

PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA
MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH
UNIVERSITY OF BEJAIA
FACULTY OF ARTS AND LANGUAGES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH



INVESTIGATING EFL STUDENTS' WRITING DIFFICULTIES AND COMMON ERRORS IN WRITING

A case study of third year LMD Students of English at The University of Bejaia

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a degree of
MASTER in Applied linguistics and ELT

Submitted by:

ANNAB Abderraouf

Supervised by:

Mr. OUALI Chafa

BOARD OF EXAMINERS

EXAMINER: M^{me}. KACI Fadhila University of Bejaia

CHAIR: Dr. AHOUARI Nadia-Idri University of Bejaia

SUPERVISOR: Mr. OUALI Chafa University of Bejaia

Academic year 2015/2016

DEDICATION

In the name of ALLAH, the Most Gracious, Most Merciful, All praise to Him alone, the Sustainer of the entire world. I shall pay my deepest gratitude to Graceful and Compassionate ALLAH the Almighty for granting me the power to pursue and to finish this work.

I dedicate this work to:

The pillars of my life; my sympathetic *MOTHER* and my thoughtful *FATHER* whose love and support guided me all the way to success.

To all my Brothers and Sisters: *SAAD, WARDA, HAKIM, GHOULEM, FOUZIA, HAFEDH, WAFIA, NASREDINE and ZINEB* who always believed in me and pushed me forward and helped me in all possible ways.

To all my nephews and nieces especially *ISHAK*, and the rest of my family.

To my dear *RAYEN*, who never stopped for a moment motivating me and providing me with care and support, I thank you very much.

To my friends *ILYES, IBRAHIM, ISLAM, CHABANE, ANIS, ABDELKADER, KARIM, RAMI, MEHDI*, all my ALELT classmates and previous classmates at Oum El-Bouaghi with whom I shared the university life with all its lights and shadows.

To my old friends *HAROUN, MALEK, and NASREDINE* and all those who know me.

To my previous teachers, MR. MAZOUZ Fayçal, MR. BOULMAIZ Djallel, MR. MELGANI Haroun and especially to my primary school teacher MRS. MOKHNACHE Halima who always remembered me in her prayers and expected the best out of me.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to my supervisor Mr. OUALI Chafa, whose encouragement, and guidance largely contributed to the fulfillment of this work.

I would like to extend my appreciation to MRS. AHOUARI Nadia-Idri and MR. BOUDAUD Malek who have always been a source of information in critical times. My special thankfulness also goes to MRS. SAIBI Sihem and MR. SIDI SALAH Lyes who have been major contributors to this work.

I would also like to thank all the students who took part in this research. In the end, I would like to thank all members of the board of examiners for taking the time to examine the present work.

ABSTRACT

This study aims at investigating EFL students' writing difficulties and the common errors they make in their English writing. The participants in the study are 26 randomly selected third year students of English at the University of Bejaia. To achieve the research aims, a mixed methodology was employed, whereby data was collected through the Students' Questionnaire, and a Corpus Analysis of fifteen randomly selected essays. The results obtained from the Students' Questionnaire revealed that the majority of students encountered difficulties in vocabulary, grammar and academic style. The Corpus Analysis of the students' essays revealed a high frequency of occurrence of errors in spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and vocabulary. Based on these findings, teachers are advised to take into account students' writing problems, and the elaboration of more writing sessions are among the pedagogical implications.

Key words: Writing, Writing Difficulties, Common Errors

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

L1: First language

L2: Second Language

FL: Foreign language

ESL: English as a Second Language

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

EA: Error Analysis

SMS: Short Message Service

SNS: Social Networking Sites

LMD: License Master Doctorate

NSW: New South Wales

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Microskills for writing	3
Table 2: Process and subprocesses presumably tapped by various tasks	7
Table 3: Elements of a writing pedagogy	14
Table 4: Students' gender	31
Table 5: Students' English level	32
Table 6: Motivation to learn writing	33
Table 7: The level of writing proficiency	33
Table 8: Aspects of difficulties in writing	34
Table 9: The sufficiency of writing time in the classroom	35
Table 10: Reasons for insufficient time for classroom writing	36
Table 11: Following stages in writing assignments	37
Table 12: Reasons for not following the stages of writing	37
Table 13: The permission to use of dictionaries	38
Table 14: The degree of dictionary use	38
Table 15: Following the writing instructions in other modules	39
Table 16: Reasons for not following writing instructions in other modules	39
Table 17: Writing outside the classroom	40
Table 18: The strategies used in writing	41
Table 19: The existence of reading comprehension module	42
Table 20: The integration of reading in writing session	42
Table 21: The importance of reading in improving writing	43
Table 22: The degree of reading	43

Table 23: The degree of English use via Internet and SMS	44
Table 24: The type of English students use when using internet or SMS	45
Table 25: Students' justifications to the type of English they use	46
Table 26: The effect of internet and SMS on students' English writing	47
Table 27: Students' justifications about the effect of internet and SMS on their English writing	48
Table 28. Results of the Corpus Analysis	49

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Producing a piece of writing	4
Figure 2: The linear model of writing process	9
Figure 3: The process wheel	9
Figure 4: Elements in teaching writing	12
Figure 5: The schema of the conceptual theoretical framework	25
Figure 6: Students' English level	39
Figure 7: Aspects of difficulties in writing	42
Figure 8: Reasons for insufficient time for classroom writing	44
Figure 9: The strategies used in writing	52
Figure 10: The degree of English use via Internet and SMS	57

TABLE OF CONTENT

Dedication	i
Acknowledgement	ii
Abstract	iii
List of abbreviations	iv
List of tables	v
List of figures	vii

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the problem	xiii
Research questions	xiv
Assumptions	xiv
Aim of the study	xv
Significance of the study	xvi
Population and Sample	xvii
Research methodology	xviii
Structure of the study	xix

CHAPTER ONE: THEORETICAL PART

SECTION I: THE WRITING SKILL

1. Introduction to writing	1
1.1. Reasons for writing	2
1.2. Speaking and writing	2
2. Microskills and subskills of writing	3

2.1. Expert writers vs. novice writers	5
2.2. EFL writers	6
3. The writing process	6
3.1. Planning	7
3.2. Drafting	8
3.3. Editing	8
3.4. Publishing	8
4. The writing strategies	10
4.1. Modelled writing	10
4.2. Think aloud writing	11
4.3. Guided writing	11
4.4. Independent writing	11
SECTION II: TEACHING WRITING	
5. The teaching of writing	12
5.1. Elements in the teaching of writing	12
5.1.1. Composition of texts	13
5.1.2. The process of writing	13
5.1.3. The representation of written texts	13
5.1.4. The writer	14
5.1.5. The text	15
5.1.6. The reader	15
5.2. Approaches to the teaching of writing	15
5.2.1. The product approach	16
5.2.2. The process approach	16

5.2.3. The genre approach	17
5.3. Reading and writing	17
5.3.1. The relationship between reading and writing	18
5.4. Planning students' writing	19
5.5. Assessing students' writing	19
6. Difficulties in writing and learning to write	20
6.1. Aspects of difficulties in students' writing	20
6.1.1. Problems with grammar	21
6.1.2. Problems with vocabulary	22
6.1.3. Problems with spelling and punctuation	22
6.2. Error analysis of students' writing	23
SECTION III: ACADEMIC WRITING	
7. Academic writing	26
7.1. Factors affecting students' academic writing	27
7.1.1. SMS and text chatting	27
7.1.2. Internet networking	28
Conclusion	29

CHAPTER TWO: THE PRACTICAL PART

Introduction	30
1. Population and sample	30
2. Description of the questionnaire	30
2.1. Analysis and discussion of Students' Questionnaire	31
3. Analysis and discussion of Students' essays	49
4. Interpretation of the findings	50

4.1. Students' Questionnaire	51
4.2. Students' Essays	51
5. Implications and recommendations	51
6. Suggestions for further research	52
7. Limitations to the study	52
Conclusion	53
General conclusion	54

APPENDICES

Appendix I. Samples of students essays in the Preliminary Analysis

Appendix II. The Student's Questionnaire

Appendix III. Samples of students' essays in the Corpus Analysis

Appendix IV. Elements focused on in the Corpus Analysis of Students' essays

Introduction

Writing has largely attracted the attention of researchers as being a crucial skill that contributes in learning any language, and without which further education may be largely impossible (Shangarfan, & Mamipour 2011). The process of writing, as it seems to most people, is a difficult one to carry; takes a lot of time and requires excessive attention. Moreover, the skill of writing is significant for EFL learners in particular, for it is a major factor for a successful academic performance in educational contexts. However, learning to write and succeeding at it is usually problematic. For most of students often encounter several difficulties in writing, and they consider it as a challenging task to carry as a result of various instructions they need to respect.

1. Statement of the problem

For many years, teaching writing has been a pillar in foreign language teaching. Unlike writing in an L1, writing in an L2 or in a FL is a quite challenging task, it requires an attainment of sufficient linguistic proficiency (Hinkel, 2004).

Knowing the nature of writing, Sperling & Fredman (2001) seek to define it as a set of sub-processes that includes planning, translating and reviewing. Looking at this process the researchers seem to only present writing as steps that needs to be followed, while there are few things to keep in mind like the addressee you are writing for and the quality of language one is using. Authors of the research have employed a cognitive approach in the presentation of their ideas, and attempted to present what students lack in their writing skills. In 2010 Klimova conducted a study on students from the faculty of Informatics and Management at the University of Hradec Kralove, Czech Republic. In this study the aim was to explain the reasons behind students' low proficiency at writing. After analyzing students written works, the results shown that students commit mistakes of two aspects among them was the stylistic aspect of students' writing. This mainly concerns: register and appropriacy, extremely long sentences, incorrect choice of word or a phrase etc. It also demonstrates clearly that EFL learners face this problem in writing.

Moreover, Norris (2015) points in her book of *Academic Writing in English* to different aspects contributing to successful academic writing. It demonstrates with clear examples what is considered as inappropriate language use in formal writing, and suggests alternative ways for

a successful one. Much of this book has focused on providing the audience with various examples about what to include and avoid in writing.

In addition, writing has been largely influenced by the media and the social networking services. Nowadays, students are exposed to a variety of language sources, which lead them to execute various language use. Netspeak for instance, as referred to by Crystal (2001), can be seen as a source for such results in writing. Knowing that the way people speak is distinct from the way they write, Mirza (2015) stated that “Netspeak also shares characteristics with speech... There are also characteristics of face-to-face interactions in the style of what is typed – highly informal and conversational, making use of specific means to convey emotions and feelings” (para. 4). This suggests the influence that Netspeak may have on students’ writing.

A preliminary corpus analysis of samples of third year students’ essays at the English Department, University of Bejaia, had revealed various problems in their writing. These problems mainly indicate that students’ are failing to use the academic register in writing, low proficiency in vocabulary use, as well as the misuse of lexical items. We also noticed that students are likely to use long sentences and fail to use punctuation which results in creating ambiguous statements and obstruct the clarity of messages. These reasons have been the main motive to carry out this study.

Conducting this research at English Department at the University of Bejaia, we mainly focus on investigating EFL students’ writing difficulties, and the common errors they share.

2. Research Questions

This study seeks to answer the following research questions:

- 1- What are the writing difficulties third year EFL students at the University of Bejaia usually encounter?
- 2- What are the common errors do third year students of English at the University of Bejaia encounter when writing in English?

3. Assumptions

In the light of the research questions, it is assumed that students’ writing difficulties are derived from two main aspects. The first is, the students’ lack of writing practice which results in the low understanding and application of the writing conventions and rules. Whereas the

second aspect is related to the amount of reading practice which is closely related to the skill of writing.

3. Aims of the study

This study aims at investigating writing difficulties of third year students of English at the University of Bejaia. The main purpose of the study is to identify the common errors and mistakes students commit in writing essays. In addition, we attempt to suggest proper recommendations for this issue hoping to improve students' writing at an advanced level.

4. Significance of the study

The significance of the present will reflect on the both teachers and students of English at the University of Bejaia, considering the skill of writing as an important tool in academic performance. A great demand of writing proficiency is required from students to accomplish various tasks ranging from homework assignments to dissertations. Teachers of writing at the Department of English at the University of Bejaia, will find this study useful in exploring students' major difficulties in writing. Additionally, students of English, particularly third year students, will benefit from the findings of the research to learn more about the different stages included in writing composition, and attempt to build on which a better understanding of the writing process. More interestingly, this study provides overt perceptions about the skill of writing for teachers of writing as well as for future researchers who wish to carry studies on this subject.

5. Population and sample

This study deals with students of third year LMD at the department of English in the University of Bejaia. The sample is a group consisting of twenty six (26) students. The sample was chosen randomly for the sake of validity and objectivity of the study, and also to avoid the interference of external factors in the findings of the research.

6. Research design and methodology

The current study is conducted using case study methodology to achieve the main objective of the research. Collecting data in this study is done through a students' questionnaire delivered to a randomly selected third year students. Additionally, a number of students' corpus essays produced as assignments for the module of written expression will be collected and analysed.

7. Structure of the study

The present research is divided into two chapters: the first chapter is the theoretical part, whereas the second is devoted to the practical part.

Chapter one deals with the background study concerning the skill of writing and writing composition, in addition to the teaching of this skill to learners of English as well as the difficulties they may encounter in writing.

Chapter two deals with the writing difficulties of the selected sample, it tackles the analysis of students' questionnaire and followed by an analysis of students' written essays. The chapter also deals with the interpretation of the findings and closes with several implications and suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER ONE:

THEORETICAL
PART

SECTION I: THE WRITING SKILL

1. Introduction to writing

The rising interest in writing especially at higher levels has developed entirely to become a distinguished discipline on its own. Many researchers have different perspectives about the concept of writing, for everyone seeks to define it from a different angle according to a specific field of study. For Nunan, writing is “an extremely complex, cognitive activity for all which the writer is required to demonstrate control of a number of variables simultaneously”. (1989, p.36). This shows the complexity of the task of writing, and the clear link to the cognitive aspect that often creates a difficulty to learners during their writing. Nunan’s idea about writing gives us more details about the skill of writing than what is overtly seen. Moreover, writing is also defined as “a process that requires extensive self-regulation and attentional control...writers must change ideas into text, repair organization and mechanics, and monitor their success--all while trying to formulate a coherent message” Ransdell and Levy (as cited in Singleton-Jackson, 2003). In fact, dealing with writing means being able to manage all the different stages and aspects included to arrive at producing a successful piece of writing.

Moreover, other definitions about writing include Widdowson’s (1978) as being an act of producing correct sentences and transmitting them into words on paper. This involves mainly the use of graphic language. In this definition, we are introduced to the skill of writing as a way to recording one’s ideas and feelings, using a correct grammar in a concrete manner. Following Widdowson’s definition, Troyka and Nudelman (1994) asserted that writing is more than just taking a pen in hand and expecting words to flow perfectly on paper. This indicates how sophisticated writing is, and the steps that need to be obeyed in the process. In doing so, writers have to:

generate their ideas, which need to be monitored, selected, and prioritised; to translate the ordered ideas into text, using correct lexicon, grammar and genre rules; and to review the text in order to clarify meaning and eliminate errors Biggs, et al.(as cited in Singleton-Jackson, 2003, p. 60).

Flower and Hayes (1980) have studied writing by looking at the involved mental operations as they interact recursively: planning and generation of knowledge, translation of the plan into speech, and editing or reviewing the plan or the newly created text. As a result, thoughts about the skill of writing have shifted from simple considerations as the misconception that writing is

nothing more than an extension of thinking (Mandel, 1984), or the way of communication through which we express our ideas, feelings, emotions etc. (Harmer, 2001, p. 79). Consequently, writing is no longer marginalized, and is regarded as significant as any of the other language skills.

1.1. Reasons for writing

Unlike speaking that is acquired at an early stage throughout the process of exposition, writing is, however, most considered as a minor skill which is only achieved as a result of a more conscious process of learning (Harmer, 2004). Writing development in history was a result of the growing industrialization and the community needs, there was an indispensable need for these skills to be taught and spread among the individuals. “Thus, we no longer have to ask ourselves whether writing is a good thing or not. We take it as a fundamental right.” (Harmer, 2004, p. 3). In other words, Harmer means that we learn to write to fulfill our social needs, and being educated gives people the impression of self-esteem over those who are not so fortunate. Moreover, Reid (as cited in Damayanti, 2009) identifies three main reasons for writing which are: to explain, to entertain and to persuade. Therefore, while focusing on the purpose of writing, the writer then can move onwards with his writing by aiming at other stages.

All in all, we come to understand that before starting to write, a writer as primary stage needs to give deep thoughts to the purpose of writing, which will justify later on the use of language, the information they require, and how to develop and organize them in their writing (Damayanti, 2009).

1.2. Speaking and writing

We cannot speak about writing without referring to speaking. There exist broad similarities and differences between speaking and writing in terms of form and process (Harmer, 2004). Raimes (1983) explained that learning to write is not just an extension of speaking a language. In her perspective, she distinguished between speaking that is learned at an early age without any systematic instruction, and writing that has to be taught at school. In this sense, Raimes presented various differences between the two skills such as the nature of speech of relying on voices and body language, while the use of graphic symbols in writing. Additionally, the variations of spoken language found in dialects, the use of intonation pronunciation and the face to face interaction found in the conversation. Whereas writing depends more on standard forms such as grammar, vocabulary and style, for writing is a planned process and the writer needs to convey the message to the reader accurately (pp. 4-5).

2. Microskills and subskills of writing

In learning a language, one needs to be fluent and master all the four skills of it (that is; speaking, reading, writing and listening). This mastery comes from the continuous exposure and practice of a particular skill in order to perform well. Every skill is composed of a set of levels of proficiency that makes the user of that skill an effective one. Speaking for instance, requires from learners to be as interactive as possible during a conversation, yet speaking a lot is not what makes your speaking skill effective. Therefore, the mastery of the speaking skill requires for instance; paying attention to the use of words, using correct grammar and the clarity of messages. Writing goes in the same direction, for this skill has certain microskills in order to be mastered later on. Microskills for writing are presented by Brown (2001) in the following table.

1. Produce graphemes and orthographic patterns of English
2. Produce writing at an efficient rate of speed to suit the purpose
3. Produce an acceptable core of words and use appropriate word order patterns
4. Use acceptable grammatical systems (e.g., tense, agreement, pluralization)n patterns, and rules
5. Express a particular meaning in different grammatical forms.
6. Use cohesive devices in written discourse.
7. Use the rhetorical forms and conventions of written discourse
8. Appropriately accomplish the communication functions of written texts according to form and purpose.
9. Convey links and connections between events and communicate such relations as main idea, supporting idea, new information, given information, generalization, and exemplification.
10. Distinguish between literal and implied meanings when writing.
11. Correctly convey culturally specific references in the context of the written text.
12. Develop and use a battery of writing strategies, such as accurately assessing the drafts, using paragraphs and synonyms, soliciting peer and instructor feedback, and using feedback or revising and editing.

Table 1. Microskills for writing (Brown, 2001, p. 343)

The above mentioned skills are represented in Brown (as cited in Damayanti, 2009) in the same way, yet categorized into micro skills (element 1-6) and macro skills (element 7-12). These writing skills combine between the mechanical of writing (related to the microskills), and the communicative purpose of writing (related to the macro skills) (Damayanti, 2009).

Moreover, writing being considered as a way of transmitting thoughts to written form burden both natives and non-natives. Nunan (1989) assumed that "...learning to write fluently and expressively is the most difficult of the macroskills for all language users regardless of whether the language in question is a first, second or foreign language" (p. 35). Raimes (1983) explained the basic elements in producing a good piece of writing, in this sense he provides the following diagram summarizing the different factors teachers have to focus on in the teaching of writing.

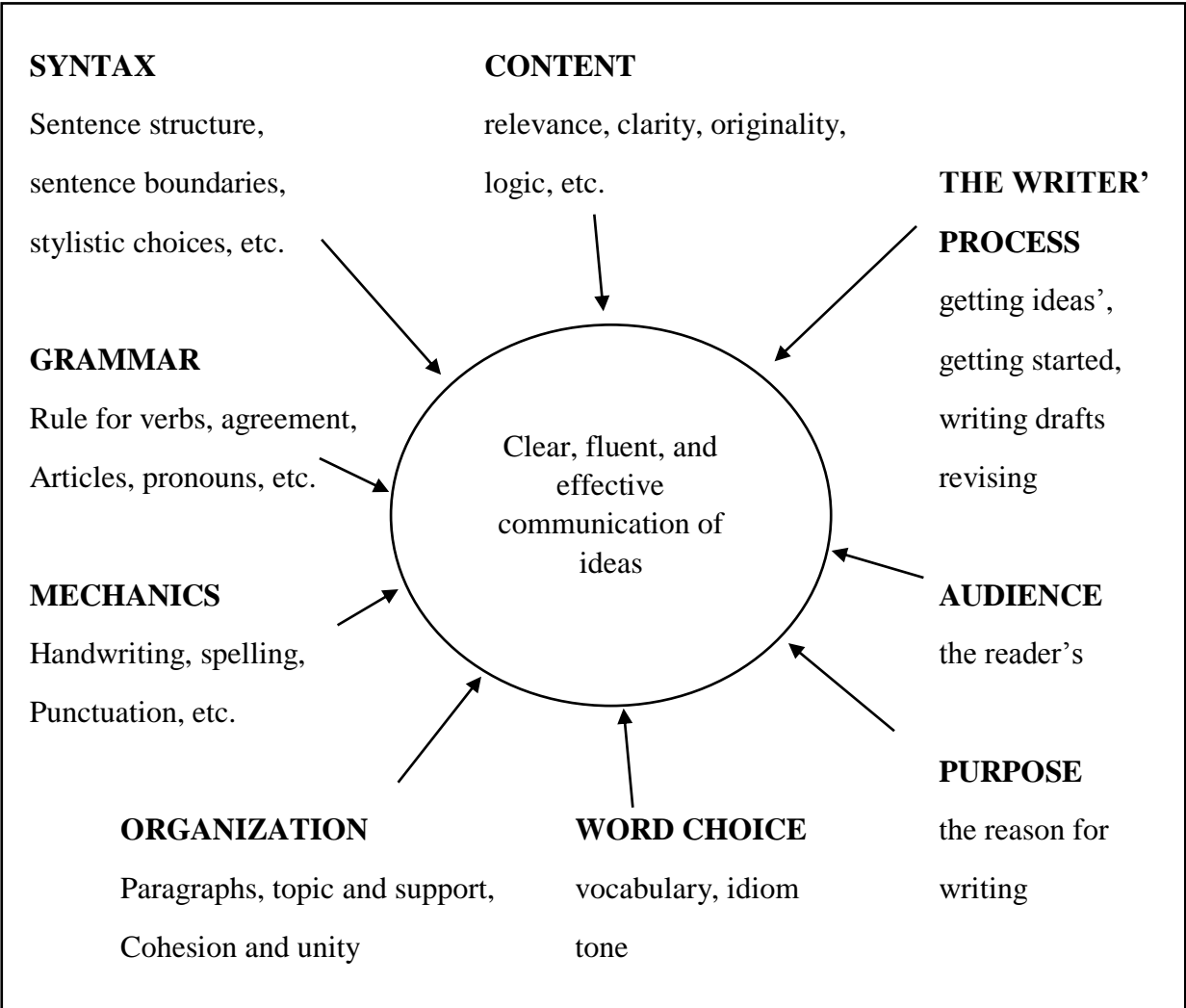


Figure 1. Producing a piece of writing (Raimes, 1983, p. 6)

In this sense as well, Heaton (as cited in Damayanti, 2009) describe four basic skills that has to do with writing proficiency. He points at the grammatical features i.e., the ability to write grammatically correct sentences, and the stylistic skills which indicate the ability to control and manipulate the sentences effectively. Heaton adds the mechanical skill that applies to the skill

of mastering the use of punctuation and spelling. Finally, Heaton concludes with the judgement skill as the ability to write appropriately with proper selection of relevant information (p. 138).

All in all, what makes a good piece of writing is the writer's ability and effective control over the elements that make a good writing, in addition it requires that the writer to be as clear as possible in presenting his ideas to the audience. Overall, Hedge (1988) summarizes the elements of effective writing stating the organization and development of ideas; the clarity of meaning; and the careful choice of discourse devices, and vocabulary that is appropriate to the readers.

2.1. Expert writer vs. novice writers

Writing among students widely differs, for in every skill there exist a number of features by which we distinguish between expert and novice writers. This notion was studied by Flower and Hayes (1981) who have listed some characteristics and differences between both types. In their study, they have found that writers of different skill levels employ different approaches to writing. Expert writers have shown a good response to factors such as rhetorical problem, and tend to start their writing by focusing on the problem and purpose of writing to help the readers later on. Following Flower and Hayes work, Torrance (as cited in Singleton-Jackson, 2003) also points at the rhetorical problem which expert writers tend to consider, in which they focus on the addressed audience, the impact they wish to have on them, and how they represent themselves throughout the text. Another feature is that expert writers take much time to revise their ideas before writing Breetvelt et al.; Torrance (as cited in Singleton-Jackson, 2003).

On the other hand, novice writers in the work of Flower and Hayes have shown that they are concerned primarily with basic conventions of writing such as the number of pages. Moreover Singleton-Jackson (2003) indicates that “novice writers have a tendency to write like they talk, not recognizing the error in this approach” (p. 17), which leaves the reader with a sense of confusion and incomprehension. Unlike expert writers, novice writers put less effort in the writing process resulting in a slow progress while making much efforts (Singleton-Jackson), and engage in writing with less planning Breetvelt et al. and Torrance (as cited in Singleton-Jackson, 2003). Consequently, the difference between expert writers and novice writers as suggested by Torrance depends on the basic knowledge of the writer himself.

2.2. EFL writers

In describing the characteristics of EFL writers, it is at first worth mentioning the cognitive process of writing and composing. These processes have been studied by Flower and Hayes (1981) and were identified as “distinctive thinking processes which writers orchestrate or organize during the act of composing” (p. 366). Nonetheless, these processes are not the only aspect to focus on during the composition, “when it comes to formulating a message, linguistic skills and knowledge become prominent in the writing process” Chenoweth and Hayes (as cited in Schoonen, Snellings, Stevenson & van Gelderen, 2009). As a result, studies have come to conclude that “writing in an L2 or FL is much harder and time consuming in the native language” Chenoweth and Hayes, 2001; Roca de Larios et al., 2006 (as cited in Schoonen, Snellings, Stevenson & van Gelderen, 2009). Therefore, FL writers are influenced by their experience in writing in their L1 to FL writing situations, further they were identified to have limited linguistic knowledge that can hamper the use of metacognitive knowledge and writing experience Jones and Tetroe, 1987; Whalen and Me´nard, 1995; Schoonen et al., 2003 (as cited in Schoonen et al., 2009). In addition, these L1 writing experiences at various occasions affect FL writing in different ways such as the writing process and therefore makes the writer struggle during composition due to his inadequate FL linguistic knowledge (Schoonen et al., 2009). To conclude, most of EFL writers are facing difficulties in FL composition due to the interference of L1 expertise, and lack of FL linguistic knowledge resulting in a low proficiency in writing.

3. The writing process

Writing as a skill is a sophisticated process consisting of different steps to arrive at the final form. Although different types exist in writing, their content and the purposes behind them, they do share the same process. Singleton-Jackson (2003) refers to writing as “...a mystery to researchers with regard to how the process of writing occurs and what makes it proficient” (p.11). In this sense, emphasis is put on the complexity of this task illustrating the interference of different cognitive activities in the task. Moreover, in their study about writing Flower and Hayes (as cited in Singleton-Jackson, 2003) account for the mental operations as they interact recursively, and have distinguished “planning and generation of knowledge, translation of the plan into speech, and editing or reviewing the plan or the newly created text”. This model proposed by Flower and Hayes has made an influential impact in the research on writing, and inspired many researchers later on to follow their studies. (See Table 1).

Process/ subprocess	Task	Description
Planning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generating • Organizing 	1-Iconic memory task 1-Ordered letters 2-Letter reordering 3-Word reordering 4-Sentence reordering 5-paragraph assembly	Accessing visual information from task environment Maintaining ordered information in working memory Holding and manipulating information in working memory Holding and manipulating information in working memory Holding and manipulating information in working memory Holding and manipulating information in working memory
Goal setting Reviewing Reading Editing	1-Word reordering 2-Sentence reordering	Holding and manipulating information in working memory Holding and manipulating information in working memory
Translating	1-Ordered letters	Maintaining ordered information in working memory

Table 2. Processes and subprocesses presumably tapped by various tasks Benton, Kraft, Glover, & Plake (as cited in Singleton-Jackson, 2003)

Several researchers, among them Harmer (2004) depict the process of writing as of four basic steps that are as follows:

3.1. Planning

Williams (2003) claims that “Planning is one of the more effective features of the writing process, although it also can be one of the more challenging” (p. 114), and then returns to define planning as “Reflecting on the material produced during prewriting to develop a plan to achieve the aim of the paper” (p. 106). At this stage writers, before beginning to write, consider three main issues (Harmer, 2004). At first, Harmer indicates that writers need to think about the purpose of their writing; by doing so, they will identify the text type they will produce along with the language used, and the information included. Secondly, writers must account for the audience they are addressing allowing them to adjust their writing to leave a certain impact on the readers.

Concluding, Harmer emphasized on the content structure of the piece of writing in which it is organized in terms of facts, ideas or arguments (p. 5). In short, planning is the step stone for the writing development by which the writers collect all sorts of information about the purpose of writing, the addressed audience, and the information that will be used.

3.2. Drafting

After the first stage of planning for the writing, writers now need to follow another step that is drafting. It is producing the first version of the piece of writing that is a subject of amendment. Donohue (2009), refers to drafting as the stage where “the students are able to craft their own writing” (p.12). Therefore, in the drafting stage, writers need to put all what they see relevant to the piece of writing they are composing regardless to spelling mistakes, grammar mistakes and others. Therefore, the purpose behind drafting is to gather as much information, ideas and arguments that will be used later on in writing. Along the writing process there may exist a number of drafts until we reach the final version (Harmer, 2004).

3.3. Editing

During this step writer check their drafts for cohesion and coherence and rewrite what they think is unclear or ambiguous to form an understandable passage. This phase is about revising what a writer has done so far with careful emphasis on the elements of style and grammar lexis and so on. Editing also concerns “focusing on the sentence-level concerns, such as punctuation, sentence length, spelling, agreement of subjects and predicates, and style” (Williams, 2003). In fact, editing is significant phase by which the writers shape their writing and prepare them to be published, Harmer (2004) suggests that revising of ones’ writing by another reader helps the writer improve the quality of his writing (p.5), Whereas Donohue (2009) describe drafting as the stage at which students’ reflect on the previous stages and plan for the next.

3.4. Publishing (the final version)

After editing the drafts and making the changes that needed to be done, writers are now ready to make the final version of their piece of writing to be sent to the intended audience. Donohue concludes that “The final stage of writing process includes sharing, reflection, and assessment of the students’ writing” (p.14). The final version is therefore supposed to be the refined, errors-free copy delivered to the teacher or any other entity in order to be evaluated. When describing the writing process as listed above, we will obtain these steps as follows:

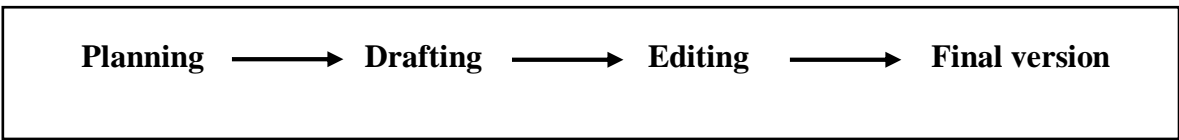


Figure 2. The linear model of writing process, (Harmer, 2004, p. 5)

However, the process of writing cannot be considered to follow such a linear representation. Harmer indicates that “The process of writing is not linear, as indicated above, but rather recursive” (p. 5). Agreeing with this, Donohue (2009) illustrates:

The writing process is not a linear as presented in this typical model, where a piece starts at the beginning with students prewriting their ideas, and ends when the piece is published. Instead, the writing process is recursive. This means that the writer is constantly revising the previous stages and finding new ways of refining a piece of writing in order to improve it (p. 9)

Thus, each step is a subject of repetition, and more often we can have more than one drafting, and more than one planning and so on. For this reason, the conventional linear representation is not valid and does not reflect what most writers experience when writing. The process wheel as presented by Harmer shows a more agreeable scheme of the writing process, in which it explains the different steps involved in writing and demonstrates their interrelation. It is worth mentioning that these stages apply for the different kinds of writings; e-mails, invitations, letters, messages, shopping lists etc.

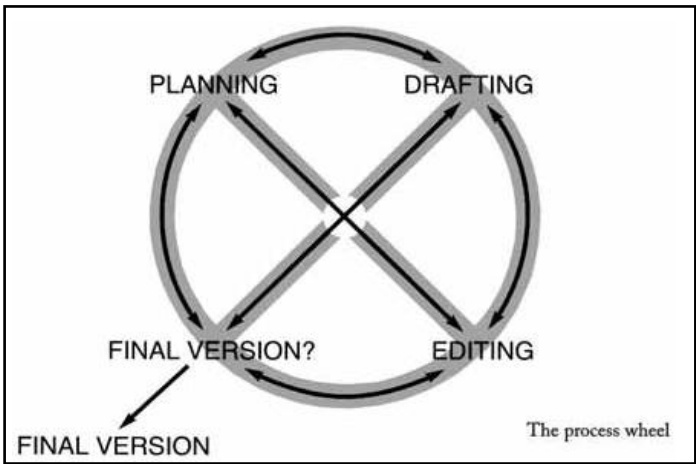


Figure 3. The process wheel, (Harmer 2004, p. 6)

As a result, the process wheel suggested by Harmer and accepted by other researchers implies the students follow a cognitive process in which they are constantly revisiting previous steps and to end up with the final version.

4. The writing strategies

Kirby and Crovitz (2013) stated that “Teaching writing is challenging; it may be one of the toughest jobs a teacher faces” (p. 9), however “it can also be rewarding” (p.11). The effective teaching of writing for Kirby and Crovitz requires time divided between practice, sharing writing, completing the piece of writing, and time to respond and evaluate all of that writing (p.9). The teaching of writing also occurs with the help of certain strategies that aim at enhancing students’ writing productions. Teaching these strategies to learners will surely have a positive effect on their writing. For instances, teaching adolescents strategies such as planning, revising and editing their compositions has made a remarkable impact on the quality of their writing (Graham & Perin, 2007). The writing strategies are variant as their application and implementation in syllabuses. Thus, the teacher is the center point which directs the students towards a successful writing achievement. The writing strategies are identified by several researchers as the teaching of generic processes such as brainstorming (Troia & Graham, 2004), or the strategies for achieving writing tasks such as story writing (Fitzgerald & Markham, 1987). Additional to the writing strategies writers may employ in during their composition, there exist a number of strategies used to engage students in writing. The NSW Department of Education and Training (2007) have proposed a series of strategies which promotes students to write and demonstrated their implementation in writing classes.

4.1. Modelled writing

Teachers use this strategy to allow students “to gain knowledge about language, vocabulary and text structures required to write for a range of purposes” (The NSW Department of Education and Training, 2007, p. 29). Models used in this strategy are real world texts students read, they might vary from newspaper articles to literary works depending on the teacher’s selection. The implementation of this strategy starts by introducing the text type to students while clarifying the audience and the purpose behind writing the text. Then the teacher points out to the type and the features of language used by the author and its effect on the readers, and he ends up with providing students with chances to practice the writing skills they have acquired studying these models (p. 28).

4.2. Think aloud writing

Think aloud strategy is one way to engage students in writing that function as a stimulator for writing. Think aloud is defined by The NSW Department of Education and Training (2007) as a method in which students are saying aloud what they are thinking about during their composition which helps them organize and edit their writing. In addition, The NSW Department of Education and Training asserts “It is a strategy that can be used to demonstrate a comprehensive range of skills, knowledge and understandings about writing” (p. 33). Moreover, the implementation of this strategy comes as the teacher selects a particular skill to focus on, and then he chooses few writing samples and apply the think aloud strategy in order to illustrate the reasoning and editing during writing.

4.3. Guided writing

In guided writing strategy, the teacher’s role is as the name of the strategy denotes is a guide for students, and they work cooperatively in order to compose a written text. This strategy “...can involve the whole class, small groups or individuals”, it can also be with help of the teacher “a key strategy for assisting students who need additional support in writing” (The NSW Department of Education and Training, 2007, p. 34). In short, guided writing emphasizes on the role of the teacher in fostering and facilitating student’s writing, by focusing on their needs, measuring and assessing the students’ achievement of the outcomes. Then the teacher helps students building prior knowledge and skills students develop in writing (The NSW Department of Education and Training, 2007).

4.4. Independent writing

The aim of this strategy is to provide students with opportunities to explore their own skills in writing different text types (The NSW Department of Education and Training, 2007), apart from the teacher’s guidance and collaborative writing with peers. In independent writing, students learn to identify the purpose of their writing, the audience, and the use of different skills to help them accomplish the writing tasks. This strategy also helps students become aware of their writings increases self-assessment.

SECTION II: TEACHING WRITING

5. The teaching of writing

The teaching of writing is an essential element of every teaching program at all levels, and the goal for teaching writing is for students to become independent writers (NSW Board of Studies, 2000). Teachers responsible for this task are well aware of the complexity of the writing skill and process, though “teaching writing can be frustrating and challenging, but it can also be rewarding and a breath of fresh air in a rather stagnant educational context” (Kirby & Crovitz, 2013, p. 9). Therefore, as suggested by NSW Board of Studies the teaching of writing needs to be explicit for students while distinguishing clearly between academic and community purposes (p.21). Additionally, teaching writing is another complex process that requires several aspects to be satisfied. For the teaching of writing, NSW Board of Studies assumes that students are supposed to understand both the purposes and the context of their writing in order to succeed at written texts, this implies the teaching of writing for different audiences and purposes. Despite the fact that students may become independent writers, there still other issues and challenges they face, and with which they need proper guidance (p. 26). In addition, students need to be personally involved in writing tasks in order to make the learning experience effective and valuable (Adas & Bakir, 2013). As a result, what are the main elements in the teaching of writing, and how are they taught?

5.1. Elements in the teaching of writing

NSW Board of Studies (2000) depicts the following elements in the teaching of writing program, it focuses on the compositions of text, the process of writing and the presentation of texts. It also indicates that the aim of teaching writing is for students to learn to write effectively for different purposes (p.21).

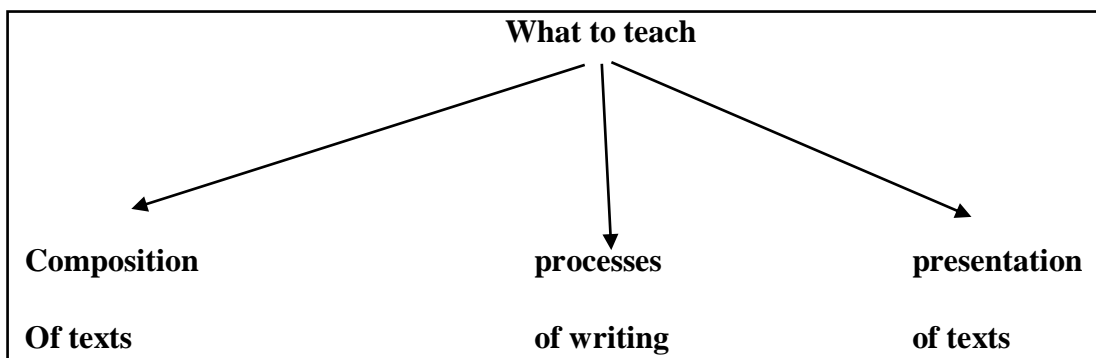


Figure 4. Elements in teaching writing (Focus on literacy: writing, 2000, p. 22)

5.1.1. Composition of texts

The composition of text as assumed by NSW Board of Studies includes the students developing a sense of the mechanics of writing; how it works and what makes it effective. In doing so, students need to learn how to think about the purpose for their writing according to different writing tasks, and to reflect on the context of their writing. Besides, the teacher evaluates the students' writing at different levels. First, the composition of the whole text (purpose, text structure and cohesion). Second, the teacher evaluates the linguistic features such as grammar, syntax and vocabulary and finally ends with the evaluation of surface features such as punctuation. As a result, in the elements of composition of text, the teacher generally follow a gradual pattern in teaching writing in which he starts with main aspects, followed by a concluding evaluation of students writing.

5.1.2. The process of writing

In this element, the teacher focuses on the fundamental feature of the writing process. During this phase, the basic process is explicitly illustrated to students, in order to understand how does writing occurs. The process of writing in generally a cognitive one (Flower & Hayes, 1982), that has to do with several mental operations, in spite of the complexity of this process students still need to practice writing following this pattern. Researchers differ in the distributing of the stages of writing but mainly agree on some of them. For NSW Board of Studies, the process is divided into seven main stages that are drafting, revising, and conferencing along with editing, proofreading and publishing.

In short, teaching the writing process to students and the stages of composing enable them to engage in writing more often, and to think critically during writing which will improve it later on.

5.1.3. The presentation of written texts

The presentation of written text goes through the explicit teaching of handwriting, spelling, grammar and punctuation. These features need to be present all the time in the student's writing for an effective writing productions. As mentioned before concerning the elements of teaching writing presented by NSW Board of Studies (2000), and which suggested the three elements. Further description of the elements in teaching writing was illustrated by Hyland (2002). In his description he focuses on three fundamental key elements that are; the writer, the text and the reader which are exhibited in table 3.

The writer

- Issues of proficiency, first language background, and prior experience
- Cognitive and motivational factors
- Knowledge of the topic
- The role of composing processes

The text

- Authenticity of purposes and writing tasks
- Number and variety of writing assignments
- Genre modelling and exploration
- Rhetorical and lexico-grammatical consciousness raising

The reader

- Orientation to specific target discourse communities
- Need for real and multiple audiences
- Awareness of appropriate levels of involvement and interactional strategies
- Importance of feedback and audience response.

Table 3. Elements of a writing pedagogy (Hyland, 2002, p. 79)

5.1.4. The writer

This element of the writer draws on the notion that writing is of two chunks; the first is that “writing as a cultural activity, and to engage students in the writing process” (Hyland, 2002, p. 80). Understanding the meaning of the cultural influence of the writers means the contribution of this factor in shaping the writer’s cognition during writing. Adding to that, writers of different cultural backgrounds will surely write according to their previous knowledge, for “Participants have their own ideas of what ‘good writing’ consist of based on their prior disciplinary, cultural or social experiences, and these expectations are internalised as different writing patterns” (p. 80). Moreover, the teacher needs to implement certain strategies in order to encourage students to write. This strategies are generally drawn from the cognitive, and motivational factors related to the students. Some of these strategies include: the choice of relevant topics, cooperative writing, and the use of varied tasks. These strategies will not only engage students in writing activities, but will also allow them to overcome the deficiencies they were suffering from in writing. Additionally, the teacher needs to understand that “not all students compose in the same

way” (p. 81), and this is due to the cultural differences mentioned previously. Therefore, student’s cognition vary in the writing process. At this point, the teacher can deliver training sessions for students aiming at “developing strategies for writing...helping them to brainstorm, draft in stages...” provided that is accompanied by his continuous feedback to guide students.

5.1.5. The text

In the teaching of writing, the text is a fundamental aspect. However, students as Hyland pointed out “are given little advice on how to structure their writing experiences according to the demands and constraints of target contexts” (p. 81), and this also proves students lacks in acknowledging features of various texts. This elements is crucial in the teaching of writing, for it has to deal with the different text types and how they are written. Teachers are therefore required to familiarise students with such types, and illustrate using strategies such as modelled writing. By this strategy teachers are supposed to “plan their writing syllabuses to focus on the formal constraints of texts to acquaint learners with the potentially unfamiliar patterns and rhetorical conventions they will need” (p. 81-82). This will include the authenticity of writing tasks, and the analysis of written texts.

5.1.6. The reader

As a final element in the teaching of writing, teachers need to incorporate the notion of the audience in teaching writing. The element of the reader or so-called the audience, largely contributes to the effective teaching of writing which “involves guiding students to an awareness of their readers...background understandings...these readers are likely to expect” (Hyland, 2002, p. 83). Further, teaching writing while focusing on the audience is implemented through encouraging students to think exhaustively of readers’ expectation and needs.

5.2. Approaches to the teaching of writing

The teaching of writing has been significantly marked by the adaptation of three main approaches. The product approach, the process approach, and the genre approach. Although these approaches have developed to make the teaching of writing as effective as possible, yet they vary in the sense of principles and techniques on the one hand, and they demonstrate merits and drawbacks on the other.

5.2.1. The product approach

The product approach is the oldest and by far one of the most practiced approaches around the world (Palpanadan, Bin Salam & Bte Ismail, 2014) in the teaching of writing. This approach is predominately focusing on the final result of writing, and considers linguistic knowledge, syntax, vocabulary and cohesive devices as basic features of the writing product Pincas (as cited in Badger & White, 2000). Students in this approach are encouraged to imitate modelled text provided primarily by the teacher, where the main objective is to acquire linguistic knowledge. Pincas (1982b) explains learning to write in the product approach as consisting of four stages. It starts with the familiarisation stage in which students get acquainted with different features of texts, then they move to the controlled writing stage where they practice skills to be prepared before moving further to the stages of guided writing and the free writing (p. 22). Subsequently, the product approach to the teaching of writing is based on several principles; for teachers put a great emphasis on the teaching of features of grammar and sentence. Additionally, teachers regard the provision of modelled texts for students as the main tool for students to avoid committing mistakes (Lázaro, 1996, p. 92). Therefore, students are generally relying on already made samples in order to compose grammatically and syntactically correct pieces of writing.

5.2.2. The process approach

The process approach to teaching writing is defined as “a cyclical approach. In this approach, students are needed to move back and forth while going from one stage to another stage and taking part in the writing activities” (Palpanadan, Bin Salam & Bte Ismail, 2014, p. 790). Similarly to the process of writing which is “recursive” (Harmer, 2004), the process approach tend to focus on the explicit instruction of the writing stages to students. Unlike the product approach which emphasizes fostering the linguistic knowledge, the product approach on the other hand “is seen as predominantly to do with linguistic skills, such as planning and drafting” (Badger & White, 2000, p. 154). In the process approach, researchers identify different stages writers go through, yet the most commonly stages agreed on suggested by Tribble (as cited in Badger & White, 2000) are the four stages model composed of: prewriting, composing/drafting, revising and editing. Moreover, the stages of writing in the process approach are complemented with various activities that the teacher supply while acting the role of a facilitator and monitor. Further, Badger and White conclude stating the aim of process approach as to improve students’ linguistic skills and writing development with the help of the

teacher as a facilitator (p. 155), rather than the product approach which aims at developing merely linguistic skills using modelled texts.

All in all, the process approach to teaching writing characterised with students as active participants in learning to write provides a good opportunity for them to develop their writing, and with the help of the teacher as monitor, and a facilitator, this approach is considered to be efficient.

5.2.3. The genre approach

The genre approach is considered as the latest approach in the teaching of writing, however it is thought to be an extension of the previous product approach (Badger & White, 2000). The notion of genre was explained by Swales (as cited in Badger & White, 2000) as "...a class of communication events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes" (p. 58). This notion was introduced in the genre approach as an explanation to the fact that writing differs across social contexts (Badger & White). In addition, with the features derived from the product approach that writing is merely about linguistic knowledge, students in the genre approach are exposed with different types of writing, and write for various purposes. Genre in writing, mainly refers to the distinct structure of texts, the different use of language in terms of grammar, vocabulary that writers use to convey their ideas (Luu, 2011). Moreover, this approach argues that successful writing occurs when students take into account both the context and the expectations of the readers in terms of grammar, organization and the content (p. 123). As for the role of the teacher, Luu claims that the teacher is generally a guide who provides students with careful support during writing activities, so they will achieve a mastery over the genres (p. 124). As a result, students in the genre approach are first acquainted with the different features of texts, purposes for writing while considering the context and the needs of the readers before they can engage in writing.

5.3. Reading and Writing

The significance of reading in the foreign language context has been for so long of interest to numerous studies (Krashen, 1982; Alderson, 1984; Carrell, 1988; Grabe, 1993). Reading was also acknowledged for having a typical connection with writing (Trosky & Wood, 1982, Tierney, Soter, O'Flahavour & Mc Ginley, 1989, Mc Gingley, 1992). A simple definition of reading mainly suggests that it is a process of attaining linguistic information through print (Widdowson, 1979). Whereas Rumelhart (1977) argues that reading is a more complex

cognitive process than we think, which includes constructing meaning with the involvement of several elements such as the reader, the text and the relationship between them. Therefore, starting from the 1970s a shift occurred regarding reading in whereby it has changed from a simple way of decoding messages to a deeper concept of comprehension.

5.3.1. The relationship between reading and writing

A large number of researchers have agreed that reading and writing are strictly intertwined and connected, for Olness (2005), Tsai (2006) they both consider reading and writing as similar processes of composing in which the reader or the author interact with a text. As it has been noticed in classroom experiences, good readers are mainly good writers (Williams, 2003). The explanation of this comes in Krashen's (as cited in Williams, 2003) claim that the skills of writing is similar to second language skill in which its mastery comes out of a comprehensible input over a period of time. Meaning that proficiency in writing is a result of a sufficient and a comprehensible reading input. Furthermore, Krashen (1985) relates writing development to "... extensive reading in which the focus of the reader is on the message, i.e., reading for genuine interest and/or pleasure" (p. 23). When considering the perspective of reading as a way of improving writing proficiency, Krashen (1981a) introduced the reading hypothesis which is a way of explaining the differences of students' writing ability. As a result, he claimed that (a) "good writers will have done large amounts of pleasure reading" (p. 3); (b) "good writers, as a group, read and have read more than poor writers" (p. 3); (c) "reading remains the only way of developing competence in writing" (p. 9). However, Williams (2003) does not completely support these arguments, for he acknowledges the importance of reading as a factor in writing development but not as the only one (p. 166).

In general, it is apparent that reading and writing are interrelated in terms of processes, and the tight impact which reading has on writing. Moreover, drawing on the fact that reading is a contributing factor in developing students' writing ability, this can also imply that reading may inhibit writing ability if not practiced often. Furthermore, reading is encouraged to be integrated when teaching writing, without neglecting the effective instruction from the part of the teacher.

5.4. Planning students' writing

When speaking about planning students' writing, we generally refer to planning writing assignments. This procedure may not be as easy as it seems, for it may reflect the quality of the students' writing in most instances as Williams (2003) points out that "...problems in students' writing can be traced back to poorly constructed assignments" (p. 279). Therefore, effective planning of assignment is a delicate matter that requires attentive thought. Williams (2003) suggested few steps in order to improve assignments planning. In his perspective, he emphasizes on the importance of outcomes and objectives of writing assignments. He argued that good assignments require time for planning, and are of a measurable objectives related to broader goals in the teaching of writing. In relation to that, he distinguishes between goals that are linked with mastery of writing, and objectives that has to do more with performance and skill. In describing the goals for writing assignments; Williams indicates that students will be studying different forms of writing. Whereas in objectives, students mainly are expected to produce effective and successful writing by the end of the writing course (p. 280). Additionally, in planning for students assignments Lázaro (1996) proposed that teachers need to take students' level and the difficulties of the assignment into account. This generally means that writing assignments are distributed designed to meet students' actual level and addresses their lacks in writing. Therefore, teachers need to take into account all these aspects into account when designing writing activities for students.

5.5. Assessing students' writing

Assessing students' writing is a significant element in the teaching of writing; by which teachers are able to measure the degree at which their students are progressing. Assessing is defined as "the process of collecting, analysing and recording information about student progress towards achievement of syllabus outcomes" (Writing and spelling strategies, 2007, p. 17). Harmer (2004) suggested that "when responding to students' work we are not only concerned with the accuracy of their performance but also – and this is crucial – with the content and design of their writing" (p. 108). Meaning that assessment of writing is not only concerned with rules of language and respecting stages of writing, but also with the information included within their writing. Supporting this argument, Mackenzie, Scull and Munsie (2013) claim that "assessment systems should consider content and process" (p. 376). The notion of responding to students' written works for Harmer is just a way by which the teacher discusses the students' writings without any judgement. Whereas, when correcting their writing, teachers are ought to

observe and indicate errors and correct mistakes, and also make recommendations whenever necessary. Moreover, an effective process for assessing students' writing achievement was highlighted in Writing and spelling strategies (2007). As a first step, teachers need to collect students writing samples over a period of time, and then the teacher needs to observe students' behaviours as they engage in the process of writing. Then, comes the analysis stage in which teachers analyse students' writing skills based on a test which results are used to determine students' progress.

As a conclusion, assessment of students' writing is a critical process where the teacher needs to determine the basic elements of his evaluation. In doing so, teachers need to define the basic goals and objectives for assessment along with consideration to both process and the content of students' writing in order to achieve the main aim behind assessment that is improving students' writing ability.

6. Difficulties in writing and learning to write

As they learn to write inside or outside the classroom settings, students encounter difficulties which hinder their writing proficiency. The writing difficulties are commonly shared among English native speakers, and even students who are learning English both as a second or foreign language (Aragón, Baires & Rodriguez, 2013). Al-Khasawneh (as cited in Huwari & Al-Khasawneh, 2013) states that "EFL learners showed that they have many problems when writing in English... That's because they rarely write in English" (p. 2). Writing is also highlighted as one of the most difficult skills to master McIntyre and Gardner (as cited in Huwari & Al-Khasawneh, 2013). This issue may be traced back to the stages of writing, planning, drafting, editing and publishing (Harmer, 2004) as well as to the components of a good piece of writing (Raimes, 1983) which students need to take into account while composing in English. In addition, "Students do not write very often and most of what they write is classroom-bound" (Adas & Bakir, 2013, p. 254). This assumption is applicable in many settings where ESLs and EFLs are hindered with composition; where "they have to put into practice all the strategies and techniques that have been taught to them in their composition courses" (Aragón, Baires & Rodriguez, 2013, p. 13).

6.1. Aspects of difficulties in students' writing

The writing difficulties may be related to features like grammar, syntax, cohesion or others, and students usually vary in facing these difficulties. Furthermore, students' writing difficulties may be a result of different factors, because "...not only self-strategies influence students'

performance, but also the effectiveness of the methods and techniques that teachers apply in their English composition courses” (Aragón, Baires & Rodriguez, 2013, p. 1). Significant to the nature of writing as a cognitive process, and the amount of time and effort it requires, Aragón, Baires and Rodriguez (2013) argued that students who have low interest in writing and learning to write mostly have low writing proficiency (p. 1). Another research which confirmed writing difficulties was conducted by Salem (as cited in Huwari & Al-Khasawneh, 2013), in which he concluded that ESLs and EFLs encounter difficulties impeding them to writing effectively.

His results came out of a study carried on undergraduate students majoring in English, and their views on writing in English. He argued that most learners faced difficulties in relation to vocabulary, idioms, cultural knowledge and less experience with second language rhetorical strategies. Students in this study have displayed difficulty in beginning to write, developing ideas; they also found difficulties using technical skills and appropriate written compositions. In short, this implies that students faced a variety of difficulties, and encountered different problems during their writing composition.

6.1.1. Problems with grammar

Grammar was defined by Neuleib (as cited in Hartwell, 1985) as “the internalized system that native speakers of a language share” (p. 205). A more detailed definition was proposed by Harmer (2001) as “the description of the ways in which words can change their forms and can be combined into sentences in that language” (p. 12). These ways are called ‘the grammar rules’ that are basic elements in every language, and are also inseparable from writing (Hartwell, 1985). Grammar rules mainly include various rules such as tenses, prepositions, word class, voice and many others. These rules stand as a problem for many students in writing. In investigating the effect of teaching grammar, Hartwell (1985) cited different studies which concluded that formal grammar instruction made no improvement on students writing ability nor on their ability to avoid errors (Neuleib, 1977; Elley, Barham, Lamb & Wyllie 1979). The main writing difficulties students find in relation to grammar is the low understanding of grammar, which results later on in difficulties in arranging proper writing (Bahri & Sugeng, 2010).

6.1.2. Problems with vocabulary

Vocabulary is an important aspect in language skills as suggested by Nation (as cited in Mehring, 2005). Vocabulary is defined by Cambridge dictionary as “all the words known and used by a person”. Vocabulary related difficulties are generally; students failing to recall on important words to use, failing to use the appropriate words and poor vocabulary. More importantly, knowing words generally means knowing their meanings, basic forms (Shejbalová, 2006) and their distribution (Lado, 1955) which often results a confusing for students at different occasions. Nakata (as cited in Mehring, 2005) noted that vocabulary acquisition is an ongoing process that requires students’ constant repetition and use of words to be effectively attained in the long term memory, and then retrieved once needed. Developing vocabulary through memorising words of a list is not sufficient, for students to acquire vocabulary they need to learn words as a part of the context in which they occur. This method is proven to be beneficial for “it helps the student understand the word’s correct usage” (Mehring, 2005, p. 4). Moreover, Yongqi Gu (as cited in Mehring, 2005) asserts that “vocabulary acquisition is a learner-centered activity with the effectiveness of the learner’s strategies depending on his/her attitude and motivation towards new vocabulary acquisition”.

As a result, vocabulary can have a great impact on students writing for the importance, and the contribution it adds to the value of writing ability. Therefore, learners are expected to have a positive attitude towards learning new vocabulary, and to recognize new words as part of their context of occurrence, while attempting to identify their meanings.

6.1.3. Problems with spelling and punctuation

Spelling and punctuation are two commonly shared writing difficulties among students. Learning to spell words correctly is expected to take place in the earliest stages of language teaching, yet it is not always the case for spelling may become difficult in some instances. Moreover, spelling is said to be closely interrelated with reading; Frith (1980) argues that “Learning to read should imply learning to spell, and learning to spell should imply learning to read” (p. 496). However, this is not always the case, for there exist people with excellent reading abilities, but struggle when it comes to spelling words (Frith, 1980, p. 497). Writing difficulties of relevance to spelling mainly include the misspelling of words which are a result of the irregularities of the English spelling system (Banca, 2013). This related to the similarities of vowels, for instance, that can be decoded in different spelling. Additionally, Banca further explained that spelling mistakes may occur when students are less concentrated due to tiredness

or carelessness about the correctness of words (p. 4). While Harmer (2001) states that "...the correspondence between the sound of a word and the way it is spelt is not always obvious" (p. 256). Furthermore, he indicates that the reason spelling is difficult for students is "...the fact that not all varieties of English spell the same words in the same way". For instance, the way American English pronounce the word '*behavior*', differs from British English '*behaviour*'. In this sense, Harmer (2001) proposed extensive reading as a remedy for students to overcome spelling difficulties.

On the other hand, punctuation presents an obstacle in writing. Carroll and Wilson (1993) illustrate three problems linked to punctuation. The first is that punctuation rules are not totally exact, punctuation is complex, and it depends on one's style to determine the meaning. The way a student punctuates writing can change the meaning completely, because each punctuation mark is a distinctive way of interpreting the meaning. Therefore, students need to pay attention to the way they punctuate, which is in most cases a problem for them.

6.2. Error analysis of students' writing

Errors and mistakes are part of students' writing as they progress in learning to write. Hadler (as cited in Bahri & Sugeng, 2010) argued that "Errors give the writer evidence of difficulty which students have problem in practicing writing, although they do not provide them with all the possible evidence, nor are they to be taken as the only proof" (p. 3). Considering errors as a proof that students face difficulties during writing, the emergence of error analysis (EA) was first established in the 1970s by Corder "as a type of linguistic study that focuses on the errors learners make" (Sawalmeh, 2013, p. 2). According to Corder (as cited in Sawalmeh, 2013) EA is of two main objectives. The first is to understand learners as they learn in a second language (L2), while the second is to enable effective learning by using learners' knowledge of his native language (L1).

Errors were classified by Brown (as cited in Sawalmeh, 2013) as of two origins, the first of which is interlingual errors which "... are those errors that are traceable to first language interference" (p. 4). While the second is intralingual errors were explained by Keshavarz, Fang and Jiang (as cited in Sawalmeh, 2013) "they result from faulty or partial learning of the target language rather than language" (p. 4). Corder (as cited in Khasawneh, 2013) indicated that the process of error analysis is conducted through four stages. It starts with recognizing the meaning of an error and identifying its type. Then followed by an explicit description, and explanation of the error, and, by finally, classifying the error. In their investigation of writing difficulties

among students, Bahri and Sugeng (2010) depicted a framework of errors along with stages of error analysis that explicitly illustrates the process of EA, the framework is demonstrated below in figure 4.

To conclude, Error Analysis is one way by which teachers are able to measure the students' difficulties in writing, and build on them a particular remedy to improve their writing instruction in the future. More importantly, "...errors are advantageous for both learners and teacher" (Sawalmeh, 2013), for it offers clear insights of the areas of difficulties not only related to students, but also connected with teachers.

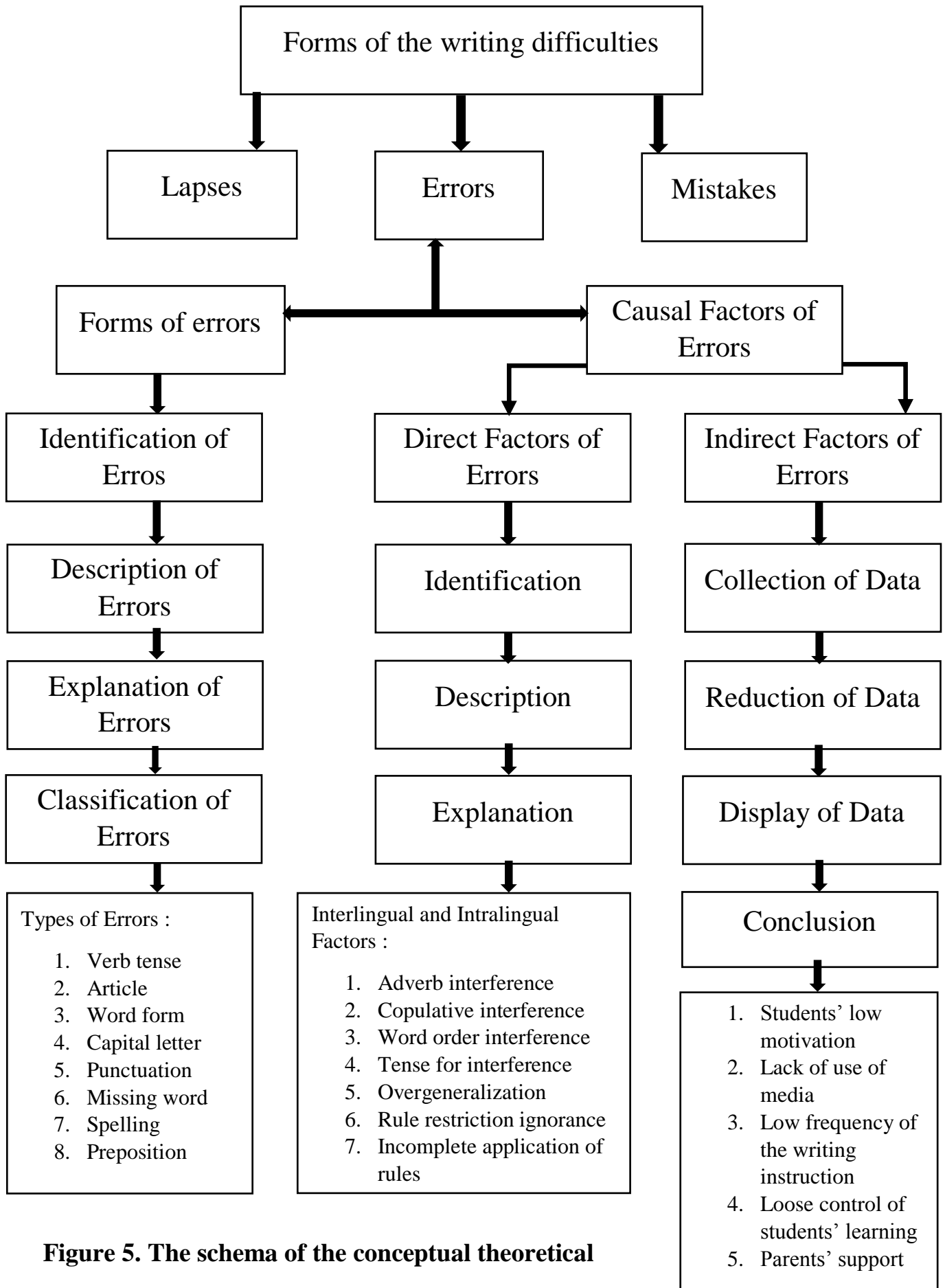


Figure 5. The schema of the conceptual theoretical framework (Bahri & Sugeng, 2010)

SECTION III: ACADEMIC WRITING

7. Academic writing

Success at advanced level of education such as college or university requires developed communicative skills known as academic literacies. It also “involves adapting new ways of knowing: new ways of understanding, interpreting and organising knowledge” (Lea & Street, 1998, p. 158). One of these skills is academic writing. Irvin (2010) considers academic writing as “...a form of evaluation that asks you to demonstrate knowledge and show proficiency with certain disciplinary skills of thinking, interpreting, and presenting” (p. 8). Tarnopolsky and Kozhushko (2007) explained academic writing as “the most creative type of writing that can be taught to students of English as a foreign or second language” (para. 4), and have also account for it as “...a unique means for learners’ consciously mastering the creative, productive, and expressive approach towards communicative performance in the target language” (para. 5). Academic writing is highly required for university courses (Whitaker, 2009). During academic writing assignments Whitaker have demonstrated that students are mainly required to ask good questions, and examine their answers. They are also required to show good understanding of the main topic they are discussing and develop critical arguments about it. Coffin, Curry, Goodman, Hewings, Lillis and Swann (2003) listed what students’ need to do in academic writing; the list is as follows:

- Take up a position
- Adopt a particular perspective
- Put forward points for and against a particular position
- Explore possible positions
- Link theory and evidence
- Draw a conclusion
- Analyse
- Be critical
- Develop a central idea
- Use evidence to support an argument
- Express personal opinions
- Use personal interpretations

Academic writing is, therefore, a tool for success at higher educational levels if mastered perfectly by students. It will result in a high sense of research skills, information analysis and other skills such as arguing, organising and expressing personal views (Whitaker, 2009).

7.1. Factors affecting students' academic writing

Students' academic writing is influenced by various factors interfering to either improve or inhibit writing proficiency. In this study two main factors are going to be studied; SMS chatting and the second is social networking.

7.1.1. SMS and text chatting

As the progress of modern life continues to grow, so does the ways of communication in an attempt to link people and narrow distances between them. Text messaging is a feature of mobile phones that is widely used by a growing number of users nowadays. The development of the Short Message Service (SMS) service came in the 1990s was introduced as a way for communication that is of a less cost than phone calls (Mirza, 2015). Thurlow (as cited in Mirza, 2015) stated:

The limit of 160 characters per SMS has motivated users to invent space saving strategies in order to make SMSing quicker and more cost-effective, as exceeding this limit results in the user paying for sending an extra SMS (para. 2)

The limited space of an SMS has resulted in inventing new ways of including as much information needed in a concise way. Such strategies may include “a significant amount of abbreviation, and creative use of punctuation and symbols” (Mirza, 2015, para. 3). The increasing use of SMS along with SMS strategies among people especially students is questioned; if such a feature can impact students' academic writing in any particular way. In his study of investigating the presence of features of SMS in students' written works, Mirza (2015) discovered that students' have shown few features of SMS speak. Whereas results derived from questionnaires revealed that the minority of participants were frequent users of SMS, and they believed that their academic writing was affected by SMS in terms of spelling, inappropriate use of abbreviations and acronyms. Another study was conducted by Dansieh

(2011) where he surveyed a large number of both students and teachers. Results came to show that the majority of the population confirmed that SMS have a negative effect on their writing skills. Contradicting with these findings, Crystal (as cited in Dansieh, 2011) reported that SMS texting is not that harmful, but rather improves it. He argued that SMS texting involves people in using the language, it also makes them think about the spelling of words before writing them, an argument of Crystal against bad spelling which SMS texting is assumed to have on writing. Moreover, Dansieh (2011) reported a third party which considers SMS texting of no effect. Presumably they stated that language used while texting is another language separated from English that will cause no negative impact; since students are able to distinguish between “slang, texting lingo and correct English” Russel (as cited in Dansieh, 2011).

7.1.2. Internet networking

Social networking has become widely used by a large number of people across the globe. The reasons for its spreading is the possibilities of sharing ideas, connecting people and the easy access for almost all sorts of information. People have started spending more time surfing the internet, and as a result many have become more and more addicted to it to extreme limits. This issue is not an exception for students, for “...they find it difficult to study for one hour without login to one network site” Egedegbe (2013, para. 2). This increase in internet networking sites (SNS), and the constant use of it, among students particularly, leads to the question stating the nature of influence of internet networking on students’ writing proficiency.

Nowadays, internet and Social Networking Sites (SNS) are used for different reasons. Ahn (as cited in Mingle & Adams, 2015) indicated that “Social Network Sites (SNS) provide a platform for the youth to participate in communities that help them to learn, and practice skills within a particular knowledge area”. This claim proves that SNS are a way by which people can benefit from in learning. In relation to writing, Fishman et al. (as cited in Mingle & Adams) stated that students produce a large amounts of writing on the internet through weblogs and social media sites where they can enhance their writing. Additionally, in his research Yunus et al. (as cited in Mingle & Adams, 2015) indicated that students have improved their writing and gained more vocabulary from social networks such as Facebook and Twitter. However, internet and SNS are not always of that good, Risto (2014) claimed that “...educators fear that students

will draw upon their most frequently utilized form of communication, texting and social media, for their sentence patterns, grammar, punctuation, and word choice”. As a result, as internet can be used in enhancing one’s skills in writing it also inhibit it. A number of studies, Horton, Alloway and Dawosn (2012); Wood et al. (2014) (as cited in Mingle & Adams) have been conducted which confirmed that internet, social media and texting have a negative effect on students’ writing especially in terms of spelling, grammar.

To conclude, internet and social networking sites have marked a great importance in our daily life and have become “...one of the most important factors that can influence educational performance of students positively or adversely” (Egedegbe, 2013, para. 16). Moreover, these services have influenced both positively and negatively students’ academic performance especially at the level of writing skills. Therefore, students’ must be made aware of these consequences so they can make effective use of internet and social networking sites.

Conclusion

As a productive skill, writing is significant for students in the learning of the target language. In the context of study, writing is one of the basic elements in the curriculum of foreign language teaching. This chapter shed light on the theoretical framework surrounding the skill of writing, and the main microskills and processes in writing composition. It also deals with the teaching of writing in different approaches, and it ends with the main difficulties encountered in writing.

CHAPTER TWO:

THE PRACTICAL PART

Introduction

The current study is about investigating students' writing difficulties, and common errors and they share in writing. In doing so, a students' questionnaire was administered with the aim of identifying learners' views of writing. In addition, corpus analysis of students' essays was done to inspect about students' possible areas of difficulties they are likely to encounter.

This chapter includes a description of the population from which the sample was selected. In addition, it covers a description of the questionnaire, an analysis of the questionnaire and corpus analysis of students' essays. Moreover, this chapter deals with a discussion of the findings and ends with suggestions and recommendation for further research.

1. Population and sample

Twenty six (26) students were selected randomly as the sample of this study from a general population of (268) third year LMD students majoring in English at the University of Bejaia. The selection of this sample was based on the assumption that students by this stage they would be aware of the different writing types and the components of a good piece of writing. Additionally, the population of third year students have at least have experienced difficulties in writing.

2. Description of the Students' Questionnaire

The first means of collecting data in this research is The Students' Questionnaire. Before administering it to students, the questionnaire was first piloted to test the validity of the questions. Nineteen (19) questionnaires were distributed in this phase. Result from the pilot study of the questionnaire show that most questions were understood correctly by the students and answered normally.

The questionnaire is composed of nineteen (19) questions mixed between closed questions where students are required to choose 'yes' or 'no' answers, and with multiple choice questions where they are asked to pick their own answers providing a justification for the selection. In addition, there exist other questions with a 'yes' and 'no' answers with a justification space if the answer matched to the option 'no'.

Moreover, the questionnaire is categorised into three main types. Questions (1) and (2) are under the background information of the students. The second type, question (3) to (16), entitled: students' writing proficiency and difficulties in writing deals with aspects related to

students' perception of their level and motivation in writing, difficulties in writing and time devoted to writing. It also tackles features such as the basic stages they should follow in writing, the use of dictionaries, respecting teacher's instruction during writing in other modules and how often students write outside classroom settings. Furthermore, other questions in this type deals with writing strategies students employ, and with the connection between reading and writing and its importance in improving writing skill.

Consequently, the third part of the questionnaire, question (17) to (19), entitled academic writing are mainly related to students' use of SMS texting, internet and social networking sites, the type of language they use in these services and their impact on their English writing.

2.1. Analysis and discussion of Questionnaire

Part one: Background information

1. Students' gender

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Male	5	19.2%
Female	21	80.8%
Total	26	100%

Table 4. Students' gender

We can deduce from the chart above that the majority of the respondents to the questionnaire are females (80.2%), whereas the remaining percentage represents the male respondents (19.2%).

2. How do you evaluate your English level?

Level	Frequency	Percentage
Outstanding	0	0%
Good	11	42.3%
Average	14	53.8%
Low	1	3.8%
Very low	0	0%
Total	26	100%

Table 5. Students' English level

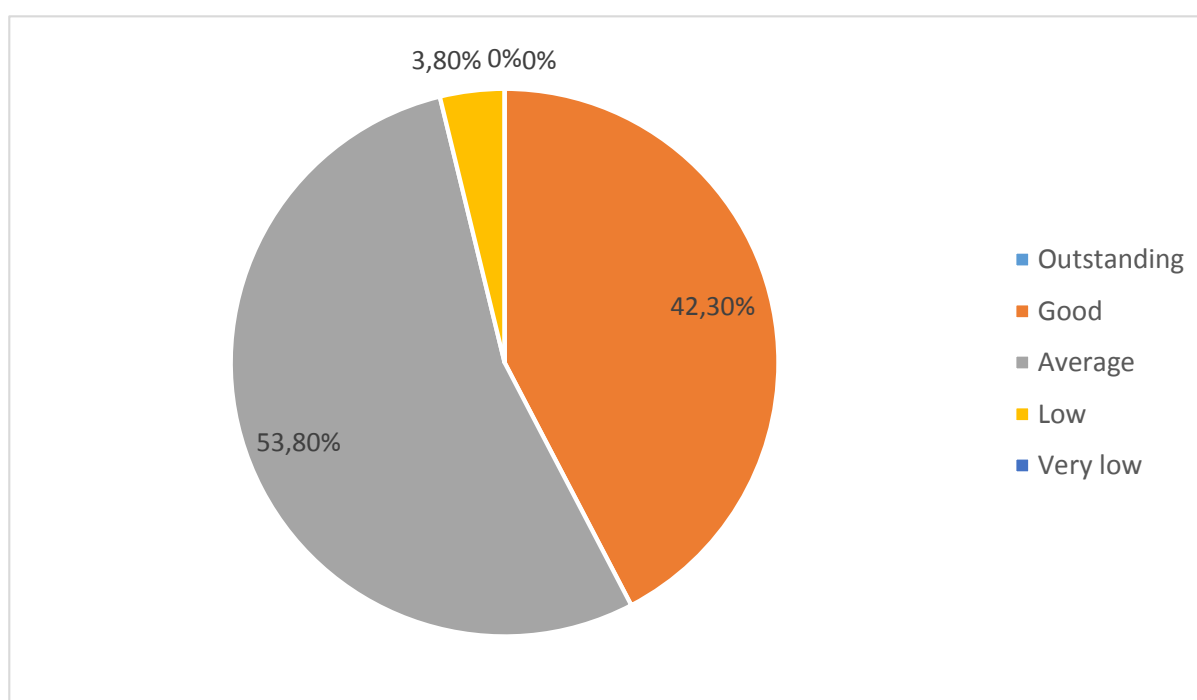


Figure 6. Students' English level

As it is noticed, the highest rate of respondents (53.8%) claim to have an average level in English. Others (42.3%) have declared to have a good level, while the remaining respondents (3.8%) appeared to have a low level in English.

Students mainly link their level in English to their ability of understanding and using the different language skills; speaking, reading, writing and listening.

Part two: Students' writing proficiency and difficulties in writing

3. Are you motivated to learn writing?

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	25	96.2%
No	1	3.8%
Total	26	100%

Table 6. Motivation to learn writing

Results obtained from question (3) depict that the majority of respondents (25) assume that they are motivated to learn writing. As for the rest, the remaining respondent (1) has stated to be demotivated to learn writing.

The factor of motivation plays a significant role in learning this skill. These results could be interpreted in the way that most students like to practice writing, and they have a positive attitude towards it. Therefore, they are willing to learn writing and to improve their level.

4. How do you evaluate your writing proficiency?

Level	Frequency	Percentage
Outstanding	1	3.8%
Good	8	30.8%
Average	15	57.7%
Low	2	7.7%
Very low	0	0
Total	26	100%

Table 7. The level of writing proficiency

The majority of students (57.7%) stated that they have an average proficiency in writing, whereas other students (30.8%) indicated to be good writers. Moreover, few students (7.7%) have identified themselves to be low proficiency writers, and (3.8%) as outstanding writers.

The fact that most students have an average level in writing, as noticed from the aforementioned results, may be linked to students' lack of practice of writing. Unlike (30.8%)

of students who have declared to have a good level in writing probably practice writing more often. Therefore, the more students practice, the more they will improve their writing skill and proficiency.

5. What are the aspects you are likely to find difficulties in? (You can choose more than one answer)

Aspects of difficulties	Answers	
	Frequency	Percentage
Grammar	11	19.6%
Vocabulary	13	23.2%
Punctuation	5	8.9%
Spelling	6	10.7%
Coherence	4	7.1%
Academic style	10	17.9%
Organization of writing	7	12.5%
Total	56	100%

Table 8. Aspects of difficulties in writing

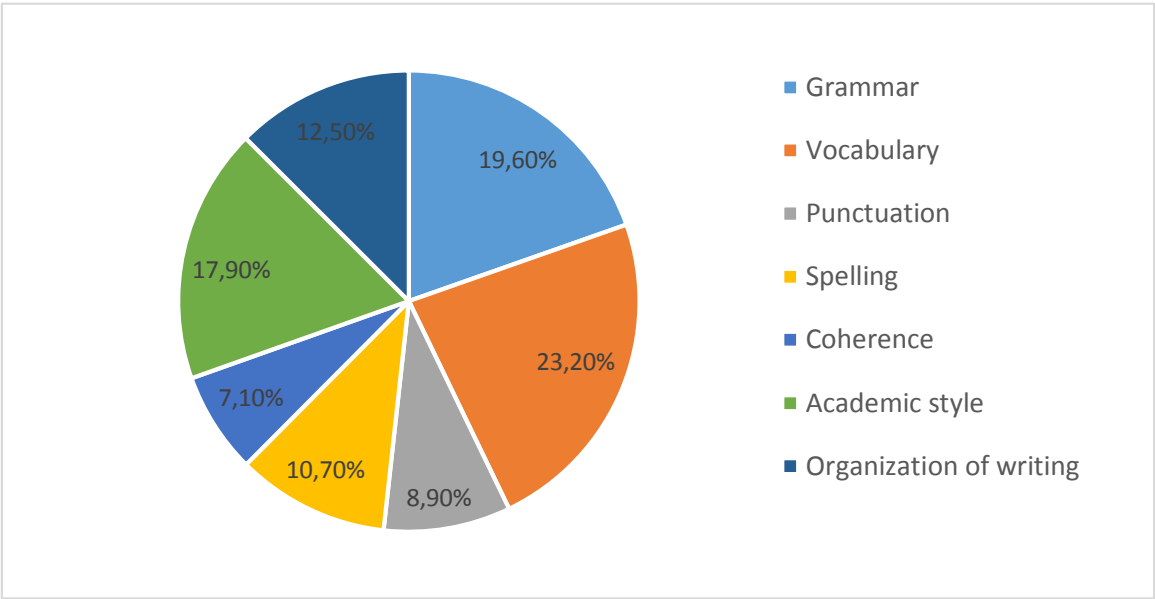


Figure 7. Aspects of difficulties in writing

The results obtained show the following. Vocabulary (23.2%), grammar (19.6%) and academic style (17.9%) were the most common difficulties in writing which students seem to

share. Followed by approximate percentages in organization of writing (12.5%), spelling (10.7%), punctuation (8.9%) and coherence (7.1%).

The results found show three main aspects of difficulties in students writing. The first, is concerned with vocabulary. Problems in writing concerned with the element of vocabulary derive from the challenging fact of finding exact words each time they write. In this case, students are EFL learners therefore they may have a limited vocabulary, with less experience, and practice in using word choice which results in a repetition of words, the misuse of vocabulary items and ambiguity of meaning in their writing.

Secondly, grammar originating difficulties found in students writing may have been caused by a low understanding and practice of the grammar rules, or the generalization of rules in the case of EFL learners. It may also be a result of L1 influence.

The last aspect of difficulty is related to the academic style. The struggle students face in writing concerning the academic style, is due to the requirements of each text type and patterns and respecting various forms such as: academic words, transitions, sentence structure and so on. These features may cause a problem for students if they cannot distinguish between academic and non-academic writing, and if they are not given proper instruction about it.

6. Are you given enough time in the classroom to write or to answer the writing activities?

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	17	65.4%
No	9	34.6%
Total	26	100%

Table 9. The sufficiency of writing time in the classroom

The results tabulated above revealed that (65.4%) of students are not given sufficient time in the classroom to either write or to answer the writing assignments. On the other hand, others (34.6%) believe that the time given to them is sufficient.

Providing sufficient time for students is an important factor to allow students to think properly without any pressure; which allows them to follow the writing process, and respect the elements of a good piece of writing.

6.1. If no why?

Reasons	Frequency	Percentage
Lack of time	7	77.7%
Activities are not a part of the classroom	1	11.1%
Unknown reason	1	11.1%
Total	9	100%

Table 10. Reasons for insufficient time for classroom writing

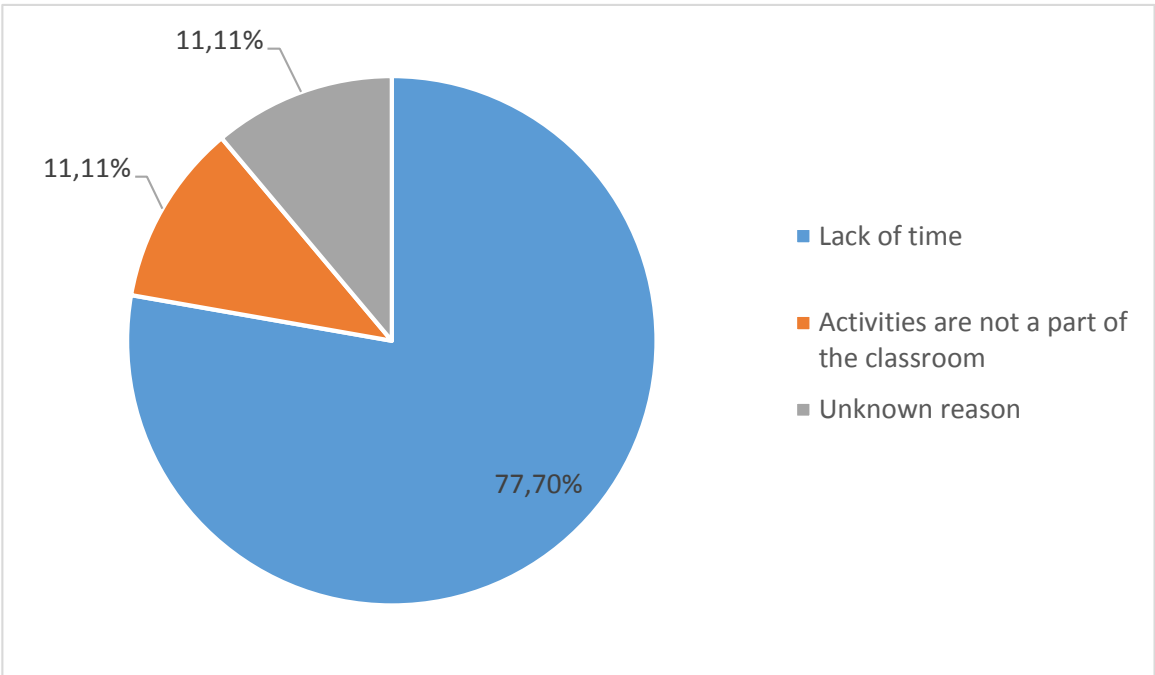


Figure 8. Reasons for insufficient time for classroom writing

When inquiring about the reasons students are not given enough time to write or to answer to assignments during writing session, the following results have been found. The highest rate of students (7) have associated the reason to the fact that the session of writing is short and they do not have enough time to write. Another student (1) explained that the writing activities are not a part of the session that is they do not practice writing in the classroom. Whereas, another student stated he does not know the reason exactly.

The obtained results imply that the writing session is merely devoted to the presentation of the lesson. Moreover, students seem not to practice many writing activities in the classroom which should be a part of the writing session.

7. Do you usually follow the steps/stages of writing in your written assignments?

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	17	65.4%
No	7	26.9%
No answer	2	7.7%
Total	26	100%

Table 11. Following stages in writing assignments

Most of the students (65.4%) who have answered the question (7) have confirmed that they follow strictly the stages of writing in their assignments. Whereas the rest of students (26.9%) disproved the statement, and the remaining students (7.7%) gave no answer.

Results from the table (11) imply that most of students are aware of the significance of following the stages of writing. This factor is important in developing and refining students' written productions (Harmer, 2004).

7.1. If no why?

Reason	Frequency	Percentage
Related to the students' way in writing	2	28.5%
Because it is difficult	3	42.8%
It is time consuming	1	14.2%
Missing answer	1	14.2%
Total	7	100%

Table 12. Reasons for not following the stages of writing

The majority of students (42.8%) who declared to not follow the stages of writing when answering to the activities, linked the reason to the difficulty of following these stages. Subsequently, others (25.8%) argued that they have a personal method in writing. While,

(14.2%) stated that it is time consuming, the same percentage (14.2%) of students gave no answer.

The above stated results entail that students' main reason for not following the stages of writing is due to the difficulty of the latter. As assumed by Harmer (2004), writing is a recursive process meaning that writers move from the different stages more than once. This task is challenging, and it may be the problem behind students' failing to follow the steps of writing.

8. Does the teacher allow you to use dictionaries in your writing session?

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	21	80.8%
No	5	19.2%
Total	26	100%

Table 13. The permission to use of dictionaries

We can notice that the majority of students (80.8%) claimed that the teacher allows them to use dictionaries. Unlike the rest of students (19.2%) who stated that the teacher does not allow them to use dictionaries during the writing session.

Students' use of dictionary could be a way to improve their writing level, and also to foster them to compose. Teachers recommend that students use dictionaries frequently so that they become more interested in writing and engage in the process.

9. How often do you use dictionaries in your writing?

Degree	Frequency	Percentage
Always	6	23.1%
Often	15	57.7%
Rarely	4	15.4%
Never	1	3.8%
Total	26	100%

Table 14. The degree of dictionary use

As the table describe, (57.7%) of students appear to use the dictionary often, (23.1%) of them use it always and (15.4%) use it rarely. Whereas the least percentage (3.8%) of students never use dictionaries.

Reasons behind students' frequent use of dictionaries, are for the search of synonyms and their meanings, to use them in their writing, and also as a way of enriching students' vocabulary. In this sense, students' proficiency in writing may develop if dictionaries are used properly.

10. Do you follow writing instructions your writing teacher taught you when writing in other modules?

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	20	76.9%
No	6	23.1%
Total	23	100%

Table 15. Following the writing instructions in other modules

The table above shows that a high percentage of students (76.9%) confirmed that they follow what the teacher has instructed them when writing in other modules. On the contrary, (23.1%) of students said that they do not follow these instruction.

Students learn writing and its stages to be applied not only in the module of writing, but in different types of writing assignments. The results obtained show that students are fully aware of teachers' instruction concerning writing, and that they apply most of them in other modules.

10.1. If no why?

Reason	Frequency	Percentage
Write freely and forget the rules	1	16.6%
Lack of time	1	16.6%
Missing answer	4	66.6%
Total	6	100%

Table 16. Reasons for not following writing instructions in other modules

The table above indicates students' responses about not following the teacher's instruction when writing in other modules. A large number of students (66.6%) did not provide an answer. A percentage of (16.6%) which represents (1) student explained that he likes to writes freely and often forget about the rules. A similar percentage (16.6%) associated the reason to the lack of time.

The results indicates that these reasons are the main cause of not following the steps of writing. First, providing students with less time to complete the writing assignments may stop them from respecting these steps and results in a messy composition. Second, when students develop a certain style in writing they may forget the basic instructions they have to follow. In addition, the complexity of some writing rules may push students to become more independent which makes their writing seem less organized.

11. How often do you write outside the classroom?

Degree	Frequency	Percentage
Always	0	0%
Often	13	50%
Rarely	12	46.2%
Never	1	3.8%
Total	26	100%

Table 17. Writing outside the classroom

Results from the table (17) show that half (50%) of students write often outside the classroom, and (46.2%) of them stated that they write rarely, and the remaining (3.8%) of students never write.

Improving the skill of writing is done through constant practice, therefore writing outside the classroom is important in developing this skill. In this sense, students need to write more often especially outside the classroom to make sure they apply what they have learned during the session in order to make a progress.

12. Which of the following strategies you use more often in your writing?

Strategy used	Frequency	Percentage
Modelled writing	4	15.4%
Think aloud	7	26.9%
Guided writing	3	11.5%
Independent writing	10	38.5%
Missing answer	2	7.7%
Total	26	100%

Table 18. The strategies used in writing

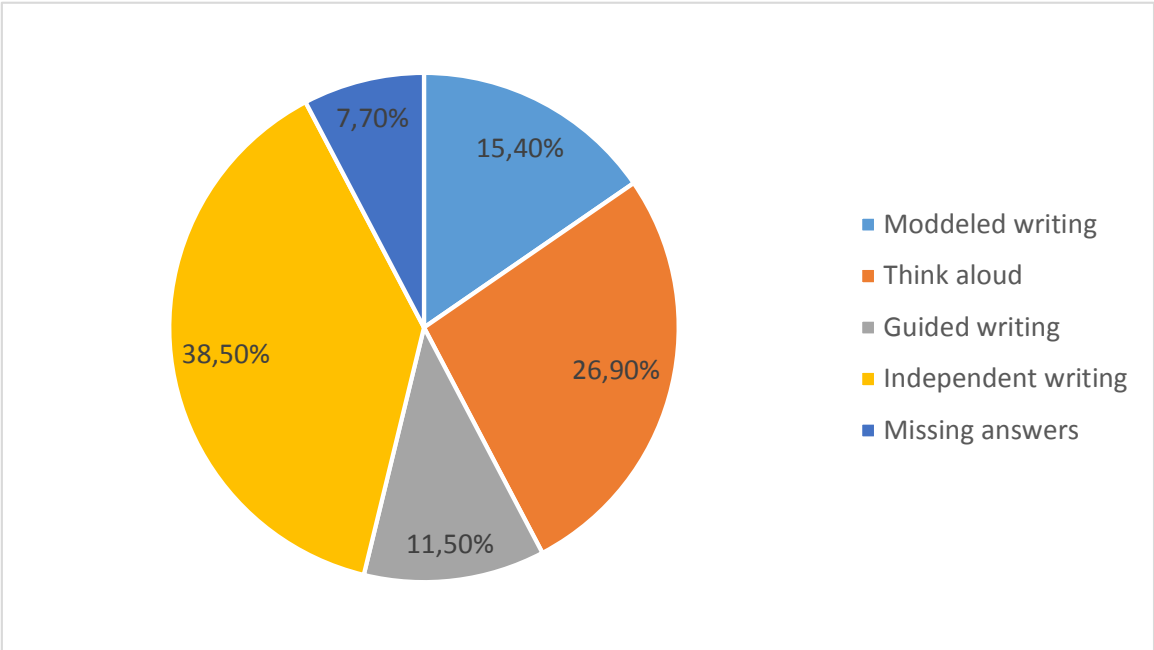


Figure 9. The strategies used in writing

Results obtained from question (12) indicated that up to (38.5%) of students use independent writing strategy in their writing, (26.9%) of students prefer to use think aloud strategy, and (15.4%) of them like modelled writing. Moreover, guided writing was selected by (11.5%) of students, and the remaining percentage (7.7%) was missing answers.

These results imply that students differ in the strategies they employ for writing, which is due to their personal preferences. Students’ choice for the strategies could be based on their past experiences in writing and the results they get after choosing each strategies.

13. Do you have a module for reading comprehension?

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	4	15.4%
No	22	84.6%
Total	26	100%

Table 19. The existence of reading comprehension module

When asked about the existence of a reading comprehension module in their program, the majority of students (84.6%) have answered with no stating that they do not have such a module. Whereas other students (15.4%) confirmed that they have a module for reading comprehension.

Having a module for reading comprehension introduced to learners is important. The amount of time students spend in reading they will be introduced to different writing types and get familiar with their characteristics which will shape their writing skill.

14. Is the skill of reading integrated/included in your writing session?

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	16	61.5%
No	9	34.6%
Missing answer	1	3.8%
Total	26	100%

Table 20. The integration of reading in writing session

Table (20) demonstrates that (61.5%) of students indicated that the skill of reading was integrated in their writing session, however (34.6%) of them stated the opposite; that reading did not take part in the writing class. Furthermore, (3.8%) that is one (1) student did not answer.

Knowing that writing and reading are intertwined, the skill of reading should have a part in the writing session. For developing one skill will result in the development of the other (Krashen, 1985), and practicing reading more often and integrate this skill in the writing session will enable students to have knowledge about good writing.

15. Is reading important in improving your writing?

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	26	100%
No	0	0%
Total	26	100%

Table 21. The importance of reading in improving writing

The answers obtained revealed that all students (100%) responded positively regarding the importance of reading in improving the skill of writing. These results clearly indicate that students are aware of the tight connection between reading and writing, and they view it as a significant factor in the development of the writing skill.

16. How often do you read books, magazines or any texts in English?

Degree	Frequency	percentage
Always	4	15.4%
Often	9	34.6%
Rarely	12	46.2%
Never	1	3.8%
total	26	100%

Table 22. The degree of reading

Most of students (46.2%) who answered question (16) declared that they rarely read in English, other students (34.6%) stated that they often read, and (15.4%) of them said that they read always. A remaining student (3.8%) indicated that he never reads.

The close connection between reading and writing plays a significant role in enhancing the latter. Practicing reading more often can make students more skillful in writing (Krashen, 1985; Williams, 2003). Therefore, when being less exposed to this skill as it is the case in here, writing proficiency may be reduced.

Part three: Academic writing

17. How often do you practice English writing via/through Internet and SMS?

Degree	Frequency	Percentage
Always	9	34.6%
Often	10	38.5%
Rarely	6	23.1%
Never	1	3.8%
Total	26	100%

Table 23. The degree of English use via Internet and SMS

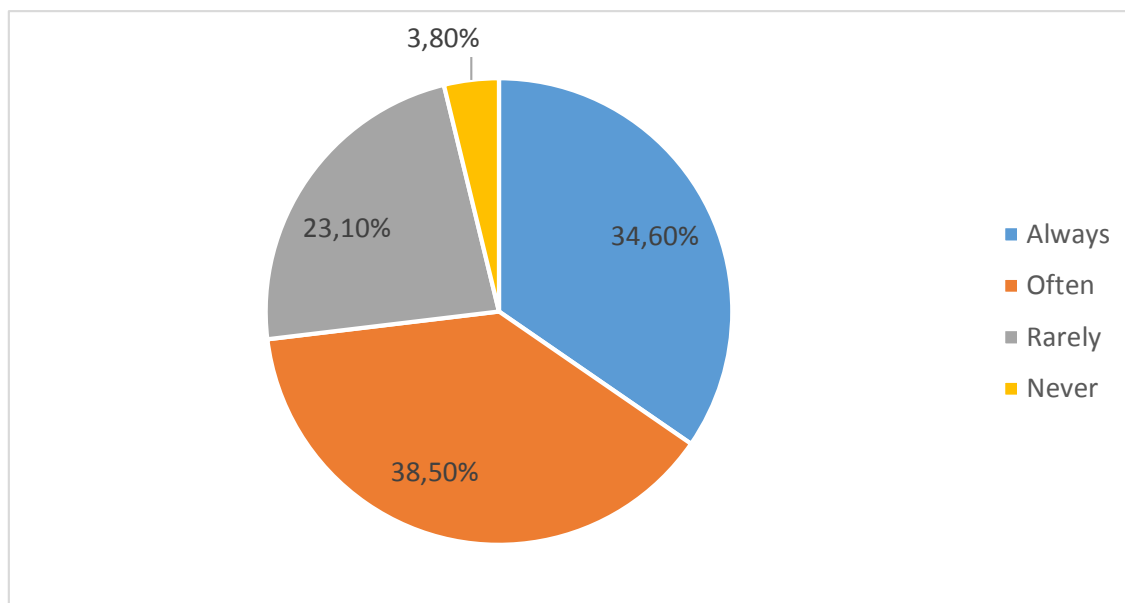


Figure 10. The degree of English use via Internet and SMS

Results in table (23) illustrates the following results: (10) students that is (38.5%) declared to use English often via internet and SMS, and (9) students (34.6%) use English always. The students who said they rarely use English were (6) that is (23.1%), whereas (1) student (3.8%) asserted that he never uses English via internet or SMS.

These results indicate that students' constantly practice of English writing via internet and SMS, may be as a result of their affection to English as a language or to improve their proficiency in English writing.

18. What sort of language do you use when using internet or SMS?

Type of language	Frequency	Percentage
Formal English	2	7.7%
Colloquial English (informal)	12	46.2%
Both types	12	46.2%
total	26	100%

Table 24. The type of English students use when using internet or SMS

From the table above we notice that (46.2%) of students claim to use colloquial English when using internet and or SMS. A similar percentage of students (46.2%) on the other hand stated that they use both types of formal and colloquial (informal) English, however a minority of students (7.7%) said that they use formal English when using internet and SMS.

Students' answers about the type of English they use via internet and SMS, shows that they can easily distinguish between both types and are aware of the differences between them. Furthermore, students' justifications for their answers are listed in the table below.

18.1. Please justify your answer:

Answer	Reasons	Frequency	Percentage
Formal English	1. to improve the capacities writing (enhance the writing level) 2. it's what we learn in our classroom and what I practice	2	7.7%
Colloquial English	1. because I have custome to write with colloquial English 2. because we talk between friends 3. because we use formal English only in the classroom and we use the abbreviation 4. it helps me to have good vocabulary 5. it depends on the concept and the topic 6. because when we chat we do not have enough time to write correct English 7. because all use it and I answer like they ask me 8. no answer	1 1 1 1 1 1 1 5	46.2%
Both types	1. it depends on the person for whom I speak 2. it depends on the person whom I am speaking with 3. when surfing on the internet I use informal one because it is between friends, when I am in the classroom I use formal English 4. when speaking to friend I don't ask same the type when speaking with teachers or person that I don't know 5. because chatting makes my English writing get well and try to correct my mistakes in English language 6. because there are some cases where you have to use formal English 7. no answer	1 1 1 1 1 1 6	46.2%
Total		26	100%

Table 25. Students' justifications to the type of English they use

19. Do you think that internet and SMS chatting affects your English writing?

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	23	88.5%
No	3	11.5%
Total	26	100%

Table 26. The effect of internet and SMS on students' English writing

Table (26) shows that most students (88.5%) have a positive belief that internet and SMS affect their English writing, whereas (11.5%) of them do not think that their writing is affected by internet and SMS.

These results imply that these technologies play an important role in students' learning and practice of writing. In addition, it denotes that learners are aware of how to take advantage of these tools in enhancing their writing skill.

19.1. Justify your answer?

Answer	Why	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	1. I think it helps us to enhance our language writing	1	88.5%
	2. it gives us the chance to express to write in English	1	
	3. because it help me to have good vocabulary	1	
	4. to learn English very well	1	
	5. because it helps me develop our English	1	
	6. it helps me in some cases (the improvement of vocabulary)	1	
	7. we learn about reading, writing and a new vocabulary	1	
	8. because at least we try to use English in our daily life even with texting	1	
	9. internet can help us to improve our English writing	1	
	10. I gain more experience and knowledge	1	
	11. because internet it is a second source of information to me	1	
	12. because chatting makes my English get well and try to correct my mistakes in English language	1	
	13. because it gives me the opportunity to use English language and to correct my mistakes	1	
	14. because we spend a lot of time saying things that are not important at all as our daily problems then I think that internet and chatting affect our English writing	1	
	15. because when we often use informal language in chatting we are so affected by it and when writing an academic work we sometimes use that language, but we realize that it is not correct so we have to correct it	1	
	16. because it becomes a habit when we write a lots	1	
	17. because when we use always internet networking and SMS we evaluate our English writing	1	
	18. because it is the virtual area, so we're using them often then it's helping us	1	
	19. no answer	5	
No	1. because I am always practicing English at classroom	1	11.5%
	2. because most of time I use other language not always English in my writing	1	
	3. no answer	1	
Total		26	100%

Table 27. Students' justifications about the effect of internet and SMS on their English writing

The table (27) above states the reasons behind students answers on question (19). As the table illustrates, the majority of students (23) that is (88.5%) believe that their English is influenced by the use of internet and SMS. Out of this percentage, (69.2%) of the students justified their answers saying that internet and SMS improved their English writing, by giving them the opportunity to practice writing and also to correct their mistakes, whereas (21.7%) of students who answered ‘yes’ on the question (19) provided no justification. Additionally, (2) students that is (7.7%) who chose ‘no’ as their answer justified them stating that they practice English only in the classroom, and they use another language when using the internet and SMS. Furthermore a remaining student (1) (3.8%) did not provide a justification for his answer.

3. Corpus Analysis of Students’ essays

As a second means of collecting data for this study, a number of students’ written works have been collected and examined for identifying the students’ writing difficulties. The main aim behind implementing this means was to have a closer look at students’ actual level, and attempting to determine the common errors in their written works. Therefore, in this study fifteen (15) copies of students’ written essays were gathered and selected randomly to be inspected.

Aspect	Frequency of errors	Percentage (%)
1. Spelling	104	18.94%
2. Capitalization	101	18.39%
3. Tense	36	6.55%
4. Word order	3	0.72%
5. Preposition	17	3.09%
6. Linking	2	0.36%
7. Vocabulary/word choice	69	12.56%
8. Unclear meaning	44	8.01%
9. Word missing	54	9.83%
10. Singular/plural	37	6.73%
11. Punctuation	82	14.93%
Total	549	100%

Table 28. Results of the Corpus Analysis

The table above shows the analysis of errors in students' essays. According to the table, there exist four main errors with high frequency in students' essays. Spelling and capitalization errors were the major errors encountered during the analysis with a percentage of (18.94%) and (18.39%) of the total number of errors. Moreover, students committed errors of punctuation by (14.93%) and vocabulary (word choice) by (12.56%). In addition, errors of missing words and the clarity of meaning appeared in approximate percentages (9.83%) and (8.01%). Furthermore, less frequency errors in students' essays were singular/plural forms with (6.73%), errors in tense by (6.55%), prepositions (3.09%), linking (0.36%) and word order by (0.72%).

4. Interpretation of the findings

4.1. The Students' Questionnaire

The analysis of students' questionnaires has revealed that the majority of students were interested in learning to write. The first part of the questionnaire shows that most of the sample selected were female students, and that they have an average level in English. In the second part of the students' questionnaire, the majority of students displayed a high motivation for learning to write, yet the majority of them stated to have an average proficiency in writing. When inquiring about the aspects of difficulties students may face in writing, results revealed three main difficulties; vocabulary as the most frequent factor (23.2%), grammar (19.6%) and academic style with (17.9%). Moreover, during the writing session students' have stated that the time for the session was sufficient for them to practice writing. In addition, the majority of students stated that they respect the steps they need to follow in writing composition, whereas the remaining students who do not follow these steps linked the reason to the lack of time. Furthermore, the questionnaire shows that half of the students (50%) often write outside the classroom, and most of them (38.5%) use independent writing strategy in their writing. Additionally, students seem to lack a module for reading comprehension in their program, though all of them confirmed the integration of reading in the module of writing. However, most of the students (46.2%) said they rarely practice reading while they have agreed on the importance of reading in improving writing skill. In the third part of the questionnaire, results show that (38.5%) of students use English often on the internet and when using SMS. As for the type of language, (46.2%) of students claim to use both types that is formal and informal English. Furthermore, when asked if their writing was affected by the use of internet and SMS, the majority of students (88.5%) confirmed, and most of their justification were in connected

to their assumption that internet and SMS were a valuable means by which they get to practice English writing, and enhance their language.

4.2. Corpus analysis of Students' Essays

On the other hand, the corpus analysis of fifteen (15) students' essays, show that most of errors found were in relevance to spelling and punctuation with (18.94%), errors of capitalization and wrong capitalization with (18.39%). Errors of punctuation with (14.93%), and errors of vocabulary and word choice with (12.56%). These results match what was stated in the theoretical part about the difficulties in writing concerning these elements, and that are also stated in Raimes (1983) as the elements of a good piece of writing.

5. Implications and recommendations

Results obtained from this study can help provide both teachers and students with valuable insights about the writing composition, and the teaching of writing. After conducting this study a number of suggestions are recommended.

Teachers need to devote more sessions for students to learn writing. Students need be aware of different elements included in the writing composition such as the language rules, the organization of writing and so on. Usually, the limited period for the writing session is insufficient to present all these features, therefore teachers should include more sessions in students program. In doing so, teachers can cover different aspects in the teaching of writing, additionally this will give them the opportunity to explain the lessons for students. More importantly, activities must be a part of the writing session, allowing students to practice all what they have learned, and to explore new techniques in writing. It also gives them the chance to improve their proficiency in writing inside the classroom while the teacher monitor their progress, and provides them with proper guidance and feedback.

In the teaching of writing, teachers are encouraged to test students' writing proficiency. This procedure is useful to obtain valid information about the difficulties students are experiencing, and will permit the teacher to transform the way he teaches writing to meet the needs of his students. Following this process, teachers will be able to use a variety of activities addressing different aims regarding students' difficulties. Therefore, teachers are going to help students overcome these difficulties, and effective teaching of writing will take place.

In this study, it is noticed that third year EFL students do not have a module for reading comprehension. Knowing the connection between reading and writing, and the importance of

reading in enhancing writing skills. Therefore, it is highly recommended for teachers to promote learners to read different text types particularly in English. Raimes (1983) asserts that “The more our students read, the more they become familiar with the vocabulary, idioms, sentence patterns, organizational flow, and cultural assumptions of native speakers of the language” (p. 50).

It is for this reason, teachers at the Department of English at the University of Bejaia should encourage the inclusion of a reading module in students program in order to improve students’ skills in reading which will reflect on their writing ability.

The results obtained from this study show that a good number of students use English via internet and SMS, and they have reported that these means help them improve their English writing. As a result, teachers need to make a good use of these tools inside and outside the classroom in different ways such as organizing webinars, creating online platforms for students to post their writing and encouraging them to write on regular basis. Moreover, this strategy will facilitate the learning of writing without being put under the pressure of the teacher’s feedback, and it will also motivate learners to practice writing more often outside the classroom.

6. Suggestions for further research

As a matter of fact, every research ends with both a result and a question. After conducting the present research and collecting results, several suggestions are proposed for future researchers interested in writing. First, results of this study cannot be largely generalized, thus future research should conduct a study on a large population in the Department of English at the University of Bejaia. In addition, it is suggested that future research in the area of writing should be examined in association with several variables such as: the amount of reading students practice, the type of activities they exercise and the use of technologies such as internet to develop students’ writing skills.

7. Limitations of the study

In conducting this research, there exist several limitations which cause the results to be less accurate. These limitations are generally related to time, for the limited period given may not be sufficient to investigate students’ writing difficulties. Another limitation is related to students’ willingness to provide honest answers for the questionnaire. In addition to students’ reluctance in submitting their essays to be analysed. More importantly, other limitations to this study are linked to the problem of generalization, for this study focused on investigating writing

difficulties existing in the sample of study, therefore generalization of the findings to the entire population is not valid.

Conclusion

This chapter highlighted the practical part of the research, in which we provided a description of the population and the sample. We also introduced means of collecting data and data analysis, in addition to the discussion of the main findings. Furthermore, recommendations and limitations to the study were demonstrated.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

Improving students' writing skill is a challenging task especially in the case of foreign learners. The complexity of writing as a cognitive process requires profound considerations to the rules, and careful use of the target language. During writing composition, students generally hesitate to write, for they strive to find the proper words, struggle with the grammar of the language, or they may find punctuation difficult.

The present descriptive study focuses on identifying students' writing difficulties, and the common errors they commit. This is done through a questionnaire administered to third year English students at the University of Bejaia, which reported the documentation of several writing difficulties. In addition the corpus analysis of students' essays which confirmed that students make errors during writing composition.

The findings of this research reveal that third year English students at the University of Bejaia have different writing difficulties. According to the results obtained from the questionnaire, students seem to have main difficulties concerning vocabulary, grammar and academic style. Whereas, the corpus analysis of students' written productions reveal that the majority of errors found were in relation to spelling, capitalization, punctuation and vocabulary (word choice). Therefore teachers are advised to use these findings for an effective teaching of writing in the future, whereas students are encouraged to use the findings in developing their writing proficiency.

REFERENCES

- Adas, D. & Bakir, A. (2013). Writing Difficulties and New Solutions. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 3(9), 254-266. Retrieved from <https://staff.najah.edu/sites/default/files/28.pdf>
- Aragon Jiménez, C. E., Baires Mira, D. C. & Rodriguez, G. S. (2013). *An analysis of the writing skill difficulties of the English composition* (License). University of El Salvador
- Badger, R. and White, G. (2000). A process genre approach to teaching writing. *ELT journal*, 54(2), 153-160. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/elt/54.2.153>
- Bahri, S. & Sugeng, B. (2010). *Difficulties in writing in vocabulary and grammar of the second year students of SMPN I Selong East Lombok West Tenggara in the school year 2008/2009*. Retrieved from <http://journal.uny.ac.id>
- Bancha, W. (2013). What causes spelling errors of the Thai EFL students?. *ARECLS*, 10, 107-129. Retrieved from http://research.ncl.ac.uk/ARECLS/volume_10/bancha_vol10.pdf
- Brown, H. D. (2001). *Teaching by principles: an interactive approach to language pedagogy* (2nd ed.). White Plains, NY: Longman.
- Caroll, J. & Wilson E. (1993). *Acts of teaching*. Englewood, Colo: Teacher Ideas Press.
- Coffin, C., Curry, M. J., Goodman, S., Hewings, A., Lillis, T. M. & Swann, J. (2003). *Teaching academic writing*. London: Routledge.
- Crystal, D. (2001). *Language and the Internet*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Damayanti, Y. (2009). *Micro and macro skills of writing found in the writing exercises of the Bridge English competence for SMP grade VIII*.

- Dansieh, A. (2011). SMS Texting and Its Potential Impacts on Students' Written Communication Skills. *International Journal of English Linguistics*, 1(2). doi:10.5539/ijel.v1n2p222
- Donohue, L. (2009). *The write beginning*. Markham, Ont.: Pembroke Publishers.
- Egedegbe, N. (2013). The Effect of Social Networking Sites on Students' Academic Performance in Girne American University, North Cyprus. Retrieved from <http://ydemokrat.blogspot.com/2013/05/the-effect-of-social-networking-sites.html>
- Fitzgerald, J. & Markham, L. (1987). *Teaching children about revision in writing*. Springfield, VA.: ERIC Document Reproduction Service.
- Flower, L. & Hayes, J. (1980). The Cognition of Discovery: Defining a Rhetorical Problem. *College And Communication*, 31(1), 21. Retrieved March 12, 2016 from <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/356630>
- Flower, L. & Hayes, J. (1981). A cognition Process Theory of Writing. *College Composition And Communication*, 32(4), 365. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/356600>
- Frith, U. (1980). *Cognitive processes in spelling*. London: Academic Press.
- Graham, S., & Perin, D. (2007). *Writing next*. Washington, D.C.: Alliance for Excellent Education.
- Harmer, J. (2001). *The practice of English language teaching*. London: Longman
- Harmer, J. (2004). *How to teach writing*. Harlow: Longman

- Hartwell, P. (1985). Grammar, Grammars, and the Teaching of Grammar. In J. Carroll & E. Wilson, *Acts of teaching* (pp. 205-207). Englewood, Colo: Teacher Ideas Press.
- Hedge, T. (1988). *Writing*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hinkel, E. (2004). *Teaching academic ESL writing*. Mahwah, N. J.: L. Erlbaum Associates.
- Huwari, I. F. & Al-Khasawneh, F. M. (2013). The reasons behind weaknesses of writing in English among pre-year Students at Taibah University. *English for Specific Purposes World*, 14(38), 1-9. Retrieved from http://www.esp-world.info/Articles_38/z_2-12-2012.pdf
- Irvin, L. L. (2010). *What is "Academic" Writing?*. Retrieved from <http://wac.colostate.edu/books/writingspaces1/irvin--what-is-academic-writing.pdf>
- Kirby, D. L., & Crovitz, D. (2013). *Inside out*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinmann.
- Klimova, B. F. (2010). Formal English Written Revisited. *Procedia Social and Behavioral Science* 3, 131-137. doi:10.1016/j.sbspro.2010.07.024
- Krashen, S. D. (1981a). *Second language acquisition and second language learning*. Oxford: Pergamon Press.
- Krashen, S. D. (1985). *The Input Hypothesis: Issues and Implications*. New York: Longman
- Lado, R. (1955). Patterns of difficulty in vocabulary. Retrieved from <https://deepblue.lib.umich.edu/bitstream/handle/2027.42/98253/j.1467-1770.1955.tb00829.x.pdf?sequence=1>

- Lázaro, L. A., (1996). *Teaching and assessing writing skills*. Retrieved from <http://dspace.uah.es/dspace/bitstream/handle/10017/6932/Teaching%20Assessing.pdf?%20sequence=1>
- Lea, M. R. & Street, B. V. (1998). *Students writing in higher education: An academic literacies approach*. Retrieved from <https://www.kent.ac.uk/teaching/documents/qualifications/studwritinginhe.pdf>
- Mackenzie, N. M., Scull, J., and Munsie, L. (2013). Analysing writing: the development of a tool for use in the early years of schooling. *Issues in Educational Research*, 23(3). Retrieved from <http://www.iier.org.au/iier23/mackenzie.pdf>
- Mehring, J. G. (2005). *Developing vocabulary in Second Language Acquisition: from theories to the classroom*. Retrieved from <http://www.hpu.edu/CHSS/English/TESOL/ProfessionalDevelopment/200680TWPfall06/03Mehring.pdf>
- Mingle, J. & Adams, M. (2015). *Social Media Network Participation and Academic Performance In senior High School in Ghana*. Retrieved from <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3446&context=libphilprac>
- Mirza, M. (2015). *Impact of SMS on written English*. Retrieved from http://s3.amazonaws.com/academia.edu.documents/32990595/Impact_of_SMS_on_English_Language.docx
- Nunan, D. (1989). *Designing tasks for the communicative classroom*. Cambridge University Press.
- Norris, C. B., (2015). *Academic Writing in English*. Retrieved from <http://www.helsinki.fi/kksc/language.services/AcadWrit.pdf>
- NSW Board of Studies, (2000). *Focus on literacy: Writing*. Sydney, NSW: Board of Studies.

NSW Department of Education and Training (2007). *Writing and spelling strategies*.
Darlinghurst: NSW.

Olness, R. (2005). *Using literature to enhance writing instruction*. Newark, DE: International
Reading Association.

Palpanadan, S., Bin Salam, A. R., & Bte Ismail, F. (2014). *Comparative Analysis of Process
Versus Product Approach of Teaching Writing in Malaysian Schools: Review of
Literature*. DOI: 10.5829/idosi.mejsr.2014.22.06.21943

Pincas, A. (1982b) *Teaching English Writing*. London: MacMillan.

Raimes, A. (1983). *Techniques in the teaching of writing*. New York, N. Y.: Oxford
University Press.

Risto, A. (2014). The impact of texting and social media on students' academic writing
skills. Retrieved April 18, 2016, from
<http://digitalscholarship.tnstate.edu/dissertations/AAI3683242/>

Sawalmeh, M. S. M. (2013). Error Analysis of Written English Essays: The case of Students
of the Preparatory Year Program in Saudi Arabia. *English for Specific Purposes World*,
14(40), 1-17. Retrieved from http://www.esp-world.info/Articles_40/Sawalmeh.pdf

Shangarfan, N., & Mamipour, M. (2011). The Impact of Teaching Critical Thinking on
Intermediate EFL Learners' Writing Skill. *American Journal of Scientific Research*, (40),
119-125. Retrieved from <http://www.eurojournals.com/ajsr.htm>

Shejbalová, D. (2006). Methods and approaches in vocabulary teaching and their influence on students' acquisition. Retrieved from http://is.muni.cz/th/104917/pdf_b_a2/bakalarska_prace.pdf

Schoonen, R., Snellings, P., Stevenson, M. & van Gelderen. A. (2009). Towards a blueprint of the foreign language writer: The linguistic and cognitive demands of foreign language writing. In R.M. Manchón (Ed.), *Learning, teaching, and researching writing in foreign language contexts* US: Multilingual Matters.

Singleton-Jackson (2003). *Writing proficiency among graduate students in higher education programs* (Doctor in Philosophy). North Texas.

Sperling, M., & Freedman, S. W. (2001). Research on writing. In V. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook of research on teaching*, 4th edition (pp. 370-389). Washington, D.C.: American Educational Research Association.

Troia, G. & Graham, S. (2004). *Students who are exceptional and writing disabilities*. Manwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Tarnopolosky, O. & Kozhushko, S. (2007). *Teaching academic writing in English to tertiary students in Ukraine*. Retrieved from http://readingmatrix.com/conference/pp/proceedings2007/tarnopolsky_kozhushko.pdf

Troyka, L. & Nudelman, J. (2004). *Steps in composition*. Upper Saddle River, N. J.: Pearson/Prentice Hall.

Tsai, J. M. (2006). *Connecting Reading and Writing in College EFL Courses*. Retrieved from <http://iteslj.org/Articles/Tsai-ReadingWritingConnection.html>

Tuan, L. T. (2011). Teaching writing through genre-based approach. *BELT Journal* 2(1), 121-136. Retrieved from <http://revistaseletronicas.pucrs.br/ojs/index.php/belt/article/viewFile/9361/7023>

Vocabulary [Def. A2]. (n. d.) In *Cambridge Advanced Learners Dictionary*, Retrieved April 23, 2016, from <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/vocabulary>

Whitaker, A. (2009). *Academic writing guide*. Retrieved from <http://www.vsm.sk/Curriculum/academicsupport/academicwritingguide.pdf>

Widdowson, H. (1978). *Language teaching texts*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Williams, J. D. (2003). *Preparing to teach writing* (3rd ed.). Manwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum.

APPENDICES

Appendix I. Samples of students essays in the Preliminary Analysis

Appendix II. The Student's Questionnaire

Appendix III. Samples of students' essays in the Corpus Analysis

Appendix IV. Elements focused on in the Corpus Analysis of Students' essays

Appendix I. Samples of students' essays in the Preliminary Analysis

Sample 1.

Elderly drivers

As we grow up, it is normal for our driving abilities to change, but we can continue driving safely by paying attention to any warning signs.

In fact, fatal crash rates rise sharply after a driver has reached the age of 70. So according to this, elderly drivers should be required to reapply for their licences due to many important factors such as, decreased vision, impaired hearing, or slowed motor reflexes may become a problem. Furthermore, we can mention some major impacts on their ability to control a car, for instance; pain or stiffness in their necks, leg pain which can make it difficult to move.

Although people ~~are~~ are getting older and face health problems, it doesn't automatically mean that we must stop driving and lose their ability to drive; because there are other ways which can follow The elderly one in order to keep driving safely, including modifying our cars, the way we drive, then understanding and rectifying physical issues that may interfere with driving.

At least we can reduce this problem provided that we pursue some essential steps among them; getting our eyes checked every year then having our hearing checked annually; In addition, talking with a doctor and take his advices, finally, sleeping well and enough.

problem with quantifiers, some items should not be put in the beginning of lists, wrong ca

conclusion failure to use transitions,

Sample 2.

Elderly drivers

As we grow up, it is normal for our driving abilities to change, but we can continue driving safely by paying attention to any warning signs.

In fact, fatal crash rates rise sharply after a driver has reached the age of 70. So according to this, elderly drivers should be required to reapply for their licences due to many important factors such as, decreased vision, impaired hearing, or slowed motor reflexes may become a problem. Furthermore, we can mention some major impacts on their ability to control a car, for instance, pain or stiffness in their necks, leg pain which can make it difficult to move.

Although people ~~are~~ are getting older and face health problems, it doesn't automatically mean that we must stop driving and lose their ability to drive; because there are other ways which can follow the elderly one in order to keep driving safely, including modifying our cars, the way we drive, then understanding and rectifying physical issues that may interfere with driving.

At least we can reduce this problem provided that we pursue some essential steps among them; getting our eyes checked every year, then having our hearing checked annually; In addition, talking with a doctor and take his advices, finally, sleeping well and enough.

problem with quantifiers, some items should not be put in the beginning of a sentence, wrong capitalization, long sentences, structure, punctuation, failure to use transitions, lack of vocabulary, translation from L1.

Sample 3.

The bad effects of television

People in the house are usually turned to television, and in some homes the television is perpetually "on" even without anyone watching and many people guess that it's hard to avoid it. So many others believe that television violence has negative effects when it promotes violence.

Announcing the bad effects of television doesn't mean hiding its good ones, but the person should know how to use it without influencing himself or any member of his family negatively. The majority of experts think that the television has bad effects on children for example, and many prevent them from being smart because school kids who watch too much TV also tend to work less on their homework. And when doing homework with TV on the background, they tend to retain less skill and information. When they lose sleep because of TV, they become less alert during the day, and this results in poor school performance.

In addition to this, TV exposes the negative influences, and promotes negative behavior. TV shows and commercials usually show violence, alcohol, drug use and sex in a positive light. TV watching also affects people health problems like: the eye diseases, blood pressure, and athletic ability too.

This is why we have to make TV a more helpful rather than harmful tool to put a limit for its violence.

Remarks: Ambiguous words, vague ideas, shortened forms, Abbreviations, incorrect inflection

Appendix II. The Student's Questionnaire

Dear student, the following questionnaire was primarily constructed for the sake of investigating the students' writing difficulties, and the presence of aspects of colloquial writing in their writings. We would be grateful if you could fill this questionnaire, and we inform you that your answers will be completely anonymous and used for scientific research only.

Thank you.

The researcher.

Part one: Background information

1. You are:

- Male
- Female

2. How do you evaluate your English level?

- Outstanding
- Good
- Average
- Low
- Very low

Part two: Students' writing proficiency and difficulties in writing:

3. Are you motivated to learn writing?

- Yes
- No

4. How do you evaluate your writing proficiency?

- Outstanding
- Good
- Average
- Low
- Very low

5. What are the aspects you are likely to find difficulties in? (You can choose more than one answer)

- Grammar
- Vocabulary
- Punctuation
- Spelling
- Coherence
- Academic style
- Organization of writing

6. Are you given enough time in the classroom to write or to answer the writing activities?

- Yes
- No

If no why do you think is the reason?

.....
.....

7. Do you usually follow the step/stages of writing in your written assignments?

- Yes
- No

If no why:

.....

8. Does the teacher allow you to use dictionaries in your writing sessions?

- Yes
- No

9. How often do you use dictionaries in your writing?

- Always
- Often
- Rarely
- Never

10. Do you follow writing instructions your writing teacher taught you when writing in other modules?

- Yes
- No

If no why:

.....

11. How often do you write outside the classroom?

- Always
- Often
- Rarely
- Never

12. Which of the following strategies you use more often in your writing?

- Modelled writing (imitating texts such as newspaper articles, novels, stories...)
- Think aloud (you say what you are thinking about during writing)
- Guided writing (you work collaboratively with peers and or the teacher to compose written texts)
- Independent writing (you rely on your skills and the information you have acquired from the teacher in order to accomplish the writing task)

13. Do you have a module for reading comprehension?

- Yes
- No

14. Is the skill of reading integrated/included in your writing session?

- Yes
- No

15. Is reading important in improving your writing?

- Yes
- No

If no why?

.....

16. How often do you read books, magazines, or any texts in English?

- Always
- Often
- Rarely
- Never

Part three: Academic writing

17. How often do you practice English writing via/through Internet, social media or SMS?

- Always
- Often
- Rarely
- Never

18. What sort of language do you use when using Internet or SMS?

- Formal English (Academic English)
- Colloquial English (Informal, casual English)
- Both types

Please justify your answer:

.....

.....

19. Do you think that internet networking and SMS chatting effect your English writing?

- Yes
- No

Why?.....

.....

Appendix III. Samples of students' essays in the Corpus Analysis

Sample 1.

Arabic and European countries

Sometimes, when we look at the way of life in all over the world, we notice many differences from one place to another. Such as Arabic countries and European lands. Culture and traditions play an important role, conditions also take a vital part in this case. Otherwise, after a long observation, we can deduct that the world is unfortunately divided into two different parts.

European countries are living in good conditions, the peace spread over their own lands. Many countries are perfectly developed. Their construction is absolutely accompanied by growing economic integration. The pizzeria, the Irish pub is a part of their own daily. We can find many religions in this glad world, the majority of people are simply Christian, others are Jewish, we can find also some Muslims. We can notice the existence of several languages, such as French, German, Spanish..... etc. Food is an important item, it differs from one region to another the most known is Cod filet green cabbage. When we talk about clothes, everyone is free to wear what he desires, jeans, dresses, shorts, skirts... etc, nobody can judge you.

On the other hand, when we move to the Arabic countries, we discover completely another different world. People suffer for many years, wars conquered their lands. Children suffer from a lack of peace, they don't have a chance to enjoy their innocence. Bombs and death become their daily. Their lifestyle is different, they have only one religion which is Islam, but we can find some Christians. The food in Arabic countries is also different from one place to another, for instance Meloukhia is well-known. The majority of Arabic women wear the veil, but the others have broken the rules, they wear like European women. Their official language is clearly Arabic, English is considered as the first foreign language, they use it for commerce and business.

The world can change one day, the differences can disappear and every country can have a piece of happiness. All the world deserve peace and a comfortable life.

Sample 2.

11
In our life every one of us has his friends with whom he spends most of his time: confiding to each other, sharing problems and best moment. Concerning myself I am girl; I have two boyfriends Mick and David who defers from each other in many things. **-Introduction-**

The first difference between David and Mick is there appearance. David is tall gay and didn't practice sport while Mick is short, not fat ho loves practicing sport he is the best footballer in our region, there way of dressing David have a chic style simple and unique while Mick have a flamboyant style which got the attention of people. **-1st SP first difference-**

The other aspect, Mick is a laugher gay, he is always laughing and says that laugh curs a multitude of illls and that is the most important thing in person's life. he always make me laugh when I think that I will never smile again, conversely to David who didn't laugh so much, always serious, strict in his decisions and act, he sometimes got angry easily when joking about stupid things. **-2nd SP second difference -**

Finally they differ in the way that they care about me Mick care about me more than he care about himself, when he is not around us he always sends messages just to say take care of you, be prudent. On the other hand David ho didn't care and says that he trusts me and knows that I will not act in wrong way especially when Mick is there. **-3rd SP third difference -**

In conclusion both Mick and David are helpful Boys they have the ability to lift my spirit just by being themselves, for them I am the little my best friend is Mick the reason is that we have lot of similarities and I feel more comfortable because being yourself is so much easier than trying to be someone else. **-Conclusion-**

Sample 3.

Difference Between Colombia and United States of America

When i was at high school i had a girl friend that recount me about her experience for living in Colombia then moved to live in United States .From her experience it come To my mind to write about the difference between Colombia and United States.Concerning Geographical part ,traditional, and economical one.

The first difference is in geography ,Colombia has 32 states it is located in south America, the Mountains every where in the country.it is has famous river which is Amazon.On the contrary, The United States has 50 states it is located in North America , the mountain is founded in some States but especially in one located in north part of country, this is concerned the difference in The geography.

The second difference is about traditions in south countries .In Colombia, most of people Are catholic and other religion is less common in other country ,also Colombia has very typical Food ,every states has its own traditional dish. Example, 'bandejojupaisa' is a dish from Antioquia , one of the biggest states in Colombia .Moreover the family lifestyle include the Children live with their family until they get married.Conversly in United States people Are different in religions ,because people migrated from their native country.As a result People enjoy food from all over the world. Concerning there lifestyle children move From their parent as soon as they finish high school.

The Last difference is in economy of both countries .Colombia has bad economy , this county is unsafe ,people dont have enough job for all people . Oncontrast ,in United States the [problem in economy has appear in last few year all people go to school].Also there are opportunity of job for all people.

In conclusion concerning the different between Colombia and United States is very Interresting and it is good to explore the difference in traditions, and economy,And it is very Experience it is like if i was there.

Sample 4.

SpiderMan and BatMan

In the past before the development of science and technology, people used to go to the street to play foot-ball or to the cafeteria to play cards in order to pass their time. But now they prefer to stay at home and watching tv, especially interesting movies like : Bat man and Spider man both of these films enjoyed by people and share [the same popularity even they have different life, activities, and personalities.]

The first difference in the characters is their daily life. Spiderman who is known on his city as Peter Parker, lives in New York with his aunt May and his uncle Ben, while Batman lives in Gotham city in particular hotel with majordomo, who knows all his secrets. Spider man lives in a poor situation especially after the death of his uncle Ben. but Batman is a rich man [who has a lot of money]. Spider man is still student but Batman is business man.

If Batman and Spider man live in different condition, they choose different activities to achieve their purposes. Spider man works as photographer ; but Batman is billionaire, as a result he does not work on the day, however ; he participate in the works of charity in his city. Spider man also help people to solve their problems, particularly when his uncle killed by a criminal. on the other hand Batman works on the night to rein and make peace in his town.

Finally Bat-man and spider man influenced by different factors, consequently they have different personalities. Spider man is young man who is very shy and insolent but he is responsible and kind, while Bat man is very strict with strong personality ; since he is adult and wise. In addition the two person have different physique power. The experience of Spider man began in the university when a spider picked him in the laboratory , after this accident Spider man became strong and he has magic power. however ; Bat man has strong body without any magic power but great physique one which is full of intelligence and bravery . also, both of them have nice body in different appearance. Batman wear black cloth but Spider man the red one .

In conclusion , Spiderman and Batman are two savemen, who expressed the value of helpness and well behaviour. These two heroes played big role in the American tv because of their popularity especially in the imagination of children .

Appendix IV. Elements focused on in the analysis of Students' Essays

- 1. Spelling**
- 2. Capitalization**
- 3. Punctuation**
- 4. Tense**
- 5. Word order**
- 6. Preposition**
- 7. Linking**
- 8. Vocabulary/word choice**
- 9. Unclear meaning**
- 10. Word missing**
- 11. Singular/plural form**