Role of Feedback on English Academic Writing Skills of Tertiary Level Iraqi English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Students: A Review of Literature

Entesar A. Algburi & Abu Bakar Razali

Faculty of Educational Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), Malaysia
Email: entesaralgburi@gmail.com & abmr_bakar@upm.edu.my

Abstract

Recent studies have shown that Iraqi English as a foreign language (EFL) students face many challenges when composing in an academic context, where they produce a wide range of errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar, and they have trouble writing coherent texts and managing their writing tasks (Alshujairi, 2017; Ahmed & Mohammed, 2015). One of the main reasons why Iraqi EFL students lack proficiency in their academic writing is that they do not receive the necessary feedback to improve their writing. The idea of feedback as a crucial aspect for improving teaching writing instruction and improving academic writing acquisition has not been given much attention in EFL Iraqi literature. This issue is quite problematic because mainstream EFL writing instructors need to equip themselves with effective instructional techniques and strategies to improve EFL student writers' skills. Thus, this article reports on the review of studies on feedback for ESL Iraqi undergraduate students. This review sheds light on the relationship between providing feedback, improving academic writing skills and offering guidelines for writing instructors to help EFL Iraqi undergraduate students improve their academic writing. Furthermore, this review hopes to urge administrators in higher education to provide feedback courses to enhance writing instructors' feedback knowledge. Finally, this literature review hopes to explore gaps in the Iraqi EFL literature context, which should be adequately addressed in future research studies.
Keywords: Academic Writing, Feedback, Iraqi EFL Undergraduate Students, Process-based Approach to Writing Instruction

Introduction

In a rapidly changing world, obtaining a higher level of education is considered a means of attaining social proficiency and economic gain. Much emphasis in education has been on the college graduation certificate to assure government jobs or opportunities to study abroad. Blazar (2016) asserts that focusing on undergraduate students' academic writing performance will contribute to students' academic performance, and thus, good academic writing skills must be developed to ensure government employee performance in the future.

In the last two decades, writing has become an essential tool for today's global community. People worldwide have increased communication by composing more broadly

through digital means, such as social media, e-mails and text messages (Davies & Elder, 2004). Given this continuous technology change, people need to be connected, transfer ideas, gain knowledge and communicate with others worldwide, which are dependent on the ability to use practical and effective writing skills (Hyland, 2003). Therefore, writing ability has become one of the most important predictors of undergraduate students' academic success (Ferris & Hedge, 2005; Graham, 2006). Writing is currently used to evaluate undergraduate students' language skills and the extent of their learning progress in academic contexts (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996). Kamil (2014) affirms that the importance of writing coherent, well-organised expository essays at the tertiary level, and laments that students who lack practical writing skills are disadvantaged because they will be unable to produce clear and convincing arguments to demonstrate their understanding of the subject.

Horning (1987) states that undergraduate students need to master the mechanical element of transcribing letters, such as knowledge of grammatical, organisational and coherence and the cohesion aspects of writing and logic required in an academic context. Furthermore, to compose effectively, undergraduate students need to be taught a range of writing skills like generating and developing ideas, drafting, revising and rewriting final drafts (Hyland, 2003). Academic writing performance is demonstrated in a student's writing in response to content learned in the university academic context, not to show all information about a topic but to show the process of a writer's thinking about that topic to improve their undergraduate academic success (Shen, Silva, & Matsuda, 2002). Academic writing has a vital role in socialising undergraduate students into the discourse on subjects and tertiary-level disciplines. Academic writing depends on a wide range of cognitive skills that allow undergraduate students to think critically and improve their writing efficiency (Giridharan, 2012) because writing is an ongoing process and is not taught but learned through many stages (Hyland, 2003). Writing involves a combination of skills and strategies that can be developed by writing instructors to motivate students to express themselves effectively and build their confidence (Hyland, 2003, p. 136). Zahou et al (2006) state that undergraduates must accomplish numerous objectives for writing improvement at the tertiary level:

- language (English vocabulary and grammar, ranging from clauses to morphemes or punctuation),
- rhetoric or genres (conventional discourse or text structures and elements),
- composing processes (planning, drafting, editing and revising a text),
- ideas and knowledge (concepts and information for written texts),
- affective states (learners' emotional dispositions concerning writing),
- learning and transfer (processes of transforming knowledge and skills) and
- identity and self-awareness (self-awareness, self-image or self-concept related to social functions of writing) (P,30).

The ability to write academic prose well at the tertiary level reflects students' ability to express themselves effectively. However, if composing a coherent and cohesive text is difficult for native speakers (Pineteh, 2014), it is the most challenging task for ESL/EFL students, particularly Iraqi undergraduate students. When evaluating L1 writing, instructors were highly focused on providing feedback on organisation and content and less concentrated on structure and mechanics (Ruegg & Sugiyama, 2013). However, in certain contexts, providing and utilizing feedback (formative or summative) from non-native instructors can be considered as form of justifying students' grades, therefore, they are not existing to help students overcome their mistakes and improve their performance (Farris &

Hedgcock, 2014). Furthermore, Huisman et al. (2019) argued in their meta-analysis that writing teaching staff considered giving feedback on writing was time-consuming, such workload increase the demand for alternative pedagogical techniques for providing feedback that are both adequate and practically competent.

In academic writing at the tertiary level, EFL Iraqi undergraduate students experience many challenges when dealing with writing tasks and find that they lack knowledge of specific grammar and syntax conventions and the broader conventions of organisation and logic required in academic discourse (Nasser, 2019). This matter is concerning because Iraqi undergraduates have been provided with theoretical and practical materials covering linguistic competence, cognitive skills and relevant educational strategies – and yet they still struggle in writing. Also, most Iraqi universities offer writing courses over the four years of undergraduate studies (which is considered the most critical course) for undergraduate students to gain knowledge and skills to be proficient writers (college of education for women). Even though English writing courses in colleges are assigned to teach ESL/EFL undergraduate and postgraduate students critical thinking and writing skills (Bailey, 2011), writing is still taught traditionally, focusing on low-level writing skills, and undergraduate students receive insufficient feedback (Ayoub, 2006), and thus resulting in their poor mastery of the writing skills.

Writing can be approached through writing instruction but has been considered a challenging task because of difficulties in transferring ideas and thoughts into writing given that it requires many skills and knowledge based on topic and grammatical rules (Jalaluddin et al., 2015). Writing ability must be evaluated at each stage of writing to ensure improvement. This is where the role of feedback and its impact on writing has received substantial support from a body of literature, where recent studies have attempted to prove that feedback impacts writing performance (Kulger, 1996). Thus, providing comments and feedback on writing tasks continuously and formatively is vital to improve writing skills (Hyland, 2019). Continuous and formative comments, responses or error marking provided to writers to improve their writing are essential for the first language (L1), second language (L2) and especially foreign language (FL) writing proficiency. Bichener, Young and Cameron (2005) assert that writing instructors have many feedback options to implement in writing instruction, such as direct and indirect feedback, and written or oral forms of feedback. Most studies have indicated that EFL undergraduate students experience many challenges regarding the Iraqi context when they compose in an academic context. EFL undergraduate students make frequent errors in spelling and grammar when taught writing using a traditional method (product-based approach). Also, there has been lack of studies conducted to investigate the impact of formative feedback on academic writing performance. For example, Ayoub (2006) found that EFL Iraqi undergraduate students made all types of errors and that many other factors affect writing performance, such as having insufficient time, demotivation and inefficiency of some of the instructors responsible of using alternative methods to teaching writing.

Therefore, this study provides a review of Iraqi studies focusing on academic writing and its importance at the tertiary level, types of errors committed by Iraqi EFL undergraduate students and the role of feedback in improving academic writing skills. The authors will discuss: 1) the role of EFL education and academic writing in Iraq and 2) the role of feedback and its impact on writing performance for EFL Iraqi undergraduates.

EFL Education and EFL Writing in Iraq

In Iraq, the English language is a compulsory subject taught by non-native English users in the form of Iraqi teachers, where the English textbooks, and the syllabus was borrowed from a British syllabus and written by British authors about Iraqi culture. Iraqi secondary schools concentrate on a communication approach, as imitated in the latest Iraqi 'Education Guidelines', and do not concentrate much on communication strategies by writing. Most Iraqi students think that oral communication is essential and more necessary than writing skills in the English language context (Jameel & Mahmood, 2017).

Based on the Iraqi educational policy, new basic knowledge is expected to help students in their higher studies at the tertiary level (Alsadi, 2016). Teaching English in Iraq is affected by many factors, such as, time allotted to teaching English, teacher preparation and qualification and EFL textbooks. Furthermore, English teaching still follows traditional strategies, where the teacher is the source of information, and learning is slow (Jafar, 2016). Iraqi students are taught English for 12 years before entering university; where in the last three years before university, students are expected to fully master English language skills. However, when it comes to writing skills, pre-university students fail to compose coherent text and use writing strategies to manage tertiary level writing tasks (Mutar & Nimehechisalem, 2017). For the intermediate stage, selected material for writing in English for Iraq textbooks are varied; where it involves vocabulary, spelling, punctuation, writing answers to questions and short writing tasks (50–70 words); and the teaching of writing does not really refer to the importance of providing feedback while writing but that of 'marking errors' and "encouraging comments" (Messieres et al., 2013). Elebadi (2019) stated that "Learning English for students is intended to master the four language skills, unfortunately, the English writing skill of Iraqi students is low. The students are not able to write English well because their knowledge vocabulary still limited and they do not use grammar in writing" (p. 400).

The ultimate focus of writing instruction in the pre-tertiary stage is to improve writing as a skill, and students are taken gradually through a writing process (brainstorming, planning, developing ideas, writing by given model, self-correction and redrafting). During this level, Al-Shujari and Tan (2017) found that the most common mistakes committed by Iraqi EFL pre-university students are grammatical mistakes, where they misuse tenses, prepositions and singular and plural nouns. However, they commit fewer errors in irregular verbs, adjectives and possessive nouns. The researchers also find that, for intermediate and secondary stages, writing instructions in the teacher's guide focus on marking errors and self-correction without providing feedback, enabling the teacher to control students' progression and adjust instruction towards improving writing skills. The review of studies above reveals that the writing material and writing instruction done at the pre-tertiary level in Iraq are insufficient for preparing students for the tertiary level. This has thus created a problem extending to the tertiary level, where undergraduate students at colleges are required to compose academic essays, assignments and research papers regularly but are unable to come up with good academic written products.

Challenges in Academic Writing for Iraqi EFL Undergraduate Students

English academic writing is an essential part of any discipline at the tertiary level. Composing an academic texts requires a wide range of writing skills and sub-skills to improve writing performance (Reid, 2008). However, writing instructors and undergraduate students usually face tremendous challenges when writing in the EFL/ESL context. EFL students'

academic writing challenges depend on many factors, such as mother tongue interference, lack of time and resources (Keong, Ali, Hameed, 2015), traditional methods of teaching writing (product-based approaches) (Alsadi, 2017), lack of knowledge and lack of written assignments or practice (Muslim, 2014). Furthermore, Abbas, Yasin and Ismil (2016) claim that Iraqi EFL undergraduate students encounter challenges in identifying and correcting their writing errors.

Abbas (2016) studied 88 Iraqi EFL undergraduate students from an English language department and found that Iraqi undergraduate students have poor writing skills to manage their writing tasks and commit errors in language, organisation, mechanics and vocabulary. Abbas revealed that Iraqi undergraduate students lacked writing skills and commonly experienced challenges in dealing with writing tasks (Abbas, 2016). Similarly, other research conducted by Ali (2012); Al-Sadi (2016) revealed that undergraduate Iraqi EFL students, similar to other Arab students, face problems in writing effectively in an academic context. They are passive learners, cannot express themselves well, and commit the same errors in each writing assignment. Al-Shujairai (2017) revealed that the lack of writing skills attributes to first language interference (i.e. Arabic language), and Iraqi Arab EFL students fail to write English text grammatically correctly. Mohammad (2018) analysed 70 essays from 93 (i.e., 31 males and 39 females) undergraduate students majoring in English and revealed that Iraqi undergraduate students encounter difficulties in spelling, capitalisation and punctuation.

Abbas (2019) states, "Unfortunately, Iraqi EFL students in different educational settings, including under and postgraduate levels … have poor writing skills and face difficulties in managing writing tasks" (p. 56). The most common errors occurred in grammar and mechanical skills (Al-Shujari & Tan, 2017). Abbas, Yasin and Ismail (2016) confirm that Iraqi undergraduate students fail to write well and fail to grasp their errors in writing. The challenges they experienced are not restricted to the accuracy of structures they use but also include composing coherent and cohesive work (Darweesh & Kadhim, 2016). Al-Qaraghooly and Sultan (2008); AlBakaa (2015) analyse postgraduate errors when doing academic writing. These studies indicate that most postgraduates do not master the aspects of writing when they write in an academic context. They show that postgraduates use linear patterns to show the mastery of linguistics and communication with the knowledge of grammar to retain readers' interest.

Several studies have been conducted to investigate the common types of errors that occur in writing at the tertiary level in Iraq are either on grammatical, spelling and punctuation errors (Abbas, Yasin, & Ismail, 2016; Al-shujairi & Tan, 2017; Nasser, 2019; Ridha, 2012; Yahya, 2016). Darweesh and Kadhim (2016) also found that Iraqi students fail to identify conjunctions, misuse compound prepositions and misunderstand grammatical cohesive devices. Furthermore, they state that the source of errors committed by Iraqi EFL undergraduate students lies in the lack of practice in English writing and the interference of the mother tongue particularly the negative translation of thoughts and ideas from the first language. Yahya (2017) states that writing at tertiary context has become a challenge for writing instructors to satisfy undergraduates to enable them to write effectively. Students are recommended to be taught in pre-tertiary level structures, vocabulary and communication of ideas and thoughts. In addition, instructors must work hard to help undergraduates acquire required writing skills for effective composition (Aziz, 2011; Nasser, 2019). However, most studies focus on error analysis, and only a few studies were conducted to investigate students' errors in content/ideas, coherence and cohesion, organisation and structure (Abbas, 2016;

Ali, 2012; Darweesh & Kadhim, 2016). Ali finds that most undergraduate students were unable to compose coherent text. Thus, they cannot produce a coherent piece of writing because of their difficulty in connecting ideas in sequenced paragraphs (Abu Hameid, 2013; Ahmed & Mohammed, 2015).

Role of Feedback on Iraqi EFL Undergraduate Students' Academic Writing Performance

Feedback is vital in the process approach of teaching writing in which it emphasises revising, editing and rewriting through multiple drafts to write effectively. Hyland indicates that "he process approach to teaching writing emphasises the writer as an independent producer of the text. Writing depends on the basic cognitive process that teachers should develop these by helping students to plan, define a rhetorical problem, propose solutions and evaluate outcomes" (2019, p. 10). Therefore, the process approach focuses on all stages of writing (i.e., pre-writing, drafting, responding, revising, editing and publishing). The formative or continuous type of feedback has a crucial role in improving students' writing by providing more opportunities to revise and edit their drafts. Giving feedback also "provides writing instructors with an image of students' writing development and improves teaching writing instruction" (Hyland & Hyland, 2019, p. 3). Keh (1990, as cited in Muncie, 2000) pointed out that feedback is considered a central idea of the process approach; the value of feedback is its power in facilitating the revision stage, developing revising skills necessary to reach the final draft (Muncie, 2000). Thus, feedback provides opportunities for multiple drafts and helps students move through stages to produce the final draft.

In writing, as with any skill to be mastered, students need practice. The ESL/EFL writing situation is significantly different from writing in the first language. Writing errors are common, especially for non-native speakers of English. However, text accuracy can be improved by receiving effective feedback on linguistic errors (Hyland & Hyland, 2019). Writing acquisition is "a process of gaining a combination of skills through input and feedback, where feedback is valuable in developing writing performance" (Horning, 1987, p. 74). As a pedagogical genre, the writing teacher's job is to manipulate problematic areas in students' writing performance to avoid problems consequent writing tasks. Chandler (2003) claims that the best way to increase writing accuracy and fluency is by providing students with various types of feedback. Thus, assisting in the form of information (feedback) is critical in enhancing EFL students' writing. "Errors that occasionally occur throughout the writing must be seen as signs of learning progress and dealt with by giving feedback to provide instruction so that the student writers are unlikely to make the same errors in the future" (Raimes, 1983, P.7). Krashen as cited by Al-Jarrah, explains that mastery of rhetorical features of writing depends on input and feedback (2015).

Although providing feedback is the best pedagogic way to improve students' writing progress, Iraqi English language instructors consider it as a laborious and time-consuming task. They are also uncomfortable providing formative feedback. They prefer providing students grades without giving feedback because of overcrowded classes and insufficient time devoted to teaching and learning (Azmi et al., 2019). Furthermore, sometimes "writing teachers' efforts to provide feedback in writing class is likely to be pedagogically unsuccessful due to large numbers of students" (Williams, 2003, p. 299), insufficient time and traditional methods of providing feedback (Glover & Brown, 2006).

Review of Past Studies on Writing Instruction and Use of Feedback in Teaching Academic Writing in Iraq

From the literature review (see Appendix A), Iraqi writing instructors were found to rely on the traditional approach to teaching writing, which means that students' writing is seen as a final product to be evaluated and not as a continuous work to which they can and should be giving feedback on for improvement. Thus, Jasim (2012) recommends writing instructors to guide their students to high writing competence and adds "They also need to remember that they are not error hunters but that their job is to create non-threatening classrooms by convincing learners that they can write, that writing could be learned, and that nobody's writing is perfect" (p. 295).

Hassan (2019) states that the process of teaching writing in the Iraqi EFL context is laced with many challenges given that EFL teachers focus on the written text as a product rather than focusing on the process of writing; thus, the focus is on quantity (long of written text) rather than quality. Numerous studies have acknowledged that Iraqi English language writing instructors do not follow up on their students' written work by providing formative feedback for many reasons. Insufficient time, large class size, lack of technology for lecture classes and traditional methodology in teaching are contributing factors that affect providing formative feedback to improve writing performance (Al-Bakry, 2018; Ayoub, 2006). Jasim (2012) believes that writing instructors should provide positive comments and avoid giving negative ones on students' writing.

In the last two decades, many studies have emphasised the importance of the process approach, especially on giving formative feedback in foreign language writing instruction at the tertiary level (see Appendix A). Several studies (see Abbas, 2016; Ayoub, 2006; Jasim, 2012; Muslim, 2014) have provided important findings in relation to appropriate writing instruction detected in terms of motivating Iraqi instructors to follow the process approach to teaching writing, which offers opportunities to students receiving formative feedback to enhance their academic writing performance. Abbas and Al Bakary (2018) carried out a pre- and post-test experimental design study using the pair writing technique on 40 third-year undergraduate students of an English language department. They found that pair writing technique positively affects reducing students writing anxiety, thus improving writing quality and quantity. This is where the pair writing technique provides the opportunity to receive indirect feedback from classmates. Furthermore, speaking as a communication skill has improved given students' interaction when managing writing tasks. In another instance, Hasan (2019) carried out an experimental study on 43 undergraduate students to write a composition with 80–120 words and find that the Venn diagram technique improved experimental group participants' writing performance. She recommends for Iraqi high school EFL teachers to adopt this technique when teaching English writing.

Jonathan et al (2018) affirm that the types of feedback comprise the most critical factor in writing instruction. The type and focus of feedback writing instructors choose must be appropriate for students' progress needs. Therefore, teachers must give formative feedback on various types of writing constructs, such as content, organisation, grammatical form, spelling and punctuation (Ferris, 2003). In addition, multiple factors should be considered when providing feedback from various agents (such as instructor, peers and automated/computer-based software). These factors include timing, type of feedback (focused or unfocused, direct or indirect and written or automated) and students' feedback preferences. All these factors have critical roles in fostering the cognitive learning process of writing (Davis, 2015; Purnawarman, 2011).

The English language instructors' ability to respond to students' writing is vital for writing improvement. Research on providing feedback found that undergraduate students' writing was assessed as a final product without giving appropriate feedback, and those who were provided with feedback would have low-level errors (Parr & Timperely, 2010). In the case of Iraqi EFL undergraduate students, Ayoub (2006) points out that the process of responding to student's writing in EFL context emphasises on marking errors on spelling, punctuation and word formation and puts less emphasis on providing feedback on organising and developing ideas or on coherence and cohesion. In a study conducted by Cankara and Galaly (2018) to investigate the attitudes of high school teachers and students towards teacher written feedback in writing class in the north of Iraq, they surveyed 50 teachers and 200 hundred students using two suryve questionnaires. The study revealed that providing focused and content feedback positively impacts students' writing improvement and brings out students' positive attitudes towards receiving feedback on their writing. Al-Khayyat (2018) investigated the impact of using feedback strategies via technological devices to develop Iraqi EFL undergraduate students' listening performance in an institution's educational psychology department. Seventy participants received various types of feedback via social media (WhatsApp, IMO and e-mail). In terms of providing feedback via social media, the findings reveal that the use of social media has a positive impact on listeners' performance.

Many studies have been carried out to investigate the influence of psychological and social factors on EFL undergraduate students' academic writing improvement (see Appendix A). Abbas (2016); Majeed et al (2018); Sabti et al (2019) point out that apprehension, anxiety and motivation are considered as main factors that affect Iraqi EFL students' writing performance. They believe that writing instructors should be aware of students' level of writing apprehension, anxiety and motivation to enable undergraduate students to decrease the effect of these factors. Sabti et al (2019) suggest adopting various activities to encourage students interested in the learning process, which will help improve their interest in developing writing skills.

Three studies have been conducted regarding automated feedback that provided evidence of technology having a positive effect on Iraqi undergraduate students' academic writing. Jasim and Dzakiria (2019) revealed that Iraqi undergraduate students were motivated to learn and practice more writing following the shift from a traditional way of teaching writing to a more recent one through which their writing skills were developed and enhanced. Hasan (2019) found that using a spellchecker helps to reduce spelling errors among EFL undergraduate students' writing. Al-Jumaily (2015) examined the effect of using word processing with the process approach to improve writing performance. The study confirms a positive relationship between students and instructors throughout the overall writing process. Results show that the use of word processing has a huge benefit in enhancing their writing abilities. All in all, recent studies have found that Iraqi undergraduate students still experience many difficulties in many aspects of English language writing, such as grammar, spelling and punctuation (Al-Bayati, 2013; Al-Garabally, 2015; Al-Shujari, 2017; Al-Zankawi, 2018; Hadi, 2016; Ibnian, 2017). In addition, they encounter challenges in other aspects of academic writing, such as cohesion and coherence, organisation and content (Majeed et al., 2018; Al-Hammadi, 2015; Fareh, 2013; Kadhim, 2016), which are attributed to many factors mentioned above.

Thus far, the scope of most existing studies has been limited to investigating writing errors committed by Iraqi EFL undergraduate students, and not many studies have

emphasised the lack of feedback and its importance in increasing and decreasing errors. Thus, more studies in terms of delivering teacher feedback, peer feedback and computer-based feedback (automated feedback) must be conducted to improve EFL students' writing skills. Many EFL Iraqi teachers still follow the traditional method of teaching writing (product-based approach), which focuses more on evaluating students' writing products instead of giving them feedback to improve their written work further. As a result, Iraqi EFL teachers face many challenges when considering providing feedback: in which they lack of feedback knowledge, have large workload insufficient time, large class sizes, and reduced learning hours and lack training on e-learning.

Despite these issues, many recent international studies have advocated the need to provide feedback on students writing, mainly in the ESL/EFL context, and have indicated many benefits for students (Hyland & Hyland, 2006). Furthermore, providing feedback allows writing instructors to improve teaching experiences and students' learning process by delivering various feedback modes (i.e. teacher feedback, peer feedback and automated feedback), and also enable students to monitor their progression. Further studies on feedback will help teachers, administrators and policymakers to take real action to find solutions to the low English language proficiency among EFL undergraduate students. Higher education may consider giving feedback in writing courses, using various methods to teaching writing and integrating technology when providing constructive, immediate and individualised feedback.

Conclusion

Iraqi EFL scholars have carried out studies on EFL undergraduate students' composition in the academic context. They agreed that Iraqi EFL undergraduate students commit all types of errors, such as spelling and grammatical errors (Mohammed, 2018; Alshujairi, 2017), punctuation errors (Yahya, 2017; Muslim, 2014) and grammatical cohesive devise errors (Ahmed & Mohammed, 2015; Kadhim, 2016). In addition, psychological factors as anxiety, attitudes, motivation and apprehension have been investigated as variables that affect students' ability to compose effectively (Hamed, 2012; Sabti, 2019). Numerous studies have also emphasised adopting methods and techniques to improve the acquisition of academic writing skills. Results from these studies have also indicated the positive impact of the process-based approach, particularly on the use of feedback in teaching English language writing to improve Iraqi EFL students' academic writing performance (Al- Bakry, 2018; Razoqy & Yahya, 2019). However, insufficient empirical evidence is found in the literature that establishes the impact of formative feedback on the quality of undergraduate academic writing.

Few studies have been conducted to investigate the impact of using technology in writing instruction and writing assessment in Iraq as an EFL context. Therefore, it is hoped that this review will help to shed light for EFL writing instructors in the Iraqi context as they consider the importance of providing feedback in enhancing academic writing skills. In addition, this review is hoped to help researchers in English language teaching and learning to focus on ESL/EFL writing in the tertiary level and draw their attention to the importance of feedback in improving academic writing skills. Further research is needed to determine the impact of giving formative feedback on the progress of writing performance. All of these efforts will help Iraqi EFL undergraduate students to be proficient academic writers.

It is hoped that this review has provided significant contributions in which it highlights the importance of using technologies in teaching and learning English language especially in writing. It is hoped that the automated writing evaluation system for providing feedback will

help to improve the undergraduate students' writing accuracy through the automated system for providing feedback on writings helped students to respond to that feedback (Calvo et al., 2011). This is due to the various writing activities that require the coordination of multiple perspectives (content and audience) and the organization of thought, which would help undergraduate students in their writing.

This review hopefully would contribute to Iraqi higher education in terms of EFL teacher education, educational research and writing instruction. Discussion on the benefits of automated writing evaluation (AWE) capabilities especially in the effectiveness of formative feedback on improving writing quality and its essential role in solving educational problems would be particularly useful for Iraqi writing instructors. As stated by Chain et al. (2018), using computer based mode by writing teachers provide opportunity to focus more on writing process that are important for writing improvement. Arsalan and Kizil (2013) support this notion by stating that using automated writing tool can support writing instruction tailored to various learning style.

This review is also significant for ministry of education, curriculum developers, authorities in which taking into consideration including technology (automated feedback) in English curriculum that may lead to a more fitting technology implementation policy in Iraqi higher education for these EFL Iraqi students to learn by and with. In addition, learning to write through process approach enables Iraqi EFL undergraduate students to cope with difficulties and challenges of writing process. It provides them with opportunities to control over writing stages to submit more confidently with the writing task. In addition, this review hopefully would contribute to the discussion and pursuit of future research on the utilization of automated feedback in teaching English writing for undergraduate ESL/EFL students. It is worth mentioning that many research studies have been conducted on writing performance improvement in relation to the Iraqi EFL context. However, to the researcher's knowledge, little is known from recent studies regarding the effect of feedback in general and automated feedback in particular on students' academic writing improvement.

Corresponding Author
Abu Bakar Razali
Associate Professor at the Faculty of Educational Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), Serdang, Selangor, Malaysia.
Email: abmr_bakar@upm.edu.my

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