

## Assessing the Writing Assessment The Perception of Saudi Graduate EFL Learners: A Case Study

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### Abstract

This research study followed a qualitatively based research design utilizing semi-structured interviews to investigate the perception and beliefs of Saudi graduate students registered on a Master of Arts (M.A) Applied Linguistics program at a major Saudi government university with regards to the writing assessment practices at the graduate level. The participants who volunteered to take part in this study, were ten male, Saudi MA Applied Linguistics students in their first year of the two-year MA Applied Linguistics course. The collected data, in the form of audio recordings of the participants' interviews, were transcribed verbatim and thematically analyzed. The analysis of the gathered primary data led to the emergence of four overall themes pertaining to the perceptions of the students of the writing assessments in the M.A. Applied Linguistics course. The study concludes with some pedagogical implications for the EFL graduate context. It also offers some recommendations for current EFL assessment practices and several directions for future research.

**Keywords:** postgraduate EFL learners, qualitative analysis, Saudi EFL context, writing assessment

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## 1.0 Background

Writing assessment is rarely a topic of agreement among theorists, practitioners, instructors, and even students in both first (L1) and second (L2) or foreign language (FL) graduate classes (Crusan, Plakans, & Gebril, 2016; Lam, 2018; Polio & Shea, 2014). Writing assessment in a foreign language has the same purpose as in first language classrooms. However, the context of a foreign language provides a completely different platform for writing assessment (Schoonen et al., 2003). One of the reasons why this topic is greatly debated in applied linguistics and second language acquisition research studies, is the fact that it involves so many elements and issues related to it. This is in addition to the fact that it involves a wide spectrum of perceptions and opinions of researchers as well as English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and English as a Second Language (ESL), practitioners.

### 1.1 Does Assessment Matter?

Writing assessment is rarely a topic of agreement among theorists, practitioners, instructors, and even students (Obeid, 2017). As educators, we are always questioning the best writing assessment methods for our students. We, too, question how and if we can come to a consensus about writing assessment practices. There are persistent questions that all instructors implementing writing assessments seek to answer: What are we trying to accomplish with writing assessments? Which method or methods should we choose? Multiple-choice tests, timed essays, portfolios, standardized tests, research papers, or no assessment at all? Ultimately, the decision of choosing the most appropriate assessment should align with the goals and the visions of the program (Smith, Howarth, & Lynch, 2016); everything must be contextualized to obtain meaningful consequences of our decisions. Moore, O'Neill, and Huot (2009) state that: "Context informs the decision we make as teachers. We consider not only what teaching methods are available but how they coincide with the mission of the school whether they support the goals of a particular program or a course" (p. 59). White (1995) supports this argument, mentioning, "No assessment device is good or bad in itself but only in context" (p. 34). Writing assessments take many shapes, all of which present their own advantages and disadvantages, most specifically in relation to the context in which they are given. However, the purpose of each approach to writing assessment remains the same: to improve the teaching and learning of writing (Crusan, 2010). A writing assessment that uses its local context (specific course outcomes, an actual budget, departmental needs, etc.) to appropriately measure the aptitude of students, and in turn is used to implement further or new pedagogical practices, is certainly the most useful approach to the assessment. As writing is a social activity (Bazerman, 2009; K. Hyland, 2016), it is crucial for those choosing assessment methods to acknowledge this truth to produce effective, reliable, and valid results (K. Hyland, 2016; Thompson & Wittek, 2016).

Recognizing this idea promotes assessments that are based on specific course outcomes, engages students in meaningful writings, and is assessed by another human. Together, these elements produce assessments that are well rounded, positioned to create the most helpful results for all parties involved: the students, the instructors, the department, and the university (Inoue et al., 2016; Pearson, 2017). Writing assessments in the second language (L2) classrooms have the same purpose as in the first language (L1) classrooms, which is a pertinent fact regarding this study. L2 writing assessment theories and practices are entirely borrowed from L1 theories and practices (Brown, 2001, 2003; Paul Kei Matsuda, 2001; Silva & Matsuda, 2012), yet the context of the L2 classroom provides an entirely different platform for an assessment.

As L2 writing students are required to write in the academic and social context of the L2, they come across challenges in writing to which native students are not attuned. This makes an assessment of L2 writing students much more difficult, as they are not writing from the same innate context that native students are capable of (Hyland & Hyland, 2006).

### *1.2 EFL Graduate Level Writing Assessment*

The EFL graduate context is immensely complex, as L2 students are asked to write lengthier, more intricate pieces in many genres (Rakedzon & Baram-Tsabari, 2017). Not only are the assignments more difficult, but also the assessments often match, as instructors begin to expect more growth and stronger writing from their students (Fujioka, 2018). However, little research has been conducted regarding L1 graduate student writing, and currently, no research exists in the area of L2 graduate student writing. As writing assessment should be greatly influenced by the context in which it is presented, it is crucial to research this untouched area of study, the L2 graduate student writing context. Though each study about writing assessment will be situated in its specific context, any study at the L2 graduate level will be groundbreaking and advantageous for the area of L2 writing assessments and graduate student writing assessments. As L2 writing assessment poses many challenges (Hamp-Lyons, 2008), and as writing is greatly emphasized in graduate studies (Kamler & Thomson, 2006; Wiggins, 1993), as well as assessments, for the most part, are an integral part of enhancing students' learning (Hamp-Lyons & Kroll, 1996; Leki, 2006; Weigle, 2002), these initiated the rationale for conducting this research study on a broader spectrum.

Although writing assessment in higher education, namely in Applied Linguistics programs, is greatly controversial and varies from one context to the next, there is a consensus on certain methods of assessment in most Applied Linguistics or Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) programs offered in North American, British, and Australian (NABA) English contexts. These Western perspectives of particular writing assessment methods translate into non-Western contexts such as the Saudi context, especially Applied Linguistics master's programs that focus on preparing EFL students to demonstrate scholarly work through writing for publications, research projects, writing in blogs, reflections, and presentations. The problem here is the contextual differences of popular writing assessment methods that impact non-Western master's Applied Linguistics programs differently. Though writing assessments aim to help students perfect and polish their academic writing (Mcarthur, 2014), it is significant to realize that not all assessment methods are created equally, and thus, may prove less effective than other methods available (Jin, Warrener, Alhassan, & Jones, 2017). In Applied Linguistics master's programs, students are required to compose myriad written texts to improve their academic writing skills. Here, the teachers are responsible for assessing their students' writing and commenting on their assignments, and students should be aware of their teachers' writing assessment practices because students are the primary and direct affectees of this complicated process.

When it comes to writing assessment at an advanced level, little research has been conducted in the Western context. There are a few studies lightly related to this topic: assessing writing abilities for social work master's students (Alter & Adkins, 2006); what tasks professors ask graduate students to write across disciplines (Cooper & Bikowski, 2007); analyzing English

as a second language (ESL) students' interaction with their professors about writing assignments (Fujioka, 2014); how L2 graduate students respond to discipline-based feedback (Kim, 2015); how doctoral students develop their writing abilities using different sources of feedback (Ondrusek, 2012); and examining the writing and response in a graduate course seminar (Cislaru, 2015; Prior, 2013). However, these studies were not able to examine the whole writing assessment practices, and their contexts, of a specific master's program. To the best of the knowledge of the researcher, as for the EFL graduate context, the teachers' writing assessment practices remain unexplored and uninvestigated. Thus, the current study aims to investigate this remote area of research (an M.A. Applied Linguistics program in Saudi Arabia) by investigating students' perceptions of writing assessments at the graduate level in an EFL and non-Western context.

### *1.3 Writing Assessment for the MA TESOL Applied Linguistics Course*

The Applied Linguistics master's program was chosen for this study for two main reasons. First, this program stresses writing, requiring students to write in English for nearly all assignments, and indeed all writing assessments. It was important to choose a program centered around writing as this study focuses solely on the writing of graduate students. Second, one of the main forms of learning for these students is through their writing assessments, which provides a great platform for collecting data.

Using the opportunity to dissect the writing assessments, and students' perceptions of these writing assessments that are present in this program, it provided an incredible chance to understand the strengths and weaknesses of certain assessments in this program's—and specific courses'—contexts. More specifically, this study, therefore, explored the perceptions of Saudi, English as a Foreign Language (EFL) graduate students regarding writing assessment practices in the Saudi context.

### *1.4 Purpose of the Study*

The rationale of this study stems from the hope that this study will illuminate the writing assessment practices at the graduate level in the Saudi context. Additionally, as the study of writing assessment is growing rapidly, it is significant to research the writing assessment of EFL students, especially at the graduate level where the skill of polished academic writing is crucial. Furthermore, as this study aims to assess the writing assessment practices used in a particular non-Western Applied Linguistics master's program from the students' point of view, it is significant to acknowledge that evaluating a writing assessment practice provides insight into the positives and negatives of the particular method in use. As such, this can then be used to improve upon the current assessment method or a new method can be implemented in its place.

### *1.5 Research Questions*

This research study is guided by the following main research question:

1. How do students perceive the writing assessment practices at the graduate level in the Saudi context?

### *1.0 Theoretical Framework*

The theoretical framework for a given study should serve the research, aiming to highlight the study's significance and emphasize its purpose. This understanding coupled with the purpose of this study—looking into how teachers assess graduate students' writing in the M.A. Applied Linguistics program in the Saudi context—has informed this research by the constructivism research paradigm. The constructivist lens, as it builds the process of meaning making, aided in exploring the individuals' experiences and perspectives and learn from their points of view about their teachers' assessment practices. As Clarke (2018) states: "This methodology [social constructivism] considers psychological, sociological, and cultural aspects of our lives as interdependent, and, as such, each has an influence on the other in the way in which we construct social life through relationships, feelings, and action" (p. 5). The latter, together with Vygotsky (1978) activity theory that was developed by Engeström (2001) and Bakhtin (1981) dialogic approach to learning, create a complete theoretical framework for this study, from data collection to data analysis.

### **2.0 Review of the Literature**

Writing is generally regarded as both a "socially situated practice" (Angove, 2016; Buchholz, 2015), formed by disciplinary discourse communities (Işık-Taş, 2018; Tran, 2014) or communities of practice (Matthews, Marquis, & Healey, 2017), and as a "socio-cognitive perspective" (Johnson, Constantinou, & Crisp, 2017; Wang, 2014), which is a practice that cognizant writers use to interact within a socially constructed and mediated world (Elola & Oskoz, 2017; Wells, Lyons, & Auld, 2016) while participating in discourses (Pare, 2017), all with the intention to write and continue learning how to write. We analyze the writing instructions and the writing assessment practices in a given context, the components of the context should be scrutinized.

#### *2.1 Activity Theory and Writing Assessment*

As such, the constructivism paradigm, as well as the activity theory, are the main theoretical frameworks of this study. The role of activity theory is to ensure the dialogue between the multiple perspectives within a system. This is where the dialogic approach to learning comes into play because of its nature that provides the communication between activity theory components (Kuutti, 1996). The activity theory is an excellent tool for understanding how writing assessments work within a given context. As there are numerous writing assessment approaches and methods, it can be challenging to choose the most advantageous assessment.

Perhaps the most critical element to consider is the context in which the assessment is given, which is where activity theory comes into play. Without understanding and catering to context, an assessment could be ineffectual (O'Neill, Moore, & Huot, 2009). Using activity theory to situate an assessment certainly raises the opportunity for fruitful assessments, for both students and instructors. Figure 1 illustrates the different elements an activity theory.

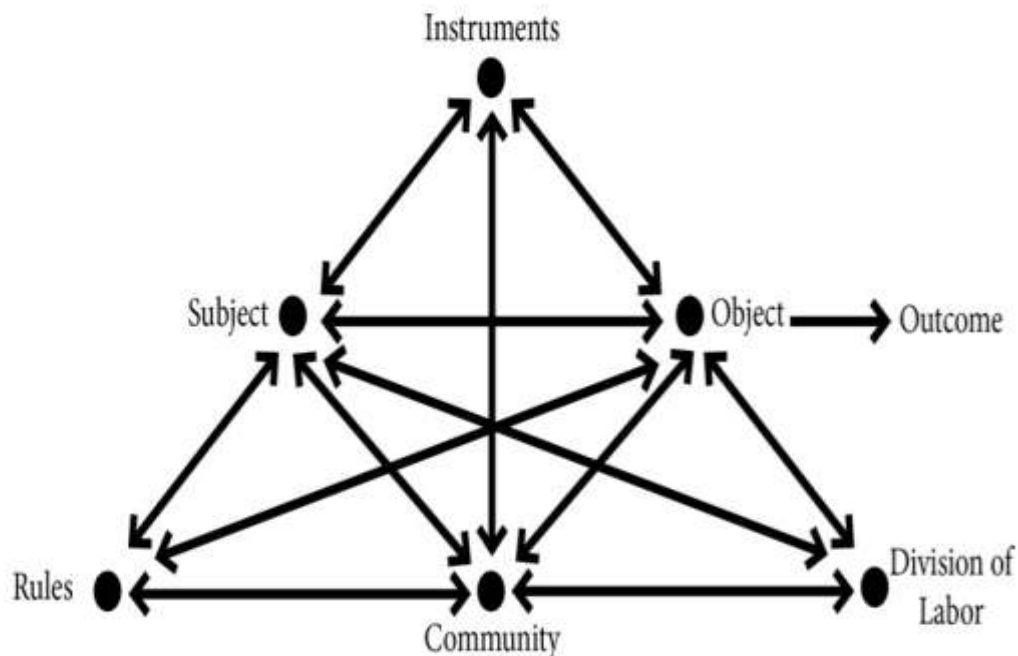


Figure 1. Activity theory.

### 2.2 Writing Assessment as a Social and Cultural Practice

Looking through activity theory as a lens illuminates just how social and cultural assessment practices are (MacArthur, Graham, & Fitzgerald, 2008). Assessments require involvement from multiple areas: instructors, students, the curriculum, the institution, and so forth. For an assessment to be successful, all elements must be considered (Newton et al., 2018). This means recognizing that assessments are socially and culturally situated, and thus rely heavily on the dynamic communication among all elements involved (Jeffery & Wilcox, 2014). The activity theory allows for a greater understanding of social and cultural practices in relation to writing assessments. Elmerger, Björck, Liljedahl, Nieminen, and Bolander Laksov (2018) reasoned that this theory could be used as a framework for implementing innovations. In the same line, Sannino and Nocon (2008) believe it provides “analytical tools for understanding constraints and barriers to innovations in schools as well as possible new means to overcome them and to support sustainable, innovative change efforts” (p. 326). Using activity theory to understand better social and cultural practices and how they affect assessments can further the knowledge of, and better educate our choices for, assessments in the future. It is essential to situate activity theory and the dialogic approach within this study, as they lend a higher hand to understanding the larger picture. Figure 2 demonstrates the six main components of activity theory situated within this study. It also highlights the areas in which the dialogic approach could most likely play a role, the areas in which student–teacher interaction would be most prominent (the lighter lines).

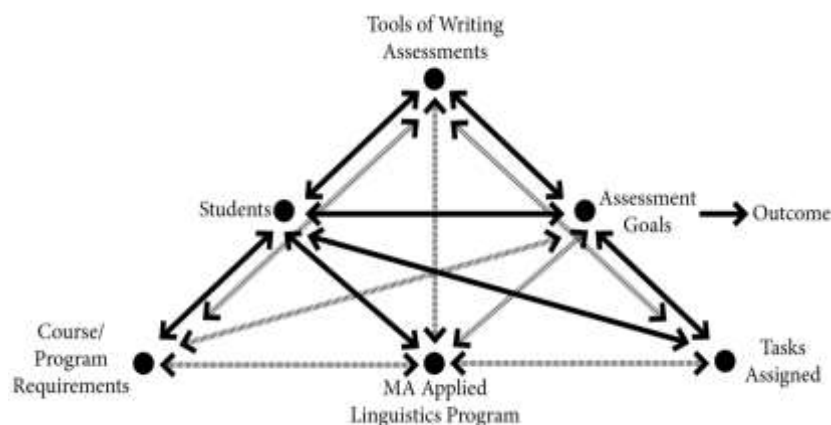


Figure 2. Activity theory and the dialogic approach situated within this study.

### 2.3 The Saudi Writing Context

The Saudi writing context is a difficult one, with many factors impacting the EFL learning process, including student L1 abilities, teaching habits, and the educational system (Al-Seghayer, 2011; Elyas & Picard, 2018). All of these variables have created a difficult context in which students must learn EFL, and instructors must teach EFL. Variables such as these can be easily uncovered in studies focusing on Saudi EFL students by implementing activity theory, exposing many hidden factors that greatly impact an outcome. With the knowledge presented in many research studies (in the Saudi context) using elements of activity theory, it is not absurd to believe the Saudi writing context may have a large impact on the state of EFL writing assessments, further continuing the cycle of poor Saudi EFL writing skills (Alshahrani & Storch, 2014; Obeid, 2017; Rajab, Khan, & Elyas, 2016). The state of EFL in Saudi Arabia is lacking, affecting students' abilities to develop strong writing skills and positive habits. One might draw a connection between poor writing and writing assessments: do poor student writing abilities lead to poor writing assessments from teachers? As students lie stagnant in their EFL writing abilities, teachers may lower their writing assessment outcomes, demanding less and less improvement from their students, ultimately challenging students less and less.

### 2.4 Writing Practices at the Graduate Level

Writing at the graduate level is significantly different than the undergraduate level for several reasons (Bailey, 2014). A common expectation of students from their instructors is the sheer amount of writing required, and the breadth of that writing. Students may be required to write several types of papers, such as literature reviews, article and book critiques, position papers, essays, manuscripts, articles, reports, proposals, theses, and dissertations (Paltridge, 2014) — several types of papers that students might not have written during their undergraduate education. Learning a new document style in a short period is a daunting task, especially achieving this success in a second language. Graduate-level writing requires a wide knowledge of document styles and a strong understanding of how to adopt a proper writing style per document. (Kamler & Thomson, 2014) found that the humanities and social science fields ranked the importance of writing skills higher than the science and technology fields. This research suggests that adequate academic writing skills are much more important in fields of study that require much more writing

of their students. For Saudi students studying EFL at the graduate level, this is highly significant, as the bar rises regarding their writing abilities as they enter the graduate-level EFL program.

### *2.5 L2 Graduate Students' Writing*

Writing at the academic level for second language writing (SLW) students is one of the most challenging tasks for students, as it requires them to call upon academic literacies, build upon those literacies, while adapting to L2 social and academic cultures, also respecting and taking into account the goals of instructors, yet still maintaining personal goals (Chang, 2016; F. Hyland, 2016; Langum & Sullivan, 2017). The task of academic SLW is indeed more complicated than most instructors, students, and even researchers understand. Though many instructors expect writing at the graduate level to be innate and solitary, the reality is that many students need guidance, especially SLW students. Writing assessment lends a hand to these students who are in need of further guidance. Al-Zubaidi (2012) discusses the difficulties of Arab students writing in the English academic context at the graduate level, maintaining that attaining a correct academic style is one of the most difficult things for nonnative students to achieve. Using elements of activity theory, he found that one reason for this particular difficulty is that most English academic writing courses ignore the fact that Arab students have a markedly different background in academic literacy than that of English. This problem then places Arab students with the sole responsibility of learning new academic literacies before being able to write research papers, theses, and dissertations successfully. The weight of this difficulty for Arab students translates into negative attitudes that often reflect in writing assignments. This study proves the significant challenge SLW students have when writing for graduate courses.

### *2.6 Writing Assessment Practices*

Writing at the graduate level is vastly different than writing at the undergraduate level, as writing is the main form of communication between students and teachers, as well as the main opportunity for grading. It is fair to say that the educational career of graduate students greatly hinges on their ability to write and communicate effectively through their writing. In this section, let me introduce the types of writing assessment that are usually implemented at the graduate level and how the related studies discussed them.

There are several different types of writing assessments such as quizzes, exams, portfolios, short writing assignments, and lengthier essay assignments. Though each assessment has one main goal, to measure a student's writing ability, the kind of assessment chosen measures this ability differently. Placement assessments aim to measure a student's performance at the beginning of a course (D. R. Ferris, Evans, & Kurzer, 2017). Diagnostic assessments determine problems that consistently occur during a student's learning process, aiming to resolve these issues and continue forward (Knoch, 2009). Formative assessments gauge a student's progress during the progression of the course (Huhta, 2008). Lastly, summative assessments measure whether the goals set at the beginning of the course were obtained by the student.

## **3.0 Methodology**

This study is conducted by using a qualitative methodology that describes and discusses specific phenomena (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Silverman (2016) recommended using qualitative methods when the intended data is verbal, expressing opinions, attitudes, and beliefs.



### 3.1 Participants

For the purpose of this study, I chose to implement purposeful selection in recruiting the participants of this study (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). As Yin (2009) indicated, proper selection of participants is significant for credible case studies. The purposeful selection was convenient in allowing the careful selection of the best group of participants who surely informed this study. Due to the cultural restrictions in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) where gender mixing in education is not permitted at government educational institutions, only male participants took part in this study.

### 3.2 Data Collection

The gathering of the primary data was carried out utilizing semi-structured interviews which lasted between 45 – 60 minutes each. The recorded audio of each interview was transcribed verbatim and digitally saved into a password secured files on the researcher's laptop.

## 4.0 Data Analysis

Informed by the grounded theory in social constructivism which assumes that relativism of multiple social realities, recognizes the mutual creation of knowledge by the viewer and the viewed, and aims toward interpretive understanding of subjects' meanings (Charmaz, 2014), the gathered data from the interviews were coded and thematically analyzed for emerging themes (Saldaña, 2015). While conducting this study, trustworthiness criteria which entails categorizing four areas—credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability—to establish a foundation of trust within the study, was followed (Schwartz-Shea & Yanow, 2013).

## 5.0 Discussion and Conclusions

One main coding scheme resulted from the data analysis procedure, and under this coding scheme, four subcategories emerged accordingly. This coding scheme addressed the *students' perceptions of the writing assessment practices*.

### 5.1 Saudi Graduate Students' Perceptions toward the Writing Assessment Tools

There four subcategories that reflected the students' perceptions regarding the chosen assessment methods, in each of their courses, are:

#### 5.1.1 Reliance on Tests

The examination is a means to measure a student's performance in a given area of study. Evidence obtained from this study revealed that there was too much focus on examination, which became a detriment to the teaching and learning processes. As shown in Table 6, all participants expressed their reluctance to rely on exams as the main form of assessment in their M.A. Applied Linguistics program. For example, the following excerpts provided insight into how these students (pseudonyms) prefer to learn, and how they perceived the heavy emphasis on exams as unprofitable regarding improving and sculpting their research-writing skills:

*It's all about what we do in exams. We actually prefer to write papers because they are more beneficial and less stressful.* (Basim)

*Yeah, I don't feel prepared, I don't practice doing research. I don't practice on this. Instead, when I went through this course, as I was reading, I only prepare myself for the exam.* (Ahmed)

*I don't want exams. I want something that can help me improve my research skills and critical thinking. Depending only on exams is actually bad for our program outcomes.* (Khalid).

As shown above, each student commented that the examinations do not make them feel prepared for research writing. Without an emphasis in assessments on honing their research-writing skills, these students feel at a loss, even stating that focusing so heavily on exams is “*bad for our program outcomes*” (Basim). These perceptions portray a difficult assessment style for these students and a longing for an assessment method that would improve the skills for which they came to this program.

### 5.1.2 Lack of Research Writing Experience

This subcategory highlights how the institution paid little attention to the purpose of research-related writing activities, and instead placed more focus on examinations and final scores. The majority of the students felt that building proper research skills was an afterthought in this MA program. There are many reasons why students in an M.A. program should be encouraged and taught how to develop and mold their research-writing skills. Below, Anas and Ahmed (pseudonyms) touch on these reasons:

*We didn't have to write a lot of research assignments; it's all small assignments. I think it might be difficult for us to write long research papers, but it will be helpful too especially when it's the time to start writing our Masters thesis... As a graduate student, I need more research papers because I need more preparation to conduct research and this will help me to write good thesis at the end of the program.* (Anas)

*How do you expect me to write and then defend my thesis if you just focus on exams? I don't think any student will be able to write good thesis if there is no attention on research papers in courses.* (Ahmed)

### 5.1.3. Required Research Topics

According to the reported data, all students must write about the same research topics assigned by the teacher, which are listed in the course syllabus. Around 70% of students showed unsatisfactory opinions about the preselected research topics. The following interview excerpts are examples of students' responses to this issue:

*All the assignment topics or questions were chosen by teachers, we didn't have the opportunity to choose our research topics. All topics are imposed on us, and we all write about the same thing.* (Khalid)

*We want to be free to choose our research topic. We want to select a good idea because we are going to learn new idea, new style of learning, new way to gain the information. I think this is a traditional way of assessment.* (Basim)

*I had the chance to study English in UK in a summer program. We were from different ages and different nationalities in ESL class, but the teacher asked us to write about anything we*

*want. Here, we are graduate students and we don't choose our research topics. It's quite unacceptable.* (Faisal)

Illustrated in the excerpts above, graduate students showed different interests towards research. They wanted to have the freedom to choose their own research topic when their teachers asked them to write a research paper. Khalid expressed this concern clearly when he said, “*All topics are imposed on us and we all write about the same thing*”. In line with Khalid’s perception, Basim mentioned that students should have the chance to write about what they like. As for Faisal, he had the opportunity to study some ESL classes in the UK. He experienced the difference between given a chance to write about whatever students like and what teachers like. Faisal described imposed research topic as “*unacceptable*”.

#### 5.1.4 Same Assessment Practices in Either Semester

Another important theme that emerged was the stagnation in assessment practices. The majority of the students reported that the assessment methods were fixed, providing zero change or variance between the two academic semesters of this study. The students believed this was a downfall, especially in relation to the improvement (or lack thereof) of their learning experiences and overall knowledge and practice of the course material.

Below, Hassan, Kareem, and Fahad explained their point of view, each noting something different:

*Nothing has changed in the second semester. It's all the same imposed assessment tools on teachers by the institution. And the amount of feedback on papers is still less and less.* (Hassan)

*We came to the second semester hoping that there will be a change in the evaluation, but we were wrong. It actually remained the same and we don't blame teachers for that. We know they can't do anything about it.* (Kareem)

*Exams are following us, the amount of the research papers and other assignment might be the same, but mostly I didn't notice any changes. These are my writing samples look at them and tell me if you notice any changes in feedback or types of assignment.* (Fahad)

Hassan, along with many other students in this study, remarked blatantly that the assessment methods did not change in the slightest, but even worse that the students received less feedback than before. Kareem pointed out that he understands the lack of change in assessments was not necessarily the teachers’ fault. Also, Fahad commented that not only did the assessment methods not change, but neither did his writing skills.

#### 5.2 Pedagogical Implications

Gathering and working to understand students’ perceptions about writing assessments might be crucial for some programs, particularly SLW programs where writing assessments might be key to furthering students’ abilities and their grasp of writing academically in the L2. The goal of gathering and understanding the students’ perceptions is not to mold writing assessments to their needs and likings, but rather to understand the assessment through their eyes. This opportunity allows teachers and students alike to understand what works best for them, perhaps what each was expecting to get

out of the assessment, and ideas for how to improve the assessment in the future. Understanding an assessment through the students' eyes—the participants—could expand its purpose, further reach the students, and even the teachers, persuading them to grow and develop their writing skills quicker, more efficiently, and most important, effectively. As per the data gathered in this study and from the students' perspectives, it is suggested that stake holders and decision makers of graduate level courses have an overall view of what the needs are of the students as well as a comprehensive evaluation of the writing assessment followed in such courses. As such, teachers, as well as the students, can have their say and voice their concerns regarding any element of the assessment process.

### 5.3 Recommendations for Future Research

This study was conducted with ten male participants at a major university in Saudi Arabia. It would be greatly recommended to include a much wider base with more participants from several universities as well as exploring different graduate courses' writing assessment process as perceived by the learners and the teachers. Additionally, since the researcher only managed to include male participants in this study, a study that will include female participants will be an added value and an opportunity to explore more opinions and beliefs about the writing assessment process at the graduate level.

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