

People's Democratic Republic of Algeria
Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
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Developing Students' Writing Skill in EFL Classrooms

**The Case of First Year LMD Students at Belhadj Bouchaib University of
Ain Temouchent**

**An Extended Essay Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for a Master's Degree in
Linguistics**

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Academic Year: 2019/2020

Dedications

- To my grand family 'MARIF' and especially to my parents for their support. May God bless them.
- To my brother 'Hamidou' thanks for his care and support.
- To my colleagues: Sarah, Samah, Meriem and Slimane Aissaoui
- Sincere thanks go to my best friends: Nassereddine, Ismail, ElMandi and Omar Marif for their encouragements and energetic motivation.

Acknowledgements

It is with great pleasure to thank all those helped me in this work.

First of all, I would like to thank my supervisor Mr. Benguerfi Boubkeur for his help and patience to complete this extended essay.

I would like also to thank all my teachers of the English department for their guides and comments towards the preparation of the essay.

And finally special thanks go to all people who helped me to complete the work.

Abstract

This extended essay is completely directed to an investigative study of very important skill in language learning ‘writing’, which is generally regarded as a complex skill, since the majority of teachers showed their agreements on the difficulty of this skill for both levels teaching and learning. Besides, the researcher’s aim is to search for the best way to improve the writing skill at the level of first year students by identifying facts and reasons behind the weakness of the skill, regarding to the importance that writing involves in both teaching and learning. Therefore, and after the obtaining results through this study, alternative solutions have been suggested by the researcher aiming to discover such issues that interrupt writing development procedure.

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

- **AF** Absolute Frequency
- **EFL** English as a Foreign Language
- **ELT** English Language Teaching
- **LMD** License Master Doctorate
- **RF** Reference Frequency

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- **Appendix A** First Year Students' Questionnaire
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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

General Introduction

Learning English as a foreign language stands on the wide importance of both academic and professional domains. Yet, one of the basic language skills after listening, speaking, and reading, it is 'writing' which takes place and considered as one of the most essential skill in conducting language learning/ teaching.

Relying on the phase of this study, writing is chosen for the reason that several formal academic assessments are generally presented in this skill. Thus, this research highlights on a case study for first year LMD students at English department, aiming to achieve more understanding on the real situation of the skill level, and why is writing particularly witness low achievement in EFL learning.

Hence, the reason behind choosing 'writing' to be examined in this work, mainly rely on the fact that it is considered as the appropriate wide used tool to evaluate students such as 'exams and tests' and a medium to measure their improvement within multi procedures. That is why writing should be conducted and controlled carefully.

Thus, the current situation shared plenty difficulties among learners, as many students yet cannot express themselves effectively. That is why the research aims to discuss these issues:

- What types of difficulties that students often face?
- How do students react on the skill of writing?
- Is the writing skill adequately taught at the level of first year?
- And how can students be motivated to write?

Regarding to the real causes of the great failure in the writing skill at first year students, it is necessary to bring down some arguments to enrich hypotheses of the research,

that is to say, writing is usually taken as a reflective way that teachers used to test and assess individuals. Secondly the reason that first year students are unable to write fluently. Thirdly, the skill is still inadequately taught. Finally, to what extent the mutual contribution ‘teachers and students’ ensure the learning successfully.

All these issues will be respectively discussed in this study throughout three main chapters, standing on the objective to find out difficulties of the skill and so that trying to improve the writing level with better skillful writers. Each chapter concerns particular level.

Chapter one will be as a theoretical part that involves discussing on the general concepts such as defining terms, description of the context, and indicating the role and the purpose of writing. That will basically introduce the reader to better understanding. The chapter also includes speaking on the difficulties of the skill level which will take the big part in this study relying on learning the writing with reference to first year students.

Chapter two will be a practical part in which the findings will conduct this research throughout its analytical instruments those standing on two questionnaires the first questionnaire is addressed to first year LMD students so that to see how the skills’ improvement is monitored beyond students’ attitudes. The second questionnaire is addressed to the teachers to shed light on the real situation of writing and teaching writing particularly with reference to the kind of assessing.

Thus, this chapter will analyze the data gathered from students’ questionnaire with the aim to describe the reported findings while teachers’ questionnaire will be a kind of testing and assessing students’ competency.

Therefore, the aim of the researcher is to derive facts that illustrate the weakness in the writing skill following the study that requires the contribution of the two partners in order to achieve successful results in conducting learning and teaching procedures.

Furthermore, the collected data will be analyzed quantitatively by the researcher with the interpretation of such results in each part. These may help the researcher to draw the conclusion through a conductive pole.

Chapter three will be kind of interpretation which may justify the weakness of the skill level in addition to the provided suggestions that will best guide the satisfaction solutions relying on high awareness of both teachers and students.

Chapter One

CHAPTER ONE

LITERATURE REVIEW

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1.1.Introduction

Broadly speaking, learning a language stands on four main skills: Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. Writing takes part among these skills and it is essential for foreign language learning in both academic success as well as other domains. Throughout, many changes happening in the world, and fast communication where several social communicative instruments have taken part and becoming the most rapid means in communication like e-mail, an effective written text, article, message is of great importance, especially in the process of teaching and learning, where writing is used by learners and often be the kind of evaluation, either in exams and texts or for further studies. The reason that it is necessary to know how could the writing taught effectively.

Moreover, in this chapter the researcher aimed to shed light on the description of the current setting, by introducing concepts which illustrate different elements such as: definition of writing, showing its role, mentioning the purpose of writing in addition to its difficulties...etc.

1.2.Definition of writing

By taking a look for writing definition, its meaning in the oxford advanced learner's dictionary (1996) "is the activity of writing or the skill of linear sequences of graphemes in time". Writing is considered as the fourth and last communicative skill after listening, speaking and reading. Huebner says in this vein "the language skills should be presented in the following order: listening-speaking-reading and then writing" (Huebner in Milliani 1992.5).

Learner think about real facts and try to classify these facts throughout his/her needs then think about the relevant facts to be selected for his/her purpose. Byrne puts it in this way:

“Writing requires some conscious mental efforts: we think out sentences and consider various ways of combining and arranging them. We reread what we have written as a stimulus to further writing... the reason for this is that we are writing for a reader”

(Byrne 1988, p.1)

Byrne mentions that writing is such thinking process, where several things of mental procedures come to be counted and take place. Writing allows learners to analyze facts and provide the knowledge by expressing the ideas. Thus, writing effectively puts learners or writer in an organized structure instruments.

Writing is also a process that includes classifying ideas after being discovered in order to carry a message to the reader; it puts thought on paper that helps reading.

Harris also explains it as:

“it is almost as if the act of writing makes thought visible and tangible, this is in turn provides the opportunity for revising and refinement because the thought are there on the page to be worked on”

(Harris 1993:12)

At the end, this skill usually makes some issues the reason that it is necessary to be aware and take attention to the improvement of writing beyond learners.

1.3. Difficulties of writing

Most learners/users agree that writing is a difficult skill and writing fluently is not easy, the reason that transferring thoughts stands on Physical as well as mental efforts produced by writer or learner.

Difficulties in writing are divided into categories As Byrne (1988) explains the first one, is the lack of interaction and feedback between writer and reader. Rivers 1968 puts it this way:

“When we communicate a message orally we know who is receiving the message. We know the situation including the mood and tone it requires of us. We receive feedback from the interlocutors or audience.....which makes clear that the message is being received and if it is comprehended. With spoken messages many things are visible....which cannot be taken for granted in writing”.

(Belaid,2014:37)

The second issue is about linguistic problem “speech/ writing”. Here Byrne states that in writing, writers must express themselves clearly in order to justify the absence of certain features of the spoken language, like body language and immediate feedback between the interlocutors.

More than this, the writer must involve many things at the same time; grammar- syntax- word choice- mechanics- purposes- audience and writing process.

The third problem is about cognitive, since writing has to be taught through formal instruction. As Tribble (1996:11) says:“writing normally requires some forms of instruction. It is not a skill that is readily picked up by exposure”.

Moreover, writing is a difficult skill, where several variables have to be controlled by learners/writers. Raimes (1983) puts these variables into nine categories as mentioned before. The following figure illustrates the writing features which make issues for learners of foreign language as well as for native speakers.

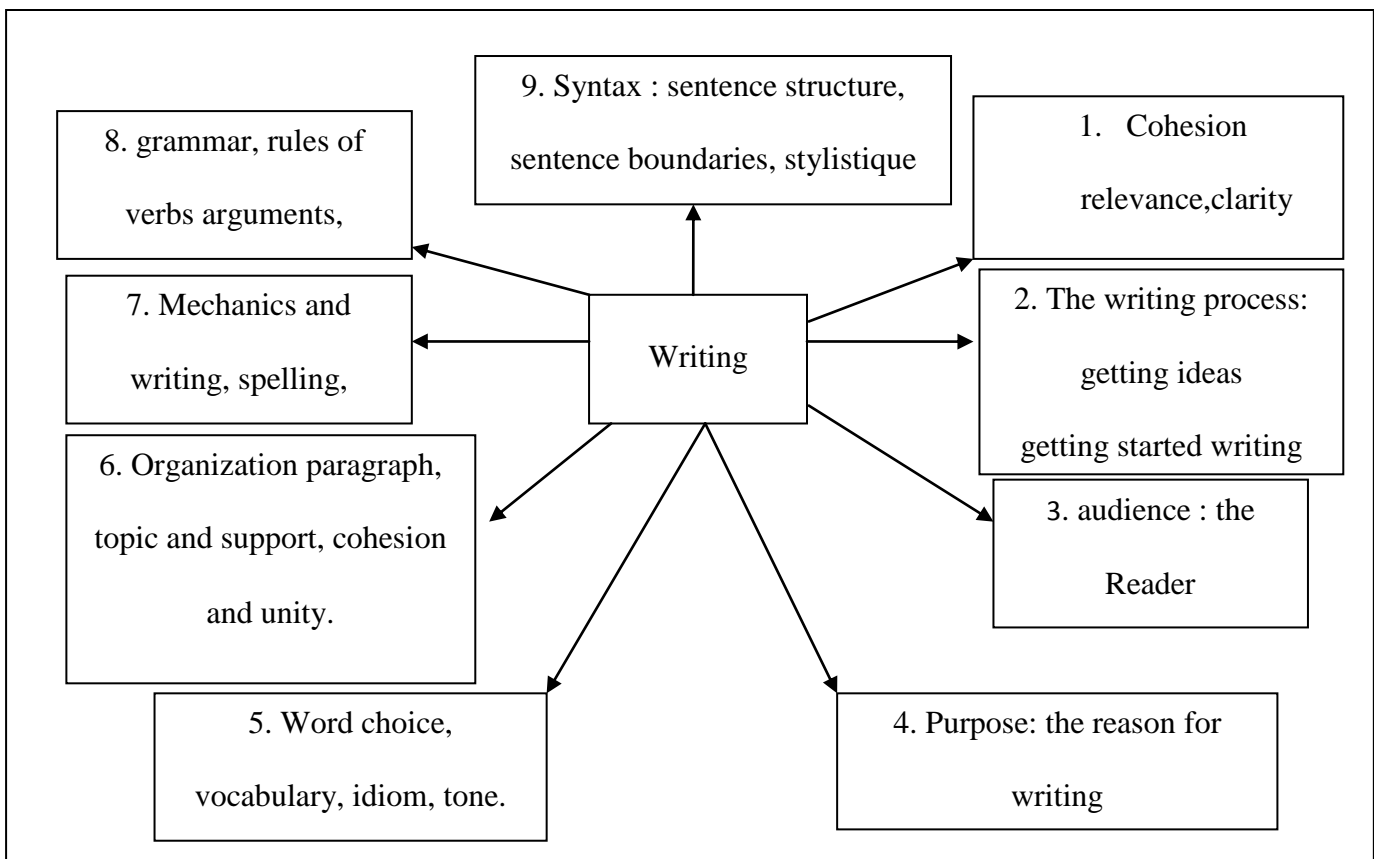


Figure 1.1. Producing a piece of writing from (Raimes, 1993:6)

1.4. Role of writing

Language is used to communicate facts, thoughts, feelings, requests...etc. Thus, communication does not include only speech, writing takes part too. Hence, writing is very important and participates in many domains, Tribble (1996) indicates to this importance as follow:

“To be deprived of the opportunity to learn how to write..., is to be excluded from a wide range of social roles, including those which the majority of people in industrialized societies associate with power and prestige.”

(Tribble. 1996:12)

Furthermore, Luo introduces it as: “some of you wish to be writers...while other, wish to be teachers, no matter what carrier you choose, the ability to write is necessite in life” (Luo, 1989:26).

Since communication across language becomes very important, the ability to write effectively in English is becoming essential in our community. Competency in good writing then, is considered as a necessary skill for education, business and other domains.

1.5. Purpose of writing

Generally speaking, writing is used for many purposes such as; expressing thoughts and feelings, narrating stories and reporting facts and events. In addition, writing is also used to guess whether usual lectures and exams takes place or not. As well as, it provides learners with an occasion to learn, and thus develop their thinking.

Moreover, writing as a skill in language teaching is essential where students can evaluate their own achievement, considering it as a communicative instrument for learning, so that; why it is essential to learn writing? And what are the real purposes of writing?

1.5.1. Writing for learning

Any lecture in language teaching needs writing, and putting it as a skill in its own side, the reason that it involves both developing the language and reinforcement in learning. Rivers (1968) shows that:” writing plays the role of consolidation learning in other skills and is of paramount usefulness in testing” (Rivers, 1968:293).

Yet, an instruction takes place which is “leaning to write or writing to learn”, since writing is almost used to summarize books, texts...and even found in most students’ answers like exams and tests. Moreover, using writing activities provides students with

expanding their knowledge of vocabulary, practicing grammar, spelling punctuation and evaluating processes.

Kern and Harmer point in this context several reasons that writing serve to:

- Allow learners create and modify meaning through manipulation of forms.
- Reinforce language use and enhance understanding and memory, mainly when writing assignment is given shortly after a vocabulary or grammar lesson.
- Develop learners' ability to think explicitly how to express thought and organize ideas in accordance with the readers' expectations.
- Enhance learning strategies through individual pair or group work.
- Develop learning experience as learners go through mental activities in order to write.
- Make learner think as they write develop their language and resolve problems which writing poses and so learners learn better.

(Belaid,2014:44)

The information stated above lead to say that, learning to write and writing to learn are interrelated, in which each one complete the other.

1.5.2. Writing for communicating

In addition to write a composition for an exam or homework “writing for learning”, people can also write letters; “formal or informal”, e-mail messages or personal diaries, there where communicative activity takes place.

Raime (1985:83) says that:” writing should be primarily a means of communication”.

Harmer notes it like this:

“When teaching productive skill the focus should be on communication and so activities with no communicative ends are not of productive skill category”

(Harmer,2001.p3)

Thus, writing skill activity is not only practicing grammar and how sentences are combined, but rather standing on the mutual messages for certain purpose aiming to convey information to the audience.

1.6. Writing as process and writing as product

Improving the linguistic competency through syntax, semantic and phonology is not sufficient to ensure that students are capable to write correct essays in the target language, but also finding rules in order to guide and conduct the development of the writing. Yet several teachers still searching and asking whether product or process writing is the effective way to teach this sensitive skill fluently and clearly.

1.6.1 Writing as process

Effective writing needs to develop the written form of the language and learn some structures, because writing is not only producing and putting down sentences but rather relating them within an organized form to be well understood by the reader.

Raimes puts in this sense:

“Writing means a connected text and not just single sentences that writers write for a purpose, and that the purpose of writing is valuable learning”

(Raimes, 1983:11)

Writing also stands on several stages that the writer follows in order to put down a final written text. That is to say, the preparation period spent by the writer and the purpose he/she is conducting to achieve his/her aim.

In this sense, Hedge (1988) puts it as follow:

“Before putting pen to paper, the skilled writer in real life, considers two important questions; what is the purpose of this piece of writing? And who am I writing for?”

(Belaid, 2014.56)

Hence, during writing, competent writers have to think about three main issues that writing process stands on. The first one, the purpose of their writing -Why you are writing-, considering the kind of text they will produce as well as the language to be used.

The second one, the nature audience (readers) you are writing; it is important to consider the form of writing and the choice of language, either formal or informal.

Markel(1988) states: “knowing the audience is a good idea because it forces the writer to be specific as possible”.

Moreover, an appropriate style within a coherent way is essential for making complete sense to the readers.

Hamp-Lyons and Heasley (1987) divide the cooperative principles into the following criteria:

- Clarity: where the writer has to make everything clear to the reader, but not to give more information than necessary.
- Reality: the writer has to assume that his reader knows how the world works and does not need to know everything, but to be sure to tell them only the things felt they are unknown to them.
- Relevance: the writer keeps to his topic and his purpose of the writing and the last one is honesty, where the writer has to state only what he can provide evidence.

(Hamp, Lyons and Heasley, 1987. 1992 :105)

The third one is the content, where the writer should structured his piece of writing by an organized facts and arguments which are relevant to be included.

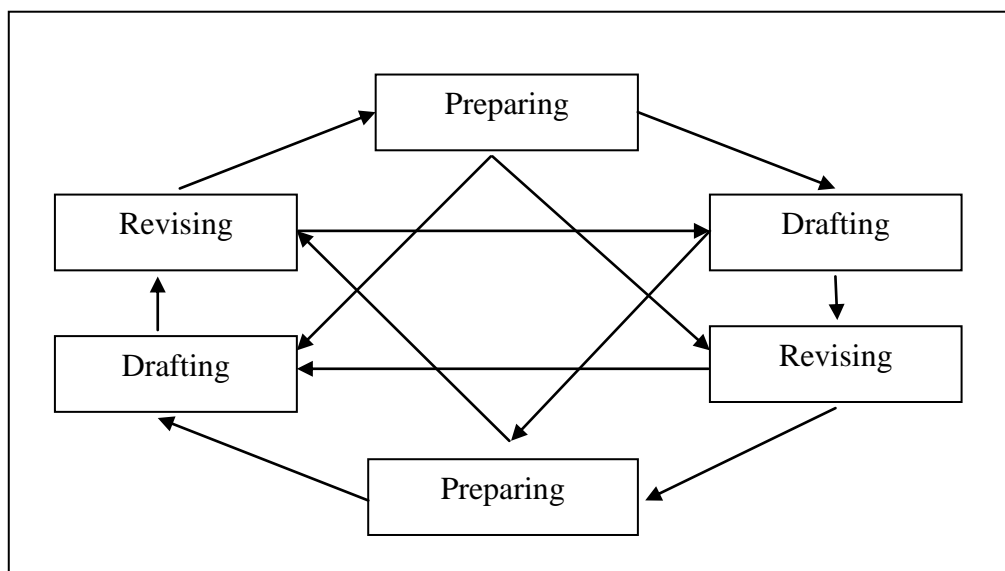


Figure 1.2. The whole process of writing (Brown & Hood, 1989.6)

1.6.2. Writing as product

The use of classroom activities is considered as the main product conducting the improvement of writing in language teaching, where learners are in the state of producing

with the contribution of imitating, copying and transforming methods of a correct language. For instance, in order to get a paragraph, learner should collect sentences from different sorts, which basically need grammar knowledge, as:

“The grammar is the means through which linguistic creativity is ultimately achieved and an inadequate knowledge of grammar would lead to serious limitation on the capacity of communication”

(Wilkins, 1976.66)

Thus, in teaching writing, learners have to bring down ideas to write. Which can clearly seen in the form of grammatical structured sentences. in addition, the product of writing for example to write essays or letters, such number of processes are present like taking notes, collecting ideas, drafting, outlining and revising. So, learning to write is respectively taken in consideration: leaning the basic sentences patterns, learning to master them, and then developing coherent paragraph.

1.7. Conclusion

At the end, after this review one can reach to agree that writing is a difficult and a complex productive skill, which stands on particular devices and skills in order to produce a well written piece. Writing effectively then, takes learners to be carefully taught, simply the reason that it has a great importance for their learning. It is also necessary to indicate that during teaching students' practices, writing may help both teachers and learners to be more precised should be taught through keeping a balance between fluency and accuracy. And evaluation is mainly an instrument that helps learners to edit, revise and redraft their writing.

Note to Chapter One

• **Foreign Language:** a language which is not the native language of large number of people in a particular country or region, it is not used as a medium of instruction in schools, and it is not widely used as a medium of communication in government, media, etc. foreign languages are typically taught as school subjects for the purpose of communicating with foreigners or for reading printed materials in the language

• **Language Skills also Skills in Language Teaching:** the manner or mode in which language is used “listening- speaking- reading and writing” are generally called the four language skills. Sometimes speaking and writing are called the active/productive skills and reading and listening, the passive/ receptive skills. Often, the skills are divided into sub skills, such as discriminating sounds in connected speech, or understanding relations within a sentence.

• **Coherence and Cohesion** are closely linked together they help to achieve linguistic and semantic unity of their written work. Coherence refers to the same unity that should exist between sentences of the same paragraph. It is usually described in terms of connectedness between sentences. Cohesion completes the unity of the text through the use of rhetorical devices.

CHAPTER TWO

Chapter two**- RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DATA ANALYSIS -**

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2.1. Introduction

This chapter aims to arrive at more descriptions of the real situation of EFL teaching/learning with reference to the writing skill. It focuses on the methodology of this research, and it describes the sample population; the instruments used to gather data. It involves the contribution of two partners in the teaching/ learning process “teachers and students”. Hence, this chapter aims to investigate real facts about the writing skill i.e. the teaching of writing in first year LMD students’ level and the students’ apprehension to this skill.

2.2. The setting; descriptions and research aims

Belhadj Bouchaib University –Ain Temouchent, recently undergone the name of the university, as it was known as “university centre” before. The department of English has been established in 2012. It includes two levels of graduations.

The first level refers to licence, it consists of 424 students divided as:

- First year grade contains 196 students divided into five groups, students deal with eleven subject matters.
- Second year grade contains 122 students divided into three groups with ten subject matters.
- Third year grade contains 106 students divided into three groups deal with eleven subjects.

The second level reflects to master level which includes two crucial streams:

Master 1

. Linguistics : involves 198 students divided into two groups provided with nine subject matters

.Literature: this stream embraces only 17 students making one group .

Master 2

. Linguistics : contains 58 students making one group, they deal with nine modules

. Literature : this stream is composed of 17students of one group dealing with nine subject matters.

The department of English holds about 22 teachers. This research highlights on 30 students among 196 students of first year in the department of English at Belhadj Bouchaib University. These students were selected randomly. Students of first year study eleven subject matters, writing takes place among these subjects and it is necessary for students to develop their writing skill capacities.

The objective behind this study is to test students' attitudes towards improving their writing skill.

The results of this research may show reactions and challenges of students and determine whether they can achieve an effective tool that encourages EFL students to write effectively following their classroom lectures as well as the efforts and tasks outside classes.

2.3. Informants' profile

This investigative study requires two partners those contribute in the teaching/learning process: First year LMD students and EFL teachers in Belhadj Bouchaib University. This research work highlights on first year students in order to derive effective Data about the attitudes of students, and how can they improve their writing skill.

Hence, 30 students of first year are chosen as a sample to this work. Before this; one needs to define the word “sample”, according to Frey et al. (2000p.125) sample is “ a subgroup of a population” i.e. a small group is chosen from the whole population. According to Lohr (1999), the sample exemplifies and illustrates truly the characteristics of the elements of a complete target population. the sample generally helps the researcher to test and evaluate such single participant through a small group. Thus, the sample in the research is selected randomly, i.e, 30 students from first year in the department of English at Belhadj Bouchaib University. In addition to 9 teachers from 22 teachers. The sample of this research is taken during the academic year 2019/2020.

2.3.1. First years LMD students’ profile

This study is concerned with first year LMD students. The main aim behind choosing this population is to know the real situation of the writing skill i.e, how do students feel about writing? What they need? And how can they manipulate their attitudes in order to develop this essential and sensitive skill.

2.3.2. Teachers’ profile

The department of English at Belhadj Bouchaib University consists of 22 teachers and the sample of this study is directed to 9 teachers, most of them are either teachers of writing or used to teach this module before. Teachers are chosen the reason that they take an important part, they can help or provide the necessary at least since according to their experience in lecturing, they can see within a direct or indirect view how their students react, what are the difficulties that interrupt them, and the most important thing is that they can assess students’ level.

2.4. Research instruments

The analytical tool of this phase will be monitored through two questionnaires, one for students as they take the big part for this research i.e. “attitudes of students towards improving their writing skill, and the second one is directed to teachers as they play an important complementary part for teaching/learning process.

The questionnaire is chosen for this study as an instrument, the reason that it brings the analyses of a large number of informants within short period of time in a very effective way. The questionnaire also involves a combination of questions which make the analyses easier and help the researcher to draw his conclusion.

Brown (2001) introduces questionnaire this way:

“Questionnaires are any written instruments that present respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they are to react either by writing out their answers or selecting from among existing answers”

(Brown, 2001.6)

Thus honest and real data can be gathered by the researcher using questionnaire. In this study, a questionnaire of 12 questions have been addressed to first year EFL students in order to gather students’ perspectives and views about their real level in the writing skill and their attitudes to improve this skill.

Both questionnaires include two types of questions, close ended and open ended questions. The participant has to choose which best fit her/his view, and he/she is free to express his/ her idea.

The questionnaire of tcurrent study was submitted to first year students in camp D on Wednesday March 8th, 2020; most students spent about 15 to 20 minutes to complete it.

2.5. Data Methods of the Research

Any research study needs method which mainly helps the researcher to explain and describe the process to be followed in order to test and analyze the gathered data.

In this research, the methods of analyses are measured quantitatively for both students and teachers' questionnaires.

2.5.1. Quantitative research method

Quantitative research as Adi Bhat in question pro.com puts:

“Systematic investigation of phenomena by gathering quantifiable data and performing statistical, mathematical or computational techniques” (www.questionpro.com)

That is to say, quantitative method stands on numbers and the results are counted within a form of statistics using graphs.

This method is used to measure data gathered from students' and teachers' questionnaires, and it helps the researcher to draw a conclusion for his/her topic.

2.5.2. Qualitative method

Qualitative research method is not like quantitative method which stands on a non descriptive method, but rather descriptive ones. Shank (2002. P,5) says: qualitative method is : “ a form of systematic empirical inquiry into meaning” the aim behind this is to provide results through the use of utterances rather than statistics' number.

2.6. Students' Questionnaire

In this study, the respondents' chosen to be tested are thirty (30) students of first year in the department of English at Belhadj Bouchaib University, twenty three (23) female and seven (7) male.

The questionnaire was given to students during lecture i.e. 'in classroom'. It consists of 13 questions. This students' questionnaire aimed to know information and explanation about real situation of the writing skill. It means how students react and felt towards the writing task.

2.7. Students' Questionnaire Analysis

Students' questionnaire includes 13 questions, and each question was analyzed individually.

- **Question one:** this question is concerned with the gender of the sample, i.e. students' gender "male/female"

GENDER	A.F	R.F
Female	23	77%
Male	07	23%
Total number	30	100%

Table2.1. Gender

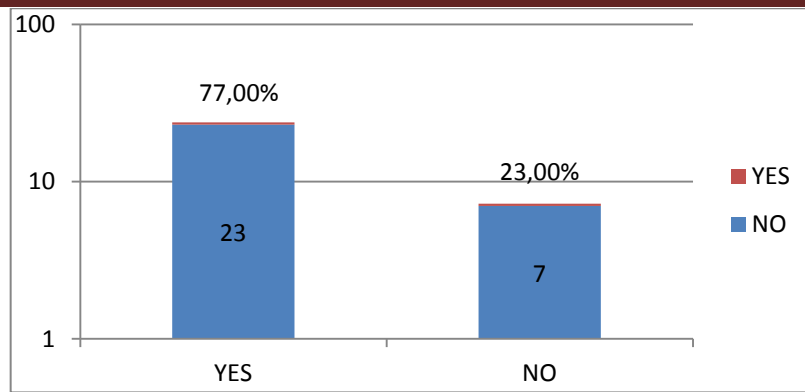


Figure 2.2. Gender

This question showed that the sample contains twenty three female which made 77% and seven male, made 23 %.

• **Question two:** Do you like English ?

Enjoyment of English language	A.F	R.F
Yes	30	100%
No	0	0%
Total number	30	100%

Table2.2. Students' enjoyments of English

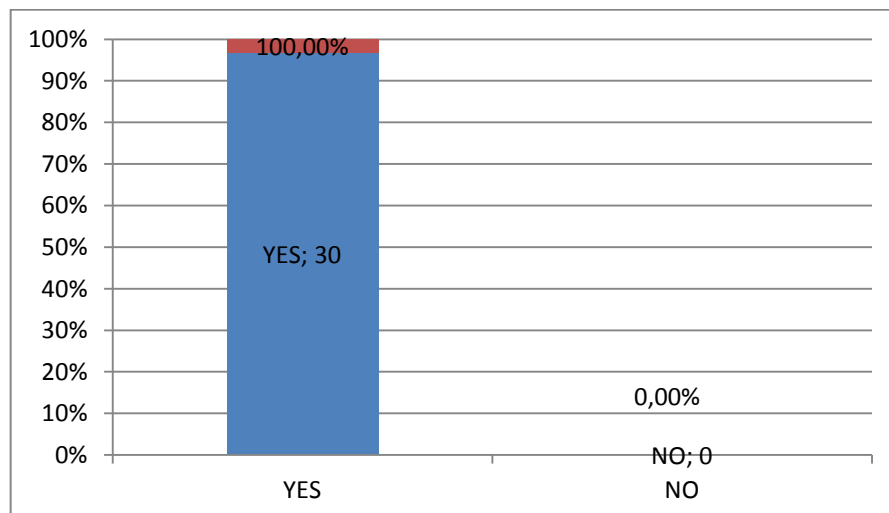


Figure2.3. Students' Enjoyments of English

In this question, all students 100% said that they like English language.

- **Question three:** How long have you been studying English ?

Years	A.F	R.F
8 years	22	73%
9 years	8	27%

Table 2.3. Years spent in studying English

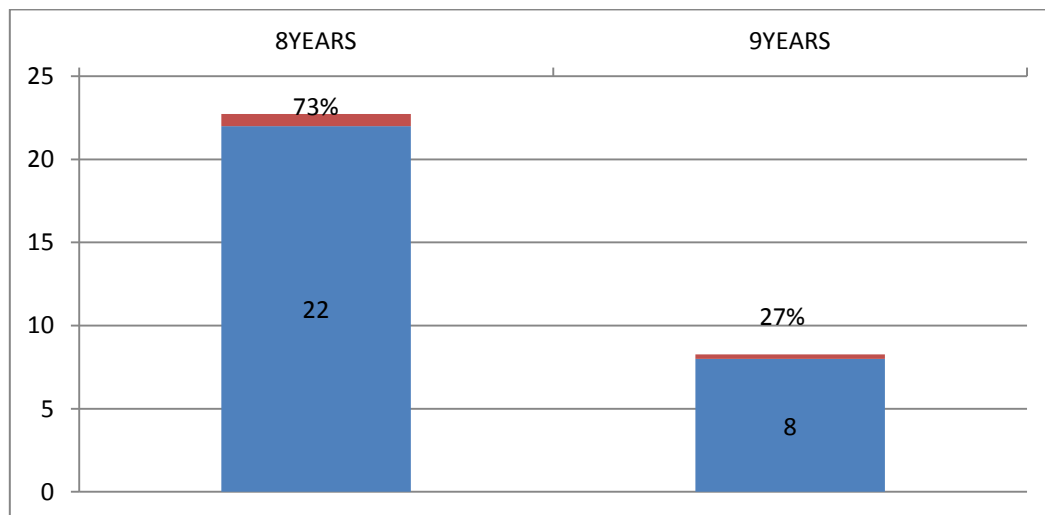


Figure 2.3. Years spent in studying English

From the previous graph, we noticed that the majority of students were of eight years of experience in studying English i.e. twenty two students 73% since they has taken English 3 years in secondary school and four years in middle school. Whereas, eight students 27% are of nine years experience, the reason that they have repeated a year.

- **Question four:** Do you enjoy English ?

Enjoyments in studying English	A.F	R.F
Yes	30	100%
No	0	0%
Total number	30	100%

Table 2.4. Students' enjoyments in studying English

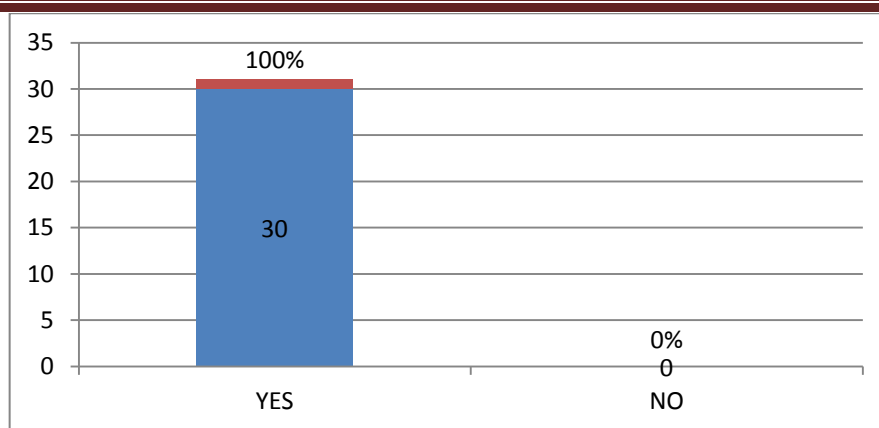


Figure 2.4. Students' Enjoyments in Studying English

This question, showed a great interest of students towards English language, since all students 100% said that they like studying English even those who had a weak level at English. They also mentioned a positive attitude, expressing that English is very important language and it is the first language over the world which is essential in many domains.

- **Question five:** Is English important for your success?

Students' interests towards English	A.F	R.F
Yes	28	93%
No	02	7%
Total number	30	100%

Table 2.5. Students' Interests towards English

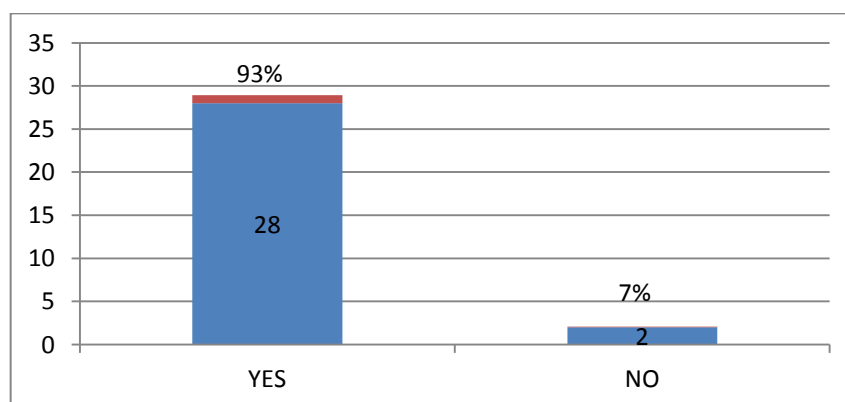


Figure 2.5. Students interests towards English

In this question, most students 28 confirmed that English is important for their future studies i.e. academic or professional domain. While only 2 students mentioned that they are not aware about it, the reason for unemployment after finishing studying.

- **Question six:** In which skill do you face more difficulties?

Skills	A.F	R.F
Writing	17	57%
Speaking	10	33%
Listening	3	10%
Reading	0	00%
Total	30	100%

Table2.6. Students' skill level of difficulty

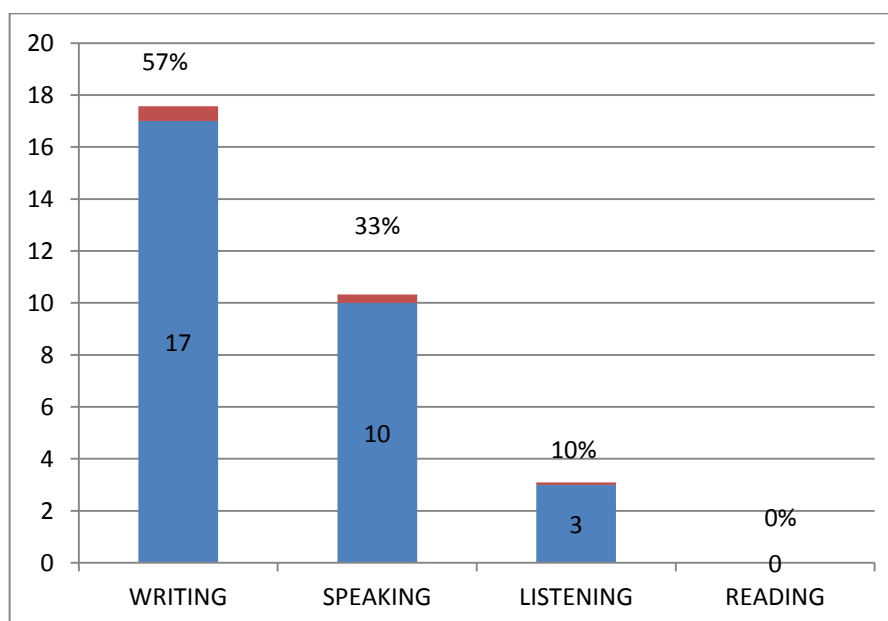


Figure 2.6. Students skill level of difficulty

This question showed the skill that made more difficulties for students of first year. Most students said, it is writing which formed 57% that interrupt them, speaking with 33%, listening 10%; then reading with 00%.

- **Question seven:** Do you enjoy the writing lectures ?

Students' Enjoyments of the writing lectures	A.F	R.F
Yes	23	77%
No	7	23%
Total number	30	100%

Table2.7. Students' enjoyments of the writing lectures

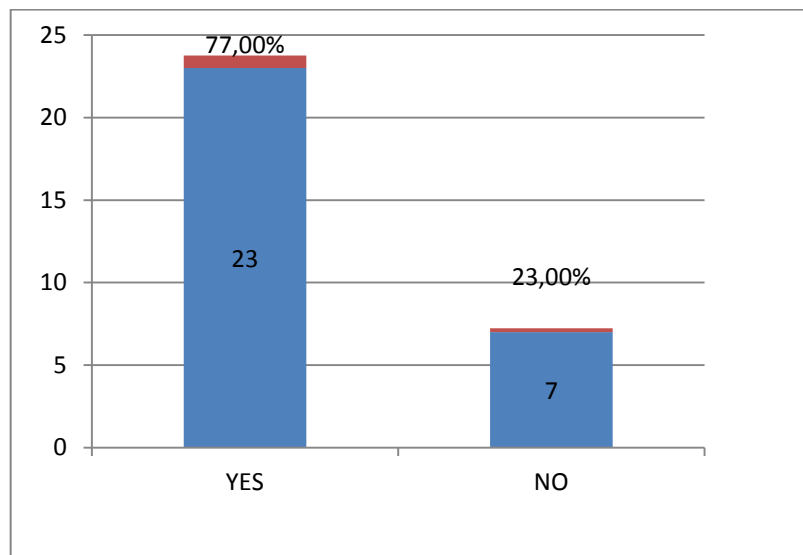


Figure 2.7. Students' enjoyments of the writing lectures

This question aimed to know students' enjoyments of the writing lectures. The results showed twenty three students 77% said that they enjoy the writing lecture, as they earn new ideas and expand their knowledge. And seven students 23% said that they do not like the writing lectures because they are afraid of making mistakes. Other students prefer oral lectures.

- **Question eight:** Is the writing skill sufficiently taught at your level?

Students' view about the teaching of writing	A.F	R.F
Yes	19	63%
No	11	37%
Total number	30	100%

Table 2.8. Students' views towards the teaching of writing

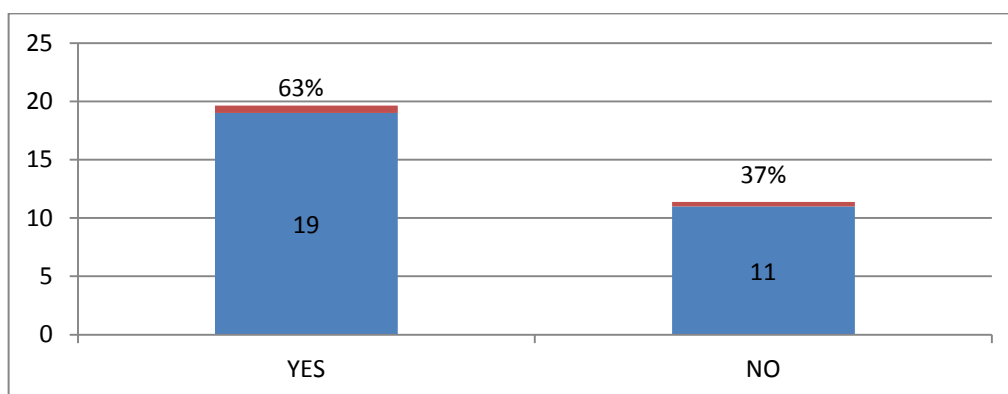


Figure 2.8. Students views towards the teaching of writing

This question aimed to know the views of students towards teaching the writing at the level of first year i.e. “is it sufficiently taught or not”. The analyses showed that 19 students 63% said that it is sufficiently taught. While eleven students 37% said that it is insufficiently taught at their level.

- **Question nine:** Which difficulties face you when writing?

Difficulties that face students when writing	A.F	R.F
Weakness of vocabulary.	16	53%
Absence of ideas.	09	30%
Organization of ideas.	05	17%
No answers.	02	7%
Spelling and punctual issues	00	0%

Table 2.9. Difficulties that face students when writing

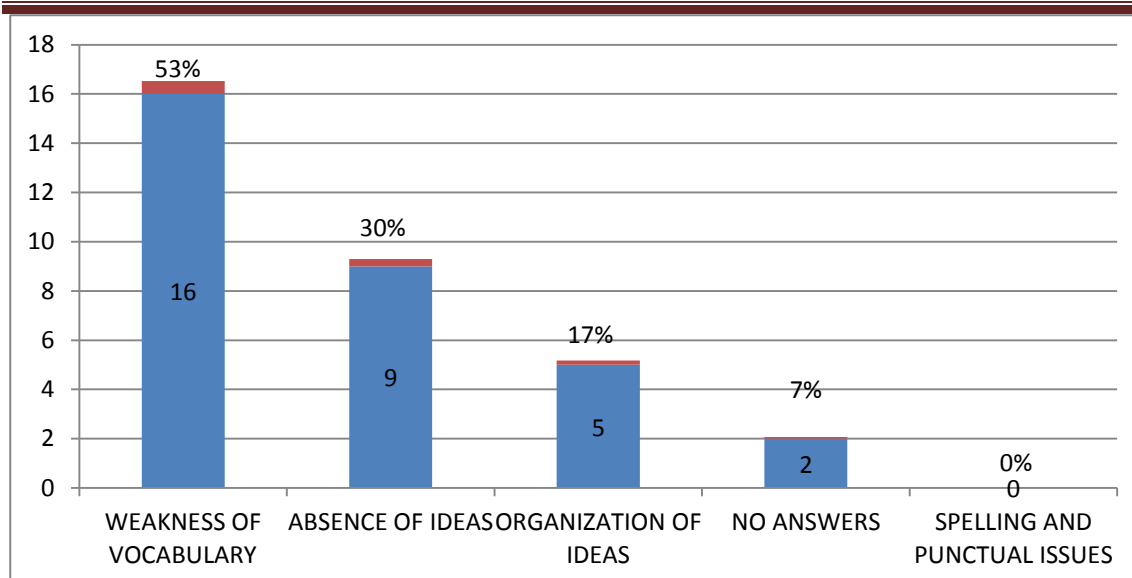


Figure 2.9. Difficulties that face students when writing

This question aimed within indirect way to encourage students rather than to know the difficulties. Besides, from the analyses above, more than half of the respondents 16 students 53% said it is the weakness of vocabulary that interrupt them, while 9 students 30% declared it is the absence of ideas. Then 5 students said it is the organization of ideas; whereas two students stood with no answers and no one selected spelling and punctual issues.

- **Question ten:** According to you these difficulties are due to:

Causes of the writing difficulties	A.F	R.F
The practice of writing is not enough	19	63%
Poor teaching of the writing	07	23%
Other issues	02	7%
No answer	02	7%

Table 2.10. Causes of the writing difficulties

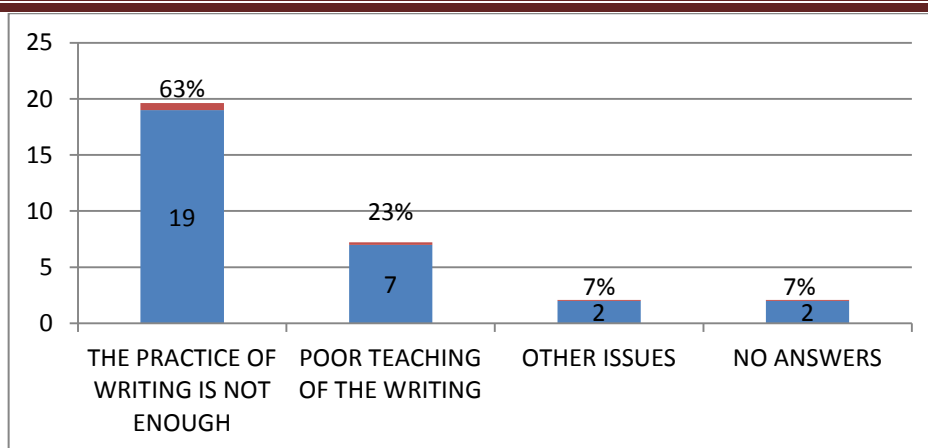


Figure 2.10. Causes of the writing difficulties

Students are asked in this question with an aim to pick up reasons or causes that explain their weakness in the writing. The results showed that 19 students 63% said it is the lack of practice this skill, since students do not use to write regularly “i.e. the practice of writing is not enough”. Seven students stated that, it is the poor of teaching writing that may put students into unbalanced state. Two students stated other issues, it was about self control, i.e. they cannot control themselves while they are writing. The remaining students, “two students”7% stood with no answers.

•**Question eleven:** For what reason do people write?

Reasons behind writing	A.F	R.F
Transmitting messages of their personal ideas	15	50%
Showing a good knowledge in syntax, vocabulary...etc	14	47%
No answers	01	3%
Total	30	100%

Table 2.11. Reasons behind writing

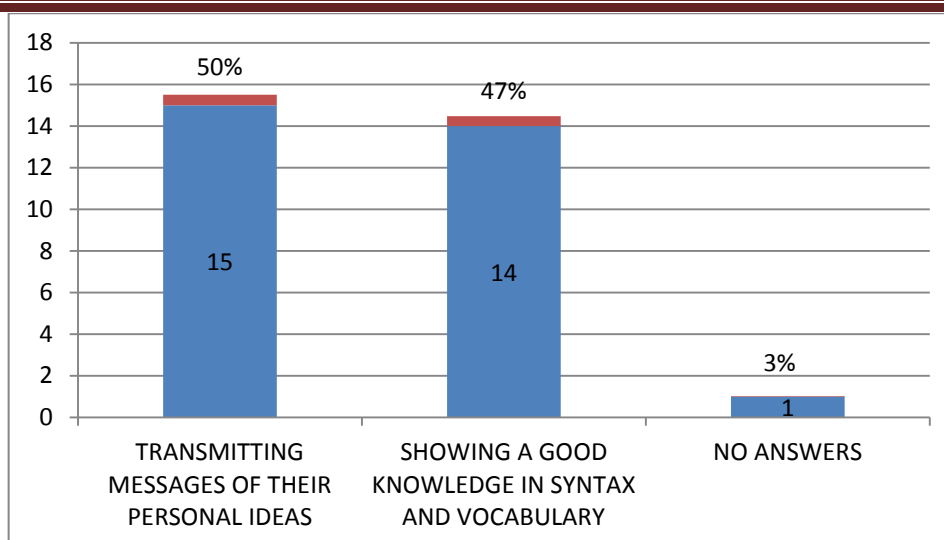


Figure 2.11. Reasons behind writing

This question aimed to shed light on students' purposes while writing, i.e. either communicating particular messages or mentioning a better knowledge level. Fifteen (15) students 50% stated that the reason behind writing is to communicate and transmit personal ideas. While (14) fourteen students 47% said that it is for the reason to express and show a good knowledge "in other words, good mastery of vocabulary, grammar, syntax...etc". Whereas, one student 3% stood with no answer.

- **Question twelve:** When writing essays, which of the following methods do you use?

Methods followed by students during writing essays	A.F	R.F
Reading only after finishing writing	10	33%
Read many times while writing	20	67%
Hand it back to the teacher without reading it	00	00%
Total	30	100%

Table 2.12. Methods followed by students while writing essays

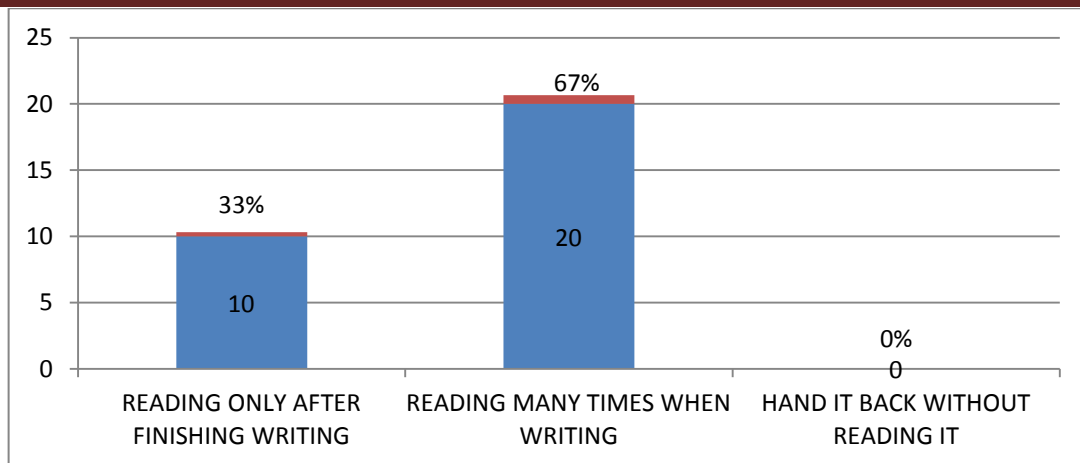


Figure 2.12. Methods followed by students while writing essays

This question is concerned with students' methods to be followed during their writing, what is essential here is how do students revise their writing. The results showed that the majority of respondents, i.e. 20 students, 67% stated that they pay a great attention to the revision while writing, and read many times while writing. Whereas, ten (10) students 33% said that they do not care, they read only after finishing their writing. No one stated "hand it back to the teacher without reading it".

- **Question thirteen:** What do you suggest to develop your writing

Students' suggestions in order to develop their writing

What was remarked "here" for this question was that students showed great enjoyment, as they express their ideas by suggesting some solutions in order to develop the writing skill. They suggested the following:

- Doing more writing work especially at home.
- More practice of writing at classes.
- Motivate students to write by providing them with interesting subjects.
- Suggested more sessions of writing to the level of first year.

2.8. Teachers' Questionnaire

By the aim of more understanding and testing students' level in writing; this questionnaire was addressed to the teachers of the department of English with an objective to better explanation of the real situation of the writing skill in first year level, since teachers have much information, as they have clear ideas to test and assess their students.

This questionnaire, shed light on nine (09) teachers whom have a teaching experience ranges from four (4) to twenty five (25) years. Besides, this latter helped the researcher to collect information from different types, i.e. «experienced and non-experienced teachers». Teachers' questionnaire includes (11) eleven questions.

2.9. Teachers' Questionnaire Analysis

- **Question one : Gender**

Teachers' gender	A.F	R.F
Male	03	33%
Female	06	67%
Total	09	100%

Table 2.13 Gender

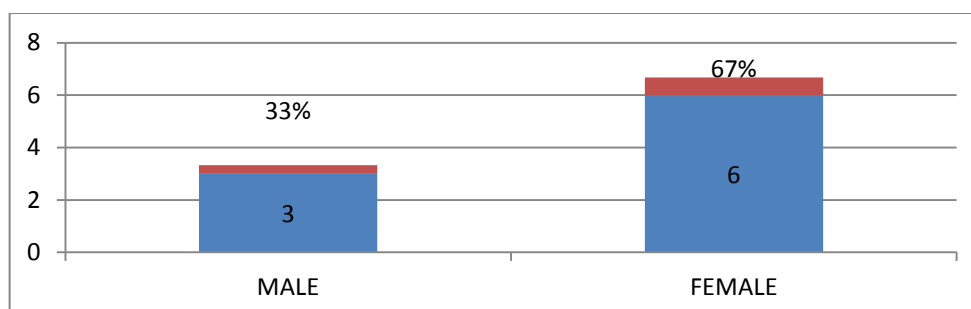


Figure 2.13. Gender

The informants to whom the questionnaire was addressed include nine (09) teachers, six female and three male

- **Question two:** Teaching experience” number of years”

Teachers	years of experiences	R.F
2	25	22%
2	07	22%
2	06	22%
2	04	22%
1	09	11%
Total 9		100%

Table 2.14. Years' number of teaching experience

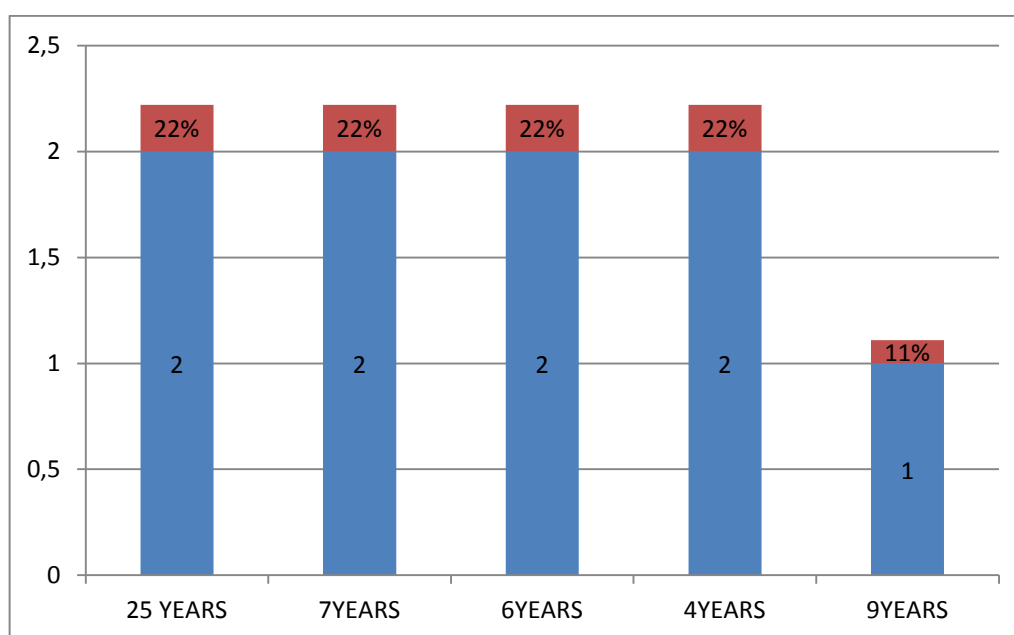


Figure 2.14. Years' number of teaching experience

What is noticed from the table above is that there are 2 teachers of 25 years experience. The remaining teachers are between “7 to 9” years experience.

- **Question three:** How do you assess your students' level in English?

Students' level in English	A.F	R.F
Average	04	44%
Weak	03	33%
Good	02	22%
Excellent	00	00%
Total	09	100%

Table 2.15. Students' level in English

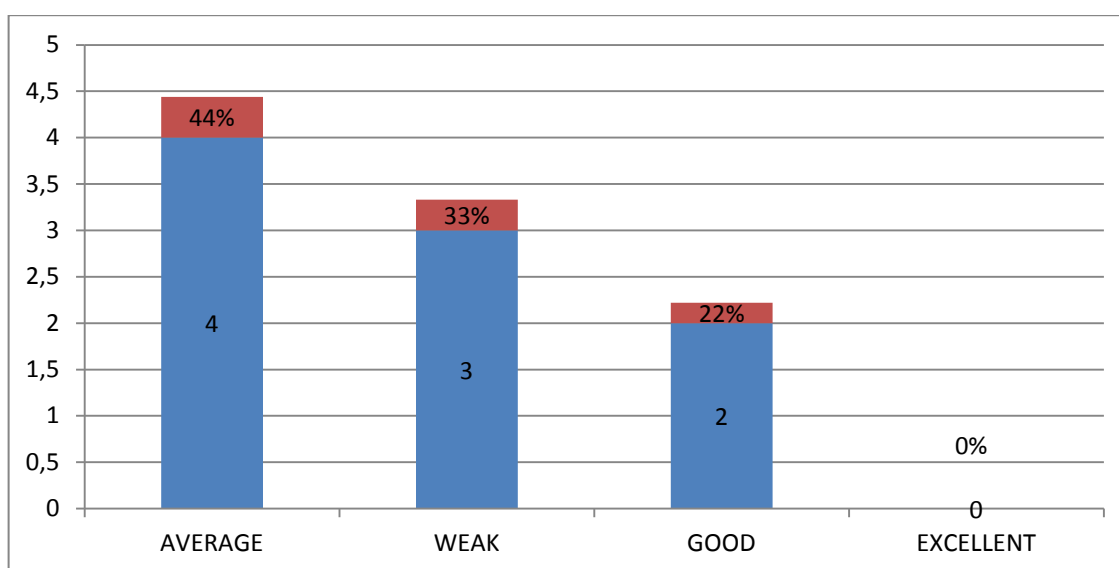


Figure 2.15. Students' level in English

This question aimed to know the evaluation of students' level by their teachers, i.e. "kind of assessment". The results showed that the four teachers described their students as they have an average level in English language. While three respondents stated that they have a weak level, however, the rest said they are good in English.

Question four: Which skill is of great importance for 1st year students?

Skill degree importance to first year students	A.F	R.F
Writing	4	44%
Speaking	4	44%
Reading	3	33%
Listening	2	22%

Table2.16. Skill degree importance to first year students

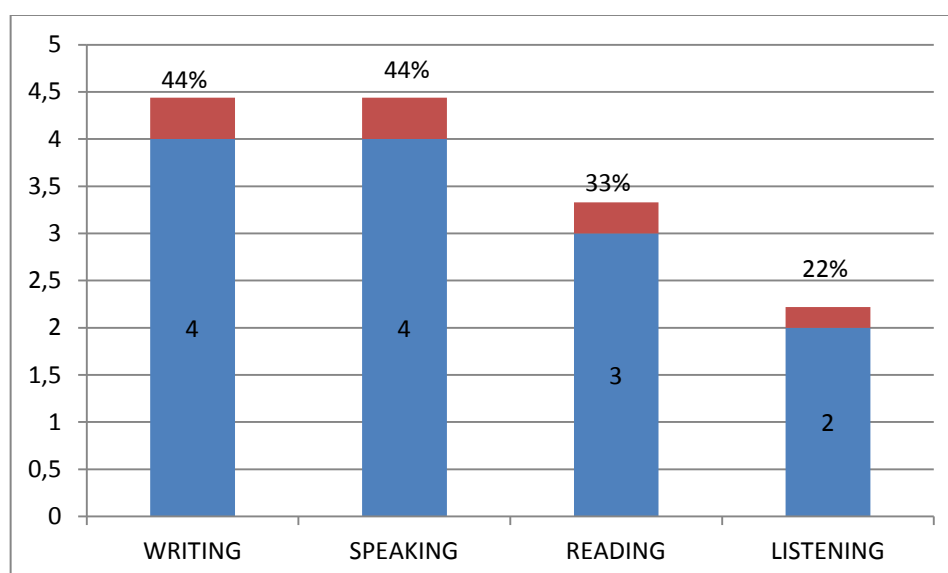


Figure 2.16. Skill degee importance to first year students

This question was addressed in order to know teacher' views concerning the skill which seems to have more interests for students to arrange more efforts following their teachers advice. The results showed that writing and speaking came first with 44% then reading with 33%, at the end listening with 22%.

- **Question five:** How many sessions do you suggest a week?

Time sufficiency for teaching each skill		A.F	R.F
Writing	Three times	5	55.5%
	Twice	2	22.25%
	Once	0	0%
Speaking	Three times	0	0%
	Twice	2	22.25%
	Once	0	0
Reading and Listening	Three times	0	0
	Twice	0	0
	Once	0	0

Table 2.17. Time sufficiency for each skill

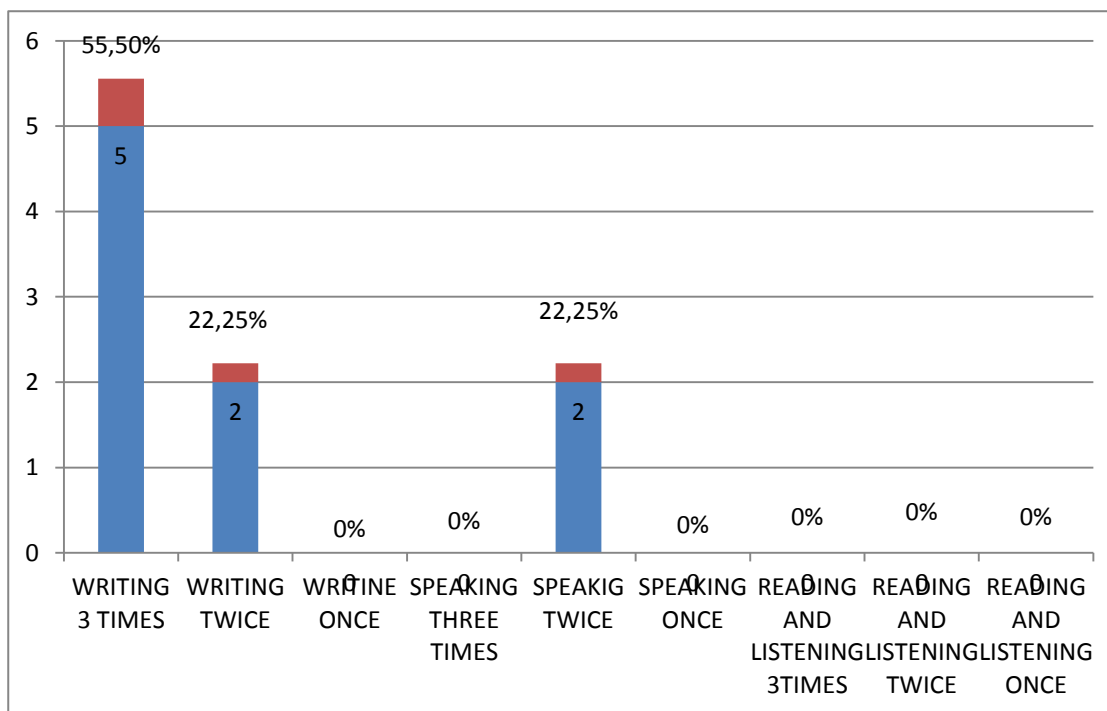


Figure 2.17. Time sufficiency for each skill

What was remarked for this question is that more than the half of respondents agreed with the writing skill to be the first “5 teachers put three times a week to be sufficient for this skill and 2 respondents put twice”. The remaining put twice for speaking skill.

- **Question six:** During teaching writing do you focus on:

Methods followed by teachers during teaching writing	A.F	R.F
Process and product method	09	100%
Process	00	00%
Product	00	00%
Total	09	100%

Table 2.18. Methods followed by teachers during teaching writing

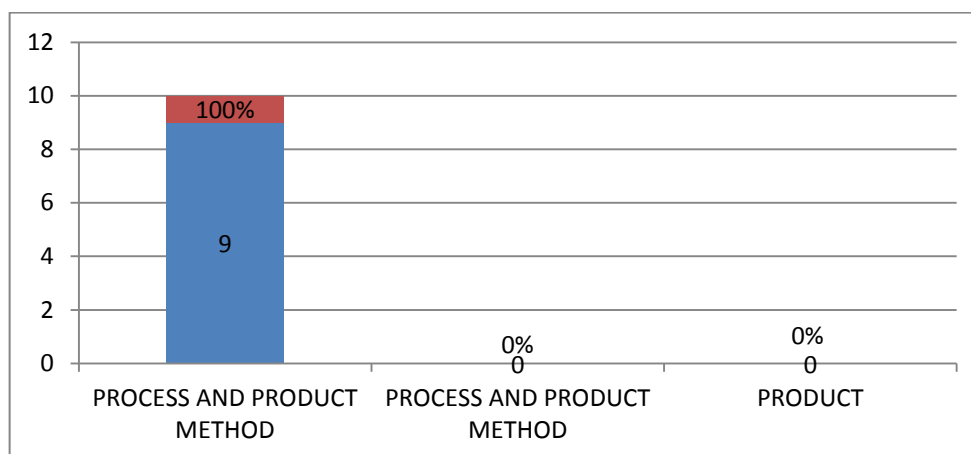


Figure 2.18. Methods followed by teachers during teaching the writing

The above results showed that all the respondents “09teachers” stated that they focus on both process and product method when they are teaching writing skill.

- **Question seven:** How could you explain students' weakness in writing?

Students' weakness in writing	A.F	R.F
Difficulty of skill level	06	66.66%
Lack of students' motivation	03	33.33%
Inadequate methodology	00	00%
Total	09	100%

Table 2.19. Students' weakness in writing

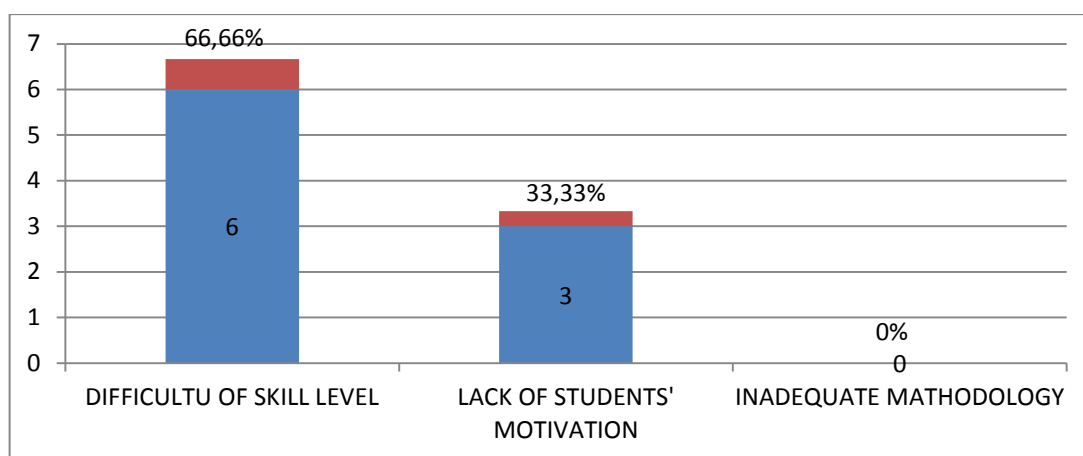
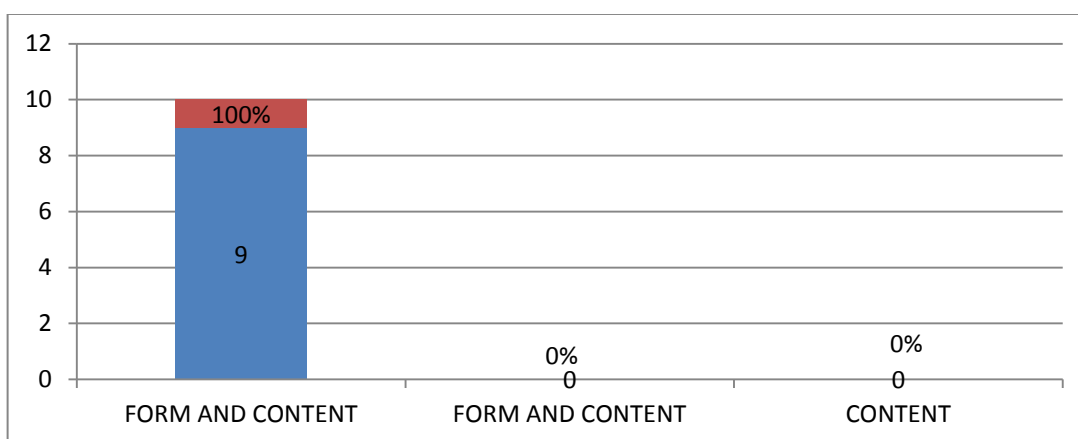


Figure 2.19. Students' weakness in writing

In this question, the informants are asked with an aim to explain students' low achievements in writing and what are the real causes of the weakness of the writing skill. What was noticed from the above results was that the majority of teachers indicated the difficulty of the skill level (writing). Whereas, the remaining respondents claimed that it is the lack of motivation of students.

- **Question eight:** While correcting your students writing, do you focus on:

Form and content	09	100%
Form	00	00%
content	00	00%

Table 2.20. Teachers' focuses while correcting students writing**Figure 2.20. Teachers' focuses while correcting students' writing**

This question, shed light on something very interesting which was teachers' focuses during correcting students' writing. The results showed that all respondents i.e.9/9 teachers 100% stated that when they are correcting students' written production essays; they focus on both form and content, the reason that a well done piece of writing is standing on both sides.

- **Question nine:** Do you encourage your students to write i.e. to use more than one draft when doing writing task?

Teachers' encouragement to writing task	A.F	R.F
YES	09	100%
NO	00	00%
Total	09	100%

Table 2.21. Teachers' encouragements for students writing tasks

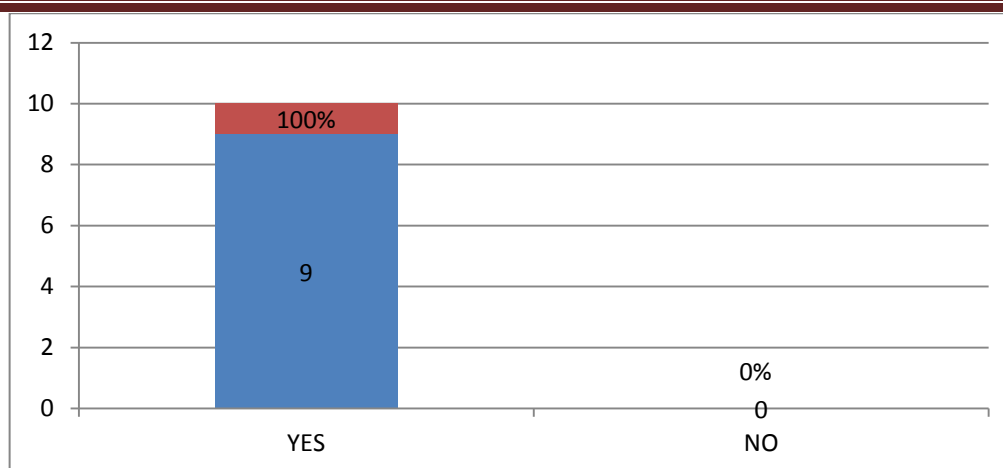


Figure 2.21. Teachers' encouragements for students' writing tasks

This question aimed to know the way teachers motivate their students and encourage them, whether they provide them to use more than one draft during the session of writing as well as other tasks. Besides, what was noticed from the analysis was that, all respondents, 9/9 teachers answered by “yes”. In addition, teachers explained that, it is for the reason that students can be able to edit their papers. And others said, it is the foundation of the language itself.

- **Question ten:** What types of mistakes do students often make when writing?

Types of mistakes	A.F	R.F
Grammar mistakes	5	55%
Punctual and spelling	5	55%
Lack of linking words	4	44%
Lexical mistakes	2	22%
Cohesion of sentences	2	22%
Total	18	100

Table 2.22. Types of mistakes often made by students

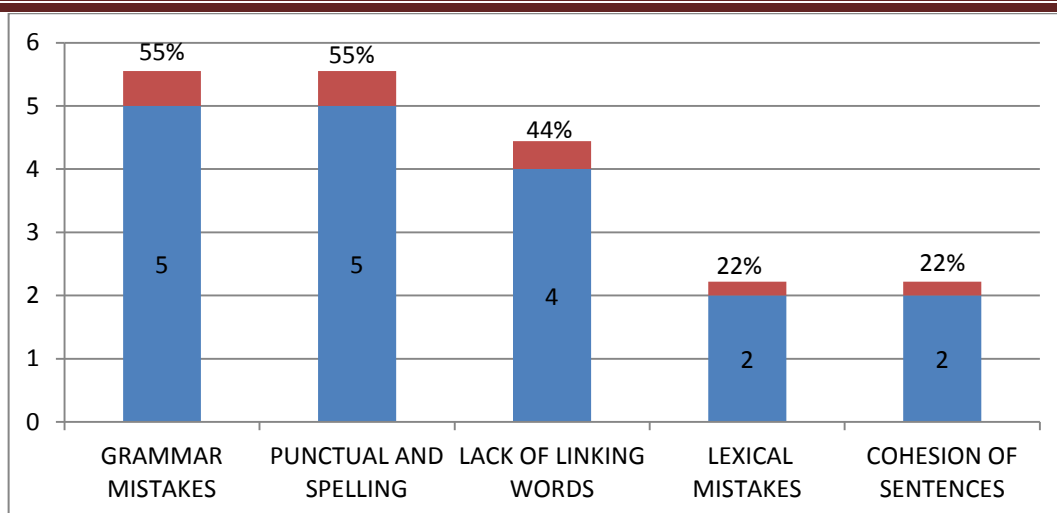


Figure 2.22. Types of mistakes often made by students

In this question, teachers were asked in order to evaluate the types of mistakes commonly used by students. The results showed that many mistakes are related to grammar, punctuation and spelling. In addition to lack of linking words and weakness of vocabulary.

• **Question eleven:** What do you suggest in order to develop students' performance in writing?

This question shed light on teachers' suggestions and advices in order to improve students' level in this skill as they represent the reference to conduct the procedure. What was remarked after the analysis, teachers suggested the following:

- Encourage creative writing
- Students have to read a lot
- Teachers have to introduce “dictation” as a task for first year students.
- Motivate students to write and ask for help from their teachers.
- Consolidate students' knowledge by supporting writing at home.

2.10. Conclusion

This study concerned students attitudes and how can they develop their writing. What was noticed besides this investigative research was that there need to be a partner who plays a great role in this phase i.e. “teachers”. In other words, both students and teachers have to be included in the teaching /learning process.

Thus, the procedure stands on classroom practices, teachers’ encouragements and motivation and then assessment rules. Therefore, success in learning in general and in writing particularly is standing on the combination as well as the contribution of mixed efforts between the two partners’ teachers and students i.e. “teachers’ guides and students practices”. And that what was obtained from the analyses of both teachers and students questionnaires.

CHAPTER THREE

Chapter Three

Interpretations and Recommendations

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3.1. Introduction

This chapter is concerned with the interpretation of the data results of students' and teachers' questionnaires. Besides, the obtaining results of the study expressed further students' failure and low achievement in the writing skill since it is an essential skill in learning a foreign language. Moreover, after the analyses of both students' and teachers' questionnaires, it is noticed that the difficulty of the skill level affect and interrupt the improvement of the writing. Therefore, some suggestions and recommendations are presented for both students' and teachers' in order to develop the competency of students and expand their knowledge to become fluent writers in the future.

3.2 Students' Questionnaire Interpretation

The following part is about the interpretation to the main findings and results collected from students' questionnaire and their views concerning the writing skill and how can they improve this skill.

What was remarked in the first part of the questionnaire was that all students 100% like English Language and the majority of respondents 73.33% have been studying English for eight years and 26.66% for nine years. Besides this, studying English for a long time does not always express students' good level in language. In other words, there were students who study English for long time but still face difficulties and cannot express themselves fluently, this is may be caused by many reasons, as the ones found in the previous questionnaire such as: lack of practice, weakness of communication with English language. However, other students can take the language fluently within a short period of studying it.

Moreover, all students 100% showed their enjoyments in studying English even students who had a weak level in English. They affirmed that English is very important language; it is the first language over the world which is essential in several domains.

In addition, students showed their motivation to this language in the future in both academic and professional domains. As learning English by the choice of student himself express a positive attitude with the aim to achieve a high level.

In the second part of this questionnaire, most of the respondents agreed on the difficulty of the skill level i.e. “writing skill”, as for them “first year students”, writing may disturb and interrupt them explaining that with their failure, i.e. much mistakes when doing tasks: (essays, exams, tests...etc). However, the majority of them 77% showed their enjoyments of the writing lectures, the fact that through this skill, they can express themselves freely and prepare a way to become fluent writers in the future and increase their level in learning this language.

While, seven students 23% stated that they do not like the writing lectures, simply the reason that they afraid of making mistakes, and it depends on the different styles of students as in EFL classrooms there are several types of learners, that is to say, there are students with self confident users who take advantages and work in many given topics with great motivation and huge challenges to reach their goals. In the contrary, there are students with less users i.e students do not show his/hers motivation and sometimes they stand with rarely efforts in classrooms, this is because of their weak knowledge or fearing to save their face in front of their classmates or their teachers assessments.

In addition to that, most of respondents’ answers 63% about students views towards teaching the writing at the level of first year LMD students announced that it is sufficiently taught, these answers represented the new techniques provided by the teachers of writing at

the department of English in order to create a warm atmosphere for learners and encourage them to write effectively. While eleven students 37% stated that this skill is insufficiently taught and still it need extra sessions in their program, explaining that as the difficulty of the skill itself caused many problems to writing . Other students indicated the lack of practice of this skill. However, students in the other hand have to make efforts in order to fight these issues.

As students, can do the best for themselves and improve their level especially in writing not only in classrooms but outside too. Besides, students have to be aware of the difficulties that face them when they are writing. Students' answers also showed that it is the weakness of vocabulary that make their writing weak (more than half of respondents 53%), while other students feel that they are unprepared for doing tasks and this feeling is may be related to their inadequate level particularly in writing. Students also mentioned the point of the absence of ideas during writing. All in all, these issues reflect certain specific practices in doing tasks through different ways.

Participants also indicated the causes of the writing difficulties, where most students agreed that the practice of the skill is not enough in addition to the poor teaching of the writing.

Hence, these are the most challenges that face EFL learners, where a good deal of students lacks the basic skills. It aims to find methods to tackle students' weaknesses by introducing lectures directed and related specifically to the target skill. Furthermore, students demonstrated the reasons that people write, most answers ranged between communicating particular messages and showing a better knowledge level, where half of the respondents 50% declared that the aim behind writing is to communicate and transmit personal ideas. However, the remaining students stated that people generally write in order

to express and show a good knowledge that is to say; showing good mastery of vocabulary, syntax...etc.

In addition to that, most of the respondents 66% stated that they keep attention to the revision while they are writing as “ they read many times”, while the rest of participants 33% mentioned less care, and read their writing only after finishing it.

In the last part of this questionnaire which dealt with the suggestions of students in order to develop their writing. At this point, students showed their enjoyments as it is the part to express their ideas and feelings. They suggest doing more practice of this skill at classes, doing writing work especially at home; motivate students to write by providing them with interesting subjects. They also suggest extra sessions to be added to the writing for first year students.

3.3 Teachers’ Questionnaire Interpretation

Regarding on the findings obtained from the teachers’ questionnaire, teachers to whom this questionnaire was addressed have a diversity experience range between four to twenty five years in teaching. They are either current teachers of writing or used to teach the module before. Which means that they are able to assess students’ level as they have passed enough period of time in teaching, although, the period of teaching does not always express the teaching quality level but rather stands on the ways selected to teach.

Moreover, teachers reported different views on the assessment of the students’ level in English, there were teachers who said that their students have average level; while others, stated a weak level in English. All in all, these views are mainly due to the way teachers test their students or the quality of students they face. Besides, teachers mentioned positive attitudes towards the skill which seems of great importance for first year students, where

most of teachers showed an agreement on “the writing” which came first. (50%), teachers suggested between two to three sessions a week to be sufficient for this skill, in addition to “speaking” where some teachers joined writing with speaking in their answers.

Furthermore, in teaching writing teachers’ focuses are in both process and product methods which reflected all the teachers’ answers (100%) who stated that the methods to be followed in the teaching generally and in teaching writing particularly are of great importance in order to overcome many issues depending especially on the way lectures are presented by teachers. In addition to that, Teachers further added that the weakness of students in writing is due to the difficulty of the skill level and also the lack of students’ motivation. In other words, it quite relied to weak level in the language in general and in the constitution of the skill in particular. The reason that students come to the university with poor lexical knowledge in English, with only few rules and structures without effective techniques in learning. Here, one can say that this was due to the limited and guided activities presented in the secondary school which was considered as the basic station to a better preparation for students’ capacities.

As far as, the eight question concerned all the respondents stated that while correcting students’ writing “essays, exams, tests”, they focus on both form and content justifying that as a good productive piece of writing is mainly standing on both sides. Teachers were asked whether they encourage their students to write, this question aimed rather on the way teachers motivate and encourage their learners i.e. what are the techniques to be provided for students when doing writing tasks, such as “using many draft”. What was noticed was that all the respondents confirmed that they encourage and push their students to write a lot.

Furthermore, teachers were also asked about the types of mistakes that students often made when writing, they stated that most of the common mistakes made by learners are

related to grammar, punctuation and spelling mistakes, in addition to the lack of linking words and weakness of vocabulary.

All in all, one can say that the difficulty of the writing skill which was shared a common agreement from the majority of teachers must require sufficient time and practice to be learned and mastered successfully. It is now the mutual contribution of both students and teachers that determines and measures the development of the writing skill.

3.4 Suggestions and Perspectives

Since English is the first language over the world that allows people to communicate widely. It is necessary to develop and master this language which is important in several domains. It participates to exchange thoughts between people and making mutual relations not only in the local side but rather in the international ones.

Hence, developing language level is standing on the basic skills a language deals with, that is to say, in addition to listening, speaking, reading, it is writing which is essential for learning too. Although, the difficulty of this skill as mentioned previously by both participants (students and teachers). It is yet still necessary to increase the writing level, the reason that it takes a big part among the remaining skills, since most of the official contacts around the world between people are done in a written form such as exams and tests between teachers and students or many other domains that need written official documents like “e-mails”.

Furthermore, teaching writing as it was obtained in the results of this investigative study should take enough sessions to be devoted to the skill as it seems the most important ones to be developed.

3.4.1. Students' Suggestions

The first thing to be mentioned in this phase was that, although the difficulty of the skill level “writing”, students shared great motivation and challenges in order to face the problem and increase their competencies. More than that, they showed enjoyments in the writing lectures, as for them, it is the pot where most students can express their thoughts freely. Therefore, students suggested some points to the teachers and the system to be followed in teaching; they propose extra time to be devoted to the teaching of writing in order to make enough understanding to the rules of writing by asking their teachers to help them finding better instruments to master the skill level. Students also, suggested alternative techniques to be taught in teaching writing such as the use of dictation considering “introducing dictation” by the teachers is important in order to increase the spelling form, they support and encourage students to read a lot and all of them agreed on the mutual relationship between a good writing and extensive reading, in addition to the use of summarizing may also help the process too.

3.4.2. Teachers' Suggestions

As far as writing is necessary for learning a language, most teachers indicated a common interesting point which is the strong relationship between reading and writing that is why they advised students to read a lot because it is reading that enrich students' vocabulary, expand their knowledge and then prepare to reach a better level in writing .

They also encourage their students to keep an attentive eye upon towards the target language i.e. “learning English” not only in the classroom but rather outside. Moreover, all the respondents ‘teachers’ urged all the teachers to search for better way to teach writing and help students until they become capable to generate full steps of writing. They also

stated that it is important for students to ask their teachers whenever they need help and keep always the mutual contact with teachers. Teachers added in this sense that much practice is quite necessary and doing pair or group work can help in exchanging thoughts and ideas among learners and rely on better benefits.

All in all, teachers suggested these points:

- Students have to read a lot.
- Teachers have to introduce ‘dictation’ as a task for first year students.
- Encourage creative writing.
- Motivate students to write and ask for help from the teachers.
- Consolidate students’ knowledge by supporting much practice of writing at home.

3.5 Perspectives on the Teaching Needs

Regarding to what was obtained from the previous chapters, it is now necessary to understand the reasons behind the failure in EFL teaching and learning.

So that, in addition to the agreement of both teachers and students on the difficulty of the skill level, it is the inadequate practice of teaching that causes problem, it does not rely directly to teachers but rather to the system of teaching.

Hence, teachers need appropriate tools to pass their tasks successfully, at the same time prepare their students with much responsibility in the future.

The preparation may be seen in the way it is practiced, so that a good education generally stands on more understanding of the real objective behind teaching and evaluate students’ level within a positive way and facilitate to prepare for new challenges.

Teachers therefore must look for changing themselves first, their roles and the way of assessing. As quoted in this sense:

“As individual, the teacher is only one who knows where he begins his professional development and thus, he needs to go. The teacher knows best what steps need to be taken to become a better language teacher, researcher or teacher educator”

(Clair , 1998.465)

In other words, teachers must monitor the procedure focusing on reflecting on their teaching as well as on their students’ needs using their experiences for better changes. Teachers need also to modify the way of teaching as well as self introspective skills. In this sense, Richards, (1999.143) states:

“The process of change occur when teachers articulate to themselves and others what they want to change and why, when they identify the factors that inhibit change, and when they develop strategies to implement change over time”

Moreover, the improvement of teaching is standing also on the contribution of the collective work between teachers which can easily bring effective benefits.

In addition to the organizing study days and seminars which share a huge opportunity to exchange thoughts and expand cultural knowledge level between learners instead of relying on one source.

Therefore, the development of teaching in the other hand motivates teachers to learn from the awareness of the mutual collaborative research work that certainly bring innovative changes.

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter was devoted with a sum of suggestions and recommendations through different perspectives combined between the two partners ‘students and teachers’ regarding to improve a necessary skill ‘writing’ and following a respective positive teaching. So that, teachers have to keep a great awareness to students’ needs following effective techniques in introducing teaching practices. Simply the reason that the most essential objective behind these challenges is to develop students’ language knowledge and particularly their writing skill.

Therefore, as it was mentioned previously that a good written product sands on both ‘form and content’, that is why it is recommended to keep a combination balance between product and process approaches in order to conduct EFL teaching/learning to a better results.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

General Conclusion

Eventually, the researcher's aim throughout this study was to shed light on the current situation of one of the most important skills in learning 'writing', with close reference to first year LMD students at the department of English. The illustrated descriptive analyses aimed to identify, test and assess students' level particularly in 'writing' by trying to understand reasons behind the low achievement. Thus, it was initially necessary to introduce the component of the phase "students and teachers", where the researcher used questionnaires for both of them as an instrument to conduct this work.

Hence, the results of the research showed that achieving better level in writing is mainly standing on the way students are prepared, controlled and followed throughout the help of their teachers by designing some effective techniques and overcome as much as possible difficulties of the writing and how do students react in order to raise their competency. The reason that the majority of students' thoughts towards writing are up only when they want to express personal ideas.

Furthermore, the results showed that writing focus is on both form and content, since teachers' concerns are probably to check mistakes (dealing with form) as well as the whole content. In other words, students have to know that writing does not occur only at the level of sentence but rather deal with the whole given procedure; Keeping in mind a balance between process and product method.

The findings also expressed that practice of the writing skill prepare to reach better achievement, since most teachers agreed and indicated the role of practice which may certainly put students in the right road and expand their knowledge, encourage creative

training with full energy in order to reach a good level in learning especially in writing. In addition to reading which takes part in the suggested points of the results, as in most teachers' answers, reading was linked with writing and considered as a necessary skill in addition to writing for first year students. Regarding that reading is the spot where students can earn ideas and expand their knowledge.

All in all, the suggestions presented in chapter three push learners to take high awareness towards learning which should be controlled and conducted for better results. This is totally standing on the participation of the effective elements, i.e. the combination of both teachers and students parts, as they represent the sources to imply a complete development. Therefore, teaching writing with effective methods is essential for creating new techniques in order to enrich the whole objective.

This extended essay helped the researcher to keep an attentive eye upon towards learning generally and learning writing particularly, by reconsider and reorganize different matters to master the improvement not only in writing but rather exploring wide range in learning. It is now the responsibility of both teachers and students that illustrates such measurements in learning process.

Partially, the finding of this research as it was predicted initially, that is to say; testing students linguistic competency and aiming to improve a written skill successfully, reflect partially further objectives that researcher want to discover, in other words trying to understand the low achievement causes in writing for the majority of students. But yet, still remains more instructions to be devoted for future researches.

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APPENDICES

- ❖ Spelling and punctuation issue
- ❖ Weakness of vocabulary
- ❖ Absence of ideas
- ❖ Organization of ideas

*Other issues

10. According to you, these difficulties are due to:

- ❖ The practice of writing is not enough
- ❖ Poor teaching of the writing

*Other issues

11. For what reason do people write?

Transmitting messages of their personal ideas

Mentioning and having a better knowledge in syntax, vocabulary... etc.

12. When writing essays, which of the following methods do you use?

Reading only after finishing writing

Read many times while you are writing

Hand it back to the teacher without reading it

13. What do you suggest to develop you writing?

.....

.....

.....

Why

Why not

10. What type of mistakes do students often make when writing?

- ❖ Grammar mistakes
- ❖ Punctual and spelling
- ❖ Lexical mistakes
- ❖ Lack of linking words
- ❖ Cohesion of sentences

*Others

11. According to your experience, what do you suggest in order to develop students' performance in writing?

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