



Review and Revision Workshops: A Strategic Framework for Research Writing in FLE

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Abstract

Research writing in French as a Foreign Language (FFL) is a complex and fascinating challenge for apprentice researchers, who must reconcile scientific rigor with extensive documentation. At the Master's and doctoral levels, novice researchers frequently encounter obstacles that considerably complicate the drafting of this type of writing, whether it be a Master's thesis, an academic article, or a doctoral dissertation. In order to foster a better acculturation to research writing in FFL, and while drawing upon the principles of collaborative learning, we aim to demonstrate the effects of corrective feedback on the improvement of writing skills for Master's theses in FFL didactics. This article examines how review and revision workshops constitute an indispensable pedagogical framework for perfecting this specific genre of writing. Finally, the article advocates for an effective integration of these workshops within Algerian university curricula.

Keywords: FFL research writing, review and revision workshops, corrective feedback, development of writing skills, Master's thesis.

1. Introduction

Research writing constitutes a complex task for most apprentice researchers who complain especially when they initiate the drafting process. This complexity further increases when it involves writing in French as a Foreign Language (FFL). Thus, the Master's or doctoral student must not only demonstrate an understanding of theoretical content but is also called upon to appropriate a complex academic literacy. To remedy this situation and in order to overcome the recurring writing difficulties in FFL research papers, it proves indispensable to revalue training programs and rethink current pedagogical practices.

Indeed, the adoption of effective teaching strategies, based on cooperation, collaborative work, and mutual aid between apprentice researchers, as well as between teacher-researchers and apprentice researchers, constitutes a privileged path for better acculturation to this type of writing (Merabet, 2022, National Symposium). In this contribution, the first part introduces theoretical benchmarks relating to studies conducted on peer corrective feedback. The second part will present the methodological framework and the experimental protocol of this study. The third part will analyze the errors of the apprentice researchers, and the fourth part will discuss the results obtained.

2. Theoretical Benchmarks

Drafting a Master's thesis, a scientific article, or a doctoral dissertation in FFL does not constitute an easy task. The drafting of research writing represents, in fact, a fairly complex process that mobilizes several skills, mainly: linguistic skills (mastery of lexicon and scientific terminology), methodological skills (respecting the structure of scientific discourse, knowing how to pose the research question, building a rigorous argumentation, knowing how to mobilize and exploit sources wisely), and cognitive and metacognitive skills (developing a spirit of analysis and synthesis, adopting a critical posture, self-evaluating, and justifying methodological choices). The theoretical aspect of this article focuses on the effects of peer corrective feedback, particularly during the review and revision of research writing.

2.1. Peer Corrective Feedback: What Interests for Research Writing?

Starting from a synthesis of several hundred meta-analyses, Hattie and Timperley (2007) present feedback as "information provided by an agent (e.g., a teacher, a peer, a book, a parent, self, experience) relating to different aspects of a performance". (Cited in Dozot, 2017, p. 60). Feedback could be a clarification of a concept, a reformulation, a correction of information, a question that helps the learner to reflect, encouragement, etc. It is important to note that feedback does not constitute a simple transmission of corrective information, but it is part of an interactive dynamic favoring exchange and collaboration. In this perspective, to what extent does the feedback resulting from scriptural activities allow for breaking the isolation of the apprentice researcher by integrating them into a process of co-construction of knowledge and scientific discourse?

2.1.1. From the Isolation of the Apprentice Researcher Toward a Co-construction of Scientific Discourse

Research writing is not summarized as an isolated act, but it is part of a social context where the apprentice researcher positions themselves in relation to the existing literature review. The researcher takes into account the expectations and knowledge of their audience, drafts their writing in an academic style valuing neutrality, precision, and caution, and thus learns to write scientifically by adopting a culture of rigor and objectivity. Succeeding in research writing constitutes a real challenge for the apprentice researcher. They must not only master a specialized vocabulary, build complex sentences, and adopt a neutral tone, but also take into account the target audience to anticipate expectations and produce a discourse that is both clear and convincing.

According to Lang (2019): "Scriptural activities at the academic level are indeed not reduced to purely discursive aspects, and even less to defects in language mastery on the part of novice writers,

but are in reality complex tasks composed of a set of intimately linked dimensions (social, cognitive, cultural, etc.)" (p. 6). Several contributions have been devoted to the analysis of the effects of feedback on the evolution of learners' written productions (Colognesi, S., 2015; Colognesi, S. and Van Nieuwenhoven, C., 2017a; Colognesi, S. and Van Nieuwenhoven, C., 2017b; Colognesi, S. and Lucchini, S., 2018). This research insists on the fact that learners, during collaborative review workshops, mobilize their already acquired knowledge and exploit it in intragroup discussions to adjust them together.

The works of Colognesi and her collaborators prove that this framework is not limited to simple peer correction, but it radically changes the writing and revision process into a social, cognitive, and metacognitive activity. Indeed, learners who play the role of evaluators rapidly improve the quality of their writing and subsequently develop the metacognitive skills and autonomy necessary to become competent writers. In the collaborative review of peer research writing, the effectiveness of corrective feedback relies more on the process it triggers than on the correction itself.

On the metacognitive level, the primary utility lies not only in the improvement of the text but in the consolidation of the metacognitive skills of the author and the reviewers. Thus, the author receives the criticism and analyzes it in order to plan their revision. Then, the reviewers identify the characteristics of a successful text and appropriate academic norms by discussing together. Thus, feedback becomes a vector of acculturation. In short, during review and revision workshops, apprentice researchers do not limit themselves solely to correcting errors but help each other to support their peers in the understanding and analysis of the research writing in question. This helps them consolidate cognitive and metacognitive strategies to manage their own research writings later.

2.1.2. From Solitary Writing Toward the Establishment of Constructive Corrective Feedbacks

Given the significant number of students enrolled in Master's programs at Algerian universities, the research supervisor often finds themselves faced with many difficulties in ensuring the follow-up of several research works within a limited timeframe. Consequently, it becomes necessary to find solutions by adopting teaching practices that allow for collaboration and mutual aid between apprentice researchers. Following Sawadogo (2009) and Min (2006), Souame and Kadi (2015) state: "didactic help tools such as reading source texts and collaborative work are indispensable for the construction of new knowledge. They allow participants in difficulty to produce texts of better quality at the semantic level and at the level of the textual surface" (p. 319).

Several contributions have been devoted to peer feedback in higher education (cf. Carless and Boud, 2018; Carless and Winstone, 2020; Mottier Lopez, Girardet and Naji, 2021). This research emphasizes the contributions of corrective feedback in a collaborative context in the co-construction of students' knowledge: "In a collaborative learning environment, the production and reception of formative feedback between learners are likely to represent a powerful framework for supporting the regulation of their learning" (Mottier Lopez, Girardet and Naji, 2021, p. 3). By introducing review and revision workshops, the teacher multiplies the opportunities for peer feedback, allowing for the active involvement of students in evaluative processes.

Indeed, the integration of corrective feedback within a group provides an optimization of the cognitive processes inherent in scientific writing and aims to develop, in addition, skills of self-evaluation and metacognition (Girardet, 2020). Review and revision workshops allow for changing the perception the young researcher has of their writing. By relying on group dynamics and active collaboration, they constitute an alternative to the traditional supervision relationship, thus effectively fighting against the feeling of isolation and anxiety related to writing. Finally, faced with recurring reluctance due to the isolation of the apprentice researcher and the anxiety of the "blank page". In order to better support apprentice researchers in the process of drafting the Master's thesis in FLE, a support framework has been set up. The following section will be devoted to the presentation of the practical framing of this study.

3. Methodological Framework and Experimental Protocol

To analyze the contributions of review and revision workshops in the development of research writing skills, an experiment was set up within the French Department of the Barika University Center. This approach is part of a course entitled: "Thesis Writing Methodology" intended for second-year Master's students of all specialties (FFL Didactics and Language Sciences). The objective was not only to evaluate a Master's thesis already defended but to examine the process of collaborative review and to analyze the nature of the difficulties identified by the apprentice researchers themselves, thus becoming actors in their own training.

Our experiment was conducted with a sample of twenty (20) students enrolled in Master 2 at the French Department during the academic year 2024-2025. These students, previously trained in research methodology and involved in drafting their theses, possessed a priori the theoretical prerequisites necessary for the realization of this task. The chosen sample is characterized by its heterogeneity, bringing together 15 students and 5 teachers enrolled in the Master's program. The distribution of participants within the groups was as follows: five groups of four members were formed. Each group is supervised by a French teacher ensuring both the role of expert and facilitator. This configuration in small groups of four members was chosen to favor interactions and ensure that each member could actively participate in discussions.

Five Master's theses were selected. These manuscripts were written and defended in June 2025 by five Master's students enrolled in FLE Didactics. They cover various themes and were selected to constitute a representative sample of produced research writing. To guarantee research anonymity, each group received a thesis without access to the identity of its author. Given that writing constitutes a complex activity, rewriting is essential as a vital process (Reuter, 2002; Lafont-Terranova, 2009; Niwese, 2010). The present study focused on several activities: reading, collaborative review, rewriting, and collaborative rewriting.

According to Cuq (2003): writing and rewriting are inseparable: "writing and rewriting are understood as two sides of the same activity; the second appears when the writer, through reading-revision, perceives dissonances between their textual project and the text already produced" (p. 212). The task assigned to each group does not consist of revising the entire thesis, but is limited only to the study of two essential parts often difficult to draft: the general introduction and the general conclusion. Following a reading and a collective review of the distributed theses, the

participants of each workshop proceed to their correction with a view to drafting a revised and improved version.

The instructions entrusted to each group are summarized as follows:

- Read carefully the general introduction and the general conclusion of the proposed thesis, taking care to reread them to properly identify the structure, the main ideas, and any gaps;
- Identify and classify errors into two major categories: language errors (grammar, lexicon, conjugation, style) and methodological errors (structure, compliance with academic norms);
- Make the necessary corrections and proceed with a careful revision of the noted errors;
- Draft as a group a final, corrected, and revised version of the general introduction and conclusion.

The approach adopted is both descriptive-analytical and quantitative. It aims to identify recurring weaknesses, both linguistically and methodologically, and to compare the general introductions and conclusions written by the apprentice researchers of the previous year (original version) with those resulting from the rewriting work carried out by the collaborative groups during the review and revision workshops (final version).

4. Analysis of the "Original Version" of Introductions and General Conclusions

University research is a demanding path marked by cognitive and methodological challenges. This journey is punctuated by major obstacles, particularly for FFL students. These students are required to produce academic writing that demonstrates scientific rigor and documentary richness, thus mobilizing their analytical skills and their mastery of the language. The analysis of the general introductions and general conclusions of the five "original version" theses highlighted two types of recurring errors: linguistic errors and methodological errors (The number of error occurrences is mentioned in Table 1 and Table 2).

4.1. Linguistic Errors

Language errors are numerous and varied (The results are presented in Table 1). They are classified into two major categories.

4.1.1. Errors of lexicon and style

inappropriate use of lexicon and confusion between: method vs. methodology, research question vs. questioning vs. problematic. Redundancy, which is reflected in the excessive use of the same terms. This is due to the lack of mastery of scientific terminology. Lack of rigor and non-compliance with academic style by using personal turns of phrase that stem from oral language, such as: In my opinion, Personally, I noticed.

4.1.2. Morphosyntactic errors

This type of error is recurring. We can mainly cite the incorrect use of prepositions (for example: *Ce travail se divisera sur deux parties* instead of *Ce travail se divisera en deux parties*). Violation of

temporal coherence. Errors in the gender of nouns are also observed, often linked to interference with Arabic. Lack of clarity by writing sentences that are too long and complex. Added to this is the poor use of punctuation.

4.2. Methodological Errors

Methodological errors are also numerous, mainly:

4.2.1. Recurring errors of the general introduction

The general introduction constitutes the essential part of research work because it allows for presenting and situating the studied theme. It is structured like a funnel and must include the following sub-sections: The hook, The clear and precise announcement of the subject, the reasons for the choice, the research objectives, the problematic, the hypotheses, the methodology followed, and the presentation of the plan.

The members of the five collaborative groups were able to identify several errors committed in the proposed general introductions: An opening that is too long and vague or an abrupt entry into the subject. The arguments put forward as well as their justifications were not sufficiently developed, which results in a lack of precision in the statement of the problematic and a fuzzy formulation of objectives. To this is added the absence of a clear description of the methodology. Moreover, data collection instruments, investigation techniques, and analysis methods are not clearly specified. It should be noted that this major gap weakens the rigor of the scientific approach. Finally, it is important to emphasize that the presentation of the plan is sometimes poorly structured, which prevents the reader from following the hierarchy of the parts of the work and the progression of the research.

Table 1. Linguistic errors recorded in the general introductions of the "original version"

| Linguistic Errors (58 errors) | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------|
| Lexicon and Style | Occurrences | Morphosyntax and Clarity | Occurrences |
| Terminological confusion | 6 | Incorrect prepositions | 5 |
| Redundancy | 8 | Temporal incoherence | 8 |
| Use of personal or oral phrasing | 4 | Errors in noun gender | 5 |
| | | Long and complex sentences | 10 |
| | | Faulty punctuation | 12 |
| Total | 18 | Total | 40 |

4.2.2. Recurring errors of the general conclusion

The general conclusion consists of a synthesis of the results obtained and an opening that leads toward other avenues of reflection in perspective. It is of particular importance and is distinct from the abstract. It includes a brief reminder of the problematic, objectives, and methodology followed, the main results obtained, the limits of the work, and research perspectives.

Thanks to several collaborative reviews, the participants of each group were able to identify numerous gaps in the general conclusions (see Table 2). Insufficient mastery of the synthesis technique. Indeed, the majority of apprentice researchers encounter difficulties in extracting the essential part of the work carried out. It also turned out that they often confuse the abstract and the synthesis and do not clearly answer the problematic posed. Finally, the work rarely proposes an opening toward subsequent research paths, and sometimes new information is inserted without a direct link to the subject treated.

Table 2. Methodological errors recorded in the general introductions of the "original version"

| Methodological Errors (40 errors) | | | |
|--|--------------------|--|--------------------|
| General Introduction | Occurrences | General Conclusion | Occurrences |
| Hook too long and vague | 3 | Insufficient mastery of synthesis technique | 3 |
| Short entry | 2 | Difficulty extracting essential results | 4 |
| Lack of precision in problematic statement | 2 | Confusion between synthesis and abstract | 3 |
| Fuzzy formulation of research objectives | 3 | Absence of clear answer to research question | 2 |
| Absence of clear methodology description | 5 | Absence of opening toward future research | 4 |
| Lack of precision on collection instruments/analysis | 3 | Insertion of new information not in thesis | 2 |
| Poorly structured or confused plan | 4 | | |
| Total | 22 | Total | 18 |

5. Analysis of the "Final Version" of Introductions and General Conclusions

The comparative analysis of the general introductions and general conclusions of the studied theses "original version" with those drafted in the workshop "final version" by the five collaborative groups allowed for obtaining a precise vision of the progress made and highlighting a certain number of persistent errors to be remedied. The in-depth analysis of the "original" and "final" versions allowed us to note a significant progression in the quality of academic writing both linguistically and methodologically.

Linguistically, a significant evolution in writing quality was noted. It should be noted that the number of errors significantly decreased, dropping from 58 to 12, which corresponds to a reduction of approximately 79.3%. Thanks to self-corrections and hetero-corrections, the members of each group became aware of their recurring errors. Indeed, they managed to correct a significant number of stylistic awkwardnesses such as ambiguous sentences and repetitions. They also succeeded in correcting agreement, conjugation, and syntax errors, sometimes due to interference with the mother tongue.

Collaborative review and revision created a metacognitive awareness. Moreover, by playing the role of evaluators, the workshop participants were led to mobilize their theoretical knowledge, to confront them with those of their peers to finally succeed in appropriating the criteria of successful research writing. Methodologically, increased scientific rigor is manifested in the apprentice researchers through the reformulation of fuzzy parts of the introduction and conclusion. The results show a significant reduction in methodology errors from 40 to 15, i.e., a reduction of approximately 62.5%.

Regarding the introduction, at first, they manage to properly contextualize the subject, especially for short hooks, and tend to clarify certain poorly formulated research questions. Secondly, they ensure to bring more precision to the methodology followed to carry out the research. Finally, to ensure progression and coherence between the different chapters of the work carried out, they performed revisions on logical connectors, linking expressions, and punctuation. Concerning the conclusion, the apprentice researchers succeeded in synthesizing the main results while highlighting the main impacts of the work. They also proceeded to delete certain passages judged useless and which contribute nothing to the argumentation. Furthermore, they manage to propose research perspectives, especially for theses that did not include any.

6. Discussion of Results

The comparative analysis of the "original" and "final" versions, as well as the observation of the members of each team during the realization of the collaborative rewriting task, allowed us to note that the review and revision workshops constitute a fundamental support framework favoring the development of scriptural skills in research writing. Far from being simple correction and revision sessions, these workshops represent collaborative learning spaces where apprentice researchers, by becoming evaluators of their peers' work, develop an essential critical posture and reflective autonomy.

The teacher-facilitators played the role of experts by providing help to their classmates in difficulty. These multiplied the opportunities for questioning within the workshop, thus favoring the emergence of interactional patterns conducive to learning. It also turned out that the heterogeneity characterizing the constitution of collaborative groups created a co-learning dynamic. Thus, discussions within the workshops allowed for negotiating meaning and confronting argumentations, which allowed for overcoming several linguistic and methodological difficulties specific to this type of writing. Collaborative review proves to be an essential lever for the development of metacognitive awareness.

Indeed, the corrective feedbacks proved to be constructive. Apprentice researchers tend to evaluate and regulate their writing process by actively reflecting on their way of drafting and organizing research work. It is important to emphasize that these corrective feedbacks relate to grammar, syntax, academic lexicon, clarity of the problematic, validity of hypotheses, the methodology presented, the structure of the argumentation, the synthesis of results, the development of research perspectives, and citation norms.

Despite the progress noted, some gaps remain. Among these are difficulties in paraphrasing and correctly citing sources. These reluctances reflect important challenges in mastering the conventions of research writing in FLE and highlight the need for continuous support to consolidate the writing skills of future researchers. The experience conducted shows that review and revision workshops represent not only linguistic correction spaces but also an essential support framework to meet the requirements of academic writing. By placing participants in an active role of evaluators, they increase opportunities for constructive corrective feedback. Furthermore, the metalinguistic negotiations that occur during verbal interactions stimulate metacognitive reflection and consequently develop research writing skills. Finally, by establishing a space for exchange and constructive feedback, these workshops allow apprentice researchers to no longer be isolated in the face of their writing, while benefiting from a critical evaluation from their peers.

7. Conclusion

The present contribution aims to demonstrate the role of review and revision workshops as a pedagogical framework favoring the appropriation of research writing in FLE in a university context. The establishment of this type of workshop allowed for encouraging apprentice researchers to take up the challenge of research writing. It should be emphasized that the work of review and revision carried out by the members of each workshop is not limited to the correction of morphosyntactic errors but also concerns argumentation, the coherence of academic discourse, as well as its structuring.

The corrective feedbacks produced within the formed groups favored positive interdependence among the members. Moreover, the facilitators played the role of learning facilitators who orient and direct their peers by giving them recommendations and practical advice to succeed in the drafting of their theses in progress. This didactic framework created a stimulating context that pushes apprentice researchers to truly involve themselves in this writing task.

We finally suggest that the success of these reading and revision workshops depends on the conviction of the teacher and the apprentice researchers in the usefulness of these workshops and

the skills they possess to effectively manage this collaborative work. Consequently, we assume that a real integration of these workshops within Algerian university curricula is a necessary condition to reinforce the quality of research writing and promote the autonomy of future researchers.

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