples show how our students overestimated the instructor's content feedback

- "Clarifying the ideas was one of the most helpful comments which helped me in writing a good essay; for instance, the instructor's feedback taught me that in order to convince the readers of my viewpoint, I have to explain my ideas more and support them with examples and/or statistics or other ways of support."
- "I noticed that most of my instructor's comments were on content, so I paid attention to improving and developing my ideas by more and more reading about the topic under discussion."

As for organization, our students underestimated their actual performance; hence their actual improvement was much better than their claims. Here are some examples of their positive feedback on organization issues.

- "In the past, I could not organize my ideas correctly; I used to write in the way I thought it was right. I did not know that we should write an introduction, a body, and a conclusion, but now with instructor's comments, I can write in an organized way".
- "I have learnt how to organize my ideas by using different types of ordering like special, logical, and chronological ".

Claims matching with performance

As for form, word choice, and mechanics, the results indicated that students' claims matched with their actual performance. Consider how students' claims on form were reflected in their writing,

- "Due to the feedback, I have realized the importance of grammar in understanding the written text after, so I gave more attention to the structures I am using in my writing."
- "When I got my writing assignments, I noticed that they had many grammatical mistakes in tense, subject-verb agreement. which made my writing unclear; as a result, I paid more attention to this issue and worked on it."

on writing mechanics,

- "Before this writing course, I always had problems with using punctuation marks in their appropriate places, but now I have known what punctuation mark to use and where to use it".
- "In fact, I have learnt a lot from the feedback on punctuation. Now, I can use the punctuation marks correctly in the right place"

and on word choice.

- "When the instructor returned our papers with comments on vocabulary, I had to look up for other words that best fit the context in the dictionary. In this way, the choice of appropriate words improved."
- "The feedback improved my vocabulary. For example, when I see the symbol (WW) above a word, I know that it is not the appropriate word in this context, and I should look for another word which best fits the sentence more than the word I have already used".

To answer the second research question, Was there any statistically significant difference between the learners' self-assessment and the instructor's evaluation on the written products in this EFL context?, the means and standard deviations of actual improvement and claims of achieving such improvement were quantitatively analyzed. Paired Sample T-Test was used to uncover whether this correspondence was significant.

Tables 2, 3, and 4 show no statistically significant difference at $\alpha = 0.05$ between the means of both the students' writing actual improvements and their claims of having achieved such improvements as a result of the feedback they received on form, word choice, and mechanics. This means that there was a correspondence between students' perceived capabilities and their writing actual improvement after correcting their papers regarding these three aspects of writing.

Table 2: Results of Paired Sample T-Test

Writing feedback	Comparison	Means	Std. Dev. Dev.	ρ	t	df	Sig.
Form	Improvement	6.79	1.76	0.17	-0.32	49	0.75
	Claims	7	4.63				

Table 3: Results of Paired Sample T-Test

Writing feedback	Comparison	Means	Std. Dev. Dev.	ρ	t	df	Sig.
Word Choice	Improvements	6.72	1.87	0.14	1.55	49	0.13
	Claims	5.6	5.01				

Table 4: Results of Paired Sample T-Test

Writing feedback	Comparison	Means	Std. Dev. Dev.	ρ	t	df	Sig.
Mechanics	Improvements	6.03	1.95	0.03	0.31	49	0.76
	Claims	5.8	4.99				

On the other hand, Table 5 demonstrates that there was a statistically significant difference at α = 0.05 between the means of both students' actual improvements and their claims of having achieved such improvements due to the feedback they received on content in favor of the latter. What this basically means is that there was no correspondence between what the students actually achieved and what they claimed they had done as a result of receiving such feedback. In other words, their claims surpassed their actual improvement in content as this was not reflected in their writing.

Table 5: Results of Paired Sample T-Test

Writing feedback	Comparison	Means	Std. Dev. Dev.	ρ	T	df	Sig.
Content	Improvements	7.06	1.93				
	Claims	8.6	3.51	0.16	-2.93	49	0.01

Additionally, Table 6 shows that there was a statistically significant difference at α = 0.05 between the means of both the students' writing actual improvements and their claims of having achieved such improvements as a result of the feedback they received on organization in favor of the former. This indicates that there was no correspondence between what the students actually achieved after correcting assignments and what they claimed they had done by receiving such feedback. What this indicates is that their actual improvement in organization was better than what they claimed.

Table 6: Results of Paired Sample T-Test

Writing feedback	Comparison	Means	Std. Dev. Dev.	ρ	T	df	Sig.
Organization	Improvements	6.92	1.70	0.13	3.50	49	0.00
	Claims	4.4	5.01				

Based on the data in the tables above, we can say that there was a match between what the students claimed they had improved due to the feedback provided and the actual improvement (what the instructor found when correcting the assignments) in three writing aspects, namely, form, word choice, and mechanics, but there was a mismatch between what the students claimed they had improved due to the feedback provided and the actual improvement (what the instructor found when correcting the assignments) in two writing aspects, content and organization. In this regard, the students' actual improvement in content was less than what they claimed, while their actual improvement in organization was better than what they claimed.

Discussion and Conclusion

The main goal of our current research was two-fold. First, we wanted to see how self-assessment practices helped ESL learners in our context put effective cognitive skills into practical learning practices. The method we adopted to do so was triangulating students' opinions with teacher's evaluation. Second, we wanted to see at a greater level of detail on which aspects of writing (content, form, organization, word choice, and mechanics) those learners benefited the most from teacher instruction and feedback.

At the cognitive level, our findings corroborated previous research findings onto the question of why students should be encouraged to practice self-assessment. Concisely, we found that students' understanding of their own learning through self-assessment practices could help us, as writing teachers, achieve at least four goals. First, we could improve 'unique' professional practices in this type of contexts (see students' comments above). Second, we could guide our students to develop effective cognitive learning to make sense of their learning and thus transform them into autonomous learners without, of course, scarifying guidance from their teachers. Hawe and Dixon (2014, 66) showed that when learners take responsibility for their own learning, they "move from being recipients of feedback to intelligent self-monitoring". The role of the learners in the process of learning is, therefore, of maximum importance as they become more capable to self-reflect and become more proficient in assessing their progression in learning new knowledge. Third, we could develop fairer assessment practices, which can show that learners have to attend to the instruction they have received, rehearse material to be learned, and monitor their level of learning. Finally, we could provide students with authentic opportunities of democratic practices that encourage teacher- student dialogue.

At the practical level, it turned out that there was a mismatch between students' claims about their improvement and their actual practices as those learners often associate their own self-efficacy with their own perceived ability and exerted effort. As we are aware that teacher's, peer's, and self-assessment "is not simply for the sake of grading assignments, but to provide students with detailed feedback on their works" (Wang 2014, 82), we wanted to figure out how students' self-assessment match with their actual improvements in the different aspects of writing (content, form, organization, word choice, and mechanics) in essay writing. It is probably worth mentioning here that previous studies made holistic, nondiscriminatory judgments on students' overall performance, i.e. without referring to specific writing feature(s). The findings showed that while some studies found high correlations between instructors' and students' assessment of their writing (Sullivan and Hall 1997), others revealed low correlations (Oldfield and Macalpine 1995). At the level of details, we consider here, that the current study categorically investigated students' perceived capabilities on the five aspects of writing, namely, content, form, organization, vocabulary choice, and writing mechanics vis-à-vis their actual performance.

At the instruction level, our current research findings lent support to previous research findings which showed that writing "teachers should focus primarily on issues of content and organization early in the writing process, saving grammar and mechanics issues for the end of the writing process."

At the feedback level, our findings provided support for the suggested model of corrective feedback provision put forward by author X (2016) which called for factoring out corrective feedback into error

correction and error feedback. Accordingly, "whereas error correction targets sentence-level language corrections for local and mechanical errors such as improving grammar, spelling, and vocabulary, error feedback targets global issues that affect meaning and organization" (author X 2016).

Research on feedback provision has two major concerns: which errors should be targeted? and how many errors should be corrected on a student writer's written product? Whereas the former motivated researchers to make the distinction between direct and indirect feedback, the latter caused them to draw the line of demarcation between focused and unfocused feedback. Apart from the former concern which falls outside the scope of our current research, the literature available to date on the latter concern generally provided support for focused feedback provision. However, research on students' perceptions of error treatment has been conflicting. For example, in Oladejo's (1993) survey, it was found that most of the subjects preferred a comprehensive approach to error treatment, but in Ellis's et al. (2008, 356) survey, the argument ran like this: "Learners are more likely to attend to corrections directed at a single (or a limited number of) error type(s) and more likely to develop a clearer understanding of the nature of the error and the correction needed". What this means is that two main competing models of feedback provision, the focused approach and the unfocused approach, still compete (for a critique of both approaches, see the author X 2016). The question is thus this: How could we pull these seemingly paradoxical findings together?

In their attempt to interject in this debate, author X (2016) and authors X and Y (2017) tried to distinguish between two types of focused feedback: Providing focused feedback selectively versus providing focused feedback comprehensively, advocating a novel approach which calls for providing focused corrective feedback comprehensively (i.e. correcting all misuses for the structure(s) under the writing instructor's focus domain concurrently). Their argument leveled against the traditional selective focused approach which mainly calls for targeting only some 'treatable' functional uses of the linguistic structure being investigated, as this turns writing classes into 'segmented' grammar classes (see X and Y authors 2012). Ferris (2010) for long argued that the general goal of providing corrective feedback on students' compositions is to improve accuracy in general, not just some specific treatable features. As for the error categories, some studies (e.g. Fathman and Whalley 1990) combined feedback on form with feedback on content, others (Chandler 2003) focused on only one type of corrective feedback (either form or content feedback). What this means is that research on the efficacy of corrective feedback has been targeting the various types of errors as if they were segmented, unfocused, and unsystematic. With the move from the single draft to the multiple draft approach, the call is to treat all errors as a coherent whole with gradual and sustained practices in that once one category of error is put under the instructor's current domain; all its features are targeted. The goal is to let the learners see how these features are intertwined as a complete system. The suggested model is then like this: First, we provide instruction and feedback on all content-related issues. Second, we provide sustained instruction and feedback on all organization-relevant concerns. Third, we provide sustained error corrections on all (mis)uses of form, mechanics, and word choice. In other words, we want error feedback to cause global changes that affect meaning and organization, and we want error corrections to target small fixes. By shifting the approach from being

product-oriented to becoming process-oriented, we conceive writing as a recursive process in which the student "writers go back and forth in the midst of generating a text, looking for global errors in the meaning and correcting them, employing certain techniques such as deletion, addition, substitution, and rearrangements" (the author X 2016, 104). This line of thought was probably advocated by the cognitive school which conceives writing as a problem-solving process (Flower and Hayes 1981a, b) and the expressive school which conceives writing as self-expressive, self-discovery, and self-actualizing (Faigley 1986)

By triangulating students' opinions with the teacher's grades those students received on their writings and by distributing the corrective feedback on five areas of writing, we tried to see whether the feedback provided on students' writing tasks helped them improve their writing quality in the five aspects of writing, and whether there was a correspondence between the actual performance of the learners on these five aspects and their claims. Although the students claimed that the feedback had a positive effect on their improvement in all the five aspects of writing, the findings showed that whereas some of these aspects did match, others didn't. Notably, the match between the students' claims and their actual performance was evident only in the structural characteristics of a writing task (Form, word choice, and mechanics) and the mismatch was evident in the meaning-related features (content and organization) – a state of affairs which supports our claim that learners of English in our context pay more attention to sentence-level corrections than to global ones. What this basically means is those students were trained in this learning environment that writing was basically a mechanical process that targeted surface-errors not a cyclical approach in which they had to get involved in a global revision.

Being interested in studies on contrastive rhetoric and composition, the authors recommend that this study be replicated in different socio-cultural contexts to see how the writing process can be conceived of as a socio-cognitive activity. Hence, the debate on the efficacy of corrective feedback (including assessment practices) has been very much influenced by theoretical standpoints on second language acquisition (SLA) which, in turn, is a répliques of the still philosophical debate whether language is innate or learned. Chomsky's nativist view underlies the belief that much of our linguistic knowledge is unlearned simply because it is innate or inborn. Researchers, adopting a Chomskyan model of language learning, were skeptical that "explicit knowledge can evolve into implicit knowledge through practice and eventually lead to changes in the learners' interlanguage" (Hyland 2010, 173). At this theoretical level, Krashen (1985) for long called for drawing a distinguishing line between 'learning' that affects only the learner's explicit knowledge and 'acquisition' that affects the learner's implicit knowledge. Adopting a naturalistic view of language learning, Krashen believes that error correction can affect only the learner's explicit knowledge. Truscott (1996) went too far to suggest that corrective feedback is ineffective and could possibly be harmful (Truscott 2007).

As far as foreign language learning is concerned, three basic premises instigated the shift from the Chomskyan approach to the cognitive approach. First, foreign language learning processing is different from first language acquisition processing (see Newby 2003). Second, foreign language learners' cognitive abilities are broader than first language learners' (Skehan 1998). Third, foreign language learners' sources of information are more varied than first language learners' (see O'Malley and Chamot

1990). Although influenced by the Chomsky's view of language which merely focused on linguistic competence, cognitive linguists shifted linguistic attention (and therefore research) to communicative competence. The debate between the two camps originated in whether linguistic reality and general cognition are independent entities (as Chomsky would wish to argue). At the practical plane, Bandura (1986, 1989), the founder of Self-Efficacy Theory, held the view that assessment of self-efficacy is mainly a cognitive process. All in all, at the conceptual level, learners should be instructed on how to plan and evaluate their writing assignments. At the procedural and strategic levels, they should be trained on problem-solving techniques. Hence, the overarching goal in second language writing research should not just be on gauging the learner's cognitive and metacognitive advancement in, say, a university-level writing course, but also on their motivational and affective state of learning.

التقييم الذاتي مقابل تقييم المدرس للمنتج المكتوب في سياق اللغة الانجليزيّة كلغة أجنبية

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الملخص

كان التركيز الرئيسي لهذه الدراسة على التقييم الذاتي لمتعلمي اللغة الانجليزيّة كلغة أجنبية مقابل أدائهم الفعلي في مساق من مساقات الكتابة الإجبارية، زيادة على مساهمة هذه الدراسة في أهمية البحث في التقييم الذاتي لمتعلمي اللغة الانجليزيّة كلغه أجنبية، فقد كانت محاولة للربط بين آراء الطلبة بالعلامات التي حصلوا عليها في كتاباتهم في سياق اجتماعي ثقافي. شارك في هذه الدراسة خمسين طالباً تخصص لغة انجليزيّة في مستوى السنة الثانية يدرسون مساق كتابة (إجباري) وجُمِعَتْ بيانات الدراسة من خلال امتحانين، قبلي (النسخة الأولى من الكتابة غير المحددة بزمن) وبعدي (الكتابة المقيدة بزمن محدد). استخدمت تغذية راجعة تصحيحية بنوعيها الشفوي والتحريري على (المحتوى، وترتيب الأفكار، والقواعد، واختيار الكلمة المناسبة، وآليات الكتابة). وعلى الرغم من أن غالبية الطلاب عامة ادعوا بأنّ التغذية الراجعة للمدرس ساعدتهم على تحسين أدائهم الكتابيّ في كل جوانب الكتابة (القواعد، واختيار الكلمة المناسبة، وآليات الكتابة، والمحتوى، وتنظيم الأفكار)، فإنّ الأرقام أكدت نتيجتين محددتين فيما يتعلق بسياق تعلم اللغة الإنجليزيّة كلغة أجنبية التي أجريت به هذه الدراسة، وهاتان النتيجتان هما: 1) كان ثمة توافق بين ادعاءات الطلاب بأن أداءهم الفعلي في الكتابة تحسن في مجالات القواعد، واختيار الكلمة المناسبة، وآليات الكتابة. 2) لم يكن ثمة توافق بين ادعاءات الطلاب بأن كتاباتهم وأداءهم الفعلي تحسن في كتابة المحتوى وترتيب الأفكار.

الكلمات المفتاحية: تقييم ذاتي، تقييم مدرس، تغذية تصحيحية، ادعاءات طلاب، أداء فعلي، المنتج المكتوب.

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