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The Role of Synchronous and Asynchronous Online Teacher Feedback in Enhancing the Complexity of Structure in Academic Writing

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Declaration

We hereby declare that the dissertation entitled "The Role of Synchronous and Asynchronous Online Teacher Feedback in Enhancing the Complexity of Structure in Academic Writing" is our own work and all the sources we have used have been acknowledged by means of references. We also certify that we have not copied or plagiarized the work of other students or researchers partially or fully. In case any material is not documented, we shall be responsible for the consequences.

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Dedication

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

I would like to dedicate this work lovingly to the memory of *my father*, the one whose hands never left my shoulders, the one whom I asked for a star and he came back with the moon; I wish you were here and I hope I made you proud. To *my mother*, the greatest of them all for her support, prayers, encouragement, and unconditional love. To my sisters, *Amina, Rima, Sarra, and Rayene*, for supporting, loving, encouraging, and helping me. To my brothers, *Sami, Abd Erraouf, and Alae Eddine*, for their endless love and support. I am so lucky for having such power in my life. To the source of joy at home, *my nephews and nieces, Amdjed, Rama, Aynour, Mohammed, and Anes.* To my fiancé *Ahcene*, the kindest and purest heart, for his emotional support, love, and courage to never give up. Special thanks to my friend and mate *Rayane*, with whom this work has been done. To my friends *Chanaz, Nada,* and *Zohra* who have been by my side since the beginning.

Meissa

I would like to dedicate this work to my beloved mother for her unconditional love, prayers, and sacrifices. My dear father for his endless support, patience, and encouragement. My sisters, **Imene** and **Aya,** who were always a source of motivation. My dear brothers, **Chemsseddine** and **Abedrrahime,** for their guidance. My lovely niece **Maria** and nephews **Ayoub** and **Younes**. My deepest gratitude goes to my friend **Meissa**, with whom this work has been done. My friends, **Zohra** and **Chanez,** for being always by my side. A special dedication goes to my cousins **Maroua**, **Nehla**, and **Hiba.**

Rayane

Abstract

This study explored the role of synchronous and asynchronous online teacher feedback in enhancing students' writing in terms of complexity of structure. It has been hypothesized that if students are exposed to online synchronous and/ or asynchronous teacher feedback, their ability to use complex structures in writing will be improved. To test this hypothesis, an experiment was conducted with fourteen third year students of English at the department of English, Mohamed Seddik Benyahia University, Jijel, and a questionnaire was administered to eight teachers of the Written Expression module at the same university. The results obtained from the experiment, which consisted in providing online feedback on a students' writing task, demonstrated that both types of online feedback helped students to increase slightly the number and the variety of the complex structures used in their compositions especially the number of complex sentences, prepositional phrases, relative pronouns, and relative conjunctions. However, limitations pertinent to the implementation of the experiment prevented comparing the relative effects of synchronous and asynchronous feedback. On the other hand, the findings from the teachers' questionnaire showed that teachers believe that synchronous online feedback would better improve students' writing since it allows live discussion where both the teacher and the students interact with each other and creates an atmosphere that is, to some extent, similar to traditional classroom feedback. Nonetheless, teachers preferred to use asynchronous online feedback because it is less time-consuming and less efforts demanding. The inconclusive results of online feedback highlight the need for traditional feedback, and the unfamiliarity of both teachers and students with online feedback calls for more training in the use of technologies in education.

Key words: Synchronous feedback, Asynchronous feedback, Complexity of structure

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

ASF: Asynchronous Feedback

CBF: Conference Based Feedback

CMF: Computer Mediated Feedback

C/TU: Clauses per T-Unit

ESL: English as a Second Language

FL: Foreign Language

L2: Second Language

MLC: Mean Length of Clause

MLTU: Mean Length of T-Unit

NP: Noun Phrase

SCMs: Syntactic Complexity Measures

VP: Verb Phrase

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Introduction

Writing is one of the four essential skills in language learning that requires considerable time and effort to master. Students face difficulties with writing in terms of appropriateness, grammar, and complexity of structure. The latter often occurs because the students attempt to write in the same way they speak, without focusing on using the appropriate type of sentence and the accurate punctuation.

With the technological development and during the special situation the world is living due to Corona Virus, the Ministry of Higher Education in Algeria adopted online teaching as a solution to compensate for the delay in the teaching programmes. Thus, technological devices have been used in teaching writing, and online feedback has been considered a suitable alternative to provide learners with the necessary review and assistance to improve their writing, either synchronously or asynchronously.

1. Background of the Study

Feedback is widely used in different learning contexts, especially in the field of Second/ Foreign Language (ESL/EFL) teaching. Its significant impact on the learning process makes the experts always search to improve its quality and to keep up with the developments in the world. Feedback can be provided to learners online, either synchronously or asynchronously, during the writing process to enhancing students' writing, especially in terms of structural complexity. Various studies by different researchers shed light on the impact of online feedback in writing development such as Shintani (2015), Shang (2017), and Cabantac-Lumabi and Tabajen (2021).

Shintani (2015) conducted a study about the effect of computer-mediated synchronous and asynchronous corrective feedback (SCF vs. ACF) on writing. The study's aim was to

investigate how the SCF and ACF affect student's writing tasks. The study was completed by eliciting the perceptions of 15 Japanese university students in both SCF and ACF conditions. The findings revealed that SCF created an interactive environment similar to the traditional feedback. Unlike the ACF, the SCF provides the learners with the opportunity to self-correct their mistakes while writing. However, both the SCF and ACF facilitated the understanding of the metalinguistic features (including semantic and syntactic ones). Similarly, Ene and Upton (2018) investigated the effectiveness and perceptions of teacher electronic feedback (e-feedback) on learner uptake in ESL composition. The researchers used three data collection instruments: essay drafts and chat, student survey, and teacher interview (online chat for the synchronous feedback and comments on electronically exchanged essay files for the asynchronous feedback). The results showed that both teachers and students had positive perceptions toward the use of synchronous and asynchronous feedback. The study suggested that a combination of the two types of feedback might lead to better improvements in students' performance.

Shang (2017) compared EFL university students' experiences of asynchronous peer feedback (APF) and SCF while writing and the effectiveness of each mode on the aspect of syntactic complexity. 44 students were examined in a private university in southern Taiwan using multiple instruments (writing tasks, questionnaire, and semi-structured interview). The findings revealed that most students accepted this e-learning approach and achieved satisfactory results via using APF and SCF and both types helped them in producing more words in total. However, the feedback provided through APF was more usable than the SCF in writing more sentences and it was more preferable by students.

Very recently, Cabantac-Lumabi and Tabajen (2021) conducted a study to analyse and investigate college students' experience and evaluation in online asynchronous peer feedback in writing. One hundred college students responded to a questionnaire and participated in a

focus group discussion in which their experience with online asynchronous peer feedback has been evaluated. The results revealed that college students had a positive experience in online asynchronous peer feedback and that this type of feedback is valuable for them especially in their writing development.

The review above suggests that the study of the experiences and effectiveness of online feedback is an interesting area of research. This pursuit is especially necessary since no studies have been carried out in Algeria to investigate the role of synchronous and asynchronous online feedback in enhancing students' writing in terms of complexity of structure.

2. Statement of the Problem

Students build knowledge by acquiring new information through searching or correcting the already existing knowledge. Correction of the wrong information can be achieved by receiving feedback from a more knowledgeable person, either a teacher or another more able peer. Since mastering the ESL/EFL writing skill is considered a difficult process, the teacher has to devote a lot of time for students to help them ameliorate their writing.

However, university students of English, during the pandemic of Corona Virus, are facing problems concerning the short time available for them to practice writing. Coupled with the lack of student-teacher interaction, this has prevented students from asking questions and clarifications about their writing, which will certainly affect their writing development. Hence, providing online should be pondered and the effective ways of doing so investigated.

3. Aims of the Study

The first aim of this research is to find out the effectiveness of the synchronous/asynchronous online teacher feedback in enhancing the complexity of structure in students' writings. The second aim is to conduct a comparative study between synchronous

and asynchronous online feedback in order to explore which of the two types leads to more improvement in students' writings. The third aim is to reveal the teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness and feasibility of the two types of e-feedback.

4. **Research Questions**

This research attempts to answer the following questions:

1. Are students able to use an acceptable varied number of complex structures while writing?

2. Which of the two types of online feedback (synchronous vs. asynchronous) lead to better improvement in complexity of writing, if at all?

3. Which of the two types of online feedback (synchronous vs. asynchronous) do the teachers of writing prefer to use?

5. **Research Hypotheses**

This research is directed by the main hypothesis that if students are exposed to online feedback from the teacher, they will improve their academic writing in terms of complexity of structure.

Second, according to findings by previous studies, it is hypothesized that more improvement in the structure complexity of writing can be made by students who received asynchronous feedback.

6. Means of Research

This study is conducted at the University of Mohamed Seddik BenYahia, Jijel, and it is focused on third-year LMD students of English. To collect the necessary data, an experimental study has been conducted with fourteen students and a teacher questionnaire has been submitted to eight teachers of written expression. The experiment has been used to study the development of the students' writings in term of complex structures after receiving

synchronous and asynchronous online teacher feedback while the questionnaire aimed to find out the teachers' attitudes towards the use of the two types of feedback.

7. Structure of the study

This research is divided into two parts: theoretical and practical. The theoretical part consists of one chapter divided into two sections in addition to the general introduction; section one answers the following questions about the concept of complexity of structure: what is it? What are its types and its measures? What are the strategies for making a complex sentence? Section two deals with online feedback: its definition, types, sources and importance when it comes to developing students' academic writing.

The practical part (chapter two) provides a description of the methodology that has been used in conducting this research. First, the chapter starts by introducing the procedures followed in the research in order to collect data, as well as the population and sampling. Moreover, it presents a clear description of the two instruments that have been used in the study along with the analysis and interpretation of results.

Section One: Complexity of Structure in Writing

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<center>**Section One: Complexity of Structure in Writing**</center>

Introduction

This section gives an overview about complexity of structure in writing. It starts by defining complexity of structure and presenting its main types. Next, it introduces a number of strategies that ensure complexity of structure in simple sentences (at the phrase level), in compound sentences (at the level of coordinating conjunctions), and in complex sentences (at the level of the clause). Moreover, it highlights some complexity measures including mean length of T-units, clauses per T-units, and mean length of clause. The section concludes by making clear the relationship between complexity of structure and academic writing.

1. **Definition of Complexity of Structure**

Academic writing is linked with complex structure; the more the structure is complex, the more sophisticated and academic the writing is. According to Biber et al. (2011), complexity of structure refers to the more advanced grammatical structures that the learners of a language demonstrate in their progress in writing (p.67). Thus, academic writing is characterized by both grammatical and lexical structures; however, the latter is beyond the scope of this research.

Many linguists argued that complexity of structure is linked with complex sentences and the number of subordinating clauses embedded in them; Biber and Gray (2016) indicated that "linguists have operationalized grammatical complexity as the increased use of 'elaborated' structures, consisting of dependent clauses added on to a simple independent clause" (p. 245). Later, in 2020, Biber Gray, Staples, and Egbert stated that grammarians have focused on the different types of dependent clauses as the most important manifestation of complexity" (p. 6). However, in addition to dependent clauses, complexity of structure can be achieved by

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other devices at the level of phrase or coordination; Ortega (2003) supported this idea by stating:

> "Other measures of syntactic complexity that are not specifically based on T-units but are commonly used in L2 writing studies include indices that measure the length of syntactic structures, the types and incidence of embedding, the types and number of coordinators between clauses, the range and types of phrasal units produced, and the frequency of clauses and phrases used." (As cited in Crossley, & McNamara, 2014, p. 67).

2. **Types of Structural Complexity**

Structure complexity is a part of linguistic complexity; it represents a composition of grammatical rules and structures of a language system and it is divided into two subtypes: formal complexity and functional complexity.

2.1. Formal Complexity

Housen et al. (2012) defined formal complexity as "the number of operations to be applied on a base structure to arrive at the target structure (e.g. in the derivation of passive clauses from underlying active structures)" (p.25). It includes morphological complexity, which in turn is divided into inflectional morphology (the different changes in the form of a lexeme to express different functions) and derivational morphology (the changes in the stem to create new words).

2.2. Functional Complexity

Functional complexity refers to the number of functions and meanings of a particular structure. It includes syntactic complexity at different levels (phrasal, clausal, and sentential syntactic complexity).

Figure 1 below represents the different elements and types of structural grammatical complexity that can be analysed on three different levels. The theoretical level consists of system grammatical complexity and structural grammatical complexity (the degree of embeddedness of the systems components and relationships between them). The observational level refers to the manifestation of the rules and strategies of theoretical level in actual language performance. Finally, the operational level represents the measures that can give a concrete indication of the degree of complexity (as cited in Housen, Kuiken, & Vedder, 2012, pp. 25-27).

Figure 1. Grammatical complexity at different levels of construct specification (Housen, Kuiken, & vedder, 2012, p. 27

Theoretical level of cognitive constructs: Grammatical complexity	**Systemic grammatical complexity** (elaboration, size, range, variation, 'breadth' of L2 grammar)	**Structural grammatical complexity** ('depth', embeddedness, compositionality of grammatical L2 structures)			
Observational level of behavioural constructs: Surface manifestations of grammatical complexity in L2 performance	**Grammatical diversity** **Syntactic complexity**			**Grammatical sophistication**	
	Sentence complexity	Clausal complexity	Phrasal complexity	Inflectional complexity	Derivational complexity
Operational level of statistical constructs: Measures (frequency, ratio, index)	**Length measures** (words/T-unit; words/ clause)	**Subclause ratios** (simple and adjusted)	syntatic arguments/ clause	dependents / phrasal head	verb inflections/ verbs number of verb forms	derivational affixes/ word

3. **Strategies for Making a Complex Structure**

In order to write structurally complex paragraphs, learners must master the various elements of grammar as well as the different types of sentences: simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex. Sentence structure refers to the various elements and parts of the sentence and how they are combined and organized together to convey a meaningful message. Thus, complexity of structure can be achieved at the levels of phrases, clauses, or conjunctions.

3.1. Complex Structures in Simple Sentences

A simple sentence is the smallest type of a sentence that contains a complete thought with a subject and a verb (also known as predicate). According to Joshi (2014), "A sentence which has one subject and one predicate is called simple sentence. A simple sentence is always an independent clause. A simple sentence expresses a complete thought" (p.40). A simple sentence, or an independent clause for that matter, can be structurally complex if it is well-elaborated at the level of the phrase. The latter is a pair or a group of words which are linked together and which have either a subject or a verb; Joshi (2014) posited that "A group of words that does not have a subject and a verb is called phrase. A phrase makes sense, but not complete sense" (p. 44). The different types of phrases are noun, verb, prepositional, adjective, adverb, participle, infinitive, and gerund phrases.

3.1.1. The Noun Phrase

The noun phrase (NP) is a group of words containing a noun (it could be a name, a place, or a thing) and functions as a subject. Dixon (2005) explaines that an NP includes a pronoun, proper noun, or a common noun as a head (p. 26). The NP can be made structurally complex by including at least two or more modifiers.

3.1.2   The Verb Phrase

The verb phrase (VP) contains the main verb that may be preceded by the helping verb (auxiliary verb). Fabb (2005) defines it as a phrase that contains a verb as a head and an auxiliary verb -such as: could, might, have- that precedes the main verb. (p.33). The structure of VP can be complex by adding other types of phrases such as an adverbial phrase.

3.1.2.   The Prepositional Phrase

The prepositional phrase consists of a preposition and its object; the latter can be either a noun or a pronoun. According to Matthews (2007), a prepositional phrase is a group of words containing a preposition or sequence of prepositions followed by a noun phrase or the equivalent, e.g. by Sunday, out of the classroom. (p. 316). The prepositional phrase can be complex in its structure by linking two or more prepositional phrases together.

3.1.3.   The Adjective Phrase

The adjective phrase is a group of words that functions as an adjective in a sentence. O'Dwyer (2006) defines it as the syntactic structure with an adjective as its focus and it describes or qualifies a noun (p. 110). The adjective phrase is considered as a feature of that contributes to construct complex structures.

3.1.4.   The Adverb Phrase

The adverb phrase is a group of words that function as an adverb in a sentence; it modifies a verb, an adjective, or another adverb. According to De Materials (2011), "An adverb phrase is also regarded as a sequence of words that provides information generally referring to the time, place, manner and degree, in which an action, state or event occurs" (p. 124). The adverbial phrase itself is considered an indicator of complex structure.

3.1.5. The Participle Phrase

A participle phrase is a group of words that starts with a participle followed by the elements that complement it such as adjectives or adverbs. Hackett and Hackett (2011) define it as a group of words containing a participle and its complementing elements that can have the function of an adjective or adjective phrase. The participle phrase can be used with helping verbs to make a clarification of tense or voice. (p.490). The participle phrase is considered as a feature of complex structures.

3.1.6. The Infinitive Phrase

The infinitive phrase is a group of words that starts with the infinitive. Peder and Frames (2002) define it as a phrase that starts with (to) and a verb or verb phrase. It may function as a noun or a modifier. The verb in an infinitive phrase does not tell anything about the subject in a direct way (p.130).

3.1.7. The Gerund Phrase

A gerund phrase is created when a gerund -a verb that takes an *ing* form and functions as a noun, has a modifier, object or both. The gerund phrase is one of the features of complex structures.

3.2. Complex Structures in Compound Sentence

The compound sentence "consists of two or more independent clauses. These clauses are connected by coordinate conjunction such as and, but, or, nor, for, yet, so, etc." (Sari et al., 2019, p. 342). The independent clauses of compound sentences can be joined in three ways: either by a semicolon, a coordinating conjunction, or conjunctive adverb.

The first way of forming a compound sentence is by adding a coordinating conjunction to link between the two independent clauses, which are known also as FANBOYS; these conjunctions are: for, and, nor, but, or, yet, and so. The second way is by using conjunctive adverbs such as: however, moreover, furthermore, hence, meanwhile, therefore. And the third

way is by adding a semicolon; Werner et al. (2002) stated that "a compound sentence may also be formed by joining two sentences with semicolon" (p. 254).

Coordinators are the only possible way to make compound sentences complex in structure. The compound sentence can contain as many independent clauses as the writer wants; however, realistically, it should not contain more than two coordinators; in other words, more than three dependent clauses. Kane (2000) stated that "Compound sentences often have three independent clauses or even four or five. In theory there is no limit. In practice, however, most compound sentences contain only two clauses. Stringing out a number is likely to make an awkward, rambling sentence." (p. 159)

3.3.Complex Structures in Complex Sentences

A complex sentence is composed of one independent clause and one or more dependent clauses, where a clause is a group of words that contains both a subject and a verb. Azar (1999) indicated that in order for a sentence to be considered complex, it should consist of one independent clause and one or more dependent clause (p.2).

The independent clause is a complete sentence that has a coherent meaning on its own; however, the dependent clause -known as subordinate clause- is a group of words that depend on other clauses to convey a complete message or idea. The independent clause refers to a clause that can stand alone as a complete sentence for it has a subject and a finite verb of a sentence while a dependent clause must be connected to an independent clause (Subekti, 2017, p. 2).

The dependent clauses could be in the forms of noun clauses, adjective clauses and adverb clauses. In this section, the complexity of structure will be considered at the level of dependent clauses only since the discussion of complex structures at the level of the independent clause is identical to that within simple sentence.

3.3.1. Dependent Noun Clauses

Dependent noun clauses are clauses that function the same way the noun does; they can be a subject, a direct object, an object of preposition (Subekti, 2017, p. 3). Noun clauses are introduced by Wh- words or the so-called noun clause markers. "Noun clauses usually follow the main clause and are introduced by subordinate conjunctions… that, whether (or not), if, or wh-question words, depending on the type of noun clause" (DeCapua, 2010, p. 353).

3.3.2. Dependent Adjective Clauses

Dependent adjective clauses are clauses that act like adjectives, which means that they modify a noun or a pronoun. In other words, adjective clauses describe the noun or the pronoun. It "describes, identifies, or gives further information about a noun." (Subekti, 2017, p. 3). Adjective clauses are known as relative clauses because they are usually introduced by a relative pronoun: who, whom, whose, which, and that. The relative pronouns 'who' and 'whom' are used for people, 'which', 'who' or 'that' are used for nouns and 'whose' is used to express possession (DeCapua, 2010, p. 313).

3.3.3. Dependent Adverbial Clauses

Dependent adverbial clauses are clauses that modify a verb, an adjective, or another adverb; "they function the same way the adverb does: modifying or telling more about a verb, in the way that they explain where, when, how, why, to what extent and under what condition an action occurs" (Farbman, 1985, p. 4). Adverbial clauses start with a subordinating conjunction, such as after, although, since, before, until (Subekti, 2017, p. 4). Those subordinators are the one that determine the type of the adverbial clause "For example, the subordinators after and when introduce adverbial time clauses. The subordinators since or because introduce reason or cause clauses" (DeCapua, 2010, p. 288).

3.3.4. Illustration of Common Subordinate Conjunctions

The following lists represent the different functions of the commonly used subordinating conjunctions:

- Subordinating conjunctions of time: after, before, by the time, as soon as, when, whenever, until/till, since, and while
- Subordinating conjunctions of place: where, wherever, everywhere, represents
- Because, since, as, so, so that, now that, and in order that are the conjunctions that introduce the cause-and-effect relationship.
- If, if only, unless, provided, provided that, and assuming that indicate condition
- Subordinating conjunctions of concession: though, although, even though
- As if, like, as, and as though indicate manner
- Than and whereas represent comparison
- Subordinating conjunctions that function as relative pronouns are: that, which, who, whom, whose, why, who, when, and where. These subordinating conjunctions function as relative pronouns.

4. Syntactic Complexity Measures

Due to the importance of complexity of structure, many researchers tried to identify standards to measure the extent of complexity in a given piece of writing; however, this has led to the emergence of a considerable number of measures and different interpretations of those measures. Yet, the most common syntactic complexity measures (SCMs) are mean length of T-unit, mean number of words per clause, and mean number of clauses per T-unit (Jagaiah, Olinghouse, & Kearns, 2020, p. 2577).

4.1. Mean Length of T-Unit

T- unit represents one independent clause and one or more dependent clauses, yet the mean length of T-unit (MLTU) is an indicator of the number of words per T-unit; it is the most commonly examined SCM (Jagaiah at al., 2020, p. 2582). Kyle (2016) claimed that MLTU helps to understand the sentence clearly and avoid ambiguity in saying, "(MLTU) adds an extra level of specificity (i.e., dependent clauses are somewhat disambiguated)" (p. 10). He reported that a number of studies argued that there is a positive significant relationship between writing proficiency and MLTU in that the length of T-units tends to increase as proficiency goes up. (p. 10).

4.2. Mean Length of Clause

The mean number of words per clause (MLC) is an indicator of clause length. Kyle (2016) argued that MLC could be seen as a global measure of intra-clausal complexity, and it is said that there is a relationship between MLC and proficiency level.

4.3. Mean Number of Clauses per T-Unit

The mean number of clauses per T-unit (C/TU) is based on counting the number of subordinate clauses per sentence, "Clauses per T-unit is obtained by counting the total number of clauses (independent and dependent) divided by the total number of T-units" (Jagaiah at al., 2020, p. 2582). As concerns its correlation with language proficiency, Wolfe-Quintero et al. (1998) highlighted that out of eighteen studies that employed the C/TU measure, six found significant positive relationships with language proficiency and, one found a significant negative relationship, and eleven did not find a significant relationship (as cited in Kristopher, 2016, p. 12).

5. Complexity in Academic Writing

Academic writing is a formal type of writing where the writer has to follow certain rules such as avoiding the use of slang, contractions, and incomplete sentences. It is "the kind of writing used in high school and college classes" (Oshima, & Hogue, 2007, p. 3). Academic writing is characterized by three main properties: complexity, elaboration, and explicitness. In this vein, Biber and Gray (2016) asserted, "two of the most strongly held beliefs about academic writing are the stereotypes that it is extremely complex and elaborated in terms of its characteristic grammatical structures, and that it is maximally explicit in its presentation of information" (p. 14).

Structural complexity serves to determine the developmental stage in which learners are; it can reveal language proficiency of the student in the same way a placement or proficiency test does. Several researchers (e.g. Biber and Gray, 2010, Biber, Gray and Poonpon, 2011) argued that in order to measure whether students reach sufficient academic proficiency, grammatical complexity can be relied on an indicator of L2 writing development; syntactic complexity correlates positively with academic writing proficiency and can differentiate writing proficiency levels (as cited in Thongyoi, & Poonpon, 2020, pp. 44-45)."

The use of complex structures is a benchmark of professional writing in that the more complex sentences occur the more professional the writing will be. In this vein, Ortega (2012) noted that Second Language writing researchers have recently been using complexity measures with at least three main purposes "(a) to gauge proficiency, (b) to describe performance, and (c) to benchmark development" (as cited in Biber, Gray, Staples, & Egbert, 2020, p.5).

Syntactic complexity is highly associated with academic writing, given that the use of complex grammatical structures as an evidence of high writing quality. "Grammatical

complexity is, especially, regarded as an important characteristic of academic writing because academic writing has been found to be grammatically complex" (Biber & Gray, 2010; Biber, Gray & Poonpon, 2011, as cited in Thongyoi, & Poonpon, 2020, p.44).

Conclusion

This section has dealt with the major elements concerning complexity of structure which is defined as the complex grammar used at the three levels of the sentence: phrase, conjunction, and clause. It also shed light on the methods of making the three types of sentences structurally complex. Mean length of T-Unit, clauses per T-Unit, and mean length of clause are presented as the main complexity measures that are used as criteria for writing proficiency and development in that structural complexity is a reliable sign or measure of professional writing.

Section Two: Online Feedback

Introduction

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Conclusion

Introduction

With the technological development, online teaching, in which online feedback is an integral part, has become a necessity. This section introduces online feedback and its two types, synchronous (immediate feedback) and asynchronous (delayed feedback). Next, it presents sources of online feedback, which are teacher feedback, peer feedback, computer-mediated feedback, and conference-based feedback. Moreover, this section focuses on three different tools that are used for providing feedback: email, screencastings, and videoconferencing.

1. Definition of Online Feedback

Feedback is a common technique in teaching that aims to help learners determine their strengths and weaknesses, enabling them to work on the areas that need more work. According to Lewis, giving feedback consists in "telling learners about the progress they are making as well as guiding them to areas for improvements" (as cited in Sri Wahyuni, 2017, p. 40).

There are two major ways of providing feedback; the most common one is the traditional classroom feedback, where the teacher and students are in direct face-to-face interaction; whereas, the second way is online feedback, via the use of technological tools.

A comprehensive definition of online feedback was provided by Leibold and Schwarz (2015) in which they introduced also its sources and tools; accordingly, online feedback refers to "information from an educator, peer, or other in an online format, such as the written word, audio file, video, pre-programmed automatic reply, or live web-based conferencing" (p. 35). In other words, online feedback can be defined as the process of giving comments, reviews, and/or responses about learners' production using an online platform.

Alvarez et al. (2011) distinguished between three main types of feedback for writing assignments in an online environment, which are corrective feedback, epistemic feedback, and suggestive feedback. Corrective feedback refers to comments provided by the teacher about the assignment requirements and explanation of the correct answer. Epistemic feedback is used by the teacher to criticize the answer and ask students for explanation and clarification. In suggestive feedback, the teacher suggests advice to progress and improve the idea. Alvarez et al. (2011) suggested that a fourth type of feedback can be supplied by the teacher by combining epistemic and suggestive feedback (as cited in Guasch et al., 2013, p. 326).

Moreover, there are two other common types of feedback: formative feedback and summative feedback. The former aims to monitor students' achievements by providing ongoing feedback in order to capture their needs. Brown (1997) claimed that feedback given as part of formative assessment enables learners to consolidate their strengths and identify their weaknesses (as cited in Hatziapostolou and Paraskakis, 2010, p. 112). On the other hand, the latter is a final evaluation of students' learning and used to grade students.

2. Asynchronous versus Synchronous Online Feedback

Over the recent years, technology has become widely used in language teaching, in general, and for online feedback provision, in particular. Online feedback can be provided in two ways: synchronously and asynchronously.

3.1. Asynchronous Online Feedback

According to Shintani and Aubery (2016), asynchronous feedback occurs after students complete their texts; the teacher gives reviews about the already submitted texts (p. 296). Specifically, the learners submit their assignments to their teacher via email or any other online platform and he/she provides them later with the feedback in the form of comments or responses after the task is completed using online discussion tools.

The fact that asynchronous feedback is provided after submitting the final texts is considered as an advantage for the learners. Tolosa, East, and Villers (2013) found out that asynchronous online feedback led to improvements on students' grammar, spelling and vocabulary (as cited in Ene and Upton, 2018, p. 2). Moreover, Rohrbacher (2019) argued that it is beneficial to the teachers since they can take their time for providing specific and meaningful feedback (p. 36). Put differently, online feedback is very effective because it can be sent at any time and place and learners have the ability to edit their writings before submitting the final text.

However, asynchronous feedback does not allow teacher-learner interaction; the two parts cannot be present at the same time. In this vein, Hobson (1998) explained that the faceless nature of online discussion does not allow learners to ask questions, respond to comments, raise issues, and actively work with tutors toward the revisions (as cited in Writing Center Asynchronous/Synchronous Online Feedback p. 248). Another shortcoming of this form of feedback is that the teachers' comments may be ambiguous and unclear. In this regard, Fisher et al. (2000) noted that "asynchronous peer feedback resulted in a higher level of writer frustration when students could not understand what their reviewers said; particularly given online communications often lack the facial and body cues necessary to avoid misunderstandings" (as cited in Shang H. F., 2017, p. 498).

3.2. Synchronous Online Feedback

Synchronous online feedback, according to King (2017), occurs "when tutor and tutee are present at the same time, just not in the same place, and technology is used to bring them together to discuss a student's assignment" (p.2). In particular, synchronous feedback requires the participants to meet at the same time "to communicate by reading, typing and sending messages"; hence, the "discussions are often compared to face-to-face discussions, as they are both instantaneous and spontaneous" (Chew & Ng 2021, p. 200). Also referred to as

Synchronous Corrective Feedback (SCF), synchronous online feedback is provided by the teacher "while students are in the process of composing their texts" (Shintani and Aubery, 2016, p. 296).

Synchronous online feedback occurs during the production process, which is an opportunity for learners to immediately correct the errors detected and highlighted by the teacher. The presence of the teacher and the learner at the same time in this form of discussion allows learners to ask questions in case of any ambiguity or confusion concerning the task. According to Hewett (2006), "The synchronous online tutoring mode could enable students to establish a supportive, interpersonal relationship in a "faceless environment" (as cited in Rice and St. Amant, 2018, p.249). Moreover, it gives the teachers the ability to provide the learners with the needed cultural and language learning backgrounds, and, as a result of immediate feedback, error corrections and interaction with the teacher, students are able to promote their writing skills (Shang, 2017, p. 498)

However, not all learners prefer this type of feedback because they were not able to correct their own mistakes at the same instant the teacher detects them. Shintani and Aubery (2016) argued that learners are not able to correct their mistakes on the spot due to the lack of language proficiency (p. 312).

3. Sources of Online Feedback

Over the recent years, debates have been held about who can provide feedback and the best manner for providing it (Séror, n.d, p.3). Online feedback can be can dispensed by peers, teachers, computers, or in conferences.

4.1. Peer Feedback

Peer feedback, also called peer review, peer response, and peer evaluation, refers to the type of comments and reviews about a learner's writing given by another student. The term

peer feedback was discussed in Vygotsky's sociocultural theory which argued that the mind develops through interactions with the environment and that learning is a group work rather than an individual process:

> Vygotsky (1978) claims that mind develop through one's interaction with the world around him/her. He *emphasize* that learning is not an individual activity; but rather a cognitive activity that the nature of learning shifts the focus on learning from individual to the interaction within a social context." (Bijami, Kashef, &Nejad. 2013, p. 93).

Peer reviewing has several beneficial effects on students' productions. First, it is considered as a chance to the learners to discover each other's mistakes and correct them. Hyland and Hyland (2006) stated that peer review "… enhances the ability of peer reviewers to evaluate their own work by providing a sense of audience and a checklist of evaluative questions to apply to their own writing" (p. 90). Second, it may help learners "learn critical evaluation skills that are necessary to effectively review texts" (Berg, 1999, as cited by Hyland & Hyland. 2006, p. 7). For instance, students would question themselves when reading others' text about why their peers have included certain aspects.

4.2. Teacher Feedback

The teacher is considered as the efficient authority to provide feedback because he/she is the most linguistically competent participant. Teacher feedback is considered "…a main requirement for improvement in students' essay writing" (Hyland & Hyland, 2006, p.30). Teacher feedback helps learners to enhance their ability in writing and become independent writers in the educational field. According to Carvalo, Martins, et al. (2014), "Teacher feedback seems to be a fundamental aspect on learning outcomes and student engagement, encouraging student awareness of their achievement and learning needs" (p.219). Students prefer teacher feedback rather than other types of feedback including peer feedback and computer-mediated-feedback because they believe that the former is not competent enough while the latter may be affected by technical problems (Hyland & Hyland, 2006, p. 30).

3.1 Computer-Mediated Feedback

With the rapid development of technology in the recent years, the role of the computer in delivering and providing feedback has become more visible in practice. Students submit their essays electronically and later they receive feedback, which can be supplied by different participants: peers, teachers, or by the computer itself. Meanwhile, many teachers nowadays use online programmes to provide feedback such as Blackboard or Moodle, in addition to other tools such as Email.

It is believed that this type of reviews (CMF) is of a great benefit to both the tutor and the tutee. For students, it allows them to be active through raising questions and taking initiative in discussions. According to Chen (2016), positive results with CMF include "… allowing students to respond spontaneously, to reflect on their ideas, to rehearse their responses, and to express themselves freely at their own pace" (as cited in Hyland & Hyland, 2006, p. 9). Moreover, CMF allows the teacher to save and store comments and easily retrieve them later, it is time saving, and the teacher can read and provide more feedback online than he/she does in the traditional way.

Despite the beneficial effects of CMF, there are teachers and students who believe that this source of feedback is not effective for enhancing students' writing. A downside of CMF is that students may be overwhelmed by the comments and feedback they receive since they may be unclear or ambiguous for them. Another negative aspect of the CMF is the lack of face-to-face interaction with the teacher or peers. Besides, the time pressure that students face may affect negatively their writings. According to Hyland & Hyland (2006), "the lack of face-to-face communication, time pressures in synchronous encounters, and public postings may negatively affect the quality of peer interaction" (p. 94). In addition to the previously mentioned shortcomings of CMF, students feel threatened and anxious about sharing their

writings online and exposing them to their peers (Lindblom-Ylanne & Pihlajamaki, as cited in Hyland & Hyland, 2006, p. 9).

4.3. Conference Based Feedback

Conference based feedback (CBF) is the type of feedback which is provided before, during or after a conference. In ESL/EFL learning, CBF refers to when both the teachers and the students meet together in order to discuss students' writings and provide feedback. Feedback provided in the writing conference can be given orally or in writing and it is considered as a conversational dialogue; according to Freedman & Sperling (1985), "Writing conferences with teachers have therefore been seen as conversational dialogues" (as cited in Hyland & Hyland, 2019, p. 5).

CBF is considered a great way of feedback provision for both the teacher and the learner as it offers a chance for the teachers to respond and understand the cultural and educational differences of the students. In this sense, Hyland and Hyland (2019) posited, "the interactive nature of the conference offers a chance to respond to the diverse cultural, educational, and writing needs of their students, clarifying meaning and resolving ambiguities, while saving them the time spent in detailed marking of papers" (pp. 5-6). Thus, CBF also serves to clarify the ambiguous things for the students and gives them the opportunity to ask questions and to express their needs freely and clearly (Martin and Mottet, 2011).

5. Online Tools for Providing Feedback

Recently, the use of electronic tools as an alternative way of giving feedback has become popular, especially in universities where teachers usually take advantage of technology and search for methods that enable learners to keep up with the rapid development in scientific research. E-mail, Screencasting, Videoconferencing are among the tools that are widely used in education.

5.1. E-mail Feedback

E-mail is one of the most common tools used in online learning. It is used to provide asynchronous feedback by sending e-mails to individual learners about their works. Huett (2004) argued, "With its ubiquitous nature, relative low cost, global reach, speed, and flexibility, email is becoming the communication choice of many." (p.35).

It is believed that the use of e-mail helps a lot in facilitating communication between teachers and learners, strengthening their relationship, solving the problem of reaching the student, and providing individualised feedback.

> E-mail can be a simple but effective way of communicating formative
> feedback to students. This communication method solves the problem of
> reaching the student and supports individualised feedback as tutors can e-mail
> to each student feedback comments or a personal pre-prepared feedback form.
> (Hatziapostolou and Paraskakis, 2010, p.113).

In addition, e-mail has a significant role in promoting effective teaching since it can increase faculty-student contact resulting in improved student involvement and motivation." (Huett, 2004, p.38).

However, it is necessary to make sure that both instructors and learners are able to use e-mail and they are aware of how the system works. Huett (2004) insisted that using email in the classroom requires a certain level of technical expertise (p.39).

On the other hand, some disadvantages of using e-mail include user isolation, user depression and loneliness, and the potential lack of a learning community. In addition, e-mail can lead to misunderstandings and conflicts (Huett, 2004, p. 40).

5.2. Screencasting Feedback

According to Thompson (2012), screencasts are "digital recordings of the activity on one's computer screen, accompanied by voiceover narration" (as cited in Henry et al., 2020, p. 42). Screencasts are used to provide a deeper explanation of feedback given to learners by providing both audio and visual feedback at the same time, and the content can be shared using multiple screencast software.

In his research, Thompson stressed that the use of screencasts when giving feedback provides more in-depth explanations and creates a more personal experience than traditional written comments since the teacher who uses screencasts can enhance his explanation using different aids from the internet (Henry et al., 2020, p. 42). Screencasts allow instructors to model behaviours and operations and view the content multiple times at their convenience (Sugar, Brown, and Luterbach, 2010, as cited in Mathieson, 2012, p. 146).

Mathieson (2012) conducted research that compared the effect of audio-visual feedback via screencasting with text feedback; the findings showed that most of the students preferred the text plus audio-visual method as it made the feedback more engaging, comprehensive, and effective; moreover, hearing the instructor's voice made the feedback feel more personal and real.

5.3. Videoconferencing Feedback

Videoconferencing is a technology that allows live video-based meetings between people, bringing together "– synchronously, visually, aurally – parties otherwise separated geographically" (Gillies, 2008, p. 107). Since videoconferencing creates a real live conversation environment, it has witnessed considerable use in education, and instructors are using it for providing synchronous feedback to learners. Hampel and Stickler (2012) claimed, "Because of easy and often free access to technology that combines text, audio and video, teachers are increasingly likely to use desktop videoconferencing environments" (p. 119).

Carr et al. (2004) proposed that tools that foster more direct social interaction and feedback amongst learners and teachers would foster higher levels of learner engagement (as cited in Giesbers et al. 2013, p. 285). Several tools are used in videoconferencing including "Zoom" (which is a software-based conference room solution used around the world in conference, offices, and classrooms), "Google meet" (a video conferencing platform created by Google for online meetings), "Black board" (an application for online teaching, learning, community building, and knowledge sharing.), and "Skype" (a software that enables making conversations).

Moreover, videoconferencing provides the opportunity to choose whether to use audio, voice, chat or video tools. According to Garcia, Uria, Granda, & Suarez (2007), videoconference tools allow synchronous communication that resembles face-to-face situations since they "facilitate real-time communication through audio, video, chat." (p. 287).

Conclusion

This section has been devoted to give an overview about online feedback, which is a method for providing comments and reviews to the learners using online platforms and is being used nowadays in education as an alternative to traditional feedback. This method has two major types: synchronous feedback and asynchronous feedback. The former is where the comments are provided during the task through software applications such as Google meet, while the latter represents the comments being provided after submitting the final production by the students, using Email for instance. The reviews in these two forms of online feedback can be provided by various participants: teacher, peer, computer, or conferences. Even nowadays, learners still prefer teacher feedback because they believe that the teacher is more competent than peers and his/her presence helps determine students' needs and difficulties.

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Chapter Two: Field of work

Introduction

While the first chapter provided a description of the theories about the two major variables of this study, structural complexity and online feedback, this chapter is devoted to the practical part. It first starts by describing the research procedures followed by determining the setting as well as the population and samples of this study. Second, it offers a description and administration of the experiment followed by the analysis and interpretation of the results. Next, it presents a description and administration of the teacher questionnaire along with its analysis and interpretation of its results. Last, the chapter concludes with an overall analysis of the results as well as answering the research questions.

1. Data Collection Procedures

This study aims to investigate and discover whether or not teacher online feedback can enhance students' academic writing in terms of complexity of structure. This is carried out by studying and identifying effects of synchronous and asynchronous online feedback on students' writing as well as eliciting teachers' perceptions about the matter.

Since conducting experimental research was not possible in our case due to the absence of random selection and control group, a quasi-experimental research design was adopted. The experiment was used to explore whether the teacher's synchronous and asynchronous online feedback (independent variable) improves the students' writing in terms of structural complexity (dependent variable).

On the other hand, for the sake of investigating teachers' experiences with and attitudes toward the synchronous and asynchronous online feedback, a questionnaire was administered to a sample of eight teachers of written expression module.

2. Population and Sampling

The current study has been conducted with third year university students of English at Mohamed Seddik BenYahia Jijel-University, Tassoust Pole. Fourteen students were selected based on their availability (i.e. convenience sampling) and divided into two groups. The reason behind targeting third year university students is that their amount of instruction they received in writing for almost three years enables them recognize and use complex structures. In addition, a sample of eight teachers was requested to answer a questionnaire. These teachers are from the same university and they teach or had an experience with teaching written expression module.

3. The Experiment

3.1. Description and Administration of the Experiment

Since applying the true experimental design in this research would face several constraints concerning random selection, the lack of control group, and time limitation, a quasi-experimental research design was determined as an appropriate research method for this study. Quasi-experimental research resembles experimental research but is not true experimental research. "Although the independent variable is manipulated, participants are not randomly assigned to conditions or orders of conditions" (Cook & Campbell, 1979). In this study, two features were absent: random selection of the participants and the control group. Nonetheless, "This unique method is used to estimate the causal impact of an intervention on its target population (to test causal hypotheses), without random assignment" (White & Sabarwal, 2014, as cited in Almodaires, et al. 2019, p. 14).

This experiment was conducted with fourteen students divided into two groups; the first group received online synchronous feedback while the second group received online asynchronous feedback. The teacher arranged an online meeting with each group in which she

explained the instructions of writing an essay about the topic of access to social media and whether it should be limited or not.

In Experiment one, concerned with measuring the effects of synchronous feedback, and during the writing process, the teacher asked the first group of students to send her parts of their writings, and she immediately provided them with feedback. The students received feedback focusing on strategies to improve complexity of structure, revised their drafts, and continued writing based on feedback by the teacher. A final essay was submitted by the end of the two-hour session.

In Experiment two, concerned with measuring the effects of asynchronous feedback, the students in the second group were given one hour of time to write an essay about the same topic. By the end of the allocated time, the students sent the teacher their writings and she provided each one of them with feedback highlighting complexity of structures measures. Later, the students were sent the reviewed drafts and were asked to write or revise their essays based on the feedback provided in one hour time.

Measuring complexity is one of the Complexity-Accuracy-Fluency triad that is commonly used to assess the level of proficiency in academic writing (as cited in Peter Skehan, 2009, p. 510). This research paper is devoted to describe one type of complexity, which is structural/syntactic complexity, which was done by measuring complex sentences and structures of the essays written by the students.

"Syntactic complexity is measured by linguistic features that rely on the complexity at sentential, clausal and phrasal levels" (Thongyoi & Poonpon, 2020, p. 45). In this study the focus was on measuring the following structures in students' writing:

➢ The number of complex sentences,
➢ The number of dependent clauses per t-unit (DC/T-unit),
➢ The types of the clauses (noun, adverbial, and adjective),

- ➢ The types of the phrases (prepositional, gerund, and participle phrase), and
- ➢ The number of relative conjunctions and pronouns.

3.2.   Analysis of the Experiment Results

As highlighted above, two experiments have been conducted with two groups: the first experiment was with the students who have received synchronous online feedback; whereas the second group received asynchronous online feedback.

3.2.1.   Experiment One: Synchronous Online feedback

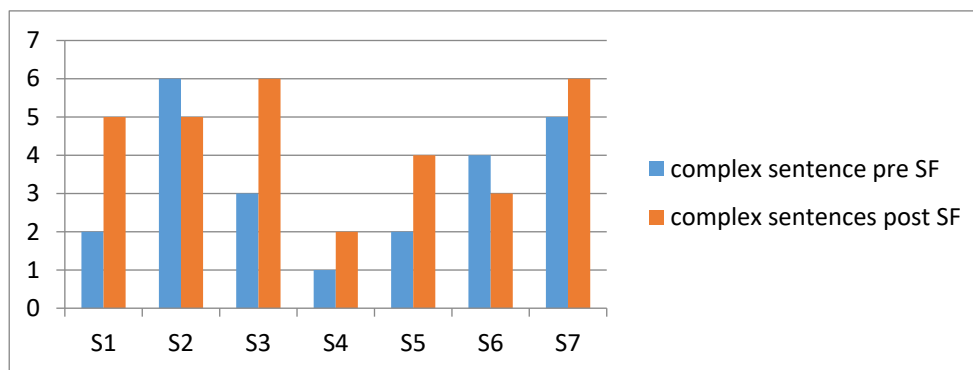3.2.1.1.**The Use of Complex Sentences by Students in Synchronous Feedback**

Figure 2: Number of Complex Sentences by Students in Synchronous Feedback

A comparison between the number of complex sentences written by students before and after receiving the synchronous feedback shows that 3 out of 7 students have doubled the number of complex sentences after receiving SF. While the number of sentences written by students 2 and 6 have withdrawn with one sentence. On the other hand, student 1 has improved his complex structure by writing 3 extra complex sentences comparing to the pre-feedback writing which was 2 sentences. While student number 7 added only one sentence in the post feedback. Overall, students have produced eight extra sentences after receiving SF.

3.2.1.2. **The Number of Dependent Clauses per T-Unit in Synchronous Feedback**
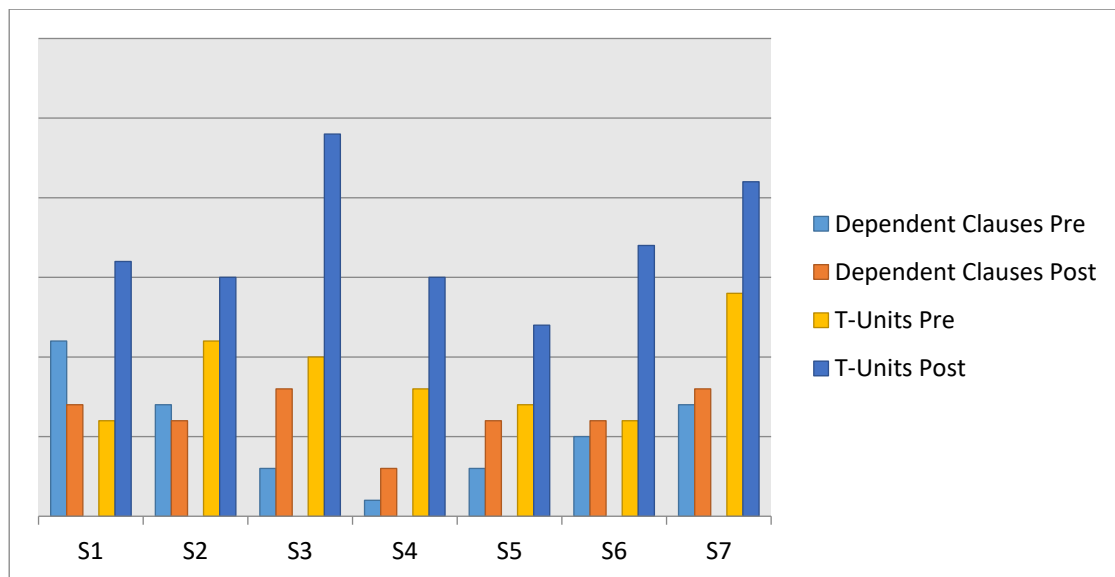

Figure 3: Number of Dependent Clauses and T-units before and after Synchronous Feedback

From the graph above, it is noticeable that students used seven more dependent clauses after receiving synchronous feedback (37 compared to 44); all of the students except student (S2) witnessed a slight improvement in the number of dependent clauses in the productions. Whereas, the total number of t-units, after receiving synchronous feedback, has noticed a remarkable progress. This increase is the result of avoiding run-on sentences and fragments based on teacher's feedback.

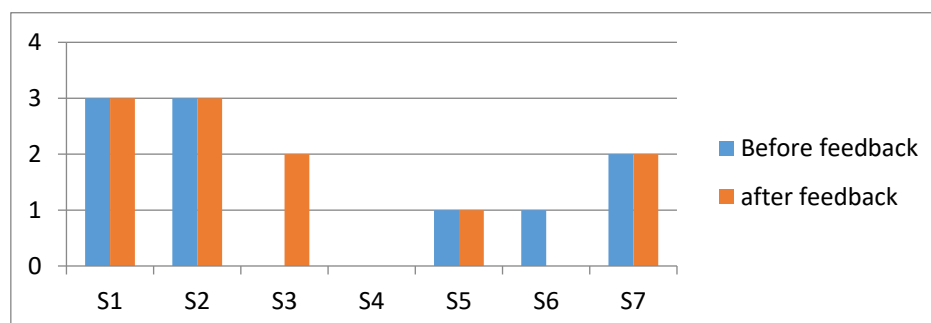### 3.2.1.3. **The Use of Adjective Clauses by Students in Synchronous Feedback**

Figure 4: Number of Adjective Clauses by Students in Synchronous Feedback

The total number of adjective clauses has increased after SF by only one clause per T-Unit. A number of 5 students produced the same number of clauses in the pre- and post-feedback stages, while only one student has improved with two adjective clauses. However, student (S6) used one less adjective clause.

3.2.1.4. The Use of Adverbial Clauses by Students in Synchronous Feedback

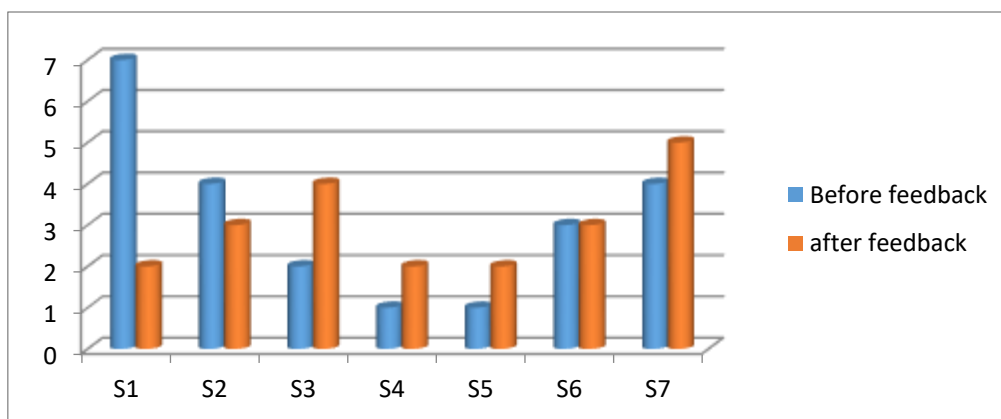Figure 5: Number of Adverbial Clauses by Students in Synchronous Feedback

The number of adverbial clauses for the group decreased by one adverbial clause after receiving SF. However, the majority of students used one or two more clauses (S3, S4, S5 and S7).

3.2.1.5. The Use of Noun Clauses by Students in Synchronous Feedback
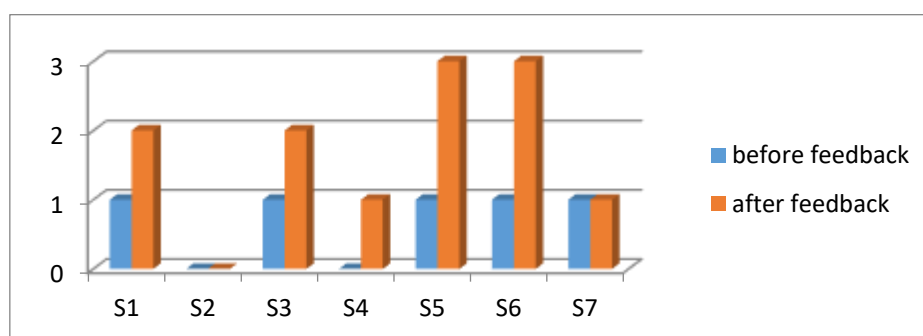

Figure 6: Number of Noun Clauses by Students in Synchronous Feedback

Concerning the results of noun clauses, there was a remarkable improvement comparing to that of adverbial and adjective clauses with a total number of seven more clauses. The majority of the students advanced with one to two clauses (S1, S3, S4, S5 and S6).

3.2.1.6. **The Use of Relative Pronouns by Students in Synchronous Feedback**

Figure 7: Number of Relative Pronouns by Students in Synchronous Feedback
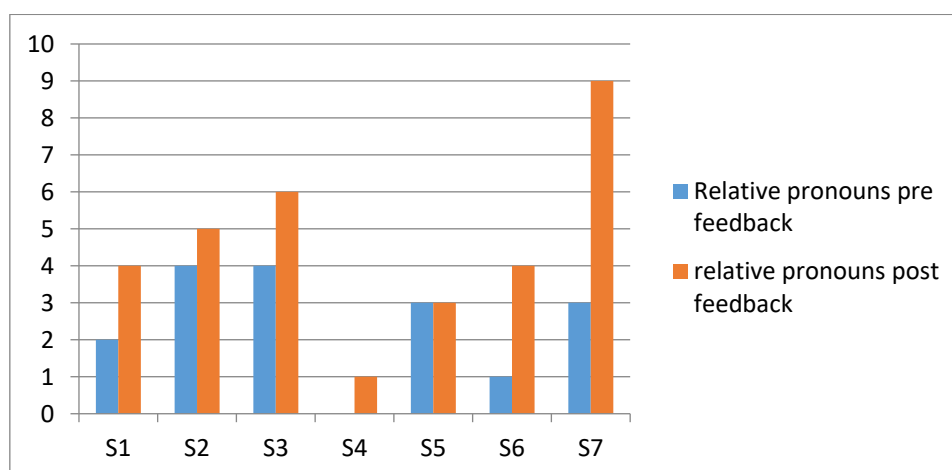
All the students except for student 5 have increased the number of the relative pronouns in their essays after receiving synchronous online feedback. This amounted to the use of fifteen more relative pronouns.

3.2.1.7. **The Use of Gerund Phrases by Students in Synchronous Feedback**
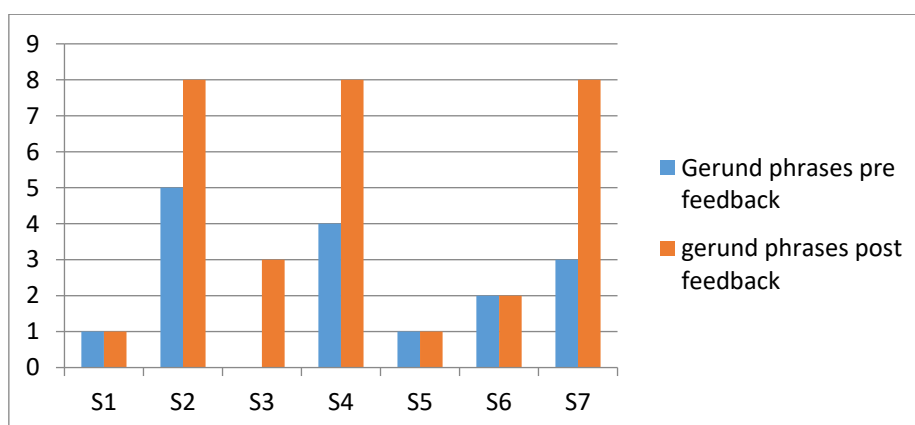
Figure 8: Number of Gerund Phrases by Students in Synchronous Feedback

The chart above shows a remarkable progress in the number of gerund phrases in students'
writing after receiving synchronous online feedback. The total number of gerund phrases has
almost doubled after receiving the SCF (from 16 to 31).

3.2.1.8. **The Use of Prepositional Phrases by Students in Synchronous Feedback**
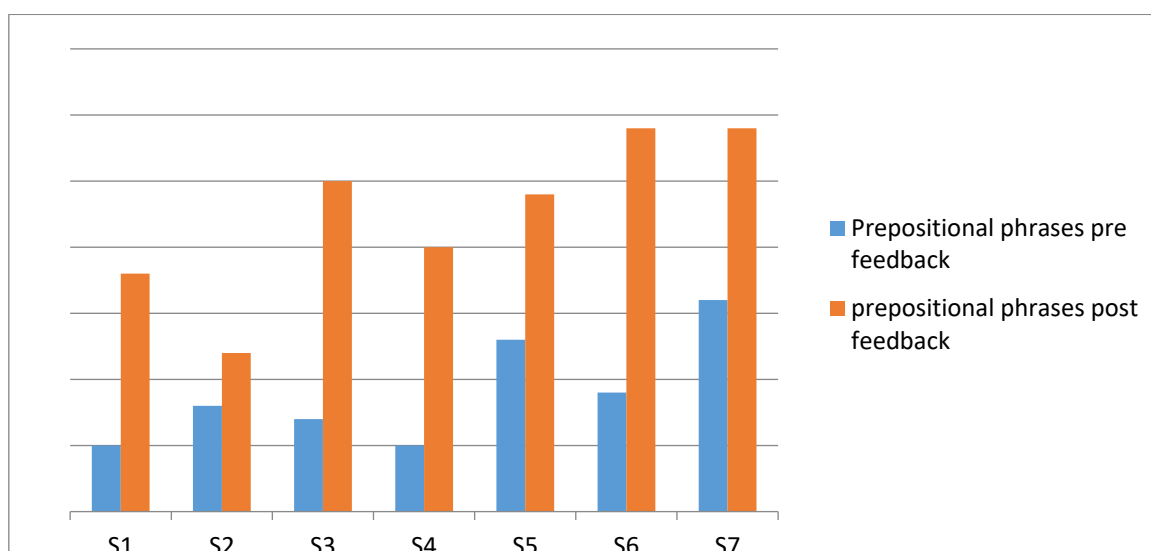
Figure 9: Number of Prepositional Phrases by Students in Synchronous Feedback

The graph reveals a huge progress in the number of prepositional phrases produced by
learners after receiving the SCF. The number of prepositional phrases increased from 63 to
157.

3.2.1.9. **The Use of Participle Phrases by Students in Synchronous Feedback**
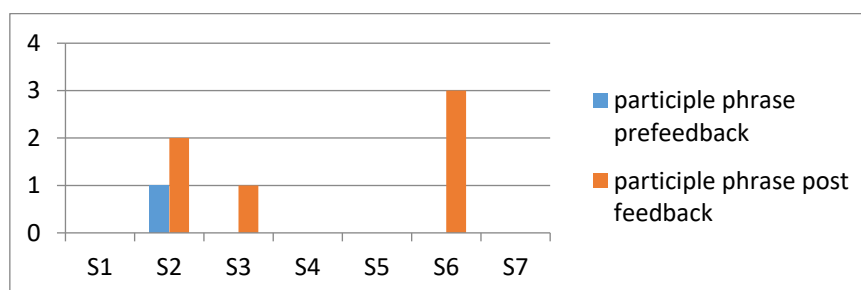
Figure 10: Number of Participle Phrases by Students in Synchronous Feedback

The results show that only student 2 has used one participle phrase in his production before receiving the review. After receiving SCF, student 6 used three participle phrases, student 3 used one participle phrase and student 2 used one extra participle phrase.

3.2.1.10. The Use of Relative Conjunctions by Students in Synchronous Feedback
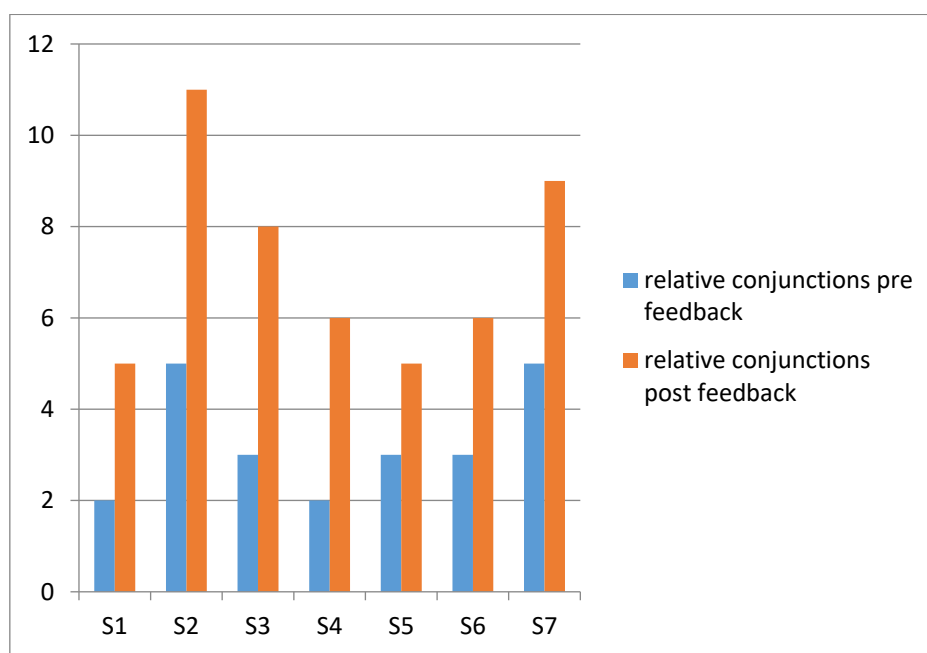
Figure 11: Number of Relative Conjunctions by Students in Synchronous Feedback

The bar graph above represents the use of relative conjunctions before and after receiving SCF. The results reveal that all students witnessed a progression in the use of relative conjunctions after receiving the teacher's feedback, where the total number has doubled.

3.2.2. Experiment Two: Asynchronous Online Feedback

3.2.2.1. The Use of Complex Sentences by Students in Asynchronous Feedback
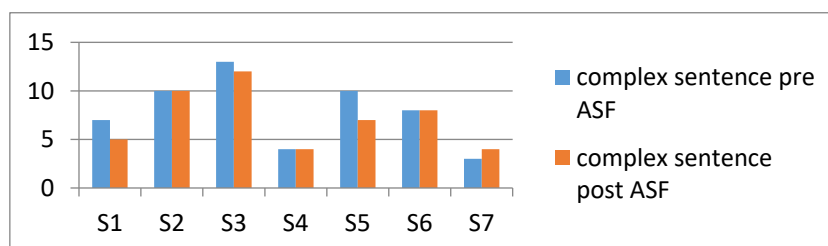
Figure 12: Number of Complex Sentences by Students in Asynchronous Feedback

From the chart above, it can be observed that there has not been any progress in students' writings in terms of complex sentences; instead, there was a decrease with 5 complex sentences. Only student 7 wrote an extra complex sentence in the post-feedback essay, while 3 students have regressed in their complex sentences, producing 6 less sentences in total. However, 3 students used the same number of complex sentences in the two occasions.

3.2.2.2.**The Number of Dependent Clauses per T-units in Asynchronous Feedback**
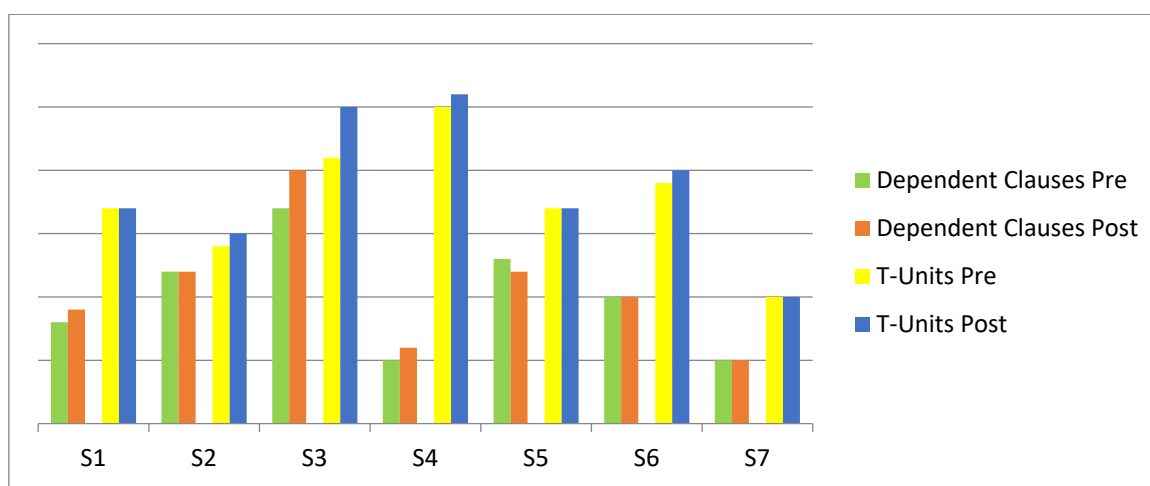
Figure 13: Number of Dependent Clauses and T-units before and after Asynchronous

Feedback

The graph above represents the use of dependent clauses and t-units before and after receiving asynchronous feedback. The results reveal that the dependent clauses have witnessed a slight improvement of four clauses (from 70 to 74); while the number of t-units increased from 123 to 130. As with the case of synchronous feedback, this slight increase is reflects less use of run-on and fragment sentences.

3.2.2.3. The Use of Adjective Clauses by Students in Asynchronous Feedback
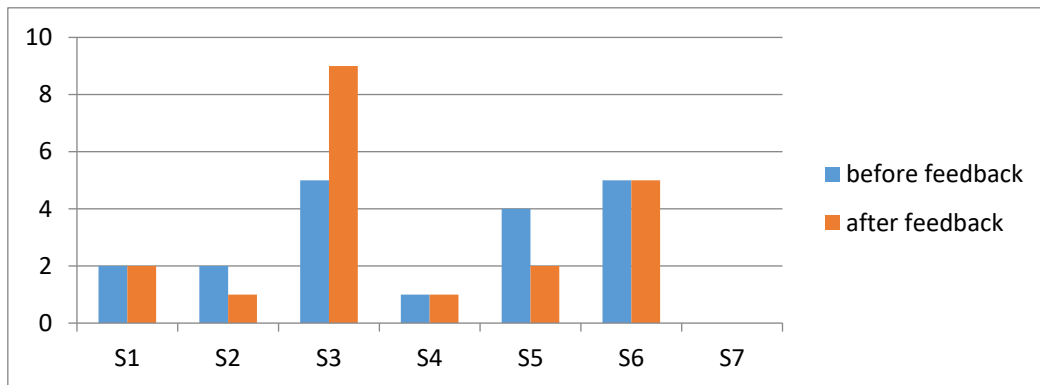
Figure 14: Number of Adjective Clauses by Students in Asynchronous Feedback

The obtained results above show an increase by one adjective clause in the post-feedback essays. The majority of the students kept the same number adjective clauses' before and after receiving asynchronous feedback; however, student number 3 made an improvement with 4 clauses.

3.2.2.4. The Use of Adverbial Clauses by Students in Asynchronous Feedback
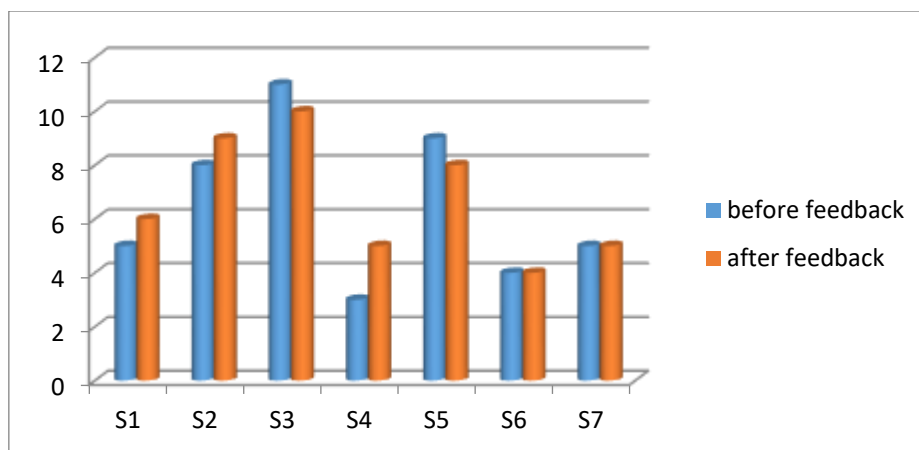
Figure 15: Number of Adverbial Clauses by Students in Asynchronous Feedback

The figure shows a total progress of two adverbial clauses. While 3 students have improved with a total of 4 clauses, 2 students have regressed with 2 clauses; however, 2 other students have kept using the same number of clauses in the post-feedback writing stage.

3.2.2.5. **The Use of Noun Clauses by Students in Asynchronous Feedback**
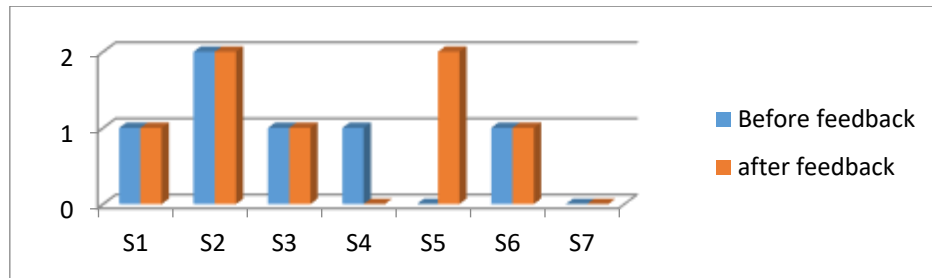
Figure 16: Number of Noun Clauses by Students in Asynchronous Feedback

The graph shows that 3 students (S1, S3 and S6) used the same number of Noun clauses before and after receiving ASF, and while S4 regressed by one noun clause, S5 used two more noun clauses.

3.2.2.6. **The Use of Relative Pronouns by Students in Asynchronous Feedback**
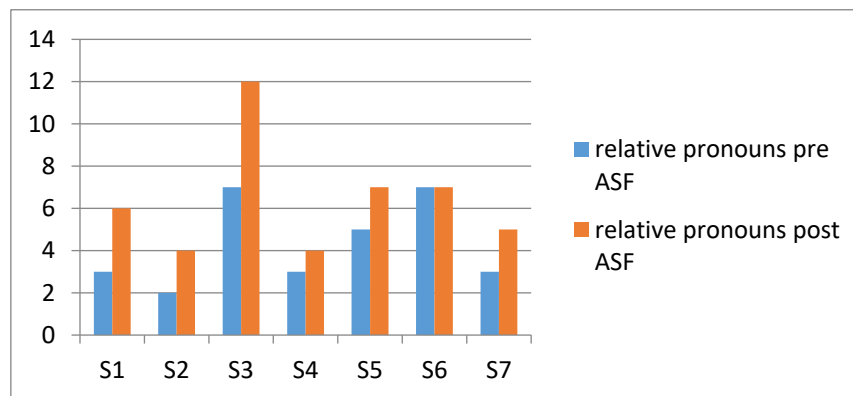
Figure 17: Number of Relative Pronouns by Students in Asynchronous Feedback

In the results above, it is noticed that the total number of relative pronouns has increased with 15 relative pronouns after receiving ASF, in which their number increased from thirty to forty-five. Six out of the seven students used more relative pronouns.

3.2.2.7. **The Use of Gerund Phrases by Students in Asynchronous Feedback**
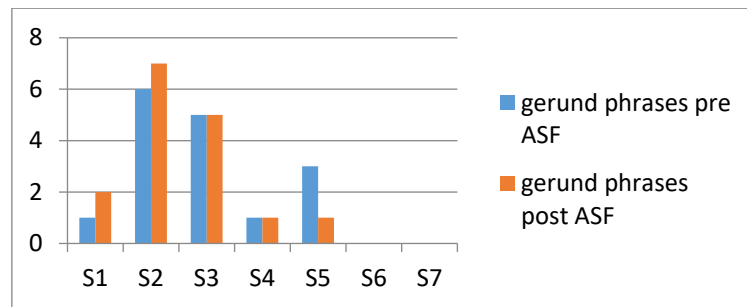
Figure 18: Number of Gerund Phrases by Students in Asynchronous Feedback

As concerns the use of gerund phrases, S1 and S2 used one more phrase each after receiving ASF, S3 and S4 used the same number of phrases, S5 used two less noun phrases, and S6 and S7 did not use any on both occasions.

3.2.2.8. **The Use of Prepositional Phrases by Students in Asynchronous Feedback**
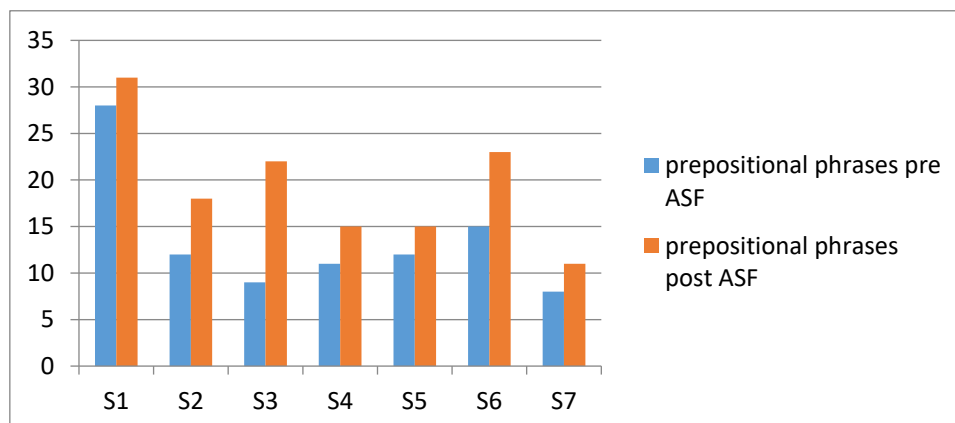
Figure 19: Number of Prepositional Phrases by Students in Asynchronous Feedback

The prepositional phrases, comparing to other complex structures, have been used with larger numbers even before receiving the ASCF with 95 phrases. Their number raised to 135 phrases in the post feedback essays.

3.2.2.9. **The Use of Participle Phrases by Students in Asynchronous Feedback**
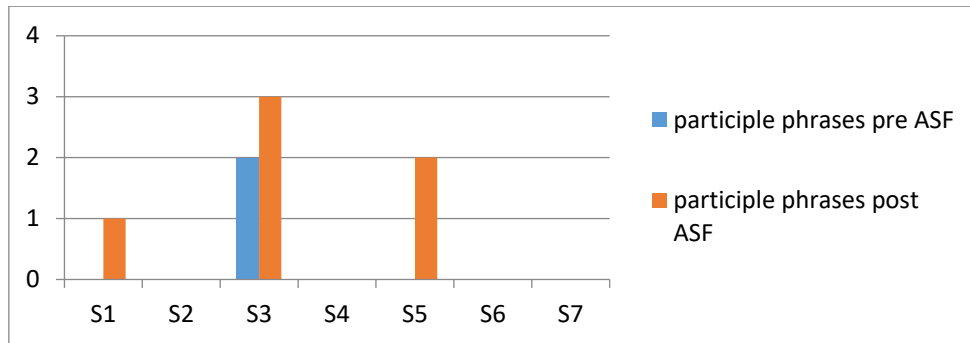
Figure 20: Number of Participle Phrases by Students in Asynchronous Feedback

Students did not use participle phrases in the pre-ASF stage except for S3 who used two of them in his essay. However, after ASF, we notice the presence of participle phrases in the essays of two other students, which increased the total number from 2 phrases to 6.

3.2.2.10. **The Use of Relative Conjunctions by Students in Asynchronous Feedback**
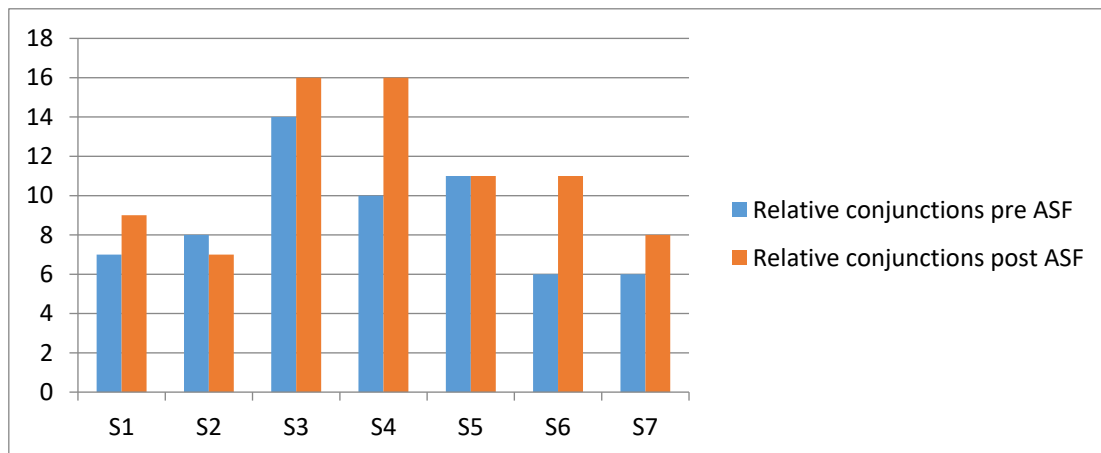
Figure 21: Number of Relative Conjunctions by Students in Asynchronous Feedback

The bar graph above shows the use of relative conjunctions in students' productions before and after receiving the ASF. Except for S2 and S5, all other students used more relative conjunctions in their essays, with a total increase of 16 relative conjunctions.

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3.3. Interpretation and Discussion of Experiment Results

The two experiments aimed at measuring the improvement of students' writings before and after receiving both online synchronous feedback and asynchronous feedback. The results obtained from the data and the analysis reveals that:

a) Students' productions in synchronous online feedback have witnessed improvements in terms of the number of complex sentences with the use of eight more complex sentences after receiving the feedback. However, though the students in asynchronous feedback produced more complex sentences than the first group before and after the experiment, their performance after receiving feedback declined since they used five complex sentences less. The improvement of students in synchronous feedback may attribute to their ability to interact with the teacher and ask for clarification; this idea was supported by Shang (2007) believed that as a result of interaction with the teacher, students are able to improve their writing skills.

b) Students of both groups have witnessed an improvement in the number of both dependent clauses and t-units after receiving teacher's feedback with the use of seven more dependent clause and extra 58 t-units in synchronous feedback. However, in the asynchronous feedback, the total number of dependent clauses has increased with four clauses only while the total number of t-units has increased with seven more sentences; Shang (2017) confirmed that by indicating that both types of feedback helped in producing more words as has been previously mentioned in the background. The reason behind this result is the reduction in the use of fragments and run-on sentences after teacher's feedback. Nonetheless, the C/TU ratios in both experiments decreased, suggesting that students did not understand the online feedback provided by teacher in either conditions, or that the period of training was not sufficient.

c) Students of both groups have varied the types of dependent clauses in their complex sentences; they have used the three types: adverbial, adjective, and noun clauses. However, comparing the pre- and post-feedback essays, the number of the dependent clauses did not witness a remarkable improvement by students in the two conditions as follows:

➢ Before the experiment, the group in asynchronous feedback produced twice as many adverbial clauses as group in synchronous feedback; however, after the experiment, while the former progressed with the use of two more adverbial clauses, the latter degraded with one clause.

➢ Second, similar to the case with adverbial clauses, the number of adjective clauses produced the group in asynchronous feedback was almost double that of the synchronous group before receiving feedback; After receiving feedback, the number has increased with only one clause in the students' productions of both groups.

➢ Concerning noun clauses, their total number has doubled in the compositions of the asynchronous group while only one extra clause has been added to the total number of the synchronous group.

d) Students have used a variety of complex structures in their essays in both treatments (SF and ASF). The number of prepositional phrases is greater comparing to the number of participle phrases in both groups, which is the least used; however, the number of gerund phrases, relative pronouns, and relative conjunctions was significant in both experiments before receiving the feedback. Whereas the number of these different complex structures have witnessed a remarkable improvement with both groups after receiving the teacher's feedback.

4. Teacher Questionnaire

4.1. Description and Administration of the Teacher Questionnaire

The questionnaire is a research instrument which consists of a series of questions organized for gathering information and collecting data about a given issue. In this study, the aim is to investigate teachers' perceptions about the potential effects of online teacher feedback on students' writings. Hence, the questionnaire was given to eight (8) teachers of written expression module at University Mohamed Seddik BenYahia, Jijel, and is made up of a collection of 17 open-ended and close-ended questions classified within four sections.

The first section is under the title: "Access to Online Teaching" and consists of three questions. It aims to discover whether the teachers had experienced online teaching and their attitudes toward it.

"Writing" is the title of the second section, which is made up of four questions. Q4 to Q6 are designed for identifying the students' ability to use complex structures in their essays while Q7 aims to determine the complex structures that the teachers prefer to find in students' texts.

The third section is entitled "Online Feedback on Writing": Q8 is intended to estimate the frequency of providing online feedback, Q9 is designed to ask about students' attitudes toward this feedback, and Q10 asks teachers' about favourite type of feedback between traditional classroom feedback or online-based feedback.

The fourth section "Synchronous and Asynchronous Online Feedback" is a collection of seven questions to compare between the synchronous and asynchronous online feedback. Q11 was asked to find out the materials used by the teachers when giving online feedback. Q12 and Q13 are to find out which type of online feedback the teachers prefer or would prefer to use. Q14 and Q15 explores the type of feedback in which teachers receive more questions, clarification requests from students and the one in which students show more intake. Q16 aims to find out the type of feedback that is more effort-demanding and time-consuming while

the last question (Q17) aims to discover the type of feedback that leads to better progress in writing.

4.2. Analysis of Teacher Questionnaire Results

Section one: Access to Online Teaching

1.Have you ever provided courses online to your students?
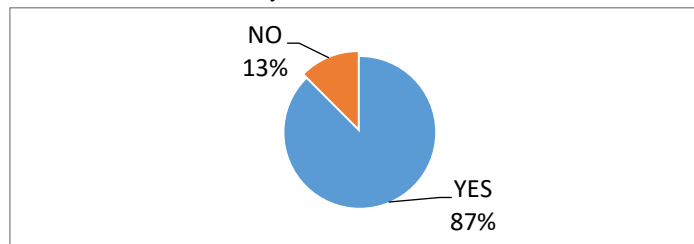
Figure 22: Teachers' Use of Online Courses

The pie chart above shows that the majority of the teachers (87%) have already experienced teaching online.

2.How many of your students have access to the materials that you put online?
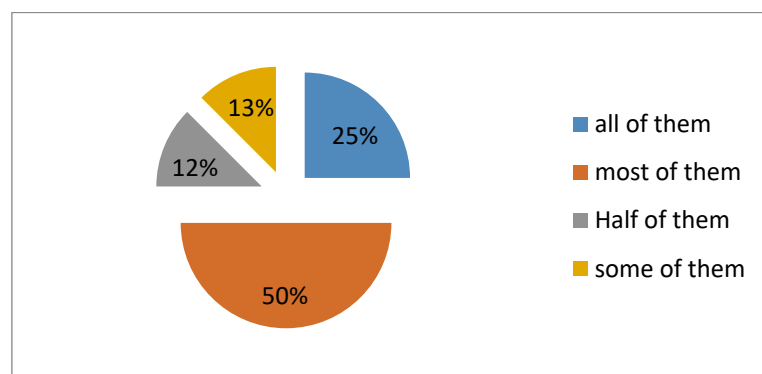
Figure 23: Students' Access to Online Materials

The second question aimed to verify whether online teaching is accessible to all the students or not. 50% of the teachers (4 teachers) assumed that most of their students have access to the online courses, 25% said that all of their students do while two teachers acknowledged that only half or less than half of their students have access to their online courses.

3.How many times have you provided your students with online writing tasks?
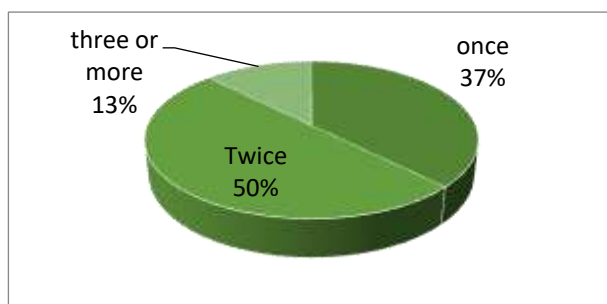
Figure 24: Teachers' Frequency of Using Online Tasks

The data shows that half of the teachers have given their students online writing tasks twice while 37% have provided online tasks only once. However, 13% of the teachers provided their students with online tasks more than two times.

Section Two: Writing

4.Do your students have the ability to use complex structures in writing?
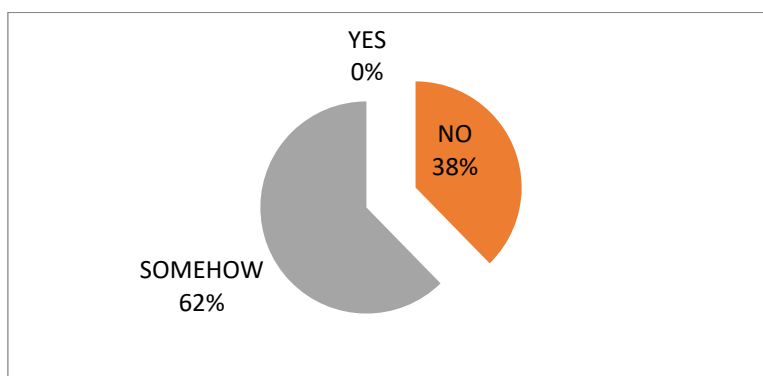
Figure 25: Students' Ability of Using Complex Structures

Most of the teachers (62%) believe that their students are somehow able to use complex structures in their writings. 38% of them agreed that their learners are not qualified to use

complex structures. Surprisingly, none of the teachers confirmed their students' ability to use complex structures in their writings

5.What is/are the dominating type(s) of sentences in the written productions of your students'?
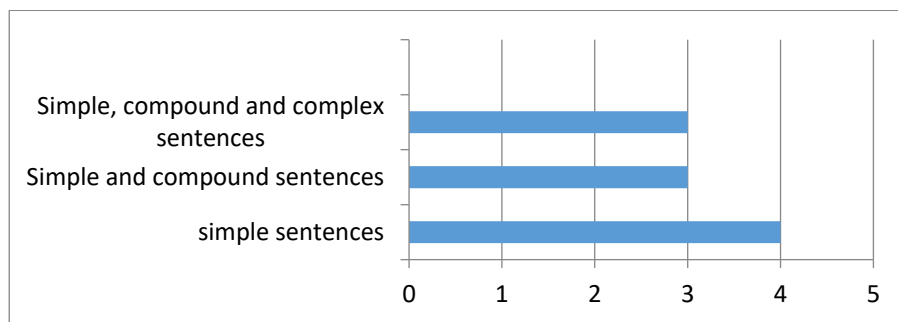
Figure 26: The Typical Sentences Frequently Written by Students

The results in the chart above show that the dominant type of sentences used by students is the simple one (50%), whereas the other two types are used less frequently (37,5% for each).

6.Do you think that your students are aware about the necessity of using complex structures in formal or academic writing?
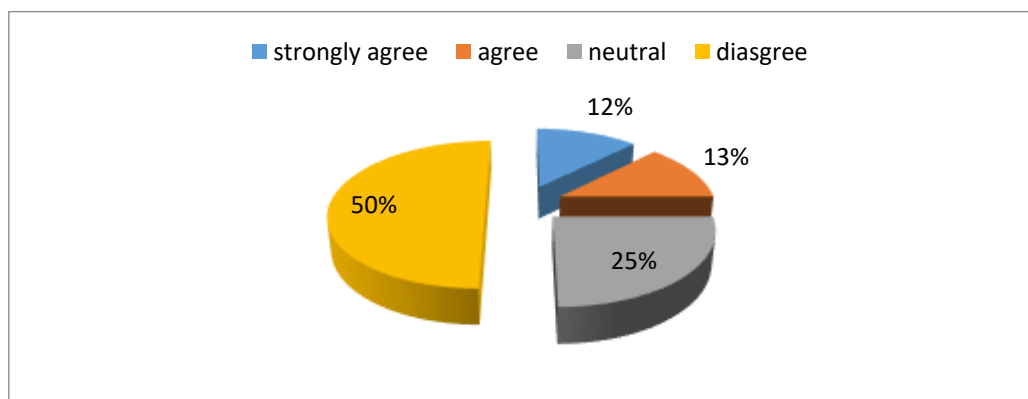
Figure 27: Students' Awareness about the Necessity of Using Complex Structures in Writing

The above pie chart shows that a considerable number of teachers believe that students are unaware of the necessity of using complex structures in formal academic writing (50%). On

the other hand, 25 % of the teachers strongly agree and agree that students are aware of this necessity, while 25% of the teachers were neutral.

7.Which of the following complex structures do you encourage your students to use?
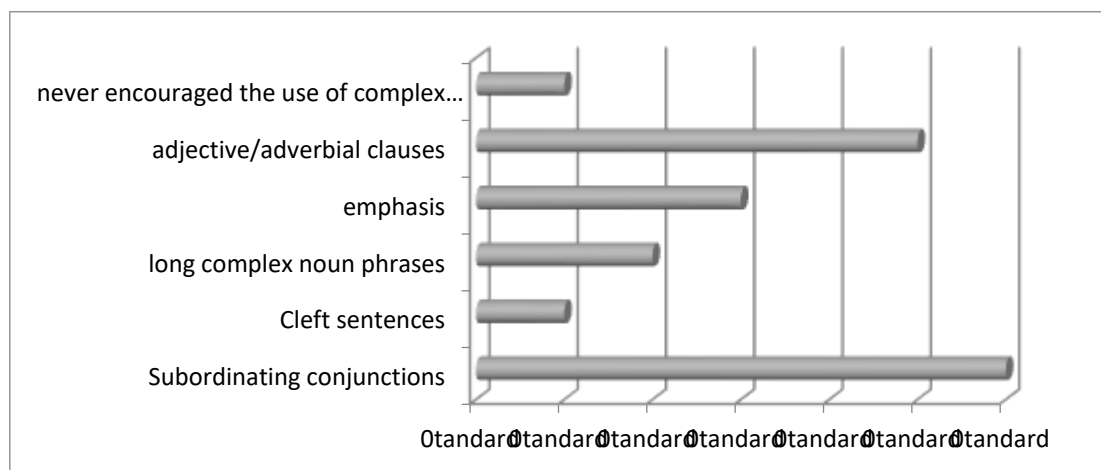
Figure 28: Type of Complex Structures Sustained by Teachers

The bar graph above represents the complex structures that teachers encourage their students to use. Most teachers encourage the use of subordinating conjunctions and adjective and adverbial clauses. Other structures such as the use of emphasis, long complex noun phrase, were less instructed while the use of cleft sentences received minimal instruction. One of the teachers admitted having never encouraged his students to write complex structures.

Section Three: Online Feedback on Writing

8.How often do you provide your students with online feedback about their writings?
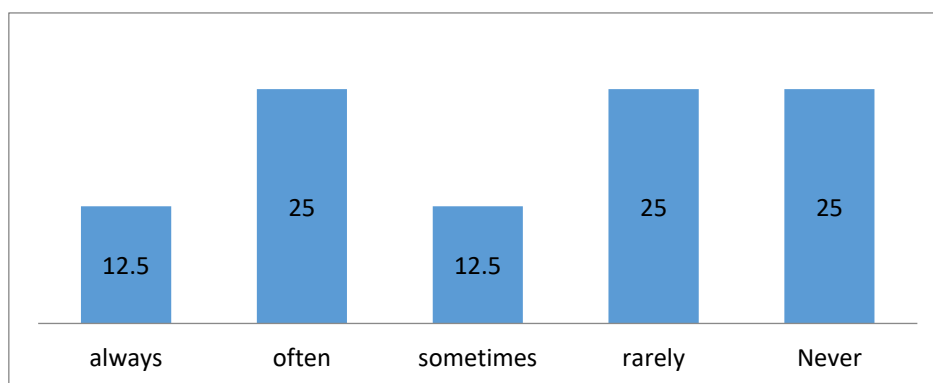
Figure 29: Frequency of Providing Online Feedback on Writing

The results indicate that the teachers who use online feedback regularly represent 37.5%, who rarely or never provide it represent 50% of the sample.

9.What are your students' attitudes /do you think your students' attitudes are toward online feedback?
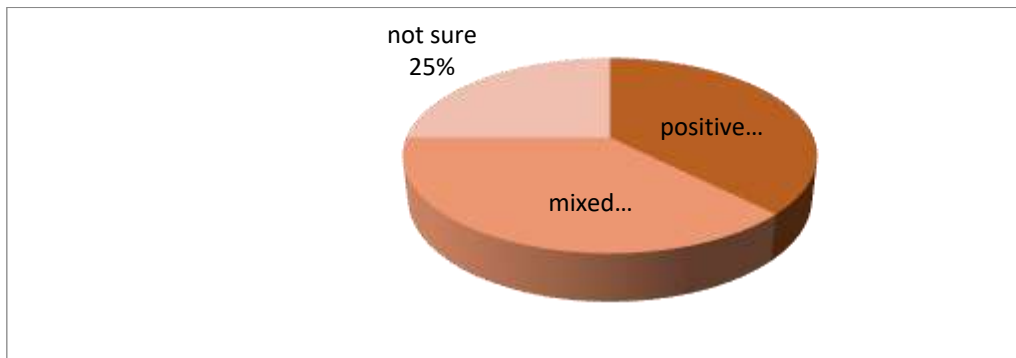
Figure 30: Teachers' Perceptions of Students' Attitudes toward Online Feedback

As is it plainly shown in the pie chart above, 37.5% of the teachers thinks that students have a positive attitude toward online feedback. 37.5% of them believe that students have a mixed attitude, whereas 25% are not sure about their students' attitudes. However, no teacher thinks that students have a negative attitude toward online Feedback.

10.Which type of feedback do you consider more effective?
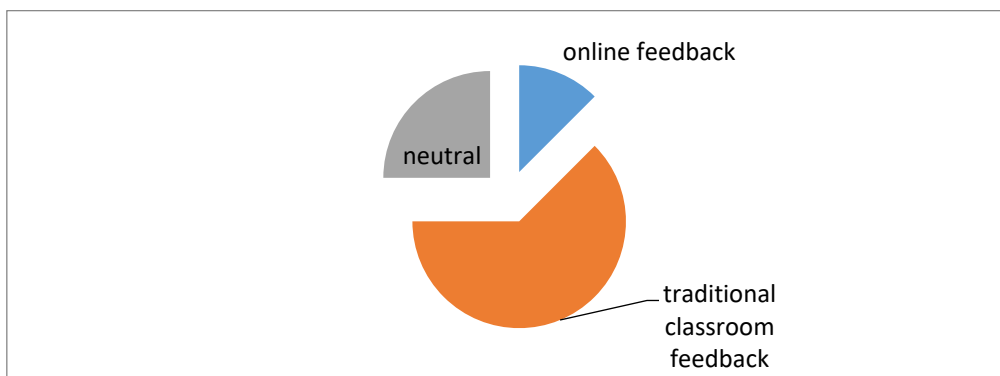
Figure 31: Teachers' Opinions about the most Effective Type of Feedback

According to the results represented above, most of the teachers (62.5%) consider that the traditional classroom feedback is more effective than online feedback whereas 12% of the teacher believe the opposite.

Section Four: Synchronous and Asynchronous Online Feedback

11. Which of the following tools do/ would you use to provide feedback?
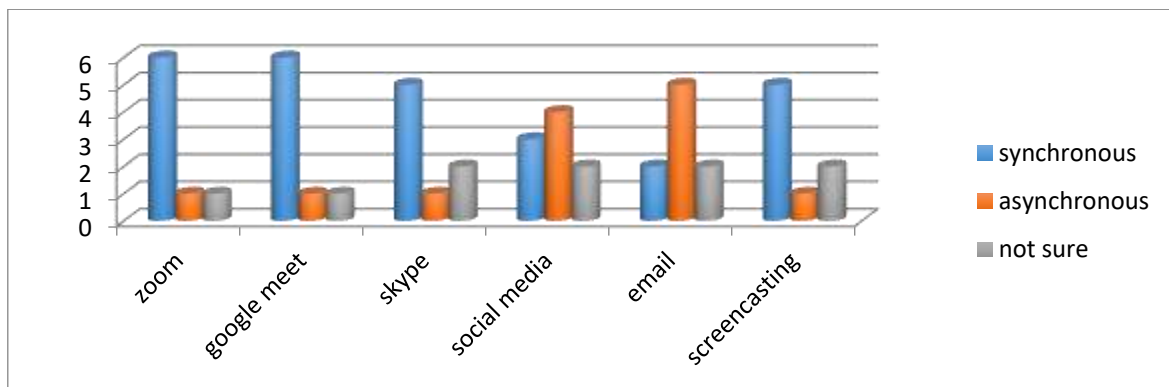
Figure 32: Tools for Providing Synchronous and Asynchronous Feedback

As indicated in the chart above teachers prefer to use Zoom, Google meet, Skype, and Screencastings when giving synchronous feedback, beside using social media and email with a lower rate. On the other hand, email and social media are commonly used when providing asynchronous feedback. Only one teacher could not decide on which tools are better to use when it comes to synchronous or asynchronous feedback.

12.a.Which type of online feedback do you prefer?
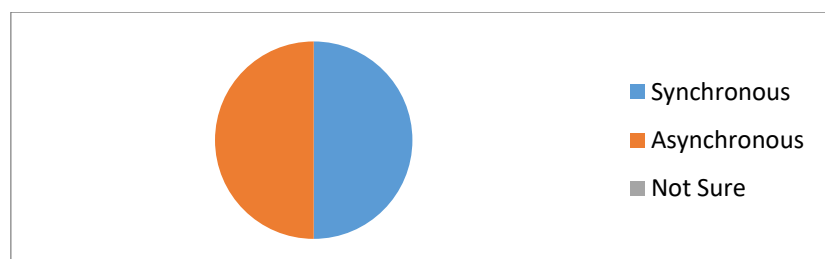
Figure33: Teachers' preferable Online Feedback Type

The results of Q12 show that both feedback types are equally preferable for the teachers (half of the teachers prefer synchronous online feedback while the other half prefer asynchronous online feedback).

12.b.Which type of online feedback do you/would you prefer to use?
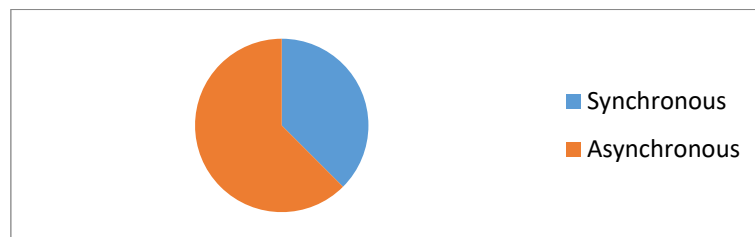
Figure34: The Type of Online Feedback Frequently used by Teachers

Q12.b. reveals that more than half of the teachers (5/8) used or would use asynchronous online feedback rather than synchronous online feedback.

12.c.Where do you/expect to receive more questions/ clarifications about your feedback?
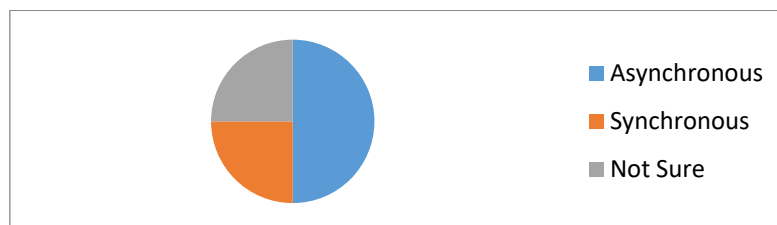
Figure 35: The Need for Clarifications in Synchronous and Asynchronous Feedback

Concerning the form of feedback in which teachers expect to receive more questions, half of teachers chose the asynchronous feedback while ¼ of them choose SF. However, the other ¼ of teachers were not sure about the type in which students will need further clarifications.

12.d.In which type do you think students would incorporate more of your comments?
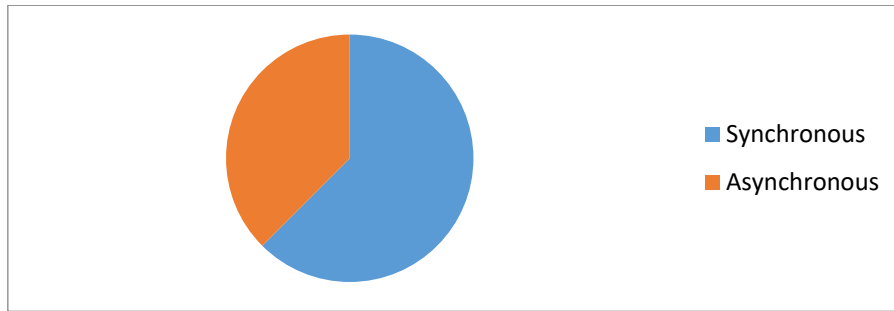
Figure 36: Incorporation of Teacher Comments in Synchronous and Asynchronous Feedback

More than half the teachers (5/8) believe that SF is the type where students have the opportunity to incorporate more of their comments through asking questions.

12.e.Which type of feedback do you think is/would be more efforts demanding and time consuming?
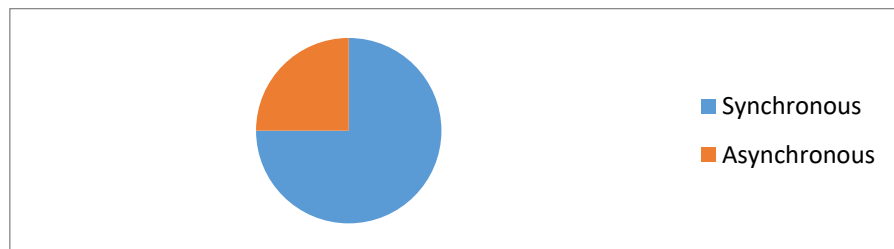
Figure 37: Effort and Time Requirements of Synchronous and Asynchronous Feedback

The majority of the teachers (75%) believe that synchronous feedback is the most efforts demanding and time-consuming type of feedback

12.f.Which one do you think is more likely to lead to improvement in writing?
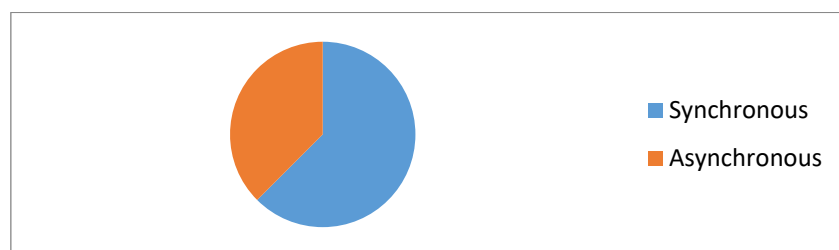
Figure 38: Effectiveness of Synchronous and Asynchronous Feedback in Improving Writing

The majority of teachers (62.5%) assume that synchronous online feedback would lead to better improvement while 37.5% believe in the effectiveness of asynchronous feedback.

4.3. Interpretation and Discussion of Questionnaire Results

The teachers being questioned are written expression teachers, who are familiar with online teaching and the use of technological devices. The results obtained from teacher's questionnaire affirmed that:

1- Most teachers assume that the students are aware of the importance of using complex structures; however, students are not competent enough to make their essays structurally complex.

2- The majority of teachers have experienced providing online feedback to their students; however, most of them prefer to use traditional classroom feedback to online feedback.

3- In contrast to Upton's (2018) findings, which showed that both teachers and students have positive perceptions toward the use of synchronous and asynchronous feedback, this study reveals that most teachers believe that synchronous online feedback lead to better improvement and help the students to incorporate more of the teachers' comments; nevertheless, they prefer to use the asynchronous feedback since it is less effort demanding and less time consuming.

5. General Discussion of the Overall Findings

As it has been previously mentioned, the effectiveness of online feedback was explored by means of an experiment and a teachers' questionnaire. Students' compositions were compared before and after receiving feedback and teachers' attitudes towards the two types of online feedback were compared. Accordingly, we arrived at the following findings that represent the answers to the research questions:

Students' ability to use an acceptable varied number of complex structures while writing:

The results of the experiments reveal that students have varied the types of complex structures and succeeded in using more complex sentences, prepositional phrases, gerund phrases, and relative pronouns after receiving online feedback.

The two types of online feedback (synchronous vs. asynchronous) which lead to better improvement:

According to the experiments and questionnaire's results, the synchronous online feedback proved relatively more effective than asynchronous feedback in increasing the number of complex structures produced by students. Similarly, the study of Shintani (2015) revealed that synchronous feedback created an interactive environment similar to the traditional feedback and provided the learners with the opportunity to self-correct their mistakes while writing, which results in more improvement.

Teachers' preferences for providing online feedback:

Teachers prefer the use of asynchronous feedback since it is less time consuming and efforts demanding.

Conclusion

This chapter presented the data collection processes (the experiments and the questionnaire) along with their analysis and interpretation. To determine the effect of online feedback in writing, an experiment was conducted in which students one group of students received synchronous feedback and the other received asynchronous feedback. Moreover, to corroborate the results and explore the usefulness and feasibility of online feedback, a questionnaire was distributed to teachers of written expression. The immediate conclusions that can be made after the analysis and the evaluation of the data collected is that the majority of the students were able to vary their complex structures; however, only few of them have

understood the teacher's feedback and improved their writings. Moreover, the findings of the questionnaire revealed that most the teachers believed that synchronous online feedback is more likely to lead to better improvement although they prefer to use the asynchronous feedback since it is the most suited to the current conditions of teaching characterised by severe time limitations. The majority of the teachers emphasised the crucial and central role of traditional classroom feedback, which remains more important than online feedback.

General Conclusion

4. Putting it Altogether

5. Limitations of the Study

6. Suggestions for Further Research

1. **Putting it Altogether**

It is commonly known that students tend to use simple sentences and simple structures when writing in a foreign language that they are still learning. Teacher's online feedback in its both types, synchronous and asynchronous, is suggested as a solution to enhance students' writing in terms of complex structures used. The research explored whether teachers' online feedback would improve the use of complex structures by students as well as compared the effectiveness of synchronous feedback and asynchronous feedback on students' writing.

Complexity of structure refers to the complex grammar that can be observed at the three levels of the sentence: phrase, conjunction, and clause. To make sentences structurally complex, several strategies can be exploited such as the use of long and heavily-modified noun clauses, adverbial clauses and adjective clauses. At the level of the phrase, participles, gerunds and infinitives contribute to varying the writing of students. Last, conjunctions that serve to coordinate should be used moderately.

In order to measure complexity of structure, researchers suggested standard formulas that predict students' writing proficiency at the same time. Mean length of T-Unit, clauses per T-Unit, and mean length of clause are presented as the main complexity measures.

As concerns online feedback, which is presented as an alternative to traditional feedback, it relies on the use of software applications such as Google meet, Zoom, Skype and email. Online feedback can be supplied to students in two forms, synchronously (during the task) and asynchronously (after submitting the final compositions). What makes online feedback accessible is its ubiquity and the diversity of its sources: teachers, peers, computers, or conferences. However, the review of previous studies has shown that teacher-fronted classes and teacher online feedback are still favoured by all participants in the educational process

because they believe that the teacher is more competent than peers and his/her presence helps determine students' needs and difficulties more precisely than would artificial intelligence.

This research, in the practical part, took place at Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia University, Jijel, and involved both teachers and students of English working on the subject of Written Expression. The teachers were requested to answer several questions about their experiences, opinions, attitudes, and beliefs about the different forms of feedback. In addition, two experiments were conducted with third-year students of English in which their levels of writing complex structures were examined before and after receiving teacher's feedback, both synchronously and asynchronously.

Synchronous online feedback is proven to be relatively more effective in enhancing students' academic writing in terms of complex structures, as the results reveal. However, most of the teachers prefer the use on asynchronous online feedback because it is less time consuming and less efforts demanding.

2. Limitations of the study

Like any other research, the preparation of the present study faced a number of obstacles and restrictions.

➢ Because of the current system of studying at university, based on social distancing and reduction of time for face-to-face teaching, students were available at university for only a short period of time. This situation did not allow to reach all targeted students to explain the procedures of the study and conduct random selection and random assignment. Hence, the participating relied on volunteers who were ready to submit their written assignment online and receive online feedback. Many of the students who were invited to take part in the online writing session argued that they did not have access to internet.

➢ Despite the fact that the participating teacher provided students with feedback synchronously and asynchronously, we believe that it is the number of online feedback sessions that would unleash the potential of online feedback. One session was not enough for the students to grasp all the instructions related to complexity of structure. Hence, the experiment should have been done at least in three sessions in which complexity of structure should have been explained to students with more time to practice.

➢ In the experimental study, the two groups that underwent the treatment were not equivalent in their proficiency levels, which made comparison across the two groups invalid.

➢ The procedures followed for giving students feedback are deemed somehow demanding and inadequate, but they were dictated by time constraints and students' availability. Each student should have been given more time for explaining feedback.

3. **Suggestions for Further Research**

The findings obtained from this study pave the way for a number of suggestions for future research.

➢ Further studies can be undertaken to determine the role of online feedback by selecting other structural complexity measures such as coordinate phrases per clause, complex nominals per clause, complex nominals per T-unit passive per T-unit, and passive per clause.

➢ The role of online feedback in this study was restricted to complexity of structure; however, it would be interesting to focus on the second type of complexity (lexical complexity).

➢ Further studies can be conducted to compare the effect of online feedback of enhancing other aspects of language learning.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Sample Pre-Feedback Essay by Student 1 in Synchronous Feedback

The vast technological development over the years has made the world an arena of information and statistics related to all areas of our lives such as? Add more words . In fact, it is very important to have modern social media in our lives today as it can be considered as a precious gift that science and technology have given usbecause...(use a subordinating clause to finish your thought) .social media usage should not be limited because it has made (add adjectives to describe what kind of communication) communication with whom? easier and faster and gave us an opportunity to change our plans and lifestyles.

Social media has given us a valuable opportunity to change our plans and lifestyles. (Make this sentence a complex one) By watching motivational applications, instructions, tips and advice in various practical, health, and even personal fields, one could...(write the consequences). It is also by watching programs, sharing opinions, and listening to others' opinions that our view of lifehelped is broadened, our (insert an adjective) problems are solvedits problems, and our understanding of things such as...(exemplify) becomes more accurately.

Appendix 2: Sample Post-Feedback Essay by Student 1 in Synchronous Feedback

The vast technological development over the years has made the world an arena of information and statistics related to all areas of our lives such as political, social, cultural and religious. In fact, it is very important to have modern social media in our lives today as it can be considered as a precious gift that science and technology have given us because, it's create for us an helpful environment .social media usage should not be limited because communication people easier and faster and gave us an opportunity to change our plans and lifestyles.

Today social media it has made communication more easier and faster. It allows us to stay in touched with people we grew up with. We don't have to wait to come home and call our friends, family members, or even those who we recently met. Now we can rely on our smartphones, laptops and log in What Sapp, Viber, Facebook Messenger, Skype.. The tools we are using today to communicate to each other are more about speed and efficiency also it is all simple and easy.

Because social media has given us a valuable opportunity to change our plans and lifestyles. today we not able to do anything without asking or research about it and that by watching motivational applications, instructions, tips and advice in various practical, health, and even personal fields, one could achieves his goals by imitate others steps or learns from their mistakes. It is also by watching programs, sharing opinions, and listening to others' opinions that our view of life helped is broadened, our problems solved, and our understanding of things such as in the study field, we learn how to write, spell, and do things better in this field.

Some people believe that when you see successful people, whether they are close to you or not, it will make you envious, hate and disrespect yourself. Also, when you read the opinions and comments of people around you or about your work, it will increase your frustration and reduce your capabilities. To some extent they were right criticism of successful people around you , should be a positive weapon in your pocket. It is a source of strength that pushes you to develop yourself and draw new plans for yourself firstly.

In conclusion, social media can be very useful and necessary in our lives and sometimes

harmful, the user must be in control of it and not the opposite

Appendix 3: Sample Pre-Feedback Essay by Student 1 in Asynchronous Feedback

Should Social Media Usage Be Limited?

Social media is a way to connect with each other from different places around the world. Make this sentence a complex one! It is becoming more popular with the passage of time especially among young people ~~which~~ and it has a double side effect. It is the negative side which made us wonder whether we should limit the usage of social media or not. ~~Well,~~ and it this is really an interesting ~~question~~ debate because it is a sensitive matter and we shall study its effect thoroughly. Social media should be limited because it affects the mental health of whom? and wastes time.

Social media usage should be limited because ~~if~~ it has a negative impact on our mental health. It can affect thoughts and feelings which lead~~s~~ to acute depression, (Use an adj. to describe anxiety) anxiety and low self-esteem by watching other people's lives, achievements and fake happiness. This leads the social media user to feel unhappy and unsatisfied with his life and makes him think he is a looser.

Social media usage should be limited because it wastes time of whom? . People tend to use applications, websites and platforms without planning. Make this sentence complex! They spend hours and hours chatting, watching videos, playing online games and doing useful things instead of studying, working, and build self-improvements.

A significant number of people think that social media usage should not be controlled because it has a lot of positive effects like the opportunity to create an own business. Nowadays people use social media for marketing and managing business by sharing the content to all people and communicate with them to convince the buy your product. However, social media are not safe for commerce and business because in this case the seller will deal with fake accounts and untrusting people that could deceive him/her.

As a conclusion, social media should be controlled in order to make people able to manage their time and make beneficial insert a noun! . People should be connected to the real world rather than the virtual one to maintain both physical and mental health.

Appendix 4: Sample Pre-Feedback Essay by Student 1 in Synchronous Feedback

The internet has made our world smaller with the various services it offers. One of those services is social media, a kind of platforms that allows people to communicate and share daily stories and news with each other, react to those stories, and even post comments on them. It is becoming the most popular service to pass time amongst young people regardless to the fact that it has a double side effect. It is the negative side which made us wonder whether we should limit the use of social media or not and this is really an interesting debate because it is a sensitive matter and we shall study its effect thoroughly. Social media should be limited because it affects the mental health of the users and wastes time.

The use of social media should be limited because it has a negative impact on our mental health. It can affect thoughts and feelings which lead to acute depression, chronic anxiety and low self-esteem by watching other people's lives, achievements and fake happiness. This leads the social media user to feel unhappy and unsatisfied with his life and makes him think he is a looser.

The use of social media should be limited because it is completely a waste of time. For the reason that most people prefer spending their time online chatting, watching videos, playing online games for hours instead of investing this precious time on studying, working, or even self-improvements.

A significant number of people think that social media usage should not be controlled because it has a lot of positive effects like the opportunity to create an own business. Nowadays people use social media for marketing and managing business by sharing the content to all people and communicate with them to convince the buy your product. However, social media are not safe for commerce and business because in this case the seller will deal with fake accounts and untrusting people that could deceive him/her.

As a conclusion, social media should be controlled in order to make people able to manage their time and make beneficial things. People should be connected to the real world rather than the virtual one to maintain both physical and mental health.

Dear teacher,

This questionnaire aims to gather insights on the effectiveness of giving online feedback to improve students' writing. We kindly ask you to answer the following questions.

Please, accept our sincere gratitude for your cooperation.

Definition of Terms:

Synchronous Feedback: it refers to providing feedback while writing.

Asynchronous Feedback: the comments provided at any time after the writing task is completed.

Screencasting: refers to "digital recordings of the activity on one's computer screen, accompanied by voiceover narration" (Thompson, 2012).

Section 01: Access to Online Teaching

1. Have you ever provided courses online to your students?

   ☐ Yes

   ☐ No

2. How many of your students have access to the materials that you put online?

   ☐ All of them

   ☐ Most of them

   ☐ Half of them

   ☐ Some of them

☐　　None of them

☐　　Not sure

3. How many times have you provided your students with online writing tasks?

☐　　Once

☐　　Twice

☐　　Three times or more

Section Two: Writing

4. Do your students have the ability to use complex structures in writing?

☐　　Yes

☐　　No

☐　　Somehow

5. What is/are the dominating type(s) of sentences in the written productions of your students'?

☐　　simple sentences

☐　　Simple and compound sentences

☐　　Simple, compound and complex sentences

6. Do you think that your students are aware about the necessity of using complex structures in formal or academic writing?

☐ Strongly agree

☐ Agree

☐ Neutral

☐ Disagree

☐ Strongly disagree

7. Which of the following complex structures do you encourage your students to use?

- Subordinating conjunctions ☐

- Cleft sentences ☐

- Long complex noun phrases ☐
☐
- Emphasis

☐
- Adjective/ adverbial clauses

-Others

…………………………………..

Section Three: Online Feedback on Writing

8. How often do you provide your students with online feedback about their writings?

☐ Always

☐ Often

☐ Sometimes

☐ Rarely

☐ Never

9. What are your students' attitudes /do you think your students' attitudes are toward online feedback?

☐ Positive

☐ Negative

☐ Mixed

☐ Not sure

10. Which type of feedback do you consider more effective?

☐   Online feedback

☐   Traditional classroom feedback

☐   Neutral

Section Four: Synchronous and Asynchronous Online Feedback

Please, tick where appropriate

Questions		Synchronous Feedback	Asynchronous Feedback	Not sure
- Which type of online feedback do you prefer?				
- Which type of online feedback do you/would you prefer to use?				
- Which of the following tools do/ would you use to provide feedback?	Zoom			
	Google meet			
	Skype			
	Social media			
	Email			
	Screencasting			
- Where do you/expect to receive more questions/ clarifications about your feedback?				
- In which type do you think students would incorporate more of your comments?				

- Which type of feedback do you think is/would be more efforts demanding and time consuming?	5		
- Which one do you think is more likely to lead to improvement in writing?			

ملخص

استكشفت هذه الدراسة دور ملاحظات الاساتذة المتزامنة وغير المتزامنة عبر الإنترنت في تعزيز تعقيد بنية نصوص الطلاب الكتابية. تم الافتراض بأنه إذا تعرض الطلاب لتعليقات الأساتذة عبر الإنترنت، فسيتم تحسين قدرتهم على استخدام الهياكل المعقدة في الكتابة. ولاختبار هذه الفرضية أجريت تجربة على أربعة عشر طالبًا في السنة الثالثة بقسم اللغة الإنجليزية بجامعة محمد الصديق بن يحيى بجيجل، وتم إرسال استبيان إلى ثمانية مدرسين في وحدة التعبير الكتابي في نفس الجامعة. أظهرت النتائج التي تم الحصول عليها من التجربة، والمتكونة من تقديم ملاحظات عبر الإنترنت حول نصوص الطلاب الكتابية أن كلا النوعين من التعليقات عبر الإنترنت ساعدا الطلاب على زيادة عدد وتنوع الهياكل المعقدة المستخدمة في تراكيبهم بشكل طفيف وخاصة عدد التركيبات المعقدة وتنوعها خاصة عدد الجمل وعبارات الجر والضمائر النسبية والارتباطات النسبية. ومع ذلك فإن العراقيل المتعلقة بتنفيذ التجربة حالت دون مقارنة التعليقات المتزامنة وغير المتزامنة. من ناحية أخرى أظهرت نتائج الاستبيان أن الاساتذة يعتقدون أن المراجعة المتزامنة عبر الإنترنت من شأنها تحسين كتابة الطلاب لأنها تتيح لهم المناقشة الحية مما يخلق لهم جوا مشابها للملاحظات التي يتحصلون عليها داخل القسم حيث يتفاعل كل من الاستاذ والطلاب مع بعضهم البعض. ومع ذلك فضل الاساتذة استخدام التعليقات غير المتزامنة عبر الإنترنت لأنها تستغرق وقتًا أقل وتتطلب جهدًا أقل. تسلط النتائج المحققة في هذه الدراسة الضوء على الحاجة إلى المراجعة التقليدية كما أن اعتياد الأساتذة والطلاب على التعليقات عبر الإنترنت يتطلب مزيدًا من التدريب على استخدام التقنيات في التعليم.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التغذية الراجعة المتزامنة، التغذية الراجعة غير المتزامنة، تعقيد الهيكل

Résume

Cette étude vise à explorer le rôle des commentaires synchrones et asynchrones des enseignants en ligne dans l'amélioration de l'écriture des étudiants en termes de complexité de structure. Il a été émis l'hypothèse que si les étudiants sont plus exposés aux commentaires des enseignants en ligne, leur capacité à utiliser des structures complexes dans l'écrit sera améliorée. Pour affirmer cette hypothèse, une quasi-expérience a été menée auprès de quatorze étudiants de 3eme année du département d'anglais, Université Mohamed Seddik BenYahia Jijel et un questionnaire administré à huit enseignants du module "expression écrite" de la même université. Les résultats obtenus à partir de cette quasi-expérience démontrent que les deux types de rétroaction en ligne ont aidé les étudiants à produire des structures plus complexes et variées surtout dans les phrases prépositionnelles, les prenoms relatifs et les conjonctions de coordinations. De plus, les résultats du questionnaire des enseignants ont montré que les enseignants pensent que la rétroaction en ligne synchrone est le type qui conduit à des meilleures améliorations sur les écrits des élèves parce qu'elle donne le même atmosphère de la classe; cependant, ils préfèrent utiliser les commentaires en ligne asynchrones car cela prend moins de temps et demande moins d'efforts. mais avec les obstacles qu'on a trouvé dans cette étude que le traditionnel feedback est le moyen préféré par les enseignants et les étudiants.

Mots clés : Retour synchrone, Retour asynchrone, Complexité de la structure