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Teaching and Learning Writing Skills: Exploring Second Year University Students' Strategies

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ABSTRACT

Learning to write becomes a complex task, predominantly when students are required to write not only isolated sentences or paragraphs, but extended essays. Second year students in the Department of English Language at Djilali Liabes University show important writing impediments which make their productions meaningless. The present work portrays a holistic review about the rationale for such a low achievement in the writing skill. The current study aims at analyzing and identifying the students' writing strategies, the difficulties they face when producing a text, and then attempting to find remedial and utilitarian suggestions that hopefully improve the students' writing competence. Multiple research tools are used of the ultimate objective of verifying the research hypotheses and triangulate results; ethnographic observation, analysis of students' essays and questionnaires of both learners and tutors. In order to establish baseline data and to determine the progress towards pedagogical goal, the findings are treated qualitatively and quantitatively. These reveal that according to the obtained grades in written expression exam, the sweeping majority are unskilled student writers who misuse the metacognitive strategies and rely heavily on ineffective translation and oral construction. These strategies are used by the students for the prime purpose of overcoming their writing hurdles. The results also show that the vast majority think first in their mother tongue to be able to produce in English. Therefore, the findings recommend adopting a new approach to teaching writing which correlates between cognitive and metacognitive strategies instruction, as well as integrating reading as a basic component in teaching composition. To sum up, the current investigation highlights the major students' strategies that are used when producing a writing piece for the purpose of understanding their writing behaviours and assist them to become skilled writers through presenting tasks that hopefully remedy their written production disabilities.

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LIST OF ABBREVEATIONS / ACRONYMS

CBA: Competency Based Approach

DS: Direct Strategies

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ELT: English Language Teaching

ESL: English as a Second Language

ESP: English for Specific Purposes

FL: Foreign Language

ICT: Information and Communication Technologies/ Internet and Computer Technologies

L1: First Language

L2: Second Language

LMD: License Master Doctorate

LTM: Long Term Memory

N: Number

NNS: Non-Native Speakers

PRAC: Practice

SL: Second Language

SLL: Second Language Learning

General Introduction

The writing skill has generated a great deal of debate among those searching for new methodologies that contribute profoundly to the enhancement of writing proficiency. Written production has always been considered as a relevant skill in Applied Linguistics and plays an eminent role in professional and academic settings. Written production as an instrument of expressing thoughts and delivering knowledge to the audience is still a complex skill to deal with. However, EFL teachers often complain about students' weaknesses in writing, because learners in different academic settings find composition a complex cognitive skill; and hence, incapable of producing coherent and accurate texts.

Second year university students' writing performance is far from being satisfactory and they exhibit serious writing issues at the levels of vocabulary, grammar, writing mechanics, sentences; albeit, they have been exposed to English for seven years prior to entering university, i.e. they do not use the language appropriately which typically affects negatively the coherence and the cohesion of their extended essays. The writing deficiencies have been recorded solely in written expression module, but many teachers in the Department of English language report that their students are unable to express themselves neither fluently nor clearly, unveiling important deficiencies in both writing and speech.

The writing disability is therefore, a basic impediment for second year university students. The low achievement in written production drives the researcher to investigate the source of students' hurdles in writing, because the latter is considered as a major skill for which learners are assessed and evaluated in examinations in different subject areas. The researcher believes that students' writing deficiencies are predominantly due to the fact that second year students lack the necessary strategies that enable them deal with various composition exercises and activities with ease and consequently produce adequate and purposeful writing pieces.

Hence, EFL learners need to be provided with more effectual strategies to overcome first the writing problems that they face when composing a text, and to outperform more efficiently. The ultimate concern of the current work is to locate primarily the deficiencies in the teaching and learning methods of written production at Djilali Liabés University, and to recommend some efficient tasks that hopefully assist students to perform clearly and easily, and therefore improve their writing ability and competence. Then, it is worth investigating the challenges that second year university students face when endeavouring to compose an extended essay. This is done for the objective of seeking particular attitudes, techniques,

strategies, processes, autonomy and their motivation that they utilize to carry out the assigned written task.

Basically, the students' writing performance in particular and English language in general can be better attained thanks to the efforts of the written expression teacher who can diagnose the real impediments that lie behind students' poor performance through providing strategies and techniques that better assist students to become effective writers. The present investigation is important, because it explores and analyzes the learners' writing strategies; as the latter is likely to result in educational failure, for lacking the knack to deliver knowledge and communicate thoughts onto a paper is what the EFL students never manage. They find it difficult and complex, and therefore cannot provide clear and satisfactory responses to the questions they are assigned.

Thereby, on the basis of the above mentioned claims, the current study addresses the beneath research questions:

1. Why is writing a troublesome and complex skill for second year university students?
2. What are the strategies used by the students to write an extended essay?
3. To what extent do cognitive strategies contribute to the development of the writing skill?

The overarching objective of this thesis is to unveil the most important causes of second year students' low achievement in written production. Consequently, exploring the research questions above shed light on learners' writing strategies for the purpose of determining effective tasks that hopefully develop the students' proficiency in composition. Additionally, the principal interest of this study is to help students overcome the writing difficulties. Such an objective can be achieved solely if they are well armed with effective strategies and methods that enable them produce efficiently.

The rationale aim for undertaking such a study is to help learners develop composition procedures that better enable them control the cognitive and metacognitive strategies when students are enjoined to compose an extended essay in any subject area. Furthermore, the ultimate objective of this research is to provide more opportunities for students to write purposeful writing pieces by emphasizing reading as an intertwined and inseparable skill via assigning tasks that encompass reading; for the purposes of stimulating students' thinking,

and develop therefore their cognitive capacity. Notably, such exercises boost the students' creativity through the different assigned tasks. It should be pointed out that commenting on what is produced whether positively or negatively helps EFL students to a large extent improve strategic competence and typically avoid the mistakes in the next writing.

Thereby, investigation throughout this study endeavours to give evidence and shed light on second year university students' written production and strategies used to write a particular text. Doing so entails the researcher to formulate the following hypotheses:

1. Written production might be a complex task and a troublesome skill to master.
2. Second year students could employ metacognitive strategies in order to be able to produce a writing piece.
3. Developing cognitive strategies would increase the learners' writing abilities and raise their competence.

A sample of seventy six university students were chosen randomly and took part in this case study; and who were enrolled in the Department of English Language of Djilali Liabes University in Sidi Bel Abbés. Indeed two structured questionnaires are administered; one for the writing teachers and another for students. In addition to ethnographic classroom observation, the researcher favours examining the students' written assignments (group work) and analyze ninety five written expression exam sheets.

These instruments are designed for the sake of evaluating students' competence in composition and investigating how effectively the current teaching methods are deployed by writing teachers. The ultimate aim of employing structured questionnaires as a research instrument is that it is strongly believed among scholars that it is a suitable and convenient means for collecting sufficient data in a short period of time about students' perceptions, attitudes and behaviours towards the writing skill. Indeed, students and written expression teachers are asked to answer the different questions accurately and precisely.

Hence, analyzing and exploring students' written assignments (group work) and their examination essays allowed the investigator to elicit thorough understanding about the way students undertake a writing piece; in terms of vocabulary and ideas choice, grammar, capitalization, punctuation and sentences construction. In order to deepen our comprehension about the use of writing strategies among the learners, a small sample was undertaken as a case study to examine how students produce a text when working collaboratively.

Since the researcher was immensely interested in detailed data about each student's writing perception and behaviour, the investigator analyzes a multitude number of examination papers and only a small sample is studied, because the latter represents the sweeping majority. It is important to mention that that the explored assignments are of those who are observed and of those who turned in the questionnaires. It should be pointed out a blend of qualitative and quantitative studies are adopted in data collection analyses and treatment.

Seeking for more data, the researcher has observed both second year students and writing teachers. Classroom observational sessions provide the investigator with information relevant to the writing skill, and most importantly how tutors instruct that skill. It should be noted that the regular absence of the students from their writing classes affected to a wide extent the analysis of their essays, because only few undergraduates attended.

The general purpose behind choosing an ethnographic observation as a means of study is to obtain a clear and more accurate picture about students' motivation in the context of writing as well as the way written expression teachers deal with composition as a skill. More importantly, what kind of strategies they instruct to their students, what exercises do they provide for enhancing their learners' writing proficiency and what techniques do they give to make their learners overcome the different hurdles when producing an extended essay.

This work is composed of five chapters that are interrelated for the purpose of unveiling to the reader the field of investigation. The first chapter is devoted to research design and methodology as well as language policies in Algeria in general and in particular. The methodological chapter describes studies in EFL context and clarifies the LMD system. Then, the researcher depicts the status of English in Algeria via displaying English language instruction in the Algerian educational system from middle school to the tertiary level, and showing at last the importance and the role of the EFL tutor.

The overarching intent is to provide sufficient data about research design and procedures that the current investigation relies on. In other words, the chapter illustrates research methodology: participants, research tools displaying the rationale behind this choice, and the chosen methods for data collection and treatment via presenting and defining some related literature.

The second chapter pinpoints and gives the reader a clear picture of the theoretical background of this work. It first defines the writing skill, illustrates its complexity via reviewing relevant literature for this study. It also displays the different teaching approaches to composition. Then, it deals with the cognitive aspects in written production, highlighting the models used by A. Flower & J. Hayes (1981) and the difference between skilled and unskilled student writers.

The second chapter also shows how writing is intimately intertwined to other skills of speaking and much more to reading; which in its turn contributes to the development of the different writing styles. Then, the theoretical chapter explores the students' learning strategies, shedding light on R. Oxford (1990) and M. O'Malley & A. Chamot (1990) who investigated the learning strategies in depth. Finally, the chapter defines feedback, depicts its relevance to what is produced and covers the importance of the teacher's commentary as being an inseparable component of the teacher's and the student's instruction in writing as a process in general and as a product in particular.

The third and the fourth chapters deal with data analysis of students written assignments and observation, tending to identify students' writing strategies as they are engaged in composing an extended essay. In fact, chapter three is devoted to classroom observational sessions where the researcher observed both students and teachers for more than one month, and it analyzes the learners' assignments. Chapter four on the other hand, deals with students' and written expression teachers' questionnaires. In the analysis of both questionnaires, the researcher compared the data obtained from both learners and tutors to the other research instruments (observation and students' written assignments for the purpose of gathering reliable data.

This has been done to guarantee triangulation, verify the validity of the findings and more importantly serve as research hypotheses verification. Both chapters aim at studying mistakes produced by second year university students and the way they compose a text. The ultimate purpose is to explore the students' achievement in writing. Then, after the analysis of the gathered information from the different research instruments, the results are discussed and interpreted qualitatively and quantitatively.

The last chapter suggests some solutions and provides some pedagogical implications. The investigator tries to provide the audience with tasks and an approach that correlates between cognitive and metacognitive strategies instruction and that hopefully contribute to the

development of the writing skill. The emphasis is put on the integration of the reading skill as a basic component in the writing class that better help students develop and increase their strategic competence through providing effectual exercises that may well improve students' writing performance and proficiency.

The present thesis has without doubt some limitations. The researcher encounters difficulties at the level of students' regular classroom attendance, i.e. most of second year students do not attend their written expression classes. The latter prevented the investigator from observing all the students' writing behaviours. The learners' absence also had a negative impact on examining their writing assignments (group work). Additionally, the students' questionnaires were not all turned in.

Chapter one: Language policies in Algeria & research design & methodology.

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1.1 Introduction

The overarching objective of this chapter is to gain a thorough understanding about research design and methodology that are used in this study. After describing the language policies in Algeria, in general and the status of English language in particular as well as the modules that the students deal with for the three years of their studies, the researcher discusses the other methodological components of the research: the population, research questions, hypotheses and the research instruments. In addition, the chapter demonstrates also the type of research undertaken for data analyses. The methodological chapter covers also the procedures that the researcher conducts and follows to collect and analyze the gathered data.

Additionally, the researcher illustrates the types of analyses that are undertaken for data treatment which include the qualitative and the quantitative studies selection and unveils also that the investigation is a case study displaying some related literature. Basically, the three research tools are thoroughly described; stating the use and the rationale behind choosing classroom observational sessions, the questionnaires and the students' written assignments and examination which are conducted to check the validity and the reliability of the tools and data analyses.

1.2 General description of language policies in Algeria

There are two main language policies in Algeria; the first one is the policy of Arabisation between 1962 and 1999, and another refers to the policy of the educational reform in 2000 (M. Chemami, 2011: 229). The reform policy in Algeria of 2000 concerns the low level of teachers, improving their socio-economic development, reviewing content's curriculum. More importantly, the status of foreign languages (op. cit: 230).

The status of French and English languages in Algeria does not rely only on cultural preferences and educational reasons; however, the country's modern history and political alliances are also taken into account. Algeria has a certain connection with French language, i.e. it belongs to the invaders and is considered as a prestigious language that is spoken by most of the Algerian people. In other words, this vast country of 2.3 million Km² is inhabited by 40 million people remains the second French-speaking country in the world approximately eighteen million speakers (S. Abid- Houcine, 2007: 143).

Nowadays, French language is instructed for three years in the primary school, for four years in the middle school and for three years in high school. As a matter of fact, French has taken the second place after Arabic and is instructed in many private schools. It plays a fundamental role for pursuing higher education especially abroad or to find a particular job. It should be noted that at the tertiary level and particularly in science fields, French is the language of instruction.

English on the other hand, has become a controversial issue. English language is considered as a second foreign language in Algeria. Basically, French language instruction is important in that undergraduate and post-graduate courses in science or in medicine are taught in French language, but further research entails English, because most of worldwide journals are written in English, and that what makes English language compete French instruction. Indeed, the desire to promote English in Algeria is due to the cooperation with the United States of America and Canada which supported this educational reform in Algeria. This support included textbooks and the training of teachers of English.

1.2.1 Language policies in Algeria

The Algerian linguistic background is very rich and complex at the same time. In fact, it makes a unique nation with a number of languages instructed and employed whether in academic or non-academic contexts. N. Rezig (2011: 1327- 1328) in Mala Tabory (1987) who argues that:

The Algerian situation is complex, as it is at a crossroad of tensions between French, the colonial language, and Arabic, the new national language; Classical Arabic versus colloquial Algerian Arabic; and the various Berber dialects versus Arabic. The lessons from the Algerian situation may be usefully applied to analogous situation by states planning their linguistic, educational and cultural policies.

However, the presence of this variety created political and educational language issues (Rezig. N, 2011: 1328 quotes Lakhel Ayat, 2008). Indeed, students' weaknesses in general and particularly in foreign languages contributed to the educational system.

1.2.2 A description of studies in EFL contexts

The high educational system in Algeria commenced introducing the LMD reform during the academic year 2004/2005. Rezig (2011: 1328) carries on quoting Lakhel Ayat (2008) who states that the LMD is designed in the Anglo-Saxon countries, and is spreading

everywhere, and the Algerian government applied it in order to replace the classical system. The LMD have three main grades:

- The bachelor's degree which is granted after three years of study.
- The master degree is delivered after two years of education.
- The doctorate degree is conferred after accomplishing a research which lasts for four years of study and submitting a thesis.

Furthermore, the implementation of these reforms encountered several constraints for instance; Arabization policy was applied since independence and entailed a multitude of teachers who taught in Arabic and did not have a good mastery of foreign languages (French and English), because the policy had risen the Arabic language teaching hours compared to French and English (ibid: 1328). On the other hand, teachers of the primary, middle and high schools were applying these reforms with an immense difficulty, because they were not trained on how to deal with the change as it is the case of university teachers with the application of the LMD system.

Starting from 1993, a new process emerged to enhance teaching the foreign languages; the reform entailed French or English instruction at the primary schools as compulsory foreign languages. The program was experienced solely in some primary schools but ceased latter, because the bulk majority of parents preferred French rather than English. It is worth mentioning that at that time, teachers were more than 90% Algerians at all levels (op. cit 1330).

The Algerian universities first adopted a system based on the French model; that is to say, the universities used to be autonomous at structuring the teaching curricular. However, this system was in vain (N. Rezig, 2011: 1330 quotes Ben Rabeh, 1999). In 1971, some reforms were designed in order to develop the university system and the prime reforms were introduced in 1988, but the majority of universities followed the French model and the instructors were French.

But, the number of French teachers had reduced as the number of the Algerian teachers increased after 1980, when a decree introduced Arabization since the first year of social, political science, law and economics at university. On the other hand, French was gradually left for French instruction itself. In fact, this step was really dramatic for baccalaureate holders who belonged to the scientific and technical streams at university

wherein modules were instructed in French language such as the medical stream, computing and so on. Indeed, the students found it difficult at different levels including understanding the content of the courses (ibid: 1330).

1.2.3 The LMD system in Algeria

The past decades witnessed a tremendous change in higher education in Algeria. The classical system that was followed in the Algerian universities since independence did not correspond to the radical changes in the political and economical world. It is an old system which composed of four years bachelor, two years magister and three years doctorate. However, the change led the Algerian government and policy makers to re-think about the educational system and decided to implement a new system that can respond to the socio-economical situations (F. Bouhadiba; S. Houcine; S. Koç & H. Sarnou, 2012: 180). It is worth mentioning that policy makers agreed to apply the European educational system known as LMD in 2004. Nevertheless, some EFL teachers consider it as a failure.

“Licence-Master-Doctorate” or LMD as a system has been adapted in many countries for the purpose of “*professionalization of prospective Algerian workers, teachers, scientists, researchers and so forth, to meet both the needs and the requirements of the working life and the different markets*” (N. Mebitil, 2013: 3). Furthermore, the application of the LMD system in Algeria is considered as a movement towards “*globalization*”, because the Anglo-Saxon syllabus has proved its success. Additionally, the prime aim is for innovation and permits also to follow the evolution of research and education as well as the world (N. Idri, 2005: 2).

It is worth introducing the three element of the system. LMD is composed of Licence with six (6) semesters, i.e. three years of study and the equivalence of the BA (the Bachelor Degree), a Master degree of two years; which is considered as a second phase and which should be implemented within four (4) semesters. The last phase is doctoral studies of three or more years and of course defending a dissertation. In every semester, students are required to attend 400 hours in a 16 week, i.e. 25 hours per a week (ibid: 2).

LMD system brings new aspects into Algerian universities which are the new roles of both teachers and students in the teaching and the learning processes. After being passive and depends heavily on the teacher, the student within the LMD system tends to be active and plays an important role in the classroom. The teacher’s role on the other hand, has been modified and transformed for the goal of providing more liberty to the learner. In other words,

in the LMD system, teachers are considered to be “facilitators” and are no more the only source of providing knowledge (F. Bouhadiba, et al, 2012: 182).

1.2.4 The status of English in Algeria

English instruction started officially in Algeria in the late of 1930s during the French colonial rule. It began with the non-existence of English language policy and no designed plan for its education. Basically, the teaching of English was part of what it used to be named “*l’enseignement des langues vivantes*”, under the title of “*l’anglais vivant*” (I.A. Elsherif & P. M. Smith, 2013: 170). After the independence in 1962 and until the late of 1960s, English instruction was still based on the French system in terms of the syllabi, textbooks and organization.

The emergence of ELT (English Language Teaching) textbooks, the provision of EFL Algerian instructors and the shifts in ELT methodology have been influenced by ELT approaches and methods. Most importantly, the new changes in economy and the appearance of the new means of communication as part of the ICT (Information and Communication Technologies) encouraged the growth of “*Global English*”. Thus, in this broad context of “*globalization*”, English became the dominant foreign language in the curricula of educational schools and institutions and the only language that forms an immense part of most graduate and postgraduate studies in Algerian universities. Elsherif & Smith (2013 quotes Bottery (2000: 170) who claims that “*the development of globalization has been associated with the dominance of the English language*”.

By the mid of the year 2000, the Algerian government made an adjustment aiming at enhancing the educational system, however, the dramatic past events (1991-2000) had left the government confused in particular parts in Algeria where several schools required a certain organization and more instructors. Since English language has become a necessary subject in the curriculum and required a tremendous demand at all the levels of education, N. Abdelatif Mami (2003: 432) in Miliani’s (2000) stating as follows:

In a situation where the French language has lost much of its ground in the socio-cultural and educational environments of the country; the introduction of English is being heralded as the magic solution to all possible ills-including economic, technological and educational ones.

As a matter of fact, English has been defined as a second foreign language in the beginning of the 90's and as a first foreign language after the 2000 reform in order to obtain the status of the language of science and technology employed in lifelong learning (op. cit: 433).

1.2.5 The English language teaching

Several approaches have been proposed and adopted by educationalists and psychologists in Algerian schools. However, two approaches have been taken into consideration. The first one was the communicative approach to language where curriculum designers agreed on that language is first communicated; indeed, making the learners communicate, but this step was inadequate taking into account time constraints.

The second approach was adapted from the first one (the communicative approach to language) which was the Competency Based Approach (CBA), assisting the learners to acquire a communicative competence through focusing on the learner as the target of the learning process (learner centred approach). The focal point in this approach was conveying the meaning by the context rather than grammatical forms. In fact, this approach has been the upshot of the requirements of the 21st century which structured particular measures to the instructor and better considered in the United States as "*facilitators*" N. Abdelatif Mami (2003: 243).

1.2.6 Objectives of teaching and learning English

As it is explained previously, Algeria is a multilingual nation; therefore, it has been really hard to set the objectives of studying English as a foreign language. At university, for instance, students are often asked about the reasons that led them to study English as a specialty. In fact, their responses most often vary between "*because I like it*", "*because it is an international language*", "*it was not my choice but this was the only thing I could do with my average*".

Another problem that the majority of the students face is that they strongly rely on marks as a motive for learning. Indeed, the grades become the primary objective for the learner rather than the learning process itself or the subject being taught. Indeed, focusing on the grades rather than learning may impede the students' progress and prohibit the mastery of the English language. Furthermore, it inhibits creativity, autonomy and cleverness (ibid: 433). Teaching English has some objectives such as developing some skills such as: listening,

speaking, reading and writing. Additionally, learners will be able to use grammar and vocabulary correctly. Most importantly, they will acquire knowledge.

1.2.7 The Department of English language and its goals

The Department of English at Djilali Liabes University in Sidi Bel Abbès was first established in the 90's. The primary purpose of the English section is to train and to equip the learners who hold the baccalaureate certificate to become future teachers of English, or simply future graduates in English language. Indeed, the LMD pedagogical training is attained via three year curricula which compose of enhancing some basic language skills such as writing/ reading comprehension and oral expression.

Besides, after obtaining the bachelor's degree, students may well enroll for another two years to obtain the master degree in order to be able to teach at the secondary school. The tables beneath show the various modules instructed to first year, second year and third year, and the time allowance for each module as set by the Ministry of Higher Education in 2015.

Module	Time allotted
Writing/reading comprehension	3 hours
Oral expression	3 hours
Social/humanities sciences	1hour 30 mn
Linguistics	1 hour 30mn
Grammar	3 hours
Cultural studies	1 hour 30 mn
Phonetics	1 hour 30 mn
Initiation to literature	1 hour 30 mn
French language	1 hour 30 mn
ESP	1 hour 30 mn

Table 1.1 Time allowance of first year English modules

The table beneath shows time allowance of second year English modules.

Modules	Time allotted
Writing/reading comprehension	3 hours
Oral expression	3 hours
Grammar	3 hours
Civilization	1 hour 30 mn
Socio-linguistics	1 hour 30 mn
Literature	1 hour 30 mn
Phonetics	1 hour 30 mn
Esp	1 hour 30 mn
Study skills	1 hour 30 mn
Initiation to translation	1 hour 30 mn

Table 1.2 Time allowance of second year English modules

The following table depicts time allowance of third year English modules.

Modules	Time allotted
Civilization	1 hour 30 mn
Literature	1 hour 30 mn
Methodology	1 hour 30 mn
Psycholinguistics	1 hour 30 mn
Socio-linguistics	1 hour 30 mn
TEFL	1 hour 30 mn
Psychology	1 hour 30 mn

Table 1.3 Time allowance of third year English modules

Up to now, thousands of EFL students have graduated from this department. Some of them have been recruited by the Ministry of Education; either in the middle or the secondary schools after passing the national examination for access to the available teaching jobs. Others have joined different institutions, while a minority has joined other universities for research studies by the Ministry of Higher Education.

The prime objective of the Department of English is to train students to become qualified future teachers of English that are expected to instruct the English language to all the learners in the Algerian schools and institutions. Furthermore, those trained students may contribute to the economic/ science development of the country which is profoundly in need of the scientific and technological knowledge carried out primarily in English, i.e. English is considered as a basic language in which higher education and worldwide research entail learning English.

Nonetheless, the teaching situation at the Department of English language in Sidi Bel Abbès is not that suitable for EFL students, since it lacks the teaching materials and teachers' professional training as well as the non-existence of audio-visual aids, phonetic laboratories, the absence of listening/reading comprehension as modules and internet access; all these factors are paralyzing the learning and the teaching processes.

1.2.8 Written expression instruction at the Department of English language

EFL students need to be well armed with linguistic competence, for they find writing a complex cognitive skill, and therefore unable to express their thoughts in an appropriate manner predominantly when they are not linguistically competent. In fact, learners are required to answer to the assigned questions in different subject areas; wherein they are asked to compose extended essays. Indeed, the student writer needs to explain his/her ideas explicitly through organizing conveniently the sentences and paragraphs to persuade the audience.

Writing in a foreign language seems to be complex for EFL learners that requires efforts because it needs ideas' organization. It is one of the fundamental skills in which students are asked to pen a dissertation in the final year of their graduation. But still, learners

face obstacles when drafting any paragraph. The hindrances could be punctuation, capitalization, spelling and grammatical mistakes. Hence, the writing failure results in the educational failure. Therefore, it seems quite impossible to ask an EFL student to write a memoir while s/he cannot draft a coherent paragraph. H. Elachachi-Hamzaoui (2010: 1) in Bouhadiba's (2000) explains as follows:

No adequate responsive educational or pedagogical programmes have been suggested this far. The BA¹ curriculum dates back to the 1980s (perhaps prior to this date) and no substantial change has been brought about in spite of the drastic changes in the social-economic environment.

Training learners to write accurately and coherently demands care and attention from language teachers since the aim of the course is to prepare EFL students for the class and home assignments that they are required to produce as well as to answer the examination questions (N. Bouyakoub-Bouabdallah, 2011: 93). In the EFL writing classroom, second year students are instructed written expression for three hours per a week. They first deal with the organization of a paragraph that consists of three elements: the topic sentence, thesis statement and the concluding sentence. Then, they explore the different essay types that can be used for different objectives. These types encompass expository, descriptive, narrative, argumentative and writing letters. The beneath tables show the written expression syllabuses.

1 st year	2 nd year	3 rd year
- First steps in writing.	-An introduction to different types of writing (introduction, body and conclusion).	-Essay: descriptive/narrative
- Sentence/structure		-Exposition: comparison and contrast.
- Simple, compound and complex sentences.	-Process approach	-Essay definition.
-Writing mechanics (capitalization and punctuation).	(planning, brainstorming, clustering...etc.)	-List and classification: how to develop an essay.
	- Narrative writing.	- Argumentative essay.
- Introduction to paragraph writing.	- Descriptive writing.	-Writing CV.
- Descriptive writing	- Expository writing.	-Writing letters: business,

¹ The bachelor's degree is the equivalent of the BA degree

- | | | |
|-------------------------|--|------------|
| (places, people...etc.) | - Argumentative writing. | friendly. |
| - Narrative writing. | - Different types of letters
(business, complaint...) | - Project. |

Table 1.4 Written expression syllabuses

1.3 Population

The sample of the present research is university students who are enrolled during the academic year 2014-2015 to continue their second year at Djilali liabes University in Sidi Bel Abbas. It should be pointed out that the current investigation is a case study which involves a great deal of university learners who are randomly selected. Hence, the students' questionnaire is allotted to a hundred (100) of second year university students, however, only seventy six (76) handed back the questionnaires.

The participants in this study are males and females who have different age and identical knowledge background. Indeed, the participants come from different parts of Algeria; they speak various dialects. However, Most of the informants speak the western variety of Algerian Arabic. Their L2 is French language, and English is their foreign language. Moreover, for the classroom observation, there are four (04) groups out of six (06) that are observed by the investigator.

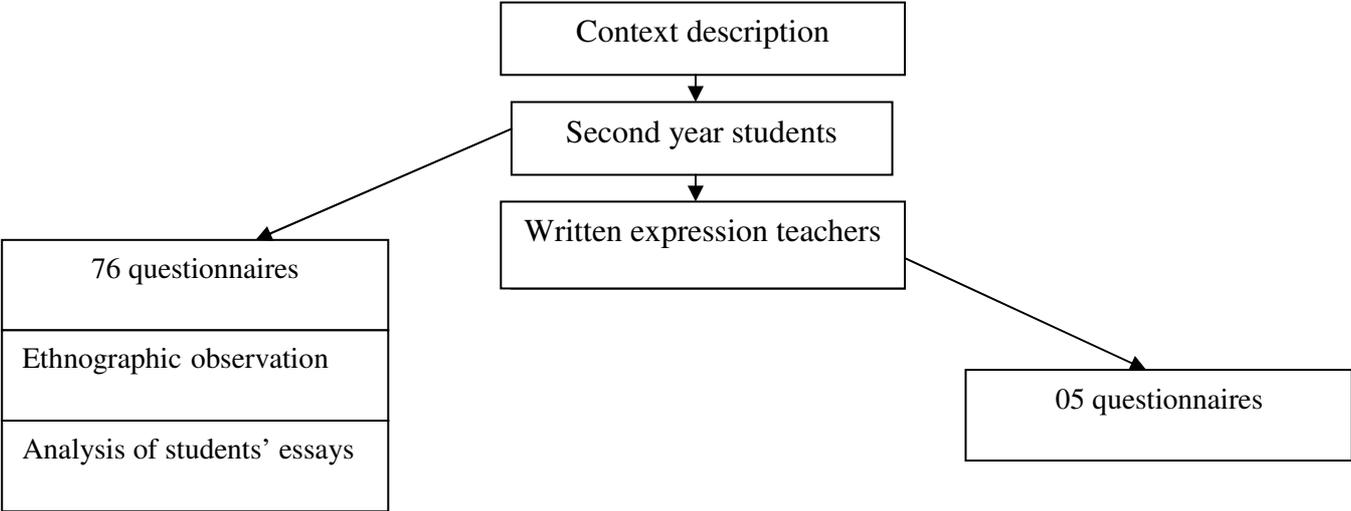
It should be noted that there are only two (02) full time teachers who are observed, because only these two instructors teach the entire Section of English during the academic year 2014/ 2015. Indeed, these two written expression teachers are a female and a male who have totally different age and specialized in different fields. In other words, the male teacher holds the doctorate degree in Civilization, and the female instructor is younger who has a magister degree in Didactics and is a five (05) years doctoral student, specialized in Didactics.

It is also important to mention that the observed students are few (see appendix 1). They form two to three groups composed of four students. In fact, EFL learners are frequently absent from written expression classes; only who are interested and motivated attend the courses. The same students keep attending written expression classes, for each week and for more than a month. However, those who attend seem to have the same age and have identical knowledge backgrounds

Additionally, the students whom written assignments are analyzed are the same participants who are observed and the same who turned in the questionnaire. Therefore, in order to identify more the students' use of writing strategies, the investigator favours examining the written expression examination papers of those who are already observed and of course of those who were absent too; the number of the examined papers is ninety five (95), but the researcher takes only a small sample of some students who represent all the learners. It is worth mentioning that written expression exam essays are of those who have already turned in the questionnaire. Hence, the researcher analyzes the students' written expression's extended texts, because there, the learners are obliged to attend examinations. However, as it is already mentioned that most of the students were absent and only those who attended the lectures, were able to answer the written assignments given by the teacher.

The second questionnaire is handed out to five teachers in the Department of English language at Djilali Liabes University in Sidi Bel Abbes. Their teaching experience varies from one teacher to another, so does their instructional method. In fact, they differ in the age, the experience and the degrees; one teacher is already a doctor who has been instructing for more than fifteen (15) years, others obtain their doctoral degree during the academic year 2014-2015, two other teachers hold the magister degree and are doctoral students. These tutors and mainly the beginners received the theoretical training but not practice. To put it differently, there is a huge difference between what they know theoretically and what they have to do inside the classroom. Indeed, novice teachers have to design their own writing course which seems complex, because the designed course should fit the learners' needs and weaknesses.

The following diagram highlights the context description which involves EFL students and teachers, research instruments and types of data treatment.



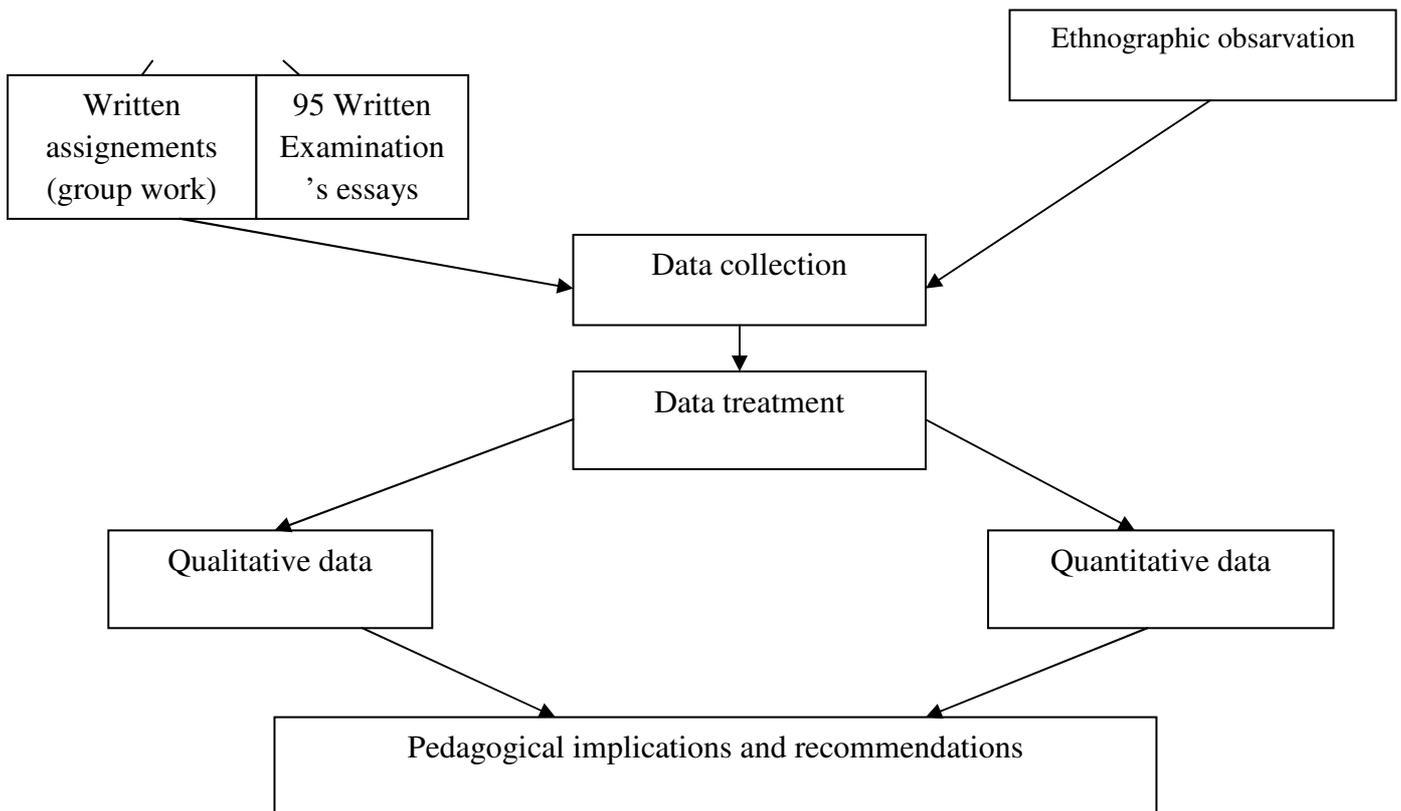


Diagram 1.1 Design of context description

1.4 Research questions and hypotheses

Written production has always been considered as a fundamental skill for EFL students who prepare their bachelors' degrees in English language. They are evaluated depending on their final productions; for teachers assess their students through the means of written examinations. Learners often have difficulties which influence their performance. Likewise, most of EFL teachers in the Department of English complain about their students' writing capacities, in that they are limited at different levels.

Most importantly, EFL instructors also complain about the frequent absence of the students. The latter has also been witnessed in written expression classes. Indeed, after dealing with the analysis of the findings, it has been noticed by the researcher that writing is a troublesome skill for second year students of English. Indeed, the learners' written productions could be better enhanced thanks to the efforts of written expression teachers who can diagnose the real composition difficulties which inhibit the learners' performance. Therefore, the current study addresses the following questions:

- **Question one:** why is writing a troublesome and complex skill?

- **Question two:** what are the strategies employed by second year university students to write an extended essay?
- **Question three:** to what extent do the cognitive strategies contribute to the development of the writing skill?

Writing is considered to be a complex process (see chapter II); thus, it is necessary to examine the students' written assignments and their written expression exam essays in order:

- To identify the use of strategies while producing a writing piece and the way EFL students overcome their compositions' hindrances.
- To confirm that written production is a complex skill for university students which requires thinking.
- To unveil the appropriate strategies that better foster and improve the learners' written production.

Hence, the above questions allow the investigator to formulate the following hypotheses:

- **Hypothesis one:** written production might be a complex task and a troublesome skill to master which entails thinking.
- **Hypothesis two:** second year students may employ metacognitive strategies to be able to compose a writing piece.
- **Hypothesis three:** developing cognitive strategies would increase the learners' writing abilities and competence.

1.5 Research design and methodology

The following section provides a thorough description of research design as well as research instruments that are utilized in the current investigation. In doing so, the researcher discusses the types of research that are involved in the present study and defines all the tools employed for data collection and the rationale that lie behind this selection.

1.5.1 Research design

Research is a scientific and a purposeful activity which attempts to establish or attain something. It is a systematic search that seeks for information about a specific issue and it is an art of a scientific study. Furthermore, it deals with problems treatment, formulating hypotheses, collecting, organizing, evaluating data and suggesting solutions (R. kumar, 2008:

1). Likewise, T. Hussain (2011) points out that research is a scientific process which aims at attaining solutions and implications to particular issues via planning, collecting, analyzing and interpreting data.

Research design on the other hand is a written plan for a specific scientific investigation. It discusses what the researcher intends to do, i.e. the purpose of the investigation and its relevance. Additionally, it communicates what the investigator plans to do step by step for conducting the study (op.cit: 30). Kumar quotes Kinner who argues that research design is:

The basic plan which guides the data collection and analyses the phases of the project. It is the frame work which specifies the type of information to be collected, the sources of data and the data collection procedures (R.Kumar, 2008: 30)

Kumar argues that it is a plan for collecting and analyzing information and it is the structure of an outline through which the study is conducted. Moreover, research design composes of an outline within which the investigator forms hypotheses, analyzes the findings and suggests solutions (op. cit: 31). According to A. Novikov & D. Novikov (2013) a research design is a process of selecting a research technique.

1.5.2 Case study

The current research is a case study which involves a great deal of participants (second year university students and written expression teachers) who are randomly chosen for the purpose of identifying their attitudes and writing behaviours. It is worth mentioning that in any study the researcher needs to identify the type of his/her investigation. In research methodology a case study is defined by N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln as follows:

...Case study. The detailed examination of a simple example of a class of phenomena, a case study cannot provide reliable information about the broader class, but it may be useful in the preliminary stages of an investigation since it provides hypotheses, which may be tested systematically with a large number of cases. (2011: 301)

In this respect, a case study examines a particular phenomenon about a specific population, however, it does not provide correct and clear data, but rather it can be useful for the first stages of the research since the latter has research questions and hypotheses.

Nonetheless, the definition provided by the two above mentioned researchers might well provide a mistaken view for the investigator. On the other hand, Denzin and Lincoln explain that a case study is “*the detailed examination of a simple example...*” Another definition stated by Simons which is completely different from the first one and who argues that:

Case study is an in-depth exploration from multiple perspectives of the complexity and uniqueness of a particular project, policy, institution, programme or system in a ‘real life’ context...The primary purpose is to generate in-depth understanding of a specific topic (as in a thesis), programme, policy, institution or system to generate knowledge and /or inform policy development, professional practice and civil or community action. (H. Simons, 2009: 21)

Simons (2009) illustrates that a case study means exploring a certain issue profoundly and from various perspectives.

On the other hand, R. Yin (1994: 1) argues that case studies are the favoured method mainly when the researcher poses questions as “how” or “when”, and that it is one of several ways for doing a particular investigation. Case studies include both qualitative and quantitative research depending on the participants involved in the study as well as the number of research instruments employed by the investigator.

Similarly, P. Baxter & S. Jack (2008: 544) opine that “*qualitative case study methodology provides tools for researchers to study complex phenomena within their contexts*”. The authors carry on stating that once the investigator identifies the research questions and determines that they are best answered using a qualitative case study, then the researcher decides what type of case study should be conducted or applied (op. cit: 547). In similarly, R. Yin (1994) categorizes several types of case studies which vary between “*explanatory*”, “*expository*”, and “*description*”. He also differentiates between “*single*”, “*holistic*”, and “*multiple*” case studies (P. 4).

Likewise, S. Crowe; K. Cresswell; A. Robertson; G. Huby; A. Avery; & A. Sheikh define and categorize case studies as follows:

A case study is a research approach that is used to generate an in-depth, multi-faceted understanding of a complex issue in its real-life context. It is an established research design that is used extensively in a wide variety of disciplines, particularly in the social sciences. A case study can be defined in a variety of ways...the need to explore an event or phenomenon in depth and in its natural context. It is for this reason sometimes referred to as a

'naturalistic' design, this is in contrast to an 'experimental' design... (2011: 2)

In addition to the wide range of definitions as suggested previously by different authors, R, Vanwynsberghe & S, Khan (2007) refer to a case study as a *'method'*, *'research design'* or a *'methodology'*, but *"to refer to case study as a method"*; a term which is completely different from methodology. As a matter of fact, the authors imply that a case study is a *'technique'*, or a *'procedure'*, or a tool for collecting evidence or gathering enough information. For instance, research techniques refer to interviews, document analysis and observations (P. 3). Similarly, case study generally utilizes a wide range of methods for collecting data and analyzing of methods for collecting and analyzing data rather than being narrowed and restricted to one single research method (D. Nunan, 1992: 74).

1.5.3 The purpose of case studies

The primary purpose of using such case studies in this investigation is to obtain a thorough understanding about second year university students' attitudes and thoughts about the writing skill, strategy use in their extended essays, and of course-a thorough linguistic analysis of EFL students' written assignments and written expression examination. Furthermore, to determine how the learners compose, and if teachers' explanations have fully conveyed, and most importantly, what strategy instruction fosters the students' writing capacities. Such a procedure elicits enough data and intends to explore all the issues. Basically, it typifies the students' way of producing a writing piece, as well as the written expression teachers' way of instruction.

1.5.4 Qualitative and quantitative studies

The current research is a combination of both qualitative and quantitative research. In other words, the interpretations of data analyses rely a great deal on qualitative and quantitative analyses. Indeed, interpreting the gathered data obtained from both EFL students and written expression teachers are found to be difficult in terms of comprehending the way university learners undertake writing as a process and as a product. Therefore, the investigator depends in this research on both qualitative and quantitative analyses for interpreting and discussing the collected data.

In effect, relying on more than one research type provides more reliability and validity to the scientific investigation. It is worth mentioning that the researcher correlates the

findings resulted from the data obtained from the various research tools that are employed in this study to the different research analyses as it is illustrated explicitly in the section beneath.

1.5.4.1 Qualitative research

Sh, Merriam (2009: 14) reports that qualitative research aims at attaining comprehension of how investigators make sense to their lives and how the researchers undertake the research process rather than focusing on the final product. Most importantly, the overall purpose of qualitative research describes how investigators interpret the findings. Merriam continues defining qualitative study stating that “*the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis*” (op. cit: 15). She clarifies that researchers most frequently undertake a qualitative study compared to the other types of research, because there is a lack of the theoretical part, or the non-existence of theory which makes a particular issue or a phenomenon difficult to explain. That is why, researchers collect data to construct concepts, hypotheses or theories, in that respect, “*qualitative researchers build toward theory from observation and intuitive understandings*” (ibid: 15).

The ethnographic observation and result discussion have been done on the basis of qualitative analysis in this research. Accordingly, the qualitative study describes and explores the students’ and written expression teachers’ behaviours, thoughts and strategies, i.e. in classroom observation, the qualitative analysis helps clarify and identify the way second year university students undertake the writing process; mainly when the teacher ordered his/her learners to form groups and write about a particular topic; so here, the students showed clearly the type of strategies that they relied on when composing a writing piece.

The qualitative analysis has also been used when studying the students’ written assignments and their exam papers, wherein their written productions are analyzed in-depth and interpreted. As a matter of fact, analyzing profoundly the EFL learners’ written tasks allows the investigator to know about the different composition difficulties that hinder the students’ performance. Furthermore, written assignments and students’ exam papers provide insights into both the writing process and product.

More importantly, relying on the qualitative analysis in students’ written tasks helps gather clear, correct and detailed data about the actual students’ composition performance, because the primary purpose of qualitative research is:

...to uncover multiple perspectives in a specific context...In order to analyze qualitative data, researchers often make use of cyclical data analysis and grounded theory, cyclical data analysis is an analytical process involving collecting data, conducting data analysis through which hypotheses are formed, testing hypotheses through further, more focused data collection... (C. Sanz, 2005: 83-84).

In addition, it is believed that qualitative research has two major advantages. The first one is that it allows the researcher to interact with the respondents. The second advantage is that it stimulates discussion that unveils issues during the designing phase (R. Nykiel, 2007: 56). Whereas, the purpose of qualitative research according to Boeije (2010) has three major elements namely: looking for meaning, using flexible research methods that enable contact and providing qualitative findings, in this respect:

The purpose of qualitative research is to describe and understand social phenomena in terms of the meaning people bring to them. The research questions are studied through flexible methods enabling contact with the people involved to an extent that is necessary to grasp what is going on in the field. The methods produce rich, descriptive data that need to be interpreted through the identification and coding of themes and categories leading to findings that can contribute to theoretical knowledge and practical use. (H. Boeije, 2010: 11).

R. Yin (2011) on the other hand, argues that qualitative research has five different characteristics which will be summed up in the following claims:

- 1- Qualitative research involves studying and analyzing the way people live under the actual conditions, i.e. the way participants express them freely and spontaneously. For example, classroom observation allows the investigator to observe, study and analyze the students' behaviours, beliefs and motivation as well as the teachers' way of instruction (P. 8).
- 2- Qualitative research differs in its ability to represent the different views and perspectives of the population in a particular study. Moreover, obtaining the participants' perspectives may be a basic purpose of a qualitative analysis. Hence, the ideas emerging from the qualitative research can symbolize or represent the meanings carried by the investigator (ibid: 8).

- 3- Qualitative research connotes “*contextual conditions*”; the social, institutional and environmental conditions within which participants’ lives take place. In fact, these contextual conditions may have an impact on the events such as in experimental research and surveys which are limited in the number of questions concerned in any contextual conditions (ibid: 8).
- 4- Qualitative research tends to explain these events via the existing data or concepts. Furthermore, qualitative study provides opportunities for developing new concepts which attempt to illustrate social processes (op. cit: 9).
- 5- Qualitative research attempts to collect data, integrate and present the gathered information from the different sources of instruments. In effect, the complexity of the research and the diversity of its population suggest the use of diverse research tools such as observations and interviews. Therefore, the study is based on triangulating the data from the different research instruments which provide more credibility, validity and trustworthiness (ibid: 9).

The ultimate aim of qualitative research concerns detailed descriptions of data via measurements and scores. Moreover, its purpose is to study people and events in their natural contexts and settings. In qualitative studies, investigators tend to present a natural picture of a particular phenomenon (A. Mackey & S. Gass, 2016: 216). According to these authors “*qualitative researchers tend to work more intensively with fewer participants*”. However, the current research required working with four (04) written expression classes out of six (06) and this had been done in order to gather sufficient and detailed data from various groups.

1.5.4.2 Quantitative research

Quantitative study, on the other hand focuses on amounts or measurements, i.e. similar or different, small or large, more or less, frequent or rare. The quantitative study shows people’s characteristics and events that the researcher investigates (R. Murray Thomas, 2003:

1). Qualitative study is typified by two features of researchers:

- 1- Quantitative study composes of numbers and statistical analysis. As a matter of fact, it is based on “*numerical measurements of specific aspects*” of an issue. Moreover, it is about a general description of a particular phenomenon, and of course- it seeks to test hypotheses, measurements and analyses (op. cit: 2).
- 2- Quantitative investigators look for illustrations as well as predictions. In addition, quantitative research focuses on designing experiments which aim at finding accurate

results. The investigator’s role in the quantitative study is to measure, analyze and observe. More importantly, the researcher should be objective and not involving the gathered data with personal subjects (ibid: 2).

The overall definition of quantitative research according to R. Nykiel (2007: 55) “...is about quantifying relationships between variables...quantitative research seeks to establish facts, make predictions, and test hypothesis that have already been stated”. Quantitative has two advantages; the first one is that the obtained results are *statistically reliable*”. That is to say, quantitative research can determine whether a particular idea or a concept is reliable and better than other alternatives. The second advantage is that “*the results are projectable to the population*”. Most importantly, it is thought that if the gathered data cannot be structured in the form of numbers, then they are quantitative analyses. Indeed, objectivity and also numbers are characteristics often associated with quantitative study (op. cit: 56). Quantitative research aims at determining the relationship between “*an independent variable and another dependent variable or outcome variable in a population*” (ibid: 56).

In order to differentiate clearly between the two types of studies, the following table shows the distinction between both types (qualitative and quantitative):

Quantitative	Qualitative
Both are systematic in their approach	
Deductive	Inductive
Generalizable	Not generalizable
Numbers	Words

Table 1.5 Comparative distinctions between quantitative and qualitative research

(R. Nykiel, 2007: 59)

Thus, in the current study, the gathered data are summed up in tables and graphs as shown in chapters (3 and 4), in which the quantified data are structured in the form of numbers and percentages in order to compare between the results. Accordingly, the quantitative study has been used for analyzing students’ questionnaires as well as teachers’ questionnaires. It is worth mentioning that the quantitative analysis that is used in this research is more descriptive than other types of research. In this respect:

Descriptive designs are designed to gain more information about a particular characteristic in a particular field of study. A descriptive study may be used to develop a theory, identify preferred current practice, justify current practice. Make judgments, or identify what others in similar situations may be doing...Usually this type of research involves studying the preferences, attitudes, practices, concerns, or interests of some group of people...(R. Nykiel, 2007: 57)

Therefore, quantitative analysis does not involve only numerical data, but is also descriptive to a large extent, in which in the present investigation, the quantitative analysis has been used when identifying students' beliefs or attitudes towards the writing skill, their motivation and so on. As a matter of fact, the principal objective of descriptive research is to provide a thorough description of the features of a certain situation or a phenomenon. Sometimes, researchers undertake a descriptive research to learn about the different opinions, attitudes, beliefs and behaviours as well as demographics, for instance: gender, age, ethnicity and education. Most importantly, the primary element in descriptive research is that investigators collect suitable data that are utilized for the description (B. Johnson, & L. Christensen, 2012: 367).

The major conclusion that is drawn here is that both qualitative and quantitative methods are believed to be systematic. In other words, a system defines the principle of research. Broadly speaking, quantitative research is considered to be objective, whereas, qualitative research frequently involves subjective aspects, i.e. the researcher remains detached (objective) when attempting to analyze and interpret quantitative data (R. Nykiel, 2007: 56).

1.5.5 Research instruments

Research instruments are known to be diverse and different. In fact, any scientific investigation requires tools for collecting data to be studied, analyzed and interpreted. However, researchers use instruments that they believe are suitable and more appropriate for gathering enough information about a particular situation or a problem. Thus, in the current study, the researcher has employed three (03) research instruments and ensures triangulation, namely: classroom observation, questionnaires provided to the informants and analyzing students' written assignments as well as their written examination. The three research instruments will be discussed thoroughly in the following section.

1.5.5.1 Classroom observation

Classroom observation is now becoming an interesting research instrument and more than it used to be in the past (E. Wragg, 2012). As a matter of fact, L2 researchers such as Allwright (1987), Pica and Doughty (1985) and Wrong- Fillmore (1980 – 1982) have also used observational methods in order to unveil thorough and detailed data about both the learners and the teachers. Classroom observations allow investigating internal and external reasons and factors in L2 learning (C. Sanz, 2005: 75). Furthermore, the data are collected via several means; whether audio, visual recordings and field notes.

Sanz (2005) carries on arguing that investigators observe carefully and describe classroom tasks without taking any participation or interaction in the lesson. Audio –visual records allow the researchers to revise their thoughts, analyze the gathered data in great depth. More importantly, make the research clearer, richer and thoroughly analyzed to other researchers (ibid: 75). In addition to the wide range of definitions, Mason (2002) claims so:

The term observation usually refers to methods of generating data which entail the researcher immersing herself or himself in a research ‘setting’ so that they can experience and observe at first hand a range of dimensions in and of that setting. These might include: social actions, behaviour, interactions, relationships, events, as well as spatial, locational and temporal dimensions. (J. Mason, 2002: 84)

Classroom observation is useful for recording the type of behaviours and interactions that occur in the classroom, but not necessarily why they occur; except if the teachers and the students are participants in data collection and are provided the chance to illustrate classroom events. In such a case, the reader relies heavily on the observer’s explanations of these events which may have a particular influence on the validity and the reliability of the gathered and interpreted data (M. O’Leary, 2014: 54).

The principal purpose of classroom observation is “*describing the current status of instructional practices and identifying instructional problems*” (H. Waxman; R. Thrap & S. Hilberg, 2004: 45). In other words, classroom observation is designed to describe a certain educational phenomenon. Moreover, classroom observation allows the researcher to evaluate the syllabus and the effectiveness of its implementation. In observational sessions, researchers are interested in participants and primarily the ways in which the population behave or act. The investigators attempt to understand and interpret the complex attitudes that happen around. (D. Wilkinson & P. Birmingham, 2003: 117).

Wilkinson & Birmingham (2003) continue claiming that observational sessions allow the investigator to analyze how the participants understand their surroundings in terms of interaction with others and how their actions are perceived by others (teachers). In this respect, “*observation is an extremely handy tool for researchers in this regard. It can allow researchers to understand much more about what goes on in complex real- world situations...*” (P. 117). They add that the good observational researchers are skilled in a particular technique namely, “looking”; looking is an extremely focused and systematic way.

Likewise, J. Mason (2002: 87) expresses the same opinion, claiming that any investigator who attempts to utilize observation as a research tool, then s/he needs to prepare him/herself not only for the observational process, but also for interaction as well as to be deeply involved in observing, participating, interrogating, listening, communicating as well as thinking. As a matter of fact, this set of activities is called “fieldwork” which means observing. On the other hand, the researcher may find classroom observation more challenging and a tiring process than other research instruments, such as conducting “interviews”, because the setting could be complicated and messy in terms of a lot of things that happen together and at once. On the other hand, E. Wragg (2012) points out that visiting and observing classroom studies is difficult to some extent, but it is necessary for the researcher to go through it, he claims as follows:

....despite some of the difficulties of visiting classrooms and observing lessons, it is a worthwhile enterprise and one that should be undertaken in a thoughtful and professional manner. There is still a great deal to be learned by any teacher, novice or seasoned practitioner, or by an investigator. Good classroom observation can lie at the heart of both understanding professional practice and improving its quality. (2012: 17)

The principal interest that lies behind undertaking observational sessions is that observing groups of people in order to better comprehend and explore their behaviours, and their tasks. More importantly, to understand how these participants interpret, react and view the actions of other people around them (D. Wilkinson & P. Birmingham: 2003: 118). In addition to the wide range of definitions of classroom observation and its objectives, B. J. Taylor (2006: 215) reports that the human eye is a way of gathering data about people’s behaviour, and that it can be used for both qualitative and quantitative research and it can also be utilized as a method of obtaining and gathering data in different research designs.

Taylor, (2006) claims on the other hand that observation is not useful for studying people’s thoughts, beliefs, values, feelings and attitudes. Furthermore, observation can be

objective or subjective, as well as it can be structured or unstructured; in the unstructured observation, the researcher attempts to observe the setting and people without imposing any structure on the observational sessions, whereas, the structured observation allows the investigator to use tools such as “checklist” (op. cit:216).

1.5.5.1.1 Types of observation

Classroom observation varies according to the investigator’s research requirements. Accordingly, s/he can be active or a passive researcher, i.e. in some circumstances, the investigator may keep his/her opinion presence unseen or unnoticeable to other people or s/he may participate actively in the lesson. Therefore, according to B. Taylor; G. Sinha & T. Ghoshal (2008) classroom observation is divided into two types:

1.5.5.1.1.1 Structured classroom observation

Structured observation “*comprises a set of formal data collection methods that seek to provide systematic description of behavior and may be used to test hypotheses of various parts*” B. Taylor et al. (2008: 105). It is characterized by observing carefully the details and recording the data. Structured observation is often attained through “checklists” or “rating scales”. Simple checklist enables the researcher to observe or to record carefully the presence or the absence of a particular behavior. Indeed, there are two types of checklists which are defined as follow:

- Static checklists involve recording information that concern age, sex, qualifications, job function and features of the setting.
- Action checklists involve recording the behaviour (ibid: 105).

C. Lankshear & M. Knobel (2004: 222) argue that structured observation should be well planned, well organized and a detailed observation. In fact, structured classroom observation is frequently used in quantitative as well as it can be also employed in qualitative research. In observational sessions, researchers ‘pre-plan’ what is to be observed and they remain unseen or unnoticeable to others (students), and do not engage in any participation (op.cit: 226).

On the other hand, K. Kato (2010: 35) claims that structured observation requires “*the aid of a recording made by a mechanical means such as audio or video-tape recording...structured observation is a technique suitable for investigating small units of*

behaviour or ideas...” It is often concerned with the language use and interactions that occur in the classroom. In such circumstances, structured observation refers to the analysis of classroom interaction which indeed provides data about whether or a few or many aspects of teaching (ibid: 35).

1.5.5.1.1.2 Unstructured classroom observation

Unstructured classroom observation records events that spontaneously occur and the collected data are described and revised later for assessment (L. Cohen; L. Manion; k. Morrison & D. Wyse, 2010: 427). Unstructured observational sessions are frequently unstructured in exploratory research. The overall objective of such observations is to obtain and provide direct and detailed information concerning the behaviours and events. In unstructured classroom observation, the researcher attempts to comprehend and analyze the difficult circumstances without imposing any structure, or without interfering in the classroom’s events (B. Taylor; G. Sinha; & T. Ghoshal, 2008: 106).

Similarly, unstructured observation concerns observing the setting, events and classroom tasks, but having some goals in mind. Researchers who conduct unstructured observational sessions tend to take a long time observing in order to obtain thorough data and explanations (C. Lankshear & M. Knobel, 2004: 222). As a matter of fact, in unstructured observational sessions, the investigator needs to be unnoticeable by other people, and this can be done via employing audio-visual recordings. In this respect, C. Lankshear et al (2004: 227) in Bernard’s (2000) & Phal’s (2002):

Researchers may choose to observe a context or event in a completely unstructured way that does not involve them as direct participants in what unfolds before them. The most ‘pure’ form of this approach removes the teacher researcher altogether from the context being observed. This can be done by equipping study participants with visual recording devices (e.g. video-cameras, disposable cameras) and the researcher instructing them to record certain elements...

In other words, unstructured classroom observation involves the presence of the investigator, but not directly involved. Furthermore, unstructured observational sessions are most often of qualitative data collection, since the researcher is allowed to move from one event to another new one, which could be more interesting (C. Mertler, 2012: 121). On the other hand, G. Beri (2005: 105) argues that “*unstructured observation implies that observers are free to observe whatever they think is relevant and important*”. J. Wlid & C. Diggins (2009: 137) claim that unstructured classroom observation is employed in investigations

where the research problem is not well defined. The observer is free in terms of what is observed; s/he has more freedom to observe behaviours as well as classroom events.

Furthermore, such observational type is often a qualitative method, for there is no exact or specific behaviours to be studied. The investigator observes actions and events in order to explore and investigate the situation. There is no organized or structured plan in such observations (M. Alston & W. Bowles, 2003: 197). In addition, unstructured classroom observation does not entail a schedule on the observer's part for recording the actions, events and activities, but rather its overall objective is to record as much data as possible (A. Bryman & E. Ball, 2015: 281).

Similarly, in unstructured observational studies, the researcher needs to take into consideration the participants' behaviours, events, the setting and s/he needs also to observe the duration of the events or incidents. It is necessary to record what is happening in the classroom while observing to foster its accuracy (L. S. Connaway & R. Powell, 2010: 181). So as to increase the accuracy of unstructured observational sessions, there are some steps that need to be taken into account and which are summed up in the following claims:

- Utilizing two or more observational techniques, such as audio/visual recordings and then comparing the results.
- Having two or more other participants observe the same behaviours and then comparing the results.
- To distinguish between the occurred behaviours and perceptions or interpretations of the actions when taking notes.
- To avoid participation in the activity being observed (ibid: 181).

It should be pointed out that having two or more participants to observe the same behaviours that occur inside the classroom and then comparing between the results may not be effective, because the investigators do not have the same field of interest. On the other hand, the presence of only the researcher suffices while observing the teachers' acts as well as the students.

1.5.5.1.1.3 Ethnographic observation

Ethnography is an approach to qualitative research which comes from the field of anthropology². The word ‘ethnography’ implies the description (graphy) of cultures (ethno), in this respect, H. Tavakoli (2012: 198) defines it as follows:

Ethnography is the in-depth study of naturally occurring behavior within a culture or entire social group. It seeks to understand the relationship between culture and behavior; with culture referring to the shared beliefs, values, concepts, practices and attitudes of a specific group of people.

In addition, ethnography studies what participants practise and interprets why they do these acts or behaviours. Furthermore, ethnographer researchers describe, analyze and interpret the attitudes through a long period of time by the research tools, namely ‘observations’ which are considered as the primary research tool for data collection (ibid: 198).

The rationale that lies behind choosing an ethnographic research is to comprehend complex issues, behaviours about people (T. Patel, 2007). Besides, it seeks for the identification of the research problems that the investigator is interested in and then, s/he attempts to discover where these research problems occur and of course how they are linked (L. Wei & M. Moyer, 2008). Ethnographic observation is not a simple method of observing people; however, it is systematic, organized and disciplined form of observation which is designed to gather reliable data. In ethnographic observation, researchers observe what is important and relevant to the investigation, such as the structure and the participants’ behaviours (R. Madden, 2010: 173). In addition, ethnographic observation involves watching what happens in the classroom, listening to both teachers and learners.

It is a special methodology which concerns learning about people, not only talking to them and asking different questions, but learning from them through observing them closely and asking questions related to the context, but this should be done in several sessions (K. O’Reilly, 2005: 1, 55). Ethnographic observation on the other hand, entails the avoidance of the theoretical as well as testing the research hypotheses for a direct and prolonged classroom observation in order to observe the behaviours and the different tasks, attempting to obtain a long and detailed description of what has been observed (H. Tavakoli, 2012: 199).

In ethnographic observation, there are two main types “*overt and covert*”. In overt observation, the investigator intervenes from time to time and shows himself/ herself to the participants or the group being studied. Whereas, in the covert observation, the researcher

² Anthropology is a discipline which focuses on understanding humankind in its many facets. (J. Peacock, 2001).

does not reveal his/her identity or the objective that lies behind the investigation (M. Riley; R. Wood; M. Clark; E. Wilkie & E. Scivas, 2000: 138). Both overt and covert observations are divided into two types: “*participant and non-participant observation*”. These types are defined as follows:

- Overt indicates non-participant observation is where the investigator’s presence and purpose are clearly shown. Besides, s/he does participate in the classroom tasks of the group being studied as a member of that group.
- Covert implies non-participant observation is where the researcher’s presence/identity or objective are not revealed and s/he does not intervene or show any attitude in the activities as a member of the group being investigated (ibid: 138)

The current study requires an ethnographic observation, because it investigates the social behaviours of the students. In addition, the present research entails a thorough description of written expression classes, the setting, how second year university students interact and participate in the classroom. The overall objective that lies behind is that there have been many questions or issues wherein the researcher-observer is interested in and may well be answered by the means of an ethnographic observation.

Such a detailed observation helps profoundly the investigator to reply on a great number of questions, and more importantly to discover what is hidden such as students’ writing strategies, motivation and attitudes. Most importantly, the primary purpose of using such observation in this research is to compare both students’ and teachers’ responses of the questionnaires, and which reveals some of the facts about the population integrated in this investigation.

The ethnographic observation unveils and answers some of the inquiries about written expression syllabus that is taught by EFL instructors. In addition, it reveals also that most of second year university students are absent from written expression classes, whereas, those who attend are few and some of them do not show any interest, particularly when the teachers provide them with some of the topics to compose about.

The main tool of recording data in the ethnographic observation is through pen, in which the investigator records the major facts and events that are relevant to the research including what is written on the whiteboard. However, the use of video-recordings might not be possible for the researcher-observer, i.e. the investigator hides her identity and does not participate in classroom activities.

More importantly, video-recordings show explicitly the students' and the teachers' faces which might be problematic for the participants. That is to say, the researcher observes both second year university students and written expression teachers, who in their turns behave naturally and spontaneously. They might feel embarrassed in front of the camera which may well influence their attitudes. That is why the observer chooses the pen as the best and more effective tool to record all the events as shown in (appendix 1).

The researcher-observer takes notes while observing what is happening in the classroom from the very beginning of written expression session until the end, or jots down some points, key words and phrases, and then converted and transformed into meaningful sentences which have been analyzed and discussed as it is mentioned in chapter three (3).

As it is mentioned earlier, that the researcher-observer hid her identity from the students or the groups being studied and did not participate in classroom tasks provided by the teachers, in order to observe the spontaneous attitude, motivation and actions of the students. In addition to that, the investigator favours asking some of the questions to both written expression instructors and some of the students in order to discover what has not occurred in the ethnographic observation, to know about the learners' level and what type of strategies they use while writing extended essays.

The following discusses the second research tool that is used in this investigation which is written assignments provided by written expression teachers and their examination.

1.5.5.2 Written assignments and examination

Written expression classes entail practice on the students' part and they need to accomplish the written assignments provided by their instructors. Through the assignments, students can enhance their critical thinking skills and obtain experience via the various types of composition. Indeed, written tasks provided with teachers' feedback help learners develop their writing capacities which are fundamental in the learning process (C. Oermann & K. Gaberson, 2014: 167).

Written assignments are basic for composition instruction as well as assessment; they can be utilized to attain many learning purposes and outcomes, but need to be well chosen and designed, taking into account the main instructional objectives. It is important to mention that via written assignments, students can form ideas and communicate them in an accurate and coherent method to the audiences and develop their writing abilities and skills (ibid: 167).

It is also worth noting that teachers plan their writing activities based on some primary objectives of learning which should meet specific goals of the course and should not be only for the purpose of having a written assignment as a lecture requirement. However, composition activities need to be carefully selected in order to help students develop their production skills and of course attaining the course outcomes (op. cit: 168).

In addition, composition tasks and teachers' feedback guide students in learning how to produce accurately and clearly for different readers, because the ability to communicate the thoughts on a paper is an important outcome at all educational levels (op. cit: 169). It is worth noting that written expression teachers need to criticize their students' papers for the quality of the content; how ideas and arguments are well developed and organized, production style; such as clarity of expression, sentence structure, writing mechanics, grammar and spelling. This critique needs to be accompanied with feedback on how to improve writing. Students also need suggestions about reviewing, for instance written expression instructors identify first the writing problem and provide suggestions on how to enhance it (op.cit: 170).

In the current investigation, the researcher chooses to examine first the students' written assignments provided by their teachers which of course are related to written expression classes. In fact, the examined composition activities are few, because of the regular absence of the students. Hence, the analyzed essays are of those who regularly attend their classes. These students are asked to produce essays about certain topics related to the elaborated lecture.

Sometimes, the teachers favour asking their learners to form groups, and other times ask them to work individually. In fact, after the teachers' illustrations to the various points on how to compose clearly an extended essay, written expression teachers ask their learners to produce a writing piece in the classroom using five (05) paragraphs; one is devoted to the introduction, three other paragraphs for the essay development and the last one is for the conclusion.

The students started writing in the classroom within a certain period of time; this period is quite long, because the learners finish their writing pieces outside the classroom, i.e. they commenced producing in the first session and were required to hand back their assignments in the next session. Therefore, when giving topics to compose about, students have sufficient time to think about the appropriate ideas, adequate vocabulary related to the

provided subject, and more importantly, dictionaries and other means that may well contribute to their writings.

The overall purpose for choosing written assignments to be studied, examined and analyzed is to unveil what type of strategies that the students employ while producing a writing piece, and mainly when they have enough time. In addition, choosing written assignments as a research tool in this investigation is to answer the research questions, because composing an extended essay is required in all the modules particularly when the university students are gathered for examination in the final of each semester. As it is already mentioned that the students are given topics to compose about starting in the classroom and finishing at home; the given topics are related to the elaborated lessons, which are about argumentation, wherein the students state their ideas and have much to communicate about, and thus, they are expected to reveal much about their writing strategies.

After accomplishing the writing activities at home, essays are collected by the teachers, corrected and provided by written comments (teachers' feedback) which show to the students their mistakes at various levels. More importantly, the written assignments are given to the researcher in order to identify the different mistakes which include grammar, spelling, ideas organization...etc. Additionally, the written tasks unveil a wide range of strategies used while drafting.

On the other hand, while observing the students tackling their activities, they depend much on one strategy, because most of the time teachers order their learners to form groups and select one topic to write about. I should be pointed out that the essays are not graded, but are read and assessed. It is important to mention that the written assignments are of three (03) groups who are instructed by the same teacher and the fourth one is tackled during the ethnographic observation and which is instructed by another teacher.

Furthermore, the investigator chooses also to study and analyze the written expression exam sheets of the same students being observed and handed out the questionnaires to be answered. As a matter of fact, ninety five (95) exam papers are taken from the university's administration and read by the researcher. It should be first noted that the exam sheets are of the first semester that was held on January, 2015. In effect, students are given different topics and have to select only one to talk about. The essays should not exceed five paragraphs as already elaborated in the classroom and need to be drafted within a specific period of time, which also should not be more than one hour and thirty minutes (1h/30m).

The primary purpose for selecting students' examination sheets to be studied, is to unveil and discover the writing strategies that are used by second year university students during examination wherein they are required to work individually, because their writing pieces will be assessed and graded by their teachers. In the exam, students are asked to compose and choose one of the three different genres of writing; whether descriptive, narrative or argumentative, and each student selects what best suits him/her and has much to say about the given topic.

Indeed, the analyzed examination papers reveal that the students use different strategies compared to the strategies employed in the written assignments. Learners, exam papers also unveil a wide range of strategies which considered to be real, because EFL students are obliged to work individually wherein they employ what they know (knowledge background). It is worth noting that studying students' extended essays answer the research questions and confirm the hypothesis.

The following discusses the third research instrument that is used in this investigation which is the questionnaires that are handed out to both teachers and students.

1.5.5.3 Questionnaires

After dealing with the ethnographic observation and the treatment of students' written assignments, questionnaires are designed and addressed to both written expression teachers and second year university students to investigate some issues raised by the researcher, answer the research questions and test the hypotheses. It is worth noting that the questionnaire complements the earlier mentioned research tools, for the purpose of gathering more useful information and comparing the obtained results with that of the other research instruments. Moreover, questionnaires are designed to gather both qualitative and quantitative data in a short period of time.

Most often researchers employ two different approaches when collecting data in descriptive quantitative research studies: they may gather information via observing or counting acts and behaviours, or they may use a questionnaire to elicit responses to particular questions, including questions about views, attitudes, motivation, knowledge, and demographics...etc. Questionnaires are used by most of the researchers because they tend easier and quicker for data collection in a short period of time. In this respect:

Questionnaires are the most popular way to gather primary data. It has been estimated that questionnaires are used in 85 percent or more of all qualitative research projects. They are particularly appropriate when the research problem calls for a descriptive design (D. McNabb, 2010: 109).

Questionnaires are used to gather information about a great number of informants (people) or small groups (samples). Questionnaires can be short or long, complex or simple. They can be structured or unstructured. In addition, they can be administered face-to-face, or through the telephone, by mail, or via e-mail. Most often, participants' answers are easy to be coded and tabulated (op.cit: 110).

Furthermore, questionnaires are addressed to determine what people know, what they think about a specific issue, or how they behave or plan to act. They are designed to elicit information about the respondents' opinions, attitudes or motives for acting in particular ways. It should be pointed out that constructing an efficient questionnaire entails a high degree of skill; in terms of arranging the questions in a logical order, i.e. it must be clear to all people of all backgrounds, ages and educational levels (ibid: 110).

In addition to the wide range of definitions, I. Brace (2008: 4-6) points out that a questionnaire is a means for communication between the researcher and the informants. In the questionnaire, the researcher asks questions to which s/he wants to know the answer and through this research instrument, the answers are conveyed back to the investigator. Questionnaires have some characteristics particularly when attempting to write them. In fact, it is the researcher's duty to ensure that the informants will comprehend all the questions and that they will not feel challenged or threatened by the questions.

A questionnaire is administered to written expression teachers of the Department of English in Sidi Bel Abbes. The primary objectives of addressing such a tool to EFL instructors are to clarify what they teach in their classrooms, how they undertake the writing skill and to determine the students' attitudes and motivation. Basically, the questionnaires are handed out to clarify about writing strategies instruction. Moreover, questionnaires are also designed to gather both qualitative and quantitative data.

It is important to mention that the questionnaire indicates some shortcomings, such as being filled in by the students in rush, i.e. some learners completed the questionnaire in the classrooms and give it straightly back. It should be pointed out that in the current research not all the students give back their questionnaires; knowing that it is short and straightforward. Students' questionnaire is designed short for the purpose of not making the participants feel

fatigue to complete it, and because there are many other researchers who provide the same students with same research instruments for their dissertations. Both teachers' and students' questionnaires consist of closed and open questions. Students' questionnaire is straightforward and composes much of closed questions for the purpose of making them feel at ease; and not feeling bored when filling it in.

Teachers' questionnaire in contrast, is much longer and consists of a mixture of both closed and open-ended questions, in which written expression teachers are required to answer by "yes" or "no" in closed-ended questions, or pick out the right response from a number of options and are also asked to give full answers or to express their views in open-ended questions. Accordingly, two types of questions are distinguished: unstructured (open-ended) and structured (closed-ended) questions.

1/ Unstructured questions: are designed to explore profoundly and qualitatively issues of a particular phenomenon. Unstructured questions give the informants the opportunity to reply in details using their own words. In other words, the respondents decide what to answer and how to say it (L. Nicholas, 2008: 27). For instance, for the open-ended questions the researcher may ask as follows:

- *How can reading contribute to the development of writing?*

2/ Structured questions: in closed-ended questions, the respondents choose the most appropriate answer which is pre-written by the researcher. Indeed, answers may be given in a form of a list where the participants are required to select the adequate choice. For instance, the investigator may ask the informants as follow:

- *Are you motivated to write?*

Yes *No*

It should be pointed out that questionnaires can be structured or unstructured or an amalgam of the two. Typically, closed questions are simple and easy in terms of gathering and analyzing data. Open questions in contrast, elicit sufficient data and gather different opinions from the participants. Similarly, C. Dawson (2002: 87) argues that in open questions, informants utilize their own words to answer a question, whereas in closed questions, the researcher provides prewritten categories. The following table suggests the advantages and the drawbacks of open and closed questions:

Open questions

- Tend to be slower to administer.
- Can be harder to record responses.
- Do not stifle response.
- Enable respondents to raise new issues.
- Respondents tend to feel that they are able to speak their mind.
- Respondents might not be willing to write a long answer and decide to leave the question blank.
- Can use open question to find out all the possible responses before designing a closed-ended questionnaire.

Closed questions

- Tend to be quicker to administer.
- Often easier and quicker for the researcher to record responses.
- Tend to be easy to code.
- Respondents can answer in a predefined way.
- New issues cannot be raised.
- Respondents can only answer in a way which may not match their actual opinion and may, therefore, become frustrated.
- It is quick and easy for the respondents to tick boxes-might be more likely to answer all the questions.
- Can include a section at the end of a closed-ended questionnaire for people to write in a longer response if they wish.

Table 1.6 Advantages and disadvantages of open and closed questions (C. Dawson, 2002: 88)³

On the other hand, when constructing questions, the researcher needs to think about the use of words. The beneath suggestions indicate what should be avoided and what should be included when structuring the questions:

Avoided questions

- Avoid using technical words whenever it

Included questions

- Questions should often be direct.

³ Adapted from Dawson (2002: 88)

is possible.

- Try not to use words which might have double meaning, because some words have different meaning.

- Avoid questions which may cause annoyance or frustration.

- Questions should be easy and simple.

- Make sure the questions is unambiguous.

- Make sure the questions do not contain some type of prestige.

Table 1.7 The structure of the questions (C. Dawson, 2002: 89)⁴

Before distributing the questionnaires, EFL students are told that they should answer the questions individually and not collectively since the questionnaire entails personal opinions of the learners. Additionally, students are explained the prime purpose of the questionnaire to make sure that they comprehend all the questions and answer all of them adequately. It should also be pointed out that before distributing teachers' questionnaire, they are told that they can reply immediately or keep them for a few days and take their time to complete it. Indeed, teachers are illustrated the prime goal that lies behind this instrument; which is to collect different information in a short period of time. So, a week later, the questionnaires are collected by the researcher.

1.5.5.3.1 Students' questionnaire design

The researcher addresses a questionnaire to students which objectives could be summed up as follow:

1/ To ask about the writing strategies used by the students when producing extended essays.

2/ To verify the research hypotheses.

3/ To compare the results obtained in the two research instruments: questionnaires and the ethnographic observation.

It is worth noting that the students who responded the questionnaire were the same students who were observed. Seventy six (76) students answer the questionnaire in February, 2015. The questionnaire consists of fifteen (15) questions.

Questions 1-3: deal with the writing skill in general.

⁴ Adapted from Dawson (2002: 89)

Questions 4-5: concern the students' motivation.

Questions 6-7: tackle the connection of reading and writing.

Question 8: is about the contribution of speaking to the development of writing.

Question 9: is about the students' pre-writing strategies used in production.

Question 10: concerns students' thinking about the audiences when writing.

Question 11: is about the students' use of languages while writing.

Question 12: deals with strategies used by the students to overcome some writing hindrances.

Question 13: concerns revision.

Questions 14-15: are about teachers' feedback on their students' assignments or not, and if these comments are taken into consideration by the learners or not.

1.5.5.3.2 Teachers' questionnaire design

The researcher administers a questionnaire to written expression teachers which goals could be summarized as follow:

1/ To verify the research hypotheses.

2/ To compare the results gathered from students' questionnaires and classroom observation.

3/ To inquire about the strategies taught by the instructors to make their students compose accurately.

It is important to mention that the five (05) teachers answer the questionnaire in February, 2015. Teachers' questionnaire composes of twenty nine (29) questions.

Questions 1- 2: are about teachers' general work in the university.

Questions 3- 4: are related to the effectiveness of written expression syllabus.

Questions 5- 6: deal with the speaking and the writing skills correlation.

Questions 7- 8- 9: are related to the improvement of writing via reading and teachers' encouragement to their students to read.

Questions 10- 11: deal with the instructors' encouragement to their students to write and their motivation.

Question 12: is about the components of a good production.

Question 13: deals with teachers' composition strategies instruction.

Questions 14- 15: are about students' writing difficulties and weaknesses.

Question 16: deals with students' use of strategies when writing an essay.

Question 17: is about students' use of translation in composing an extended essay.

Questions 18- 19: are about teachers' satisfaction towards students' writing abilities.

Questions 20- 21: concern teachers' assistance to their students in the writing process.

Questions 22: is about the type of written tasks provided by the teachers.

Questions 23- 24: deal with writing strategies instruction.

Question 25: is about the written assignments provided by the instructors in the academic year.

Questions 26- 27- 28: concern teachers' assessment to the students' essays.

Question 29: is related to further suggestions relevant to the questionnaire.

1.5.6 Data analysis procedures

The data obtained from the three research instruments (classroom observation, students' written assignments and questionnaires) are analyzed and interpreted using qualitative and quantitative studies. The results are counted and structured in a form of numbers and graphs and are also tabulated. After the analysis of the ethnographic observation, the researcher needed to check the validity and the reliability of the obtained results of classroom observational sessions with that of students' and teachers' questionnaires, and to look for more useful information about writing strategies and of-course to verify the research hypotheses.

That is why questionnaires are designed and administered to both second year university students and composition teachers. However, not all the learners give back their

questionnaires. Some questions were unclear and seemed ambiguous to some students, so in order to make sure that the ambiguous questions are well understood to the participants, the researcher illustrates the questions using the Algerian Dialect when it is necessary. It is worth noting that the students' and the teachers' questionnaires are distributed during the observational sessions.

After the treatment of all the observational sessions and collecting all the questionnaires from both the teachers and the learners, the researcher asks a written expression teacher to have their extended essays after being corrected and commented by the instructor. A week later, the teacher gives the researcher the corrected written assignments to be studied and analyzed. Moreover, the researcher asks also the administration of the Department of English language to have the students' written expression exam papers.

Hence, collecting all the learners' written productions is for the purpose of verifying the research hypotheses, seeking additional information about the strategies used by the students while producing and strategies instruction by EFL teachers. The prime objective of choosing the written assignments as a research tool is to compare the results with that obtained in classroom observational sessions. It should be noted that all the written assignments are examined in order to see how well the learners attain their tasks and how effective written expression teachers conveyed the message about composition strategies. The analysis is done on the basis of both qualitative and quantitative studies; the analysis relies a great deal on the qualitative research rather than the quantitative.

1.6 Limitations of the study

The present doctoral dissertation has some limitations which have an effect on the obtained results. The major hindrance was students' absence from writing classes. The frequent absence of the learners inhibited the researcher to observe all the students' perceptions of the writing skill, and more importantly test their motivation. Adding to that, the regular absence impeded the investigator from analyzing a large number of written assignments as they worked collaboratively (the researcher examined few essays). Furthermore, the researcher was not overly interested in examining the socio-affective strategies and learning styles; for the same claimed reasons.

This leads to more questions and open doors for further research. Additionally, the second main obstacle in this work is that the investigator was not a part time in the

Department of English language to execute the proposed tasks in the fifth chapter, and apply summarization as a basic cognitive component that would enhance the students' writing capacity. The researcher faced also some problems with research instruments. The students' regular absence from their writing classes led the investigator to ask other EFL teachers to distribute the questionnaire (because the students attended in some modules and neglect others).

Because of time constraints, the researcher could not observe both students and teachers for a long time. Thus, several weeks of observation that lasted for more than a month were apparently sufficient for the investigator to determine which teaching method was applied along the academic year. Notably, because of the short period of the observation, the researcher could not determine exactly the learners' attitudes and motivation towards the writing skill; because, this could alter from one semester to another (classroom observational sessions was during the second semester). Regarding the students' questionnaire, it was not answered by twenty four (24) out of one hundred (100) students, and among those who turned in the questionnaire; there were some missing information, albeit they had sufficient time to provide answers.

1.7 Conclusion

The researcher attempted to provide a detailed description of the process of the study. The chapter described in detail and in-depth the research design and methodology. Questionnaire is a major tool for collecting data from both written expression teachers and second year university students in a short period. Furthermore, the questionnaires are

administered to compare between the obtained data from the other research instruments. In addition, classroom observational sessions and the written assignments are also basic for testing the research hypotheses and permit the researcher to have a holistic comprehension of the process of this study.

Moreover, the researcher employed three instruments in order to match, compare and elicit more useful information and to analyze the obtained data using two different methodological approaches (qualitative and quantitative). It should be mentioned that the researcher believes in using more than two research tools to gain more information and to enlighten what seems unambiguous and problematic and finally, to answer the research questions. Thus, the whole chapter is devoted to research design and justified the rationale behind data collection and the participants that are involved in this investigation.

The following chapter will deal with the review of literature related to the writing skill and composition strategies.

Chapter two : Review of literature related to the writing skill and learning strategies.

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2.1 Introduction

This chapter is related to the review of literature which provides thorough data about the writing skill in general and in particular. It is basic to begin defining the writing skill and unveils detailed information from different theories. The chapter investigates different views, issues and concepts that concern first, second and foreign languages. It also previews the

different components of writing as well as the different stages that EFL learners go through while writing an extended essay.

Moreover, the chapter unveils the correlation between writing and other skills: speaking and reading. It explores also the different approaches related to the writing skill. It discusses the different theories related to the teaching of written production and demonstrates the difference between skilled and inexperienced writers. The chapter covers the different cognitive models related to written production. In addition, it examines the writing strategies and provides a thorough understanding about learning strategies investigated by different researchers.

The researcher attempts also to look at the importance of providing feedback; particularly teachers' comments on the students' written assignments, starting first by providing the readers with a wide range of definitions and the different types of feedback. Thus, the overall purpose of the review of literature is to explain to the reader what other researchers speculate about the same topic, i.e. providing holistic reviews about the writing skill in general and strategies in particular.

2.2 Definition of writing

Writing did not attract much attention until the 1960's, and has been considered as a basic aspect of communication. According to J. Harmer (1998:255) writing is recognized as a fundamental skill for language learning and focuses mainly on the importance of the writing skill, i.e., he considered the causes for instructing composition to students of English as a

foreign language and which include reinforcement, language development, learning style, and most importantly, writing as a skill. Written production is important and a complex task to acquire and is a communicative skill which is required in today's information society (M. Melouk; and Z. Merbouh, 2014: 149). However, speaking is also considered to be an essential skill in any society primarily with the growth of globalization.

Writing is a complex process, which EFL learners do not acquire naturally, i.e. it is learnt. Written communication requires the control of the mind (D. Smit, 2004). He argues that writing ability is a “*mental*” process, for it is an operation that happens in one's mind. Studies show what our minds can do while composing in order “*to create a sort of composition portrait of all the possibilities of mental life when we learn all of the many kinds of knowledge and skill we need in order to compose*”. K. Hyland (2016:158) explains that writing is a purposeful activity which has a context, and an intended audience and involves selecting appropriate vocabulary to deliver accurate and coherent written communication to a particular reader. The writer has to imagine the audience of his/her text and draft to engage them.

Researchers in learning theory and language acquisition have primarily built taxonomies of all the operations we can do mentally while writing (ibid: 42). Written production makes the learner explore the world in order to improve his/her capacity to think, feel and perceive. Writing is not as easy as it seems to be; that is to say, the symbols that we use in order to write have to be arranged in order to form words, and the latter are also arranged in phrases and sentences (D. Byrne, 1979).

Linking the sentences together and in a particular order forms a clear and an understandable paragraph. Writing requires a certain level, because it is not an acquired skill but, the learner needs to be well trained on how to compose effectively. Similarly, R. White and V. Ardnt (1991) also claim that writing is a complex skill, for it is a “*thinking process*” and requires a mental effort. R. Lado (1983) on the other hand, states that writing in a foreign language is the ability to control the grammatical structures, and vocabulary.

Hence, writing is using graphic symbols to obtain clear words and sentences, as well as following the grammatical rules, and using adequate vocabulary; this is done in order to share ideas and thoughts coherently with the reader. D. Byrne (1979) regards writing as transmitting out thoughts into language. It is a very complex skill that requires both physical and mental activity from the writer. R. Al-Mahrooqi, V. Thakur & A. Roscoe (2015) in W.

Walterz's (1983: 17) who claims that "*writing is the last and perhaps the most difficult skill students learn if they ever do*". On the other hand, some EFL students find speaking and listening the most complex skills. V. Zamel (1982) points out that writing is a skill in which meaning is created.

Writing is based on ideas or principles and linguistic processing. D. Smit (2004) opines that writing is a complex task which requires different abilities of knowledge. C. D'Aoust (1987) clarifies that writers and linguistic researches describe writing as a complex skill at the level of conveying thoughts and ideas into written production. He also states that writing occurs when there is something to communicate. Similarly, K. Pytash & R. Ferdig (2014: 2) written production is a difficult process that involves a blend of cognitive tasks and objectives. According to A. Oluwadiya (1989-93: 122) writing is a process of transmitting something (content) on paper to a reader and if the writer has nothing to say, writing will not occur.

According to M. Chan (1986: 14) writing is considered as a communicative act, i.e. students are asked to think of the audience while writing, as well as thinking about the aim for producing. It is also regarded as a process which is divided into three different stages: prewriting, composing and revision. A. D'Aoust (1986) suggests that prewriting activities generate thoughts, i.e. they encourage the flow of thoughts and help students discover what they want to say and how to say it on paper. In other words, prewriting activities facilitate the planning in writing as a process as well as a product.

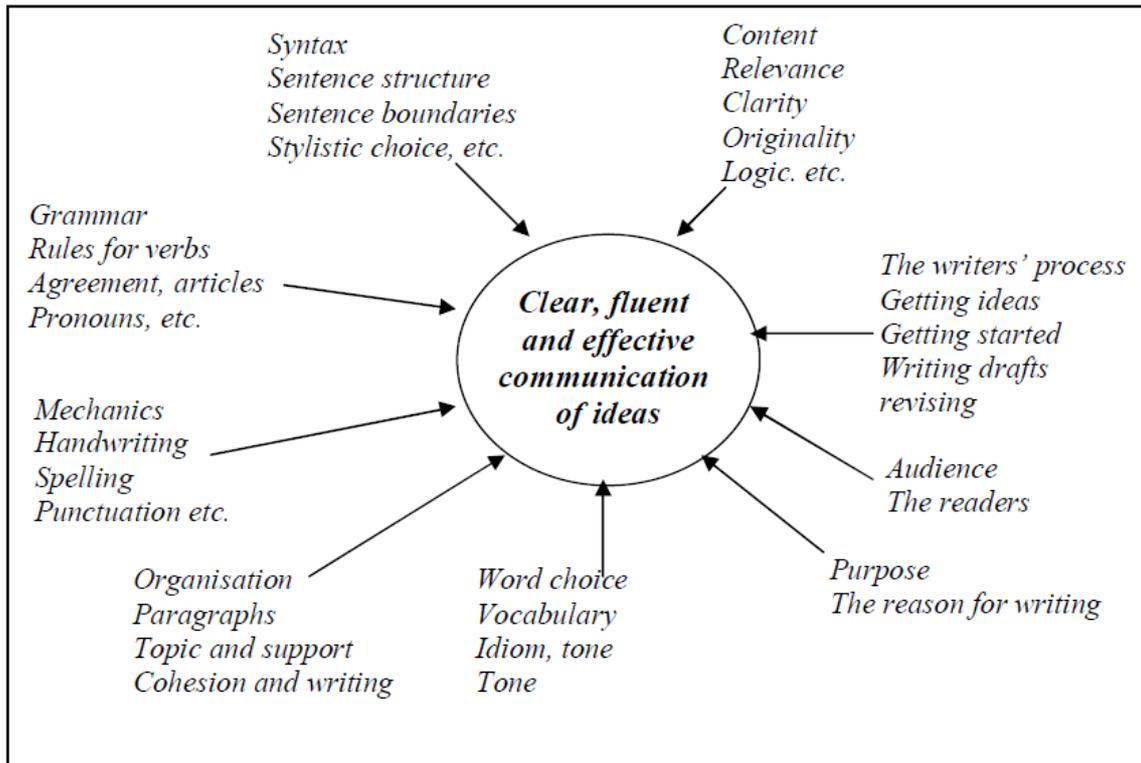


Figure 2.1 How writers produce a writing piece (A. Raimes, 1983: 6)

The above figure shows the steps that learners go through when writing any composition, because the latter needs to be clear, fluent, effective and has a communicative purpose.

T. Tyner (2008) defines writing as a process of discovery and creation where one word or a sentence may provoke a new idea. It has been identified “as one of the essential skills in a world that is more than ever driven by text and numerical data” (K. Hyland, 2003). S. Weigle (2002) quotes T. Fulwiler (2002) writing is a way of exploring the world inside and out by the thinker. It is crucial to regard composing not solely as a product of a writer, but as a social and a cultural activity (S. Weigle, 2002).

L. Hamp-Lyons and B. Kroll (1997) argue that writing as “an act that takes place within a context, that accomplishes a particular purpose, and that is appropriately shaped for its intended audience” (cited in S. Weigle, 2002: 19). Sperling (1996) joins the same view that writing like a language in general in which it has a social and a cultural activity which is purposeful, (cited in Weigle: 19).

J. Hayes (1996) put it as follows:

Writing is also social because it is a social artifact and is carried out in a social setting. What we write, how we write and who we write to is shaped by social convention and by our history of social interaction...The genres in which we write were invented by other writers and the phrase we write often reflect phrases earlier writers have written. (cited in S. Weigle, op.cit: 20).

E. Ahlsén and N. Lundh (2007: 4) quotes Brown (2001) that written language is merely the graphic representation of spoken language. Indeed, writing is regarded as a complex skill; as Brown claims that writing is different from speaking “*like swimming is different from walking*”; he implies that composition totally differs from speaking. In fact, Brown links the ability of composition to thinking in a very special and a basic way; he argues that written production comes most often from thinking; that is to say, speculating results in written production (op. cit: 5). Whereas, V. Zamel (1982: 201) points out that writing is a medium of discovery which contributes in the creation of thoughts and ideas, and K. Hyland (2003) describes writing as a developmental process.

2.3 Approaches to the teaching of writing

Before the 1960's, writing was neglected in English as a second language (ESL). The primary concern was that language is spoken (A. Brooks and T. Richards, 1964). In fact, speech had more importance than writing. It was until after 1960's and mainly in the United States of America, that writing for academic purposes was given attention.

2.3.1 The process approach

The process approach is a reaction to the product-oriented culture which is seen as an enhancement over the traditional methods of writing (B. Ho, 2006). The process approach focuses more on content and meaning, and the second place is reserved for the form. Ho quotes Badger and White (2000) by stating that writing in process approaches is closely linked with linguistic skills, such as planning and drafting, and there is less emphasis on “*linguistic knowledge*”, such as knowledge about grammar and text structure. In addition, researchers found that the process approach is an effective approach for it helps learners improve their writing capacities (op. cit: 3).

This approach develops effective and efficient writing strategies (M. Congjun, 2005). According to V. Zamel (1983) writing is regarded as a process through which learners can explore and discover their thoughts, constructing meaning and assessing it at the same time (cited in Ho: 2). In the process approach, learners are instructed planning, drafting, revising, editing and employ strategies at each stage of the writing process. In other words, the teacher shows the different stages that his/her students would go through while penning, and more importantly, showing them effective strategies that make them produce more efficiently.

It is not a new approach to writing; in fact, it started as early as 1970's (C. Keh, 1990). It consists of generating ideas (pre-writing), writing a first draft focusing mainly on meaning, and writing a second and a third draft in order to review the thoughts (ibid: 294). The process approach plays an important role in writing instruction. Indeed, it aims at analyzing the complexity of writing via taking into consideration the nature of the problem-solving within the following tasks: prewriting, writing and rewriting (P. Deane; N. Odendahl; T. Quinlan; M. Fowles; C. Welsh; J. Tatum, 2008). In contrast, C. Olson (1991) identifies ten (10) essential features of the process approach which can be summarized as follows:

1. Writing is an activity, an act that constitutes of a variety of tasks
2. The activities in writing are in fact recursive rather than linear.
3. Writing has always been considered as a social activity.
4. The act of writing can be a tool of learning as well as a means of discovery.
5. Experience writers are often aware of the audience, purpose and context.
6. Experienced writers take their time for invention and revision.
7. Effecting writing instruction permits the students to practise these activities.
8. Such instruction includes ample opportunities for peer review.
9. Effective teachers evaluate students work not only for the finished product, but also grade for the writing process.
10. Effective writing instruction requires finding adequate opportunities to intervene in each student's writing process.

I. Leki (1991) argues that the process approach to teaching writing focuses on the stages that the learners go through rather than the final product. Moreover, in the process approach, students are instructed planning, drafting, revising, editing and publishing strategies at each stage of the writing process in order to assist them to write freely and to obtain a good

quality of writing in the end. In this approach, students need to use the adequate assistance of the teacher as well as the cooperation of the other learners.

L. Flower and J. Hayes (1981) point out that writing is a changeable process in which the writer moves back and forth between generating ideas, formulating these ideas into language, and then transmitting these ideas into a written form. The changeable nature of drafting means that there are many opportunities for making changes to the written text before the final product which is read either by the teacher or any other reader. Farnan & Dahl (2003) describe the writing process as a set of mental processes learners use when they compose (cited in J. Schumn, 2006).

A. D'Aoust (1987) claims that linguistic researchers described writing as a complex process and a “*difficult system*” of conveying thoughts and ideas into written forms. This description had a certain influence on composition since the instructor looks for a good product. In other words, a writer goes through different stages which are: prewriting, writing, sharing/ responding, revising, editing and evaluating. A. D'Aoust (1987) put it as follows:

Student writers carry on their editing via adding and deleting what is inappropriate, i.e. correcting grammar, punctuation and the spelling mistakes. When it comes to the final stage, that is refining the product, the teacher interferes in which s/he is going to show his/her learner the writing techniques instead of doing grammatical and punctuation activities, (ibid: 8)

The process approach encourages students to express their own thoughts freely in written words by giving them enough time to revise their compositions at each stage. Hence, the teacher facilitates the learners' production. Furthermore, the process approach views writing as a cognitive activity and writing development would follow unconsciously when the instructor facilitates the act of the writing skill. A. Applebee (1986), states that the process approach makes the learner think about drafting in terms of planning and revising instead of thinking about the final product. Guidance and intervention are seen as better elements in the process approach.

Researchers such as T. Tyner (2008: 2) have discovered the following features that are involved in the writing process and which can be summarized as follows:

1. Writing is difficult and not easy. In fact, both novice and experienced writers struggle with what to write; in other words, what to say in a paper, and how to put their thoughts and ideas into words. Furthermore, all writers go through the process of how to commence.
2. Most writers often do not just sit down and start writing. In fact, they spend deciding what to write and what they want to say. However, they may begin writing in a flawed way, jotting down their ideas, utter to other people, or simply plan in their minds. Indeed, prewriting is what writers do in order to help themselves start writing.
3. Writing is a recursive process; in other words, in this stage writers often go back to what they have written via viewing the previous paragraph; it could be a sentence, or part of it. Writers do this in order to help themselves decide what to compose next, and to keep the flow of thoughts. Moreover, writers reword their sentences or words or even passages which do not sound alright (T. Tyner, 2008: 3).
4. Writing is considered as a “*process of discovery*”. Writers often do not know what to write before they start producing. As a matter of fact, the writing act itself helps writers discover what they want to say, and to find new ideas. The process of writing helps writers discover meanings that they have never thought of. Indeed, the act of writing encourages writers to think and concentrate on their writing topic (ibid: 3).
5. Rewriting is a fundamental element in the writing process. It has always been considered that writers rarely can word effectively their ideas or thoughts for the first time. However, it is challenging at the beginning to write adequately and in an understandable way, simply because thoughts are not well developed in the writer’s mind before s/h tries to compose his/her ideas on a paper. Once the thoughts or the ideas come into a paper, the writer revises the words, the sentences or the paragraphs until s/he feels satisfy with his/her composition (ibid: 3).
6. For most writers, writing is considered as a complex task to be accomplished effectively in one single setting. Most often, they write the first drafts to provoke ideas and thoughts, then, they reword, reorganize, and more importantly, they develop those ideas until they get a final draft which is readable and comprehensible (ibid: 3).
7. Before finishing their final drafts, writers usually “*proofread*” their production in order to correct any error as far as grammar, spelling or punctuation are concerned

with. Sometimes, writers discover their errors while drafting, however, correcting the errors generally is at the final phase of the writing process.

T. Tyner (2008) quotes Johnson (1995) who defines editing as the final step in the writing process which involves revision as far as spelling, punctuation, grammar and even the layout are concerned with; this phase is known as “*proof-reading*”. In other words, it is at this phase that learners check their writing and examine it closely. Many learners do not realize that writing should be reviewed, edited, and most importantly, checked before it is presented to the reader.

2.3.2 The product approach

For many years, written production was regarded as a product in which writers transcribe their thoughts and ideas to end up with the final product such as essays. The product approach would be proofreading which requires correcting (J. Boyle & D. Scanlon, 2009). N. Nunan (1991) states that the product approach as one that concentrates on the final result of the learning process and what is expected from the learner is to be fluent and competent as far as the language. The product approach aims at making the students competent in the language while writing relevant and coherent pieces of writing. The texts written by the students are based on models provided by the teacher, i.e. to “*fairly rigidly defined principles of rhetoric and organization which are presented as ‘rules’ for writing*” (B. Kroll, 1990: 246). The teaching steps of the product approach are beyond what is called ‘*the Traditional Paradigm*’ or the ‘*Traditional Approach*’. It becomes to be known as the product approach because it focuses on the end result of the product of the writers.

K. Hyland (2003) summarizes the major principles of the product approach as the following: the product approach “*encourages a focus formal text units or grammatical features of texts*”, that is to say, the product approach focuses on the form of texts: how words in sentences are combined, for example. It is based on the model based approach, in other words, in the product approach students are taught through the model type’s text. A very important element characterizes the model based approach; it is the fact that the teacher and student would have ‘*linguistic knowledge and vocabulary choices*’, i.e. to facilitate the study of the different models provided.

Nunan (1999) and Jordan (1997) describe the process and the product approaches as follow:

The process approach

- It is based on stages that are involved for composing a written production.
- The process approach allows mistakes, because no written text is perfect, but the writer gets closer to perfection by producing, reflecting, discussing and re-drafting.
- It allows the learners to express better their thought.

The product approach

- It focuses on writing activities in which the learner imitates and copies.
- The primary aim of the product approach is to produce a coherent piece of writing.

Table 2.1 Comparison between the process and the product approaches (Nunan, 1999; & Jordan, 1997: 153)⁵

2.3.3 The free-writing approach

This approach stressed on the content and fluency. When the learners are asked to write, they do not have to fret about the form. What is important is the quantity of writing and not the quality. Once the ideas are drafted, indeed, the feature is coherent grammar; organization and the rest will come. For the “audience” and the “content” are considered as essential elements in this approach. The teacher would just read the students’ production and then makes comments on their ideas.

2.3.4 The paragraph pattern approach

It focuses on the organization of the language rather than the coherence of grammar or the content. This approach stresses mainly on the organization of the paragraphs and the cohesion of the sentences. The students are given scrambled sentences and are asked to order them into organized paragraphs. The main concern of the students is copying and analyzing the model paragraphs.

2.3.5 The communicative approach

The communicative approach takes into consideration the production of the students, and the reader who can be whether the instructor or the students. In fact, in this approach the learners are asked to read to the others as well as responding to the piece of writing via

⁵ Adapted from T. Hurber-Warring (2008: 153)

summarizing it, rewriting it taking another form, but do not correct it. Therefore, writing is a communicative act, i.e., uttered words drafted on a paper, and read in lieu of listened.

Communicative writing involves the presence of the audience (readers). The focal point in the communicative approach is that the student can pen to express thoughts by following the grammatical rules and, indeed, writing academically. Or, one can compose a production in order to talk with the others using written words, for instance, using e-mails, or sending text messages through cell phones. Writing with the absence of the target audience, may not be considered as a communicative activity, for example, writing a personal diary is not a communicative exercise because there is no reader. Hence, communicative writing is defined as a writing activity that goes hand in hand with the audience.

2.3.6 The genre approach

In a genre approach to writing, students study the texts in the genre they are going to produce before their own composition (J. Harmer, 1998: 258). Thus, sometimes teachers want their students to write different kinds of business letters, so, they let them look at models of such letters before starting to compose their own piece of work. For instance, writing newspaper articles requires from teachers to instruct real examples to their learners to discover facts and the language that is used in that genre (op. cit: 259).

J. Harmer (1998) in Tribble's (1997) who suggests "*data collection*" which implies how to write letters of newspapers. In fact, students are required to spend some time looking at letters. They are asked to take notes of vocabulary and grammar construction in the letters. For example, teachers may ask their students to find words or sentences which express approval or disapproval, or to note down if- sentences. They can also use dictionaries in order to check their comprehension. At the end, they bring their research to the classroom and make a list of the frequently used vocabulary and grammar. The instructor now makes the students plan letters using the language that they have come across in the data collection phase (ibid: 259).

A genre approach is suitable and appropriate for students of English for Specific Purposes (ESP). Students who are writing using a particular genre need to consider a number of different factors; they need to have knowledge of the topic, style of the genre and the audience (reader). In fact, asking students to initiate a particular style could be encouraging for the learners, for they can see composition as "reproduction" rather than a creative activity.

Moreover, imitation is the first stage which is designed in order to enforce genre rules (ibid: 259).

2.4 Components of a writing piece

In order to develop an extended essay, learners go through various stages. W. Rivers (1968) suggests five stages: copying, reproduction, a production with major adaptations, guided writing and finally composition.

2.4.1 Copying

Some foreign language teachers may view copying as an unnecessary task since the students already know the script. However, it is believed that this stage is quite an important skill. Furthermore, this step enables the learners to differentiate between the graphic forms in order to represent the various sounds they have already heard. Here the students should not be asked to write a word which they have not heard or uttered. In other words, there must be a link between the letters and the sounds which in their turn ought to be existed before the students write. (W. Rivers: 263).

2.4.2 Reproduction

During reproduction, the learner attempts to write without originality, i.e. s/he is going to employ what s/he learnt orally or use what is available in textbooks. In fact, if s/he is well trained on the accuracy during the copying activity, s/he will be able to reproduce more successfully. W. Rivers (1968) indicates that this stage consists of writing and rewriting sentences that are already learnt. This exercise is used to ameliorate reproduction is called dictation; where the learner develops two fundamental skills: listening and writing in that s/he has to distinguish between the sounds via listening and writes the linked symbols flawlessly.

2.4.3 Reproduction with minor adaptation

This step consists of reproduction of a sample that is presented by the teacher with minor adaptations. W. Rivers (1968) claims that at this stage, production takes a multitude of norms in which the students would compose structure drills of different kinds such as: making substitutions of words or phrases, transforming sentences and expanding them in order to obtain more information through the learned phrases, and constructing them by substituting pronouns for nouns or simple words for groups of words, W. Rivers (1968: 248).

In such level, the instructor introduces the learners into situations, where the learnt grammatical rules, phrases and vocabulary are already practised orally, and the written form comes after. In fact, at this level the teacher makes sure that the students have had enough practice to ensure of success. Examples of such activities are:

- Reorder the following sentences in a coherent paragraph using the adequate connectors.
- Rearrange the following dialogue, and then practise with a partner.

2.4.4 Guided writing

At the fourth level, the teacher asks the learners to write according to specific directions, with a certain liberty in selecting the grammatical rules as well as lexis. For instance, the teacher shows the students a sample, and then requires them to draft their own paragraphs following the example that is already presented. The students might also be asked to write an outline, to summarize a story, or to rewrite it using their own words and style. The guided writing process is always controlled by the teacher, and when the learners become well trained in terms of how to produce, they move to the final step which is composition (op.cit: 250).

2.4.5 The composition

It is the final stage where the students select their vocabulary and structure to express their ideas and thoughts. In the final activity, the EFL learner cannot write flawlessly, i.e. neither coherently nor correctly unless s/he shows a wholly control of the structure and the vocabulary that is used while expressing thoughts. Furthermore, learners need also to show a complete control of spelling and more importantly, the mechanics of writing such as punctuation and capitalization and so on, (op.cit: 252). Moreover, the student will be asked to describe, narrate and explain, or summarize. And when s/he becomes accustomed to expressing thoughts, s/he will also be asked to develop ideas based on the read material. Composing depends widely on sufficient training in the previous four stages; that is, copying, reproduction, reproduction with minor adaptations and guided writing (Rivers: 254).

2.5 Cognitive models in writing

Cognition is a broad term that describes the different ways which learners process information, solve problems, make decisions and expand their knowledge (I. Ellof and L. Ebersohn, 2004: 14). In fact, it is an important field in educational psychology, in that it is a challenging task (ibid: 14). R. Reid & T. O. Lieneman (2006) develop these ideas claiming

that the cognitive strategy focuses on the role of the student in the learning process. Similarly, E. Macaro (2001: 22) argues that cognition is the way the brain processes information, selects and retrieves those information (see figure 1.2). For doing this, two processes take place in different areas of the brain:

* The long term memory: the LTM can store tremendous amount of data.

* The working memory: the working memory can keep information for a timely period.

The following figure demonstrates the cognitive processes:

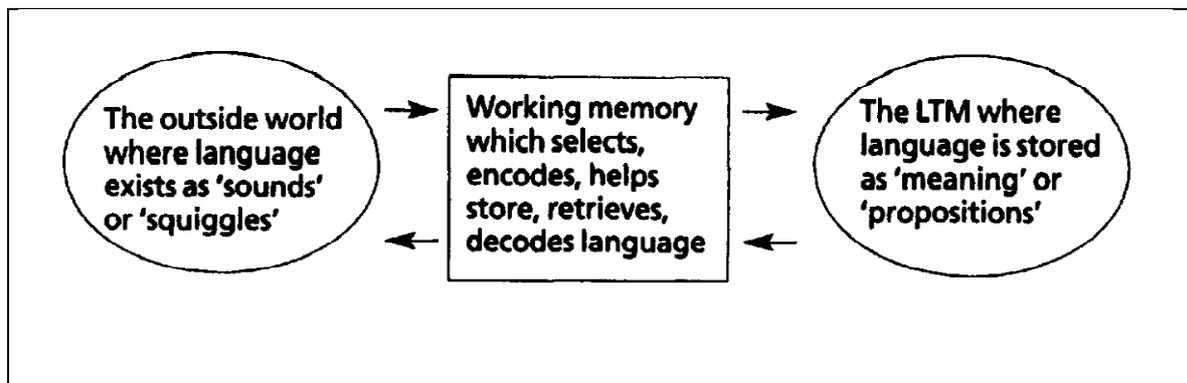


Figure 2.2 Cognitive processes (E. Macaro, 2001: 22)

J. Hayes and L. Flower (1981) introduce a theory about the cognitive processes that are involved in writing. Basically, this theory has focused on four essential elements that are summed in the claims beneath:

- 1- The writing process is regarded as a multitude of thinking processes which learners organize while composing. This means that the writing process is seen as “*linear series of stages, separated in time*”. This stage is in fact characterized by the gradual development of the written product such as pre-writing, writing and re-writing.
- 2- These processes are clearly classified and organized in which any given process can be embedded within any other. In other words, writing is regarded as “*an act of discovery*”, because most often learners start writing without knowing where they will end up. In fact, writing has always been seen as a purposeful activity.
- 3- The act of writing is about a “*goal-directed process*” in which it is guided by the learner’s own goals.
- 4- Most often, learners create their own goals via establishing two ways: through generating both high-level goals and sub-goals which contribute in enhancing those

goals as well as the sub-goals in general. Or, even changing these basic goals into new ones which are based on what has already been acquired in the act of writing.

J. Hayes and L. Flower (1980) classify the different steps that are involved in writing and their relationship to the “*task environment*” and to the “*internal knowledge*” of the writer, i.e., the acquired data. J. Hayes and L. Flower argue that the writer’s long term memory has different types of knowledge , including knowledge of the topic , knowledge about the readers , and stored writing plans .They identified four major writing processes related to the “*task environment*” and are summarized as follows:

- 1- Planning takes into account the writing assignment and long term memory as input which then produces a plan based on ideas and principles and this is called output. Thus, planning includes sub-activities of generating ideas, organizing i.e., arranging those ideas in the writer’s head; moreover, setting goals, i.e., achieving the global goals.
- 2- Translating a written text is based on ideas and principles that express thoughts meaningfully and clearly.
- 3- When it comes the reviewing, the writer checks his /her piece of writing, modifying it in order to improve it (revise) or correct errors (proof-read).
- 4- Monitoring takes into account the metacognitive processes that link planning, translating and reviewing (J. Hayes and L. Flower, 1980 cited in P. Deane et al, 2008: 4).

L. Flower and J. Hayes (1996) revised their writing model arguing that, in order to develop the cognitive strategies in composing, the students would “*think aloud*” while writing, they analyze the results of the verbal protocols for determining the type of cognitive process that is involved in writing. Basically, the latter describes the mental operations that are employed while producing (cited in V. W. Berninger, 2012: 178). The cognitive model includes planning, i.e. what to say and how to say it, translating plans into written texts. In fact, planning involves three components:

- a- Setting goals.
- b- Generating ideas.
- c- Organizing those ideas into a written plan.

Whereas, reviewing includes reading and editing the text (ibid: 178).

T. Tyner (2008: 67) explains that researchers have studied the characteristics shared by effective writers; indeed, they have found that most writers do similar things as they pen. However, they go through various steps in their writing process. In fact, the process is defined as prewriting, drafting, rewriting (revising) and editing. Thus, writers compose differently while going through these steps, but the steps are not separated, but are interrelated.

Another hindrance which afflicts unskilled writers is that they have the firm belief that writing should be “*impressive*”, i.e., a written production would be flawless in order to be effective. In fact, a composition which is simple and clear is impressive for the reader. Whereas, when attempting to impress the reader s/he would be detached from the written text rather than getting impressed (op. cit: 68).

T. Tyner (2008) quotes Johnson (1995) arguing that some learners find writing boring and dull; in fact, this occurs for they lack practice. On the other hand, there are also students who seem motivated and autonomous writers. Some people believe that there are talented learners for they are able to compose well, and if one does not have this talent just do not bother trying (P. 67). However, many successful writers even those who are famous; plan, review, write several drafts until they feel satisfied. In contrast, when giving a writing task, some learners would only sit down reluctantly and feel unable to write in front of a vacant sheet of paper, trying to use the small amount of words, i.e. they struggle to write, and then stop feeling dissatisfied for being incapable of producing a simple, clear and a coherent sentence. Hence, the unskilled writers fail to compose any piece of production because; they do not take into consideration the stages that are involved in the writing process such as: generating ideas, planning, writing drafts and reviewing the production (ibid: 67).

L1 writing process studies such as Pinko (1979), Sommers (1980), Zamel (1983) claim that L2 unskilled writers spend less time on their compositions and revise less. They rather “*focus on small bits of the essay and edited from the beginning to the end of the process*”. The studies of Hildenbrand (1985), Jons (1985) and Roscharch (1986) point out that certain used approaches might not enhance the writing competency, i.e. particular instructions might hamper and impede students’ production of L2 writers, (cited in Kroll, 1990). V. Zamel (1983) argued that unskilled L2 writers draft as L1 unskilled writers, however, the lack of composing competence in L1 is reflected in L2 learners writing ability (ibid: 43). Deane et al (2008) view that an experienced writer can confront various problems including generating

and organizing ideas such as constructing grammatically correct sentences, using correct punctuation and spelling.

M. Scardamalia & C. Bereiter (1987) describe composing as a problem solving in which writers would decide on solutions as far as what to say and how to say it. They argue that skilled writers often “*problematize*” when they compose, using a particular strategy which is named “*knowledge transforming*” which is a strategy that is employed by good writers who already have well developed thoughts and rework those ideas or thoughts. In fact, the skilled writers do not take into account only the changes in the written text, but also the changes in what they want to say, hence, writing for them fosters their knowledge (p.11).

On the other hand, inexperienced writers use a simpler, natural approach to writing. More importantly, they restrict themselves to “*knowledge telling approach*” which provides an effective solution to the problems for the inexperienced writers when composing, i.e. the solution is natural, because it makes use the available knowledge (op. cit: 9). Whereas, good writers have the knack to move between “*knowledge telling*” and “*knowledge transforming*” which refer to “*mental processes*”. However, mature writers correlate efficient receptive and expressive skills with adequate, appropriate and effective reflective strategies (P. Deane, 2011:11).

Novice writers do not plan much compared to skilled learners. Moreover, they revise less, and have very limited goals, and focus more on generating content (K. Hyland, 2003). Whereas, experienced writers analyze the problems, speculate about the given task, and more importantly set goals in order to keep the flow of thoughts (ibid: 11). K. Hyland (2003) quotes Polio (2001) that equipping the unskilled learners who have the techniques and the strategies of good writers do not effectively lead to enhancement. In fact, students do not need only learning how to write, but also comprehending how well paragraphs are structured. They need to be aware of the reader, setting goals, and the cultural norms (K. Hyland 2003 quotes F. Hyland 2000).

Thus, effective writing requires a high level of structuring ideas, organizing paragraphs (F. Ashlén and N. Lundh, 2007: 4). However, N .Sommers (1980) as it is cited in V. Zamel (1982: 201) who studies the writing strategies of the novice writers and the experienced ones, she found that the inexperienced writers revise in an extremely restricted time as well as the way they use it in order to review their production. Moreover, they seldom

modify their thoughts that had already been drafted. Hence, less skilled writers need to be instructed techniques on how to use the prewriting strategies (op. cit: 203).

2.6 Writing and other skills

Writing is interrelated with the other skills. In fact, learners who read a lot will be able to write coherently as well as, they will be able to speak fluently using correct grammar.

2.6.1 Writing and speaking

Writing and speaking are interrelated skills because both form language outcomes, as well as listening and reading are complementary skills. Educational researchers have coined that speech is primary and written language is a reflection of spoken language and have considered that written language is more valued than oral language (S. Weigle: 2002).

However, educational research has proved that neither written production nor oral is superior over the other, but they do vary according to the context. S. Weigle quotes Brown (1994) indicating some differences between speaking and writing:

- **Permanence:** oral language lasts for a timely period and is processed in real time. By contrast, written language is permanent and can be read and reread at any time.
- **Production Time:** writers often have time to plan, review and revise their ideas and thoughts before the final product, while speakers must plan, formulate and then speak in a very timely period.
- **Distance:** distance between the reader and the writer in time and space alike, which deletes the context that is present between the speaker and the listener in a daily contact. Hence, this necessitates a great deal of clearness and exactness from the part of the writer.
- **Orthography:** it carries a limited amount of data compared to the availability of the devices to speaker in order to deliver a message, for instance, stress, intonation, pitch, volume, pausing and so on.
- **Complexity:** written language is characterized by longer clauses and more subordinators, whereas, spoken language tends to have shorter clauses linked by coordinators, as well as more redundancy for example repetition of nouns and verbs.
- **Formality:** writing tends to be formal compared to the oral language and this occurs because of the social and cultural use of both skills.

- **Vocabulary:** written texts contain a variety of words and lower frequency words than oral texts. For instance, the written productions contain figure of speech such as: metaphor, simile...etc. S. Weigle (2002: 15-16).

In fact, speaking and writing skills are used in different contexts, for different reasons and for various communicative purposes. Moreover, the cognitive processes that are involved in composing totally differ from those in speaking (op. cit: 16). Thereby, they are used in different contexts and for different goals. Andrews, R. and Smith, A. (2011) on the other hand, explain that writing and speaking are two demanding skills in that they require expression and clarity of intention and thoughts.

Grabowski (1996) considers the differences between the speaking and the writing skills and views that two elements in Brown's lists which are "*permanence*" and "*production*" are seen as crucial aspects in the sense that writing is permanent; in other words, it can be read by anyone and reread at anytime. Additionally, speaking is heard, quick and does not require a physical action as drafting which takes some time (cited in S. Weigle, 2002: 16). All the other differences arise from these two important elements. Grabowski points out some conditions which show that writing is chosen over speaking stating that the choice is based on the social or conventional norms.

S. Weigle (2002: 17) in Sperling's (1996) who concludes that writing and speaking have a certain connection, he states:

To talk of written and spoken language differences is to consider the range of communication purposes to which either writing or speaking is put. In this sense, broader characteristics_ such as what gets said and what remains implicitly, what is foregrounded and what is stated by whom and under what circumstances_ implicate the norms and expectations of the range of contexts in which both writing and speaking are produced.

As a matter of fact, writing is regarded as highly valued in educational settings and this standardization of writing means that the clearness, coherence and accuracy of composing is necessary and more important than the accuracy and coherence in the spoken language. Additionally, under the social and the cultural influences on writing compared to speaking; it is really crucial to take into account the cognitive differences. Therefore, a question has been raised over the differences between writing and speaking. According to L. Vygotsky (1962: 192) written production has its own function and differs from speech in both structure and language mode. More importantly, it demands conscious work.

All the differences that have been illustrated earlier; it goes without saying that the addressee is not often present during the writing process which has the most important cognitive implications. On the one hand, the speaker does not need to employ the cognitive strategies in order to maintain any conversation such as avoiding long pauses or filling pauses (Sacks et al., (1974) Grabowski (1996) in S. Weigle: 17).

Moreover, time and energy in writing are spent on cognitive tasks such as planning, and retrieve information. However, there is less pressure when someone utters (Grabowski, (1996) in Weigle's: 18). On the other hand, the absence of the addressee has a particular challenge to writers that speakers do not face; however, speakers receive a direct feedback on how well the message is being conveyed and communicated, whereas, writers would build a coherent message which in fact would grasp the addressee's attention as well as goal. Consequently, a writer would devote a considerable amount of cognitive energy which requires managing information about the subject matter, information about the reader (ibid: 18).

L.Vygotsky (1962) opines that "*written speech is a separate linguistic function, differing from oral speech in both structure and mode functioning*". W. Grabe and R. Kaplan (1996: 6) argue that learning to write is wholly different from learning to speak in that writing abilities are not naturally acquired but must be culturally (rather than biologically) transmitted in a helping environment.

In fact, writing any composition causes a multitude of problems to the students. In other words, they have to make a lot of efforts and practices to enhance the different stages of writing. Writers usually have time to plan and review their compositions; even a written language is a permanent process and can be read or re-read whenever one pleases. For the vocabulary, it is rich and well organized in a written form in a written form. Whereas, in the oral language, redundancy occurs, and speaking is considered most of the time informal as oppose to writing which is formal. D. Smit (2004) argues that writing is related to speaking; it is another way of recording speech. The way people learn to compose is associated with the way people learn to speak (ibid: 41).

M. Sperling differentiates between writing and speaking by stating that:

To talk of written and spoken language differences is to consider the range of communicative purposes to which either writing or speaking is put. In this sense, broader characteristics- such as what gets said and what remains implicit, what is foregrounded and what is backgrounded, and what is stated by whom and under what circumstances- implicate the norms and

expectations of the range of contexts in which both writing and speaking are produced. (1996:56)

This means that vocabulary and formality in writing differ from that of speaking. Indeed, composing has its own value compared to speaking and is considered as an important skill in terms of accuracy and coherence than the speaking skill (S. Weigle, 2002: 17). To sum up, the written and the spoken languages have the same communicative goals. Writing is a communicative language that is put on paper but has norms and rules that should be followed by the writers.

2.6.2 Writing and reading

V. Zamel (1979) suggests that teachers should not only restrict themselves to teaching only writing, however, they have to take into account the reading skill which is essential, for it is the study of what has been penned. S. Krashen (1984: 10) states that learners who do more readings than writings seem to be good writers and have more progress. B. Byrne (1979: 10) states that reading is a fundamental activity and has a specific purpose. Furthermore, it is more important than writing, but the two skills can and should be enhanced together.

In fact, the reading text should be interesting where the learners ought to be engaged and not detached; they should benefit from it. Indeed, they will grasp vocabulary, grammar, and most importantly, ideas that enable them to be good writers. Moreover, they develop their knowledge as well as the writing styles, and the study of the language. Reading enables the students to comprehend more about grammar, enrich their vocabulary, lexis, and the mechanics of writing, how paragraphs are organized, and basically, how sentences are constructed.

Reading in the classroom is understood appropriately when it enhances the writing skill in the sense that the teacher assists his/her learners by showing or explaining for them, for instance, some difficult and unfamiliar vocabulary as well as grammar. S. Krashen (1984), views that efficient writing comes self-motivated reading. S. Stotsky (1983) points out that better readers are better writers i.e., those who write well, read a lot. In other words, the students who read a lot are capable of producing good and fluent production which has well constructed sentences and well organized paragraphs as well as adequate vocabulary.

Indeed, reading has a great impact on both writing and speaking skills. When students compose about a particular topic, they apply skills that they learn in reading, i.e. when students learn new words, they employ the acquired vocabulary in their contexts (Sh. Mee

Bee & S. McCullum, 2016: 264). T. Hurber-Warring (2008) quotes Dionisio (1983) claiming that reading enhances writing and that both skills are interrelated. T. Hurber-Warring (2008: 152) claims that there are similarities as far as the reading and the writing skills are concerned with, these similarities can be summarized as follow:

- a/** Both skills are personal and social tasks and are employed for the need of communication.
- b/** Reading and writing are “*reciprocal*” skills in which students can learn writing through reading. Likewise, readers can learn a lot about reading through writing.

T. Hurber-Warring (2008) quotes Escloz (1980) arguing that the vocabulary that the students face while their readings, usually appear unexpectedly in their written production. However, the relationship between reading and writing is complex. Therefore, reading and writing can be enhanced in an interrelated way, i.e. both skills can be integrated for the students in order to see the connection (ibid: 152). A. Hirvella (2004: 13) quotes Grabe and Kalpan (1996) arguing that reading outcomes may serve as the input for writing and the latter can lead to further reading. Hirvella (2004) also quotes Stotsky (1983) who stated that good readers are good writers and that experienced students writers read a lot compared to the unskilled ones, he notes:

To summarize briefly, the correlational studies show almost consistently that better writers tend to be better readers (of their own writing as well as of other reading material); that better writers tend to read more than poorer writers, and that better readers tend to produce more syntactically nature writing than poorer readers (A. Hirvella, 2004: 13).

A. Hirvella (2004) criticizes the notion which says that “*good writers are good readers*” and “*good readers are good writers*”. In fact, linking reading and writing in the classroom might be problematic. For instance, non-native speakers (NNS) have a certain background in reading and writing in their native language, which completely differ from reading and writing in English. Hence, reading and writing in L1 have an influence on reading and writing in L2 (op. cit: 43).

S. Hampton & L. Resnick (2009: 74) argue that writing is important as reading; and that there are many reasons that lead to reading. In fact, one of these reasons is to obtain ideas and employ those thoughts when one is asked to produce a piece of writing. Moreover, learners write in order to express themselves, to communicate and to demonstrate what they know and they compose with a purpose in order to convey the message.

Reading and writing are often linked in that good readers and writers use their knowledge of literature, history or science and get new ideas and information, i.e. knowledge

acquisition. Skilled writers read regularly the same as good readers do. In fact, writers read in order to gain ideas, inspiration as well as information for their written production. Furthermore, the same as readers get involved in a particular book, writers also can strengthen thoughts. Readers talk about the books that they are reading and good writers utter about the writing they are doing. Additionally, the same as the good readers revise their comprehension of the text while reading so do the experienced writers; they also review their production for changing any particular idea (op. cit: 130).

Readers and writers have the sense of literate people and when the students develop this habit, they commence speaking about the books and compose about what they are reading and learning. More importantly, they employ their readings as inspiration for their own writings. S. Hampton and L. Resnick (2009) quote Tierney and Shanahan (1991) arguing that reading and writing are frequently connected for the following reasons:

1/ Reading and writing are correlated but are two different “*cognitive processes*”: in fact, the relationship between reading and writing is complex and at the same time dynamic. Both readers and writers set goals, because both of them monitor what they are doing and use “*linguistic knowledge*”. However, in the past 20 years, there were various theories about the relationship between reading and writing, in that reading was considered to be passive and receptive skill, while writing was considered to be an active skill; in other words, a different mental process (ibid: 130).

Now, scholars believe that both reading and writing are active skills. In fact, some argued that both skills are similar in that reading instruction can benefit student writers. Interestingly, reading and writing are alike, but are not the same, i.e. readers and writers may employ the same knowledge in order to construct meaning while reading or writing, comprehending a particular text versus composing a piece of writing, thus, they employ knowledge using different ways.

However, both skills are different “*cognitive processes*” even when the students are reading and producing about the same topic. Additionally, each learner has his/her own processes for reading and writing, depending on the activity. Although the differences, reading and writing are closely linked. For example, writing often goes hand in hand with reading, i.e. writers take notes about what they read, summarize what they read in written notes and paraphrase the words of others, as well as others may read them in order to see if these written sentences are meaningful or not, plan what to write next, and more importantly,

think about the reactions of the readers. Hence, effective readers know how to read like writers, compose for readers (S. Hampton and L. Resnick, 2009: 130).

2/ Students may face challenges in both reading and writing: students are expected to read longer, complex and challenging books. In fact, they face new and difficult vocabulary, sentences, and more importantly, new and complex grammar. Moreover, learners would struggle with the complex words and ideas, i.e. they try to comprehend the difficult concepts or vocabularies which are related to specific topics (op. cit: 131). Similarly, student writers are also expected to develop well organized and structured punctuation, coherent pieces of writing that include strong ideas and details, as well as facts which foster those thoughts. Furthermore, they need to be more thoughtful about what to write and how to write (ibid: 131).

3/ Writing supports reading: a student who composes more effectively and coherently may well benefit his/her performance as a reader. For instance, reading supports writing in that there is a particular familiarity with genre and the structure of the text which are acquired through written production. In other words, one can practise writing via using various genres, and therefore can learn the structures and the features that characterize the difficult texts that they read. Moreover, writing about the books or texts that they read requires students to recall, reproduce, and select the appropriate form, restate, reorganize and integrate their comprehension (ibid: 131).

S. Hampton & L. Resnick (2009: 131) quote Falinscar and Brown (1984); Pearson and Fielding (1991) who point indicate that when the learners write about what they are reading and learning at the university, they have the opportunities to express their thoughts and ideas using their own words, organizing and structuring information in order to achieve their goals, as well as sharing their knowledge with others. Thus, writing helps students comprehend better what they read through involving them actively in practicing comprehension. In fact, learners may understand what they are reading in order to employ effectively their ideas in writing. Indeed, this requires students to go back to the text, reread, monitor their comprehension as well as clarify misunderstandings. Hence, writing about reading helps the learners practise the habits of good readers (ibid: 131).

4/ Reading enhances writing: when the students read, they acquire vocabulary and will be aware of how sentences are constructed, they become familiar with the language and the way texts are structured. In fact, students learn about the writers' intention via responding to the

reading text, speculating, or uttering or composing about the choices that authors make in books in order to create these answers. Readers may concentrate on the author and ask questions such as: Why does the author say this? Why does s/he choose that vocabulary? Why does s/he use that example? Thus asking questions about the text assists students become more familiar with the writer strategies that may help them accomplish their own purposes in writing. Therefore, the correlation between reading and writing cannot be ignored. Indeed, a good and a purposeful educational syllabus integrates both reading and writing (ibid: 131).

5/ Reading and writing foster learning: Pearson and Fielding (1991); Tierney and Shanahan (1991) claim that composing is exceedingly useful for the students (cited in S. Hampton and L. Resnick (2009). They also quote a scholar A.D. Van Nostrand (1979) who argues that writing is a fundamental skill and writes: “*the nature of writing makes learning inevitable*” (op.cit: 132). In fact, student should be encouraged to draft about what they read as well as learning in their academic subjects, transforming the acquired knowledge using their own words or style.

This kind of writing has a positive influence on reading comprehension, it facilitates the learning process, develops reasoning skills, and more importantly, fosters long term memory, i.e. it makes the students recall what they have learnt (Langer and Applebee, 1987 cited in S. Hampton and L. Resnick, 2009). When the students develop their pieces of production, they select, reorganize and use information. In fact, effective and experienced student writers know how to arrange the information into clear sentences, paragraphs (Goldman and Rakeshaw (2000); Taylor and Beach (1984), cited in S. Hampton and L. Resnick, 2009: 132).

According Graham and Perin (2007) in S. Hampton & L. Resnick (2009: 132) proficient student writers know how to link between the ideas in one single paragraph, they know how to move from an old information to a new one. Basically, when the students rethink, reorganize, observe the ideas and the thoughts, they make them meaningful; they are leaning. Hence, students who draft about what they learn are able to comprehend, employ and recall the new information.

Moreover, they invest more in learning because writing involves them deeply in the learning process (ibid: 132). For example, a student who decides to write about the role of “Native Americans in California Missions” has to accumulate sufficient data about the subject, i.e. s/he would learn enough about the topic in order to decide what information to include in the report and how to arrange these information. Moreover, s/he would also learn

“elements of historical events”, such as using primary sources and thinking about the situation from various perspectives (ibid: 132).

In order to produce a coherent piece of writing, the student would revise, return back to the sources for adding, or adjusting or altering some information, as well as editing for grammar, punctuation and spelling. Thus, composing the report enhances the student’s learning about California’s history, develops his/her comprehension of historical events and writing alike. Therefore, when students produce about what they are reading and learning in literature, history and science, they become active learners, more interested and more engaged in the learning process. In fact, the latter fosters motivation (ibid: 132).

2.7 On learning strategies

Learning strategies are fundamental in the teaching and the learning processes. R. Oxford (1990: 7) identifies that a strategy comes from the ancient Greek term *“strategia”* which means the art of war. Moreover, a strategy is related to tactics, and people use these two terms for they share some basic characteristics like: planning, competition, conscious manipulation as well as accomplishing a certain goal. The term strategy has changed in education and has transformed into *learning strategies* (op.cit: 8). The term strategy has been used in many ways; it is *“facilitative and essential”*. The prime objective of learning strategies is improving one’s performance, i.e. learners use strategies in order to undertake a particular task easily and fast (R. Reid & T. O. Lienemann, 2006: 17). Moreover, a strategy is like a tool in which it helps learners accomplish their tasks more efficiently. It refers also to *“cognitive processes that occur inside our head”* (op. cit: 18). Thus, learning strategies are a set of operations that are employed by the learner to help him /her acquire, store, retrieve and use particular information.

M. O’Malley & A. Chamot (1990) in Naiman et al (1978) and Rubin (1975) the literature on learning strategies in second language acquisition appeared in order to identify the features of effective learners. Research based on “good language learner” conducted by Naiman et al (1987) and Rubin (1975) report strategies used by the students and observe language learning situations which contribute to the learning process. In fact, the research explains that students apply learning strategies while learning a second language (SL) and that these used strategies can be described and classified. For instance, Rubin (1981) classifies

learning strategies into groups and sub groups (see table 1.1) (cited in M. O'Malley & A. Chamot, 1990: 3).

Rubin's first classification composes of strategies that directly affect learning, which includes clarification/verification, monitoring, memorizing, guessing or inductive reasoning, deductive reasoning and finally practice. The second primary group consists of strategies that contribute indirectly to learning which compose of creating opportunities for practice and using production tricks like communication strategies. Rubin has based her strategies on extensive data collection in completely different situations which are about fifty hours of classroom observations. The latter showed that the strategies were the least useful (ibid: 3).

Author	Primary strategy classification	Representative secondary strategies	Representative examples
Rubin (1981)	* Strategies that directly affect learning.	*Clarification/verification * Monitoring *Memorization *Guessing/inductive inferencing *Deductive reasoning	*Asks for an example of how to use a word or expression, repeats words to confirm comprehension. *Corrects errors in own/ other's pronunciation, vocabulary, spelling, grammar, style. *Takes note of new items, pronounces loud, finds a mnemonic, and writes items repeatedly. *Guesses meaning from key words, structures, pictures, context, etc. * Compares native other language to target language.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *- Looks for rules of co-occurrence. - Experiments with new sounds. - Repeats sentences until pronounced easily.
		*Practice	
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *- Listens carefully and tries to imitate - Creates situation with native speaker - Initiates conversation with fellow students - Spends time in language lab, listening to TV, etc.
	*Processes that contribute indirectly to learning	*Creates opportunities for practice	
Naiman et al. (1987)	*Active task approach		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Uses synonyms or cognates *Student acknowledges need for a structured learning environment and takes a course prior to immersing him/ herself in target language. *- Reads additional items. - Listens to tapes.
		*Production tricks	
		*Responds positively to learning opportunity or seeks and exploits learning environments.	
		*Adds related language	

learning activities to regular classroom program.

*Realization of language as a system.

*Practices

- *- Writes down words to memorize
- Looks at speakers' mouth and repeats.

*- Analyzes individual problems.

* -Reads alone to hear sounds

- Makes L1 /L2 comparisons.

-Uses cognates

- Using what is already known.

*Realization of language as a means of communication and interaction.

*Analyzes target language to make inferences.

*Uses rules to generate possibilities

*Makes use of fact that language is a system.

*Relates new dictionary words to others in same category.

*Emphasizes fluency over accuracy.

*- Does not hesitate to speak

- Uses circumlocutions.

* Management of affective demands.

* Seeks communicative situations with L2

*- Communicates whenever possible

- Establishes close personal contact with L2 native

	speakers.	speakers
		- Writes to pen friends.
*Monitoring L2 performance.	* - Finds sociocultural meanings.	*- Memorizes courtesies and phrases.
	- Copes with affective demands in learning.	- Overcomes inhibition to speak.
		- Is able to laugh at own mistakes.
		- Is prepared for difficulties.
		* - Generates sentences and looks for reactions.
		- Looks for ways to improve so as not to repeat mistakes.
	* Constantly revises L2 system by testing inferences and asking L2 native speakers for feedback.	

Table 2.2 Classifications of learning strategies in second language acquisition

(M. O'Malley & A. Chamot, 1990: 4- 5)⁶

Naiman et al. (1978) propose another classification (see table 2.2) which includes five primary categories of learning strategies and a multitude of sub-strategies. In fact, the primary strategies were found to be common among all the good interviewed language learners, whereas, the secondary categories were given only to some of the good learners (cited in M. O'Malley and A. Chamot, 1990: 6). The primary classification includes an “*active task approach*”, realization of language as a system, realization of language as a means of communication and interaction, management of affective demands, and monitoring of second language performance.

Naiman et al. (1978) based this classification on interviews and identified what they referred to as “*techniques*” for second language learning (SLL), which differ from strategies by being focused on certain aspects of language learning. The techniques are summarized with examples as follows:

⁶ Adapted from M. O'Malley and A. Chamot (1990: 4)

1/ Sound acquisition:

- a- Repeating aloud after a teacher, a native speaker or a tape.
- b- Listening carefully, and talking aloud, including role plays.

2/ Grammar:

- a- Following rules that are available in texts.
- b- Inferring grammar rules from texts.
- c- Comparing L1 and L2; and memorizing structures and using them most often.

3/ Vocabulary:

- a- Making up charts and memorizing them.
- b- Learning words that are associated in contexts.
- c- Using new words in phrases and sentences.
- d- Using a dictionary when necessary and carrying a notebook to note new items.

4/ Learning to write:

- a- Having pen pals
- b- Writing frequently and regular reading of what you expect to compose.

5/ Learning to read:

- a- Reading something every day.
- b- Reading books which are familiar and not that have a difficult style.
- c- Looking for meaning without consulting a dictionary (ibid: 6).

Indeed, among the different techniques that Naiman's group introduced, those linked with vocabulary learning were used most often. Basically, this identification suggests that learners either have difficulties in selecting what techniques they employ to learn other tasks or have fewer strategies for doing so (op. cit: 7)

2.8 Learning strategies

Learning strategies are certain ways that are employed by the learner to facilitate the learning process and make it better, self-direct, and more importantly effective (R. Oxford, 1990: 8). Learning strategies are fundamental to enhance one's own learning, they are essential for language learning, because they are means for active, self-directed involvement which fosters and promotes *communicative competence*⁷ (op.cit: 1). Learning strategies are widely

⁷ Communicative competence is the ability to communicate in both spoken and written languages and all four language skills (Oxford, 1990).

used in education and have various names such as: learning skills, learning to learn skills, thinking skills, and problem solving skills (op.cit: 2).

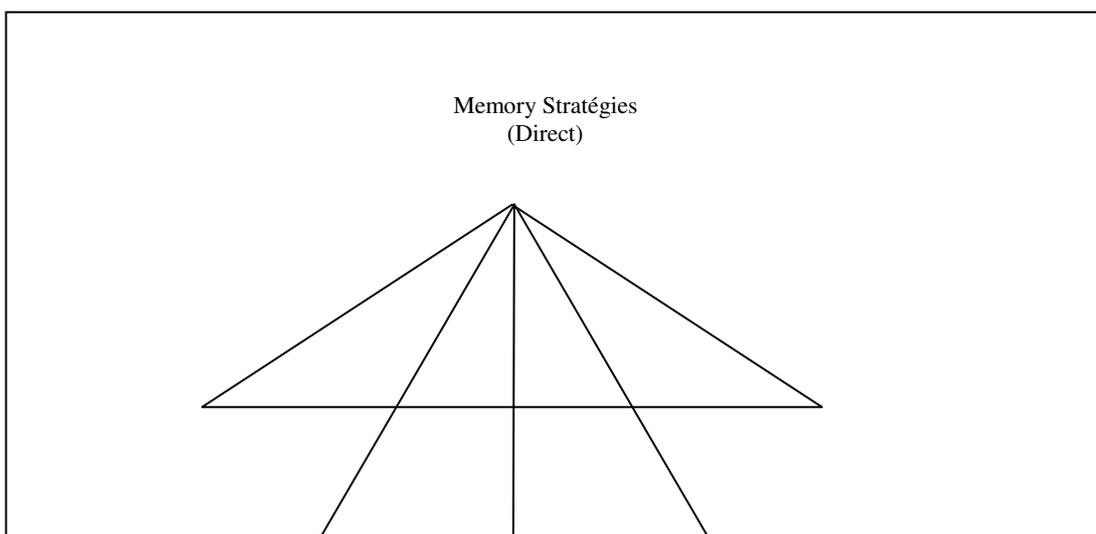
Language learning strategies
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1- Contribute to the main goal, communicative competence. 2- Allow learners to become more self-directed. 3- Expand the role of teachers. 4- Are problem oriented. 5- Are specific actions taken by the learner. 6- Involve many aspects of the learner, not just the cognitive. 7- Support learning both directly and indirectly 8- Are not always observable. 9- Are often conscious. 10- Can be taught. 11- Are flexible. 12- Are influenced by a variety of factors.

Table 2.3 Characteristics of language learning strategies (R. Oxford: 1990: 9)

The table explains the characteristics of language learning strategies for instance, (LLS) are flexible, i.e. they are not found in a predictable sequence. However, sometimes learners combine strategies in a predictable way. For example, when reading a particular paragraph, learners often preview the given text by skimming or scanning. Then, they read it carefully; speculate in order to fill in the blanks. Furthermore, they organize the material by taking notes or summarizing (op.cit: 13).

2.8.1 Direct and indirect learning strategies

The strategy system that is introduced here differs completely from the earlier classification of strategies; it links individual strategies as well as a group strategy, with each of the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing), (op.cit: 14).



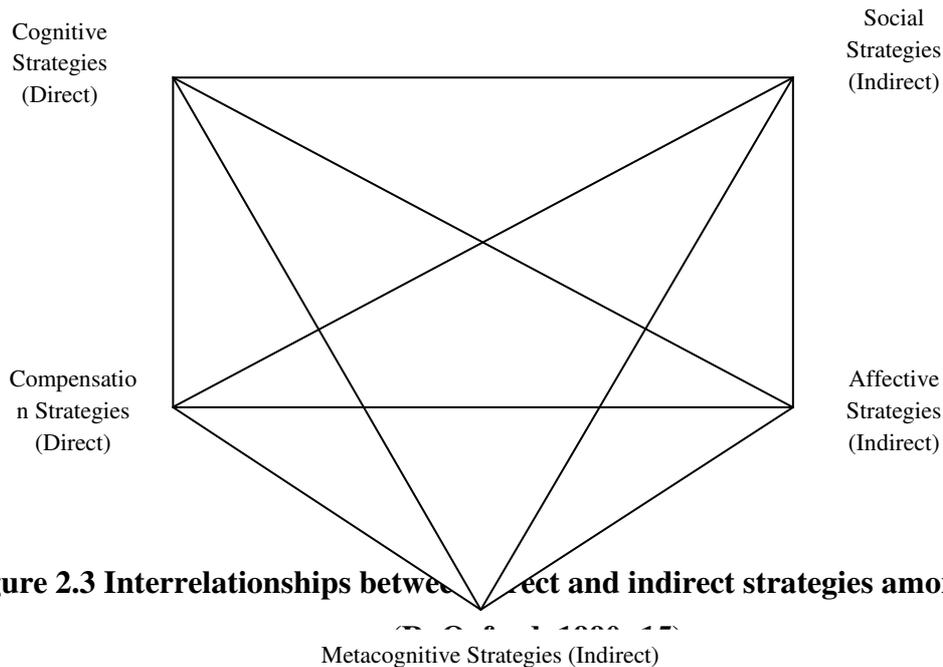


Figure 2.3 Interrelationships between direct and indirect strategies among the six

Metacognitive Strategies (Indirect)

The figure presents a general overview of the system of language learning strategies. Strategies are divided into two major aspects: direct and indirect. These two classes are subdivided into six groups: memory, cognitive, and compensation under the direct class, metacognitive, affective and social under the indirect classes (R. Oxford, 1990: 14). Additionally, the figure shows that the direct strategies and the indirect strategies are interrelated and support each other, and that each group strategy is capable of linking and aiding another group strategy.

To put it differently, the first major class which is direct strategies (DS) deals with several tasks and situations. The DS contains memory strategies for remembering and retrieving new information, cognitive strategies stands for comprehending and producing the language, and compensation strategies for using the language through the knowledge gaps. Thus, the performer works with the direct strategies in order to get best outcomes (ibid: 14).

Indirect strategies are the second major strategy class stands for general management of learning. This class composes of metacognitive strategies for coordinating the learning process, affective strategies for regulating feelings and social strategies for learning with others (op.cit: 15). Indirect strategies facilitate concentration, organization, guidance and correction, coaching, encouraging and enjoying the Performer. The primary function of the indirect strategies is to increase learning for the students (op.cit: 16). The following diagram explains how learning strategies are divided into two groups and each group is sub-divided:

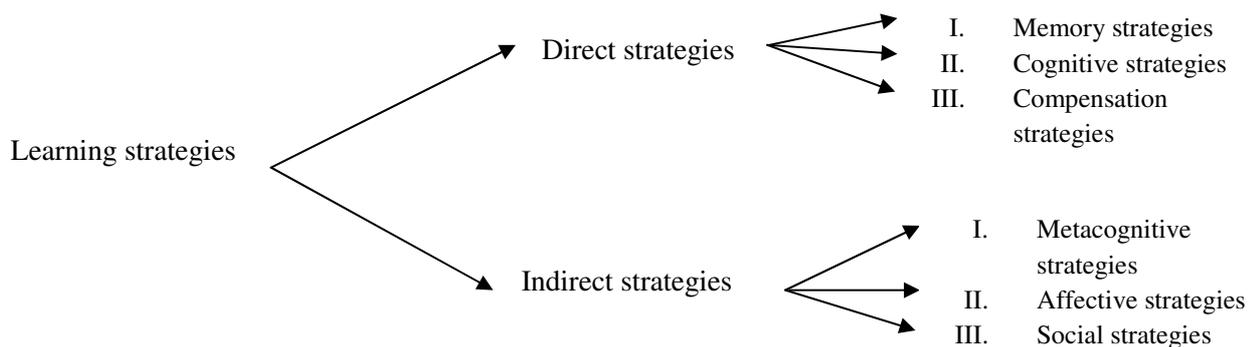


Figure 2.4 Strategy system (R. Oxford, 1990: 16)

2.8.1.1 Indirect strategies

The indirect strategies include metacognitive, affective and social strategies. It is worth noting that affective strategies concern lowering one's anxiety, encouraging himself/herself and taking emotional temperature. Social strategies on the other hand, involve asking questions, cooperating with others and empathizing with the learners. Metacognitive strategies deal with centering one's learning, arranging, planning as well as evaluating the learning process.

2.8.1.1.1 Metacognitive strategies

According to Oxford (1990), teachers used to correct the errors that the learners commit. Now, the students correct themselves, while teachers functions become less guided and directive and more facilitating (ibid: 16). However, still EFL instructors provide feedback and correct their learners' mistakes and still their role is fundamental in both the learning and the teaching processes. The metacognitive category helps learners regulate their own cognition by evaluating their learning process, and by planning for future language activities. K. M. Thomas (1993: 12) quotes Flavell (1976) claiming that the term metacognition describes the knowledge and awareness of cognitive processes, cognitive strengths and weaknesses and self-regulation. In fact, she carries on arguing that writing is a complex skill which requires metacognitive strategies because efficient student writers use these strategies during each stage of the writing process.

Furthermore, metacognitive knowledge about writing refers to the awareness that the students have about goals, editing and reviewing (op. cit: 13). Indeed, she claims that in order to be a good writer, the learner needs to have metacognitive strategies. However, these basic

elements (evaluating and planning) require reasoning, which is cognitive strategy (R. Oxford, 1990: 16). L. Flower (1994: 226) quotes Baker & Brown (1984) who describe metacognition as “*control strategies, monitors cognition and redirects attention, putting on the brakes, calling up new processes, setting a new goal for the thinker*”.

In written production, planning, detecting or being aware of problems are all control strategies that let the learners monitor and guide cognition. In fact, metacognition is about the knowledge and being able to use one’s own knowledge as content and process. That is to say, being able to talk about what the learner knows and what s/he does not, and how this knowledge is well organized. Moreover, knowing how one’s thinking operates. Thus, cognition is not solely about being aware of the topic knowledge that one processes, but it is about one’s own thinking processes and strategies as well (ibid: 226).

Similarly, N. Mertens (2010: 60) quotes (Hayes, 1996; Bruning and Horn, 2000; Arroyo, 2005; Salvador, 2008) claiming that the writing metacognitive process has been developed recently and that writing is a complex process in which it demands affective and social strategies. In fact, it highlights:

- a-** A social context (audience or readers).
- b-** A physical context (the text or environment).
- c-** Memory (long term and short term memory).
- d-** Processes of written composition.

All of these aspects are governed by the metacognitive processes (knowledge and self-regulated⁸ processes execution) (ibid: 60). Written production metacognitive implies firstly:

- a-** Knowing what is a text.
- b-** Knowing why the text is created.
- c-** Being aware of the purpose of the text’s creation.
- d-** Being aware of what is to create a text.
- e-** Knowing how to create a text.
- f-** Performing it via taking into account the goals (self-regulation).

Secondly, metacognition includes also affective and social variable in a self-regulated way (ibid: 60).

⁸ Self- regulation: is a form of acquiring knowledge and skills and refers to setting goals, behaviours and is used to enhance one’s objectives (N. Hall & T. Goetz, 2013, 126-129).

2.8.1.1.2 Affective strategies

The term “affective” refers to feelings, attitudes, motivations and values. The beneath figure suggests that there are three primary sets of affective strategies:

- Lowering one’s anxiety like using music.
- Encouraging the learner like making positive statements and taking risks.
- Taking one’s emotional temperature such as using a checklist, or writing a diary.

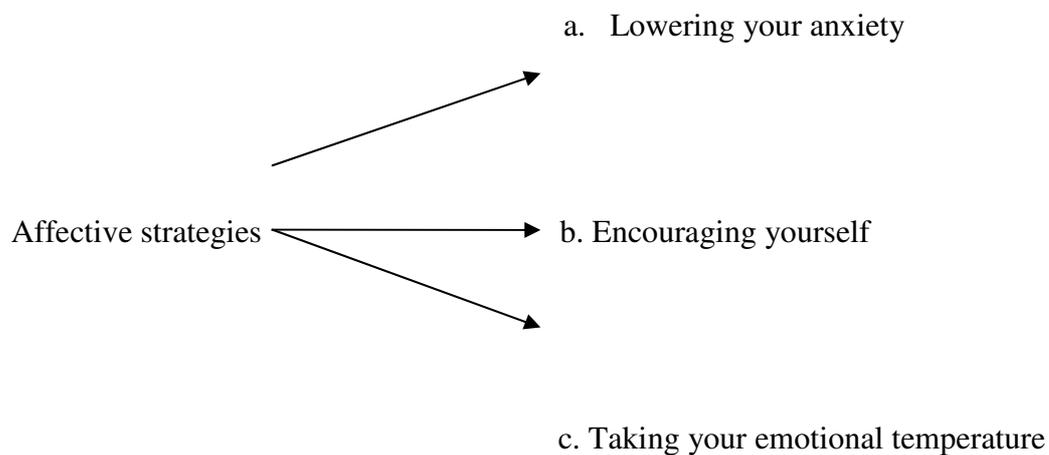


Figure 2.5 Affective strategies (R. Oxford, 1990: 141)⁹

The acronym LET comes from the first letters of each of these strategy sets. The affective side of the learner may have a strong impact on language learning success or failure.

⁹ Adapted from (R. Oxford, 1990: 141)

Additionally, good language learners are often the ones who know how to control their emotions and attitudes about learning, because the negative feelings can impede progress. On the other hand, positive feelings and attitudes can make learning a language more effective and enjoyable. (R. Oxford, 1990: 140).

Self-esteem is one of the most important aspect in affective strategies. In fact, it is about self-judgment of value or worth, which is based on feeling of efficacy, interacting effectively with one's own environment. However, low self esteem can be known through the negative talk, for example: "*am I a blockhead! I embarrassed myself again in front of the class*". Basically, the three affective strategies help learners lower such negativity (ibid: 141).

The sense of efficacy which is part of self-esteem is reflected in attitudes (beliefs and opinions) which influence the student's motivation to carry on trying to learn. In fact, attitudes are strong predictors of motivation in any phase of life and especially when it comes to learning a language. The same as attitudes affect motivation; attitudes go hand in hand with motivation to influence language learning performance including both language proficiency and proficiency in language skills such as: listening, reading and oral production. Moreover, research findings suggest that both attitude and motivation have a certain impact on whether the learner loses or maintains language skills after language training is over (R. Oxford, 1990: 142).

Self-encouragement strategies are also powerful for enhancing attitudes and motivation. However, anxiety sometimes helps learners achieve a certain performance level, but too much anxiety hampers language learning. Indeed, anxiety occurs in different ways: worry, self-doubt, frustration, helplessness, insecurity and fear. Even the simple and ordinary language classroom creates anxiety, because learners are often forced to perform in a state of ignorance and dependence in front of their peers and teacher (ibid: 142).

2.8.1.1.3 Social strategies

Language is a social behaviour; it is communication and the latter happens between people (op. cit; 144). Thus, learning a language involves other people, and adequate social strategies are important in this process. In fact, there are three sets of social strategies and each set composes of special strategies (see figure 1. 5):

- Asking questions like asking for clarification or asking for correction.
- Cooperating with others: cooperating with peers.

- Empathizing with others: developing cultural understanding & becoming aware of other thoughts.

One of the most important social interactions is asking questions, an action from which learners obtain benefits (op. cit: 145). Basically, asking questions helps learners understand better. It also helps them communicate with peers or teachers using the target language, and thus providing indirect feedback about the learner’s production skills (ibid: 145).

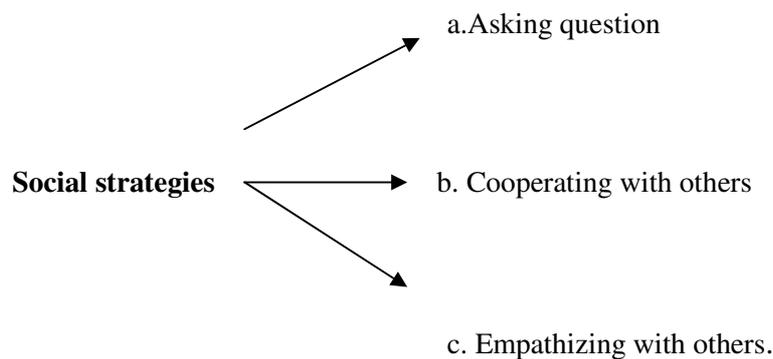


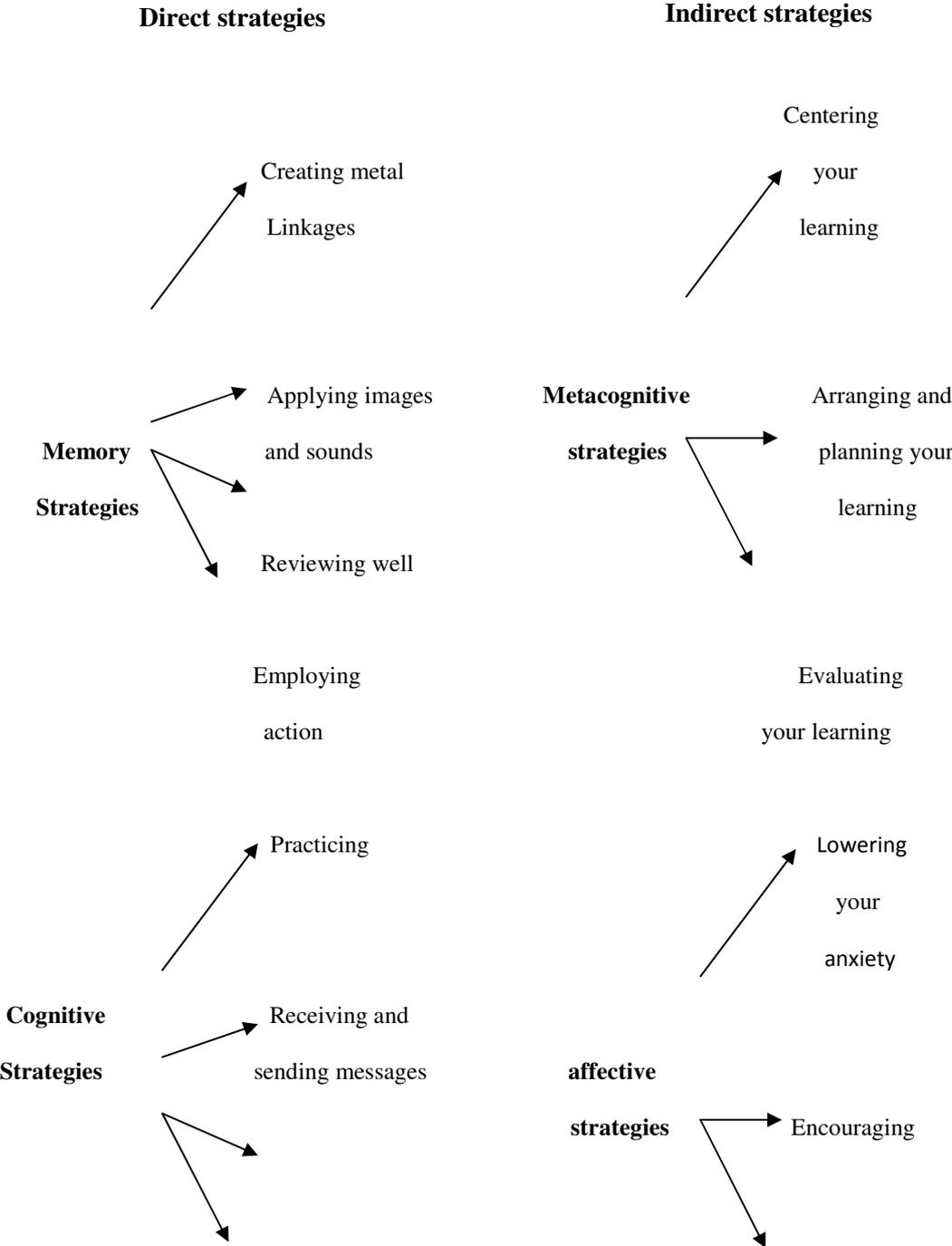
Figure 2.6 Social strategies (R. Oxford, 1990: 145)

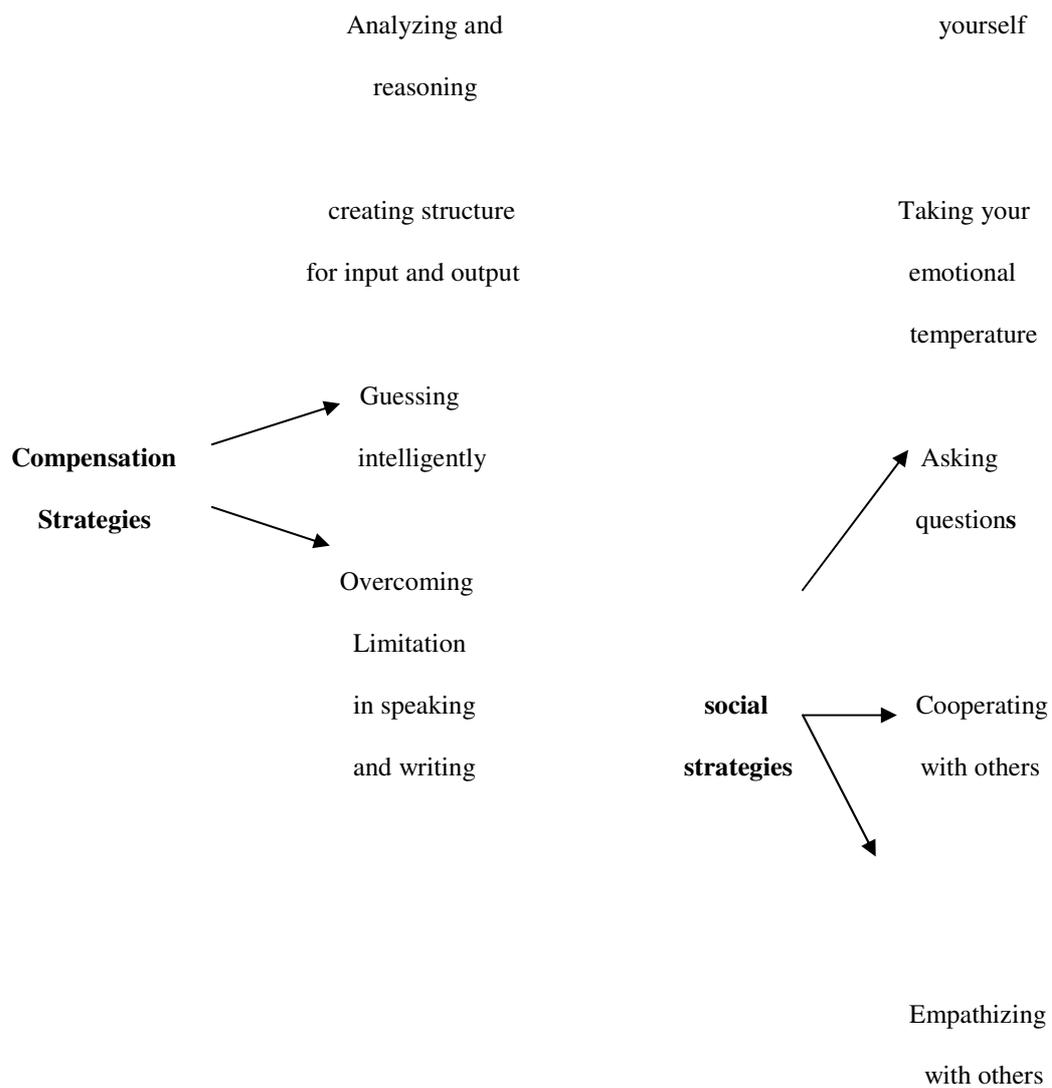
Additionally, cooperating with peers implies the absence of competition and the presence of group work. In fact, it involves a “*cooperative task structure or cooperative record structure*” which can encourage “*positive independence*” and support. Many studies about language learning field have explained the effectiveness of cooperative language learning strategies cooperative learning aids learners to have higher self-esteem, increased confidence and enjoyment, fast achievement, getting more respect for the teacher, the use of cognitive strategies. It fosters also motivation, practice, as well as feedback about language errors.

However, cooperative strategies might not be good for all the learners. For example competition may sometimes result in a positive need to improve and do better than other students, but, at the same time, it also promotes anxiety or fear of failure. Hence, in order to promote cooperative language learning inside and outside the classroom, it is the teacher’s role who can make his/her learners work per groups, encourage them to work cooperatively and raise competition among the students (op. cit: 146). Similarly, EFL students often work

cooperatively when attempting to write an extended essay. Within such a framework, they exchange ideas and ask for vocabulary whether from their classmates or the teacher who becomes as a guide rather than a knowledge transmitter.

Empathy is essential for successful communication in any language, it is essential though sometimes hard to accomplish in learning another language. In fact, learners differ in their natural ability to feel and demonstrate empathy. However, social strategies can help all learners increase their ability to empathize by improving cultural comprehension and becoming aware of other thoughts and feeling (R. Oxford: 146). The beneath figure indicates the direct strategies, the indirect strategies and the way they are divided into sets:





**Figure 2.7 Strategy system showing two classes, six Groups, 19 sets
Oxford, 1990: 17)**

(R.

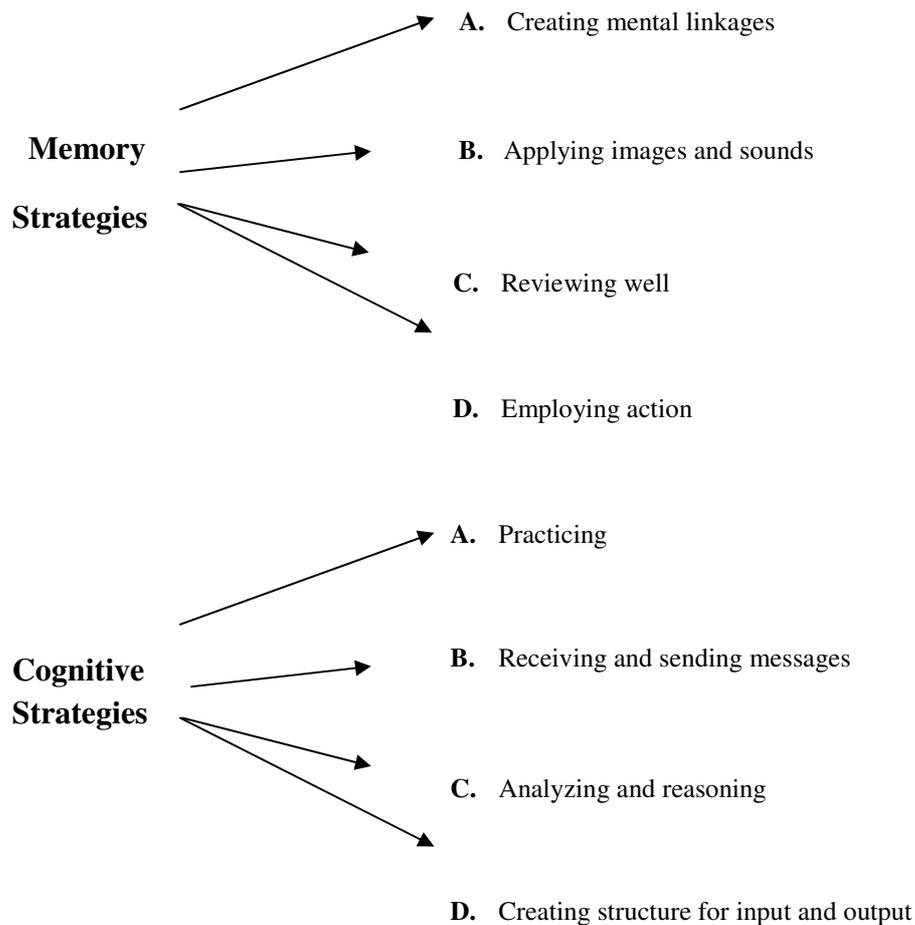
2.8.1.2 Direct strategies

Language learning strategies that directly involve the target language are called *direct strategies*. All direct strategies require mental processing of the language but three groups of strategies (memory, cognitive and compensation) do the processing differently and for various goals (R. Oxford, 1990: 37).

a- Memory strategies such as grouping or using imagination have a particular function in that, it aids learners store and retrieve new data.

b- Cognitive strategies such as summarizing or reasoning enable learners to comprehend and produce new language via various tools.

c- Compensation strategies, as guessing or using synonyms, permit the students to use the language despite the gaps in knowledge (ibid: 37).



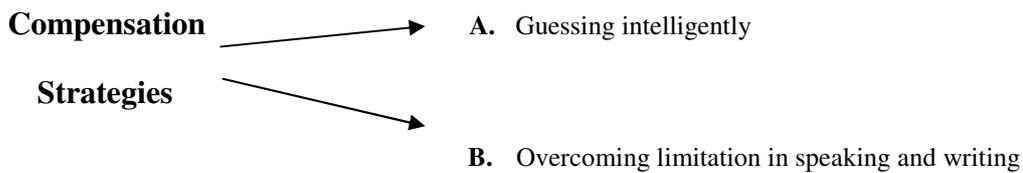


Figure 2.8 Direct strategies (R. Oxford, 1990: 38)

2.8.1.2.1 Memory strategies

Memory strategies are sometimes called mnemonics. Before literacy spread, people employed memory strategies to recall information, for example forming (ibid: 38). At the present time, memory strategies are regaining their place as powerful mental tools. In fact, “*the mind can store some 100 trillion bits in information, but only part of that potential can be used unless memory strategies come to the aid of the learner*”. Indeed, memory strategies become effective and efficient when the learner employs metacognitive strategies, as paying attention, and effective strategies, like reducing anxiety. Memory strategies reflect simple principles, such as recording things making associations and reviewing. These principles involve *meaning*, i.e., in order to learn a new language, the arrangement and associations must be meaningful to the student and the material would be reviewed and has significance (op.cit: 39).

Despite that some teachers think that learning vocabulary is an easy task, learners have a problem concerning remembering vocabulary. R. Oxford (1990) quotes Lord claiming

that: "Vocabulary is by far the most sizeable and unmanageable component in the learning of any language, whether a foreign or one's mother tongue "because of "tens of thousands of different meanings" (P. 39). Thus, Memory strategies help learners cope with this difficulty. They enable students to store vocabulary and then retrieve it when it is necessary or needed for communication. Additionally, the memory strategy helps move information from the "fact level", when knowledge is more automatic (ibid: 39). When the learner becomes knowledgeable, information becomes easy for retrieval and lasts for a long time.

Memory strategies often involve verbal material and visual image of words and phrases. The latter are essential for learning a language for four reasons. First, "the mind's storage capacity for visual information exceeds its capacity for verbal material", (R. Oxford, 1990: 40). Second, the information are moved to long term memory through visual images. Third, visual images help recall verbal material. Fourth, most students prefer visual learning. Although, memory strategies are fundamental and contribute enormously to language learning, research shows that students seldom employ these strategies, i.e. they do not use memory strategies very often. However, these students might be unaware of how to use memory strategies.

2.8.1.2.2 Cognitive strategies

Cognitive strategies are important in learning a new language. These strategies enormously vary. In fact, they are based on repeating, analyzing expressions and summarizing. Despite that cognitive strategies vary, they are unified at the same time by a common function which is "manipulation" or transformation of the target language. Cognitive strategies are considered to be the most popular strategies. Indeed, there are four sets of these strategies which are called as follow: practicing, receiving and sending messages, analyzing and reasoning, and creating structure for input and output (R. Oxford, 1990: 43). K. Hyland (2003: 13) argues that cognition is a central element in the composition task. However, researchers are more concerned about the complexity of planning and editing tasks.

Furthermore, they are more concerned about what learners actually do when they produce a written text. Most importantly, the first letters of each of these strategy sets form the acronym PRAC, which stands for "practice", because cognitive strategies are practical for language learning. In fact, practicing is considered to be among the most necessary

cognitive strategies. Most often, learners do not know about the importance of practicing. However, during class, practice chances are often missed because one learner is involved in the learning process, while the other one is just sitting idle (R. Oxford, 1990: 43). Practice is often needed in order to achieve proficiency.

Besides, practicing strategies include repeating and practicing through using sounds and writing. In addition, strategies which include receiving and sending messages are essential tools. The latter is known as grasping the idea very fast which aids the learner to get the main idea by skimming or scanning. However, it is not necessary for learners to concentrate on each word. Additionally, another strategy in this group which is using resources which is useful for both understanding and production (op. cit: 44). The following figure explains how cognitive strategies are set:

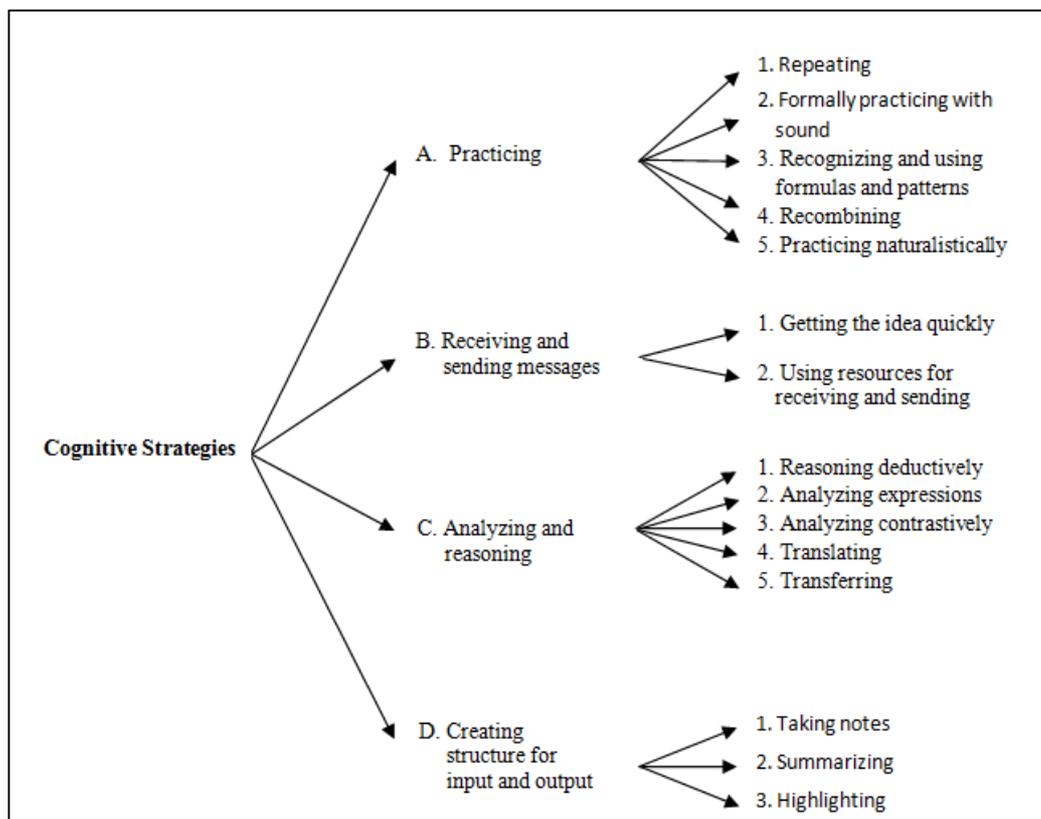


Figure 2.9 Cognitive strategies (R. Oxford, 1990: 44)

Such strategies help learners take advantage of a wide range of resources in terms of comprehending and producing messages using the target language (P. 44). Analyzing and reasoning are strategies used most often by the students. In fact, many learners tend to reason first the new language, build a particular modal in their minds which is based on analysis and

comprehension, create general rules, and review those rules when there is new information. However, in this process, students sometimes make blunders by generalizing those rules that they have learnt, or transferring expressions from one language to another, and most often from the mother tongue to the target language. The inadequate use of literal translation results in the “*interlanguage*¹⁰”. In addition, language learners need to use strategies such as: taking notes, summarizing and highlighting. Therefore, generating these strategies help learners use the language for speaking and writing (R. Oxford, 1990: 45). The following concepts are definitions of cognitive strategies:

1/ Repeating: it implies doing something several times for example, listening to something more than once, or imitating a native speaker. In writing, repeating strategy is revising in order to correct or amend the composition. Thus, revision is basic. In fact, writers review employing different ways. For instance, some learners regard revision as a distinct phase, while, others revise as they compose in a continuous, ongoing process. In addition, writers sometimes focus on specific details for one revision for example, checking punctuation. Hence, teachers need to help their students learn the best strategies or techniques to review their production (R. Oxford, 1990: 71).

2/ Formally practicing with sounds and writing systems: for instance, practicing sounds like pronunciation, intonation and so on in different ways or practicing the new writing systems of the target language.

3/ Recognizing and using formulas and patterns: being aware of using routine formulas (single, unanalyzed units) such as: “*Hello, how are you?*” and unanalyzed patterns such as “*it’s time to...*” In other words, patterns have at least one blank to be filled as it is indicated in the instance.

4/ Recombining: it means combining known elements in new ways such as linking one phrase with another in order to form a coherent sentence.

5/ Practicing naturalistically: it means that practicing the new language in natural and realistic settings, such as participating conversation, reading a book or an article, listening to a lecture, or writing a letter using the target language (R. Oxford, 1990: 45). Most importantly, practicing naturalistically is very important, for it fosters the writing skill. In fact, it involves

¹⁰ Interlanguage is a normal phase in language learning, but some learners do not leave this phase because they misuse analyzing and reasoning strategies (R. Oxford, 1990: 45)

various kinds of activities such as individual contributions to different products, or exchanging written messages between learners (ibid: 77). Furthermore, naturalistic writing modes are about creating separate products by individuals; indeed, it might include all kinds of formats like: stories, poems, or diaries employing the target language and so on (R. Oxford, 1990: 78).

The second naturalistic writing mode “*is joint writing projects composed of individual contributions*” for instance, newspapers, news-letters and literary magazines. These projects provide the experience of writing with a real goal for an available audience, as well as working together in order to create a product. The third naturalistic writing mode is called “*coauthorship*”, i.e. two or more learners work together in order to compose one piece, an article, a short story, or a play, because, writing partners provide encouragement and feedback to each other. So, the best way to use coauthorship is jigsaw writing. Learners are given a part of a story and are required to complete it (ibid: 78).

The last naturalistic writing mode includes exchanges of written messages between individuals or groups. In addition, it also includes journal exchanges, letter writing. Furthermore, dialogue journals are effective which make writing a more interactive process in which learners exchange messages with their teachers. Indeed, students produce whatever they want in their dialogue journals and share these journals with the teacher, who in his/her turn provides feedback or comments, and of course not using “*a threatening red pen*”, but correcting the draft in a supportive way. Thus, dialogue journals are efficient and effective, for it is motivating for the students (ibid: 78).

2.8.1.2.3 Compensation strategies

Such strategies enable the students to employ the new language for either comprehension or production although, the blanks or shortage in language, compensation strategies tend to make up for inappropriate repertoire of grammar and mainly vocabulary (R. Oxford, 1990: 47). Most importantly, ten compensation strategies exist, divided into two sets: Guessing smartly in listening and reading, and Overcoming restrictions in speaking and writing.

The two initials (G and O) stand for the acronym GO “*since language learners can Go far with compensation strategies*”. Guessing strategies are sometimes called “*inferencing*”, which involve using linguistic and nonlinguistic clues in order to guess the meaning when the learner does not know all the words. When skilled learners face unknown

words or expressions, they make educated guesses. On the other hand, unskilled learners often panic or they consult their dictionaries checking unfamiliar words (ibid: 47).

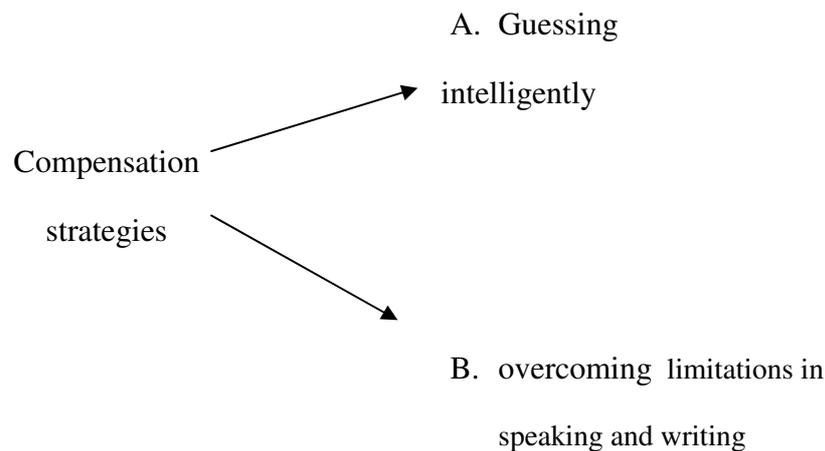


Figure 2.10 Compensation strategies (R. Oxford, 1990: 48)¹¹

Not only beginners who use guessing strategies, advanced learners and even native speakers guess when they do not hear a particular word fairly well, when they do not know a new word, or when the meaning is hidden between the lines. In fact, guessing is a way that makes the student processes new information. That is to say, interpreting the data by using the available context or using the learner's own experience, Oxford (1990) quotes MacBride "*meaning is in fact created by the receiver in light of the experience which s/he already processes*". Indeed, it is the experience which provides many clever guesses for both experienced and novice learners (R. Oxford, 1990: 48).

Furthermore, compensation strategies do not occur merely for comprehending a new language, but also for producing it. In fact, they permit the learners to produce written expression using the target language without complete knowledge. However, many

¹¹ Adapted from Oxford (1990 : 48)

compensation strategies are employed in order to compensate for the lack of vocabulary, but such strategies can also be used to make up for the shortage of grammar knowledge (R. Oxford, 1990: 49). For instance, if learners fail to express the subjunctive form of a verb, they may use various form in order to get the message across (op. cit: 49).

Likewise, advanced learners and native speakers sometimes employ guessing strategies to help them comprehend; they occasionally use compensation strategies when they breakdown in speaking or written production. Therefore, less experienced students need these strategies because they often encounter obstacles when dealing with the target language. Moreover, compensation strategies for production aid learners to keep on using the language, thus, getting more practice (ibid: 49).

2.9 Strategy choice and use

R. Oxford (1990: 13) notices that motivation affects the strategies used by learners claiming that the highly motivated students use a wide range of adequate strategies than do less motivated learners. Moreover, the aim for which the students are learning a language determines the type of strategies they will employ. For instance, those who are learning a language for personal communication will use different strategies than those who are learning a language in order to obtain for example a license degree. In this sense, R. Oxford (1990: 13) points out *“motivation is related to language learning purpose, which is another key to strategy use”*.

Furthermore, motivation has a certain relationship with learners’ attitudes and beliefs i.e. the former affects the students’ behaviour. The attitudes and beliefs that the learner has towards the target language, its culture, and the learning environment will affect the student’s level of motivation and thus, his/ her strategy use and choice. R. Oxford (1994) notes that a learner who has negative attitudes and beliefs often cause poor strategy use.

Research has identified several causes that may have impact on the students as far as the choice and the use of strategies are concerned. These factors are related either to the learner (motivation, age, attitudes and beliefs, learning style, cultural background and gender) or to the learning environment (type of the activity and the teacher).As a matter of fact, motivation has a strong effect on the strategies that the learners select because of the important role it plays in L2 or EFL learning. W. Lile (2003) opines that motivation is the *“backbone”* of any classroom. R. Gardner (1985: 147) points out that motivation is *“the*

effort, want (desire), and affect associated with learning a second language” R. Gardner refers to the “want” to the goals learners want to accomplish via language learning. R. Gardner & W. Lambert (1959) suggest that motivation can be either “*integrative*” or “*instrumental*” orientation.

Indeed, the first one is the desire to achieve proficiency in the target language as well as to take part in the target community i.e. the learner shows interest not only in the target language but also in the culture. On the other hand, instrumental motivation is the desire to achieve proficiency in the target language for specific reasons such as career development or educational goals. H. Hamzaoui (2005) quotes Gardner & Lambert (1959) who claim that an integrative motivation is relevant to language accomplishment as being an enduring part of the learner’s personality, whereas instrumental motivation is influenced by external factors such as rewards, and therefore this kind of motivation does not last for a long time. But later, other studies reveal the importance of instrumental motivation for L2 learning (Y. Lukmani, 1972, R. Gardner & W. Lambert, 1972; in H. Hamzaoui’s, 2005) and this unveils that both types of motivation foster language learning in that learners would be extremely motivated R. Gardner & P. MacIntyre, (1995: 208) opine:

....it is not so much the orientation that promotes achievement but rather the motivation. If an integrative or instrumental orientation is not linked with heightened motivation to learn the second language, it is difficult to see how either could promote proficiency.

Additionally, it is worth mentioning that both orientations are complementary i.e. learners can be both instrumentally and integratively motivated. J. Keller (1983) identifies four components of motivation which show how the students approach learning; these factors can be summarized as follows:

- 1/ The degree of interest that the students show while learning.
- 2/ The importance of the learning activities which meet the learners’ needs and achievement.
- 3/ Expectations as far as success or failure are concerned with.
- 4/ Outcomes i.e. rewards or punishment are the result of the learning experience.

The previous factors have a great impact on the students’ level of motivation, and the latter result in the choice and use of strategies in learning or accomplishing a particular activity. Indeed, the learner’s motivation has an important influence on his/her use as it is explained in Z. Dornyei (2003: 21)

Learning strategies are techniques that students apply of their own free will to enhance the effectiveness of their learning. In this sense, strategy use_ by definition- constitutes instances of motivated learning behavior.

Some studies investigated the relationship between learners' age, their L2 proficiency level as well as their use of strategies. Hence, the results showed that students of different ages and stages of L2 learning employed different strategies, and some strategies were used by older or advanced learners (M. Grenfell & V, Harris, 1993, 1994). On the other hand, gender has attracted much attention lately. R. Oxford & M. Nyikos (1989) suggest that gender has a fundamental influence on strategy use and choice. In their study, they found that females used a wide range of strategy use compared to the males. Similarly, J. Coates (1986) claims that females ask more questions than males. In fact, all these findings indicate that gender plays an essential role in the choice and use of learning strategies.

Other learner features were also found to be important for learners' choice and use of strategies. Learning style; in fact, it is noticed that the general approach to language learning determines the types of strategies employed by the students (R. Oxford, 1994). Moreover, the cultural background of learners influenced the choice and use of strategies. Hispanics, for example, were observed to use more social strategies than other ethnic groups (R. Oxford, 1990: 11). While, Asian students preferred memorization (M. O'Malley & A. Chamot, 1985. Cited in M. O'Malley & A. Chamot, 1990).

The following section discusses the effectiveness of providing teachers' feedback on the students' writing pieces.

2.10 Definition of feedback

Feedback is seen as a basic element for encouraging learning and is considered as a central aspect of ESL/ EFL writing programs throughout the world (K. Hyland & F. Hyland, 2006: 83). It is the input from whether a reader/ teacher to a writer through providing the latter with information for revision; in other words, it is the comments, questions and suggestions the reader gives to the writer. L. Hamp Lyons (1987) explains feedback by stating that *“the feedback which the learner gets on his or her piece of writing plays a very important role, both in motivating and further learning...”* (L. Hamp Lyons, 1987). Teacher written response carries on playing a central role in second language (L2) and foreign language (FL) writing classes. Many teachers feel that they must write comments on the students'

composition in order to provide a reader reaction to the learners' efforts and to help them improve as writers (K. Hyland and F. Hyland, 2006: 84).

The primary purpose for providing feedback on students' written production is to help them improve the quality of their writing. Indeed, traditional approaches to the teaching of writing assumed that via correcting the students' errors on final drafts, learners would enhance their writing (Ch. MacArthur, S. Graham & J. Fitzgerald, 2006: 222). However, another research conducted by Van Gelderen (1997) depicted that responding to the students' compositions does not result in the improvement of the quality of writing (cited in Ch. MacArthur. et al, 2006: 223).

On the other hand, students favour two types of comments which they find helpful; first, they prefer comments that suggest ways of making improvement. Second, they favour comments that explain why something is good or bad about their drafting (op. cit: 227). Teachers also respond to students' grammar and writing mechanics to help them edit the final drafts for clarity and coherence. Moreover, it is important that such comments occur mainly at the editing phase of writing and not when the students are formulating ideas and organizing their drafts (op. cit: 230).

Feedback aims at helping students develop their knowledge and strategies for self-correction. Indeed, learners at intermediate and advanced levels appreciate such written responses and ask for it. The most efficient way for providing such feedback is through giving signals or symbols which indicate errors and mistakes. The learners then, have to correct their own mistakes and show the correction to the instructor, (I.S.P. Nation, 2009). Feedback is essential in the process of learning. Offering feedback on students' written assignments could be the most valuable teaching task of written expression instructors. Feedback represents important formative assessment information, mainly when students review assignments based on the offered comments (A. Cavanaugh, 2014: 122).

2.10.1 Types of feedback

C. Keh (1990) distinguishes three types of feedback: Peer evaluation, conferences, and written comments. K. Hyland (2003) regards feedback as an inseparable, integral and central element in language learning generally and in learning to write particularly. It is a tool that provides writers with a set of information such as the reader's needs and expectations and whether students' writings have met such expectations J. Harmer (2004).

2.10.1.1 Peer evaluation

Peer evaluation is a possibility to stress the role of the student on the writing process. To emphasize the role of the students is an important issue and has to be well planned and incorporated in the writing activity. Students need to know all about evaluation; that is to say, what to evaluate and how to do it. J. McDonough and C. Shaw (1993) points out that peer evaluation “*will only be effective with guidance and focus*”. It can help the students see what they produce consciously.

2.10.1.2 Conferences

Conferencing is defined by B. Bowen (1993) as an efficient technique which develops the writing skill, in that it is integrated and linked with another skill which is speaking. It is a good opportunity for the students to meet with their teacher and ask questions about the different aspects of writing. One of the interesting characteristics of writing workshop and the way it creates a working atmosphere is that the teacher is given the opportunity to confer with students, M. Weaver (2006: 392). Here, the students need to focus on two important points; first, to make of conferencing a successful technique to improve writing and have some knowledge and ideas about what a successful text consists of and how it would be presented. Second, teachers /or students need to give an encouraging and positive feedback and offer suggestions for improvement.

Written comments are helpful in that they help students correct their writing and find solutions to their problems. In fact, giving clues whether in the form of questions, suggestions, codes symbols or error sheets are considered more effective than correction of mistakes, (M. Brock & L. Walters, 1993: 97). It is believed that written comments give a certain security to students’ written compositions if they are clear and not misleading.

2.10.1.3 Oral Conferences

The oral conferences have particular values, in terms of being more effective for facilitating the improvement compared to the written comments and as means of encouraging successful practices and texts. In order to allow students develop ways of writing which are not only effective, but in which they feel comfortable, such approaches need both support and time. It is believed that feedback has a strong effect on students in that it helps them become aware of their mistakes and their problems of writing. I. Leki (1992: 165) points out that students need to learn how to revise more effectively whether the learners are international

students, or immigrants or minority students in the tertiary institutions. K. Dheram (1995: 160) also states that “*feedback seems to be as central to the process of teaching and learning writing as revision is to the process of writing*” (ibid: 160).

Likewise, A. Raimes (1985) shares the same idea and found that L2 students appreciate teacher-editing and feedback. P. Radecki & J. Swales (1988) also indicate that L2 learners welcome and accept greater intervention, and make greater improvements when they get responses about their compositions.

Research has proved that there seems to be a strong connection between active correction of errors and the improvement of students in the writing skill. D. Ferris (1995) put a focus on the importance that students give to writing accurately and their perceived need to obtain corrections from the teacher. J. Truscott (1996) mentions the important factor of grammar correction and the necessity of dealing with every linguistic category (lexicon, syntax and morphology). Many studies carried out by scholars such as Ferris and Roberts (2001), Zamel (1985) and Lalande (1982) advocate different approaches to written correction:

- a-** Explicit or direct: where the teacher indicates the error and provides the correct form.
- b-** Non-explicit or indirect: where the teacher only marks the error in some way by underlining or using a code and leaves it to the student to correct it.

When dealing with students’ writing, teachers need to bear in mind that it is exceedingly important that any correction or feedback procedure should reflect the kind of tasks the students go through in the classroom. Their aim is to judge the performance of the students by checking the correct form of the language and grammar and via being concerned about the organization of ideas and the quality of content as well.

2.10.2 The importance of providing feedback

N. Sommers (1982) states that while commenting, always there is a pedagogical goal. Instructors know that most of the learners find it difficult to imagine the teacher’s feedback in advance. In addition to that, they use such comments as guidance while producing; Sommers (1982) put it in the following words:

Thus, we comment on student writing to dramatize the presence of a reader, to help our students to become that questioning reader themselves, because, ultimately, we believe that becoming such a reader will help them evaluate what they have written and develop control over their writing.

(Sommers, 1982: 148)

Therefore, teachers' comments help the learners become readers and that latter can make them evaluate their own compositions. According to N. Sommers (1982: 148) teachers provide feedback on students' productions in order to motivate the learners to revise. When the teacher identifies the students' errors in usage, diction and style in a first draft and asks the students to correct these mistakes within revision. Such feedback shows the learner the importance of these errors and the way they need to regard these mistakes in this process (op. cit: 149).

In studies on oral production in which either feedback is positive or negative, help the students to be good and skilled student writers, (M. Aridah, 2003: 106). In another research which is conducted by Lighbown and Spada (1990), it is discovered that corrective feedback in an oral context has a certain influence on increasing linguistic knowledge, (ibid: 106). Accuracy and fluency might be well enhanced when corrective feedback is given. Besides, it makes learners be aware of their mistakes that they committed. Eventually, it leads them to fix these errors (ibid: 106).

In relation to instructing and learning writing, responding to students' writing is considered as an essential issue, in the sense that writing is recognized as an instrument for ameliorating ideas, constructing thoughts, as well as discovering experiences. Therefore, student writers need to know whether they have penned flawlessly and properly or not, and this is done just through receiving feedback from the teacher, (ibid: 106). P. Dheram (1995) states, that feedback is regarded as an essential process in both teaching and learning the writing skill. Feedback in writing is considered as an important aspect to develop students' language awareness so that they can write effectively in the classroom. Taylor (1981) suggests that although regular writing does improve writing, students ask for teachers' comments in order to achieve particular writing developments, as it is mentioned in M. Aridah (2003).

Teachers' feedback makes the students believe that their compositions are finished drafts, and all that they need is revision, and correct what is missing. N. Sommers (1982: 151) carries on saying: "*the comments encourage students to believe that their first drafts are finished drafts, not invention drafts, and that all they need to do is patch and polish their writing*". That is to say, instructors' responses do not give the students basic reasons for revision the structure and the meaning of the essay, however, the responses tell the students that the meaning of the production is available, finished, produced and all that is lacking is adequate words and appropriate phrases. Sommers goes on stating that:

... the process of revising, editing, and proofreading are collapsed and reduced to a single trivial activity, and the students' misunderstanding of the revision process as a rewording activity is reinforced by their teachers' comments (ibid: 151).

Giving feedback is very indispensable in that, it has a great influence on the learners and it helps them also become more aware of their errors and their problems in writing. I. Leki (1992), points out that students need to learn how to revise more effectively. P. Dheram (1995) also notices that *"feedback seems to be as central to the process of teaching and learning writing as revision is to the process of writing"*. A. Raimes (1985) also found that L2 learners appreciate teacher-editing and feedback. P. Radecki and J. Swales (1988) also argue that L2 learners welcome and accept a wide intervention and make a good improvement when they receive such feedback.

Taylor (1981) suggests that it is important for the students to criticize their own drafts (cited in M. Aridah, 2003: 110). Students are required to rewrite their own assignments; thus, the importance is given to the first draft. Rewriting is important in that it enables learners to solve their own problems that encounter them; rewriting their own compositions gives the students trust in their ability to resolve their own mistakes in their own writing. It has been suggested by Zamel (1984) that when giving feedback, students must be given enough time to do multi-drafts assignments so that each draft brings them closer more or less to what they really want to say or achieve. Butturf & Sommers (1980) mentioned in Zamel (1985) opine that as teachers should lead their students via various steps of revision. The importance of correction and feedback and revision in the writing process make the learners value it after they produce any piece of writing. Ferris (1995) stresses more on the necessity that the students' writing need to get corrections from teachers.

Focusing on the final drafts' errors and mistakes encourage the learners to be aware of the structure of the sentences and mechanics, N. Sommers (1982: 149). She carries on saying that the comments ought to be done during composing and not after it. For Sommers (1982), *"comments create the motive for doing something different in the next draft; thoughtful comment creates the motive for revising"*. That is to say, when the teacher offers comments while the student is composing, that drives the student to revision. She claims *"we believe that it is necessary for us to offer assistance to student writers when they are in the process of composing a text, rather than after the text has been completed"* (P. 149).

Without giving comments whether from a teacher or a reader, the writer may reckon that it is needless to revise the text (op.cit: 152). She argues that offering comments encourage the students to see that the written text needs some improvement through doing more research. Hence, the learners are encouraged to see their production (ibid: 152).

White and Ardnt (1991) see that language problems are preferable dealt through the teacher feedback (ibid: 181). It is not easy for teachers to provide the students with a useful feedback that enables them to improve their writing.

The question that is asked by these teachers is whether to focus on form (grammar and the mechanics of writing), or on content (ideas organization, meaning, clarity and the amount of details). "*The major question confronting any theory of responding to student writing is where we should focus our attention*". C. Griffin (1982: 298) indicates that positive feedback on the learners' compositions can lead to increasing the amount of writing and improve also their attitude toward drafting. Written feedback tells the student that the composition is read, understood and that has a certain influence on the reader. It is fundamental for student writers to not offer them all the time feedback, because this latter might discourage them (I.S.P. Nation, 2009: 137)

2.11 Conclusion

The chapter has provided data about the writing skill in general and learning strategies in particular. Composition has been a controversial issue for many years and for many investigators. However, written production is a topic wherein many scholars are interested in. It is a complex skill for most of EFL learners in that they are unable to master all the writing aspects. Basically, it is a complex skill for the teachers to instruct and for the students to learn. It is considered by many researchers as a mental process and difficult to acquire even for the native speakers. It is important to note that its complexity is due to many factors. Therefore, many studies have been interested in writing attempting to find solutions for the student writers.

Therefore, research on language learning interestingly focuses on strategies employed by the skilled and the novice learners for the purpose of unveiling the appropriate writing strategies that better help students overcome their production difficulties. More importantly, studies conducted by a multitude of researchers identified the effective strategies that are

employed by the experienced writers and urged for training the unskilled student writers for using such efficient strategies while producing a writing piece.

Additionally, the chapter has shown that investigators identified many factors that influence students' writing performance. The use of L1 or L2 in writing any extended essay affects students' selection and use of strategies. The researcher provides the audiences with a wide range of definitions about offering feedback on students' written performance, attempting to unveil the significance of different types of feedback and showing its effectiveness on composition instruction and on the learners themselves.

The following chapter investigates the practical side of the research. It deals with classroom observational sessions and studies second year university students' written assignments and examination.

Chapter three: Ethnographic observation and analysis of students' essays.

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3.1 Introduction

To support the research hypotheses, the investigator used two instruments: classroom observation and analysis of students' written assignments and their written expression examination essays. The ultimate objective of the ethnographic observation is to discover what teachers do inside the classroom, to understand better the writing process from the tutors' perspective and to determine students' writing behaviours and perceptions. Adding to that, classroom observational sessions enable the researcher to know more about the taught strategies and the type of the provided tasks. Indeed, results and interpretation of the findings are thoroughly covered and summed up in this chapter.

Then, the researcher aims at examining the students' essays, for the prime objective of identifying the exact strategies that are used when writing a text. Doing so entails the researcher to analyze first the written assignments (students' collaborative work). After, the researcher divides the learners' written expression exam into two categories: the first one is devoted for the skilled student writers, and the second category is for the inexperienced learners. This is supplemented by a graph that shows students' average in written expression exam. The division is done primarily for determining the type of strategies used among the skilled and less proficient student writers.

3.2 Results and interpretation of classroom ethnographic observation

This section will analyze some features of four (4) EFL composition classes' sessions conducted by two different teachers at the Department of English at Djilali Liabes University of Sidi Bel Abbes, based on the researcher's observation of these sessions. As illustrated earlier in chapter one, the researcher relies on written ethnography as a tool used in the qualitative research in classroom observation. Ethnographic results are to be found in (Appendix 1).

On the whole, classroom observation revealed first, that at the level of written expression instruction, both teachers relied a great deal on oral discussion. However, both instructors differed in the way they tackled written expression instruction. Besides, they instructed two different syllabuses, i.e. they do not follow the ministerial syllabus. In other words, each teacher is instructing as s/he believes suitable for the students. One instructor depended heavily on illustrating first the theoretical part of producing a particular essay. For

example, teaching the different components of writing an argumentative essay or an informal letter, i.e. how to write and what to include in the argumentative essay or the personal letter.

The other tutor focused on teaching the practical part of composition. The observation unveiled also that both instructors provided their students with strategies and techniques for writing extended essays; they also provided them with vocabulary, grammar and useful expressions or phrases, and most importantly some metacognitive strategies. They also focused on telling their learners to think about the audiences. Written expression teachers stressed on providing the students with various strategies for composing essays whether these strategies are taught implicitly or explicitly, albeit the students are unable to produce accurately and coherently.

Furthermore, instructors have little familiarity with which strategy ought to be fostered and which teaching method is suitable for their learners. It was also noticed that teachers do not rely on the reading skill which is considered as an important task that promotes and improves composition. However, these teachers seldom integrated reading in their classes, but the latter is solely used as a model for writing. For instance, teachers selected a text and showed their students how paragraphs are well organized and how sentences are constructed, for example showing them the thesis statement and the supporting sentences. Though the module is named “Compréhension et Expression Ecrite”, they do not tackle reading in order to teach writing.

Moreover, the researcher observed that one teacher provided a text to the students (see Appendix 2) and asked them to read it silently. Some engaged in reading, but the great majority did not seem interested in reading. After a while, the teacher commenced nominating the students to read paragraphs loudly, and it was noticed that the great majority of students had pronunciation problems; one student asked his teacher to show him the pronunciation of the word “guarantee”. However, reading loudly is not allowed for the reader focuses on the pronunciation rather than meaning. More importantly, reading loudly is considered as an old fashioned approach and is not advisable. However, this was the only solution for the teacher to make all the students read the material. Nevertheless, it could be the selection of the text that makes the learners feel reluctant towards reading; however it is always advisable to select a text which involves deeply the students and which is not beyond their cognitive level.

Another observation session reveals that the teacher instructed explicitly strategies like “brainstorming” and “clustering”. Most of the time, that teacher did not write at the

whiteboard. The instructor showed them how to deal with clustering as a strategy for writing and for the float of ideas. So, s/he provided them with a topic which was about “*smoking*”. The teacher attempted to make the students generate ideas and brainstorm. This, had been done orally via asking questions to the students for the ultimate objective of activating the learners’ knowledge background and to make them speak and use different vocabulary related to the topic “*smoking*”. While speaking about the topic, that teacher advises the students to concentrate on the form rather than the content.

Then, the same instructor moved from the strategy of clustering to the text wherein the reading material had been explored by the teacher, showing the students the introduction, the opening sentences, background information and thesis statement. As far as the body paragraph is concerned, the teacher advised his/her students to defend their opinions. Meanwhile, the instructor illustrated some grammatical rules to the learners for example, to not confuse between “*to find*” and “*to found*”. In that session, the teacher correlated reading and writing but stressing predominantly on the writing skill, and attempted to integrate grammar to show the students the differences between verbs, nouns adjectives and adverbs, s/he proceeded reading and asking the learners about the synonyms of some words, but received no answer, so s/he illustrated the words by himself/herself orally for instance, to “*rival = to complete*”. Thus, the teacher always endeavoured to provide the students with different vocabularies.

Teachers of composition classes believe that speaking enhances writing. Therefore, they use the speaking skill for the prime purpose of fostering orally ideas in the students’ minds, and that what has been said by one instructor to the research-observer that focusing on speaking when teaching the writing skill enhances and reinforces the students’ thoughts, and that what all the questioned teachers confirm in the questionnaire when asked about the contribution of speaking to the writing skill.

Moreover, one teacher instructed explicitly writing strategies such as brainstorming, planning, brainstorming and clustering which fall under the category of metacognitive strategies. However, the other one taught in detail how to move from one paragraph to another and what to include thoroughly in each paragraph providing them with written examples on the whiteboard. Whenever a teacher starts his/her class, s/he explains briefly what has been dealt with in the previous session.

Though the sweeping majority of the informants claimed in the questionnaire that written expression is an interested class, the observation revealed that most of the students are absent, i.e. the great majority of the students did not attend; sometimes only nine (9) out of thirty two (32) students. It depends also on the hour, i.e. if it is at eight (8) in the morning, teachers do not expect many students, but at ten (10), all the groups cluster together to form one group comprising approximately of thirty (30) students. Thus, the observation indicated that, though the learners regard that writing is a basic skill as it is shown in the students' questionnaire, they do not attend composition classes.

Furthermore, the ethnographic observation has also showed that written expression's teachers tackled composition instruction differently; one wrote every tiny detail on the whiteboard, for instance illustrating what to write in the introductory paragraph and how to move to the body paragraph stating different opinions since it is an argumentative or expository essays. However, the other teacher depended upon oral instruction without writing the details on the whiteboard.

Some students seem involved in the lecture, asking the teacher questions and negotiating, giving remarks, but some others were not interested in the lesson, albeit the latter was a basic theoretical course. Students who sat at the beginning of the classroom were deeply involved in the lecture, but those who sat in the end of the classroom were totally ignoring the course, though they indicated in the questionnaire that writing was an interesting class.

Another observational session revealed that written expression teachers provide their students with all the components and some strategies that they should go through when writing an extended essay. After explaining everything in the whiteboard, the tutor read a paragraph to the students and all of them were listening to that passage which was about "*women's work*", providing the learners with examples that the writer has employed in the argumentative paragraph, i.e. the teacher showed her/his learners how the writer explains his opinions towards women's work. Hence, instructors always attempt to illustrate in detail their lectures providing examples from certain texts to show their learners paragraphs construction.

The ethnographic observation shows that both teachers and the students are aware of the importance of the reading skill, but instructors did not integrate the reading to improve

writing, but they provided a reading material as a model to their students and as an example to reinforce their explanations to their learners. After finishing the detailed illustrations and asking the students if everything was clear and understandable, the teacher gives her/his learners two topics to compose about in the classroom, and asks them to form groups and choose one topic to work on.

Indeed, some form their own groups and started talking about their personal issues. But, there were some students who preferred working individually, and some favoured working in pairs. Therefore, the observation reveals that this teacher encourages the social/ affective strategies, since in all the sessions, s/he orders the learners to work collaboratively. Some students told the observer after asking them some questions about writing strategies, they replied as follows:

“eh...In the classroom we work in groups or.. in pairs and we arrive to write an extended essay, because we help each other in which,... each learner provides an idea, vocabulary... But in the exams,...eh... we cannot write, because nobody helps. We feel frustrated for we cannot generate our own ideas because we do not have sufficient vocabulary and we commit mistakes... That is why in the exams we obtain bad marks..., because we do not write accurately...eh, we think but we cannot compose...Actually, one hour and half is not enough to write an extended essay mainly under the stress and frustration. In groups we are able to produce, but not individually”¹².

This implies that though the teachers are instructing different strategies, yet the students are incapable of producing in an appropriate manner. It indicates also that EFL students are not well trained on how to read and how reading can effect and enhance the writing skill in that, it broadens the students' thoughts. Although, social/ affective strategies may enable EFL learners to generate their ideas and use different techniques in order to express themselves appropriately, they feel unable to explain their opinions on a paper particularly when working individually. On the other hand, in a group work, the teacher may find proficient learners gather with students with a low ability in writing in order to exchange thoughts, learn from each other and produce a good writing piece.

This is considered as a positive aspect in which the skilled students will teach implicitly the less effective learners, and they will notice the writing strategies or the

¹² The passage is transcribed (the students answered in Algerian Arabic)

procedures that the good writers follow. So, the social/ affective strategies might well be helpful for the learners, however, one teacher explains to the observer that it would be impossible for the learners to work individually, because of time constraints. But working collaboratively does not consume time for both correction and providing teachers' feedback.

Additionally, those who favoured working individually spent much time on thinking about the appropriate vocabulary, generating ideas and grammar. Students on the other hand, who worked in pairs ask for the help of their classmates (social/ affective strategies), because they lacked vocabulary and did not know how to express their thoughts into written words, and this confirms the research hypothesis which states that writing is a mental process, complex and troublesome skill for second year, LMD students of English.

The other group finished writing the introductory paragraph and asked their teacher to read it and give her/his feedback about whether the paragraph was good and rich or poorly written. So, the teacher noticed that the students translated ineffectively from L1 into the target language and s/he corrected the students and asked them to re-write. While the students were about to compose their production, the teacher walked around and helped her/his learners in selecting the right vocabulary and generating ideas.

The following observational session also indicates and confirms that teachers always explain briefly what they already explicated in the last course. Moreover, they always ask their learners to finish what they have already started; writing essays. Indeed, when the students were asked to terminate their written productions, they showed reluctance towards writing. These students indicated in the questionnaire that motivation plays a relevant role in the writing process. Additionally, the teachers always advise their learners to perform accurately and coherently, to use simple sentences, direct English and the handwriting must be readable.

The other instructor explained briefly to the learners that clustering is a strategy that enables them to produce an extended essay. Typically, providing the students with an assignment at class might be helpful. Therefore, that teacher introduced "*smoking*" as an issue to write about. However, the latter is based on clustering where the students need to communicate about "*the reasons to quit smoking*".

As usual, the students start writing the first paragraph, but some of them spent time in composing the first introductory paragraph, and then jotting down ideas. The instructor

advised his/her learners to use simple, short and direct sentences. In fact, while writing some students lack some vocabulary, so they asked their teacher to translate some words from French into English for instance, the word “*dependence*”. Others used bilingual dictionaries (Arabic- English/ French- English) in order to overcome some writing difficulties.

Using translation or consulting bilingual dictionaries are revealed in the observation and uncovered also in the students’ questionnaire. It is also indicated that EFL students use similar strategies when composing, i.e. translating from one language to another or consulting bilingual dictionaries; these strategies are classified under the categories of cognitive and metacognitive. The similar strategies used by students would be also confirmed in the analysis of students’ classroom assignments and exam sheets where they are required to write individually extended essays.

Additionally, the teacher of composition class informed the researcher-observer that the students are limited at the level of grammar and vocabulary and sometimes in the exams they do not know a word in English they write it in French. Moreover, s/he carried on saying that:

“Eh...though we teach them different writing strategies and they do follow these strategies, they are unable to compose in the exams”.

Another teacher of civilization told the observer that the students are required to use the past tense in their essays when recording the past events, but rather they use the present tense or the future. Though the teacher advises the students before the exams to employ solely simple past, they utilize several tenses in one writing piece. That teacher of civilization proceeds saying that:

“The notion of the tenses is not well stuck in the students’ minds”.

Accordingly, one teacher also asked his/her students to translate some words whether from Arabic or French into English (see Appendix 1). Thus, teachers sometimes require translation from their learners to check their linguistic competence and background knowledge. Typically, that teacher nominates students to write passages on the whiteboard with the collaboration and assistance of other classmates and the teacher. The nominated student composed as follows:

Smoking is consider a very dangerous habit. it date to many centuries ago. Recently actions have been made to encourage smokers this addiction, so what are the different reasons to quit smoking?

Although, the teacher and the students dictated to that learner the paragraph above, s/he was incapable of writing correct English on the whiteboard, knowing that the dictation was clear, i.e. they dictated coherently (no grammatical mistakes) and well pronounced English. It is worth mentioning that, the short passage shows that this student lacks grammar “*is consider*”, “*it date*”. The teacher noticed the mistakes, but favoured to leave correction at the last phase wherein s/he provided oral and written feedback explaining that the verb “to date” is always conjugated in the present tense. It is also noticed that the instructor is the one who provided his/her learners with ideas.

In order to confirm again that second year students have grammatical hindrances and composition is a complex skill for them, the teacher nominated another student to write a second paragraph on the whiteboard, he produced as follows:

first, smoking can be a very expensive act. In fact smokers spend a lot of money to buy lighters and cigarettes. besides, replacing damaged cloths and upholstery has a higher finannacial cost.

Although the students have dealt with writing mechanics in the first year of their studies, that student did not master punctuation and capitalization, and committed some spelling mistakes. Spelling mistakes occur, because learners do not practise neither reading nor writing. Accordingly, the teacher of writing class informed the observer that:

“...three hours per a week is not enough to ameliorate the students’ written production, I always advise my students to read, because it is the only skill which enhances writing”.

The teacher continued stating:

“...speaking and reading are strongly correlated with the writing skill”.

Thus, that teacher believes that speaking has a great influence on composition. That is why; s/he relies heavily on explaining orally and briefly the grammatical rules and vocabulary in order to foster these two aspects in the students’ minds. Besides, teachers often advise their learners to read independently to overcome all writing hindrances, for intensive reading is not integrated as a separate skill in the syllabus. Hence, it is always advisable on the part of teachers to insist on their students to read.

Another observation session indicates that students based their written productions on translation from the mother tongue into English language. One group composed of four learners were given a topic to compose about. While trying to generate ideas, they discussed the arguments much more in Algerian Arabic using some French words rather than English. Furthermore, they asked each other how to spell the word “*indeed*”, but no one knew, so they checked their dictionary and then sought for the help of their teacher to translate an Arabic word, so the teacher translated it and wrote it for them to show the students its spelling. The second group of students also finished producing the first passage and asked their teacher to read it. In fact, the teacher noticed that the students use translation in order to compose, they write the first sentence of the paragraph as follows: “*Between the past and the present...*” and the instructor corrects and gives them an alternative.

Thus, students employ translation as a strategy that enables them to compose, and which is classified by M. O’Malley & A. Chamot (1990) as a cognitive strategy. However, translating from Arabic to English makes the written production poorly performed. On the other hand, translating from French into English might be better than thinking in Arabic, for it is known that those who are skilled at L2 tend to be also proficient in the foreign language.

To sum up, most of the students used translation and reckoned in Arabic in order to be able to perform or write. EFL students need to have a thorough understanding of what writing is and its relevance and more importantly, its role in learning English as a foreign language. However, foreign language teachers often advise their students to think in English in order to be able to write correctly. It should be noted that these issues are complicated for both the teachers and the students, for writing academically demands much efforts and practice; it requires ideas organization and appropriate vocabulary, accurate grammar and clear spelling.

Though the observation of ten (10) written expression sessions may not be sufficient to place its findings in a broader context, classroom observation helped the researcher to find out what teachers were attempting to transmit to their students. Though classroom observational sessions made the researcher to some extent conscious of teachers’ instruction of writing strategies and students’ composition strategies, motivation, and behaviours, it is still important to study the written assignments and exam essays of the same students. Hence, the analysis of students’ written tasks, examination and results discussion will be dealt with in the

next section in order to explore the exact writing strategies that are utilized for essay writing and to elicit production impediments.

3.3 Analysis of students' written assignments and examination

In order to confirm that there is a correlation between the strategies used by the learners in their compositions; this section is devoted to the analysis of students' essays in the classroom and in the examination's papers to see if the learners' performance is good, acceptable or poor. It also explores the strategies used by the best graded students in written expression module and the strategies used by the less effective learners. It is worth mentioning that the analysis of students' written assignments and examination essays are of three (03) EFL classes and the fourth one was tackled in the ethnographic observation. The instances provided in the following section are to be found in the appendices.

3.3.1 Analysis of students' written assignments

After finishing the teachers' illustrations to the different points or strategies that should be tackled and followed when composing a particular piece of writing, they urged their learners whether to form groups and work or to compose individually in order to write about topics provided by their teachers. So, when finishing composition at the end of the session, their written sheets are collected, then corrected and provided with teachers' written feedback. After teachers' response to the students' essays, they paid attention to the form as well as the content taking into account the following points:

- Grammar correctness.
- Spelling.
- Precise vocabulary.
- Writing mechanics.
- Well expressed ideas.
- Well organized sentences and paragraphs.

The correction of students' extended essays reveals a multitude of writing problems at the levels of grammar, spelling mistakes, ideas expression and writing mechanics. It is worth mentioning that second year students' weaknesses emerge even when using social/affective strategies (in group work, students have sufficient time to produce and means such as dictionaries and teachers' or classmates assistance). It is also important to note that students'

poor performance will be analyzed in depth showing some sentences, paragraphs distilled from their essays.

3.3.1.1 Grammar

Grammar correctness is a problematic component for EFL students, in which grammatical mistakes influence the meaning and the quality of their extended essays. It always plays a basic role in writing, particularly in the cohesion of the sentences and paragraphs. It is important to note that the students' grammatical mistakes are not much compared to the individual work during examination; since they cooperated and helped each other or asked for the teachers' assistance; their grammatical mistakes have been reduced. Moreover, it is noticed by the researcher that learners' grammatical hindrances are shown in the use of auxiliaries, tenses and the grammatical order of sentences. All these written hurdles illustrate the students' weaknesses; the examples beneath are taken from students' written assignments, (see appendix 3):

- *“The work of woman considered as the most polemic topic cause there is more than point of view about it.”*
- *“The successful woman is a good exemple for her children especially for her girls, cause she learn them that the woman not created just for cooking, washing and managing the home, she’s able to do more than that, and she can give more than man in very often time. The Quran give the woman her right but Quran never says that she can’t work she shall stay at home, Quran says the heaven under the feet of mothers in general and not only the once who are at house...”*

The two instances above are drafted by four (04) students in which the first passage lacks the auxiliary “to be” *“the work of woman is considered...”* as it is corrected by the teacher. Moreover, instead of writing “because”, the students wrote *“cause”* and the latter is also corrected by the instructor. As far as the second paragraph is concerned, it is worth mentioning that the entire paragraph contains several errors at the level of tenses in general and language in particular. Grammar inaccuracy occurs when the students compose *“cause she learn them that the woman not created...”* and the learners repeat consciously the word “cause”, *“she learn”* in lieu of “she teaches” and other grammatical mistakes that clearly appear in the second passage. All these mistakes are corrected by the teacher.

Most importantly, the second paragraph also reveals the use of translation from L1 or the mother tongue into English language. This implies that the group of students focused on thinking using other language rather than the target language. Thus, the result equals with that

obtained in both teachers' and students' questionnaires. In fact, these students are given enough time to compose their writing pieces inside the classroom and outside it. Furthermore, they employ different strategies and techniques that may well help them, such as metacognitive and much of social/ affective strategies; because they work collaboratively. Adding to that, they have sufficient time for revision and refinement, yet the students have inaccurate grammar and therefore a poor written performance.

To show more of the grammatical mistakes that are made by the students while drafting any text, the following piece is written by one student and unveils the writer's tenses weakness:

- *“Computers are good means of education because it help student practice writing, learning, and reading, it help us.....computers also have its own disadvantages like it is harmful impact on people's health.”*

That student does not master the “present tense”, for s/he carries on writing the same grammatical mistake. Regarding tenses and predominantly the present simple, is taught in the middle school for four years, in high school for three years and at the tertiary level for two years. Thus, all these years are sufficient for any student to acquire deeply the present tense in particular and do not misuse the tenses. Although the instructors keep correcting the same mistakes, but in vain. Besides that, the student does not differentiate between singular and plural form for example, s/he wrote *“computers are good means....it help...it help us...computers also have its own...”* This explains that the writer does not know the simplest grammatical rules; i.e. s/he does not know when to utilize “it” and when to employ “they”.

3.3.1.2 Vocabulary selection and expression of ideas

Vocabulary selection of ideas seems to pose a great hindrance for EFL students. The inadequate use of vocabulary influences negatively the cohesion of the writing piece. It is important to mention that the students based their compositions on translation, mainly from L1 into English. The following paragraphs are from students' written works, when they are

enjoined to compose argumentative essays about women's work and the role of computers, they produce as follow:

- *“Women need to work not just for money even that money is an important thing. but to prove that she has a capacities and talent to shown and to appear in many domains, we can find women as doctor, minister, and taxi driver...There are some people say women shouldn't work because of the weak physique or just to say 'No for women work' and this is to keep her in need to man to improve that man stronger than women...”*

The paragraph is taken from an essay written by two (02) students which reveals that it is inaccurate and lacks grammar, no respect for punctuation and more importantly, misused words and sentences for instance, *“to keep her in need to man to improve that man stronger”*, one sentence contains different mistakes and inadequate selection of vocabulary. In other words, the entire paragraph is not well structured, and most of the time it contains the frequent use of translation like when saying *“...to prove that she has a capacities and talent to shown and to appear her self in many domains”*.

Another essay is composed by four (04) students which is about giving their opinion towards women's work. The four student writers based their expressions on inappropriate translation; how ideas are expressed are taken from Standard Arabic or the Algerian Dialect and are poorly communicated, because of the unsuitable selection of words.

- *“The work of woman bring another finance for house besides the paid of her husband. This is in the benefit of the children cause it allows to support them by buying all the means which can help them in their studies, in other side, that can help them to start their own small project in the case when family has teenagers cause in this step they start to think about the futur and how they will build themselves, when their finance come from parents that be more safety...”*

It is worth noting that the whole paragraph is meaningless, because the students reckon only in Arabic or use bilingual dictionaries in order to find the appropriate vocabulary that they think is effective. Furthermore, the paragraph has grammatical and spelling mistakes. It is also important to note that all the sentences are translated. In addition, the same students proceed writing and carry on using translated ideas and words which are selected inappropriately; the paragraph beneath is a good example that shows that learners are unaware of writing procedures, (see appendix 3):

- *“The life get more expensive and difficult that make women in the necessity of working, especially in these several causes, we take exemples from fact namely the*

situation of the poor families that make each member of this family work hard among them the woman who has the sense of responsibility...according to Quran, men and women have the same spirit, there's no superiority. The results of woman were given by Allah who make paradise under her foot and give her, her rights of inheritance, of getting education and to be respected for her mind and her own responsibility. All those be neglected..."

Indeed, the whole writing piece sounds meaningless and words are inadequately chosen and which are selected from dialectal language. Most importantly, revision seems to be neglected, for the entire essay contains ineffective vocabulary, because the students think first in their mother tongue and then produce in English. There are other instances taken from second year EFL students' writing essays which reveal that sometimes they do not know a particular vocabulary, so they leave a gap and it is up to the teacher to speculate that word. The following writing pieces are extracted from two essays; each written production is composed by two students, (see appendix 4):

- *"There nothing...?...women work and to put position to herself, life is more faire than some people..."*

In that sentence, the teacher put a question mark over the gap and underlined the whole sentence, simply because it seems unclear and incorrect, (see appendix 5):

- *"...?... , a lot of people think that using computers is something indispanisible for our life..."*

In the above sentence, the teacher corrects and writes *"nevertheless"*. As a matter of fact, both sentences are taken from students' essays and from two different groups. It seems that the student writers do not bother themselves to ask for their teacher's assistance or alter the entire idea in order to overcome the difficulties, but rather they only leave a space, and it is the instructor who guesses the missing word.

3.3.1.3 Spelling

Spelling also poses an issue for second year university students since all the extended essays are full of spelling mistakes. The latter has a certain impact on composition, because the students are evaluated and assessed according to several aspects and spelling is one of these components to be taken into account. The following written works are from different students' essays and from different groups. Furthermore, the spelling mistakes are of familiar words that the writers should not mistake in such vocabulary:

- *“The work gives the woman the opportunity...Though it she will be more...”*
- *“It is common in our society that the man dominated within his family who occubied...it brought a new ideas”*
- *“They result humain’s memory malfunction...the free time involve only Facebook’s addiction or other useless things; moreover, humans have become...”*
- *“Computers are becoming vital in humain’s life...”*
- *“Nowday the world is very needy and men on their own cannot satisfied all demands...to raise her children and to be a good housewife because it her natural place. A woman think with her emotions...”*
- *“There is also the essue of the environmental work conditions”.*
- *“We can talk to people from defferent countries, and even see them computers also have its own disadvantages...”*

The sentences above are taken from some students’ written assignments, and which indicate some common spelling mistakes which are made by the learners while composing their writing pieces; knowing that the students have enough time, and different techniques to be applied in order to produce accurate and coherent compositions. Unlike writing during examinations which happens under stress and time constraints.

3.3.1.4 Writing mechanics

It is important to mention that analyzing the students’ written assignments indicates that writing mechanics is a real hindrance since they do not know when to punctuate and when to capitalize. The following passages are examples taken from the same essays of the same students, and which show that writing mechanics are a real impediment for second year university students:

- *“Starting at a young age now, children are learning how to use computers for fun and for learning. one advantage is that...share intimate details with others online, learning them vulnerable to cyber-stalking and real life issues. also many people ...”*
- *“Among women’s rights; she can work...they study so hard for many years. during their schol life...their needs for example it is an obligatory to buy a new clothes and make up to be more elegant and pretty. furthermore if she is an employer...”*

Another example shows that learners are unaware of the role of a good punctuation, the instances beneath are written by two students:

- *“...if she work she will denile her first job in this life; also it’s not faire...”*
- *“...women in general don’t have, besides the safest place they can be at is also the essue of the...”*

The sentences above are examples which display that students do not know when to put commas, and when to put a full stop or semi-colons. All the students neglect capitalization and it was their teacher who corrects all the mistakes and provides feedback that shows their weaknesses. Nevertheless, the teacher's written comments are at the level of content and not language norms (grammar, how ideas are expressed, spelling and writing mechanics). However, the instructor corrects the students' mistakes but does not provide written responses on the blunders. Such teacher's comments are summarized in the following remarks:

- "Good!! Your argumentative essay is well structured and the way you defend your opinion is great."
- "Good!! You have followed the steps involved in argumentation! But try to pay more attention to your spelling, grammar and the structure of your sentences! Your conclusion is not clear."
- "Good! But try to explain more through examples while responding to or attacking the counter arguments in your third paragraph."
- "Your essay is full of rich information concerning the given topic, yet you haven't taken all the steps involved in argumentation into consideration! You are required to attack the counter arguments before presenting your conclusion."

The comments above are some teacher's responses on some students' extended essay which reveal that the instructor focuses more on content rather than providing comments on language structure, knowing that the teacher corrects most of the mistakes. To summarize, teachers give their learners written assignments to be composed in the classroom and finished at home. It is worth noting that student writers have sufficient time to produce their written tasks, but their texts are far from being satisfactory, because of the wide range of mistakes at the levels of grammar, appropriate ideas, spelling and writing mechanics.

In order to compare the students' individual performance, i.e. the way learners produce their essays during exams and without working in peers or groups and what are the strategies used in composition, it is worth mentioning that the second section is devoted to the analysis of about ninety five (95) written expression exam sheets of the same students who answer the questionnaire, and who are also observed in the classroom and whom assignments are analyzed.

3.3.2 Analysis of students' written expression exam papers

This part is divided into two sections, one is for analyzing the productions of the skilled student writers whose grades are over 11/20, and the second one is devoted for analyzing the extended essays of the novice writers whom grades are less than 10/20.

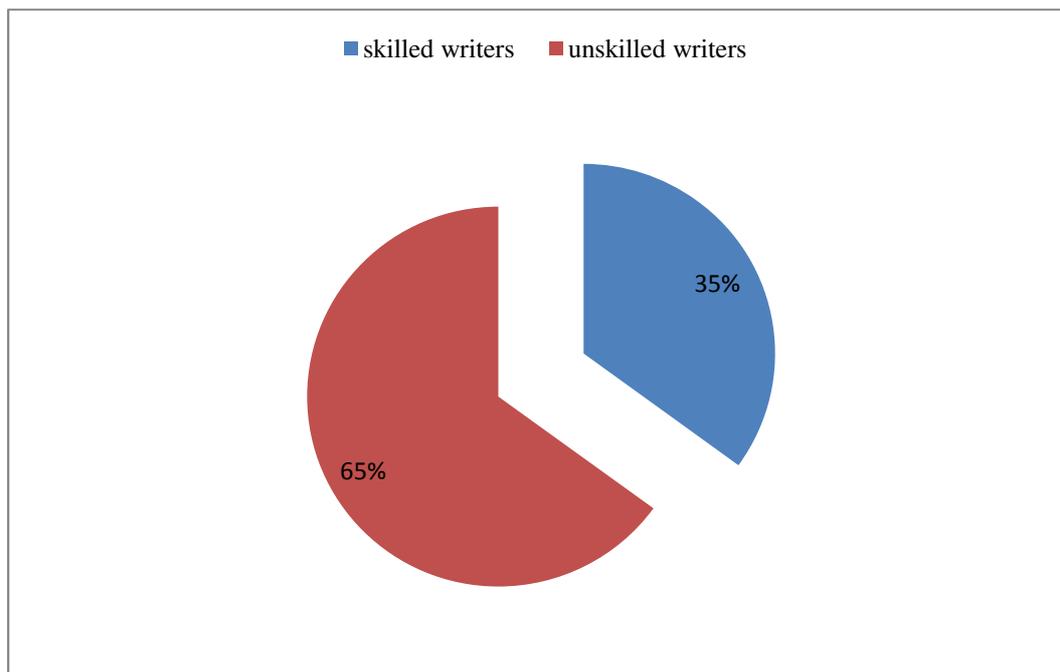
3.3.2.1 Analysis of the skilled student writers' essays

After the correction of students' written productions, the instructor grades the learners' writing pieces, and is considered as a semester evaluation that was held in January, 2015. The teacher provided the students with three different topics to write about, and urged them to choose only one subject. Each one selects a topic that seems suitable for him/her and in which s/he feels able to write about. So, the students' responses vary, so do the marks.

Nine (09) exam sheets are selected from different groups as a sample of the best graded students in written expression exam. The following table shows the different marks, and in which each learner will be represented by a number in order to avoid mentioning the students' names.

Student	grade
1	15
2	15
3	15
4	14.5
5	13.5
6	13
7	12.5
8	12.5
9	12

Table 3.1 Best students' grades



Graph 3.1 Students' grades in written expression exam

The graph suggests that most of the students' grades are less than twenty (./20), i.e. seventy six (76) students perform poorly in written expression exam. Whereas, only nineteen (19) students obtain more than (10/20) and are considered to some extent as skilled student writers, and mainly whose grades are 15/20. This implies that writing poses a problem for EFL learners. On the other hand, 35% of the students obtain the average. The obtained result is considered to be very weak compared with that of the novice student writers. Indeed, the analysis tackles the different components of English language such as:

- Grammar correctness.
- Precise and correct vocabulary.
- The employed strategies.
- Adequate ideas expression.
- Spelling and writing mechanics.

3.3.2.1.1 Grammar

Grammatical mistakes are commonly made by EFL students. For example, learners often do not choose the correct English verb tense for expressing an idea or do not use it in its correct form. They may fail to use the articles (a/the) correctly, or place words in the wrong order in a sentence. When analyzing the learners' examination essays of the nine highly graded students, their compositions reveal plenty of grammatical mistakes, wherein most of

the learners misuse the tenses and mainly the present simple and simple past, i.e. some verbs are put in the present and others in the past in the same written production for instance, in some extended essays the students speak about a descriptive situation and need to conjugate the verbs only in the present tense, but rather they use both the present and the past.

Another issue that impedes the students' writing is the "s" that should be added to the singular form of the verbs in present simple. The following passages are taken from the students' essays, for example student 1 who obtains 15/20 writes as follow, (see appendix 6):

- *"Parents, who are parents? A simple question and everybody answer that parents are...It is one word contain two persons...They are the air that we breathe and when loose them or one of them we stop to breathe...This what was happening...everybody need an attention from his mum...nine years without any problem till the bad day the day when the doctor tell my brother that mum have dangerous disease. It will be the first hard moment..."*

The above examples are some instances taken from the introductory paragraph and the body paragraphs. The rest of the essay contains the same grammatical mistakes. Another example indicates that the students are not aware of some grammar rules which are problematic for EFL learners and hinder their writing performance. Most importantly, the grammatical mistakes that are found in the students' extended essays affect profoundly the quality of their compositions. The example below is from student's 4 writing piece who obtains 14.5/20:

- *"Since the first moment he looked me he was attracted to me, and was the more fondest than all other men whose I met them in my daily life...everyday, both of us seated under a...each one on his garden's house...we looked the most shiness star on the sky to pass our emotional sentiments...we decided that our hearts will never separated...he always get benefactions..."*

Interestingly, the entire essay is full of grammatical and spelling mistakes, and ideas are poorly expressed. This explains that even though EFL students brainstorm, plan and utilize a particular strategy in order to express themselves in a better way, yet, they are incapable of controlling or mastering the language norms, such as grammar and other linguistic competence. Another production is taken from student's six (6) writing piece who is considered to be a skilled learner since s/he obtains 13/20, and which is also a good grade, the learner composes as follow, (see appendix 7):

- *"...accept what Allah give to you, this words was touch my heart and fained me, I never forget it."*

In July 07, 2007, the worst day for me, when my mother is died, when I was lost...and who has a mother and see her face each morning, never has a right to speak about the pain.”

All the mistakes are corrected by the teacher and taken into account in the written comments provided by the teacher. However, the student’s mistakes are not taken into consideration as far as the mark is concerned. These mistakes have a negative impact on the structure of sentences and make the audiences feel like reading in another language, but not English. Additionally, since the mistakes influence the meaning of the students’ ideas, the writing piece is inaccurate and uneasy to comprehend. Spelling on the other hand, is also a hurdle for second year university students. Another example reveals that grammar is a real flaw for EFL learners who incapable of mastering the grammatical rules. The beneath instance is from student nine (9) production and who obtains 12/20:

- *“...she don’t wear fashion clothes...My mother is the great woman for every number of my family. Because without her everyone lost. She specified by her physical appearance and her strong personality and I proude because...”*

3.3.2.1.2 Spelling

Spelling is an important criterion in any language, primarily in writing academically. Accordingly, the latter seems to be troublesome for the students in which no extended essay is clear and coherent at the level of spelling. Furthermore, spelling mistakes are found to be more frequent compared to grammar and other writing aspects. The following paragraphs are taken from students’ best graded essays to show that even effective student writers who obtain the best marks in written expression exam; spelling seems to be an impediment for them. The passage is taken from student five (5) who gets 13.5/20, (see appendix 8):

- *“One of the solutions is practicing sport. I say sport, I don’t mean running and jumping untill you fall. But I mean following a program with coach or instructor who would show you...An other solution is eating by programe, that is to say we should not eat foods just like that or depending our personal desire. In order to lose weight we have to consume alot of vegetibals...our body needs a certain cantity of culluries...”*

It is worth mentioning that the essay is full of spelling mistakes and are due to the absence of revision which is considered as an important criterion in composition, or is related to the inappropriate translation from the Algerian Dialect or L1 into English as mentioned in the following example which is from student’s 1 essay who obtains 15/20:

- *“I couldn’t see my mother ill, really my heart was blessed that moment...She went to the hospital and she stayed two moths. Mother, the streight woman...It was a hard view and nobody of her childs can do anything for her...”*

Furthermore, the spelling mistakes could also be due to the absence of reading as shown in the following instance which is taken from student’s 6 production and who gets 13/20:

- *“I asked her: what’s your matter? Mum!, but she tried to clean her eyes from tears...”*

Another example explains that sometimes the students use ineffective translation of some words from L2 into English and which has a negative influence on the correctness of the sentence. The following instance is taken from student’s 4 who obtains a fine grade 14.5/20:

- *“It was my deer experience...his mother died, and our sufferance finished.”*

Additionally, second year students are unaware of the academic writing. Their texts often sound like listening to someone who is speaking (oral construction), albeit the production is a written one. This occurs because of the words that are utilized or chosen while writing. Thus, the latter affects the clarity of certain passages. The following sentence is from student’s 2 introductory paragraph who obtains 15/20, s/he composes as follow:

- *“Stres is a human fenomenen...”*

To sum up, spelling mistakes are related to a multitude of factors; students’ mistakes could be due to the negligence of revision, the absence of reading and time constraints during examination for some students. Moreover, these factors seem to be negative, because they affect deeply the clarity of the written production.

3.3.2.1.3 Vocabulary selection and expression of ideas

Inappropriate vocabulary selection and inadequate ideas expression are explicitly found in all the students’ compositions. In some instances, EFL learners choose their vocabulary from their L1, i.e. ineffective translation, and in other examples the ideas are not well expressed and are misleading. In addition, the reader is unable to comprehend a particular idea when it is meaningless and aimless. The following examples are taken from the effective students’ writing performances; the first instance is from a writing piece in which the student obtains 14.5/20, s/he produces as follow (see appendix 9):

- *“...we stayed sent emotions without me during one year. He wanted to announce his desire in marriage, he never attend that his family will refuse his choice.”*

It is important to point out that the first sentence contains two conjugated verbs which mislead the reader and affect greatly the clarity and the cohesion of the written idea. Besides, the second sentence contains the verb “attend” which is taken from L2 (French), because that learner has a firm belief that the verb “attend” means the same as in French, but it is not. It is also important to note that the second sentence contains inadequate vocabulary. The student carries on producing:

- “...tried many times be he was always disappointed, we suffered a lot from this situation, while absence made our hearts more founder...it was a picture full of words he adhered me when I felt that his heart who cried not his eyes.”

Nevertheless, the entire passage is not clear and difficult to understand, because of inadequate vocabulary employed in the paragraph. Moreover, in the first sentence there are some words which are missing such as “tried many times to convince them but was always disappointed”. In the second sentence, it is exceedingly difficult to figure out what the student writer aims to communicate, i.e. the idea is unclearly stated. Another instance is taken from student’s 2 essay in which s/he does not know how to express adequately his/her idea, and includes two words which are not clear, s/he writes as follow (see appendix 10):

- “...psychologist scientific related that to many causes as: “work or study pression, mood of life and lack of hobbies”...”

The whole sentence is not well expressed, mainly the first two words “psychologist scientist”; are mistakes wherein the writer makes the reader guess the meaning. Furthermore, it is not only related to the poor selection of words, but also spelling mistakes for example instead of composing “studies”, the writer composes “study”. Such mistakes are due to the absence of reading, though the student gets a fine mark 15/20, which is considered as the best grade, s/he most often speaks rather than writes (oral construction), i.e. in lieu of producing, the reader feels like the student is speaking to someone while composing a writing piece, as it is covered in the following passage, (see appendix 6):

- “After the ded of my father, mum found herself alone in front of a big family, we are twelve girls and boys. So, imagine the weight of her responsibility the adolescents and childs...”

In spite of what has been mentioned above, that the writer speaks his/ her thoughts out when stating “imagine the weight of responsibility...” s/he depends completely on oral construction and translation. In addition, the above passage explicitly shows that the learner

speaks because s/he does not respect punctuation when it is necessary, because of reckoning first in the mother tongue, and then putting the words or speech into written words. It is essential to mention that the essay is full of different mistakes, knowing that the student obtains 15/20. This suggests that EFL students are unaware of good narration and do not know what is the mode discourse¹³.

Another instance which indicates that students based their thinking on L1 rather than English, i.e. most of EFL students rely heavily on inadequate translation which makes the sentence incorrect. The bellow example is taken from student's eight (8) production, and who obtains 12.5/20:

- *"...today's it becomes very easy to be stressed and stress is one of these challenges we all experience from times to times, then there are many reasons that lead stress. We as students we return our stress to exams..."*

Another obstacle has been recorded in some students' essays, is vocabulary order. This hindrance is noticed when the writer is unaware of which word should be put first, and this is considered as a grammatical issue. In fact, when attempting to ask questions, they put the auxiliary first and then the subject or vice versa, as shown in the following passages:

- *"...there are many problems that can we describe as challenges...they think about affairs their projects and doing the plans about how will they live..."*

Another instance, which is shown in student's 9 essay and who obtains 12/20, in which the writer does not know how to write a vocabulary because it is composed of two words:

- *"...my mum likes everything. She is a wife house..."*

Another example shows that the students do not know how to order words in a question. The following instance is taken from a student production who obtains 13.5/20.

- *"...avoid fast foods or foods like pizza, ships, etc. why we should do that?..."*

This illustrates that some students do not know how to ask a simple question without ordering its words correctly and accurately. Not to mention redundancy of some words in one single sentence, and the latter is due to the absence of revision and the inefficient translation whether from L1 (Standard Arabic) or Algerian Dialect.

¹³ Mode discourse refers to what part the language plays and learners' expectations about what language can do for them in that situation. It refers to the symbolic organization of the text, its status and its function in the context, (J. Renkema, 2004: 47).

To sum up, even the skilled students have tremendous hindrances as far as expressing their thoughts and feelings appropriately, without thinking in their mother tongue. In addition, translation is the basic component in students' written productions and which leads to unclear writing and difficult to comprehend. Selecting vocabulary that is not linked to the context affects negatively the meaning of the content or the whole passage, and makes the reader guess what the learner endeavours to transmit.

3.3.2.1.4 Writing mechanics

Punctuation and capitalization poses a writing problem for the experienced writers. Capitalization negligence occurs clearly in the students' writing examination sheets. Some students do not know the importance of the adequate punctuation, i.e. they do not know when to put a comma and when to put a full stop. In fact, it is the teacher who corrects students' punctuation. Moreover, the students' sentences are too long, because they neglect the full stops, and instead put commas. The following passages display the students' hindrances:

- *“At the end, losing weight is an easy thing to do, but we should do it by following the right way. also it is our duty to help and stand with those who have this problem.”*

The passage above is a conclusion of a topic provided by the teacher and in which the student obtains 13.5/20. The grade is fine, though the essay is full of mistakes at different levels. Another instance, wherein the student totally neglects capitalization in the beginning of the sentences:

- *“...people consider it as the biggest problem facing their progress. doctors estimate each day a high number of patients... relationship between families, feurids...”*

Then, the student writer proceeds composing the conclusion wherein s/he put a comma in lieu of a full stop s/he composes as follow:

- *“...a common problem that is affecting both youth and old people, that when people are asked to avoid this latter; and visiting psychologist doctor in order to be away from it's bad effect.”*

Knowing that this essay has been tackled previously at the levels of grammar, vocabulary and spelling mistakes, and showing that the student obtains the best grade 15/20. As all other students, the teacher corrects most of the mistakes including adequate punctuation. Another student gets a less grade compared to the previous one, 14.5/20 is also a

good mark in which the student makes the same punctuation and capitalization blunders, s/he produces as follow:

“...what happened with me is more deeper. my love story dated back to 2004...”

Though all the students know that after a full stop, there must be a capital letter, yet the students commit the same mistakes. This explains that EFL learners are not aware of the importance of neither capitalization nor punctuation. The passages beneath are taken from essay exam sheets:

- *“...what make me want to smile, when she talks, her mouth small outlined by a paffy lips...”* (extracted from student (7) who obtains 12.5/20).
- *“...Me and my sister was shocked, we didn’t know what we should to do. my sister called my father, and when he saw her call, he automatically know what happen with my mother, he came with a taxi and took her to the hospital, while me and my sister still in home, ten minutes after, we went to the hospital, actually I didn’t want to see her in this situation...”* (extracted from student (6) essay who gets 13/20) (see appendix 7).

The passage indicates that the student writer misuses punctuation, i.e. too long paragraph contains a multitude of commas. That is why the teacher provides written comments (feedback) at the end of the students’ essays, and which reflect the learners’ weaknesses. The beneath teacher’s responses are summarized in the following points:

- “Your essay is well-structured and your composition is rich! But pay more attention to your handwriting”.
- “Your essay is well-structured and your composition is good! But avoid too long sentences and pay attention to your spelling”
- “You are telling, more than showing! Pay more attention to your grammar and spelling”.
- “Your essay is well-structured, but pay more attention to the structure of your sentences and your grammar! Avoid repetition”.
- “Pay more attention to the structure of your sentences, your grammar and spelling! Avoid too long sentences! Respect punctuation”.
- “Avoid too long sentences”.
-

The comments suggested the students’ strengths and weaknesses. The latter occurs at grammar, spelling, the structure of sentences and punctuation. The teacher’s commentary

concerns the best graded students. Yet, their written productions are neither coherent nor accurate and need to be developed at the earlier mentioned points.

3.3.2.2 The results of the unskilled students' examination's essays

As it is earlier mentioned that the great majority of students (65%, i.e. 65 out of 100 learners) obtain less than 10/20. This explains that most of the students need to enhance their writing competence and alter the strategies that they rely on when composing an extended essay. Thus, the correction of the less efficient writers reveals that several areas impede profoundly their writing performance. In effect, the passages that will be tackled are extracted from students' writing pieces.

3.3.2.2.1 Grammar

Grammar coherence is problematic for the unskilled writers who embody the large majority. The weaknesses occur in the use of tenses, auxiliaries, definite and indefinite articles, etc. Furthermore, the writing deficiencies are recorded primarily in the use of the present simple and simple past, i.e. when the learners describe a situation in the past, in lieu of conjugating the verbs in simple past, they use the present, or they employ the two tenses in one single paragraph. In addition, the weaknesses also occur in the conjugation of some of the verbs for some students as shown in the following instances, (see appendix 11):

- *“Fati have a hobbies like play hand ball, she die about the Indian movies and of course the actors, she love shahis kapoeur, she like sleeping all the time, she want to be a future teacher of English. I forget something she is a girl coffee she love the coffee very much, it's like a drug for her, she hate cats and dogs. no one can touch her face I don't know why?”*

The passage reveals all the grammatical mistakes including the auxiliary “to have”, and the “s” of the third person. Knowing that the learner obtains a very poor grade 06/20. another example taken from another student's essay which shows other grammatical mistakes:

- *“When I have six years old, I losed my mother, so I leave with my family our house, and we got to my grand mother's house in out of Sidi Bel Abbès”.*

In the example, there is an amalgam between two tenses, in which the student writer is unaware of how and when to use simple past and when to use the present simple. Furthermore, the student also does not know how to conjugate the verb “to lose” in the past, and utilizes the present instead of simple past, though s/he speaks about a past event. The

following paragraphs are extracted from a student's written production, wherein the entire essay is full of different mistakes and particularly verbs conjugation, s/he produces as follows:

- *“In this life there are many principals to live with and the most important one is love, than we can continue our life with it, and the most big, large and so beautiful love in the word is the love of my mother.
My mother has some specific details physically, so when I look her I see this beautiful grean eyes, her dark short hair with this whit skin she is small then me, but beautiful then me. she has a peaceful smil that make you live.”*

The two passages are full of various mistakes; no conjugated verbs, no respect for punctuation and capitalization and totally inaccurate grammar. The following instance is taken from another student's composition, in which s/he conjugates all the verbs inappropriately, i.e. unawareness and incomprehension of tenses, as shown in the following example:

- *“There is no thing more than love in my mother personality. She love everything she do for us; cooking for example, I have never and ever tasted as my mother cooking; I always try to be like her but I don't thinks so, she is also reads a lot of books so she is so good in telling storys and giving advices.”*

In addition, the way students structure their questions is grammatically incorrect for instance, one student obtains 09/20, composes a question in the introductory paragraph as indicated in the following example:

- *“...who is Muhammed and how he was look?”*

Even asking simple questions is difficult for the novice writers; they are unaware of the structure of a simple question. The student carries on description stating that:

- *“...“there is none compartable to him”, He had a white with some rosy skin, with a big head, his hair is black wavy and jet shine, he appear his blaide time, his eyes was black opened...”*

It is worth mentioning that this passage contains a mixture of the present and the past. Although the student describes the Prophet Mohamed and begins description using the past, but from time to time s/he misuses the tenses; the verbs ought to be in simple past. Moreover, that learner is unaware of the grammatical rules, i.e. s/he does not know that when the subject is in the plural form, the auxiliary or verbs in general ought to be in the plural form too, like

when the student wrote “...*his eyes was black*”. The subject “eyes” is plural and the auxiliary “to be” is in singular form.

To sum up, after analyzing most of the students’ examination essays, it is important to note that the grammatical mistakes, and which are considered to be serious and important; in that EFL learners are unaware of grammar rules namely, the present simple and simple past. That is to say, they do know neither the conjugation of the verbs nor when to use them. Additionally, it is noticed in most of the essays that the students are not aware of the usage of the definite and indefinite articles; whether they join both articles with plural nouns, or neglect them.

3.3.2.2.2 Spelling

Spelling poses a hurdle for the unskilled writers. Most of them make mistakes at the level of spelling and do not know how to write even simple and familiar vocabulary and sometimes, they compose words as they are pronounced. In addition, some vocabularies are too common, yet the novice writers do not write these words correctly. Indeed, these factors affect greatly the meaning of the production; the following instances show the students’ spelling mistakes (see appendix 12):

- *“In the other hand, she part all the time working not out side or in administration, but at home she claim the hour, cooking the diner for as and some times she is our doctor when we ill she bring for as medicament, stay behind as tell we feel good”*

Besides grammar, spelling is also a serious deficiency and this is due to the negligence of the reading skill. When students do not know a particular vocabulary, they replace it by a French one such as “medicament”. It is also important to note that one single paragraph is full of spelling mistakes and which are considered to be serious ones, for all the used vocabularies in the paragraph above are common and familiar. Another example is taken from another student’s essay in which it contains familiar words, however, the student does not know how to compose these vocabularies as shown in the passage beneath (see appendix 14):

- *“In include this trip was hard experience in my life but it learn me the patien, and the courge, me also I how I took the responsibility alone. the men didn’t live without experience because it him how he lived in this life.”*

It is worth pointing out that the whole passage is taken from a concluding paragraph and it contains inappropriate vocabulary which makes the reader guess the meaning of ideas and speculate what the writer attempts to convey. In order to show more of the different

spelling mistakes made by different students, the beneath instance is from a student's writing piece, in which s/he obtains 06/20, s/he composes as follow, (see appendix 13)

- *“Allthought she is angry person she have a big and whait hart; she think in all people before herself, she does the possible to make all persons who just know them happy...Fatiha do not care about any thing; by example mony she saide that wa make mony not the opposite. My sister stay smille...she look funny when she starte be angry; she look like comedain...she think that it is essay than we think...”*

The written production is full of mistakes at different levels. In fact, that student does not know how to write simple words like “although”, “white”, “heart”, etc. Moreover, some sentences are unclear because of the spelling mistakes. To conclude, the spelling mistakes that the students make are so basic in that, some passages are meaningless and uneasy to understand. In addition, these mistakes are related to the absence of both intensive and extensive reading. Revision also plays an important role in writing any extended essay which is considered to be ignored on the part of the poor writers.

3.3.2.2.3 Vocabulary selection and expression of ideas

The poor performers depend a great deal on ineffective translation; i.e. they think in their mother tongue (the Algerian Dialect) in order to be able to put the English words together into a paper. However, when the reader takes a look at the examination texts, it seems like reading pointless language, due to the huge and unacceptable mistakes that make their writing unreadable and do not grasp the audience's attention. Basically, inappropriate translation from the Algerian Arabic into English overwhelms in their compositions and affects negatively their writing performances. In addition, the unskilled writers depend heavily on translation as a strategy that enables them to produce. The instances beneath are from students' essays and show how they reckon while writing and the strategies they utilize for composition, one student writes as follows (see appendix 14):

- *“So Ive went to the station of the train to travel and in the chamber of train each moment I looked Amel watched for me, because I was very crasy, and she remarked me, although I needed to smile in her face but I couldn't. So she said for me, “when look Bachar, you didn't regret of this trip”, so I was to talk with her, and I watch every time in the places around Bachar, all the places I like it...”*

The inadequate selection of vocabulary taken from the Algerian Dialect leads to ineffective translation. The whole passage is grammatically incorrect; plenty of language errors and the content is meaningless; ideas are not well expressed. Besides, code-switching is

what the student relies on especially when writing “*she remarked me*”. Another less efficient writer utilizes translation as a primary strategy for writing, the following paragraph reveals so, (see appendix 15):

- “...*one day in February 1999, a group of terrorists attacked the village of Bellarbi in SBA, they check to my father and some millitaries, they killed about 13 persons (old men, children, women) Suddenly, they were in our house, so my grand mother take me in the bathroom, and brise the lamp, and she her hand in my mouth. She tells: “we are just play cache-cache”. I was child so I believed it. in this moment, I listen my oncle, and my aunt cry, they were killed by a horrible method...*”

The writer relies heavily on translation and substitutes an English word by a French one “*brise*” instead of saying “break”. This implies that when the students are unaware of a particular vocabulary, they replace it by another word even if it is not taken from English language; this is done for the purpose of overcoming their writing difficulties (direct translation). The examples beneath display the translated sentences from the mother tongue into English, and also show the use of French vocabularies:

- “...*everything in my father is special, the way he moves, the way he behaves and the way he speaks. it is a role model for me, sometimes I just think that it, could creat to be a petit percent of what he is.*”

Here the writer employs a French word in the last sentence. The entire sentence is meaningless and difficult to figure out what s/he wants to transmit. Another student composes as follows:

- “*Sleeping for many hours didn’t help in losing weight but sleeping for 6 are enough and eating fruits and vegitables help the body to be always in good health and avoid drug wich containe gazes and also candies chocolat because both are the enemy of the body.*”

Besides grammar inaccuracy that appears in each line and spelling mistakes, translation plays an important role in students’ writing performances. Furthermore, the word “*chocolat*” is a French vocabulary adhered in a sentence which is completely taken from French the Algerian mother tongue. Another instance written by a student who obtains 08.5/20, wherein s/he composes some French words (see appendix 16):

- “*His sol was so full of lighte, he is the lighte that we need in darkness, he was faithful and truthful in every word he said he is the saource of advices whenee we lost since he*

is our teacher, he was a brave man when he could receive message from "Allah" to humanity..."

Hence, in order to overcome some writing difficulties, the less effective writers use some French words in lieu of English. This implies that most of the students rely heavily on translation; whether directly or indirectly. Moreover, the novice writers do not bother using some French vocabularies in their written productions. Most of the poor performers depend also on inefficient translation; mainly using the mother tongue as a primary language for being able to produce in English, and this has been covered in all the students' extended essays. Indeed, utilizing translation whether the mother tongue or the second language (L2) in writing is related to the absence of reading, in which the students find themselves incompetent in front of writing, for they do not know what to write onto a paper, because they lack vocabulary and ideas.

3.3.2.2.4 Writing mechanics

Students' general weaknesses occur also at the level of punctuation and capitalization. These two components play major roles in writing. After analyzing the learners' essays, it should be pointed out that all the novice students do not know how to punctuate adequately and how to capitalize properly. The instances beneath are from different students' compositions, and which show their writing mechanics' weakness:

- *"a friendship is a good relation between two person all of us have or had a friends, this experience we all live it. I have many friends, of course I love them..."*

Another piece of writing drafted by another learner and which shows that capitalization is completely neglected, s/he writes as follows:

- *"As many historians said, The prophet Mohamed 'peace be upon him' was brighter than the sun, he was beautiful characterized by his strong and tall body, he known by his long black hair and beard. also they said that he had a white skin. we can not talk a lot about his physical appearance but..."*

The essay is full of inappropriate punctuation and the absence of capitalization. Another example reveals another learner's weakness:

- *"His occupation an electrician, because now he is retired. He is amazing a very skilled electrician, In fact he is the only one that fixes the city's elevators, sometimes I go with him to help him out, and..."*

The student writer uses too long sentences and neglects the full stops when necessary. It is noticed that the unskilled writers often compose too long sentences or too short ones, and most frequently very long paragraphs full of commas as indicated in the passage beneath which is taken from a student's extended essay and who obtains 07/20:

- *“my mother is very very calm don't talk a lot, but if she will be nerveus she seems like a volcano, she always gives you a hope 'optimistic', an active and courageus women, and very traditional.”*

Very short paragraph that is full of different mistakes, and which affect tremendously the meaning. It is needless to mention all the instances which reveal that all the less efficient writers lack writing mechanics; they punctuate and capitalize whenever it seems logic and convenient for them. In addition, after the analysis of the poor writers' examination essays, it is noticed by the researcher that all the students do not master writing mechanics and are unaware of its importance in fostering the writing proficiency.

3.4 Results discussion

The results mentioned earlier reveal a multitude and general students' weaknesses, and more importantly writing problems which occur at the levels of grammar, vocabulary selection, spelling, writing mechanics, as well as the use of strategies. An immense difference is noticed between the students' group work in the classroom and their individual work during written expression examination. Furthermore, there is also a difference in strategy use in two different contexts, i.e. in the classroom, second year university students work slightly better than writing during exams.

Writing collaboratively helps students elaborate and exchange ideas, and permits the use of dictionaries when necessary. Time allowance in the classroom fits the learners and makes them write at ease. Whereas, during written expression exam, some students work under stress and frustration. In addition, the strategies used by the students are virtually the same (ineffective translation is used by the sweeping majority).

Students' written assignments reveal that the use of social/affective strategies is more beneficial for the learners in that they become able to produce essays slightly accurate and coherent compared to their exam writing pieces. Nevertheless, the use of social/affective strategies as recorded in the ethnographic observation show also that the students based their

writing on translation mainly from the mother tongue into English, (using bilingual dictionaries and asking their teachers to translate some words whether from L1 or L2).

Likewise, after the analysis of students' written expression exam, most of them (65%) depend a great deal on inefficient translation which influences negatively the learners' production proficiency. Those who obtain good grades such as (15/20, 14.5/20), their compositions cannot be considered as excellent essays, because of the grammatical and spelling mistakes which are corrected by the teacher, but not taken into account at the level of evaluation, for the instructor focuses heavily on the content and the form rather than mistakes. Though, the teacher provides written feedback on grammar, vocabulary and spelling, s/he does not grade the students' on the basis of the number of mistakes that they make.

3.4.1 Results' discussion of students' written assignments

After the analysis of students' written assignments provided by the teacher in the classroom, the results reveal that the mistakes are minimized compared to the individual work during examination. This implies that using social/affective strategies are helpful for EFL students, in that they have the opportunity to exchange ideas, vocabulary, and use of dictionaries or asking for the teacher's assistance. All the above mentioned elements contribute to the development of writing.

Nevertheless, students' written productions cannot be considered to be good, because of the number of mistakes that are recorded. The latter occurs at grammar, spelling, word selection as well as writing mechanics as shown in the instances provided in the analysis. Most of the essays contain mistakes at the level of tenses, in which the students do not conjugate the verbs, i.e. the plural and singular forms are alike for them. Moreover, they sometimes forget to write some auxiliaries when the verb is combined with "to be". It is important to mention that the results obtained from students' assignments equal with that viewed by the researcher-observer during the ethnographic observation; when the teacher ordered some of his/her students to write on the whiteboard and showed some weaknesses at the level of grammar.

More importantly, students' assignments reveal also learners' weaknesses at the level of word selection, since they depend heavily on ineffective translation as discovered in the observation. Similarly, when teachers provide their learners with assignments whether in the classroom or out of it; they rely a great deal on translating some of the words or ideas in order

to overcome their writing difficulties. Notably, employing inappropriate translation mainly from the mother tongue or Algerian Dialect into English language has been recorded in all the students' written productions.

This notion suggests that second year university students misuse the learnt strategies. In addition, as it has been mentioned earlier in classroom observation's results that even teachers depend on some strategies instruction neglecting others, i.e. they focus on teaching metacognitive strategies whether implicitly or explicitly, such as planning, clustering, brainstorming, etc., and ordering their learners to form groups and compose about a given topic, where the students find themselves in front of employing social/affective strategies.

However, teachers neglect teaching cognitive strategies which may well develop the learners' writing proficiency. Accordingly, metacognitive strategies instruction results in the learners' utilization of some of them, but inappropriately. This is due to many reasons such as the absence of intensive or extensive reading, less exposure to different writing opportunities and the regular absence of the students. Besides, for some students, examinations are the only opportunity where they find themselves obliged to produce a writing piece.

Teaching metacognitive strategies and neglecting other strategies cannot be the only teaching method to be applied on EFL learners, as if those strategies are perfect and better suit the students. Second year students use inappropriately the above mentioned strategies. Teachers need to stress also on cognitive strategies and social/affective ones. Nevertheless, when teachers urged their learners to work per groups, the students worked together and employed some metacognitive strategies such as planning, brainstorming and jotting down their ideas as revealed in the qualitative analysis.

However, while using social/affective strategies, students rely heavily on metacognitive strategies and one cognitive strategy which is translating their thoughts from the mother tongue into English, and this is what their written assignments reveal. Hence, instructors need to focus on teaching social/affective strategies adequately as well as shedding light on cognitive strategies that contribute also to the development of the writing skill as mentioned earlier in the review of literature.

Moreover, students' written assignments reveal also that though written expression teachers focus on metacognitive strategies instruction and students try hardly to follow the different steps that their instructors illustrate in the classroom, yet the learners do not

accomplish their written tasks adequately. In other words, their extended essays were full of spelling mistakes, albeit they were allowed to use dictionaries or ask the teacher to spell some of the unfamiliar words for them. Yet, the students do not produce coherently as shown in the instances taken from different students' compositions in the analysis. Second year learners are not permitted to make such mistakes, for they have sufficient time and other factors that facilitate their written performance. Nevertheless, spelling mistakes are due to the negligence of the reading skill and this indicates that most of the students do not read.

To sum up, since written expression teachers focus on metacognitive strategies instruction, having a strong belief that these strategies are suitable and meet the students' needs and weaknesses, learners find themselves obliged to follow their teachers' instructions. However, students' weaknesses can be explained in that they do not read, because as it has been mentioned earlier in the literature that reading contributes deeply to the development of the writing skill. Furthermore, teachers also need to focus on instructing the other strategies, for some techniques are more suitable for some students, because they cannot impose a particular strategy on their learners. It is essential to note that cognitive and social/affective may also be helpful in promoting students' writing proficiency. Additionally, it is better on the teachers' part to advise their students to avoid ineffective translation.

3.4.2 Results' discussion of skilled student writers

According to the grades (15/20) which are obtained by three students as shown in table (3.1), those students are considered to be proficient writers. However, it is important to note that their essays contain different mistakes at various levels. The other students' grades vary between 14.5 and 12/20; the marks are considered to be good, but the essays cannot be considered as accurate writing pieces because of the number of mistakes that are recorded in the qualitative analysis of the best graded students. The three best graded learners who obtain 15/20 make some mistakes. However, the written impediments which are recorded are not too important, because the meaning does not change, i.e. the mistakes do not have a negative influence on the meaning or the structure of sentences to a large extent.

It is important to study the strategies used by the skilled writers. The results emerging from students' extended essays' investigation highlight that they rely heavily on

metacognitive strategies in that they use a wide range of different strategies that enable them to write adequately and accomplish their written tasks correctly. Whenever there is an exam, students read the given topics carefully in order to discover what to communicate and how to start it. Similarly, the proficient writers read the subject very carefully, that is why their extended essays are well-structured and well-organized. Moreover, their compositions are outlined in the right form unlike the less proficient writers.

It is worth mentioning that because of their grades, these students are considered as skilled writers; they brainstorm in order to be able to generate ideas about the given topic. Indeed, they brainstorm vocabulary and thoughts related to the subject. This implies that they read the topics provided by their instructor carefully. After reading and brainstorming, they plan and divide their essay into approximately five (05) paragraphs as explained by the teacher in the classroom and noticed by the researcher-observer that students are required to compose five paragraphs; one in the introduction, three for essay body and the last one must be devoted to the conclusion. Thus, the students follow their teacher's explanations and this is what the instructors confirm when asked by the researcher if their learners stick to the teacher's illustrations and if they find the provided steps in the writing pieces.

It has been noticed that all the best graded students (from S1 to S9) use simple vocabulary, but make spelling mistakes. According to the essays, students maintain concentration on their compositions, because they keep thinking and writing in English. On the other hand, whenever an idea is difficult for them and seems impossible to be expressed in the target language, they move to translation. Nevertheless, this translation is considered to be ineffective, for it affects the quality of a certain sentence in general and language in particular. Accordingly, it seems that proficient writers depend on translation from time to time to overcome their writing difficulties and to convey the message. It should be pointed out that, this result equals with that obtained in students' questionnaire.

The use of translation of particular ideas or vocabularies seems to be like an alternative for the learners whenever they do not know how to express their thoughts properly. Since dictionaries are not allowed during examinations, students are obliged to use what is in their linguistic repertoire. The best graded learners employ the above mentioned strategy which falls under the category of cognitive strategies in order to be able to carry on writing, because they find themselves helpless and incapable of producing. It is also important to note

that the translated sentences are first constructed orally, because when one reads one of the sentences, it sounds like the writer is speaking to the teacher or the audiences (oral construction). This is indicated through the use of some words such as “imagine”, i.e. here the student addresses the word “imagine” to the teacher, the same as while speaking. There are some vocabularies that are used in speech, but not in written production. EFL students are therefore unaware of academic writing.

Some of the experienced student writers employ a strategy that seems effective for their writing, namely oral construction which falls under the category of metacognitive strategies and which enables them to carry out production. The use of ineffective translation, inappropriate word selection and even vocabulary order, have been commonly used in the students’ writing pieces; to make sure that their compositions or their writing tasks have been attained in a successful manner. Thus, whenever the students encounter a writing hindrance, they use one of the earlier mentioned strategies in lieu of substituting an idea or a word by another easier and a correct one, they prefer the easiest method to make sure that their writing is carried out; i.e. they do not spend much time on thinking to find the correct idea or vocabulary.

As far as reviewing is concerned, it seems like even when effective learners re-read and review their essays, they are not able to recognize their mistakes predominantly in grammar and spelling. Although, time allotted for examination is enough for all the students to write an extended essay, the best graded students know how to tackle argumentative expository/narrative essays. However, the great majority were absent while the teacher illustrated the different steps that any writer should go through. That is why, most of them (less efficient writers) compose randomly.

As far as the skilled students are concerned, though their teacher does not show them explicitly the different metacognitive/cognitive strategies, they reveal their capacity towards accomplishing their written tasks successfully especially for S1, S2, S3 and S4, and even the way they employ metacognitive strategies is effective. However, the different language errors that the best graded students make, mainly at the levels of grammar (tenses hindrances) and spelling are related to the entire absence of the reading skill and of course negligence of good revision, for the latter helps students recognize their mistakes and thus refine their written texts.

The above mentioned strategies are effective for the students, because they enable them to generate ideas and vocabulary related to the given topic. Furthermore, after generating the first ideas and recall some of the necessary vocabularies and events, students move to the organization. So, they organize and re-arrange all events or information on their examination sheets. Thus, they obtain very well structured sentences and paragraphs.

It is important to shed light on students' writing general weaknesses, whenever an impediment inhibits them, they move to a cognitive strategy; namely translation, i.e. when an idea is not clear in the students' minds or is difficult to be expressed appropriately, their writing hindrance entails the use of translation instead of substituting the whole idea by another one, or utilize re-reading as a cognitive strategy that may well facilitate the flow of thoughts and enable them to generate more correct sentences. In addition, the use of inadequate translation as shown in the students' essays, affects profoundly the cohesion and the quality of the writing piece.

Therefore, it is important to note that the best graded students employ the same strategies, namely metacognitive ones, and this shows what kind of strategies use and confirms also the second hypothesis which states that second year university students employ the same strategies when writing a text. This kind of translation occurs only in student's 1 examination paper who obtains 15/20. On the other hand, the second student and the third one essays do not mark any translated sentences because of learners' language proficiency, but mark with some spelling and grammatical mistakes.

The primary conclusion drawn from results' discussion is that the best graded students (mainly those who obtained 15/20) employ efficient strategies that enable them to write successfully. Nevertheless, since they are unaware of the importance of reading, their writing pieces are marked to some extent with some deficiencies. These mistakes do not affect what the writer intends to transmit. It is worth mentioning that after the study of strategy use by most of the effective learners, it is noticed by the researcher that they rely a great deal on metacognitive strategies for writing any text; namely planning, brainstorming and oral construction. They use oral construction whenever it seems necessary for them to provide more comprehension to the audiences.

3.4.3 Results' discussion of the less efficient student writers

As it was previously mentioned in the qualitative analysis of students' written expression examination that 65% obtain less than 10/20, and are considered as less effective

students since 65% represents the large majority of student writers. It is important to study learners' general weaknesses and the strategies used for producing a written text. The analysis shows that all the unskilled students have writing problems in a multitude of areas; grammar, vocabulary choice, ideas expression, spelling and writing mechanics seem to be real hindrances for the less effective writers. Besides, those students do not acquire grammar rules adequately, because as it is indicated in the analysis and especially from the instances provided from their extended essays that they have their own grammar; i.e. their writing pieces do not contain any grammatical rules.

Furthermore, they do not master the tenses, mainly the present tense which poses clearly a major problem for the unskilled student writers in which; whether they do not conjugate all the verbs or they conjugate all of them, even when some of the verbs ought to be in the infinitive. Nevertheless, tenses instruction and predominantly the present simple, simple past and the auxiliaries are tackled with the pupils in the middle school for four (04) years, and then re-instructed in high school for three (03) years, and finally at the tertiary level with plenty of examples and with different tasks provided by the teacher. Yet the students do not differentiate between in which situation one must put the present, and in which situation one should conjugate the verbs into the past. These are considered to be the easiest tenses in English language.

It is worth mentioning that the less effective learners are considered to be unskilled writers because they do not attend grammar classes, the same as noticed in the ethnographic observation, wherein a great deal of students were absent from written expression classes, and those who attended were a minority. Grammar is similar to a pillar or a backbone to the language. So how would these students learn or review the grammatical rules if they do not attend all their classes, since all the modules are complementary to each other, and most importantly, taught in English language.

Regarding vocabulary choice and expression of ideas are poor and are shown clearly in their essays, and which indicate that they lack the adequate vocabularies related to the given topics. Moreover, the large majority of students lack linguistic competence and thus, do not have language proficiency. Reading one of their compositions implies that these students combine and join words together in order to form sentences, and thus passages. Their essays contain unforgivable and unacceptable mistakes which make their compositions aimless. Most importantly, the vocabulary chosen by the students are taken from their mother tongue, i.e. the

Algerian Dialect. The unskilled writers depend heavily on translation which makes their writing meaningless and does not grasp the reader's attention. Most of the learners utilize the ineffective translation as a strategy which they find more effective and efficient, and which enables them to carry on writing and accomplish their written task successfully.

Basically, the result obtained here equals with that in students' questionnaires and with that obtained also in classroom observation. Nevertheless, students' vocabulary selection and the way they express themselves indicate that they do not read. In addition, the way they compose, suggests also that they are not well trained on how to produce accurately and coherently; their English is inaccurate and inappropriate, knowing that they are second year university students, and only one year remains to obtain the bachelor's degree.

It is necessary to study the less efficient student writers' strategies that they employ while writing a text. Less effective students rely a great deal on inefficient translation as mentioned in the qualitative analysis that most of the learners used it as a strategy that helped them produce. They employ it as a writing strategy that enables them to brainstorm some of the vocabulary and ideas. So, they brainstorm first their thoughts in the mother tongue (the Algerian Dialect) and then, transfer those ideas into their examination papers. Furthermore, while copying their sentences, they do not think about the audiences, but they write in order to fill the double sheets, because their English language lacks several criteria; such as grammar and spelling, and writing mechanics.

Besides brainstorming their ideas in the Algerian Dialect, they plan less, because most of their essays reveal that these learners do not know how to make an adequate planning which enables them to organize those thoughts onto a paper. Thus, the unskilled student writers depend heavily on one cognitive strategy, namely translation, and rely also on some metacognitive strategies such as brainstorming and planning. However, they rely inappropriately on these strategies, and most importantly they are not proficient and able to translate coherently and accurately. In that sense, K. Bukta quotes Raimes (1985)

Raimes (1985) expresses her concerns in connection with defining a writer as "unskilled" and attempts to define what makes a writer unskilled in a L2. She concludes that although there are differences between the composing processes in L1 and L2, L2 writers use strategies similar to their L1 strategies and try to express themselves in writing as much as they can bearing in mind that the language is not their native one, but a language they are learning. (K, Bukta, 2013: 26)

Adding to that, they plan less which makes their writing poorly performed. In similar context,

...the main difference between unskilled and skilled writers is in the use of strategies: unskilled writers employ fewer and simpler strategies than expert writers. Unskilled writers spend time on planning and they revise less than expert writers. (op.cit:24).

So, the strategies employed by the novice student writers are not used in the right manner and need to be altered accordingly. Additionally, as shown earlier in the qualitative analysis of the inexperienced student writers that whenever a word or an idea impeded their production, they did not try to change the idea, or review the entire sentence in order to adjust it or generate a new thought. They rather substituted the English word by a French one, i.e. they translated from the mother tongue into English and whenever a particular vocabulary was unfamiliar for them and difficult to be translated, they solemnly wrote it in French language, in order to make sure that their writing was carried out, accomplished and ready for the teacher to read the written text.

The result obtained here equals with that in the ethnographic observation, when the students did not know a particular vocabulary, they whether asked their written expression teachers to translate some of the words whether from Standard Arabic language into English, or they used their bilingual dictionaries which were most frequently Arabic-English dictionaries. However, in the exams, the dictionaries are not allowed, and which entail for some students to write some of the unfamiliar vocabularies in their L2 language in order to continue writing. Another obstacle was also noticed by the researcher in the unskilled students' essays was that sometimes when they did not know a certain word, they only left a gap, and hence, it was the role of the teacher to figure out what the writer endeavours to communicate on the paper. This explains that most of less efficient writers do not take into account the audience, but rather they compose because they are asked to do so.

Likewise, some second year university students and mainly those who are considered to be novice writers do not write at all their lectures, however, they only depend on the handouts of their instructors, and when it is high time for examination, it will be the only opportunity for them to compose an extended essay. That is why they are unaware of the importance of the reader, because any writing piece is addressed to the audience. In similar context J. Lynn Graig (2013: 104) opines:

....writing for a reader is difficult challenge for students, and unskilled writers often will «dump” every think they know onto the page without thinking of a reader. Yet the sense of audience is vital to a student who is trying to organize a piece of writing....clarity and cohesion require that the

writer have some sense of the reader. Then clear and cohesive text can be created by correct word choice, appropriate use of style and register, sentence construction, paragraph development, and organization that leads the reader through a train of thoughts...

To sum up, the inexperienced student writers use the same strategies, namely metacognitive strategies: brainstorming, oral construction and planning, and one cognitive strategy which is translating from the Algerian Dialect into English. However, they employ these strategies ineffectively, because they brainstorm in their mother tongue, they barely plan. Most importantly, they copy all the generated ideas on their sheets without taking into account the language norms, because these students are considered to be poor writers who are unaware of what writing is.

Furthermore, they compose without taking into consideration the audiences; they produce whatever comes in their minds without thinking about the appropriate vocabulary, no respect for neither grammar nor writing mechanics, and they use too long sentences in which sometimes one sentence forms one long paragraph. It is important to note, that these students revise less, because their extended essays are full of mistakes at different levels. So, how can the inexperienced students turn to skilled writers without being exposed to reading?

3.5 Conclusion

The information obtained from the ethnographic observation and predominantly from the analysis of students' extended essays brought relevant and insightful results that helped the researcher identify the writing attitudes and classify the used strategies into categories. The results showed that the sweeping majority obtained less than ten, and considered therefore as unskilled student writers and the rest as experienced learners, because they obtained more than twelve. The observation revealed that both students and teachers did not have sufficient time to practise the craft of writing. Besides, tutors focused more on the teaching of writing as a process.

The students' essays unveiled that they utilized similar strategies, namely the metacognitive ones, and depended heavily on translating ineffectively for the purpose of overcoming their writing hurdles and to carry out production. Additionally, the students' writing pieces revealed also the use of oral construction which falls under the category of metacognitive strategies. Revision was not recorded in the unskilled students' essays; because

of the wide range of the committed mistakes which affected the coherence and the cohesion of their texts.

The next chapter will be entirely devoted to the analysis and results interpretation of the students' and teachers' questionnaires.

Chapter four: Analysis of students' and teachers' questionnaires.

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4.1 Introduction

This chapter is entirely devoted to the analysis of students' and teachers' questionnaires. It first deals with the analysis of students' questionnaire and followed by tutors' questionnaire analysis. This instrument is primarily used to verify first the research hypotheses. Basically, the questionnaires enable the researcher to ask a number of questions to both learners and teachers about the writing skill in general and in particular.

The gathered data are analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively via supplying and illustrating information through tables, graphs and explaining clearly the results. It also presents an interpretation of the obtained results from the two sources (questionnaires). The collected data from the students' questionnaire are compared with that of teachers, analyzed and discussed thoroughly. Most importantly, these data are also compared with that of the observation.

4.2 Analysis of the students' questionnaire

This section analyzes the students' questionnaire for the ultimate objective of eliciting data.

Question 1: Do you find the written expression class 'interesting'?

Options	N	%
Yes	73	96.05
No	3	3.95
Total	76	100

Table 4.1 The way students find written expression class

The table indicates that the great majority of the students (96.05%) claim that written expression is an interesting class. In other words, 73 of the informants are aware of the importance of writing as a skill. It is through the help and the guidance of the teacher, the learners become motivated by providing them with interesting topics to write about. On the other hand, only 3.95% of the learners state that written expression class is not that important.

Question 2: Do you find writing a complex skill?

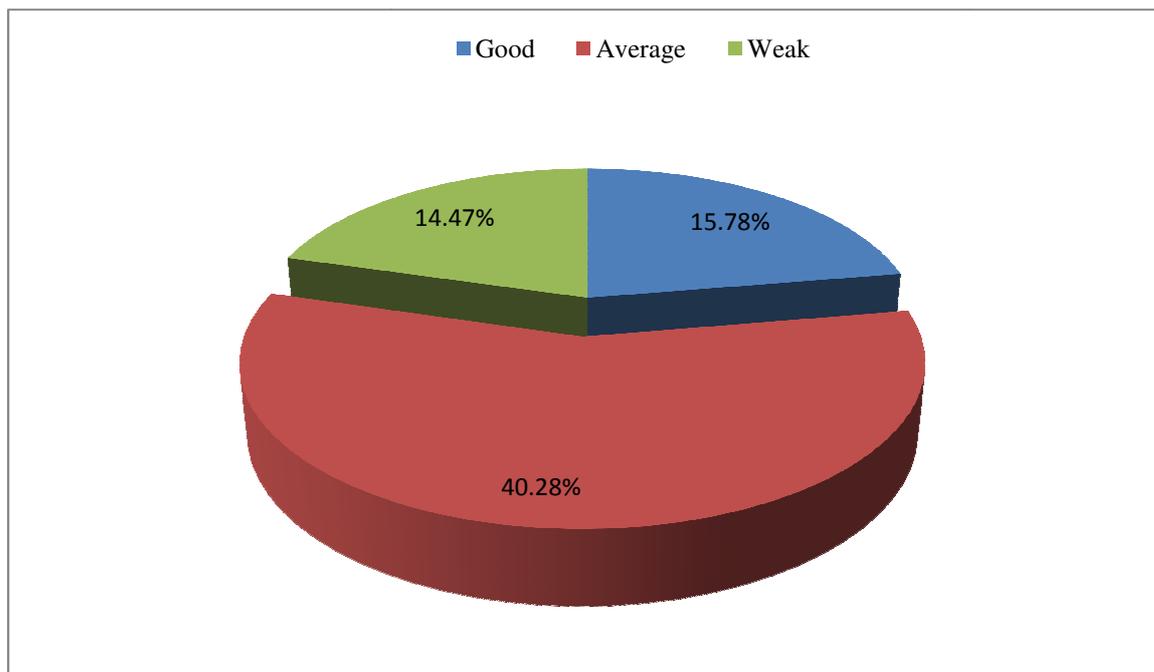
Options	N	%
Yes	51	67.11
No	25	32.99
Total	76	100

Table 4.2 The students' perception of the writing skill

The table above reveals that 67.10% of the students indicate that writing is a complex skill to master. Whereas, 25 learners (32.99%) report that written production is easy and a simple task to be handled. Most of the respondents are aware that writing is a troublesome skill for them because; it entails specific knowledge at the levels of grammar, lexis, vocabulary...etc. The students find writing a complex skill, for they do not know the techniques that are efficient for writing any production.

Question 3: Is your level in writing?

The graph below reveals that 12 out of 76 questioned students claim that they are good writers, 53 informants (40.28%) presume that they have an average level as far as composition is concerned. On the other hand, 11 (14.47%) out of 76 informants report that they are poor student writers. Those who claim that they are skilled writers could be also good readers, or routinely writers, i.e. they are creative students. Those who agree on that they are average writers might well have hindrances at the level of grammar, vocabulary, ideas...etc. The unskilled informants are not primarily aware of the importance of the writing skill, nor try to enhance the quality of their written production.



Graph 4.1 Students' level in written expression

Question 4: Are you motivated to write?

Yes → 68

No → 08

Sixty eight (68) out of seventy six (76) questioned students believe that they are motivated writers. This implies that these informants are active learners and are eager to enhance their writing proficiency. Indeed, motivation plays a relevant role not only in writing, but also in the learning and the teaching processes alike. Surprisingly, 08 students state that they are not motivated as far as writing is concerned. Students with low writing ability are found to be demotivated, and this negative attitude has a negative influence on learning in general and writing in particular.

Question 5: If “not”, please, explain why?

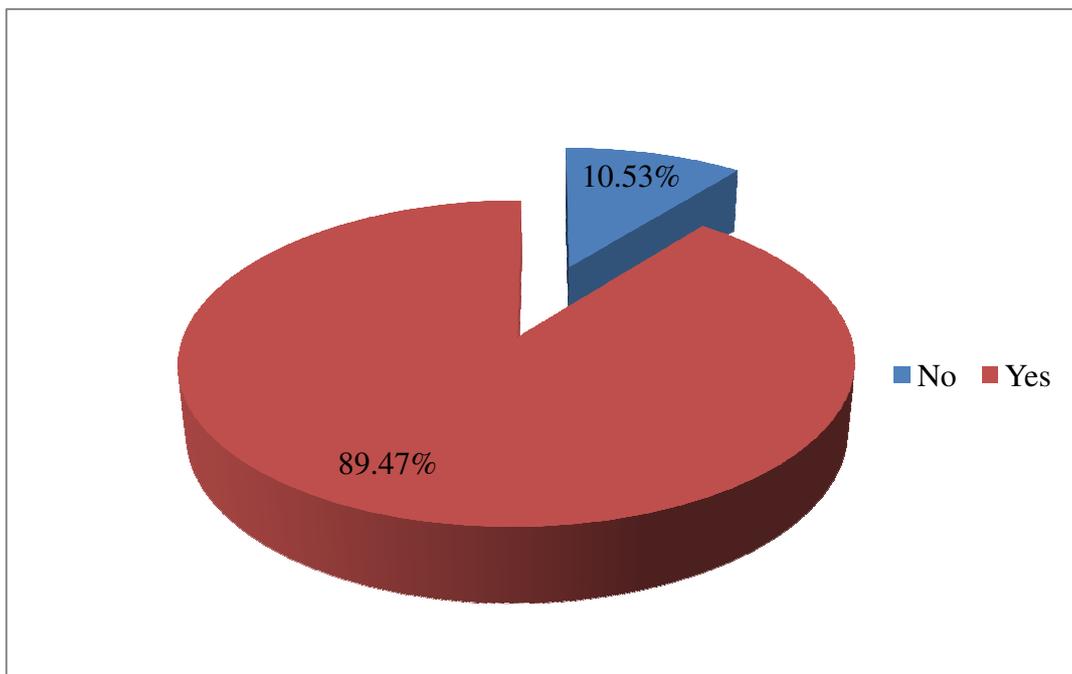
It is worth noting that 08 out of 76 respondents clearly admit that they do not show interest in writing and that they are not motivated learners, only five (05) students explain the reasons that demotivate them and feel reluctant towards written production. The illustrations can be summed up in the following suggestions:

- “I’m not motivated because I don’t have sufficient knowledge, and lack vocabulary”.
- “I am not really motivate in writing, because I don’t read too much”.

- “Because I’m so lazy and I don’t have a rich vocabulary and grammar”.
- “I hate writing especially essays”.
- “Because writing is boring”.

Question 6: Does reading contribute to the development of the writing skill?

The following graph indicates that 68 out of 76 informants, i.e. (89.47%) state that reading contributes profoundly to the development of writing. This result equals with that obtained in Teachers’ Questionnaires. As it is mentioned in the literature (see chapter 2) reading is strongly correlated with the writing skill, in that reading enriches the students’ repertoire. Moreover, the reading text may serve as a model for future writing. In addition, good readers tend to write more effectively than those who do not read. Better readers are always creative in their written productions. Furthermore, they become able to argue and denounce what they have read. On the other hand, 08 students (10.53%) report that reading does not improve writing. According to these students, there is no relationship between reading and writing.



Graph 4.2 Contribution of reading to the development of the writing skill

Question 7: If “yes”, please, explain how?

89.47% of the questioned students believe that reading contributes to the development of writing and some of them provide explanations which can be summarized in the following claims:

* “It enriches my English language and to better understand how to write in a correct form”.

- “it helps me to know how to write correctly and how to use words in the exact place”.
- “by making your english rich and taking ideas for each topic”.
- “by reading new vocabulary which helps me to improve my level in writing”.
- “when you read, you learn more vocabulary and speling”.
- “Because reading can develop our vocabulary skills and adopt new ideas”
- “giving idea, new way of expression”.
- “to copy down what you have read”.
- “Reading help me to memories the morphology of the word ie how to spell this word”.
- “It enriches my language and makes me avoid the spelling mistakes”.

Question 8: Does speaking contribute to the development of the writing skill?

Options	N	%
Yes	61	80.27
No	15	19.73
Total	76	100

Table 4.3 Contribution of the speaking skill to the development of writing

80.26% agree that speaking does contribute to the development of the writing skill, and only 19.73% (15 informants) indicate that speaing does not have an influence on writing. Nevertheless, it is strongly believed among scholars that all the skills are interrelated, and that language proficiency greatly relies on the speaking skill. Indeed, the latter has an impact on written production in that it helps learners distinguish between formal and informal language.

Question 9: After reading the topic of the composition, what do you generally do?

- a- Start writing immediately
- b- Think about ideas (brainstorming)

- c- Make an outline and follow it (planning)
- d- Write down sentences and phrases related to the topic
- e- Other, specify

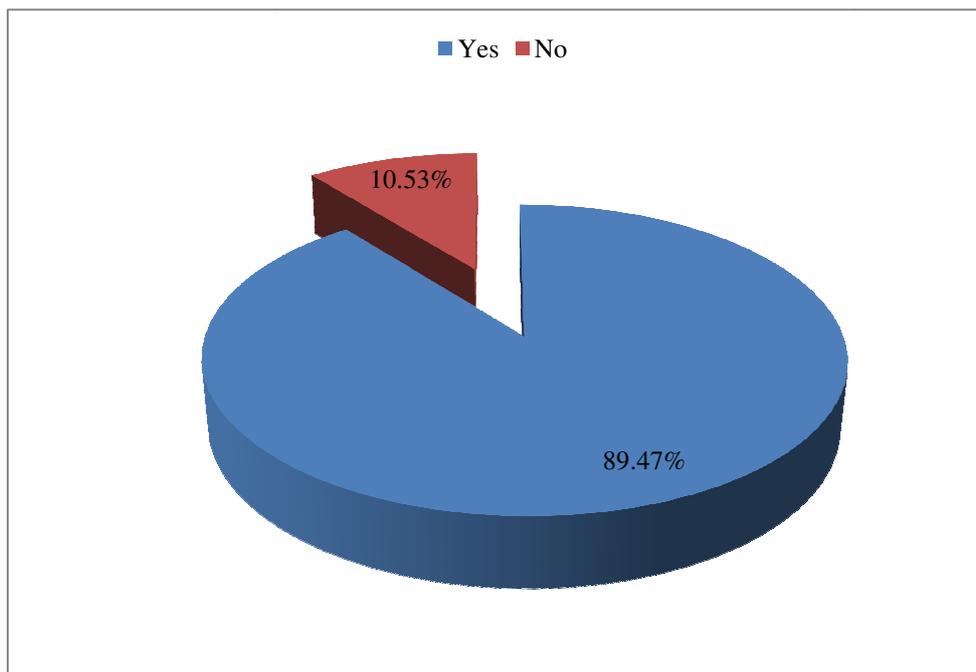
The informants give various answers concerning the pre-writing strategies. They report using a number of pre-writing strategies that are gathered by the researcher, as the table below suggests. It is worth noting that there is another student, whose participation is not indicated in the table, and who uses another strategy which is totally different from that mentioned in the question.

Options	N	%
a	01	1.31
b	57	75
c	34	44.73
d	18	23.68

Table 4.4 The pre-writing strategies

All the above cited strategies are metacognitive and are identified in the ethnographic observation. Surprisingly, only one student (1.31%) who presumes that after reading the topic, s/he commences immediately drafting. However, the great majority of the questioned students, i.e. 75% indicate that they think first about ideas (brainstorming). 44.73%; around 34 informants state that first they make an outline and follow it (planning). 18 questioned students (23, 68%) claim that they jot down sentences and phrases related to the given topic. It is essential to mention that there is one informant who employs another strategy which is completely different from that in the question in that s/he translates ideas and words and then organizes them.

Question 10: While writing, do you think of the purpose of what you are writing?



Graph 4.3 The purpose of writing

The graph above suggests that sixty eight (68) informants report that writing is a purposeful task. Only 10.53% of the informants respond negatively in that they do not know about the main goal that lies behind written production. The question reveals that 89.48% of the students are employing one aspect of the cognitive strategies. There is always an aim behind writing any text. Indeed, thinking about the objective of producing engages the learners in thinking critically and therefore successful writers. In fact, this aspect determines what the student wants to say and how to communicate on a paper by analyzing the situation of the given topic.

Question 11: While writing, do you think in:

Options	N	%
Arabic	31	40.78
French	22	28.94
English	41	53.94

Table 4.5 Languages used by students while writing

In this question, students report using specific strategies while writing as shown in the table. 40.78%, that is, 31 out of 76 questioned students state that in order to write, we think first in Arabic (L1), and then translate the ideas and words into English language. However, among the 31 informants answer that they think sometimes in Arabic and other times in English. 22 informants agree that while writing extended essays, we think in French language, so that it facilitates the flow of thoughts. Likewise, among the 28.94% of the questioned learners respond using both languages; French and English for drafting.

It is worth mentioning that the sweeping majority of the informants rely a great deal on translation (whether from Arabic or French into English) and then start writing about the provided topic. This attitude is found to be a negative aspect, because translating sentences and phrases make the context meaningless and aimless. On the other hand, only 20 informants presume that they think in English in order to produce. Basically, writing in English involves thinking in English, for the latter brings the students closer to fluency, i.e. it helps students organize and communicate better their thoughts and avoid therefore the oral constriction.

Question 12: What do you do to overcome writing difficulties?

- a-** Look for vocabulary in the dictionary
- b-** Translate the idea from Arabic or French into English
- c-** Ask for teacher’s help
- d-** Other, specify

Options	N	%
a	28	36.84
b	31	40.78
c	29	38.15

Table 4.6 Strategies used to overcome writing difficulties

The table indicates the students’ use of strategies to overcome the obstacles while writing any extended essay. 28 out of 76 students reply using dictionaries to overcome writing difficulties whenever they do not know how to express an idea or a particular vocabulary. 31 informants translate ideas from whether Arabic or French into English. 29 students claim that they ask a classmate or a teacher for assistance, and that is what has been noticed by the researcher in the ethnographic observation.

Nevertheless, the recorded strategies fall under the categories of cognitive and social/affective as it is indicated in the table. In other words, 40.78% translate ideas from one language to another in order to be able to produce in English; and this strategy is found to be a cognitive one. Whereas, 38.15% ask a classmate or the teacher for assistance and this is a social/ affective strategy.

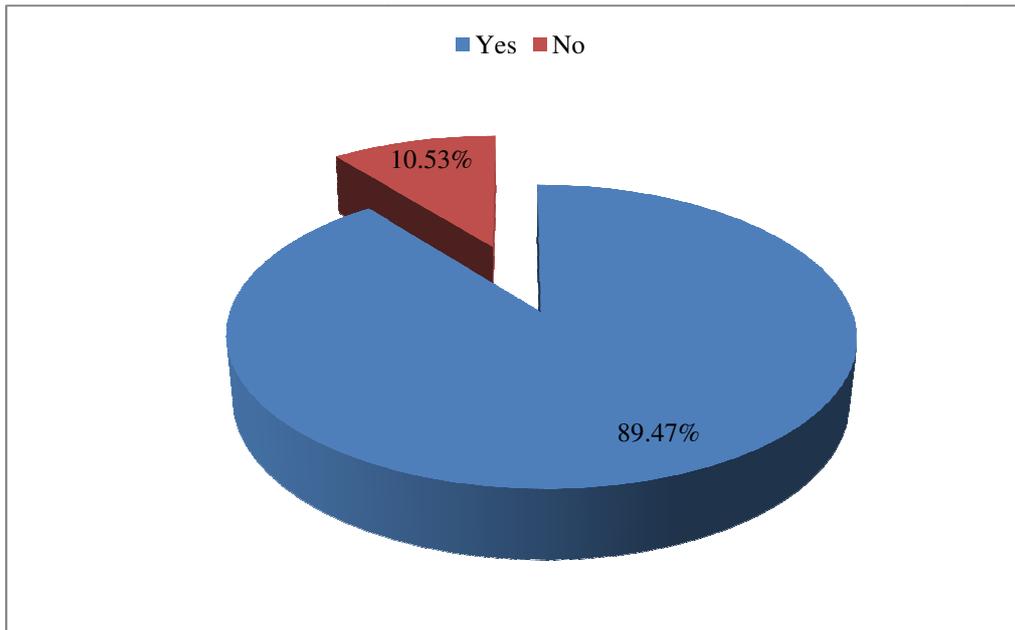
It should be pointed out that there are some informants who answer differently, i.e. using other strategies which are not listed in the question, the informants' responses can be summarized in the following claims:

- “arranging the whole idea while I considere this bad”.
- “I try to find another idea, a better one if it’s possible”.
- “some times, I try to remplace my idea with another one if it’s possible”.
- “make it with other vocabulary”.

All the above listed points fall under the cognitive strategies which are used by the students in order to overcome the hindrances while writing extended essays.

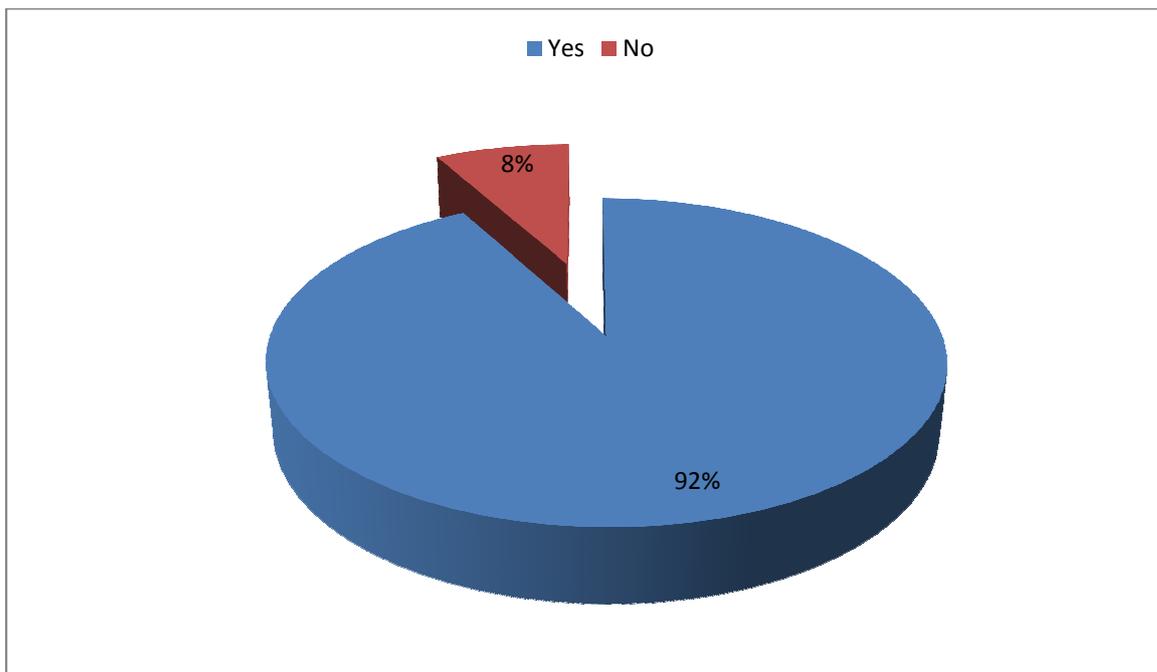
Question 13: Do you revise what you write?

The following graph reveals that sixty eight out of seventy six students claim revising their written essays. Only eight informants answer negatively the question. Interestingly, one student among the eight learners answers “no” and writes beside “no” the word “Never”. The percentage 89.47% represents the vast majority of the students who use revision as a strategy in producing a writing piece. Most respondents consider revision as a basic strategy in composition, for it gives a chance to the writer to look critically at his/ her production, i.e. to look at his/ her piece of writing from a different perspective or from a different angle. So, the writer here might well substitute his/her idea, a vocabulary or an expression by a better one.



Graph 4.4 Students' revision

Question 14: Do you receive teacher's feedback (comments on your essays)



Graph 4.5 Students' reception of teachers' feedback

The graph above reveals that the great majority of the respondents (92%) agree on the reception of teachers' comments on their written production. Whereas, six out of seventy six students (8%) presume that they do not receive any feedback on their writing assignments neither from their teachers nor from their peers. It is worth noting that this result is not covered

in classroom observational sessions, because all the students receive teachers' feedback. Nevertheless, only 2 students out of 70 informants answer "yes", but write as comments "sometimes, not much", i.e. sometimes they do receive teachers' responses and sometimes not.

Question 15: Do you use teachers' feedback for writing your paragraph?

Options	N	%
Yes	72	94.73
No	04	5.27
Total	76	100

Table 4.7 The use of teachers' feedback

The table above shows that most of the questioned students (94.73%) agree on using teachers' feedback. It should be pointed out that assessing the students' compositions is exceedingly basic; since a large number of the students (72 out of 76 students) rely a great deal on it and take it into account. However, 5.27% of the informants state that they do not use teachers' comments in their written production.

4.3 Result discussion

The following section interprets the results obtained by the means of students' questionnaires.

Question one:

The informants report in question one that they find written expression an interesting class; some students claim that it is important, because they learn relevant aspects about the writing process; others state that "they like the teacher too"¹⁴. However, this has not been covered in the ethnographic observation wherein the majority of the students are always absent, and some do never attend written expression classes. In other words, the students who attend are few; not all the group.

In our courses and through our instructions, we insist on the importance of writing because, as we tell our L2 English students, they will have to pass writing entrance exams, or they will face writing assignments on college or on the job. Or we suggest to students that their lives would be richer if only

¹⁴ The speech is transcribed by the researcher.

they would open themselves up and use writing to explore their thoughts and feelings. B. Kroll (2003: 316)

Writing in English is fundamental because it is required in different domains. Second year students do not attend written expression classes and hence, incapable of becoming skilled student writers, because most often teachers provide their learners with written assignments and only those who attend can compose about the different given topics as indicated in classroom observation sessions.

Question two:

Dealing with the complexity of writing in question two, the large majority of the informants reply “yes”, whereas only few students do not consider writing as a complex task. This implies that most of the students do not master grammar, vocabulary, lexis, ideas organization as well as the mechanics of writing, and that what has been revealed in the observation when the students were asked by their teachers to produce extended essays about specific topics. So, most of the students were unable to generate the first drafts and most of the time their teachers intervened in order to help them generate the first ideas and provide them with vocabularies.

Writing is a multi faced task, i.e. it requires several aspects unlike speaking which demands only uttered words and expressions. Composition entails grammar cohesion, correct spelling and more importantly, writing mechanics which plays a fundamental role in writing a particular text, for the latter has an impact on meaning. Thus, the complexity of writing is illustrated as follows:

Writing a text is a complex task that needs a coordinated implementation of a large set of mental activities. Writers have to clearly delimitate the nature, the goal and the communicative function of the text. They also have to establish a precise representation about readers' characteristics and expectations in order to anticipate systematically what must, or can be, written. (D. Alamagot & L. Chanquoy, 2001: 1).

This confirms the first research hypothesis which states that writing is a mental process, complex and a troublesome skill.

Questions three and four:

Regarding the students' level in writing in question three, the answers vary between good, average and weak, but the majority of the informants claim having an average level. It

is worth mentioning that some students are skilled writers, i.e. they are able to write any extended essay in any subject area, not only in written expression class. Typically, the students are required to compose essays in the exams. In fact, most of the teachers in the Department of English in Sidi Bel Abbés, complain about the quality of writing of the majority of their students; predominantly when they are asked to write essays in literature and civilization. Similarly, S. Abedi points out:

Motivation is the basic factor for ESL students to excel the writing class; therefore the role of teacher is pivotal in writing process. Teachers have to work a lot to raise the level of motivation of the class and sustain it throughout the lesson, as motivated learners work with more interest and intensity. This initiative of teachers and learners can lead to enhancement of writing skills. (A. Abedi, 2013: 1).

In addition to its relevance in the learning process, motivation is also prominent in written expression classes. However, when the students are given written assignments in the classroom, most of them choose talking for a while in lieu of writing and this has been covered in the observation. Nevertheless, the questionnaire reveals that most of the informants are motivated and show eagerness towards production. The students cannot learn how to compose if they are not motivated and interested enough in written production. Second year students still have writing impediments, albeit they claim motivation. This has been noticeable and remarkable in the analysis of their written expression essays.

Questions six, seven and eight:

Regarding the contribution of reading to the development of the writing skill in question six, nearly all the informants are aware that reading boosts writing. Accordingly, reading is a skill that strongly affects the improvement of composition. Students who are good readers are found to be also good writers. These skilled readers do not have writing deficiencies at the levels of generating ideas, vocabulary, grammar or spelling...etc. Good readers are able to outperform. Most importantly, they are able to write whatsoever extended essay in different disciplines.

Unfortunately, second year students of English are not well trained on how to read. Furthermore, students and teachers in the Department of English are aware of the importance of the reading skill, albeit the module is named “Compréhension et Expression Ecrites”, no reading texts are integrated in composition classes. Hence, reading and writing are two

interrelated and fundamental skills for EFL learners and which are complementary to each other, and which need to be taught together. For reading:

- Broadens the students' thoughts.
- The students will be aware of how sentences are constructed and how paragraphs are well organized.
- They will be aware of tenses usage (when to use the present simple and to use simple past; because the great majority of the learners do not know when and why using a particular tense mainly in American/British civilizations).

Therefore, reading goes hand in hand with writing, A. Abu-Akel (1997: 200) quotes Krashen (1984) "*a variety of studies indicate that voluntary pleasure reading contributes to the development of writing ability*". Spivey (1997) points out that "*reading and writing skills almost never emerge as separate tasks, but are most often performed in close connection with each other, so that some others have defined them as 'hybrid acts'*" (cited in Mateos, M.; Cuevas, I.; Martin, E.; Martin, A.; Echeita, G.; & Luna, M., 2011: 281).

Concerning the contribution of speaking to the development of writing in question eight, most of the informants answer positively. Sometimes good speakers are good readers and skilled writers too, but the case of second year LMD students, most of them manage to speak slightly better, but are not able to write appropriately and coherently; they do not know how to compose ideas, and do not know when and how to punctuate. Speaking could be acquired from listening frequently to the native people.

Teachers of composition classes use the speaking skill as a technique in order to reinforce the ideas, expressions and sentences in their students' minds, in this respect,

Second language writing researchers have demonstrated that the integration of dialogue into ESL writing classrooms can have positive effects on certain aspect of composition instruction, namely in the planning and revision stages....writing is a fundamentally social phenomenon best acquired by L2 learners when it is firmly embedded in a classroom environment of social interaction. (M. Hurbert, 2011: 170-171)

That is why teachers need to focus on the speaking for instructing writing as a process.

Questions nine, ten, eleven, twelve and thirteen:

The informants report in question nine, that after reading a topic of any composition, they start first thinking about ideas (brainstorming). Basically, brainstorming is a strategy that

falls under the category of metacognitive strategies, and which is taught by a teacher of three groups. This strategy could be a good tool for showing the students what to do after reading the subject of the composition. Planning is another strategy which is indicated by the questioned students. Indeed, making an outline and follow it is required for producing any writing piece, not only in written expression, but even for other disciplines such as civilization wherein events should be well organized and need to be well ordered. Moreover, writing a thesis for instance, requires an outline. Hence, planning is a basic stage where the writer outlines what s/he intends to communicate on a paper.

The above cited strategies (brainstorming and planning) are classified under the category of metacognitive strategies. Planning has been identified as a pre-writing strategy by M. O'Malley & A. Chamot (1990: 110) "*pre-writing the main ideas and concepts of materials to be learned, often by skimming the text for the organizing principle*". Although, students report using metacognitive strategies, they seldom use them when drafting essays, but rather they use other techniques and rely heavily on strategies which are easy and less demanding, i.e. do not demand mental efforts. In some cases, there are combinations and an amalgam of metacognitive and cognitive strategies; i.e. metacognitive strategies are frequently used by the students compared to the cognitive ones. However, the teachers of these students are aware of the types of strategies their learners actually employ. Nevertheless, teachers have little familiarity with which strategy should be encouraged, and which strategies foster the students' writing proficiency.

Dealing with the while-writing task in question ten, the informants claim that they think about the goal of writing. Nearly all the questioned students reckon that writing is a purposeful activity and that what has been revealed by L. Flower and J. Hayes (1982). Similarly, S. Hidi and P. Boscodo (2007: 122) also notice:

The more developed a student's interest for writing, was the more sophisticated his or her goals tended to be...students with a well developed individual interest worked to achieve personal and broadly accepted standard of excellence.

This implies that setting goals in writing essays lead to effective production, i.e. thinking about what to say and how to communicate on the paper, and more importantly, what the reader expects from the writer engage the student in attaining his/her writing objectives.

In question eleven, only twenty (20) out of seventy six (76) questioned students claim thinking in the target language. The rest of the informants use Arabic or French, i.e. they first

speculate in Arabic and then translate their ideas into English language. Likewise, there are some learners who also use French L2 as a means to help them compose in English. Translating from Arabic or French could be a habit that is used by a wide range of the students, for they are not well trained or advised on how to reckon in English, and that what has been observed in the ethnographic observation.

Translation is classified under the category of “cognitive strategies” by M. O’Malley and A. Chamot (1990: 126) in which they consider translation as “*being the first language as a base for understanding and/ or producing the second language*”. However, the case here is not a second language, but English as a foreign language (EFL). Nevertheless, it is known that those who translate to some extent whether from L1 or L2 into English are found to be less proficient students and these strategies refer to as “self- instruction” and are using such strategies in order to solve problems, or mainly to overcome their writing difficulties as far as cognitive tasks are concerned (A. Cohen, 2014: 236). Similarly, I. Leki, A. Cumming & T. Silva point out as follow:

L2 writing ability was not significantly correlated with L1 writing proficiency....L2 writing ability and L1 writing ability were two separate tasks; that is, writing in L2 was a language, specific phenomenon, not a writing problem (2008: 2002).

These results support the second research hypothesis which states that second year students employ metacognitive strategies when writing extended essays, i.e. the great majority of the students use translation as a technique that helps them write.

Concerning overcoming students’ writing difficulties in question twelve, the sweeping majority rely on translation when they do not know how to express themselves appropriately. As it was previously mentioned that this strategy is identified as a cognitive strategy and is a strategy that is used by students with a low ability in writing. Likewise, A. Yigzaw (2012: 13) “*L1 use is determined by the learners’ L2 proficiency level; less proficient learners repeatedly switch to L1 while writing in an L2 when they face task difficulty*”

Twenty eight (28) out of seventy six (76) informants use dictionaries in order to look for a missing word, when they do not know a particular vocabulary. However, all the consulted dictionaries in composition classes are bilingual and that what has been noticed by the researcher-observer. Consulting bilingual dictionaries are considered to be as a negative aspect in learning a foreign language; however, it is frequently advisable to consult, for instance English-English dictionaries, in that sense Y. Tono (2001) in Ard’s (1982) who

opines that “*the use of bilingual dictionaries as well as L1 knowledge contributed to lexical errors*”. Similarly, the ethnographic observation reveals that when the students do not know a specific word, they consult their bilingual dictionaries in their cell phones in order to find a missing word or correct its spelling. Accordingly, E. Hinkel notices as follows:

For most L2 learners and writers, dictionaries are absolutely essential. One of the common misconceptions is that bilingual dictionaries are inherently inferior to monolingual (English-English) dictionaries that are prepared for L1 users or highly advanced L2 learners. However, in order to use monolingual dictionaries successfully, learners already have to have a substantial vocabulary base to understand word definitions and usage examples. For most beginning or intermediate learners, monolingual dictionaries may be very useful. (2015: 206)

Twenty nine (29) out of seventy six (76) informants claim asking their classmates or their teachers for help when they are unable to express their thoughts. The recorded strategies fall under the category of social/affective strategies as classified by O’Malley and A. Chamot (1990). It is worth mentioning that using social/ affective strategies are essential primarily when working collaboratively; when each learner or an individual shares an idea, or helps another classmate in generating an expression. That is why; group work is always encouraged for it helps students work effectively and particularly in writing as a process.

Reviewing after writing a piece of composition is an eminent phase in production. In question thirteen, the great majority of the informants report revision. However, though the students revise their writing pieces, they are unaware of the mistakes that they have committed. As it is mentioned in the literature, that only a skilled writer spends much more time on revision. The latter is prominent in that the student would alter, refine and polish their ideas; s/he would change their thoughts to better ones.

Revision...is...(1) changing the meaning of the text in response to a realization that the original intended meaning is somehow faulty or false or weak...(2) adding or substituting meaning to clarify the originally intended meaning or to follow more closely the intended form or genre of the text...(3) making grammatical sentences more readable by deleting, reordering and restating...as well as (4) correcting errors of diction, transcription and syntax and that nearly obscure intended meaning or that are otherwise unacceptable in grapholect. (2006: 24)

Therefore, it is always better to remind the students of the importance of revision in the learning process.

Questions fourteen and fifteen:

Seventy four (74) informants report receiving teachers' feedback. The latter is considered to be a prominent aspect, because it makes the learner aware of his/her mistakes, it shows him/her that the composition has been read and evaluated at the same time. This has been revealed by teachers of written expression, when they give their students written assignments and correct the essays of all the students. It is important to note that assessing students' written productions is necessary, because through assessment, learners will correct their own mistakes and errors.

Students rely a great deal on their teachers' responses, mainly if feedback is corrective and not threatening as it is mentioned in the literature. Teachers of composition classes told the researcher during classroom observational sessions that they are providing their students with comments at the levels of grammar, ideas construction, writing mechanics and vocabulary. Instructors comment on their students' written productions in order to show their learners their own mistakes and to make them avoid this kind of mistakes in future writing.

In the last question, most of the students report using teachers' feedback in their writing pieces. It is encouraging on the part of the students that they benefit from their mistakes. Nevertheless, according to what has been revealed by the researcher-observer that after commenting on the students' compositions, the informants want only to be aware of their mistakes, but they do not produce a second draft, i.e. learners only show preference for teachers' feedback. On the other hand, instructors do not ask their students to correct their assignments for time constraints. Accordingly, writing a second draft is an important step for the learners, notably, the students become aware of their own mistakes. Thus, after correcting and providing feedback, teachers need to encourage their learners to compose a second draft.

4.4 Analysis of the teachers' questionnaire

The current section elicits information on teachers' way of instruction and their students' attitudes and writing behaviours.

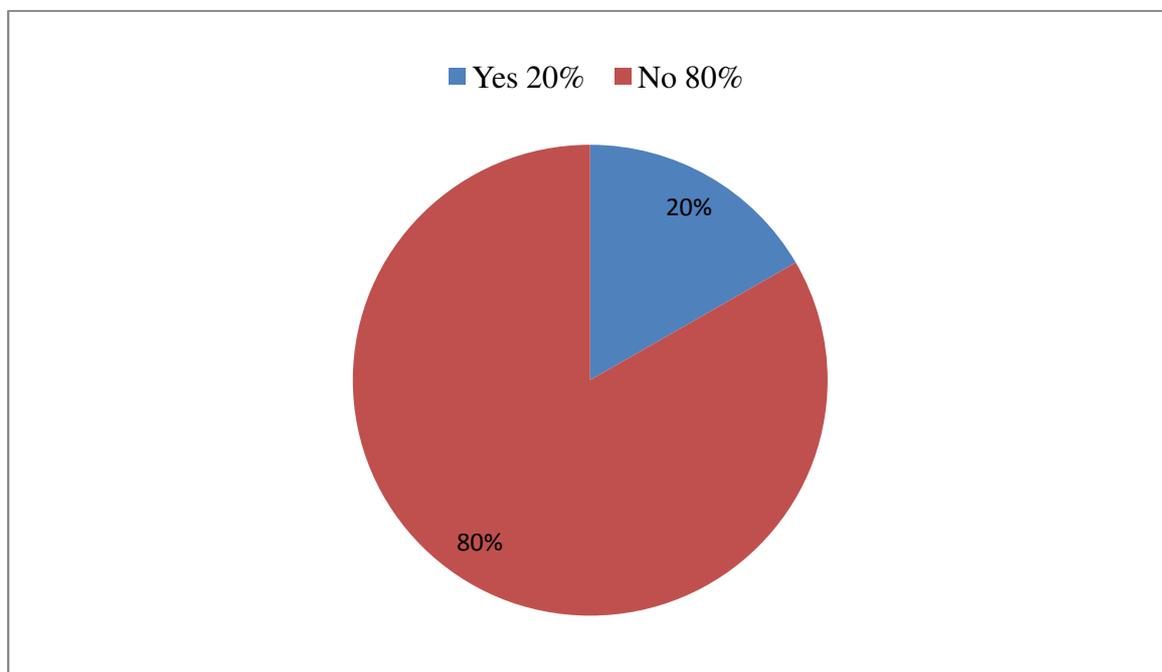
Questions one and two:

1/ What is your position in the university?

2/ How long have you been teaching written expression?

All the inquired teachers (05) are full time teachers and are in charge of written expression syllabuses. Two of them have the “magister degree” except three who held their doctorate. Their teaching experience in written production varies from five to twenty years. One teacher states that s/he starts teaching written expression to first year students only this year, however, the previous years s/he instructed written expression to second year students, while the rest of the teachers instruct second year learners.

Question three: Do you think written expression syllabus you are following is efficient to enhance the students' written proficiency?



Graph 4.6 Written expression syllabus and writing proficiency

The results in the graph suggest that nearly all the teachers (80%) believe that the “written expression” syllabus that they are following is not efficient to enhance writing

proficiency. However, only one (01) teacher shows satisfaction towards following the syllabus. There are some written expression teachers design their own syllabi which meet students' needs and which they believe that it is suitable for their learners.

Question four: if “not”, please explain why.

The four teachers who reply “No” explain that the “writing expression” syllabus is not sufficient to promote writing proficiency; their illustrations can be summed up in the beneath claims:

- “More practice is needed for the writing skill to be mastered”.
- “Teaching writing twice a week is not enough for the students to be skilled writers”.
- “Students cannot be good if they do not do intensive reading in order to help themselves”.
- “Writing is time consuming, and two hours per a week are not enough to boost writing proficiency”.
- “Time allocated to written production is not sufficient”.
- “Writing is the most difficult skill and needs more efforts on the part of the students”.
- “Writing skill needs other skills to be integrated, because they are basic in an EFL setting”.

Question five: Does speaking contribute to the development of writing?

Yes → 05

No → 00

All the teachers view that speaking contributes deeply to the enhancement of writing. This indicates that the instructors are aware of the effectiveness of the speaking skill on writing as a process. In other words, written expression teachers believe that speaking has a positive impact on composition and enhances writing to a large extent.

Question six: if yes, please, explain how.

Teachers' illustrations can be summarized in the following claims:

- “Both are two productive skills, where the learners can use the language in an active way”.

- “Talking about a given topic before writing about it can serve as a useful pre-writing activity that helps activating background”.
- “Language is regarded in terms of four basic skills and speaking is one of them”.
- “There is use of words and grammar that are put first in speaking before being put into piece of written communication”.
- “Speaking fosters ideas, vocabulary and grammar in students’ minds”.

Question seven: Does reading contribute to the development of writing?

Yes → 05

No → 00

As it is expected, 100% of the instructors claim that reading contributes to the development of the writing skill. This result equals with that obtained in students’ questionnaires. Written expression teachers view that reading has a great influence on the improvement of the writing skill in that, reading provides learners with new vocabulary, grammar and broads their thoughts. Furthermore, it has proved by so many researchers (see chapter 2) that reading contributes strongly to the development of writing as a process as well as a product.

Question eight: if “yes”, please, explain how:

In their explanation, teachers comment as follow:

- “Reading helps to enrich learners’ vocabulary, elaborate their ideas, and allow them to gain insight into the principles of construction of writing through the exposure to writing in the form of reading”.
- “Naturally, the learner discovers different linguistic structures when reading well-structured texts and which he can use while writing”.
- “Texts can be used as future models, by looking how they are constructed”.
- “Reading develops the students’ vocabulary, way of thinking and more importantly, their style”.
- “Students can never be improved into good writers, if they do not read”.

Question nine: Do you encourage your students to read?

Yes → 05

No → 00

All the questioned teachers encourage their students to read extensively and independently. This attitude is considered to be a positive component in learning a foreign language at so many levels. As it is already mentioned, reading helps the students develop their writing strategies as well as their style. In addition, reading raises the students' awareness towards the writing skill, i.e. they become aware of the process of production.

Question ten: Do you encourage your students' to write at home?

Yes → 05

No → 00

All the teachers claim that they encourage their students to write more at home and not only in the classroom. Indeed, this attitude on the part of the instructors has been identified by the researcher while observing the teachers' role trying to encourage their learners to be creative and to produce more, for the latter helps them to be skilled writers. Additionally, writing instructors always provide their students with writing assignments and ask them to start producing in the classroom, but, since one hour and half does not suffice the students to finish their extended essays, teachers enjoin their learners to end writing at home. However, there are a few students who favour writing more than what their teachers enquire to do. Besides, these students also ask for teachers' feedback too.

Question eleven: Are the students motivated to compose?

Options	N	%
Yes	04	80
No	01	10
Total	05	100

Table 4.8 EFL students' motivation in writing

Four (04) out of five (05) questioned teachers (80%) claim that their students are motivated writers. As it is mentioned earlier in the literature, that motivation is a prominent element in the learning and the teaching processes. This explains that writing tutors believe that their learners are eager writers during writing classes. Surprisingly, only one teacher

(10%) reports that his/her students are demotivated learners. These students are found to be demotivated, because of the writing hindrances that impede their productions.

Question twelve: Good writing is (you can tick more than 1 box)

Aspects	N	%
Correct grammar	05	100
Good ideas	05	100
Precise vocabulary	03	60
Spelling	05	100

Table 4.9 A good writing piece for teachers

The table above suggests that all the teachers agree that a good production encompasses coherent grammar, clear ideas and correct spelling. Basically, EFL teachers strongly believe that mastering grammar means having a good control of all language norms. Accordingly, students who master the grammatical rules are considered to be good at the target language. 100% agree that writing an extended essay entails good ideas. As far as spelling is concerned, all the questioned teachers agree on the same aspect; that there should be no mistakes and spelling ought to be correct.

All the instructors report that spelling is a prominent criterion in writing, the same as grammar correctness and as good ideas. These results are encouraging, because correct grammar, clear ideas and coherent spelling are the backbone of producing any writing piece and which make the written production readable, well organized and an acceptable one. However, 60% of the questioned teachers claim that good composition includes also precise vocabulary. The three teachers suggest that selecting good vocabulary plays an important role in producing essays, for instance the knowledge of nouns, adverbs, adjectives...etc. Therefore, teachers need to teach explicitly new vocabulary to their students, so that they will be able to employ these words while writing.

Question thirteen: Which of the following strategies are you teaching....?

Strategies	N	%
metacognitive	05	100
cognitive	01	20
Social/Affective	05	100

Table 4.10 Writing strategies taught by teachers

The table shows that 05 instructors teach metacognitive and social/affective strategies to their students. It is important to note that instructing such strategies explicitly are helpful for writing any piece of production. 100% of questioned teachers claim instructing how to pre-write the main ideas and which the students may find a complex task. In other words, they do not know how to generate the first sentences or the introductory paragraph. Moreover, teachers also report showing their learners how to organize those ideas to form an accurate and acceptable passage and also reveal that they shed a light on revision and assessing the final product.

Similarly, all the composition teachers state that they instruct social/affective strategies to their learners, for the students favour working with peers or ask the teacher for assistance whenever there is a writing impediment. However, only one teacher reports teaching cognitive strategies wherein the students use translation for overcoming writing problems, jot down ideas and use visual memory to remember its spelling in order to be able to carry on writing.

Question fourteen: which part of the writing process is difficult for your students?

Strategies	N	%
brainstorming	00	00
Generating ideas	03	60
vocabulary	05	100
revising	01	20

Table 4.11 Difficult strategies for the students in the writing process

In that question, composition teachers indicate some of the obstacles that impede the students' productions. For instance, brainstorming which falls under the category of metacognitive strategies does not hinder the students' performance. However, three (03) teachers (i.e. 60%) claim that their students have hindrances as far as generating ideas are concerned. Generating ideas is an important criterion while attempting to jot down some initial ideas. On the other hand, all the instructors shed light on vocabulary. Basically, vocabulary means writing and reading, i.e. those who are good readers have a rich repertoire and a firm linguistic competence. Unfortunately, vocabulary impedes the students' writing

performance, because they are not well trained on how to learn appropriately. Interestingly, only one teacher (20%) reports that the students have problems with revision which plays a fundamental role in writing essays wherein the writer can refine his/her production.

Question fifteen: what do you think your student lack in their written production?

Aspects	N	%
Vocabulary	05	100
Grammar	05	100
Expressing ideas	2	40
Writing mechanics	3	60

Table

4.12

Students' writing hindrances

The table above indicates that all the questioned teachers of written expression report that their students lack vocabulary and grammar. Both components (vocabulary and grammar) are relevant for constructing any piece of production; either oral or a written one. In other words, second year EFL students are incapable of producing any piece of writing because they lack two major aspects of English language. On the other hand, two out of five questioned teachers notice that their students have problems at the level of expressing ideas, i.e. they do not know how to express appropriately their thoughts. 60% of the instructors claim that their students have hurdles regarding writing mechanics, and this is covered in the ethnographic observation wherein the students wrote some paragraphs on the whiteboard which lacked punctuation and capitalization. No teacher adds a comment as far as the last aspect (e) is concerned.

Question sixteen: Do the students use similar strategies when producing a paragraph or essay?

Yes → 05

No → 00

All the questioned teachers report that their students utilize similar strategies while writing essays. This attitude among the students has been covered by the researcher while observing the students; wherein the learners rely heavily on consulting bilingual dictionaries or asking their classmates or teachers to translate some of the words whether from Arabic or French into English. Moreover, using similar strategies is also identified by the researcher in the students' extended essay.

Question seventeen: Do your students translate from:

Aspects	N	%
L1 to FL	04	80
L2 to FL	03	60
Think in English	01	20

Table 4.13 Students' language use while composing

Almost all written expression teachers (80%) state that their students utilize the mother tongue as a means of reckoning in order to be able to compose a piece of writing. This result equals with that of the students' questionnaire that a great deal of the students rely heavily on thinking in Arabic. Moreover, three teachers report using the second language (French) only because they are good speakers at this language and therefore, it facilitates their way of writing in English.

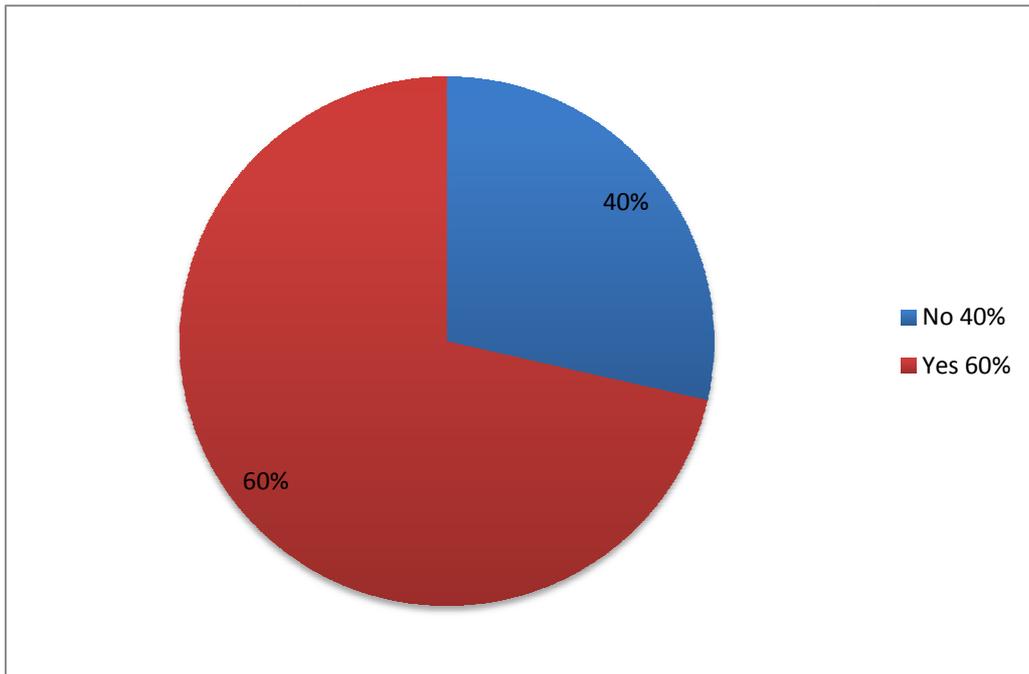
However, only one teacher claims that his/her students think in English for producing any written production; 20% is an exceedingly low percentage compared to the other results. Translating either from Arabic or French languages has been identified in the students' questionnaire, and has also been covered by the researcher-observer wherein EFL students rely a great deal on using Standard Arabic or the Algerian Arabic as a tool of thinking in English while producing an essay, whether in written expression or any other module.

Question eighteen: Are you satisfied with your students' writing capacities?

In that question 60 % of the questioned teachers report that they are not satisfied with the level of their students' writing as shown in the graph beneath. These students tend to be limited; one teacher opines that:

- *"...eh... they are limited at the level of vocabulary and grammar".*

The results obtained from these teachers have been covered by the researcher in classroom observation wherein the great majority of EFL students employ some strategies in order to overcome some writing difficulties. On the other hand, two (02) instructors claim satisfaction towards their students' capacities. In other words, 40% of the questioned teachers state that their students are good in writing, and that they have a good control of composition aspects.



Graph 4.7 Teachers' satisfaction towards their students' writing capacities

Question nineteen: if “not”, please explain why?

The teachers' illustrations are summed up in the following claims:

- “They have not sufficient and clear vocabulary”.
- “They mix tenses, i.e. they do not master grammar, though they deal with grammar as a separate module and as teachers we do emphasize on this musical aspects while producing extended essays”.
- “Most of the students based their writing on translation mainly ‘Arabic’”.
- “Their essays are full of grammatical and spelling mistakes and they do not master composition mechanics”.
- “When they write, they do not restrict themselves to the norms or steps that we do instruct inside the classroom”.
- “It is seldom when we see a student’s sheet which is well written, clear and coherent”.

Question twenty: while do the students write, do you walk around and help them?

Yes → 05

No → 00

All the questioned instructors agree on one single response, reporting that they walk around the rows while their learners endeavour to write a text or a paragraph about a given topic in the classroom. Indeed, this behaviour facilitates and strengthens the relationship between the teacher and the students. In such a case, the learners may seek for assistance from their teachers whenever they encounter a writing hindrance, i.e. students find it easy to ask for help when the teacher is close to them. Moreover, this has been covered by the researcher-observer when the teachers marched around and asked different questions to their students in order to facilitate the flow of thoughts.

Question twenty one: if “yes”, do you assist them in:

aspects	N	%	Table 4.14 Aspects where teachers
Generating ideas	02	40	
Vocabulary	02	40	
Grammar	04	80	
Content and organization of ideas	05	100	
spelling	05	100	

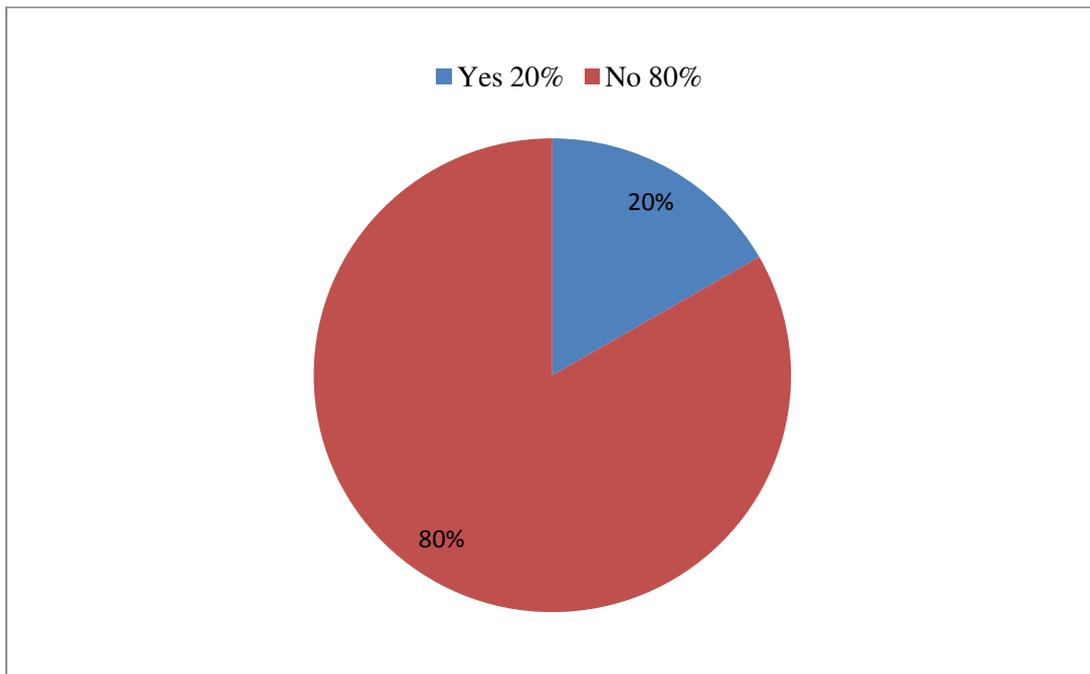
assist students

Teachers assist their students when walking around the rows. 100%, i.e. 05 of the questioned teachers of composition focus on helping their students at the levels of content and ideas organization; simply because they believe that these two components are prominent for writing any extended essay. On the other hand, only two teachers, i.e. 40% state that they focus on helping the students with generating ideas and vocabulary. Regarding assisting the learners to overcome their vocabulary difficulties, students depend heavily on their tutors.

This result has also been covered by the observer in the ethnographic observation wherein the teachers moved around the rows' attempting to assist, illustrate and translate some words to their learners whenever they see that their students are unable to produce, they

interfere. Indeed, providing the learners with vocabulary may boost writing proficiency. Most of the teachers, 80%, i.e. four instructors report assisting their students at the level of grammar, because the latter is considered to be important in language learning.

Question twenty two: Do you give your students written tasks which are beyond their cognitive level?



Graph 4.8 Written tasks given by teachers

Interestingly, one teacher (20%) reports giving the students written activities or tasks which are beyond their cognitive level. Comparing to the rest of the instructors, this result is considered to be low. Even though there is only one teacher in the Department of English language that provides his/her students with topics which are beyond the cognitive level of the learners, his/her students would not be able to write neither correctly nor accurately. More importantly, they would be incapable of finding related vocabulary to the topic or rather understand what the reader expects from them.

Moreover, they would be unable to comprehend the topic first, and incapable to produce an extended essay which has clear ideas. On the other hand, 80%, i.e. four teachers agree on one answer which is giving their students topics which are not beyond their cognitive level. In other words, these teachers provide their learners with tasks which are understandable, wherein the students feel at ease and are capable to compose about the provided subject.

Question twenty three: Do you teach students essay writing techniques? (Outline: essay development).

Yes → 05

No → 00

All the instructors (100%) report teaching composition strategies which are identified as an outline that consists of essay development, essay organization and writing mechanics. Teaching essay techniques is fundamental in any production whether in written expression module or any other module. However, no teacher has expressed a different opinion; all the questioned teachers answer positively. In fact, this result is encouraging, for essay writing techniques instruction plays an important role in academic composition.

Question twenty four: if not, please, explain why.

No teacher shed light on “no”, so, as it is already illustrated that all teachers show to their learners essay writing techniques.

Question twenty five: how many writing assignments do you give your students during the academic year?

Aspects	N	%
1 to 5	/	/
5 to 10	04	80
10 to 15	01	20

Table 4.15 Written assignments given by teachers in the academic year

In that question, a great deal of the questioned teachers (80%) report giving assignments from five (05) to ten (10) during the academic year. In fact, focusing on the practical side of writing is more important than stressing on the theoretical part of teaching composition. Hence, providing the students with a multitude of assignments in the year may well boost the writing proficiency. However, only one teacher indicates offering students assignments from ten (10) to fifteen (15) during the academic year. The obtained result might not suffice the students’ needs; the more the teacher gives the more better.

Question twenty six: Do you assess your students in writing?

Yes → 05

No → 00

All the teachers of written expression assess their students' written productions. This result equals with that of students' answers when inquired about teachers' feedback wherein the great majority reported receiving teachers' comments. Additionally, this result has also been covered by the researcher-observer where some teachers provide oral feedback and correct their students' mistakes. Furthermore, the obtained result from teachers' questionnaire is also shown in the students' writing sheets of both exams and assignments. However, no teacher claims the opposite, and this is a positive attitude in the learning and the teaching processes.

Question twenty seven: when you assess, what aspect (s) of the composition you focus on (you can tick more than one box)

Aspects	N	%
Grammar	02	40
Vocabulary	03	60
Ideas organization	05	100
Writing mechnics	05	100
Spelling	02	40

Table 4.16 Aspects teachers focus on when assessment

All the composition teachers (100%) emphasize on assessing the students at the levels of ideas organization and writing mechanics. On the other hand, three teachers, that is, 60% report assessing their learners' vocabulary. Indeed, focusing on the latter helps the students be aware of new words and recall them when necessary. Two teachers (40%) state that they stress much on grammar and spelling. Assessing grammar and the spelling mistakes make the students' essay clearer and more accurate.

Question twenty eight: How often do you assess your students work during the academic year?

Options	N	%
Once a week	02	40
Once a month	03	60
Once a term	00	00

Table 4.17 Teachers' assessment during the academic year

In that question, written expression teachers express different opinions. 40%, i.e. two instructors state that they assess their students' written productions once a week. In fact, this is encouraging, for assessment is important in that it shows the learners' their writing capacities. Moreover, it shows him/her the different mistakes at the levels of grammar, spelling and so on. More than half, i.e. 60 % report assessing their students only once a month. This result does not meet the learners' needs particularly in written expression class, because it needs frequent assessment from time to time, so teachers are urged to read their students' assignments and to provide feedback to show the learners that their compositions have been read and assessed. However, no teacher indicates assessing his/her students only once a term.

Question twenty nine: Further suggestions. Please add any suggestions you see relevant to the purpose of the questionnaire.

Only one teacher integrates his/her opinion wherein s/he stated that we have to encourage a combination of three elements which are:

- "More frequent writing tasks".
- "Reading well-structured texts".
- "Assimilating writing methodological instruction".

4.5 Discussion of the results

This section discusses and interprets the results obtained from teachers' questionnaire.

Questions one and two:

In these questions, all written expression teachers reply that they are full time instructors. This result is encouraging; because these teachers are experienced and not novice, some have their doctorates and others hold the “majester” but doctoral students. Furthermore, their teaching experience varies from five to twenty years. Basically, teaching requires experienced teachers who know the different strategies that the students need, and what technique is suitable for each learner.

Questions three and four:

Dealing with the efficacy of written expression syllabus, that the teachers are following in order to develop the writing proficiency, the large majority of the instructors answer “No”. Whereas only one teacher shows satisfaction towards the syllabus. It is worth noting that the researcher- observer has noticed that each teacher is following his/her own syllabus, knowing that there is one single program that is designed by the ministry in this academic year (2014-2015). However, the instructors in the Department of English are not applying the ministerial syllabus. It is also important to mention that composition teachers are not aware of the designed syllabus; only the administration knows that written expression program is unified in the entire country.

On the other hand, those tutors who find that composition syllabus does not suffice the students' needs and requirements are the majority. They believe that the syllabus is ineffective and needs more hours per a week in order to be well mastered. They also think that it needs to be refined and associated with the reading skill. Additionally, they state that writing is a complex task which needs a lot of efforts. Written expression needs to be refined according to the learners' requirements and teachers ought to focus more on practice rather than teaching composition theory, because though the teachers illustrate the various points on how to tackle a particular essay, students are incapable of producing accurate paragraphs, which lead the instructors to stress mainly on what their learners lack. In that sense, K. Hyland (1993:57) argues about syllabus designer:

- “*Consideration of the students (personal goals, proficiency, levels, interests, etc)*”.

- *“Consideration of the learning context (duration, resources, relationships to other courses)”*.
- *“Consideration of the target context (future roles of learners and the texts and tasks they need)”*.
- *“Establishment of course goals and objectives (projected outcomes of the course)”*.
- *“Planning the syllabus.”*

Therefore, designing the right and unified syllabus that meets the students’ needs and reduce the shortcomings can boost the writing competence for the learners.

Questions five and six:

Concerning the impact of speaking on the writing skill, all teachers tremendously believe that speaking contributes to the development of writing. This contribution indicates that speaking the thoughts out makes the students write adequately. More importantly, it facilitates the flow of ideas. There are some students on the other hand, who are good speakers, but poor writers; i.e. they do not know how to spell words, their essays lack the writing mechanics, albeit they have accurate pronunciation. These students are good speakers because they tend to be good listeners, but not good writers; they only listen carefully to the natives or their teachers and learn the different aspects of pronunciation in order to acquire it appropriately and to be able to speak fluently, yet incapable of writing what they are uttering.

Accordingly, one teacher strongly believes in the contribution of speaking to the enhancement of written production. Likewise, it has been covered in classroom observations that each time that the teacher deals with writing, s/he makes his/her students speak up their thoughts via starting telling the first sentences and asking the students to finish orally. That instructor relies heavily on speaking to enhance writing. As a matter of fact, the concept of to what extent does speaking contribute to the writing skill depends on the learner, if s/he is a good reader and a good listener s/he will be able to write coherently and to speak accurately. On the other hand, no teacher answers “No”; they all believe that speaking enhances writing to a large extent. Accordingly, the questioned instructors illustrate that speaking contributes to the enhancement of written production, knowing that discussing first a particular topic given by the teacher may serve as a pre-writing task that fosters the learner’s background.

In addition to activating the student’s knowledge, speaking and writing are two productive skills, because the students can employ the language in a very active way. Teachers also explain that language composes of vocabulary and grammar that are arranged

into a number of sentences to be first spoken before being put into written words on a paper. Some teachers think that speaking reinforces vocabulary and thoughts in the students 'mind.

Questions seven, eight and nine:

Concerning reading and writing correlation, all teachers show agreement, this has always been considered as a fact, and even most of the literature has suggested that reading develops composition. Even though that the teachers believe in the positive influence of the reading skill on written production, they totally neglect it and greatly focus on teaching the writing skill separately from reading. Besides, the module is named "Reading and writing comprehension", however, the teachers stress primarily on writing, ignoring the reading skill which contributes profoundly to the development of composition.

Reading makes the learners grasp uncousiciouly vocabulary, grammar and more importantly the style. In that sense,

While enjoying a story, students hear that language of good writers, are exposed to rich vocabulary, and develop literary awareness, or a "sense of story". They learn the structure and language of books. And they acquire literacy skills that can be transferred to their own writing. The reading-writing connection is a strong one. Suitable reading materials, when used creatively, can enhance the writing curriculum. Students who are exposed to many genres and styles of good literature are very likely to transfer these rich experiences to their own writing. (R. Reck, 2005: 2, 9).

Furthermore, the instructors state that reading enriches the students' vocabulary, develops their ideas and makes them recognize the construction of sentences and paragraphs. Notably, they discover the different linguistic structures which help the learners employ while writing. To sum up, reading has a certain impact on writing. It is always known that good readers are better performers. For, when the learners read, they copy what they have read in their future writings. Thus, reading needs to be instructed in correlation with written production; i.e. writing goes hand in hand with composition.

Relating to question nine, all the teachers report that they encourage their students to read independently. Indeed, advising the students to read is a positive teaching behaviour, because the more they read the more they perform better, they become experienced student writers and will not encounter any writing hindrance.

However, all the teachers claim encouragement, but the students do not read; only a minority who likes reading and this is revealed through their composition drafts. On the other

hand, the rest are considered to be poor writers, simply because they are not aware of the importance of the reading skill. Most importantly, they are not well trained on how to read, because reading as a module is totally neglected. So, how the students are supposed to be good readers and thus better writers. Therefore, encouraging the students to read is not sufficient for it stays only an advice.

Second year students need to be trained on reading in the classroom first (intensive reading), i.e. teachers ought to urge their learners to read outside the classroom, i.e. reading independently. To conclude encouraging the students to read is a positive aspect and showing them that the latter is a basic task that leads to a good performance at the levels of writing, speaking and listening. Nevertheless, encouragement does not suffice the learners' needs and does not fill the gaps that the students have. Hence, learners need to know first what is reading in the classroom, though the latter is not enough because of time constraints, but, at least the students will be provided with reading material and be asked to read in the classroom in front of the teacher. This may lead the learner to outperform and develop therefore his/her writing ability.

Questions ten and eleven:

All written expression teachers encourage their student to write more at home, because it is not sufficient to practise writing only in the classroom. So, it is always advisable to encourage the students to produce more and be creative. However, encouraging the learners to do a particular written task is not enough, because as it is revealed in the observation, most of the students were absent, i.e. they are not interested in composition classes. Encouraging EFL students to write extensively is a positive attitude, because it fosters motivation, however, providing the learners with written assignments would be better to make them work outside the classroom. To sum up, encouraging the students to write at home may well engage them to be creative and thus, improving their written style and broadning their critical thinking.

It is worth noting that motivation is an eminent criterion in both the learning and the teaching processes. Nearly all teachers report that their learners are eager to compose, i.e. motivated students, except one teacher (10%) who claims demotivation. It is encouraging to see EFL students motivated enough to compose, because this would promote their written performance. More importantly, it is the role of the teacher to motivate his/her students via

providing tasks which are not beyond their cognitive level, i.e giving them for instance social topics and not tasks which are unrelated to the students' lives. Moreover, providing the students with appropriate tasks would make them profoundly engaged in the writing piece and raise their autonomy, in which they will be able to express themselves easily and appropriately.

Question twelve:

In order to compose well, there are some norms to be followed and writing an extended essay requires correct grammar, good ideas and clear spelling. All the questioned teachers agree on the above stated criteria. Three teachers among the five indicate that a good production is about precise vocabulary. Similarly, G. Huck (2015: 29, 30) argues that fluency in writing is very important issue that deserves to be dealt with, and can be learnt via focusing on writing as a process and providing effectual strategies. Defining good composition differs from one teacher to another. Moreover, it is up to the teacher to transmit the knowledge to the students which meets their drawbacks. It depends also on the instructor to teach what is suitable for his/her learners, and reaches therefore the final results from the students (writing as a product), because the latter is the ultimate goal of most of the teachers.

It has been identified in the ethnographic observation that all composition teachers show their learners the different techniques that the learners need to go through when writing any extended essay in order to be capable of composing a good piece of writing which has correct grammar, good ideas, clear spelling and precise vocabulary. However, only few students compose well and the sweeping majority performs poorly in all the modules without any exception, reports a teacher in the department of English language in Sidi Bel Abbas.

Question thirteen:

The questionnaire reveals that four out of five teachers claim the instruction of writing strategies such as pre-writing the major ideas, organizing them, revising, evaluating the final products; all these strategies fall under the category of metacognitive strategies. Classroom observational sessions unveil that written expression tutors focus more on teaching only one strategy which is pre-writing the main ideas neglecting the other techniques.

In addition, they also report instructing social/affective strategies including working with peers or asking for the teachers' assistance. Indeed, the latter has been covered in the ethnographic observation wherein, teachers frequently make their students work collaboratively or ask for the teacher's help when necessary. However, instructors do not take into consideration the cognitive strategies which include translation in order to find a missing word or expression, jotting down and using visual memory to remember its spelling and re-reading in order to be able to continue writing.

Although students employ a cognitive strategie (ineffective translation) as a technique that helps them compose about a given topic, the teachers focus greatly on metacognitive and social/affective strategies, neglecting the cognitive strategies. However, the students often feel helpless while writing; i.e. whenever a writing impediment inhibits their composition, they resort to bilingual dictionaries or seek assistance from their teachers in order to overcome a particular difficulty as it is discovered in the observation. It is worth mentioning that written expression teachers focus more on instructing two particular strategies namely, metacognitive and social/affective strategies ignoring the other one, having a strong belief that those strategies would reinforce in the students' written productions' accuracy and coherence and make the learners better writers.

Thus, it is better to take all the strategies into account; for instance, teachers instruct some strategies such as brainstorming, pre-writing the main ideas, planning, but neglect to focus on "revision" which plays a prominent role in composing any writing piece, in which the learner may add or change a certain vocabulary, or substitute an idea by another one. Hence, integrating all the strategies together may well help the students.

No writer product is finished after only one draft. The only way to create a polished piece of writing is to revise and rewrite...Remind students that revising is much more than simply checking for spelling and grammatical errors, or just rewriting the same words in their best handwriting becomes clearer and they are more able to express their ideas precisely. As a result, and more satisfying products (P. Freincher, D. Fout, & M. Fout, 2003: 5).

Revision is an important criterion in both the learning and the teaching processes. That is to say, reminding the students to review their assignments leads to gradual writing improvement. Regarding evaluating the students' final written product, it has been covered in

the observation that all teachers urge their students to compose extended essays, and then they evaluate their assignments in which they give their commentary on students' performance and this has also been indicated in the students' essays which compose of individual work and group work in the classroom and in the exams; individual work where the students are required to produce about a particular topic in order to be evaluated and more importantly graded at the end of each semester. To conclude, evaluating and providing feedback on the learners' written productions is exceedingly important, because the learners will recognize their mistakes.

Questions fourteen and fifteen:

All composition teachers (100) indicate that their learners are limited at the level of vocabulary. Through vocabulary, the learner can speak and write; if the latter impedes the student's performance, s/he can neither speak nor write. This explains that the students do not have a rich repertoire, because of the absence of the reading skill. Even though, composition teachers instruct orally different words from time to time to their students varying from verbs to adjectives to adverbs to phrasal verbs and phrases as it is covered in the observation, yet the learners cannot acquire these vocabularies.

Vocabulary has been identified as an essential factor in language acquisition and development, an important component in reading comprehension, and a valid predictor of students' language development and writing performance. Vocabulary has also been linked to people's perceptions of writing quality.... Vocabulary instruction helped these students acquire, retain and access new word meanings more efforts lessly and rapidly. It is therefore tenable words enhances the quality of the students' writing on theme as a result of students learning and using new words in their writing. (E. Papadopoulou, 2007: 19, 20).

Nevertheless, written expression instructors try to foster the new vocabularies to make the learners deploy these words in their pieces of writing, but the questionnaire reveals that the learners have serious deficiencies at the level of the language itself. This illustrates that the way they teach vocabulary is ineffective and needs to be altered to an adequate and more appropriate way that makes the new vocabularies stick in the students' minds.

Three out of five teachers report that their learners have problems at the level of "generating ideas". The latter is considered as an important component in production; in which the students do not know how to put their first thoughts on a paper. This implies that the large majority of the students have hurdles as far as generating ideas is concerned.

Basically, this could be associated with the lack of vocabulary and the absence of the reading skill. Most importantly, having impediments at the level of composing ideas as a response to the given task indicates that students are not exposed to reading and are not also exposed much to writing. They do not know how to start and how to plan, albeit their teachers instruct them implicitly and explicitly metacognitive strategies (brainstorming, planning...etc.).

Only one teacher indicates that his/her students do not revise their assignments. As it is previously noted that reviewing is an important component in writing; these students could not be taught about the importance of revision. Nevertheless, in the ethnographic observation, all composition teachers do not ask their students to revise and they do not show them the role that the latter does play in writing an essay. Surprisingly, no teacher shed light on “brainstorming”, i.e. all the students find it easy to brainstorm. In fact, this strategy falls under the category of metacognitive strategies as it is identified by O’Malley and Chamot (1991).

All written expression teachers report that their students have vocabulary and grammar issues; these two components are considered to be as the backbone of any language, because through vocabulary a sentence can be constructed, and via grammar a piece of production becomes meaningful and clear. Vocabulary and grammar play important roles in writing any extended essay, and these two elements impede the students’ performance. Although, EFL learners deal with grammar as a separate module for three hours a week, yet, the students cannot master grammar rules and do not know when to use the present simple and when to employ simple past or the future.

Similarly, EFL teachers always complain about the grammatical mistakes that their students commit, and that they do not differentiate between the tenses. Although, some composition teachers try to recall some tenses during written expression classes such as “present perfect” like it is unveiled in the observation, but still not sufficient since there is the absence of the reading skill and is not correlated with writing. Indeed, grammar is a basic criterion for any language through which speech is built and writing is constructed. Moreover, teachers always based their evaluation on grammar, vocabulary and the mechanics of writing.

Three out of five questioned teachers claim that their students lack writing mechanics. This result is also revealed in the ethnographic observation when the teacher orders his/her students to compose in the whiteboard and all the student writers misuse punctuation and capitalization. Indeed, punctuation is a fundamental element in which it gives a certain piece

of writing meaning, and the latter alters according to punctuation. In similar context J. Argelillo coins:

Punctuation may appear to be a small detail compared to the weighty matters of structure, theme, organization and craft... Punctuation is what links ideas together, what writers use to enfold and, in turn, express layered thoughts with clarity and grace. Teachers who want to empower young people to craft memoirs, poems, and book reviews also need to empower them to use subordinate clauses... and connect sentences with commas and semicolons. (2002: 5, 6).

The students have dealt with writing mechanics in the first year for two or three sessions. However, this does not suffice the students' need. Therefore, it is important to remind the students to employ all the writing mechanics and to emphasize on the role it plays in conveying meaningful sentences.

More importantly, two out of five teachers claim that their students do not know how to express their ideas clearly. Most of the time, EFL students think in Arabic or French, because they feel unable to express their thoughts using the target language. Thus, they find it easy to brainstorm in their mother tongue and then translate their ideas in English. These students are not well trained on frequent writing and are not much exposed to reading; that is why, they cannot express their ideas on a paper using appropriate words and adequate ideas related to the given topic, and this is proved in the students' written assignments.

Although the teachers show their learners the different steps for writing an extended essay and the different components of a writing piece, still the students cannot put their thoughts in an adequate and coherent manner as shown by their instructors. In other words, even though teachers keep illustrating what to include in each paragraph; they do not know what to write in the introduction, what to explore in the body of the essay and what ideas should be put in the concluding passage. Nevertheless, teachers need to expose their learners to regular writing to make them well armed with the different styles, strategies of writing.

Questions sixteen and seventeen:

All written expression teachers (100%) claim that their students use the same strategies. This implies that EFL learners; both skilled and inexperienced writers based their composition on using much more the metacognitive strategies. Thus, second year students employ the same strategies when writing any extended essay, because that is what their teachers instruct and reinforce in their learners (teaching metacognitive strategies). Though

written expression tutors teach their own syllabi, still complain about their students' performances. Accordingly, these teachers need to adjust their teaching method and focus on strategies that best suit the learners and that develop their writing abilities.

Nearly all the questioned teachers (80%) report that their students use translation when producing a piece of writing, i.e. four (04) instructors state that their learners translate from L1 into English when attempting to write any extended essay. This result equals with that in the students' questionnaire and the ethnographic observation. Therefore, the results confirm the second hypothesis that states that the students use similar strategies.

The students translate from the mother tongue to the target language to overcome the difficulties or hindrances that impede their written production, such obstacles: lack of vocabulary and ideas. Therefore, teachers need to well equip their students with the necessary strategies that make them avoid translation mainly from Arabic into English, Three (03) teachers state that their students translate from L2 into English, these students, overcome their obstacles via thinking in French and then writing in English. In fact, they use French language as a strategy because they are good at it and it is easy for them. More importantly, it makes their ideas and thoughts flow into the paper. This result is also proved in the ethnographic observation wherein the students asked their teachers to translate some French words into English. Surprisingly, only one teacher reports that his/her students think in English while producing.

To conclude, the great majority of the students think in Arabic or French rather than English while producing a writing piece. In other words, they employ L1 or L2 in order to overcome the writing hindrances that impede their writing. EFL teachers always advise their students to avoid translation and to think only in English to obtain a clear and a coherent essay, but in vain. Since the students lack vocabulary, they find it easier to ask the teacher for translation or to look for a missing word in a bilingual dictionary.

Questions eighteen and nineteen:

Three teachers (60%) report that they are dissatisfied about their students' writing capacities. The great majority of the students are limited as far as writing is concerned, i.e. vocabulary poses a real hindrance for EFL students in which they can not express their thoughts accurately. Moreover, grammar is considered to be a deficiency for second year learners in which they do not know when to use a particular tense; they mix the tenses in one

single situation, i.e. they do not have a good control of grammar rules. As it was previously mentioned, grammar is the backbone of any language and when grammar is correct, the language is coherent and understood.

EFL teachers add that their students' essays are based on translation, particularly from L1 (Arabic) into English; they use translation to overcome their writing problems and because they do not know how to express their thoughts. Adding to that, most often learners do not know when to capitalize and how to punctuate. Most importantly, spelling poses a great issue; students do not know how to write words correctly. Tutors explain that when producing, students do not follow the essay's rules and norms. Thus, some modules ought to be deeply correlated with written expression regarding their importance.

On the other hand, two teachers (02) report that they are satisfied about their students' level. Indeed, 40% is considered to be a weak percentage compared to sixty percent. These two instructors state that their students are good at composition and that they do not have any impediment that hinders their production. That is to say, these students are considered to be skilled student writers since their teachers express satisfaction towards their writing abilities.

Questions twenty and twenty one:

All the teachers agree on one answer in that they walk between the rows while the students are asked to compose in the classroom. This is considered to be a positive attitude since it makes the learners feel at ease and facilitates the instructors' help. In fact, walking around while the students are composing facilitates some illustrations that the teacher may add to those who do not well comprehend the writing norms that should be followed. Most importantly, it helps the students ask for assistance when they do not know a particular vocabulary.

Furthermore, this attitude on the part of teachers makes all the students engaged in writing. Walking around the rows facilitates to some extent composition for the unskilled writers and makes them willing to produce; in that it will be easy for the students to ask their instructor if a written sentence or a paragraph is well composed or not, or ask for help. C. Cook (2007:79) argues about a written expression teacher in the United States of America "*Some students ask her to listen to a sentence to see it sounds 'Good'. Others might ask her to spell a word*". Therefore, it is important on the part of the teacher to walk between the rows while the students are composing in order to explain more and provide assistance.

Since all written expression teachers report that they walk around the rows while the students are producing, they proceed reporting in question nineteen that they provide assistance to their learners at the level of content, ideas' organization, and help them at spelling some unfamiliar words. The five written expression instructors believe that helping the students would boost the learners' writing proficiency, and make them recognize how ideas ought to be well-ordered according to the facts and according to the structure of the piece of writing. Additionally, aiding the students at spelling makes them know how a particular word is written and that leads to learning new vocabulary.

Four teachers (04), that is eighty percent report that they assist their students at the level of grammar, because of some factors. The first prime purpose is that they believe that grammar is important in writing, for the students are evaluated and assessed in all disciplines according to their written style. Basically, grammar is considered to be a prominent criterion that the teachers first correct. It is worth noting that, assisting the students at the level of grammar may strengthen their writing capacities and makes their language clearer, more accurate and coherent.

Question twenty two:

Four teachers (04) claim that they give tasks that are convenient for the learners' level. Teachers need to provide their students with topics that enable them to write and to express themselves easily. Moreover, the results obtained here are similar to that in classroom observation, wherein teachers provide their learners with social topics in which students feel comfortable to compose. In addition, in such a situation, students can brainstorm ideas related to the provided task, and find easy and familiar vocabulary, because they already know what to write about, i.e. they already have a certain amount of knowledge background about the given exercise. However, giving a task which is beyond the cognitive level of the students would confuse them and find nothing to communicate on a paper. Adding to that, finding adequate vocabulary would be difficult, and would make the learners unable to generate ideas, and this is what one teacher states that s/he provides the learners with tasks which are beyond their cognitive level.

Questions twenty three and twenty four:

As far as writing strategies instruction to second year university students are concerned, all the teachers indicate teaching writing strategies, which are composed of

outlining that consists of paragraph development, how to organize an extended essay and writing mechanics. Indeed, teaching composition strategies is extremely important in that it allows students to learn how to produce a piece of writing.

Furthermore, teaching the different writing strategies help the students be skilled learners and help them in writing a particular text without any hurdle. This result confirms teachers' strategies instruction during classroom observation, wherein written expression instructors illustrate metacognitive strategies whether implicitly or explicitly; it depends on the teacher's method. These instructors focus only on metacognitive strategies, neglecting predominantly the cognitive strategies that may well contribute to the development of writing.

These teachers have a strong belief that metacognitive strategies are efficient and effective for promoting the writing competence. That is why; they shed light on the earlier mentioned strategies. On the other hand, as it is also confirmed in classroom observation, most of the students favour social/affective strategies, for the ultimate objective that they are helpful in that; these strategies enable the learners to ask for the help of a classmate or a teacher, and exchange ideas when working collaboratively, and thus easy to compose.

Nevertheless, it is also indicated in the qualitative analysis of students' assignments and learners' written expression examination, that the vast majority of students obtain less than (./20), and who use inappropriately the learnt writing strategies; this has been covered in their essays. Therefore, teachers need to focus more on the practical side of composition instruction. It is the teachers' duty to instruct and it is the responsibility of the students to make extra research and read more in order to be able to produce any piece of writing.

Questions twenty five, twenty six and twenty seven:

It has been noticed by the researcher that all the teachers provide their students with written assignments. However, the average of the provided topics to write about differs from one teacher to another. Four instructors (04) report that they give their learners from five to ten assignments during the academic year. Therefore, providing the learners with more topics to compose is a positive attitude on the part of teachers, because this will equip the students with the different writing styles and make them proficient. Moreover, they will become well trained on how to produce different essays. Focusing on the practical side of composition is

much better than wasting time on illustrating the several steps that any student writer should go through.

It should be pointed out that, providing the students with more assignments will make them know how to write and how to move from one paragraph to another. As noticed in classroom observational sessions that all written expression teachers focus more on the theoretical part of a composition course, and after finishing the explanations, they give their students topics and enjoin them to produce according to the elaborated course. Similarly, M. Brosig and K. Kas claims that:

Very often, these assignments contribute to a part of the overall grade for a particular course, or serve as a requirement to be fulfilled for the student to take an exam. As a whole, written assignments are considered an important tool for students to gain the expected competency within individual courses. (2008: 95)

Thus, providing written assignments foster to some extent students' writing competence. One teacher: that is (20%) reports that s/he administers to his/her students from ten to fifteen tasks during the academic year. The more activities instructors give their learners, the better; because it allows them to get deeply involved in the writing skill. Most importantly, writing more permits EFL students to know new vocabulary, grammar and style. Therefore, it is advisable to give learners more written tasks, for the overall purpose is to boost the students' writing proficiency.

After providing written expression teachers their learners with topics to compose about, they give them time to think and then produce, i.e. they start writing the first draft in the classroom, finish at home and then give their polished and refined drafts to their teachers. Then, instructors read their students' extended essays and provide feedback. However, the latter differs from one teacher to another; sometimes they respond orally, i.e. offer oral feedback on students' mistakes as indicated in classroom observation and other teachers stress more on written comments, or rather correct their learners' mistakes as shown in the learners' written assignments.

It is worth mentioning that assessing the learners' drafts is important on the basis of showing what is correct and what is incorrect, and if they have composed accurately or not. Moreover, it makes the students' aware of their mistakes at different levels, so that they will not repeat the same committed blunders in the next writing. Assessment is a relevant component in the learning process, wherein the teachers evaluate themselves (evaluate how

effective are their teaching methods), and evaluate their students' comprehension to the course and how well they produce their writing pieces.

The five questioned teachers agree that they assess their learners on ideas organization, punctuation and capitalization, because they believe that these two components are fundamental in writing any extended essay, i.e. that any paragraph needs to be well organized in terms of ideas. Besides, punctuation and capitalization play important roles in transmitting the meaning. Nevertheless, students always show general weakness at writing mechanics as covered in the qualitative analysis of students' written assignments (group work) and their written expression examination essays, wherein they reveal that there is no respect for writing mechanics. For that reason, written expression teachers assess their EFL learners at the level of writing mechanics, because of the misuse to the above mentioned criterion.

On the other hand, two teachers (02) report that they assess the students at the levels of grammar and spelling mistakes, because these two components are considered to be fundamental in language proficiency. In fact, assessing grammar is important, because of the role it plays in language acquisition; and if grammar is correct, then the language is accurate and coherent. Besides grammar accuracy, correct spelling also suggests that the learner is proficient and that s/he masters the language, because producing any writing piece entails accurate grammar, good spelling, adequate punctuation and precise vocabulary related to the given topic.

Three out of five teachers report vocabulary assessment. A writing piece that is rich and contains precise vocabulary indicates that the student is a good reader. Taking into consideration all language aspects (grammar, vocabulary, ideas organization, spelling and writing mechanics) imply that the writer is aware of the different components of the writing skill. Most importantly, s/he is aware of the importance of the reader, who in his turn evaluates the writing piece.

Teachers regularly assess their students' writing performance, i.e. each tutor evaluates his/her learners' work depending on how much s/he provides the students with writing assignments. Two teachers claim that they evaluate the students' essays once a week and three other teachers report that they evaluate their learners once a month. No instructor on the other hand, claims that s/he assesses once a term. Nevertheless, assessing the students' written assignments once a month seems to be insufficient. In other words, assessing the students

once a month is not enough and needs to be done at least twice a month, because writing entails frequent evaluation.

Question twenty nine:

One teacher states in question twenty nine, that written expression class should be fostered. The instructor provides some suggestions that may enhance the students' writing proficiency. These suggestions encompass providing the students with more assignments. Moreover, s/he suggests that reading plays an important role in that learners should read well structured texts which may serve as a model for future writing. S/he proceeds stating that teachers ought to assimilate new writing methodological instruction. That teacher believes that because of the students' poor performance predominantly in the exams, the written expression module should be altered in terms of improving the syllabus.

4.6 Conclusion

The questionnaire is relevant and a useful instrument to reveal general and particular data about both students' and teachers' behaviours and perceptions of the writing skill. The students' questionnaire helped detect their writing strategies and then compared these obtained data with that of the assignments. It helped discover that the students employed the same strategies to produce an extended essay. The vast majority relied on thinking from their L1 or the mother tongue to be able to compose in English. Some recorded using L2 (French) when endeavouring to compose a writing piece in the target language.

Translation is identified and classified by M. O'Malley and A. Chamot (1990) as a cognitive strategy. However, applying translation as a main strategy raises more questions about whether the learners translate effectively or ineffectively. The teachers' questionnaire helped identify that most of them were not satisfied about the syllabus that they are following. Most importantly they emphasized on the relevance of the reading skill in developing students' writing competence and on the importance of providing feedback on the students' essays.

The following and the last chapter will deal with pedagogical implications and will recommend some utilitarian solutions that hopefully will remedy the existing writing impediments.

Chapter five: Pedagogical implications and recommendations.

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5.1 Introduction

This chapter is devoted to some pedagogical implications and recommendations concerning the teaching of writing, hopefully intended to overcome some students' writing impediments that are identified in the current investigation. Furthermore, the researcher does not endeavour to recommend solutions for best writing instruction, but rather suggest some exercises that better assist second year university students to develop their written communication.

This chapter therefore, will introduce the impact of reading on improving writing and some assignments that include reading as a major part in designing a written course; tending to minimize the most common language errors and raising students' awareness about how to learn the target language in general and the writing skill in particular. The investigator will recommend adopting an approach to teaching writing that will combine between metacognitive/cognitive instruction, and will splash some tasks that encompass the use of blend of metacognitive and cognitive strategies.

Further suggestions regarding the priority and the relevance of revision stage during the writing process as well as product. Some recommendations will be put forward such as showing the efficacy of providing teachers' feedback on students' extended essays with displaying some related literature, and showing that commenting on content will be more efficacious and purposeful; in which the teachers' responses will be used in the future writing.

5.2 Pedagogical implications and recommendations

Written expression teachers' grades of examination indicate that students' performance during exams is poor; in that the grades vary between weak and average. Most of

EFL teachers at the Department of English language in Sidi Bel Abbes, blame their students for not reading. Furthermore, the absence of the reading skill as a module makes the students unaware of its relevance. Basically, the students' written assignments and examination unveil that the sweeping majority of the learners do not read. Indeed, this occurred in their spelling, lexical and grammatical mistakes...etc.

It should be pointed out that during classroom observational sessions, the great majority of the students are absent from written expression classes and which makes them unaware of the writing process. Written expression module is entitled "Compréhension et Expression Ecrite", albeit composition teachers do not intertwine the two modules, they focus solely on written production instruction.

5.2.1 The impact of reading on writing

For many years reading and writing skills were taught separately. However, research (see chapter 2) has suggested that both skills are interdependent in that reading affects writing and writing affects reading. Teaching written composition is efficient when it is interrelated with reading. The latter goes hand in hand with writing; in that reading a variety of genres helps students learn language and structural texts which can be transferred in their future writing.

Additionally, intensive or extensive reading reinforces EFL learners' knowledge that they can employ in their writing pieces, it broadens their thoughts and facilitates the flow of information. Indeed, many EFL teachers at the Department of English of Sidi Bel Abbes complain about the absence of the reading skill that must be integrated as a separate module in the syllabus. Besides, they also shed light on the importance of reading in improving the students' written production capacities.

Likewise, a multitude of educationalists in the field of Applied Linguistics emphasized on the interrelation of reading and writing; in that student readers have the ability to perform better when composing extended essays. More importantly, studies have recommended reading-writing instruction, because both skills are intertwined. In this respect, H. Koons (2008) notices "*...more effective instruction when reading and writing are taught in combination*". Thus, since written expression module is named "Reading-Writing Comprehension", the researcher recommends some pedagogical implications regarding reading/writing instruction as two inseparable skills:

5.2.2 Summarization

Summarizing is a strategy that ameliorates both proficient and novice student writers' written production skills. It falls under the category of cognitive strategies. Basically, the process of summary writing is a good instance that splashes the interrelation of reading and writing. According to M. Heller (2009: 157) summaries require reading first a given text, fully understand it and then reduce the prose into its gist.

Offering texts can be a good writing activity for EFL students for the ultimate purpose of learning more about production. Relying on summarization as a cognitive strategy for producing a writing piece, construct the students' comprehension skills; in that they read, understand and summarize using their own vocabulary. Reading and then writing a synopsis provide opportunities for EFL students to learn how to read, acquire spontaneously new vocabularies, the author's style and grammar. Most importantly, they use reading to promote their production abilities.

Learning to write is not taught theoretically, but is acquired through practice. As it is revealed in students' written assignments and particularly in their examination, students relied heavily on ineffective translation for the objective of overcoming their writing difficulties. The latter hampers their performance, and reveals also that second year university students' have some writing deficiencies in several language areas and unveils that they are unable to compose neither coherently nor accurately.

Besides, the observational classroom sessions indicate that EFL written expression instructors focus much on the theoretical lectures. However, second year university students lack training on how to tackle a writing piece. It should be pointed out that students' written assignments and examination revealed that they do not utilize appropriate vocabulary related to the given topic; sometimes they write French words predominantly when they do not know how to express themselves adequately.

Thus, the researcher suggests summarization, because it enables learners to comprehend better reading materials and develops the reading and the writing skills which may drive them to read more in the future. In this respect:

Summarization as a required technique in academic area is believed to facilitate and enhance reading comprehension. Summarizing helps students to comprehend knowledge, transferring it to long-term memory significantly because it leads students to reading to understand, to distinguish important

ideas and to express the information by using their own words. (F. Sahebkhair, 2012: 515).

Summarization is a cognitive strategy that helps students read and write at the same time utilizing their own vocabulary and style. Therefore, written expression teachers are urged to provide their students with summary written production as assignments, because the latter effectively boosts their reading and writing capacities.

It is worth mentioning that summarizing allows students to recall and retrieve from long term memory some of the learnt vocabularies and employ them in their extended essays. Furthermore, reading a particular text enables students to know about writing mechanics (capitalization and punctuation) which make their written synopsis meaningful and purposeful. Providing the students with reading materials that are not beyond their cognitive level enable EFL students to interact within the text, and therefore construct an accurate writing piece.

Additionally, offering stories to be summarized make the learners capable of retaining the author's expressions. Hence, short stories could be a good instance for second year university students. Stories which are short capture the reader's attention and make him/her involved and interactive within the text. Indeed, social or moral stories can be beneficial in promoting students' critical thinking. Teaching students to summarize texts has a strong, consistent, positive effect on their capacities to compose good writing pieces (S. Graham & D. Perin, 2007). Writing about texts facilitates understanding and allows the students to record, connect, analyze and manipulate ideas in the text (S. Graham & M. Herbert, 2011: 712).

Written expression teachers are urged to provide their learners with short stories, explaining to them primarily the rationale for summarizing a particular reading material. Moreover, illustrating how to summarize, how to move from one paragraph to another, how to move from one main thought to another relevant one, and how to rewrite them. In other words, a writing teacher needs to unveil to EFL learners the different aspects that they ought to go through when producing a synopsis. The instance beneath covers what written expression instructor should explain in order to obtain an accurate and adequate synoptic text:

The introductory paragraph:

- The introductory paragraph should capture the audience's attention, so that the reader will be eager to read more about the text; through starting with a startling fact.

The body paragraphs:

- The learner plans and outlines what s/he attempts to summarize, i.e. listing the facts, information or ideas according to the chronological order of the story. To put it differently, rewriting the prime thoughts using simple style (students' own words).

The concluding paragraph:

- In that phase, students are required to re-arrange the final key ideas; s/he focuses on the basic expressions that are mentioned by the author, rewrites them and adds details when necessary to make the written synopsis complete and more accurate.

The researcher suggests also another writing activity which requires also summarizing.

5.2.3 A book report

A book report is a writing piece which requires a brief summary of a book. It often includes the reader's own understanding of the book (B. Rollins, 2009). Indeed, a book report "*is another part of writing process*". Moreover, it reveals how well the reader has understood the story and what s/he speculates about it. Each book report encompasses the same elements in order to be well achieved and completed (P.8). The following components indicate what to include:

The opening paragraph:

- In the introduction, the student writer needs to state the book's title, the author's name and the rationale for choosing a certain story.

Developing the body paragraphs:

- In this phase, the students are required to describe the main parts of the story: setting, plot, theme and characters.

The concluding paragraph:

- In this phase, the learner may suggest another end to the story, or s/he may provide views about the story.

To put it differently, a writing teacher can select a novella or a short story that capture the learners’ attention and which is not beyond their level. Or, s/he can utter with the students about the selection of the story, i.e. asking the learners whether they like mystery, adventure, drama, fictional books...etc. When both the teacher and the students agree about a particular text, the instructor illustrates several elements that the students should undertake when dealing with a book report. For instance, the written expression teacher may suggest to the learners “Rappaccini’s Daughter” by N. Hawthorne. In that phase, the teacher asks the students to read the story outside the classroom (independent reading); because 1 hour and 30 minutes do not suffice the students to read and summarize at the same time.

In order to compose a book report, the teacher demonstrates to the students the different steps to be followed which will be shown in the instance beneath:

Student’s name:.....
<i>Introduction:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Suggesting another title.....• Type of the story.....
<i>Developing the body paragraphs (summarizing the following aspects):</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introducing the main character (the protagonist).• Where and when the story takes place.• Stating the gist (the main theme of the book).• Summarizing briefly the story (distil the most important thoughts).• Writing what happened in the end of the story.
<i>The concluding paragraph:</i>

- Suggesting another end.
- Stating the student’s own opinion about the story.

.....
.....
.....

Writing a book report fosters both reading and writing. Students will be able to read different genres of texts, and therefore able to produce different genres. Additionally, they will develop their understanding, foster their critical thinking and reinforce creativity predominantly when attempting to write a different end of the read story. It is worth mentioning that correlating both reading and writing skills, enable the learners to be skillful and proficient, raise their linguistic competence and able to master all language aspects. Furthermore, providing EFL students with reading-writing assignments raise their motivation and autonomy and thus, skilled student writers.

Similarly, Bloom’s Taxonomy for reading comprehension indicates that providing the students with such assignments reinforce their thinking skills that are prominent for writing an extended essay. Bloom’s Taxonomy is based on six levels of thinking, i.e. written tasks such as producing a “book report” is a challenge for the learners to not only recall what s/he read, but to comprehend the text through “*higher-order thinking*”. In other words, learners are required to employ skills, namely: understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating and creating (B. Rollins, 2009: 6).

Deploying the skills mentioned earlier enable the students to be active writers; in that they extract meanings from the text, apply and extend their learning and knowledge in a more effectual and rigorous manner. Hence, writing a book report is an efficient instrument for learning a language in general and writing in particular. In addition, it inspires the students with various thoughts, encourages creativity and promotes learning. The following diagram summarizes what mentioned previously.

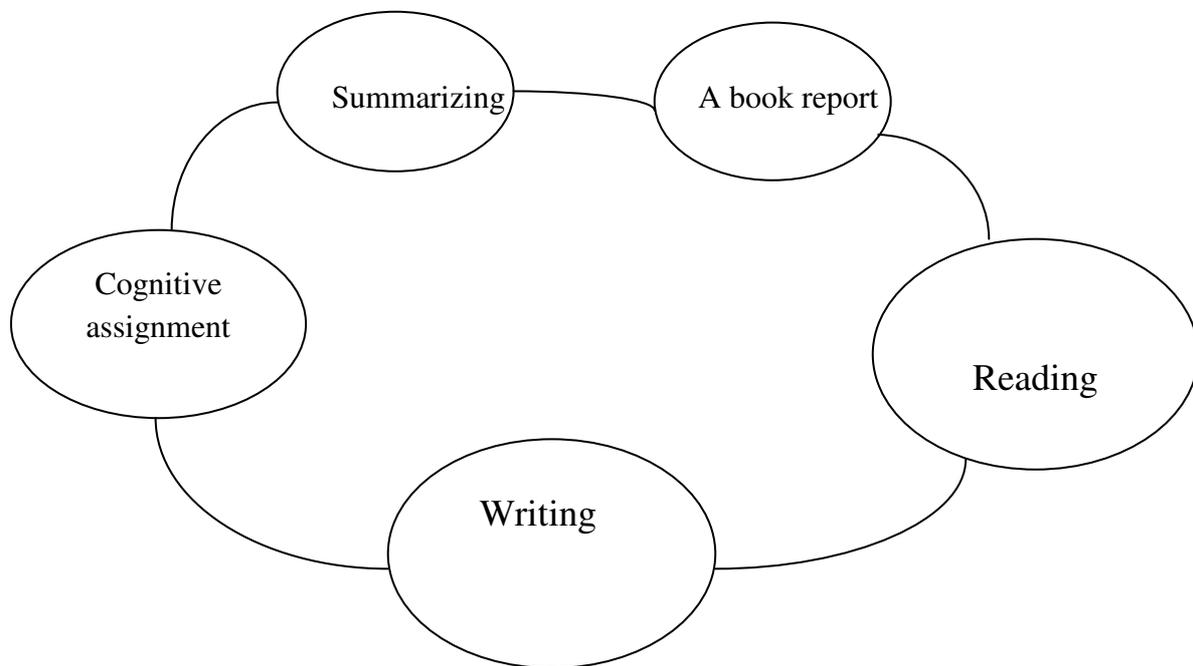


Diagram 5.1 Developing students' cognitive strategies

5.2.4 Designing written tasks

Engaging EFL students in classroom activities becomes a central challenge for written expression teachers, i.e. EFL instructors find it complex when introducing written assignments to their students; they may raise questions like which task would better suit the students' cognitive level and which activity could really boost their writing proficiency. Additionally, keeping the students on a particular task, assisting them to accomplish their intended objectives and raising their awareness are teachers' priority.

It is essential to mention that learners must be provided with opportunities to direct their own learning (students' centeredness). Indeed, self-dependence expedites students' autonomy, motivation and ultimately highly productive students. It goes without saying that any teacher intends to assist his/her learners to improve their written production skill. In order to do so, s/he makes them work on tasks that accelerate their proficiency. However, to make the students accomplish their written assignments successfully, s/he must provide help.

As it is mentioned at the outset that any written expression teacher intends to assist his/her learners to improve their production skill. In order to do so s/he makes them work on

tasks that accelerate their written performance. However, to make the students accomplish their exercises successfully, s/he needs to provide help. Doing so entails some teaching methods that will be summarized in the following assignments:

Task: a written expression teacher can bring passages from literature in which characters are described effectively. Making a photocopy of these paragraphs would be efficient to make the learners see the target language or the author's style (D. Rice, 2005).

- Teach the students that they will be producing descriptive texts about themselves.
- Ask the students to read carefully the samples from literature.
- They should first start by brainstorming descriptions on themselves on the first draft.
- Teach students that they ought to organize the brainstorming and utilize it to compose a descriptive passage or two.

The instances from literature would serve as examples that may enable second year university students to pen similar texts. Not to mention that they will acquire descriptive vocabulary and the way the author expresses his/her ideas. Notably, they will read and think about the writer's thoughts and the way s/he deploys those ideas. Furthermore, the instructor should also illustrate the different points that the learners need to go through. For instance, asking the students to reread the literary examples in order to identify how the author moves from one sentence to another and from one passage to another.

Additionally, explaining to the learners the importance of utilizing the literary devices when producing descriptively. Such devices encompass metaphor, simile and alliteration, etc. Typically, adjectives and adverbs are the most essential descriptive instruments (D. Rice, 2005: 99). The teacher should remind the learners to speculate of the audience and to be mindful of the language use. In other words, in order to obtain an effectual impression, grammar, spelling vocabulary and writing mechanics should be deployed efficiently. At the end, the teacher ought to explain explicitly the importance of revision.

The following diagram sums up what mentioned earlier.

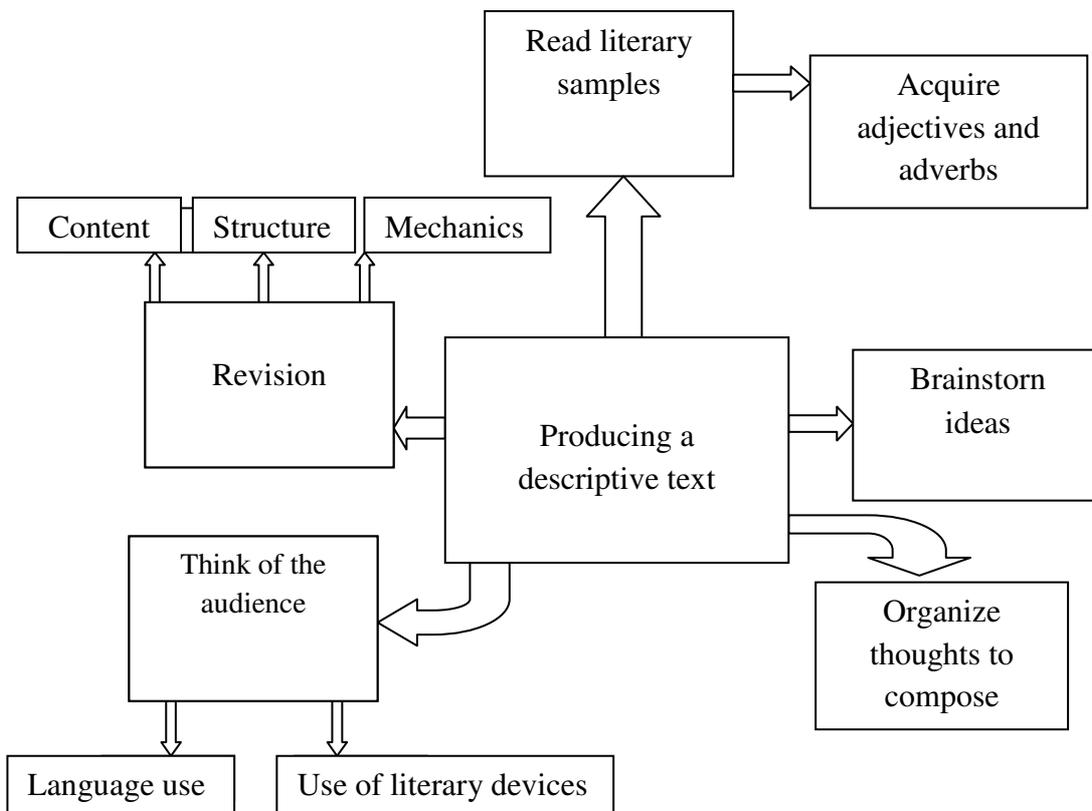


Diagram 5.2 Stages of development for writing a text

The researcher moots other tasks that prompt students' thinking skills and most importantly their creativity. The exercises encompass reading.

Task: providing topics that the learners are au fait with, such as recent exciting event. Then, discussing with the students these events to stimulate first the flow of thoughts and to be easy for them to organize those thoughts; so that when they start writing, ideas will be clear in their minds. That is to say, making the learners utter about the provided topic facilitates the writing process. After discussing the events, the teacher then asks the students to write according to the previous stimulated knowledge. Likewise, the exercise is well elaborated by I.S.P. Nation (2009).

I.S.P. Nation (2009: 95) recommends some teaching methods that are sum up in the following suggestions:

- A written expression teacher may speculate about any topic and then enjoins the students to form groups of three or four. Each group has to plan and write one text.

Through assisting each other, the students will be able to compose a writing piece that is better than any of them could have written via working alone (without teacher's help).

- The teacher may also select a topic and then ask the students to work on it. They may ask for help if it is necessary, but they are predominantly left to compose independently.

Task: learners are required to read or listen to a story in order to reproduce a writing piece and they are asked to retell it without looking again at the story. Indeed, this kind of exercises is straightforward and undemanding for the students, because they are allowed to reread or re-listen to the story several times before they start writing. When accomplishing the reading or the listening phases, the instructor asks his/her learners to retell the story using the vocabulary that they already acquire.

Indeed, the writing piece should be similar to the original one. Students are permitted to take notes. Learners are not required to alter events, but to keep the main thoughts as they are, and reproduce the story using their own style. Adding to that, during the reproduction phase, students can also add extra events for the objectives of boosting their thinking skills, prompting their creative writing and expanding their imagination.

Another similar exercise; wherein the teacher can read a story more than once for providing more assistance. Then, s/he enjoins the students to take notes and asks them to rewrite the given story from their memory (I.S.P. Nation, 2009: 99). This activity is called by I.S.P. Nation "*a dicto-comp*"¹⁵. Additionally, in case if the learners are impotent of recalling some of the ideas and some of the words, they ought to deploy their thinking skills and fictionalize the missing parts of the provided story.

The teacher here is training implicitly the students on utilizing memory strategies which allow the learners to store data and retrieve them (R. Oxford, 1990: 39). This kind of tasks has some benefits:

- It makes the students work as hard as they can in the classroom.
- It fosters their motivation and autonomy.
- It raises their intelligence and broadens their critical thinking.

¹⁵ Dicto-comp comes from dictation and composition in which learners are required to recall ideas in a text, or more than one hundred words and express them in the words of the original or in their own words (I.S.P. Nation & J. Newton, 2009: 70)

Another activity that may well encourage the students to write spontaneously and is encouraged of course by a writing teacher. Freewriting activity will be well elaborated in the section beneath.

5.2.5 The efficacy of freewriting

Free-writing is a technique that allows students communicate their thoughts onto a paper. It helps students generate ideas, explore their thoughts and discover attitudes. The prime objective of freewriting is to keep learners on writing, even when they are impotent of communicating something (J. Carolyn & D. Carter, 2003: 73). Freewriting is a technique that is used by both well-experienced writers and students in order to let ideas flow and emerge on the paper, and this latter, leads to the suggestion of other ideas. Freewriting allows learners to draft as fast as they can. *“When you freewrite, write as much as you can, without stopping to think about organization or grammar”* (Raimes, 1998).

In writing without teachers, A. Elbow (1973: 32) suggests that writers are advised to draft anything that comes to their minds, even though if they do not know to where they are going. Editing has to stay at last and should be avoided when the writer produces a text. In order to help the learners develop their writing abilities, writers should do freewriting activities for ten minutes or three times a week. When doing a freewriting activity, student writers feel free, in the sense that they start jotting down ideas without editing or looking back, Elbow states as follows:

The main thing about freewriting is that it is nonediting. It is an excise in bringing together the process of producing words and putting them on words. Practice regularly, it undoes the ingrained habits of editing at the same time you are trying to produce. It will make writing less blocked because words will come more easily. (Elbow, 1994: 55)

At the conclusion of freewriting, a writing teacher should direct students to synthesize the generated ideas in the freewriting activity and compose a single sentence that summarizes the focal point (J. Carolyn & D. Carter, 2003: 73).

In addition to reducing blocking, Elbow states that there are two advantages of freewriting. First, he coins that it makes learners express their thoughts, ideas, or their voices, which he speculates that it is indispensable feature for effective writing. He put it as follow *“the habit of compulsive, premature editing doesn’t just make writing hand. It also makes writing dead. Your voice is damped out by all the interruptions, changes, and hesitations*

between the consciousness and the page." (Elbow, 1973: 75). Most importantly, Elbow believes that freewriting helps the writer discover better ideas. Freewriting is not only about putting down words on paper, but it improves thinking. Hence, freewriting could be a good remedy for the LMD students, for it stimulates creativity. Moreover, it is an easy way to make the ideas and thoughts flow and emerge on a paper.

5.3 Metacognitive and cognitive strategies correlation: an approach to writing instruction

EFL teachers often complain about their students' level in the other modules in general and in writing in particular. Instructors of writing on the other hand tend to blame their learners for not reading independently to better improve their level in English in general and predominantly in writing as a craft. The prime finding of this study is that second year university students depend heavily on metacognitive strategies (brainstorming, clustering, etc) and ineffective translation from their L1 or Algerian Arabic to be able to produce a text.

First and foremost, the way instructors teach written production should be adjusted to meet the learners' written impediments. More training needs to be taken into account on the teachers' part in order to make the learners' well armed with the different and effective strategies, rather than devoting much time to theory. Providing the students with vocabulary when they are blocked and illustrating grammar rules when necessary as it is recorded in classroom observational sessions are no more considered to be fashionable in the teaching of written production.

In order to raise students' awareness of efficient writing strategies, a new approach to teaching composition is introduced which is a blend of metacognitive and cognitive strategies instruction. Within such a framework, students will develop their learning strategies and ultimately become autonomous and motivated writers. Adding to that, focusing on both categories enables the learners to ameliorate their thinking skills via providing them with an array of written assignments.

As it is noted at the outset, the less proficient student writers form the sweeping majority. Their results are poor in written expression examination, because they utilize inadequate strategies. However, teachers can assist their learners via identifying the most dexterous strategies. As it is mentioned earlier that the sweeping majority were novice student writers, hence, teachers of writing should give due attention to metacognitive strategies

instruction, because the majority misuse strategies such as: (planning, brainstorming, clustering, translation, etc) when endeavouring to compose a particular text.

Nonetheless, EFL students ought to be well armed with appropriate writing strategies that enable them to overcome their production hurdles. It is worth noting that classroom observational sessions revealed that instructors of writing focus more actively on metacognitive strategies instruction for the prime purpose of facilitating composition for learners. However, teachers pay scant attention to other learning strategies which make the students deploy ineffectively some strategies like translation and oral construction. More importantly, student writers are unaware of the importance of revision which falls under the metacognitive strategies.

Thus, deliberate attention should be devoted to all learning strategies instruction and tutors should also provide the students with suitable and different tasks that better boost the students' writing capacities. Moreover, training the novice writers on deploying or combining between cognitive and metacognitive strategies helps them utilize these strategies when a writing impediment inhibits their performance. J. Shrum & E. Glisan (2015: 285) note "*...overall writing improved when students were trained in cognitive as well as metacognitive strategies*".

Similarly, S. Hurd & T. Lewis (2008: 106) quote Aziz (1995) who emphasizes on the importance of cognitive strategies in her research of writing proficiency. She found that learners who utilized both cognitive and metacognitive strategies were able to outperform than those who employed solely the cognitive strategies. Therefore, depending on one single category is not effectual and artful; however, written expression instruction needs to be varied at the level teaching writing strategies.

5.3.1 Importance of revision

Students' written assignments and their examination essays unveil that revision is scant. Only skilled student writers reviewed their texts, and this is occurred in the way they expressed themselves and mistakes were a few and not serious ones. On the other hand, less proficient writers pay little attention to revision, and is considered to be central in learning in general and in writing in particular. Adding to that, reviewing is another challenge for EFL learners in which the large majority are unaware of its relevance.

Thus, teachers of written production must devote some time to instruct revision to their students via displaying thoroughly the role it plays in composition. Furthermore, they also must train their students to revise their extended essays as a separate and essential activity, not solely in written expression, but in other subject areas. Additionally, learners ought to review their paragraphs at each stage of the writing process for thoughts adjustment, vocabulary, grammar, writing mechanics and organization.

Students need to be taught to revise throughout the writing process and to make content changes as well as surface changes. Students should reread their written text for content and organization as a separate activity...

(J. Shrum & E. Glisan, 2015: 286)

Indeed, revision allows student writers to refine not only grammar and vocabulary, but content. However, some students think that proofreading their final drafts is a simple a stage, rather than a relevant activity that should be implemented effectively during writing as a process and as a product (J. Wyrick, 2015). Frequently, EFL students struggle to put their thoughts on a first draft, so, it is due to revision stage which allows student writers to adjust, refine and polish their written communication. Teachers of writing ought to display clearly to their learners the revision stages which are eminent, in that their writing pieces would be to a large extent written appropriately and coherently.

Reviewing is a metacognitive strategy which is a critical part that most EFL students never manage to do. The student writer may come across a number of hurdles when endeavouring to draft an essay. Hence, revision is an instrument that turns a simple writing piece into an accurate and coherent one. For instance, during the refining part, details are added that *“Make characters and places come alive in readers’ minds, dialogue is polished, repetitive words are deleted, and unclear comments are rewritten”* (J. Kissel, 2005: 6).

It is worth noting that each student has his/her own method for revising a writing piece. As it is indicated in the literature, that skilled students spend much time on reviewing, whereas, less proficient learners revise less (see chapter 2). As the student becomes proficient performer, s/he develops ways that help during the revising process. F. Galko (2001: 75) recommends some suggestions that show to the student writer how to review. The suggestions will be summarized in the following claims:

- Read carefully the writing piece and very critically as if the writer is the intended audience. It is often helpful to read the essay aloud in order to evaluate what the paper communicates.
- Content revision: the introduction should grasp the reader's attention and it ought to display explicitly the main theme and prepares the reader's for what comes next. Sentences must be correlated and paragraphs ought to be logically ordered. The concluding passage should end the writing piece. Overall, the student writer should make it clear that the written text meets the intended objectives and the course goals.
- The student writer may come up with composing an entirely second draft that is more accurate and coherent via changing some details, misspelled words and confusing sentences.

5.4 The role of teacher feedback in writing

Writing teachers at the Department of English in Sidi Bel Abbes always seek for effective strategies that enable student communicate their thoughts accurately; they devote time on written assignments to be provided, and prepare theoretical courses that demonstrate and facilitate the process of writing for their learners.

According to the research findings, written expression teachers always encourage their students to craft independently; through this activity, students can enhance their ideas on the piece of writing they produce and learn more about the art of production. The latter contributes profoundly to the improvement of writing, and which makes students engaged in the process of composition, autonomous, not anxious and reluctant when assigning a written task. After providing topics to craft about, teacher could offer feedback which is based on the thoughts that the learner endeavours to communicate. Additionally, to help students eradicate language errors, s/he can also focus on grammar, spelling and writing mechanics.

According to M. Ouskourt (2008) teachers of writing need to be aware of the following issues:

- Writing needs a lot of time to be developed.
- Writing is a complex and frustrating skill, and students need to be provided with assignments that maintain their eagerness to work and which facilitate the acquisition of the writing process.
- Continuous and frequent writing teach writing.

- Students could be encouraged to deploy the different learnt strategies (cognitive/metacognitive and affective strategies).
- Reviewing is the most relevant stage in writing as a process as well as a product, because it is in that phase where content and purpose are revised for the sake of clarity, accuracy and correctness.
- Students need to be aware of the importance of reading to develop an accurate and effectual written communication.
- Students need to be encouraged to write about what they have read.
- Primacy of content, planning and ideas organization over grammar, vocabulary and the mechanics of writing.
- Teachers would not put more focus on grammatical and lexical errors at early stages, but reserve them for the end stage of students' drafting after they have worked through their ideas and organizational issues.
- Feedback could be motivating, helpful and formative indicating for each student what his or her weaknesses and strengths in specific areas.
- Opportunities could be provided for students to discuss the comments they receive and make them part of the writing process, so that the feedback will help them in their future writing.

5.4.1 Principles of providing teacher feedback

According to the research findings, feedback is overly foremost and beneficial. It is interesting to note that the participants involved in the current work (students and tutors) emphasized on the relevance of teachers' comments. D. Ferris & J. Hedgcock (2014: 293) indicate that teachers' feedback is primarily offered to illustrate and justify the grade, and perhaps providing some general suggestions for student writers to consider next time.

Some writing teachers at the Department of English regard commentary on students' texts as frustrating, because it is time consuming. The latter inhibits writing tutors to assign regular activities. However, assigning written tasks on a regular basis improves students' production capacities and responding to their essays develops their ability to write.

It is therefore advisable to provide frequently second year university students with activities and respond to their performance regularly. Teachers' feedback helps to a large extent the learners' written communication and assists them to be aware if their texts meet the

essays standards and if their English language is adequate and clear. Indeed, teachers' commentary should be offered on language errors to lessen and avoid blunders next time. In that respect, D. Ferris & J. Hedgcock (2014: 293) clarify:

It is fairly straightforward to observe that teachers should and do provide feedback at various stages of the writing process (not just at the end) and about a range of issues (not just grammar)...

It is worth mentioning that writing instructors need to provide feedback during the writing process, and not at the final stage (product). Additionally, after commenting on the produced assignments, teachers ought to ask their students to compose a second draft; wherein they have to take into account the teacher's responses and correct all their language errors for the purpose of making their texts respect the conventions of academic writing. In fact, correcting the mistakes and then producing another polished draft is a key to an effective extended essay. Thus, teacher's feedback plays an eminent role in learning and acquiring the art of writing as a skill; in which learners will be aware and develop various strategies by focusing on the nature of their errors, and consequently deliver accurate, correct and purposeful extended essays.

Notably, when responding to students' productions, teachers need to bear in mind that their comments should be constructive in that feedback should show to the students how well ideas are strongly correlated and how well paragraphs are organized (feedback often should be positive). Adding to that, feedback informs the students that their texts have been read and assessed at different levels. According to M. Ouskourt (2008) there are some principles that writing teachers should take into consideration, and which are summarized in the following suggestions:

- 1.** Make feedback an integral part of the writing process as well as a product.
- 2.** Provide informative, clear and explicit feedback.
- 3.** Feedback could be more accurate, and more trustworthy.
- 4.** Ask students to offer feedback to other students (peer feedback) with confidence that this feedback can be effectual.
- 5.** Students need to develop strategies for incorporating feedback in an effective and positive way.
- 6.** Students reveal a greater degree of positive motivation if they receive feedback that considers positive comments.
- 7.** Feedback is more basic to students if their writing abilities will be improved after they receive it.

5.4.2 Academic writing and teacher feedback

Writing academically entails appropriate, clear, coherent and concise vocabulary. In fact, writing academically is a serious challenge for most of EFL students; mainly when they are asked to produce assignments in an appropriate academic style with an adequate structure that develops their thoughts and arguments in a suitable way (T. Day, 2013: 5). However, most of EFL learners are not aware of this style. The latter has been unveiled when the researcher analyzed the assignments and examination.

It is interesting to mention that writing academically is not taught by all EFL teachers at the Department of English in Sidi Bel Abbés. Students on the other hand, are required to compose their writing pieces academically. Most importantly, some writing teachers do neither correct informal language nor show their learners the academic style. Notably, when responding to students' texts, teachers comment on learners' ideas and language errors (grammar, vocabulary, spelling, etc.), but they do not comment on the students' style such as asking them to avoid contractions and informal words in their next productions. Students are therefore not aware of the academic style.

As it is mentioned earlier that teacher feedback is offered on students' structure of the text and language mistakes. Nonetheless, most of EFL teachers regard learners' writing pieces as a mere source of language issues which indicate that second year university learners are not capable of mastering English language, and which may have a negative impact on the learners' writing improvement.

Focusing on content or form when providing teacher feedback has generated a great deal of debate among those searching for methodologies that increase improvement in writing proficiency. Thus, focusing on content or form profoundly differ among scholars. In some cases, providing feedback on form seems to be effective in helping students produce better; in others it is not the case.

In a study conducted by Fathman and Whalley (1985); Zamel (1985); & Lalende (1982) who found that the emphasis should be on form rather than content, because focusing on form could bring relevant enhancement. On the other hand, Horowitz (1986); Silva (1988); & Zamel (1988) agree that due attention must be paid to both content and form (cited in K. Mishra, 2005: 94).

Nonetheless, a study conducted by K. Mishra (2005) in which she clarifies that teachers should focus on content more than form, because good writers tend to revise content more than form. Hence, teachers are advised to take into consideration all the criteria when responding to students' essays, i.e. the most serious students' writing impediments should be taken into account when tending to provide feedback, because the latter enables the students to discover their weaknesses.

5.5 Teacher training

The teaching process nowadays, focuses more on learner centeredness (the learner deserves deliberate attention and is considered to be central in the teaching and the learning processes), albeit the EFL instructor is still regarded as knowledge transmitter and a learner's guider and therefore, plays an eminent role in the teaching process. Indeed, teaching is about having a knack in order to motivate learners and eradicate their reluctance. Teaching entails effectual and relevant techniques that enable them to transmit knowledge efficiently to the learners.

Today EFL learners can easily discover an incompetent teacher who lacks experience, who is impotent of offering sufficient data to his/her students, and who is incapable of dealing with learners' psychological issues inside the classroom. Similarly, H. Bansal (2009: 8) points out that teaching is an art and a good tutor is the one who is able of connecting his/her students to the subject matter; i.e. (a knowledgeable teacher can capture the learners' attention when lecturing and not disconnecting them).

Adding to that, teaching involves the use of knowledge about the subject being taught and another set of knowledge about the most effective ways to teach that subject to different kinds of learners; it therefore requires teachers to go through a complex set of tasks every minute. However, it is commonly known that novice instructors experience their first years in the profession as stressful (D. Pushkin, 2001). It is interesting to note that some teachers often continue using the same teaching methods year after year having the firm belief that those methods are the best.

Hence, EFL teachers must be well armed with personnel knowledge that permits them to deliver it appropriately to their students. Therefore, in order to prepare highly productive and skillful teachers, it is high time organized training programmes for novice teachers. N. Bouyakoub-Bouabdallah (2011) suggests that it may be time for training "magister" and

“master” students because these would be future teachers at the tertiary level as well as at secondary school.

In fact, university instructors and mainly some magister students obtain their diploma and start teaching at the tertiary level with no prior experience or training, which has a negative effect on learners. Basically, training helps novice teachers develop their professional skills and helps them acquire the most appropriate teaching methods. Additionally, even experienced teachers sometimes need training on new topics to be taught, because teacher training is regarded as the most interesting field that helps instructors overcome the teaching hurdles that may hamper their performance during the class.

N. Bouyakoub-Bouabdallah (2011) proceeds explaining that teacher training should focus its attention on classroom, for one of the major reasons of students’ failure in writing is the lack of practice. J. Harmer (2004) explains that teachers need to train their students on written production for the purpose of eradicating or minimizing their anxiety predominantly when assigning a task. Bouyakoub-Bouabdallah recommends that writing teachers need to engage their learners into frequent and continuous practice until they acquire the habit and the art of writing.

This can be attained if learners are well trained to compose on a regular basis throughout written expression classes, rather than spending much time on theoretical instruction as it is revealed in classroom observational sessions. University therefore, should establish a training programme for its students to make them proficient and skillful future teachers who will be able to face psychological issues in the classroom.

It is interesting to note that novice university teachers should ask assistance from the most experienced and professional instructors who in their turn, will equip them with the necessary techniques and teaching methods that will enable them to deliver suitable and appropriate knowledge to the students.

However, written expression module is most often taught by part time teachers or magister students in their first years of their profession. So, training facilitates classroom challenges and raises teachers’ awareness about the subject being dealt with. Training university teachers and postgraduate students improves their practice inside the classroom. D. Pushkin (2001: 78) illustrates that training helps educators “*apply theoretical knowledge acquired in their teacher preparation programmes to the complexity of real life teaching*”. To

conclude, teacher training has a positive effect on both teachers and learners; in that it helps both novice and experienced teachers cope with the new challenges regarding the teaching process. Adding to that, training new teachers both boosts and measures their performance.

5.6 Conclusion

The current concluding chapter deals with some pedagogical implications and recommendations as far as the writing instruction to second year university students is concerned. It is an attempt to assist writing teachers and hopefully displays some assignments and tasks regarding enhancing written production. The EFL teacher is regarded as being central in the teaching/learning processes. Thus, some suggestions and recommendations have been put forward, such as introducing different tasks, the integration of reading in the teaching of composition, the correlation between metacognitive/cognitive strategies in the teaching of writing, etc.

The suggested metacognitive/cognitive approach and assigned tasks help students deploy various strategies that enable them to accomplish their texts effectually. Basically, focusing on reading as an integral part of the teaching of written production is strongly believed that it promotes higher written achievement. Additionally, the investigator has proposed some activities that encompass reading and which help learners to a large extent develop their proficiency as well as fostering their cognitive skills. Furthermore, the researcher has shown the importance of teaching revision in the writing class, wherein the student proof-reads and refines. In addition, the researcher recommends the explicit instruction of reviewing as a metacognitive strategy that profoundly improves the students' written communication.

Finally, the investigator introduced the importance of providing teachers' feedback on learners' extended essays displaying some related literature and indicating that the focus should be on content rather than form. Assessing the students on content enhances to some extent the students' written performance in that they will take into account the teacher's comment and use them effectively in the future writing.

General Conclusion

After several years of learning English prior to university entrance (four years in the middle school and three years in the high school), second year university students are still incapable of writing acceptable and correct English. When they are enjoined to compose an extended essay, they find serious difficulties. Indeed, being inaccurate at the levels of grammar, vocabulary, spelling, etc. inhibit the learners from delivering effectively their written communication, and which makes the latter emerge as pointless and meaningless production.

EFL teachers in the Department of English Language, Djilali Liabes University often complain about receiving poor written texts in terms of coherence and cohesion. Additionally, the writing teachers also reported that their students exhibit important mistakes and that they misuse the strategies that they have learnt. It is essential therefore to explore and analyze the rationale for students' writing impediments to be able to determine adequate and purposeful remedies that help students improve their writing ability.

So, exploring the learners' writing strategies and the way written expression instruction the students received are the ultimate objective for undertaking such a research. Adding to that, the investigator attempted to provide a holistic image to the audience about the students' writing style. The investigator started first by research methodological chapter which described the Algerian educational system and explained the status of English language in Algeria via reviewing the body of literature. Moreover, the research procedures and design were described in depth through relating to some literature. Then, the second chapter set the theoretical background to this work, starting first by defining the writing skill, covering its complexity and showing related findings to the research field.

Chapter three is concerned with classroom observational sessions, wherein the researcher described both learners and tutors, for the objective of identifying what kind of written assignments were provided as well as students' motivation in the classroom. The chapter dealt also with the analysis of students' essays; tending to pinpoint the exact writing strategies. Chapter four is also devoted to the practical side; wherein the investigator analyzed, discussed and interpreted the data collected from both students' and teachers' questionnaires. After analyzing qualitatively and quantitatively the gathered information from the earlier mentioned research tools, the investigator recommended some pedagogical implications and remedial solutions in chapter five that embody reading as a major inseparable component from writing instruction.

The findings gathered in this research supported the hypotheses and provided important insights into second year students' writing performance and allowed us to come up with the following conclusions regarding the three earlier mentioned research hypotheses. As far as the first hypothesis, the qualitative and the quantitative studies of students' essays, observation and questionnaires unveiled that the students are unable to outperform and showed serious deficiencies.

Written production is therefore challenging, troublesome and a complex cognitive skill that requires thinking deeply before producing a certain idea. To put it differently, the findings showed that the students had writing weaknesses at manifold areas, and this confirms the first research hypothesis which states that written production is a complex task and a troublesome skill to master.

Regarding the second research hypothesis, the results emerging from the ethnographic observation, students' assignments and their written expression examination unveiled that the sweeping majority were found to employ to a large extent the metacognitive strategies, because writing teachers focused primarily on metacognitive strategies instruction. In other words, written expression teachers taught explicitly the process approach which includes (planning, brainstorming, clustering, etc.); having the firm belief that this approach has a positive effect on students' productions; in that the process approach provides them with different techniques and strategies. Teachers believed that the process approach to writing stimulates the students' thoughts as they compose, and thus, it improves the learners' writing competence.

Furthermore, the classroom observation revealed that the time devoted to written expression instruction is scant and does not suffice the students' needs and which resulted to some extent in learners' writing failure. According to the obtained data from the observation, three hours a week allocated to writing is insufficient, because the students do not have the opportunity to practise the craft of writing. It should be noted that the first session is devoted to teaching theoretically the lesson and the second session is meant for producing an extended essay; starting first in the classroom and finishing the text at home.

Adding to that, because of time constraints, teachers do not have the chance to accomplish properly the lesson in that they do not have sufficient time for arming the students with the necessary strategies and tasks that enable the learners to compose with high proficiency. Hence, time allotted for teaching written expression needs to be increased.

Furthermore, the results emerged from this exploratory work highlighted students' writing strategies. These strategies were studied by the researcher, identified as cognitive and metacognitive strategies and classified according to the taxonomy of M. O'Malley & A. Chamot (1990).

Thereby, the obtained results from the students' texts were studied quantitatively and qualitatively, and which revealed that the vast majority relied heavily on ineffective translation, i.e. examining their written productions showed that they thought first in their L1 or the mother tongue and then translate into the target language. To put it differently, the sweeping majority used similar strategies to be able to compose. It is important to note that translation falls under the category of cognitive strategies. Moreover, oral construction was also noticeable in the learners' essays. Indeed, these strategies refer to as 'self-instruction' and students are using such strategies to solve problems or to overcome their writing difficulties (A. Cohen, 2014)

Brainstorming was also noticed when students were assigned tasks and asked to work collaboratively. Additionally, translating from French language into English was also recorded in some writing pieces. It seems necessary to point out that these students use French words in lieu of English to carry out their communication. Besides, leaving gaps was also remarkable among the unskilled student writers, and it was the reader who completed the missing words.

Typically, second year students applied similar strategies, namely the metacognitive ones, because the latter were the only strategies that they received in the classroom. However, as it is noted at the outset that they do not have sufficient time to practise writing and apply effectively the learnt strategies. Revision as it is classified by O'Malley and Chamot (1990) as a metacognitive strategy was not recorded among the novice students, for their ideas were meaningless. It is important to note that revision was not taught as an indispensable component.

However, reviewing was noticeable in skilled student writers' essays, because their productions were well organized in terms of ideas and sentences construction, which indicated that these students revised, refined and polished their texts. In addition, the qualitative and the quantitative analyses revealed that the inexperienced writers misused the metacognitive strategies namely, planning, brainstorming, self-monitoring and revision. In fact, their essays were not written appropriately in terms of vocabulary and ideas selection, spelling, writing

mechanics, sentences and passages organization which made the reader misunderstand what the student intended to convey, and this is due to a number of language errors.

These results were corroborated by students' and teachers' responses to the questionnaires and observation. So, translation from L1 into English and oral construction were the prime strategies that second year students depended on to overcome their writing impediments. The ineffective use of strategies affected the quality of their texts and was noticeable in the obtained grades on their written expression examination. This illustrates that students were unaware of strategies such as planning and brainstorming and were using them unconsciously. Ineffective translation and oral construction were frequently used amongst the less proficient writers who formed the great majority of the students. According to these learners, these strategies could help them overcome the language deficiencies.

Some students indicated that they use L2 as the main language that enable them to write an effective extended essay. It is important to mention that the learners are not aware of all the writing strategies and that they used a limited number of strategies; teachers focused on metacognitive strategies instruction which made the students unaware of cognitive strategies. This is why the students applied what they learnt and frequently failed to employ these strategies, because of the insufficient time. The results indicate that the university students use similar metacognitive strategies, and which confirms the second hypothesis which states that second year learners employ metacognitive strategies to be able to produce a writing piece.

It seems essential to mention that the assignments and written expression examination unveiled that the less proficient students were not readers and this was covered via the restricted range of words they used and overly limited linguistic repertoire; wherein the students did not have a rich repertoire that enable them to express themselves clearly and accurately. Adding to that, EFL teachers often complain about the absence of the reading skill from the syllabus and that their students do not read independently which affected profoundly the way they composed. It is also revealed that reading is integrated with writing in one single module; albeit teachers did not take it into consideration when instructing production. In fact, the reading skill can serve as a model for the teaching of composition.

Regarding the third research hypothesis which is related to cognitive strategies' contribution to the development of writing proficiency, most of EFL teachers in the Department of English complained about their learners' level and this is due to the non-existence of reading neither intensively nor extensively, nor independently. However, only

few students are considered to be readers and this is shown in their extended essays which showed to some extent a mastery of English. Nonetheless, tutors at Djilali Liabes University agreed on the reconsideration of reading as a prominent aspect that contributes to the development of writing for the fundamental role it plays in the learning process.

Thus, from what emerged in this study and predominantly from classroom observation that the present teaching methods need to be reconsidered; in terms of writing tutors who ought to revise the way they instruct composition for the ultimate objective of providing more opportunities for the students to practise the different styles of production, and therefore, utilize efficiently the learnt strategies. Focusing solely on writing instruction and neglecting reading could be due to time allocated to that module, and because of time constraints tutors are incapable of teaching both skills in one hour and thirty minutes.

Hence, the researcher introduced summarization which falls under the category of cognitive strategies as classified by R. Oxford (1990), in which students are required to read a short story provided by their teachers (reading independently) and are asked to summarize according to the different steps illustrated in the classroom on how to synthesize. Furthermore, they could also be asked to write a book report. Doing so, entails a thorough explanation on how to write a book report, asking the learners to write a different end to the provided story. This is done for the purpose of stimulating the students' thoughts and thus boosting their creativity.

The last chapter is devoted to different tasks that correlate between reading to write and writing to read. Adding to that, the researcher emphasized on the explicit instruction of revision which plays an eminent role in writing, through which the students could refine and polish their ideas. Indeed, assigning activities that encompass reading and which entail the use of cognitive strategies seem to assist the learners and regulate their own progress towards writing via reading actively, and develop therefore their cognitive level.

To attain the learning goals, writing teachers need to instruct explicitly and effectively the cognitive and the metacognitive strategies. This can be done through introducing a new approach to teaching writing, which correlates between cognitive and metacognitive. The latter would encourage the students to think critically when composing a text, raise their writing competence and encourage them on using the most appropriate strategies that would lead them to write academically and thus successfully. It is essential on the teachers' part to offer feedback on their students' productions, which would enhance the students'

performance by asking them to write a second draft, through which they need to consider their mistakes via taking into account their teachers' commentary.

Such pedagogical implications do not endeavour to offer the best suggestions and recommendations for the teaching of writing to second year students, however, the fifth chapter is about setting some tasks, techniques and strategies that hopefully would lessen the existing deficiencies in the acquisition and the teaching of the writing skill. In fact, the results obtained from the current investigation are not generalizable, because the work has some limitations, such as the frequent absence of the students which inhibited the researcher to observe all the learners. Their absence impeded the researcher from examining all their written assignments.

To conclude, the current doctoral thesis tended to investigate second year university students' writing strategies, for the ultimate purpose of identifying their writing hindrances, difficulties and to discover the rationale behind these impediments. The work aimed at finding solutions that hopefully would remedy the learners' hurdles and to change the students' behaviours from passive learners to more motivated ones. Such an alteration would facilitate the teaching process for EFL tutors and would engage them in assisting their students to outperform effectually, and attain therefore a high achievement in writing, and thus succeed academically.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Ethnographic Observation

Session 1:

Second- year EFL written expression class: February 01st, 2015.

Background: the class comprises 13 students. Today's lecture is about an argumentative essay (theoretical part).

8h30 The teacher comes in the room, arranges her things in the desk and waits for the students to come. Some are sitting down and talking to each other. Others haven't come yet.

8h40 The teacher starts asking the students what is an argumentative essay. What is the difference between an expository essay and an argumentative one. The students look deeply involved in the lecture. The teacher keeps explicating that the language that is used in the argumentative essay should be simple, understandable, clear and direct.

She gives her learners an example "*everybody knows that smoking is dangerous*". She proceeds saying that no one can prove this. She says that you have to be careful in using or selecting terms.

The teacher shows the students how to give arguments and how to support their writing. In an argumentative essay avoid terms like: *everybody, all, nothing, always, nobody, never*. Rather state your opinion directly and do not contradict yourself.

Then, she moves to the way of structuring an argumentative essay. She illustrates that the first part of the essay is devoted to the introductory paragraph (start from general ideas into specific ones). She asks her students some questions about how to proceed from general to specific; the teacher receives several and various responses; one student says "*to introduce a general point of view to the reader*".

She provides her learners with examples on how to compose an introductory paragraph (include your opinion at the end using one clear sentence).

Then, she moved to the body paragraph. She shows them how to plan and outline the structure of the body paragraph by giving facts, arguments and says that this part ought to have three paragraphs and shows them what to include in each one.

10h the teacher stops illustrating.

Session 2:

Second- year EFL written expression class: February 04th, 2015.

Background: the class comprises 16 students. Today's lecture is about "clustering" as a writing strategy (practical part).

10h15 The teacher comes and sets his papers at the back of the classroom waiting for the students to gather.

10h20 He commences talking about the different techniques related to writing like "brainstorming" and how to generate ideas. Then, he introduces the word "clustering" and says that it's a strategy for brainstorming vocabulary

10h30 He provides his students with vocabulary related to the topic "smoking" through nominating a student to write what the teacher says on the whiteboard. Then he provides them with the reasons and the damage that smoking does, of course, with the collaboration of the students.

The student writes on the whiteboard and the teacher explains trying to make the learners brainstorm and generate ideas. Meanwhile, the instructor inquires some questions in order to make his students utter using vocabulary related to the topic. The student draws a diagram about smoking and which contains vocabulary. The teacher demonstrates that writing an essay requires five paragraphs as a whole.

10h50 The teacher distributes a topic to be read and asks his students to read it silently and then discuss it. Some read the text but some are not interested in reading. The teacher nominates students to read and from time to time interrupts in order to correct students' pronunciation. The instructor makes all the students read loudly the text.

11h He starts asking questions to the students about the introduction of the text, the opening sentence, background information, basic information, and thesis statement. And asks them about the key words in the text.

11h05 The teacher and the students start exploring the text, in which the instructor shows the sentences related to the thesis statement, then he moves to the body paragraph of the essay where he says that there are major points. Moreover, he also shows his learners the supporting sentences, and at the same time illustrates grammar orally for example do not confuse between "to find" and "to found", and inquires the students to find the synonyms of some words in the text such as "*to rival*", but he receives no answer. So, he gives the students the synonym "to compete".

He carries on reading the text and asking the learners which sentence is this (is it a topic sentence or a supporting sentence). They responded correctly. He proceeds showing his students the different adjectives from the text like "*crucial = important*". Additionally, he shows his students how paragraphs are

constructed, and whenever he sees an unfamiliar word, he illustrates it. He shows them orally the different nouns and verbs like “*improvement*” from the verb “*to improve*”. Then, he explains the concluding paragraph and how it is constructed.

11h30 The teacher ends the lecture.

Session 3:

Second- year EFL written expression class: February 08th, 2015.

Background: the class compromises 40 students coming from three different groups. Today’s lecture is about “argumentation” (theory and practice).

10h05 The teacher explains again what is an argumentative essay and to proceed (she writes all the details on the whiteboard. Then she carries on her lecture by showing the students how to compose the last stage by restating the student’s opinion using different ways.

Some students are really involved in the lecture, asking the teacher questions, giving remarks and negotiating, but some others are totally ignoring the session, especially those who sit at the back.

After explaining everything, the teacher reads a paragraph to her students and all of them are listening to that paragraph which is about “*women’s work*”, providing the learners with examples that the writer has used in the argumentative essay (she shows them how the writer explains his opinion towards women’s work).

10h30 The teacher gives her students two topics to write about in the classroom.

Topic one: *we are becoming increasingly dependent on computers. Is this dependence a good thing or should we be more suspicious of their benefits?*

Topic two: *do you think women should work or stay at home?*

She asks her students to form groups. Some students form groups and choose a topic to work on. Some form groups and talk to each other. And some favoured to work either individually or in pairs. While writing, students start asking for the help of their teachers or using bilingual dictionaries.

11h25 The teacher ends the course and orders her students to finish the assignments at home, so that she will correct all the drafts.

Session 4:

Second- year EFL written expression class: February 08nd, 2015.

Background: the class compromises 17 students. Today’s course is about providing the students with an assignment (practical part).

11h40 The teacher explains briefly the previous lecture. Then she continues the lesson, asking the students some questions and they answered.

The teacher gives her students the two topics cited above and asks them to select one subject, and asks them to form groups. So, some form their own groups, others work in pairs and some prefer working individually. Those who work individually finish writing the introductory paragraph and ask the teacher to read it and comment about whether the paragraph is good or poorly composed.

While the students are trying to produce, the teacher walks around and asks them which topic you are dealing with. All the students choose the second topic because it is more social. So, the instructor asks the students if they are for or against women's work. Some respond that they are for, others reply negatively.

12h50 The teacher terminates the lecture and asks the students to finish the assignment and bring it next time.

Session 5:

Second- year EFL written expression class: February 11th, 2015.

Background: the class compromises 11 students.

08h40 The teacher explains again an argumentative essay. She draws on the whiteboard the structure of the argumentative essay. Then, she asked her students to write again about the previous topics that she already gave them. However, when she gave them the written task, they were reluctant and chose to speak about their own issues rather than writing.

09h45 The students are still talking.

09h50 The teacher asks her students if they have finished producing their essays. They answered no. Then she asked them to finish at home and bring them back in the classroom, so that she corrects the essays. She asks them also to pen adequately, so that, their handwriting will be readable

Session 6:

Second year EFL written expression class, February 18th, 2015.

Background: the class comprises 15 students out of approximately 32. Today's session is about writing an essay about "smoking" based on the techniques "clustering".

10h10 The teacher explains what he has already explained in the previous session. He says that he already gave them a diagram as a technique and says that this diagram can serve as a strategy that enables the students to write an essay. He gave them a topic to write about which tackles the reasons to quit smoking based on the clustering technique at (10h10). The teacher asked his students to start writing the introduction. Among the 15 students, 4 students prefer to talk rather than start writing the introduction. Some spend time in thinking, then jotting down. Just one student asks his teacher for help. The teacher asks his students to use short, simple and direct sentences. He asks them to write in general as far as the introduction is concerned. Another student asks the teacher to help her in translating a word from French to English (the word dependence). Some students are using dictionaries in order to find the appropriate words (bilingual dictionaries).

10h30 The teacher asks a student orally for an opening sentence. The teacher carries on inquiring the other students to state what they have written. Whenever a student states his/her opening sentence the teacher intervenes for more explanation. The teacher is explaining the negative points of smoking orally and asking the students questions about finding words. For instance, he starts a sentence and asks the students to finish it. Of course the sentence is about an introductory sentence.

10h40 The teacher asks a student to write on the whiteboard. He asks the students how to say "يعتبرك" in English so they replied "considered as". The student who is on the whiteboard, composes what the teacher and the classmates are dictating to him. Nevertheless, it is the teacher who is greatly assisting his learners; he states the opening sentence and asks the students to terminate what he wants to say using appropriate adjectives and adequate verbs. The student on the board writes as follow:

Smoking is consider a very dangerous habit. it date to many centuries ago. Recently actions have been made to encourage smokers this addiction, so what are the different reasons to quit smoking?

He explains the verb "to date" that is reflects the past but we conjugate it in the present tense. It is the teacher who provides his learners with ideas and the students are just saying words such as: *encourage, to leave*. The teacher

states the idea, for instance, “*Recently, different actions have been made*” then he asks a question “*by whom*”, they reply “*smokers*”.

The teacher notices the mistakes on the whiteboard saying: “*we leave the correction of the mistakes at the end*”

After finishing the first sentence, the teacher moves to the correction of the mistakes orally with the help of his students; he made his learners correct the mistakes orally. Then, he corrected the mistakes on the board; correction of the mistakes was done as follow:

*Smoking is **considered** a very dangerous habit. It **dates** to many centuries ago. Recently actions have been made to encourage smokers this addiction, so what are the different reasons to quit smoking?*

10h50 He asks his students to commence writing the first sentence of the body paragraph. He gave them some time to think and draft. All the students were working individually, and from time to time some of them use bilingual dictionaries in their cell phones.

11h The teacher nominates another student to write on the whiteboard, and the other students are participating orally and dictating with the teacher to the learner the idea: mainly the teacher’s idea. He student produces as follow:

*first, smoking can be a very expensive act. In fact smokers spend a lot of money to buy lighters and cigarettes. besides, replacing damaged cloths and upholstery **has** a higher finannacial cost.*

The teacher asks them if the word “damaged” here is a verb or an adjective. Some responded “it is an adjective”, others kept silent.

After that, the instructor asks his learners to translate the word “*ثمن له*” into English. He receives no answer, so he translated the word by himself saying “*has*”. Then, the teacher asks the student who is on the whiteboard to circle the key words, and that what the other students were dictating and their classmate was circling the following words: “lighters”, “cigarettes”, “cloths”, “upholstery”.

When finishing writing everything on the whiteboard, the instructor asked his students for correction. Some learners were correcting just the mechanics of writing like Capitalization of *F* in the word *first* and punctuation. But, they did not notice the spelling mistake of the word “*finannacial*”, so the teacher corrected the spelling mistake “*financial*”.

11h15 The teacher asks again to write the second paragraph. He illustrated how to start writing and all the students commence composing immediately. He

gave them five minutes to produce and nominated the students to read what they have already written.

11h25 The instructor asks one student to write on the whiteboard, she composes as follow:

To conclude, health expense and limit are the major causes that help addicted people to leave this habit. So, we wonder how to convince them to abandon this harmfull obsession.

In that session, the teacher has based his lecture on oral expression and made his students talk a bit. They just state some words and not completed sentences. The student on the board did not know how to write the word “*abandon*”, so the teacher spells the word to her. Once again, the teacher spells the word “*obsession*”.

The teacher proceeds illustrating briefly in one minute how they moved from a “diagram of clustering” into a complete composition. He said just words from the diagram are developed into paragraphs.

11h30 In the last minute, the teacher went back to the whiteboard and corrected the word “*harmful*” and told his students orally that the word is written in one L and not two Ls.

Session 7:

Second year EFL written expression class, February 18th, 2015.

Background: the class comprises 09 students out of approximately 27. Today’s course is to make the student write an argumentative essay.

11h40 The teacher ordered her students to form groups and asked them to start writing an argumentative essay; they formed two groups.

12h She walked around and check what the students have composed.

One group is besides the observer, they are discussing the arguments in French and much in Arabic. This group consists of four students; one of them is dictating and another one is writing. Then, she asked her classmates how to write the word “*indeed*”, but no one knows. One student uses a dictionary and looks for the word. Then, they asked their teacher to translate the word “*ارملة*”, so the teacher translated the word orally « *widow* » and then wrote it to show them its spelling.

The second group finishes writing the introductory paragraph, and when the teacher read the first sentence, she notices that they have translated the expression from Arabic into English, the sentence was written by the students as follows: “*Between the past and the present...*”. The teacher advised her students to avoid translation and to think in English rather than Arabic and she corrected the expression.

All the students are using bilingual dictionaries in order to find and check words. Both groups based their discussion of ideas and vocabulary on Arabic using some French words. After discussion and thinking in Arabic (generating ideas first in Arabic), they try to find words and expressions in the bilingual dictionaries (Arabic, French into English).

12h50 the teacher asks her students if they have finished their essays, they replied “no”. So, she asked them to finish the essays at home and bring them next time.

Session 8:

Second year EFL written expression class, February 22nd, 2015.

Background: the class comprises 29 students; some are from the other groups. Today’s course is about writing personal letters.

10h As usual, the teacher begins her lecture with illustrations and writing on the whiteboard. Whenever there is a type of written composition, she provides her students with the theoretical part .

The great majority of the students are following the lecture, but those who sit at the back keep talking.

10h45 The teacher shows her students the layout of the letter. She identifies the different components of the letter. She draws the layout on the whiteboard. She asks them questions about the letter and they give various responses.

The teacher uses oral expression as a tool for getting information from the students and gets them involved in lecture.

From time to time, the students commence talking and the teacher tries to make them silent.

She explicates what to include in the personal letter and how to write it; she starts first by the introduction. She wrote on the board what the students have already answered orally (*the address, the date...etc*). She advised her students to not learn by heart the letters from the internet, because that’s what she has seen in the students’ papers.

11h She shows them how to compose an address on the whiteboard (indicating every slight detail using the mechanics of writing).

While explaining and showing all the details about writing letters, students sitting in the back keep talking and some play with their cell phones as if there's no lecture. They are not writing the techniques of the personal letter that the teacher is illustrating.

11h05 She finishes the explanation.

Session 9:

Second year EFL written expression class, February 25th, 2015.

Background: the class comprises 29 students; some are from the other groups. Today's course is about what to write in personal letters.

10h05 The teacher explains what to write in the introductory paragraph of the letter. She enquires some questions to her students about what to include in such letters. She receives different responses but not an effective answer.

She illustrates that in order to write an introduction, start first by an opening remark and then the reasons for writing. She proceeds writing on the board examples for the opening remark in the informal letter: questions, words about recent events, wishes, the person's health...etc.

Eg: how are you? I hope you're feeling better.

Thanks a lot for the letter which I've received two weeks ago.

She keeps providing her students with extra and different examples on the whiteboard and explains at the same time.

Then she moved to the main body explain briefly what should be written. Then, she moved to the conclusion wherein the students ought to draft a closing remark. She asks her students what need to be written as a closing remark. The students answered orally as follow: "*greeting*", "*say hello to everyone*"...etc.

The large majority were just writing and not following, those who participate are those who sit in the front. She advised her student to be at ease when writing an informal letter, for the letter contains informal expressions such as: "*Did I tell you that...?*" "*Have you heard that...?*"

She advised them to use contractions, and then she showed them how to write a complementary close.

11h The teacher ends the course.

Session 10:

Second year EFL written expression class, March 09th, 2015.

Background: the class comprises 18 students out of 30; today's lecture is about writing an essay in which students need to compare between Algeria and Tunisia at several levels.

10h25 Students are sitting in the classroom.

10h30 The teacher starts asking questions about planning and brainstorming, and receives various answers. Then he gives them the different aspects of education and culture in Tunisia. The students start immediately writing the first draft, but most of them spend much time on thinking. The instructor keeps moving between the rows and advises them to use the lexical sets (use vocabulary related to the topic).

Whenever the students find an obstacle, they consult their bilingual dictionaries mainly Arabic – English. Some just jot down and then go on reckoning.

10h40 The teacher starts nominating the students to read what they have already composed.

Then, he asks his learners to compare between Algeria and Tunisia at the level of education and culture. While speaking the teacher tells his students about the pronunciation of “*the*” and illustrating why it is pronounced /ð/

He proceeds as usual starting the idea and waiting for the students to finish it, however, as always no answer.

10h50 Students start again jotting down the major points related to culture, and some stop writing again, because they need to consult their bilingual dictionaries; they look at the Arabic side in order to find an English word.

10h55 The teacher starts again nominating the students and receives different answers related to the topic such as: *tradition, religion, society, history, language...etc.* The respond to the teacher's questions orally. Then, he nominates a student to read a thesis statement from the introductory paragraph which has been written in the previous session. Then, he intervenes saying that each paragraph has a topic sentence and a supporting sentence.

- 11h He asks the student to commence writing the body paragraph related to economy. So, all the students start writing.
- 11h15 He nominates a student to read what she has written and corrects her orally. After he nominates another learner to read his paragraph, and they discuss orally the economical aspects of both countries. Some students are totally out of subject. The teacher carries on asking the other students to read, however one starts the sentence by “*nevertheless, in fact*”; so the teacher intervenes explaining that you should not write these words, for example, “*we use nevertheless, when you state something before and you want to say something else which is more important*”. They discuss the paragraphs orally, but it is only the teacher who speaks. Then, he gives his students an assignment to do it at home in which they have to develop the political side of both countries.
- 11h30 The teacher ends the lecture.

Appendix 2: The reading material provided by the teacher to the students in the classroom

Reading development in different domains is the main objective of every country. Many nations have succeeded to attain it after centuries of efforts and hard competition. They are considered as the leading countries of the world. Different fields can contribute to the growth of a country.

First, any nation should consider knowledge as the base of expansion and should create conditions to promote it. Developed countries build schools to make education accessible to every child. They also found universities which offer specific knowledge in different specialties. Other measures are made to help people to be well versed by building libraries and facilitating access to the new technologies, which are considered as a modern way of learning.

Then, any country should develop an efficient and prosperous economy which can help to remain a competitive one, able to rival with the other developed areas of the world. Indeed, an advanced agriculture is important for the achievement of alimentary independence. The Spanish agriculture, for example, is a crucial element of export which can guarantee a precious source of foreign currency. Besides, a high industrial level can help to guarantee prosperity for particular region in the world. For instance, Germany has become one of the leaders of industrialized countries thanks to the technological products they propose to the international market. Other countries, such as England, prefer to concentrate their economic strategies on the sector of services such as insurance, telecommunication or bank services.

Finally, other aspects can also reflect the level of improvement of a particular country. Indeed, the quality of public services such as health care, means of transport, and security, is another parameter of national progress. Other areas insist on providing, to their citizens,

sources of entertainment such as theaters, cinemas or museums. In fact, these latter can increase quality of life.

To conclude, when trying to achieve a multidimensional development, countries concentrate their efforts on many sectors such as knowledge, economy and other vital sectors. It is the only way to guarantee their survival in a very competitive world.

- The work of woman ^{is} considered as the most polemic topic because there is more than ^{one} point of view about it. Some say that she must stay at home, it's her appropriate place, but others have the opposite idea. ^{I personally think that} the woman should be given the opportunity to prove herself in society.

- The life getting more expensive and difficult ^{and} that makes women in the ^{need} necessity of working, especially in these several cases, we take examples from fact mainly the situation of the poor families that ^{where} make each member of this family work hard ^{had no other way to work} among them the woman who has the ^{to participate in the income} sense of responsibility. Other case of the death of the responsible of the family whether was the father, the brother, the mother - (or also) or also the abandonment of the helpmate that make her work the only solution to feed her family. ^{Necessities} Divorce push woman to work especially if she has children and also that help her to change her psychological position. Women have rights to be equal in society with man ~~to~~ in work. She tries to improve herself and get a high degree. Now she is a minister, doctor, president, a responsible as man. European society gave a women rights more than man because man's rights are classified after woman's rights.

- Some people think that working mothers are ^{I deep expression} advantage for children since they have an economic independence, but it's not right to send your child today case let someone else raise them. Many child are out of control because there is not consistent discipline ^{they said that} especially in the case of divorce and

A4

Society ^{encompasses} ~~is mix~~ men and women and everyone of them have ^{their} ~~his~~ own role as an individual and like an important piece in complex plan that couldn't be complete without ~~the other~~ ^{the other} men and women ^{are equal} in rights and duties. So, I believe that women are pivot in Society and accord ^{ingly} ~~ing~~, they have ^{the} right to work.

Women need to work not just for money even that money is an important thing, ~~but~~ ^{to prove that she has} ~~to~~ ^{they have to work} capacities and talents, ~~to be shown~~ ^{to be shown}, and to ~~appear~~ ^{prove} her self in many domains & we can find women as doctors, ministers, and taxi drivers why not!?

We all know that the principal role of women is as a mother, but it doesn't mean that if she works she will deny her first job in this life. Also it's not fair to stop her dream and to ~~limit~~ ^{limit} her abilities because ~~when~~ ^{both} men and women ~~strive~~ ^{strive} she ~~is~~ ^{is} the purpose in ~~Society~~ ^{both} ~~is~~ ^{is} the development of their Country, ^{which is}

There are some people say that women ^{spelling} shouldn't work because of the weak physique or just to say "No for women work" and this is to keep her in need to man to improve ^{prove} that men ~~are~~ ^{are} stronger than women and to avoid competition.

A4

Boufene Mohamed Amine - Benkaban Zoujoui
Group: D

Thursday, February 24, 2016

Topic 1:

By the last years, the world is depending more and more on the digital world, and one of these important tools is computers. We become more and more attached to it. But I see that this machine is bad for our life.

The biggest problem of computers is that they are killing creativity of humans because computers with Internet are giving us ready information ~~and~~ ^{made} ~~that~~ ^{that} ~~all false~~ ~~not sure~~ the most of the time. Besides, it limits our innovation side in writing, reading and the artistic spirit. Also, using this machine can badly influence our health especially our eyes, and minds and our natural habits.

Nevertheless, A lot of people think that using computers is something indispensable for our life because they think that it provides to us an easy life with easy communication between people or between people and machine. These new technologies make the world smaller, and help us to organize all the fields of our life.

spelling clearly expression
I think that using these tools is badly
influencing our familial communication especially
in our society. we need to meet ~~and~~ Also, we should
not be attached too much to it, for example, mechanics
archiving because it is not sure, so only one error or long
can destroy it.

This machine isn't that good on our life
but we can say in our life we have always bad and
good things, it only depends on our using of
these things.

good! but try to explain
more through examples
while responding to or
attacking the counterargument
in your third body
paragraph.

A.T.



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(A REMPLIR OBLIGATOIREMENT)

WEBBAR Module : *Writing Expression / Comprehension*
 ... 12. Mediacija Année Universitaire : 2014 / 2015
 ... 221231.1984.2. Sidi. Bel. Abbes Nbre de feuilles intercalaires :
 N° Etudiant : 22.07.13.02.5.57 (Numeroter les pages)

NOTEUR | 15/20 Note et Appréciations
*Your narrative is well-structured!
 I find myself speechless in front of you have said!*

The experience that I will never forget *May Allah bless her soul*

Parents, who are parents? a simple question and everybody answer that parents are mother and father, but in reality the answer is very deeper than that. It is one word containing two persons which have a very deep sense. Parents are love, affection, security, everything we need in this life. They are the air that we breathe and when we lose them or one of them we stop to breathe so we die. This is what was happening to me, I lost both and I stopped to breathe, I am dying every day and every moment, especially without mum, I passed by a very hard experience when I lost her

After the death of my father, mum found her self alone in front of a big family, we are twelve girls and boys. Imagine the weight of her responsibility for the adolescents and children. Everybody needs an attention from his ^{best} mum and also love.



PAGE

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UNIVERSITE DJILLALI LIABES
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96

(A REMPLIR OBLIGATOIREMENT)

n : F.A.R.A.H Module : Comprehension and written Express
nom : Fatima Année Universitaire : 2015.. 2016.....
e) le : 10.02.1994. T. elagh. S. d. Bel. Abbes. Nbre de feuilles intercalaires : 02.....
carte d'Etudiant : 22.07.13.000.16 (Numeroter les pages)

CORRECTEUR

13/20

Note et Appréciations

Topic: I was throughout your
Have you ever imagined your life without your soul? Although people live
the world is changed, the time is passed, people go and people come, when
you ~~could~~ meet many people ^S which could change your life around ^M this
side could be your family, teacher, friend, etc. But you will never find a really person
who cares about you more than your parents. My parents are the secret of
my life, and I can't imagine my life without one of them. Although I lost
my mother. But until now I can't accept that there is one day I lost her.
It (worst) was the worst day of my whole life.
As every day, my mother ^{W. choice} give up ^{to} prepare the breakfast. For us, she
was an attractive woman with her work, she never knew what ^{breeds} is.
She was a good wife for her husband, and a great mother for us, she always
tried to give us all protection with her affection ^{and} while she prepared the
breakfast, she repeated the Do'a or the names of Allah.
One day, I said: As every day, she prepared the meals in the morning, while
she prepared the breakfast, she ~~discuss~~ with my father. After that, I heard
some noises in her bedroom, then I saw my father run out the bedroom with ^{any}

9/

(A REMPLIR OBLIGATOIREMENT)

m : Nedjar Module : Comprehension and written
 nom : Hassan Année Universitaire : 2014/2015
 (e) le : 27/10/2014 Nbre de feuilles intercalaires : 1
 carte d 'Etudiant : (Numeroter les pages)

CORRECTEUR

135/20

Note et Appréciations

Topic : 0

So many people have a problem of weight, that means are over weight, and they do not know how to lose it, how to deal with it. So, what should they do in this case?
~~the thesis statement should not be a question~~

One of the solutions is practicing sport. ~~But when I say sport, I don't mean running and jumping and so on.~~ ~~But when you fall.~~ But I mean following a programme with a trainer or instructor who would show you how to do it because sport has its techniques ~~to practice it~~, and this solution is an effective one.

An other solution is eating by programme, that is say we should not eat foods just like that or depending our personal desire. In order to lose weight we have to consume a lot of vegetables and avoid fast foods or foods like pizza, chips etc. why we should do that? It is

hard order

29



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54

(A REMPLIR OBLIGATOIREMENT)

CHAÏB DRAA Module : Comprehension and written es
n : N. adia Année Universitaire :
le : 19/05/1977 Nbre de feuilles intercalaires :
de d'Etudiant : GE (Numeroter les pages)

RECTEUR

14,5 / 20

Note et Appréciations

2)

"It takes only a minute to get crush on some
an hour to like someone, a day to love someone
but it takes a lifetime to forget someone" what
happened with me is more deeper. My love story
dated back to 2004, when I met my lover "Karim"
Tlemcen, he was from Bejaia. It was my deer
experience that I will never forget at all.

Since the first moment he looked at me he was
attracted to me and was the more fondest than
all other men whose I met them in my daily life.
Similarly, since my first glance to him, I was in
in his love. We stayed sent emotions without me
during one year. IE

He wanted to announce his desire in marriage,
he never attend that his family will refuse his choice.

LA1 choice



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(A REMPLIR OBLIGATOIREMENT)

..... **Module :**

..... **Année Universitaire :**

..... **Nbre de feuilles intercalaires :**

..... **(Numeroter les pages)**

..... **d 'Etudiant :**

RECTEUR

15 / 20

Note et Appréciations

Stress is a human phenomenon, that's affecting people all around the world; people consider it as the biggest problem facing their progress. Doctors estimate each day a high number of patients consulting for stress related illnesses due to stress. Psychologist scientific relate to many causes as: Work a study session, moral of life and lack of hobbies.

People agree that lot of work hours, in stress include them; working many hours per day, taking a lot of their left time. In the other side, lot of problem are also affecting their private life, student found also exams, stress of studies and fear failure, major causes of stress; as studies ~~don't~~ ^{don't} allow them to



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(A REMPLIR OBLIGATOIREMENT)

Prénom: Module : Comprehension and Written Expression
Nom: E.L. Houda Année Universitaire : 2016
Date: 09.12.1993 Lieu: Bord Boerjies Nbre de feuilles intercalaires : 05
N° d'Etudiant : 22071300291 (Numeroter les pages)

ECTEUR

06
20

Note et Appréciations

Not enough !!
Show don't tell !!
pay attention to your Grammar
& Spelling !!

M
..... a Friendship is a good relation between two persons more, all of us
have ex. had friends, this experience we all live it. I love many friends, of course
I love them and they love me, it's an exchanged love, but I have one who is too close to me.
When we are together I feel happy, which she make me feel it. She said: "I never
loved you before, I don't know why?" but now our relationship is good full of love and
respect, and she is my friend.

Fati is tall and slim, with white skin and brown hair, she has blue eyes.
she is studying the English language, she is in the second year, she is from the city of El Maria, her house
is far from my house, she has one sister and two brothers,

Fati has several hobbies like playing hand ball, she likes to watch the Indian movies, and
of course the actors, she loves the movie "Kappan", she likes sleeping all the time, she wants
to be a future teacher of English, I forget something, she is a girl, coffee, she loves
the coffee very much, it's like a drug for her, she hates cats and dogs, no one
can touch her face and I don't know why?

The character of Fati is a sensible and silent girl (because she loves sleeping).
she has a beautiful smile it makes me feel good.

Topic 1: Describe a person you admire or place you consider to be beautiful.

Spelling

In this life there are many principles to live and the most important one is love, than we can continue our life without, and the most ~~on~~ big, large and so beautiful love in the word is the love of my mother.

Grammar

My Mother has some specific details physically, so when I look her, I see this beautiful ~~eye~~ green eyes, her dark short hair with this ~~white~~ skin, she is small ~~at~~ then me, but beautiful. ~~then~~ she has a peaceful smile that make you live.

In the other hand she part all the time working not outside or in administration, but at home she ~~clean~~ the house, cooking, the dinner for us, and some times she is our doctor when we ~~ill~~ she bring for us medication, stay behind as ~~we~~ tell we feel good.

Vocabulary

Their hobbies are not so much, she watches TV, some ~~series~~ or Samira TV the perfect channel for her, and makes some new recipes or make some decoration for home.

As a concluding we can say that the mother's never give up and their love is pure and true. ~~the~~ stay for ever that's why our God give him the paradis.

11/11

Topic: ~~XXXX~~

When I have six years old, I ^{lost} loved my mother. ^{left} ~~she~~ leave with family our house, and we ^{went} go to my grand mother's house in out of Sidi Bel-Abbes.

My father was an old police officer, he got many enemies he refused ^{to} succeed to fail many dangerous plans of Terrorist, ~~distroy~~ The most sensitive places like national securities etc...

One day in February 1999, a group of Terrorist attacked The village of Belarbi in SBA, They ~~also~~ ^g ~~came~~ to my father and son ^{were} looking for militaries, They killed about 13 persons [old men - children - women]

Suddenly, They were in our house, so my grand mother ^{of} took me to the bathroom, and ^{French} ~~brise~~ the lamp, and she put her hand in my nose

She ^{said} ~~tells~~ "we are just playing a game... cache-cache" I was ~~shocked~~ so believed it.

At that moment, I ^{heard} listen my uncle, and my aunt ~~cry~~ ^{cry}. They were killed

A16



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(A REMPLIR OBLIGATOIREMENT)

Banque : Module : Comprehension and written expression
Rahma Année Universitaire :
19/4/1994 Nbre de feuilles intercalaires :
l'Etudiant : 22071302282 (Numeroter les pages)

CTEUR

08,5 / 20

Note et Appréciations

pay more attention to your grammar, the structure of your sentences, your spelling!

Thème 1: Describe a person :

You may hear about many people in persons but you may be attracted by only one. The person who was chosen one ^{of} remains and will live with us in our memories. ^{as much as} ~~as~~ he is our messenger, the prophet Mohamed peace be upon him. The complete one and the perfect one apparently personally and even in his ^{of} manners and behaviour. As many historians said, the prophet Mohamed peace be upon him was brighter than the sun, he was beautiful. ~~he~~ characterized by his strong and tall body. ^{of} ~~he~~ known by his long black hair and beard. ^M ~~also~~ they said that he had a white skin. ^M ~~we~~ cannot talk a lot about his physical appearance but his personality is much more rich with the noble ethic than any one in the world. His ^S ~~eyes~~ so full of light, he is the light that we need in darkness. ^S ~~eyes~~ faithful and truthful in every word he said, he is the source of ^S ~~truth~~ and we are not lost since he is our teacher. ^M ~~he~~ was a brave man where he could.

Student's Questionnaire

Please answer the following questions and tick (✓) the appropriate box (es) or give full answer (s) on the broken lines whenever necessary.

1/ Do you find written expression class “interesting”

Yes

No

2/Do you find writing a complex skill?

Yes

No

3/ Is your level in writing?

a- Good

b- Average

c- Weak

4/ Are you motivated to write?

Yes

No

5/ If “not”, please, explain why?

.....
.....

6/ Does reading contribute to the development of the writing skill?

Yes

No

7/ If “yes”, please, explain how?

.....
.....

8/ Does speaking contribute to the development of the writing skill?

Yes

No

9/ After reading the topic of the composition, what do you generally do?

- a- Start writing immediately
- b- Think about ideas (brainstorming)
- c- Make an outline and follow it (planning)
- d- Write down sentences and phrases related to the topic
- e- Other, specify

.....
.....

10/ While writing, do you think of the purpose of what you are writing?

Yes

No

11/ While writing, do you think in:

- a- Arabic

b- French

c- English

12/ What do you do when you do not know how to express an idea when writing?

a- Look for vocabulary in the dictionary

b- Translate the idea from Arabic or French into English

c- Ask a classmate or a teacher for help

d- Other, specify

.....
.....

13/ Do you revise what you write?

Yes

No

14/ Do you receive teacher's feedback (comments on your essays)

Yes

No

15/ Do you use teachers' feedback in your written paragraph?

Yes

No

Teacher's Questionnaire

Dear teacher, I would be so grateful if you could answer the following questionnaire which is designed to accumulate data about the writing strategies and students' writing problems.

Please tick (✓) the appropriate box (es) or give full answer (s) on the broken lines whenever necessary.

Section One: General Information

1/ What is your position in the university?

a- Full time teacher

b- Part time teacher

2/ How long have you been teaching written expression?

.....year (s)

3/ Do you think the written expression syllabus you are following is efficient to enhance writing proficiency?

Yes

No

4/ If "Not", please, explain why.

.....
.....

Section Two: The Writing Skill

5/ Does speaking contribute to the development of writing?

Yes

No

6/ If “yes”, please, explain how.

.....
.....
.....

7/ Does reading contribute to the development of the writing skill?

Yes

No

8/ if “yes”, explain how.

.....
.....
.....

9/ Do you encourage your students to read?

Yes

No

10/ Do you encourage your students to write at home?

Yes

No

11/ Are the students motivated to compose?

Yes

No

12/ Good writing is: (you can tick more than one box)

a- Correct grammar

b- Good ideas

c- Precise vocabulary

d- Spelling

Section Three: Writing Strategies

13/ Which of the following strategies are you teaching to your students to help them compose coherently?

a- Metacognitive strategies

(Prewriting the main ideas- organizing ideas, revising- evaluating the final product)

b- Cognitive strategies

(Using translation to find a missing word or expression- jotting down and use visual memory to remember its spelling- rereading in order to be able to carry on drafting))

c- Social/ affective strategies

(Working with peers- ask the teacher for help)

14/ Which part of the writing process is difficult for your students?

a- Brainstorming

b- Generating ideas

c- Vocabulary

d- Revising

15/ What do you think your students lack in their written productions?

a- Vocabulary

b- Grammar

c- Expressing ideas

d- Mechanics of writing

e- Other, specify

.....
.....

16/ Do the students use similar strategies when producing a paragraph or essay?

Yes

No

17/ Do your students translate from:

a- L1 to FL

b- L2 to FL

c- Think in English

18/ Are you satisfied with your students' writing capacities?

Yes

No

19/ If “not”, please, explain why

.....
.....
.....

20/ While the students write, do you walk around and help them?

Yes

No

21/ if “yes”, do you assist them in:

a- Generating ideas

b- Vocabulary

c- Grammar

d- Content and organization of ideas

e- Spelling

22/ Do you give your students written tasks which are beyond their cognitive level?

Yes

No

23/ Do you teach your students essay writing techniques? (Outline: essay development, essay organization and writing mechanics)

Yes

No

24/ If “not”, why?

.....
.....
.....

25/ How many writing assignments do you give your students during the academic year?

a- 1 to 5

b- 5 to 10

c- 10 to 15

Section Four: Assessment

26/ Do you assess your students in writing?

Yes

No

27/ When you assess, what aspect(s) of the composition you focus on? (you can tick more than one box).

- a-** Grammar
- b-** Vocabulary
- c-** Ideas organization
- d-** Mechanics of writing
- e-** Spelling

28/ How often do you assess your students' work during the academic year?

- a-** Once a week
- b-** Once a month
- c-** Once a term

Section Five: Further Suggestions

Please add any suggestions you see relevant to the purpose of the questionnaire.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

ملخص

أصبح تعلم التعبير الكتابي لدى الطلبة مهمة معقدة وخاصة عندما يطلب منهم كتابة مقالات وليس فقط جمل منفصلة أو فقرات. من ذلك أنّ طلاب السنة الثانية في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية في جامعة جيلالي ليابس يظهرون أخطاء كتابية هامة مما يجعل المقال لا معنى له.

هذا البحث يعطي صورة شاملة حول أسباب تدني مستوى الطالب في التعبير الكتابي، كما يهدف أيضا إلى تحليل وتحديد استراتيجيات الكتابة لدى الطلاب والصعوبات التي يواجهونها عند إنتاج نص، ومن ثم محاولة البحث عن مقترحات علاجية نافعة تهدف إلى تحسين المهارة الكتابية.

إنّ أدوات بحث متعددة استخدمت من أجل التحقق من صحة الفرضيات وتثمين النتائج والمتمثلة في الملاحظة الاثنوجرافية، وتحليل مقالات الطلاب واستبيانات لكل من طلاب السنة الثانية وأساتذة الجامعة. الأغلبية الساحقة من الأساتذة يعتبرون الطلاب غير ماهرين لأنهم يسيئون استعمال استراتيجيات ما وراء المعرفة ويعتمدون بشكل كبير على الترجمة غير الفعالة. علما أنّ استخدام هذه الاستراتيجيات من قبل الطلاب مبعثها التغلب على عقبات التعبير الكتابي. تبرز النتائج أيضا أن أغلب الطلبة تفكر أولا باللغة الأم بقصد امتلاك القدرة على كتابة نص باللغة الإنجليزية. ولذلك فإن خلاصة الدراسة المتحصل عليها توصي بتبني نهج جديد لتدريس التعبير الكتابي والذي يربط بين التعليم المعرفي واستراتيجيات ما وراء المعرفة، وكذا دمج القراءة باعتبارها عنصر أساسي في تثمين التدريس.

Résumé

Apprendre à écrire devient une activité complexe, principalement lorsque les étudiants sont tenus d'écrire non seulement des phrases ou des paragraphes isolés, mais des essais prolongés. Les étudiants de deuxième année du département de langue anglaise de l'Université Djilali Liabes montrent d'importants obstacles à l'écriture qui rendent leurs productions dénuées de sens. Le présent travail décrit une analyse holistique de la raison d'être d'un si faible rendement dans l'expression écrite. La présente étude vise à analyser et à identifier les stratégies d'écriture des apprenants, les difficultés auxquelles ils sont confrontés lors de la rédaction d'un texte, puis à trouver des suggestions correctives et utilitaires qui, espérons-le, améliorent la compétence d'écriture des étudiants. De multiples instruments de recherche sont utilisés pour vérifier les hypothèses de recherche et de trianguler les résultats; L'observation ethnographique, l'analyse des essais des étudiants et des questionnaires pour les apprenants et les tuteurs. La majorité sont des étudiants en difficultés qui abusent des stratégies métacognitives et s'appuient fortement sur la traduction. Ces stratégies sont utilisées par les étudiants dans le but de surmonter leurs obstacles d'écriture. Les résultats montrent également que la grande majorité pense d'abord dans leur langue maternelle pour être capable de produire en anglais. Par conséquent, les résultats recommandent d'adopter une nouvelle approche de l'enseignement de l'expression écrite qui corrèlerait entre les stratégies cognitives et métacognitives, ainsi que l'intégration de la lecture comme composante de base pour enseigner l'expression écrite.