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**Difficulties Facing EFL Pupils in Writing a
Composition at Secondary Schools in M'sila. The
Case of Third Year classes at Abdelmadjid Allahoum
High School**

*A Dissertation Submitted to the English Department of M'sila University in a
Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master in Linguistics*

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to:

The pillar of my life, my sympathetic *MOTHER* whose love and support guided me all the way to success.

To the light of my light, to my heart , my daughter *CHAHD*

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

To all my brothers and sisters who always believed in me and pushed me forward and helped me in all possible ways.

To all my nephews and nieces and the other members of my family.

To all my friends and all my classmates at the university of M'Sila with whom I shared the university life with all its lights and shadows.

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

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ABSTRACT

Teaching and learning English is generally based on the four skills. However, The writing skill could be the most challenging one for both EFL teachers and learners. This study aimed at investigating the difficulties that face secondary school pupils in writing a paragraph in M'sila. The study looked at those difficulties that face and tried to develop it. The researcher adopted the descriptive method since it fits the aim and nature of the study. To put this methodology in practice, the researcher used the questionnaire as an instrument to attain the goal of the investigation. The research resulted in the following: Students at the secondary schools in M'Sila were unable to write a composition in English. They also failed to master the writing skill. The research suggested the following recommendations. First, Students should be given considerable practices in composition writing, since practice makes perfect. Moreover, they should be given sufficient and efficient exercises on the composition writing skills. One more point is that teachers must instill the confidence in their students and expand their awareness of different kinds of writing.

The Key Words

The EFL learners

The teaching and learning process

The writing skill

The difficulties encountered

The problems faced

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ESL	English as a Second Language
L1	First language
NSW	National Syllabus Writing
Q	Question

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The writing process is one of the most challenging tasks for the majority of the EFL learners. Difficulties are one of the most significant problems that affect the student in secondary school .Most of them dislike writing a piece of composition in English even they are interested in the topic, but they didn't use to do this type of work. As a result, they get bad marks and make many mistakes.

Many students face difficulties in expressing themselves in writing. They lack confidence, especially in examinations in which they cannot write correct piece of writing. This has created unproductive and inappropriate orientation towards composition (*Al-Fath Journal. 2014*) .For this reason ,it is important to say that academic writing involves many requirements that students must put into practice to avoid difficulties and complications at the moment of writing a composition.

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

1.2. Statements of the problem

The ability to write effectively and correctly is considered to be the most serious trouble that face learners in secondary schools. Few studies present various students challenges in writing a composition . Due to many reasons like using poor language, wrong grammar and spelling mistakes; learners lack logical arguments and coherence, being influenced by the mother tongue. They claim that they have received no instructions in learning how to write a composition when they were in previous stages of their first education, but they received only feedback in the examinations when their teachers returned their papers filled with red marks and notes. As a consequence, their reaction was to complain (*Al-Fath Journal.2014*).

The main objective of this paper is to help students pass the examinations successfully and create productive students without problems and difficulties facing in writing a composition.

1.3. Objectives of the study

1.3.1. General objective

Our research intends to identify the difficulties facing secondary school students in writing a composition in order to provide solutions and to eradicate such weaknesses.

1.3.2. Specific objectives

- 1-To clarify the main factors that lead the students to write with poor quality.
- 2-To identify the techniques with the purpose of determining its effectiveness.
- 3-To discover the weaknesses and to enhance students 'writing a composition.
- 4-To raise the learners motivation using the suitable techniques according to the learners' interest.
- 5- To train students to avoid mistakes.

1.4. Research questions

- 1- Are learners aware of how to write a composition ?
- 2- Are they able to write in English?
- 3- Which methods do teachers use in teaching the writing skill ?
- 4- What are the difficulties facing students when writing a composition ?
- 5- What are the strategies teachers use in order to improve their students writing skills ?

1.5. Hypothesis

We hypothesize that if EFL teachers use effective strategies in teaching writing, EFL learners will overcome the difficulties when writing as well as improve the quality of their writing productions.

1.6. Significance of the study

Through my experience as a teacher of English, I notice that many high school learners face difficulties in writing a composition. At the sametime, I found that few studies tackled this kind of research. This motivated me to undertake this study.

I wish this work would help in better understanding to students' writing as well as provide teachers with information to consolidate with their own students.

1.7. Limitation of the study

Many obstacles and limitations faced me in conducting this research which cause the results to be less accurate. Among them is the lack of time since I'm a teacher and I work for the most of time. In addition to that, I did this work alone as my partner gave up studying.

1.8. Research Methodology

1.8.1. Research Methods

The research method used in this study is descriptive one since it seems as the most appropriate for this research and the context where it takes part. The choice of this method can be justified by the fact that it can provide us with consistent and comprehensive information and valid results.

1.8.2. Sample of the Study

The research was conducted among the third year students at Abdelmadjid Allahoum high school in M'sila. This choice was based on the belief that third-year students are more mature to understand how to handle responsibility for their learning than the first and second year.

In the normal cases, it is unfavorable to work with the whole population. In this case, students are more than 300 one. So, working with all of them consumes time and efforts; thus, a representative sample of 60 students was selected randomly for answering the questionnaire. This number represents 1/4 from the whole number of students. For teachers, the sample contained twenty teachers from different schools in M'Sila. Their views in the field are very beneficial to confirm or reject the already stated hypothesis.

1.8.3. Data Gathering Tool

In this study, the data collecting tool that was used is questionnaires. One is for students to find out some of the students' problems in writing a composition, and what they do to improve their writing skills. Another questionnaire is given to teachers to explore the teachers' current strategies to teach writing. Both questionnaires seek to take

the teachers' and students' opinions about the difficulties facing EFL learners in writing a composition. The analysis and interpretation of obtained results will help us to reach our aim.

1.9. Structure of the Study

This dissertation is divided into two chapters. Chapter one consists of two sections; section one attempts to give an overall review about the teaching of writing. It tackles the definition of the writing skill, its importance, the elements of teaching writing and its steps. Whereas, the second section is devoted to approaches and methods of teaching writing. It focused on four main points namely: approaches to the teaching of writing, students' difficulties in writing a composition so as to measure the students' problems in writing, improving the students writing and the eleven key elements of effective writing. However, the second chapter is about research methodology and discussion of results. It contains three sections which respectively set out the research methodology and design, finding and discussion of results, suggestions and recommendations.

CHAPTER ONE
LITERATURE
REVIEW

CHAPTER ONE : LITERATURE REVIEW

Chapter Introduction

Learning English as a foreign language is somehow a slow process. It seems to most people a difficult challenge. This process focuses mainly on the development of the four skills which are classified into two main categories :The productive skills (speaking and writing) and the receptive skills (reading and listening). The latter two skills are naturally acquired. Whereas, the former two skills have to be learned at school. Specifically, writing is one of the most significant skills in learning English as a foreign language. It has a special importance because it is the base of many aspects in life such as writing a job application, writing a scientific research, writing messages,...etc.

As a result of the importance of writing, it was given a special care by many educators and researchers who were interested in English learning and teaching. This skill has to be learned and acquired since it helps EFL learners to express and exchange ideas, give instructions, share and preserve knowledge. Moreover, it encourages thinking and learning in general. However, in the academic setting, learning to write is not an easy task for learners. Most of them often face several difficulties in writing a composition. Thus, the learners' poor writing production has become the core problem which needs an urgent remedy. That's why, our research was mainly on the problems and difficulties facing EFL learners in writing a composition, trying to suggest some solutions.

This chapter presents a theoretical background on the writing skill and its importance in the foreign language classroom. Therefore, the chapter is divided into two main sections. The first one sheds light on the writing skill which explores the definition of writing, its elements and its characteristics. The second one attempts to demonstrate the approaches and strategies that associated to teaching writing. It also introduces some methods and techniques that EFL teachers use to help their learners overcome the writing difficulties.

Section One : Teaching Writing

Introduction

The teaching of writing is an essential element of every teaching program at all levels. For students, the purpose of teaching writing is to become good writers. It is the responsibility of the teachers to deal with the complexity of the writing skill and the process of writing. Therefore, writing needs to be an explicit task for students to improve their writing quality. Additionally, the teaching writing is another difficult process that needs several aspects and elements to be available. In the teaching of writing, students are supposed to understand both the purposes and the context of their writing in order to succeed in writing compositions, this implies the teaching of writing for different audiences and purposes. Even though, students may be able to write a composition, there still other difficulties and challenges they face since learning to write takes time and practice. Moreover, students need to be personally involved in writing tasks in order to make the learning process effective and valuable. As a result of that, it is important for teachers to be well knowledgeable to the teaching of writing and all what are related to it.

1. The Definition of Writing Skill

Like other skills, writing is the skill that has to be learned and acquired because it helps us to express ideas, give instructions, share and preserve knowledge. Generally speaking, it has been agreed that writing is a form and a means of communication that allows students to put their feelings and ideas on papers, to organize their knowledge and to convey meaning through written productions. In spite of that overall definition, it is a skill which has been given other different definitions on the perspectives of many educators and scholars.

According to Heaton (1989, cited in Saraitum, 2010, p. 30), “writing skill is complex and sometimes difficult to teach, requiring mastery not only of grammatical and rhetorical devices but also of conceptual and judgmental elements”. This means that the problem is not in providing pupils with knowledge of writing; but, in helping them think critically since it is something abstract and not concrete. This can explain the reason behind the learners’ difficulties in expressing themselves appropriately when writing in English because they need to be well learned of how to write and how to organize ideas using their understanding and interpretations.

For Coulmas, writing has got different important definitions. To start with, it is considered as a mechanism of language recordings through the use of visible or tactile marks. In other words, writing is a way of storing ideas and messages using different codes. In addition, it means the process of putting such system into use which means to apply the knowledge that pupils have learned about writing into action. Furthermore, it is the result of an activity and a particular form of such result, a script styles such as block letter. Moreover, it is seen as an artistic composition, a professional occupation. More importantly, Coulmas also gives another definition to writing in which he describes it as a unit of language which has got a purpose of storing messages, and in which any person who knows the language can retrieve it.

In turn, Trimmer (1995, cited in Sariatum, 2010, p.15) states that “writing allows you to express something about yourself, to explore and explain ideas and to assess the claim of other people. By formulating, organizing and finding the right words to present them, you gain power”. In other words, writing is an essential skill which permits people to express themselves freely and exchange ideas easily through better selection of words.

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

All in all, from these definitions, we can notice that writing skill as is a sophisticated process consisting of different steps to arrive at the final form. Although different types exist in writing, their content and the purposes behind them, they do share the same process.

2. The Importance of Writing

Generally speaking, written language has a great contribution to our intellectual development. It was given a basic concern in our culture in general and in our schools in particular. Since the early 1970's, many educators have touted writing as a means of enhancing the learning process. It was seen as a such owing to several reasons. Firstly, it is a form of learning. It also approximates human speech. Furthermore, it supports learning

strategies. All in all, the educative effects of writing may be contingent on the context in which it occurs.

According to Steive & Dolores (2007), writing has two great roles. First, it provokes the skill of using many strategies such as planning, evaluating and revising text. The aim is to be able to write a report or express an opinion with proofs. Second, it develops and recalls the learners' knowledge when learning the subject matter. They also said : “ It is a necessity. Along with reading comprehension, writing skill is a predictor of academic success and a basic requirement for participation in civic life and in the global economy” (p.3). In other words, writing is so crucial for people to be involved in all life activities.

To summarize the importance of writing, it can be said that it is a key element of effective communication through which people can organize their thoughts, express views, preserve special moments and opening one's minds. In relation to the academic setting, writing allows learners to develop and understand the aspects of the language such as phonetics, semantic syntactic, paralinguistic and pragmatic.

3. The Elements of Teaching Writing

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

3.1.Composition of Texts

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

3.2. The Process of Writing

In this element, the teacher focuses on the fundamental feature of the writing process. During this phase, the basic process is explicitly illustrated to students, in order to understand

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

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

3.3. The Presentation of Written Texts

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

3.4. The Writer

This element of the writer draws on the notion that writing is of two chunks; writing as a task, and engaging students in the writing process. Understanding the meaning of the cultural influence of the writers means the contribution of this factor in shaping the writer's cognition during writing. Adding to that, writers of different cultural backgrounds will surely write according to their previous knowledge. Moreover, the teacher needs to implement certain strategies in order to encourage students to write. This strategies are generally drawn from the cognitive, and motivational factors related to the students. Some of these strategies include: the choice of relevant topics, cooperative writing, and the use of varied tasks. These strategies will not only engage students in writing activities, but it will also allow them to overcome the deficiencies they were suffering from in writing. Additionally, the teacher has to know that not all students behave and react in the same way but differently, and this is owing to the individual differences of each student character. Therefore, student's cognition vary in the writing process. At this stage, the teacher can deliver training sessions for students aiming at

“developing strategies for writing...helping them to brainstorm, draft in stages...” provided that is accompanied by his continuous feedback to guide students.

3.5. The Text

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

3.6. The Reader

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

4. The Steps of Writing

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

4.1. Planning

Williams (2003) claims that “Planning is one of the more effective features of the writing process although it also can be one of the more challenging” (p. 114). Then, he returns to define planning as “Reflecting on the material produced during prewriting to develop a plan to achieve the aim of the paper” (p. 106). At this stage and before starting to write, writers consider three main issues (Harmer, 2004). At first, Harmer indicates that writers need to think about the purpose of their writing. To do so, they will identify the text type they will produce along with the language used, and the information included. Secondly, writers must

account for the audience they are addressing allowing them to adjust their writing to leave a certain impact on the readers. Harmer emphasized on the content structure of the piece of writing in which it is organized in terms of facts, ideas or arguments (p. 5). In short, planning is the step stone for the writing development by which the writers collect all sorts of information about the purpose of writing, the addressed audience and the information that will be used.

4.2. Drafting

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

4.3. Editing

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

4.4. Publishing (the final version)

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

Conclusion

As a productive skill, writing is significant for students in the learning of the target language. In the context of study, writing is one of the basic elements in the curriculum of foreign language teaching. This section sheds light on the theoretical framework surrounding the teaching of the of writing skill as a process, its definition, its importance, the main elements of writing and its steps to write a composition.

SECTION TWO :Methods and Strategies of Writing a Composition

Introduction

Writing is the most complex and difficult skill because it requires a great deal of training. In addition, all learning problems and difficulties in producing a good piece of writing lie not only on generating ideas, but also on translating these ideas into readable text. Hence, in this section, we will present the methods and approaches to teach writing, the major difficulties that encounter the EFL learners and some keys to improve their writing..

1. Approaches to the Teaching of Writing

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

1.1. The Product Approach

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

1.2. The Process Approach

The process approach to teaching writing is defined as “a cyclical approach. In this approach, students are needed to move back and forth while going from one stage to another stage and taking part in the writing activities” (Palpanadan, Bin Salam & Bte Ismail, 2014, p. 790). Similarly to the process of writing which is “recursive” (Harmer, 2004), the process approach tend to focus on the explicit instruction of the writing stages to students. Unlike the product approach which emphasizes fostering the linguistic knowledge, the product approach on the other hand “is seen as predominantly to do with linguistic skills such as planning and drafting” (Badger & White, 2000, p. 154). In the process approach, researchers identify different stages writers go through, yet the most commonly stages agreed on suggested by Tribble (as cited in Badger & White, 2000) are the four stages model composed of: prewriting, composing/drafting, revising and editing. Moreover, the stages of writing in the process approach are complemented with various activities that the teacher supply while acting the role of a facilitator and monitor. Further, Badger and White conclude stating the aim of process approach as to improve students’ linguistic skills and writing development with the help of the teacher as a facilitator (p. 155), rather than the product approach which aims at developing merely linguistic skills using modelled texts.

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

1.3. The Genre Approach

The genre approach is considered as the latest approach in the teaching of writing, however it is thought to be an extension of the previous product approach (Badger & White, 2000). The notion of genre was explained by Swales (as cited in Badger & White, 2000) as “...a class of communication events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes” (p. 58). This notion was introduced in the genre approach as an explanation to the fact that writing differs across social contexts (Badger & White). In addition, with the features derived from the product approach that writing is merely about linguistic knowledge, students in the genre approach are exposed with different types of writing, and write for various purposes. Genre in writing, mainly refers to the distinct structure of texts, the different use of language in terms of grammar, vocabulary that writers use to convey their ideas (Luu, 2011).

Moreover, this approach argues that successful writing occurs when students take into account both the context and the expectations of the readers in terms of grammar, organization and the content (p. 123). As for the role of the teacher, Luu claims that the teacher is generally a guide who provides students with careful support during writing activities. So, they will achieve a mastery over the genres (p. 124). As a result, students in the genre approach are first acquainted with the different features of texts, purposes for writing while considering the context and the needs of the readers before they can engage in writing.

2. Students' Difficulties in Writing a Composition :

Steve G & Dolores P (2007) used the term 'low- achieving writers ' to refer to the students whose writing skills are poor and are not able to write. They claimed that some of these low achieving writers seem to receive learning disabilities ; others are ' the silent majority' who are not proficient in writing unless they are given help and support. According to them, the students who have difficulties in writing are not well trained to develop their writing skill and to achieve the classroom demands. In addition to that, the equipment of schools and the big number of the students widely affect the way of teaching writing and the quality of the students writings as well.

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

2.1. Aspects of Difficulties in Students' Writing

The writing difficulties may be related to features like grammar, syntax, cohesion or others, and students usually vary in facing these difficulties. Furthermore, students' writing difficulties may be a result of different factors because "...not only self-strategies influence students' performance, but also the effectiveness of the methods and techniques that teachers apply in their English composition courses" (Aragón, Baires & Rodriguez, 2013, p. 1). Significant to the nature of writing as a cognitive process, and the amount of time and effort it requires, Aragón, Baires and Rodriguez (2013) argued that students who have low interest in writing and learning to write mostly have low writing proficiency (p. 1). Another research which confirmed writing difficulties was conducted by Salem (as cited in Huwari& Al-Khasawneh, 2013), in which he concluded that ESLs and EFLs encounter difficulties impeding them to writing effectively.

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

2.1.1. Difficulties in Grammar

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

understanding of grammar which results later on in difficulties in arranging proper writing (Bahri & Sugeng, 2010).

2.1.2. Difficulties in Vocabulary

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

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

2.1.3. Difficulties in Spelling and Punctuation

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

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

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

3. Improving the Students' Writing Skill

There have been many changes in policies and practices influencing the teaching of writing over the last 30 years. Many researchers who were interested in teaching and learning writing tried to provide information about the effective writing instruction. Among them Steve & Dolores (2007) who offered a number of specific teaching methods. They focused on all students not just those who have difficulties in writing a composition. In spite of that, the latter group deserves more focus and much attention because their writing skills are not developed and are not suitable to what is needed in the classroom. Steve & Dolores (2007, p.13) claimed that there should be many efforts to select the most effective teaching strategy, using what they called it 'the meta-analysis of writing'. « It allows consideration of both the strength and consistency of a practice's effects. » Steve & Dolores (2007, p.13).

Teachers agree on some advice that should be given to students especially those who have difficulties in writing a composition. First, students have to know that the topics are divided into three types : General topics such as family, water, environment, peace ...etc ; letters such as a letter of reply .apply for a job, congratulations,...etc and creative topics such as writing a story, imagining an event, reporting something...etc.

4. The eleven (11) Key Elements of Effective Writing

To have good EFL writers, teachers' interventions are needed to improve their learners' writings through adopting special strategies when teaching writing. Many researchers who are interested in teaching writing tried to provide some techniques so as to improve the EFL

learners' ability to write (writing skill). Among them were Steve & Dolores (2007) who presented eleven (11) key elements of effective writing. They were writing strategies, summarization, collaborative writing, specific product goal, word processing, sentence combining, pre-writing, inquiry activities, process writing approach, study of models and writing for content learning.

Whatever the strategy used whether the whole class, group work, pair work or the individual work, the teacher can incorporate all the eleven elements in their way of teaching writing. All these elements are interrelated. That's, the teacher should not separate them ; he/she ought to mix them in order to achieve better results.

4.1. Writing Strategies

Learners are taught to use some strategies freely such as planning, revising and editing their writing of compositions. These strategies affect the quality of their writing. It is based on brainstorming or collaboration for peer revising do as to do a specific type of writing activity like writing a composition. It is so effective for learners who have difficulties in writing. According to Steve & Dolores (2007), the best approach to teaching writing strategies is ' Self Regulated Strategy Development'. « It is an approach for helping students learn specific strategies for planning, drafting and revising text » as declared by De La Paz and Graham (2002) ; Harris & Graham (1996)(as cited in Writing Next, 2007 , p.15). It is based on explicit instructions and procedures of writing.

4.2. Summarization

Writing instruction is an explicit and systematic teaching. Students are taught the strategies of summarising texts so as to write better summaries. Thus, explicit teaching summarization strategies can positively affect the learners ability to summarize.

4.3. Collaborative Writing

It students to plan, draft, revise and edit their compositions. «It involves peer writing as a team. In one approach, a high achieving student is assigned to be the helper (tutor) and a lower achieving student is assigned to be the writer (tutee) as said by Yarrow and Topping (2001) (as cited in Writing Next ,2007,p.16). It means that students help one another ; the student who is able to write can help and guide those who have difficulties in writing.

4.4. Specific Product Goal

Teachers should provide their students with clear and specific goals or sub goals on the topic of their writing. According to Ferretti, MacArthur and Dowdy (2000) (as cited in Writing Next (2007, p.17) : « Setting specific product goals provides students with objectives

to focus on particular aspects of their writing ». It is so important for learners to have clear and specific objectives for their writing. This in its turn will improve the quality of their writing. Unlike giving a general overall goal, setting specific goals results in better production.

4.5. Word Processing

This way of instruction needs the use of personal computers. Students can work in groups and type their writing on the computer using the word processing software. In this way, students have the opportunity to modify on their text through adding or deleting. Unlike writing by hand, typing texts has positive influence on writing quality of the low achieving writers.

4.6. Sentence Combining

Students should learn how to link simple sentences to form compound and complex ones. It is the role of the teacher to give them as many as activities to train them use connectors to build more complex sentences. Steve & Dolores (2007) defined this element as : « Sentence combining instruction involves teaching students to construct more complex and sophisticated sentence through exercises in which two or more basic sentences are combined into a single sentence ». Students should be given activities to link pair of simple sentences so that they will be able to form single complex sentences.

4.7. Pre-writing

This instruction involves giving students special tasks to help them have ideas about their topic before starting writing. It can be through reading, raising a discussion, describing a picture,etc.

4.8. Inquiry Activities

This kind of instruction involves students to be engaged in special designed tasks to generate ideas about the content of the topic. It aims at developing the students' inquiry skills. An example of inquiry activities is as what Hillcks (1989)(as cited in Writing Next (2007,p.9) said : « Students examine and infer the qualities of a number of objects in order to describe them in writing. The students touch objects while wearing blindfolds, examine seashells, listen to sounds, do physical exercises,..... ».

4.9. Process Writing Approach

This approach engages students in activities that give a variety of chances for writing to real audiences.

4.10. Study of Models

As its name suggest, it gives students models and examples suitable for each writing stimulating them to analyse these models. They develop the critical side of these examples using their own strategies.

4.11. Writing for Content Area Learning

Writing is proved to be the best way to encourage students to learn any subject matter. It is called writing- to- learn activities. It has positive impact on the learning process in general. A clear example is given by Boscolo and Mason (2001) (as cited in Writing Next (2007,p.21) : « The science teacher asks students to write summaries and answer questions in writing to increase their ability to explain information. »

After testing these elements by Steve and Dolores, they all show positive impact on improving the quality of the students' writing.

Conclusion

writing is a significant productive skill for students in the learning of the target language because it is the basic element in the curriculum of foreign language teaching and learning. It needs to be mastered through helping learners know how to write and how to be creative in their writing. In addition, they need to teach them different styles of writing and help them choose the most suitable for them. To do so, teachers should use the appropriate approach that suits the learners' needs. This is why a careful design and constant practice of this skill is of great importance.

Chapter Conclusion

This chapter was devoted to the theoretical part of the present research. The chapter was divided into two sections which are about the teaching of writing and the difficulties that face EFL learners in writing a composition at high school in M'Sila. The first section emphasized the teaching of writing. It started by defining the writing skill, then it dealt with the importance of writing, its elements and its steps. Whereas, the second section focused on four main points namely: approaches to the teaching of writing, the students' difficulties in writing a composition so as to measure the students' problems in writing, improving the students writing and the eleven key elements of effective writing. As a result of that, teachers can build on them a particular remedy or a strategy to improve both their writing instruction and their students' writing skill in the future.

CHAPTER TWO
RESEARCH
METHODOLOGY
AND DISCUSSIONS
OF RESULTS

CHAPTER TWO RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DISCUSSIONS OF RESULTS

Chapter Introduction

The current research on the investigation of the difficulties facing EFL learners in writing a composition is chosen based on the previous researchers already tackled in the first chapter. The research proved the disability of the EFL learners to writing a composition.

This chapter is concerned with the empirical phase of this study. It attempts to give a profound description of the situation of teaching writing and its role in enhancing the learners' writing quality. In other words, the present chapter deals with the implementation of the research project. It is concerned with the description of the research design and procedures, the process of administrating the study, and the methodology. As well as, the description of the methods used for collecting data collection and the main approaches employed for analyzing of the data obtained.

It also deals with the data analysis and interpretation of the findings of each instrument. Next step is providing a general discussion in which the results of the two tools will be combined and then related to previous studies. The chapter ends by providing some suggestions and pedagogical recommendations on the light of the main results obtained.

SECTION ONE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

Introduction

The focus of this section is on the research design and methodologies used in this study. The chapter starts by specifying the variables, population and a sample of the study. The section then deals with the research methodology to collect qualitative and quantitative data. It also tackles the research design chosen for this study which is the descriptive research. Next, the section describes the tool used to collect data collectively pointing to some aspects of the questionnaires. At last, further details are presented concerning the data collection procedures and analysis.

1. Research Variables

The current study is concerned with investigating the difficulties of the EFL learners in writing a composition. Thus, the study contains two variables independent and dependent. The independent variable is the difficulties in writing a composition and the dependent variable is adopting an effective teaching writing strategy.

2. Research Sample and Population

The research is conducted among the third year students at high schools in M'sila. This choice was based on the belief that third-year students are more mature to understand how to handle responsibility for their learning than the first and second year. They are also under more pressure resulted from the previous years and may be treated in a different way by their teachers in terms of both responsibility and trust.

In the normal cases, it is unfavorable to work with the whole population. In this case, students are more than 300 one. So, working with all of them consumes time and efforts; thus, a representative sample of 60 students was selected randomly for answering the questionnaire. This number represents 1/4 from the whole number of students. For teachers, the sample contained twenty teachers out of many.

3. Data Collection Tool

Researchers need to choose the appropriate research methods that enable them to gather reliable and valid data. These methods include different tools which can be questionnaires, interviews, observations, and dairies amongst others.

In this study, the instrument used for collecting data is a questionnaire. One is for students to find out some of the students' problems in writing a composition, and what they

do to improve their writing skills. Another questionnaire is given to teachers to explore the teachers' current strategies to teach writing. Both questionnaires seek to take the teachers and students opinions about the difficulties facing EFL learners in writing a composition. The analysis and interpretation of these procedures' results will help us to reach our aim.

3. 1 The Questionnaire

The present study used the questionnaire to collect data from both teachers and students. Questionnaires are research tools given the target population so as to collect data. They allow social scientists to gather information about the specific group characteristics, behaviours, attitudes, beliefs, and opinions about the investigated topic (Bulmer, 2004). In this investigation, questionnaires help in obtaining information about the learners' difficulties in writing a composition and the teachers' problems in teaching writing from their own perspective. They also help in knowing whether the used techniques methods are effective or not. Moreover, the questionnaires provide an idea about the opinions and attitudes of the participants toward the writing quality.

3.1.1 Structured and Unstructured Forms of Questionnaire

Questionnaires can take the form of close-ended or open-ended. In close-ended form, the questions are all the same and presented exactly with the same words and participants respond to the same set of questions, It can take the form of fixed alternatives (multiple choice) questions or 'yes' or 'no' questions . The open-ended questionnaire does not include the previous forms, rather it allows space for the respondents to write using their own words. In this study, the nature of the topic which requires many information and complete answers led to the choice of closed-ended questionnaire since it is easy to answer and covers as many questions as possible.

Questionnaires can be developed based on previously made guide or built by the researcher himself. In this research, the questionnaire is self-completion and developed based on the literature review without referring to any other researchers' questionnaires.

4. Data Collection Procedures and Analysis

In this study, the researcher collected and analyzed data using one method which is the questionnaire. Two questionnaires were carried out through quantitative research, one for teachers and the other for students. The teachers' questionnaire was given to twenty teachers of the third year at some high schools in M'sila.

For the students' questionnaire, the distribution was done randomly among the different streams of the third year classes for more reliable answers. The target population are from *ABDELMADJID ALLAHOUM HIGH SCHOOL* where there are nine classes of the third year ; 60 students answered the questionnaire. Each class took from about fifteen minutes to finish. Before giving the questionnaire, the researcher explained and clarified the topic for all the participants to ensure their understanding and give proper answers.

After collecting the questionnaires, the investigator analyzed each questionnaire quantitatively and each question separately from other questions using the descriptive statistical analysis particularly, frequency and percentage. This choice depends on the nature of the research design which is descriptive. The representation of results was in the form of tables, then explanations and clarification followed or preceded each table or figure. After finishing the analysis of each questionnaire, the researcher provided some interpretations and discussions to justify the results.

Conclusion

In this section, the researcher described the research variables, population, and sample, philosophical assumptions that highlight the present study, research design, methods and procedures of data collection and analysis. The next section will deal with the findings and discussions of the results.

SECTION TWO FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Introduction

This section is emphasized the findings and discussions of results. It is divided into three parts. The first part is dedicated to the teachers' questionnaire. It starts by pointing to the aim of the questionnaire and the description of its organization. Next, it provides a detailed analysis and discussions of the results. The second part is concerned with the students' questionnaire. It also starts by stating the purpose and the description of the questionnaire. Then, it deals with the analysis and discussions of the finding of the questionnaire. The third part focuses on the discussions of the main results. It first deals with the triangulation discussions in which the findings of the two tools are combined. The study later, carry out the general discussion of the main results of findings.

1. Teachers' Questionnaire's Results

1.1. Aim of the Teachers' Questionnaire

In order to investigate effectively the learners' difficulties in writing a composition , it is necessary to consider the teachers' opinions and attitudes towards their learners' writing skills. It also aims to investigate the teachers' perspective about the learning and the teaching of writing in general.

1.2. Description of the Teachers' Questionnaire

The questionnaire is made up of twenty two questions classified into four sections. Each section focus on a particular aspect. The majority of the questions are in the form of closed-ended except for three questions. The closed-ended questions are in form of multiple choice, 'yes' or 'no' questions, and different rating scales that were developed according to the purpose of each section and aspect. The questionnaire includes many points that may not be all answered reliably if they are in the form open-ended questions especially that each set of questions is in a form of collective related concepts.

Section I: The Teacher's Personal Background (Q1- Q 2)

The aim of this section is to collect information concerning the teachers themselves. Q1 concerns the degree held. Q2 focuses on the number of years the teacher have been teaching in high school..

Section II: Teaching Writing(Q 3- Q 11)

The teachers in this section, are asked to explain the teaching process of writing. They are asked about the language skill they teach most on Q 3. They specify through ticking next to each skill. Q4 asks them about the frequency of teaching writing :always, often, very often or rarely. The next question (Q 5) seeks the Teachers' opinion about the importance of writing sessions for learners, saying whether they strongly agree, agree, slightly agree or disagree. Then, the teachers are requested if the time allocated to writing lessons was very sufficient, sufficient or insufficient in Q6. The Q7 seeks to know the frequency of the learners opportunity to write in the classroom either sometimes, often or rarely. After that, teachers in Q8 are asked if they encouraged their learners to use dictionaries by ticking 'yes' or 'no'. The coming question ,Q9, aims to confirm the effectiveness of using dictionaries through saying 'yes' or 'no'. In addition to those, in Q10 ,they are requested to rank in terms of importance the following methods : individual work, pair work, group work or collective work. The last question (Q11) is about the teacher 's encouragement to push their learners to write outside the classroom, by putting a tick next to 'yes' or 'no'.

Section III The Difficulties in Writing a Composition (Q12- Q20)

This section is concerned with the teachers' opinions about the difficulties and the obstacles that face their learners when they write a composition. It also deals in describing the learners' writing quality.

The first question in this section (Q12) seeks to know if the teachers encountered problems when teaching writing or not, asking them to justify in case they answered by ' yes' in (Q13).They are also asked if their learners were able to write a composition or not (Q14). The coming question (Q15) seeks to to identify the kind of difficulties the learners faced, giving them the following options : lack of ideas, lack of vocabulary, spelling mistakes, wrong tenses or others. The(Q16) is about the cause behind these difficulties either the teacher, the pupils, the syllabus or In (Q17), teachers are asked what techniques they used to correct their learners writings ticking next to peer correction, collective correction or correction on the papers. Linking to the previous question, they also requested to say which of the already mentioned techniques they use most. The next question (Q19) concerns the aspects on which they focused more when correction. They put a rich next the following given options : correct grammar, selected vocabulary, the spelling mistakes, good ideas, word order, all of them or others. indicate to what far they provide lectures that cover the students' needs and interests, use lecturing as the main strategy to present lectures, interact

with students inside and outside the classroom, use collaborative work, and experience-based activities such as presentation role playing, and flip the classroom. The last question in this section (Q20) focuses on the kind of mistakes that learners made most , giving them the following options : grammar mistakes, word order, punctuation and Capitalisation, spelling mistakes, lack of vocabulary or others.

Section IV: Teachers' Suggestions and Recommendations (Q21-Q22)

The last section seeks to have information about the teachers' suggestions and Recommendations concerning both his / her way to help learners improve their writing(Q21) and to suggest a way to teach writing in general (Q22). Through these two questions, the teachers are given a space to express their minds and give the suitable suggestions according to them.

1.3. Preliminary Teachers' Questionnaire Results and Discussions

Section One: Teachers' Personal Background

1. Where did you graduate from?

Table 1. Teachers' Graduation

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
University	15	75%
ENS	05	25%
Total	20	100%

We can deduce from the chart above that the majority of the respondents to the questionnaire are graduated from the university (75%).Whereas, the remaining percentage (25%) the respondents graduated from the ENS .

2. How many years have you been teaching English?

Table 2. Teachers' Experience

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
0-5	07	35%
5- 10	10	50%
10 and more	03	15%
Total	20	100%

As it is noticed, the highest rate of respondents (50%) had an experience of more than 5 years in teaching English. Others (35%) had an experience of less than 5 years. While the remaining respondents (15%) appeared to have more than 10 years.

Section Two: Teaching Writing

3. In your teaching carrier, which skill are you teaching most?

Table 3. The Frequency of Teaching the Skills

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Reading	12	60%
Writing	5	25%
Listening	3	15%
Speaking	0	00%
Total	20	100%

Results obtained from question (3) depict that the majority of respondents (60%) said that they taught reading . (25%) chose writing. As for the rest, the remaining respondent (15%) has stated that listening was taught most .

These results could be interpreted in the way that writing is not taught all the time.

4. How often do you teach writing ?

Table 4. The Frequency of Teaching Writing

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Always	0	00%
Often	15	75%
Veryoften	1	5%
Rarely	4	20%
Total	20	100%

According to Table 4, the majority of teachers (75%) stated that they often teach writing. Whereas, (20%) of the respondents said they rarely teach writing. Moreover, few teachers (5%) teach writing very often.

The results showed that writing and listening are less taught in comparison with other skills.

5. Writing sessions are so important for learners?

Table 5: The Importance of Writing Sessions

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	16	80%
Agree	4	20%
Slightly agree	0	0%
Disagree	0	0%
Total	20	100%

The majority of the respondents (80%) strongly agreed about the importance of writing sessions for learners. The remaining teachers (20%) agreed about that.

The obtained results imply that the teachers are aware of the importance of writing session for their learners.

6. Is the time allocated to writing lessons : Very sufficient, sufficient, insufficient?

Table 6. The Sufficiency of Writing Time in the Classroom

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Very sufficient	1	5%
Sufficient	4	20%
Insufficient	15	75%
Total	20	100%

The table above shows that most of our target population (75%) answered that the time allocated to writing lessons was insufficient. However, (20%) of them said the time was sufficient. Only (5%) claimed that it was not sufficient.

The results tabulated above revealed that writing sessions are not sufficient either for teachers to teach writing or for learners to practice writing. As a result of that, students seem not to practice many writing activities in the classroom which should be a part of the writing session.

7. How often do you ask your learners to write in the classroom?

Table7. The Frequency of Asking the Learners to Write

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Sometimes	4	20%
Often	14	70%
Rarely	2	10%
Total	20	100%

Results from the table (7) show that (70%) of teachers often asked their learners to write inside the classroom, and (20%) of them stated they sometimes asked them to write. Whereas, the remaining (10%) of them rarely asked their students to write inside the classroom.

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

8. Do you encourage your learners to use dictionaries when writing ?

Table 8. The Use of Dictionaries

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	12	60%
No	8	40%
Total	20	100%

As the table describes, most of the teachers (60%) appeared to encourage their learners to use the dictionaries. Others, (40%) of them did not encourage the use of dictionaries.

Concerning the teachers who did not encourage the use of dictionaries, they claimed the reason behind that was the difficult access to have dictionaries for learners .

9. If yes, have you found the use of dictionaries effective ?

Table 9. The Effectiveness of Using Dictionaries

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	18	90%
No	2	10%
Total	20	100%

As it is noticed, the majority (90%) admitted the effectiveness of using dictionaries. Only (10%) said it was not effective.

Learners' use of dictionary could be a way to improve their writing level. Teachers who advocated the frequent use of dictionaries wanted their learners to become more interested in writing and engage in all writing tasks. Other reason behind the learners' frequent use of dictionaries is to look for synonyms and their meanings and to enrich their vocabulary. Thus, learners' writing skill maybe developed if dictionaries are used properly.

10. Rank in terms of effectiveness the following writing methods.

Table 10. The Effectiveness of the Writing Methods

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Individual work	2	10%
Pair work	3	15%
Group work	9	45%
Collective work	6	30%
Total	20	100%

From the chart, the highest percentage of the respondents (45%) answered that group work was the most effective one. After that it came the collective work, then pair work. The least effective one according to them was the individual work.

This rank was on the view of the teachers who compared the positive aspects of each method to improve the learners' writing quality.

11. Do you encourage your learners to write outside the classroom?

Table 11. Writing Outside the Classroom

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	12	60%
No	8	40%
Total	20	100%

The majority of the teachers (60%) encourage their learners to write outside the classroom. Whereas, the remaining ones (40%) did not do so.

These results indicate that encouraging learners to write outside the classroom give them the opportunity to write more especially that they are not given enough time to practice writing inside the classroom.

Section Three: The Difficulties in Writing a Composition

12. Are there any problems encountered when teaching Writing?

Table 12. Problems in Teaching Writing

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	19	95%
No	1	5%
Total	20	100%

Table 12 showed that approximately all teachers (95%) encountered problems when teaching writing. Only (5%) answered they did not encounter problems.

It is so clear that teachers find problems and difficulties in teaching writing.

13. If yes, identify them.

The results found show that teachers agreed on some difficulties when teaching writing among them is the insufficient time to teach writing. It needs much time to introduce and explain the topic, to ask the learners to write and finally to correct their production. In addition to that, many learners are not able to write a composition.

14. Are the majority of your learners able to write a composition?

Table 13. The Learners' Ability to Write a Composition

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	6	30%
No	14	70%
Total	20	100%

Table 14 Shows that the majority of the teachers (70%) stated that their learners were not able to write. Only (30%) of them said their learners were able to write.

15. If no, what difficulties do your learners find when writing a composition? (You can choose more than one).

Table 14. Learners' Difficulties When Writing

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Lack of ideas	0	0%
Lack of vocabulary	12	60%
Spelling mistakes	4	20
Wrong tenses	3	15%
Others	1	5%
Total	20	100%

The results obtained show the following. Lack of vocabulary (60%) and spelling mistakes (20%) were the most common difficulties in writing which students seem to share. Followed by low percentages in wrong tenses (15%) and in others (5%) such as word order, punctuation, ...

The main aspect of difficulties in learners' writing is concerned with the lack of vocabulary. It is mainly due to the non encouragement to use dictionaries. The learners here are in a challenging fact of finding exact words each time they write. Therefore, they may have a limited vocabulary, with less experience and practice in using the right word in its correct meaning. Most of the tome it results in a repetition of words, the misuse of vocabulary items and ambiguity of meaning in their writing.

16. Are these difficulties due to :

Table 15. The Causes of the Learners' Difficulties

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
The teacher	2	10%
The learner	12	60%
The syllabus	6	30%
Others	0	00%
Total	20	100%

Analysing the causes of the learners' difficulties, (60%) of our respondents referred it to the learners; (30%) referred it to the syllabus. But only (10%) referred it to the teacher.

According to the obtained results, all the factors contribute in a way or another in the learners disability to write a composition. Hence, each factor must be improved to get better results.

17. What techniques do you use to correct your learners' writing production?

Table 16. The Correction Techniques

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Peer Correction	0	0%
Collective correction	4	20%
Correction on their papers	16	80%
Total	20	100%

Results obtained from question (17) indicated that (80%) of teachers correct on their learners' papers. The remaining teachers (20%) used the collective correction technique.

These findings imply that teachers did not vary in the techniques they employ for the correction of their learners' writing. Maybe, their choice is due to their personal preferences or because of the easiness of the chosen technique.

18. Which aspect do you focus on more when you correct your learners' writing?

Table 17. Teachers' Focus When Correction

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Correct grammar	3	15%
Selected vocabulary	8	40%
The spelling mistakes	4	20%
Good ideas	2	10%
Word Order	2	10%
All of them	1	5%
Others	0	0%
Total	20	100%

The chart indicates that (40%) of our target population stated that they focused on selected vocabulary when they corrected their learners' writing. Others (20%) focused on the spelling mistakes. Whereas, (15%) answered they focused on the correct grammar. The same percentage (10%) focused on the good ideas; others focussed on the word order. Only (5%) said that they focused on all of them.

The obtained results imply that the majority of the teachers did not focus on all mistakes; they concentrate only on the common ones. In this way, learners will not get the enough positive feedback to improve their writing skills.

19. Which of the following mistakes is the most common among your learners?

Table 18. Kinds of Learners' Mistakes

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Grammar mistakes	3	15%
Word order	1	5%
Punctuation and capitalisation	2	10%
Spelling mistakes	4	20%
Lack of vocabulary	10	50%
Others	0	0%
Total	20	100%

The results obtained show the most common mistakes among learners. They are from the highest percentage to the lowest one as the following: Lack of vocabulary (50%), spelling mistakes (20%), grammar mistakes (15%), punctuation and capitalization (10%) and word order (5%).

The results found show that lack of vocabulary is the main aspect of difficulties in the learners' writing. Secondly, the spelling mistakes are owing to the lack of practice. Moreover, grammar originating difficulties found in the learners' writing may have been caused by a low understanding and practice of the grammar rules. Furthermore, The word order may also be a result of L1 influence through the generalization of L1 rules. The last aspect of difficulty is punctuation and capitalization which is sometimes due to the neglect.

Section Four: Teachers' Suggestions and Recommendations

20. According to you, how can you help your learners improve their writing skill?

In that question, teachers gave us their ways that they used to help learners improve their writing skill. For instance, they always encourage them to read books, listen to songs and watch movies so as to put some of their ideas in their writing. They also ask them to write a short composition at the end of a reading lesson to get more vocabulary.

21. As an EFL teacher, what can you suggest as away to teach writing so as to help EFL learners overcome the difficulties faced when writing a composition?

Teachers agreed on some suggestion to teach writing in order to help EFL learners overcome the difficulties faced when writing a composition. They all suggested to increase the allocated time to writing lessons. This gives students the opportunity to practice writing more often. They also declared the importance of selecting interesting topics that increase their motivation to write. In that respect, it is advisable to use the learners' ideas rather than using the ones of the textbook.

Summary

Results from the teachers' questionnaire revealed that all teachers are aware of the importance of writing for EFL learners in both their school life and their social life. Most of them see their students as low achieving writers and they use different techniques to make them involved in the writing tasks so as to improve their writing skill mainly. The results also indicate that teachers face difficulties when teaching writing approximately most of the time.

2. Students' Questionnaire's Results

2.1 Aim of the Students' Questionnaire

This questionnaire is designed to diagnose the learners' writing skills in terms of their ability and disability . It also attempts to know the students' difficulties in writing a composition and their attitudes towards the process of teaching writing.

2.2 Description the Students' Questionnaire

This questionnaire is composed of 26 designed questions organized into four sections. Each section focus on a particular aspect. Some questions are similar to the questions of teachers' questionnaire because there are some aspects that require the views of both teachers and students, especially that the attempt of the study is to suggest a strategy to the teachers to improve the learners' writing quality. The questions are also in form of closed-ended questions. There are multiple choice questions, 'yes' or 'no' questions and different rating scale with a slight difference between the two questionnaires depending on the purpose of each one.

Section I: Student's Personal Background (Q1, Q6)

This section attempts to know some information about the learners themselves. The first Question (Q1) is concerned with the gender of the student. The second one (Q2) is about their age. The third question (Q3) is to tick next their streams.The fourthone (Q4) is

concerned with how many years they studied English. In (Q5), students are asked if they liked English or not. Finally, in the last question (Q6), the learners are requested to evaluate their level in English, ticking next the following given option :Excellent, good, average, low or very low.

Section II: Teaching Writing (Q7-Q15)

The purpose here is to know the process of teaching writing from the learners' perspective. The first question (Q7) is concerned with the rubric they study most :Grammar, vocabulary, writing or reading. To specify writing, the next question (Q8) is about the importance of writing according to them, putting a tick next to : too much, much or little, then giving a justification to their choice. In the following question (Q9), they are asked about the frequency of practising writing on the classroom : Always, often or rarely. As a relation to the latter question, (Q10) is concerned with the time devoted to writing lessons, ticking either very sufficient, sufficient or insufficient. Moreover, in (Q11), they are requested what writing method their teacher used, giving them the following options : Individual work, pair work, group work or collective work. After that, the (Q12) is about the method that they preferred from the already mentioned methods, giving justification for their choice. In (Q13), they are questioned if they used dictionaries when writing. In case they answered by 'yes', they are also asked about the frequency of using them by ticking : Always, often, rarely or never if they said 'no' (Q14). At last , in (Q15), the learners are requested if they practised writing outside the classroom through the social media or SMS.

Section III: Problems and Difficulties in Writing a composition(Q 16-Q 25)

This section is concerned with the problems that hinder EFL learners from developing their writing skill. This section is the same as the section developed in the teachers' questionnaire. They have the same title also. The aim of putting the same section is to see if learners can notice the techniques that their teachers may say that they are using. To start with, the learners are requested if they liked to write in English(Q16). Then, they are asked how they evaluated their level through ticking next : Excellent, good, average, low or very low in (Q17). However (Q18) confirms if they faced difficulties in writing or not. In the next question (Q19), learners are asked what kind of difficulties were : Grammar, vocabulary, punctuation and Capitalisation, spelling or others. Moving to writing correction, in (Q20),the learners are requested which type their teachers used , putting a tick next these options : peer correction, collective correction or correction on their papers. After that, (Q21) is concerned with the effectiveness of the already chosen type of correction to avoid mistakes. Whereas in

(Q22), they are asked what kind of mistakes they made most after their teachers' correction, giving them the following options: Grammar mistakes, spelling mistakes, word order, lack of vocabulary or others. Moreover, in (Q23), the learners are questioned if they had learned from their mistakes. Most important, in (Q24), we seek to know whether or not they tried to improve their writing, focusing mainly on the way of improving in (Q25) in case they answered by 'yes' in the previous question.

Section IV: Suggestions and Recommendations (Q26)

This last section seeks to collect some learners' suggestions as a way to improve their writing quality and overcome the difficulties faced in their writing.

2.3 Preliminary Students' Questionnaire Results and Discussions

Section One: Student's Personal Background

1. Students' gender

Table 19. Students' Gender

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Male	14	23.33%
Female	46	76.66 %
Total	60	100%

We can deduce from the chart above that the majority of the respondents to the questionnaire are females (76.66%), whereas the remaining percentage represents the male respondents (23.33%).

2. How old are you?

Table 20. Students' Age

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
16	11	18.33%
17	32	53.33 %

Others	17	28.33
Total	60	100%

The above table indicates that the majority of our target population(53.33%) are 17 years old, and (28%) of them are more than 17 years old. Whereas, only (18.33) are16 years old.

From the obtained results, we notice that most of our respondents are repetitive one year at least.

3. What is your stream?

Table 21. Students' Streams

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Literary	26	43.33%
Scientific	11	18.33 %
Maths	4	6.66%
Foreign languages	19	31.66%
Total	60	100%

Table 3 shows that (43.33%) of the respondents were literary. (31.66%) of them were foreign languages. (18.33%) of them were scientific. The remaining ones (6.66%) were mathematics.

As it is noticed, the majority of our target population are literary. Most of them are not even able to write a composition.

4. How long have you been studying English?

Table 22. Students' Experience in Studying English

Years	Frequency	Percentage
7	11	18.33%

8	32	53.33 %
9-10	17	28.33
Total	60	100%

From the chart, (53.33%) of the respondents studied English for 8 years. (28.33%) of them studied it for more than 8 years. The remaining ones (18.33%) studied it for 7 years.

From the obtained results, we notice that most of our respondents are repetitive one year at least since they experienced English more than 7 years.

5. Do you like English?

Table 23. Learners' Desire to Learn English

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	53	88.33%
No	7	11.66 %
Total	60	100%

Results obtained from question (5) depict that the majority of respondents (88.33%) liked English. As for the rest, the remaining respondent (11.66%) said that they didn't like English.

These results could be interpreted in the way that most students like English. It means they are motivated to learn writing. Therefore, they are willing to learn writing and to improve their level. However, others seem to be demotivated to learn writing.

In brief, the factor of motivation plays a significant role in learning this skill. That is to say; to practice writing, learners must have a positive attitude towards English in general.

6. How do you evaluate your English level?

Table24. Students' Level

Level	Frequency	Percentage
Excellent	3	10%
Good	8	13.33%
Average	14	23.33%
Low	28	46.66%
Very low	7	11.66%
Total	60	100%

As it is noticed, the highest rate of respondents (46.66%) claimed to have a low level in English. Others (23.33%) declared to have an average level. (13.33%) of them said that they had a good level. (11.66%) claimed to have a very low level. While the remaining respondents (10%) appeared to have an excellent level in English.

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

Section Two: Teaching Writing

7. Which rubric are studying most?

Table 25. The Most Studied Rubric

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Grammar	42	70%
Vocabulary	0	0 %
Writing	0	0%
Reading	18	30%
Total	60	100%

The majority of the respondents (70%) stated that grammar was the most studied rubric. Whereas, (30%) answered they were studying reading most.

It is so clear that writing is not taught much. Thus learners are not given enough opportunity to practice writing which in its turn explains the disability of the EFL learners to write a composition.

8. According to you, how much is writing lesson important? Justify

Table 26. The Importance of Writing

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Too much	3	5%
much	21	35 %
Little	36	60%
Total	60	100%

The table above show that the highest percentage (60%) of our target population stated that writing lessons were of little importance. Whereas, (35%) of them answered they had much importance. Only (5%) of them declared of their too much importance.

As it is shown, the majority of the respondents neglect the importance of writing lessons. That is why, they do not care or even try to improve this skill.

9. How often do you practice writing in the classroom?

Table 27. The Frequency of Pracising Writing

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Always	0	0%
Often	48	80 %
rarely	12	20%
Total	60	100%

Results obtained from question (9) depict that the majority of respondents (80%) said that they often practise writing in the classroom. Whereas, (20%) of them stated they rarely practise it.

From these results. We notice that the learners are not *always* practise writing in the classroom. The lack of practice results in facing difficulties when writing and there will be no improvement in the writing skill. Therefore, learners stay enable to write a composition.

10. Is the time devoted to writing sessions: Very sufficient, sufficient, insufficient

Table 28. The Sufficiency of Writing Time in the Classroom

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Very sufficient	0	0%
Sufficient	28	46.66%
Insufficient	32	53.33%
Total	60	100%

The results tabulated above revealed that (53.33%) of the students said that the time devoted to writing sessions were insufficient. On the other hand, the others (46.66%) believed that the devoted time was sufficient.

Providing sufficient time for students is an important factor to allow them practise writing properly and respect the elements of a good piece of writing without any pressure. Furthermore, it helps them overcome the difficulties encountered when writing.

11. What writing method does your teacher use?

Table 29. Writing Methods

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Individual work	0	0%
Pair work	11	18.33%
Group work	32	53.33%
Collective work	17	28.33%
Total	60	100%

From the obtained results, (53.33%) of the target population stated that their teachers used the group work method. (28.33%) of them answered that their teachers used the collective work, and the remaining percentage (18.33%) declared to use the pair work method.

These results imply that teachers differ in the methods they employ for writing, which is due to their personal preferences or the results they get after choosing each method. Therefore, teachers' choice for the methods should be based on their effectiveness on learners.

12. Which one do you prefer?

Table 30. The Learners' Preferred Method

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Individual work	3	5%
Pair work	8	13.33%
Group work	37	61.66%
Collective work	12	20%
Total	60	100%

The results tabulated above revealed that (61.66%) of the respondents said that they preferred the group work. However, (20%) of them answered they liked the collective work. Whereas; (13.33%) stated that they preferred pair work. Only (5%) of them preferred the individual work.

These findings indicate that students differ in the methods that they prefer to work on for writing. These personal preferences are likely to be due to their interest or the effectiveness of each method. Concerning the individual work, it is generally preferred by good and excellent students. As a result, Students' choice to the methods could be based on their past experiences in writing and the results they get after choosing each strategies.

13. Do you use the dictionary when you write?

Table 31. The Use of Dictionaries

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	11	18.33%
No	49	81.66%
Total	60	100%

We can notice that the majority of students (81.66%) claimed that they did not use dictionaries when they write. Unlike the rest of students (18.33%) who stated they used dictionaries.

The lack of using dictionaries explains the learners' lack of vocabulary; their use of dictionaries could be an effective way to improve their writing level, and also to foster them to compose. So, it is advisable to use dictionaries frequently so that the learners become more interested in writing and engage in the process.

14. If yes, how often?

Table 32. The Frequency of Using Dictionaries

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Always	0	0%
Often	7	11.66 %
Rarely	4	6.66%
Never	49	81.66%
Total	60	100%

As the table describes, the highest percentage of the target population (81.66%) never used the dictionary. Only (11.66%) appeared to use the dictionary often. Whereas, the least percentage (6.66%) used it rarely.

Reasons behind the learners' frequent use of dictionaries are for the search of synonyms and their meanings, using them in their writing and also as a way of enriching their vocabulary.

In this sense, students' proficiency in writing may develop if dictionaries are used properly.

15. Do you practice writing outside the classroom through the social media or SMS chatting?

Table 33. Practising Writing outside the Classroom

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	7	11.66%
No	53	88.33%
Total	60	100%

Results from the table (15) show that the majority of our respondents (88.33%) did not practise writing outside the classroom. Whereas, the remaining ones (11.66%) stated that they practised it outside the classroom.

Improving the writing skill is linked with students' constant practice of English writing. In this sense, students need to write more often especially outside the classroom to put what they have learned in a practice as well as to make a progress. Hence, writing outside the classroom via internet and SMS is important in developing this skill.

Section Three: Problems and difficulties in writing a composition

16. Do you like to write in English?

Table 34. Students' Willingness towards Writing

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	41	68.33%
No	19	31.66%
Total	60	100%

The results tabulated above revealed that (68.33%) of the respondents liked to write in English. Whereas, the remaining learners (31.66) did not like to write in English.

The students' willingness towards writing can be explained by both their motivation to write and their' stock of vocabulary. As a result, those who do not like to write are either demotivated or they lack the needed vocabulary to express.

17. How do you evaluate your writing skill?

Table 35. Students' Evaluation to their Writing Skill

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Excellent	0	0%
Good	14	23.33 %
Average	12	20%
low	24	40%
Very low	10	16.66%
Total	60	100%

The majority of target students (40%) identified themselves to be low proficiency writers. Whereas, other students (23.33%) stated that they had a good proficiency in writing. However (20%)of them indicated to be good at writing. Only few students (16.66%) identified themselves as very low writers.

The fact that most students have a low level in writing, as noticed from the already mentioned results, may be linked to students' lack of practice of writing. Unlike, those who declared to have a good level in writing probably practise writing more often. Therefore, the more students practise, the more they will improve their writing skill and proficiency.

18. When you start write a composition, do you face some difficulties?

Table 36. Students' Difficulties

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	52	86.66%

No	8	31.33%
Total	60	100%

The majority of the respondents (52%) stated that they faced difficulties when writing. Whereas, (31.33%) answered they did not encounter such difficulties.

It is so clear that writing is not an easy task for most learners. The factors behind their disability differ from a student to another as it is mentioned in a previous question.

19. What kind of difficulties are they?

Table 37. Kinds of Difficulties

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Grammar	14	23.33%
vocabulary	30	50 %
Punctuation and capitalisation	0	0%
spelling	16	26.66%
Others	0	0%
Total	60	100%

The results obtained show the most common kind of difficulties which students seem to share. The following ones are from the highest percentage to the lowest one: Vocabulary (50%), spelling (26.66%) and grammar (23.33%).

The results found show three main aspects of difficulties in students' writing. To start with, learners seem to have a limited vocabulary which put them in a challenging fact of finding exact words each time they write. This challenging task results in a repetition of words, the misuse of vocabulary items and ambiguity of meaning in their writing. Secondly, grammar may have been caused by a low understanding and practice of the grammar rules or

the influence of L1. The last aspect of difficulty is related to the spelling mistakes which is mainly due to the lack of practice.

20. What type of correction does your teacher use to correct your writing?

Table 38. Teachers' Types of Correction

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Peer correction	0	0%
Collective correction	11	18.33%
Correction on papers	49	81.66%
Total	60	100%

Table 20 show that the majority of the target students (81.66) declared that their teachers corrected their writings on papers. Whereas, the others' teachers (18.33%) used the collective correction.

Teachers' choice to the type of correction generally refers to their personal preferences.

21. Does this way of correction effective for you to avoid the mistakes?

Table 39. The Effectiveness of the Teachers' Types of Correction

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	42	70%
No	18	30%
Total	60	100%

The majority of target students (70%) stated that their teachers' type of correction was effective to them to avoid mistakes. Whereas, the remaining students (30%) did not benefit from them.

Teachers had better vary in their types of correction so that learners can benefit to avoid their mistakes.

22. After correcting your papers , what kind of mistakes do you make most?

Table 40. Students' Kinds of Mistakes

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Grammar mistakes	9	15%
Spelling mistakes	19	31.66%
Word order	6	10%
Lack of vocabulary	26	43.33%
Others	0	0
Total	60	100%

The results tabulated above reveal the kind of mistakes that learners made most. The following ones are from the highest percentage to the lowest one: Lack of vocabulary (43.33%), the spelling mistakes (31.66%), grammar mistakes (15%) and word order (10%).

The results show the most common mistakes that the learners seem to share. These mistakes are due to the same factors explained before in question 19.

23. Have you learnt from your mistakes

Table 41. Student' Learning from their Mistakes

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	42	70%
No	18	30%
Total	60	100%

Table (23) shows that most students (70%) learnt from their mistakes. Whereas (30%) of them did not learn from their mistakes.

These results imply that some of the teachers' types of correction are effective to most students. So, it is recommended to vary in the types of correction to help learners enhance their writing skill.

24. Do you try to improve your writing?

Table 42. Student' Writing Improvement

Answer	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	39	65%
No	21	35%
Total	60	100%

From the results shown in the above table, the majority of target population (65%) stated that they tried to improve their writing. Whereas, the others (35%) did not try to improve their writing

Section Four: Suggestions and recommendations

25. As an EFL learner, what do you suggest as a way to improve learners' writing and overcome the difficulties faced in their writing?

The learners gave a lot suggestions as ways to improve their writing and overcome the difficulties faced when writing? When analyzing this question, I noticed that approximately all the target student wrote in Arabic which really indicate their inability to write even short sentences. Among these suggestions ,which I translated them into English, are: to practise writing outside the classroom and give your writing to your teacher to correct it, to take your mistakes into account so as to avoid them later, to try writing individually and do not rely on your partner all the time, to learn the key words of each unit by heart in order to enrich their vocabulary, to respect the use of sequencers, punctuation, capitalization and indentation. Most important, many students suggest to give much time to teach writing

Summary

From the analysis of results, it is obvious that the majority of the students are not able to write a composition especially the ones of the literary stream.

3. Discussion of the Findings and Results from Data Analysis

This research was carried out essentially to investigate the difficulties that face the EFL learners in writing a composition at high schools in M'Sila. Teachers' questionnaire and students' questionnaire were used to answer the research questions which already proposed in the introduction of this paper.

The study started with the assumption that if teachers give much more time and use different methods to teach writing, students will overcome the encountered difficulties, and thus they will improve their writing skill. It was clear from the analysis of the results that both teachers and students agreed on facing problems and difficulties in teaching and learning the writing skill.

At the end of each questionnaire, teachers and students were asked to write some suggestions and recommendations. The purpose was to know their opinions about the best way to teach writing according to them. They both suggested to provide much time to teach and practice writing which, in its turn, leads to better writing qualities.

The results of analyzing both questionnaires revealed that none of the teachers ignore the importance of writing. They also revealed some common views between teachers and learners concerning the difficulties in writing, kind of mistakes, techniques and methods of writing ...etc .The analysis of the teachers' and learners' questionnaires proved that there are several difficulties facing EFL learners when writing a composition.

Conclusion

This section was concerned with the description, analysis and discussion of the findings of the chosen data collecting tool which is the questionnaire. The section started with the description and analysis of the teachers' questionnaire. Later, it focused on the learners' questionnaire description and analysis. Both questionnaires were developed to know the teachers' and students' views, perceptions, and expectations about the writing skill in general and the learners' difficulties to write a composition in particular.

Based on the entire findings, the hypothesis has been tested and confirmed. Also, the already stated research questions of the present study have been answered. The analysis and interpretation of the main findings have given a clear idea about the problems and difficulties faced by EFL learners when writing. The next section will deal with some recommendations, suggestions, and further research.

SECTION THREE: SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The two last sections dealt with the methodology, methods, and research design used in this study as well as the data analysis, interpretation and discussions. This section provides some suggestions and recommendations that may help in solving some problems and improving learners' writing skill in the light of the results found.

From the results found, it was clear that the majority of the learners are not able to write a composition. They face different kinds of difficulties . They also complained about the methods and techniques used to teach the writing skill which , in its turn, affect the quality of their writing. Therefore, some points are recommended and some suggestions are proposed to help EFL teachers and learners to promote the teaching and learning of the writing skill.

1. Teacher's Role

EFL teachers of M'Sila are aware of the importance of the writing skill for the EFL learners. However, they give little time and interest to it . By this, learners will never learn how to write a composition. They will always face the writing difficulties which of course affect their writing quality. Accordingly, teachers should change their ordinary way of teaching writing and start to think about new methods and techniques that help the learners overcome their difficulties and be good writers in English.

2. Learning Environment and school equipment

Students complained about the environment of learning and they see that it is not suitable; thus, teachers should work to offer them a better environment that involves them more in learning and motivate them. Learners also suffer from the lack of dictionaries in their school library; some of them are not able to buy dictionaries. Providing good working conditions is also a central concern that teachers and the administration need to take into consideration.

3. The Allocated Time

Teachers complained about the size and time of the writing sessions. They confirmed that there is no much time for extra writing tasks. From time to time, teachers can ask their learners to write at home so that they can save more time for correction.

4. The Learners' Role

Learners can not improve their writing skill without working hard and having a desire to make progress.

5. Suggestions for Future Research

This research dealt with the difficulties faced the EFL learners in writing a composition and the problems that face the teachers when teaching writing. It investigated some problems that affect the progress of teaching and learning writing, trying to tackle both the good and the bad points of the process. In this way , we try to adopt what is good and reject what is not so as to improve the process of learning and teaching writing.

Other areas are worth to investigate, but due to the time and length of the paper they were not tackled. Further research can investigate the effectiveness of group work on EFL learners' writing quality, the role of the teacher to improve the learners' writing skill. In addition, from what has been studied, another research can focus on the effectiveness of chatting on developing the learners' writing skills.

Conclusion

The current section proposed some recommendations on the light of the issues found and suggested some activities and techniques related to staff-student partnership in learning, teaching, and assessment that may solve some problems and enhance the learning process. At the end, it suggested some topics that are worth tackling.

The second chapter was dedicated to the practical part of the study. It was divided into three sections which are research methodology and design, findings and discussion of results, and suggestions and recommendations. The first section focused on research methodology and design. It started by introducing the research variables which are the independent variable : the teaching of writing and the dependent variable: the EFL learners' difficulties in writing a composition, and describing the population and sample of the study. Next, it deeply explained the methodology used including the research design, procedures and the process of administrating of the study. It also explained the method used for data collection which is the questionnaire, and the main approaches employed for the analysis of the obtained data which are qualitative, quantitative, and mixed method approaches.

The second section was concerned with findings and discussion of results. It was divided into three parts. The first part tackled the description and analysis of the teachers' questionnaire. The second part emphasized the description and analysis of the students'

questionnaire findings. The third one was devoted to the discussions of the findings analysis of the instruments together in relation to previous studies. The third and last section of this chapter was dedicated to the suggestions and the recommendations that were provided based on the main findings.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

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

The present descriptive study focuses on identifying students' writing difficulties, and the common mistakes they commit. This is done through a questionnaire administered to third year English students at *ABDELMADJID ALLAHOUM* high school, which reported the documentation of several writing difficulties.

The findings of this research reveal that third year English students at the high school have different writing difficulties. According to the results obtained from the questionnaire, learners seem to have main difficulties concerning vocabulary, grammar and spelling. Therefore, teachers are advised to use these findings for an effective teaching of writing in the future, whereas students are encouraged to use the findings in developing their writing proficiency.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A TEACHERS' QUESTIONNAIRE

Teachers' Questionnaire

Dear teachers,

We are writing a research paper for a Master 2 degree on the problems and difficulties facing EFL learners in writing a composition at high schools in M'Sila . The following questionnaire was primarily conducted for the sake of collecting some data about how teachers deal with these difficulties, focusing mainly on what techniques teachers use in order to help their students write better. We will be grateful if you could help us by answering the following proposed questions either by ticking a given choice or completing the answer by giving your own opinion. Thank you for your collaboration.

Section one : Teachers' personal background

1. Where did you graduate from ?
 - University
 - ENS
2. How many years have you been teaching English ?
 - 0-5
 - 5-10
 - 10 and more

Section Two : Teaching Writing

3. In your teaching carrier, which skill you are teaching most ?
 - Reading
 - Writing
 - Listening
 - Speaking
4. How often do you teach writing?
 - Always
 - Often
 - Very often
 - Rarely

5. Writing sessions are so important for learners.
- Strongly agree
 - Agree
 - Slightly agree
 - Disagree
6. Is the time allocated to writing lessons
- Very sufficient
 - Sufficient
 - Insufficient
7. How often do you ask your learners to write in the classroom?
- Sometimes
 - Often
 - Rarely
8. Do you encourage your learners to use dictionaries when writing ?
- Yes
 - No
9. If yes, have you found the use of dictionaries effective ?
- Yes
 - No
10. Rank in terms of effectiveness the following writing methods. (1 for the most effective, then 2,3,4)
- Individual work
 - Pair work
 - Group work
 - Collective work (the whole class with their teacher)
11. Do you encourage your learners to write outside the classroom ?
- Yes
 - No

Section Three: The Difficulties in Writing a Composition

12. Are there any problems encountered when teaching writing ?
- Yes
 - No

13. Are the majority of your learners able to write a composition ?

- Yes
- No

14. If No, what difficulties do your learners find when writing a composition ? (you can choose more than one)

- Lack of ideas
- lack of vocabulary
- Spelling mistakes
- Wrong tenses
- Others

15. Are these difficulties due to :

- The teacher
- The pupils
- The syllabus
- Others

16. What techniques do you use to correct your learners' writing production ?(You can choose more than one)

- Peer correction
- Collective correction on the white board
- Correction on their papers

17. Which of the above techniques do you use most ?

18. Which aspect you focus on more when you correct your learners' writings ?

- Correct grammar
- Selected vocabulary
- The spelling mistakes
- Good ideas
- Word order
- All of them
- Others

19. Which of the following mistakes is the most common among your learners ?

- Grammar mistakes
- Word order

- Punctuation and Capitalisation
- Spelling mistakes
- Lack of vocabulary
- Others

Section Four : Teachers' Suggestions and Recommendations

20. According to you, how can you help your learners improve their writing skills ?

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21. As an EFL teacher, what can you suggest as a way to teach writing so as to help EFL learners overcome the difficulties faced when writing a composition ?

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APPENDIX B LEARNERS' QUESTIONNAIRE**Learners' Questionnaire**

Dear learners,

This questionnaire is designed to help us accomplish a Master dissertation in applied linguistics on the problems and difficulties facing EFL learners in writing a composition at the high school. We will be thankful if you answer the following proposed questions in order to have an idea about your writing skill and your attitude towards teaching writing. Would you please put a tick (✓) in the right box and give us your personal opinion in other questions. Thank you in advance for your help

Section One : Student's Personal Background .

1. What is your gender

- Male
- Female

2. How old are you ?

- 15
- 16
- 17
- more

3. What is your stream ?

- Literary
- Scientific
- Math
- Languages

4. How long have you been studying English ?

5. Do you like English ?

- Yes No

6. How do you evaluate your level in English ?

- Excellent
- Good
- Average
- low
- Verylow

Section Two : Teaching Writing.

7. Which rubric are you studying most ?

- Grammar
- Vocabulary
- Writing
- Reading

8. According to you, how much is writing lesson important ?

- Too much
- Much
- Little

- Please,

justify.....

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9. How often do you practise writing in the classroom ?

- Always
- Often
- Rarely

10. Is the time devoted to writing sessions :

- Very sufficient
- Sufficient
- Insufficient

11. What writing method does your teacher use ?(you can tick more than one).

- Individual work
- Pair work
- Group work
- Collective work (the whole class with the teacher)

12. Which one do you prefer ?

- Justify

13. Do you use a dictionary when you write ?

- Yes
- No

14. If yes, how often ?

- Always
- Often

- Rarely
- Never

15. Do you practise writing outside the classroom through the social media or SMS chatting ?

- Yes No

Section Three : Problems and Difficulties in Writing a Composition

16. Do you like to write in English ?

- Yes No

17. How do you evaluate your writing skill ?

- Excellent
- Good
- Average
- Low
- Verylow

18. When you start writing a composition, do you face some difficulties ?

- Yes No

19. What kind of difficulties are they ?(you can choose more than one)

- Grammar
- Vocabulary
- Punctuation and Capitalisation
- Spelling
- Others

20. What type of correction does your teacher use to correct your writing ?

- Peer correction
- Collective correction
- Correction on your papers

21. Does this way of correction effective for you to avoid the mistakes ?

- Yes No

22. After correcting your papers, what kind of mistakes do you make most ?(you can tick more than one)

- Grammar mistakes
- Spelling mistakes

- Work order
- Lack of vocabulary
- Others

23. Have you learned from your mistakes ?

- Yes No

24. Do you try to improve your writing ?

- Yes No

Section Four : Suggestions and Recommendations :

25. As an EFL learner, what do you suggest as a way to and overcome the difficulties faced in their writing ?

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الملخص

تلعب الاساليب والتقنيات التي يعتمدها أساتذة اللغة الانجليزية في الطور الثانوي دورا أساسيا ومهما في تطوير مهارات المتعلم بصفة عامة ومهارة الكتابة بصفة خاصة، ويتجلى هذا الدور عموما في مساعدة المتعلم على مواجهة الصعوبات التي يجدها في كتابة فقرة.

تهدف هذه الدراسة أساسا في تحديد الصعوبات التي تواجه تلاميذ السنة الثالثة ثانوي في كتابة فقرة من أجل إيجاد حلول والقضاء على هذا الضعف في كتابة الفقرة. كما تهدف أيضا الى تحديد أهم العوامل التي تؤدي بالتلميذ الى الكتابة بطريقة سيئة. بالإضافة إلى معرفة الأساليب والتقنيات وتحديد فعاليته. كل هذه الأهداف هي من أجل رفع معنويات التلاميذ باستعمال التقنية المناسبة على حسب اهتمامهم والتي بدورها تساعدهم على تجنب الأخطاء. وقد تم إجراء هذا البحث بين طلاب السنة الثالثة ثانوي في كل الشعب بثانوية عبد المجيد علام بولاية المسيلة. وقد اعتمد هذا البحث على استخدام البحث الوصفي حيث تم جمع البيانات نوعية وكمية من خلال استبيان تم تقديمه لكل من الأساتذة والتلاميذ. وكشفت النتائج على أن كل من المعلم والمتعلم يواجه صعوبات في تعليم وتعلم مهارة الكتابة. أثبتت النتائج أيضا ان كلا منهما متيقن بأهمية هذه المهارة على الصعيد الدراسي والعملي ، ولقد تطرقت هذه الدراسة إلى محاولة إيجاد حل لمواجهة هذه المشاكل والصعوبات ، ويقترح تغيير الاستراتيجية المعتمدة في تدريس مهارة الكتابة باستراتيجية جديدة تكون مدروسة من طرف متخصصين في هذا المجال بالإضافة إلى زيادة الحجم الساعي لتدريس هذه المهارة التي بدورها تتيح للمتعلم فرص كثيرة لممارسة كتابة الفقرة.