The Meta Discursive Dimension In Evaluative Practices And Improvement Of Writing Competence In French As A Foreign Language

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Abstract:
This research aims to understand better the role of metadiscursive feedback in improving the writing skills of FLE learners, taking into account teachers' different interventions and their impact on students' writing.
Based on a corpus of 42 drafts written by Algerian students in the third year of secondary school, the study seeks to identify how traces of rewriting reveal students' ability to adjust their discourse according to their teachers' expectations, explicit or implicit. The analysis also examines how teachers use these traces to effectively guide students in improving their written productions.

Keywords: First Draft, Metaspeech, Writer, Assessment, Teacher, FLE.

Introduction
Evaluation occupies a central and sometimes restrictive place in teachers' daily professional lives. Discussions about the number of subjects to prepare for exams, piles of papers to correct, and grades to assign frequently punctuate their concerns. Indeed, evaluation, although essential, is perceived as one of the most demanding activities after the courses themselves and their preparation. Correcting students' written productions is essential and regular, but evaluation practices should be improved.

Despite the extensive theoretical and practical exploration of assessment in the didactics of writing, providing feedback in the context of a written production aimed at developing and assessing learners' language proficiency and writing skills

remains complex and challenging. The word 'evaluation' often evokes a sense of unease among teachers, whether experienced or beginners, a feeling that is frequently expressed. However, this task is an essential educational activity in their professional life. The evaluating teacher typically begins with a first phase, during which he or she reads the paper to understand, evaluate, and criticize it. Depending on the difficulties encountered in the student's work, two subtasks are implemented: the detection of a problem and, if necessary, the proposal of a solution. Once this first step has been completed, a second phase follows: assigning a score to the paper and leaving comments. This model (Dessus & Lemaire, 2004) is particularly relevant because it highlights the different processes involved in correcting papers, namely the reading and the awarding of the grade. Limiting oneself to simple marking or proposing possible corrections is also revealing and helps define the profile of the teacher-corrector. The complexity of this process underscores the need for further research and improvement in evaluation practices.

As an interaction between the author and the reader-evaluator, metadiscursive markers play a crucial role in 'organizing a discourse or indicating the author's posture about its content or its reader' (Hyland, 2005, p. 4). In the context of evaluation, these markers become essential tools, as they allow the reader-reviewer to understand the author's intentions better and to judge the clarity and relevance of his or her writing. Their importance in facilitating understanding and judgment in the evaluation process cannot be overstated.

This contribution aims to analyze, on the one hand, the different traces of writing and rewriting present in the first drafts of 3rd year of secondary school and, on the other hand, to compare the various interventions of their teachers to accompany them in the development of a clean, organized and perfected writing despite all the imperfections it highlights. In short, we will answer the following question: What information do the traces of writing and rewriting present in the first drafts of 3rd-year secondary students reveal about the metadiscursive interaction between writer and evaluator? How do the traces of writing and rewriting in the first drafts of Secondary three students reflect their ability to adjust their speech according to the implicit or explicit expectations of their evaluating teacher?

We answer these questions by relying on a corpus of 42 texts written in French as a foreign language by Algerian students enrolled in the third year of secondary school. In addition, through the analysis of corrected texts, we will be interested in how teachers consider these traces of rewriting to lead students to rework their writing effectively.

1. Theoretical framework

1.1. Evaluation: dialogic interaction between writer and corrector

Assessment is a practice that is closely linked to learning activities, whether they are conducted by teachers or carried out by students. For a long time, in disciplines such as didactics, educational sciences, psychology, and docimology, it has been the subject of much research and reflection aimed at defining its contours and specifying the tools necessary for its implementation. It can be defined as a process for identifying a student's skill level or progress in a given skill. The objective of the assessment is to provide different actors (student, parents, teacher, institution) with a clear vision of the student's position concerning an established norm or hierarchy among peers.

However, this notion, whose field of application is constantly expanding, is often perceived as a fashionable concept, both in the business and the education world. It has different meanings depending on the context. Docimology, for example, encompasses school assessment and aims to study learning assessment's general and specific characteristics. It is generally agreed that assessment has two main objectives: the regulation and verification of learning. However, it also plays a decisive role in selecting students and their social integration, mainly through exams and competitions. Thus, the choice of assessment methods, tools, and techniques depends mainly on the educational objectives set. According to C. Garcia-Debanc and M. Mas, evaluating students' written productions is complex for teachers. The many difficulties it raises are attributed to various aspects:

> The specific difficulties in the evaluation of writing are first of all due to their multidimensional aspect: the various levels of organization of the texts are intertwined, so that teachers most often practice a normative evaluation (concerning the group's productions, without previously explained criteria), a partial evaluation (favoring criteria that a surface reading, spelling or syntax, for example, can identify). Standard (identical criteria regardless of the writings to be produced) and summative (errors are noted, but they are more than the subject of pedagogical treatment. (Garcia-Debanc & Mas, 2002, p. 117)

According to the correction process model (Roberge, 2005), the correction begins with reading the text (input). In this case, the teacher can read the text for the first time without making corrections to get a general idea of the student's production. As he reads, he spots one or more errors. He can determine

whether it is a microstructure or macrostructure error based on his declarative knowledge. He then tries to identify the nature of this error (misspelt word, grammatical dysfunction, logical inconsistency, etc.). If the error remains unidentified, the teacher will start reading again.

Once the error has been identified, the teacher seeks to understand the causes to decide whether to intervene in the student's text. This decision often depends on factors external to the teacher, such as his or her representations of the student and his or her skills. If the teacher chooses to annotate the paper, he or she will write comments. In the same way as for the writing processes (planning, writing, revising), the teacher-corrector plans his comments before writing them on the paper. He even rereads and revisions his comments after writing them or while they are written. Once the commentary is finished (writing phase), the teacher returns to reading the text (reading phase) and continues reading until he or she detects a new error (revision phase).

1.3. The metadiscursive dimension in evaluation

Metadiscourse refers to the language authors use to manifest themselves in their writings and communicate with readers. Two models of metadiscourse have been formulated: the reflexive model, which emphasizes the elements that organize the text (Ädel & Mauranen, 2010), and the integrative model, which encompasses a broader range of interpersonal resources used by authors, including how they construct their relationship with readers and the text (Hyland, 2005).

This dimension refers to "the verbalization of the writers' practices, their choices, the state of their work, the difficulties they encounter, the solutions they choose." (Colognesi & Lucchini, 2016, p.37). In other words, the subject-writer often uses implicit "self-reflexive discourses" during his or her writing activity to comment on his or her work, translate his or her impressions concerning the writing instruction, check, and self-correct. It is also defined by some as a heterogeneous set of linguistic resources that guide the reader in monitoring, interpreting, and evaluating the content of his or her text (Vande Kopple, 1985; Crismore et al., 1993), thus signaling the presence of an author who organizes the discourse and evaluates the content (Hyland, 2016).

In other words, this dimension concerns the verbalization of writers' processes, their choices, the state of their work, the difficulties encountered, the solutions they adopt, etc. These verbalizations do not emerge naturally or spontaneously. Teachers and peers can play an essential role through meta-cognitive mediation throughout the writing process to allow writers to express their approach. According to Reuter (2013), verbalizing knowledge and strategies in collaborative activities

can influence the development of this knowledge and strategies, thanks to peer contributions.

In other words, a dialogic interaction between the learner and the teacher assuming both roles is mediated by feedback feedback. This type of interactive dialogic written commentary can function as a form of "metasemantic mediation" (Coffin & Donohue, 2014). In other words, feedback acts as a vehicle for reflection and adjustment, where the learner can perceive and understand what needs improvement in his work and how he can reorient or reformulate his ideas to meet his reader teacher's expectations better. This process creates an active dialogue between the two parties, and it is this dynamic that is referred to as "interactive dialogic," in which the roles of the teacher and the learner come together and readjust as they correct and rewrite.

2. Methodology

2.1. Research participants

The participants in the research were students in the 3rd year of secondary school enrolled in a class of Literature and Philosophy. The latter comprised 46 students aged 19 to 20, whose level was visibly heterogeneous. The methodology to answer our questions consisted of writing a first draft in which the participants had to answer the following instruction: "Talk about a person who inspires you in the world. Explain her job, why she inspires you, and what you would like to learn from her. »

2.2. Design of the experimental protocol

The first group (G1) received only the writing instruction. In contrast, the second group (G2) received a document in which the instruction was accompanied by a series of questions highlighting the writing scenario and the difficulties encountered by these students. To answer the research questions, we have chosen to analyze the differences, the erasures, and all the traces of the writer-evaluator's dialogue. The first version took 45 minutes to write. Then, the teacher asked the students to copy the final text by attaching the first version. We then proceeded to compare the degree of improvement of these students' written texts to answer the following question: Which group of writers will bring more rewrites to its first version: the editors of the texts based on their teacher's annotations (G1) or the editors of the first drafts accompanied by the established grid (G2)?

3. Analysis of the results

Table 1: Traces of rewriting found in the first version

Trail	Group 1	Group 2
Scribbles	108	87
White	34	29
Off-topic words	46	19

Incomplete sentences	51	26
Native words	29	17

The data collected comes from 42 copies (21 copies for each version and each group). A list was made of all the traces that testify to the reflexivity and trial and error through which the group writers passed despite the requirements of the writing instructions. We have spotted erasures, blanks, words unrelated to the instruction proposed by the teacher, and many incomplete sentences. Similarly, we observed that some writers in both groups used their mother tongue (dialectal Arabic) to express themselves in a blockage situation when the French language words escaped them. In parallel with the classification of traces, we have identified various rewriting strategies that align this part with the work carried out in this direction (Fabre, 1990; Fabre-Cols, 2002; Doquet, 2012).

Table 2: Rewriting strategies

Rewrite strategy	Group 1	Group 2
Suppression	83	52
Replacement	41	29
Addition	158	107
Displacement	24	19
Total	306	207

The statistical analysis of the above data shows a difference between the number of rewrite operations performed by the writers in the two groups. Those who had the guide grid at their disposal had made less rewriting. However, it is important to note that there is no significant difference in length between versions 1 and 2. Therefore, the availability of the guide grid was independent of the length of the texts. On the other hand, we analyzed the teacher's corrections to deduce the main concerns for evaluating the students' written productions. Here is an illustration of what a transcription of the scriptural process could be based on the corrections made by the teacher, which are transcribed in red.

Table 3: Teaching metadiscursive traces

Traces	Number
Questions	43
Direct corrections	61
Feedback	39

Encouragement	52
Underline	67
Total	**262**

The analysis of the teaching metadiscursive traces in the table above reveals a varied evaluative practice engaged in correction and feedback. The 43 questions, such as "Why did you choose Oprah Winfrey?" and "Is he charismatic?" visibly show his desire to provoke reflection in the student, allowing him to rethink his production and initiate a metadiscursive interaction. The 61 direct corrections proposed indicate a more explicit intervention to help the writer immediately and correct his errors. The 39 commentaries, with their different types, complement these interventions by providing suggestions on well-targeted points and parts of the text. The 52 encouragements, such as "Bravo, you inspire me, you too!" and "Very good text!" play an essential role in the student's motivation by valuing his or her efforts in French as a foreign language. Finally, the 67 underscores reveal the attention paid to errors or key elements to be reviewed, often leaving the student responsible for correcting these errors. We present the following section two examples of the two contexts of rewriting:

Text E21: Rewriting from the teacher's corrections

Version 1 (Gr 1)	Version 2 (Gr1)
La personne qui m'inspire (**Tu peux la préciser**) ~~Elle travaille comme~~ médecin dans un hôpital de campagne **(s'agit-il peut être d'une petite clinique, non ?).** Elle ~~aide~~ les gens malades et leur ~~remonte moral.~~ Ce métier est ~~très~~ dur **(Pourquoi à ton avis ?),** mais elle ne plaint **(ortho)** jamais. Elle m'inspire qu'elle est ~~gentil~~ et ~~sérieuse.~~ J'aimerais apprendre à être aussi ~~motivé~~ **(dévouée, c'est mieux)** et à bien aider les autres dans ma vie, **(oui précise !)**	La personne qui m'inspire est **ma tante**. Elle est **médecin** dans un petit **hôpital de ville**. Elle **soigne** les gens malades et leur **donne beaucoup de courage**. Ce métier est difficile, mais elle ne **se plaint** jamais. Elle m'inspire parce qu'elle est **toujours patiente, souriante** et **travailleuse**. J'aimerais apprendre d'elle à être aussi **dévouée** et à bien **aider** les autres dans ma vie sociale et professionnelle.

The review of the rewriting of version 2 of student 21 of (Gr1) shows several significant improvements compared to the initial draft following the teacher's intervention. First, motivated by the comments written by the corrector **(You can specify it)**, the subject is clarified in the revision: the writer specifies that the person who inspires him is his aunt, which makes the sentence more complete and even more understandable. Then, the aunt's place of work is changed from a "field hospital" to a

"small city hospital" after reading the teacher's comment **(maybe it is a small clinic, right?).** This improves the accuracy of the place. In addition, the verb "help" is replaced with "treats," a more precise term to describe the activity of a doctor, and the expression "morale lift" is rephrased to "gives much courage," which makes the sentence more fluid and correct. The student also corrects a grammatical error: "Elle ne plaint jamais" becomes "Elle ne se complaint jamais," which respects the correct structure in French.

The revision enriches the description of the person's qualities, replacing "she is kind and serious" with "she is always patient, smiling and hardworking," which gives a more positive and detailed image of the aunt. The conclusion is also improved: instead of simply saying "in my life," the student specifies "in my social and professional life," making the objective more explicit and concrete.

The analysis of the rewrites reveals that most of the additions made by the students were relevant and correctly formulated. It is essential to emphasize that the teacher's annotation of a text is a valuable opportunity to point out errors and weaknesses and highlight the students' writing qualities, thus strengthening their motivation. However, comparing the initial and final versions of the two test groups shows that rewriting could have been more effective in students who used a guide grid to proofread and correct their first version. Indeed, these writers need a sufficiently developed reflexive eye, believing that their texts meet the expectations set by the instruction and the editorial requirements. This perception prevents them from simultaneously managing the global and local levels of the text during revision.

On the other hand, the analysis of the final versions highlights the positive impact of the corrections made by the teacher, mainly focused on language and syntactic structure. These annotations have primarily contributed to the improvement of the texts. It is relevant to emphasize that annotation is integral to metatextual discourse. This valuable tool accompanies and guides the writer throughout his writing process, helping him to refine his productions and develop better writing mastery.

Text E 5: Rewriting from the Guidance Grid

Version 1 (Gr 2)	Version 2 (Gr2)

La personne qui m'inspire est Cristiano Ronaldo, l'un des meilleurs joueurs au monde. Il joue dans un grand club et a marqué l'histoire avec ses nombreux records. Ce qui m'inspire chez lui, c'est son ambition et son dévouement. Il ne se contente jamais de ses réussites et cherche toujours à s'améliorer.	La personne qui m'inspire est Cristiano Ronaldo. Il est joueur de football et a joué dans plusieurs grands clubs a marqué l'histoire avec ses nombreux records, laissant une empreinte partout où il est passé. Ce qui m'inspire le plus chez lui, c'est son ambition, sa discipline et son dévouement. Il ne se contente jamais de ses réussites et cherche toujours à s'améliorer. Même dans les moments les plus difficiles, il trouve toujours la force de continuer. Il est un modèle de discipline et du courage J'aimerais être comme lui un jour.

This student proofread and modified his draft by integrating sentences to improve his text's clarity and richness. In this regard, Doquet's words (2014) are particularly relevant: according to him, there are two types of writers. The former rereads his text to enrich it, either by adding elements to the already written or by continuing the development of the text. On the other hand, the second proofreader checks certain aspects, such as meaning, punctuation, and syntax. This classification highlights the different approaches taken by students during the rewriting process.

The analysis of the two versions highlights several significant aspects of rewriting. In version 1 (Gr2), the pupil opts for a concise presentation by insisting on Cristiano Ronaldo's ambition and dedication. This version is distinguished by its simplicity and clear structure, which illustrates a first attempt at writing with well-established main ideas. However, the text needs more developed details, making it less convincing for a demanding reader.

In contrast, Version 2 (Gr2) shows an apparent effort to enrich and deepen the content. The student incorporated new elements, such as Ronaldo's journey through several major clubs, highlighting his lasting impact on each of them. Adding details about his qualities, such as his discipline and courage, shows a more accomplished reflection and a desire to make the text more fleshed out. In addition, the student introduces an emotional dimension with sentences such as "Even in the most difficult moments, he always finds the strength to continue," reinforcing the text's impact.

Both versions also reveal a work on coherence and lexical enrichment. For example, in Version 2, words like "imprint" or "discipline" translate a more precise and richer vocabulary. The student probably used a substitution and expansion strategy by reformulating the initial ideas with more detail and nuance.

This testifies to a real relationship with the text, where the student is not satisfied with a raw production but engages in in-depth revision.

Conclusion

In this research, we analyzed the impact of students' reflective and metadiscursive practices and teachers' metadiscursive evaluative practices on improving the written productions of 3rd-year secondary school students. On the reflexive level, the writer assumes the role of both writer and reader: he partially rereads his text before continuing the writing or carries out a global rereading after completing his text (Grésillon & Lebrave, 1984).

The study and analysis of the texts revealed traces of metalinguistic work, reflective activity in the students during writing, and metadiscursive interaction between their teachers. The traces of the latter, the first and second person pronouns used, such as "I, me, you, we, my, your, our," are markers of the reader's response in feedback comments. The teacher's corrections and comments were a resource to suggest improvements to the text considering the development of metadiscursive awareness.

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