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Group Work to Enhance Learners' Writing

Self-Confidence and Ability

**The Case of First Year LMD Students at Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia
University- Jijel**

**A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfilment for the Requirement for a Master
Degree in Language Sciences**

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated specially to our parents, who have shown us what nobody else would ever have, and have provided us with their encouragement, love and understanding.

This work is also dedicated to our brothers and sisters for their wholehearted support;

To all our extended family,

To all our friends and teachers at Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia University- Jijel

To all who were there for us, thank you for ignoring our faults and encouraging our merits

To all those who have been supportive, caring and patient, sometimes beyond their strength, we dedicate this simple work

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ABSTRACT

The present study attempts to examine the role of group work in enhancing students' self-confidence in writing and their writing ability. In other words, it aims at investigating the potential impact of group work as one effective technique used by the teachers of English as foreign language, at the department of English, University of Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia-Jijel, on students' attitudes towards their writing self-confidence and performance. Throughout this research, we hypothesize that if teachers implement the group work technique in the English classes while carrying out writing tasks, students' writing self-confidence and ability will be improved. To verify the validity of this hypothesis, the students' writing ability is tested by comparing individually-written paragraphs to paragraphs written in a group. After that, two kinds of questionnaires are administered to test students writing self-confidence: the first to the forty first year English students who took the writing test, and the second is given to a random sample of ten teachers having experienced teaching writing. The discussion of the results has shown that using cooperative learning enhances first year English students' writing self-confidence and ability. In addition, students claim that they prefer to write in groups under some conditions. The results obtained in this study are at the same time insights for teachers and students to use the technique of group work effectively in writing classes.

Key words: Group Work; Self-Confidence; Writing Ability.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACT: American College Testing

AP: Advanced Placement

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ESL: English as a Second Language

FL: Foreign Language

G: Group

IQ: International Intelligence Quotient

L1: First Language

L2: Second Language

N: Number

vs.: Versus

%: Percentage

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1. Statement of the Problem
2. The Research Questions
3. Aim of the Study
4. Hypotheses of the Study
5. Means of Research
6. Structure of the Study

1. Statement of the Problem

Self-confidence proves to be among the crucial factors which affect the progress of learners undertaking the study of foreign languages. For learners who are going through the initial developmental stages in learning such a foreign language as English, expressing oneself in writing or speaking is quite a daunting experience. The case is so because learners have not mastered yet the linguistic tools necessary in producing texts as accurately and appropriately as to satisfy the norms set by the teacher or to equal performance of the few successful and advanced students. This situation, in turn, risks to cause increased levels of stress and anxiety, reflecting students' lack of self-confidence.

As far as writing in English as a foreign language for first year students at the department of English -university Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia- is concerned, the skill makes high demands of these novice writers who may find it frustrating to align their productions with the standards of grammar, lexis, coherence and, genre. Such a problem may lead some students to be low output generators, withdraw from writing or, in extreme cases, withdraw from learning the language completely. However, what they need to realise is that making developmental mistakes is only natural, and that errors are the result of attempts to discover the language. This cannot be clearly noticed by students when they approach writing tasks on their own. Students working individually lack immediate feedback on their drafts or even what to write about in terms of brainstorming ideas –unless the teacher is actively monitoring their progress and paying close attention to each and every one of them, which is an unrealistic endeavour especially in the large classes which teachers have to teach. In addition, students might not be able to judge the quality of their products, which may be sub-standard. Hence, they may not be confident in their ability to write and in their products.

2. Research Questions

In attempting to find out whether or not group work enhances students' writing self-confidence and ability, considering that group members can help each other in the process of writing, this research paper poses a set of questions:

- 1- Do students prefer to write individually or in groups?
- 2- What are the students' attitudes towards group work?
- 3- How often do teachers implement group work in writing activities?
- 4- Does group work enhance students' self-confidence about learning English, in general, and writing, in particular?
- 5- Does group work promote students' writing ability?

3. Aim of the Study

The present study is conducted with first year LMD students at the department of English, University Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia-Jijel; it aims at investigating the impact of collaborative group work on learners' writing self-confidence and writing ability. Arguing for group work is based on the fact that when students join in the task of writing, they will realise that it is a difficult one for every student that making mistakes is natural and that group members can offer assistance in the attempt to produce an acceptable final product. Therefore, students will contribute to build and sustain their motivation to write, and more importantly, boost their confidence in the process.

4. Hypotheses of the Study

In order to answer the research questions of this study, it is hypothesized that:

- If teachers implement the group work technique in the English classes while doing writing tasks, students' writing self-confidence will be improved.

- If teachers implement the group work technique while doing written tasks, students' writing ability is likely to be improved.

5. Means of the Research

In order to test our hypotheses and to obtain the information required from our subjects, and in accordance with the aims set for the present study, two research tools are adopted: a questionnaire and a test. Students are given a questionnaire and asked to sit for a writing test, and teachers were handed a questionnaire.

The students' questioned are first year LMD students of English at Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia University-Jijel. Two groups of students are selected randomly (n=40) out of a population of ten groups (N=335). Moreover, a test was done with the same students (those who answered the questionnaire). They were asked to write paragraphs about two different topics, but once individually and the other time in groups.

The teachers' questionnaire was designed to teachers of Written Expression at the same university as well. A sample of ten teachers who are teaching first year students writing or have an experience at doing so are selected to take part in the survey.

6. Structure of the Study

In addition to the general introduction and the general conclusion, this study consists of four (4) chapters. In the first three chapters, a literature review is conducted, and the fourth chapter is devoted to the field work.

The first chapter supplies an overview on the nature of group work. A brief distinction between pair work and group work is covered in addition to the reasons for grouping. It also includes the roles of the teacher and the role of the learner in group work. In addition, the criteria for group construction, group work stages as well as

elements of cooperative learning are discussed. This chapter concludes by listing the main advantages and disadvantages of group work.

The second chapter sheds light on self-confidence in foreign language learning. Self-confidence is defined and related to similar concepts and other affective factors and language production. Moreover, the characteristics of high and low self-confidence are presented along with the influence of self-confidence on motivation and autonomy.

The third chapter is devoted to writing ability in foreign language learning. First, definitions of writing ability are given. Then, the different stages involved in the writing activity are discussed. In addition, types of writing performance are mentioned. Furthermore, the basic approaches to teaching writing as well as writing assessment in the EFL context are covered.

The fourth chapter is devoted to the presentation of the results obtained from the analysis of the different means of research after introducing each of them. The chapter discusses how research tools are administered, offers interpretation of the data collected and discusses overall results.

Chapter One: Group Work in English as a Foreign Language Classes

Introduction

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1.8. Elements of Cooperative Learning

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Chapter One: Group Work in English as a Foreign Language Classes

Introduction

Teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) requires the teachers' exposure to what is known as methods and techniques of teaching. Group work is one of the most popular types of the instructional techniques which aim at improving learners' linguistic abilities in addition to fostering cooperation skills, collaboration and interaction between learners inside the classroom.

This chapter provides an overview of group work and its implementation in the English language classes. It includes a definition of group work and the main reasons for using it. Next, the distinction between pair work and group work is clarified. Subsequently, the main roles of the teacher in group work are discussed in addition to the main roles of the learners, followed by an analysis of some of the most efficient criteria and procedures for arranging students into groups in the English language classes. Last, the discussion turns to evaluating the advantages and the disadvantages of group work.

1.1. Definition of Group Work

The method or technique of 'Group Work' substantiated the shift in the language teaching profession towards learner-centred approaches in view of the central role learners have in such a method. The term 'Group Work' refers to the instructional method in which learners work together to achieve a common aim or goal, and in which they exchange responsibilities among each other. It includes any classroom activity in which learners are divided into groups and work together.

Because cooperation and interaction are key-elements of group work, Arnold (1999:226) suggests that, "cooperative learning requires social interaction and

negotiation of meaning among heterogeneous group members engaged in tasks in which all group members have both something to contribute to and learn from the other members”. In other words, the technique is based on cooperation, interaction and negotiation of solutions to the problems encountered while working on a task between members of a group who, evidently, will have different abilities and skills. Arnold (ibid.) also made it clear that without the contribution of every member, the technique cannot be called true group work.

Group work allows learners to interact in the classroom using the target language (TL); it is an outlet for language practice. In this vein, Chappell Philip (2014:31) qualifies classroom interaction as “a discrete element of the language curriculum, one that is the source of language data for learners to process”. Practice, then, is the aim of group work; in this regard, Benson (2011:11), coined the term “group work practice” to refer to the opportunities offered in such forms of interaction to share knowledge and respond to the needs of participants as follows:

Group work practice refers to the conscious, disciplined and systematic use of knowledge about the processes of collective human interaction, in order to intervene in an informed way or promote some desired objective in a group setting. ...
Group work practice is a helping process designed to correspond to specific instances of individual and group need, based on a view of man as in constant interaction and relationship with others.

Regarding the aspect of cooperation in group work, Harmer (1998) points out that what makes group work a cooperative activity of discussing topics, playing roles or solving problems between group members is the fact that, “In groups, students tend to participate more equally, and they are also more able to experiment and use the

language than they are in whole-class arrangement” (31). Therefore, group work allows every member to have a say about the topic being discussed, and push learners to explore and experiment with the language.

Doff (1988:137) contradicts the view that group work is a teaching method, and states that it should be considered as a simple arrangement of learners which is suitable for some types of activities; in this regard, he says “pair work and group work are not teaching methods, but ways of organizing the class. They can be used for many different kinds of activities, and are naturally more suitable for some activities than for others”. The kind of activities and skills that are well-suited to and benefit directly from group work are oral practice ones as stated by Ur (1991:232) “in group work, learners perform a learning task through small group interaction. It is a form of learners’ activation that is of particular practice of oral fluency”

Arends and Kilsher (2010:306) equate group work with cooperative learning. The latter is defined as “... a teaching model or strategy that is characterized by cooperative task, goal, and reward structures and requires students to be actively engaged in discussion, debate, tutoring, and team work” (306). Moreover, cooperative learning enables learners to exchange information in addition to its role in making learners responsible for and able to learn for themselves as well as for other learners. Therefore, Olsen and Kagan (in Richards and Rodgers, 2001:192) provide a clear explanation for cooperative learning and explain its contribution to learning as follows:

Cooperative learning is group learning activity organized so that learning is dependent on the socially structured exchange of information between learners in groups and in which each learner is held accountable for his or her own learning and is motivated to increase the learning of others.

In summary, it is worthy to use Benson (2001) comprehensive and recapitulative definition of group work as "... a productive, healthy and creative experience, carried out on the basis of explicit agreements, openly pursued and clearly arrived at, about the purpose and task of the group, rights, and responsibilities of members" (11).

1.2. Pair Work and Group Work

Varying the teaching methods and techniques as well as the ways of organizing the class is of great benefit for the teacher in that it facilitates the task of providing learners with ample comprehensible input. Moreover, pairing and grouping learners in instructional contexts helps also learners themselves to create a new environment inside the classroom away from the traditional teacher-fronted methods for teaching. Pair work as well as group work give students more chances to be integrated in the TL as well as the target society.

Doff (1988:137) provides a clear distinction between pair work and group work, defining the former as a strategy used by the teacher to divide the class into pairs, referred to as partners. Partners have to work together at the same time, and this leads to the appellation "simultaneous pair work". Doff (ibid.) distinguishes between "simultaneous pair work" and "public" pair work in which pairs of students speak in turn in front of the class. Richards and Lockhart (1988) state that mutual interest and obligation is what students feel when they work together in pairs in order to solve a problem or complete a task, "In pair work, the learner finds himself in an obligation to work in and practice the language because he/she must work and speak with the other learner who is obliged to share the work with him" (147). As for Harmer (2001:165), he asserts that "pair work increases the amount of speaking time any one student gets in the class"; it allows students to work and interact independently away from the guidance of the teacher, as a result, this leads to promoting learners' independence. In

addition, pair work offers students more chances to work and speak the language (Doff, 1988, p.141). When a learner is obliged to work with his/her partner, he/she will have more opportunities to learn the language more than learning it individually. In the same vein, Richards and Rodgers (1996) posit that “through interacting with other students in pairs or groups, students can be given the opportunity to draw on their own linguistic resources in a nonthreatening situation and use them to complete different kinds of tasks” (152). This implies for teachers, as Long (in Richards and Lockhart, 1996:152) argues that “the use of carefully designed pair work tasks can help learners obtain “comprehensible input”.

Doff (1988) introduces group work as a classroom strategy which is different from pair work in some aspects; one obvious difference is number of members usually being equal to four or five students, “the teacher divides the class into small groups to work together ...[and] all groups work at the same time.” (137) In addition, group work ensures a high level of interaction; Richards and Lockhart (1988) state that group work is used for carrying out learning tasks because it “promotes collaboration among learners” (153). Moreover, learners will be active and responsible for their own learning; it can “... give learners a more active role in learning” (ibid.). In addition, Harmer (2007) states that “group work promotes negotiation and cooperation skills, and also, enables students to estimate each other’s performance both positively and negatively” (165).

1.3. Reasons for Grouping

Group work can serve all types of learners, even those with very dissimilar characteristics and abilities. Hock (1961:421) lists a number of reasons that make teachers use group work as a method of teaching and learning. These can be

summarised in two points. First, and as stated above, group work provides for the vast differences that exist between learners, including interests, purposes, talents, skills and comprehension. It is one technique that allows the teacher to use a variety of materials, resources and classroom procedures. Second, group work satisfies the learners' needs for opportunities for TL production and practice. It involves learners directly in the learning process and prepares them to be integrated in the target society, which constitutes one of the aims of teaching a foreign language.

Other aims and reasons of using cooperative learning in the EFL classes are proposed by Richards and Rodgers (2001:193) as follows:

- a. To provide naturalistic second language acquisition through the use of interactive pair and group activities.
- b. To provide teachers with a methodology to enable them to achieve this goal and one that can be applied in a variety of curriculum settings (e.g.: content-based, foreign language classroom, mainstreaming).
- c. To enable focused attention to particular lexical items, language structures and communicative functions through the use of interactive tasks.
- d. To provide opportunities for learners to develop successful learning and communication strategies.
- e. To enhance learner motivation and reduce learner stress and to create a positive affective classroom climate.

Richards, et al. (2010:306) suggest other important reasons for the use of cooperative learning. These are cognitive and social reasons resulting from working in teams to acquire and master new information and to learn social and teamwork skills. Another social and attitudinal reason is that learners also learn to be more accepting of

diversity and to be more tolerant of differences. These benefits are summarized in the figure below.

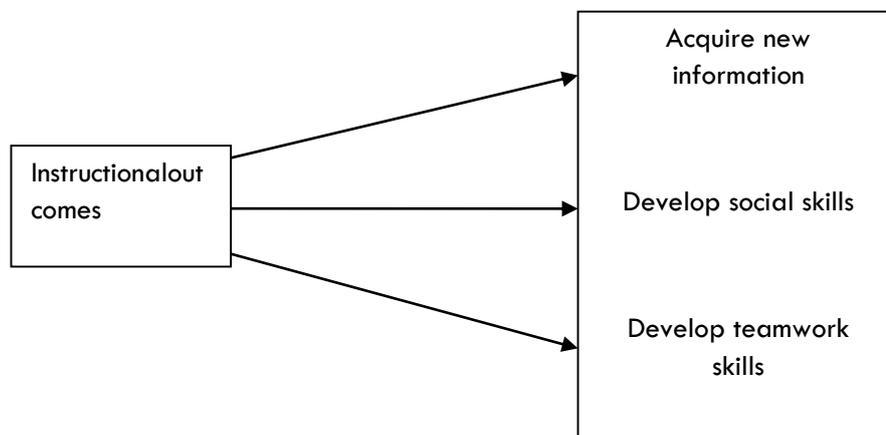


Figure 1.01: Instructional Outcomes for Cooperative Learning (Richards et al. 2010:306)

1.4. The Role of the Teacher in Group Work

Harmer (2007:108) suggests some important roles which the teacher should play while using group work. Accordingly, the teacher has to act as a controller, prompter, participant, resource, and tutor.

1.4.1. Controller

When acting as a controller, this means being in charge of the classroom and the activity to be done; acting as a controller, however, is not very beneficial for learners because it denies students access to their own experiential learning relying on the teacher. Moreover, when the class acts as a whole group, this will decrease individual students' opportunities to speak. Such a role, if it is typical of a teacher, reveals lack of variety in activities, and contributes to create monotonous, thus routine and boring classroom atmosphere. However, working as a controller may have some advantages on groups because it is considered as the most common teacher role and the most comfortable one for them.

1.4.2. Prompter

The teacher can also act as a prompter. Prompting needs to be done sensitively and encouragingly, but with discretion. The teacher assuming the role of a prompter helps and encourages students to complete speaking, especially in role plays, and make them think creatively rather than on the teacher input, especially in writing productions.

1.4.3. Participant

One of the teacher roles is to join in an activity as one of the participants and take part in the discussion. Working as a participant is good because it enables the teacher to liven things up from the inside of the group. However, acting as a participant can be bad because the teacher can easily dominate the proceedings in view of his/ her being more knowledgeable than the learners.

1.4.4. Resource

Involving learners in a piece of group writing makes students in need of their teacher as the resource for the information they need and as an answerer to their questions. Acting as a resource is difficult for the teacher because it is hard to possess all the answers for students' questions, especially for non-native teachers of English who do not know much about the language. Instead of assuming such a demanding role, the teacher should guide his/her learners, and ask them to rely on themselves in finding out the information they look for. Otherwise, the teacher should have the courage to say "I do not know", but by saying it, teachers risk to make learners lose confidence in them.

1.4.5. Tutor

Working as a tutor makes the teacher able to work with small groups. In this case, the teacher assumes two roles in one setting, as a prompter and as a resource. The teacher can work as a tutor for a specific pair or small group, and he has to offer a sort

of guidance for them. Despite the difficulty of working as a tutor, the teacher should enact this role from time to time because, as such, he/she addresses individual students and caters for the needs of each, thus contributing to the creation of the right atmosphere, the one that is conducive to learning.

1.5. The Role of Learners in Group Work

To ensure effective use of group work, students need to be aware of and assume various roles. Roles may be negotiated within the group or allocated by teachers. Roles should be rotated ensuring that, over the course of a term or a semester, students gain experience in developing a range of capabilities in addition to preparing them to take complete responsibility for their learning. Learners are basically required to interact with each other in their groups; they should learn the language in a cooperative manner. Richards and Rodgers (2001:199) point out that the learner gains the quality of a ‘member’ of the group because he/ she develops a sense of belonging and duty to the group, thus works and cooperates on tasks with other members. In addition, the main roles that learners should act while working collaboratively are summarized by Richards and Rodgers (*ibid.*) in the following quote:

Learners have to learn teamwork skills. Learners are also directors of their own learning. They are thought to plan, monitor, and evaluate their own learning, which is viewed as a compilation of lifelong learning skills. Thus, learning is something that requires students’ direct and active involvement and participation.

Group work, then, is viewed a student-centred strategy; it gives the total responsibility to students and makes them obliged to work on their tasks as active and fully-engaged participants in cooperative learning or group work.

1.6. Criteria for Group Construction

The decision of working with groups should be preceded by an awareness of which criteria to adopt in organizing the class into groups. Creating groups in which members are sure to collaborate is one of the teacher's responsibilities. In doing so, the teacher should make sure that every group realizes the meaning of community in order to guarantee a high level of interaction and communication between learners.

Harmer (2007:168) proposes a set of principles that teachers can consider and rely on when generating and creating pairs and groups; these are friendships among the members, streaming or ability, chance, change, gender and status.

1.6.1. Friendship

Friendship is a key consideration when organizing the class into groups. When designing groups, the teacher should be aware of the importance of putting friends with friends rather than taking the risk of putting learners with others whom they do not know well. With unknown partners, learners may find a difficulty to interact and share ideas and opinions. Thus, it is safest to place friends together to avoid the risk of problems and difficulties, and to create a lively classroom atmosphere in general. Therefore, and as a first step, the teacher should let learners decide by themselves by instructing them to go to the group they would like to work in.

1.6.2. Streaming

Streaming is the process of grouping students into pairs or groups on the basis of their abilities. That is, the teacher may create a group in which all the learners are at the same level and have the same intellectual abilities such as a group of high attaining learners. The goal of the group is to create an effective learning climate of challenge, debate and competition. By contrast to this, the teacher may also create a group of low attaining learners in order to concentrate on them, give them the kind of assistance

which they need, as well as encourage and push them to talk, participate and use the language effectively.

1.6.3. Chance

Chance is another criterion which facilitates the process of creating groups for the teacher. Grouping learners by chance means that learners can be grouped for no particular cause and without taking into consideration friendship, abilities or levels of participation. Therefore, chance is considered as the easiest way of grouping learners since it does not need efforts from the teacher. The teacher can rely on the sitting arrangement as a way of grouping learners by chance; the learners who sit next to or near to each other will interact and work together in the same group.

1.6.4. Changing Groups

Changing groups means that the teacher gives learners the chance to change their groups while the activity is in process. This implies that learners are not obliged to stay in the same group until the end or completion of the task. Moreover, the possibility of the existence of planning or discussions in one group entails that the teacher should give members of the group the permission to visit other groups, get the information from them and take it back to their original group.

1.6.5. Gender

Gender should also be taken into consideration while grouping. Having male learners work with female learners, for example, may not fit with some situations; similarly, the teacher should be aware of the individuals' culture and attitudes from the outside of the classroom. Therefore, same gender or mixed gender groupings should be based on cultural considerations and personal preferences. The latter can easily be observed by the teacher in terms of members who typically interact with each other in the classroom.

1.7. Group Work Stages

In any cooperative work, the teachers' responsibilities have to do with organizing groups in addition to preparing tasks. However, the teacher's role does not finish at creating groups and making students work with each other. Therefore, the teacher has to follow other procedures and apply techniques in order to create successful cooperative learning. These are essentially procedures that should be taken into consideration or done before starting the task, during and after the task, as suggested by Harmer (2007:171-2).

1.7.1. Before Group Work

Before assigning learners to groups, the teacher should strive to make learners feel enthusiastic and interested. This will be possible only if the teacher provides a set of clarifications and explanations about what students are expected to do, how they are going to do the task in addition to the time allocated for the task. Moreover, directions about how to practise the language, and a demonstration should also be given by the teacher especially when there is an information gap activity, for instance. Giving learners the time when they must finish the task is also a key for their success because it will help learners to prepare a clear framework to follow and work with.

1.7.2. During Group Work

Keeping an eye on what is happening during group work is an important task that the teacher should accomplish because it allows him/her to measure progress and decide whether he has to help one group or not. In addition, group monitoring helps the teacher to make decisions and collect examples for later comments and work. Monitoring helps the teacher also to decide whether to provide learners with suggestions about what they are planning. The teacher can act as a prompter, resource

or tutor by responding to what students are doing or picking up information about learners' progress.

1.7.3. After Group Work

After learners finish working in groups, teacher feedback is needed on learners' production. Learners should discuss what has occurred during the cooperative work with the help of the teacher's correction and assessment, which is beneficial for both the group concerned and the rest of the class. This procedure will provide learners with good information for future learning and action.

Encouraging and comforting learners to talk and discuss their answers is good for them because this will make them able to compare different solutions, ideas and problems. In this manner, the topic will be made easier to understand for the whole class. Additionally, constructive feedback on learners' production can enhance their motivation to understand the nature of their language mistakes, and work towards mastering higher levels of accuracy in using the TL.

1.8. Elements of Cooperative Learning

Following cooperative learning as a teaching strategy requires the teacher to become aware of a set of different elements that make part of it. Moreover, effective cooperative learning requires deep understanding from the teacher of the nature of cooperation as well as the basic elements and features of a cooperative task. Cooper et al. (2006:258-9) call these elements 'Essential Features of Cooperative Learning' which have to be understood and promoted to the centre of any cooperative learning lesson. These features are positive interdependence, individual progress, promoting peer learning, and mastering process skills.

1.8.1. Positive Interdependence

In any cooperative learning, students must perceive that they work together for a shared goal. Cooperative learning and assignments require students to work together to learn and to succeed. Personal learning and success depend on the learning and success of all group members (Richard et al, 201:313). This feeling could be created through assigning mutual goals, or goal interdependence. In addition, that feeling could also be sustained by the praising of all the members of the group, or reward interdependence. Moreover, students should work together to achieve resource interdependence which has to do with the shared materials used by students to complete the task; and last, they should realise role interdependence, which says that each student's role is interlocked with the group members' roles.

1.8.2. Individual Progress

The second key feature is accountability at the group level and at the individual level, which means that the success of the group depends on the success of each member. Achieving the lesson objectives and completing the tasks successfully rewards the group as well as individuals for cooperation. Grading strategies must be based on individual achievement and team rewards must be based on individual growth if cooperative learning is to work well. Individual accountability is very important because it leads to the success of the cooperative leaning.

1.8.3. Promoting Peer Learning

The third essential key feature is promoting peer learning. Explaining what one knows for other members of the group is positively associated with what exactly goes on in successful cooperative groups; there are more opportunities for high achieving students (smart students) to explain their knowledge and show higher achievement on tests. When students of modest ability in a given task explain their answers and thinking

to their peers, they learn better, and they add materially to their own learning. For this reason, studies of the contribution of cooperative learning strategies to the achievement of academically gifted students usually show these to be beneficial. Transmitting new knowledge from different members or modelling new skills enhances learning in groups.

1.8.4. Mastering Process Skills

The fourth essential feature which Cooper et al. (2006) proposed is mastering process skills that are used by students when working cooperatively. Particular social skills are demanded for successful learning and working in groups. When practiced in the context of real tasks, these social skills are developed and have positive impacts on learning results. Other process skills that can be mastered in group work include the student' ability to review their own skills critically with a view to improving group effectiveness.

1.9. Advantages and Disadvantages of Group Work

Group work has both advantages and disadvantages. Both should be known by the teacher to maximally exploit the benefits and minimize the drawbacks.

1.9.1. Advantages of Group Work

Group work has proved to be one of the effective ways which teachers rely on more in doing tasks in the classroom because of its great influence on learners' psychological and mental sides which are considered to be the first factors that control learners' production of the language. In addition, group work provides more chances for interacting, communicating and sharing ideas between learners. In terms of advantages of group work, Harmer (1988:31) suggests the following:

- a. Group work provides students with opportunities for greater freedom and liberty. The absence of the teacher's control when students are working together

in groups gives them the ability to work and to decide on their own without any pressure or anxiety from the surrounding environment in addition to sharing responsibilities between them.

- b. Group work gives chances for the teacher to work with individual learners and provide special attention for invoked learners.

Doff (1988:141) proposes other important advantages of group work as:

- a. Group work offers more opportunities for language practice and language use.
- b. Working in groups make learners more concerned and interested in addition to raising the ability to participate and to focus on the task.
- c. Working in groups gives learners a feeling of security, decreases anxiety and give chances for shy learners to participate and to speak in English.
- d. Group work gives learners a sense of humanity and cooperation; moreover, it makes them able to share ideas, views and knowledge.

In another book, Harmer (2007:165) suggests other important advantages of group work; these are:

- a. It dramatically raises the chances of talking for individual learners.
- b. It decreases personal relationship problems.
- c. Different opinions and several contributions can be found and shared.
- d. Group work promotes negotiation and cooperation skills, and also, enables students to estimate each other's performance both positively ~~and~~ negatively.
- e. It increases learners' autonomy by permitting them to build their own decisions with no intervention from the teacher.

Other advantages of cooperative learning are proposed by Mabrouk (2007:34-35) who posits that group work enhances learning and benefits all students of different abilities in several ways:

- a. Weak learners working individually are likely to give up when they are stuck in problematic areas, working cooperatively they keep going.
- b. Strong students who are involved in explaining and clarifying material to weaker students often find gaps in their own understanding and fill them in.
- c. Motivate students to stay on task and to do the work in a timely manner because they know that others are counting on them.

In addition, Richards and Lockhart (1996:153) support the use of group work as a teaching strategy and encourage teaching with group work because of the positive influence of group work on students' learning of English:

- a. It reduces the dominance of the teacher over the class.
- b. It increases the amount of student participation in the class.
- c. It increases the opportunities for individual students to practice and use new features of the target language.
- d. It promotes collaboration among learners.
- e. It enables the teacher to work more as a facilitator and consultant.
- f. It can give learners a more active role in learning.

According to Orlich et al. (2010:271), cooperative learning has a number of advantages that promote students' learning and enhance learners' abilities; they assume that cooperative learning:

- a. Improves comprehension of basic academic content
- b. Reinforces social skills.
- c. Allows students decision making.
- d. Creates active learning environment.
- e. Boosts students' self-esteem.
- f. Celebrates diverse learning styles.

- g. Promotes students' responsibility.
- h. Focuses on success of everyone.

Clark (2003:85) states that “the most useful method of helping students generate ideas for a writing assignment is to have them discuss the topic in pairs, small groups, or with the whole class”. This is because students in cooperative learning “promote each other's learning and success, hold each other accountable to do their fair share, demonstrate interpersonal skills needed in the work place and process team effectiveness” (Smink&Schargel, 2004:203).

According to Webb (1982), interaction provides a suitable affective climate for language learning to take place and enables students to view situations from others' perspectives and teaches them a sense of responsibility for their own and their group-mates' learning. Thus, learning has to be viewed as an interactive process, because writing will be better when students exchange ideas to extend each other's understanding. In addition, group work gives learners chances to interact with each other, and discover new ways of thinking in doing tasks. Floods et al., (2003: 691) claims that, “It is a basic assumption of many cooperative learning strategies that student to student verbal interactions about content improve learning and increase the level of thinking”. Slavin (2006:253) for his part states that group encourages creative writing:

A widely used set of approaches to the teaching of creative writing, writing process models (Callins, 1983;Graves, 1983) engage students in small peer response teams in which they work together to help one another plan,draft, revise, edit, and "publish" compositions. That is, children may review each other's drafts and give helpful ideas for improvements in content as well as mechanics(e.g., spelling, punctuation), and

ultimately present compositions for some authentic purpose (such as a poetry reading or a literary review). In the process of responding to others' compositions, children gain insight into the process of writing and revision.

Working in groups has effective results on learner's achievements. "When students explain and teach concepts to each other, retention of these concepts improves. Explaining also helps students connect their prior knowledge with new information" (Hartman, 2001: 165). Also, when students write in groups, each student contributes to the writing task through exchanging ideas, and giving feedback when evaluating each other's writing.

1.9.2. Disadvantages of Group Work

In terms of the disadvantages of group work, Harmer (1998:31) warns against a set of weaknesses:

- a. In group work, learners may not like the members of the group with whom they will interact and group with.
- b. The dominance of one student while the other students keep silent.
- c. The use of the mother language by students in the groups because of the absence of the teacher.
- d. Group work may encourage students to be disarranged and to be more disturbed.

Additional disadvantages are listed by Doff, A. (1988:141-142) as follows:

- a. The use of group work can create noise and as a result the whole class will be disturbed.
- b. The inability of the teacher to control all the groups will lead learners to make mistakes.

- c. Working in group work is difficult to be controlled by the teacher which will effect negatively students' production of the language.

Learning cooperatively may be time consuming for teachers, especially novice ones; it requires complex skills and roles from both the teacher and the learners, and thus can be a factor that creates confusion in the classroom.

Conclusion

In summary, group work is a method that insists on the learner as an active and central participant in the learning process by giving him/her many responsibilities to accomplish. It is also one of the most effective ways of organizing foreign language classes. Group work can be used effectively by following principled methods in its construction and adapting criteria that are suitable to particular types of learners. The teacher takes on various roles in group work, and performs different roles during each stage of the task; and though advantages of group work outnumber and overshadow its disadvantages, an awareness of both is necessary for the teacher to weigh up the options available.

Chapter Two: Self-Confidence in Foreign Language Learning

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Chapter Two: Self-confidence in Foreign Language Learning

Introduction

Affect or affective factors can have negative or positive effects in the process of learning EFL, and students' production of written texts, in particular –which constitutes the focus of this research paper. In this chapter, self-confidence is explored as an affective factor that has tremendous impact on the success of students. Moreover, its relationship to EFL language production and learning is discussed. Next, self-confidence is distinguished and linked to self-esteem, self-concept and self-efficacy. For the purpose of giving a comprehensible view of the concept, the relationship between self-confidence and some other affective factors such as anxiety, risk-taking, and extroversion vs. introversion, is examined. Subsequently, the characteristics of both high and low self-confidence are presented; and lastly, the discussion explains how self-confidence influences motivation and autonomy.

2.1. Definition of Self-Confidence:

Self-confidence is one of the most important factors studied by psychological researchers (Clément, et.al., 1975). Concerning the etymology of the word, Lland (2013:11) explained, “Confidence originated from the Latin word “confidential” meaning “to trust” and “to have faith”.” Self-confidence reflects basically personal attitudes towards the self which allow the person to have a positive and realistic perception of himself and his abilities; such attitudes include pride, trust, optimism and affection. Murray (2006:53) says, “Confidence is defined in my dictionary as ‘firm trust’. If you are confident about something, you do not worry about its outcome, you just take it for granted that it will go well.” In the same line of thinking, Adalikwu (2012:5-6) suggests that “Self-confidence can be summed up as the belief that a person

has in their ability to succeed at a task, based on whether or not they have been able to perform that task in the past.” The concept is used by Dörnyei, (2008:73) to denote “a powerful mediating process in multi-ethnic settings that affects a person’s motivation to learn and use the language of the other speech community”. Thus, in addition to making a student unafraid, self-confidence is a motivational factor in learning an FL. This is the reason why Pine and Boy (in Williams and Burden, 1997: 98) stress that the goal of education is to make learners believe in themselves and their abilities by saying: “Our best preparation for an evolving society is helping children face the future with confidence in their own abilities and with a faith that they are worthwhile and important members of whatever they might find themselves in”

Self-confidence is regarded to be among the first steps to progress, achievement and success. Furthermore, Norman and Hyland (2003) suggest that there are three elements to confidence:

- ‘*Cognitive*’, i.e., the person’s knowledge of their abilities;
- ‘*Performance*’, i.e., the person’s ability to do something;
- ‘*Emotional*’, i.e., the learners’ comfortable feeling about the former two aspects.

In the language learning process, self-confidence has an essential influence on the achievement of learners. In other words, and as explained by Cole et al. (2007), confidence is related to competence, thus, teachers should build confidence in learners who are not confident in their abilities, and just the required level of confidence in learners who are so overconfident that they view the tasks beneath their ability:

A learner may be able to do some of the things described in the card sort but may not feel confident enough about their ability. On the other hand, they may be overconfident because they don’t fully appreciate what is involved. Building confidence in speaking and listening matters just as much as

developing skills and your teaching will need to take this into account. (p.20).

Self-confidence is considered one of the primary affective factors because language learning depends on the quality of the learner's attitudes and belief in his/ her own abilities. The learning process will be facilitated when students believe in their production or performance. In this vein, Tracy (2012), claims that "The power of self-confidence explains how to increase your 'mental fitness' by thinking like top performers in everything you do".

In closing, it should be noted that self-confidence is a construct that identifies beliefs and attitudes towards one's abilities vis-à-vis doing tasks. what is noticeable in self-confident learners is that they are the ones who would like to take further risks, place themselves in unfamiliar situations and examine their abilities in different contexts; in particular, making mistakes does not prohibit them to increase their capacity to succeed in the learning process.

2.2. Self-Confidence and Language Learning

Learners' variations by abilities can be attributed, in part, to the affective side of language learning, which counts among its components self-confidence as a motivational factor (Clément, 1994; Noels, 1994; Gardner, 2001; and Dörnyei, 1999 in Djabbari, 2013:43). For instance, Noels (1994) demonstrated that self-confidence is a crucial motivational subsystem in FL learning situations where learners have little contact with the TL members. It stands to reason that self-confident students are enthusiastic, have higher motivations, and do not stop when confronted by difficulties. These qualities can impact positively on students' achievement.

Through analysing self-confidence studies which dealt with the correlation between self-confidence and FL learning, Rubio (2007) found two attributes for the construct. The first one is that self-confidence is a result and/or cause of academic achievement. The second one is the strong and positive relation between academic achievement and self-confidence.

Low self-confidence may lead to some psychological conditions such as feelings of insecurity, anxiety, fear, and antisocial behaviours, according to Rubio (ibid.). These may be typical of FL teaching and learning contexts especially at initial stages of FL learning when the students' abilities do not allow them to speak and write in the classroom. This, in turn, leads low self-confidence learners to be unable to make a good start in studying the TL.

Krashen (1981) hypothesized that "the self-confident or secure person will be more able to encourage intake and will also have a lower filter" (23). In other words, the self-confident learner is one who acquires and learns better than the one who is not so. A similar view is given by Brown (1977): "the person with high-esteem is able to reach out beyond himself more freely, to be less inhibited, and because of his ego strength, to make the necessary mistakes involved in language learning with less threat to his ego" (352). Therefore, the input may be understood by the less-confident learner but not acquired.

In conclusion to the role of self-confidence in language learning, it can be said that self-confidence is considered one of the primary affective factors that influence language learning. It is not sufficient for a learner to have certain abilities; he/she must be able to use them in real classroom settings. The feeling of confidence increases both

the energy level towards learning the FL and the positive feelings towards the learner's abilities.

2.3. Self-Confidence and Language Production

A major challenge of FL instruction is to promote learners' communication abilities since the fundamental goal of language teaching is the production of competent speakers and writers of the TL.

According to Brown (2000) and Skehan (1989), self-confidence is an influential variable which affects language production. Accordingly, Brown (1994) states that FL learners cannot express themselves or speak the language freely and fluently without some degree of self-confidence. In addition, Brown (2007:155) claims that "no successful cognitive or affective activity can be carried out without some degree of self-confidence in oneself – the belief in one's own capabilities to successfully perform an activity" Tavani and Losh (2003) also supported the idea that correlates self-confidence with language production. They claim that "Levels of students' internal characteristics, such as motivation and self-confidence, also strongly influence their achievements during their high school careers" (142).

MacIntyre, Dornyei, Clement, and Noels (1998) assumed that self-confidence contributes to the learner's willingness to communicate in an FL. According to them, affective factors such as motivation, personality, intergroup climate, and intergroup attitudes, etc. underlie willingness to communicate as it is shown in the following figure.

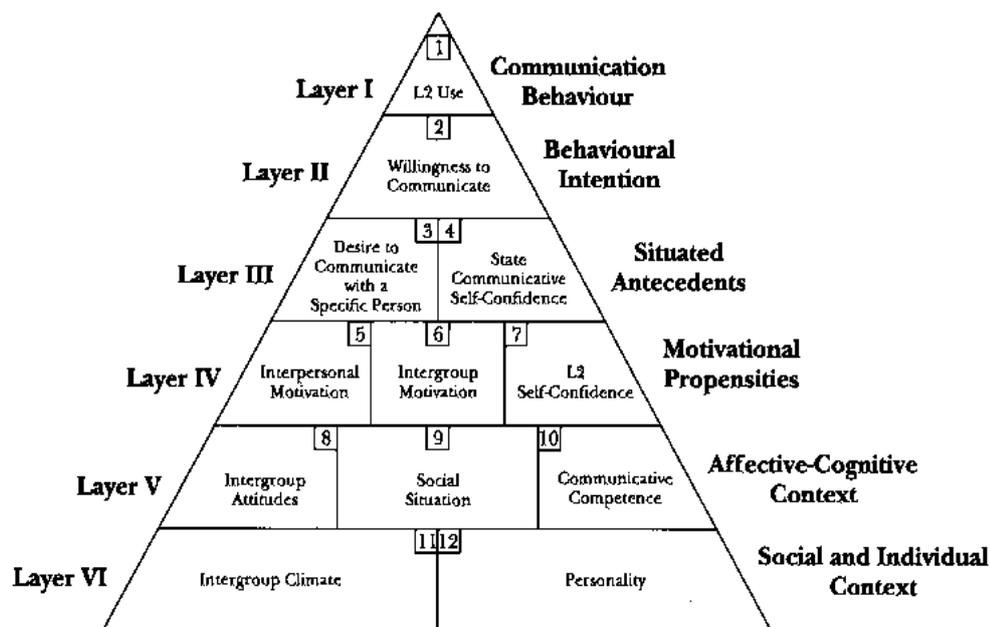


Figure 2.01: Social and Affective Factors in Learner’s Willingness to Communicate

Theoretically, pupils who perceive their FL communication competence as extremely high may be willing to speak in the classroom, regardless of the topic discussed, the number of pupils in the group, without reflecting their actual competence in the TL. On the other hand, pupils with low self-confidence, who perceive their FL communicative competence as low, are not going to participate in the classroom. In this regard, Cole et al. (2007) asserted,

... speaking in a group can seem one of the most daunting parts of spoken communication. Building learners' confidence through preparation and practice can make a big difference to their ability to take part in group discussions and even enjoy having their say (171).

Hale (2004) provides examples of the effects of high and low self-confidence on performance as listed in the following table:

High self-confidence	Low self-confidence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Giving maximum effort - A willingness to take chances - A willingness to react positively to set -backs and learn from the situation - High commitment to training - Strong focus on the task at hand - Positive attitude and belief in own skills and talent. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of effort - More likely to give up - Playing safe - Misdirected focus - Tendency to attribute outcome of events to factors that cannot becontrolled (e.g. luck, environmentalconditions).

Table 2. 01: Effects of Levels of Self-Confidence on Performance

2.4. Self-Confidence and Related Concepts

Self-confidence has been used interchangeably, in many cases, with other self-related terms such as self-esteem, self-concept and self-efficacy. These three constructs will be defined and distinguished, and their relationship to self-confidence explained.

2.4.1. Self- Esteem

Self-esteem is an important affective factor in successful FL learning. Self-confidence is inextricably related to self-esteem. Dörnyei (2005:87), for example, draws the attention towards the significance of the two notions: “Self-esteem and self-confidence are like the foundations of a building: if they are not secure enough, even the best technology will be insufficient to build solid walls over them.” This means that self-confidence and self-esteem complete each other, and are both necessary in the learning process. Another researcher, Branden (1969:110) claims that self-esteem covers both self-confidence and self-respect. According to him, “Self-esteem has two interrelated aspects: it entails a sense of personal efficacy and a sense of personal worth.

It is the integrated sum of self-confidence and self-respect”. Branden (1969:117) also asserted that:

Self-esteem requires and entails *cognitive self-assertiveness*, which is expressed through the policy of thinking, of judging, and of governing action accordingly. To subvert the authority of one's rational understanding to sacrifice one's mind in favor of feelings one cannot justify or defend—is to subvert one's self-esteem.

Student with high self-esteem will generally be positive. They may experience difficult times in their language learning, but they will generally be able to deal with these without having too much of a long-term negative impact on them. On the opposite side, low self-esteem may hinder students' success in the FL. In this context, Cloutte (2011) said, “If you have low self-esteem these beliefs will often be negative. You may focus on what you feel are your weaknesses, and mistakes that you have made” (p.47). As a result, students may find it hard to recognize the positive parts of their personalities. They may also blame themselves for any difficulties or failures that they have.

According to Lawrence (2006:5) “Self-esteem is the individual’s *evaluation* of the discrepancy between self-image and ideal self”, and has two facets: global self-esteem and specific self-esteem. The former refers to an all-round feeling of self-worth and confidence, and the latter refers to a feeling of self-worth and confidence with regard to a specific activity or behaviour.

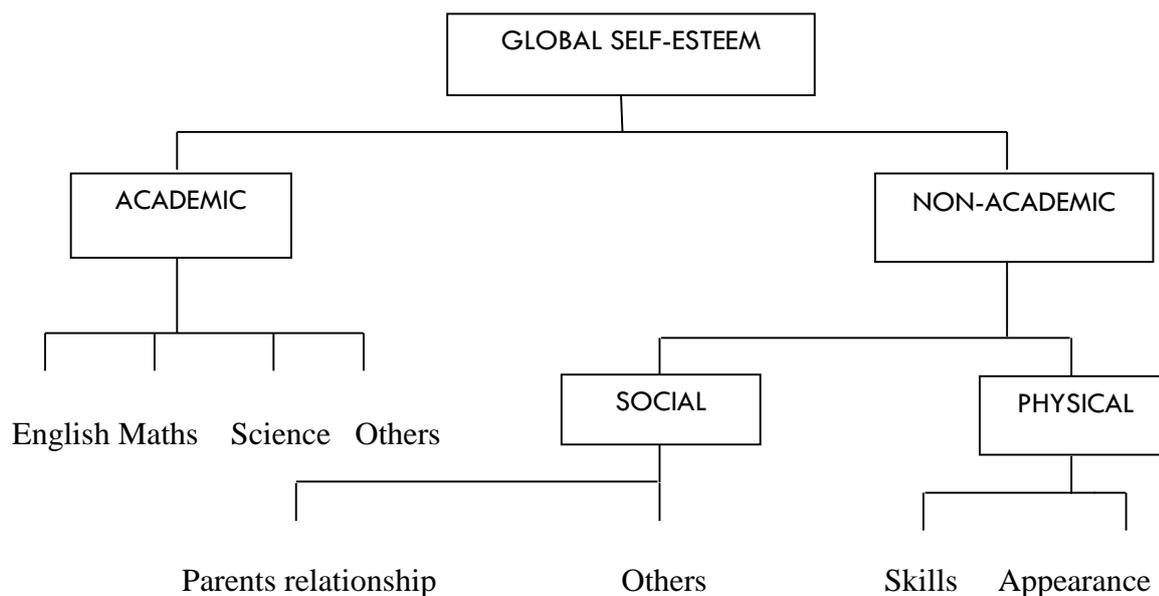


Figure 2.2: The self-Esteem Hierarchy (Lawrence, 2006:12).

According to the previous figure, global self-esteem includes both academic and non-academic feeling of self-worth and confidence, and each of them includes other domains. English is academic, and it needs a high level of self-confidence to be learned.

Benabou and Tirole (2000) indicate that "the fact that a higher self-confidence enhances the individual's motivation gives anyone with a vested interest in his performance an incentive to build up and maintain his self-esteem" This means that self-confidence and self-esteem are interrelated. Moreover, it seems that a learner's evaluation or judgment of his/ her own "worth" plays an important role in bringing the notion of values into play, as recognized by Rosenberg (1979:30-31):

The individual simply feels that he is a person of worth; he respects himself for what he is, but he does not stand in awe of himself nor does he expect others to stand in awe of him. He does not necessarily consider himself superior to others.

In general, self-confidence and self-esteem are used interchangeably. Lland (2013) mentioned, "Perhaps the word that is most commonly interchanged with self-

confidence is self-esteem” (12). Self-esteem is the students’ evaluation of themselves. However, self-confidence means that students believe in their own capacities. Lland (2013) also added, “To simply put it, self-esteem is your view about you or your internal rating of yourself. On the other hand, confidence is how much faith you have on yourself and the degree which you trust yourself” (13).

2.4.2. Self-Concept

Self-concept is a general term used to refer to how an individual thinks about, evaluates or perceives himself/herself. In another word, to be aware of oneself is to have a concept of oneself. It is the way in which you think and you see yourself as a person. Lawrence (2006:2) stated, “The self-concept is the individual's awareness of his/her own self” or the individual’s own organized and conscious conception of the self. Comb and Snygg pointed out that self-concept is the nucleus of one’s personality structure, and that changes in behaviour occur only in relationship to events that have direct bearing on the self (in Paschal, 1968).

In language learning, self-concept is defined as an overall self-perception of individuals in the academic context, it refers to self-beliefs in the academic domain including statements such as “I’m satisfied with my grades”, “I’m able to understand this”..., etc. (Wondimu and Bruinsma, 2006). Moreover, self-concept is the learner’s belief of his own ability to learn the accepted types of academic behaviour, in specific subject areas in the school program, which is predictive of learning performance. In the language classroom, FL learning is an anxiety-provoking experience for many students. As a result, self-concept should be taken into account. In this regard, Horwitz et al (1991; in Rubio, 2007:7) note,

The importance of the disparity between the "true" self as
known to the language learner and the more limited self as

can be presented at any given moment in the foreign language would seem to distinguish foreign language anxiety from other academic anxieties such as those associated with mathematics or science. Probably no other field of study implicates self-concept and self expression to the degree that language study does.

In addition, teacher encouragement is essential in building self-concept. Kirby and McDonald (2009:75) claim that, “Encouraging students to pursue their interests or talents increases empowerment and confidence, and taking the time to recognize young people for their efforts and accomplishments contributes to building a strong self-concept” Thus, self-confidence is an important dimension of self-concept and they are really related to each other.

There are three main terms constituting what Lawrence called « self-concept » as it is shown in the following figure. They are self-image, ideal self and Self-image.

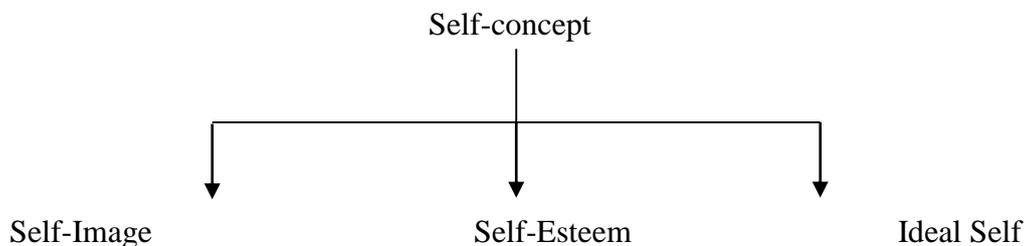


Figure 2.03: Self-Concept as an Umbrella Term (Lawrence, 2006:3)

2.4.2.1. Self-Image

Self-image is how students perceive themselves. It is a number of self-impressions that have built up over time. It can be positive, by giving the students confidence in their thoughts and actions, or negative, by making them doubtful of their capabilities and ideas. One’s self-image, as Lawrence (2006:3) state, takes shape at the

early years of life “in the family with parents giving the child an image of him/herself of being loved or not loved, of being clever or stupid, and so forth, by their non-verbal as well as verbal communication.” Hence, how students see themselves, their self-image, affects their production in the classroom. Next, when learners are aware of their self-image, they will start to think how to possess ideal self.

2.4.2.2. Ideal- Self

An ideal-self is essentially an ideal future version of “you” that encompasses the learner personality, beliefs, values, and behaviour under various conditions. According the Humanistic Psychologist Carl Rogers, “the personality is composed of the Real Self and the Ideal Self. Your Real Self is who you actually are, while your Ideal Self is the person you want to be” Kim (in Tarhan, 2004:291) found that for the learner to build a positive and instrumental L2 self, he/ she has to bridge his/her ideal L2/FL self and “life experiences in a variety of communities”

2.4.2.3. Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy (efficacy expectations) is dealt with in the socio-cognitive theory of motivation that was suggested by Albert Bandura, and which is defined as “The courses of action required to manage prospective situations” (1995:2). In other words, self-efficacy is an individual’s belief in his/her ability to succeed in a particular situation. It plays a major part in determining the learner’s chances for success. Schunk (2012), for his part, claims that “Self-efficacy depends in part on student abilities. In general, high-ability students feel more efficacious about learning compared with low-ability students” (p.146). Schunk also differentiates between students with high self-efficacy and students with low self-efficacy in saying. The following figure represents the relationship between self-efficacy, skill and instructional treatment, in which all these three factors influence a student’s skilful performance. In this model, students

who feel efficacious about learning generally expend greater effort and persist longer than students who doubt their abilities, especially when they encounter obstacles. In turn, these behaviours promote their learning/performance. (ibid.)

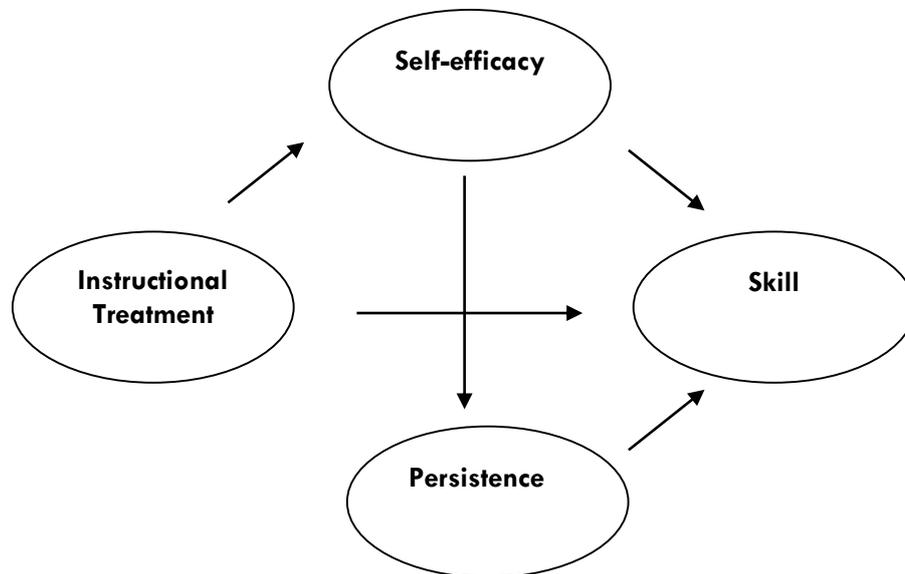


Figure 2.04: Effects of Instructional Treatment, Self-Efficacy, and Persistence on Skilful Performance (Schunk, in Bandura, 1995:205).

Indeed, the teacher also plays an important role in enhancing the students' self-efficacy. Bandura (1994:11) also noted that the learning process depends also on the self-efficacy of teachers. According to him, teachers who have a high sense of efficacy about their teaching abilities can motivate and enhance their students "cognitive orientation". In addition, Bandura suggested that peer influence serves several important efficacy functions. He proposed that "age-mates provide highly informative comparisons for judging and verifying one's self-efficacy"(ibid.10). In the same context, Bandura (in Chelbi, 2010:35) believes that there are four main foundations of self-efficacy:

a. Mastery Experience: Students' sense of efficacy is strengthened or weakened when they succeed or fail in performing a given task.

b. Social Modelling: One more significant source of self-efficacy is noticing other students achieve a task successfully.

c. Social Persuasion: Students could be convinced by their teachers that they “can make it”; i.e. verbal encouragement from teachers plays an important role in students’ success.

d. Psychological Responses: Students’ own responses and emotional reactions to particular contexts. When facing challenging situations, students should train themselves to manage their stress to enhance their sense of self-efficacy.

Self-efficacy is interrelated to self-confidence, and it shares some beliefs with it. Self-confidence is a broad term which involves the students’ belief in their abilities in all the tasks whereas self-efficacy is a part of it. Lland (2013) pointed out that self-confidence generally includes a lot of qualities which can be described in two words: belief and self-efficacy. Adalikwu (2012) claims that if an individual does not have a high level of self-efficacy he/she will be unwilling to try a new challenge.

In brief, each student has his/her own goals, but how to achieve them is quite complex for them. Self-efficacy helps the learners to know how to achieve those purposes. Thus, developing students’ self-efficacy will enhance their self-confidence as well.

2.5. Self-Confidence and other Affective Factors

Personality, represented in the affective factors, is one of the main determiners of success in language learning (Oxford, 1990; Arnold & Brown, 1999; Dörnyei, 2005; Brown, 2007). According to Pervin and John (in Dörnyei, 2005:11), “personality represents those characteristics of the person that account for consistent patterns of feeling, thinking and behaving.” Affect covers a whole range of phenomena and is

defined in terms of “aspects of emotion, feeling, mood or attitude which condition behaviour” (Arnold & Brown, 1999:01). For Oxford (1990:140), “Good language learners are often those who know how to control their emotions and attitudes about learning.” Affective factors (also called affective domain), according to Brown (2007), are as important or almost as important as the cognitive side in conditioning human behaviour, and are defined as:

The emotional side of human behavior and it may be juxtaposed to the cognitive side. The development of affective states and feelings involve a variety of personality factors, feelings both about ourselves and about others with whom we come into contact (140).

In the same vein, Pike (in Brown, 2000: 144) posited that language learning, including L2/FL learning, as a verbal activity, is not separated from the affective side of the learner or the nonverbal human activity:

The activity of man constitutes a structural whole in such a way that it cannot be subdivided into neat “parts” or “levels” or “compartments” with language in a behavioral compartment insulated in character, content, and organization from other behavior.

Krathwohl, Bloom, and Masia (Brown, 2007:153) believed that the development of affectivity goes through five levels: “receiving”, “responding”, “valuing”, “organizing” what has been valued and finally “understanding” oneself according to the values they have internalized. As stated above, self-confidence embodies different affective variables. Learners are thought to be self-confident if they

trust their abilities in the classroom. That is to say, students should be active, speak and participate even if they are not sure about the exact answer.

Anxiety, risk-taking and extroversion vs. introversion are among the affective factors that influence learners' self-confidence. The following section is devoted to the exploration of those variables and their effect on learners' self-confidence.

2.5.1. Anxiety

Anxiety is considered one of the most influential variables, which prevents learners from successfully learning an FL. It is a general term for several disorders that cause nervousness, fear, apprehension, and worrying. These disorders affect how students feel and behave. Learners often experience a general state of worry or fear before confronting something challenging such as a test or examination. Anxiety is a complex affective concept associated with feelings of uneasiness, frustration, self-doubt, apprehension, or worry (Skovel 1978:134). These feelings of stress and nervousness that are experienced by many students have been extensively investigated. "For a long time, researchers thought of anxiety as a permanent feature of a learner's personality" (Lightbown and Spada, 2006:61). However, when studying anxiety, researchers have come to differentiate between FL anxiety and trait anxiety.

Brown (2006) found that trait anxiety is a more permanent willingness to be anxious. According to him, some people are generally anxious about many things. Trait anxiety has not proved to be useful in predicting FL accomplishment, because of its global and ambiguous nature.

Regarding the second type of anxiety, Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope defined FL anxiety as "A distinct complex of self-perception, beliefs, feelings, and behaviours related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language

learning process” (in Aida,1994:128). According to Dornyei (2005:198), “There is no doubt that anxiety affects L2 performance. Most of us will have had the experience that in an anxiety-provoking climate our L2 knowledge often deteriorates: We forget things that we otherwise know and also make silly mistakes.” Indeed, communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety are the main components of FL anxiety. These components have been identified (Horwitz et al.; MacIntyre& Gardner in Brown, 2006:151) as the following:

- Communication apprehension, arising from learner's inability to adequately express mature thoughts and ideas;
- Fear of negative social evaluation, arising from a learner's need to make a positive social impression on others; and
- Test anxiety or apprehension over academic evaluation.

In turn, Wrench et al. (2009) identified five distinguishing types of anxiety that can be found in classroom setting: communication apprehension, receiver apprehension, writing apprehension, teacher apprehension and evaluation apprehension. Each of these types of anxiety, or apprehension as it is used by these authors, concerns an aspect inseparable in the classroom atmosphere.

Research in FL/L2 learning has dealt with two types of anxiety: harmful anxiety and helpful anxiety. According to Oxford (1999), harmful anxiety or debilitating anxiety affects the learner's performance negatively; indirectly through self-doubt and worry and directly by low participation in the classroom. This type of anxiety can be related to many things including: negative attitudes and beliefs, plummeting motivation, in addition to language performance difficulties. On the other hand, helpful or facilitating anxiety affects the learner's performance positively. Horwitz (in Oxford, 1999) claims that anxiety is not helpful with more complicated learning, such as

language learning, but it is helpful just for very simple learning tasks. Facilitative and debilitating anxiety can motivate or hinder the progress of the student. Brown (2000:152), in this regard, states that: “both too much anxiety and too little anxiety may hinder the process of successful second language learning.” Scovel (1978:139) points out that anxiety provokes a fight or flight reaction as follows:

Facilitating anxiety motivates the learner to ‘fight’ the new learning task; it gears the learner emotionally for approval behaviour. Debilitating anxiety, in contrast motivates the learner to ‘flee’ the new learning task, it stimulates the individual emotionally to adopt avoidance behaviour.

Arnold (1999:61) found that there are a lot of studies showing the negative correlation of anxiety and the language achievements in different areas of learning an FL/L2 including:

- Grades in language courses (Aidaa 1994; Horwitz 1986; Trylong 1987);
- Proficiency test performance (Garschow, Sparks, Anderson , Javorsky, Skinner and Patton 1994 ; Gardner, Lalond, Moorcroft and Evers 1987) ;
- Performance in speaking and writing tasks(Trylong 1987 ; Young1986)
- Self-confidence in language learning(MacIntyre and Gardner 1991; Gardner and MacIntyre 1993)
- Self-esteem (Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope 1986; Price 1991; Scarcella and Oxford 1992).

Philips (1992) found that there is a relation between FL anxiety and oral performance, reporting that the more the students were anxious, the lower performance they displayed in oral tests, because some learners lose control of their speech and performance. This is called speech anxiety.

Regarding language proficiency, the mutual relationship between anxiety and proficiency should be stressed (Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1986). That is to say, language anxiety with its deep-rooted negative feelings can affect, negatively or positively, learners' language development and proficiency. It is either motivating learners, helping them engage in communicative tasks or taking risks in classroom activities or hindering their learning process (in Baran-Lucarz, 2013).

As regards the relationship between self-confidence and anxiety, Krashen (1981:75) states it as follows:

Self-confident people have the advantage of not fearing rejection as much as those with high anxiety levels and are therefore more likely to put themselves in learning situations and do so repeatedly...[they] are less hampered by the conscious operation of the monitor because they are not so worried about how they appear.

Thus, self-confidence and anxiety seem to strongly enhance or inhibit FL/L2 acquisition by playing a critical mediating role between the linguistic input available in the educational setting and the students' ability to learn.

2.5.2. Risk-Taking

Risk-taking is closely related to the construct of self-confidence as an important characteristic of successful foreign language learning. Learners have to be able to gamble a bit, to be willing to try something new and to take risks even if they are not sure about the right answer. Willingness means making voluntary steps to participate – say in communicative activities within FL classrooms– through guessing or speaking (Arnold & Brown, 1999; Oxford, 1999). Risk-taking is an internal property of every

learner. The concept of risk-taking has been explained by Brown (2000) as a state in which learners “[are] willing to try out hunches about the language and take the risk of being wrong” (149). This notion of willingness is the key to risk-taking behaviour. Brown (2001) states that many instructional contexts around the world do not encourage risk-taking; instead, they encourage correctness, right answers, and withhold “guesses” until one is sure to be correct.

A risk-taking student is typically student one who actively participates in the classroom and answers the questions without waiting to be called by the teacher. This type of students is not afraid of making mistakes, and is willing to take part in class discussions without any fear. He/she is not worried of speaking in front of their classmates, and hence, is better than a shy student because they usually speak more in the classroom.

Risk-taking is proven to be a characteristic of good language learners; Rubin (in Freeman and Long, 1991:188) characterized good language learners as “willing to guess, willing to appear foolish in order to communicate, and willing to use what knowledge they do have of the TL in order to create novel utterances”. Learning involves the risks of “failing to produce intended meaning, failure to interpret intended meaning (on the part of someone else), of being laughed at, of being shunned or rejected” (Brown, 1994:160). Sometimes, students suffer from the negative evaluation from the teacher or from their classmates. This usually prevents them from taking necessary risks. In an article written by Hofstede (1986), there are some means of conceptualizing such mismatches in expectations. To study the cultural norms, he used four different conceptual categories. One of them is ‘uncertainty avoidance’ which is defined as “the extent to which people within a culture are made nervous by situations they perceive as unstructured, unclear, or unpredictable, situations which they therefore

try to avoid by maintaining strict codes of behaviours and beliefs in absolute truths” (Brown, 2000:190).

Ely (1986a) found that students’ risk-taking behaviour was a positive predictor of their voluntary classroom participation, but the relationship with actual success was relatively weak, even though the correlation of risk-taking and participation was high. Hence, individual differences and personality affect language learning in specific manner. In addition, Ely (ibid.) put out four characteristics to risk-taking behaviour. The first one is related to the learner’s self-confidence and absence of fear of experimenting with new language. With the help of self-confidence, the second characteristic which refers to the willingness to use new complex language can be realized. Hence, self-confidence and risk-taking are really related to each other. Students learn to feel that they are important, and they learn to trust. This builds the self-confidence that is needed for them to take risks. These risks include tasks such as speaking, writing, and building relationships with their classmates. Therefore, this makes them confidently engage in new experiences at their own pace. The third characteristic or level is manifested by an acceptance of erroneous linguistic production or achievement. The fourth and most refined feature of risk-taking is shown by a tendency to repeat the new linguistic data before speaking out, under the aim of either discussion or trial of new language.

2.5.3. Extroversion vs. Introversion

Extroversion and introversion are also crucial personality factors that might influence language learning. In learning EFL, teachers can easily distinguish between two types of learners: extrovert learners and introvert learners.

Arnold and Brown (1999:10) defined extroversion as “being outgoing and talkative and, therefore, better language learners, since they are more likely to

participate openly in the classroom and seek out opportunities to practice”. Another definition of extroversion is given by Brown (2000) as the following: “the extent to which a person has a deep-seated need to receive ego enhancement, self-esteem, and a sense of wholeness from other people as opposed to receiving that affirmation within oneself ”.

On the other hand, introverted students seem quiet and not friendly since they feel nervous among the group and they always prefer individual work instead of being part of a group. They are less exposed to oral task and they lose the chance to be effective speakers. Indeed, introverted means shy or reserved. In addition, introversion refers to the extent to which a person derives a sense of wholeness and fulfilment apart from reflection of this self from other people.

It is not clear whether extroversion or introversion affects the process of learning EFL. However, it is well-established that the process involves too much talking, interacting, participating and practising from the side of the learner. FL learning is more effective when the language is practised, and because shy students are less likely to practise it, they may attain less proficiency. Introverts, according to Arnold & Brown (1999, p10) “might be considered less apt language learners, since they seem to be too reserved, too self-restrained”. They are energized by spending time alone, and inclined to think things through without speech. On the other hand, extrovert learners are likely to engage in conversation, without being afraid of making mistakes, which provides them the opportunity to improve their oral ability. Most people think that extroverted are talkative, energized by being with others, and often think out loud. Dewaele&Furnham (in Brown, 2000:156) found that extroversion may be a factor in the development of general oral communicative competence.

Folk wisdom claims that extroverted learners learn at a faster rate than introverts, but again, the results of empirical research are inconclusive. Naiman et al. (in Freeman and Long, 1991:185) found no significant correlation between scores on an extroversion/introversion measure and performance on listening comprehension and imitation tasks by Canadian self-professed good language learners. In reality, extroverts are better in pronunciation, speaking whereas, introverts are better in spelling and writing. This explains the idea that there is no positive correlation between successful FL learning and extroversion. Brown (2007) suggested that in some cultures, it is improper to speak inside the classroom. Hence, teachers should pay attention to those cultural norms in their evaluation of students' participation, because introversion may be just a sign of respect and modesty in a given culture. Additionally, extroverts might have a good immediate recall, but a poor one after a long time. Introverts, on the other hand, are more likely to have good learning achievement, since they have more patience than extroverts. In other words, introverts are less likely to talk and have a lower self-confidence in their FL. Self-confidence has been linked to success in FL learning in natural settings. According to a study by Gardner and Clément (1990), self-confidence is one cause of motivation in learning an FL; it is a combination of low levels of language-specific anxiety, confidence in one's language skills, and self-perceptions of high levels of proficiency. From these studies, it would seem that an extrovert with an outgoing personality and more tolerance for risk would be a better language learner than the more introverted personality who is more conservative and more self-conscious.

2.6. Characteristics of High Self-Confidence

Students with high self-confidence can easily impress others, as others perceive them as more knowledgeable and more likely to make correct judgments. They are

more successful in learning and producing the FL. They just have to believe that they are capable of doing the best, and they have to be willing to take risks. Students with high self-confidence have specific features. Wright (2007:12) suggested different characteristics of students who have high self-confidence:

- **They are ambitious:** They want more from life than existence or survival; FL learners are aspirant and want to get more about the foreign language.
- **They are goal oriented:** They seek a challenge of completing and setting new goals for themselves. They try hard to accomplish their intents to develop their FL.
- **They are visionary:** Rather than being stuck for too long, they can see themselves in better circumstances and surroundings. They have an idea about success and how to achieve it.
- **They have learned to communicate:** This kind of students prefers to listen than to speak. For them, to be effective is more important than to be right.
- **They are loving and kind:** Those students build good relations with others since they are always friendly.
- **They are attractive and open to others:** They attract good things and good people to them inwardly and not physically.

Students with high self-confidence are more successful in learning and producing the FL than students with low self-confidence. In this regard, Oxford (1990:140) claims that: “The affective side of the learner is probably one of the most important influences on language learning success or failure. Good language learners are often those who know how to control their emotions and attitudes about learning”. The learner does not need to just have certain abilities, but he must be capable to use these abilities in real classroom settings when he interacts with his teacher and

classmates. Making the learners believe in their abilities needs to be incorporated within the teaching process. Besides, it is important to acknowledge the extension provided by Clément and his colleagues (Clément, 1980; Clément & Kruidenier, 1985) that self-confidence is a social product which is due to contacts between environments where different language communities exist together without excluding its cognitive components. In this regard, Dörnyei (2008:73) states that “Linguistic self-confidence – derived from the quality and quantity of the contact between the members of the L1 and L2 Communities– is a major motivational factor in learning the other community’s language, and determines the learners’ future desire for intercultural communication and the extent of identification with the L2 group...” Linguistic self-confidence in Clément’s view is primarily a socially defined construct.

2.7. Characteristics of Low Self-Confidence

Lack of self-confidence is not necessarily related to lack of ability. It influences students’ production of written and spoken texts because they do not believe in themselves. Students with low self-confidence speak negatively to themselves, they do not take risks. Wright (2007:11) suggested other features of students with low self-confidence:

- **They are fearful of change:** Those students think negatively because of fear of making mistakes .This prevent them to change.
- **They are pessimistic and tend to see the glass as half empty:** They do not search for the real reasons that make them fail. They reprimand other people for their own choices.

- **They have difficulty communicating what they really want from life:** Those Students are not specific when giving an idea about their purposes in life. Then, generalities are more used.
- **They want to please others more than be true to themselves:** They always see themselves in the lower class. Also, they blame the others and think that they are always right.
- **They are insecure and are drawn to others who also see themselves as victims:** Lack of self-worth will be increased when students build weak relationships with others.

When talking about lower levels of self-confidence, two categories of symptoms need to be discussed, emotional symptoms and physical symptoms. As for the emotional symptoms, they are as follows: apprehension, uneasiness and dread, feeling restless, strong desire to escape, avoidance behaviour, hyper-vigilance, irritability, confusion, impaired concentration or selective attention, self-consciousness and insecurity, and behavioural problems. The physical symptoms are noticed through racing heartbeat, chest pains, hot flashes or chills, cold and clammy hands, stomach upset, shortness of breath, sweating, dizziness, muscle tension or aches, headaches, fatigue and insomnia (Wiley, 2003).

2.8. The Influence of Self-Confidence on Motivation and Autonomy

Self-confidence has a positive impact on learner's achievement. First, it boosts student's motivation. In addition, it makes them autonomous in FL learning. In EFL, students have to be motivated and autonomous. Learner motivation and autonomy in the language classroom can lead to more extensive use of the language and the development of greater language proficiency.

2.8.1. Motivation

Motivation refers to the necessary quality that FL learners should have to achieve their goals. “The term motivation comes from the Latin verb *movere*, which means to move. Motivation is evoked to explain what gets people going, keeps them going, and helps them finish tasks” Pintrich and Schunk (in Regnolds and Miller, 2003:104). Thus, student motivation is probably the most important element for explaining the success or failure of any complex task. Highly motivated students will learn readily, and make any class fun to teach; whereas unmotivated students will learn very little and generally make teaching frustrating.

In Brown (2000: 160-161) various definitions of motivation have been proposed from different perspectives over the course of decades of research. From the behaviouristic perspective, motivation is simply the expectation of reward, driven to acquire positive reinforcement, and driven by previous experiences of praise for behaviour. From the cognitive perspective, motivation places much more emphasis on the individual's decision, “the choices people make as to what experiences or goals they will approach or avoid and the degree of effort they will exert in that respect” (Keller 1983:389). From the constructivist perspective, the view of motivation places even further emphasis on social context as well as individual personal choices (Williams & Burden 1997:120). Indeed, Maslow (1970) saw motivation as dependent on the satisfaction, first, of fundamental physical necessities (air, water, food), then of community, security, identity, and self-esteem, the fulfilment of which finally leads to self-actualization. The table below explains more the schematic representation of views of motivation.

Behaviouristic	Cognitive	Constructivist
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anticipation of reward • Desire to receive positive reinforcement • External, individual forces in control 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Driven by basic human needs (exploration, manipulation, etc.) • Degree of effort expended • Internal, individual forces in control 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social community context • Social status and security of group • Interactive forces in control.

Table 2.02: Behaviouristic, Cognitive and Constructivist Views of Motivation

Without large opportunities for motivation, even individuals with outstanding abilities cannot accomplish, long-term goal; this is why Dörnyei (2005:65) argues that motivation "... provides the primary impetus to initiate L2 learning and later the driving force to sustain the long and often tedious learning process; indeed, all the other factors involved in SLA presuppose motivation to some extent."

Teachers need to be aware about the psychological variables and individual differences to help their learners be more motivated, and to achieve success because motivation is affected by many factors as mentioned by Danis (1993:3) "...interest in the subject matter, perception of its usefulness, general desire to achieve, selfconfidence, self-esteem as well as persistence". Thus, a 'motivated' learner is one who is willing to invest effort in learning activities and to progress. A motivated learner makes learning and teaching more pleasant and easier, as well as more productive Naiman et al., (in penny, 1996:275) came to the conclusion that most successful learners are those who have certain typical characteristic, summarized below:

- Positive task orientation. The learner is willing to tackle tasks and challenges, and has confidence in his or her success.

- Ego-involvement. The learner finds it important to succeed in learning in order to maintain and promote his or her own (positive) self-image.
- Need for achievement. The learner has a need to achieve, to overcome difficulties and succeed in what he or she sets out to do.
- High aspiration. The learner is ambitious, goes for demanding challenges, high proficiency, top grades.
- Goal orientation. The learner is very aware of the goals of learning, or of specific learning activities, and directs his or her efforts towards achieving them.
- Perseverance. The learner consistently invests a high level of efforts in learning, and is not discouraged by setbacks or lack of progress.
- Tolerance of ambiguity. The learner is not disturbed or frustrated by situations involving a temporary lack of understanding or confusion; he or she can live with these patiently, in the confidence that understanding will come later.

Two types of dichotomies of motivation have been distinguished in the literature on FL/SL learning. These refer to the distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, and the difference between instrumental and integrative motivation

Regarding the first dichotomy of motivation, intrinsic vs. extrinsic, the former is used to refer to an internal form of motivation. As Ur (1991) points out, “Intrinsic motivation is the urge to engage in the learning activity for its own sake” (276). This means that intrinsic motivation emanates mainly from inside of students and their interest in learning an FL. (p.15). Deci and Ryan define intrinsic motivation as “an evidence whenever students natural curiosity and interest energize their learning” (in Arnold,1999:14). In this sense, intrinsic motivation refers to the natural tendency to initiate and move students to particular actions. It results in high quality learning and creativity. When intrinsically motivated, a learner is moved to act for the fun or

challenge entailed rather than because of rewards, pressures. Intrinsic motivation exists in the relation between learners and activities. On the other hand, extrinsic motivation is external. It comes from influences outside of the learners. According to Arnold & Brown (1999), “Extrinsic motivation comes from the desire to get a reward or avoid punishment; the focus is on something external to the learning activity itself” (p.14). Indeed, positive feedback, grades, prizes refers to the main typical extrinsic rewards (Brown, 2000:164). This means that the learner expect payoff of action. Oelmüller (2006:7) asserts that extrinsic motivation is just for short term results. These results include travelling abroad, getting a job..., etc.

For a better learning process, students have to be intrinsically motivated. Maslow(Brown, 2000:165) found that intrinsic motivation is superior to extrinsic motivation. According to him, students are motivated for achieving “self-actualization” if students basic needs are available, then without taking into account the presence or absence of 'extrinsic rewards', students will just struggle for self-esteem and fulfilment.

The second type of dichotomies refers to the difference between instrumental and integrative motivation. The significant studies of these two types of motivation in FL/L2 learning were carried out by Robert Gardner and Wallace Lambert (1972). According to them, instrumental motivation refers to acquiring a language for attaining instrumental goals: translation, reading technical materials, etc. On the other hand, integrative motivation refers to learners who want to be integrated into the target culture and to be able to communicate with foreigners (in Brown, 2000:162). Later on, Gardner and Lambert (1972) and Spolsky (1969) reached the idea that achieving higher scores in proficiency tests in an FL is because of integrativeness (ibid.163). The table below describes the two different motivational dichotomies as proposed by Brown (2000: 166).

	Intrinsic	Extrinsic
Integrative	L2 learner wishes to integrate with the L2 culture (e.g., for immigration or marriage)	Someone else wishes the L2 learner to know the L2 for integrative reasons (e.g., Japanese parents send kids to Japanese-language school)
Instrumental	L2 learner wishes to achieve goals utilizing L2 (e.g., for a career)	External power wants L2 learner to learn L2(e.g., corporation sends Japanese businessman to U.S. for language training)

Table 2.03: Motivational Dichotomies (Brown, 2000: 166).

2.8.2. Autonomy

Autonomy means the ability to take control of one's own learning independently. An autonomous learner will take more responsibility for learning and is likely to be more effective than a learner who is reliant on the teacher. Autonomy and responsibility are two metacognitive strategies (Oxford, 1990) that inevitably result from well-structured cooperative work (Brown, 2001). As stated in the first chapter, cooperative grouping enhances self-confidence, which in turn influences autonomy. That is to say, when students have a high self-confidence, each student becomes responsible for his/her individual learning and group learning, and for the group's benefits as a whole, which makes all students autonomous and responsible. Paiva defines autonomy as the following,

autonomy is a socio-cognitive system nested in the SLA system. It involves not only the individual's mental states and processes, but also political, social and economic dimensions. It is not a state, but a non-linear process, which undergoes periods of instability, variability and adaptability. It is an essential element in SLA because it triggers the learning

process through learners' agency and leads the system beyond the classroom. (in Murray, Gao & Lamb, 2011:p.249)

In the field of FL learning, the concept of learner autonomy was clearly articulated by Holec (1981) as “an attribute of the learner, implying certain cognitive capacities”. This definition explained “WHAT autonomous learners are able to do, rather than HOW they are able to do it” (Benson, 2007:23). This means that learner autonomy is a matter of explicit or conscious intention: one cannot accept responsibility for her/his own learning unless he/she has some idea of what he/she tries to learn. Indeed, autonomy helps learners to control themselves, which means to have enough abilities which help them in their language production. In this sense, Thornbury (2005) defined autonomy as, “The capacity to self-regulate performance as a consequence of gaining control over skills that were formerly other regulated” (96). FL learning will proceed most effectively if students are authorized to develop and exercise their autonomy. This does not reject the role of the teacher in learning, but it points out, the huge worth of the teacher in forming the autonomy skills. In this case, the teacher is just a guide to the learners. Palfreyman (2003) states, “Independence from a teacher is often taken as observable sign of autonomy, indeed the term 'independence' is often used as a synonym for autonomy” (p.4). Autonomy defends the idea of individualization or the learner-centeredness. Individualization means that individual learners are working towards autonomy for their own lack. In addition, within the context of education, there seem to be seven main attributes characterizing autonomous learners (Omaggio, in Wenden, 1998: 41-42); thus, autonomous learners:

- have insights into their learning styles and strategies;
- take an active approach to the learning task at hand;
- are willing to take risks, i.e., to communicate in the target language at all costs;

- are good guessers;
- attend to form as well as to content, that is, place importance on accuracy as well as appropriacy;
- develop the target language into a separate reference system and are willing to revise and reject hypotheses and rules that do not apply; and
- have a tolerant and outgoing approach to the target language.

As far as aspects of learner autonomy in language learning are concerned, Littlewood (1997) presents a model with three aspects of learner autonomy: (1) ‘autonomy as a communicator’, (2) ‘autonomy as a learner’, and (3) ‘autonomy as a person’ that are elaborated by six additional factors placed around these types as displayed in Figure 2.5.

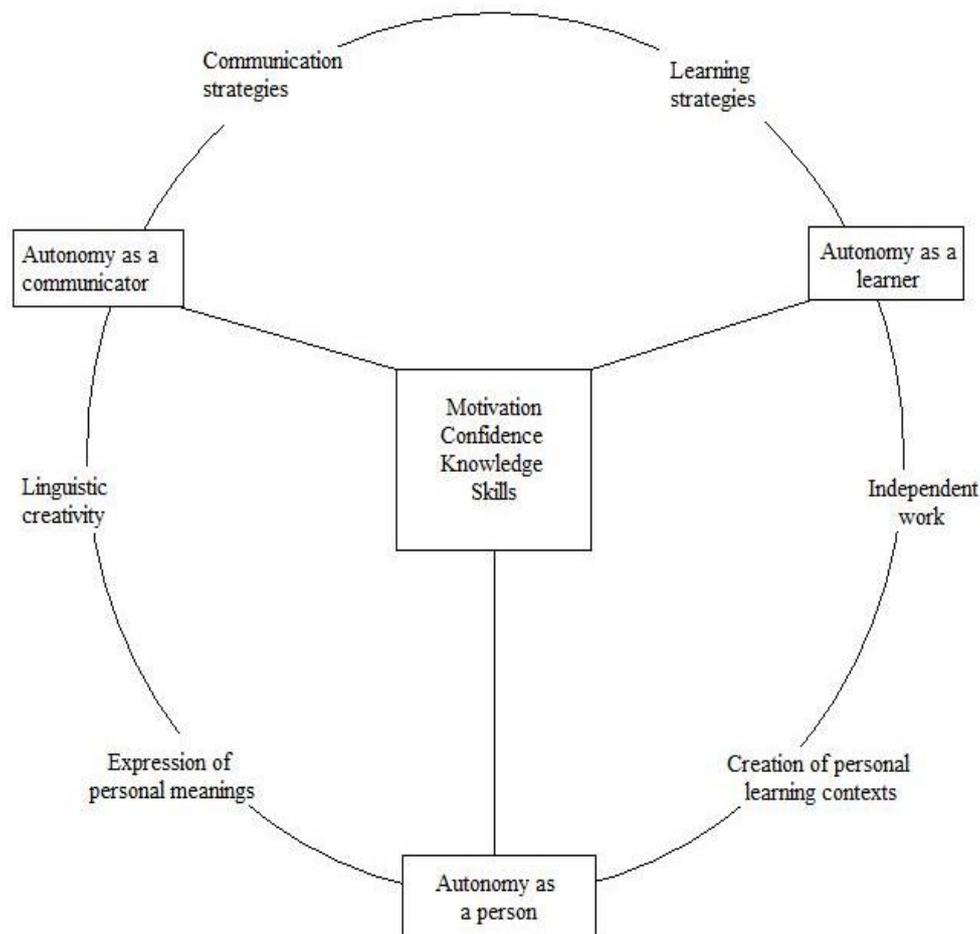


Figure 2.05: Developing Autonomy through Teaching (Littlewood, 1997:83)

In elaboration of the model of learner autonomy above, Littlewood explains that linguistic creativity is expressed by the creative use of language and/or communication strategies in order to convey meanings; such use of language demonstrates and develops language learners' independence as communicators. By applying personal learning strategies and/or engaging in independent work, language learners demonstrate and develop their ability as independent learners. By creating their personal learning contexts and/or expressing their personal meanings, language learners demonstrate and develop their autonomy.

Conclusion

On the basis of the previous study of key terms in this chapter, learners should trust their own abilities in order to be more motivated and energetic to become effective FL learners. Research to date demonstrates that lack of confidence is likely to block the learners' efforts to be better producers of language. Accordingly, light has been shed on the key-concepts: self-confidence, self-esteem, self-concept, self-image, ideal self, self-efficacy, anxiety, risk-taking, extroversion/introversion, motivation and autonomy used in this work, and sought to reflect the literature related to self-confidence. It was also shown that self-confidence is contributed to by teachers who have the responsibility to create an affective atmosphere wherein learners feel comfortable, relaxed and interested. The aim is to enhance learners' self-esteem so that they become more confident to take risks, solve different language problems and achieve better results in their learning process.

Chapter Three: Writing Ability in Foreign Language Learning

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Chapter Three: Writing Ability in Foreign Language Learning

Introduction

Writing, together with reading, speaking and listening constitute the four language skills that should be taught and learned in FL classrooms. Writing requires considerable efforts on the learners' part to reach an acceptable level of writing, and on the part of teacher, who has to use a variety of strategies to develop the learning process. One of the methods that are used by the teacher is designing a group work.

This chapter discusses the concept of writing ability in FL learning contexts. The aim is to come to a better understanding of the meaning of writing ability. First, various definitions of writing and writing ability are presented. Next, the different stages involved in the writing activity and the types of writing performance are discussed. Finally, the basic approaches to teaching writing and, most importantly, methods and criteria for the assessment of writing are described.

3.1. Definition of Writing Ability

Writing is the act of expressing our thoughts and ideas through a sequence of words; it is more than the graphic symbols which appear in papers and screens; it is a result of a process involving thinking, drafting, preparation, revision and editing to achieve the script that we want. Richards (1990:100) states that "Writing is used either as evidence of successful learning or as a means of learning", this means that, production of a piece of writing can be used as a means for assessing one's success in language learning, or vice versa, writing can be used as a tool for students to learn a foreign language.

For the teacher, writing is the best tool to provide evidence of learners' achievements, which will be a source of later reference. For the learners, on the other

hand, writing fulfils their needs by boosting language learning as they experiment with words, sentences and larger chunks of writing to communicate their ideas effectively, and to reinforce the grammar and vocabulary they are learning in class. According to White (1981:2), writing is very different from speaking the language in that it is not an innate ability, but one that has to be learned, practised and perfected. Other important differences that exist between writing and speaking are expressed by White (ibid.) as “Writing, unlike speech, is displaced in time. Indeed, this must be one reason why writing originally evolved since it makes possible the transmission of a message from one place to another. A written message can be received, stored and referred back to at any time.” As far as the last difference is concerned, it should be noted that even speech nowadays retains the properties of reception in different formats, long term storage for future retrieval.

The students’ ability to write effectively has received a big interest in FLL contexts. Writing ability gives students the chance to go beyond the oral language, and to use their creativity in new situations. In addition, students use different abilities to reinforce learning when they start writing. To be able to write means to be able to release a lot of ideas, and then to evaluate them in order to decide on which ones to include in your writing. Definitions of writing ability according to the approaches to the teaching of writing differ from one approach to the other.

According to the product/text-oriented approach, writing ability is defined as the ability to respond to a given stimulus according to some authority’s definition of the correct response (Nunan, 1999 in Yi, 2009:56). Put another way, it is “the ability to adhere to style-guide prescriptions concerning grammar, arrangement and punctuation” (ibid.57). On the other hand, writing ability in the process/cognitive-oriented approach is defined as the ability to initiate and evolve ideas and then use certain revising and

editing practices to develop them; nowadays, this cognitive view adds more writing development processes such as the think-aloud method, while others inspired by Hairston (1982 in Yi, 2009:59), recorded writing sessions in order to discover ‘the intangible’ process involved in writing, as opposed to analysing the final product or attempting to imitate it. In this regard, Hairston (ibid. 81) argues,

We cannot teach students to write by looking only at what they have written. We must also understand how that product came into being, and why it assumed the form it did. We have to try and understand what goes on during the act of writing ...if we want to affect its outcome. We have to do the hard thing, examine the intangible process, rather than the easy thing, evaluate the tangible product.

In addition to the product-oriented approach and the process-oriented one, the third approach known as the reader/genre-oriented approach, views writing ability as the ability to perform writing tasks for a given purpose, satisfy a given discourse community with regard to the structure and content of the discourse, and to communicate functionally (Yi, 2009:60).

In the course of their educational progress, students will be more required to develop their ability of writing appropriately and effectively, especially at the university level. Writing is seen as a mental activity that is closely related to critical thinking and the mastery of the necessary cognitive skills for working at university, and as Weigle (2002:5) explained, any perceived lack in the ability to write impacts highly negatively on the students’ chances to succeed because it is closely identified with their capacity for reasoning.

3.2. The Different Stages Involved in Writing Activity

In order to produce a final written text, the writer goes through several stages. These stages are summarized by Harmer (2004:4-5) as the following:

3.2.1. Planning

Planning is the first stage for a written text to be produced. Before students initiate their writing, they decide on what they are going to write by making notes for their topics. There are three main issues the writer has to take into account. First, s/he has to consider the purpose of his/her writing. Second, the writer should think about the audience they are writing for so as to decide, for instance, about its formality. Then, the writer has to decide about the best sequence of ideas, facts or arguments he/she is going to use or what is called content structure.

3.2.2. Drafting

Drafting is the second stage for a written text to be produced. It refers to the first version of a piece of writing. Other modifications will be done to this draft on the way to the final and the last version.

3.2.3. Editing

Editing is classified as being the third stage of writing. The stage of editing is also called the 'reflecting and revising stage'. In this stage, the writer will look deeper in his/her draft in order to see whether it works or it needs more revision and modification. These modifications may include using other structures, adding or omitting something's, etc.

3.2.4. Final Version

Final version is the last stage where the writer is ready to present the written text to his/her intended audience.

3.3. Types of Writing Performance

Writing is considered as an important skill that has to be mastered in the learning of foreign languages. Moreover, it is classified as one of the productive skills that is defined as the creation of written texts. With regard to types of writing performance, they can be divided into imitative, intensive, responsive and extensive types (Brown, 2004). Each type has specific characteristics and different fundamental skills; these are demonstrated by Brown (ibid.220) as follows:

3.3.1. Imitative

The production of written language requires the learner to attain the fundamental skills of writing, producing appropriate vocabulary and correct grammatical features that suit with the length of the sentence. This category of writing includes also the ability to spell words correctly in addition to the ability to understand the English spelling system. Imitative writing is a level where learners are trying to master the mechanics of writing. Form, context and meaning are considered all necessary, but the primary focus is on form while context and meaning are the secondary.

3.3.2. Intensive (controlled)

In addition to imitative writing, intensive or controlled writing is another type of writing performance. After mastering the fundamentals of imitative writing, meaning and context become also important in defining correctness and appropriateness. Moreover, the focus on form is the concern of most assessment tasks, and is strictly controlled by the test designer.

3.3.3. Responsive

After mastering the fundamentals of grammar at the level of sentences, in imitative writing, the writer has to master other important levels as creating well-organized sentences, and using logical connection of these sentences to form a

paragraph or paragraphs. This type of writing is common in tasks responding to pedagogical directives, lists of criteria, outlines and other guidelines. However, some freedom of choice among different forms of expressing ideas can be exercised by the writer under some conditions. Moreover, form-focused attention is an important discourse level in addition to considerations of context and meaning.

3.3.4. Extensive

Extensive writing includes all the other categories of written performance, encompassing writing for all goals. Achieving the purpose, logical development and well organization of ideas, supporting ideas with details, the demonstration of syntactic and lexical variety are the writer's emphasis in addition to the engagement in the process for achieving a final product. However, the focus of grammar should be limited to occasional editing or proofreading of a draft.

3.4. Basic Orientations to Teaching Writing

Teaching writing is considered as one of the most fundamental parts of any FL classroom curriculum. This special attention which has been given to productive skill of writing has led to the emergence of different and contrasting approaches, each striving to suggest the best way of teaching writing. Three main approaches to the development of EFL writing are often identified in the literature. According to Keny (2000:180-183), these are the product approaches, the process approaches and the genre approaches. First, the product approaches are the approaches which focus on textual norms, emphasize accuracy and encourage students to imitate good models. Second, the process approaches are the approaches which focus on individuals, considering writing as an evolutionary process that involves learners to go through a set of steps for creating a piece of writing. Finally, the genre-based approaches are the approaches

which focus on the social context and which consider the reader as an active participant playing a major role in writing.

3.4.1. Product Approaches

The product approaches are based on the behaviourist theory, and are the ones which characterize most writing instruction. According to these approaches, writing is a linguistic act. Moreover, reaching a well-produced composition needs the focus on habit formation and imitation, which means that learning to write, is only possible by imitating good models that help students to learn the features of texts. The product approaches focus on the inner core of design, or the interaction between texts and the structural resources needed to create them. According to Hyland (2002:5), the product approach “focuses on the products of writing by examining texts in various ways, either through formal surface elements or their discourse structure”. These formal surface elements refer to textual norms which should be focused on in order to reach and achieve formal accuracy in the FL. Hence, the product approaches aim at achieving syntactic complexity, adherence to canonical organizational patterns in addition to formal accuracy in the TL. As far as product-oriented teaching is concerned, it first ascribes texts the intrinsic value of its formal properties and gives less importance to the way of addressing the task of writing, or the steps and procedures. Therefore, grammar study, sentence combining, paragraph structure analysis and, more importantly, analysis and imitation of models are the main instructional techniques included in the product approaches. In these approaches, learners must achieve a mastery of grammatical and lexical systems of the language. Nunan (1989:36) describes the product approaches as

The product approach to writing focuses on the end results of the act of composition, i.e. the letter, essay, story and so on.

The writing teacher who subscribes to the product approach will be concerned to see that the end product is readable, grammatically correct and obeys discourse conventions relating to main points, supporting details and so on.

However, this approach does not allow the writers to create on their own because there is a total reliance on imitation of existing text models. Therefore, the teachers' roles in the product approaches are to correct the final outcomes of the learners. They have to focus on language accuracy, or the extent to which learners have succeeded in applying a grammar point or using a writing mechanic successfully, ignoring creativity of the writer.

3.4.2. Process Approaches

The process approaches are based on insights from cognitive psychology (constructivism) which view writing as a cognitive act. According to Hyland (2002:5) the process approach “focuses on the writer and describes writing in terms of the process used to create texts”; thus, the central focus in the process approaches is the writers' internal processes (focus on the individual). According to process approaches, learning to write is an evolutionary process, a discovery process of thinking, creating and problem solving and developing one's own unique voice. Moreover, the text form does not constitute the primary concern; instead, the concern goes to learning to invent, draft, revise, and edit recursively. Therefore, special cognitive activities such as collaborative brainstorming, selecting ideas, ordering them and constant revision before finishing the task are required in this approach. The process approaches aim at achieving individual creativity, fluency of expression, development of authentic voice, improvement through revision, learning through writing in addition to self-reliance in the writing process.

The major criticism to the process approaches is based on the observation that they largely ignore the influence of the socio-cultural context, and focus exclusively on the dynamic individual processes. This leads to favour students who are already familiar with a variety of culturally-appropriate academic genres over those who are not. Some students are not familiar or comfortable with the inductive orientations of process-centred instruction, and are much more at ease with a deductive approach Horowitz (1998, in Keny, 2000:180-3). Moreover; process-oriented writing instruction has been criticized for letting idiosyncrasies or inappropriateness be too easily swept under the rug of personal expression.

3.4.3. Genre-Based Approaches

Genre-based approaches focus on social context, they “emphasize the role that readers play in writing, adding a social dimension to writing research by elaborating how writers engage with an audience in creating coherent texts” (Hyland, 2002:5). As for the idea of genre, it refers to “abstract, socially recognised ways of using language” (ibid.16). Genre-based approaches to teaching writing focus on introducing students to new discourse communities and making them aware of the purposes behind using the language in the community. Moreover, much emphasis is put on the audience needs and expectations. According to genre-based approaches, the main instructional goals are awareness of the conventional parameters of expectations for particular texts typed within particular discourse communities and the ability to conform to those conventions, by understanding those conventions.

3.5. Writing Assessment in EFL Contexts

Writing assessment requires the teacher’s ability to know what is meant by good writing, how to describe it, and how to assess it. Assessment, then, can demonstrate a program’s impact on its students’ proficiency. Flood et al. (2003:1001) claims that

“Research on writing assessment is about the efficacy of writing assessments that exist for the purpose of documenting learners’ achievement, of addressing issues that can directly inform curriculum and instruction”. Nowadays, all educational institutions are required to use valid methods of assessment in order to measure the EFL students’ English language written proficiency.

3.5.1. A Brief History of Writing Assessment

Writing assessment has changed over time with the development of composition. Yancey (1999: 499) identified three waves of assessment: the objective wave (1950-1970), the holistic wave (1970-1986), and the portfolio and program assessment wave (1986-present).

During the first wave of assessment (1950-1970), the teacher could not decide about the students’ readiness to write, because the test was not valid even if it was reliable. According to Yancey (1999), tests were reliable, easy and quick to administer, but the problem was that these tests lack validity because they did not measure what they purport to measure. In this wave, the most dominating question is: “what is the best or most valid measure of writing? The answer was the reliable test” (ibid.489). On this account, objective testing does not measure writing as a skill; hence, one cannot predict whether students are really able to write or not.

During the second wave, from 1970-1986, teachers became aware about the efficiency of validity in the writing assessment process. In this regard, Yancey (1999:489) states that “it made increasingly less sense to use tests whose chief virtues were reliability and efficiency. The shift to what did seem obvious -the essay tests- had to be orchestrated”. During this wave, the teachers started using a direct measure, i.e., they chose a sample of behaviour for examination. In addition, with the acceptance of

the direct measure, an improvement in writing is started, “the one essay model is replaced by a set of texts, so that: a single draft becomes two drafts, two drafts become two drafts accompanied by reflection, and the set of texts becomes the new: portfolios assessment” (ibid.486).

The third wave in the history of writing assessment, from 1986 to the present, refers to the portfolios and program assessment. Portfolios, or collections of students’ work overtime, is a valid assessment since it measures writing, but its reliability is not based on statistics; rather it is based on reading, interpretation, and negotiation (Yancey, ibid.). In addition, the focus of assessment has also seen a shift towards programmatic assessment that is used as a means to measure the effect of what is presented in classes on students' ability to write. That is, how much from a particular program has a student learned? Accordingly, this type of assessment is "curriculum-based, ... at the end of a course-where it's difficult to ignore the program you've just delivered" Yancey (1999: 493).

Though writing assessment has passed through these different waves, it stays the same in some situations, and the assessment methods of the first and second waves are continuing to be administered in a lot of universities and institutions around the globe.

3.5.2. Formative and Summative Assessment

To evaluate students’ compositions, teachers and researchers use either formative or summative assessment. Formative assessment provides feedback and information during the instructional process, while learning is taking place, and while learning is occurring. Formative assessment measures student progress the progress of

instruction. As for summative assessment, it takes place after the learning process and provides information and feedback that sums up the teaching and learning process.

Black and Wiliam (in Koller, 2005:265) define formative assessment as “all those activities undertaken by teachers, and/or by their students, which provide information to be used as feedback to modify the teaching and learning activities in which they are engaged”. In the same vein, Sadler (1989:120) asserts that

Formative assessment is concerned with how judgments about the quality of student responses (performances, pieces, or works) can be used to shape and improve the student's competence by short-circuiting the randomness and inefficiency of trial-and-error learning.

A primary focus of formative assessment is to identify areas that may need improvement. These assessments, typically, are not graded; they act as a measure to students' learning progress and determine teaching effectiveness (implementing appropriate methods and activities). Formative assessment has allowed teachers to “rethink” and then “re-deliver” the material to ensure students are on track. It is good practice to incorporate this type of assessment to “test” students' knowledge before expecting all of them to do well on an examination. According to Lippman (2003:203-4), formative assessment “puts emphasis on shaping students' writing while they are still in the process of writing. The goal of most formative assessment is to help students improve their writing and writing ability”. Types of formative assessment may include observations during in-class activities, homework exercises as review for exams and class discussions, conferences between the instructor and students at various points in the semester, in addition to the reflection journals that are reviewed periodically during the semester.

On the other hand, summative assessment is different from formative assessment in that “it is concerned with summing up or summarizing the achievement

status of a student, and is geared towards reporting at the end of a course of study, especially for purposes of certification" (Sadler, 1989:120). This means that summative assessments are given to students at the end of a set point during or at the end of the semester to assess what has been learned and how well it was learned. Grades are usually an outcome of summative assessment: they indicate whether the student has an acceptable level of knowledge-gain—is the student able to effectively progress to the next part of the class? Some types of summative assessment include examinations, portfolios, and projects, in addition to the student evaluation of the course (teaching effectiveness). Summative assessment is more product-oriented and assesses the final product, whereas formative assessment focuses on the process toward completing the product.

According to Lenski and Verbruggen (2010:137), formative and summative assessments have different features in the writing-classroom. Formative assessment focuses on the process, is open-ended, scoring is subjective, and writing samples produced for authentic purposes. On the other hand, summative assessment focuses on the final product, it is closed-ended, scoring is objective, and writing samples elicit specific forms or content.

Conclusion

Being a productive skill, writing is very important to evaluate and improve learners' proficiency in the target language. Writing gives learners the ability to produce the language relying on their own knowledge. It makes them able to realize ideas, evaluate and organize them into a good piece of writing. Therefore, learning to write entails learners' engagement in writing tasks using the appropriate strategy that fits with the given task. The aim is to activate and enhance learners' writing capacity, give them more opportunities to participate and express their ideas.

Chapter Four: Field Work

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- 4.2. Data Collection Procedures
- 4.3. Students Questionnaire
 - 4.3.1. Description of the Student Questionnaire
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Chapter Four: Field Work

Introduction

In the theoretical part, we have presented a literature review of group work, self-confidence and the construct of writing ability in the field foreign language learning. In this practical part, we attempt to establish a link between group work on one side and writing self-confidence and ability, on the other. This chapter is then devoted to the presentation, analysis and interpretation of data by way of answering the research questions.

4.1. Population and Sampling

The population targeted by this study is that of first year students, enrolled at the department of English in Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia University, Jijel, and the teachers of the module of Written Expression for first years at the same setting. Forty first year students, making up two groups are chosen randomly from the department of English to be the sample of this research (n=40). The number of teachers who constitute the sample is ten (n=10); they were chosen among the teacher who are teaching Written Expression or have an experience at teaching it.

4.2. Data Collection Procedures

Two research tools are adopted in this study, a questionnaire and a test. Two questionnaires were administered to the sample of teachers and the sample of students, in addition to a test that was administered to the same students who responded to the questionnaire. The main reason why these tools are used with different participants is to allow us compare the results by estimating the average performance or opinions, taken from different perspectives and using different methods. Participants were questioned in order to find out about how they prefer to conduct writing in the EFL classes, measure the belief of students in their abilities, the influence of affective factors on English written production and the role of

group work in enhancing FL learners' self-confidence and their writing ability. The latter is measured by applying criteria for assessing writing on written products written individually and in groups.

The discussion starts by describing, analysing and discussing the students questionnaire, the teacher questionnaire, then the students test. Analysis of overall results sums up all the results.

4.3. Students Questionnaire

4.3.1. Description of the Students Questionnaire

The questionnaire consists of sixteen questions. They are divided into four sections: Section A, Section B, Section C and Section D

Section A: General Information (Q1 – Q2) purports to give the profile of students in terms of gender and age.

Section B is entitled Group Work and Self-Confidence (Q3-Q9). Q3 aims to evaluate students' overall English ability. Q4 asks students to supply the mark they got in the first semester exam of Written Expression, which is then evaluated by students who had to state whether it reflects their real abilities in Q5, and in which way, positively or negatively by asking, in Q6, about students' expectations for performance in the future exams. Q7 asks about the frequency of work in a group on written tasks. The next question, Q8, intends to measure students' self-confidence about their abilities when carrying out classroom tasks in a group, and in the last question in this section, Q9, students compare their self-confidence when working in a group to their self-confidence when carrying out written tasks individually.

Section C: Students' Perceptions towards Writing in a Group (Q10-Q15), starts with Q10 tackling students preferences about whether to write alone or as part of a group. Q11 asks students to choose the criteria they prefer to select the group members to work with in writing tasks. Next, Q12 is set to determine whether students consider themselves as active members in cooperative writing, and in Q13, specify their usual contribution in those cooperative writing

tasks. Q14 and Q15 ask the students to identify the advantages and drawbacks of writing cooperatively, if any.

Section D is entitled Group Work and Self-Confidence in Writing (Q16). This section deals with the main positive characteristics of the students' written production. Students have to choose either or both of the arrangements, group work or individual work, in which their written productions are more sophisticated or acceptable, if there is a difference at all

4.3.2. Analysis of the Students Questionnaire

Section A: General information

1. Gender:

a. Female

b. Male

Options	N	%
a.	36	90
b.	04	10
Total	40	100

Table 4.01: The Students' Gender

The results from the table above clearly show that the groups are dominated by female students who constitute 90% of the population of students. We conclude that in these two classrooms, the number of females is higher than that of males.

2. Age: years old

Age	N	%
18	12	30

19	16	40
20	06	15
21	02	05
Above 21	03	07.50
No answer	01	02.50
Total	40	100

Table 4.02: The Students' Age

According to the table above, most students (85%) are of approximately the same age group ranging between 18 and 20 years old.

Section B: Group Work and Self-Confidence

3. How would you evaluate your overall English language ability?

- a. Good**
- b. Average**
- c. Less than average**
- d. Not sure**

Option	N	%
a.	10	25
b.	25	62.50
c.	01	02.50
d.	03	07.50
No answer	01	02.50
Total	40	100

Table 4.03: Students' Perceptions of their Overall English Language Ability

The results obtained show that most of learners think that they have average English language ability (62.5%); this indicates that they face some difficulties while learning the language. Another significant portion of students constituting 25% said that they have a good English language ability, showing that they are confident enough about they know about language.

4. Specify Your Mark In First Semester Exam Of Written Expression:

...../20

Option	N	%
07-09	04	10
10-12	26	65
13-15	08	20
16	02	05
Total	40	100

Table 4.04: Students' Marks in First Semester Exam of Written Expression

As it is noticed from the table above, more than half of the students (65%), stated that they had an average level in writing (10-12). While 20% of the students had relatively good marks (13-15). However, 10% of the students have marks below the average (7-9). The rest of the students (5%) had a very good mark. These results are perfectly consistent with those obtained in the previous questions, which suggests that students' opinions are highly reliable.

5. Do you think that this mark reflects your real abilities

a. Yes

b. No

Option	N	%
a.	11	27.50
b.	29	72.50
Total	40	100

Table 4.05: Students' Evaluation of their Marks

The table above reveals that most of the students, 72.5% of them, chose the "no" option, which reveals that the mark does not reflect their real abilities. Whether they think they can do better or they deserve less remains to be determined by the next question.

6. Do you think you can do better in the future exams?

a. Yes

b. No

The results for this questions show that all the students (100%) answered by “yes”. This means that students expect better results for the future exams, and they are confident about their writing ability.

7. How often do work in a group on written tasks?

a. Always

b. Often

c. Sometimes

d. Rarely

e. Never

Option	N	%
a.	08	20
b.	10	25
c.	18	45
d.	04	10
Total	40	100

Table 4.06: Frequency of Working in Groups in Writing Tasks

The results point out that the biggest proportion of students (45%) do work sometimes in a group on written tasks, and about 25% claim that they ‘often’ work cooperatively in writing, whereas 20% of students said that they are ‘always’ working in groups, and no one said that they ‘never’ work in groups. These results indicate that students are familiar with group work and that group work is a strategy that all students adapt to varying degrees when writing.

8. How confident are you when you carry out classroom tasks in a group?

a. Very confident

b. Confident

c. Not very confident

d. Not confident at all

e. Not sure

Option	N	%
a.	02	05
b.	23	57.50
c.	10	25
d.	03	07.50
e.	02	05
Total	40	100

Table 4.07: Students' Self-Confidence when Working in a Group on Classroom Tasks

The table above indicates that more than half of the students (62.5%) feel confident or very confident when carrying out classroom tasks in a group. On the other hand, 12.50% do not feel very confident or are not confident at all. These results clearly show that students of English like to work in groups because it makes them think positively about their abilities, and enhances their self-confidence.

9. How confident do you become when you carry out classroom tasks in a group next to carrying them alone?

- a. More confident
- b. Less confident
- c. Not sure

Please, justify your answer

.....

Option	N	%
a.	20	50
b.	10	25
c.	10	25
Total	40	100

Table 4.08: Students' Comparison of their Self-Confidence in Group Work and Individual Work

Table 4.10 shows that half the students representing the biggest proportion of students (50%) feel more confident when they carry out classroom tasks in a group next to carrying them alone. Those students explained their choice claiming that they exchange a lot of ideas,

and discover weak and strong points. Other students admitted that cooperative learning assisted less talkative students to work with others because working in groups could help overcome the passivity and shyness of students.

On the other hand, the same percentage (25%) is shared between students who feel less confident, and those who are not sure about their opinions. Those who feel less confident explained their choice claiming that they cannot express their points of view when they work in a group, and they prefer to work alone. In addition, those students find it difficult to choose the right opinion justified their answers claiming that it depends on the group they are working with. They will feel more confident if the group is active, and so cooperate with each other and exchange ideas; however, they will feel less confident if they work with a non-active group; someone listens to music, the other chats, someone else does not cooperate at all, etc. Overall, it can be said that, when the group is cooperative, most students become more self-confident than when working individually on doing classroom tasks.

Section C: Students’ Perception towards Writing in a Group

10. When given written tasks in class, how do you prefer them to be done?

- a. In a group**
- b. Individually**
- c. Varying between individual and group work**

Option	N	%
a.	20	50
b.	08	20
c.	12	30
Total	40	100

Table 4.09: Students’ Preferences for Doing Written Tasks in Groups or Individually

According to the table above, half of the students (50%) favour cooperative writing over individual writing, which is selected by 20% of students. 30% of students want to strike a balance between writing alone, and writing in groups. This indicates that the majority of first year students have positive attitudes towards writing in groups.

11. Who are the students you want to work with in a group to write?

- a. Students you like personally (e.g. friends, students you agree with)
- b. Students who have the same abilities as you
- c. Students who have better abilities than you
- d. Students who have a lesser abilities than yourself
- e. Mixed-ability groups of students
- f. No preference
- g. Others please specify:

.....

Option	N	%
a.	20	50
b.	03	07.50
c.	05	12.50
e.	07	17.50
a.+ b.	01	02.50
a.+ e.	01	02.50
b.+ c.	01	02.50
a.+ c.+ e.	01	02.50
a. + b.+ c.+ e.	01	02.50
Total	40	100

Table 4.10: Students' Criteria for Group Preferences

As stated in the table above, most students prefer to work with the students they like personally (e.g. friends, students they agree with) with a percentage of 60% [a:20+(a+b):1+(a+e):1+(a+c+e):1+(a+b+c+d+e):1=24; a is chosen 24 times which equals 60%]. Second, 25% of students want to work in mixed-ability groups of students [e:7+(a+e):1+(a+c+e):1+(a+b+c+e):1 = 10 or 25%]. Next, 20% of students like to work with

students who have better abilities than them [c:5+ (b+c):1+ (a+c+e):1+ (a+b+c+e):1]=06 or 20%]. The fourth criterion for choosing the group to work with is sameness of abilities between members, with 15% of students opting for it [b:3+ (a+b):1+ (b+c):1+ (a+b+c+d+e):1) =06 or 15%]. On the contrary, no student preferred to work with students who have lesser abilities than them. Finally, no student chose the ‘no preference’ or ‘others’ options. Thus, for most students to be more confident when writing cooperatively, they need to work with the students they like personally.

12. When you write in a group, do you consider yourself an active member?

- a. I strongly agree
- b. I agree
- c. Neutral
- d. I disagree
- e. I strongly disagree

Option	N	%
a.	03	07.50
b.	26	65
c.	07	17.50
d.	04	10
Total	40	100

Table 4.11: Students’ Degree of Activity when Writing in a Group

The results shown above reveal that the majority of students (65%) agreed that they are active members when writing in groups, and 07.50% emphasised that they are so. On the other hand, 10% disagreed, and 17.50% could not make a decision. Consequently, it can be said that writing in a group is a good technique for students to be active members in the classroom.

13. What is your usual contribution in cooperative writing tasks?

- a. Ask other students for help
- b. Help other students
- c. Lead the group
-

d. Remain silent , but exchange your ideas

e. Do not cooperate at all

Option	N	%
a.	14	35
b.	14	35
c.	02	05
d.	09	22.50
e.	01	02.50
Total	40	100

Table 4.12: Students' Contribution in Cooperative Writing Tasks

Students' contribution in cooperative writing tasks differs from one student to the other. Statistically, 70 % opted for asking other students for help, or helping other students with the same percentage (35%) in each. The next rate (22.50%) was for those who favoured to remain silent, but exchange their ideas, nonetheless. However, two students stated that they usually lead the group, and just one student claimed that s/he does not cooperate at all. From these results, we can conclude that students consider cooperative writing a technique of mutual assistance or help.

14. According to you, what are the advantages of writing cooperatively?

a. Creates more relaxed and enjoyable learning atmosphere

b. Enhances communication skills

c. Allows you to exchange ideas and skills

d. Helps you improve your writing performance

e. Others please specify:

.....
.....

Option	N	%
---------------	----------	----------

a.	04	10
b.	02	05
c.	04	10
d.	25	62.50
e.	02	05
b.+ d.	01	02.50
c.+ d.	02	05
Total	40	100

Table 4.13: Students' Views about the Advantages of Writing Cooperatively

A significant number of the students, 28 out 40 [d: 25+ (b+d):01+ (c+d):02 =28; 70%], described the advantages of writing cooperatively as being a technique for improving their writing performance. In addition, 15% of the students gave priority to the fact that group work allows them to exchange ideas and skills [c: 4+ (c+d): 2 = 06 corresponding to 15%]. Another percentage (10%) went for those who claimed that writing cooperatively creates a more relaxed and enjoyable learning atmosphere. Other students (07.50%) stated that writing cooperatively enhances communication skills [b: 2+ (b+d): 1=03; 07.50%]. There are other students 05% who considered cooperative learning as beneficial to learners' success arguing that this strategy facilitated writing through discovering weak and strong points, and learning to work in a team; it also increased motivation and helped students write better paragraphs given that learners had more ideas and fewer mistakes (two minds are better than one). This clearly indicates that the majority of students considered that writing in groups is helpful for improving their writing ability.

15. According to you, what are the drawbacks of writing cooperatively?

- a. Wastes your time**
- b. Leads to the unequal participation of group members**
- c. Leads to unfair assessment by peers and teacher**
- d. Makes the class noisy**

e. Leads to misunderstandings

f. Others, please specify:

.....
.....

Option	N	%
a.	06	15
b.	09	22.50
c.	02	05
d.	13	32.50
e.	03	07.50
a.+ d.	07	17.50
Total	40	100

Table 4.14: Students' Views about the Drawbacks of Writing Cooperatively

The option that got the highest rating is d. [d: 13+ (a+d): 7= 20; 50%], with 50% of the students choosing to write individually rather than in groups because they claimed that writing in groups makes the class noisy; and 22.50% declared that writing cooperatively leads to the unequal participation of group members. According to 32.50% of the students; [a: 6+ (a+d): 7], cooperative writing is a waste of time, whereas 07.50% perceived cooperative writing as a causing misunderstandings. The smallest number of the learners 05% stated that cooperative writing leads to unfair assessment by peers and teacher.

Section D: Group Work and Self-Confidence in Writing

15. In which work arrangements, if any, does your written production contain the following characteristics?

Characteristics	Group work	Individual work
a) Few or no errors of grammar and word order		
b) Few or no errors in punctuation		
c) Few or no errors in spelling		
d) Precise words and terms		
e) Appropriate structures and words		
f) Varied vocabulary		
g) Varied syntactic structures		
h) Well organized ideas		
i) Well connected ideas		

Options	Group work		Individual work	
	N	%	N	%
c.+ d.+ h.+ i.	04	10	0	0
b.+ h.+ i.	02	05	0	0
c.+ d.+ e.	0	0	01	02.50
d.+ h.	0	0	02	05
a.+ b.+ e.	01	02.50	0	0
a.+ c.	02	05	0	0
b.+ e.+ f.+ g.	03	07.50	0	0
h.+ i.	0	0	01	02.50
a.+ b.+ c.+ d.+ e.+ f.+ g.+ h.+ i.	22	55	02	05
Total	34	85	6	15

Table 4.15: The Positive Characteristics of Written Production in Group Work or in Pair Work

The results presented in table 4.16, clearly indicate that the majority of the students (85%) stated that group work contains mostly positive characteristics of the written production, divided between 55% of students identifying all the characteristics, 10% claiming that group

work products contain few or no errors in spelling, more precise words and terms and well organized and connected ideas; 07.50% stating that group work contains few or no errors in punctuation, more appropriate structure and words, varied vocabulary and syntactic structures; 05% going for both those who considered that group work written products contain few or no errors in punctuation, well organized and connected ideas, another 05% choosing well organized and connected ideas as features of group work products in addition to 02.50% for those who said that it contains few or no errors of grammar and punctuation and more varied vocabulary.

The rest of the students, 15%, were divided between 05% for those who said that individual work contains both precise words and terms, and well organized ideas, 05% of them choosing all options, 02.50% claiming that individual work contains either few or no errors in spelling, precise words and terms, and appropriate structures and words and, finally, the same percentage 02.50% for students indicating that individual work contains both well- organized ideas, and well-connected ideas. We conclude that group work is believed to enhance to students' writing ability.

4.4. Teacher Questionnaire

4.4.1. Description of the Teacher Questionnaire

The teacher questionnaire consists of twenty (20) questions. They are divided into five (5) sections:

- **Section One:** Personal Information (Q1-Q4). In Q1, we attempt to identify the teachers' degree. Next, Q2 is to about experience of teaching English in years. Then, in Q3, teachers are asked whether they have the experience in teaching written expression and Q4 is about their experience in teaching Written Expression.

- **Section Two:** Teachers' Perspectives of Group Work (Q5-Q9). Q5 is to check the teachers' frequency of using group work in teaching writing. Q6 probes the reasons behind using group work in writing tasks. The reasons behind teachers' avoidance of using group work in writing tasks are elicited in Q7. In Q8, we attempt to check the considerations that the teachers take into account when assigning students into groups; and in Q9 check the reaction of the students when working together in groups from the teachers' perspectives.
- **Section Three:** Group Work and Self-Confidence in EFL Classes (Q10-Q13). Q10 is about teachers' opinions about students' self-confidence and whether it affects their learning of English. Q11 is to check teachers' views about working in groups and whether it is good for enhancing students' self-confidence or not. In addition, Q12 is about teachers' opinions about students' self-confidence when working in groups compared with working individually. Last, Q13 checks the type of students who react better in groups according to teachers.
- **Section Four:** Group Work and Writing Ability (Q14-Q19). Q14 is for the evaluation of students' written production prepared in group work by the teachers. Then, the aspects in which students usually fail at the end of group work are generated by Q15. Q16 investigates teachers' opinions about their students' writing ability in groups and how it can be enhanced. Q17 is about the considerations that should be taken in order to efficiently divide tasks on group members. Moreover, Q18 talks about the quality of individually produced written texts compared with the quality of those produced in group work. Q19 checks teacher's opinions about the effect of group work on learner's writing ability.

- **Section Five:** Suggestions and Recommendations (Q20) is to check teachers' opinions on how to make group work an efficient contributor to enhance students' self-confidence and their writing ability.

4.4.2. Analysis of the Teacher Questionnaire:

Section one: Personal Information

1. Degree held:

- a. **Doctorate**
- b. **Magister**
- c. **Master**
- d. **License**

Degree	N	%
a.	05	50
b.	05	50
Total	10	100

Table 4.16: Teachers' Degree

From the table above we can notice that half the teachers have a magister degree and half of them have a master degree.

2. How long have you been teaching English?

..... year(s).

Teaching Experience	N	%
1 year	03	30
5-7 years	03	30
8-10 years	04	40
Total	10	100

Table 4.17: Teachers' Experience in Teaching English

As far as teaching experience is concerned, 90% of teachers have an experience equal to or above five years. This suggests that teachers are familiar with the different methods of teaching English.

3. Have you taught Written Expression before?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Option	N	%
a.	05	50
b.	05	50
Total	10	100

Table 4.18: Teachers' Experience in Teaching Written Expression

50% of the teachers have taught Written Expression. This means that teachers are familiar with the teaching of written expression; however, 50% of the teachers have not taught written expression before.

4. If yes, please mention for how long?

Years	N	%
01	02	40
02	01	20
04	02	40
Total	05	100

Table 4.19: Years of Teaching Written Expression

One can notice from the results shown above that two teachers have one year experience in teaching Written Expression. On the other hand, two teachers have a four years of experience in teaching the said module. In addition to these, one teacher of the five who have taught Written Expression has two years of experience. This means that though teachers have

relatively long experiences in teaching English (between 5 and 10 years; Table 4.19), they have relatively shorter experiences in teaching Written Expression (not more than 4years; the table above).

5. How often do you use group work in teaching writing?

- a. Always
- b. Very often
- c. Sometimes
- d. Rarely
- e. Never

Option	N	%
b.	01	10
c.	08	80
e.	01	10
Total	10	100

Table 4.20: Teachers’ Frequency of Using Group Work in Teaching Writing

The majority of the teachers (80%) said that they sometimes use group work in teaching writing. On the other hand, only 10% of the teachers used group work very often in teaching writing and 10% of the teachers said “never” used it. This means teachers are interested in using group work as a teaching strategy especially in doing writing tasks, and suggests that teachers believe that such tasks require interaction and sharing ideas between students.

6. Why do you use group work in writing tasks?

- a. To bring on more participation
- b. To keep students on tasks
- c. For students to help and encourage each other
- d. To overcome students’ inhibition
- e. For students to develop social skills and relationships
- f. To implement the approach adopted in teaching

g. To vary the teaching-learning procedures

h. Others, please specify:

.....

Option	N	%
b.	02	20
f.	01	10
h.	01	10
a.+ b.+ f.	01	10
c.+ g.	03	30
b.+ c.	01	10
a.+ c.+ f.	01	10
Total	10	100

Table 4.21: Teachers’ Reasons behind the Use of Group Work in Writing Tasks

The table above illustrates that 50% teachers use group work for students to help and encourage each other; [(c+g):3+ (b+c):1+ (a+c+f):1=5; 50%], 40% use group work to keep students on task [(b:2)+(a+b+f):1+(b+c):1=4; 40%], and 30% of teachers claimed that they use group work to implement the approach adopted in teaching [(f):1+(a+b+f):1+(a+c+f):1 =3; 30%]. Surprisingly, no teacher thought that group work in writing tasks is intended to overcome students’ inhibition (option d.) or to develop their social skills and relationships (option e.). In addition, 30% of teachers vary the teaching-learning procedures by using group work, among others [(g:0)+(c+g):3=3; 30%], and 20% used it to bring on more participation [(a):0+(a+b+f):1(+a+c+f):1=2; 20%]. The remaining teacher explained that he uses cooperative writing to improve students’ critical thinking.

7. Why would you avoid using group work in writing tasks?

a. The nature of the topic or lesson

b. It leads to disciplinary problems

- c. It is time consuming
- d. It leads to unequal participation
- e. It undetermined individual productivity and creativity
- f. Others, please specify:

.....

Option	N	%
a.	02	20
c.	01	10
d.	03	30
e.	03	30
a. + b.	01	10
Total	10	100

Table 4.22: The Reasons for Avoiding Use of Group Work in Writing Tasks

We can notice that teachers have several reasons which prevent them from using group work in writing tasks. 30% of teachers claimed that the use of group work in writing tasks leads to unequal participation. Another 30% of teachers saw that group work undermined individual productivity and creativity. On the other hand, 30% of teachers assumed that the nature of the topic or lesson is the first reason which prevents them from using group work in writing tasks; [(a):2+ (a+b):1=3; 30%]. Moreover, 10% of teachers did not like to implement group work in writing tasks because they claimed that it leads to disciplinary problems; [(b):0+ (a+b):1=1; 10%]. In addition, 10% of teachers avoided to use group work in writing tasks because it is time consuming. However, no teacher added other reasons (option f.). As a result of these statistics, it can be said that group work is avoided by the teacher in writing tasks for reasons that generally have to do with their teaching method and the belief that it may lead to unequal participation of group members.

8. Which of the following considerations do you take into account when assigning students to groups?

- a. Friends together
- b. Mutual agreement/consent
- c. Same gender
- d. Mixed gender
- e. Same ability
- f. Mixed ability
- g. Randomness
- h. Others, please specify:

Option	N	%
a.	02	20
b.	01	10
g.	05	50
h.	01	10
b. + f.	01	10
Total	10	100

Table 4.23: Teachers' Criteria for Assigning Students to Groups

The results above show that half the teachers assigned students into groups randomly, 20% of them design groups of friends. In addition, two teachers (20%) formed their groups on the basis of mutual agreement/consent [(b):1+ (a+b):1=2; 20%]. Mixed ability and gender are two other criteria which were used by two teachers. Only one teacher mentioned other considerations which they rely on when assigning students into groups. They assumed that the considerations to be taken into account depend on the task; each time they vary the strategy which fits with the task.

9. Are your students reluctant to working together?

- a. Definitely
- b. Probably
- c. Possibly
-

d. Probably not

e. Definitely not

Option	N	%
a.	02	20
b.	02	20
c.	03	30
d.	01	10
e.	02	20
Total	10	100

Table 4.24: Teachers' Views about Students Willingness to Work Together

The answers tabulated above reveal that while 30% of the teachers admitted the possibility of students being reluctant to working together, meaning that some students do not feel satisfied with using group work, 20% of the teachers answered with 'definitely' and 20% with 'probably'. The use of 'probably', 'possibly' and 'definitely' by 70% of teaches suggest that teachers perceive their students as being unwilling to work in groups. On the other hand, 20% of the teachers say that students are completely willing to work in groups.

Section three: Group Work and Self-Confidence in EFL Classes

10. Do you think that students' self-confidence affects their learning of English?

a. Yes

b. No

Regarding teachers' answers, all of them agree that students' self-confidence affects their learning of English. This shows that teachers are aware of the importance of self-confidence in the learning of an FL and that they should look for the best strategy which would help learners overcome the difficulties they face.

11. Do you agree that working in groups is good for enhancing students' self-confidence?

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Agree
- c. Disagree
- d. Strongly disagree

Option	N	%
a.	04	40
b.	06	60
Total	10	100

Table 4.25: Group Work and Students' Self-Confidence

The Majority of the teachers (60%) agreed with this idea that group work enhances students' self-confidence and 40% disagree with it. This means that teachers are divided on the matter with some advocating its benefits and others preferring personal and individual efforts.

12. What do you think happens to your students' self-confidence when working in groups in comparison to working individually?

- a. It becomes higher
- b. It is not affected
- c. It becomes lower
- d. Not sure

Option	N	%
a.	07	70
b.	01	10
c.	01	10
d.	01	10
Total	10	100

Table 4.26: Teachers' Comparison of Students' Self-Confidence in Groups and Individually

The most significant result is that the majority of the teachers (70%) stated that students' self-confidence becomes higher when working in groups in comparison to working

individually. This shows that teachers confirm the importance of group work in enhancing students' self-confidence and that group work has a great effect on students' self-confidence.

13. According to you, which students react better to carrying out tasks in groups?

- a. More self-confident student
- b. Less self-confident student
- c. No difference

Option	N	%
a.	06	60
b.	03	30
c.	01	10
Total	10	100

Table 4.27: Teachers' Opinions about more Cooperative Students in Group Work

As the table above demonstrates, the majority of the teachers (60%) saw that students who react better to carrying out tasks in groups are more self-confident students, while 30% of the teachers stood against this idea by saying that less self-confident students are the ones who are more cooperative in carrying out tasks in groups. Only 10% of the teachers saw that there is no difference and no student reacts better than the others.

Section Four: Group Work and Writing Ability

14. How would you evaluate your students' written productions prepared in group work?

- a. Excellent
- b. Above average
- c. Average
- d. Below average
- e. Very poor

Option	N	%
b.	07	70
c.	02	20

d.	01	10
Total	10	100

Table 4.28: Teachers' Evaluation of Students' Group Work Written Productions

Evaluation is an essential aspect of FL teaching. As the table above indicates, the majority of the teachers (70%) evaluated their students' written production as being above average. This means that, group work enhances students' writing ability and it is good to improve their writing. The rest of the teachers (20%) said that it is average or below average.

15. At the end of group work, on which aspects do your students usually fail?

- a. Grammar
- b. Vocabulary
- c. Content
- d. Organization of ideas
- e. Form
- f. Others, please specify:

.....

Option	N	%
b.	01	10
d.	02	20
f.	02	20
a.+ b.	03	30
a.+ d.	02	20
Total	10	100

Table 4.29: Teachers' Evaluation of Students' Mistakes after Group Work

The table above shows that half of teachers stated that students usually make grammar mistakes at the end of group work; [(a):0+ (a+b):3+ (a+d):2=5; 50%]. Next, 40% agreed that vocabulary is one of the main problems revealed by students' products in group work; [(b):1+(a+b):3=4; 40%], and a same proportion, 40%, saw that organization of ideas is the main aspect in which students usually fail; [(d):2+(a+d):2=4;40%]. In addition, 30% of the teachers

claimed that students at the end of group work usually fail in the organization of ideas, and 20% of them stated that students usually find problems in coherence and punctuation. On the other hand, no teacher mentioned that students usually fail in content as well as form, which suggests that group work is beneficial for those two aspects.

16. In your opinion, students' writing ability in group work can be enhanced by:

- a. Conducting group work activities more often
- b. Conducting group work activities less often
- c. Increasing the time allocated for group work
- d. Reducing the time allocated for group work

Option	N	%
a.	05	50
b.	01	10
c.	04	40
Total	10	100

Table 4.30: Ways of Enhancing Students' Writing Ability in Group Work

The results show clearly that 50% of the teachers agreed that students' writing ability in group work can be enhanced by conducting group work activities more often. Moreover, 40% of them suggested increasing the time allocated for group work to achieve that effect.

17. In your opinion, efficiently dividing tasks on group work while writing involve:

- a. Assigning different roles of members of the same group
- b. Assigning the same roles of members of the same group
- c. Equal participation for each member
- d. Abler students acting as supervisors and group leaders
- e. Others, please specify:

.....

Option	N	%
a.	03	30
b.	03	30

c.	04	40
Total	10	100

Table 4.31: Criteria for Efficient Task Division on Group Members

40% of the teachers thought that equal participation for each member in the group is a key consideration which should be present in each group. Moreover, teachers were divided on the kind of roles given to group members with 3 teachers, (30%), thinking that assigning the same roles to members of one group is the right decision and the same number of teachers seeing that assigning different roles to members of a group is the best strategy.

18. In comparison to individually-produced written texts, those produced in group work are:

- a. Better quality
- b. Same quality
- c. Lesser quality
- d. Variable

Option	N	%
a.	07	70
b.	01	10
c.	01	10
d.	01	10
Total	10	100

Table 4.32: Comparison of Quality Texts in Group Work and Individual Work

The table above shows that the majority of the teachers (70%) agreed that written texts produced in group work are better quality than individually-produced written texts. The remaining teachers were divided between considering individually-produced texts better, having the same or variable quality.

19. In your opinion, group work:

- a. Enhances learners' writing ability

- b. Influences negatively learners' writing ability
- c. No effect

Option	N	%
a.	09	90
c.	01	10
Total	10	100

Table 4.33: The Effect of Group Work on Students' Writing Ability

We can notice that the highest percentage of teachers (90%) are of the opinion that group work enhances learners' writing ability by contrast to 10% who said that there is no effect. This means that, regular use of group work will enhance learners' writing ability for reasons explored in question six (Q6), for example.

Section Five: Suggestions and Recommendations

20. Please, supply your opinion on how to make group work an efficient contributor to enhance students' self-confidence and writing ability?

The suggestions and the opinions of the teachers about how to make group work an efficient contributor to enhance students' self-confidence and writing ability are quite different, but in general, they all serve and lead to the aim of our research, but it is worthy to note that all teachers provided feedback in this section and agreed on the importance of group work and the value of this study.

Three (03) teachers suggested organizing the class into groups of mixed abilities. They see that the teacher should mix students with different levels at the same group because variety of abilities makes students able to benefit and learn from each other especially students with low writing ability.

Moreover, two (02) teachers advised teachers not be selective when organizing the groups; in addition, having a leader in the group would be beneficial for managing students, and at the same time, encouraging and boosting students' self-confidence.

In addition to these suggestions, two (02) other teachers suggested a couple of principles for teachers to succeed in to the use of group work as well as the enhancement of students' self-confidence. The first ones relates to a call for applying the principles of cooperative learning in developing the students' self-confidence and writing ability. The second suggestions holds that raising competition among groups while writing will motivate the students to work harder and at the same time enhances their self-confidence and writing ability

Furthermore, two (02) other teachers agree that hesitation is one of the problems that many students suffer from while doing writing tasks individually and it prevents them from showing their writing abilities. Therefore, most students are willing to work in groups since doing writing tasks in groups enhances their self-confidence, gives them the opportunity to participate and encourages them to show their writing abilities and intellectual skills.

One teacher thinks that group work makes students motivated in addition to its role in making them share their ideas and correct mistakes. He suggests that teachers should take into account some "same ability" as a consideration when assigning students into groups because it makes them feel more confident, and at the same time, need the help of each other.

A final suggestion about how to make group work an efficient contributor to enhance students' self-confidence and writing ability is suggested by a teacher; he says:

"Along my experience in teaching writing, I have noticed that group work is among the teaching factors that contribute in

improving students' writing skills (both paragraph and essay writing). Therefore, I recommend implementing group work as a teaching strategy in the English curricula. More time should also be allocated to teaching with the said strategy”.

4.5. Students Test: Paragraph Writing

4.5.1. Description of the Student Test

Before administering the questionnaire for students, the researchers talked with the teacher about conducting a test and making it feel official. Thus, the students in the sample (n=40) were asked to write two paragraphs, but once individually and the other time in groups. The topic of the first paragraph deals with shopping preferences, and in the second, students are asked to write paragraphs about flea markets. Hence, forty paragraphs were written about each topic, resulting in 80 paragraphs. All the paragraphs were handwritten, and they were about one page long each.

The aim behind paragraphs analysis is to examine whether students' writing ability in group work is better, worse or the same as their writing ability when writing individually. The evaluation of the paragraphs is based on a number of criteria of good performance. For each students, we read his/her two paragraphs, and then decided whether it contains these criteria, which one contains better criteria, whether the two are equally good or equally bad, meaning that the criteria of good performance are not possible in either setting, individual and group work. This is done by the two researchers, first individually, and then we had to agree on rating paragraphs on each criterion by demonstrating arguments for every point. The reference standards are adapted from (Hughes, 1989) for comparisons are the following:

- a) Few or no errors of grammar and word order
- b) Few or no errors in punctuation
- c) Few or no errors in spelling
- d) Precise words and terms

- e) Appropriate structures and words
- f) Varied vocabulary
- g) Varied syntactic structures
- h) Well organized ideas
- i) Well-connected ideas

4.5.2. Students Test Analysis

Criteria	Group work		Individual work		Equally good		Not possible in either		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
a.	20	50	08	20	08	20	04	10	40	100
b.	25	62.50	09	22.50	04	10	02	05	40	100
c.	30	75	07	17.50	03	07.50	0	0	40	100
d.	15	37.50	09	22.50	12	30	04	10	40	100
e.	20	50	10	25	02	05	08	20	40	100
f.	28	70	08	20	04	10	0	0	40	100
g.	26	65	10	25	02	05	02	05	40	100
h.	13	32.50	08	20	11	27.50	08	20	40	100
i.	14	35	09	22.50	10	25	07	17.50	40	100
Average	21.22	53.05	8.67	21.67	06.22	15.56	03.89	09.72	40	100

Table 4.34: Assessment and Comparison of Students' Writing Performance in Individual Work and in Group Work

The table above indicates the results after correcting students' written productions. In terms of single criteria, we found out that:

- a.** 50% of students' made few or no errors of grammar and word order when they worked in groups next to only 20% of students working individually. For 20% of other students, the written production was equally good in both settings. The remaining (10%) of students lacked the possibility of not making errors of grammar and word order.
- b.** Regarding punctuation, we found out that 62.50% of students made few or no errors in punctuation in their written production in groups more than the 22.50% of students who

made the same in individual work. 10% of students' written production was equally good in both work arrangements; and 05% of students didn't have the ability to write without making punctuation errors or just few of in either.

- c.** In terms of spelling mistakes, we found out that the majority of students, 75%, made few or no errors when they write cooperatively outnumbering the 17.50% of students who made the same when they wrote individually. Furthermore, 07.50% of students' written output was the same in terms of spelling mistakes in both.
- d.** Concerning precise words and terms, a percentage of 37.50% of students achieved their use when they wrote cooperatively next to 22.5% of students succeeded in the use of precise words and terms in their individual writing. 30% of students succeeded in the use of precise words and nouns in groups and individually. The last 10% of students didn't have the ability of writing with the precise words and terms in both setting.
- e.** Appropriate structures and words had the highest percentage 50% in the students' written productions which have been done in groups in comparison to 25% in those produced individually. However, 20% of students' written production lacked this characteristic in either. The remaining (05%) of students had selected the appropriate structures and words in group work as well as in individual work.
- f.** In terms of vocabulary, the majority of students, 70%, varied their use of vocabulary when working cooperatively, whereas only 20% of them varied their vocabulary in their individual production. The last 10% of students represent those who varied their use of vocabulary in both group work and individual work.
- g.** Concerning the syntactic structures, a considerable percentage (65%) of students varied in their syntactic structures when writing in groups more than the 25% who varied their syntactic structures when they wrote individually. Moreover, while 05% of students'

were able to vary syntactic structures in both settings, another 05% could not do that in either.

- h.** The organization of ideas was almost the same in the working arrangements; with 32.50% for students writing cooperatively, 20% for students working individually and 27.5% for excelling in both settings. A considerable portion of students (20%) lacked the ability of using well-organized ideas in either setting.
- i.** The last characteristic is the connection of ideas. 35% of students who wrote in groups succeeded in connecting ideas compared to 22.50% of students who succeeded in doing so on their own. Moreover, 25% of students were good in both settings and 17.50% were not in either.

To recap the findings, it can be said that students did better in all the criteria of good performance in writing as follows:

- The average number of students who performed well in individual work is 27.44 – more than 27 students out of 40– (21.22+6.22) which amounts 68.60% of students
- The average number of students who performed well in individual work is 14.89 –almost 15 students out of 40– (21.22+6.22) which amounts 37.22% of students

Therefore, considering only the students who made an improvement in group work, their average number is 21.22 and it is more than double the average number of students who made an improvement in individual work, 08.67.

6. Overall Analysis and Interpretation of Results

The results obtained from the analysis of the two questionnaires answered by the teachers and first year students of English at Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia University; demonstrate that students as well as teachers agree on the positive effects of group work on students' self-confidence and their written production.

The interpretation of the students' questionnaire results shows that students prefer to write in groups, maintain that cooperative writing helps them feel confident and exchange knowledge and ideas with each other. Yet, some students claim that they would like to write cooperatively under some condition such as to write with students they personally like (e.g. friends, students they agree with). In addition, students consider themselves active members when writing cooperatively, and that their usual contribution in cooperative writing tasks is either to ask other students for help or to help other students. Moreover, students claim that the main advantages of writing cooperatively are to help them improve their writing performance, in addition to creating a more relaxed and enjoyable learning atmosphere. In light of these results, the second hypothesis set for this study and which holds that if teachers implement the group work technique in the English classes while doing writing tasks, students' writing self-confidence will be improved, is sustained. Concerning the writing ability, the results show that the number of mistakes made by the learners in group work is lower in comparison to those in individual work. According to this result, the first hypothesis which predicts that if teachers implement the group work technique while doing written tasks, students' writing ability is likely to be improved, is also sustained.

The analysis of the Teachers' Questionnaire reveals that teachers are aware of the usefulness of integrating cooperative learning in writing tasks. Most teachers use group work to vary the teaching-learning procedures and to keep students on task, and they relied mostly on putting friends together to create groups. Teachers also are aware of the importance of self-confidence in learning EFL, and that they should look for the best strategies to help learners to overcome the difficulties they face, the ultimate goal being to help them in developing autonomy. The majority of teachers argue that students' self-confidence becomes higher when working in groups in comparison to working individually. In addition, teachers agree that students' writing ability in group work can be enhanced by conducting group work activities

more often with an equal participation for each member in the group. Moreover, most of them agree that in comparison to individually-produced written texts, those produced in group work are better quality.

Conclusion

This chapter highlights the main findings of the analysis undertaken in the present study which lends credence to the belief that group work has positive effects on the students' self-confidence and their writing ability. The results of the questionnaire, of both learners and teachers in addition to paragraphs analysis strongly support the importance of group work as an effective technique in enhancing students' self-confidence and their writing ability. Therefore, there is clearly enough evidence to say that if learners of English work in groups, they would be more confident in themselves to make writing successful. So, it is important for both learners and teachers not to neglect the group work as a technique in their processes of learning and teaching.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

- 1.** Putting it altogether
- 2.** Pedagogical Recommendations
- 3.** Limitations of the Study
- 4.** Suggestions for Further Research

1. Putting it altogether

The main purpose of the present study has been to investigate the impact of collaborative group work on learners' self-confidence in writing and their writing ability. In other words, it was mainly interested in showing the fact that English language learners, who trusted their own abilities and capacities, would be more confident and motivated to better their own writing skills performances.

The study is made up of two sections: one theoretical and the other practical. The theoretical side is in turn divided into three chapters. The first chapter provides an overview of group work and its implementation in the English language classes. It includes a definition of group work and the main reasons for using it. Next, the distinction between pair work and group work is clarified. Then, the main roles of the teacher and learner in group work are discussed. After that, it is followed by an analysis of some of the most efficient criteria and procedures for arranging students into groups in the English language classes. Finally, the discussion turns to evaluate the advantages and the disadvantages of group work. In the second chapter, self-confidence is explored as an affective factor that has tremendous impact on the success of students. Moreover, its relationship to EFL language production and learning is discussed. Next, self-confidence is distinguished and linked to self-esteem, self-concept and self-efficacy. The relationship between self-confidence and some other affective factors such as anxiety, risk-taking, and extroversion and introversion, is examined for the purpose of giving a comprehensible view of the concept. Subsequently, the characteristics of both high and low self-confidence are presented. Lastly, the discussion explains how self-confidence influences motivation and autonomy. The third chapter discusses the concept of writing ability in FL learning contexts. First, various definitions of writing and writing ability are presented. Next, the different stages involved in the writing

activity and the types of writing performance are discussed. Then, types of writing performance and the basic approaches to teaching writing are described. Finally, the most important methods and criteria for the assessment of writing are discussed.

The second section is devoted for the practical side. It deals with the presentation and analysis of data obtained through the implementation of the present research. The analysis concerns two questionnaires: the teacher questionnaire and the students questionnaire, in addition to a test that had done by the same students who answered the questionnaire. These analyses will allow us to build a standpoint about our hypothesis about whether group work really enhances EFL learners' self-confidence in their writing ability. The main goal behind the use of questionnaires, for both learners and teachers, is to provide information about how learners can take risks to write in the FL due to their beliefs in their abilities, to know the influence of affective factors in written production, and also to have an idea about teachers' attitudes towards the role of group work in enhancing EFL learners' self-confidence and their writing ability.

The obtained results confirmed our hypothesis that there is a positive relationship between group work, self-confidence, and students' writing ability. The positive findings revealed in this study show that implementing group work in the classroom has beneficial results in enhancing English language learners' self-confidence in writing. The discussion of the results has shown that students become highly confident when they carry out classroom tasks in a group. In addition, students have demonstrated that they prefer to work in cooperative groups rather than writing individually because their writing ability is enhanced when they work in groups. The discussion of the teachers' answers clearly indicates that teachers agree on the idea that group work enhances students' self-confidence and their writing ability.

Concerning assessment of the writing ability, when comparing between individually-produced texts and those written in groups, it has been found that those produced in groups are of better quality. The analysis of the students' written paragraphs indicates that students make less mistakes in grammar and word order, punctuation and spelling; they also use precise words and terms, appropriate structures and words, varied vocabulary, varied syntactic structures, well-organized ideas, and well-connected ideas more frequently in group work. These characteristics of the written production are used as a proof of the effectiveness of group work in boosting students' writing ability. The results obtained from this analysis clearly indicate that high numbers of mistakes are associated with students working individually.

This study shows that learners need to trust in themselves and their abilities in order to improve the quality of their written production; teachers' responsibilities are to create a relaxed and enjoyable learning atmosphere where learners can use English with confidence; and both teachers and learners should be aware of the importance of applying the group work technique for boosting learners' self-confidence in their writing ability, because there is no doubt of the effectiveness of implementing cooperative learning in the writing class in that both the theoretical parts and the practical findings of this study support the use of this technique and acknowledge its efficacy in the writing class.

2. Pedagogical Recommendations

The findings of this study would be useful for teachers, showing them how to implement the technique of group work as a viable remedy to their writing class routine and problems. Providing a suitable atmosphere to enhance writing has been proven to produce positive effects in students learning of the writing skill, which should be taught

and learnt with interest and fun in order to achieve positive outcomes. On these accounts, we recommend the following.

1. Teachers should be given more freedom in selecting techniques and strategies which suit their learners' levels and abilities.
2. Teachers should be aware of the criteria for the selection of the potentially most effective groups, because the good selection of groups plays a crucial role in the success of the teaching and learning process.
3. Learners should trust themselves and try to express their abilities in front of their classmates.
4. Teachers need to help learners overcome their fear towards writing in the medium of the English language.
5. Teachers need to motivate learners and raise their self-confidence, because learners will write successfully if they find that their teachers are ready to help them and raise their self-confidence.

3. Limitations of the study

The limitations of our study are presented in the following points:

1. The number of teachers and students surveyed is very small number.
2. The time allocated to the completion of this study is limited to six months, which hampers a deep exploration and development of the theme.
3. Due to the nature of our topic which is concerned with writing, many teachers did not accept to answer the questionnaire because they assumed that they did not experience the teaching of the written expression module. However, most exams and assignments given by teachers are written tasks, and those teachers could have supplied highly relevant insights to the study.

4. The test of writing ability was conducted only once. If it had been conducted on more than one occasion, it would have been more valid in terms of consistency of results.

4. Suggestions for Further Research:

Beyond the current practices, there are some areas of research in EFL teaching which are still calling for further investigation and understanding. These areas of research would guide us towards deeper and clearer understanding of implementing group work in foreign language education for better achievements and, therefore, would open window for further research. Therefore, it is important to bear in mind that the findings of the present study might be regarded as a beginning of a new research investigation based on the limitations and shortcomings encountered. One could replicate this study and use other types of data collection procedures such classroom observation and interviews. We also suggest using an bigger number of participants in order to add to the data and thus to generalize the findings to wider populations.

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APPENDIX I

UNIVERSITY MOHAMED SEDDIK BENYAHYA OF JIJEL FACULTY OF LETTERS AND LANGUAGES DEPARTEMENT OF ENGLISH

Students Questionnaire

Dear student,

This questionnaire is part of a Master dissertation which attempts to examine the role of group work in enhancing students' self-confidence and their writing ability. Thus, you are kindly requested to answer the following questions by selecting the answer that best reflects your opinion and making comments whenever necessary. Your contribution will remain anonymous, and data collected will be used for the purposes of this research only.

Section A: General Information

11. Gender:

Female Male

12. Age: years old

Section B: Group Work and Self-Confidence

13. How would you evaluate your overall English language ability?

Good Average Less than average Not sure

14. Specify your mark in in first semester exam of Written Expression:

...../20

15. Do you think that this mark reflects your real abilities

Yes No

16. Do you think you can do better in the future exams?

Yes No

17. How often do work in a group on written tasks?

Always Often Sometimes Rarely Never

18. How confident are you when you carry out classroom tasks in a group?

- a. Very confident
- b. Confident
- c. Not very confident

d. Not confident at all

e. Not sure

19. How confident do you become when you carry out classroom tasks in a group next to carrying them alone?

a. More confident

b. Less confident

c. Not sure

Please, justify your answer

.....
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.....

Section C: Students' Perception towards Writing in a Group

20. When given written tasks in class, how do you prefer them to be done?

a) In group

b) Individually

c) Varying between individual and group work

21. Who are the students you want to work with in a group to write?

a) Students you like personally (e.g. friends, students you agree with)

b) Students who have the same abilities as you

c) Students who have better abilities than you

d) Students who have a lesser abilities than yourself

e) Mixed-ability groups of students

f) No preference

g) Others, please specify:

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

22. When you write in a group, do you consider yourself an active member?

I strongly agree I agree Neutral I disagree I strongly disagree

23. What is your usual contribution in cooperative writing tasks?

a) Ask other students for help

b) Help other students

c) Lead the group

d) Remain silent , but exchange your ideas

e) Do not cooperate at all

24. According to you, what are the advantages of writing cooperatively?

a. Creates more relaxed and enjoyable learning atmosphere

b. Enhances communication skills

c. Allows you to exchange ideas and skills

d. Helps you improve your writing performance

e. Others, please specify:

.....
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.....

25. According to you, what are the drawbacks of writing cooperatively?

g. Wastes your time

h. Leads to the unequal participation of group members

i. Leads to unfair assessment by peers and teacher

j. Makes the class noisy

k. Leads to misunderstandings

l. Others, please specify:

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

Section D: Group Work and Self-Confidence in Writing

26. In which work arrangements, if any, does your written production contain the following characteristics?

	Group work	Individual work	Not possible in either
a) Few or no errors of grammar and word order			
b) Few or no errors in punctuation			
c) Few or no errors in spelling			
d) Precise words and terms			
e) Appropriate structures and words			
f) Varied vocabulary			
g) Varied syntactic structures			
h) Well organized ideas			
i) Well connected ideas			

Thank you for your cooperation

APPENDIX II

Teachers Questionnaire

This questionnaire is part of a Master dissertation research investigating the role of group work in enhancing students' self-confidence and writing ability. We would be grateful if you could spare some time to share your insights on the matter by ticking the appropriate box and making full statements when necessary.

May we thank you in advance for your cooperation and time devoted to answer this questionnaire.

Section One: Personal Information

1. Degree held:

- a. Doctorate
- b. Magister
- c. Master
- d. License

2. How long have you been teaching English?

..... year(s).

3. Have you taught Witten Expression before?

Yes No

4. If "yes", please mention for how long?

..... year(s).

Section Two: Teachers' Perceptions of Group Work in Writing

5. How often do you use group work in teaching writing?

- Always
- Very often
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

6. Why do you use group work in writing tasks?

(Skip this question if you "Never" use group work)

- a. To bring on more participation

- b. To keep students on task
- c. For students to help and encourage each other
- d. To overcome students' inhibition
- e. For students to develop social skills and relationships
- f. To implement the approach adopted in teaching
- g. To vary the teaching-learning procedures
- h. Others, please specify:

.....

7. Why would you avoid using group work in writing tasks?

(Skip this question if you "Always" use group work)

- a) The nature of the topic or lesson
- b) It leads to disciplinary problems
- c) It is time consuming
- d) It leads to unequal participation
- e) It undermines individual productivity and creativity
- f) Others, please specify:

.....

8. Which of the following considerations do you take into account when assigning students to groups?

- Friends together
- Mutual agreement/consent
- Same gender
- Mixed gender
- Same ability
- Mixed ability
- Randomness
- Others, please specify:

.....
.....
9. Are your students reluctant to working together?

Definitely Probably possibly probably not definitely
not

Section Three: Group Work and Self-Confidence in EFL Classes

10. Do you think that students' self-confidence affects their learning of English?

Yes No

11. Do you agree that working in groups is good for enhancing students' self-confidence?

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

12. What do you think happens to your students' self-confidence when working in groups in comparison to working individually?

- a. It becomes higher
- b. It is not affected
- c. It becomes lower
- d. Not sure

13. According to you, which students react better to carrying out tasks in groups?

- a) More self-confident students
- b) Less self-confident students
- c) No difference

Section Four: Group Work and Writing Ability

14. How would you evaluate your students' written productions prepared in group work?

- a. Excellent
- b. Above Average
- c. Average
- d. Below Average
- e. Very Poor

15. At the end of group works, on which aspects do your students usually fail?

- a. Grammar

- b. Vocabulary
- c. Content
- d. Organization of ideas
- e. Form
- f. Others, please specify:

.....

16. In your opinion, students' writing ability in group work can be enhanced by:

- a. Conducting group work activities more often
- b. Conducting group work activities less often
- c. Increasing the time allocated for group work
- d. Reducing the time allocated for group work

17. In your opinion, efficiently dividing tasks on group members while writing involves:

- a. Assigning different roles to members of the same group
- b. Assigning the same roles to members of the same group
- c. Equal participation for each member
- d. Abler students acting as supervisors and group leaders
- e. Others, please specify

.....

18. In comparison to individually-produced written texts, those produced in groups are:

- a- Better quality
- b- Same quality
- c- Lesser quality
- d- Variable

19. In your opinion, group work:

- a. Enhances learners' writing ability
- b. Influences negatively learners' writing ability
- c. No effect

Section Five: Suggestions and Recommendations

20. Please, supply your opinions on how to make group work an efficient contributor to enhance students' self-confidence and writing ability?

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION

Résumé :

La présente étude tente d'examiner le rôle du travail de groupe dans l'amélioration de la confiance en soi des élèves dans leurs capacités d'écriture. En d'autres termes, il vise à étudier la relation entre le travail de groupe comme l'une des techniques efficaces utilisées par l'enseignant dans le processus d'apprentissage des langues étrangères et à sensibiliser les élèves à l'importance de leurs attitudes à leur égard dans le succès de leur écriture performance. Tout au long de cette recherche, nous émettons l'hypothèse que si les enseignants mettent en œuvre la technique de travail de groupe dans les cours d'anglais tout en accomplissant des tâches d'écriture, la confiance en soi de l'élève sera améliorée. Pour vérifier la validité de cette hypothèse, nous avons testé la capacité des élèves à écrire des paragraphes individuellement et dans le groupe. Ensuite, nous avons effectué l'enquête principale qui, à son tour, est divisée en deux types de questionnaires; Le questionnaire des étudiants et le questionnaire des enseignants. Le premier est composé de seize questions et administré à quarante élèves d'anglais de première année au département d'anglais, Université de Mohamed Seddik Benyahya de Jijel. Le deuxième questionnaire se compose de vingt questions données à dix enseignants au hasard. La discussion des résultats a montré que l'utilisation de l'apprentissage coopératif améliore la confiance en soi des élèves d'anglais de première année dans leur capacité d'écriture. En outre, les étudiants affirment qu'ils préfèrent écrire en groupes dans certaines conditions. Sur la base des résultats fournis, nous avons suggéré certaines recommandations qui serviront de point de vue pour que les enseignants utilisent efficacement cette technique.

Mots clés: Travail en groupe; Confiance en soi; Capacité d'écriture.

ملخص

تهدف الدراسة الحالية إلى دراسة دور العمل الجماعي في تعزيز ثقة الطلاب بقدرتهم على الكتابة . وبعبارة أخرى فإنه يهدف إلى التحقيق في العلاقة بين العمل الجماعي كأحد الأساليب الفعالة التي يستخدمها الإستاذ في عملية تعلم اللغة الأجنبية، وكذلك لرفع وعي الطلاب بقدراتهم اثناء ادائهم لواجباتهم الكتابية. وطوال هذا البحث، نفترض أنه إذا اعتمد الإستاذ على العمل الجماعي اثناء اداء الطلاب لواجبهم الكتابي فإنه سيتم تعزيز ثقتهم بانفسهم

للتحقق من صحة هذه الفرضية، قمنا باختبار قدرة الطلاب على كتابة فقرات بشكل فردي وفي مجموعات. وبعد ذلك، أجرينا الدراسة الرئيسية الذي تنقسم بدورها إلى نوعين من الاستبيانات؛ استبيان للطلبة واستبيان للاستادة. يتألف الاستبيان الاول من ستة عشر سؤالاً كانت موجهة إلى أربعين طالبا في السنة الأولى بقسم اللغة الإنجليزية، جامعة محمد صديق بن يحيى بجامعة جيجل. أما الاستبيان الثاني يتألف من (20) سؤالاً تم طرحها على عشرة استادة بشكل عشوائي. وقد أظهرت مناقشة النتائج أن اعتماد العمل الجماعي يعزز ثقة طلاب السنة الأولى لغة الإنجليزية بانفسهم اثناء الكتابة. وبالإضافة إلى ذلك، يدعي الطلاب أنهم يفضلون الكتابة في جماعات في ظل بعض الشروط. واستنادا إلى النتائج المقدمة، اقترحنا بعض التوصيات التي من شأنها أن تكون بمثابة رؤى للاستادة لاستخدام هذه التقنية على نحو فعال.

الكلمات المفتاحية العمل الجماعي الثقة بالنفس القدرة على الكتابة