

Perspectives of Moroccan EFL Students on Collaborative Writing: The Case of Hassan II University

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Abstract

The need for transformative pedagogies is growing due to limitations inherent in lecture-based teaching. Collaborative learning is an excellent method for addressing some of these shortcomings. Collaboration provides ways that can be used by both instructors and students as they work together to develop content and facilitate student engagement through discussion and problem-solving. This will potentially enhance the sense of criticality in Moroccan EFL university students' written texts. Therefore, the study's objective is to investigate the benefits of collaborative writing from the perspective of Moroccan EFL University students. To accomplish this goal, a mixed-methods research design was employed using questionnaire data to obtain quantitative information and follow-up semi-structured interview data to provide qualitative insight into the responses. Convenience sampling was used to select 140 English majors from Hassan II University in Casablanca. The findings demonstrated that Moroccan Hassan II University EFL students recognized the significance of using collaborative, argumentative writing. The students argued that group writing allows them to discuss, exchange perspectives, share the workload, and learn from peer feedback. Nonetheless, writing collaboratively can be difficult for some participants, especially because it can involve communication problems, a lack of interest, and uneven participation. These difficulties pushed some respondents to sometimes prefer individual writing instead. Several implications for ensuring high-quality outcomes will be drawn from the results obtained.

Keywords: collaborative writing, English as a Foreign Language, EFL students

1. Introduction

To succeed in today's highly competitive job market, English language learners must master writing to sharpen their communication and critical thinking skills (Bora, 2023). The ability to communicate efficiently in writing is one of the competencies necessary in the 21st-century

workplace (Kowalewski & Halasz, 2019; Tushar & Sooraksa, 2023). Nonetheless, writing is a difficult skill to master for many students as it is a linguistic skill that also requires substantial cognitive processing (Rao, 2017; Nunan, 1989). Even though writing can be complicated, with proper instruction, teachers will help their students develop the tools necessary to write coherently and communicate effectively in a variety of social situations.

Argumentative writing is a significant genre that warrants increased attention, as it can foster students' critical thinking across diverse contexts (Beniche, 2023; Beniche et al., 2021). The ability to create written arguments allows students to produce new information, understand different viewpoints and use evidence to support their ideas in a variety of academic and non-academic contexts. Argumentative writing, as Hillocks (2011) argues, is central to academic discourse and critical thinking, making it important for student success academically and professionally. Therefore, educators should create opportunities for students to develop quality argumentative texts and boost critical thinking skills in the Moroccan EFL classroom.

The quality of written argumentation by Moroccan EFL university students has continued to be poor. Although the importance of argumentative writing is recognized globally as a significant form of academic writing, research demonstrates that the students' overall argument construction and evaluation continue to be weak, suggesting that they have a low level of higher-order cognitive skills (Amrous & Nejmaoui, 2016). Other studies have also documented persistent problems with content creation (Bouzenirh, 2004; Dahbi, 1984), cohesion and coherence, grammar, language mechanics and organizational structure of an argumentative essay (Belbouah, 2024; Beniche, 2021). In combination, all of these studies demonstrate that Moroccan EFL university students do not receive sufficient training in argumentative writing, limiting their ability to develop their critical thinking abilities.

The way EFL students are taught to write at universities in Morocco does not provide enough for them to improve the quality of their written output. Research demonstrates that EFL instructional practices are primarily focused on teaching writing using a product-centered model with little time spent on other crucial components of writing such as organization, content, critical thinking, and creativity (Aouaf et al., 2023; Mamad & Vigh, 2023). Hence, focus is placed more on structural elements, such as sentence, paragraph, and essay, as opposed to depth or meaningfulness of content and reader expectation. Some attempts have been made by EFL instructors to apply process-based approaches to teaching writing, but these attempts have reflected a limited understanding of the underlying theory and, therefore, have resulted in inadequate application (Zyad, 2015). The discussion above clearly shows that writing instructions in Moroccan EFL university classrooms do not adequately help students produce quality written texts.

Although steps have been taken in some Moroccan universities to teach critical thinking as a course, which can foster students' writing skills, they have encountered challenges related to resources, overcrowded classrooms, students' backgrounds, and teachers' lack of training in critical thinking instruction (Chouari & Nachit, 2016). Due to these drawbacks, researchers recommended the use of collaborative learning as a robust way to help students generate not only more accurate and fluent argumentative productions but also more coherent and convincing texts, cultivating their higher-order thinking abilities (Bikowski & Vithanage, 2016; Kurniawan & Indrawati, 2024; Li, 2023; Talib & Cheung, 2017; Wigglesworth & Storch, 2012). Because pair work, discussions, debates, peer feedback, and revisions allow students to engage in knowledge construction and problem-solving, some EFL teachers have begun using them to enhance the quality of students' argumentative writing (Ananda et al., 2024; Ka-kan-dee & Kaur, 2015). Hence, Moroccan EFL teachers must encourage group writing activities in their classrooms to improve learning outcomes.

Moroccan EFL university students have expressed their readiness to embrace learner autonomy, indicating that they wish to establish their own learning goals, actively participate in creating lesson content, and assume responsibility for their learning (Oussou et al., 2024; Oussou & Kerouad, 2024). Nonetheless, there is a paucity of research on Moroccan EFL university students' willingness to embrace collaborative writing within the scope of argumentative writing. The study, therefore, sets out to examine the standpoints of Moroccan EFL university students toward collaborative writing and the reasons underlying those perspectives. It maintains that effective application of collaborative writing rests, at least in part, on how valuable the pedagogy is among students. To achieve the aims of the current study, two research questions are constructed:

1. What are the attitudes of Moroccan EFL university students toward collaborative writing?
2. What reasons underpin students' outlooks on collaborative writing?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Social Constructivism and Collaborative Writing

Constructivism argues that people construct and reconstruct their realities through interactions with others (Lincoln & Guba, 2016). In this regard, the social constructivist theory, in particular, holds that learning and cognitive development are primarily the result of social interactions (Vygotsky et al., 1978). This view has transformed students' roles in the classroom from passive recipients into active co-producers of knowledge. Through interaction with more knowledgeable peers, students enter the zone of proximal development, which helps them become more engaged in learning. One of the most effective ways to apply social constructivism in the EFL classroom is to use collaborative writing, which enables peer feedback and discussion and promotes students' awareness of opposing perspectives.

Collaborative writing is the process through which learners engage in group or pair interactions to perform a writing task (Storch, 2013). It emerged from collaborative learning, which has attracted a lot of attention over the last three decades, not only for its capacity to engage students in the learning process (Laal & Ghodsi, 2012), but also for its manifestation as a philosophy of personal lifestyle and interaction with people, thereby fostering teamwork and civic engagement (Panitz, 1999; Smith & MacGregor, 1992). Unlike cooperative learning, collaborative learning considers knowledge and authority as social constructs. In this respect, the teacher is no longer the only source of knowledge and guidance, allowing students to take responsibility for their learning. Although being more student-centered distinguishes collaborative learning from cooperative learning, some researchers have used the terms interchangeably in previous studies (Farrah, 2011). The two pedagogies are very similar in the sense that they involve small groups of learners working toward a shared objective.

2.2 Students' Standpoints on Collaborative Writing

There seems to be a positive attitude toward collaborative writing among university students both at the international and national levels, especially in English language learning. The literature also suggests that collaborative writing is not without limitations, as students have expressed reservations that are largely attributable to ineffective implementation. In fact, some studies show that students sometimes hold a negative attitude toward group writing. The subsequent paragraphs elaborate on these ideas.

Brown (2008) conducted an inquiry with 260 university students from different faculties and majors in Southern Africa to examine their attitudes toward collaborative writing in an English for Academic Purposes (EAP) course. The study's results showed that most students acknowledge the value of group writing in making learning more enjoyable and providing them with the opportunity to share useful feedback and improve their critical thinking. While many students highlighted

challenges of group writing, such as laziness and unequal participation, only a small minority expressed a preference for individual writing. Likewise, Palestinian EFL university students enjoyed collaborative writing and indicated that it enabled them to exchange more ideas, boost their critical thinking, and produce higher-quality written texts (Farrah, 2011). In both studies, the majority of students believed that writing collaboratively is never a waste of time.

Fernández Dobao & Blum (2013) conducted a study to illuminate students' perspectives on collaborative writing in both small groups and pairs. Using a questionnaire, the researchers collected data from a sample of 55 university students in the United States who were studying Spanish as a foreign language. The results demonstrated that most students were satisfied with group and pair writing. They particularly noted that writing in small groups was richer in knowledge and ideas than writing in pairs, thereby enhancing the accuracy of their writing and offering them more opportunities for language improvement. Similarly, Kwon (2014) carried out an action research with university students in Thailand to explore their attitudes toward collaborative writing in English instruction. Results showed that for the most part, the students held an optimistic view about collaborative writing, as they believed that writing collaboratively would enhance both the learning experience and the quality of their essays. These positive views were ascribed to the opportunities provided by collaborative writing for the exchange of ideas and peer feedback. However, the students identified specific obstacles in collaborative writing, such as difficulty in establishing consensus and the reluctance of some students to accept different viewpoints.

Masuara & Widiati (2020) focused on university students' views of collaboration in relation to argumentative writing in English language learning. The findings indicated that through facilitated communication and knowledge sharing, collaborative writing enhanced students' learning satisfaction and confidence. A similar study demonstrated that ESL university students in Hong Kong viewed the use of writing collaboratively as positively influencing their confidence, motivation, and awareness of their intended audience (Choi, 2008). Azar et al. (2021) additionally showed that group work promoted both the motivation and performance of Malaysian university Students.

There is evidence that doctoral and undergraduate students profit from working collaboratively on their writing. Research has shown that one of the most important aspects for promoting improvement in academic writing and developing doctoral students' self-esteem and confidence is receiving constructive criticism and sharing ideas through peer feedback (Cahusac De Caux & Pretorius, 2024). This can be compared to another study about the experiences of undergraduate students in both English literature and accounting/finance programs (Haq, 2024). In this study, students reported experiencing satisfaction using collaborative learning approaches, which created an opportunity for them to develop their language skills as well as engage actively in learning.

Alkhalaf (2020) investigated the attitudes of female EFL university students in Saudi Arabia toward collaborative writing. According to their experiences with collaborative writing, most students enjoyed the process and were motivated to learn. Students' responses showed that collaborative writing led to beneficial peer feedback, better essay structure, stronger arguments, broader points of view, and an increase in overall writing skills. The overwhelming number of respondents identified significant obstacles to successful group writing – primarily lack of equal participation and reluctance to accept differing opinions. In Saudi Arabia, Salem Aldossary (2021) examined the perspectives of male EFL university students toward collaborative writing, demonstrating that most respondents were satisfied with collaborative writing activities. The students found these collaboration opportunities to be beneficial because they allow them to share helpful comments, ideas and knowledge, and improve their writing abilities.

In contrast, Alsehibany (2024) pointed out that while female EFL university students in Saudi Arabia acknowledged the advantages of peer-based writing, they also indicated that it can present them with several major obstacles, specifically unequal participation and limited English language proficiency. Despite these obstacles, the results generally support the idea that when students work in groups to complete writing assignments, it increases their sense of satisfaction, motivation, confidence, appreciation of multiple viewpoints and writing skills in a collaborative setting.

Previous studies show that under certain circumstances, students may negatively react to collaborative learning. For instance, Pajarillo-Aquino (2019) found that many university students in the Philippines were dissatisfied with group work due to communication challenges. Another example is a study by McLeish (2009), which demonstrated that most participants were hesitant about engaging in group work as they believed it would negatively affect their grades. Some Kuwaiti EFL students preferred individual work, arguing that this format allows them to concentrate better and feel more comfortable (Taqi & Al-Nouh, 2014). The evidence from these studies indicates that poorly executed collaborative learning will create an environment where students do not want to participate; consequently, this reduces students' opportunity to benefit from the advantages of group work.

From the perspective of Moroccan undergraduate students, collaborative learning is a favourable approach to teaching the English language. Laachir (2019), for instance, studied how 60 Moroccan EFL undergraduate students perceived online collaborative learning. Results indicated that, according to most students, collaborative learning was effective in enhancing their engagement, motivation, problem-solving ability, communication, and critical thinking. Ait Hattani (2024) conducted a similar study with 216 English for Specific Purposes (ESP) university students to shed light on their perceptions of their collaborative activities. The study demonstrated that working collaboratively allowed students to share the workload and improved their motivation, problem-solving skills, and writing quality. Since these studies focused on collaborative learning in a broader sense, little is known about collaboration in argumentative writing from the standpoints of Moroccan EFL university students.

It should be noted that the merits of peer feedback, an important component of collaborative writing, have been stressed in previous research in Morocco. A study found that Moroccan EFL university students view peer feedback as a powerful means to boost not only their linguistic performance in writing, but also their affective and cognitive aspects (Haoucha, 2005). According to Ziad & Bouziane (2020), combining different types of feedback, such as self, teacher, and peer feedback, is a more promising strategy to teach writing in the Moroccan EFL context. Peer feedback is only one part of collaborative writing; therefore, it is crucial to investigate the usefulness of collaborative writing as a whole from the perspectives of EFL Moroccan students in higher education.

3. Research Methods

3.1 Research Design

Adopting an explanatory sequential mixed-methods approach, the study employs questionnaires and interviews. Questionnaires were used to gather quantitative data that helps determine the extent to which Moroccan EFL university students recognize the significance of collaborative, argumentative writing. Subsequently, interviews were conducted to collect qualitative data in order to achieve a more nuanced understanding of the issue.

3.2 Participants

In view of convenience sampling, 140 EFL students from Hassan II University in Morocco voluntarily participated in the present research. The sample comprised 87 female and 53 male

students whose ages varied from under 20 to over 25 years old, with the majority aged 20-22. Among these participants, 6 were in semester 2, 39 in semester 4, and 95 in semester 6. All participants in the investigation were informed that their participation was voluntary and that the confidentiality and anonymity of their data were rigorously maintained.

Furthermore, using purposive sampling, 12 respondents consented to participate in semi-structured interviews to obtain a clearer insight into students' attitudes. Accordingly, they completed a written consent form which outlined the objectives of the study and indicated that participation is voluntary.

3.3 Instruments

The present study used a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview, both adopted from a previous study which focused on high school students (Author, year). The questionnaire aims to pin down students' attitudes toward collaborative, argumentative writing. In addition to demographic information, the complete questionnaire consists of 10 items that assess students' perspectives of collaboration in writing. The investigation used semi-structured interviews, which are composed of five closed- and open-ended questions, intended to probe deeper into factors underpinning students' standpoints.

The validity and reliability of the two data collection tools were examined in the previous study. However, the researchers recalibrated the questionnaire to improve its construct validity and reliability. They conducted exploratory factor analyses (EFA) in an attempt to gauge the construct validity of the instrument. Results showed that the questionnaire items clustered under the same factor and exceeded the threshold level of 0.40. The researchers also checked the instrument's reliability using Cronbach's Alpha. The test yielded a coefficient of 0.914, implying a very satisfactory reliability above 0.70.

The questionnaire was distributed via WhatsApp to reach the participants directly. After confirming that they had experience working in groups on an argumentative writing task during their undergraduate studies, participants were granted permission to complete the questionnaires. Interviews with 12 informants followed this stage. Consequently, analyses were performed on data from the questionnaires and interviews with the objective of meeting the aims of the study.

3.4 Data Analysis Technique

The questionnaire data were examined quantitatively using descriptive statistics (i.e., percentages and frequencies) in SPSS. The purpose was to identify patterns and trends in participants' responses, allowing us to understand students' standpoints regarding collaborative writing. In light of the second and third research questions, thematic analysis of the interview data was conducted to shed light on the reasons underlying students' viewpoints on the use of collaboration in the context of argumentative writing.

4. Results

4.1 Quantitative Analysis of Students' Standpoints on Writing Collaboratively

Using a quantitative data-collection instrument, researchers aimed to determine the views of Moroccan EFL university students toward the value of group, argumentative writing classes. Results obtained from the questionnaire are shown in Table 2. As presented in the table, item 1 indicates that a considerable number of participants (39%) remain neutral about the statement that they experience enjoyment in group writing tasks, while 34% agree and 27% disagree. As it pertains to item 2, a high proportion of participants (38% "agree" and 32% "strongly agree") report that feedback from their classmates is useful for improving their argumentative texts. In contrast, only 8% "disagree" and 3% "strongly disagree". In response to item 3, the majority of participants (30%

"agree" and 24% "strongly agree") report that their confidence in their writing skills improves after working with their classmates, while only 20% disagree. Concerning item 4, more than half of respondents 25% "agree" and 29% "strongly agree" that their motivation is improved when they work in a group to perform a writing task, while 27% disagree.

Similarly, although only 22% disagree with item 5, the majority of participants (30% "agree" and 25% "strongly agree") indicate that collaboration enables them to generate ideas more easily. Only 12% of participants disagree with item 6, whereas the largest proportion 33% "agree" and 39% "strongly agree" that group work is useful in allowing them to comprehend varied standpoints. Regarding item 7, the highest percentage of respondents 66% agree that group work is useful for them in constructing robust arguments, while only 15% disagree. Likewise, the table demonstrates that, in response to item 8, a sizable proportion of participants 59% admit that group work enhances their ability to write a well-structured argumentative text. Furthermore, most respondents (61%) acknowledge that group discussions in writing foster their critical thinking skills. Interestingly, a low proportion of participants (20%) support the idea that group writing constitutes a waste of time, while 66% reject this notion.

Table 1: The Perspectives of Students regarding Writing Collaboratively

Items		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. I enjoy working in groups on writing tasks.	N	17	21	54	21	27
	%	12%	15%	39%	15%	19%
2. My classmates' feedback helps me improve my argumentative writing.	N	4	12	26	53	45
	%	3%	8%	19%	38%	32%
3. I feel more confident in my writing skills after working with peers.	N	12	15	37	42	34
	%	9%	11%	26%	30%	24%
4. I feel more motivated when I work on a writing task in a group.	N	18	19	27	35	41
	%	13%	14%	19%	25%	29%
5. I find it easier to generate ideas in a group setting.	N	16	16	31	42	35
	%	11%	11%	22%	30%	25%
6. Working in groups helps me understand different perspectives.	N	9	9	22	46	54
	%	6%	6%	16%	33%	39%
7. Working in groups helps me develop stronger arguments.	N	5	16	27	55	37
	%	4%	11%	19%	40%	26%
8. Working in groups improves my ability to structure an argumentative essay.	N	10	13	34	56	27
	%	7%	10%	24%	40%	19%
9. My critical thinking skills improve when I engage in group discussions about writing.	N	4	15	36	43	42
	%	3%	11%	25%	31%	30%
10. I find group work to be a waste of time.	N	56	36	20	13	15
	%	40%	26%	14%	9%	11%

4.2 Qualitative Analysis of Students' Standpoints on Writing Collaboratively

The objective behind the semi-structured interviews was to explore the reasons underlying students' attitudes toward collaborative writing. Understanding the factors that shape students' perspectives is crucial for providing insights into the successful implementation of collaborative writing in the EFL classroom.

The subsequent paragraphs display the results of the interviews, where each theme is supported by excerpts that reflect recurrent and diverse opinions among participants. Two main themes emerged from the thematic analysis: *Factors Impacting Students' Positive Standpoints on Writing Collaboratively* and *Reasons Lying Behind Students' Negative Standpoints on Writing Collaboratively*.

It is clear from the two core themes that students' standpoints can differ depending on their experiences with collaborative writing. In light of the first core theme, *Factors Impacting Students' Positive Standpoints on Writing Collaboratively*, participants reported feeling motivated and productive in well-organized collaborative writing, as it enables them to discuss their perspectives, learn from each other, share the workload, and understand diverse viewpoints. Instances from participants' responses are presented below for illustration.

- *"I've had some good experiences with other groups which made me feel motivated to work with [them]."*
- *"I also feel encouraged when I see my classmates working hard."*
- *"According to my experience while working with other people, I feel more productive because they, from time to time, notice some perspectives that I do not."*
- *"The group allows me to hear different perspectives and ideas."*
- *"First of all, not the entire work is getting thrown at you first, and the second thing, you sort of get the diversity, the ideological diversity of it."*

The second central theme, *Reasons Lying behind Students' Negative Standpoints of Writing Collaboratively*, revealed two subthemes. In view of the first subtheme, *Difficulties Students Encounter in Writing Collaboratively*, respondents stated that they disliked ineffective group writing because it led to problems such as dominance, conflicts, poor communication, lack of interest, and uneven participation. Examples from participants' responses are listed below to support these claims.

- *"I do not usually like to go for it because of some experiences with selfish students."*
- *"When we do not communicate with each other, it causes problems and misunderstandings, which lead to conflicts."*
- *"Umm, it depends on certain things. For example, if the other party is not interested, I would not be interested."*
- *"I dislike it when some group members do not participate equally, making it difficult and stressful for the other members."*

The second sub-theme concerns *Factors Affecting Students' Preference for Writing Individually Rather than in Groups*. Students preferred to write individually because they could concentrate better, feel more comfortable with the task, and feel their thoughts were better

organized. To illustrate these findings, selected excerpts from participants' responses are presented below.

- *"Because I am more concentrated when I am working alone."*
- *"I can think more clearly, develop my ideas more thoroughly, and present my points consistently and clearly when I work alone."*
- *"When I work alone, I usually find that my essays are more organized."*
- *"I am more comfortable working individually than working with others."*

5. Discussion

The present study employed both quantitative and qualitative methods (a questionnaire and an interview) to provide insight into how Moroccan EFL university students view collaboration in writing. The questionnaire results indicated that students generally see collaborative writing as valuable, recognizing its positive influence on their learning at both the cognitive level, such as improving critical thinking skills, and the affective level, including increased confidence and motivation. While the interviews indicated that students held varied opinions regarding collaborative writing, several participants reported positive attitudes, attributing these to collaborative writing's capacity to facilitate feedback and idea exchange, reduce individual workload, and increase awareness of diverse perspectives. Therefore, these findings are reinforced by the principles of social constructivism, which emphasize that peer interactions are essential for students' development and learning. The acknowledgement that group writing can improve performance through peer feedback and shared responsibilities suggests that Moroccan EFL university students are prepared to engage in collaborative writing. Hence, the implementation of collaborative writing pedagogy is recommended within the Moroccan EFL university context.

In contrast, the interviews showed that some participants expressed negative attitudes toward collaborative writing, backing them with several reasons. Among these reasons were the difficulties that characterize poorly organized group writing, such as conflicts, dominance, communication problems, lack of interest, and uneven participation. Those negative standpoints were also explained by the desire of some participants to write individually rather than collaboratively, as they seek greater focus, order, and comfort. Therefore, the EFL teacher must ensure effective implementation to reinforce students' willingness to participate in collaborative writing and to bolster their performance.

The results drawn from the questionnaire showed that Moroccan EFL university students saw collaborative writing as being an enjoyable experience, corroborating several previous studies (e.g., Aldossary, 2021; Brown, 2008; Fernández Dobao & Blum, 2013; Farrah, 2011; Kwon, 2014; Laachir, 2019; Masuara & Widiati, 2020). For instance, according to Aldossary (2021), Saudi Arabian EFL university students expressed satisfaction with collaborative writing. The present study also aligns with those of Brown (2008), Fernández Dobao & Blum (2013), Farrah (2011), and Laachir (2019) in that university students recognized that collaborative writing allowed them to exchange more ideas, knowledge, and peer feedback, and improved their critical thinking and writing quality.

Furthermore, the present study supports the findings of Alkhalaf (2020), Azar et al. (2023), Masuara & Widiati (2020), and Choi (2008) who showed that EFL university students acknowledged the value of group writing in increasing their confidence, motivation, awareness of different perspectives, and ability to structure an argumentative essay and support arguments.

Additionally, in line with the findings of Brown (2008) and Farrah (2011), most students in the current investigation stated that writing in groups was worth the time.

In contrast, the questionnaire results differ from those of Pajarillo-Aquino (2019) and McLeish (2009). In Pajarillo-Aquino's (2019) investigation, university students in the Philippines undervalued group writing since it contained communication tensions. Similarly, the majority of participants in McLeish's (2009) study reported little inclination toward collaborative learning due to fear of receiving poor marks. These studies support results from the interviews, which revealed that students do not appreciate collaborative learning environments where group writing lacks proper organization.

In previous literature (e.g., Aldossary, 2021; Alkhalaf, 2020; Alsehibany, 2024; Brown, 2008; Kwon, 2014), some university students reported that group writing can be a real challenge due to certain obstacles. For example, according to Alsehibany (2024), Brown (2008), and Kwon (2014), the problems students encountered in group writing included refusal by some students to accept different views, difficulty in reaching agreement, unequal participation, laziness, and low English language proficiency. This is consistent with the present study, in which respondents reported that group writing can be difficult due to issues such as dominance, conflict, poor communication, lack of interest, and uneven participation. Additionally, the current study resonates with that of Taqi & Al-Nouh (2014), who found that some EFL students preferred working individually rather than collaboratively, as they emphasized the need for greater concentration and comfort. The EFL teacher, therefore, needs to put considerable effort into developing optimistic views among students about collaboration in learning.

The interview results, however, concur with those of Cahusac De Caux & Pretorius (2024), Haq (2024), Kwon (2014), and Masuara & Widiati (2020). They are similar in showing that university students associated their optimistic outlooks with collaborative writing's capability to offer a supportive learning milieu that encourages the exchange of knowledge and peer feedback. The study also aligns with that of Ait Hattani (2024), in which Moroccan ESP students regarded collaborative learning as important because it reduced their workload by allowing them to help one another. This indicates that students place a premium on collaborative writing's capacity to promote teamwork and active engagement in learning.

6. Conclusion

Before EFL teachers can secure effective implementation of collaborative learning in argumentative writing to boost students' writing achievement and critical thinking skills in the classroom, they must first develop awareness of students' satisfaction with and willingness to embrace such an approach. The present study aimed to foster such awareness by examining the extent to which Moroccan EFL university students recognize the utility of collaborative, argumentative writing.

It turned out that students had a generally favorable perception of collaborative writing, suggesting that the approach should be promoted to achieve more positive outcomes. Writing collaboratively enables students to discuss ideas, share the workload, and exchange feedback, enhancing not only their learning satisfaction, motivation, and confidence but also their critical thinking and argumentative writing skills. Although collaborative writing can present students with problems of unequal participation, stress, and dominance, its effective implementation can help circumvent those challenges. By exploring not only the attitudes of Moroccan EFL university students toward collaborative work but also the factors that shape them, the current study enriches our understanding of the significance of collaboration in the Moroccan educational context. In a

world that has become almost like a small global village with the advent of technology, students who engage in effective collaborative writing will be well-prepared to succeed in their professional lives.

Based on the study's results, several implications can be suggested for teachers, policymakers, and curriculum designers. EFL teachers should incorporate more collaborative writing into the classroom, given its immense benefits. In addition, to successfully integrate group writing into the classroom, the teacher must not only balance groups based on students' individual differences and assign roles, but also encourage students and provide feedback during the activities. Policy interventions should address situational challenges (e.g. limited materials, outdated textbooks, crowded classes and assessment constraints) so as to facilitate productive collaborative writing. It is equally necessary to provide EFL teachers with professional development on effective ways to implement the collaborative learning pedagogy. Moreover, to enhance students' motivation, curriculum designers should require students to work in groups on some of their classroom continuous tests.

It is important to acknowledge the limitations of the current research. An important constraint is that the study failed to incorporate the standpoints of EFL university teachers in Morocco regarding the usefulness of group writing. In addition, the present study explored only the viewpoints of Hassan II University EFL students and did not cover those of EFL students at other Moroccan EFL universities. The study is also limited because it relied exclusively on students' perceptions. While these shortcomings do not diminish the study's value, they stress the need for additional research on the role of group writing in shaping students' learning gains. Therefore, future research should investigate teachers' and students' viewpoints across multiple universities in Morocco. In addition, studies are needed to gauge the actual impact of collaborative writing on Moroccan EFL university students' argumentative writing performance.

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