

**PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA
MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH
ABOUBAKR BELKAID UNIVERSITY-TLEMCCEN**



**FACULTY OF LETTERS AND LANGUAGES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH**

**WRITING PEDAGOGIES AT UNIVERSITY AND THEIR IMPACT ON
FIRST YEAR EFL STUDENTS' PROFICIENCY AND WRITING ABILITY**

**Thesis Submitted to the Department of English in Candidacy for the
"Doctorate" Degree in Applied Linguistics and TEFL**

Presented by:

Mrs. Fatima Zohra ABI-AYAD HEMCHE

Supervised by:

Prof. Hafida HAMZAOU-ELACHACHI

Board of Examiners:

Prof. Amine BELMEKKI

Prof. Hafida HAMZAOU-ELACHACHI

Prof. Nadia KIES

Dr. Habib YAHIAOUI

Dr. Mohamed DIB

Dr. Nouredine MOUHADJER

President (University of Tlemcen)

Supervisor (University of Tlemcen)

External Examiner (University of Belabbes)

External Examiner (University of Mascara)

External Examiner (University of Mascara)

Internal Examiner (University of Tlemcen)

2018

**PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA
MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH
ABOUBAKR BELKAID UNIVERSITY-TLEMCCEN**



**FACULTY OF LETTERS AND LANGUAGES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH**

**WRITING PEDAGOGIES AT UNIVERSITY AND THEIR IMPACT ON
FIRST YEAR EFL STUDENTS' PROFICIENCY AND WRITING ABILITY**

**Thesis Submitted to the Department of English in Candidacy for the
"Doctorate" Degree in Applied Linguistics and TEFL**

Presented by:

Mrs. Fatima Zohra ABI-AYAD HEMCHE

Supervised by:

Prof. Hafida HAMZAOU-ELACHACHI

Board of Examiners:

Prof. Amine BELMEKKI

Prof. Hafida HAMZAOU-ELACHACHI

Prof. Nadia KIES

Dr. Habib YAHIAOUI

Dr. Mohamed DIB

Dr. Nouredine MOUHADJER

President (University of Tlemcen)

Supervisor (University of Tlemcen)

External Examiner (University of Belabbes)

External Examiner (University of Mascara)

External Examiner (University of Mascara)

Internal Examiner (University of Tlemcen)

2018

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the present work entitled “Writing Pedagogies at University and Their Impact on First-Year EFL Students’ Proficiency and Writing Ability” is the result of my own investigation, except where otherwise stated. This work contains no material previously published, nor material which has been submitted to a university or any other institution for a degree, diploma or other qualifications.

Mrs Fatima Zohra ABI-AYAD HEMCHE

Signature

DEDICATION

In memory of my parents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank all those who, in one way or another, helped me in the realisation of this thesis.

I would like to express all my gratitude and indebtedness to my supervisor, Prof. Hafida Hamzaoui, for her insightful guidance, suggestions, and advice during the completion of this dissertation.

My sincere thanks go to the members of the jury, namely Prof. Amine Belmekki, Pr. Nadia Kies, Dr. Habib Yahiaoui, Dr. Mohamed Dib, and Dr. Nouredine Mouhadjer, for having accepted to examine my work.

I am grateful for the support and encouragement of my colleagues at the English Department. I would like to thank, more particularly, Prof. Zoubir Dendane, Prof. Ilhem Serir and Dr. Maliha Abi-Ayad, for their help during the elaboration of this Doctorate dissertation.

I wish to express my deep sense of gratitude to first-year students for their invaluable influence and assistance throughout this work.

But thanks are due most of all to my family for their invaluable patience, assistance, moral support, and encouragement. Without their understanding, I could never have persevered to this outcome.

ABSTRACT

The majority of new Baccalaureate holders enrolled in the Department of English at Tlemcen University present serious deficiencies in FL2 writing at both linguistic and discourse levels, their level of writing competency lower than expected despite a long formal exposure to English learning prior to university entrance, seven years or even more. In order to have a better understanding of the way these learners proceed as they embark in a writing task, the major aim of the present research is to investigate these learners' writing proficiency, pointing out the difficulties encountered in FL2 writing through an exploration of the writing pedagogies employed at first-year university level. For this purpose, an investigative study is undertaken through classroom-action research, making use of triangulation tools: teacher classroom observation, learners' task production (pre and post-intervention phase tests), and questionnaires (pre and post-intervention phase questionnaires) addressed to first-year EFL university learners. The study involves a group of thirty Algerian EFL first-year LMD students at the University of Tlemcen. The results brought by this action-research show that besides pre-education which fails to prepare learners to cope with university requirements, in the present teaching setting the prevailing methodology is still language-based and accuracy-oriented. While the main concern is the final product, the process is totally inexistent. Giving priority to language mastery and grammatical accuracy over the development of the writing process proves totally inefficient. First-year learners display an obvious inability to make a balance between accuracy and fluency and appear to be primarily concerned with sentence-level production, such inability in writing in the target language being in no case solved by mere acquisition of linguistic competence. The study also shows the positive impact of explicit teaching of the specific composing resources and the use of the writing process on learners' performance. The conclusion that can be drawn from this research is that a pedagogic change in terms of a different approach and techniques in addition to a reasoned eclecticism for achieving effective writing is needed. This study then attempts to suggest ways that can contribute to the enhancement of entrant students' writing proficiency level, hoping to help eradicate or at least lessen some of the existing problems and bring about positive change at university level.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Declaration.....	I
Dedication	II
Acknowledgements.....	III
Abstract.....	IV
Table of Contents.....	V
List of Tables	XII
List of Figures	XIII
List of Acronyms and Abbreviations.....	XIV
General Introduction	1
Chapter One: Writing as a Language Skill	
1.1 Introduction	14
1.2 Writing Defined	15
1.3 Complexity of Writing	16
1.4 Writing System Devices	21
1.4.1 Mechanics of Writing	21
1.4.1.1 The Importance of Spelling	22
1.4.1.2 The Functions of Punctuation	24
1.4.2 Rhetorical Devices	25
1.4.2.1 Logical Devices	26
1.4.2.2 Grammatical Devices	26
1.4.2.3 Lexical Devices	27
1.4.3 Discourse Unity	27
1.4.3.1 Cohesion	28
1.4.3.2 Coherence	31
1.4.4 Purpose, Audience, Content	32
1.4.4.1 Purpose	33

1.4.4.2 Audience	33
1.4.4.3 Content	35
1.5 Writing as a Product	36
1.6 Writing as a Process	37
1.6.1 The Pre-Writing Stage	41
1.6.2 The Writing Stage	42
1.6.3 The Post-Writing Stage	42
1.7 Composition: The Need for a Framework	43
1.7.1 Sentence Construction	43
1.7.2 Paragraph Development	44
1.7.3 Composition Writing	45
1.8 Types of Writing	47
1.8.1 Descriptive Writing	48
1.8.2 Narrative Writing	49
1.8.3 Expository Writing	49
1.8.4 Argumentative Writing	49
1.9 Genre and Register	50
1.10 Style	50
1.11 Major Approaches to Teaching Writing	52
1.11.1 The controlled-to-Free Method	52
1.11.2 The Free Writing Approach	54
1.11.3 The Product-Based Approach	56
1.11.4 The Process Approach	60
1.11.5 The Process-Product Approach	67
1.11.6 The Genre Approach	68
1.11.7 The Process-Genre Based Approach	70
1.12 Conclusion	72

Chapter Two: ELT and EFL Writing in the Algerian Educational System

2.1 Introduction	76
2.2 ELT at Pre-University Level	77
2.2.1 ELT at Middle School	83
2.2.2 ELT at Secondary School	87
2.2.3 EFL Writing at Middle-School Level	92
2.2.4 EFL Writing at Secondary-School Level	95
2.3 ELT at University Level	99
2.3.1 The Syllabus	100
2.3.2 The LMD System: An Overview	103
2.3.2.1 Teacher Education and Training	107
2.3.2.2 Teacher Roles and Strategies	112
2.3.2.3 Student Roles	114
2.4 The English Department	116
2.4.1 Teacher Profile	118
2.4.2 Student Profile	119
2.5 EFL Writing at University Level	120
2.5.1 Writing at First-Year University Level	120
2.5.2 Writing at Second-Year University Level	123
2.5.3 Writing at Third-Year University Level	124
2.6 Written Expression Examination	125
2.7 Conclusion	126

Chapter Three: Research Methodology and Situation Analysis

3.1 Introduction	130
3.2 Research Purpose and Objectives	130
3.3 Research Methodology	132

3.3.1 Classroom Action Research	134
3.3.2 Participants	140
3.3.2.1 Learner Profile	141
3.3.2.2 Teacher Profile	142
3.3.3 Research Instruments	143
3.3.3.1 Classroom Observation	145
3.3.3.2 Task Production	148
3.3.3.3 The Questionnaire	149
3.4 Research Procedure	152
3.4.1 Piloting the Questionnaire	153
3.4.2 The Study Proper	155
3.5 Data Analysis	156
3.5.1 Qualitative Analysis	157
3.5.2 Quantitative Analysis	158
3.6 Conclusion	159
Chapter Four: Findings and Discussion	
4.1 Introduction	163
4.2 Classroom Observation	164
4.3 Pre-Intervention Phase	164
4.3.1 Classroom Observation Analysis	164
4.3.1.1 Results	164
4.3.1.2 Discussion	167
4.3.2 Learners' Task-Production Analysis	168
4.3.2.1 Results	170
4.3.2.2 Discussion	172
4.3.3 Learners' Questionnaire Analysis	173
4.3.3.1 Results	174
4.3.3.2 Discussion	190

4.4 Intervention Phase: Classroom Observation Analysis	191
4.4.1 Results	191
4.4.2 Discussion	192
4.5 Post-Intervention Phase	193
4.5.1 Classroom Observation Analysis	193
4.5.1.1 Results	193
4.5.1.2 Discussion	194
4.5.2 Learners' Task Production Analysis	195
4.5.2.1 Results	196
4.5.2.2 Discussion	197
4.5.3 Learners' Questionnaire Analysis	200
4.5.3.1 Results	201
4.5.3.2 Discussion	208
4.6 Discussion of the Main Results	209
4.7 Conclusion	211

Chapter Five: Suggestions and Recommendations

5.1 Introduction	215
5.2 The teacher	216
5.2.1 Teacher Training	217
5.2.2 Teacher Education Development	220
5.2.3 Teacher Roles	224
5.2.4 Teaching Methodology	225
5.2.4.1 Remedial Teaching	232
5.2.4.2 Learner Self Correction	237
5.2.4.3 Explicit Teaching	238
5.2.4.4 Writing Strategy Implementation	241
5.2.4.5 Implementing Collaborative Writing	244

5.2.4.6 Learner Peer Conference	245
5.2.4.7 Eclecticism	246
5.2.4.8 Surveys, Questionnaires and Interviews	247
5.3 Learner Development	249
5.4 Writing Tasks	252
5.4.1 Keeping Journals	253
5.4.2 Book Report	254
5.4.3 Student Portfolios	255
5.5 Additional Activities to Improve learners' Writing Performance	257
5.6 General Requirements for Composition Writing	263
5.7 Writing and Reading	266
5.8 Writing for Learning Versus Writing for Learning	267
5.9 Writing: The Process of Discovering Meaning	268
5.10 Conclusion	270
General Conclusion	273
Bibliography	283
Appendices	
Appendix A : Classroom Observation	
Appendix B : Learners' Pre-Intervention Phase Questionnaire	
Appendix C : Learners' Post-Intervention Phase Questionnaire	
Appendix D : Written Expression Examination Samples	
Appendix E : Learners' Pre-Test Samples	
Appendix F : Learners' Post-Test Samples	

LIST OF TABLES

- Table 2.1:** Middle-School English Textbooks
- Table 2.2:** English Teaching Time load
- Table 2.3:** Secondary-School English Textbooks
- Table 4.1:** Learners' Pre-Intervention Phase Task-Production Marks
- Table 4.2:** Students' Reasons for Learning English
- Table 4.3:** Learners' Enjoyment in Studying English
- Table 4.4:** Learners' Classification of the Four language Skills in Order of Complexity
- Table 4.5:** Learners' Enjoyment of the Writing Course
- Table 4.6:** Learners' Writing Proficiency Level Assessment
- Table 4.7:** Reasons for Learners' Writing Difficulties
- Table 4.8:** Learners' Major Problem Areas in Paragraph Writing
- Table 4.9:** Reasons for Learners' Negative Attitudes towards Writing
- Table 4.10:** Complexity of Learners' Assigned Writing Tasks
- Table 4.11:** Paragraph Instruction
- Table 4.12:** Learners' Practice in Paragraph Writing
- Table 4.13:** Learners' Use of the Writing Process
- Table 4.14:** Learners' Use of Drafts When Composing
- Table 4.15:** Changes Made by Learners While Rewriting Drafts
- Table 4.16:** Teacher's Assistance to Learners
- Table 4.17:** Learners' Preferred Ways of Working in Class
- Table 4.18:** Teacher's Guidance and Peers' Help
- Table 4.19:** Effectiveness of the Current Writing Instruction
- Table 4.20:** Efficiency of the Current Writing Instruction
- Table 4.21:** Learners' Post-Intervention Phase Task-Production Marks
- Table 4.22:** Learners' Pre and Post-Assessment Grades
- Table 4.23:** Preparing Learners' Thinking Abilities
- Table 4.24:** Reasons Making Writing an Important Skill at University Level
- Table 4.25:** Efficiency of Explicit Writing Instruction to Help Overcome Learners' Difficulties
- Table 4.26:** Explicit Teaching of Text Patterns Helping Write Better

Table 4.27: Importance of Form and Content

Table 4.28: Importance of Writing Features for Paragraph Production

Table 4.29: Practice in Paragraph Writing

Table 4.30: Learners' Ability to Write Better in the Other Modules and Coming Years

Table 5.1: Sentence Patterns

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1 Producing a piece of writing (Raimes, 1983: 06)	20
Figure 1.2 The process wheel (Harmer 2004: 06)	39
Figure 1.3 The writing process model (Flower and Hayes, 1981)	40
Figure 1.4 Dynamic and unpredictable model of process writing (Tribble, 1996)	62
Figure 3.1 A basic action research model (Kurt Levin, 1946)	135
Figure 3.2 Research design	160

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

BAC: Baccalaureate examination (Entrance examination for the university)

BEM: Brevet de l'Enseignement Moyen.

CBA: Competency-Based Approach.

CLT: Communicative Language Teaching.

DA: Dialectal Arabic

EFL: English as a foreign language

ESL: English as a second language

FL: Foreign Language.

FL1: First foreign language

FL2: Second foreign language

GTCW: General teaching council for Wales

L1: Learners' first language or mother tongue

L2: Second Language

LMD: Licence, Master, Doctorate

MSA: Modern Standard Arabic

MT: Mother Tongue.

TEFL: Teaching English as a foreign Language

1 YMS: 1st Year Middle School

2 YMS: 2nd Year Middle School

3 YMS: 3rd Year Middle School

4 YMS: 4th Year Middle School

1 YSS: 1st Year Secondary School

2 YSS: 2nd Year Secondary School

3 YSS: 3rd Year Secondary School

General Introduction

The recent changes in language teaching have led to a substantial shift regarding such teaching not as mere object of study but as a system of communication. As a matter of fact, because communication across languages is becoming increasingly important, writing has become an important component of communicative language teaching, no longer seen as a simple language skill needed for mere examination purposes, but as an essential productive one needed for long-term goals.

The traditional view of writing as a skill primarily needed to support and reinforce the other skills has been replaced by the notion that writing in a second language is more a support to language education, becoming a field of increased interest, then assuming an increasing role in both second and foreign-language education. As a result, writing instruction has undergone several changes in terms of the numerous approaches and methods implemented since the early 1980's, with a shift of focus from sentence structure and grammar activities to text organization. In other words, the view that writing is more importantly used as a system of communication, assuming an increasing role worldwide has led to the introduction of a number of approaches and methods. Yet, despite being regarded as successful at one period or another, none of these approaches has proved to be actually efficient and is rejected with the same kind of vigor it was first implemented. Therefore, despairing of finding ways to teach writing adequately, researchers, educationalists and L2 practitioners are still in quest of a coherent, more relevant theory for instructing this skill. While highlighting the essential points related to writing, the study will also present some of the major approaches to teaching this skill, both traditional and innovative ones, some of which were dropped because of their inefficiency while others are still in vogue.

The choice of the selected topic was born after considering a pedagogical problem which is becoming more and more prominent, and to suggest ways in which it might be solved. The problem is that, when they join university, the new Baccalaureate

holders have been exposed to English learning for a period of seven years (four years at the middle school and three years at the secondary level) or even more (due to failure at previous levels). In spite of such a lengthy period of foreign language learning experience and much concern turned towards improving learners' proficiency level, entrant students present serious deficiencies in FL2 writing. In addition to inaccurate mastery of the basics of the writing system (mechanics and grammatical structures), their writing most frequently being mere sequences of unrelated sentences, the vast majority of new learners display an important lack of competency in thinking and analyzing, such skills being of fundamental importance for students in order to develop as effective writers. It should be noted that one of the main functions of writing at higher education level is to expand one's own knowledge through reflection (rather than simply communicating and receiving well-established information), leading to see writing and critical thinking as closely linked. Yet, the appropriate thinking and reasoning skills needed to succeed appear to evade the majority of first-year students. In higher education, great emphasis is placed on the writer's thought and logic, and the development of ideas. Though the conventions of language such as accuracy, mechanics and style are also important, they are nonetheless seen as secondary, content and organization being regarded as more important matters.

It should be noted that the teaching/learning of writing in the Algerian educational system is given much concern throughout the different levels of instruction yet without reaching the expected goals. As writing is an important part of the curriculum, such teaching raises serious problems at higher education level. At pre-university education, writing is taught implicitly with much emphasis put on the development of oral skills, teachers frequently postponing the instruction of writing to the merit of the other three skills. As a matter of fact, such teaching stresses the important need for learners to build proficiency in all of the four language skills in order to achieve communication. However, as it appears that oral proficiency is given much more importance over the written one, both speaking and listening are practised to the detriment of writing which is primarily used to support the development of oral proficiency.

Although its importance for successful academic work is highly acknowledged, writing is the skill which receives little attention in language learning classes in the Algerian context, generally relegated to the end of the session due to several contextual constraints. One reason is that, in comparison with the other three skills, developing writing ability to an acceptable degree requires much more time. It is then no wonder that writing is the skill which has always received little importance and treatment in the Algerian context, this partly due to the dual complexity which instructors and students alike are faced with: the complex nature of writing on the one hand, and the difficulties inherent to the foreign language on the other. Clearly, writing is a slow process which develops over years of much effort and continual practice. In spite of being widely recognized as an essential skill in the field of education nowadays, writing instruction witnesses a growing dissatisfaction concerning the low performance of a large number of Algerian EFL students. For this reason, it is estimated necessary to uncover some of the concerns voiced by a large number of EFL university teachers. A major concern is that, once they reach an advanced level in Higher Education (case of Master and Doctorate students), learners' proficiency level is not only far from satisfactory but is rather disappointing as well. Teachers tend to blame the methods used to teach writing at university level (namely those used at first-year level), stating that such pedagogies prove unproductive as learners display poor achievement at both linguistic and discourse levels. Such a problem is mainly due to the fact that, for decades, successful writing has been seen as synonymous with language competence, with a tendency to confuse grammatical correctness with writing performance, this leading to teach grammar during the writing course. Clearly, this is totally contradictory with what good writing in English involves.

In the Algerian educational context, only the most advanced classes involve composition in the target language, these composition classes being no more than workshops in grammar. EFL teachers have rarely focused on improving composition skills such as structuring discourse, organizing thoughts, choosing appropriate vocabulary and style in writing, concentrating on the various discourse modes

(narration, argumentation, description, and exposition), or tailoring the writing for specific audiences. Pre-university education fails to provide learners with an adequate preparation in essential thinking and language skills, such being of fundamental importance for academic success. It is no wonder, then, that such teachers generally complain about the poor performance of their learners.

Rather than considering writing as a learning experience, the vast majority of teachers and students alike, for whom writing is but an isolated skill required for mere academic purposes, appear to be mainly concerned with mechanics and correct grammatical forms, having no concern with content organization. In other words, totally unaware about what effective writing requires, that is, mastery of the composition skills mentioned above, teachers most frequently become concerned with the conventions of the written code (accurate writing system and lexico-grammatical knowledge). As a matter of fact, the ability to write effectively is becoming more and more important nowadays, such a skill being not only regarded as the key to academic success (educational reasons) but also for business and personal reasons.

The present study serves a twofold purpose: both the theoretical and the practical aspects of writing in the target language. While seeking to find ways to promote the teaching/learning of writing and recommend a more adequate way of teaching this skill, this research first and foremost proceeds to assess the efficiency of drawing from a number of methods and approaches in one's instructional practices, being eclectic, showing the whole importance of explicit teaching for learners' writing ability enhancement, making regular use of the writing process involving the three required (pre-writing, writing and post-writing) stages, attempting to demonstrate the positive impact such a process can have for the development of foreign language writing proficiency.

As the major aim of this work is to cater for the way first-year learners tackle the writing task, seeking to highlight the potential pedagogical deficiencies and aiming to underline the inefficiency of employing a single approach for writing instruction, it seems essential to look anew at the teaching of writing, the correlation between explicit instruction, the writing process use and achievement in writing,

attempting to provide a plan of action for enhancement of first-year learners' writing proficiency level as well as development of effective instructional practices. It seems then that the time is ripe enough for recommending a reassessment of priorities in terms of what has to be taught in the writing classroom, providing learners with opportunities through which they learn to think and become aware of the true nature of writing: paying attention to the grammar, discourse features, and the composing knowledge (that is the complex process which proficient writers go through), with the major assumption that writing is not fixed but recursive and cognitive (involving conscious mental activities requiring both knowledge and the application of certain rules and norms of the language). Such a dimension will likely lead writers (learners) to set up a link between linguistic knowledge, discourse knowledge, and writing ability. While linguistic knowledge includes knowledge of the basic structural elements of the language, i.e. the writer's ability to combine words into correct and meaningful sentences, discourse knowledge refers to knowledge of the ways in which cohesive text is constructed, i.e. the writer's ability to combine and develop sentences into larger units to express complete thoughts and ideas. For this, the following questions are put forward:

1. What writing pedagogy/ies is/are used at first-year university level?
2. What is the impact of this/these writing pedagogy/ies on first-year EFL university students' proficiency and writing ability?
3. What writing pedagogy/ies could bring about positive change in the learners' writing performance at the content and discourse levels?

As it has recently been assumed that the use of the writing process underlies successful achievement, it seems then necessary to examine the way these learners perform their writing task. Being unaware of the processing resources has for a long time made learners produce texts that looked like strings of unrelated sentences, lacking a number of elements essential to achieve effective writing as this skill appeals

for many competences at the same time. It follows that in order for learners to be able to express themselves freely and meaningfully, using cohesive and coherent pieces of writing, they have to get an awareness of the writing process and all that it entails, such becoming possible through explicit instruction of specific writing resources and much practice. Such resources involve the mastery of several skills such as grammatical accuracy, lexical items, and rhetorical patterns including variables such as style, presentation of ideas in an orderly manner showing continuity of thought, sentence and paragraph cohesion, coherence, and other ways of presenting written discourse. To give answers to the research questions, the following hypotheses are provided:

1. Among the different pedagogies available for the teaching of writing, the most frequently employed at first-year university level is the product-based approach. Being mainly concerned with the final product while the process is totally inexistent, this approach views writing as predominantly linguistic, giving priority to grammatical accuracy and writing at sentence level.
2. Writing instruction at first year-university level proves to be deficient in some respects, failing to provide learners with adequate preparation in essential academic skills: thinking, analyzing and writing fluently and expressively, students' deficiencies appearing mainly at the level of content organization and discourse, with an obvious inability to make a balance between accuracy and fluency.
3. In order for writing to be successful at first-year university level and to improve the learners' writing effectiveness, a pedagogic change is needed with respect to the approach, the teaching methodology and the techniques. A reasoned eclecticism in addition to providing explicit writing instruction and making the writing process become an inherent part of writing may help learners overcome their difficulties in EFL writing at content organization and discourse levels.

Which writing pedagogy could be used to approach writing? How can the weakest learners be encouraged to compose? How can the learners' writing effectiveness be improved? How can successful writing performance be achieved? Does explicit writing instruction help learners develop their writing ability? are all important questions the EFL university teacher must put to himself before engaging in the difficult task of teaching writing, more particularly at first-year level. It may be fair to argue that the vast majority of new Baccalaureate holders frequently reach university without any experience at composing in English as pre-university education encourages memorization and rote learning, inquiry and reflection evading a large number of entrant students. Yet, a multitude of techniques are available for making the writing course more productive, helping learners to develop their thinking and language skills. But above all, a pedagogic change regarding the teaching and learning of writing is needed. Such a change primarily based on reconsideration, reflection, refinement, and reformulation of instructional practices can be largely provided at higher education level.

The main objective of the present research is to examine the way entrant students proceed as they engage in the composing task. The subjects involved in this study are a group of thirty (30) first-year university learners, that is, newly enrolled students at the Department of English. The study examines their writing proficiency through an exploration of the current writing pedagogies employed at first-year university level. For this purpose, a classroom-action research is undertaken. Its objectives are threefold: first, reflecting on classroom practice; second, raising the learners' awareness of the factors needed to achieve effective writing thanks to explicit teaching and the use of the writing process; and third, the extent to which systematic and direct instruction can be conducive to learners' writing performance improvement.

The empirical phase is designed in such a way to find out whether explicit instruction of specific writing resources can influence learners' writing performance positively. Besides teacher observation and with the purpose of evaluating first-year EFL learners' writing proficiency level, a written task is designed to the thirty research subjects. This paragraph-writing activity is devised as part of the classroom-action

research, in addition to two questionnaires (pre-intervention phase and post-intervention phase questionnaires) administered to the same sample population. The questionnaires are designed to obtain extra information from the subject participants in order to enlighten the points remaining obscure as concerns the way learners proceed when engaged in task production, to prevent from getting inaccurate information, in sum to make the study more valid and reliable.

This work comprises five chapters. Each chapter develops on the basis of specific objectives: Chapter one examines the role of writing in language teaching and proceeds to discuss writing as a skill in its own right. This chapter is divided into three main sections. The first one illustrates most of the theoretical points concerning writing. It provides an overview of the writing skill in general, starting by defining it and displaying the major components making it a complex skill (1). The chapter also endeavours to present the writing process, providing information about the different steps involved as well as the stages writers go through to achieve effective writing performance. Besides, composition writing is tackled in a subsequent section of the chapter, highlighting the general requirements for composition writing as well as the different types of writing involving the use of different styles and registers, and the strong interrelation between writing and reading (2). The third section is devoted to a description of the major approaches to teaching writing, with emphasis on the current writing pedagogies used at first-year university level (3).

Chapter two is devoted to an overall description of the English teaching situation in the Algerian educational system, with a focus on first-year university learners and the objectives set for English writing in the first level of higher education. While striving to describe the variables that have framed first-year students' writing behaviour, the chapter displays the teaching of English in the different levels of the Algerian educational system from middle-school level to higher education. In addition, it presents the teaching of writing at the same levels of the educational context, proceeding to discuss the development of this skill throughout these levels by presenting the teaching methodology, the instructional practices, and the techniques used for teaching writing. Besides tackling such aspects, the chapter also endeavours

to give a broad view of the LMD system, teacher education and training, roles and strategies, before moving to describe the English Department, and both teachers' and learners' profile.

Chapter three is concerned with the first part of the empirical phase. It first displays the importance of classroom-action research by means of both qualitative and quantitative procedures. This chapter states the research purpose and objectives, the research methodology, describes the participants' profile and the research instruments: teacher classroom observation, task production (pre-intervention, intervention, and post-intervention phases), and two questionnaires (pre-intervention phase and post-intervention phase questionnaires) addressed to first-year learners. The pre-intervention phase questionnaire concerns itself with inquiring about the learners' proficiency level, and examines the way external as well as non-external factors can affect the teaching/learning of writing, the way first-year learners view writing i.e. its importance in relation to the other modules, whether the current writing instruction is an adequate one (fitting the learners' needs, respecting a kind of balance between theory and practice), and the suggestions brought by the same sample population to help remedy or at least lessen the problem of EFL writing.

Chapter four is devoted to the analysis and interpretation of the collected data related to the teaching/learning of writing in order to make the research more valid and reliable. It aims to investigate the main pedagogical deficiencies through a consideration of learners' potential difficulties in the skill under consideration. For this purpose, students' paragraphs are first examined in order to highlight the way learners perform writing, and get an idea about their proficiency level. After analyzing the data obtained from the different research instruments, the results are interpreted through qualitative and quantitative procedures. The study also aims at displaying the effects of explicit writing instruction on learners' performance, attempting to show the extent to which such teaching can help students write both quantitatively and qualitatively, with much emphasis placed on the use of the writing process

Chapter five provides alternative remedies to learners' writing deficiencies through the recommendation of pedagogical perspectives, with a reconsideration of

EFL writing instruction, suggesting ways hoped to contribute to the enhancement of writing at the university level. This last chapter is a collection of stimulating writing activities which are expected to contribute to improving the prevailing conditions for entrant students. The suggested activities are mainly intended to help both teachers and first-year university learners achieve the expected objectives that is, the ability to write effectively.

The accuracy level that used to be the major component of traditional writing courses, emphasizing usage and grammar correction and consequently obliterating learners' writing, has resulted in a controversy in recent years, leading researchers in the field, scholars and practitioners to reconsider writing and the way it is taught. However, showing that the qualitative aspects of learners' writing can be enhanced as a result of explicit teaching has never appeared to be the concern of many language studies. Therefore, while attempting to find alternative ways for both teaching and learning writing enhancement, this study aims at demonstrating the effects of explicit writing instruction on participants' performance as opposed to implicit teaching, such a procedure helping learners to write both quantitatively and qualitatively.

CHAPTER ONE

Writing as a Language Skill

CHAPTER ONE

Writing as a Language Skill

1.1 Introduction	14
1.2 Writing Defined	15
1.3 Complexity of Writing	16
1.4 Writing System Devices	21
1.4.1 Mechanics of Writing	21
1.4.1.1 The Importance of Spelling	22
1.4.1.2 The Functions of Punctuation	24
1.4.2 Rhetorical Devices	25
1.4.2.1 Logical Devices	26
1.4.2.2 Grammatical Devices	26
1.4.2.3 Lexical Devices	27
1.4.3 Discourse Unity	27
1.4.3.1 Cohesion	28
1.4.3.2 Coherence	31
1.4.4 Purpose, Audience, Content	32
1.4.4.1 Purpose	33
1.4.4.2 Audience	33
1.4.4.3 Content	35
1.5 Writing as a Product	36
1.6 Writing as a Process	37
1.6.1 The Pre-Writing Stage	41
1.6.2 The Writing Stage	42
1.6.3 The Post-Writing Stage	42
1.7 Composition: The Need for a Framework	43
1.7.1 Sentence Construction	43
1.7.2 Paragraph Development	44
1.7.3 Composition Writing	45
1.8 Types of Writing	47
1.8.1 Descriptive Writing	48
1.8.2 Narrative Writing	49
1.8.3 Expository Writing	49

1.9 Genre and Register	50
1.11.1 The controlled-to-Free Method	52
1.11.2 The Free Writing Approach	54
1.11.3 The Product-Based Approach	56
1.11.4 The Process Approach	60
1.11.5 The Process-Product Approach	67
1.11.6 The Genre Approach	68
1.11.7 The Process-Genre Based Approach	70
1.12 Conclusion	72

1.1 Introduction

The major aim of chapter one is to discuss both writing as a skill in its own right, displaying the different features involved in its complexity, and also effective writing performance. Since the ability to write proves essential in Higher Education, the first part of this chapter will attempt to shed light on the manifold variables which make this skill a complex one and consequently a difficult skill to acquire by the vast majority of learners. Because such difficulties seem to underlie new Baccalaureate holders' writing performance, two questions immediately come to mind: "Why does writing pose so many problems to entrant students?" and "What are those difficulties?" That they are linguistic cannot be disputed. It is nonetheless important to note that mere acquisition of linguistic competence is totally insufficient for achieving effective writing performance. Put differently, grammatical correctness alone is not what makes for good writing in English. Practice concentrating on writing at the sentence level, paying attention to certain areas of grammar, gives learners the impression that writing is mastery of grammar rules as this skill is taught separately from context, audience and purpose. Since the focus is on accuracy and usage, the major problem regarding the teaching of writing has to do with meaning. Having a knowledge of how meaningful and purposeful writing can be accomplished proves of fundamental importance, writing being most and foremost a system of communication. An important means concerning the writing knowledge a writer must have is the complex process (the writing process) including a number of operations and strategies which proficient writers go through while composing.

Due to the increasing role of writing in second and foreign-language education, writing instruction has recently received a particular interest leading to significant changes at the level of the approach. One of these major changes occurred due to the fact that writing is no longer seen as linear but recursive, the traditional view of writing as a product being supplanted by the notion of writing as a process. However, such debate frequently results in conflicting views regarding writing instruction, making EFL practitioners still in search of a coherent adequate

theory for the teaching of writing. As a result, numerous approaches have been introduced at successive periods in order to arrive at a more efficient way of teaching writing.

The last part of the present chapter is then a survey of the major approaches and methods available to the teaching of EFL writing. Yet, before moving to the presentation of some of these, it is estimated necessary to touch on the following areas: (1) defining writing, and (2) showing its complexity by displaying the major components making this skill so complex.

1.2 Writing Defined

Also called a dynamic or active skill and one of the two productive skills through which messages are conveyed and then communication established, writing is a method of representing language in visual form. It is, in fact, more than mere transformation of human sounds into written language. Writing is the representation of all the thoughts, facts, opinions, or ideas in written language; it means translating one's thoughts into a visual form of written words (Byrne, 1979), developing and presenting them in a structured way (Sadiqi, 1990).

Writing is neither linear, nor static, nor a one-step action but a progressive recursive activity. Writing is viewed as a troublesome and demanding task involving concentration, effort and many activities and processes at the same time. In this respect, Berninger et al. (2002) state that writing “involves on the one hand lower-order transcription skills such as handwriting, punctuation and spelling, and on the other hand, higher-order self-regulated thinking processes involved in planning, sequencing and expressing the content”. Berninger et al. explain that the act of writing not only requires sound knowledge of vocabulary, possession and mastery of the mechanics of writing (spelling, punctuation, handwriting, etc.), grammatical rules, and strategies, but the application of appropriate norms, structures, and writing strategies as well, taking into account the topic, audience, and purpose, depending on the context of composing. In this respect, Sturm and Koppenhaver (2000, qtd. in Westwood, 2008: 56) explain that writing is a complex

mental activity involving different elements “including the topic or theme, choice of words, organisation, purpose, audience, clarity, sequence, cohesion and transcription”. All such writing skills combined together in addition to the mechanics of writing are required for successful writing. In the context of teaching and learning, such demanding tasks make writing problematic to the majority of learners, both natives and non-natives of a given language; the different matters involved in making the process of writing a complex one are explained below.

1.3 Complexity of Writing

It has always been agreed that writing is the most difficult of the four basic skills whatever the language in question is, whether first, second or foreign (Hedge, 1988; Westwood, 2008). Despite its complexity, skill in writing remains a basic requirement in any academic environment, an important dimension of academic life (Murray and Moore, 2006). A large number of learners whose writing is poor and who wish to improve their proficiency level come to the conclusion that either one is endowed with this skill or is not, assuming that there is no remedy to their problem. Yet, this assumption is not always true. Just because a learner is not able to write, this does not mean that there is no solution to his/her problem. Most frequently, the writing difficulties are merely relevant to a particular assignment and therefore can be lessened. In this regard, the following two questions come to mind:

- (1) What makes writing such a complex skill?
- (2) Is the difficulty to acquire this skill due to the difficult nature of writing itself?

Despite the complexity of writing, a skill being “neither easy nor spontaneous” (Byrne, 1979: 01) and an “extremely complex cognitive activity requiring control over a number of variables simultaneously” (Bell and Burnaby, 1984: 36), writing remains essential for learners at the different levels of instruction. However, unlike speech which is the language of immediate communication, writing presents writers with numerous difficulties. In terms of the similarities and

differences regarding speaking and writing, Rosen (1981, qtd. in Hedge, 1998: 5) posits the following:

The writer is a lonely figure cut off from the stimulus and corrective of listeners. He must be a predictor of reactions and act on his predictions. He writes with one hand tied behind his back, being robbed of gesture. He is robbed too of his tone of voice and the aid of clues the environment provides. He is condemned to monologue; there is no one to help out, to fill the silences, put words in his mouth, or make encouraging noises.

What emerges from the above quotation is that, when composing, the writer is cut off from all that surrounds him; there is no one to help, correct, encourage, or give him a sense of direction. The writer has to predict how the reader will react, attempting to cater for the reader's needs and expectations.

He adds:

Writing is detached from the wide range of expressive possibilities in speech. A writer is unable to exploit all the devices available to a speaker: gesture, body movement, facial expression, pitch and tone of voice, stress and hesitations. A speaker can backtrack, or clarify and revise ideas as listeners question or disagree. A writer has to compensate for all of these disadvantages.

As explained by Rosen, when composing, in contrast with speaking, the writer can neither get immediate feedback from the reader, nor use intonation, stress, facial expressions, gesture, nor body movement. According to the above quotations, it seems then interesting to make a comparison between speaking and writing. While speech is the language of immediate feedback and direct communication allowing the speaker to adjust, clarify, add, ask, explain, agree, disagree, etc., writing is seen as “the act of communicating accomplished thoughts through written language, an interactive process between the reader and the writer” (Olshtain, 2001: 207), a way through which delayed contact is made at a distance. In this regard, Hedge (1998: 5) states that:

Compared to speech, effective writing requires a number of things: a high degree of organization in the development of ideas and information; a high degree of accuracy so that there is no ambiguity of meaning; the use of complex grammatical devices for focus and emphasis; and a careful choice of vocabulary, grammatical patterns, and sentence structures to create a style which is appropriate to the subject matter and the eventual readers.

What emerges from the above quotation is that, unlike speech, no immediate feedback is provided in writing. This disadvantage has then to be compensated for by great clarity and the use of grammatical and stylistic techniques for focusing on main points. In like manner, the need for logical organisation in a piece of writing is by far greater than the one in a conversation. Put differently, the reader has to interpret what has been written, in Byrne's words (1988) "to decode the message" without asking for clarification or else. This can be achieved through the selection of certain types of sentence structure rather than others (writing having certain structural differences from speech) and the great use of language devices. In the written form, there is greater reliance on the structural elements alone, grammar and lexis. Such elements are determined by the writer's need to make his writing as explicit as possible. As effective writing requires that a number of variables have to be tackled simultaneously (Raimes, 1983; Hedge, 1998), in addition to the ability to vary one's style according to a particular situation as noted by Nemouchi (2014: 44) that "writing takes particular conventional forms," such demands make writing problematic to the majority of writers, both natives and non-natives, let alone EFL learners. This means that different types of writing involving different styles and registers according to a particular context and a specific audience are required in order to make one's writing effective.

With regard to speaking and writing, it is assumed that there is no sharp separation between the language used in speech and the one used in writing. Such a consideration has led scholars and researchers to debate over the similarities and differences regarding speaking and writing. These are rather two independent but interrelated forms that draw on the same linguistic elements of the language, its grammar and lexis, but to a different extent. This is largely due to the nature of the

two channels: speech is used for immediate and direct communication while writing is the means through which one makes delayed contact at a distance.

In the context of teaching and learning, it should be noted that, despite the numerous similarities between the two channels (speaking and writing), some differences regarding different levels of correctness as well as different types of activities related to learning can be observed. This implies first and foremost that, in comparison to speaking, writing, being a more standardized system, has to be acquired through formal instruction (Grabowski, 1996), that the teaching of writing should focus not on how much the linguistic forms and vocabulary of a language have been acquired, but on how to put such elements to effective use. Put differently, learning how to fit linguistic forms together to make correct sentences is totally insufficient. A learner cannot be said to know a language until he shows the ability to vary the style according to a particular situation or a particular context (whether in oral or written communication).

An important point to raise is that writing is often imposed, most frequently by circumstances. It is an important part of the curriculum in schools from the earliest grades onward as most frequently all exams in the majority of institutions (whether public or private) take a written form. Whatever the level of instruction (primary, middle, secondary or higher education), learners are asked to write short but simple paragraphs, short accounts, summaries, papers, book reports, exposés, etc, (depending on the level of instruction they belong to) for their teachers, but most frequently for examination purposes, the purpose of an examination being mainly to assess the learners' ability to convey their thoughts through the medium of writing. And yet, not all of them will turn to be good writers as, for the majority, writing is a demanding exacerbating component of learning.

According to Byrne (1979), the problems that make writing difficult represent three categories. The first problem is psychological. It is caused by lack of interaction and feedback between the writer and the reader. The second category

concerns linguistic problems. Byrne states that grammar mistakes can be tolerated in spoken discourse due to the spontaneous nature of speech. In writing, however, the writer has to be careful about what s/he wishes to express: using a clearer and more grammatical manner in order to compensate for the absence of certain features of spoken language such as immediate feedback between interlocutors, this standardized system allowing “for a higher degree of sanctions when people deviate from that standard” (Grabowski, 1996: 75). The third category concerns cognitive problems. Speaking, which is a natural process, occurs without much conscious effort. Writing, for its part, is not random. As a result, it has to be taught through formal instruction (Halliday, 1985; Grabowski, 1996). All these difficulties make learning to write a sophisticated process involving many interrelated components: grammar, syntax, mechanics, word choice, purpose, audience and the writer’s process. It is possible to see the interrelatedness of these components in writing in Figure 1.1 by Raimes (1983: 06).

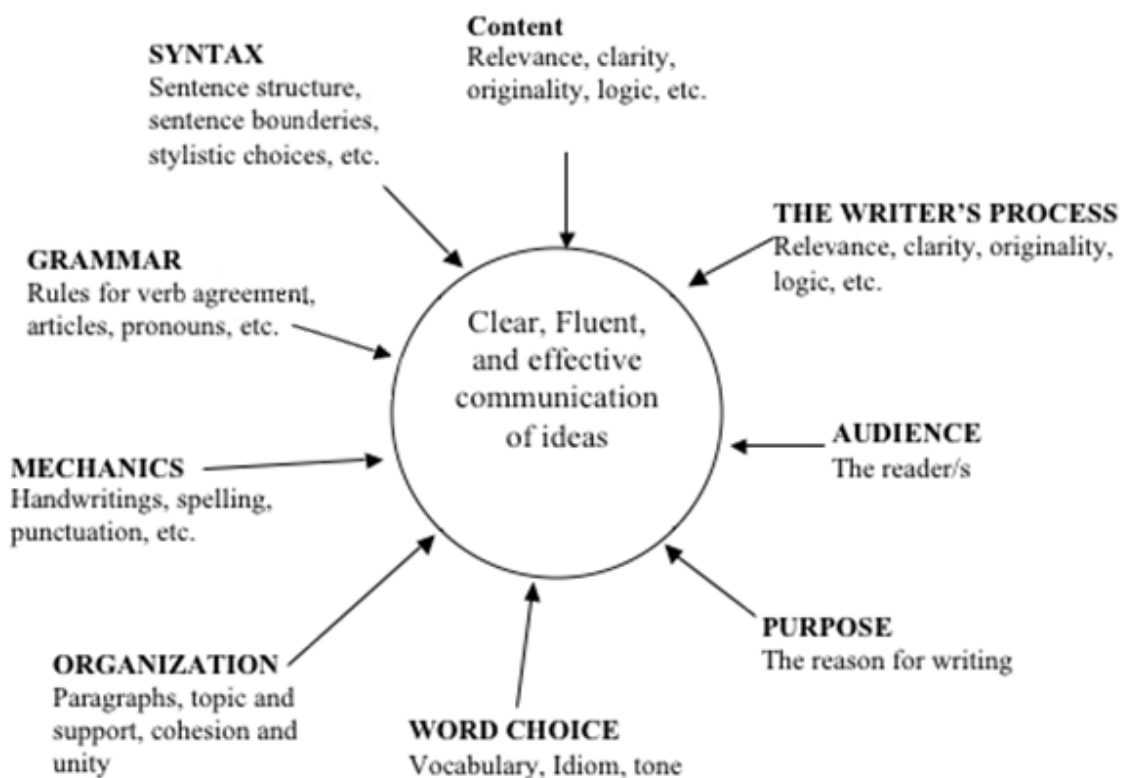


Figure 1.1

Producing a Piece of Writing

These features of writing cause problems even for native speakers when composing. Therefore, if writing is such a complex skill for native speakers since it requires formal instruction and conscious mental effort, needless to say that it will be then more difficult for non-native speakers, namely EFL learners. The next section, devoted to the presentation of the writing devices, develops the point on the complexity of writing.

1.4 Writing System Devices

In order for writing to be meaningful, selecting certain types of sentence structure and also using language devices, prove essential since there is greater reliance on the structural elements alone in writing. As stated by Ourghi (2002: 71), “Written language generally demands an accurate writing system and lexicogrammatical knowledge with regard to graphics, mechanics, lexis, and syntax”. Put differently, this knowledge enables the writer to select the appropriate correct language forms to use in his/her writing in order to make it clear and meaningful. Similarly, choosing the appropriate vocabulary, making good use of linguistic rhetorical elements (cohesive devices), meaningful punctuation, building up sentences and arranging them into a well-constructed and coherent text (putting the interrelated pieces together), are determinant factors helping the writing to be effective. Hedge (1988:89) names this “crafting”¹. Such an important aspect of writing highlights the linguistic features of a specific piece of writing and shows whether mastery of the linguistic system has been achieved, in terms of grammar, lexis, mechanics of writing (spelling and punctuation), and texture (Ourghi, 2002).

1.4.1 Mechanics of Writing

Mastery of the writing system involves the use of graphic conventions including spelling and punctuation. Making use of the graphological elements in written language helps convey and clarify meaning. Obviously, these conventions do not make the text itself; they, nonetheless, help process the information, conveying a specific message, clarifying meaning, ensuring that communication is

¹ Crafting is the way in which a writer puts the pieces of a text together. It is how he develops ideas through sentences and paragraphs within an overall structure.

efficient thanks to making the ideas flow smoothly from one sentence to the other. It appears then that “good writing implies a knowledge of the conventions of the written code” (Rivers and Temperley, 1978: 264) as well as “the ability to use them” (Heaton 1985: 138). This means that it is not enough to know the conventions of the written code if one cannot put them to effective use for writing achievement. While bad or no punctuation at all highly affects meaning and distorts communication, frequently making the original meaning lost, also creating a bad impression on the reader(s), poor spelling may lead to ambiguity. Considered as somehow troublesome by the majority of learners who totally ignore this important dimension, mechanics are a specific component of the written form of the language. Mainly used to enhance clarity, their value needs to be demonstrated and their whole importance should be one of the main concerns of any writing course.

1.4.1.1 The Importance of Spelling

Spelling refers to the way words are formed thanks to putting together alphabetical letters arranged in a correct order. Though spelling accurately is an important component of writing, poor spellers, both native and non-native speakers, fail to grasp its importance, a problem resulting in a serious handicap. It is nonetheless important to mention that most of the common spelling mistakes occur due to confusion between words: a number of English words are often confused due to the relationship between sound and symbol which is a complex one, spelling being most of the time irregular (Sadler, 2006; Harmer, 2014). Such words sound the same, are spelled differently and have different meanings, i.e., homophones such as ‘their/there, two/to, flower/flour, through/threw’. Likewise, the same sound may be represented through various spellings as in the following examples: /k/ in ‘cat, kick, pick, kitchen, character, make, quality’. Conversely, a certain spelling may have a number of different sounds as for instance in -s- ‘stage, sons, promise, issue, insure, is, jaws, Japanese, parenthesis, treasure’. Since a number of sounds are realized through a variety of different spellings and various spellings have a variety of different sounds (Browne, 2009), it follows that “learning to spell in a language

like English is not an easy task” (Westwood, 2008: 62). Even though word pronunciation varies greatly, no indication of the way words are spelt is provided. While English spelling is unsystematic, with word pronunciation varying greatly, it is not completely random and, as stated by Harmer (2014: 46) “English spelling rules do often have exceptions, these usually applying to only a small number of individual words”.

As a result, both the teacher and the learner should share the responsibility for ensuring an adequate mastery of both spelling rules and the exceptions. On the one hand, since English is not unsystematic (Browne, 2009), it is the teacher’s responsibility to provide learners with the necessary rules, help and guidance. On the other hand, the main concern of the learner should be to consult a dictionary for guidance because, though wrong or incorrect, spelling does not necessarily create ambiguity (in communication), it nonetheless makes a bad impression on the reader (i.e. the teacher in the context of teaching and learning), mainly in test and examination evaluation. Yet, a further consideration is that mis-spelling rarely interferes with communication. Some examples of this kind are provided below:

- We saw meny animalz in the zoo. (many- animals)
- A little boy kiked the ball. (kicked)
- A window cleaner fell of the ladder. (of)
- A third car bumped into the csecond car. (second)
- Too women run to help the drivers. (two- ran)
- If I were living in an earlyer century... (earlier).....

As previously stated and though English is not unsystematic, it is worth mentioning that in English the relationship between sound and symbol is a complex one. As spelling is a serious problem for many language users, it seems then inappropriate to adopt too prescriptive an approach towards spelling in terms of a writing programme.

1.4.1.2 The Functions of Punctuation

Punctuation refers to the use of conventional signs and symbols known as punctuation marks which serve to display the speech functions of any sentence, whether a statement (the period or full stop indicating where a sentence ends), making readers stop and read a particular part as a whole entity (Harmer, 2004). Likewise, the colon and semi colon show the relationship between a word (or group of words) and what comes after, the comma is used to separate different sections of a sentence and also to emphasize specific pieces of information, a question (signalled by a question mark), an exclamation (exclamation mark) or quotation (inverted commas).

The main function of punctuation is to regulate writing by enhancing clarity, making relationships between a word or word group and what comes after, helping to organize and structure one's writing, also establishing structure and logic, affecting meaning either positively or negatively, depending on the quality of punctuation, i.e. whether good, defective, or inexistent, helping to interpret sentences and reading passages. This section intends to show the important role of punctuation in making writing comprehensible and easy to read. Defective or no punctuation at all may lead to ambiguity, misunderstanding, and makes writing difficult to understand. The following sentences have been chosen to illustrate the above point, explaining how a change in punctuation brings about a change in meaning.

(1) The theory he explained was very impressive.

(2) The theory, he explained, was very impressive. (Grellet, 1996: 8-9)

The first sentence means that:

The theory *which he explained* was very impressive. or

He explained *a theory that was very impressive*. or

It was a very impressive theory.

The second example means that *he explained* that the theory was very impressive.

(3) It was a large party and John had brought his two sisters, Anne and Christine.

(4) It was a large party and John had brought his two sisters, Anne, and Christine.

(Grellet, 1996: 9)

In the third example, it is possible to understand that *Anne and Christine are John's sisters*. John brought *only two persons*, that is, his *two sisters*. While in the fourth example, one understands that John brought *his two sisters plus Anne and Christine*, that is *four persons*.

In spite of the importance of punctuation, it seems extremely trivial for the vast majority of new Baccalaureate holders, and has never received due attention. Since it plays a significant role, it has to be included in any writing programme. For this main reason, its value needs to be demonstrated. Punctuating correctly is an important skill since, most frequently, the quality of writing is not judged on the form and content only, but on how well punctuation has been used. In order for learners to develop as writers, they need awareness of the conventions of the writing system: spelling, capitalisation and regular practice of the rules governing punctuation. Paying due attention to such conventions clearly shows how much the writer cares about his/her writing. On the contrary, unattractive writing, which makes a negative impression on the reader, and a text difficult to understand, suggests that the writer either ignores the conventions of writing or simply does not care about them (Ourghi, 2002).

In addition to the twin problems of spelling and punctuation, other mechanical components deserve much attention, in particular the construction of well-formed sentences, paragraphs and whole texts are to be achieved thanks to the use of certain specific linguistic devices discussed hereafter.

1.4.2 Rhetorical Devices

This concerns all the devices needed in writing so as to produce a text in which all the sentences are organised into a coherent whole. Such organisation proves very efficient in that it helps avoid confusion or ambiguity and enables the writer fulfil his communicative purpose. This section is intended to give a brief

survey of the rhetorical devices. It is possible to look at them under three headings: logical, grammatical, and lexical.

1.4.2.1 Logical Devices

Logical devices are words or phrases used to establish the relationship between ideas. Such elements, also called linking devices, cohesive devices, connecting words, linking words or linkers (Pincas, 1982, Byrne, 1988) can be successfully used to provide cohesion in a piece of writing. These devices include those of addition (e.g. and, furthermore, moreover, besides, in addition, etc.), contrast (e.g. but, however, yet, while, on the other hand, etc.), comparison (e.g. in the same way, similarly, likewise, etc.), result (e.g. then, thus, hence, as a result, etc.) exemplification (e.g. for example, for instance, such as, etc.) and some others which are also very important and therefore very useful logical devices. The use of such elements enables the writer to make relationships between sentences and paragraphs understandable to the reader. In certain types of texts, it proves absolutely indispensable to use the devices for enumeration such as firstly, in the first place, secondly, finally, last of all, etc.; and for summarizing: in short, on the whole, etc.

1.4.2.2 Grammatical Devices

Such devices, without which text cohesion would not be achieved, are very important elements in writing. Certain grammatical devices, for example those which signal relationships between sentences by means of anaphora² and cataphora³ referencing, help to establish links between sentences and paragraphs. For example:

- anaphora: ‘*Strout* is a small town situated in a beautiful area. Life *there* is quite peaceful and the inhabitants have no reason for complaint.’

(Adapted from Think It Over, 1990: 99)

- cataphora: ‘*She* may be right now, but this *woman* has lied so much to us!’

² Anaphora is the use of a word or phrase which refers back to another word or phrase which was used earlier in a text (or conversation).

³ Cataphora is the use of a word or phrase which refers forward to another word or phrase which will be used later in the text (or conversation).

1.4.2.3 Lexical Devices

Lexical devices or lexical relationships refer to the way in which sentences are linked together or, more properly, the links between words themselves. There are numerous ways thanks to which the choice of words and expressions can unify a piece of writing because of the similarity in meanings among them. The most-often used devices are the repetition, the use of synonyms or near synonyms and the use of more general words which act as umbrella words for many items in the text. For example:

Astronauts undergo extensive training to learn to perform their complex duties. Before being assigned a specific mission, *they* must complete a general background training *programme*. *This programme* lasts from four to six months.

(Adapted from Think It Over, 1990: 209)

1.4.3 Discourse Unity

There seems to be disagreement about the meaning of the two terms ‘text’ and ‘discourse’. Considering the definitions proposed by Cook (1989) and Crystal (1992), these terms are used almost interchangeably. For others, discourse refers to language in context. Nevertheless, according to the same writers, both text and discourse are to be defined in terms of meaning. Coherent texts or pieces of discourse cannot be considered as such unless they form a meaningful whole. A text or piece of discourse consists of more than one sentence, the sentences combining together to form a meaningful whole thanks to the use of certain structural devices and features which differentiate coherent pieces of discourse from disconnected sentences (Nunan, 1993). Discourse, according to Riley (1985: 2) refers to “the process of creating, relating, organizing and realizing meaning in a text beyond the sentence level”. This means that discourse knowledge accounts for the writer’s ability to develop and combine sentences into larger units to express complex thoughts and ideas. However, a text or piece of discourse may consist of just a

single word, such one word conveying a coherent message and forming a meaningful whole (see sections 1.4.3.1 and 1.4.3.2) as in the following examples: Go!, Wait!, Stop!, Listen!, Come in! Therefore, regarding some of the linguistic features of coherent discourse, it is important to note that coherent discourse is largely distinguished from random sentences thanks to the existence of certain text-forming devices (i.e. cohesive devices). Yet, considering the role of cohesion in the establishment of coherent discourse, both Widdowson (1978) and Nunan (1993) share the view that cohesion is neither necessary nor sufficient for the creation of coherent discourse in spite of the use of cohesive devices which allow the logic flow of ideas.

Writing is a complex activity involving a number of variables. Two important variables to take into account which can but add more complexity to the writing task are the twin problems of cohesion and coherence, these being the main characteristics of a well written text. De Beaugrande and Dressler (1981) see these two features as highly involved in making a text communicative.

1.4.3.1 Cohesion

Cohesion involves signals which make text organization clear and the writer's intended meaning easily understandable. It shows how certain grammatical elements of a sentence and words can connect that sentence to what precedes and to what follows in the text. Nunan (1993:21) defines cohesion as:

...sequences of sentences or utterances which seem "to hang together"-contain what are called text-forming devices. These are words and phrases which enable the writer or speaker to establish relationships across sentence or utterance boundaries, and which help to tie the sentences in a text together.

This leads to the conclusion that a text consists of more than one sentence, and the sentences combine to form a meaningful whole conveying a complete message. Yet, the notion that a text should consist of more than one sentence is arguable. Considering the following examples: Stop!, Go!, Wait!, etc, Nunan (1993) states that, though each of them consists of a single word, they, nonetheless are

complete texts, forming a meaningful whole since each of them conveys a complete message.

Halliday and Hasan (1976) on the other hand, share the view that whether a set of sentences constitutes a text or not depends first and foremost on cohesive relationships within and between the sentences. This creates what they call ‘texture’. Hence, they state that “a text has texture and this is what distinguishes it from something that is not a text...The texture is provided by the cohesive RELATION (Halliday and Hasan, 1976: 2). This means that text-forming, cohesive devices, or cohesive relations are largely involved in establishing coherence within a text, and this is what makes it distinguishable from random sentences. It appears then that cohesion plays an important role in the establishment of coherence. Furthermore, Halliday and Hasan (1976:4) add that cohesive relationships within a text are set up, that is:

[...] cohesion occurs where the INTERPRETATION of some element in the discourse is dependent on that of another. The one PRESUPPOSES the other in the sense that it cannot be effectively decoded except by recourse to it.

This means that words within a sentence do not necessarily have any meaning of their own; they only get their meaning from some other item which they refer to (see section 1.4.2). A number of cohesive relationships can be established within a text, providing cohesive ties which bind a text together (Halliday and Hasan, 1976). A most commonly used type of cohesive relationships in texts is shown by markers such as ‘and’, ‘but’, ‘so’ and ‘then’, relating what has been stated to what is going to be expressed. Halliday and Hasan (1976) display four basic conjunction relationships as follows:

- addition: and, furthermore, in addition (to), etc.
- opposition: but, however, nevertheless, etc.
- causal: so, consequently, for this reason, etc.

- temporal: then, after that, finally, at last, etc

It is nonetheless important to note that these formal markers do not stand exclusively with a particular cohesive relation; ‘and’, for example, can be used to bind sentences and clauses in any of the four relationships mentioned above. It is also possible to make relationships between entities despite the absence of formal markers. Said differently, cohesion can be achieved without having recourse to any of the cohesive markers mentioned above which means that a relationship may be implied, not necessarily pointed at. For Halliday and Hasan (1976: 229) “it is the underlying semantic relation... that actually has the cohesive power”. To illustrate this, the following example has been chosen:

‘If you are going to London, I can give you the address of a good hotel there’.

In this sentence, the link is between ‘London’ and ‘there’ (see section 1.4.2.2). Even though Halliday and Hasan state that cohesion is not necessarily achieved thanks to mere use of cohesive markers, they nonetheless insist that such markers constitute ‘textness’ which, without any of the conjunctive relations previously mentioned, a text would not be a text. In the same context, Nunan (1993:57) states that “cohesion consists of certain linguistic devices, including pronouns and conjunctions, which enable the writer or speaker to make relationships between entities and events explicit”.

To sum up, it is fair to say that, in order to make a piece of writing easy to understand, and also to avoid ambiguity, a writer has to make clear to the reader the relationships between sentences and paragraphs. Such relationships can be achieved thanks to the use of cohesive and linguistic devices including pronouns and conjunctions, and signals (repetition of content words, synonymy, hyponymy, anaphora, transition markers), and other lexical relationships (Nunan, 1993; Grabe, 2009).

1.4.3.2 Coherence

Stressing the fact that coherence is the property of the substructure of the paragraph, that is, how to perceive and interpret thoughts, ideas and feelings, Kane (2003: 95) states that cohesion and coherence prove important elements for both text unity and interpretation, adding that:

Paragraph unity involves two related but distinct concepts: coherence and flow. *Coherence* means that the ideas fit together. *Flow* means that the sentences link up so that readers are not conscious of gaps. Flow is a matter of style and exists in specific words and grammatical patterns tying one sentence to another

Coherence in writing, according to Hasan (1984), refers to whatever links the meaning of utterances in a discourse or of the sentences in a text, that is, all the included ideas should be strongly related to the topic (Kane, 2003). This implies relevance of ideas arranged in a logical and orderly manner showing their importance, making writing effective. Merely relying on the syntactic structure and lexical items contained in a message in order to interpret it (Brown and Yule, 1983) is totally insufficient. In other words, it seems clear that one does not interpret a linguistic message solely on the basis of sentence structure and the words used to convey that message. Whether a writer has produced a quite correct grammatical sentence from which a literal interpretation can be derived is easily noticeable. If a sentence is taken out of context and presented in isolation, it can hardly, if at all, be interpreted. Obviously, the sentences that make up a text need to be grammatical, but grammatical sentences alone will not ensure that the text itself makes sense. In addition to the structure and meaning of the individual sentences, one needs to know how the sentences relate to each other. Therefore, in addition to sentence-level knowledge, the reader also needs to be able to interpret the sentences in relation to one another. In this context, Hoey (1983) argues that the difference between coherent pieces of discourse and disconnected sentences lies in the words and phrases that connect each sentence with one or more of the sentences that come before or after it. However, besides linguistic knowledge, how sentences are formed internally and combined with each other externally, there is also non-linguistic

knowledge, that is, knowledge of the subject matter or content of the text in question. Indeed, subject-matter knowledge plays an important part in that it enables the reader or listener to interpret texts and whatever pieces of discourse (Widdowson, 1978; Nunan, 1993). They both believe that interpreting discourse, and by the same token, establishing coherence, is a matter of readers/listeners using their linguistic knowledge to relate the discourse world to people, objects, events, etc., beyond the text itself. In other words, any piece of language is highly interpretable with reference to extra-linguistic context. This simply means that the things people know about the world assist them in the interpretation of discourse. In addition, it should be noted that a number of linguists disagree with the idea that the connecting words and phrases create discourse. It is quite possible to construct a text which, though rich of cohesive devices, makes little sense simply because it lacks coherence.

Therefore, after a consideration of these different viewpoints, it clearly appears that writing, by its very nature, is a difficult skill and consequently “the most difficult skill to acquire because its development involves the effective coordination of many different cognitive, linguistic and psychomotor⁴ processes”, as Westwood (2008: 56) asserts, writing being a mental recursive process involving other subprocesses (Sadler et al. 2004: 3). This means that the difficulty to acquire the writing skill is mainly due to unawareness of how to effectively coordinate a number of processes involved in directing and giving sense to the writer’s text. It is important to note that before undertaking any piece of writing, one needs to take into account the following three main elements: purpose, audience, and content (discussed hereafter), such elements enabling him/her to direct and give sense to his/her writing.

1.4.4 Purpose, Audience, Content

In order for any piece of writing to be regarded as communicative, it has to be shaped by three major dimensions: purpose, audience and content. Obviously, one does not write just for the sake of writing. On the contrary, writing implies first and foremost a clear purpose intended to a particular audience.

⁴ Psychomotor represents the relationship between cognitive functions (mental activities) and physical movement of the body.

1.4.4.1 Purpose

Whatever the kind of writing, whether a newspaper article, an exposé, a poem, a scientific experiment or else, such skill consists of three variables: purpose, relevance and an organized body of selected facts, opinions and/or ideas. Obviously, writing without any purpose in mind is just not possible as one does not simply sit and starts writing just for the sake of writing. In order to successfully convey a message to an intended reader, the writing has to be shaped by a clear purpose, relevant and well-structured facts. Keeping in mind his/her purpose, the writer has to select and organize his/her facts or ideas, taking into consideration the relevance of the audience. Writing can be the more effective provided that the writer is able “to bring together in a successful fusion content and form to a specific context” (Ourghi, 2002: 70). He adds that writing involves both the construction and transmission of content since it is a communicative interaction, depending on “the writer’s awareness and application of complementary types of knowledge: lexico-grammatical, discourse composing, and content organization” (Ourghi, 2002: 70). The effectiveness of the writing is determined by a clear purpose and by relevant and well-organized facts. Therefore, when writing, the writer should first keep in mind his purpose, i.e. what he wants to write about, selecting and organizing his facts and ideas before finally taking into consideration the relevance of the audience, that is, the notion of the reader. One has to ensure that the writing is under control of a purpose whereby an intended meaning is successfully conveyed to an intended reader (Harmer, 2014). In other words, writing is a purposeful and contextualized communicative interaction which involves both the construction and transmission of content. Put differently, as writing requires a certain outline and sequence of what is to be written, it has to be arranged and presented according to a certain way, following the rules and norms of formal language.

1.4.4.2 Audience

Audience refers to the person(s) to whom the writing is addressed. Consequently, knowledge of the audience becomes essential in the development of a piece of writing in that writers will feel obliged to perceive clearly who they wish

to reach through writing (Winch and Wells, 1995). Taking into account the relevance of the audience, with its socio-cultural dimension (background and setting), tastes, interests, needs and expectations helps writers adjust to specific writing contexts, allowing them to build up whole pieces of writing depending on the readers' prior knowledge (Harmer, 2014). In other words, audience awareness gets writers to adjust their writing to the reader's demands: age, needs, educational and/ cultural background. Writing with a reader in mind and a clear purpose provides the writer with a context which, in Byrne's words (1988: 1) "may affect the style of writing".

Clearly, different types of writing require different styles (see section 1.10) and registers (see section 1.9) as well as different degrees of formality depending on whom the writing is addressed to as writing is a social act that implies an audience. In this line of thought, Brookes and Grundy (1990:14) state that:

Persuading implies an audience to persuade, just as informing implies an audience that has imperfect knowledge of a subject. In either case the audience is of considerable importance. A consciousness of readership affects the way we write as well as the information we include. Our writing style, therefore, involves a sensitivity to our readers and their knowledge, beliefs, and expectations as well as being a reflection of ourselves.

This means that one of the most important variables involved in shaping one's writing is the notion of audience, a factor of considerable importance for writing to be effective, involving not only accurate use of language but also effective organization of information. In addition, it requires that the writer be aware of his readers' needs, both when selecting content and guiding the reader through writing.

Regarding the context of teaching and learning, Harmer (2014:39) posits that "effective writing takes place when students are writing real messages for real audiences". He explains that, since any piece of writing is produced to convey a message to an intended reader, it follows that an awareness of the reader's expectations proves essential for the writer to make decisions about the different

choices (lexico-grammatical, discourse, composing and content) to match purpose and audience.

1.4.4.3 Content

Content is one of the elements that shape writing. This means deciding about the information to include (i.e. ideas, facts, opinions, etc) as well as the sequence to follow; in other words, the way the writer is going to select, organize and arrange all the thoughts, facts or ideas to be included, making the ideas flow smoothly to help the reader interpret the message as easily as possible. Writing well requires a good command of the language system in addition to sound knowledge of how to use the language appropriately (i.e. making appropriate choices). Since a piece of writing is concerned with both form and content, it follows that fluency in writing is as important an aim in language teaching as knowledge of correct forms if a piece of writing is to be regarded as communicative. Language forms cannot be seen as separate components of the language they are used to express. On the contrary, they are seen as an indispensable means to help establish appropriacy of language. For Halliday and Hasan (1989), “text and context are inseparable notions”. A text can be defined as social interaction between at least two participants, involving the writer’s purpose, knowledge of the audience, content, and the type of writing. This implies that nonexistent or inadequate use of these language elements results in poor or bad pieces of writing (Tribble, 1996). Language learning has two main objectives: using language as an effective means of communication and using it accurately.

Good language teaching offers both kinds of practice: accuracy and fluency. For this main reason, learners have to be made aware of the importance of discourse. If they understand its importance, they will be concerned with both aspects. They will realize that both accuracy and fluency are an integral part of any piece of writing, these two elements regarded as two sides of the same coin.

In sum, writing is an act of involvement, an interactive communicative process between the writer and the reader including a number of variables shaping it

whereby adding to its complexity. Besides the twin problems of cohesion and coherence and the three mentioned dimensions related to purpose, audience and content, it is important to mention the dichotomous distinction made between writing as a process and writing as a product.

1.5 Writing as a Product

For decades, the teaching of writing was mainly concerned with the end product, with no attention paid to the process. In other words, the focus was on the final product, the accurate writing system and lexico-grammatical knowledge (i.e. mechanics, lexis, grammatical structures) used to complete it. Learners were mainly concerned with writing passages (paragraphs, essays), putting the focus on what they had to write, totally unaware of the stages involved in the writing process. Writing was essentially directed towards sentence structure knowledge, and writing development was achieved through imitation of input provided by the teacher (Badger and White, 2000). Teaching was teacher-centred and the teacher became the arbiter of the models used (Brakus, 2003).

Until quite recently, research on composition writing and the classroom practices showed that such practices concentrated on the students' written products. Put differently, researchers and writing teachers started then realizing that the main concern was the final product while the act of writing itself was not given any attention. As a result, they started investigating the composing process, identifying its complex nature, working under the assumption that before being able to teach writing, one has to first understand how to write. Such a research also raised questions concerning past approaches to writing instruction. In other words, what has been found out seriously challenges the ways writing used to be taught in the past, such findings leading to paradigm shifts in the field as writing was no longer seen as linear but as a process involving three interrelated points: prewriting, the act of writing itself, and rewriting. As a result of this new dimension, the nature of the composing process was regarded as an extremely complex undertaking, revolutionizing the teaching of writing, and militating against the prescriptive approaches to writing instruction (Witte and Faigley, 1981).

1.6 Writing as a Process

The concept of writing as a process has been a subject of hot debate among researchers (Cumming, 1998; Pullman, 1999; Matsuda, 2003). Recently, it has been given due consideration. The study of the composing process has shown that writing involves a number of processes which refer to “the ways writers discover ideas, formulate goals and plans, express their ideas, assess their own writing, revise, and edit”, including categories such as “reformulating, stopping, reflecting, and changing” (Beach and Bridwell, 1984: 127). Process as defined by Brookes and Grundy (1990: 22) “is the means by which the product is completed”. Flower and Hayes (1981) for their part, point out that the processes involved are not linear but recursive and dynamic, such processes defined by Camps (2005) as a series of interrelated and interactive, cyclical and gradual stages which the writer goes through to produce his final product.

What emerges from the above quotations is that writing is a dynamic and cyclical process that requires preparing, revising and rewriting, approximately in this order, not necessarily forming a kind of tidy progression as it is possible to review, evaluate, and revise at any time of the writing. In the same line of thought, in her description of the writing process, Larsen-Freeman (1987: 7) writes:

Investigation of the writing process has determined that composing is not a linear process of first, think; second, plan; and third, write [...] but rather is a recursive one. Writers begin to write, they stop, go back, reread what they have written, and usually even revise it before they resume writing. As such, writing is not thought so much to be a process through which one reports one’s thoughts; rather, it is a way writers explore and clarify their thoughts and even discover new ideas.

In this respect, Zamel (1982:195) argues that the methods that emphasize “form and correctness”, ignoring the way ideas are being “explored through writing”, fail to make learners aware of writing as being “a process of discovery”. An important element of the writing process then is the act of discovering ideas (Zamel, 1982; Larsen-Freeman, 1987). During the composing process, writers

frequently need to change whole chunks of language, to discuss them, to reorder material, in sum to make things sound better. It appears then that formulating goals and planning does not necessarily mean thinking first, getting ideas, organizing them, and finally writing them down, moving in this orderly way; this is just not possible since the stages are not entirely distinct (Brookes and Grundy, 1990).

In addition, pretending that a text emerges from the very first attempt would be totally wrong. It is recognised that even the most prolific writers do not produce final texts at their first attempt. Writing is viewed as a long and painful process through which the final text emerges, i.e. after successive drafts. In the light of this, Byrne (1988: 1) states that “it is all too obvious that a person may write several versions of a text before being satisfied with the result”. What emerges from this quotation is that introducing techniques before engaging in any topic rather than merely turning in a finished product helps writers to discover meaning, revise and communicate new ideas. These techniques are, for example, creating a first draft which will be polished into subsequent drafts thanks to peer and teacher conferencing. The use of multiple drafts depends highly on the writer, the purpose of writing, the audience, and the content. For their part, Kendall and Khuon (2006: 4) state that:

The process of writing is virtually the same for all writers. Writers get their ideas from many different sources. They organize what they have to say (on paper, on a computer, or in their heads). They write a draft. They ask what others think. They revise, making changes and additions to clarify their meaning. They edit for capitalization, punctuation, grammar, sentence sense, and spelling. Then they publish. It’s the same for English Language Learners. They need to move through the writing process just like everyone else.

Thus, writers cannot produce successful writing from the very first attempt. Rather, they have to go through a number of different steps or, as stated by Harmer (2004: 06) “the many directions that writers can take ... travelling backwards and

forwards” ... before finally being satisfied with what they have written. This holds true for EFL learners, too. The ‘process wheel’ below illustrates these aspects of the writing process.

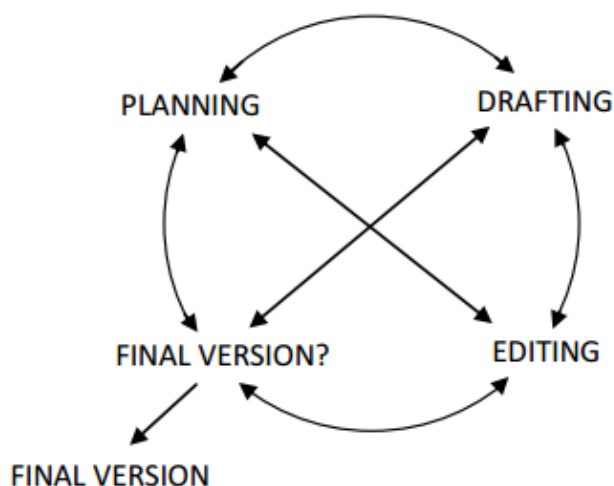


Figure 1.2 The Process Wheel (Harmer, 2004: 6)

Besides going through several drafts, the teacher’s intervention during the ongoing process proves of great help by offering learners interesting comments or feedback, getting the learners to produce more effective pieces of writing. This approach then, contrarily to the product approach, emphasizes the cognitive⁵ processes (planning, composing, and revising) used while composing.

The Flower and Hayes’ theory (1981: 366) of the cognitive processes involved in writing shows that such a process is seen as “a set of distinctive thinking processes” organized by writers during the act of composing. The Flower and Hayes’ model recognizes three main processes: the task environment (rhetorical situation), the writer’s long-term memory (audience knowledge, topic, writing plan), and the writing processes (planning, translating, and reviewing embedded in self-monitoring⁶).

⁵ Cognitive strategies are the mental operations, actions or steps used by learners to acquire new information and apply it to specific learning tasks.

⁶ Monitoring (also self-monitoring) is an approach to writing which should be cultivated in learners. Such an approach consists in allowing much time for checking or self-monitoring. It reduces then the chance of making mistakes.

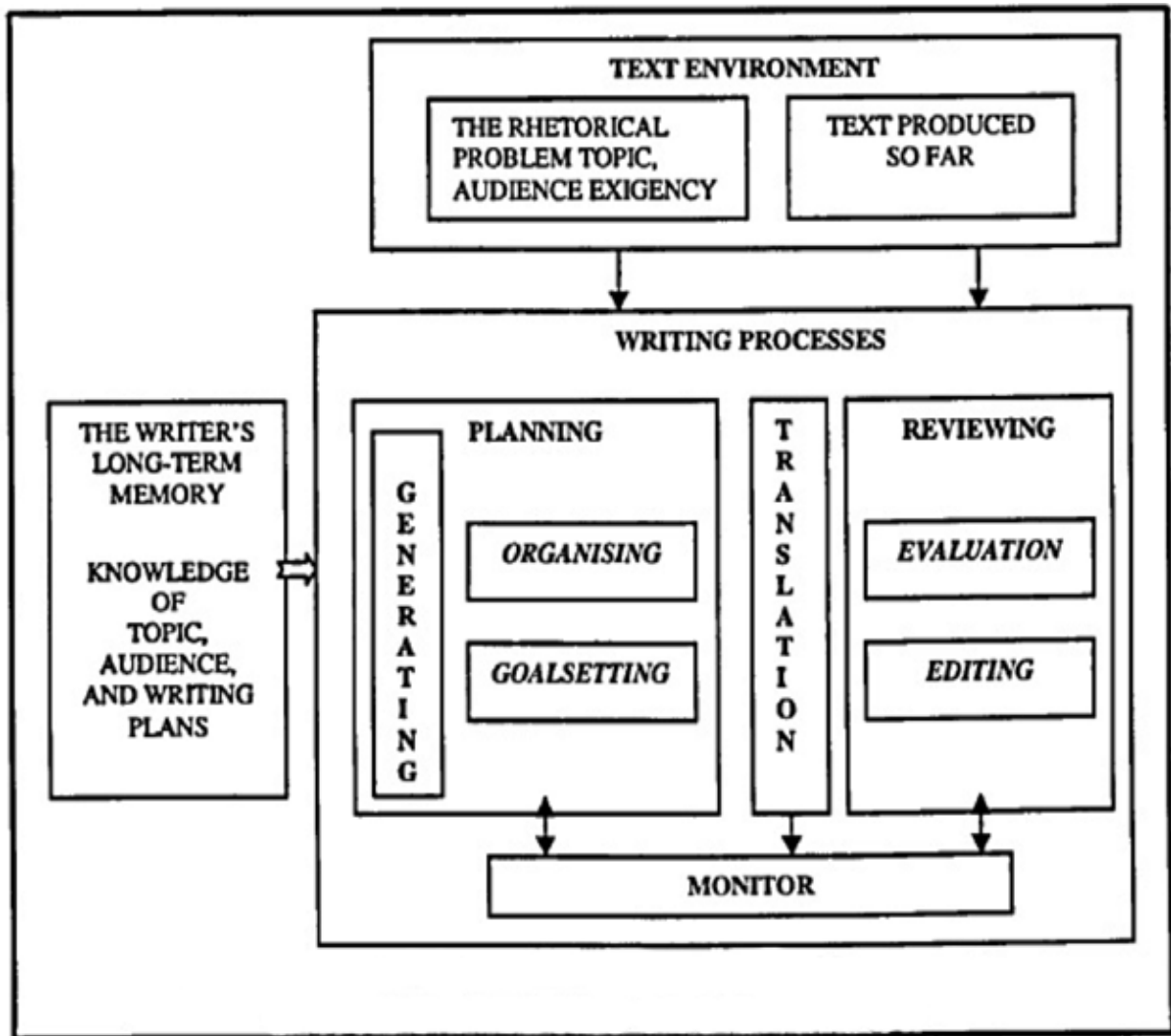


Figure 1.3 The Writing Process Model (Flower and Hayes, 1981)

The task environment relates to all the things that surround the task itself, starting with the “rhetorical problem or assignment” and ending with the growing text itself” (Flower and Hayes, 1981:369). The second identified aspect of the writing activity is the writer’s long-term memory. At this level, the writer’s knowledge of the topic, audience, knowledge of various writing plans and problem representation are stored. The third element, the writing process, involves three main processes: planning, translating, and reviewing, such embedded in self-monitoring.

- Planning, in which writers make an “internal” and “abstract representation of the knowledge which will be used in writing” (Flower and Hayes, 1981: 372), has two main sub-processes: generating ideas and organizing them.
- Translating, the second step of the writing process, is defined by Flower and Hayes (1981:373) as “the process of putting ideas into visible language.” At this level, the writer has to cater for both syntactic and lexical demands of written English. During the process of planning, attention to grammar and spelling is played down so as not to hinder the process.
- The third phase, reviewing, is embedded in monitoring. Reviewing is “a conscious process” (Flower and Hayes, 1981:374) where writers read what they have written as a stimulus to further writing. Such a phase involves “two sub-processes: evaluating and revising”. The three sub-processes concerned with “revising, evaluating, and generating” can occur at any time of the writing process, frequently interrupting any other process which is already in progress.

As previously stated, the processes are controlled by a monitor. Monitoring means deciding when to move from one process to the next; this technique takes place when writers begin composing. They monitor both the process of writing and their progress (Flower and Hayes, 1981). In addition to the mental activities involved, other sub-processes can be mentioned. They are: the pre-writing, writing, and post-writing stages.

1.6.1 The Pre-Writing Stage

Being the first stage of the writing process, pre-writing is seen as the most important stage comprising other sub-processes: brainstorming, planning, organizing and goal setting, all appearing “before words emerge on paper” (Flower and Hayes, 1981:366). This refers to the techniques used by writers to define a topic (whether individually or in groups), generating as many ideas as possible, selecting and gathering information, organizing ideas, and developing an outline. Flower and Hayes (1981) and Chien (2008) explain that organizing involves retrieving and

selecting thoughts, including “structuring information in a cohesive and coherent way, through knowledge of the long-term memory and task-environment for the documentation” (Chien, 2008:46). Writers will nonetheless have to make modifications during the process of writing, thinking about a possible way to reach their objective by making decisions and choices, re-organizing and adjusting.

1.6.2 The Writing Stage

The second stage of the process, translating, refers to the act of putting ideas and thoughts into written language, i.e. transforming ideas, thoughts, and arguments into sentences, that is, into visible language, in order to build up clear, coherent and meaningful pieces of writing (Flower and Hayes, 1981; Byrne, 1988). When moving from planning to translating, writers have the opportunity to make changes thanks to moving forwards and backwards, clarifying, developing, reviewing, and modifying. Yet, the stages are not entirely distinct as they most frequently happen to alternate with each other.

1.6.3 The Post-Writing Stage

Post writing, the last stage of the process is divided into two phases: revision and proof-reading. This stage is mainly concerned with evaluating what has been planned or produced. Revision which means seeing again refers to the questions which writers ask about their work. Such questions are concerned with adding the information necessary for comprehension, omitting the unnecessary details, substituting items for others, and rearranging paragraphs. Proof reading helps correct punctuation and spelling mistakes and also grammatical ones such as subject-verb agreement, tense concord, etc. Reading and editing are two strategies which make up reviewing which consists in the act of evaluating what has been planned or written. At this stage, the writers check their work and proceed to correct, seeking for more correctness and clarity, attempting to get rid of any mistake (both at the grammatical and content levels) susceptible to hinder comprehension or prevent the text from meeting its objectives. All in all, reviewing

is a sub-process involving writers in evaluating their writing, devoting much time to verification and checking.

In order to achieve a meaningful, coherent piece of writing, writers continuously monitor the whole composing process. This means that writers have the ability to think, coordinate, examine and evaluate the mental activity to ensure the quality and progress in writing (Flower and Hayes, 1980; 1981).

1.7 Composition: The Need for a Framework

After a consideration of most of the approaches to teaching writing, it appears that they offer no starting point. Free composition, for instance, is mainly concerned with the final product without a detailed plan of how to produce the end-product. This is mainly due to the assumption that all learners perform well in their native language, the teacher's job consisting in merely transferring this skill to English, yet with slight adjustments in grammar. The primary purpose of any teaching course is to prevent the learners from using patterns (grammatical structures) from their native language. The second main concern is to help them to achieve a kind of competency with a minimum of grammatical complexity. For the teaching of a composition, three basic teaching points deserve due consideration. These are: first, how to develop the paragraph; second, developing the paragraph in a series (in case of more than one paragraph); and third, how to organise and develop a composition. These three points are concerned with making the sentences and paragraphs relate to each other, and also relating thought to argument in a structured way. Since coherence in writing is generally achieved thanks to the use of rhetorical devices (see section 1.4.2) and by logic of thought, such elements should be the major concern of a writing course. Even though composition is discussed in terms of paragraph building, it is worth mentioning the simple sentence as the starting point for the writing of any composition.

1.7.1 Sentence Construction

Pincas (1982: 45) asserts that the simple sentence is the basic component of any text. As she puts it: "most commonly, composition is discussed in relation to

paragraph building and essay planning. In fact, however, it starts at sentence level. The simplest way of expressing an idea is in one bare sentence, e.g., ‘I have a ball’.” This quotation clearly shows that one can express complete thoughts and ideas through simple and bare sentences. Learning to write means learning gradually. It is a step-by-step process involving mastery of the basic sentence patterns before proceeding to the next level which is learning how to expand such patterns. In the light of this, Pincas (1982:45) states that: “we do not normally express ourselves in a succession of such simple statements. We put the various pieces of information together in any of a large number of different ways...” Using simple utterances and statements (whether in speaking or writing) would seem childish and also boring. Writing has generally longer sentences than speech. For this purpose, and in order to avoid using too childish a language, learners have to be made aware of the various ways to combine the short sentences of spoken English (see section 5.5.2). This can be done by modification, coordination, substitution or else, or by using sentence connectors of various kinds (e.g. conjunctions like “however” and “therefore”, phrases like “in the first place”, etc.).

1.7.2 Paragraph Development

When defining the paragraph, Pincas (1982: 50) points out that “it is perhaps easier to say...what a paragraph is not. It is not merely a succession of sentences neatly set out in the right shape”. According to her, a paragraph may not be defined in terms of mere sequence of correct grammatical sentences even though the sentence expresses a complete thought. On the contrary, it is a series of closely related ideas with the notion of unity existing between them. A paragraph must satisfy the main two requirements of writing: continuity of thought and orderly arrangement. This entails that writing a correct paragraph means organizing, arranging, presenting ideas through the different types of sentences (simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex) in a coherent manner, and following a certain logic.

A paragraph consists of three main parts: a topic sentence, supporting sentences and a concluding sentence. The topic sentence, which expresses the

central idea of the paragraph, puts the reader into context. The second part, a substantial body of material, constitutes the middle (i.e. at least two supporting sentences which relate directly to the central idea of the paragraph). Finally, the paragraph must have a concluding sentence, such one sentence restating the idea(s) contained in the topic sentence yet expressed in a different way. Just as the sentence expresses a complete thought, a paragraph expresses a complete series of closely related thoughts. Therefore, any paragraph must satisfy the two general requirements of continuity of thought and of orderly arrangement. Moreover, paragraphs serve the purpose of making reading easier by marking the logical stages in the writer's thoughts and the subdivisions in his material (Pincas, 1982).

1.7.3 Composition Writing

This last step is more concerned with developing writing into cohesive and coherent paragraphs and whole texts, respecting the main requirements for the writing of a good composition: grammatical and lexical features through which meaning is conveyed for a certain purpose, continuity of thought and orderly arrangement, clarity and accuracy. It is important to note that such features are indispensable in order to make reading easy to understand, by displaying the logical stages of thought and marking the subdivisions of the writer's material (Paulston, 1972). Pincas (1982:45) defines composition as follows:

In order to convey thoughts and feelings as clearly as possible, we do several things. We arrange our ideas in sentences, we organize sentences into paragraphs, and with these we construct whole essays...We use special words, phrases, and other devices to indicate just how the ideas, sentences and paragraphs actually relate to each other. The result is...we have composed a composition.

This quotation means that writing a good composition requires a careful and planned structuring of ideas, such ideas arranged in sentences, sentences organized into paragraphs; it requires grammatical accuracy and acceptability to make the relationships between words clear, showing the ability to structure and integrate information into cohesive and coherent paragraphs and texts.

Composition, as defined by Paulston and Bruder (1976: 205), is “writing beyond the sentence level, putting together words in a grammatically acceptable form and ordering the resultant sentences in an appropriate way”. Such writers state that writing is a means of learning the formal properties of the language, adding that it is “a service activity which serves to reinforce and consolidate the other language skills” (Paulston and Bruder, 1976: 204). In the same context, Ourghi (2002: 161) states that writing is “seen as a means of communicating messages (involving knowledge of the language system and context discourse), composition can be defined in terms of grammatical rules, lexical items, rhetorical patterns, and discourse organization, writing being the application of such rules to complete a text”.

It appears then that learners’ mistakes and most ungrammatical sentences are the result of an incorrect knowledge of the rules governing the foreign language. It is important to note that both grammatical and discourse features are essential elements for making the writer aware of the way elements of a text relate to one another (Nunan, 1993).

Whether composed of one paragraph or more, any composition must satisfy the following requirements: orderly arrangement, continuity, and unity. A composition is then either only one paragraph or a series of closely linked paragraphs on a given theme. Since the paragraphs which make up a text are strongly interrelated, it seems therefore important to mention that true understanding of any text is a matter of readers using extra-linguistic knowledge (i.e. what they know about the world) to interpret discourse, beyond the text itself.

Regarding the dissimilarities between speaking and writing, one may say that both channels are not totally different. It is more a matter of coherence, organization, and logic as writing requires a higher degree of formality (accuracy and fluency) and more clarity: the message is conveyed through written language only. Harmer (1991: 114) puts it this way:

We discussed some of the differences between speaking and writing ... the need for coherent organization and logical thought ... to help students to organize their writing clearly and coherently. This involves not only the ordering of sentences, but also the use of cohesive devices (i.e. language that is used to join sentences together).

What emerges from this quotation is that, in order to achieve cohesion of a text, the links between sentences and paragraphs have to be established in an orderly manner, such devices needed in writing so as to organize the sentences into a coherent whole (preventing from having ambiguity), helping the writer to fulfill his communicative purpose.

The choice of the devices clearly shows the writer's will to make his piece of writing as clear as possible, making understanding between reader and writer easier, in other words, helping the reader to interpret that piece of language as easily as possible. As a matter of fact, such a selection constitutes a step towards effective writing.

1.8 Types of Writing

The main types of writing, also called modes of writing, forms of writing or domains of writing, represent four basic categories of writing, each category having a particular purpose. Such forms include description, narration, exposition, and argumentation (persuasive writing). Appropriate choices have to be made by the writer according to what he wants to achieve, choosing a convenient method of developing his piece of writing. Though the modes of writing differ slightly from one another in terms of structure, this does not prevent a certain flexibility in text organization. While allowing the writer to combine some of these structures thanks to explaining, exposing, describing and arguing, in order to achieve his intended aim, such flexibility is likely to enable the writer to compose more effectively in that s/he will not feel confined to using only one type.

Even if each mode differs slightly from the other in terms of structure, it should be noted that this latter still allows some flexibility and can, consequently, be combined with another in order for the writer to achieve his aim; that is,

providing for the reader's expectancies. In other words, the specific structure of a mode of writing does not prevent the writer from combining one or more of these structures in order to achieve his intended aim; since he has a purpose that compels him to write, the writer can considerably be flexible in text organization thanks to explaining, exposing, describing, and arguing, for instance. Awareness of such methods of writing are likely to help the writer improve his/her way to write.

1.8.1 Descriptive Writing

Description provides the reader with details about the setting, the person or the object to be described. The main purpose of description is to reproduce a person's experience in a written form. It is used to provide a vivid picture of a place, person, or thing, allowing the reader to share the writer's sensory experience related to a specific subject. Description can be used by itself but, since, as previously mentioned, each mode allows some flexibility, description is no exception and can consequently be combined with the other three types of writing. Descriptive writing is characterized by the use of details, specific and figurative language such as simile, metaphors, symbolism and personification. Thanks to the use of active verbs and modifiers, description is more concerned with showing and usually makes use of the present tense. There are two main types of description: Objective Description and Impressionistic Description. As its name implies, objective description is impersonal. It avoids the use of emotions or subjective interpretations, focusing on facts and observable details such as physical appearance, objects, spatial order, measures, colours, etc. Such a type is mainly used in business and academic writing. While objective description is impersonal, impressionistic description is personal (emotional and subjective). Such a type allows the writer to communicate thoughts, feelings, emotions and mood, attempting to impress by making his writing as attractive as possible, often exaggerating in order to get the reader to have the same feelings and emotions (Ourghi, 2002).

1.8.2 Narrative Writing

Whether a fact or just fiction, narration or storytelling is known as creative writing. Two types of narration can be distinguished: fiction and non-fiction. While the former consists of all that comes out of imagined events, the latter is a sum of accounts based on real facts: biographies, autobiographies, a period of history, etc., narrative writing, which is used to narrate a past experience (even a recent one), makes use of the past tense. Narrative texts include fairy stories, science fiction, mystery and adventure stories, fables, legends, historical narratives, ballads and personal experiences (Ourghi, 2002).

1.8.3 Expository Writing

Expository writing is a type of written discourse used for a number of purposes: to inform, clarify, define, instruct, explain, illustrate and analyze. Expository writing is used in letters, guidebooks, newspaper articles, reports, research papers, and also to give instructions and directives. Such type includes logical facts, examples, explanations and experiences.

1.8.4 Argumentative Writing

Argumentative writing, also called persuasive writing, or defending one's opinion(s) is a way through which the writer attempts to convince (or persuade) the reader to believe or do something. It is used in letters, advertisements, pamphlets, petitions and academic writing (Ourghi, 2002). An argumentative text is expected to present a number of features, among them a rational method to arrive at a conclusion by moving steadily through conflicting arguments. Such a task requires lexico grammatical and discourse knowledge. Argumentative writing requires thinking skills such as analysis, synthesis and evaluation.

1.9 Genre and Register

Different writing constructions (e.g. newspaper advertisements, formal letters of notification, application letters, scientific reports, etc.) called genres require different registers. Register is referred to as the specific choice of vocabulary within genres; it is a variety of language used according to a particular situation. While defined according to use or function, a register includes both grammatical and lexical features through which meaning is conveyed according to a certain situation. In order to address a particular audience and adjust to specific writing contexts, learners have to get the ability to write, using a variety of styles and registers so as to increase their writing effectiveness. It appears then that both styles and registers have become important skills. Even though they are aware of the different levels of formality required for specific contexts, and although they have developed an adequate linguistic repertoire, advanced learners remain unable to use those devices appropriately because of lack of language-system knowledge and unawareness of context discourse (Brookes and Grundy, 1990). Various studies have shown that because they have no counterpart in English writing, the discourse patterns proper to other languages appear to interfere negatively in learners' writing (Kaplan 1966, 1997; Maurannen, 1993; Connor, 1996; Kachru, 1997). Yet, that learners' basic writing problems are mainly due to language transfer (from L1 to FL) is quite arguable. Deciding whether interference constitutes the main problem is the teacher's concern, thanks to his own experience. Since learners' poor achievement is generally linked to lack of language-system knowledge (lexico-grammatical problem) and discourse organization, it follows that paying attention to the grammar and discourse features is vitally important in that it gets the learner become aware of how the elements of a text relate to one another.

1.10 Style

Style concerns the manner proper to each individual to make a statement. It is a specific way of expression which reflects the individual personality of the writer. Whether a piece of narrative or description, the style is clearly perceived in that manner the idea is expressed and not in what is to be said. Style is generally

independent on subject-matter. However, different writers would express the same subject-matter using different styles and, conversely, different descriptions would be tackled through the same style. For example, when required to describe an object in the classroom, different learners would give the same account in so far as it contains the same facts. However, the descriptions would be different from one another to the extent that they reflect the different personality of each writer. Though such differences can be hard to detect, most frequently, they are perceived in the varied ways sentences are constructed (whether simple, compound, complex, or compound complex), in the selection of vocabulary, and also where emphasis has been put. Certain styles are more suitable for particular purposes. For instance, describing an action or expressing emotions, narrating an event or exposing, etc. require different styles. Even though a certain style fits more a certain purpose, it follows that no one style is seen as better than others; all are of equal importance and all require two main qualities: (1) accuracy and (2) clarity. Accuracy can be defined in terms of the close correspondence between the meanings of the words used and the ideas they are aimed to express. Since communication (ideas, thoughts and feelings) is made possible thanks to language, it follows that one has to make this process as easy as possible. For this main reason, it is important for the writer to be as clear as possible as to what he wishes to say, using those words (i.e., appropriate ones) which enable him to convey the exact meaning of what he wishes to express. Clarity, for its part, can be defined as the clearness through which the object described can be visualized (by the reader). It results from this that, in addition to the selection of linguistic items “dependent on factors such as culture, context and text” (Ourghi, 2002), the clarity of any piece of writing lies principally in how well the reader can comprehend the argument or visualize the subject described. However, in order to avoid unclear, ambiguous compositions made up of ungrammatical sentences, accuracy in each individual statement becomes the first pre-requisite.

1.11 Major Approaches to Teaching Writing

Because, so far, no ‘ideal’ theory nor any approach regarding writing instruction has yet emerged, the teaching of writing, which was included with that of grammar till the 1950s, has undergone several changes over the last five decades. As a result, there have been numerous approaches to teaching. However, despite the several methods and approaches which appeared at successive periods, and the recent attempts to put forward a framework to provide EFL teachers with the necessary guidance for the teaching of writing, the science of language has proved unable to demonstrate that one methodology is better or more efficient than another. Most of the previous approaches have proved to be deficient in some respects, merely offering theoretical models, with neither starting point nor framework.

Starting from the mid-1940s, writing instruction was mainly directed towards teaching the controlled or guided composition, focusing on the formal properties of the language. This method prevailed till the mid-1960s. During that period, language teachers started realizing that the approach had proved somehow deficient, which led to a shift from language functions to ‘rhetorical functions’. This new trend is essentially concerned with writing at the discourse level and not at mere sentence level. Since then, with the introduction of a number of methods and approaches following one another at successive periods, much emphasis has been put on the paragraph, the composition and the different types of writing such as description, narration, argumentation, and exposition (see section 1.8).

While most of the previous approaches to teaching writing have been dropped due to their inefficiency, a number are still in vogue and are competing with each other in language classrooms. This section endeavours to present the major approaches available to L2 writing instruction today, both traditional and innovative ones.

1.11.1 The Controlled-to-Free Method

The Audio-lingual method and Structuralism dominated until about 1960. This method emphasizes the formal properties of language, with writing seen as a

reinforcement of speech (Hamzaoui, 2006). For decades, FL teaching was based on the principle that a foreign language can only be acquired through systematic exposure to the grammatical system. As a result, a salient prominence is given to the teaching of structures and English is synonymous with the teaching of formal grammar. Put differently, such a concern with “formal accuracy and correctness” (Hamzaoui, 2006: 35), i.e., attention to form plus the necessity of overlearning the structural patterns of English, led to teaching grammar during the writing course.

With the emergence of the controlled-to-free method, learners are presented with a number of activities (sentences and paragraphs) where they become manipulators of previously learnt items (grammar rules, language structures, paradigms⁷, etc.) (Hamzaoui, 2006), making slight changes (both grammatical and lexical). Learners have the opportunity to write frequently, producing their own pieces of writing yet, avoiding as much as possible “to fall in errors caused by L1 interference” (Hamzaoui, 2006: 35) as such exercises are highly controlled. Once they have mastered such type of rigidly controlled activity where the teacher provides most of the language they need (vocabulary, rhetorical elements such as logical devices, transitional words and expressions, etc.), learners can finally deal with free writing, having the opportunity to express their own ideas, thoughts and feelings. However, one should not fall in the trap of overguiding learners and supplying too much information. What matters most is “to strike the right balance between predictability and unpredictability” (Abbot and Wingard, 1992: 228 qtd. in Nemouchi, 2014: 33). Moving from controlled to free writing is a gradual shift with teacher’s guidance decreasing step by step (Nemouchi, 2014). Having no concern with audience or purpose, this approach gives a salient prominence to accuracy at the expense of fluency, “stressing three features: grammar, syntax and mechanics” (Raimes, 1983: 76).

The table below by Crookes and Chaudron (1991: 52) shows the main differences between controlled and free techniques in the practical stage of a lesson:

⁷ Paradigm: an example or pattern of a word, showing all its forms in grammar; “*child, child’s, children, children’s,*” is a paradigm.

Table 1.1 Controlled and Free Techniques

Controlled	Free
Teacher-centred	Student-centred
Manipulative	Communicative
Structured	Open-ended
Predicted-student responses	Unpredicted responses
Pre-planned objectives	Negotiated objective
Set curriculum	Cooperative curriculum

Crookes and Chaudron (1991: 52 qtd. in Nemouchi, 2014: 34)

Because this approach presents more an analysis of language than communication skills, it has proved to be deficient in some respects. Putting much emphasis on language usage inhibits the teaching/learning of writing. Nonetheless, it should be noted that, even though excessive emphasis is put on accuracy (i.e. the structural aspect of the language) at the expense of fluency (i.e. the communicative aspect of the language), with no creativity on the part of the learners, and despite the strong criticism brought to this approach by the late sixties and the early seventies, it is still in use in a number of L2 settings.

1.11.2 The Free-Writing Approach

The Free-writing approach emerged due to the assumption that writing ability can be improved thanks to writing frequently, abundantly, and freely. One of the main concerns of this approach is to get the students to write without any help or interference from the teacher, learners having to pay attention to content organization and fluency. Teacher's assistance is solely provided at the level of grammatical accuracy (Peyton and Staton, 1996 qtd. in Nemouchi, 2014)

There are two types of free writing: focused and unfocused. Focused writing is concerned with answering a question (or a topic) proposed by the student himself. At this level, the teacher's interference, which is very limited, solely consists in giving instructions at the beginning of the activity, insisting on learners writing without worrying about grammar, mechanics of writing, or style as these components are not of primary concern. In this respect, Anderson (1992: 198 qtd. in Nemouchi, 2014: 36) asserts that free writing allows students to put their thoughts on paper even if they are not "sounding right" or "academic," adding that "free suggests the need to forget the rules and just go". Anderson writes: "While free writing, you (the writer) should not reread what you have already written. Rather, if stuck on what to write next, just continue to write..... in your free write".

This means that attention to a number of elements involved in getting writing correct should be played down while composing. Within the free-writing approach, where both content and audience are viewed as the most important elements, the teacher is mostly concerned with commenting on content while learners' mistakes are not examined. Also, in order for learners to develop the notion of audience (i.e. writing for an audience) (Raimes, 1983), they may be required to read their pieces of writing to the class. Peyton and Staton (1996: 16-32) state that:

Learners write for a period of time in class on a topic of interest to them. This writing can take many forms, including quick writings, which are time-limited, done individually and not always shared; and dialogue journals, written to a teacher, a classmate or another partner who then responds. But these writings "may be kept in a notebook. From these pieces, themes may emerge that can act as a facilitator for more extensive writing that is discussed, revised, edited, and published.

Even though writing is, most of the time, done individually, learners appear to be more motivated as they are given freedom to choose their own topics, or provided with topics of interest to them.

On the other hand, unfocused free writing is more a personal activity which consists in jotting down on paper any idea that comes to mind. As a result, one may witness the production of coherent meaningful passages written by a minority of

students, unlike the majority who most frequently submit incoherent, non-unified ‘blocks’. Nonetheless, advocates of this approach argue that despite the risk for students to produce non-coherent and non-unified passages, this method has the advantage of making them write with more spontaneity (Raimes, 1983).

Another concern of this method is quantity at the expense of quality. In addition, freedom in choosing their topics makes learners highly motivated as it proves much easier for them to produce successful compositions when they have enough information about the subject they are developing (Larsen-Freeman, 1987; Anderson, 1992). During revision, learners can decide what ideas to keep, what to delete and what needs to be rewritten (Nemouchi, 2014). An important remark is that free writing does not necessarily produce interesting or good material. In this respect, Anderson (1992:200, qtd. in Namouchi, 2014: 36) explains that: “free writing makes a mess, but in that mess is the material you need to make a good paper or memo or report”.

What emerges from this quotation is that, within this method, the writer is mainly concerned with putting down any idea that comes to his/her mind and thought to be relevant to the topic under consideration, without much worrying about formal mistakes. In such a way, even though the writing is not structured, it nonetheless contains most of the information needed to produce a ‘good’ piece of writing. While this approach presents several advantages (such as paying attention to content and audience) it has proved deficient in many respects, failing to get the learners to make a balance between accuracy and fluency. Despite the large criticism it has drawn, it is still widely used in many language settings.

1.11.3 The Product-Based Approach

Under the influence of Audiolingualism and Structuralism, the teaching of writing had focused on the written product. This concerns the end result of the effort accomplished in one sitting with the feeling of finality and achievement (Hink, 1985; Brookes and Grundy, 1990). Broadly speaking, such an approach, which views writing as predominantly linguistic, is concerned with the final product. For

decades, writing was merely considered as a supporting skill, mainly used as a consolidation of oral habits and the teaching of writing included that of grammar. Consequently, its role was downplayed in language courses. Much emphasis was put on sentence structure as a reinforcement of the grammar class. Writing classes were mainly devoted to sentence formation and grammar exercises, highlighting both form and syntax, with a focus on drilling (Silva, 1990), such practice making the learners think of writing as mastery of grammar rules as it was taught separately from context, audience, and purpose.

The product approach, also known as “the current-traditional rhetoric” (Pullman, 1999; Matsuda, 2003) or as “the traditional paradigm” (Hairston, 1982; cited in Kroll, 2001), is “thoroughly teacher-centred” (Pincas, 1984: 5). It is the most widely used approach for the teaching of writing worldwide. While it “bridges between controlled and free writing” (Hamzaoui, 2006: 36), this approach aims to achieve accuracy in writing through analyzing students’ writing, checking both their strengths and weaknesses. The main concern of this approach is knowledge of the language structures, writing development depending mainly on the imitation of the input (texts and passages) provided by the teacher (Jordan, 1997; Badger and White, 2000; Brakus, 2003; Hyland, 2003). Consequently, classroom activities are concerned with imitating, copying and transforming models of given patterns of language in order to make learners aware of the features which constitute a text, i.e., getting them to become familiar with writing conventions through model texts. Proponents of the product-oriented approach argue that what is most required in the written product is to meet standards of rhetorical style, having a mechanics, and vocabulary use, explaining that it enhances the learners’ writing proficiency, insisting that learners would never be able to write successfully unless they could manipulate the features of writing. According to Badger and White (2000: 157), “writing involves linguistic knowledge of texts that learners can learn partly through imitation”. Likewise, Arndt (1987:257) states “the importance of models used in such an approach not only for imitation but also for exploration and analysis. For Myles (2002), learners have to be exposed “to native-like models of

written texts”, if they wish to get rid of their writing errors. As stated by Nemouchi (2014: 38):

The model text is always taken as the starting point. It is studied and analysed from all points of view: structures of grammar, content, sentence organization, and rhetorical patterns. After manipulating these features, students are given a new topic and invited for a parallel writing task.

The above quotation means that the focus is on the written product with particular attention to form, yet with no concern to the process the learner goes through to arrive at the final product. This can be achieved thanks to sufficient linguistic input provided by the teacher. Pincas (1982: 185-6), for her part, states that within the product approach, “the learner is not allowed to “create” in the target language at all...The use of language is the manipulation of fixed patterns;...these patterns are learned by imitation”.

The product approach, as explained by Pincas (1982) is primarily concerned with linguistic knowledge. In this regard, she insists on the appropriate use of vocabulary, syntax and cohesive devices adding that learner involvement will never be made possible if one has to apply for correctness at the expense of the personal, creativity and originality. Pincas identifies four stages in the approach: familiarization, controlled writing, guided writing and free writing. After introducing a topic, class discussion takes place (both teacher and learners), with students asked to write, taking the provided text(s) as model(s) as this approach “views writing as a work of arrangement of fitting sentences and paragraphs into prescribed forms. The writer is given a form that he is asked to fill in with provided or self-generated content” (Hamzaoui, 2006:37).

Though its practice most frequently leads to the production of unfamiliar patterns of expressions, the product approach presents several advantages such as the linguistic knowledge it provides learners with: rules and structures (Pincas, 1984). It gives a clear idea about the organization of texts, words and sentences. Obviously, imitation is an efficient if not the only way to learn and communicate

special structures (White, 1988). An important point to mention is that children learn through imitating the adults (Abi-Ayad, 1997).

As it emphasizes form and neglects content (Escholz, 1980; Bizzel, 1992), the model-based approach has led scholars to debate about its efficiency, pointing out that “models tend to be too long and too remote from the students’ own writing problems”. Escholz (1980: 232 qtd. in Nemouchi, 2014: 39) argues that “such detailed analytical work encourages learners to see form as a mould into which content is somehow poured” and the imitation of models as being “stultifying and inhibiting writers rather than empowering them or liberating them”. That is, when constrained to imitate models of written language, writers feel rather frustrated as they are compelled to write things which are not always of great help to them, frequently leading to wrong and inappropriate forms of expression.

Because it has long been seen as knowledge of language forms, writing development being chiefly the result of the imitation of the stimulus (i.e. model texts supplied by the teacher) the product approach has been strongly criticized, leading both scholars and practitioners to reconsider writing and the way it is taught as this approach “devalues the learners’ potential, both linguistic and personal” (Prodromou, 1995:21). Tickoo (2003: 63) argues that: “in most cases such classroom writing denies the learner an opportunity for self-expression.” adding that this approach pays attention to the students’ products without making learners aware of the processes “which successful writers use.”

Both writers agree that the main problem related to the product approach has to do with meaning. Since writing is primarily concerned with linguistic knowledge, paying attention to grammar but not to communication content, the learner cannot express her/his thoughts the way s/he wishes, failing to be recognized as an individual.

To sum up, language is more than mere knowledge of lexis and grammatical patterns. It is more than mere awareness of how sentences are formed, practising and strengthening writing at the sentence level, focusing on accuracy and usage.

More than this, language is a means of communication required to meet the demands of present-day society (Wilkins, 1976). The assumption of learning by imitating correct grammatical sentences suited well with structural teaching in the 1960's and 1970's. However, with more contemporary views of language learning which emphasize language at the level of discourse (Bizzel, 1992), the notion of learning the formal properties of language no longer applies. This behaviour occurred in response to the traditional views of writing, a way to understand the nature of writing as well as the way it is taught (Hyland, 2003). The product approach being strongly criticized despite the advantages it supplies the learners with in terms of linguistic knowledge, and their needs in terms of rules and structures, has led scholars to regard writing as cyclical, recursive, in sum as a process movement. This has led to the emergence of a new approach revolutionizing the teaching of writing, known as the process approach.

1.11.4 The Process Approach

With the advent of Communicative Language Teaching (henceforth CLT), and as a result of teaching becoming learner-centred, methodologists and writing teachers, showing a particular interest to the teaching of writing, became much concerned with the processes writers (learners) go through when composing. This resulted in a shift from the product approach to the process approach implemented in the early 1980s. This approach, which “arrived on the scene at a very opportune moment” (Caudery, 2003 qtd. in Nemouchi, 2014: 32) came as a reaction against the shortcomings of the product approach, bringing up “new concepts and principles” in the field of writing instruction, the theory underlying the process approach having greatly influenced the development of FL2 writing instruction (Hyland, 2003). Being highly learner-centred, this approach aims to:

make the student aware of, and gain control over, the cognitive strategies involved in writing, bringing a substantial change as writing is no longer seen as mere production of unrelated sentences but as a “non-linear, exploratory, and generative process whereby writers discover and reformulate their ideas as they attempt to approximate meaning (Zamel, 1983: 165 qtd. in Hamzaoui, 2006: 37).

In the same line of thought, Murray (1992: 16) defines this approach as one which “refers to a teaching approach that focuses on the process a writer engages in when constructing meaning”. As mentioned above, this new trend in which writing is no longer seen as “a linear act but as a complex thinking recursive and creative process” (Hamzaoui, 2006: 37), emphasizes writing as a process. The process approach as defined by Richards et al. (1992: 290) is an approach which stresses the importance of a recursive procedure stating that “the composing process of planning, drafting, and revising”, are essential steps for learners during the composing process. This approach aims to develop students’ thinking and writing skills through the practice of these composing processes. According to the Flower and Hayes’ description of the process (1981), this latter consists of three sub-processes: planning, translating, and reviewing.

Being more concerned with the thinking process and learners’ creativity, drawing from learners’ potential, the process approach focuses on the message learners wish to convey, organizing ideas so as to make reading easy to the reader, following a logical flow of ideas, in sum, making writing comprehensible. It nonetheless stresses the need to assist learners, providing them with the necessary linguistic tools as well as time to develop their abilities. Such assistance can be given through feedback provided by both instructor and peers (teacher-learner conferencing, peer response) (Brown, 2001; Shin, 2003) or the model text itself, getting the students to move through the stages of the composing process (Hyland, 2003). Feedback has been defined by Keh (1990) as an essential input from the readers to the writer, this generally leading to further revision. It should be noted that input and interaction through feedback play an important role in the writing process (Myles, 2002). Within this approach, the teacher is then a helper and facilitator and writing is no longer taught but learned.

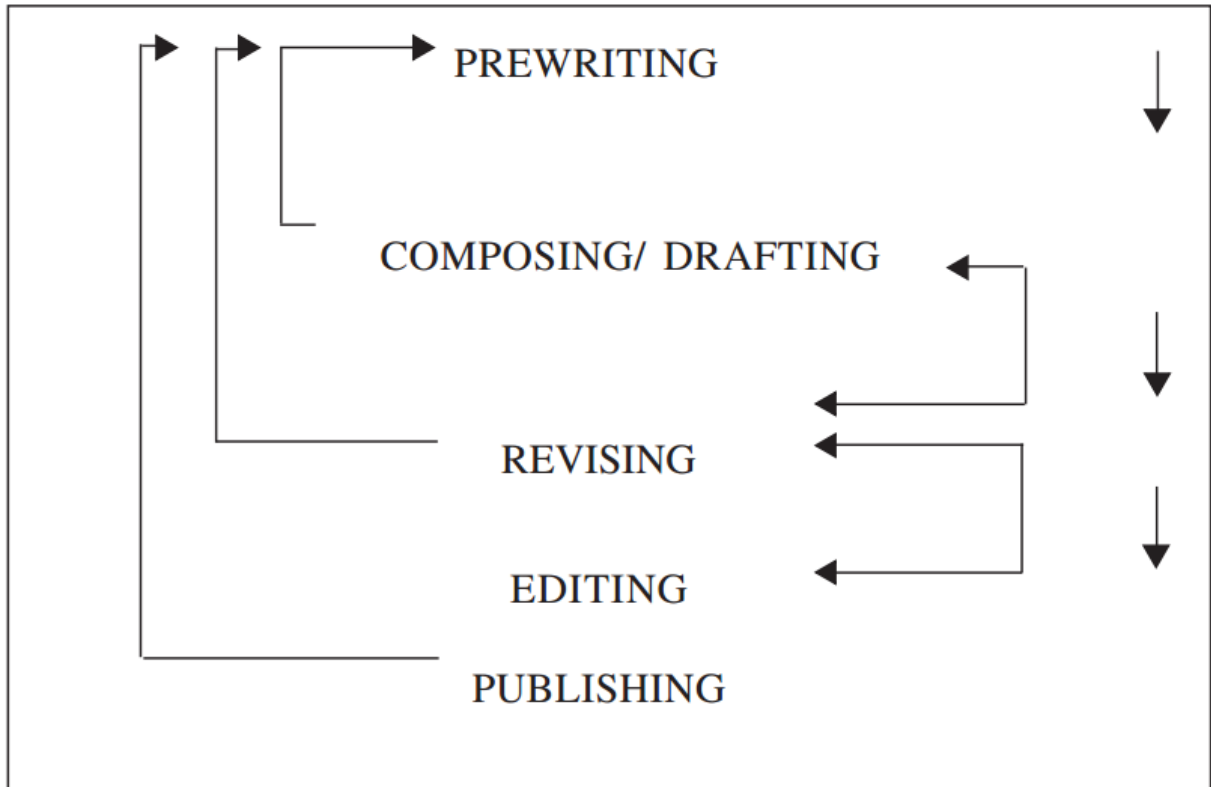


Figure 1.4 Dynamic and Unpredictable Model of Process Writing (Tribble, 1996)

Among the steps involved in the act of writing, the most commonly used are: setting goals, generating ideas, organizing information, selecting appropriate language, drafting, revising, writing, editing, and publishing. But before moving any further, it seems necessary to justify this shift of interest as explained by Zamel (1982:196): “Writing involves much more than studying a particular grammar, analyzing and imitating rhetorical models. The process involves not only the act of writing itself, but prewriting and rewriting (see sections 1.7.1, 1.7.2 and 1.7.3), all of which are interdependent”.

Zamel explains that writing is not just a matter of imitating, copying, and transforming models of correct grammatical language. Learning to write acceptable and meaningful pieces of writing involves the ability to go through the different stages of the writing process, such steps (presented hereafter) being strongly

interrelated. This implies that the writer (learner) is engaged in a pre-writing activity where generating, outlining, and organizing ideas into a logical sequence constitute the first step, before finally finding the correct written form as to how to put them on paper. An important point to raise is that even though not all scholars agree on the same definite number of stages within the writing process, they nonetheless recognize the prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing stages as being the most recursive ones.

1. Prewriting: where the focus is on quantity rather than quality, involves the gathering of ideas and a number of activities such as talking, thinking, reading, discussing, decision making activities, asking for help, clarification, explanation, or else when needed, writers being encouraged to get their ideas on paper without worrying about formal correctness.
2. Drafting: Once the rough draft has been created, it is polished into subsequent drafts with the assistance of peer and teacher conferencing (Hamzaoui, 2006: 38).
3. Revising: this is the stage where writers proceed to make any changes that seem necessary such as additions and deletions; changes in syntax, sentence structure, and organization: and quite frequently, reformulating in a completely different manner (using different sentence structure, different vocabulary, etc.).
4. Editing: at this level, the writer proceeds to polish on the draft, paying due attention to mechanics such as spelling, punctuation and grammar, making slight lexical and syntactic changes.
5. Publishing: publication, the last of the concerned stages, is the act of delivering the writing to an intended audience (if the author chooses to publish his writing).

An important element related to this approach is that it encourages collaborative and group work between learners. Such an approach, within which

attention to grammar is played down, is a way of enhancing motivation and developing positive attitudes towards writing. Collaborative work implies working with both the teacher and peers with preliminary discussion taking place not only at the beginning but in the course of writing as well. The feedback received from peers (peer-feedback), conferences (writer and reader, i.e. learner and teacher), and teacher's feedback (comments) helps the learner organize and structure his/her writing. It is important to note that peer feedback as well as peer review imply an authentic audience (Reid, 1992). Likewise, conferences as well as teachers' comments are generally valued by learners and viewed as beneficial in that they allow learners' interaction, getting them to clarify and negotiate meaning (Muncie, 2000; Shin, 2003). Another positive dimension of the process of writing is the ability to assess the accuracy and effectiveness of one's own writing, and reformulating it which, in Chenoweth's words (1987: 1) "is characteristic of expert rather than poor writers".

What emerges from the above quotation is that the process approach focuses on both revision and rewriting (i.e. seeing again and writing again, thinking again, seeing again, writing again). This is eventually done in response to the feedback obtained from the readers, this leading to an end-product (Keh, 1990). Yet, such "a process takes time and energy and, sometimes, inhibits spontaneity and creativity" (Harmer, 2004: 12).

The main concern of this approach is training learners to generate and plan ideas, taking into account the audience, drafting and redrafting, refining, developing and modifying ideas in order to transmit a communicative and meaningful message. In such settings, teachers are expected to allocate the learners sufficient time to come out with ideas, before getting feedback on the content of their drafts as "emphasis is placed on the importance of a series of drafts in the writing process" (Hamzaoui, 2006: 38). In this way and as explained by Raimes (1983:76), "writing becomes a process of discovery for the students, as they discover new ideas and new language forms to express them" (Zamel, 1982; 1987). Raimes (1983: 78) adds that "furthermore, learning to write is seen as a developmental process that helps

students write as professional authors do, choosing their own topics and genres, and writing from their own experiences or observations”. Teachers who hold a process-oriented approach to writing are required to get students to take greater responsibility for their own learning, becoming able to make decisions and collaborate as they write. Learners are expected to improve their writing as they are given the opportunity to review, clarify and reorganize. In contrast with the product-based approach, the process-based approach encourages students to write abundantly, due to the assumption that quantity should long precede any concern with quality.

Although it has brought a valuable new dimension to EFL learning (it focuses on the skills and processes of writing in the classroom, this latter providing positive interaction and support) process writing has also drawn criticism. Its opponents argue that while using the process approach, this latter having a somewhat monolithic view of writing (Badger and White, 2000), learners are merely confined to narrative forms, with writing seen as involving the same process, regardless of the social and cultural aspects that have an impact on different kinds of writing (Atkinson, 2003). Similarly, Martin (1989, 1997) states that this represents a serious limitation on learners’ ability to master text types (for instance reports, expositions and arguments), these being essential for academic success at school and beyond. Accordingly, Wilkins (1976) and Horowitz (1986) claim that the process approach has never proved to be a success, due to the number of limitations it presents, arguing that learners need structure, they need models to practise, they need to improve even mechanical drills, and they still need time to think through their ideas, to revise them, and to write for real audiences and real purposes. Writing without structure accomplishes very little (Wilkins 1976, Byrne, 1988). After all, learners do not write just for the sake of writing; they are asked to write for various purposes: reinforcement, training, imitation, communication, fluency, and learning (Raines, 1987). To come back to the criticism made by Horowitz (1986), she adds that process writing does not prove efficient as concerns writing for examination compositions as the process of writing requires time and energy. Writing is an individual, solitary activity which includes three components:

communicating, composing, and crafting. The term ‘communicating’ emphasizes the need for a writer to develop a sense of audience (i.e. the purpose is communication). Writing is usually carried out for an absent reader. As a result of the criticism brought to the process-based approach, its proponents started viewing it differently.

The conclusion that can be drawn then is that learners need models to imitate, to copy, and they still need transforming models of correct language (for example: carrying out sentence expansions from cue words and developing sentences and paragraphs from models of various sorts). In short, they must learn the different structures of the language because, as explained by Wilkins (1976: 66) “an adequate knowledge of the grammar without which linguistic creativity would not be possible, proves essential in that it prevents from being limited on the capacity for communication”. He further argues that: “[...] the grammar is the means through which linguistic creativity is ultimately achieved and an inadequate knowledge of the grammar would lead to a serious limitation on the capacity for communication” (Wilkins, 1976: 66).

Consequently, that the EFL learner must learn the grammar of English as well as produce sentences that conform to English patterns in the accepted model cannot be disputed. To sum up, it is important to note that the distinction between process and product is not always clearcut. In the field of language teaching research, this process-product distinction is made between language output (i.e. product) and the abilities and skills used in producing it (i.e. process). Language teaching/learning is concerned with both product and underlying processes such as gathering information, note-taking, planning, drafting, revising and editing. As a matter of fact, some researchers have investigated the impact of certain teaching pedagogies on writing. Yet, have such studies proved the efficiency of one methodology over another, perpetuating the belief that a pedagogical approach is better than another and would likely improve writing. The following section proposes a synthesis, integrating two of the major approaches: the process approach and the product approach.

1.11.5 The Process-Product Approach

In the 1960s and 1970s, it was assumed that learners would never be able to write coherent, meaningful passages unless they had mastered the language at the level of the sentence. To reach such objectives, under the influence of the product-oriented approach, writing classes were devoted to sentence formation and grammar exercises. This approach to the development of writing is mainly concerned with classroom activities in which the learner is engaged in imitating, copying, and transforming models of correct language, such activities occurring at the level of the sentence. The basic assumption underlying this approach is teaching language for communication in actual situations, with teachers aiming at developing learners' linguistic competence. While in structural linguistics the view of learning by imitating correct language suited well in the 1960s and 1970s, it nonetheless no longer applies as the result of such teaching and learning the foreign language resulted in an obvious inability of learners to make use of the linguistic knowledge they had got, such knowledge remaining an unapplied system (Wilkins, 1976; Candlin, 1978).

In most aspects of language teaching/learning, a distinction between writing as process and writing as product (see 1.6; 1.7) has been made. However, in recent years, this division is more ostensible than real, becoming difficult to sustain. In this regard, Finocchiaro (1982: 2) argues the following:

There should never be a question of adopting in toto one or another of seemingly conflicting notions as ... accuracy versus fluency; acquisition versus learning; ... Elements from both sides of these opposing pairs can be effective for many students at different stages of the learning process.

What emerges from the above quotation is that there is no reason why the writing process cannot be integrated within practice and even imitating written models. Hamp-Lyons and Heasley (1987: 48), sharing similar attitudes, emphasize the need to integrate both process and product in the writing classroom, showing the importance of purpose and audience. The proposal to implement the process-product approach in EFL settings does not intend to demonstrate the usefulness or

superiority of the process writing pedagogy over the product approach. On the contrary, both approaches can be seen as complementary rather than opposing each other, used in a balanced way for achieving both accuracy and fluency in writing.

1.11.6 The Genre Approach

There are similarities between the product approach and the genre approach, this latter being regarded as “an extension of the product approach” (Badger and White, 2000: 155). While both approaches see writing as predominantly linguistic, the genre approach puts great emphasis on the social context in which writing is produced, making language items contextualized (both the content of the text and the context in which the text is produced), and is mainly concerned with orientating “the writer toward academic success meeting students’ requirements” (Hamzaoui, 2006: 40), with the focus on the reader. With the view that language occurs in “particular cultural and social contexts,” that is, “particular genres are used to fulfil particular social contexts” (Nemouchi, 2014: 44-45), language thus cannot be taken out of the context in which it evolves, otherwise it becomes meaningless. It follows that using registers (see section 1.10) becomes essential.

But before moving any further, it seems important to state what genre is. According to Swales (1990: 58) who explains that the members of the same community share the same communicative purposes, genre is “a class of communicative events”. Such definition means that there are certain conventions or rules generally associated with a writer’s purpose. Put differently, most genres use conventions related to communicative purposes (Swales, 1990). For example, to write a letter of application or a personal letter addressed to a friend, presenting an experiment, or else, one has to be aware of the variety of language to use in that particular situation and also how to vary the style according to whom one is addressing.

In order to get the learners to “understand the textual regularities in form and content of each genre, teaching the rules that govern each type of development” (Nemouchi, 2014: 45), teachers need to make learners aware of the use of specific

genres for specific ends. One of the advantages of the genre approach is that it recognizes that writing takes place in a social situation, is used to fulfil a particular purpose, taking into account the fact that learning can happen consciously through imitation and analysis. In this regard, proponents of this approach argue that writing pedagogies should be primarily concerned with providing explicit and systematic explanations of the ways language functions in social contexts (Hyland, 2003). In other words, since language is functional, it follows that it is not enough for the learner to have a good mastery of the language structures. What is also needed is awareness of the social constraints regarding the selection of alternative linguistic forms.

In the field of second language writing, the genre approach has been defined by Byram (2004: 234) as “a framework for language instruction. It is based on examples of a particular genre”. By framework is meant guiding students. The genre framework supports students’ writing with guiding principles about how to produce meaningful passages”. Within the genre approach, a number of methods can be used. For instance, learners are encouraged to reflect on writing practices, investigating texts written in different genres (Paltridge, 2001). This pedagogical approach favours interaction between teacher and learner, with the teacher somehow guiding the learners as they are about to reach a certain level of performance. While provided with models, learners have to discuss and analyse both language and structure, the learners producing a text parallel to the model. They can gradually gain autonomy as the teacher moves from the task of instructor to that of facilitator (Hyland, 2003).

As was the case with any other approach, the genre approach has been subject to criticism. Its opponents argue that explicit teaching of a particular genre does not help learners a lot in that they are not allowed to express their own ideas. Put differently, depending too much on the teacher as the provider of models to imitate, learners do not have the opportunity to express their own ideas (Caudery, 1998), with no “emphasis on rhetoric and general principles of inquiry”, this latter being “considered to be more appropriate” (Hamzaoui, 2006: 40).

1.11.7 The Process/Genre-Based Approach

Such an approach gets learners aware that writing occurs in social contexts and situations, and that a piece of writing has to achieve a certain purpose. Learners have to relate purpose to subject matter, the writer and audience relationship, and the mode of organization of the text. This approach shows how texts are written in different ways, according to their purpose, audience and message (Macken-Horarik, 2002). Learners are first exposed to text organization, the structure and language used in the texts, before tackling the process of writing multiple drafts and not simply turn in a finished product. In this approach, too, revision and rewriting are inherent parts of writing.

Teachers having a range of techniques at their disposal, learners can be offered different types of feedback during the composing process: peer-feedback and teacher's written comments. With regard to feedback, it is, according to Keh (1990) an essential input from the readers to the writer, such input generally conducive to further revision. Put differently, input and interaction are two major elements involved in feedback. Hyland (2003: 26) states that the most appropriate of the available approaches should be used to help learners "understand writing and learning to write". So teachers should familiarize learners with texts and "reader expectations as well as help them understand the writing processes, language forms and genres". Hyland concludes by saying that there is a need for showing understanding and awareness of students' practices and perceptions of writing they bring to the class. Badger and White (2000: 158) explain that "genre analysis concentrate on the language contained in a given text and what is needed is to include processes writers use when producing a text showing them under the term process genre".

Teachers produce situations in class where learners are expected to find out the purpose and other elements of the social context. According to Badger and White (2000), the teacher cannot actually know what learners need, mainly in large classes. Learners produce then a text in a process genre, to be compared with the

teacher's text, after which the teacher can decide whether learners need more input or skills.

The proposal to implement a process/genre-based approach in EFL writing classes ensures that the usefulness and power of process writing pedagogy (pre-writing, drafting, feedback, and revising) cannot be entirely replaced by the genre approach. The two approaches can instead be seen as complementing rather than opposing each other. However, further studies employing a variety of research methods are suggested to investigate the impact of the process/genre-based approach as an instructional tool in EFL writing classrooms. Findings resulting from the research on teaching writing show that students' achievement is higher when the teaching emphasizes writing as a process (Parson, 1985). Traditional approaches to the teaching of writing fall short of what was expected. Several reasons for their failure have been identified:

- Emphasizing form and mechanics before, often at the expense of ideas and meaning
 - Focus on the product rather than the process
 - Serious neglect of the earliest stages of the writing process
 - Offer of too many artificial contexts for writing
 - Isolation of mechanical skills from the context of writing
 - Rather than being an outgrowth of research and experimentation, the traditional approaches are based on sheer historical momentum of outmoded theoretical assumptions (Parson, 1985: 9).

Obviously, with learner-centredness, students do not feel totally dependent on the teacher, constantly fearing his critical eye, the teacher no longer using red ink to correct papers. On the contrary, no longer left alone with their written assignments, students have the opportunity to edit their own work thanks to

teachers' comments taking the form of a negotiation, helping students to understand how to express themselves appropriately, that is, writing effectively.

The survey of the major approaches to L2 writing in the second part of chapter one clearly shows the number of methods and approaches crossing its way since the early seventies. During that period, research placed a renewed interest on rhetoric and writing as this skill was no longer perceived as a linear activity, but rather as a complex creative process, offering students the opportunity to explore some of the ways this process develops. Such competence is by far seen as more important than mere linguistic competence. Though accepted uncritically, most of these approaches were dropped due to their inefficiency, none of these theories probing immediately relevant to the teaching of writing, unable to answer learners' needs. However, such an attitude has not prevented practitioners from drawing from a number of previously implemented approaches and methods in order to attain a more adequate way of teaching FL2 writing.

1.12 Conclusion

The main concern of chapter one has been to highlight the complexity of writing by displaying the potential difficulties which learners face when composing. This chapter has also attempted to demonstrate the type of writing model which teachers should adopt at the first year of university level and the types of knowledge learners need in order to become effective writers, considering what effective writing is through highlighting a number of writing pedagogies, as well as the implications for teaching and learning this skill at the first level of higher education: developing strategies and processes that would likely make learners become aware of the fact that writing operates at discourse level, getting them to write beyond the sentence level, having a clear purpose, paying attention to the audience, using accurate grammatical forms as well as selecting correct lexical items, and ordering the different sequences in an acceptable orderly coherent manner. Such are indeniably fundamental elements for any composition if it is to be regarded as communicative and, by the same token, effective. In sum, writing is a purposeful selection and organization of thought involving the construction and transmission of

content, such elements depending on the writer's ability to bring together content and form to fit a particular context.

It should be noted that, in addition to the complexity of writing, other types of complexity come into play and are due much consideration. Such types refer to the ways (approaches and methods) used to teach writing which, most of the time, prove unproductive, the reason why they are rejected and replaced by others expected to be more efficient. Yet, as it is assumed that there is no 'right way' to teach writing, it is nonetheless believed that individual teachers should feel free to make their own decisions and not be constrained to follow blindly any kind of external prescriptive procedure. Teachers should be allowed the freedom to select and use the approach, method, techniques and materials depending on a number of factors: the particular situation they find themselves in, as well as being eclectic in their teaching practices so as to comply as much as possible with their learners' needs.

CHAPTER TWO

ELT and EFL Writing in the Algerian Educational System

CHAPTER TWO

ELT and EFL Writing in the Algerian Educational System

2.1 Introduction	76
2.2 ELT at Pre-University Level	77
2.2.1 ELT at Middle School	83
2.2.2 ELT at Secondary School	87
2.2.3 EFL Writing at Middle-School Level	92
2.2.4 EFL Writing at Secondary-School Level	95
2.3 ELT at University Level	99
2.3.1 The Syllabus	100
2.3.2 The LMD System: An Overview	103
2.3.2.1 Teacher Education and Training	107
2.3.2.2 Teacher Roles and Strategies	112
2.3.2.3 Student Roles	114
2.4 The English Department	116
2.4.1 Teacher Profile	118
2.4.2 Student Profile	119
2.5 EFL Writing at University Level	120
2.5.1 Writing at First-Year University Level	120
2.5.2 Writing at Second-Year University Level	123
2.5.3 Writing at Third-Year University Level	124
2.6 Written Expression Examination	125
2.7 Conclusion	126

2.1 Introduction

Due to the widespread use of English making it an international language, and the recognition of this foreign language as an important factor of development, more and more disciplines and institutions throughout the whole country have become concerned with the teaching of this language. This has resulted in the emergence of a number of private language schools all over the Algerian territory, offering learners from different educational levels not only English lectures, but also others in foreign languages such as French, Spanish, Italian, German, and Turkish, training them to obtain qualifications, degrees, and diplomas in the concerned languages. It is nonetheless important to mention that learners show a strong preference to the English language at the expense of the others.

Different institutions throughout Algeria such as The Chamber of Commerce, and language schools like Sibawaih, nowadays provide EFL lectures to primary, middle, secondary-school learners, university students, and also to individuals who are willing to learn English to be able to communicate with the external world for either personal reasons (travelling abroad, studies) or because of others (business, job requirements, etc.) and keep abreast with the new technology, science, and modernity.

Chapter two is divided into two main parts: ELT at pre-university education and ELT at university level. While describing the EFL teaching situation at both middle and secondary education with regard to the educational reform, the approach, the objectives and teaching load, the first part of the present chapter proceeds to report on EFL writing at these two cycles of national education.

The second part of this chapter is mainly devoted to describe the EFL situation at university level. It first gives an overview of the LMD system in the Algerian university, highlighting its major aspects. It also describes the syllabus, reports on teacher education and training as well as the new roles this new system attributes to both teachers and learners. Moreover, it provides additional information about the English Department with regard to teachers' and learners' profile (age and

previous learning experience). Because the teacher is still an important and omnipresent participant in the whole teaching/learning process, having a great impact on learners' involvement in that process, a number of variables concerning him/her must be underlined.

Since the main concern of the present research is to highlight the teaching of writing at first year university with regard to the pedagogy/pedagogies used at this level, the third and last part of this chapter also strives to describe the syllabus at the three levels of the Licence degree, teaching methodology, materials, as well as the written expression examination at first-year level.

2.2. ELT at Pre-University Level

The English colonial train and the globalization process have led to the wide spread use of English throughout the world. Being presently seen as a universal public property, though neither the national language nor the official one of all the countries, English has imposed itself as the first international language used in different fields such as education, science, business, politics, tourism, etc. In this regard, Rubdi and Saraceni (2006) believe that many language learners throughout the world nowadays study English not because they are obliged to do so but because of the advantages and benefits learning and knowing such a language may bring to them (language learners). In Roedgiers' words (2006), the globalization process, which has greatly influenced teaching worldwide in general and Algeria in particular, aims at establishing a coherent and efficient system of education. Indeed, due to the global importance and recognition of English as a factor of economic and intellectual growth, EFL learning has become very popular in the current Algerian context, in both public and private institutions. Put differently, the changing role of English as "a means to facilitate a constant communication with the world..." (The National Charter, 1976), has led Algerian policy makers to make this foreign language part of the official curriculum at all levels of education, including the lower levels (experimental attempts of 1993 to introduce English as a first foreign language at primary education). Perrenoud (2000, qtd. in Aimeur 2011) explains that the reason behind holding an educational reform is the desire to update the

objectives of teaching and adjust them in accordance with the demands of the present external world, providing effective instruction to learners. In this respect, it is argued that:

Recent social changes that were triggered by the new political and economic visions of our country, the need of the Algerian society for development and progress, the opening on the world through modern technology, lead us to define new strategies ... this cannot be achieved without a full reform of the educational system (Ministry of National Education 2006: 17-18 qtd. in Bellalem 2008: 17).

Differently stated, a reconsideration of the educational system with new teaching syllabuses, approaches, textbooks, materials as well as teacher education and training was adopted to meet the objectives of the reform and cope with the demands of the 21st century. Accordingly, such educational reform has three main objectives:

- Reconsidering and reforming the school system by making the pre-school obligatory for all five-year old pupils, reducing primary education from six to five years only, and expanding middle-school education from three to four years.
- Reforming teacher training by improving teachers' and inspectors' knowledge and skills, valorizing teachers' status, promoting their competences, also coordinating and evaluating teacher training and development.
- Reconsidering and reforming both the teaching syllabuses and textbooks by developing and implementing new teaching programmes, approaches, and methodologies in accordance with the teaching objectives, providing and evaluating new teaching resources and materials.

(Ministry of National Education, 2003)

While the period of secondary education remains the same (three years), higher education was seriously reconsidered throughout the implementation of the LMD (Licence, Master, Doctorate) system in the Algerian university in 2005. In Bellalem's (2008) words, such a reform has rendered teaching/learning in Algeria a socio-constructivist process based on interaction and critical thinking. This reflects Roegiers' view that the mission of education is to instill such values as 'autonomy' and 'learning to learn' and pictures learners as actively involved in their learning process (Roegiers, 2006: 03 qtd. in Aimeur, 2011: 38).

Roegiers (2006) explains that this Algerian educational reform is governed or determined by two significant challenges: internal challenges (*défis d'ordre interne*) and external challenges (*défis d'ordre externe*). Internal challenges, on the one hand, aim at improving the efficiency of the educational system by transmitting the value of tolerance and interaction so as to prepare and then help learners function in today's Algeria. External challenges, on the other hand, consist in improving economy, updating both scientific and technological knowledge so as to interact with the external world (Roegiers, 2006 qtd. in Aimeur, 2011).

On the basis of the general requirements of the National Commission of the reform of the Algerian Educational System, CBA, the approach which came as a reaction against the inherent shortcomings of CLT, was adopted in the Algerian school system in 2002/2003 so as to replace the Communicative Approach which was still in use by the late 1990s. The Competency-Based Approach is viewed as a "know how to act process" making use of different skills, capacities, and a considerable amount of knowledge giving learners the opportunity to interact or communicate in different situations even those which have never occurred before (Ministry of National Education, 2003: 04). Put differently, being equipped with the necessary linguistic, methodological as well as cultural knowledge, learners are supposed to be able to manage different situations of their daily life whatever the context in question (both in and out-of-school settings); that is, what learners are supposed to do so as to perform tasks and solve problems. Focusing on learners'

outcomes, CBA aims at developing learners' communicative competence; that is, what learners are supposed to do with language (Richards and Rogers, 2001 qtd. in Montazeri et al. 2014). In this respect, Arab et al. (2007) believe that learners need to be provided with the necessary conditions for EFL learning so as to make them able to move from knowledge acquisition to knowledge use (skills). It should be pointed out that such an approach may be differentiated from the previous ones by its work project integration and learner centeredness. In so doing, CBA amends both teachers' and learners' roles in the classroom. Being at the heart or the centre of the learning process, the learner is presently responsible for his/her own learning, employing the newly acquired knowledge and no longer considered as the passive agent in which teachers pour knowledge (Arab et al., 2007).

The main objective of CBA according to Aimeur (2011: 39) is "to form autonomous individuals capable of coping with the changing world and to enable them to utilize the skills acquired in the school environment for solving real-life problems". Besides aiming at developing learners' autonomy, creativity and critical thinking, CBA emphasizes the importance of what learners are going to do with the language and the skills they require to behave in different situations of their daily life, making learners cope with the demands of the changing world by solving real life problems. By the same token, CBA stresses the fact to teach and equip learners with the necessary skills and behaviours to help them perform different situations of their daily life. Therefore, it is regarded as "an approach to teaching that focuses on teaching the skills and behaviours needed to perform competencies. Competencies refer to the students' ability to apply different kinds of basic skills in situations that are commonly encountered in everyday life" (Richards and Schmidt 2002: 94, qtd. in Montazeri et al., 2014).

All in all, one may say that, since its introduction in the Algerian educational system during the French colonisation and seen as an important factor of growth, English has gained a special status and has become, over the past decades, a compulsory school subject. Consequently, EFL teaching has undergone a series of

changes at the level of methods, approaches, textbooks, teaching load, and even the school level where it should be introduced and taught for the first time. As a matter of fact, attempts to introduce English as first foreign language at primary level (this point has already been mentioned) took place during a transitional period (1993/4). Yet, such teaching remained experimental and was confined to few areas in the country. Presently, English is taught from the first year of middle-school level (1YMS) to the last year of secondary education (3 YSS) as second foreign language (FL2). The age for the majority of learners is 11, EFL learning preceded by 5 years of Classical Arabic instruction (CA) and 4 years of French, the first foreign language (FL1). The total amount of FL2 learning prior to university entrance is seven years. Except for a number of students, exposure to FL2 varies between 7 to 8 years due to failure in the Baccalaureate examination or in previous years. In addition, because English is used only in schools, learners' exposure and use of EFL is merely confined to the classroom.

New conceptions of EFL teaching in Algeria have been adopted to face and cope with the new and multiple challenges and then keep abreast with the demands of the 21st century. In this respect, Bellalem (2008: 61) states that:

The teaching of [foreign languages] ... has to be perceived within the objectives of 'providing the learner with the skills necessary to succeed in tomorrow's world'... It is helping our learner to catch up with **modernity** and to join a linguistic community that uses [these foreign languages] ... in all **transactions**'. The learner will develop capacities and competencies that will enable them to integrate their society, to be aware of their relationship with others, to learn to share and to cooperate ... this participation based on the sharing and the exchange of ideas and scientific, cultural and civilisational experiences will allow them to identify themselves and to identify others through a process of constant reflection ...

In mastering [foreign languages] ... every learner will have the chance to know about science, technology and universal culture and at the same time to avoid acculturation. Hence, they will blossom in a professional and academic world and will develop **critical thinking, tolerance and openness towards the others.**

Differently stated, knowing or learning English supplies learners with linguistic competence and mastery, providing them with multiple opportunities and opening different doors to have access to international business, technology, studies, science and trade, and then communicate with people from different countries and cultures (Kachru, 1986). By the same token, EFL teaching denotes not only the acquisition of both linguistic and communicative competences but transversal ones as well; developing critical thinking, tolerance, openness to the world, respect of the self and the other (Aimeur, 2011: 40). The educational reform of 2002/2003 concerns not only the reconsideration of the educational system, teacher education and training, the teaching methodologies, approaches, and materials, but the aims and objectives of teaching the target language as well. To join Bellalem's view, EFL teaching has presently four principal objectives:

- Linguistic/Communicative objectives; equipping learners with the fundamental linguistic utensils and devices such as grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) to make them (learners) communicate in a fluent and accurate way and pursue their studies.
- Methodological objectives; enhancing and reinforcing learning strategies, seeking to achieve autonomy, critical thinking (examining and synthesizing), and self-evaluation also permitting learners to make research both in and out of classroom settings (e.g. via internet), use and exploit various documents.
- Cultural objectives; establishing multidisciplinary consistency and unity throughout knowledge acquisition into various and distinct disciplines and information integration, also stimulating learners' curiosity and promoting their open mindness to have access to the cultural and civilizational values brought by the English language. Providing learners with a suitable learning environment which takes into account their age, needs, and interests in which the target language is regarded as a real means of communication, and in which such learners develop positive attitudes towards EFL learning
- Socio/Professional objectives; permitting learners to become and keep on being active participants in their daily life in general and professional one in particular when finishing their studies.

(Syllabuses for English, 2004; Ministry of National Education, 2005)

Presently, EFL teaching in Algeria aims at setting up and developing communicative linguistic, cultural, methodological competencies that would permit the learner to face situations of oral or written communication that have to take into consideration his or her future needs and those of the society in which he/she evolves.

(Ministry of Education, 2005: 04)

2.2.1 ELT at Middle School

The educational reform of 2002 led to significant changes regarding EFL teaching at middle-school level. One important change concerns the introduction of the foreign language at first-year middle school instead of the second, and a teaching load of three hours a week for all four levels (1YMS; 2YMS, 3YMS; 4YMS). Another change regarding the teaching sessions occurred in September 2014, resulting in the reduction of such sessions to two hours and a half a week for the first two levels while those of the third and fourth ones were extended to three hours and a half. When pupils join middle school and start learning the target language, it is usually at the age of 11. Besides Arabic, pupils' first language (L1) learned since the first year of primary education, middle-school pupils' educational background comprises three years of French (FL1) introduced in the third year of primary education. But unlike English, French is widely spoken in the Algerian society and its use covers many sectors such as education, administration, politics, and a number of other public and private areas.

The four-year EFL instruction middle-school learners receive is hoped to provide and expose them to the necessary and fundamental features and aspects of the language, develop learners' linguistic, communicative as well as strategic competences, and then make them move from knowledge acquisition to knowledge use. In so doing, learners are exposed to different types of tasks and projects involving learners working in pairs and groups where they develop the notion of share, cooperation, and problem discussion/solving (Arab et al., 2007). Besides

reconsidering and restructuring the educational system, such a reform also concerns the new teaching objectives. As a matter of fact, the EFL instruction/learning experience at middle-school level is supposed to:

- Teach and develop grammar through different lectures and activities where learners are trained to learn, discover, and then become familiar with the rules of the target language
- Initiate learners to phonetics so as to learn and ameliorate both intonation and pronunciation
- Teach and expose learners to new vocabulary through different texts and activities and then enrich their lexical storage
- Reinforce and elaborate the four language skills by promoting learning strategies and training, and encouraging learners to be creative and autonomous when interacting both in and out of classroom settings
- Reinforce learners' metacognitive awareness
- Involve and make learners responsible for their own learning by supervising and assessing it
- Examine and determine learners' needs and interests
- Give and present learners with different opportunities and situations to use the language
- Employ and choose different suitable teaching tools
- Regard/consider the target language as an actual device of conversation and interaction

(Riche et al., 2005)

Bearing in mind the stated objectives and during this four-year experience of EFL learning at this cycle, middle-school learners are exposed to different lectures, tasks, projects, activities, songs, and games (whether provided in the EFL textbook-see table 2.1 or devised by the EFL teacher), where they (learners) develop notions and knowledge about the English people, their culture and civilization. In so doing, learners also enrich their vocabulary, reinforce their grammar, develop their pronunciation, and learn to be cooperative rather than competitive. As far as the four language skills are concerned, learners become familiar with the English

sounds, differentiating between short and long vowels, diphthongs and triphthongs, also stressed and unstressed syllables as well as falling and rising intonation. Consequently, learners are able to listen to, understand, and produce their own oral messages (e.g. asking the time, accepting or declining invitations, giving directions, etc.). Developing the reading skill, learners become capable to read passages, understand them, and deal with comprehension activities, also enriching their lexical storage. With regard to writing, learners are given different types of activities such as: completing dialogues, taking notes, summarizing texts, filling simple forms, writing simple personal and elementary application letters, as well as producing different types of paragraphs (e.g. biographies). It should be pointed out that learners are required to take part in and produce end-of-file projects where they are supposed to use the previously learned language items (using appropriate vocabulary, mastering different grammatical rules and language functions in different contexts) in relation to the theme being tackled throughout the whole file.

Syllabuses for English (2004: 07)

Table 2.1 Middle-School English Textbooks

Cycle	Grade	Textbook	Files
Middle-School	1 st Year	Spotlight on English-1	Hello
			Family and Friends
			Sports
			In and Out
			Food
			Inventions and Discoveries
			Environment
	2 nd Year	Spotlight on English-2	A Person's Profile
			Language Games
			Health
			Cartoons
			Theatre
	3 rd Year	Spotlight on English-3	Communication
			Travel
			Work and Play
			Around the World
	4 th Year	On the move	It's my Threat
			You can do it
			Great Expectations
			Then and Now
Dreams, Dreams...			
Fact and Fiction			

Besides examinations and tests taking place throughout the four academic years, by the end of middle-school education, pupils sit for an end-of-cycle examination (BEM). Also known as the national basic education examination, the BEM examination grants learners access to the secondary school. It is worth mentioning that before entering the secondary school, learners are oriented towards different branches or streams (i.e. literary, scientific, and economy and management) depending on their personal choice, the average obtained in the BEM examination, and also the marks obtained in all of the subjects during the fourth year.

2.2.2 ELT at Secondary School

Once they join the secondary school and after four years of EFL instruction at middle-school level, learners are supposed to have had some experience in language learning. Differently stated, having attended several EFL teaching sessions during which the four skills (i.e. listening, speaking, reading, and writing), considerable vocabulary, language functions, structures and characteristics, also different themes and notions have been tackled, learners are expected to have acquired a significant knowledge of the English (e.g. people, culture, civilization). As a matter of fact, learners have become familiar with the language sounds, have built up a basic vocabulary, mastered some grammatical rules and structures, manipulated the necessary linguistic knowledge and skills, basic communicative functions, as well as the different learning conditions and situations allowing them (learners) to understand and use simple English of daily life (i.e. being able to encode and decode messages and negotiate meaning successfully) (Syllabuses for English, 2004). EFL learning at secondary school aims at synthesizing, homogenizing, flourishing, and expanding the previously acquired knowledge and competencies as well as improving communication to make learners cope with the demands of the 21st century and present Algeria. In addition to the general objectives of teaching, there are some social, national and universal ones which aim at making learners adjust to modernity and globalization. Therefore, secondary education EFL teaching objectives aim to:

- Provide learners with a suitable learning environment taking into account their age, needs, and interests.
- Encourage and help learners use different English documents.
- Equip learners with the necessary linguistic and methodological tools to make them understand and use the language both orally and in writing and then go further in their studies or function in an English milieu.
- Enlarge learners' cognitive and theoretical capacities such as investigation, synthesis and assessment through varied tasks.
- Encourage autonomous learning and learners' self-evaluation strategies to enlarge and strengthen their knowledge.
- Increase learners' intercultural perception by displaying a manifold set of cultures.
- Help learners better comprehend their culture by inciting them to first identify and then discover the multiple cultural features of other linguistic communities.
- Incite learners to become interactive developing tolerance, collaboration and open-mindedness.

(Syllabuses for English, 2004)

Secondary education lasts 3 years and constitutes a thorough preparation for the Baccalaureate examination held at the end of the 3YSS, such an examination allowing learners' entrance to Higher Education. For this main purpose, most material and pedagogical resources are turned towards the achievement of secondary-school learners, that is, succeeding at the Baccalaureate examination. EFL is part of the curriculum for all streams: literary, scientific, and economy and management yet, with a slight difference with regard to the syllabus which varies from one stream to another.

At secondary-school level, learners attend different teaching sessions in which varied lectures, themes (see table 2.2), texts, tasks, activities, and tests are concerned with preparing learners to use language according to varied real-life situations and aiming to "... develop gradually in learners the three competencies of

interaction, interpretation and production that cover all areas of language (syntax, morphology, vocabulary, pronunciation, spelling)” (Arab et al., 2007: 60). Accordingly, such tasks comprise the teaching/learning of the four language skills through the integration of grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, spelling, and so on. As far as listening is concerned, it is expected from learners to listen to and then understand verbal messages used in everyday life. With regard to speaking, learners are encouraged to participate in different and varied classroom tasks and discussions promoting correct and simple use of the language, also fluency and accuracy. Concerning reading, learners are supposed to be able to read, understand, and interpret different texts and documents, also use some reference books (i.e. dictionary). Regarding writing, besides paragraph and essay writing, learners are required to perform varied tasks in which different language structures, writing genres, etc. are dealt with. Being prepared throughout the whole file depending on the theme being tackled, learners also take part and produce end-of-file projects favouring research, cooperation and creativity. Whether done individually, in pairs, or in groups, such projects are most of the time beyond learners’ level. Therefore, most language teachers in general and EFL ones in particular prefer dealing with just a few of them due to the difficulty they present but mostly because of time constraints. It should be noted that learners, for their part, are not interested in such tasks at all, giving them no importance yet, showing a strong preference to surf on the net and copying everything, with no attempt for creativity, something unattainable in practice.

Table 2.2 Secondary-School English Textbooks

Cycle	Grade	Textbook	Files
Secondary School	1 st Year	At the Crossroads	Getting Through
			Once Upon a Time
			Our Findings Show
			EUREKA !
			Back to Nature
	2 nd Year	Geting Through	Signs of the Time
			Make peace
			Waste not, want not
			Budding Scientist
			News and Tales
			No Man in an Island
			Science or Fiction
	Business is Business		
	3 rd Year	NewProspects	Ancient Civilizations
			Ethics in Business
Education in the World			
Advertisors, Consumers, and Safety			
Astronomy and the Solar System			
Feelings, Emotions and Related Topics			

In addition to middle and secondary education where English is taught as a foreign language, this latter remains of fundamental importance for Algerian

learners since most of them will need and use it in higher education and in their future professional life (e.g. to facilitate international communication) thanks to the status it has gained worldwide. This is why a large number of students will have to study English as a separate module (ESP) at university level. EFL teaching then aims at:

setting up and developing communicative linguistic, cultural, methodological competencies that would permit the learner to face situations of oral or written communication that have to take into consideration his or her future needs and those of the society in which he/she evolves...to succeed in tomorrow's world.

(Ministry of Education, 2005: 04)

Based on learners' personal choice and the marks obtained in all tests and exams, a second orientation of learners is made by the end of the first year of secondary education (see table 2.3). As a matter of fact, the EFL syllabus and course content will depend heavily on learners' needs and the stream they enrol in. The table below displays time allocation and the content of the lectures related to learners' streams and specificities.

Table 2.3 English Teaching Time load

Streams	Weekly time load		
	1YSS	2YSS	3YSS
Literary streams			
-Literary streams	4h		
-Literary and Philosophy		4h	4h
-Foreign Languages		5h	5h
Scientific streams			
-Experimental sciences	3h	3h	3h
-Mathematics		3h	3h
-Techniques and Mathematics		3h	3h
Management streams			
-Economy and management		3h	3h

(Syllabuses for English, 2004)

It should be pointed out that whatever the language in question (be it first, second, or foreign) language teachers in general and EFL ones in particular complain about learners' proficiency level in language learning. After seven years of EFL learning and despite the varied and rich programmes (significant and considerable knowledge) which learners have been exposed to throughout middle and secondary education, the results are far from satisfactory. Teachers claim that using the target language both fluently and accurately appears to be problematic for most learners, explaining that such learners have moved from middle to secondary education with lacunas hindering the teaching process thus preventing them from improving.

2.2.3 EFL Writing at Middle-School Level

Because English is a new subject, introduced at first-year middle school, teachers move gradually from simple to more complicated lessons, tasks and

activities. Broadly speaking, EFL instruction at middle-school level aims to equip learners with basic language functions, structures and vocabulary. At this level, learners are provided with various writing tasks such as ordering scrambled and matching sentences, completing dialogues, producing paragraphs, writing letters, and preparing end-of-file projects.

First-year middle-school learners, for their part, are given different activities which first initiate them to word-building (letter-ordering for word construction), and sentence-construction (word order to obtain correct and meaningful sentences). Step by step, learners are assigned other kinds of writing tasks with other types of complexity: both guided and semi-guided activities such as answering comprehension questions, gap-filling, dialogue completion, letter-writing, before moving to paragraph production. The different tasks tackled throughout the whole file and expected to prepare learners for paragraph production are either provided in the textbook or devised by the EFL teacher. Moving gradually from simple to more complex activities, and aiming to improve learners' writing proficiency level, the different proposed writing tasks also offer students the opportunity to learn and use different writing strategies to accompany learners alongside their writing process. In this context, what is called the situation of integration requires from learners paragraph writing in which learners are either asked to develop notes, answer questions in the form of a paragraph, write a biography, or imagine an end to a story.

In the second year, learners have the opportunity to accede to and use new writing strategies and increase their orthographic and syntactic knowledge. They can compose (and also speak), according to a model of increasing growth, in various situations. In such a way, learners can express their ideas and organize them logically and chronologically, taking into account syntax, spelling and punctuation so as to produce pertinent and coherent messages. Consequently, they can develop their ability to oral and written expression, getting less and less guided by their EFL teacher,

On beginning their third year of middle-school education, pupils have already been exposed to the English language for two years and are expected to be able to interact with others, interpret and produce verbal and non-verbal simple but correct messages. At this level, pupils have to consolidate and develop the linguistic, methodological and cultural pre-requisites acquired in the second year. When leaving the 3YMS, learners are supposed to be able to interact in real situations of daily life both at school and out-of-school, to interpret authentic and more complex documents in a more autonomous way, also to exploit, interpret authentic and more complex passages, and produce both oral and written more elaborated ones to pursue their EFL learning in the next level.

During the fourth year, learners can interact in class, interpret and produce correct verbal and non-verbal messages of half complexity. They can produce written and relatively elaborated passages. Through time learners are required to write longer paragraphs. In addition to dialogues, biographies, letters and paragraphs, learners are assigned an end-of-file project for preparation either individually, in pairs or in groups, requiring from learners research and cooperation. Unfortunately, because of time shortage and too ambitious syllabuses, such an activity proves most of the time a very challenging task for learners, these projects frequently being out of pupils' reach since learners are newly introduced to this foreign language. Consequently, EFL teachers prefer dealing with just one or two projects a year, devoting more time to other types of activities. Being tackled throughout the different sequences, lectures, and tasks related to the file, paragraph writing is given to learners in order to get them to use and reproduce all the language items and the information dealt with within the whole file, yet being introduced to new vocabulary and new structures. Little by little, and throughout middle-school education, learners move from simple to more complex writing tasks (e.g. longer paragraphs) in which different grammatical structures, vocabulary and mechanics of writing are taught and reinforced. At the end of their schooling, middle-school learners are expected to interpret and produce written and relatively more elaborated passages of about twelve lines.

2.2.4 EFL Writing at Secondary-School Level

As the role of writing in foreign-language education is increasing, the ability to write is more and more required at all levels of instruction. Writing remains an important skill, needed for academic success in the Algerian educational context since all tests and examinations take a written form. In secondary education, which lasts three years, learners, and specially those of the third year (3YSS), who have received several years of formal English teaching and are supposed to have been equipped with enough linguistic input and content knowledge, frequently remained deficient in the ability to actually use the language whether in the spoken or the written mode. As they are to sit for the Baccalaureate examination, third-year learners are thus more concerned with the writing skill. However, it is easily noticeable according to the marks obtained in tests and exams that writing is far from satisfactory. The majority of 3YSS learners prove to be rather deficient in their written performance, showing an obvious inability to tackle writing at both form and content levels.

Within CBA, EFL writing instruction at secondary-school level is function-oriented and context-specific (Auerbach, 1999 qtd. in Bourouba, 2012). Such one teaching aims at fostering what these learners have acquired at middle-school level. Under the influence of CLT and later CBA, grammar is no longer the starting point of the writing lesson. Within these approaches to language teaching, learners are presented with the various types of discourse (different text types, dialogues, letters, etc.) throughout the different files tackled during the academic year, and work on different aspects of the language, being expected to produce pieces of writing tackling such types by the end of each unit. On presenting a writing lesson, the teacher first proceeds to provide learners with the vocabulary needed for the topic under study before moving to a brainstorming session where he/she engages in discussing the topic with the learners, gathering ideas, and helping them (learners) organize information in an orderly and meaningful whole.

The various writing tasks and activities tackled throughout each unit during the whole academic year reflect real-life ones (as most of them are used in day-to-day communication) and aim to prepare learners for the EFL composition and examinations. Whether provided by the textbook or proposed by the teacher, these multiple assigned writing activities are mainly intended to get the learners to become familiar to the use of the different types of writing (narrative, descriptive, argumentative, and expository).

Alongside paragraph and essay writing, secondary-school learners are required to summarise texts and passages, write stories and different types of articles (still brief expository ones e.g. newspaper articles, book/film review), formal and informal letters (e.g. letters of application and advice), advertisements, produce simple reports, etc., learners being expected to be able to express opinions and give reasons (arguments). In this way, while learners have the opportunity to improve their writing performance, they can also develop other features of writing such as making inferences and logical links between sentences and paragraphs, identifying and using reference words, distinguishing between fact and opinion, demonstrating critical thinking and judgement, paragraphing ideas (that is, organizing ideas in paragraphs, discussing the organizational pattern of a text), responding to text (seeking support and feedback), establishing cohesion and organization, maintaining logic and coherence. Such features can be achieved due to the assumption that learners have for a long time been exposed to and acquired a wide range of vocabulary, syntactical rules and structures, as well as the necessary linguistic skills and writing strategies to compose in English (Arab et al., 2007). It should be noted that despite the multiple activities tackled along the whole unit (training learners on both form and content), learners still feel at a loss when left to work on their own, their writing most frequently being no more than a set of unrelated sentences, something lacking all the elements needed for successful writing achievement. As a matter of fact, learners frequently produce compositions lacking most of the main requirements of effective writing (audience, purpose, content, rhetorical devices, cohesion, coherence, etc), displaying poor writing skills

not only at the paragraph level but also at the sentence level like structuring, combining, rearranging, and expanding. Merely providing learners with a framework for planning, with ideas and notes to be expanded, etc. proves insufficient, this making learners, working on their own (with no guidance, feedback, or assistance), face a serious challenge.

After a four-year of EFL learning experience at middle-school level, secondary-school learners are for the first time required to produce essays of about 15 lines. At this level, learners are supposed to have acquired rich vocabulary, learned basic and multiple grammatical rules and structures, mastered varied language functions, manipulated fundamental punctuation as well as spelling forms. In so doing, in addition to the different writing discourse types such as narrative, descriptive, argumentative, learners tackle ‘cause-effect’, ‘comparison-contrast’, and ‘problem-solution’ activities, being also required to write about major features in the culture, life and civilization of societies using this language. Research works (projects) and summaries of personal readings are also encouraged. These skills will be achieved through the exploitation of themes from the syllabus on the various text types. It should be pointed out that little by little and during the third year of secondary education learners are required to write longer essays of about twenty lines.

In the Algerian context, under the influence of CBA, different efforts have been deployed to develop both middle and secondary-school learners’ communicative competence. So, after a seven-year-experience of EFL learning, secondary-school leavers are expected to display a somewhat satisfactory mastery of the main language functions: having acquired the ability to express themselves with sufficient fluency and accuracy, manipulating more than one function at a time, employing basic vocabulary, and appropriate grammatical structures related to the given context (Abi-Ayad, 2009). By the end of secondary education, secondary-school learners are expected to: “move from skill getting to skill using” (Syllabuses for English, 2004: 36). Said differently, the focus is on the attempt to introduce an approach that allows learners to do things with the foreign language rather than

merely internalizing lexical items and structures (Ourghi, 2002). In other words, learners should participate actively, making effective use of the learnt items because, as pointed out by Palmer (1921) there is an important difference between understanding how a language works and learning how to use it.

To conclude, it may be fair to argue that though secondary-school education is a period of homogenization, consolidation, and expansion of previously learnt items, the writing skill remains a weak point for the majority of secondary-school leavers. In spite of all the effort and energy geared towards having pupils compose both accurately and fluently, achievement in writing seems out of the reach of secondary-school learners since most of them reach university level with an obvious inability to write in an intelligible way, able to transmit only very basic ideas, using individual words rather than sentences or fuller patterns of discourse, with a noticeable grammatical and lexical misuse and gaps, in addition to bad spelling and defective punctuation. Learners find difficulties related to word choice, correct grammatical use, sentence structure, organization and generation of ideas. The majority of secondary-school learners appear to be unaware of how to construct coherent and purposeful discourse, totally unable to deal with creative writing. Being exposed to a dense vocabulary thanks to a large amount of communicative activities, such learners have, nonetheless, little practice and very few writing tasks. As a matter of fact, the syllabuses which have to be achieved due to examination pressures (namely the Baccalaureate examination) force a large number of EFL teachers to put much emphasis on language mastery and grammatical accuracy, this making them feel constrained to assign most of the writing tasks as mere homework. While secondary-school learners are supposed to be able to evaluate, revise, and proofread their written productions, showing the ability to reflect on their own learning, they nonetheless complete their schooling without being able to meet these “high expectations.” (Bourouba, 2012), unable at all to create purposeful and coherent discourse. In this respect, Ourghi (2002: 30) argues that learners are severely punished because of “examination-driven institutional goals” and too ambitious EFL teaching objectives and syllabuses, explaining that both textbooks

and methodologies are content-heavy and practice-light and tend to confuse the learners whose language ability is limited. Besides “unfamiliarity with themes and topics that are commonplace in the FL culture, text types may not be accessible to all learners at such an early learning stage” (Ourghi, 2002:30). To compound the problem, it should be noted that the available teaching time (four hours a week with a focus on oral skills) in addition to the reluctance and growing demotivation in studying skills, the number of secondary-school learners who wish to improve their written proficiency is not a large one.

This section has attempted to draw attention to certain deficiencies of pre-university writing instruction, that is, the contextual factors that have contributed to shape pre-university learners’ writing behaviour, leading to a better understanding of first-year university learners’ underachievement in writing. The following section is devoted to a description of the ELT situation at university level.

2.3 ELT at University Level

Due to the globalization process, English has gained such a special status that it has become an important subject matter at both pre-university and higher education levels. Besides the educational reform of 2002 which concerns the National Education, another reform which has as purpose the reconsideration of teaching at higher education, the introduction of the LMD system in the Algerian university in the 2000s has led to many changes and modifications at the level of Higher Education and Scientific Research.

Before joining university, the new Baccalaureate holders choose the branch that best suits them to specialise in. It should be pointed out that these entrant students are orientated towards different departments to pursue their studies on the basis of a selection made according to the streams they were enrolled in at secondary-school level and the marks obtained in the Baccalaureate examination. As a matter of fact, while some learners choose the Faculty of Medicine to study either medicine, chemistry, or dental surgery, other learners opt for the Faculty of Exact Sciences to study physics, mathematics, etc., others choose the Faculty of

Economic Sciences to study management, economy, and commerce where English is taught as an independent additional module. Since English is considered a speciality in its own right, it follows that the students who apply for the Faculty of Letters to study English have to specialize in this foreign language at the English Department at university level, whether for general or academic purposes. It should be pointed out that though English is taught as an additional module for ESP learners, it nonetheless remains compulsory in almost all the departments and faculties (for both graduate and post-graduate students) such as the Faculty of Economics and Management (EBE: English for Business and Economics), or the one of Technology and Science (EST: English for Science and Technology). As a matter of fact, different syllabuses are designed to such learners, respectively, because their content is determined by learners' needs and interests (Richard and Schmidt, 2010), and also time load. An important point to mention is that the content, teaching load, and syllabuses of each stream depend heavily on the field of research and on how much students need English for their studies and their future professional careers.

2.3.1 The Syllabus

A syllabus is considered an official document as it is set by the Ministry of Higher Education in collaboration with syllabus designers and language instructors. The syllabus states what will or should be taught/learned and completed in what sequence within a certain period of time, also describing what proficiency level learners are supposed to attain in order to interact and use the language in different contexts. It represents the content of the course in terms of skills and items and the way it should be selected, organized/sequenced and presented (Richards, 1992; Nunan, 1988 qtd. in Harmer, 2001). It is a programme which identifies, selects, and organizes different themes, lectures, tasks and activities embodying multiple language items taking into account learners' needs, interests and aims. The syllabus is viewed as a plan or guideline for the teacher helping him/her to decide about the different elements or components to be taught and learned through different lectures, tasks and activities, also the content of the course in terms of notions,

structures and the most efficient way they are organized and presented. In this respect, Hutchinson and Waters (1987:80) argue that “at its simplest level a syllabus can be described as a statement of what is to be learnt. It reflects of language and linguistic performance”. A syllabus is seen as a sort of plan or programme consisting and identifying the content of the set of the different lectures, tasks, and projects to be performed and completed. It is “the summary of the content to which learners will be exposed” (Yalden, 1987: 87). Besides, it guides both teachers and learners by orientating them towards the desired objectives and the language items to be taught/learned in the most efficient way, identifying all the relevant components of a language; that is, specifying themes, functions, notions, situations, as well as grammar and vocabulary. In other words, it is an approximation of how lectures should be conducted and tasks completed to achieve the desired objectives. By language items we mean different courses and tasks within which multiple language functions, notions, grammatical structures, lexical items, etc. in relation to each lecture are studied and reinforced. By the same token, Yalden (1987) adds that a syllabus is the utensil or device permitting teachers and syllabus designers to establish a relationship between learners’ needs and the objectives of the courses (lectures, tasks, and activities) to be attained, giving both teachers and learners an overview of:

- The content of the lectures, the methodology adopted, the strategies and techniques used as well as the different tasks and projects to be completed and the way everything should be sequenced and organized.
- The content or knowledge learners are supposed to learn and know through the different lectures, files, semesters, academic years and so on.

Before designing a syllabus, many parameters need to be taken into account so as to reach the desired objectives according to a specific teaching approach:

- Learners’ needs, interests, styles and strategies
- Selection of the language items to be taught

- Also what kind of learners (e.g. EFL middle, secondary school, or university learners) are involved?
- Is the language taught L1, FL1, or FL2?
- What language items to teach and how to teach them?
- Learners' knowledge and proficiency level, time allocation (Allen, 1984; Brumfit, 1984; Dubin and Olshtain, 1986)
- Learners' attitudes towards the language in question and then language learning depending on its importance in their educational life in particular and worldwide use in general.
- The status of the language in the milieu in which it is used; that is whether it is L1, FL1, or FL2, also the different settings, contexts, and places in which it is used, the role of the language and its importance in the political, economic and educational life of the country, and so on.

The syllabus devoted to EFL university students aims at:

- Synthesizing and developing learners' language acquisition
- Enhancing learners' oral and written communication abilities and competences
- Teaching learners varied language forms, functions and various types of discourse: narrative, descriptive, expository, prescriptive, argumentative

As far as writing is concerned, when setting a syllabus, syllabus designers take into account several parameters to help students learn the language and use it in different situations in their future life (grammatical structures, functions, notions). Put differently, the different lectures and tasks devised to teach writing aim to get the learners to develop this important productive skill, mastering the basic elements of the foreign language with the ability to express oneself with reasonable fluency and accuracy (see sections 2.5.1, 2.5.2. and 2.5.3). The content of the lectures is organized and sequenced in accordance with learners' needs, interests and their proficiency level.

Regarding writing, the syllabuses designated have different goals and have as a major aim to teach learners how to construct longer units such as paragraphs and whole essays. The syllabus describes the proficiency level learners need to attain, that is, mastering the different components of writing and the ability to construct longer units. It should be noted that whatever the type of syllabus, it needs to be developed depending on a number of factors which are:

- Learnability (moving from easy to complex)
- Frequency (including the items most frequently used by native speakers)
- Coverage (selecting the language items to include either before or after others)
- Usefulness (what language items seem useful in the classroom though not necessarily used in daily life)

(Sárosdy et al., 2006 qtd. in Aimeur, 2011)

In other words, when planning a course, it is important for teachers to pay attention to the content, organization as well as the sequencing of what to teach. In other words, choice of presentation is influenced by structural complexity, what has already been taught, and teachability of the structure and language function, such elements being presented in order of need.

2.3.2 The LMD System: An Overview

Because the Algerian teaching pedagogies no more respond to the general requirements of the 21st century and the demands of the present situation, Algeria too, has been concerned by globalization. In this regard, globalization is believed to be a large economic, scientific and political movement having a direct and unavoidable influence on higher education (Albach et al., 2004). Presently, English has a fundamental role at higher education whatever the branch being followed. Said differently, since the classical system no more suits and responds to the demands of the country whether from the educational, economic, or political side,

the Algerian Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research was in quest of a new system which aims to:

- Offer quality teaching/instruction
- Create and establish communication, interchange, and transfer with the socio economic environment so as to elaborate and refine all possible interactions between university and the outside world
- Improve structures and mechanisms for constant adjustment to evolving jobs
- Be more open to worldwide scientific and technological evolution and growth
- Promote multiplicity and worldwide collaboration by the most appropriate terms
- Make bases for appropriate and quality command and direction based on involvement, contribution and negotiation

(Megnounif, 2009 qtd. in Abdat, 2015)

As a matter of fact, while the reform of 2002/2003 concerns the Algerian national education, the one taking place by 2004/2005 has as purpose the reconsideration and reorganization of teaching at the level of higher education and scientific research by adopting and implementing a new teaching system (the B.M.D: Bachelor-Master-Philosophia Doctor). Also known as the L.M.D, being an acronym for Licence, Master, and Doctorate, such a system aims at:

- Facilitating both teachers' and learners' mobility in different European zones (countries and universities)
- Helping learners integrate the European job market
- Enhancing worldwide transparency in the identification and acceptance of diplomas (also foreign ones) in accordance with the general framework of degrees and qualifications of study
- Encouraging long-term learning

(Suarez and Suarez, 2005)

The teaching period at higher education under the LMD system has been altered and is presently completed in three different phases or cycles over a period of eight years:

- Licence: be it academic (preparing learners for the master degree) or professional (directly integrating learners in the world of work) and which new Baccalaureate holders have to prepare and then obtain after a period of three years of study (six semesters) to obtain 180 ECTS (European Credit Transfer Systems).
- Master: be it a research master or a professional one, the master is obtained after two years of study; i.e. four semesters, where learners should also prepare a memoir to be defended by the end of the second year.
- Doctorate: obtained after three years (six semesters) of research (thesis) where the first semester is devoted to lectures and defending the thesis by the end of the third year.

Major aspects of the LMD system may be summarized as follows:

1. **Semestrialisation:** teaching/learning units are sequenced in different semesters (two semesters per academic year) instead of years of instruction. It should be pointed out that each semester comprises sixteen weeks (from 300 to 400 hours) of instruction during which learners are assessed in terms of tests, tasks, projects. Learners are also evaluated by the end of each semester through exams.
2. **Teaching unit:** is composed of a set of lectures sequenced in a harmonious and logical academic and pedagogical development. Each semester comprises four teaching units which are, themselves, composed of different modules:
 - The fundamental unit: where principal and fundamental subjects are categorized

- The methodological unit: which basically prepares learners to get competences in methodology
- The discovery unit: where learners become familiar with new subjects in new fields so as to enlarge their knowledge
- The transversal unit: is mainly concerned with ICT and study skill courses

3. **Credits:** the system of credits implies that learners' success or failure depends on the number of credits obtained in each semester. Differently stated, after having obtained 30 credits per semester and 60 in the whole academic year, learners pass and are admitted to the superior level.

4. **Assessment:** one of the major features of the LMD system is its continuous learners' assessment; that is, besides tests and end-of-semester examinations (marks) learners are continuously evaluated throughout the whole academic semester (i.e. lectures, tutorials, tasks, projects, and so on).

5. **Tutoring:** is another important feature of the LMD system. As opposed to the other usual teaching sessions (lectures), tutoring ones are new sessions where both teachers and learners meet. Besides their roles in the classroom, such sessions give teachers new tasks (which serve different purposes) to guide, help, advise, orientate learners depending on their needs, requests, or problems.

As far as EFL instruction is concerned, Bouhadiba (2012) argues that such a system is helpful and highly beneficial for both EFL teachers and learners if compared to the previous one (classic) in the sense that it permits worldwide recognition of learners' degrees and deep language learning, also improving teachers' competences, professional as well as pedagogical knowledge.

Though many Algerian researchers and scholars welcome the LMD implementation at university level, others do not. Such a fact may be attributed not only to the number of problems this system has encountered but also because of the misunderstanding or rather non-understanding of its goals and objectives (Idri,

2005 qtd. in Abdat, 2015). It is believed, then, according to the Ministry of Higher Education (2013), that those who view such a system as failure probably have not grasped its real meaning.

Being implemented to replace the classical system with all its aspects, architecture of studies in higher education, content of the course, other features of this newly adopted system such as EFL teacher education and training, teacher roles, also learner roles will be discussed in the following sections.

2.3.2.1 Teacher Education and Training

Beside aiming at improving the quality of university instruction and promoting learners' mobility and orientation, the LMD system implementation in the Algerian university brings changes at the level of EFL teaching/learning in general in addition to teacher education and training which has been reconsidered and then reorganized. In this contest, it is argued that:

...teacher training experiences should include enough opportunities to 1) collaborate with colleagues who are implementing the same strategies, 2) visit classrooms that use multiple instructional strategies and focus on student learning styles, 3) observe student and teacher success, 4) develop and/or pilot instructional materials, 5) practice using these strategies with colleagues in order to receive feedback, 6) participate in and present activities that foster learning styles at workshops and in-service programs.

(Ballone and Czerniak 2001: 22 qtd. in Bellalem, 2008: 39)

Within the previously educational system (classical system) applied at university level, students had to study within a period of four years to prepare and obtain their licence degree (equivalent of the BA degree). Such a diploma gave EFL university students (prospective teachers) the opportunity to become EFL teachers at either middle or secondary-school level. Those who chose to become university teachers had to sit for a contest and prepare another diploma 'Magister' in a period of two years and defend a thesis. Within the classical system, EFL university

students had a number of modules: oral and written expression, grammar, linguistics, phonetics, literature (American, British, and Third World Literature), civilization (both American and British), psychology, psycho-pedagogy, sociolinguistics, and TEFL tackled in the fourth and last year. In addition to describing the English language (theoretical aspect), such instruction permitted learners to become aware of the way English is used, getting the language skills (functions, structures, and rules) as well as being introduced to the English culture. Learners were also required to make research and produce papers which they had to present orally, in front of an audience, namely their teachers and classmates. Moreover, in order to have a professional qualification regarding EFL teaching, graduates dealt with the module of psycho-pedagogy providing them with guidelines concerning the teaching/learning situation and the teaching profession. At the level of the fourth year, in addition to the courses that were compulsory, learners had the choice between writing an extended essay or taking part in teacher-training sessions which they had to complement by a written report. In parallel with the sessions they were taking part in, learners were also required to prepare lessons to present to their classmates, attempting somehow to act as teachers. Unfortunately, because of the large number of EFL university students (very large groups varying between 50 to 60 learners), such a task did not provide these would-be teachers with regular and enough practice; as a result, repeating training several times in order to get experience proved impossible. Moreover, it is worth adding that there is a vast difference between teaching classmates (in this special case university students) and dealing with middle or secondary-school learners.

The new system applied at higher education differs from the preceding classical one with regard to the teaching courses, the time allocated to the different levels (25 hours a week for all three levels), teaching materials, number of courses, syllabi content, teaching load, evaluation tools and procedures, and students' workload and outcomes. The exams take place twice a year, by the end of each of the two semesters, and are generally followed by make-up ones, the latter concerning only the less successful students.

In addition to the number of changes (mentioned above) drawn by the implementation of the LMD system, one major change has a concern with the preparation of the licence, being the first cycle of university studies. Presently, new Baccalaureate holders prepare their degree in a period of three years (six semesters) instead of four. This three-year experience of EFL instruction provides learners (future teachers) with a number of modules, enrolling students in several “fundamental teaching units” which are: comprehension and oral and written expression (COE and CWE, respectively) grammar, phonetics, linguistics, literature and civilization. In addition, other units, “transversal” ones (ICT, study skills, human and social sciences, and translation), provide learners with various lectures, tasks and activities where multiple aspects of the target language (lexis, notions, structures, themes) are presented.

The major concern of the different fundamental units is to tackle the basic elements in EFL teaching such as describing the English language, instructing the language skills (functions, structures, and rules) as well as introducing the English culture. It is important to note that learners are initiated to the principles, processes and procedures of research through specific teaching units, namely the research methodology module. With regard to the comprehension and written expression module, it is important to note that students are presented with a number of both theoretical and practical lectures, providing learners with the necessary guidelines to be used, practised and also consolidated in other modules like linguistics, civilization and literature. Clearly, writing, as a basic skill, will be the most needed means in any of the different modules throughout all university studies (whether Licence degree, Master, or Doctorate). As a fundamental skill, writing proves of vital importance as it is the skill most required in any academic context. For this main reason, written expression should be given more importance, if not some priority over the other subjects in terms of the teaching load and teaching sessions devoted to practice.

Within the classical system, all graduates used to sit for a contest to carry on studies in different fields such as civilisation, literature, applied linguistics, TEFL,

or ESP. Presently all graduates have the opportunity to carry on their studies and prepare a 'Master' degree, depending on their choice (selecting one of the provided specificities). The different teaching units or modules students attend include ESP, TEFL and language acquisition, language and linguistic theories, sociolinguistics, research methodology, American civilisation, British Civilisation, etc., according to the field of study. Second-year Master students have to write a memoir and defend it by the end of the second year (end of the second cycle). Throughout their university studies, EFL students acquire knowledge related to the American and British civilisation, culture and literature. Learners also develop linguistic skills, these proving highly beneficial as they help students become able to encode and decode oral as well as written messages. It should be noted that a pre-selection of just the most successful students allows Master holders to sit for the Doctoral contest permitting them to pursue their Doctorate studies. Yet, such a selection depends on two main criteria: in addition to the average obtained at the two-year Master instruction (including the memoir), learners are also assessed upon their whole university curriculum. The Doctorate degree allows students to become EFL teachers at higher education.

One of the major concerns of the English degree is to ensure that learners have received an adequate instruction, preparing them both theoretically and practically (well-prepared as well as well-trained as future teachers). In this respect, Bellalem (2008: 63) states that: "the Licence course aimed at preparing prospective teachers of secondary schools. It was structured in such a way that by the end of the course, students were expected to have acquired content knowledge about the French/English language and its culture, and some pedagogical knowledge."

According to Bellalem, the Licence course is a two-fold purpose: providing students with (1) the theoretical aspect of the language, and (2) preparing the future teachers for the practical aspect of teaching. This means that by the end of their three-year instruction, learners are supposed to be able to cope with EFL teaching requirements in two different ways: having acquired sufficient linguistic and

cultural knowledge concerning the foreign language, and also some notions on the pedagogical side of teaching.

In spite of Bellalem's claim, it appears that the courses provided at the first cycle of university studies are more theoretical than practical. Despite the considerable amount of knowledge and training EFL students receive at university level, learners are definitely not equipped for a professional career. For her part, Benmati (2008: 62) states that: "in addition to subject knowledge and pedagogy required for the teaching of the subject, teachers had to have an understanding of philosophy, psychology and sociology of education."

As a matter of fact, the scientific training which students receive at university level is, to a large extent, different from the teaching profession requirements, failing to prepare the would-be teachers for their future tasks. It may be fair to argue that the gap which exists between the scientific knowledge provided at university and what would-be teachers will actually have to do at middle and secondary-school levels is a big one. Indeed, teaching the foreign language to beginners is not an easy task. Put differently, even if the training that prospective teachers receive in Higher education seems a reasonable period of time to equip them with a good command of the target language, does it actually endow them with the required pedagogical qualifications? Expecting a newly-appointed teacher to have the same kind of pedagogy an experienced teacher has would be too pretentious. It is clear that pedagogy and experience can only be acquired through time. In the same line of thought, Bouhadiba (2000, qtd. in Hamzaoui, 2006) argues that the EFL teacher still lacks "qualified ELT professionalism" despite the innovations brought in terms of methodologies and approaches. He explains that university students (would-be teachers) complete their English degree without any real training (teaching experience) and consequently with no experience in EFL teaching, further arguing that the teaching material is neither available nor suitable. To compound the problem, it is also important to mention that teachers in pre-educational levels are constrained to follow the pedagogical instructions imposed by the Ministry of National Education, this presenting a serious handicap due to a number of factors

such as learners' age and background knowledge, mixed-ability and overcrowded classes, motivation, individual learning styles¹ etc., such a challenge most frequently leading to the problem of teachability/learnability. Consequently, novice teachers are always complaining about the teaching profession.

With regard to teacher education and training, Bellalem (2008: 65) argues that: "training is a continuous process for all educators at all levels, and its purpose is to allow the participants to gain professional knowledge and to enhance competence, culture and awareness about the mission that educators are set to accomplish". Bellalem expresses the view that training for both pre and in-service teachers should be continuous and consistent, helping novice teachers tackle the task with less apprehension and more confidence, and also experienced teachers improve their teaching by keeping in touch with the requirements of the teaching profession, also being informed about the newly introduced approaches, strategies, teaching/learning and evaluation processes.

2.3.2.2 Teacher Roles and Strategies

Though, nowadays, the learner is the first element involved in the process and deserves much attention, the process of learning/teaching being more learner-centred, the teacher remains an important element in the whole process. The teacher is highly involved in the interaction teacher/learner. Consequently, some variables such as teacher roles and strategies must not be overlooked.

Besides teacher education and training which have been reconsidered and then modified with the implementation of the LMD system in terms of content, assessment, years of study, so have teacher roles. So far, there has been a shift from 'teacher-centredness' to 'learners-centredness' where the new teaching practices promote learner autonomy. Though new roles are attributed to the EFL teacher, s/he is still the agent responsible for making decisions, conducting the class, orientating, guiding and bringing help to learners when necessary. In this respect, it is argued that:

... the role of the teacher has been modified for the reason that it suits the freedom given and prescribed for the learner. Thus, teachers have to accept their role as mediator, facilitator of the knowing and the learning process. Teachers, therefore, are no more the only exclusive omnipotent of knowledge. They are called to master not only the discipline they teach but also the methodological competencies that allow them to clearly define the objectives of the learning process as well as the referential of the competence on which the control of the learning process is based (Sarnou et al., 2012: 182).

Sarnou et al. explain that teaching is no longer perceived as a one-sided flow of information; that is, the teacher is viewed as a co-learner and is no more considered as the only source of knowledge, a regulator of labour, a prototype to be reproduced and learners' spoonfeeder. More than that, the teacher is supposed to possess knowledge not only in the discipline s/he teaches but in the philosophy, psychology and sociology of learning as well (Benmati, 2008). Instead of dictating what should be done and being imitated, the teacher's role is presently to supervise, coordinate, advise, and train learners. The teacher is supposed to frequently reflect on his/her teaching methodologies and practices so as to facilitate the learning process, making learners adequately use what has been learned in concrete situations, i.e. learning through doing. By the same token Bellalem (2008: 62) argues that:

The teacher...become[s] a mediator between knowledge and the learner. She/he must create an environment that enhances learning and the development of the learner. Her/his task will be to guide, stimulate, accompany and encourage the learner in her/his learning path.

Bellalem explains that the teacher is responsible for providing a suitable flexible learning atmosphere regulating in terms of time, space, pace, and content the different phases of the learning process, supplying appropriate conditions, and tasks for learning (bearing in mind the present teaching situation with learners' age, needs, interests, experiences, educational background, etc.), also setting objectives and the way to reach them so as to develop learners' autonomy, their language awareness and enhance their learning process (Syllabuses for English, 2004).

With the shift from the teacher to the learner becoming the centre of the teaching/learning process, much emphasis is placed on the way students use such knowledge. In this respect, Harmer (2001) asserts that learning can only be the more efficient provided learners are offered appropriate tasks to perform in class, approaching real-life ones. Another important dimension to consider is that in learner-centred classrooms, teachers become open-minded and tolerant towards learners' input and errors, constantly encouraging students to communicate (both orally or by written) and use the different learnt items (new vocabulary, grammatical structures, communicative language functions), yet, taking the risk of making errors as errors are seen as an inevitable part of the learning process. Such a way allows the teacher to correct students' errors by using different techniques without inhibiting the learners.

2.3.2.3 Student Roles

While it proposes a new type of teaching materials, teaching methodology, assessment procedures, tasks and activities, the LMD system attributes new roles in the classroom for both teachers and learners. Leading to a shift in learners' role since its introduction in Higher Education during the 2000s by emphasizing their active participation and involvement in the language learning process (Benmati, 2008), the LMD gives learners different opportunities with regard to their own learning, both in terms of its content as well as the different processes employed such as working in small groups (collaborative learning involving interaction with peers) or even assessing and evaluating oneself. With the shift from product-oriented to process-oriented instruction, much emphasis is placed on the learning process rather than on learners' products (Sarnou, 2015). Sarnou et al. (2012: 182) stress the fact that the LMD implementation in the Algerian university has led to changes at the level of learners' roles explaining that such a system transforms the learner from "the docile 'object' and the passive agent into a principal active agent as the learner in the learning process". No more considered as passive agents and mere spectators, learners, at present, take responsibility for their own learning by

actively participating in the learning process. In this respect, Bellalem (2008: 62) asserts that:

[T]he learner engage[s] in a process of construction of knowledge ... she/he will be responsible for her/his learning and will consequently be able to transfer her/his knowledge to her/his academic and social activities. She/he will have developed certain **autonomy, creativity** and a sense of **initiative and responsibility**.

Bellalem explains that throughout their learning process, learners become responsible for their own learning, autonomous and creative, employing the acquired knowledge in different settings. He explains that it is only by being in charge of their learning that learners may become independent and creative to use the acquired knowledge in different situations both in and out-of-class settings. Presently, learners take responsibility of their learning by being directly involved in the learning process, making use of such knowledge in actual situations (whether in or out-of-school settings). In the same line of thought, Bellalem (2008: 09) adds that learning is:

...comprehending, changing mental representations, but most importantly integrating and not accumulating knowledge. Learning is the interaction of what we know with what others know which would lead to create new knowledge that the individual would re-invest and use in the social world.

Through this quotation, Bellalem emphasizes the fact that learning is no more perceived as the fact of assembling knowledge; more than that, it is comprehension of how to use the acquired language in appropriate contexts, also exchanging knowledge from different sides to interact in the social world. He stresses the fact that what is significant is what learners do with the language and how they use it alternatively to notions and knowledge they gather about the language.

The shift from teacher-centredness (which used to place the teacher at the centre of the teaching/learning process) to learner-centredness has had several implications regarding the learner. This new trend makes learners become

responsible for their own learning, encouraging them to understand the purpose and process of learning, work in collaboration with peers, and participate in classroom tasks-based on a cooperative rather than individualistic approach to learning (Bellalem, 2008). Being involved in group work, learners are less guided and less controlled by the teacher whose role is simplified to that of facilitator and monitor. However, as not all learners have the same abilities nor do they learn at the same rates, the teacher remains an indispensable partner in the whole teaching/learning process. He is still the person specially trained to make the learning task easier. It is the teacher's job to guide learners and make them take part in the learning process (Harmer, 2001). Due to this particular attention given to the social context of learning, learners are no longer seen as separate and decontextualized individuals. This new situation allows them to make use of the acquired knowledge both in and out-class settings, for different communicative purposes.

In our context, most of first-year EFL university learners are new Baccalaureate holders about 17 or 18 years old, new students who appear to be somehow at a loss. As they appear to lack self-confidence, it becomes obvious that these entrant students need not only guidance but their teachers' attention as well, something all too rare at university level.

2.4 The English Department

As opposed to the other faculties in the Algerian university where the target language is taught/learned for specific purposes, English is taught for general ones in the English department to prepare students to become EFL teachers either at middle or secondary-school level. After obtaining their Master degree, while a number of students leave university for personal reasons, others sit for a doctoral contest to prepare their Doctorate and become EFL teachers at university level.

Though the university of Tlemcen was established in the mid-seventies, it was only in 1988 that English was introduced for the first time, alongside with French, within the institute of Arabic. Little by little, English gained more importance, this giving birth to the institute of foreign languages in 1991. It was not

only as 1997 that this institute comprising French and English no longer belonged to the Institute of Arabic. The English section alongside with the French, Spanish, and Translation ones remained under the supervision of the department of foreign languages till 2014. However, in 2015, becoming an autonomous department, the English section was separated from that of French. The new Department of English (including the section of Translation), originally the Department of Foreign Languages, provides both undergraduates and graduate studies leading respectively to the degrees of Licence in English Language Teaching and also Master and Doctorate. In higher education, English is taught as a subject of study, given due importance in the formal evaluation of students.

It should be noted that, since its establishment in 1988, the department has received a large number of EFL students from all over Algeria and helped fill in the lack of foreign-language secondary-school teachers in various areas of the country namely, Tlemcen, Ain Temouchent, Bechar, and Mecheria. An important point to mention is that, since the late eighties, the Department had mainly relied on a group of four (4) newly qualified teachers and some others coming from different parts of the country. In 1993, the first post-graduate course was launched and was under the supervision of a group of teachers (both Lecturers and Professors) coming from other universities (namely Oran University), to help fill the void in qualified teachers namely in Tlemcen and Sidi Belabbes universities. The successful candidates obtaining the Magister degree by the mid-nineties helped to cope with the rising number of newly enrolled students. These newly qualified full-time teachers also helped put an end to the reliance on part-time teachers from secondary schools. Presently, in addition to the number of permanent teachers that does not exceed sixty (60) including ten Professors, about thirty Lecturers, and the remaining number consisting of Assistant teachers, it should be noted that the number of part-time teachers is a relatively high one, including most doctorate students as the department hardly keeps up with the increasing number of new Baccalaureate holders.

2.4.1 Teacher Profile

Years ago, the main requirement for becoming an EFL university teacher in the Department of Foreign Languages was to hold a ‘Magister’ degree. At that time, EFL teachers used to be autonomous and free to make decisions concerning module goals, content, teaching materials, and methods. They also used to teach in isolation from each other, with neither coordination nor attempt on the part of experienced teachers to assist the less experienced ones with their professional development. A number of teachers appeared to be mainly concerned with the passing on of well-established knowledge, merely acting as spoonfeeders, showing no interest to carry on their professional development. In order for teachers to improve their teaching and bring about a significant change in their students’ learning, teachers need to be more concerned, more involved, willing to collaborate and share, participating in research, seminars, conferences, joining professional organizations, and publishing articles in professional journals. The lack of such essential teaching roles and responsibilities presents a serious problem in an academic context like university.

In the present context, teachers are no longer autonomous and free to make the decisions they were uniquely suited to make concerning module goals, content and teaching materials. In other words, classroom decisions are no longer made by the teacher alone. Conversely, these decisions are guided by policy makers and certain beliefs which greatly influence the teaching of the target language. As a result, teachers are constrained to work together as a team, taking part in collaborative activities, determining their students’ needs and developing syllabuses. It should be noted that the writing syllabus for first-year LMD has been developed by a team, with slight changes occurring from one year to another. At present, teachers enjoy a wide range of responsibilities, especially in the identification of needs, content selection, teaching methodology, and relationships with learners. In addition to these responsibilities, the new system implemented in higher education has attributed new roles to teachers. Nowadays, there is a call for EFL teachers for reflecting on their teaching practices and methodology, giving guidance, facilitating learning, always keeping in mind learners’ needs, styles, and

strategies, and promoting learners' autonomy. The expected teacher roles today may be formulated this way: guides, counsellors, team members, mentors, and helpers.

Besides the EFL teacher, his new roles, responsibilities, and teaching methodology, the learner, for his part, remains an important participant in any teaching/learning situation. The following section describes the learner's profile, his/her roles as well as needs and interests.

2.4.2 Student Profile

The new Baccalaureate holders join university usually at the age of 17 or 18. After being orientated, learners are admitted in different faculties depending on the stream they enrolled in at the secondary school, the marks obtained in the Baccalaureate exam, and their personal choice of the section (branch) they want to follow at university. When entering university, learners have studied Arabic for twelve years, French for ten years, and English for seven years. It should be noted that the students admitted to the English department come from different streams but the majority of them enrolled in literary ones such as Letters and Foreign languages, Literary and Philosophy. Yet, a major problem is that offering a pedagogical place to entrant students has become a serious problem due to the increasing number of students enrolling in the English department and the lack of pedagogical concerns and facilities (qualified teachers, adequate teaching time, library facilities). When entering university, a large number of the newly-enrolled students face serious problems (orientation, linguistic, etc.), and only a small number will attempt to adjust to the demands of the new academic context. Moving from secondary to higher education is a big challenge, requiring from entrant students awareness and responsibility and a substantial change in terms of students' roles.

2.5 EFL Writing at University Level

Writing within the LMD system remains a compulsory subject for all EFL learners. Being a fundamental unit at university level required in all modules, writing is taught throughout the three years of the licence.

2.5.1 Writing at First-Year University Level

In the first year it is called comprehension and written expression (CWE). The syllabus for first-year university learners is divided into two main parts. The distribution of the lectures is made according to the two semesters, the first one starting from the beginning of September and ending by the beginning of January, right after the winter holidays (lasting two weeks), followed by the 1st semester exams (taking place during the first two weeks of January).

The first semester is entirely devoted to the learning of the sentence patterns, the main types of sentences, and the differences between sentences, clauses, and phrases. As concerns the sentences, the first lecture is designed to the teaching/learning of the simple sentence, this being the basic component of any piece of writing (Pincas, 1982). An important aspect regarding the production of correct simple sentences is to put great emphasis on the main two parts constituting the simple sentence (i.e. subject and predicate, and also the importance of the conjugated verb), making learners aware of the difference between fragments, phrases, and run-on sentences. Once they have grasped this difference, learners are engaged in a series of activities where they have to first identify the different elements (whether a sentence, a fragment, a phrase or a run-on sentence), before dealing with various tasks where they can tackle the simple sentence.

The second lecture is designed to the teaching of clauses: noun clauses, adjective (relative clauses) and adverbial clauses. It is important to note that learners get more or less confused with this lecture, frequently mixing between the different types of clauses. While the easiest of the three types is the adverb clause (time,

result, purpose, condition, etc.), the noun clause seems to present serious problems to the students (this is clearly shown in the marks obtained at the exam in this type of exercise). When it comes to noun clauses (and sometimes adjective clauses), learners are at a loss as far as identifying and using them are concerned. Yet, such a component (i.e. clauses) is of essential importance in order to form compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences, these three types forming the content of the third lecture. At this level, learners are presented with activities of varying levels of difficulty. An important point to mention is that sentence length frequently puts learners into trouble, making them confuse between the simple sentence and the complex one, learners assuming that a simple sentence is obviously short while, for instance, the complex one is long as shown in the following examples:

Complex sentence:

e.g. a. As John was ill, he stayed in bed.

b. John stayed in bed as he was ill.

Simple sentence:

e.g. The house situated next to my grandparents' is very nice, with a lovely garden full of beautiful flowers and a number of large, clear, comfortable, well-painted, well-furnished and well-decorated rooms situated in the first floor, in addition to several bathrooms found in every bedroom and a large living-room just close to the white spacious dining-room.

The last of the four lectures is designed to sentence pattern expansion, dealing with three major points: modification and subordination, coordination, and substitution. It is important to note that this fourth lecture has been dropped out as some teachers did not actually see its importance at first-year university level. While the sentence and the different types of sentences are brought into focus, learners are also introduced to the paragraph: paragraph organization, formatting a paragraph (it should be pointed out that such a point has recently been dropped out by the team in charge of the establishment of the syllabus), and unity and coherence

in a paragraph. In order to achieve this, learners are briefly introduced to the notion of the writing process and brainstorming strategies, before moving to basic paragraph structure. At this level, they are presented with multiple texts and activities where they learn that a paragraph consists of a topic sentence, supporting sentences, and a concluding sentence. The various activities are concerned with:

- Identifying and examining the different parts making a paragraph: whether a topic sentence, supporting sentences, or a concluding sentence
- Identifying topics and controlling ideas
- Identifying effective topic sentences
- Writing topic sentences
- Identifying topic sentences and supporting sentences
- Identifying supporting sentences and concluding sentences
- Recognizing unity in supporting sentences
- Developing unity
- Editing for unity
- Evaluating coherence within a paragraph

By the end of the first semester, students are introduced to the descriptive paragraph, one of the four types of writing included in the syllabus. The other three types (i.e. narrative, expository and argumentative/persuasive) are tackled during the second semester and are expected to provide learners with a great deal of paragraph writing. The two remaining lectures concerned with punctuation and the use of capital letters make the last part of the syllabus and are therefore relegated to the very end of the semester. It is nonetheless important to mention that a minority of writing teachers (among whom the researcher herself) disagree with this distribution. As a result, some of them have decided to teach such indispensable components at the very beginning of the first semester, dealing with them within any lecture or activity. A further consideration is that learners are generally blamed and penalized (as concerns tests and exams) for elements they are supposed to learn

by the very end of the second semester such as lack or defective punctuation and no capitalization.

2.5.2 Writing at Second-Year University Level

The first sessions regarding any subject are traditionally devoted to revision. It is the case for the written expression module called Comprehension and Written Expression (CWE). In so doing, while the teacher gives the learners some new notions, s/he first and foremost proceeds to remind the students with the different steps one has to go through in the composing process (pre-writing, drafting, reviewing and editing), providing them with activities expected to help them reinforce their writing performance. Besides, learners are exposed to a parallel comparison between paragraph and essay structure in which they may identify the elements found in each of them respectively. Once revision is completed and practice repeated, the teacher starts dealing with the first semester lectures which consist in teaching students the different elements of an essay and how to develop it. The whole academic year comprises seven files. While the first semester lectures are devoted to essay basic structure, outlining an essay, introduction writing, thesis statement writing, body paragraph writing, and conclusion writing, the second semester lectures initiate learners to the types of essays such as: descriptive, narrative, expository (basically cause/effect essay and comparison/contrast essay), and argumentative. Therefore, learners are exposed to some theory concerning the definition, notions and format of the essay for a whole semester, identifying the purpose of an outline and how to write it. Learners are also made aware of the different parts of the essay; for instance, the purpose of an introduction, its basic structure, what elements to include in it, and then how to develop it. Subsequent lectures are devoted to body paragraph writing. In so doing, learners are taught how to structure, develop, and edit a paragraph, bearing in mind unity and coherence throughout their composing process. Being the last lecture of the semester, and as is the case with introduction writing, conclusion writing, in its turn, shows learners the purpose of a conclusion with the type of information to include and then how to develop a whole conclusion.

Dealing with the different types of essays makes learners acknowledge the purpose of each of them, the structures used, and the jargon needed. Such a way allows students become aware of the differences between each of these types. Differently stated, learners at this level may determine the type of their writing by knowing which information to include, for which purpose (e.g. narrate, describe, give arguments to defend a thesis). Unfortunately, due to too ambitious syllabuses and time shortage, it is easily noticeable that most of the writing sessions are mainly devoted to theory, with very little practice, if at all.

2.5.3 Writing at Third-Year University Level

At this level, the teaching of writing during the whole year is devoted to a revision and consolidation of the knowledge acquired during the first two previous years, and is divided into two main parts. While the first semester tackles paragraph writing, the second deals with essay writing. The first semester is devoted to teach academic writing, with different lectures and activities designed to the teaching of paragraph organization, paragraph transition (conjunctive adverbs, transitional phrases, implied or conceptual transitions), sentence transition and combination (linking words and punctuation), phrases and words (precision in word choice, avoidance of vague pronouns) and errors to avoid in academic writing: subject-verb agreement, sentence fragment, run-on sentences, wordiness, faulty parallelism, misplaced modifiers, dangling modifiers)

Being the first file introduced at the very beginning of the year, paragraph organization is tackled through different lectures: paragraph structure, types of organization, and types of paragraphs (this third lecture making the last part of the file). At this level, learners are taught how to write a paragraph, with an understanding of the importance and role of the topic sentence, the supporting sentences, and the concluding one, and how to supply them when structuring and writing a paragraph. The second lecture consists in giving learners notions on the different types of organization. Differently stated, learners are taught how to develop the ideas in a paragraph (e.g. developing ideas in a chronological order, moving from general to more specific or vice versa). The third and last lecture of

the file exposes learners to different types of paragraphs which are: descriptive, expository, persuasive, narrative and literary. At this level, learners are taught how to construct paragraphs on each of the mentioned types, learning how to differentiate between each of these types. Besides, they can understand the purpose of each type of writing; for example, learners become aware that descriptive paragraphs are concerned with describing persons, places, things, animals, etc., using specific language.

Paragraph transition comprises two lectures: conjunctive adverbs and transitional phrases, and implied or conceptual transitions. The former gives learners notions on conjunctive adverbs (accordingly, consequently, likewise, etc.) and transitional phrases (in addition, for instance, in other words, etc.), and trains learners to use them in paragraphs so as to relate sentences to what precede or follow them. The latter serves to develop a certain logic between paragraphs using some words to refer to the preceding or following ones to maintain logic and coherence.

As previously mentioned, the second semester is entirely devoted to the teaching/learning of the different types of essays: expository, argumentative, narrative, and descriptive) where learners are exposed to different lectures and tasks on how to produce such types of essays. The lectures and tasks have as purpose to initiate learners to essay production by defining each of the previously four types mentioned above, their purpose and organization.

2.6 Written Expression Examination

Besides the different activities designed to regularly assess learners' progress, university students sit for tests and end-of-semester examinations through which both their learning and writing proficiency are evaluated. Aiming at or intended to assess learners' writing skill improvement in relation to the lectures (syllabus) they have been following, both tests and examinations prove to be beneficial since they provide information about learners' difficulties, gaps, and skill deficiencies leading teachers to deal with remedial teaching. When sitting for tests and exams, students are generally assigned activities and tasks which they are

familiar with (similar texts themes and familiar task types). Each subject exam usually consists of different types of activities, ranging from four to five, moving from the least to the most difficult ones.

At first-year level, the proposed tests and examinations have as objective to test capitalization, punctuation and spelling, and to also assess learners' productive skills and knowledge (e.g. the construction of simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences). Learners may also be asked to expand or reduce sentences, supply either the topic or the concluding sentence, extract from the text any type of sentence (simple, compound, complex, or compound complex), summarize a text, reorder scrambled sentences.

It should be pointed out that it is only in the second semester examination that learners deal with paragraph writing. At this level, learners may be given one of the four types of paragraph writing (descriptive, narrative, expository or argumentative), being expected to use a variety of language forms, and also required to provide either a topic sentence, supporting sentences, or a concluding one. Besides, paragraph writing requires from learners to have control over many components of language through which their product will be examined and evaluated at both levels: content (selection and organization of ideas) and form (grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics of writing). Learners' writing will also be assessed on the ability to establish both cohesion and coherence, the use of related appropriate vocabulary, grammatical structures, and clear meaning.

2.7 Conclusion

Chapter two has been an attempt to display the EFL situation in the Algerian educational system from the middle school till university. This chapter has provided the reader with a general view of the different levels and stages Algerian EFL teachers and learners go through in their EFL teaching/learning process, respectively. This chapter contains three main parts. Part one is mainly concerned with ELT at pre-university level with reference to both middle and secondary schools as well as EFL writing at these two levels.

Entitled ELT at university level, part two has dealt with the major reform concerning higher education, the LMD system implementation and its impact on ELT in the Algerian university regarding the teaching objectives, the syllabus, teacher education and training as well as his new roles and strategies in the EFL class. Besides, such a section has provided a description of the English Department of Tlemcen University, as well as both teacher and learner profile.

Since the researcher's main concern and field of research are related to the teaching of writing at first-year university level, the third and last part of this chapter has had as role to describe the teaching of EFL writing at the three levels of the licence degree. Therefore, for more objectivity and reliability, the next chapter will serve the following purposes: first, chapter three will present the research methodology adopted for this study with regard to the sample population, the research instruments and the empirical phase that would lead to practical evidence about the reasons underlying learners' deficiencies. Second, the chapter will also display the research design and procedure the present study was conducted, also the data collection method.

CHAPTER THREE

Research Methodology and Situation Analysis

CHAPTER THREE

Research Methodology and Situation Analysis

3.1 Introduction	130
3.2 Research Purpose and Objectives	130
3.3 Research Methodology	132
3.3.1 Classroom Action Research	134
3.3.2 Participants	140
3.3.2.1 Learner Profile	141
3.3.2.2 Teacher Profile	142
3.3.3 Research Instruments	143
3.3.3.1 Classroom Observation	145
3.3.3.2 Task Production	148
3.3.3.3 The Questionnaire	149
3.4 Research Procedure	152
3.4.1 Piloting the Questionnaire	153
3.5 Data Analysis	156
3.5.1 Qualitative Analysis	157
3.5.2 Quantitative Analysis	158
3.6 Conclusion	159

3.1 Introduction

Being devoted to the empirical phase of the study, the present chapter describes the research methodology and the general framework of the classroom-action research. Its main purpose is to provide a clear picture of the teaching/learning of the writing skill to first-year EFL university learners. While the primary objective of the present study is to investigate the reasons behind learners' low writing achievement through an exploration of the writing pedagogies employed at that level, it also aims to pave the way for a pedagogical correlation between the complex nature of written discourse and the implementation of more efficient teaching practices at the first level of higher education.

The present chapter displays, on the one hand, the problem-statement, the purpose of the study, the research tools (classroom observation, task-production, and questionnaires), the participants (first-year EFL university LMD students and EFL teachers) as well as the methodologies and procedures followed in this classroom action research, and explains the reasons for selecting these participants and using such research tools. On the other hand, this chapter describes the participants' profile and their role in this research, and reports on both teachers' and learners' EFL teaching/learning experience, respectively, as well as the data collection procedure methods.

Moreover, since the researcher's aim is to implement explicit writing instruction throughout the intervention phase, and compare learners' compositions before and after it, the last part of the chapter displays the data analysis procedure, that is, the obtained results are going to be interpreted both qualitatively (having a concern with the content), and quantitatively (having a concern with the marks). Therefore, when discussing, a comparative analysis between the results obtained through the different research tools is made.

3.2 Research Purpose and Objectives

Since writing is a fundamental skill in the academic life of almost all Algerian learners and since it remains compulsory in different domains, the aim of this

research is to explore the current teaching/learning of the writing skill at the first year of university level in relation to learners' writing proficiency level. In other words, this study strives to evaluate the teaching practices with reference to the learners' serious deficiencies which they exhibit in paragraph writing more particularly at content organization and discourse level. It is believed that the reasons underlying students' low achievement in the foreign language are mostly due to inadequate teaching of such a skill from middle-school level onward. As a result of such a deficiency, being required to write paragraphs and whole compositions at first-year university represents a real challenge to entrant students as they do not seem ready to cope with such tasks. It follows that learners' underachievement in EFL writing is believed to be strongly related not to their lack of linguistic¹ and strategic competences² only but more importantly to the teaching of writing itself, in Ourghi' s words (2002:182) "due to lack of previous school-composing instruction".

The empirical investigation is designed in such a way to find out whether learners becoming aware of what makes for good writing in English (i.e. the writing resources required for making writing effective) can lead teachers to get an understanding of the changes occurring to student writing performance at more particularly discourse level, in other words, whether such awareness can actually make clearer the way students' writing performance develops at discourse and content organization. The primary objective of this study is then to examine the participants' writing performance through an exploration of the current writing pedagogies employed at first-year university, attempting to highlight the positive impact of direct (explicit) instruction and the use of the writing process on learners' writing behavior. Accordingly, one of the main objectives of this research is to show how a classroom action-research, aiming at underlining the effectiveness of explicit instruction of specific writing resources (see sections 1.3; 1.4; 1.6) and its influence on learners' writing performance, may be conducive to bringing about change in the current instructional practices; in other words, providing teachers with

¹ Linguistic competence is the subconscious knowledge of the grammar rules of one's native language which allows any native speaker to make sentences in that language (Chomsky, 1965).

² Strategic competence is seen as the capacity to use effective strategies/techniques and processes (thinking, reflecting, monitoring, evaluating) in appropriate contexts in order to accomplish successful writing tasks.



learning, as well as a view to implement new teaching practices in order to help learners become better in EFL writing. The objectives of this research can then be summarized as follows:

1. Identify the EFL writing pedagogy(ies) used at first year EFL university level.
2. Check the impact (effectiveness/deficiency) of this/these writing pedagogy/pedagogies on first year EFL university learners' proficiency and writing ability by examining learners' writing performance through the identification of their areas of weaknesses. See whether the teaching of EFL writing responds to entrant students' needs.
3. Provide pedagogical suggestions according to the obtained results so as to help improve the quality of EFL writing. Implement explicit instruction of the specific writing resources required to achieve effective writing (in addition to the regular use of the writing process and eclectic teaching), in order to help learners to develop their writing proficiency and writing ability.

Entitled research methodology, the following section displays the procedure (the design of the study) undertaken by the researcher in the present work, concerning the type of the study, the participants, as well as the research instruments used to achieve the stated objectives. The present research is designed as will be described in the following sections.

3.3 Research Methodology

As its name implies, the present section orientates the reader by displaying the research methodology designated for the present study. In so doing, the researcher seeks to discover the real causes that prevent learners from achievement in EFL writing that is, the contextual variables that have shaped first-year learners' writing behavior through an exploration of the mostly used pedagogies at first-year university level. To achieve this, and in order for the study to be valid and credible, the researcher makes use of various research instruments: besides classroom

observation and learners' task production, the researcher uses the questionnaire (addressed to the subjects taking part in this research, that is, first-year EFL university students) as another research tool for more details and clarification.

The research strives to examine the different aspects of the students' writing performance before, during (evaluating learners' writing behavior improvement), and after a whole semester of written production teaching, and identify the weak points related to such teaching through examining and comparing the marks obtained by the participants at both the pre and post-intervention phase task-production. In so doing, while comparing the quality of both compositions (pre-intervention and post-intervention phase writing tasks), the marks obtained before the intervention phase (pre-assessment), and the ones obtained after the intervention phase (post-assessment) that is, after receiving explicit writing instruction, the researcher ensures that such direct teaching positively correlates with learners' developing writing performance. The study also proceeds to examine writing as a product by considering samples of paragraph writing produced by the same learners (a first paragraph before the intervention phase where learners write in a linear way), and a second paragraph, after the intervention phase where learners have received direct instruction and gone through the steps of the writing process. This procedure clearly states the shortcomings of the product approach as well as the inefficiency of using a single pedagogy to teaching writing. Both the samples produced by the concerned students after the intervention phase and the interpretation of their writing performance (improvement) are going to lead the teacher-researcher amend her instruction by developing more effective writing instructional practices through her own classroom research and reflection. While the subsequent section undertakes the type of the research mentioned above (classroom action research), with its sample population, it first and foremost proceeds to define it and state the reasons for such a choice.

3.3.1 Classroom Action Research

Action research can be defined as a reliable scientific systematic process inquiring about a particular aspect/phenomenon, organized and conducted by professionals taking the action to find out and deepen understanding for making improvement and then reform (Blaxter et al., 1996; Hopkins, 2002; Dick, 2002 qtd. in Costello, 2003). Differently stated, in its general sense, the term action research is used to “describe professionals studying their own practice in order to improve it” (GTCW 2002a: 15 qtd. in Costello, 2003: 3).

Also called teacher research in the context of education, action research is a method used to develop and improve teaching and learning, by making teachers reflect on their own teaching practices (identify, examine, and improve aspects of their teaching). The combination of the two terms ‘action’ and ‘research’ emphasizes the main attributes of the method: (1) “Seeking out aspects in teaching as a means for increasing knowledge” and (2) improving practice (Borgia and Schuler, 1996). It is the process teachers undergo, a measure or procedure by which teachers can manage, organize and regulate their own future teaching process, an instrument that allows teachers as practitioners to supervise, regulate and improve their professional growth and development (progress). In so doing, teachers can reflect on their previous actions and plan the following. In this respect, action research is simply believed to “be a form of self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own practices, their understanding of those practices and the situation in which the practices are carried out” (Carr and Kemmis 1986: 162 qtd. in Nunan, 2006: 2). The following figure, summarizing the main steps of a basic action research model (Levis, 1946), has been chosen to illustrate the above points describing such type of research.

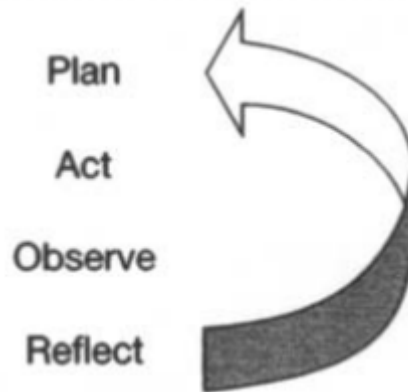


Figure 3.1 A Basic Action Research Model (Kurt Levin, 1946)

Action research in education becomes visible after considering teaching/learning aspects being problematic and the difference between what is aimed at through teaching and what actually occurs in their teaching situations. Bassey (1998: 93), for his part, defines educational action research as “an enquiry which is carried out in order to understand, to evaluate and then to change, in order to improve some educational practice”. Accordingly, action research aims at understanding what happens in the classroom with regard to the teaching/learning process, relating theory to practice, applying outcomes, also providing change and bringing improvement. In educational contexts, action research is more than the act of reporting, describing, and interpreting the different aspects and features of the class; it is rather a tool for investigating, depicting and establishing a diagnostic, finding a remedy, and progressing. In sum, because of its “practical problem-solving emphasis”, action research has proved very helpful to educators (Bell, 1999: 10 qtd. in Costello 2003: 4).

Action research, according to Nunan (2006), has the same characteristics of any other habitual or traditional research. It comprises research instruments such as observation, questionnaires, interviews, etc., research questions and hypotheses, data analysis and interpretation of findings. The only difference regards the practitioner (teacher) who is the researcher himself/herself, being a crucial and active participant at the heart or the centre of the investigation; that is the teacher’s

daily actions to solve class/school problems to improve student's learning and teacher effectiveness. It may also involve one or more teachers looking at their own practices or situations involving students' learning, behaviour or development. Though both research methods (qualitative and quantitative) are used to collect data in action research, the most commonly used is qualitative. Good action research integrates theory, practice and meaningful application of research results.

Action research may have three levels: individual teacher research, small teacher groups or teams in a single school or a single department, and school wide research. Requiring collectivity and cooperation, educational action research aims at leading to revision and amendment. Put simply, collaborative action research also aims at linking theory and practice, emphasizing and revising the different aspects and features occurring in the classroom with the view to ameliorate them. In this regard, Borgia and Schuler (1996: 2) explain that action research proves beneficial in the following ways:

- Teachers investigate their own practice in new ways, looking deeper in what they are and their students actually do and fail to do.
- Teachers develop deeper understanding of students, the teacher learning process, and their role in the education of both teachers and students.
- Teachers are viewed as equal partners in deciding what works best and what needs improvement in their classroom or classrooms.
- In most cases, solutions for identified problems are arrived at cooperatively among teachers.
- Teachers are often more committed to action research because they identify the areas they view as problematical and need of change.
- Action research is an ongoing process and its strategies can be widely applied.
- Professional development and school improvement are core aspects for any teacher who engages in action research.
- Teacher reflection can be conducted individually or in a school-based team composed of students, teachers, and administrators.

As a reflective conceptual framework, the main components of action research according to Borgia and Schuler are as follows(1996):

- **Commitment:** Action research takes time. The participants need time to get to know and trust each other and to observe practice, consider change, try new approaches, and document, reflect, and interpret the results. Those who agree to participate should know that they will be involved with the project for some time and that the time commitment is a factor that all participants should consider carefully.
- **Collaboration:** In action research, the power relations among participants are equal, each person contributes, and each person has a stake. Collaboration is not the same as compromise, but involves a cyclical process of sharing, of giving, and of taking. The ideas and suggestions of each person should be listened to, reflected on, and respected.
- **Concern:** The interpretive nature of action research (for example, relying on personal dialogue and a close working relationship) means that the participants will develop a support group of “critical friends.” Trust in each other and in the value of the project is important.
- **Consideration:** Reflective practice is the mindful review of one’s actions, specially, one’s professional actions. Reflection requires concentration and careful consideration as one seeks patterns and relationships that will generate meaning within the investigation. Reflection is a challenging, focused, and critical assessment of one’s own behavior as a means of developing one’s craftsmanship.
- **Change:** change and innovation are recommended for teachers to become and remain effective.

Planning a classroom action research is a reflective process involving an action or a set of actions for making both teaching and learning become better in future sessions. The research involving the teacher, this latter deliberately commits himself/herself to a plan of action which seems likely to lead to improvement. Such

commitment constitutes one of the most important aspects of a plan of action as shown in the diagram below:

1. Setting Goals

General: Be a better teacher

Specific: Giving space to learners to answer and participate;

Eliciting: answering to students when necessary;

Explaining: make students aware of the rationale behind certain activities, group work, pair work

2. Implementation Date

To set a target date for implementation

To set a target date for completion

To record a lesson and analyze it to see whether it develops naturally (without stopping the students at every mistake)

To experiment with different ways of encouraging revision and redrafting

3. Methods

To select specific strategies for intervention: reformulation, peer editing, etc.

4. Standards

To set standards to appraise the results. The students' feedback may provide the key to the success or failure of a particular strategy. The standards concern both the changes in the students' output and their views on the process.

A guide to simple action research (Adapted from Wilson 2001: 60)

In our context, a close look at entrant students' writing clearly highlights the difficulty they have to bridge the gap between grammatical accuracy and writing ability. A distinctive feature of action research (in this particular setting) is to reduce the gap between traditional EFL writing experience (paragraph and essay writing needed to pass tests and examinations that is, for mere academic purposes, seeking to obtain but average and pass marks), and the actual importance and increasing role of writing as a means to communicate with the world outside. Learning to write fluently and expressively in the foreign language represents a big challenge to first-year learners, their writing performance getting worse and worse for the past few years in spite of the huge human effort deployed and material investment for making the writing task nurturing and developing (despite its difficulty). It is then due to such an important problem and a growing sense of dissatisfaction with current instructional practices that the teacher-researcher, who has taught writing to entrant students for a number of years now, started putting her own teaching the subject of critical reflection and evaluation. The starting point for such investigation into her own instruction stemmed from a sense of personal dissatisfaction with teaching practices, a sound willingness to examine critically what she is actually doing in an academic setting like the university, with the strong assumption that things could be done a better way, and that "combining a substantive act with a research procedure...a personal attempt at understanding while engaged in a process of improvement and reform' (Hopkins, 2002: 42).

The purpose of such investigation is to evaluate both the teaching practices and the process of learning which learners undergo throughout a particular academic context like the university. In order to achieve this, the teacher-researcher has to investigate her own teaching thanks to investigating her own learners. The research seeks to stress the positive correlation between awareness of the processes involved in text-creation and the conventions of discourse (through explicit teaching), as well as regular practice of the writing process. To achieve such an end, the instruction has to be done clearly and carefully, with systematic direct explanation, the use of such instruction (in contrast to implicit teaching) aiming to

help learners acquire a better understanding of text-processing resources, allowing them construct coherent discourse and consequently enhance their writing performance in the target language. As a matter of fact, some studies (unfortunately not a lot to our knowledge) have strived to demonstrate the positive impact of direct teaching of what constitutes effective writing on learners' performance, such one teaching seen as a means for helping learners' writing performance change positively, getting them to develop as effective writers in the foreign language.

To conclude, it may be fair to argue that such investigation aims to highlight the essential features of the method: trying out ideas in practice as a means of increasing knowledge about teaching and learning writing to first-year university learners, and as a means of improvement in what happens in the classroom and better articulation of the educational rationale of what goes on.

3.3.2 Participants

The present study has as participants: first-year EFL university LMD students and EFL university teachers. Besides the researcher as practitioner (EFL university teacher), the study requires the participation of two other teachers to evaluate and grade learners' written productions (task-production). The selection of participants (first-year learners) was done on purpose first because the latter are new Baccalaureate holders undergoing a transitional phase in their educational life, and second, more specially because of the weak performance entrant students exhibit during their first year at higher education in spite of their long formal exposure to EFL learning. .

The study was, hence, hoped to display learners' proficiency level in EFL writing and then provide the researcher with a better understanding of the teaching/learning of writing with reference to the difficulties that learners encounter in their composing process. For this reason, it is important to present some of the most fundamental aspects of the educational context in which the informants in question have evolved and the teaching/learning process has taken place, the one

highly involved in shaping learners' writing behavior (contextual factors), describing learners' educational background and their experience in EFL learning.

3.3.2.1 Learner Profile

The sample of the research subjects involved in this study is made of thirty (30) entrant students (twenty-one females and nine male students) coming from both Literary and Scientific streams, new Baccalaureate holders enrolled in the English Language Licence degree, in the English Department, Faculty of Letters and Languages, at Tlemcen University, during the academic year 2017-2018. It should be pointed out that out of the thirty selected participants concerned with the study, two informants left university, while the twenty-eight remaining subjects took part in this research from the beginning till the end.

The majority of these learners, whose mother tongue is a western variety of Algerian dialect, come from Tlemcen and other different neighbouring places. Before entering university, most of the subject students have studied English for at least seven years at lower levels of education (middle and secondary-school levels, i.e. four years at the middle school and three years at the secondary school). The length of foreign-language learning experience amounts to seven years or more (depending on learners' success or failure at previous levels), with the competency-based approach as a type of teaching instruction. While almost all entrant students stated having scored between 11 and 17 at the Baccalaureate English examination, their proficiency level ranges from low to high intermediate. Nearly all the students taking part in this study belong to the same age group (17-23 years old) and report having chosen English as their first choice for two main reasons: first, because it is an international language thanks to which they can likely get a future job and, second, simply because they are good at English and are used to getting good marks. Within this mixed-ability group, learners achieve different scores (good, average and weak) in EFL tests in general, but more particularly in EFL paragraph writing.

Standard Arabic is the national language, first taught at school for formal instruction. French and English are respectively the first and second foreign languages taught at the different levels of education (French from the third year of primary level, English at middle and secondary-school levels, i.e. from the first year of middle-school level (1 YMS) to the third and last year of secondary education (3 YSS)).

Except for Arabic and French which are taught as separate modules dealing with language and literature, first-year university students use English in language and content-based modules. Due to a recent change, the writing course time load at the first level of university is three hours a week instead of four and a half, that is, two sessions instead of three. The two sessions are devoted to both the lecture and practice (i.e. both the lesson and activities are tackled within the same session in contrast to previous years where each of them was conducted separately). While the lecture is devoted to the theoretical part, it is complemented by practice where a lot of activities are undertaken, in which learners deal with different types of tasks such as sentence construction, sentence expansion, sentence combining, etc. Nearly all of the undertaken tasks and activities are turned toward preparing and training students to compose in English. Being introduced by the end of the first semester only, paragraph writing requires from learners to use all that has been dealt with during that semester, in other words, making use of all the previously acquired knowledge (the different types of sentences and clauses, vocabulary, structures, etc.).

3.3.2.2 Teacher Profile

Three EFL university teachers participated in the present study. While one of them was the researcher who herself conducted the whole study from the beginning till the end, the other two were concerned with the evaluation and grading of learners' task production. The three concerned teachers are permanent ones in the English Department at Aboubakr Belkaid University-Tlemcen and have either a 'Magister' diploma or 'Doctorate' degree in English obtained in different universities in the Algerian territory. It should be pointed out that these three full-

time EFL teachers' post-graduate specialization is in TEFL and Applied Linguistics. Moreover, the theme they themselves tackled in their Magister or Doctorate dissertation was mainly concerned with the writing skill. Their teaching experience ranges from fifteen to twenty-five years and they have been in charge of different modules such as COE, CWE, academic writing, and grammar. Thanks to their EFL teaching experience in general and the written expression module in particular, such teachers are actually aware of what works and what does not with the present teaching methods as far as their learners' needs, interests, and demands are concerned, all three following the same teaching syllabus and guidelines for dealing with the comprehension and written expression module. The two teachers in charge of the evaluation of learners' compositions were informed about the topic and the different criteria (see section 4.3.2) to be taken into consideration during evaluation; for instance, both surface level problems (form of the language used) and depth level problems (content organization) were to be taken into account, yet with a focus on content and paragraph organization.

While reporting on the different research instruments needed and employed in this study, the next section also provides a description of such tools (characteristics, advantages, disadvantages), stating their role, importance, effectiveness in our research, as well as the rationale of such a selection.

3.3.3 Research Instruments

For more objectivity and validity, the researcher made use of distinct research tools. As a matter of fact, in this context, it is believed that examining learners' writing proficiency level, identifying their areas of weaknesses and also the reasons behind such a problem cannot be done at random. For this, it proved necessary to follow a specific methodology, using appropriate research utensils to reach the desired objectives, that is, helping improve the quality of writing instruction, and by the same token, learners' writing performance; in other words, getting students to foster their proficiency and writing ability by learning to write in

a way that conforms to the conventional forms of the English language. In this respect, Weir and Roberts (1994: 137) state:

A combination of data sources is likely to be necessary in most evaluations because often no one source can describe adequately such a diversity of features as is found in educational settings, and because of the need for corroboration of findings by using data from these different sources collected by different methods and by different people (i.e. 'triangulation'). It is now widely held that multiple methods should be used in all investigations.

In Weir's and Roberts' view, because of its multiple features and characteristics, also because no one single method can assess, describe and represent a particular situation or phenomena, and because of the requirement of both verification and confirmation, data collection and interpretation in educational settings should be done and obtained from different sources through the association of distinct research tools. Indeed, exploring the writing teaching pedagogies by examining both learners' composing process and written product through the identification of learners' areas of weaknesses cannot be done at random; conversely, it requires validity and objectivity and should be observed in a deep way. They explain that any research should consist of different methods of investigation that is, collecting data from different research instruments.

For this reason, Weir and Roberts stress the importance of using data from different sources or people, collected through different methods (triangulation) to support each other. As a matter of fact, as the researcher's purpose is to investigate the teaching/learning of writing, she has employed three different research instruments: teacher classroom observation, task production (paragraph-writing tasks), and two questionnaires (pre and post-intervention phase questionnaires) addressed to the subject learners.

3.3.3.1 Classroom Observation

Cohen et al. (2003) argue that classroom observation gives the researcher the opportunity to attend, examine, and gather data from a direct teaching/learning situation taking place in its natural circumstance/setting without having to question participants as with questionnaires, interviews, and so on. Observation is used to gather information about how teaching is conducted rather than evaluating it and therefore presents several advantages. Being a fundamental element of everyday teaching, observation is believed to help all practitioners to see what is going on in relation to the teaching/learning process, the learners and the teacher himself/herself. Differently stated, observation may reveal certain facts, characteristics and even behaviours which cannot be unveiled by other research instruments.

In the context of teaching, observation is considered, however, not to be “a natural gift but a highly skilled activity for which an extensive background knowledge and understanding are required, and also a capacity for original thinking and the ability to spot significant events” (Bell 1987: 88 qtd. in El-Aswad, 2002: 175). In this respect, it is argued that “the information derived from such observation is fundamental to the day-to-day functioning of the classroom...” (Genesee and Upshur 1996: 79).

In so doing, teachers may, on the one hand, see how learners behave with regard to lectures, instruction, pair/group work, etc, also how they themselves (teachers) conduct their classes and manage the different teaching/learning situations. Besides, daily classroom observation helps teachers identify which instructional strategies are working and which are not, the different learning strategies that learners may employ to help improve their learning process in general and the composing one in particular, the students who are actually learning and progressing and the ones who are not, the activities which learners appreciate and make them improve, and so on.

On the other hand, while observing themselves (reflective teaching) in order to depict what is functioning in the classroom and what is not, teachers becoming

more aware may, for instance, due to particular issues remaining unclear to learners, have to repeat, reformulate, and focus on those points to make things become clearer to their students. Observation may also help teachers take new decisions as far as their future classes are concerned in the sense that a particular lecture or task has been too demanding and that the teacher has either to simplify, modify or even drop it. Lectures and tasks may also be uninteresting, boring, out of date, or dealing with aspects of cultures which learners are not familiar with, this leading the majority to be totally demotivated. In this kind of situation, it is the teacher's role to render the different tasks and lectures more attractive and more interesting by developing strategies and techniques which likely make the learners involved, raising concerns, and participating actively.

As Ourghi (2002) points it out, observation may have two forms: collaborative, consisting in peer observation (teachers observing their colleagues' way of teaching) or individual, consisting in the teacher observing his/her own way of teaching and conducting the class. Be it collaborative or individual, observation is used not to assess the way of teaching but rather to perceive it, gathering information about the way it is completed. In the present study, classroom observation is individual. Ourghi (2002) adds that such a utensil may pose problems to teachers as observers in that they may inquire about the way it is done, how to collect data, interpret results and use them when reconsidering the actual teaching instruction and then planning remedial teaching. Differently stated, Ourghi explains that observation may be problematic in the sense that it is systematic and cannot be done at random. In so doing, teachers need to manage it by gathering information, interpreting results and employing them in their teaching. To record classroom observation, teachers may use one of the following procedures:

- Anecdotal records/notes
- Notes in file cards or journals
- Criteria for assessment
- Lists of items on aspects of teaching
- Unplanned observation of unexpected events made at the end of a lesson

- Organization according to students' names or lessons
- Predesigned categories for recording observation

(Ourghi, 2002: 351)

In our context, used as another research instrument, classroom observation helped reveal some hidden points of learners' composing process. As a matter of fact, it gave the researcher the opportunity to observe the teaching/learning process (how writing instruction and learning actually took place) through examining both the teacher's and learners' behaviour in the writing class, teacher's instruction and learners' way of composing (process) before the intervention phase (pre-intervention phase), during and after it (post-intervention phase). In so doing, the researcher could also depict learners' problem areas, weaknesses and lacunas in relation to the pedagogy used.

Classroom observation lasted nearly one semester and had different aims such as examining and gathering useful information about lectures, tasks and activities, learners' involvement in such tasks and lectures, learners' reactions and responses and their areas of difficulty with reference to the employed approach. While such a procedure was undertaken to collect data concerning teaching practices and writing instruction, it more importantly aimed to see whether such instruction actually met learners' needs. The researcher started observing both her way of teaching and learners' involvement, the composing processes and writing performance before the instructional phase, during and after it. The researcher based then her observation upon some practical pedagogies. In our context, the objectives of classroom observation can be summarized as follows:

1-Pre-intervention phase:

- Examine the teaching of writing at first year EFL university level with reference to the adopted approach
- Assess learners' proficiency level in writing
- Identify learners' writing difficulties, weaknesses, and lacunas

- Assess the efficiency/shortcomings of the teaching approach with reference to learners' problem areas

2-Intervention phase:

- Modify and develop writing instruction in accordance with learners' needs
- Assess the effectiveness of the new pedagogy, the writing lesson, instruction and tasks
- See whether writing instruction correlates with learners' level and needs

3-Post-intervention phase:

- See whether learners' writing proficiency level is improving with the newly adopted approach
- State the positive correlation between direct instruction and learners' improved writing performance

On the basis of her daily observation, and thanks to the use of classroom notes, the researcher can decide which particular lesson to drop or modify for future uses. By continuously observing the way she presents particular lectures, her students' learning in the classroom, and how they respond to instructional activities and material, the researcher becomes aware of the specific points to retain or drop depending on whether they seem of interest to the learners (or not), too difficult, or irrelevant. Other lessons may be merely modified due to deficiencies noticed at the level of learners' performance.

3.3.3.2 Task Production

Such a section is devoted to describe the procedure followed to tackle this task production, that is, the two paragraphs written by first-year students during the second semester of the academic year (it should be should be born in mind that the study started by mid-January 2018 and was completed by mid-May) simply because, as mentioned in the second chapter, the first semester is entirely devoted to practice of the basics of the writing system with a focus on sentence construction

(mastery of the simple sentence patterns, clauses, phrases, etc. before moving to more complicated types of sentences such as the compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences).

Right after the pilot study had taken place, that is on the third week of January 2018, the thirty subject participants were required to produce an in-class eight to ten-line English narrative paragraph related to a childhood incident with specified time limitations and classroom pressure (30 minutes). Timed-essays and paragraphs are frequently used because they require the demonstration of disciplinary knowledge by producing a writing sample in class under time pressure (Kroll, 1990). The primary concern of analyzing the compositions (i.e. pre-intervention phase task production) was to assess learners' writing ability and performance. Setting a time limit and assigning a familiar topic (in terms of theme, content, and genre) was estimated important. The type of writing (narration) was done on purpose for "the reason ... that narration tasks were found to be easier to complete than other discourse modes such as exposition" (Reid, 1990: 157). It is then important to note that such a topic gave the learners the opportunity to express themselves freely and in a personal way (obviously, all human beings have their own childhood memories), the selected theme allowing even the weakest ones to provide enough information as the topic was of interest. Due to being constrained to compose under time pressure, students had to demonstrate their disciplinary knowledge in producing their paragraphs while managing the allocated time. Using the narrative was viewed appropriate as learners are supposed to have had sufficient practice from middle-school level to secondary education (i.e. for at least seven years).

3.3.3.3 The Questionnaire

Being one of the well-known research tools or methods for collecting data, also obtaining information from respondents concerning their profiles, needs, and interests, their viewpoints about teaching/learning and other criteria, the questionnaire has been chosen for quantitative results mainly because it is easy to

administer and conduct, but more importantly because it provides results in a shorter period of time compared to the other research tools, more particularly the interview. In contrast to the latter, the questionnaire is believed to be “easy to construct, extremely versatile and uniquely capable of gathering a large amount of information quickly in a form that is readily processible” (Dornyei, 2007: 102 qtd. in Abdat, 2015: 141). Being more effective than the interview, especially when administered to individual learners, the questionnaire deals with a large number of informants at the same time during a relatively short period of time (Harmer, 2001). As a matter of fact, interviewing thirty informants is not an easy task in that it requires too much time since one has to deal with each informant separately. Moreover, the questionnaire may guarantee the respondents’ anonymity (the researcher cannot have prejudice). Besides, all of the informants are submitted the same questions and instructions (Oppenheim, 1992 qtd. in El-Aswad, 2002). Since the questionnaire is highly designed and organized, the obtained results are easy to analyse and then quantify. It is composed of three categories of data (questions):

- Factual questions; asking about learners’ personal information (age, gender, educational background, etc.)
- Behavioural questions; aiming to obtain information about learners’ tasks and actions (what learners did, what they intend to do and so on)
- Attitudinal questions; inquiring about learners’ beliefs, needs, interests, opinions, etc. about something

(Dornyei, 2007 qtd. in Abdat, 2015)

The questionnaire, as pointed by Harmer (2001), may consist of three types of questions:

- Closed/close-ended questions; also including yes/no questions, such a type of question gives a range of possible responses already set by the researcher and from which the informants have to choose the answer that best fit(s) their

opinion without adding any supplementary information or explanation, e.g. “how often do you study CWE a week? Once a week, twice a week, three times a week?”/ “are you assigned paragraph writing in class?” or “do you enjoy studying EFL at university level? Yes/no”.

- Open/open-ended questions; inviting and making the informants feel free about what to say and to say it to express their own ideas and give their opinions, e.g. “How do you feel about your EFL learning experience?”
- Mixed (open/closed) questions; giving learners the opportunity to choose among a set of several responses, also making them justify or give the reasons for their choice (e.g. What are learners’ areas of weaknesses in paragraph writing: word order, cohesion of sentences, coherence in writing, other, please specify).

Though it appears to be very practical and less time consuming, the questionnaire may have some drawbacks in the sense that it may not examine learners’ feelings and opinions. Besides, it is believed that researchers cannot know whether the questionnaire has been dealt with seriously and as objectively as possible (El-Aswad, 2002).

In our context, the students’ questionnaires (pre-intervention and post-intervention phase questionnaires) include the three types of questions mentioned above. The pre-intervention phase questionnaire was administered to learners by mid-January 2018. Learners’ first questionnaire comprised twenty one questions. It was submitted to thirty first-year EFL university learners, entrant students, whose age varies between seventeen and twenty-three, all thirty informants belonging to the same group. The researcher gave twenty one questions and this was done on purpose: a bigger number would have made learners bored and demotivated in the task and not a lot of them would have completed the questionnaire. While it also attempted to elicit learners’ perceptions, opinions, and suggestions for improving such a skill, the questionnaire first and foremost proceeded to define problem areas in writing and inquire about learners’ proficiency level.

The second questionnaire (post-intervention phase questionnaire), which was submitted by mid-May 2018, consisted in a set of nine questions. Data collection through this questionnaire was aimed at unveiling the new perception as well as the type of pedagogy which both teachers and learners should develop towards writing (the type of instruction which learners wish to receive at university level so as to overcome their writing problems). The questionnaire was also concerned with the informants' own previous experience, inquiring about pre-education preparation (the type of instruction they received before university entrance) and their previous behavior regarding writing. The rationale behind this reflective teaching and learning was to underline the new concerns of the teaching and learning of writing (its increasing role in EFL learning), its actual meaning and importance, its whole dimension as a skill required for achieving academic success (the reasons that make writing an important skill at the university level) and beyond, likely leading to an attitudinal change towards the skill in question. The questionnaire inquired about whether explicit writing instruction had proved beneficial (helping them write better). In other words, after getting the real meaning of effective writing, would learners pay more attention to form or content organization, or to both? With regard to learners' most important problem areas, the questionnaire also inquired about whether students needed more practice to develop their writing performance in order to become able to write better in the other modules and in subsequent years.

3.4 Research Procedure

The study examined the subject participants' before (pre-intervention phase), during the ongoing instruction (evaluating the participants' changing behaviour), and after a whole semester (post-intervention phase). It should be pointed out that throughout this study, students were concerned with the production of two main tasks (pre and post-intervention phase task production) producing a first paragraph during the pre-intervention phase, that is before receiving explicit instruction about the real meaning of writing (what effective writing means and requires), and on how to deal with paragraph writing, and a second during the post-intervention phase, that is right after the intervention phase took place, i.e. after having received direct

instruction and practice on paragraph writing. As a matter of fact, during the ongoing instruction, the students were given a number of topics (10) to write on in class, having to use the writing process. It should be pointed out that the topic given as a pre-assessment writing task was tackled a second time, that is during the ongoing process (direct teaching) besides the various topics dealt with during that process.

The research procedure consisted of three different parts. Part one, in which the researcher informed the participants, making them aware of the purpose of the study and the utility of each research instrument, paved the way for the other ones. While the second part was devoted to data collection, the third and last one was concerned with the analysis of the results and their interpretation. The second part, in its turn, comprised three phases: the pre-intervention, intervention, and post-intervention phases.

The study was conducted with thirty (30) first-year EFL university learners enrolled in the English Department at Tlemcen university during the second semester of the academic year 2017-2018 because it is only in the second semester that students are concerned with paragraph writing. That is why the study started by the beginning of the second semester, more precisely by mid-January 2018. The purpose of such investigation was two-fold: first, evaluating both the pedagogy used (teacher's instructional practices) as well as learners' writing proficiency level in relation to the concerned approach, and second, highlighting the strong correlation between fairly direct writing instruction and learners' developing writing performance.

3.4.1 Piloting the Questionnaire

It is argued that before proceeding to data collection while making an investigation, the researcher has to check the feasibility of the research instruments, testing both their positive and negative aspects (Seliger and Shohamy, 1989 qtd. in El-Aswad, 2002). In this context, piloting the questionnaire proves necessary to see

whether the chosen items are clear or ambiguous to learners, that is, in order to find out the feasibility of the instrument.

After submitting the questionnaire to five first-year learners on the second week of January 2018, that is one week before the study started, the researcher could adjust her questions in accordance with learners' responses or the obtained feedback.

Said differently, this pilot study was designed to test the feasibility and effectiveness of the questionnaire since it was somehow a new approach to the informants (first-year learners), something which they were not familiar with. The researcher first gathered the five informants in a classroom. As none of them knew that the work they were undertaking was done for the purpose of assessing their writing performance, the concerned subjects showed a strong curiosity, asking about the purpose of such an activity. Learners were also invited to raise concerns, this helping the researcher determine the difficulties or ambiguities which learners encountered in filling in the questionnaire and adjust the questions to be submitted later to the whole group of informants. Besides explaining the procedure to follow, the researcher also explained each of the different questions to the learners, preventing from influencing them. Yet, the researcher had, from time to time, resource to extra explanation, or make things clearer to the informants in case they faced difficulties. Although learners' responses unveiled the viability of the questionnaire, they nevertheless demonstrated that more explanation was needed. The pilot study also revealed that the learners did not seem to understand exactly what was required from them simply because out of the five concerned subjects, three did not answer all of the questions while the other two appeared not to have understood at all. Consequently, taking learners' feedback into account, the researcher proceeded to make some modifications by re-explaining and reformulating some of the questions comprised in the questionnaire.

3.4.2 The Study Proper

As previously mentioned, the study was structured into three phases: the pre-intervention phase consisting of teacher classroom observation, task-production, and a questionnaire, the intervention phase devoted to fairly direct writing instruction and training sessions (practice) along with teacher classroom observation, and the post-intervention phase comprising a second task-production and another questionnaire, along with classroom observation. It should be pointed out that observation, which is an integral part of everyday teaching, was a continuous starting point of the investigation, a daily observation taking place throughout the whole study, that is, a whole semester, as part of the Comprehension and Written Expression module, the instruction conducted for four hours and a half each week, over a period of almost fourteen weeks. For the sake of comparability of results of the pre and the post-intervention phases, it was estimated necessary to assign a common topic to all the informants with regard to both tests, both of them dealing with the narrative.

The pre-intervention phase task-production session, in which learners were asked to produce a piece of narrative concerning a childhood incident, started by the third week of January 2018. When composing, learners worked individually (no help was provided by the teacher or peers). One week later, that is, after the evaluation and grading of learners' task-production, learners were addressed the first questionnaire (pre-intervention phase questionnaire). The researcher administered it to the thirty informants on the last week of January 2018. It should be noted that out of the thirty administered questionnaires, two were not returned as two of the informants left university.

The intervention phase proper started on the first week of February 2018 and lasted almost three months during which explicit writing instruction was incorporated in the writing course through different training sessions in which learners produced ten paragraphs, in addition to other topics given as homework, with a lot of practice and the use of the writing process.

The post-intervention phase took place by the first week of May, such a phase starting by assigning learners a second task-production in which, like the pre-assessment writing task, the participants were also concerned with a piece of narrative writing. Learners had to work individually, without any help provided by either the teacher or their peers, under classroom time pressure (30 minutes), before being submitted the second questionnaire (post-intervention phase questionnaire). With regard to the task production, it should be noted that the same procedure was followed for both the pre-assessment writing task and for the second one (post-assessment).

3.5 Data Analysis

Data collection, interpretation and discussion require from any research validity and objectivity. To achieve this end, the study made use of both qualitative and quantitative methods to present the methodology employed for collecting data obtained from classroom observation, task-production, and questionnaires, analyze and then interpret them. In the same contest, Bell (1999) argues that the features and characteristics, the facts and data provided, also the purpose of the research itself determine the researcher's selection of the approaches and methods employed to conduct the research.

Being two major and important approaches in analyzing data, both qualitative and quantitative analyses are believed to be alike in the sense that both of them "...require the definition and the identification of a problem(s), statements of research questions and methodical collection and analysis of data (Taylor and Trumbull, 2007: 17 qtd. in Abdat, 2015: 184). Such approaches are considered to be similar in that they require understanding and recognition of the issue, systematic and well-organized data collection and examination. Yet, they may diverge in the manner to collect, analyze, and interpret data. Though theory is used in both approaches, they may nonetheless differ since, while quantitative analysis relies on numerical or statistical results and testing hypotheses, qualitative analysis relies on

observation and description of facts, investigating phenomena in a detailed way (Mc Laugheen and Muffo, 2001 qtd. in Abdat, 2015: 184)

When employed, such methods are believed “to fulfil specific aims and functions and specific methodological styles, and conventions have developed within each tradition” (Oyetunji, 2011: 68 qtd. in Abdat, 2015: 181). Differently stated, such methods have certain norms to be respected, purposes and objectives to be attained, and require determined roles, tasks, approaches and systems to be used effectively.

As clearly understood from Dorneyi’s claim “the analysis of data should proceed independently for the quantitative and qualitative phases and mixing should occur only at final interpretation phase” (Dorneyi, 2007: 268 qtd. in Abdat, 2015: 181). In other words, the researcher will deal separately with the data obtained from each research instrument before discussing and comparing the obtained results together.

Therefore, to investigate learners’ writing proficiency level both before the pre-intervention phase and after it, teaching practices and problems, learners’ weaknesses, the differences and similarities occurring at learners’ writing proficiency level, the intervention phase and its effects on learners’ writing performance, classroom observation helped gather qualitative data during the intervention phase, before it (pre-intervention phase), and after it (post-intervention phase).

3.5.1 Qualitative Analysis

Qualitative analysis, as its name implies, is used to measure the quality (good) of something; how things and items are, involving “an interpretive naturalistic approach to its subject matter; it attempts to make a sense or to interpret phenomena in terms of the meaning people bring to them” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003 qtd. in Abdat, 2015: 183). Qualitative analysis of the obtained results involves the researcher’s observation, exploration, description, and explanation. In our context,

such a method is mainly concerned with teacher classroom observation, seeking to unveil teaching problems that make learners underachieve in EFL writing. Besides, teacher classroom observation was analyzed aiming to check the way writing was actually conducted.

3.5.2 Quantitative Analysis

Aiming to measure the amount of particular items and meaning ‘much’, quantitative analysis is used to help the researcher calculate the obtained data related to the informants’ grades (pre- and post-intervention phase task production), also the results obtained from learners’ questionnaires (pre-intervention phase questionnaire and post-intervention phase questionnaire). In this respect, it is argued that the main concern of a quantitative approach in research methodology is the “measurements of the characteristics displayed by people and events that researchers study. It generates numerical data that can be converted into numbers” (Oyetunji, 2011: 68). He adds that this kind of research “generates statistics through the use of large survey design using instruments such as structured interview or instruments designed to test specific construct...or special skills” (Oyetunji, 2011:68).

In our context, the researcher uses such a methodology first to quantify the results obtained from both questionnaires and to compare the scores of both tasks (pre-intervention phase task production and post-intervention phase task production). While this analysis is used to uncover learners’ writing difficulties, it also unveils the lacunas of the product approach. Through the analysis, the researcher measures learners’ writing process through the pre-intervention phase questionnaire. It should be pointed out that in order to compare learners’ pre-intervention and post-intervention phase writing proficiency level, all the participants were given the same topic to write about so as to see whether there had been any improvement and the extent to which the intervention phase had been beneficial. It should be noted that the theme proposed at the pre-intervention phase

and the one proposed at the post-intervention phase task was similar, both of them concerned with narration.

3.6 Conclusion

Giving a description of the research methodology adopted in this study, chapter three also reminded the reader with the research purpose and objectives, and data analysis. While some results were interpreted and discussed qualitatively, others were dealt with quantitatively.

This chapter dealt with the use of the triangulated action research, providing details on the methodological framework of the research, background information on the setting and respondents as well as the research instruments employed in the study. It also provided a description of the data collection procedure and analysis. While thirty EFL first-year university learners were concerned with the research, only twenty-eight subjects participated in the whole study from the beginning till the end, dealing with task production and questionnaires. The research also required the participation of three EFL university teachers, among whom the researcher herself, being at the center of the study since she is the teacher in charge of the CWE module, and two others for task-production evaluation.

While reporting on the participants, the chapter proceeded to describe both teachers' and learners' profile, highlighting a number of elements related to their teaching experience, educational background and previous experience in EFL learning, respectively, as well as information about the writing processes and strategies employed by the subject participants when engaging in task-production.

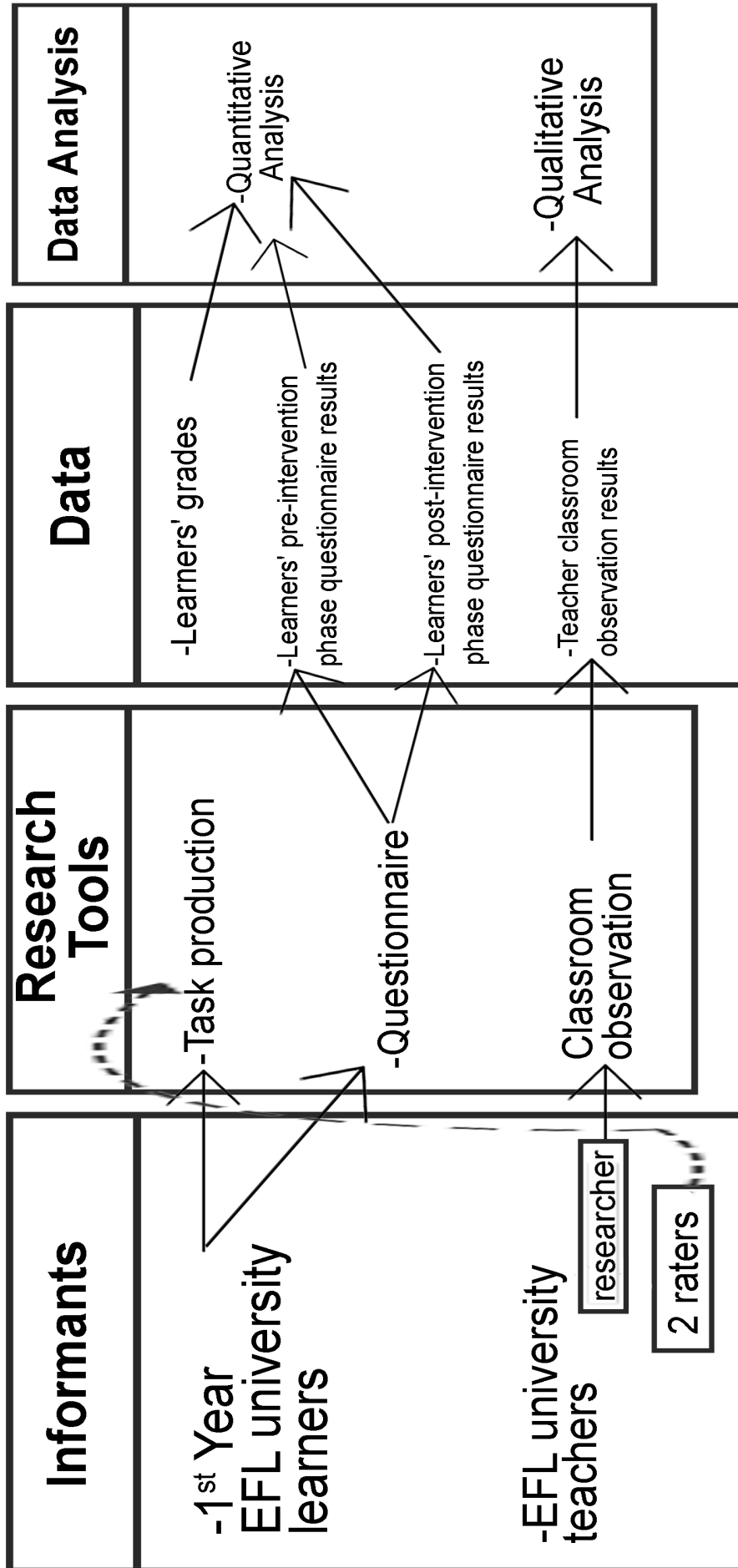


Figure 3.2 Research Design

CHAPTER FOUR

Findings and Discussion

CHAPTER FOUR

Findings and Discussion

4.1 Introduction	163
4.2 Classroom Observation	164
4.3 Pre-Intervention Phase	164
4.3.1.1 Results	164
4.3.1.2 Discussion	167
4.3.2 Learners' Task-Production Analysis	168
4.3.2.2 Discussion	172
4.3.3 Learners' Questionnaire Analysis	173
4.3.3.1 Results	174
4.3.3.2 Discussion	190
4.4 Intervention Phase: Classroom Observation Analysis	191
4.4.1 Results	191
4.4.2 Discussion	192
4.5 Post-Intervention Phase	193
4.5.1 Classroom Observation Analysis	193
4.5.1.1 Results	193
4.5.1.2 Discussion	194

4.1 Introduction

The present chapter is mainly concerned with the second phase of the research: data analysis and result interpretation. Its primary objective is to evaluate the current writing pedagogies used at first-year university level and their impact on first-year learners' writing performance through assessing those learners' proficiency and writing ability.

The chapter endeavours to find out whether the teaching pedagogies correspond to learners' needs, being efficient and preparing learners for paragraph writing, or whether such approaches are themselves behind learners' underachievement. Another important issue which the chapter is concerned with is to ensure about a potential correlation between the newly-implemented teaching approach and learners' improved writing performance after dealing with explicit writing instruction; in other words, whether direct teaching implies achievement in writing, this leading to reconsider the teaching of such a skill by implementing a new teaching approach regarding direct teaching and the writing process as inherent parts of the writing lesson.

To this end, the researcher has planned a classroom-action research undertaken through the following instruments: classroom observation, learners' task production, and questionnaires addressed to first-year learners. In addition to the three main sets of data used for the analysis, the researcher has chosen newly-enrolled students in the English Department as participants for her action research. A description of the writing lesson and the way it is conducted, learners' reactions and involvement in such a task, and an analysis of learners' written productions regarding the effective use of the writing process will be displayed through teacher classroom observation.

While teacher classroom observation and task production were analyzed and discussed qualitatively, the results of the questionnaires and learners' compositions marks were analyzed quantitatively. Due to the large number of participants, the

researcher analyzed the data collectively yet, dealing with the three phases of the study separately, each research instrument in isolation, before finally summarizing the findings and results.

4.2 Classroom Observation

The main objectives of classroom observation are as follows:

1. Identify and evaluate the writing pedagogy/ies used at first-year university level with reference to learners' areas of weaknesses
2. Undertake more relevant writing instruction and remedies (develop awareness of the structure and organization of the text) , and
3. Evaluate the effectiveness of the new writing pedagogy/ies with reference to learners' writing performance improvement

4.3 Pre-Intervention Phase

This pre-assessment phase aims to identify the efficiency/shortcomings of the pedagogy/ies used at first-year university with reference to entrant students' proficiency level and areas of weaknesses, the way the writing lesson is conducted as well as learners' involvement and reactions, the knowledge they need and the type of teaching which teachers should develop at higher education level in order to help learners get rid of their writing deficiencies and develop as effective writers.

4.3.1 Classroom Observation Analysis

4.3.1.1 Results

Step 1: What is the mostly used approach for writing instruction?

Is it the product approach?

Is it the process approach? or both of them?

Such a phase is designed to identify the approach employed for teaching writing to entrant students at first-year university level. In general, the most

frequently used pedagogy is the product approach. Due to being predominantly linguistic, when using this approach, teachers and learners alike are mainly concerned with the final product, with a focus on form over content and no attention paid to the composing process learners should go through in order to become able to create well-organized and more meaningful paragraphs.

Step 2: How does the teacher conduct the writing lesson?

It is more a superficial way of working where learners are asked to complete the task by themselves (working individually), due to the assumption that, since they can write in their native language, they are thus more susceptible to transfer this skill to the foreign language. The procedure followed within this approach consists in giving the learners a topic to write on, within time limits, providing some help at the level of the key words, some guidelines, and main ideas.

Step 3: How do first-year learners proceed as they embark on the writing task?

As this approach is predominantly linguistic, the learners are mainly concerned with grammatical accuracy and usage, writing at sentence level, using no draft, and starting writing directly on the final paper. An important point to mention is that, within this approach, learners are, in general, more in a hurry to submit the final product than making any attempt to re-read or revise their written production. In our context, learners just handed in the produced paragraphs without even caring about re-reading, revising, or checking their final version, such a behavior leading them to complete unsuccessful tasks, being no more than superficial products.

A number of differences were noticed in the way such learners performed the classroom task. The good learners (a minority) appeared to use a variety of strategies helping them complete the writing task successfully, using pre-writing strategies like reading the topic carefully, generating ideas, planning and thinking; writing strategies: having a clear purpose, writing a first draft and improving it

through correcting mistakes, using logical links, organizing ideas in a logical whole; and post-writing strategies: monitoring their written task and focusing on the overall organization of the text and meaning.

Unlike good learners, classroom observation along with the analysis of task production showed the over-reliance of low-level learners (the majority) on the use of inappropriate or rather no strategy at all, merely writing at sentence level (starting writing sentences directly, in a linear way with no attention to the topic), putting ideas and writing sentences on the spot, as they come along, without any kind of thinking, lacking a clear purpose, with an obvious interference from both Arabic (L1) and French (FL1) into English and an exaggerated use of the coordinator ‘and’ resulting in a set of lengthy unrelated sentences emphasizing grammatical accuracy.

Step 4: Which proficiency level do learners exhibit in paragraph writing?

Classroom observation revealed three groups of students: good, average, and weak learners. Except for a small minority of subjects who proved to be effective learners developing a set of strategies helping them to complete the task successfully, the other and larger majority demonstrated a poor writing performance, exhibiting a high number of mistakes at both linguistic and discourse levels. Classroom observation along with pre-assessment task analysis revealed that good learners had a clear purpose, applied both their background linguistic knowledge and text organization one, and monitored their written production for overall organization. In contrast, merely writing at sentence level due to lacking most of the effective strategies needed to perform successfully, weak learners used no strategy.

Step 5: What do learners need to learn in order to develop their writing proficiency?

In order for the learners to develop their writing proficiency, they have to get an understanding of writing operating at discourse level rather than sentence level, as well as getting sound awareness of the composing strategies and devices (see sections 1.3, 1.4, and 1.6) needed for making writing effective, yet with much use and practice of such elements.

Step 6: What kind of instruction would prove more efficient for learners' writing and thinking enhancement?

To this end, undertaking a plan of action in order to find remedies to learners' difficulties, by implementing more relevant and more appropriate teaching practices attending to learners' needs seems a valuable alternative for making students aware of the discourse dimension of writing. In order to provide learners with more relevant writing instruction, it seems essential to introduce them to the writing process, raising their awareness of the different steps required for getting a coherent, effective piece of writing, and tackle explicit teaching which, in contrast to implicit teaching, appears to help learners grasp in a better way the issues which have remained unclear from the beginning of pre-education studies.

4.3.1.2 Discussion

The analysis of classroom observation demonstrates that the causes behind learners' low achievement are numerous. On the one hand, the current writing pedagogy appears not to adequately prepare learners for paragraph writing since its main objective is the final product. On the other hand, lack of practice due to insufficient time devoted to the teaching of writing in general and paragraph writing in particular results in the impossibility to deal with the large number of students per group.

On the basis of classroom observation, the main differences between the tasks produced by the good learners and those written by the weakest ones were reflected in their lack of understanding of the composing level. In addition to the difficulties appearing at the linguistic level (language accuracy), discourse inappropriacy (lack of coherence) was primarily due to insufficient or rather lack of strategies to accomplish writing tasks due to an unawareness of such strategies.

It may be fair to argue that, being mainly related to lack of organization of content, incoherence is then a problem of structural linkage. The excessive use of coordination (and), and repetition is generally assumed to be a matter of rhetoric, something all too often used in the Arabic language (Kaplan, 1966; Aljubouri, 1983; Sa'adedine, 1989). This deviating feature of writing is first and foremost a problem attributed to the learners' first language (L1). It becomes thus clear that besides the negative transfer and the mistakes made in grammar and mechanics, learners' low performance is more a matter of unawareness of what good writing means, such a problem being likely due to lack of composing experience at pre-educational levels.

4.3.2 Analysis of Learners' Task-Production

The main concern of the present section is to assess learners' pre-intervention phase writing tasks (paragraph writing) and answer the second and third research questions. The pre-intervention phase results support an initial hypothesis that the teaching pedagogy used at first year university level was not adequate and failed to meet learners' needs. For this reason, learners' both paragraphs (pre and post-intervention phase tests) were submitted to teachers for correction and evaluation at the end of the task-production sessions (pre-intervention and post-intervention phases). As previously mentioned, the researcher designated two EFL university teachers to evaluate the informants' written productions.

Be it pre-intervention or post-intervention phase task production, both paragraphs produced by the students were assessed and graded by the two EFL teachers. The raters scored the paragraphs on the basis of the academic writing

scoring. The major criteria set were based on the capability to demonstrate competence in writing in English. They were asked to deal with both form and content, yet with a focus on content organization and discourse. Put differently, when assessing learners' paragraphs, the two raters needed more importantly to pay attention to paragraph organization, coherence of ideas, cohesion, sentence structure, and vocabulary use. Despite such a concern, none of the two teachers seemed to neglect the linguistic aspect of the writing tasks, taking into account the different errors and mistakes committed at the level of grammar, lexis, punctuation, and spelling.

The two concerned teachers (raters) were asked to assess learners' paragraphs (weak, average, or good) so as to compare between the two tasks (learners' marks and proficiency level) and see whether the intervention phase had helped learners write better. In other words, the researcher had to compare learners' compositions (pre and post intervention phase tests) to see to what extent the newly adopted approach had positively influenced learners' writing. It should be pointed out that the paragraphs were graded out of twenty marks (.../20) and that teachers took both form and content into account as well as other more specific aspects of the written product related to the narrative form. The aspects to be taken into account are as follows:

- Punctuation and spelling
- Word order/sentence structure
- Grammatical accuracy
- Cohesion of sentences
- Coherence in writing
- Rhetorical and linking words
- Word choice/appropriate vocabulary
- Choice of ideas to support narration
- Narrative organization
- Order of events in narrative paragraphs

- Showing simultaneous events
- Forming and using the simple past
- Forming and using the past continuous
- Using sensory and emotional details
- Style

4.3.2.1 Results

The assessment and grading of learners' paragraphs unveils interesting results. The researcher refers to each student using a number as shown in the table below:

Table 4. 1 Learners' Pre-Intervention Phase Task-Production Marks

Students' Number	Pre-test Marks .../20
Student 1	04
Student 2	04
Student 3	06
Student 4	06
Student 5	06
Student 6	06
Student 7	06
Student 8	06
Student 9	06
Student 10	07
Student 11	07
Student 12	07
Student 13	07
Student 14	08
Student 15	08
Student 16	09
Student 17	10
Student 18	10
Student 19	10
Student 20	10
Student 21	10
Student 22	10
Student 23	11
Student 24	11
Student 25	11
Student 26	11
Student 27	13
Student 28	14
\bar{x} Grade	8.35

The above table shows that learners' pre-intervention phase task-production marks vary from 4 to 14, showing that learners writing performance ranges from weak to average to good. While 57.14% of these informants display from weak to average achievement (04 to 09), 42.85% display from average to good writing performance (10 to 14).

The analysis of learners' compositions demonstrates that the most common problem areas lie not only at the level of mechanics (punctuation, capitalization, spelling), grammar and vocabulary (shortage), but at the level of content and organization since it proved problematic for learners to establish cohesion and coherence. The raters also recorded many incorrectnesses and repetitions, use of inappropriate vocabulary, tense concord problems and incomplete sentences. Such problem areas seem to be other difficulties confronting the majority of the informants. The writing tasks displayed the most common problems (shown hereafter) which learners face when composing:

- limited vocabulary
- repetition (word, sentence, and clause redundancy)
- excessive use of the coordinator 'and' (used as main joining word)
- sentence structure
- use of inefficient strategies like translating from Arabic (and also French) into English

Besides the problems mentioned above, it is worth highlighting the reasons leading to inappropriacy, this aspect being, in its turn, partly due to language inaccuracy. Such causes can be listed as follows:

- no accurate punctuation
- poor use of adjectives
- lengthy sentences lacking the use of connectors
- lexical cohesion
- a clear tendency towards linking, one to the other, a number of clauses with as only linking words the coordinator 'and', and the relative pronoun 'which'

- an obvious inability to make the difference between spoken and written language (formal and informal)
- unawareness of paragraph organization leading to lack of coherence

At first sight, one can easily notice that the difficulties encountered by learners are numerous. Besides writing-system problems (surface level problems like mechanics: incorrect punctuation and bad spelling), and grammatical and lexical mistakes, learners find difficulties to generate and organize ideas cohesively and coherently, their paragraphs containing repetitions of lexical and structural items. Lack of cohesion within sentences resulting from lack of cohesive ties, also word order, and lack of the use of rhetorical and linking words (lexical variables to achieve fluency) needed for establishing coherence appear to be important problems as well. Low scores were also due to learners' inability to demonstrate control over the structure of the paragraph as most of the latter contained no topic or concluding sentences.

4.3.2.2 Discussion

The analysis of learners' paragraphs reveals a number of incorrectnesses found in their compositions. The obtained results display learners' ignorance or misconception of the different parts of a paragraph and the different stages of the writing process. Although, in their questionnaire, they stated having to provide a topic sentence, supporting sentences, and a concluding sentence, their paragraphs, nonetheless, appeared to lack these main parts. This revealed learners' unawareness of text patterns, showing their inability to produce a well-structured paragraph, this likely due to insufficient or even lack of training. It also appeared that while learners were expected to stress the message being conveyed, putting the focus on content and using some strategies like topic reading, key word identification, revision and rewriting, they merely emphasized form due to their linguistic competence. Such strategies were in fact used ineffectively as shown by the qualitative analysis of task production. Learners' low writing proficiency can be attributed to a deficiency in both procedural¹ and declarative² knowledge. This has

¹ Procedural knowledge is knowing how to do something, why, when, and how to use the strategies in other new writing tasks.

² Declarative knowledge is explicit, raising learners' awareness of the necessary strategies and skills helping them better control their own learning and improve their writing performance.

led to the conclusion that linguistic competence alone is totally insufficient for successful writing performance and should be paired with strategic competence (Hamzaoui, 2006).

4.3.3 Analysis of Learners' Questionnaire

Learners' pre-intervention phase questionnaire comprises twenty one questions including the three types of questions already mentioned, i.e. closed, open, and mixed questions (see section 3.3.3.3) aiming to define learners' problem areas in EFL writing with reference to the current writing pedagogies employed, seeking to elicit learners' perceptions, opinions, and suggestions for improving such a skill. The questionnaire was submitted to 30 first-year EFL university learners in Tlemcen, whose age varies between seventeen and twenty-three, belonging to the same group. The participants were enrolled in literary and scientific streams at secondary-school level. The researcher gave twenty one questions yet, this was done on purpose as a bigger number would have made learners bored and demotivated in the task, and not a lot of them would have completed the questionnaire.

Learners' pre-intervention phase questionnaire comprises two parts. While the first one is designed to inquire about learners' bio-data information (age, gender, secondary-school stream, etc.), part two is mainly concerned with the teaching/learning of the writing skill in general and paragraph writing in particular, asking about learners' proficiency level in writing, the problems encountered in the teaching/learning of this skill, the major reasons that prevent learners from producing acceptable pieces of writing, and the suggestions brought by students to improve EFL learners' level in writing.

Part two is, in its turn, divided into seven rubrics. The first one is composed of two questions (one and two) inquiring about learners' choice and enjoyment of studying English at university level. They seek to know whether learners feel involved in studying English or not. In other words, the researcher wants to know

whether learners' underachievement is due to lack of motivation and interest in learning the foreign language itself. Questions three to eight, which constitute the second rubric, inquire about learners' enjoyment in studying writing, the complexity of the four language skills seeking to depict learners' problem areas and the level at which learners do actually find difficulties when producing a piece of writing. Furthermore, such questions aim at identifying the reasons for learners' writing difficulties as well as their negative attitudes towards such a skill. Constituting the third rubric, questions nine, ten, and eleven are mainly concerned with paragraph writing, inquiring about the difficulty of the different assigned writing tasks, instruction and practice in paragraph writing. Being composed of questions twelve, thirteen, and fourteen, the fourth rubric asks learners whether they go through the different stages of the writing process, seeking to ensure whether the composing process is taken into account while producing a paragraph. Aiming to gain information about learners' preferred ways of learning to write, the fifth rubric, composed of questions fifteen, sixteen and seventeen, endeavours to know whether learners favour working individually, in pairs, or in groups, being assisted by the teacher or not, the reasons for learners' choice and the benefits of both teacher's guidance and learners' help. Rubric six, including questions eighteen and nineteen, concerns the current writing pedagogies and their efficiency in preparing learners to write adequately in the other modules and in subsequent years. The seventh and last rubric invites learners to give some suggestions to their peers and CWE teachers to help remedy the problem of paragraph writing in general, but more particularly at the first year of university level, in order to improve first-year learners' proficiency level.

4.3.3.1 Results

As previously mentioned thirty learners belonging to the same group were chosen to take part in the present study: twenty-one girls and nine boys. Yet, out of the nine boys, two left university. As a matter of fact, twenty-eight learners were engaged in this research from the beginning till the end, partaking all the research instruments. The subject participants were examined through teacher classroom

observation, completed task production, and answered the questionnaire composed of the following set of questions:

Question 1: Why did you choose to study English at university level?

Table 4.2 Students' Reasons for Learning English

Reasons for learning English	A.F.	R.F.
Personal reasons	26	92.85 %
Parents' expectations	1	3.57 %
Orientation	1	3.57 %
Total number	28	100 %

The first question enquires about learners' choice for studying English at university level. 92.85 % of the informants state that it is their personal choice, explaining that they have been fond of this international language since childhood, expecting to study it in order to become teachers of English and have more opportunities to go abroad. While 3.57% of the informants claim that it is both their personal choice as well as their parents' expectations, 3.57% claim that they have been orientated towards the English section.

Question 2: Do you enjoy studying English at university level?

Table 4.3 Learners' Enjoyment in Studying English

Enjoyment in learning English	A.F.	R.F.
Yes	23	82.14 %
No	05	17.85 %
Total number	28	100 %

The present question seeks out whether learners enjoy studying English at university level. The majority of the informants (82.14%) state that they do. While 7.14% of these informants give no reason, 75% justify their choice as follows: 28.57% of the informants explain that EFL learning is beneficial in that it gives

them the opportunity to learn many new items, develop their skills, and enrich both lexical and grammatical knowledge. While 25% of the informants state enjoying studying English because it has always been their favourite language, 10.71% explain that it is because English is an international language. The others, that is 7.14%, state that they noticed change in their behaviour when they started learning the target language, explaining that they used to be shy, reluctant to share ideas and concerns with the others, but thanks to the way English is tackled in class, they have gained more confidence and courage to express themselves in front of an audience, getting more motivated to succeed.

Only 17.85% of the informants claim the opposite. Among them, 14.28% state that learning this language proves very difficult, explaining that it is hard to keep up with the programme and study so many new subjects simultaneously. The rest, that is 3.57% explain that learning English at university level is not enjoyable because of serious health problems.

Question 3: Which of the four language skills do you find most difficult?

Table 4.4 Learners' Classification of the Four Language Skills in Order of Complexity

Language skills complexity	A.F.	R.F.
Writing	12	42.85 %
Speaking	11	39.28 %
Listening	4	14.28 %
Reading	1	3.57 %
Total number	28	100 %

When asked to classify the four language skills in order of complexity, most of the informants complain about the two productive skills (i.e. speaking and writing). According to the obtained results, writing seems to be the most difficult skill for first year EFL university learners, since the ratio given to this productive skill is 42.85%. Speaking, the other productive skill coming in the second position,

seems to be difficult for some learners with a ratio of 39.28 %. Although listening is a receptive skill, it nonetheless presents learners with some difficulties (14.28%). Reading, the other receptive skill, remains the easiest of all four skills with a ratio of 3.57 %.

Question 4: Do you enjoy the writing course?

Table 4.5 Learners' Enjoyment of the Writing Course

Enjoyment of the writing course	A.F.	R.F.
Yes	20	71.42 %
No	8	28.57 %
Total number	28	100 %

When asked whether they enjoy the writing course or not, most of the informants (71.42%) give positive answers. They explain that they appreciate it because it helps them learn new items (vocabulary, structures) and also develop their writing skills (thinking). Among the 28.57% of the informants who give negative answers, 21.48% of them state that they do not enjoy the writing course because they find it difficult to write in English, and a ratio of 7.14% argue that they prefer the oral one.

Question 5: How would you assess your proficiency level in writing?

Table 4.6 Learners' Writing Proficiency Level Assessment

Writing proficiency level	A.F.	R.F.
Average	20	71.42 %
Good	4	14.28%
Weak	4	14.28%
Total number	28	100 %

While asked to evaluate their proficiency level in EFL writing, 71.42% of the informants think their level is but average, 14.28% believe they have a poor writing performance. Others, that is a ratio of 14.28% claim being good at EFL writing.

Question 6: What are the reasons for your difficulties in writing?

Table 4.7 Reasons for Learners' Writing Difficulties

Reasons for learners' writing difficulties	A.F.	R.F.
a-I do not like English	1	3.57%
b- I do not like writing	1	3.57%
c- I do not like the topics to write on	7	25%
d- I find English writing difficult	9	32.14%
e- Lack of practice	19	67.85%
f- Insufficient teaching time devoted to writing	6	21.42%
g- Inadequate writing instruction	2	7.14%
h-Implicit writing instruction	5	17.85%

When asked about the reasons for their difficulties in writing in the target language leading to underachievement, learners' answers vary considerably. According to the obtained results, 67.85% of the informants state that it is due to lack of practice (learners do not write very often). The difficulty to write in English comes in the second position with a ratio of 32.14%. Such learners explain that it proves difficult for them to compose in English due to the difficulty of the foreign language itself. Some of the informants (25%) state that they do not like the topics to write on. Other informants (21.42%) attribute the reason for their writing difficulties to the insufficient time devoted to the teaching of writing. A small number of informants (7.14%) consider the writing instruction as being inadequate. The ratio given to 'I do not like English' is on a par with that of 'I do not like writing' (3.57%). While the former explain that they have chosen to study English simply because of their parents' expectations, the latter state they prefer the oral course. Besides the difficult nature of the writing skill, lack of practice and

insufficient time devoted to writing, 3.57% of the informants give additional information concerning the writing process which, in their opinion, is not given due importance as it is a mental operation (thinking process) which requires much time. Other informants (3.57%) argue that the program is so odd that it should be changed.

Question 7: What are your major problem areas?

Table 4.8 Learners' Major Problem Areas in Paragraph Writing

Writing major problem areas	A.F.	R.F.
a-Punctuation and spelling	12	42.85%
b- Lack or inappropriate use of vocabulary	11	39.28%
c-Word order	2	7.14%
d-Grammatical mistakes	16	57.14%
e-Lexical mistakes (use of L1 terms)	9	32.14%
f- Cohesion of sentences (i.e. use of linking words)	6	21.42%
g- Coherence in writing	7	25%

The present question enquires about learners' major problem areas in paragraph writing. The obtained results and the numerous mistakes clearly demonstrate that learners have a number of difficulties when composing. At first sight, one can notice that grammatical mistakes (57.14%), also bad spelling and incorrect punctuation (42.85%) appear to be the most serious difficulties which learners face. Lack or inappropriate use of vocabulary comes in the third position with a ratio of 39.28%. While lexical mistakes (32.14%) frequently lead to L1 use, coherence in writing (25%) also seems to be problematic for learners to establish. Cohesion of sentences, for its part, appears to be out of the learners' reach since (21.42%) of the informants show an obvious inability to produce cohesive paragraphs, most of the time giving unrelated ideas and sentences. Although it comes in the last position, word order seems to pose problems for a small number of informants (7.14%).

Question 8: Your negative attitudes towards writing are due to:**Table 4.9** Reasons for Learners' Negative Attitudes Towards Writing

Reasons for learners' negative attitudes	A.F.	R.F.
a-The difficulty of writing	12	42.85%
b-Lack of motivation and interest	8	28.47%
c-The teaching practices	7	25%
d-Teachers' lack of pedagogy	2	7.14%

Such a question reveals learners' attitudes towards EFL writing. The obtained results clearly show that the difficulty of writing, with a ratio of 42.85%, displays learners' negative reactions towards composing. Lack of motivation and interest appears to be an important factor too in that it represents a ratio of 28.57%. Some informants (25%) also complain about the teaching practices and 7.14% advocate teachers' lack of pedagogy. Learners add that their negative attitudes are likely to be due to lack of both reading and practice. Such learners believe that more practice and a lot of reading could contribute to their writing proficiency level enhancement. According to them, reading, the skill which actually prepares for writing, is not given due importance by learners.

Question 9: Which of the assigned writing tasks seem(s) most difficult?**Table 4.10** Complexity of Learners' Assigned Writing Tasks

The difficulty of the assigned writing tasks	A.F.	R.F.
a-Expanding paragraphs	13	46.42%
b-Paragraph writing	10	35.71%
c- Sentence Expansion	10	35.71%
d-Sentence combining	8	28.57%
e-Sentence construction	5	17.85%

Aiming to know where learners' writing difficulties actually lie, the present question asks learners to grade the different assigned writing tasks in terms of

complexity. It appears from the above table that learners' writing problems are numerous: the most important ones lie at sentence expansion level, paragraph writing, and then paragraph expansion where learners are required to produce longer units. An important ratio of learners (46.42%) agrees that expanding paragraphs is the most complex task to complete. With a ratio of 35.71% each, paragraph writing and sentence expansion are also believed to present serious difficulties to learners. Sentence combining too (28.57%) seems to be problematic for learners: the informants find it difficult to combine sentences and establish both cohesion and coherence. It nonetheless, most frequently (when the number of sentences to combine is a large one) is more a problem-solving activity. Sentence construction, in its turn, is believed to be troublesome for 17.85% of the informants.

Question 10: Are you taught how to write a paragraph?

Table 4.11 Paragraph Instruction

Teaching learners how to write a paragraph	A.F.	R.F.
Yes	15	53.57%
No	11	39.28%
No answer	2	7.14%
Total number	28	100 %

The present question enquires about paragraph writing instruction. It seeks to know whether learners are actually taught how to write in-class paragraphs. 53.57% of the informants state that they actually receive instruction and deal with paragraph writing, stating that its frequency depends on time, explaining that during each session, whenever they have the opportunity and time to write, they tackle such a task. The informants add that their teacher has been doing her best to teach and explain how to write a paragraph since the beginning of the year even though they were not concerned with paragraph writing at that time. They believe that if learners paid due attention, feeling more involved, they would become better writers. They add that the teacher gets them to write as much and as frequently as

possible even though the time devoted to practice is not sufficient due to the distribution of lectures (i.e. the first semester is entirely devoted to studying the different types of sentences, sentence patterns, clauses, etc.). They state that dealing with such elements for a whole semester is boring and rather demotivating. According to them, tackling paragraph writing from the beginning of the academic year would be by far more interesting and helpful, less boring and more motivating. While 39.28% of the informants claim the opposite, that is, they are not taught how to write a paragraph, 7.14% give no answer.

Question 11: Do you think you have enough practice in paragraph writing?

Table 4.12 Learners' Practice in Paragraph Writing

Having sufficient practice in paragraph writing	A.F.	R.F.
Yes	6	21.42%
No	20	71.42%
No answer	2	7.14%
Total number	28	100 %

The present question inquires about whether learners have enough practice in paragraph writing. While 21.42% of the informants claim that such practice is sufficient, the majority 71.42 % of the informants give a negative answer. They state that more sessions should be devoted to the teaching and practice of writing. The rest, that is 7.14% of the informants give no answer.

Question 12: Do you ever go through the three stages of the writing process when composing?

Table 4.13 Learners' Use of the Writing Process

Using the writing process when composing	A.F.	R.F.
Yes	10	35.71%
No	16	57.14%
No answer	2	7.14%
Total number	28	100 %

When asked about the way they proceed in paragraph writing 35.71% of the informants affirm going through the different stages of the writing process when composing. They explain that they first think about the topic to be dealt with carefully, in order not to be out of topic, and generate as many ideas (relevant to the topic) as possible. They then draw an outline in which they organize the ideas before writing their first draft. Next, they revise their work to check and correct mistakes, rearrange and reorder ideas, write other drafts before producing the final version. 57.14% of the informants state that they do not go through the different stages of the writing process simply because they do not know how to proceed, stating that they are not yet ready for this. 7.14% of the informants do not answer this question.

Question 13: Do you ever use drafts when composing?

Table 4.14 Learners' Use of Drafts When Composing

Using drafts when composing	A.F.	R.F.
Yes	26	92.85%
No	2	7.14%
Total number	28	100%

The aim of the present question is to know whether learners use drafts when composing. The majority of the informants 92.85% give positive answers: while 75% state using only one draft, 17.85 argue that they most frequently use several

ones. 7.14% of the informants claim the opposite, explaining that they do not use drafts simply because of time constraints. Consequently, due to classroom time pressure, they feel obliged to write straight ahead on the final paper.

Question 14: What changes do you make when rewriting your draft(s)?

Table 4.15 Changes Made by Learners While Rewriting Drafts

Changes occurring while rewriting	A.F.	R.F.
a-Change words	13	46.42%
b-Correct mistakes (punctuation, capitalisation, spelling, lexical, and grammatical)	22	78.57%
c-Reformulate ideas and sentences	13	53.57%
d-Reorder ideas and sentences	15	46.42%

The purpose of the present question is to inquire about the different changes brought by learners when rewriting their drafts. It can be noticed from the above table that learners pay more attention to form (surface level) rather than content since 78.57% of the informants state that they correct capitalization, spelling, punctuation, lexis, and grammar mistakes. 53.57% of the informants state paying more attention to idea and sentence reformulation. The ratio given to word change (46.42%) is on a par with that given to idea and sentence reordering. The informants add that when writing, they do not pay attention to the mistakes; it is only while rewriting that learners do their best to correct the different mistakes committed, explaining that, for instance, if they happen to find word repetition, they have resource to synonyms or equivalents.

Question 15: Do you appreciate being assisted by your teacher when composing?

Table 4.16 Teacher's Assistance to Learners

Students appreciating teacher's assistance	A.F.	R.F.
Yes	23	82.14%
No	5	17.85%
Total number	28	100%

When asked whether they appreciate being assisted by their teacher when composing, most of the informants (82.14%) give positive answers explaining that when supervising or assisting them, the teacher can easily identify their difficulties, making insightful comments and providing help when necessary, for example, supplying new vocabulary items, spelling forms, etc. Only 17.85% of the informants state not appreciating being assisted by their teacher out of fear of his/her critical eye. For these informants, teachers merely disturb learners and make them feel tense. They add that the teacher will not be present to provide help during tests and exams.

Question 16: What is your preferred way of working when producing an in-class paragraph?

Table 4.17 Learners' Preferred Ways of Working in Class

Ways of dealing with in-class work	A.F.	R.F.
a-Individually	14	50%
b-In pairs	8	28.57%
c-In groups	6	21.42%
Total number	28	100%

When asked about their preferred ways of working and producing in-class paragraphs, learners' answers vary considerably. 50% of the informants state that they prefer working individually, explaining that because every learner has his/her

own opinions, ideas, and own work style, they prefer working separately; afterwards, they can compare their paragraphs, correct each other's mistakes and share information. They add that working individually allows them to assess their level in writing and become more self-confident as they rely on no one. Such a way also allows them to focus and concentrate more, preventing from being annoyed or disturbed.

While 28.57% prefer pair work, 21.42% favour working in groups. Those who prefer working in pairs explain that it is a very effective and helpful way for being aware of one's weaknesses, learning new things by sharing, exchanging, comparing, developing ideas, and learning from each other's mistakes. In so doing, learners can develop the ability to correct their own mistakes and develop their skills (both receptive and productive). Working collaboratively (group work), on the other hand, is believed to be very helpful for learners, especially the weakest ones, in the sense that it makes them share ideas, exchange opinions, learn new items, also correct each other's mistakes (or even wrong information), such a way helping them obtain better results.

Question 17: Do you think you learn and perform better thanks to:

Table 4.18 Teacher's Guidance and Peers' Help

Learners' preferred ways of learning	A.F.	R.F.
a-Teacher's guidance and comments	19	67.58%
b-Peers' help and comments	8	28.57%
c-Both	5	17.85%
No answer	1	3.57%

The present question inquires about learners' preferred ways of learning in class. While 67.85% of the informants prefer teacher's guidance and comments, 28.57% favour peers' help and comments. Other informants (17.85%) believe they learn and perform better thanks to both, reporting that, in addition to teacher's

guidance and comments, peers' help and comments prove also very beneficial. The rest of the informants, that is 3.57% give no answer.

Question 18: Does the current teaching of writing help you write effectively?

Table 4.19 Effectiveness of the Current Writing Instruction

Current writing instruction effectiveness	A.F.	R.F.
Yes	21	75%
No	6	21.42%
No answer	1	3.57%
Total number	28	100%

The purpose of the present question is to seek whether the new writing instruction is actually beneficial and helps learners write effectively. 75% of the informants believe that it is the case. Previously learners ignored the real meaning of writing and had no idea of the writing process. According to them, there has been a significant change as they now have a different view of writing. They now see content organization as important as grammatical accuracy. They state having learnt a lot from their teacher as regards basic paragraph structure and how to write a paragraph in addition to a wide range of new vocabulary. They add having learnt basic English sentence patterns with a great deal of interesting exercises used to help them develop their skills: thinking and writing. In addition to the number of insightful comments and pieces of advice that the teacher used to provide during each session, lessons are easy to understand. Learners add that the writing process helps them write effective paragraphs and correct their mistakes, explaining that, by writing a lot and thanks to using the writing process, they feel they are making progress and improving their writing performance. Other learners, that is 21.42%, state the opposite, arguing that writing is not adequately dealt with in class because of lack of practice. 3.57% of the informants give no answer.

Question 19: Do you think writing at 1st year university level adequately prepares you to write in the other modules and in subsequent years?

Table 4.20 Efficiency of the Current Writing Instruction

Efficiency of the current writing instruction	A.F.	R.F.
Yes	25	89.28%
No	2	7.14%
No answer	1	3.57%
Total number	28	100%

When asked whether writing instruction at 1st year university level adequately prepares learners to write in the other modules and in subsequent years, almost all the informants (89.28%) answer positively. They posit that the teaching of such an important subject (writing), which is seen as the most important one with the highest coefficient in the Licence Degree, is conducted adequately. They add that, as the first year is a massive and important part of their degree, which actually prepares them to write in all modules (literary studies, linguistics, civilization, etc.) and in the coming years, they should focus more on that subject. While 7.14% of the informants argue that the present writing instruction is not efficient, providing them with neither preparation to write in the other modules nor in subsequent years, 3.57% of the informants give no answer.

Question 20: What do you suggest to your teacher to improve your writing proficiency level?

Informants' suggestions to teachers to help improve learners' writing proficiency

- Implement explicit teaching
- Provide more writing sessions/practice
- Devote more time to paragraph writing
- Give learners more homework (paragraph writing, free topics)
- Give more appropriate/interesting topics

- Give learners different kinds of exercises and let them practise during the writing course
- Devote extra sessions for paragraph production, correction, and comparison of learners' work
- Motivate and provide learners with more opportunities to read and write
- Provide more writing sessions with more writing activities, correcting at least one paragraph collectively
- Encourage learners' self-correction
- Get the learners to work in mixed-ability groups so that good students can help weak ones
- Undertake make-up sessions for the weakest students

Question 21: What do you suggest to your peers to improve their writing?

Informants' suggestions to their peers to improve their writing proficiency level

- Attend writing courses
- Keep on working to improve the skills in writing
- Have more practice at home
- Have more practice on paragraph writing: writing at least one piece per week, asking the teacher for help
- Take the teacher's instruction regarding writing, advice and comments into account
- Write a lot of paragraphs going through the three stages of the writing process
- Avoid using translation; using own vocabulary
- Read more to get the English structure and learn more about writing
- Read books, short stories, short texts and passages, articles, newspaper articles. This will enrich your vocabulary and give you an idea about the different ways of writing used in different contexts
- Watch English movies and read books
- Write an account of a movie or a story
- Write about daily events regularly

- Do not look at writing as something difficult and boring
- Be motivated, work to learn more, ask and search

4.3.3.2 Discussion

Through the analysis of learners' pre-intervention phase questionnaire, it is easily noticeable that besides the inadequacy of the current writing pedagogy, several factors are, to a great extent, responsible for learners' weak writing performance. For this reason, the researcher has based her study on a comparative analysis of teacher classroom observation, learners' questionnaires (pre and post-intervention phase questionnaires), and learners' task production (pre and post-intervention phase writing tasks). The results clearly show that despite learners' long formal exposure to EFL learning, 1st year university EFL learners still face difficulties to produce clear, correct and meaningful paragraphs.

Although the majority of the informants stated that studying English was their personal choice, though another high ratio affirmed enjoying studying it and claimed enjoying writing, such a skill is seen as the most difficult of the four language ones to learn for a number of the informants. As a matter of fact, some learners estimate their writing proficiency level to be but average, attributing their difficulties to lack of practice since, in their opinion, writing is not given due importance, adding not writing very often. It is then believed that, as a thinking process, writing should be devoted much more time. Besides the difficulty of writing in English, the informants also advocated the inappropriacy of topics which are too odd, and the inadequacy of writing pedagogies (implicit instruction). As a matter of fact, the programmes need to be reconsidered and also updated.

Because of such difficulties, learners' problem areas lie not only at the level of the writing system (mechanics: punctuation and spelling), lexis, grammar, lack or inappropriate use of vocabulary (surface level problems), expanding/combining sentences, and also constructing sentences (basic paragraph element), but at discourse level as well, most students being unable to establish cohesion (no use of cohesive ties) and coherence among ideas, and sentences. It also appears that, in

addition to the writing process which is almost inexistent to learners, the writing pedagogy used is not of great help. Even though learners are taught how to write paragraphs and do have practice in class, it clearly appears that writing is neither taught nor learned adequately, the product approach being more in favour of the final product, putting aside the writing process and all that it entails (the different stages).

Although paragraph writing is actually tackled in class through theory first, and though learners affirm using the writing process when producing paragraphs, it nonetheless appears that, when it comes to writing, things are completely different. Learners appear to be well aware of the writing process, still not all of them know how to apply it. Most of them write in a linear way, merely paying attention to the final product. As a matter of fact, they need more explicit instruction and practice, also more assistance and guidance, and help on the part of both the teacher and peers, respectively. Since learners still find difficulties to compose, displaying a number of deficiencies at both linguistic and discourse levels, the teaching pedagogy used seems then to respond neither to students' needs nor to adequately prepare them to cope with the writing task. The obtained results seem, therefore, to confirm some points of the research hypotheses.

4.4 Intervention Phase: Classroom Observation Analysis

Such a phase intends to see whether the newly-implemented approach (explicit teaching) meets learners' needs (clarifying issues, making learners better informed and more aware about essential components thanks to systematic instruction), and the impact it has on learners' writing performance (progress).

4.4.1 Results

Step 1: Does the new teaching approach correlate positively with learners' needs?

This phase is devoted to evaluate the new approach used for writing instruction, attempting to demonstrate its effectiveness according to learners' developing writing performance and progress. The main concern of this approach is to tackle explicit teaching of the composing variables needed for achieving successful writing, explaining the whole importance of the use of the writing process for thinking, generating, discovering, developing ideas, and editing, such a process making the task easier, likely leading to perform successfully.

Within the newly-implemented approach, learners have the opportunity to work in pairs and groups, and appear more involved, more committed to this new type of working, more interested in discussing the topic with the others and sharing ideas. Such collaborative work allows the weakest to learn more about specific points (enriching their vocabulary, getting new structures and functions), allowing them, due to being involved, tackle the writing task with less apprehension and more confidence, and consequently become able to perform better, this new pedagogy appearing to correlate with learners' needs.

Step 2: What is the impact of the new writing pedagogy on learners' performance?

Thanks to becoming aware of the dimension of writing, learners appear to pay more attention to the composing process, taking into account the parameters needed for making writing effective, no longer writing in a linear way. Another aspect not to neglect concerns the advantages and benefits of pair and group work. Indeed, during such a phase, the researcher could notice that learners working collaboratively, seemed more involved and participated actively, discussing the topic, sharing opinions and ideas, getting a gradual ability to perform better.

4.4.2 Discussion

It is important to note that, without any direct instruction of what makes for good writing in English, and the different steps the writer goes through during the

composing task, learners cannot be expected to perform successfully. As they are unaware of the organizational structures and strategies needed for text-creation, learners are just penalized for issues they have never been made aware before. In order to prevent from such a situation, it is then the teacher's responsibility for raising learners' consciousness about the conventions and norms of discourse, making students become aware of and used to these essential components through explicit teaching, aiming to enable learners (mainly low-level ones) to overcome problems that used to impede their writing performance.

4.5 Post-Intervention Phase

This last phase is concerned with two major issues: the impact of direct teaching of the procedural knowledge that makes writing effective, as well as the benefits of using the writing process (1), plus the positive changes brought about in the learners' writing performance by such a new type of instruction (2).

4.5.1 Classroom Observation Analysis

This type of assessment which identifies whether learners become able to perform a task successfully can be called performance analysis, emphasizing strengths but not weaknesses.

4.5.1.1 Results

Step 1: Does explicit writing instruction lead to learners' involvement and use of the writing process?

Thanks to direct instruction which makes clearer the points remaining obscure, learners' involvement is quite noticeable, with students using a number of strategies like generating and planning, organizing ideas, revising, writing and re-writing for editing.

Step 2: To what extent has the learners' performance improved?

While the major aim was to orientate learners towards a new perception of the true nature of writing, it was noticed that students had developed new attitudes and habits (thinking before writing) along with the use of more appropriate resources. Perhaps the most significant change concerns the one appearing at the level of discourse, with an obvious development of learners' mastery of written discourse, rather than mere linguistic proficiency which used to be the primary concern of composition writing as learners have acquired the ability to comprehend and generate more correct and meaningful paragraphs. This attitudinal change shows that the objectives of implementing new teaching practices have been met.

Step 3: Has the newly-implemented approach proved effective?

As a matter of fact, this new type of instruction, which was implemented due to highlighting the teacher's perception of the need to change and improve by undertaking classroom action research, appeared to be of valuable importance as such teaching has yielded the expected objectives. In other words, there is a positive correlation between explicit instruction and learners' improvement. This has led to conclude that in addition to direct teaching, implementing the product-process approach has come to be seen as presenting a number of advantages. This approach, which proves highly beneficial to both good and weak learners as concerns their new perception of writing, has by the same token helped them improve their writing performance.

4.5.1.2 Discussion

Direct teaching seems to present a number of advantages as it has allowed learners have a better understanding of the real meaning of writing and what constitutes effective writing (rhetorical devices, paragraph patterns, and composing strategies). While it is possible to get rid of grammar, syntax, and lexical mistakes through various activities, writing at discourse level can only be acquired through

formal instruction and an understanding of the composing variables. The value and benefits of explicit instruction, aiming at encouraging students to improve thanks to reflecting on what they do and having a better understanding of how to proceed, need to be demonstrated and acknowledged. It should be noted that direct instruction proved to be very helpful to the good students too. Indeed, thanks to this new type of teaching conducive to raising learners' awareness about a number of variables which they totally ignored before, they, like the low-proficiency level learners, appeared to improve their writing performance at the discourse level.

While being mainly concerned with the final product and dealing with the writing task within a very short span of time (frequently within just a few minutes) to obtain a pass mark (the average), learners became more involved, more attentive to the writing task, as they had, for a long time ignored that writing is a mental operation which requires mental preparation and a number of steps to go through. It is then important to acknowledge the value and benefits of direct instruction on the learners' writing proficiency level.

4.5.2 Learners' Task-Production Analysis

After analyzing and interpreting the pre-intervention phase task-production, the objective of the present section was to assess the learners' post-intervention phase writing task through comparing learners' paragraphs (pre and post-intervention phase task production) in terms of marks and content so as to evaluate the efficiency of the newly-employed writing pedagogy.

4.5.2.1 Results

Table 4.21 Learners' Post-Intervention Phase Task-Production Marks

Students' Number	Post-test Marks .../20
Student 1	06
Student 2	07
Student 3	07
Student 4	08
Student 5	08
Student 6	10
Student 7	12
Student 8	12
Student 9	14
Student 10	10
Student 11	11
Student 12	12
Student 13	12
Student 14	10
Student 15	12
Student 16	11
Student 17	12
Student 18	12
Student 19	12
Student 20	12
Student 21	13
Student 22	13
Student 23	13
Student 24	13
Student 25	14
Student 26	15
Student 27	16
Student 28	14
\bar{X} Grade	11.46

The above table shows that learners' post-intervention task-production marks range from 06 to 16 that is from weak to average to good. While 17.85% of the

informants display from weak to average performance (from 6 to 9), 82.14% of the informants whose writing performance is considered to be average to good, score from 10 to 16. The analysis of learners' compositions also demonstrates that though still existing, learners' areas of difficulties have decreased especially at the level of composing and text organization.

4.5.2.2 Discussion

After receiving direct teaching, learners showed a strong will to use the writing process, seeking to manage their ideas and develop the ability to create more well-organized paragraphs. Another important point to mention is that, while dealing with the piece of narrative writing, most of the newly-produced paragraphs were full of feelings and originality simply because learners wrote with more spontaneity. Most of the informants, who seemed to welcome this new type of instruction, appeared to appreciate the topic since it gave them the opportunity not only to express themselves (communicate) by written, but to narrate a personal event as well, something which really interested and excited them much, allowing even the weakest learners to express their ideas.

It is worth mentioning learners' improved performance, with the creation of more coherent passages thanks to the use of the components of written discourse such as time sequencers (before, after, afterwards, etc), interpretive markers (for example, for instance, as an illustration), comparison/contrast linkers (yet, however, in contrast, on the contrary), certainty markers (in fact, in effect), and other markers like 'to conclude, to sum up', etc.

While displaying the marks obtained in both pre and post-intervention phase tasks, the table below proceeds to demonstrate learners' improvement. Thanks to gathering both pre and post-test grades within the same table, it becomes possible to compare between them and see the extent to which the intervention phase had been beneficial.

Table 4.22 Learners' Pre and Post-Assessment Grades

Students' Number	Pre-test Marks .../20	Post-test Marks .../20
Student 1	04	06
Student 2	04	07
Student 3	06	07
Student 4	06	08
Student 5	06	08
Student 6	06	10
Student 7	06	12
Student 8	06	12
Student 9	06	14
Student 10	07	10
Student 11	07	11
Student 12	07	12
Student 13	07	12
Student 14	08	10
Student 15	08	12
Student 16	09	11
Student 17	10	12
Student 18	10	12
Student 19	10	12
Student 20	10	12
Student 21	10	13
Student 22	10	13
Student 23	11	13
Student 24	11	13
Student 25	11	14
Student 26	11	15
Student 27	13	16
Student 28	14	14
\bar{X} Grade	08.35	11.46

After evaluating and comparing learners' paragraphs (both pre and post intervention-phase paragraphs), several changes occurring at the level of the obtained marks and learners' way of writing (both form and content) could be noticed. While the \bar{X} grade of the pre-intervention task is lower than the average, the one of the post-intervention phase is higher, a fact showing that all learners' marks have increased and that learners' writing performance has improved. Though not a radical change, the results demonstrate that the adopted approach proves to be beneficial in that it has explicitly made learners aware of the meaning of writing. While 57.14% of the informants' pre-test marks range from 04 to 09 that is, below the average mark, only 17.85% obtained marks under the average varying between 06 and 08 in the post-intervention phase, learners' improved marks showing students' improvement and also the decrease in the percentage of weak learners. This can be explained as follows:

- 42.85% scored above average in the pre-test ranging from 10 to 14
- 82.14% scored above average in the post-test ranging from 10 to 16

What could be noticed then is that all the marks had improved by at least two or more points. It also appeared that no student scored a lower mark than the one he/she got previously. While students' \bar{X} grade in the pre-intervention phase paragraph was below the average mark (8.35/20), the one obtained in the post-intervention phase paragraph was higher (11.46/20). The highest grade in the pre-intervention task-production was 14, while the lowest one was 04, highlighting both a number of linguistic difficulties and rhetorical organization, a fact that seemed to confirm learners' responses explaining their low writing performance before the intervention phase. Although the majority of informants' scores were average or above average (pre-test), it was nonetheless in that pre-test that learners displayed a number of deficiencies, especially at the level of content organization. As previously argued, in addition to linguistic competence, the writer also needs strategic competence (see section 4.3.2.2). The tasks receiving higher scores showed a somehow fair degree of organization.

The best marks were attributed to the second task-production (post-intervention phase paragraph), a fact that seemed to correlate with learners' responses, claiming having less difficulties expressing themselves thanks to the direct instruction they had received during the intervention phase. Consequently, the second task seemed to be less demanding if compared to the first one since teachers' comments were not as severe as the ones attributed to the first task.

The analysis of learners' grades also revealed that though not all the informants' writing performance had improved at 100%, it is nonetheless important to note that most of the participants appeared to have acquired a better understanding of coherent writing besides the benefits of using the writing process. The initial hypothesis about learners' ability to produce better paragraphs, with more relevant content and organization if they were more exposed to the use of the composing process was proved. The intervention phase had actually helped learners grasp the meaning of what writing actually is. Learners' writing performance improvement was not only reflected at the level of form and content but at that of paragraph structure too. Indeed, the analysis of the learners' post-tests revealed that all of the paragraphs contained a topic, supporting and concluding sentences.

4.5.3 Learners' Questionnaire Analysis

Learners' post-intervention phase questionnaire comprises nine questions categorized under six rubrics. The questionnaire was administered to learners by mid May 2018 after the task production had been completed. Its main aim was to enquire about learners' perception of writing in general and the writing process in particular, after the intervention phase during which explicit instruction and training were provided.

While the objective of the first question was concerned with writing at pre-university education, the second question enquired about the importance of the writing skill at university level. Questions three, four, and five, related to explicit writing instruction, aimed to know whether the instruction learners received during

the intervention phase had been efficient, that is, whether it had, somehow, helped them overcome their difficulties. Asking about both form and content and their roles in writing, the aim of questions six and seven was to enquire about the aspect to which learners give much importance when writing (whether form, content, or both), and the different aspects of a piece of writing (grammatical accuracy, lexical knowledge, etc.). The main concern of question eight was to know whether learners needed more practice in paragraph writing. The last question invited learners to choose the most appropriate recommendations and provide their own suggestions to help overcome their writing problems.

4.5.3.1 Results

After dealing with the task production, the informants had to complete the questionnaire that departed from the results obtained through the analysis of the pre and post-tests. The objective of the questionnaire was to inquire about the newly-acquired knowledge concerning writing, whether the intervention phase had proved beneficial, helping them write in a more coherent way.

Question 1: According to you did pre-university education prepare you develop your thinking abilities: reasoning, analysing, and synthesising?

Table 4.23 Preparing Learners' Thinking Abilities

Learners' thinking abilities	A.F.	R.F.
Yes	13	46.42%
No	15	53.57%
Total number	28	100%

The present question inquires whether pre-university education prepared learners develop their thinking abilities such as reasoning, analysing, and synthesising. While 46.42% of the informants give positive answers explaining that pre-university education made them acquire a lot of knowledge and helped them develop their thinking as well as the ability to understand and analyse, become autonomous learners, also teaching them how to value their capacities and improve

their academic skills, 53.57% of the informants answer negatively. They explain that pre-university education was just an introductory phase preparing them for their further studies. They state that while pre-university education did not give them the opportunity to learn things deeply, having just superficial knowledge, presently at university level they can learn new subjects and in a deeper way, become autonomous and take responsibility for their own learning (also develop/prepare their thinking abilities). They also explain that they used to rely more on the teacher as the giver of knowledge, in contrast with university where the teacher is a guide. It is then up to them to widen their knowledge and thinking, stating that they were not taught how to think before and during writing, with no idea of the mental operation involved in the writing process, being totally unaware about basic paragraph structure. Due to insufficient time, writing was not given due importance which led to lack of practice. As a result, neither the teachers nor the learners attributed writing its real value at pre-education level.

Question 2: In your opinion what are the main reasons that make writing an important skill at the university level?

Table 4.24 Reasons Making Writing an Important Skill at University Level

Reasons making writing an important skill	A.F.	R.F.
a-Consolidation of language proficiency	15	53.57%
b-Aid to learning and thinking	16	57.14%
c-Support to the other language skills	12	42.85%
d-Primary requirement for academic success	18	64.28%

When asked about the importance that writing holds at university level, most of the informants (64.28%) believe it is the primary requirement for academic success. While 57.14% of the informants state that it is an aid to learning and thinking, 53.57% believe that it is a consolidation of language proficiency. Other informants (42.85%) argue that writing serves as a support to the other language skills. Such informants believe that all of the above criteria make writing important.

It is in fact important not only in the CWE module but in all the other ones as well. They believe that writing helps them in their daily life, especially when speaking, making them develop the other skills.

Question 3: In your opinion, has explicit writing instruction helped you overcome your difficulties?

Table 4.25 Efficiency of Explicit Writing Instruction to Help Overcome Learners' Difficulties

Explicit writing instruction efficiency	A.F.	R.F.
Yes	25	89.28%
No	1	3.57%
No answer	2	7.14%
Total number	28	100%

When asked about whether explicit writing instruction had helped them overcome their difficulties, most of the informants (89.28%) stated that it has a big role in shaping learners' writing and was very helpful in that it clarified the meaning of writing, explaining that they learned and understood better what writing actually is (form and content). According to them, direct instruction is an adequate way to teach writing because it focuses on important elements needed in this skill. Explicit instruction appeared to be beneficial to the informants in that it helped them become aware of what good writing requires, improve their skills and their way of writing (attitudinal change), express themselves adequately and become able to write better, overcoming their difficulties and learning new items (e.g. helping them enrich their vocabulary), helping depict areas of weaknesses and avoid mistakes. The informants also explained that before receiving explicit instruction on paragraph writing, they used to produce texts lacking essential components. Thanks to the stages of the writing process, they now pay more attention to features like cohesion and coherence. In sum, explicit teaching had helped the informants' paragraphs improve globally in terms of discourse organization and composing-procedural

variables. While 3.57% of the informants answered negatively, 7.14% gave no answer.

Question 4: Does explicit teaching of text patterns help you write better?

Table 4.26 Explicit Teaching of Text Patterns Helping Write Better

Efficiency of explicit teaching	A.F.	R.F.
Yes	27	96.42%
No	1	3.57%
Total number	28	100%

When asked about the effectiveness of explicit teaching of text patterns and writing resources, almost all the informants gave positive answers since 96.42% of them agreed that the newly adopted method for teaching writing proved highly beneficial and more adequate than the previous one where instruction was done implicitly. They estimated that this new type of teaching helped to make the writing task easier as they could better grasp the discourse conventions, helping them improve their writing by developing a certain logic/connection between ideas, establishing semantic relationships among words/sentences, syntactic relationships among sentences, developing purpose and audience awareness (understanding that their writing may be read by people other than their teacher), learning how to choose vocabulary items in accordance with the topic and the genre of their writing, formal/informal style, and establishing coherence throughout the whole composition. Only 3.57% of the informants stated that explicit teaching of text patterns did not help them write better.

Question 5: What seems most important to you: paying attention to form, content, or both?

Table 4.27 Importance of Form and Content

Importance of form and content	A.F.	R.F.
a-Form	0	0%
b-Content	3	10.71%
C-Both	25	89.28%
Total number	28	100%

Such a question inquires about the aspect to which learners pay more attention when writing (whether form or content). While 10.71% of the informants state that content is more important than form, 89.28% believe that both form and content are necessary and complementary aspects of writing. They also explain that such information is of valuable importance as it stresses the main two aspects of effective writing. No answer is given to the item ‘form’ alone.

Question 6: Which areas do you consider most important?

Table 4.28 Importance of Writing Features for Paragraph Production

Important areas in paragraph production	A.F.	R.F.
a-Mechanics: punctuation, spelling, and capitalization	15	53.57%
b-Lexical knowledge: word choice, cohesion	15	53.57%
c-Sentence construction: simple, compound, complex, compound complex	9	32.14%
d-Sentence expansion: reduced and extended clauses	5	17.85%
e-Grammatical accuracy: tenses, agreement, word order	14	50%
f-Paragraph construction: topic sentence, supporting sentences, concluding sentence	15	53.57%
g-Paragraph organization: Logic and coherence in writing	11	39.28%

Such a question inquired about the different areas seen as important when writing. Although the informants believe that they all prove to be of equal importance to produce a good piece of writing, they nonetheless give priority to mechanics of writing (punctuations, spelling, and capitalization), lexical knowledge, word choice, cohesion), and paragraph structure with a ratio of 53.57% for each. Grammatical accuracy (tense agreement, word order) comes in the fourth position with a ratio of 50%, a fact showing that learners most frequently pay attention to form and surface level areas. Paragraph organization, given a ratio of 39.28%, is for its part an essential aspect of writing which requires logic and coherence. With a ratio of 32.14%, sentence construction (simple, compound, complex, compound complex) has a basic importance in paragraph writing. Though coming in the last position with a ratio of 17.85%, sentence expansion too proves nonetheless necessary (adding clauses and modifiers). Learners added that having a rich vocabulary is essential as it helps prevent from the use of repetitions, making reading more attractive. Besides, a wide range of vocabulary enables them to express and develop more ideas.

Question 7: Do you think you need more practice on paragraph writing to improve your proficiency level?

Table 4.29 Practice in Paragraph Writing

Practising paragraph writing	A.F.	R.F.
Yes	25	89.28%
No	1	3.57%
No answer	2	7.14%
Total number	28	100%

When asked about the amount of practice they had on paragraph writing, most of the informants (89.28%) estimated it as insufficient, stating that they needed more practice and training because, as they explained, as effective writing is the key to academic success, more practice is needed for achieving it. Learners

believe that more practice leads to learn more and to foster one's writing proficiency level. While 3.57% of the informants believed that the amount of practice they had was a sufficient one, 7.14% of the informants gave no answer.

Since they are beginners, learners stress the fact that they need more practice on both reading and writing as this helps them develop their skills (helping them to make research, learn more about the target language, and think in the foreign language), identify their lacunas and areas of weaknesses, spot mistakes and avoid them (thanks to correcting them, adding that they learn through their mistakes), and overcome writing difficulties. They add that they need practice of organizational modes on paragraph writing more than theory, in addition to the use of the writing process (learning more about the writing process and its use) from the very beginning of the academic year, a way to acquire more experience in paragraph writing and improve their level.

Question 8: Do you now feel able to write better in the other modules and in the coming years?

Table 4.30 Learners' Ability to Write Better in the Other Modules and Coming Years

Ability to write better	A.F.	R.F.
Yes	26	92.85%
No	2	7.14%
Total number	28	100%

To this question, learners gave the following numerous answers: explicit teaching of the writing process and strategies was very helpful in that it helped learners acquire knowledge about how to write a paragraph, learn more about how to organize ideas (content organization) thanks to using the writing process: following the different necessary steps. Besides writing practice which proved to be very helpful, learners also stated having learnt in a deeper way how to deal with sentence construction, adding that after starting studying at the university, they realized that their way of writing had changed, as pre-education did not actually

prepare them for such a task. Much practice (producing more than one paragraph a week which allowed them to learn from their mistakes), learners stated having acquired the real meaning of writing and how to write a paragraph. As their writing had improved, this will help them write in the other modules and in subsequent years in a better way, becoming able to overcome their writing difficulties due to using the writing process in any of the tackled writing tasks. Stating that they will have to be more careful with composing as they seemed to have acquired the real meaning of writing, learners added not pretending being quite ready to write perfectly explaining that they will always need more work and practice, and also guidance and help from their teachers.

Question 9: Which of the following suggestions may help you overcome your writing problems?

According to the suggestions brought by the informants as concerns the ninth question, a more effective teaching methodology and explicit writing instruction, as well as a rich vocabulary acquired through extensive reading, appear to be most helpful for getting learners to overcome their writing difficulties and develop as effective writers. In addition, having a large amount of regular writing practice plus sound knowledge of grammar and grammatical structures, working collaboratively (group work) for sharing ideas and skills and get self-confidence, plus more attractive and authentic topics, tasks, and projects seem an interesting alternative helping learners have a better performance. Devoting more time to writing during the first semester instead of spending a whole one on sentence construction and clauses seems to be another learners' concern.

4.5.3.2 Discussion

Despite their lengthy EFL learning experience, the informants appear to have a number of lacunas and difficulties preventing them from achievement in writing. Although they stated that pre-university education prepared them develop their thinking abilities, reasoning, analysing and synthesizing, it nonetheless appears not to have equipped learners with the necessary skills needed for writing since the

majority of students affirmed becoming better informed, taught and trained on paragraph writing after receiving explicit writing instruction at university level. It clearly appears then that even though learners have had some notions on writing in general and paragraph production in particular, they nonetheless stated ignoring the existence and important role of the writing process, and how to manage their writing. As a matter of fact, explicit instruction through text patterns regarding paragraph writing learners received during the intervention phase has prepared them tackle paragraph writing in a better way. Though learners in the first questionnaire stated that both form and content are of equal importance when composing, and appeared to grasp the real meaning of writing, they nonetheless showed a particular interest to content over form after the instructional phase, displaying an obvious attitudinal change regarding text production.

4.6 Discussion of the Main Results

The obtained data revealed insightful results regarding the teaching/learning of writing to first year EFL university learners, displaying the adopted writing pedagogies, their impact on such learners' proficiency and writing ability before and after receiving explicit instruction.

With regard to the first research hypothesis and as far as the adopted teaching approach is concerned, the results obtained reveal that the predominant pedagogy employed at first-year university level is the product approach. Teacher classroom observation reveals that learners' writing is linear, learners being mainly concerned with the final product. The conclusion that can be drawn is that the final product is given much importance by teachers and learners alike, having no concern with the composing process (almost ignoring its existence and the involved stages). All of the informants appear to pay attention to surface level problems, focus on form such as grammatical accuracy and mechanics of writing (spelling and punctuation). These results seem to confirm our first hypothesis.

As far as the second research hypothesis is concerned, the obtained results demonstrate that under the influence of the product approach, learners are mainly

concerned with the final product. Despite being aware of the writing process and the stages the writer goes through, learners nonetheless pay more attention to the final product, without actually caring about using such a process for better achievement. Such a fact is mainly due to learners' linguistic competence in EFL, learners being unable to make the link between the lexico-grammatical aspect of writing and discourse. Even an understanding of how grammar operates may not necessarily guarantee that learners will put it to effective use. As stated by Johns (1996:31 "Grammatical rules are not an end in themselves but means for achieving particular ends." While the product approach favours form over content, the combination of both approaches seems thus a good alternative in that both form and content will be on an equal footing. These results seem to confirm our second hypothesis.

With regard to the third research hypothesis, it seems that the intervention phase served to demonstrate that the previously employed approach did not correspond to learners' needs, failing to make learners used to the composing process and prepare them for paragraph writing. Since the newly implemented approach has proved beneficial to the learners, making clear the different stages and significant role of the writing process, getting the students to have another view of writing and also improve their writing proficiency level, it would be advisable to reconsider the current writing pedagogies and implement explicit instruction at an early level to raise learners' awareness about the advantages of using the writing process, its role and usefulness in composing. It would also be useful to devote more practice sessions during which different tasks would be devised to make learners have regular training related to paragraph writing through writing process integration.

In addition, other elements such as content, audience, purpose, mechanics of writing and other components like grammatical accuracy, whatever the ideas (i.e. the content) learners provide in their writing, emphasis should also be placed on correctness; appropriate use of vocabulary, grammatical structures, etc.), cohesion and coherence (idea organization, favouring ideas over the way they are structured)

prove to be of significant importance in order for learners to develop as effective writers.

To conclude, since EFL writing is a challenging and demanding task for a large number of EFL learners, also because it proves to be a support to the other language skills, an aid to learning and thinking, a consolidation of language proficiency, but mainly the primary requirement for academic success, it becomes necessary to equip learners with the necessary skills through explicit writing instruction to help them manage their learning and improve their writing performance.

4.7 Conclusion

Dealing with the interpretation and discussion of the results obtained through classroom-action research, the present chapter gives a clear picture of the way the writing lesson is conducted and how paragraph writing is tackled at first year university level. The obtained results provide additional information about the way the writing process is undertaken (taught and learned) in class.

While identifying the teaching approach, the chapter also displays its impact on entrant students' writing proficiency level and compares such proficiency both before and after the intervention phase; that is, learners' involvement in the writing course and the way they proceed in task production, the marks obtained in both compositions (pre and post test assessment). Nevertheless, the findings presented are suggestive rather than conclusive as the samples used in the study are not representative of all learning groups.

The study was divided into three main parts or phases. The pre-intervention phase was mainly concerned with teacher classroom observation, learners' task-production (pre-test), and one questionnaire (pre-questionnaire). The main objective of the pre-intervention phase was to evaluate the employed teaching approach through assessing the learners' writing proficiency and areas of weaknesses. Entitled intervention phase, the second part of the research was conducted through

teacher classroom observation which lasted almost three months in which the researcher had to observe the newly adopted teaching approach, paragraph teaching under its influence and learners' involvement. Being the third and last part of the study, the post-intervention phase was mainly concerned with evaluating the efficiency/shortcomings of the newly adopted approach to teaching writing.

CHAPTER FIVE

Suggestions and Recommendations

CHAPTER FIVE: Suggestions and Recommendations

5.1 Introduction	215
5.2 The teacher	216
5.2.1 Teacher Training	217
5.2.2 Teacher Education Development	220
5.2.3 Teacher Roles	224
5.2.4 Teaching Methodology	225
5.2.4.1 Remedial Teaching	232
5.2.4.2 Learner Self Correction	237
5.2.4.3 Explicit Teaching	238
5.2.4.4 Writing Strategy Implementation	241
5.2.4.5 Implementing Collaborative Writing	244
5.2.4.6 Learner Peer Conference	245
5.2.4.7 Eclecticism	246
5.2.4.8 Surveys, Questionnaires and Interviews	247
5.3 Learner Development	249
5.4 Writing Tasks	252
5.4.1 Keeping Journals	253
5.4.2 Book Report	254
5.4.3 Student Portfolios	255
5.5 Additional Activities to Improve learners' Writing Performance	257
5.6 General Requirements for Composition Writing	263
5.8 Writing for Learning Versus Writing for Learning	267
5.9 Writing: The Process of Discovering Meaning	268
	215

5.1 Introduction

Regarding the teaching writing situation at the first year of university level, and on the basis of the obtained results, this concluding chapter will be entirely devoted to some possible solutions and recommendations hoped to help alleviate the problems identified in chapter four. The present chapter will display three main sections. The first one will be concerned with some pedagogical implications regarding the EFL writing teacher. Though today the focus is on the learner as being the central variable in the whole teaching/learning process, it should be noted that the teacher is still regarded as an indispensable key element highly involved in teacher-learner interaction. Accordingly, the teacher, teacher training, teacher education development, teacher roles, and teaching methodology have to be highlighted.

In order not to fall in the trap of a unique methodology, the science of language still remaining unable to demonstrate the efficiency or superiority of one methodology over another, being eclectic seems an alternative presenting a number of advantages. Introducing learners to the writing process, making it become an integral part of writing in addition to explicit teaching of the writing resources are believed to be effective procedures and methods involved in writing instruction enhancement. Stating that this is the right or even the ideal method to teach this skill would be too pretentious as perfection does not exist. Nonetheless, recommending more relevant writing instruction at first-year university level seems an important step towards setting up a more adequate repertoire of instructional practices. For this purpose, the main concern of the third and last section is to suggest some writing tasks and activities hoped to help lessen learners' writing difficulties, attempting to promote the teaching and learning of writing, this requiring a change of attitudes on the part of language teachers. The major change should consist in a significant different approach to writing instruction, seeking to have a positive impact on the teaching/learning of the skill under consideration: the development of first-year learners' thinking and writing skills, classroom practice, assessment, and teacher education development.

Other recommendations regarding the process of learning involving the learner as well as learner development will make up the second part of the chapter. Despite the resulting shift from teacher to learner-centredness, with the learner becoming the centre of the whole teaching/learning process, it is worth noting that teachers' own efforts is still a major component involved in the management of learning. However, as teachers' efforts alone are insufficient for students' positive achievement, learners' efforts appear to be largely involved in success or failure, this in turn depending on three parameters: the reasons, attitudes and expectations of learning the target language, but more particularly learning how to write in the foreign language. One of the major principles for learners to retain is to consider writing positive achievement at the university level not as mere acquisition of language proficiency, but as an educational experience allowing students to develop their academic life skills (getting the ability to think and learn) as well as developing as learners, becoming responsible for their own learning, in sum, gaining some kind of autonomy.

5.2 The Teacher

Today, the teaching/learning process is more learner-centered, that is, emphasis is on the learner who becomes the first element involved in the process, and the one who deserves much attention. The shift from teacher-centered to learner-centered teaching has had important implications concerning language teaching. In this new situation, the teacher is no longer perceived as the giver of knowledge and the only responsible for learners. Responsibility is somehow placed on the learners' shoulders, with teacher and learner placed on a more equal footing (Little, et. al. 2002). As explained by Bassou (2015: 9) "this reshaping of teacher and learner roles has led to a radical change of power and authority that used to dominate traditional classroom settings". Despite this important shift, the teacher will remain the main partner in the whole teaching/learning process, an essential element, if not an indispensable tool, without which teacher/learner interaction would be impeded. It is important to note that the teacher is supposed to have received special training in order to provide learners with the necessary help and

guidance, being responsible for creating a supportive classroom environment and ensuring that learners become involved in the learning process, in sum, teacher's efforts are largely expected to be conducive to learners' achievement.

With regard to writing at first-year university level, an awareness of the changes occurring worldwide proves essential. Such changes have a concern with the learners, the educational policy, and teaching methodologies. For this purpose, the type of training undergone should be one enabling the teacher to cope with change, directed towards making him become able to assume a number of roles according to learners' needs, educational, cultural, social and long-term needs (Ourghi, 2002).

5.2.1 Teacher Training

Though nowadays teaching is learner-centered, it is important to note (as previously mentioned) that the teacher remains a key element in the whole process. For this main reason, a perspective regarding teacher training and education development is needed. Such one training should focus its attention towards training novice teachers adequately, getting them to improve their teaching as well as skills, attitudes and self-awareness.

In order for foreign language teachers to assume their task properly, they need a sound knowledge in the psychology of learning in addition to sociology and pedagogy, such areas being essential in teaching. As foreign language learning is no longer perceived as secondary, it follows that being able to use language in real life situations, with "a superior preparation in the linguistic and intercultural content that they teach, ... and to teach academic content in the language, in particular, at the university level" (Ourghi, 2002: 309) becomes essential.

The above quotation means that, since foreign language learning has become an essential component of education today, nowadays EFL teachers need to manipulate much more information in different areas. For this, practical techniques common to all branches of teaching and those specific to TEFL should be

developed, more particularly at university level, including an adequate command of the language a teacher will have to teach.

As far as the English Department of Tlemcen University is concerned, it should be noted that university learners study English for a period of three years (Licence Degree) followed by a two-year course (Master) at the end of which they have to prepare a Memoir. Once they finish their five-year course (i.e. Licence plus Master), learners can register for the Doctoral contest which allows them to pursue further studies within a period of three years, with an end-of-course Memoir. It is important to note that, due to the insufficient number of permanent teachers, such students act as part-time teachers for a period of three years (i.e. during the course of their studies), before receiving any qualification. While this procedure provides novice teachers with some experience in teaching, the teaching task proves of great difficulty for the majority of them mainly because of the recent views concerned with teaching, namely that of writing. To illustrate this, one may mention that within the audiolingual approach, for example, the teacher was “a combination drill sergeant and orchestra conductor” (Silberstein, 1987: 32). It was a relatively easy role to play as most activities were prepared beforehand. Yet, as nowadays the teacher has become a facilitator of learning, he needs to manipulate much more information in different areas. Put differently, a knowledge of linguistics, psychology, sociology, but mainly pedagogy proves essential in order to get the learners to become interested in learning the foreign language. Good quality education depends on teachers mastering their subject, being able to promote learners’ motivation, matching their teaching to the learners’ needs, and assessing learners’ progress appropriately and positively (Ourghi, 2002). Because prospective teachers lack such criteria, they appear to face serious challenges as they embark on teaching modules such as comprehension and written expression. Such a skill, which embraces a number of components to be tackled simultaneously, requires a certain level and much experience as it is a basic skill on which depend failure and success. As a matter of fact, novice teachers undergo no training at all, feeling at a loss as to what the teaching profession requires as they are but students themselves. Obviously, the extent, nature and quality of teacher training affect greatly the

quality of teaching since the type of training which teachers receive proves to be a major determinant. Effective teacher training should be concerned with classroom practice, with as its primary goal improving the teacher's practical efforts towards bringing about positive learning. Developing practical techniques includes first the mastery of the language to teach (i.e. a good command of the foreign language) in addition to the considerable body of knowledge related to education, teaching, language, sociology, psychology, pedagogy, etc, (Stevens, 1980). It is then strongly recommended to set up training programmes, making them obligatory, such programmes having a sound preparation orientated towards the practical side, more particularly for the teaching of writing. That is why, updating the teacher's knowledge of various approaches is an important component. This dimension allows the trainee teacher the selection of techniques rather than remaining fixed to one single method, making him keep an eye open for new techniques and approaches. Using this eclectic approach presents several advantages. Being much more flexible, it can be easily adapted to fit a variety of teaching situations, allowing the teacher to modify, shape and adjust his instructional practices depending on his learners' previous experience with English and needs (Ramani, 1987).

In addition, the concept of teacher education development should be introduced for both novice and experimented teachers. In order for both of them to learn more about teaching, it is worthwhile trying new methods (mentioned above), keeping pace with the results of educational research, changing assumptions and attitudes in terms of the teaching practices, with an increased interest towards writing instruction enhancement. To reach such objectives, teachers should act as professionals, willing to become agents for change, being in charge of their own continuing professional development (Nunan, 1988). In order to combine training and development at the university level, some suggestions are made to encourage trainee teachers to adopt a developmental perspective. Such a perspective serves a two-fold purpose: trainees informing their teaching and improving their social skills, attitudes, and self-awareness. This important recommendation concerning teaching implications and writing instruction in the Algerian educational context is

that novice teachers should be encouraged to improve their teaching through reflective practices in terms of peer observation and peer feedback. Put differently, these suggestions are primarily concerned with teaching practice (preparing for and giving feedback on teaching practice; choosing techniques must be done on a critical basis for selection and rejection), seminars (avoiding giving models of ‘correct teaching’ as they can seem threatening for novice teachers), and observation (trainees observing and giving feedback while observing other trainees) (Head and Taylor, 1997). In addition, exchanging pedagogical knowledge and ideas, ensuring their professional growth by sharing procedures and materials, and collaborating with outstanding experienced teachers seems a worthwhile enterprise in itself. A further consideration, as stated by Ourghi (2002:363), is that:

Improving the certification of qualified teachers of English by ensuring anew that a high level of language proficiency is a prerequisite for language teaching and compensating for the absence of an educational component and teaching practice.

It is important to note that there is no teaching training model at the university level. And yet, even if any kind of model is provided, it proves to be rather inadequate, failing to provide prospective and novice teachers with the necessary skills and strategies needed to cope with university requirements: language¹, education², and linguistic³, providing no help for the less linguistically proficient and inexperienced teachers. Such teachers have to be made aware of what the teaching profession requires, what they themselves are doing (whether well or badly) and what they cannot do. Therefore, in order to attend to teacher needs, learner needs, and institutional needs, it proves essential to complement teacher training with teacher education development.

5.2.2 Teacher Education Development

Learners’ low writing proficiency level resulting from a number of lacunas accumulated during their previous learning experience, which proved to be largely an experience in failing to master the foreign language, clearly exhibits the shortcomings of teaching such, in turn, resulting from the lack of professional

¹ Language is the system of human expression by means of words.

² Education is a field of knowledge dealing with how to teach effectively.

³ Linguistic concerns words, patterns of words, and grammaticality.

development and experience (Ourghi, 2002; Semmoud, 2015). The lack of permanent and experimented teachers at the university level has given birth to a chaotic situation where a large number of jobs are filled by ill-trained or rather unprepared, inexperienced teachers having received no preparation in pedagogy, psychology, or methodology. As a result of the shortcomings of the teaching profession reflected in learners' underachievement, university teachers (both experimented and novice) need to change the perceptions, beliefs, assumptions, and personal styles they bring to the classroom by reformulating their instructional practices for better, becoming more concerned with teacher education development in terms of an on-going professional development (Semmoud, 2015).

It should be noted that though the concepts of teacher education development and training are used almost interchangeably, the distinction between them is clear-cut. With regard to teacher education development, Lange (1990: 250 qtd. in Semmoud, 2015: 21) states that it is “a term used...to describe...of continual, experiential and attitudinal growth of teachers...the intent here is to suggest that teachers continue to evolve in the use, adaptation, and application of their art and craft,” adding that “the concept of teacher education development is an ongoing process of change in the teaching practices which tacitly and emphatically represents a professional development of these teachers”. In order to meet today's new challenges, EFL teachers need to be professionals, acting as agents for change, responsible for their own continuing professional development, using their knowledge and experience to make necessary changes in collaboration with others.

Development also called ‘reflective teaching (Richards and Freeman, 1996), ‘exploratory teaching’ (Allwright and Bailey, 1994), and ‘teacher development’ (Head and Taylor, 1997): “is centred on personal awareness of the possibilities for change, and of what influences the change process. It builds on the past, because recognizing how past experiences have or have not been developmental helps identify opportunities for change in the present and future... It is a self-reflective process, because it is through questioning old habits that alternative ways of being and doing are able to emerge” (Head and Taylor, 1997:1).

Teacher education development is seen as a reflective process where most aspects of teaching and experiences occurring in classroom settings become open to critical examination and reconsideration (Lewin, 1946; Car and Kemmis, 1986; Nunan, 1993). Such an assumption requires teachers to turn to be their own observers, enquiring about the roles they play in the classroom and their own teaching procedures, using the collected information as a source for self-evaluation in order to bring about positive change. This means that thanks to teacher education development, teachers are encouraged to take profit of the classroom research procedures and self-reflection to get a better understanding of themselves and of what is going on in their own classrooms, in order to gain a renewed sense of purpose and direction (Ourghi, 2002). From this, one can understand that the teacher is the only one to decide what he has to do and “where 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). It appears from this that the practitioners themselves (i.e. teachers) are the only ones to decide the direction to follow, thanks to reflection, self-enquiry, and self-evaluation.

Because teaching, is most frequently taken for granted, teachers cannot conceive of it as a means for growing pedagogically in the field (Semmoud, 2015). In other words, teachers sticking to their old teaching habits still believe that once they have been qualified, they will remain effective for the rest of their lives. Rather than remaining reluctant, such teachers should be willing to revise their own teaching practices (reflecting on their teaching and on their students’ learning). Teacher education seems an alternative presenting many advantages, bringing about pedagogical development thanks to reconsideration, reformulation, reflection upon and refinement. There are several occasions for them to try new ideas, attitudes and techniques, responding positively to change, a way for enhancing their own performance. In this respect, Ourghi (2002: 337) states the following:

Rather than exclusively relying on any external programme or policy... on methodology teaching and theory transmission, a more reflective and holistic view of the development of a teacher from novice to advanced practitioner is needed.

What emerges from the above quotation is that simply because a method or approach has been stated by any external authority, this does not mean that one has to feel constrained to follow it blindly. What matters most is to get a better understanding of the situation the teacher finds himself in, seeking to get a renewed sense of purpose and direction, depending on his learners' needs. Teacher education development has several implications:

- To promote the role of reflection, self-enquiry, and self-evaluation as a means of professional development;
- To create a community of reflective practitioners among EFL teachers within and across institutions;
- To prepare such teachers to be models of reflective teaching and practice for the future teachers they impact;
- To select activities which make it possible to explore beliefs and practices within a reflective framework applicable to the Algerian educational context;
- To introduce an educational component in the English Language Degree curriculum

(Ourghi, 2002: 337)

The value of teaching has a number of implications: teachers having the ability to reflect upon and question one's current instructional practices in order to develop a more adequate repertoire of teaching methods and techniques, trying out instructional procedures and materials that are believed to cater for the learners' needs, enlarging one's thinking, and having a positive impact on one's teaching pedagogy. This holds true for writing, due to its difficult nature, which in turn makes teaching itself a complex process. One effective way to overcome such a complexity is to adopt a developmental perspective through which it becomes possible for both experimented and novice teachers to cope better with change within and around their professional environment. Genuine development can only be achieved thanks to self-awareness, reflection, and open-mindedness to other approaches (eclecticism). For this main reason, this section has attempted to highlight the concept of teacher education development, having as main concern

teachers' own understanding (self-reflection and self-evaluation) of their classroom instructional practices, seeking to bring about positive change, that is, attempting to become better at what they are doing. Such a behaviour can only be achieved thanks to teachers' knowledge and enthusiasm, confidence, self-value, a desire to question, experiment, and the need expressed by good teachers to grow professionally (Richards, 1996; Head and Taylor, 1997; Ourghi, 2002). As a result of this new type of orientation, the main objective is to gain a better understanding of the teaching processes, with teachers engaged into an exploration of their own teaching practices, such a reflective process leading to teacher education experience becoming open to critical examination and reconsideration (Richards, 1996). Due to the several implications involved, the teacher has no longer a unique role to perform, but a number of different roles, this making teaching complex, becoming a heavy burden for the majority of teachers.

5.2.3 Teacher Roles

Today, the language teacher does not have only one role to perform but a number of roles. One of the most important is that of facilitator of learning. The teacher is the uniquely suited person to provide an environment in which the learners feel relaxed and secure, an atmosphere of interest, confidence, enthusiasm, and mutual support, where the learner is accepted as a valuable individual (Brown, 1980). Adopting such a perspective, the role of the teacher is to cater for the developing communicative needs of the learner. With the assumption that learning is more important than teaching leading to learner-centered teaching, the teacher no longer functions as a "domineering spoonfeeder" but rather as a facilitator. The focus is gradually moving from him/her towards the learners. Being fair and democratic, firm, able to deal with class management, the teacher has nonetheless to impose a certain measure of control over the class, maintaining a friendly atmosphere.

In order for learning to be successful, the teacher has to provide learners with the necessary conditions conducive to effective learning: an atmosphere of interest, confidence, enthusiasm, and mutual support. Promoting learners' interaction, with

an acceptance of their strengths and weaknesses, respecting and encouraging learners to make their ideas become essential to the day's lesson. In sum, creating a positive classroom environment is not an easy task since it involves failures and successes.

With regard to writing, it seems of vital importance for the writing teacher to behave as a needs analyst in order to cater for learners' writing weaknesses. To achieve this, the teacher has to consider two essential aspects: selecting and grading materials depending on learners' level, needs, and aspirations. While allowing a certain flexibility, it is recommended for a teacher not to be indifferent, or distant in interest or feeling. Since "there is no right way to teach writing" (Hamps-Lyons and Heasley, 1987: 2), the teacher is held responsible for making the writing course more lively and productive, creating a positive classroom environment where learners feel secure and have opportunities to express themselves freely. If such an atmosphere prevails, learners will feel the need to develop their writing competence as they no longer fear failure, criticism, and competition with fellow learners. If the teacher still acts as assessor rather than facilitator, "a motivator, a resource and a feedback provider" (Harmer, 2001: 261), then learners will never develop positive attitudes towards learning as much as they will never feel the need to improve their writing ability. To prevent learners from holding such negative attitudes, teachers themselves have to show positive ones towards teaching and interest towards the learners, being aware of their learners' writing difficulties, adopting a positive attitude towards mistakes. The competence of the teacher, the way writing is seen and taught, how errors and mistakes are viewed are all important factors involved in learners' successful learning (Harmer, 2001). But before all, teacher methodology (discussed hereafter) and techniques remain more important.

5.2.4 Teaching Methodology

With regard to the importance of writing for first-year learners in order to pursue their studies in the prospect of future careers, it appears that teacher methodology is, by far, one of the most important determinants. As a matter of fact, methodology is an essential variable which includes decisions and should not be

imposed on the teacher. To illustrate this point, this section will be devoted to some pedagogical implications involving teacher methodology and displaying procedures and techniques hoped to help alleviate the problem of writing.

Though writing is regarded as an essential component in language learning, a great number of teachers worldwide despair of finding adequate ways for teaching this skill. Compared to speaking, it has for long been considered as the last of the four language skills due to its complexity and the time and energy required for composing. Seen as a more standardized system (speaking versus writing) which has to be acquired through formal instruction, such a skill receives the least attention in Algerian EFL classes despite the fact that it is the key to academic success since all formal tests and examinations take a written form. As a result of first-year university learners displaying a reasonable proficiency in writing, it is assumed that further practice in this skill can be provided through composition writing. With the purpose of getting a good-end product, the teacher then gives the learners a topic to write on, expecting them to express themselves in an orderly and coherent manner, showing a logical flow of ideas, in sum demonstrating their ability to write. However, the result is far from satisfactory (except a small minority), with the majority of learners producing very poor pieces of writing, such lacking a large number of variables related to form and content (both grammatical and composing knowledge). As previously mentioned, composition writing is still a major component of most public examinations in the Algerian academic context. Consequently, learners have to be provided with some preparation directed towards this type of task, yet with much training and practice, teachers initiating learners to the writing process and the constant use of the different strategies⁴ involved in making writing more effective. Indeed, being a purposeful selection and organization of thought, such a skill requires much effort and practice in composing, and analyzing ideas. Due to such a challenge and according to a number of teachers in the field, writing instruction should be in the hands of experienced, caring teachers, stressing the importance of writing as an essential basic skill needed in all domains, as well as its importance in relation to the other modules, explaining

⁴ Individual strategies are procedures used in learning, thinking, etc, which serve as a way of reaching a goal. In language learning, learning strategies are those conscious or unconscious processes which language learners make use of in learning and using a language.

that writing is a tool without which foreign language education would not function, this likely leading to education failure.

Before going any further, it seems necessary to clarify a teacher-centred teaching-writing situation. Teacher centredness results in teachers displaying formal authority, with a main concern on course content. Such a behavior makes the teacher feel as the only responsible for providing and controlling content. Having no special role to perform in the whole learning process apart from the one of receiving knowledge transmitted by the teacher, the learner becomes no more than “a passive receptacle in which the teacher pours knowledge”. Clearly, such a style of teaching goes beyond the learners’ will or concern (Semmoud, 2015). However, within the learner-centred approach, such one approach being highly encouraged in higher institutions, teachers are not to use a unique teaching method. On the contrary, this approach emphasizes the use of a number of different methods, strategies and techniques, changing the role of teachers from givers of knowledge to that of facilitators of student learning. In this kind of teaching/learning situation, the teacher is no longer seen as the provider of information. “While learner’s performance is seen as more important, the teacher becomes less involved; he becomes a guide, an organizer and a counselor or a resource of information when needed” (Semmoud, 2015: 20). Indeed, it is widely recognized that teachers merely transmitting well-established knowledge, added to the learners’ unquestioning of well- established matter is but half the work; in other words, providing students with a large amount of information proves totally insufficient as it is not necessarily grasped by the majority of students. The view emphasizing traditional settings with the teacher seen as the unique provider of knowledge has been supplanted by the assumption that knowledge is not taught but learnt, constructed by learners, that is, learners are seen as creators of language, being highly involved and performing an active role in the whole process of learning.

In order for today writing teachers to make changes in terms of the objectives to be reached, the methodology to be used, and the skills to be emphasized, they have to reflect on their own teaching practices by identifying the eventual

deficiencies and attempting to remedy them (Ourghi, 2002). Seeking to solve these problems, it remains essential for the teacher to consider learners' profile, stating their needs and difficulties in writing, attempting to devise a teaching approach to writing accordingly (Hedge, 2000). Raising learners' awareness about writing, showing its importance as a skill used for long-term goals (importance of writing as a lifelong productive skill) and not just for the critical eye of the teacher and examination purposes, needed in all domains (educational, cultural, socio-economic, politics) (Ourghi, 2002). Rather than merely dealing with different and frequently unrelated types of activities, teachers should also display the importance of writing in relation to the other modules (and skills) taught at first-year university level. To achieve this, training learners to write abundantly becomes essential, the reason why the importance of extensive writing has been demonstrated. In order to get the learners to produce readable passages in the target language and also to overcome the problem of interference, teachers are strongly recommended to assign learners with a large amount of writing practice since the view that a lot of writing practice teaches writing has often been expressed. In such a way, writing is learned rather than taught. Besides, an important dimension which is worth mentioning is building in learners the habit of using the writing process. This appears to be a procedure presenting many benefits as it makes the writing process become an inherent part of writing for a large number of learners, getting them in a first time to become better thinkers (thinking constructively), helping them to compose more properly and more confidently, arguing coherently, in brief, writing meaningfully, with as main concern writing at the level of discourse. In sum, the need for implementing more relevant writing instruction proves essential. To achieve such objectives, these are only a few of the questions teachers should ask themselves when faced with the task of teaching writing:

Does a teacher start by having learners write something and correct it? Should a teacher use an approach based on free composition (Bracy, 1971), sentence-combining (O'Hare, 1973), or some kind of functional approach (Sampson, 1981)? It seems nonetheless important to note that, in addition to the mentioned approaches and strategies used to approach writing, the writing process

(see section 1.6) appears to be a strategy succeeding in raising learners' consciousness about how to achieve effective writing.

Therefore, to facilitate the writing task is to adopt the process-product approach because teachers not only want their learners to focus on producing different kinds of writing but learn and emphasize the composing processes they use when writing as well. The process-product approach, being a combination of both approaches (process and product) makes students learn gradually and effectively as, throughout this approach, learners are acquainted with some techniques which they have to apply in their performances (process).

Writing should be taken as a whole: form and content because it is a process of cohesion and coherence through which learners can produce appropriate pieces of writing. Yet, a negative point to mention is that, when it comes to exams, and though it is assumed that a good piece of writing can be judged on both sides (the way it is laid out and what it consists in), the majority of teachers being mainly concerned with evaluating the final product, appear to pay more attention to form rather than focus on both aspects.

The recent trend to teaching views learning as more important than teaching. Accordingly, this latter should reflect the learners' needs, this involving the flexibility of teachers with regard to the use of techniques depending on the learners' paths. Since the term methodology includes decisions as well as the choice of appropriate teaching material and relevant activities, attempting to make a balance between the different types of activities, it follows that this variable should not be imposed. On the contrary, methodology should be the teacher's main concern. In this context, (Finocchiaro, 1982:11 qtd. in Abi-Ayad, 1997: 128) states that "language teaching will always remain an art in the hands of enthusiastic, competent, caring teachers"... In other words, deciding about a method as being the best is totally wrong. Such a decision depends highly on a number of factors (learners' age, interest, and the course objectives to be achieved). The view that students learn at different rates has always been expressed. While the teachers can in no way be held responsible for such a challenge, they, nonetheless, have to

ensure that learning is effective, by adopting new techniques and strategies for making the writing course more attractive and also more productive. This can be achieved by involving entrant students in the process, such a behaviour being a crucial element in language teaching, getting the weakest learners to leave the classroom with a feeling of self-fulfillment and not one of frustration. Clearly, learners are more likely to enjoy the subject and succeed if they feel they are involved, having the opportunity to influence what happens and how it happens.

An important issue which has previously been mentioned is that, in order for learning to be effective, the teacher has to be aware of a number of factors so as to fit the learners' needs. In order to achieve this, it becomes important for him/her to adapt materials and courses, selecting from a range of techniques that are believed to be useful, practical, developmental, in a word, efficient, attempting to decide about the best possible instructional mode for improvement of writing (Abi-Ayad, 1997). Teachers most frequently appear to ignore the existence of mixed-ability classes and the individual's learning style⁵, being primarily concerned with a minority of good students, if not the best. Indeed, it is generally agreed that each learner has his own individual learning style. Similarly, teachers have their own teaching styles⁶ that best fit them for working. Consequently, becoming aware of the learners' preferred ways of getting instruction helps teachers make adjustments in teaching (both during the preparation and the presentation of a lesson) in order to comply with the learners' needs (Boylan, 1984). Such an attitude towards teaching makes the course become learner-centred, lively and, by the same token, more productive.

Selecting the techniques which seem appropriate to the teaching/learning situation proves very important for teachers in order to adapt their teaching according to learners' needs. In such a way, no longer constrained to offer learners a unique technique that does not necessarily prove to be effective for the majority of students due to the problem of mixed-ability classes (heterogeneity among learners), teachers have the opportunity to devise a range of additional techniques to help low-level learners have access to learning, following their own paths. It is important to

⁵ Individual learning style: all persons have preferences for ways to learn called individual learning styles. It is assumed that when an individual participates in a learning task, the learning is accomplished more rapidly and retained longer if it is presented in ways that the individual prefers.

⁶ The way that a teacher handles a learning task is called the teacher's teaching style (being either teacher-centred or learner-centred). If the teacher's teaching style and the learner's learning style match, there is usually a productive learning environment.

note that in the majority of EFL classrooms, the activity is generally dominated by a small minority of good learners.

Because today learning is viewed as more important than teaching, it proves necessary to prepare additional practices related to particular points. Due to unforeseen difficulties raised by the learners, or whether the day's lesson plan and the learners' needs are in conflict, then priority should be given to learners' needs (Boylan, 1984; Abi ayad, 1997). Accordingly, such a behaviour can somehow guarantee success in learning. After all, it should be reminded that learner-centredness is the main principle in nowadays teaching.

In addition to selecting, adapting, and adding practices intended to clarify particular points remaining obscure, the practice phase requires the revision of previous learnt items for consolidation before moving to introducing more sophisticated structures, vocabulary, topics, following a cyclical gradation, moving from mechanical (language focus) to meaningful and communicative activities (rhetorical focus) (Morrow, 1981). Put differently, nowadays, with the learner-centred approach and the particular interest given to the learner, the teacher is no longer seen as the giver of knowledge. For this, s/he has to be prepared to reconsidering previously learnt items (as previously mentioned, language learning is cyclical) for reinforcement for several reasons. As learners tend to forget or failed to grasp a specific point at a previous stage of a specific lecture, revision and additional practices are necessary (Abi-Ayad, 1997), but more importantly, the more learners advance the more they need to deepen their understanding of the language. Since language learning is cyclical, teachers and students alike should recognize that repetitions are not exact repetitions, but rather an expansion of the previous learnt items, hence the importance of explicit teaching. This technique helps facilitate the process of learning, helping learners, for instance, solve some of the linguistic problems encountered at a previous stage. In writing, learners need careful preparation. If such a preparation proves insufficient or inadequate, then some remedial teaching has to be provided.

5.2.4.1 Remedial Teaching

Once they reach university level, the vast majority of new Baccalaureate holders appear to be reluctant to write, displaying serious deficiencies and frustrations, in sum showing an obvious inability to compose in English. In order to make the writing course more lively and more productive, a dynamic attitude towards the teaching of writing has to be undertaken. Nowadays, there is a tendency to regard fluency and the ability to manipulate the foreign language as having priority over the blind adherence to rules (grammatical rules and spelling rules). To achieve fluency in writing, there is a number of possibilities ahead. Among them, and since it has always been argued that “prevention is better than cure”, several preventive strategies can be undertaken at an early stage in order to lessen error production. One of these strategies is getting the learners to learn step by step. Since most sentences (whether compound, complex, or compound-complex) have been formed thanks to simple sentences (independent clauses), it follows that learners have first to master the simple sentence before moving to more complicated forms of sentences, that is, compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences. These latter can be obtained successfully in sentence-combining activities (see section 5.5) It is important to note that sentence-combining activities are very helpful in that they enable learners to produce personal, satisfactory passages, showing them how simple sentences (and independent clauses) can relate to one another to make a meaningful whole. It is then recommended to teach the simple sentence patterns in a first time, but making this the core of a number of lectures for a large amount of time would be highly demotivating and boring.

It is recommended that students learn first the basic patterns (i.e. the simple sentence). Clearly, most sentences, even though complex, are reducible to simple sentences. It follows that learners have to master the simple sentence first before being able to produce satisfactory texts. Numerous simple sentence patterns can be taught. It is, for instance, easy to teach the following: simple subject and predicate (verb plus complement).

Table 5.1 Sentence Patterns

Type	Subject	Verb	Complement
1	noun phrase e.g. The lady The players	to be (linking) is are	noun phrase/adjective/adverb of place sick. on the ground.
2	noun phrase e.g. My friend	verb (trans.) plays	noun phrase volley ball.
3	noun phrase e.g. That girl	verb (intrans.) runs	adverb optional slowly.

In learning the above patterns, students learn a number of important points about the grammatical structure of English. When the teacher feels the learners have gained some mastery over the basic patterns, he can then move to more complex activities where the learners are asked to expand those patterns. One easy way to do this is by adding adjectives and adverbs. For example:

1-The lady is sick.

2-My friend plays volley ball.

3-That girl runs slowly.

become:

1-The *old* lady is sick.

2-My *best* friend plays volley ball *very well*.

3-That *big* girl runs slowly.

Adverbial additions change “The old lady is sick” to:

“The old lady is in the hospital”, and “That player hit the ball,” to

“That tall player hit the white ball hard.”

From simple adjectival and adverbial additions, learners advance and can get more complex ways of developing sentences and then whole paragraphs.

An important point to raise is that first-year learners produce their own sentences in parallel with writing passages, using the sentences they have produced in short paragraphs, right from the beginning. Being mainly concerned with manipulating bare sentences prepared by the teacher, having no meaning of their own because such sentences have been taken out of context, learners will never be able to develop the notion of discourse and audience awareness. Otherwise, they will write just for the sake of writing rather than expressing their own ideas within the framework of English. It is nonetheless important to note that being urged to use certain English structural patterns prevents learners from interference of their native language to the target language, this also getting them to avoid the use of translation. Since writing is a creative process, the above approach seems too mechanical at first sight. Nonetheless, learners (mainly low-level ones) have to be made aware of the fact that creativity will never be possible unless one masters the basic rules first (this has to be done explicitly).

Another strategy is to teach structures, this involving learners in finding, understanding, and using patterns. This makes learners think of grammar as being a part of the writing course and not the reverse. Obviously grammar cannot be taught in isolation from the other skills; it is acquired by involving learners in activities. As a matter of fact, grammar is all that is learnt in class. Introducing learners to the structures in parallel with learning to use the language helps a lot, for example, to make clear the difference between “I live in Algeria” and “I am living in Algeria”. Once they have grasped the different meanings expressed by these two forms, learners will focus their attention on grammar since they realize that grammar conveys meaning, hence, the importance of teaching structures. This involves problem-solving (challenging, amusing, frustrating), exploring (as learners do not know the answer, they often work with peers, being encouraged to explore and discover for themselves), finding, understanding, and using new patterns. It is nonetheless important to note that teaching mainly concerned with getting the correct forms of the language becomes meaningless and boring, and has little to do with the real nature of language. Accordingly, it is recommended to maintain a kind of balance between practices which concentrate on fluency (fluency practices

concentrate on why a person is expressing himself: function), and those which concentrate on accuracy (these practices concentrate on how the message is conveyed: structural form). A good language teaching programme involves both. Language learning has two distinct objectives: using the language as an effective means of communication, and using the language accurately. These two objectives overlap, to some extent. If learners are made aware of this accuracy/fluency distinction they will therefore be able to concentrate more on one aspect at the expense of the other. Yet, and more importantly, if they understand the importance of discourse, they will concentrate on both aspects. They will realize that both accuracy and fluency are an integral part of any piece of language, observing the rules of formal academic writing. As a matter of fact, good language teaching offers both kinds of practice (i.e. both accuracy and fluency).

With regard to assessment, it seems that adopting a positive attitude towards errors is essential in order not to discourage the learners or make them feel frustrated. The success of such a procedure lies in close cooperation between teacher and learners. When teachers proceed to cover learners' pieces of writing with red marks, they have not been of great help to the learners but merely punishing them. Obviously, students have been required to do something for which they have had no preparation. It is then recommended to the teacher to provide the learners with a detailed assignment, for example providing explicit instruction as to what is to be done in order to help them perform successfully. Such an attitude prevents learners from leaving the writing classroom with a feeling of failure and little satisfaction in doing well. Rather than feeling frustrated, learners may have a sense of self-achievement and self-fulfillment.

As concerns mistakes and error correction, it is important to note that most writing teachers are primarily concerned with surface-level mistakes such as grammar, spelling, and punctuation, firmly convinced it is their job to correct them, without making any comment on content. Such a way reinforces the learners' view to focus on sentence-level problems. Yet, research shows that correction of such errors has nothing to do with the writer's main concern. Long (1977), Krashen

(1982), Krashen and Terrell (1983) express similar doubts about the effectiveness of error correction, stating that error treatment is not so important. What is more important is to improve the overall quality of writing, that is, the content and content organization (Pianko, 1979; Perl, 1980; Zamel, 1983). Different viewpoints concerning error correction have been expressed. While the vast majority of writing teachers consider local errors⁷ as important, others regard the global ones⁸ as being more important than local errors because they are judged to impede communication. Yet, paying no attention to grammatical errors may lead learners to the serious problem of internalizing them (Hammerly, 1991; Zalewski, 1993). One further consideration is that teachers concentrating mainly on grammatical correctness frequently leads learners to believe that grammatical accuracy is more important than fluency, making them focus their attention on mechanics and accurate forms of the language. Much emphasis put on grammatical correctness leads to the production of compositions lacking cohesion, coherence and organization. It should be noted that lack of cohesion in writing is a serious problem which Algerian university learners face.

Though most writing teachers regard mistakes as a sign of failure, some pedagogical concerns have expressed the view that errors are inevitable, and are a necessary part of learning a language, a natural part of the learning process. Because of their attitudes to errors, both teachers and learners ignore the real value of language (Van Lier, 1995). As a result, changing one's attitudes towards learners' errors and mistakes seems indispensable. The shift from the consideration of error as a sign of failure which used to inhibit to a positive sign of learning which needs tolerance and careful treatment means that teachers become more tolerant towards errors and mistakes and no longer penalize learners for their production. Raising learners' consciousness about facts which they had never been made aware of before (Bolitho, 1995; Dheram, 1995; Van Lier, 1995) seems by far more important than merely looking at the learners with a critical eye.

From the researcher's point of view, correction of every single mistake is but a waste of time. It is the teacher's job to select those mistakes which are worth

⁷ Local errors are those errors that affect single elements in a sentence and have little effect in the sense that they do not impede comprehension.

⁸ Global errors are errors that affect overall sentence organization. Therefore they can cause comprehension problems.

correcting within the context in which they are produced. It is the teacher's responsibility to select those mistakes which are thought to be most inhibiting. For instance, if a learner forgets the third person "s", this mistake likely interferes in making the meaning unclear. Similarly, spelling mistakes rarely interfere with comprehension. However, if the learner uses elements required for the narrative paragraph (adverbials of time and sequence: by, at, after, before, during, first, etc), to deal with spatial developments, clearly his composition would not be understood. In other words, from a communicative point of view, such mistakes are largely involved in making the meaning ambiguous. Yet, an important dimension which deserves due consideration is that getting the learners to deal with self-correction constitutes a step towards making them feel more involved and more responsible for their own learning.

5.2.4.2 Learner Self-Correction

Considering learners' writing and teacher correction, it appears that involving the class in correcting their own errors and their peers' errors can be highly motivating. With language learning becoming a corporate activity where learners can be active and not passive, given the chance to correct themselves seems to be the most effective. The main principle of correction is that self-correction is best (Makino, 1993). Adopting a positive attitude towards errors is essential for effective remedial teaching. The success of such an enterprise lies in close cooperation between the teacher and the learner. Such methods of correcting errors help learners to self-discover and appear to be more promising than the ones in which the teacher dominates the correction procedure. Such a behaviour allows students to improve their linguistic competence (i.e linguistic knowledge) as well as their linguistic creativity, such elements being essential in language learning (Makino, 1993), making students learn the language at the same time they are self-discovering. The following section focuses on the area of explicit teaching in EFL writing, aiming to show the positive correlation between explicit instruction of specific composing resources and the extent to which learners' writing performance can improve.

5.2.4.3 Explicit Teaching

The traditional view regarding writing as an accurate lexico-grammatical system as well as the traditional writing courses that focus on grammar correction have recently resulted in a controversy. The inadequacy of such teaching was soon open to criticism. One such criticism pointed to the need to make both teachers and students aware of the fact that linguistic knowledge is totally insufficient for language use. More importantly, the ability to communicate involves the ability to participate in discourse by means of both the formal linguistic resources and the rules of language use (i.e. knowledge of *when*, *to whom*, and under *what circumstances* it is appropriate to use what forms in a spontaneous way (Hymes, 1972); in other words, building language competence through ‘use’: getting the ability to use this knowledge for effective communication, getting the ability to participate in meaningful interaction. As writing instruction failed to teach such elements, focusing on *how* the idea was expressed grammatically rather than on the ideas *what* to be expressed, in addition to being done implicitly for decades under the influence of CLT, learning to write had proved to be deficient. As studies have shown that explicit writing instruction has been found to have a great influence on the qualitative aspect of learners’ writing, investigators like Squire (1982) and L2 practitioners began to call for the need to develop and implement explicit teaching in language writing classrooms. For this main reason, the present section aims to underline the impact of explicit instruction of specific writing resources (discourse and composing strategies) as a way for improving FL2 writing performance. This section then endeavours to show the benefits of implementing a discourse-oriented writing pedagogy at first-year university level. Such one pedagogy focuses on the fact that instruction should be done systematically, this resulting in learners’ progress in text creation and writing performance improvement. Accordingly, as writing instruction had for decades been done implicitly, being rather perceived as failure to master both discourse and linguistic levels (the majority of learners producing sequences of unrelated sentences, that is, pieces of writing lacking both accuracy and fluency), the main objective of this action-research has been to highlight the positive correlation between explicit writing instruction and writing

performance, seeking to promote change in terms of modifying the current teaching pedagogies used at first-year university level.

With reference to sentence-level knowledge, it seems that knowing “when to use a sentence, how to use or interpret a structure in written discourse, and for what purposes” (Celce-Murcia, 1997:185) is something which evades most first-year EFL learners as they frequently prove unable to make use of their grammatical knowledge in writing, due to grammar seen as a separate subject, taught in isolation. “Grammar becomes a part of a larger interrelated functional whole, which then includes meaning, accuracy, and discourse (when to use the structure, how to order information, and for what purpose) to fit the whole text framework” (Ourghi, 2002: 100).

In other words, paying attention to grammar and discourse features constitutes a part of a much larger process which the writer has to consider seriously. This assists one’s argument orientation, getting the reader to understand how elements of the text relate to one another. Consequently, as argued above, sentence-level knowledge (a selection of grammatical concepts) and production (a discourse perspective) are elementary prerequisites for making writing effective. Put differently, these two issues are highly involved in establishing clarity, helping understand the relationship between local choices (how words relate to one another) within clauses and sentences, in addition to the organization of discourse. These are major elements that have to be made explicit to the learners. Within implicit teaching, it becomes difficult for teachers to ensure that such elements are clear to the learners. Becoming aware of such issues, learners will realize their whole importance for text creation, paying due attention to the selection of both grammatical choices and the organization of discourse as a whole. For this purpose, teachers should be willing to provide learners with feedback as much as possible, in order to comply with their students’ needs. As a matter of fact, a number of students show a strong will to receive feedback on the language they have used, willing to correct themselves and avoid making the same mistakes in future uses in order to improve their proficiency level. The assumption that one learns through and thanks

to his/her mistakes generally holds true. Yet, the feedback should be clear enough, unambiguous and detailed to allow students to act and take responsibility for the text improvement (Reid, 1993), learners managing to remove “the ego-centric aspect from their texts and to view writing as an act of commitment to a purpose” (Ourghi 2002: 374). Another major finding shows that a number of subject participants were able to improve at the level of discourse (organizational structures), rhetorical organization, and use of relevant genuine content thanks to explicit instruction and feedback as “learners do expect and value such feedback on their writing” (Muncie, 2000: 50). While this raising awareness helped the learners in content organization, it also shows the significant progress made by learners. However, as a number of participants showed persistent difficulties at the linguistic level, this implies that unlike discourse-processing knowledge, linguistic mastery requires intensive practice in specific problem areas and involves a set of strategies like individual conferencing (Ourghi, 2002).

Since writing is the skill in which Algerian first-year university learners are least proficient, a skill for which they have had the least use (mostly at previous levels of the educational system where implicit teaching led rather to failure to master the conventions of writing), it is thus recommended to teachers to be very careful, clear in teaching this skill and giving it much consideration and more attention, making learners gradually aware of the components of conventional written discourse. One should not forget that linguistic competence cannot be the sole aim of a writing course. As learners appear to lack composing experience, it seems then important to make them aware of and used to the organizational structures and strategies necessary for text creation. Such components include summarizing, sentence and paragraph ordering, paraphrasing, moving from the general to the particular (and vice versa), the omission of details and repetitions, the exclusion of too short or too lengthy sentences, and the framing of paragraphs around one main idea. This systematic (direct) teaching proves beneficial in that it gets the learners to develop their vocabulary, rhetorical devices, and composing strategies. Without any explicit awareness of what makes for good writing in English (becoming aware of how to proceed in a writing task), learners would likely

keep on exhibiting the same lack of skill and strategy (Ourghi, 2002). To phrase it somewhat differently, without this procedural knowledge (i.e. the different steps involved in text creation), learners cannot be expected to produce acceptable, coherent and cohesive pieces of writing.

The learning process that most first-year low-level learners have reached requires a substantial modification in terms of organizational structures, by developing a set of useful and effective resources (it is possible to achieve such one change through explicit instruction). Put differently, mere language proficiency cannot allow such students to move beyond L1-based strategies like translation and repetition (Al Jubouri, 1983) to more effective micro-skills and strategies. Learners displaying a low level merely struggle with retrieving information about a topic from memory and past experience in the first language (L1), before moving to translating and transferring into English, reducing the quality of their writing content as the original meaning is lost. Consequently, this exacerbates their writing problems. If writing requires a particular attention to correctness of syntactic form, a lack of linguistic knowledge, in Widdowson's words (1984) syntactic automation, will exacerbate the learning task of low-level learners as they become mainly preoccupied with achieving linguistic correctness. Such a behavior, coupled with the fear of making mistakes, prevents learners from having a concern with genuine communication and coherent discourse (Sa'addedin, 1989).

5.2.4.4 Writing Strategy Implementation

The emerging results show that mastery of the grammatical structures, mechanics of writing and a rich vocabulary are totally insufficient for producing good pieces of writing where both fluency and accuracy have to be established in a balanced way. In this context, Hamzaoui (2006: 220) writes that "teaching learners new vocabulary and grammatical structures is not sufficient". As defined by Pincas (1982: 50), a paragraph "is not merely a succession of sentences neatly set out in the right shape". By this, she means that a paragraph is not just a set of unrelated but grammatically correct sentences, adding that:

...we arrange our ideas in sentences, we organize sentences into paragraphs, and with these we construct whole essays...we use special words, phrases, and other devices to indicate just how the ideas, sentences and paragraphs actually relate to each other. The result is...we have composed a composition.

The above quotation means that actual understanding of a text depends on the devices which the writer has employed to make his meaning clear to the reader. Making one's writing easy to follow and understand through the use of linguistic devices constitutes a step towards effective writing.

In addition to the devices needed to achieve good writing, it is worth mentioning writing strategies as essential elements involved in the process. It is worth mentioning that an understanding of the role and importance of such strategies in addition to receiving regular training for using them throughout the writing process may be conducive to effective learning. It is then recommended to make strategy instruction become an inherent part of both writing courses and writing tasks. The results obtained in this study show that first-year learners need a strong awareness and much training regarding strategy use. Once learners become aware of their importance and advantages, they will be willing to use them. Employing them appropriately facilitates the writing process and enhances writing efficiency (Yi et al., 2007). It seems then that teachers need to implement such strategies in their teaching methods and approaches, presenting learners with the different ones, showing their important role for the accomplishment of a particular task. While initiating learners to strategy use, teachers should draw their attention, encouraging them to make a large and frequent use of these strategies in order to enhance their proficiency level.

Effective writing requires an awareness of the relationship between writer and reader, that is, the notion of audience, this having several implications: as writing is goal-directed, the relationship between topic, purpose, and content has to be well established; writing has then to be well structured. To achieve this, it seems useful to write in a recursive way, writing becoming then a recursive process. However, in order to compose well, a number of variables have to be controlled

simultaneously. Such variables include lexical and syntactic decisions, organization and larger rhetorical and graphological devices. Clearly, writing under the pressure of time and many other important constraints is largely involved in hindering and interrupting the composing process by provoking “mental blocks” making learners stop while writing (Dean et al., 2008). It follows then that dividing the composing process into a number of sub-processes becomes necessary. Such are: setting goals, making plans, generating ideas, monitoring, evaluating, structuring ideas, and revising, such a process being highly involved in making writing easy to understand, accessible to a target audience (Flower and Hayes, 1981). The results emerging from this study provide interesting insights in terms of the mastery of the language system since learners appear to somehow have a good command of the system. However, as such a knowledge is totally insufficient for good writing achievement, learners have to become used to strategy use for comprehension, manipulation, construction, monitoring, organizing, and evaluating their writing through strategy instruction and training (Flower and Hayes, 1980; 1981).

Grunewald (1999) stresses the importance of implementing learning strategy instruction in EFL classrooms, arguing that such learning is “an instructional paradigm” that should be integrated into every language teacher’s teaching pedagogy (Grunewald, 1999: 51). By integrating strategy instruction into regular writing lessons, teachers have to train learners use and practise these strategies as efficiently as possible, reinforcing and evaluating their use within each task and during each lesson, stressing their importance as a valuable procedure, essential to the development of effective learning.

With regard to writing strategy instruction, it is, according to Kinoshita (2003) an approach designed to teach learners these strategies, providing them with their usefulness, practice, reinforcement and self-monitoring benefits. In this regard, Cohen (1998: 69) posits the following: “The underlying assumption of strategy instruction is, if learners explore ‘how’, ‘when’ and ‘why’ to use ... strategies, and evaluate and monitor their own learning, then they can take a more active role in language learning process”. It is by participating actively in the learning process and

by being directly involved in strategy instruction that learners develop positive attitudes to perform their tasks. It is nonetheless important to note that such attitudes can be the more effective, conducive to successful learning and consequently achievement by providing learners with explicit teaching. Once learners understand how to employ the strategies, they become motivated, manage to become autonomous and self-efficient, self-directed, more proficient in learning in general but more particularly in writing (Hedge, 1993; O'Malley and Chamot, 1995; Cohen, 1998).

While dealing with writing tasks, learners need instruction and training on how to plan, monitor, and use the strategies. Both instruction and training appear to have great benefits. Indeed, the results show that learners who receive instruction perform better than those who receive neither instruction nor training. The conclusion that can be drawn is that using writing strategies has positive effects on the learning process, helping learners to improve their writing performance (Johnson, 1999).

5.2.4.5 Implementing Collaborative Writing

Recent studies examining learner-teacher and learner-learner scheme have had great impact on language development, such leading to the implementation of collaborative or peer learning. One reason for the increased interest given to such learning is the shift from the traditional view of teaching, where great emphasis was put on the teacher as the giver of knowledge. New conceptions as stated by Bassou (2015: 33) have come to regard:

collaborative work between learners as an important means of implementing constructivist educational approaches...stressing discovery learning and viewing knowledge acquisition as a social activity... peer-learning activities are seen as an important aspect of preparation for life after school ends.

By this, Bassou means that collaboration, which includes the ability to work, participate, and share in order to find solutions to particular problems, is a long-term dimension generally conducive to learning.

Collaborative learning involves groups of individuals working together making meanings, discovering problems and attempting to solve them. As far as peer-writing is concerned, such an activity involves learners working in pairs or in groups. This technique “lessens students’ anxiety and promotes their risk-taking” (Tsui, 1996: 98). Each pair or group of learners combine their efforts in writing a composition, being encouraged to share their work with their peers, with less apprehension of making mistakes as their anxiety is reduced. Indeed, the constant preoccupation with constructing sentences that conform to English grammar rules cannot necessarily guarantee that learners will perform successfully. As stated by Johns (1996: 31), “grammatical rules are not an end in themselves but means for achieving particular ends,” this meaning that the language system is by far more than knowledge of the basic structural aspects of writing but a part of a larger interrelated whole (Ourghi, 2002). In order to prevent a number of low-level learners from the misconception related to good writing strategies, it seems then an advantageous alternative to get them to work in pairs and groups. Such a procedure allows them to generate ideas, structure the content, revise, edit and rewrite together. When the activity is finished, a pair/group discussion usually takes place to check whether writing keeps a proper focus. During pair or group discussion, learners are made to feel totally free. No longer dependent on the teacher, they have the opportunity to discover the answers for themselves, discuss their writing problems, and attempt to find a solution thanks to their classmates’ help and comments. In sum, they are encouraged to communicate with one another and not with just the teacher, learning from their peers better than with the teacher (case of shy students). Because self and peer-editing are viewed as a way helping to enhance self-confidence, self-reliance, and mainly self-esteem (case of teenagers), a number of researchers in the field agree on the use of this technique for improvement of literary skills at all educational levels, namely writing.

5.2.4.6 Learner Peer Conference

Due to the assumption that learners learn a lot from their peers, a number of procedures have been implemented. To illustrate this, the peer conference is another

technique which has been used successfully in teaching writing. This activity consists in benefitting from discussions with other learners gathered in groups of three or four. After writing a first draft, learners have then to write another draft in response to the comments arising from a discussion with peers. Experimenting freely, without teacher's control, creates both interest and real learning. It is only after that the learner can benefit from discussion with the teacher. It is the occasion for learners to formulate specific questions or raise specific difficulties. By the end of the task (i.e. last draft), the learner turns out to be his/her own editor, editing generally occurring at the end of the writing process. This means that at this level, learners work on their own, becoming autonomous thus more responsible. "They have to be highly involved... feeling the need to take decisions and make choices, acting as individuals within a community (Legutke and Thomas, 1991: 270). According to such authors, the ability to be responsible is at work when learners take the opportunity to explore their own self-concept, especially in relation to others. The underlying idea is responsibility and choice (Dickinson, 1996).

5.2.4.7 Eclecticism

Being eclectic means having the ability to select among a wide range of methods and approaches so as to devise techniques which are believed to match the particular nature of a class. Teaching different classes within the same way is absolutely impossible. The view that there is no unique type of teaching the same content of a particular lesson has often been expressed. Clearly, whenever a teacher faces a new class, he is bound to face a number of challenges as different situations require different methods and techniques, different activities, and different materials. The major concern of a conscientious teacher is efficient teaching, yet, it is important to note that teaching is not the terminal objective of what goes on in class. The aim is not how or how well the teacher performed his task but rather whether the learners understood and learned. Such a wrong perception of teaching coupled with the constant hurry of teachers to complete "the syllabus" regardless of their students' needs, makes teachers face a dual problem: writing failure which likely leads to education failure. In addition, constantly looking for the right

method or the ideal way of doing things, following strictly and blindly any external method which they consider as the best, teachers are bound to encounter serious difficulties simply because this right, best, or ideal method does not exist, just as perfection does not. The main concern for teachers should be to decide about the suitability of an approach or method to the particular situation, making learners involved in the learning process, with serious attempts to make them motivated. An important point to raise, yet, is that in order to make learners motivated, a teacher has to be motivated himself. To achieve this, developing the style of teaching that makes him feel at ease can make the teaching task easier. As a matter of fact, since the teacher is the person highly involved in teacher/learner interaction, it results that he remains the only one to decide which approach, method, or technique seems the most appropriate depending on learners' level and needs, strengths and weaknesses, observing a kind of balance. While this section proposes an eclectic approach to the teaching of writing by synthesizing the strengths of the process and product approaches for implementation in the classroom, it nonetheless insists on the importance and flexibility to acknowledge elements of other approaches. Drawing from a number of different approaches and methods makes learning more attractive, helping both good and weak learners to follow and progress according to their respective paths.

A further consideration regarding teaching methodology is the implementation of developmental activities such as surveys, questionnaires and interviews, these being mainly concerned with fostering learners' development.

5.2.4.8 Surveys, Questionnaires, and Interviews

The growing popularity of surveys, questionnaires and interviews has led language teachers to use them as a means to investigate some aspects of teaching, in order to throw light on different problem areas that were overlooked. The word survey is most frequently used to refer to a method of gathering information from a number of individuals (a sample), in order to become aware about special facts concerning a larger part of the population. Data is collected by means of standardized questions. Such a procedure allows each subject informant to respond

to the same questions. While such tools provide a rapid and economical means of collecting information, they nonetheless prove highly beneficial in that they help determine important dimensions such as knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, expectations, motivation, preferences, and behavior (Head and Taylor, 1997). Once collected, the feedback obtained from questionnaires (or interviews) is quantified, such feedback helping teachers seek potential possibilities for ongoing development. This attitude may likely be conducive to teaching and learning improvement (Ourghi, 2002). The gathered information is essential in order to evaluate a course, as well as designing future lessons and tasks. The evaluative information collected at the end of a particular course can be highly advantageous because it provides the teacher with permanent feedback from the students, allowing him to modify and make adjustments in his teaching practices. As changes in attitude or behavior cannot be reliable on the basis of a single questionnaire or interview, the survey can employ a number of these tools in which the same informant has to respond several times to different questionnaires or interviews since both follow the same procedure: both consist of questions or statements designed for respondents to bring about the maximum of information related to a particular problem. The designed questions may take several forms: open-ended, closed, or multiple choice questions. Interviews make students interact with the teacher (in the form of conversation), this latter provided with valuable qualitative information. These pieces of information may, for instance, help the teacher become aware of learners' needs as concerns language, skills, strategies, as well as learners' profile description.

Yet, designing a survey is not an easy task. It is important first to lay out the objectives of the investigation by making them as clear as possible. Obviously, such a way is going to solve the problem of getting inadequate data. It appears then that designing a questionnaire is the most difficult step in the process of developing the survey. Implementing such developmental activities aims at fostering learners' development discussed in the following section.

5.3 Learner Development

Teaching having become learner-centred has led to a substantial change ensuring the shift from teacher responsibility to the learner taking responsibility for his/her own learning, in other words, contributing to become autonomous. For this, university education should no longer be seen as one in which the learner is provided with a large amount of well-prepared and well-established knowledge (Bereiter and Scardamalia, 1987), with teachers feeling the need to pour knowledge to students (Arab et al., 2007). Conversely, learning should be viewed in terms of “not yet completely solved problems” (Ourghi, 2002: 311). Whether an activity does not prove problematic, mainly with learners accepting unquestioningly everything that comes from the teacher, this means that no learning has actually taken place. Such one teaching/learning is not the one required in higher education. A particular activity cannot be said to be developmental only if it fulfils the main requirements of a university education, one conducive to learner autonomy. As a matter of fact, the concept of autonomy should be fostered at all levels of the educational system (Ourghi, 2002), making learners ready to cope with the changing world (i.e. the rapid growth of science and technology), enabling them to use the skills and strategies acquired in the educational environment for real-life problem-solving, becoming able to develop both creativity and critical thinking skills, meeting the requirements of modernity (Hamzaoui, 2006; Bellalem, 2008; Aimeur, 2011).

Though various definitions have been attributed to the concept of learner autonomy in language teaching, scholars nonetheless agree on some basic principles regarding this concept in terms of willingness to learn, readiness, attitudes, self-confidence, and also collaborating with others for encouraging interactions (Lap, 2005). Trying to foster learner autonomy has a number of advantages, among them enhancing one’s independent problem-solving skills (Nunan, 1992; Lap, 2005 qtd. in Bassou, 2015). Donato (1994: 40) argues that the target language is found to serve a two-fold purpose, stating that it “is not only used as a means of classroom interaction but also as a channel of learning and a tool of reflection”. This means

that while the target language is mainly used for interacting in classroom settings, it also helps students gain a certain level of autonomy in learning and allows them to reflect on their own strengths and weaknesses. In sum, the concept of learner autonomy is seen as a capacity and an ability for learners to take charge of their own learning yet, with a certain degree of awareness, making teachers feel the need to continuously review and reflect on their teaching practices and pedagogical beliefs (Little, 2002; Bassou, 2015).

Attempting to foster autonomous learning in educational contexts presents two main advantages: the first positive point is that learners have the opportunity to reflect on their own learning, such a behaviour allowing them to be aware of their own strengths and weaknesses, as previously mentioned. The second advantage is that, once learners are made aware of what the core of the next teaching course will be, they not only will get ready but will be highly motivated as well, thus facilitating the teacher's task in terms of own efforts and learners' motivation. It is generally assumed that learners do not always show positive attitudes towards learning, let alone towards writing. Yet, developing reflective attitudes, having a critical mind can be made possible thanks to autonomous learning (Wenden, 1991; Bassou, 2015), such learning perceived as getting the learners to feel responsible for their own actions (choosing one's own goals), with teacher responsibility decreasing, learners having the opportunity to set learning objectives and decide on suitable learning material and activities yet, still under significant control (Dam, 1995; Little, 2002; Bassou, 2015). Learners becoming responsible for controlling their own learning leads them to the notion of self-achievement. Such a setting, where learners' performance is more active, is one which should create the necessary conditions as well as an atmosphere that would allow the learners the freedom to learn for themselves, and to choose among materials for instance, writing about themes which are of interest to them (Johns, 1997), and methodologies (depending on their preferred way of learning), developing an attitude towards change and development, meaning the opportunity to become a person (Williams and Burden, 1997). An important issue (mentioned above) is that the concept of autonomy implies that the heavy burden of teaching is taken off the

teachers' shoulders and placed on the learners' shoulders. This means that, as stated by Semmoud (2015: 17):

Being a teacher does not necessarily mean gripping over the whole learning that may take place. A teacher cannot learn for his students. What he can do is help and create the conditions conducive to successful learning. He should set up the continuous attention to self-awareness and self-development in the learners.

Being involved in the learning process, learners are encouraged to participate, interact, talk, discuss various topics of interest to them, etc, this getting teachers to get rid of long and sometimes useless explanations. In this line of thought, Scrivener (1994:2 qtd. in Semmoud, 2015: 17) posits the following:

The teacher is teaching but it is unclear how much teaching is taking place. It is quite possible for a teacher to be putting great effort into his/her teaching and for no learning to be taking place; similarly a teacher could apparently be doing nothing but the students be learning a great deal.

To conclude, one may say that autonomy in education and language learning is not just a matter of permitting choice in learning situations, or making learners responsible for the activities they undertake. More than this, such a dimension is one that allows and encourages learners to begin to express who they are. As previously mentioned, developing creativity and critical thinking skills allows learners to generate knowledge as opposed to being passive consumers of it; this is an important dimension in language learning. What learners must do is initiate, plan, organize and carry out work of their own (out-of-class activities and autonomous learning) in order to learn more efficiently. This is autonomy in practice. Nowadays education has become an emancipatory factor encouraging learners' autonomy. Such a behavior allows new interpretation of the world and the possibility of change (Kenny, 1993), learners managing their own learning. Such a dimension allows learners to "gain an understanding of language learning in order to be able to develop their skills consciously and to organize their learning tasks" (Kohonen 1992: 18). Rather than being mere consumers of language courses, there

should be an attempt on the part of university learners to become producers of language too (Kohonen, 1992).

When reflecting on their own work with a critical mind, learners get a better understanding of themselves. Consequently, thanks to being allowed to develop the social skills of interaction and cooperation (see section 5.2.4.6), it becomes possible for learners to gain insights in what they are doing, attempting to remedy the problem they are confronted to by generating knowledge rather than merely receiving and consuming it (Kohonen, 1992), encouraged to use thought and judgment, managing their own learning rather than just receiving and accepting well-established matter unquestioningly. To achieve this, learners should be encouraged to use various types of writing activities (both in-class and out-of-class activities) believed to help enhance their proficiency level (Head and Taylor, 1997).

5.4 Writing Tasks

When suggesting techniques for teaching writing (see figure 1.1), Raimes (1983: 11) states that these techniques “stem from the basic assumptions that writing means...a connected text and not just single sentences, that writers write for a purpose and a reader, and that the process of writing is a valuable learning tool”.

As writing is not merely producing a sequence of unrelated sentences, one has to organize his ideas in such a way that they can be understood by a reader who is not present or frequently by a reader who is not known at all. Furthermore, one has to master the written form of the language and to learn certain structures which are important for effective communication in writing. It should be born in mind that while being a part of language, writing is first and foremost one form of expression (Halliday 1985: 14).

In order for the learners to improve their writing effectiveness, this section will be entirely devoted to suggesting some writing tasks and activities. Such tasks have to be undertaken regularly, with learners participating actively in their own learning, no longer relying on the teacher as a transmitter of well established material, in sum no longer seen as a spoonfeeder. On the contrary, they have to feel

responsible for their own learning, by, for instance, performing out-of-class activities in order to improve their writing proficiency level. For this, a number of useful techniques and activities are recommended to the teacher and the students alike. Among the numerous tasks involved in learners' writing ability enhancement, keeping journals, writing book reports, undertaking portfolios, appear to be useful and interesting ways for both teachers and students, aiming to achieve writing competence at first-year university level.

5.4.1 Keeping Journals

An interesting way for getting learners to make effective use of writing strategies which seems to have great benefits for both the teacher and the learner is keeping journals. Encouraging such a procedure as part of the learning process is highly recommended. This activity can be done either individually or through interaction and guidance of other supportive persons such as peers, parents, family members, and teachers (Wenden, 1998). Such an activity involves learners writing regularly (either self-writing or writing designed to others: teacher or peers), allowing them to view writing as a way of exploring, developing, and sharing ideas (Kern, 2000), having the opportunity to develop and improve their writing performance. With regard to self-writing, learners have the occasion to report on their learning experience, reflecting on their writing process and strategy use by displaying most of their difficulties in writing, and also their successes. Such a technique allows learners to generate topics of interest to them, recording previous or recent learning experience. In such a way, learners' metacognitive understanding of their learning processes and strategies is developed (Chamot, 1999; Rubin, 2003). Keeping journals has three main benefits: (1) while seeking to identify and cater for learners' needs, (2) teachers remain in a constant contact with the students who, in turn, (3) have the opportunity to monitor their own progress by attempting to identify as well as find ways to solve their writing problems. When highlighting such benefits, Nunan, (1992) states that this constitutes a preliminary step towards autonomy in learning and writing. According to him, such benefits are supposed to make learners:

- Identify writing difficulties and get teacher's help
- Become goal directed, self-reliant, and autonomous
- Facilitate communication by creating relationships with teacher and peers alike
- Increase opportunities for functional written communication between teacher and student
- Evaluate their learning experience (output) in relation to the content of the lectures
- Develop their own learning styles and strategies

When using journals, learners have the opportunity to reflect on their composing process, the strategies employed, their purpose, and the way they are used. In order to collect information regarding such strategies, journals may be used to gain insights into the writing strategies used by learners (Chamot, 2004). As learners do not always give an accurate description of their learning strategies, Rubin (2003) suggests using such documents for instructional purposes to get the learners to become aware of their thinking process and strategies.

5.4.2 Book Report

A book report is generally a paragraph (case of first-year university learners) or an essay (at more advanced levels) discussing the contents of a book, written as part of a class assignment. It is frequently the teacher who proposes lists of books to the students from which they can choose one for the report. It is also possible for the students to select a work of their own choice. The contents of the book report concerned with fiction include a summary of the narrative and setting, the main elements of the story or key characters, the author's purpose in creating the book, the student's opinion of the book, and a theme statement summing up the main idea drawn from a reading of the book. Students are required to produce the report using the various stages of the writing process including prewriting, first draft writing, revision, evaluation, editing and rewriting, publishing and post evaluation.

This activity consists in reading different kinds of writings: they can be either novels or simply short stories. Learners reporting on their reading(s) may be tackled in class, within time limits, in the case of a short story consisting of one (1) or two (2) pages and proposed by the teacher. Such an activity can also be designed as homework (clearly a higher number of pages should be required). Yet, in such a way, the teacher cannot ensure that the students have actually gone through the different steps of the writing process.

In order for the students to achieve this task successfully, it is recommended to teachers to provide learners with a model to follow. This generally consists of the book title, year of publication, author, and publisher. It is also possible to provide an extract, some background notes on the author, or even the context in which the book was written (for instance, Ireland in 1845). Students can also be asked to read the background notes related to the book before answering precise questions such as:

- What is the writer's name?
- What is the book title?
- Is the title easy to understand/Is the title inspiring?

The answers got from these questions (in addition to some others) can be recorded so as to help learners introduce the book report (this information is supposed to appear in the introduction). Teachers may also require students to read the background information concerning the author and the context in which the book was published, read the extract and the plot to answer specific questions in addition to giving an interpretation and appreciation of the concerned book (Ourghi, 2002).

5.4.3 Student Portfolios

Being a collection of the students' best pieces of writing throughout the academic year, a portfolio is used to display "learners' skills and ability to improve performance" (Gonzales, 2013:25). Stating that "The primary value of portfolios lies in the provision of a continuous record of students' writing progress...", (Ourghi, 2002: 319), he adds that a portfolio exhibits "learners' efforts, progress,

and achievements”. By the end of the academic year, the students proceed to select some of the produced texts and passages for revision, applying the various writing strategies as well as the writing knowledge they have acquired over the years of study. A portfolio is regarded as “an important element in students’ academic lives, an attractive document showing where they have been and where they may be going” (Johns, 1996: 132-134) this allowing them to reflect upon their ways of learning, and their progress and achievement (Johns, 1996). Portfolios present a number of advantages: (1) providing the teacher with the opportunity to assess the students’ writing progress, (2) contributing to enhancing learners’ involvement in the learning process, and (3) students becoming responsible for monitoring their own learning. Using portfolios as a “collaborative learning strategy and assessment process” (Ourghi, 2002: 319) depends first and foremost on teachers’ willingness and conscientious efforts but also on learners’ awareness of the benefits of such an enterprise. Obviously, some preparation, help, and guidance prove necessary in order to get the learners more involved, as they participate actively and interactively. In order to achieve this, the following guidelines have been suggested:

- Students choose the pieces of writing/reading to be included in their portfolios;
- Negotiation with students determine how the work will be assessed;
- Encouraging students to review and share their portfolios with other students;
- Students should be taught how to provide positive, constructive feedback to one another;
- Ensure that discussions of student portfolio are positive, collaborative, and under the control of the students;

Genesse and Upshur (1996: 103-104)

5.5 Additional Activities to Improve Learners' Writing Performance

In addition to the activities proposed to increase the learners' writing ability at the first year of Higher Education, other techniques have been used successfully in teaching writing. The following, where learners are required to go through the stages of the writing process (paying attention to content organization, mechanics of writing, and rhetorical devices) appear to be of great help to learners who can be asked to tackle the following:

- Provide a summary of a story they have read (either in class or out of class) with teacher stating the number of lines to be provided, learners asked to write using the different stages of the writing process, dealing with several drafts, learners turning to be their own editors by the end of the task.
- A similar activity, the free-writing activity can be done after a reading session. It is called reflective writing because it is practiced after reading a short story and reflects on what learners have just read. Free writing allows students to compose without the pressure of having an audience.
- Write a “précis” or summary writing of a story of their own choice. Such an activity can be seen as the selection of the major ideas of the passage, getting learners to mention the information essential for comprehension, or the deletion of the minor ones.
- Deal with a set of precise questions put to check learners' comprehension after which they have to produce a passage thanks to the answers they have obtained, paying attention to a number of variables simultaneously.
- Learners are asked to evaluate a text: providing learners with a story as well as its summary containing a number of incorrections occurring at different levels: wrong information related to the content, important grammatical mistakes such as subject-verb agreement, tense concord, bad use of articles,

lack of subject or predicate, lack of cohesion and coherence. Learners have to provide a passage supplying the necessary corrections (editing);

- Providing learners with passages lacking cohesion, asking them, on the one hand, to select among a wide range of provided cohesive ties, and, on the other hand, passages where they have to themselves supply the missing linkers in order to establish cohesion;

- Order sentences for achieving coherence: learners may be presented with scrambled sentences, required to produce a text where both cohesion and coherence have to be established through the use of cohesive ties and transitional expressions, paying attention to content organization;

It should be noted that within each activity, learners' attention is drawn to the main two aspects of writing: linguistic and discourse levels, learners being constantly reminded to go through the steps of the writing process for achieving coherent, meaningful, satisfactory pieces of writing.

In addition to the activities suggested above to improve learners' writing effectiveness, other useful and practical activities appear to present several advantages in that they steadily improve the learners' writing ability. Such are: punctuating, sentence-combining, paragraph expansion, developing a paragraph in a series, developing a critical mind, rewriting and editing, and imitating. Though the focus of this study is on content organization, this does not prevent learners to have a concern with mechanics, more particularly punctuation, as this component is indispensable for establishing clarity in writing.

1.The Importance of Punctuation

Besides punctuating sentences, learners can also be provided with passages to punctuate meaningfully. An example is provided below:

Exercise 1: Supply punctuation, capitals, apostrophes where necessary.

it was friday and it was paul s big business trip to new york in america he got up at 5 am got dressed had a cup of coffee and read the newspaper at 6 am a taxi arrived to take him to london airport paul locked the door and put his bags in the taxi but he left his briefcase in the house his business papers his money his credit cards his plane ticket and his passport were all in his briefcase luckily the taxi driver asked paul if he had his ticket paul ran back into the house and got his briefcase but this time he ran out of the house and left his keys inside

The above activity clearly shows the whole importance of punctuation without which understanding of any piece of writing would just not be possible.

2. Sentence-Combining

In order to help the learners develop the notion of paragraph building and the use of cohesive devices, among the different techniques that can be used successfully, it is worth mentioning the sentence-combining approach. Sentence-combining exercises are good for practising connectors and relative clauses. Examples of this type are provided hereafter:

Exercise 1: Combine each sequence of sentences into a single sentence with at least one relative clause.

- (a) The Basques live in the mountains.
- (b) The mountains separate Spain from France.
- (c) The Basques were not conquered by the Romans.

This type of exercise has the least control and a large number of possible correct answers. For instance, the following responses can be got:

The Basques, who live in the mountains which separate Spain from France, were never conquered by the Romans.

or: The Basques, who were never conquered by the Romans, live in the mountains which separate Spain from France.

(Thiede-Gonzo, 1983:16)

Exercise 2: Combine the following sentences to make complex ones. Remember that a number of answers may be correct.

- (a) His name is Peter.
 - (b) He is a famous professional athlete.
 - (c) He is a baseball player.
-
- (a) He has a large house in Miami.
 - (b) The house is beautiful.
-
- (a) He often travels around the US.
 - (b) He plays away games in different cities in the US.
 - (c) He travels by airplane.
-
- (a) He usually sleeps on the plane.
 - (b) He stays up late after games.
-
- (a) He is an excellent pitcher.
 - (b) Fans love his abilities.
 - (c) Coaches love his abilities.
-
- (a) Every week he plays a home game.
 - (b) The game is played in Glover Stadium.
-
- (a) The game is usually sold out.
 - (b) Glover Stadium is sold.
 - (c) Glover Stadium does not have enough seats for all the fans.
-
- (a) The fans wait in line to buy tickets.
 - (b) The fans often pay more than \$60 dollars for a ticket.
-
- (a) The fans are unhappy about the ticket prices.
 - (b) The fans love Peter.

3. Paragraph Expansion/Reduction

Length is an important factor, and changing the length of a text makes learners think about which words, sentences or ideas are essential and which are secondary.

Example: Working individually, add an extra 30 words to this article, (either whole sentences or isolated words or phrases) without changing the main idea of the article, then compare and discuss the new versions with your peers. Such a task involves learners to deal with group discussion when the activity is over.

Post-op office

AN NHS HOSPITAL is offering rooms with telephones and fax machines so patients can continue working after operations. Standish Hospital in Stonehouse, Glos, will even provide secretaries.

(Grellet, 1996: 12)

Lengthening or shortening paragraphs (and whole texts) appear to present learners with a number of advantages as students feel obliged to either add or omit elements indispensable (or just unnecessary) for comprehension of a text.

4. Developing a Paragraph in a Series

Learners can be provided with a single paragraph and asked to expand it into a number of others, taking into account the main ideas contained in the original one, developing the respective ideas throughout the different new paragraphs.

5. Developing a Critical Mind

Writers need to check and recheck what they have written as they are rarely content with their first draft and feel the need to read it over in order to improve it. This critical phase of any writing job is very much what editors do when they read manuscripts or articles. Editing requires the reader to leave aside the text for a while before looking at it again with a critical eye. Critical thinking indicates that learners have mastered the cognitive skills required for university work (Weigle, 2002: 5).

A-Rewriting

The following sentences or paragraphs from newspapers are all genuine. But they are so badly written that the passages have become comic, absurd or meaningless. Rewrite them so that the meaning becomes clear, avoiding ambiguity.

Read the following passages and (1) find out why the passages are comic or absurd and (2) rewrite them as if you were the editor of the newspaper.

a BEDFORD FIREMEN today received 28 letters thanking them for their efforts which destroyed 3 houses last Wednesday night. (Bedford paper)

b THE RETIRING police commissioner has been responsible for all crimes committed in the district for the past twenty years. (Wembley (V.A.) News)

B-Editing

At this level learners are required to make the necessary corrections in a given passage related not only to spelling, punctuation, vocabulary, and grammar, but also to ambiguity or shift in meaning.

Example:

Yooth wanted

I see by your advert that you require a junior Clerk that is quick at figures. You say you wood prefere one just left School, well I have just left School so perhaps I wood do? I was 3rd in my class for Maths and Top for Algabra, but perhaps you wood not re-quire any Algabra. I am farely good at most subjects exept English grammer and competition, so pheraps you will let me know...

(Grellet 1996: 06)

C-Imitating

It is one of the best ways of learning. In the field of writing, a great deal can be learnt by following the style of certain writers. While it forces learners to study a model, it also gives them a framework within which to write, still allowing them to be fully imaginative and creative. It is therefore a first step towards freer writing.

5.6 General Requirements for Composition Writing

In order for first-year university learners to improve their writing ability and develop as thinkers and effective writers, a number of requirements come into play and are due much consideration. FL2 education should set out to teach explicitly what such requirements are. This is why the teacher should first and foremost start by explaining that composing requires the mastery of several skills and a careful and planned structuring of ideas. It requires grammatical accuracy, a logic flow of ideas achieved thanks to clear relationships between words, this resulting in making understanding between reader and writer easier (Nunan, 1993). At the level of the sentence, the mechanics of writing (i.e. punctuation, capitalization, spelling, etc.) have to be in accordance with the stated conventions in addition to using vocabulary appropriate to the subject matter. Since writing is a thinking process, it results that one has to organize thought and argument in order to achieve cohesive and coherent paragraphs and texts, writing beyond the sentence level, structuring and integrating information into a coherent and logical whole (Halliday and Hasan, 1976; Hoey, 1983; Nunan, 1993). Put differently, one may say that the main two requirements for the writing of a good composition are arrangement or organization of content and continuity of thought. In order to make the thought continuous, gathering all the material relative to one heading within that heading (this can be done during the pre-writing stage), also avoiding omissions and afterthoughts, with no gap nor jumping from one idea to another prove of fundamental importance. In other words, a composition can be made clearer and more coherent by producing sentences expressing ideas in such a way that the ideas lead on naturally to the following ones. Similarly, each paragraph must lead on to the next.

A further consideration is related to interest. Writing an interesting composition implies being interested in the subject (Johns, 1997), otherwise the writing task would prove impossible to complete. Obviously, learners cannot be expected to write very inspiring compositions from an early beginning or during an examination. Yet, banality and monotony (use of very short and simple sentences, inexistence of modifiers and specific language, etc.), have to be avoided. When

features such as genuine interest in the subject and a real enthusiasm come into play, adding to the composition interest, any topic becomes interesting to the reader if the writer proves careful with the characteristic style of writing to which he should aim, helping the reader to follow him with interest and therefore enthusiasm (Dehghanpishen, 1979).

An important aspect of writing which has to be made clear to the learners is that such a skill involves three main areas: grammatical rules, lexical items, and rhetorical patterns. On the one hand, teaching the grammatical rules is generally seen as the simplest of the three to teach. It is also important to mention that explicit grammar instruction has some verified positive effects. Investigators like Krashen (1992), and Green (1992), state that hard rules are too abstract, too difficult to be applied mechanically; it appears that it is more effective to practise communication activities with the focus on meaning, this making a better use of class time. Hammerley (1987) totally disagrees with those teachers who get the learners to communicate before having any explanation and emphasis on the new structure. He criticizes any method failing to emphasize structure before communication as putting “the cart before the horse”. The result is learners who, in Richards’ words (1985:152) are “successful but grammatically inaccurate communicators”. Consequently, if explicit grammar instruction aims at developing communicative competence and by the same token writing competence, grammar rules should no longer be seen as limited to the descriptions of the way in which words combine to form sentences. Rather, they should be seen as mechanics without which language could not function. One cannot deny that the mastery of the grammatical system is essential for effective communication. In other words, as the grammatical structure forms the basis for the development of one’s communicative competence, it must have an important place in the syllabus, but making it the entire focus of teaching would be a step in the wrong direction. Studies show that learners who receive explicit target structure instruction perform better than those who have an implicit teaching method (Scott, 1989). He states that explicit grammar instruction proponents (Terrell, 1991) insist on the importance of teaching rules and grammatical structures consciously for the purpose of developing communicative

competence. Consequently, both explicit teaching grammar instruction and communicative language teaching will have a place in the foreign language writing classroom. They will be tackled side by side, this relating to the notion of eclecticism.

On the other hand, choosing the correct lexical item frequently proves very difficult for a learner when composing, mainly when attempting to express complex ideas. It is important to note that expressing one's ideas in a foreign language is not an easy task because of the inexistence of equivalents from a language to another, this frequently leading to either translation or interference from L1 to FL2, leading to ambiguity or most frequently making the original meaning lost. Consequently, in addition to explicit grammar instruction, the teacher has to ensure that learners can select the appropriate vocabulary, explaining that a word has one meaning but different values according to the context in which it is found. In order for learners to choose the right lexical items, using the dictionary in writing settings becomes a pre-requisite. Writing teachers are then highly advised to allow students check dictionaries for help and guidance even in tests and examinations.

The third main area, i.e. the rhetorical patterns including variables such as style, presentation of ideas, paragraph cohesion, and other determined ways of presenting structured discourse, are likely to be the most difficult to teach (Dehghanpishen, 1979). These elements have nonetheless to be made clear and as explicit as possible, showing their whole importance and efficiency in making writing effective. The following passage has been taken as an illustration of what has been stated above:

Leonardo returned to Florence in 1499, where he painted that most famous painting 'The Mona Lisa' (1503). Between 1482 and 1499 he was employed in the service of the duke of Milan, to whom he was painter, sculptor, musician and technical adviser on military and engineering matters. In whatever subject he studied, Leonardo laid absolute faith in the evidence of his eyes. Leonardo da Vinci was born in 1452 in Vinci, a small village in Tuscany. And it is in his 'things', his machines, that we are interested in this book. By then Leonardo's expertise with

paint brush and palette, pen and pencil was already well advanced. But his creative energies now were turning more and more to scientific and literary pursuits.

This example clearly illustrates the point developed by Pincas (1982) who explains that a paragraph is not just a set of correct grammatical but unrelated sentences. Mere grammaticality is not what makes for good writing in the target language. In other words, grammaticality alone, without the conventional norms of discourse, is nothing. To sum up, there is now considerable evidence that unlike implicit teaching, explicit instruction has some verified positive effects on learners' performance and writing ability in that it gets the learners to grasp better and in a deeper way learning aspects which had remained obscure during the previous years of foreign-language learning, (at both middle and secondary education levels). While learners used to exhibit a total absence of thinking and processing resources, producing texts resembling strings of jumbled ideas rather than well-organized coherent discourse, they now seem more concerned with thinking and writing meaningfully. In addition to explicit instruction, another way to help improve learners' writing proficiency is to implement writing strategy at the first year of Higher Education.

5.7 Writing and Reading

It is generally assumed that there is a strong correlation between reading and writing performance. In other words, reading plays an absolutely important role in the development of writing ability. Although reading is generally regarded as a goal in its own right, and though reading and writing have for decades been taught separately, research has shown that they are interdependent (Krashen, 1984; Durukan, 2011). It should be noted that both skills may be developed in close cooperation and, though not many EFL learners are aware of this connection, reading and writing skills are closely connected and complement each other. "Their interconnection is like that of the chicken and egg; that is, without one the other cannot exist". Besides, extensive (a great deal of) reading is also regarded as a prerequisite for writing achievement. Indeed, research has shown that reading extensively makes learners become better writers, getting motivated to read more

once they realize the importance of reading in improving their writing performance. Likewise, the view that readers make the best writers has always been expressed. Moreover, it has generally been assumed that one writes to be understood but reads to grow (i.e. enriching one's knowledge). It is widely acknowledged that reading extensively is the best preparation for writing and improving one's ability to write (Grabe, 2003; Alkhaldeh, 2011). Whatever the kind of literature, reading presents a number of advantages. It helps improve mechanics of writing (punctuation and spelling), grammatical structures, vocabulary, and style as well as it gets students to learn new information and consequently develops their knowledge (Murcia, 2001). As writing and reading are strongly connected and due to the assumption that writing can be improved by improving reading, both skills must go hand in hand. Consequently, teachers are strongly advised to never separate writing from reading, getting the learners to practise writing from reading passages, such an application being suggested to reinforce learners' writing ability. Murcia (2001), Grabe (2001, 2003) and Hudson (2007) who acknowledge the interrelatedness of reading and writing, such relationships having an important impact on academic literary skills, suggest that the teaching of writing should be incorporated with that of reading instruction.

5.8 Writing for Learning versus Writing for Writing

Even though the ability to write effectively has, in recent years, been considered as a key objective for learners, the importance given to writing differs according to situations and settings, writing having always formed part of the syllabus. Frequently, "writing for learning" is used only for the purpose of augmenting students' learning of the grammar and vocabulary of the language partly because of the need for accuracy in writing. Even if writing encourages learners to focus their attention on accurate language use, writing is mainly used for reinforcing the language patterns that have been taught. Consequently, this leads to the conclusion that not all writing activities necessarily help learners to become effective writers. On the other hand, teaching "writing for writing" is totally different. At this level, the objective is to help learners to become better writers; it is

not just a matter of helping them with issues related to handwriting, orthography and punctuation. The teaching of writing is more than this. Helping learners to write more effectively means, first and foremost, helping them to communicate real messages in an appropriate way, teaching them how to write in various genres, using different styles and registers (see 1.9 and 1.10). Put differently, the writer needs to first construct sentences, selecting appropriate vocabulary, using cohesive devices, punctuating meaningfully before finally organizing the obtained sentences into a well-structured text. In order to reach this, designing writing tasks has to be undertaken in a way that may help learners feel responsible for their own learning, getting them to regard writing not as mere object of study needed for examination purposes, but as a learning experience needed for long-term goals. Such an attitude towards writing is likely to make learners become more concerned, more involved, and consequently develop as effective writers.

5.9 Writing: The Process of Discovering Meaning

Since learners do not seem to know beforehand what it is they will say, writing is a process through which meaning is created. In other words, writing is the process of discovering meaning. This suggests composition instruction that recognizes the importance of generating, formulating, and refining one's ideas. It implies that revision should be the main component of such instruction, that writing teachers should intervene throughout the process, and that students should learn to view their writing as someone else's reading. Methods that emphasize form and correctness ignore how ideas get explored through writing. More importantly, they fail to teach students that writing is essentially a process of discovery. Indeed, research on composition has traditionally been concerned with the written product. Studies reported by Braddock et al. (1963) sought to prove the efficacy of one grammar over another, perpetuating the belief that a better pedagogical approach would improve writing, particularly one that focuses on usage, structure, or correct form. Consequently, little attention was paid to other, more important considerations such as purpose, audience, and the process of composing itself. Questions such as "why" or "for whom" students were writing were not taken into

account. The notion of how writers write and what the various stages of composing entail was ignored. Regarding writing as a process, one may mention the common mistake made by teachers and students alike: because of time constraints, learners write only one draft, if at all. It is important to raise the following point: the process of writing and rewriting is an art (which only caring and competent writers have access to), the least understood and the most ignored variable for composing. Raising learners' awareness towards revision and rewriting, encouraging them to write more than one draft as well as getting them to turn to be their own editors before handing back the finished product is highly recommended in order to make the learners aware of the process.

Although process research stresses the need for giving learners space and time to use their own preferred individual strategies¹¹, it is nonetheless the classroom which remains the only place to provide positive intervention and support in the development of writing skills. This simply means that, whatever the time and energy a learner can devote to writing by himself, this would merely be time-consuming and painstaking. Indeed, it is in the classroom, with the help and guidance of the teacher that a learner (whatever the level of instruction) can actually learn to write. As Byrne (1988: 14) puts it, teachers need to make learners aware that:

Any piece of writing is an attempt to communicate something: that the writer has a goal or purpose in mind; that he has to establish and maintain contact with his reader, that he has to organize his material and that he does this through the use of certain logical and grammatical devices.

According to the above quotation, it appears that one of the biggest problems in teaching writing is that, in order to write, the learner must have facts and ideas that must be expressed in the form of grammatical English sentences, making the writing easy to understand through choosing appropriate forms and structures. Though in most aspects of language learning and teaching a distinction between writing as process and writing as product has been expressed, in recent years this

division (process versus product) is not clear-cut. According to Finocchiaro (1982: 2) “this division has become difficult to sustain...this distinction is more ostensible than real...”, arguing that:

There should never be a question of adopting in toto one or another of seemingly conflicting notions, as for example...accuracy versus fluency; acquisition versus learning; ...Elements from both sides of these opposing pairs can be effective for many students at different stages of the learning process.

Brown (2001: 336) who states that “writing is indeed a thinking process,” urges writing teachers to observe a balance between process and product, avoiding to take an extreme position. For him, while the product is the ultimate goal, the process is still the means to the end. This corroborates Elbow’s (1973: 16) work who thinks of writing process, “not as a way to transmit a message but as a way to grow and cook a message”.

From the above quotations, one may conclude that integrating the writing process with the practice of studying and even imitating written models in the classroom is to be seriously considered. Hamps-Lyons and Heasley (1987) who share similar attitudes, illustrate the above points. They emphasize the need to integrate both process and product in the writing classroom, and suggest that writing is at least a three-stage process: pre-writing, writing and revision, with due attention also paid to purpose and audience, such elements seen as indispensable for achieving meaningful, effective writing.

5.10 Conclusion

This concluding chapter is a sum of recommendations and suggestions regarding the teaching of writing at first-year university level. Seen as a key variable in the whole teaching process, some recommendations regarding the foreign language teacher have been made in the first part of this chapter. Such recommendations which are first concerned with some pedagogical implications involving the teacher, teacher training and roles, and teacher education development

have more importantly been an attempt to raise teachers' awareness with respect to the methodology used for writing instruction. Clearly, an awareness of the difficulties encountered by entrant students and the way writing is undertaken will lead teachers to reflect on their own teaching, with an attempt to find more relevant writing pedagogies and develop more adequate instructional practices. To achieve this end, the chapter has suggested to adopt a new approach to writing instruction by integrating the writing process into the teaching of this skill in addition to making explicit teaching of the composing processes become an inherent part of the writing course, following a reasoned eclecticism.

Further recommendations concerning the new Baccalaureate holders have been made in the second section of the chapter, dealing with the learner and learner development. It is essential for learners to understand that language learning is not simply a matter of acquiring a system of linguistic formulas and that language is more a form of communication among individuals in a specific social context. Even more than that, language is a way of thinking and processing information. This new increased responsibility for language learning does not fall entirely on the teacher however. Learners must also assume some responsibility by participating actively in the learning process, being encouraged to reflect on academic achievement and constantly assessing the progress they make in their written performance.

Seeking to increase the learners' writing ability, a number of activities and techniques which have been found to present several advantages have been displayed in the third and last part of the chapter. The suggested activities aim to help learners overcome the challenges they are faced to and are expected to promote higher writing achievement at first-year university level.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

GENERAL CONCLUSION

The main purpose of the present doctoral dissertation has been to report on the teaching/learning of EFL writing at the first year of university level. While striving to assess learners' writing ability, the present work has underlined some of the encountered difficulties through an exploration of the current writing pedagogies employed in writing instruction in Higher Education. As the ability to write in correct acceptable English is increasingly required, and due to the large number of EFL university teachers complaining about learners' poor proficiency level, this problem has come under serious scrutiny.

The problem is that, despite a long formal exposure to English learning prior to university entrance (a seven-year course completed at both middle and secondary-school levels), the majority of new Baccalaureate holders present an obvious inability to express themselves in clear, fluent and meaningful English, lacking the main two aspects, both form (accuracy) and content organization (fluency), displaying a poor to average proficiency level in EFL writing. Clearly, as writing has always been regarded as the most difficult of the four language skills for all language users, both natives and non-natives, a skill requiring a number of competences at the same time, it follows that these elements appear to be largely responsible for students' low achievement. While writing is assumed to be a complex thinking recursive and creative process where writers go backwards and forwards for checking, controlling and editing, first-year learners' writing is linear. It has come into particular prominence over the past few years that pre-education fails to adequately prepare learners in essential academic and thinking skills. In addition to the teaching practices which are, to a large extent, involved in learners' weak performance, at pre-educational level, writing has always been considered as the last of the four language skills and consequently generally relegated to the end of the teaching sessions. Besides, as priority is given to the final product over the writing process, it appears that writing fluently and expressively evades the vast majority of new Baccalaureate holders. This is easily noticeable in the results obtained in tests and examinations which are far from satisfactory. While learners

display serious deficiencies at both linguistic and discourse levels, only a small minority appear to be willing to improve their written performance. In order for EFL university teachers to get an understanding of the way entrant students perform their writing tasks, also with the aim of helping learners enhance their writing proficiency, such teachers should reflect

on their own instructional practices, attempting to find alternative ways for dispensing instruction efficiently, helping learners grasp the importance and actual meaning of writing, that is, becoming more concerned with writing operating at discourse level. Such a dimension can be largely achieved at the first level of higher education. For this main reason, a reconsideration of the way such a skill is taught at first-year university level seems necessary, making choices as to how to approach writing and decide about appropriate teaching material. To this end, embracing new teaching methodologies, making use of a balanced combination of different approaches seems a remedy to the existing problems, in sum the key for performing successfully. It is important to note that adopting a single method for writing instruction constitutes a step in the wrong direction as writing is not necessarily acquired through mere formal instruction but through a number of different ways discussed in chapter five.

The present study has examined a group of thirty newly enrolled students in the Department of English, at Tlemcen University, most of them coming from Literary and Scientific streams. In order to gain insights into the way such learners proceed to perform the writing task, the study made use of various data sources (triangulation methodology for making the research more valid): teacher classroom observation, first-year learners task production, and questionnaires administered to the same learners. Such investigation is concerned with the following research questions:

1. What writing pedagogy/ies is/are used at first-year university level?
2. .What is the impact of this/these pedagogy/ies on first-year EFL students' proficiency and writing ability?

3. What pedagogic change would help first-year learners improve their proficiency at both content and discourse levels?

Various instruments were used to support the hypotheses: teacher observation, learners' task production (pre-and post-intervention phase tests), and questionnaires (pre-and post-intervention intervention questionnaires), helping the researcher to state that:

1. Among the different pedagogies available for the teaching of writing, the most frequently employed at first-year university level is the product-based approach. Being mainly concerned with the final product while the process is totally inexistent, this approach views writing as predominantly linguistic, giving priority to grammatical accuracy and writing at sentence level.
2. Writing instruction at first year-university level proves to be deficient in some respects, failing to provide learners with adequate preparation in essential academic skills: thinking, analyzing and writing fluently and expressively, students' deficiencies appearing mainly at the level of content organization and discourse, with an obvious inability to make a balance between accuracy and fluency.
3. In order for writing to be successful at first-year university level and to improve the learners' writing effectiveness, a pedagogic change is needed with respect to the approach, the teaching methodology and the techniques. A reasoned eclecticism in addition to providing explicit writing instruction and making the writing process become an inherent part of writing may help learners overcome their difficulties in FL2 writing at the content organization and discourse levels.

This study consists in five chapters. Chapter one attempted to display the main features of writing involved in making it a complex skill, such elements appearing at both linguistic and discourse levels. While the main concern of the first chapter was to demonstrate the difficult nature of the writing skill by displaying a number of variables which the writer has to show control over simultaneously, it has also strived to show that this complexity is largely involved in learners'

underachievement. Besides, this chapter also endeavoured to present some traditional as well as innovative approaches and methods used for the teaching of writing. Chapter two was entirely devoted to describing the present teaching/learning situation of the target language at three levels of the Algerian context: middle, secondary and higher education, with a focus on the teaching of writing. Chapter three was concerned with the empirical phase of the study, displaying the research methodology and the research instruments. It also required the contribution of the main participants involved in the study, that is, first-year university learners, the writing teacher, and the other two teachers in charge of evaluating and grading learners' tests. Chapter four dealt with the interpretation and discussion of the results obtained from the different data sources. Finally, based on the results emerging from this study, chapter five is a sum of recommendations regarding writing instruction at first-year university level, the teacher and teacher methodology, with a focus on the writing process. Such one process has to become an inherent part of writing thanks to raising learners' awareness about its importance in order to write effectively, in addition to much practice. Besides, the discourse conventions have to be presented in a clear and systematic way, through explicit instruction, without losing sight of the importance of being eclectic in one's instructional practices. While such instruction is mainly intended to create better conditions conducive to learners' proficiency enhancement, helping them become more autonomous and more effective writers, the recommendations in chapter five are also aimed to help teachers contribute to educational change through developing writing instruction. To achieve this, particular emphasis should be placed on raising learners' awareness of writing operating at discourse level, encouraging them to improve their writing skills thanks to reflecting more about the way they write. It should be fair to argue that the suggestions and recommendations made in chapter five are in no way intended to provide any prescription for writing instruction. They are but an attempt to bring together linguistic skills and discourse composing processes.

The results obtained in this study gave interesting insights into the way first-year learners proceed as they embark in writing, helping the researcher draw the following conclusions as regards the three research hypotheses:

The most commonly used writing pedagogy at first-year university level is the product approach, such an approach being primarily concerned with the linguistic aspect of the language. However, the assumption that mastery of the required structural patterns in addition to worrying too much about formal correctness leads to using language effectively has proved to be erroneous. Mastering a wide range of sentence patterns and a large amount of vocabulary is totally insufficient if it fails to equip the learner (writer) with the ability to use them effectively, for different purposes. These results provide some evidence related to the inadequacy of the product approach as learners tend to consider writing as mere production of grammatically correct sentences. Such results corroborate the first research hypothesis.

Regarding the second research hypothesis, it should be noted that the Algerian educational system has long been dominated by the product approach, with teachers focusing on the learner's final piece of writing rather than on how it is produced. Writing is then evaluated on the basis of the final product and on grammatical accuracy. Little or no attention is devoted to the whole process of writing with neither teachers nor students interested in the process of generating ideas. The qualitative and quantitative analysis of task production (pre-intervention test) showed that learners' writing is linear, learners mainly concerned with writing at sentence level, being mainly preoccupied with achieving grammatical accuracy. It appears then that getting the learners to practise and reinforce writing at the sentence level, with attention brought on form, leads learners to consider writing as mastery of grammar rules, perceived as mere isolated school subject, taught separately from context, audience, and purpose. The results show the inadequacy of the product approach, but more importantly, the negative impact of this writing pedagogy on first-year learners and confirm the second research hypothesis.

As far as the third research hypothesis is concerned, it is fair to say that thanks to using the writing process in addition to explicit teaching and feedback, learners made some progress, becoming aware of the three different stages (pre-writing, writing, and post-writing) (Flower and Hayes, 1980), allowing them to take into account a number of variables necessary to achieve effective writing. They appeared to acquire more knowledge and more experience about how to write a paragraph in EFL. Insightful results brought by the task production (post-intervention phase test) revealed that the subject participants went through the different stages of the writing process, employing a number of strategies: when using the writing process, the learners showed a strong will to first understand the topic and identify the key words (not to be out of topic as they stated in their answers) before moving to generating ideas, planning, controlling, monitoring, revising writing and reflecting on it, refining it before producing the final version and putting it on paper. The treatment of the questionnaire revealed that learners had gained a better understanding of the real meaning of writing thanks to explicit teaching. These results relate learners' progress in EFL writing to the use of the writing process and explicit teaching and corroborate the third research hypothesis.

The major findings obtained in this study reveal that first-year university students display serious deficiencies at both linguistic and discourse levels. While the linguistic aspect can be solved by much effort and practice, the other more important aspect is rooted in learners lacking the use of the writing process, thinking and reflecting upon what they produce, being preoccupied by sentence level production, grammar, vocabulary, mechanics, but not organization. A poor performance is not a matter of grammar and vocabulary only. It is more a problem of cohesion and coherence for the development of a composition or rather largely a matter of organization of content. It seems then that using the writing process presents a number of advantages as it gets the writer (learner) to think constructively, argue coherently, and write meaningfully. The Flower and Hayes' model (1981) has helped gain more insights into the writing processes writers go through, taking into account the cognitive⁸ aspect. While seeking to bring about change in the teaching of composition writing, the model also paves the way to

more studies in the field of second and foreign language learning. Both teachers and learners need to know the strategies used in writing as well as their role and importance in the learning process in order to better understand the writing process and use it effectively. The proposed activities regarding writing in the last chapter as well as the regular use of the writing process in addition to explicit instruction are expected to provide first-year learners with the view that writing operates at discourse level and not at mere sentence level, that content organization is an important aspect of writing, attempting to make students aware of the importance of the writing process as being an inherent part of writing for achieving both accuracy and fluency.

Conflicting views related to writing instruction will never end in the quest of new pedagogies. Finding the right way to teach writing proves absolutely out of reach since there is no one good, best or right way to teach this skill (Cumming, 1998; Matsuda, 1999) simply because perfection does not exist. In addition, the science of language and language teaching have never been able to prove the superiority of one methodology over another, showing the efficiency of one over another. Each time new methods or approaches are implemented, they are embraced with much enthusiasm. However, once they are seen as inefficient, unable to remedy classroom problems, such pedagogies are rejected without any scruple, with the same kind of vigor they were first implemented. As a matter of fact, whatever the method or approach, all present advantages as much as they present drawbacks. In sum, they are all on an equal footing. Accordingly, implementing relevant teaching practices proves most of the time a difficult experience as this requires the ability and capacity to make good choices. Therefore, as a reaction to these failings, and in order for teachers to reach a kind of more or less correct, acceptable, helpful, right and complete type of teaching writing at university level, they have to be eclectic, drawing from a number of different approaches, combining different techniques and strategies, depending on the learners' proficiency level and the way they view writing, in sum encouraging the weakest to perform better.

As previously mentioned, a large number of EFL writing teachers despair of finding ways to teach writing adequately. While it is not believed that there is a “right way” to teach writing, it is, nonetheless, believed that teachers should feel free to make their own decisions, decisions which they are uniquely suited to make since they are the only ones to be acquainted with the classroom situation and with the learners. In other words, as a result of the number of available approaches to writing instruction today, it is up to the writing teacher to decide which one fits the particular situation s/he finds herself/himself in, depending on learners’ needs and specific learning styles. This implies that before choosing any method and before choosing any material, it seems essential that the EFL writing teacher understands the particular situation s/he is in: the characteristics of her/his students, their level of proficiency, the kind of proficiency they are aiming at, and the teaching resources s/he has at her/his disposal. Writing is clearly a complex skill and few learners turn to be competent writers. Because of its complexity, competent writing has usually been regarded as the last of the four language skills acquired by learners, for both native and non-native speakers of a language despite its highly acknowledged importance in the academic context. Indeed, experience shows that the acquisition of this specific language skill is seen as an essential factor as successful writing most frequently has a positive effect on learning and education. It is important to note that in the Algerian educational system, learners’ success or failure depends first and foremost on the written form as, in order to test writing ability for academic success, all formal tests and examinations take a written form.

While the main objective of this research has been to propose a coherent theory of teaching writing by integrating two major approaches, the process approach and the product approach, it nonetheless does not claim to offer a radical solution to the problem of EFL writing at first-year university level. It should be noted that like any other study, this work presents a number of limitations. As a matter of fact, as the research involved a group of thirty participants, it proves rather difficult to generalize the obtained results to a larger sample population presenting different characteristics. A second limitation concerns the impossibility to videotape learners during the course of writing as such a procedure would have inhibited the

subject participants. Another limitation of the study is related to time shortage. Indeed, the amount of time devoted to the research was quite insufficient due to a number of constraints such as examinations in addition to a semester which was shortened at the very last moment due to unknown reasons. For more validity and reliability of the research, the researcher endeavours to propose the experimentation with two groups belonging to the same level: a group receiving instruction and another who receives no instruction, tackling the same number and types of activities within the same time limits. Such a way would likely bring insightful findings as concerns learners' regular use of the writing process, and the extent to which providing learners with explicit teaching of specific writing resources can be enlightening, bringing about more clarification about how to produce a satisfactory piece of writing, due to this learners' raising awareness concerning the general requirements for composition writing.

To conclude, it should be argued that this study does not claim to offer a radical solution to the existing problems of writing at first year university level. It nonetheless attempts to provide a step towards implementing more relevant writing instruction, seeking to change students' behaviour from passive receptacles of well-prepared and well-established matter to more autonomous, more responsible for their learning, able to generate rather than just consume knowledge, as well as a direction for future research that may improve the pedagogy in second and foreign language writing classes.

Bibliography

Bibliography

- Abdat, Y. (2015). *An experimental investigation into the effects of explicit and integrated instruction of reading strategies on EFL students' reading performance: Case of EFL students at Aboubakr Belkaid, University of Tlemcen*. Unpublished Doctorate thesis. University of Tlemcen.
- Abbot, J. & Wingard, P. (1992). *The teaching of English as an international language*. Edinburgh: Nelson.
- Abi-Ayad, F. Z. (1997). *Teaching E.F.L in Algerian secondary schools, with reference to the writing skill: Case of 3°AS classes*. Unpublished Magister thesis. University of Tlemcen.
- Abi-Ayad, M. Y. (2009). *Low Achievement in writing at secondary-school level: A case study of 3°AS Literary and Philosophy stream learners*. Unpublished Magister thesis. University of Tlemcen.
- Achilles, C., Krieger, J., Finn, J., & Sharp, M. (2003). Large student enrolments in EFL programs: Challenges and consequences. *Asian EFL Journal: English Language Teaching and Research*, 8 (1), 120-129.
- Aimeur, R. (2011). *Project-based learning in the Algerian secondary school syllabuses and textbooks*. Unpublished Magister thesis. Available from www.umt.dz/IMG/pdf/Memoire_de_MAGISTER_.pdf (February 26th 2014).

Al Jubouri, A. (1983). The role of repetition in Arabic argumentative discourse. In

J. Swales & H. Mustapha Eds. *English for specific purposes in the Arab World*. Birmingham: University of Aston and LSU.

Alkhaldeh, A. (2011). The effect of EFL reading comprehension on writing

Achievement among Jordanian eighth grade students. In *European journal of scientific research* 66 (3), 352-365

Allen, J.P.B. (1984). *General purpose language teaching: A variable focus*

approach. Brumfit. C.J. (ed.): np.

Allen, J., & Widdowson, H. G. (1979). Teaching the communicative use of

English. In Brumfit, C. & Johnson, K. Eds. *The Communicative approach to language teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Allwright, D. (1990). *Autonomy in Language Pedagogy*. CRILE Working

Paper 6. Centre for Research in Education, University of Lancaster, U.K.

Allwright, D., & Bailey, K. (1994). *Focus on the language classroom*. Cambridge:

Cambridge University Press.

Anderson, C. (1992). *Free/style: A direct approach to writing*.

Boston: Houghton.

Andrews, R., & Smith, A. (2011). *Developing Writers: Teaching and Learning in the digital age*. Open University Press.

Angelova, M. (1999). *An exploratory study of factors affecting the process and product of writing in English as a foreign language*. Unpublished PhD dissertation, State University of New York, Buffalo. Available from www.academypublication.com/issues/past/tpls/vol02/08/08.pdf

Applebee, A.N., et al. (1986). *The writing report card: Writing achievement in American schools*. Princeton NJ: Educational testing service.
Washington DC: Office of educational research and improvement.

Arab, S. A., et al. (2007). *NEW PROSPECTS (Secondary Education: Year Three/English-Learners' Textbook)*. ONPS.

NEW PROSPECTS (Secondary Education: Year Three/English-Teacher's Textbook). ONPS.

Arndt, V. (1987). Six writers in search of texts: A protocol-based study of L1 and L2 writing. *ELT journal*, 41(4), 257-267

Arndt, V., & White, R. (1991). *Process Writing*. Harlow: Longman.

Atkinson, D. (2003). Writing and culture in the post-process era. *Journal of Second Language Writing*. 12, 49-63.

Bader, F. (2017). *An evaluation of the Algerian middle school English syllabuses and textbooks*. Unpublished Doctorate thesis. University of Constantine

Badger, R., & White, G. (2000). A process-genre approach to teaching writing. *ELT Journal*, 5 (2), 153-160.

[Eltj.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/content/abstract/54/2/153](http://eltj.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/content/abstract/54/2/153).

Bassey, M. (1998). Action research for improving educational practice, in Halsall, R. (ed.) *Teacher Research and School Improvement: Opening Doors from the Inside*, Buckingham: Open University Press

Bassou, A. (2015). *A Reflection upon the factors mediating autonomous learning: An analysis of first year secondary school ELT textbook*. Unpublished Doctorate thesis. University of Tlemcen.

Beach, R. & Bridwell, L. S. (eds.) (1984). *New directions in composition research*. Guilford Publications, USA.

Bell, J. (1999). *Doing your research project: A guide for first-time researchers in education and social science*. Open University Press.

Bell, J. & Burnaby, B. (1984). *A handbook for ESL literacy*. Toronto: Oise.

Bellalem, F. (2008). *An exploration of foreign language teachers' beliefs about curriculum innovation in Algeria: A socio-political perspective.*

Unpublished Doctoral thesis. Available from

[http:// files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED537247.pdf](http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED537247.pdf). (March 30th 2014).

Bereiter, C., & Scardamalia, M. (1987). *The psychology of written composition.*

Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Association.

Bereksi, S. E. K. (1993). *BAC English*. Alger. ENAG.

Berninger, V. W., et al. (2002). Writing and reading: Connections between language

by hand and language by eye. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 35, 39-56.

Best, L. (2004). A practical discussion about student outcomes and instruction in introductory writing courses. *In research and teaching in*

Developmental Education, Fall 2004. Available from

<https://www.questia.com/.../a-practical-discussion-about-student-ou...> (May 2011)

31st

Bialystok, E. (1978). A theoretical model of second language learning.

Language Learning. 28, 69-83.

Bialystok, E. (1990) *Communication strategies: A psychological analysis of second language use*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell Press.

Bizzell, P. (1992). *Language arts & disciplines academic discourse and critical consciousness*. College composition: Initiation into the academic discourse 2 (1982): 191-207... Available from books.google.fr/books?isbn=0822954850...

Bolitho, R. (1995). Error correction, in *MET*, 4 (1) 47-48.

Borgia, E. T. & Schuler, D. (1996). *How to use action research in early childhood education*. University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign: ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education.

Bourouba, N. (2012). *Teaching writing right: Scaffolding writing for EFL/ESL students case study: Algerian EFL secondary school students challenges and opportunities*. Unpublished Master thesis. Available from <http://digitalcollections.sit.edu> > ... > IPP Collection > 517 (March, 9th 2014)

Boylane, H. (1984). Developmental instruction: What really makes a difference in research, in *Developmental Education*, 1(3), 1-2.

Braddock, R. et al. (1963). *Research in written composition*. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.

Brakus, P. (2003). *A product/process/genre approach to teaching writing: a synthesis of approaches in a letter writing course for non-native English-speaking administrative personal*. Unpublished dissertation, University of Surrey.

Brookes, A., & Grundy, P. (1990). *Writing for study purposes: A teachers' guide to developing individual writing skills*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Brown, H. D. (1980). *Principles of language learning and teaching*. 1st edition; Englewood Cliffs (N.J.): Prentice Hall Regents.

_____ (1994). *Principles of language learning and teaching*. Englewood Cliffs (N.J.): Prentice Hall Regents.

_____ (2000). *Principles of language learning and teaching*. White Plains, NY: Longman.

_____ (2002). *Strategies for success: A practical guide to learning English*. White Plains: Longman.

_____ (2007). *Principles of language learning and teaching*. (5th Eds.). Pearson: Longman.

Brown, H. D., & Gonzo, S. (1995). *Readings on second language acquisition*. N.J.; Prentice Hall.

Brown, K., & Hood, S. (1989). *Writing matters*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Brown, G., & Yule, G. (1983 a). *Discourse analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Browne, A. (2009). *Developing language and literacy 3-8*. SAGE Publications Ltd. Available from <https://books.google.fr/books?isbn=1446242137> - (March 24th, 2014)

Brumfit, C. (1984). *Communicative methodology in language teaching: The roles of fluency and accuracy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Byram, M. (2004). *Genre and genre-based teaching*. The Routledge Encyclopedia of Language Teaching and Learning. London: Routledge.

Byrne, D. (1979). *Teaching writing skills*. London: Longman.

————— (1986). *Teaching oral English*. New Edition; Longman.

————— (1988). *Teaching writing skills*. New ed; London; Longman.

Candlin, C.N. (1978). *A communicative approach to English language teaching*. Mine; University of Lancaster.

Carton, A. (1966). *The method of inference in foreign language study*.
The research foundation of the city of New York.

Castellanos, G. (1987). Coherence and stream-of consciousness writing: A pedagogical reading of 'The Jilting of Granny Weatherall'; in *English Teaching Forum*, 25 (1) 6.

Caudery, T. (1995). What the process approach means to practising teachers of second language writing skills. *Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language* 1(2) 1-12.

_____ (1998). Increasing students awareness of genre through text transformation exercises: an old classroom activity revisited. *TESOL-EJ*. 3.3. A2, PP. 1-15.

Celce-Murcia, M. (1997). Describing and teaching English grammar with reference to written discourse in T. Miller (ed.). *Functional approaches to written texts: classroom applications*. Washington D.C: United states information agency.

- Chamot, A. U. (2004). Issues in language learning strategy research and teaching. *Journal of Foreign Language Teaching*, 1 (1) 14-26.
National University of Singapore.
- Chamot, A. U., & Keatley, C. W. (2003). *Learning strategies of adolescent low-literacy Hispanic ESL students*. Paper presented at the 2003 annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Chicago, IL.
- Chamot, A. U., & Kupper, L. (1989). Learning strategies in foreign language instruction. *In Foreign Language Annals*, 22, 13-24
- Chamot, A. U. & O'Malley, J. M. (1987). The cognitive academic language learning approach: A bridge to the main stream. *In TESOL Quarterly*. 21, 227-49.
- _____ (1994). Language learner and learning strategies. *In N. C. Ellis (ed.)*. *Implicit and Explicit Learning of Languages* (pp. 371-392). London: Academic.
- Chamot, A. U. et al. (2003). *The Elementary immersion learning strategies resource guide*. Washington D.C.: National Capital Resource Center.
- Chenoweth, N. A. (1987). The need to teach rewriting. *ELT Journal*. 41 (1) 25-29

- Chien, S., C. (2008). A cognitive analysis of the relationships between Chinese EFL writers' strategy use and writing achievement performance. Cambridge Occasional Paper *in Linguistics COPiL*. Available from <http://www.ling.cam.ac.uk/COPIL/papers/3-chien.pdf> (May 27th 2014)
- Clair, N. (1998). Teacher study groups: persistent questions in a promising approach. *TESOL Quarterly*, 32, 465-492.
- Clarke, M., & Silberstein, S. (1977). *Task-based syllabus design: Selecting, grading and sequencing tasks*. Available from www.iei.uiuc.edu/TESOLOnline/texts/nunan2/-38k
- Cohen, A. D. (1987 a). Feedback on compositions: Teacher and students verbal reports. In B. Kroll. 1990. (pp. 155- 77).
- (1998). *Strategies in learning and using a second Language*. London: Longman.
- Cohen, A. D.& Apek, E. (1981). Easifying second language learning. *In Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 3 (2), 221-36
- Cohen, D. K., et al. (2003). Resources, instructionand research. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 25 (2), 119–142.

Connor, U. (1996). *Contrastive rhetoric: Cross cultural aspects of second language writing*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Cook, G. (1989). *Discourse*. Oxford. OUP.

Cooper, P. L. (1984). *The assessment of writing ability: A review of the research*. Princeton, N. J.: Educational Testing Service.

Costello, P. J. M. (2003). *Action research (Continuum research methods)*. London. Continuum

Crookes, V., & Chaudron, C. (1991). *Guidelines for classroom language teaching*. In *Teaching English as a second or foreign language*, 2nd ed., ed. Celce-Murcia, M. Boston, MA: Heinle and Heinle Publishers.

Crystal, D. (1971). *Linguistics*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

————— (1992). *Introducing Linguistics*. London: Penguin.

————— (1995). *The Cambridge encyclopedia of the English language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Cumming, A. (1989). Writing expertise and second language proficiency.

Language Learning, 39 (1) 81-141.

————— (1998). Theoretical perspectives on writing in Grabe, W. (Ed.)

Annual review of applied linguistics, pp. 61-78. Boston: Cambridge
University Press.

Dam, L. (1995). *Learner autonomy 3: From theory to classroom practice*.
Dublin: Authentik.

Dean, P. et al. (2008). *Cognitive models of writing: Writing proficiency as a
complex integrated skill*. ETS, Princeton, NJ. Available from
<https://www.ets.org/Media/Research/pdf/RR-08-55.pdf> (June 18th 2013)

De Beaugrande, R. & Dressler, W. (1981). *Introduction to text linguistics*.
London. Longman.

Dehghanpishen, E. (1979). Bridging the gap between controlled and free
composition: Controlled rhetoric at the upper-intermediate level, *in TESOL
Quarterly*, 13 (4) 509-19.

Dherman, P. K. (1995). Feedback as a two bullock cart: A case study of
teaching writing. *ELT Journal*, 49 (2), 160-168.

Dickinson, L. (1996). *Self-instruction in language learning*. Cambridge: Cambridge
University Press.

Donato, R. (1994). *Scaffolding in language collective learning*. In J.P. Lantolf and
G. Appel(eds): *Vygotskian Approaches to Second Language Research*, pp.33-

56.Norwood,NJ:Ablex Publishing Corporation.

Dubin, F. and Olshtain, E. (1986). *Developing programmes and materials for languageteaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Durukan, E. (2011). Effects of cooperative integrated reading and composition (CIRC) Technique on reading-writing skills. *Educational Research and Reviews*, 6 (1), 102-109

El-Aswad, A. A. (2002). *A study of the L1 and L2 writing processes and strategies of Arab learners with special reference to third-year Lybian university students*. Unpublished Doctoral thesis. Available from <https://theses.ncl.ac.uk/dspace/bitstream/10443/476/1/El-Aswad02.pdf>
(April 01st 2015)

Elbow, P. (1973). *The process of writing-cooking. Writing without teachers*. London: Oxford University Press.

Ellis, R. (1984) *The study of second language learning*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

(2002). *The study of second language acquisition*. UK: Oxford University Press.

Emig, J. (1971). *The composing process of twelfth graders. Research Report n°13.*
Urbana, Illinois: National council of teachers of English.

Escholz, P. A. (1980). The prose model approach: Using products in the process. In
T. R. Donovan, and B. W McClelland. (eds.). *Eight Approaches to Teaching
Composition*, Urbana 111: National Council of Teachers of English.

Faigley, L., & Witte, S. (1981). Analyzing revision. *College Composition and
Communication*, 32(4), 400-414.

Finocchiaro, M. (1982). Theories and Methods in the 20th century. *In English
Teaching Forum*. 20(3),

Flower, L. & Hayes, J. R. (1980). The cognition of discovery: Defining a
rhetorical problem. *In College Composition and Communication*. 31 (1), 21-
32. (1981). A cognitive process theory of writing. *In
College Composition and Communication*. 32 (4), 365-387.

kdevries.net/teaching/.../wp.../flower-hayes-81.pdf

Flynn, N. & Stainthrop, R. (2006). *The learning and teaching of reading and
writing*. John Wiley, Printed and bound by TJ International, Padstow,
Cornwall, UK.

Freedman, A., Pringle, I., & Yalden, J. (ed.) (1983). *Learning to write first/second language*. London: Longman.

Galloway, V. & Labarca, A. (1991). From student to learner: Style, process, and strategy. In D. W. Birckbichler (Ed.), *New perspective and new directions in foreign language education*. Lincolnwood, IL: National Textbook Company, 111-158.

Gardner, R. C. (1972). *Attitudes and motivation in second language learning*. Rowley. (Mass): Newbury House.

————— (1985). *Social psychology and second language learning: The role of attitudes and motivation*. London: Edward Arnold.

Genesee, F. and Upshur, J. (1996). *Classroom-Based Evaluation in Second Language Education*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Glass, G. V., et al. (1982). *School class size: Research and policy*. Beverly Hills; Cal; Sage Publishers.

Gonzales, M. (2013). *The language portfolio as a strategy to improve ESL writing in students of first grade in secondary at Sagrados Gorazones school*.

Unpublished Master thesis. Available from

https://pirhua.udep.edu.pe/bitstream/.../MAE_EDUC_112.pdf?...1

Grabe, W. (2001). Notes toward a theory in second language writing. In on *Second language writing*. T. Silva & P. K. Matsuda. (eds.). London : LEA Publishers. pp. 29-58

(2003). Reading and writing relations: Second language perspectives on research and practice. In B. Kroll (Ed.), *Exploring dynamics of second language writing*(pp.242-262). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

(2009).*Reading in a second language: Moving from theory to practice*. Cambridge University Press.

Grabe, W., & Kaplan, R. B. (1996). *Theory and practice of writing*. London: Longman.

Grabowski, (1996). Writing and speaking: Common grounds and differences toward a regulation theory of written language production. In C. M. Levy and S. Ransdell (eds.). *The science of writing*. NJ. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Graham, S. (1997). *Effective language learning: Positive strategies for advanced level language learning*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

- Graham, S. & Perin, D. (2007). *Writing next. Effective strategies to improve writing of adolescents in middle and high schools*. New York: Carnegie Corporation of New York.
- Green, S. and Hecht, K. (1992). Implicit and explicit grammar: An empirical study. *In Applied Linguistics*, 13 (2) 168-183.
- Grellet, F. (1996). *Writing for advanced learners of English*. Cambridge University Press.
- Grunewald, M. (1999). The teaching of language learning techniques: Is it possible in Japan. Teacher belief, teacher action. Jalt 99 connecting research and the classroom: *Proceedings of the 25th JALT International Conference on Language Teaching and Learning*. pp. 47-53.
- Guthrie, J. T., et al. (2004). Increasing reading comprehension and engagement through concept-oriented reading instruction. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 96, 403–423.
- Halliday, M. A. K. (1985) *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*; E. Arnold; London; Baltimore and Melbourne.
- (1990). *Spoken and written language*. Oxford. Oxford University Press.

Halliday, M. A. K. & Hasan, R. (1976). *Cohesion in English*. London: Longman.

(1989). *Language, context, and texts: Aspects of*

language in a social-semiotic perspective (2nd ed.). Oxford: Oxford

University.

Hamdi, M. (1990). *Writing*. Alger: ENAL.

Hammarley, H. (1987). The immersion approach: Litmus test of second language acquisition through classroom communication. *In MLJ Journal*, 71,

395-401

(1991). *Fluency and Accuracy: Towards balance in language*

teaching and learning. Clevedon; Multilingual Matters LTD.

Hamp-Lyons, L. & Heasley, B. (1987). *Study writing*. Cambridge:

Cambridge University Press.

Hamzaoui, H (2006). *An Exploration into the strategies used for essay writing across three languages: The case of EFL university students*.

Unpublished Doctoral thesis. University of Tlemcen.

Hamzaoui, H. & Negadi, M. N. (2012). *How to write an extended essay or a thesis in language studies*. Manal Edition.

Harmer, J. (1991). *The practice of English language teaching*; London:

Longman.

————— (2001). *The practice of English language teaching* (3ed.).

London: Longman.

————— (2001) *How to teach English*. London: Longman.

————— (2004) *How to teach writing*. England. Pearson Education.

Limited.

(2014) *How to teach writing*. England (4th ed.).

Pearson Education.

Harris, J. (1993). *Introducing writing*. Middlesex. Penguin.

Hasan, R. (1984). Coherence and cohesive harmony. In J. Flood (Ed.),

Understanding reading comprehension (pp. 181-219). Delaware:

International Reading Association.

Hayes, J. R., & Flower, L. (1981). *A review of writing model research*

based on cognitive processes.

wac.colostate.edu/books/horning_revision/chapter3.pdf

- (1983). Uncovering cognitive process in writing. *In*
Research in writing principles and methods. P. Mosenthal et al. (eds.).
New York: Longman.
- Head, K. & Taylor, P. (1997). *Teacher development*. London: McMillan
Heinemann ELT.
- Heaton, J. (1985). *Writing English language tests*. London. Longman.
- Hedge, P. (1988) *Writing*. Resource Books for Teachers. Oxford University Press.
- (1993). Key concepts in ELT: Learner training. *ELT Journal*
47 (1) January, 92-93.
- Hedge, T. (1998) *Writing*. Resource books for teachers. Oxford University Press.
- (2000). *Teaching and learning in the language classroom*. Oxford:
Oxford University Press.
- (2005). *Writing*. New York, Oxford University Press.
- Hill, M. (1991). Writing summaries promotes thinking and learning across the
curriculum-but why are they so difficult to write? *In Journal of Reading*;
37 (7), 536-39.

Hsiao, T. Y., & Oxford, R. L. (2002). Comparing theories of language learning strategies: A confirmatory factor analysis. *The Modern Language Journal*, 86(3), 368-383.

Hoey, M. (1983). *On the surface of discourse*. London; Allan and Unwin.

Hopkins, D. (2002). *A teacher's guide to classroom research*, 3rd ed, Buckingham: Open University Press.

Horowitz, D. (1986). Process not product: Less than meets the eye. *TESOL Quarterly*, 120 (1) 141-144.

(1986). Essay examination prompts and the teaching of academic writing. *English for Specific Purposes*. 5, 197-220.

Hudson, T. (2007). *Teaching second language reading*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hutchinson, T. & Waters, A. (1987) *English for specific purposes: A learning Centred Approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hyland, K. (2003). Asian EFL Journal: English language teaching and research articles: Teaching Korean university writing classes: Balancing the process and the genre approach, 7 (5) p. 2.

www.asian-efl-journal.com/pta_May_07_jg.php - 56k

www.asian-efl-journal.com/June_05_yk&jk.php-74k

Hymes, D. (1972). On communicative competence in J.B. Pride and J. Holmes (eds.), *Sociolinguistics*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Johns, A.M. (1997). *Text, role and context: Developing academic literacies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Johnson, K. (1999). *Understanding language teaching reasoning in action*. MA: Heinle and Heinle.

Johnson, K., & Morrow, K. (1979). *Approaches*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Jordan, R. R. (1997). *English for Academic Purposes*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kachcu, B. (1986). The Power And Politics Of English." In *World Englishes*, Vol. 5, No. 2/3?, 121-140.

(1997). World Englishes and English-using communities. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 17, 66-87.

Kane, T. S. (2003). *The Oxford essential guide to writing*. Berkley.

The Oxford: Berkley Books, New York.

Kaplan, R. (1966). Cultural thought patterns in intercultural education. *In Lnaguage Learning* 16 1-20.

(1997). Contrastive rhetoric. In T. Miller (ed.). *Functional approaches to written text: Classroom applications*. Washington, D.C. United States Information Agency.

Keh, C.L. (1990). Feedback in the writing process: A model and methods for implementation. *ELT Journal*. 44(4), 294-304.

Kellog, R. T. (1988). Attentional overload and writing performance: Effects of rough draft and outline strategies. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, and Cognition*, 14, 355-365.

Kendall, J. & Khuon, O. (2006). *Writing sense. Integrated reading and writing lessons for English language learners*. Stenhouse publishers. Portland. Maine.

Kenny, D. (1993). A coming-of-age for research on interpersonal perception.

Journal of Personality. 61 (4), 789-807

Kinoshita, C. Y. (2003). Integrating language learning strategy instruction into

ESL/EFL lessons. *The Internet TESL Journal*. 9 (4), Available from <http://iteslj.org/Techniques/Kinoshita-Strategy.html> (March 12th, 2015)

Kohonen, V. (1992a). Experiential language learning: second language

learning as cooperative learner education. In Nunan, D. (ed.),

Collaborative language learning and teaching. Cambridge: CUP, 14 - 39.

Kramsch, C. (1997). Rhetorical models of understanding. In T. Miller (ed.)

Functional approaches to written text: classroom applications. Washington.

D.C.: United States Information Agency.

Krashan, S. (1982). *Principles and practice in second language acquisition*. Oxford:

Pergamon Press.

Krashan, S. & Terrell, C. (1983). *Natural approach*. Oxford: Pergamon Press.

Kroll, B. (1990). *Second language writing: Research insights for the classroom*.

New York: Cambridge University Press.

(2001). Considerations for teaching an ESL/ EFL writing and going just

beyond. In M. Celce-Murcia (Ed.), *Teaching English as a second or foreign language* (pp. 219-232). Boston: Heinle, Cengage Learning.

- Lakehal-Ayat-Benmati, K. (2008). *Is the Algerian educational system weakening? An investigation of the high school curricula and their adequacy with the university curricula*. Unpublished Doctoral thesis. Available from [http:// bu.umc.edu.dz/theses/anglais/LAK1017.pdf](http://bu.umc.edu.dz/theses/anglais/LAK1017.pdf) (May 21st 2014)
- Langer, J. A. (2001). Beating the odds: Teaching middle and high school students to read and write well. *American Educational Research Journal*, 38, 837-880.
- Larsen-Freeman, D. (1987). Recent innovations in language teaching Methodology: *The annals of the Amercian society for political and social science*; March
- Legenhausen, L & Wolff, D. (1990). Text production in the foreign language classroom and the word processor. *System*, 18(3), 325-334
- Legutke, M. & Thomas, H. (1991). *Process and experience in the language classroom*. London: Longman. (Applied Linguistics and Language Study)
- Lessard-Clouston M. (1997). Language learning strategies: An Overview for L2 Teachers. *The Internet TESL Journal*.3 (12). Available from <http://iteslj.org/Articles/Lessard-Clouston-Strategy.html> (May 29th, 2014)
- Lindner, R. W. & Harris, B. (1992). Self-Regulated Learning: Its Assessment and

Instructional Implications. *Educational Research Quarterly*, 16 (2), 29-36.

Little, D. et al., (2002). *Towards greater learner autonomy in the foreign language classroom*. Authentik Language Learning Resources Ltd. Trinity College Dublin

Littlewood, W. (1981). *Communicative Language Teaching: An introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Liu, C. K. (1999). Identifying the writing processes a college student has to undergo: The generating model. *Proceedings of the Sixteenth Conference on English Teaching and Learning in the Republic of China*. 40-53.

Liu, J. (2010). Language learning strategies and its training model. *International Education Studies*. 3 (3) 100-104 August 2010. Available from www.ccsenet.org/ies

Long, M. (1977). Teacher feedback on learner error: Mapping cognitions; Brown, Yorio, and Crymes (eds.).

Lowman, J. (1990). *Mastering the techniques of teaching*. San Francisco:

Calif.; Jossey Bass.

Luo, Y. (1989). From craft to art-how to teach composition in English.

English Teaching Forum, 27 (4) 26-28.

Macken-Horarik, M. (2002). Something to shoot for: A systemic functional

approach to teaching genre in secondary school science. in A. M. Johns (ed.),

Genre in the classroom. (pp. 21-46). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Makino, T. (1993). Learner self-correction in EFL written composition. *ELT*

Journal. 47 (4), 337-341.

Manchon, R. M. (2009). *Writing in foreign language contexts: Learning,*

teaching and research. Multilingual Matters

Martine, J. (1989). *Factual writing: exploring and challenging social reality*.

Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Martine, J. R. (1997). Waves of abstraction: organizing exposition. In T. Miller

(ed). *Functional approaches to written texts: classroom applications*.

Washington D.C.: United states information Agency

Matsuda, P. (2003). Process and post-process: A discursive history. *Journal of*

Second Language, 12: 5-83.

Mauranen, A. (1993). Metatext in Finnish and English. *In English for Specific*

Purposes. 12(1) 3-22.

McCarthy, M. (1991). *Discourse analysis for language teachers*. Cambridge:

Cambridge University Press.

McDonough, S. H. (1999). Learner strategies. *Language Teaching*, 32, 1-18.

McDonough, J. & McDonough, S. (1997). *Research methods for English language*

teachers. London: Arnold.

Miliani, M. (2001). *Foreign language teaching approaches, methods and*

techniques. Editions Dar El Gharb.

————— (2001). Teaching English in a multilingual context: The Algerian case.

In Mediterranean Journal of Educational Studies. 6 (1), 13- 29.

Ministry of National Education (2004/2005/2006/2007) *Syllabuses for English*.

Department of Secondary Education Algiers.

Montazeri et al. (2014). Competency-based language curriculum in focus. ICT and innovations in education. *International Electronic Journal*. ISSN 2321-7189 2 (3) 1-11. Available from www.academia.edu/.../_citation_Compentency-based_language_cur...(February 25th, 2015)

Morrow, K. (1981) *Principles of communicative methodology*. Johnson and Morrow (eds).

Muncie, J. (2000). Using written teacher feedback in EFL composition classes. *ELT Journal*, 54(1): 47-53.

Murray, D.M., (1992). Writing as process: How writing finds its own meaning. In T.R. Donovan and B.W. McClelland (eds), *Eight approaches to teaching composition* pp. 3-20. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.

Murray, R. & Moore, S. (2006). *The handbook of academic writing: A fresh approach*. (1st ed.). New York: Oxford University Press.

Myles, J. (2002). Second language writing and research: The writing process and error analysis in student texts. *TESL-EJ*, 6(2)

Naiman, N. et al. (1978). *The good language learner*. Toronto: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.

Namouchi, A. (2014). Approaches to teaching writing. Faculty of letters and languages. University of Biskra. *Approaches et Teaching Writing*. Jan-June 2014. 31-48. Available from revue.univ-biskra.dz/index.php/fl/article/view/1078/1020

Nunan, D. (1988). *The learner-centred curriculum*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

———(1990). Action research in the language classroom. In J.C. Richards and D. Nunan (Eds.), *Second Language Teacher Education*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

———(1992). *Research methods in language learning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

———(1993). *Introducing discourse analysis*: R. Carter and D. Nunan (eds); Great Britain; Penguin English.

———(1996). *A language teaching methodology*. London: Longman.

———(2000). *Language teaching methodology (2nd Impression)*, Harlow, Pearson Education Ltd.

Olshtain, E. (2001). Functional tasks for mastering the mechanics of writing and going just beyond. In Marianne C. M., (Ed.) *Teaching English as a second or foreign language*. USA: Heinle & Heinle.

O'Malley, J. M. & Chamot, A.U. (1995). *Learning strategies in second language acquisition*.UK: Cambridge University Press.

Ourghi, R. (2002). *The implications of critical reflection and discourse awareness for educational change: The case of the writing curriculum, learner, and teacher development at the university level*. Unpublished Doctoral thesis. University of Tlemcen: Algeria.

Oxford, R. (1990). *Language learning strategies: What every teacher should know*. Rowley, MA: Newbury House.

(1992/1993). Language learning strategies in a nutshell: Update and ESL Suggestions. *TESOL Journal*, 2 (2), 18-22.

(2003). Language learning styles and strategies: An overview. *Learning styles & strategies*, Oxford, GALA (2003) pp. 1-25

Palmer, H. E. (1921). *The principles of language study*. London. OUP.

Paltridge, B. (2001). Genre, text type and the English for Academic Purposes (EAP) classroom. In A. M. Johns (Ed.), *Genre in the classroom*, pp.73-90.

Mahwah:Erlbaum.

Parson, (1985). *Hand in hand: the writing process and the microcomputer*. Juneau, AK: Alaska State Department of Education.

Patton, M. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods*. London: Sage Publications.

Paulston, C. B. (1972). Teaching writing in the ESOL classroom: Techniques of controlled composition. *TESOL Quarterly*.

Paulston, C. B., & Burder, M. N. (1976). Teaching English as a second language: techniques and procedures. Cambridge, Mass.: Winthrop Publishers, 1976.

Perl, S. (1979). The composition processes of unskilled college writers. *Research in the teaching of English*, 13. 317-36.

(1980). A look at basic writers in the process of composing; in L.

Kasden, and D. Hoerber (eds.); *Basic Writing*; Urbana II. : National Council of Teachers of English.

Peyton, J. & Staton, J. (1996). *Writing our lives* (2nd Edition). Washington, DC & McHenry, IL: CAL and Delta Systems, Inc

Pianko, S. (1979). A Description of the composing process of college freshmen writers. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 13, 5-22.

Pincas, A. (1982). *Teaching English writing*. London: Macmillan.

Pintrich, R. R., & DeGroot, E. V. (1990). Motivational and self-regulated learning components of classroom academic performance. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 82, 33-40

Prodromou, L. (1995). The Backwash Effect: From Testing to Teaching. *ELT Journal*, 49 (1), 13-25.

Pullman, G. (1999). Stepping yet again into the same current. In T. Kent (Ed.) *Post-process theory: Beyond the writing process paradigm*, pp. 16-29. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.

Raimes, A. (1983). *Techniques in teaching writing*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

(1985). What unskilled ESL students do as they write: A classroom study of composing. *TESOL Quarterly*, 19 (2), 229-258.

(1987). Language proficiency, writing ability, and composing strategies: A study of ESL college writers. *Language Learning*, 37 (3), 439-468.

Redman, P. (2006). *Good essay writing: A social sciences guide*. New Delhi, Sage.

Reid, J. (1990). 'Responding to Different Topic Types : a Quantitative Analysis from a Contrastive Rhetoric Perspective.' In B. Kroll (ed). *Second language writing: Research insights for the classroom*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

(1993/2). *Teaching ESL writing in Englewood*. Cliffs.NJ. : Prentice Hall Regents.

Richards, J. C. (1990). *The language teaching matrix*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

(1996). Teachers' maxims in language teaching. *TESOL Quarterly*. 30 (2).

Richards, J. C. et al. (1985). *Longman dictionary of applied linguistics*. Harlow; Longman.

Richards, J. C., et al., (1992). *Longman dictionary of language teaching and applied linguistics*. Harlow: Longman.

Richards, J. C. & Freeman, D. (1996). *Teacher learning in language teaching*. Cambridge University Press.

Richards, J. & Renandya, W. (2002). Eds. *Methodology in language teaching: An anthology of current practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Richards, J. C & Rodgers, T. S. (Ed.). (2001). *Approaches and methods in language teaching* (2nd ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Richards, J.C. & Schmidt, R (2010). *Longman dictionary of language teaching and applied linguistics*. (4th edition). London: Longman.

Riley, P. (1985). *Discourse and learning*. London: Longman.

Rivers, W. (1981). *Interactive language teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Rivers, W. & Temperley, M. (1978). *A Practical guide to the teaching of English as a second or foreign language*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Rubdi, R., and Saraceni, M. (2006). *English in the world: Global rules, global roles*. London: Continuum.

Rubin, J. and Thomson, I. (1994). *How to be a more successful language learner*. MA: Heinle & Heinle.

Sa'addin, M. A. (1989). Writing across language communities: The structure of Arabic text. In P. Adams et al. Eds. *Socio-cultural issues in English for academic purposes*. London: Modern English Publications/The British Council.

Sadiqi, F. (1990). The relevance of discourse analysis to the teaching of writing in English language teaching: The Maghrebi experience;

Rabat; *Publication of the Moroccan Association of Teachers of English (MATE)*.

Sadler, P. M., & Good, E. (2006). The impact of self-and peer-grading on student learning. *Educational Assessment*, 11(1), 1-31.

Sasaki, M., (2000). Toward an empirical model of EFL writing processes: An exploratory study. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 9 (3), 259-291.

Sarnou, H. *et al.* (2012). LMD new system in the Algerian university. *Arab World English Journal AWEJ*, 3 (4) 2012. 179-194. Available from [http: // www.awej.org/index.php?option=com...view...](http://www.awej.org/index.php?option=com...view...) (January 02nd 2014)

Sarnou, H. (2015). The Teacher's Role and the Students 'Autonomy under the LMD and the Integration of ICT. *Arab World English Journal AWEJ*, 3 (4) 2015. 78-83. Available from [http: // www.awej.org/index.php?option=com...view...](http://www.awej.org/index.php?option=com...view...) (January 02nd 2014)

Scardamalia, M. & Bereiter, C. (1986). Written composition. In M. Wittrock (Ed.), *Handbook on research on teaching*. 3, 778-803. New York:

MacMillan.

Scott, M. V. (1989). An empirical study of explicit and implicit strategies in French.

Modern Language Journal. 73, 14-21.

Seliger, H. and Shohamy, E. (1989). *Second language research Methods*.

Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Semmoud, A. (2015). *Peer observation as an exploratory task: A model of*

reflective teaching for university teachers. Unpublished Doctorate thesis.

University of Tlemcen.

Shin, S. J. (2003). The reflective L2 writing teacher. *ELT Journal*. 57(1): 3-10.

Shuell, T. J. (1990). Phases of meaningful learning. *Review of Educational*

Research. 60 (40), 531-547. Available from

rer.sagepub.com/cgi/content/refs/60/40/531-547

Silberstein, S. (1987). Let's take another look at reading: twenty-five years of

reading instruction. *English Teaching Forum*. Vol. 25; n°4.

Silva, J. (1990). Second language composition instruction: development, issues,

and directions in ESL. In B. Kroll (ed). *Second language writing: research insites for the classroom*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Simsek, A. & Balaban, J. (2010). Learning strategies of successful and unsuccessful university. In *Contemporary Educational Technology*, 2010, 1(1), 36-45. Available from files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED542214.pdf (November 09th 2014).

Smith, F. (1982). *Writing and the writer*. London, Heinemann.

Squire, J. (1982). Instructional focus and the teaching of writing. In A. Freedman et al. *Learning to write: First language/second language*. London: Longman.

Stern, H. H. (1975). What can we learn from the good language learner?

Canadian Modern Language Review, 31, 304-318.

(1992). *Issues and options in language teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Stevens, P. (1980). *Teaching English as an international language*. Oxford. Pergamon.

Suarez, I.C. and Suarez, L.V. (2005). The impact of the Bologna process on disciplinization. Comparative Report.

Swales, J. (1990). *Linguistics and language pedagogy: The state of the art.*

books.google.fr/books?isbn=0878401261...

Tellis, W. (1997). Application of a case study methodology. *The*

Qualitative Report, 3 (3), September, 1997. Available from

<http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR3-3/tellis2.html> (September 27th2014)

Terrell, T. (1991). The role of grammar in a communicative approach. *In Modern*

Language Journal. 75. 52-63

Tickoo, M. L. (2003). *Teaching and learning English: A sourcebook for teachers*

and teacher-trainers. Orient Longman.

Thiede-Gonzo, S. (1983). Sentence combining : An approach to teaching writing

that works. *In English Teaching Forum*. 21 (1), 14-17.

Tribble, C. (1996). *Writing*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Tsui, A. (1996). Reticence and anxiety in second language learning. In K.M. Bailey

& D. Nunan (Eds.), *Voices from the language classroom: Qualitative*

research in second language education (pp. 145-167). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Uzawa, K. (1996). Second language learners' process of L1 writing, L2 writing, and translation from L1 into L2. *Journal of Second Language Writing*.5 (3) 271-294.

Van Lier, L. (1995). *Introducing language awareness*; Penguin English applied linguistics series; London; Penguin English.

Victori, M. (1995). *EFL writing knowledge and strategies: An Interactive Study*. Unpublished PhD dissertation Autònoma university of Barcelona (Spain).

Vygotsky, L.S., (1978). *Mind in society*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

Wenden, A. (1982). *The Process of self-directed learning: A study of adult language learners*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Teachers College Columbia University.

- (1991). *Learner strategies for learner autonomy*. Hemel Hempstead: Prentice-Hall.
- (1998). Metacognitive knowledge and Language Learning 1. *Applied linguistics*, 19(4), 515-537.
- Weigle, S. C., (2002). *Assessing writing*. Cambridge University Press.
- Weir, C. & Roberts, J. (1994). Evaluation in ELT. D. Crystal & K. Johnson (eds.). *Applied Language Studies*. CALS.
- Wenden, A. & Rubin, J. (eds.). (1987). *Learner strategies in language learning*. London: Prentice-Hall. ELT.
- Westwood, P. (2008). *What teachers need to know about reading and writing difficulties*. ACER Press.
- White, R. (1988). *Writing advanced*. Oxford. Oxford University Press.
- White, R. & Arndt, V. (1991). *Process writing*. Harlow: Longman
- Widdowson, H. G. (1978). *Teaching languages as communication*. Oxford: OUP.

Willilams, M., & Burden, R. (1997). *Psychology for language teachers*.

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wilkins, D.A. (1976). *Notional syllabuses*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Winch, C. & Wells, P. (1995). The quality of student writing in higher education:

A case for concern? *British Journal of Educational Studies*.43 (1), 75-87.

Witte, S. & Faigley, L. (1981). Coherence, Cohesion, and Writing Quality. In

College Composition and Communication, 32(2)

Yalden, J. (1987) *Principles of course design for language teaching*. Cambridge :

Cambridge University Press.

Yi-Nian, L.; Ching-Yi, C.; Shu-Chen, L. (2007). A study of learning strategies used

by college EFL learners in Taiwan. Unpublished paper, MingDao

University, Taiwan. Available from

<http://www.mdu.edu.tw/~ged/other%20download/bulletin/20070319/11.pdf>

Yin, R.K. (2009). *Case study research: Design and methods* (4th ed.),
Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Zalewski, J. P. (1993). Number/Person errors in an information-processing
perspective: implications for form focused instruction; in *TESOL Quarterly*;
9(1),53-63.

Zamel, V. (1982). Writing: The process of discovering meaning. *TESOL
Quarterly*, 16 (2)

—————(1983). The composing process of advanced ESL students: Six case
studies. *TESOL Quarterly*, 17, 165-87.

—————(1983). The composing **process** of advanced ESL students: Six case
studies in effectiveness of using the **process approach** to teach
writing in six Hong Kong primary classrooms”.
www.cityu.edu.hk/en/research/spring2006ho.pdf

————— (1987). Writing: The process of discovering meaning; in *Methodology in
TESOL: A Book of Readings*; ed. M.H. Long and J. C.
Richards; New York; Newbury House

Appendices

Appendix A

Teacher Classroom Observation

I. Pre-intervention phase

Step 1: What is the mostly used approach for writing instruction?

Is it the product approach?

Is it the process approach? or both of them?

Step 2: How does the teacher conduct the writing lesson?

Step 3: How do first-year learners proceed as they embark on the writing task?

Step 4: Which proficiency level do learners exhibit in paragraph writing?

Step 5: What do learners need to learn in order to develop their writing proficiency?

Step 6: What kind of instruction would prove more efficient for learners' writing and thinking enhancement?

II. Intervention phase

Step 1: Does the new teaching approach correlate positively with learners' needs?

Step 2: What is the impact of the new writing pedagogy on learners' performance?

III. Post-intervention phase

Step 1: Does explicit writing instruction lead to learners' involvement and use of the writing process?

Step 2: To what extent has the learners' writing performance improved?

Step 3: Has the newly-implemented approach proved effective?

Appendix B

Learners' Pre-Intervention Phase Questionnaire

Dear students,

I am presently conducting a research related to the exploration of the current writing pedagogies at university level, dealing with first year EFL university learners. The aim of this research is to investigate the teaching/learning of EFL writing with reference to writing instruction. I would be very grateful if you could answer the following questions and I promise to keep your answers confident.

Part One:

Personal information

Gender:

Age:

Secondary school Stream:

Part Two:

1. Choice and enjoyment in studying English at university level

1-Why did you choose to study English at university level?

a-Personal reasons

b-Parents' expectations

c-Orientation

Others, please specify

.....
.....
.....

2-Do you enjoy studying English at university level?

Yes

No

Why?

.....
.....
.....

II. Writing

3-Which of the four language skills do you find most difficult?

Please order your choice (1 for the most difficult, 4 for the least difficult)

a-Listening

b-Speaking

c-Reading

d-Writing

4-Do you enjoy the writing course?

Yes

No

Why? Justify your answer

.....
.....
.....

5-How would you assess your proficiency level in writing?

a-Weak

b-Average

c-Good

6-What are the reasons for your difficulties in writing?

a-I do not like English

b-I do not like writing

c-I do not like the topics to write about

d-I find English writing difficult

Also due to:

e-Lack of practice

f-Insufficient teaching time devoted to writing

g-Inadequate writing instruction

h-Implicit writing instruction

Others, please specify

.....
.....
.....

7-What are your major problem areas?

a-Punctuation and spelling

b-Lack or inappropriate use of vocabulary

c-Word order

d-Grammatical mistakes

e-Lexical mistakes (use of L1 terms)

f-Cohesion of sentences (i.e. use of linking words)

g-Coherence in writing

Others, please specify

.....
.....
.....

8-Your negative attitudes towards writing are due to:

- a-The difficulty of writing
- b-Lack of motivation and interest
- c-Teachers' lack of pedagogy
- d-The teaching practices

Others, please specify

.....
.....
.....

III. Paragraph writing

9-Which of the assigned writing tasks seem(s) most difficult?

- a-Sentence construction
- b-Sentence expansion
- c-Sentence combining
- d-Expanding paragraphs
- e-Paragraph writing

10-Are you taught how to write a paragraph?

- Yes
- No

If yes, how often?

.....
.....
.....

11-Do you think you have enough practice in paragraph writing?

Yes

No

IV. Writing process

12-Do you ever go through the three stages of the writing process when composing?

Pre-writing, writing, and post-writing

Yes

No

If yes, explain how you proceed

.....
.....
.....
.....

13-Do you ever use drafts when composing?

Yes

No

Justify your answer

.....
.....
.....
.....

If yes, how many drafts do you write?

Only one draft

Several drafts

Write directly on the final paper

14-What changes do you make when rewriting your draft(s)?

Change words

Correct mistakes (punctuation, capitalisation, spelling, lexical, and grammatical)

Reformulate ideas and sentences

Reorder ideas and sentences

Others, please specify

.....
.....
.....
.....

v. Learners' preferred ways for learning to write

15-Do you appreciate being assisted by your teacher when composing?

Yes No

Justify your answer

.....
.....
.....
.....

16-When writing a paragraph in class you prefer working:

Individually

In pairs

In groups

Justify your answer

.....
.....
.....
.....

17-Do you think you learn and perform better thanks to:

Teacher's guidance and comments

Peers' help and comments

VI. Assessment of writing instruction

18-Does the current teaching of writing help you write effectively?

Yes

No

Justify your answer

.....
.....
.....
.....

19-Do you think writing at 1st year university level adequately prepares you to write in the other modules and in subsequent years?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

VII. Learners' suggestions

20-What do you suggest to your teacher to improve your writing proficiency level?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

21-What do you suggest to your peers to improve their writing?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Appendix C

Learners' Post-Intervention Phase Questionnaire

Dear students,

I am presently conducting a research related to the exploration of the current writing pedagogies at university level, dealing with first year EFL university learners. The aim of this research is to investigate the teaching/learning of EFL writing with reference to writing instruction. I would be very grateful if you could answer the following questions and I promise to keep your answers confident.

1-According to you did pre-university education prepare you develop your thinking abilities: reasoning, analysing, and synthesising?

Yes

No

Explain.....
.....
.....

2-In your opinion what are the main reasons that make writing an important skill at the university level?

a-Consolidation of language proficiency

b-Aid to learning and thinking

c-Support of the other language skills

d-Primary requirement for academic success

Other, please specify.....

.....
...

3-In your opinion, has explicit writing instruction helped you overcome your difficulties?

Yes

No

Justify your answer

.....
..

.....
...

4-Does explicit teaching of text patterns help you write better?

Yes

No

If yes please indicate which ones

a-Cohesive patterns (syntactic relationships among sentences)

b-Lexical cohesion (semantic relationships among words and sentences)

c-Logical connectors between ideas

d-Contextual features (reader and purpose)

e-Register (lexical choice)

f-Style (formal or informal)

g-Rhetoric (organizational modes)

h-Coherence patterns (overall text structure)

Other, please specify

.....
.....
...

5-Do you now feel able to write better in the other modules and in the coming years?

Yes

No

Justify your answer

.....
.....
...

6-What seems most important to you: paying attention to form, content, or both?

a-Form

b-Content

c-Both

Justify your choice

.....
.....

7-Which areas do you consider most important?

a-Mechanics: punctuation, spelling, and capitalization

b-Lexical knowledge: word choice, cohesion

c-Sentence construction: simple, compound, complex, compound complex

d-Sentence expansion: reduced and extended clauses

e-Grammatical accuracy: tense agreement, word order

f-Paragraph construction: topic sentence, supporting sentences,

concluding sentence

g-Paragraph organization: Logic and coherence in writing

Other, please specify

.....
.....
...

8-Do you think you need more practice on paragraph writing to improve your proficiency level?

Yes

No

Say why

.....
.....
.....

9-Which of the following suggestions may help you overcome your writing problems? Having:

a-Sound knowledge of grammar

b-Rich vocabulary through extensive reading

c-A large amount of regular writing practice

d-Collaboration and group composition

e-More interesting and authentic writing topics, tasks, and projects

f-Effective teaching methodology and explicit writing instruction

Other, please specify

.....

.....

...

Appendix D

Written Expression Examination Samples

Name :

Group :

Comprehension and Written Expression Exam (1st Semester)

Exercise n°1 : (2.5 pts)

Are these sentences simple (S), compound (C), complex (Cx), or compound-complex (CC)?

- 1-We saw you coming and we were glad. →
- 2-The catcher wears a large glove which is heavily padded and protects him from fast pitches.
→
- 3-The criminal will be imprisoned for two years. →
- 4-We decided that the movie was too violent, but our children, who like to watch scary movies, thought that we were wrong. →
- 5-Some students skipped studying because the weather was gorgeous outside. →

Exercise n°2 : (5 pts)

Combine the sentences in each set into **one clear sentence** (avoid repetition) :

- 1-Mary made the tea.
John cleaned the car.
The car is my father's.

.....
.....
.....

- 2-I suppose Jane is away for the day.
She did not answer my call.
I phoned her just now.

.....
.....
.....

- 3-The Williams send their son to a public school.
The public school is situated in London.
It is too expensive to study in a public school.

.....
.....
.....

- 4-A huge factory is going to be built in our town.
It will not be finished this year.
It will have been completed by the end of next summer.

.....
.....
.....

5-John always insists on revising his lectures two weeks before exams.
He could get the best grades this year.

.....
.....
.....

Exercise n°3 : (7.5 pts)

Expand the text below by filling in the blanks. **Follow the instructions given between brackets :**

A Birthday Present

Choosing a birthday present for a friend ...1... **(add an adjective clause)** or family member is ...2... **(add an adverb)** fun, but it can be difficult. ...3... **(use substitution to replace the word "present" by a noun clause)** should be personal and has to be thoughtful. For example, the best birthday present I ever got was not fancy or expensive. ...4... **(add an adverb clause of time)** my mother gave me a ...5... **(add an adjective)** photograph of my father when he was my age. He is standing with his mother and father in front of their ...6... **(add an adjective)** house, and he looks happy. I think of my father every time I see that photo. It was a perfect birthday present ...7... **(use coordination to express reason).**

Write down your answers below:

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.

Comprehension & Written Expression Exam (1st Semester)

Text:

[I will never eat dinner at the Little French Restaurant again. The restaurant ... (a) ... is not very clean.][... (b) ... you can see dust in the corners. You can also see dust on the shelves ... (c)][The food is expensive ... (d).... The portions are small. I never feel full after I have finished eating.] In addition, the waiters ... (e) ... are not very friendly ... (f).... For these reasons, I will not visit that restaurant again.

Questions:

1) How many sentences are there in the text?

Simple	Complex	Compound	Compound-Complex

2) Identify the type of the following sentence and divide it into clauses. Then identify the type of each clause (Independent Clause, Noun Clause, Adjective Clause, and/or Adverb Clause):

“For these reasons, I will not visit that restaurant again.”

3) Combine each group of sentences between **square brackets[...]** into **one** sentence (avoid repetition).

4) Fill in the gaps according to the following instructions:

(a) →Add an adjective clause. (d) →Add an adverb clause of contrast.

(b) →Add an adverb clause of time. (e)→Add an adjective clause.

(c) →Add an adjective clause.(f) →Add an adverb clause of reason.

5) Expand the following sentence of the text by **substituting** the subject by a noun clause.

“The restaurant is not very clean.”

Comprehension & Written Expression Make-Up Exam (1st Semester)

Name:

Group:

Exercise 1: (2.5) Tell whether each sentence below is simple, complex, compound or compound-complex.

1. I love roast potatoes although my mum prefers them mashed.
2. The directors worked hard to save the company.....
3. There was a monster in my room and he was roaring.
4. Eight people got into the elevator, but it was crowded, so three people got off.
5. You need to prepare for the spelling test tomorrow if you want to get all your spellings right.

Exercise 2: (5 pts)

Expand the **subject** of each sentence by adding an **adjective clause**

1. The CD improved her level in computing.
.....
2. My job taught me many skills.
.....
3. The managers did their best to save the company.
.....
4. The thief stole many things in the house.
.....
5. The teacher has given me many advices.
.....

Exercise n°3 : (5pts)

Combine the following pairs of sentences by using **subordination**. Follow the instructions between brackets and **avoid repetition** :

- 1-He is the accountant. You recommended the accountant to me. (Adjective clause)
.....
- 2-I will never forget the man. That man stole my car. (Adjective clause)
.....
- 3-It is a beautiful place. We met in this place yesterday. (Noun clause)
.....
- 4-He is eating a cake. His mother has prepared the cake. (Noun clause)
.....
- 5-She was reading a book. The phone rang at that moment. (Adverbial clause)
.....

Exercise 4 : (5pts) Complete the sentences using adverbial clauses (respect what is given between brackets) :

1-They decided to start the meeting (Time).
.....

2-We left him (Place).
.....

3-The book was so exciting (Result).
.....

4-I did not have time to revise (Reason).
.....

5-He arranged to come early (Purpose).
.....

Exercise 5: (2.5)

Choose the best connective to join the following simple sentences.

1. I pushed the door. It opened with a creak.

And / but/ or
.....

2. It was a hot, bright day. The room was strangely cold.

And/ so / but
.....

3. The room was dark. I couldn't make out any objects apart from a huge armchair.

But/ so/ although
.....

4. I took two or three steps into the room. I stopped.

And / or/although
.....

5. I heard a noise. My skin started tingling with fear.

And/ but/ or
.....

Good Luck !

Comprehension & Written Expression Make up Exam (1st Semester)

Text:

[A group of frogs were traveling through the woods. Two of them, (...a...), fell into a deep hole]. The other frogs saw how deep the hole was. [They told the two frogs that they were as good as dead. The two frogs ignored the comments. They tried to jump up out of the hole with all their might, (...b...)]. The other frogs kept telling them to stop, that they were as good as dead. Finally, one of the frogs, (...c...), listened to what the other frogs were saying and gave up. He fell down and died. (...d...), the other frog continued to jump as hard as he could. The crowd of frogs, (...e...), yelled at him to stop the pain and just die. He jumped even harder and finally made it out. (...f...), the other frogs said, "Didn't you hear us?" The frog explained to them that he was deaf. He thought that they were encouraging him the entire time.

Questions:

1) How many sentences are there in the text?

Simple	Complex	Compound	Compound-Complex

2) Find in the text one (01) **noun clause** as **an object**.

3) Identify the type of the following sentence and divide it into clauses. Then identify the type of each clause (Independent Clause, Noun Clause, Adjective Clause, and/or Adverb Clause):

"The other frog continued to jump as hard as he could".

4) Combine each group of sentences between square brackets [] into one sentence (avoid repetition).

5) Fill in the gaps according to the following instructions:

(a) → Add an adjective clause. (d) → Add an adverb clause of contrast.

(b) → Add an adverb clause of purpose. (e) → Add an adjective clause.

(c) → Add an adjective clause. (f) → Add an adverb clause of time.

6) Expand the following sentence of the text by substituting the **direct object** by a **noun clause**.

The two frogs ignored the comments.

University of Tlemcen
Department of English
1st Year LMD
May,2016

Name:
Group:.....

Comprehension & Written Expression
2nd Semester Exam

Exercise 1: Fill in the gaps in the table below (6Pts)

Topic Sentences	Concluding Sentences
a-	a- Looking back, I am not sorry that my parents were strict with me because I think it was the best way to bring up a child.
b- Being a tourist is the hope of many of us.	b-
c-	c- It is clear that eBook readers have made students' lives much easier.

Exercise 2: Read the paragraph and underline the topic sentence. Then, Circle the irrelevant sentence. Finally, write an adequate concluding sentence on the lines provided. (4Pts)

College Adjustments

When I first started going to college, I was surprised at all the studying that was required. First, I had to do all the cleaning, shopping and nursing. At the university, it seemed that all my professors thought their class was the most important class. Each professor gave me a tremendous amount of homework every night. As a result, my free time became very limited. Nights out with friends and time spent watching TV were replaced with reading assignments, group projects, learning activities, and research. My university classes kept me so busy that I could only go out on Saturday nights. This kind of schedule was a big change from high school, where I used to play sports, have fun, and go out every other night.

.....
.....
.....

Exercise 3: According to the topic sentence below, develop your own paragraph in no more than 10 lines. (10Pts)

TS: Dogs do many wonderful things for their owners.

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Good Luck

Name :

Group :

Comprehension and Written Expression Exam (1st Semester)

PART I :

Exercise 1 : (5 points)

Fill in the gaps with the appropriate **dependent clause**. Follow the instructions given between brackets:

1-The examination had to be postponed(**Adverb Clause of reason**)

→

2-.....(**Noun Clause**), was the question that the History teacher asked.

→

3-They were obliged to change their farming methods.....(**Adverb Clause of purpose**)

→

4-1962 is the year(**Adjective Clause**)

→

5-She wants to get a good mark in the exam(**Adverb Clause of contrast**)

→

Exercise 2 : (5 points)

Combine each group of sentences into **one** clear sentence. Avoid repetition and follow the instructions given between brackets:

N.B. Do not use semi colons (;) and do not change the order of sentences.

1-I liked the house. Its roof was made of red tiles. (**obtain a complex sentence**)

→

2-My father has to follow a diet. My father has a high blood pressure. (**obtain a compound sentence**)→

3- I phoned Jane just now. I suppose Jane is away for the day. She did not answer my call. (**obtain a compound-complex sentence**)

→

4-The teacher was explaining the lesson. Some students were not following. the teacher ordered those students to go out.(**obtain a compound sentence**)

→

5- The Williams send their son to a public school. The public school is situated in London. It is too expensive to study in a private school. (obtain a complex sentence)

→

PART II :

Text :

Professors should be understanding when students cannot complete assignments on time. I could not do the writing homework for English class today, and my professor did not want to hear my reasons. **[I had good reasons.]^a** Last night was Evan's birthday. He is my best friend, so I had to go to his party. After the party, I tried to do **the homework**, but my computer froze and I lost all the information. **[I was too tired to write it again because it was very late.]^b** **[My professor did not care.]^c**

Questions :

1-How many sentences are there in the text? (1point)

Simple	Complex	Compound	Compound-Complex

2-Expand the sentences between square brackets [...] using coordination or subordination.(3points)

a→

b→

c→

3-Substitute the underlined word by a **noun clause** and rewrite the sentence correctly. (1point)

→

4-Finish this paragraph by adding **1 simple sentence, 2 complex sentences and 1 compound sentence**. (5points)

UNIVERSITY OF TLEMCEN
FACULTY OF LETTERS AND LANGUAGES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
1ST year Licence

Comprehension and Written Expression
First Make-up Exam (2017)

Exercise 1 (4pts): Determine whether the following sentences are simple (S), compound (CP), complex (CX) or compound-complex (CC).

1. Mark is not going to her party since she never invited him.
2. Neither wind nor rain can stop the U.S. Postal Service from delivering the mail.
3. Cindy and Sue auditioned for the lead role in the play.
4. Although Sara called out for Charlie, no one answered, and she was scared.
5. While washing the window, Jane slipped on the soap, so she fell and broke her tail-bone.
6. Those clouds promise rain, so we should hurry up and leave before we get caught in a flash flood.
7. Barbara and Joan whispered and giggled all night.
8. Older television sets had tubes; the newest models, which take less space, are digital televisions.

Exercise 2 (4pts): Combine each group of sentences into one clear sentence. Avoid repetition and follow the instructions given between brackets.

N.B. Do not use semi colons (;) and do not change the order of sentences.

1. Thousand of lives could be saved each year. Scientists could predict earthquakes accurately. (obtain a complex sentence)
2. Albany was the first British settlement in Western Australia. Albany was established in 1826. (obtain a complex sentence)
3. Tom is ambitious. Tom's brother is quite the reverse. (obtain a compound sentence)
4. A study was done in 1991. In 1991, they found that only four states had obesity rates of 15 percent or higher. Today, at least thirty-seven states do. (obtain a compound-complex sentence)

Exercise 3 (4pts): Arrange the following sentences in a logical order to form a coherent paragraph on time management.

1. The first skill is not taking on more than you can handle.
2. Another time management skill is reasonably estimating the time required to perform each of the tasks at hand.
3. Procrastination is a time manager's enemy.
4. To be successful at university, students need to learn good time-management skills.
5. For example, deeply reading a chapter from a course text cannot be completed in between television programmes.
6. By learning time management skills your university study will be successful and most importantly enjoyable.
7. Finally, actually *doing* what needs to be done seems obvious, but is a very difficult skill. You may find that cleaning out your wardrobe becomes vital when you are avoiding study.
8. If you are a working part-time, have a family and are involved in a community organisation, then taking a full course-load at university will be too much.

Exercise 4 (8pts): Develop the following topic sentence into a paragraph by adding four supporting sentences and a concluding sentence.

My hometown is famous for several amazing natural features.

UNIVERSITY OF TLEMCEM
FACULTY OF LETTERS AND LANGUAGES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
1ST year Licence

Comprehension and Written Expression
Second Exam (May 2017)

Exercise 1 (6pts)

Expand the text below by filling in the blanks with Adjective Clauses.

A Birthday Present

Choosing a birthday present for a friend ...1... or family member is fun, but it can be difficult. A present should be personal and has to be thoughtful. For example, the best birthday present ...2... was not fancy or expensive. My mother ...3... gave me a photograph ...4... . It was a picture of my father when he was my age. He is standing with his mother and father in front of their house ...5... , and he looks happy. It was a perfect birthday present because I think of my father ...6... every time I see that photo.

Exercise 2 (3pts)

Fill in the blanks with "**because**" or "**because of**" to complete the text.

I decided to go to the city center yesterday morning ...(a)... I was so bored. I had breakfast and got dressed. I wore my boots and took my umbrella with me ...(b)... the heavy rain outside. I waited at the bus stop for some time and a bus came. I could not get in ...(c)... there were too many people in it. Then I took a taxi and arrived at the city center. First I looked for a bank ...(d)... I needed some money. Then I went to a cafe to drink coffee. I sat on a table and turned on my laptop but I couldn't surf on the internet ...(e)... poor wireless signal. I finished my coffee and went to a clothes shop. I wanted to buy a nice dress ...(f)... I needed it for my mom's birthday. Finally I finished shopping and went back home.

Exercise 3 (4pts)

Rewrite the following sentences using "**there is**" or "**there are**" and change the sentence accordingly. The first one has been done for you.

1-Many harvest festivals take place every autumn.

There are many harvest festivals every autumn.

2-You do not find good seafood along the coast.

3-Tall pine trees lining the streets of South Florida can be seen.

4-Many international restaurants are downtown.

5-We cannot find any airport in my city.

Exercise 4 (7pts)

Write a narrative paragraph about a special memory from your childhood. Use sensory and emotional details and at least **three** transitional words showing order of events.

CWE First Term Exam

Exercise 1: (4 points)

Complete the following paragraphs by adding appropriate **topic sentences (T.S)**:

1-.....**T.S1**..... . I met him at school when we were seven. We were in the same class for ten years. After school, I started working in a bank and Salim started a career as a journalist. Although he lives in a different city, we are always in touch. ...

2-.....**T.S2**..... . We went to Scotland for three weeks. We visited the big cities and then we travelled to the north. We saw some beautiful countryside and mountains. The food was also delicious. ...

3-.....**T.S3**..... . It helps you to be more confident, and to know how to work within a group. It also gives an opportunity to meet new people and have new friends, and besides these, it will keep you fit and healthy. ...

4-.....**T.S4**..... . I started fishing when I was twelve. My father took me out on his boat and showed me how to catch fish. I like to go fishing every weekend, but it is difficult now that I am studying a lot. ...

Exercise 2: (8 points)

Fill in the text with appropriate dependent clauses (follow the instructions given between brackets):

There was a farmer**1 (Adjective clause)**..... . He had three strong and healthy sons, but they were all lazy. The ploughman was sad thinking about his sons and the future of his farmland. One day,**2 (Adverb clause of time)**....., he got a flash of an idea. He called all his sons and said, "I have hidden a treasure in our farmland. You search and share the treasure among you." The three sons were overjoyed**3 (Adverb clause of reason)**..... . They went to the fields and started searching. They dug each and every inch of the field**4 (Adverb clause of purpose)**..... , but nothing was hidden in the land. The farmer said to his sons, "Dear boys! Now you have tilled and conditioned the field, why not we sow a crop!" Off went the sons to sow the crops. Days passed. Soon,**5 (Noun clause which means "the crops")**..... grew lushly green. The sons were delighted**6 (Adverb clause of contrast)**..... . The father said, "Sons, this is the real treasure I wanted you to share."

Exercise 3: (8 points)

Write a paragraph where you describe your favourite childhood possession (no more than 8 lines).

CWE First Term Make up Exam

Exercise 1: (4 points)

Complete the following paragraphs by adding appropriate **topic sentences (T.S)** :

1-.....**T.S1**..... . For example, a person can have breakfast in New York, board an airplane, and have dinner in Paris. A businesswoman in London can instantly place an order with a factory in Hong Kong by sending a fax. Furthermore, a schoolboy in Tokyo can turn on a TV and watch a baseball game being played in Los Angeles. ...

2-.....**T.S2**..... . The weather is usually sunny and hot, so I can go to the beach almost every day. I enjoy summer sports like water skiing and baseball. Gardening is my hobby and I spend many summer days working in my garden. Unfortunately, the days pass too quickly in summer. ...

3-.....**T.S3**..... . North Americans send cards for many occasions. They send cards to family and friends on birthdays and holidays. They also send thank-you cards, get well cards, graduation cards, and congratulation cards. It is very common to buy cards in stores and send them through the mail, but turning on the computer and sending cards over the Internet is also popular. ...

4-.....**T.S4**..... . First, fruits and vegetables are packed with the vitamins and minerals you need to keep your body functioning smoothly. In addition, they give you the carbohydrates you need for energy. Fruits and vegetables have lots of fiber to help your digestive system work properly. Finally, many scientists believe that the nutrients in fruits and vegetables can help fight diseases. ...

Exercise 2: (4 points)

Read the following paragraph then:

a-Find the irrelevant sentence.

b-Correct all the capitalization, spelling and grammatical mistakes (there are 7 mistakes).

The students in my class comes from different partes of the word. Some are from European countries, such as France, Spain and Italy. Others are from Middle eastern countries like Saudi Arabia and Israel. Still other students were born in Asian Countries, including Japan and Korea. Korean food is delicious. The largest number of students are from Latin American countries like Mexico, Venezuela and Peru. The class is an interesting mixture of people from many different countrys.

Exercise 3: (12 points)

Write a paragraph where you describe your house (10 to 15 lines).

Name :

Group :

CWE Second Term Exam

Exercise 1: (8 points)

Correct the **16 mistakes** found in the following paragraph :

A young graduate was deciding to launch his own business as a financial consultant.

The business did not progress very fast and in the first few days he had scarcely any enquiries,

which left him feeling, not surprisingly, rather disappointed. On the fifth day however he was

relieved to hear a knock on his door. 'Come in,' he said. Because of he was worried that his

visitor might realize he did not have a single client and had nothing to do he picked up the

phone and pretended to be busy. He spoke on the phone as his visitor walked into the room.

The young man signalled to the visitor to take a sit. 'I wan't be long,' he told him. After a

while he hunged up and turned to his visitor, who was looking surprised. 'How can I help

you?' he asked. His visitor answered, 'I've come to connect your phone.'

Exercise 2: (12 points)

Write a paragraph (no more than 20 lines) on one of the following topics:

Topic 1: Tell us how you spent your first days of Ramadan.

Topic 2: What is the best job for you? Why?

Name :

Group :

CWE Second Term Make up Exam

Exercise 1: (8 points)

Correct the **16 mistakes** found in the following paragraph :

My life changed allot when I was in college. There was 600 students in my high school and I knewed nearly everyone. However their were thousands of students in my college; and I did not know anyone. I felt very lonely. In High School, the classes were half boys and half girls. In college, I studied engineering, and there were not many woman in the classes. The biggest change in college was the style of classe. We had to do allot of reading and learning on our own in college, wheras in high school the teacher was telling us nearly everything to study for the exams. Even thouw college was more difficult I enjoyed it more then my school days.

Exercise 2: (12 points)

Write a paragraph (no more than 20 lines) on one of the following topics:

Topic 1: How did you spend your last summer holydays?

Topic 2: Do you think that smoking in public places should be banned? Why?

Appendix E

Learners' Pre-Test Samples

Childhood is one of the best periods of our life, Specially
mine. I lived ~~it~~ as good as I could and ~~it~~ was full
of adventures with my family. The day that I never
forghet ~~it~~ is when I went to the zoo and saw all animals,
Then we moved to a very nice beach and (we) ate some
delicious ice cream then in the midnight we moved
to a very ~~big~~ festival, ~~and~~ so we got a special moments,
with taking pictures with clowns and wishes.

rep

My childhood Incident

This happened to me when I was just five years old, the weather was cool with a sunny day, I was playing with my toys as usual, my father went to work and my mother was with our neighbour. I heard something ~~was~~ upstairs it was a thief inside the house, he locked the door and I started crying my mother heard me and tried to open the door but she could not ~~so~~ she called police. Fortunately they were close to our house ^{so they} broke the door and arrested him. It was really bad memory and stuck in my mind.

No use of linking words in the 1st part of your

When I was child, something very choqu
was haped to me. It was the death of my grandpa
he was on good health and very strong. The accide
was on the same date of my BEM exam. I was rea
and very happy date for me because my grandpa h
encouraged me and convinced me that I will be
best and I will get it, during the exam, I miss
his calls, so I decided to visit him. some one tell
that he was ill and just needed some urgence a
he will be okay. after my exams they told me
he died and this bad news made me really sad.
my mind went blank. Saddely I was ver
sick after this bad news because he was my greatest
nobel. This was the very unbelievable accident happ

No linking words!

I have many memories about my childhood
are some:
are some of them which is are bad and some
of good, and I have one sad event it's still in
mind and I can not forget it, it's about
classmate friend she was a very friendly
girl, and she was my best friend, we was
every things together but I hear that she
sick and she needs me to go out of the
country to see a doctor so we decide me
and my friend and my teachers to help
but she died before we help her, this is the
bad event ever in my life and I can not
forget it, it was a very friendly girl it was
my best friend.

Overuse of the linking word "and"

Bad punctuation

A bad T.S

There are many incidents which have happened to me since my childhood. ~~but~~ However, there is one ~~other~~ incident ~~happened~~ to me ~~when~~ I was a child that I can never forget. I had a strong relationship with my friend Salma; she was very funny, kind and beautiful girl. But, she was always tired, felt not fine, and did not attend lectures at school. I did not understand why maybe it was a matter of ~~age~~ age. Since I heard that she was died because of the black plague. I was completely shocked and sad because I considered her ~~to~~ the closest one of my best friend in that time. It was really a very trouble incident which I will remember all my life.

No use of cohesive words and relative pronouns/

I will never forget my special childhood

memory because it's unforgettable, It was the day

my younger sister borned I mean, The delivery was on the

5th of 10th 1900th on 2 am.

I can remember that I stayed up all night waiting

for my new family member, I was so happy and

excited, Just running in front of the house singing

and dancing, Also calling of that I will have a little

baby, And I will love him more than any thing, And take

care of him, and not make him cry, And I will give him

my toys, The sun rised and my home became full

of people, And the moment has come mom and dad

embrace a cute so small baby; it was magical.

In every one's life there is an indelible moment that cannot be removed from the memory and it could be sad or happy. When I was 5 years old, my father use to be a teacher and I use to go to his classroom every day after finishing my studies and this was the best period of the day. When I went there the first thing I did was discovering the closet which was full of mysterious things, but what attract me a lot was a box plenty of shells, I use to count them and select them by shape, when I finished, I started drawing on the black board and as I can remember I drew always a clown and this made my father's students laughing. When the bell was about to rang, my father stopped the lecture and started singing with their pupils and this was my favourite part. This was the most inforgettable memory and it will be stick on my mind forever.

To

adv. place

inf.

In my childhood; exactly when I was 5 years old, a special gift that became the closest one to me, a very sweet pink toy was offered to me by my dad in my birthday. It was called "Mr. Pinky". It was my second piece and my lovely friend. After 2 years ago; the life has given a second gift to me with was a pretty little sister. This final got touched to my pinky, that what made me kind of jealous. One day; sister Nazika ruined my toy with no attention. "Oh!! my pinky died." It was a shocked accident for me. But mom decided to sew it to avoid my bad reaction. After all, I still have Mr. Pinky. That's why it was a special memory.

Incorrect
T

Sp.

~~Every~~ ~~line~~ ~~of~~ ~~us~~ ~~have~~ a memories some of them it's good and
inc. some it's ~~bad~~ and we all have a memories about our childhood
because it was the most beautiful period ever in our life and
sing any person of us have a memories that happen in his childhood
and he can not forget it for example me, when I was a
W.W child I was 9 years, I was a student at primary school and
our director decide to organize a voyage to visit the
T Zoo. So I prepare my self and I was so happy because
it was the first time that I go a voyage alone with out my
family so all my friend and my classmate were went and our
W.W teacher also, so when we arrived at the zoo it was so big and
W.W it was plenty of animals from many types and when we was
walking we saw a monkey and my friend want to give him
a banana to eat it and when she gave it the banana the monkey
bite her in her hand and she started screaming and crying
and I was so afraid and suddenly our teachers comes and take
her to the hospital, it was the most bad memories in my childhood
and still now I can not forget it.

Well this is not really hard for me, because
I can't forget my ever best 16 surprise party ^{Birth day}

It was my mom idea to get all the family
together in my grandfather house. Remember
I was outside playing. And when I get inside
I found every one with an amazing cake with my
name on it and every one start singing, it was
amazing and emotional, I even cried, I will never
forget it and it will always be my favourite memory.

Appendix F

Learners' Post-Test Samples

Punct,
Caps

In the past, I used to play with my friends in a public garden near our houses. One day, we were playing as usual and suddenly a black car stopped next to us. Two big men came out, and ~~try to take~~ kidnap us. So we started screaming and shouting, we panicked, until someone called police. At that time we were resisting and crying. When police man came it was too late, unfortunately they took two of my friends and we could not find them.

My Special Memory

2000000

W.W

inc.

All people have many memories from their childhood that remember all their lives. Personally, I have also funny and hard childish memories, but there is one of them I cannot forget it. I remember, in December, 31st, 2008, my parents and I were in the living room watching TV and enjoying our time. Suddenly, the phone rang and my mother answer. When she finished the call, ~~the~~ her face became red and her eyes were filled with tears. She said that her father died; this expression have broken me. I was so shocked that I began faulting and asking why did he leave us. Then, I went to my room, and I started crying and looking at my photos with him. However, I ~~always~~ have always believed that we will meet each other in Paradise one day. I remember each moment I spent with him. It is so undelete memory that makes me always thinking about the treasure that I lost all my life.

Some incorrects

Sometimes, when I am sitting and looking
(to my childhood's ph.)

W.W. to my childhood's photos, I remember many
adventures and mistakes that I did it especially

in the primary school. One day, I came back

from the school, and I went to my baby siter's

m.w. home to wait my mother. so, I met a

W.W. boy who had 6 year (like) and we started

rep. playing, and the game was "the Run and escape".

so, I run before the boy, but when I turned

to see him, I hit my self with the wall, it

was really something horrible, and I could not

forget this moment. C.S?

No concluding sentence!

Each person has memories in his life that could be different and indelible and could make him shedding tears of happiness or sadness, and my unforgettable moment makes me really laughing. When I was 9 years ^{old}, my cousin came to my home for pyjama night. I was very excited for this amazing night. So, after we took our dinner, my mother told us to wash our teeth and go to my room for enjoying ourselves by doing something that not to disturb ^{the} others. So, when we were in my room, we started thinking how we could make this night unique, fortunately my mother came to tell us "have a good night", and she gave us an idea to do, which is reading princess stories, all my family members were sleeping. At the beginning we were quiet and started reading stories. Suddenly, we heard a sound coming from the living room; we thought that ~~was~~ ^{the} my mother, therefore we went there, but we didn't find anyone, we started being afraid and we ran away to my room and all of the sudden, we found someone at the door, who was hidden by a white curtain. So, we shouted loudly and we started crying. Consequently, all my family woke up. At the end we found ^{that} the person who made us afraid was my brother. It was really an amazed night and unforgettable.

mg.w.

(X am)

Some times, when I am sitting and looking to my childhood's photo; I remember many adventures and things that happend with me, especially in primary school. One day I come back from school and I went to my baby siter's home to wait my mother. I met a boy who had 6 years as me. so, we started playing and the game was "The run and Escape". so, I run before a boy, but suddenly I beat my self to the wall, and it was really not not forgot.

miss, and

Every person has a very memorable incident in his life that ~~can never~~

can never forget it. Personally, the incident that is stick in my memory

is my first school's day, where, it was the first time that I attend a classroom

with new persons, and I remember that I was really scared of being separated

from my mom; I was crying and screaming showing that I will not come back

here. The thing that made this fact memorable was my mom because, she

stayed with me in the first day in my classroom to show me that I should

not have fear from being in school, and it was a new experience for me.

~~This~~ was my favourite incident in my infancy, and I will never forget it.

My painful memory

W.
rel. pr.

10 years ago, I was in the primary school, my step father wich was my uncle used to drive me to school every morning.

One day I woked up late, I didn't find my my uncle; he went to work without driving me school I was so angry from my uncle

I went late to school and my teacher punished me that day. when

I came back home I found people and noise. I was suprised then

rel. pr. I ran to my mom; I found her crying so I asked my cousin he told me that my uncle had an accident and he is in emergency. the next

day in the morning my other cousin came from the hospital crying.

I was the first to know that my uncle died, I had a mental

break down that day and I fell down, I cried and cried because

for the second time I lost my father. I will never forget

the death of my uncle because I learned that life is unexpected;

since then my life changed completely.

childhood is the most favourite period of the human life. when I go back to the previous days I remember the days of primary school where I spent my lucky days, my successful ambitions. it was the entering of school days when I was getting the fifth year primary level. So, I was taking good marks everything is write. Soon the finale begins. So, I passed my Exam. it's the announcement of Exam Results in this moment something incredible happened found myself the Magnate one in the whole country. So, I was surprised. After that I traveled to the ministry residence where the minister of education hailed me, He give me a gift saying: 'I appreciate your work. Everybody were Clapping' for me I'm proud of what I have done.

Everybody = singular

w.
cap!

The memories that i have from my childhood are both good and bad, But there is one memory that stands out from the rest and it's when I first learned how to ride a bike.

It was a gift from my uncle because i was clumsy first in my class in primary school. The body of the bicycle was yellow and had rainbow colored wheels, So I practiced all summer long but still failed. My cousins laughed at me all

the time so i decided to learn no matter what. I wake up one day i remember it was late august, I had coffee and went to the back yard and tried for hours, And on that day I finally learned. I was so happy that the next day I took it out and spent the whole day outside with my friends just playing with our bicycles.

sth's
missing

When I was too young, my father bought a very nice toy to me. It was a very nice car ~~is~~ with its remote. It was very speed and I spend all day with playing just with it. So, After a while, I took it outside the home to try it with my friends, I was thinking that had to be a good adventure but ~~for~~ unfortunately ~~my~~ our neighbour shocked me with his car when I was playing in the road. So that made me in very bad situation, ~~so~~ he decided to take me to the hospital and after the analyzes, it shows ~~is~~ that my leg had broken.

rep

T.

الملخص

أظهرت غالبية طلاب السنة الأولى المسجلين بقسم اللغة الإنجليزية بجامعة تلمسان نقائص خطيرة في كتابة اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. فبهدف المساعدة في التخفيف من حدة هذه المشكلة، يسعى هذا البحث إلى تحديد مهارة الكتابة عند أولئك المتعلمين، مع محاولة كشف الأسباب وراء الصعوبات من خلال استكشاف بعض أوجه القصور التربوية المحتملة، وذلك عن طريق الاستفادة من ثلاث أدوات للبحث: ملاحظة المعلم، مهمة الإنتاج والاستبيانات. وعلى أساس النتائج المحصل عليها، تشرع هذه الدراسة في التوصية بممارسات تعليمية أكثر ملاءمة للمستوى الأول في الجامعة، بهدف المساعدة على تعزيز مستوى كفاءة المتعلمين وبالتالي قدرتهم على الكتابة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: تعليم الكتابة (إنجليزية)، متعلمو السنة الأولى، القدرة على الكتابة، طرق التدريس.

Résumé

La majorité des étudiants de première année du Département d'Anglais de l'Université de Tlemcen présentent d'importantes lacunes dans la production écrite, plus particulièrement au niveau de l'organisation du discours. Afin de remédier à ce problème, l'objectif de cette recherche est d'abord d'examiner la compétence dont font preuve ces apprenants, d'identifier les causes de leurs difficultés, et d'explorer d'éventuelles déficiences pédagogiques à travers trois outils de recherche: observation faite par l'enseignant, production écrite des étudiants de première année, et questionnaires adressés à ces mêmes étudiants. Sur la base des résultats obtenus, cette étude tente alors de recommander, en première année universitaire, une approche plus adéquate mais surtout plus performante.

Mots clés: Enseignement de l'écrit, langue étrangère (Anglais), étudiants de première année universitaire, méthodes d'enseignement

Summary

The majority of first-year students enrolled in the Department of English at Tlemcen University display serious deficiencies in FL2 writing, more particularly at the level of discourse and content organization. Aiming to help alleviate this problem, this research endeavours to identify these learners' writing competence, seeking to point out the reasons behind their difficulties through an exploration of some possible pedagogical deficiencies, making use of three research instruments: teacher observation, learners' task production, and questionnaires addressed to the same learners. On the basis of the obtained results, the study proceeds to recommend more relevant instructional practices at first-year university level, aiming to help enhance learners' proficiency level and consequently their writing ability.

Key words: Teaching FL2 writing, first-year university learners, writing ability, teaching methods