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The Influence of Grammatical Errors in Learning the Writing Skill

Case Study: Second year Students of English at Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra

Dissertation Submitted to Mohamed KHEIDER University of BISKRA in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master in Language Sciences

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DECLARATION

I, Derbali Fella, do hereby solemnly declare that the work presented in this dissertation is my own, and has not been submitted before to any other institution or university for a degree.

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Dedication

To my parents, who educated me on the good principles; to be honest, kind and respectful. I thank you for your trust, which I really appreciate; for your love, patience, support and also encouragement.

I would also like to dedicate this work to the memory of my grandmother “Yemma”, we all miss her.

Also, this dissertation is dedicated to my fiancé Amen Allahwho has been a great source of motivation and inspiration, to my mother in law who prayed for me and askedAllah to help me.

This dissertation also dedicated to my brothers: Ilies, Redouane, Aissa, Fouzi and wael. To my sister Lamia and her husband Houssin, to my wonderful nephews Abdallah and Wassim.

To my aunt Houriaand to all my family especially, my cousin zineb.

To all my friends; Kenza, Diamonta, Hana, Hadjer and Fatima, I cannot list all your names here, but you are always in my mind, thank you for understanding and encouragement. Your friendship made my life a wonderful experience and thank you for the amazing times I spent with you.

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ABSTRACT

Writing in a foreign language is one of the most challenging and complex tasks for language learners. It is a difficult skill that requires considerable effort and practice on the learners' part to reach an acceptable level of writing. Due to the complexity of this skill, many students find it very difficult to produce a sufficient piece of writing. In this research, we aimed to identify the most recurrent errors in writing made by second year students of English Language Section at Biskra University. We hypothesized that the most common errors made by second year students are errors in the use of articles, in the use of prepositions, and tenses. We advanced that these errors are not only limited to the course of written expression, but also concerned all the courses that require some writing ability, such as: literature, civilization and psychology. We suggested that we need to give the students additional lessons in grammar and more exercises in classroom and at home. These could be one of the solutions. In this research, we relied on the descriptive method through using two questionnaires; one for teachers and another for students. The results obtained from this investigation confirmed our hypotheses' and revealed that students make a lot of grammatical errors in writing especially in the use of the prepositions; on the other side, teachers confirmed that students make those errors not only in written expression course, but in other areas such as literature and oral expression.

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

EFL: English as Foreign Language

WE: Written Expression

SQ: Students' questionnaire

TQ: Teachers' questionnaire

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General Introduction

The most important issue in second language learning is developing the ability to use the written language appropriately. In other words, students who learn a second or foreign language should make great effort to write it. However, unlike writing their first language, a foreign language is a difficult task for most of these learners. Therefore, the writing skill is considered as an important part in teaching English, as well as it is commonly apparent that academic writing with its development is designed for students at university level. Students at this level are supposed to learn how to write inside and outside of the classroom. In written expression sessions (course), students try to express their ideas and feelings. However, when they write, they overlook the basic rule of grammar, lexis, and phonological rules. In fact, it considered as the main reasons for making errors.

1. Statement of the Problem

The second year students of the English section at Mohammed Kheider University of Biskra make grammatical errors in writing. These errors may affect badly and negatively their overall levels. Students may find the same difficulties when they tackle other areas such as: literature, linguistics, oral expression and so on. In this research, we intend to provide an overview about the writing skill, and we will discover the students' common committed errors, find their main causes, classify them and suggest solutions.

2. Significance of Study

The significance of this study can be generalized in terms of shedding light on the influence of grammatical errors in writing. This research will help both teachers and

students; teachers will be able to help students to improve their levels through making less error and developing their writing skill. This study aims to help the students of Biskra University to discover their errors and try to correct them.

3. Research Questions

This dissertation raises on the following questions:

- 1-What are the most common grammatical errors made by second year students?
- 2-Are these errors related only to the course of written expression?
- 3-What must be done to remedy the situation?

4. Research Hypotheses

The present research is based on three hypotheses that shall be tested and verified through.

- 1-We hypothesis that the most common grammatical errors made by second year students are errors in the use of articles, prepositions, and tenses.
- 2-We do agree that these errors are not limited only to the course of written expression but concerned all the courses that require some writing ability such as: linguistics, literature, civilization and psychology. Also, they make these errors in their oral sessions.
- 3-We put forward that we need to give the students additional lessons in grammar, and more exercises in and out of the classroom and at home. These could be one of the solutions.

5. Aims of the Study

This study aims at shedding light on the most common kinds of errors committed by students when they write. Moreover, the dissertation seeks to enable

students to write more acceptable paragraphs/essays. Furthermore, encouraging students to work both individually and in groups when they write.

6. Research Methodology Design

6.1. The Choice of the Method

The researchers intended to use the descriptive method as an approach to acquire and gather data for this thesis. Moreover, the researchers planned to derive information from any material relevant to their field of interest which is a new and a fresh area in their section as far as they are concerned. In addition, we will distribute a questionnaire for students and teachers to supply for both theoretical and applied research. The results of the questionnaires will be included in the thesis.

6.2. Population of Study

To accomplish the stated objectives, the dissertation takes as a sample both teachers and students of the second year at section of English in university of Biskra. They will be consulted in order to report their opinions and to get insights from their answers about the subject under investigation.

6.2.1 Teachers' Sample

Our sample consists of 5 teachers of Written Expression from the population of 33 teachers, teaching Second year students for the academic year 2014/2015. They have been chosen randomly. The reason behind choosing those teachers and not others is due to the fact that they are supposed to know more about their students' written proficiency and level, as well as the different errors made by the learners. Those 5 teachers are well aware about the importance of the suggested techniques

which are used to correct their students' grammatical errors in writing. Those 5 teachers of written expression can be good representatives to obtain full information that serves our investigation.

6.2.2 Students' Sample

Our sample consists of 50 students who are chosen randomly from a population of about 494 of second year students of the academic year 2014-2015. They have been chosen as participants because they commit a lot of grammatical errors in writing since they are beginners in writing paragraphs/essays.

6.3. Data Gathering Tools

Our investigation will be focused on the Teachers' and students' Questionnaires to gather data and to gain insights from the proposed answers for both of them. It is done to get information as well as opinions concerning the subject under investigation. On one hand, the students' questionnaire presents information about the students' written productions and the frequent errors committed on it. On the other hand, the teachers' questionnaire presents the level of students and the types of errors, the reaction toward these errors, and suggestions some solutions to remedy this situation.

7. Limitation of the Study

It is important to make the limitation of the problem, to avoid misunderstanding and to clarify the problem. The research limitations as Samon and Goes define "limitations are matters and occurrences that arise in a study which are out of the researcher's control. They limit the extensity, to which a study can go, and sometimes affect the end result and conclusions that can be drawn." (P.1) in other words the limitations are matters not controlled or hinders the way of the study. As second year

master students, we have faced big problems; the first exams and the makeup exams started late, this delay lasted for a long and this is why researchers could not proceed in their researches. Also, lack of sources related to the grammatical errors was a major problem.

8. The Structure of Dissertation

This dissertation is divided into two parts: the theoretical and practical parts. The theoretical part includes two chapters. Chapter One is entitled “the Writing skill” that clarifies the definition, nature, component of the writing skill. Moreover, it explains the different approaches to teaching writing and how to assess it. It gives a clear description about the writing skill. Chapter two is entitled “Grammatical errors in learning the writing skill” that presents a general overview about the distinction of mistake and error, also clarifies the definition, types, causes, and kinds of errors. The practical part includes one chapter which presents the analysis of the teachers’ and learners questionnaire results.

9. Literature Review

This section contains related abstract aspects associated to the research topic: Error Analysis, Lado (1957) claims that students learning a foreign language prove to face both easy and difficult patterns of it in accordance with the similarities and differences between the native and foreign languages. Stockwell, Bowen, and Martin (1965) assure that "the main source for predicting the difficulties is the interference between native language and target language." Transfer theory is the process of using knowledge of the first language in learning a second language. Chan (2004) presents that syntactic English transfer is based on data obtained from 710 Hong Kong Chinese ESL learners at different proficiency levels. According to Corder

(1981:47), mismatch is a problem of diagnosis because the degree of mismatch is a quantitative assessment whereas the nature of mismatch is a qualitative assessment. According to Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics (1992), a student makes mistakes and errors when writing. Mistakes are due to lack of attention, fatigue or carelessness. Errors are the use of linguistic items in a way that a learner of the language regards them as showing faulty or incomplete learning. They occur because the learner does not know what is correct, and thus errors cannot be self-corrected. Richard (1985:95) described errors as follows: “the use of a linguistic item in a way which a fluent or native speaker of the language regards as showing faulty or incomplete action”. Gass and Selinker (2001) claims that errors are systematic. They occur repeatedly and not recognized by the learner. Hence, only the teacher or researcher could locate them, the learner would not. To conclude, mistakes are not a result of deficiency in competence. They are considered as slips of pen or tongue. They are lapses, but errors are different from mistakes. They occur because the learners do not know what is correct. They are due to incomplete acquisition of the language.

Emmalyanas’ work (2010) on her Bachelor of Arts is entitled “An Analysis on the Grammatical Errors in the Students’ Writing”. She concentrated on the analysis of the grammatical errors; whereas, our research focuses on the influence of those errors in learning the writing skill because writing skill is considered as a essential aspects of learning English as foreign language.

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Introduction

In general, learning a foreign language subjects learners to the four skills that are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Learning to write is increasingly becoming a necessity in life, no matter what career one will embrace. Writing is a communication tool that translates thoughts into language, and pedagogically speaking, it is the means by which learners' achievements are generally examined.

This chapter will deal with the writing skill, including definitions of the writing skill and its nature. After that we move to the act of the writing skill and the other skills. We mention also types and components of that skill after that we move to teaching writing which consist two points approaches of teaching writing and the role of the teacher in writing.

1. Definition of Writing

Writing has a basic significance to learning, to the improvement of the learner, and to his success in his educational career. Teachers have to work frequently to aid their students in their investigation for achievement as writers (Graham & Harris, 1993).

Lannon (1989) observes writing as “the process of transforming the material discovered by research inspiration, accident, trial or error, or whatever into a message with a definite meaning- writing is a process of deliberate decision” (p.9). It indicates that writing must express a message with a sense.

Writing as termed by Rivers is the act of putting in conventional graphic form has been spoken what (p.242). For Byrne, writing contained the conventional arrangement of letters into words, and words into sentences that need to flow smoothly to form a coherent whole (p.1).

Writing, in general, means words in symbols (for example, Hieroglyphics) written down as a tool of communications. (Encarta Dictionary, 1999: 2151). Apart from a part of written language planned to be read, writing furthermore relates to the activity in which such a part of written language is created. Nevertheless, it is far from being a matter of transcribing language into symbols. As a result, writing is not as simple as it appears to be. “However writing is clearly much more than the production of graphic symbols, just as speech is more than the production of sounds”. Byrne (1979, p.1). This means that the graphic symbols should be arranged in certain ways and conventions to form words, and the latter are arranged to form sentences. We create a series of sentences arranged in a specific order and linked together in certain manners, They form a coherent whole, what we call a ‘text’. In line with this, White and Arndt (1991:3) observe that:

Writing is far from being a simple matter of transcribing language into written symbols: it is a thinking process in its own right. It demands conscious intellectual effort Which usually has to be sustained over a considerable effort of time.

Lado (1983:248) observes writing in a foreign language in terms of the capability of manipulating structures, vocabulary and their conventional representations. He set it as follows: “We mean by writing in a foreign language the ability to use structures, the lexical items, and their conventional representation in ordinary matter of fact writing”. In the same way, Widdowson (1981:26) relates the act of writing to the activity of constructing correct sentences and “transmitting them through the visual medium as marks on paper”.

So, the idea we illustrate from the preceding definitions is that writing is the activity of being able to communicate with the language over graphic symbols of

ideas, regarding the correction of the different structures and vocabulary items in order to participate ideas to persuade, to arouse feelings obviously, briefly and understandably. Byrne (1979) reports that writing is changing our thoughts into language. It is a very complicated skill that contains both physical and mental activity on the part of the writer.

According to Walters (1983: 17), “Writing is the last and perhaps the most difficult skill students learn if they ever do”. Writing is one of the main skills for using language, through which one can express his thoughts. It is reported that “writing is a reflection of what can occur only after the main ideas are in place”. (Clark, 2003: 8). This means that the writer’s objective is to know how to say what has been discovered, not in discovering and selecting what to say.

As writing is a means of communication between people, it should follow some conventions that are unique for all, which connect letters to have words and words to have sentences, which must be well organized to have a coherent whole. (Bader; 2007:7). This skill or means of communication is neither innate nor a natural process, it must be done and trained frequently to be learnt and make use of it and its rules. Likewise, Ouskourt (2008: 13) said that “Since this skill is not inborn, one should practice it a lot to learn it and become a good writer.”

2. Nature of Writing

Writing is generally a group of letters or symbols written or marked on a surface as a means of communication (Collins, 2003). This definition proposes that writing is the activity of producing a piece of written language which is planned to be read. However, writing is more than being a matter of transcribing language into symbols. Just as speech is more than producing sounds, writing is much more than the production of graphic symbols; these symbols have to be arranged according to some

conventions to form words, and to join them to form sentences. A sequence of sentences, short or long, but coherent is a sufficient tools of communication.

According to Collins and Gentner (1980: 62), the learner/writer should consider the four structural stages in writing starting with the word structure, sentence structure, paragraph structure, and on the whole text structure. Coordinating all these aspects is a astonishing work that is absolutely more than a simple activity of putting symbols together.

In addition to the complexity of structure, other psychological, linguistic and cognitive attached issues interfere to make writing a complex activity for both native speakers and language learners. Byrne (1991: 4) illustrates that “writing is a difficult activity because it is neither a natural nor a spontaneous activity” and that “the problems related to writing are usually grouped under three headings which overlap to some extent: psychological, linguistic and cognitive.”

Moreover, writing is directly linked to people’s roles in society. According to Tribble (1996: 12) to be deprived of the opportunity to learn how to write is “to be excluded from a wide range of social roles, including those which the majority of people in industrialized societies associate with power and prestige.” In the same way goes Kress (1989; in Tribble, 1996), confirming that learning to write is not just a question of developing a set of mechanical ‘orthographic’ skills however it also involves learning a new group of cognitive and social relations.

In terms of pedagogy, writing is a crucial element in the language classroom since students need to take notes and to be tested in written exams. Yet, over the years the position of writing has been changed and become as only a support system for learning grammar and vocabulary rather than a skill in its own right. However, trainers and methodologists have reconsidered writing in the foreign language

classroom and recognized the significance of writing as a vital skill for speakers of a foreign language as much as for everyone using their target language (Harmer, 2004).

From the previous definitions, we can conclude that writing is the activity that facilitates communication with language through a graphic representation of ideas. It is also a difficult, sophisticated, prestigious social activity of communication and an important skill for language learners as well as native speakers.

3. The Act of Writing and Other Skills

Writing is among the most complex human activities. It involves the development of an idea, the capture of mental representations of knowledge, and of experience with subjects. Nancy Arapoff (1967: 233) terms writing as ‘much more than an orthographic symbolization of speech. It is, most significantly, a purposeful selection and organization of experience’. According to her, “experience” includes all thoughts, facts, opinions, or ideas, if acquired first hand through direct perceptions and/or actions or second hand through reading and hearsay.

3.1 Writing -speaking relationship:

The relationship between writing and the productive skills, mainly the speaking skill, has been

The relationship between writing and speaking is important for language testing, among other reasons, because of the question to what extent writing can be seen as a special case of L2 language use and to what extent writing represents a distinctly different ability from speaking drawing on the many the same linguistic resources but also relying on distinctly different mental processes.
(Weigle, 2002:15)

Traditionally, most linguists grasp the position that the only reason for the existence of the written form is to present the language in its oral form. Written, language has presence; however is simply a shadow cast by speech. Writing is

essentially a means of representing speech in another medium (Lyons, 1968: 38). If Lyons and others are right in their thoughts that writing is speech written down, both spoken and written forms of communication should then have essentially the same characteristics. Yet, it is immediately understandable that each has specific features distinguishing it from each other. A more recent position, thus, has emerged to stress the fact that neither oral nor written language is inherently superior to the other, but oral and written texts vary across a number of dimensions including(but not limited to) textual features, socio cultural norms and patterns of use, and the cognitive processes involved in text production and comprehension.

3.2 Reading-Writing Connection

The reading-writing association has received considerable attention from theorists, researchers, and practitioners (e.g., Eisterhold, 1990). The relationship between reading and writing has often been sighted in straightforward terms: those who read well write well. Although this relationship has been long recognized, researchers have often been more involved in understanding the sources of the relationship. From a historical point of view, reading was more emphasized than writing in education.

In Britain, for instance, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, reading took the primary attention in education before writing, and this is because as Foggart (1993; in Tribble, 1996:11) states: “it is desirable that the majority should read in the way they can be given instructions and can be educated into a particular ideology; writing on the other hand, assumes the giving of instructions and the formation of views about society.”

As it is perceived by Johnson (2008: 7), the obvious relationship between the preceding skills is that reading helps students become better writers. Through reading, students have supplementary contact with the rules of grammar, thus they develop a sense for the structure of the language and grammar and increase their vocabulary. Therefore, Reading in the writing classroom is understood as the suitable input for acquisition of writing skills because it is commonly assumed “that reading passages will somehow function as primary models from which writing skills can be learned, or at least inferred” Eisterhold (1990: 88).

4. Components of the Writing Skill

To be able to write L2, learners should master the different elements comprising the writing skill in which only some are strictly linguistic. Harris (1969) recognizes five general elements:

- Content, which involves the ideas expressed;
- Form, which refers to the organization of the content;
- Grammar, which refers to the use of grammatical forms and syntactic patterns;
- Style, which displays the use of structures and lexical items to give a particular tone to writing; and-
- Mechanics, which consists of the use of the graphic conventions of language.

Bell and Burnaby (1984; cited in Nunan, 1989: 36) clarify that writing is an extremely complex cognitive activity in which the writer is required to demonstrate control of a number of variables simultaneously. At the sentence level, these include control of content, format, sentence structure, vocabulary, punctuation, spelling and letter formation. Beyond the sentence, the writer must be able to structure and integrate information into cohesive and coherent paragraphs and texts.

The writing skill is complex and difficult to teach, requiring a mastery of all these abilities, some of which have never fully achieved by many learners, even in their native language.

Additionally, there is huge evidence that learning how to express oneself in written English requires basically a full practice in relation to other skills: listening, reading, and speaking all together. Only by hearing and reading a great deal of the language as it is spoken and written by native speakers can the foreigner acquire that feeling for the appropriate use of language forms and combinations which is basic to expressive writing.(Rivers, 1968, p.244)

This entails that the best way to have learners learn to write is by practice in the whole competency involved to develop the writing skill. One needs, then, a continual integrative exercise of the four basic skills.

5. Teaching Writing

5.1. Approaches to Teaching Writing

In the early 1960's, writing was a neglected skill; it was debated that language is most important in its spoken form and less important in the written one; and for this reason, writing was not given much attention. When writing was first included in teaching curricula, it was viewed as a simple reinforcement of "what students learned to say" (Rivers, 1968: 51).

After the 1960's, writing gained importance and was considered central in the language learning context. Its understanding and use became largely valued in every discipline, each of which requires a specific method of teaching. Consequently, a great number of approaches and methods of teaching have come out. Even though none of these approaches can be measured as ideal, they have all proved to be successful in one period or another (Nemouchi, 2008).

5.1.1 The Controlled-to-Free Approach

In the 1950's and 1960's, when the audio-lingual approach prevailed, writing was taught just to reinforce speech where speech was measured primary. It was supposed that the mastery of grammar rules would guide to the development of the spoken form of a foreign language, and this is the reason for allocating grammar teaching to writing. In this approach, students are not supposed to produce their own texts; the only writing learners do is to write grammar exercises (Leki, 1992). The controlled-to-free approach is sequential: students are first given sentence exercises, then paragraphs to copy or manipulate grammatically by changing questions to statements, present to past, or plural to singular. Only after having improved this type of highly controlled-writing can students move to free composition in which they can express their own ideas (Leki, 1992).

Maybe, one of the most outstanding features of the controlled-to-free approach is that it emphasizes the accuracy rather than fluency or originality (Ghaith, 2002). It focuses on the structural aspect of the language and ignores its communicative aspect as Raimes (1983: 76) declares, "this approach stresses three features: grammar, syntax and mechanics."

5.1.2 The Free-Writing Approach

The free-writing approach is fundamentally relied on the assumption that when we write freely and frequently, we enhance our ability in that language skill. Free writing means that the students write without teachers' interference, and are encouraged to emphasize content and fluency first (Raimes, 1983). This approach stresses writing quantity rather than quality. Teachers who utilize this approach assign vast amounts of free writing on given topics with only minimal correction.

The emphasis in this approach is on content and fluency rather than on accuracy and form (Ghaith, 2002). Once ideas are down on paper, according to Raimes (1983), grammatical accuracy, organization and the rest will gradually follow. Dissimilar to the controlled to free approach, the role of the teacher is limited to reading learners' productions and sometimes making comments on the expressed ideas. In other words, pieces of writing should not be corrected, but probably read aloud and the content mentioned upon.

5.1.3 The Product-Oriented Approach

Generally speaking, a product-oriented approach focused on the final product of the writing process. It mostly advocates activities, which require from the learner to be engaged in imitating and transforming model texts. Indeed, the imitation of a model was seen as crucial. White (1998) sees the model based approach as follows:

Study the model → Manipulate elements → Produce a parallel text

Figure.1: Model Based Approach (White 1998: 46)

The model text is always taken as the starting point. It is studied and analyzed from all points of view: structures of grammar, content, sentences, organization, and rhetorical patterns. After controlling these features, students are given a new topic and asked for a parallel writing task. (Nemouchi, 2008)

The interest of such an approach is in the correct use of form. Logically the role of the model is vital in the sense that it leads students from a point of departure to an end with a task to repeat. The model then comes first and shows a completed text as well. "What the model does not demonstrate", states white (1998,p. 6), "is how the original arrived at that particular product. In other words, it gives no indication of the process."

This traditional approach that encourages students to reproduce model texts can be drawn in the following way:

- **Stage one:** Students read the model text and underlined the specific features of genre in this text. For instance, if studying essay organization, students' attention will be directed towards the way the essay in the model text is organized; how paragraphs are distributed, linkers used to join these paragraphs, the thesis statement, indentations and all the techniques that help in the organization of an ideal essay.
- **Stage two:** In the second stage, students have a controlled practice of the highlighted features, usually in separated. Hence, subsequent the example in the first stage, students here invited to make practice on linkers between paragraphs, writing introductions, stating thesis statements, writing conclusions and so on and so far.
- **Stage three:** This is a very important stage, where students are asked to organize paragraphs in order to get a coherent essay (introduction, developmental paragraphs, and conclusion). Teachers who use this approach give more consideration to the organization of ideas rather than ideas themselves.
- **Stage four:** In the final stage students are given a topic and demanded to develop an essay in the manner as the model text.

5.1.4 The Process-Oriented Approach

This approach moved the attention from the traditional view of looking at writing simply as a product to emphasize the process of writing. Students have to recognize that what is first written down on paper is not the final product, it is only the beginning. The process approach depends on giving students time to work on what

they want to write, going from pre-writing activities to the final draft. According to Nemouchi (2008), the most important aim of this approach is to prepare students how to generate ideas for writing, plan these ideas, take into account the type of audience, draft and redraft in order to produce a final written paper that is likely to communicate their ideas.

This approach includes four main stages: prewriting, drafting, revising and editing. According to Tribble these stages are 'recursive' and 'not linear at all. He clarifies that “at any point in the preparation of a text, writers can loop backwards or forwards to whichever of the activities involved in text composition they may find useful”.

The following diagram by White and Arndt (cited in Harmer, J. 2001: 258) explains

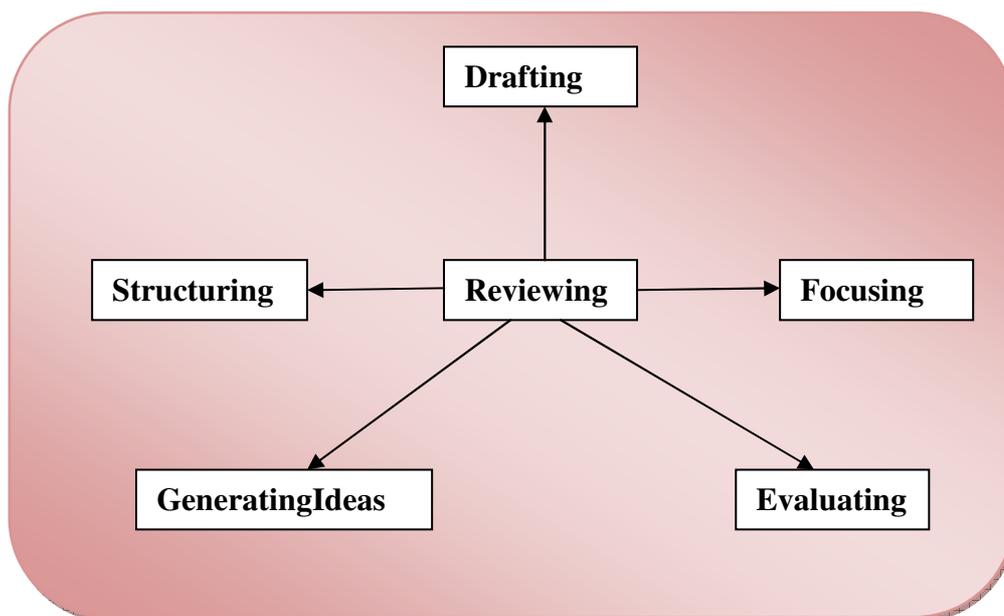


Figure 2: White and Arndt’s Process Writing Model (cited in Harmer, J. 2001, p. 258)

The above model characterizes a process of writing in which 'reviewing' is a central stage where the learner revises his/ her draft. So, the learner evaluates the draft continuously in order to generate more sentences that express better his/her ideas. Structuring depends on the review of the draft according to what the learner aims to

express.

Moreover, correction is not emphasized from the early stages because it hinders communication. It comes only at the last stage which is 'revising' or in White and Arndt's words 'reviewing'. Unlike the product approach where the teacher is the only corrector, feedback in the process approach is received from both the teacher and the learner. In this respect, the language skills rather than the linguistic features are developed.

5.1.5 The Genre Approach

Recently, the field of writing has a new approach which notices writing as an attempt to communicate with the reader. The genre approach not only focuses on form and textual conventions, although more significantly on the rhetorical purposes of that text and every component of the text that contributes to the fulfillment of that process.

“The central belief here is that we do not just write, we write something to achieve some purposes: it is a way of getting something done.” Richards (2003:18) .This point of view sights genre as a typified social action that answers to a recurring situation. That is when one writes a letter, a story, a request and so on, he has to pursue certain social conventions for the organization of his message, thus that the reader recognizes his purpose. In other words, the structure, the content, the style ...etc has to be collectively recognized and shaped according to the expectation of the reader. According to Richards(2003:18) “these abstract, socially recognized ways of using language for particular purposes are called genres.” Another description of the genre approach is offered by Swales (1990) who defines genre as:

A genre comprises a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes. These purposes are recognized by the expert members of the parent discourse community, and thereby constitute the rationale for genre. This rationale shapes the schematic structure of the discourse and influence constrains Choice of content and style. (Swales 1990: 58)

In addition, Swales notices that the genre approach starting point is the concept of discourse community and identifies a series of academic contexts. Swales illustrates six characteristics for identifying a group of writers and readers as discourse community: “common goals, participatory mechanisms, information exchange, community specific genres, a highly specialized terminology and a high general level of expertise.” (Swales 1990: 29) “common goals” refer to the objectives of the scholars in any community that might include accounts of replicable experimental procedures, the reporting of new knowledge, the examination of students and so on. For writing, the „participatory mechanisms“ are texts that are related with a particular discipline, such as; academic journals and text-books.

The genre approach has specific characteristics that influence the use of language. These specific characteristics may include; communicative purposes, associated themes, conventions (rhetorical structures and other textual features), the channel of communication, degree of formality, mode of argumentation, textual structures, and the audience type. It is obvious that when such an approach is adopted the focus is on texts, but this focus is not on grammar, rather it is on social constraints and choices that operate when writing in a particular context. That is, students study the style, conventions, structures and organization, argumentation...etc., of texts in the genre they are going to write. The genre approach is supported by the functional model of language which argues the association between discourse and the context in

which language is used. Richards (2003: 18) disputes that the significance of genre is that it includes discourse and contextual aspects of language use. The genre approach involves the direct teaching of a range of genres through a cycle that comprises modeling, joint constructed with the teacher and finally, the students separately construct a text.

6.2. The Roles of Teacher in Writing

Kimble and Garnezy in Brown (2000:7) state that“ learning is a permanent process of the change in behavioral tendency and a result of reinforced practice”. From the preceding quotation, we can suppose that teaching is not just a simple transferring knowledge activity since it is aimed at the behavioral change. Therefore, teachers have to make sure that their students learn something beneficial that eternally will donate to their future.

Teachers are expected to discover their significance roles toward students' development in learning, mainly in writing. Teachers are required to have a range of strategies and great interest when they are teaching writing to the students. Moreover, the achievement of students in learning writing is too determined by the teacher's performance in helping them learn writing. It means that in the process of teaching writing, the teacher has to aid the students to understand and learn how to write successfully, give clear explanations and instructions and guide the students in each step of the writing process. In relation to teacher's roles in the process of writing, Harmer (2004, p.41) also used some tasks that the teachers must perform before, during, and after the process of writing. They are demonstrating, motivating and provoking, supporting, responding and evaluating.

The first task that must be done by the teacher in the process of writing is demonstrating. It is a need for the students to be able to understand writing conventions and genre restraints of particular sorts of writing. As a result, the teacher has to be able to draw the two features to their attentions.

The second task done by the teacher in the process of writing is motivating and provoking the students. It is difficult for some of the students to write in English. Besides, they sometimes have no idea of the words used to write their messages. This is the situation where teachers can help them by provoking them to get the ideas and then persuading them to work on their writings.

Supporting the students is the third task that needs to be performed by the teachers. In the process of writing, teachers become the main supporters for the students when they are writing in classroom, particularly when the students face difficulties. They must be obtainable and well prepared to help them to solve the difficulties. Thus, the students will be motivated in doing their writings. Then, the next task is responding to the students' writing works.

Responding relates to how the teachers respond to the students' writing works. Content and construction are the focus of this task. After looking at the writing works formed by the students, the teachers can give feedbacks or suggestions for the students' improvement in writing.

The last task done by the teacher in the process of writing is evaluating the students' works. This task refers to how the teachers will evaluate the students' writing works and then grade them. This is done by the teachers to see the students' progress in writing. As conclusion, the teachers are required to be able to perform those tasks in the process of writing. This will allow the students to be better writers, especially when they are shy to express the ideas.

To support his preceding ideas on the tasks that should be performed by teachers.

Harmer (2007, p. 261-262) also declares some additional information about teacher's roles in the teaching and learning process of writing. They will be explained as follows:

- **Motivator**

When the students work on the writing tasks, the teacher must motivate them by creating the nice learning atmosphere, persuading them of usefulness of the activity, and encouraging them to create as much as efforts to achieve the optimal result.

- **Resource**

When the students are doing more extended writing tasks, the teacher must be ready to supply information and language needed by the students. Besides, the teacher must also ensure the students that he/she will be there to give them advice and suggestions in a constructive and tactful way. For example, in the process approach, the teacher facilitates the students' writing by providing input or stimulus.

- **Feedback provider**

Being a feedback provider, a teacher should respond positively to the content of what the students have written. The feedback given to the students must be based on what they students need at their level of studies. As summary, teachers hold importance roles toward the students' success in learning writing so they have to be responsible in guiding and facilitating the students' writing by being good motivators, resource and feedback providers.

Conclusion

This chapter was mainly devoted to the writing skill. The chapter started by defining the writing as they are defined by scholars. After that, the researchers provided a general overview about the nature of that skill and the relationship of the act of writing with other skills. Also, this chapter introduced the components of writing. Then, we moved on to identify the approaches and the role of the teacher in teaching writing. Additionally, the chapter included with the assessment of the writing skill.

Chapter Two

Grammatical errors in writing

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Conclusion

Introduction

Human learning is fundamentally a process that involves making mistakes during all his/ her life by means of progression and learning. This latter is a process in which success comes by profiting from mistakes, by using mistakes to obtain feedback from the environment and with that feedback to realize their goals. According to Richards et al “learners’ language has three main goals : to identify the strategies which learners use in language learning, to identify the causes of learners’ errors, and to obtain information on common difficulties in language learning as an aid to teaching, or in preparation of teaching materials” (p. 127).

In this chapter, we will deal with the grammatical errors, including the definition of mistake and error, and the distinction between them. Moving from that to the significance, types, causes, kinds, description and identifying the errors. After that, we will focus on prepositions’ errors as the most common error committed by students while writing and we will mention the influence of those errors in learning the writing skill.

1. Definition of Mistakes and Errors

According to Brown, mistakes refer to a failure to utilize a known system correctly whereas errors concern “a noticeable deviation from the adult grammar of a native speaker, reflecting the interlanguage competence of the learner” (1994, p.205). To sum up this definition, we could say that, a native speaker could make a mistake in his/her language. On the other hand, errors are problems that a native speaker would not do whereas errors are more occurring with foreign language learners. Corder (1974) defines errors as: “breaches of the code” or “deviations from what is regarded as the norms”. (p. 250).

Brown (1994, p.205) considers an error as “a noticeable deviation from the adult grammar of a native speaker, reflecting the interlanguage competence of the learner.” Recognizing that an error has been committed necessarily involves the interpretation of the learner's utterance in a context. Corder (1974, p.250) retains that the utterance may be “erroneous” in two ways: “Overtly or covertly”. These relate to Surface Structure and Deep Structure respectively. (p.272). Overt errors, he clarifies are superficially deviant. i.e., ungrammatical in terms of the target language rules. Whereas, Covert errors are superficially well-formed, but inappropriate in the context.

Both Corder (1967, 1971) and James (1998) reveal a criterion that helps us to do so: A mistake can be self-corrected, but an error cannot. Errors are “systematic,” i.e. likely to happen regularly and not recognized by the learner. Hence, only the teacher or researcher would locate them, the learner would not (Gass&Selinker, 1994). That is to say, learners usually are aware of the grammatical rules however, they make mistakes thus they correct their mistakes. On the other hand, learners make errors because they are not conscious of the rules consequently they need teacher feedback.

Norrish (1983) made a clear distinction between errors and mistakes. He stated errors are “systematic deviation when a learner has not learnt something and consistently gets it wrong.” (p. 21). He added that when a learner of English as a second or a foreign language makes an error systematically, it is because he has not learnt the correct form. Norrish defined mistakes as “inconsistent deviation.” When a learner has been taught a certain correct form, and he uses one form sometimes and another at other times quite inconsistently, the inconsistent deviation is called a mistake. In this light that the researcher has chosen to focus on students’ errors not mistakes. An error, however, is considered more serious.

2. Significance of Errors

Many researchers and theorists in the field of error analysis have focused on the importance of second language learners' errors. Corder (1967, p 19-27) states that errors are significant in three distinctive ways. First of all to the teachers, in that they tell them how far towards the goal the learners have advanced and consequently, what remains for them to learn. Then, they provide the researchers with evidence of how language is learnt or acquired, what strategies or procedures the learners are employing in their discovery of the language. After that, they are necessary to the learners themselves, since we can regard the making of errors as a step the learners use in order to learn. Research has provided experimental evidence pointing to emphasis on learners' errors as an effective means of improving grammatical accuracy (White et al, 1991; Carroll and Swain, 1993). As Carter (1997, p.35) notes, "Knowing more about how grammar works is to understand more about how grammar is used and misused". There is a need for students to recognize the significance of errors which occur in their writing, to fully grasp and understand the nature of the errors made. This requires English language teachers to be better prepared, more sensitive and aware of the difficulties students face while writing.

3. Types of Errors

Different types of errors have been classified in lexical (word choice), semantic (meaning), phonological (pronunciation), syntactic (grammar), and pragmatic (content) errors.

Lexical errors are errors which involve inappropriate direct translation from the mother tongue (Arabic /EFL learners), or the use of incorrect lexical items in foreign language. An example of lexical errors: "This is the car that father bought", "The

clock is now ten”. Phonological errors are errors which student lacks of distinction between phonemes. For example, “P and B” phonemes which mostly Arab students (EFL) commit as errors saying: “bollution and putterfly” instead of “pollution and butterfly”. Semantic errors are those which involve a mixture of meaning i.e. producing words that are not in the appropriate place in the sentence such as saying “I go to the see each summer” instead of “I go to the sea each summer”. Syntactic errors are errors in word order, subject-verb agreement, and the use of pronouns in English. An example of syntactic error: “The girl that I saw her is called Amina”. And, pragmatic errors are those errors which deals with intention of the speaker for example the situation is warning, and the interlocutor is using advice.

Beretta (1989, p.292) classifies errors as linguistic, morph syntactic or phonological and content errors saying “any response by a student to a teacher's question that was unsatisfactory to in terms of its propositional content.” Thus, (categories of errors range from strictly linguistic (phonological, morphological, syntactic), to subject matter content (factual and conceptual knowledge) and lexical items, and to errors of classroom interaction and discourse. Knowing the definition of errors facilitates the decisions of teachers that they make regarding to error treatment.

4. Causes of Errors

Students commit errors when they write a foreign language unconsciously; they are not aware that they are doing so. However, many theories and methodologies seemed mainly concerned with who should accept responsibility, some regarding students as mainly responsible, others the teacher. In fact, the truth may be in other sides because even the intelligent and motivated students make errors. Each teacher of foreign language should have enough knowledge about his class and his/her students to the extent of asking what makes my students do those errors.

Norrish's Classification :

Norrish (cited in Richards (1992, p.21-26) categorizes causes of errors into three types that is carelessness, first language interference, and translation.

1. Carelessness

Carelessness is frequently directly related to lack of motivation. Many teachers will admit that it is not always the student's fault if he loses interest, perhaps the materials and/or style of presentation do not suit him.

2. First Language

Norrish states that "learning a language (a mother tongue or a foreign language) is a matter of habit formation. When someone tries to learn new habits the old ones will interfere the new ones. This cause of error is called first language interference" (cited in Richards 1992, p.23).

3 .Translation

Translation is one of the causes of error. This happens because a student translates his first language sentence, thoughts, ideas, or expressions in to the target language word by word.

Richards' classification

Richards (1971.p, 32) also discusses the sources of error. He classifies sources of errors into:

1. Interference

That is an error resulting from the transfer of grammatical and/or stylistic elements, from the source language to the target language.

2. Overgeneralization

That is an error caused by extension of target language rules to areas where they do not apply.

3. Performance error

That is unsystematic error that happens as the result of such thing as memory lapses, fatigue, confusion, or strong emotion.

4. Markers of Transitional Competence

That is an error that results from a natural and perhaps certain development sequence in the foreign language learning process (by analogy with first language acquisition).

5. Strategy of Communication and Assimilation

That is an error resulting from the attempt to communicate in the target or foreign language without having completely acquired the grammatical form necessary to do so.

6. Teacher-Induced Error

That is an error resulting from the teaching materials or methods that contained in the text or employed by the teacher. This is probably the most common cause of errors.

5. Kinds of Errors

Errors vary from one student to another because they can cover: a phoneme, a morpheme, a word, a phrase, a clause, a sentence or even a paragraph. Burt and Kisparisk (1982.p, 73) made a distinction between the two types of errors; global and local errors. A global error is one which involves “the overall structure of a sentence”, and the local error is one which affects “a particular constituent”. (Richard,et al 1992.p, 123 cited in Chelli 2006, p. 65)gave examples of global and local errors.

5.1.Global error

“I like a taxi, but my friend said so not that we should be late to school.”

5.2. Local Error

“If I heard from him I will let you know.”

The first example of the global error is considered as erroneous (containing an error, incorrect) because the meaning of the sentence is comprehensible. However the second example of the local error only "heard" in the sentence which considered erroneous because the meaning of the sentence is clear.

Many theories suggest propositions of how to deal and to react to errors. According to David Crystal (1992), in real life we rarely react to local errors; those which does not interfere with comprehension of the message. But we do react to global errors those which impede the comprehension of the message because when we are engaged in communication we do not pay attention to specific errors certainly immediate correction. Therefore, we lose concentration by making a lot of interruption and gaps of correction (p.93).

6. Identifying the Error

Identifying the error is not as easy as it is assumed; for example, when a student writes a sentence it seems correct (apparently), but it has no meaning and if so it can happen by chance (hazard). Here, it comes the role of the teacher to know whether the sentence written is comprehensible or not, and whether it is appropriate to the context or not. The teacher should pay attention to each word written by his/ her students, because sometimes they give sentences the teacher understand them in one way in fact the intention of the students is something else. For that, identifying the

error is something very important for both; the teacher to correct and to give a clear analysis and for the student to learn what have been corrected positively.

7. Description of the error

Identifying the error alone is not sufficient what's more important is to give a clear description of the error itself. As we mentioned before when a student produce erroneous (incorrect) sentence the first step is asking "is the learner's sentence intelligible?" i.e., what is the intended meaning that the learner want to convey at. The erroneous sentence should go through several interpretations then reconstruction and all that happens of course with the help of the learner if he/she present; otherwise, the teacher will do a possible interpretation and possible instruction of the sentence based on the capacity of the teacher to extract the intended meaning by the learner from his production.

The process of comparing original sentences with their possible constructions identifies a lot of differences. According to Corder (1973, p.277) "Difference of this sort can be classified into four categories: omission of some required elements, addition of unnecessary or incorrect elements, selection of an incorrect element, and miss ordering of elements". (cited in Chelli, 2006, p. 58)

7.1.Omission

Many learners face problems in writing their second or foreign language because of their complexity. For that, they modify the language according to what makes them feel comfortable in producing that language by making omission of certain elements. This occurs in morphology. Learners often leave out the third person singular morpheme in present simple tense "S", the "S" of the plural, and the final "ed" of the past simple. In syntax, learners may omit certain elements which are

necessary in the sentence uttered. These are some examples given by learners which illustrate what is mentioned above:

“Mobile is means of communication”

“There are many language in this world, but famous is English”

“It described my status”

“My mother work all the day”

“There are a lot of plant in here”

“Two days ago, I clean my car “(ibid).

7.2.Addition

In contrast to the omission, some learners make addition of certain elements to facilitate the practice of the second or the foreign language at many levels. In morphology, students overuse the third person singular morpheme of the present simple tense “S”. At the syntactic level, learners may use the definite article with the place name such as “The Algiers”. At the lexical level, learners may add an unnecessary word. For example, I stayed there during five years ago. These are some examples given by learners which illustrate what is mentioned (ibid):

“The classroom is a group of students”

“In the writing we use some letters..... “

“The English is the most useful language in the world”

“Speech it is a way of communication between the human”

“The causes of pollution are: the factories are near for houses”

“I can to play the piano”

7.3. Selection

Furthermore, some learners make omission and additions another category make selection in the practice of the second or the foreign language. Learners commit errors in morphology, syntax, and vocabulary due to the selection of the wrong phoneme, morpheme, structure or vocabulary item. At the phonological level this may be illustrated by interlingual transfer, the learner transfers and imitates a familiar phoneme from the mother tongue, like Arabic students who substitute “P” with “b” e.g., saying “broblem” instead of “problem”. An error in morphology can be committed like the selection of “est” instead of “er” e.g., Algeria is biggest than Tunisia. In syntax, the learner may choose a wrong structure. At the lexical level, learner often selects words which do not convey the meaning (ibid). These are some examples:

“I was surprised by my succeed”

“You can saw what is there”

“I can ate all this plate”

“The giraffe is the taller animal”

7.4. Miss-Ordering

Miss-ordering may occur in pronunciation by shifting the position of certain phonemes, e.g., a speaker may say “fignisicant” instead of “significant”. Less frequent at the morphological level, but in the example: he’s get upping now, the learner attaches “ing” form to the particle of the two word verb get up. At the syntactic level, miss-ordering is much more common as in the sentence: “ He’s a dear to me friend”, where the elements of a single noun phrase are inverted. At the lexical level, the learner may reverse the elements of a compound noun word. “A car key” may become “a key car”, which may be regarded as a car carrying keys. These are some examples:

“English is the best language international”

“I am years 20 old”

“This cat is my”

“Each summer to swimming pool i go”

“She wake ups late all the time”

Each learner of the second or foreign language when he meets a different language from his mother tongue he may make one of these problems which are considered as errors: omission, addition, selection, or miss-ordering. Some learners commit one of them; however, others may face the four at the same time. What is evident is that the learner find difficulty in many grammatical areas, in particular the use of articles and prepositions which are used randomly. It occurs more in speaking than writing because the learner doesn't have much time to correct or to recapitulate what he/she has said.

8. Errors on prepositions as the Most Common Grammatical

Errors in Writing

8.1. Definition

A preposition is a word which opens up the possibilities of saying more about a thing or an action. According to Sinclair (1991, p. 59) “prepositions help us to indicate the place where an action occurs, the place where someone or something is, the place they are going to or coming from, or the direction they are moving in”. This means preposition indicates the relationship of the idea expressed in the prepositional phrase to the idea expressed in the rest of a sentence.

Allosop (1986, p.105) conforming to “prepositions are words which show the relationship between the things, people or events.” That is to say, prepositions are connectors; their function is to connect a noun, pronoun to another word in a sentence.

In addition to that Celce (1999) considers English prepositions as free morpheme unlike the other languages where they are bound inflectional morphemes. Thus, the reason that prepositions have the name they do is that they precede nouns unlike other languages like Japanese which has postposition that follow nouns, and this does not mean that English prepositions must always come before nouns. It is possible for prepositions to come after nouns. Furthermore Strang (1974) claims that English prepositions are morphemically either simple like: against, at despite, on and in or complex which consists of two or more words that function as single preposition such as: because of , out of, in front of.

Rutherford (2003) states that the use of prepositions makes semantic relations more clarified and easier to be understood.

Kennedy (2003) points that prepositions represent 8% of the used words in spoken language and 12% of the used words in writing.

8.2.Classification of Prepositions

Most of prepositions are single words, although there are some that consist of more than one word such as “out of” and “in between”.

8.2.1. Simple/one wordpreposition

Sinclair (1991) proposes the following list of common one-word prepositions which are used to talk about place or destination:

About	Between	Over
Above	Beyond	Past
Across	In by	Within
Along	Down	Round
Among	From	Through
Around	Inside	Throughout
At	Into	To
Before	Near	Toward
Behind	Off	Under
Below	On	Underneath
Beneath	Opposite	Up
beside	outside	

Table 1: Common one-word prepositions.

8.2.2. Compound prepositions

Furthermore, Sinclair (1991) presents another list of prepositions which consists of more than one word and those words are used to talk about place or destination. Compound prepositions are formed by prefixing the preposition to a noun, an adjective or an adverb.

A head of	In front of
All over	Near to
Away from	Next to
Close by	On top of
Close to	Out of
In between	

Table 2: Compound Prepositions

8.3.Types of Prepositions

According to Chalker (1984): “A major use of preposition is to relate things or people in various ways in place and time. Many of them apply to both place and time,

with very similar meanings.” That is to say, the essential role of preposition is to connect objects and individuals in a various manners, place and time.

Prepositions indicate the different relations which are found between things mentioned in a sentence, they are usually classified into the categories of place, time, and direction, for introducing objects and for spatial relationship.

Berry and Brizee (2010) propose the following charts to describe both uses and meanings of prepositions:

8.3.1. Preposition of Place

A preposition says something about the position; we can find it by asking “where”.

- To express notion of place, English uses the following preposition: to talk about the point itself: **in**, to express something contained: **inside**, to talk about surface: **on**, to talk about a general vicinity: **at**.
- To express notions of an object being higher than a point. English uses the following preposition: **over, above**.
- To express notions of an object being lower than a point. English uses the following preposition: **under, underneath, beneath, below**.
- To express notions of an object of being close to a point. English uses the following prepositions: **near, by, next to, between, among, opposite**.

8.3.2. Preposition of Time

Preposition that say something about the time. It can be found by asking “when”.

- **On, at, in** indicate one point of time.

- To express extended time, English uses the following prepositions: **since, for, by, from-to, from-until, during, (with) in.**

8.3.3. Preposition of Direction

- To basic preposition of direction is “**To**”
 “**To**”: signifies orientation toward a goal. When the goal is physical, such as a destination, “**To**” implies movement in the direction of the goal.
- The other two prepositions of directions are compounds formed by adding “**To**” to the corresponding prepositions of location.

On +to = onto: signifies movement towards a surface.

In+ to= into: signifies movement towards the interior of a volume.

(“**To**” is a part of the directional preposition toward, and the two mean about the same thing).

- With many verbs of motion, “**on**” and “**in**” have a directional meaning and can be used along with “**onto**” and “**into**”.

8.3.4. Prepositions to introduce objects of verbs

English uses the following verbs:

- **At:** glance, laugh, look, rejoice, smile, stare.
- **Of:** approve, consist, and smell.
- **Of (or about):** dream, think
- **For:** call, hope, look, wait, watch, and wish.

8.3.5. Prepositions of spatial relationship

- **Above:** in or to a higher position than something else.
- **Across:** from one side to the other of something with clear limits, such as an area of land, a road or river.

- **Against:** next to and touching or being supported by something.
- **Ahead of:** in front.
- **Along:** from one part of a road, river, etc. to another.
- **Among:** in position or direction surrounding, or in a direction going along the edge of or from one part to another (of).
- **Behind:** at the back (of).
- **Below:** at the back (of).
- **Beneath:** in or to a lower position than under.
- **Beside:** at the side of, next to.
- **Between:** in or into the space which separates two places, people or objects.
- **From:** to be born, got form, or made in a particular place.
- **In front of:** the part of a building, object or person's body which faces forward or which is most often seen or used.
- **Inside:** in or into a room, building, container, or something similar.
- **Near:** not far away in distance.
- **Off:** used with actions in which something is removed or removes itself from another thing.
- **Out of:** used to show movement away from the inside of a place or container.
- **Through:** from one end or side of something to the other.
- **Toward:** in the direction of, or closer to someone or something.
- **Under:** in or to a position below or lower than something else, often so that one thing covers the others.
- **Within:** inside or not further than an area or period of time.

8.4.PrepositionsErrors

According to Burt et al (1982), there are different types of errors that students can make when writing a sentence. The following classification is used as reference for identifying errors in the use of prepositions:

8.4.1. Misuse

Misuse errors are characterized by the incorrect presence of an item in an utterance, it means, when an element inside a sentence is wrongly substituted for another one from the same category. For this study, misuse refers to the case when within a sentence any preposition is used instead of the correct one.

8.4.2. Omission

Omission errors are characterized by the absence of an item that must appear in a well-formed utterance. In other words, an omission error is made when within a sentence the producer leaves out an element necessary for its correct understanding. In this work, omission refers to the case when the writer does not include the preposition that is necessary for the correct interpretation of the sentence.

8.4.3. Addition

Addition errors are the opposite of omission errors. They are characterized by the presence of an item which must not appear in a well-formed utterance. In this document, addition refers to the case when the writer includes a preposition that should not be present in a sentence.

8.5.PreviousResearch on Prepositions

Learning a second language is considered as a complex process with its corresponding difficulties. According to Krashen (1988) there are two independent systems of

second language performance: “The acquired system” and “The learned system”. “The acquired system” or “acquisition” is the product of subconscious process very similar to the process children undergo when they acquire their first language. It requires meaningful interaction in target language –natural communication- in which speakers are concentrated not in the form of their utterances, but in the communicative act. “The learned system” or “learning” is the product of formal instruction and it comprises a conscious process which results in conscious knowledge “about” the language, for example knowledge of grammar rules.

Managing preposition is a task related to the acquisition and learning process, apart from dealing with their meaning and communication aspect, the learner must be aware of the grammatical rules that govern them.

Some authors have written documents pointing out the difficulties when learning a foreign language and they have found that one cause is mother tongue interference. Habash (1982) focused her attention on prepositions as one of the most difficult areas of foreign language acquisition. The main objective was to investigate the causes of errors in the use of English prepositions that are frequently made by Arabic-speaking students. She finally found that the main factor was interference from Arabic. This was because students found more difficulty in learning English patterns that are similar to their own language than learning the ones that are completely different. It also happened because of the literal translation substitution, deletion, and redundancy that students do before they form English patterns.

Moreover, Blom (2006) emphasizes the difficulties students have when learning English preposition. She talked about the analysis she made with two courses of ninth-grade Swedish students trying to find out if students performed better when they

were given answers to choose from or when they had to produce the prepositions by themselves.

She found nine prepositions that are particularly frequent in errors: **to, in, at, of, about, on, by,** and **with**. Her study proved that learners resorted to Swedish when they did not know the correct answer. This strategy results in positive or negative transfer depending on the similarities of the language. Prepositions used in Swedish sometimes have two or more equivalents in English, which also contributes to the complexity of the matter.

On the other hand, some researchers have been concentrated on the use of software for analyzing English preposition errors made by EFL learners, as was the case of Chodorow, Tetreault and Han (2007) that describes a methodology for creating software that detects English preposition errors and found it performed with high precision (84%). They tested their own software with writing samples from EFL students and found that the most common prepositions that learners used incorrectly were in (21, 4%), to (20,8%) and of (16,6%). Next, they ranked the common preposition “confusions”, the common mistakes made for each preposition. The top ten most common “confusions” were in cases where no preposition is licensed (the writer used an extraneous preposition). The most common offenses were actually extraneous errors.

There have been many studies on prepositions from different perspectives. However, in the case of Spanish speakers students of English as a foreign or second language, more specifically Colombian students. It is supposed that no research has been carried out on the topic of prepositions, since no papers have been found

probably because they have not been published or it is difficult to have access to them.

8.6. The Influence of Grammatical Errors on learning the Writing Skill

The notion of error in itself seems negative in any process of life. In teaching it is considered the same, however, it is the contrast because no one can learn new thing without making flats, errors, or mistakes. Errors in language teaching are positive indicators that the students are acquiring or learning and many researchers see them as an aid to learning. Corder (1974,p,283) summarizes and explains the significance of making errors in language teaching as follows:

1. They are indispensable to the learners because making errors can be regarded

as device the learners use in order to learn. Through hypotheses-testing, the learner gets to know which formulations are acceptable and which ones are not.

2. They inform the teacher if he\she undertakes a systematic analysis, how far

towards the goal the foreign learner has progressed and consequently what remains for him\her to learn.

3. They provide the researcher with evidence of how language is learnt or acquire what strategies the learners are employing in their discovery of the knowledge about the language.

Conclusion

This chapter was mainly devoted to classify the grammatical errors on learning the writing skill. The chapter started by the distinction of mistakes and errors as they were argued by scholars. After that, the researchers provided the significance, types, causes, kinds, description and identifying the errors. Additionally, the chapter also introduced errors on prepositions as the most frequent errors committed by students in learning the writing skill.

Chapter Three: Field Work

Data collection and Discussion of the Findings

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Introduction

The present chapter is devoted to the analysis of both teachers' and students' questionnaire. The aim of this latter is to get an overview about the writing skill and to find out the students' errors in writing which face them in improving their level in writing.

In EFL context, it seems appropriate to give students the opportunity to express their ideas not only by means of assignments, but via questionnaires as well. The aim of this questionnaire is to gain a thorough understanding of the most grammatical errors committed by second year LMD students on learning the writing skill, and what are the causes of those errors and what must be done to remedy this situation. In this section, we will see the results of the both questionnaires, and to check the validity of the research hypothesis.

1. Students' Questionnaire

1.1. Administration of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire was given to 50-second year students chosen randomly from the Department of English at Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra. The students answered the questionnaire in the classrooms, and this number of students constitutes the sample of this research. The administered questionnaire discusses an issue that is shared by almost all students; it does not need a great number of students to be analyzed, most of second year students face the same difficulties in writing since it is this year that they start write compositions.

1.2. Description of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire consists of twenty-one (21) open-ended and multiple-choice questions divided into three sections as follows:

Section One: Background Information (Q1-Q4): It is to get an idea about students' gender, age and if English was their first choice and how the students consider their level in English.

Section Two: The Writing Skill (Q5-Q11): this section seeks information about the writing skill, and what is the most difficult course according to them and what is the most important skill they want to develop. Also, it seeks whether "written expression" is interesting or not as well as if their teacher motivates them to write or not. The section also includes the student' ability to write and what types of writing he/she produces.

Section Three: Grammatical errors in writing (Q12-Q21): this section is composed of questions seeking information on whether the students find difficulties when writing in English and to what these difficulties are related, and how often they make mistakes in grammar and what types of those errors; whether those errors are made only in written expression or in other areas. The last questions are about how could reduce those errors. The final question is an open ended question in which the students are asked to give other suggestions.

1. 3. Analysis of Students' Questionnaire

Section one: background information

Q1. Gender

Gender	Participants	Percentage
Female	35	70%
Male	15	30%
Total	50	100%

Table 1: Students' gender

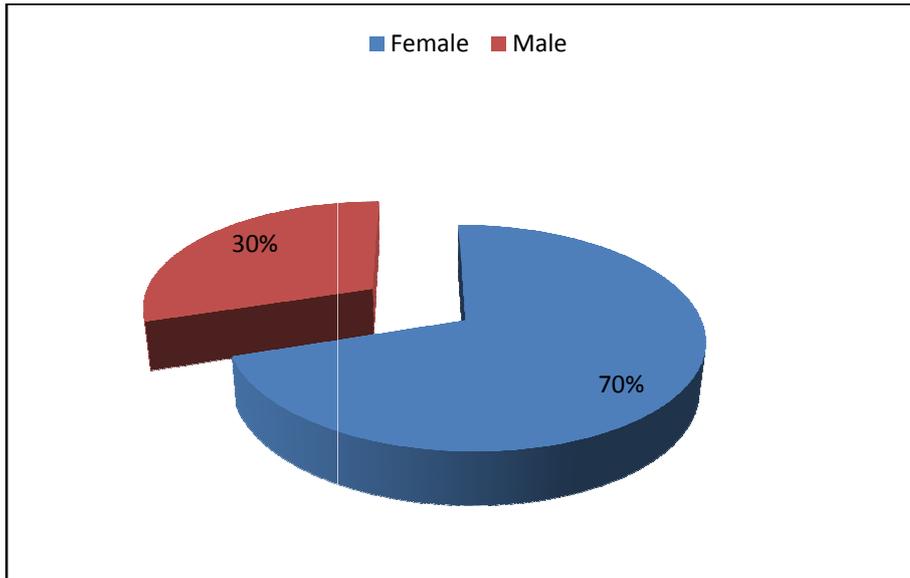


Figure 1: Students' gender.

As indicated in the table above, the results reveal that largest majority of students are female and that female students outnumber males. In fact, we have recorded just 15 male students out of fifty (30 %), whereas the rest is female sex, that is 35 are female students (70 %). This indicates that in the field of foreign languages (e.g. English) the percentage of girls is higher than of boys, which is not the case in other fields.

Q2. Age:

Age	Participants	Percentage
18- 22	30	60%
23- 28	20	40%
Total	50	100%

Table 2: Students 'age

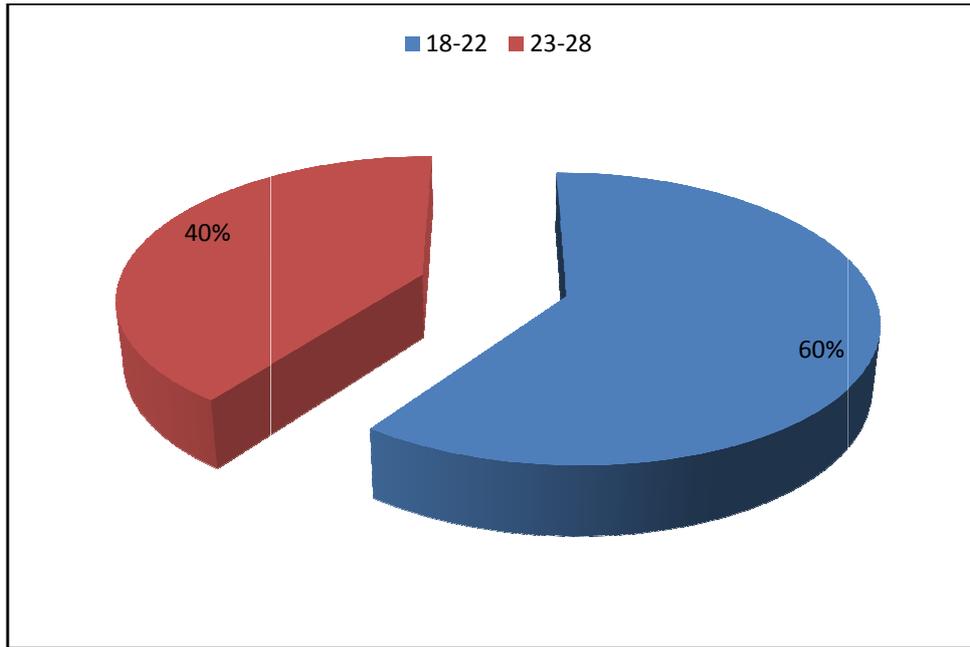


Figure 2: Students' age.

We notice from table 2 that (60%) of students 'age range is between 18-22. However, the other (40%) of students 'age range is between 23-28.

Q3.Was English your first choice?

Option	Participants	Percentage
Yes	45	90%
No	5	10%
Total	50	100%

Table 3: Students' Choice to study English.

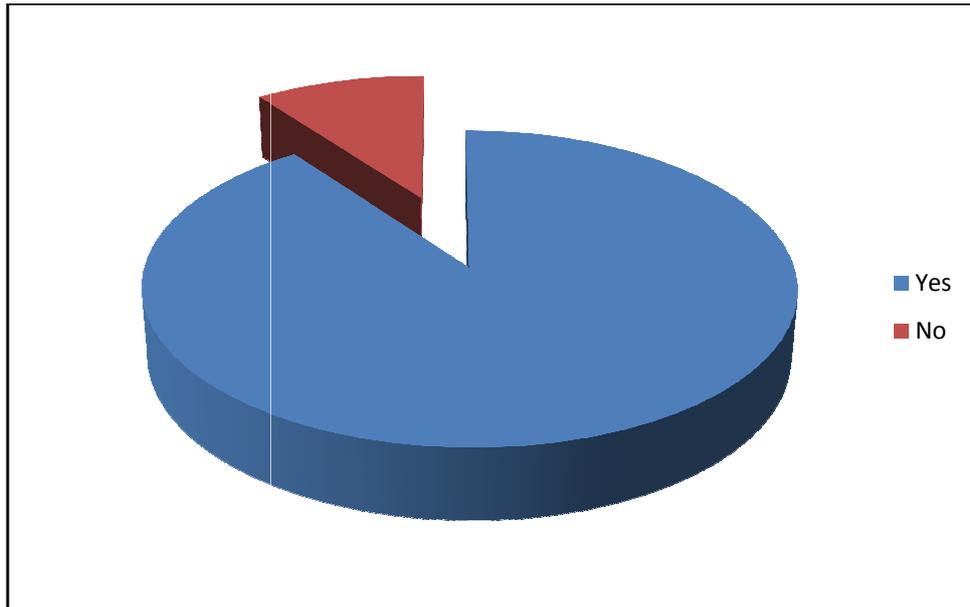


Figure 3: Students' choice to study English.

This table shows that most of learners chose the English branch because they love it and they chose it freely because most of the students 45 (90%) answer with “Yes” and just 5 students (10%) answered with “No” either because they didn’t want to study this branch and hate the English language, or they didn’t have opportunity to choose another branch. Students who answered with No they justify their answers by choosing another branch like philosophy, medicine, ect.

Q4. How do you consider your level in English?

Option	Participants	Percentage
Good	20	40%
Average	29	58%
Low	1	2%
Total	50	100%

Table 4:Students' level.

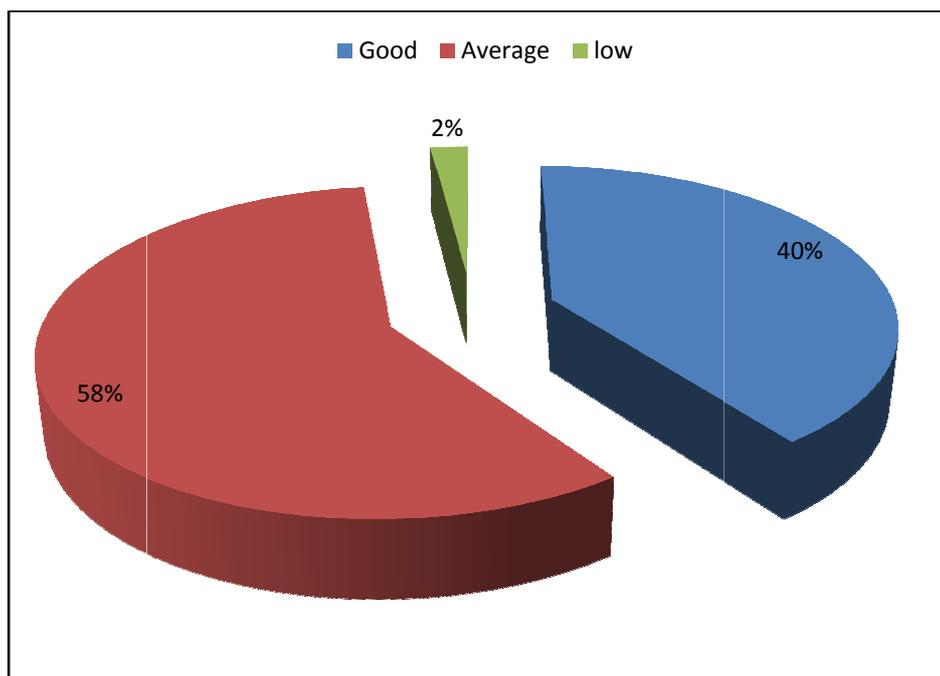


Figure 4: Students' level.

This question sheds light on students' level in English. It shows that most of students 29 or (58%) consider their level average and 20 students (40%) consider their level good. By contrast, there is just one student about (2%) who considers his level low.

Section two: The Writing Skill.

Q6. Which of the courses below is the most difficult?

Option	Participants	Percentage
Written expression	25	50%
Oral expression	5	10%
Grammar	5	10%
Phonetics	15	30%
Total	50	100%

Table 5: The most difficult course for students.

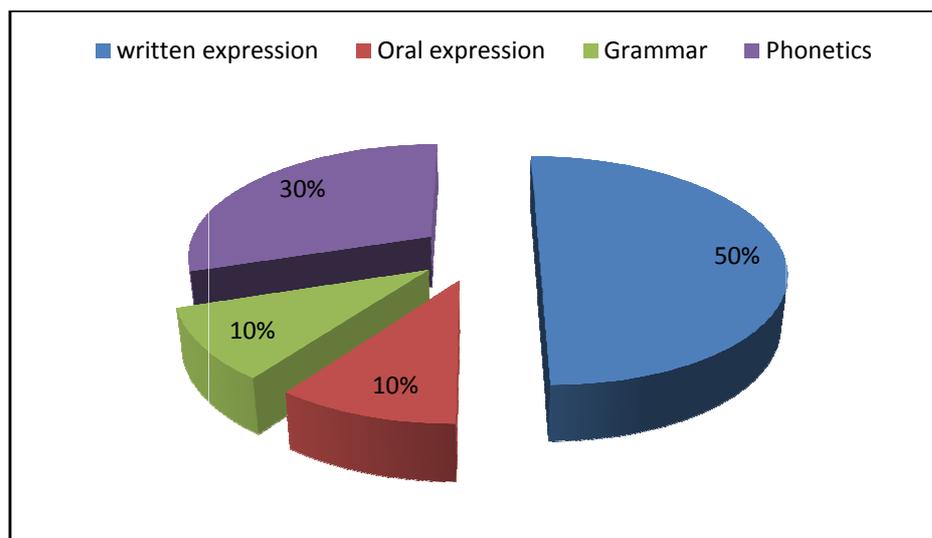


Figure 5: The most difficult course for students.

We notice from the table 5 that 25 students (50%) state that the written expression module is the most difficult module according to them; whereas, 15 students (30%) declare that phonetics is the most difficult module and 5 students about (10%) state that the oral expression module is the most difficult module and the rest of students which is (10%) mention that grammar is the difficult course to them.

Q7. Choose the most important skill that you want to develop.

Options	Participants	Percentage
Listening skill	8	16%
Speaking skill	18	36%
Reading skill	2	4%
Writing skill	22	44%
Total	50	100%

Table 6: Students preferred skill to develop.

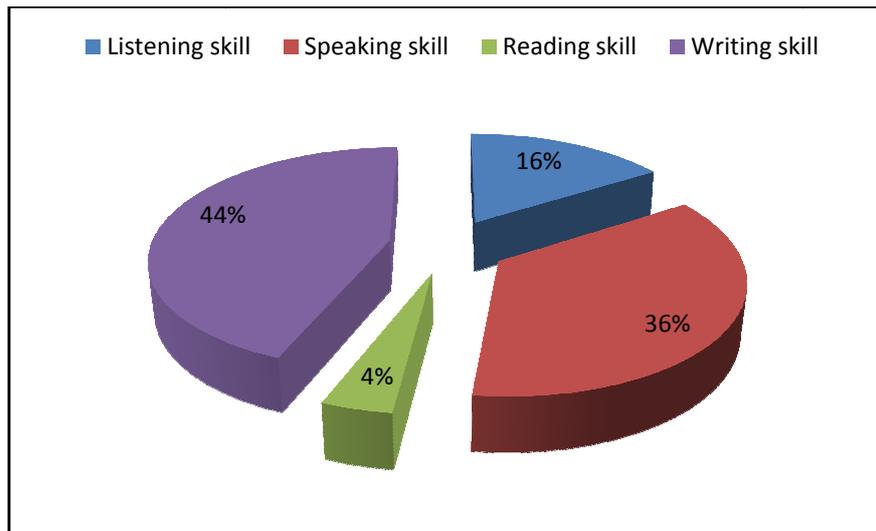


Figure 6: Students preferred skill to develop.

As we notice from table 6, the majority of students (44%) want to develop their writing skill and they justified their choice by saying that they need the writing skill in their future study and they verified that the writing skill is an important aspect of learning English a foreign language. Whereas, the rest (36%) of students need to develop their speaking skill and they defended their answer by saying that to learn a foreign language, we should to speak it and others said that they are confused between British and American accent. (16%) of students want to develop their listening skill and they sustained their answer by saying that they have a big problem when they're listening to native speakers' speech ,music or watching movies because they don't understand what is said.(4%) students like to develop their reading skill; they justified their answer by saying that they want to learn how to read and understand the hidden meaning.

Q7.To what extent do you think that the writing skill is important in studying English

Options	Participants	Percentage
Very important	40	80%
Important	10	20%
Not important	00	00%
Total	50	100%

Table 7:Students ‘Attitudes towards the module of “Written Expression”.

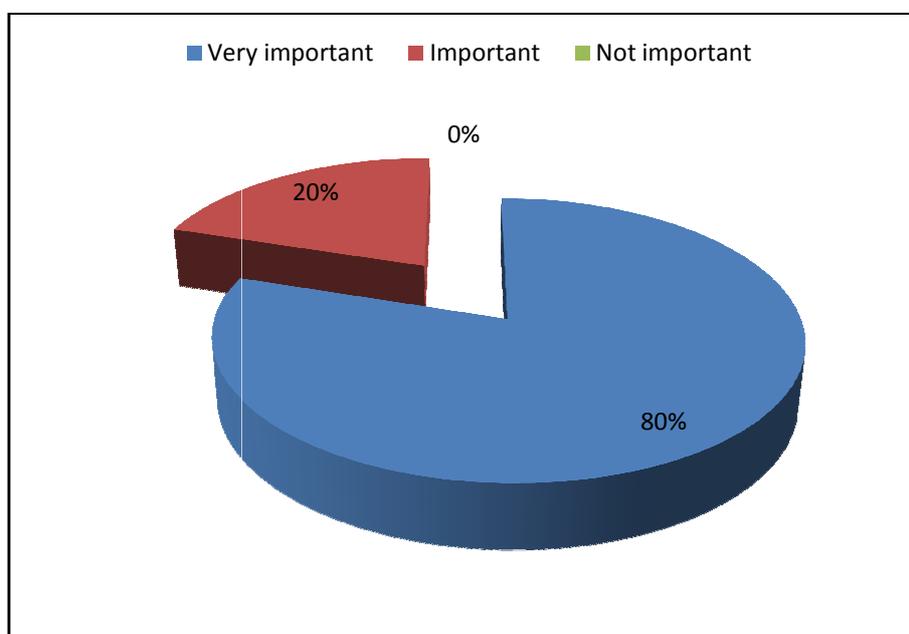


Figure 7:Students ‘Attitudes towards the module of “Written Expression”.

Table 7 shows that (100%) of the students find the module of “Written Expression” interesting and no one say that it is not interesting. This percentage is divided into 3 options A) very important (80%), B) important (20%) and C) not important (00%). This result demonstrates that the students are aware of the importance of writing.

Q8. Does your teacher motivate you to write?

Options	Participants	Percentage
Yes	41	82%
No	9	18%
Total	50	100%

Table 8: Students' attitude about their teacher.

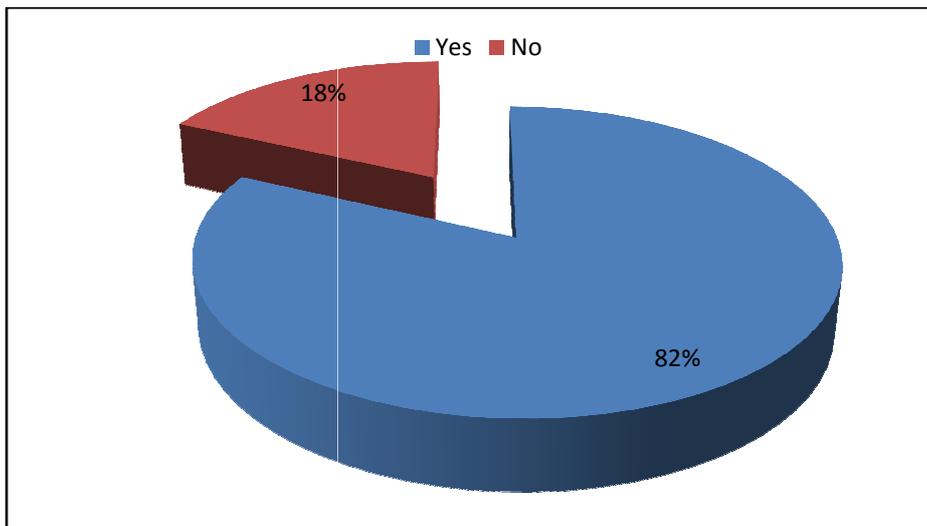


Figure 8: Students' attitude about their teacher.

In this question students were asked whether their teacher motivates them to write or not. 41 students, (82%) answered with “yes”, and just 9 students (18%) answered with “no” which is something positive to the process of teaching and learning of foreign language ,which indicates that teachers are doing their best to make students use the language.

Q9.Your ability to write is:

Option	Participants	Percentage
Good	7	14%
Average	18	36%
Low	25	50%
Total	50	100%

Table9: Students ‘ability in writing.

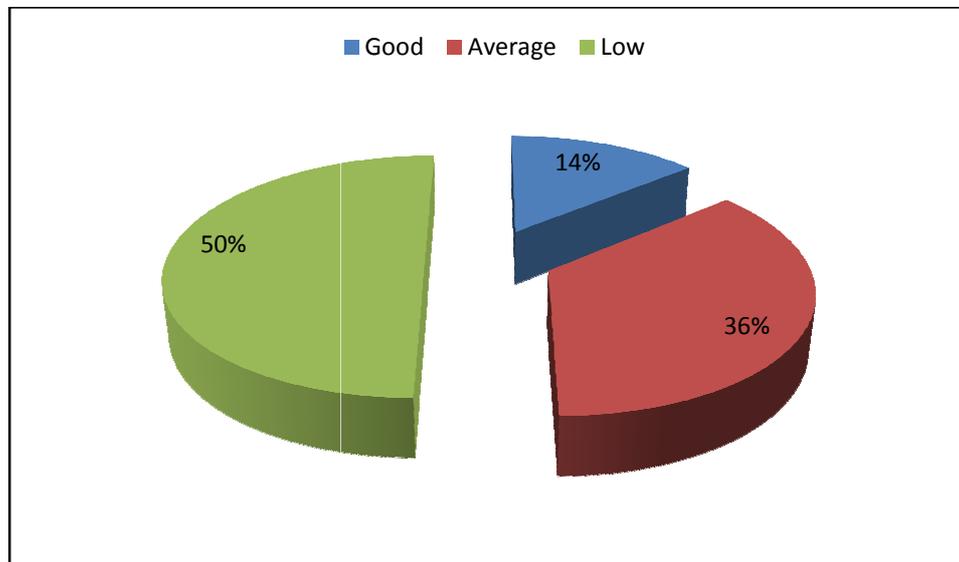


Figure 9: Students ‘ability in writing.

The results in table 9 show that 50 % of the students consider their level in writing low; they are not satisfied with their writings. Whereas, the rest (36%) of the students evaluate their ability to write average and 14% of the students consider their level good ;they are satisfied with their writing. The results prove that our students are weak in writing because it is a difficult skill.

Q10.Do you write in English outside University?

Options	Participants	Percentage
Yes	28	56%
No	22	44%
Total	50	100%

Table 10: Writing Practice outside University.

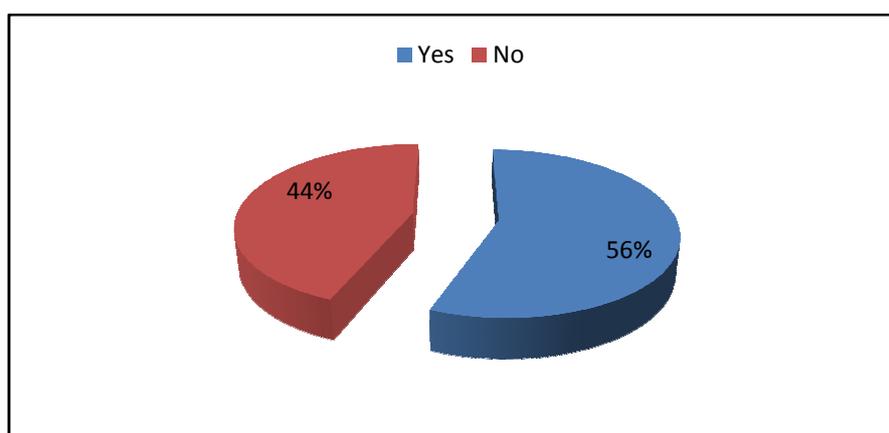


Figure10: Writing practice outside university.

As we see in the table 10 most of students (56%) try to write outside of university in different types such as homework, letters, E-mail, short stories, diaries and poems. This is really encouraging to know that a considerable number of students are interested in performing a writing task. And (44%) of the students don't write outside of the university

Q11. In class, do you like to write?

Options	Participants	Percentage
Individually	18	36%
In pairs	21	42%
Groups	11	22%
Total	50	100%

Table11: Writing Techniques.

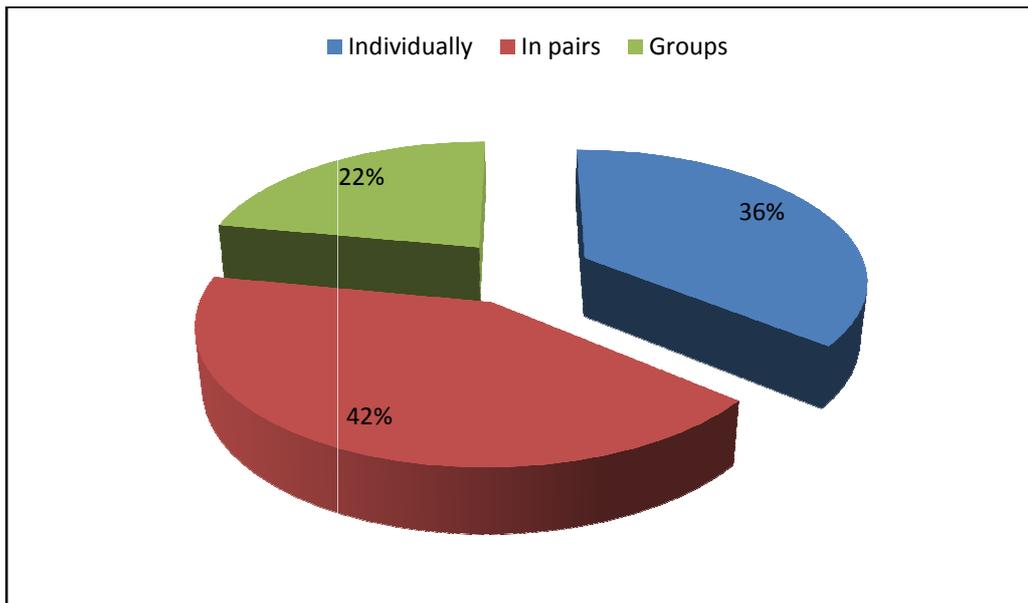


Figure11: Writing Techniques.

As indicated in the table above, 21 students about (42%) like to write in pairs, whereas 18 students prefer to write individually .The other 11 students favor to write in groups.

Section Two: Grammatical errors in writing.

Q12.Do you find difficulties when writing in English?

Option	Participants	Percentage
Yes	30	60%
No	10	20%
Not rarely	10	20%
Total	50	100%

Table 12: Students' difficulties in writing.

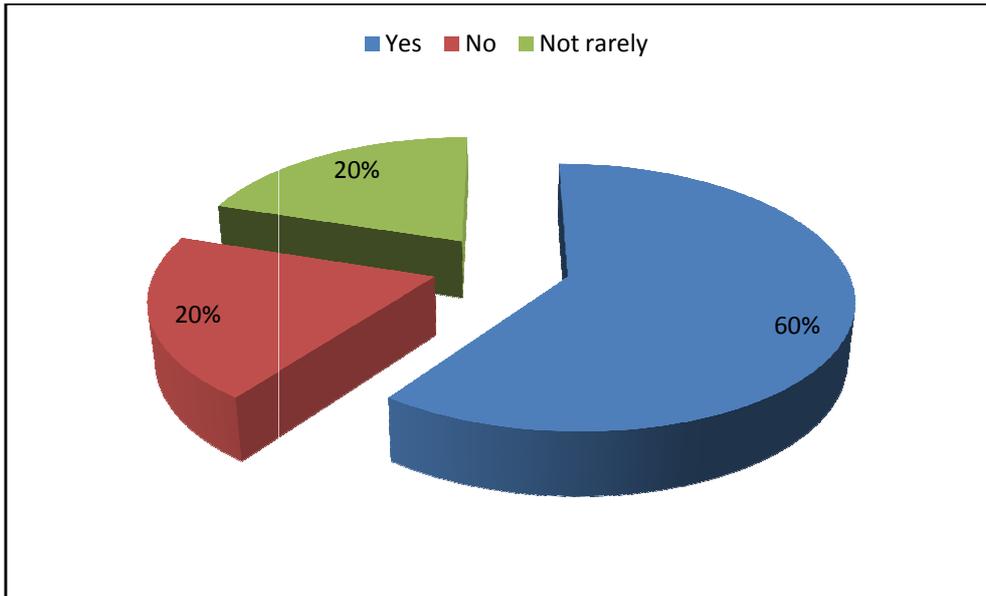


Figure 12: Students' difficulties in writing.

As we can see from the table on high that the majority of student (60%) find difficulties while writing, from the students answers we can notice that these difficulties are due to of lack of vocabulary.

Q13.Are these difficulties related to?

Options	Participants	Percentage
Vocabulary	20	40%
Grammar	30	60%
Total	50	100%

Table 13:The most problematic aspect of writing.

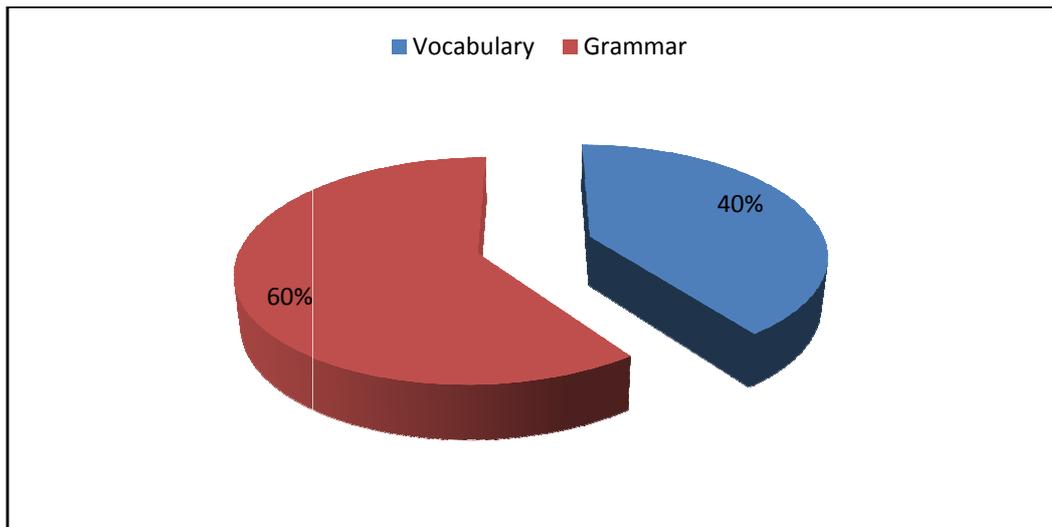


Figure 13: The most problematic aspect of writing.

As we observe in table 13, most of students (60%) relate their difficulties to grammar; whereas, (40%) of students relate their difficulties to vocabulary. We notice from that, that the students have a background of vocabulary, but they don't use it in correct or formal structure they do a lot of mistakes especially with grammar.

Q14. While you write, how often do you make mistakes in grammar?

Options	Participants	Percentage
Often	31	62%
sometimes	17	34%
Never	2	4%
Total	50	100%

Table 14: Students' errors in writing.

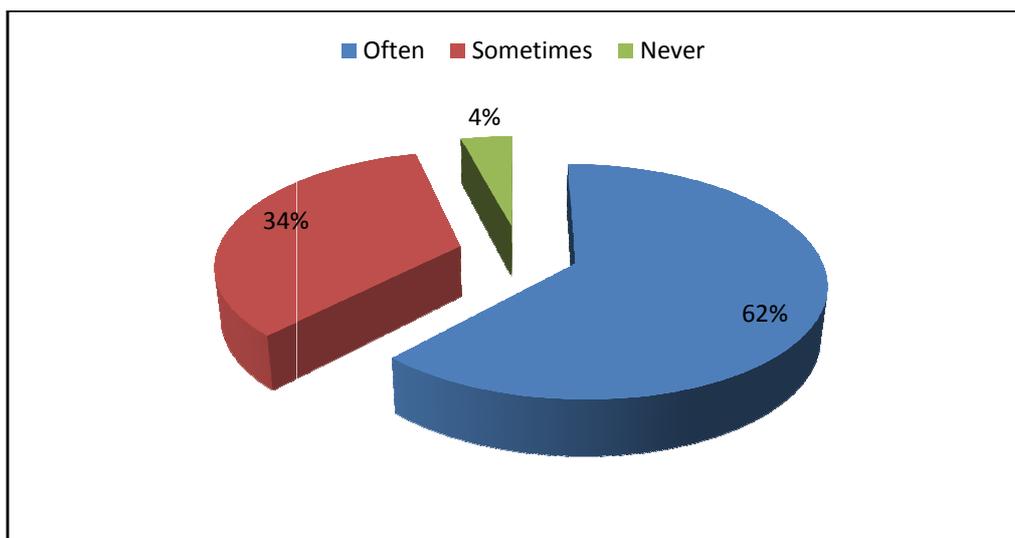


Figure 14: Students' errors in writing.

The majority of students (31) or (62%) say that they often make errors in grammar while writing. However, 17 students or (34%) declare that they sometimes make errors in grammar. Furthermore, only two students (4%) state that they never make mistakes in grammar.

Q15. What are the types of those errors?

Options	Participants	Percentage
Articles	05	10%
Prepositions	20	40%
Tenses	25	50%
Total	50	100%

Table 15: Types of errors.

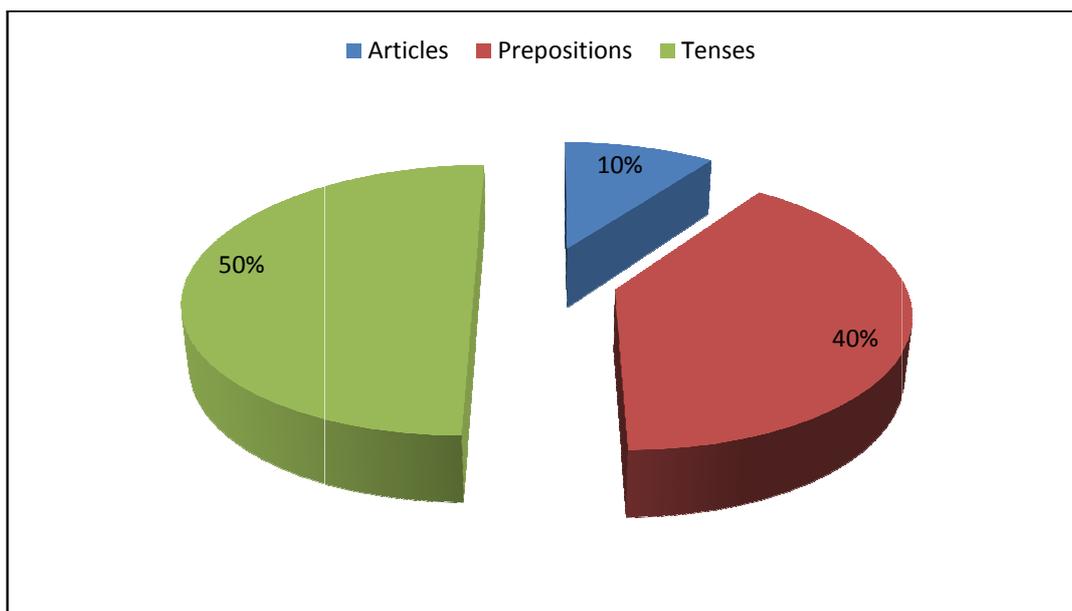


Figure 15: Types of errors

As indicated in the table above half of the students (50%) face difficulties in using tenses, furthermore, (40%) of students make a lot of errors in using prepositions and the rest (10%) of students make errors in using articles.

Q16. Do you make those errors only in written expression?

Options	Participants	Percentage
Yes	10	20%
No	40	80%
Total	50	100%

Table 16: The limitation of errors.

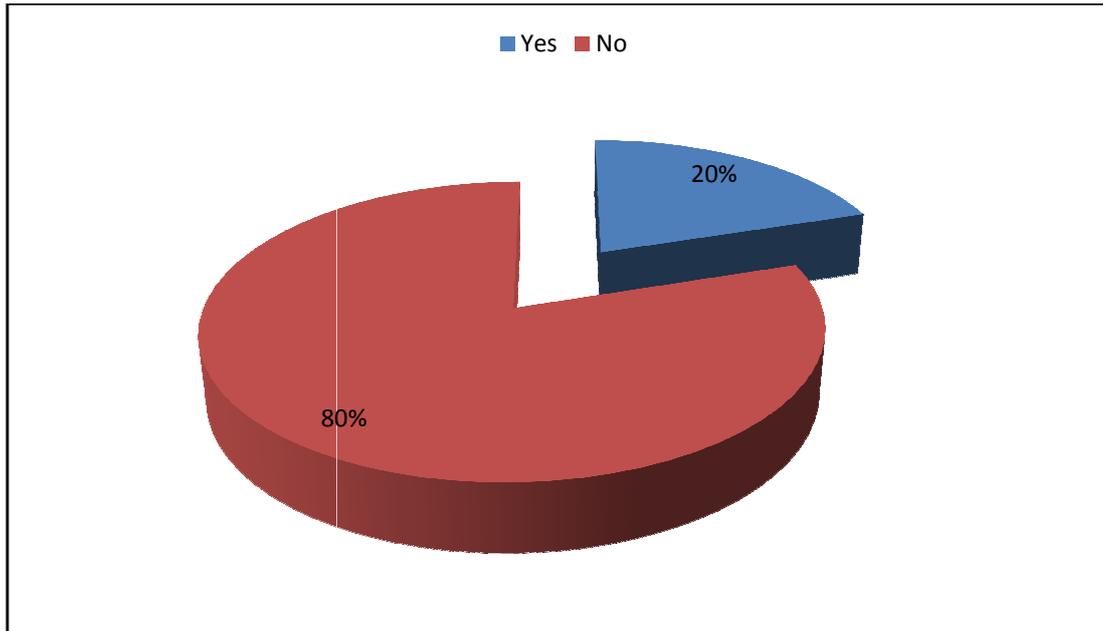


Figure 16: The limitation of errors.

As we can see in table 16, (80%) of students affirm that they don't make those errors only in written expression; whereas, 20% of students assert that they do those errors only in writing this may be due to they are obliged to write only in this course.

Q 17.What are the other areas do you make those errors?

Options	Participants	Percentage
Oral expression	36	72%
Linguistics	2	4%
Psychology	2	4%
Literature	10	20%
Total	50	100%

Table 17: Other errors' areas.

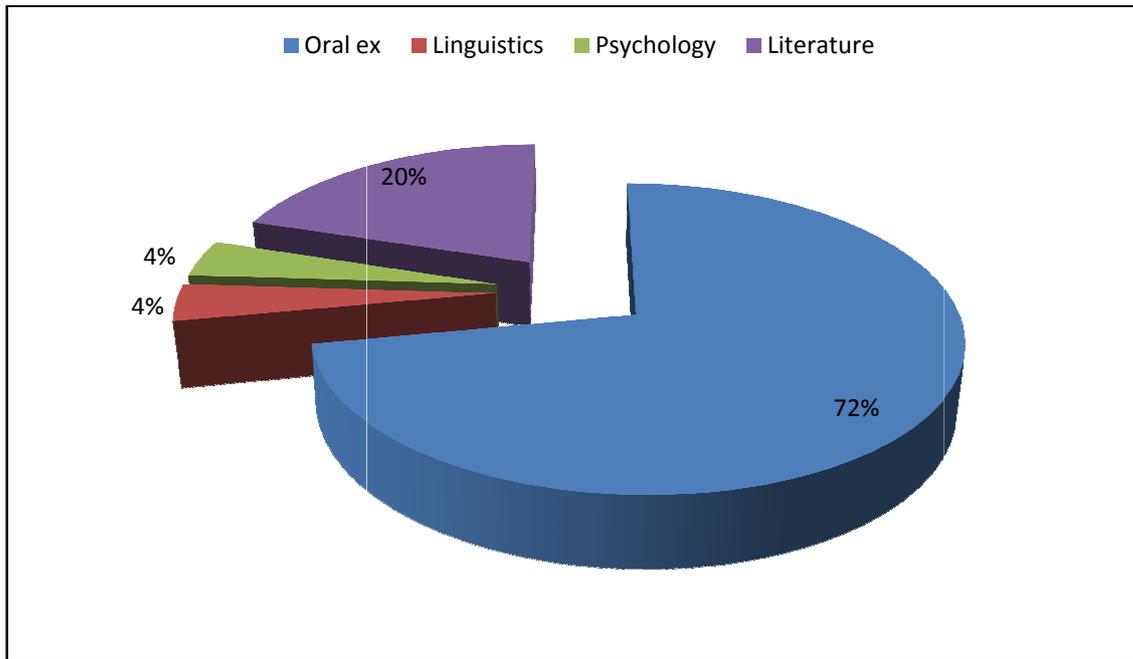


Figure 17: Other errors' areas.

As indicated in the table above, (72%) of students make grammatical errors in oral expression because they are obliged to use the English language in that course in different ways such as plays, and (20%) of students make the same errors in literature; whereas, (4%) commit those errors in linguistics and the rest (4%) do those errors in psychology; these results show that they are not obliged to write paragraphs in exams because they are obliged to answer the questions that are given to them.

Q 18. Have you tried to solve this problem before?

Options	Participants	Percentage
Yes	48	96%
No	2	4%
Total	50	100%

Table 18: Students' attitude toward errors

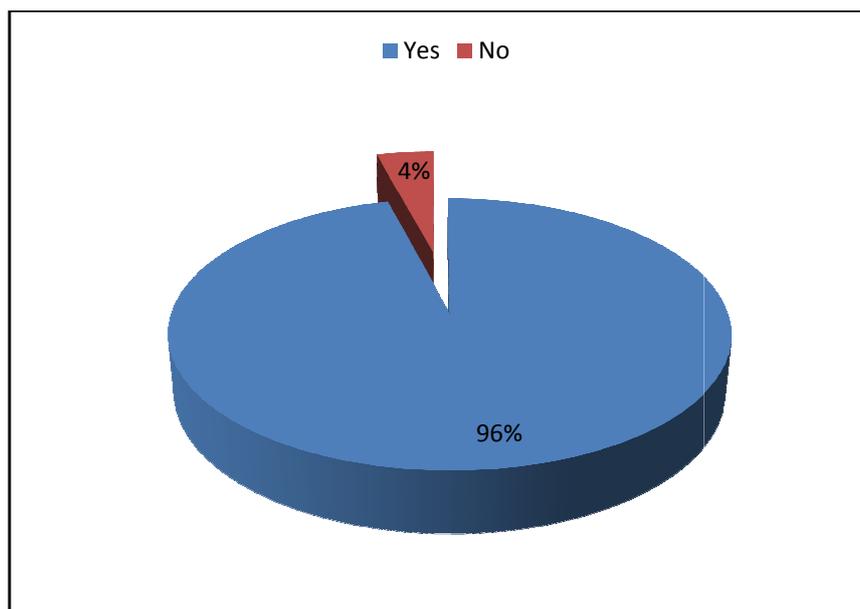


Figure 18: Students' attitude toward errors.

Concerning question eighteen which is about students 'attitude toward errors, the majority of students (96%) tried to solve their problem which is grammatical errors in writing, and only two students (4%) haven't tried to solve that problems. We can notice from that result that most of the students like to learn English language correctly.

Q 19. Does your teacher correct your mistakes?

Options	Participants	Percentage
Yes	50	100%
No	00	00%
Total	50	100%

Table 19: Students 'opinion on teachers 'role in correction errors.

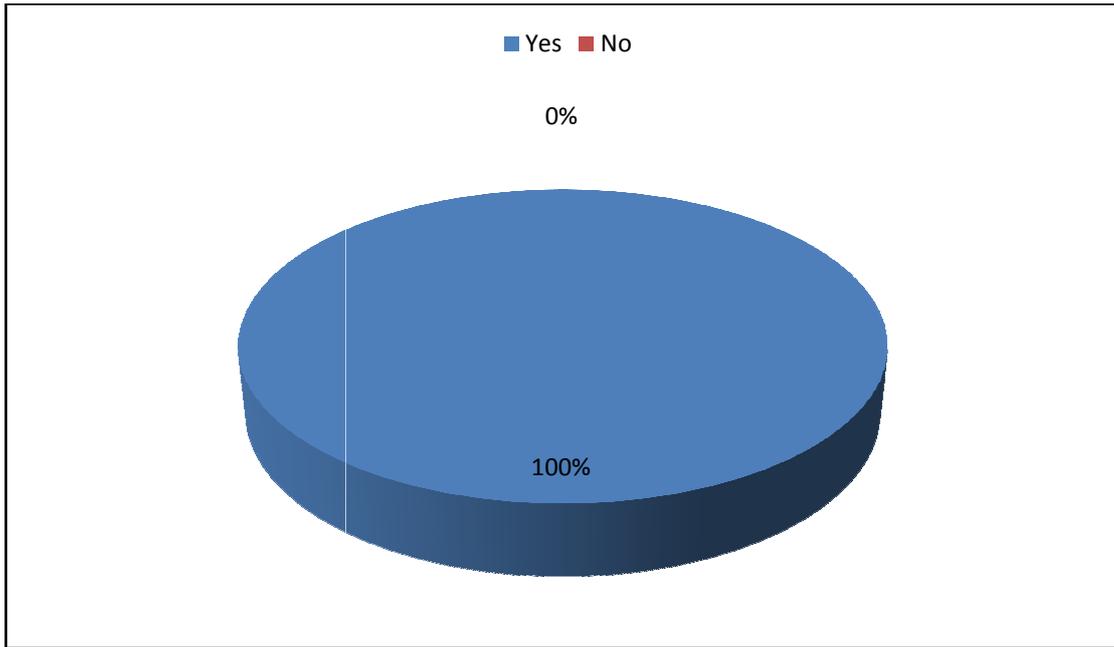


Figure 19: Students ‘opinion on teachers ‘role in correction errors.

From this table, we can notice that all the students of our sample (100%) agreed upon one answer saying that their teacher corrects their errors.

Q20. In your opinion, what is the best solution to remedy this situation? (You can tick more than one answer)

- a. To have additional lessons
- b. To have more exercises
- c. To have more home works

Options	Number	Percentage
a+b+c	50	100%
Total	50	100%

Table 20: Some solutions to remedy the students’ grammatical errors.

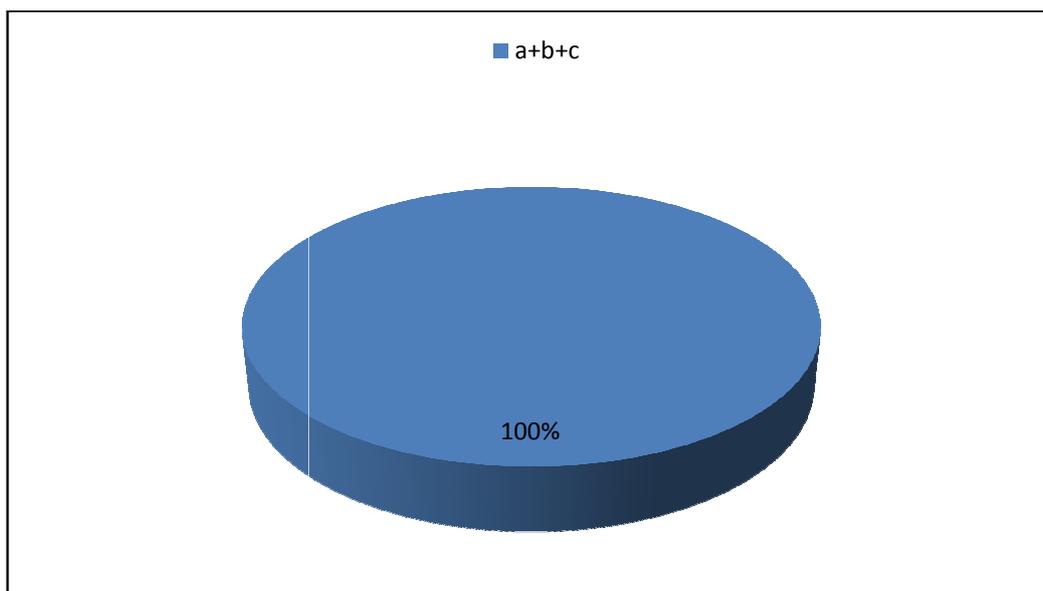


Table 20: Some solutions to remedy the students' grammatical errors.

As indicated in table 20, all of the students propose the same solutions to solve their problems which are; to give them additional lessons, to have more exercises and to have more home work. This result shows that the written expression program is not sufficient to improve their writings.

Q21. If you have any other suggestions, do not hesitate to give your opinion.

The last question in the students' questionnaires shed light on the suggestion wants the students add to remedy that situation, but unfortunately only 2 students about (4%) of the whole sample answer by saying: we need more practice in written expression and we need a teacher who motivates us to write more.

2. The Teachers' Questionnaire

2.1. The Sample

The questionnaire is administrated to five (5) teachers of Written Expression in the English Branch at the University of Biskra. The selection of such a sample was based on the consideration that the teachers of WE will benefit us more than other

teachers since students write more in this course and in which they are supposed to make grammatical errors more within this course and this is our subject matter.

2.2. Description of Questionnaire:

The teachers' questionnaire consists of 18 questions which were divided into three main sections. The questions are both closed questions, requiring from the teacher to choose "yes" or "no" answers, or to pick up the appropriate answer from a number of choices, or open questions where teachers are requested to give explanation or suggest other alternatives.

Section One: Background Information: (Q1-Q4): This section is devoted to get background information about the chosen sample of teachers. They were asked about their gender, the degree(s) held and also includes questions about their experience in teaching and the teaching of "Written Expression".

Section two: The Writing skill: (Q5-Q10): It deals with the writing skill itself. It seeks to know if the sessions are given to them are sufficient or not and if "written expression program is enough to improve their students or not. Furthermore, we want to know which approach they use in teaching writing; moreover, if they help students when they write as far as they're satisfied with their writing or not and finally, we ask the teachers about their opinion on students 'level of writing.

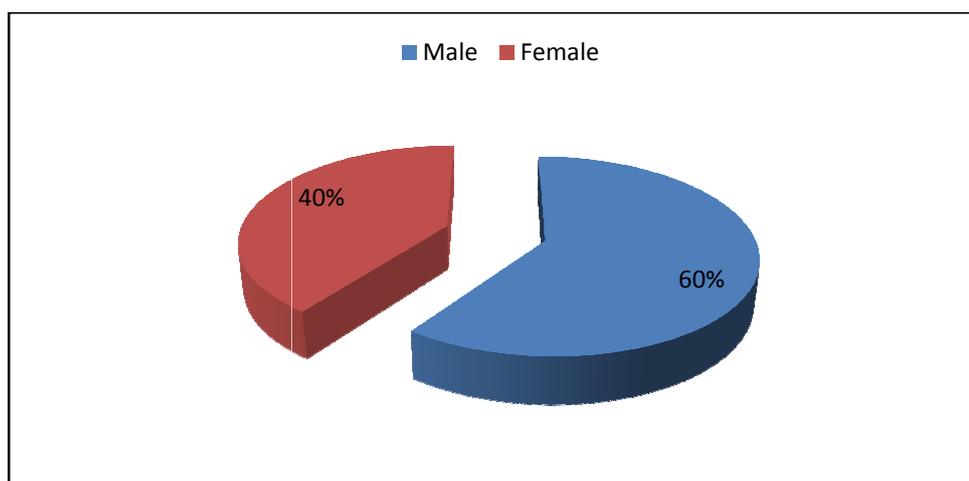
Section three: The Grammatical errors: (Q11-Q18): This section is composed of questions seeking information about the students 'difficulties in writing and whether grammar usage is one of these difficulties and the types of errors in addition what are the causes behind those errors and what is the best solution to solve this problem.

2.3. Analysis of Teachers' Questionnaire

Section one: background information

Q1.Gender:

Gender	Participants	Percentage
Male	3	60 %
Female	2	40%
Total	5	100

Table 21: Teachers' gender**Figure 21: Teachers' gender.**

As table 1 shows, the number of male teachers exceed the number of female teachers in teaching written expression in which female teachers, comprise (40%) and male teachers comprise (60%).

Q2. The degree(s) you have:

Options	Participants	Percentage
BA	1	20%
MA	2	40%
PHD	2	40%
Total	5	100%

Table 22: Teachers' educational level

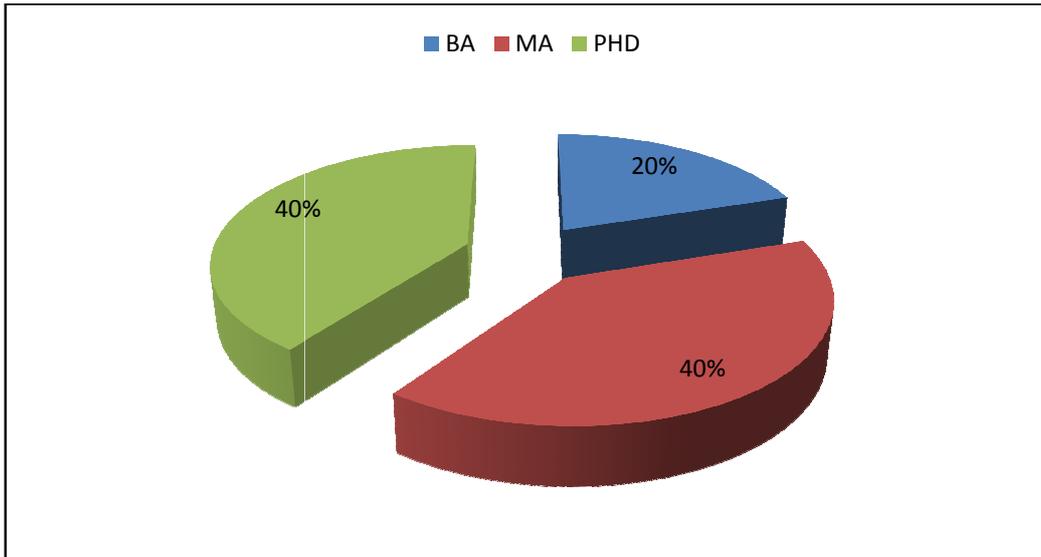


Figure22: Teachers' educational level.

As table 2 shows, that there are two teachers (40%) who have Deoctorat degree and the same percentage i.e, (40%) have Magister degree, and only one teacher (20%) who have BA (license) .

Q3.How long have you been teaching English?

Options	Participants	Percentage
5-7	3	60%
8-25	2	40%
Total	5	100%

Table 23: Years of Teaching English

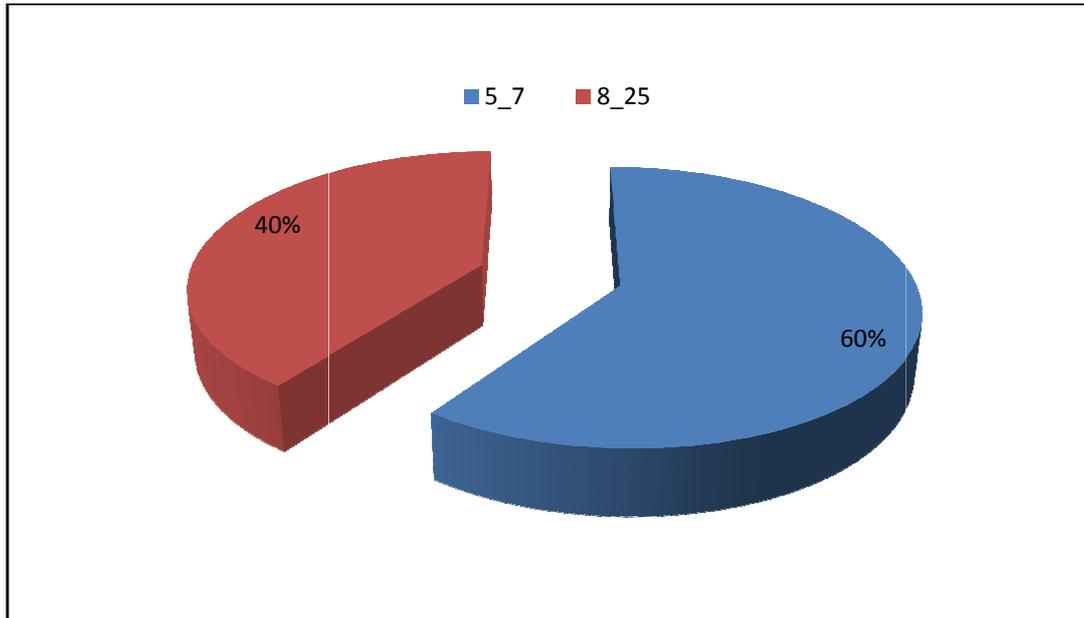


Figure 23: Years of Teaching English.

As it is shown in the table 3, 60% of the questioned teachers have been teaching English for 5 to 7 years, and the 40% of them have been teaching English for 8 to 25 years. The obtained results imply that teachers' experience is to some extent reliable in the analysis of this questionnaire.

Q4. How long have you been teaching “Written Expression”?

Options	Participants	Percentage
2 years	2	40%
4 years	1	20%
6 years	1	20%
10 years	1	20%
Total	5	100%

Table 24: Years of teaching “Written Expression”.

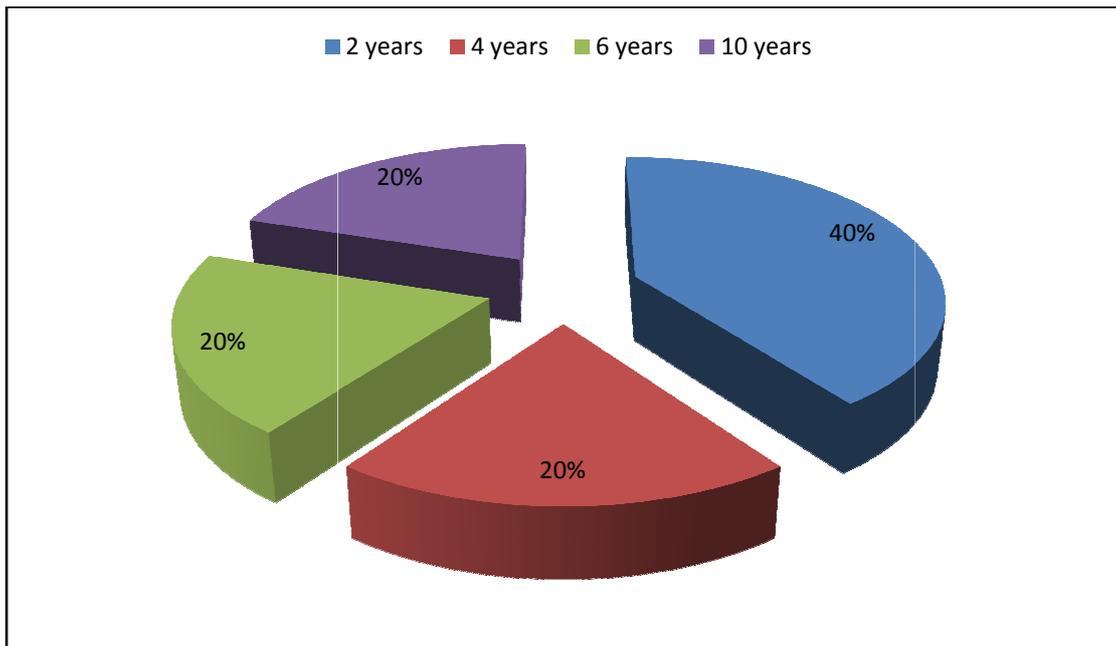


Figure 24: Years of teaching “Written Expression”.

Table 4 shows that 2 teachers (40%) have been teaching English since two years ;whereas, 20% of teachers have been teaching English for 4 years, with the same percentage there is only one teacher (20%) who has been teaching WE for 6 years. With the same percentage these is also one teacher (20%) who has been teaching WE for 10 years.

When we compare the years of teaching “Written Expression” with those of teaching English, we can see that teachers are not always asking to teach the module of writing. Teachers should acquire more experience in teaching writing so as they could teach efficiently and let students take advantage of such an experience to improve their writing.

Section Two: The Writing skill.

Q5.Do you two think that two sessions a week are enough for “Written Expression”?

Options	Participants	Percentage
Yes	00	00%
No	5	100%
Total	5	100%

Table 25: Teachers 'opinions about the time given to writing.



Figure 25: Teachers opinions about the time given to writing.

As it is shown in table 5, (100%) of the teachers claim that the time allocated for “Written Expression” is not enough. It is worth noting here that there is a great relationship between time and the different aspects of writing. Students should feel at ease when they write; time pressure should be avoided in order to help students to perform well in writing.

Q6. Do you think that the “Written Expression” program you are teaching is enough to improve your students’ level in writing?

Options	Participants	Percentage
Yes	1	20%
No	4	80%
Total	5	100%

Table 26: “Written Expression” Program Sufficiency in Improving Writing.

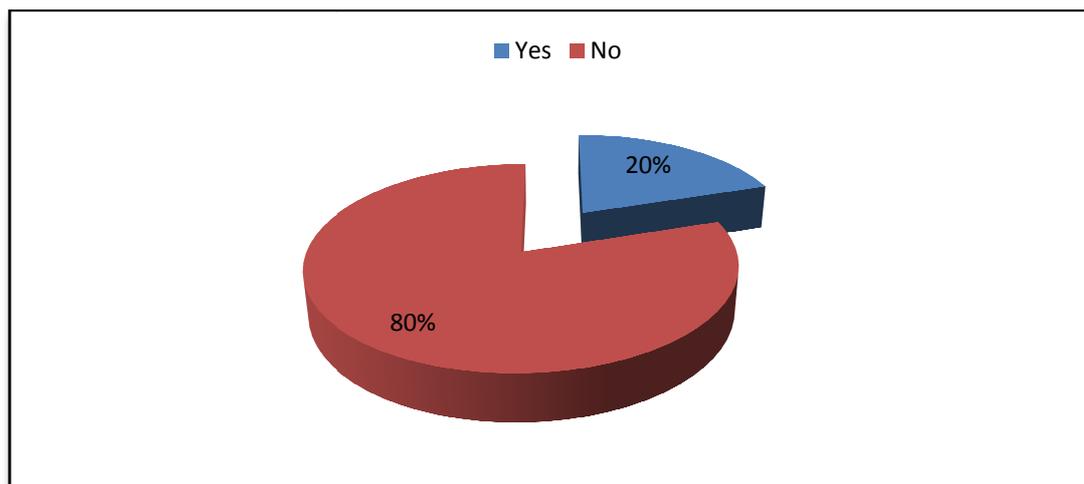


Figure 26: “Written Expression” program sufficiency in improving writing.

Table 6 results that 80% of teachers believe that the “Written Expression” program they are teaching is not enough to improve students’ level in writing. Whereas 20% of teachers claim that “Written Expression” program they are teaching is enough to improve students’ level in writing.

- **If “No”, please, explain why**

Two teachers who answered “No” to the previous question explained that the “Written Expression” program is not enough to improve students’ level in writing because of the lack of practice. There is a teacher who improves his answer by saying: I think that WE program needs a general revision “Modification”. The other teacher didn’t give any justification to improve his answer.

1. What is the approach you use to teach writing?

Options	Participants	Percentage
The Controlled-to-Free Approach	00	00%
The Free-Writing Approach	00	00%
The Product-Oriented Approach	00	00%
The Process-Oriented Approach	04	80%
The Genre Approach	00	00%
All of them	01	20%
Total	05	100%

Table 27: Approaches used by teachers in writing.

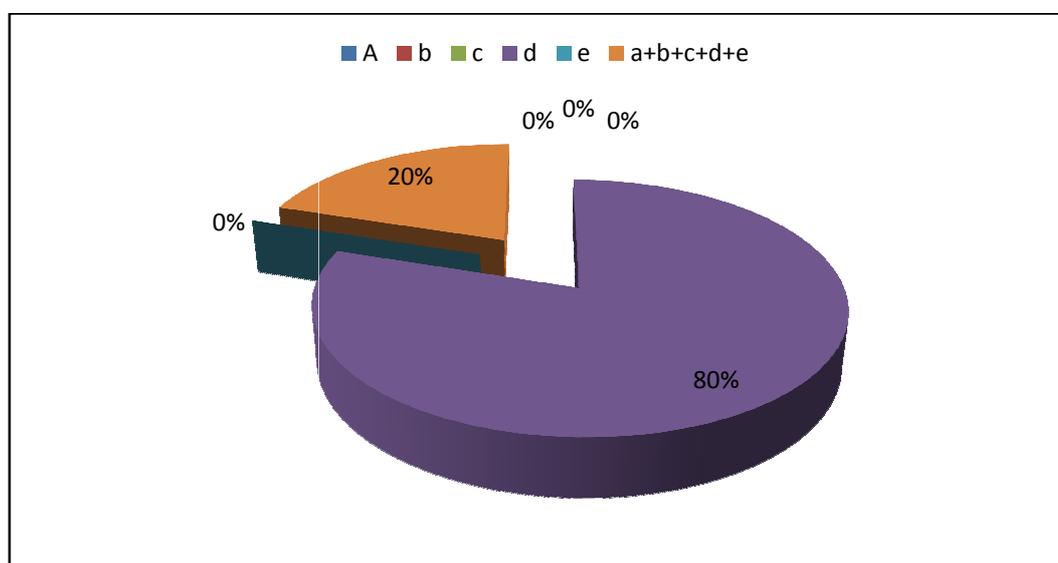


Figure27: Approaches used by teachers in writing.

From the table above, we can see that (80%) of the teachers use the process approach to teach writing; whereas, 20% of the teachers use all the other approaches in teaching writing. The teachers who use all the approaches see that the teachers

should use or adopt different approaches, that is, they should combine the product, the process and the genre approaches. One of the teachers didn't justify his answer; Whereas, the three teachers who select process-oriented approach improve their answer by saying:

- It is more methodological and gradual.
- Students need to know first what is the issue, the lesson is about, to clarify things, to grasp the ideas one by one and then to practice, i.e., to produce; to write.
- It allows students to go through stages before then submit the final version. It is also recursive in which student may go back and forward to revise and edit the work to better it.

Q8.Do you help your students when they write?

Options	Participants	Percentage
Yes	5	100%
No	0	0
Total	5	100%

Table 28: Teachers helping students when they write

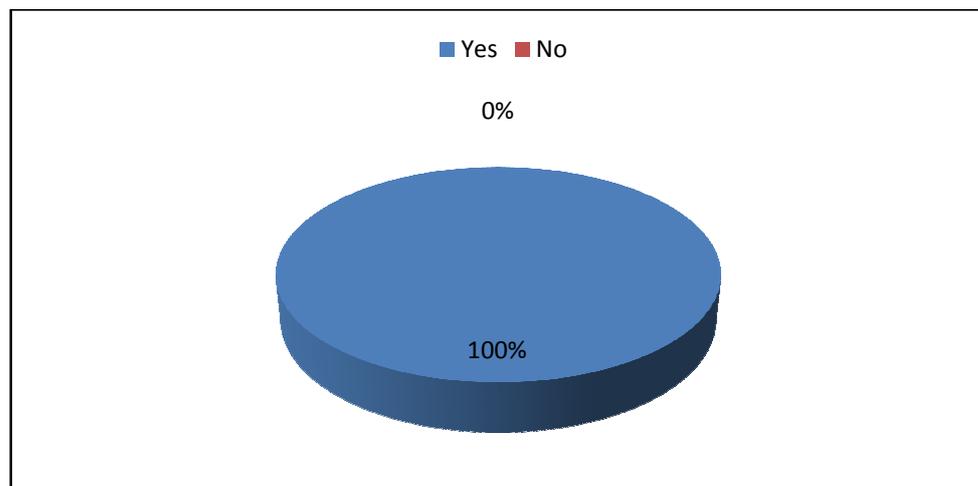


Figure28: Teachers helping students when they write.

Table 8 shows that all teachers help their students when they write. Walking around and helping students while writing is essential in guiding them through all the writing steps.

Q9. Are you satisfied about your students ‘level of writing?’

Options	Participants	Percentage
Yes	5	100%
No	0	00%
Total	5	100%

Table 29: Teachers’ satisfaction with stdents’level.

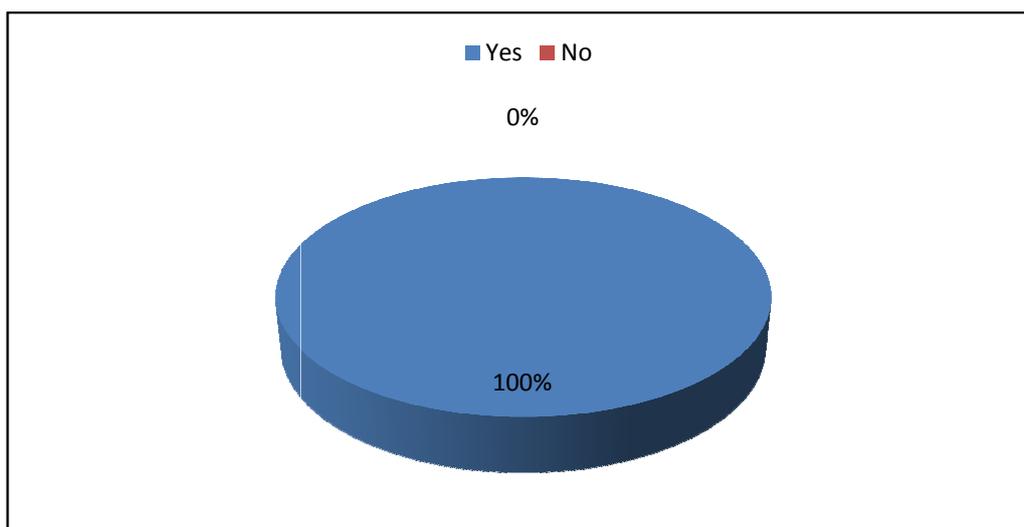


Figure 29: Teachers’ satisfaction with students’ level.

All the teachers said they were not satisfied with their students’ level of writing. This means that the writing skill is really a troublesome skill in that the students do not produce acceptable paragraphs/ essays. The teachers justify their answers by saying:

- They need much more practice.
- Many students are still facing different writing problems (grammar, mechanics, vocabulary...)
- Lack of material, lack of practice.

- Students make a lot mistakes (grammar, spelling, organization, etc.)
- They have many points of weaknesses at all levels.

Q10.How do you find your students ‘level of writing?’

Options	Participant	Percentage
Good	0	00%
Average	3	60%
Bad	2	40%
Total	5	100%

Table 30: Teachers’ opinion on learners’ level

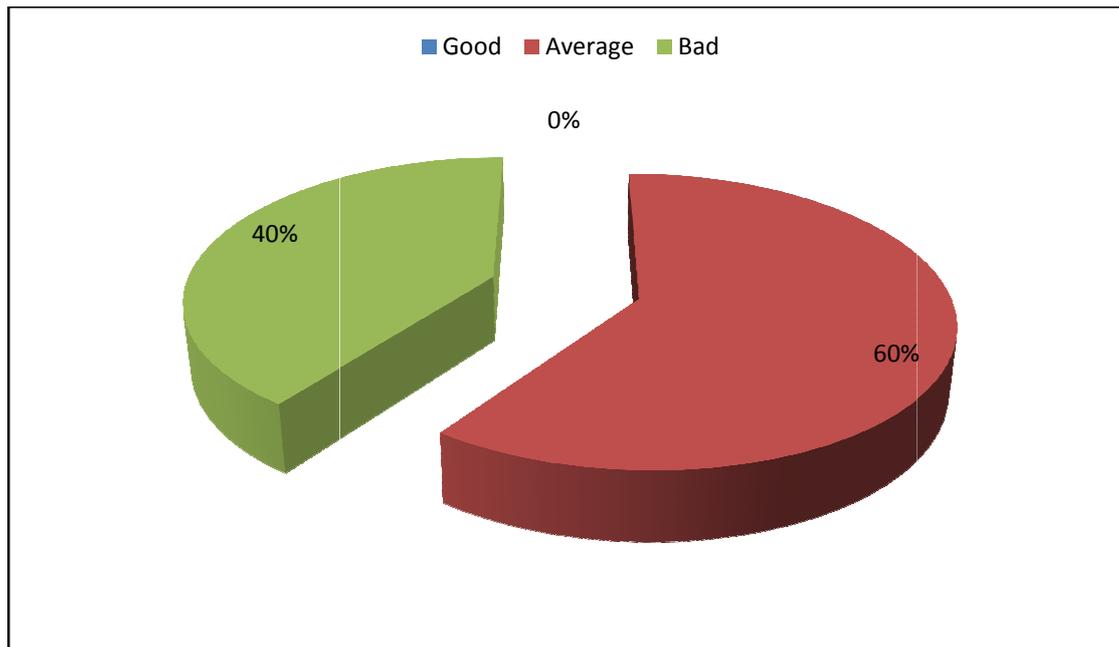


Figure 30: Teachers’ Opinion on learners’ level

As indicated in table 10, (60%) of the teachers consider their students ‘level “Average”’; whereas, (40%) of the teachers evaluate their students ‘level as “Bad”’

Section three: Grammatical Errors

Q11.How often do your students face difficulties in writing?

Options	Participants	Percentage
Frequently	5	100%
Sometimes	0	0%
Never	0	0%
Total	5	100%

Table 31: Teachers ‘opinions on their students ‘difficulties.

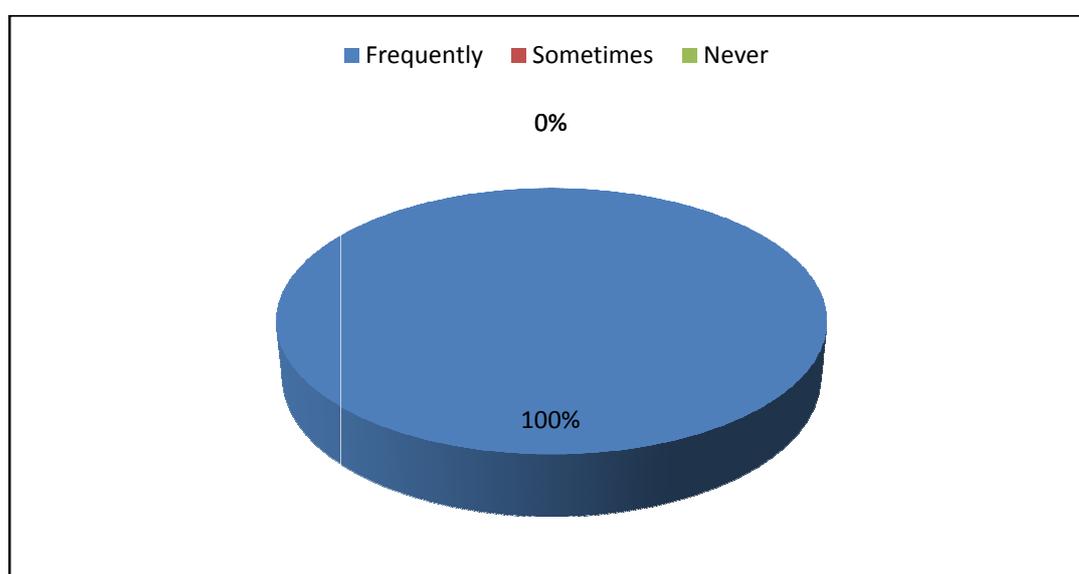


Table 31: Teachers ‘opinions about their students ‘difficulties.

(100%) of teachers argue that all of the students frequently face difficulties in writing. That means that the students have a lot of errors in writing.

Q12.Is “Grammar Usage” one of those errors?

Options	Participants	Percentage
Yes	5	100%
No	0	0%
Total	5	100%

Table 32: Grammar usage as type students’ difficulties.

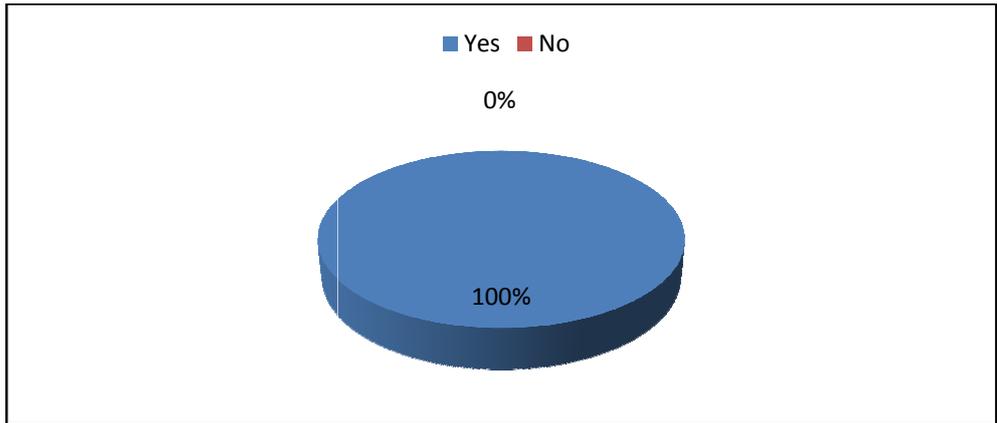


Figure 32: Grammar usage as type students' difficulties.

As we can see in table 12, all the teachers (100%) say that grammar usage is one of students 'difficulties in writing. That means that the students do not know how to use the grammatical rules.

2. While they write, how often do they make errors in grammar?

Options	Number	Percentage
Often	5	100%
Sometimes	0	0
Never	0	0
Total	5	100%

Table 33: Students' errors.

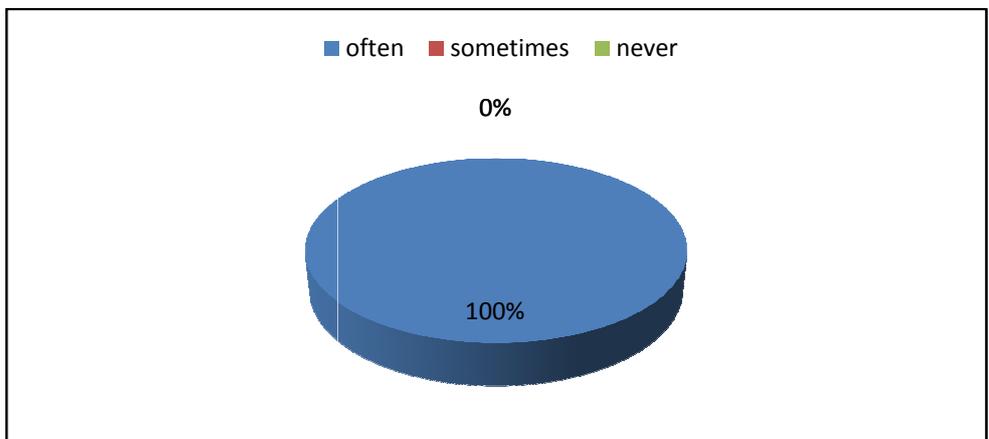


Figure 33: Students' errors.

As indicated in the table above, all of the students claim that the students always make the additional errors while writing.

Q.14 What are the types of those errors?

Options	Participants	Percentage
A	0	0%
B	0	0%
C	0	0%
A+B+C	5	100%
Total	5	100%

Table 34: Teachers' perception of the kind of learners' errors

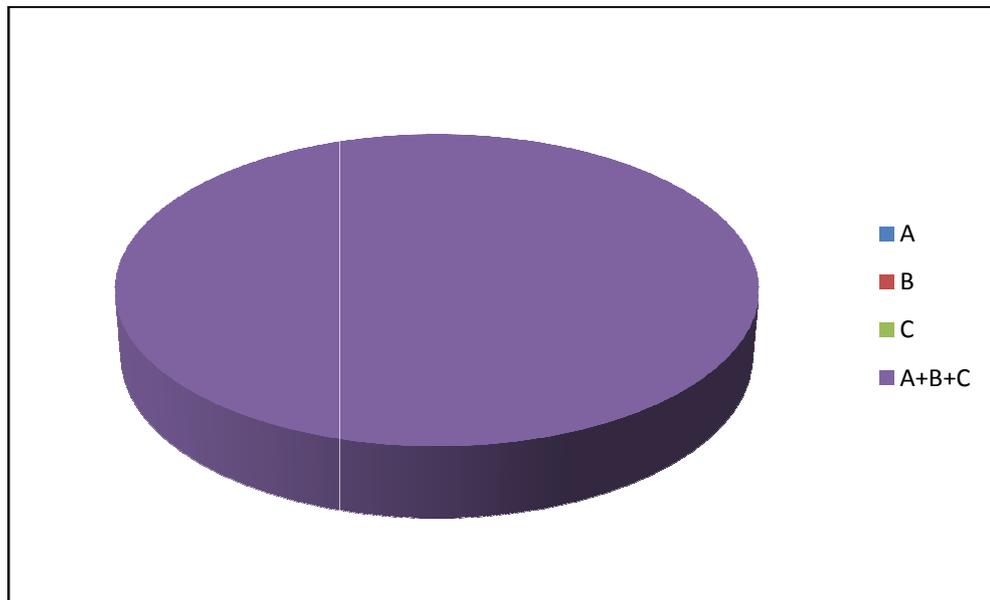


Figure 34: Teachers' perception of the kind of learners' errors.

Table 14 shows that all the teachers agree that the students make errors when they use articles, preposition and tenses.

Q15: Do you think those errors are recurrent because of :

Options	Participants	Percentage
Negative transfer	0	0%
Lack of reading	1	20%
Lack of practice	2	40%
A+B+C	2	40%
Total	5	100%

Table 35: Reasons behind students 'errors.

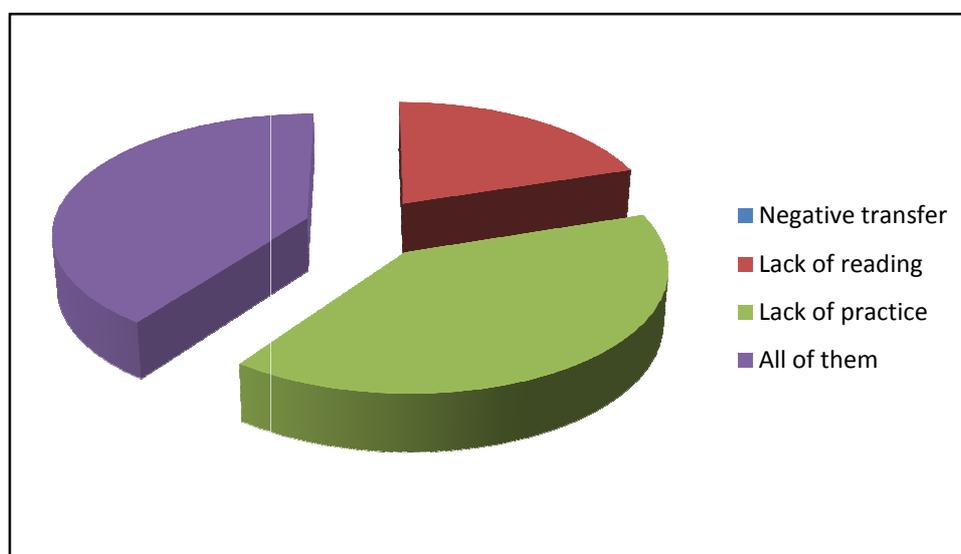


Figure 35: Reasons behind students 'errors.

As it is shown in the table 15, 20% of teachers said that lack of reading is the reason behind students 'errors. Whereas, 40% of teachers claim that lack of practice is the only reason. Moreover, 40% of teachers said that negative transfer, lack of reading and lack of practice (all of them) behind students 'errors. There are two teachers add others reasons such us: lack of competence and lack of motivation.

Q16.Do you think that knowing the source of your students' errors will facilitate your work?

Options	Participants	Percentage
Yes	5	100%
No	0	0
Total	5	100%

Table 36: Teachers ‘sense of achievement.

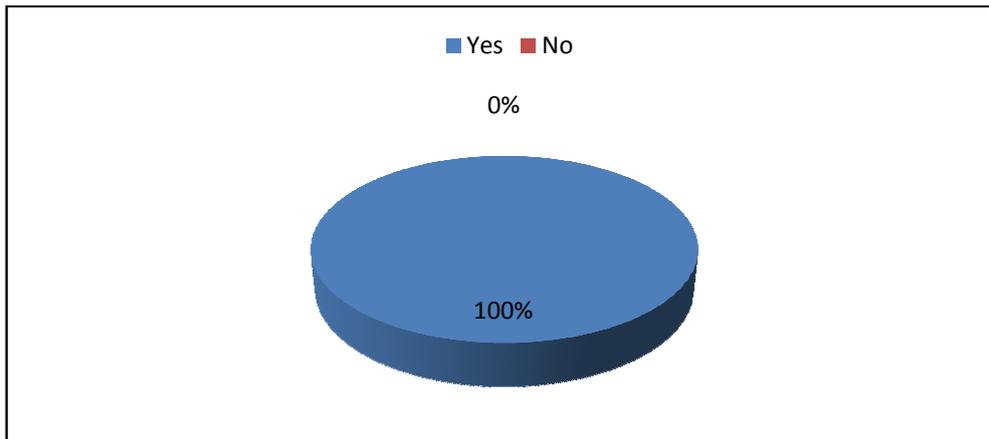


Figure 36: Teachers ‘sense of achievement.

The commonly shared answer between all the teachers is that it is important to know the source of their students’ errors which gives them the sense of achievement in their work, which means that knowing the students’ writing errors sources; facilitates their work to treat and to understand these errors.

Q17. In your opinion, what is the best solution to correct your students ‘errors?’

Options	Participants	Percentage
A	2	40%
B	1	20%
C	0	0%
All of them	2	40%
Total	5	100%

Table 37: Suggestions to solve errors problem.

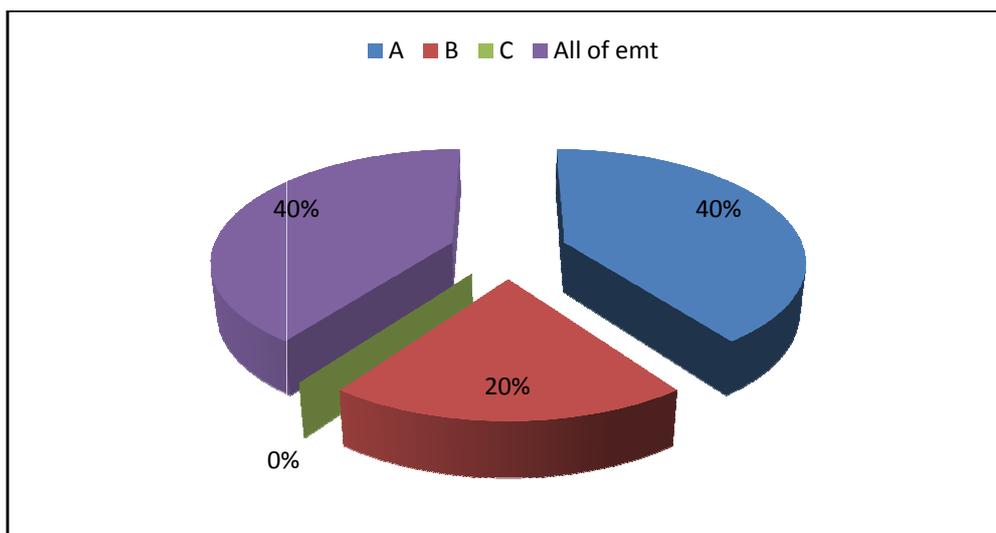


Figure 37: Suggestions to solve errors problem.

As indicated in table 17, all the teachers suggest the same solutions to solve that problem. We notice from the results that the teachers want to give their students additional lessons because as we saw from question 6 the teachers stated that Written Expression program is not sufficient to improve the students' level.

Q18.If you have any suggestions, do not hesitate to write them down.

3 about 5 teachers who answered the question by saying:

- Teacher 1: There should be a correlation between the teacher of grammar and written expression in order to help learners to overcome their grammatical errors.
- Teacher 2: We need to increase the number of sessions per week (e.g.: 4) Moreover, we need to change the program to a more vivid one which follows new strategies and methods of teaching, especially teaching written expression because it is a basic module.
- Teacher 3: students must read, summarize, paraphrase and write.

3. Discussion of the Results and Concluding Remarks

3.1. Students' Questionnaire results

First of all, the selected sample in this study reveals that (Q1) females (70%) are dominant over males (30%), this may be due to the fact that females are more interested to study foreign languages and the English language in particular than males who often tend to specialize in other field. The result of (Q2) reveals that (90%) of students studying English as foreign language was their first choice; whereas, the rest (10%) it is the opposite studding English do not want their first choice because they chose other streams like philosophy and medicine. The percentage reveals that the majority of students like English and they have a positive attitude towards learning English as foreign language; this positive attitude will eventually help them in their study. The current level of the students also allows us to rely on them in investigating this study since more than half of them said that their level in English is between average and good (29 "a"+ 20 "b") as shown in (Q4). In (Q5), we asked the students about what is the most difficult course, a high percentage (50%) of students said that the Written Expression course is the most difficult course ;whereas, (30%) of students declared that phonetics is the most difficult module and (10%) of students stated than the oral expression module is the most difficult module and the rest of students which is about (10%) mentioned that grammar is the difficult course to them. Moreover, though the students classified the writing skill as being their first priority in learning English because; they justified, written expression is an important aspect of learning English as foreign language and, they need it in their future study, as it is shown in (Q6). In the (Q7) we ask the students whether the writing skill is important in studying English or not but the results shown that all students (100%) find the module of writing interesting. In (Q8), students were asked whether their teacher

motivate them to write or not, (82%) of students answered with “yes”, and just (18%) answered with “no” which is something positive to the process of teaching and learning a foreign language which indicates that teachers are doing their possible to make students use the language. Concerning the student’s ability to write in the English (Q9), the students considered their level in writing low they are not satisfied with their writings. Whereas, the other 36% of the students evaluated their ability to write average and 14% of the students consider their level good they are satisfied with their writing. The results prove that our students are weak in writing because it is a difficult skill. The majority of the students (56%) said that they write English outside university (Q10). This is really encouraging to know that a considerable number of students are interested in performing a writing task. Students perform many types of writing outside university such as home works, letters, E-mail, ect,. The results of (Q11) illustrated that students generally prefer to work either in pairs (42%), or individually (36%). This is a clear message to the teachers that students do feel more comfortable, productive and relaxed by working individually or in pairs.

Concerning the difficulties while writing, the majority of students about 60% said “yes” we find difficulties when we write, 60% of them relate these difficulties to grammar, and 40% related it to vocabulary; maybe the main reason behind these difficulties is lack of practice because when we don’t practice the language always we will find a lot of difficulties in front of us. The (Q14) has a relationship with the previous question where the students indicated that they have difficulties in grammar, so in this question we asked them how often they make errors in grammar, and the majority of students said that they often make errors in grammar while writing and 34% who said we sometimes make errors in grammar while we write; this result was not be a big surprise because we know very well they are here to learn and to make

errors and to learn from those errors but what is noticeable here what are the kinds of those errors? This is what the (Q15) talking about, moreover, half of the students (50%) face difficulties in using tenses; furthermore, (40%) of students make a lot of errors in using prepositions and the rest (10%) students make errors in using articles. Furthermore, we were wonder if they make those errors only in written expression or not (Q16), and the majority of students (80%) asserted that they do those errors in others areas as it indicated in the (Q17) by saying: (72%) yes we make those errors in Oral Expression too because they are obliged to use the English language in that course in different ways such as plays, and (20%) of students make the same errors in literature ;whereas, (4%) committee those errors in linguistics and the rest (4%) do those errors in psychology; this results means that they do not obliged to write a paragraphs in exams because they obliged to answer the questions that are given to them. The (Q18) is designed to examine students' attitudes towards toward errors, the result of the question revealed that 96% of students try to solve this problem; some researchers argue that error correction plays an important role in learning foreign language. In (Q19),we asked the students if their teacher correct their errors or not, their answer was: (100%) agreed upon one answer saying that their teacher corrects their errors. May be because they are serious errors in which the teacher must treat them each time. In order to give them the opportunity to choose what the best solution can remedy this situation; to have additional lessons, to have more exercises or to have more home works, and the answer included all the suggestions that are proposed. Maybe we need to change the teaching method or approach especially in written expression because it is a basic module. And in the final, we ask the students to give their opinions or to give other suggestions but unfortunately only 2 students from the whole sample who gave their opinions by saying: we need more practice in written

expression and we need a teacher who motivates us to write more. In our point of view; Teachers should take into account the importance to establish relaxed atmosphere, in which students feel comfortable to produce and make errors. However, students should take benefit of their error or from their classmates' errors too, and consider them as element for, not against the learning process.

3.2. Teachers' Questionnaire results

In background information, the teacher's responses revealed that the chosen sample contains more males (60%) than females (40%). This may be due to the fact that men are more interested in teaching the WE than men (see Q1). Concerning (Q2), most who responded to our questionnaire have MA (Master/ Magister) or Doctorte this mainly means that the module of WE has great importance. The results of (Q3) are interesting too because three teachers have experience in teaching English since they have spent from 5-7 years. So, their responses will be of great importance in comparison with that of two teachers who have a few or short experience. The result of (Q4) shows that 2 teachers (40%) have been teaching English since two years whereas 20% of teachers have been teaching English for 4 years, with the same percentage there is only one teacher (20%) who has been teaching WE for 6 years. With the same percentage these is also one teacher (20%) who has been teaching WE for 10 years. When we compare the years of teaching "Written Expression" with those of teaching English, we can see that teachers are not always asked to teach the module of writing. Teachers should acquire more experience in teaching writing so as they could teach efficiently and let students take advantage of such an experience to improve their writing.

In relation to the time given to the module of writing (Q5), the results demonstrated that (100%) of teachers are not satisfied with the two sessions a week

for writing. This time issue should be taken into consideration, and students should be given more time for text production to make them feel at ease when they write, especially when adopting the process approach which requires different stages with multiple drafts. The findings of (Q6) show that the majority of teachers (80%) saw that the “Written Expression” program they are teaching is not enough to improve learners’ proficiency in writing; they said that WE program needs a general revision “Modification”. The results of (Q5) and (Q6) lead us to think that the programs should be reviewed in terms of contents. Time allocated to "Written Expression" should be satisfactory and should enable the students to cover what they are presented understandably without feeling they are rushing toward finishing the program by any means.

Concerning the approaches used by teachers in teaching writing, the results in (Q7) shows that (80%) of the teachers used the process approach; whereas, (20%)of teachers vary all the approaches, we can notice from the result that the process approach is the best way to get students involved into writing. And it is the most appropriate approach in teaching writing that leads the students going through the different steps of the approach helps the students to write a more accurate piece of writing. In (Q8) 100% of teachers affirmed that they help their students; because, Walking around and helping students while writing is essential in guiding them through all the writing steps and raising their awareness of audience consideration. The result of (Q9) demonstrates that all the teachers said they were not satisfied with their students’ level of writing. This means that the writing skill is really a troublesome skill in that the students do not produce acceptable paragraphs/ essays. The teachers said that the students need more much practice because they have many points of weaknesses at all levels. Concerning Teachers’ opinion toward learners’

level (Q10), the result shows that (60%) of teachers considered learners 'level average and the (40%)of them considered their level asbad, maybe because many students are still facing different writing problems which affect their productions negatively and this is what was approved in the (Q11) ,(100%) of teachers stated that students are frequently face difficulties in writing. In addition, they related Grammar Usage to these difficulties because a lot of students do not know how to use the grammatical rules correctly (Q12). In (Q13) all the teachers claimed that their students always make errors in grammar in many types such as articles, prepositions, and tenses; maybe those errors are due to the method of teaching, it means that the students haven't get enough explanation about how to use these aspects of grammar.

In (Q15) we asked teachers if those errors are recurrent because of negative transfer, lack of reading or lack of practice so the result was 40% of teachers claimed that lack of practice is the main reason. . Moreover, (40%) of teachers said that negative transfer, lack of reading and lack of practice (all of them) behind students 'errors, (20%) of teachers said that lack of reading is the reason behind students 'errors, in our opinion is true because as what is said "A good reader is a good writer"; Reading may affect positively the writing skill. And there are two teachers who provided other reasons which as lack of competence and lack of motivation.

Concerning teachers' sense of achievement (Q16) The common shared answer between all the teachers is that it is important to know the source of their students' errors which gain them the sense of achievement in their work; which means that by knowing the students' writing errors source; it facilitates their work by doing their best to treat and to understand these errors. In (Q17) we gave the teachers some solutions to solve the grammatical errors in writing, the common shared answer between all the teachers is to give their students additional lessons, exercises and home works.

In the final question (Q18) we were asking teachers if they have any suggestions about the issue; some of them said: there should be a correlation between the teacher of grammar and written expression in order to help learners overcoming their grammatical errors. And others said: we need to increase the number of sessions in a week e.g.: 4. Moreover, we need change the program to a more vivid one which follows new strategies and methods of teaching especially teaching written expression because it is a base module. And the last one said that the students must read, summarize, paraphrase and write.

The obtained results show that the writing skill is a complex activity that requires much time and practice from the learner's part and a lot of experience and guiding from the teacher's part, and results achieved that teachers claimed that the students made a lot of grammatical errors while writing and these errors are due to lack of reading, negative transfer and lack of practice, motivation, and competence. Furthermore our teachers choose best solutions to remedy this situation such give the students additional lessons, exercise, and home works. In the final we can say that our research hypotheses are proved in our results of teachers' questionnaire.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we do believe that we have applied the suitable methodology which is normally used by most researchers in similar cases of study. We have begun the chapter by describing the students and teachers 'questionnaire. In the second part of chapter, the researchers have started by the analysis of questionnaires which obtain the information we need. After that, we have discussed the results obtained from the collected data used in this study.

General conclusion

Teaching writing in a foreign language is considered as an issue that many researchers had tackled, but each one focused on one among its various aspects. In this research, the issue of EFL students' disabilities in writing, inspired by the inquiry of "what are the most common errors committed by second year students, and whether those errors are related only to written expression course or not?". Correlating what has been found in the literature review and research investigation parts, the research questions were answered; and the research hypotheses were confirmed.

This investigation was undertaken using students' and teacher's questionnaires, through which we have collected data about the topic and probed students' and teachers' views and attitudes towards the grammatical errors. The analysis of the results reveals that students make a lot of grammatical errors while writing and those errors are not limited only to written expression course because students when they tackle other areas they face the same difficulties.

In an attempt to find out solutions to such students' difficulties and weaknesses in writing, a set of pedagogical recommendations is suggested as to be applied for successful teaching and learning of writing. It is paramount to consider grammatical errors as a difficulty in learning the writing skill. .Therefore, this problematic issue of errors in writing should be taken into account.

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Appendices

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APPENDIX A :
Students' Questionnaire

PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA
MOHAMED KHEIDER UNIERSITY OF BISKARA
FACULTY OF LETTERS AND LANGUAGES
DEPARTEMENT OF FOREINGN LANGUAGES
ENGLISH DIVISION

Students' Questionnaire

Dear student,

I am a Master 2 student and we are conducting a research about the influence of grammatical errors in learning the writing skill by the second year students at Mohamed Kheider University for my master dissertation. You are kindly invited to answer the following questions. We would like to receive details from you on the course of written expression. . Your answers are very important for the validity of this research.

Please, tick the appropriate answer and justify it whenever it is possible.

We extremely appreciate your collaboration.

Thank you.

Section one: Background information.

1. Gender:

a. Male

b. Female

2. Age:

Years old.

3. Was English your first choice?

a. Yes

b. No

If No, What was your first choice?

.....

4. How do you consider your level in English?

a. good

b. Average

c. Low

Section two: Writing Skill.

5-Which of the courses below is the most difficult?

a. Written expression

b. Oral expression

c. Grammar

d. Phonetics

6-Choose the most important skill that you want to develop.

a. Listening skill

b. Speaking skill

c. Reading skill

d. Writing skill

Because:

.....

.....

.....

7-To what extent do you think that the writing skill is important in studying English?

- a. Very important
- b. Important
- c. not important

8-Does your teacher motivate you to write:

- a. Yes
- b. No

9- Your ability to write is:

- a. Good.
- b. Average.
- c. low.

10-Do you write in English outside university?

- a. Yes.
- b. No.

• If 'Yes', what type of writing?

- a. Homework.
- b. Letter.
- c. E-mail.

d. Others:

Please specify.....

11-In class, do you like to write:

- a. Individually.
- b. In pairs.
- c. groups.

Section Three: Grammatical Errors in Writing.

12-Do you find difficulties when writing in English?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Not really

13- Are these difficulties related to? (You can tick more than one box)

- a. Vocabulary
- b. Grammar
- c. Others :

Please mention them.....

14 - While you write, how often do you make errors in grammar?

- a. Often
- b. Sometimes
- c. Never

15- What are the types of those errors?

- a. Articles
- b. Prepositions
- c. tenses

16-Do you make those errors only in written expression?

- a. Yes
- b. No

17- What are the other areas do you make those errors ?

- a. Oral expression
- b. Linguistics
- c. Psychology
- d. Literature

18-Have you tried to solve this problem before?

a. Yes

b. No

19-Does your teacher correct your errors?

a. Yes

b. No

20-In your opinion, what is the best solution to remedy this situation? (You can tick more than one answer)

To have additional lessons

To have more excersices

To have more home works

21. If you have any other suggestions, do not hesitate to give your opinion.

.....
.....
.....

Thank you for your cooperation.

APPENDIX B:

Teachers 'Questionnaire

**PEOPLE'S'DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA
MOHAMEDKHEIDERUNIVERSITY OF BISKRA
FACULTY OF LETTERS AND LANGUAGES
DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES
ENGLISH FIELD**

Teachers' Questionnaire

Dear teacher,

You are kindly invited to fill in this questionnaire to express your thoughts about *theinfluence of Grammatical Errors in Learning The Writing Skill by Second Year Student at Mohamed Kheider University* for our master dissertation. Your answers are very important for the validity of this research.

Please, tick (√) the appropriate answer and justify it whenever it is possible.

We extremely appreciate your collaboration.

Section One: General Information.

1-Gender:

a. Male

b. Female

2-The degree(s) you have:

a. BA(License)

b. MA(Magister/Master)

c. PHD(Doctorate)

3-How long have you been teaching English?

.....Year(s)

4-How long have you been teaching ""Written Expression""?

.....Year(s)

Section Two: The Writing skill

5- Do you think that two sessions a week are enough for “Written Expression”?

a. Yes

b. No

6-Do you think that the “Written Expression” program you are teaching is enough to improve your students’ level in writing?

a. Yes

b. No

• If “No”, Please, explain why

.....
.....
.....
.....

7- What is the approach you use to teach writing?

a.The Controlled-to-Free Approach.

(Students are first given sentence exercises, than paragraphs to copy or manipulate grammatically by for instance, changing questions to statements, present to past or plural to singular)

b.The Free-Writing Approach.

(The emphasis is on the intermediate level students in this approach. It focuses more on fluency than form)

c.The Product-Oriented Approach

(Students read text and are drowning to linguistic features. Writing is about applying linguistic knowledge to practice. Emphasis is on the product)

d.The Process-Oriented Approach.

(Brainstorming ideas, students make notes e.g. via mind map "first draft, edit draft, Final draft")

e.The Genre Approach.

(Discussion based on content of text)

- Please, explain the reasons for choosing this approach

.....
.....
.....
.....

8-Do you help your students when they write?

a. Yes

b. No

9- Are you satisfied with your students' level of writing?

a. Yes

b. No

If No ,Please, explain why

.....
.....
.....

10-How do you find your students' level of writing?

a. Good.

b. Average.

c. Bad.

Section three: Grammatical errors

11- How often do your students face difficulties in writing?

a. Frequently

b. Sometimes

c. Never

12-Is "Grammar Usage" one of these difficulties?

a. Yes

b. No

13- While they write, how often do they make errors in grammar?

d. Often

e. Sometimes

f. Never

14- What are the types of those errors?

d. Articles

e. Prepositions

f. tenses

15- Do you think those errors are recurrent because of:

a. Negative transfer

b. Lack of reading

c. Lack of practice

d. Others:

Please, mention them

.....
.....
.....

16- Do you think that knowing the source of your students' errors will facilitate your work?

a. Yes

b. No

17- In your opinion, what is the best solution to correct your students' errors?

a. To have additional lessons

b. To have more exercises

c. To have home work

18- If you have any suggestions, do not hesitate to write them opinion down

.....
.....
.....

Thank you for your cooperation