



Investigating English major undergraduate
students' experiences with writing in English
for Academic Purposes in the University of
Prishtina

PhD

University of Reading

English Language and Applied Linguistics

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May 2018

ABSTRACT

This study explores how fifteen English language major undergraduate students in the University of Prishtina in Kosovo learned how to write in English for Academic Purposes courses, the challenges they encountered in learning how to write in a new discourse community and the changes that occurred in their views and practices as writers. In light with most recent research that views writing as a social practice, this study adopts an academic literacies approach to explore second year students' writing experiences. To investigate their writing experiences, the data was drawn from three main sources: a) semi structured interviews that were conducted four times over a span of six months, b) questionnaire and c) advice letters addressed to prospective students at two different points in time.

The findings of this study suggest that writing is a complex and dynamic process which is influenced by writer (personal backgrounds and characteristics) and task-specific factors. Drawing upon its findings, the study concludes by giving theoretical and pedagogical implication for teachers in EFL/ESL context.

DEDICATION

To my father, who did not live to witness the completion of this thesis.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am indebted to so many people for making my PhD journey smoother and memorable. First and foremost, I would like to thank my supervisor, Professor Clare Furneaux for her continuous support, valuable feedback, wisdom and encouragement. Her uplifting conversations, warm personality and her faith in me gave me strength to continue when I doubted myself, especially when I faced challenges. She is a true model of a supervisor: knowledgeable, always available, compassionate, patient, open-minded and supportive. I will always look up to her in my future endeavors.

This study would have never been possible without the great contribution of all students who took part in this study. I am forever indebted to all of them for taking their time and for trusting me to share their experiences.

I am also extremely grateful to Jacqueline Vivien Laws for demonstrating great compassion, endurance, kindness and for keeping me motivated. I am thankful to the two external examiners, Christine Pearson Casanave and Rodney Jones, for their suggestions and for making the Viva exam an enjoyable experience.

I would like to acknowledge with much appreciation my beloved colleagues at the English Department of the University of Prishtina Shykrane Gërmizaj and Lindita Rugova, who tried their best to accommodate my needs. I am especially grateful to my friends and colleagues: Zinaide Gruda, who was part of my PhD journey from the onset, and whose support, kindness and motivational words made this experience smoother; Yllkë Paçarizi, who did her utmost to support me in the last phase of my thesis writing and who was available at any time to help out.

Special thanks go to my friends in the UK, Lynda O'Brien and Dermot Shield, who made me feel loved and appreciated.

I am also thankful to Edixon Quinones for his moral and financial support during the first year of my studies.

Last but not least, I am deeply grateful to my family, particularly to my daughter Hana, for believing in me, for their patience and unconditional love.

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DECLARATION

‘Declaration: I confirm that this is my own work and the use of all material from other sources has been properly and fully acknowledged.’

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List of abbreviations

AF	American Fellow
EAP	English for Academic Purposes
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ESL	English as a Second Language
ESP	English for Specific Purposes
FL	Foreign Language
HA	High Achievers
HE	Higher Education
L1	Language one
L2	Language two
MA	Middle Achievers
MEST	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
NLS	New Literacy Studies
NNES	Nonnative English Speaking
SA	Struggling Achievers
SFL	Systemic Functional Linguistics
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
UNMIK	United Nations Mission in Kosovo
UP	University of Prishtina

INTRODUCTION

Chapter One: Background to the Study

1.1. Introduction

The aim of the introductory chapter is to establish the contextual and theoretical background of the study. The first part of the chapter will highlight the importance of writing in higher education. The second part of the chapter will describe how my experience with writing at a UK university shaped my interest in teaching and investigating writing in EFL context. This will be followed by a section on the effects that reorganization of higher education in Europe has on EFL writing, prior to describing the context of the present study. The last two parts of this chapter will cover research questions and thesis outline.

1.2. Writing in higher education contexts

In the past two decades a dramatic increase of interest in writing in a second language (Silva & Brice, 2004) has been seen. Topics such as development of identity and voice in writing (e.g. Casanave 2002; Ivanic 1998; Hirvela & Belcher, 2001), development of L2 writing skills and strategies (Sasaki, 2009; Shi & Beckett, 2002), developing L2 literacy and competence (Leki, 2007; Spack, 1997a; Sternglass, 1997), investigating writing as a cultural

and education activity (e.g. Connor, 1996; Connor, 2003), preferences for and reaction to feedback (e.g. Ferris, 1995; Hyland, 1998; Hyland & Hyland, 2001) are only few from a wide range of topics in which L2 writing has been investigated. As bulk of research on writing suggests, acquiring writing skills in second language presents the most challenging aspect of language learning.

However, writing in higher education is challenging for all students for writing in academic settings is about “change in ways of thinking, using language, and envisioning the self” (Casanave, 2002, p. 36). Students are expected to acquire disciplinary knowledge in academic settings by reading other people’s work and producing knowledge through writing academic texts. Therefore, mastery of academic writing has become the hallmark of success for students in higher education in many contexts (Jones, 1999, p. 63). Despite the fact that academic writing plays a key role in teaching and learning, the attention that is given to its teaching is often invisible (Curry & Lillis, 2003). Unlike the American higher education context where both native and non-native students are required to take compulsory writing classes as part of their degree programmes (Leki & Carson, 1994, p. 83), students in many European higher education institutions are not taught writing explicitly under the assumption that the rules and conventions of academic writing are part of a ‘common knowledge’ (ibid. p. 3). Even if the lack of familiarity with conventions is acknowledged, the assumption that they will ‘pick it up’ as part of acquiring their subject knowledge prevails (ibid, p. 3). As literature suggests, students who are new to the academic community cannot ‘pick up’ writing rules and conventions; instead they need time to “practice, observe, imitate, and rehearse until they internalize or embody the rules so that the rules no longer require their conscious attention” (Casanave, 2002,

p. 4). In other words, novice writers could develop some level of expertise through years of study, practice and disciplinary socialization (Prior in Casanave, 2002, p. ix).

Another misconception that guides many institutions relates to the view that writing is a set of universal skills that is transferable; therefore, once acquired it can be applied in other contexts (as discussed in Lea & Street, 2000). Consequently, many universities in western countries, such as UK, require the writing/language centres to fill the gap and equip students with skills that they can transfer in their disciplinary writing. Unfortunately, the generic advice on writing and grammar did not help students become active participants in the academic community (Lea & Street, 1998) because participation “presents both intellectual and social challenges to newcomers” (Northedge, 2003, p. 31). The challenge becomes even more evident for ESL students whose cultural, educational and linguistic background might interfere with the expectations set by their disciplinary community of practice.

On the other hand, the problem with most universities in Eastern and Central Europe is that writing instructions are provided predominantly through English classes and not through national languages (Harbord, 2010, p. 2). Besides, most universities from this region began to introduce writing as an assessment from after the 90’s (ibid). Adherence to Western Europe trends in teaching and learning and the reorganization of higher education in Europe in the past two decades have made academic writing the hallmark of higher education in this region, too. In considering that “learning in higher education involves adapting to new ways of knowing: new ways of understanding, interpreting and organising knowledge” (Lea & Street, 1998, p. 158), as noted above, one could argue that all students face challenges when they are required to produce writing according to the norms and rules of their disciplinary communities, though

ESL and EFL students might struggle more due to contextual and/or linguistic related problems.

1.3. Personal interest/motivation

The bulk of research in writing in ESL has shown that writing is a complex process, in which the cultural, social, political factors are intertwined and, as a result, students feel ‘strangers in academia’ (Casanave, 2002, p. 46). Having being exposed to academic writing in the British Higher Education (HE) system myself, I have experienced the confusion and the dilemmas and have struggled like many of the students reported in literature (e.g. Casanave, 2002; Shen, 1998; Spack, 1997a; Sternglass, 1997). Due to my poor academic writing skills, as initially judged by professors from my postgraduate study programme, my self-image of a high achiever in my home country had to be substituted with that of a struggling one. I was no longer representing the bright student whose writing was highly praised in high school, neither one of the top undergraduate students in the department of English, nor the first person in the country to have won an Open Society / Chevening scholarship for a postgraduate study to Cambridge. Instead I became the student that many believed would not succeed.

My first disappointment was when I received comments on my first unassessed assignment that read something like “this is not an acceptable writing at an academic level - please come and see me”. Luckily, the program director, who had already seen this type of writing before, recognized the need for support and guidance at the onset. As a result, she hired an instructor to guide me in the process of acquiring academic writing skills, thus helping me survive. The pain I had to endure during the first months made me believe that I was not bright. I could not

do what was expected of me because I had not been used to express my opinion on any matter, let alone question authority. I was not aware of the concept of plagiarism, because I had been taught to reproduce knowledge and not engage with it. Also, through practice and observation, I came to understand that using metaphors in writing and writing implicitly did not conform to the norms of writing required in the British educational context, although they were expected in my mother tongue writing.

It took me time to realize that it was not that I was not bright, simply I had not been taught academic literacy skills for this context. After many trials and errors, tears, emotional distress and low self-esteem, I began to learn the ‘rules of the game’ (Casanave, 2002, p. 3) and I started to see writing as an important skill for communication and for enhancing professional opportunities.

Consequently, when I went back to my institution (University of Prishtina, Kosovo), I initiated the English for Academic Purposes (EAP) course, with a focus on writing. Not having been taught how to write in English led me to believe that I was deprived of many opportunities in life. I wanted my students to have greater chances; therefore, teaching them how to write became my major goal.

As there is little research on writing in EFL contexts (as noted by Ishikawa, 1995; Manchón & de Haan, 2008; Nayer, 1997), I presume that I was one of many teachers in EFL whose teaching pedagogy was heavily influenced by ESL writing pedagogy. Initially, I followed the practices of the Western tradition fanatically, failing thus to consider the different values and practices of the context in which I was teaching. My students, for example, failed in the EAP

course by committing plagiarism at a time when the institution did not have clear rules and regulations for it. They failed in my course for copying the ideas or words of others without appropriate referencing, whilst in most of their other courses they were encouraged to reproduce knowledge word-by-word without any acknowledgment.

In addition, they were penalized for writing metaphorically in their writing and/or for not taking into consideration different perspectives of the issue, as I failed to accept that they needed more time to recognize and apply rhetorical differences between English and Albanian. They needed time to understand that there are multiple views on a matter and that they could contribute to the way those views were established. Later, as I reflected on my teaching, I was surprised at myself for having forgotten my past pain. I was too focused on imposing my agenda: I wanted my students to be equipped with ‘Western academic literacy skills’ as only then they would be able to compete globally. Unfortunately, I did not stop to explore their goals for future or their current needs.

After many trials and errors, and continuous reminder to my uncomfortable experience with writing at graduate level, I started to question my pedagogy and think more about the challenges I was posing to my students. I had to acknowledge the fact that teaching students a set of writing conventions does not automatically imply that they will learn how to do it. It became obvious I had to be more flexible in my approach and I had to look at the context. I also realized the impact that context has on learning, and as a consequence of this I began to adopt a more humanistic approach in teaching. I started getting more interested in who my students are and what experiences they bring in my classes. This became particularly evident in the past decade with a sudden increase of students from non-traditional backgrounds

entering higher education in Kosovo. As a result, my EAP course had to take into consideration this context and try to meet the needs of these learners. I do not make claims that I have found solutions to all my students' needs, rather I want to point out that my beliefs on writing have changed. As a consequence of this I want to know more about student writing through their voices and to act upon their insights/experience as a teacher and educator.

However, my curiosity to explore writing issues became greater with the increased number of complaints from the staff on students' poor writing skills. Not all were aware that the shift in our University system from predominantly oral-examination to written examination assessment (beginning in 2000) was challenging for both parties: staff and students. Instead, they were expecting the EAP course to fill the gap. Even more interesting were the complaints of staff about the unacceptable quality of students' writing in the 'diploma paper' (mini-thesis) at the end of their studies, hence my interest to investigate students' experiences with major pieces of writing. In other words, my experience as both a graduate student and a writing teacher in a changing HE context has instigated my interest to investigate and learn more on the multifaceted nature of writing.

1.4. Reorganisation of Europe's higher education and its impact on EFL writing

Writing in EFL in Higher Education contexts has grown steadily; however, most of the research into this has been carried out in Asian countries, such as Japan and China (e.g. Casanave, 2002, 2010; Cumming et al, 2018; Flowerdew & Li, 2009; Sasaki, 2009; Yang &

Sun, 2012). There has been some research in Western Europe, predominantly in Spain (e.g. Manchón, 2009; Nicolás-Conesa, de Larios & Coyle, 2014; Roca de Larios, Murphy & Manchón, 1999; Roca de Larios, Marin, & Murphy, 2001), as well as some research in Middle East countries (e.g. Coşkun et al, 2013; Mitchell & Pessoa, 2017; Naghdipour, 2016;). However, research on EFL in former Communist countries of Eastern Europe is scarce (Cmejrkova, 1996; Reichelt, 2006; Tarnopolsky, 2000, are few of the examples), respectively in Western Balkan countries. This is important in considering the current education systems in these countries, which have been characterised by outdated teaching methods, the predominance of theory over practice, overspecialized curricula, compliance to authority and the like. These countries have also been implementing reforms, triggered by pluralist democracy in the Central Europe (Ladislaw, 1995; Wernish, 2010). For most of the Central and Eastern Europe countries, as Cerych (1997, p. 75) points out, the period between 1989 to 1995 was the period of numerous radical changes in the systems of education, during which past (pre-communist) education patterns were restored and/or Western Europe trends were adapted. Nonetheless, the process of change was far from complete as some countries were more advanced (Cerych, 1997) and others still lagged behind.

The changes in the higher education system in the Western Balkan countries, which represent countries of Former Republic of Yugoslavia (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia) and Albania were twofold: initially they had to re-establish their higher education system after the fall of former Yugoslavia or the autocratic regime in Albania, and then they had to adjust their newly-established systems to European development (Stensaker, Brankovic, Kovacevic, Maassen and Vukasavic, 2014, p. 9). In other

words, these countries had to play a key role in the reconstruction of post-conflict, post-communist societies prior to adhering their education systems to Western values and norms.

In addition, as education and research are considered to be two of the main determinants of economic growth, European Union policy makers have not been satisfied with the performance of universities in reinforcing competitiveness vis-à-vis North America and Asia (Penchar, 2007, p. 110). The Bologna process (1999), therefore, has been regarded as Europe's response to challenges as it aims to internationalise education in Europe, increase student and staff mobility, increase quality, and as a result boost its competitiveness internationally (The European Ministers in charge of Higher Education Area, 1999). Consequently, the most recent reforms are the result of higher education reorganisation in Europe, i.e., they were driven by an effort to make institutions more entrepreneurial or market-oriented (Clark, 1998), to enhance employability and international competitiveness of the European workforce (de Wit, 2003).

Not surprisingly, thus, the internationalization, Europeanisation and globalisation of higher education systems have been put on the top of the European agenda. Promotion of cooperation between European institutions, and mobility projects for professors/researchers and students have enabled people to move freely between countries/institutions, thus reinforcing communication in English. Universities in many countries have established programmes, particularly at the postgraduate level, that are taught in English (Bolton & Kuteva, 2012). In addition, inclusion of various academic writing genres (such as research papers, position papers,) in Higher Education in Eastern Europe has been gaining increased significance due to its role in disseminating disciplinary knowledge and innovation (Timar & Panaitescu, 2006).

Nevertheless, as Jones (2003, p. 313) points out, in the absence of freshmen composition tradition in European universities, the existing European writing instruction models, if they exist, are quite varied.

The issue becomes even more complex considering that tertiary education systems have been expanding all over Europe in the past decades, and consequently, the number of students in some countries has doubled (Wernish, 2010). Furthermore, the growth rates in enrolments in higher education in ‘EU neighbouring’ countries since 1999 has exceeded those in Western countries: while, for example, the average growth number of HE students in Germany and France between 1999 and 2008 has increased only 10%, the increase in the Western Balkans, Eastern Europe and Caucasus has been an average 60% (Technopolis Group, 2011). In terms of Western Balkan countries, the increase of student enrollment doubled or tripled since 2000, except for countries that have been affected by war and armed conflicts such as Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo (Zgaga, Klemencic, Komljenovic, Miklavic, Repac, Jakacic, 2013, p. 13), though the process took place at later stages. For example, as a result of the open door enrollment policies in higher education, Kosovo today is reported to be at the “top of European countries for the number of students per 100,000 inhabitants” (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2016, p. 17).

The figures suggest that higher education systems are facing many challenges in coping with an “influx of students from a far wider range of backgrounds, rather than only the most academically able” (Hicks, 2012, p. 2). This could affect the quality of teaching and learning around writing because, as Lillis (2001) and Ivanić (1998) argue, education background, cultural expectations, gender and ethnicity affect the way students read academic texts and

how they respond to writing. Consequently, in following the Western educational trends, the mastery of academic writing is gaining attention in many universities around Europe, putting thus pressure on students and teachers to comply with certain norms.

1.5. Research methodologies in EFL writing

As pointed by Ortega (2009), research in EFL writing has predominantly focused on cognitive and textual-linguistic dimensions of writing (e.g. Grainger, 2005; Kobayashi & Rinnert, 1996; Olivares-Cuhat, 2002), respectively an extensive research has investigated L2 writer's processes and strategies (see Roca de Larios, Nicolas-Conesa, & Coyle, 2016 for an overview). Consequently, the predominant methodologies employed included large-scale surveys, think-aloud protocols and linguistic and textual analysis. Besides, many were short-term and one-shot studies that did not capture development; consequently, the repertoires of research methods need expansion (Manchón, 2016, p. 9). Accordingly, the advancement of foreign language writing theory, research and pedagogy depends upon investigation of new themes, employment of new methodologies and adoption of new theoretical frameworks (Manchón, 2009, p.16). In order to get a better understanding of the multifaceted aspects of writing, research that is 'more context-embedded and socially-situated' is encouraged (Manchón, 2016, p. 10).

In the light of above discussion, the field requires more longitudinal, ethnographic studies, including interpretive-qualitative case studies of teachers and learners and their life histories (Casanave, 2009, 2016; Manchón, 2009; Ortega, 2009). As Casanave (2002, p. 46) points out "a student does not need to be a second language speaker or a member of an oppressed minority

to find the academy a strange place”. Therefore, we need to account for their “life histories in an attempt to understand their specific experiences of engaging in academic writing in HE” (Lillis, 2001, p. 4). This is relevant particularly for contexts that have recently introduced L2 writing in their education systems, i.e., for educators and/or institutions that are following the Anglophone academic discourse convention without considering the context and the diverse histories of students. Moreover, empirical research on L2 writing shows that students’ academic literacy experiences are best understood if traced over time (e.g. Leki, 2003; Spack, 1997a; Sternglass, 1997). Even though research on L2 writing development is quite rare due to time and labour demands, there is an advantage in conducting longitudinal studies; it allows researchers to have a deeper understanding of the contexts, participants and their practices, thus revealing change over time through multiple perspectives and sources (Casanave, 2016, pp. 501-503).

Drawing on the above-mentioned limitations, and considering that writing development occurs slowly (Sternglass, 1997), this study focused on student-writers’ experiences with English for Academic Purposes courses at the University of Prishtina, over a course of an academic year. I carried out an ethnographic research “through the eyes of the participants” (Cohen, Manion & Morisson, 2007, p. 167) in order to explore the challenges that undergraduate writers in the given context encountered with writing in English for academic purposes. In addition, I wanted to explore what changes occurred in their attitudes to academic writing over the course of study. Rather than just analyse their written texts, the study employed what Lillis (2001) refers to as ‘talk around text’, i.e. talk around writing conventions and talk to engage in exploring students’ experiences with writing practices. A questionnaire

at the onset, followed by semi-structured interviews and advice letters written to the future EAP cohort were the main source of data for the present study.

1.6. Context of the study

The study took place at the English Language and Literature Department of the University of Prishtina (UP), which until the last decade was the only Albanian public university in Kosovo. It was established in 1969, and today it comprises 13 faculties. The aim of the UP is to become a leading centre in advancement of knowledge, ideas and science in HE and to fully integrate into the European Higher Education Area and European Research Area (University of Prishtina “Hasan Prishtina”, 2017). The majority of students are Albanians from Kosovo, or representatives of other minorities such as Turks and Bosnians, as well as a small number of Albanians from the region (Montenegro, Albania, Serbia, Macedonia). The three cycles of studies (BA, MA, PhD) are predominantly conducted in Albanian, with the exception of foreign language departments.

In order to understand the current context, this section will provide a brief historical overview after which present situation will be discussed. Education system in Kosovo has been deeply affected by the political situation in the 1990's. With the abolition of its autonomy by Yugoslav Republic of Serbia government in 1989, Albanians soon found themselves expelled from all state institution sectors, including education (cf. Malcom, 1999; Sommers & Buckeland, 2004). By 1990 “6000 teachers were sacked...and the rest where expelled when they refused to comply with a new Serbian curriculum” (Malcom, 1999, p. 349). In counter reaction, and as a resistance movement against the Serbian government repression, Albanian

population established the ‘underground parallel system of education’. Due to its separation from mainstream education, parallel system has been referred to as having operated as “a large NGO, outside government funding or control” (Crighton et al., 2001).

As a consequence of the situation created, in an attempt to maintain their cultural identity, Albanian population unwillingly committed themselves to a decade of isolation from current trends in teaching and learning, which among others, resulted in continuing to learn by “rote rather than by enquiry” (Clark, 2000, p. 8), a practice of teaching/learning in “schools across Yugoslavia in the 80’s” (Sommers & Buckland, 2004, p. 46).

Moreover, the political resistance erupted into a full-scale armed conflict in the late 90’s, which led to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) intervention. Under the United Nation Security Council Resolution 1244, Kosovo was administered by the United Nation Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) from 1999 until the declaration of its independence in 2008.

In terms of education, UNMIK considered that little from the entrenched system of education provided a sound base for reformation, instead the task in reforming the system was “staked out as nothing less than reinvention” (Sommers & Buckland, 2004, p. 20). The ‘reinvention’ however, marginalised the local educational leaders who though supportive of educational changes were not included in the process (Sommers & Buckland, 2004). As local practitioners had little ownership of the reformation, it is thus not a surprise that the current education is still mainly characterized by teacher-centred methodology and rote learning, i.e., passive reproduction of knowledge.

UP adopted the Bologna Process (though not officially joined it) in order to make its system of education more compatible, i.e. to prepare its students for the European labour market. In addition, the Kosovo government has made integration into European Union (EU) its main objective. There is a considerable pressure to comply with the EU standards, but still there are many challenges. As Kosovo has the youngest population in Europe, with 50% of population being under the age of 25, and since youth unemployment rate continues to be as high as 50.9% (World Bank Group, 2017, p.8), the national goal is to ensure equal access to education for all, and thus enhance employment opportunities and participation in economic activities (Ministry of Education, 2011, pp. 22,23). In line with this commitment, the number of enrolled students in the University of Prishtina (UP) has increased drastically, tuition fees have been lowered to increase opportunities for low income families, as well as tuition fee waivers have been applied for certain categories of students such as those affected by the recent armed conflict (World Bank, 2010). While the total number of students in the University of Prishtina in academic year 2008-2009 was around 29,000, by 2011-2012 the number had increased to around 47,000 students. This means that, the number of ‘non-traditional’ students, i.e., students from “social backgrounds previously excluded’ (Lillis, 2001, p.x) is continuously increasing, and the quality of teaching is being hindered. Moreover, the widening access for the less privileged groups of the society in the University of Prishtina has not been followed by a “corresponding increase in financial means, investment in infrastructure or increase of the number of academic staff (...) damaging the quality of studies offered for students” (Kosova Education Center, 2014, p. 13).

Interference from the government in setting the number for student enrollment without considering the capacities of UP, and the attempt to internationalize higher education has put a great pressure on academic and administrative staff of the university. They were adjusting to the re-established post-conflict education system, when new challenges were imposed to harmonise study programs and modernize higher education. In addition, the increased number of “less successful and poorly motivated students” (Zgaga et al, 2013, p. 69) who joined higher education left teachers with many dilemmas and decisions to make. For example, in the English Language and Literature Department, 237 students were enrolled during the academic year 2011/2012 (Shehri, Champseix, Reinowski & Goodspeed, 2013), almost twice the number the Department had foreseen to enrol. Due to limited space and low number of staff, it was almost impossible to accommodate the basic needs of these students, let alone give them more individual attention.

Moreover, the drastic change in market demands due to the presence of the international community in Kosovo, which caused English to become a major second working language, and the increased opportunities to participate in EU funded mobility programs, which are numerous for both staff and students (Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology, 2016, p. 28), have led education stakeholders to reconsider the existing curricula and literacy practices (e.g. academic writing has been introduced in the curriculum of many departments). In addition, aiming for improvement in the quality of teaching and learning, the Kosovo Education Strategic Planning 2017-2021 foresees the increase of academic mobility opportunities for staff and students and their participation in international higher education programmes (MEST, 2016, p. 37). Consequently, writing in English is steadily gaining recognition as a key tool in enhancing one’s opportunities in the global market.

1.7. Purpose of the study

The main aim of the study was to explore students' experiences with writing for academic purposes in this context. It also attempted to investigate changes that students reported to have occurred over the course of study.

Though this study is located in the Kosovo education setting, in considering the changing landscape of higher education in Europe, and the widening participation, it is believed that this study will make an important contribution to research in the wider EFL context. In particular, the findings could be rather beneficial for the region of Western Balkans which, despite being politically committed to viewing Western Europe values as a model to follow, also shows idiosyncrasies rooted in its historical development and identity external to Europe (Zgaga et al., 2013, p. 24, 55). In other words, the contextual factors that affect progress and/or stagnation of undergraduate English major writers in Kosovar context could show similar patterns to those of their peers from the region due to a shared education system in the past. Consequently, writing teachers could use findings from this study as a starting point to inform their pedagogies. In addition, findings from the present study could have pedagogical implications for contexts that are characterized by large and multi-levelled English classes, such as are found in a broad range of EFL educational contexts outside Eastern Europe.

The Research Questions

The present study developed two main research questions, arising from the Literature Review and the context:

1. What changes over time in the reported behaviour and attitudes of undergraduate English major students developing as writers in English for Academic Purposes course?
2. What differences are there in the reported behaviour and attitudes of students developing as writers in EAP? WHY?
 - 2.1 What differences are there in terms of whole group and three sub-groups?

1.8. Thesis outline

Chapter 1 of the thesis presents the contextual and theoretical background of the study. Then, in Chapter 2, I discuss the relevant literature. The research methods used in the study are described in Chapter 3. Then, the results of change within the group are presented and discussed in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 presents the results of change among three sub-groups. Finally, Chapter 6 outlines the main conclusions and identifies limitations to the study and recommendations for future research.

Chapter Two: Literature review

2.1. Introduction

The aim of the literature review chapter is to elaborate existing literature and theories related to this study. Initially, it will explore the three main approaches to writing: it starts with a brief overview of writing as a process, then it explores genre as a socially situated product prior to exploring writing as a social practice. As this study takes an academic literacy approach to writing, it elaborates academic literacies in higher education by offering an overview of three models of academic literacy: study skills, academic socialization and academic literacies. Moreover, it elaborates Nonnative English Speaking (NNES) academic literacy practices. As this study took place in an EFL context, and students underwent various challenges, the following section will present and analyse difficulties that EFL students face when writing. To understand findings of this study a brief overview of self-efficacy beliefs is also provided prior to exploring literature in terms of written feedback.

2.2. Writing as a process, product and a social activity

A historical perspective on second language writing reveals that the disciplinary interest of L2 writing has shifted from analysing learners' texts, to investigating their processes of composing and to placing their writing in a socio-cultural context (Cumming, 2001). However, it would be wrong to assume that there is no overlapping between the approaches (Leki, 2010, Cumming, 2001). This section will not look at writing as a product at the level of language issues, but will

start by looking at writing as a *process*, writing as a socially situated *product*, and writing as a *social activity*. I should also mention that in echoing Hyland (2003, p. 23), L2 writing teachers should look at the approaches as complementing each other, because: “writing is a sociocognitive activity which involves skills in planning and drafting as well as knowledge of language, contexts, and audience”.

It should be mentioned that literature on writing in higher education has been influenced by two approaches: EAP, focusing on international students and Academic Literacies, focusing on home students from non-traditional backgrounds. Traditionally, research in EAP has focused on process and product, while academic literacies on social activity. Lately, however, this categorisation has been challenged as out-dated and oversimplified (Furieux, 2012) and a call has been made to link these movements (Furieux, 2012; Wingate & Tribble, 2012). Therefore, the starting point of this research will be to combine these movements in investigating students’ development with writing.

2.2.1. Writing as a process

In borrowing the theories from cognitive psychology, a process model views writing as a “non-linear, exploratory and generative process whereby writers discover and reformulate their ideas as they attempt to approximate meaning” (Zamel, 1983, p. 165). The model, which originally was developed by Flower and Hayes (1981) has had a wide impact among teachers as it had brought to their attention that writing is a problem solving activity that occurs between three processes: planning, composing and reviewing. Throughout the process, writers define the

rhetorical problems of the task (purpose, audience and the text produced so far) and draw in the knowledge stored in long-term memory.

A considerable amount of research has explored writing processes of both L1 and L2 writers, to suggest that there is a difference in the composing processes employed by skilled and less-skilled writer, the latter revising mostly at the superficial level and treating writing as a linear approach, and the former revising continuously and viewing writing as an opportunity to discover ideas (e.g. Zamel, 1983; Raimes, 1985). However, the findings have been regarded often as contradictory “due to the limited generalizability of the small samples typically investigated in case-study research” (Hyland, 2002, p. 27).

To account for the differences in processing between skilled and less skilled writers, Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987) have argued for a two process model: knowledge telling and knowledge transforming. The first model addresses the fact that writers are mainly concerned with generating content. The latter shows how writers analyze problems and actively revoke thoughts to change their ideas and text. The model thus helps L2 teachers understand the difficulties that their students experience as a result of task complexity and lack of topic knowledge (Hyland, 2003, p. 12). However, the model did not explain how writers make the “cognitive transition to a knowledge-transforming” (Hyland, 2002, p. 2).

The cognitive approach to writing has had a tremendous impact on the writing classroom. The multiple-draft approach to writing has led classroom teachers to regard feedback by both peers

and teachers as a common practice. Nonetheless, as pointed out by Hyland (2002, p. 29), there seems to be little evidence that shows that the process writing techniques improve writing. Moreover, the process approach to writing has been criticized for paying little attention to the social context (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996).

2.2.2. Genre: a socially situated product

The focus of genre approaches is on the product but with “a social context thrown in” (Casanave, 2004, p. 82). In other words, we write for a purpose, therefore, the writer has a certain audience in mind, certain goals and certain information to convey, and this is accomplished through the forms of a text (Hyland, 2003).

A review of literature shows the existence of three complementary approaches to genre; the Australian Systemic Functional Linguistics school (SFL) (e.g. Halliday, 1994), English for Specific Purposes (Swales, 1990) and the North American New Rhetoric (e.g. Freedman & Medway, 1994). Both SFL and ESP genre studies “see text as an object” (Hyland, 2011, p. 21), i.e. focus on the analysis of text, and teaching of grammatical features and genre structures while the ‘New Rhetoric’ movement views text as discourse, i.e. “the way we use language to achieve purposes in particular situations” (Hyland, 2011, p. 23).

SFL explores the relationship of language and its social functions, but failing to show how meaning is conveyed (Hyland, 2003, 2011). Research focusing on formal features of text (e.g. passive, hedging, words) have looked at writing and students’ development by counting increases

of features in texts, locating/comparing selected language features in larger samples-corpus studies, or by analysing writing at the rhetorical level (Casanave, 2004; Connor, 1996; Hyland, 2011). Unfortunately, focusing on grammar accuracy does not necessarily lead towards a successful text, or writing improvement. In concurring with Hyland (2011), I would argue that students often fail to make the connection between grammar knowledge and its application in different writing contexts.

The genre approach in ESP has been influenced by the seminal work of Swales, in which he describes genre as “a class of communicative events, the members of which share the same communicative purpose” (1990, p. 58). Research within the ESP perspective, including its subareas such as EAP, has emerged from the need to prepare NNEs acquire specialized discourse in their discipline (Bhatia, 1993; Swales, 1990). However, as Hyon (1996, p. 702) argues, despite the fact that researchers have provided useful models for ESP writing instructions, they have not provided detailed instruction methodologies, except few genre specialists such as Swales (1990) and Bhatia (1993). As there is no way to predict “the wide range of possible genres students of English for Professional Communication will need to participate”, Flowerdew (1993, p. 309) argues that we can equip students with techniques in text analysis in order to help them identify discourse conventions once they encounter a new genre.

In viewing genre as a social action, the New Rhetoric movement which developed in North America, focused on the situational context in which genres occur. This would mean, as Bazerman (1988) argues, that “the more you understand the fundamental assumptions and aims of the community, the better able you will be, to evaluate whether the rhetorical habits you and your

colleagues bring to the task are appropriate and effective” (1988, p. 323). In drawing its attention on the functions of genre and their institutional settings, the New Rhetoric scholars, have given insights on “what actions genres perform in various communities and how these groups come to value certain text types” (Hyon, 1996, p. 713).

2.2.3. Writing as a social practice

The view that reading and writing make sense only if they are studied in the context of social and cultural practices in which they are embedded has been influenced by the New Literacy Studies (NLS) movement. One of the most prominent scholar in NLS (Street, 1984, 1993) identifies two models of literacy: “the autonomous”, which conceptualizes literacy as a set of technical skills independent of social context, and “ideological”, which views literacy practices as embedded in cultural and power structures. In other words, the former model imposes the western/dominant conception of literacy on other cultures, whilst the latter is more culturally sensitive, i.e., it recognizes that literacy is embedded in socially constructed epistemological principles (Street, 2003).

Ethnographic research on literacy practices suggests that there are multiple literacies and they are associated with home, school and work (Barton, 1994; Barton & Hamilton, 1998; Heath 1983, Street, 1984). In investigating language practices of children from three communities, Heath (1983) noticed that they were differently prepared for school as a result of home and community practices. NLS, thus calls to examine the relationship between school and non-school contexts (Hull & Schultz, 2001), recommending teachers to notice the resources that students bring to

school, encouraging them to involve student-writers in a dialogue and to think how they can change their pedagogies rather than expect students to change/adapt (Ivanić, 1998; Lillis, 2001; Schultz & Hull, 2002).

2.3. Academic literacies in HE

In higher education, Lea and Street (2000) identify three models of literacy: study skills, academic socialization and academic literacies. The *study skills* model emphasizes the importance of mastering mechanical aspects of language, such as grammar and spelling, and the importance of teaching these technical aspects of writing. In addition, the model, which pays little attention to context, assumes that once the writing competency is acquired, students will be able to transmit their knowledge to any context (p. 3). This is precisely the reason why the ‘skilled-based’ model has been criticised.

In contrast, the *academic socialization* model assumes that students will acquire writing competency if they are acculturated into different disciplinary discourses and genres. Whilst there are some changes to the types of tasks that students in higher education are required to carry out, they are expected to get acculturated into the ‘essayist literacy’. (Lillis, 2001, p. 20). Moreover, Lea and Street (2000, p. 35) criticize the model for treating academy as a “homogenous culture whose norms and practices have simply to be learnt to provide access to the whole institution”. The model thus, fails to meet the needs of the diverse student population, whose academic writing practices might have been influenced by different ideologies.

The *academic literacies* model, goes beyond in asserting that writing difficulties cannot be resolved by getting students familiarized with disciplinary genres, rather they are concerned with “issues of epistemology, identities, discourses and institutional power relations” (Lea & Stierer, 2000, p. 7). In addition, students learn to switch practices from one setting to another, thus learning to deal with the social meanings and identities that each evoke (Lea & Street, 2000).

2.4. Academic literacy practice of NNES

With regard to Nonnative English Speaking (NNES) academic literacy practices, research suggest that students go through a long, uncomfortable and complex process, and that academic writing entails moving beyond the ‘autonomous model’, i.e. beyond the acquisition of sets of ‘formal game rules’ (Casanave, 2002). Several researchers have looked into the writing development of international students longitudinally (e.g. Leki, 2003; Spack, 1997; Sternglass, 1997) to shed light on the factors that impede academic literacy acquisition. The Chinese undergraduate nursing student in Leki’s (2003) study, who was an experienced pediatriacian and had high TOEFL scores, for example, struggled with both writing and oral communciation. For five semesters Leki observed how her academic literacy development was affected by her struggle to adapt to the nonacademic disciplinary writing (nursing care plan) and her limited social and cultural knowledge. In her longitudinal study, Sternglass (1997) looked at multicultural students’ academic and nonacademic lives for six years. In portraying her case studies, we see the complex network of factors that affected the development of academic literacies such as, family relationship and work responsibilities.

Learning the rhetorical conventions and audience expectations of English writing is another set of obstacles in the academic literacy development of NNES. In following a Japanese student for three years, Spack (1997b) reports how her L1 rhetorical tradition and education background, affected her writing and the lack of independent/critical thinking that U.S education system demands. And since writing is always ‘school sponsored’, one should consider that the “teaching of writing and rhetorical patterns reflects social, economic, and political realities, ... not psychological capacities” (Leki, 1992, 89-90). This reminds us of Fan Shen (1998) whose Chinese self was clashing with the requirements of writing in English. He learned that in order to develop his English identity, i.e., write directly and explicitly, he had to ‘reprogram his mind’- thus not be himself (p. 123). When students’ identities are threatened, they either try to accommodate to or question the dominant values (Ivanić, 1998, p. 9).

As we can see from the literature, research in Academic Literacies has been more concerned with the experiences of students as they “engage with university meaning making and genres” rather than with the “qualities of successful texts” (Coffin & Donahue, 2012, p. 66). Research in EAP, on the other hand has been predominately concerned with texts. The main focus of this study will be on the writer. However, as pointed out by Lillis (2001), in order for the researcher to “understand what is involved in student writing it is important to have sense of who the student writers are and the representation of resources they are potentially drawing on” (p. 6). Therefore, this study explored ‘literacy histories’ and ‘talk around the text’ in the given context. However, as Polio (2003) reminds us, the study of texts in L2 writing research has helped identify issues that could help students produce better products. This way, each approach could complement the other.

2.5. EFL student difficulties with writing

Researchers list various factors that impact students' writing. While Kraus (2001) lists contextual, research and writing factors as hindrances to student writing, Al-Badwawi (2011) lists task requirements, students' learning histories, disciplinary contexts, and institutional contexts as key factors as impactful on student writing. Asaoka and Usui (2003) on the other hand, categorise factors into *surface-level*, *macro-level* and *external*.

Regardless of various categorizations of factors that impact student writing, throughout literature it is reported that EFL students' face difficulties with: *text management*, *source management* and *research management* (Leki & Carson, 1994), lexical repertoire, essay and paragraph structure, finding the suitable writing style, disciplinary knowledge and writing in a foreign language and contextual challenges.

Each of these difficulties will be explored in detail below.

2.5.1. Text management

Text management which according to Leki and Carson (1994) includes “brainstorming, planning, outlining, drafting, revising, proofreading” (p. 86), constitutes one of the key challenges that students face when writing. When it comes to text management, EFL students are noticeably reported to struggle with planning.

Students' struggles with planning stem from lack of exposure to planning and lack of instruction on how to plan before writing. Evans and Morrison (2010), note this obstacle in their longitudinal study which aimed to explore students' challenges when attending the university in English in a country where most people speak Cantonese and students only have to use English in assignments and formal settings. The study surveyed 3008 freshmen and interviewed 28 students for three years since their freshman year to investigate these challenges. Findings of this study suggest that students were not taught how to plan and this lack of knowledge caused frustration and writing difficulties among most of the study participants. Asaoka and Usui (2003) who conducted a longitudinal study investigating challenges of student writing at a Japanese university, also reported that students had notable struggles when planning. These struggles were in the shape of miscomprehension or no comprehension of teachers' instructions and feedback. As a few of the study participants stated:

"I just couldn't figure out what to write even after I read the directions" (Asaoka & Usui, 2003, p. 152).

"However, there was a problem. I had to use key concepts from ALL three RD6 [reading and discussion] classes, but in my outline I didn't think about the third reading. I had misinterpreted the directions." (Asaoka & Usui, 2003, p. 152).

"I didn't understand well what my teacher meant in his comments." (Asaoka & Usui, 2003, p. 153)

"When I submitted my essay during the previous class, the teacher told me, 'This looks OK. Please work more and bring it to tutorial.' However, I didn't quite understand what I could improve. So, I ended up not making any changes, and told the teacher about it." (Asaoka & Usui, 2003, p. 153)

2.5.2. Source management

Source management which according to Leki and Carson (1994) includes “summarizing, synthesizing, reading, using quotes” (pp. 86-87) constitutes another challenge for EFL students.

Source management is a problem for first year students in general, not just EFL students (Kraus, 2001). As most respondents in Kraus’s research reported, in university level they struggle with accessibility and use of sources:

Information is not as accessible, structured or straightforward—in school you could just use information from one textbook, under one heading. Now you need much more detail and more up-to-date information. It’s a much higher standard. (p. 154)

Students, whether native speakers of English, ESL or EFL, are reported to struggle with: identifying significant parts from sources that they can include in written work, synthesising information, identifying main and pertinent arguments when reading sources, comprehension of sources and integration of sources in their written work (Evans & Morrison, 2010; Kalikokha, 2008; Kraus, 2001). When it comes to the integration of sources in written work the biggest problems seem to be that “opinions were lost amidst the citations”, the written work seemed like a “patchwork of different experts’ opinions” rather than integration of sources in students’ work, student’s stance on the topic has changed to “suit the supporting evidence” acquired during literature review, there can be “citations without fully understanding the original authors’ claims” (Asaoka & Usui, 2003, p. 157).

2.5.3. Research management

Research management which according to Leki and Carson (1994) includes “library skills, research skills” (p. 87) also poses a challenge for students. Kraus (2001) reports students’ struggles with pinpointing significant sources in databases and library that could be useful for their research. Khalikokha (2008), whose study focuses on Malwaian students’ perception on writing essays, also stated that students find it challenging to research and find reliable sources that they can later integrate in their written work.

2.5.4. Choosing a topic

The selection of a topic, when selection is possible, is detrimental to student’s success in writing. Research suggests that knowledge on a certain topic may lead to a written product of a higher quality than when such knowledge is lacking McCutchen (1986). Asoka and Usui (2003) emphasize this phenomenon through analyzing students’ experiences with writing:

The failure to choose the right topic served as a block to constructing an opinion, resulting in an unorganized essay that readers found difficult to understand. This was further complicated when the students had to integrate experts’ opinions and data to support their views. Students may need more intervention by teachers at an early stage of their writing when they are choosing their topics and constructing their opinions. (Asaoka & Usui, 2003, p. 163)

2.5.5. Lexical Repertoire

The views on the importance of students' vocabulary knowledge in EFL students' writing are varied. Evans and Morrison (2010) claim that lack of lexical repertoire and ability to write in advanced syntactic structures limits students' finesse in writing. Research participants in a Asaoka and Usui's (2003) study also acknowledge that their limited lexical repertoire has resulted in repetition and lack of sophisticated written work. As a couple of the respondents noted:

I'm disappointed at lack of my vocabulary. For conjunctions, I can only think of and, but, or, as, however, and for intensifiers, I can only think of only and just.

In the essay I mentioned the same things many times; "too many people around the world believe the clearness of race, because...", but it is also 'kudoï' 3 in Japanese. (Asaoka & Usui, 2003, p. 150)

2.5.6. Essay and paragraph structure

Determining the essay and paragraph structure seem to be challenging for writers. These challenges are present for all first-year undergraduate students, including EFL students.

While researchers report EFL student struggles with structuring written work (Asaoka & Usui, 2003), Kraus (2001) reports that essay structuring challenges for freshman students are numerous. As one research participant notes:

“Uni essays are much more structured—fewer words and much more to say.” (p. 157)

2.5.7. Finding a suitable writing style

Research suggests that EFL students face challenges to write in academic discourse. They find it difficult to find a suitable academic style in which they can write assignment (Evans & Morrison, 2010; Kalikokha, 2008) especially since writing styles in English may not be similar to writing styles in L1 (Al-Badwawi, 2011).

2.5.8. Disciplinary knowledge and writing in a foreign language

A crucial challenge for EFL students is that they do not only have to display disciplinary knowledge but they also have to be able to represent that knowledge in writing in a foreign language. As noted throughout literature:

...while students go through the process presented in an EAP writing class, they are exposed to various demands of academic discourse. They are expected to formulate the cognitive framework of an academic discourse with the expectation of transferring it to writing tasks in other disciplines. This expectation seems to lead to writer’s block. (Asoka & Usui, 2003, pp. 163-164)

These students are expected to show academic attainment and comprehension of the content of their subject courses in a language that they are not fully competent in using new forms of literacy practices (e.g. essays) that they are not familiar with. In other words, EFL students are

faced with the triple task of acquiring the language, the content, and the literacy practices of studying at an English medium of instruction higher education institution. (Al-Badwawi, 2011).

2.5.9. Contextual challenges

Context is highly important to ensure student success in writing. One must examine students' previous experiences with writing and their perceptions on writing, to be able to assess how students' success in writing can be maximized.

Firstly, research indicates that previous experiences with writing might not have prepared students for academic writing at university (Evans & Morrison, 2010). In fact, the vast majority of students are frustrated with academic writing due to their:

...unfamiliarity with disciplinary genres and referencing conventions, inexperience in planning and writing extended texts requiring the synthesis of information and ideas from multiple sources, and apparent inability to communicate their understanding of the subject matter in stylistically appropriate academic prose. (Evans & Morrison, 2010, p. 391)

Secondly, researchers must remember the fluidity of perceptions in relation to writing, "... 'normal' or 'good' or 'proficient' uses of reading and writing are culturally and contextually specific" (Harklau, 2001, p. 62). Considering previous literacy experiences impact student

perceptions of writing in college (Al-Badwawi, 2011; Kobayashi & Rinnert, 2013; Harklau, 2001), there is:

“a need for more contextualized portraits of student experience to ascertain exactly what poses new and challenging tasks for students in various contexts and suggests that ultimately literacy experiences and demands may be too diverse and context-specific to posit unilinear developmental milestones”. (Harklau, 2001, p. 62)

An existence of a negative perception for EAP classes may be obstacle to successful EAP classes (Kalikokha, 2008).

Thirdly, students’ prior experiences must be analysed in concordance with perceptions of provided writing programs. Ellis, Taylor and Durry (2007) report that students’ perceptions of writing affect the final results in writing assignments and the quality of the writing journey. More specifically:

... prior writing experiences in which writing is conceived as related to understanding subject matter, and positive perceptions of the writing program, such as a clear understanding of its goals and standards, are closely associated to higher levels of achievement in writing and an overall higher quality of experience of learning. (p. 309)

Finally, contextual factors such as a high number of students, unavailability of resources, inability to communicate with all students due to a high student teacher ratio (Kalikokha, 2008) must all be analysed to help students overcome challenges related to academic writing.

2.6. Self-efficacy

In order to explore students' experiences as writers in EAP courses, Bandura's (1986) concept of self-efficacy was crucial in understanding how their beliefs of themselves as writers change over the course of study. Self-efficacy is defined as "beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments" (Bandura, 1997, p. 2). In other words, self-efficacy is a judgment of one's confidence in one's abilities (Pajares, 2003).

Bandura (1995) identifies four main sources of influence in self-efficacy beliefs, which are useful in interpreting students' behavior in this study:

- Mastery experience
- Vicarious experiences provided by social models
- Social persuasion
- Physiological and emotional states

According to Bandura (1986, 1995) mastery experience is the most influential source of efficacy. These beliefs are interpreted by one's performances on certain tasks. The perceived successful experiences in task performance tend to increase confidence in one's abilities,

strengthening thus self-efficacy beliefs. On the other hand, failures lower confidence, hence weaken their self-efficacy beliefs. Students who hold higher sense of self-efficacy are not easily discouraged by setbacks; instead, they are aware that success is achieved through sustained efforts. As Bandura points out “after people become convinced they have what it takes to succeed, they persevere in the face of adversity” (1995, p. 3). However, as he warns us, this is not the case with people who experienced only easy successes without experiencing challenges, i.e., people who did not learn how to overcome challenges through sustained efforts will be discouraged by failure. Therefore, people with high sense of self-efficacy will approach a task as a challenge to be mastered and not to be avoided, as would be the case with people with low sense of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1986, 1995). Also, it is very likely that the highly self-efficacious people will not attribute their failure or poor performance to their inability, rather they will perceive it as a result of insufficient efforts or inability to employ effective strategies. Consequently, they will try to regulate their strategies and be more persistent in attaining better results. Overall, in the face of adversity the high efficacious people will remain resilient, show greater efforts and persistence (Pajares, 1996; Pajares & Valiante, 2006)

Also, people form their self-efficacy beliefs through the vicarious experiences of observing their peers performing. As Bandura states “the greater the assumed similarity the more persuasive are the models’ successes and failures” (Bandura, 1995). In other words, seeing peers succeed through persistent efforts raises people’s beliefs that they too possess the capabilities to master similar tasks Likewise, observing peers fail in spite of efforts, may raise doubts about their capabilities (Bandura, 1986, 1995). For example, students could use the vicarious experiences as

a source of self-efficacy beliefs during group work projects (see Hutchison, Follman, Sumpter, & Bodner, 2006).

The third factor that strengthens people's self-efficacy beliefs is verbal and social persuasion. When people are persuaded verbally that they possess the capabilities to perform the assigned tasks they are more likely to exercise greater efforts and sustain it. Negative persuasion on the other hand, weakens self-efficacy beliefs: people who have been persuaded that they are not capable of performing certain tasks tend to avoid activities they perceive difficult, and if they encounter difficulties they give up quickly (Bandura, 1995). This reminds us of the importance teacher feedback has on self-efficacy beliefs: positive feedback will increase self-efficacy, whilst negative one will weaken it (Hyland & Hyland, 2006). Consequently, this aspect of self-efficacy is important to this study considering that students received feedback on their capabilities as writers from their teacher.

Finally, people's self-efficacy beliefs are partially influenced by their own physiological and emotional state. Emotional reactions such as anxiety or stress will quite likely weaken the performance of people who are affected by such emotional states and are unable to cope with it. But as pointed out by Bandura it is not the "emotional and physical reactions that is important but rather how they are perceived and interpreted" (1995, p. 5). That is, people with high sense of efficacy will perceive affective incitement as an "energizing facilitator of performance", whilst those with low sense of efficacy will regard it as a "debilitator" (p. 5). He also adds that the level of stress or depression exercised during a challenging situation will depend on one's beliefs on his

coping mechanism to overcome the challenges. Moreover, there is a range of factors such as personal, social and situational ones that may affect one's self-efficacy interpretations.

In explaining the role of context on the learner, Bandura (1986, 1997) through his triadic reciprocity model suggested that there is a mutual influence between behavior (B), internal personal factors such as cognitive, affective and biological factors (P), and environmental events (E).

As an example of explaining the influence of personal factors and behavior, Schunk points out that "learners' self-efficacy beliefs influence achievement behaviour such as choice of tasks, effort, persistence, and achievement" (2003, p. 160). As discussed above, students with higher self-efficacy beliefs are more likely to approach a task, such as writing task with confidence that they will complete it. Their behaviour can also alter self-efficacy beliefs: the progress that they notice while writing will increase their self-efficacy beliefs that they are capable of writing well, which as a result will increase self-efficacy for continued writing (Jalaluddin, Paramasivam, Husain & Bakar, 2015). In short, personal characteristics, context and social factors all interact with one another. In terms of writing development, the interactive role of all these factors suggest that students' writing development is placed within a discourse community in which writers interact with its members through written texts and literacy practices such as feedback (Poverjuc *et al*, 2012).

2.7. Written Feedback

Feedback plays a crucial role in encouraging learning, in helping students identify areas of language they have not mastered yet, in engaging in a dialogue with teachers, peers or self, in raising awareness about audience and so on. It is useful for both novice and experienced writers because it enables them to identify their weaknesses and consequently evaluate their writing. In large classes where individual attention is rare, written feedback gives students a message that teachers are attentive toward their needs. Even though written feedback plays a pivotal role in L2 writing (Hyland & Hyland, 2006), providing written feedback to students remains to be “a chore for teachers, and receiving teacher feedback a demoralizing experience for students” (Lee, 2016, p. 518).

Teachers’ expectations after providing feedback is that students will take action that will lead toward written improvement. Unfortunately, the mixed results suggest that even though students perceive teacher feedback to be helpful in improving their writing and L2 grammar (Ferris 2002; Hedgcock/ Lefkowitz 1994; Hyland 1998; Montgomery/Baker, 2007), many students ignore those comments, struggle to understand them or utilize them unsuccessfully in their writing (Ferris, 1997; Nicol, 2010; Radecki & Swales, 1988). According to Sadler (2010) providing students with feedback statements on strengths and weaknesses on their writing and suggestions on how it might be improved will not necessarily encourage learning-for students to take actions they must possess sufficient working knowledge on the main concepts. Nicol (2010) argues that the quality of feedback and revision can improve if feedback is conceptualized as a dialogue rather than a one-

way communication. In her opinion, teachers should tailor their comments to students' needs and the dialogue should draw on as many sources as possible (e.g. teacher, peer and self).

2.7.1. L2 writers' views on teacher feedback

Much of the literature that concerns writers' views on teacher feedback, derives from writing class settings, conducted in undergraduate and postgraduate level, initially in single-draft and then in multiple draft contexts (Casanave, 2002; Cohen, 1987; Cohen & Cavalcanti, 1990; Conrad & Goldstein, 1999; Ferris, 1995; Hyland, 1998). It is a well-known fact that teachers spend a great amount of time providing written feedback on student writing, aiming to help them improve the text and develop their writing skills on a long-term. However, this tedious work, often is perceived as a waste of time for both teachers and students. Students sometimes do not take the time to make the suggested revision, often resulting from the limited repertoire of strategies (Cohen, 1987; Cohen & Cavalcanti, 1990).

However, this is particularly apparent in a single-draft context. In summarizing findings from eleven studies Ferris (2003) found out that in contexts in which the teacher provided students with feedback and grade, it was unlikely for students to take initiatives and “do anything with the comments”, which was not the case with students in multiple-draft context where they had responsibility to utilize teachers' comments (p. 104). Unfortunately, in the former students were not given an opportunity to see the role of written feedback in the development of writing. In the latter, due to revisions students could notice improvement in their writing, therefore they are more

willing to take actions and see a relationship between feedback and development of writing in a long-run.

Cohen (1987) was among the first researchers who investigated how students process teacher feedback, the strategies they employ to cope with it and some of the problems they encounter in interpreting it. Two hundred and seventy NES, ESL and EFL students at New York University responded to a questionnaire that was administered in the first couple of days after they received back their marked papers. The findings suggest that students had a limited range of strategies they could use to utilize teacher feedback: most of them reported that after receiving their papers they made a mental note of their teacher's comments. Cohen (1987) concluded from his data that "the activity of teacher feedback as currently constituted and realized may have more limited impact on the learners than teachers would desire" (pp. 64-65). However, as Ferris (2003) points out, most of these students were producing papers in a single-draft context, where information about the feedback activities employed by teachers were not provided.

Similarly, in Cohen and Cavalcanti (1990) the nine EFL college students in Brazil referred to mental notes as strategies they employed to utilize teacher comments. Moreover, they reported that teacher comments were mostly focused on grammar and mechanics, findings that are consistent with Cohen's (1987). In comparing feedback that teachers claimed to have given to students with the feedback students received, they found out that there was a mixed fit between the feedback the teacher reported giving and the one given. Consequently, they recommended that

teachers need to make a clear agreement with students in terms of what will be commented and how it will be categorized.

These single-draft L2 studies led researchers such as Ferris (1995) to investigate the matter of adapting Cohen's survey in a context in which students received feedback in preliminary drafts. Despite being very appreciative of teachers' feedback they also reported to have reread and acted upon teachers' comments using a range of strategies. More importantly, they reported to have been more attentive to comments received in preliminary drafts than on final drafts, though they still found the latter useful. These findings suggest that due to the invested time in revisions, students were more open to comments received on both preliminary and final drafts, or a possibility to receive a higher grade might have an impact on their motivation.

A study that aimed at investigating students' attitudes towards teacher feedback (in terms of usefulness of teacher comments and their views on the scope of feedback) and the responsibilities of both teachers and students, the former in marking corrections to students writing and the latter in making changes in their texts was conducted by Radecki and Swales (1988). The 59 students from various backgrounds and levels of study (undergraduate and postgraduate) in four ESL writing courses were given a questionnaire during the first week. Based on findings, they were divided into three categories, defining the various attitudes students hold toward teacher written feedback: Receptor (46%), Semi-resistors (41%) and Resistors (13%). In this study, students from the first two categories (87%) expressed appreciation for substantive teacher comments, though they also showed desire for all surface errors to be corrected. However,

correcting all surface level errors would make teachers' job impossible particularly in large size class contexts. On the other hand, the resisters related rewriting with punishment. The variety of attitudes toward teacher feedback, led Radecki and Swales (1988) to suggest that it is teacher' responsibility to change students' attitudes. Similar findings in terms of preferences for teacher feedback were found with 47 freshmen EFL college students in Turkey in Enginarlar 's (1993) replication of Radecki and Swales' (1988) study design.

However, as students become more engaged in academia, i.e. as they "move away from classes where English is practiced for the sake of language learning ... to those in which language is subservient to another discipline... the more restricted the role they generally assign to the English instructor (Radecki & Swales, 1988, p. 364). Likewise, the 137 FL students in Hedgcock and Lefkowitz 's study (1994) prioritized linguistic accuracy in written feedback compared to 110 ESL students who were more driven toward content feedback. That FL students prefer feedback on formal accuracy rather than on content was confirmed by another study conducted by Hedgcock and Lefkowitz (1996). The ESL students on the other hand preferred both feedback on content and form. The difference on feedback preferences was attributed to EFL students' views of composition and rewriting as a language practice and not as an activity they could expand or demonstrate their thinking. A preference for grammar corrections was identified with the 39 college level ESL students in Saito's (1994) study, though in terms of strategies used in reviewing teachers' comments they reread comments, made a mental note and then made corrections/revisions. Despite the positive appreciation for teacher feedback, the various connotations of "error" for L2 learners needs further investigation (Hyland & Hyland, 2006). The

various attitudes toward teacher feedback and the way students respond to it can be attributed to their previous instructional experiences (Leki, 1991).

However, the complexity behind the matter becomes more apparent in considering the findings from Hyland's (1998) study. As the two teachers in her study were providing feedback to one essay draft for each of the six students, think-aloud protocols were conducted. The results revealed that when teachers provide feedback they consider the individual student who wrote the text rather than the errors he/she made. Consequently, their comments were tailored to fit student's background, preferences and needs. For example, one of the students specifically required to receive teacher feedback on grammar. However, as Hyland notes, students might have different perceptions as to what constitutes useful feedback, therefore it is quite difficult for a teacher to meet all students' expectations. Therefore, more research is needed to explore the relationship between individual, cultural and contextual factors that affect acceptance/rejection and delivery of feedback.

These studies revealed that in general all students showed great appreciation for teacher feedback. However, despite the positive attitudes that students hold on teacher feedback, 'the research literature has not been unequivocally positive about its role in instruction, and teachers often have a sense they are not making use of its full potential' (Hyland & Hyland, 2006, p. 1).

How students make use of teacher comments and whether those comments lead towards effective change in writing is presented by mixed results in literature (Conrad & Goldstein, 1999; Ferris, 1995; Ferris, 1997; Hyland, 1998).

Ferris (1997) investigated the effects of teachers' written comments on drafts of 47 advanced ESL students. She examined feedback in margins and at the end of 110 draft essays, including the revised drafts. In assessing whether revisions led to effective changes in student writing she found out that students made an effective use of teachers' comments during revision. However, there were also comments that were ignored or avoided, implying that different types of teacher feedback have different outcomes in the revision. For example, students made the most substantive revisions from the summary comments on grammar and when the marginal comments requested specific information. The feedback that was least effective were the questions or statements that provided students with information, or required students to provide additional information. Even if students acted upon these comments, revisions were unsuccessful or had a negative effect. In considering the teacher comments made things worse for some students suggests that "teacher feedback can be a two-edged sword and the researchers (and teachers) should certainly examine it carefully" (Ferris, 2003, p. 30).

However, in pointing out the many caveats to her study and in acknowledging the role that culture could have in the findings, Ferris (1997) calls for researchers to "investigate the degree to which L2 students have different cultural, rhetorical and linguistic schemata that teachers need to consider in providing feedback" (p. 334). The mismatch of cultural expectations, inadequate linguistic and pragmatic knowledge could be some of the difficulties that students face when

responding to teacher written feedback (Ferris, Pezone, Tade & Tinti, 1997). The complexity of the relationship between teacher comments and students' revision is revealed in Conrad and Goldstein's (1999) study. The three ESL undergraduate students in a writing class, made 36 revisions in response to 44 teacher comments, however, "over a third of the attempted revisions were not successful" (p. 156). The findings suggest that the crucial factors influencing students' revision decisions were "the type of revision problem being addressed and individual student factors, which is beyond the comments themselves but interact with them" (p. 171). For example, some students were less successful in revising comments related to logical and argumentative problems. What Conrad and Goldstein (1999) point out after analyzing findings from this study is that contextual factors ought to be considered in the investigation of the relationship between teacher comments and students' revisions.

Even though these studies show that students pay attention to teacher comments, they also suggest that teacher-student interaction creates confusion and misunderstandings in the revision process. Unsuccessful utilization of teacher comments in revision can be attributed to other factors such as those outlined by Goldstein (2004, p. 71):

- Lacking the willingness to critically examine one's point of view
- Feeling that teacher's feedback is incorrect
- Lacking the time to do revisions
- Lacking the content knowledge to do the revision
- Feeling that the feedback is not reasonable
- Lacking the motivation
- Being resistant to revision

- Feeling distrustful of the teacher's content knowledge
- Mismatches between the teachers' responding behaviors and the students' needs and desires

Another reason that could cause misunderstandings in teacher-student interaction is the language employed by teachers when providing students with feedback. For example, praise is important in showing writer's strengths i.e. in showing them "what is working, helping them to build confidence in the choices they make" (Goldstein, 2004, p. 74). However, as reported in literature, being conscious about the harm that critical comments could have on the writer, teachers often use praise to soften the criticism, rather than genuinely comment on the quality of students' work (Hyland & Hyland, 2001). Moreover, to mitigate criticism teachers use questions forms, hedging devices and personal attribution (Hyland & Hyland, 2001), which often results in confusion and unsuccessful revision (Conrad & Goldstein, 1999; Ferris, 1997; Hyland & Hyland, 2001). For example, students with less advanced English proficiency levels might struggle to recognize that indirectness in English is used for politeness and for toning down power differences between teachers and students (Ferris, 1997). And because they are not familiar with it (Hyland & Hyland, 2001), they might "miss the point of the comment and so misinterpret the feedback" (Hyland & Hyland, 2006, p. 5)

The various factors that impact the relationship between teacher feedback and student revision have been investigated mostly in L2 context, therefore researchers should look at the EFL context in the future. For example, researchers could investigate factors that affect acceptance/rejection of teacher feedback in educational contexts that see teacher as an authority, where large class sizes

prevail, where education system is in transition, i.e. some teachers implement conventional feedback approaches compared to others who employ more contemporary ones. Moreover, researchers could look at the relationship between teacher comments and students from different proficiency level revisions.

2.7.2. Context and individual differences in response to feedback

Contextual factors and student and teacher individual differences can have an impact on the way teachers deliver feedback and the ways students react toward it. A context, as defined by Goldstein (2004) is a “unique combination of factors stemming from the institution and the program within which the writing, commenting, and revision takes place, and factors that teachers and students bring to the process, as well” (p. 65).

In considering teachers, factors such as content-knowledge, strongly-held beliefs, course context and the pressure of other commitments may affect the success or lack of it in students’ revision decisions (Conrad & Goldstein, 1999). For example, teachers in contexts that view writing as an exercise in developing grammar and vocabulary would most likely focus their feedback on grammatical and lexical errors, whereas in settings where students and teachers’ opinions are valued and/or influenced by process-oriented approach to writing, they are encouraged to respond to content and to the rhetorical concerns such as audience, purpose, organization and development (Goldstein, 2004; Hyland, 2000), in other words, the way teachers respond to feedback is influenced by “the dominant ideologies of their institutions and beliefs acquired as a result of their cultural backgrounds and educational experiences” (Hyland & Hyland, 2006, p. 10).

Another factor that according to Goldstein (2004) affects the way tutors provide written feedback to students is related to sociopolitical forces. She discusses the case of full-time and adjunct faculty: the former, due to heavy teaching load that includes classes of 25-30 students, and the latter due to teaching at several institutions are unable to provide feedback as often, as detailed and as effective as they would like to. Moreover, a strong pressure on the way teachers comment and students revise depends heavily on contextual factors such as word and length requirements, number of drafts and paper requirements and so on (Goldstein, 2004).

However, a teaching overload consisting of a class with 30 students is a luxury in many parts of developing countries and countries in transitions. Therefore, when exploring the impact of sociopolitical factors on the way teachers provide feedback and/or students respond to it, future research needs to consider settings with large number of students and heavy teaching overload. Also, future researcher should recognize that teaching does not occur in vacuum, therefore a deep understanding of the context is crucial (Goldstein, 2004), consequently various data collection tools need to be used.

The teachers on the other hand can try to minimize the teacher factor through reflection and needs analyses action: initially by uttering to themselves “what their theory of commentary is and why” (p. 20), by reflecting how their attitudes towards particular students, particular writing and contents affect the way they respond to writing, and by conducting need analysis with students in order to discover their experiences, preferences and attitudes towards written commentary

(Goldstein, 2005). Individual factors should also be given consideration as they affect the way students respond to written commentaries during revision (see Conrad & Goldstein 1999).

Students' previous writing experiences, their assumptions and beliefs about writing, preferences for certain institutional practices, types of feedback applied (Hyland & Hyland, 2006), preferred learning styles, attitudes towards the teacher, the class, content, proficiency (Goldstein, 2004) are only some of the factors that can affect the way students understand and respond to feedback. Therefore, in understanding students' revision decision in response to written comments, one should also look at the individual factors affecting students' writing and revisions and the type of issues they are being required to revise (Conrad & Goldstein, 1999).

2.7.3. Peer feedback

Since the 1980s peer response on writing has captured the attention of teachers and researchers initially, in L1 process classes and later, in ESL classrooms (Zhu, 2001). The shift from teacher to student centeredness has influenced many writing teachers to adopt the peer feedback technique in EFL contexts as well. Consequently, researchers from various contexts of the world have conducted research on the effectiveness of peer feedback in writing development (Berg, 1999; Berggren, 2014; Hu, 2005; Lundstrom & Baker, 2009; Min, 2005; Rahimi, 2013; Ruegg, 2014). Peer feedback, also referred to as "peer editing", "peer review", "peer response" "peer evaluation", "peer critique" can be defined as:

the use of learners as sources of information and interactants for each other in such a way that learners assume roles and responsibilities normally taken on by a formally trained teacher, tutor, or editor in commenting on and critiquing each other's drafts in both written and oral formats in the process of writing (Liu & Jette, 2002)

The substantial evidence on the benefits of peer feedback on the development of L2 writing skills and overall L2 language abilities has been provided by research deriving from various theoretical stances, i.e., process writing theory, sociocultural theory, collaborative learning theory, interaction and second language acquisition (SLA) (Liu & Jette, 2002; Yu, 2016). In explaining how Vygotsky's theories of language and literacy development apply in L2 writing Grabe and Kaplan (1996) state "the student learns to write by working with a more knowledgeable person on the skills and knowledge needed to perform specific purposeful actions through a kind of apprenticeship... which requires considerable practice under expert guidance" (p. 242-243). Therefore, teacher's feedback plays an important role in the development of student writing, particularly at the initial stages of development.

However, in many educational settings, where the heavy teaching overload prevents teachers from giving students more individual attention such as organizing conferences, it is quite likely that teachers might struggle to grasp the intended meanings when reading students work, therefore, peer feedback gives students an opportunity to describe, defend and clarify their views (Villamil & De Guerrero, 1996).

This pedagogical activity among the many benefits, encourages active learning (Topping, Smith, Swanson & Elliot, 2000), fosters “a myriad of communicative behaviors” beneficial to all group members (Villamil & De Guerrero, 1996, p. 69), helps students ‘see points that were clear in their essays and points that needed revision’ (Mendonca & Johnson, 1994, p. 764), i.e., it enables them to see how others, i.e. a ‘real’ audience responds to their writing, which also encourages them to learn from those comments (Hyland, 2010). Moreover, peers can spend more time providing feedback on individual drafts compared to the overloaded teacher, and the ‘turnover’ time for receiving feedback will also be quicker (Rollinson, 2005), and also feedback givers can benefit from reading and commenting on peer texts (Berggren, 2014; Lundstrom & Baker, 2009).

However, students can find the process of peer feedback time consuming, intellectually exhilarating and socially distressing, though beneficial in terms of the improved quality of their writing (Topping, Smith, Swanson, & Elliot, 2000). Other factors such as context (Conrad & Goldstein, 1999; Goldstein, 2004), cultural and individual factors (Poverjuc, Brooks, Val & David, 2012; Carson, 1996) may affect peer feedback effectiveness. As it will be explained below, research indicates the need for students to be trained in peer feedback practices (Berg, 1999; Min, 2005; Nelson & Murphy, 1992) to ensure maximum benefit out of it.

2.7.4. Effectiveness of peer feedback compared with teacher and self-feedback

Caulk (1994) investigated the quality of written comments provided by ESL students and herself as a teacher in a large metropolitan university in Germany. In comparing similarities and differences between these two types of feedback sources she found out that her comments were more general and focused on the whole piece of writing, compared to students' comments that were more specific and focused on specific problems. Although, peers gave each other good advice, and often provided suggestions the teacher did not make (e.g. on content), it did not substitute for teacher's comments (e.g. on form and clarity). As pointed further by Caulk, each type of feedback "serves important and complementary functions in developing writing abilities" (1994, p. 187). That both teacher and peer feedback contribute to student learning in their own way (Yu & Lee, 2016) has been supported by a more recent study conducted by Yang et al (2006) with Chinese university students. The findings show that even though students adopted more teacher feedback than peer feedback, the latter appeared to encourage more student autonomy and brought a higher percentage of meaning-change revision compared to teacher influenced surface level revisions. In other words, both types of feedback contributed to the development of writing.

Incorporating more teacher than peer feedback is not that straightforward. For example, 18 second year English majors in a writing class in a university in China incorporated more teacher comments in the revision compared to peer feedback. However, the incorporated comments were not fully understood by students (Zhao, 2010) suggesting that peer feedback could be useful. This lack of understanding of teachers' comments could be attributed to the limited opportunities that students have in negotiating meaning with teachers. Not surprisingly, they fail to understand teacher comments because they perceive them vague, too abstract, ambiguous, too cryptic or

expressed in an unfamiliar disciplinary discourse (Nicol, 2010). Peer interaction on the other hand fosters mutual understanding and reduces misinterpretation and miscommunication (Yang et al, 2006). That students act on feedback if they understand it was confirmed by Nelson and Schunn's study (2008) with novice ESP writers. Understanding in this study was more likely to occur when a suggestion and the location of a problem was provided, and feedback was summarized. There is a disparity in findings regarding how much students have understood their teachers' feedback (see Brice, 1995; Ferris, 1995; Hyland, 1998).

The value of teacher feedback on writing is supported too by a study conducted with five Japanese students writing in their content courses at a large university in Canada. However, findings also suggest that students see 'alternative source of feedback' i.e. advice provided by friends, roommates and writing center tutors as valuable for their L2 writing development (Seror, 2011).

That different sources of feedback supplement rather than substitute for each other is supported by studies that considered self-assessment, in addition to peer and/or teacher feedback. A call for an integration of self-assessment and peer revision in L2 writing classroom was made by Suzuki (2008). In examining Japanese EFL students' processes of negotiation in peer and self-feedback conditions, Suzuki found out that students benefited from both approaches. That is, the global issues of the written text were dealt with during peer revision, whereas surface level changes were addresses during self-revision (Suzuki, 2008). Lam (2013) on the other hand, argues that self-assessment does not guarantee text revision, however, the chances are greater if self- assessment is combined with tutor feedback (Lam, 2013). However, a maximum improvement in writing can

be achieved if peer feedback, teacher feedback and self-feedback are all employed as it was the case with Iranian students in Birjandi and Tamjid's study (2012).

The research literature on the usefulness of peer feedback on writing has been conflicting: this is mostly due to a wide variety of student populations, types of feedback, quality and research designed employed (Hyland & Hyland 2006). In concurring with Yu and Lee (2006) a more ethnographic longitudinal research is needed to investigate the impact peer feedback has on the development of writing skills.

2.7.5. Benefits of peer feedback for feedback givers

Providing peer feedback could result in possible benefits for feedback-givers, though research investigating the impact of peer feedback on feedback-givers is scarce (Lundstrom & Baker, 2009; Yu & Lee, 2016). In a study of ninety-one students in nine writing classes at two proficiency level, Lundstrom and Baker (2009) investigated who benefited more in writing development, peer receivers or peer feedback givers. The 'receivers' only received feedback but did not provide it, whereas the 'givers' reviewed peer papers but did not receive any feedback. The findings suggest that feedback givers benefited more compared to 'receivers' and the givers with lower language proficiency made more gains than those with higher language proficiency. Also, the 'givers' gained more benefits on global than local aspects.

By reviewing peer papers, students could develop critical thinking skills, which in turn will help them scrutinize their writing more critically, thus encourage self-assessment and

improvement of writing (Lundstrom & Baker, 2009). However, since there was no interaction between the ‘givers’ and ‘receivers’, the conditions of this study do not resemble a typical education context in which peers review each other’s papers (Lundstrom & Baker, 2009; Yu & Lee, 2016). Another study that supports the positive benefits of giving peer feedback on feedback givers has been conducted with lower secondary school EFL students in Sweden (Berggren, 2014). The findings suggest that ‘givers’ reinforced their audience and genre awareness, but also improved their writing at a macro level. However, as the researcher warns us, findings should be regarded as tentative considering that they were conducted with a small number of students. Cho and Cho also maintain that ‘students seem to improve their writing more by giving comments than by receiving (2011, p. 640). This could be supported by Nicol’s (2010) argument that producing feedback can be more beneficial than receiving it, since it is cognitively more demanding, i.e., ‘it increases the level of student engagement, analysis and reflection with feedback processes’ (p. 514).

More specifically, by critically examining peer texts, feedback givers develop reader awareness i.e., they consider readers’ perspectives, which leads them to improve the quality of the revised texts (Cho & MacArthur, 2010). Moreover, the process of analyzing the work of peers, identifying problems and offering suggestions helps reviewers produce a better quality of writing (Nicol, Thomson, Breslin, 2013).

Contradictory findings are found in a study with 10 EFL Japanese writers in an online center in a 12-week study (Rosalia, 2010). They compared this group with 11 similar students. The former received an online intervention on feedback, whereas the latter did not. Providing feedback

to peers however, did not result with improvement of writing quality for feedback givers, though they did write longer essays with an increased choice of metadiscourse features.

Though the above-mentioned studies suggest that there might be positive benefits for feedback givers' writing development, more empirical research using multiple sources of data is needed to understand the potential benefits for feedback givers and its impact on their writing development (Yu & Lee, 2016).

2.7.6. Training of peers

Research on peer feedback has emphasized the importance that peer feedback training has on the students' revisions and quality of writing (see Hu, 2005; Min, 2005, 2006; Rahimi, 2013; Yang & Meng, 2013). For peer feedback activity to be truly profitable some form of pre-training is pivotal: learners need to acquire a set of basic procedures and social and interactional skills (Rollinson, 2005). Some useful principles that aim at guiding teachers in developing effective peer feedback activities before feedback (such as discussing students' prior peer feedback experiences, modeling the peer response process, selecting the mode of peer response), during (encouraging students to negotiate meaning, monitoring their progress) and after peer feedback (such as linking peer response to classroom activities) have been provided by Hansen and Liu (2005). They also suggest that the outlined principles expand the peer feedback concept beyond the 'editing' and 'revision' activity to the one that promotes the development of four language skills in an L2 writing class. A number of other studies have outlined some training procedures that aim at generating

constructive peer interaction (see Berg, 1999; Jacobs et al, 1998; Min, 2005; Nelson & Murphy, 1992).

Many empirical research supports the claim that the benefits of peer feedback can be maximized through training. For example, Berg (1999) studied the effects of trained peer response in the revision types and quality of writing. In this quasi-experimental study, 46 ESL students were divided into two groups, one received training on how to provide peer response and the other received no instructions at all. Findings show that the revised drafts of trained students improved more than of the untrained one regardless of proficiency level. Additionally, trained students made more meaning revisions.

Also, students in an EFL writing class in a university in Taiwan incorporated a higher number of peers' comments into text revisions after attending peer review training (Min, 2006). Similar findings are found with EFL students in an Iranian university. Students who received training on peer feedback made noticeable improvements in their writing compared to the untrained group. They also shifted their attention to global aspects of writing compared to the untrained group that focused on local aspects (Rahimi, 2013).

Likewise, a peer feedback training (in-class demonstration, modelling and teacher-student conferences) led to an increased number of peer comments, with a noticeable number of comments being made on global issues with EFL students in Taiwan (Min, 2005). Moreover, in an action-research study in Singapore, ESL Chinese students in a third cohort attending an Academic writing

course improved their writing in both global and local issues, developed a positive attitude towards peer feedback and acquired academic writing skills due to training (Hu, 2005). However, this pedagogical activity was not productive with the first cohort because peers did not develop an adequate understanding of the peer feedback process, due to an inadequate training provided by the teacher. In an end-of-course feedback questionnaire they even suggested that the course could be improved by dropping peer review activity. Nonetheless, the lack of trust in each other, or in one's abilities to judge the validity of peer comments, the predominant focus on language and mechanics, inappropriate comments and so on were minimized by improved instructional practices, which included more demonstrations, small group discussions, and practices.

These studies suggest that trained peer review feedback can have a positive impact on ESL/EFL students, though training needs to be carefully planned and must consider the context. However, teachers might be skeptical of its benefits, particularly in contexts where teacher is the authority and/or in classrooms with large number of students. This time-consuming activity might confuse students too: they might not be open to the idea of receiving feedback from peers with whom they share approximately the same level of knowledge, because it contradicts the deeply rooted belief that teacher is the only source of knowledge in the classroom, thus peers cannot substitute the teacher. Also, having established procedures and engaging learners in peer feedback training, does not guarantee that all learners will benefit equally. Interestingly, the peer feedback practices and writing skills of less proficient EFL Taiwanese university students improved more compared to the more proficient students in an online peer feedback training (Yang & Meng, 2013). The less proficient students could identify and correct both local and global errors in their

own writing and that of their peers. This however was not the case with the more proficient students; they made less progress since they distrusted their peers (Yang & Meng, 2013).

However, as Hyland (2010) explains, students need time to develop their peer response skills, therefore, they cannot be hold accountable for feedback immediately or for the expressed doubts on the quality of their peers' comments. Moreover, he argues that for students to take increasing responsibility for feedback, patience and a supportive environment is required.

In regard to research investigating impact of training in the quality and practices of peer feedback in writing, Yu and Lee (2016) suggest that more research is needed to explore how to train students in collaboration and interaction and not to focus only on helping students identify problems and provide comments as it was done until now. Also, more research is needed on EFL contexts that are making a shift from teacher to student centeredness and in contexts in which student regular attendance of classes is not monitored, which than affects training outcomes.

2.7.7. Context and peer feedback

As research suggests context can have an impact on the way students perceive peer feedback and how they react to it. However, as pointed by Yu and Lee (2016) little has been done in terms of the impact the sociocultural contexts and students' personal belief system have in shaping peer feedback practices. Though initially peer feedback practices were being investigated in ESL contexts, with the growing interest of scholars on issues related to writing in EFL, several

researchers have considered peer feedback practices in various EFL contexts in the past decade (Min, 2008; Rahimi, 2013; Yu & Lee, 2014).

As pointed out earlier students' previous educational experiences could have an impact in the quality of peer feedback; for example, master students' lack of previous feedback experiences and their perceptions of peers' ability to provide quality feedback created barriers to the successful implementation of this activity (Poverjuc et al., 2012). To enhance effectiveness of peer feedback, as findings from their study suggest, well-structured collaborative and group work activities combined with tutor interventions are essential.

However, implementing peer feedback in EFL contexts seems to be quite challenging as writing teachers are regarded as the only authority, which leads students to doubt peer feedback and hesitate to make any changes (Yu & Lee, 2016). It is quite possible, therefore that they will not look at their work critically and make self-directed decisions on what needs to be revised (Goldstein, 2004). However, there is some evidence that peer feedback training can help students improve their writing skills (Rahimi, 2013; Yang & Meng, 2013), therefore, more research is needed in EFL contexts in which a power of revision is being transferred from teacher to students.

2.7.8. Culture and peer feedback

Peer feedback has gained great attention in literature. However, many questions remained unanswered. For example, one of the questions that requires more attention relates to the impact culture has on students' response to peer feedback (Hyland & Hyland, 2016). The notion of culture

is complex and disputable. However, the cultural factors that affect interaction and peer feedback practices are defined by Hu and Lam as a “complex of cultural and social differences” (2010, p. 374).

Participants’ understanding of teaching and learning are shaped by cultural factors such as experiences and backgrounds, and as such can have a great impact on the way feedback is given and received in subsequent writing (Hyland & Hyland, 2006, p. 11). For example, the five master students lack prior experiences with peer feedback and their perceptions of peers’ inability to provide constructive feedback affected successful implementation of peer feedback activity (Poverjuc *et al.*, 2012). The findings from this study suggest that to ensure successful peer feedback activities, the use of well-structured collaborative activities combined with tutor’s intervention are essential.

As a socially constructed activity, peer feedback does not occur in a vacuum rather in a sociocultural context in which the role of culture is crucial (Goldstein, 2004; Yu & Lee, 2016). For example, as research in L2 has pointed out, the various cultural backgrounds and different norms of communication have led international students to provide peer feedback that was inappropriate and unhelpful (e.g. withholding criticism) and caused misunderstandings and clashes in peer feedback activities (e.g. over criticism) (Carson & Nelson, 1996; Hyland, 2000; Nelson & Murphy, 1992).

Moreover, in educational contexts where “teachers are viewed as the holders of truth, wisdom, and knowledge, and they pass this knowledge on to their students” (Nelson & Carson 1998, p. 129) students may distrust peer comments (Hu, 2005; Nelson & Murphy, 1992; Tsui & Ng, 2000) because they do not believe that peers are “qualified to critique their work” (Paulus, 1999, p. 268). Also, in collectivist cultures such as China, over-reliance on interpersonal relationships may lead students to refrain from expressing criticism to maintain harmony (Carson & Nelson, 1996; Connor & Asenavage, 1994; Nelson & Carson, 1998). Moreover, in a more recent study conducted with six students from various cultural backgrounds and various proficiency levels, students reported to have felt uncomfortable and discouraged in peer feedback practices due to cultural factors (Hyland, 2000).

However, Hyland and Hyland (2006) argue that “an over-reliance on culture as explanatory tool may lead researchers to downplay the importance of complex and constantly changing sociocultural factors” (p. 11). This is supported by more recent studies (Hu & Lam, 2010; Hu & Ren, 2012; Yu et al., 2016) with Chinese students that cast doubt on the held belief that Chinese students are reluctant to criticize their peers to prevent disagreement, which then could harm group harmony.

In a case study with four non-English major EFL university students in a reading and writing EFL class in Mainland China, Yu et al. (2016) found out that despite individual differences in students’ beliefs and practices, cultural issues did not impede peer feedback activity. Moreover, the twenty postgraduate Chinese students in a university in Singapore were generally open to peer

feedback as a pedagogical activity: they responded critically to peer feedback and they also incorporated a higher proportion of constructive peer comments (Hu & Lam, 2010). Also, prior positive peer feedback experiences in the local cultural contexts were reported with majority of Chinese EFL university students in a survey-based study conducted by Hu and Ren (2012). Therefore, we should be mindful to the suggestions made by Tsui and Ng (2010) who warn us not to make simplistic generalizations regarding “cultural traditions and the constrains they impose on pedagogical possibilities” because “it hinders a deep understanding of the complex interplay of factors impinging on student learning and the exploration of opportunities for learning” ... (p.365).

However, most research is conducted in ESL context, therefore, as Yu and Lee (2016) point out there is a need to investigate cultural issues on peer feedback practices in different contexts such as China, Korea, Taiwan and Japan. However, as EFL context goes beyond Asia, it would be interesting to investigate peer feedback practices in high-context cultures such as Western Balkans, and see how the implicit communication styles affect peer feedback practices. Moreover, more research should look at the impact the changing practices of teaching and learning have on peer feedback practices of students who are accustomed to teacher centred approach but engaged in student-centred activities, such as peer feedback.

2.8. Defining change

Defining change is not straightforward (Fullan, 1999). We have become so accustomed to its presence in our lives that we rarely reflect on its meaning at a personal level, let alone think what it means for others who might be in a change situation (Fullan, 2007). On the other hand, any

attempt to define change that is satisfactory for all academic disciplines is impossible and unfeasible because change is regarded as contextual (Saldaña, 2003). Nevertheless, “there is an explicit recognition that change is multifaceted,” (Pettigrew, 1995, p. 93) and it is referred to, for example, as:

- “passing through the zones of uncertainty... the situation of being at sea, of being lost, of confronting more information than you can handle” (Schön, 1971 as cited in Fullan, 2007, p. 22);
- "a disturbance in one or more systemic forces that causes changes in other forces, more or less simultaneously" (Kelly, 1988, pp. 17-18);
- “a serious personal and collective experience characterized by ambivalence and uncertainty” (Fullan, 2007, p. 23).

For change to occur time is needed. Therefore, conducting longitudinal research enables researchers to get a better understanding of the factors that impact change. Nevertheless, researchers in longitudinal studies are recommended to define change and inferences of change prior to, during and after data analysis in their context (Pettigrew, 1995). However, as Saldaña argues, we cannot always know what to look for in advance; therefore, he suggests that we should be flexible and allow a definition of change to emerge as the study and data analysis continues (2003, p. 10). More importantly, researchers should be aware that what they perceive as change “might conflict with [their] participants’ perceptions or readers’ operating conceptions” (Saldaña, 2003, p. 10).

In attempting to operationalize further the construct of change, it is inevitable that we seek to clarify and construct its meaning by looking at its synonyms such as “evolution,” “development,” “difference,” or “process”, though these concepts might be perplexing too (Saldaña, 2003, p. 8). Sternglass (1997) for example defined development as improvement, which occurs over time and is seen as “muddled, progressing at some times and regressing at other times” (p. 13).

Haswell (1991) defined development “as any human change that both lasts and leads to further change of a similar cast” (p. 5). In terms of writing development, Haswell saw it as

“three-dimensional, perhaps best pictured as an ascending spiral. It is not just an inner, maturational growth nor just an outer, social acculturation, nor even the interaction between the two, but an educational life-process or lifework composed of three main forces or vectors, all on the move. Where the developments of student, field of writing, and teacher meet and are furthered by the meeting, there genuine educational development takes place” (pp. 5-6).

The intertwining of all these factors show the complex nature of writing development. The inconsistencies in defining what is meant by ‘development’ or ‘writing improvement’ results from the fact that writing teachers, students, goals and practical constraints vary greatly (Casanave, 2007). To define what Casanave (2007) meant by improvement when she taught intermediate level undergraduate students at a university in Japan, she had to consider who her students were and what learning experiences they brought to her class. As her students were accustomed to studying grammar and translation, take tests in English that usually had a correct answer, and many of them

were restrained to express opinions in both speaking and writing out of fear of making mistakes, Casanave (2007) decided to define improvement as “the development of fluency and expression of their own ideas, increased willingness to take risks without fear of making mistakes, and the ability to write and revise one or more pieces of writing for a class “book” of their own work” (p. 92). She established these criteria at the outset to observe the reported writing improvement with her students.

In order to explore what changes over time with undergraduate students at the English Language and Literature Department of the University of Prishtina, I had to decide what I meant by ‘change’ for these students. In considering that they had limited preparation for writing prior to EAP 1, I decided to define change as the ability to utilize metacognitive strategies in reading and writing, the ability to write and revise essays that also include synthesis of sources, increased openness in giving and receiving peer feedback on drafts and ability to conduct a small-scale study and report its findings in written discourse. Change in this study was also defined as reported difference in participants’ perceptions of academic writing and themselves as writers at various points in time.

Chapter Three: Research Methodology

3.1. Introduction

The first section of the chapter initially outlines the rationale behind the qualitative approach to the study, before introducing the academic context of the BA program in English Language and Literature at the University of Prishtina. The details provided in the context are followed by an outline of data collection tools and analysis. The methods used to analyse the data are also discussed. Finally, it details the consideration of ethical issues in the research.

3.2. Research Paradigm

Denzin and Lincoln (2000, p. 9) assert that paradigms are “the net that contain the researchers’ epistemological, ontological, and methodological premises”. That is, every research is guided by a paradigm, which operates under a set of basic assumptions about the nature of reality (ontology), what we know about reality and the relationship between knowledge and reality (epistemology), and the specifics of how the research is carried out (methodology).

As reported in the literature, there are two main research paradigms: “positivist/post-positivist’ and “constructivist-interpretive” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 22). The two paradigms hold different views on social reality and knowledge and the use of methodology. These “worldviews” (Creswell, 2014, p. 6) respectively, “basic set of beliefs” (Guba, 1990, p. 17) will

thus lead researchers to embrace a “qualitative, quantitative or mixed-methods approach in their research” (Creswell, 2014, p. 6).

The positivist/post-positivist worldview is governed by the belief that there is a single reality that can be measured through observation and direct experience, i.e. the objective reality which is “out there” (Creswell, 2014, p. 7) can be discovered using experimental (natural science) methods. The role of the researcher, is “to formulate laws to account for the happenings in the world, thus giving them a firm basis for prediction and control” (Cohen et al, 2011, p. 8). Proponents of this paradigm also believe that findings from a representative sample can be generalized to the entire population, where the sample was taken from.

A different worldview is held by constructivism/interpretivism. This school of thought argues that there is no single reality i.e. single truth, rather multiple interpretations of truth. Consequently, the truth cannot be generalized to other contexts. As pointed by Creswell (2014), human beings construct subjective meanings of their experiences and since these meanings are varied the researcher is left with a task of exploring how people make sense of their experiences (p. 8). In other words, researchers strive to “view social phenomena from the perspective of the ‘insiders’ (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 38). In order to understand the world from the perspective of the participants, researchers employ qualitative methods such as interviews and observations. Moreover, in this approach, reality (truth) is a socially constructed phenomenon (Creswell, 2014; Mason, 2002), i.e., individuals construct subjective meaning by interacting with others (Creswell, 2014, p. 8).

This study is positioned within the constructivist research paradigm, which is based on the presuppositions that people construct reality and knowledge in their interactions with each other. The interpretive nature of inquiry, therefore, enabled me to ‘co-construct understanding’ of the subjective reality under investigation through mutual engagement with participants (Hatch, 2002, p. 13, 15). In other words, participants interpreted their experiences and perceptions on academic writing development in EFL through interviews, questionnaire and letters to prospective students, which then I interpreted relying on views that are shaped by her “personal, cultural and historical experience” and background (Creswell, 2014, p. 8). Thus, in concurring with Hatch (2002, p. 15), in this study the researcher and the researched collaborated in the “process of co-construction”. Moreover, in acknowledging that multiple realities exist, the present study generated meaning on academic writing through multiple source data collection.

In academic writing studies concerned with context, ethnography plays a crucial role (Lillis, 2008, p. 354). Hence, the methodology adopted for this study was grounded within the ethnographic framework; it followed ethnographic features proposed by Hammersley and Atkinson (2007). For interpretation of this study in relation to the ethnographic features described by Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) see Table 3.1. below.

Table 3.1. *The features of ethnographic work*

The feature	The present study
People’s actions and accounts are studied in everyday contexts, rather than under conditions created by me-such as an	Students’ actions and accounts were studied in the course of their undergraduate studies through semi-structured interviews.

<p>experimental setup or in highly structured interviews</p>	
<p>Data are gathered from a range of sources- though, participant observation and relatively informal conversations are the main ones</p>	<p>Interviews, written artefact, questionnaire, letters to prospective students</p>
<p>Data collection is, for the most part, relatively ‘unstructured’ as:</p> <p>a) it does not involve following through a fixed and detailed research design specified at the start,</p> <p>b) categories that are used for interpreting what they say and do are generated out of the process of data analysis</p>	<p>I employed semi structured interviews, which are flexible in allowing respondents to continue beyond initial responses</p>
<p>The focus is usually on a few cases, generally small-scale, perhaps a single setting or group of people</p>	<p>15 cases, within one setting (English Department-University of Prishtina)</p>
<p>The analysis of data involves interpretation of the meanings, functions, and consequences</p>	<p>The meaning of students’ realities were interpreted in relation to the context of</p>

of human actions and institutional practices, and how they are implicated in local, and perhaps also in wider, contexts.	University of Prishtina but also in relation to EFL context
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(Adapted from Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 3)

However, in order to get ‘thick description’ (Geertz, 1973), i.e., build holistic understandings, a sustained engagement in a particular site using a range of source data is advised (Lillis, 2008, p. 362). Thus, by using interviews, questionnaire and letter to prospective students over a span of an academic year, this longitudinal study aimed at getting in-depth understanding of EFL undergraduate students’ worldviews and see how, and if, their writing skills change over time. A criterion of a span, however, needs to be established in order to label a research longitudinal: at least one year for social study projects and at least nine months for projects in educational settings (Saldaña, 2003, p. 3-4).

This study spanned over eight months (November 2012 - June 2013), covering an academic year in the given educational context. However, it has a shorter period of engagement compared to other studies that investigated writing using ethnographic approach (such as Lillis 2001: 2-6 years). Nonetheless, its contribution is certain because through prolonged engagement I focused on how participants think, feel and act over time, capturing thus their perceptions and meanings (Saldaña, 2003, p. 4). In other words, longitudinal studies enable researchers to see “how human actions and participant perspectives might change during the course of the study to reveal temporal-based themes and patterns of human development” (Saldaña, 2003, p. 4). The aim of this

longitudinal study was to identify changes that occurred in undergraduate EFL students' writing practices and their perspectives on academic writing over a span of an academic year.

Also, in the light of its aim, the study can be regarded as a case study. Yin, (2003, p. 13, 14) argues that a researcher would use the case study method because:

- s/he wants to investigate a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially in cases when:
 - the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident
 - relies on multiple sources of evidence

In line with Cohen et al (2007, p. 254) argument, this case study strove to portray “what is like to be in a particular situation” (undergraduates majoring in EFL), “to catch the close up reality” (writing development) and to present “thick description of participants’ lived experiences of, thoughts about and feelings for a situation”.

Case studies, as Dörnyei asserts, have been very ‘productive and highly influential in applied linguistics’ (p.154). Also, many researchers exploring writing in ESL have employed a case study approach for e.g., Leki (2007) focused on four bilingual undergraduate students, Sternglass (1997) investigated nine, Casanave (2002) focused on five, Ivanić (1998) on eight and so forth. Case study is an excellent method for ‘researching changes in complex phenomena overtime’ (van Lier, 2005, p.195). Consequently, case study approach fits well with the purpose of the current study to

explore in-depth accounts of fifteen undergraduate students' experiences with writing in EAP during an academic year.

Nonetheless, case studies are classified in different ways. According to Stake (2005), case studies can be:

- 'intrinsic' i.e., when case study is undertaken in order to understand a specific thing due to its value;
- 'instrumental' i.e., when providing insights into a wider issue is of primarily interest, and the specific case of a secondary one;
- 'multiple/collective' i.e., when a number of cases are studied jointly in order to explore a phenomenon, with minimum interest in single cases.

This study can be seen in both ways: as one case study (the educational context studied) and multiple case study research (in light of the fifteen participants). In accord with Dörnyei (2011), a 'multiple-case study is, in effect, an instrumental case study extended to several cases' (p. 152). The study reported represents, a collective instrumental case study - the phenomenon explored being writing for academic purposes in EFL undergraduate context. Each participant represented a case on their own. Nonetheless, they could be explored as a group learning to write in English for Academic Purposes courses.

3.3. The context of the study

3.3.1. Research setting

The project took place at the University of Prishtina, which at the time of the study was the only public university in Kosovo. Established in 1970, University of Prishtina consists of 13 faculties and at the time of study it had 47,070 students at the undergraduate level. More specifically, the study was conducted with undergraduate students in the English Language and Literature Department of the Faculty of Philology where I hold the position of a lecturer.

Majority of students come from the Albanian community, though there is a small percentage of Turkish, Bosniak, Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian (RAE) community. There is also quota for Albanian students from the region. Each student undergoes an admission procedure that includes points collected from: the average grade during upper-secondary school (max. 20 points), points collected from the State Exam i.e. the Matura exam (max. 50 points) and points achieved from the enrollment exam in the respective departments (max. 30 points).

However, enrollment without examination was possible for children of war veterans (from the armed conflict during the 90s), an education privilege granted to them under a memorandum of agreement signed by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, Rectorate of the University of Prishtina and The War Veterans Organization. The automatic registration of this category of students has been used as a mechanism to abuse with the number of enrolled students in the University. As pointed out in section 1.6., during the academic year 2011/2012 there were almost twice the number of students enrolled in the English Department, more than originally

intended. This approach resulted in overcrowded classrooms and an increased number of non-traditional students.

3.3.2. The programme of study

The three years programme in English Language and Literature for majority of participants described in section 3.2.4 began in the academic year 2011/2012, while for two participants it began in 2010/2011. They completed the programme at different periods, the earliest being in June 2014. The number of compulsory and elective courses is shown in Table 3.2. below.

Table. 3.2. The number and sequencing of courses English Language and Literature Department students are required to complete their degree.

Year	Winter Semester <i>(October 1- January 15)</i>	Spring Semester <i>(February 1 - May 31)</i>	Exam schedules <i>(5 per academic year)</i>	Graduation requirements <i>(Post exams)</i>
1	5 compulsory modules 30 ECTs	4 compulsory & 1 elective 30 ECT	June September	
2.	4 compulsory & 2 electives 30 ECT	4 compulsory & 2 electives 30 ECT	November January April	
3	4 compulsory & 2 electives 30 ECT	4 compulsory & 2 electives 30 ECT		Completion of Diploma Paper <i>(20-30 pages)</i>
Total	90 ECT	90 ECT		

The courses taken during the first year of studies are general and include foreign languages among elective courses. However, in the second year, elective courses aim at orienting students towards a more specialized profile, which occurs during the third year. Therefore, in the last year students take compulsory and elective courses based on the study profile they have chosen, which could be either Linguistics, or Translation, or Philology (Literature).

At the end, after completing all exams, students are required to write a ‘diploma paper’, i.e. a mini-thesis under the supervision of a mentor. Students are not awarded the degree if they have not gained a minimum 60% on their diploma paper. Most of the compulsory courses carry 7 credits, while others vary from 5 to 4 ECTS. In total, 180 credits are required for the award of a Bachelor degree. A pass mark is 60%.

The programme is offered to both full-time and part-time students. However, the latter are not provided with instructions; rather they are only allowed to enter exams. By November of each academic year, students need to have passed a number of exams from the previous academic year (example minimum 7 out of 10) to be granted the right to attend classes from the following academic year. As practice shows, majority of students enter an academic year without finishing all exams from previous year.

3.3.3. Assessment

Assessment is predominantly done through written exams. In some courses assessment is done via written tests, taken up to twice during a semester. A few of the courses apply course work assessment, i.e. they require submission of portfolios at the end of the course and/or assess

students' achievement on the course through work collected over time. Nonetheless, if the course is compulsory, exams need to be organized for those who have failed through course work assessment/tests or for those who did not show up for classes, as it is the case with part-time students.

In every exam session, through an announced consultation hour, oral feedback is provided to students who are interested to see why they have failed the exam. Due to a large number of students, and frequent exam schedules, written feedback is limited, except in rare occasions when course work assessment is applied.

It is standard practice for exams to be announced publicly on the Department hall, and Faculty website. There is no Department secretary, nor any administrative staff who could help in disseminating exam results to students individually, or to collect student portfolios and other types of work. Therefore, submission is done directly to the course instructor or teaching assistant(s), while announcement of results is made public.

3.3.4. English for Academic Purposes 1 and 2 (EAP 1 / EAP 2)

EAP 1 and EAP 2 courses are mandatory courses for all 2nd year students of the English Language and Literature Department. They are designed to help students develop their academic skills, in particular writing (for details see Appendix 1). The EAP 1 course is delivered during Winter Term (October to January), while the EAP 2 during Spring Term (February to May). Even though the EAP 2 course builds upon the EAP 1 course, students can attend the EAP 2 course without having passed the EAP 1.

In alignment with university practice, all compulsory courses, hence EAP courses too, are organized in such a way that the leading course instructor has to hold a PhD, and exercise the position of a/an (assistant/associate) professor. Other course instructor/s need to have completed postgraduate studies, and hold the position of a teaching assistant/reader. In addition, lead course instructors are responsible for delivering lectures and assessing students, while teaching assistants are responsible for delivering practical classes and assisting the respective professor with assessment procedures.

At the time of the current study, I was responsible for practical classes. However, due to unexpected developments, the professor withdrew temporarily from her teaching responsibilities few weeks prior to the beginning of the academic year. An arrangement had to be made: an American Fellow (AF) took over the two hours foreseen for lectures per week to teach listening and speaking skills. I, on the other hand, continued to use the two hours foreseen for practical classes to focus on reading and writing only.

3.3.5. EAP 1 and 2 course work tasks

Students attended 90 minute classes with the AF and with me, amounting to 4 hours per week, respectively 180 minutes. In both classes they completed various tasks. This section will report only tasks that students had to complete in relation to writing.

Majority of written tasks in EAP 1 followed a similar pattern: students provided each other with written feedback on initial drafts, the teacher gave written feedback on revised drafts, and oral feedback on common issues identified while reading their drafts, and/or provided feedback upon request during teacher-student conferences. For further details, see Table 3.3.

Table. 3.3. *Summary of written tasks in EAP 1*

Task	Description	Peer-feedback	Teacher-feedback
Essay 1 (T1)	In-class essay, min. 250 words	N/A	N/A
Essay 2	Five paragraph essay (300-400 words) on a jointly selected topic: <i>The qualities of teaching in the English Department of the University of Prishtina.</i>	In class peer feedback (from one person at least) Draft 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual written teacher feedback; • In-class oral feedback on common errors and difficulties Draft 2
Essay 3	Five paragraph essay (300-400 words) on a jointly selected topic, i.e. looking at the other side of the coin of the previous topic: <i>Why majority of English Department student are not learning?</i>	In class peer feedback (from one person at least) Draft 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual written teacher feedback; • In-class oral feedback on common errors and difficulties Draft 2

Essay 4	Read- to- write essay (2000 words). <i>The challenges and benefits of English teaching and learning at the University of Prishtina: a student perspective</i>	Peer feedback encouraged outside class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Out-of-regular schedule workshop delivered to students while in the initial stage of writing. Suggestions on organisation, potential problems with referencing and other issues were provided and student questions were answered. • Teacher-student conferences were organised upon request.
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In EAP 2 students had two main assignments: write a 4000 words research paper in groups of four or maximum five people and a 250 words in-class essay as in EAP 1. For the former, the tasks were staged and scaffolding was provided. In the process of research writing, each group member was also responsible for producing individual work that contributed to the overall group product. The latter was timed in-class essay. For details, see Table 3.4.

Table 3.4. *Summary of written tasks in EAP 2*

Task	Description	Peer-feedback	Teacher-feedback
Proposal	Write a summary (150 words) defining the aim	Written feedback during EAP class	Predominantly oral feedback during EAP

(group task)	of research, procedures to be followed, data analysis and outcomes.	(from at least one group)	class and student – teacher conference.
Research tools (group task)	Compile a questionnaire and/or interview questions	Written feedback during EAP class (from at least two groups)	Oral and written feedback during EAP class and during student-teacher conferences that were arranged upon students' request
Methods section (individual task)	Each group member had to describe the procedures s/he applied in collecting data (150-200 words).	During EAP class and out of class (between member groups & other group members)	During EAP class (to one or couple of members of group only)
Results (individual task)	Each group member had to report on results of his/her data. (150-200 words).	During EAP class and out of class (between member groups & other group members)	During EAP class (to one or couple of members of group only)
Methods Section (group task)	Write 1 st draft of methodology section for research paper.	Written feedback during EAP class (other group members)	Predominantly oral feedback during EAP class
Results (group task)	Write 1 st draft of results section for research paper	Written feedback during EAP class (other group members)	Predominantly oral feedback during EAP class

Data analysis (group task)	Write 1 st draft of data analysis section for research paper	Written feedback during EAP class (other group members)	Predominantly oral feedback during EAP class
Research paper (group task)	Write 1 st draft of data analysis section for research paper	Written feedback during and out of EAP class (other group members)	Written feedback on draft 1
Essay (T2)	Write in-class essay (min. 250 words) on the same topic as Essay 1 in EAP 1	N/A	N/A

3.3.6. What defines good writing in EAP courses

When students enroll in the English Language and Literature Department, unfortunately, they are not provided with any written guidelines that explicitly define assessment criteria and provide grade descriptors. This is merely because the University does not have a handbook that details the assessment criteria. On the other hand, students have to figure out on their own the grade descriptors for each course. Ironically, at the end of their studies when they need a proof of grades, the university issues them a document in which grade descriptors are outlined. Moreover, even if a staff member uses a grading rubric for any of the taught subjects, this is not made transparent. My insider's role and anecdotal evidence allow me to surmise that grading rubrics, if existent, are not made available to students. Assessment is mainly done via written exams, where the focus is mostly on knowledge reproduction, hence academic writing conventions and/or task requirements are not made explicit to students.

And, when staff assess writing, they place emphasis on different aspects of writing that are important to them (Leki, 1995). Though not specific to the Kosovar context, even teachers within the same discipline value different kinds of writing and/or assign different values to different aspects of writing. For example, many teaching assistants responsible to grade writing in English 1 and 2 place a great emphasis on grammar and mechanics rather than macro-aspects of writing, as it is the case with me. Therefore, students continuously report that writing in EAP courses is completely different from other courses.

It becomes obvious that there is disagreement among staff as to what constitutes good writing. As Leki (1995) pointed out, the “concept of good writing is context bound, that what is good writing in one instance is not successful for all circumstances, that different contexts impose different, even contradictory constraints on writers” (p.24). In the context of the English Language and Literature Department the inconsistency in defining good writing results from various teachers’ beliefs. The approach “Good writing: I know it when I see it” (Leki, 1995, p.25) prevails, thus compelling students to figure it out what each teachers’ expectations are.

In the first years of teaching EAP courses, I used a very detailed analytic grading rubric to define what good writing is: also, because I believed that students would find it easier to understand how each criterion of writing was graded separately. Despite the many attempts to train students to understand the rubric, unfortunately, over the years I have noticed that for one reason or the other, students rarely referred to grading rubrics. On the other hand, I was feeling overwhelmed to assess hundreds of essays using the grading rubric that I have adapted from various sources, thus to speed up the process of assessment I began applying the Simple Analytic Scale provided by

John Bean (2001) (for details see Appendix 2.), which is the same grading rubric I used for the first three essays with students in the study.

I have been using this scale for several years and I feel very comfortable with it, because it covers characteristics of writing I look for such as: Quality of ideas, Organization and Development, Clarity and Style, Sentence Structure and Mechanics. The scale applies general description method, i.e. “the criteria for writing can be stated in a general or universal way” (Bean, 2001, p. 257) and it allows me to “weigh some criteria more heavily than others” (Bean, 2001). For example, I always put more emphasis on the quality of ideas and organization and development and less on sentence structure and mechanics. Moreover, I adapted the scale to add other criteria such as “Use of sources”. Every time I assigned students a new task, the rubric was revisited in order to reinforce the key aspects of the essay. In addition, students were encouraged to consider the rubric as a checklist when providing peer feedback.

However, as practice has shown, students disregard assessment criteria. Therefore, to help them grasp a better understanding of what ‘good writing’ means in EAP courses, for each task students were provided with a checklist that aimed at keeping them focused on key features of writing (see Appendix 3. for illustration). In addition, I made sure that for each assignment, students received samples of previously written work, which we discussed together in class. A typical lesson would involve analysis of two or three essays, usually one being a poorly written essay, while the other one was a good example of writing. This enabled students to discuss the grading criteria, i.e., it gave them an opportunity to discuss and develop their understanding of what constitutes good writing in EAP courses.

3.3.7. Classroom perspective

The approach I was using in EAP courses was in many regards unconventional for the given context: active learning was at the heart of both courses and students' needs were nurtured through scaffolded tasks and assignments, continuous feedback and increased participation. Moreover, I made sure to “walk the walk” in creating a caring environment where one's opinions were respected, where questioning and discussion were encouraged, and where each student was held accountable for his/her learning and for collaborating with each other in the process. In addition, a regular classroom attendance policy was established at the outset of EAP 1, a practice not implemented rigidly by the institution, but which in EAP courses aimed at building a strong sense of community and responsibility among students. The fact that there were only 90 minute tutorials per week to acquire writing skills, the limited teaching and learning resources, and the non-existent technology in the classroom, led me to believe that regular attendance would play an important role in helping students build academic knowledge. Moreover, to cultivate interaction in the classroom, I ensured that students were provided with plenty of opportunities to learn from each other, therefore, many tasks were assigned to be completed in pairs and/or in groups. For example, they were also trained to provide peer feedback through a range of activities such as whole class activities, analysis of teacher feedback on drafts, analysis of feedback against grading criteria.

Overall, through this approach, students were no longer passive recipients of knowledge; instead they became more active in the process of learning, i.e., they became novice members of a discourse community. They achieved this through regular interaction with me as a more experienced member of the community (such as through individual and/or group tutorials, writing

conferences, oral feedback), through interaction with each other, with various genres and writing conventions of the “university culture” (Paltridge, 2004, p. 90).

My approach was heavily influenced by my experience as a learner of writing conventions in my graduate study, but also as an EAP teacher at the English Department, who had experimented with various techniques and approaches through the years. As pointed out in the introduction, my approach was also influenced by my strong belief that students needed to acquire academic writing conventions in order to be ready to compete in the global labour market.

A snapshot in EAP 1

To give a snapshot of the activities that were going on in the EAP 1 course, I will briefly describe two aspects of teaching that were perceived to be innovative for my students: teaching pre-writing strategies and introducing feedback through multiple-draft writing. Over the years, I became aware that my enthusiasm to teach students metacognitive writing strategies derived from my own personal experience of having found these strategies beneficial to my own writing development. In addition, various textbooks, online resources and literature were giving me reassurance that I was doing the right thing. Therefore, I made sure to make teaching of pre-writing strategies an integral aspect of teaching writing in EAP 1. I strongly believe that students need to be exposed to various learning strategies, need to be given time and space to experiment with them, prior to making an informed decision about its suitability for their learning style. I had showcased in class previous student writings to illustrate the process and spell out writing class requirements and introduce students to the multiple-draft writing approach. Therefore, from the very beginning

students had an opportunity to see previous student writings as part of their portfolios, containing ideas jotted down during brainstorming, then outlining, draft essays with peer and teacher feedback and lastly, the final version of each essay. They were also given a lot of activities in class to identify thesis statement, topic sentences, to analyze supporting evidence, to analyze essays and evaluate them against grading criteria.

In order to model the planning process and encourage students to take an active role in learning, I facilitated a brainstorming session for the first five-paragraph essay. After students negotiated an essay topic amongst themselves, I wrote down the topic on the board and invited students to share their ideas. While I was writing down their ideas on the board, students were using pen and paper to copy them. The free flow of ideas was encouraged, and, as a result, a wide range of ideas was produced. Afterwards, we analyzed, discussed and negotiated the outline for the first two paragraphs of the essay. This decreased the tension that students might have felt if they were left alone to write an essay on an assigned topic. It also gave them a sense of ownership. On the other hand, it gave me a sense of control over the content, which also helped me to minimize potential cases of ghost writing. Students were then sent home to write the first draft of the essay using the outline made for the first two paragraphs. They were encouraged to brainstorm further on the topic, in order to come up with additional ideas and make an outline for paragraph three of the body too. This decision was made having in mind that some students (e.g. high achievers) might have felt trapped to write an essay using an outline composed of ideas produced by the whole class, hence they would have room to express their own thoughts.

The following week, the first 20-25 minutes of class were dedicated to peer feedback. Students were given a set of checklist questions adapted from Hyland's (2010) 'First peer response sheet' to guide the feedback process. Students were encouraged to identify thesis statement, topic sentences of each paragraph, the evidence the writer has used to support his position and main conclusion. They were also encouraged to provide suggestions for improvement. Feedback was given in written form but additional time was given to students to have a conversation for clarification purposes (e.g. if they did not understand the feedback). Students had one week to make changes based on their peer feedback prior to submitting it to me. I would usually return feedback within a week or two. On the day I returned feedback, I usually took 10-15 min of class time to discuss common problems I noticed in student writing. Consequently, I gave students suggestions for improvement and provided them with an opportunity to ask questions. Students then had time to work on the final version until the end of the term when they were required to submit a portfolio of all writing they have done in EAP1, including drafts with feedback comments.

In the same fashion, I facilitated brainstorming activity for Essay 2. Afterwards, except for one paragraph outline that was done as an example, students were encouraged to outline the rest of the essay on their own. This decision was made out of fear that I was spoon-feeding them, hence I wanted to create more opportunities for independent learning and interaction between peers. Additionally, I did not want to pressure them to apply outlining against their will, if it was not aiding the process of writing. I myself have never been a "radical outliner" (Reid, 1984), and since some people benefit greatly from outlining I had to consider available options for my students (Casanave, 2004), hence the modeling and encouragement to use it, if and when effective. In terms of feedback, the procedure was the same for the other two assignments.

It should be mentioned that for Essay 3, i.e., the 2000 words essay, I did not facilitate brainstorming, because I wanted them to work more independently as learners. Also, I was hoping that by this time, students were able to figure out which planning strategies best suited their style. Nevertheless, I did have whole-class writing conferences to discuss the structure and organization, referencing and other concerns that students had prior to writing and while writing their essays.

Overall, the EAP 1 classes were tailored to meet students' needs, through modeling, scaffolded assignments, guidance, feedback, cooperation and collaboration. As part of research, students were asked to comment on their reaction towards the multiple-draft approach to writing and what facilitated their growth as writers.

A snapshot in EAP 2

The key aspect of the EAP 2 course was to create an opportunity for students to acquire basic research skills and develop further their writing skills, which they would be able to use when writing their diploma paper at the end of the studies. The course was designed to involve students in a range of activities that span over 15 weeks. They needed to design a research project in groups of 4 or 5 and work together in conducting research and reporting findings.

Aware that students were inexperienced in conducting and writing research reports and/or papers, I tried to organize classes in such a way that activities and tasks were carefully scaffolded. For example, to guide students to come up with a research topic idea, I encouraged them to initially

flip through various magazines (e.g. teachers' magazine 'Forum', IATEFL's magazine "Voices") and/or conference proceedings (such as IATEFL, TESOL, EATAW) that I had brought to class. I showcased a list of topics that previous generations of students had done and I shared my own experience of coming up with research ideas. They were then encouraged to explore their own interests and, subsequently, to negotiate amongst group members on potential topics for research. As it was the case with Casanave (2004) during her years of teaching a graduate-level writing class in Japan, I had noticed over the years of teaching EAP 2 that my students too had no idea what they wished to investigate and, even when they thought they did, the topics were too broad to investigate. Consequently, students were invited to make connections to other subjects in their field of study, as the background knowledge would give them confidence and increase their interest in research. It would also help me guide their learning better: I would not be able to provide them with constructive feedback and guidance if they had chosen a topic from field in which I had no knowledge, (e.g. law, politics) therefore, it was a requirement for students to select a topic from the field of education.

Each week, a new component of research was introduced in class through examples and activities, and then students were required to incorporate that component in their own research. For example, to define research questions, various activities were used in class such as: highlighting good research questions in a paper, analyzing previous EAP students' writing, i.e., analyzing the development of research questions, eliciting and analyzing questions posed from the audience. Afterwards, students had to work on defining their own research questions, bring them to class the following week for feedback. For an illustration, see a lesson plan on abstract writing in Appendix 4.

Written and oral peer and teacher feedback characterized the first part of each lesson (approximately 40-0 minutes). Each class would start with groups giving each other feedback on their research projects, while I would go around and meet each group, talk to the group's leader for the week, who would then report to me about everyone's contribution to the project, what they achieved during the week and what did they want feedback on during those 5-7 minutes allocated for feedback. Afterwards, I would take another 5-10 minutes of class time to share some of the common problems I had noticed in the research design and writing prior to introducing a new component of research. It is important to be mentioned that on top of classroom feedback, I gave each group a more detailed written feedback on the first completed draft of their writing.

Overall, classes in the EAP 2 were designed to be very practical and tailored to help students learn how to design, conduct and report research through continuous guidance, continuous written and oral feedback and scaffolded tasks and assignments. As part of research, students were asked to comment on their experience with research process and collaboration and what facilitated their growth as writers.

3.4. Selection of participants

In order to gain a better understanding of the problem and of the research questions, some sort of purposeful sampling is often applied in qualitative research (Creswell, 2014, p. 189). Even

though, as reported in literature (Charmaz, 2006; Dörnyei, 2011;), the process of selecting participants should remain open for as long as it is possible, ideally, until we reach saturation, an initial plan needs to be made about the initial sample size. As qualitative researchers are “prepared to sacrifice scope for detail” (Silverman, 2005, p. 9), working with a large sample longitudinally is difficult due to large amount of data. Nonetheless, the sampling size could increase up to 30 due to computer-aided data analysis, though that could barely be manageable for a single researcher (Dörnyei, 2011, p. 127). Looking at previous qualitative research in academic literacy studies, e.g. Lillis (2001) worked with a sample of ten, Ivanić (1998) with eight or in ESL/EFL context (Casanave, 2002; Leki, 1995) worked with a sample of 3-5, a study of a size 6-10 might work well. (Dörnyei, 2011, p. 127).

Having in mind the above, and being aware that attrition can occur in longitudinal research, a decision was taken to select 15 participants for this study. Hence, even with the occurrence of attrition the remaining number would still be sufficient to complete the study successfully. Nonetheless, no one withdrew from the study. Even though, “qualitative inquiry is not concerned with how representative the respondent sample is...” rather with “individuals who can provide rich and varied insights” (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 126), the participants for this study were selected via a “maximum variation sampling”, in order to be broadly representative of student population typical of the program. Also as Dörnyei, (2007) asserts, ‘this process will allow us to explore the variation within respondents and it will also underscore any commonalities that we find’ (p.128). Participants were identified based on the following criteria (see Table 3.5.):

Table 3.5. *Selection criteria for research participants*

Characteristics of participants	
Year of study	2 nd
Nationality	Kosovo Albanian
Age	19-22
Previous education	in Kosovo
Place of residence	Different regions (urban and rural) of Kosovo in order to ensure variation in education background and expectations
Overall performance in English 1 and 2 courses (as a prerequisite)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • English 1 & English 2 modules from year 1 of studies need to have been passed • The overall grade from these two courses was used to determine high, middle and low ranking. (representatives from all developmental levels)
Volunteering	Expressing readiness to participate in the study

EAP courses are intended to build upon practical English language skills acquired in English 1 & 2 modules (for details see Appendix 5). However, as a result of the exam-driven system of education, many students attend modules in Year 2 without finishing all exams from year 1. In terms of their participation in EAP courses, as practice shows, students who have not passed English 1 and/or 2 will probably not attend classes regularly nor will they engage in the EAP course work. Considering that regular attendance and active participation in EAP courses is a must, in the selection of participants, having passed English 1 and 2 was considered an indicator of their potential readiness to participate in the course/study. Further to this, lack of University database at the time of the study, made it difficult for me to use student reported grade average

from freshmen year as a criterion to select top, middle and low-ranking students. Therefore, an emphasize was put on the average grade from English 1 and 2 exams.

To solicit participants, and to get a background on their life and academic literacy practices, a questionnaire was distributed to students attending the EAP 1 course (see Appendix 6.1.). Initially, the plan was to solicit participants as early as the 3rd or 4th week of the course (October 2012). But since students did not show for classes at all for the first two weeks, and because a vast majority was preparing for the exams, scheduled to take place in November, the number of students attending classes was small compared to the 150 who joined the course by the end of semester. Consequently, the low attendance of students during the first 6-7 weeks was feared not to be sufficiently diverse i.e., not representative of all categories of students (top, middle and low ranking), which the research aimed at including in the study.

To accommodate all students, reading and writing classes were organized in four groups. Therefore, the questionnaire was distributed to students attending practical classes of the EAP 1 course (reading and writing) on the dates when each group had classes in EAP 1 (3, 4, 5 and 10th of December). Potential participants were informed orally in Albanian language on the aim of the research, the questionnaire and how the data would be used. More importantly, they were assured that their decision for taking part in the study would not affect assessment in EAP courses. They were also informed that agreeing to take part in the study requires them to sign a consent form, which was approved by the Ethics Committee of the University of Reading.

Having in mind that students might have had limited opportunities in the past to fill a consent form, and to assure that they understand what is written on it, I talked the form through with them (Seidman, 2006) prior to giving them time to read it again and ask questions for clarification purposes. To ensure understanding of its content, the consent form, Participant's Information Sheet (see Appendix 7.1.) and the questionnaire were translated into the Albanian language (see Appendix 6.2.). On the week the questionnaire was distributed 128 students attended classes and filled in the questionnaire. See table below.

Table. 3.6. *Number of students who filled the questionnaire and expressed their position on study participation.*

Response on study participation	Number of potential participants
YES	79
Don't know	29
NO	20
TOTAL number	128

- It should be pointed out that from the pool of 79 potential participants, three were excluded from the study as they:
 - a) signed the consent form but they did not indicate in the questionnaire if they would like to take part in the study (2 people);
 - b) indicated in the questionnaire that s/he would like to take part in the study but did not submit the consent form (1 person);

- 15 potential participants were excluded as ‘atypical’.
 - a) Two of them were excluded as one was 37 years old and the other one was 25, whereas majority of second year students are in their early twenties;
 - b) 11 have lived abroad for more than a year, whereas 2 were from a neighbouring country. The exposure to education outside Kosovo could not reflect the education system in Kosovo; therefore, it could have an impact on final results;

- 16 potential participants were also excluded; they have not passed English 1 and/or English 2 exams, implying that they might not attend classes regularly or participate actively in EAP courses.

The remaining number of potential participants totalled 45, thus the fifteen study participants were selected from this pool. One of the participants, who was unsure if she could commit to the study, approached me couple of weeks later to confirm that she wanted to be part of it. As the participants had already been selected, I offered her to help out with piloting, which she willingly accepted.

The participants’ profile is summarised in the table below.

Table 3.7. *Participants' profile*

Name	Age	Place	Gender	Average grade in English 1&2
s3 Herolinda	20	Vrelle/Istog (rural)	F	9
s5. Hasime	19	Decan (suburban)	F	9
s9. Hesa	20	Podujeve (urban)	F	9
s11.Hana	19	Kacanik (suburban)	F	9
s14. Hekuran	19	Ferizaj (urban)	M	9
s2. Mimoza	21	Prizren (urban)	F	8
s4.Merita	19	Rashnice/Shtime (rural)	F	8
s7. Mrika	20	Mitrovice (urban)	F	8
s8 Malesore	20	Prishtine (urban)	F	8
s15. Miranda	20	Prishtine (urban)	F	8
s1. Saranda	21	Vushtrri (suburban)	F	6.5
s6. Sazana	22	Kamenice (suburban)	F	6
s10.Servete	20	Suhareke (suburban)	F	6
s12. Selvie	21	Livoq i Poshtem/Gjilan (rural)	F	6
S13. Sihana	20	Gjilan (urban)	F	6.5

	High Achievers
	Middle Achievers
	Struggling Achievers

Pseudonyms begin with the first letter of the subgroup students belong to (e.g. the names of all high achievers begin with letter H). They came from urban, suburban and rural places, representing six out of seven major regions of Kosovo. The region that was not represented in the study was due to the establishment of the University of Prishtina, respectively the English Department branch there, which encouraged enrolment of students from that region predominantly. Moreover, the age range representation was typical of the BA group at the English Department, as were their developmental levels. Grade 6 represents the lowest pass grade, whereas grade 10 is the highest possible pass grade. For details on description of grades (see Appendix 8.).

As the aim of this research was to also investigate differences in terms of students' practices as a whole group (undergraduate students attending EAP), 3 sub-groups (higher, middle and struggling achievers) and individuals (fifteen students), focusing on fifteen individual cases was not practical i.e., thick description for each case would be jeopardized considering the large amount of data. In addition, most research studies focusing on writing focused on lower number of cases: a range from one case (Spack, 1997b) to 10 cases (Lillis, 2001) is a more standard practice. Having said the above, a decision was taken to look at students' practices as a whole group and three sub-groups.

3.5. Data collection tools

The main source of information in this research derived from interviews conducted with fifteen students of the English Language and Literature Department of the University of Prishtina. Interviews play a key role in ethnographic research as they allow researchers to understand reality from the participants’ perspectives. Two other research tools used for this study were: a questionnaire that aimed at getting background into participants’ previous academic literacies and two letters addressed to prospective students in order to get insights into their experiences with academic literacy practices. Lastly, an essay written at two points in time was planned to measure writing development over time, but later the idea was abandoned due to time constraints. However, both essays were used to explore students’ views on writing development as they looked at their T1 and T2 writing during Interview 4. Table 3.8. summarizes research tools used for the study.

Table. 3.8. *Summary of data collection tools*

Research tool	Quantity/Length	Research Questions Answered	Focus
Questionnaire	1	RQ 2	Solicit top, middle, low ranking students; Use background information to identify participants’ previous writing and reading experiences

In-depth interviews	43 hours, 20 minutes	RQ 1 & 2	Previous experiences with reading, writing and feedback; On-going experiences with reading, writing, and feedback in EAP courses; Reflecting on the development of reading and writing skills over time
Timed essay (T1)	149 (on average 250 words each)	RQ 1.2	Use students' level of performance in writing as a baseline
Timed essay (T2)	128 (on average 250 words each)	RQ 1.2	Check if any development occurred over time in students' writing
Letters to students	29	RQ 1.2	Capture students' reflection on the experience with writing and reading in EAP 1 & 2

Research tools were extensively piloted with four groups of English language and literature students from September 2012 to May 2013.

3.5.1. Interviews

Understanding students' experiences with academic writing development can be gained by employing a qualitative approach to data collection. Interviews are probably the most widely

employed forms of qualitative research methods. (Bryman, 2001; Mason, 2002), particularly in case study research (Yin, 2003). However, the decision to use interviews as a main data collection instrument for this study lies primarily in the interest of understanding “the lived experiences of other people and the meaning they make of that experience” (Seidman, 2006, p. 9). Across the spectrum of method possibilities in data collection this study opted for interviews because through interviewing one can generate data on events and perspectives of participants that otherwise would be almost impossible to generate using other methods (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). For example, the data produced from a survey approach would very likely be thin, and would not allow the researcher to understand or explore answers in depth (Denscombe, 2003; Gillham, 2000). Moreover, checking the accuracy of responses in a large-scale survey would be demanding for a researcher (Denscombe, 2003, p. 32). This however, would be possible by employing the interview because due to the depth of focus on the participant and possibility to clarify things, through in-depth interviews the researcher can address and explore in details the processes and experiences of participants (Lewis, 2003, p. 58). Also “the overpoweringly positive features of the interview are the richness and vividness of the material it turns up” (Gillham, 2000, p. 10). Moreover, as Denscombe (2003) asserts, in a survey approach due to its focus on the production of data based on a wide coverage, there is a potential to neglect the significance of the data, thus leaving them to ‘speak for themselves’ (p. 32). On the other hand, “general statements, no matter how well written can convey less, and with less impact than a direct quotation from an interview, even when the person being interviewed is not smoothly articulate” (Gillham, 2000, p. 10).

However, Kvale (2007) sets out seven steps of interviewing: thematizing, designing, interviewing, transcribing, analysing, verifying and reporting suggesting that reinforcing the

argument that the process of generating data is time consuming (Cohen *et al* 2007; Mason, 2002). Though a careful consideration needs to be given to this concern, when the focus of the research is exploring an issue from the point of view of the participants, then interviewing is the appropriate approach. Also, this research was in alignment with other ethnographic and case study research tradition (such as Furneaux, 2011; Leki, 2007; Morton, Storch & Thompson, 2014; Sternglass, 2009), as it aimed at examining and understanding participants' perceptions and experiences with academic writing by using interviews as the main data generation technique. Interviewing thus enabled me to explore how participants came "to attach certain meanings to phenomena or events" (Berg & Lune, 2014, p. 115).

3.5.2. Semi-structured interviews

"Different forms of interviews serve different purposes" (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 2) therefore, following a slightly varied structure in the process, which also depends on the number of interview sessions (Dörnyei, 2011). Interviews can be unstructured i.e. they do not follow a pre-prepared interview guide, beyond 'few opening questions' thus allowing researchers to have maximum flexibility in following the interviewee (ibid: 136). On the other extreme, the structured interview follows the interview guide closely, i.e., each interviewee is asked the same questions, leaving no room for variation in responses (ibid: 135) and for new issues to emerge (Gibson & Brown, 2009, p. 88).

As a compromise between the two extremes, the semi-structured interview applied in the study allowed me to guide the interview through a set of prepared questions but allowing her to be

flexible in investigating further any raised issue (Dörnyei, 2011). Consequently, each participant was asked the same questions though not necessarily in the same order and wording (ibid: 136), and any issue that arose beyond initial response was explored in more depth with a series of follow up questions. Consequently, I was able to generate detailed data on the experiences of each individual, which if she had chosen to use structured interview, would have not been able to achieve depth of responses, though the data could have been quantified.

Moreover, the case study research emphasizes ‘depth over breadth, the particular rather than general, relationships and practices rather than outcomes’ (Denscombe (2003, p. 32). Having said that, and in concurring with Seidman (2006) a topic cannot be explored in breadth and depth through a one-shot interview, rather through multiple sessions. Therefore, tracing changes in the development of writing skills over time required administration of multiple interview sessions with the same participants. As pointed out by Dörnyei (2011), in longitudinal studies interviews would need to be organized in such a way that with the first or two interviews a baseline knowledge is created, and with the following regular interviews the focus would be on exploring changes of the phenomenon under investigation. Therefore, in order for the researcher to understand students’ experiences and their reaction to writing over a period of time, interviews at four points in time during the academic year 2012/2013 were conducted. The aim of the first interview was to break the ice, build rapport, and create the baseline knowledge i.e., ‘put participant’s experience in context by asking him or her to tell as much as possible about him or herself in the light of the topic up to present time’ (Seidman, 2006, p. 17). The subsequent interviews were more focused on exploring changes in students’ perspectives and reactions towards academic literacy practices in EAP courses. All interviews were conducted in Albanian.

3.5.3. Interview design and procedure

The aim of this sub-section is to provide information on the nature of each interview and the proceeding activities. Many of the questions asked were similiar at all interviews (1-4); they aimed at generating responses about changes that were perceived to have been occuring in regards to development of writing skills. However, additional questions were asked in each interview either to clarify responses, hence understand better participant's meaning or to generate data specific to interviewee and/or interview focus. Written assignments were referred to, mostly in relation to feedback in interviews 2 and 3. In the last interview each participant was given time to read his/her essay written at T1 and T2 (after 6 months). They were then invited to share their perceptions on change in writing overtime and to illustrate it by referring to the text. Then they were asked questions about the writing experience over an academic year. The table below summarizes interview timeline and content. To specify which data derives from which interview the following combination was used: the letter I succeeded by a number. The letter I denotes the interview, and the succeeding number denotes the number of the interview that was conducted. For example, I4 stands for interview 4.

Table. 3.9. *A summary of interview process and focus*

Interview (I)	Session period	Length	Focus
I1	12-31 st January, 2013 <i>(Week 15-17)</i>	10h, 06 min.	Background information: Previous reading and writing experiences. First impressions

			on writing, reading and feedback experience in EAP1.
I2	17 April- May 2 nd , 2013 <i>(Week 9-11)</i>	10h, 57 min.	Coping with literacy practices in EAP: reflection on writing, reading and feedback experience.
I3	23-31 st May, 2013 <i>(Week 14-15)</i>	13h, 36 min.	Reaction to an on-going group research paper experience in EAP2. Reflection on writing, reading and feedback experience
I4	20-25 th June, 2013	9h, 19 min. <i>(3-4 weeks after the course was finished)</i>	Looking back at the development of writing, reading and reaction to feedback over time

Interview three was longer because two of the participants were scheduled to go abroad on a study/travel opportunity and could not attend interview 4. Consequently, interview 3 and 4 were held on the same day for these two participants (S14 and S15). In total, 43 hours and 20 minutes were spent in interviewing participants. Interviews lasted between 28 to 64 minutes (excluding Interview 3 and 4 for S14 and S15). This range was a result of various details that participants' shared at each interview. Interviews were recorded using a high quality recorder. Each interview was initially transcribed (see section 3.8. for details) and then translated (see section 3.6.). Most of the interviews were held in a room that is used for Departmental meetings and occasionally for small group teaching classes. However, only two people had access to the key, the Head of Department and a cleaning lady. Permission to use the room for research purposes was granted by

the Head of Department. I also ensured that when students left the room, there was no staff in the hall, or another study participant who could identify them.

3.5.3.1 Interview 1

Interview 1 was initially planned to take place in October/November. However, in qualitative research initial plans often need to shift due to unforeseen contextual factors. The fact that in the first two weeks, students did not show up for classes, and when they began to the number was very low, required modifications on my side to accommodate the unforeseen challenges. Interview 1, hence took place during January, i.e., last week of the EAP 1 course. Participants had finished with the EAP 1 classes, i.e. by that time they had written two essays using multiple-draft writing and they were working on the final 2000 words essay. This experience enabled students to talk about change that in their views, occurred from October to January.

The interview guide for the first interview can be found in Appendix 9. During this session information on previous writing, reading and feedback experiences were sought. Additionally, participants were asked to share their viewpoints on the experience with EAP 1 and if they noticed any change in their writing until that point. Moreover, concerns about the ongoing final writing assignment were discussed.

3.5.3.2. Interview 2

Interview 2, for which the guide appears in Appendix 9, took place about 8 weeks after the first interview. By that time students had finished all coursework in EAP 1 and were attending

classes in EAP 2. The focus of this interview was discussing changes in writing from the onset of academic year until that point. All assignments completed in EAP 1 (two shorter essays and the final 2000 words assignment) were brought by students and were referred to during discussion, though in relation to feedback predominantly. Examination period in the university presented a challenge in setting interviews, for both piloting and the main study. Consequently, even though most interviews took place in April, for one person the interview was scheduled in May 2nd.

3.5.3.3. Interview 3

Interview 3 took place a month after the second interview was held. In this interview, participants were asked to talk about the ongoing experience with writing; initially writing experience in other courses (to check if data is being contaminated), focusing then on the ongoing experience with conducting and writing a research paper in EAP 2. As with other interviews, they were asked to reflect on the perceived changes on writing overtime. The interview 3 guide appears in Appendix 9. Examination period presented a challenge in setting interviews; consequently, for one person the interview had to be scheduled in May.

3.5.3.4. Interview 4

Interview 4, for which the interview guide appears in Appendix 9, took place in June, a month after interview 3, respectively three weeks after EAP 2 classes were completed. As mentioned above, in this interview each participant was given time to read his/her essay written on the same topic at two different points in time. They were then asked to comment if change has occurred in writing single-draft essay overtime. The rest of the interview was an overview of

participants' experiences with writing during the whole academic year. Throughout all interviews participants were able to provide valuable insights into their changing perceptions on writing development overtime.

3.5.4. Questionnaire for students

In order to solicit participants, a questionnaire was administered to 128 students in the EAP 1 course in December (See Appendix 6.1.). The questionnaire also aimed at getting information on participants' background, respectively on life/education histories, prior reading and writing experiences, module expectations and background on their experiences with multiple-draft writing.

The questionnaire consisted of four sections: The first section focused on questions that aimed at eliciting information on participants' education and life history. Questions, 7, 8, 9, 10 of this section were adapted from Sternglass (2009, p. 305-306). Section B aimed at collecting students' experiences with reading and writing in both mother tongue and English. Section C focused on students' goals and course expectations. Section D on students' practices with process of writing and feedback. Compilation of these sections was influenced by consulting other longitudinal research such as Furneaux (2011), Sternglass (2009), O'Brian (2012), and guided by its research questions. The last question of the questionnaire was taken from Furneaux (2011).

3.5.5. Letters to prospective students

At the end of the winter semester (end of January) and spring semester (end of May) participants wrote letters to prospective EAP 1 and 2 students. At the end of interview 1 each participant was given a sheet with instructions in order to prompt responses for the letter (see Appendix 10). They were then given oral instructions and encouraged to ask questions for clarification.

For EAP 2, after interview 3 participants were reminded of the letter and its purpose and were kindly asked to write one at their convenience. Later, a reminder was sent to each individual via email, to which participants responded at different occasions.

The purpose of this letter was to capture their reflections after having completed each course and see what aspects of the course they found challenging and/or beneficial. More importantly, putting the focus on future students was done with a purpose of triggering aspects that were not considered important to be mentioned during interviews or which students might have not perhaps felt comfortable in sharing with. The idea to use these letters as research tools, derived from my personal experience in using it with students at the end of the course in the past. The anecdotal evidence over the years suggested that students provided more useful information about the course and their personal challenges when the letter was addressed to future students compared to end-of-course questionnaires or reflective essays. In addition, this would enable cross checking with data generated from interviews. The length of responses varied: some were brief (e.g. 118 words) hence not very informative, some were more elaborated (e.g. 648 words), hence a useful

source of getting participants' perspective on important aspects of the courses in relation to writing development.

3.5.6. Timed Essays T1 and T2

Prior to starting with writing modules in EAP 1 students were asked to write 250 words in-class essay in 40 minutes (Time 1). The timing and word length were borrowed from IELTS exams and implemented in EAP exams as norm years prior to the study. In the last week of spring semester, they were asked to write an essay on the same topic and following the same requirements (Time 2). For details see Appendix 11. The output was aimed to analyse student development over 6 months. To choose a topic that would elicit responses, envisaged choosing a topic that students would have prior knowledge of. In order to achieve that, an extensive piloting was conducted using topics found in TOEFL writing sections. For details on piloting check section 3.7. For a list of topics see Appendix 12. The writing was done in the first 40 minutes of the class. Explanations were given in both Albanian and English. The students were also informed that the following week they would be asked to participate in the study, in which the written essay would mean permission to be used for the study.

3.6. Translating data

As the interviews were conducted in Albanian, interview transcripts had to be translated into English. Collecting data in one language and reporting about findings in another for many

social researchers can have a direct impact on the quality and validity of the study. There are several factors that could affect the quality of translation:

‘the linguistic competence of the translator/s; the translator’s knowledge of the culture of the people under study; the autobiography of those involved in the translation; and the circumstances in which the translation takes place’ (Birbili, 2000).

Even though I possess linguistic competence in both languages, cultural understanding of the research setting and participants, over a decade long experience as a translator/interpreter from Albanian into English and vice versa, and she was translating transcripts of interviews that conducted by her, to ensure agreement over any potential translation-related dilemma she cooperated closely with a colleague, respectively her Critical Friend. She is an experienced translator with over two decades in the profession of translation and almost twenty years of teaching experience in the English Department. She is a course instructor for couple of translation-related courses in the Department, and developed her master thesis in the field of translation.

Her involvement and her expertise were valuable in ensuring ‘correct transfer of meaning’ (Temple & Young, 2004, p. 172). Since literal equivalence in the target language often fails to express the fundamental meaning of the source language clearly, the lingual and cultural aspects need to be considered in order for the equivalence in meaning to be achieved (Su & Parham, 2002, p. 3). Her high level of linguistic and sociocultural competence, the noticeable background knowledge of the education system in Kosovo, and her understanding of the purpose of research played a crucial role in minimizing the risk of misinterpreting participants’ words. In working closely with her, it became evident that her role in research was that of a key informant rather than

of a message transmitter solely (Edwards, 1998). As Temple and Young argue, since the translator makes assumptions about what constitutes equivalence in meaning, this makes him/her an analyst and a cultural broker (2004:171). Therefore, her construction of meaning was of a great asset in providing qualitative and valid translation.

In the first stage of research, we collaborated on the translation of the consent form, questionnaire and interview questions. We met regularly and discussed each component carefully. We did this through a side-by-side discussion and translation. Though we did encounter translation-related dilemmas for couple of the words, a decision was made to eliminate these dilemmas through piloting (see section 3.7.). With regards to transcripts we agreed to share translation, though we continued to cross-check against the original and discuss potential dilemmas.

As translation issues and procedures in research are seldom discussed in literature, I had to ‘improvise and develop rules based on common sense’ (Halai, 2007: 347). Since language issues may occur at different stages of research i.e. during data collection, at the stage of analysis and report writing (Fenna et al., 2010), some of the rules were developed at the initial stage while others during the process (for details, see Appendix 13.).

3.7. Piloting

Supporting the argument of van Teijlingen and Hundley (2001), as a researcher I have an ethical obligation to report about all stages of research, including the piloting phase. The process of piloting is undertaken to examine areas that need improvement and refinement (van Rensburg,

2010). Even though literature warns us that piloting does not necessarily guarantee success of the study, when the process is completed the researcher can step back and reflect on the experience, and thus revise his/her research approach based on the lessons learned (Seidman, 2006, p. 39). As I did not want to deprive myself from such a reflective experience, I concurred with De Vaus (2002) who said, “Do not take the risk. Pilot test first” (p. 52). Piloting allowed me to familiarise myself with interview procedures, enabling me to modify interviewing strategies for the main study and for the recording quality to be tested. Therefore, this section will describe participants who helped me test research tools and the steps taken in the process to be tested.

3.7.1. Profile of participants

Four groups of students have helped me pilot research instruments at different stages of the process See Table 3.10.

Table 3.10. *Piloters’ profile*

GROUP	WHO	NUMBER	RESEARCH TOOL PILOTED
GROUP 1	2 nd year English major students from a private college	5	Questionnaire Interview 1 Essay
GROUP 2	3 rd year English Department students (struggling achievers) of UP	5	Questionnaire Essay

GROUP 3	3 rd year English Department students (struggling achievers) of UP	4	Essay
GROUP 4	2 nd year (middle ranking) English Department students attending EAP	5	Interviews (2,3,4)
TOTAL		19	

3.7.2. The process of piloting

The piloting of research tools was done during a seven-month span. For ease of reference, the process has been split into phases.

Phase I

Prior to executing a pilot test, it was deemed required to find participants who are representative of the target group. Two colleagues from the Department who also teach in a private college, where students have an EAP course were consulted. Hence, an opportunity arose in soliciting participants from that institution as they were seen to be representative of the target group. One of the colleague (hereafter the gatekeeper) was very efficient in giving me contacts of three students who had agreed to meet me. During the first meeting I explained the aim of the study, rights and responsibilities and answered questions. In that meeting she was also told that two more students expressed an interest to join the group, but that they could not attend the meeting. I was given their contacts, which was used to schedule a meeting similar to this one.

To pilot the questionnaire and essay topics, a meeting took place on the 23rd of October 2012. After talking them through the consent form, a brief discussion followed about the procedure of piloting the questionnaire. Even though they were advised to fill the questionnaire and then discuss questions, each problematic question was discussed as they were filling in. While the participants were responding to the questionnaire, I was observing and taking notes on how they were completing it, paying a close attention to survey completion time, which took 38 minutes for the last person to finish. For details on the piloting of the questionnaire, see table 3.11. The next step, as agreed beforehand, was the piloting of essay topics.

Initially, six topics from a list of TOEFL exam were chosen and asked the opinion of 3rd years students to help in narrowing down the list (see Appendix 14.). Fifteen students who were attending a course with me were contacted via email and were kindly asked to select the topic they found most interesting. Ten of them responded, and their preferences were divided within two topics, which at the end were decided to be piloted.

However, on the piloting day participants felt unable to write as they were tired; therefore, they carried on with writing at home, for which they were advised to withhold from consulting online resources. As expected, four students who submitted the written essays relied heavily on online resources to the point that they were not able to help me define which of the topics would generate more interest and ideas.

Phase II

As issues arose in the piloting of research instruments in phase 1. I had to re-pilot both the questionnaire and essay topics. For this phase the experience and insights of a group of five

students in the third year of studies was used. I met with them on two occasions: initially for the piloting of essay topics and then for the re-piloting of the questionnaire. For the piloting of essays, each participant was required to write essays on two different topics (T1 & T2) and then share their preferences and potential challenges through joint group discussion. To minimize factors such as tiredness from affecting students' responses, three students were assigned to write an essay on T1 while the other two on T2 and vice versa. For each essay time allocated was 40 minutes.

In the afterwards joint discussion it became evident that the only concern participants had with the instructions was related to the required length for the essay. Three of the participants believed that emphasizing the number of required words could distract students, who as a result will focus more on the quantity rather than quality. My concern that not setting a minimum for the length could bring students in situations in which they would produce short paragraphs was considered less relevant. In their opinion, students should know what constitutes an essay and in case there is a doubt, an oral reminder about word limit should suffice. The other two participants were less opinionated on the matter.

In regard to their preferences, the three male participants preferred T2 over T1, one female participant preferred T1, while the other female participant considered T1 a good topic but rather sensitive to write about, therefore she considered T2 easier. A male participants made an observation about T1; he claimed that few are those who agree that fathers make better parents than mothers, therefore, the topic would elicit less responses from students in comparison to T2. Discussion with participants on topic preferences brought attention to gender differences, which in regard to T1 could reflect the cultural stereotypes, i.e., that mothers are better at parenting. Considering that majority of 2nd year students in the Department are females, and having in mind

that T2 was preferred by majority of participants in the pilot study i.e., the male participants, a dilemma was raised whether T2 will be as appealing to females as it was to males. On the other hand, selection of T1 based on the divided opinion of two female participants could be misleading. Therefore, a third attempt was made to select a topic that would be appealing to both genders and would elicit ideas.

In order to work out problems identified in the testing of the questionnaire in phase I, a meeting was arranged again a few days later. Considering that the questionnaire consisted of 4 sections, participants were instructed to fill one section at a time and then jointly discuss each question to check for understanding and any potential challenge. I observed as they were filling the questionnaire and kept the time of completion for each section. Suggestions were made in relation to few questions and “respondents’ interpretations are incorporated into the questions” (Czaja & Blair, 2005, p. 20-21).

Phase III

To pilot new essay topics, a list with six topics was shared with two teachers from freshman year (see Appendix 15.). They were asked to select the four topics that could elicit more ideas, keeping in mind 2nd year students and what they have been taught during freshman year. Through their help it was possible to eliminate the two less neutral topics. Additionally, as one of the professors commented, topics similar to the selected ones for piloting were discussed in her classes, therefore she expected students to have enough knowledge to write on the given topics.

After narrowing down to four topics (see Appendix 15.), the list was distributed to a group of 3rd year students who were having a class with me. She explained the purpose and kindly asked

the students to select the 2 topics they found the most interesting. 15 students responded, of which 11 chose topic 3 as the top most interesting. Topics 1 & 2 were chosen to be second on the list (each received 6 votes). After that, I went back to her colleagues to help her decide in selection of the topic. The argument that not all students might use Internet on daily basis and that they deal with exams most of their time (thus are familiar with the topic) helped in eliminating topic 2.

After having selected the topics, instructions were added (length, purpose, audience) and another group of 3rd year students (Group III) were invited to pilot it. Prior to the meeting, and in discussion with my supervisor we revisited the instructions on the audience. Despite being aware that a reference to an explicit audience is not a common practice for English major students, who are rather accustomed to respond to prompts, a decision to include it in the instructions was made as EAP students would learn about it in the course. Therefore, to have a real-world audience, the instructions were adjusted and instead of asking them to keep a university lecturer in mind, they were asked to have an international expert in mind. Essay instructions were explained to students and questions were encouraged.

Two candidates wrote their response on T1, while the other two on T2 and then the other way around. After they finished writing both essays a discussion on their preferences and potential challenges followed. Three of them preferred T1 over T2; they claimed to have more knowledge on it. To check which topic generated more ideas, I went through the essays together with her Critical Friend using a simple checklist (see Appendix 16.). In general, it was noticed that the 1st topic was keeping students more focused compared to the second, which was leading student to talk about things such as cheating, professors not checking exams and similar. Since no challenges were reported, T1 was selected as an essay topic to be used in the main study.

Phase IV

The piloting of four rounds of interview questions occurred during this phase (December 2012-May 2013). The first round was conducted with Group 1 and the other three rounds were conducted with Group 4. A standard procedure with both groups was to:

- a) conduct the interview
- b) discuss comprehension of questions
- c) ask for advice to make improvement, if required
- d) remind participants of forthcoming interview

A summary of piloting process is provided in Table 3.11. below.

Table 3.11. *Summary of piloting process*

Phase *	Participants	Research Tool Piloted	Challenges	Post-Pilot Changes
Phase 1	Gr 1	Questionnaire & Essay Topics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion of questions after each question rather than at the end of the survey • Limited experience with writing skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content, instructions, questions and layout.
	G2	Essay Topics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student tiredness while writing • Participants' reliance on online resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revision of topics
Phase 2	G2	Essay Topics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essay topic selection • Disapproval of word limit • Conflicting views on suitable writing topic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revision of topics
	G2	Questionnaire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essay topic selection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content, instructions, questions
Phase 3	G 3	Essay	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decision on final topic
Phase 4	G1	Interview 1	N/A (Note: Group was excluded from continuing with the study due to limited writing experiences, that would affect responses)	N/A
	G4	Interview 2,3,4	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Question sequence • Colloquial language

The richness of data collected during piloting assured that questions were producing responses relevant to research questions. In majority of the cases, participants did not address any issue with comprehension of questions and only in the last two interviews a recommendation was made to change the sequence of couple of questions. Piloting also helped realize that I could face situations in which the interviewee might ask her for an advice or clarification related to things conducted in class, to which she might feel an urge to respond. Through reflection she learned to control it.

Another lesson learned during piloting was to understand the importance of using a colloquial language instead of academic language. Even though the questions had been written in an academic language, when asking respondents attempts were made in avoiding the use of academic jargon. In order to make respondents feel comfortable, I was aware that the language she uses not only needs to be understandable for the interviewee but it should be part of their frame of reference (Cohen et al, 2011, p. 423).

3.7.3. The piloting of the questionnaire

Table below provides a summary of changes that have been made on the questionnaire as a result of piloting.

Table 3.12. *Implemented changes in the questionnaire as a result of piloting*

Focus	Description	Implemented changes Group I	Implemented changes Group II
Content	<p>Is the content of the questions appropriate to the research?</p> <p>Are the questions relevant?</p>	<p><u>Section A. Q5.</u> was deleted since participants found it difficult to recall grade average;</p> <p>Q11. –it was recommended to add another option to the list of options</p> <p><u>Section B. Q5.</u> Participants did not know the meaning of a ‘<i>narrative essay</i>’ (it was still decided to leave it the way it is for re-piloting).</p> <p><u>Section D. Q5.</u> Add an option for respondents to elaborate the answer, if the response is affirmative.</p>	<p><u>Section B: Q5.</u> It was suggested to delete the option ‘essays in exams’.</p> <p><u>Section D.</u> Suggestion was made to add a question that would precede Q.7</p> <p>Suggestion was made to turn Q7 into two questions.</p>
Instructions	<p>Are the instructions clear?</p>	<p><u>Section A. Q4.</u> It was recommended to add option <i>Yes/No</i> and in the bracket to give instructions about what to do i.e., that they should circle the answer.</p> <p><u>Section B. Q5.</u> It was recommended to clarify instructions: instead of ‘<i>mention all that you have written</i>’ (referring to types of essays) to say ‘<i>write an X next to all that you have written</i>’</p>	<p><u>Section D. Q2.</u> It was considered that explanations in the bracket included too many options, therefore, it was recommended to eliminate some.</p>

<p>Questions</p>	<p>Are all questions clear or ambiguous?</p>	<p><u>Section A.</u> Q1. It was suggested to rephrase the question</p> <p><u>Section B.</u> Q6. It was suggested to delete expression '<i>outside formal education</i>' and leave the explanation in brackets to follow i.e., '<i>outside high school/university</i>'</p> <p><u>Section C.</u> Q2. It was suggested to substitute word '<i>program</i>' with another term '<i>studies</i>'</p> <p><u>Section D.</u> Q1. 2.& 4. It was suggested to add explanations in the brackets as participants were not familiar with the process writing.</p> <p>Q3. Participants claimed not to understand this question, therefore once explained they thought elaboration is needed.</p> <p>Q6. To add word '<i>type of feedback</i>' instead of '<i>feedback</i>'; only, and to give explanations in brackets.</p>	<p><u>Section B.</u> Q6. It was suggested to substitute expression '<i>outside high school/university</i>' with '<i>except in high school or university</i>'</p> <p><u>Section D.</u> Q4. It was suggested to substitute the word '<i>expected</i>' with '<i>required</i>' and the explanations in bracket '<i>work on an essay in more than a version</i>' with '<i>rewrite an essay more than once</i>'</p>
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Layout	How appropriate is the layout of the questionnaire?	Certain suggestions such as moving one question to next page were implemented to make it easier for participants to read and also to make it look professional. Few typographical errors were noticed and corrected	Layout considered appropriate
Length	Time taken to complete the survey? How acceptable are the length of the survey to the respondents?	Time estimated to complete the questionnaire was 40 minutes. The first person completed the question in 32 min. and the last one in 38 minutes.	The maximum time needed for completion of the questionnaire was 30 minutes. No objection was made regarding length. Participants did not report fatigue.

(Adopted from van Rensburg, 2010)

3.8. Data transcription

Interviews were recorded using a voice recorder device. Then, they were turned into text through the process of transcription. Transcription was performed by me and a research assistant. As the interview one cycle was conducted much later than planned, and very near to interview cycle two, I considered that I was not able to follow the initial plan of transcribing interviews all by myself, thus help was sought.

Consequently, an experienced research assistant was hired. She had worked for a research institute in the past, thus she was very experienced in transcribing data and in understanding the

ethical dilemmas. Additionally, she was a trustworthy person. She was a former student in the Department, thus her linguistic competence in English was an asset when transcribing bilingual data.

Though about half of the interviews had been transcribed by me, i. e., the interviews typed as a text in her computer, for the interviews the assistant was hired to help out a confidentiality agreement was signed. To check for any potential error and/or inaccuracies during transcription I read the transcribed interviews and corrected when necessary. The most common errors were of a technical nature, such as misspelling or misunderstanding of words. However, in the first three transcribed interviews I checked the accuracy of transcripts by referring to the original recording. Being satisfied with the quality of the transcripts, and since editing transcripts and transcribing other interviews was a tedious process, I decided to continue editing other transcripts, but referring to the original recording only for particular sections of interviews, chosen either randomly or when it was thought there was a potential dilemma. In addition, I also used my interview notes to help me with the process.

Also, at the initial stage an agreement was made to follow transcription convention (see Appendix 17.). Any dilemma encountered during the process, implied discussion until a solution/consensus was achieved. Also, at the end of each transcribed interview, I checked for potential errors or inaccuracies by listening to the recording of the interview one last time against the transcribed text.

3.9. Human ethics consideration

In designing and conducting research it is vital that ethical principles are given an ongoing consideration. When dealing with people, as Gray (2004) asserts, ethical dilemmas can occur at all stages of research (p. 58). During planning, permission from the University of Reading Ethics Committee was required before approaching potential participants for piloting and the main study. Doing so helps researchers “anticipate and minimize possible problems later on” (Gibson & Brown, 2009, p. 61). The principal ethical consideration that needed to be addressed at this stage was to show procedures and relevant information to be shared with potential participants, so that they are given an opportunity to make an informed decision about their participation in the study. Accordingly, each potential participant received a copy of information sheet in mother tongue (Appendix 7.2.) that contained the following explanations:

- the aim of the research
- what information is sought from them
- degree of involvement
- that participation is voluntary
- assurance that participants can withdraw from the study at any time
- how anonymity will be guaranteed
- who will have access to data
- how and for how long the data will be saved
- incentives and rewards for participation (adapted from Gray, 2004:59)

A copy of information sheet in English and Albanian appears in Appendix 7.1 and 7.2.

To be sure that participants understand implication of the research and do not sign the consent form thoughtlessly (Cohen, Manion, Morrison, 2011. p. 80), they were provided with an opportunity to ask questions and to receive additional explanations verbally in at least two occasions. Initially, when a questionnaire that aimed at soliciting participants was distributed to all EAP 1 students, in their respective groups during the first week of December (3, 4, 5, 10). After a brief introduction about the aim of the study, the degree of involvement on the side of the participants, and how the data will be used, the 128 potential participants attending EAP 1 classes were given time to read the consent form and raise questions for clarification purposes before signing it. The other occasion during which detailed explanations were provided was after the participants were solicited and were invited in my office. Each of the participants attended an individual meeting during which they got assurance that their responses will remain confidential and that assessment in the course will not be affected. They were also reminded of their right to withdraw from the study without explanation. Additionally, they were encouraged to raise questions for any of the points mentioned in the consent form, for which they needed further information. This approach has been used for piloting process too.

As an incentive for their engagement in research, participants were offered advice/feedback on two written assignments from other modules. As pointed out by Cohen et al., (2011, p. 86), researchers should always bear in mind the obligations they owe to participants, and should be open to alternative techniques if the ones they are employing are disputable. They should also acknowledge if the use of incentives has ‘the potential to create a bias in sampling or in participant responses’ (BERA, 2004, p. 4). During the interviews it became evident that the written assignments for other courses implied occasional in-class written task. Consequently, as an

alternative, assistance was offered with anything they thought could help them with their studies, but which did not involve EAP courses, as it was feared it would influence their responses but also the end product.

A few of the students used this opportunity the following academic year when they were in their senior year: couple of them consulted with me regarding their diploma paper topic ideas and/or dilemmas, and one sought advice regarding a job application. In order to make sure that participants are also benefiting from the research in some way (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 67), at any given opportunity during their senior year, they were continuously reminded that the offer still stood open and that they could reach me at any time. Nonetheless, they kept insisting that they did not take part in the study to receive rewards; rather they felt privileged to have been given a chance to contribute to the advancement of science so that others could benefit from it.

In protecting confidentiality, a considerable care has been given to ‘remove all identity features that could link specific data to individuals’ (Gray, 2004:120). Pseudonyms have been used for each participant and all data have been saved in my personal computer, with no other person having access to it. Additionally, any individual was not discussed with anybody else (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 92).

Though informed consent is a principle that “forms the basis of an implicit contractual relationship between the researcher and the researched and will serve as a foundation on which subsequent ethical considerations can be structured” (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 81), this does not imply that it is sufficient and that no other ethical consideration are required.

As Seidman (2006) advises, a teacher should avoid conducting research with her/his students as ‘a student can hardly be open to his or her teacher who has both so much power and so much invested in the situation’ (p. 41). In this case, conducting research with participants, who were also students in EAP classes raised several ethical dilemmas. The dilemmas were:

- Students might feel obliged to take part in the study;
- Students might not be honest in their responses, i.e. they might want to provide responses only to please the teacher/researcher;
- Students might not be able to differentiate between the multiple roles exercised by researcher. As the study was longitudinal, initially, participants saw the researcher as a *teacher* and *grader*, but as the study unfolded, and as a rapport with them built was, the *researcher* role was also established and perceived as such.

Therefore, in an attempt to alleviate ethical dilemmas, I ensured to:

- remind participants at the beginning of each interview how vital is for the study if they focused on researcher role, thus responded as honestly as possible about issues raised in interviews. In addition, at the beginning of each interview they were reminded and reassured that under no circumstances their grade in EAP courses would be affected by the given responses (see Appendix 18.).
- Further to this, as a reassurance for maintaining a professional rapport, it was made clear at the very beginning of research that no class or after class discussions will take place in relation to research. This was also done in the interest of avoiding situations which could lead participants to think that they are researcher’s friends, and/or preventing

misperceptions of other students about preferential treatment for a student or group of students. In concurring with Seidman ‘the interviewing relationship can be friendly but not a friendship’ (2006, p. 97).

- In addition, interviews were conducted in Albanian, as opposed to English which is the language of communication in class. This language shift could potentially signal the change in their roles from student to participant. Also, being a non-native speaker, despite having fluency in English could pressure participants in producing grammatically correct sentences, thus impeding the process of communicating ideas clearly.
- made great efforts not to disrupt the “flow of activities of participants” (Creswell, 2014, p. 97-98). In scheduling interviews, I was “flexible enough to accommodate the participants’ choice of location, time and date” (Seidman, 2006, p. 50). Even though often, this meant prolonging tentative interview schedules, it was still possible to maintain the concept of equity, which meant I had to feel comfortable with the schedule too (Seidman, 2006). By treating them with respect, and by giving them the opportunity to negotiate time for interviews I was also trying to be sensitive and minimize the teacher power she might have had over them, particularly at the initial stage of research.
- To clarify the role as a *grader*, students were informed at the very beginning that final grades in EAP courses would consist of several components that were assessed by both course instructors. Additionally, the initial plan which included the possibility to involve one of the course instructors as the marker for the written essays, or another teacher from the Department as a co-marker was shared with participants. Unfortunately, in the end, I ended up assessing students’ written work for two reasons:

1) The lead course instructor (the professor) withdrew from her responsibilities as a lecturer and grader of EAP courses. Instead, she remained responsible only for signing final grades in the student grading card, before submitting to administration - a responsibility she could not evade.

2) The American Fellow was excluded from the option of marking essays.

In discussion with the Head of the Department, I was advised to give her time to adjust to the new culture of work, as the large number of students was overwhelming for her. A colleague on the other hand showed willingness to help. However, she admitted that her limited experience with teaching and assessing writing made her feel she was not capable of doing the job well, even as a co-marker. Due to time-constraints, training her in the assessment of writing was not possible.

Also, a decade long research interest in the field of academic writing and the pioneering role as an English for Academic Purposes instructor contributed to the general perception in the Department that I am the expert in teaching writing skills in English. This made it impossible to find anyone who felt competent and had time to take over the classes, thus teach using a multiple-draft approach to writing. Additionally, there was a legal issue of being obliged to teach courses for which the person is appointed in the position of a lecturer, and any change would have to go through the Senate of the University for approval.

Despite the efforts, contextual factors made it difficult to deal with this ethical dilemma accordingly. Nonetheless, the final grade for each course consisted of work checked by me (reading and writing) and the AF (listening and speaking). Additionally, throughout the study attempts were

made to avoid any biases, which could harm or benefit participants. For example, when students submitted their written work, in order to avoid any influence that could have occurred during marking, prior to reading, I anonymized the marking by sticking a note over the name. This approach, however, was more difficult to apply with group work assignments in the EAP 2 portfolio. Conversely, only the final research paper was anonymized. When providing feedback on drafts, I used the same approach to prevent myself from unconsciously providing a more detailed feedback to student-participants.

Throughout research, before taking any decision and particularly when being conscious that an “ethically relevant moment” (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 67) was occurring, I reflected and carefully considered if the actions for the pursuit of scientific truth are being balanced with the rights of participants (Cohen et al., 2011, p.75). Whenever in doubts, the issue was discussed with supervisor and occasionally with Critical Friend (a colleague who also helped with translation of interviews) in order to double check if my understanding justified the actions and/or simply for seeking another opinion.

The principle of not harming the participants has guided the research throughout the way. Nonetheless, as pointed out by Dörnyei, (2011) ethical stakes in harming participants are higher in medical or psychological research compared to applied linguistics research (p. 71-72). However, when ethical dilemmas arise the researcher needs more than just a “code of ethics for guidance” (Hill, Glaser & Harden, 1998, p. 102). As ethical dilemmas are not treated as a topic in most textbooks or research courses (de Laine, 2000, p. 37), researchers need to take decisions which best fit their context. I consider that researchers can judge for themselves what constitutes an

acceptable behaviour and what is ethically correct decision in the context of their study. Therefore, in ethical decision making processes an approach is needed that is contextualized, flexible and which relies more on professional integrity and reflexivity of the researcher (Dörnyei, 2011, p. 72). By clearly reporting about the process of data collection and analysis, I hope to demonstrate that I have maintained professional research standards throughout the study.

3.10. Further reflections on my teacher-researcher roles

The relationship I had built with my participants was based on trust and care. However, building trust required time. The power I held as a teacher, particularly at the initial stage of research could have affected greatly how students interacted with me. I was afraid that they would respond to what they assumed I wanted to hear. At one instance during Interview 1, my fear became reality. When a student was asked at the end of the interview if she had anything to add, she responded by asking whether I have liked her responses. This was an indication that she was seeking confirmation if she had pleased me with her responses. Even though this was an isolated case, as a researcher I saw it as a dilemma, mostly because I did not want interaction in future interviews to be affected by my role as a teacher. As a result, in the following interviews I emphasized more firmly the importance of responding honestly and in regarding me as a researcher. The constant reminder before each interview, at some point became a routine that students were just confirming that they understood what they were required to do. I am not making claims that a reminder before each interview has resolved my teacher-researcher role, but in combination with other factors, it did contribute to making the role of the teacher less visible during the interviews.

Another aspect that contributed in building trust with students was the empathy I showed (Hockey, 1993). I was able to empathize with them and with their circumstances. Even though I was their teacher, we still shared some common traits: we had not been taught writing explicitly in pre-university education nor in the university (in their first years of their studies, whereas in my case it was during my entire BA studies) and we both experienced learning to write academic essays as a demanding task. More importantly, students appreciated the personal stories I disclosed from my experience with writing as a graduate student in the UK. I revealed my initial failures, my struggle for survival, my fears, the tears I have shed, lessons learned and above all the effective strategies that I had learned as a writer but also as a teacher of academic writing. This type of disclosure helped them see me as an honest person, who has learned how to write through trials and errors, and consequently understood the painful process they were going through. It also helped in reconstructing my reputation as the expert on teaching writing from the fact that I had a degree from a very prestigious world university, and that I was continuing to study writing as part of my PhD studies. In other words, students increased their trust in me because I was empathetic towards their needs, and because I was determined to investigate academic writing issues in a Kosovar context.

This trust grew stronger over time and consequently I became more visible as a researcher during the interviews. During Interview 3 and 4, students were more comfortable in disclosing information with me as a researcher. For example, during Interview 3 many students shared with me information on reading requirements that they had not completed in EAP 2: if they had seen me as a teacher, it is very likely that they would alter their responses and/or provide some

justification as to why they have not done the reading. In addition, they spoke more openly about problems they were encountering with current writing tasks in EAP 2 and/or group work issues. Also, during Interview 4 students were reflecting on the entire year, i.e., on their growth. That reflection made some of the students review their initial responses, either due to their growth over time, or due to the increased level of trust.

The enhanced trust in my role as a researcher became more evident from Interview 3: at that time students in EAP 2 had already acquired knowledge of ethical research principles, and, as a result, they were able to understand that I have been conforming to ethical principles in my research. Their own research experience reassured them that they have been treated fairly and professionally in my study, hence the increased trust to disclose information with me.

In reflecting about my multiple roles in the study, I noticed that at the onset I faced some challenges too: there were a number of situations during interviews where a question was addressed to me in my role as a teacher, to which I unconsciously responded. As a result, I remained alert to potential questions that would be addressed to the teacher and made the decision to invite participants to discuss it after the interview. Also, because classroom practices were discussed during interviews, I often felt the urge to engage in discussion. However, over time, the transition back and forth from teacher to researcher became a routine, and I was able to comfortably keep my emotions under control and avoid responding to questions related to classroom practices i.e., I took the listeners stance as I wanted to influence the data as little as possible (Hamilton, 2017).

The prolonged engagement in research and continuous reflection on issues and dilemmas, allowed me to reflect on my growth as a researcher over time. On the other hand, students who took part in the study were encouraged to reflect on their learning during the interviews over a span of several months, an activity that might have supported the development of their academic literacy skills but also stimulated more in-depth responses, particularly in the last two interviews.

Even though, I cannot claim with absolute certainty that students were able to distinguish between my roles, the prolonged engagement, reflexivity, trust-building that lead towards mutual respect, and the development of students' writing and research skills, over time, reduced the effect of the power relationship between my multiple roles and theirs.

3.11. Data Analysis

To analyse qualitative data, the researcher goes through a non-linear process of identifying, analysing and explaining the data (Cohen *et al*, 2011, p. 537). In other words, the process includes some general steps such as preparing and organizing data (e.g. transcribing interviews), prior to coding in order to reduce data into themes, so that at the end they are presented in various forms such as discussion (Creswell, 2007, p. 148).

However, as will become clear later on, data analysis is not a process that occurs the moment data collection is over, rather, as Creswell (2007) points out, data collection, data analysis

and the process of writing the report are interrelated (p. 150). Moreover, data analysis is influenced by the epistemological presuppositions underlying the study. As this study frames itself within the ethnographic and case study framework, i.e. aims at representing its participants and their viewpoints, thematic analysis, which tend to be inductive abides with the *fitness for purpose*. This means that researchers do not impose themes upon data, instead the themes emerge from the data. In other words, thematic analysis enables the researcher to ‘analyze data according to its commonalities, relationships and differences’ (Gibson & Brown, 2009, p. 127). However, as Braun and Clarke assert, ‘thematic analysis is not wedded to any pre-existing theoretical framework and therefore it can be used within different theoretical frameworks’ (2006, p. 81).

More importantly, the way how themes emerge from data are vaguely reported by researchers. Qualitative researchers have the tendency to ‘omit the ‘how’ question from accounts of their analyses’ (Attride-Stirling, 2001, p. 386) leading critics to claim that qualitative research is not robust and trustworthy. Moreover, the common practice of discussing the passive role of themes ‘emerging’ from data contradicts the active role that the researcher has in the process of identifying, selecting and reporting data to the reader (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 80). Considering my active role not only as a researcher but also as a teacher, themes in this study did not emerge passively. The insider’s knowledge of having taught academic writing in this institution for years guided my research questions, which in turn shaped the questions posed in questionnaires, interviews and letters to prospective students. Still, I was careful to constantly reflect and be open during the process of data analysis when generating themes.

Therefore, in order for research tradition to gain greater recognition I concur with Attride-Strirling (2001), that greater disclosure of methods of data analysis in a research project is needed. Having said that, the application of data analysis for this research will be covered in the section below. This study followed the six steps recommended by Braun and Clarke (2006), who define thematic analysis as ‘a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within the data’ (p. 79). For details see table below.

Table. 3.13. *Phases of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 87)*

Phase	Description of the Processes
1. Familiarizing yourself with your data:	Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas.
2. Generating initial codes:	Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code
3. Searching for themes:	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme
4. Reviewing themes:	Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic ‘map’ of the analysis.
5. Defining and naming themes:	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme.

<p>6. Producing the report:</p>	<p>The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis</p>
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3.11.1. Familiarizing yourself with your data

After the first cycle of interviews was completed, the process of verbatim data transcription began. I started the process of transcribing by herself, though later, due to contextual factors and in order to manage data more efficiently assistance was sought. Nonetheless, checking transcripts done by the research assistant against the recording of the interviews for accuracy purposes helped in staying close to the data obtained in other interview cycles. Consequently, the process helped in getting a grasp of data from the onset. As Interview 1 was focused mostly on previous literacy practices of students, jotting down few themes was done to share first impressions rather than identify themes to follow up in other interviews.

Another component that brought me close to data was the translation process. Though the process began only after data were collected, and was shared with a colleague from the Department, reading and re-reading transcripts just furthered the familiarity with data.

Presenting preliminary findings at conferences such as the ones mentioned below encouraged a closer look at raw data.

- the annual postgraduate conferences at the University of Reading;
- 48th IATEFL Annual International Conference in Harrogate - “Peer feedback: from foe to a friend”;
- 48th TESOL Annual Convention, in Portland - “Change of students’ perception towards peer feedback in large classes”;
- 7th EATAW Annual Conference in Budapest - Investigating undergraduate students’ experience with writing in an EAP course”.

For example, an emerging theme that continuously drew my attention was related to the change of students’ perceptions on peer feedback over time. Hence, this potential theme was looked at more closely, initiating informal analysis.

3.11.2. Generating initial codes

The process of generating codes occurred at two different points in time. Initially, I started the process of coding using MAXDA software: the idea was to test the software and generate codes, too. However, the process was stopped at its initial stage due to some personal mitigating circumstances and could not continue for over a year.

When work resumed, the whole process restarted with a fresh eye. As I feel more comfortable to work with coding manually i.e., I am able to make connection between data easier, I decided to drop the idea of working with software. To start off the process, and re-familiarize with data, three participants from each ranking group (HA, MA, SA) were selected randomly, and

each interview was read first, and then the process of initial coding began manually. After that assigning codes to chunks of texts in the remaining interviews continued. The process was iterative as it involved re-reading coded data, looking for patterns, assigning new emerging codes, refining and organizing codes. It was quite typical for this stage to code an extract once, many times, or even uncode it, just as Braun and Clarke (2006) suggested it would. Moreover, at times participants mentioned several issues within one response, therefore, several codes were assigned.

Following manual coding, I decided to work on Word to assign codes on the right margin of each interview text. During these steps, codes and subcodes were reviewed and potential codes from each interview emerged. This process was characterized by constant reflection as I read the interviews, re-read them, coded and recoded when needed. Afterwards, I created a list of codes and subcodes (see table 3.14 below) despite the warning from the experts that codes need to be collated, thus not having a long list was recommended.

Table 3.14. *Preliminary List of Codes and Sub-codes*

Codes	<i>Subcodes</i>
Previous experiences in:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Writing</i> • <i>Reading</i> • <i>Feedback</i> • Limited instructions on writing • Limited instructions on reading
The process of writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-writing • Drafting • Working on research project

Writing challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Length • Lack of feedback • Vocabulary • Lack of focus • Stress • Thinking about the reader • References • Ideas • Time-management • Topic • Writing challenges not overcome • Making use of feedback • Lack of experience • Results
Development of writing over time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-writing • Structure • Vocabulary • Noticing change in writing
Worries/Dilemmas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to write • What the final version will look • Plagiarism • References • Topic • Lack of time • Using academic vocabulary • Group work issues
Thoughts on feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Usefulness • Teacher vs. peer feedback
Reaction to peer feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accepting

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rejecting
Making use of feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From Teacher • From peers • On structure • Vocabulary • On questionnaire • Given on previous essays • References
Change of students' perceptions on feedback over time	
Development of reading skills over time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading strategies • Critical Reading
Reading challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding texts • Not knowing what to look for • Finding reliable articles • References • Reading challenges not overcome
Developing reader awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thinking about the reader
Effects of reader awareness on writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write in simple words • Give background information
Lessons learned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From writing • From reading • From feedback • From EAP 1

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From EAP 2
Other factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attending lectures • Consulting literature • Course instructor
Advice to future students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benefits • Challenges • Topic attractiveness

In addition, to the existing list of codes, I added a descriptor to help me define codes better. I created a table, in which a code, a code descriptor and an example from data were given. (see Table 3.15 for a snapshot of the list). I discussed the list with my mentor in order to get her insights as well. Despite having descriptors for codes, I remained open, and only at the next stage more emphasis was put on collating codes in order to identify categories that later would lead towards themes.

Table 3.15. *List of codes with corresponding descriptions and examples*

Ref	Code	Description to aid continued coding	Example
1	Advice for future students	Based on writing, reading and feedback experience in EAP courses is there any advice a student would give to students coming to do the same course next year?	S2: I would say maybe you think that you know how to write but in fact there are many other things that you will learn things that you did not know so far not only learn them but you will have the opportunity to apply the things you learn. I would say this, more or less there are many reading skills that you do not even know exist that could help you a lot in the future and if you wanted to do exchange for ex. it would be much easier for you to understand other academic things

2	Change in writing over time	Do students perceive any change in their writing over the time of attending EAP courses?	S7: Before I wrote the conclusion as a short summary and it had no relation with the introduction. Now, I try to paraphrase the introduction and put it in conclusion. In the body I didn't change much because I was good before and I didn't have difficulties with it, but introduction and conclusion were difficult.
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3.11.3. Searching for themes

As suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006), at this stage one begins to analyse codes, and by doing so he/she realizes that certain codes when combined form an overarching theme (p. 89). In order to group codes under certain themes, a table was created and three potential themes started to be identified (writing, reading and feedback experience). However, there were other codes that did not fit into any of the above themes, hence, they were temporarily left under the theme 'Other', even though Braun and Clarke (2006) recommend to create a theme called 'miscellaneous' for all codes that do not seem to belong anywhere.

As I was grouping codes from all interviews into themes, I created a table that was used as a template for all interviews. For each set of interviews, the coded data was re-read, and the codes were put under certain topics. Preliminary patterns emerged which led me to create another word template in which codes for each topic were assigned. The template included codes for each ranking group (HA, MA, SA), and codes for all groups together (see a snapshot of the table in Table 3.16 below). This approach, though tedious, helped me to also look for patterns across groups through visual representation.

Table 16. A snapshot of the table

Topics	HIGH ACHIEVERS	MIDDLE	STRUGGLING	COMMENTS
WRITING DEVELOPMENT OVERTIME	<p>Structure (4)</p> <p>Developing ideas (3)</p> <p>Vocabulary (3)</p> <p>Rhetoric (2)</p> <p>Self-confidence</p> <p>Organization</p> <p>Clarity</p>	<p>Developing ideas (5)</p> <p>Vocabulary (3)</p> <p>Structure (1)</p> <p>Genre-1</p> <p>Building argument-1</p> <p>Clarity</p> <p>Rhetoric-1</p> <p>Coherence-1</p> <p>Referencing-1</p> <p>Sentence Structure-1</p> <p>Drafting-1</p> <p>Time management-1</p> <p>Being specific-1</p>	<p>Developing ideas (4)</p> <p>Vocabulary (3)</p> <p>Structure (2)</p> <p>Self-confidence (1)</p> <p>Rhetoric-1</p> <p>Unity</p> <p>Time management</p>	<p>Developing ideas (13)</p> <p>Vocabulary (9)</p> <p>Structure (7)</p> <p>Rhetoric-3</p> <p>Self-confidence (2)</p> <p>Clarity (2)</p> <p>Time management (2)</p> <p>Organization</p> <p>Genre</p> <p>Building argument</p> <p>Coherence-1</p> <p>Referencing-1</p> <p>Sentence Structure-1</p> <p>Drafting-1</p> <p>Being specific</p> <p>Unity</p>

However, one issue that was not mentioned by Braun and Clarke (2006), but was given consideration by other researchers (see Huberman & Miles, 1994) was whether to count codes. As pointed out by Creswell (2007) some qualitative researchers do so, though he on the other hand looks at the number of passages that are related with each code but does not report them in articles because ‘counting conveys a quantitative orientation of magnitude and frequency contrary to qualitative research’ (p. 152). Moreover, he is concerned that when codes are counted then the expectation is to give each code an equal emphasis, disregarding thus the fact that coded extracts may represent contradictory views (Creswell, 2007, p. 152). In concurring with Creswell (2007), I decided not to count the codes though I wrote down the total number of participants that mentioned the code. This stage was completed with a ‘collection of candidate themes, and sub-themes, and all extracts of data that have been coded in relation to them’ (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 90).

3.11.4. Reviewing themes

This stage begins with refinement of candidate themes at two review levels. In line with Braun and Clarke's (2006) suggestions, at level one, I reviewed the collated extracts for each theme to evaluate if they form a coherent pattern. If for example the data extract did not fit with the theme I created a new theme or discarded them from analysis. At level two, I reread the entire data set to check if candidate themes adequately reflect the meanings evident in the data set as a whole" (ibid, p. 91). In short, in following Braun and Clarke I checked if the themes work in relation to data set and whether there is any data which was missed during earlier stages of coding. By the end of this stage, I began to have a clear idea of what the data was telling me. To gain a clearer understanding of the codes in interviews for each theme, I created spreadsheets for each theme and for each ranking group (HA, MA and SA). For each interviewee, the spreadsheet contained quotes and codes from all four interviews. The last column in each spreadsheet consisted of acronyms of codes and numbers of the interview in which the code was observed. The last column was especially helpful since it enabled me to see a change in students' perception on the topic discussed over time. (see Appendix 19. for a summary of the theme peer feedback for each ranking group and for all groups together).

Table 3. 17. *Sample of themes in an interview*

Saranda INTERVIEW 1

DEVELOPMENT OF WRITING OVER TIME	Saranda: Earlier the way teachers explain it to you, that is the way how you write an essay, different teachers showed me different versions of writing an essay and when I took the EAP course I understood how to write an essay that is, the way the teacher
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	<p>instructed us I write that way, first you need to think to prepare the reader about what he/she is going to read, further to write about facts in the next two or three paragraphs and in the end to conclude all that you wrote. <u>(STRUCTURE)</u></p> <p>Saranda: The difference is that earlier they didn't tell us that you have to think about the topic first but you also didn't have time because you sat for the exam and you didn't even have enough time to write the essay. In most of the cases my essay was incomplete because I hadn't planned well how to begin it, how to develop it and how to end it. I understand that it is the main component of writing an essay, first you have to think how to write. <u>(DEVELOPING IDEAS)</u></p> <p>Saranda: Aha, yes yes, I see, first I write, I write about those three things, first I write the body, and then I write the introduction and conclusion.</p> <p>R: Aha OK. You think that this is a new style of writing.</p> <p>Saranda: Yes yes, because we used to begin with the introduction and then you wrote about anything that you could think of. <u>(PROCESS OF WRITING)</u></p> <p>Saranda: I see that I am working much better and I have a desire to write essays because I know how to do it. <u>(SELF -CONFIDENCE)</u></p>
<p>PROCESS OF WRITING</p>	<p>Saranda: First I think what to write, if I have to provide examples, or my personal experience related to the topic, I first mention, I begin with a general statement, and then I write two or three facts that will be elaborated in the essay, this is ... <u>(DEVELOPING IDEAS)</u></p> <p>S1/I1: if I have to write it at home, it is natural that I do brainstorming and I take information from, different pages, or different books, or if I recall that I have read something then I have to</p>

	<p>search for it and write in the essay where I found and took the information I am using (DEVELOPING IDEAS)</p>
<p>WRITING CHALLENGES</p>	<p>Saranda: before I didn't know that the essay in English differs a lot from the essay in Albanian. Maybe I wrote essays following my thoughts in Albanian, or following the procedure in writing in Albanian, but nobody told me that the essay writing in English differs a lot from the one in Albanian ... maybe this was the key problem why I lagged behind in essay writing in English. (RHETORIC)</p>
<p>WRITING EXPERIENCE</p>	<p>Saranda: I can say that in the first year of studies, we didn't practice essay writing that much or, I don't know how to explain it, they didn't teach us as they should have about essay writing, in terms of academic essays, we learned about Cover letters only, the ones and how to write emails, but they didn't teach us how to write an essay. (PREVIOUS 1ST YEAR)</p> <p>Saranda: I found some English videos which explain essay writing, I learned the writing phases, the essay, that is, introduction ... the beginning, conclusion, paragraphs, two paragraphs, that is, I learned more from the internet, I had problems with essay writing, in the second semester, and when I asked what to do, how to learn about essay writing, I would be told to search the google, or, I don't know, I might be wrong or ... (PREVIOUS-1ST YEAR)</p> <p>Saranda: ... I think it was two three times, not more than that, and it was like an exam, we had to write an essay, she explained to us the steps to write an essay, we wrote an essay and it was over, there we were: in the exam ... (PREVIOUS-1ST YEAR)</p>

	<p>Saranda: Yes, an essay, in the first semester we had a cover letter, whereas in the second semester in English 2 we had to write an academic essay.</p> <p>R: What was the one that you call an academic essay, what type. Did you have ex. an argumentative essay or descriptive or what kind of essay was it?</p> <p>Saranda: The essay was ... one of the essays was on the differences between British and American English. That is, the ones spoken in UK and the USA, we had to write about whatever we know on the topic.</p>
<p>FEEDBACK EXPERIENCE</p>	<p>R: OK. Fine thank you. ... now, I am thinking about a question related to feedback, to comments. We mentioned the first year, you worked a little on essay, have you received peer feedback or teacher feedback {for those works}.</p> <p>Saranda: {no, no}</p> <p>Saranda: Because, if we received feedback from students who might know better how to write an essay you would realise where you are and you would think about, how to develop yourself and how, to write better, but no, unfortunately no, we didn't receive any. (PREVIOUS)</p> <p>Saranda: earlier I did take, that is, I wrote an essay, and I would give it to a person who maybe ... I had a person who lives in America, and I asked for help from him about how to write an essay, and I told him to show me how to write an essay because I didn't know how to do it, and he told me to write an essay so that he can see my work, and I wrote</p>

	<p>the essays, and he helped me ... he showed me my mistakes, what to eliminate, how to write, and he helped me a little, a little (PREVIOUS)</p> <p>Saranda: First he gave me feedback about introduction, he told me that I should not write much, and, I should mention the things I would elaborate further in the essay. (PREVIOUS)</p>
PEER FEEDBACK	<p>Saranda: I can say that peer feedback did not help me much, because he said that I needed to provide examples, but I had already provided examples, and then I did not change the essay (USEFULNESS) (-)</p> <p>Saranda: I gave my work to the teacher so that I can get feedback from a person who is more, that is I gave it to the teacher without changing it, not with the changes suggested in peer feedback because I thought that they were wrong and if I was right then I would make it worse. (ATTITUDE)</p> <p>Saranda: S1: I took something, but most of it not, because they were maybe commenting the way I wrote not the content of the essay. (REACTION TO FEEDBACK)</p>
TEACHER FEEDBACK	<p>R: Can you tell me how you felt when you received feedback from me.</p> <p>Saranda: <i>[laughs]</i> I realised where I am, and, it helped me a lot. (USEFULNESS) (+)</p>

	<p>Saranda: what helped me more, I realised where I am, was the teacher's comments. It helped me a lot in essay writing, what my mistakes are that affect my essay. (USEFULNESS) (+)</p> <p>Saranda: No, it's not that, for ex. I feel bad because I don't know, yes, that is I liked the fact that somebody was telling me about my mistakes, I didn't say, why is something wrong, but I received well the fact that somebody was telling me that I was wrong. Because it helps you, in your writing. (REACTION TO FEEDBACK)</p>
<p>READING EXPERIENCE</p>	<p>Saranda: It is natural that the faculty studies differ from secondary and primary school education, and I liked it, I have read novels, but here, when I realised that not only reading but the way you read matters, and how you analyse things in a given book or a novel or a certain event. In my studies I realised, and they taught us that the way we should read, not just read a novel and, that is, to work on certain events, work on a, something and then leave everything as it is, but work on the core, how to connect words, where to use articles or, everything you were interested in you could find in a book. (PREVIOUS)</p> <p>Saranda: In the first year, the courses on literature, we had novels and authors' biographies, we had ... poetry to analyse, sometimes to translate, different emails, or an event, in English 2 we had to work on an event that took place and then we had to write a summary or something like that, or we had to answer the questions about the topic, we had, we read more in literature than in language courses.</p> <p>R: So you had to read more in literature courses than in the {linguistic aspect}.</p>

	<p>Saranda: {Yes}</p> <p>(PREVIOUS)</p> <p>R: What do you like to read, since you say that you read articles in internet, usually what do you read.</p> <p>Saranda: About researches done, somebody's autobiography for ex., I recently read the autobiography of Bill Gates, who founded Microsoft, I like sports, that is, news related to him, and I like film and photography, I read about how photography developed and everything else related to it.</p> <p>R: So it is a passion?</p> <p>Saranda: Yes.</p> <p>R: And these things, when you say you read in internet, I suppose most of them are in English, right ...</p> <p>Saranda: Yes, in English. (OUTSIDE UNIVERSITY)</p>
<p>READING CHALLENGES</p>	
<p>DEVELOPMENT OF READING OVERTIME</p>	<p>Saranda: before I never thought what the author wanted to say, I just read the book ... I never thought any deeper, any critical thinking or, what the author wanted to say with this, or did the author have any opinion, he said it differently or ironically or, other things.</p>

	<p>R: Now you, I just want to make it clear, you think that you have learned these in EAP and that they are helping you or, because it is not clear to me.</p> <p>Saranda: There is something that I learned, EAP helped me a lot, regarding the way I used to read and the way I read now. (CRITICAL READING)</p>
<p>LESSONS LEARNED</p>	<p>Saranda: Yes, I learned, in EAP I learned how to write an academic essay, and how you can provide your opinions and support the opinion that you provided. (SUPPORTING OPINION WITH FACTS)</p> <p>Saranda: I would say that English for Academic Purposes helped me a lot this year, to be a student, how to say, how to think in a critical way or, EAP helped me a lot with the thinking process. Maybe maturity has helped too, or other things too, but EAP is part of this, the situation I am in now and the situation I used to be in. (CRITICAL THINKING)</p>
<p>TRANSFER OF SKILLS/KNOWLEDGE</p>	<p>Saranda: In other writings, I know how to do it, and I apply it in other essays that I have to do, or are given to me. (IN OTHER ACADEMIC COURSES)</p> <p>Saranda: yesterday my brother asked me to help him with essay writing, and I was thrilled to tell him how to write it, I told him to write it first and then I could tell him what his mistakes are, I didn't write it for him ... (OUTSIDE UNIVERSITY)</p>

3.11.5. Defining and Naming Themes

Stage five begins by defining and refining themes, i.e., “identifying the essence of what each theme is about, and determining what aspect of the data each theme captures” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 92). Once again, collated data were re-read and re-organised in order to see how themes themselves and in relation to each other tell a ‘story’ in relation to research questions. Interview extracts related to feedback have been provided below to display how sub-codes were revised at two various stages of analysis.

Table 3.18. *Revised sub-codes at two various stages of analysis*

Code	Interview extract	Initial sub-code	Final sub-code
Feedback experience	Hasime (I1): Well, this is an issue, because I have never received any feedback before, be it a teacher or a peer, I might have worked, but it wasn't evaluated, neither good nor bad, to improve, so, this is what we lacked in the first year, and it is a good way to learn better, how to write, now that we do this feedback.	Views on feedback	Previous experience
Teacher Feedback	Hekuran (I3): When we wrote the questionnaire we submitted it to you and the feedback was good and we changed it immediately.	Views on Feedback	Usefulness /

Teacher Feedback	Sazana (I1): I saw that you began with Good start. I liked it very much and I liked the fact that you liked my ideas. You said I had interesting ideas but you said the essay could have been good as a whole if I had corrected some mistakes, such as not to mention teachers' names, courses, and if I took a position, so I liked the feedback and I think I have corrected it very well.	Views on Feedback	Reaction to Feedback
Peer feedback	Mimoza (I2): Students got used to feedback and tried to give a more objective feedback, better and then there were a few changes.	Views on Feedback	Change of Perception over time

In terms of naming the themes, I tried to follow the advice of Braun and Clarke (2006) and give concise names that immediately would give the reader a sense of what the theme is about. The final list of codes is provided in the table below.

Table 3.19. *The final list of codes*

Writing experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Previous • In other academic courses • Outside university
Writing process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing ideas • Drafting

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attitude to multiple draft writing
Writing challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Task based (working with sources, genre, language)
Development of Writing over time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing ideas • Structure • Self-confidence
Feedback experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Previous • In other academic courses • Outside university
Views on feedback experience in EAP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Usefulness • Reaction to Feedback • Attitude
Teacher feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Usefulness • Reaction to Feedback • Attitude
Peer feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attitude (Reaction to feedback) • Usefulness • Change of perception on feedback over time
Literacy brokers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Usefulness • Attitude
Reading experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Previous • In other academic courses • Outside university
Reading challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research skills • Language
Development of Reading over time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategies • Comprehension • Critical reading
Other contributing factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Factors impeding progress • Factors aiding success • Reflection on learning

- | | |
|--|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Self-efficacy beliefs |
|--|---|

3.11.6. Producing the report

Writing up the report is an essential aspect of analysis in qualitative research (Gibbs, 2007). At this stage, researcher is actively and creatively involved in the process of making sense of raw data and present it in a coherent and logical way to the reader (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In other words, I followed Braun and Clarke’s recommendation to convince the reader of the “merit and validity of analysis” (ibid, 93). At this stage, I tried to give enough data extracts that were vivid and that captured the occurrence of themes. Moreover, in telling the story in reference to research questions, I tried to move beyond description of data and provide analytical interpretation of it.

Chapter 4. Whole group writing experience

4.1. Introduction

This chapter begins by outlining patterns across the group in terms of their previous writing experiences followed by their views on writing practices during Year Two, when the study took place. It then describes the challenges that students have encountered with writing over the year of study, followed by discussion on reported changes that have occurred in writing over time. Another important aspect that will be discussed here is the feedback practices. Initially, students' previous feedback practices will be considered, followed by practices in Year Two and continue with reflection on change of feedback practices over the year of study. A similar approach will be used in the third part of this section, the reading practices. At the end, a summary of the section will be given.

4.2. Students' reported writing experiences and attitudes over the study period

In order to explore students' experiences and attitudes with writing, this section will initially share the similarities and/or differences that students have at the onset in terms of their writing experiences. The broader the picture on students' background, the better our understanding of their experiences and performances along the year. Equally important is learning about students' writing in other academic courses and outside academia, as it helps us understand writing challenges they encounter. Consequently, students reported experiences with writing in Year Two

will also be shared. Prior to exploring the reported changes in terms of writing over the year of study, students' reported challenges with writing will be explained. To describe which data derives from which interview the following combination is used: I- stands for interview and the succeeding number indicates interview number. E.g. I/4 means that extract is taken from Interview 4.

4.2.1. Patterns across group at the beginning

Looking at the individual cases revealed the similarities and differences in terms of writing experiences that students had at the onset. Table 4.1., 4.2., and 4.3. show potential factors that affect writing practices of students in EAP courses.

Table 4. 1. *Prior writing experiences and anticipated writing challenges in EAP1*

STUDENT	Started learning English (age)	WRITING PRACTICES IN L1	WRITING PRACTICES IN ENGLISH	MULTIPLE-DRAFT EXPERIENCE	ANTICIPATED WRITING CHALLENGES IN EAP 1
Herolinda	7	Creative writing, poetry	Essays, SMS, short stories	No	To write academically
Hasime	12	Essays, notes, reports	Essays, emails, notes	No	New rules
Hesa	11	Essays, notes, SMS	Essays, emails, notes	Sometimes	Think in Albanian and write in English

Hana	10	Essays, emails, news, SMS	Essays, emails, notes, summaries	No	New words
Hekuran	10	Emails, SMS	Emails, SMS, essays	No	
Mimoza	10	Emails, SMS, essays	Emails, essays	No	Tend to write in lyrical way
Merita	8	Essays, notes, SMS	Essays, notes	Rarely	Rules of writing
Mrika	12	Notes, essays	Essays, notes	No	Not good at writing
Malesore	9	Essays, notes, SMS	Emails, essays	No	
Miranda	11	Email, notes, essays, SMS	Emails, essays	No	
Saranda	11	(some) emails, essays	(some) emails, essays	No	To write an essay properly
Sazana	15	Emails, SMS	Emails, notes, SMS	No	Writing is difficult
Servete	11	Essays	essays		Time is short for writing
Selvie	10	SMS, notes	essays	No	Writing an essay
Sihana	11	SMS, notes	notes	No	To write an effective essay

As table above reveals, all students had acquired English language for over seven years. Majority acquired English from grade five in school. In addition, ten students stated to have attended private language courses either prior or parallel to English they were receiving in school. In addition, when asked to share their experiences with English writing outside formal education, five of the respondents reported to have learned essay and email writing at these courses.

The questionnaire also reveals that prior to EAP 1, all students reported similar writing experiences in both mother tongue and in English, which included essay writing, emails, SMS and notes. However, writing practices did not include multiple-draft writing. In addition, the writing in mother tongue included descriptive and/or creative writing. The interview extract below elaborates a student's view, which was confirmed by many other students too:

Herolinda (I1): About writing I practiced a little because we always learned how to write artistic essays since primary school to describe the nature to express feelings and here it was different we had to use our mind to write and not use our feelings, use literary figures of speech. I had to practice these more.

A typical pattern for writing in L1, as reported during the interviews was to write in-class essays without any instructions and guidance. Writing was implicit, putting a responsibility on the reader to make sense of the intended meaning. The Albanian rhetorical style of writing that these students were accustomed to write is similar to reported writing of Chinese students, as it includes "lyrical references to nature and novel metaphors" (Leki, 1992, p. 63). The opportunity of writing in other genres in English, enabled students to identify that their previous writing experiences did

not prepare them to face the writing challenges in higher education. In short, as pointed out by Herolinda (I/4), students became aware that being taught to write in one genre only “is a weakness of our education system because they take the essay as something artistic, in secondary and primary school we had to write an essay on autumn, on winter and that’s it”.

The questionnaire also asked students to share their writing experiences in English 1 and English 2 courses during Year One (see Table 4.2.)

Table. 4.2. *Writing experience in Year 1*

Writing	Herolinda	Hasime	Hesa	Hana	Hekuran	Mimoza	Merita	Mrika	Malesore	Miranda	Saranda	Sazana	Serevete	Selvie	Sihana	Total
Argumentative	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	13
Letter		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					10
Group tasks			✓	✓	✓				✓		✓					5
Short Stories		✓	✓	✓					✓							4
Other			✓		✓	✓	✓									4
Narrative		✓					✓		✓							3
Summary			✓	✓							✓					3

reported during the interviews, in both these courses writing was mostly done in class or occasionally at home, followed by reading the essay aloud in front of peers in order to receive general comments on grammatical mistakes from the teacher only. A product-based approach to writing was used by lecturers in literature courses too, where students claimed to have done most of the writing. They stated to have written comments/short analysis on poems they were analyzing in class, which did not involve any peer or teacher feedback. A common complaint by many students was related to teachers' reluctance to teach writing i.e. according to them teachers did not spend time in explaining rules to them. According to them, teaching staff provided them with brief oral explanations on essay structure but never went into depth to explain how each component, such as paragraph contributes to the whole. That instructions on essay writing were brief were echoed by many students, such as the one below:

Selvie (I2): That is in the first year I knew so little about essay writing, only in general how it is written. We were told that it is divided into three paragraphs but we did not know what paragraph one consisted of, paragraph two, three.

Similar to Kraus (2001; Kalikokha, 2008) a possible reason why teachers do not spend time in teaching writing could be attributed to the large number of students as suggested by the extract below:

Sihana (I1): In lectures, the professor of English could not explain how to write an essay because the number of students was big, we did dictations.

Perhaps another reason why university staff does not provide students with explicit instructions might be related to their perceptions that students already know the requirements thus there is no need for further elaboration (Lea & Street, 1998; Lea & Street, 2000). As Lillis points out the prevailing view in higher education is that academic text construction “should be part of students’ common sense knowledge” (2001, p. 75). In terms of professors, eventhough they do not provide explicit instructions about what constitutes good writing, they are able to identify good writing when they see it (Leki, 1995). It is surprising, as Lillis reminds us, that lecturers fail to recall that they too became socialised into the essayist conventions “through many years of formal schooling and socio-discursive practices in their homes and communities”, whereas students, such as those from non-traditional backgrounds may not (ibid, p. 75).

Moreover, instructions on writing were mostly focused on language aspects such as vocabulary as pointed by Mimoza (I2) in the extract below, supporting the view that writing in undergraduate level in the given context in general puts a greater emphasis on language and less on content:

A little, a little explanation but more concentrated on the language vocabulary the vocabulary we have to use when for example we write emails, formal letters, explanations referred to these more, but not much about the construction.

In terms of their writing process, the questionnaire asked students to describe what they do prior to writing, how they develop it further and whether they think about the reader and in what ways. At a pre-writing phase, majority of students stated that they think before writing, but only a

few of them elaborated how they do it, i.e. they did not specify what strategies they employ to generate ideas. Regarding the development of writing and finishing it, most respondent reported to focus on the organization of the essay, grammar and language mistakes. There is no indication that they deviated from the linear approach to writing, an approach which as they reported during the interviews was the only approach they have been accustomed to write in both L1 and English. In addition, almost all students reported to think of the reader and as a result they consider if writing will be understood and/or liked by the reader.

In response to the question in a questionnaire about their EAP course expectations all students, aside from one, referred to the acquisition of academic writing and/or further development of writing skills. This is an indication that students showed awareness on what EAP course entails. The questionnaire also asked students to anticipate what challenges would they have with writing in EAP 1. Twelve of them expressed their concerns that they might not know how to write an academic essay properly and/or adhere to new rules, new vocabulary and so forth. Perhaps this shows that students were aware that writing is complex and writing effective essays in English is quite challenging. When asked to share what would they do to overcome potential challenges, most of them did not provide specific strategies, rather they discussed in general how they would need to practice and work harder. However, five of them considered that reading more would help them overcome the challenges. This implies that not all students have effective learning strategies and/or perhaps are unsure how to overcome challenges without guidance and support.

The questionnaire and interviews revealed that there was not a great variation in terms of previous writing experiences among students. Overall, students had some experience with writing

in both Albanian and English, but not with academic writing such as read-to-write essays or research papers. These findings are in line with conclusion made by Evans and Morrison (2010) who state that previous writing experiences do not prepare students for writing in higher education.

Understandably, the vast majority expected to learn about academic writing in EAP, and they also predicted to encounter difficulties with it. Lack of experience with academic writing, however could be the reason why most students at the onset were unable to list specific steps they would need to take to overcome challenges. In addition, lack of experience with multiple-draft writing is an indicator of a product-based approach dominance in teaching writing in their previous education. This is also supported by students' reported process of writing. The linear approach they employ when writing could also be attributed to the exam-based education. In addition, it could be attributed to teachers' insufficient knowledge on other approaches to teaching writing, which resulted from lack of professional development opportunities during the period of warfare and immediately afterwards (see Clark, 2000; Sommers & Buckeland, 2004). Also, the reported focus on grammar and language mistakes when writing could result from the institutionalized role grammar has in language learning in the given context.

4.2.2. Students' reported views on writing practices over the period of study

As mentioned above, students had some experience in writing essays prior to attending EAP1 course during Year Two. During interview 2, many of them also reported to have done some writing in other academic courses during Year Two, such as for a literature course and/or couple of elective courses. However, as student stated, in these courses writing was mostly assigned as a

classroom task that did not require research or use of references, no feedback was provided and the focus was on the product.

In contrast with the traditional product-based approach to writing, EAP 1 advocated a more process approach to writing. According to students, writing in multiple drafts and receiving feedback was very useful, a practice they have never encountered prior to the EAP 1 course. It was perceived useful because it helped them see mistakes and improve their writing. The following interview extract, illustrates how students perceived writing using a multiple-draft approach:

Saranda (I2): [multiple-draft writing] Well, very good. It is a very good experience, because, for example, when you write an essay, you don't know whether you have written it well, whether it is good or bad, you need other people's opinion. It is a good experience when your essay is checked twice by others and in the end, you write the final essay

Nevertheless, this positive attitude was developed over time as at the onset, it posed a challenge for some of the students. The following extracts, illustrate this:

Miranda (I2): When we started to learn how to write the essay, it was a challenge to learn according to the rules and to correct the essays, it was the first time to do that, after you write the essay, to try to write another version, to make it better, something that we had not done before, because we would write an essay and finish it.

Hesa (I2): In the beginning, it was difficult to write the same thing with corrections, because earlier I had the impression that it is much better if I start something from the beginning, rather than changing something you have already done. I had difficulties with

the first one, then I got used to it, and I realized that it gives good results, the work in drafts, because there is always something to learn, and the first work is never the best one

These extracts suggest that revising essays was a new practice for these students, therefore it is understandable that student found this experience a bit challenging at the onset. For students who are used to focus on the product, immersing them in unfamiliar writing practices could be perceived as asking them to step outside their comfort zones. This could be attributed to lack of training in essay writing (Kalikokha *et al*, 2009) among various factors. Not surprising, some students, as it will be elaborated in Chapter five, were not very open towards some writing practices in EAP 1. In addition, the multiple-draft approach became the norm for the compilation of a research tool in EAP 2 too, i.e. students were required to revise the questionnaire several times based on the received feedback from teacher, peers and piloting. Interview data reveals that all students, apart from two who initially faced some challenges with it, found this experience very helpful.

When asked to share their experiences with writing outside university, majority of students reported that they do not do much writing beyond what is required of them in the university. Three of them, write poetry, literary essays or keep a journal, couple of them stated that when they have time they practice essays writing, but overall except writing emails and or posting things on social medial they do not write that much and this includes writing in mother tongue and English.

4. 3. Student Identified Writing Challenges

This section will present the difficulties that students reported to have encountered with writing in EAP courses over the course of study. These difficulties will be discussed under four major criteria: High order cognition, task related problems, language and self-efficacy beliefs.

4.3.1. Higher order cognition problems

Many of the exhibited challenges in writing were connect to the process of thinking. Many students, similarly to participants in Asoka and Usui (2003) perceived the process of generating ideas difficult, particularly for the long essay and/or research paper, for which students had little background knowledge and no previous writing experiences. Even when they were able to generate ideas, they had challenges in developing them at a greater length and depth, often ending up with a repetition of ideas. It is very likely that students have not internalised the effective use of planning strategies at the onset (Raimes, 1987), and/or they were inexperienced in planning (Evans & Morrison, 2010).

Another plausible explanation could be that they had guidance from the teacher in every step of the process for the first two essays, including generation of ideas. For the third essay, they were left for the most part without explicit guidance and more independent choices and decisions to make. It could be argued, being part of an education system, that predominately fostered memorization affected students' confidence in applying critical thinking skills independently.

Similarly, half of the respondents reported to have encountered challenges in coming up with essay topic for the research paper. As the first three essay topics were assigned by the teacher or in agreement with the teacher, students felt challenged to identify topics that they could explore into more depth and conduct research on for Assignment 4 i.e. group research project. Again, this was their first experience of conducting research, collaborating with others and writing a paper of 4000 words. As research suggests, familiarity with the topic makes writing experience an easier one for students. As Kellog points out “conceivably, the better one knows the writing topic, the less effort might be needed to plan, translate, and review text” (Kellog, 1987, p. 258), i.e., the more writers know on the topic, the longer and more coherent essays they might produce (McCutchen, 1986). However, selecting a topic for a group research project implies that students had to negotiate, hence they could not necessarily select topics they were familiar with.

Moreover, considering students’ culture of dependence on authority, i.e., the teacher who usually makes decisions on their behalf, adds up to their frustration. In both cases, students were engaged in a more independent learning process, which required research, reading, and higher order thinking.

Moreover, the independent work created challenges for almost half of the students with the structuring of essays. Again, this was mostly evident for the longer assignments, particularly the 2000 words essays, where organizing content into sub sections appeared to have caused a difficulty, as the following extract illustrates.

Mimoza (I4): when we wrote the 2000 word essay I didn't know how to work with the structure because these essays with less words were easier to deal with, you could manage them because we learned its outline. When I had to deal with the 2000-word essay I had to use sub-sections how to formulate sub-sections how to support them how to write the outline of the 2000-word essay and it was difficult

Structuring an essay as part of the planning stage is not enough for the essay to be regarded effective, unless coherence is sustained throughout. Therefore, knowing how to produce coherent essays was reported to have been equally challenging for half of the students, particularly when working on EAP 1 assignments. As Hesa (I2) pointed out: “the first essay was more difficult, until I got used to the structure, as I said, until I learned it, because later, the things just flew”.

For an essay to be considered coherent there has to be a logical flow of ideas, which according to Lee (1998) needs to be accessible to the reader and relevant to the writer's purpose. When talking about reader awareness, the vast majority reported that thinking about the reader was not a practice they were accustomed to, therefore even when the topic asked them to consider a specific reader, majority of them stated to have failed to do so, particularly at the initial stages, though some of them reported to have thought about the teacher. The extract below illustrates student challenges in terms of audience awareness:

Miranda (I1): I still need to think what I want to write about a topic, because in most of the cases when we write, I personally try to express myself about the topic, but I forget to think about the people who read it and whether they will be able to understand it. So, I always

try to express my opinion about the topic, but I don't think if the way I expressed myself will be understood.

To add to this, when asked to define the purpose behind their essays, having it submitted, hoping for the teacher to like it were some of the given explanations. When the researcher probed further, they indicated various purposes, such as to describe, explain, persuade, though often suggesting that they did not consider the audience and /or assignment guidelines. In other words, writing with sense of purpose did not appear to be a practice that these students were familiar with. It is perhaps reasonable to infer that writing coherent essays required students to connect ideas logically using a register that it is appropriate to the purpose of writing and audience, which could be perceived as a daunting task for novice writers.

4.3.2. Task related difficulties

The practice of submitting essays in two drafts prior to submitting the final version characterized the first two tasks in EAP 1. However, for the third task, i.e., the 2000 words essay, students were provided with support through assignment guidelines and a couple of teacher-to-class conferences. After having been accustomed to receiving individual feedback from both teacher and peers on drafts, and not receiving it on Assignment 3 was perceived to have been an unpleasant experience for eleven students, as the following excerpts illustrate:

Hana (I2): Without feedback, it was bad frankly speaking. To write 2000 words without any feedback, it was bad

Sihana (I2): Even though this was supposed to be easier after the ones we did, but without feedback I felt insecure

However, the main challenge for students was to write essays following a word limit: a great majority perceived the writing of a 2000 word essay a great challenge, as illustrated by the following quotation from one of the students:

Malesore (I2): The most challenging thing was that I found it too long. And to write according to those essay points that we have to follow. OK, fine you are writing introduction, the content of everything, but all that content with so many words. It is a bit challenging to write it, to follow, I do not know how to explain it for example how to summarize everything you are going to write about in an introduction in such a long essay

The challenge of the length of writing is often associated with familiarity that one has on the topic. And since “topic knowledge is directly tied to generating and organizing ideas” (Kellogg, 1987, 258), the fewer the ideas on the topic the more challenges students can encounter in producing texts at the required length. Students were aware that topic knowledge plays an important role in reaching word limit for the essay, as suggested by Sazana (I/3) who feared that “not possessing enough knowledge” might be the main challenge for her to reach word limit. This was understandable since none of the students had written such lengthy essays in the past.

Sihana (I2): “we didn’t have a 2000-word essay before, I was worried that I might not have ideas, if I would be able to reach the word limit, these were the difficulties

4.3.3. Working with sources

As students mentioned, a great challenge for them was to know how to use sources in their writing. This was predominantly the case with the 2000 words essays. As interview data reveals, this was the first assignment where they had to use references, and show their abilities of summarizing, paraphrasing or synthesizing information from multiple-sources. Conversely, it was reasonable that eleven of them reported to have encountered challenges with this practice. Similar challenges were reported in many studies such as Krause (2001) where students reported to have been overwhelmed by the amount of work they had to do compared to their previous experiences. In the following excerpt, the student explains that language barrier had a role in the way she referred to sources in the text. She states that:

Sihana (I4): I did not know how to find synonyms or to give, remain the same meaning of the person that I cited or, or of the paragraph that I had to paraphrase. It was very difficult because I started to perhaps do it and I thought it was good but when I read it for the second time I noticed that I got away from the topic or I gave it another direction from the one I wrote

It is quite likely that the limited academic vocabulary, which is a result of general English exposure in the past has affected students' abilities to understand and interpret texts in their own words.

On the other hand, another student attributes her challenges to the lack of experience with referencing in the past. She reports that:

Herolinda (I3): I need to work more on paraphrasing, a lot, because I need to write, everything is about the length of the text, when I start to write I lose the track immediately, so I need to work harder on this, because it is the first time that I'm doing paraphrase, we didn't do this either in primary school, gymnasium, or in the first year.

Lack of experience in using references in the past, but also during Year Two in other academic courses created challenges for these students when they were required to work with sources. As a result, they reported to have felt insecure, anxious and also to have referred to fewer sources just to prevent themselves from making more mistakes. It is plausible, therefore to infer that the discrepancies in the approaches used by academic staff at the Department in terms of writing and research have aggravated the matter. At one side of the spectrum, students were encouraged to reproduce knowledge, while on the other one they were encouraged to engage in critical thinking practices. In addition, for a few of the students, access to references was challenging too, especially for the research paper. They reported to have found it difficult to locate references, even though some of them tried to check at the Library of the Faculty, but unsuccessfully. These findings comply with the reality of the university, which holds a limited number of titles in English, especially of the current literature. In addition, university did not have an electronic database from which students could download or read required resources.

4.3.4. Genre

In EAP 2, students were required to gather data and produce a research report, a genre they were unfamiliar and inexperienced with. Even though they were provided with continuous

feedback and scaffolding tasks, they nonetheless, reported to have encountered difficulties in writing the report, particularly certain parts of it. The results section and abstract, followed by a compilation of a questionnaire were perceived as the most challenging aspects of this assignment. Students stated that it was difficult to sum up the whole paper in an abstract; they were also having difficulties in interpreting results and maintain clarity for the reader, as the extract below illustrates:

Hasime (I4): Yes, maybe the results, I still need to know, how to draw them, at least how to express them, in order for them to be understandable for the reader.

Moreover, the process of compiling a research tool was perceived as a difficult experience for few students: lack of previous experience and the multiple-draft approach used in writing the questionnaire were given as reasons behind this challenge.

4.3.5. Language

Using academic vocabulary in writing and/or finding adequate expressions was a challenge for almost half of the respondents. They attributed this to their previous writing experiences where they used simple, non-academic words. In addition, they were aware that using words from Academic Word List was a requirement, however, they report to have encountered difficulties in incorporating them in writing. The following excerpts illustrates the challenge:

Malesore (I1): if you have a text and you are told to do a summary or paraphrase, then you need new words, the knowledge that you have and this is a result of reading other books,

and expanding your vocabulary and then you are able to write something with the same meaning but using different words. I lag behind in this, I am not able to write properly

Students' mixed English proficiency, the length of assignments and the scarce background knowledge on the topics they wrote, could have all contributed to the situation. To add to this, the whole experience with EAP courses was difficult for students who had little experience with academic conventions, as described by the following excerpt from letter 1.

Sihana (L1): It maybe seems difficult to you in the beginning because you will be dealing with a lecture that it will be another world to you, comparing it with other lectures, and maybe some unknown words too, with some rules, which an academic person has to know.

In her first letter to future generations, the student prepares them for what they will experience in EAP 1, which she warns them that it will be a different experience from the one they are accustomed to. Among the challenges she refers to academic vocabulary too.

4.4. Self-efficacy

Discussing students' writing prior or during the process brought to light their insecurities. They were self-conscious that they lack particular skills that could influence performance. They were mostly worried if they will be able to pull it off, i.e., to write an acceptable essay since many of them were aware of their individual challenges and prior experiences with writing practices. The following excerpts illustrate the doubts that students have on their writing capabilities.

Selvie (I1): I am concerned about whether I will have a clear idea how to write, how to connect paragraphs, how to conclude the essay, will I have an idea how to do the introduction, will you like it.

Herolinda (I1): what if I do not do it properly, what if I write too much, what if I write too little, what if I cannot express what I want because I do not dare to risk, and it comes out wrong, or what if I am expressing what I want to express, and it does not, the meaning is completely different, a bit difficult, and we did not learn this before

Their self-efficacy beliefs can have a major role in how students approach writing tasks and maintain motivation (Bandura, 1986). The self-doubts, often influenced by internal personal factors can lower students' efforts and performance or cause anxiety.

4.5. Students' reported views on development of writing over the year

In general, students reported to have developed their writing skills over the course of study, and they attribute this achievement to various factors. A major contributing factor in the development of writing skills over time is ascribed to pre-writing strategies, respectively to brainstorming and outlining techniques. Thirteen students have reported to have used these strategies, which in their opinion resulted in the improvement of writing skills. In short, being taught metacognitive strategies enabled writers to regulate the existing strategies and use more effective ones, which consequently helped them develop as writers. Moreover, after having been involved in

writing practices for several months, eleven students stated that they feel more confident as writers, as illustrated by the extract below:

Hasime (I4): Yes, it has changed in general, the fact that I feel more self-confident, when writing an essay, because I know that you have to think in a critical way, to elaborate ideas, to brainstorm, to think as clearly as possible, on a given topic, to have as many arguments, because if you want to convince the reader about an issue, then you have to provide many arguments.

The student believes that the increased self-confidence is a result of the growth of knowledge and enhanced practices of writing. This view is echoed by many others, who feel confident that they have acquired academic writing skills over time and as a result they believe that they can transfer the skills in other learning situations, as suggested by interview extract below:

Mimoza (I4): I have more self-confidence in writing. I used to have it before too but I was, I was wrong, I thought I was writing something but in fact I wasn't. Now it has strengthened because I know that now I know what the formula is (...) for ex. I don't fear the diploma paper anymore because more or less I know how to do it. I don't fear seminar papers and stuff because I more or less know things, I do. I feel comfortable

Ten students also reported that they became more effective in structuring their essays. Likewise, ten of them stated that their vocabulary expanded over time, particularly the academic one.

Even though reader awareness was not reported as an issue at the onset, nine students claimed to have acknowledged development of reader awareness over time. In addition, the increased awareness on the differences between rhetorical structures in Albanian language and English, encouraged eight students to adhere to English rhetorical structures while writing, which consequently, as they report, helped them improve their writing. The student maintains:

Selvie (I1): I wrote the way an essay is written in Albanian, now I know there is difference between the Albanian and English essay, and frankly speaking, I always thought in Albanian and started to write the essay, but now I know that it is wrong

This student shares her discovery of rhetorical differences between writing in mother tongue and English. This awareness raising helped her and other students be more attentive to English academic writing conventions.

In addition, students reported to have noticed changes in their practices; six of them claimed that their writing became more coherent over time i.e., they noticed that there was a more effective flow of ideas from one paragraph to the other. Similarly, six students stated that their writing was clearer by the end of EAP 2 course compared to the writing they did at the onset. Also, a few of them asserted that they are better at organizing ideas in writing, while four of them considered that they have developed genre knowledge too.

4.6. Summary

Students' previous writing experiences revealed that they had some writing experiences in both English and mother tongue, and no previous academic writing experiences. In particular, they had not experienced reading for writing, which according to Carson (1993) is the practice in which "readers/writers use text(s) that they read, or have read, as a basis for text(s) that they write" (p. 85), nor did they engaged in a research report writing. Consequently, they faced various challenges when they were required to produce academic assignments in EAP courses. Among the main challenges were those related to thinking more critically, such as developing ideas, defining topics, writing coherent and well structure essays. In addition, there were some task related challenges such as word limit, working with sources, writing in different genres and not receiving individual feedback. Moreover, employing academic vocabulary in writing and the shaken writing self-efficacy beliefs presented a challenge for some of the students. However, over the time of study, students reported a development in their writing practices and performance. They stated that they noticed development at the macro aspects of writing such as structure, coherence, organization, but also at a micro level, respectively a development of vocabulary. Above all, they reported an increased belief in their academic writing abilities.

In terms of RQ1, i.e., what changes over the time of study in terms of writing, information shared above suggests that students' views of themselves as writers and practices on writing change over the time of study.

- Students perceive themselves as better writers. The self-confidence shown at the end of the study period reveals that students believe that their writing skills have improved and that now they have the knowledge and strategies how to write effective academic essays.
- Overcoming some task related problems. Though initially writing a 2000-word essay was perceived a daunting experience, by the end when students had to produce 4000 words report, word limit was no longer perceived as a challenge.

Change of students' writing practices over time

- Students plan prior to writing. Students' use pre-writing strategies prior to writing, a practice they were not accustomed to in the past.
- Their writing is recursive. Due to multiple-drafts writing experience in EAP courses, students' process of writing is recursive.

4.7. Students' reported feedback experiences and attitudes over the study period

This section will look at students' feedback experiences over the study period. Initially, it will look at students' experiences prior to the EAP course, including data from questionnaire and interviews. Then it will move to their experiences with feedback in the EAP course. Lastly, it will share students' perceptions on the development of feedback practices over the time of study.

4.7.1. Patterns across group at the beginning

At the onset, as part of a questionnaire students were required to share their previous experiences with feedback. When asked if they discuss writing assignments with teachers, most students reported to have not done so or even if they did, it was done occasionally. Moreover, as twelve students maintained, feedback was mostly received from friends and/or family members, while only five stated that feedback was given by the teacher or in a combination with peer feedback.

Interestingly, even when students received feedback it was predominantly given to them orally, and only in couple of cases in written. This suggests that students were not given an opportunity to make the necessary changes and/or reflect on comments and suggestions. This becomes even more evident by the response of the vast majority of the students who reported to have not been asked to write in multiple drafts prior to attending EAP courses. The fact that couple of students responded by saying ‘it happened’ and ‘sometimes’, also leaves room for interpretation; not being exposed to multiple draft writing approach could prevent students from understanding the concept itself, thus respond with doubts and/or referring to it as an individual activity that they do without being a teacher’s requirement.

Also, as they expressed in the questionnaire, the provided feedback was primarily provided on global (content and organization) but also on some local issues (language related).

To elaborate further the matter, students were asked during Interview 1 to share their previous feedback experiences, particularly during Year One. Interestingly, all of them indicated that during the first year of studies they were not provided with written teacher feedback on their essays. A typical pattern as reported by almost half of the students, was to read their essays in front of peers, and receive some oral feedback from the teacher/s on mistakes during or after reading, which often meant comments related to grammatical mistakes or no comments at all, as indicated by the following excerpt:

Mimoza (I1): I remember once we had to write an essay about your neighbour, neighbours, we had to do it at home, and all we did was to read it in class in front of the whole class, and the teacher didn't give any comment or anything. That's all I remember, I remembered it now, because when I read it I was a little bit afraid

An oral feedback was also provided in cases when students went to consult the teacher after exam failure, though this was reported by two students only, who also confirmed that the focus of oral teacher feedback was on grammatical mistakes and no specifications were provided on what needs to be improved in terms of writing. In addition, students were not involved in peer feedback practices during Year One.

4.7.2. Students' reported views on feedback practices over the period of study

Feedback practices were not common in Year Two either. As eight students reported, receiving feedback on drafts from both teachers and peers was not a practice in other academic courses either, except EAP. It is reasonable, therefore that all of them commented to have found

feedback provided in EAP very useful, as it helped them improve writing skills. It should be specified that the multiple-draft approach to writing in EAP courses encouraged peer feedback on Draft 1, and teacher feedback on Draft 2. However, for Essay 3, students received in-class teacher feedback only. On the other hand, working on a research required more peer and teacher feedback at certain stages of process, whereas in terms of report at the end, the same practice of receiving peer and teacher feedback on drafts 1 and 2 was applied. In the sections below teacher's and peer feedback will be discussed in terms of students' perceptions on its effectiveness, reaction and change of perceptions over the course of study.

4.8. Teacher feedback

All students reported that teacher feedback in EAP courses was useful and they all acted upon it. A major reason why at least five of the students stated that teacher feedback was useful has to do with the perception that teacher feedback helped them understand where they stand, i.e., it helped them identify areas of improvement. Overall, they expressed positive reactions towards teacher feedback as maintained by the student below:

Saranda (I4): The feedback from the teacher was very useful, because we realized our mistakes, and then we corrected our works and we realized what was wrong and what we needed to improve, to avoid doing them in the future, not to repeat them. I considered teacher's feedback rather than that of peers.

It is not surprising that this student is more open to teacher feedback than peer feedback. This echoes the beliefs of some of the students who found teacher feedback better than peer

feedback, as it was longer and more detailed. Even though there is a great possibility that teacher feedback was more useful and/or concrete compared to peers who were learning the practices of providing feedback, it is quite likely that this view is a result of the perception that teacher is the main authority, respectively the main source of knowledge. A student explained that teacher feedback is given more attention by saying:

Miranda (I3): Peer feedback is good, but what makes our work much better is the teacher's feedback and we pay more importance to teacher's feedback when we work on the final part.

However, there is also a possibility that as students were not accustomed to receiving so much attention from the teacher in terms of their writing performance, the whole process of receiving feedback was perceived as a great event. To add to this, some of the students commented that they liked that the given teacher feedback was initially focusing on praise and then on criticism.

4.9. Peer feedback

All students report to have found peer feedback useful, though not all of them were open to it from the onset. They mention that peer feedback was an unknown practice to them, but by the end it became a 'natural practice'. Many report that they were not so willing to accept criticism from peers at the initial stages, as illustrated by the following quote:

Hasime (I1): Peer feedback, it didn't help me much, frankly speaking, I don't know, they wrote something else, in fact I was certain about my idea, or the way I did it, it didn't help me much

The student expressed her reaction towards the effectiveness of peer feedback, which was restated by many students who took peer feedback too personal. They reported that just like peers, they too hesitated to give 'honest' feedback to peers because they did not want to hurt their feelings. Some did not want to receive peer feedback at all, as the quote below illustrates:

Mrika (I4): Yes. In the first semester, I didn't have a desire, I was praying that people wouldn't give much feedback, many mistakes, even though I wouldn't be angry.

A praise was expected and practiced initially, but later it was not considered to be useful in the process of writing. Typically, students report to have noticed change in the quality of peer feedback after having gone through the first three assignments. As a result, their perceptions about the effectiveness of peer feedback changed over the course of study as one of the students stated:

Malesore (I4): During the last semester, it wasn't useful, because students in general didn't know how to give feedback, we didn't know what to improve, or we hesitated to say things, because they might get hurt, but in the second we felt like improving them. In the beginning you gave us feedback and then I followed it, for ex., in an abstract I was able to tell what was wrong with it, and gave my suggestions for improvement. I felt freer to give feedback in this semester than in the previous one.

In general, students noticed change with peer feedback practices; they reported that the quality of the received and given peer feedback has improved.

4.10. Third party feedback (Seeking Literacy Brokers)

At the onset, it was reported that students had very limited opportunities in terms of receiving teacher feedback upon which they could revise drafts and improve writing. Also, peer feedback practices were not part of their previous writing experiences. However, to compensate for it, a great number of students reported to have asked for help from friends and /or family members. In order to find out if they required support from other people in the EAP 1 course, respectively on the 2000 words assignment, for which they had limited teacher feedback and no peer feedback, it was reported that only six of the students asked friends and acquaintances (such as cousin, an American pastor) for support and one shared her writing with a peer. The support often meant feedback on ideas and clarity of thoughts, but in an isolated case it included feedback on language.

Sazana (I2): Yes, my cousin. She finished her studies, music studies, not English, but I thought she could help even though she didn't know English, but I tried via Albanian to get her opinion whether I gave a certain idea well, if I wrote something wrong about University, or anything, a kind of feedback if I may call it, but not in English, in Albanian.

R: Do you think it helped?

Sazana (I2): Yes, because she helped me to write about the background of the University of Prishtina, because I was small at that time and I read about it in Internet, but it's different when someone older tells you the information. She explained how it was, because she studied 6 or 7 years ago, so I asked her how she learned, about the methods, the lectures, the exams, whether they were only oral or written. And she gave me some ideas from her own experience.

Seeking for literacy brokers did not seem to have helped all students equally, but at least they made an attempt and received a second opinion. The question to be raised is whether reliance on the teacher as the authority has led only a certain number of students to seek support from other people. On the other hand, it could be argued that since this was the first 2000 words assignment, many students did not plan their time well ahead and as a result they could not find time for interaction with literacy brokers. However, there was an option to discuss the assignment with peers, but aside for one person, the others did not report to have collaborated. Moreover, contacting the teacher during working hours was an option too, which none of the respondents made use of.

4.11. Summary

As indicated above, students' previous experiences with teacher and peer feedback were limited. Peer feedback was a new concept for all students, a practice not all of them were open to at the beginning. However, over time and through practice students changed their perceptions about peer feedback practices. In terms of teacher feedback, the detailed feedback that was provided in written was perceived as a breakthrough for all students considering that in their

previous experiences they reported to have not received any written feedback from teachers. Another concept that was mentioned in terms of feedback related to literacy brokers. Seeking help from people either within the institution or outside of it could have an impact on the production of texts. Though most students at the onset reported to have interacted with literacy brokers in the past, almost half of the students reported to have done so in EAP courses, which raised some questions about this shift.

RQ1: What changes over time in terms of feedback practices?

As suggested by findings above, the major change in terms of feedback practices is related to peer feedback. Respectively, students changed their perceptions about the usefulness of peer feedback over time. In addition, they changed their practices too: they give more constructive feedback and receive better quality feedback from peers.

Change of students' attitude on peer feedback over the period of study. Students believe that peer feedback is beneficial and could help them improve their texts. This is a change in their attitudes considering that at the beginning they were skeptical and non-appreciative towards peer feedback.

Change of students' peer feedback practices over the period of study. Students believe that they are more skilled at providing useful peer feedback. At the same time, they believe that peers too provide higher quality feedback.

4.12. Students' reported reading experiences over the study period

4.12.1. Patterns across group at the beginning

Similarities and differences of individuals in terms of reading practices are presented in Table 4.4 below.

Table 4.4 *Reading in mother tongue and in English*

STUDENT	What kind of texts do you mostly read in your mother tongue?	What kind of texts do you mostly read in English?
Herolinda (S3)	-Newspaper articles, novels	-novels, telephone sms, books with instructions (How to... books)
Hasime (S5)	-novels	-novels, reports, newspaper articles
Hesa (S9)	-newspaper articles, novels, telephone sms, reports, psychological books	-emails, novels, letters
Hana (S11)	-all kinds of news and information, novels, school literature, emails, history	-newspaper articles and news in internet, novels, essays
Hekuran (S14)	-newspaper articles, novels, apologetic letters	-apologetic letters, novels, internet articles, emails

Mimoza (S2)	-daily newspaper, telephone sms, novels (when I have time)	-internet articles (newspapers or information websites) stories and essays by different authors
Merita (S4)	-newspaper articles, novels, telephone sms	- novels, letters
Mrika (S7)	-newspaper articles, scientific research, novels	-newspaper articles, scientific research, novels
Malesore (S8)	-newspaper articles, emails, telephone sms	-emails, letters, novels
Miranda (S15)	-newspaper articles, telephone sms, psychological books	-newspaper articles, telephone sms, novels, letters
Saranda (1)	-newspaper articles, novels, reports	-novels, letters, reports
Sazana (S6)	-newspaper articles	-newspaper articles, novels
Servete (S10)	-psychological, novels, educational, etc.	-different books, articles, novels....
Selvie (S12)	-novels, telephone sms	-novels, newspaper articles
Sihana (S13)	-telephone sms, emails, novels	-newspaper articles, emails

As table above suggests, majority of students reported to predominantly read novels and newspapers in both Albanian and English and Short Message Service (sms) in Albanian. As it can be seen, aside from one person, who reports reading scientific research there is no report about reading academic texts.

In order to elaborate further reading experiences of students during Year One, the following can be inferred from the interviews: ten students stated that in language courses such as English 1 and 2 reading skills included reading comprehension activities, i.e., read the text, answer the questions that were either multiple type questions and/or fill in the gap. No one reported to have been assigned reading that included synthesis of resources. Rather, as fourteen students stated, most reading assignments were for literature courses, which included reading Shakespeare dramas, poetry and/or novels.

Interestingly, nine students stated that reading activities in language skills courses such as English 1 and 2 in the first year of studies, did not encourage the use of reading strategies such as skimming and scanning. These concept, according to most of them were introduced to them in the second year of studies, respectively in the EAP 1 course.

4.12.2. Students' reported views on reading experience over the period of study

As far as reading outside class is concerned, students reported to read in both languages, English and Albanian. Novels, magazines, news and other online sources were commented to be mostly read in English, whereas recommended books by friends, popular life coaching books, which four students referred to as 'psychological books' were mostly read in Albanian. In EAP 2, students were provided with handouts to help them practice reading strategies but also to help them with report writing. Consequently, they were assigned to read two key articles to help them understand research paper structure. Nine students reported to have read at least one of them.

Overall, no one reported to have encountered difficulties in understanding the materials shared with them or the ones they selected for research papers.

However, it should be pointed out that the shared materials by the teacher were not very difficult, and so was the case with materials that they selected from the internet. English 1 and 2 are required to develop students' study skills, focusing mostly on communicative skills. However, in terms of writing and reading, this was not achieved fully. I think this is a results of teaching staff who have not had opportunities to be trained or kept updated with the recent trends in teaching of these skills, and also because they were a product of an education system that had oral communication at the centre of its teaching.

4.13. Reading challenges

One of the main problems in reading, as reported by twelve students, was to understand materials. Respectively, eight of them reported problems in comprehension and four of them with vocabulary. The latter explained how they had to use dictionary to understand the meaning of words, which were more academic that they were used to. The former, stated to have been confused by the structure, by many unknown words and so on, and as a result they encountered challenges to comprehend the text.

Saranda (I4): If there is, that is, there are a lot of expressions that we don't know in our language, there are words we don't understand, and that I need to translate, I find the text very hard to read and that takes me much time to look up the words, if there are many words to look up, I find it difficult and maybe I don't use it.

R: So, you are saying that if there is a text with a difficult vocabulary to understand, and that text might be useful, but you leave it because it takes much time.

Saranda (I4): Yes.

In considering the given quote, one can assume that one of the reason why not all students have read the assigned readings mentioned in section 5.6.2 could be related to the language level of difficulty, or even their practices of referring to internet first rather than read what is being assigned.

In addition, students refer to issues related to finding sources and making use of sources as reading challenges. Finding sources for example was reported by eleven students to have been the major problem in terms of reading challenges. They faced challenges in finding sources, particularly reliable sources as it was stated by three of those students. Moreover, a challenge for 7 students was to know how to deal with sources, i.e. categorize what is useful, select information that could be used in the paper and so forth. Equally challenging for seven students was to know how to report about other people's ideas i.e., they encounter a challenge with text-management skills.

A second major challenge was how to use reading strategies effectively. In considering their previous reading practices, it is understandable that nine students stated that they encountered difficulties in applying these strategies, particularly at the initial stages of EAP 1.

4.13.1. Students' reported views on development of reading over the period of study

It is understandable that through time, with the development of reading strategies students feel more comfortable in consulting literature and in understanding reading materials. This was reported to be the case with eleven students. Though initially they encountered challenges in using reading strategies such as skimming, scanning, prediction and so forth, by the end they considered themselves as effective readers. The acquired reading strategies were used in other courses too and for the research report, as the following student asserts:

Selvie: Earlier, we didn't use these skills, now I began, they helped me with other exams, too, they helped me to find the main things, and when I did the research, to search for literature, I always used them, I didn't read everything, but the main things only, and if I considered it adequate I would take that book or material to write, and if you use these skills they are very useful.

The fact that students need to be taught pre-reading strategies while in Year Two of their studies confirms the complex situation of the pre-university education system in Kosovo but also of the university level. These skills ought to have been taught in the mother tongue; in that situation students would have been able to transfer the skills when reading in English and face fewer challenges.

4.14. Summary

As indicated above, students' previous reading experiences did not involve academic reading texts, rather novels and newspaper articles. In addition, the reading they have been exposed

to during Year One included reading comprehension activities, novels and poetry. When students started EAP 1, they had to be taught pre-reading strategies, which initially they found challenging, though by the end this was no longer reported to be the case. Interestingly, students categorized a reading challenge the process of finding sources, dealing with sources such as what to select among various sources and knowing how to use them in writing.

RQ1: What changes over time in terms of reading experiences over the period of study?

As suggested by findings above, the major change in terms of reading experiences is related to the development of reading strategies.

Change of students' reading practices over the period of study. Students believe that knowing how to apply reading strategies effectively helps them with writing but also in searching information for other courses. This is a change in their practices considering that at the beginning they did not know how to make use of these skills.

Chapter 5. Between group writing experience

5.1. Introduction

This chapter will look more closely on the reported writing, feedback and reading experiences between the three sub-groups (High, Middle, Struggling). Initially, it will begin with a description of students within each group in order to provide information about who these students are and what experiences they bring with themselves, looking at each group in turn, from High Achievers to Struggling Achievers. Despite the many similarities that students shared as a whole group, a closer look at the data reveals that there are some differences in terms of reported challenges and development between subgroups. Therefore, each sub-section begins by outlining the reported challenges within and between groups and then continues with students' reported views on development. It will start with writing; it will continue with feedback and, lastly, it will cover reading. At the end of each section, a short summary of responses to the research questions in terms of between-group differences will be provided.

5.2. Students' background

This section will outline the patterns between groups at the onset, drawing on information provided at arrival in the questionnaire and background information from Interview 1.

Higher achievers

Two of the five HA students, Hana and Hekuran, come from ‘nontraditional’ families, while the other three had at least one parent who had completed higher education degree. Everyone, apart from Hana reported to be multilinguals. One person comes from an urban area, the others from semi-urban and/ or rural areas. The age ranged between 19-20.

Regarding English language learning, for three students (Hasime, Hesa and Hekuran), attending private English classes besides school instructions was the common practice. For Herolinda, on the other hand, acquiring English as her third language began through communication with her cousins from the U.S. and continued in school. Similarly, Hana had opportunities to acquire and/or practice English through communication with her uncle who worked as a translator. They both attributed the development of their English language skills to the independent study rather than to formal school instruction.

In terms of future goals, three students (Hasime, Hana, Hekuran) aspired to be English teachers, Herolinda wanted to become a translator whilst Hesa wanted to gain skills that would get her employed. Both Hana and Hesa were planning to continue postgraduate studies. In terms of employment, Hana was the only one from the group who was working at the time of study.

As reported at arrival, all students were engaged in writing both essays and more personal types of writing (such as emails, notes, text messages) in mother tongue, whilst writing in English in Year 1 of their studies was predominantly exam based and limited to either literature and/or

English skills courses. In terms of challenges in Year 1, Hana reported to have found writing difficult as the 'style was formal' whilst Hesa had challenges in using adequate vocabulary. Three of them, Hasime, Hesa and Hekuran, reported to have received writing instructions outside formal education, with the two-former having the opportunity to receive instruction from native speakers. Regarding the process of writing, all of them reported to make use of some planning strategies prior to writing (such as brainstorming), though multiple-draft writing was a new concept to all of them. They were homogenous in terms of reading and experience of feedback practices: reading novels and newspapers in both mother tongue and English were reported to be the predominant genres they were engaged with, whereas both teacher and peer feedback experiences in the past were limited.

Learning how to write academically, developing critical thinking skills, and learning how to use references in writing were the common expectations of this group from EAP courses, suggesting greater awareness of what academic writing entails, compared to the other two groups. When asked to describe potential challenges that they might encounter with reading and writing in EAP courses, two students (Herolinda and Hesa) reported that being used to creative writing and Albanian rhetoric might interfere with writing in EAP. Their concerns were realistic considering that both of them were recurrent writers of poetry and literary essays in mother tongue, who had probably noticed differences in writing essays in English during Year 1. Hasime and Hekuran on the other hand did not expect to face any challenges in terms of reading and writing, whilst Hana anticipated new vocabulary to present a challenge.

When asked to describe what they would do to overcome the challenges, Hesa considered that being exposed to English as much as possible would be a good strategy, whilst Herolinda and Hana were planning to practice/read more. The fact that there is no institutional support (such as writing centres) nor peer-support activities suggests that learning perhaps is perceived to be an individual task, therefore students believed that overcoming challenges is their sole responsibility.

Middle Achievers

Two MA students came from 'non-traditional' families, whilst the other three (Mimoza, Malesore and Miranda) had at least one of the parents with a completed higher education. More than half of students came from urban areas, and the age ranged between 19-21. Two reported to be multilingual. All of them, except Mrika, had acquired English in both formal school settings and through private language classes. As a result, two of them reported to have acquired writing skills in the latter.

In terms of their goals, all students, except Mrika, were planning to continue to postgraduate studies. In addition, working as a teacher was an aspiration for three students (Merita, Mrika and Miranda), though the other two students reported that they would be in pursuit of professional employment, with Mimoza being more concrete, i.e., specifying that she wanted to work in an 'English medium speaking organization'.

When students were asked about their expectations from EAP courses, development of writing skills was the top priority, judging by four students' responses, followed by an expectation

to develop academic language, oral communication and reading. Not surprisingly, in anticipating challenges with writing and reading, three students reported to foresee challenges with writing, one with reading, i.e. understanding vocabulary. One person did not predict any difficulties.

When asked to describe what they would do to overcome those challenges, interestingly, only Mrika mentioned getting support from the EAP teacher i.e., she was planning to discuss her weaknesses and ask for help from the teacher. The rest gave general comments such as ‘read’ ‘practice’, ‘write more attentively’, ‘attend regularly’, suggesting that learning and development was viewed as the student’s responsibility alone.

In terms of their writing practices in both Albanian and English, all students (as indicated in the questionnaire) had experience in writing essays and other genres such as emails, notes, SMS. Nonetheless, multiple-draft writing was not the approach they had been exposed to, as reported by four of the respondents in the questionnaire. Merita, who has indicated she had experienced it, on the other hand clarified her views during the interviews, confirming that she was not involved in any multiple-draft writing activities prior to EAP. Planning strategies such as brainstorming or mental outlining were reported by only two students at the arrival, and only Mrika reported to have found writing in Year 1 difficult.

They, too, were a homogenous group in terms of reading and feedback practices; reading novels and newspapers in both languages was a common practice, whilst all of them had limited feedback experiences.

Struggling achievers

All five SA students come from ‘non-traditional’ families, as they represent the first generation of family members attending higher education. Three of them came from rural areas and the age range was between 20-22. In terms of English learning, three students reported to have attended private English language courses, though for two of them this was complementary to formal school instruction. Upon completion of the BA programme, four of them had aspirations to become English teachers. Sihana, on the other hand, was also studying International Relations and Diplomacy, a BA programme at a private college, aspiring to find a job in a non-teaching institution. Sazana was planning to continue her postgraduate studies in Austria and join her brother. To get prepared for it, she was taking intensive German language classes. For all of them English was their first foreign language, through three of them reported to have some knowledge in the languages such as French/Spanish/German. At the time of study, Saranda and Servete were also working.

As reported at arrival, the writing they were engaged in mother tongue included more non-academic forms of writing, whilst writing in Year 1 of their studies was limited to exam-essay writing, either in literature and/or English skills courses. Everyone except Sihana reported to have found writing in Year 1 difficult. As a result, Saranda and Sazana had failed the year, whilst Servete had failed the writing component repeatedly in one of English skills courses. In addition, no one reported to have received writing instructions outside formal education, nor to have been required to write in multiple-drafts making them homogenous in terms of previous writing practices. They also had limited experiences in receiving feedback from the teacher and almost no experience in

giving and receiving peer feedback. No one, except Sihana reported to have used pre-writing strategies in writing at arrival. With regard to reading engagements in both Albanian and mother tongue, they reported to predominately read novels and newspapers in both languages.

In terms of their expectations from EAP courses, they all aspired to learn how to write essays. Unsurprisingly, four of them anticipated to face challenges with writing in EAP courses, suggesting perhaps an awareness on writing skills deficiency. Saranda on the other hand was concerned that unknown vocabulary would present a challenge to her, or the poor pronunciation of words during reading, suggesting that ‘reading-aloud’ activities characterized her previous reading practices.

When asked to outline the steps they would take to overcome anticipated challenges, they all considered individual actions, such as ‘practice more’, ‘read more’, ‘work harder’ to be sufficient tactics. Interestingly, no one referred to peer-support as an option, suggesting that drawing on their previous experiences, learning perhaps was perceived to be an individual task.

Differences on arrival

As suggested by the description above, SA had the greatest disadvantages at the arrival having had less experience with essay writing in mother tongue, less experience with pre-writing strategies and no writing in English instruction outside formal education compared to the other groups. In addition, in Year 1 of studies, a vast majority of SA students had found writing difficult, which was less mentioned by the other two groups. Moreover, in terms of their non-academic

backgrounds, more than half of students from HA and MA groups came from traditional families, whilst all SA students were the first generation to have attended higher education. In general, the academic and non-academic backgrounds at arrival put SA students at a disadvantage in terms of previous experience.

5.3. The reported writing challenges between subgroups

In this sub-section, the similarities and differences between groups in terms of encountered challenges in writing will be discussed. In adapting Leki and Carson's (1994) categories of difficulties in the writing process, this section will initially report about the encountered challenges with task-management strategies such as text management, source management, managing research, rhetorical skills and language.

5.3.1. Challenges with text management

This section will look at the challenges related to text management issues (such as, topic) between subgroups.

High Achievers

Among the reported challenges with the process of writing, HA students encountered challenges in writing an essay on assigned topic/s or in coming up with a topic for the research paper. Hesa and Hana both encountered challenges with the assigned topics: Hana was not comfortable with the topic that was jointly selected by peers for Essay 2 since she did not want to

“judge our friends or peers”. The topic asked students to write an essay on the reasons majority of the English Department students were not studying, as it would have been expected of them. This topic was selected as a counter reply to Essay 1, where the focus of the essay was to discuss the quality of teaching in the English Department, in which majority of students blamed the teaching staff for the poor quality. As students were learning to see things from another perspective, Essay 2 topic was a result of their attempt to look at both sides of the story, i.e., analyse the roles and responsibilities of teachers and students at the English Department in the process of teaching/learning.

Nevertheless, Hana’s remarks (I2) ... “I didn’t like the topic at all because I thought there were more attractive topics we could write about” is a well-founded observation. Different individuals have different preferences and expectations. However, as no one else reported a challenge with the topic, it might be assumed that students felt comfortable with it, probably because they had background knowledge. In another example from this group, Hesa encountered a difficulty in understanding what was being required of her in Essay 3 because “it was a bit difficult to understand the topic, even though the words were comprehensible, I had difficulties in defining the form” (I2).

Essay 3 required students to write about the benefits and challenges of English language teaching and learning at the University of Prishtina. As one could argue the topic included concepts and information similar to the ones mentioned in Essay 1 and Essay 2, hence familiarity with the topic. The difference though in this case was elaboration of the topic using sources. In looking closely at the interview, I noticed that Hesa described the strategies such as reading what others

have done on the topic in order to decide how to proceed with the task, but “none of them did fit exactly”. My emic perspective on the education system in Kosovo allows me to suggest that students were accustomed to write using a ‘knowledge telling’ model i.e., tell everything they have remembered on the topic. Commonly, the topic in these writing tasks was identical to the topic found in the student’s textbooks, which encouraged reproduction of knowledge, practice students reported to have been involved during Year 1 of studies too. It could be argued that Hesa therefore, turned to her L1 strategies to make sense of the topic, respectively task requirement.

Similar to Hasime, Hesa also encountered a challenge in selection of a topic for their final assignment. The process of selecting a topic was ‘more problematic’ (Hasime: I3) because “it is the hardest part to choose which topic you need to work on, whether there is a need for that study” (Hesa: I33). These comments seem noteworthy because coming up with a research topic is an intellectually demanding task. In looking at Hesa, one could argue that one reason why she faced challenges with topic selection has to do with her awareness that a set of criteria such as whether the topic is research-worthy need to be met.

Middle Achievers

Producing work on assigned topics or on a self-selected topic did not present a challenge for majority of MA students, except for Merita. She encountered some challenges in selecting topic for research paper, as it was a group decision and it had to consider “which topics fits us best”. Nevertheless, she refers to the process of topic selection as “it wasn’t a big problem” (I3). In terms

of individual assignments, she found topics for first two essays more challenging, as explained below:

Merita (I2): The topic might have been easier, because it was about students, but it was more difficult to write about teachers than for students, and to write about the reasons, even though we are all part of this.

It could be argued that writing openly about the teaching problems in the English Department could be perceived as questioning authority, a practice not all students feel comfortable with. In addition, having the EAP teacher read the essay could have made Merita uncomfortable to share her criticism. Helping students select topics in which they have background knowledge does not imply that no challenges will be encountered. However, individual preferences are not easy to be accommodated.

Struggling Achievers

Struggling achievers reported no difficulties with the first three essay topics. However, a more challenging task was to select a topic for Assignment 4. This was a challenge for Saranda, Sazana and Sihana. For Sazana, having been told to choose a topic within the field of education “it was very difficult until we chose the topic” (I3). Sihana on the other hand reported to have found it difficult to come up with a topic because “the research would be long and we were not sure whether we would find people to respond” (I3). Similarly, Saranda did not know what topic would be “adequate for research”. In general, all three of them faced challenges, which later were overcome as a result of guidance and feedback.

5.3.2. Managing sources

Fear of plagiarism was reported as a challenge in terms of source management for MA and SA students, whilst HA students did not report it at all.

Middle Achievers

Fear of plagiarism presented a challenge for three MA students. Unintentional plagiarism seemed to have been the main concern: students expressed doubts if they were following conventions when referring to sources. As a result, the process was perceived to have been very difficult, also because they were aware that “the teacher can find where the plagiarism is, because she knows how much I know, and it doesn’t seem honest to me now, before it did, but I wouldn’t feel proud if I had plagiarism” (Mrika: I2). A closer look at Mrika’s interview reveals that in her previous practices using information without acknowledging sources went undetected and unpenalised. However, at the time of reporting, not acknowledging sources was perceived to be a dishonest practice, which also would lead to punishment. In other words, she no longer considers it a normal behavior. Nevertheless, the increased awareness on the effects of plagiarism has made writing process more difficult, as suggested by interview extract below:

Mimoza (I2): I always thought that maybe what I am saying could have been said by someone else, and the teacher might think that I have taken it.... I do, I do fear that a lot. And that seems to have made writing the essay more difficult to me.

Another dilemma that characterized fear of plagiarism was to define what constitutes common knowledge as illustrated below:

Malesore (I2): I thought a lot about this. There were some sentences that they looked very similar and I was thinking to myself if this is perhaps plagiarism. But then I would say that these are known facts, and if I write them it is not that I am discovering something new, simply I am writing these again but in my own way. I thought a lot about plagiarism. I was in dilemma if this was it.

It should be pointed out that fear of committing plagiarism was reported only during Interview 2, and in relation to Assignment 3, i.e., their first read-to-write essay. One could argue that it was understandable for these students to have felt confused and afraid; it was their first task in which they were required to acknowledge sources following certain conventions. The fact that they did not report the same fears later, suggests that they began to learn the ‘game rules’ and/or they proceeded into acquiring new games (Casanave, 2002).

Struggling Achievers

Fear of plagiarism was reported as an issue only by two SA students. In reflecting on her experience with referencing, Servete came to realize that not knowing the conventions of quoting and paraphrasing led her to failure in Assignment 3. She thought she was writing according to conventions i.e., “I wrote it as a paraphrase, but in fact it came out to be plagiarism, and you told me that the way I thought I did paraphrase was in fact plagiarism, because I hadn’t used quotation marks” (I4).

Sazana on the other hand was struggling to distinguish what constitutes common knowledge. In her case common knowledge referred to the background of the university, for which the student had prior knowledge in her experience as a learner in that institution. The dilemma was whether to refer to the information provided on the website or use her own experience, as illustrated below:

Sazana (I2) ... all the things that were mentioned there about students, their motivation, I had in mind even before I read about them and I feared that might be plagiarism, because I would say my opinions were the same as the information provided there, but I still wrote it.

In responding to researcher's further enquiry, Sazana reported to have used her own opinion, because her point was to show that motivation is a key determinant in ensuring success in learning, for which she did not need any reference.

It should also be pointed out that in both cases, students exhibited uncertainties, which later were not reported as such, suggesting that they too were getting more skilled in playing the academic writing game.

5.3.3. Differences between groups

The interviews with students suggest that students displayed similar dilemmas across both groups i.e., both MA and SA students struggled to define what constitutes common knowledge and both of them were afraid of committing plagiarism unintentionally. As a result, one can argue that these students lacked the confidence and skills needed to define what constitutes plagiarism. This could be attributed to their inexperience with referencing in the past, and/or lack of institutional emphasize on plagiarism as a serious academic integrity issue prior to attending EAP courses. In other words, the applied practice of ‘textual borrowing’ in written assignment and the encouraged practices of knowledge reproduction in exams could be regarded as contributing factors in the confusion. It should also be acknowledged that for all students, the EAP 1 course was the first experience in which they were learning how to prevent occurrence of plagiarism in their writing, hence the tensions.

However, if this was the first experience for everyone, one could wonder why no one from the HA students reported any plagiarism-related concerns. A possible explanation could be that defining what constitutes plagiarism and common knowledge might not be such an intellectually challenging task for HA students as it is for their lower performing counterparts, though this does not imply that HA students did not face challenges when referring to sources, as pointed out in section 5.3.2. Moreover, as literature suggests (Bandura 1986), HA students have a high sense of self-efficacy and as a result they know how to overcome challenges and how much efforts they should place on tasks. Perhaps previous results have given them confidence that they will not fail. Nevertheless, HA students recognize that efforts and guidance are needed to acquire these skills as suggested by Herolinda in Letter 1 addressed to future students:

Herolinda (L1) This is the only subject, so far, that will teach you how to be original, or if you wish to refer to someone else's ideas and work, how to avoid plagiarism. You may think that you can learn all of these things by yourself, but trust me, you can't, I have already tried.

Hesa too addresses the "theme of plagiarism" in her letter in which she explains to students why she was "impressed" with the concept because:

Hesa (L1) ...You will understand the importance of being original, thus having your opinion and not copy others.

In both cases, as it can be argued, the concept of being "original" refers to textual ownership, where writing without "textual borrowing" is the new norm. Perhaps HA students are aware that academic conventions of writing in English require change of textual practices, hence their reference to "originality" in writing. In looking at change over the time of study, as suggested above, students saw plagiarism as a challenge only at the mid-point in their development but not at the end of it. This suggests that through practice they acquired the basic concepts and some knowledge how to implement them in writing.

5.3.4. Managing research

Three HA and one MA student/s reported challenges related to locating references. This, however was not reported as an issue for SA students.

High Achievers

The main concern for three HA students in terms of managing research was finding references. They were worried that they might not be able to find enough references, they were worried if the references would be credible or whether the references are primary resources. In the next interview excerpt, the student explains some of the dilemmas that were common for others too:

Herolinda: (I1): I worry I won't be able to find enough references, or if I find them in internet, in internet you can find everything, you do and you think that it is very good, in the end you realise that it didn't have to do...

Accessing information through the internet, according to Herolinda might not be the best way to find relevant materials. She did report to have visited university library, however, she could not find any relevant source as most books according to her were literary books, poetry and so on.

Middle Achievers

In terms of challenges with finding literature, only one person reported to have encountered a challenge. Mrika, reported to have encountered a challenge in finding materials related to the topics she and her group were thinking to do a research as part of Assignment 4.

Mrika (I3): Yes. In the beginning we had several topics, but I don't know, we had problems to find information about them

Between group differences

In trying to explain why finding sources was a challenge for three HA students, a plausible explanation may be that they were more determined to find academic reading materials that were current and reliable, i.e. they sought more up-to-date and challenging reading materials. At the same time, they were aware of the university's limitations in terms of providing students with access to literature, hence their concern about being incapable of finding adequate resources for their writing assignments. The fact that SA and most MA did not perceive this as a problem, could be attributed to their self-efficacy beliefs, which guide their decisions about what to do and how much efforts they should put on a particular task. In other words, they seemed comfortable in working with whatever is handier, rather than worry if the materials are current and/or reliable, hence internet search was sufficient for their purpose.

5.3.5. Rhetorical skills

In terms of rhetorical skills, the main reported challenge between subgroups was structuring an essay according to English writing conventions. It should be pointed out that whilst three HA and four MA students encountered some challenges related to essay structure, this was not an issue for any SA student.

High Achievers

Three HA students (Hesa, Hana and Hekuran) found it difficult to structure the 2000 words essay. The shift from 400-500 words essay, for which they had guidance and support throughout the way, to writing a 2000-word essay with limited support was perceived to have been a very difficult experience. The most challenging thing for all of them was how to arrange everything in sub-sections, as illustrated below

Hekuran (I2): ...but the hardest experience was to write using sub-sections, and we had to write more.

In addition, Hana found it very difficult to structure the introduction because “we had so many elements that I didn’t know what to do” (I2). Obviously, the length of the essay and adherence to unfamiliar writing conventions played a major role in the confusion.

Middle Achievers

Four out of five MA students reported to have found some challenges in structuring essays in English. Only one person referred to some structure-related issue in terms of Assignment 1, whilst the others were more concerned with Assignment 3. For students structuring an essay that was 2000 words was very challenging as they did not know “where to start, how to do it” (I2). The following excerpts, summaries most of the worries that students of this group shared in terms of structure for Assignment 3:

Mimoza (I4): when we wrote the 2000-word essay I didn’t know how to work with the structure because these essays with less words were easier to deal with, you could manage

them because we learned its outline. When I had to deal with the 2000-word essay I had to use sub-sections, how to formulate sub-sections, how to support them, how to write the outline of the 2000-word essay and it was difficult because somehow it scares you, it is about finding 2000 words. That was challenging.

Between group differences

One could argue that thinking about rhetorical aspects of writing (such as structure) requires exhibition of higher order thinking, careful planning, continuous revision, accordingly more effort on students' side. For struggling achievers, focusing on global aspects of writing perhaps might not be a priority considering that due to the limited linguistic knowledge they need to devote more time and effort in retrieving words at the cost of planning (see Schoonen, Snellings, Stevenson, & Gelderen, 2009) or other global aspects of writing.

5.3.6. Language skills

Issues with vocabulary were reported by students in all groups. Whilst vocabulary presented a great problem for four SA students, this was less evident with HA and MA groups.

High Achievers

Hekuran was the only person from this group who faced difficulties in finding “the right expressions” (I2). He reported how while writing he had to constantly check thesaurus to help him use the “right language”. By right language he referred to academic vocabulary. He felt challenged

not to use literary devices in writing, such as metaphors, as he was accustomed to. As a strategy, for one of his assignments he “wrote one paragraph in Albanian and then I translated it, because I saw that I could find more expressions in Albanian (I2). Nevertheless, no references to vocabulary challenges were mentioned at later stages of development, suggesting that through practice, reading, guidance and over time he was evolving.

Middle Achievers

Mimoza and Malesore were the two MA students who encountered difficulties with academic vocabulary. Mimoza wanted to include them in writing “by all means” (I2), whilst Malesore explained how due to limited range of lexical constructions she had to spend a lot of time to find adequate expressions, as explained below:

Malesore (I1): When I have to write an essay for academic purposes I may spend three hours in searching for an adequate word I need for the context.

None of them mentioned academic vocabulary to have been problematic at later stages, i.e., beyond Interview 2, suggesting that they became more familiar with academic vocabulary and/or they were learning how to play the game in the given context.

Struggling Achievers

Four out of five SA students reported challenges in terms of vocabulary use. Three of them found the use of academic vocabulary in their writing to have been a very difficult experience

because they were used to “write simply, the way I do” (Saranda: I4). Finding academic expression for the 2000 words essay was also reported as challenge because they were aware of their limited linguistic abilities and they had a problem to “find which word to use” (Selvie: I4). Obviously, their previous writing experiences and limited use of academic language has contributed to the situation, as suggested by the interview extract below:

Sazana (I4): Maybe because we got used to writing simple essays, not to use academic words, that was a problem not only for me but for all, we tried to find adequate words, better words to describe an event, a story, so that it looks like an academic writing as per requirements.

On the other hand, Sihana (I3) reported how using new vocabulary affected comprehension i.e., she found out that her sentences became longer but “I don’t know how to shorten them and trying to make them better I make them worse”.

Between group differences

Vocabulary has a key role in L2 writing production (Nation, 2001). In order to get the message across, the writer should have a large repertoire of words, which is also easily accessible (Schoonen, 2009). But in producing academic texts in L2 the level of linguistic proficiency needs to be higher: students are expected to employ academic vocabulary. As students from this study showed, this is a very difficult practice. Academic word corpus is very large, and as Hinkel points out “it is not the common words that create the greatest difficulties in reading and writing, but the relatively rare words that actually represent the largest number of words used even in basic

academic texts” (2004, p. 42). Having said this, it is very likely that struggling achievers, who reported most challenges with academic vocabulary had limited linguistic resources to express their thoughts in writing. As Sihana (I4) pointed out “it seems that my vocabulary in English is not rich and for this reason I did not know with what to substitute it. For students like Sihana the lexical retrieval process is more time-consuming and attention demanding (Larios *et al.* 2006; Schoonen, 2009). The process becomes even more demanding considering the limited experience with academic vocabulary in previous experience. On the other hand, HA students who are more proficient English language learners, they did not perceive academic vocabulary to have interfered in writing, at least not at the level and frequency as reported by SA students. It is plausible to assume that having a larger repertoire of words, which was also gained through more exposure to the language (as suggested by their experiences at the arrival) will take less time to access knowledge (Schoonen, 2009).

In term of MA students, one gets the impression that the MA are in the midst of the two extremes: certain individuals might have faced more challenges with vocabulary than others. The differences within-group could be a result of differences in background, goal-attainment and so forth. In terms of comparison between groups, MA students confirmed their experiences to be less challenging compared to SA students, but not at the level of HA students.

5.3.7. Reported Development over time-Between group differences

This section will share students' views on change that occurred over the course of study. The main difference between subgroups in terms of their development are summarised under two categories: planning strategies and higher order thinking activities.

Planning strategies

The following section will describe key differences between groups in terms of planning strategies.

High achievers

In looking at the reported previous writing experiences in the questionnaire, it turns out that HA students employed some pre-writing strategies such as brainstorming, outlining or, as was the case with Hekuran, summarising ideas in English after they were initially written in Albanian. During Interview 1, only two students reported to have noticed that the process of writing an essay had changed. In their views, introducing the strategies of planning prior to writing made the process easier and more effective, as it prevented them from contradicting themselves. This is a different strategy from the one they were accustomed to, where responding to the topic by writing immediately and checking spelling and/or grammar at the end was the norm. The interview excerpt below describes the view:

Herolinda (I1): ... First, before I start writing I always use a paper where I write what I want to write about, brainstorm then I select two or three of them [ideas]. Before it was only the topic, write about it and check whether there are any spelling

mistakes or anything else. Now it is different, first I prepare what I want to write about, then write about it.

Whilst Hesa admitted her initial scepticism towards pre-writing strategies, which to her looked 'like a game', she came to realize at early stages of the EAP journey that employing pre-writing strategies helped her with writing. Hana, on the other hand, commented on the usefulness of strategies in the process of developing ideas, and recognized that some improvement had occurred in the process of her writing, as suggested below:

Hana (I2): I think they have changed, maybe not a radical improvement, but there are changes...

However, she was more enthusiastic to talk about outlining as an achievement for her because as she puts it 'outlining is what we learned but we hadn't done it before'.

By the end of the study, Hasime also reported to have learned how to develop her ideas through brainstorming. In analysing her T1 and T2 essays and discussing her writing practices in between these two essays, she reported to have not used pre-writing strategies with T1 essay but she used brainstorming as a strategy for T2 essay.

Hasime (I4): No, in the first essay I didn't do brainstorming. With time, I learned that first you need to do a kind of brainstorming of ideas in general. The first things that come to your mind, when you start writing an essay.

In the questionnaire, interestingly, both Herolinda and Hasime reported to have used brainstorming as a pre-writing strategy in their previous writing experiences. However, as discovered through the interviews, they reported to have learned and to have practiced brainstorming in EAP courses. This might be an indication that their views on what constitutes an effective use of brainstorming has changed through practice and over a course of study.

Another interesting observation relates to Hekuran who did not see any change in his writing practices as a result of pre-writing strategies. He talked about making use of brainstorming for most assignments but he did not report any change in his practices, suggesting that he was either accustomed to the employment of pre-writing strategies in his writing or he did not find them useful in the improvement of his writing skills.

Unlike Hekuran, all HA students reported to have noticed change in their writing practices as a result of pre-writing strategies, which helped them develop and organise ideas prior to writing.

Middle Achievers

MA students had a similar background experience as HA students with pre-writing strategies. Prior to starting EAP, strategies such as brainstorming, reading or organizing ideas were employed by two students, whilst the other three students did not report to act upon any strategy, unless 'thinking about the topic' can be regarded as having a mental plan. Interviews, on the other hand revealed that students were not familiar with pre-writing strategies though changes in their

writing practices as a result of planning were reported by three students as early as Interview 1. Interestingly, none of these three students were very open to the idea of planning at the onset: Mimoza, who was comfortable with her writing skills was initially sceptical to use outlining as a strategy to organise her writing. She did not like it, however, as she worked with it, she reported that her texts became more comprehensive and better structured. Other two students, Mrika and Malesore reported that once they started implementing these strategies, they found the writing process less challenging, though at the beginning they were doubtful on its effectiveness. Mrika considered it a ‘waste of time’ even though later she reported that ‘without brainstorming, I cannot function well’. Malesore on the other hand did a ‘reverse outlining’, probably to meet the teacher’s expectations. However, soon she realized that it was not a good strategy, thus she decided to follow the teacher’s advice, which she found helpful, as suggested by interview extract below:

Malesore (I1): In the beginning, when we started to write essays, I used to write whatever came to my mind, and when you [teacher] told us to first write on a piece of paper, the outline, the main points we want to write about, it seemed difficult to me, and the first time I made the mistake most students make, I wrote the essay and then I did the outline. Then, I applied your advice, and it was much easier

Interestingly, Mimoza reported to have used reverse outlining at the beginning, too. Adherence to the teacher’s requirements seems to be the only motivation why these students used outlining at the onset. It could be argued that they were comfortable with the embedded processes in their writing practices; therefore, they might have felt challenged by new practices that involved implementation of a new set of metacognitive strategies and adherence to new rules of writing.

Overall, the discovery and/or refinement of embedded pre-writing strategies through scaffolding led towards improvement in the reported writing practices of MA students, who used to write without any planning, as shown by interview excerpt below:

Merita (I4): Earlier, I didn't do brainstorming, I just provided my thoughts immediately. This would be one of the improvements, if I may call it so.

The importance of planning strategies was emphasized in an advice letter to future cohorts, in which generating content through reading, which could then help students with brainstorming was mentioned as a strategy to follow.

Malesore (L2): Also, for every assignment students have to do, firstly they have to read articles and magazines about that topic. This is very helpful to brainstorm their ideas.

As one could argue, students incorporated the taught planning strategies in their writing practices and reported improvement in their writing. Miranda, however, was an exception in this regard. Despite reporting to have employed strategies of reading and planning as content generating strategies, she did not report any improvement in her writing as a result of it. She, however, emphasized the importance of planning strategies in both letters she addressed to future cohorts, as described by the extract below.

Miranda (L1) ...after taking the instructions and the topic that is given to you then you should brainstorm your ideas and plan things. Brainstorming is a process for generating

new ideas. These ideas will be the most important key for you to have an idea how and what to write about.

Struggling Achievers

As questionnaire data reveals, unlike one person who learned about pre-writing strategies in a private English language course, other students did not report to have made use of pre-writing strategies in their writing practices prior to the EAP course, though comments such as ‘thinking’ could be regarded as mental plan. Nonetheless, after having being involved in guided activities that demonstrated how their ideas can be turned into a structured outline, from which students then wrote their first essay, a change in their practices was reported as early as interview 1. At this stage, students reported to have realized that the reason why they failed in the past was closely related to the fact that they received limited instructions on writing, and that writing tasks in their previous experiences encouraged writing in a linear way. Moreover, the writing they were involved in the past usually involved writing under time-constraints, which caused many challenges, such as inability to finish it within the given time. When asked to describe potential change in the writing practices, the student below explained how developing ideas prior to writing was not a practice she was accustomed to, though she came to realize that she needs to plan in order to organise ideas and make position on the topic clear.

Sihana (I1): I see differences now, I didn’t before. For ex., I began to write immediately, because it was a habit and I didn’t know it was wrong. I began to write and I thought my essay was the best, until someone told me that I was wrong and I shouldn’t write that way, I should think before I write, I should know how to divide ideas, because one paragraph

elaborates one idea, I should state my position, whether pro or con the topic. I used to write without thinking about it, I wanted to fill the page.

As the study unfold, students were asked to describe their writing process. They typically described the process as starting by uncovering what was required of them, followed by application of pre-writing strategies to help them develop ideas and then selecting key ideas that would guide their writing, as described by Interview 2 excerpt given below:

Saranda (I2) I first take the title, and think what is important about it, what is required from me to do, for ex., and I write everything I can say about the points, for ex, to find three points related to the essay title and have them aside so that I can remember them when I write the essay.

In the light of the above discussion, it should be pointed out that during the last interview when students were asked to read and comment on the differences they noticed in the quality of their essays written in Time 1 and 2 (T1 and T2) and practices that they employed, all SA students reported to have not employed pre-writing strategies in T1 essay, though they stated to have done so for T2. One could argue that thinking clearly in retrospective about what one did six months ago might be difficult. Nonetheless, as these students repeatedly mentioned to have learned these strategies in the EAP course, they were very straightforward in acknowledging that when they first wrote the essay they wrote as they were accustomed to, i.e., they wrote immediately without any planning, which in T2 essay was not the case, as explained below:

Selvie (I4): The first difference, in the first essay that I wrote, I began to write immediately, I didn't do brainstorm, I didn't choose the ideas to use in this essay, whereas in the last essay I began with brainstorm, I wrote the main words I was to use, and it was much easier, to give ideas based on that, faster.

Overall, for SA students, employing pre-writing strategy remained an important aspect of their writing development throughout the process. As Selvie reminded us during the last interview, writing in the past was perceived to have been more difficult because students did not employ pre-writing strategies "... I didn't use this method, and it was more difficult, I spent much time until I got an idea to write about the topic".

Differences between groups

Though at the first sight all groups share more similarities (e.g. the vast majority reported to have changed writing practices as a result of metacognitive strategies), a closer look reveals between-group differences, too. Whilst most HA and two MA students reported to have entered the EAP course with embedded pre-writing strategies, this was not the case with struggling ones. As indicated by research in FL writing, transfer of knowledge, skills and writer's linguistic repertoire is bidirectional (Manchón, 2009, p. 12.). Consequently, HA and MA students could have used the text-generation strategies employed in L1 to plan their writing in L2 (Cumming, 1989; Jones & Tetroe, 1987). According to Cummins' (1980) concept of common underlying proficiency (CUP), if the students have acquired certain strategies in L1, such as pre-writing strategies, then there would not be a need for them to reacquire those strategies in L2. Therefore, one can argue

that HA and MA students had a range of strategies at the arrival. This could also be attributed to the range of L1 writing practices they were engaged at the arrival (including essay writing), compared to SA who reported to produce more non-academic texts (notes, emails, texts). In other words, the more advanced the students were, and/or the more involved in L1 writing activities, the more strategies/resources they could draw from.

This does not mean that SA had no strategies, but as Raimes (1987) points out not all internalised strategies are effective, consequently, they might need “to be developed, refined or changed” (p. 460). Therefore, having being introduced to brainstorming as a strategy to generate text might have reduced writers’ cognitive demands and allowed them to focus on the transcribing process of writing (de Larios et al., 2016, p. 276). Whilst at the onset SA students were preoccupied in “filling the page” with text, this was no longer reported as an issue, because writing process became ‘easier’. This could suggest that planning prior to writing could have improved their writing fluency (Ellis & Fangyuan, 2004), hence the reported views that their writing practices have changed over the time of this study.

At the beginning of the EAP 1 course, the ‘writing-as-telling’ strategy (Ruan, 2005) was employed by almost all students, regardless of level. Even students who at the arrival reported to have made use of some of the pre-writing strategies, they too reported a change in their writing practices as a result of planning. It is quite likely that they “refined or changed” (Raimes, 1987, p. 460) their strategies as they were learning the conventions of academic writing in English. They also discovered new planning strategies, such as the outlining, which was viewed to be initially challenging for two MA, but very enlightening for one HA student. In other words, reshaping the

metacognitive knowledge might have been the reason why these students reported change in their writing practices.

Unlike HA and MA students, SA students reported change in writing practices through the span of all interviews. One could argue that as HA and some MA students found planning to be a less cognitively demanding task they moved to a subsequent skill (de Larios et al, 2016, p. 267), consequently, they reported on different components of writing as source of change. As de Larios et al. point out “from a cognitive perspective, (...) writers are seen as capable of integrating only the skills they can cope with at any given moment” (2016, p.276). Considering this, it is quite likely that in their development as writers, SA students were getting accustomed at dealing with metacognitive strategies throughout the course of study. In addition, in their reported views one can notice more emphasis on text-generating strategies (such as brainstorming) compared to outlining, which suggests that more difficult tasks, such as organizing ideas in a structure were the ones they needed more practice to cope with.

5.3.8. Higher order thinking activities

The following section will describe key differences between groups in terms of critical thinking and organisation of ideas.

High Achievers

All high achievers mentioned to have developed their critical thinking skills as part of EAP courses. As a result, when discussing change in terms of writing, Hana reported to look at ‘both

perspectives' (I3) of an issue, whilst Herolinda stated that 'I have become more objective and more critical'(I3). As Tsui points out "critical thinking refers to students' abilities to identify issues and assumptions, recognize important relationships, make correct inferences, evaluate evidence or authority, and deduce conclusions" (2002, p. 743). HA students perhaps were able to detect at earlier stages of their development that giving evidence of critical thinking, i.e., applying some of the abilities outlined above was expected in essay writing. Therefore, they acted upon instructions and guidance, hence they consulted literature that evaluated a matter from various perspectives, and considered those perspectives in writing, too. Interview extract below illustrates the point:

Hekuran (I2): Another thing I noticed is that I need to read different perspectives and then write from different perspectives, you can defend a point of view, and give another one as an option, which means that there are different people and different opinions, so I think it's a kind of honesty.

But development of critical thinking skills was not only reflected in writing but also in the process of learning. As early as 'Letter 1' (written at the end of winter semester), Hasime and Hesa reported to have recognized that the many abilities outlined in Tsui's definition of critical thinking were exhibited through the EAP 1 course.

Hasime (L1): EAP develops the ability to think logically and independently, to be reflective and critical, to analyse, to synthesize and to be creative.

By the time these letters were written, students had already had some practice in writing essays that also included analysis and synthesis of literature and more independent work from the

teacher. Perhaps, this experience helped students recognise that their literacy practices were being developed as the time was progressing.

At the end of the EAP 2 experience, Hesa in advising future generations stated that students will acquire how ‘to mount well-presented arguments, to solve problems and to work as a member of a group’ (Hesa: L2). Adding up these abilities to the above-mentioned list was most probably related to students’ experience of working with group members in a research project that required them to jointly investigate an issue/topic (solve a problem) and share findings in a well-constructed argument. One could also argue that students like Hesa were able to learn that argument is a “defining feature of the essay” (Elander, Harrington, Norton, Robinson, & Reddy, 2006, p. 81), hence the need to share this information with other students.

As the data suggest, all the students displayed a solid understanding of what critical thinking might entail in the context of EAP courses. They all demonstrated willingness to engage in critical thinking activities, thus adapt to a target discourse, even though some might have argued that they are not “ready” for critical thinking due to their “sociocultural and linguistic socialization” (Ramanathan & Kaplan, 1996, p. 232). Despite emphasising challenges in learning to engage with rhetorical conventions of the target discourse, these students reported that they learned how to identify multiple interpretations and how to integrate their arguments in essays. Moreover, developing critical thinking skills in order to write well-established written arguments were the set expectations from the course at the onset for both Hesa and Herolinda, therefore, one can argue that these expectations were met over time.

Moreover, three students (Hasime, Hesa, Hekuran) reported change in their writing as a result of organisation of ideas. For Hasime organisation of ideas “it’s not a problem anymore” (I3), whilst Hekuran believes that it is “much easier for you to write and express yourself” (I2) if you organise your ideas. It is possible that through planning strategies, guidance and modelling students learned how to present information in a more organised way. Consequently, “writing is easier now” and it takes you ‘less time to think” (Hasime, I3). It should be pointed out that the ability to organise one’s thoughts effectively in order to produce a text that is logical and focused requires higher-order thinking skills.

Middle Achievers

Interestingly, development of critical thinking skills as part of EAP courses was not reported by MA students. Even though there is no explicit indication as to why is this beyond the assumption that critical thinking was being developed unconsciously, a closer look at the data reveals that Mimoza and Malesore showed awareness of the importance of consulting references and building an argument when writing. Mimoza (I4) reflected how her writing at the beginning of EAP was “more biased” ..., “it was not academic writing”, whereas now she knows how to write essays. Being biased at the onset might suggest that the student views herself as being more objective at the end of the course. In addition, as she pointed at earlier stages, she realized that she cannot just provide an opinion without factual evidence, rather she needs to “stand behind what I wrote” ... “and not write what first comes to your mind” (Mimoza, I3). Malesore on the other hand, described the importance of building an argument through supporting evidence because “if I only talk and talk and talk, someone might not be interested if there are no arguments” (I3), suggesting

that the reader might not be convinced if her position is not based on facts. In the light of the given information, one could argue that despite the limited view on critical thinking both students exhibited an understanding of the process of argumentation in writing.

Moreover, when asked to describe what has changed in terms of writing skills over time, Mimoza and Mrika reported that being able to organise their thoughts helped them write better essays. It should be pointed out that both of them reported change during Interview 2, suggesting that change was a result of modelling, practice and guidance. The following interview extracts illustrates student's perceptions on development.

Mrika (I2): then I have progressed in the organization, before I would write something and then if an idea related to the first paragraph came to my mind while writing, I would put it in the end, because the mistake is that we don't think before we write, and now that we have learned to do brainstorming and the outline, now it's easier to organise them.

At the time of reporting, these students had already produced three essays; therefore, it is understandable that practice may have contributed in the reported confidence.

Struggling Achievers

In terms of critical thinking, two out of five students reported to have developed these skills as part of EAP courses. In a first advice letter (L1) to future cohorts at the end of the EAP 1, Sihana

states that... 'you will learn how to think critically, and to have your own opinion, which you may have missed during first year'. Sihana makes a reference to previous experiences, suggesting that unlike the first year where students were not encouraged to express their opinion, they would be able to do it in EAP courses. Moreover, developing an opinion and learning how to support that opinion in writing seems to be an accomplishment for Saranda, too. These statements suggest that unlike HA students who seem to refer to higher-order thinking skills such as analysis and evaluation to point the development of critical thinking skills, SA students are more refrained from making those claims. In referring to their educational backgrounds, where memorization and recall of information has been the predominant approach to learning, learning how to develop and support that opinion represents movement beyond students' zone of proximal development (ZPD), hence a change in their development. Furthermore, Saranda believes that the EAP course contributed to her growth as a student as suggested by the following excerpt:

Saranda (I1): I would say that English for Academic Purposes helped me a lot this year to be a student, how to say how to think in a critical way or EAP helped me a lot with the thinking process. Maybe maturity has helped too or other things too, but EAP is part of this, the situation I am in now and the situation I used to be in.

In terms of the organisation of ideas, no one reported to have noticed a change in their writing as a result of it, unlike the other two groups.

Differences between subgroups

Unlike HA students who report to exhibit all higher-order thinking skills in their writing and learning process, the two MA students were not aware that they were using some higher-order thinking in writing, whilst the two SA displayed the first signs of application of higher-order thinking in the learning process. It is plausible to suggest that it is more likely for HA students to gain deeper levels of understanding through writing compared to other groups, particularly SA, since they report to use all higher-order thinking skills. Consequently, they think more critically about issues they write and organise their thoughts accordingly, a practice that SA students are beginning to get acquainted with. As regards the impact organisation of thoughts has on writing, unlike SA students who did not report any benefit from it, HA and MA students displayed a great level of enthusiasm and confidence suggesting that writing development occurred as a result of it. A plausible explanation why these students found this activity useful could be related to findings in literature suggesting that more skilled writers make more planning of organisation (Sasaki, 2000) and they do more planning in general (Hirose & Sasaki, 1994; Raimes, 1987). Therefore, having been taught how to organise one's thoughts prior to writing might have helped these students make the necessary changes to succeed in writing in English.

Their previous writing experiences in L1 could have had a role in it, too: four out of five students who reported to have benefited from planning of organisation were active writers in L1. In comparison to their less skilled counterparts, they perhaps were more skilled at transferring and adapting strategies they employ in L1 to the L2 context.

5.4. Feedback

This section will report on differences between sub-groups in terms of feedback received from the teacher, peers and other literacy brokers. As indicated in Chapter 4 there are no major differences between groups regarding previous feedback experiences and those in other academic courses during Year 2.

5.4.1. Teacher feedback

High Achievers

Teacher feedback was perceived to have been a very useful practice in helping students improve writing skills. In reflecting about the usefulness of teacher feedback in writing development throughout the entire academic year Hesa (I4) said: “the professor’s feedback helped us a lot. I believe it was the greatest help”. She was even surprised “how patient the teacher is to work with every detail” (I3). Moreover, teacher feedback was not perceived useful only in improving written drafts: students, such as Hana reported to have implemented teacher’s advice and suggestions in the subsequent essays too. In general, all students displayed a positive attitude towards teacher feedback. It is perhaps understandable that in contexts in which a teacher is still viewed as the main source of knowledge, students will adhere to their suggestions and accept them instantly, hence the positive attitude toward teacher feedback. Even peer feedback comments are given more credibility if they are provided on the aspects of writing pointed out by teacher. The interview extract below illustrates the point:

Herolinda (I): ...for ex. if someone of the peers only told us 'you should change this', we might have taken it into consideration but not as much as when at the same time both the teacher and a peer that give you feedback focus on the same point.

However, in terms of their reaction to teacher feedback, not all students reacted the same, particularly at the onset. Whilst Herolinda felt 'nice' that the teacher did not start with criticism but with things she did right, and Hasime felt 'excited and happy' with teacher's comments and approved her suggestions, Hana and Hekuran were rather disappointed, whereas Hesa was surprised. The three of them were accustomed to receive praise for their writing in the past, conversely, they felt overwhelmed by teacher suggestions. As student below explains:

Hana (I1): I am very open in this aspect, I don't want to boast, but I am not used to getting negative comments from teachers, and this in a way made me gain self-confidence, not an exaggerated one to affect me, but when I saw that I had mistakes, I felt bad, it's normal, but I said I deserved it and I accused myself for being busy with so many things at the same time.

The student shows how appraisal on her writing in the past increased her self-confidence as a writer. Consequently, it affected her reaction towards EAP teacher feedback. Moreover, Hekuran disapproved teacher's comments at the beginning of feedback because he sensed that the given comment aimed at softening criticism (Hyland & Hyland, 2001), as suggested by example below:

Hekuran (I1): When I received first feedback, the first comment was that's a good start so I was very angry with myself in the beginning.

R: Why?

Hekuran: Because that's a good start is like, for ex., I was told that's a good start when I was in the fifth grade, you know, that's a good start in English and it seemed to me that I was writing from the beginning, but I think it was realistic because I hadn't written before, and it was a moment of reflection, and I was angry when others told me that they got "well done" and a smile and I kept asking myself "why not me", but it showed me the reality.

It should be pointed out that both of them were active writers in L1. They described themselves as talented writers of poetry, but also quite experienced in other genres such as short stories/essays that were mostly performed in front of an audience. However, both of them showed disappointment when they received the first feedback, but later, after reflecting upon it, they accepted it and made changes in their writing. Similarly, Hesa's essays in Albanian language were used as examples of good writing, therefore, she reports to have felt surprised by the numerous teacher suggestions. Despite initial disappointment, all of them reported to have considered teacher feedback and to have understood the importance of 'honesty' when providing it. Overall, teacher feedback was perceived to have been a very useful practice throughout the study.

Middle Achievers

Teacher feedback was perceived to have been a very useful practice for four MA students because it helped them improve their writing. The usefulness of teacher feedback was also attributed to its thoroughness as suggested by interview extract below.

Malesore (I4): When you gave us feedback, it was half a page, it covered mistakes, be it a word, a comma, a full-stop, in introduction, in conclusion, in everything, and when I improved them, the essay seemed very good, it might be the conviction that when the teacher tells you to correct something, if you do the way the teacher told you then everything is all right.

As pointed by the extract above, one could argue that students in the given context were more likely to accept teacher comments and suggestions, because she was viewed as an expert. As Mimoza (I2) pointed out: “teacher feedback is more professional”. In addition, it was anticipated that the teacher will “always find something to suggest, no matter how perfect we write, because she knows these things, they are part of her profession, her course. (Miranda: I2). Despite having positive attitudes towards peer feedback, they still viewed teacher feedback to be more useful, as the student below explains:

Miranda (I3) ... Peer feedback is good, but what makes our work much better is the teacher’s feedback and we pay more importance to teacher’s feedback when we work on the final part.

In terms of reaction to teacher feedback at the onset, four students reported to have been very open to teacher comments and suggestions. They felt ‘good’, ‘nice’ and ‘motivated’. They liked the positive comments, “because I didn’t think I would get positive feedback, and when I saw it, it made me feel very nice, it motivated me, and it plays a huge role in future writing, and it gives you self-confidence” (Miranda: I1). The student acknowledges the importance of ‘social persuasion’ (Bandura, 1986) in shaping her self-efficacy beliefs.

Only Malesore reported to have felt bit anxious when she received the first feedback. She appreciated the positive comments, but due to numerous teacher suggestions she felt she had to begin completely afresh. Overall, all MA students had a positive and beneficial experience with teacher feedback throughout the study.

Struggling Achievers

Struggling Achievers reported to have had a very positive experience with teacher feedback. Receiving feedback from the teacher was perceived to be a “good experience” (Sazana: I4) because it helped students “realise where I am” (Saranda: I1). Consequently, they were very keen in receiving feedback in order to make changes in their writing, as suggested by comments below:

Servete (I2): I looked forward to the teacher’s feedback to see my mistakes...

Selvie (I2): I couldn’t wait to receive the feedback from the teacher, in order to see what I need to improve and it helped me a lot and I corrected from first to the second essay, the mistakes that I received from feedback.

In terms of reaction to teacher feedback at the onset, SA students were very open and appreciative of teacher's approach to feedback, as suggested below:

Sihana (I1): I felt fine due to the fact that never before a teacher was interested in taking your writing and show you your mistakes. I felt nice when I received feedback and I felt nice when I submitted it, because you [teacher] were willing to read all those essays we submitted and write in the best way possible to everyone. You started with "you began well Sihana" which means you were not critical, but you looked at positive things and the negative ones, that is, your attitude was very good and that's why I felt nice.

In considering their limited experiences with feedback and writing in the past, and as interview data above suggest, SA students were not accustomed to so much attention from the teacher, let alone receive positive comments on their writing. It is plausible, therefore to suggest that teacher feedback has had a crucial role in helping SA students build their self-efficacy beliefs. As Servete (I1) explained, after submitting her first essay she felt 'very bad' because she was convinced that she does not know how to write and that the teacher most likely would not like her essay. In other words, the low perception of efficacy and acceptance that failure is inevitable (Bandura, 1986), created a stressful condition for her. However, when she received feedback with positive comments "it motivated me, and I thought I wasn't bad at all.... One can argue that 'social persuasion' (Bandura, 1986), i.e., feedback received from the teacher could have influenced the increased self-efficacy and motivation (Goldstein, 2004) of struggling achievers.

Between group

In terms of differences between groups, there does not seem to be any noticeable difference. All students benefited from it and were very appreciative of the teacher's approach to feedback. However, HA students differed from other two groups in terms of their reaction to teacher feedback at the onset. The three students who felt annoyed with teacher feedback on their first assignment were good writers in L1; consequently, they expected to attain same status in EAP, therefore praise and not criticism was expected from teacher feedback. As a result, teacher's criticism on the task was perceived to be suggestive of students' capabilities. Nevertheless, despite the engendered temporary loss of confidence at the onset, as Bandura (1986) and Pajares and Valiante (2006) suggest, students with high sense of self-efficacy recover quickly from setbacks and alter their faulty strategies. Accordingly, HA students' reflection on teacher feedback perhaps helped them revise their beliefs about their capabilities as writers and determine how much effort to put in acquiring academic writing conventions. The encountered difficulties with teacher feedback at the onset, therefore, were not reported as such at later stages, suggesting that students attributed their unsatisfactory performance at the onset to their capabilities.

5.4.2. Peer feedback

This section will report on peer feedback experiences: it will start with high achievers, continue with middle achievers and conclude with struggling achievers prior to making a comparison between groups.

High achievers

At the beginning of the course, four out of five students reported to have found peer feedback useless. Receiving praise instead of constructive feedback was the main source of criticism towards peer feedback. Students reported that withholding criticism was done in order to maintain harmony, that is, not hurt each other's feelings, as indicated by extract below:

Herolinda (I1): I know they try not to hurt my feelings but I'd rather prefer to be told what my mistakes are ...

Students were eager to get "comments, or suggestions about what I could write, or add, or remove, in order to improve my essay" (Hesa: I1). Instead, they received comments such as 'good', 'very good', 'this sentence is very good', and consequently peer feedback was perceived to be 'lame'. Moreover, students' distrust in peer feedback can be attributed to the held beliefs that teacher is the expert (see section 5.4.1.), whilst "peers don't have much professionalism to see what's wrong with the essay" (Hekuran: I1). This negative attitude towards peer feedback is understandable in looking at their previous peer feedback experiences: prior to EAP none of the students was engaged in written peer feedback practices. Even the concept of feedback was not known to them prior to EAP 1 as Hesa (I1) pointed out "I saw it as something new, and before I might have not understood the word feedback well...". This confirms the observations made during piloting, where it became evident that students struggled to understand the concept of feedback.

Nevertheless, as students were engaged in peer feedback practices in the EAP 1 course, some changes in their attitudes began to occur. They are noticeable from reports in Interview 2, i.e. after students had completed three assignments. The extract below suggest that peer feedback practices helped students view each other as readers, thus adjust their writing accordingly to meet reader's expectations.

Herolinda (I2): I still think that students do not express their opinions, they are still reserved, but in general I think that peer feedback helped us, not only me, but most of us, because we realised how the essay develops not only from our perspective but from the other people's perspective as well...

Moreover, students began to open up towards peer suggestions, though they were reserved in terms of whose comments to consider. When asked to consider if peer feedback was useful, Hasime stated that "Yes, it was useful. It depends also who gave it...". In other words, she considered feedback, but the criteria she chose to select whose feedback to consider was based on "his/her abilities in English language".

The main shift in change of attitude towards peer feedback was reported during interview 3, when students were working on Assignment 4, that involved peer feedback practices on weekly basis. Students reported change in their views towards peer feedback but also in their practices, i.e. they reported more example of incorporating peer feedback suggestions in their writing. Peer feedback at this stage was being viewed as more professional and more critical, as indicated by extracts below:

Hekuran (I3): I received peer feedback for abstract and results. Peer feedback for abstract was from Mrika and it was a real feedback, I would say almost professional...

Hesa (I3): ... lately they [peers] have become more critical maybe they have already learned that they need to find mistakes. I am more critical too and try more to give suggestions and to correct mistakes

Another reported change, as illustrated by Hesa's example above, relates to the developed belief that they too became better at giving constructive peer feedback. In reflecting at their journey with peer feedback practices in EAP, students realized that at the beginning they did not "pay much attention in general, and now I focus deeper" (Hasime: I4). By the end they all reported that "we know how to give feedback" (Hana: I4).

The only person who was open to peer feedback from the onset was Hana. She attributed her openness towards peer feedback to her experience of working with a media agency; she was accustomed at receiving feedback from supervisors and colleagues on regular basis, therefore, she saw peer feedback as a useful practice from the very beginning.

Looking closely at students' discourse during the four interviews, one can notice change in the way they report about the experience throughout the EAP journey. Peer feedback during I1 referred to as "*not very helpful*", "*useless*", "*I was stubborn [to incorporate suggestions]*", then it developed into "*it is more helpful*" (I2), "*things have changed for better*", "*peer feedback helped me very much*", "*we now accept criticism more*" (I3), and concluded with "*I feel responsible to tell*

someone what he is doing wrong', I am thankful for finding that mistake', 'we are ready to give feedback', 'I do not hold grudges' (I4).

Overall, all HA students benefited from peer feedback practices. As they reported, despite the rough start, they changed their views on peer feedback practices and they too developed better skills at giving feedback.

Middle Achievers

Four out of five students found peer feedback useful from the initial stage. They were willing to accept suggestions and make improvements in their writing, even though suggestions at the beginning were reported to have mostly focused on superficial aspects of writing such as sentence level concerns. MA students had a more positive attitude towards peer feedback. The following extract describes the attitude

Merita (I1): It was really good, we are the same age, have almost the same knowledge and we try to help each other, for ex., if I knew something I tried to share with my peer or vice versa. It was very good and we weren't afraid.

However, despite openness to incorporate changes in their writing, MA students reported that criticism was not well accepted at the beginning, as it was the case with the praise, because students would take it personally.

Mimoza (I1): When I received the first feedback from my colleague who was next to me, in the beginning, his feedback seemed harsh and I said maybe because when I wrote feedback to him I wrote a long one and now I thought he wanted revenge since I wrote a long feedback. He probably intentionally wanted to be mean to me but when I began applying his suggestions I realised he had been reasonable. I found him harsh in the beginning, when I wrote the next essay it had an impact on me

With time, students noticed that praise was no longer considered a useful feedback, rather specific suggestions were. Providing positive feedback was a characteristic of the EAP 1 course but not of EAP 2, as suggested by Merita's comments:

Merita (I4): ... [in EAP 1] most of peers tried to give me positive feedback, because we hesitated to criticize or to give a bad comment, whereas in EAP 2 we were very direct when expressing our opinions. We realised that we were not insulting anyone when we criticized.

Withholding criticism in EAP 1 was reported to have been done in order to protect the feelings of peers. Consequently, students hesitated to give honest feedback even though they acknowledged its importance in improving writing skills.

Mrika (I1): I don't know, sometimes I hesitate, because there are a lot of people who get hurt, and I sometimes hesitate that's why many times I say, it's OK. Actually, it's not OK, it's bad, but what to do, one needs to improve, but I don't know, I hesitate. So, I tell them indirectly but it's good to be honest...

The only person who resisted peer feedback at the beginning was Malesore. She complained to have not understood peer comments, hence she did not know what to do with it. She considered that peers did not possess any skill/knowledge she did not have because “the colleagues were at the same level as I was and they did not know how to give me feedback (I2).

However, Interview 3 reveals that Malesore began to change her views on peer feedback: she refers to the peer feedback experience as “I think it has improved since the last semester”. At the same stage, others report to view peer feedback as “it is beneficial”, “very effective if given sincerely”, “it seems very normal... we don’t mind it”, “it helped us”. These comments suggest that students felt comfortable with their peer feedback practices.

By the end, when reflecting on the entire journey, students commented how the quality of peer feedback improved, including their own skills of giving peer feedback. While in EAP 1 “I didn’t know what to write on feedback”, in EAP 2 “I felt freer to give feedback” ... in this semester I wrote more about what corrections to make (Malesore: I4). They also noticed that “all students have progressed [in giving peer feedback], they began ‘to give more serious feedback’, ‘more details came up, and more suggestions’.

Also, in examining the language through which they expressed their views on peer feedback practices, one could notice how peer feedback practices became a ‘normal’ practice for these students. The following pattern was similar for most students in this group. During I1 peer feedback experience was characterized by expression such as: “*I liked it*”, “*it helped me*”, “*It was*

really good, *I didn't get hurt*, and continued with *I was grateful for the comment*, *we didn't have any hard feelings*, *It went really well*, *it helps you, but always if it's honest*, *it was very good*. At a later stage, peer feedback was perceived as: *it seems normal*, *I consider it valuable, necessary*, *we don't mind it*, and lastly *it became natural to us*.

Overall, all MA students had a beneficial experience with peer feedback. They reported to have developed their skills in providing constructive peer feedback but also, they claim to have changed their writing practices as a result of peer feedback.

Struggling Achievers

All SA students reported to have not been open to peer feedback at the onset: three of them felt uncomfortable to share their writing, afraid that they will be judged - as suggested by interview extract below, and/or because they did not find it useful.

Servete (I4): In the beginning, I used to think it was not good to give my essay to someone because they would say I have many mistakes and I didn't write well, I hesitated, but when I submitted the first essay and received the feedback, I was angry a bit, because I thought my essay was not that bad to have all those comments. In the beginning, I didn't receive it well, but when I reread the essay and looked at the mistakes he/she wrote, I realised that if I corrected those mistakes the essay would be better, and then I got used to the method

Even when they received peer feedback, many of them did not trust it because as Sazana stated (I1) "we didn't know how to give feedback, and I didn't trust the peer feedback much.

Sihana (I1) did not take any action because of fear that peer feedback may be wrong and as a result she would make her text 'worse'. In addition, she was afraid that peers might comment on the "way I wrote, not the content of the essay". Moreover, they encountered difficulties in understanding comments because "... they didn't mention the mistakes, specifically, and it wasn't very clear for them, where to correct" (Selvie: I2).

Perhaps this is the reason why more than half of them reported to have looked forward to teacher feedback because she was seen as "qualified to evaluate the essay" (Sihana: I3). Despite resistance, over half of students reported to have made some changes in their writing as a result of peer feedback. This became more evident during I2: students began to notice change in peer feedback practices i.e., they commented how peers started to give more concrete suggestions, even though not all were perceived to have taken it seriously. It should also be pointed out that being open to peer feedback is the advice Saranda gives to future students in Letter 1, as illustrated below:

Saranda (L1): do not hesitate to give your peers to check your paper because this is for your own benefit, and when you go home, do it again

A more visible change in peer feedback practices is reported in Interview 3. Students seem to be more comfortable: at this stage of their development, students viewed peer feedback as 'very natural now', a 'habit'. Servete, for example commented how in the past she hesitated to ask for feedback, something she does it freely now, and as a result she feels 'a relief'.

By the end, all students reported to have changed their attitudes towards peer feedback, because feedback became more constructive, as illustrated by extract below:

Sihana (I4): ... [peer feedback] it has changed because everyone looks at it as a way to help each other or in a way particularly in EAP 2 we had more help and not in that way to receive [feedback] that says bad. It could tell you good, here you need to improve.

In discussing change, two students reported to have developed their skills in providing constructive feedback. In reflecting on her experience with peer feedback, Sazana reported how she was not able to give or receive peer feedback during EAP 1. In her opinion 'we were amateurs'... but I believe we have become better in receiving and giving feedback. Sihana on the other hands, reported how reading more attentively and looking for ways to help someone improve writing became the norm compared to the beginning when she provided a very generalized feedback.

In looking closely at the way students talk about peer feedback practices, the following pattern was characteristic for most SA students. Initially, peer feedback practices were characterized by expressions such as: *'I didn't appreciate it'*; 'I hesitate to give my essay to someone', *'it did not help me'*, *'we wouldn't trust it'* (I1), then by *'if it were good, it would help'*, *'it wasn't very clear'*, *'it is much better'* (I2). Later they referred to it as: *'it's a big help'*, *'we know how to correct it'*, *'it is very helpful'*, *'very natural'* (I3), whereas at the end they talked about it as *'[it] helps me improve'*, *'I am more relaxed'*, *'I accept criticism'* (I4), suggesting change in their views on peer feedback practices.

Overall, peer feedback practices were perceived to be very beneficial for SA students, despite resistance at the onset.

Between group

The main difference between groups regards their attitudes at the onset. Both HA and SA students expressed a more negative attitude towards peer feedback, though for two different reasons. While the former got annoyed by appraisal and lack of constructive feedback, the latter felt uncomfortable to share writing with peers, afraid that they will be judged. It could be argued that HA students due to high self-efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 1997) were motivated to succeed in writing and in considering that they are perceived to be more strategic in achieving their goals and perform successfully (Locke & Latham, 1990; Zimmerman & Martinez-Pons, 1992), they might have had expectations from peers to provide them with constructive feedback that they could act upon to improve text. It is also possible, as suggested by research (Hu, 2005; Tsui & Ng, 2000; Yu & Lee, 2016) that they doubted peer feedback since in the given context the teacher is still viewed as the key authority, as the source of knowledge i.e., the expert. Even though the same holds for other two groups, in the case of SA students, the low perception of efficacy might have engendered an uncomfortable situation for students: the limited experience with writing in L1 and poor L2 writing performance during Year 1, made them conscious that their current writing performance was affected by their previous experience, hence, the fear of being judged by others. As Bandura points out (1997) students with lower efficacy beliefs will try to avoid engagement in a task, will show signs of passivity and so forth. Saranda, was the person who resisted peer feedback the most and together with Sazana they insisted that they needed feedback from the teacher, ‘the

professional'. Sazana at the onset believed that peers 'hated' her and that is why they were showing her the mistakes in writing, whereas Saranda was concerned that peers 'might judge me for not having knowledge'. Interestingly, both these students had failed Year 1, suggesting that their previous academic achievement had shaped their negative beliefs. On that note, one could also argue that MA students who had more satisfactory academic achievements in the past, were less resistant to engage in tasks with peers compared to SA students, and less demanding in terms of "achieving higher goals in learning" and in 'expending more effort in their learning" (Sewell & George, 2000, p. 60) compared to HA students.

Nevertheless, through practice, modeling from the teacher and with time, all students embraced peer feedback experiences and reported to have benefited from it.

5.4.3. Third Party (Seeking for Literacy Brokers)

As pointed out, support from literacy brokers such as peers and the teacher were part of both EAP courses. However, peer feedback practices were not implemented in class for Assignment 3, though it was encouraged to be done outside class, whilst teacher feedback was provided twice as a joint class activity. This section will report on students' experiences with literacy brokers outside classroom.

High Achievers

When participants of this study were asked if they sought help from anyone with their assignment, four out of five HA students reported that they did. Literacy brokers included family members (2), peer (1) and an acquaintance (1), who happened to be an American.

In two cases participants shared their assignment with their brokers in order to get confirmation on the overall quality of text. In other words, they wanted to find out whether the essay meets the main criteria and/or is being liked by the reader. In addition, one person, asked for support on language related issues from a native speaker, which later extended to a discussion on meaning. The fourth student discussed meaning of her essay with her cousin, as illustrated by interview extract below:

R: This cousin of yours, does she know English?

Hesa (I2): Yes, she does, but not at the high level, but I mainly consulted her, about the meaning, sometimes I had to translate it for her, and I asked whether it made sense, or whether it relates.

Interesting to mention is Hekuran's experience with his literacy broker, the native speaker of English. Even though he benefited from discussing his essay with the native speaker, nevertheless, he expressed doubts if this practice was fair in relation to other peers, i.e., he was having doubts if he had cheated by consulting a native speaker considering that the others did not have this opportunity. The following excerpt illustrates this:

R: In what aspect, cheating?

Hekuran (I2): That an American is giving me feedback, for ex., Lira doesn't have an American to get feedback from, this is the aspect I meant. But, the advice and the encouragement he gave me were helpful and I was not cheating but just asking for an opinion from an experienced person.

The perception that collaboration with a literacy broker might interfere with student's existing knowledge and skills might have led Hekuran fear that he had committed a dishonest act. Likewise, Hana, who did not ask for help from others, pointed out that one of the reasons why she did not ask for help was related to her belief that if she did, she would not be assessed for what she knows, but for the help she received.

Hana (I2): ...it's better that I got evaluated for what I did on my own, that's why I might have not tried to find someone to read it, I got evaluated for what I did.

Interestingly, almost all HA students turned to people outside classroom for help. However, as interview data suggest, not all students benefited the same from it.

Middle Achievers

Only one person from this group made use of literacy brokers outside classroom. Mimoza chose to share her writing with students from other fields, because she needed to find out if her writing will be understood by a reader who was not familiar with course requirements. Nonetheless, only one of the brokers resulted to have given her the required support, as the other one just complimented her writing. She also sought help from peers but despite reporting

willingness on their side to give her advice or update her on their writing, no one shared work with her. Consequently, she did not make any changes in her writing.

Struggling achievers

A struggling achiever also sought help from a non-academic literacy broker; she consulted an older relative who had background knowledge on the context the student was writing the paper about, which resulted to have helped her a lot, as suggested by the extract below:

R: Do you think it helped?

Sazana (I2): Yes, because she helped me to write about the background of the University of Prishtina, ... and she gave me some ideas from her own experience.

It should be pointed out that Servete used her roommate as a literacy broker for the first two assignments, for which she did not report any change in writing, only a confirmation that the assignment was perceived to be good.

Between Group

As indicated by the table below, six out of fifteen students turned to literacy brokers (Lillis & Curry, 2006) for help. Except Servete, all students turned for help regarding Assignment 3.

Table 5.1. *Literacy brokers*

Group	Student name	Non-academic	Academic
HA	Herolinda		✓
	Hasime	✓	
	Hesa	✓	
	Hana		
	Hekuran	✓	
MA	Mimoza	✓	✓
	Merita		
	Mrika		
	Malësore		
	Miranda		
SA	Saranda		
	Sazana	✓	
	Servete	✓	
	Selvie		
	Sihana		

Non-academic: family, friends

One could argue that high achieving students are more successful than the other two groups since they draw on more resources available to them in order to overcome potential challenges and succeed. The fact that four of them turned to literacy brokers is an indicator that they are

determined to meet the requirements of the course. However, it does not seem that all of them used literacy brokers well: not getting suggestions for improvement, rather just a confirmation that the text is satisfactory might have not led in improvement of text, as it was the case with two of them. On the other hand, when a student made a good use of literacy broker, he felt he has cheated. Nevertheless, the middle-achieving student was the one who drew on a wider range of literacy brokers, both programme related and non-programme related. However, she benefited from only one of them, as it was the case with one of the SA students.

It can be argued that HA students perhaps are more determined in attaining the set goals, they are more active in the learning process (Sewell & George, 2000), but also more strategic in achieving success (Bandura, 1997). Seeking help from others could result in an improved version of a text. However, there does not seem to be a noticeable difference in terms of benefits students gained from literacy brokers compared to other groups. The fact that almost half of students reported to have sought help from literacy brokers outside EAP class could be attributed to the changing perceptions on feedback practices over time. On the other hand, if students were getting accustomed to peer feedback practices, the question one can raise is why they did not seek more help from each other? A plausible explanation may be that most students reported to have changed their attitude towards peer feedback after they have completed the EAP 1 course, i.e., after having completed Assignment 3. Perhaps students in the future should be guided how to select wisely the literacy brokers in order to maximize learning. Lastly, one could also argue that since students were required to pilot research tools, the piloters have also served as literacy brokers, and in that case, everyone made use of them.

5.5. Reading skills

This section will report on differences between sub-groups in terms of reported reading challenges. The differences relate to the effective use of reading strategies, use of sources, and comprehension. Otherwise, there does not seem to be a noticeable difference between groups in other aspects of reading.

5.5.1. Reading strategies

Making an effective use of reading strategies such as pre-reading, skimming and scanning presented a problem for some of the students. The first part of this section will cover the experiences of high achievers, then middle achievers followed by struggling achievers. Finally, it will compare differences between groups.

High Achievers

Herolinda and Hasime were the two HA students who reported challenges with the use of reading strategies. In reflecting about her experience with reading over the course of study, Hasime reported how at the beginning of the EAP 1 course she found it difficult to find answers to questions ‘within limited time’ because that required “quick thinking”. She was referring to her experience with reading test in the EAP 1 course, which in her perspective ‘penalized me the most’. By it, she referred to her failure in the test. Nevertheless, she did not perceive them to be difficult at the end of her experience with EAP courses. Failure in reading test, helped her “realize’ that she has a problem with these strategies. Probably, the lesson learned from this experience

increased her awareness on the importance of these strategies, hence her advice to future students to consider them, as illustrated below

Hasime (L1): With regards to reading, you should pay attention to reading strategies and once you do it, you will eventually become an efficient reader.

Similarly, Herolinda, reported to have encountered difficulties with effective use of reading strategies: non-linear reading approach was not something she was familiar with, as suggested by interview extract below:

Herolinda (I4): In the beginning it was difficult, because I had been used to reading a text from the beginning to the end, and even though I hadn't had enough time I had to read all of it, I hadn't been used to looking at it and stop at the most interesting thing.

This comment is consistent with other students' comments that suggest that prior to the EAP 1 course students were accustomed to the traditional linear approach to reading. It is understandable therefore, that both Herolinda and Hasime found it challenging to go through texts quickly in order to find answers to the questions they were looking for. In contrast to Hasime, Herolinda reported to have made use of these strategies beyond the reading test: when she was working on Assignment 4 she collected many reading materials from the internet, but in order to choose the most adequate ones she used the non-linear approach to reading as stated below:

Herolinda (I4) ... [I] didn't have to read it from beginning to the end, but only parts of it, which seemed related, how to say I checked a bit here or a bit there, if it is relevant, I kind of skimmed it...

Overall, as indicated by interview data above, both students reported to have developed the reading strategies over the course of study.

Middle Achievers

Mrika and Malesore also reported to have encountered challenges with reading strategies. For Mrika, the main problem was knowing where to focus and how much time to spend in each section of a reading text. Besides, recognizing what information is relevant in a text presented another struggle for her. Malesore, who reported to have heard about skimming and scanning for the first time in the EAP 1 course, found these strategies "a bit difficult" in the beginning. However, over time she came to "see that they are very important" because when she was working on Assignment 4 "it was important for us to find the main points of the article... and skimming and scanning were of a great help" (I4). In other words, despite the challenges at the onset, she reported to have made an effective use of these strategies as the study unfolded.

Struggling Achievers

All SA students reported to have encountered challenges with reading strategies: they did not use them effectively at the onset because they were not familiar with them.

Servete (I4): ... In the beginning when you told us this method, skimming scanning, in reading, I thought it wasn't possible to know what is required and what it is about when you look at it without reading and I wondered if that was effective.

In her letter of advice to future students Sihana (L1) wrote:

You will be learning about paraphrasing, scanning and skimming, and how to take notes also, which were unknown words to me, because I did not learn them during first year, and if not in EAP 1, where else you think, you will be learning these? I tell you: Nowhere.

These comments suggest that metacognitive strategies such as skimming and scanning were not common to students' practices, hence Servete's doubts about its effectiveness. In looking at the reported experiences with reading activities during Year 1 of studies, where a common practice was to read a text in a linear way, i.e., from beginning to the end and then answer questions, it becomes evident that classroom activities in previous English classes did not encourage the development of metacognitive reading strategies, hence the encountered challenges to implement them effectively:

Sazana (I1): I wasted so much time, because I didn't understand how to do the first five questions, and until I figured it out, time passed...

It should also be pointed out that reading aloud and responding to questions was the norm in mother tongue reading classes too. As students in this study confirmed, they were not introduced

to the reading strategies prior to EAP, therefore, it is reasonable to infer that mother tongue teachers did not instruct students how to utilize the above- mentioned reading skills.

Between group differences

Constructing meaning from text by quickly searching and selecting the required information was perceived to be a challenging task for students. Not surprisingly, utilizing reading strategies effectively at the onset posed a greater challenge for SA students compared to other two groups.

HA and MA students seemed to have a higher metacognitive awareness on reading strategies, and as is the case of Herolinda, an awareness on similarities and differences between L1 and L2 (Jiminez, Garcia & Pearson, 1996). In both groups students were able to recognize the importance of these strategies in the process of reading and they were more inclined to evaluate the effectiveness of the utilized strategies and regulate them accordingly (Maasum, Tengku & Maarof, 2012). In addition, in comparing the number of students who reported challenges with deployment of reading strategies, HA and MA students were fewer in numbers compared to SA students.

One could argue, therefore that SA students, show less metacognitive awareness on reading strategies; perhaps it is understandable Servete's doubtfulness on the effectiveness of reading strategies. Another factor contributing to the challenge could perhaps be the insufficient linguistic

competency, which as a result prevented students from quickly selecting the required information in the text.

5.5.2. Comprehension

High Achievers

Three HA students reported challenges with comprehension of reading materials. Herolinda and Hekuran found it more difficult to understand materials for Assignment 4. According to Hekuran "... compared to EAP 1, difficulty in reading was higher". Herolinda "felt lost" when she had to read materials that explained how a scientific report is structured. As a result of her struggle in comprehending materials, Herolinda turned to dictionary to construct meaning of unknown concepts. Hasime too, attributed her lack of understanding to text structure, as suggested below:

Hasime (I2): Some of the information was mostly in English and sometimes they were not that clear. I don't know, or perhaps the structure was sometimes not very good or clear and I had to wonder what one wanted to say

Overall, the reported challenges of HA students with reading comprehension were at a macro level.

Middle Achievers

Only MIMOZA reported a challenge in terms of reading comprehension within the MA group. Her comment echoes Hasime's, in terms of the reported challenges with the organization of writing, i.e., the structure. She found the structure of scientific papers challenging, as explained below:

MIMOZA (I3): I don't know. Maybe the problem is in me but it is very plain writing, it's too, too refined it's worked out and when you come across something like that you have to concentrate very much on it what it means and you have to concentrate in order to know what is going on it's like a challenge when I read academic scientific papers or reading.

Struggling Achievers

Four out of five SA students reported to have had difficulties in understanding the texts they were consulting for Assignment 3 and Assignment 4. As a result, three of them turned to translation or simply decided to turn to other sources that were easier to comprehend. The following interview extracts illustrate the experience:

Servete (I2): I began to read it and it seemed difficult, I read two–three sheets, I tried to describe what I understood from it, I couldn't, and it had many unknown words, so I had to use the dictionary all the time, so I went with the easier and more comprehensible materials.

SARANDA (I4): ... I find the text very hard to read and that takes me much time to look up the words, if there are many words to look up, I find it difficult and maybe I don't use it.

R: So, you are saying that if there is a text with a difficult vocabulary to understand, and that text might be useful, but you leave it because it takes much time?

Saranda (I4): Yes.

Between group differences

Even though there is not a visible difference between SA and HA in terms of student numbers who reported challenges with comprehension of materials, the difference, one could argue, relies on the level of difficulty. For example, whilst the main problem for SA was at a linguistic level, i.e., they encountered too many unknown words that perhaps interfered with comprehension, HA on the other hand were more challenged by the way information was being presented to them, i.e., the rhetorical structure of English texts created uncertainties.

An interesting observation is the reaction of SA towards this challenge. Just as Herolinda, they too turned to dictionary for help, however, as the number of unknown words was high, they decided to discard the challenging texts that were assigned by the teacher and work only with more level-appropriate texts. This behavior corresponds with Bandura's (1994) remarks that students with low-self efficacy believe perceive difficult tasks as threats and instead of focusing their efforts on successful performance, they give up. Even though participants in this study did not completely give up, they decided to work with something that was less time consuming and less challenging, which could have affected the quality of assignment. On the other hand, students with high level of self-efficacy do not avoid challenging tasks, rather, they approach them with the

attitude that through effort and commitment they can succeed. In this case, there was no report about avoidance of reading materials despite the challenges.

However, one could also argue that SA students employed effective reading strategies: spending time in reading a material that it is incomprehensible or it has too many unknown words and opting for alternative reading materials with more familiar words is a sensible thing to do.

5.5.3. Using references

Knowing how to incorporate other people's work in writing was reported a reading challenge for four HA, compared to two MA and one SA.

High Achievers

Four high achievers reported to have encountered difficulties in reformulating and integrating other writers' ideas. As a result, they stated that rereading of materials was essential.

Herolinda (I1): I have no problems in reading e.g. to understand what the text is about but when it comes to summary I get confused. I leave the paper in front of me and when I look at it all the time I forget that I have to turn it and write about what I remembered. Then when I write a summary I might use the same phrases I had used before or that had been used in the text and which I need to express in my own words, and I do this wrong, very often I need to concentrate more to give up my old habits.

The interview extract above illustrates the dilemmas that the student reported to have face when summarizing materials. She revealed awareness that wording needed to be different from the original, i.e., she needed to use her own language, which consequently would prevent her from plagiarizing. However, she was insecure whether she did this accordingly because she was aware that she was inexperienced. Moreover, Hasime (I4), acknowledged that she needed to “focus in a more analytical way on the ideas they [researchers] provided” before incorporating sources in her assignment, whilst Hesa (I2), tried to disguise her insecurities by writing her ideas first and then “I started to read, then write again, then read again”.

Overall, lack of knowledge and experience with appropriate use of references in writing was perceived to be the reasons behind HA students reported challenges.

Middle Achievers

Two MA students reported to have faced dilemmas related to in-text citation. The main reason for it, in their words was lack of knowledge, as suggested by extracts below:

Mimoza (I2): I described things using my own words and I didn't know whether I should use the quotation marks and give the source, or to leave it for the end, so I decided to use both options

Miranda (I2): It was something I didn't pay much attention to in the beginning. I used one reference, but when I had to use it in the essay we didn't know what to do ...

Not surprisingly, in providing future students advice on important aspects of the EAP 1 course, one of the students wrote in her letter:

Merita (L1): ... in EAP classes you will be focused more in paraphrasing and summarizing, which are vital in academic writing to avoid plagiarism

Struggling Achievers

Sihana was the only person from the group who faced challenges with references throughout the course of study. Her initial struggle was associated to her experience with Assignment 3, i.e., her first read-to-write task. This experience was characterized by continuous efforts in reading and rewriting, as suggested below:

Sihana (I2): I was based on the reading a bit and I paraphrased from there, even though it was a bit difficult for me, I read a lot but, in the end, I also wrote it 100 times, I switched the places, I brainstormed again and like that.

Making effective use of references in writing continued to be a struggle for Sihana even when working on Assignment 4 too.

Between group difference

Summarizing and paraphrasing is a cognitively demanding task because it requires one to understand the meaning of the text and its rhetorical organization and then reformulate author's ideas in own words. Having said this, in comparing between group differences, a question worth

exploring is why only one SA student reported to have encountered a challenge with incorporation of sources compared to four HA students. Moreover, the limited linguistic competency of struggling achievers, can create additional barriers for them when they try to incorporate sources in writing (Petrić, 2007). A plausible explanation in this case could be that two SA students failed Assignment 3, whereas one did not submit it all. In the case of the former, students might have turned to less cognitively challenging tasks such as direct quotation or might have not understood the complexity behind the process of source incorporation, hence failure to acknowledge sources accordingly. In the case of latter, not undergoing through the same experience could have been the reason why effective use of references in text was not reported as a challenge. It should also be pointed out that while incorporation of sources in writing was reported a problem throughout the course of study for Servete, this was not the case with other HA and MA students, who did not see it as a challenge beyond Assignment 3, suggesting developmental changes with higher achieving students. On a last note, the fact that almost half of students considered utilization of sources in their writing as a reading challenge perhaps is indicative that students recognize the connection between reading and writing. As Hirvela (2004) points out, in educational settings where students are required to read and write, the act of writing begins with students engaging with assigned reading sources. In other words, “reading and writing are reciprocal activities” (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996, p. 297), therefore, students did not see source incorporation as a writing activity solely.

RQ2. What differences are there between groups in terms of students’ reported experiences with reading over time

In terms of reported reading experiences, the main difference remains between HA and SA students. HA and MA students reported a higher metacognitive reading awareness compared to

SA students, and were more effective at regulating their learning strategies. Moreover, whilst HA students reported challenges with higher order thinking tasks such as incorporation of sources in writing and comprehension of texts at a rhetorical level, the challenges of SA students were at a linguistic level. In other words, the reported challenges of SA students relate to insufficient linguistic knowledge and ineffective use of metacognitive reading strategies.

As findings from this study suggest, students come from different backgrounds and different levels of preparedness. Consequently, university instructors cannot expect students to enter university well-equipped with skills and strategies that would aid learning. Having information on students' previous educational background and level of preparedness should be the baseline for teaching. Students in this study were limited in their metacognitive awareness on reading as a result of their experience with reading in both L1 and L2. However, having been taught explicitly how to apply them was "both possible and productive" (Hudson, 2007, p. 138), as it encouraged students to actively reflect on their learning processes and in identifying gaps in their individual knowledge (Kanea, Learb & Dubea, 2014).

In addition, the different levels of preparedness at the onset but also throughout the course of study suggest that instructors should provide students with ample learning opportunities and guidance. Scaffolding reading activities and tasks could be one way of supporting student development in reading skills. Moreover, providing students with a bank of reading texts to select from (particularly for their first read-to-write assignment) might help less able readers to work with level-appropriate materials before they move on to more advanced reading materials and more independent writing assignments (such as research project/paper).

Moreover, by scaffolding academic integrity and referencing activities students might have more opportunities to learn from trial and errors before they embark on writing assignments and get punished for incorrect use of sources. In addition, the first read-to-write assignment should receive more guidance and support from both teacher and peers in terms of referencing. In looking at students' challenges in the given context, and in order to lessen their challenges with reading comprehension at a rhetorical level, more activities and examples that compare rhetorical organization of academic texts in L1 and L2 could be used as classroom activities.

Chapter Six. Conclusion

6.1. Introduction

Building upon discussion on Chapter four and five, this chapter discusses the key findings of the study. The section will start with a summary of reported challenges and as the study specifically looked at changes that students perceived to have occurred over time in terms of writing, reading and feedback, it will give a brief summary of it. Then it moves attention to pedagogical implications, prior to discussing study limitation. This section finishes with suggestions for further research.

Summary of Reported challenges

In the similar vein to other research in EFL context (such as Asoka & Usui, 2003; Casanave, 2002; Khalikokhathe, 2008) the findings of this study suggest that the process of acquiring academic writing skills is tedious, challenging and uncomfortable for students. Writing is a product of numerous contextually bound factors, which impact students' writing development and their conceptualization of writing. In the current study, students' development of writing over time was influenced by numerous factors such as their previous writing experiences and their backgrounds.

Previous writing experience

As it has been pointed out in literature (e.g. Rinnert & Kobayashi, 2003), students' attitudes and perceptions on writing are affected by their previous learning experiences and backgrounds. In the current study, students had entered EAP 1 course with limited preparation in terms of academic writing skills. Not having been taught writing explicitly in Year 1 of their studies had an impact on the way students perceived some of the writing tasks and activities. For example, it was understandable that students reported to have struggled with working with sources i.e., locating references and referring to multiple sources in their EAP 1 writing because they were not taught these skills prior to EAP. In similar vein to other research in EFL context (such as As-Badawawi, 2011), students reported that they were underprepared for the EAP courses: for example, writing in-class essays under exam conditions, with a 200-word requirement in English 2 course, did not prepare them to handle a 2000 words essay in EAP 1. Reaching the 2000 word requirements for the essay hence was perceived to be a challenging task since students needed to structure the essay using unfamiliar rhetorical conventions, they needed to generate ideas on a topic they had some knowledge, they needed to refer to multiple sources, hence demonstrate good source management skills, they also needed to use an academic vocabulary and express their opinions in a foreign language. In other words, a lot of efforts were needed for the completion of one writing assignment, an overwhelming experience for students (Krause, 2001). Moreover, the challenges of acquiring new genres, as it was the case with research essay, posed another challenge.

In addition, the reading they were assigned during Year 1 included reading comprehension activities in class and reading of novels and poetry in literature. In comparison, reading assigned to be read in EAP courses were more challenging in terms of vocabulary and rhetorical structure.

Moreover, in their previous experiences students were not provided with feedback, which also affected their attitude towards feedback practices in EAP courses.

The difficulties in writing, reading and feedback practices reported by students in this study suggest that there is a discrepancy between courses i.e., there is no smooth transition between courses that teach writing skills. Also, syllabi do not seem to be interrelated, making the process of acquiring academic writing conventions more difficult for students.

Students' writing attitudes and writing development is also affected by their background. As it has been pointed out earlier in the study, some students, as it was the case with SA in this study, are in greater disadvantage at arrival compared to others. Students coming from non-traditional families, students who had limited opportunities to acquire certain skills outside formal education were at a disadvantage from the onset compared to those who could attend various private courses. In addition, students' self-efficacy beliefs could have a great impact on the way students perceive writing experiences. Students with high self-efficacy beliefs are more willing to approach a task with a certain level of confidence, compared to those with low self-efficacy beliefs, who would try to avoid activities they perceive difficult. In contexts characterized by large classes, teachers are not able to know students individually; hence they might not be able to detect students with low-self-efficacy beliefs. Consequently, students might resist working on certain task and/or completing certain assignments, impeding thus the process of development.

The aim of this study was to investigate undergraduate English language major students' experiences with writing in English for Academic Purposes course within an EFL context. The study looked specifically at the changes which will be covered in the section below.

Findings in my study indicate that incorporating feedback during the writing process, especially when it is a new experience can result in varying beliefs and attitudes. These beliefs and attitudes change as students are exposed continuously to feedback from teacher, peers, and literacy brokers.

RQ1. What changes over time in the reported behaviour and attitudes of undergraduate English major students developing as writers in English for Academic Purposes course?

Changes in writing

There are various changes in the behavior and attitudes of undergraduate English language major students who were developing as writers in the EAP courses. Students developed context-based academic literacies skills through interaction with various resources. As a result, students' perceptions of themselves as writers and their writing, feedback and reading practices changed over the courses of study. Students arrived at the course with different backgrounds and personal characteristics, and then all embarked on the same journey.

In terms of writing practices, the key changes are mostly observed in planning and multiple draft writing. At the arrival, students did not utilise planning strategies effectively as many were not introduced to metacognitive strategies prior to EAP. Modeling of these strategies by the teacher

at the very beginning and the continuous teacher and peer feedback, enabled students to report change in their writing practices in terms of planning strategies. In addition, a change of perceptions in terms of multiple-draft writing practices was also reported. Findings suggest that despite the many challenges students developed their confidence and skills over time. This is in line with Sternglass's suggestion that "...even the apparently most educationally disadvantaged students have the potential to achieve academic success if they are given time and support they need to demonstrate their abilities" (Sternglass, 1997, p. 299).

Changes related to feedback

Teacher feedback

The existing literature on the usefulness of teacher feedback is quite controversial. Ferris suggests that "teacher feedback can be a two-edged sword and the researchers (and teachers) should certainly examine it carefully" (2003, p. 30). Whether students make use of teacher feedback depends on many factors: individual, cultural, contextual as well on where the teacher focuses when giving feedback (Cohen, 1987; Cohen and Cavalcanti, 1990; Goldstein, 2004; Hyland & Hyland, 2001; Hyland, 1998). Considering the controversy of teacher feedback usefulness (Radecki & Swales, 1988) and impact on student writing, it is recommended to keep exploring it in more detail (Hyland & Hyland, 2006).

While students in all groups found teacher feedback to be useful throughout the entire writing process, the reactions of HA at the beginning of the process were quite different from MA and SA. Student in the HA group were quite resistant to the feedback they received from the

teacher, since the feedback they received from other teachers was only praise for a job well done. However, later in the research process, HA noted the importance of constructive teacher feedback, just as MA and SA students had done from the beginning.

The reactions of students in the HA group towards teacher feedback indicate that students' attitudes and beliefs to teacher feedback should be investigated in more detail throughout student groups (HA, MA, SA) to gain a deeper understanding between the similarities and differences of students' experiences of teacher feedback.

Moreover, although there is literature that suggests that teacher feedback is considered more by students due to teacher authority, in my study teacher and peer feedback have been reported as complementary.

Peer feedback

Much research has been conducted to explore whether peer feedback has an impact on writing (Ruegg, 2014; Lundstrom & Baker, 2009; Berggren, 2014; Rahimi, 2013; Min , 2005; Berg, 1999; Hu, 2005).

Findings in this study have revealed that the use of peer feedback resulted in different attitudes at the beginning of the use of peer feedback in comparison to the later stages of the research. While MA generally found the experience helpful, HA and SA had a more negative

attitude towards peer feedback. HA complained that they had not received constructive feedback from their peers. On the other hand, SA expressed that they did not feel comfortable to be judged by their peers. This may have been a result of low self-efficacy beliefs of SA (Bandura, 1997). However, as students got used to the process of providing and receiving feedback, they noted the importance of peer feedback on the improvement of their written work.

Literacy brokers

A few of the study participants also used literacy brokers. While there may not have been a direct benefit from literacy brokers, findings indicate that HA are the ones who mostly seeked help from friends, family or native speakers of English since they are “more strategic in achieving success” (Bandura, 1997).

Changes in reading

As students engage in academic writing, especially in EFL/ESL contexts, various challenges in relation to reading are noted in research, among which comprehension and development of metacognitive skills. Findings from this study suggest that, regardless of the challenges, there are changes of attitudes and beliefs in relation to reading for students who are developing as writers.

Students in EFL/ESL contexts, particularly those in their first years of studies in higher education, face challenges in comprehension since “[i]nformation is not as accessible, structured or straightforward...” (Kraus, 2001, p.154). It has been reported that students have issues with

reading material comprehension, identification of relevant arguments and inclusion of relevant sources in their writing (Evans & Morrison, 2010; Kalikokha, 2008; Kraus, 2001; Leki & Carson, 1994). In concordance with existing literature, findings in my research indicate that students struggled with reading comprehension, inclusion of sources and recognition of appropriate arguments in reading sources. While comprehension issues seemed to be a result of students' lack of exposure to academic texts, reasons between sub-groups were different. For SA, the difficulties were on a linguistic level, mostly due to the vocabulary that was incomprehensible for them. For HA, the issues derived from being exposed to a different rhetorical structure than what they were used to in Albanian. These findings emphasise the importance of exposure to academic writing in English for better reading comprehension. Moreover, they denote different sources of struggle for students which teachers can use to inform their instruction for reading comprehension.

When it comes to metacognitive skills, my findings suggest that although students struggled with using pre-reading strategies when they were introduced to them at the beginning, they acknowledged their importance in the comprehension of sources for their writing. However, there was a difference in the way each group ranking perceived reading strategies. While for HA it was easier to employ reading strategies SA faced more difficulties in doing so. As literature suggests, for struggling achievers development of metacognitive skills may be more challenging due to the difficulties they may face in the comprehension of the text in the first place, whereas HA already have some development of metacognitive skills so without the barrier of comprehension on a linguistic level, they can adapt strategies they are taught according to their needs easier than SA (Jiminez, Garcia, & Pearson, 1996; MohamadMaasum & NooreinyMaarof, 2012). Findings in my research also indicate the transferability of metacognitive skills to other

courses. Students' acknowledgment of the transferability of reading strategies is of high importance, especially for contexts where memorization rather than critical comprehension of source material is encouraged. By teaching strategies on how to improve metacognitive skills and by exposing students to activities where they employ reading strategies, students' metacognitive skills will improve overtime (Kanea, Learb, & Dubea, 2014; Hudson, 2007, p. 138), enabling them to apply reading strategies in other contexts. As it can be suggested, for the development of metacognitive strategies students need time and practice.

RQ2 What differences are there in the reported behaviour and attitudes of students developing as writers in EAP in terms of three sub-groups?

Differences between high achievers (HA), middle achievers (MA) and struggling achievers (SA) are noticeable in students' writing, reading and feedback experiences. These differences are noticeable mostly between HA and SA. MA's change of behavior and attitudes also display changes that are often merged within those of HA and/or SA.

In terms of writing practices, there were various differences between HA and SA students. At the onset, SA student background revealed that they had less experiences with writing in L1, less experience with utilization of metacognitive strategies and no receipt of writing instructions outside formal education hence a number of writing challenges. However, in the process, HA students were able to move on quicker because they were able to regulate their strategies. In addition, issues related to limited linguistic repertoire were common for SA students and not HA students.

In terms of development, HA students reported development at macro aspect of writing such as critical thinking skills. Finally, unlike HA who focused on global aspects of writing, SA students focused more on linguistic aspects because they spent more time in finding the right words to express their opinions in English. So, while HA had challenges with higher order thinking tasks such as interpreting sources in writing, rhetorical organization SA students did not face these difficulties since they were dealing with linguistic level difficulties. Regarding reading practices, HA students were better prepared at the onset with metacognitive strategies and they regulated them accordingly on the process.

Finally, when it comes to feedback there are a few differences between HA students and SA students. HA students seems to draw on more feedback resources (e.g. literacy brokers), compared to SA. Nevertheless, both groups developed more positive attitudes towards feedback on the way.

Overall, HA students come better prepared at higher education compared to SA students, hence the challenges they encounter are at a more macro aspects of writing compared to SA students, who often struggle to survive.

6.2. Pedagogical implications

The reported challenges in writing, feedback, research skills, academic integrity, and reading lead to numerous pedagogical implications which will be elaborated below.

Start with writing earlier in the programme

This study has shown that students were not taught explicitly how to write and did not write frequently in Year 1. Initially, it would have been more beneficial for all students if they had been introduced and encouraged to apply metacognitive writing strategies in Year 1. This would have saved class-time in the EAP 1 course and would have allowed the teacher more time on other components such as training students in integrating source text in their writing. As writing is complex and requires time to be acquired, having four teaching classes per week, of which only two practical classes for reading and writing was insufficient considering the large number of students. Preliminary findings from this study and anecdotal evidence from other successive cohorts were considered by the Department and changes have been introduced in the curricula: EAP courses are taught in six class hours per week, of which four are practical classes. This has given students time to develop their skills gradually and under more guidance and support, whereas it has helped the teachers to scaffold more and help students develop at their pace.

Build peer review into the programme

This study has given some insights into how students' peer feedback practices changed over the course of study. However, when students were introduced to the practice, many were not very open to it, because they believed that one needs to be an expert on the field to be able to judge

another person's work. If peer-feedback was built into the program from Year 1 of their studies and extended in other years too, perhaps students would have been opened to it from the beginning of the EAP 1 course. This practice would have helped struggling achievers feel more comfortable in sharing their writing with each other and consider peer feedback suggestions when revising writing. In addition, students accustomed to peer feedback practices would be more constructive in giving feedback, which would satisfy high achieving students' needs to have their work criticized and not only praised. The training of students in peer feedback practices in Year 1 of their studies, where writing assignments and practices are not very frequent would be more difficult. However, peer feedback training on other tasks such as oral presentations could be a starting point in familiarizing them with peer feedback practices. In addition, incorporating more collaborative and cooperative in-class activities and assignments that encourage peer feedback practices, would give students more opportunities to practice peer feedback. As a result, it would promote Bandura's (1986) social persuasion and when extended on other courses such as EAP would promote mastery experiences too. Also, more opportunities to interact with senior students, who have undergone the same experience and are viewed as more knowledgeable could be a useful strategy in promoting peer feedback practices from the first year of their studies. This collaboration could extend in other years, including written feedback on academic writing in EAP courses. Integrating peer feedback practices in the programme could encourage students to view it as "very normal" (Miranda: I3) and to make it as an integral part of learning process. As a result, students could make it a habit and even when "there are cases when we are not required to receive feedback, but we still ask our peers about their opinion, we don't mind it now" (Miranda: I3). Preliminary data on this study has encouraged me to integrate peer feedback on other courses. I have noticed, that students' experiences with peer feedback at onset are similar to students in my study, however, through training and practice they become accustomed to it. As a result, when they attend other

subsequent courses with me there is no need to provide extra training, because they already know their roles and responsibilities.

Guide students' development of research skills

Research participants' difficulties with research skills during this study were: finding sources of their interest and accessing the sources. To overcome the challenge of finding sources, students must be taught where and how to search for sources. Initially, students must be introduced to reliable online databases that they can use to find information and then how they can get to information of their interest. For the latter, students usually struggle to use key words that result in pertinent research, and end up feeling that there is not enough literature they can use for their assignments. However, the teacher can use modelling and/or thinking aloud as strategies that can help students find sources by using key words. When students see the teacher model/ think aloud the process of database search, they will be able to make a connection not only to how to use databases but also what the teacher thinks when they are searching. As research indicates, modelling and thinking aloud increase the chance of the likelihood that students will use the same process/es when they search for sources. Moreover, the teacher should create opportunities for students to put into practice what they saw, but use scaffolding and keep it personal to students' research interests.

When it comes to accessing the sources, students in the context of this study were unable to access most of research due to the fact that the University has no subscriptions on educational databases. However, with more articles being provided as full view by various journals and

databases, students will have access to more research. Teachers still have to share reliable databases and guide students' use of these databases through activities in class so it will not be too overwhelming for them to try on their own without guidance.

Development of students' research skills should start on the first year of undergraduate studies. Teachers can ask students to identify reliable sources, identify key words pertaining to assigned tasks, paraphrase and summarise sources as well as refer to them.

Develop students' reading metacognitive skills

Findings in this study suggest that students' metacognitive skills had an effect on the views of students regarding reading strategies. While SA students struggled with understanding the importance of reading strategies and with using them, HA students not only understood the importance of the strategies but also evaluated them and regulated their use (Mohamad Maasum & Nooreiny Maarof, 2012).

To develop students' reading metacognitive skills so that they will not face challenges with them when doing research, metacognitive strategies should be taught earlier in undergraduate studies. Considering the differences of metacognitive awareness between HA, MA, and SA students, teachers should scaffold and select material that is appropriate for the level of students. When appropriate, students can also be asked to reflect on the use of metacognitive reading strategies. Teachers can ask questions that students would answer in reflection journals and this reflection could help develop students' regulating strategies.

Safeguard academic honesty

Students struggles in relation to academic dishonesty included: paraphrasing, summarising and referencing and fear of plagiarism.

Students in this research struggled noticeably with paraphrasing, summarising and referencing. Neither of the groups - HA, MA or SA students - had previous experience with these skills and many felt anxious and insecure about using them. To avoid student anxiety and insecurity, which for some students led to use of fewer sources in their written work, students must be introduced to these writing skills earlier in their undergraduate studies.

In addition, MA and SA students reported fear of plagiarism. This fear was intensified due to students' lack of previous experience with paraphrasing, summarising, referencing and institutional emphasis to avoid plagiarism. Most practices within the institution encourage "textual borrowing" and reproduction of information as in the original sources. Therefore, courses at university must be structured in such a way that they do not only enable students to practice avoiding plagiarism, but the concept of academic integrity must change when necessary. The first can be done through asking students to reproduce information through paraphrasing, summarising and referencing whereas the second through training of teaching and library staff when staff is unfamiliar with strategies to avoid plagiarism.

In addition, honor codes and other academic integrity policies should be used to ensure academic integrity on institutional level. Honor codes, which have demonstrated to be successful in decreasing academic dishonesty levels in universities, not only raise students' awareness of the demands of the university, but they also involve students through making them accountable for academic honesty (McCabe & Treviño, 1993). However, academic integrity policies must be used throughout all courses similarly to safeguard academic honesty and to ensure consistency.

Provide departmental support

This study shows that students' experiences with written teacher feedback was almost inexistent. It is understandable that professors do not have time to provide students with feedback due to the large number of students per course and teaching overload. However, it is their responsibility to find ways that could work within the given context. For example, each professor works with minimum one and maximum 5 teaching assistants. The latter are responsible for practical classes and are in a more direct contact with students. Therefore, teaching assistants could be trained on feedback practices, modeled and guided by professors until they become more confident and independent to carry the work on their own. In the case when there are more than one teaching assistants, the overload in providing students with written feedback is lowered. In the case of single teaching assistant, the workload could be shared between him/her and the professor. Additionally, in-class joint feedback could be provided, with emerging patterns being written on the board and/or shared via email. In addition, these teaching assistants could be trained on approaches and strategies for teaching writing to students. Considering my own experience with teaching and researching writing, I could lead several workshops and play the role of the mentor for the staff until they become confident and more experienced.

To minimize confusion among students in terms of academic literacies they need to get accustomed to when joining higher education, and in order to help them build on acquired knowledge, a clear connection between courses is needed. In short, English 1 and 2 courses need to provide students with opportunities to learn how to write the five-paragraph essay, how to utilize metacognitive strategies in reading and writing, how to summarize information from readings and some research strategies prior to entering the EAP 1 course. The transition from Year 1 to Year 2, i.e., the EAP 1 course would be smoother and would enable students to build upon the skills and knowledge acquired during Year 1. In addition, the Department should reach an agreement in terms of what constitutes good writing. As this study shows, students entered EAP without being informed what good writing looks like, and when they learned the conventions of academic writing in EAP courses they realized that what they were told in Year 1 was contradictory to what they were taught in EAP.

For detailed suggestions on how teachers facing similar challenges can help students overcome them during the process of learning how to write, please see table below.

Table 6.1. Suggestions on activities that can help overcome challenges

	Issues identified in the study	Activities used in EAP 1 and EAP 2	Benefit (3)	Challenge (4)	Suggestions to overcome challenges
Writing	Writing Essay 1	<p>Use scaffolding</p> <p>1. Model brainstorming and outlining. Brainstorm together with the students. Then, make an outline for the first two paragraphs (including three supporting evidence in bullet points for each paragraph). The third paragraph, students can decide on their own.</p>	2. Modelling the process helps students see the steps they need to take to write	1. Some students may be overwhelmed. Some may feel they have been put in a straight jacket-	Be flexible. Ask SA to write just one paragraph. Allow more advanced student to add things and not necessarily focus on the same points.

	Issues identified in the study	Activities used in EAP 1 and EAP 2	Benefit (3)	Challenge (4)	Suggestions to overcome challenges
	Topic preference	1. Provide multiple topics and decide the topic of the essay together with the students.	1. Having a say in the topic gives students power.	1. The selected topic from most students and the teacher might not be the most suitable for other students.	

	Issues identified in the study	Activities used in EAP 1 and EAP 2	Benefit (3)	Challenge (4)	Suggestions to overcome challenges
	Coming up with research topic (Writing Essay 4)	<p>Use scaffolding</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Share examples of good and poor research topics. Provide guiding questions for students to analyse why the topics are good / poor. 2. Share examples of topics researched by previous students. 3. Share templates with guiding questions. 4. Meet students one on one to discuss their ideas on the research topics. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Analysing topics will enable students to distinguish between good and poor research topics. Moreover, they will engage in discussions and hear various points of view on how topics are understood which will enable them to reflect when they decide on their research topic. 2. Same as point 2 in column Activities used in EAP 1 and EAP 2. 3. Templates will help students keep focused when deciding on their research topics. 4. It gives students space to talk more about their ideas and teachers more space to help. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Overreliance on examples. Some students may feel confined to examples provided by the teacher and that may inhibit their creativity. 2. Same as point 1. 3. Templates might be confining for some students who might develop the research topic directly without the template, and then fill out the template only because it is a requirement. 4. Time consuming for the teacher. 	Allow space for teacher and peer feedback on students' research topic ideas.

	Issues identified in the study	Activities used in EAP 1 and EAP 2	Benefit (3)	Challenge (4)	Suggestions to overcome challenges
	Existing literature incorporation in essay	<p>Use scaffolding</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Analysing literature incorporation by other authors. Ask students to read a journal article before class. In class, ask students to analyse and discuss how the author has included those references in his article. Bring guiding questions for students to answer as they are analyzing. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Students who do not find a direct link between their research topic and research articles can see actual examples of how authors made these connections. The guiding questions will help keep students focused on what is important. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Preparing all this material is quite time consuming for the teacher. Moreover, students might feel overwhelmed by the abundance of information and too challenged if the topic of the journal article is not of their interest. 	
	Plagiarism	<p>Use scaffolding</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Offer many opportunities in class for students to summarise, paraphrase, synthesise and refer to sources. With paraphrasing and synthesising start with 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Students are eased into summarising, paraphrasing, synthesizing and referencing, so they do not have to learn/practice them on their own. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Students might feel overwhelmed with summarising, paraphrasing, synthesizing and referencing, especially if they have had no/little 	

	Issues identified in the study	Activities used in EAP 1 and EAP 2	Benefit (3)	Challenge (4)	Suggestions to overcome challenges
		<p>sentence level and then move on to paragraph level. With summarizing start with paragraph level and then focus on longer texts. Keep sources within students' field of study / general knowledge.</p> <p>2. Share cases of different types of plagiarism. Ask students to identify, analyze and discuss. Start with more comprehensive cases and try to keep the cases within the students' field of study / general knowledge.</p> <p>3. Give students the opportunity to meet the teacher one on one to discuss their dilemmas, struggles or questions they may have.</p>	<p>2. This is a good opportunity for students to identify plagiarism.</p> <p>3-5. It gives students space to talk more about their dilemmas, struggles and questions they may have and teachers / senior students / writing centres more space to help.</p>	<p>experience with them before.</p> <p>2. It may be challenging for the teacher to find material within students' field of study / general knowledge.</p> <p>3. Time consuming for the teacher.</p> <p>4. There might not be enough senior students who could help.</p> <p>5. Students might not feel comfortable to make use of writing centres.</p>	

	Issues identified in the study	Activities used in EAP 1 and EAP 2	Benefit (3)	Challenge (4)	Suggestions to overcome challenges
		4. Pair up students with senior ones. 5. Advise students to use writing centre services.			

	Fear of plagiarism	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Share your own experiences with being introduced to academic integrity conventions. 2. Bring in a guest speaker, a student from previous generations for them to share their experiences with academic integrity. 3. Share and discuss cases of similar research / inventions in different places. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students might feel more confident to start writing due to the teachers' encouragement. <p>2-3. When personalizing experiences, students see that the process they undergo is a process that all writer go through, including their teachers, so they do not feel alone in the experience.</p> <p>2-3. This enables students who fear of plagiarism of ideas to know that sometimes people in different parts of the world, without ever having been in contact with each other have same ideas. This way they will not have a writer's block simply due to the fear that someone in the world has similar ideas with them.</p>	<p>1-3. Students might feel that the teacher is only trying to comfort them because in the end if they submit plagiarized work it will impact their grade/possibility to pass the course.</p> <p>3. This might encourage students to use these cases as a justification for when / if they plagiarise ideas.</p>	Give it time. Students will need time to reflect on their progress.
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	Finding sources	<p>Use scaffolding</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Have students identify key words in journal articles. 2. Model search for sources. 3. Have students identify key words for their research topics. Give feedback. 4. Teach students how and where to search for literature, keep it specific to research topics / interests. 5. Advise students to look for sources outside university when they are scarce. 6. Advise students to use library services (assistance from librarians in finding sources). 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It enables students to reflect on the importance of key words for their research. 2. Students get introduced to the process of searching for sources. 3. Identifying key words for their own research enables students to reflect and get feedback on whether those key words will give them results when searching. 4. This enables students to be guided in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • focusing on reliable databases to find sources • selecting reliable sources • finding sources corresponding their research interests/topics 5. They might find the sources they need for their work. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Some students might be unable to identify key words due to background knowledge on their research interest. 4. It might be time consuming for you, especially when you teach a large class. 5. They might feel overwhelmed by the amount of sources available. 6. Some students might not feel comfortable to use this service. Some librarians might not have enough time or disciplinary knowledge to find sources. 	
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			6. Librarians model search for sources.		
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	Issues identified in the study	Activities used in EAP 1 and EAP 2	Benefit (3)	Challenge (4)	Suggestions to overcome challenges
	Structuring Essay	<p>Use scaffolding</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Offer a guide on essay planning and structure for shorter essays. 2. Share a few essays submitted by previous years. Analyse how students grouped information. 3. Offer templates 4. Give students the opportunity to meet the teacher one on one to discuss their work. 5. Pair up students with senior ones. 6. Advise students to use writing centre services. 	<p>1-2. Models and templates will assist students see how they can group and organize information.</p> <p>4-6. It gives students space to talk more about their essay and teachers / senior students / writing centres more space to help.</p>	<p>1-2. Students might follow the model strictly and feel confined to it rather than organize their essays according to their needs.</p> <p>4. Time consuming for the teacher.</p> <p>5. There might not be enough senior students who could help.</p> <p>6. Students might not feel comfortable to make use of writing centres.</p>	

	Issues identified in the study	Activities used in EAP 1 and EAP 2	Benefit (3)	Challenge (4)	Suggestions to overcome challenges
Feedback	Teacher Feedback	<p>Use scaffolding</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Start with positive comments. Give smile faces. Suggest 2-3 things for improvement. Give at least one very detailed suggestion-such as you rewrite the part. 2. Give summative feedback on class-write down typical mistakes. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students will use teacher feedback as a model to give peer feedback. Moreover, it will allow students to see that mistakes are common (lower anxiety), and it will guide them toward providing suggestions for improvement for their peers. 2. Enables students to see most common mistakes (even their own) and avoid them in the future. Most importantly, it enables them to discuss the mistakes in general with the rest of the class when/if they do not understand the feedback they got in their essay. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It will take you time to give thorough feedback. Do it for the first essay. 2. Students might disregard certain feedback since they consider that it may not be valid for their essay. 	

	Issues identified in the study	Activities used in EAP 1 and EAP 2	Benefit (3)	Challenge (4)	Suggestions to overcome challenges
	Peer feedback	<p>Use scaffolding</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use 3-4 questions which will help students give feedback. 2. Model giving feedback. 3. Give feedback to an essay together. 4. Give students an example from previous years' feedback including the draft with the peer feedback and the corrected draft following peer feedbacks. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This will help students start small and not be stressed out about giving or receiving feedback. 2. Modelling giving feedback. That enables students to see the process of giving feedback as the teacher thinks out loud when giving feedback. 3. Giving feedback together enables the teacher to guide students' thinking and feedback, but not a lot of pressure is placed only on students since they will be giving feedback together with the teacher. 4. Seeing examples of peer feedback and the changes writers made following peer 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The feedback may not always be specific. 2. Some students may not be focused as the teacher is modelling the process of giving feedback. 3. Some students may be able to participate much more in comparison to others. Therefore, the teacher must organise student participation in such a way that enables all students to engage in giving feedback. 4. Seeing examples of improvement following peer feedback might not have an impact on students' perceptions of the feedback they get from their peers, 	

	Issues identified in the study	Activities used in EAP 1 and EAP 2	Benefit (3)	Challenge (4)	Suggestions to overcome challenges
			feedback shows students the importance of peer feedback on writing improvement.	which they sometimes do not perceive to be useful and / or objective.	
	Literacy Brokers	1. Find an educated friend, family member or peers outside class to discuss your paper	1. Encourage discussion and cooperation with Literacy Brokers	1. Not everyone can find effective literacy brokers	Literacy brokers can be ELFs, writing centres, senior students, volunteers in English teachers association, former teachers.
	Group work	1. Have team leaders rotate on weekly basis. Ask them to report on the work each member did every week.	1. Rotating team leaders enables all students to be responsible for leadership within the group.	1. Not everyone will be involved equally or report honestly.	
	Materials	1. Give a pool of reading materials students can select from. 2. Ask guiding questions.	1. They can pick the ones they feel are more comprehensive for them. 2. Students can assess if the reading material is suitable.	1. More advanced students might opt for easier articles too. 2. It might be too limiting for some students.	Give each group member as a task to read an article in-depth (appropriate for their level) and summarize it. Then

	Issues identified in the study	Activities used in EAP 1 and EAP 2	Benefit (3)	Challenge (4)	Suggestions to overcome challenges
					ask them to share with the group.

6.3. Limitations of the study

Whilst a number of limitations to the study were mentioned in the methodology section, the aim of this sections is to outline some of the key concerns. In line with other ethnographic studies, this study collected more data than used. However, it should be pointed out that the main focus of this study was on student voices.

- I interviewed students four times but I did not analyze their writing to see if development has occurred, as expected by SFL. Originally, students were asked to write an essay at two different times within a span of over six months. The idea was to analyze these essays in order to explore if writing development occurred over the time of study and compare those findings with students' reported beliefs about their development over time. Nevertheless, they were used during interview four to talk 'around the text', i.e., students compared both writing and gave their own perceptions about the noticed change over the period of six months. However, the idea to analyse essays by the researcher was later abandoned for two reasons:
 - 1) EAP courses implemented a multiple-draft approach to writing. Consequently, students reported that their writing has changed due to this approach, i.e., due to practice and feedback. Therefore, analyzing essay texts that were written under exam conditions and that were focused on the product, would not reflect the development reported by students.
 - 2) The overload in transcribing, translating and coding data and the mitigating circumstances that researcher had to go through in the process, would made essay analysis more time-consuming, thus add up the overload.

- Moreover, I did not analyse the effects of feedback on writing. It would be particularly interesting to investigate the change of students' perceptions on the effectiveness of peer feedback in the development of their writing over the course of study. This would give me a broader understanding of the ways peers can contribute in the development of each others' writing skills, particularly in contexts that are characterized by large classes and which view the teacher as the dominant figure. Another challenge in this regard relates to the fact that students had individual portfolios for EAP 1, which would enable me to trace changes in writing as a result of feedback. However, in EAP 2 they submitted group portfolio, which would make it difficult to trace changes that occurred in writing of participants as a result of peer feedback. On the other hand, most reported change on the effectiveness of peer feedback occurred after they completed the EAP 1 course. Again, this would not represent the whole process, rather just a snapshot of it-thus this was another limitation.
- Though the focus was on students' voices, an inclusion of Year 1 and some Year 2 teacher perspectives on writing might have enriched findings of this study. Though originally planned to include their voices in the study, due to their overload in teaching it was impossible to arrange interviews with two teachers from English 1 and 2, during the first year of data collections. Afterwards, the idea was not pursued, mostly because teachers' references to their teaching experiences might have referred to current year, which would not necessarily reflect the experiences of study participants.
- I also do not know how my multiple-roles (teacher, assessor, researcher) affected students' responses, i.e., I do not know what they have not shared with me or whether in any way their responses were affected by my role as a teacher of a subject they were reporting about. Nevertheless, other writing researchers have investigated writing experiences of students

in their teaching context too (such as Casanave 2002, Lillis, 2011). However, what makes my case different is that I was also an assessor of their writing. It is worth mentioning that students were aware that final grade in EAP courses was a result of work assessed by two teachers, i.e., it did not entirely depend on me. Nevertheless, I should acknowledge that this could have affected the way students viewed me. Although for the most part, students were able to refer to me as a researcher during the interviews, there was one MA students who constantly referred to me as ‘teacher’, for which I had to remind her that my role was that of the researcher. However, despite these limitation, I would argue that my role as a teacher, i.e. the insider enabled me to get better insights on the study.

- Another limitation to the study regards member-checking. Even though I continuously checked meaning with students during interviews, I was unable to return data to respondents for them to validate the findings. The reason is that by the time the interviews were transcribed and translated the students had already finished the program and I was not in contact with them.
- Reservations about the generalizability of the findings of this research across the wider population should be considered when reporting and analysing findings. While research participants in this study have shared their personal experiences of developing as writers, personal experiences may be subjective, pertinent only to the research participants in this study (Creswell, 2014; Hyland, 2002). Therefore, findings may not be representative of the larger population.

6.4. Recommendations for future research

In considering the findings from the current study and its limitations, a number of suggestions can be made for further research that would explore students' experiences with academic writing.

As students in this study reported, peer feedback practices had a role in the development of their writing skills over time. Having said this, it would be interesting to explore further the influence of peer interaction on writing development; hence, an analysis of peer written feedback over time could shed light as to what feedback students incorporate, if any, at the onset and if there are any changes in terms of how they give feedback and respond to peer feedback over time on writing performance. Such findings could inform our classroom practices: we could scaffold peer feedback practices and tasks so that we make the process of giving and receiving feedback less threatening and more effective for students. Moreover, referring to the reported differences in terms of peer feedback practices between groups in the present study, it becomes evident that different learners face certain challenges with peer feedback practices, particularly at the onset. Teachers need to find ways to accommodate the needs of all students; therefore, researchers need to investigate in more depth the challenges that each group of learners (HA, MA, SA) face with peer feedback practices. As a result, strategies to overcome group-specific challenges can be suggested.

Research that incorporates analysis of students' writing over time is also needed. This study reported on students' perceptions of themselves as writers over time, but it did not analyze their

writing performance. A direct comparison of writing performance with students' perceptions of themselves as writers would give a more comprehensive picture of what changes over time in terms of writing and what factors impact the change.

To ensure the validity of the findings, the inclusion of individual case studies is also needed. As this study was exploring differences between high, middle and struggling achievers, a more thorough exploration and comparison of individual cases from each of the three levels would shed more light on various factors that affect writing development of students from these levels. Namely, despite group differences, a study could analyze differences between 2 to 3 individuals from each group and, thereby, gain a deeper understanding of individual differences as well. In addition to this, students could be asked to reflect on the process of learning by writing their thoughts, dilemmas and feelings in a journal. Though the work of analyzing journals would be tedious due to time constraints and logistics, it could provide researchers with better insights into the challenges that students encounter while acquiring academic writing skills.

As the findings from this study suggest, students attributed a high level of their success to classroom practices, i.e. the way the courses were designed and delivered. Conducting an action research with two cohorts could shed light on the pedagogical aspects that contributed to the development of academic writing skills through the perspectives of students.

6.5. Reflection on my PhD Journey

As I was analyzing data and particularly as I was writing up the thesis, I kept noticing similarities with the findings of my study i.e., with the experiences of my students in the study. Similar to my students, who were not familiar with academic writing conventions and genres, I found the process of writing my PhD thesis, a genre I was not familiar with, to be very tedious and complex. For example, I had to re-write two chapters from the very beginning as the writing style I had used in the first drafts did not resemble the ethnographic writing style.

I also struggled to meet word limit of thesis. I was challenged by the academic vocabulary I was expected to use by the discourse community, and my L1 was continuously interfering with my writing in English. I shared the same level of worries with my students in terms of structuring my thesis, conducting research, analyzing data and reporting about it in writing. Moreover, my self-efficacy beliefs were seriously challenged in the process: I was aware of my previous writing experiences and challenges; hence I was self-conscious that my writing deficiencies could have a great impact on academic performance. This journey definitively recognized that when students interact with practices they are unaccustomed with, they embark into unfamiliar territory (Casanave, 2002).

To add to this, many outside classroom factors such as previous academic and non-academic experiences, and individual characteristics can have a role in students' writing development and performance. Also, my PhD journey was characterized by many challenges on the personal level: the numerous unfortunate events that took place while I was studying affected

my emotional well-being, hence the quality of my work. Similar to some of my students' stories, the outside class work-load, financial constraints and family obligations affected my work and increased anxiety. As I reflect now, I empathize more with my students and their experiences.

Similar to the findings of the study, feedback experiences affected my writing development. In terms of peer feedback, I had a similar experience to that of some HA students in the study. I wanted constructive feedback from two colleagues who were familiar with my study, but instead I kept receiving praise for my work. I felt angry and disappointed, just as my students did, because I was searching for comments that would improve my work. I believe that their perceptions of myself as an expert on writing skills might have had an impact on the way they saw my writing, a situation similar for my HA students who at the onset were only receiving compliments and not criticism by their peers, probably as a result of their established status as HA students. Later, my colleagues were able to give me more constructive feedback, though not at the level I was expecting to.

My literacy brokers, on the other hand were helpful in giving me comments related to language level mistakes, but not on content. In other words, I too received confirmation that my work is satisfactory, except for a few minor language corrections. To reiterate findings from my study, I also did not make a great use of literacy brokers in my role as a PhD student, either because I did not find the most adequate ones or because there were not many great opportunities to do so in Kosovo. Situation would have been different if I had stayed in Reading for the whole study period: there were other PhD students who were willing to help and there were many more opportunities for interaction with various scholars. I felt very lonely in this journey while in

Kosovo. This made me think more about my students and the limited opportunities they have to interact with academic-literacy brokers. They need guidance and more opportunities for interaction in building knowledge: an interaction with senior students who had undergone a similar experience would be the starting point. This means that in contexts similar to the University of Prishtina, course instructors could be the bridge between senior and junior students in creating opportunities for knowledge building.

Another similarity to my students' experiences regards receiving feedback from my supervisor. At the onset of my PhD journey, a wave of emotions would go through my body as I would read my supervisor's written feedback: in the same vein as my three HA students, at the beginning I was overwhelmed by emotions as I was not accustomed to receiving comments that suggested change or corrections to my writing, i.e., it did not feel good to be criticized. However, as I was building rapport with her and as I was developing as a writer and a researcher, I began to view her comments as extremely valuable to the development of my writing skills, hence I considered them with great pleasure. In addition, my students' comments about the impact teacher's appraised feedback had on their self-confidence correlates to my own experience. Being in the same position myself, I realized what an effect my supervisor's words had on my motivation and self-confidence. Even when I was sure that my writing was not of good quality, she would find a way to appraise my efforts, hence make me feel better about myself and my writing. A similar experience was reported by students in the study. Therefore, my personal experience, combined with that of the students from my study made me reflect more deeply about the impact teacher's feedback could have on students' motivation and writing development. Consequently,

more thoughts need to be given to the numerous ways teachers could impact students' growth as writers.

As I reflect on the whole journey as a researcher and as a teacher, I concur with Casanave who pointed out that "...teachers of EAP want students to quickly become like us, to think and write in ways that have taken us years to learn how to do" (2002, p. 80). This experience made me think more closely about who my students are, what experiences they bring into the classroom so that I can help them "...make easier transitions onto the academic playing field" (Casanave, 2002, p. 81).

However, there was also a great difference in our experiences; in my study programme, I did not perceive the discrepancies between courses that my students faced, and which affected their writing development over time. Instead, courses I took were well planned, support was provided continuously and there were more opportunities for building knowledge through interaction with various members of community.

Finally, the experience of completing my PhD studies was challenging, but a rewarding learning experience. Similar to findings of my study, I developed my academic writing and reading skills, I learned to become more open to receiving feedback and I became better skilled at conducting research. I have also learned how to think more critically and to be more aware of readers' expectations. As a result, I am more self-confident as a writer and as a researcher, and similar to my students' expectations for the future, I believe that I will be able to independently

conduct research and write work of acceptable standards. And just as my students commented at the end of their experience with EAP courses, despite the many challenges and the hard work, my PhD journey was worth the trouble.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1. EAP 1 & 2 course syllabus

University of Prishtina

Faculty of Philology

English Department

Course title: English for Academic Purposes (EAP) 1& 2

Length of course: Two semesters (October-January & February –June 2008/2009)

Classes per week: Lectures: 2; Tutorials: 2

Teaching Method: Student centred

Instructor(s): Assoc.Prof.XXXX, PhD-office 99

M.Phil.Blerta Mustafa- office 97

Office hours: Wednesdays and Thursdays (from 12h: 30-13h: 30) by appointment

Required textbooks: See the attached list.

COURSE DESCRIPTION: English for Academic Purposes is a practical, non-theoretical course designed to help students in developing their academic skills. More specifically, the course is intended to enable students to write more effectively, to further develop their reading comprehension, to practice and improve their listening and speaking skills in order to succeed in an academic environment. Vocabulary and the study of correct grammatical structures are integrated with both productive and receptive skills. Furthermore, the course is intended to foster critical thinking skills, independent learning, and to prepare students in research methods, time management skills and internet skills. The course will cover a variety of topics such as: social issues, literature, politics, history, film, language learning and teaching and so forth.

LEARNING OUTCOMES: Upon successful completion of this course students should be able to:

1) Writing Skills

- Master pre- writing strategies (brainstorming, mind mapping and outlining);
- Write cohesive paragraphs (a clear topic sentence, supportive sentences and transitions);
- Write summaries;
- Paraphrase, synthesize and quote the work of other authors correctly;
- Write a well-structured, coherent, well-supported and persuasive academic essays;
- Represent and interpret visual data (tables, graphs, charts);
- Revise and edit academic texts;
- Demonstrate awareness about the audience, tone and purpose of a written text
- Write a research paper;
- Develop critical skills necessary for the successful production of academic texts;

2) Reading Skills

- Use pre-reading strategies (skimming, scanning, predicting, previewing) to identify main ideas of an academic text,
- Develop critical thinking while reading the text and improve the reading speed;
- Take notes effectively from reading materials;
- Use reading to develop or stimulate their own ideas;
- Locate and analyse information for research purposes;

- Use vocabulary strategies (context, structural and syntactic clues; recognizing affixes, using monolingual dictionaries effectively) to aid in the comprehension of new vocabulary and idioms found in academic written texts;
- Effectively read and comprehend a variety of level appropriate texts and identify grammar and spelling errors;
- Read for different purposes;
- Demonstrate ability to read critically and analyse academic texts;

3) Listening Skills

- Take lecture notes effectively and synthesize from several sources (listening actively, recognizing main points of a lecture, cues of transition from one point to the other);
- Discuss information from readings or from listening of audio tapes;
- Recognise lecture structure;
- Deduce the meaning of unfamiliar words and word groups;
- Skim-listen to obtain gist;
- Scan-listen to obtain specific information;
- Listen and comprehend different accents;

4) Speaking skills

- Use strategies for speaking effectively on academic topics;
- Use conversational strategies to practice discussion skills, in both formal and informal situations (formal and informal debates);
- Design and deliver presentations on a given topic;

- Use vocabulary of a more academic nature;

COURSE POLICIES

Attendance: Regular attendance is mandatory for the course. Students are expected to attend 80% of scheduled classes. If you have mitigating circumstances such as illness or emergency or any other situation, you are advised to contact the course instructor immediately in order to be granted approval. Failure to comply with the requirement might affect your ability to complete the class successfully and jeopardise your entitlement to collect signature from the course instructors at the end of the term.

Assignments: Students are required to complete a variety of individual and group assignments. Failure to turn in your assignments on time will affect your grade. For each day the assignment is late, it will be marked down one grade. In case you miss a class it is your responsibility to hand in your assignment when it is due and catch up with lectures. In case you do not show on the day scheduled for oral presentation you will not be given another chance.

Assessment: Final course grades will be composed of the following:

Reading quiz -5 points

Listening quiz-5 points

Reading test- 10 points

Listening test-10 points

Oral Presentation-15 points

Research paper-30 points

Portfolio -15 points

Writing test -10 points

Total: 100 points

Grades:

60- 67 points = 6

68-75 points = 7

76-84 points = 8

85-92 points = 9

93- 100 points = 10

Academic Dishonesty: Plagiarism is considered to be the greatest academic crime. Anyone caught having plagiarized (whether copying, paraphrasing from different kinds of materials without acknowledging sources, presenting other people's work/ideas as their own and so forth) will receive a failing grade and might be subject to disciplinary measures. Plagiarism can be easily avoided by acknowledging the sources. For further information on plagiarism you can refer to a hand out on plagiarism that will be available to you during the lectures. Anyone who is caught taking part in other forms of academic dishonesty (cheating on the test,

ghost writing, making up facts, not collaborating with peers in group projects while claiming to do so, and so on) will also receive a failing grade on that assignment/test).

Assistance: You are encouraged to contact the course instructors for any inquiries related to the course, or any additional assistance for problems that you might encounter during the process of essay writing, in finding resources, or preparing for the presentation and so forth. Do not forget that it is your responsibility to ask questions whenever something is unclear.

WINTER TERM

	Lecture topic and/or assignments
Week 1	<p>Introduction to the course</p> <p>Note taking skills</p> <p>Why take notes?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening-Note-taking strategies • Reading-Note-taking strategies • Listening cues • The note taking systems <p>Assignment 1:(Read a short passage and take notes)</p>
Week 2	<p>Effective reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting to know your textbook • Choosing what to read • Active Reading (preview, skim and scan)

	<p>Assignment 2: (Write a summary using the previous assignment notes)</p>
Week 3	<p>Effective Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading to remember (SQ3R) • Critical Reading <p>Assignment 3: (Write a short paragraph)</p>
Week 4	<p>Reading comprehension and vocabulary development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding how facts and ideas are connected • Understanding unfamiliar words from their immediate context and word groups • Building an academic vocabulary • Making inferences • Distinguishing the main ideas from supporting details • Practicing strategies for effective reading <p>Assignment 4:(Preparation for a reading quiz)</p>
Week 5	<p>Plagiarism & Referencing</p> <p>What is plagiarism?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why students plagiarise? • Types of plagiarism <p>How to refer to sources?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct quotation • Paraphrasing • Summarizing • Synthesizing

	<p>How to write a reference list?</p> <p>Assignment 5: (Compile a reference list)</p>
Week 6	<p>Academic writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning your writing assignment • Planning stages • Practicing pre-writing strategies • Practice on organization and structure (the three parts of a paragraph, developing coherent paragraphs, practicing transition words etc.) <p>Assignment 6: (Write a short essay)</p>
Week 7	<p>Academic writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing the thesis statement • Linking ideas together • Locating sources • Writing a five paragraph essay • Using facts, opinions or arguments <p>Reading material: White, R & Arndt, V (1997) Chapter 5. pg.99-181</p> <p>Assignment 7: (Write an outline for an 1200 words essay)</p>
Week 8	<p>Developing your writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using stylistic conventions for academic writing • Audience and Tone • Being precise <p>Reading material: Chaffee (2003)- Chapter 2: pg.50-86</p> <p>Assignment 8: (Write essay introduction)</p>
Week 9	<p>Critical thinking, reading and writing</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most common problems in writing argumentative essays • Analyzing perceptions (selecting, organizing and interpreting perceptions; factors that shape perceptions) • Thinking critically about perception (several thinking activities; thinking critically about the images) • How to write objectively <p>Assignment 9: (Continue with essay writing)</p>
Week 10	<p>Academic Writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to incorporate other sources in an essay • Most common problems in incorporating sources in essays • Analysing texts/essays • Proofreading/editing/revising <p>Reading material: <i>Editing and Revising Text</i>. Billingham (2002); Pg 32-69 & 92-95; Cook, C.(1985). Chapter 5.pg 108-137</p> <p>Assignment 10: (Continue with essay writing)</p>
Week 11	<p>Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comparing sources • Identifying viewpoints • Evaluating arguments <p>Assignment 11: (Submit 1st draft)</p>
Week 12	<p>Writing, reading and critical thinking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nine basic writing errors and how to fix them <p>Reading materials: Rosenwasser, D. &Stephen, J. (2006). Chapter 14, pg.349-384.</p> <p>No assignment</p>

Week 13	<p>Feedback and assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to give, receive and learn from the feedback • How to assess an essay • Editing final drafts <p>Reading Material: Stiggins, J. R. (2005).Chapter 2, pg.32-63; Cotrell, S.(2003), pg. 172-173</p> <p>Assignment 12: (Submit edited draft)</p>
Week 14	<p>Critical Thinking; Reading; Assessment; Writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysing and assessing persuasive essays <p>No assignment</p>
Week 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wrap up (Reading, Writing, Critical Thinking and Discussion) • Evaluation of the course • Signature collection <p>Assignment 13: (Submit final draft)</p>

SPRING TERM

Week 1	<p><i>Introduction to speaking in academic context</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective presentation (preparation, organization, structure, delivery, body language, visual aids) <p>Reading material: Harris (1995). <i>Presentation skills for teachers</i>. Chapters 5,6,7; pg.58-92 and/or Collins (1998). <i>Perfect Presentations</i>. Pg. 16-35.</p>
Week 2	<p>Speaking skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ways of working with others • Group presentation

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback on presentations <p>Assignment 1: (Group presentation)</p>
Week3	<p>Speaking & Listening Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Debate Speaking Skills • Debate logic and reasoning <p>Assignment 2: (Preparing for a debate/or write a short essay)</p>
Week 4	<p>Speaking, Writing & Research Methods</p> <p><i>Conducting an interview</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interview techniques • Do's and don'ts in interviewing • Informal vs. formal language • Writing questions for an interview on a given topic <p>Assignment 3: (In 3 paragraph describe your experience after interviewing an older person-attach questions)</p>
Week 5	<p>Academic Writing & Research Methods</p> <p><i>Compiling a questionnaire</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compiling questions/types of questions • Avoiding leading questions • How to use the questionnaire • Illustration of bad and good practice <p>Assignment 4: (Group work-Street interviews on a specific topic)</p>
Week 6	<p>Academic Writing & Research Methods</p> <p><i>Representing and interpreting data</i></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tables • Graphs (bar, pie, column and line graphs) <p>Assignment 5: (200 words essay describing a graph/table)</p>
Week 7	<p>Academic Writing, Research methods</p> <p>How to write a research paper?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is a research paper? • Planning • Writing the precise title • Who is your audience • Describing the problem • Supporting your hypothesis with data <p>Assignment 6: (Begin preparation for a research paper-state an hypothesis)</p>
Week 8	<p>Research methods, academic writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to organize your data? • How to analyze data? • How to write a literature review <p>Assignment 7: (Continue with the research paper-work on a methodology section)</p>
Week 9	<p>Listening, Reading & Writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognizing lecture structure • Deducing the meaning of unfamiliar words and word groups • Skimming-listening to obtain gist

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scanning-listening to obtain specific information <p>Assignment 8: (Continue with research paper-work on a questionnaire/interview questions)</p>
Week 10	<p>Listening, Reading& Writing(XIX)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening from the tape (identify the text) • While listening, use skimming and scanning to fill in the gaps • The most common signals indicating lecture structure • Reference • Substitution & ellipsis • Conjunction • Lexical Cohesion • Exercises <p>Assignment 9: (Continue with research paper-write Literature Review)</p>
Week 11	<p>Listening, Speaking & Assessment</p> <p><i>Conflict Resolution: Mediate, Don't Instigate</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summarize/clarify major ideas presented in spoken messages • Use active listening to mediate a dispute • Self-assessment of mediator performance • Feedback from peers <p>Assignment 10: (Collect data)</p>
Week 12	<p>Listening comprehension and note-taking</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to a lecture and take notes • Dealing with unfamiliar and more complex vocabulary • Listen and write <p>Assignment 11: (Prepare for a listening quiz, write the 1st draft)</p>
Week 13	<p>Practicing Listening & Reading</p> <p><i>Preparation for the final test</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening section & discussion • Reading section & discussion <p>Assignment 12: (Edit draft)</p>
Week 14	<p>Practicing Writing</p> <p><i>Preparation for the final test</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describing a graph/table • Writing short essays) <p>Assignment 13: (Submit research paper)</p>
Week 15	<p>Reading, Writing, Listening</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Final test</i> • Wrap up • Evaluation of the course • Signature collection

NOTE: For each lecture the students will be provided with handouts, which are a compilation of materials taken from different sources (books, internet, compiled materials by the course instructor, journal articles, newspaper stories and so forth) by the course instructor. As EAP is a practical, non-theoretical course, the reading material

will be assigned to students according to their needs. The needs will be identified during the assignments, in class-participation and the discussions during office hours.

Appendix 2. Simple Analytic Scale

Scoring Guide
Quality of ideas (8 points) Range and depth of argument; logic of argument; quality of research or original thought; appropriate sense of complexity of the topic; appropriate awareness of opposing views.

Organization and Development (8 points)

Effective title; clarity of thesis statement; logical and clear arrangement of ideas; effective use of transitions; unity and coherence of paragraphs; good development of ideas through supporting details and evidence.

Use of sources (5 points)

A range of sources are used effectively through summarizing/paraphrasing/quotations. Bibliography and referencing follows the APA style.

Clarity and style (5 points)

Ease of readability; appropriate voice, tone and style of assignment; clarity of sentence structure; gracefulness of sentence structure; appropriate variety and maturity of sentence structure.

Sentence Structure and Mechanics (4 points)

Grammatically correct sentences; absence of comma splices; run-ons, fragments; absence of usage and grammatical errors; accurate spelling; careful proofreading; attractive and appropriate manuscript form.

Total 30 points

Adapted from Bean (2001, p. 259).

Appendix 3. Essay Writing Checklist

Quality of ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Does the essay have a range of arguments?● Does the essay have logical arguments?● Does the essay consider opposing viewpoints?
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Organisation and Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the essay have a clear thesis statement? • Does the essay have a logical and clear arrangement of ideas? • Does the essay have appropriate transitions? • Does the essay have a good development of ideas through supporting details and evidence?
Clarity and Style	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the essay have an appropriate voice, tone and style? • Is the essay easy to read? • Does the essay have a clear and mature sentence structure?
Sentence Structure and Mechanics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the essay contain grammatically correct sentences, punctuation and spelling? • Does the essay contain academic and unambiguous vocabulary?
Referencing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the writer of the essay clearly distinguish his/her ideas from those of others? • Does the essay contain at least 5 references? • Does the essay contain references in concordance with the APA style of referencing?

Appendix 4. Example of a Lesson Plan for EAP 2

Number of students	45
Lesson Length	90 minutes

Lesson Objectives	<p>After having shared the progress in their research (first 40 minutes) by the end of the class, students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - be able to identify components of an abstract - be able to distinguish between a well-written and a poorly-written abstract
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Copies of jammed abstract ● Copies of abstract samples ● Copies of abstract list of features ● Copies of a well-written and a poorly-written abstract
Lesson Procedures	
Step 1 (45 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Go to each group in the classroom one by one. Spend 7-10 minutes in each group. Ask the appointed group leader for the week to inform you about what each member has done during the week in relation to their research. Then, give them feedback on the part of their research where they need your feedback. This depends on the stage of the research that each group is at. While in some groups you may need to provide feedback on data analysis, in another you may need to provide feedback on how they wrote the results section. Provide feedback and then move on to the next group. ● While you hear weekly reports from each group and give feedback, the rest of the groups exchange their progress in the research process with their peers (at least two other groups), and give and receive feedback.
Step 2 (10 minutes)	<p>Reflect on the common issues/problems noticed throughout groups. Give advice to students on how to solve the issues/overcome the problems.</p>
Step 3 (13 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ask students what an abstract is and what they think it includes. Give them 2 minutes to discuss in their groups and then pick students randomly to share with the class. At this stage simply listen to students' opinions without providing feedback. This way students will feel free to share what they think an abstract is. ● Introduce the concept of the abstract by informing students on its function and re-iterating students' correct responses in relation to the abstract. ● For each group of students, distribute a copy of a jammed abstract. Ask them to put the abstract in the correct order and analyse each sentence so they determine its function in the abstract, i.e. what information it contains in relation to research.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide students with the key to the jammed abstract and ask them to share their thoughts on the function of each sentence in it.
<p>Step 4</p> <p>(10 minutes)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Distribute copies of three abstracts and a list of features (see worksheet below). Students are asked to identify which features are present in each abstract. ● Discuss students' opinions and provide correct answers.
<p>Step 5</p> <p>(10 minutes)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide a copy of a well-written and a poorly-written abstract. Give students time to discuss in their groups which abstract they think is well written and which one is not. Then discuss with the class what makes the abstract a good or a bad one.
<p>Step 5</p> <p>(2 minutes)</p>	<p>Ask students to write an abstract for their research at home and bring it to the next class for teacher and peer feedback (as in Step 1).</p>

List of features

Abstract	A	B
1. a general statement/essential background information		
2. the aims of the project, dissertation, thesis		
3. the implementation of an investigation in a real-world situation		

4. how the text is organized		
5. details of research carried out by the writer		
6. what the results of the research suggest		
7. a thesis statement		
8. a definition		

(McCormack & Slaght, pg. 60)

McCormack, J., & Slaght, J. (2012). English for Academic Study: Extended Writing and Research Skills: Course Book. Reading: Garnet Education.

Appendix 5. English 1 and English 2– Syllabi

University of Prishtina

Faculty of Philology

Department of English Language and Literature

Subject: English 1

Bachelor/ Compulsory

Year I - Semesters I

Credits: 7 ECTS

Lectures: Integrated skills 1 (45mins) per group

Tutorials: Listening and speaking (90mins) per group

Reading and writing (90mins) per group

Method of delivery: Learning centred & interactive

Course description

English 1 is a practical non-theoretical course aiming at the development of students' abilities in receptive (listening, reading) and productive skills (speaking writing). Although the main focus will be in the development of communicative skills, the course will also integrate other aspects of language use, such as structures and vocabulary development. The approach adopted for the course is task-based whereas the selection of teaching materials is topic-based.

The aims of course

- enable students to communicate in the target language at this particular level;
- increase students' confidence and ability to communicate with native and non-native speakers of English both in speaking and in writing;
- develop students' study skills and a range of language learning skills;
- enable students to combine language work with real life skills;
- promote and encourage independent learning.

Learning outcomes

Upon completion of this course students should be able to:

Listening

- Listen and demonstrate understanding of gist and/or specific information in spoken texts;
- understand a wide variety of spoken discourse (lectures, peers, recorded passages);
- understand the majority of films, news items on topics of personal and professional interest;
- Take notes and summarise oral texts;
- Infer the meaning of unfamiliar words and word groups;
- Recognise main accents;

Speaking

- engage with increased confidence in conversation on every day topics and a range of specialised ones;
- present facts and ideas with the help of visual aids;
- Design and deliver presentations on a given topic;
- Use a range of vocabulary in interaction;
- Produce language with an increased degree of pronunciation and intonation.

Reading

- Use pre-reading strategies (skimming, scanning, predicting, previewing) to identify main ideas of a wide range of texts;
- Take notes from reading materials;

- Use reading to develop or stimulate their own ideas;
- Use mono and bilingual dictionaries with increasing efficiency;
- Read and comprehend a variety of level appropriate texts and identify grammar and spelling errors;
- Read for different purposes;
- Demonstrate ability to read critically and select information;

Writing

- Master pre-writing strategies (brainstorming, mind mapping and outlining);
- Produce short texts (paragraphs, formal and informal letters, short essays, short narratives, summaries); on a range of topics.

Course requirements

Attendance: Regular attendance is mandatory for the course. Students are expected to attend 80% of scheduled classes. Failure to comply with the requirement will be penalized by not having students' index signed, which will lead to further administrative measures.

Assignments: Students are required to complete a variety of individual and group assignments that derive from the course content. Students should hand in all assignments by the due date and if unable to do so, must provide appropriate documentary evidence. Failure to do so will result in penalties.

Assessment: Final course grades will be composed of the following:

Students are required to submit weekly assignments. Their assignment will be graded and the average of the three best graded assignments will count as essential portion of the final grade.

Students who fail to meet the assessment requirements will not be entitled to taking their final examination until they have completed their leftover assignments.

Coursework 40%

4x10%

Tasks which integrate examples of the following:

- Listening
- Group oral presentations
- Writing tasks in different registers
- Investigative tasks
- Grammar tests
- Written and oral summaries/commentaries

Attendance and participation: 10%

Coursework 40% (3 extended written assignments, 1 oral assignment)

Exam 50% - 2 hour paper based examination consisting of four sections:

1. Listening
2. Reading
3. vocabulary
4. Written composition

Grades:

60- 67 points = 6

68-75 points = 7

76-84 points = 8

85-92 points = 9

93- 100 points = 10

Course content

Week 1-4

MODULE 1 - Learning and Teaching

Discovering your learning style

Becoming an independent learner

Education around the world

Exploring different education systems

Week 5-8

MODULE 2 - Media and Society

Watching and listening to the news

Reading newspapers and magazines

The language of the press

Reporting objectively

Week 9-12

MODULE 3 - English for work

Finding a job

Building your business vocabulary

Writing a CV

Emails and business letters

Weeks 13

Revision of Modules 1-3

Week 14

End-semester test

Course materials: A selection of materials from level appropriate course books, reference materials and topic-based material will be used as appropriate. Much of the material will be derived from authentic print and audiovisual media.

Equivalence

Successful completion of English 1 is approximately equivalent to reaching Levels A2/B1 of the Common European Language Framework.

University of Prishtina

Faculty of Philology

Department of English Language and Literature

Subject: English 2

Bachelor/ Compulsory

Year I - Semesters II

Credits: 7 ECTS

Lectures: Integrated skills 1 (45mins) per group

Tutorials: Listening and speaking (90mins) per group

Reading and writing (90mins) per group

Method of delivery: Learning centred & interactive

Course description

English 2 is a practical non-theoretical course aiming at the development of students' abilities in receptive (listening, reading) and productive skills (speaking writing). Although the main focus will be in the development of communicative skills, the course will also integrate other aspects of language use, such as structures and vocabulary development. The approach adopted for the course is task-based whereas the teaching materials to be used will be topic-based.

The aims of course

- enable students to communicate in the target language at this particular level;
- increase students' confidence and ability to communicate with native and non-native speakers of English both in speaking and in writing;
- develop students' study skills and a range of language learning skills;
- enable students to combine language work with real life skills;
- promote and encourage independent learning.

Learning outcomes

Listening

- Listen and demonstrate understanding of gist and/or specific information in spoken texts;

- understand a wide variety of spoken discourse (lectures, peers, recorded passages);
- understand the majority of films, news items on topics of personal and professional interest;
- Take notes and summarise oral texts;
- Infer the meaning of unfamiliar words and word groups;
- Recognise main accents;

Speaking

- engage with increased confidence in conversation on every day topics and a range of specialised ones;
- present facts and ideas with the help of visual aids;
- Design and deliver presentations on a given topic;
- Use a range of vocabulary in interaction;
- Produce language with an increased degree of pronunciation and intonation.

Reading

- Use pre-reading strategies (skimming, scanning, predicting, previewing) to identify main ideas of a wide range of texts;
- Take notes from reading materials;
- Use reading to develop or stimulate their own ideas;
- Use mono and bilingual dictionaries with increasing efficiency;
- Read and comprehend a variety of level appropriate texts and identify grammar and spelling errors;
- Read for different purposes;
- Demonstrate ability to read critically and select information;

Writing

- Master pre-writing strategies (brainstorming, mind mapping and outlining);
- Produce short texts (paragraphs, formal and informal letters, short essays, short narratives, summaries); on a range of topics.

Course requirements

Attendance: Regular attendance is mandatory for the course. Students are expected to attend 80% of scheduled classes. Failure to comply with the requirement will be penalized by not having students' index signed, which will lead to further administrative measures.

Assignments: Students are required to complete a variety of individual and group assignments that derive from the course content. Students should hand in all assignments by the due date and if unable to do so, must provide appropriate documentary evidence. Failure to do so will result in penalties.

Assessment: Final course grades will be composed of the following:

Students are required to submit weekly assignments. Their assignment will be graded and the average of the three best graded assignments will count as essential portion of the final grade. Students who fail to meet the assessment requirements will not be entitled to taking their final examination until they have completed their leftover assignments.

Coursework 40%

4x10%

Tasks which integrate examples of the following:

- Listening
- Group oral presentations
- Writing tasks in different registers

- Investigative tasks
- Grammar tests
- Written and oral summaries/commentaries

Attendance and participation: 10%

Coursework: 40% (3 extended written assignments, 1 oral assignment)

Exam: 50% - 2 hour paper based examination consisting of four sections:

5. Listening
6. Reading
7. Vocabulary
8. Written composition

Grades:

60- 67 points = 6

68-75 points = 7

76-84 points = 8

85-92 points = 9

93- 100 points = 10

Course content

Week 1-4

MODULE 1 – Academic English

Taking part in lectures

Critical thinking

The language of seminars

The features of academic writing

Week 5-8

MODULE 2 – Varieties of English

Englishes

Standard English and dialect

British and American English

Recognising accents

Week 9-12

MODULE 3 – People and identities

European citizenship

Expansion of EU

The Euro

Globalisation

Weeks 13

Revision of Modules 1-3

Week 14

End-semester test

Course materials: A selection of materials from level appropriate course books, reference materials and topic-based material will be used as appropriate. Much of the material will be derived from authentic print and audiovisual media.

Equivalence

Successful completion of English 2 is approximately equivalent to reaching Levels B1/B2 of the Common European Language Framework.

Appendix 6.1. Student questionnaire in English

Name: Age: Nationality:

Email address..... Place of residence:

A. Education/life history

Use the space in dots to respond to the questions below. If you need more space, please continue on the next page.

1. What languages do you speak?

2. At what age did you first study English?.....

3. Where did you study English?.....

4. Have you ever lived/studied abroad? If yes, where and for how long?

5. On average, what have most of your grades been in the first year of your studies?
.....

6. Have you passed English 1 Yes No (Please circle the answer)

If yes, please circle the received grade 6 7 8 9 10

7. Have you passed English 2 Yes No (Please circle the answer)

If yes, please circle the received grade 6 7 8 9 10

8. What is your current employment status? Complete one of the following:

- a) Employed full-time..... Numbers of hours per week.....
Description of job.....
- b) Employed part-time.....Number of hours per week
Description of job.....
- c) Not employed outside home
- d) Seeking employmentWhat type of job
.....

9. What is the highest level of formal education obtained by your parents(guardians)?

Check one for each parent.

	Father	Mother
Primary school
Some high school
High school graduate
Some college
College degree
Some graduate school
Graduate degree
Don't know/not applicable

10. Do you have any brothers or sisters?

No..... Yes..... How many?

11. If yes, how many of your brothers and sisters have reached each of the following education levels? Count each sibling only once and include him/her in the highest educational level that he/she has achieved. Do not include yourself.

	Number
Graduate from college
Attended college but did not graduate
Now attending college
Graduate from high school but did not attend college
Now attending high school
Not yet reached high school age

B. Reading and writing experience

1. What kind of texts do you mostly read in your mother tongue? Please specify, e.g. newspaper articles, emails, novels, text messages, reports, letters, memos etc

2. What kind of writing do you mostly produce in your mother tongue? Please specify, e.g. reports, emails, essays, notes, memos, text messages etc.

3. What kind of texts do you mostly read in English? Please specify, e.g. newspaper articles, emails, novels, text messages, reports, letters, memos etc.

4. What kind of writing do you mostly produce in English? Please specify, e.g. reports, emails, essays, notes, memos, text messages etc.
5. Did you practice writing in English 1/English 2 modules? Please circle the appropriate answer

English 1 YES NO

English 2 YES NO

If yes, how often did you write?

Often

Occasionally

Rarely

Never

What kind of writing? (Check all that apply)

Essay exam answer

Argumentative Paper

Personal narrative

Summary

Report

Research paper

Group paper

Letter

Short story

Other (Please specify) _____

6. Have you received English writing instructions outside formal education? (outside high school, college) Circle the appropriate answer YES NO

If yes, where did you receive writing instructions (please specify)

.....

For how long?

What kind of writing were you required to produce? Please specify, e.g. reports, emails, essays, notes, memos, text messages etc.

.....

C. Students' goals and module expectations

1. Why did you enroll in English Language and Literature programme?
2. What do you expect to do upon completion of this programme?
3. What are your expectations from English for Academic Purposes modules?
4. What difficulties do you think you might have with reading and writing in this module?

5. What do you plan to do to overcome these difficulties?

D. Process of writing and feedback

1. What do you do before you start writing?
2. How do you develop and finish your writing?
3. Who do you have in mind when you write?
4. When you write, are you required to write more than one draft?
5. When you write, do you usually discuss your writing with your teacher?
6. What kinds of feedback do you usually receive on your writing?

E. Is there anything else that you would like to say about your reading, writing and feedback experience?

Thank you for completing this questionnaire.

F. **Participation in this study.** Please circle one:

1. I want to take part in the study into academic writing.
2. I am not sure if I want to take part in the study into academic writing; I would like more information about it before deciding.
3. I do not want to take part in the study into academic writing.

Appendix 6.2. Student questionnaire in Albanian

Emri: Mosha: Kombësia:

Adresa e e-mailit..... Vendbanimi:

G. Të dhënat për shkollimin/jetën

Në hapësirën me pika shënoni përgjigjet tuaja. Nëse keni nevojë për më shumë hapësirë, shkruani në faqen tjetër.

12. Cilat gjuhë i flisni?

13. Në cilën moshë keni filluar të mësoni gjuhën angleze?.....

14. Ku e keni mësuar gjuhën angleze?.....

15. A keni jetuar / studiuar jashtë vendit ndonjëherë? Nëse po, ku dhe për sa kohë?

16. Cila është nota mesatare gjatë vitit të parë të studimeve?

17. A e keni kaluar provimin në lëndën English 1 Po Jo (Rrethoni përgjigjen)

Nëse po, rrethoni notën që e keni marrë 6 7 8 9 10

18. A e keni kaluar provimin në lëndën English 2 Po Jo (Rrethoni përgjigjen)

Nëse po, rrethoni notën që e keni marrë 6 7 8 9 10

19. Cili është statusi juaj aktual sa i përket punësimit? Plotësoni njërin nga optionet e dhëna:

- e) I/e punësuar me orar të plotë..... Orë pune në javë.....
Përshkrimi i punës.....
- f) I/e punësuar me orar jo të plotë.....Orë pune në javë
Përshkrimi i punës
- g) I/e papunë
- h) Duke kërkuar punëLloji i punës.....

20. Cili është niveli më i lartë i shkollimit të prindërve (kujdestarëve) tuaj? Plotësoni për secilin prind.

	Babai	Nëna
Shkolla fillore
Shkolla e mesme e papërfunduar
Shkolla e mesme
Shkolla e lartë e papërfunduar
Shkolla e lartë
Studimet e papërfunduara
Fakulteti
Nuk e di/asnjëri opcion nga të mësipërmit

21. A keni vëllezër apo motra?

Jo..... Po..... Sa?

22. Nëse po, sa prej vëllezërve apo motrave tuaja kanë arritur nivelin e mëposhtëm të shkollimit? Plotësoni opsionet e mëposhtme për secilin vëlla apo motër. Mos e përfshini veten.

	Numri
Ka mbaruar studimet
Ka vijuar studimet por nuk ka diplomuar
Vijon studimet tani
Ka mbaruar shkollën e mesme por nuk ka vijuar studimet
Vijon shkollën e mesme tani
Nuk ka arritur moshën për shkollë të mesme

H. Përvoja me të lexuarit dhe të shkruarit

7. Çfarë lloj tekstesh lexoni më së shpeshti në gjuhën tuaj? Ju lutem specifikoni, psh., artikuj gazete, e-maila, romane, mesazhe telefonike, raporte, letra, memorandume, etj.

8. Çfarë lloj shkrimesh bëni më së shpeshti në gjuhën tuaj? Ju lutem specifikoni, psh., raporte, e-maila, ese, shënime, memorandume, mesazhe telefonike, etj.

9. Çfarë lloj tekstesh lexoni më së shpeshti në gjuhën angleze? Ju lutem specifikoni, psh., artikuj gazete, e-maila, romane, mesazhe telefonike, raporte, letra, memorandume, etj.

10. Çfarë lloj shkrimesh bëni më së shpeshti në gjuhën angleze? Ju lutem specifikoni, psh., raporte, e-maila, ese, shënime, memorandume, mesazhe telefonike, etj.

11. A e keni ushtruar shkathhtësinë e të shkruarit në lëndët English 1/English 2? Rrethoni përgjigjen e duhur.

English 1 PO JO

English 2 PO JO

Nëse po, sa shpesh keni shkruar?

Shpesh

Herë pas here

Rrallë

Kurrë

Çfarë lloj shkrimesh keni shkruar? (Shënoni të gjitha ato që i keni shkruar)

___ Ese në provim

___ Ese argumentues

___ Ese narrativ

- ___ Përmbledhje
- ___ Raport
- ___ Hulumtim
- ___ Punim në grup
- ___ Letër
- ___ Tregim të shkurtër
- ___ Tjetër (Ju lutem specifikoni) _____

12. A keni marrë udhëzime si të shkruani në gjuhën angleze jashtë arsimimit formal?
(jashtë shkollës së mesme, fakultetit) Rrethoni përgjigjen e duhur PO JO

Nëse po, ku i keni marrë këto udhëzime? (Ju lutem specifikoni)

.....

Për sa kohë?

Çfarë lloj shkrimesh janë kërkuar nga ju? Ju lutem specifikoni, psh., raporte, e-maila, ese, shënime, memorandume, mesazhe telefonike, etj.

.....

I. Qëllimet e studentëve dhe pritjet nga lënda

6. Pse e keni regjistruar programin e Gjuhës dhe Letërsisë Angleze?
7. Çfarë prisni të bëni pasi ta keni mbaruar këtë program?
8. Cilat janë pritjet tuaja nga lëndët e Anglishtes për Qëllime Akademike?
9. Çfarë vështirësish mund të keni me të lexuarit dhe të shkruarit në këtë lëndë?
10. Çfarë keni ndërmend të bëni për t'i tejkaluar këto vështirësi?

J. Procesi i të shkruarit dhe komentet (feedback)

7. Çfarë bëni para se të filloni të shkruani?
8. Si e zhvilloni dhe e përfundoni shkrimin?
9. Për kë mendoni kur shkruani?
10. Kur shkruani, a pritët nga ju të shkruani më shumë se një draft?

11. Kur shkruani, a e diskutoni zakonisht shkrimin tuaj me mësimdhënësin?

12. Çfarë komentesh (feedback) merrni zakonisht për shkrimet tuaja?

K. A ka diçka tjetër që do të dëshironit të thonit për përvojën tuaj në të lexuar, të shkruar dhe komentet (feedback)?

Falemnderit që e keni plotësuar këtë pyetësor.

L. **Pjesëmarrja në këtë studim.** Ju lutem rrethoni një opcion:

1. Dëshiroj të marr pjesë në këtë studim për shkrimin akademik.
2. Nuk jam i/e sigurt nëse dëshiroj të marr pjesë në këtë studim për shkrimin akademik; Do të doja të merrja më shumë informata për të, para se të vendos.
3. Nuk dëshiroj të marr pjesë në këtë studim për shkrimin akademik.

Appendix 7.1. Participant information sheet and consent form in English

ETHICS COMMITTEE

ETHICS COMMITTEE

Consent Form

I have read and had explained to me by Blerta Mustafa the Information Sheet relating to this project.

I have had explained to me the purposes of the project and what will be required of me, and any questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to the arrangements described in the Information Sheet in so far as they relate to my participation.

I understand that my participation is entirely voluntary and that I have the right to withdraw from the project any time.

I have received a copy of this Consent Form and of the accompanying Information Sheet.

Name:

Signed:

Date:

Researcher:

Blerta Mustafa

Phone: +44 (0) 118 378 8512*Email:* b.mustafa@pgr.reading.ac.uk

School of Languages and European Studies

HumSS Building

The University of Reading

Whiteknights, PO Box 241

Reading RG6 6AA

Supervisor:**Information Sheet for Participants**

You are invited to participate in doctoral dissertation research study that I am conducting as a PhD student of English and Applied Linguistics at Reading University. The aim of the study is to explore the development of academic writing skills in English for Academic Purposes courses in English Language and Literature Department of the University of Prishtina. In understanding better the challenges you face with academic writing, we would be able to help future students by providing them with more appropriate guidance and advice. If you agree to take part in the study, you will be asked to:

- Complete a questionnaire on your previous academic reading, writing and feedback experiences (End of October 2012)
- Be interviewed four times during the academic year. The first interview will be conducted in November 2012 and the last one in June 2013. Each interview will be arranged at your most suitable convenience and it will last no more than one hour. All interviews will be recorded using an audio recorder. You are expected to talk about your writing and reading experiences in EAP courses.

- Email me your journal entries. At the end of each term you will be asked to write to prospective students about your experience with writing in EAP and advising them what they should do to make the most of the opportunities for learning. These entries should not take more than 20 minutes of your time.
- Give me permission to examine your writing assignments submitted for the EAP course(s)

In return for your participation I will offer you advice/feedback on your diploma (exit) paper at the end of next academic year.

The consent forms will be kept securely in the School of Literature and Languages for a reasonable time after the project. The interview data will be kept securely in researcher's filing cabinet. The data will be used only for the purposes of this study and the only people who will have access to it will be the researcher, the supervisor and the examiners. In order to protect your identity, pseudonyms will be used. Participation is on voluntarily basis. You have the right to withdraw from the study at any stage of the project without giving any reason.

This project has been subject to ethical review by the School Ethics and Research Committee, and has been allowed to proceed under the exceptions procedure as outlined in paragraph 6 of the University's *Notes for Guidance* on research ethics.

If you have any queries or wish to clarify anything about the study, please feel free to contact my supervisor at the address above or by email at c.l.furneaux@reading.ac.uk

Signed

Blerta Mustafa

Appendix 7.2. Participant information sheet and consent form in Albanian

School of Literature and Languages

Department of English Language and Literature



KOMITETI ETIK

Formular pëlqimi

Deklaroj se Faqen Informative lidhur me këtë projekt e kam lexuar dhe ma ka sqaruar Blerta Mustafa.

Deklaroj se qëllimet e projektit dhe ato që kërkohen nga unë i kam të qarta, si dhe kam marrë përgjigje të plotë për çdo pyetje timen. Pajtohem me kushtet e përshkruara në Faqen Informative lidhur me pjesëmarrjen time në këtë projekt.

Deklaroj se e kam të qartë se pjesëmarrja ime është krejtësisht në baza vullnetare dhe se kam të drejtë të tërhiqem nga projekti në çdo kohë.

Deklaroj se e kam marrë një kopje të Formularit të pëlqimit dhe të Faqes Informative.

Emri:

Nënshkuar:

Data:

Department of Applied Linguistics

School of Languages and European Studies

HumSS Building

The University of Reading

Whiteknights, PO Box 241

Reading RG6 6AA

Researcher:

Blerta Mustafa

Phone: +44 (0) 118 378 8512

Email: b.mustafa@pgr.reading.ac.uk

Supervisor:

Faqja Informative për Pjesëmarrësit

Ftoheni të merrni pjesë në hulumtimin e disertacionit të doktoraturës të cilin jam duke e bërë si studente e studimeve të doktoratës në Degën e Gjuhësisë së Aplikuar në Universitetin e Redingut. Qëllimi i këtij studimi është të hulumtohet zhvillimi i shkathtësive të shkrimit akademik në lëndët Anglishtja për Qëllime Akademike (AQA – EAP) në Degën e Gjuhës dhe Letërsisë Angleze të Universitetit të Prishtinës. Me të kuptuar më mirë sfidat me të cilat ballafaqoheni ju në shkrimin akademik, ne do të mund t’u ndihmonim studentëve të ardhshëm

duke u ofruar atyre më shumë udhëzime dhe këshilla. Nëse pajtoheni të merrni pjesë në studim, nga ju do të kërkohet që:

- Të plotësoni një pyetësor lidhur me shkollimin dhe përvojat e mëhershme në lexim dhe shkrim akademik, si dhe në vlerësim (dhjetor, 2012)
- Të intervistoheni katër herë gjatë vitit akademik. Intervista e parë do të mbahet në dhjetor të vitit 2012 dhe ajo e fundit në qershor të vitit 2013. Secila intervistë do të mbahet atëherë kur është më e përshtatshme për ju dhe nuk do të zgjasë më shumë se një orë. Të gjitha intervistat do të regjistrohen me regjistrues zëri. Nga ju pritët të flisni për përvojat tuaja në shkrim dhe lexim akademik në lëndët Anglishtja për Qëllime Akademike – EAP.
- Të m’i dërgoni me email përgjigjet tuaja në dy pyetje. Në fund të secilit semestër nga ju do të kërkohet që t’u shkruani studentëve të ardhshëm për përvojat tuaja në shkrim në EAP, si dhe t’i këshilloni se çfarë duhet të bëjnë që të përfitojnë sa më shumë nga mundësitë për mësim. Kjo nuk do t’ju marrë kohë më shumë se 20 minuta.
- Të më lejoni t’i kontrolloj punimet tuaja me shkrim të dorëzuara në EAP për qëllim të hulumtimit tim.
- Të më përgjigjeni në pyetjet për qëllime sqarimi së paku dy herë në semestër.

Në anën tjetër, unë do t’ju jap vlerësimin tim për një punim tuajin me shkrim nga modulet tjera në fund të secilit semestër.

Formularët e pëlqimit do të mbahen nën siguri në Universitetin e Redingut dy vite pas përfundimit të tezës së doktoraturës. Të dhënat nga intervistat do të mbahen nën siguri në dosje në kabinetin e hulumtueses. Të dhënat do të përdoren vetëm për qëllime të këtij studimi dhe të vetmit njerëz që do t’i kenë në dispozicion janë hulumtuesja, mentorja dhe komisioni provues.

Do të përdoren pseudonimet me qëllim të ruajtjes së identitetit tuaj. Pjesëmarrja është në baza vullnetare. Keni të drejtë të tërhiqeni nga studimi në cilëndo fazë të projektit pa dhënë asnjë arsye. Kjo assesi nuk do të ndikojë në vlerësimin tuaj nga lënda.

Ky projekt i është nënshtruar shqyrtimit etik nga ana e Komitetit të Shkollës për Etikë dhe Hulumentim dhe është lejuar që të vazhdojë sipas procedurës siç parashihet në paragrafin 6 të Udhëzuesit të Universitetit për etikën në hulumentim.

Nëse keni ndonjë pyetje apo dëshironi të merrni sqarime lidhur me këtë studim, mund ta kontaktoni mentoren time në adresën e lartshënuar ose me email në adresën elektronike c.l.furieux@reading.ac.uk.

Nënshkruar

Blerta Mustafa

Appendix 9.1. Interview questions in English

Interview 1

1. Can you tell me about your previous education?
2. Can you tell me about your experience in learning English?
3. Can you tell me about your experience with writing in the first year of studies?
4. Can you tell me about your experience with reading in the first year of studies?
5. What were the biggest challenges that you had with writing and reading in the first year of studies?
6. Can you tell me about writing and reading that you do outside faculty, that is, apart from the ones you do for your studies?
7. Can you tell me how do you find the course so far, English for Academic Purposes, and do you have any concerns?
8. Can you tell me about your writing process?
9. Do you see any changes?
10. Can you tell me about feedback you received?
11. How much do you think peer feedback helped you?
12. Can you then tell me about teacher feedback?
13. Do you think about the reader?
14. Do you think that anything you have learned in EAP about reading and writing could help you in other courses?
15. Any other comments?

Interview 2

1. Can you tell me about your experience with multiple-draft writing?
2. Do you consider feedback as useful?

3. What do you think about peer feedback?
4. Did you make any changes in your work as a result of feedback?
5. Can you show me some examples of useful feedback?
6. Do you think you gave constructive feedback?
7. In EAP 1, what did you learn about essay writing?
8. Do you think your writing skills have changed?
9. Can you tell me about your experience with the first assignment?
10. Did you have any difficulties in general related to the first assignment?
11. You have your portfolio in front. Can you tell me about your experience with the second assignment?
12. When you wrote the second assignment, did you think about the reader?
13. What goal did you want to achieve with this assignment?
14. Can you tell me about your experience with the third assignment, in which you did not get any feedback?
15. Can you describe the process of writing the third assignment?
16. In the third assignment, did you think about the reader?
17. What goal did you want to achieve when you finished the assignment?
18. Can you tell me about your experience with reading materials for the second paper?
19. Which aspects of reading seemed more challenging to you?
20. Can you tell me how you felt when you got your grade?
21. Any other comments?

Interview 3

1. Can you tell me about the working process on on-going project in EAP 2?
2. How do you find the work in groups?

3. Have you as a group or individually done any outline on what the report would look like?
4. Do you have any concerns regarding the project?
5. How do you find the whole experience of writing the multi-draft questionnaire?
6. Who did you have in mind when you wrote the questionnaire?
7. How did you find piloting in general?
8. What do you think about peer feedback?
9. How did you find the experience of receiving teacher and peer feedback in class?
10. Have you made any changes in your work as a result of feedback?
11. Can you tell me if the feedback from others was useful?
12. How did you feel when you received feedback?
13. What do you think you have learned from the feedback you received?
14. Do you think that feedback that you received in previous papers is helping you in writing the project?
15. What do you think you have learned regarding the whole process of writing a research project?
16. Do you think your writing skills have changed over time?
17. Can you tell me something about your experience in reading materials in EAP 2?
18. Any other comments?

Interview 4

1. Can you tell me if you see any differences between the essay you wrote in the beginning of the academic year, and the one you wrote at the end of the academic year?
2. Did you use brainstorming or outlining in the first essay?
3. Have you thought about the reader when you wrote both essays?
4. What goal did you want to achieve?

5. Can you tell me if your writing skills have changed over time?
6. Did you have difficulties with academic writing during the year?
7. What aspects of writing do you still find challenging?
8. Can you tell me about your experience with academic reading in EAP courses?
9. What aspects of reading do you still find challenging?
10. Can you tell me about the feedback you received during the year?
11. Has your approach towards feedback changed since the first semester?
12. Do you see any difference in the quality of feedback you received in the beginning and now?
13. How different do you feel compared to the first semester regarding writing?
14. Can you tell me what influenced most the change of your writing skills?
15. Have EAP courses fulfilled any of your goals?
16. Do you think that in the future you will use the things you have learned in EAP?
17. If EAP were elective courses, would you recommend them to future students and why?
18. What competences would you like to have had before you began the EAP so that it would have been easier for you with the EAP tasks?
19. Any other comments?

Appendix 9.2. Interview questions in Albanian

Intervista 1

1. A mund të më tregosh për shkollimin e mëhershëm?
2. A mund të më tregosh për përvojën tënde me mësimin e gjuhës angleze?
3. A mund të më tregosh për përvojën tënde me shkrimin në vitin e parë të studimeve?
4. A mund të më tregosh për përvojën tënde me leximin në vitin e parë të studimeve?
5. Cilat ishin sfidat më të mëdha me shkrimin dhe leximin në vitin e parë të studimeve?
6. A mund të më tregosh për shkrimin dhe leximin që bën jashtë fakultetit, përveç atyre që i bën për studimet e tua?
7. A mund të më tregosh si po të duket lënda Anglishtja për Qëllime Akademike (AQA) dhe a ke ndonjë brengë?
8. A mund të më tregosh për procesin e shkrimit?
9. A po vëren ndonjë ndryshim?
10. A mund të më tregosh për feedback (komentet dhe sugjerimet) që e ke marrë?
11. Sa mendon se të ka ndihmuar feedback (komentet dhe sugjerimet) nga kolegët?
12. A mund të më tregosh për feedback (komentet dhe sugjerimet) që e ke marrë nga mësimmthënësja?
13. A mendon për lexuesin?
14. A mendon se gjërat që ke mësuar për leximin dhe shkrimin në AQA mund të të ndihmojnë në lëndët tjera?
15. Ndonjë koment tjetër?

Intervista 2

1. A mund të më tregosh për përvojën tënde me shkrimin në disa drafte?
2. A e konsideron feedback (komentet dhe sugjerimet) të dobishëm?

3. Çka mendon për feedback (komentet dhe sugjerimet) nga kolegët?
4. A ke bërë ndryshime në punën tënde si rezultat i feedback-ut (komenteve dhe sugjerimeve)?
5. A mund të më tregosh disa shembuj të feedback-ut (komenteve dhe sugjerimeve) të dobishëm?
6. A mendon që di të japësh feedback (komente dhe sugjerime) konstruktiv?
7. Në AQA 1, çka ke mësuar për shkrimin e eseve?
8. A mendon se shkathhtësitë tua të shkrimit kanë ndryshuar?
9. A mund të më tregosh për përvojën tënde me detyrën e parë?
10. A ke pasur ndonjë vështirësi lidhur me detyrën e parë?
11. E ke portfolion këtu para vetes. A mund të më tregosh për përvojën tënde me detyrën e dytë?
12. Kur e ke shkruar detyrën e dytë, a ke menduar për lexuesin?
13. Çfarë qëllimi ke dashur të arrish me këtë detyrë?
14. A mund të më tregosh për përvojën tënde me detyrën e tretë, në të cilën nuk ke marrë feedback (komente dhe sugjerime)?
15. A mund ta përshkruash procesin e shkrimit për detyrën e tretë?
16. Në detyrën e tretë, a ke menduar për lexuesin?
17. Çfarë qëllimi ke dashur të arrish kur e ke përfunduar detyrën?
18. A mund të më tregosh për përvojën tënde me leximin e materialeve për detyrën e dytë?
19. Cilat aspekte të leximit të janë dukur më sfiduese?
20. A mund të më tregosh si je ndjerë kur e ke marrë notën?
21. Ndonjë koment tjetër?

1. A mund të më tregosh për procesin e punës në projektin aktual në AQA 2?
2. Si po të duket puna në grupe?
3. A keni bërë si grup apo individualisht outline për atë si do të duket raporti?
4. A ke ndonjë brengë lidhur me projektin?
5. Si po të duket tërë përvoja me shkirmin e pyetësorit në disa drafte?
6. Kë e ke pasë në mendje kur e ke shkruar pyetësorin?
7. Si të është dukur pilotimi në përgjithësi?
8. Çka mendon për feedback (komentet dhe sugjerimet) nga kolegët?
9. Si të është dukur përvoja me marrjen e feedback (komentet dhe sugjerimet) nga mësimdhënësja dhe kolegët në klasë?
10. A ke bërë ndryshime në punën tënde si rezultat i feedback (komenteve dhe sugjerimeve)?
11. A mund të më tregosh nëse feedback (komentet dhe sugjerimet) nga të tjerët ka qenë i dobishëm?
12. Si je ndjerë kur e ke marrë feedback (komentet dhe sugjerimet)?
13. Çka mendon se ke mësuar nga feedback (komentet dhe sugjerimet që e ke marrë)?
14. A mendon se feedback (komentet dhe sugjerimet) që e ke marrë në punimet e kaluara po të ndihmon me shkrimin e projektit?
15. Çka mendon se ke mësuar lidhur me tërë procesin e shkrimit të hulumtimit?
16. A mendon se shkathtësitë e tua të shkrimit kanë ndryshuar?
17. A mund të më tregosh për përvojën tënde me leximin e materialeve në AQA2?
18. Ndonjë koment tjetër?

Intervista 4

1. A mund të më tregosh nëse po vëren ndryshime midis eseut që e ke shkruar në fillim të vitit akademik dhe atij që e ke shkruar në fund të vitit akademik?

2. A ke përdorë brainstorming apo outlining në eseun e parë?
3. A ke menduar për lexuesin kur i ke shkruar të dy esetë?
4. Çfarë qëllimi ke dashur të arrish?
5. A mund të më tregosh a kanë ndryshuar shkathtësitë tua të shkrimit?
6. A ke pasë vështirësi me shkrimin akademik gjatë vitit?
7. Cilat aspekte të shkrimit po të duken ende sfiduese?
8. A mund të më tregosh për përvojën tënde me leximin akademik në lëndët e AQA-s?
9. Cilat aspekte të leximit po të duken ende sfiduese?
10. A mund të më tregosh për feedback (komentet dhe sugjerimet) që e ke marrë gjatë vitit?
11. A ka ndryshuar qasja jote ndaj feedback (komenteve dhe sugjerimeve) që nga semestri i parë?
12. A po vëren ndonjë ndryshim në cilësinë e feedback (komenteve dhe sugjerimeve) që e ke marrë në fillim dhe tani?
13. Sa ndryshe ndihesh lidhur me shkrimin krahasuar me semestrin e parë?
14. A mund të më tregosh çka ka ndikuar më së shumti në ndryshimin e shkathtësive tua të shkrimit?
15. A i kanë përmbushur qëllimet e tua lëndët e AQA-s?
16. A mendon se në të ardhmen do t'i përdorësh gjërat që i ke mësuar në AQA?
17. Nëse AQA do të ishin lëndë zgjedhore, a do t'ua rekomandoje studentëve të ardhshëm dhe pse?
18. Çfarë kompetencash do të doje t'i kishe mësuar para se të filloje me AQA në mënyrë që ta kishe më lehtë me detyrat në AQA?
19. Ndonjë koment tjetër?

Appendix 10.1. Letter to prospective students

Drawing upon your experience with writing in EAP 1, write a short letter of advice to future EAP students outlining the key points that would help them succeed with special focus on writing. You can write the letter in Albanian or English, as you prefer. It should not take you more than 20 minutes of your time.

Appendix 10.2. Letter to prospective students (Sample)

Letter 1 (by Mrika)

Dear fellow student,

Having had the opportunity to be part of EAP 1 last year, I had the chance to get more knowledge on language and academic writing. After so many mistakes made and so many lessons learned, I finally managed to improve myself in academic writing. Therefore, I am addressing you my dear fellow student with some advice in order for you to get the most out of this course.

Firstly, you have to make your utmost not to miss any class (both lecture and tutorial) of this course. This is very important because every class covers different components of language and academic writing. So, if you miss any of these components, you will not be able to use them adequately in academic writing.

Secondly, you have to carefully follow the instructions provided by the course instructor and write them down. This will help you to get the main idea of how to finish the tasks assigned by the course instructor. Once you have the main instructions, you will be free to search different materials in internet. I am saying this because now I know what kind of information you can search and use from internet.

When a task is assigned, never leave it for the last moment. This is very risky, because in that case you miss the opportunity to get feedback from the course instructor and your work eventually will have so many mistakes.

Since your task in EAP 1 is to write essays, I would advise you, when asked by the instructor to give feedback to your fellow students, not to hesitate to tell the truth because this is the only way you can help your colleagues.

Before you start to write an essay, it is of high importance to define the main terms of an essay, such as: "Abstract", "Introduction", "Body", "Conclusion". If you have no clear idea of what each part of the essay contains, writing your essay will be very difficult.

When writing an essay, you have to define the title itself in order for you to have it clear how to work with other writing procedures in producing a good essay, such as: "brain storming", "outline".

During the course, you have to be in constant contact with the instructor and ask her/him about any unclear things you have. Do not make the mistake most of students do: get information about the assignments in EAP from anyone, but the instructor.

So, dear fellow student, you should take EAP 1 seriously, attend lectures and be active, because this course trains us for future. This course also makes it possible for us that through our academic speech and writing we deserve to be called proper linguists.

Appendix 11.1. Timed Essays T1 and T2

An international expert on education is coming to Kosovo to conduct (do) a research and would like to get current students use on the following matter:

Some people believe that a college or university education should be available to all students. Others believe that higher education should be available only to good students. What is your opinion?

Write an argumentative essay and express your point of view but give reasons for your answer. Include any relevant examples from your own knowledge and experience and support your opinion.

Write at least 250 words.

You have 40 minutes for this task.

Appendix 11.2. Timed Essays T1 and T2 - Sample

Sample Essay T1

Student name: Sihana

An international expert on education is coming to Kosovo to conduct (do) a research and would like to get current students use on the following matter:

Some people believe that a college or university education should be available to all students. Others believe that higher education should be available only to good students. What is your opinion?

Write an argumentative essay and express your point of view but give reasons for your answer. Include any relevant examples from your own knowledge and experience and support your opinion.

Write at least 250 words.

You have 40 minutes for this task.

If the main idea as after finishing high school, should good students continue university, and not the others, I believe that university education should be available to all students.

Many students in the time of university, when they actually decide what they are going to do with their life and what kind of profession they will choose, they change. It doesn't mean that's if he/she had bad grades in high school, she/he will not achieve later. In university time some of them study hard and they understand the real concept of learning and life. But in a way before you get to university you will have exams, so this is what they will tell firstly, if you are not going to study hard, don't bother. But in the same time a lot of other things happen, like a lot of students get to university even if they are not interested at all, but in the meantime they understand, by having exams, and if they fail they will know where they are supposed to go. It won't take longer for them.

Sample Essay T2

Student name: Sihana

An international expert on education is coming to Kosovo to conduct (do) a research and would like to get current students use on the following matter:

Some people believe that a college or university education should be available to all students. Others believe that higher education should be available only to good students. What is your opinion?

Write an argumentative essay and express your point of view but give reasons for your answer. Include any relevant examples from your own knowledge and experience and support your opinion.

Write at least 250 words.

You have 40 minutes for this task.

Whether a college or university education should be available to all students, or only to good students it is in a way a bit problematic. As far as I'm concerned a university should be available to good students. The reasons are that ~~one can change the way~~ the way of learning ~~works~~ is more effective, ~~they~~ good students already have knowledge about some specific things regarding studying, and good students do not bother teachers. These points I will try to explain further.

When it comes to the question, what if a lecture is more effective, if there are only good students or mixed with the others, the answer is easy. Better students better the effectiveness of learning. If students are prepared, in this case we are talking about good students, the learning skills will be more effective to each of them. They study by themselves and also with the help of their teachers. ~~This then is doubled~~ is doubled.

When mentioned that good students already have knowledge about some specific things regarding learning, ~~I mean that~~ this means that they have been prepared enough to enter the university. They have read enough, and ~~maybe~~ they have craved for knowledge, and this is the reason that they already are informed about some study skills, that are necessary to have information for, when one enters the university.

Analysing the sentence that “good students do not bother teachers”, this ~~have~~ has its meaning, that a teachers does not need to go again and again and again, through the information, so they just need to be more confidente, in the way they will be some day practicing, things that they learn in books. The process in teaching is easier, with good students. The assignments given to good studaents, are always on time, in the desk of the teacher. So, also teachers are never bored, and even always there to help the students.

In conclusion, good student should enter the university. Good students set goals to themselves such as learn and get informations before, ~~get~~ do the assignments in time and they help in the effectiveness of the lecture. These students are the ones that achieve something in their lifes.

Appendix 12. List of two final topics piloted

An international expert on education is coming to Kosovo to conduct (do) a research and would like to get current students' views on the following matter:

- 1) Some people believe that a college or university education should be available to all students. Others believe that higher education should be available only to good students. What is your opinion?*

- 2) Some people believe that exams are not a reliable test of evaluating the ability of the students as luck plays a major role. Others think that exams are an adequate way to determine the ability of the students. What is your opinion?*

Write an argumentative essay and express your point of view but give reasons for your answer. Include any relevant examples from your own knowledge and experience to support your opinion.

Appendix 13. Translation related issues and procedures

Prior to translation of interviews a decision was made to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>go for a 'free' translation instead of word-by-word translation</i> (literal translation). Even though the latter would represent the words of the participants more objectively, such a practice would affect readability of the text and test reader's patience (Birbili,2000). Moreover, many of the language dilemmas cannot be found in dictionaries but 'rather in understanding the way language is tied to local realities' (Simon, 1996, p.130). In other words, the process of translating ideas expressed in one language to another language entails cultural decoding (Torop, 2002), which consequently cannot be expressed through literal translation.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>translate all interview data prior to analysis</i> as translating only essential categories and concepts would increase chances of mistranslation (Regmi,Naidoo, Pilkington, 2010).
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>use forward translation exclusively instead of back-translation or a combination of two</i>. Lack of consistency in regard to translation process and procedures (Regmi et al., 2010:20), the special effort needed to switch from one language to the other and the considerable time required for it (Halai, 2007:353), suggested that back-translation, i.e., translation of a text from the target language (English) into the source language (Albanian) and then its comparison with the original text to check accuracy is costly and time consuming (Chen & Boore, 2010). Moreover, back translation is criticized for focusing on 'closeness of fit rather than on the accuracy or truth' (Nurjanah, Mills, Park, Usher, 2014:2) and it requires at least two people to achieve more valid results (Birbili,2000). Using multiple methods would best ensure trustworthiness of data, however, due to inability to hire research

assistants/translators, and time pressure it was decided to proceed with forward translation.

- *to remain consistent in the process of forward translation steps were taken to ensure validity.* Initially, researcher's Critical Friend was asked to check translations of interviews. Later, to help me with the slow process of translation she offered to translate interview data. Consequently, researcher checked her translation for accuracy and equivalence of meaning by looking at the transcripts in the source language. Any discrepancies or ambiguities were discussed until a consensus was achieved. Nonetheless, it should be mentioned that during translation, both the researcher and Critical Friend kept having the reader from academia in mind; therefore the main consideration was to write in a logical and correct English (Halai, 2007; Bashiruddin, 2013)

- *to use English words in interviews and in the questionnaire when there is no equivalent in Albanian and/or to use both versions when there was doubt that students might not recognize the word in the source language.* During piloting it became evident that some terms in English did not have an equivalent in Albanian and/or some terms were unknown to students since they were not exposed to the practices that explained the word. For example the word 'feedback' was used in English because its meaning-helpful information or criticism that is given to someone to say what can be done to improve a performance, product, etc. (Merriem Webster) can not be expressed in the source language through a single word. There is a separate word for praise - *lëvdatë*, and a word for criticism – *kritikë*.

Appendix 14. Pre-piloting of essay topics

1. Many people believe that women make better parents than men and that this is why they have greater role in raising children in most societies. Others claim that men are just as good as women at parenting. Write an essay expressing your point of view. Give reasons for your answer. You should use you own ideas, knowledge and experience and support your arguments with examples and relevant evidence.
2. Technology is making communication easier in today's world, but at the expense of personal contact as many people choose to work at home in front of a computer screen. What dangers are there for a society which depends on computer screens rather than face-to-face contact for its main means of communication? Write an essay expressing your point of view. Give reasons for your answer. You should use you own ideas, knowledge and experience and support your arguments with examples and relevant evidence.
3. The mass media, including TV, radio and newspapers, have great influence in shaping people's ideas. Do you agree with this statement? Give reasons for your answer. You should use you own ideas, knowledge and experience and support your arguments with examples and relevant evidence.
4. Some people think that exams are not a reliable test of evaluating the ability of the students as luck plays a major role. Write an essay expressing your point of view. Give reasons for your answer. You should use you own ideas, knowledge and experience and support your arguments with examples and relevant evidence.
5. Many students choose to attend schools or universities outside their home countries. Why do some students study abroad? Write an essay expressing your point of view.

Give reasons for your answer. You should use you own ideas, knowledge and experience and support your arguments with examples and relevant evidence.

6. Some people believe that it is justifiable to terminate a person's life when they are terminally ill. Others claim that it is not. Write an essay expressing your point of view. Give reasons for your answer. You should use you own ideas, knowledge and experience and support your arguments with examples and relevant evidence.

Appendix 15. Piloting of essay topics

1. Some people think that exams are not a reliable test of evaluating the ability of the students as luck plays a major role. Others think that exams are an adequate way to determine the ability of the students. Which view do you agree with? Give reasons for your answer. You should use your own ideas, knowledge and experience and support your arguments with examples and relevant evidence.
2. Some people say that the Internet provides people with a lot of valuable information. Others think that access to so much information creates problems. Which view do you agree with? Give specific reasons and examples to support your opinion
3. Some people believe that a college or university education should be available to all students. Others believe that higher education should be available only to good students. Discuss these views. Which view do you agree with? Why?
4. 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 answers

Appendix 16. Guided questions in the selection of essay topic

- Does the essay answer the question?
- Does it provide sufficient supporting evidence?
- Which essay provides more examples?
- Which topic triggers longer responses?
- Which topic seems to keep students more focused?

Appendix 17. Transcription conventions

1. A standard orthographic transcription (i.e. **conventional English spelling**) will be adequate
2. Do not add **punctuation**, except full stops and capital letters at beginning of clearly demarcated sentences and commas, if relevant, to show structure/meaning eg:

The man, who I spoke to, was carrying a bag.

The man who I spoke to was carrying a bag

3. All **pauses** perceptible to the hearer should be represented in some way. Use a single dot in brackets (.) for a short pause (say, less than half a second), two dots (..) for a longer pause (half a second to one second) and (...) for longer pauses
4. If you are not sure that you have deciphered a section of speech correctly, indicate your **uncertainty** by surrounding the dubious bit in round brackets:

ice cream (to)day

5. If you really have **no idea of what is being said**, use empty brackets (). This is often the case with overlapping speech (see below).
6. Always indicate who **the speaker** is. I'll specify abbreviations for each transcription. In my interviews with students, r=researcher and s1, s2 etc = the students. It will be assumed that the speaker is the same until a new speaker-abbreviation is encountered on the left-hand side of the transcription.

7. Put an **identifier** at the beginning of each turn and also a closing mark:

<s3>And what was your feeling about that</s3>

This makes the data more manipulable - if I want to get all the things that s3 says and put them into one place, I can do that very easily.

8. Always make it clear if two or more speakers are **talking simultaneously**. This is best done by placing their speech on consecutive lines and using lines or brackets to show where the simultaneous speech begins and ends,

e.g.: r: interesting {work}

s1: {work}

(Blackwell, 2000), also used by Furneaux (2012)

Appendix 18. Extracts from 1-4 interview beginning

Interview 1

R: Saranda thank you very much for accepting to be part of my research and for finding time for the interview.

Saranda: First of all I am glad you have chosen me and I hope that I will be able to help you in your PhD research.

R: Thank you. Saranda, before I start I would like to clarify something for you. In my emails I have mentioned and highlighted the fact that when doing interviews or discussing the research I would like to be treated as a researcher only not as your teacher. Blerta is a teacher in the classroom, I am a researcher here i.e., it is very important that you answer the questions in the most sincere way, but at the same time to feel comfortable and express yourself freely because everything you say here will not affect your final evaluation in EAP... (*Interview 1, Saranda*)

Interview 2

R: X thank you very much again for finding time to come for the interview, and before I start, I would like to remind you how important it is to view me as Blerta the researcher and not as a teacher, and that everything that you say will remain confidential and in no way will it affect your final evaluation in EAP 2. (*Interview 2, Mimoza*)

Interview 3

R: XX thank you very much for your time.

Hana: You're welcome.

R: Firstly, I want to thank you for coming this early in the morning for the interview. And as usual, I would like to remind you how important it is to answer the questions most sincerely and treat me as a researcher, not as a teacher, and anything you say here will remain confidential and in no way will it affect your final evaluation in EAP 2. (*Interview 3, Hana*)

Interview 4

R: Thank you very much for your time. As usual, I will remind you how important it is to look at me as a researcher and not as a teacher, that is to respond as honestly, and anything you say will remain confidential, and in no way will reflect on the final assessment. (*Interview 4, Sihana*)

Appendix 19. A sample of a spreadsheet for coding the topic “peer feedback”

Student name	Interview 1	Interview 2	Interview 3	Interview 4	Codes
HEROLINDA	S3/1: he gave a good feedback () it is good () I knew it wasn't () because I knew I hadn't had enough time () because () I had to prepare for the pre-test () two pre-tests within a day () I didn't have much time to concentrate on EAP () and I know I had written it at the last moment () I wrote it and I knew it wasn't good (RF) S3/1: when I gave it to Dona () she said it was obvious I had done it at the last moment () that everything was a mess () that I had long sentences () that I had tried just to provide justifications () and finally that I hadn't mentioned any facts () and so far XXX has helped me the most (U+) S3/1: I know they try not to hurt my feelings () but I'd rather prefer to be told what my mistakes are () maybe not be told that it is wrong and that's it ()	S3/2: Yes, there were cases when we got hurt a little, not only me, but all of us, when we received negative feedback, but when I corrected the draft, I realised that it looked better, because they didn't want to hurt me, but they wanted the essay to be better, more comprehensible (RF) S3: I still think that students do not express their opinions, they are still reserved, but in general I think that peer feedback helped us, not only me, but most of us, because we realised how the essay develops not only from our perspective but from the other people's perspective as well, the way it looks to them, because we thought it was clear and we knew what we meant by it, but they told us that we were not saying what we wanted (A) S3/2: Before I submitted the final version I gave it to XXX and she gave her final version to me to check them, but we were not very objective because each of	s3/3: what I found interesting was that () in methodology () there were many cases when they said () too many details () but isn't methodology about many details () to show how you did it () the process () I found that strange. (R) S3/3: And I didn't understand what they meant by 'too many details' () for ex. they wrote 'too many details' but didn't write 'this detail is too much' or 'this' () but only 'too many details' () but where to delete things () which things to delete. (R) S3/3: Peer feedback in general () is a good way to improve () and () to correct and realise the missing things () and the things you didn't see and you can correct them (CHPOT) S3/3: Question 19 () read () 'Are you satisfied by the education quality offered by your department?' () and () some of the students said () 'I may be satisfied with the teaching quality () but not with learning quality (into) facilities () so we changed it () and wrote () 'Are you satisfied with the	S3/4: In the beginning it was more like, they looked at it and said 'it's good' and didn't elaborate further like 'you could do this differently, this one this way'. From that time until now things have changed a lot. For ex., when someone checks your paper they give you critique, they say 'you could have done it this way, this one that way, you didn't stick to the structure, this is wrong'. Things have changed for better and it helps us very much. For ex., when we had to write the report, we didn't do anything without receiving feedback, because it's like having someone in mind, the reader, and if the reader doesn't know what we were saying he/she tells you what is not clear, and asks for clarification (CHPOT) S3/4: Since the first semester. In the beginning I used to think "what could it possibly help us", but with time I realised that it helps us a lot in our work, it helps us write better, improve them, make them clear, express our thoughts better when we have in mind a reader that might not understand us. It helped us very much (CHPOT)	RF (1, 2, 3); A (1, 2); U (1, 2, 3) CHPOT (3, 4)

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