

# **Process-Oriented Writing and Peer Reviewing in the Bahraini English as a Second Language Classroom: A Case-study**

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**Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
Ph.D.**

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**September 2017**



## Declaration

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## **Abstract**

The development of written accuracy among learners of English as a Second Language (ESL) has always been a primary concern for ESL teachers and researchers in Applied Linguistics and Second Language Acquisition (SLA). While a vast body of research has examined learners' interlanguage, proposed taxonomies of errors made by ESL learners, and explored their possible sources (such as intra-lingual and inter-lingual transfer, cross-linguistic interference and first language (L1) interference), few studies have focused on the development of written accuracy among Arabic speaking learners of English. Yet, given the differences between Arabic and English, the potential for interference errors is high. Furthermore, traditional teaching approaches in the Arab world, which are primarily product-oriented, have been said to negatively impact on students' perceptions of and attitudes towards ESL writing, and consequently on their language development.

This case-study examines firstly the level of written accuracy of Bahraini learners of English in their first year at a higher education institute, highlighting not unexpectedly, a high frequency of L1 interference errors. The investigation then explores the impact that a process-oriented instructional approach had on learners' writing in English as a foreign language, tracking development over the course of an academic semester. The intervention applied to improve learners' skill development involved a significant peer-reviewing component in addition to individual and collective teacher feedback. A corpus of students' initial writings and subsequent revisions, as well as peer-reviews, was analysed to identify whether there was an improvement in the accuracy of students' texts. It was found that a process-oriented approach and peer-reviewing appeared to assist students' learning, as they were able to identify L1 interference errors in the work of their peers. However, there were variable results in students' abilities to apply this learning to different writing contexts. This suggests that more time is needed to practise and embed the skills learned, especially for Arabic speaking students learning to write in English, due to the highly different language structure of their first language compared to L2. The results provide new insights into the dynamic relationship between producing correct forms and noticing errors in one's peer's writing with several pedagogical implications for teaching writing to Arabic speaking students in the Bahraini context including the need to establish an approach to understanding the written skills of

learners require and to provide them with the proper training and scaffolding addressing their language needs.

## Acknowledgements

“If I have seen further, it is by standing on the shoulders of giants,” Isaac Newton was quoted as saying (Lindgreen, Vallaster and Van hamme 2000, p. 508). Without the incisive critique, the close guidance and encouragement of Professor Françoise Blin, I would not have completed this study. I attribute the self-knowledge and personal satisfaction I have gained through completing this study to her continuous support throughout my doctoral research. Her motivation, enthusiasm, patience and belief in me when I no longer believed I could do it, made me continue to earn it. Without her support and encouragement over the seven past years, this thesis would have never taken shape.

My greatest indebtedness is to the twelve students who so willingly shared their time and participated in this research study. They were keen on changing their written skills to the best of their power throughout the course utilising all the help they could get.

My sincere gratitude is extended to my family for their support and mainly my mother for her constant spiritual support, prayers and blessings, and for supporting me in every angle in my life. I will never ever be able to thank enough my husband, Ali, and my children Hussain and Hoor for *always* being there for me and continuously asking me: will you graduate this year?!

Finally, I give thanks to Allah for providing me with the opportunity to grow and develop personally and professionally, as well as to develop a new strategy for the development of written accuracy amongst learners of English as a Second Language that can potentially make a difference for many generations of Bahraini. Praise be to Allah, for the uncountable blessings bestowed upon me and for ensuring that I had both the capability and support to proceed successfully.

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## List of Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Explanation
ESL	English as a Second Language
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
L1	First language
L2	Second language
MENA	Middle East and North African
WEF	World Economic Forum
TIMMS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
ELT	English Language Teaching
ELSSC	English language syllabus for the secondary cycle
QAAET	Quality Assurance Authority for Education and Training
CF	Corrective Feedback
WCF	Written Corrective Feedback
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development
MoE	Ministry of Education
IELTS	International English Language Testing System
CEFR	Common European Framework of Reference for Languages
GPA	Grade Point Average
PR	Peer review
CERRA	Centre for Educator Recruitment, Retention and Advancement
AAT	Architecture of Accomplished Teaching

## List of Publications

### *Chapters in refereed volumes*

Al Daylami, M., Bennison, B., Coutts, C., Hassan, F., Hasan, J., Huijser, H., McLoughlin, B., McMaster, D. & Wali, F., 2015. The establishment of Bahrain Polytechnic: Assumptions questioned, myths exposed and challenges faced. *In Myths in Education, Learning and Teaching*. UK: Palgrave Macmillan. 4, pp. 114-132.

### *Proceedings*

Wali, F., 2010. Enhancing Arabic Students' L2 Writing through Wikis. *EUROCALL 2010 Conference: New trends in CALL. Working together, 08-11 September 2010, Bordeaux, France*.

Wali, F. and Blin, F., 2009. Enhancing Arabic Students' L2 Writing through Computer-Mediated Peer-Reviewing: the Case of Bahraini Learners of English. *EUROCALL 2009 Conference: New trends in CALL. Working together, 09-12 September 2009, Gandia Campus Universidad Politécnica de Valencia, Spain*.

Wali, F., Tabbara, S. and Auton, R. 2013. A Collaborative Approach to Interdisciplinary Problem Based learning in Bahrain Polytechnic. *Social Sciences Conference, August 2014, Prague, Czech Republic*.

# List of Presentations

## *Conferences*

Wali, F., Tabbara, S. and Auton, R. 2013. A Collaborative Approach to Interdisciplinary Problem Based learning in Bahrain Polytechnic. Social Sciences Conference, August 2014, Prague.

# 1 Chapter One: Introduction

As Bahrain grapples with issues associated with oil dependence and the need to diversify the economy in an increasingly global trading environment, Bahrainis are required to have an increasingly high level of skills and knowledge as they compete for jobs against expatriate workers in the labour market. As many companies based in Bahrain trade internationally, the English language has become increasingly important as the common communication mode and so abilities to read, write and understand this language are now in high demand by employers, alongside the other employability and technical skills required in today's Knowledge Economy. My motivation in seeking to find out more about how to assist Bahraini students more effectively learn English comes from being a Bahraini citizen and an English teacher, but also as a mother of two children who I see grappling with difficulties on each and every day.

Coming from an oral culture, Bahraini students whose first language (L1) is Arabic, struggle to write in English. This problem may have its roots in the local cultural context, with factors such as the quality and quantity of education exacerbating the situation. The literature review places the issues of Bahrain's schooling and the reform improvement initiatives within the wider global context and outlines what the Kingdom of Bahrain can learn from the international literature focused on the learning of English as a Second Language.

Using research conducted in other parts of the world, this study firstly explores some of the factors that international research has identified as posing problems in second language learning: interference and the development of written accuracy among Arabic speaking learners of English. Whilst some work has been done on identifying the types of errors that Arab students typically make when learning English as a second language, at the time of writing there was a dearth of published research about how to assist Bahraini learners to resolve such issues. Utilising a strategy congruent with the customs, norms and values of Arabic culture, this study of the effects of process-oriented writing on Bahraini English second language learners seeks to fill this gap in knowledge about interventions that can be successful for Arab students in learning English as a second language. Using a mixed-methods

methodology, the study examines a corpus of students' original writings and their subsequent revisions after peer-reviews and teacher feedback, with a view to categorising the most common interference errors existing in students' texts and to assess whether a process-oriented approach and peer-reviewing can help resolve L1 interference errors. The results provide new insights on the dynamic relationship between producing correct forms and noticing errors in one's peer's writing. The ecological framework, discussed in more detail in Chapter Two, has been used as a unifying theme to order the discussion of the factors found to be affecting the development of writing for ESL students in Bahrain.

### 1.1 **Background: English Language Learning in Bahrain**

Bahraini students' lack of proficiency in writing in English as a second language has posed barriers in successful tertiary level studies. Dana, a first year Business student aged 19 illustrated the experience of many Bahraini students when writing in ESL:

*I came to the Polytechnic really confident about my English because I always received nearly full marks on exams. The exams were too easy and the books were really bad....same content questions, layout and even the same level every year. But when I got my first writing back the tutor wrote with red all over it and said even 'I can't understand this' or 'unclear' on many sections. It was so depressing for me. I know my writing is not strong but how can I go from writing about 'my holidays' and childish stuff like that to writing about strategies for marketing with technology with many new vocabularies and 'academic language'? The English tutors help us but there is a big gap- how can I go from doing everything in Arabic even the English lessons to studying everything in English? (Al Daylami et al. 2015, p.119)*

Receiving a tutor's feedback on her writing caused Dana to reflect on her educational experience over the previous 12 years. She identified gaps in the way she was taught to write in English, her second language. Dana's experience highlights the challenges Arab students typically face learning ESL writing and it brings into sharp profile the effects that the government education systems of the Gulf have on learners' academic performance, personal confidence and their motivation to learn and persist in further study (Tamkeen 2016). Some of the challenges maybe rooted in Bahrain's cultural context and the way the teaching and learning system is set up locally, aspects that warrant further elaboration.

### **1.1.1 Bahrain Cultural Context**

Dana and many other Bahraini Arab ESL students experience writing challenges that need to be addressed. To enable the reader to better understand why Arab students commonly face greater difficulties than their western counterparts in learning to write in English as their second language, an overview of the Bahraini cultural context is helpful. The cultural context is the product of its geography, its history and its politics, so these aspects are briefly alluded to here.

The Kingdom of Bahrain is part of the Arabian Peninsula, which has the desert and hot dry climate as its prominent features. It occupies a central location in the middle of the Arabian Gulf, which joins the east and the west. Due to its unique location, the Kingdom of Bahrain has, over the long course of its 7000 recorded history, been inhabited by various ethnic groups, witnessing different events and being exposed to the transformational changes wrought by the invasion of various civilizations (Alriffai 1995). More recently in history it was occupied by a number of Western powers during the period of 1861 to 1971, when it was designated as a British protectorate. Although Bahrain gained its independence in 1971, a mutual friendship and cooperation has since developed between the two countries, with many business and educational links now in place, with the result that the English language has become an important mode of communication. Although the official language of Bahrain is Arabic, this sequence of events resulted in the adoption of English as a second language (ESL), rather than as a foreign language in the Kingdom of Bahrain (Al-Ansari 1985). This is an important distinction that has paved the way more recently for the establishment of other international trade alliances with English speaking countries, such as the United States of America (USA), as will be outlined below. Indeed, being the first post-oil economy amongst the Gulf Cooperation Countries (GCC) in the Arabian Peninsula, Bahrain attracted many international financial structures (The Report: Bahrain 2010). All these factors contributed to having a wide range of cultures and a growing expatriate population and the need of Bahrainis to have a good command of both spoken and written English as a second language as they became engaged in work across an increasingly diverse range of occupational sectors in Bahrain. English was therefore incorporated into the syllabus of the core curriculum of government schools but over time it has changed so a brief overview of the Bahraini educational system follows.

### **1.1.2 Bahrain Educational Context**

Classical Arabic belongs to the Semitic languages and it has evolved to have various modern colloquial dialects of Arabic due to the rapid spread of Islam. Prior to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Bahrain's educational context was mainly dependent on Quranic schools teaching the Qur'an in mosques or homes of Qur'an teachers called Mutawa'a (Abdulla and Zain Al-Abideen 2009). The Arabic language was taught through rote-learning the Holy Qur'an, after which a child would have come to know all the primary linguistic elements (phonology, syntax, morphology and pragmatics), required. Islam came to the Middle East in the late sixth and early seventh century with the revelations of the Holy Qur'an (the divine guidance received by Prophet Muhammad from God) and so Arabic is now spoken widely across the Arabian Peninsula (Wahba, Taha and England 2014) and by Muslims all across the world. Most of the Arabic dialects that have evolved can be heard in the spoken language, but the written Arabic has remained consistently preserved in its features as it is the language of the Holy book of God (ibid). Arabic has twenty-eight consonants with only three vowels and a cursive alphabet script from right to left. Although Arabic has its own written system, the learning method traditionally used was through oral and aural means, reciting the poetic verses of the Qur'an. This traditional and widely used method across the Arabian Peninsula has had implications for education in the region, both in learning Arabic in schools as well as second language learning. Specifically it has posed substantive challenges in learning how to write in English as a second language, a requirement to be more employable in today's increasingly global society.

The Bahraini public education system is very much a didactic traditional system where the teacher is the centre of the teaching and learning process, being seen as the respected elder, and source of knowledge. The didactic teaching approach typical of the Middle East and North African (MENA) region depends on rote memorisation rather than analytical, problem-solving and critical thinking skills (Rashid-Doubell , Doubell, O'Sullivan and Elmusharaf 2016; Al Wadi and Saravanan 2012). The result of such a system is that many students are underprepared for higher level tertiary learning (Wilkins and Masri 2011 cited in Rashid-Doubell, Doubell, O'Sullivan and Elmusharaf 2016): They do not have the skills that will allow them to be analytical and autonomous learners. Indeed, the World Bank (2008) argues that investment in

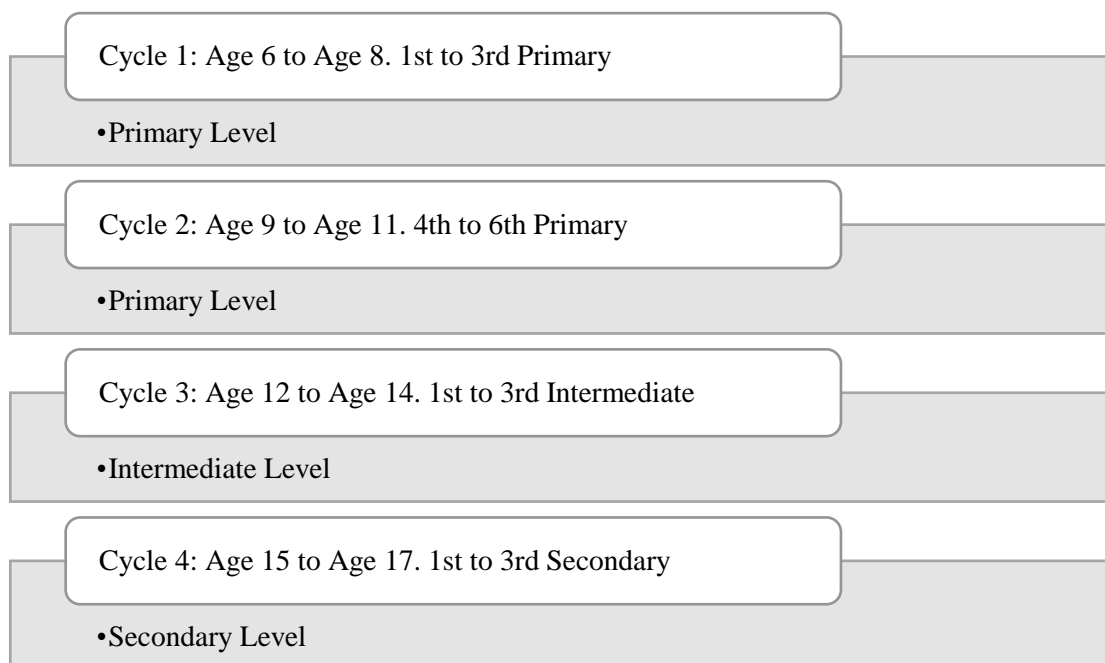


education in the MENA region has not resulted in economic growth due to the lack of educational quality and quantity of high teacher to pupil ratios, fewer years of schooling, shorter school days and fewer weeks in the academic year, out-dated curricula and reliance on rote learning, exacerbated by shortages of qualified teachers, posing challenges to the quality of education in the region. Thus, the Bahraini government introduced educational reforms including a teachers' college, a polytechnic, an improved vocational programme and a quality assurance initiative, aiming from 2001 at improving of employability and efficiency rates and catering of job market needs (Economic Yearbook 2013). The World Economic Forum (WEF)'s Global Competitiveness Report of 2015–2016 indicates Bahrain is placed 26th worldwide in terms of the quality of the higher educational system and training compared to the 56th position in 2008 and 38<sup>th</sup> in 2014. However, AlKoofi (2016) suggests that students' achievement in internationally bench-marked tests such as the *Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study* (TIMSS) is declining. This discrepancy appears to be related to the different focus of the National Authority for Qualifications and Quality Assurance of education and Training (QQA), which shows progress on process indicators compared to the outcomes focus of national examinations and international bench-marking. So whilst some reforms have been initiated, their positive effects are yet to be realised. The education system in Bahrain and how it has been reformed is further elaborated below.

### **1.1.3 The Education System in the Kingdom of Bahrain**

The rise of formal schooling in public schools began in 1919 with the first school for boys followed by another one for girls in 1928 (Abdulla and Zain Al-Abideen 2009). Education has undergone many reforms since then, expanding educational services, improving the quality of education and employing qualified teachers according to Shirawi (1989). Abdulla and Zain Al-Abideen (2009) report that in 1981 the Ministry of Education announced the necessity to link education with the economic needs of Bahrain. This resulted in the current structural organisation of the educational system in Bahrain, shown in Figure 1.1, which is comprised of four educational cycles in government schools (Ministry of Education 2008, p.20). According to AlKoofi (2016) the current education system in Bahrain follows a ladder of nine years of education from primary up to secondary education, as shown in Figure 1.1 below on page 6.

**Figure 1.1 Bahrain's Education Ladder**



Source: AlKoofi 2016, p. 35

Education in Bahrain is compulsory for children aged between six and fourteen and they must be enrolled either in a government school or a private one. Primary education is the first formal rung of the school ladder, accommodating students aged between six and eleven. It lasts for six years and is divided into two cycles, the first incorporating first primary up to third primary, where a class teacher provides instruction in almost all the subjects except English language, design and technology, music education, and physical education. The second cycle starts from the fourth primary up to sixth primary, but at this level the 'subject-teacher' system is applied, where each subject is taught by a teacher who has specialized in a specific discipline (ibid.). The third cycle is the intermediate stage, which accommodates students between the ages of 12-14 years, and lasts for three years, and over this phase the model of subject-teacher is also applied. The first three cycles of education up till Grade 9 are considered as 'basic education', and participation is obligatory for all Bahraini students, whereas 'secondary' education is not compulsory (Directorate of Curricula 2011). Cycle 4 is the secondary level that lasts for three years for students aged on average fifteen to seventeen and, although attendance at this higher level of schooling is not mandatory, most students participate and, consequently, Bahrain has one of the highest literacy rates in the MENA region (Economic Yearbook 2013). The fourth cycle is divided into eight streams: technical education,

commercial education, scientific education, literature education, hotel and tourism education, textile and clothing education, agricultural and livestock resources education and printing education (UNESCO-IBE 2011). The Ministry of Education also provides a religious education stream that does not go through the stages mentioned above, but is considered as a separate specialization starting from the primary level (UNESCO-IBE 2011). The medium of instruction in all stages is Arabic, while English is a second language (Directorate of Curriculum 2006). The educational system in Bahrain aims to develop literacies in Arabic but also, and increasingly, in English as a second language. English is used as the medium of instruction in most private schools and universities. In addition English is also the main language of communication in the majority of commercial organizations, both industrial companies and the banking industry. This is the reason why the Ministry of Education makes students in government schools undertake compulsory English language classes from primary to secondary level.

### ***Teaching English as a second language in Bahraini schools***

Bahrain's Economic Vision 2030 highlights the need for "a clear strategy for raising standards and performance in our schools, vocational institutions and universities" (Bahrain Economic Development Board 2008 P. 24). These standards include English language instruction (Harmes, Huijser and Danaher 2015). However, English language teaching has existed since the establishment of formal education in the 1920s both in governmental and private schools (Al-Hamer 1969). Over this period the Ministry of Education has been continuously modifying the curriculum and changing the English textbooks used in governmental schools in order to keep up with innovation in ELT worldwide (Folath 1994). As a consequence, today English as a second language is taught in all four cycles. The curriculum described in this section would later be updated (see below). The cohort of students discussed in the body of the thesis was mostly taught using the 'older' curriculum.

English is introduced in Primary education from grade one with five English classes per week, each of which lasts for 50 minutes. The textbooks used for grades 1 and 2 are the series of *Happy House* by Maidment and Roberts (2008) while grade 3 are taught through the *Happy Street* textbook by Maidment and Roberts (2008),

according to the Directorate of Curricula information (2011). The textbooks are story-based and aim to get students to learn English through listening and speaking followed by an introduction to reading and writing. These textbooks are accompanied by a Guided Reading Programme that aims to improve the ESL proficiency level as well as producing independent silent readers. The guided reading levels for each grade are colour-coded and each has different content as detailed below.

Cycle 1 objectives in the first primary take account of asking for help (for example from family and friends), cooperating with others, developing motor skills, drawing to express simple ideas, developing relationships through work and play, displaying sensitivity and respect for others, learning from watching others, participating in partner work and class discussions, producing short utterances in English, producing words for simple objects, participating in pair/ group work and using isolated words and phrases to communicate daily needs. The second primary of Cycle 1, however, has different learning objectives that are focused on developing a relationship through work and play, developing the concept of belonging, interacting with classmates, listening for specific information, responding to a topic in both oral and written form and using isolated words and phrases to communicate daily needs. The learning content in the third primary of cycle 1 includes interacting with class mates, listening for gist, reflecting on learning experiences, recycling vocabulary with pronunciation focus, writing letters to complete words, writing words to complete simple sentences and writing very short simple sentences.

Cycle 2, which ranges between grades 4 and 6 in primary education, focuses on building more linguistic structures through reading and listening and these are expected to be employed in speaking and writing using *Back Pack 3 as a textbook* by Herrera et al. (2009). A guided reading programme is also used along with the textbook. The objectives of Cycle 2, from the second primary to the fourth primary, include comparing and contrasting, describing people and places, drawing conclusions, expressing preferences, stating and supporting opinions, interacting with peers in classroom activities to develop the concept of belonging and team work, listening for gist and details, making predictions and summarizing stories, understanding very simple text with visual support on familiar topics such as

weather, jobs, food etc., using graphic organizers, writing simple isolated phrases and sentences and managing 2 to 3 sentences paragraphs on familiar topics.

Cycle 3 focuses on the intermediate education that develops students' cognitive, metacognitive and social skills through speaking, listening, reading and writing. These skills are addressed through 3 staged textbooks, *Upstream* (Evans and Dooley 2008), according to the Directorate of Curricula (2011). The linguistic outcomes of Cycle 3 include associating pictures, illustrations, and sounds with meaning; communicating in English and exchanging information; comprehending different forms of English; dialogue and short exchanges on tape; and using a set of patterns in multi-sensory tasks. Also, the linguistic or cognitive outcomes take account of making comparisons between English and Arabic language, making use of an English/English dictionary and producing the sounds, pronunciation and intonation of the target language. In terms of the metacognitive objectives for this cycle, concentrating better and longer to perform a task is one of the main objectives. Other objectives are to develop students' writing skills, emphasising aspects of life in English-speaking countries; enabling them to monitor their own speech and writing for persistent errors, recording and assessing progress and thus developing autonomy, skimming and scanning texts and dialogues to locate the necessary information. Social and affective objectives encompass becoming responsible by keeping and updating one's language portfolio, experiencing being part of a group and obeying rules through games and projects, having some understanding of the culture, traditions and life in English speaking countries, responding to feedback from teacher and peers and showing support and tolerance for other learners' learning styles.

In addition to the specific subject, level objectives, required content knowledge and skills, the Ministry of Education has also developed a number of general educational objectives to be achieved on graduation, so these add additional foci for English Language Teaching (ELT) in Bahrain's Secondary Cycle (Alriffai 1995). One of these objectives is the development of *language skills*. Learners are also expected to build up an ability to listen, speak, read and write the language easily in daily life experience and continue improving and maximizing these skills, especially reading, with a view to being able to read a range of texts, both fiction and non-fictional. There is also a focus on written language as a form of communication, with learners

expected to be able to produce accurate and complete pieces of different types of writing. Another focus over Cycle 4 is the development of *transferrable skills* through which learners are expected to develop self-learning skills to be able to use different language resources, build up self-esteem and employ new technology in language learning. The development of *Intercultural skills* is also emphasized, with learners expected to appreciate not only the importance of English in communication between nations, but also to establish cultural identity, inculcating in the students within the spirit of the Arabic culture through reading selected prose in English. This is achieved by contextualisation of the ESL global textbooks to the regional Arabic and local Bahraini settings before implementing them in Bahraini governmental schools. The textbooks adopted (Opportunities by Harris et al. (2005); Business Goals by Knight et al. (2011); Elective Academic Writing by Savage and Shafiei (2009); Cover to Cover by Day and Yamanaka (2009)) cover general topics from global perspectives and a local Arabic perspective to broaden learners' knowledge and language capacities.

However, some of these general objectives have not been fully implemented in the English curriculum. For example, there has been little alignment between what was being taught in the language courses across the levels and the future needs of the learners in terms of university language requirements or work-related language levels and skills. Consequently, Bahraini school leavers' low standard of English has received critique from employers (Abdulmajeed 1995), leading to the dissatisfaction of the Ministry of Education authorities (Wigzel and Al-Ansari 1993). Al-Ansari (1985) claims this gap between education outcomes and employer requirements is the result of a teacher-centred method of teaching. Secondary students' failure to learn English is allegedly due to the lack of sufficient motivation and language learning awareness in their early stages of learning English (Salman 1992): English is taught as a subject instead of a language maintaining the rudimentary instrumental factors of passing English language tests and examinations (Abdul Majeed 1995, p. 17). As a result of such critiques, a number of policies and procedures to improve the quality of English teaching and learning were set up by the Ministry of Education in the early 1990s (Ministry of Education 1994). The revised English language syllabus for the secondary cycle (ELSSC) in Bahraini governmental schools aims firstly to consolidate and expand on the linguistic knowledge and skills acquired in the primary and intermediate cycle and secondly to develop a suitable level of

competence in the use of English to accomplish communication (Ministry of Education 1994).

The secondary education English curriculum was changed between 2009 and 2010 as a result of educational reforms and the set-up of Bahrain's Qualifications and Quality Assurance Authority for Education and Training (abbreviated to QQAET) in 2008. QQAET is an independent quality assurance agency created to cover all education levels. QQAET's role is to ensure that the quality of education and training in Bahrain meets international standards and best practice. QQAET functions include:

- Reviewing schools and education and training institutions and examining students
- Identifying areas for improvement in Bahrain's education system
- Driving improvements in the quality of education by increasing accountability and transparency
- Writing reports on the overall quality of the education system and disseminating best practices

The reason for creating QQAET was that there were quality issues particularly with the private sector that were causing a reputational risk to the Kingdom (Coutts and Leder 2010).

The Ministry offers 10 compulsory English language courses for technical students while all other students are given 12 compulsory English language courses (English 101, 102, 201, 202, 251, 252, 301, 302, 303, 304, 351 and 352) through the textbook series *Opportunities* by Harris et al. (2005) (Directorate of Curricula 2011). Each of these compulsory English language courses is taught for five sessions a week and each session lasts for 50 minutes. Secondary level students are also given the choice to take five optional courses (English 215, 216, 217, 218, 323) which run for four sessions a week and each session's duration is 50 minutes (Directorate of Curricula 2011). The objectives of the compulsory courses are to develop speaking, listening, reading and writing skills as detailed below:

- There is an emphasis on the process of writing such as brain storming and other pre-writing activities as well as feedback and redrafting.

Students are expected:

- To be able to listen for gist, main ideas and specific information that correspond to each course level.
- To be able to scan and skim, make inferences, draw conclusions, predict outcomes, and distinguish between facts and opinions.
- To raise cultural awareness through exposing students to a variety of reading and writing genres of the English language as well as cross-cultural discourses from all around the world.

Other objectives include:

- To introduce business terminologies and information.
- To improve reading skills.
- To write different genres and levels.
- To read different genres and provide analytical responses.
- To practise academic writing for undergraduate levels.

Bahraini Middle Eastern families aspire to achieve the best possible education for their children, Rashid-Doubell , Doubell, O’Sullivan and Elmusharaf (2016) claim that the more traditional and teacher-dominated the learning is, the more trustworthy the outcomes are perceived to be (Al Wadi and Saravanan 2012). Parents’ perspectives on education are drivers to maintain the status quo, so despite all the educational changes and reforms, the graduates’ educational outcomes might not change causing higher unemployment rates. Indeed, AlKoofi (2016, p. 306/7) confirms this notion. His case-study of four schools in Bahrain over one academic year (2012/13) found that whilst QQA’s reviews indicated improved school processes, students’ results declined in National Examinations and internationally benchmarked tests, such as the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS). This poor showing was of particular concern because of Bahrain’s reliance on dwindling oil reserves and the need to diversify the economy, a situation necessitating a supply of local talent (AlKoofi 2016, p. 23). In the annual report of 2013, QQA indicated that they had no evidence to explain the continued decrease in the National Examination (NE) scores, but they highlighted that there were two additional areas worth exploring: the effect of the continued civil disturbance of schools in the Kingdom during 2012 and 2013 on students' lives and motivation, and the students' and teachers' enthusiasm and excitement with the NE, "particularly



since the NEs do not count towards students' Grades and promotion to the next year" (National Authority of Qualifications and Quality Assurance for Education and Training 2013. p. 48). This study highlighted that the characteristics of students who sat the NEs before 2010 may have been different from those examined after 2010: There are now a greater diversity of students in Bahrain Government schools, many of whom do not speak Arabic or English and may have found the transition to a new schooling system difficult. Amongst many other factors, Al Koofi's Bahrain government school findings reinforce the key premise on which this study is based, and that is that a shift in the teaching of English writing is essential to meet the employability expectations of the global market.

## **1.2 The Teaching of ESL Writing**

As a teacher of English as a second language (ESL) at different governmental and private educational institutions in Bahrain over the last fifteen years, I observed that the value of writing as a communicative medium at the secondary level was diminished through an obsession by teachers of English at all levels with surface details rather than the global picture of meaning and content. This is exemplified by the use of what are commonly described as 'bunched writing tasks', which are a series of written exercises found at the end of each teaching unit within the Ministry of Education (MoE) prescribed English language textbooks. Such tasks are frequently assigned as homework or supplementary material carried out in class, usually as group-work, to be later assessed by the teacher. From my observations, it seemed that little process writing experience is provided within the Bahraini classroom. This was also observed by Sabooni (1994) as a shortcoming of the writing approach utilised in Bahraini schools, but it appears to be still so today. Students' writings are still evaluated on the basis of accuracy, focusing generally on spelling and punctuation. In most Bahraini educational institutions, writing is still considered as language practice, which enables language learners to apply all the accuracy and grammatical rules they have learned during their English classes.

The lack of useful feedback appears to be a major factor in students' poor grasp of English language literacy. It seems that poor feedback provision in most English writing classes has caused confusion for learners, leaving them uninformed as to the aspects of their writing that need to be improved, and resulting in a misdirection of

their efforts (Hyland 2003; Ferris 2002; Hyland and Hyland 2001). However, a few attempts have been initiated to give learners constructive feedback on their writing, with a wide range of ‘cues’ including error codes, question marks, cross outs, underlines, or comments variously provided by teachers by way of feedback to their students. Learners are expected to understand the cues provided for their errors, to accept the grade awarded and to avoid committing the same errors in the next written task. This has impacted the teaching and learning processes of writing with students being seemingly demotivated and overwhelmed with the amount and nature of feedback received (Leki 1990), whilst teachers and employers alike complain about learners’ poor writing skills and their reluctance to write.

Sabooni (1994) explains that language teachers are apparently unaware of the significant impact that effective feedback can play in improving ESL learners’ writing and accuracy. For those that do recognise the power of feedback, there has been the issue of teacher workload. Therefore, there has been a movement for an addition to teaching feedback through peer feedback in second language writing (Ferris 2002). Peer feedback is beneficial for both beginners and expert writers, as they evaluate their writing and detect potential errors or weaknesses (Ferris 2002; Hyland and Hyland 2001). Peer feedback is valued in an ESL classroom but teacher feedback is still in demand (Ferris 2011; Tsui and Ng 2000), particularly in the Gulf, where the teacher is seen as all-knowing.

First language (L1) interference influences learners’ written productions in ESL classrooms and it seems that these challenges might be able to be resolved through the adoption of peer review practices, alongside teacher feedback. Throughout my studies and professional career, I have not experienced practising process writing or peer reviewing at any level and nor have such strategies ever been suggested for implementation. Why is this? One explanation may be because teachers have been so busy getting the curriculum covered that there has not been any time to trial the merits of this process. Another possibility is that teachers, not having trialled this process, may be reluctant to adopt a strategy where little or no research into the effectiveness has been conducted, and hence the outcomes cannot be confidently predicted. Therefore, investigating how process writing and the peer reviewing process could enhance the development of written accuracy among Arab students has been of long standing interest and something that warrants further exploration.

This thesis, therefore, seeks to investigate the impact of process writing and peer reviewing on the development of writing in a second language.

### **1.3 Research Questions and Methodology**

The literature review covering learning, language learning and specifically English language learning indicates that writing poses the greatest difficulty for Arab students. The notion of ‘interference’ between first and second language (L2) for learners seems to be a critical challenge, and this can be defined according to two standpoints: either psychologically, by having old habits influencing new learned ones, or socio-linguistically, by which two languages interact (Dulay 1982), a point further elaborated in Chapter 2. These challenges, identified almost half a century ago, may stem from L1 interference and the ineffective writing approaches implemented in ESL classes. Another reason for the persistence of these errors, given the impact of the reforms on teacher quality and schooling time, could be the lack of constructive feedback on students’ written productions.

Using a case-study approach based on an Academic Bridging course at a higher educational institution, this thesis seeks to analyse the possible advantages of process-oriented writing and peer reviewing in teaching English as a second language (ESL), concentrating on the writing proficiency of Bahraini first year students. It investigates whether peer feedback assists students to overcome first language (L1) learning difficulties reflected in process writing. This study explores the value of peer reviewing and teacher feedback to overcome interference grammatical errors found in the writing of one entire class comprising 12 students, identifying the role of process-oriented writing as well as the effectiveness of peer reviewing in the English language writing classroom.

My experience as an English teacher in the Middle East suggests that Bahraini students whose first language is Arabic, struggle to write coherently and accurately in English. There is a dearth of published research in the Middle East addressing this problem and hence the need for this study, which was established to address three specific research questions:

Q1: What are the most common grammatical errors made by Bahraini Arab students in ESL writing?

Q2: To what extent can the process-oriented writing approach via peer reviewing in ESL resolve errors?

Q3: What are the implications for teaching writing to Arabic speaking students?

## 1.4 Thesis Outline

Following this introduction, which established the background context and rationale for undertaking this study, and the driving questions that guided it, the five subsequent chapters of this thesis outline the theoretical background that underpins this research, the research methodology, findings and finally the implications of the study.

Chapter Two sets the research background by providing a literature review on second language written structural errors and their origins. It discusses transfer, cross-linguistic influences, L1 interference and interlanguage as well as the ecological factors affecting L2 development. It also gives an overview of ESL grammatical errors in relation to L1 interference, transfer, and the interlanguage of Arabic learners of English. This chapter then explores two approaches to teaching writing in a second language, namely product-oriented and process-oriented approaches. It also discusses feedback and the peer reviewing processes of writing as well as scaffolding.

Chapter Three describes the methodology used to conduct the case-study including: research design, sample selections, and research procedures in addition to the data collection techniques and data analysis procedures.

Chapter Four outlines the type of errors found within the ESL participants' essays through the process-oriented writing approach. Peer reviewing showed that the ESL students doing the reviews were able to identify these errors. It concludes with a discussion of the impact of peer and teacher feedback and error identification on Arabic speaking ESL learners' writing and their language development.

Chapter Five analyses the performance of more competent CEFR (A2) students and less competent CEFR (A1) students, triangulating these findings with those of the pre-course and post-course questionnaires. A detailed analysis of some reviewer and

reviewee feedback pairs is used to illuminate the effects of the peer reviewing process, the grammar tutorials and the individual and collective teacher feedback.

Chapter Six brings together the findings outlined in Chapters Four and Five, discussing these in light of international literature. What can be concluded about the development of ESL written accuracy and language awareness is identified, noting the study's limitations, possible directions for further research and potential implications for second language learning practices.

## **2 Chapter Two: Learning to write in a second language?**

As in the previous chapter (Chapter 1) showed, Bahrain's need to diversify the economy in an increasingly global trading environment has put increasing pressure on young Bahrainis seeking employment to acquire high levels of English language fluency. The local context and Arab culture are important aspects that affect a student's ability to learn English. Coming from an oral culture, Bahraini students whose first language is Arabic, struggle to write in English. But why is this? This chapter looks firstly to the international literature for explanations that may have applicability to the local context, outlining firstly what learning is, and what conditions need to be in place for deep learning, where knowledge and skills are retained and applied to different contexts. Then the specific causes of problems in learning to write English as a second language are outlined, with an explanation of 'transfer', 'cross-linguistic influences', 'first language (L1) interference' and 'interlanguage effects'. The particular problems experienced by Arab ESL learners in writing are then identified, providing an overview of the L2 writing teaching practices and approaches identified in the literature that may have applicability to the Bahraini context.

### **2.1 Second Language Learning: Chomsky vs. Krashen**

There are many definitions of learning, but one commonly used is that learning is any "activity or process of gaining knowledge or skill by studying, practicing, being taught, or experiencing something" (Merriam Webster Dictionary). A wide range of theories (*Behaviourism, Cognitivism, Constructivist, Experientialism and Social Learning*) have developed in an attempt to explain and demonstrate the way that people learn (Thurlings, Vermeulen, Bastiaens and Stijnen 2013). For example, behaviourists state that learning occurs due to the change caused by external stimuli (Skinner 1974), while cognitivists propose that learning is an internal process that takes place due to mental activities through thinking, memorising and reflecting (Piaget 1962). In contrast, Hein (1991) explains that constructivists such as Dewey see learning as a self-regulation and construction of knowledge that takes place due

to observation and interpretation, whereas experientialism is based on experiences that lead to learning through a number of stages. Kolb (2014) identifies the learning stages as firstly having a concrete experience; then observing and reflecting; and finally, conceptualising and concept testing the new scenarios. The Social Learning Theory, however, explains that learning is a shared process in which individuals learn from their social interaction with their surrounding individuals, observing and working together. The main protagonist of this theory explains that providing assistance to learners or scaffolding is a key aspect required for learning (Vygotsky 1962).

Language learning is, however, a very specialist field. Learning a first language (L1) is quite a different process from learning a second (L2) or any subsequent language. Krashen (1981) claimed that humans learn their L1 by listening attentively to spoken language that seems meaningful in natural settings due to repetition. The learners' first words evolve by reinforcement of accidental sounds. Learning a second language requires the development of skills and knowledge in phonology (learning the L2 sound system and patterns of sound), morphology (learning how words are formed), syntax (learning the grammatical arrangements of words and how to structure sentences), semantics (combining words to create a logical discourse), and pragmatics (using speech to communicate in specific contexts).

Different theories seek to understand first and second language acquisition processes. Two of these have greatly influenced researchers in Second Language Acquisition and practitioners: Chomsky's Universal Grammar Theory and Krashen's second language acquisition hypotheses. These are outlined below.

### **2.1.1 Chomsky's Universal Grammar Theory**

According to Universal Grammar Theory, language development is genetically predestined as all human beings share a rich set of innate structures (Chomsky 1986). This theory is based on the belief that a structural basis of a limited set of principles, rules (Chomsky 1965, 1980, 1986) or 'parameters' (VanPatten and Benati 2010, p. 161) is present when a language develops, these parameters creating what is referred to in the literature as Universal Grammar (Cook 1985). Language is produced in one part of the brain by a Language Acquisition Device (LAD) where language develops (Chomsky 1965). The LAD is a hypothesised organ of the brain that is expected to

function as a congenital device to acquire a language. Learners' instinctive language abilities are developed in their brains and they totally depend on the environment and the ecological factors, discussed in Section 2.2.1 on page 25, through which this language is practised (Chomsky 1986). Chomsky believed that grammatical structures and linguistic competence are instinctively acquired by children using the Language Acquisition Device (LAD) (Blake 2008).

### **2.1.2 Krashen's hypotheses**

Although Chomsky's universal grammar theory was not focused on the acquisition of a second language (van Lier 2004), second language researchers (Krashen 2007; Brown 2000) widely accepted it (White 2003). For Krashen (2007) and Brown (2000), there is no major difference between the process of acquiring a first language and subsequent languages and learners have an innate ability that guides the process of language learning. According to Krashen (2007), however, language acquisition does not need massive use of conscious grammatical rules, nor does it need drilling. Krashen developed a broadly recognized second language acquisition theory which comprises of five key hypotheses:

- Acquisition-Learning hypothesis: language development happens either through acquiring it subconsciously or learning it consciously;
- Input hypothesis: language learners acquire the language by being exposed to comprehensible spoken or written language (input);
- Monitor hypothesis: learners monitor and correct their own language output through the rules they have learned;
- Natural Order hypothesis: learners acquire languages in a predictable order which does not depend on the way they perceive the languages' grammatical aspects;
- Affective Filter hypothesis: if the input is influenced by filters (e.g. ecological factors such as low motivation, anxiety.etc.), the language will not be acquired (Romeo 2003).

Some aspects of Krashen's Acquisition-Learning hypothesis, Monitor hypothesis and Natural Order hypothesis, which are relevant to teaching and learning writing in English as a second language to Arab learners, are briefly presented below.



## **Acquisition Learning Hypothesis**

Krashen's Acquisition-Learning hypothesis is based on two fundamental processes by which linguistic skills are developed; acquisition or the 'acquired system' and learning or the 'learned system' (Krashen 2003). Acquisition is the subconscious process of learning a language one is exposed to through meaningful interaction and natural communication, while learning entails formal and conscious instruction (Brown 2000). According to Krashen, 'acquisition' is more important than 'learning' (Krashen 2003). While native speakers are already immersed in the language, which makes it easier for them to acquire it, L2 learners strive to learn the language due to the expectations and language requirements of their contexts. Subconscious and conscious language acquisition and language learning processes entail that the rules for accuracy are taught in a language learning classroom but are not necessarily used appropriately (Krashen 1981). Language learners may perform well in formal grammar tests; nevertheless, they make mistakes that they do not make in the tests when focusing on content rather than form (Krashen 1982).

## **Natural Order Hypothesis**

The Natural Order hypothesis suggests that the acquisition of grammatical structures develops in a 'natural order' (Krashen 1994; Dulay and Burt 1974; Fathman 1975; Makino 1980 cited in Krashen 1987) and that errors are signs of naturalistic developmental processes that occur while acquiring a second language, but not while learning it (Krashen 1994). Some grammatical structures tend to be acquired in a predictable order; however, some ecological factors such as the learners' age, first language background, language exposure conditions and second language communication conditions are not thought to have an impact on the order of acquisition (Romeo 2003). For Ellis (1993), the Natural Acquisition Order Hypothesis oversimplifies the cognitive processes of learning which separate learning and acquisition.

## **The Input Hypothesis**

The Input Hypothesis argues that learners acquire language through the exposure to comprehensible input (VanPatten and Benati 2015; Krashen 2003). Learners acquire

a language through the continuous attempts to understand it (ibid). For learners to acquire language, negative feedback as well as formal instruction such as a focus on grammar should not be given to learners (ibid). Learners progress through the natural order hypothesis by comprehending input that has structure at the next stage they should reach beyond their current level (Krashen 2003). With the help of context, learners get to understand language that contains unacquired grammar (ibid).

### **Monitor Hypothesis**

Krashen's Monitor Hypothesis describes the connection between acquisition and learning and proposes that when second language learners plan, edit or correct their learned language, they subconsciously monitor and filter their language especially their learned grammar (Krashen 2003). In line with the Monitor Hypothesis, Lightbown Spada, Ranta and Rand (1993) believe that a "learned system acts as a monitor, making minor changes and polishing what the acquired system has produced" (p.27). Gass and Selinker (1994) state that Krashen identified three essential elements to facilitate using a monitor. These factors are time, focus on form, and knowledge of the rules. According to Krashen (1994) second language learners exploit the monitor differently based on their individual differences (McLaughlin 1989). Some learners are called *over-users* as they monitor all the time so there is no hesitation in their speech and they tend to correct themselves (Krashen 1994). Other learners are classified as *under-users* because they have not learned how to utilize the monitor or they choose not to exercise their language knowledge consciously (Krashen 1994). Language learners who use the monitor appropriately are classified as "optimal users" (Krashen 1994).

### **Affective Filter Hypothesis**

Krashen's affective-filter hypothesis originates from the term affective delimiters proposed by Dulay and Burt (1977). This particular hypothesis states that the required input for acquiring a second language is obstructed or allowed through a number of 'affective variables' such as motivation, anxiety and self-confidence which operate as filters (Krashen 1988). According to Krashen (1994), second language learners who succeed in acquiring a second language have high motivation, self-confidence, a good self-image, and a low level of anxiety as these work as a lower

affective filter that enable “subconscious language acquisition” (Krashen 1994, p. 58). Conversely, negative emotions function as a filter between the speaker and the listener and they impede effective language input processing (Krashen 2003). Krashen (1982) states that the lowering of the affective filter can be thwarted by getting students to speak prior to receiving satisfactory comprehensible input based on their individual needs and by rectifying their errors in the very early stages.

English language teachers have supported this hypothesis because it helps them design appropriate environments in which the second language can be acquired by learners.

### **2.1.3 Discussion**

Many language acquisition theories address the factors of the acquisition process. The two language acquisition theories addressed in this chapter have given moderately changing weights on different factors in approaching the acquisition process as can be seen in the previous subsections. Each has been criticised differently. Not all researchers agree with Krashen’s hypotheses, arguing that second language learning can also occur in a formal setting without communicating directly in the target language. Indeed, Gass and Selinker (2001) note that Krashen did not provide any support to prove that acquiring and learning are two distinct systems. Also, it is clear that writing in L2 has not been addressed in any of the hypotheses discussed.

The Monitor hypothesis, for example, is criticized for its claims that the monitor is merely present in the learned system. Also, McLaughlin (1989) asserts that showing evidence of Monitor use is challenging:

“People have rules for language use in their heads, but these rules are not those of the grammarian. People operate on the basis of informal rules of limited scope and validity. These rules are sometimes conscious and sometimes not, but in any given utterance it is impossible to determine what the knowledge source is” (McLaughlin 1989, p.30).

Determining how the monitor operates through learners' production of correct forms in the target language and the causes for their production is impractical if possible at all. Furthermore, according to Gass and Selinker (2001), monitoring is not limited to learned knowledge. According to them, second language learners monitor their language production at all times, except when they seek comprehension (Krashen 2003). Along the same lines, the Natural Order Hypothesis is criticised for neglecting the influence of the first language on the second language and the function of positive and negative transferences in early thinking of 'natural order' (Zobl 1980, 1982). Moreover, the Input Hypothesis is critiqued and cannot be tested as the comprehensible input cannot be described since it varies from learner to learner (McLaughlin 1989). In reviewing the evidence that comprehensible input causes acquisition, Ellis (1994) argues that the process of comprehension needs to be more carefully defined. White (1987) asserts that the input hypothesis lacks accuracy and criticizes Krashen's hypothesis that acquisition is based on simplified input stating that "one might argue that many forms of simplified input would result in  $i - 1$ , rather than  $i + 1$ !" (p. 96). In terms of the Affective Filter Hypothesis, McLaughlin (1989) criticized this as the affective filter hypothesis does not explicate the reason why motivated learners have difficulty learning a second language nor does it offer any explanation as to "how this filter works" (Gass and Selinker 2001, p.202).

It seems that neither Chomsky's Universal Grammar nor Krashen's hypotheses have given rise to pedagogies of L2 writing. Second language learning linguistic models have been widely used to establish research on teaching ESL writing. Cognitive and sociocultural theories have made more significant contributions to second language pedagogy addressed above. An overarching theory which addresses how languages are learnt is yet to be accepted by researchers and the debate is far from being over (Selinker 1972; Corder 1967; Krashen 1981; Chomsky 1986; Lantolf 2000; Shakouri and Rezabeigi 2015; Granena and Long 2013; Vanhove 2013).

Many language teachers (Mahmoud 2016; Al-Jarrah and Al-Ahmad 2013; Sabet, Tahriri, and Pasand 2013) consider learning how to write in a second language more complex than the other language skills of speaking, reading or listening because writing is a continuum of formulating and transforming information practices. This is particularly true for Arab ESL students as evidenced by Dana and many other

Bahraini students who experience writing challenges that traditional rote-learning methods do not address.

The reasons behind a weak written English language output need to be considered in order to better understand the source of errors (Al-Hamad 2003; Sheehan 2002).

## **2.2 Why is it difficult to learn a second language?**

Learning a second language is complex because of the new cognitive frameworks it involves. Many factors influence learners when learning a second language which could be socio-demographic factors, motivational factors, L1 interference factors or L2 difficulty factors. These influences will be discussed thoroughly below.

### **2.2.1 The influence of socio-demographic factors**

The ecological approach of student development identified in Coutts and Dismal's work on Bahrain Polytechnic students' career development (2013) aligns with the socio-demographic factors in Ellis (2005). Ellis (2005) suggests age, gender, social class and ethnic identity as four social factors that influence L2 learning. Learners who start L2 learning at adolescence cannot acquire the same accent as native speakers. Besides, L2 learners' grammatical ability will not develop at the same level of native speakers even if they started learning the language at an early age. In terms of gender as a social factor, females might be better L2 learners and more receptive to linguistic forms than men. Moreover, social class is connected to L2 development as middle-class children's L2 proficiency was far better than learners from lower and working-classes. Added to that, L2 learners' ethnic identity affects their L2 learning especially if the learners' L1 is similar to that of L2. Learners whose attitude is positive towards their individual identity as well as the L2 culture are more likely to progress in L2 and their motivation also develops (Ellis 2005).

### **2.2.2 Motivation**

Motivation is an important concept in education, but there is little consensus in the literature as to what it really refers to (Dörnyei 2009). For Dörnyei and Csizér (2006), motivation is a complex concept. The components of motivation are varied

and include cognitive, social and cultural factors, as well as personal and situational differences (Belmechri and Hummel 1998).

The concept of motivation was first examined from a behavioural perspective in an attempt to understand one's instincts, needs and drive (Weiner 1990). Humans' desired behaviour was simulated through rewards which proved to be irrelevant in academia (ibid). Piaget's cognitive developmental theory indicates that motivation is associated with society, maturation and equilibration as a mechanism for learning change (Kessen 2013, cited in Mischel 2013). In addition, Piaget considers other human beings associated with the learners, especially their parents, influential to learners' motivation (ibid). Piaget adds that the role of people, e.g. parents, around learners' cognitive development could work as reinforcing agents or else as problems or posers of problems to be solved (ibid). The development of cognitive approaches directed the focus on the reasons of learners' engagement in learning tasks more than the concentration on the learning task and the time spent accomplishing it believed by behaviourists (Rueda and Dembo 1995).

Second language learners face motivational challenges when learning how to write in their L2. The social and cultural effects on L2 learning motivation was introduced in Krashen's (1981). In Gardner's (2013) socio-educational model, motivation is an amalgamation of the motivational intensity or effort, desire and attitudes to learn a language. Gardner (2013) divided motivation into instrumental motivation (e.g. employment, high salary, academic achievement and passing assessments) and integrative motivation (e.g. desire to communicate with L2 native speakers). The latter was criticised by some scholars (Taie and Afshari 2015; Dörnyei 2003; Crookes and Schmidt 1991), who criticised its definition which has been understood differently by the different researchers. Also, integrative motivation indicates that L2 learners who have encounters with L1 learners are better learners, which cannot be overgeneralised since it does not consider geographical, social or cultural aspects (Taie and Afshari 2015; Dörnyei 2003; Crookes and Schmidt 1991). Some researchers think integrative motivation presents some risks to learners' identities since it suggests that good learners are those who desire to adopt a new identity and disregard their own (Taie and Afshari 2015; Dörnyei 2003; Crookes and Schmidt 1991). Second language learners' psychological, behavioural, social and cultural complexities are addressed in L2 motivation research (Ushioda 2011). Globalisation

as well as the English language as a world lingua franca, for example, made learning English a basic educational must (Taie and Afshari 2015; Dörnyei 2003; Crookes and Schmidt 1991). This has consequently affected the traditional social psychological concepts of L2 learners with no clear indication of a specific L2 community (Taie and Afshari 2015; Dörnyei 2003; Crookes and Schmidt 1991).

Writing as a difficult skill includes various lower- and higher-order psycholinguistic activities (Troia et al. 2013). Due to the fact that writing is a complex task, being positively motivated towards it might be hard to achieve (ibid). Motivation has a great influence on learning the writing process and on the written product (Bruning and Horn 2000 in Hashemian and Heidari 2013). Having authentic reasons for writing, such as using it as an intellectual or social activity, has motivational consequences (Potter, McCormick and Busching 2001 in Hashemian and Heidari 2013). In their study, Hashemian and Heidari (2013) indicated the existence of a relationship between their subjects' integrative motivation and the writing skill as well as a relationship between positive attitude and the writing skill. However, no relationship between negative attitude and success in second language writing was found (ibid).

A number of researchers (e.g., MacArthur, Philippakos and Graham 2016; Hidi and Boscolo 2006) investigated the relationships between writing achievement and motivation. In their study to develop and validate a measure of motivation for use with basic college writers, MacArthur, Philippakos and Graham (2016) found that measuring self-efficacy, achievement goals, beliefs, and affect is essential. Research on writing motivation has largely focused on self-efficacy (MacArthur, Philippakos and Graham 2016). Self-efficacy influences learners' choice of tasks, commitment, perseverance when facing difficulties, and responses (Bandura 1986, 1997; Pajares 1996 in MacArthur, Philippakos and Graham 2016). Learners have a tendency to work on tasks in which they have knowledge and avoid activities which they think are above their capabilities (MacArthur, Philippakos and Graham 2016). Learners with low confidence feel anxious and consequently affect their performance (ibid). Self-efficacy is found to consistently correlate with writing achievement (ibid). In writing, goals orientation has also been considered along with self-efficacy and related constructs (ibid). Mastery goals interrelated positively with self-efficacy unlike avoidance goals which correlated negatively with self-efficacy (ibid).

Peers have also a significant impact on learners' motivation as well as affecting their engagement and achievement (Furrer, Skinner and Pitzer 2014). Peers who share experiences, communicate with each other and support each other emotionally and respectfully develop a bond with their peers and feel that their peers understand and care for them (ibid). Classroom peers provide contextual affordances that can support academic competence (Wentzel 2009 in Furrer, Skinner and Pitzer 2014). For instance, when interacting with peers, learners communicate with each other, offer and get feedback, demonstrate academic abilities, solve problems, offer advice, and develop mutual academic aims and social and interactive principles (Parr 2002; Wentzel 2009 in Furrer, Skinner and Pitzer 2014). Peers' instrumentally supportive interactions include sharing learning materials and promote autonomy, feelings of competence as learners acknowledge the fact that they can depend on their peers for information and assistance (Furrer, Skinner and Pitzer 2014). Peers who attempt to understand their partners' points of view can promote each other's autonomy (Youniss and Haynie 1992 in Furrer, Skinner and Pitzer 2014). However, they might fail to meet their peers' requirements if they are hostile and show rejecting interactions (e.g. rejecting friendships), confusing interactions (e.g. telling lies, teasing), or coercive interactions (e.g. manipulative, controlling) (Furrer, Skinner and Pitzer 2014). These peer interactions interfere with students' academic motivation and performance ability to attain academic competencies, devalue peers' preferences and weaken their sense of autonomy and motivation (ibid).

### **2.2.3 The influence of the first language: interlingual errors**

Written structural errors in English are often associated with students' carelessness and their lack of familiarity with L2 rules (Zreg 1983), and with their inability to analyse the cause of their errors (Bataineh and Bataineh 2009). However, some researchers believe that these errors are due to the influence of the learners' first language (L1) on their second (L2) (Grami 2012; Al-Yaari, Al Hammadi and Alyami 2013; Heydari and Bagheri 2012; Abdulkareem 2013), and more specifically to language transfer, also known as L1 interference.



Language transfer occurs when “learners’ performance in a second language is influenced by the language, or languages, that they already know” (Mitchell and Miles 2004 p. 19) and when elements of one language are incorporated into another (Kellerman 1987, cited in Ellis 1994, p. 301). It is “the influence resulting from the similarities and differences between the target language and any other language that has been previously (and perhaps imperfectly) acquired” (Odlin 1989, cited in Ellis 1994 p. 301). According to Gass and Selinker (1983), “there is overwhelming evidence that language transfer is indeed a real and central phenomenon that must be considered in any full account of the second language acquisition process” (p. 7).

First language interference and its influences on second language learning processes have been highlighted by Lado’s early work (1964), where *interference* is defined as the negative effect of the first language (L1) on the performance of the target language (L2). Interference is thus one of the factors leading language learners to produce errors that “can be traced back to the L1” (Lott 1983 p. 256).

Errors that can be attributed to the influence of the first language are called, often interchangeably, interference errors, transfer errors, or interlingual errors (Sari 2013). Interlingual error was coined to refer to errors that occur when language learners’ L1 habits (e.g. rules, patterns and systems) interfere and impede acquiring the rules of L2 (Corder 1981). For Keshavarz (1999) and Chelli (2014), interlingual errors result from the transfer of learners’ mother-tongues phonological, morphological, and semantic elements to the learning of L2.

Interlingual errors or language transfer errors are classified into positive and negative transfer. Positive transfer arises when the structures of learners’ L1 and the target language are similar and learners either face little or no difficulty in using the target language (Powell 1998). Partial similarities between learners’ L1 and L2 often mislead them (Nunan 1992). Second language learners whose L1 is similar to the target language show more interference than those whose L1 has fewer features that are similar (Albert and Obler 1978). On the other hand, negative transfer emerges when structures are different in both languages, and its effects are generally recurrent in the early stages of learning a second language (Brown 1980). For Spada and Lightbown (1999), “the transfer of patterns from the native language is undoubtedly

one of the major sources of errors in learner language” (p. 165), a finding congruent with the earlier work of Platt, Platt and Richards (1992).

#### **2.2.4 The difficulty of the second language: intralingual errors**

Not all errors are due to L1 interference. The reasons vary with relevance to students’ socio-demographic factors (Ellis 2005), students’ motivation which include cognitive, social and cultural factors, as well as personal and situational differences (Belmechri and Hummel 1998), students’ carelessness and their lack of familiarity with L2 rules (Zreg 1983) as well as their incompetence examining the cause of their errors (Bataineh and Bataineh 2009).

Some errors are due to the difficulty of the second language and are known as intralingual (Touchie 1986). Intralingual errors can be divided into seven categories: overgeneralization, hypercorrection, false analogy, exploiting redundancy, misanalysis and overlooking co-occurrence (James 2013). He identifies *overlooking co-occurrence restrictions* as where students ignore specific words that go together (p. 186) whereas *misanalysis* is the condition by which learners have made an unfounded supposition about the second language and are using it (p. 185).

*Overgeneralizations* are “instances where the learner creates a deviant structure on the basis of his experience of other structures of the target language” which happen when grammatically correct structures are combined to produce a grammatically incorrect structure (Richards 1971, p. 174). For Brown (1980), overgeneralization represents the *intralingual negative transfer* in language learning where ESL learners produce an unusual structure based on their experience of the second language namely their lack of knowledge in rule restrictions and application of rules. Second language learners employ overgeneralization by overusing a certain form and not using much of the others (James 2013).

*Hypercorrection* occurs when learners over-monitor their second language output and demonstrate an excessive vigilance of language rules (James 2013). Furthermore, *false analogy*, or hypothesized false concepts, is another type of

intralingual error. It occurs when learners build the faulty hypothesis that certain forms function like others that are already mastered.

Although this research into types of errors was done last century, the experience in Bahrain would suggest that the Interlingual category is still useful today. This is supported by recent work done in Spain by Cabrera and Zubizarreta (2005) and Chang and Zheng (2015). The difficulties in learning English as a second language and then producing written outcomes are challenging here in Bahrain, aspects that will be explored further in Section 2.3 on page 31.

## **2.3 Arabic ESL Learners' Written Errors**

Arabic learners of ESL writing tend to produce errors in the use of articles, prepositions, verb forms and tenses, and punctuations. These errors have been largely attributed in the international literature (e.g. Barry 2014; Al Murshidi 2014; Alsamadani 2010; Shehata 2008; Hamdi 2008; Alamin and Ahmed 2012; Abushihab, El-Omari and Tobat. 2011; Holloway, and Horton-Murillo 1992; Hajjaj and Khrama 1989; Hendrickson 1978; Scott and Tucker 1974) to interlingual and intralingual errors.

However, whilst there has been much research done on Arabic ESL/EFL learners' difficulties (see for example Alsamadani 2010; Shehata 2008; Oxford, Holloway, and Horton-Murillo 1992; Hendrickson 1978), there is limited research on the classification of errors that are thought to be the result of Arabic interference. Furthermore, few researchers have grappled with the challenges of how to resolve interference errors, especially in the Bahraini context. Consequently, Arabic students, including Bahrainis, still encounter serious problems in their English-writing. In this section, the common errors made by Arabic students in the use of articles, prepositions, verb forms and tenses and punctuation are detailed more fully, with an invented example by the researcher of the specific error followed by the accurate forms and the Arabic translation to illustrate how the transfer from Arabic to English causes the error to surface. The following sections call heavily on the seminal works of Khrama and Hajjaj (1989) because, at the time of writing, there was little published research about these aspects in Bahrain.

### 2.3.1 Articles

Articles, and more specifically the use of definite and indefinite articles, pose great difficulty for Arabic speaking ESL learners, and this is thought to be due to L1 interference (Al Murshidi 2014; Hamdi 2008; Alamin and Ahmed 2012; Abushihab, El-Omari and Tobat. 2011; Hajjaj and Khrama 1989; Scott and Tucker 1974). This is due to the fact that Arabic uses a binary system for indicating definiteness and indefiniteness whereas in English a tripartite system is used (Alamin and Ahmed 2012; Alhaysony 2012; Crompton 2011; Jassem 2012; Hajjaj and Khrama 1989). There are many different types of problems with the use of articles and the common errors are illustrated in the following examples. In each example of misuse of an article, firstly the common errors made by Arabic students in general are given followed by the accurate forms and the Arabic translation to show the transfer from Arabic to English causing the error to surface.

Firstly, in Arabic, the indefinite articles are used with plurals or before nouns beginning with a consonant:

- a) <sup>1</sup>\* In conclusion, these changes in our culture have a positive and negative sides.

(In conclusion, these changes in our culture have positive and negative sides.)

وفي الخاتمة، هذه بعض التغييرات السلبية و الايجابية في عاداتنا.

- b) \* Families are always facing arguments and problems, family members are spirited and not like before, because they don't face their problems to find an solution.

(Families are always facing arguments and problems, family members are spirited and not like before, because they don't face their problems to find a solution.)

تمر العائلات دائماً بمشاكل ولكن افراد العائلة ليسوا كالروح الواحدة كما في الماضي و ذلك لأنهم لا يواجهون مشاكلهم لأيجاد الحل.

Arabic has a definite article [ال] and zero or no article while the English system employs *a*, *an*, *the* and *zero* (Alhaysony 2012; Crompton 2011; Jassem 2012; Khrama and Hajjaj 1989). The absence of *a* and *an* in Arabic leads ESL learners to

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<sup>1</sup> \*This symbol will be consistently used throughout the thesis to refer to inaccurate language structures.

associate them and the zero condition with the Arabic *zero* article (Alhaysony 2012; Crompton 2011; Jassem 2012; Khrama and Hajjaj 1989). For example,

- a) \*She is ^ teacher. Instead of  
(She is a teacher) هي معلمة.
- b) \*She gave him a good advice.  
(She gave him good advice.) لقد اعطته نصيحة جيدة.
- c) \*Hamad was ^ great lawyer.  
(Hamad was a great lawyer.) حمد محام رائع.

The definite article is often used in Arabic where it is not applicable in English (Alhaysony 2012; Crompton 2011; Jassem 2012; Khrama and Hajjaj 1989). For instance, abstract nouns are normally preceded by the definite article in Arabic, but not as much in English (Jassem 2012; Khrama and Hajjaj 1989). Below are some examples:

- a) \*The happiness comes from loving people.  
(Happiness comes from loving people.) السعادة تأتي من حب الناس.
- b) \* \*^Difficult childhood can be a reason for men and women to give up.  
(A difficult childhood can be a reason for men and women to give up.)  
المرور بطفولة صعبة قد تكون سبب يأس بعض الرجال و النساء.

The Arabic article is repeated when two nouns are joined by *and*, but in English a determiner may modify two nouns if considered as one unit.

**Table 2.1 A comparison between the use of articles in Arabic and English**

English	Arabic
The father and mother	The father and the mother الام و الأب

Mass nouns are another category where the Arabic definite article is used as mass nouns indicate the type of the nouns (Alhaysony 2012; Crompton 201; Jassem 2012; Khrama and Hajjaj1989). For example,

- a) \*The silver is less expensive than the gold.  
(Silver is less expensive than gold.) الفضة أقل سعراً من الذهب.
- b) \*The milk is good for building the body.  
(Milk is good for building the body.) الحليب مفيد لبناء الجسم.
- c) \*The plate is made of the glass.  
(The plate is made of glass.) الصحن مصنوع من الزجاج.

Also, English proper nouns do not take the English definite article, while they do in some instances in Arabic:

- a) \*The Bahrain is an island. (Bahrain is an island.) البحرين جزيرة.  
b) \*Our plan was to look for a nice gift for the mother's day. (Our plan was to look for a nice gift for mother's day.) ان هدفنا البحث عن هدية جميلة بمناسبة عيد الأم.

Nouns in Arabic, whether singular or plural, are preceded by the definite article. Conversely, English nouns appear in three different forms (Jassem 2012; Khrama and Hajjaj 1989).

**Table 2.2 The use of articles and the conjunction and in Arabic and English**

English	Arabic
The cow is a useful animal.	The cow is a useful animal. البقرة حيوان مفيد.
A cow is a useful animal.	
Cows are useful animals.	

Some examples of the same error made by Arab ESL learners are:

- a) \* In my opinion they have to choose jobs that they can manage their time between the work and the children.

(In my opinion they have to choose jobs so that they can manage their time between work and children.)

في رأيي الشخصي، يجب عليهم انتقاء الأعمال التي يستطيعون من خلالها ادارة وقتهم و أطفالهم.

- b) \* First of all, the mothers these days start to work, because they feel bored at home.

(First of all, mothers these days start to work, because they feel bored at home.)

أولاً، تعمل الامهات في الوقت الحاضر لشعورهن بالملل.

- c) \* The student will wake up at the early morning and makes sure that he must attend the classes on time.

(The student will wake up early morning and makes sure that he attends the classes on time.) يستيقظ الطالب مبكراً و يتأكد من حضوره للصف في الوقت المحدد.

- d) \* We planned to go to ^ cinema.

(We planned to go to the cinema.) لقد قررنا الذهاب الى السينما.

The structure of the genitive in English displays the noun as the first element unlike Arabic, where the noun is the second element. When the second element is definite,

it adds definiteness to the first element and the definite article is not used (Hameed and Yasin 2015; Jassem 2012; Khrama and Hajjaj 1989):

- a) \*The change was ^ result of the war.

(The change was the result of the war..التغيير كان سبب الحرب)

- b) \*This was ^ idea of the doctor.

(This was the idea of the doctor.).كانت هذه فكرة الطبيب)

Finally, the definite article is omitted in certain idiomatic expressions in English while it is used in their Arabic equivalent (Khrama and Hajjaj 1989). These expressions are mainly related to the use of Arabic adverbs of time, nouns used to refer to meals, transportation, and medical terms referring to diseases. Below are some examples:

- a) \*They work from the dawn to the dusk.

(They work from dawn to dusk.).انهم يعملون من الفجر الى المغرب)

- b) \*She suffers from the diabetes.

(She suffers from diabetes.).انها تعاني من السكري)

- c) \*They have had the dinner.

(They have had dinner.).لقد تناولوا عشاءهم)

- d) \*Are you going by the bus or the car?

(Are you going by bus or car?)هل ستذهب بالباص ام بالسيارة؟)

### 2.3.2 Prepositions

Prepositions are among the very commonly used functional words in many languages. Sentences are rarely constructed without prepositions, which makes their use of great significance and at the same time a challenging area of difficulty for second language learners of English (Khrama and Hajjaj 1989). Errors on use of prepositions are thought to be caused by L1 interference (Al-Bayati 2013; Al Khotaba 2013; Sawalmeh 2013; Grami and Alzughaibi 2012; Tahaineh 2010; Abushihab, El-Omari and Tobat 2011; Hourani 2008; Al-Buainain 2007) or by an inadequate competency in the L2 (Al-Bayati 2013; Al Khotaba 2013; Sawalmeh 2013; Grami and Alzughaibi 2012; Tahaineh 2010; Abushihab, El-Omari and Tobat 2011; Hourani 2008; Al-Buainain 2007). In the case of Iraqi learners of English, Al-Bayati (2013, p. 15) reports that:

Iraqi EFL learners tend to select the improper prepositions where equivalents are not used in their L1, to delete prepositions where equivalents are not required in their L1, to add prepositions where equivalents are required in their L1, and to use the English prepositions properly where equivalents are there in their L1.

According to Khrama and Hajjaj (1989) two major reasons can be ascribed to the difficulties that Arab students have in selecting the correct preposition. The first reason is the complexity of the prepositional system in English where each preposition may show multiple relations such as in the use of *at* in the following sentences:

He is *at* school. (place)

What are they *at*? (disapproval)

*At* the age of 20 (age)

*At* half past seven (time)

*At* sixty kilometres an hour (rate of movement)

Equally, the same concepts can be shown by different prepositions such as the concept of time in:

At seven o'clock

On Thursday

On 23<sup>rd</sup> October

In October

In 1977

The second reason is Arab ESL learners' tendency to use literal translations from Arabic into English, thus confusing, for example, *at* and *in* (Al-Bayati 2013), as there is only one place preposition in Arabic في /fi/. Some examples of errors that are the result of literal translation are indicated in Table 2.3 on page 37 below:



**Table 2.3 A comparison of prepositions in Arabic and English (Adapted from Khrama and Hajjaj 1989 p. 77):**

English	Arabic	Arabic form
Accuse <i>of</i>	Accuse <i>with/ on</i>	يتهم ب
Afraid <i>of</i>	Afraid <i>from</i>	خائف من
Aim <i>at</i>	Aim <i>on/to</i>	تهدف إلى
Arrive <i>at</i>	Arrive <i>to</i>	التوصل إلى
Write <i>in</i> ink	Write <i>with</i> ink	الكتابة بالحبر
Prefer <i>to</i>	Prefer <i>with</i>	يفضل أن
Good <i>at</i>	Good <i>in</i>	جيدة في
Come/ go <i>by</i>	Come/ go <i>with/ in</i>	تعال / يذهب بها

Finally, collocations and phrasal verbs are also a source of difficulty for Arab learners of English. Many English words collocate with specific prepositions that are unpredictable (Khrama and Hajjaj 1989). This is also the case in Arabic, but “the Arabic preposition used with the Arabic equivalent of the English word is not always the same”, which makes it an error area (Khrama and Hajjaj 1989, p. 76). According to Mehdi (1981), Arab ESL learners tend to omit or wrongly select the prepositions from English due to their non-existence in Arabic. For example, the preposition *with* is missing in the sentence: \**On the other hand a lot of people disagree ^ women working.*

The meaning of many verbs in English changes when they are used with a preposition or an adverb (Aldukhayel 2014; Khrama and Hajjaj 1989) and cannot be guessed such as *hand in* (submit) and *hand out* (to distribute to a group of people). Phrasal verbs exist in Arabic but they do not have equivalences in English nor do they have a preposition that is the same as its Arabic equivalent (Khrama and Hajjaj 1989). For example, the verb *get* has different meanings based on the preposition attached to it, e.g., *get away* is different from *get on* or *get up*. Below are some examples of phrasal verbs and their structures in Arabic and English:

- The phrasal verb *get rid of* can be used as follows in English: The man got rid of the garbage. However, the Arabic equivalent can be glossed as \*The man got rid from the garbage.

يتخلص الرجل من القمامة.

- The phrasal verb *aim at* can be used as follows in English: She *aimed at* reaching there on time. However, the Arabic equivalent can be glossed as \*She aimed on reaching there on time.

ان هدفها أن تصل هناك في الوقت المحدد.

### 2.3.3 Verb Forms and Tenses

Other common errors due to interference from Arabic into English are sentence-level grammatical errors such those associated with the use of verbs (Gokhale and Sharma 2011; Al-Buainain 2007). Gokhale and Sharma (2011) claim that the main reason for verb errors is that Arabic verbs agree with their subjects in person, number and gender. Also, the auxiliary verb 'to be' is usually omitted by Arabic speaking ESL learners due to the lack of equivalent form in Arabic (Gokhale and Sharma 2011). Other frequent verb errors due to L1 interference concern tenses (Hamdi 2008; Sawalmeh 2013; Abushihab, El-Omari and Tobat 2011), and passive voice (Abushihab, El-Omari and Tobat 2011; Hourani 2008; Al-Buainain 2007).

English verb tenses and forms cause confusion to Arabic speaking ESL learners (Ho and Duong 2015; Aldukhayel 2014; Khrama and Hajjaj 1989). Five inflections can be applied in English verbs: base form, infinitive, past, -ing participle and -ed participle (Lee and Seneff 2008). The similar forms and tenses in English and Arabic lie in two areas only: Firstly, there are two "proper tenses" in Arabic and English, the present simple and the past simple (Khrama and Hajjaj 1989, p. 157); Secondly, the future can be indicated with the help of the auxiliary *shall* or *will* in English and with a similar form /sawfa/ سوف in Arabic. The continuous and perfect forms in Arabic exist but "cannot be easily associated with clear-cut expanded forms" like in English (Khrama and Hajjaj 1989, p. 157). The relationship between the form of the verb and the time of the action, or the state it describes, are other error areas for Arabic speaking ESL learners (Richards and Schmidt 2013), e.g., *\*I studied Arabic for 12 years*. which should be *I have studied Arabic for 12 years*. ( لقد درست اللغة العربية لمدة 12 سنة). Also, misusing the infinitive 'to + verb', particularly after modals, is another area of error. For example, Arabic speaking learners write *\*She can to jump* instead of *She can jump* which is a transfer from their first language "تستطيع أن تقفز" (Murad and Khalil 2015). A more detailed discussion of the errors in verb forms and tenses made frequently by Arab learners of English follows, covering auxiliary verbs, verb usage in forming questions, simple, progressive and past tenses, passive voice and punctuation.

## Auxiliary Verbs

Forming English auxiliary verbs differ from Arabic ones, which causes the confusion Arabic speaking ESL learners face. The difference in their form and use is outlined in Table 2.4 below.

**Table.2.4 Auxiliary verbs form differences in English versus Arabic**

English	Arabic	Errors as a result of the differences
There are 3 auxiliary verbs: To be, To do, To have	There is only one auxiliary verb: The past simple of to be	These differences cause three major errors when writing in English. <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The auxiliary verb is omitted.</li><li>2. An auxiliary verb is added unnecessarily due to their existence in L2.</li><li>3. 'to be' is used instead of the correct auxiliary.</li></ol>
Only the auxiliary verb agrees with the subject. This applies to finite verbs.	All verbs agree with the subject.	
Auxiliary verbs are used to form interrogatives.	Auxiliary verbs are not used to form interrogatives.	
Auxiliary verbs are required to form negatives using not.	Auxiliary verbs are not used to form negatives using not.	

## Forming Questions

Forming questions is also difficult for Arabic speaking ESL students (Al-Mekhlafi 2013). Common errors include auxiliary omission, auxiliary replacement, auxiliary subject agreement, verbal form concord, auxiliary subject inversion, auxiliary redundancy, wrong question word, and verb inverted. The errors in forming questions are mainly due to differences in the structures of question formation in L1 and the second language. Also, the nonexistence of the equivalent or counterparts of the verbs *be*, *do*, and *have*, and of the present perfect tense in Arabic are the main reasons for Arabic speaking ESL learners' difficulties using them (Al-Mekhlafi 2013). A common auxiliary error forming questions is the use of the auxiliary *be* instead of *do* as in the following example: *\*Is he work in a bank?* instead of *Does he work in a bank?* This type of error is mainly due to the nonexistence of both *is* and *does* in Arabic.

## Simple, Progressive (Continuous), and Perfect Verb Forms

There is a difference between time and tense, Obeidat (2014) explains, with time categorised as a universal concept to indicate the time of an action including past, present and future; while tense states the relationship between the form of the verb and the concept of time. Tense also indicates the actions' time, while *aspect* determines whether the action is completed or still on-going (Jarvie 1993). Twelve tenses in English are actually the result of combining tense and aspect, and these can be categorised into four divisions: simple, perfect, progressive and perfect progressive (Celce-Murcia 2002). Table 2.5 on page 42 below summarises the differences between Arabic and English verb forms and tenses (Khrama and Hajjaj 1989).

### Present Tense

The first errors committed by Arabic speaking ESL learners in the English verb-system are related to the fact that the present simple is not generally used for an in progress action at the time of utterance (Khrama and Hajjaj 1989). Arab speakers tend to add the auxiliary '*is*' instead of the inflection '*s*' for third person singular subjects, e.g. *\*The teacher is teach English.* instead of *The teacher teaches English.* In some cases, the third person singular rule is over-generalised. For example, *\*Fatima will feels better soon* instead of *Fatima will feel better soon* ( سوف تتحسن ) (فاطمة قريباً).

Arab learners of English also produce the present continuous form of a verb instead of the present simple due to the lack of its use in Arabic and over-generalising the use of the present continuous (Hajjaj and Karama 1989). Muftah and Rafik-Galea (2013) note that Arabic speaking English language learners have difficulty mastering the use of the third person singular present tense due to L1 interference, which is indicated by learners' omissions, substitutions and incorrect suffixation. For example, *\*She's always looking at it positively* instead of *She always look at it positively* (هي دائما تنظر اليه بايجابية).

Arabic does not have a formal equivalent of the present perfect. Thus, the past tense and a time reference are used to form an informal equivalent of the present perfect. This explains why the use of the present perfect in English is usually confused with the past tense, or lacks the past participle due to its nonexistence in Arabic.

This is illustrated by the example below:

\*This essay will look at this issue and how it *has effect* the society.

(This essay will look at this issue and how it has affected the society) ( هذا المقال سيركز ( على هذا الموضوع وتأثيراته على المجتمع.

**Table.2.5** *The differences in verb forms and tenses between Arabic and English*

Verb forms	English	Arabic	Errors as a result of the differences
Simple	<p>Present: The inflection –s is added to third person singular subjects. E.g. She eat<u>s</u> fish.</p> <p>Past: the inflection –ed is added to regular verbs while the whole form of irregular verbs changes. e.g. I watch<u>ed</u> the movie.</p> <p>Past habit is described with ‘used to+infinitive’ or ‘always+past form of the verb’ e.g. I <u>taught</u> the kids.</p>	<p>Present: The present simple form is not generally used for an in progress action at the time of utterance.</p> <p>Past: the past simple is used in Arabic to indicate a past action except for oaths and wishes. To refer to iterative action in the past, a verb phrase كان /kana/ which is the equivalent of the past <i>is used</i>. e.g. She is used to writing letters. هي متعوده على كتابة الرسائل.</p> <p>A past habit is described with the ‘past form of the verb to be+imperfect form of the verb’ e.g. It <u>is based</u> on their opinion. Arabic does not have regular and irregular verbs.</p>	<p>Confusion about which form to use.</p> <p>Incorrect addition of was/were before the verb for habitual past forms.</p>
Progressive	<p>The progressive or continuous form is expressed with the verb <i>to be</i> and the suffix –ing. e.g. He is reading.</p>	<p>Continuous actions are expressed in different ways according to when the action occurred. e.g. He is going now. سوف يذهب الآن.</p>	<p>Incorrect addition of was/were before the verb for habitual past forms.</p>
Perfect	<p>The perfect form is expressed with the auxiliary <i>have</i> followed by the past participle form of the verb. e.g. They haven’t been to Dublin since 2002.</p>	<p>Concepts expressed by the perfect tenses in English can be expressed with the past tense and a time reference. e.g. They haven’t been to Dublin since 2002. لم يذهبوا الى دبلن منذ 2002.</p>	<p>Incorrect addition of was/were before the verb for habitual past forms.</p>

## Past Tense

Arabic does not have regular and irregular verbs. This “causes a plethora of non-target-like forms produced by Arabic Learners of English while acquiring the simple past in English” (Mourssi 2012 p. 151). Irregular verbs are complex and cause many complications for ESL learners especially when some verbs can be regular and irregular at the same time (ibid.) such as: “Hang, hanged, hanged as in *The murderer was hanged*. (to kill or die, by dropping with a rope around the neck), and Hang, hung, hung as in *He hung the picture*. (to fix something –a picture- at the top so that the lower part is free)” (ibid).

### *Simple past*

Errors on simple past forms are thought to be caused by either transfer from Arabic or by the lack of English awareness and knowledge (Abu-Joudeh, Assasfeh, Al-Shaboul, and Alshboul 2013; Mourssi 2012). Seven categories have been identified as frequent errors made by Arabic speaking learners acquiring the simple past tense in English (Mourssi 2012 2013) as outlined in the examples below. In each example of misuse of verbs, firstly the common errors made by Arabic students in general are given followed by the accurate forms and the Arabic translation to show the transfer from Arabic to English causes the error to surface.

1. Using the root or simple present third person form (e.g., read, take, eats, needs), as shown in the following example:

\*Yesterday, I woke up at 8 o'clock. Then, I go on a picnic.

(Yesterday, I woke up at 8 o'clock. Then, I went on a picnic.)

بالأمس استيقظت عند الثامنة و بعد ذلك ذهبت في نزهة.

\*In the past men doesn't do the housework.

(In the past men didn't do the housework.)

في الماضي لم يكن الرجال يقومون بأية أعمال منزلية.

2. Using spoken target-like form in a written non-target-like form (e.g. *brook*, *wint*, *crayed*, *solled* instead of *broke*, *went*, *cried*, *stole*) as in \**The baby crayed*. instead of *The baby cried*.

3. Overgeneralization of –ed to irregular verbs (e.g. *drinked, swimed, eated* instead of *drank, swam, ate*); as in *\*They swimed in the pool.* instead of *They swam in the pool.*
4. Using verb *to be* + simple past, past participle or gerund. (e.g. *was ate, was drank, is operating* instead of *was eaten, was drunk, is operated*) as in *\*The girl was drank tea.* instead of *The girl drank tea.*
5. Mis-selection of the target-like verb from (e.g. *they was, she were, he were, the man were, the teacher were* instead of *they were, she was, he was, the man was, the teacher was*) as in *\*They was happy.* instead of *They were happy.*
6. Using blended forms:
  - A. Using *have, has* + *simple past or past participle* (e.g. *has went* instead of *has gone*)
    - \*I had drew a picture. (I had drawn a picture.)*
    - \* I haven't drank my tea. (I haven't drunk my tea.)*
  - B. Using *infinitive* + *past simple or past participle* (e.g., *to swam, to watched, to gone*)
    - \*I didn't know what to chose. (I didn't know what to choose.)*
7. Overgeneralizing a sub-rule of irregular simple past on other irregular simple past or regular simple past (e.g., *brang, stold, foul*) (Mourssi 2012).

## Passive Voice

In Arabic, the agent is deleted in the passive voice sentence, and the object of the equivalent active sentence (the patient) becomes subject. The verb كان “Kanna” is used before the stem, agent or other forms of the verb when narrating stories in Arabic (Mourssi 2012). This is the equivalent of the verb *to be (were)* in English (Mourssi 2012). Arabic speaking ESL learners tend to use the verb *to be* in the past (*was* or *were*) followed by the simple past, agent, past participle or gerund. Table 2.6 on page 45 below compares the two systems.



**Table 2.6 A comparison between the passive voice in English and Arabic**

English	Arabic	Errors as a result of the differences
The passive is formed with the verb to be and past participle. e.g. Dinner <u>is served</u> .	No auxiliary is used before the passive participle. e.g. Dinner <u>served</u> . (قُدِّمَ العشاء.)	The auxiliary verb is dropped. An incorrect form is used instead of the past participle.
The passive is used to emphasize the action when there is an agent. e.g. Dinner <u>is served</u> by my mother.	When the agent is mentioned, the sentence has to be active, not passive. e.g. Dinner <u>is served</u> by my mother. The agent ‘my mother’ functions as a subject in Arabic so adding it changes the voice from passive to active. Active: (قُدِّمَت /مَيَّ العشاء.) Passive: (قُدِّمَ العشاء.) the agent is removed.	The use of <i>with</i> instead of <i>by</i> .

### 2.3.4 Punctuation

The final, but most problematic category of frequent errors made in English by Arabic speakers is punctuation. Arabic speakers tend to produce more errors with English punctuation than other ESL students who use non-Romanized scripts (Siddiqui 2015; Dunlap 2012). Some texts produced by Arabic speaking ESL learners may have no punctuation at all (Siddiqui 2015; Hirvela Nussbaum and Pierson 2012). This is due to the fact that Arabic has very few punctuation marks. Arabic speaking ESL students join sentences excessively (Murad and Khalil 2015; Khrama and Hajjaj 1989). Also, capitalization does not exist in Arabic. Proper nouns or words at the beginning of sentences are not capitalized (Abisamra 2003) and there is no difference between upper and lower case (Sofer and Raimes 2002). These orthotypographical variances are significant as “they represent different ways of conceptualizing punctuation and can place a heavy learning burden on second language learners of English, especially as they attempt to transfer L1 punctuation knowledge to L2 contexts” (Hirvela Nussbaum and Pierson 2012, p. 14). Common punctuation errors produced by Arabic speaking ESL learners are: capitalization; the

use of colon; semicolon; apostrophe; question mark; full stop; and comma (Alamin and Ahmed 2012). Below are some examples of common punctuation errors:

- Full stop: \*Yesterday, I woke up at 11 am. (Yesterday, I woke up at 11 am.)  
(بالأمس استيقظت الساعة 11 صباحاً.)
- Apostrophe: Students' dont like that teachers' lessons.  
(Students don't like that teacher's lessons.) الطلاب لا يحبون دروس المعلم .
- Comma: \* After that^we went to my brother's stable to see the animals.  
(After that, we went to my brother's stable to see the animals.)  
بعد ذلك ذهبنا إلى اسطبل أخي لمشاهدة الحيوانات.
- Capitalisation: sam and i visited london last summer.  
(Sam and I visited London last summer.) زرت ووسام لندن الصيف الماضي .

## 2.4 Teaching L2 Writing and the Role of Feedback in the Writing Classroom

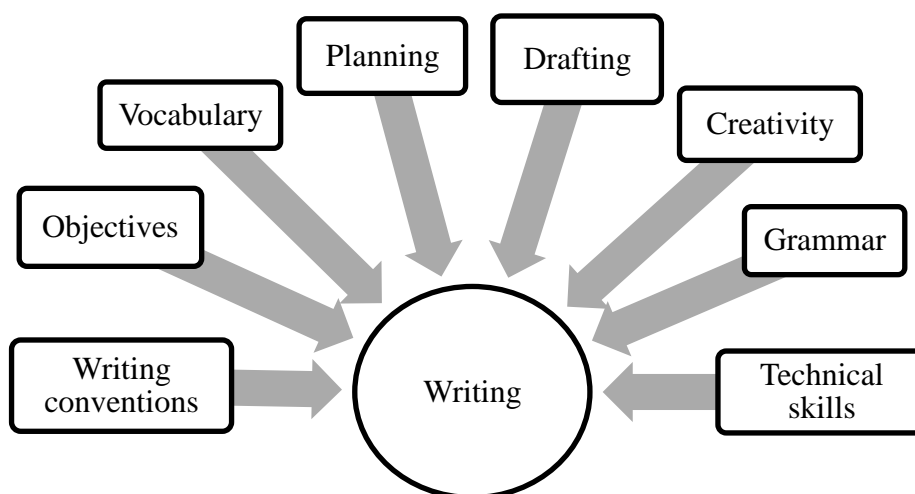
Writing, whether in a first or second language, is a skill which requires practice through experience, a principle that has been known for two decades or more, according to Grabe and Kaplan (1996). The interlanguage and transfer of a first language into a second language may contribute to linguistic and writing difficulties in a second language as indicated in Section 2.2 above on page 25. Different writing approaches are now explored to see the potential of their implementation in ESL writing contexts. There is also a need to examine the role of feedback and its impact on the learning of second language writing.

### 2.4.1 Writing in a Second Language

Writing is one of the most important skills in language learning (Weigle 2002). Matsuda (2001 and 2003) and Fujieda (2006) argue, however, it is a difficult skill to master. Because it is problematic, writing has been neglected since the rise of applied linguistics research on the influence of the audio-lingual approach in the mid

twentieth century. Writing is commonly perceived as a complicated skill and task (Graham, Harris and Mason 2005). All the identified elements that need to come together for the learner in order to write effectively in English as a second language are summarised in Figure 2.2 below.

**Figure 2.1 Writing skill elements**



Writing is a process to explore and visualize ideas, which can be “examined, reconsidered, added to, rearranged, and changed” (Jahin and Idrees 2012, p. 11). It has characteristics and attributes, which "range from mechanical control to creativity, with good grammar, knowledge of subject matter, awareness of stylistic conventions and various mysterious factors in between" (Wall and Petrovsky 1981, p.53). Writing is also considered as a problem solving technique, in which cognitive and linguistic skills are utilized in order to “identify a purpose, to produce and shape ideas, and to refine expression” (White 1995, p.3).

Writing is the demonstration of ideas and it entails great effort, attention and order (White 1987 cited in Long and Richards 2011; Smith 1989). It is the most challenging macro-skill for both native and non-native language learners (Kroll 2003). Omaggio Hadley (1993) describes writing as a range of activities that vary from simple mechanical notes to more complex compositions. Writing necessitates composing information in different genres — such as narratives, descriptions or argumentative essays — through writing processes such as brainstorming, planning, drafting, revising, editing (Myles 2002) or planning, writing, and reviewing (Rouhi and Azizan 2013; Flower and Hayes 1981).

Discourse analysis is ‘a study of language use beyond the sentence boundaries’ (Bhatia 2014, p. 3). Discourse analysis has a number of parameters in linguistics including theoretical orientation (e.g. grammatical formalism, semantics and pragmatics), general-specific (e.g. analysis of conversations, written discourse), application and surface-deep analysis (ibid). For Bhatia (2014) discourse analysis moved to deep description of language use instead of surface level to include socio-cultural and psycholinguistic aspects of writing through genre analysis. Written genre is shaped by the socio-cultural, institutional and organisational aspects in discourse processes (ibid).

Genre analysis has a deep-rooted tradition in literature enriching linguistics analysis (Bhatia 2014). It is a perceptive and dense description of academic and professional texts which has become an influential and beneficial tool to achieve form function correlations (ibid). Freedman and Medway (2003) stated that traditional definitions of genre concentrated on textual regularities distinguished by form and content conventions such as sonnet, tragedy and ode. On the other hand, recent genre research focuses on non-literary texts analysing and connecting regularities in discourse types (linguistic and substantive similarities) with a wider understanding of language in use in the social and cultural contexts.

Bhatia (2014) describes genre as

‘a recognisable communicative event characterised by a set of communicative purposes identified and mutually understood by the members of the professional or academic community in which it regularly occurs. Most often it is highly structured and conventionalised with constraints on allowable contributions in terms of their intent, positioning, form and functional value. These constraints, however, are often exploited by the expert members of the discourse community to achieve private intentions within the framework of socially recognised purposes’ (Bhatia 2014, p. 13).

For Swales (1990) genre is communicative events that share a number of communicative purposes recognised by the experts in the discourse community. This forms the structure of discourse and impacts the selection of content and style (ibid). The nature and construction of genre are impacted by the content, form, audience,

channel and communicative purposes which give genre its internal structure (ibid). Genre is shaped by the communicative aims of a community and the structure of genres generally used in a societal context to give it its internal structure (ibid). Authors or writers are expected to use certain linguistic resources and conform to the rules and written conventions of a particular genre (ibid). Paltridge (2014) stated that genres are open to change; however, any major exploitation in the genre conventions (e.g. using specific lexico-grammatical resources restricted for specific genres) would bring odd features to the genre used (Swales 1990).

The relationship between genre and register is still unclear (Swales 1990, Swales 1993). Register is 'a contextual category correlating groupings of linguistic features with recurrent situational features' (Gregory and Carroll 1978, p. 4 cited in Swales 1990, p. 40). Register is analysed according to three variables field (i.e. content and ideas), tenor (i.e. the relationship of participants) and mode (i.e. discourse or spoken or written communication method) (ibid). Genre and language are interconnected systematically (Paltridge 2014). The levels of genre and register are accountable for the meaning patterns found in texts (ibid).

Prescribed and structured teaching can help language learners manage these processes concurrently when producing new texts (Emig 1971). Adequate time should thus be allocated to develop second language learners' writing skills, Ismail argues (2011). This is recommended because second language learners normally write in L1 as whilst they are learning, they are still thinking in L1 and converting it (Vedder 1999; Akyel and Kamishi 1996). Also, a great deal of concentration is required for word choice that represents the desired meaning and is the best in devising complex ideas (Uzawa and Cumming 1989). Through the process of writing in their second language, students have also to learn how to manage their planning and revising and develop editing skills (Crossly and McNamara 2011 a and b). Teaching L2 writing thus entails teaching a comprehensive set of skills (Alber-Morgan, Hessler and Konrad 2007).

Scholars have debated whether accuracy or fluency should be the core of L2 writing instruction (Pincas 1962). The two key approaches that have resulted from this debate and influenced the EFL community are the product-oriented and the process-oriented approaches to L2 writing, which are outlined in the next sections.

## **2.4.2 Product-Oriented Approaches to L2 Writing**

According to Yiu (2009), product-oriented writing approaches have their origin in the audio-lingual method developed by Charles Fries in 1945. They are based on the mechanics of writing, such as focusing on grammatical and syntactical structures, on vocabulary, and on imitating models (Yang 2005; Gabrielatos 2002). These approaches focus primarily on accuracy and on the form of the final product (Steele 2004). The content and form of students' written productions remain largely under the control of the teachers whose primary role is to assess students' written performance (Zamel 1987).

A product-oriented writing approach is typically managed through sentence-level writing and paragraph-level organization, Raimes argues, noting that students are generally only allowed to write once they have "achieved near-native proficiency" (1985, p. 322). In the sentence-level L2 writing sessions, students follow a framework which offers composition organization models that they can follow and imitate (Chiang 2002; Brown 2001) while concentrating on grammatical rules and usage (Freedman and Sperling 1983). Writing is therefore primarily a means to practice grammar (Matsuda 2003; Homstad and Thorson 2000). Hyland (2003) describes a four-stage process that forms the basis of a product-oriented approach to the teaching of writing:

- Familiarization: Text-based grammar and vocabulary is usually taught to learners.
- Controlled writing: fixed patterns sourced from substitution tables are used by learners.
- Guided writing: model texts are imitated.
- Free writing: developed patterns are used to compose pieces of writing by learners.

According to Al-Hazmi and Scholfield (2007), the teaching of writing in the Arab world is generally product-oriented with a focus on structure and vocabulary. Students are given models to imitate and complete during class or as homework. Teachers tend to promote instruction about writing rather than writing skills (Al-Hazmi and Scholfield 2007; Al-Jamhoor 2005; Al-Shahrani 2004). Product-oriented writing is also the basis for the teaching of writing in the Japanese educational system where students are expected to apply correct grammar and use appropriate

vocabulary (Casanave 2003). Likewise, Porto (2001) claims that English programmes in Argentina's universities are following a product-oriented writing approach. Teachers adopting a product-oriented writing approach normally analyse the written product and focus on linguistic errors made by learners (Brown 1994). However, merely analysing and focussing on errors does not automatically promote fluency nor does it encourage revisions (Flower and Hayes 1981). As a result, Mahmoud (2016), Al-Jarrah and Al-Ahmad (2013), Raimes (1985) and Zamel (1982) advocate for a move in ESL from product-oriented to process-oriented approaches to writing, a recommendation that still persists today.

### **2.4.3 Process-Oriented Approaches to L2 Writing**

Students often require assistance in planning their writing (Sabet, Tahriri, and Pasand 2013). The process-oriented approach to L2 writing is “an approach to the teaching of writing which stresses the creativity of the individual writer, and which pays attention to the development of good writing practices rather than the imitation of models” (Tribble 1996 p.160). It consists in guiding language learners throughout the writing process and making them write multiple-drafts according to a pre-determined sequence of steps (Sabet, Tahriri, and Pasand 2013; Rouhi and Azizan 2013; Hedge 2001; Whitman and Demarest 1999; Johnston 1996; Keh 1990; Platt, Platt and Richards 1992). These steps can be grouped into four writing stages or phases: (1) generating ideas and pre-writing, (2) drafting, (3) revising and editing, and (4) publishing.

- **Stage 1: Generating ideas and pre-writing.** Pre-writing activities aim to enhance the quality of students' writing (Johannessen 1995), by encouraging them to understand the writing topic, to generate and exchange ideas, to organise their initial ideas with a view to producing a first outline of their text (Sabet, Tahriri, and Pasand 2013; Simpson 2013; Kingen 2000; Noskin 2000; Whitman and Demarest 1999).
- **Stage 2: Drafting.** Having generated ideas and organised them, students produce a first draft and focus primarily on content (Noskin 2000). This draft is likely to change before the text is finalised (Sabet, Tahriri, and Pasand 2013; Noskin 2000; Whitman and Demarest 1999).

- **Stage 3: Revising and editing.** Revising and editing involve modifying spelling, checking grammatical accuracy and punctuation, as well as possibly changing the content, following feedback received from reviewers, who can be teachers or peers (Sabet, Tahriri, and Pasand 2013; Van Steendam, Rijlaarsdam, Sercu and Van den Bergh 2010; Diab 2010; Dickson 2001; Lindsay 2000; Keh 1990).
- **Stage 4: Publishing.** The final version is now ready to be presented to its target audience (Kingen 2002).

The feedback received during the third stage of the writing process described above plays a fundamental role in the improvement of the initial draft. Due to the importance of this process, the role of feedback is further elaborated in the next section.

#### 2.4.4 Process-oriented Writing Empirical Studies

A number of studies investigated the benefits of process-oriented writing in L2 classrooms. Bennui (2016), for example, used the process-oriented approach with his Thai learners of English as a second language. Bennui found more negative transfer than positive transfer in the students' written English. He also found that literal translation of Thai words into English mainly represented features of L1 lexical interference in the students' written English. Another error area was the structural borrowing from students' L1 (Thai language) such as word order, subject-verb agreement, and noun determiners signposted L1 syntactic interference. Bennui (2016) recommended that aspects of L1 interference should be identified by English writing teachers to diminish negative transfer errors in L2. Another study conducted by Bosher (1990) investigated the use of error correction in a process-oriented writing classroom for Southeast Asian ESL students. The procedure engaged the students in a problem-based solving approach to correct their errors and found that students gain more control over their writing using the code corrections through the process-oriented writing approach.

Moreover, Alshammari (2016) investigated the benefits of the process-oriented approach for Saudi L2 learners. The study took into consideration the differences of the format of reasoning and rhetorical patterns in Arabic and English. Alshammari (2016) found that these differences created an inconsistency of rhetoric styles and interfered with the target rhetorical style of L2 (English). Results also indicated that



students improved significantly and outperformed their counterparts in the control group. The study implemented an instructional model on students' persuasive writing which enhanced students' knowledge of how to write an English language essay. It also educated the students on how to develop a self-regulated writing strategy and enabled them to elaborate when writing.

El-Aswad (2002) examined the writing processes of Arab Libyan ESL learners. The subjects in his study focused on grammar and vocabulary when writing in L2. The low level of linguistic knowledge and imperfect mastery of L2 were the reasons behind the students' inappropriate writing compositions. Another reason for the imperfect texts produced by students was the L1 interference errors especially in agreement, articles, prepositions, sentence order and punctuation. El-Aswad (2002) stated that the students in his study revised and edited their drafts more during the drafting process than they had in the final revision stage. He added that most students carried out internal revisions when writing with the majority paying more attention to lexical items and sentence construction than to idea generation. Another case carried out by Alnufaie and Grenfell (2013) explored the writing strategies of 121 second-year undergraduate Saudi EFL students. Both writing strategies (process-oriented writing strategies and product-oriented writing strategies) were investigated through a questionnaire. The results of the study showed that almost all of the participants mixed writing strategies, but mostly used the process-oriented writing approach. Alnufaie and Grenfell (2013) concluded that writing primarily is based on the students' interactions with the text, readers and writers of the text which does not allow any room for it to be isolated as either process or product activity.

In another attempt to employ process-oriented writing in an Arab ESL classroom, Rass (2015) investigated problems facing Palestinian Arab students in developing well-structured paragraphs in English. Rass (2015) found that students transferred the stylistic features of L1, Arabic, to the L2, English by writing long sentences with coordinating conjunctions, repeating and excessively elaborating. The findings showed that most of the students succeeded in writing topic and concluding sentences through the process-oriented writing but not supporting details. Rass (2015) also found that some students continued transferring the style of Arabic writing.

In addition, Mahmoud (2014) adopted a learner-centred approach to process-oriented writing with the focus on Arab Omani EFL learners' use of conjunctions. The findings showed that students' errors were mostly selection and insertion errors committed for interlingual and intralingual reasons. The findings of Mahmoud (2014) showed that even the students with vocabulary and grammar difficulties used most of the cohesive devices appropriately which could be due to positive transfer from Arabic which is students' L1. Mahmoud (2014) explained that the overuse of 'and' was recognised as negative interlingual transfer. He explained the correct use of the logical connectors by some students could be related to either 'systematic form-focused instruction, practice, revision and feedback, cognitive maturity, positive interlingual transfer, acquisition through exposure to the language, or positive intralingual transfer' (Mahmoud 2014, p. 180).

#### **2.4.5 The Role of Feedback in ESL Process-Oriented Writing**

Feedback can be in a written or oral form given by either teachers or peers (Min 2016; Thurlings, Vermeulen, M., Bastiaens, T. and Stijnen 2013; Ferris 2003; Hyland 1990). It can be divided into *content-level* and *surface-level* feedback, where content-level feedback generally comprises comments on the information to be deleted, reorganized or added, as well as questions intended to challenge the thinking of student, whereas surface-level feedback relates to grammatical accuracy and punctuation. According to Bitchener and Ferris (2011) and Hyland (2002), L2 learners produce more errors and different types of errors than native speakers do. Arab ESL learners are particularly concerned with the grammatical errors they make (Grami 2010), as are L2 learners in other ESL contexts, as illustrated by work with Chinese students (Tsui and Ng 2000) and German students (Schonagen 2008). ESL students are reported as viewing surface-level feedback, particularly grammatical feedback, as important and useful, expressing the desire to receive more corrections on their grammatical errors than they typically get (Yu and Lee 2015; Lee 2004; Lee 2008; Ashwell 2000). From the researcher's experience in Bahrain, such comments pose a huge dilemma for teachers, because whilst they recognise this request, limited student contact and workload issues commonly restrict the amount of teacher-feedback that can realistically be given, but also there are doubts about the value of this type of feedback. Therefore, it is worth further elaborating on this problem,

exploring written corrective feedback that does not involve significant amounts of class time, as well as other feedback forms, such as peer reviewing.

### **Written Corrective Feedback (WCF)**

The term *corrective feedback* refers to “any feedback provided to a learner, from any source that contains evidence of learner error of language form” (Russell and Spada 2006 p. 134). Written Corrective Feedback (WCF) on linguistic errors “does not involve extensive amount of class time” (ibid) as it is usually provided outside class (Esfandiar, Yaqubi and Marzban 2014). For more advanced learners, feedback can also be offered indirectly by underlining, circling, marking or highlighting errors with no codes, written or verbal comments (Alvarez, Espasa and Guasch 2012; van der Kleij, Eggen, Timmers and Veldkamp 2012; Maw 2011; Ferris and Roberts 2001). Indirect feedback is constructive and thought to positively improve learners’ writing (Ferris and Hedgcock 2004). It is often preferred by ESL professionals as it enhances guided learning skills and problem solving skills (Ferris and Roberts 2001). It also “forces students to be more reflective and analytical about their errors than if they simply transcribed teacher corrections” (Ferris 2002, p. 63).

A number of studies have shown that feedback can help students improve text content and form (Ellis 2009; Van den Bergh, Ros and Beijaard 2013; Alvarez, Espasa and Guasch 2012; Jigang 2011; Hyland 2003). With regards to surface-level feedback, and more specifically written corrective feedback *WCF*, researchers have however debated the value of error corrections (Van Beuningen, De Jong and Kuiken 2012, Bitchener and Knoch 2009 2010; Sheen, Wright, and Moldawa 2009; Ellis, Sheen, Murakami and Takashima 2008). Indeed, Truscott (1996) argues that grammar corrective feedback in L2 writing and identifying errors should be abandoned due to its ineffectiveness and harm, claiming that students will not use the same language structures in future writing. Similarly, Semke (1984) asserts that WCF has ineffective consequences in L2 writing in the long term. But not all researchers agree, and there is a significant body of thought in favour of written corrective feedback, which is argued, contributes not only to the enhancement of the text being reviewed, but also to the acquisition of L2 structures and the longer term development of language accuracy (Ferris 2016, Bitchener and Ferris 2011; Ferris

2011; Evans, Hartshorn and Strong-Krause 2010; Russell and Spada 2006). Studies conducted by Storch and Tapper (2007) show that language learners who use the feedback they have received on early drafts demonstrate better grammatical accuracy and an improvement in lexical complexity after one semester. Table 2.7 on page 58 below summarises the different types and characteristics of written corrective feedback as found in the literature.

### **Teacher Written Feedback**

Many studies regarding teacher-written feedback on L2 writing have examined students' use of and preference for different types of feedback (McMartin-Miller 2014; Lee 2014; Enginarlar 1993). Teacher feedback has been considered as a main element in the process-oriented approach as it offers "feedback on both content and form" (Joe 1992 p. 48). The process approach "helps students from the beginning stage of generating ideas to the final stage of refining the whole written discourse" (Joe 1992 p. 48). Hyland (2003) identifies six main categories of teacher written feedback. These focus on language form, content, text functions, creative expressions, writing process, and genre. Language teachers generally have been found to check ESL learners' vocabulary choices, syntactic patterns, and punctuation when the focus is on language structures while, interestingly, they tend to concentrate on the ideas of learners when the focus is on content. Also, language teachers attend to "constructing a functional and fluent text" when the focus is on text functions (Kontinen 2009, p. 9) whereas, when the focus is on creative expressions, personal ideas and styles of writing are monitored. Language teachers were found to focus on observing the writing process through which the learners plan the written production, specify the linguistic problem, and outline solutions, in other words, on the genre, which Hyland argues significantly, aids in teaching language learners communicative writing (2003).

So, it is concluded, teacher feedback should be employed to advise language learners about their errors as well as their improvements (Hyland and Hyland 2001). Language teachers should provide written feedback that addresses learners' written structure, content and style (Hyland 2003). More recent studies examining students' use of feedback have confirmed Ferris's earlier work (1995), which demonstrated

that students still believe teacher feedback is helpful and can improve L2 writing and grammar (Hendry, Bromberger and Armstrong 2011). Previous studies found ESL learners preferred teacher feedback, perceiving it as more useful and valuable than any other feedback forms (Hyland 1998; Gunn and Raven 2005), especially written comments and feedback (Conrad and Goldstein 1999). Students found teacher feedback particularly useful in enhancing their language and written skills (Weaver 2006).

Studies examining students' perceptions of, and preferences for, types of feedback have demonstrated that students do have strong opinions on both the amount and type of feedback given by their teachers. Different language learners react differently towards written teacher feedback. Many language scholars have focused on language structures in the feedback process, for example, Leki (1990), examines 100 ESL students for error correction in college-level writing classes, finding that the majority of students (67%) preferred that their teacher show the location of the error and provide a clue about how to correct it. A converse perspective is provided by Tyson (1999), who found that some learners ignore and disregard teacher feedback. Other studies found that many students read the feedback without incorporating the suggested comments in their drafts (Gunn and Raven 2005; Cohen and Cavalcanti 1990), something attributed to the fact that students are more interested in getting a grade than learning (Gilbert 1990). Indeed, Macdonald (1991) suggests that learners' reactions to teacher feedback totally depend on the grade awarded.

**Table 2.7 Comparison of Different Types of Written Corrective Feedback**

Written Corrective Feedback Types	Features	Authors
Focused	Focused WCF is correction provided for specific error types identified by the researchers for the study or based on individual writers' needs. Focused WCF is more useful than unfocused CF.	(Van Beuningen, De Jong, and Kuiken 2012; Bitchener and Knoch 2010, Sheen, Wright and Moldawa 2009; Ellis Ellis, Sheen, Murakami and Takashima 2008; Sheen 2002).
Direct	The correct form is provided. Direct WCF is valuable in language acquisition contexts where overall development of the language is the focus not just writing skill development. Direct WCF is valuable for writers with low language proficiency levels.	(Van Beuningen, De Jong, and Kuiken 2012; Bitchener and Knoch 2010; Ferris and Roberts 2001).
Indirect	Indirect WCF is useful for writing development. Indirect WCF indicates that errors have been made while opportunities for self-correction are given. Indirect WCF promotes learners' reflection and problem-solving skills and develops writing/self-monitoring ability.	(Ferris 2006; Hendrickson 1980).
Explicit	Explicit CF employs metalinguistic explanations e.g. codes. Explicit CF is valuable in ESL contexts which provide a great deal of formal grammar instruction. The codes, metalinguistic corrections or explanations may elicit prior knowledge.	(Bitchener and Knoch 2008 and 2010; Ellis Ellis, Sheen, Murakami and Takashima 2008; Sheen 2002; Ferris 2006; Bitchener, Young and Cameron 2005; Ferris and Roberts 2001).
Implicit	Implicit CF concentrates on meaning. Correction is elicited from the learners through repetition and recast.	(Ellis, Sheen, Murakami and Takashima 2008; Ellis, Loewen and Erlam 2006; Lyster and Ranta 1997)

In summary, then as Leki (1990) and associates writing last century found, many students consider the teacher the best source of help during the error correction process, a conclusion supported by the more recent work of Yang, Badger and Yu (2006), who observed how peer feedback and teacher feedback affect students' ESL writing and noted that teacher feedback was more accepted and led to better writing development. Students had a preference for receiving negative comments that indicated where their problems are (Nelson and Carson 1998). An earlier study by Enginarlar (1993) investigated the views and interests of students in the feedback procedure employed on written compositions and found that learners did not find the revisions interesting, though they preferred the teacher's involvement in the error correction process. It is noted that learners may pay more attention and respond more positively to teacher feedback if their tutors are non-judgemental and encouraging (Schunk and Usher 2012; Paulus 1999; Weaver 2006; Dodigovic 2005).

Despite all the benefits of teacher feedback, Zamel (1985) believes that there may be many deficiencies in the written comments of teachers in the LS contexts as they have been criticized by researchers as being over-general, vague, unspecified, contradictory, incomprehensible, meaningless to the students and idiosyncratic. The meaningfulness of some teachers' written feedback or "squiggles" can be restricted to teachers only (MacDonald 1991). This can also be evident with the mismatches between the written feedback provided by teachers on their written work and learners' interests due to the "unclear, inaccurate, and unbalanced" nature of the feedback provided (Cohen and Cavalcanti 1991, p.155). It is mainly because of the unstructured and negative comments given by teachers to students that they develop negative reactions and attitudes towards writing (Brimner 1982; Connors and Lunsford 1993). Moreover, the lack of positive, encouraging comments has also been given as a reason for student inattention to the feedback (Leki 1990). In contrast, Polio and Fleck (1998) and Sommers (1982) believe that teacher feedback and involvement may not have an important impact on students' writing. Cohen and Cavalcanti (1991) add that some teachers' main focus in their feedback is punctuation and grammar. As an example, Lee (2008) found ten mismatches between teachers' beliefs and written feedback practice in a survey and interviews of 26 secondary ESL teachers. This study showed that teachers paid most attention to language form despite their belief there was more to good writing than accuracy; they marked errors comprehensively although selective marking was preferred and

they also tended to correct and locate errors for students, even though they said that through teacher feedback students should learn to correct and locate their own errors. Furthermore, teachers used error codes although they thought students had a limited ability to interpret the codes. Besides, teachers awarded scores/grades to students' writing although they were almost certain that grades drew student attention away from teacher feedback. These findings suggest that teachers respond mainly to weaknesses in student writing although they know that feedback should cover both strategies and weaknesses.

As exemplified by the work of Lee (2008), teachers written feedback practice can allow students little room to take control although teachers think students should learn to take greater responsibility for learning. There is clearly a mismatch between pedagogy and practice as shown in the literature concerning the nature and role of teacher feedback in enhancing the development of ESL writing. These conclusions and the high level of debate amongst researchers as discussed in this section have led the way to further explore other types of feedback and their potential in ESL within the Arab world, where relationships are a very important component in society, and therefore within the learning environment itself. Peer feedback or peer reviewing as a process has been implemented in some ESL environments and therefore it was considered that this may warrant attention as a possible alternative. Its use is further described in the section that follows.

## 2.5 Peer Reviewing

The process-oriented writing approach is fundamentally based on the provision of feedback and it can incorporate collaborative learning and writing, which allows language learners to construct their writing together with their peers and teachers. Peer feedback, or peer reviewing, is now commonplace in the process-oriented ESL writing class (Khaliq and Khaliq 2015; Chen 2016; Zhang, Song, Shen and Huang 2014; Chang 2012). It is also known as *peer response*, *peer editing*, *peer critiquing*, and *peer evaluation* (Khaliq and Khaliq 2015; Nicol, Thomson and Breslin 2014; Rouhi and Azizan 2013; Keh 1990). It is also referred to as Collaborative Negotiated Feedback (CNF), through which peers interact and exchange feedback on the surface level of their L2 writing, according to Marzban and Sarjani (2014), who propose that surface-level CNF on students' errors is beneficial in enhancing writing skills in



English as a Foreign Language, arguing that this approach outperforms teacher feedback due to interaction. Peer reviewing is often associated to the notion of *scaffolding*, which is core to sociocultural approaches to language teaching and learning (Ohta 2000), a concept that will also be briefly examined, along with scaffolding, in the next and subsequent sections.

### **2.5.1 Scaffolding**

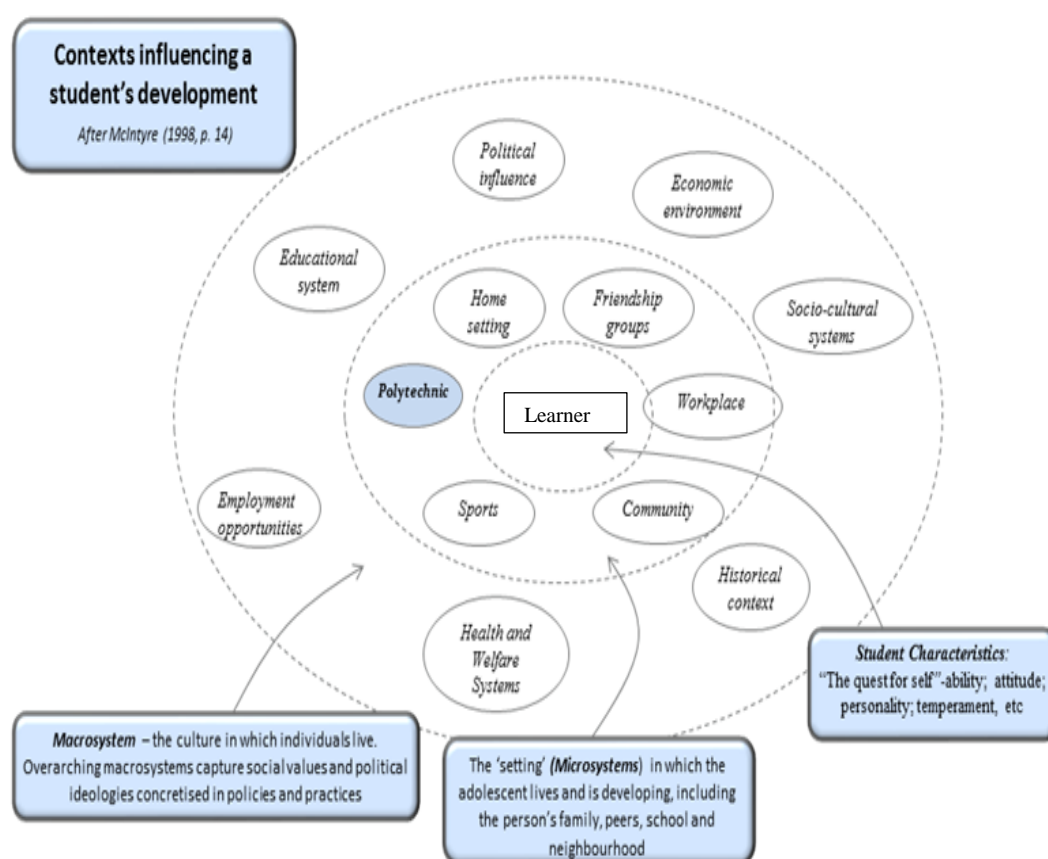
The notion of pedagogical scaffolding was derived from the work on mother and child interaction conducted by Wood, Bruner and Ross (1976, p. 90). Also known as “assisted performance” (van Lier 2004 p. 147). Scaffolding is normally understood as “the process by which a ‘mentor’ helps a learner know how to do something, so that they will be able to do it alone in the future” (Gibbons 1999, cited in Forman 2008, p. 320). The theory of scaffolding was developed in parallel with Vygotsky’s (1978) *Zone of Proximal Development*, or ZPD, defined as the “difference between the child’s developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the higher level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” (1978, p. 85). These two concepts are linked by Stone, who explains that “the term scaffolding has come to be synonymous with the process of adult-child interaction within the ZPD” (1998, p. 170). Both Mercer (1995) and Wells (1999) see scaffolding students’ learning as a way of operationalizing the Vygotskian concept of working in the zone of proximal development. Similarly, van Lier claims that “scaffolding only occurs in proximal contexts, in other words, in Vygotsky’s ZPD” (2004, p.162). However, it seems that the concept of pedagogical scaffolding is complex, and needs to be further explored for effective teaching and learning.

From a sociocultural and ecological perspective, van Lier (2004) distinguishes between *interactional* and *structural scaffolding*, which he sees as two interrelated constituents of pedagogical scaffolding occurring at different levels of the ecological system. The relationship between the ZPD and other more distant but still influential levels of factors that affect a learner’s development are identified in Figure 2.2 below on page 63, from the Bahrain-based work of Coutts and Dismal (2013). This ecological framework for Bahrain Polytechnic’s student learning and development

shows the micro, meso, and macrosysemic levels of influence that can be also applied to understand the different levels of scaffolding- see Figure 2.2 below on page 63. So first a brief explanation of each of these levels is needed, and then the different types of scaffolding will be discussed.

Structural scaffolding borrows the scaffold metaphor from the construction industry, where a scaffold is a temporary structure that supports workers and enables them to carry out their work above ground. The structure is temporary in so far that “as soon as it is no longer needed it is dismantled” (van Lier 2004, p. 147). In educational terms, a scaffold is therefore seen as “a structure that allows the movement of pedagogical activity, that permits efficient and quick access to pedagogical goals, and that is temporary” (van Lier 2004, p. 147). Structural scaffolding occurs at the macro level (e.g. “planning task sequences, projects, recurring classroom rituals” (van Lier 2004, p. 149) and at the meso level (e.g., “planning each activity in terms of sequences of actions, moves” [ibid]). Interactional scaffolding, on the other hand, “can be neither predicted nor premeditated” (van Lier 2004, p. 148). It occurs at the micro level of interaction and “requires ‘just-right’ and ‘just-in-time’ responses and interventions” (van Lier 2004, pp.148-149).

**Figure 2.2 The Ecological Framework adapted from Coutts and Dismal (2013)**



According to van Lier (2004), scaffolding is thus learner-driven: it occurs “when planned pedagogical action stops” and “on the initiative of the learner” (van Lier 2004, p. 162). This learner-centred approach is identified in Figure 2.2 above. Scaffolding primarily refers to “the ways in which teachers verbally interact with students in whole-class contexts for pedagogic purposes” (Forman 2008, p. 323), and good teachers call on the other aspects of student lives to interest and motivate learners to engage actively in the learning process and the development of ESL writing. Pedagogical scaffolding is, therefore fundamental to the teaching of writing as it provides not only the interest and motivation, but also the support that empowers students to achieve a written task (Williams 2002; Wells 1999). According to Hyland (2007), in the context of genre pedagogy, research shows that students are able to reach much higher levels of performance by working together and with an expert than they might have achieved working on their own (e.g. Donato 2000; Ohta 2000). From the researcher’s experience, this is particularly so in the Middle-Eastern context, where relationships are so very important in society. The degree of teacher intervention and the selection of tasks therefore play a key role in

scaffolding writing, representing a continuum of support from closely controlled activities to autonomous extended communication, reducing direct instruction as the learner gradually assimilates the task demands and procedures for constructing the genre effectively (Hyland 2007, p. 158). In summary, then, peer collaboration and scaffolding by peers may be useful in a process-oriented approach scenario where writing goes through cycles of drafts and revisions exchanged amongst peers.

### **2.5.2 Scaffolding by Peers**

For learners to develop within the ZPD, Rezaee and Azizi (2012) argue that they require peers or teachers' help in a scaffolding process. Peer interaction and facilitation enhance learners' knowledge in producing more accurate and complex levels of grammar according to Ohta (2000). This conclusion is supported by Hanjani and Li (2014), who observed that their learners benefited from scaffolding and that all learners benefited irrespective of their L2 writing proficiency level. Having peers interact meaningfully and scaffold may eventually improve writing quality of the learners' (Hanjani and Li 2014, p. 112). Added to that, Ohta (2001) found that collaboration amongst peers and scaffolding made them develop further, achieving well above their level of performance before this intervention was implemented. Hartman (2002) states that scaffolding to support learners' performance and to turn them into autonomous learners and problem-solvers can be provided either by teachers, classmates, group mates, or computer-supported collaborative tools, accomplished through the peers' written or spoken collaborative dialogues where "learners work together to solve linguistic problems and/ or co-construct language or knowledge about language" (Swain, Brooks and Tocalli-Beller 2002, p.172). These various studies demonstrate the usefulness of ZPD in language acquisition contexts where learners' performance develops through peer collaboration or the process of peer reviewing.

The process of peer reviewing can take place in either a homogeneous (same-ability) or heterogeneous (mixed-ability) group composition (Hooper and Hannafin 1988; Webb, Nemer and Zuniga 2002): A vast body of research recommends the (mixed-ability) heterogeneous grouping, particularly for low-achieving students (i.e. low linguistic competence) or less advanced students who are believed to learn more in

these groups (Hooper and Hannafin 1988; Wiedmann, Leach, Rummel and Wiley 2012). Utilising the bias of Vygotsky's ZPD work on learning and development suggests that peers need to observe conflicting perspectives that more likely will exist in mixed-ability groups (Hogan and Tudge 1999). This argument rests on the assumption that more competent peers may find it challenging to communicate with the less competent ones, so "even if a peer knows what the less advanced child needs, he or she may have difficulty adjusting to an appropriate level and adjusting as the child improves over time" (Hogan and Tudge 1999, p. 57). In other words, to learn something really well, the student is put in the place of teacher, requiring him/her to really grasp and simplify the concept in order to explain it to another. In this way, Hogan and Tudge's argument suggests (*ibid.*), deep learning will occur. Similarly, Leonard (2001) also argues that more competent students (more linguistically advanced or competent language learners) benefit from collaboration irrespective of the grouping composition, a finding supported by Webb, Nemer and Zuniga (2002), who also believe that students perform better in heterogeneous groups. This surprisingly positive learning result from heterogeneous levels of learners working together may be due to the cognitive distance between the proficiency level of the more advanced and that of the less advanced in the group (Mugny and Doise 1978) or the complexity of the task (Webb, Nemer and Zuniga 2002). However, there is not a consistency across the field, with Fuchs, Fuchs, Hamlett and Karns (1998) believing that advanced peers collaborate better with the same level of students in L2 writing while Patchan, Hawk, Stevens and Schunn (2013) recommend having more competent or advanced students work with less competent or advanced students so that the latter receive more feedback and so benefit more.

### **2.5.3 Integrating Peer-Reviewing in the L2 Writing Class**

The lack of grammar accuracy, the lack of structure, variety and the use of inappropriate grammatical structures, are frequent errors found in ESL writing that can be resolved through peer reviewing according to Ho and Duong (2014) and Weir (1988). Storch (2011) agrees that peer assistance enhances learners' grammatical accuracy and writing in general. However, Bitchener and Ferris (2011) and Lunsford and Lunsford (2008) argue that peer reviewing can only contribute to the

development of L2 writing if grammar instruction and error feedback is contextualised on planned and organised language structures so that students can make a connection to their own errors in writing. To be effective as a means of developing grammar accuracy, peer reviewing activities should be focused, and students should have the knowledge of the types of errors they are looking for (Bitchener and Ferris 2011; Lunsford and Lunsford 2008). Repetition is important, and allows learners to recognise and use language structures and forms for themselves as well as their peers (DiCamilla and Anton 1997). Moreover, Hanjani and Li (2014) observe that peers in their peer reviewing research used scaffolding from which both partners benefited, irrespective of their L2 writing proficiency, leading to an observed growth in surface level accuracy. They suggest incorporating collaborative revisions in EFL writing to enhance writing and revision skills as all their students managed to develop more accurate essays over drafts, despite the variations in their language development (ibid). Students were observed to offer feedback based on the complexity of errors as well as the language needs of the peers (ibid). They also add that their students were novice and checking content or organisation was beyond their level of competency, thus, they tended to focus on surface-level errors (ibid). Hanjani and Li (2014) found that:

“Most participants were able to move through their ZPDs beyond their current levels of development to higher levels of achievement by generating higher quality revised drafts as a result of appropriating the solutions that were jointly constructed, and incorporating them into their revisions.” (p.112).

Students might not use the addressed grammatical structures in their writing if they were taught in grammar-focused lectures by teachers (Frodesen and Holten 2003). This necessitates more engaging grammatical activities (Ferris 2016). Whilst Jegerski and Ponti (2014) declare that peers in their sample found correcting grammar and spelling more beneficial to their writing through the peer reviewing process, this was in spite of the ostensive focus on content and organization. Likewise, Chang (2012) and Mulder, Baik, Naylor and Pearce (2014) found that students’ perceptions of the effects of peer reviewing were similarly beneficial. Because there appears to be some debate in the literature, the merits and shortcomings of peer feedback are discussed in the next section.

## **Disadvantages of Peer Feedback**

Teachers can be discouraged from using peer feedback in the classroom due to its real potential to become a difficult, unproductive experience, especially in a L2 classroom (Paulus 1999; Rubin 2006). In a class where students come from different cultural backgrounds there can be varied expectations for small group work and the role of the teacher, which can militate against the effectiveness of peer feedback as a technique for improving ESL writing (Paulus 1999; Rubin 2006). It can also provoke anxiety and communicative clashes (Liu and Hansen 2002). Another disadvantage is that peer feedback can be time consuming, as it includes reading drafts, writing comments and suggestions in addition to redrafting, which would require training and having students' consensus (Rouhi and Azizan 2013; Rollinson 2005). Carson and Nelson (1996) found in a case-study in which Chinese students were involved that the cultural concept of 'face' was a factor in that students either tended to withhold critical comments to preserve group harmony or they were hesitant to take the degree of authority needed to give feedback to another student. Carson and Nelson concluded that peer review will not be a productive activity if students are defensive, uncooperative, and distrustful of each other.

Another factor that works against the notion of peer feedback is if the students are primarily concerned with trying to avoid conflict (Rubin 2006; Carson and Nelson 1996). Others have also found language learners may be discomforted and uneasy about receiving or offering peer feedback (Liu and Hansen 2002). Students may prefer teacher feedback to peer feedback because of their belief that their peers that are not qualified to critique their writings (Nelson and Murphy 1993). Students believe that it is not their responsibility to review their peers' writings as they are not teachers (Sengupta 1998) nor can they provide effective feedback (Nilson 2003) or 'detect and correct errors' (Li 2009). So these researchers raise some important issues to be considered in adopting the concept of peer-review as a mechanism to assist in ESL writing development. However, there are also many authors who have seen the benefits that such an intervention can bring, as outlined in the next section.

## **The Merits of Peer Feedback**

Peer feedback provides an authentic sense of audience and it also facilitates students' critical reading and analysis skills (Nicol, Thomson and Breslin 2014; Rouhi and Azizan 2013; Khaliq and Khaliq 2015; Rubin 2006; Keh 1990). It provides an environment in which peers interact as writers and readers of the same written product, recommending alterations and practising writing drafts (Orsmond et al. 2013; Cho and Cho 2011; Cho and MacArthur 2011; Nicol, Thomson and Breslin 2014; Rouhi and Azizan 2013; Khaliq and Khaliq 2015; Rollinson 2005; Reither and Vipond 1989). Peer feedback promotes active learning through group work involving collaborative and cooperative learning as well as providing several opportunities for receiving and giving feedback and repeating and applying learning through practice (Rouhi and Azizan 2013; Cornelius-White 2007). Peer feedback is regarded as a development on self-feedback, a mechanism whereby students reflect on their own writing and errors (Lee 2008; Tsui and Ng 2000; Ferris and Hedgcock 2005; Rollinson 2005). This is due to the fact that 'two heads are better than one' to detect mistakes without judging students (Lee 2008; Tsui and Ng 2000; Ferris and Hedgcock 2005; Rollinson 2005). Peer feedback is less threatening to students than teacher feedback (Rollinson 2005). Students develop a sense of authority over their learning instead of the teacher in a friendlier atmosphere (Rollinson 2005).

Furthermore, giving peer review raises awareness of various ways to approach a task (Rouhi and Azizan 2013; Li 2009; Holst-Larkin 2008). Caulk (1994) found that 89% of his intermediate/advanced level FL students made useful comments and 60% made suggestions that he himself had not made. In another study, Rollinson (2005) stated that L2 learners write for communicative purposes and thus a 'responsive 'real' audience will let the writer know if her message was effective.' In addition, a real audience will encourage writers to formulate their writing in alignment with the qualities and demands of their readers (Rollinson 2005, 25).

Peer feedback promotes student participation in the classroom where learners can become active, more independent and develop more control over their learning (Kwan and Yunus 2014; Yu and Lee 2015; Schunk and Usher 2012; Hyland 2000). Likewise, peer feedback tends to be different and more constructive than teacher



feedback (Zhang, Song, Shen and Huang 2014; Cote 2006). Students put more effort into correcting writings when they concentrate on one or two pieces of prose (Cote 2006). Peer feedback can also be considered when peers identify mistaken meanings (Berg 1999). It improves the writing of ESL learners (Lee, Mak and Burns 2015; Trinh and Yen 2013; Zhang, Song, Shen and Huang 2014; Lundstrom and Baker 2009); and it enhances the feedback providers' writing as well (Lee, Mak and Burns 2015).

Peer feedback can encourage collaborative dialogues in which 'two-way feedback' is formed because of the high level of response and interaction between readers and writers (Rollinson 2005). Also, peers can spend more time providing feedback on another peer's writing than the overworked teacher and thus there is a higher density of feedback in addition to immediate interaction between readers (Rollinson 2005, 25). Peer feedback also contributes to the "increased engagement and time spent on-task, immediacy and individualisation of help, goal specification, explaining, prevention of information processing overload, prompting, modelling and reinforcement." (Yarrow and Topping 2001, p. 262). Peer feedback encourages "highly complex socio-cognitive interactions involving arguing, explaining, clarifying and justifying" (Rollinson 2005, 25). Marzban and Sarjami (2014) and Grami (2010) found that students' "autonomy, alacrity, participation and better performance" are observed through negotiated peer feedback (Marzban and Sarjami 2014, 300). So, it seems then, that peer readers can provide useful feedback (Rollinson 1998).

Whilst some studies have suggested that less competent students in ESL can provide useful feedback to more proficient writers (Lee, Mak and Burns 2015; Patchan Hawk, Stevens and Schunn 2010), others have not entirely supported peer feedback (Mooko 1996). There are not many studies in the Middle East, but one, by Grami, investigated the effects of introducing peer feedback to Saudi ESL students and concluded that it assists in enhancing students' editing skills and it was found also to make students realise that their peers face similar language difficulties, leading to "less writing apprehension and more confidence" (2010, p. 37). In another GCC study, Saudi students' writing quality improved in punctuation through the practice of peer feedback (Al-Hazmi and Scholfield 2007), giving confidence that this

technique may have applicability to Bahrain students' development of ESL writing skills.

## **2.6 Summary and Conclusion**

The review of the literature indicates that the frequent grammatical errors made in English writing made by Arabic speakers are generally thought to be caused by interference or transfer from Arabic, which results in common errors in the use of articles, prepositions, verb tenses and forms, and punctuation. These error areas appeared to substantiate James' (2013) work on second language learning, which has been applied by Karama and Hajjaj (1989) to Arabs writing in English as a second language. Some researchers believe these errors are caused by L1 interference or transfer but it seems that language interference alone is not fully accountable for second language learners' errors. A number of writers have identified the difficulties Arab learners of English face writing in English as a second language such as the duration of the implementation and the teaching approaches. However, the challenges facing Arab learners in Bahrain are greater due to the range of dialects used in Bahrain but also due to the diversity of teachers employed due to shortages of suitably qualified locals as discussed in Chapter One. Indeed, according to Al Murshidi (2014), some of the difficulties of writing in ESL are due to the misconception in students' minds caused from vague teaching methods and lack of practice suggesting the need to consider the impact of teaching methods on the development of L2 written accuracy.

ESL writing is a painstaking task to learners and requires ESL teachers' assistance to improve their writing skills. On the whole, the literature in this chapter explored the writing approaches in second language learning and noted that ESL learners may overcome the grammatical errors in their written productions through the types of feedback offered to them. Feedback is generally seen as vital for promoting and consolidating learning and in particular learning writing. Feedback practices and processes include the process of peer review, corrective written feedback and scaffolded learning through process-oriented approaches to writing.

This review of recent research seems to indicate that there is a gap in the literature, with a dearth of published studies in Bahrain on Arab ways of learning in general, and few reference points investigating how L1 interference influences Arab students'

learning of English as a Second Language. The specific issue identified as a barrier to Bahraini students' success in tertiary education, that of learning how to write in English (L2), emerged as a pressing question requiring further investigation. Due to the pressing nature of the issues emerging, it was not enough merely to investigate and describe the problem, as indeed many other researchers have attempted. A range of different strategies were investigated for developing effective writing skills, but few previous researchers had considered adopting peer-review as an additional process beside teacher review, as a way of consolidating and reinforcing learning to write English for ESL learners. Consequently, this lack of published literature focusing on the problem in Bahrain, coupled with some encouraging case studies investigating the effectiveness of peer reviewing as a learning process, suggested the focus of this research, which concerns Arab students' L2 writing in the Middle East, more specifically Bahrain.

In summary, it can be seen that peer readers can provide useful feedback (Rollinson 1998). Some studies have suggested that less competent students in ESL or weak writers are capable of providing useful feedback to more proficient writers (Lee, Mak and Burns 2015; Patchan Hawk, Stevens and Schunn 2010) while others have not entirely supported peer feedback (Mooko 1996). This is due to the fact that some peers may not give feedback as good as the teacher's (Nelson and Carson 1998; Tsui and Ng 2000). Grami (2010) investigated the effects of introducing peer feedback to Saudi ESL students and concluded that it assists in enhancing students' editing skills. It also makes students realise that their peers face similar language difficulties, which leads, as noted above, to "less writing apprehension and more confidence" (Grami 2010, p. 37). In another GCC study, Saudi students' writing quality improved in punctuation through the practice of peer feedback (Al-Hazmi and Scholfield 2007), giving confidence that this technique may have applicability to Bahrain students' development of ESL writing skills.

The purpose of this study then, became to understand how better to help Bahraini ESL students develop their writing skills in English, and to explore the potential impact of peer-reviewing and teacher feedback on their language development. From this purpose, the research questions were identified and an appropriate methodology was developed to furnish the evidence required to determine a more effective-teaching and learning approach for ESL writers. The next chapter, Chapter Three,

outlines the methodology implemented in this research including the subjects of case-study approach, data collection methods.

### **3 Chapter Three Methodology**

The previous chapter set the context of the study, giving an overview of learning, language learning and learning English as a second language in order to begin to develop an understanding of the common problems that Arab students encounter. It focused specifically on the particular issues related to writing English, identifying teaching approaches, including product-oriented and process-oriented scenarios. The role of teacher and peer feedback in developing skills in process-oriented writing and the potential of scaffolding by peers in writing contexts were identified as enabling a possible intervention that could be beneficial in assisting English as Second Language Learners' skills and address the research questions.

Based on the examples provided by other studies conducted in the field, this chapter outlines the methodology applied to investigate the effectiveness of such an intervention. It describes the process of gathering the evidence required to map the experiences of twelve students enrolled in a foundation programme named Academic Bridging over one semester. First the objectives and research questions are again outlined, and then the methodological approach, which employs a case-study design, with two main phases, a number of methods, peer-review pairs and types of analysis, is described. Issues related to the generalizability, trustworthiness and reliability of the findings, and the ethical considerations are then identified. Finally, the chapter explains how and why the writing cycle is used as an organising structure for the implementation and reporting of the case-study to investigate the effects of process-oriented writing on Bahraini learners of English as a second language learners.

#### **3.1 Research Questions**

Many of the studies addressed in Chapter Two and focusing on improvements in schooling used a case-study approach (Sutherland 2004; Coutts 2007; Khaliq and Khaliq 2015; Rouhi and Azizan 2013), and therefore case-study was selected as the most appropriate approach for this investigation into the effects of process-oriented writing on Bahraini learners of English as a second language. The selection of the case-study approach is supported by Hitchcock and Hughes (1995), who consider it one of the most appropriate designs for education-based research because it offers teachers the ability to conduct research in their own settings. It also enables "the

researcher to intensively investigate the case in-depth, to probe, drill down and get at its complexity, often through long term immersion in, or repeated visits to/encounters with the case" (Coe 2012, p. 138). As was shown in Chapter Two, the problem of English language writing for speakers of Arabic is indeed complicated by a number of issues, such as interlanguage effects. The primary purpose of this study is to understand precisely how to help Bahraini ESL students develop their writing skills in English, and more particularly to understand the potential impact of peer-reviewing and teacher feedback on their language development. It has as its overarching guiding objectives:

1. To critically evaluate the problems facing learners of English as a second language in the Middle East, with a particular focus on their writing skills;
2. To develop an effective and suitable model for process-oriented writing that can help Bahraini students improve their writing skills;
3. To recommend an appropriate course of action that will facilitate the integration of process-oriented writing and peer-reviewing in the Bahraini English classroom.

More specifically, the study addresses the following research questions:

Q1: What are the most common grammatical errors made by Bahraini Arab students in ESL writing?

Q2: To what extent can the process-oriented writing approach via peer reviewing in ESL resolve LI interference errors?

Q3: What are the implications for teaching writing to Arabic speaking students?

### **3.2 Methodological approach**

As indicated in Chapter 1, my interest in ESL came from my own experience as a second language learner, a love of my work as a teacher of English, and as a parent of two children who I have watched struggling as second language learners, particularly in their attempts to write in English. As a Programme Manager of the

Certificate for Academic Preparation at Bahrain Polytechnic, a foundation programme designed to prepare new entrants for their degree programme, I had the opportunity to teach an intensive ESL course to a group of Bahraini students. Because I was the academic manager for the Academic Bridging Course, I had a unique opportunity to re-design the syllabus so as to integrate teacher and peer feedback with a view to enhancing the students' learning experience as well as their overall academic results. The theoretical framework used is based on the ecological framework of learners' development as adapted by Bahrain Polytechnic's context from Coutts and Dismal (2013), and which was discussed in Chapter Two.

### **3.2.1 Mixed Methods Approach and Action based research**

In order to choose the most appropriate methods for the research study, mixed methods studies and action research studies are compared. Mixed methods research combining quantitative and qualitative traditions in a single study techniques, methods, approaches and language (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie 2004 in Wiśniewska 2011). Mixed methods research is criticised for mixing approaches that originate from different philosophical assumptions; however, it has been accepted and justified by the research questions, the final effect and results (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie 2004; Tasshakori and Teddlie 1998; Onwuegbuzie and Leech 2006 in Wiśniewska 2011). Not only do mixed methods research adhere to the standard research procedures but it also follows decision making, justification of mixing methods, stating the aim of mixing methods, selecting the measures of method mixing and finally interpreting the combined results (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie 2004, Collins et al. 2006 in Wiśniewska 2011).

Wiśniewska (2011) identified a number of reasons why quantitative and qualitative research approaches should be combined in a single study. These reasons include: (a) triangulation examines different positions of the issue from followed by congregating the results (Cresswell 1999 in Wiśniewska 2011); (b) one method's strength may overcome another method's weakness in the same study (Johnson and Turner 2003, Gelo et al. 2008 in Wiśniewska 2011); (c) data complementarity by which qualitative data are used to clarify numbers, and quantitative data add more accuracy to data shown in words or illustrations (Greene et al. 1989, Johnson and

Onwuegbuzie 2004 in Wiśniewska 2011); (d) exploration of more complicated problems from diverse standpoints by asking questions in search of more complex findings (Greene et al. 1989, Johnson and Onwuegbuzie 2004, Gelo et al. 2008 in Wiśniewska 2011); (e) the results of one method may provide an impetus for designing a further step in the research with the use of another method, or may trigger questions for another method study (Greene et al. 1989 in Wiśniewska 2011);

(f) reaching a bigger audience (Dörney 2007 in Wiśniewska 2011);

(g) when a wide range of methods are used in a research, the research claims become more solid and the results may be more convincing for policy-makers (Gorard and Tylor 2004 in Wiśniewska 2011);

(h) allowing divergent views to be presented and answering exploratory and confirmatory questions more simultaneously (Schulenberg 2007 in Wiśniewska 2011);

(i) various research questions could only be answered by combining quantitative and qualitative methods in one study (Bryman 2006 in Wiśniewska 2011).

The mixed methods approach is used for action research as well as mixed methods studies because they both have the same goals of providing complementarity of data and triangulation (Wiśniewska 2011). Action research is unlike mixed methods in not providing justifications for combining qualitative and quantitative methods (ibid). Questions in action research could be asked or guided by a goal carried out by the researcher. Added to that, smaller populations are examined and they remain the same for both the quantitative and qualitative part of the research while in mixed methods bigger populations are investigated with smaller populations investigated for qualitatively (ibid). The most popular data collection tools in action research studies usually use a wider range of data collection tools with sequential-concurrent model while in mixed methods research sequential data collection dominates (ibid).

The qualitative and quantitative data in mixed methods research are studied distinctly, statistically and qualitatively (ibid). However, in action research quantitative data are basically calculated and discussed together with the qualitative data with no description of the analysis process (ibid).



### 3.2.2 A Case-Study Approach

A case-study is an investigation that seeks to answer particular research questions using a range of evidence available in a particular case setting. In the context of this study, it was planned to generate a high degree of confidence in the findings through the use of more than one method and by the bringing together of multiple perspectives from a range of students learning how to better develop process writing skills, as recommended by many researchers, notably Skott and Ward (2012) and Hammersley (2007).

There are many types of case-study according to Stake (2006), who explains that ‘Intrinsic’ case studies, such as the one proposed here, seek to develop greater understanding of a particular case in all “its particularity *and* ordinariness” (Stake 2006, p. 437), whereas ‘instrumental’ case-studies seek to provide a greater understanding of a generic phenomenon. The approach taken here is an in-depth study of a small body of empirical materials (“cases” comprising peer-reviewing pairs of students and processes), within the classroom, the setting where the processes of learning to write English occur for Arab second language students. In this case-study, a pedagogical intervention was introduced and its impact evaluated using a range of analytical methods, both cohort wide and with selected pairs of students. Although the case is singular, it is considered to be made up of twelve subsections, the ESL students, each with their unique personality, past experiences, and specific learning problems. The data for this study was collected through an opportunistic selection of a group of 12 students enrolled in the Academic Bridging course in the academic year 2009/2010, detailed further in section 3.3 on page 85.

The case-study aimed to explore the impact that peer reviewing, individualised teacher feedback, and grammatical tutorials may have on the development of written accuracy. The intervention was implemented by the introduction of a new curriculum designed to incorporate a process-oriented approach with both tutor and peer-reviewing used to enhance the development of written accuracy and the academic outcomes of students in an Arab ESL writing class. Quantitative and qualitative analysis of data about the number and type of errors made by students were presented back to them over the duration of the study. Sustainable improvement in L2 writing was aimed for through this on-going dialogical engagement with both

peers and the tutor. The mixed methods approach adopted allows the study to trace the development of written accuracy over the semester and to provide some insight into the effectiveness of the peer feedback, assessing the degree of impact as well as any shortcomings as a strategy to support teacher feedback in process writing classrooms in the Bahraini context.

In summary, this case-study was based on a process-oriented writing syllabus specifically designed to provide learners with a range of language learning experiences and to facilitate the investigation of the effects of peer and teacher feedback on the development of their written accuracy. The design of the research is further elaborated upon in the next section (Section 3.2.3 on page 78), and this is followed by several sections that identify issues associated with this research design, namely, generalizability of the findings (Section 3.2.4 on page 81), the trustworthiness and reliability of the findings (Section 3.2.5 on page 82) and ethical issues (Section 3.2.6 on page 82).

### **3.2.3 Research Design**

Case-study was the research design adopted, and it involved an entire class of ESL learners, all of whom were working towards developing the competencies required to meet the English language requirements to enter a degree level programme of study at Bahrain's newly established Polytechnic. The case-study design involved three distinct stages:

#### **Stage 1: Curriculum (re-) design**

The writing component of the Academic Bridging curriculum was redesigned for the participants in the research group. This phase entailed the design of a writing cycle that integrated peer-reviews of initial drafts produced by the participants, individualised teacher feedback to each participant, teacher-led grammar tutorials after each essay writing cycle, computer-based grammar sessions and independent study. Section 3.3 on page 85 will present the curriculum re-design in detail.

## Stage 2: Implementation of the Curriculum and Data Collection

A number of writing compositions were included as a new formative assessment component in the re-designed Academic Bridging course curriculum. Eight assessments for learning tasks were incorporated over the duration of one academic semester (16-weeks). However, in accordance with best international practice in the assessment for learning paradigm (Liu, Lin, Kou and Wang 2016), a diagnostic test was first administered so that students' progress could be measured against this. Over the duration of the semester the data about students' progress in developing written accuracy provided by students' drafts and peer-reviewers' commentary, was supplemented by teacher classroom observations. These different types of data are briefly outlined below:

- **Baseline oral survey.** This was carried out in the first introductory sessions of the semester in order to seek information from the participants about their perceptions of writing in English and the difficulties they have been facing learning English in general and writing in English in particular.
- **Pre-questionnaire.** Following the oral survey, students filled in a pre-questionnaire seeking to reveal their perceptions of the importance of English writing, their learning responsibilities and their expectations from the teacher in an English language class.
- **Diagnostic test.** The purpose of the diagnostic test was to identify the type and frequency of the writing and grammatical problems students had at the beginning of the course. The pre-test writing task topic, "*What did you do yesterday?*" related to the theme of the first unit in the curriculum and allowed participants to write freely and as extensively as they were able. More details are described in Section 4.1 on page 109.
- **Students' drafts:** The participants were expected to write three different drafts for each writing composition. Draft 1 was the original draft students wrote, Draft 2 was what students edited after receiving peer feedback and Draft 3 was written after receiving teacher feedback. The participants used codes in their peer reviewing process to identify the category of the error produced. The various drafts and reviews by peers were collected as soon as they were produced in class to ensure authenticity. In the first instance, revised drafts were annotated with a view to providing individualised and

whole class feedback. This is described thoroughly in Section 4.1, Section 4.2 and Section 4.3.

- **Researcher reflective journal.** As a participant researcher, the teacher kept a journal in which observations about students' actions throughout the writing course, as well as their reactions and interactions with their peers and teacher, were noted. This provided a vehicle for self-reflection and discussion of any ethical aspects with the university supervisor.
- **Post-questionnaire.** At the end of the semester (week 16), students were asked to complete a post-questionnaire aimed at eliciting their opinion about the effectiveness of giving and receiving peer response or feedback as a means of developing their English as a second language writing skills. Further details are described in Section 5.4.2 on page 188.

The implementation of all these different data collection methods and their associated findings will be discussed in greater detail in Chapters Four and Five.

### Stage 3: Analysis

The research adopted a mixed methods methodology from which the patterns of errors evidenced in students' writings, revisions and reviews of their peers' writings were considered alongside feedback about their perceptions of the effectiveness of this process as a learning intervention. To address the research questions, three aspects of data were considered in the analysis (qualitative, longitudinal and quantitative). The qualitative and quantitative data collection methods have already been outlined: these generated both quantitative data (frequency of types of errors) and qualitative data (how students felt about the process).

The extent of the problem that Bahrainis experienced as English as a second language learners as indicated by writing errors was provided through the quantitative component of the study. This was based on the participants' first draft, second draft and peer-reviewed drafts of eight essays by (a) establishing the number of errors normalised by 100 words by grammar categories in Draft One from essay one to essay eight, (b) the percentages and proportions of the most common or frequent errors, (c) the number of errors normalised by 100 words in all grammar categories comparing the CEFR (A1) and CEFR (A2) students' progress, (d) the

proportion of correct forms in the frequent error categories produced by all students, (e) the difference in the number of errors (correctly or incorrectly identified and unidentified) by peers in the process-oriented writing approach via the peer reviewing process in all error categories and the four most frequent error categories.

The longitudinal aspect of the analysis was extremely important as it allowed for the evidence from the various sources to be compared over the duration of the semester and thus for the researcher to track progress in the process-oriented writing learning journey of the twelve participants.

Qualitative data is collected through the post-questionnaire as well as the teacher's classroom observations.

### **3.2.4 Generalisation**

This research did not, as its primary purpose, aim to generalise the findings to a broader population, but to synthesise the themes and patterns of errors in second language learning and identify areas for development that would be important in assisting first year foundation level Polytechnic students meet entry to degree level study. Process writing was highlighted as a key aspect that Bahraini students needed to improve, and it was hoped that, by using some new strategies associated with teacher and peer feedback, learner achievement would be enhanced. The case-study approach aimed to provide an extensive description of the context of this initiative and the circumstances surrounding the development of language learning for Arab students whose first language is not English, so that the picture of each student and their problems in facing the challenge of knowledge of written English is understood and clear. Stake maintains that if the descriptions of the case-study are detailed enough then they can give the readers an experience which, when added to the readers' own knowledge, can lead to what is termed 'naturalistic generalisation' (2006, p. 442), whereby they are able to see relationships and patterns. In this case-study it is therefore left up to the reader to assess the similarities of the context to their own circumstances, and then to determine how applicable these findings are to their own situation.

### **3.2.5 Trustworthiness and Reliability**

Case-studies adopt a variety of methods, quantitative and qualitative, and collect data using different ways of experiencing the same issue, to give greater confidence in the findings (Cousin 2009). In quantitative research, there is generally the expectation that there will be consistency in methods, conditions and results leading to a judgment that the research is reliable, that it is trustworthy. There are two assumptions linked to the concept of reliability, according to Burns (1994). The first is that the study can be replicated and the second is that two or more people can have similar interpretations by using the same categories as the study and the same procedures. A thorough documentation of all steps and procedures is therefore included in this thesis to improve reliability and enable others to replicate the study. However, the natural setting and ethical considerations pose problems for the replicability of any case-study because it is unlikely that similar events will occur in the same way.

Trustworthiness is an important key to effective research, according to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007). In this case-study trustworthiness was achieved by triangulating data derived from different stakeholders, at different times and by different methods. By incorporating data and method and participant triangulation, with a comparison of the results of the pre-test (pre-intervention) and post-test (post intervention), the researcher has ensured that the reader can be more confident about the findings. In this study, triangulation was used to cross-examine the data gained from semi-structured interviews, observations, survey questionnaires, and documents to strengthen the confidence in the findings.

### **3.2.6 Ethical Considerations**

This section discusses the methodological, ethical and logistical concerns and challenges of the case-study methodology applied. It is noted, for the record, that both universities, the supervising University (Dublin City University) and the host University where the research was conducted (Bahrain Polytechnic) have ethics committees that implement and monitor policies and procedures to ensure research is conducted in an ethical manner. An ethical approval was granted by the DCU

Research Ethics Committee (Appendix I). Another ethical research approval which aligns with the requirements of Dublin City University was granted by Bahrain Polytechnic's Quality and Measurement Department as well as the School of Humanities.

As I was a participant researcher, being the course teacher of the class that formed the participating group in the case-study, as well as the programme manager, this study had the potential to pose considerable ethical issues. As one way of potentially mitigating such a risk, I invited colleagues in the same school to participate in the study to avoid the potential conflict of having two roles as the researcher and the teacher of the course. However, none of the teachers accepted the invitation due to their already heavy workload. Using the reflective journal, with the aid of my peers (one of whom was the head of Bahrain Polytechnic's Research and Ethics Committee) I was able to identify and mitigate any potential ethical issues. One of these concerned the nature of assessments, as students must not be put in a position where an intervention might harm their chances of academic success in the programme. Having the belief that this intervention would enhance the success of students, I therefore could not ethically apply it to only part of the class, so all students were involved in the peer review processes. However, only formative assessments were involved, as these did not count towards the final grades allocated for the course.

Potential conflicts would have occurred if the written productions of students were summative assessments. All the drafts of all eight essays were formative tasks based on the core aims of the programme and learning outcomes of the course, as approved by Bahrain Polytechnic's Academic Board and AQAC (Academic Quality Assurance Committee). Nevertheless, if the research essays had been part of the summative assessment, this conflict would have been resolved through abiding by the Polytechnic's *Assessment and Moderation* policy (Policy No A/AB/005), which requires pre and post moderation. In English, an additional requirement that applies is the necessity for 'double-marking' (each piece of work is marked by two tutors) as a must for all summative assessments. In addition, all results get approved by the Academic Board, so if there were any harmful effects on the participants' results through this intervention, this would have been apparent when compared to results from other classes, providing an opportunity to mitigate any such issues.

As required by both Universities, informed consent was sought by participants in the study. All willingly agreed to participate in the study and this can be attributed to two reasons, the first of which is related to religious and cultural aspects associated with the Arab Muslim religion of students and the second being their motivation to succeed and gain entry to study in the more advanced level the degree programme. The religious aspects were presented in the revelation of the first verse in the Qur'an attracting the attention of Muslims to knowledge and learning. This verse, with its imperative voice demands students' full respect and obedience to teachers' instructions. Everyone in the Muslim community, including the participants of this study, is expected to follow and abide by these guidelines. Another reason why all students agreed to participate in the study might have been their eagerness to get their writing skills enhanced with the hope to join the degree programme.

Anonymity was an important aspect of the ethical considerations in this study, protecting the participants from identification and possible harmful effects as a result. Students were assured that they would be anonymised by not using their full distinctive names indicating their surnames. Students participating in the study were identified by the most frequent first names. All the names used in the research study were included in these categories:

- Fatima (daughter of the prophet)
- Zahra (daughter of the prophet)
- Abdulrahman also written as A.Rahman (prophet's companion)
- Asma (daughter of prophet's friend Abo Baker)
- Amina (Prophet's foster mother who only nursed him)
- Hashmiya (any woman from the prophet's family would be called that)
- Bader (first battle in Islam)
- Mahmood (descends from the same root of the prophet's name Muhammad)
- Reem (descends from the same root of Virgin Mary and means the Arabian white deer)
- Naderah (a title given to a wise Muslim woman called Om Hakim and it means rare)
- Hanan (a name given to Virgin Mary in Sorat Maryam in the Holy Quran and it means affection)



Participants were invited to sign a voluntary informed consent form preceding the start of the study, see Appendix A. As the participant researcher of the study, I briefed participants as to the aim of the research and explained how steps would be in place to ensure students' anonymity, privacy and confidentiality, and I also detailed their right to withdraw from the study at any time (Appendix A). Students were made aware that participation in the study was not obligatory in any way. All the students were informed of the study's rationale and were also alerted to the fact that there was no risk in participating. Explanations as to how students were going to participate in the study and to whom the research findings would be reported to were given. Students were made aware that the written assignments collected from the research study would be formatively assessed to enhance their writing skills. They were assured that the assignments' evaluations were formative and would not contribute towards their final assessment grading and Grade Point Average (GPA). Complying with the legal requirements in relation to the storage and use of personal data, participants were informed that their data would be stored in a secure place where only I and the thesis supervisors could access it.

### **3.3 Curriculum (re-)design**

The course curriculum was redesigned to enable a better learning outcome for all students, with assessment for learning built into the structure. Whilst the investigation was going to be conducted, it was important that the course learning outcomes and objectives of the programmes were still met. It was important that the context of the research did not have an undue influence on the re-design of the curriculum. The writing cycle as an organising structure of the curriculum as well as the other means of implementation are discussed in great detail below.

#### **3.3.1 Context**

The literature review shed light on some of the essential skills Bahraini graduates lack based on which this case-study was designed. Bahrain's *Economic Vision 2030* is a strategic document that wants to see Bahraini as employees of first choice as the Kingdom grows and diversifies its economic base, reducing its dependence on the oil and gas sector (Economic Yearbook Bahrain 2013). Many of the companies based in

the region are international traders and thus they prefer to employ graduates who can communicate effectively in English, a language globally recognised for its succinct expression. Concerns about trends in the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) results, which indicated that Bahraini learners were falling behind their international counterparts, led to the Ministry of Education (MoE) launching a School Improvement Project in 2008, with the aim of lifting the performance of all Bahrain Government schools. However, the reality is that such reforms take a long time to take effect and in the meantime, Bahraini students reaching tertiary level study have been experiencing difficulties in learning English as a second language, as outlined in Chapter Two.

The study was conducted in Bahrain Polytechnic, a higher education institute in the Kingdom of Bahrain where the medium of instruction is English in the academic year 2009/2010. The Polytechnic offers a foundation programme to Bahraini ESL learners and upon successful completion of the foundation programme; students can proceed into their preferred degree choices (e.g. Bachelor Degree in Business, Mechanical Engineering, Electronics Engineering, Visual Design, Web Media, Internet and Computer Technology and Freight and Logistics). High School graduates choose their area of study prior to joining the Polytechnic but cannot enrol in the Bachelor courses unless they are at an IELTS 5 level, which is the exit level for the foundation programme.

The Academic Bridging course was a 60-credit course which is equivalent to 600 learning hours. The course ran over a semester of 16 teaching academic weeks, which include two weeks of examinations (in weeks 9 and 18). Classes were run normally during the exam weeks, in different scheduled timings, with no class cancellations. The total learning hours included 20 hours of contact class or language laboratory time per week (320 direct contact hours per semester) in addition to 280 self-directed hours to do homework and out-of class assignments. The language laboratory hours were subsumed in the 20-contact hours. Four language laboratory sessions per week were allocated for students to practise accuracy and writing from week 1 to week 8 thus leaving 16 class contact hours for the class activities from week 1 to 8. However, the language laboratory sessions from week 10 to week 17 were 2 hours per week, while the class contact hours rose to 18 hours per week.

The writing component of the course consisted of ten weekly contact hours. The twelve participants in the case-study were paired for the writing component of the course which will be described further in Section 3.3.2 on page 87. Table 3.1 below shows the different types of face-to-face sessions during the teaching weeks.

**Table 3.1 Types of face-to-face sessions during the teaching weeks**

Class/Time	Class 1 (Duration:1-hour)	Class 2 (Duration:1-hour)	Class 3 (Duration:1-hour)	Class 4 (Duration:1-hour)
Day 1	Skill/Activity: Writing Venue: language laboratory	Skill/Activity: Writing Venue: classroom	Skill/Activity: Listening Venue: classroom	Skill/Activity: Reading comprehension Venue: classroom
Day 2	Skill/Activity: Writing Venue: language laboratory	Skill/Activity: Writing Venue: classroom	Skill/Activity: Grammar Venue: classroom	Skill/Activity: Reading comprehension Venue: classroom
Day 3	Skill/Activity: Writing Venue: language laboratory <i>(changed to classroom from week 9 to 16)</i>	Skill/Activity: Writing Venue: classroom	Skill/Activity: Grammar Venue: classroom	Skill/Activity: Listening Venue: classroom
Day 4	Skill/Activity: Writing Venue: language laboratory <i>(changed to classroom from week 9 to 16)</i>	Skill/Activity: Writing Venue: classroom	Skill/Activity: Grammar Venue: classroom	Skill/Activity: Reading comprehension Venue: classroom
Day 5	Skill/Activity: Grammar Venue: classroom	Skill/Activity: Listening Venue: classroom	Skill/Activity: Writing Venue: classroom	Skill/Activity: Writing Venue: classroom

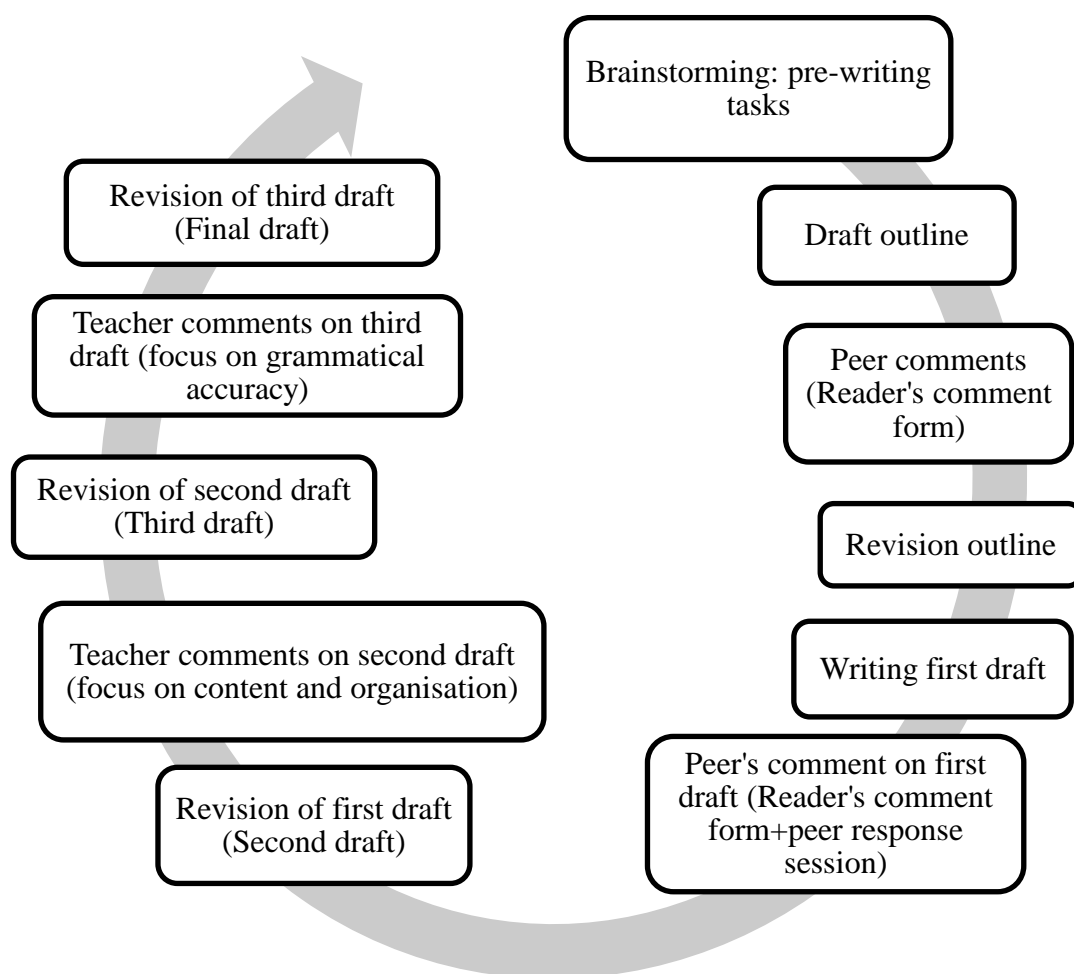
### **3.3.2 The Writing Cycle as an Organising Structure**

Studies conducted on the effectiveness of teacher and peer reviewing, as discussed in the previous chapter, have shown inconsistent findings. Some doubt the benefits peer

reviewing could possibly bring in an L1 classroom and others support it as a process for helping learners to identify and raise students' awareness in terms of their strengths and weaknesses in writing. Over the twelve years enrolled in schools, all the participants in the study were used to the product-oriented writing approach common in government secondary schools, which involves having their written drafts looked at by the teacher only for feedback or grades. In most, if not all, cases students would not be asked to fix or resubmit any of their writing assessment tasks. So there was no opportunity to learn and apply that learning through revision. In the development of the new writing curriculum a process-oriented approach was introduced with a focus on peer-reviewing. The curriculum revision was based on Tsui's and Ng's writing cycle illustrated in Figure 3.1 below on page 89, which was adapted for this purpose, taking into consideration the constraints and specificity of the learning environment in which this case-study was situated.

Tsui's and Ng's (2000) writing cycle was developed as a result of their study, which took place in a secondary school in Hong Kong where English was used as a medium of instruction. The study aimed to investigate the roles of teacher and peer feedback in writing among secondary L2 learners in Hong Kong. The writing practice in the school originally placed much emphasis on grammatical accuracy and the class size averaged around 27 Chinese students mostly from working class families. Students were used to writing one draft and submitting it to the teacher for feedback. The new approach explored in their study was based on the writing cycle (Figure 3.1 on page 89), and it started with a brainstorming session in which pre-writing tasks were carried out. The pre-writing tasks were based on the topics of the weekly units covered to engage students with the most frequent vocabulary items they might need on the topic. These would either be linked to the reading or listening activities of the units. The brainstorming session was followed by each participant making their own draft outline for their writing, which was shared with their peers for comments. Students revised their first outlines and wrote their first draft. The first draft was then shared with their peer for feedback. After receiving the peer feedback, students wrote their second drafts. The second draft was also submitted to the teacher for feedback focused on content and organisation. Having received the teacher's comments, students then produced a third draft, which was looked at by the teacher for feedback on grammatical accuracy. Finally, based on the teacher's comments, students wrote their final drafts.

*Figure 3.1 Writing Cycle (adapted from Tsui and Ng 2000, p. 6)*



Tsui's and Ng's (2000) writing cycle suited the objectives of the study at the time, as it was conducted in an EFL context. However, it required a few changes and modifications to apply it to a Middle Eastern context. The first change was in terms of duration of the course. Each of Tsui's and Ng's (2000) writing cycles lasted for 6 weeks having 4 writing cycles in the school year. This was not possible as the research study at Bahrain Polytechnic was restricted in scope to the length of the Academic Bridging course, which was only a semester in duration. Because of the diversity of learners within the Polytechnic, and the organisation of programmes of study beyond the Academic Bridging level, it was unlikely that there would be the opportunity to study the same students in the same class over an academic year. This course discontinued the following academic year putting a more urgent selection in place. Also, having the school reforms run at the same time allowed this-level of English of students to rise. In the case-study then, each writing cycle lasted for only 2 weeks. The second reason for the change was the subjects' A2 level of English

language competency on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), which is very low. Having a 6-week writing cycle was not suitable for the allocated writing genres and word counts for each writing task in the curriculum. Therefore, a few steps in Tsui's and Ng's writing cycle were modified for the purposes of the Bahrain Polytechnic case-study as follows:

1. The draft outline session and the peer comments session on the outline were skipped.
2. The teacher's comments on the students' second draft were focused on grammatical accuracy instead of content and organisation.
3. The third draft was cancelled. Thus, there were no teacher's comments provided for draft three.
4. The peer response session conducted to discuss the peers' written feedback was merged with the writing up session of draft two.

Coming from a traditional teacher-oriented type of education, it was understood that implementing the writing cycle and the peer-reviewing process in a student-centred approach would be a big shift to students. Consequently, students were inducted about the benefits the peer-reviewing process could bring to their learning. More specifically, findings of Tsui's and Ng's (2000) writing cycle and peer-reviewing process were shared with students. Also, prior to the implementation of the writing cycle, students were trained to use a list of error codes used by Bahrain Polytechnic's English Language Faculty to mark and correct students' writing production at all levels. The training was conducted over a series of four tutorials on the first two weeks of the semester. The codes were used by the teacher when giving feedback to the written drafts submitted. Also, students were asked to use these codes when peer-reviewing for their peers. This is explained further in Section 3.5.1 on page 97.

In the context of this study, the writing cycle was sequenced as in Figure 3.3 below on page 91: brainstorming, writing the first draft, editing and emailing draft 1, receiving peer feedback, writing and emailing draft 2, receiving teacher's written feedback to the second draft, and writing the third (Final) draft. The first lesson, which was conducted in a language laboratory, was usually taken up by discussion about the topic and brainstorming, first as a whole group then in pairs. The pairs remained fixed throughout the semester- see section 3.4 on page 95. During the

following 2-hour language laboratory session, students wrote their first draft and emailed it to their allocated peer-reviewer and to the teacher. The teacher/researcher corrected the first draft for research purposes only and did not share any of the feedback with students to evaluate students' peer reviewing outcomes. Session three took place in the language laboratory and was dedicated to the peer-reviewing of the drafts. Using the error code checklist prepared specifically for this study (outlined further in Section 3.5 on page 97), students reviewed their peer's draft and indicated the errors they identified. The 'reviewers' then emailed the annotated draft back to the original student author (reviewee) and the teacher. The 'reviewees' then studied the feedback given to them by their peer reviewer and made changes as they considered fitting. Where there was some ambiguity in the errors highlighted, students asked their peers for clarification during the session as illustrated in Figure 3.2 below.

***Figure 3.2 Peer reviewing process in action in the language laboratory***



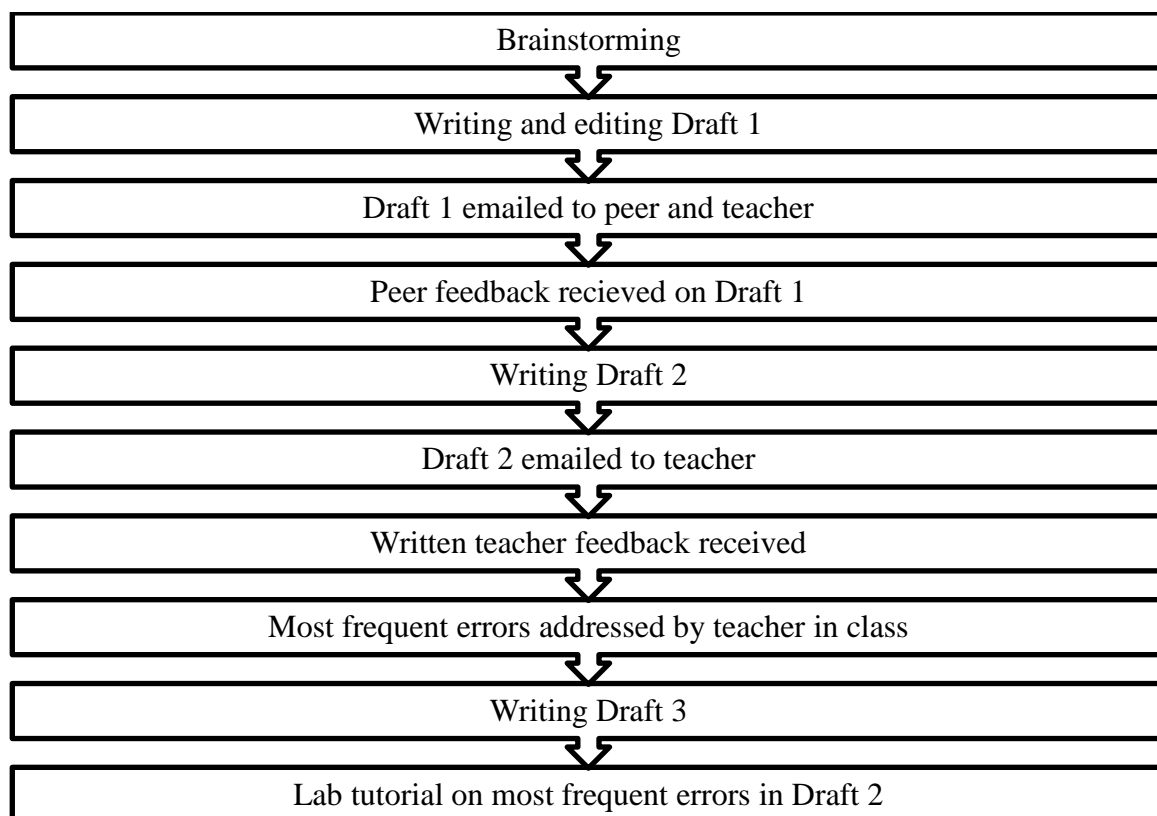
Based on the peer feedback received, students made their revisions and submitted the second draft to the teacher at the end of the second session. The teacher then commented and offered collective feedback on the second draft. The most common

errors found in the second draft, were discussed and analysed by the class and the teacher in weekly analysis sessions. Students were given the background of their errors and their relation to their L1. Differences between English and Arabic were explained thoroughly using class samples. The aim of the feedback was to help students improve their grammatical accuracy in their next written production. Thus, no specific research-related errors were chosen to track further development. The errors most frequently made and noticed weekly were addressed in the tutorials. Finally, students were expected to write the last draft (third draft), which hardly any student submitted.

This was followed by language practise using Sanako language laboratory 100. Sanako is an effective user-friendly language tool with a package of a wide array of reading comprehension, listening, writing, punctuation and grammar exercises and activities for students to practise their English skills in the language laboratory time allocated every week as well as their self-directed hours outside class time. Tense Buster, for example, is one of the programmes used to improve students' grammar areas from Elementary level (A) CEFR to phrasal verbs in Advanced level (C) CEFR. It is a self-access resource for remedial work. It consists of units that start with a presentation based on a dialogue, audio broadcasts or articles where students are encouraged to guess how the grammar aspect works. Then, the grammar rule is presented. It helps students confirm or change their understanding of the rule. Later comes the practice section with contextualised activities which has embedded grammar aspects. Each section is ended with a test to check students' progress.



**Figure 3.3 Research study writing cycle**



### **3.3.3 Implementation**

Students completed eight formative writing compositions during the programme. They were not considered as summative assessments that go towards their GPA. The writings included persuasive or argumentative compositions, descriptive, comparison and evaluation compositions. The topics that were presented in the above styles of writing were related to the topics covered in the modules of the course book *On target 2: intermediate (2000)* assigned for the course. The course book included different topics in its 12 units. Catering for the assessment weeks and breaks during the course, only eight writing tasks were assigned based on the topics of the course book as illustrated in 3.2 on page 94 below. The writing tasks were selected to match the genres selected for this level by the faculty management. The timeframe around the process outlined in Figure 3.3 above is two weeks per topic.

**Table 3.2 Writing Stages**

<b>Weeks</b>	<b>Essay</b>	<b>Unit</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Writing focus and genre</b>	<b>Writing task assigned</b>
1 and 2	1	-	Starting Out	To make introductions and exchange personal information	What did you do yesterday?
3 and 4	2	12	Hit the Jackpot	To talk about cause and effect, to speculate about the future and to describe consequences	Divorce has many negative effects. Do you agree or disagree? Give examples.
5 and 6	3	3	Keeping Up with the Joneses	To compare and contrast two items, to express preferences, to ask for agreement	What are the effects of technology on families? Discuss.
7 and 8	4	1	What's on TV?	Express agreements and disagreements, habits, opinions and frequency	What are the advantages and disadvantages of work to mothers? Give examples.
9 and 10	5	3	Keeping Up with the Joneses	To compare and contrast two items, to express preferences, to ask for agreement	Some people believe that university students should be required to attend classes. Others believe that going to classes should be optional for students. Which point of view do you agree with? Use specific reasons and details to explain your answer.
11 and 12	6	9	Stressed Out	To describe specific people and objects, to express preferences	Friendship is a very vital thing in our life. Discuss.
13 and 14	7	7	The Perfect Match	To talk about what has happened, to state generalizations	What are the important qualities of a good son and daughter? Have these qualities changed or remained the same over time in your culture? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.
15 and 16	8	6	The Best in Life	To compare and contrast three or more items, to argue, counter-argue and concede	The expression "Never, never give up" means to keep trying and never stop working for your goals. Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

### 3.4 Participants

Applicants to any programme at the Polytechnic undergo an online placement test, *Oxford English Testing.com*, as the Foundation English Language Placement Test for admission purposes. The Oxford test differentiates between students in mixed-ability classes and automatically categorises the participants using the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) group levels and specifies the areas for development. The test consists of two sections; language use and listening. The language use section tests vocabulary, functional language and grammar, while the listening assessment tests listening for detail and gist. Both sections target how language is used and the students' understanding of meaning. This gives the examiners the accurate level for each student. Based on the results of the Foundation English Language Placement Test, applicants are accepted to join the polytechnic's programmes.

The students were accepted on to the Academic Bridging course because their English was not strong enough to meet the requirements to participate in the Foundation programme. There were eight Academic Bridging classes in Semester One. Students were randomly allocated into classes with the aim of getting a mix of gender and similar abilities, by the Head of the English Faculty. Thus the class allocated to me as the teacher and researcher was fairly random. The Academic Bridging students were first year students who typically have studied English as a foreign language for nine years before joining the programme, although it is noteworthy that not all take English in secondary school, so this meant that for some, it was a long time since they had exposure to English, and their proficiency had subsequently deteriorated from the level indicated by results. Most came from government schools, in which the medium of instruction is the Arabic language. At school, participants' medium of communication with their peers was usually Arabic.

The Academic Bridging course was designed to address the needs of the less-competent cohorts and the class size was therefore limited so as not to exceed 12 students in each class, and they were provided with more face-to-face instruction than students studying English language at higher levels in the Foundation programme. This was mainly to address the students' language needs during class time.

There were 12 students in the class randomly allocated to the researcher to teach, and there were three males and nine females. The students' ages ranged from 18 to 20 years old, but their abilities in English showed some diversity, despite having similar schooling experiences. These students were classified as basic users, Level A according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) with six students at A1, referred to as less competent or CEFR (A1) students and another six at A2 and referred to as more competent or CEFR (A2) students. Based on the CEFR basic users Level A are individuals who can comprehend and employ common daily expressions and basic phrases, can introduce themselves and others and can inquire and respond to questions about personal details, can describe in basic terms and can interrelate in an uncomplicated manner if addressed gradually and clearly (Council of Europe 2011). Participants were paired based on their language level determined by the Oxford placement test. An A1 CEFR level was paired with an A2 CEFR level. Each peer worked with his or her identified peer throughout the course. Students did not know each other's language levels to avoid conflicts and personal and parental requests to be separated in a higher-level class as it is a norm in the Bahraini culture. The pairing was aimed at evaluating the influence the more advanced participants would have on the lower ones. This is illustrated in Table 3.3 below.

***Table 3.3 Peer groups***

<b>Pairs (Pn)</b>	<b>- CEFR (A2) / - CEFR (A1)</b>
P1-Zahra	CEFR (A1)
P1-Hanan	CEFR (A2)
P2-Asma	CEFR (A2)
P2-Fatima M	CEFR (A1)
P3-Amina	CEFR (A2)
P3-Hashmiya	CEFR (A1)
P4-A.Rahman	CEFR (A2)
P4-Bader	CEFR (A1)
P5-Fatima	CEFR (A2)
P5-Mahmood	CEFR (A1)
P6-Reem	CEFR (A2)
P6-Naderah	CEFR (A1)

### **3.5 Data analysis**

Different analyses were carried out to answer the research questions. The sub-sections below describe the different forms of analysis applied according to the type of data produced. Quantitative and qualitative analysis of data about the number and type of errors made by the participants are presented back to them over the duration of the study.

#### **3.5.1 Drafts and Peer-Reviews**

##### **Students' drafts**

Students were expected to write eight essays, but not everyone submitted the eight due to several reasons. One of the reasons might be that they were formative tasks so students did not feel pressured to complete them at any stage. Another reason might be due to the assessments that ran over the semester for other courses. Other reasons might be ecological. The multiple drafts of each participant and their reviews by their peers were the primary source of data in the research study. The teacher/researcher annotated the first draft, second draft and peer-reviewed draft of the eight essays for all twelve participants. This brings the total of checked and annotated drafts to 288 drafts. The researcher was the only marker of the collected drafts. This was due to the fact that none of the other teachers teaching the course accepted to participate or help out marking or annotating the drafts due to their heavy workload.

The data for each student was electronically tagged to distinguish the drafts' numbers and students' names. Each pair was allocated a code (P1, P2, etc.). The drafts were coded as follows:

- Draft 1: This is the 1st draft written by students before it has been peer-reviewed (e.g. E1D1: Essay 1, Draft 1). E stands for essay and D for draft.
- Draft 2: This is the 2nd draft written by the authors or reviewees after Draft 1 has been peer-reviewed by the reviewer (e.g. E1D2: Essay 1, Draft 2)
- Draft 3: 3rd and final draft after Draft 2 has been reviewed by the teacher (e.g. E1D3: Essay 1, Draft 3). Unfortunately, this was not submitted by students for all essays.

As for the peer-reviewed Draft 1 of each and every essay from 1 to 8, one code was used:

- PR-E(n): This is the peer-review of Draft 1 with the reviewer's feedback to the author of the essay or the reviewee. (e.g. PR-E1 is the peer reviewed Draft 1 of Essay 1) PR stands for peer review and D stands for draft.
- Figure 3.4 below shows a sample of a student's (Hashmiya) Draft 1 with no errors coded by either the teacher or the peer (Amina).

***Figure 3.4 Sample of draft 1- Essay 7***

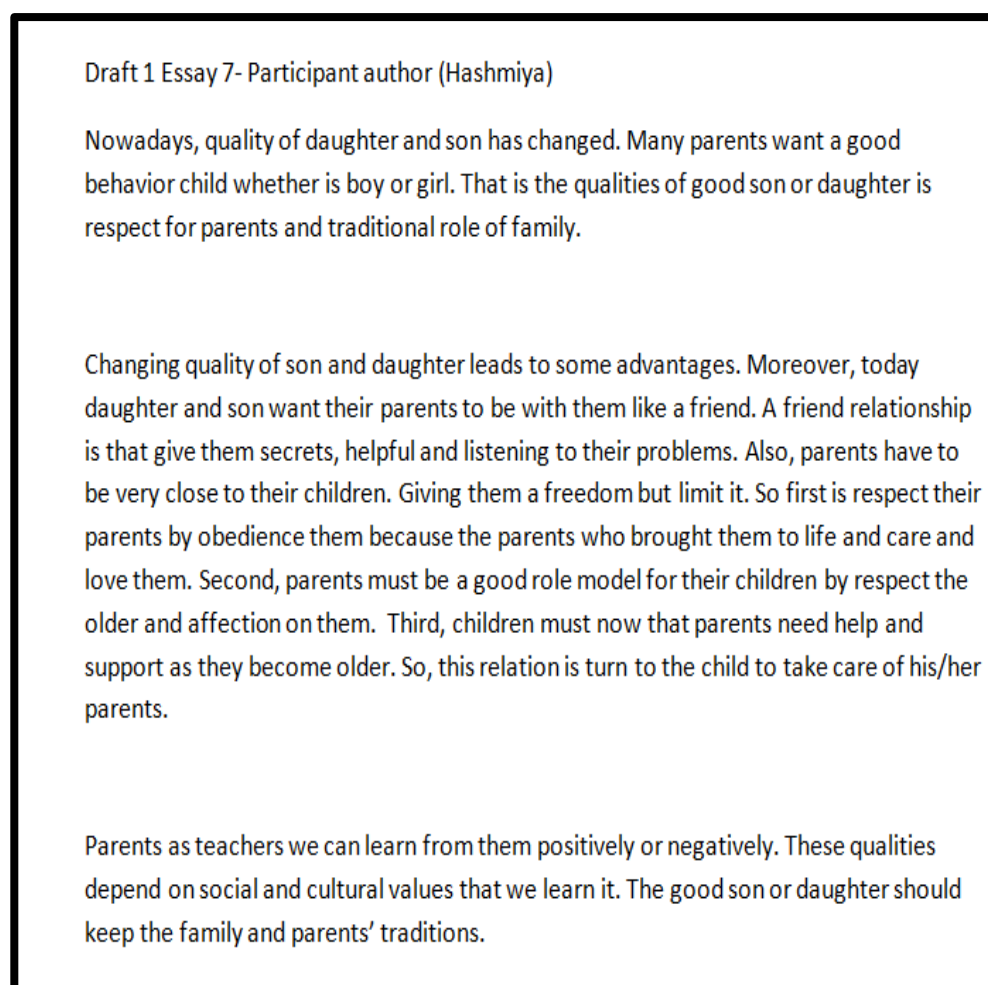


Figure 3.5 below on page 100 outlines the steps taken in analysing students' written productions. Each student's draft 1 and draft 2 have been reviewed by the teacher/researcher for on-going data analysis; however, only the feedback on draft 2 was shared with the authors. Thus, individual feedback was given to Draft 1 while collective feedback was given to Draft 2. The correct forms for the most frequent error categories related to L1 interference were counted only for analysis purposes.

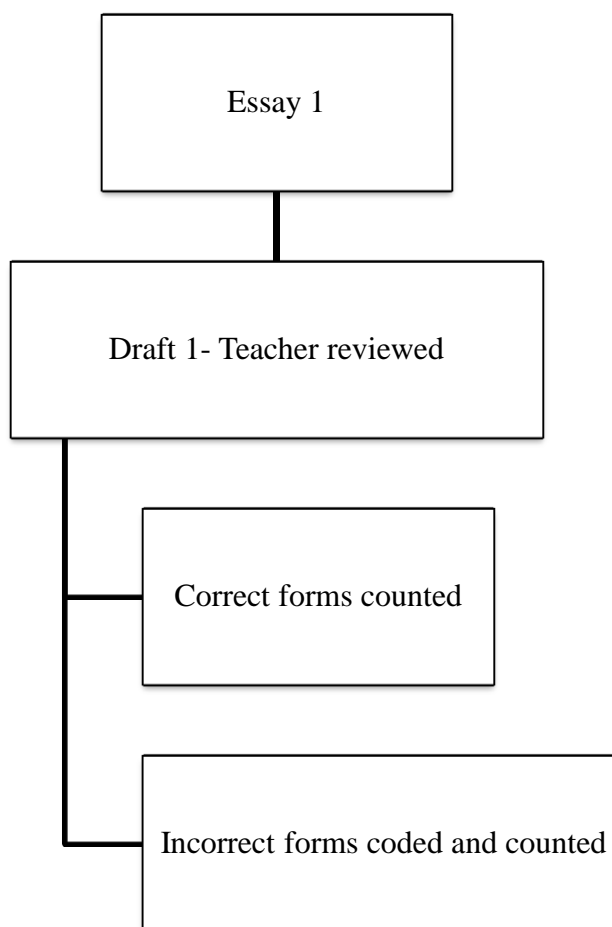
The same applied to each peer reviewed draft. Each student provided coded feedback identifying the errors in the peer's draft as described in Section 3.3.2 on page 87.

**Table 3.4 Error codes checklist**

Code	Meaning	Code	Meaning	Code	Meaning
P	Punctuation	WF	Word Form	/	Start a new sentence here
Caps.	Capital letter	WW	Wrong Word	¶	Start a new paragraph here
sing.	singular	Vocab	Choose a better word	<del>Word</del>	Delete this
pl.	plural	WO	Art.	Article	Article to be added or removed
prep.	preposition	SS	Sentence Structure: The sentence needs to be rewritten to make better sense.	VT	Verb Tense
SV	Subject Verb Agreement	sp	Spelling	^	Missing word
VF	Verb Form	—	Space	~ ?	Meaning unclear

For draft 1 of each essay received individual feedback. The teacher coded and counted the incorrect forms and only counted the correct forms for the most frequent error categories related to L1 interference. This was not shared with the participants to evaluate the peer reviewing process and peers' interaction and written actions taken. The teacher review steps are illustrated in Figure 3.5 below on page 100.

***Figure 3.5 Coding: Draft 1 Individual Teacher review***





**Figure 3.6 Sample of individual teacher feedback and encoding of Draft 1- Essay**

7

Nowadays, the quality of daughter and son has changed. Many parents want a good behavior child whether is boy or girl. That is the qualities of good son or daughter is respect for parents and traditional role of family.

Changing the quality of son and daughter leads to some advantages. Moreover, today daughter and son want their parents to be with them like a friend. A friend relationship is that keep secrets, help and listen to their problems. Also, parents have to be very close to their children. Give them a freedom but limit it. So first is respect their parents by obedience them because the parents who brought them to life and care and love them. Second, parents must be a good role model for their children by respect the older and affection on them. Third, children must that parents need help and support as they become older. So, this relation is turn to the child to take care of his/her parents.

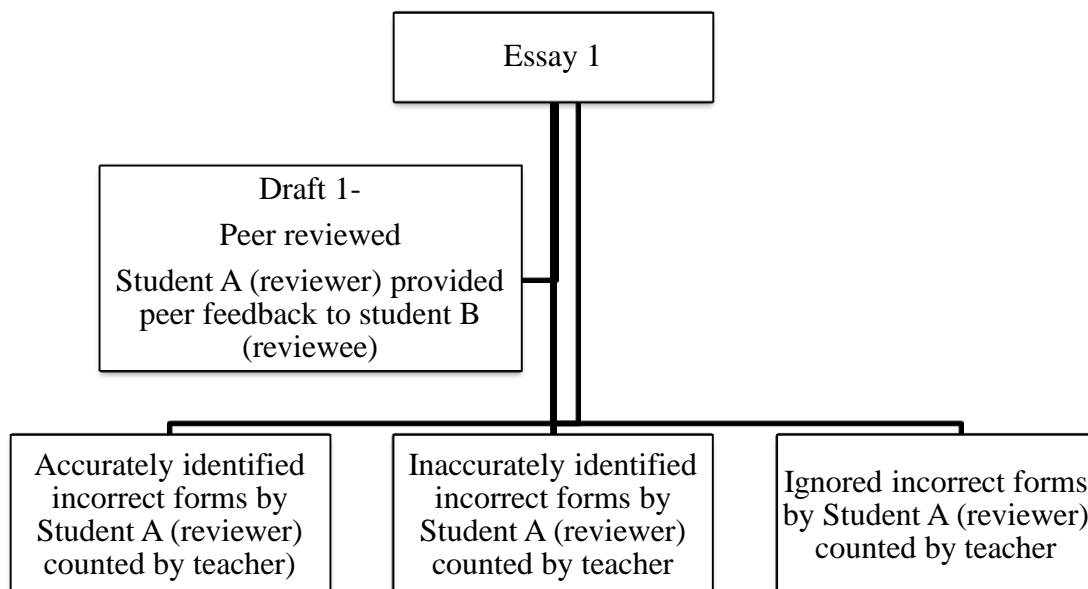
Parents as teachers we can learn from them positively or negatively. These qualities depend on social and cultural values that we learn it. The good son or daughter should keep the family and parents' traditions.

Comment [f1]: Word form: PLURAL  
 Comment [f2]: Word form: PLURAL  
 Comment [f3]: Word form: PLURAL  
 Comment [f4]: Subject verb agreement  
 Comment [f5]: WORD FORM  
 Comment [f6]: WORD FORM  
 Comment [f7]: Sentence structure  
 Comment [f8]: Pronoun reference SUBJECT VERB AGREEMENT  
 Comment [f9]: ARTICLE  
 Comment [f10]: PREPOSITION  
 Comment [f11]: PREPOSITION  
 Comment [f12]: ARTICLE  
 Comment [f13]: ARTICLE  
 Comment [f14]: Word form: PLURAL  
 Comment [f15]: Word form: PLURAL  
 Comment [f16]: Word form: PLURAL  
 Comment [f17]: WORD FORM  
 Comment [f18]: RELATIVE PRONOUN  
 Comment [f19]: VERB TENSE  
 Comment [f20]: VERB TENSE  
 Comment [f21]: VERB TENSE  
 Comment [f22]: PUNCTUATION  
 Comment [f23]: ARTICLE  
 Comment [f24]: SUBJECT MISSING  
 Comment [f25]: VERB FORM  
 Comment [f26]: WORD FORM  
 Comment [f27]: VERB MISSING  
 Comment [f28]: VERB TENSE  
 Comment [f29]: CONJUNCTION  
 Comment [f30]: WORD FORM  
 Comment [f31]: DELETE THIS  
 Comment [f32]: CONJUNCTION  
 Comment [f33]: VERB MISSING  
 Comment [f34]: SENTENCE STRUCTURE  
 Comment [f35]: SENTENCE STRUCTURE  
 Comment [f36]: PRONOUN

## Peer Reviews

The peer-reviewed drafts (PR-E (n)) were also encoded. The teacher counted the errors that had been correctly highlighted by reviewers, forms that had been incorrectly signalled as errors, as well as incorrect forms that had been ignored, as shown in Figure 3.7 below on page 102.

**Figure 3.7 Coding: Draft 1 Peer review**



**Figure 3.8 Sample of peer feedback and encoding of Draft 1- Essay 7 PR-E (n)**

Draft 2- Essay 7 coded by peer reviewer (Amina)

Nowadays, quality of daughter and son has changed. Many parents want a good behavior child whether is boy or girl. That is the qualities of good son or daughter is respect for parents and traditional role of family.

Changing quality of son and daughter leads to some advantages. Moreover, today daughter and son want their parents to be with them like a friend. A friend relationship is that give them secrets, helpful and listening to their problems. Also, parents have to be very close to their children. Giving them a freedom but limit it. So first is respect their parents by obedience them because the parents who brought them to life and care and love them. Second, parents must be a good role model for their children by respect the older and affection on them. Third, children must now that parents need help and support as they become older. So, this relation is turn to the child to take care of his/her parents.

Parents as teachers we can learn from them positively or negatively. These qualities depend on social and cultural values that we learn it. The good son or daughter should keep the family and parents' traditions.

Comment [937]: Artical

Comment [938]: Artical

Comment [939R38]:

Comment [940]: Keep

Comment [941]: Delete

Comment [942]: (v)form

Comment [943]: (V) form

Comment [944]: (v) form

Comment [945]: punctuation

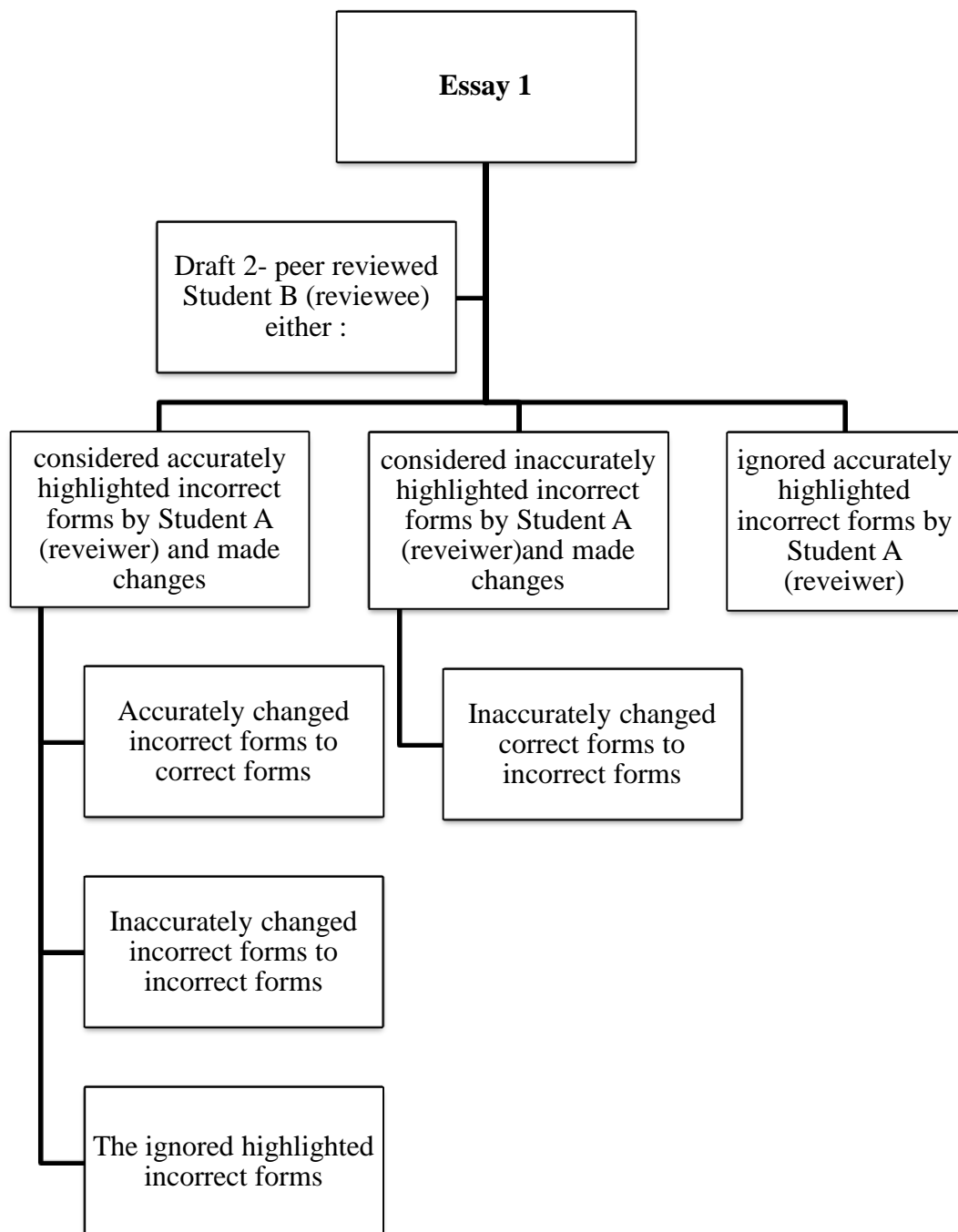
Comment [946]: Delete

Comment [947]: Wrong word

Comment [948]: they

The writing cycle described in Section 3.3.2 on page 87 shows that when the reviewees received feedback from their respective reviewers, they revised their initial draft (Draft 2) either considering or ignoring the highlighted incorrect forms. The teacher/researcher then analysed the reviewee's accurately changed incorrect forms, inaccurately changed incorrect forms and the ignored incorrect forms which were not highlighted. See Figure 3.9 below.

**Figure 3.9 Draft 2 Student B (Reviewee) changes based on Student A's (Reviewer) feedback**



**Figure 3.10 Sample of teacher feedback and encoding of Draft 2- Essay 7**

Draft 2- Essay 7 coded by teacher

Nowadays, the qualities of (daughter) and (son) changed. Many parents want a good child whether it is boy or girl. (That is) the qualities of a good son or daughter (s) respect (for) parents and (t)raditional role of a family.

Changing the quality of (son) and (daughter) leads to some advantages. Moreover, today (daughter and son) want their parents to be with them like a friend. A (friend) relationship is that (keep) secrets, (help) and (listen) to their problems. Also, parents have to be very close to their children. (Give) them (a) freedom but limit it. So first is respecting their parents by obeying them because the parents (who) brought them to life and (care) and (love) them. (Second,) parents must be a good role model for their children by (respect) the older (and) affection on them. (Third,) children must (that) parents need help and support as they become older. (So, this relation is turn to the child to take care of his/her parents.)

Parents are teachers we can learn from positively or negatively. These qualities depend on social and cultural values that we learn (it). The good son or daughter should keep the family and parents' traditions.

Comment [f1]: Word form: PLURAL  
 Comment [f2]: Word form: PLURAL  
 Comment [f3]: Pronoun reference SUBJECT VERB AGREEMENT  
 Comment [f4]: PREPOSITION  
 Comment [f5]: PREPOSITION  
 Comment [f6]: ARTICLE  
 Comment [f7]: Word form: PLURAL  
 Comment [f8]: Word form: PLURAL  
 Comment [f9]: Word form: PLURAL  
 Comment [f10]: WORD FORM  
 Comment [f11]: RELATIVE PRONOUN  
 Comment [f12]: VERB TENSE  
 Comment [f13]: VERB TENSE  
 Comment [f14]: VERB TENSE  
 Comment [f15]: PUNCTUATION  
 Comment [f16]: ARTICLE  
 Comment [f17]: VERB MISSING  
 Comment [f18]: VERB TENSE  
 Comment [f19]: CONJUNCTION  
 Comment [f20]: WORD FORM  
 Comment [f21]: DELETE THIS  
 Comment [f22]: CONJUNCTION  
 Comment [f23]: VERB MISSING  
 Comment [f24]: SENTENCE STRUCTURE  
 Comment [f25]: PRONOUN

Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the sample to learn about the participants' written accuracy changes over the eight essays. Thus, means, variations, Single Factor Anova and regression were applied to test the significance of the data collected. Detailed tables with the number of coded all punctuation and grammar Categories incorrect forms and (the four most frequent grammar error categories) correct forms identified by the teacher are available in Appendix B.

The encoded errors and correct forms described above were processed through two equations to answer the research questions. The researcher/teacher identified the word count of each composition written by each student, and the count of each incorrect form per grammar category, all of which were normalised by 100 words using Equation 1.

**Equation 1: Error (category)<sup>n</sup> in Essay<sup>n</sup>**

$$\text{Errors in Essay}(n) = \left| \frac{\text{Incorrect Forms}}{\text{Word Count Essay } n} \right| \times 100$$

*\*(n) stands for the number of the essay*

Using Equation 1, the overall errors produced in all error categories for the sample were observed to find the most frequent errors produced. These errors were further investigated to compare CEFR (A1) students' and CEFR (A2) students' 'production of errors in each error category. Another analysis was carried out on the most frequent L1 interference errors found. The corresponding percentages for the normalised most frequent errors (i.e. percentage of punctuation errors in relation to the total number of errors) were calculated. These analyses aimed to answer the first research question investigating what the most frequent L1 interference errors are. Equation 1 was also used to provide an overview of participants' identified errors for their peers in the peer reviewing process. The identified errors were categorised as follows: accurately identified errors, falsely identified errors and unidentified errors.

The development of written accuracy over time from essay one to essay eight in (a) all error categories and (b) in the most frequent L1 interference errors, was analysed using Equation 2 below.

**Equation 2: Correct forms ratio formula**

$$\begin{aligned} &\text{Ratio of correct Forms in Essay}(n) \\ &= \left| \frac{\text{Correct Form}}{\text{Incorrect Forms} + \text{correct Forms}} \right| \times 100 \end{aligned}$$

The patterns of the proportion of correct forms produced and the proportion of correctly identified errors for peers were reviewed in light of the methods implemented in the case-study (e.g. peer reviewing process, grammar tutorials led by the teacher, grammar language laboratory sessions) to answer the second research question investigating the effect of the writing cycle and more particularly the process-oriented writing method through the peer reviewing process- see Chapter Four (Section 4.2 on page 135) and Chapter Five (Section 5.2 on page 151 and Section 5.3 on page 170). Appendix B illustrates the proportion of correct and incorrect forms by all students in Draft 1 of all essays.

### 3.5.2 Baseline Oral Survey and Questionnaires

The participants' perceptions of their own writing skills were sought through an oral survey prior to the intervention in the first session of week one of the semester. The aim of the survey was to understand students' personal perceptions, fears and difficulties based on their experience at school. The survey was conducted in Arabic so that the participants would feel comfortable sharing their thoughts about learning English and more specifically writing in English.

In the same week prior to the start of the study, students were asked to fill in a pre-intervention diagnostic questionnaire, the aim of which was to find out the students' expectations of the writing course and their reactions to receiving and giving feedback. The questionnaire addressed the statements outlined below in a 4-item Likert scale (Strongly agree, Agree, Strongly disagree, Disagree).

**Table 3.5 Pre-questionnaire statements**

Statement
• I think writing in English is more difficult than speaking.
• I think I don't really have problems in writing English.
• Writing in English is important to me because I will need it in a job.
• Writing in English is important to me because I must pass examinations in English.
• I expect to do a lot of writing in class.
• I expect to do a lot of writing by myself at home.
• I would like the teacher to look at my work and help me while I am in class.
• I would like the teacher to talk to me about my writing sometimes.
• I usually check through my writing before I hand it in.
• I expect the teacher to mark all the mistakes in my work.
• I expect the teacher to mark the most important mistakes in my work.
• I want my teacher to write comments about what is good or not good in my writing.
• I make a careful note of the teacher's corrections when I get work back.
• I usually read the comments and look at the grade but I don't study the corrections.

The same statements as in the pre-course questionnaire outlined above were administered at the end of the intervention as a post-course questionnaire in order to compare students' expectations of the writing course and their reactions to receiving and giving feedback before and after the intervention.

Another 4-item Likert scale questionnaire was carried out at the end of the study seeking the participants' views of the peer reviewing process. The questionnaire had an open-ended question asking students to state what they liked or did not like about the writing cycle. The questionnaire addressed the statements in Table 3.6 below.

**Table 3.6 Peer reviewing process questionnaire**

<b>Peer Review Statement</b>
• Peer feedback is helping me to revise my drafts.
• It helps me look at my writing as a reader would.
• Peer feedback helps me to present my ideas more clearly.
• It helps to improve the organization of my writing task.
• It has helped the grammar in my writing.
• I learn most from comments on the content of my writing.
• I learn most from comments on organization and style.
• I learn most from their corrections in grammar, spelling, etc.
• Indicate one of the following features that you feel you learnt best and was most important when receiving peer feedback with a "1" and the least important features with a "3".
<b>When I give feedback Statement</b>
• Reading my peers' drafts helps me to improve my writing.
• It helps me to discover new ideas and views.
• It helps me to analyse my own writing.
• Reading my peers' drafts makes me better at spotting my errors.
• I learn from reading the content of their writing.
• I learn by looking at the organization and style of their writing.
• I learn from their mistakes in grammar, spelling, etc. (I try not to make similar mistakes)

The teacher observed the participants' reactions in class, especially students' reaction to their peers and the peer reviewing process. Also, the teacher voice-recorded some of the peer reviewing sessions, but unfortunately these had to be abandoned due to the poor quality of the voice recordings, which were not clear enough to be analysed. Some videos and pictures of the peer reviewing process and discussions held in class were taken to capture the level of engagement.

### **3.5.3 Classroom Observations**

The teacher/ researcher kept a journal in which students' personal qualities and traits, health complications, social backgrounds, interactions, engagement in learning, attendance and their daily responses to their peers and teacher were all noted. Parents' visits and calls were also summarised. Another journal was kept analysing the two cases' writings in details noting down the observations of the changes the peers made or neglected. The classroom observations provided insights to the variations in students' proportion of errors and correct forms as well as their feedback input to their peers. These are discussed where relevant in Chapter Five.

### **3.6 Conclusion**

In the literature review, an overview of learning, language learning and learning English as a second language identified the common problems that Arab students encounter, focusing on the particular issues related to writing English as a second language. This raised the role of feedback in English as a second language learning in process-oriented writing, and concluded that the use of peer feedback may enhance students' learning. It was apparent that there is a need to consider enhancing Bahraini students' English writing skills and in this chapter the methodology used to investigate the most common grammatical errors Bahraini Arab students made in ESL writing was outlined. The intervention applied was focused on the effects of peer reviewing in ESL to resolve LI interference errors. The context for the study influenced the research design, and the nature of the students who were the targeted participants was described, as well as the case-study approach and identification of appropriate data collection and analysis methods. How this methodology was implemented in this case-study of Bahraini ESL learners is the focus of the next two chapters. The findings reported in Chapter Four are the result of an analysis of the participants' written products through the correct and incorrect forms they produced and identified. Chapter Five analyses the effects of the process-oriented writing approach through the peer reviewing process on students' written accuracy.



## **4 Chapter Four: The Development of Written Accuracy**

The previous chapter (Chapter Three) defined the methodology utilised in the case-study investigating the most frequent grammatical errors Bahraini Arab students make in ESL writing in addition to how peer reviewing in ESL could resolve LI interference errors. It comprised the context, research design, participants and the methodological methods.

The findings in this research study are reported in two chapters, analysing the participants' products through the correct and incorrect forms they produced and identified, and analysing the effects of the process-oriented writing approach with the focus on the peer reviewing process and teacher feedback on students' written accuracy. This chapter (Chapter Four) describes the overall participants' written products detailing the individual subcases of errors in students' written products before, during and at the end of the research study. A subsequent chapter (Chapter Five) will analyse the effects of the process-oriented writing approach using peer reviewing as a process.

### **4.1 Making Errors**

Using descriptive statistics, comparisons of the means and variances of the errors in all eight essays of the twelve participants were carried out. A first reading of the values as listed in Table 4.1 on page 110 below shows clearly that there are differences in means of all errors in all essays ranging from (5.59) to (10.59). The errors' variations in the eight essays indicate the different learning complexities faced in the grammar error categories per essay.

***Table 4.1 Means and variances of errors per essay***

<b>Essay</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Variance</b>
<b>Essay 1</b>	8.34	13.31
<b>Essay 2</b>	10.59	16.93
<b>Essay 3</b>	10.08	10.53
<b>Essay 4</b>	10.2	9.92
<b>Essay 5</b>	8.49	18.99
<b>Essay 6</b>	9.59	27.09
<b>Essay 7</b>	5.77	6.87
<b>Essay 8</b>	5.59	3.14

Accordingly, the means and variances of the errors of each participant were calculated showing differences between participants in the errors each produced over the full cycle. See Table 4.2. The variations of errors produced per participant show how students' development producing errors differed. To analyse the errors produced in each essay further, a Single-Factor Anova was done as illustrated in Table 4.3 on page 111 below.

***Table 4.2 Means and variances of errors per participant***

<b>Student</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Variance</b>
<b>Zahra</b>	7.18	13.72
<b>Hanan</b>	8.20	9.94
<b>Amina</b>	7.27	11.98
<b>Hashmiya</b>	10.82	22.14
<b>Fatima M</b>	12.64	41.46
<b>Asma</b>	8.94	13.54
<b>Fatima</b>	12.38	10.15
<b>Mahmood</b>	8.85	11.05
<b>Reem</b>	7.95	7.72
<b>Naderah</b>	10.37	12.05
<b>Bader</b>	8.05	5.75
<b>A.Rahman</b>	3.92	3.31

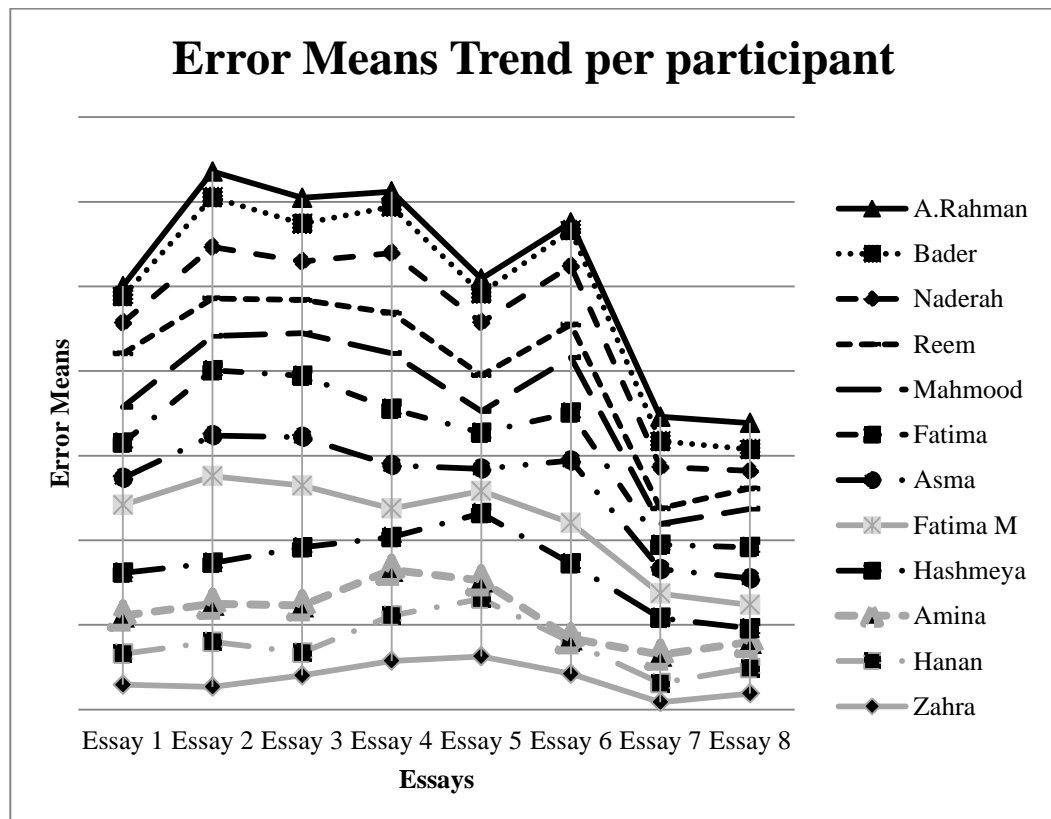
Based on Table 4.3 on page 111 below, the null hypothesis was rejected as the p-value (0.01344) is less than (0.05) showing a statistically significant difference, indicating that the numbers of errors produced per essay were different.

**Table 4.3 Single Factor Anova**

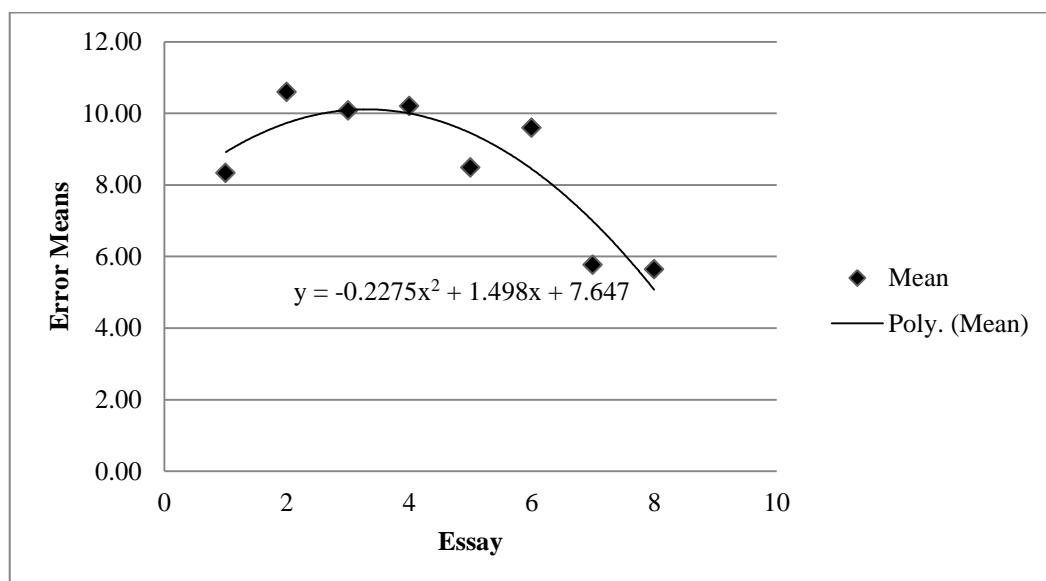
ANOVA						
Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	264.669534	7	37.80993	2.74441374	0.0134	2.1309
Within Groups	1060.83307	77	13.77705			
Total	1325.50260	84				

The second null hypothesis, namely that the error averages for each student over time would be the same was also rejected. The averages varied across essays and students over time. Inspecting the trends for each participant's errors per essay as in Figure 4.1, no trend was found. Consequently, the errors' averages were plotted on a Cartesian coordinate system and formed a quadratic equation ( $y = -0.2275x^2 + 1.498x + 7.647$ ), which expressed the trend. The trend found was polynomial showing a gradual decrease of the errors over time. See Figure 4.2 on page 112.

**Figure 4.1 Error Means Trend per participant**



**Figure 4.2 Quadratic equation and trend of error averages**



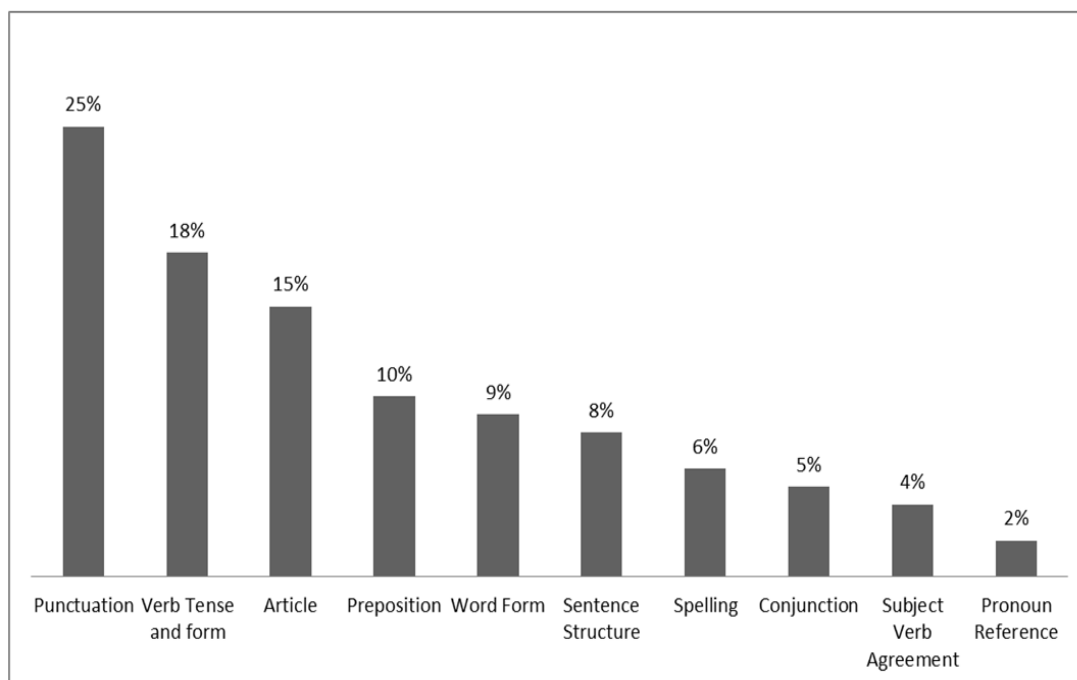
This section outlines and discusses the errors produced by the participants and identified by the teacher/researcher. Errors found in the participants' first drafts (from Essay 1 to Essay 8) were coded according to the taxonomy presented in Chapter 3 (p. 93) and recorded (see Appendix B), before being normalised (see Table 4.4 on page 113 below).

**Table 4.4 Most frequent errors in essay 1 to 8 (per 100 words)**

Draft 1 of Essay (No.)		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total errors/ category
No. of students who submitted		12	12	12	12	12	12	11	9	
Error Category	Total Number of errors normalised per 100									
	Article	13.7	9.7	13.5	7.3	18.5	13.3	2.3	2.8	81.1
	Conjunction	3.6	3.1	2.5	4.8	2.9	6.5	2.7	3.1	29.2
	Sentence Structure	2.5	9.7	4.5	7.3	7.5	6.9	2.7	3.5	44.6
	Spelling	3.5	11.4	4.7	1.8	2.5	2.4	1.9	2.1	30.2
	Subject Verb Agreement	0.0	6.3	3.4	3.6	0.0	2.1	3.3	0.9	19.7
	Preposition	5.6	9.2	7.2	11.7	2.0	5.6	0.6	10.4	52.3
	Punctuation	29.0	31.7	20.7	16.5	12.6	14.0	8.0	2.1	134.7
	Verb tense and form	17.6	11.6	15.5	22.7	15.5	18.7	8.0	6.6	116.3
	Word Form	2.9	8.7	7.1	3.6	10.4	8.0	4.2	4.7	49.6
	Pronoun Reference	0.0	2.2	0.0	5.2	0.5	0.3	1.8	0.3	10.4
Total errors per essay		97.6	115.4	94.7	109	90.3	96.6	43.4	45.4	

An overview of the corresponding percentages for the normalised errors above (i.e. percentage of punctuation errors in relation to the total number of errors) is given in Figure 4.3 below on page 114. Punctuation errors are the most frequent errors (25%) followed by verb tense and forms (18%), article (15%), preposition (10%), word form (9%), sentence structure (8%), spelling (6%), conjunction (5%), subject-verb agreement (4%) and pronoun reference (2%). The four most frequent error types (punctuation, verb tenses and forms, articles, and prepositions) are also the most frequent errors due to L1 interference as indicated in Chapter Two.

**Figure 4.3 Overview of percentage of errors per category in Draft 1 (Essay 1 to 8)**



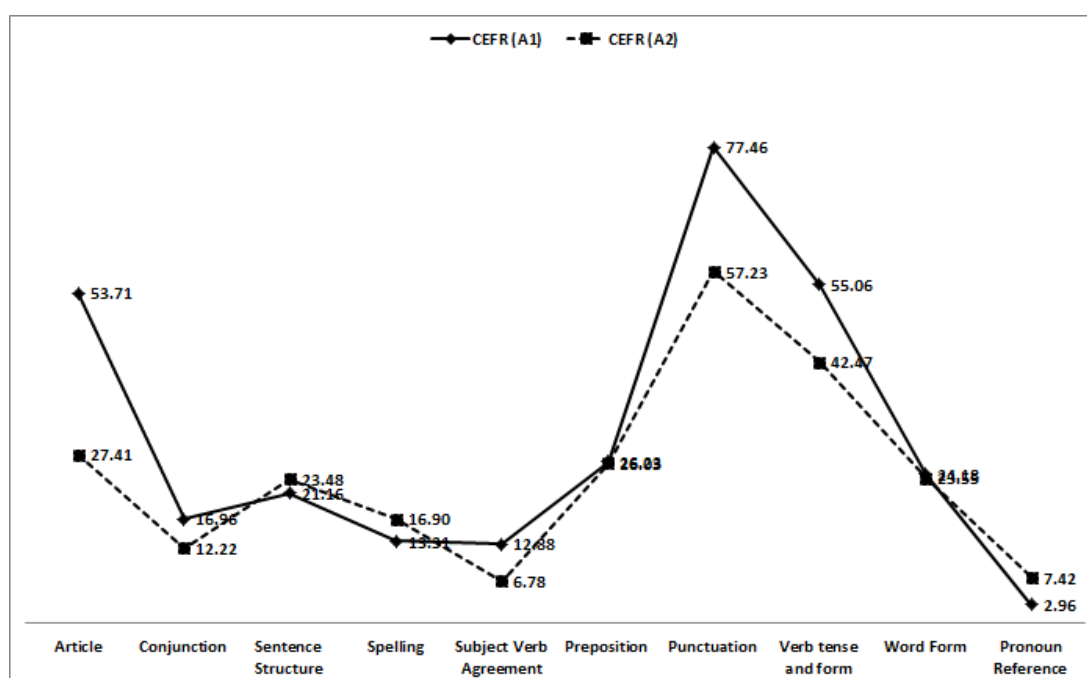
#### **4.1.1 Overall Errors Produced by CEFR (A2) students Versus CEFR (A1) students**

Another comparison was carried out on the overall errors produced by CEFR (A1) students and CEFR (A2) students in Draft 1 from Essay 1 to 8. The participants were divided into students were divided into two groups, according to their CEFR level: less competent (A1) and more competent (A2). Based on the total number of errors per 100 words as outlined in Table 4.5 on page 115 and Figure 4.4 on page 116 below, CEFR (A2) students produced more errors than the CEFR (A1) students in some error categories.

**Table 4.5 Overall errors (mean per 100 words) produced by CEFR (A2) students vs. CEFR (A1) students**

Participants' classification	Error Categories	Essay 1	Essay 2	Essay 3	Essay 4	Essay 5	Essay 6	Essay 7	Essay 8	Total
	Essay No.									
A1 Mean	Word count per essay	714	896	1061	1255	767	960	1091	1044	7788
A2 Mean	Word count per essay	912	1248	1447	1209	1078	2605	697	1184	1038
A1 Mean	Article	10.4	6.42	5.94	4.56	12.9	10.0	1.85	1.52	53.7
A2 Mean	Article	3.20	3.30	7.52	2.70	5.58	3.34	0.45	1.33	27.4
A1 Mean	Conjunction	2.96	2.17	0.57	2.56	2.40	3.53	1.72	1.05	16.9
A2 Mean	Conjunction	0.60	0.96	1.93	2.28	0.52	2.92	0.95	2.06	12.2
A1 Mean	Sentence Structure	1.56	4.74	2.26	3.56	3.00	3.12	1.85	1.06	21.1
A2 Mean	Sentence Structure	0.95	5.00	2.26	3.78	4.48	3.77	0.81	2.43	23.4
A1 Mean	Spelling	0.57	6.51	1.02	1.80	1.32	1.30	0.00	0.78	13.3
A2 Mean	Spelling	2.90	4.92	3.67	0.00	1.13	1.06	1.90	1.33	16.9
A1 Mean	Subject Verb Agreement	0.00	3.41	2.34	2.80	0.00	0.94	2.81	0.59	12.8
A2 Mean	Subject Verb Agreement	0.00	2.87	1.10	0.83	0.00	1.20	0.45	0.33	6.78
A1 Mean	Preposition	5.55	5.11	3.60	2.98	0.66	3.20	0.62	4.50	26.2
A2 Mean	Preposition	0.00	4.09	3.61	8.73	1.34	2.36	0.00	5.89	26.0
A1 Mean	Punctuation	14.48	19.5	12.1	12.2	7.43	6.06	4.46	1.13	77.4
A2 Mean	Punctuation	14.5	12.21	8.54	4.22	5.15	7.99	3.56	1.00	57.2
A1 Mean	Verb tense and form	7.39	2.38	8.13	11.2	8.04	9.51	5.58	2.80	55.0
A2 Mean	Verb tense and form	8.39	5.67	7.08	5.31	4.99	5.96	1.23	3.85	42.47
A1 Mean	Word Form	1.48	5.42	2.58	0.31	6.36	4.16	2.03	1.85	24.1
A2 Mean	Word Form	1.39	3.32	4.51	1.40	4.03	3.86	2.18	2.86	23.5
A1 Mean	Pronoun Reference	0.00	0.64	0.00	0.88	0.00	0.00	1.44	0.00	2.96
A2 Mean	Pronoun Reference	0.00	1.53	0.00	4.36	0.52	0.30	0.36	0.34	7.42

**Figure 4.4 Overview of errors comparing CEFR (A2) students and CEFR (A1) students per 100 words**



The overall trend of errors produced for CEFR (A2) students and CEFR (A1) students indicates that CEFR (A2) students produced more pronoun reference errors (7.42), spelling errors (16.90) and sentence structure errors (23.48), as shown in Figure 4.4 above. CEFR (A2) students produced more sentence structure errors in Essay 2 (5.0), Essay 4 (3.77), Essay 5 (4.479), Essay 6 (3.77) and Essay 8 (2.43). They showed the same trend producing more pronoun reference errors than the CEFR (A1) students in the group especially in Essay 2 (1.53), Essay 4 (4.35), Essay 5 (0.52), Essay 6 (0.29) and Essay 8 (0.34). Additionally, they had more spelling errors in Essay 1 (2.89), Essay 3 (3.67), Essay 7 (1.89) and Essay 8 (1.32). The results show that the less competent students have generally produced more incorrect forms in articles, conjunctions, word forms, subject-verb agreement, punctuation, prepositions and verb tenses and forms. Observing their errors in articles, it is noticed that the less competent students produced more article errors than their more competent peers in Essay 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 but not Essay 3. Similarly, no stable trend was found in terms of less competent students having more errors all across the eight essays in the other error categories mentioned above. More competent students seemed to have more errors than less competent students in a few essays in each category, yet stayed at a better accuracy level on the whole. For example, more competent students had more punctuation errors than less competent students in Essay 1 and 6, but overall their accuracy in punctuation developed more than the less



competent students especially in Essay 2, 3, 4, 5, 7 and 8. Likewise, verb tenses and forms seemed to be problematic for more competent students only in Essay 1, 2 and 8 while they progressed significantly in the rest of the essays and on the whole. The same was noticed for conjunctions, word forms, subject-verb agreement and prepositions.

The most frequent L1 interference error categories are discussed below in light of the findings from the sample.

#### 4.1.2 Punctuation

As discussed in Chapter 2 (Section 2.3.4 on page 45) Arabic speakers produce more errors with English punctuation than other ESL students because Arabic has fewer punctuation marks than English (Siddiqui 2015). The most frequent punctuation errors include the use of commas instead of full stops, missing commas after adverbial phrases, missing apostrophes and using lower case instead of upper case. The main reason is that in Arabic, sentences are separated with commas with an indication of one full stop at the end of each paragraph. The samples in Table 4.6 below illustrate this type of punctuation error.

**Table 4.6 Punctuation Errors: Full stop**

Essay	Student	Student's sentence indicating punctuation errors
1	Bader	Yesterday, I woke up at 11 am, I ate my lunch at 1 pm, then I went to drive my brother car around Bahrain because I just got the driving license,
1	Reem	Next I had a call from my friend , she asked me if I can go with her
1	A.Rahman	Yesterday, I woke up early in the morning, at around 7:00 A.M. After I woke up, I watched TV for a little while and then headed to my friends.
1	Hanan	We went near the sea and had barbecue,
2	Asma	Divorce has many affects in child's life,
2	Bader	On the other hand, sometimes it can be good thing, if the father or the mother has a negative effect on the family or the children its better sometime to have a divorce,
3	Fatima M	In my opinion technology is good for us help us to live easily and fast , not like our grandfather generation , it depends on the person if it will affect him in which way ,, so we have always take the positive and the good advantages' .

Commas after fronted adverbial phrases or conjunctions are usually required in English but not in Arabic as shown in Table 4.7 below. The students below missed the commas following the phrase ‘After that’, ‘Then’ and ‘First of all’. Students tend to apply the rules and conventions of Arabic punctuation as in the examples below.

**Table 4.7 Punctuation Errors: Commas**

Essay	Student	Punctuation errors
1	Asma	After that I had my lunch and went to my Aunt’s house to help my uncle with his work.
	Amina	Then my cousin called me and told me to go for her so we went to my aunt house for a while then we went back home.
	Fatima	First of all I had my breakfast alone and I watched television.

The inexistence of capital (upper case) or small letters (lower case) in Arabic also caused some confusion to students. Table 4.8 gives some examples of students who tended to use small letters for all words in all sentences disregarding their position in a sentence e.g. at the beginning of a sentence; or their part of speech e.g. proper nouns. It shows examples of starting a sentence using lower case and another example showing the use of a capital letter twice in the middle of her sentence. A pattern is apparent misusing lower and uppercase across all essays among students.

**Table 4.8 Punctuation Errors: Capital and small letters**

Essay	Student	Student’s sentence indicating errors
3	Fatima M	it has positive and negative effects ,
2	Asma	For example they’ll be in the street all the time so they’ll learn some bad things to try like Drugs, Fight with peoples, steal many things to earn money And many more..

Another type of punctuation error produced by the participants is the incorrect use of apostrophes in plural nouns instead of possessive nouns like in the example shown in Table 4.9 below. Students consistently overgeneralised the use of apostrophes to include plurals and even third-person singular verbs due to the inexistence of apostrophes in Arabic and their multiple uses in English.

**Table4.9 Punctuation Errors: Apostrophes**

Essay	Student	Student’s sentence indicating errors
2	Asma	And then the children will grow up with their mum’s or dad’s.

In sum, punctuation was one of the most common error categories observed in the research due to the orthotypographical variances in English and Arabic. Most of the students replaced full stops with commas as they are normally used between sentences in L1. Having a few punctuation marks in Arabic and no difference between upper or lower case affected the students' use of punctuation. Students' use of punctuation changed throughout the course and the majority became more aware of where to add the most suitable punctuation marks by the end of the semester.

#### **4.1.3 Verb Tenses and Forms**

The most frequent errors in verb forms and tenses found in the participants' writings will be further discussed below.

##### **Auxiliary Verbs**

Forming auxiliary verbs in English is different from Arabic causing the participants some confusion using them. The difference in their form and use is discussed in Chapter 2 with examples of the difference between auxiliary verbs in English and Arabic which caused the participants to produce errors. One of the major errors is unnecessarily adding or removing an auxiliary verb. The analysis of students' drafts in this category in Table 4.10 on page 120 below showed that students' incorrect use of auxiliary verbs is apparent where students could not distinguish the use of auxiliary verbs from that of main verbs while writing, which are confused with Arabic modals.

**Table 4.10 Auxiliary verb errors**

Category	Essay	Student	Errors	Translation in Arabic
<b>Auxiliary verbs</b>	1	Hanan	My phone was rang with a message wrote in it that my aunt was born a very nice baby this morning	كان هاتفي يرن مع رسالة مضمونها ان عمتي ولدت طفل جميل جدا هذا الصباح.
	3	Hashmiya	TV also one of useful effect the family because it's join family together.	التلفزيون أيضا احد من المفيد تؤثر على الأسرة لأنها الانضمام الأسرة معا.
	3	Fatima M	nowadays people using cars for travelling, having fun, visiting others, and going to their jobs.	في الوقت الحاضر الأشخاص الذين يستخدمون السيارات للسفر، للهو، وزيارة الآخرين، والذهاب إلى وظائفهم.
	4	Asma	One of the reasons are the children, they need money for their educations, their foods and cloths...etc.	أحد الأسباب هي الأطفال، انهم بحاجة الى المال لتعليمهم، وغذائهم و ملابسهم ... الخ

### **Present simple and subject verb agreement**

The present simple form in Arabic is not generally used for an in progress action at the time of the utterance. Besides, Arabic does not have a formal equivalent of the inflection 's'. Thus, many participants were confused using the simple present tense as shown in the examples below in Table 4.11 on page 121 below.

**Table 4.11 Present simple and Subject verb agreement errors**

Category	Essay	Student	Errors	Translation in Arabic
<b>Present simple and Subject verb agreement</b>	3	Hashmiya	But, I think technology affect families more positively because it is communicate others.	ولكن، أعتقد أن التكنولوجيا تؤثر على الأسر بإيجابية أكثر لأنها للتواصل مع الآخرين.
			TV also one of useful effect the family because it's join family together.	التلفزيون أيضا احد من المفيد تؤثر على الأسرة لأنها الانضمام الأسرة معا.
	6	Asma	And because children needs their mother beside them,	ولأن الأطفال بحاجة أمهم بجانبها،
	7	Fatima	But these days girls looks for better future instead of getting early marriage.	ولكن في هذه الأيام الفتيات بالبحث عن مستقبل أفضل بدلا من الحصول على الزواج المبكر.
	8	Hashmiya	That's take some time to answer this question.	هذا يستغرق بعض الوقت للإجابة على هذا السؤال.

### **Past Simple**

The past simple in Arabic is used to indicate a past action except for oaths and wishes. The past tense form requires the whole verb to change with the addition of suffixes that agree with the number and gender of the subject. Unlike English, the inflection –ed does not exist in Arabic nor does the past tense have irregular verb changes. Table 4.12 on page 122 below outlines a few samples of past simple errors.

**Table 4.12 Past Simple errors**

Category	Essay	Student	Errors	Translation in Arabic
<b>Past Simple</b>	1	Amina	They went to study and I get back to my room and again use the laptop.	ذهبوا للدراسة وأعود إلى غرفتي ومرة أخرى استخدام الكمبيوتر المحمول.
	1	Mahmood	But my friends didn't woke up because they didn't slept well.	لكن أصدقائي لم يستيقظوا لأنهم لم يناموا جيدا.
	1	Reem	Also, I remembered that I haven't eat my dinner ,and I went to the kitchen and I made some chicken sandwiches for me and my little brother.	أيضا، تذكرت أنني لم أكل العشاء، وذهبت إلى المطبخ وصنعت بعض سندويشات الدجاج لي ولأخي الصغير.

### **Present and Past Continuous**

The continuous form is expressed with the verb to be and the suffix *-ing* in English while in Arabic it is expressed in different ways according to when the action occurred with the absence of the auxiliary and the suffix. Table 4.13 on page 123 below illustrates some of the continuous form errors produced by the participants. Analysing the drafts of students, some tended to add the progressive suffix *-ing* without the use of auxiliary verbs while others used the auxiliary verbs correctly but not the suffix. Some had the progressive suffix *-ing* missing while others had it replaced with the third person singular suffix 's'. Some students replaced the continuous suffix *-ing* with no suffix complying with the continuous grammatical rules in Arabic.

**Table 4.13 Present and past continuous errors**

Category	Essay	Student	Errors	Translation in Arabic
<b>Present and past continuous</b>	1	Hanan	My phone was rang with a message wrote in it that my aunt was born a very nice baby this morning.	كان هاتفي يرن مع رسالة مضمونها ان عمتي ولدت طفل جميل جدا هذا الصباح.
	1	Hanan	In the evening, when I back home my brothers were waited for me because they wanted me to take them out.	في المساء، عندما كنت في البيت كتن اخواني في انتظاري لأنهم كانوا يريدونني أن خرج بهم.
	2	Naderah	There are many divorces happens every day, year to year the percentage of divorces is increase.	هناك العديد من حالات الطلاق التي تحدث كل يوم، كل سنة بعد أخرى تزداد نسبة حالات الطلاق.
	3	Naderah	On the other hand, there are negative effects of the internet, one of them is meet people you do not know them and you trust them and share a lot of things with them, and then they cheat on you and tell everybody about your personal information.	من ناحية أخرى، هناك آثار سلبية للإنترنت، واحد منهم هو التعرف على أشخاص لا نعرفهم وتثق بهم ونشارك في الكثير من الأمور معهم، وبعد ذلك يغشونك ويعلمون الجميع عن معلوماتك الشخصية.

### ***Present and past perfect forms***

The present perfect form in English is expressed with the auxiliary ‘to have’ followed by the past participle form of the verb. This form does not exist in Arabic and it was challenging for the participants to form it in English due to the non-existence of an equivalent of the auxiliary verb ‘have’ and the past participle form of verbs in Arabic.

Table 4.14 on page 124 below outlines some present and past perfect errors produced by the participants. The confusion in linking the perfect forms to Arabic is clear in the errors produced. A trend was noticed in students’ writings in either incorrectly using the perfect auxiliary or wrongly not using the past participle form of the verbs which may be explained by the non-existence of the past participle form in Arabic.

**Table 4.14 Present and Past perfect errors**

Category	Essay	Student	Errors	Translation in Arabic
<b>Present and past perfect</b>	1	Amina	We've gone to the city centre and do some shopping we had our dinner there.	انتقلنا إلى وسط المدينة للقيام ببعض التسوق وتناولنا العشاء هناك.
	3	Fatima M	Technology have been changed in these few years ,	تم تغيير التكنولوجيا في هذه السنوات القليلة،
	1	Reem	Also, I remembered that I haven't eat my dinner ,and I went to the kitchen and I made some chicken sandwiches for me and my little brother.	أيضا، تذكرت أنني لم أكل عشاءي، وذهبت إلى المطبخ و عملت بعض سندويشات الدجاج لي ولأخي الصغير.
	7	Fatima	Nowadays, things have deeply change especially at the social level.	في الوقت الحاضر، فإن الأمور قد تتغير بشدة لا سيما على الصعيد الاجتماعي.

## Modals

Modals in Arabic are inflected for numbers and tense using suffixes that are attached to the modal. In English, modals are followed by the infinitive form of the lexical verb, and are not inflected. The examples derived from students' essays illustrated in Table 4.15 on page 125 below shows that the participants followed the same modal grammatical structure as in Arabic using the attached personal pronouns to match the subject to the predicate, and adding the English inflections as well to show the agreement between the subject and predicate.



**Table 4.15 Modals errors**

Category	Essay	Student	Errors	Translation in Arabic
<b>Modals</b>	4	Hashmiya	The mother will feels better when she is working out more than sits in home.	الأم ستشعر على نحو أفضل عندما تقوم بالعمل أكثر من الجلوس في المنزل.
	8	A.Rahman	For the tough incidents or difficulties, some people ignore doing or avoid interacting with them, while others may suicide from tiredness.	للحوادث الصعبة أو الصعوبات، يتجاهل بعض الناس فعلها أو يتجنبون التفاعل معها، في حين أن البعض الآخر قد ينتحر من التعب.

### Passive Voice

The passive voice was rarely used in the written productions of the participants. This is due to the differences in the passive voice forms in Arabic and English. The passive voice in English is formed with the verb to be and the past participle and it is used to emphasize the action when there is an agent. On the other hand, the passive voice in Arabic has no auxiliary used before the passive participle and the agent is only mentioned when the sentence is active and not passive. The participants' errors using the passive voice were analysed based on their use of an incorrect form of the past participle or of the wrong auxiliary verb, errors which are put down to the difference between the passive systems in the two languages.

**Table 4.16 Passive voice errors**

Category	Essay	Student	Errors	Translation in Arabic
<b>Passive voice</b>	7	Fatima	As people become mobile, children are introduce to non-traditional ways of doing things while their parents are sometimes viewed as old fashioned.	حيث أن الناس أصبحوا متنقلين، يتم تعليم الأطفال الطرق غير التقليدية للقيام بهذه الأمور بينما ينظر الى آبائهم أحيانا على انهم من الطراز القديم.

In accordance with the findings of Obeidat (2014), Al-Mekhlafi (2013), Muftah and Rafik-Galea (2013), Sawalmeh (2013), Al-Buainain (2011); Hourani (2008) and Abushihab, El-Omari and Tobat. (2011), the findings discussed in this section show that verb tenses and form errors are another grammatical category produced due to L1 interference. The majority of students in the study used incorrect forms for tense/

aspect combinations which have no equivalences in Arabic. The only tenses that exist in Arabic and are similar to a certain extent to those in English are the present simple, past simple and future. Nevertheless, understanding and properly using these tense and forms was challenging as well despite their existence in Arabic. Most of the verb tense committed errors throughout the study were subject-verb agreement errors in the present simple. Another confusion area due to L1 interference is the inability to form irregular English verbs in the past tense. Students, instead, used the (-ed) as an overgeneralisation to the past simple form of verbs in English. Also, some students misused the infinitive particle (*to*) especially preceding modals which is possible in L1. Auxiliary verb errors were frequent in the sample analysed mainly because they are not part of the L1 system.

#### 4.1.4 Articles

The article systems in Arabic and English have some differences and similarities. There is one article in the Arabic system which is the definite article *the* while the English system has definite, indefinite and zero articles. These will be discussed in the light of the samples analysed from students' essays.

##### Definite Article

The article errors are mainly related to the misuse of the definite article *the* which is the only article that has a formal equivalent in Arabic. Table 4.17 below gives examples of article errors pointing out how the participants overgeneralised and used the Arabic definite article system in English by preceding all common nouns with the definite article.

**Table 4.17 Article errors Examples (1)**

Essay	Student	Student's sentence indicating article errors	Translation in Arabic
1	Asma	I spent all the day with my cosines.	قضيت معظم اليوم مع اولاد اقاربي.
1	Bader	it was <i>the</i> time for me to sleep.	. قد حان الوقت لنومي.

Another L1 interference error recognized stems from the fact that the definite article is required in Arabic before nouns representing day and night time, and festivals or national and international celebrations which is not the case in English. Table 4.18

below identifies examples where the definite article *the* is added to comply with the rules of the Arabic noun phrase.

**Table 4.18 Article errors Examples (2)**

Essay	Student	Student's sentence indicating article errors	Translation in Arabic
1	Reem	At <i>the</i> mid-night I watched T.V, and I went to sleep.	شاهدت التلفاز في منتصف الليل وذهبت للنوم.
1	Fatima	Our plan was to look for a nice gift for <i>the</i> mother's day.	كانت خطتنا ان نشتري هدية جميلة لعيد الأم.

The definite article is required in English before the names of buildings such as the mall which is also essential in Arabic. The example in Table 4.19 shows that the participant avoided using the definite article with the noun, applying the English definite article rule as with proper nouns.

**Table 4.19 Article errors Examples (3)**

Essay	Student	Student's sentence indicating article errors	Translation in Arabic
1	Mahmood	Then we went to^City Center and I bought 3 T-shirts.	ثم ذهبنا الى الستي سنتر واشتريت 3 قمصنة.

Adjectives in English noun phrases are attached to the definite article but that does not necessarily apply in Arabic. The word 'same' in Bader's essay 6 'Same thing with the intelligent one, he can be useful with his smartness' requires the definite article in English but the same word in Arabic 'نفس' cannot be attached to the definite article in Arabic which explains not having it in the sentence.

**Table 4.20 Article errors Examples (4)**

Essay	Student	Student's sentence indicating article errors	Translation in Arabic
6	Bader	^Same thing with the intelligent one, he can be useful with his smartness	نفس الشي ينطبق على الشخص الذكي الذي يستطيع ان يكون مفيدا بذكائه

While examining students' drafts, many errors related to the differences between Arabic and English. In English the definite article is used to indicate something that has already been mentioned before but not for common nouns mentioned for the first time which is the opposite of Arabic. The definite article is a must for all common nouns in Arabic. Table 4.21 on page 128 below shows some examples.

**Table 4.21 Article errors Examples (5)**

Essay	Student	Student's sentence indicating article errors	Translation in Arabic
4	Fatima M	In my opinion they have to choose jobs that they can manage their time between the work and the children.	في رأيي الشخصي عليهم اختيار الاعمال التي يستطيعون من خلالها تدبير وقتهم والعمل ةالأطفال.
5	Asma	, so mothers will face a problem which is the balancing between <i>the work and the home</i>	لذلك الامهات سيواجهن مشكلة في التوازن بين العمل والمنزل
6	Zahra	Having a friend is an important thing in the life.	وجود الصديق مهم في الحياة.

English abstract nouns do not require definite or indefinite articles. However, this is not the case in Arabic. The definite article is a must before abstract nouns. Fatima 's error in Table 4.22 below is an example.

**Table 4.22 Article errors Examples (6)**

Essay	Student	Student's sentence indicating article errors	Translation in Arabic
7	Fatima	In addition ,the fear is reducing because of the open minded from both sides of parents.	بالأضافة الى ذلك، الخوف يقل بسبب العقلية المتفتحة للوالدين.

### Indefinite Articles

The indefinite articles *a* and *an* do not exist in Arabic. Thus, using them is problematic to most Arabic speaking students. The errors range from not using them at all to placing them where they should not be. Table 4.23 on page 129 below outlines some examples of the participants' errors using indefinite articles.

**Table 4.23 Article errors Examples (7)**

Essay	Student	Student's sentence indicating article errors	Translation in Arabic
1	Hanan	We went near the sea and had ^barbecue,	ذهبنا للبحر وقمنا بالشواء.
6	Bader	A friend with ^sense of humor can entertain you and make you laugh, but, is it enough?	الصديق ذو الحس المرح يستطيع ان يرفه عنك ويجعلك تضحك لكن هل هذا كاف؟
4	Fatima M	However it may be ^problem for women who have young children, not for the children only but for the whole family.	لكن من الممكن ان تكون هذه مشكلة للنساء اللاتي لديهن اطفال صغار، ليس للأطفال فحسب بل للعائلة أجمع.
6	Zahra	In my opinion, the friend is the person who loves, help and attend me for my mistakes.	في رأيي الشخصي، الصديق هو الشخص الذي يحب و يساعد وينبهي لأخطائي.
6	Hashmiya	When I have ^problem, I want my friend to advice me and stand with me.	لما يكون لدي مشكلة اريد ان ينصحني صديقي ويقف بجانبني.

Table 4.24 below shows how inconsistent students could be by correctly using the indefinite article in some sentences of their drafts yet not using it correctly as to how to use it in other times.

**Table 4.24 Article errors Examples (8)**

Essay	Student	Student's sentence indicating article errors	Translation in Arabic
2	Bader	On the other hand, sometimes it can be ^good thing, if the father or the mother has a negative effect on the family or the children its better sometime to have a divorce,	من الناحية الاخرى يمكن ان يكون شيء جيدا اذا كان الاب او الام لديهما تأثير سلبي على العائلة أو الأطفال فالأفضل بعض الاوقات انن يحصلنا على الطلاق.
6	Fatima M	In my opinion ^ reliable friend always helps you when you are in need	في رأيي الشخصي، الصديق الذي يعتمد عليه سيساعدك دائما عندما تحتاجه.
3	Fatima M	Some of those affect families in a positive ways and actualize their needs,	بعض ذلك يؤثر على العائلات بطريقة ايجابية مبينة احتياجاتهم.

In terms of the use of articles, for example, Arabic utilises a binary system using the equivalent of *the* as an article for pointing out definiteness and indefiniteness while a tripartite system, including the definite article *the*, and the indefinite articles *a* and *an*, is used in English (Alamin and Ahmed 2012; Alhaysony 2012; Crompton 2011; Jassem 2012; Hajjaj and Khrama 1989). The non-existence of the indefinite articles in Arabic leads learners to confuse *a* and *an* with the zero or no article (Alhaysony

2012; Crompton 2011; Jassem 2012). In other instances where they use the English articles incorrectly, students tended to incorrectly precede all types of nouns-singular (*the pen*), plural (*the pens*), proper (*the Dublin*), abstract (*the faith*) and mass nouns (*the silver*)- with the definite article as in Arabic. Article repetition was also noticed due to its use in Arabic for co-ordinated nouns as in (*\*the brother and the sister*). This finding aligns with (Alamin and Ahmed 2012; Alhaysony 2012; Crompton 2011; Hameed and Yasin 2015; Jassem 2012; Hajjaj and Khrama 1989).

#### **4.1.5 Prepositions**

Two chief factors are the reason for Arabic speakers' prepositional errors in English. The first one is the difficulty of the prepositional system in English where each preposition may express multiple relations like the use of the preposition 'in' as illustrated in Table 4.25 on page 131 below. The errors identified in the participants' samples indicate that the preposition 'in' is used instead of 'at' to mean the concept of time which relates to the fact that the adverb of time is used in the same context of time in Arabic. Similar errors identified modelled the use of the adverbial phrase 'في' (*in*) in Arabic before 'الوقت الحاضر' '*nowadays*', as well as using *in* to mean *via* or *through*, which are typical in Arabic.

**Table 4.25 Prepositional errors with (in)**

Essay	Student	Preposition errors	Translation	Preposition in error	Concept of preposition	Confused with
1	Hashmiya	In the noon, I watched T.V.	عند الظهر شاهدت التلفاز.	In	Time	At
3	Mahmood	In nowadays we have got many technologies like computers, mobiles and car.  And the negative effect of the cell phone, always talking in the mobiles and don't have much time to talk with your parents.	في الوقت الحاضر لدينا العديد من التقنيات مثل أجهزة الكمبيوتر والهواتف النقالة والسيارات.  والأثر السلبي للهاتف الخليوي هو التحدث دائما في الهواتف النقالة وليس لديهم الكثير من الوقت للتحدث مع والديك.	In	Time  Via	None -To be removed  On
1	Zahra	Moreover, my friend called me and said that our friends are going to the cinema and eat the lunch in Dana mall.	وعلاوة على ذلك، اتصل بي صديقي وقال ان أصدقائنا ذاهبون إلى السينما وتناول الغداء في مجمع الدانة.	In	Place	At
4	Hashmiya	So, if mothers spend their time more in work, children will spend more time with housemaid and that's dangerous, because mothers will spend less time with their children.	لذا، إذا الأمهات يقضون وقتهم أكثر في العمل، فإن الأطفال يقضون المزيد من الوقت مع خادمة وهذا خطير، لأن الأمهات سوف يمضون وقتنا أقل مع أطفالهم.	In	Place	At

Another reason for the participants' errors in prepositions is the similarity between the use of some Arabic and English prepositions by which the participants end up comparing the literal translation of the Arabic preposition in English as indicated in the examples of Table 4.26 on page 133 below. For example, Hashmiya used the preposition 'with' instead of 'in' in her essay 3 because the preposition Arabic form (with) in Arabic is used in the same context as 'in' in English. Another error due to the similarity between the use of some Arabic and English prepositions is Mahmood's error using 'with' instead of 'by' due to L1 interference using the equivalent of 'with' to mean 'through the means of'. Also, Naderah's use of 'of' in two sentences in her essay 5 reflects her attempt to find a match for the Arabic preposition 'من' which means 'in the category of'.

Many English words collocate with specific prepositions that are unpredictable (Hajjaj and Khrama 1989). That is the same for Arabic prepositions with the fact that the Arabic prepositions used with the Arabic equivalent of the English word are not always similar (Hajjaj and Khrama 1989). Thus, the participants tended to omit or wrongly select the prepositions from English (Mehdi 1981). These cases are outlined in prepositional phrases or phrasal verbs in Table 4.26 on page 133 below.



**Table 4.26 Prepositions: similarities in English and Arabic**

Essay	Student	Preposition errors	Translation	Preposition in error	Concept of preposition	Confused with
3	Hashmiya	They can communicate with each other very quickly with one second only.	يمكن التواصل مع بعضهم البعض بسرعة كبيرة مع ثانية واحدة فقط.	With	Time	In
3	Mahmood	And of course the cell phones have affected us, with contacting your family member anywhere and anytime, or instead of visiting them you can talk to them.	وبالطبع الهواتف المحمولة قد أثرت علينا، مع الاتصال بأفراد أسرتك في أي مكان وزمان، أو بدلا من زيارتهم يمكنك التحدث معهم.	With	via	By
5	Naderah	Now days, there are many of difficulties in our world that faces everybody.	في هذه الأيام، هناك العديد من الصعوبات في عالمنا الذي يواجه الجميع.	Of	In the category of	To be removed

In Table 4.27 on page 134 below, Zahra produced prepositional errors in essays 2 and 7 due to the L1 interference as there is no equivalent to the choices of prepositions she used. She linked ‘for’ to the verb ‘advise’ instead of ‘with’. She also used ‘of’ connecting it to ‘responsible’ instead of ‘for’ in essay 7. Likewise, Fatima M used the preposition ‘on’ instead of ‘to’ with the verb ‘addicted’ while Hanan used ‘by’ instead of ‘in’ with the verb ‘ended’ in essay 8.

**Table 4.27: Prepositions confusion in phrasal verbs in English and Arabic**

Essay	Student	Preposition errors	Translation	Preposition in error
2	Zahra	The children will learn the bad things in their life, because they don't have the person that advice them for the good or bad things.	سوف يتعلم الأطفال الأشياء السيئة في حياتهم، لأنهم لم يكن لديك الشخص الذي ينصحهم للأشياء الجيدة أو السيئة.	for
3	Fatima M	people used to addicted on the technology so they can't live without what the technology gave us ,	اعتاد الناس على المدمنين على التكنولوجيا حتى أنهم لا يستطيعون العيش من دون ما أعطانا التكنولوجيا،	on
7	Zahra	They used to be helpful and responsible of their parents, but now every thing has changed.	واستخدم الباحثون أن تكون مفيدة ومسؤولة من والديهم، ولكن الآن فقد تغير كل شيء.	of
8	Hanan	They faced a lots of trouble and almost all their tries ended by frailer. However, they kept working on their goals and never turned for back.	انهم يواجهون الكثير من المتاعب وتقريبا كل محاولات بهم انتهت الفشل. ومع ذلك، فإنها أبقت العمل على أهدافهم ولم تحول للعودة.	by

In summary, a common error committed due to L1 interference in this research involves prepositions. The English prepositional system is complicated in comparison to the Arabic system as prepositions in English have different uses and relations to their Arabic formal equivalents. This had implications for students' use of *at*, for example. It is used for places, disapproval, age, time and rate of movement. Students reverted to what they considered the most appropriate Arabic equivalent when uncertain about which preposition they should have used in English, which was inaccurate most of the time. This caused further errors in the forms they wrote. Some students tended to choose wrong prepositions especially where a formal Arabic equivalent did not exist. On other occasions, some students deleted prepositions where they should have been used following Arabic usage. On the contrary, other students added prepositions where equivalents are required in Arabic. Moreover, a lot of confusion was noticed in the use of the prepositions *at* and *in* due to the fact that only Arabic (*in*) exists in Arabic as a preposition for place.

The participants' errors are further investigated through the errors they identified or did not identify for their peers in the peer reviewing process.

## 4.2 Identifying Errors

An overview of the participants' errors was given in Section 4.1 above outlining the most common errors produced namely those involving punctuation, verb tense and form, articles and prepositions. This section will discuss the overall development of students' accuracy derived from the errors produced by students, and the errors they identified or did not identify over the course of the case-study. A further comparison of errors produced over time is made leading to the second part of this section with the evaluation of students' written accuracy development.

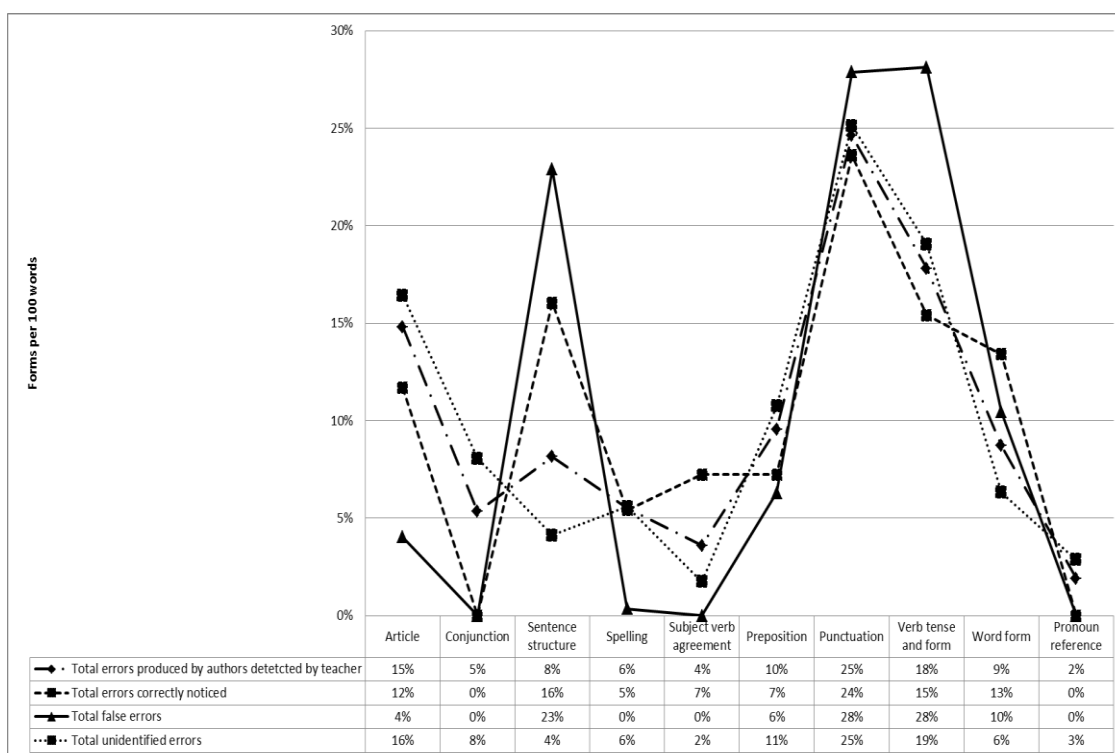
Figure 4.5 on page 136 and Table 4.28 on page 118 below show an overview of participants' errors, categorised as follows: accurately noticed errors, falsely noticed errors, unidentified errors, and total produced errors as noticed by the teacher. The totals on Figure 4.5 on page 136 are given per 100 words while Table 4.28 on page 118 below presents totals per 100 words as well as the percentages of each error category. Breaking down the data in Figure 4.5 below, it was found that the most frequent errors produced by the participants as found by the teacher were punctuation errors (25%), verb tense and form errors (18%), article errors (15%), preposition errors (10%), word form errors (9%), sentence structure errors (8%), spelling errors (6%), conjunction errors (5%), subject verb agreement (4%) and pronoun reference (2%).

Not only were punctuation errors, verb tense and form errors, article errors, word form errors, and sentence structure errors identified as the highest produced errors by the participants as authors, but they were also the highest errors correctly noticed by the participants (reviewers) for their peers (authors) with punctuation, (8%) of the time and verb tenses and forms (5%), articles (4%), word form (5%) and sentence structure (5%). Added to that, analysing the unidentified errors by reviewers, it was found that punctuation, verb tense and form and article errors were also the most frequent unidentified errors with (17%) of punctuation errors unidentified, (13%) of verb tense and form errors and (11%) of article errors. Comparing the three categories of errors above, a pattern is distinguished that indicates some learning taking place. It is found that students were engaged in language learning and that

language learning awareness was taking place although not so readily measured and recognised by the participants.

The parallels between L1 and L2 may have influenced their learning progression of some of these categories. For example, learning some aspects of punctuation, (e.g. apostrophes) may have either taken a shorter time due to their non-existence in L1 and not having to compare the two systems and adjust accordingly, or it may have taken a longer time as it was new learning that took place. Individual differences and ecological skills may be related to the variations in identifying and not being able to identify the errors.

**Figure 4.5 Overview of participants' errors identified in the peer reviewing process**



**Table 4.28 Overview of participant percentage of errors identified in the peer reviewing process**

<b>Error category</b>	<b>Total errors identified by reviewers (correctly &amp; incorrectly)</b>	<b>Total errors correctly noticed by reviewers</b>	<b>Total unidentified errors by reviewers</b>	<b>Percentage errors identified by reviewers (correctly and incorrectly)</b>	<b>Percentage errors correctly noticed</b>	<b>Percentage unidentified errors</b>
Article	25	21.6	59.5	9%	4%	11%
Conjunction	0	0	29.2	0%	0%	5%
Sentence structure	49	29.7	14.9	18%	5%	3%
Spelling	10.3	10	20.2	4%	2%	4%
Subject verb agreement	13.4	13.4	6.3	5%	2%	1%
Preposition	18.7	13.4	38.9	7%	2%	7%
Punctuation	67.2	43.7	91	25%	8%	17%
Verb tense and form	52.2	28.5	69	19%	5%	13%
Word form	33.6	24.8	22.9	12%	5%	4%
Pronoun reference	0	0	10.4	0%	0%	2%
Sum of errors per category	269.4	185.1	362.3	100%	34%	66%

Despite the fact that verb tense and form (5%), punctuation (8%), sentence structure (5%) and word form errors (5%) were identified as the most frequently correctly identified errors by the reviewers, they were also indicated as the most frequently falsely identified errors by the reviewers with (13%) verb tense and form errors, (13%) punctuation errors, (10%) sentence structure errors and (5%) word form errors. In fact reviewees falsely identified errors more commonly than they correctly noticed errors. Four error categories were not noticed at all (0%) namely spelling, conjunction, subject-verb agreement and pronoun reference errors. It is observed that the participants did not correctly identify any conjunction or pronoun reference errors either. However, the participants did accurately identify a small proportion of spelling errors (2%) and subject verb agreement errors (2%). These observations showed variations when comparing the correctly identified errors with the falsely identified errors in these four grammar categories. See Table 4.29 on page 138 below.

**Table 4.29 Percentage of falsely identified errors**

<b>Grammatical category</b>	<b>Total false errors</b>
Verb tense and form	13%
Punctuation	13%
Sentence structure	10%
Word form	5%
Preposition	3%
Article	2%
Spelling	0%
Conjunction	0%
Subject verb agreement	0%
Pronoun reference	0%

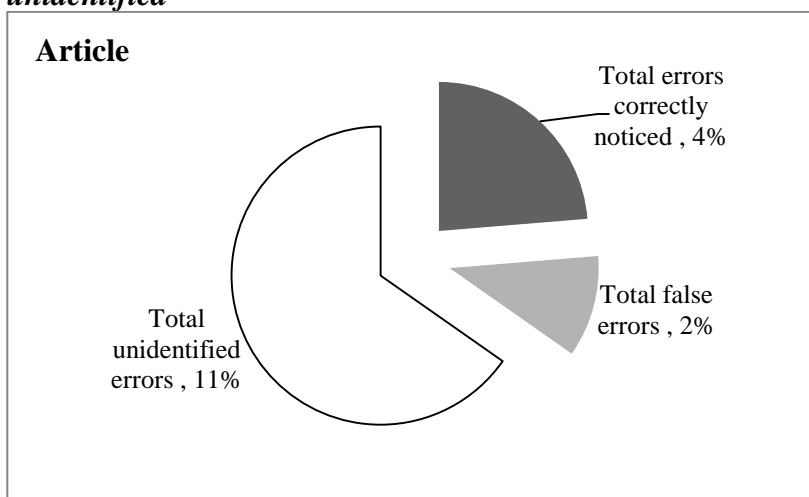
A further analysis was carried out to break down the most frequent L1 interference error categories into percentages of identified and unidentified errors as discussed in Section 4.1 on page 109. These L1 frequent errors are punctuation, verb tense and form, article, and preposition errors. The punctuation errors unidentified by the reviewers represent a higher percentage (17%) than the correctly identified punctuation errors (8%) and even the incorrectly identified errors (13%). Moreover, verb tense and form total errors expected to be noticed were (97.5%) from which only (5%) were correctly identified by students compared to (13%) which were unidentified and another (13%) which were falsely identified. In terms of articles, the participants were expected to identify (81.1) errors, which were identified by the teacher. Students were able to correctly identify (4%) of the total errors compared to (11%) of errors they were unable to identify. They also had (2%) article errors which were falsely identified. The same was found for preposition errors with (7%) unidentified errors compared to (2%) correctly identified errors and (3%) falsely identified preposition errors by the reviewers. See Figure 4.6,

Figure 4.7,

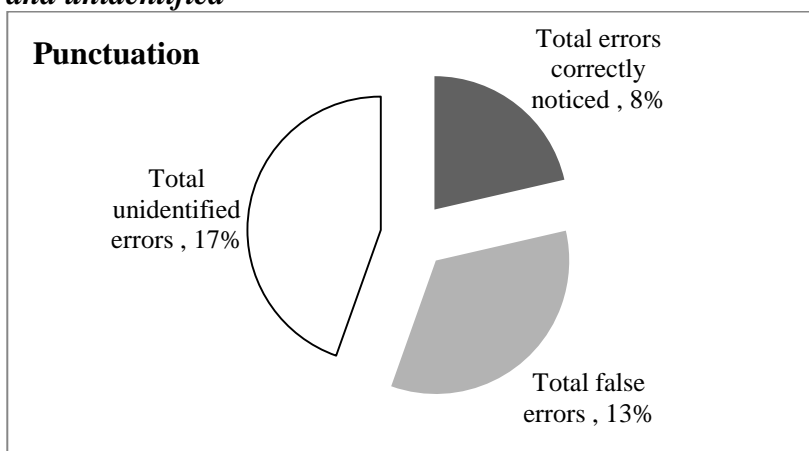
Figure 4.8, on page 140 below, Figure 4.9 and Figure 4.10 on page 140 below.

The participants were capable of identifying the errors correctly to some extent but their unidentified error percentages were much higher. The same pattern was noticed in spelling errors which is not considered as one of the most frequent errors in this case-study. In addition, students' false identification of punctuation errors (13%), verb tense and form errors (13%) and prepositions errors (3%) was at a higher percentage than their correctly identified errors. This pattern was not found in article errors where the correctly identified errors (4%) were higher than the falsely identified ones (2%).

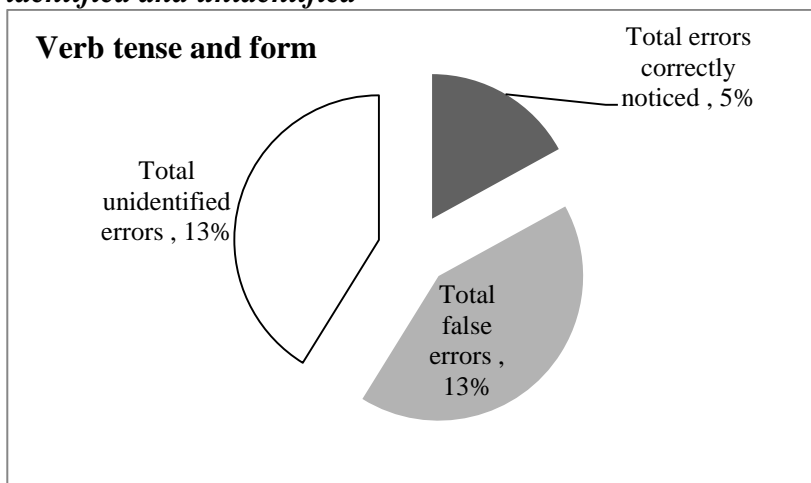
***Figure 4.6 Percentage of article errors correctly identified, falsely identified and unidentified***



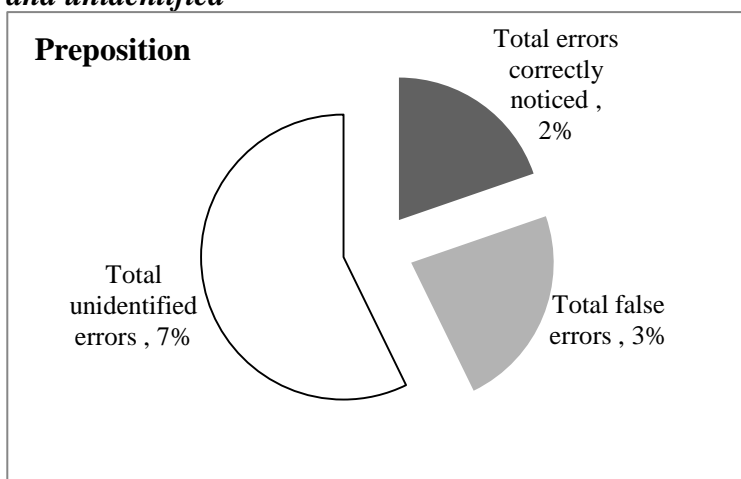
***Figure 4.7 Percentage of punctuation errors correctly identified, falsely identified and unidentified***



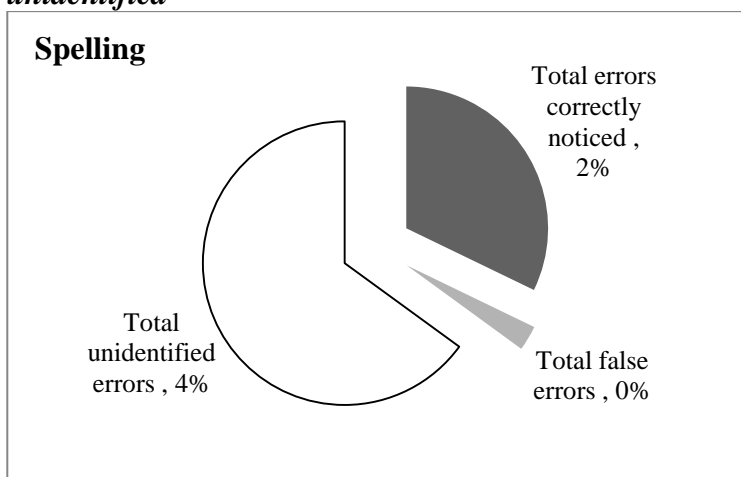
**Figure 4.8 Percentage of verb tense and form errors correctly identified, falsely identified and unidentified**



**Figure 4.9 Percentage of preposition errors correctly identified, falsely identified and unidentified**



**Figure 4.10 Percentage of spelling errors correctly identified, falsely identified and unidentified**



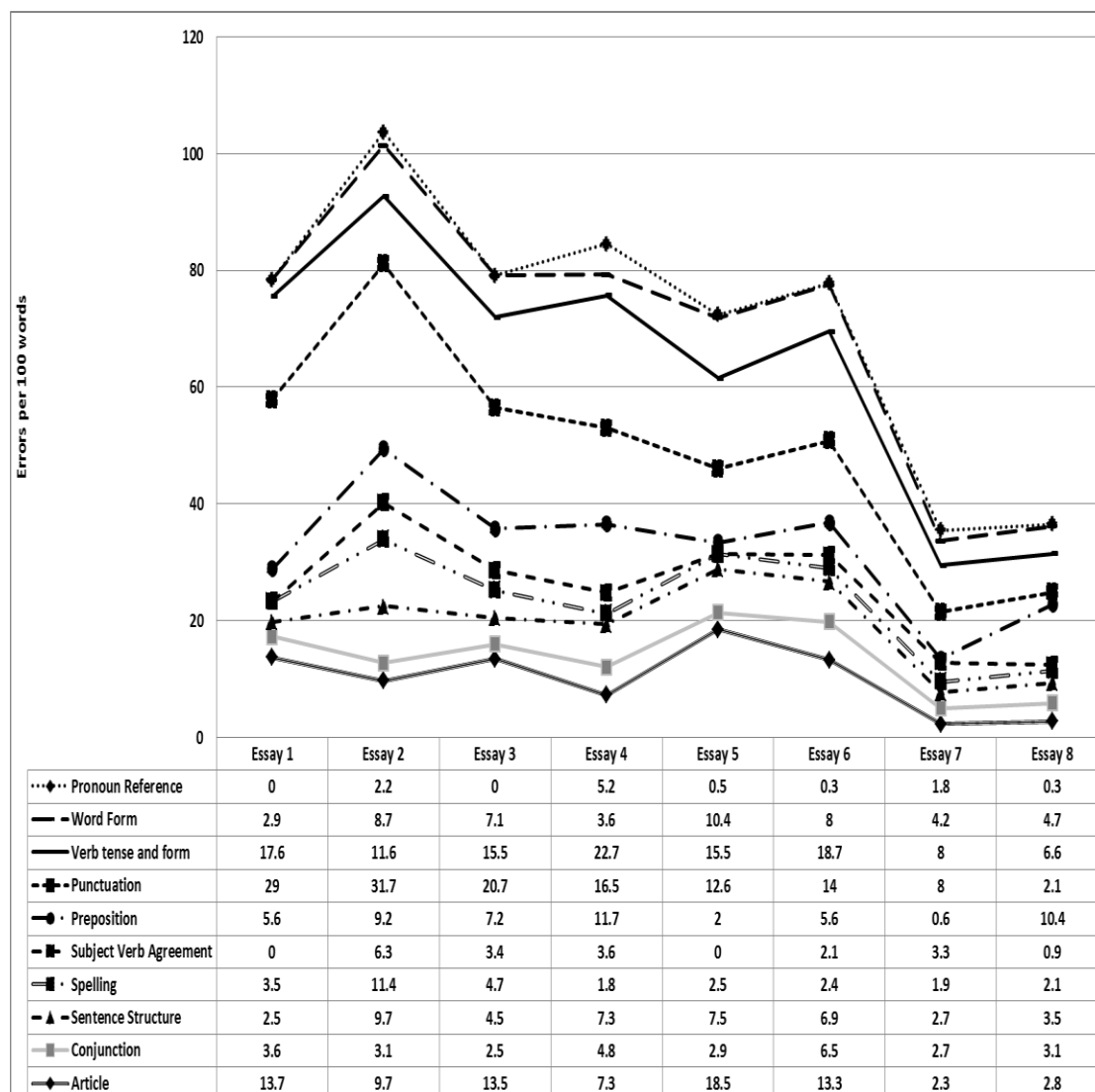


In order to identify the reasons for the variability in error production and identification in Section 4.1 on page 109 and 4.3 on page 141, the participants' proportion of correct forms will be analysed. The development of written accuracy is tackled through analysing students' correct form proportions in the most frequent error categories identified in Section 4.1 namely, punctuation, verb tenses and forms, articles and prepositions.

### **4.3 Proportion of Correct Forms and the Development of Written Accuracy**

An overview of the errors made by the participants in Draft 1 over the whole course was given in Section 4.1 above. It is generally observed that students' production of incorrect forms fluctuated between Essay 1 and Essay 8. However, comparing the production of errors in Essay 1 with Essay 8, a considerable decline in errors was noticed especially in articles, conjunctions, spelling, punctuation and verb tenses and forms as illustrated in Figure 4.11 on page 142 below. Article errors, for example, were (13.68) in Essay 1 after which the errors seemed to fluctuate until dropping in Essay 8 to reach (2.84). Likewise, conjunction errors, spelling errors, punctuation errors and verb tenses and forms errors were at (3.56), (3.46), (29.04) and (15.78) respectively in Essay 1 and experienced fluctuations before finally declining to (3.10), (2.11), (2.127) and (6.642) sequentially in Essay 8. However, students seemed to still have problems using prepositions, pronoun reference, subject-verb agreement, word order and sentence structure despite the intervention. Once again no trend of either increasing or decreasing sequentially was noticed in any of these categories. They all seemed to fluctuate between Essay 1 and 8 before increasing again in Essay 8. Prepositions, for instance, increased noticeably to (10.39) in Essay 8 as opposed to (5.55) in Essay 1. The students did not have any errors in pronoun referencing or subject verb agreement in Essay 1; this, however, changed to (0.34) for pronoun referencing and (0.92) for subject verb agreement in Essay 8.

**Figure 4.11 Overview of L1 interference errors**



Based on the findings of the decline of the most frequent errors in articles, punctuation, verb tenses and forms and the increase in errors in prepositions, the following section will explore the development in selected error categories in essays 1 to 8 to find out whether or not there is a significant effect noticed in the development of the participants' written accuracy. This is carried out through the analysis of the participants' proportion of correct forms produced.

**Figure 4.12 Proportion of correct forms produced by participants**

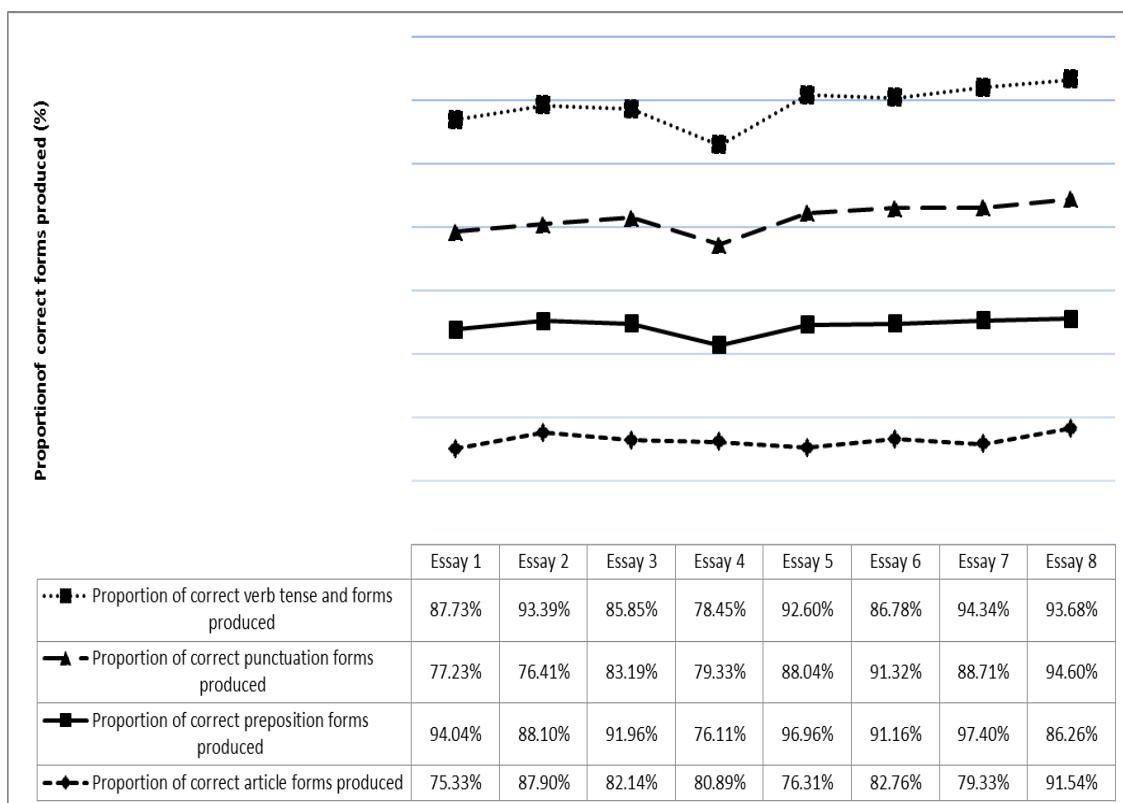


Figure 4.12 above illustrates an overview of the proportion of correct forms produced by all participants over time from essay one to essay eight. The proportion of correct verb tense and forms showed that the participants' productions were not constant across the eight essays. Verb tense and form correct forms started at (87.73%) in Essay 1 increasing (93.39%) in Essay 2 before dropping down to (85.85%) in Essay 3 and (78.45%) in Essay 4. The fluctuations continued from Essays 5 to 8 with a final increase over the first essay noticed in Essay 8 at (93.68%). In addition, the proportion of correct punctuation produced was (77.23%) in Essay 1, which dropped slightly to (76.41%) in Essay 2. The same variation was noticed in the correct form value of punctuation, which reached its highest proportion (94.60%) at the end of the case-study. Similarly, the participants demonstrated a range of high and low proportions of correct article forms from essay one to essay eight. The proportion of correct articles in essay one started at (75.33%) which increased to (87.90%) in Essay 2. An upward trend was not noticed in the essays throughout the study although the final value for this category was (91%) in Essay 8 post the case-which indicated a significant increase in comparison to the proportion in essay one (75.33%). On the whole, fluctuations in the production of correct forms were observed overall with the tendency to increase at the end of the study in verb tense

and form, punctuation and article correct forms. The proportion of preposition correct forms, however, seemed to have dropped at the end of the case-study, which relates to the increase at the end of the study in the preposition errors discussed earlier. The proportion of correct preposition forms in essay one was (94.04%) which then dropped to (88.10%) in Essay 2. This drop was followed by an irregular pattern to end up with a significant decrease (86.26%) in essay eight.

The analysis of the errors tracked as well as the proportions of correct forms discussed above showed that despite the irregular rises and falls across the four error categories over time, a consistent fall was noticed in essay four, which was the period prior to the mid-semester assessments. Factors like anxiety and stress might have affected the participants' written accuracy and production of correct forms. Other factors may be related to the grammar categories covered after each essay. In an attempt to find if the teacher-led grammar tutorials after each essay during the case-study led to a subsequent improvement in the essays produced, the categories covered were analysed in conjunction with the improved grammar categories. The first tutorial covered the three most frequent errors produced, which are punctuation, verb tense and form and articles. It was found that the 'errors in verb tense and form' was the only category that dropped in essay two, from (17.6) to (11.6). The second tutorial covered more grammar categories which were indicated as concerning the most frequent errors, which were articles, conjunction, subject-verb agreement, preposition, punctuation and verb tense and form errors. Looking at the participants' produced errors in these categories in essay three, it was found that sentence structure, subject-verb agreement, preposition and punctuation errors dropped significantly but not articles or verb tense and form. Also, the three grammar categories covered in the third tutorial seemed to have affected the participants' production of errors positively as the preposition, punctuation and verb tense and form errors dropped noticeably in essay four. In tutorial five, article, punctuation and verb tense and form errors were focused on, to notice an improvement in articles only in essay seven. The same three grammar categories' errors reappeared as the most frequently in essay seven amongst the other categories which were observed to have decreased in errors in essay seven compared to essay six. Punctuation and verb tense and form remained the most frequent errors in essay seven but they declined significantly in essay eight. Prepositions appeared as the most frequent errors in essay eight in addition to verb tense and form errors which resurfaced. It was noticed

earlier that the proportions for correct forms for punctuation, verb tense and form and article, improved at the end of the case-study compared to that for prepositions. The decline in the proportions of correct preposition forms in essay eight could be related to the fact that prepositions were addressed the least in the teacher-led grammar tutorials. Only four tutorials over the period of the case-study covered prepositions compared with five tutorials focusing on articles, seven tutorials concentrating on punctuation and all eight tutorials addressing verb tense and forms. This was mainly because of the selection of the most frequently surfacing error in every essay. The participants produced more correct forms, despite the fluctuations, in articles, verb tense and forms and punctuation by correcting themselves, their peers and observing their peers overtime. This observation suggests that some sort of L2 awareness and knowledge was acquired in a disorganised order, which may have been achieved for prepositions if the duration of the case was extended and students had more time to build language awareness and knowledge around prepositions. Detailed examples of the errors identified and addressed in each essay are available in the teacher's reflective journal in Appendix C.

The use of these tutorials was part of the feedback role the teacher/researcher had. Students shared their existing knowledge in each error category. Their L2 knowledge of the error categories was compared with the L1 equivalent of the same error categories by the teacher. The main aim was to make students aware of the similarities and the differences between the two languages and get them, with their new knowledge, to have more control over their L2 writing. The participants seemed startled to know the reason for certain errors occurring in their writings. They did not anticipate that the two language systems agreeing or conflicting could be one of the causes for their frequent written L2 errors. The tutorials and the most frequent errors will be discussed in relation to the two subcases' produced errors, proportion of correct forms produced as well as the errors identified by peers in Chapter Five (Section 5.2).

#### **4.4 Summary**

The written productions in this case-study revealed the L2 written accuracy challenges participants faced, reflecting the accuracy levels of their authors. The literature in this area revealed the same findings in terms of the most frequent errors

produced by Arab ESL learners. It is argued that the errors produced by all students in all eight essays, specifically errors in verb tenses and forms, articles, prepositions and punctuation, which are the most common errors, are all L1 interference errors. Based on the findings of this chapter, the most common grammatical errors the Arab participants in this research made in ESL writing were also found to be the most common errors due to L1 interference. Amongst other factors, students' first language interference influenced the learning of English as a second language causing the production of structural errors in their writings. L1 interference might have surfaced due to the similarities or differences between the participants' L1 and their L2. The participants' interlanguage appeared where the two languages had different structural patterns leading one pattern to override the other and causing errors to be transferred. Some of the transfer found in the cases was positive (interlingual transfer). The participants' use of the present simple and the past simple could be considered as an interlingual transfer due to the similarities of the two systems in both languages. Another interlingual transfer found was the use of the future. Nonetheless, the language transfer using auxiliary verbs, prepositions and punctuation was negative (intralingual transfer) emerging due to the differences in the systems in both languages. The negative transfer in all the four grammar categories, articles, punctuation, verb tense and forms and prepositions, seemed persistent at the early stages of L2 learning, with the exception of prepositions which continued to be predominant to the end of the intervention. The persistence of prepositions, through a psychological perspective, could be due to *interlanguage* which is the participants' status between knowing and not knowing L2 structures. This was clearly found comparing the errors produced by the participants and the errors they could identify for their peers. The participants were able to identify errors for their peers while they could not avoid them in their own writings. This will be further explored in Chapter Five analysing the cases in the process-oriented writing approach and through the peer reviewing process. The data analysis of this chapter will be discussed more thoroughly in the discussion chapter, namely Chapter Six.

The next chapter will address the impact of the peer reviewing processes on students' written language development by examining two cases across the eight essays. Another two cases will be looked at to identify the factors affecting the process-oriented approach and peer reviewing. The teaching and learning materials used, which included the peer reviewing process, teacher feedback as well as the

designed tutorials and grammar language laboratory practice sessions, will be inspected in light of the proportion of correct forms produced by the peers in two cases with the aim of observing the development of students' grammatical awareness in L2.

## **5 Chapter Five: Process-Writing in Action - A Focus on Peer-Reviewing**

Chapter Four discussed the development of students' accuracy with a focus on the errors made in all the different grammatical categories, the most common errors over time as well as the proportion of their correctly produced forms. The errors produced by students whose CEFR level had been established as A1 and A2 were compared. This cohort of students was shown to exhibit similar errors to those commonly found amongst Arabic learners of English as a Second Language.

This chapter explores in more depth the process-oriented writing curriculum in action. Following a brief introduction of the two student pairs for this study, it analyses the students' development of accuracy as authors and reviewers. It then examines the uptake of peer and teacher feedback by all four students. In doing so, it considers the influence of the teacher's direct and individual feedback as well as the influence of the tutorial sessions on students' revisions. Finally, with a view to get a further insight into the impact of the process-oriented approach to the teaching and learning of L2 writing, it examines students' perceptions of the ESL writing programme, as well as some ecological factors that may have contributed to the students' attitude and language development.

### **5.1 Introducing the sub-cases**

As explained in Chapter 3, Section 3.4, two sub-cases were chosen to further explore the impact of peer-reviewing on students' language development. The selection of these sub-cases was practical, based on the availability of a full range, or almost complete range, of writing drafts. Draft one of all essays was selected for analysis. Four sets of data were analysed based on the most frequent L1 interference errors as discussed in Chapter Four (Section 4.1).



### **5.1.1 Sub-Case 1: Amina and Hashmiya**

Amina (CEFR Level: A2) and Hashmiya (CEFR Level: A1), both females, worked as a pair and reviewed each other's' Draft 1 for all eight essays. Each one of them wrote, submitted and exchanged the eight assigned essays for peer reviewing. Both come from a similar cultural and socio-economic background, albeit with different educational circumstances.

#### **Amina**

Amina was a very confident and a fluent English speaker whose writing quality, however, did not reflect her spoken English. Having the opportunity of meeting her mother, this teacher/ researcher found out that not only was Amina in denial that she had to do the Academic Bridging course, but so was her mother. Amina's high level of fluent spoken English explained why both rejected the idea of Amina needing to take the Academic Bridging English course Amina's goal was to earn the Bachelor degree in Business and to work in a bank.

Amina was very respectful of her peer and displayed responsibility towards Hashmiya as shown in her interaction with her during class time. Her respectfulness stemmed from her upbringing. Amina came from a very well-educated family with both parents working in academia and living a more liberal life in an urban environment. Amina's consideration of her peer and her sense of responsibility reflected how she was nurtured and treated at home. Amina's relationship with Hashmiya appeared to be that of a mother taking care of her child.

#### **Hashmiya**

Hashmiya was very shy, hardly ever made eye-contact with classmates or the teacher, and rarely spoke out in class. She preferred to speak in Arabic and was overheard code-switching throughout the course. She was nevertheless a hard-working student who was keen to write and submit on time and who was always interested in getting feedback from her peer. Like Amina, Hashmiya respected her peer and showed a high level of trust in her peer's language competence, listening to Amina's explanations and considering carefully the feedback received.

Hashmiya came from a traditional family that lived in a conservative village, known for its conformist religious practices. Living in such a religious and culturally obligated atmosphere shapes the attitudes and personalities of children brought up in such an environment. Most if not all students who originate from such sheltered village environments in Bahrain tend to be very humble, respectful towards their surroundings, and hard working towards gaining a solid educational foundation. Hashmiya's ambition was to work in an office and thus she was content to join the Office Management Diploma programme.

### **5.1.2 Sub-Case 2: Hanan and Zahra**

Hanan (CEFR Level: A2) and Zahra (CEFR Level: A1), both females, reviewed each other's Draft 1 for all eight essays. They were a homogenous case. Their personalities matched and they seemed to have clicked in their communication and reactions towards each other. They were both very confident and out-spoken. Their spoken English was at a high level compared to their written accuracy. Both could be heard across the classroom, discussing, disagreeing and giggling about their written productions and other personal matters in both English and Arabic.

#### **Hanan**

Hanan came from a working-class family. Her parents left the educational system after high-school. She was the eldest of her family, which is a big responsibility in the Bahraini society. She hoped to join the Business school after completion of the Academic Bridging course and was expected to support her family after graduation.

Hanan spoke English with a strong Arabic accent. She had some difficulties in pronouncing sounds that do not exist in Arabic such as /p/. Hanan worked with Zahra as an equal peer with no sense of language superiority or inferiority. She also had a good sense of humour and seemed very relaxed in terms of writing and exchanging feedback with her peer.

## **Zahra**

Zahra also came from a conservative working-class family with a university qualified father and a high-school educated mother. As Hanan, she was the eldest in her family and was thus expected to support them financially upon graduation. Her professional goal was to join the Business school. She was self-motivated and worked hard to meet the requirements of her chosen degree programme.

Zahra spoke three languages, Arabic, English and Farsi, but she only wrote well in Arabic. Zahra's articulation and pronunciation in English were overall adequate. She was very relaxed in terms of writing and exchanging feedback with Hanan, whom she treated as an equal peer. She was also a lively learner.

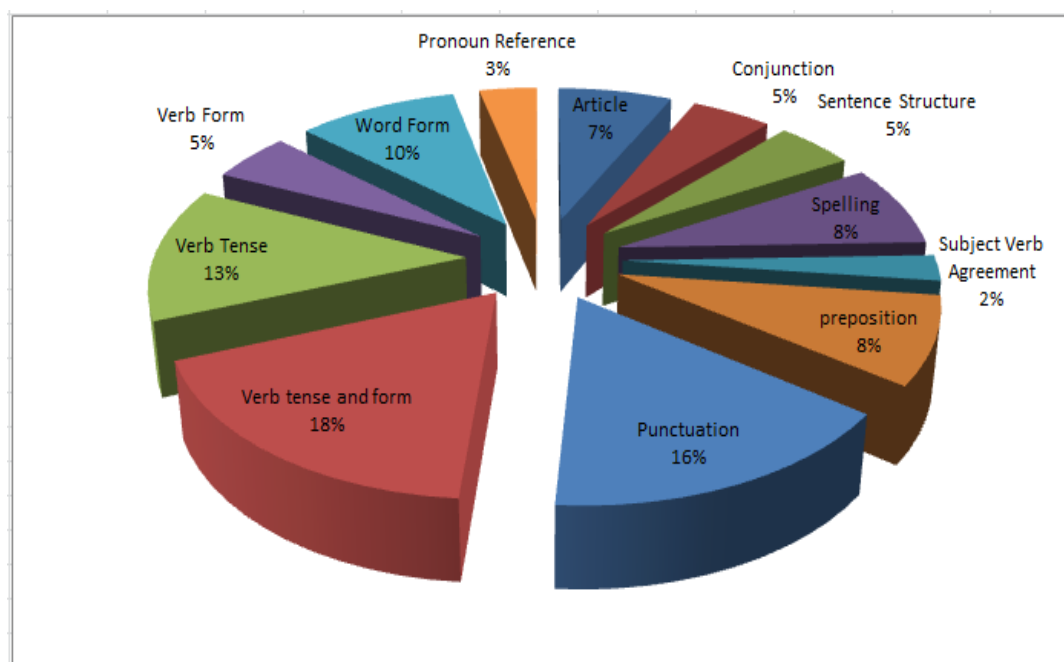
## **5.2 Author vs. reviewer**

Throughout the study, each student took the role of an author as well as a reviewer. Students were expected to write and edit their personal drafts and offer feedback to their peer's first draft. These two roles will be investigated in depth for the two selected sub-cases. The proportion of each case's correct forms was monitored. In addition, a comparison was conducted between the proportion of correct forms produced by each case as an author and the proportion of incorrect forms noticed for their peer in their roles as reviewers. The four most frequent L1 interference error categories, namely punctuation, prepositions, articles and verb tenses and forms were selected.

### **5.2.1 Amina (sub-case 1)**

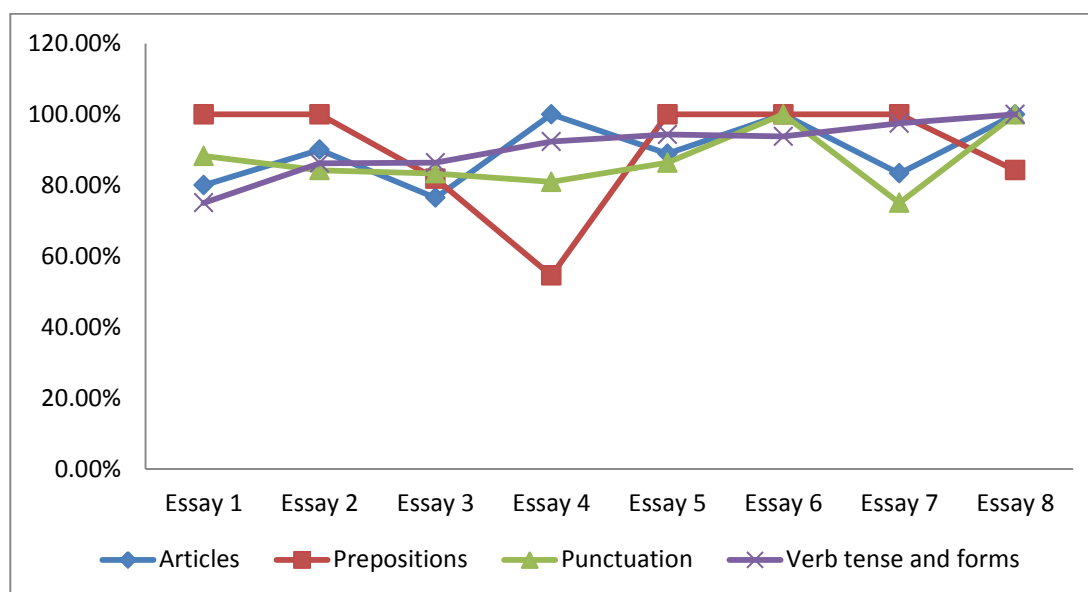
Amina's most frequent errors in relation to the total number of errors, as identified by the teacher across all essays are illustrated in Figure 5.1 on page 152 below which shows that most of her errors were in verb tenses and forms, followed by punctuation, word forms, prepositions and articles. Her least common errors were subject-verb agreement errors, pronoun reference errors, sentence structure errors, and conjunctions. Appendix B outlines the detailed normalised errors per 100 words in each error category for each essay.

**Figure 5.1 Distribution of Amina's errors as identified by teacher (per 100 words)**



Amina's proportion of correct forms in the four most frequent error categories due to L1 interference (articles, punctuation, prepositions and verb tenses and forms) were looked at more closely across all eight essays. Amina's proportion of correct forms in punctuation, verb tenses and forms, and articles generally increased between Essay 1 and Essay 8. This increase, however, was not constant. There is a dip in the categories selected in Essay 3 and Essay 7 (see Figure 5.2 on page 153 below). Amina's use of prepositions also fluctuated. While she made no errors in the previous three categories in Essay 8, her correct use of prepositions fell to 84.21%.

**Figure 5.2** *Proportion of correct forms produced by Amina over time*



In her role as a reviewer, Amina was able to correctly identify some of Hashmiya's errors. However, she also incorrectly marked some correct forms as errors and ignored other errors as shown in Table 5.1 below. More specifically, Amina correctly identified her peer's article errors, conjunction errors, sentence structure errors, spelling errors, subject-verb agreement errors, preposition errors, verb tense and form errors, and word form errors. She did not identify any punctuation or pronoun reference errors correctly.

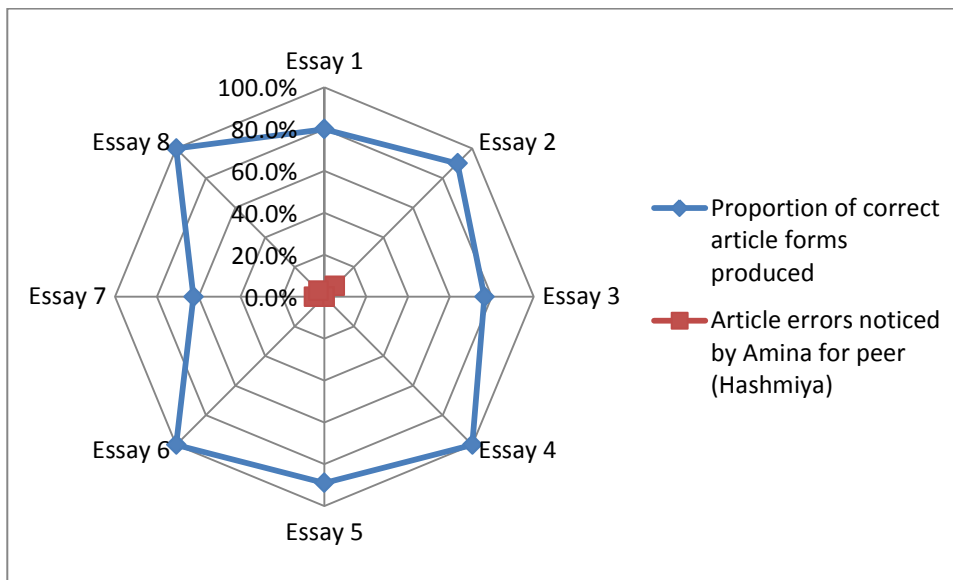
**Table 5.1** *Amina as a peer reviewer (errors per 100 words)*

Amina	Errors correctly noticed by student when reviewing his/her peer's essays	Errors not identified by student when reviewing his/her peer's essays (draft 1)	False errors marked by student when reviewing his/her peer's essays (draft 1)
Article	5	6	1
Conjunction	2	9	
Sentence structure	1	10	
Spelling	2	11	1
Subject Verb agreement	2	1	1
Preposition	3	6	1
Punctuation		29	1
Verb tense and form	7	10	
Word Form	8	11	1
Pronoun Reference		7	

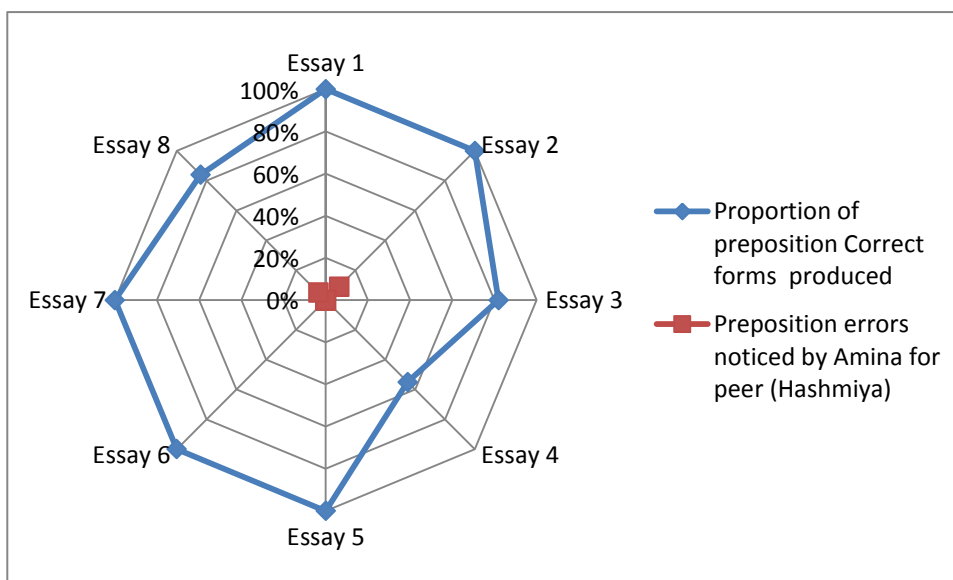
The proportion of correct forms she produced and the proportion of errors she correctly noticed in Hashmiya's texts (see Figure 5.3, Figure 5.4, Figure 5.5 and Figure 5.6 on page 154 and page 155 below) indicate that Amina's ability to produce

more correct forms developed over time; however, she did not identify all errors made by Hashmiya in the same categories.

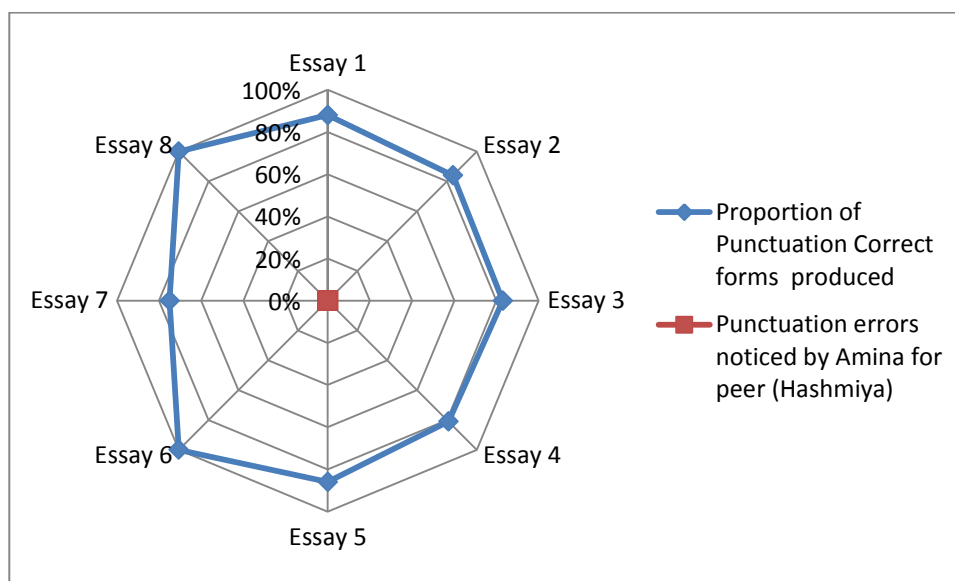
**Figure 5.3** *Amina's proportion of correct article forms produced and the proportion of article errors she correctly noticed*



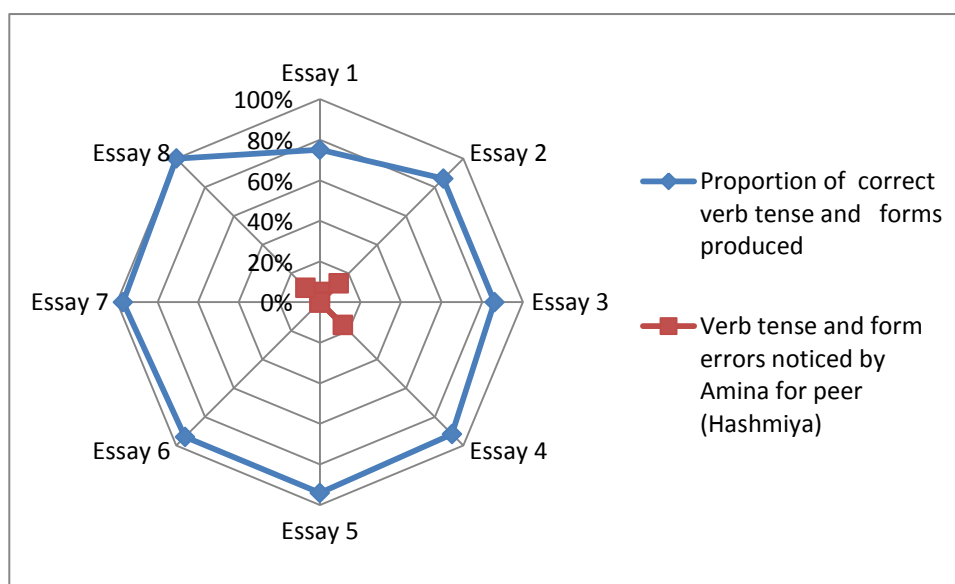
**Figure 5.4** *Amina's proportion of correct preposition forms produced and the proportion of preposition errors she correctly noticed*



**Figure 5.5** *Amina's proportion of correct punctuation produced and the proportion of punctuation errors she correctly noticed*



**Figure 5.6** *Amina's proportion of correct verb tense and forms produced and the proportion of verb tense and forms errors she correctly noticed*

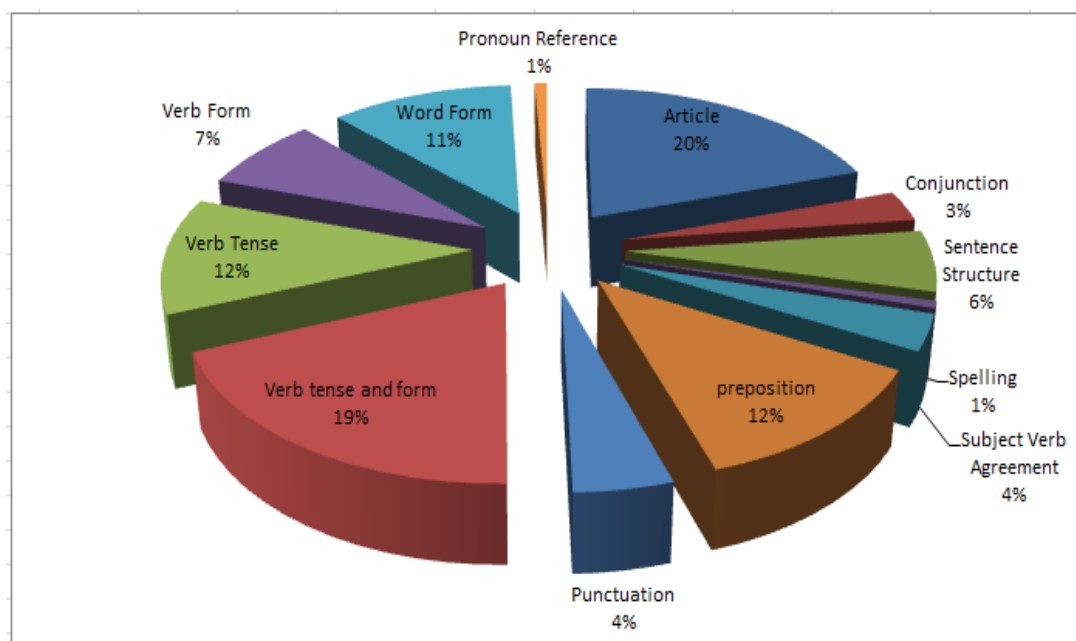


### 5.2.2 Hashmiya (sub-case 1)

Hashmiya's written errors (per 100 words), as identified by the teacher, were mainly in articles, verb tenses and forms, prepositions, word forms and sentence structures (see Figure 5.7). She also made other grammatical errors, which were less frequent,

such as spelling, pronoun references, conjunctions, subject-verb agreement and punctuation. The detailed normalised errors per 100 words in each error category for each essay are available in Appendix B.

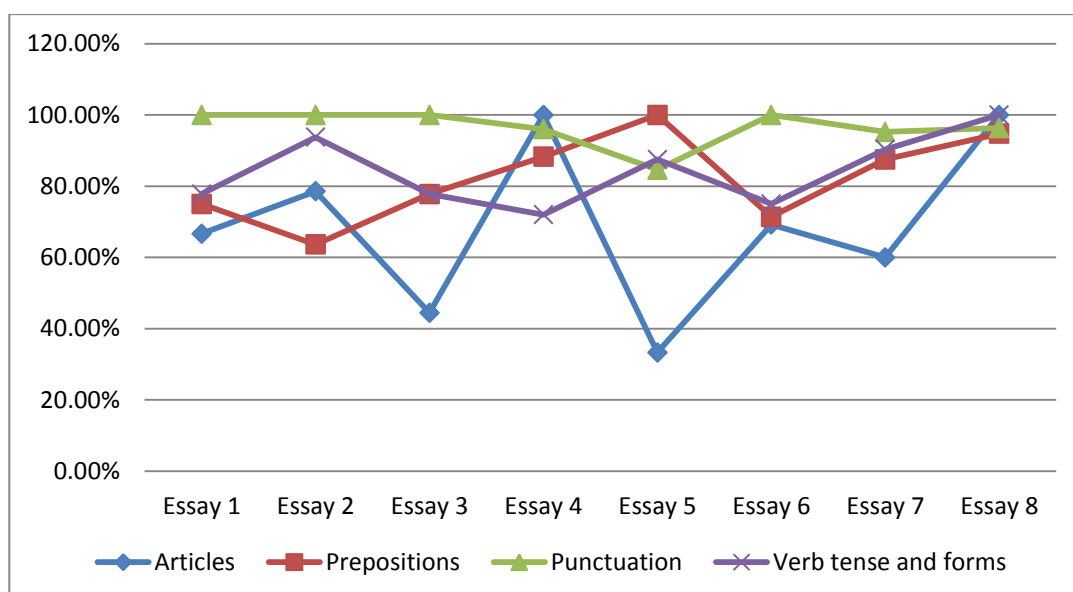
**Figure 5.7** *Distribution of Hashmiya’s errors as identified by teacher (per 100 words)*



Hashmiya’s proportion of correct forms generally increased over time with some noticeable highs in Essays 2, 4, 6, 7 and 8 across the selected grammar categories indicating a development in language awareness and accuracy (see Figure 5.8 on page 157 below).



**Figure 5.8 Proportion of correct forms produced by Hashmiya over time**



During the peer reviewing process, Hashmiya accurately noticed some of Amina's errors. In particular, she noticed errors in articles, sentence structure, spelling, subject-verb agreement, prepositions, verb tense and forms, and word forms. However, and despite her ability to produce correct forms, Hashmiya was not able to identify all errors made by her peer in the above categories. She even falsely identified sentence structure errors, punctuation errors, verb tense and form errors and word form errors (see Table 5.2 below).

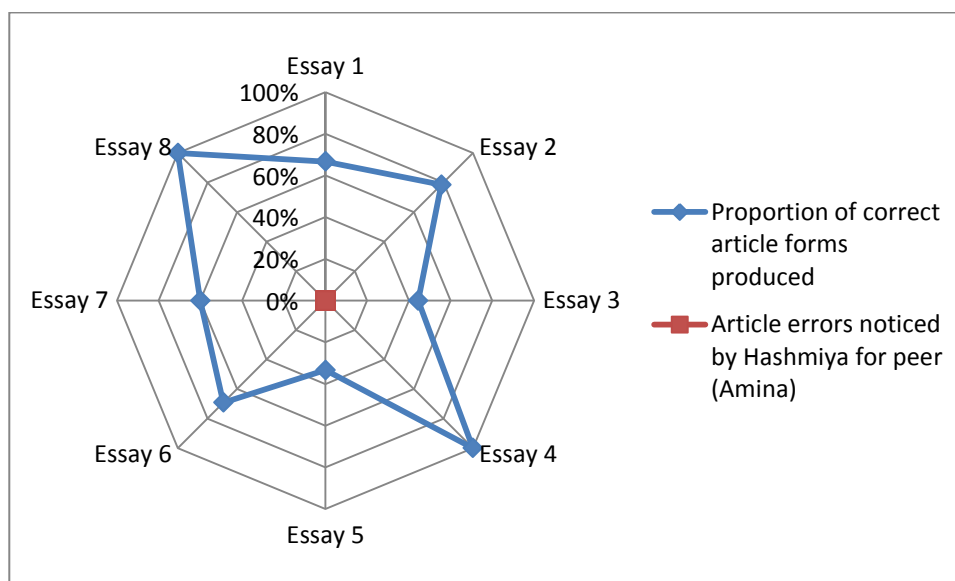
**Table 5.2 Hashmiya as a peer reviewer**

Hashmiya	Errors correctly noticed by student when reviewing his/her peer's essays	Errors not identified by student when reviewing his/her peer's essays (draft 1)	False errors marked by student when reviewing his/her peer's essays (draft 1)
Article		28	
Conjunction	4	6	1
Sentence structure	2	2	
Spelling	1	0	2
Subject Verb agreement	1	5	
Preposition		16	
Punctuation	5	8	2
Verb tense and form	4	19	3
Word Form		16	1
Pronoun Reference	2	1	

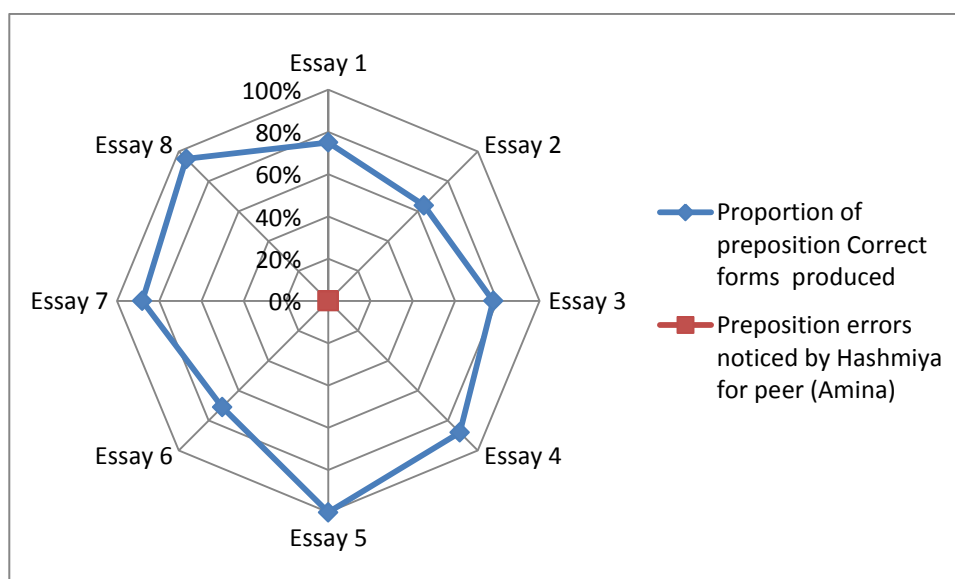
The difference between the proportion of correct forms Hashmiya produced and the

proportion of errors she correctly noticed in Amina's texts show that, although Hashmiya's language awareness has developed over time as her proportion of correct forms in articles, punctuation, prepositions and verb tenses and forms increased significantly, her observation and indication of her peer's errors did not develop to the same extent (see Figure 5.9, Figure 5.10, Figure 5.11 and Figure 5.12 on page 158 and page 159 below).

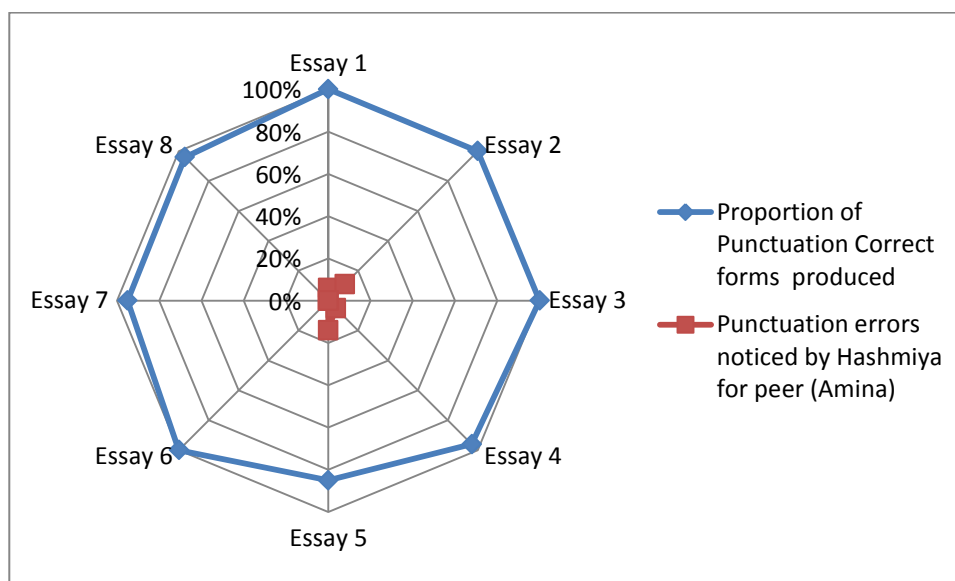
***Figure 5.9 Hashmiya's proportion of correct article forms produced and the proportion of article errors she correctly noticed***



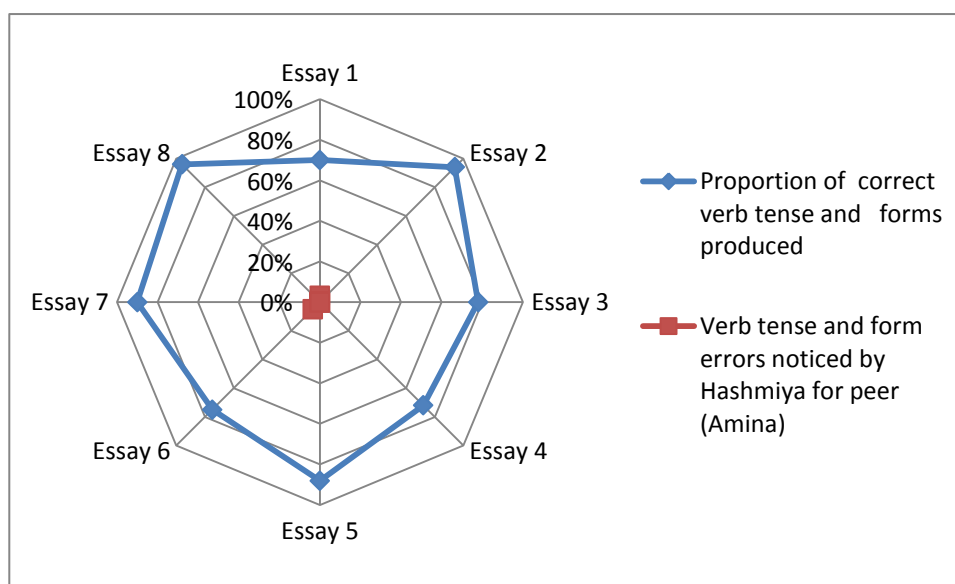
***Figure 5.10 Hashmiya's proportion of correct preposition forms produced and the proportion of preposition errors she correctly noticed***



**Figure 5.11 Hashmiya's proportion of correct punctuation produced and the proportion of punctuation errors she correctly noticed**



**Figure 5.12 Hashmiya's proportion of correct verb tense and forms produced and the proportion of verb tense and forms errors she correctly noticed**

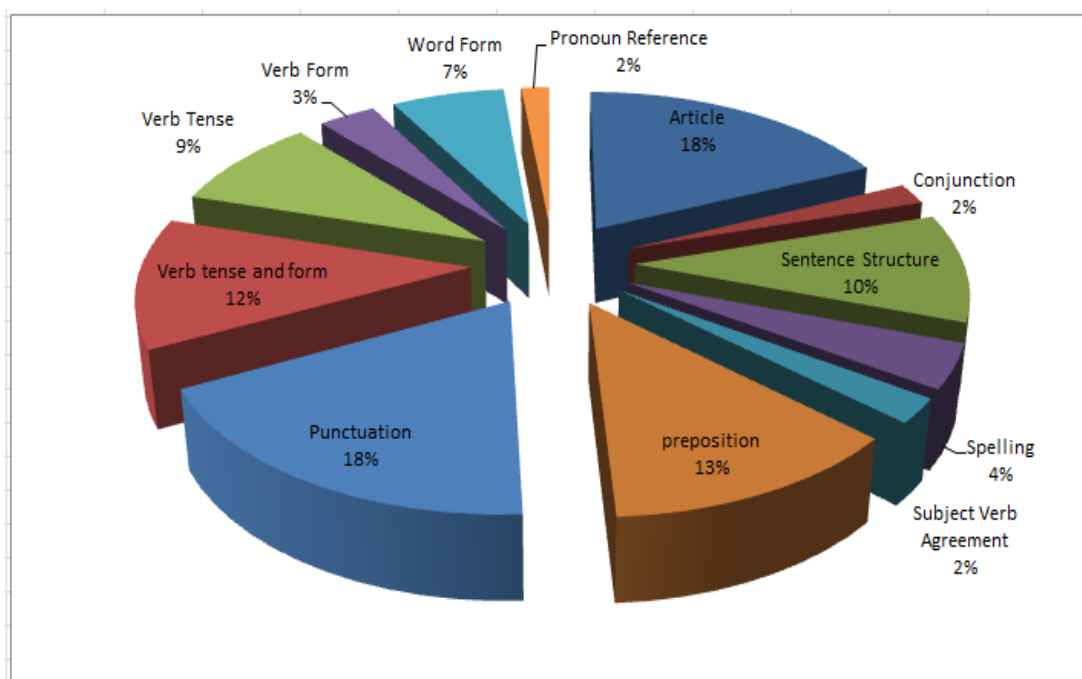


### 5.2.3 Hanan (sub-case 2)

Hanan's difficulties are indicated in Figure 5.13 on page 160 below. The most challenging areas for her were punctuation and articles. Prepositions, verb tenses and forms and sentence structure were also considered as high frequency errors.

Pronouns, conjunctions, subject-verb agreements, spelling and word form were not as problematic. Appendix B outlines the detailed normalised errors per 100 words in each error category for each essay.

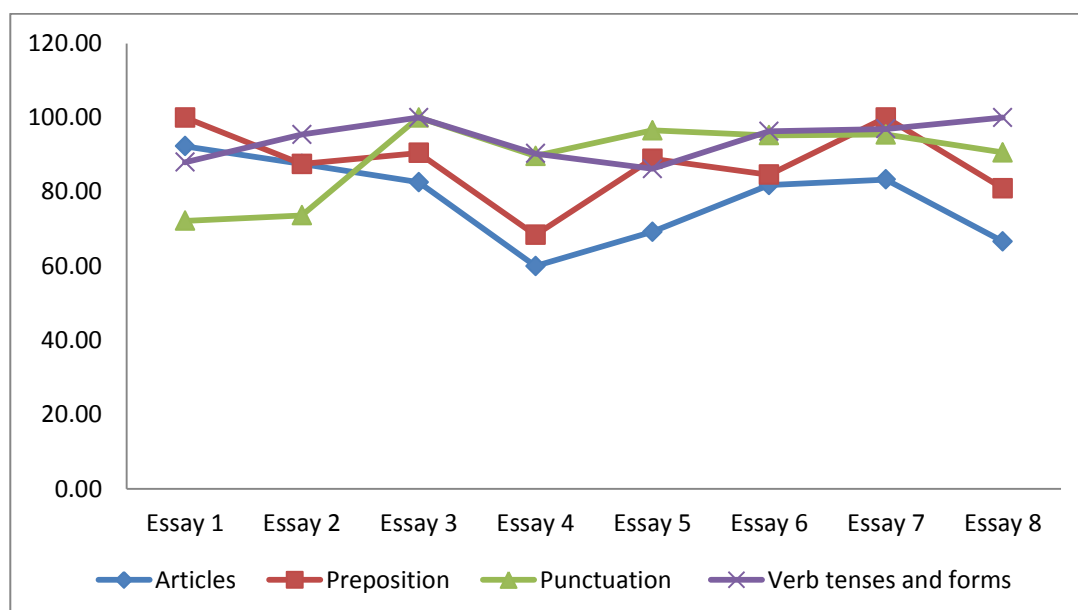
**Figure 5.13** *Distribution of Hanan's errors as identified by teacher (per 100 words)*



Hanan's production of correct forms fluctuated over time to end at a higher proportion from Essay 1 to Essay 8 in punctuation and verb tenses and forms while the proportion of correct forms in articles and prepositions declined (see

Figure **5.14** on page 162 below). A significant drop in the proportion of correct forms produced was noticed in all four selected categories in the middle (Essays 4).

**Figure 5.14 Hanan's proportion of correct forms produced over time**



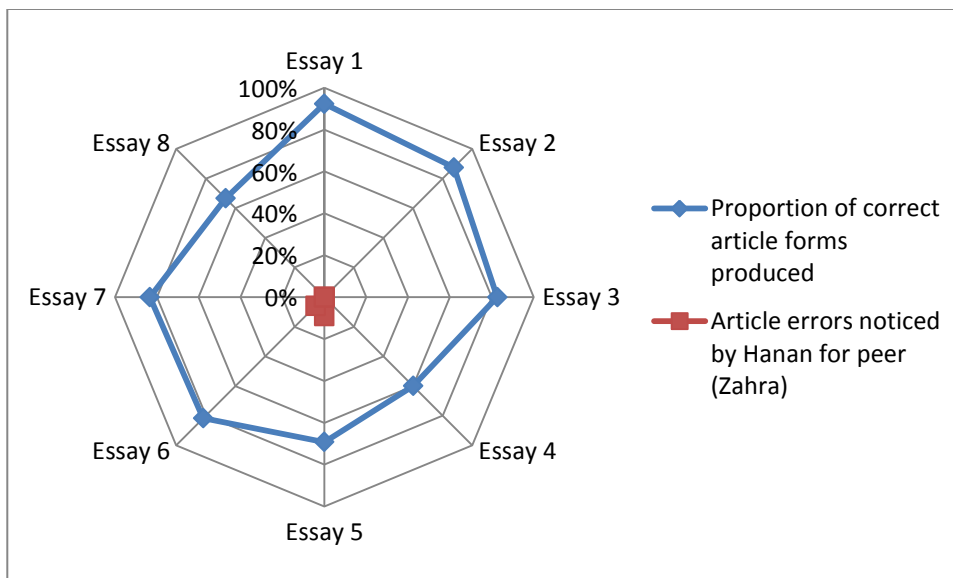
As a peer reviewer to Zahra, Hanan was able to correctly identify some of her peer's errors while other errors were either inaccurately identified or ignored. She accurately noticed some article, spelling, subject-verb agreement, punctuation errors and verb tense and form errors. However, she did not identify several conjunction errors, sentence structure errors, preposition errors, word form errors and pronoun reference errors. Furthermore, Hanan falsely identified spelling errors, preposition errors, punctuation errors, verb tense and form errors and word form errors (see Table 5.3 below).

**Table 5.3 Hanan as a peer reviewer**

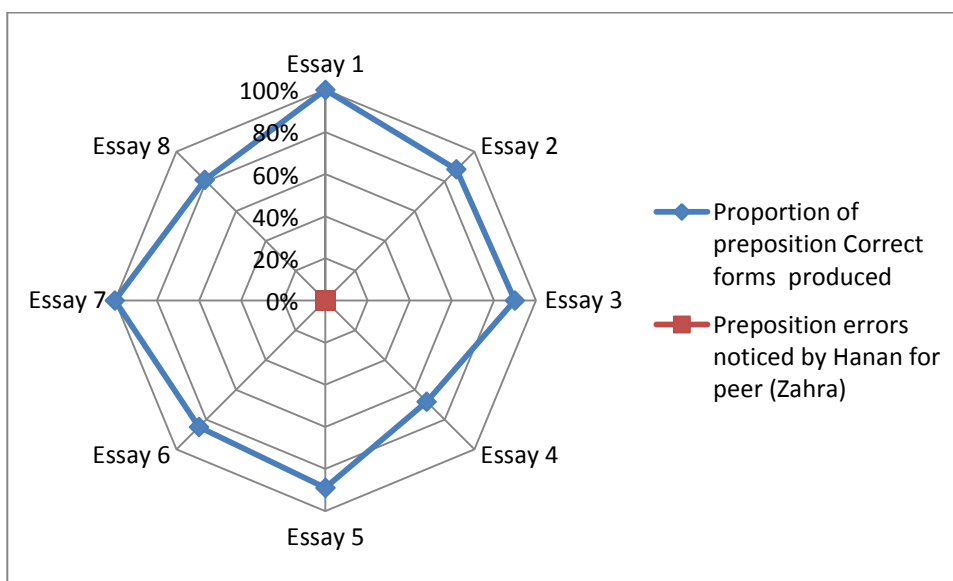
Hanan	Errors correctly noticed by student when reviewing his/her peer's essays	Errors not identified by student when reviewing his/her peer's essays (draft 1)	False errors marked by student when reviewing his/her peer's essays (draft 1)
Article	2	21	
Conjunction		2	
Sentence structure		11	
Spelling	2	5	1
Subject Verb agreement	1	1	
Preposition		16	1
Punctuation	4	18	8
Verb tense and form	2	15	2
Word Form		8	1
Pronoun Reference		2	

Hanan's correct form production was compared to her error identification in her peer reviews as illustrated in Figure 5.15, Figure 5.16, Figure 5.17 and Figure 5.18 below. These figures show that, while Hanan produced a high proportion of correct forms in her first drafts, she was unable or reluctant to signal her peer's errors.

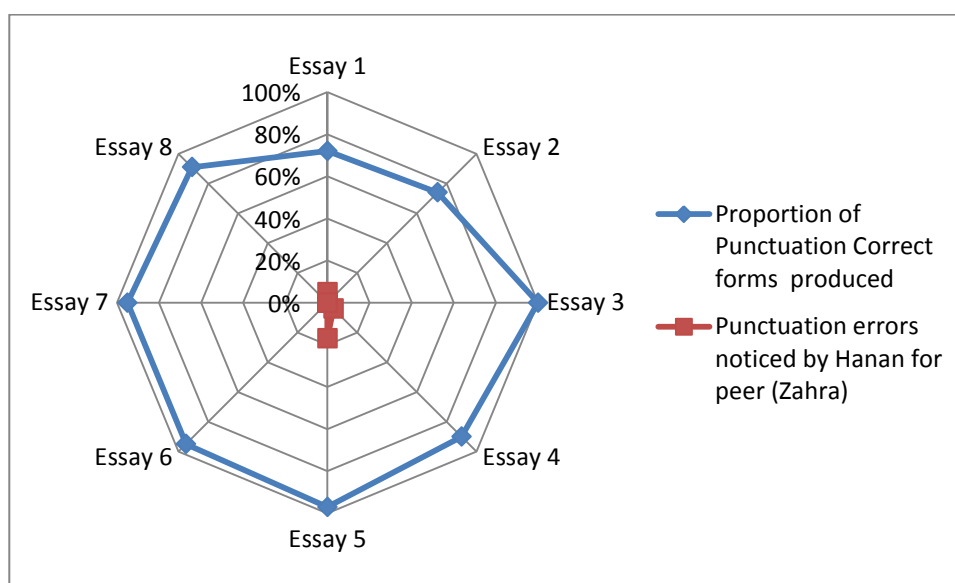
**Figure 5.15 Hanan's proportion of correct article forms produced and the proportion of article errors she correctly noticed**



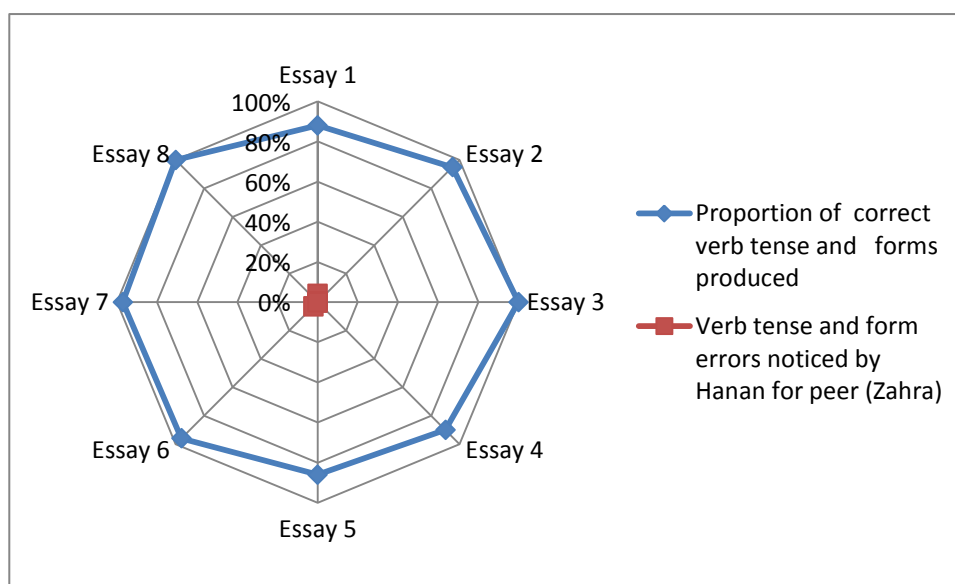
**Figure 5.16 Hanan's proportion of correct preposition forms produced and the proportion of preposition errors she correctly noticed**



**Figure 5.17 Hana's proportion of correct punctuation produced and the proportion of punctuation errors she correctly noticed**



**Figure 5.18 Hanan's proportion of correct verb tense and forms produced and the proportion of verb tense and forms errors she correctly noticed**



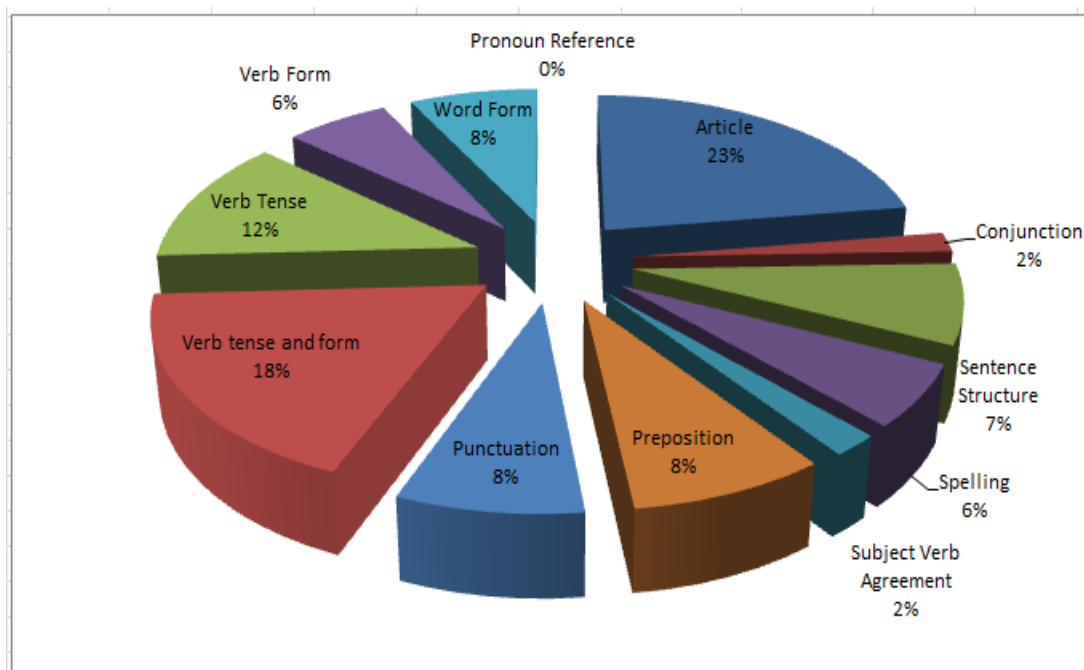
#### 5.2.4 Zahra (sub-case 2)

Zahra also faced grammatical challenges in her writings. The most frequent errors identified by the teacher were articles, verb tenses and forms, prepositions, punctuation, sentence structure and word form while the least frequently occurring errors were conjunctions, subject verb agreement and spelling (see Figure 5.19



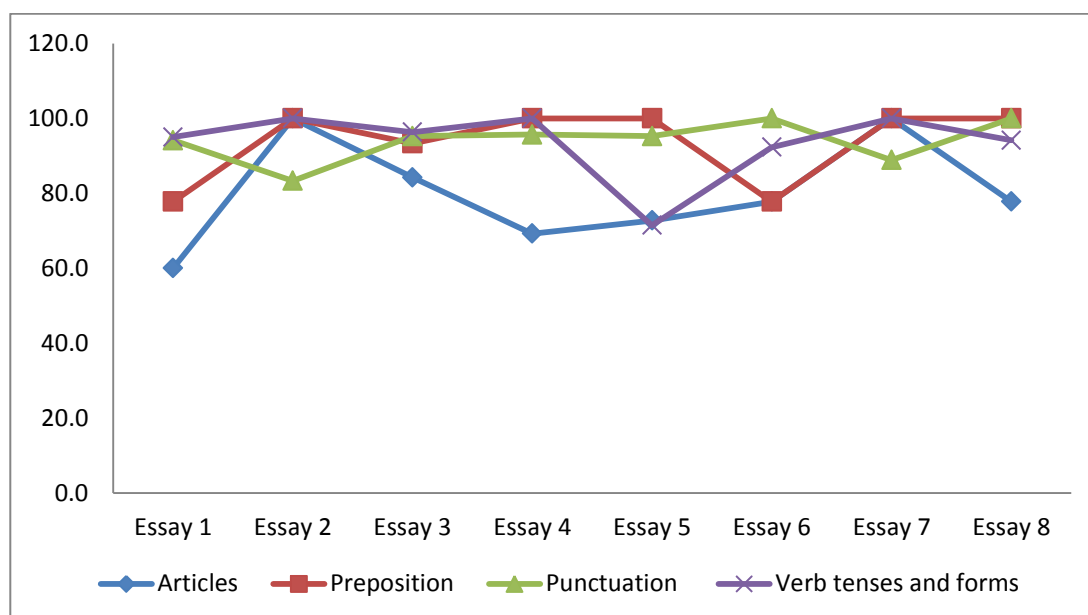
below). Appendix B outlines the detailed normalised errors per 100 words in each error category for each essay.

**Figure 5.19 Distribution of Zahra's errors as identified by teacher (per 100 words)**



From Essay 1 to Essay 8, Zahra's proportion of correct forms in articles, prepositions and punctuation increased while verb tenses and forms stayed at almost the same level (see Figure 5.20 on page 166 below). Zahra's production of correct forms showed two distinct increases in Essays 2 and 7.

**Figure 5.20 Zahra's proportion of correct forms produced over time**



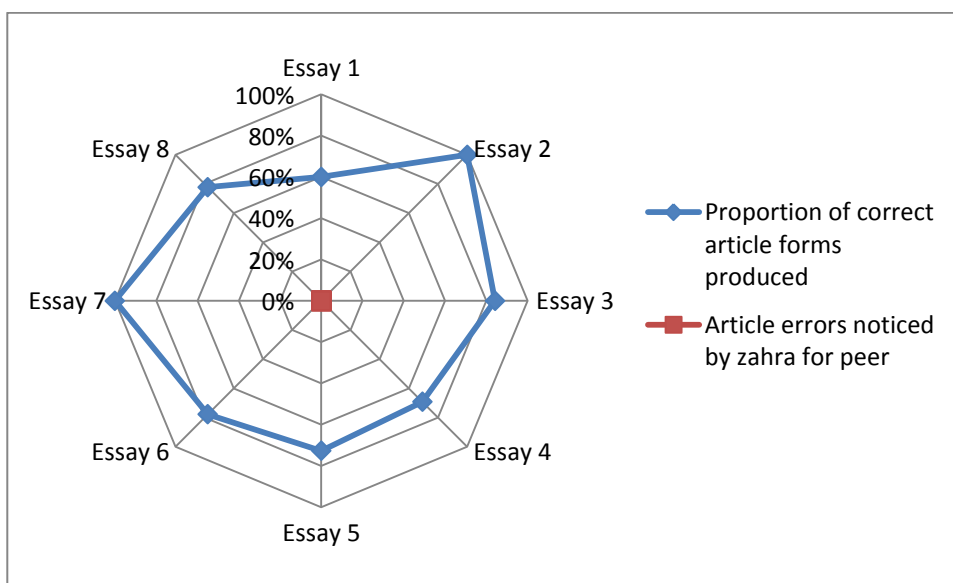
During the peer reviewing process, Zahra correctly identified some of Hanan's errors. These were spelling errors, verb tense and form errors and word form errors. However, Zahra did not identify any article errors, conjunction errors, sentence structure errors, subject-verb agreement errors, preposition errors, punctuation errors or pronoun reference errors. Zahra also falsely highlighted spelling errors, subject-verb agreement errors, preposition errors, punctuation errors, verb tense and form errors, word form errors and pronoun reference errors (see Table 5.4 below).

**Table 5.4 Zahra as a peer reviewer**

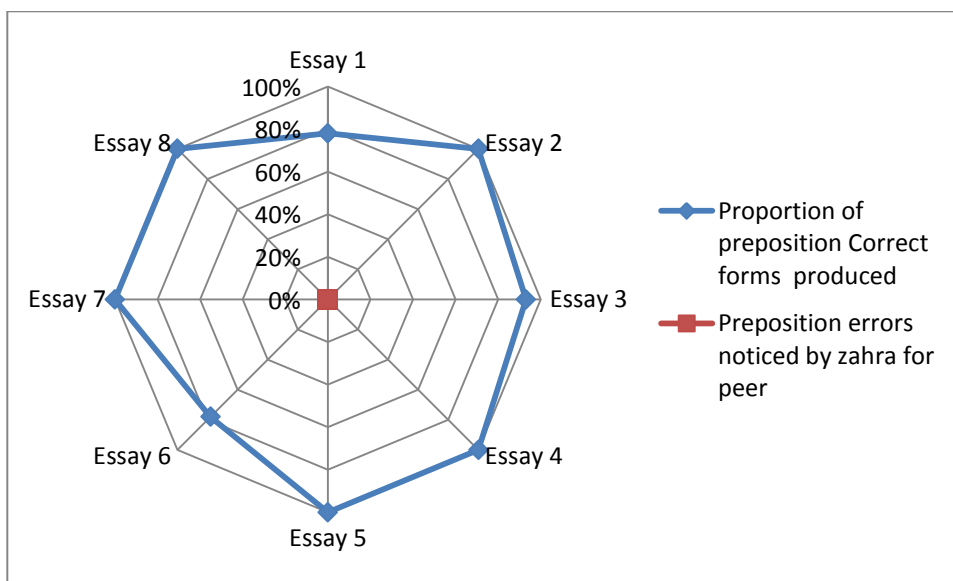
Zahra	Errors correctly noticed by student when reviewing his/her peer's essays	Errors not identified by student when reviewing his/her peer's essays (draft 1)	False errors marked by student when reviewing his/her peer's essays (draft 1)
Article		14	
Conjunction		1	
Sentence structure		4	
Spelling	4	4	1
Subject Verb agreement		0	1
Preposition		6	1
Punctuation		2	6
Verb tense and form	1	12	4
Word Form	1	56	4
Pronoun Reference		0	13

Zahra's performance as a reviewer shows her language awareness level and lack of knowledge of the error categories (see Figure 5.21, Figure 5.22, Figure 5.23 and Figure 5.24 below).

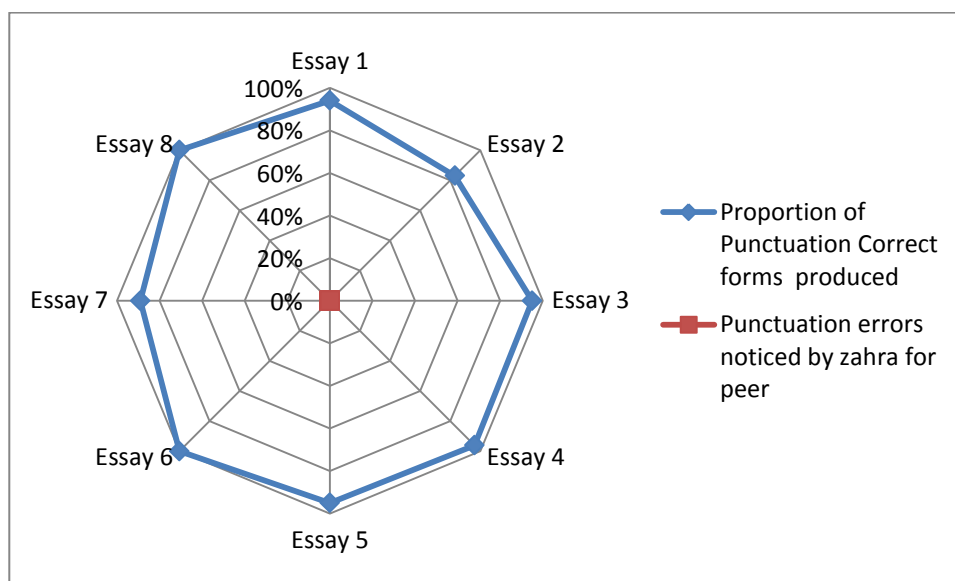
**Figure 5.21 Zahra's proportion of correct article forms produced and the proportion of article errors she correctly noticed**



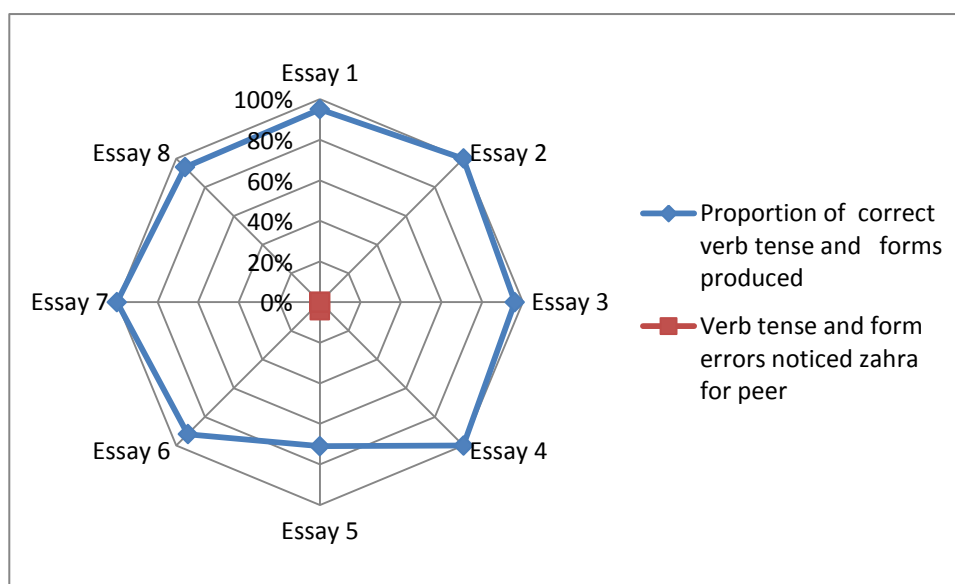
**Figure 5.22 Zahra's proportion of correct preposition forms produced and the proportion of preposition errors she correctly noticed**



**Figure 5.23 Zahra's proportion of correct punctuation produced and the proportion of punctuation errors she correctly noticed**



**Figure 5.24 Zahra's proportion of correct article forms produced and the proportion of article errors she correctly noticed**



### 5.2.5 Summary and preliminary discussion

The findings presented above show that all four students generally produced a higher proportion of correct forms over time. Yet, each sub-case shows some variability within and between learners.

At the beginning of the course, Amina and Hanan were at Level A2 (CEFR), while Hashmiya and Zahra were both at Level A1 (CEFR). Amina's level of accuracy continued to be higher than her peer's throughout the course, despite Hashmiya's significant efforts to practise using the forms that were causing her difficulties. Although their language difficulties were initially different, both students progressed in similar categories, such as articles and verb tenses and forms. Similarly, Hanan and Zahra ended the year with a higher proportion of correct forms in Essay 8, but in different categories. Hanan's proportion of correct forms increased in verb tenses and forms as well as punctuation, while Zahra improved her accuracy in articles, prepositions and punctuation.

In their role as peer reviewers, all four students showed an ability to identify some of the errors made by their respective peer, but not at the level of their correct forms production. For example, while Amina and Hanan both demonstrated an ability to apply their developing grammatical knowledge to their written productions, they incorrectly marked some correct forms as errors and ignored some incorrect forms produced by their respective peer. As for Hashmiya and Zahra, they did not notice, or were reluctant to signal most of their peer's errors in the same categories. Given Amina's and Hanan's higher level of proficiency (i.e. A2), more errors could have been identified and correctly signalled to their peers.

While the gaps between the production of correct forms and the correct identification of errors may be explained by the fact that students are developing their grammatical knowledge and competence at a different pace and in non-linear ways, motivational, cultural and psychological factors may also partly explicate them. Throughout the course, Hashmiya and Amina built a solid trusting relationship, with Amina striving to guide her peer so that she could learn more. Hashmiya's trust in Amina's language abilities may have led her to wrongly assume that Amina's errors were correct forms. She may also have feared losing the bond she was building with her peer if she signalled any errors in Amina's writing. In Hanan's case, the lack of accurate feedback provided to Zahra may be attributed to her determination to produce better drafts that would be read by the teacher and by her peer, and a lesser motivation to support her peer's language development.

### **5.3 Feedback uptake in a process-oriented writing classroom**

While the previous section looked at language development, both in terms of production and reviewing, this section addresses the uptake of feedback by students in an attempt to explain their writing skills development or decline.

#### **5.3.1 Peer feedback uptake**

The uptake of peer feedback was investigated by identifying the accurate and inaccurate feedback received as well as the action taken by the writer/ reviewee such as correctly revising a highlighted form, incorrectly revising it, or leaving it unchanged.

##### **Amina's response to Hashmiya's feedback**

Table 5.2 (page 157) and Table 5.5 (page 171 ) below show that Amina received 19 correct feedback from her peer Hashmiya, of which one was incorrectly changed, four correctly changed, and 14 left unchanged. Amina also received 9 incorrect feedback from Hashmiya, which she mostly left unchanged. Amina thus rejected most of the feedback received from her peer, perhaps because of some persistent L1 interference errors (fossilization) coupled with her confidence in her own competence and her belief that her language awareness and competency level were perhaps higher than her peer's.

However, Amina showed no sense of disrespect or inferiority towards Hashmiya. During class, she carefully considered the feedback she received from her peer, discussed the errors inaccurately identified, and made a case on why she should not change them. She seemed to have command over the changes she should make, considering what was correctly highlighted by Hashmiya (e.g. punctuation and spelling) and discarding what she thought was inaccurately identified by the latter (e.g. punctuation, verb tenses and forms, pronoun reference, subject-verb agreement, verb tenses and word forms). She nevertheless 'corrected' a few verb tenses and forms as well as punctuation errors that were wrongly marked by her peer as errors.

**Table 5.5 Amina's response to peer feedback**

Essay	Correct feedback received	Student's action	Incorrect feedback received	Student's action
1	1 verb tense error	1 incorrect revision		
	1 capitalisation error	1 correct revision		
			2 verb tense errors	1 correct revision 1 incorrect revision
2	2 punctuation errors	2 correct revisions		
	1 spelling error	1 correct revision		
			1 punctuation error 1 verb phrase error 1 spelling error	3 unchanged
3			1 verb error	1 unchanged
4			1 spelling error	1 unchanged
	2 pronoun reference errors	2 unchanged		
	1 possessive inflection error	1 unchanged		
5	1 punctuation error	1 unchanged		
6			1 punctuation error 1 conjunction error	2 correct revisions
	1 a verb form error	1 unchanged		
7	2 verb tense errors	2 unchanged		
	1 subject-verb agreement error	1 unchanged		
	2 conjunction errors	2 unchanged		
	1 sentence structure (repetition) error	1 unchanged		
8	1 sentence structure	1 unchanged		
	2 conjunction errors	2 unchanged		
			1 word form (adverb) error	1 unchanged
Total	19	1 incorrect revision 4 correct revisions 14 unchanged	9	1 incorrect revision 3 correct revisions 6 unchanged

### Hashmiya's response to Amina's feedback

Hashmiya received 30 correct feedback and six incorrect feedback from Amina as shown in Table 5.1 (page 153). Hashmiya accurately revised and changed most of the correct feedback (16) while she left two unchanged and incorrectly revised two. Hashmiya also considered most of the forms that had been incorrectly identified by her peer as errors and only left one unchanged. She revised and changed one form correctly although the feedback received was incorrect. Hashmiya also revised and incorrectly changed four of the highlighted errors (see Table 5.6 on page 172 below).

**Table 5.6 Hashmiya's response to peer feedback**

Essay	Correct feedback received	Student's action	Incorrect feedback received	Student's action
1	1 verb tense error	1 correct revision		
2	1 verb tense error	1 correct revision		
	1 article error 1 word form (plural/singular) error	2 correct revisions		
	1 preposition error 1 verb tense error	2 correct revisions		
3	1 preposition error	1 correct revision		
			1 word form (pronoun) error	1 correct revision
	1 article error	1 correct revision		
4	1 verb tense	1 correct revision		
	1 subject-verb agreement error	1 correct revision		
			1 subject-verb agreement error	1 incorrect revision
	1 word form error	1 correct revision		
	1 verb form error	1 incorrect revision		
	1 verb form error	1 unchanged		
5	1 subject-verb agreement error	1 correct revision		
	1 spelling error	1 correct revision		
6	1 spelling error	1 correct revision		
	1 conjunction	1 incorrect revision		
	1 sentence structure error	1 correct revision		
			1 article error	1 incorrect revision
7	2 article errors	2 correct revisions		
	4 word form errors	3 correct revision		
	1 conjunction error	unchanged		
			1 spelling error	1 unchanged
8	1 verb tense error 2 word form errors	3 correct revisions		
	1 prepositional phrase error	1 correct revision		
	1 article error	1 correct revisions		
			1 punctuation error 1 prepositional error	2 incorrect revisions
				1 correct revisions
Total	30	16 correct revisions 2 incorrect revisions 2 unchanged	6	4 incorrect revision 1 correct revisions 1 unchanged

Hashmiya thus acted upon most of the feedback she received, whether accurately or inaccurately highlighted, and revised her text accordingly. She addressed Amina's suggestions in relation to articles, verb tenses and forms, other word forms and prepositions. This may have stemmed from the fact that Hashmiya had great confidence in Amina's language abilities as noted previously and observed in class. By considering most of her peer's suggestions, Hashmiya also seems to have sent a message to Amina, motivating her to do better and to feel confident about her progress. However, Hashmiya disregarded a few incorrectly identified errors by her peer (e.g. punctuation) showing some knowledge and awareness of the form.



Similarly, she considered some errors wrongly identified by her peer (e.g., pronoun reference) and changed them to new correct forms.

### **Hanan's response to Zahra's feedback**

As previously shown in Table 5.4 (page 166), the feedback provided by Zahra to Hanan was mostly inaccurate, with 13 forms incorrectly identified as errors and only six errors accurately highlighted. As shown in Table 5.7 below, Hanan revised and correctly changed five out of the six accurately identified errors. She rejected most of the errors incorrectly identified by her peer (28), mostly spelling, punctuation and verb tenses, and correctly changed one incorrectly identified error. She also revised one incorrectly identified error and changed it into another incorrect form. Hanan thus seemed selective when revising and changing the identified errors in her peer's feedback. This might indicate that Hanan is confident about her knowledge of spelling, punctuation, and verb tenses.

***Table 5.7 Hanan's response to peer feedback***

Essay	Correct feedback received	Student's action	Incorrect feedback received	Student's action
1			1 spelling error	1 unchanged
			1 capitalisation error	1 unchanged
			1 punctuation error	1 unchanged
2			1 punctuation error	1 unchanged
3			1 pronoun reference error	1 unchanged
			1 punctuation error	
4			1 verb tense error	1 unchanged
			12 pronoun reference	12 unchanged
5	1 spelling error	1 correct revision	1 a punctuation error 1 word form error	2 unchanged
			1 verb form error 1 word choice error.'	1 incorrect revision 1 unchanged
	1 verb tense error	1 correct revision		
	1 spelling error	1 correct revision		
			1 word form error	1 correct revision
6	1 word form error	1 incorrect revision		
	2 spelling error	2 correct revisions		
7			2 verb form errors	2 unchanged
			1 prepositional error 1 subject-verb agreement error'	2 unchanged
8			1 word form error	1 unchanged
			1 punctuation error	1 unchanged
Total	6	5 correct revision 1 incorrect revision	30	1 incorrect revision 1 correct revision 28 unchanged

### **Zahra's response to Hanan's feedback**

As previously illustrated in Table 5.3 (page 162), Hanan correctly identified 11 errors, which Zahra accurately revised, changing nine forms relating to L1

interference errors (e.g., verb tenses, articles and punctuation) and leaving two subject-verb agreements unchanged (see Table 5.8). Noticeably, Zahra rejected all 14 errors incorrectly identified by her peer, which were mainly punctuation errors.

Zahra was thus generally selective in her uptake of Hanan's feedback. She acted upon her peer's correctly identified errors in verb tense and punctuation and disregarded most of the incorrectly identified errors, which included punctuation, verb tenses, word forms, prepositions and articles. By disregarding them, Zahra showed her awareness of how to correctly use these categories. However, on a few occasions, she disregarded errors correctly identified by her peer as in subject verb agreement. This might relate to her lack of knowledge in this category.

**Table 5.8 Zahra's response to peer feedback**

Essay	Correct feedback received	Student's action	Incorrect feedback received	Student's action
<b>1</b>			1 punctuation error	1 unchanged
			1 verb form error	1 unchanged
<b>2</b>	1 verb error 1 punctuation error	2 correct revision	1 verb tense error	1 unchanged
			2 punctuation errors 1 word form error	3 unchanged
			1 spelling error 1 punctuation error	2 unchanged
<b>3</b>			1 preposition error	1 unchanged
<b>4</b>			4 punctuation errors	4 unchanged
<b>5</b>	2 spelling errors	2 correct revisions		
	1 article error	1 correct revision		
	1 punctuation error	1 correct revision		
<b>6</b>	1 punctuation error	1 correct revision		
	1 article error	1 correct revision		
	1 capitalisation error	1 correct revision		
<b>7</b>	1 subject-verb agreement error 1 verb particle error	2 unchanged		
<b>8</b>	No submission			
<b>Total</b>	11	9 correct revision 2 unchanged	13	13 unchanged

## Summary

The uptake of peer feedback discussed above varied and may be attributed to a number of factors. The findings presented above showed that the peers accepted

some of their peers' feedback and managed to revise them accurately. In some cases, students accepted and acknowledged their peer's feedback; however, in their attempt to revise the error, another error was introduced. The dominant grammar error categories (i.e., articles, punctuation, verb tense and forms, prepositions, word forms and spelling) seemed persistent. All four students accepted their peers' feedback in some cases and ignored it in other cases. The latter could be due to a lack of trust in the language abilities of the peer or to an excessive trust in the peer's language. For example, Amina rejected most of Hashmiya's feedback whether errors had been correctly or incorrectly identified. On the other hand, Hashmiya responded to most of Amina's feedback and managed to change errors them into correct forms.

### **5.3.2 Teacher feedback uptake**

Based on the weekly highest occurring errors, the teacher provided feedback in grammar tutorials which were given to allow students to understand the difference between the use of the same grammatical item in Arabic and English. Collective feedback was given to the whole class and students also received individualised feedback. The aim of the feedback was to have fewer grammatical errors in the next written production. Thus, no specific research-related errors were chosen for these tutorials. Samples of the errors were collected from students' essays and comparisons between the English and Arabic grammatical systems were made in class. This was then followed by students practising the forms explained using an in-house computer-based software called Sanako Lab 100 as described in Chapter 3. Table 5.9 on page 176 below outlines, for each essay, the errors that most frequently occurred and that formed the basis for the tutorials.

**Table 5.9 Outline of Grammar Tutorials**

Essay	Topic	Grammar Tutorial	Sanako Lab 100
1	What did you do yesterday?	Article, Conjunction, Preposition, Punctuation, Verb Tense and form, Pronoun Reference	Article, Conjunction, Preposition, Punctuation, Verb Tense and form, Pronoun Reference  Individual exercises were added based on the most frequent errors per learner
2	Divorce has many negative effects. Do you agree or disagree? Give examples.	Article, Conjunction, Sentence Structure, Spelling, Subject Verb Agreement, Preposition, Punctuation, Verb Tense and form, Word Form, Pronoun Reference	Article, Conjunction, Sentence Structure, Spelling, Subject Verb Agreement, Preposition, Punctuation, Verb Tense and form, Word Form, Pronoun Reference  Individual exercises were added based on the most frequent errors per learner
3	What are the effects of technology on families? Discuss.	Article, Spelling, Subject Verb Agreement, Preposition, Punctuation, Verb Tense and form, Pronoun Reference	Article, Spelling, Subject Verb Agreement, Preposition, Punctuation, Verb Tense and form, Pronoun Reference  Individual exercises were added based on the most frequent errors per learner
4	What are the advantages and disadvantages of work to mothers? Give examples.	Sentence Structure, Subject Verb Agreement, Preposition, Punctuation, Verb Tense and form, Word Form, Pronoun Reference	Sentence Structure, Subject Verb Agreement, Preposition, Punctuation, Verb Tense and form, Word Form, Pronoun Reference  Individual exercises were added based on the most frequent errors per learner
5	Some people believe that university students should be required to attend classes. Others believe that going to classes should be optional for students. Which point of view do you agree with? Use specific reasons and details to explain your answer.	Article, Sentence Structure, Punctuation, Verb Tense and form, Pronoun Reference	Article, Sentence Structure, Punctuation, Verb Tense and form, Pronoun Reference  Individual exercises were added based on the most frequent errors per learner
6	Friendship is a very vital thing in our life. Discuss.	Article, Conjunction, Sentence Structure, Subject Verb Agreement, Preposition, Punctuation, Verb Tense and form, Pronoun Reference	Article, Conjunction, Sentence Structure, Subject Verb Agreement, Preposition, Punctuation, Verb Tense and form, Pronoun Reference  Individual exercises were added based on the most frequent errors per learner
7	What are the important qualities of a good son and daughter? Have these qualities changed or remained the same over time in your culture? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.	Subject Verb Agreement, Verb Tense and form, Word Form, Pronoun Reference	Subject Verb Agreement, Verb Tense and form, Word Form, Pronoun Reference  Individual exercises were added based on the most frequent errors per learner
8	The expression “Never, never give up” means to keep trying and never stop working for your goals. Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Use specific reasons and examples to support your answer.	Conjunction, Preposition, Verb Tense and form, Pronoun Reference	Conjunction, Preposition, Verb Tense and form, Pronoun Reference  Individual exercises were added based on the most frequent errors per learner.

During the grammar tutorials, recurrent errors were explained to the whole class using identified errors as samples to address the difficulty students faced. The teacher would explain the reason behind faulty occurrences in English and relate them to students' L1 with a view to raise students' awareness of the similarities and differences between the two languages. Students were encouraged to ask and seek further clarification on the items discussed or any related problematic structures they had questions on.

Students also received individualised feedback on their second drafts during the tutorials where they could query the use of the faulty structures identified by the teacher. They were met separately during class time to discuss the errors identified in their Draft 2. The teacher would go through the codes with individual students, seeking to know whether they knew what the codes meant, whether they knew the reason why the identified items were errors, whether they knew how to fix these errors or if they lacked the basic knowledge of how to use the identified inaccurate structure.

To find out the effects of the individual teacher feedback and grammatical tutorials on the development of the cases discussed in this chapter, the proportion of correct forms were compared against the topics covered in the grammar tutorials led by the teacher as well as against the individual feedback each student received for Draft 2. The highs and lows in the proportion of correct forms produced after each tutorial were analysed to monitor the changes that took place in the essays following each grammar tutorial.

The remaining of this section focuses on the four most frequent errors, namely punctuation, verb tenses and forms, prepositions and articles:

- **Punctuation.** Punctuation was ranked as of the most frequent errors for all participants as discussed in Section 4.1 on page 109. Consequently, seven consecutive punctuation tutorials were given by the teacher from Essay 1 to Essay 7.

- **Verb tense and form.** The verb tense and form errors were one of the most frequently occurring errors in all participants' essays as shown in Section 4.1 on page 109. Consequently, every tutorial throughout the course offered support to all participants so that they could better understand how to use verb forms and tenses and eventually produce more correct forms.
- **Articles.** Errors on articles frequently occurred and were addressed in the tutorials following Essays 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6.
- **Prepositions.** Three main tutorials on prepositions were given to all participants. They followed Essay 2, 4, and 8.

Each of the sub-cases' development against the grammar tutorials and teacher feedback will be discussed below.

### **Amina**

Amina might have benefited from the general and individual feedback received on *punctuation* in the tutorials, as well as from her practice in the language laboratory in Essay 5 with 84% correct punctuation compared to 81% in Essay 4, 100% in Essay 6 as opposed to 86% in Essay 5 and 100% in Essay 8 as to 75% in Essay 7.

Amina's production of correct *verb tense and forms* shows some development following the grammar tutorials and the teacher's feedback she received on her second drafts. Amina might have built more verb tense and form awareness from the tutorials and the personal and group teacher feedback received in class. In the case of *articles*, Amina's proportion of produced correct forms was much higher than the proportion of errors' she had in all essays. Having received individual teacher feedback for draft 2 and having addressed articles in the grammar tutorials for Essays 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6, Amina subsequently produced more correct forms (90%) in Essay 2 compared to Essay 1 (80%), in Essay 4 (100%) as opposed to Essay 3 (76.5%), and she produced 100% correct article forms in Essay 6 compared to 88.9% in Essay 5. However, her correct forms declined in Essay 3 (76.5%) and Essay 7 (62.5%) although she was given feedback in a grammar tutorial prior to both.

After the first tutorial on *prepositions*, Amina produced a lesser proportion of correct prepositions in Essay three 82% compared to 100% in Essay two, but her proportion of correct forms progressed after the second tutorial to reach 100% correct prepositions in Essay 5 compared to 55% in Essay 4. As Amina made preposition errors mainly in Essay 3 (18%), 4 (45%) and 4 (12%), she practised using prepositions in the language laboratory sessions with the aim of improving her performance and producing more correct forms in Essays 4 and 5. Cross-checking her performance after the language laboratory sessions, Amina did not produce more correct forms in Essay 4 (55%) compared to Essay 3 (82%), but she produced 100% correct forms in Essay 5 compared to 55% in Essay 4.

### **Hashmiya**

The use of *punctuation* was one of Hashmiya's strength as her correct forms outnumbered her errors in all essays. She produced an error proportion of only 6% in Essay 4, 13% in Essay 5, 7% in Essay 7 and 20% in Essay 8. Despite the low proportion of punctuation errors over time, Hashmiya's correct form proportions declined from 100% in Essays 1, 2 and 3 to 96% in Essay 4 and 85% in Essay 5. The proportion of correct punctuation increased to 100% again in Essay 6 before dropping to 95% in Essay 7 then increasing to 96% in Essay 8 marking a lower proportion of correct forms at the end of the course than at the start (see Figure 5.7 on page 156). Hashmiya might have benefited from the tutorials following Essays 2, 3 and 6, which may have led to an increase in her correct forms but not in Essay 4, 5 or 7. As a result, Hashmiya would have been directed to use the grammar software in the language laboratory after Essay 4, 5 and 7. Her correct punctuation increased from 85% in Essay 5 to 100% in Essay 6 and from 95% in Essay 7 to 96% in Essay 8.

*Verb tense and forms* were the second highest L1 interference errors for Hashmiya with a total percentage of errors (per 100 words) at 19% as shown in Figure 5.7 (page 156). Her correct verb tense and form proportion produced was 70% in Essay 1 and underwent systematic fluctuations from Essay 2 to Essay 8 reaching a higher

proportion at the end of the course at 96%. The grammar tutorials with their individual and group teacher feedback might have positively affected Hashmiya's verb tense and form development in Essay 2, in which the correct proportion of forms increased to 94% from 70% (see Figure 5.8 on page 157 above). The same development was noticed in Essay 5 (88%) compared to Essay 4 (72%), Essay 7 (90%) as opposed to Essay 6 (75%) and Essay 8 (96%) compared to 90% in Essay 7. Following the drop in the proportion of correct verb tense and forms produced by Hashmiya in Essays 1, 3, 4 and 6, she would have been directed to use the software packages in the language laboratory sessions. The language laboratory session exercises might have been the reason behind the increases in the proportions of correct verb tense and forms in Essays 2, 5, 7, and 8.

Errors on *articles* were the most frequent L1 related errors for Hashmiya. As indicated Figure 5.7 on page 156, her total production of article errors topped the four L1 interference error categories to reach 20% (per 100 words). Despite that, Hashmiya's proportion of correct articles increased over time to reach 100% in Essay 8 compared with 66.7% in Essay 1. Hashmiya's proportion of correct article forms in each of these essays was compared with the next one. An improvement was noticed after the tutorial and laboratory practice that followed Essay 1, with the proportion of correct articles reaching 78.6% in Essay 2 as opposed to 77.7% in Essay 1. Hashmiya also produced more correct forms in Essay 4 (100%) compared to 44.4% in Essay 3. The same was observed in Essay 6's and 7's increased proportion of correct articles. However, no improvement was noticed after the tutorial based on Essay 2. On the contrary, Hashmiya's production of correct articles declined in Essay 3 (44.4%) compared with 78.6% in Essay 2.

Finally, Hashmiya's proportion of correct *preposition* forms fluctuated across the eight essays and ended with a significant increase (95%) in Essay 8 compared to where it was in Essay 1 (75%). Hashmiya was encouraged to do the grammar exercises on prepositions in the laboratory after Essay 2 and 6, which showed a decrease in the production of correct forms. The proportion of correct use of prepositions increased in the following essays to reach 78% in Essay 3 as opposed to 64% in Essay 2 and 88% in Essay 7 compared with 71% in Essay 6.



## **Hanan**

Based on the findings in the previous section, Hanan's *punctuation* awareness developed in essay two, three and five but not in essay four, despite the grammar tutorials and individualised feedback provided by the teacher on Drafts 2. With regards to *verb tenses and forms*, Hanan improved in the first phase of the study between Essay 1 and 3 and in the last part between Essay 7 and 8 as shown in

Figure 5.14 (page 162). Despite extensive feedback provided during the preceding grammar tutorials, Essay 4 and Essay 5 showed a decrease in the proportion of correct verb tenses and forms. Hanan had also practised using verb tense and forms in the language laboratory sessions after Essays 1, 4 and 5. She showed improvement after the language laboratory sessions with an increasing proportion of correct forms from 88% in Essay 1 to 95% in Essay 2, and from 86% in Essay 5 to 95% in Essay 6, but this was not apparent in Essay 5 (86%).

Hanan was given additional information, feedback, and practice opportunities on how to use *articles* after Essay 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5. Based on

Figure 5.14 on page 162, Hanan's correct use of articles dropped after each of the tutorials except for tutorial five, which showed an increase in the proportion of correctly used articles in Essay 6 (69%) compared to 60% in Essay 5. Hanan had also worked on articles after Essay 2 and 3 in the language laboratory session, after which no real progression in the correct use of articles was observed. Thus, no systematic change was noticed following the tutorials.

Finally, Hanan had difficulties using *prepositions* correctly. Preposition errors accounted for 12% of the total number of errors across all essays as outlined in Figure 5.13 (page 160). However, she seemed to have produced a higher proportion of correct prepositions over time than errors, although this was not a straightforward linear progression between the essays. Hanan started with no preposition errors in Essay 1, but only produced 88% of correct prepositions in Essay 2. Following individual teacher feedback in a grammar tutorial on prepositions her use of prepositions increased to 90% correct forms in Essay 3. This increase was followed by a dip to reach 68% in the middle of the study in Essay 4 upon which another tutorial was offered by the teacher on an individual and group basis. Hanan's proportion of correct prepositions rose again reaching 89% in Essay 5. No more collective teacher feedback in the grammar tutorials were offered to students on prepositions afterwards due to the fact that they were not most frequently occurring errors in the weeks of Essay 6 to 8. However, the individual teacher feedback for Draft 2 continued in response to Hanan's errors. Hanan's proportion of correctly used preposition fluctuated between Essays 6 and 8 to decline in the end to 81% compared to where it started (100%).

In conjunction with the tutorials, Hanan used the language laboratory sessions to practise her use of prepositions. She was directed to the language laboratory sessions following Essays 2, 4, 6 and 8. As indicated in

Figure 5.14 on page 162 above, her correct forms increased after each language laboratory session which might perhaps be due to the effects of the extra reinforcement she had as well as the individual feedback she received by the teacher after her draft 2 for every essay. Overall, Hanan's development of language awareness linguistic competence cannot be solely related to any of the intervention methods used.

### **Zahra**

Zahra's correct use of *punctuation* fluctuated throughout the course. It however increased in the essays following her practice in the language laboratory, namely in Essay 3 (95%), Essay 6 (100%), and Essay 8 (100%). *Verb tenses and forms* were the second highest category of errors produced by Zahra across all essays (18% of all errors). The proportion of correct verb tense and forms fluctuated between Essay 1 and Essay 8, ending with a general decrease in the proportions of correct forms at the end of the study (see Figure 5.20 on page 166 above). Zahra produced 95% correct verb forms and tenses in Essay 1 compared to 94% in Essay 8. In addition to the collective and individual feedback she received during the grammar tutorials, Zahra practised using verb tenses and forms in the language laboratory after each decrease in her correct use of verb tense and form (i.e. after Essays 1, 3 and 5). The proportion of correct verb tenses and forms produced by Zahra increased in the next essays, reaching 100% in Essays 2 and 4, and 92% in Essay 6.

With 23% of the total number of errors produced by Zahra across all essays, *articles* constitute her most significant difficulty due to L1 interference. However, she produced more correct forms than errors in all essays. Her correct use of articles fluctuated throughout the course, from 60% of articles used correctly in Essay 1 to 78% in Essay 8. As shown in Figure 5.20 on page 166 above, this fluctuation was however non-linear, with a decrease in the proportion of correctly used articles from 100% in Essay 2 to 84% in Essay 3, and to 69% in Essay 4. As part of the individual feedback she received from the teacher for Essays 1, 3, and 4, Zahra had been directed to work on the use of articles in the language laboratory sessions, apparently with little effect.

Lastly, Zahra's correct use of *prepositions* increased over time from 78% of prepositions used correctly in Essay 1 to no errors in Essays 2, 4, 5, 7, and 8. The grammar tutorials focusing on the use of prepositions, the individual feedback she received on Essay 1, 3, and 6, as well as the exercises she was then directed to do in the language laboratory, may have contributed to her progress.

### **5.3.3 Summary and preliminary conclusions**

The two pairs (Amina and Hashmiya, and Hanan and Zahra) varied quite considerably in their response to peer feedback, but all four students were selective in accepting their peer's comments on their first drafts. Similarly, the impact of the grammar tutorials, the individualised feedback provided by the teacher on their second drafts, and the tailored use of the Sanako Lab 100 programmes varied between students as well as between categories of errors. No specific pattern of accuracy development could be established: each student seemed to progress in different areas at different times, and their development, which was shown to be non-linear, may have been influenced by one or more of the intervention strategies that were implemented.

The findings discussed above show that the errors attributed to L1 interference may not have been fully resolved through the implementation of a process-oriented approach to the teaching and learning of ESL writing. However, students' increasing use of correct forms and their growing ability to identify errors in their peers' writings suggest that a process-oriented writing curriculum spanning a longer period of time may yield positive results in the Bahraini context. To better assess the potential of process-oriented approaches in the Bahraini ESL classroom, students' perceptions and attitudes were examined.

## **5.4 Students' perceptions of and attitudes to ESL writing and the peer reviewing process**

Section 2.5 of Chapter Two discussed the linguistic and cognitive benefits that can be gained from the integration of peer-reviewing into the ESL writing classroom. The ideas tested in other parts of the world, and more particularly in Saudi Arabia (Al-Hazmi and Scholfield 2007; Grami 2010), suggest that the integration of a peer reviewing process into the formal curriculum, alongside direct teacher feedback, can facilitate the development of ESL written skills among Arabic students. To provide base-line data against which progress could be measured, a pre-questionnaire was administered before the intervention. A post-questionnaire was also conducted towards the end of the investigation, and both data sets are discussed in the following sections. The results are triangulated with the teacher's observations and reflections before, during, and after the implementation of the course. A brief analysis of two of the six pairs that formed the Bahrain Polytechnic case-study concludes this chapter (Section 5.5).

#### **5.4.1 Pre-questionnaire**

The twelve participating students in the Bahrain Polytechnic case-study gave their perceptions about their experiences of writing in ESL and shared their views about giving and receiving feedback from peers. A full set of results is shown in Table 5.10 on page 186 below, and the survey questionnaire can be found in Appendix D. In the summary of key highlights, the 'agree' and 'strongly agree' data have been added, to give an overall indication of the trends, whether based on positive or negative responses.

For two-thirds of the students (67%), writing in English was seen as more difficult than speaking, a self-assessment confirmed by the teacher's observations of their abilities. A similar proportion (67%) was well aware of the problems they had in writing in English. The majority were very aware of the importance of proficiency in writing to pass examinations (100%), such as the entry test for degree level study at the Polytechnic, and to get a good job (92%).

***Table 5.10 Students' perceptions of ESL writing***

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>
I think writing in English is more	25.00%	41.67%	33.33%	0.00%

difficult than speaking.				
I think I don't really have problems in writing English.	0.00%	33.33%	58.33%	8.33%
Writing in English is important to me because I will need it in a job.	50.00%	41.67%	8.33%	0.00%
Writing in English is important to me because I must pass examinations in English.	75.00%	25.00%	0.00%	0.00%
I expect to do a lot of writing in class.	16.67%	75.00%	8.33%	0.00%
I expect to do a lot of writing by myself at home.	8.33%	58.33%	25.00%	8.33%
I would like the teacher to look at my work and help me while I am in class.	33.33%	66.67%	0.00%	0.00%
I would like the teacher to talk to me about my writing sometimes.	16.67%	75.00%	8.33%	0.00%
I usually check through my writing before I hand it in.	16.67%	66.67%	16.67%	0.00%
I expect the teacher to mark all the mistakes in my work.	0.00%	91.67%	8.33%	0.00%
I expect the teacher to mark the most important mistakes in my work.	33.33%	33.33%	33.33%	0.00%
I want my teacher to write comments about what is good or not good in my writing.	50.00%	50.00%	0.00%	0.00%
I make a careful note of the teacher's corrections when I get work back.	8.33%	50.00%	16.67%	25.00%
I usually read the comments and look at the grade but I don't study the corrections.	0.00%	41.67%	50.00%	8.33%

Most participants (92%) expected to be doing a lot of writing in class but a lesser proportion, though still more than half (67%), expected to do a lot of writing at home. Students' expectations of the teacher were high, with the entire group expecting to get their writing checked by her during class time, and 92% expecting the teacher to talk to them about their writing. Nearly all students (92%) anticipated that the teacher would identify and highlight the most important mistakes, and all participating students expected that the teacher would write comments on what was good or not good in their written productions. In terms of how students respond to teacher's comments, 58% of them indicated that they take careful note of the teacher's corrections when they get back their work, while 42% tend to read the comments and look at the grade, but without studying the corrections.

### **5.4.2 Post-questionnaire**

As described in Chapter Three, a post-course questionnaire, with identical statements as in the pre-course questionnaire, was administered at the end of the semester. Only six participants answered the post-questionnaire, yielding a response rate of 50%. This is possibly due to the timing of the survey administration, which clashed with the assessments in some subjects. After this, students went on leave, so there was no possibility of following up with the class to encourage further responses. It will be noted that because of the small number of respondents, the data is unlikely to be representative of the views of the whole class. As in the pre-intervention questionnaire, in the summary below of key highlights, the 'agree' and 'strongly agree' data have been conflated, to give an overall indication of the trend.

For the majority of students (83%), writing in English was seen as more difficult than speaking, which indicates an increase in the participants' realisation of this fact compared to the pre-course questionnaire (67%). A similar proportion (83%) was very much aware of the problems they had in ESL writing, which suggests an increase in students' awareness of their writing problems as opposed to what they thought in the pre-course questionnaire. All students (100%) were very aware of the importance of proficiency in writing to pass their examinations and recognised its significance to get a good job. All participants (100%) expected to be doing a lot of writing in class while well over three quarter of the participants (83%) expected to do a lot of writing at home.

Students' expectations of the teacher remained high, with the entire group (100%) expecting to get their writing checked during class time. More than three quarters (83%) also expected the teacher to talk to them about their writing and anticipated that the teacher would identify and highlight the most important mistakes. and all students in the case-study (100%) expected that the teacher would provide comments on what was good or not good in their written productions. In terms of how the students reacted to the teacher's comments, around 50% of the participants indicated that they take careful note of the teacher's corrections when they get back their work as opposed to 58.33% in the pre-questionnaire.



**Table 5.11 Students' perceptions of ESL writing post the case-study**

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>
I think writing in English is more difficult than speaking.	16.67%	66.67%	16.67%	0.00%
I think I don't really have problems in writing English.	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%	0.00%
Writing in English is important to me because I will need it in a job.	50.00%	50.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Writing in English is important to me because I must pass examinations in English.	83.33%	16.67%	0.00%	0.00%
I expect to do a lot of writing in class.	66.67%	33.33%	16.67%	0.00%
I expect to do a lot of writing by myself at home.	0.00%	83.33%	16.67%	0.00%
I would like the teacher to look at my work and help me while I am in class.	50.00%	50.00%	0.00%	0.00%
I would like the teacher to talk to me about my writing sometimes.	16.67%	83.33%	0.00%	0.00%
I usually check through my writing before I hand it in.	33.33%	50.00%	16.67%	0.00%
I expect the teacher to mark all the mistakes in my work.	16.67%	66.67%	16.67%	0.00%
I expect the teacher to mark the most important mistakes in my work.	50.00%	33.33%	0.00%	16.67%
I want my teacher to write comments about what is good or not good in my writing.	66.67%	33.33%	0.00%	0.00%
I make a careful note of the teacher's corrections when I get work back.	33.33%	16.67%	50.00%	0.00%
I usually read the comments and look at the grade but I don't study the corrections.	50.00%	50.00%	0.00%	0.00%

As described in Chapter Three, at the end of the course, another post-course questionnaire investigating students' opinion on giving and receiving peer review feedback was carried out (The questionnaire can be found in Appendix E). The results of the first part of the post-intervention questionnaire, which focused on giving feedback, are given in Table 5.12 below.

More than three quarters of the respondents (83%) found peer feedback of help to them when revising their drafts, with 83% believing that peer feedback helped them look at their writing as readers would, and 100% agreeing that it helped them present their ideas more clearly. Furthermore, all students (100%) agreed that peer feedback has helped the grammar in their writing and 83% stated that the comments on their writings improved their writing. More than two thirds of the students (67%) agreed that they learned the most from peers correcting their grammar and spelling mistakes.

***Table 5.12 Students' perceptions of receiving peer feedback***

<b>Peer Review Statement</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>
Peer feedback is helping me to revise my drafts.	33.33%	50.00%	16.67%	0.00%
It helps me look at my writing as a reader would.	16.67%	83.33%	0.00%	0.00%
Peer feedback helps me to present my ideas more clearly.	50.00%	50.00%	0.00%	0.00%
It helps to improve the organization of my writing task.	33.33%	33.33%	33.33%	0.00%
It has helped the grammar in my writing.	16.67%	83.33%	0.00%	0.00%
I learn most from comments on the content of my writing.	66.67%	16.67%	16.67%	0.00%
I learn most from comments on organization and style.	50.00%	33.33%	0.00%	0.00%
I learn most from their corrections in grammar, spelling, etc.	50.00%	16.67%	33.33%	0.00%

The second part of the post-intervention survey concerned giving feedback, with detailed results summarised in Table 5.13 on page 191 below. As shown, most

students (83%) indicated that reading their peers' drafts helped them improve their own writing, while all students (100%) stated that reading their peers' drafts improved their ability to spot errors. Furthermore, more than two thirds of the students (67%) indicated that they learned from their peers' grammar and spelling mistakes and tried to avoid making similar mistakes in subsequent compositions. All students (100%) strongly agreed that the process of giving feedback helped them analyse their own writing, and a similar proportion (100%) indicated that they learned from reading the content of the peers' writing. Also, 83% of the respondents stated that they learned by looking at the organisation of their writing.

***Table 5.13 Students' attitudes to giving peer feedback***

<b>When I give feedback Statement</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>
Reading my peers' drafts helps me to improve my writing.	50.00%	33.33%	16.67%	0.00%
It helps me to discover new ideas and views.	66.67%	16.67%	16.67%	0.00%
It helps me to analyse my own writing.	66.67%	33.33%	0.00%	0.00%
Reading my peers' drafts makes me better at spotting my errors.	16.67%	83.33%	0.00%	0.00%
I learn from reading the content of their writing.	16.67%	83.33%	0.00%	0.00%
I learn by looking at the organization and style of their writing.	33.33%	50.00%	16.67%	0.00%
I learn from their mistakes in grammar, spelling, etc. (I try not to make similar mistakes)	33.33%	33.33%	33.33%	0.00%

#### **5.4.3 Teacher's reflection: Pre-intervention**

At the beginning of the semester, this teacher-researcher observed that all students were very respectful and humble, and thought highly of the teacher as the provider of knowledge. This was not a surprise as it is embedded in the cultural, societal and religious background of all Bahraini students. Male students were shy and careful in their approach to their female peers as well as the teacher. This was also due to the cultural and religious rules, which forbid males from approaching females outside

their families unless necessary. Students who mingle in mixed-gender groups are not looked upon highly and their communication is always questioned in the Muslim society, especially in strict villages. The teacher took this observation into account when matching the peers.

Another significant trait was the participants' disappointment that they could not join the degree programmes like other students which was noticed in Amina's case as discussed in Section 5.2.1 above. They questioned the reason behind their enrolment in the course and a few were in denial about being required to do it. Their denial was accompanied by a sense of fear of what would happen to them if they did not reach the required English level to join the degree programmes.

The fear of family reactions to students' achievements was also a concern to the participants. They feared their families' negative reactions in case of failure. The males even indicated that they would be forced to go and look for a job in the market where more than 10,000 qualified graduates were unemployed and striving to get a job. Three of the females as well as two males stated that it was very important for them to pass the course in order to proceed with their studies, to get a decent job, and to support their parents financially. One student wanted to please her disappointed parents by achieving the passing grade and entering the degree programme they chose for her. Another student, however, was quite relaxed about it, although it was clear that she was pushed to do her undergraduate degree by her family. She explained that she would rather get married instead and start a family.

Several parents got in touch with the teacher either by phone to express their disappointment at having their children undergo the Academic Bridging Course instead of the degree programmes they selected. It was very clear that most students' fears and lack of security mirrored what their parents felt. The parents' expectations were reflected greatly in how the students behaved prior to the intervention in terms of denial, anxiety, low self-esteem and refusal to be convinced that the course would be beneficial for them. Despite all the anxiety each one was going through, most of them were very determined to try their best to develop in L2 writing and reach the

required level for degree. The teacher felt that it would have made a big difference in students' motivation if their parents had accepted the fact that they had to do the course for better learning outcomes in the future.

The participants did not object to the case-study's requirements and they all accepted the idea that writing more than one draft would do no harm. However, some of them could not accept the fact that they would be providing feedback and believed it was only the duty of the teacher to see their writing and offer feedback. This behaviour is related to the didactic teacher-centred approach they were used to at school for twelve years. The teacher knew it would take the participants some time to understand the shift in the teaching method.

#### **5.4.4 Teacher's reflection: During the intervention**

During the intervention, most students attended classes regularly with the exception of a few cases who were absent due to sickness. Most students were committed to doing the written tasks. The more they progressed into the course, the more they showed motivation to learn more and write better. However, four students showed a lack of motivation during the intervention. This changed gradually for Asma as she was personally and emotionally mentored by the teacher to overcome an emotional shock she had suffered. Her self-esteem and her dedication to write better were monitored throughout the course. As for Fatima, she was busy with extra-curricular activities and believed that this course was not necessary since she had been granted a scholarship. Two students (one male and one female) did not pay much attention to the course and its requirements as they were mixing and mingling most of the time despite cultural and social restrictions and boundaries. They did not care much about what their parents wanted them to do any more. They were both pushed to join the programme and thus had no real desire or motivation to pursue their studies any further.

Generally, students were very engaged in the grammar tutorials led by the teacher as their own errors were addressed anonymously and explained thoroughly. They showed awareness moments when their errors were discussed. Some of them even expressed that they felt more confident to write the next essay because they believed the tutorial gave them the required knowledge they lacked.

The participants were vibrant and engaged in the language laboratory sessions as they found the activities fun and informative at the same time. Despite students' cultural norms and restrictions not to share or show any lack of knowledge in public, students were surprisingly quite comfortable to state out loud the errors they had when the teacher explained them to the whole class. They were willing to show that they faced that difficulty when writing. They seemed to enjoy the sessions and were disappointed when they got reduced by Registry in the middle of the intervention due to space restrictions.

Although most students were openly sharing the language difficulties they faced in the teacher feedback individual sessions as well as in the grammar tutorials, some of the participants expressed their concerns regarding the peer feedback they offered and received. It seemed that they were still influenced by cultural norms that meant one does not criticize anyone even if it would be beneficial for their learning, which may explain some students' poor peer feedback performance despite the improvement noticed in their written productions. Moreover, as illustrated in Section 5.3.1 (page 170), some students did not trust the peer feedback offered to them, believing that their language level was better than their peers'. These individuals did not consider most of the peer feedback they received during the intervention. This behaviour changed for some students, (e.g., Amina, Reem, Hanan and Zahra), but not for all. However, the participants' confidence in their written abilities in L2 gradually increased, which was noticed in the discussion they had in the peer review sessions. Students were more relaxed writing the essays and exchanging feedback in the second half of the course. In particular, Asma, Abdulrahman and Reem expressed that they were more capable of using some forms than at the start of the intervention.

An overall decline in submitting some of the drafts was noticed during the course, which was generally due to the assessment periods in other subjects. Illness (as in Hashmiya's, Reem's and Abdulrahman's cases) and a lack of commitment (Fatima M, Mahmood, and Fatima) were also reasons for not submitting some of the drafts.

#### **5.4.5 Teacher reflection: Post-intervention**

At the end of the semester, the participants seemed more confident yet exhausted due to the workload they had and the expectations of the course. Having practised writing more than the other groups and having had the opportunity to understand where their errors stemmed from, they believed that they would move to the next academic level easily. There was a sense of unhappiness that they would be separated once the course was over but at the same time, they were over-joyed to have reached the end of the course and to be closer to their enrolment in their desired degree programmes. They came together towards the end of the course in more harmony and care for each other, and greater respect for the teacher. Checking their final summative assessments, which were not part of the scope of this thesis, all participants joined their desired degree programmes.

#### **5.4.6 Summary**

This section analysed the pre-course questionnaire and the post-course questionnaires which provided insights into the students' perceptions and attitudes about L2 writing as well as their views of providing and receiving peer and teacher feedback. It also presented the teacher's perception and observations of students' actions, thoughts, beliefs and background before, during and after the intervention. The participating students' reactions to the peer-reviewing process were noted in the teacher's reflective journal on a daily and weekly basis with a view to identify any contributing factors that may have influenced the process and the outcomes of peer reviewing. The next section looks at some ecological factors that may have

contributed to students' engagement (or lack of) with the overall process-oriented approach to the learning of L2 writing.

## **5.5 Ecological factors**

As stated in 5.2, sub-case 1 and sub-case 2 were chosen based on the maximum availability of their drafts. Looking at students who did not submit all drafts as required may provide further insights into the potential impact of peer-reviewing on L2 development. Two additional sub-cases were thus selected. The students constituting these two sub-cases did not submit some of their Draft 1 to their peer. It is worth noting that they all came from single-sex schools.

### **5.5.1 Sub-Case 3: Fatima M and Asma**

#### **Fatima M**

Fatima M was a joyful student who aimed to have fun to the maximum. Coming from a female-only school and being the only daughter in a strict working-class family, she was monitored and taken care of in the community to the highest level, which seemed to have affected her. Reacting against the way she was brought up, she seemed to be doing the exact opposite of what she was expected in terms of mixing with males and her academic commitment and achievements. For example, she did not pay much attention to the teaching and learning process during the course and was keen to build mixed-gender friendships.

Fatima M spoke three languages, namely Arabic, Farsi and English. Her English language competency level was at CEFR A1, but her spoken English was good. During the writing cycle of the course, she did not seem to put much effort into writing her drafts, sharing them with Asma, or providing feedback to her. She caused frustration and anxiety for her peer, who was traumatised by a personal loss. She was not interested in understanding her errors and did not attend to the feedback she received from either the teacher or her peer. During the lab sessions, she kept chatting and made very little effort to practise any of her areas of weaknesses.



## **Asma**

Asma was a female student who was very isolated in class for a long period at the beginning of the writing cycle. Asma came from a working-class family and she was the oldest among her siblings. Her family was very open-minded and liberal in their lifestyle, unlike the common cultural practices she was surrounded with. Asma went through a devastating emotional phase, having lost a loved one just before the course commenced. She was not attentive for a while and initially refused to work collaboratively with Fatima M. She insisted on being left alone and promised to do her share of the work. Fatima M's did not take offence as she knew the background to Asma's behaviour. In the following weeks, Asma became more approachable and eager to do her tasks. Tensions in her relationship with Fatima M began to surface when the latter did not share her drafts with Asma or did not provide her with peer feedback.

Asma was a dedicated student who would do her work as instructed. She would not intentionally ignore or disregard a deadline. She was an attentive student during the individual teacher feedback session and would take notes to improve her writing. She used to practise in the lab the grammatical aspects she required, and offered feedback to her peer.

### **5.5.2 Sub-Case 4: A.Rahman and Bader**

#### **A.Rahman**

A.Rahman came from a middle-class family with very sophisticated values and respectful manners. He was an attentive student in class and a humble peer to his colleagues. A.Rahman's spoken and written competencies were the highest in the class (above CEFR A2). However, he suffered from a health condition, which affected his performance in class and his engagement in the peer reviewing process. Although he became more engaged as the course progressed, A.Rahman did not submit several essays and was not interested in getting his work reviewed by his peer.

## **Bader**

Bader came from a working-class family. He presented himself as a very shy and quiet person. Bader did not show any confidence in his language abilities although he was ranked second best in the class. He was at a CEFR A1 but his performance in class showed that he was at a higher level than indicated in the entry test. Bader was very much focused on grades. He was an ambitious student who wished to join the degree programme at any cost to please his family and help them financially.

Bader was reluctant to fully engage with the peer-reviewing process as he believed (and expected) that the teacher should be the only individual to review his writings and to offer feedback, which is the normal practice in the public school system. He also feared that the drafts shared with peers would be graded without students knowing. This reflected some of the experiences he went through in school, where teachers did not keep their word. This fear however disappeared after submitting the third essay, when he realised that the teacher was not paying any attention to grades. Thus, even with the consent form explaining the rights and responsibilities of researcher and participants, there was a sense of distrust due to previous experiences.

### **5.5.3 Discussion**

Sub-case 3 and sub-case 4 illustrate some contextual, social or personal factors, which may have affected students' performance and engagement in the process-oriented writing classroom and in the peer reviewing process. Other ecological factors also contributed to the students' low level of engagement with the peer-reviewing process. One contributing factor was the length of the process, which caused reluctance and boredom to sustain the production of drafts, as well as frustration and stress while waiting for feedback and the grammar tutorials. Another factor was the participants' unwillingness to share their drafts with their peers due to feelings of embarrassment and the possibility of losing face if their peers saw their errors. Some students expressed their lack of trust in their peers' feedback as they were all supposed to be at the same level. They preferred teacher feedback for two reasons. First, they were used to sharing their drafts with the teacher only. Secondly, they had not experienced collaborative work at school. The collaborative work they were used to do was limited to the random pair work in class to accomplish a simple

task. Writing an essay was not one of the pair tasks in question as it was considered a major task which carried grades.

## 5.6 **Summary**

This chapter aimed to look closer at the uptake of feedback and at the process of peer reviewing. Students' perceptions were sought to identify what they think is essential for their writing learning process and their expectations from their teachers in writing classes. Their views on what they considered their responsibilities were also addressed. The cases' written productions were analysed and described in detail to demonstrate the effects of the peer reviewing process, teacher feedback, teacher-led tutorials and grammar language laboratory practice on their written language learning development. The participants' reactions as reviewers towards identifying errors for their peers were also examined to monitor any correlations with changes in their linguistic competencies in the four error categories over time.

The findings from this chapter (Chapter Five) and the preceding one (Chapter Four) are now to be integrated in Chapter Six, as together they provide the evidence needed to address the second research question, which sought to assess the extent to which the process-oriented writing approach via peer reviewing in ESL was able to resolve LI interference errors.

## 6 Chapter Six: Discussion and Conclusion

This case-study investigated peer-reviewing as a strategy in developing the writing skills of ESL students within the Bahraini context. It identified that there were a number of reasons to account for the variable development of written accuracy amongst Polytechnic entry level students, providing some insight into the effectiveness of process-oriented writing with a particular focus on feedback and peer-reviewing.

Over the two preceding chapters, Chapter Four and Five, the impact of a peer-reviewing intervention was assessed and, whilst the findings show that some learning occurred, the rate, the degree and the method of learning were seen to be very variable. The students, who were all learning English as a second language, formed an opportunistic sample, being arbitrarily allocated to a class scheduled according to tutor availability. They were all supposed to be at approximately the same level, this assessment being made as the result of an *Oxford Placement Test* administered as part of Bahrain Polytechnic's student selection process. The results of this test determined whether an applicant was accepted to study at the Polytechnic, and at what level. The particular students in this group had met the eligibility requirements for English at foundation (pre-degree) level. Being at this very minimum level, they were placed in a specialist course, *Academic Bridging*, to enable them to receive additional tuition and ESL support in order that they might be able to achieve entry into degree level programmes in the coming semester. Despite this commonality, it was found that they varied widely in their writing proficiency, exhibiting the common errors that Siddiqui (2015), Al Murshidi (2014), Hamdi (2008), Al-Bayati (2013), Al Khotaba (2013), Sawalmeh (2013), Grami and Alzughaibi (2012), Alamin and Ahmed (2012), Dunlap (2012), Hirvela Nussbaum and Pierson (2012), Abushihab, El-Omari and Tobat (2011), Tahaine (2010), Gokhale and Sharma (2011), Hourani (2008); Al-Buainain (2011), Abisamra (2003) and Hajjaj and Khrama (1989) studies of Arab ESL students had identified.

This chapter discusses the findings from this Bahrain case-study, calling on knowledge gleaned from previous studies conducted across the world, in order to

gain some insight as to why there appear to be common problems facing Arab writers of English as a second language. This case-study contends that writing in English for Arabic students is much more difficult than for many other ESL students. The international literature suggests that is largely because of a phenomenon called *Interference*, which arises due to the vastly differencing structure of their first language (L1) from their second language (L2). But it seems that this may not be the only reason that Bahraini students were found to struggle to write proficiently in English. The following discussion examines the education and cultural context for further clues as to why Bahraini ESL writers continue to struggle, despite the additional support provided by a peer-review process in this case-study.

The drive for Bahraini students to raise their written ESL accuracy is that as the local economy is growing and diversifying, an increasingly competitive global labour market is coming into effect. Locally-based industry needs their future employees to have the ability to not only speak well, but also to write well, as most are international companies with a diverse workforce. It can be assumed that the students described in the case-study were highly motivated to develop their English writing skills because this was needed to get entry into the Polytechnic degree level programmes that would make them work-ready and employable.

This chapter firstly brings all these key challenges to the fore in Section 6.1, seeking to address the driving questions that underpinned the investigation, looking at the most common grammatical errors Arab students have in ESL writing. It then assesses to what extent the process-oriented writing approach, with the inclusion of peer reviewing, was successful in assisting ESL students resolve LI interference errors (Section 6.2). Section 6.3 then utilises an ecological framework to discuss how the research findings from this Bahrain case-study compare to those of previous studies. Finally, the research questions are revisited and the pedagogical implications of process-oriented writing as well as the peer reviewing process in L2 are outlined (Section 6.4).

This chapter also contains a reflection on the methodology implemented and its limitations (Section 6.5). This is followed by suggestions and recommendations for future research.

## 6.1 The Linguistic Challenge: A Discussion

A lack of published literature focusing on the problem of ESL writing for Arab learners in Bahrain, coupled with some encouraging case studies investigating the effectiveness of peer reviewing as a learning process, had suggested the focus of this research, which on entry-level students' L2 writing in a Middle Eastern higher education institute. A peer-reviewing intervention aimed to provide students with additional support in developing ESL writing skills. The findings of Chapter Four and Five indicated that the Arab students who formed the case-study were challenged linguistically when writing utilising a process-oriented approach that incorporated peer reviewing. There were multiple methods employed by a number of participants, yielding a variety of data that was able to be triangulated to give readers greater confidence in the findings. Data sources included students' writing drafts, student feedback gained via questionnaires and tutor reports and reflections on class observations, and these were analysed, compared, integrated and evaluated to produce a set of findings to support the achievement of the three key objectives of this investigation as outlined below:

1. To critically evaluate the problems facing learners of English as a second language in the Middle East, with a particular focus on their writing skills;
2. To develop an effective and suitable model for process-oriented writing that can help Bahraini students improve their writing skills;
3. To recommend an appropriate course of action that will facilitate the integration of process-oriented writing and peer-reviewing in the Bahraini English classroom.

Learning a language is like any other form of learning in that it necessitates undergoing a process of observation and interpretation (Hein 1991), practising, experiencing and reflecting (Kolb 2014) or socially interacting, observing, scaffolding and working with other individuals (Vygotsky 1962). Young Bahrainis' ability to learn English is very much influenced by their local context and culture and the demands of a competitive workplace. Bahrainis seeking employment are expected to have high levels of English language fluency not only from the spoken

perspective, in which they excel, but also writing, which they struggle with. The Bahraini Arab ESL participants in this thesis come from an oral context with Arabic as their first language. From the case-study findings it seems that their struggle in learning to write in English as a second language might originate from a diverse range of factors. One of the reasons might be students' lack of familiarity with L2 rules (Zreg 1983), and with their inability to evaluate the cause of their errors (Bataineh and Bataineh 2009). However, transfer, first language (L1) interference and interlanguage effects might be other influential factors affecting their L2 writing (Grami 2012; Al-Yaari, Al Hammadi and Alyami 2013; Heydari and Bagheri 2012; Abdulkareem 2013). The participants' L1 interference influences were examined through the process-oriented-writing approach which was a new experience in their learning to write in English. This approach was supported by peer feedback gained through a review of their drafts. The participants were used to receiving teacher feedback, coming from a didactic teacher-centred learning environment (Rashid-Doubell, Doubell, O'Sullivan and Elmusharaf 2016; Al Wadi and Saravanan 2012; Huijser and Wali 2012; Huijser and Hasan 2012). Nonetheless, the process of peer reviewing, which had them as learner/teachers in the centre of the learning process, was not.

Analysing the participants' drafts over time, a number of grammatical rules were found to continue to pose challenges to them in process-writing, the most common errors being the use of articles, prepositions, punctuation and verb tenses and forms. These errors were found to be largely attributable to L1 interference, a similar finding to that of other researchers studying the writing errors found in Arab ESL learners' writing, notably the work of: Murad and Khalil (2015); Abu-Joudeh Assasfeh, Al-Shaboul and Alshboul (2013); Siddiqui (2015); Al-Bayati (2013); Hamdi (2008); Obeidat (2014); Aldukhayel (2014); Al-Hamdi (2008); Sawalmeh (2013); Mekhlafi (2013); Muftah and Rafik-Galea (2013); Mourssi (2012); Dunlap (2012); Hirvela Nussbaum and Pierson (2012); Alamin and Ahmed (2012); Alhaysony (2012); Jassem (2012); Abushihab, El-Omari and Tobat (2011); Crompton (2011); and Kharma and Hajjaj (1989). In this case-study the Bahraini students' Arabic (L1) seemed to have influenced their ability to learn to write in English as their second language (L2), resulting in the range of errors identified in their writings. The structural and grammatical features of Arabic (L1) differ significantly to that of English (L2), and may therefore have been the root cause of

the negative transfer. The Arabic language, a Semitic language, is a poetic language with a very a complex and unusual morphology that does not match that of English. The writing script direction is exactly the opposite, running from right to left, with a different punctuation system that has little resemblance to the English system, an aspect that is further discussed in Section 6.1.1 on page 204 below.

### **6.1.1 Punctuation**

The most problematic and frequent L1 interference error category faced by the participants in English was punctuation mainly because Arabic has very few punctuation marks and capitalisation does not exist. In the first essays, students rarely used full stops, but instead were found to have a great number of commas. The result was a piece of writing with a continuous flow of narrative and few sentences or paragraphs, ending with one full stop at the end of the essay exactly as they would expect to structure a written piece in Arabic. In keeping with Arabic language conventions, words at the beginning of sentences, proper nouns and the first-person singular were rarely capitalised. Another commonly identified punctuation error in the Polytechnic students' first essays concerned the use of an apostrophe for contractions and possessives, and as well, they did not properly use question marks. These findings matched those of Murad and Khalil (2015); Hirvela Nussbaum and Pierson (2012); Alamin and Ahmed (2012); Abisamra (2003); Sofer and Raimes (2002); and Khrama and Hajjaj (1989); whose combined findings suggest that Arab speakers' punctuation errors are largely produced due to learners' attempts to transfer L1 punctuation knowledge to L2 contexts. However, unlike what Alamin and Ahmed (2012) found, there were no colon or semicolon errors in the Polytechnic students' essays, probably because these punctuation forms are rarely used in Arabic, so there was no interference factor at play in learning how to use these punctuation marks.

### **6.1.2 Verb Forms and Tenses**

Congruent with the findings of Ho and Duong (2015); Aldukhayel (2014); Hamdi (2008); Sawalmeh (2013); Abushihab, El-Omari and Tobat (2011), verb tenses and form errors were amongst the most frequent errors made by Bahraini students in this



case-study. Despite the individual and collective teacher feedback focus in the teaching tutorials on how to address these errors, and consistent highlighting in peer reviews, such errors were found to appear every week across the semester. In particular there were commonly found errors of agreement similar to what other researchers had reported (for example: Muftah and Rafik-Galea [2013]; Sawalmeh [2013]; Hourani [2008]; Al-Buainain [2007]), and errors in the use of the passive voice (Abushihab, El-Omari and Tobat [2011]; Hourani [2008]; Al-Buainain [2007]). The main reasons for the confusion the Polytechnic students faced using verb tenses and forms can be largely attributed to the many differences between the verb systems in Arabic and English, which only have two similar proper tenses which are the present simple and the past simple. Even with those similarities, negative transfer was identified in the participants' use of irregular past forms in which they tended to overgeneralise and add the regular past tense inflection *-ed* to verbs, a finding that might be also related to Arabic not having regular or irregular verbs. A similar finding was also observed by Mourssi (2012).

The present case-study also found that the use of the present simple was challenging to the Bahraini students, a factor not highlighted by other writers. A general finding was the use of the present continuous form of a verb instead of the present simple by the participants especially in essays 1 to 4, a finding that probably had its origins in the fact that a homologous form does not exist in the Arabic language. Hajjaj and Karama (1989) identified the same finding anecdotally, but they provided no empirical data to demonstrate the nature and extent of the problem.

Similar to the findings of Muftah and Rafik-Galea's research (2013), subject-verb agreement was another major obstacle that the Polytechnic participants faced in this category, probably due to the wide range of inflections that show verb agreements with their subjects in person, number and gender in Arabic. The Polytechnic participants seemed to confuse the use of the third person singular inflection *-s* with the plural inflection *-s*, causing a wide range of inflections to either appear or to be neglected.

Another common finding, attributed previously to the work of Gokhale and Sharma (2011), was that some of the Polytechnic participants did not use auxiliary verbs properly, either adding them where they were not supposed to be, or omitting them,

or replacing them with the infinitive form of the verb. These errors were due to the nonexistence of auxiliary verbs in Arabic. In the same vein, as Murad and Khalil (2015) found, the Polytechnic participants in this case-study added the infinitive form of the verb following modals as an overgeneralisation of the use of Arabic modals. Furthermore, the present and past perfect were avoided by the participants and they were mainly confused with the past simple due to the non-existence of the perfect form in Arabic. In Arabic the perfect form is used with the past tense and a time reference, which explains Polytechnic students confusing it with the past simple form. Another faulty occurrence of the perfect forms was found to be their use in blended forms such as using *have, has + simple past or past participle*, a finding congruent with the previous studies conducted by Abu-Joudeh Assasfeh, Al-Shaboul, and Alshboul (2013) and Mourssi (2012).

### 6.1.3 Articles

The participants in the study were challenged by the English (L2) tripartite article system due to the differences and similarities it has compared to the Arabic language (L1) binary system. The Arabic system has one article, which is the equivalent of the definite article *the*, while the English system has definite, indefinite and zero articles. Congruent with the findings of Alamin and Ahmed (2012); Alhaysony (2012); Crompton (2011); Jassem (2012); and Hajjaj and Khrama (1989), the misuse of the L2 articles could be related to (negative) intralingual transfer. The misuse of the definite article, *the*, was common amongst the Polytechnic participants, and it is suggested that this might be because it is the only article that has an equivalent in Arabic. The participants in the Polytechnic case-study tended to overgeneralise and they were found to precede almost all common nouns with the Arabic definite article.

Interlingual transfer was also noticed in the use of the definite article before nouns representing day and night time, and festivals or national and international celebrations as in Arabic. Moreover, some participants struggled using the definite article preceding adjectives in noun phrases in English, a usage that does not necessarily apply in Arabic. The indefinite articles *a* and *an* do not exist in Arabic, and hence this caused confusion, with participants using them instead of the zero or

no article as also identified in studies by Alhaysony (2012); Crompton (2011); and Jassem (2012). The Polytechnic participants seemed to repeat the definite article for co-ordinated nouns as in Arabic, a finding in common with that of Alamin and Ahmed (2012); Alhaysony (2012); Crompton (2011); Hameed and Yasin (2015); Jassem (2012); and Hajjaj and Khrama (1989).

#### **6.1.4 Prepositions**

Prepositions were problematic for Polytechnic ESL learners, as already well detailed in Chapter Four, a finding similar to the findings of Aldukhayel (2014); Khrama and Hajjaj (1989); and Al-Bayati (2013). Indeed prepositional errors were not only one of the most common L1 interference errors but also one that was found to persist to the end of the case-study despite the peer-review intervention, individual and collective teacher feedback tutorials and other support to enhance the accuracy of ESL writing over the duration of the case-study. This might be due to the fact that the prepositional system in English is very complex compared to the Arabic system. In English each preposition can express multiple relations to each preposition. The participants seemed to use incorrect prepositions in an attempt to find match with an Arabic preposition. Also, some participants did not use prepositions where they were not essential in Arabic and in other cases they forced them into their sentences to match structures in Arabic. The same finding was reached by Al-Bayati (2013). Another faulty use of prepositions was their use in English phrasal verbs, which have no equivalences in L1. The meaning of, most if not all, phrasal verbs cannot be predicted and thus the confusion increased causing the Polytechnic participants to produce even more incorrect prepositional forms.

### **6.2 The Effects of Peer-Reviewing**

On a positive note, the findings of this case-study, as outlined in Chapter Four, generally showed development in the production of correct forms in the above-mentioned categories, indicating an enhancement in the language awareness of the Polytechnic students over time. This emerging conclusion was supported by an evaluation of the outcomes across the process-oriented writing and peer reviewing

process, as discussed in Chapter Five. The four cases discussed in Chapter Five showed that the development of written accuracy varied according to the timing of the development of the particular essays, and when they were produced. The findings of Chapter Four showed that the participants found prepositions problematic. While this was not always reflected in their written productions, students' language awareness, language development and knowledge of correct forms increased in the four most frequent L1 interference error categories, articles, punctuation, prepositions and verb tenses and forms, over the course of the semester. However, there was some variability in students' interlanguage and this can be linked to the impacts and deficiencies of peer reviewing as a process as well as several ecological factors which include learning styles, cultural aspects and interpersonal skills.

Peer reviewing seemed to be useful in the L2 writing classroom for Bahraini ESL learners. As Lee, Mak and Burns (2015); Trinh and Yen (2013); and Zhang, Song, Shen and Huang (2014), also found, the implementation of the peer reviewing intervention seemed to have generally improved the writing of ESL learners in the most frequent error categories: articles, punctuation, verb tenses and forms, and prepositions. However, unlike what Lee, Mak and Burns (2015) found, it was not necessarily reflected in development in the feedback providers' writings. This may have been because the study was restricted in scope to only one academic semester due to the structuring of the Bahrain Polytechnic foundation programmes. Changes in learning behaviours take time to bed in, according to AlKoofi (2016). However, there may also be other factors at play.

The process-oriented writing approach is primarily based on providing feedback, allowing language learners to work with their peers writing drafts in a collaborative learning atmosphere as well as working with their teachers. The participants in the Bahrain Polytechnic case-study worked together through collaborative negotiated feedback where they interacted and exchanged feedback on the surface level of their L2 writing. Peer collaboration and scaffolding by peers seemed to be useful in this process-oriented scenario where the participants' writing went through cycles of drafts and revisions exchanged amongst peers. As also found in the application of a process-oriented approach by Khaliq and Khaliq (2015); Chen (2016); Zhang, Song, Shen and Huang (2014); Nicol, Thomson and Breslin (2014); Wo, Chu and Li (2013); Rouhi and Azizan (2013); and Keh (1990), at Bahrain Polytechnic peer

reviewing and teacher feedback seemed to have contributed to the development of the participants' written accuracy. Although the participants did not progress identically through the process-oriented writing to achieve the same level within the semester timeframe, by the end of the investigation they appeared to have developed a greater awareness of the correct forms they should produce.

The findings from the peer reviewing process indicated that the participants faced difficulties in the four most frequent L1 interference error categories leading to them producing errors. However, these challenges did not affect their ability to identify the same errors for their peers in their reviewer role. This might relate to the fact that some participants *structurally scaffolded* at the macro and meso levels while peer reviewing explaining their ability to identify their peers' errors. However, when writing their own drafts as authors, the same structure they identified was dismantled. In alignment with van Lier (2004) and Forman (2008), the participants' scaffolding seemed to be learner-driven, based on their own initiative. Using the work of Hyland (2007); Donato (2000); and Ohta (2000) to assist in interpretation of the results of the present case-study, it would seem that the pedagogical scaffolding produced high proportions of correct forms by the Polytechnic participants because of the effects of two main factors: firstly students' interaction with their peers and secondly, teacher interventions. The continuum of support for development of writing skills as shown through the written tasks came from the individual and teacher feedback offered in the tutor-led grammar tutorials, formal scheduled language laboratory activities and communication with the teacher and the peers, all of which helped in gradually developing a greater awareness of written language. This developmental progress could also be explained through Wood, Bruner and Ross' (1976), concept of pedagogical scaffolding, where the learners normally help each other learn how to do something through observation and interactions, so that they can do it again more easily and accurately in the future. The Polytechnic participants in this research may have benefited from observing each other's drafts in terms of the correct and incorrect forms their peers produced. Polytechnic students' interactions, their answering of peers' queries, may also have been a contributing factor affecting the decrease in error rate and the increase in more correct forms over time.

In summary, then, throughout the peer reviewing process initiated in this case-study, the focus was on the Polytechnic participants' grammatical accuracy with the aim of enhancing it and increasing the proportion of their correct grammar production as proven possible by the previous studies conducted by Ho and Duong (2014); Storch (2011); and Weir (1988). The Polytechnic participants' grammatical accuracy developed generally, a finding that not only related to the effects of peer reviewing but also to the contextualised and planned grammar instruction and error feedback in the English language laboratories, as well as individual and collective teacher feedback offered in the grammar tutorials led by the teacher. Bitchener and Ferris (2011) and Lunsford and Lunsford (2008) state that learners make a connection to their own errors in writing due to the organised grammar support offered; DiCamilla and Anton (1997) reinforced the importance of repetition, which allows learners to recognise and use language structures and forms for themselves as well as in work with their peers. However, the participants in this study did not conclusively demonstrate the benefit of repetition; some continued to produce recurrent errors while they could identify these same errors in the work of their peers. What this shows is that some degree of learning has occurred, but it suggests that a greater time period for repetition of learning acquired is required to embed thoroughly students' new skills in and knowledge of English language writing.

The process of peer reviewing in this research study was carried out in a supposedly homogeneous (same-ability) group composition, participants having been tested and reported to be at the A (CEFR) level, albeit although, with some at A1 and others at A2. More written accuracy and development might have been achieved if the participants had been at two more greatly diverse levels, according to some research carried out by Wiedmann et al. (2012); Webb, Nemer and Zuniga (2002); and Hooper and Hannafin (1988). These studies found that less competent students (i.e. those with low linguistic competence) may learn better in a heterogeneous (mixed-ability) group, where there are role models for more accurate ESL usage. It has been suggested that cognitive distance between two proficiency levels (Mugny and Doise 1978) or the task difficulty (Webb, Nemer and Zuniga 2002), may be the factors that allow less competent students to learn from the more competent ones. Another reason in support of a heterogeneous composition is suggested by Hogan and Tudge (1999), who call on Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) to explain that the mixed-ability groups result in peers observing conflicting perspectives that

result in the challenge of all engaging in learning to resolve these. In this way both the lower ability ESL learners and their more competent peers learn, as they co-construct new knowledge together. However, heterogeneous group members might face challenges interacting with each other as peers, Hogan and Tudge (1999) maintain, resulting in communication challenges. Such communication challenges were observed in the participants of the Bahrain Polytechnic case-study, even though they were within the same (A) CEFR level and therefore there were smaller gaps in their level of English. The discussion in Chapter Five showed a pattern of miscommunication in Case 3 and Case 4 which might be explained by more competent peers (A2) CEFR finding it challenging to communicate with the less competent ones (A1) CEFR. Thus, the A2 peers might have known what the A1 peers needed, but the A2 might have had difficulty adjusting to an appropriate level and adjusting as the A1 improved over time. The proportion of correct forms were much higher for the A2 (more competent) participants than the A1 (less competent) participants, indicating that the A2 peers might have benefited more from collaboration, a finding that is in-line with that of Leonard (2001). Generally, all participants in their peer reviewing seemed to have benefited irrespective of their L2 writing proficiency, leading to a growth in surface level accuracy as in Hanjani and Li (2014).

The peer-review effects on learning to write lie within the microsystem of influences identified by Coutts and Dismal's (2013) work on Bahrain Polytechnic, but as the discussion of the findings in Chapters Four and Five has already indicated, the developments in learning to write may not always be attributable to the peer-reviewing processes; other factors may be at play, and these are discussed further in the following section.

### **6.3 The Effects of Other Factors in Learning to Write**

Using ecological systems theory, Coutts (2007) showed that learners develop through a complex system of relationships affected by multiple levels of the surrounding environment. Based on Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, learners develop through "a complex *system* of relationships affected by multiple levels of the surrounding environment" (Berk 2001, cited in Coutts 2007). Bronfenbrenner (2005) describes five environmental systems which are connected to

each other, which are the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem and chronosystem layers. These are discussed thoroughly in the sections below.

From this ecological perspective, the Bahraini students' variable L1 interference errors might be due to interlanguage as a set of styles that could be used in diverse social settings. The participants' variable written accuracy might possibly be accounted for by a variety of factors at different levels: in the microsystem, social interactions with their peers in the peer reviewing process; by observing their peers' writings and errors; reflecting on each other's writings and working together, providing help and scaffolding. But there are also many other factors at more distant levels that also have influence on their writing development. The ecological framework discussed in Chapter Two is used here as a unifying theme to discuss the factors influencing the development of writing for ESL students in Bahrain.

### **6.3.1 Culture and Religion**

Culture and religion are inextricably intertwined. The cultural attitudes and philosophies of the students in this case-study are a result of the environment they live in, of the microsystem and the macrosystem influences. The restrictions the participants' cultural customs and religious rules as they relate to mixed-gender interactions, and setting the teacher as an authority figure who is expected to provide knowledge all the time, have been passed on through generations. The macrosystem's observable and physical characteristics are reflected in the exosystem, the social structures and events in the learners' environment that affect the learners' language development. Unlike western society where there is a division between religion and culture, interaction between religion and culture in the Bahraini Muslim society is seamless. Therefore, the effects of these two are represented and discussed together in this discussion, which looks at the influence of religion and culture on the development of students' writing.

In this case-study of the development of writing among Bahraini ESL learners, fluctuations in the nature and number of identified errors could not be explained by the effect of peer reviews as shown in Chapter Four and Five. Is it that these Muslim



students were influenced by their culture and religion to maintain the Arabic structure of writing and hence the transfer of errors? For example, could the variability demonstrated by some students' essays over the duration of the study be due to the fact that the participants were bound within the compassionate living values stressed by religion and culture in the Middle Eastern communities. Almost all students' written English improved over time then suddenly in certain essays and certain grammar categories, the error rate increased and went back to what it was at the start of the study, a perplexing result- was this because of the effects of the holy occasions and family gathering students participated in in the intervening period? Such chronosystem level effects warrant further research, as indicated in Coutts (2007), who showed that more drop outs followed holidays. During these occasions, the old L1 structures are reinforced instead of the new learned structure of L2.

Another reason for the fluctuations in the nature and number of identified errors may have been the lack of effectiveness of some peer reviews. In this Bahraini case-study, students might have avoided signaling to their peers all the errors they could have identified to retain harmony between peers them in accordance with the values stressed by the Quran. Carson and Nelson (1996) reached the same conclusion with their Chinese students, who tended to withhold their critical comments to preserve group harmony or maintain a degree of authority. The reflective journal for almost all the cases (sample in Appendix C), showed that, at the beginning of the case-study almost all peers felt threatened, anxious and uncomfortable in showing their peers their writings, a finding that appeared to contradict what Rollinson (2005) found. In this case-study of Bahraini students, it appeared that this feeling changed over time and students did not mention it again, an example of a chronosystem effect. This change over time may be related to students' realisation that their peers had similar grammar and language difficulties, leading them to be less apprehensive and more confident over the duration of the study, a conclusion that is supported by work with Saudi students (Grami 2010) as well.

### **6.3.2 Educational System**

The macrosystem in the ecological framework includes the educational beliefs that are underpinned by the broader historical, social and economic values of Bahraini

society, including the educational reforms as outlined in Chapter Two where it is explained that this case-study was conducted at the beginning of the nation-wide educational reforms which included the teaching and learning of ESL in public schools.

The Bahraini educational system is based on a teacher-centred didactic approach which evolved from the religious teaching practices evident over many centuries within Quranic schools, where the Mutawa'a, as the master of learning, taught the word of Allah through getting the children to rote learn it by repetition and vocalisation (chanting). The students in this case-study came from an education system where what they should know was dictated by the teacher, and they then attempted to memorise the required content in order to pass examinations at the end of each schooling level.

Their acquisition of Arabic as an L1 oral language, as discussed in Chapter Two, had an effect on the participants' L2 learning development of writing. The participants had gone through the conventional content-heavy didactic learning experience for over twelve years in public schools which was purely based on the product-oriented writing approach, so the implementation of the process-oriented writing approach was a paradigm shift in terms of learning for the participants. When they enrolled in Bahrain Polytechnic, the participants in this case-study experienced a new teaching and learning approach illustrating the effects of the microsystem on ESL writing development. The Polytechnic curriculum is implemented in a student-centred manner where students were expected to write multiple drafts instead of one product. They are expected to take responsibility for their own learning and in this case-study they were also expected to take responsibility for the learning of their peer, which was a huge shift in the way they were brought up. They were expected to autonomously share their drafts and feedback through peer reviewing as a process. The participants were used to producing writings only as summative assessments as per the demands of the language teachers (Rashid-Doubell, Doubell, O'Sullivan and Elmusharaf 2016; Al Wadi and Saravanan 2012; Huijser and Wali 2012; Huijser and Hasan 2012). The concept of formative assessments where no grade was given to students' work did not exist for the participants. Throughout their previous learning journey, everything the participants submitted went towards their GPA. Students' notion of teacher feedback was restricted to receiving a score and a general remark

indicating how well they achieved the task like ‘very good, well done or excellent’. Grades were basically the level of achievement that the teachers believed the students were at in a teacher-centred classroom. Grades had always been what really mattered to students in the end due to cultural and societal demands in the Bahraini community and this was what they were expecting based on their perceptions collected in the pre-questionnaire. Also, workload was an influential factor that had a negative impact on the participants. The reflective journal showed the impression of a few participants of the process of peer reviewing as time consuming, as was found by Rouhi and Azizan (2013) and Rollinson (2005).

Teacher feedback was also an issue for some participants in the Polytechnic case-study. As evidenced by excerpts from the reflective journal and reinforced by the results of the pre-course and post-course questionnaires, especially in case 4 and case 6, it seemed that some peers preferred and demanded to receive teacher feedback instead of peer feedback, with the belief that it was the teacher’s responsibility to review their writings not their peers- see Appendix C. This might be related to the authoritative role of teachers in the Middle East and the high expectations of teachers, who are looked up to respectfully as the keepers of all knowledge and authority figures in the traditional teacher-centered classrooms, which was one of the issues identified in the teacher’s reflections on some students preferring receive teacher feedback instead of peer feedback. This conclusion is supported by the feedback from the students selected for attention in Chapter Five, who did not believe that their peers could provide effective feedback or even detect and correct errors, a finding similarly reported in the work of Li (2009), Sengupta (1998) and Nilson (2003).

These findings are now considered and analysed in light of the learning theories outlined in Chapter Two, where it was explained that behaviourists hypothesised that learning is a change in behaviour caused by an outside stimulus, based on the key principles of reward and punishment. In this case-study, peer review could be seen in both these ways: feedback as a form of rewarding the learner; and feedback as punishment since it indicates the participants’ errors, expecting the behaviour not to be repeated. However, behaviourism fails to account for learning that occurs in the absence of reinforcement. As shown in Chapter Five, some students (e.g. Zahra, Reem, Fatima) demonstrated learning in writing with grammatical errors declining

although they were hardly receiving any peer feedback. Cognitivism proposes that learning occurs through mental activities such as memory and reflections of participants. Thus, any change in the process of acquiring knowledge leads to a change in the participants' understanding and consequently their behaviour. Thus, the students' increased proportion of correct forms could be related to the fact that they demonstrated the information they learned. Throughout the peer reviewing process, based on cognitivists, more competent students might have transferred knowledge to less competent students who might have received the information, taken it on board, saved it and linked it to the existing information they already had, indexed it, and then retrieved it whenever needed from their memory. From the constructivists' point of view, the participants' involvement observing, processing and interpreting the information they received is where their learning happened. The participants might have learned to produce more correct forms through simulating their own ideas and constructing their own knowledge. Therefore, the participants might have constructed their own knowledge shown in the proportion of correct forms due to their involvement, observation and reaction to the information they received in the grammar activities in the language laboratory as well as their involvement in the teacher-led sessions and the peer reviewing process.

Experientialism draws on the participants' personal experience being authors and reviewers which could have possibly improved their written accuracy observed in the increasing proportion of correct forms in their written performance. The participants' prior experience and accumulative experience throughout the course could be observed in the skills they demonstrated and applied in either their own writing or their reviews for their peers. Feedback might have refined their written performance and ability to apply the accurate grammatical structures in the essays they sequentially produced over the course of the semester. Considering the social approach, the participants were exposed to scaffolding through receiving teacher feedback and peer feedback. The participants' increased production of correct forms might be due to (a) their interaction and communication with their more competent peers, the teacher and other classmates, and (b) the peer reviewing and teacher feedback processes and the materials they worked with. According to Vygotsky (1980), their interaction might have enabled them to extend themselves to higher levels of cognition and produce more correct forms over time. The lack of trust in the peer's feedback as non-authoritative individuals in a teaching and learning atmosphere

might be a contributing factor explaining the slow and not up-to-the standard development of their written accuracy in the L1 interference grammar categories. The participants seemed to lack readiness to accept the new teaching and learning method and to be more autonomous self-directed learners instead of being spoon-fed in the traditional teaching atmospheres they were used to.

### **6.3.3 Family, Friends and Employment Opportunities**

The microsystem includes the environment where the learner lives and interacts. The most proximal L1 interference setting can be seen to include the learners' family, friends and peers who are considered as the available social agents. The participants interacted, had relationships and active roles as children, friends and students in their environments. Coutts (2007) states that if the microsystem is considered as a fundamental focus of influence in the learners' life, the mesosystem, the exosystem and the macrosystem can be visualised as its surrounding circles.

A number of deficiencies were observed during the peer reviewing process in the L2 writing classroom, which were related to the participants' family background. Some of the participants (Amina, Abdulrahman) were influenced by their parents who had high expectations of them directly joining the degree programme. It was observed by the teacher/researcher meeting and talking to the parents that the denial of students being enrolled in the course stemmed from their parents' belief that they should be at a higher level. Students seemed to lack initiative and motivation due to parental influences on them (see section 2.2.2 on page 25). Would it make a difference if parents were invited in and convinced of their children's need to do the course? Other students (Zahra, Hanan, Naderah, Abdulrahman and Bader) were motivated to perform highly in the course to meet their families' expectations of them passing the Academic Bridging Course and moving to their chosen degree programmes with hopes to graduate and support their families financially. While some students were very much influenced by their parents, two students (Fatima M and Mahmood) were least interested in what their parents planned for them. Both were forced to enroll at the Polytechnic by their parents and consequently did not fully accomplish many tasks of the course and demonstrated the least interest in doing any activity. The power of parents in the case-study of Bahraini students is influential and there could

also be consequences of failing as indicated in Fatima M's and Mahmood's cases. Being family centric is an intergenerational cultural phenomenon in Bahraini society (Al Daylami et al. 2012). Families clearly influenced the students' choices and reactions towards their learning. This ecological factor seemed to have affected the pedagogical expectations of the process developing students' written accuracy in the specified time of the course. This warrants further research.

As in Rubin (2006); Liu and Hansen (2002); and Paulus (1999), the participants came from different backgrounds (e.g. working class, middle class, religious families, liberal families) with a diverse range of expectations. The peers in this case-study were matched by the teacher based on students' L2 levels and personalities. No consideration was given to students who were friends prior to the start of the study. Some peers showed a harmonious collaborative relationship throughout the case-study such as sub-case 1 and 2 while others were prone to communicative clashes and anxiety especially in case 3 and case 5. Through the teacher observations in the initial stages of the peer reviewing process, students' seemed to be reluctant to share their individual drafts with their peers and were reluctant to consider the peers' feedback in writing their draft 2. This was clearly observed in the cases of Fatima M and Asma, and Fatima and Mahmood, where the peers seemed to have difficulty dealing with each other and sharing their writings (see Appendix C). This might be partly due to the cultural norms of group clusters in Bahraini society where people with the same backgrounds (family descendants, sects, friends of family) would cluster together and work in harmony abiding by the norms of their clans. Would it have been better if the students were to choose who they wanted to work with? This suggests further research and investigation.

The mesosystem involves relations between microsystems and it consists of the network of social systems surrounding and interacting with the developing person. It includes the links between the participants' contexts in which their relationships are constructed to be either positive or negative (Coutts 2007). In this case-study of Bahraini students, it appeared that parents' expectations of the participants and the public system's expectation of getting skilled employees, for example, have affected the participants' language learning development. The participants' family expectations as well as the competitive job market in Bahrain were contributing

factors in having the students (Zahra, Hanan, Naderah, Abdulrahman and Bader) focused on developing their skills, passing the course, joining the degree programmes with the aim to get a proper job in the market and financially supporting their families. This warrants further research and investigation.

#### **6.3.4 Motivation**

Motivation is a complex term which includes cognitive factors (Kessen 2013 in Mischel 2013), social and cultural factors (Kessen 2013 in Mischel 2013; Ushioda 2011), personal and situational differences (Gardner 2013; Dörnyei and Csizér 2006; Belmechri and Hummel 1998). The details of the motivational theory were discussed in section 2.2.2 on page 25. A number of observations related to these factors were noted in the sample.

From the social and cultural aspects as indicated in Piaget's motivational theory, other individuals associated with the learners such as parents are influential to learners' motivation (Kessen 2013 in Mischel 2013; Ushioda 2011). Piaget believes that parents' influences on the learners' cognitive development could work as reinforcing agents or as problems or posers of problems to be solved (ibid). This aligns with the social, familial and cultural pressure the sample faced in their context. The students' Bahraini society tends to affect their motivation and consequently shape their approach to learning. A number of students (Zahra, Hanan, Naderah, Abdulrahman and Bader) were highly motivated to meet the expectations of their families by passing the Academic Bridging Course and moving to their chosen degree programmes with hopes to graduate and support their families financially. However, the parents of a few other students had a negative impact on students' motivation to learn and develop their skills. Fatima M and Mahmood, for example, were demotivated as pursuing their graduate studies was their parents' choice and not theirs. Reem and Amina were demotivated at the start of the course because of the disappointments and non-acceptance of their parents that their children did not qualify for direct degree entry. The teacher felt that it would have made a big difference in students' motivation if their parents had accepted and acknowledged the learning outcomes the course could bring to their children's learning. Another angle where students' motivation could be justified is through

Gardner's (2010) instrumental motivation (e.g. employment, high salary, academic achievement and passing assessments).

Students' motivation to raise their written ESL accuracy in this course was also based on their belief that it will grant them employment as it is their only path to get into a degree programme that will offer them employment. Students' motivation to pursue this course successfully also relates to students' achievement goals and beliefs as also found in MacArthur, Philippakos and Graham (2016). Furthermore, the teacher observed that the more correct forms students were able to produce and the more identified errors they could trace for their peers, the higher their writing motivation as in Waller and Papi's (2017) findings.

The findings of Zhang, Song, Shen and Huang (2014) and Kizaki and Ross (2011) showed that peer feedback is influential to learners' motivation. This was observed in the peers' (pair Amina Hashmiya, the pair Hanan and Zahra as well as the pair Reem and Naderah) collaboration, engagement and achievement. In addition to peer reviewing, the teachers' Written Corrective Feedback seemed to have a useful. Also, students approached the teacher continuously to explain and further detail the grammatical aspects behind their errors as highlighted in the Written Corrective Feedback they received. They were motivated to know showing that perceived the WCF as an opportunity for learning as aligned with the findings of Goldstein (2005).

A special case in the sample representing personal and situational differences as in (Ushioda 2011; Gardner 2010; Dörnyei and Csizér 2006; Belmechri and Hummel 1998) was Asma's case. She was demotivated due to personal loss reasons at the beginning of the intervention. Having the knowledge about her emotional and personal status, the teacher mentored and coached her throughout the semester to overcome the emotional shock she had suffered from. Asma's status changed gradually during the intervention and her self-esteem and her dedication to write better improved.

Motivational aspects had great positive and negative influence on students' L2 writing development which warrants further research.



## **6.4 Research Questions Revisited**

This study investigated the development of written accuracy with a particular focus on L1 interference errors made by Bahraini learners of English in their foundation year at tertiary level. The goal was to explore the impact of a process-oriented approach to the teaching of writing, which included peer-reviewing as well as individual and collective teacher feedback, on this development. Following a mixed-methods methodology, the study examined a collection of students' writings and revisions, as well as peer-reviews, aiming to identify the most common interference errors in students' writings and to evaluate the effectiveness of a process-oriented approach and peer-reviewing in resolving L1 interference errors. The three specific research questions will be addressed below.

### **6.4.1 Question 1: What are the Most Common Grammatical Errors Arab Students make in ESL Writing?**

Many studies have revealed how Arab students' L1 negatively interferes in ESL writing (Al-Yaari, Al Hammadi and Alyami 2013; Heydari and Bagheri 2012; Abdulkareem 2013). The contrasting forms between Arabic and English have been indicated as possible contributors to producing incorrect forms in L2 writing (Bataineh and Bataineh 2009; Al-Yaari, Al Hammadi and Alyami 2013; Heydari and Bagheri 2012; Abdulkareem 2013; Sheehan 2002; Grami 2012). The findings of the current study revealed that the most common grammatical errors committed by Arab ESL learners involve articles, prepositions, verb tenses and forms and punctuation, which are the same errors indicated in the literature yet more exacerbated due to the structure of the Arabic language. Arabic has a totally different structure to English for its written cursive-scripted texts read from right to left with no distinction between upper and lower case and a loose set of rules for punctuation.

The different forms in the structures of Arabic and English have been identified as possible contributors to producing incorrect forms in L2 writing. Also, the poor English linguistic knowledge influenced participants' written productions and made them depend on their L1 grammatical accuracy knowledge leading to producing

incorrect forms in L2. The findings in Chapter Five explained that the participants largely produced more correct forms than errors by the end of the semester although variations were noticed and no linear progression was identified at any level. Students varied in their linguistic development in all essays and across the grammar categories. No identical pattern was observed amongst students, nor was there a structured development noticed at any level. The most significant finding was that students progressed differently at their own rate, pace and approach.

One of the things that triggered this finding was the observation of the error and correct proportions after each grammar tutorial. The grammar tutorials addressing students' errors were given on a weekly-basis on the most frequently occurring errors in students' final drafts. These tutorials involved individual and collective teacher feedback and they were also supported with Sanako grammar exercises which provide further individual grammar practice in the weekly language laboratory sessions. Some students continued producing the same errors in the weeks following, despite tutorials addressing the same errors over and over again for some time. However, students' writings showed that they were capable of producing the same forms correctly. Observing the error and correct proportions after each grammar tutorial, it was found that students' errors did not necessarily disappear or even decline nor did it mean that they produced more correct forms over time. Some learning took place despite students producing the errors at higher percentages in some cases. Variations were identified indicating the learning curve in each grammar category for each student, but students' written productions showed that they were capable of producing the same forms correctly. Many factors contributed to this finding, as shown by reference to the ecological diagram, which brings together all the contributing levels of influencing factors, accounting for the diversity in students' metalinguistic awareness and the fact that learning does not occur in a linear fashion. Learning the linguistic forms of the most common grammatical errors Arab students make in ESL writing (e.g. articles, prepositions, verb tenses and forms and punctuation) seems to have taken place developmentally but not linearly as indicated in the variations noticed amongst the participants.

## **6.4.2 Question 2: To What Extent can the Process-Oriented Writing Approach with the Focus on Peer Reviewing in ESL Resolve L1 Interference Errors?**

L1 interference in L2 writing is a socio-cultural challenge affecting Bahraini students' written productions. Students' multiple written drafts and questionnaire responses in the Bahrain Polytechnic case-study showed that students acknowledged their poor written abilities as well as their inadequate knowledge and use of English grammar. The process-oriented writing approach and more specifically the peer reviewing process potentially nurture language development (Lundstrom and Baker 2009). Students were exposed to a variety of language learning materials supporting the peer reviewing process in the study. They were also exposed to their peers' written drafts from which they could reflect on their own work, learn how to use new grammar forms or learn not to produce certain incorrect forms.

A non-linear learning technique was observed in students' written development through the process-oriented writing approach and the peer reviewing process. Student reviewers accurately identified a proportion of errors for their peers, inaccurately identified some errors which were correct forms, and ignored some other errors. A large body of evidence shows that the neglected errors were not necessarily in the linguistic categories students were weak at. Students were selective in what they highlighted for their peers for some reason. Students' inaccurate identification of errors was not solely due to being incompetent in these grammar categories as they were capable of producing them correctly in their drafts. This might be due to the lack of confidence in their language abilities critiquing peers' writings (Sluijsmans, Moerkerke, Van Merriënboer and Dochy 2001).

Whether students had or had not improved in the error categories, the proportion of correct forms, the errors identified correctly or wrongly and the unidentified ones varied across the categories. Not having improved in a grammar category did not necessarily mean not noticing the errors. On the contrary, students correctly identified errors, even ones which were even proven to be problematic for them, in their peers' essays. Studying these errors in relation to the error taxonomies discussed in the literature review, different taxonomies may relate to each type of error identified in this study. The participants' errors in passive voice, auxiliary verbs

and conjunctions are relevant to Dulay and Krashen's (1982) linguistic taxonomy. The word order, verb, articles, preposition and the inflection in subject verb agreement relate to surface strategy taxonomy in which the surface structures are changed by having them either omitted, added, mis-ordered, mis-formed or over-used. As found in this study, the use of the definite article *the*, for example, is an over-use surface structure error by which an overgeneralisation is applied due to L1 interference.

Additionally, mis-ordering the sentence structure is another type of error observed by the surface structure taxonomy as the examples in Chapter Four showed. The wrongly and correctly noticed errors showed that the participants' L1 not only interfered positively in L1 but also negatively which might be due to the fact that students' L1 has similar language items to L2 by which the acquisition of these items is easy or of limited difficulty to the participants. Examples of such positive transfer is the use of the preposition 'in' in Arabic and English as well as the use of the definite article 'the' in some conditions as explained in the literature review as well as Chapter Four (Section 4.1 on page 109).

One of the reasons why the participants continued producing certain errors despite the fact that they were able to correctly use and identify the errors for their peers might be fossilization as introduced by Brown (1980). Thus, although they were exposed to the intervention teaching and learning methods (peer reviewing process and teacher feedback), they continued committing some errors showing that their interlanguage might have not developed fully or it might have possibly been fossilized.

The literature did not reveal or identify a model that suited the peculiarity of the local cultural context of ESL learning in Bahrain. However, the taxonomies discussed above had elements that are applicable. Writing in ESL, it seems, is a much more complex skill than a lot of writers give it credit for.

First language interference in second language writing is a socio-cultural challenge challenging Bahraini students and influencing their written productions. The questionnaire responses as well as the multiple written drafts indicate students' acknowledgement of their poor written abilities as well as their insufficient knowledge and use of English grammar. Implementing the peer reviewing process

through a process-oriented writing approach theoretically supports language development. Being exposed to a wide range of language learning materials supporting the peer reviewing process in the study, students interacted and reflected on their own work, learned how to use new grammar forms or developed some awareness of how not to produce some inaccurate forms.

Non-linearity and variability in learning techniques were clearly observed in students' written development over the peer reviewing process via the process-oriented writing approach. Student reviewers, whether more competent or less competent students, correctly identified a proportion of errors for their peers or partners in the process, incorrectly identified some errors which were correct forms, and neglected some other incorrect forms which should have been corrected. It is observed that students selected what they identified as errors for their peers, which indicates that some learning took place through the process of peer reviewing. Students' inaccurate identification of errors also indicated that learning was taking place in a trial and error form. Students' ability to produce the same forms accurately in their own drafts is evidence that learning was taking place but once again not systematically. The reason for students' incorrect identification may also be due to the lack of confidence in their language abilities critiquing peers' writings or maybe other ecological factors in their surroundings.

With the observed increase in correct forms produced, it is found that students' linguistic skills were enhanced and they had the ability to accurately produce more correct grammatical forms at the end of the case-study with the ability to correct their own errors more. The process of peer-reviewing can be seen to have enhanced students' learning in this case-study, in that, by the end of the semester most students were able to identify errors relatively correctly, in the writing of others. They were not, however, capable after only one semester, of writing accurately, with a total absence of errors. This suggests not only is more time needed to see the effects of peer-review, but also it might mean that a variety of supports is required.

### 6.4.3 Question 3: What are the Implications for Teaching Writing to Arabic Speaking Students?

The researcher conducted action research prior and after the research study utilising peer reviewing and process-oriented writing in her ESL classrooms in the same Arabic context. The first case was implemented with 26 freshmen Medical students in 2007 at the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland- Medical University of Bahrain. Each student was offered a laptop as part of the programme which laid the way to implement process-oriented writing and peer reviewing through computer-mediated communication via <http://123.writeboard.com/> (see Appendix F). The results showed that even though the development of written accuracy varied according to students and essay types, students' language awareness and knowledge of correct forms generally increased in the course of the semester (Wali and Blin 2009).

In another action research in 2009, the researcher used '*wikispaces.com*' as a collaborative online learning environment where students can learn how to write in a process-oriented writing approach. A fully-designed writing package was created to match the objectives of the course and to engage students while learning writing online. The subjects of the research were 12 Bahraini ESL students in a pre-degree programme. Students were granted a page each to write their assigned tasks. Each student shared a virtual room with another peer to practise peer reviewing and offer feedback on their writing. The website had colour-coded features showing the changes made by each peer in addition to indicating the time and date for the changes (See Appendix G). The results indicated that not only did students find the learning engaging and amusing but also their errors decreased towards the end of the course.

The findings of this study could have several implications for teaching writing to Arabic speaking students. To start with, ESL writing teachers need to understand their students' written abilities and levels prior to the course so that proper training and scaffolding is prepared to address their weaknesses and language needs. The *Oxford Online Placement Test* was useful to identify the overall level of students, but it did not identify the writing skill needs for each student. The first draft of the case-study was useful in diagnosing what was essential to address for each student in terms of written language support. Learners do not learn at the same pace or rate,

which should be considered in teaching English writing classes. One way of getting better accuracy results for students could be considering the ecological factors. Also, a longer period of practice for the process of peer reviewing may be useful to achieve more language improvement and more L1 interference awareness by learners in the Bahraini context. Implementing all the relevant aspects of the case-study's writing model requires more time and effort dedicated towards students' writing needs which might be rejected by teachers due to their workload.

ESL curricula in the Arab world should take into account the challenges associated with the skill of writing. A shift from the product-oriented writing approach to a more focused process-oriented writing approach in L2 is crucial. Not only would this allow students to be able to plan their L2 writing with more focus, but it would also allow the opportunity for students to explore the writing topic in depth through the revision processes by editing the writing. Furthermore, exploring the peer reviewing process in teaching L2 has the potential to develop students' written language skills. Students would cooperate, observe and reflect on their writing skills as well as their peers allowing more language awareness to develop.

It seemed that some L2 linguistic forms impeded students from exploring more advanced content-related and organisation-related aspects in their writings which was witnessed in their recurring errors, e.g. prepositions, until the end of the case-study. Writing teachers need to consider addressing L1 interference errors occurring in students' written productions, as by being aware of the source of the problem they can make students more conscious of not producing the same forms. The student participants in the study seemed to have an 'Aha!' moment every time the comparison between L1 and L2 was made.

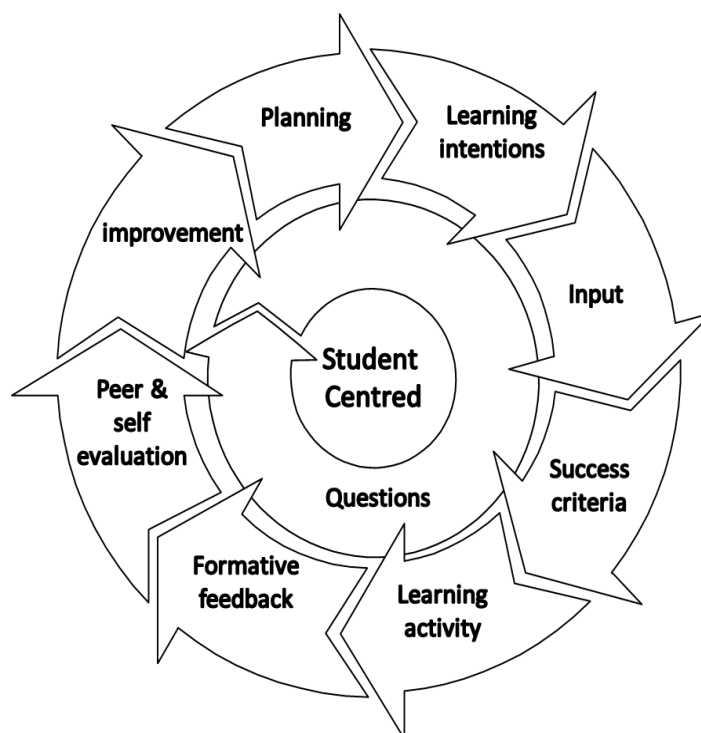
One of the noteworthy implications of this research study is that L2 writing courses in government schools should mirror what is expected from students in foundation programmes at universities. Producing error-free writings and working collaboratively and cooperatively on tasks is essential at any foundation programme. Also, more coordination is desired between third-level writing courses and at least secondary school writing courses in Bahrain through cross-organisational cooperation. This could be achieved as part of the present educational reform by getting the ESL specialists at the Ministry of Education and its stakeholders develop

a strategic plan with a specific objective to enhance Bahraini ESL learners writing skills. A quality assurance national drive is required to encourage and authorise proper communication between university ESL teachers and secondary school ESL teachers. This would give teachers the opportunity to discuss the writing challenges encountered by their students, determine the grounds of these problems and suggest possible solutions to help their students write L2 properly. Reinforcing the benefits of written revisions and feedback is useful and could be disseminated through the QQAET yearly conference where ESL teachers could be encouraged to work on investigating the effectiveness of feedback and revision strategies in enhancing Arab ESL learners' writing skills and promulgating the findings to all stakeholders.

A new peer-reviewing process model which suits the Bahraini educational context with all the factors that influence it would be of great use in the ESL writing classrooms. In order to achieve this, the teaching and learning cycle of ESL writing needs to have specific elements that are integrated and mutually supportive of the process of writing rather than have discrete effects. These elements include planning for the case in hand and designing the learning objectives which will be implemented through a range of learning and teaching input materials. The success criteria for any learning achievement have to be set in advance and surely prior to implementing the learning activity. The next step would be offering formative feedback to the participants and having them and their peers evaluate each other's productions. The last stage is stepping outside the whole cycle of learning and observing what went right and wrong. Improvement is essential to have better learning outcomes in the end. Coutts's (2015) diagram in Figure 6.1 on page 229 below illustrates how these elements can be an integral, embedded part of the learning and teaching cycle in a student-centered approach. In order to achieve successful outcomes, enough time should be dedicated to each and every step in classroom practice to allow development of the specific skills addressed. As found in the case-study, the development of the participants' written accuracy took more time for some students. Also, in the case of the study in hand, all the learning elements existed except for the improvement aspect which was outside the scope of this thesis.



**Figure 6.1 Learning and Teaching Assessment Cycle**



There is a need to train teachers to be more committed to students and their learning. They need to be motivated to implement new teaching strategies and techniques for better learning outcomes. The Centre for Educator Recruitment, Retention and Advancement (CERRA) unveiled its support toolkit in which the Architecture of Accomplished Teaching (AAT) model is found. The AAT seems to be a good model in ESL writing classrooms. It is a representation of what proficient teachers do in the classroom. What is observable in the classroom may be different but essential characteristics of teaching are common to all accomplished teachers.

The AAT model has five core propositions for teachers, one of which is commitment to students' learning. Thus, teachers are expected to know their students' levels, skills and what they need to do to develop these skills. Using the *Oxford Online Placement Test* was beneficial in identifying the overall level of students. However, it did not indicate the writing skill needs for students showing the need to fill the gap in the current placement testing tool by using a more advanced skill-oriented testing tool for writing. The AAT also requires that teachers have the core knowledge of what they teach and the skills to teach it. They are also expected to manage and monitor students' learning and systematically learn from their experiences. This may have put off all the teachers approached to participate in the case-study. Learning

new practices as teachers and monitoring students' progress in learning takes more than teaching students for the sake of earning a salary at the end of the month. Skillful and professional teachers are needed to teach ESL writing in this part of the world. It is not enough for a teacher to be a native speaker of the language taught or even to hold a qualification in the same area of teaching. Therefore, more professional training is essential for teaching ESL writing in the Arab world. Moreover, more training should go towards raising teachers' awareness of where the confusion between L1 and L2 lies in terms of students' writing skills and linguistic forms. Writing teachers are recommended to address L1 interference errors occurring in students' written productions. They are also recommended to consider having some knowledge about the source of the accuracy problems students produce. According to the AAT model, teachers need to set high, worthwhile goals appropriate for students at the time and setting they are in. The setting and goals of this case-study were specified; however, the time was a forced factor by the nature and length of semester. To see more accuracy development, it is believed that the case-study should be carried out over a longer period of time. The next AAT step is to implement the designed method to achieve the goals set. Assessing students' learning and reflecting on students' learning and the effectiveness of the design come next so that a new set of high and worthwhile goals, which are suitable for the students at the time of the implementation, are considered for future application. Unfortunately, as stated above, the last step was not implemented in the case-study as it was outside the scope of this thesis.

In an attempt to develop the tools used in the implementation of the peer reviewing process in class, the researcher continued modifying the methods after this study in her classes. From 2010 to 2015, the researcher changed the online learning environment to a more basic and user-friendly one which is Moodle wikis. The main reasons were to have an easier tool for students to use and to guarantee having students' work saved at a local server for future auditing and moderation purposes as set by the organisational. Students used to write in a process-oriented writing approach as well as peer review their writings. The results were promising showing a higher proportion of correct forms produced by the majority of students.

The researcher embedded a new tool to improve her students' written accuracy in February 2017. This was done through online workbooks that she created via

<https://writeandimprove.com/workbooks#/wi-workbooks> (See Appendix H). The website is run by Cambridge University and it offers a free service for learners of English to practise their written English. Students submit their written work and receive feedback in seconds, covering spelling, vocabulary, grammar and general style. The site identifies students' CEFR level and shows their progress in a grid each time they submit and re-submit their writing. The results are yet to be found.

The analysis in this thesis focused on English as a second language for ESL Arab students; therefore, it remains to be seen whether enhancements in academic outcomes of the kind identified here apply to other settings or cohorts. Clearly more work is desired on teaching ESL writing in the Arab world and the implementation of process-oriented writing with the focus on peer reviewing.

## **6.5 Limitations of the Thesis**

As outlined above, the overall findings demonstrated that the process-oriented writing approach with the focus on peer reviewing and teacher feedback could have potential benefits for the written accuracy of Bahraini students. These benefits could have been more advantageously achieved if some of the limitations were resolved. These limitations are discussed in terms of methodology and technology.

### **6.5.1 Methodological Limitations**

The first limitation was the sample size of the research study. The investigated sample was relatively small representing only one class of students, a small proportion (2.4%) of the total of 500 first-year students registered during the academic year 2008/2009. Although there were at least twenty classes running for the same ESL course, only one class of twelve Bahraini ESL students was involved in the research study. This is due to the fact that none of the tutors were interested in carrying an extra load implementing the research collection methods. The present study examined written responses and revisions from eight written initial drafts and final drafts, eight peer-reviewed drafts and two questionnaires administered. A

bigger sample would have given more confidence in the results, and would perhaps have identified clearer patterns of results or trends across the findings.

Another limitation was that not all students submitted the third draft for teacher feedback, limiting the extent of analysis on students' production of errors and correct forms over time. This might originate from students' cultural background and belief that the teacher would provide feedback to students' earlier work (Drafts 1 and 2) which would be sufficient to receive. It might also be because of feeling pressured or stressed to provide more than 2 drafts for the same topic on an on-going-basis. Moreover, even with the small size of the class and the absence of draft 3, the number of drafts that the teacher/ researcher manually annotated (around 280 drafts) was overwhelming with the limited technological resources at the time of the study and no other teacher to give a hand. This would be a deterrent to applying new feedback processes in the ESL writing classroom with the same challenging circumstances.

Further research is required to address the issue of peer compatibility within groups. Another resulting factor from having one class is that the researcher was also the teacher of the course. Maintaining objectivity and reporting findings were essential and challenging. It took a lot of effort from the teacher/researcher to distance herself from the participants to ensure objectivity and accuracy in examining and reporting the data. If the teacher/researcher were to implement the study again, she would put in other methods such as choosing not to teach the participants and having the sole role of the researcher. This method would have allowed the researcher to observe the written processes as well as the interaction from an outsider's point of view. The researcher would have also been able to see whether the participants were committed or involved in the process of peer reviewing, how they reacted and what they felt. All these aspects may have affected the results.

Another limitation was the low participation in the post-course questionnaire. This was mainly due to the assessments of the Academic Bridging course and other courses that were conducted during the last week of the research study. Students missed some classes and missed the opportunity to express their opinions about giving and receiving feedback in the peer reviewing process. This could have been resolved if students' opinions had been sought earlier, or collected using the online surveying tools (e.g. survey monkey), which were not available at the time of the

research. Notwithstanding the lower than ideal response rate, it was evident that not all the participants thought highly of the process-oriented writing approach as it was against everything they were used to in their traditional teacher-centred educational journey. Moreover, they were not keen on having a long period of time drafting and editing the same piece of writing which seemed a boring and a waste of time for students at this level. The peer reviewing process seemed to be challenging too, in terms time management, peer communication, interactions, expectations and motivation. Another influential factor was students' lack of understanding of the benefits of formative assessments, resulting in a reluctance to write and submit the essays in some, but not all cases.

### **6.5.2 Technical Limitations**

A further limitation may be seen in the lack of technological support at a new tertiary institution. Unfortunately, engaging the participants through technology was not possible at the time of the study due to the lack of internet connection or even the access to online teaching and learning materials. Inadequate technical resources were also observed in the audios of the peer reviewing sessions, which were not of good enough quality to be included in the analysis. In the same vein, the organisation lacked a secure technological platform at the time of the case-study as it was in its early set-up phase as an organisation. Some students' written productions were corrupted due to the lack of computer and online security or backup. Students' drafts were saved on students' drives in the organisation's system. Unfortunately, the system got infected with no proper security at the time and consequently some students' documents were affected. Some of these drafts were retrieved while others were completely corrupted.

The lack of a secure technological platform affected the flow of the computer-based activities in the support grammar sessions due to the technical challenges in the language laboratory. Also, the medium for operating the peer reviewing activities could have been an online platform or a virtual learning environment, which could be more appealing, motivating and user-friendly to the new generation of digital natives (Prensky 2001). A lot of research supports the effectiveness of using

technology in peer reviewing process in ESL and ESL writing (Lee 2012; Min 2016). Another technology-related limitation was the absence of a computerised or an online language system for annotating and tracking students' errors and correct forms. Coding multiple drafts and counting and normalising the correct and incorrect forms by hand over two drafts for eight essays for the 12 participants was very a time-consuming task for the researcher. Post the research study, the researcher used Markin as tool to provide feedback for students. It is a Windows programme which provides a set of tools, and grammatical codes that enable the teacher to annotate texts. As recommended by Wali and Blin (2009), post the research study, as the Polytechnic established better facilities and implemented a more effective technology platform, the researcher used a number of online tools and platforms as modified versions of the case-study such as writeboard.com, wikispaces and draftin.com with other classes and in other subject areas in her role as a teacher. The researcher also investigated the effectiveness of technology in a Problem Based Learning scenario (Huijser and Wali 2012).

## **6.6 Suggestions for Further Research**

A number of vital issues were highlighted by this case-study of Bahrain Polytechnic's ESL students' writing development. Many questions were raised, which could not be addressed, given the restricted scope of this study, and these need to be investigated further in the future. There is a dearth of research publications in L2 writing, particularly related to process-oriented writing as well as peer reviewing research in the GCC context. At the time of writing, few rigorous L2 empirical research studies had been published to investigate the effects of the peer reviewing process on developing students' written skills and resolving their L1 interference errors in an Arabic context. Furthermore, the influences of learners' L1, namely Arabic, on L2 writing skills and more specifically grammar in higher education have not been explored in the Bahrain context, which has many unique features. Much of the research in this area [e.g. Nicol, Thomson and Breslin (2015); Orsmond et al. (2013); Rouhi and Azizan (2013); Khaliq and Khaliq (2015); Rubin (2006); Tsui and Ng (2000); Keh (1990)] explores global improvements such as organization, development, and cohesion in writing, but not grammar or punctuation and not in an Arabic setting, an area which therefore warrants future attention.

The participants in this research study were at one CEFR level but with a range of proficiency levels and each benefited differently from the language re-enforcement activities of the course and the process of peer reviewing. A pedagogical suggestion would be to evaluate the effectiveness of the peer reviewing process in a heterogeneous (mixed-ability) group composition: A vast body of research recommends the (mixed-ability) heterogeneous grouping, particularly seen as advantageous for less advanced students, according to Webb, Nemer and Zuniga (2002) and Hooper and Hannafin (1988). Bahraini students should be made more aware of the benefits of different assessment types and their effects on their learning development. Also, curriculum linkages between secondary level and third level institutions are of paramount importance to improve the quality of the written products of students and potential graduates and employees. Transition from the traditional didactic teacher-centred teaching and learning approaches to a more student centred approach in schools as well as third level education institutes is essential. This transition needs to be accompanied by e-learning delivery, and the implementation of a more robust technological infrastructure to support students' learning. Not only will technology help in developing students L2 writing but it will also develop their employability skills. Being a business hub in the Arabian Gulf region, Bahrain is exposed to multiple nationalities who are employed for their good command of written English, which is a necessity in the industry. Bahraini nationals are competing in their own homeland with expatriates to get a proper job. This fact requires more professional development planning for students and graduates aiming to develop the essential skills required for the workforce in Bahrain. Not only that, but the fact that none of the teachers, namely expatriates, accepted to participate in the case-study means that more professional development planning is required to get teachers of all nationalities willing to step out of their comfort zones and apply new teaching and learning strategies that may be useful to students' and teachers' learning. Motivating teachers to take part in the case-study was the hardest problem and the researcher ended up being the only teacher to apply the methods used in this study.

It cannot be shown inconclusively that the changes in writing skills and knowledge observed here are attributable to the peer-reviewing intervention. It was clear that there were many factors that affect learning and therefore a substantial area of future research into Arab ways of learning needs to be based around the whole range of

ecological factors influencing Bahraini ESL students. Furthermore, research on interaction for different pair arrangements in L2 peer reviewing would be useful for language teachers. There was little research published on L2 writing and the impact of peer reviewing, and there is a need for research studies to explore the relationship between instructional methods and achievement-based grouping influences, which would be beneficial to L2 practitioners. In some cases in the sample used in Chapter Five, students were selective accepting the feedback given by their peers. It was observed that some students were more accepting of the feedback offered in the oral peer reviewing sessions as they had the opportunity to communicate and express the reasons behind the error identifications. This might relate to Arabic being an oral language and that most students if not all have good command of English spoken skills. More studies need to be carried out investigating the effectiveness of oral feedback and comparing it to written feedback. Additionally, the findings suggest that working together and discussing the changes of a written product are beneficial to students.

Collaborative writing or co-authoring a text by peers could be encouraged in the ESL classroom. To Storch (2011), collaborative writing activities could be useful in L2 learning provided that they are carefully designed and monitored. The study also revealed that students preferred receiving teacher feedback for their written productions. A sense of distrust in the peers' error identification was noticed which is culturally understandable since students have always and solely received comments from teachers in the school systems in Bahrain. This suggests that more research, especially for Arab ESL students, is needed to observe cultural effects on students' behaviour and perceptions in and of the peer reviewing process.

The use of the grammar codes proved to be challenging to students and some of them seemed to just highlight the errors using colour codes while others created their own versions of the codes which seemed to be comprehensible by their peers. A more user-friendly coding system or rubric could be of use to these practices. Also, the use of online or computer-based software to analyse students' writings would be worth investigating. More comparative research is worth conducting to investigate the use of technology in ESL writing classrooms.



Motivation might have affected the findings of the case-study. Some students were demotivated by their parents' disappointment in them being in the course while others were motivated to pass the course, join the degree programmes they selected and place themselves in a highly competitive labour market in Bahrain. Families and friends had great positive and negative influence on students' L2 writing development which warrants further research.

The face-to-face English learning contact hours seemed to be overwhelming for students, which led to some of them losing their motivation at some stages in the course or not paying enough attention. As a teacher, I may have set high expectations for students to be involved in the peer reviewing process, which may have been a challenging learning task. In order not to lose students' motivation, more learning support with appreciation of their work should be attained (Fullen 1985 cited in AlKoofi 2016).

## **6.7 Summary**

This case-study investigated the effectiveness of using a student-centred process-oriented writing approach through the peer reviewing process in an oral-based teacher-centred context in the Kingdom of Bahrain. The findings of the thesis show the potential that the research methods implemented on the sample might have in the L2 writing classrooms in Bahrain. The problems facing learners of English as a second language in the Middle East, with a particular focus on their writing skills especially L1 interference errors, might be possibly resolved via the process-oriented approach with more student-centeredness, autonomy, critical thinking and problem-solving skills injected into Bahraini L2 writing classrooms over a longer duration. Further research is required to find a more effective and suitable model for process-oriented writing that can help Bahraini students improve their writing skills. Also, more research is essential to develop an appropriate course of action that will facilitate the integration of process-oriented writing and peer-reviewing in Bahraini English classrooms.

This case-study is set in the Kingdom of Bahrain where teachers are faced with fluent-speaking students in English as Arabic, their L1, is an oral culture. Teachers are misled by the assumption that Bahraini students' English writing skills are at the

same proficiency level as their spoken skills. A number of factors were identified to account for the differences in the learners' production of errors, identifying them correctly, and finally being able to identify and correct them in a piece of work produced by another student. Although the findings demonstrate that some learning transpired through process-oriented writing, the rate, the degree and the method of learning was inconstant. This, however, may have been a factor of the time for which the study was operational, rather than a factor associated with the nature of the intervention itself. The participants of this opportunistic sample varied broadly in their ESL writing proficiency level as shown by the common errors data. The literature outlines these common errors and indicates that particular challenging problems that Arab speakers face in writing are due to the influence of L1 interference.

Students' motivation to raise their written ESL accuracy is based on industry's need for employees with good writing skills. The participants on this course trust that it will grant them employment as it is their ticket to have to get into a degree programme that will offer them employment. A lot of factors contributed to learning ESL writing leaving this research study inconclusive with regard the effectiveness of peer reviewing on students' writing skills, which requires further research. The methodology used may also be an aspect that needs consideration. Further research evaluating the implementation of the process-oriented writing approach and peer reviewing in a more student-centred context using technology is required. The generalizability of the case study method provided replicability of approach through the rich details and experiences portrayed in all its complexity. It is up to the reader to judge its applicability.

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# Appendix A. Consent Form

Enhancing Arabic Students' L2 Writing through Peer-Reviewing: the Case of Bahraini Learners of English

Fatima Wali

## INFORMED CONSENT FORM

A thorough evaluation of a program, designed to help ESL students provide useful written feedback to peers when submitting assignments electronically, is being conducted. The chief aim of the study is to find to what extent peer-reviewing in EFL can enhance the development of written accuracy among arabophone students and resolve mother-tongue interference errors. In addition, it seeks to find out if EFL students consider teacher feedback more constructive and helpful than peer feedback, to identify the factors that contribute to successful peer-reviewing and in particular, what the impact of students' perceptions and attitudes towards peer-reviewing is. Moreover, the study aims at investigating the effectiveness of feedback in the context of a multiple-draft classroom and if it can influence the way that teachers incorporate such practices into their classes.

If it is, your teachers will be able to target more precisely your needs in language learning. The evaluation process will consist of collecting all drafts of your written assignments. You will be invited to correct thrice your assignment during lab sessions. Access to the data will be restricted to yourself, your teacher and myself via email. Classroom observations will also be conducted at regular intervals. These may include recording some of your interactions with your peers during feedback sessions as well as screen recordings of your computer mediated activities.

Participation in this study is strictly voluntary and your decision will have no effect on your grade. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. All of the information collected will be confidential. This means that your identity will be preserved. Whenever sample data, drawn from your texts in this study, are published or presented via reports, journal articles, or conference presentation, your name will not be used. Any other detail that you may identify will also be removed.

Your participation is, therefore, being considered highly valuable and vital to the success of this study. I would greatly appreciate if you could answer the following questions (please circle Yes or No for each question) and add your signature at the bottom of this consent form along with the date and the name of your witness:

<i>Have you read or had read to you the Plain Language Statement</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
<i>Do you understand the information provided?</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
<i>Have you had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss this study?</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
<i>Have you received satisfactory answers to all your questions?</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
<i>Do you give permission to use your language production?</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
<i>Do you give permission to record your classroom interactions?</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
<i>Do you give permission to capture your computer activity?</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>

I have read and understood the information in this form. My questions and concerns have been answered by the researcher, and I have a copy of this consent form. Therefore, I consent to take part in this research project.

Participants Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Name in Block Capitals: \_\_\_\_\_

Witness: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix B. All Data Collected from the Cases'

### Written Production Over Time

Proportion of correct forms, incorrect forms and peer identified forms per case for all 12 participants of (L1 interference categories) for all students in every Draft 1 from essay 1 to essay 8

- **Case 1 Amina and Hashmiya**

Essay No.	Amina-Errors noticed by peer	Amina - Errors noticed by Teacher	Amina-Correct forms noticed by Teacher	Hashmiya-Errors noticed by peer	Hashmiya - Errors noticed by Teacher	Hashmiya - Correct forms noticed by Teacher
1	0.00	20.00	80.00	0.00	33.33	66.67
2	0.00	10.00	90.00	7.14	21.43	78.57
3	0.00	23.53	76.47	11.11	55.56	44.44
4	0.00	0.00	100.00	0.00	0.00	100.00
5	0.00	11.11	88.89	0.00	66.67	33.33
6	0.00	0.00	100.00	0.00	30.77	69.23
7	12.50	37.50	62.50	40.00	40.00	60.00
8	0.00	0.00	100.00	25.00	0.00	100.00

- **Case 2 Hanan and Zahra**

Essay No.	Hanan-Errors noticed by Zahra	Zahra-Errors noticed by Teacher	Zahra-Correct forms noticed by Teacher	Zahra-Errors noticed by Hanan	Hanan-Errors noticed by Teacher	Hanan- - Correct forms noticed by Teacher
1	0.00	40.00	60.00	0.00	7.69	92.31
2	0.00	0.00	100.00	0.00	12.50	87.50
3	0.00	15.79	84.21	0.00	17.39	82.61
4	6.67	30.77	69.23	0.00	40.00	60.00
5	0.00	27.27	72.73	9.09	30.77	69.23
6	0.00	22.22	77.78	0.00	18.18	81.82
7	16.67	0.00	100.00	0.00	16.67	83.33
8	0.00	22.22	77.78	0.00	33.33	66.67



- **Case 3 Fatima and Mahmood**

Essay No.	Fatima- Correct forms noticed by Teacher	Fatima - Errors noticed by Teacher	Fatima- Correct forms noticed by Teacher	Mahmood - Errors noticed by peer	Mahmood - Errors noticed by Teacher	Mahmood - Correct forms noticed by Teacher
1	50.00	0.00	100.00	50.00	75.00	25.00
2	22.22	33.33	66.67	0.00	0.00	100.00
3	0.00	25.00	75.00			
4	0.00	6.67	93.33	0.00	14.29	85.71
5				0.00	0.00	100.00
6	0.00	18.18	81.82	0.00	28.57	71.43
7				20.00	20.00	80.00
8	0.00	0.00	100.00	0.00	0.00	100.00

- **Case 4 Reem and Naderah**

Essay No.	Reem- Errors noticed by peer	Reem- Errors noticed by Teacher	Reem- Correct forms noticed by Teacher	Naderah- Errors noticed by peer	Naderah- Errors noticed by Teacher	Naderah- Correct forms noticed by Teacher
1	0.00	25.00	75.00	0.00	0.00	100.00
2	0.00	0.00	100.00	0.00	9.09	90.91
3	0.00	4.17	95.83	0.00	21.43	78.57
4	0.00	7.69	92.31	11.11	22.22	77.78
5	0.00	9.09	90.91	0.00	33.33	66.67
6	0.00	7.69	92.31	0.00	36.84	63.16
7	0.00	0.00	100.00	42.86	42.86	57.14
8	9.09	9.09	90.91	20.00	20.00	80.00

- **Case 5 Bader and A.Rahman**

Essay No.	Bader- Errors noticed by peer	Bader- Errors noticed by Teacher	Bader- Correct forms noticed by Teacher	A.Rahman- Errors noticed by peer	A.Rahman- Errors noticed by Teacher	A.Rahman- Correct forms noticed by Teacher
1	0.00	50.00	50.00	0.00	0.00	100.00
2	0.00	7.69	92.31	0.00	0.00	100.00
3	0.00	8.33	91.67	0.00	20.00	80.00
4	0.00	0.00	100.00	0.00	0.00	100.00
5	0.00	33.33	66.67	0.00	15.38	84.62
6	0.00	7.14	92.86	0.00	0.00	100.00
7	0.00	8.33	91.67			
8	0.00	0.00	100.00			

- **Case 6 Fatima M and Asma**

Essay No.	Fatima M- Errors noticed by peer	Fatima M- Errors noticed by Teacher	Fatima M- Correct forms noticed by Teacher	Asma- Errors noticed by peer	Asma- Errors noticed by Teacher	Asma- Correct forms noticed by Teacher
1	25.00	25.00	75.00	20.00	20.00	80.00
2	0.00	42.86	57.14	0.00	8.33	91.67
3	0.00	0.00	100.00	15.38	23.08	76.92
4	0.00	7.69	92.31			
5	0.00	20.00	80.00	0.00	13.64	86.36
6				0.00	20.00	80.00
7						
8				0.00	0.00	100.00

## Appendix C. Reflective Journal

Case 1	Amina	Hashmiya
week 1	CONFIDENT yet angry looking- not content with the idea being in the course thinking that her level is way above all others-listening to her spoken English I can understand why. Her mother called and asked to meet me- shall meet next week Sunday. Main problems this week: Verbs- sentence structure- punctuation-spelling	SHY and quiet. Very keen to note down everything -has no eye contact with me. She seems uneasy around boys-culture and religion- listens carefully to Amina's feedback- Looks pale and I have checked if she has any illness issues and YES (sickle cells) :\$ She submits drafts in time. Talk to Amina in Arabic. Main problems this week: articles- prepositions-verbs
week 2	Spoken to her mother in her presence- Amina has a twin sister who is enrolled in another university and doesn't have to go through an English course to enter degree. She is direct entry and Amina being the smarter one according to the mother should be direct entry- i explained the difference between the two universities and the objectives of the course-showed her Amina's writing this week and last week- explained spoken is good but writing isn't so she needs to be committed and accepting to reach where she wants- Amina softened and some glimpse of hope to Main problems this week: Verbs- sentence structure- punctuation-spelling	she whispers to Amina when she wishes to ask or even converse- code-switching Main problems this week: articles- prepositions-verbs- sentence structure- SVA- word forms- pronoun reference
week 3	Seems more comfortable and is dedicating more time in writing- paying more attention to Hashmiya's whispering- code-switching- Main problems this week: Verbs- sentence structure-punctuation- spelling-conjunctions-prepositions- missing words	Seem her smile today- she looks more relaxed now that Amina has accepted the idea of finishing the course and moving to the next level Main problems this week: articles- prepositions-verbs- sentence structure- SVA-conjunctions- word forms- pronoun reference
week 4	Main problems this week: Verbs- sentence structure-punctuation- spelling-conjunctions-prepositions- pronoun reference- word order	Main problems this week: prepositions-verbs-
week 5	tired and barely doing the work- I guess it is the exams Main problems this week: Articles- sentence structure- punctuation-verbs- word forms	has a flu- seems not focused but is doing her tasks Main problems this week:
week 6	on task again :- ) and has become softer and more understanding to Hashmiya as we continue Main problems this week: verbs	recovered and I can see her across the room talking more confidently with her peer- she had good eye contact with me without dropping her eyes down today Main problems this week: articles- prepositions-verbs- sentence structure- SVA-conjunctions
week 7	relaxed and more engaged Main problems this week: articles- conjunctions- spelling-punctuation- word forms- word order	Has asked a few questions in the tutorial this week :- ) Main problems this week: articles- prepositions-verbs- word forms
week 8	on track- filled in the post-questionnaire Main problems this week: articles- conjunctions- spelling-prepositions- word forms	on track- filled in the post-questionnaire Main problems this week: verbs- sentence structure- word forms- punctuation

Case 2	Hanan	Zahra
week 1	Joyful and sweet girl. Wants to improve and eager to join the degree programme. She has been working closely with Zahra. Matching personalities. Arabic dominated Main problems this week: article-punctuation- verbs-word order	Zahra is a hyper student and has a joyful character. Her spoken skills are really good. She says she learnt it through TV! She speaks Farsi in addition to Arabic. She is very easy-going and takes things as they pop. code-switching Main problems this week: articles-prepositions- punctuation-verbs
week 2	The bond is being built at a comfortable pace and shows positivity of her reactions- speaks to peer while writing in context and out of context! Main problems this week: Articles- sentence structure- SVA-prepositions- punctuation-verbs- word forms	Zahra is very communicative with her peer- comes to me when she is stuck with some words she can't find a word for in English but in the other 2 languages she knows. code-switching Main problems this week: conjunctions- sentence structure-spelling- punctuation- word forms- verbs
week 3	Has realised that the perfect tense doesn't exist in Arabic- in shock to find a match! code-switching Main problems this week: Articles-sentence structure- SVA-prepositions-verbs- word forms	Seemed confused in the tutorials-might be realization of similarities and differences between L1 and L2-didn't perform well- many errors this time Main problems this week: articles-sentence structure-spelling- SVA-prepositions- punctuation- verbs-word forms
week 4	Compare the two languages a lot and seems to ask about the similarities in prepositions- find it very confusing Main problems this week: Articles-sentence structure- SVA-prepositions-punctuation-verbs- word forms-pronoun reference	Confused why the definite article rule in Arabic doesn't fully match the English one Main problems this week: articles-punctuation-verbs- word forms
week 5	has a conflict with Reem and seemed uneasy Main problems this week: Articles-sentence structure- SVA-prepositions-punctuation-verbs-pronoun reference	Zahra was taking Hanan's side and was comforting her- errors increasing though- still confused- she says overwhelmed Main problems this week: articles-sentence structure- spelling- verbs-word forms- word order
week 6	back on track and I can hear them giggle again while working Main problems this week: Articles-sentence structure- SVA-prepositions-punctuation-verbs- word forms-spelling	back on track and I can hear them giggle again while working Main problems this week: articles-conjunctions-sentence structure-verbs- word forms
week 7	made sure she submitted although a bit late Main problems this week: Articles-sentence structure- SVA-prepositions-punctuation-verbs- word forms-	responded to Hanan's question about a phrasal verb- explanation was wrong so I interfered and corrected it (put on and put out) Main problems this week: less problems- confused plural with SVA
week 8	expressed disturbed feelings at the end of the course and will miss the class and especially her class mate Zahra Main problems this week: articles-spelling- SVA- prepositions-punctuation-word order	emotional to Hanan's reaction Main problems this week: articles-verbs

Case 3	Fatima M	Asma
week 1	<p>Fatima M is my neighbour! She is not taking anything seriously and is busy making friends with males- which is a taboo- in this culture ;-)</p> <p>She approached me not to tell her family..hehehe. So far she is having fun and enjoying the new atmosphere yet writing her drafts with heaviness and no attention is paid towards her writing so far in terms of accuracy.</p> <p>She is the only girl in the family with 3 brothers- her behaviour and going out is monitored to the max by family- culturally protecting her. Hesitated to share her writing.</p> <p>Main problems this week: articles- conjunctions-punctuation-prepositions— verbs-word order and forms</p>	<p>Asma is the only daughter in her family. A liberal family with no cultural or religious restrictions in the Bahraini community. She is going through a phase of depression due to the death of her fiancé in a car crash. She is absent-minded and reads the Holy Quran in class to stay focused where the heart is. She has no attention paid so far to anything or anyone. She is a friend of Fatima M's. despite that, she didn't want to show her peer her writing. She said she can't concentrate if she worked with others- meaning collaboratively on a task!</p> <p>Main problems this week: articles-spelling-punctuation-word forms</p>
week 2	<p>She hasn't been paying much attention in the lab- wrote a few notes in the grammar tutorial- doesn't want to continue showing her peer her draft. She approached me not to tell her family about her behaviour- sense of guilt but feels safe I wouldn't! code-switching</p> <p>Main problems this week: punctuation- articles- spelling- sentence structure- conjunctions-word order</p>	<p>Mourning- and in lack all the time- saw her tears dropping in class- hiding them- I spoke to her about the passing away of her fiancé and coached her through- she is accepting what I say so good sign- will continue paying more attention to her emotional health- reacted to Fatima's refusal not to share the draft. code-switching</p> <p>Main problems this week: punctuation- articles-spelling-prepositions-verbs-word forms-sentence structure</p>
week 3	<p>She is still in her own comfort zone- submitting by being reminded by peer- seems still against sharing-(In Farsi she said it is a long process-tiring and boring)</p> <p>Main problems this week: punctuation- verbs-articles-</p>	<p>She has changed a bit- wears more colourful stuff :-)</p> <p>more keen to approach me and does her work on time- feels at ease sharing her writing with Fatima-seems to know Fatima doesn't pay attention any way- She is comforted I feel! code-switching (agreed to Fatima's comment)</p> <p>Main problems this week: articles-spelling-prepositions-punctuation- verbs-word forms</p>
week 4	<p>Doesn't seem bothered by exams</p> <p>Main problems this week: punctuation- articles- direct translation from L1- verbs</p>	<p>stressed due to assessments-didn't submit</p>
week 5	<p>has been doing the tasks</p> <p>Main problems this week: punctuation- word order-articles-conjunctions</p>	<p>very committed and has been taking to Fatima about submitting her drafts and taking it seriously- she proudly stated that she she can write better and knows more grammar</p> <p>Main problems this week: articles-spelling-punctuation</p>
week 6	<p>lack of interest and giving excuses again- didn't submit</p>	<p>Asma is at a much better emotional status now :-)</p> <p>I can even hear her laugh loudly which was IMPOSSIBLE in the first weeks. She is working hard in the lab and asks whenever she is stuck with an idea in class</p> <p>Main problems this week: articles- conjunctions-prepositions-punctuation- verbs-word forms</p>
week 7	<p>didn't submit-Her mother rang me and was very distressed to hear that Fatima hasn't been working- noticed some change in Fatima's behaviour taking some initiative to do her tasks</p>	<p>focused and doesn't speak to Fatima-upset about her being late in sending feedback</p> <p>DIDN'T SUBMIT</p>
week 8	<p>Same old same old! didn't submit</p>	<p>didn't submit</p> <p>Main problems this week: sentence structure-prepositions</p>

Case 4	Abdulrahman	Bader
week 1	Abdulrahman is a very delicate and humble student. His language level is the highest amongst his peers. He has a thyroid problem which makes him fall asleep. This has been a challenge not knowing how to deal with it myself with no background or information from Registry. I had to read about it to know how to deal with him. Despite the fact that his level is higher than the rest, he was not comfortable sharing his draft 1 with Bader. Main problems this week: punctuation	Bader is very shy and has no eye contact with me. He is the second best in terms of his language competencies. He seemed shy and reluctant to share his draft. He explained that he wanted me to check like in school. He asked if there were any grades given to the essay or to the sharing of it. Main problems this week: articles-Sentence structure-punctuation
week 2	sleepy all week-thyroid problem- very stressed over his progress because of his illness- comforted him and told him he'd fly and graduate with a degree- this shouldn't stop him- found prepositions confusing- compared them to Arabic-some similarities but many don't exist. He was spontaneous sharing his draft this week- no complications. Main problems this week: prepositions-pronoun reference- SVA- Direct translation from L1	Submitted draft but doesn't seem to be comfortable. enjoyed the computer lab sessions- very much focused in the grammar tutorials Main problems this week: AGAIN(articles-Sentence structure- punctuation)- spelling—taught him how to use the spell check and directed him to the spelling list activities-
week 3	excellent comments given in tutorial showing he knows what was addressed-asked a few questions about the order of nouns and adjectives and the verbs and adverbs Main problems this week: articles- Direct translation from L1 -SVA-Word form- word order	Has started to build a good relationship with A.Rahman-makes sure to compete with him in structuring his sentences better. Main problems this week: (again articles)- direct translation from L1 in some phrases-punctuation
week 4	stressed due to assessments-spoken to me that the outcome wouldn't look good and doesn't want to show it to peer. talking to him that he will be learning any way, he sent it through to Bader. He said he was tired of the process of writing- took time and felt anxious to see the feedback. Main problems this week: sentence structure-conjunctions-prepositions-pronoun reference	stressed due to assessments-didn't want to submit but eventually did. Bader expressed the same comment with regard to being tired of the process-oriented approach which seemed long compared to writing a draft and sharing with the teacher like before. Main problems this week: punctuation-SVA-spelling-verbs
week 5	losing his hair- can't cope with the emotional stress- I feel bad for him-intelligent and hardworking yet no one is perfect- seemed to have many errors this week. he feels bad and expressed worry on his achievement. Main problems this week: articles-sentence structure-verbs and word form	bored and feels bad for his peer-emotionally drained I guess- still tries to accomplish his tasks Main problems this week: punctuation-articles-verbs-word order
week 6	worked on his writings- has been joyful this week and said that he knows more grammar to use in writing Main problems this week: verbs-SVA-prepositions	asked a few questions in the lab Main problems this week: Punctuation-articles-conjunctions-verbs
week 7	exhausted and doesn't want to submit anything- didn't submit	picked the same from A.Rahman-he says we are tired Main problems this week: punctuation-articles-SVA-verbs-word order
week 8	was absent didn't submit	submitted and sent it A.Rahman who was absent Main problems this week: punctuation-spelling-prepositions-verbs-word forms

Case 5	Naderah	Reem
week 1	Speakers Farsi and Arabic- has a distinctive accent- tries to be as easy going as possible and accepts everything she is asked to. Main problems this week: conjunctions-punctuation-word order and forms	A very serious student- hardly smiles- has asthma. She approached me introducing herself after class- both parents in the military--explains why serious :-) Main problems this week: articles-conjunction-punctuation-verbs-missing words
week 2	active and asks at the end of class when I am alone- tries to build personal bonds with me-sweet watching her do that :-) asks peer frequently in the lab Main problems this week: Articles-Direct translation from L1- spelling-punctuation- prepositions-word forms and word order- subject verb agreement	has been writing everything I say in class especially the tutorials- doesn't want to be interrupted in the lab by peer Main problems this week: punctuation-verbs-spelling-sentence structure
week 3	Disappointed to still have frequent errors- asked for a reference book which has the grammar aspects described in Arabic and English Main problems this week: Articles-Direct translation from L1- spelling-punctuation- prepositions-word forms and word order- subject verb agreement- sentence structure	change of weather-asthma attack in class-still very committed to everything she does Main problems this week: articles-direct translation-sentence structure-spelling-verbs-word forms
week 4	stressed due to assessments-didn't submit Main problems this week: Articles-Direct translation from L1- spelling-punctuation- prepositions-word forms and word order- subject verb agreement- sentence structure	stressed due to assessments-didn't submit Main problems this week: articles-sentence structure-punctuation-verbs-word forms
week 5	change in behaviour- quiet this week-still working with her peer Main problems this week: Articles-Direct translation from L1- spelling-punctuation- prepositions-word forms and word order- subject verb agreement-sentence structure	broke the ice- natural communication with peer- she knows more now she says Main problems this week: punctuation-verbs-word forms
week 6	I got to understand why she was different last week- getting engaged and feeling stressed about it Main problems this week: Articles-Direct translation from L1- punctuation- prepositions-word forms and word order- subject verb agreement-spelling	helping Naderah and approaching her when she sensed Naderah was stuck :-) Main problems this week: punctuation-verbs-word forms
week 7	a bit at ease but at times she is not focused to do the tasks Main problems this week: Articles-Direct translation from L1- punctuation- prepositions-word forms and word order- subject verb agreement	sick this week but has been doing her tasks Main problems this week: punctuation-sentence structure-word forms
week 8	on track- filled in the post-questionnaire Main problems this week: Articles-Direct translation from L1- punctuation- prepositions-word forms and word order- subject verb agreement	on track- filled in the post-questionnaire Main problems this week: verbs-word forms

Case 6	Fatima	Mahmood
week 1	Talkative about herself- family- upper class in society- wants to impress even when writing- very proud of her writing yet doesn't want to show it to her peer. demanded I see it like the old days back in school! Claims it is my duty as a teacher to do so! code-switching Main problems this week: punctuation	Closed to himself- talks to Fatima M only- disappointed he is not working with her- speaks Farsi- shy to speak in class- fear of being embarrassed in public due to wrong accent-he said- very hesitant to share his draft. code-switching Main problems this week: articles-word forms- prepositions-missing words
week 2	Fatima is enthusiastic to show that she is fully involved in writing the task. listening to her oral conversation with Mahmood, she has some simple yet constructive feedback and explanation but feels more confident talking about them rather than sharing them- code-switching Main problems this week: articles-sentence structure-spelling-punctuation-verbs-word form	Still not interested- surfs msn.com instead of working on his drafts- attention has to be drawn at all times to the tasks. Fear of sharing the draft I guess! code-switching Main problems this week: conjunctions-sentence structure-spelling-prepositions-punctuation-verbs
week 3	Fatima is trying to overcome the hesitation sending the draft yet Mahmood reaction isn't helpful. She is angry at Mahmood because he is not sending her the draft or feedback on time- didn't send her his drafts either Main problems this week: conjunctions-punctuation-prepositions-verbs	Tired all week. Didn't submit
week 4	spoken to me about Mahmood and asked permission to address the issue with him personally- withdrawn and doesn't want to share. Main problems this week: conjunction-prepositions-verbs-pronoun reference	slow in responding to peer Main problems this week: punctuation-articles-conjunctions-SVA-Prepositions-verbs
week 5	didn't submit	on tasks this week- I guess Fatima's talk to him worked ;-) Main problems this week: punctuation-sentence structure-conjunctions-
week 6	has ignored Mahmood fully but sent him the draft Main problems this week: Punctuation-verbs-sentence structure	a bit more committed and careful talking-to Fatima- code-switching Main problems this week: Articles-conjunctions-sentence structure-punctuation
week 7	Absent and didn't submit	SLACKING but submitted Main problems this week: punctuation-verbs-word forms-articles
week 8	talked to me about AIESEC and the trip to US- asked if I see her writing has improved Main problems this week: conjunction-verbs-prepositions-sentence structure	Absent but submitted Main problems this week: Prepositions-direct translation-verbs



## Appendix D. Pre-course questionnaire and Post-course Questionnaire 1

### Questionnaire 1

Note: Source adapted from Hedge, T. (1988). Writing, Oxford University Press.


#### Writing

The purpose of this questionnaire is to get your opinion on what you think is important in compositions and written tasks. The information collected will be used for research on writing.

#### Key:

What do you think about your writing?

Circle the appropriate box for the following statements.

	Strongly agree	1
	Agree	2
	Disagree	3
	Strongly disagree	4

No	Statement	1	2	3	4
1	I think writing in English is more difficult than speaking.				
2	I think I don't really have problems in writing English.				
3	Writing in English is important to me because I will need it in a job.				
4	Writing in English is important to me because I must pass examinations in English.				
5	I expect to do a lot of writing in class.				
6	I expect to do a lot of writing by myself at home.				
7	I would like the teacher to look at my work and help me while I am in class.				
8	I would like the teacher to talk to me about my writing sometimes.				
9	I usually check through my writing before I hand it in.				
10	I expect the teacher to mark all the mistakes in my work.				
11	I expect the teacher to mark the most important mistakes in my work.				
12	I want my teacher to write comments about what is good or not good in my writing.				
13	I make a careful note of the teacher's corrections when I get work back.				
14	I usually read the comments and look at the grade but I don't study the corrections.				

## Appendix E. Post-course questionnaire

### Questionnaire 2

Note: Sources adapted from

Lockhart, C & Ng, P. (1993). How useful is Peer Response? Perspectives, 5, 1, 17-29.

Hedgcock, J & Lefkowitz, N. (1994). Feedback on feedback: Assessing learner respectively to teacher response in L2 composing. Journal of Second Language Writing, 3, 2, 141-163.

#### Writing

The purpose of this questionnaire is to determine your opinion on the system of self-analysis and peer feedback that has been practiced during our writing programme.

The information collected will be used for research purposes to help better understand teaching and learning of writing skills.

Please indicate your answer by circling the number that best expresses your opinion. Read each question and answer it promptly. Do not go back and change your answers.

#### Key:

Strongly Agree	1
Agree	2
Disagree	3
Strongly Disagree	4

Peer Feedback					
When I receive feedback					
No.	Statement	1	2	3	4
1	Peer feedback is helping me to revise my drafts.				
2	It helps me look at my writing as a reader would.				
3	Peer feedback helps me to present my ideas more clearly.				
4	It helps to improve the organization of my writing task.				
5	It has helped the grammar in my writing.				
6	I learn most from comments on the content of my writing.				
7	I learn most from comments on organization and style.				
8	I learn most from their corrections in grammar, spelling, etc.				
When I give feedback					
No.	Statement	1	2	3	4
15	Reading my peers' drafts helps me to improve my writing.				
16	It helps me to discover new ideas and views.				
17	It helps me to analyse my own writing.				
18	Reading my peers' drafts makes me better at spotting my errors.				
19	I learn from reading the content of their writing.				
20	I learn by looking at the organization and style of their writing.				
21	I learn from their mistakes in grammar, spelling, etc. (I try not to make similar mistakes)				

# Appendix F. Writeboard

This writeboard is located at: <http://123.writeboard.com/c8957c21603c5b93b>

[Edit this page](#) [Export](#) [Remove flag](#)

## RCSI-MUB FY MEDICINE

Dear Students,

We will be implementing a Computer-Supported Collaborative Writing Project this year aiming at developing your English written skills. You will be working on this writeboard in addition to the university's virtual learning environment Moodle.

Let's give it a try!

Fatima Wali, English Language Lecturer

### Comments

Fatima Wali, Engl...

(23 Oct 07, looking at [version 4](#))

Let's discuss the first topic:  
  
'When people succeed, it is because of hard work. Luck has nothing to do with success.'  
Do you agree or disagree with the quotation above? Use specific reasons and examples to explain your position.

Fatima said...

(23 Oct 07, looking at [version 4](#))

I disagree. Sometimes luck interferes in our destiny.

A,rahman Ahmed Juman said...

(23 Oct 07, looking at [version 4](#))

I totally disagree , luck play a big role in life and one of the evidence is that bluffers sometimes succeed more than those who are hard workers

A,rahman Ahmed Juman said...

(23 Oct 07, looking at [version 4](#))

"I totally disagree , luck play(s) a big role in life and one of the evidence is that bluffers sometimes succeed more than those who are hard workers (.  
  
And please don't correct mine just PM me so no one can see it .

Nafelah Al kowari said...

(23 Oct 07, looking at [version 4](#))

I strongly agree with this. When someone didn't have success or they didn't achieve the result that they desire, they always thought that because they were luckless or they had a lot of bad luck. I think that it's only the way we lie ourselves and we don't want to face the facts or the true reason. when people succeed, it is because of hard work, luck has nothing to do with it.

Zahra Ayoob said...

(23 Oct 07, looking at [version 4](#))

[Invite people](#) to collaborate

### Versions

You're viewing the latest version

06 Aug 07 Fatima Wali, Engl...

06 Aug 07 Fatima Wali, Engl...

06 Aug 07 fatima


06 Aug 07 fatima

Check two and [Compare](#)

Or [quick compare](#) the current and previous versions

This writeboard is located at: <http://123.writeboard.com/c8957c21603c5b93b>

### Formatting guide

To get this effect...	Type this...
<b>Bold phrase</b>	*Bold phrase*
<i>Italic phrase</i>	_Italic phrase_
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Bulleted list</li><li>Bulleted list</li></ul>	* Bulleted list * Bulleted list
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>Numbered list</li><li>Numbered list</li></ol>	# Numbered list # Numbered list
Indented block	bq. Indented block
<b>Big header</b>	h1. Big header
<b>Normal header</b>	h2. Normal header
<a href="#">37signals</a>	"37signals":http://www.37signals.com
	!http://37signals.com/logo.gif!

[Close this](#)

### Simple formatting codes

Writeboard uses simple, easy-to-write codes to format your text.

Type the codes in your text and you will see the results after clicking Save.

Here are some examples:

\*bold\* → **bold**  
\_italic\_ → *italic*

Check the [formatting guide](#) to easily make lists, headers, and more.

279

## Appendix G. Wikispaces

Fawali-Foundation2wiki · My Wikis · My Account · Help · Sign Out · wikispaces

 Foundation2Wiki

☆ home

Page ▾

Discussion (97)

History

Notify Me

Back to Discussion Forum

1

1

Delete Topic

Virtual Wiki 1

 **Fawali-Foundation2wiki** Nov 1, 2009 9:28 am  
This is Lesson 3.  
  
Start your wiki page! Write a short text about yourself e.g. (name, age, where you live, hobbies, dislikes, and anything you wish to include so that we know about!). You can also use Voki to create your personalized speaking avatar.  
[\[delete\]](#)

 **re: Virtual Wiki 1**  
**Fawali-Foundation2wiki** Nov 9, 2009 8:10 am  
Some of you have created their avatar in Voki but have NOT written a short text about themselves. Please write us something about you!  
[\[delete\]](#)

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! www.kingsage.ae

[Chicken Video & Ringtone](#)  
Get 4 Download Credits But Pay For Only 3. Get It Now. 250 Fils/Message  
www.Mozook.Com/FunnyChid

[Ask a Dog Vet Online Now](#)  
8 Veterinarians Are Online! Ask a Question, Get an Answer ASAP.  
JustAnswer.com/Dog

Search

Home

Lesson 1

Lesson 10

Lesson 11

Lesson 12- Final

Exam Writing

Lesson 2

Lesson 3

Lesson 4

Lesson 5

Lesson 6

Lesson 7

Lesson 8

Lesson 9

Personal Pages

Placement Test

Practice

Fawali-Foundation2wiki · My Wikis · My Account · Help · Sign Out · wikispaces

 Foundation2Wiki

☆ A'ala'a

Page ▾

Discussion

History

Notify Me

Dates:

Nov 12, 2009 9:23 am to Jan 20, 2010 10:11 pm

Actions:

[show wikitext changes](#)

Key:

Inserted Text Deleted Text Jump To: [First](#) [Last](#)

Online Chatting

Chatting is one kind of communication on the internet, it meant internet. It means talking directly refer to talking with other people on the internet by using text messages. Online chatting rooms give a chance to immediate access and fast to all sort of singles. sorts of single rooms chatting. This essay will look at outline the main problems and solutions of online chatting.

Many people today have found a common hobby for chatting online, so there are many problems arising because of it. First of all, internet chat is wasting the time. Online chatting is giving the person who spends a lot of time on it chance to waste a lot of non-interest time while he can spends his time with things more interesting. Another danger of online chatting is that chatting partner can easily track the other person to know personal information. This problem can lead to harassment, stalking and any other kind of distress.

Search

Home

Lesson 1

Lesson 10

Lesson 11

Lesson 12- Final

Exam Writing

Lesson 2

Lesson 3

Lesson 4

Lesson 5

Lesson 6

Lesson 7

Lesson 8

Lesson 9

Personal Pages

Placement Test

Practice

edit navigation

# Appendix H. Write and Improve

**Write&Improve**

- Create profile
- Create a workbook
- Join a workbook
- My progress

Don't forget! You can create a profile to see many more tasks. It's fast and free! [Create a profile now.](#)

**Start writing**  
It's free to start writing! Click on any of these tasks to start. You're ready to write and improve!

**W&I Beginner** [More tasks](#)

- ☐ **An email: My favourite day of the week**  
You receive this email from your English pen friend:  
*My favourite day of the week is Thursday. I usually play tennis on*
- ☐ **A postcard: Visiting your town**  
Your Australian friend, Mary, is visiting your country. She will come to your town for one day.
- ☐ **A description: My favourite piece of clothing**  
Read the text from a fashion magazine.  
*My favourite piece of clothing is my leather jacket. I wear it all the time.*
- ☐ **A note: New town**  
You now live in a new town.  
  
Write a note to your friend Isabel about the town.

**W&I Intermediate** [More tasks](#)

- ☐ **An opinion essay: Shopping**  
You have recently had a class discussion about shopping. Now your English teacher has asked you to write an essay giving your opinions on the following statement:
- ☐ **A letter: A problem**  
There is a problem in your street. Write a letter to the local town council explaining who you are, what the problem is and what you hope will be done about it.
- ☐ **An opinion essay: Professional footballers**  
Professional footballers earn really high salaries nowadays, far more than they did in the past. Do you think they deserve these salaries or are they paid too much for what they do?
- ☐ **A report: Making a video**  
Your English class is going to make a short video about daily life at your school. Your teacher has asked you to write a report suggesting which lessons should be filmed and why.

**W&I Advanced** [More tasks](#)

Cambridge English Write & Improve

Secure | <https://writeandimprove.com/workbooks#/my-workbooks/584e529b-a624-4006-86db-90c63be9d7ef/tasks/58ad1354-d7ad-437d-8d05-6ffc811f9466>

**Write&Improve** [Return to workbook](#) [Join a workbook](#) [Invitation code](#) [Join](#) [Sign out](#)

Welcome, Fatima [Sign out](#)

- W&I workbooks
- My workbooks
  - Bahrain Polytechnic
- Create a workbook
- Join a workbook
- My progress
  - My writing
  - My activity & awards
- My account

**E-journal- Week 1: Reflect on your experience in week 1**

Reflect on your experience in week 1.

Description

What is it?

What happened?

Why am I talking about it?

Interpretation

What is important, relevant, interesting, useful?

How is it similar to or different from others?

How can it be explored, explained using contemporary theories?

Outcome

What have I learned from this?

How will it influence my future work?

[Start again](#) [Saved](#)

I love you you love me were a happy family with a huge big hug and a kiss from me to you won't you say you love me too

**Task help** [Help](#) Level A2

Images Feedback

**&** *Good work! This new piece of writing is A2. You improved your writing! Keep trying! Look at the feedback. Make new changes. Then click Check again.*

*I love you you love me were a happy family with a huge big hug and a kiss from me to you won't you say you love me too*

**Your progress** Checks 1

A2

# Appendix I. DCU Ethical Approval

Dublin City University  
Ollscoil Chathair Bhaile Átha Cliath



Dr. Françoise Blin  
SALIS

10<sup>th</sup> March 2009

**REC Reference:** DCUREC/2009/038

**Proposal Title:** **Enhancing Arabic Students' L2 Writing through Peer-Reviewing: the Case of Bahraini Learners of English**

**Applicants:** Dr. Françoise Blin, Ms. Fatima Ahmad Wali

Dear Françoise,

This research proposal qualifies under our Notification Procedure, as a low risk social research project. Therefore, the DCU Research Ethics Committee approves this research proposal. Should substantial modifications to the research protocol be required at a later stage, a further submission should be made to the REC.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'DR Raftery', is written over a faint circular stamp.

Dr. Declan Raftery  
Secretary  
DCU Research Ethics Committee



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