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**Exploring EFL Students' Writing Deficiencies:
The Case of Second Year Students of English
At Belhadj Bouchaib University of AinTémouchent**

*An Extended Essay Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for a
Master's Degree in Didactics and Applied Languages*

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DEDICATION

Before all, I thanks *Allah* for helping me to achieve this work which I dedicate:

I dedicate this humble work to:

To my wonderful parents,

The source of my success in my life.

To my beloved brothers and sisters.

And to all my family and friends.

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the most Merciful for giving me the patience,
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study.

Abstract

This research study sought to find out the causes related to EFL students' deficiencies in language production at Ain Temouchent's English department. University. Questionnaires were designed for second-year LMD students and some of teachers. The results obtained from the case study showed that the students' failure in speaking and writing was due to: lack of reading, lack of practice, inadequate time allotted, in addition to the psychological variables in speaking, such as: low self-confidence and self-esteem, demotivation and anxiety. In this view, the result of this extended essay was to examine the learners' and teachers' perceptions of the factors involved and tried to give some remedies required to develop learners' proficiency level.

Key words: EFL, Writing Deficiencies, Students, teachers.

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General Introduction

General Introduction

English seems to be a prominent medium in international communication to escort the progress and the development of the globalization process. It is taught all over the world either as a foreign or second language. It is the case of the Algerian educational system in which it is taught as a foreign language. EFL learning process is based partly on studying the productive skills including grammatical knowledge, lexical knowledge and phonological knowledge.

The main concern of the present work is to deal with the linguistic and the psychological reasons behind learners' weaknesses and difficulties in producing the English language, at the level of Second Year Students of English at BelhadjBouchaib University of AinTemouchent. The aim is to help learners to go beyond these deficiencies, help them to improve their productive skills and better cope their proficiency level.

This study is based on the following general question:

1. What are the main difficulties that Second Year EFL Students encounter in EFL writing?
2. What are the causes of such a deficiency?
3. What can be done to improve the situation?

Out of the stated questions, the following hypotheses were put forward:

1. Spelling, grammar, punctuation and sentence structure might be the core problems that EFL students face while writing in the Target Language.
2. Students' problems in EFL writing might be attributed to their lack of motivation to and practice of writing as well as to their lack of reading.
3. Students' EFL writing ability might be enhanced if they are engaged in some reading-writing tasks.

General Introduction

This research work is divided into three chapters. The first chapter contains two parts: The first one deals with the definition of language, the productive skills, the speaking skill and its importance. Then, it reports the students' speaking difficulties and the psychological variables that influence them. The second part revolves around the definition of the writing skill and its importance. After that, it states the writing types and steps in addition to the learners' difficulties in writing.

The second chapter starts with an overview of ELT in Algeria. Next, it describes the Department of English at Ain Temouchent University where the research work is conducted, within second year LMD students studying English as a foreign language. The research tools which are used are: a questionnaire for learners and for some of their teachers. Furthermore, the data collected were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively.

Based on the results obtained from the case study, the third chapter proposes some strategies for teachers to help their students overstep their problems in producing the language.

CHAPTER ONE
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1. Introduction

This chapter is a review of literature which attempts to clarify key concepts and explain the difficulties that second year LMD learners face when learning a foreign language especially the productive skills. The first part of this chapter defines language in general and speaking in particular, and explains the difficulties in addition to the psychological variables involved when learning this skill. Thus, it elucidates the importance of the speaking skill in learning and communicating.

The second part defines the writing skill and deals with the difficulties which detain EFL learners when writing. Then, it states the four basic types of writing besides the writing steps and procedures that should be taken into consideration. Finally, it involves the importance of writing in both learning and communicating.

2. Language as a Means of Communication

The capacity to acquire and use a complex system of communication is specific to human beings. Language helps human beings to deal with each other in daily life. Moreover, language and communication are considered as the basis for success in all fields even in personal and family relationships. Therefore, many linguists and dictionaries define language differently, but most of them agree unanimously on the idea that language is a means of communication. Edward Sapir (1921, p. 07) says: **“language is purely human and non-instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions and desires by means of a system of voluntarily produced symbols”**. According to him the language is specific and used only by human beings living within a given speech community. This language is acquired from birth as a system of arbitrary, meaningful, conventional symbols. Such symbols are primarily speech sound, gestures and secondary the written system. Language is used to communicate and convey a number of different goals, among them: expressing emotions, feelings and desires; exchanging ideas and information and enabling individuals or groups to send and receive messages, thoughts and opinions.

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Oxford Dictionary also defines language as: **“the method of human communication either spoken or written consisting of the use of words in a structured and conventional way”**. This means that language has two forms: written and spoken which complement each other. Language is characterized by a set of speech sounds and it is a system which has rules and norms that combine the linguistic elements. Furthermore, the most widely spoken language in the world, nowadays, is English due to its political and technological power. So, it is taught all over the world as a lingua franca, second language or as a foreign language.

3.The Productive Skills: an Overview

The four skills stand out as individual areas but they form a chain cycle. They are needed for a complete communication as Robins (2000:95) defines them: **“two modes of linguistic communication”**. One can distinguish two types of skills: receptive skills (listening, reading) and productive skills (speaking, writing).

The productive skills in the field of English language teaching require the students to produce the language in an organized way in order to convey the message and communicate effectively and fluently. However, motivation, practice, and teacher’s competence are usually the basic principles in the successfulness of teaching and learning the productive skills. Therefore, the productive skills are based on producing correct language, i.e., accuracy, and allowing students to express themselves spontaneously and be creative with the language, i.e., fluency.

4.The Speaking Skill Definition

Speaking is the delivery of language through the mouth. To speak, one creates sounds using many parts of the body, including: the lungs, vocal tract, vocal cords, tongue, teeth and lips. Speaking is one of the four language skills which is important and necessary to be developed by English Foreign Language learners in order to fulfill their communication needs, express their feelings and interact to other persons in different situations.

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The oral skill has been defined by Oxford Dictionary (2009, p. 414) as: “the action of conveying information or expressing one’s thoughts and feelings in spoken language”. In language teaching and learning, speaking is considered as a skill that must be practiced fluently and comprehensively. In this light, Nunan (2003:48) points out: “speaking is the productive oral skill. It consists of producing systematic verbal utterances to convey meaning”. Chaney (1998: 13) considered speaking as a process, he states: “speaking is the process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal and non-verbal symbols in a variety of contexts”. Students have to speak up, put words together and show what they are thinking of in order to share their opinions with others.

The ability to speak skillfully and fluently provides the speaker with many benefits, such as: the ability to inform and persuade, the ability to create positive relationships with others and the ability to overstep the psychological obstacles.

5.The Importance of Speaking Skill in Learning and Communicating

Since English has become an international language, it is being taught and learned all over the world either as a second language or as a foreign language. Today, English is used in many domains such as: education, technology and business, as a result, most of research works are written in this language. For this reason the importance of spoken English has been raised. O’Malley and Valdez Pierce (1996:59) say:

because oral communication involves the negotiation of meaning between two or more persons, it is always related to the context in which it occurs. Speaking means negotiating intended meaning and adjusting one’s speech to produce the desired effect on the listener.

The ability to produce meaningful and combined sentences helps students to express their thoughts and provide them with several advantages:

- ✓ Clear and confident students’ speech can attract the teachers’ and make the information understood easily,

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- ✓ Students who talk repeatedly, discuss and make conversations in front of their classmates, they acquire comfortable feelings and improve their self-confidence,
- ✓ Speaking skill is important in the successfulness of EFL learners' career,
- ✓ Skillful EFL students encourage their teachers and their friends to listen to them,
- ✓ Through Communication, learners express their ideas and share them with others,
- ✓ Skillful learners may have chances to get good jobs in international companies in the future,
- ✓ Speaking skill may also highlights students' personality and intelligence.

6.EFL Students Difficulties in Speaking

English language plays a vital role nowadays, since it is considered as a global language. For this reason it is taught to many learners as a foreign language. Speaking is regarded as one of the difficult skills to develop for the majority of second year EFL students who are incompetent in expressing themselves orally in English.

As Loama (2004:01) argues: *“Speaking in a foreign language is very difficult and competence on speaking takes a long time to develop”*. Therefore, during the speaking classes, EFL learners encounter many problems that detain their learning process. Among these difficulties the: students' pronunciation level, lack of vocabulary, lack of grammar and the use of the mother tongue.

6.1. Students' Pronunciation Level

Pronunciation is necessary in foreign language learning because it makes EFL learners more competent in communication. Morley (1991:488) argues: *“intelligible pronunciation is an essential component of communication competence”*.

But most students produce words without carrying about their pronunciation because of their unconsciousness of supra-segmental features, such as: intonation which is important as it is used to contrast ideas; 'rising intonation' is used for questioning, inquiring or invitation while 'falling intonation' is used for agreement and confirming.

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As well as, the inadequate official sessions for practising speaking lead students to be less aware about their pronunciation mistakes. Besides, the interference between the American and British accents which make learners confuse on their pronunciations.

6.2. Students' Lack of Vocabulary

Vocabulary is the discovering knowledge of new words through several means as Beck, Mckeown, and Kucan (2008:01) define it: *“words that a reader reorganizes in print” and “learning meanings of new words”*. But many students have a lack of vocabulary which make them unable to show and share their opinions with others in a comfortable way. The main reasons that lie behind this problem are lack of: reading books, listening to English music, discussing with friends outside the university walls, watching English movies and using dictionaries. Another reason is when students think, they organize their ideas in Arabic which make them produce collocations in English. Those collocations, are most of the time incorrect and inappropriate.

6.3. Students' Lack of Grammar

It is the organization of words into correct grammatical and appropriate sentences. Ur (1980:04) defines it as: *“the way a language manipulates and combines words or bits of words in order to form longer units of meaning”*. But many EFL learners are not able to produce correct grammatical sentences, this is due to the ignorance of the rules and instructions, such as: the use of two negatives in the same sentence, the misuse of modifiers, the production of fragment sentences and the mixture between tenses. Therefore, the inappropriate grammar leads to misunderstanding communication.

6.4. The Use of the Mother Tongue

It is obvious that EFL learners rely on the use of their mother tongue in classrooms rather than the target language because of their shyness, lack of proficiency, or being demotivated to communicate. According to Baker and Westrup (2003:12): *“barriers to learning can occur if students knowingly or unknowingly transfer the cultural rules from their mother tongue to a foreign language”*. This shifting from the

target language to the first language allows them to express their thoughts clearly and communicate easily.

7. The Psychological Impact on the Students' Writing Skill

In language teaching and learning processes many educationalists agree unanimously that there are many psychological factors which may influence learning a foreign language. Burns and Joyce in Nunan (1999); Schwarts (2005); and Thornbury (2005) argue that there are psychological variables which may affect the learning progress, such as: self-confidence, anxiety, self-esteem and motivation.

7.1. Self-confidence

Self-confidence is the students' knowledge of their abilities taking the risk and do not fearing of making mistakes. Therefore, speaking is based on the learners' capacities to speak the target language, in addition to the students' self- assessment. Self-confidence contributes to do tasks proficiently and correctly and helps learners to be more successful, progressed and developed. In this respect, Krashen (1981:74) claims: *“not surprisingly nearly all the available literature suggests that self-confidence is very much related to second language development...the self-confident, secure person is a more successful language learner”*.

So, learners who have high self-confidence and strong personality are developed and progressed in their oral performance. On the other hand, low self-confidence can affect learners negatively since they think that they have limited abilities and deficiencies in expressing themselves.

7.2. Anxiety

It is an effective variable which makes an obstacle for learners to be successful in the foreign language speaking. Scoval (1978:134) says: *“Anxiety is a complex effective concept associated with feelings of uneasiness, or worry”*. According to Scoval, anxiety makes students afraid, nervous and have a fear of expressing themselves orally.

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Philips (1992) argues that anxious students feel uncomfortable because they may have a failure experience which makes them quite silent and discouraged to take the risk and talk again. Additionally, anxious students are afraid of being laughed by the surroundings when engaged in conversations and discussions. Therefore, it is very necessary to create a positive atmosphere in the classroom and the chances of participation should be divided equally between students so that all the voices will be heard and respected.

7.3. Self-esteem

It is defined as how much a person likes himself and how he feels about it. According to Coopersmith (1967:05): *“self-esteem is a personal judgement of worthiness that is expressed in the attitudes that individuals hold towards themselves”*. It is a subjective experience which the individual conveys to others by verbal reports and other overt expressive behavior. Self-esteem tasks are related to learners own assessments in particular situations, such as: speaking. It is acquired from childhood through the interaction between the family members.

Thus, people with high self-esteem are able to build relationships with others. According to Nathanien Braden (1969) students who have self-esteem are competent and are able to cope with the different challenges, as well as they are successful in taking decisions and even when things go wrong, they accept them.

7.4. Motivation

It is known as the effort and willingness to achieve a specific goal. It is considered as a key factor that influence the foreign language learning process.

Scheidecker and Freeman (1999:116) believe that: *“motivation is, without question, the most complex and challenging issue facing teacherstoday”*. So the lack of motivation is caused by the uninspired teachers who do not show the purposes behind the program, and the teachers’ discouragement of learners towards the English language, as well as teachers’ low performance in classrooms.

8. Definition of the Writing Skill

Writing is one of the four language skills which is difficult to achieve by EFL students. Writing is one of the productive skills, it refers to specific abilities which promote learners to translate their opinions and notions into clear and well organized words, as Flower and Hyes (1981:366) state: *“writing is best understood as a set of distinctive thinking processes which writers orchestrate or organize during the act of composing”*. Good writers should be aware about the conventions of the language which concern: grammar, vocabulary, spelling, punctuation, coherence and cohesion.

Writing is creative since it makes students showing their ways of thinking and delivers them to the reader. Writing facilitates the revision of ideas and information that appears on papers, as Harris (1993:12) maintains: *“it is almost as the act of writing makes thoughts visible and tangible; this in turn, provides the opportunity for revision and refinement because the thoughts are there on the page to be worked on ”*.

Enough knowledge about the target language is required to produce grammatical and appropriate written texts. Weigle (2002:36) states:

The process of text generation, or encoding internal representation (ideas) into written text, may be disrupted by the need for lengthy searches for appropriate lexical and syntactical choices. Consequently, the written product may not match the writer’s original intention.

The act of writing demands the mastery of many competences, not only finding out ideas but also how to make them in a coherent discourse

9.The Importance of the Writing Skill in Learning and Communicating

Good writing is important in both personal and professional lives. It is considered as the best way to students for expressing their thoughts, ideas, and views as persons especially for those who can’t express themselves orally as Mc Arthur, et al. (2008:01) points out: *“writing provides an importance mean to personal self-expression”*.

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Writing makes students' thinking observable, it allows them to discover their ways of reflection rather than keep it in their minds. Skillful students in writing require confidence in their lives and have edge over others. Well writing facilitates students' and teachers' tasks in exams, in which learners translate their knowledge in their own styles and that make teachers convinced their answers.

Writing prepares students for future employments that need this skill. As a teacher he/she has to know the basic elements of writing and teach them for students. In administrations, they also require writing in public relation, in the case of journalist in an English newspaper or magazine; it is a way for reporting events honestly and clearly.

10. Steps and Procedures in Writing

The writing process is based on five main stages and each one is comprising various strategies: the pre-writing stage, the drafting stage, the revising stage and the editing stage. Krashen(1984:17) argues: *“many good writers employ a recursive, non-linear approach-writing of a draft may be interrupted by more planning, and revision may lead to reformulation, with a great deal of recycling to earlier stages”*. These stages will be further explained in the following sections.

10.1. The Pre-writing Stage

D'Aoust(1986:07) points out:

Pre-writing activities generate ideas, the encouragement a free flow of thoughts and help students to discover both what they want to say and how to say it on paper. In other words pre-writing activities facilitate the planning for both the product and the process.

It is the planning phase of the writing process, when students brainstorm and specify the topic then think about the possible information related to it, then, generating ideas and making a work plan through:

- ✓ Using a particular outline,

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- ✓ Specifying the who, where, when, why and how of a subject,
- ✓ Promoting a set of arguments.

In this step, students are not required to write correctly and perfectly but just putting their general thoughts on papers.

10.2. The Drafting Stage

After planning, students move to drafting, where they translate their ideas into visible sentences. As White and Arndt (1991:99) suggest: *“the writer passes from the “writerbased” to the “reader based” writing in which the concerns of the reader should now begin to assume more significance”*. They are not obliged to follow a specific order when writing without paying attention to grammatical mistakes.

Drafting is a strategy used to create, discover and change the learners’ opinion in which they must allow themselves more time. During this stage, students have to decide which writing genre they choose (narrative, descriptive, expository, persuasive), taking into consideration the thesis statement, the purpose and the arguments. Thus, by the end of this phase the writer’s task will be easy.

10.3. The Revising Stage

It means reorganizing and changing the previous work by reading it and modifying sentences, adding new parts or deleting others. As White and Arndt (1991:137) argue that this stage is to *“enrich the repertoire of linguistic resources which are the essential tools of writing”*. These allow students to examine their styles, writing and thoughts as well as making them creative. Learners should focus on a set of principles to be effective, such as:

- ✓ Organizing ideas in a logical manner to convince the reader,
- ✓ Using clear sentences with relative purposes to attract the reader,
- ✓ Using simple style to be understood,
- ✓ Making a ballance between the developmental ideas of the topic,
Expanding each point of the topic in separate paragraphs.

10.4. The Editing Stage

Harris (1995) argues that editing is the final stage of drafting. In this step, priority is given to the form and structure rather than the content. Students have to check and pick up spelling, punctuation and grammar errors that may impede communication. In addition, they have to make sure that the use of sentence structure, words choice, adjectives, adverbs and prepositions are correct and appropriate. Finally, they write their last compositions in proper papers and give them to the teacher to be evaluated. On the other hand, learners can exchange their essays and evaluate them using correction strategies that has been taught to them. Through this way, students become more aware and responsible about their writing.

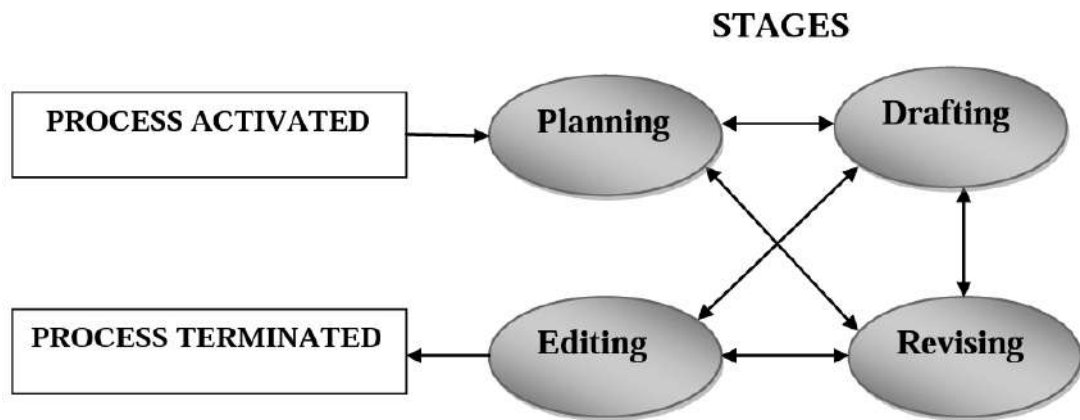


Figure 1.1: The Writing Process (Richards and Renandya:325)

11. EFL Students' Difficulties in Writing

The students' knowledge of language conventions make their writing tasks easy, they allows them to construct meaningful and well-structured sentences, to punctuate correctly and to choose appropriate vocabulary. But many EFL learners consider writing as a complex activity which requires both mental and physical endeavors. Writing is a complicated skill to be achieved by EFL students since it demands several sub-skills. Moreover, the problem is not limited in finding ideas but also how to combine them into coherent sentences. As Kroll (1990:140) points out:

for English as a second language, (ESL) students, it seems fair to say that writing is particularly difficult. ESL students must learn to create written products that demonstrate mastery over contextually appropriate formats for rhetorical presentation of ideas as well as mastery in all areas of language..... It is partially the multiplicity of skills involved which contributes to the overall difficulty of writing.

The deficiencies that second year EFL learners are bound to face in written production include: vocabulary, grammar, spelling, punctuation, coherence and cohesion.

11.1. Vocabulary

It is considered as the body of words that make up a language, as Ourghi(2002:77) argues: *“writing is primarily conveying meaning and sending a message by selecting relevant lexical items and putting them in a written form”*.

Second year EFL learners have a lack of vocabulary due to the lack of reading stories, articles, newspapers, magazines, the decrease of participation in speaking sessions, as well as the diminution of using dictionaries which results in a limited vocabulary.

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11.2. Grammar

Grammatical knowledge is very important and necessary in writing, there are rules and norms that should be known by both teachers and learners in order to get the message across. Students should be aware of the most grammatical patterns with the aim of producing meaningful and well-structured sentences. However, most second year EFL learners encounter grammatical problems in:

- ✓ Building meaningful sentences,
- ✓ Confusing between phrase, sentence and clause,
- ✓ The misusing of comparative and superlative adjectives,
- ✓ Verb tenses,
- ✓ Using appropriate punctuation to structure sentences,
- ✓ Failing in constructing reported speech and passive/active forms,
- ✓ Using conjunctions and connectors.

11.3. Spelling

It is one of the problems that second year EFL students encounter in writing. Spelling mistakes are characterized by the fact that many words are pronounced the same but are written differently and carry distinctive meanings. Spelling difficulty for learners can be caused by the lack of correct connection between sounds of words and their spelling. For example: « to », « too », « two », « then » and « than », « effect » and « affect ».

Incorrect spelling is perceived as a lack of knowledge and affect the readers' judgement negatively which prevents them to understand the written message. The different of English accents i.e., American accent and British accent, is another reason that cause spelling errors.

11.4. Punctuation

It plays a prominent role in writing; it is a set of symbols used in writing to link between the units of a sentence. Harreley and Bruckman(2002:209) state:

“punctuation marks are like traffic signals they guide readers, they tell readers when to go and when to stop and when to turn and in what direction”. so, students need to be aware about the punctuation marks and their functions that includes: full stop(.), comma(,), apostrophe('), hyphen(_), colon(:), semi-colon(;), question marks(?), exclamation marks(!), brackets(), dash(-) and inverted commas («... »).

11.5. Coherence and Cohesion

They are two lexical items that link sentences and make them correct and meaningful. But many EFL learners have difficulties in writing introductions, thesis statements, topic sentences and conclusions. Additionally, they focus on language matters rather than meanings. Another reason, is the interference between students' mother tongue and the English language which is text-based, specified, change oriented and non-additive. Furthermore, they translate their words from their mother tongue to the target language.

Thus, students should be aware about coherence and cohesion since they make them able to write appropriate and organized paragraphs, essays and long compositions.

12. Conclusion

As a conclusion to this chapter, one can deduce that the productive skills are complex and difficult skills in learning English as a foreign language. These processes require the mastery of language rules, structure and organization of ideas in order to communicate effectively either in writing or in speaking. In order to explore this literature review in AinTemouchent University, there are several research tools with their quantitative and qualitative analyses.

CHAPTER TWO
THE CASE STUDY

CHAPTER TWO

1.Introduction

This chapter aims to present the research design and its procedures. It starts by describing education and ELT situation in Algeria. Then, undertakes the section of English at AinTemoouchent University focusing on the methodology of teaching speaking and writing. Furthermore, it highlights the participants' profile and the research instruments which included an interview addressed to second year EFL teachers of both written and oral production and a questionnaire which was designed to their students in English Section. Finally, it deals with quantitative and qualitative analyses of both teachers' and learners' questionnaires.

2. Education and ELT Situation in Algeria

During the post-colonialism period, French was the dominant language of instruction in Algeria. The Algerian educational system went through several reforms. By 1970's, the Arabization process began in the lower levels of education. In the 1980's, it spread throughout the higher levels of education in all fields except for sciences and medicines. It aimed to replace French by the Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) as a means of instruction. As a result, French had become the first foreign language and English the second foreign language, as professor Miliani (2000: 13) says: "in a situation where the French language has lost much of its ground in the sociocultural and educational environment of the country: the introduction of English is being heralded as the magic solution to all possible ills including economic, technological and education ones".

Furthermore, ELT in Algeria is divided into four stages. The first stage (from 1962 to 1970), was based on the Grammar Translation Method which attempted to make the learners able to translate literary pieces from the target language to the native language and vice versa, in addition, priority was given to reading skill followed by w3) writing while speaking was neglected. The second period (from 1970 to 1984), was based on the Structural Approach in which translation is completely banished from any classroom

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activity as opposed to oral teaching which comes before any other kind of reading and writing activities.

From 1984 to 2003, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) had been adopted; it concentrates functional and communicative uses of language. The last phase (from 2003 till now), has been based on the Competency Based Approach (CBA) in which instructions are based on worldwide that highlights the importance of the links between learning and context of use. The aim of this approach is to develop students' intellectual, linguistic and problem solving capacities both in and out schools.

2.1. The Middle School

As regards the Algerian situation, English is brought forward to second year of the middle school till the fourth year, and the official courses scheduled for teaching English are three hours per week. Concerning speaking, pupils are often asked to practice the language by doing conversations and dialogues while in writing pupils are instructed to write short paragraphs and filling the gaps.

2.2. The Secondary School

In the secondary school, English is taught in both literary and scientific branches. The official courses are different according to their fields and levels. Concerning speaking, the emphasis is put on teaching phonological features in order to improve the students' pronunciation; whereas in writing students are asked to write essays, long passages and paragraphs or completing imaginative stories.

2.3. ELT at the University Level

Regarding the importance of English as a global language it is taught in all the university branches either in the English department or as ESP module in other fields. The English department at the Algerian University level used the classical system which was based on four years to get the 'License' degree, two years for 'Magister' degree and four years for 'Doctoral' degree. In 2004/2005 the LMD system (License, Master, and

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Doctorate) has been adopted from the European educational system; three years for 'License' degree, two years for 'Master' degree and three years for 'Doctoral' degree. The main aim of the LMD system is involving both students and teachers in vocational training, and highlighting the quality of higher education.

3. Description of the English Department at AinTemouchent University

English Department of AinTemouchent University is one of the many Algerian departments which adopted the classical system. This system is based on teaching: grammar, written production, oral production and discourse comprehension, in addition to other modules, such as: linguistics, phonetics, civilization (Anglo-Saxon, American and African), psycho-pedagogy, research methodology, ICT, TEFL and Arabic culture. These modules are taught during the first three years. On the third year 'License', students have the chance to choose between two branches; either Language Studies or Literature and Civilization.

Concerning Master level in the department of English Language at BELHADJ BOUCHAIB university there are other modules, for instance in didactics and applied language speciality we have different types of modules such as: psychology studies, phonetics, translation techniques, linguistics and English as Specific Purposes (ESP) for Language studies. Whereas, for literature and civilization speciality, modules include: American civilization and also British civilization. There are sixty hundred ninety one students (691), thirty nine (39) permanent teachers in the English language department

3.1. Teaching Writing

During the three years, writing module is taught as a separate module. For the second year, students learn the different types of sentences. i.e., simple, compound and complex sentences, sentence pattern and how to combine and organize them. For the second year, learners are required to write essays and to be aware of the different types of writing, such as: narrative, expository, descriptive and argumentative. For the third

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year, students are instructed into academic writing, besides studying the module of research methodology which helps them to organize their research papers (following some steps, such as: abstract, general introduction, general conclusion and bibliographies).

The written production is taught in classrooms using blackboard and chalk, but the strategies differ from one teacher to another, for instance: teachers set their students in pairs or in groups to write essays, after that, they make discussions.

3.2. Teaching Speaking

Oral production is taught as a separate module during two years in 'License' degree. There is no clear syllabus design for teaching speaking and each teacher uses his/her own strategies and audio-visual aids according to his/her students' needs. Some speaking courses are given in the laboratories or multi-media rooms according to the teachers' objectives.

4. The Participants' Profile

This research study was conducted in the English department at AinTemouchent University with 40 students of second year LMD and their teachers of written production and oral production in the academic year 2022/2023.

4.1. The Teachers' Profile

The subjects are four teachers, Two of oral production and two of written production in the English Department at AinTemouchent University. Three of them are doctors, the other one holds the 'Magister' degree. All of them are permanent teachers, their experiences range between six (6) and twenty (20) years. However their post graduate fields of specialization differ: sociolinguistics, TEFL and Applied Linguistics, and Educational Psychology. Moreover, their modules of charge are: oral production,

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phonetics, research methodology, psycholinguistics, teaching practice, and written production.

4.2. The Learners' Profile

This research deals with second year LMD students in the Department of English at AinTemouchent University. Forty learners were chosen randomly from different groups. They are university students and their ages are vary between seventeen (18) and twenty two (23) years old. The sample includes males and females who have been studying English for seven (07) years.

5. Research Methodology

The researcher may rely when collecting data on a set of instruments such as: the questionnaire.

5.1. The Questionnaire

The questionnaire is one of the well-known instruments that are used in collecting data in foreign language research. Brown (2001:06) defines questionnaire as: "Any written instrument that present respondents with a series of questions or statements". It is a set of written questions used to collect data. These data could be either facts or opinions. Factual data, ask the respondents about facts. Inventory data, ask the respondents about attitudes and preferences. These two types of questions can be collected within the same questionnaire. Additionally, a questionnaire may include three types of questions: close-ended items in which the informants select one of the several answers, they can be: Dichotomous questions (i.e., Yes /No questions), multiple choice items (in which the respondents are required to choose one or more answer from a range of choices) or rating scales (which is based on the participants' evaluative judgments by selecting one of the several answers organized into a scale).

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There are two types of rating scale: frequency and opinion. The second type is open-ended item that requires the informants' answers in which they give their points of view. The third item is a mixture between close and open questions which is called close-open-ended item in which the informants choose an answer and justify or give more explanations about his/her choice.

5.2. Description of Learners' Questionnaire

This questionnaire is given to forty second year EFL students, it has two parts, and First part is concerned with speaking and the second part deals with writing. It contains eight close questions; two close open ended questions and four open ended questions.

This questionnaire contains ten items:

From item one to three: shed a light on the importance of oral expression courses in improving the speaking skill and whether students practice it outside University.

Item four and five: gather information about students' difficulties as well as the psychological impact when speaking.

Item six: which respectively asks about the importance of written production in learning English?

Item two and three: gather information about students' planning ideas and if they follow writing steps.

Item seven and eight: it aims at investigating students' difficulties when writing.

Item nine and ten: aims to collect data about students' opinion about the useful strategies and their wishes from their teachers to overstep their deficiencies and improve their writing.

5.3 Description of teachers' Questionnaire

The questionnaire consists of 12 questions. The purpose of this survey is to find out what problems students face when writing and how teachers deal with them. Also, the frequency and main purpose of the feedback given to the learner and the major one is to explore the effective techniques that improve the writing skill of the learners.

6. Data Analysis

Data analysis plays a vital role in reporting the research findings. It takes two forms; quantitative and qualitative.

6.1. Quantitative Analyses

It involves analyzing data using statistical techniques (Dornyei, 2001). The researcher relies on the use of descriptive statistics, which includes frequencies, percentages, tabulations, graphic representations and measures of central tendency. Frequencies and percentages may be provided within a text or may be represented on tables called frequency tables or through graphic representations which involve the use of bar-graphs or pie-charts. Whereas the measures of central tendency include three types: the mean, the mode, and the median. The mean refers to the calculation of the average of the whole group of the individuals; it is the total of scores which is divided by the number of scores. The mode refers to the most frequently occurring score. The median shows the middle value of a group of scores. For an odd number, the median is the middle score; while for an even number, the median is the average of the two scores which are in the middle.

6.2. Qualitative Analyses

Qualitative analysis reformulates the information given in texts. It involves interpretations and explanations of the informant's responses (Cohen et al, 2005). In order to provide more explanations, the researcher may use tables or diagrams to summarize and recapitulate the main points listed previously within the text.

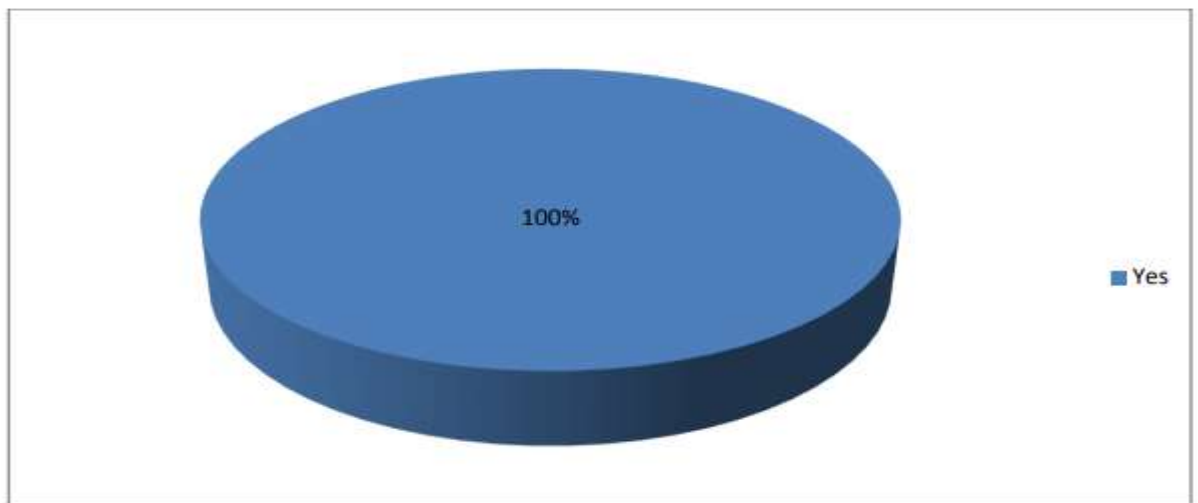
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6.3. Learners' Questionnaire Results

This section revolves around the quantitative analysis of learner's questionnaire and their interpretations.

6.3.1. Quantitative Analysis of Learners' Questionnaire

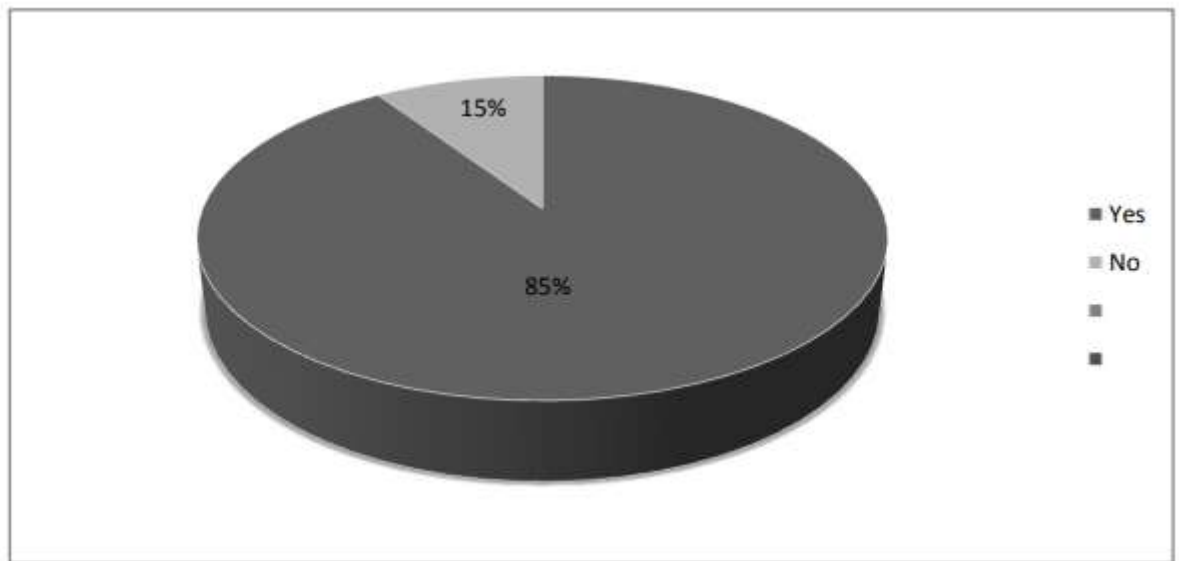
The quantitative results contain descriptive statistics including percentages. All the students (100%) agree that the speaking skill is important in their study because they think that it facilitates their communication with each other as well as with people from other countries. It can also help them to improve their pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar levels.



Pie Chart 2.1: The Importance of the Speaking Skill for Students

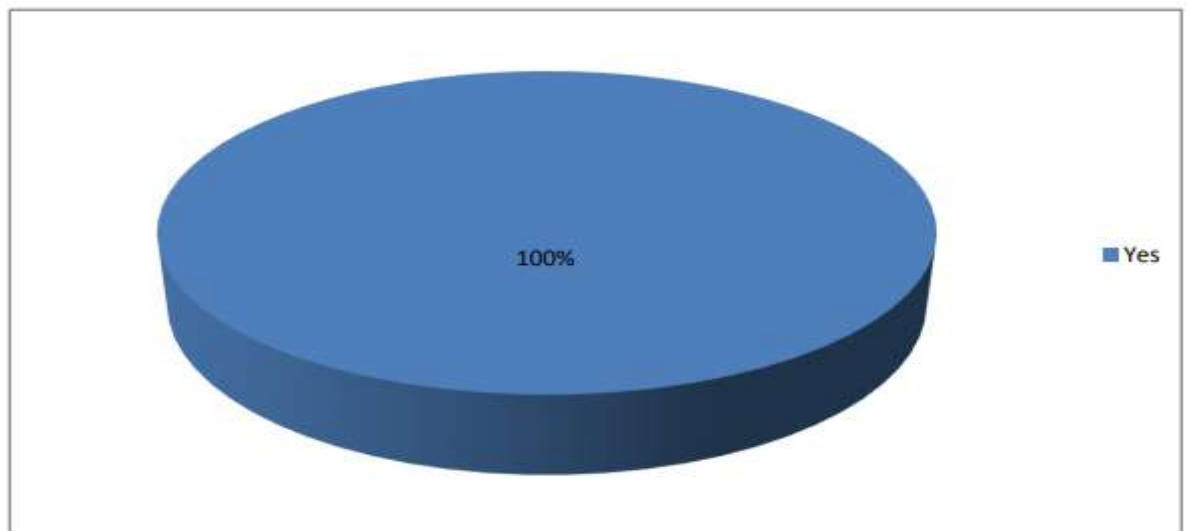
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The majority of them (85%) do not practice English outside university.



Pie Chart 2.2: Students' Practice of English Outside University

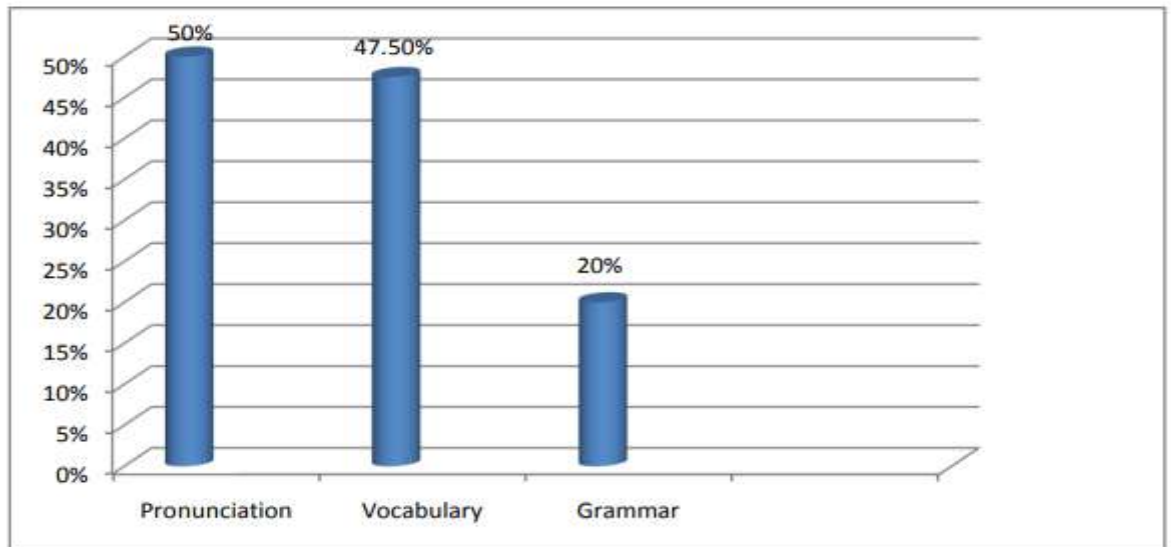
All learners (100%) believe that the oral expression courses help them to improve their speaking level, since they think that it gives them the opportunity to express their ideas. It helps them to show their capacities and get the chance to be corrected by the teacher and it assists them to overstep their fear and stress.



Pie Chart 2.3: the Importance of the course of Oral Expression

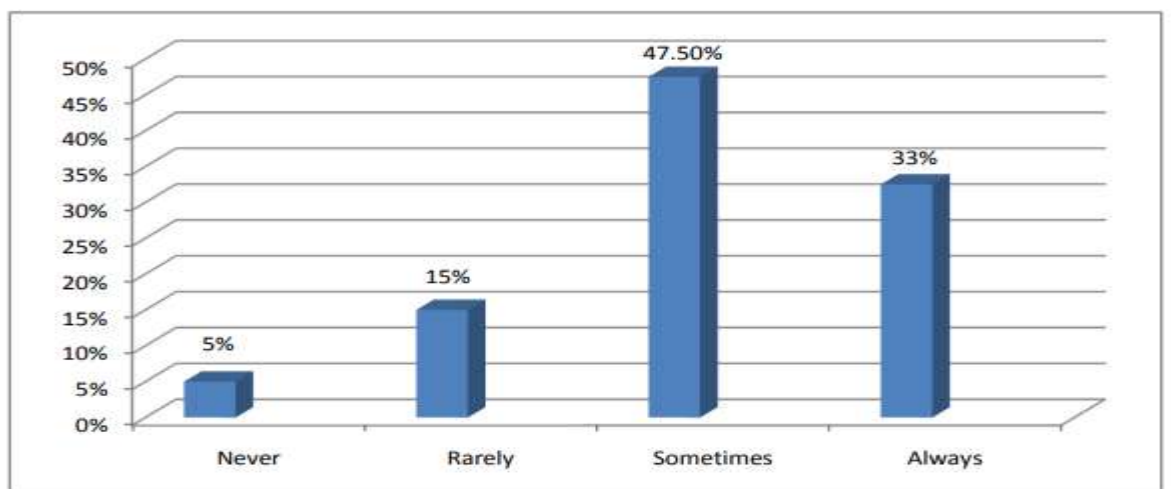
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Half of the population (20) faces difficulties in pronunciation, (19) have vocabulary problems, and (08) have the grammar deficiency.



Graph 2.1: Students' Difficulties in Speaking

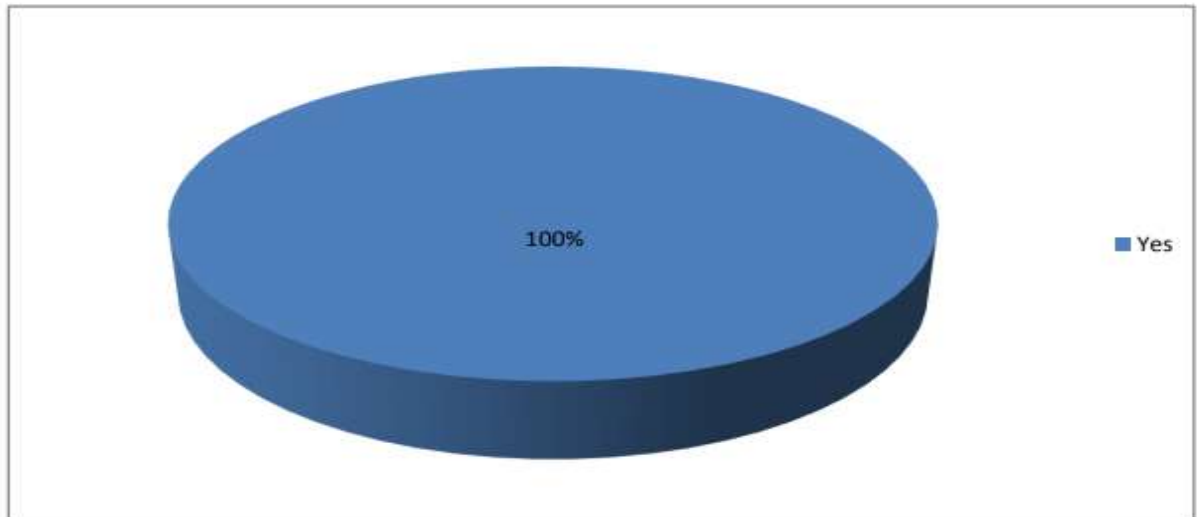
At about half of the population (19) sometimes use the mother tongue during the speaking session. Whereas, few of them (02) are not influenced by their mother tongue. (06) Choose rarely and (13) of the subjects select the choice always.



Graph 2.2: The Influence of the Mother Tongue on Students

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The quantitative results contain statistics including percentages. All the participants (100%) agreed that writing is important in improving their English.



Pie Chart 2.4: The Importance of Written Production for Students

Concerning students' following up of writing steps, their answers were:

- **First step: pre-writing**
Thirty learners (30) go through pre-writing either sometimes or always, seven (07) Selected rarely while the remaining (03) selected never.
- **Second step: drafting**
Twenty five (25) students always or sometimes draft, for rarely ten (10), for never five (05).

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- Third step: revising

Half of the informants twenty (20) never revise their writing, nine (09) chose rarely, and eleven (11) students sometimes or always revise their writing.

- Fourth step: editing

The majority of the subjects (36) go through editing either always or sometimes from the rating scale, and the same number (02) for each; never and rarely.

Steps of Writing	Percentages (%)			
	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Always
Pre-writing	7.5%	17.5%	47.5%	27.5%
Drafting	12.5%	25%	22.5%	04%
Revising	50%	22.5%	15%	12.5%
Editing	05%	05%	27.5%	62.5%

Table 2.1: Students' Writing Process

The results showed that students encounter problems in:

- First Difficulty: Punctuation

The majority of the respondents (28) have sometimes or always this problem, eight (08) rarely found it and only four (04) select never.

- Second Difficulty: Grammar

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Thirty three (33) students said that they sometimes or always face grammar difficulty, and four (04) said that they rarely met this problem, the remaining (03) said never.

- Fourth Difficulty: Vocabulary Third Difficulty: Spelling

Students who admit that they sometimes or always encounter problems in vocabulary are thirty one (31), six (06) were rarely found this problem and the minority of them three (03) selected never.

- Fifth Difficulty: cohesion and coherence

Twenty nine (29) of the informants selected the point sometimes or always from the rating scale, five (05) for rarely and six (06) for never.

Writing Difficulties	Percentages (%)			
	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Always
Punctuation	10%	20%	45%	25%
Grammar	07.5%	10%	55%	27.5%
Spelling	05%	25%	40%	30%
Vocabulary	7.5%	15%	52.5%	25%
Coherence & cohesion	15%	12.5%	42.5%	30%

Table 2.2: Students' Difficulties in Writing

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➤ **Students' opinion about the strategies that help them to overstep their difficulties in writing**

The aim behind question five is to collect students' opinions about the most useful strategies that help them to overcome their difficulties in writing. In this respect, they reported that reading books, listening to native speakers and music contribute to improve their vocabulary knowledge, the exchanging of writing essays and paragraphs between students as well as focusing on writing diaries to interchange opinions.

➤ **Learners' wishes from their teachers**

The last question concerned the students' wishes from their teachers to improve their writing level. Their answers revealed that the teacher should simplify lessons for better understanding, dictation exercises to overstep their spelling mistakes and learn new words, assign home works then correct them, as well as give them the chance to write on the blackboard to discover their errors, and use several ways to attract their students and make them more motivated.

6.3.2. Data Interpretation of Learners' Questionnaire

The aim behind learners' questionnaire is to find out the difficulties that second year EFL students face when they speak. Concerning the data collected about the problems that students face while speaking, the results show that the majority of students have the vocabulary and pronunciation problems because they do not have enough oral expression sessions and they do not practice English outside university in addition to the lack of reading and the lack of listening to native conversations. Moreover, most of the times they are influenced by their mother tongue since they consider it as a way which allows them to express themselves freely and easily.

The second aim behind learners' questionnaire is to investigate the deficiencies that learners face when they write. When collecting data several findings were obtained. The

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majorities of students have problems in the writing steps in which they focus on some of them and neglect the others, because they are not aware about the importance of each step which helps them to organize their writing. Additionally, they found difficulties in punctuation, grammar, vocabulary, spelling, coherence and cohesion. This may be due to the lack of practice, the inadequate writing official course, lack of reading which results in limited vocabulary and the language transfer from Arabic to English or from French to English. In addition to that, they neglect revision of their writing essays and paragraphs as well as they do not use dictionaries, thus these have lead to spelling mistakes and unclear sentences. Moreover, they fail to use conjunctions and connectors to link sentences which result lack of coherence and cohesion in their writing pieces.

6.4. Teacher's Questionnaire Results

This section revolves around the quantitative analysis of teacher's questionnaire and their interpretations.

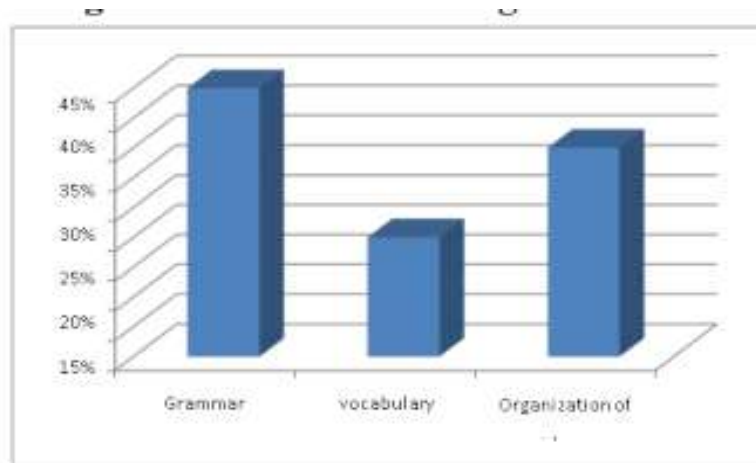
6.4.1. Quantitative Analysis of Teacher's Questionnaire

Item 1: According to your experience in teaching writing, what are your students' main difficulties?

<i>Options</i>	<i>Respondents</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Grammar	9	45%
Vocabulary	4	20%
Organization of ideas	7	35%
Total	20	100%

Table2.3: Students' Writing Problems

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Graph 2.3: Learners' Writing Problems

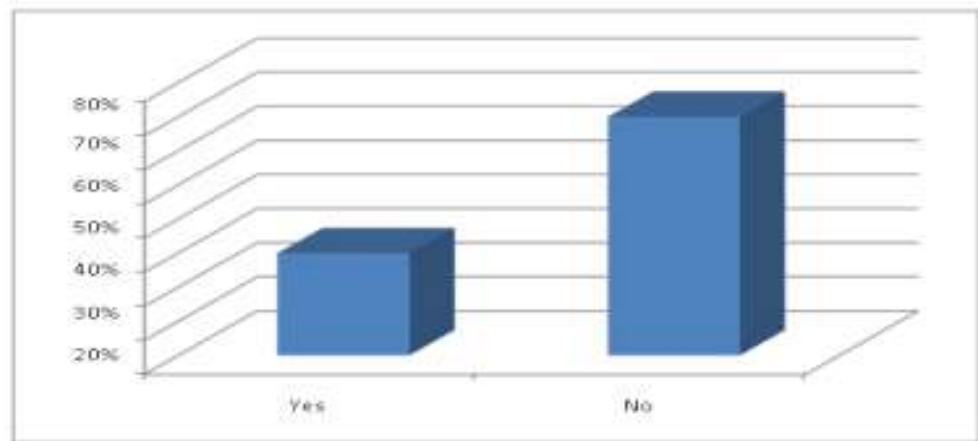
As the figure illustrates, 45% of teachers confirm that their learners have problems with grammar rules while writing, some learners find English rules difficult to be memorized while other learners are interested at all in memorizing them. However, 35% of them declare that their learners, difficulties are related to organization of ideas. 20% of instructors agree that their learners have difficulty with vocabulary. They seem that they have not grasped yet enough vocabularies to use them in their assignments.

Item 2: While the written expression session, do you feel that your learners are motivated to write?

Options	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	6	30%
No	14	70%
Total	20	100%

Table 2.4: students' attitude toward writing.

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Graph 2.4: Students ‘attitude toward writing

The majority of instructors (70 %) declare that the pupils are not motivated at all to write in English, while just 30% state that their students are actually motivated to write in English.

Can you justify why you students are not motivated?

The majority of teachers that answer the previous question with “no” declare that their students are not motivated to learn English in generally and in writing precisely, they add that some learners find difficulty in memorizing English rules while others do not even bother themselves to memorize them. The teachers find difficulty to repeat the rules each time.

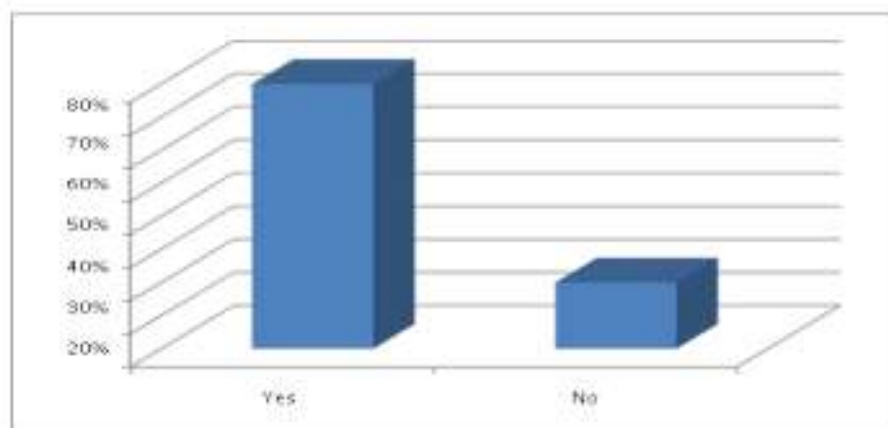
Some other teachers state that their pupils find the writing tasks that are proposed in the syllabus boring. Consequently, they are less motivated to write about them. While other instructors state that their learners have no intention to write, even when the teacher gives them topics to write about outside the classroom environment, they give them to more proficient pupils write for them.

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Item 3: In your point of view; do you think that the learners feel afraid of writing?

Options	Respondents	Percentages
Yes	16	80%
No	4	20%
Total	20	100%

Table 2.5: Teachers perception of students' anxiety in writing



Graph 2.5: Teachers' perception of students' anxiety in writing

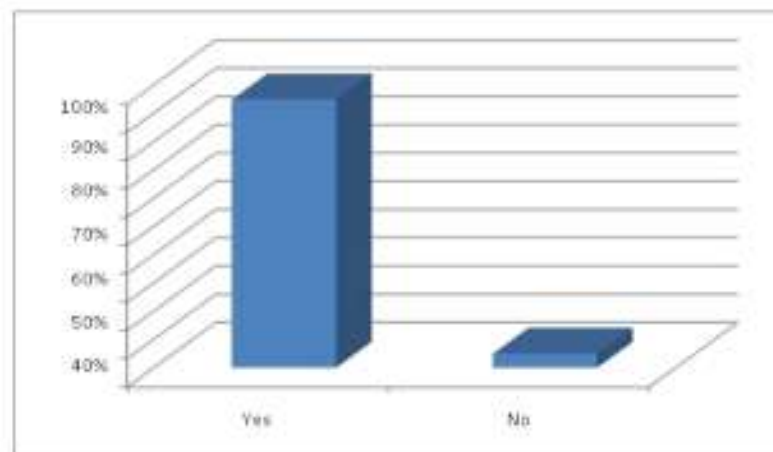
According to the results, 80% of teachers suggest that pupils are afraid of writing whereas just 20% of them claim that their learners do not feel afraid of writing.

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Item4: If yes, do you try to lower their anxiety?

Options	Respondents	Percentages
Yes	19	95%
No	1	5%
Total	20	100%

Table2.6: Rate of lowering students' anxiety in writing



Graph 2.6: Rate of lowering students' anxiety in writing

A high percentage 95% claim that teachers work hard to reduce student anxiety, while just 5% of them state that they do not try to lower the students' anxiety.

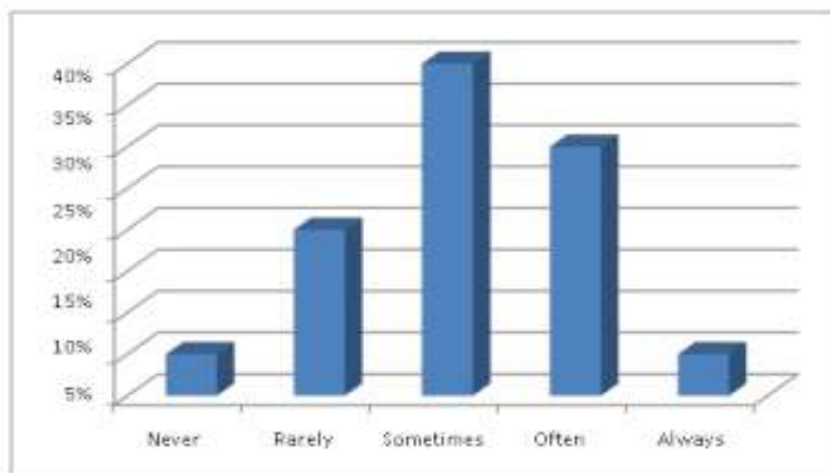
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Some teachers say they use games to motivate them to write and try to reduce learners' anxiety about writing by asking them to write simple, short sentences. Some teachers point out the importance of reading short sentences to learn new vocabulary. This is especially useful in writing sessions. Other teachers emphasize that they try to reduce learner anxiety by discussing topics to write with and writing subtitles on the blackboard that students can easily create later.

Item 5: The following table and figure show how often teachers explore group work as a writing technique.

Options	Respondents	Percentage
Never	1	5%
Rarely	4	20%
Sometimes	8	40%
Often	6	30%
Always	1	5%
Total	20	100%

Table 2.7: Teachers' utilization of group working



Graph 2.7: Teachers' utilization of group working

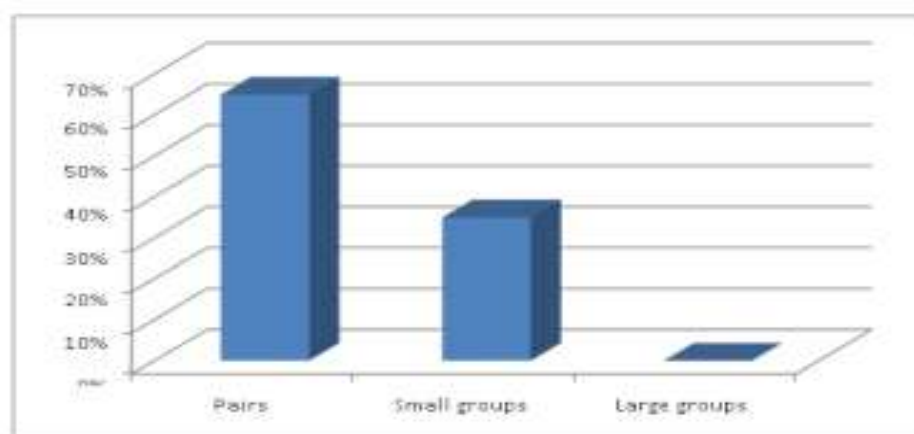
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5% of teachers argue that they always use group work. 40% of them state that they sometimes adopt cooperative learning technique in the writing sessions, whereas 30% declare that they often use group work while just 20% state that they rarely use group working. 5% of instructors claim that they never use group working in their writing sessions.

Item 6: According to you, is organizing pupils into groups a part of your teaching writing strategy?

Options	Respondents	Percentage
Pairs	13	65%
Small groups	7	35%
Large groups	0	0%
Total	20	100%

Table 2.8: Group Size



Graph 2.8: Group Size

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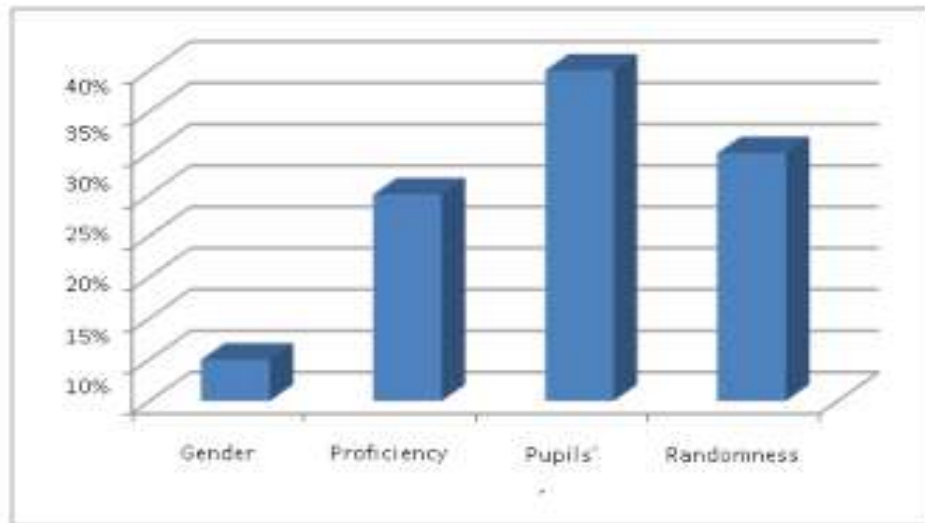
The results show that 65% of tutors prefer to organize their learners into pairs. They may see two members in each group would be enough to share ideas correct mistakes and help when necessary. While 35% of teachers inform that they prefer managing groups into small ones. What is remarkable is that no one of the teachers prefers large groups since the latter would be noisy and not well organized.

Item7: The following table and figure indicate the criteria that teachers use when organizing group work.

Options	Respondents	Percentage
Gender	1	5%
Proficiency	5	25%
Pupils' preference	8	40%
Randomness	6	30%
Total	20	100%

Table 2.9: Factors of Groups Setting

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Graph 2.9: Factors of Groups Setting

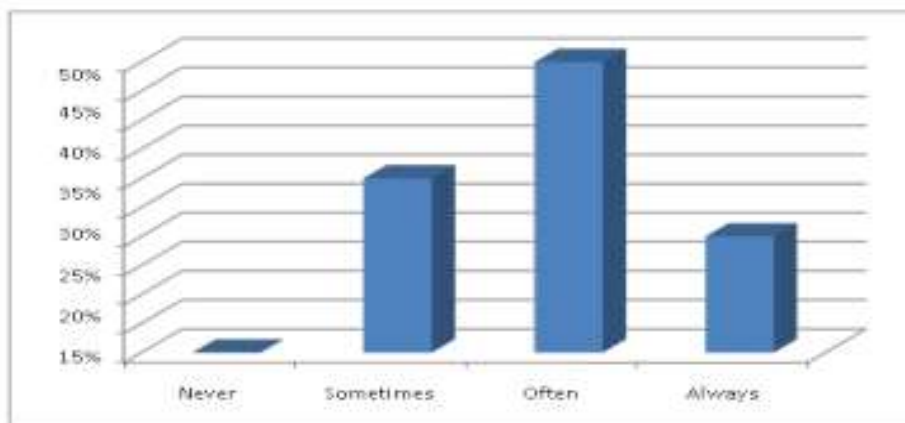
The table indicates that 40% of teachers suggest that they organize group working depending on learners' preference. The teachers give them the freedom of choosing their mates in order to make them feel at ease and get acquainted to pupils they are working with. 30% of instructors say that they set the groups randomly without considering factors. 25% of tutors consider proficiency as a group basis. Learners that are more proficient work together while less proficient learners work together. The proficient learners will necessarily benefit more from group working since they almost share the same level in one hand and it would be so easy for teachers to monitor and explain the ambiguous tasks to less proficient learners in the other hand, while gender as basis of group organizing is chosen only by 5% of teachers.

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Item 8: The following table and figure display how often the teacher explores his teaching feedback.

Options	Respondents	Percentage
Never	0	0%
Sometimes	6	30%
Often	10	50%
Always	4	20%
Total	20	100%

Table 2.10: Frequency of Feedback giving



Graph 2.10: Frequency of Feedback giving

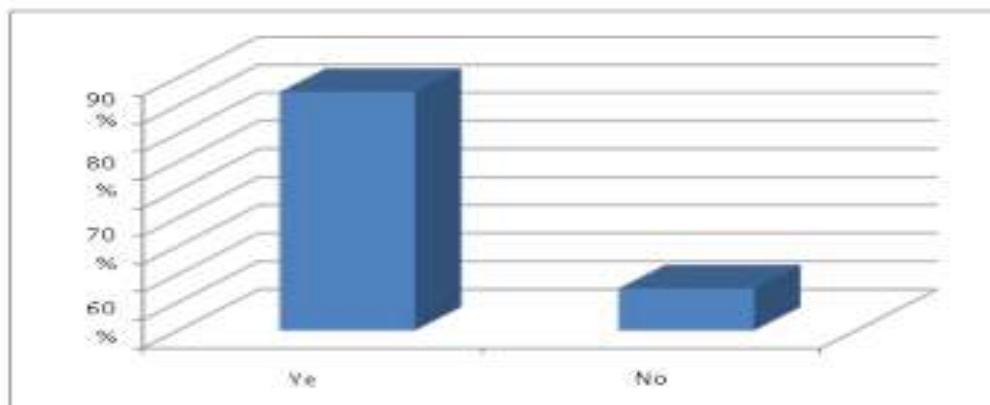
Along the analysis of the data, we have found that half of teachers 50 %often give feedback after the group working. 20% of teachers always evaluate their learners after thegroupworking.30%ofthemsometimesgivefeedback, while the last option“never”wasnot are chosen.

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Item 9: As a teacher, do you explore learners 'self-correction as feedback?

Options	Respondents	Percentages
Yes	19	95%
No	1	5%
Total	20	100%

Table 2.11: Rate of encouraging learners' Selfcorrection



Graph 2.11: Rate of encouraging students' selfcorrection

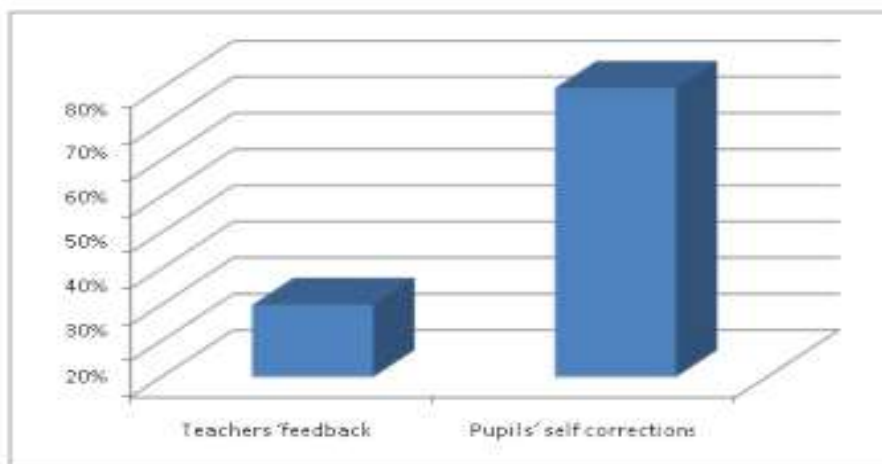
According to the results, 95% of teachers declare that they do support pupils' self-correction while 5% of them encourage teacher 'evaluation.

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Item 10: According to you, which teaching technique helps you reinforce students' writing performance?

Options	Respondents	Percentage
Teachers feedback	4	20%
Pupils 'self-corrections	16	80%
Total	20	100%

Table 2.12: Encouraging students' self-correction



Graph 2.12: .Encouraging students' self-Correction

For a variety of reasons, including those that will be discussed in the next question, 80% of teachers believe that students' self-correction is an effective method of

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providing feedback. Only 20% of them believe that using teacher assessment, as a method of providing feedback is useful.

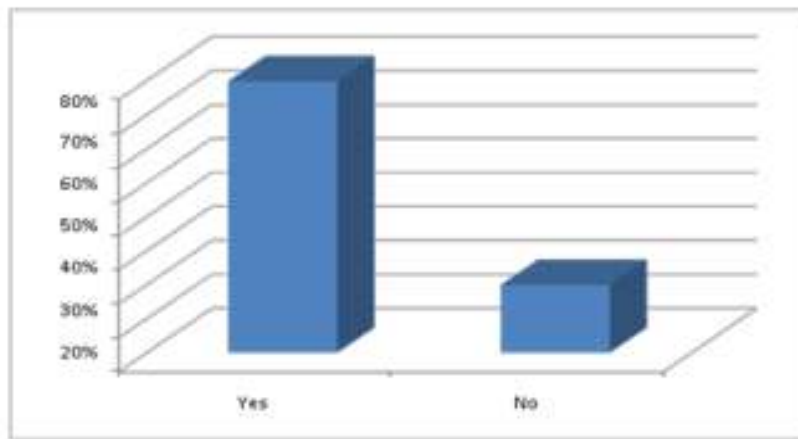
The majority of professors who encourage students to correct themselves contend that when students do so, they memorize their errors, which reduces the likelihood that they will repeat them in the future. Some instructors encourage students to correct themselves in order to better understand their mistakes during the learning process. They continue by saying that after students remedy their errors, they will recognize them and learn from them so they will not happen again. Consequently, teachers ought to promote and employ students' self-correction more.

Item 11: Is your adoption to writing strategy efficient?

Options	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	16	80%
No	4	20%
Total	20	100%

Table 2.13: Teachers 'perception of students' Problems ingroup working

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Graph 2.13: Teachers' perception of students' problems in-group working

80% say that their students face problems while they are joined together .While 20 percentage of them declare that their learners do not face obstacles when they are working together.

If there are problems, what are they?

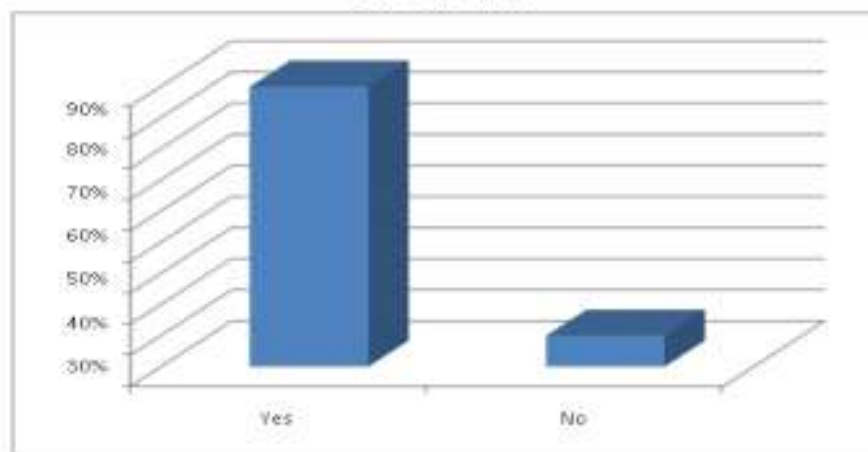
Some teachers claim that the students' level can be a crucial problem .As the good learners take over the majority of the work, do it themselves, and let the others apart. The majority of instructors point out that most pupils do not take the group working seriously .they add that in some classes if the tutors do not monitor the groups, most learners would enjoy talking about external subjects far from the subject in concern. Some other teachers highlight that many learners during group working do not participate and receive the same evaluation like the ones who work hard.

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Item 12: During the application of writing technique, are there any problems notified?

Options	Respondents	Percentage
Yes	18	90%
No	2	10%
Total	20	100%

Table 2.14: Rate of Solving Cooperative Learning Problems



Graph 2.14: Rate of Solving Cooperative Learning Problems

With the exception of only two teachers that do not try to solve problems that arise among learners while working together .18 of them attempt to solve those problems.

If yes, please explain

Most teachers say that they try to motivate their learners to participate, and help them to come up with one unified idea, in order to avoid disagreements. Others claim that they generally make the learners work with stable members in order to be familiar

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with each other and later on enjoy the group working. Some teacher clarify that each learner must take a certain task to work in, in order to be sure that the final product is the product of the whole team members.

6.4.2. Data Interpretation of teachers' Questionnaire

80% of teachers say they manage the class as they write even if it is difficult, especially when the room is busy (more than 40 learners in the single class). Instructors emphasize that they typically keep an eye on the group by explaining difficult vocabulary to the students, correcting their mistakes, and determining whether everyone is interested in the subject.

80% of teachers support learners' self-correction in order to include pupils in the learning process. Further, when the learners correct their own mistakes, they will identify them. Consequently, those mistakes would be reduced in the learner' next assignments. Although no one of the teachers informs that his/ her students have good or very good level in writing, they undoubtedly do their best to improve the writing skill since they use multiple strategies such as controlling the group while writing in order to correct mistakes, supporting pupil 'self-correction to include the learner in the learning process.

Learners enjoy working together although they encounter certain difficulties such as noise and disagreement. These can be explained that learners have not yet acquired some necessary skills for cooperation. Hence, the teacher should offer them with the necessary instructions for group working. The learners find working in groups as a chance for giving and receiving different point of view and they declare that it improves their writing and some social skills.

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7. Conclusion

This chapter is concerned with the main results obtained from both the questionnaires. The main findings revealed that second year EFL students encounter problems namely vocabulary, grammar and a result of lack of reading, lack of practice and lack of contact with native speakers.

Concerning writing, the results showed that the majority of students meet deficiencies at all levels i.e., grammar, punctuation, vocabulary, spelling, coherence and cohesion. These findings may denote students' lack of reading and practice, additionally; they have problems in the writing process.

According to the results obtained from the research tools, the next chapter will deal with some suggestions and recommendations in order to overcome students' difficulties in the productive skills and improve their proficiency level.

CHAPTER THREE

SUGGESTIONS AND

RECOMMENDATION

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1. Introduction

According to the results obtained from the research work, the present chapter offers some suggestions and recommendations for teachers to improve the students' productive skills at the English department at the university level. It starts by some techniques and strategies as well as the most useful technological materials used in teaching the speaking skill. Then, it suggests some possible strategies in teaching writing. It also deals with the writing process. Finally, it states the role of the teacher.

2. Techniques and Strategies in Teaching Speaking

Teaching speaking relies on two main factors: fluency and accuracy. As Brown (2001:02) says: *"It is now very clear that fluency and accuracy are both important goals to pursue in CLT"*. Fluency refers to the production of spoken language easily and the communication of ideas effectively while accuracy refers to the production of correct and complete and grammatical sentences.

2.1. Fluency Based Activities

Effective instructors teach their students speaking skills using some activities, such as: group work, role play, debates and discussions, games, problem solving and the use of pictures. These strategies prepare the students for real-life communication situations, and encourage them to improve their abilities to produce fluent, appropriate, correct, logical and connected sentences. Gower et al. (1995:102) argue: *"there should be communicative activities in classroom to encourage purposeful and meaningful interaction between students"*.

The present section will explore some techniques and strategies which can help EFL students develop their speaking.

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2.1.1. Group Work

To ameliorate learners' speaking skills, group work is regarded as very useful. It is defined by Johnson & Smith (1991:15) as: *“a cooperative activity, during which students share aims and responsibilities to complete a task assigned by the teacher in groups or in pairs”*. In group work, students learn to listen to each other, discuss and share their thoughts; they are independent and they have the same opportunities to speak and take decisions. Group works have many advantages:

- a) The improvement of learners' responsibility and autonomy.
- b) The promotion of students' participation, talking and oral fluency.
- c) The involvement of participants' motivation.

2.1.2. Role Play

In communicative language teaching classes, the role playing is considered as pedagogical activity. Harmer (1989:92) says: *“role play activities are those where students are asked to imagine they are in different situations and act accordingly”*. The role play has an objective or a purpose which students must accomplish in which they pretend that they are in various social contexts, and present a variety of social roles. Therefore, the role play gives opportunities for students to elicit their talents. It also frees them to be more creative and lower their anxieties.

2.1.3. Debates and Discussions

Among the effective and useful tasks that affect the learning of speaking process are debates and discussions. Harmer (1998:91) points out: *“the important thing is that students need to be engaged with the topic. They then might do some study and move quickly to activate stages, which include the discussion itself”*. During this kind of activities, the teacher has to set up a certain topic with a designed objective in which learners speak about personal or social reports by exchanging their thoughts and opinions spontaneously.

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2.1.4. Games

There are numerous games that can be involved in the production of language such as: crossword, puzzles, information gap grids and city maps. McDonough & Saw (2003:114) argue: *“game based activities can involve practice of oral strategies such as describing, predicting, simplifying and asking for feedback, through activities such as filling in questionnaire and guessing unknown information”*. These types of games develop students’ vocabulary as well as their knowledge. It also teaches them academic and social skills.

2.1.5. Problem Solving Activities

They focus on a specific problem that students must find its solution. Therefore, problem solving is based on the learners’ meaningful cognitive challenges.

2.1.6. The Use of Pictures

They are mentioned under the most common strategies in the language production. Scriver (2001: 71) states: *“for the quick explanation of vocabulary items, for setting up a discussion, a dialogue or a role play, for story building, we need pictures”*. Moreover, pictures include: photographs, diagrams, drawings, maps and charts. So, they can be used as a sequence of cues or as a stimulus to tell a story, or produce a dialogue with the aim of combining sentences using: time relative, sentence connectors etc.

2.2. Accuracy Based Activities

Accuracy based activities make students aware of their mistakes and able to produce accurate spoken language using correct and appropriate grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation.

2.2.1. Grammar

Grammar facilitates students’ speaking accuracy; it differs from that of writing. According to Thornbury (2005) the spoken grammar has the following features:

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- ✓ Clause is the basic unit of construction,
- ✓ Clauses are usually added,
- ✓ Head + body + tail construction,
- ✓ Direct speech favored,
- ✓ A lot of ellipsis,
- ✓ Many question tags,
- ✓ Performance effects (hesitation, repeats, false starts, incompleteness, syntactic blends).

Among the strategies that the teacher can use is filling-gap activities which may concentrate on the appropriate use of tenses (present, past, future), articles (a, an, the). The other kind of activities is the substitution and the modification of clauses into compound, complex or compound and complex sentences. Additionally, the teacher can ask his students to turn sentences from direct to indirect speech and vice versa, active voice to passive voice. These activities should be followed by the teachers' correction of students' mistakes.

2.2.2. Vocabulary

Accurate use of vocabulary based on the relevant choice of words when speaking. According to Harmer (2001) the performance of well formed utterances based on speakers' lexical knowledge. Students either lack words to express themselves or they use them incorrectly.

So, the teacher has to use several methods like: memorizing scripts in which he can select interesting topics such as: obtaining a service in a shop, ticket office, restaurant, airport following certain shared scripts like greeting, offers, requests in the form of tape dialogues. After that, he asks learners to repeat after the tape then practice these dialogues in pairs until they memorize words and acquire new vocabulary. (Thornbury 2005)

Another strategy that can be used is disappearing dialogues. In this type of activities, the teacher writes a conversation on the board after those students read it

then; the teacher deletes parts of it from time to time. By the end, they will be able to repeat the dialogues from their memories. (Thorn bury 2005).

2.2.3. Pronunciation

Redmond and Vrchota (2007:114) argue: *“It is imperative that you use the correct word in the correct instance and with the correct pronunciation. Pronunciation means to say words in ways that are generally accepted or understood”*.

Teachers should put emphasis on teaching their students the different sounds and their features, syllables and where stress should be placed. Moreover, they have to make them able to differentiate between falling and raising intonation using different techniques such as listening to songs and poems. As a result, students will be able to speak effectively with accurate and understandable pronunciation. Therefore, a well pronounced word helps to get the message across whereas bad pronunciation leads to mis- understanding speech.

3. The Use of Technological Materials in Teaching Speaking

With the spread of English as a second language around the world, people are more closely connected than ever before. Therefore, teaching English as a foreign language for learners becomes important and necessary. In this context, Gradole (1997:16) states: *“technology lies at the heart of globalization process affecting education work and culture”*

Moreover, with the updated technological materials, such as: language laboratory and audio-visuals aids including, videos and internet, the traditional methods, like chalk seem to be outdated. These technological materials are widespread nowadays among language teachers as they help them to achieve interesting and enjoyable atmosphere in their classes. According to Richards & Rodgers (1986:25) the role of materials should focused on:

- ✓ The communicative abilities of interpretation, expression and negotiation;

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- ✓ Understandable, relevant and interesting exchanges of information;
- ✓ Involving different kinds of texts and media.

Moreover, technological materials involve many types, among them: language laboratory and audio-visual aids. These types will be discussed in the remaining of this section.

3.1. Language Laboratory

Language laboratory plays a vital role in the modern foreign language teaching. In this sense Lengo (1986:42) says: *“language laboratory is a place where students can listen to the materials, authentic English of native speakers and try to imitate it”*. Modern language laboratories include necessary equipments, such as: computers, headphones, microphones, tape deck and other listening materials. Through the use of language aids, learners can listen to a particular text and record their own voices, so that, they can listen and discover their pronunciation mistakes. Harmer (2001:142-43) cites the advantages of language laboratory saying that:

The language laboratory helps to train some students to rally listen to what they say and how they say it. When they comparing pronunciation with correct version on the tape, they began to notice the differences, and this awareness, over a period, helps them to heard and pronounce English better.

Language laboratory develops learners’ fluency and accuracy. It gives students the opportunity to be in contact with native speakers.

3.2. Audio-visual Aids

They are instruments of record used to develop the speaking skill. They should be chosen according to the learners’ needs. They also help the teacher to make his students more motivated since they attract the learners’ attention (Mayer 2003). Videos and the internet are a sample of the audio-visual aids in teaching English as a foreign language for learners.

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3.2.1. Videos

As a result of the growth of communicative techniques, the video becomes a useful aid in teaching English courses. It stimulates students to learn the language and it also shows them the culture of the target language. In addition, the video makes the courses more interesting and enjoyable since it requires the students to focus on the body language, vocabulary and language models. Cakir (2006:69) argues: *“active viewings increase the students’ enjoyment and satisfaction and focuses their attention on the main idea of the video presentation. So, it is necessary for students to take an active part in video teaching presentations”*. The video should be short in order to get the students active and have an idea about the correct pronunciation.

3.2.2. Internet

It is a widespread aid that is used to teach English online in the classroom and doing grammatical and lexical exercises which makes learning more interesting (Harris 1995). Nevertheless, there are many applications which allow students to practice and improve their speaking, such as: Skype, Messenger and Google. Moreover, these applications enable them to connect with friends, other students, teachers and even native speakers. Finally, one cannot imagine the English teaching and learning processes without the technological materials. This is due to its importance and usefulness in the development of the learners’ proficiency.

4. Strategies Used in Teaching Writing

Writing as an act of creation requires the teachers’ guidance who help their students to get their thoughts down on papers.. In order to make students write correctly, appropriately and effectively, the teacher should follow a set of strategies, such as: dictation, self-writing, the use of pictures and intensive or controlled activities.

4.1. Dictation

Brown (2001) argues that the teacher dictates a short passage with a specific topic once or twice and from time to time he makes pauses. During these pauses students are

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required to write what they heard. After that, the teacher re-read the passage for the last time while students check their writing then he corrects their mistakes.

4.2. Self-Writing

The teacher asks his students to write diaries or keep journals about their thoughts and feelings. After that, he reads them and corrects their mistakes. This technique helps students to develop free flow of their ideas and their selfassessment. (Brown 2001)

4.3. The Use of Pictures

The instructor shows his students' one picture or more that contains many characters. They have to brainstorm the general idea, imagine the situation, then, and write either a paragraph or a conversation. The teacher can also show his students a picture includes various words with unusual spelling then, gives them few minutes to concentrate on it. After that, he hides it and asks his students to write in a sheet of paper the words that they memorize (Celce-Murcia 2001). This technique contributes to develop students' vocabulary.

4.4. Intensive or Controlled Activities

Intensive activities based on the grammar control in which the teacher requests his students to copy a certain written text and change some aspects of it. For example, they replace repeated subjects with pronouns, changing verb tenses as well as nouns from singular to plural. The aim of this kind of exercises is to develop student's grammar knowledge (Brown 2001).

With the use of several strategies in teaching writing in EFL classrooms, students will be able to create and use all their four language skills together in learning grammar, vocabulary or communication skills.

5. The Methodology Used in Teaching the Writing Process

The writing module plays a prominent role in EFL learning in which it accompanies students from beginning to advanced levels. Through teaching the writing

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process, students will be able to express themselves fluently, easily and correctly. Moreover, teachers have help students develop their writing process and they should act as facilitators “... *who develop strategies for generating ideas, revising editing* “(Tsui, cited in freeman and Richards 1996:98).

Therefore, the writing process in EFL classrooms based initially on four writing stages: pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing.

In the pre-writing stage, Richards and Renandya (2002) state that the instructor has to engage students in group work activities providing pictures or multi-media sources such as videos and films that help them to pick up the topic, brainstorm ideas and discuss them. Additionally, he has to give them exercises which contain familiar words randomly. Then, he asks them to organize these words in correct ways in order to enrich their vocabulary and to be able to use it in their independent writing.

During the drafting phase, the teacher should guide his students to organize their ideas in order to write paragraphs. In addition, he must learn them models of writing genres (narrative, descriptive, argumentative and expository) and asks his learner's to imitate them using their own styles. Moreover, teachers' remarks are important since they help students to discover their mistakes and correct them. This would facilitate the next step i.e., revision. (Richards and Renandya2002)

In the revising step, Richards and Renandya (2002) state that in the revising step, the teacher makes his students work in pairs or in groups, read aloud each other pieces which enable them to discover their mistakes then change vague sentences with meaningful ones, check the main elements (introduction, body, conclusion) and the order of paragraphs

During editing stage, the instructor has to put emphasis on proof reading to find out errors, such as: capitalization, punctuation, spelling, grammar and vocabulary. Besides, the teacher can select a model from his students' written pieces, write it on the blackboard, then underline and discuss the mistakes using the editing symbols, for

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instance: sp which means „spelling error“, that means the use of capital letter, which means insert (letter, word, phrase or punctuation) (Richard and Renandya 2002).

Through teaching the writing process students will be able to expand their knowledge and improve their writing process.

6. The Role of the Teacher in the Productive Skills

Teaching is a difficult task, it means showing students how to learn, how to meet their needs. According to the Cambridge International Dictionary of English, “teaching” means *“to give (someone) knowledge or to instruct or train (someone)”*. Whereas the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English suggests that it means to “show somebody how to do something” or “change somebody’s ideas”. Thus, the teacher is required to have linguistic, pedagogical and cultural competences. Moreover, he has to be great leadership in his classrooms and create positive atmosphere besides showing enthusiasm for teaching.

The Teacher plays a prominent role in his EFL classrooms with the aim of facilitating the students’ progress and development in learning the language skills such as: resource, organizer, controller, participant, and corrector.

6.1. Resource

When students are working in pairs or in groups and they do not find the exact words to express themselves, they ask their teachers for help. Hedge Tricia (2000:26) identifies the role of the teacher: *“..... as promoter while students are working together and as resource if students need help with words and structures during the pairwork”*. So the role of the teacher here is to guide, encourage and promote students with the needed information.

6.2. Organizer

Teacher has to perform as organizer by guiding students how to do activities, dividing them into pairs or groups and limiting time exercises (Harmer 2001). Thus,

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teacher's organization of his classroom as well as explaining the purpose behind doing activities get students involved, engaged, ready to participate.

6.3. Controller

Harmer (2001) states that the teacher can act as controller by showing his students that they have good mastery of the language with well pronunciation and expanding lexical and grammatical knowledge. Additionally, he should transmit his knowledge to their students using different kinds of activities such as drills and reading aloud.

6.4. Participant

Harmer (2007) points out that the teacher has to act as a participant not just as a teacher and he takes part in classroom discussions. The teacher's participation makes debates more enjoyable and interesting.

6.5. Corrector

Teachers have to correct students' mistakes when producing the language taking into consideration the suitable way to do it. Emphasis should be put also on showing well pronunciation and correcting mis-pronounced words because most of the time students adapt it from their teachers. Hedge Tricia (2000:26) identifies the role of the teacher "*.....as corrector of pronunciation.....*". On the other hand, the grammatical errors and the mis-use of lexical items have to be corrected. What seems to be clear is that, the teacher need to be aware of his roles and responsibilities in front of his students in order to facilitate the foreign language learning and achieve a high quality education.

7. Conclusion

This chapter summarizes some proposed strategies that can be used in teaching the productive skills. It aims to overcome students' difficulties in order to be able to express themselves and communicate with foreigners freely and easily either in speaking or in writing. Furthermore, since the teacher is considered as a center of the teaching and learning processes, some recommended roles have been suggested. This

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results in positive attitudes from students towards their teachers and helps them to overstep not only the linguistic problems but also the psychological obstacles.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

GENERAL CONCLUSION

The purpose of the current study was to shed the light on the linguistic and the psychological reasons behind second-year EFL learners' weaknesses and difficulties in producing the English language at the Department of English in AinTernouchent University. This leads to ask the following research questions:

- What are the linguistic factors which cause students difficulties?
- What are the psychological variables that influence the students' writing skill ?
- What can be done to improve the situation?

Two hypotheses were deduced from these two questions:

- Second year EFL students may face many problems in the productive skills probably because of linguistic factors like: lack of vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, spelling, coherence and cohesion.
- Self-confidence, motivation, anxiety and self-esteem may affect students' speaking skill.

Therefore, this research was divided into three chapters. The first one was a theoretical view which tried to define key concepts related to language in general and the productive skills: speaking / writing. Then, it highlighted their importance in EFL learning. After that, it discussed the students' difficulties in learning these skills. The second one described ELT situation in Algeria and the teaching of writing and speaking at the English Department. Then, it dealt with the quantitative and qualitative analyses of the collected data through the use of multiple instruments including: a questionnaire that was designed for students and an interview which was addressed for their teacher.

The main results obtained from the research tools confirmed the both hypotheses. Firstly, the participants agreed that there were linguistic factors including: lack of vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, spelling, punctuation, coherence and cohesion

GENERAL CONCLUSION

behind learners' difficulties in producing the language. These were the results of: lack of reading, lack of practice, students' huge number in addition to the insufficient time allotted for each module (speaking and writing).

Secondly, the data gathered from the research instruments showed that self-confidence, motivation, and anxiety and self-esteem influence students' oral performance. This may be due to the lack of teachers' support and encouragement, learners' fear of making mistakes and losing faces when speaking with their friends.

Based on the main findings, the teacher needs to use some pedagogical strategies to make learners more successful and creative and to be able to build positive attitudes towards learning. Additionally, EFL instructor requires creating a supportive atmosphere to encourage students to participate using up-dated materials these suggestions were presented in chapter three.

Thus, the present work attempts to give a vivid picture about teaching and learning speaking / writing and to elucidate the reasons of EFL second year students' problems in these skills.

Regarding the topic of the current study, there are some issues in the foreign language teaching which need to be investigated: the use of the technological materials in teaching the productive skills, effective productive skills teachers, the positive and the negative effects of self-confidence on learners' performance.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

English as a foreign language requires a combination of techniques to promote learning, especially the ability to write. The present study aimed to investigate writing techniques to improve learners' writing skills. Research includes theory and practice; it consists of analyzing data from two questionnaires, followed by results. Two questionnaires were distributed in this regard.

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