IDENTIFICATION AND ANALYSIS OF SOME FACTORS BEHIND STUDENTS’ POOR WRITING PRODUCTIONS
THE CASE STUDY OF 3rd YEAR STUDENTS AT THE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT-BATNA UNIVERSITY-

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment for the Requirements of the Magister Degree in Applied Linguistics and Foreign Language Teaching

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1. Background of the Study

Foreign-Language Teaching and Learning, with its four skills, is a complex process especially the writing skill. And when teaching these skills, teachers usually follow a certain order: beginning with listening, speaking, reading, and then writing “adults devote 45% of their energies to listening, 30% to speaking, 16% to reading, and 9% to writing” Hedge (2000, p. 305). It is placed at the end because it is thought to be highly complex and difficult to master even for natives. Grabe and Kaplan (1996) said that “probably half of the world’s population does not know how to write adequately and effectively"(p. 87). Writing and learning to write has always been one of the most complex language skills. Nunan (1989) agreed that" it is easier to learn to speak than to write no matter if it is a first or second language” (p. 12). It is not a very easy task to achieve since it requires hard work, lengthy steps, enough time, and more practice. Of course, this order may change depending on the needs of the learners. It is obvious that mastering English as a foreign language (EFL) requires mastering the four skills. And today, none of us would ignore their importance in the educational system, but we have to mention that the writing skill is the most complex and difficult skill to master. Richards and Renandya (2003, p. 303) argued that “there is no doubt that writing is the most difficult skill for second language learners to master”.

The majority of English learners confuse between the two modules Grammar and Written Expression. According to (Leki, 1997, p. 34), “their only sense of security comes from what they have learned about grammar”. In other words, many learners assume that the key to a good English written production is
mastering the rules of grammar, but what about the other aspects of writing? In this respect, the learners often rush towards more grammatical practice and tend to forget about practicing the specific rules of writing such as drafting, revising, editing, etc. These rules are summarized by (Harmer, 2007a, p. 4) in this quotation:

Writing is a process, that is, the stages the writer goes through in order to produce something in its final form. This process may, of course, be affected by the content of the writing, the type of writing, and the medium it is written in . . . this process has four main elements: planning, drafting, editing, and final draft.

Poor performances in the writing skill wonder about how to organize information to get a coherent paragraph/essay, a well structured piece of writing without mistakes, etc. According to Nunan (2000, p. 217), "it is an enormous challenge to produce a coherent, fluent, extend piece of writing in L2".

2. Statement of the Problem

The actual problem was observed among third year students normally expected to already master both the grammatical rules and writing techniques, which is not the case. The reasons for dealing with this topic are based on the following arguments: Though the first year writing program focuses much more on the writing conventions, grammar, and an introduction to paragraph writing (Contents of First Year Written Expression Program, see Appendix 02); in the second year, the writing program focuses on the paragraph and essay writing techniques (Contents of Second Year Written Expression Program, see Appendix
While in the third year, the students’ performance in writing is poor writing. Hence, our interest to the third year students.

In the Algerian context, writing in English unlike speaking, listening, and sometimes reading, is not practiced outside the class, so what is learned inside the class is practiced inside and has little chance to be developed outside. Time and practice are nearly neglected especially in our Department of English at Batna University. Moreover, the complexity of the writing skill led the majority of our students to struggle when they need to write paragraphs and essays; this will result in a poor writing. Thus, investigating this issue stems from a personal interest in the field of education motivated by my experience in teaching writing for two years where it is witnessed that the majority of the learners face problems with paragraph and essay writing. These observations are backed by other colleagues' point of view working in the same Department (Teachers’ Preliminary Questionnaire, see Appendix 01). They have been upset by the mediocre performances of our learners especially when dealing with exams that require paragraph and essay writing as well as summarizing, paraphrasing, describing, synthesizing, etc.

This is collaborated by the students’ opinions stating that "even if we want to practice it, but to whom"(Students’ Preliminary Questionnaire, see Appendix 04). The quality of the writing skill of third year students in the Department of English at Batna University is unsatisfactory since the learners are not able to write paragraphs and essays in Linguistics, Literature, and Civilization modules. We
have also observed their copies corresponding to 100 among 500 ones displaying too many mistakes related to grammar, spelling, punctuation and capitalization. Students even lost the ability to write short and correct sentences, with many repeated words revealing a lack of vocabulary, which is an indication of a lack of reading. The longer their sentences are, the more mistakes they contain (Sample of Students’ Exams Papers, see Appendix 05). Accordingly, all what is mentioned above increase our interest in investigating what is the secret behind learners' poor writing and shedding light on the main factors that hamper students to write correctly.

3. Aim of the Study

The present study deals with the learners' poor achievements in written products with the purpose:

1. To identify some factors which markedly restrict the learners' ability to write correctly when they reach third year.

2. To translate the research findings into suggestions and guidance.

4. Research Questions

On the basis of the above observations, many questions are raised:

1. Why do our learners produce poor written productions when they reach third year?

2. What should be done to improve the situation?
3. What are the major factors that hamper third year students to produce a correct piece of writing?

It is impossible to answer all these questions as they subsume a lot of aspects which are not viable to exhaustively cope with. A reason why this work attempts to identify, then analyze some factors behind students' poor writing productions among third year students of English.

5. Data Collection Procedure

To collect the necessary information for our research, we have started our investigation with an analysis of different written productions (100 copies) belonging to third year students at the Department of English, Batna University having marks oscillating 00.00 and 09.75 in paragraph and essay writing in different modules (Sample of Students’ Exams Papers, see Appendix 05). To identify and analyze writing problems, two preliminary questionnaires had been administered to 100 third year students having bad marks, and the second one to the third year teachers of Linguistics, British and American civilization, British, American, and Third World Literature. Then to relatively come out with a deep and comprehensive account on the reasons behind poor writing performances, we administered questionnaire for all teachers of written expression (first and second years).

6. Limitation of the Study

We are perfectly aware that there is an almost endless number of factors that affect students’ achievements in writing. These factors could be related to the
program, the methods, the techniques, the teacher, the learner, and others such as motivation, anxiety, etc. But, we have deliberately limited our study to what we think are the main factors that are related to both teachers and learners. Our study concerns also a limited population, third year students in one university, and can; therefore, be generalised only if the same results are obtained by other researches conducted under the same circumstances and research protocol.

7. Organisation of the Dissertation

The dissertation is a whole of six chapters: Chapter one deals with general issues about writing. It discusses the history of writing, the various definitions of writing, its nature, the rational behind it, and then its connection with the other skills (speaking and reading). Finally, it sheds light on the importance of writing in learning a language. Chapter two provides a deep discussion about the factors that hamper students to write correctly. It is completely devoted to speak about the teacher as a potential source of the problem. It examines some interesting points: the most important methods and techniques that are relevant to teach writing; the extent of the impact of teachers’ demotivation on students’ writing productions. It also sheds light on the effects of the teachers’ corrective feedback and reinforcement. Finally, it discusses the teachers’ reactions to students’ written productions and its effects on improving the writing skill.

In chapter three, a deep discussion on the learner as a second potential negative source of writing problems such as learners’ lack of motivation to write, lack of reading, and finally, the influence of the first language (L1) on writing in
English. Chapter four entirely devoted to the practical side of our study, in which we expose the appropriate methodology that best fits this investigation. Chapter five deals with data analyses and interpretation of teachers' questionnaire. Chapter six is devoted to some useful pedagogical implications and suggestions that may help curb or minimize the influence of these factors on students' performances in the writing skill by suggesting some strategies to help university students who are not able to produce a good piece of writing.
CHAPTER ONE: THEORETICAL ISSUES ON WRITING

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A discussion of some principles and aspects of the writing skill is worthwhile as a starting point. The aim is to gain an overall understanding of what is meant by “WRITE”, and how to learn and develop this skill. Writing has been neglected in teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) for many years and remained, for most of its history, a minor occupation. This is in part because almost all human beings grow up speaking their L1 and sometimes their second language (L2), or foreign language (FL); therefore, writing has to be learned. In this respect, to write, to learn how to write correctly and to be an effective writer are the most important objectives for both teachers and learners, especially at university. Students’ poor performances in writing have become the core problem which needs an urgent remedy. And we can not identify the main factors behind students’ poor achievement in writing by investigating some theoretical issues its history, its definition and nature as well as its connection with the other skills. Finally, it is worth shedding light on its importance in language learning.

1. History of Writing

The development of writing is relatively recent phenomenon. According to Harmer (2007a, p.1)” human activity of writing is a fairly recent development in the evolution of men and women . . . some of the earliest writing found so far dates from about 5,500 years age”.

Also, Yule (2010, p. 212) claimed that “human beings started to write some 20,000 to 25,000 year ago”. Unfortunately, the reason behind knowing too little about early man is that he did not write. The earliest forms of writing were
naturalistic paintings of animals and people in protected spaces like caves. The pictures of animals were attempts at appearing their spirits after being hunted. While the pictures of people often represent people appearing in different physical positions as in a ceremonial dance.

Gradually, primitive cultures, which were at the mercy of natural forces, stylized their representational messages. For ancient cultures, they are called “petroglyphs” or “pictograms” (Crystal, 1999, p. 18). In other words, pictures representing symbols, for example, the picture ☀ might come to be used as a form of the sun. These pictograms later on developed to become “ideograms” which are considered to be part of a system of idea writing, or “hieroglyphs”. For instance, ancient Egyptians had a sophisticated system of hieroglyphs that have been stylized afterwards.

The following Egyptian hieroglyph/ideogram ☣ represents a house. On the other hand, the cliff paintings of Native Americans in the desert South West are usually called petroglyphs/pictograms for they are written on stone. Although Native American tribal groups did not speak each other’s languages; the petroglyphs are surprisingly standard; however, they are not as sophisticated as were the Egyptian hieroglyphs. When symbols come to be used to represent words in a language, they are described as examples of word writing or “logograms”. For instance, Sumerians in the southern part of modern Iraq, between 5,000 and 6,000 years ago, used logographic writing as reported in this quotation:
Because of the particular shapes used in their [the Sumerian] symbolism these inscriptions are more generally described as cuneiform writing. The term cuneiform means wedge-shaped and the inscription used by the Sumerians were produced by pressing a wedge-shopped implement into soft clay tablets, resulting informs like 🕊️. (Yule, 2010, p. 214)

In about 3,500 years ago, the Phoenicians, the ancestors of the Lebanese, invented an alphabet from the Egyptians hieroglyphs. For example, the Egyptian 🕊️ meaning house become the Phoenician 🕊️. And by about 1000B.C. the Phoenicians had a fully developed syllabic writing system. Their alphabet spread into Northern Africa to become the writing system of the Arabs, and North West to Greece whose letters was further modified to become the Cyrillic Alphabets of Russia and the Balkans. After that the Romans modified the letters into the alphabets we recognize and use. Those alphabets are called the Roman alphabets which are different from other writing systems in that the symbols represent sounds, not pictures or ideas.

Table 1.1  Development of Writing (Yule, 2010, p. 217)
Finally, the historical development of writing is summarized by O’Grady, Dobrovolsky, and Katamba (1996) in the following quotation:

The development of writing has been one of humanity's greatest intellectual achievements. From pictograms and logograms, the graphic representation of language has developed through syllabic writing to the alphabet. This was achieved through the discovery that the sounds of language can be associated with arbitrary graphic symbols. Eventually, this was followed by another discovery that a fairly small number of symbols is sufficient to represent language in written form. (p. 620)

In other words, before writing takes the recent forms, it began as pictograms (picture-writing) which represent particular images in a consistent way. Later on, it developed to ideograms (idea-writing); then these ideograms changed to what we call logograms which means word-writing. The best example used is that of the Sumerians where the writing system is word-based. More specifically, the alphabet replaced pictographs between 1700 and 1500B.C. in the Sinaitic word. The ink, invented by the Chinese philosopher, Tien-Lcheu (2697B.C.), became common by the year 1200 B.C. in parallel with the invention of paper (Bellis, 2003, p.34). This historical overview gives less comprehension to the writing skill; that is why the next section is entirely devoted to clarify it.

I.2 What is Writing?

In its simplest form, writing may be just using graphic symbols or reproducing in written form something which has been heard or read. Writing becomes more
complicated when it involves producing meaningful segments to carry a message in the language. Accordingly, Widdowson (2001) stated that "writing is the use of visual medium to manifest the graphological and grammatical system of the language. That is to say, writing in one sense is the production of sentences as instances of usages" (p. 62).

Thus, students must master the graphic system of language, its grammatical structure, and select the appropriate vocabulary (mechanisms of writing) related to the subject matter. However, they fail to do so for writing is the most difficult and complex skill, and also because it is an act of discovery. Another definition was given by Crystal (1999, p. 214) who stated that “writing is not a merely mechanical task, a simple matter of putting speech down on paper. It is an exploration in the use of the graphic potential of a language -a creative process- an act of discovery”.

Writing is a form of expression and communication which enables learners to communicate ideas, feelings, and different attitudes in a written mode. Writing can be an individual, a personnel, and social endeavor. As it is reported by Miller (2001, as cited in Richards & Renanya, 2003, p. 25) “even though the writing production is an expression of one’s individuality and personality, it is important to remember that writing is also a social endeavor, a way of communicating with people”.

Being an expression and a social endeavor, Pincas (1992) goes on to claim that “writing is a system of graphic symbols, i.e., letters or combinations of letters which relate to the sounds we produce while speaking” (p. 125). Also writing can be defined as much more than the production of these symbols, just as speech is
more than the production of sounds. For that, the graphic symbols have to be arranged or combined according to some conventions to form words, and words to form sentences, and sentences to form paragraphs and essays. Accordingly, writing is not making a lengthy list of words, as inventories of items of a shopping list. "Although this shopping list may not seem to provide an example of sophisticated writing, it tells us something about the writing process" (Harmer, 2007a, p. 4). That is why he defined writing as follows:

Writing is a process—that is, the stages the writer goes through in order to produce something in its final form. This process may, of course, be affected by the content of the writing, the type of writing, and the medium it is written in . . . this process has four main elements: planning, drafting, editing, and final draft. (Harmer, 2007a, p. 4)

This idea is supported by Richards and Schmidt (2002) where it is stated “writing is viewed as a result of complex processes of planning, drafting, reviewing and revising” (p.529). That is to say, the final product is the result of various operations. While Hedge (2000) stated that:

Writing is the result of employing strategies to manage the composing process . . . it involves a number of activities: setting goals, generating information, selecting appropriate language, making a draft, reading and reviewing it, then revising and editing. It is a complex process. (p.302)

Writing can not be achieved if there is no coherence between the words or the sentences which are arranged in a particular order and linked together in certain ways and above all, holding a meaning. In this respect, “learners at schools [and
universities] must master the academic writing which was needed in writing essays and paragraphs or other assignments for exams” (Bailey, 2003, p. 1).

Moreover, writing in a foreign language is the ability to use language and its graphic representation productively in an ordinary writing situation. “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” (Lado, 2000, p.248).

Furthermore, writing is a whole process which goes through different steps. It is not merely limited to express thoughts via written symbols, but also a tool of learning as it is reported by Kate and Guy (2003, p. 1480)) “writing is a process of exploring one’s thoughts and learning from the act of writing itself from what thoughts are”.

Being the most difficult and complex skill to be mastered by EFL students, Numan (1989, p. 36) pointed out that “writing is an extremely complex, cognitive activity for all which the writer is required to demonstrate control of a number of variables simultaneously”. This means that, at the sentence level, the writer has to take into consideration many features such as content, sentence structure, vocabulary, punctuation and spelling. Beyond this level, i.e., the sentence, he must be able to integrate information into coherent paragraphs and essays.

In addition to its complexity, it takes time and a lot of training to be mastered, i.e., only after years of training and practice at schools and universities few students, not all of them, are able to write correctly. In this respect, Hedge (2000) had completely investigated this issue and came with a conclusion “all the time
spent in communicative activities, adults devote 45% of their energies to listening, 30% to speaking, 16% to reading, and 9% to writing” (Hedge, 2000, p. 305). That is why the majority of students feel stress which prevents them from conveying the desired message. Accordingly, it is reported by Brookes and Grundy (2009) that "it must be worth asking precisely what is difficult about writing and, especially, about writing in a second language” (p.11).

Also writing is viewed as a powerful tool as it is stated in this quotation "although writing is not this explosive, it is one of the humankind's powerful tool. But they are sometimes confused about the source of its power" (Mc Arthur, Graham, & Fitzgerald, 2008, p.1). These difficulties and poor achievements in writing among our students will be discussed profoundly in the coming chapter. Also, to clarify things about this skill, we have to investigate its nature which is the next point.

I.3 Nature of Writing

Foreign-language skills are classified into two main categories: the productive skills (speaking and writing) and the receptive skills (reading and listening). However, their nature is not relevant to this division since listening and speaking are naturally acquired, while reading and writing must be learned at school and university. This is called literacy, i.e., the ability to read and write. Moreover, even if writing and speaking are belonging to the same category, they are sharply different as it is stated in this quotation “the productive skills of writing and speaking are different in many ways” (Harmer, 2007a, p. 246). We’ll see their differences in the coming sections.
Richards’ (1990, p. 100) viewpoint is that the nature and significance of writing has often been underestimated in language teaching, and in foreign language teaching, writing has often been synonymous with teaching grammar and sentence structure. Furthermore, in terms of complexity and difficulty, many surveys proved that language production is difficult. Harmer (2007b, p. 251) pointed out that “there are a number of reasons why students find language production difficult”. Writing and learning to write has always been one of the most complex language skills. Nunan (1989, p. 12) agreed that “it is easier to learn to speak than to write no matter if it is a first or second language”. A similar point is stated, for instance, by Grabe and Kaplan (1996) who said that “probably half of the world’s population does not know how to write adequately and effectively” (p. 87). Concerning its difficulty as a productive skill, Tribble (1997) claimed that “writing is a difficult skill to acquire” (p. 65). This complexity resides in the stages of the process we go through when writing, the lack of knowledge in the subject matter, etc. Moreover, it can be related to psychological, linguistic, and cognitive factors; this applies to writing in L1, L2, and FL.

Besides its complexity, its difficulty, and its importance, writing is a dynamic process which allows writers to work with words and ideas no matter if these are right or wrong. This idea is supported by Zamel (1992, p. 473) who described writing as a “meaning-making, purposeful, evolving, recursive, dialogic, tentative, fluid, exploratory process”. More importantly, writing is a process of discovery, i.e., a way to help learners to learn or to discover how to compose a piece of writing. Grabe and Kaplan (1996, p. 6) think of writing as a “technology”, i.e., a
set of skills which must be practiced and learned through practice. On the other hand, Bell and Burnaby (1984, as cited in Nunan, 1989, p. 23) had a similar point to Tribble (1997). They pointed out that:

Writing is a very complex cognitive activity in which writers must show control over content, format, sentence, structure, vocabulary, punctuation, spelling and letter formation, i.e., control at the sentence level. Besides, writers must be able to structure and integrate information cohesively and coherently within paragraphs and texts.

According to White and Arndt (1991), "writing is also a problem-solving activity developing in progress" (p.11). This means that writing doesn’t come naturally or automatically, but through cognitive efforts, training, instruction and practice. Even if it is a problem-solving, writing involves processes such as generating ideas, a voice to write, planning, goal-setting, monitoring and evaluating what is to be written and what has been written as well as the right language used by the writer. Looking at these factors, we may conclude that writing is indeed a difficult issue given the multiple demands it makes on writers.

The nature of writing can be determined according to language transfer, i.e., to what extent L1 can affect students’ written productions in English? In this respect, it was proved that “writers will transfer writing abilities and strategies, whether good or deficient, from their first language to their second [or third] language” (Friedlander, 1997, p. 109). Also, in her study of the writing of L1, L2, and FL, Edelsky (1982, as cited in Friedlander, 1997, p.110) indicated that
“writing knowledge transfers across languages.” This transfer was independent of language proficiency as it is reported in Jones and Tetroe’s study (1987, as cited in Friedlander, 1997) that "weaker writers' failure to use writing strategies in English was based on their failure to use these strategies in their first language". Another opposite viewpoint was held by Blanchard and Root (2004, p.1) who argued that “it is like driving a car. If you have ever driven in another country, you know that some of the rules of the road may be different. Just as the rules for driving differ from country to another, the conventions for writing may change from language to another”. This means that writing conventions differ from one language to another. In any ways, not everyone is a naturally gifted writer. Writing is a skill that can be learned, practiced, and mastered.

Also, the nature of writing can be linked to the nature of writers themselves such as students or people in general. And sometimes students/people are protective of their thoughts and; therefore, they prefer to keep them hidden in their minds, and many great ideas and observations are never born because their creators won't express them. Accordingly for those writers "writing is nothing more than thought on paper" (Stark 2005, p. 8). Moreover, he goes on to claim that many people fear a blank sheet of paper or an empty computer scream, i.e., even if they know what they want to say they don't know what to write; they afraid it will come out looking wrong or sounding stupid. That is why he said to these students and people that one of the things to love about writing is that:
Writing is a process. The first time you write a draft, it doesn't matter if your writing comes out wrong or sounds stupid to you because you can change it as often as you want. You can go over it until you are completely satisfied or until you need to shift gears. You can show your draft to your friend or family and get a response before you ever make it public. (Stark, 2005, p. 9)

Stark (2005) added that we should not put pressure on ourselves by thinking that we are going to write a perfect first draft. No one can sit down and write polished reports, letters, essays, paragraphs without changing (or revising) them at least slightly.

In short, the nature of writing requires that we write for an audience (reader) whose task is to decode what the writer has encoded previously. It is worth mentioning that, in contrast to speaker-listener relationship situation, in writing there is no interchanging participant and it is impossible to measure the effect of the message on the reader, but it is possible to determine the reasons that push us to write. These reasons are different from one writer to another. We will see them in our next section.

I.4 Rational behind Writing

In everyday life the amount of writing we do is minimal, i.e., in our daily routine we may write down a telephone message, a shopping list, an invitation, etc. (Forms of Writing, see Appendix 06). Accordingly, Harmer (2007a, p. 4) stated that “because writing is used for a wide variety of purposes, it is produced in many different forms. The shopping list and the telephone message are a type of writing that many people do, as a matter of course”. Further more, our writing is usually
addressed to family members, colleagues and friends. Nevertheless, in terms of frequency, Mc Donough and Shaw (1993, p.15) argued that most people talk and listen far more than they actually write: Thus, it is evident that if people have few real worlds' reasons to write, they have even fewer to do so in second or foreign language. This seems to show that writing is most of the time done for educational purposes and it may be the case. But we disagree with Mc Donough and Shaw (1993) to some extent since they do not provide us with clear evidence that most of the society don’t have to write, and even if when people want to write, they usually write for social purposes such as messages, shopping lists, telephone messages amongst other things. But what about those people, students who write for academic and work purposes such as reports, essays, summaries, government documents, news papers, magazines and so on.

Put succinctly, we may conclude that certain sections might have to do more writing. But at the end we assume that most people must be literate not only when speaking or reading, but when writing too, no matter the purpose they have in doing it. As far as writing in the English classroom is concerned, Hedge (2000) stated that “these purposes are to enhance learning and consolidate structures and vocabulary” (p.300).

Raimes (1994, p. 14) had the same point of view as Hedge’s (2000), but also draws attention to other important reasons: First, learners can go beyond what they have learned by taking risks with the language; they can use structures or words they have not seen yet no matter if these are right or wrong. Second, writing may
give learners a sense of involvement with the new language because as they express their ideas, they also use their eyes, hands, and brain which is relevant for learning. Third, as learners think what to write about and how to express their ideas, they find out new ways to write and express them; they also discover the need to get the right words and sentences. This let us see that writing is a cognitive activity because of the close relationship between thinking and writing. This means that one of the educational purposes of getting learners to write is to get them to think in order to express, order, and communicate their ideas effectively.

Nonetheless, Hedge (2005, p. 95) argued that “successful writing goes beyond producing clear and accurate sentences since learners must be aided to write and express their ideas in the most appropriate and creative way”. White and Arndt (1991) go on to claim that the teacher’s aim is to make writing a creative and stimulating process so that students do not feel intimidated and frustrated by the complexity of writing. Also, his aim to clarify to the students what relation can be done between writing and the other skills, and how they can benefit from this relation. Therefore, the coming point aims at exploring and investigating this relationship drawing special attention on the classroom (p. 34).

I.5 Writing and the other Skills

1.5.1 Differences between Writing and Speaking

Even if writing and speaking are productive skills, they are so different. And writing is the most difficult skill; that is why our focus is on it. Consequently, O’Grady et al. (1996, p. 591) argued that:
Speaking and writing are different in both origin and practice spoken language is acquired without specific formal instruction, whereas writing must be taught and learnt through deliberate effort . . . there are many people who are unable to write. While spoken language comes naturally to human beings, writing does not.

Raimes (1994, p. 14) shared the same viewpoint and argued that we learn to speak our first language without any instruction, while most people are taught how to write in their L1, given the complexity writing represents for them. In contrast, speech and writing are considered by Robins (2000, p. 95) as “two modes of linguistic communication”. However, Rings (1992, p. 21) stated that “spoken discourse not only utilizes different phonology morphology, syntax, lexicon, and speech among other elements, but also a different textual interactional structure from that found in formal written discourse” . Hence, speech and writing are different ways of using language. Understanding the difference between them is an important part of the teaching of writing. A similar point comes from Brown and Yule (1983, p. 28) who stated that a major difference between spoken and written language is that “the elaborated and dense pack of information at the structure and the text level in written language, i.e., the use of heavy grammar structures, connectors, syntax, etc., whereas spoken language is more simple and therefore less elaborated”.

However, Halliday (1985, as cited in Numan, 1989, p. 25) agreed but disagreed with Brown and Yule (1983) only to some extent that is speech is also structured and complex, but its complexity lies in the way clauses are put together,
while written language is complex at the sentence level. Then, we must say that writing is still characterized by its complexity at the clause level. What is certain, though, as Raimes (1994) claimed, speaking is spontaneous and unplanned, whereas writing is planned and requires people to take time when producing it. But, we can say, like writing, speaking for EFL student especially at university, can be acquired through learning where the students have to master the oral/spoken form of a language such as intonation, stress, pitch, connected speech, etc. That is why both Phonetics and Oral Expression are introduced in “English Licence Program” (see Appendix 07). By doing so, EFL students will speak and listen correctly, of course, not like native speakers.

Despite what is said above, but still more attention is paid to writing as it is reported by Brookes and Grundy (2001, p. 2) who stated that “we pay more attention to writing since we are more aware of what we are doing and consequently we give more emphasis to correctness”. They, in another reference, claimed that there has been a strong belief among writers about language this century that “spoken language is primary and that written language develops from it” (Brookes & Grundy, 2009, p. 16). This is true that is why our work starts with a brief historical development of writing to see the exact position of this skill among the others.

Other differences include the level of “formality”, i.e., “writing is formal and compact, while speaking is more informal, repetitive and uses phrases such as ‘you see’, ‘What I mean’, etc.” (Raimes, 1994, p. 35). Besides, speech is more simple in terms of connectors such as “and” and “but” which tend to be used more
frequently; whereas in writing sentences, they are more complex when using connectors and subordinators. And the problem becomes more complex when students come to punctuation and capitalization. That is why we have chosen to investigate these aspects as potential sources of the problems behind third year students' poor performance in writing.

Furthermore another difference highly relevant for our study is that Nunan (1989, p.45) referred to writing by the term “decontextualised”. This means that writers are usually distant from the person they address. Then they must infer the readers' knowledge in order to choose what to include or omit in their texts. Also, the writer must foresee problems readers might have and take these into account when writing. When we link this to our case, with third year students, we notice that also “handwriting” is another problem faced by their teachers when coming to read their products (essays, paragraphs, summaries, etc.).

Another view is held by Harris (1993, p. 3) who stated that “there are three ways of looking at the differences between speech and writing which are situation, grammatical choices, and lexical density”. He meant by the first way, situation, that speakers may drop or elide word-final phonemes or morphemes, and this can be interpreted by the listeners as conventional speech where correctness is not important. But this is not the case with written language which must be well-structured and polished. Some of essential differences between writing and speaking in relation to situation are summarized in Table 1.2:
27

The second way is grammatical choices; Harris (1993) meant that the main organizing unit of the spoken text is not the sentence; it consists of clauses of equal status or near equal status chained together in sequence. He goes on to summarize the difference between the grammatical structure of speech and writing as “speech, typically, consists of chains of coordinated, weakly subordinated and adjoined clauses, while writing, by contrast, is marked by full subordination and embedding” (Harris, 1993, p. 4).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speakers</th>
<th>Writers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Can refer to people, objects, and so on in the shared environment by pointing with gestures or by using pointing words.</td>
<td>1. Do not share an immediate environment with their readers and have to make explicit references to people and objects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Can check whether they are being understood by looking at the speaker's expression, by asking, or by being directly prompted.</td>
<td>2. Have no means of knowing once the text is finished whether the readers will understand the message they need to anticipate potential misunderstandings and appropriate levels of shared knowledge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. In conversations (including telephone conversations) speakers are encouraged by listener's markers, such as &quot;mm&quot; and in live conversations and gestures.</td>
<td>3. Have to find ways of motivating themselves to continue creating a text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Can backtrack and fill in information that may have been omitted precise sequence is not a prerequisite effective communication.</td>
<td>4. Have to plan in order to achieve both a sequence and a selection that will lead to effective communication.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.2 Differences between Speech and Writing (Harris, 1993, p.4)
According to Halliday (1989, as cited in Harris, 1993, p.8), lexical density (the third way) means vocabulary that is needed in writing; it is divided into two major classes: content words and structure words. By lexical density, he is referring to the proportion of structure words to content words in a text. He demonstrated that writing has a higher ratio of content words to structure words than speech, i.e., information is more densely packed into writing than into speech. Another way of looking to their differences is stated by McCarthy (1991) who argued that:

With written texts, some of the problems associated with spoken transcripts are absent: We do not have to contend with people all speaking once; the writer has usually had time to think about what to say and how to say it, and the sentences are usually well formed in a way that the utterances of natural, spontaneous talk are not. (McCarthy, 1991, p. 25)

Moreover, speech is naturally acquired, but writing is formally taught, as pointed by Ur (1991, p. 161) “Most people acquire the spoken language (at least their own mother tongue) intuitively, whereas the written form is in most cases deliberately taught and learned”. Hyland (2003, p. 49) argued that "speech is more highly contextualized, depends far more on a shared situation". This view is similar to that mentioned before by Harris (1993) which is related to situation. Some of commonly perceived differences between speech and writing are summarized by Hyland (2003, p.50) in Table 1.3:
Harmer (2007a) had his own ways at looking to the differences between speech and writing, especially in terms of their forms and in the processes that writers and speakers go through to produce language. These ways are concerned with: First, time and space, “spoken communication operates in the here-and-now world of immediate interaction; writing transcends time and space” (Harmer, 2007a, p.7). Second, it is concerned with participants, i.e., we choose our words with more or less care on the basis of who these co-participants are? Third, he goes on to add the notion of process, and claimed that “one of the most obvious differences between writing and speaking has to do with the processes that writers and speakers go through” (Harmer, 2007a, p. 8). Fourth, organization and language are another Harmer’s ways in differentiating between the two modes. Accordingly, he claimed that “the most noticeable dissimilarities between speech and writing are the level of correctness and the issue of well formedness. [Also] lexical density, i.e., the proportion of content to function or [grammatical words] used. (Harmer, 2007a, p. 9)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speech</th>
<th>Writing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2-No spelling and punctuation conventions.</td>
<td>2-Longer sentences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-Relies on gestures and paralanguage.</td>
<td>3-More explicit coding of logical relations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-Concrete, fragmented, informal, and context-dependent.</td>
<td>4-Less modal modification.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-Characterised by turn-talking.</td>
<td>5-Structurally elaborate, complex, abstract, and formal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6-Characterised by monologue.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The fifth way is concerned with signs and symbols where Harmer (2007a) claims that both writing and speaking have their own signs, symbols, and devices to make communication more effective. Thus writing has fewer signs and symbols than speech. Finally, the sixth way is concerned with the product where he argued the following “if we consider a face-to-face conversation to be a work in progress, writing usually turns up as finished product” (Harmer, 2007a, p.11).

All what is said above is summarized by Finegan (1994, p.120) who argued that there are four main differences between writing and speaking:

1- Speaking has such channels as intonation, voice pitch, and gestures to convey information, whereas writing has only words and syntax.

2- Writing requires more time than speaking in terms of planning.

3- Speakers and addresses are often face-to-face while writers and readers are not.

4- Speaking tends to rely on the context of the interaction more than writing.

In sum, even if speaking is so different from writing, but they are two modes of language, especially, communication and they share one characteristic which is arbitrariness. Also, writing is equated to speaking for both are concerned with conveying information. But what about the reading skill, is it a helpful tool to promote students’ writing? If "yes", how students can benefit from this connection (reading and writing). It is our next section.
I.5.2 Connection between Writing and Reading

Writing and reading are two distinct skills, i.e., the former is productive, whereas the latter is receptive. But, they are interrelated since they lead to the same objective: learning. Writing involves the encoding of a message of some kind; that is, we translate our thoughts into language. Reading has to do with the decoding or the interpretation of this message. Both of them are linked with language and communication of ideas. It is argued by Hyland (2003) that “writing, together with reading, is a central aspect of literacy” (p.53). This means that to be a literate person, it is both to be able to read and write.

Most recent trends in teaching English stressed that reading and writing are related, but researchers have only recently begun to explore this connection. (Charge & Taylor, 1997; Eisterhold, 1991; Rodenich, 1998, as cited in Sadek, 2007, p. 200) provided a good deal of empirical results and logic which support the connection between them. According to Eisterhold (1991, as cited in Sadek, 2007, p. 202), “reading in the writing classroom is understood as the appropriate input for acquisition of the writing skills, because it is generally assumed that reading progress will somehow function as primary models from which writing skill can be learned or at least be inferred”.

In other words, reading can be an important and an appropriate input to acquire the writing skill. In language correlation studies between reading and writing relationship, Eisterhold (1991, as cited in Sadek, 2007, p, 233) concluded that:
1. There are correlations between reading achievement and writing abilities, i.e., better writers tend to be better readers.

2. There are correlations between writing quality and reading experience as reported through questionnaires, i.e., better writers read more than poorer writers.

3. There are correlations between reading ability and measures of syntactic complexity of writing, i.e., better readers tend to produce more syntactically natural writing than poorer readers.

This view is already mentioned before by (Stotsky, 1983, as cited in Kroll, 1997, p. 88) who suggested completely the same idea “better writers tend to be better readers, . . . better writers tend to read more than poorer writers . . ., and better readers tend to produce more syntactically natural writing than poorer readers”. If we should link this view with third year students’ poor writing productions, it may be suggested that the source of the problem is the lack of reading among university students that lead to this poor writing production. In fact, the lack of reading among university students has been pointed out by Mansouri (2006) and backed by data obtained from students’ questionnaire (see Appendix 08).

Also, studies of reading and writing relationship (Redenichetal, 1998; Charge & Taylor, 1997, as cited in Sadek, 2007, p. 210) suggested three somewhat interrelated hypotheses which they have chosen to describe as models. The first one is the directional hypothesis which means that the reading-writing connection is directional, i.e., reading influences writing, but that writing knowledge is not
useful in reading. What marks the directional model is reading-to-writing model. The second hypothesis is the non directional-hypothesis, where reading and writing are said to derive from a single underlying proficiency, i.e., the common link being that of the cognitive process of constructing meaning. They argued that writing, like reading, is a process of interactive and dynamic activation, instantiation, and refinement of schemata. The third type is the bi-directional hypothesis. It is the most complex model which means that reading and writing as interactive, and dependent as well (Charge & Taylor, 1997; Eisterhold, 1991, as cited in Sadek, 2007, pp. 202-204).

Furthermore, there are many other connections between reading and writing, some are simple and others are complex. For instance, readers use writing to help them process what they read. And as writers, we are always reading. In addition to reading what others have written, we also read our own work, over and over, for correction. In this respect, Harris (1993) suggested five interesting relationships which seem more significant to teachers:

- Reading and writing are personal and social activities that are used in order to communicate. Writers need a response to what they write; readers need to respond to what they read and get responses to their analysis of the text;
- Reading and writing are reciprocal. Writers can learn much about writing by reading; readers can learn much about reading by writing;
- Reading and writing are interdependent. Readers cannot read if writers do not write. Likewise, writers can’t write if readers do not read;
• Reading and writing are parallel. Both have purpose, depend on background knowledge, and focus on the construction of meaning;

• Reading and writing help discover the world around us. As writers write, they need to read. And as readers read, they often need to write. (pp.81-86)

Finally, Manzo and Manzo (1995, p.113) describe the relationships between reading and writing as an interrelated treatment; they call this connection the "Two-way relationship between reading and writing" as it is illustrated in Table 1.4:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading to write</th>
<th>Writing to read</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-Reading increases the knowledge individuals have to write about.</td>
<td>1-Understanding of subjects, making subsequent reading easier.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-Reading instills knowledge of linguistic pattern and form.</td>
<td>2-Writing helps one to read like a writer, hence, sparking insights into writer mechanism and enhancing comprehension.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-Reading builds vocabulary and familiarity with writer craft</td>
<td>3-Revision in writing or making changes at various point in the process, involves many of the same high-order thinking strategies involved in critical reading.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.4 Reading and Writing Connection (Manzo & Manzo, 1995, p.113)

Accordingly, providing student writers with well-written models of many styles and genres in any topic (Linguistics, Literature, Civilisation, etc.) will enlarge the resources they use when they write. Moreover, teachers should place students into the writers’ roles and encourage them to read like a writer, in order to help them better write.
I.6 Why Writing is Important?

Learning a foreign language entails learning to write it. And many foreign students are least proficient in coping with the writing system. Only a minority feels compelled to use it in some formal situations because it is a difficult skill to acquire. “Writing provides an importance mean to personal self-expression” (Mc Arthur, et al., 2008, p. 1). Its importance lies in its power as it is reported by Mc Arthur, et al. (2008, p. 11) “The power of writing is so strong that writing about one’s feelings and experiences can be beneficial psychologically and physiologically because it can reduce depression, lower blood pressure, and boost the immune system.

Despite its importance, there is considerable concern about the writing capabilities of school-age children and youth. As it is asserted by National Commission on Writing in America’s School & College [NCW] (2003, p.7, as cited in Mc Arthur, et al., 2008, p.1) “The writing of students in the USA is not what it should be”. This bad situation on writing was confirmed by this study which indicated that “three out of every 4th - 12th-grade students demonstrated only partial mastery of the writing skill” (Persky, Campbell, & Mazzco, 1999, as cited in Mc Arthur, et al., 2008, p.2).

In this respect, we should not neglect the importance of the writing skill in Teaching/learning English as a foreign language because it expresses social relationships which exist due to the individuals’ creation via discourse, but these relationships are not only discourse. According to Hyland (2003, p. 69), “writing is
one of the main ways that we create a coherent social reality through engaging with others”.

Also, the practice of writing can provide different learning styles especially for those who find it difficult to learn through the oral skill, for such students writing is likely an aid to retention. It means that students feel more secure and relaxed in writing at distance rather than feeling compelled to deal with immediate communication through oral practice. Moreover, writing provides varieties in FL classrooms through the assigned activities such as punctuation and grammar, to supply different writing models. Furthermore, writing is used in formal and informal testing. For instance, oral ability can not often be tested through the oral skill as it might seem impossible regarding the large number of students and time allocated. Thus, writing can supply oral testing. These considerations suggest that we can make good use of writing as an integrated skill to learning English as it complements the leaning skills and serves as a reinforcement of the language learnt orally. However, some learners of English do not agree with the importance assigned to the writing skill pointed out by Doff (1995) who said that:

If we think only of long-term needs, writing is probably the least important of the four skills for many students, they are more likely to need to listen to, read and speak English than to write it. Their need for writing is most likely to be for study purposes and also as an examination skill. (p.148)

Most contexts of life (school, the workplace, and the community) call for some levels of the writing skill, and each context makes overlapping, but not identical demands. Proficient writers can adapt their writing flexibly to the context
in which it takes place. In the school setting, writing plays many roles: It is a skill that draws on the use of strategies such as planning, evaluating, and revising text to accomplish a variety of goals, such as writing a report or expressing an opinion with the support of evidence. It is a skill that draws on sub-skills and processes such as handwriting and spelling, a rich knowledge of vocabulary, mastery of the conventions of punctuation, capitalization, word usage, and grammar; and the use of strategies such as planning, evaluating, and revising text. All are necessary for the production of coherently organized essays containing well developed and pertinent ideas, supporting examples, and appropriate detail. This role can be characterized as “learning to write”. Moreover, writing is a means to extend and deepen students’ knowledge; it acts as a tool for learning subject matter. This role is called “writing to learn”.

In fact, the roles of learning to write and writing to learn are interdependent. For this reason, it is recommended that language teachers use content-area texts to teach the reading and writing the skills and that content-area teachers provide instruction and practice in discipline-specific reading and writing. Using writing tasks to learn content offers students opportunities to expand their abilities; to strengthen the planning, evaluating, and revising process; and to practice grammar, spelling, punctuation, modes of argumentation, and technical writing. In short, if students are to learn, they must write (Graham & Perin, 2007, p. 23).

After having investigated some theoretical issues on writing, it is safe to say that writing has become vital nowadays; for the written script is the only proof that ever remains. We come to conclude that, through its history, writing is a recent
skill which developed from pictographs to the alphabet. It is viewed and defined differently, i.e., from different perspectives. Concerning its nature, writing is the most complex and difficult skill to master even for native speakers. When engaging in writing, each writer has reasons to do so; they reasons can be social, professional, or academic purposes. Comparing writing with the other skills, it is the most important one, in addition to its complexity and difficulty because it requires a lot of training compared to the speaking skill. What is important is that, writing can not be taught alone, but usually with the integration of the other skills. However, university students still face a great deal to write correctly. Thus, the factors behind students' poor performances will be investigated in the next chapters.
CHAPTER TWO
TEACHER AS A POTENTIAL SOURCE OF WRITING
DIFFICULTIES

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There is a common agreement that writing is the most complex and difficult skill for it requires a lot of training. Like all learning problems, difficulties in producing a good piece of writing can be devastating to the learners' education, self-esteem, self-confidence, and motivation to write. Many researchers (Harmer, 2007a; Nunan, 1989; Tribble, 1997, Richards & Renandya, 2003, etc.) agreed that writing is the most complex and difficult skill. This difficulty lies not only in generating and organizing ideas, but also in translating these ideas into readable text. And even the sub-skills that are involved in writing are highly complex.

Hence, in this chapter, we will investigate what hinders students to writing correctly especially at university level. Among an endless number of factors, we will try to sketch a general picture of the motivational factors behind the students' lack of correct writing. And since the teaching/learning process can't take place only with the presence of the teacher and the learner, this chapter will be entirely devoted to speak about the teacher. We will discuss some important issues that concern the teacher's approaches, methods and techniques in teaching writing then his way when reacting to the students' writing productions.

II.1 Lack of an Appropriate Approach to Teach Writing

The teaching of writing in EFL classes has witnessed important changes in the last twenty years; strongly influenced by research insights from mother tongue contexts, resulting in pedagogic shifts. For many years, the teaching of writing, in any context, was largely ignored, forever tested but seldom taught. Thus, the focus was on what the students produce, not on how to do it. Raimes (1994) stressed the importance of how to teach writing not what to teach and drew attention to the
Controlled-to-Free Approach, the Free-Writing Approach, the Paragraph-Pattern Approach, the Communicative Approach, the Grammar Syntax-Organization Approach, etc.

Raimes (1994) agreed that there is no one answer to the question of how to teach writing in EFL classes. There are as many answers as there are teachers and teaching styles, or learners and learning styles. This may be due to the fact that writing is a process of exploring one’s thought and learning from the act of writing itself what these thoughts are? Figure 2.1, below, displays the elements activated when producing a piece of writing.

![Figure 2.1 Producing a Piece of Writing (Raimes, 1994, p.6)](image)

It includes different features such as syntax, content, grammar, mechanics, organization, word choice, purpose, audience, and the writers’ process—which are required and necessary in writing any topic such as Linguistic, Literature,
Civilization, and others). Accordingly, teachers have developed many approaches to the teaching of writing. Before the 1960s, writing was a neglected skill in the English as a second language (ESL) and EFL. The earliest learning theory was Behaviorism which stressed that language is primarily spoken, while writing took the second position. It was only after the 1960’s, especially in the United States, that writing for academic purposes gained importance and became central to language learning. The main learning theory, in this period time, was Structuralism which stressed the importance of teaching writing. Accordingly, these are the main approaches to teaching writing as reported by Raimes (1994).

II.1.1 Controlled-to-Free Approach

The Audio-lingual Approach dominated ESL and EFL in the 1950’s and early 1960’s. A focus was put on speech in that it was primarily and writing was only used to reinforce it. Also, the mastery of grammar and syntactic forms occupied a great importance, as stated by Raimes (1994) “speech was primary and writing served to reinforce speech in that it stressed mastery of grammatical and syntactic forms” (p.10). Here the students are not creators; they just write grammar exercises “the writing is carefully controlled so that the students see only correct language and practice grammar structures that they have learned” (leki, 1992, p. 8). According to Raimes (1994), it is the approach that stresses three features mentioned in Figure 2.1: grammar, syntax, and mechanics; it emphasizes accuracy rather than fluency or originality. Finally, it is a sequential approach, i.e., students deal with writing according to the following steps: sentence exercises, paragraphs
to copy or manipulate grammatically, and after these students are allowed to write controlled composition with the help of the teacher’s intervention to correct the errors. And once the students reach a certain level of proficiency, they are encouraged to write free composition (pp. 10-11).

II.1.2 Free-Writing Approach

In this approach, teachers are expected to stress content and fluency. When the students are engaged in writing, they do not have to worry about form. Once the ideas are on paper, grammatical accuracy, organization and the rest will gradually follow. Concern for audience and content are seen as important in this approach especially where free-writings often revolve around subjects that the students are interested in, and make the basis for other more focused tasks (Raimes, 1994, p. 11). Contrary to the Controlled -to- Free Approach, the role of the teacher is limited to reading the students’ productions and sometimes making comments on the expressed ideas. In other words, the piece of writing should not be corrected, but possibly read aloud and the content commented upon.

II.1.3 Paragraph-Pattern Approach

Unlike the previous approaches, the Paragraph-Pattern Approach stresses another feature. It is organization of language rather than accuracy of grammar or fluency of content. The paragraphs, the sentences, the supporting ideas, cohesion, and unity are the most important points that are dealt with. Student’s main task is to copy and analyze form of the model paragraphs. And sometimes, they imitate model passages. Moreover, students can be given scrambled sentences to be
ordered into a coherent paragraph, to identify general statements, to find out the topic sentence, or they insert or delete sentences (Raimes, 1994, p. 12). It is worth noting that first and second year students at university of Batna deal with this type of exercises.

II.1.4 Grammar-Syntax-Organization Approach

Under this approach, teachers stress the need to work on more one feature, mentioned in the diagram. According to Raimes (1994), “writing cannot be seen as composed of separate skills which are learned one by one” (p.13). This means that students should pay attention to, simultaneously, organization and at the same time work on grammar and syntax which are necessary to carry out the writing tasks.

II.1.5 Communicative Approach

The main concerns of this approach when producing a piece of writing are its purpose and audience. Thus, students are encouraged to ask themselves two main questions: Why am I writing this? And who will read it? So, the purpose, i.e., the communicative function of the text can be grouped according to whether it is intended to entertain, inform, instruct, persuade, explain, argue a case, and so on (Harris, 1993, p.18). In this approach, students are encouraged to behave like writers in real life which means that teachers must devise situations that permit them to write purposefully. In other words, students can write to each other in the classroom or use writing in role play situations.
II.1.6 Product Approach

This point explores the product approach to writing succinctly given the small amount of information and attention it receives for being form-based. It is also compared to the process approach. So, we shall mention some characteristics of this process to highlight features of the product approach.

Generally speaking, the product approach to writing focuses on the end product. A particular feature of this approach is its attention to correctness. As it is reported by Nunan (1989, p. 36) "the teacher who adopts a product-approach makes sure that the end product is grammatically correct". Mc Donough and Shaw (1993, p. 43) argued that it is a traditional way to teach writing whose focuses are on accuracy and consolidation of grammar. Moreover, the teacher becomes a judge of the finished product. Tribble (1997, pp. 20-22) also said that "teachers see errors as something that they must correct and eliminate given the importance accurate language has". In fact, for some teachers, the most important is a readable accurate piece of writing since language competence is the aim of this approach. Moreover, learners are given writing models to construct sentences, develop paragraphs, and sentences out of these models.

Nevertheless, Zamel (1992, p. 32) stated that learning by imitating was thought to be appropriate at the sentence level, where the structure is somehow relevant. However, in a certain way, imitation does not match with the recent view of language and learning at the discourse level. Thus, it is this mismatch between both levels that gives rise to the process of composing as well as the realization
that the final product is not produced at the first attempt, but after a long process and some drafts.

Attempts to understand the process underlying the production of a piece of writing led to the process approach. This latter makes teaching writing more explicit given the stages writers go through which help them communicate their ideas more effectively. The Product approach sees writing as strictly a solitary activity especially during exams. In this respect, (Zamel, 1992, p. 74) claimed that "students get very few opportunities to write, and when they do so there is still a tendency to look at texts as final products for evaluation". Therefore, this might make learners think that the purpose of writing is for evaluation rather than for communication.

According to Richards (1992, as cited in Sadek, 2007, p. 231), "the product approach leads to practice in the structure and organization of different kinds of paragraphs and texts". Accordingly, the main features of this approach are:

- Learners have specific writing needs, either for institutional writing or personal writing.
- The goals of a writing program are to teach students to be able to produce the kinds of written texts they will most frequently encounter in educational, institutional, and/or personal contexts. The writing program will focus on the patterns and forms used in different kinds of written text (e.g., differences between descriptive, narrative, expository, and persuasive writing, formats
need to present information in an essay or report; different ways of organizing information in paragraphs).

- The grammatical patterns and grammatical rules used in different kinds of texts are presented in model composition, which are constructed to display the rules that learners should use in their own writing.

- Correct sentence structure is the main aspect of writing, grammatical skill receives considerable emphasis.

- Errors in writing are avoided by providing learners with models to follow by guiding and controlling what learners write to prevent them from making errors. Thus the primary emphasis is on providing practice in different kinds of texts.

Compared to the other approaches, Broughely (1997, p. 130) concluded that the product approach is also known as a “prose model approach” when used for teaching the composition skill to native and non-native learners. This is based on the strategy of read, analyze, and write.

Furthermore, the overall emphasis of this approach, regardless on who are the learners, “is on the form of the final product that the students produce rather than on the process of writing” (Sadek, 2007, p.232). In sum, the main goal of the product approach to writing is accuracy rather than communication. As it is pointed out by (Sadek, 2007, p. 232):

The product approach concentrates on ends rather than means [i.e.] on the form and structure of writing rather that on how writers create writing which
has form and structure. This means that the processes of good writers are ignored.

That is why a new approach to teaching writing has emerged. This approach deals with those processes rather than the product itself. What this approach is about and what are those processes will be explored widely in the next point.

**II.1.7 Process Approach**

As we have previously seen, writing has been associated with accuracy and traditional teaching, i.e., teachers ask students to write for language improvement and consolidation of grammar items then, the final product serves only for correcting aspects of the language. Nonetheless, more recent approaches to writing have stressed that learning to write does not involve asking learners something on a given topic without a purpose and audience in mind. Learning to write is a process which entails a series of steps writers go through to arrive at the final product. More specifically, the process approach has emerged as a reaction against the product approach where Silva (1993, as cited in Sadek, 2007, p. 232) pointed out that “this approach calls for providing a positive, encouraging, and collaborative workshop environment within which students, with ample time and minimal interference, can work through their composing process”.

Thus, teachers’ role is to help students to develop viable strategies for getting started. Those strategies are “Finding the topics, generating ideas and information, focusing, and planning structure and procedure” (Silva, 1993, as cited in Sadek, 2007, p. 232). This means that teachers should become facilitators rather than
assessors helping students to develop those strategies mentioned above with easiness. For instance: drafting means writing several multiple drafts, revising means adding, deleting, modifying and rearranging ideas, and editing means looking at vocabulary, sentence structure, grammar, and mechanics.

On the other hand, by collaborative we mean getting learners to interact with each other mainly for feedback as we stressed above so that writing is not seen as a solitary or isolated activity as it was usually thought of, but a more creative and dynamic one.

In fact, the teacher’s goal is to present writing as a stimulating process (White & Arndt, 1991). Hedge (2000, p. 302) saw this approach as follows:

The process view of writing sees it as thinking, as discovery. Writing is the result of employing strategies to manage the composing process, which is one of gradually developing a text. It involves a number of activities: setting goals, generating ideas, organizing information, selecting appropriate language, making a draft, reading and process which are neither easy nor spontaneous for many L2 writers.

Among the characteristics of viewing writing as process, Grabe and Kaplan (1996, p. 48) stated that the process approach encourages learners to:

1. Write on relevant topics or topic learners find interesting rather than having the teacher who assigning the topic.

2. Plan their writing having a purpose in mind and a context to base the written text on rather than write freely without having anything to say.
3. Be creative and imaginative using pre-writing activities, different drafts and feedback rather than immediately putting pen to paper without previous planning and revision.

4. Get feedback from real audience either from peers, small groups or the teacher through formative evaluation.

5. Focus on content and personal expression rather than the final copy, grammar and usage.

6. Look at writing as recursive rather than a linear process since repetition of activities and steps are relevant and necessary.

7. Be, aware of the writing process and the issues relevant to it such as audience, planning, etc., rather than teach students to write without a suitable method.

Accordingly, the process approach is usually considered as a positive innovation which enables both teachers and students to interact more meaningfully with a purpose in mind when writing, i.e., why write? And to whom we write? Moreover, it is important to make student aware of how to get started by encouraging them to start think and produce ideas. Also, allowing time for the process is essential as well as feedback so that students can discover new ideas, sentences, words, etc. as they plan and work through the initial drafts. This shows that process writing is a way of creating, discovering, and extending meaning. (Tsui, 1996, p. 15). Furthermore, another characteristic of using the process approach in writing is what is noted by Silva (1993, as cited in Sadek, 2007, p. 233)“The process approach is seen as non-linear, exploratory, and generative.
process whereby writers discover and reformulate their ideas as they attempt to approximate meaning”. Although the process approach has been generally well and widely received, it is not without its critics especially in the late 1980's by many researchers such as Furneaux, (1999); Grabe and Kaplan, (1996); (Horowitz, 1986; Krapels, 1993, as cited in Sadek, 2007, p.140), etc.

The first criticism is that, as we’ve said, the process approach is recursive, i.e., not a linear process but a complicated task which goes through different stages. The writer must follow a sequence of the writing steps; he can move between them. In other words, a good writer goes backwards and forwards at whatever stage in composing a text in order to make changes either about style, content, or how to appropriately address his/ her audience. But there are process models which are linear and do not match what successful writers usually do. At this point, it is worth mentioning that teachers must encourage learners to revisit the stages of this approach before the final product.

Another criticism made by Horowitz (1986, as cited in Sadek, 2007, p. 143) who is critical of process-oriented approach to teaching writing, stating that "a process-oriented approach gives students a false impression of how university writing will be evaluated outside of the language classroom”. He meant that the process approach over emphasizes the individual psychological functioning and neglects the socio-cultural context. He goes on to claim that writing multiple drafts will not lead to the ability to write in-class examination essays quickly and fluently and that this approach does not teach a variety of types of formal writing necessary
in an academic setting (reports, annotated bibliographies, etc.). According to him, the inductive approach of process writing is suitable only to some writers and for some purposes; some students are better motivated to write by external motivators (such as grades) than internal motivators.

Critics also question whether the process approach realistically prepares students for academic work which is the most essential for them especially during exams. Accordingly, Kraples (1993, as cited in Sadek, 2007, p. 234) stated that “the process approach creates a classroom situation that bears little resemblance to the situation in which students writing will eventually be exercised.” He goes on to suggest that “a process orientation ignores certain types of important academic writing tasks particularly essay exams” (p. 234). In other words, the process approach does not teach learners how to write examination essays, i.e., it looks inappropriate at the university level. Yet, it might be that at this level the process approach does not work. Moreover, he sees that the two basic tenets of the process approach which are “content determines form” and "good writing is involved writing" do not necessarily hold true in many academic contexts.

There are; however, other criticisms as Grabe and Kaplan (1996, p. 45) who state that one of the first critiques appeared in the 1980’s claiming that the process approach lacked a theoretical foundation due to its recent introduction at that time. Nonetheless, throughout time, it has developed considerably and offers an extensive review of the evaluation of process approaches. When coming to evaluation, teachers usually judge just the product at hand; this is the case at the
university level where students are judged only about the final product in the written expression module. As it is pointed out by Furneaux (1999, p. 60) who claimed that “writing is ultimately judged by content, not process, teaching students to express their ideas is important, but an exclusive focus on this could lead to writer-based texts which might actually be inappropriate or wrong”.

In short, all of the approaches mentioned above overlap, that is, we will seldom find a classroom where a teacher is devoted to one approach as to excluding all others. A teacher using a communicative or a process approach will still use techniques drawn from other approaches as the students need them. It means that, there is no one way to teach writing, but many ways. But the teacher’s main task is to select which approach(es) fulfill students’ needs. Then which techniques that support that approach. So far, we have considered some general issues of the process approach which consists of successive stages that lead to the final written production. These stages will be widely explored in this next point.

II.1.7.1 Process Approach Stages

Previously, we have concluded that writing is a process. This process is too complex and consists of a number of operations going on simultaneously. These operations or stages allow writers to get to the end product more successfully. Tribble (1997) claimed that “learners who move on into composing immediately are likely to produce badly when writing” (p. 55). These different descriptions of the process outlined by several authors; some of them consist of various steps while other are summarized into smaller units; however, as he said, they share the same elements. Thus, we’ll see these stages according to Harmer, (2007a); Hedge,
(2000); Krashen (1984, as cited in Richards & Renandya, 2003, p. 315); Richards (1992, as cited in Sadek, 2007, p. 200); Tribble, (1997); White and Arndt, (1991); etc. Also, we will shed light briefly on these stages for our purpose is to investigate the major problems that lead to poor writing productions among third year students. Most writers and students, spend a lot of time thinking before they write and then work through a series of operations while they are composing. The final product is often the result of several careful revisions. It takes patience as well as skill to write well. Thus, the using of the process approach in writing by students (writers) must follow the different stages of this process. These stages are summarized in Table 2.1:

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<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-Planning (prewriting) 2-Drafting (writing) 3-Revising (redrafting) 4-Editing</td>
<td>1-Drafting 2-Structuring 3-Reviewing 4-Focusing 5-Evaluating 6-Generating</td>
<td>1-Rehearsing (prewriting) 2-Drafting 3-Revising</td>
<td>1-Prewriting 2-Composing (Drafting) 3-Revising 4-Editing 5-Publishing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-Composing 2-Communicating 3-Improving</td>
<td>1-Prewriting 2-Writing 3-Revising and Editing</td>
<td>1--Planning 2-Drafting 3-Editing 4-Final draft</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2.1 Stages of the Process Writing "Different Models"

According to Table 2.1, we can say that the stages of the process approach can be looked at from different points of view. These steps or stages of the writing process are between 3 stages (Richards, 1992, as cited in Sadek, 2007, p. 200), and 6 stages (White & Arndt, 1991). Krashen’s (1984, as cited, in Richards &
Renandya, 2003, p.315) point of view is that the process of writing as a private activity may be broadly seen as comprising four main stages: planning, drafting, revising and editing. As depicted in Figure 2.2 below, the stages are neither sequential nor orderly. In fact, he suggested that many good writers employ a recursive (non-linear) approach. Writing of a draft may be interrupted by more planning, and revision may lead to reformulation, with a great deal of recycling to earlier stages.

![Figure 2.2 Krashen’s Process Writing Model (Richards & Renandya, 2003, p.315)](image)

He goes on to suggest that, in addition to these four basic stages mentioned above, there are three other stages which are externally imposed on the students by the teacher, namely responding, sharing, evaluating, and post writing. Process writing in the classroom is highly structured and organized as it requires the orderly teaching of the process skill, and thus, it may not give way to a free variation of writing stages mentioned earlier. Teachers often plan appropriate classroom activities that support learning specific writing skills at every stage. According to him, planning or pre-writing encourages and stimulates students for getting started to write. It includes brainstorming and clustering. Then it comes to the drafting stage where the focus is on the fluency of writing not on the grammatical accuracy
or the neatness of the draft. Another sub-stage is responding. It intervenes between drafting and revising. It is the teacher's quick initial reaction to students' drafts then, comes the revising stage. When students revise, they review their written productions on the basis of the responding stage. It is not only checking for language errors (editing). At this stage editing, which is the fourth basic stage and includes evaluation, the teacher edits grammar, spelling, punctuation, diction, sentence structure, etc. Finally, post-writing as an external stage which is imposed by the teacher like responding and evaluation, it is a platform for recognizing students work as important or worthwhile, and it may be used as a motivation for writing and hedge against students excuses for not writing (Krashen, 1984, pp. 17-18, as cited in Richards & Renandya, 2003, p. 315).

Unlike Krashen (1984, as cited, in Richards & Renandya, 2003, p. 315), White and Arndt (1991, p. 5) stressed that "writing is re-writing that revision-seeing with new eyes-has a central role to play in act of creating text". They share the same feature of Krashen's model which is an interrelated set of recursive stages that includes: drafting, structuring, reviewing, focusing, evaluating and generating ideas. Their model can be represented diagrammatically as it is displayed in Figure 2.3:

![Figure 2.3 White and Arndt's Process Writing Model](image-url)
They pay attention to the topic, the purpose, and audience which are the main effective elements in writing. According to them, the first stage in writing includes brainstorming technique which is similar to Hedge’s (2000). In this respect, they claimed “brainstorming should be free-wheeling, unstructured, and non-judgemental” (White & Arndt, 1991, p.8). This technique can be done by different interaction patterns: pair work, group work or the whole class, but they emphasize that group-work works better when brainstorming is applied, i.e., the more students participate, the more ideas flow. They added other techniques which are note-making and mind-mapping. For them, drafting is the moment when writers move from pre-writing to writing a first draft. They go on to claim that relevant to drafting is the process of revising and writing until a good product is produced.

When writing a paragraph, they claim, writers must think how to appeal to their readers from the beginning and how to continue doing so, as they go through to the text leading them to the conclusion which is usually related to the beginning and give the text a sense of completion. The reason behind doing so is to encourage learners to organize a text the best possible way. And they emphasized on what we call self-correction (p. 258).

However, Richards (1992, as cited in Sadek, 2007, p. 232) distinguished three main stages in using the process approach. According to him, these stages are the following: "Rehearsing, drafting, and revising". By rehearsing, he meant pre-writing where students try to find the topic itself; then, ideas about it. After that they let those ideas to interact, develop, and organize themselves. He didn’t neglect the main elements of writing which are the subject (topic), the purpose, and the
audience. Then it comes to the drafting stage where students transform those ideas into graphic symbols, of course, on paper in rough form, but he doesn't mention how many drafts to reach the revising stage. This latter includes evaluation of what was written by deleting, adding, or substituting as necessary to help the writer say what he intends to say Richards (1991, as cited in Sadek, 2007, pp. 232-233).

Tribble (1997, p. 39) sketched a more structured process which includes: pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing. What is important is that he emphasized on a recursive way “we loop backwards and forwards between the various stages”. That is, writers (students) may feel the need to go back to a pre-writing phase and think again. Most importantly, he emphasized on the three elements of writing (the topic, the purpose, and the audience).

Hedge (2000, p. 322) also proposed four main stages in using the process approach (Composing, Communicating, Crafting, and Improving). In addition to paying a special attention to purpose and audience, she claimed that the first thing to consider is purpose which is a worthy element to look at for it will have an impact on the organization and language chosen when drafting. Then, audience, as Hedge argued, makes writers choose the most suitable things to say, the styles such as formal/informal, etc. That is to say, having a sense of purpose and audience at the very beginning may give writers a better insight on the content of the texts. Composing, as the first stage, includes brainstorming which is similar to White and Arndt (1991), and Krashen (1984, as cited in Richards & Renandya, 2003, p. 330). Also, she added another technique which is mind-mapping or note-making which is
similar to White and Arndt’s (1991). Also, she looked at communicating as the audience themselves.

Hedge (2000, p. 333) had less interest in “Focusing and Structuring” than White and Arndt, (1991). Hedge (2000) gave more attention to communicating than composing, i.e., more emphasis to audience. She contended that in everyday life people have different purposes to write social, academic, professional, etc., and obviously, there’s a person to whom they address their writing.

Hence, communicating allows students to address their written texts to real audiences, e.g., teacher, classmate, and friends. To this end, teachers must help students to become aware of their audience, i.e., before starting, they must answer these questions:

1. Who is my reader?
2. What do I need to say?
3. How can I make it unambiguous and accessible to my reader? (Hedge, 2000, p.303)

Concerning crafting, she said that" Crafting is the way in which a writer puts together the pieces of the text developing ideas through sentences and paragraphs within an overall structure” (Hedge, 2000, p.315). Putting ideas together in a text is not an easy task and successful crafting requires analysing the finished products. Within the improving stage, she described two activities: redrafting and editing. The former deals with evaluating, rethinking, and rewriting parts in the text. The latter involves checking grammar, punctuation, and spelling.
According to Blanchard and Root (2003), the writing process involves three main stages: pre-writing, writing, revising and editing. They also emphasized what they called "SPA" which stands for subject, purpose, and audience. They argued that pre-writing is the hardest part of writing when getting started for many people. They go on to claim “pre-writing is a way to warm up your brain, just as you warm up your car’s engine before you drive” (p.11). This stage includes generating ideas, brainstorming (which is a quick way to generating a lot of ideas on a subject), clustering (a visual way to generating ideas), and free-writing which is a helpful technique to writing as much as we can write without worrying about mistakes. Then, planning, i.e., making a simple outline of the ideas generated from pre-writing, this helps us organise our thoughts as we plan our paragraph. The second stage is “writing” which deals with paragraph writing, i.e., using the ideas generated in the pre-writing stage as a guide, with respect to the main parts of a paragraph (topic sentence, supporting sentences, and concluding sentences). The last step is revising and editing. Revising is a very important part in the writing process. They described the word revision as the combination of the root word vision and the prefix re- which means “again”, i.e., when we revise, we see again. We look to our writing again to see how we can improve it. Then, editing is the final part of the revision step. They provided us with some kinds of changes that can be done when revising. All what was said about this is summarized in Figure 2.4:
Similarly to the previous models of the writing process, Harmer (2007a, p.4) suggested four main basic operations/stages for the writing stage which are presented in the following way: “planning → drafting → editing → final draft.” According to him, when planning writers must pay attention to three main issues: the purpose of writing, the audience to whom they write, and the content structure, i.e., how to organise ideas and arguments in a best sequence. By doing so, the writer will be ready to start with the first stage where he must decide about what he is going to say. Harmer (2007b) distinguished three main categories of writers: Those who make detailed notes, others see that a few jotted words may be enough, while the second category sees that it is needless to use those notes since their planning is in their heads such as planning a shopping list. By drafting, as a second stage he suggested that it is the first version of a piece of writing; he stressed also that the writer should write a number of drafts till he reaches the editing stage. At this latter stage, the writer reads and tries to see what works, what is not clear, and what is ambiguous or confusing, then checking spelling and grammar. Once editing and making the necessary changes, the writer produces the

**Figure 2.4 Blanchard & Root's Process Writing Model**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step One: Prewriting</th>
<th>Generating ideas, planning, and organizing your ideas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step Two: Writing</td>
<td>Using your ideas to write a first draft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step Three: Revising and editing</td>
<td>Improving what you have written</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Step One: Prewriting
Generating ideas, planning, and organizing your ideas

Step Two: Writing
Using your ideas to write a first draft

Step Three: Revising and editing
Improving what you have written

- **Step One: Prewriting**
  - Generating ideas, planning, and organizing your ideas

- **Step Two: Writing**
  - Using your ideas to write a first draft

- **Step Three: Revising and editing**
  - Improving what you have written

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final version (draft), and becomes ready to send the written text to its intended audience.

However, Harmer (2007b) claimed that, Figure 2.5 is not completely satisfactory. This is due to two main reasons “it tells us little about how much weight is given to each stage . . . the process of writing is linear, it misrepresents the way in which the majority of writers produce written texts” (Harmer, 2007b, p.5). This means that, he is against the linear process, rather he is for a non-linear or recursive where the writer can plan, draft, edit, and then often re-plan, re-draft, and re-edit for many times. Accordingly, he claimed that we need to represent these aspects of writing in a different way. That is why he proposed the “process wheel” which clearly shows the various ways/directions that writers can take either travelling backwards or forwards around the rum or going up, and down the wheels spokes. Only when the final version is really ready then it can be said that the process reached its culmination.

The process described above can work with different types of writing such as e-mails, texting our friends, writing shopping lists, providing compositions for English teachers, or writing a doctoral thesis. Finally, how much attention we should give to the different stages of the process will largely depend on the three main issues of writing (purpose, audience, and content structure). This process wheel is presented in Figure 2.5:
In short, we have visited different views concerning the stages of the process approach, and we come to one conclusion: All the authors mentioned above nearly share the same ideas. They argued that even if the stages are different in number, they must be non-linear, i.e., recursive. And a good writer is the one who can travel, forwards, and backwards at whatever stage in composing a text. Furthermore, the common agreement between them is that the writer must pay attention to three main elements (issues) before starting composing which are: subject, purpose, and audience. But Harmer (2007b, pp.4-6) had his own perspective where he suggests the purpose, the audience, and the content structure. After choosing the best approach that helps our students improve their writing, the teacher's next task is to select the best techniques and this is the concern of the following section.

II.2 Lack of Adequate Techniques to Teach Writing

Teachers’ main task is choosing the best classroom technique. This latter is a day-to-day business of every writing teacher. Any decision teachers make- such as
providing students with a first sentence or not, or correcting all errors or only a selecting few-is a decision about teaching technique. Selecting these techniques depend on their suitability with class, students’ levels, and the approach underlying the curriculum and teaching. These issues are not confined to any one of the approaches outlined before. Accordingly, Raimes (1994, pp.15-30) proposed seven basic questions that must be asked by any teacher before class namely:

1. “How can writing help my students learn their second or foreign language?
2. How can I find enough topics?
3. How can I help to make the subject matter meaningful?
4. Who will read what my students write?
5. How are the students going to work together in the classroom?
6. How much time should I give my students for their writing?
7. What do I do about errors?”

In addition, he proposed different techniques that have proven successful in the classroom among them:

**II.2.1 Using Pictures Techniques**

Pictures can be a valuable resource that provides a shared experience for students in class, a common base that leads to a variety of language activities. Using pictures, all students after close observation of the material, will immediately need the appropriate vocabulary, idiom, sentence structure, words choice, etc. to discuss and translate what they see into graphic symbols. Also they provide for the use of a common vocabulary and common language forms. In addition, a picture can be used only for another task, also as ranging from fairly
mechanic all controlled compositions, sentence commissioning exercises, sequencing of sentences to write dialogs, letters, reports, and essays. Finally, pictures use, in the classroom, stimulates students’ attention and also create a concrete real world in the classroom. So, it is a valuable resource as claimed by Raimes (1994, pp. 31-32):

1. ”a shared experience in the classroom,

2. a need for common language forms to use in the classroom,

3. a variety of tasks, and

4. a focus of interest for student.”

II.2.2 Using Reading Techniques

Teachers must be aware that reading can be a useful tool to improve their students’ poor writing. Hence, a short story, a newspaper, a letter, or a piece of student’s writing can work the same way as a picture to provide shared content in the classroom. Reading can also create an information gap that paves the way to different communicative activities. When a teacher encourages his/her students to read, they engage with the new language and culture, new vocabulary, new ideas, and so on. In the same vein, Raimes (1994) reported “the more our students and the more they become familiar with the vocabulary, idiom, sentence patterns, organizational flow, and cultural assumptions of the native speakers of the language” (p.36).This technique includes many activities which fall into two broad categories:
Students can work either with "the text" or "from the text". The former means that the students copy the writer’s choice of specific linguistic and logical features such as cohesion links, punctuation, grammar, sentence arrangement, and organization. While the latter, from the text, means the students create a text of their own by summarizing, completing, speculating, or reacting. Finally, this technique can help solve student’s problems of writing if it is frequently used by the teacher.

II.3 Teachers as a Source of Demotivation

When asking learners about the teachers they prefer studying with, they immediately point to "X" or "Y" teachers but not to "Z"; the reason is that they learn quickly and understandably with some and feel bored with others. This is a fact and no teacher teaches in the same way under the same conditions. However, teachers can be demotivating when they do not enhance learning and incite learners to write confidently preferring to scorn them for having made mistakes, repeat the same activities over and over, do not encourage them to write in the classroom or outside it. In other words, motivated teachers can produce motivated learners.

Accordingly, the teachers have a number of crucial tasks to perform to help the students become better-good writers. Harmer (2007b) stated that "the main task of the teacher is to motivate and provoke the students" (p.41). In other words, students writers often find themselves “lost for words” especially when dealing with creative writing. Here the teacher’s role is to provoke the students to have
ideas, enthusing them with the value of the task, etc. Sometimes, teachers can help the students by worth words they need to start in writing.

In this respect, Harmer (2007b, p. 42) added another issue which is closely allied to the teacher’s role as motivator and provoker is that of supporting. This means that students still need a lot of help and reassurance once they get going. Teachers must be extremely supportive when students engage in writing, by helping them overcome difficulties.

II.4 Lack of Teacher’s Corrective Feedback and Reinforcement

Previously, we have said that teachers should intervene by motivating, provoking, supporting, and even suggesting or advising students, in addition to reacting, responding, and correcting. What is shared between these last three concepts is that, each of them needs a "feedback" that reinforces students to do better. It is reported in (Language teaching and applied linguistics, 2002)

Feedback is very important in the teaching a foreign language; in teaching, feedback refers to comments or other information that learners receive concerning their success on learning tasks or tests, either from the teacher or other persons”. (p.199)

Moreover, O’Hagan (1997, as cited in Graham & Perin, 2007, p. 30) argued that the common practice of giving grades to students for their writing is counter-productive. O’Hagan’s (1997, as cited in Graham & Perin, 2007, p. 33) ERIC search of over 1,500 journal articles, since 1963, on grading writing, only a handful attempted to defend the use of traditional grading practices. Many students
find this type of feedback demotivating because of its emphasis on performance in relation to others. And this creates a kind of discrimination among those who always work and those who always participate. This can lead students to be more concerned with failure and avoidance rather than being motivated to master the writing skill. According to Harmer (2007b, pp.108-113), teachers’ reaction to their students’ work can be done in two ways: “correcting” and “responding”.

By “correcting”, we mean correcting mistakes of a student’s written performance on issues such as syntax, grammar, collocation, etc. When teachers’ intervention is designed to help students edit and move to another new draft, responding is more appropriate than correcting. This means that our task, as teachers, is not to say what wrong or right, but to ask questions, make suggestions, and indicate where the student could improve his writing either in the content or in the manner of his expression. This type of feedback will improve the students’ level and they can take advantage of such help.

This way of reaction to students’ work, makes the teacher seen as evaluator/examiner. Students are generally very interesting in numerical grades, but it is worth understanding where their weaknesses and strengths lie. Hence, teachers should “write at least a brief comment on their work where we mention task achievement” (Harmer, 2007a, p. 50). These comments are motivating for the students if they are positive, i.e., the students will revise again their work and try harder in future. In some cases, the overuse of red ink will frustrate students. As it is pointed by Harmer (2007a) that “most students find it very disporting if they get
a piece of written work back and it is covered in red ink, underlining, and crossing-out” (p. 84). This means that the teacher’s over-correction is a problem that hinders student’s writing. Even if some pieces of writing are completely full of mistakes, over correction can have a very demotivating effect. Thus, the teacher has to achieve and make a sort of balance between being accurate and truthful and treating students sensitively and sympathetically.

Accordingly, to avoid all these troubles, Harmer (2007b) suggested an appropriate and useful ways of correcting students’ work, which he called “selective correction”. In other words, the teachers do not have to correct everything, i.e., they should tell their students that they are going to only correct, for example, mistakes of punctuation, tenses, spelling, paragraph organization, etc. This way can guide students to concentrate on that particular aspect of writing, and it cuts down on the correction; all this depends on the teacher himself. Also, the other way is the use of written symbols (see Appendix 08) in order to avoid an overabundance of red ink. This will encourage students to think about the mistakes to correct it themselves (pp. 110-111).

In fact, our third year students write to get good marks in the exams and not for the sake of writing itself. For them writing is useful only if it brings good marks. However, it is worth mentioning that in addition to giving marks, teachers should write comments at the end of a piece of writing which will reinforce them to work hard to reach a certain writing level. When writing comments, teachers should use comments which praise, motivate, and encourage the students.
Otherwise, students will despise writing because of the frustration they feel when they see only negative marks. The question that must be asked then is “does the teacher able to write comments, even short ones, to the all his/her students? In this case, with out-numbered classes, we believe that the teacher cannot do the job perfectly either in teaching the writing skill or evaluating it. As it is maintained by Harmer (2006b, p. 84) that “correcting is important, but it can be time consuming and frustrating . . . correction is worth less if students just put their corrected writing away and never look at it again.” That is, teachers should be aware that their students understand their problems committed in writing and then rewrite their pieces of writing again correctly since it is the main aim of that correction. He goes on to claim that:

In big classes, it is difficult for the teacher to make contact with the students at the back and it is difficult for the students to ask for and receive immediate attention . . . but despite this there are things which teachers can do such as the use of worksheets and the use of pair work and group work.

(Harmer, 2006b, p.128)

Black and William (1998, as cited in Mc Arthur, et al., 2008, p. 6) argued strongly that teachers need to give feedback that gives each student a specific guidance on strengths and weaknesses. The implication for teachers of writing is that they must use feedback along side challenging goals. In other words, receiving no feedback is a frustrating experience for learners preparing a final exam.
Thus, students need to know how effective their writing is as they long for improvement. There is no reason, then to expect corrections only from the teachers; why not to expect it from other classmates? And the insights they provide can often be very valuable. To be frank, our learners are not mature enough to accept corrections from their peers. They are just looking at teachers who are troubled with crowded classes to whom offer them the right feedback.

II.5 Teachers’ Responses to Students’ Writing Productions

As we have said previously, teachers’ reaction to students’ writing productions can be done by correcting and evaluating issues of grammar and lexis rather than issues of text design and content. All this can be done when correcting exams’ papers or student’s assignments, as homework; even our students are accustomed with this type of feedback. In this respect, Harmer (2007b, p.112) claimed that “many students value this kind of correction extremely highly and feel uncomfortable when other kinds of feedbacks are offered”. However, this type of reaction is done only during exams; it is not sufficient to enhance and improve students’ level in the writing skill. Therefore, the question which deserves to be asked is the following, what about the rest of the year since exams are just for specific time?

Therefore, to remedy students’ poor achievement in writing, it is preferable for teachers to react by responding to written work as guiders, facilitators, or assistants than evaluators or judges. When responding to students’ work, it means that the teachers react, to the content and the way the piece of writing is
constructed, supportively by giving suggestions, asking questions, etc. and not grading the work or judging it as a finished product. Moreover, the teacher tell the students how well they are going so far; by making comments concerning the correct use of language and suggesting other ways to improve writing. In this respect, Raimes (1994) suggested that “responding to student’s writing is very much a part of the process of teaching writing” (p.139).

Responding to students’ work is not that easy task, i.e., the teacher should know and practice the different ways that are used. Accordingly, Harmer (2007b) suggested many ways to do this task, initiating on responding to “work-in-progress”. It means that when students are engaged in writing, teachers should visit and speak to students about their writing by asking many questions such as “what a certain sentence means?”, or “why they have started in this particular way?”, or they give them some suggestions. What is important in work-in-progress, is that teachers have to think carefully about the way they give advice or suggestions, and remain as neutral as possible. By doing so, students will tremendously benefit from this individual attention from the teachers, but still teachers should approach this task with great sensitivity.

However, this way of responding does not work with all students. In other words, there are some students who do not appreciate a teacher’s intervention especially in writing. This means that, the teacher should be aware about these special cases and treat them positively. Also, responding to students’ work can be done by writing comments, after handing the draft to the teacher. In such
circumstances, the teacher should write comments that encourage, foster, and enthuse the students to carry on their writing.

Leki (1997, pp. 57-68) addressed the issue of how teachers should respond to students’ writings by first raising questions about the way writing is taught to second language learners. Are the goals for second language students’ primarily grammatical accuracy or global comprehensibility? Do teachers expect students to take risks in order to express themselves or develop a sense of style, or do they stress linguistic control?

How instructors define these goals will determine, to a great extent, how they respond to students’ writings. Another factor is the teacher’s varied roles as audience (reader), coach, and evaluator. Furthermore, teachers’ comments have depressingly little impact on students’ writings. It appears that what is most helpful is that the teachers’ comment on writing while it is in progress or during a sequence of assignments that are all related to an on-going project. Teachers often have difficulty when they attempt to respond to the content of students’ where giving impression that are appropriating the student’s text. Many teachers find it difficult to separate their roles as evaluator from that of coach. Leki (1997) concluded that although we have some ideas of what types of responses are helpful in improving students’ writings, more research needs to be done.

In short, reacting, correcting and responding to students’ writing productions are appropriate and effective ways which will minimize and encourage students to improve their writing. Also, feedback, whatever type is, is a useful tool in addition
to grading students’ works, but if it is positive one. All this is concerned the teacher who is, we believe, one potential source behind students’ poor writing.

After having investigated some important aspects that are linked to the teacher as a potential source behind students’ poor performances in writing; it is safe to say that our teachers should be aware about all these aspects by applying them adequately. Concerning the teaching approaches and techniques, teacher should be selective when teaching the writing skill, i.e., choose what is positive from each approach and technique and reject what is negative, this selection is called “eclecticism”, taking into consideration the students’ needs, levels, the working conditions, etc. As far as motivation is concerned, it is not bonded only to students; rather teachers can be also a potential source that demotivated the students. Hence, they must be extremely supportive by inciting the students to write confidently without any fear or hesitation. Moreover, giving feedback-comments can be an effective tool to help improve students’ levels of writing. It is provided in different types (reacting, correcting; and responding.
CHAPTER THREE
LEARNER AS A POTENTIAL SOURCE OF WRITING
DIFFICULTIES

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The ability to write well is not a naturally acquired skill; it is usually learned. It must be practiced and learned through experience. This means that, taking time over writing and doing a lot of reading are absolutely essential part of writing. Learners fail to appreciate writing as a skill, i.e., how to be a skilful writer or how to write a correct paragraph/essay. They write the way they speak. Thus, learners really faced many problems in expressing themselves systematically and logically, either in the mother tongue or foreign language. Accordingly, this chapter is completely devoted to the factors that hinder the learner to write correctly, including lack of motivation, lack of reading, and the influence of the first language on writing.

III.1 Lack of Motivation to Write

It is accepted in most fields of learning that motivation is essential to success and achievement. Accordingly, Harmer (2006a) stressed this point and claimed that:

People involved in language teaching often say that students who really want to learn will succeed whatever circumstances in which they study. They succeed despite using methods which experts consider unsatisfactory. In the phase of such a phenomenon, it seems reasonable to suggest that the motivation that students bring to class is the biggest simple factor affecting their success”. (Harmer, 2006a, p. 3)

This means clearly that motivation is strongly related to achievement, and learners’ motivation makes the mission easier and more pleasant for both teachers and learners.
In our case, motivation makes writing pleasant and enjoyable. Byrne (1991) argues that writing difficulties are linked to three categories of problems: Psychological, linguistic, and cognitive problems. The interest in the psychological conceptualization of motivation to write has developed recently; it is started officially at the end of the 1970s, According to Boscolo and Hidi (2008, p. 7), “there are two questions that language skill teachers frequently pose to writing. First, why are students so often not motivated to write? Second, how can their motivation to write be increased?”

Harmer (2006a, pp. 32-45) there are many hidden forces which demotivate them to achieve certain writing level. Fear of failure which means the fear of not achieving our goals or value in some context specifically in the context of competence or efficacy. It is also closely related to the fear of rejection. The source of this fear of failure among the majority of our students is that they are afraid of making mistakes. They feel weak and never recover the state of protections, so they become haunted by failure. Consequently, they are paralyzed and don't attempt their chances for adventure. Learners do write because they see their friends write or may be they are under the influence of their teachers. But when they write, they are prompted by uncertainty; they feel doubtful about what they write. Moreover, some students avoid showing their writing; they intentionally hide their weaknesses and often do not finish on purpose because they are utterly pessimistic and feel a beforehand failure. The idea of failure should not be let to creep in the learners’ consciousness, yet we cannot get-rid of it.
That is, the main role of a teacher is to enhance, to encourage the students to write by making writing stimulating and enjoyable as it is reported by Dornyei (2005) who claims that "It is one thing to initially whet the student's appetite with appropriate motivational techniques" (p. 80). In other words, the teacher should be selective in choosing or exposing the students to attractive topics and determines the objective of writing such topics. Moreover, students feel relaxed when expressing their thought, ideas, etc., in writing; however, they find great difficulties in writing in English (Students’ Preliminary Questionnaire, see Appendix 4). They need to feel relaxed; according to Byrne (1991), "some learners feel secure if they are allowed to write . . . for such students, writing is likely to be an aid to retention, if only because they feel more at ease and relaxed"(p. 10).

Furthermore, anxiety can cause chronic worry and negative thoughts that distract students from doing their best. However; this feeling can also result in a number of additional negative consequences. For example, when anxiety is directed inward, it causes self-doubt and hesitation that keeps students writing with less confidence and effectively. Harmer (2006a, p. 55) considered writing anxieties very dangerous in the sense that it can result in a negative attitude towards writing. He goes on to discuss the causes of students’ fear of writing, in a detailed way. First, he mentioned lack of practice even in the mother tongue. Second, having nothing to say can also be an obstacle to students. Finally, some people are simply not interested in the writing activity. He claimed that teachers should develop self-confidence in their students through building the “writing habit”
In short, students regard writing as a risky adventure whose results can be anticipated. Learners’ phobia grows from the fear of being corrected; they fall into the trap of pleasing the teachers, satisfying the mates and the self and confronting the fear to learn and improve their writing level and ameliorate their low achievements Boscolo and Hidi (2008, p.9). In addition to this factor, students suffer from another important cause that hinders their abilities to achieve satisfaction. This is discussed in the next section.

III.2 Lack of Reading

As mentioned in chapter one, reading is a useful tool to improve students writing for it is the study of what is written. Some reports by Krachen (1984, as cited in Harmer 2006b, p. 224) compared classes that did more reading than writing allowing the conclusion that the reading group showed more progress than the writing ones in the writing test. That is, even if the two skills are separated, for reading is a passive activity while writing is a productive one, they are nonetheless complementary and can be closely developed. Byrne (1991) argued “reading, of course, can be the goal in itself and in any case is likely to be a more important one than writing, but the two Skills can and should be developed in close collaboration”. (p.22)

In this respect, many surveys are done to confirm the existence of the relationship between reading and writing. The findings proved that really there exists a relationship between them. In the same vein, (Eisterhold, 1997, p. 88) stated “better writers tends to be better readers, better writers read more than poorer writers, and finally better readers tend to produce more syntactically nature
writing than poorer reader”. This means that, the question in second or foreign 
language learning concerns the directionality of the skills transfer. The most 
obvious direction is from reading to writing, although some studies (Kroll, 1997; 
Sadek, 2007; etc; how that writing activities can be useful for improving reading 
comprehension and retention of information, in particular. In this directional 
model, skills acquired in one modality can be transferred to the other. It appears, 
though, that this transfer is not automatic, but comes only as a result of direct 
instruction. Another hypothesis maintains that the link between reading and 
writing is “no directional “and results from a single underlying proficiency: The 
cognitive process of constructing meaning. The bidirectional hypothesis claims 
that reading and writing are interactive, but also independent. Each of these models 
indicates a different relationship between the development of reading and writing 
skills, and invites different classroom approaches to the teaching of reading and 
writing. This issue is further complicated when we consider the second language 
learner who is already literate in a first language. Evidence suggests that after a 
certain threshold of language proficiency has been attained, first language literacy 
may have a positive effect on the development of second language skills. However, 
research also indicates that this transfer of skills is not automatic. Teachers can 
help their students use their first language skills in learning a second or a foreign 
language by making clear the interrelationship between reading and writing 

Furthermore, reading in the classroom is understood as the appropriate input 
for the acquisition of writing skills for it is generally assumed that reading passages
will some how function as primary models for which writing can be learned or at least inferred. Accordingly, “it is reading that gives the writer the feel for the look and texture of reader based prose” (Kroll, 1997, p. 88). That is why Raimes (1994) emphasized the use of reading technique when teaching writing to the students because "readings can do far more in the teachings of writing than simply provide subject matter for discussion and for comprehension topics" (p.60). This means that, when the students read, they engage actively with the new language and culture, in our case it is English which they have little occasion to speak or hear spoken face to face. She goes on to claim that “the more our students read, the more they become familiar with the vocabulary, idiom, sentence patterns, organizational flow, and cultural assumptions of native speakers of the language” (Raimes, 1994, p. 66). In other words, reading is a pre-condition for writing because it plays an important role in its development. One can not improve writing if he does not read frequently.

In any case the two skills go hand-in-hand, and one can not function without manipulating the second. We often read to get the information we need to include in our writing. However, this ideal way to improve students writing is totally neglected among our third year students. All of them agreed that lack reading is the main factor behind their poor performance and achievements in writing.

### III.3 Influence of First Language on Writing in English

In addition to the lack of both reading and interest in writing, students face another obstacle that hinders their abilities to write correctly. As it is reported in their preliminary questionnaire (see Appendix 03), the majority of them claim that
when composing (writing), they think in Arabic. This problem is the main concern of many researchers such as Harmer, (2006b); Kroll, (1997); Sadek (2007); Stark, (2005); etc. Generally, foreign language teachers emphasise the need for EFL writers to think and write as far as possible in English. Friedlander (1997) reported, “writers do any of their work in their first language” (p.109). It means that this way of writing will inhibit acquisition of English due to transfer of structures and vocabulary from first language in an incorrect way.

However, Friedlander’s (1997) study indicated that "writers will transfer writing abilities and strategies, whether good or deficient, from their first language to their second or third language” (Friedlander, 1997, p. 109). Regarding the writing of first, second, or third language, Edelsky (1982, as cited in Fiedlander, 1997, p.109) indicated that “writing knowledge transfers across languages“. This means, students writers use their strategies and knowledge acquired by their L1 to aid and help their L2 or FL writing.

Also, Jones and Tetroe (1987, as cited in Friedlander, 1997, p. 111) claimed that “writers transferred both good and weak writing Skills from their first language to English“. They added “weaker writers failure to use writing strategies in English was based on their failure to use these strategies in their first language“(p. 110). In other words, students writers who have never acquired strategies in their first language could not transfer them to their second or third language.

In contrast, many other studies indicate that, it is not necessary to be good writers in L1 to be so in L2, or third language writing. Carson, Carrell, Silberstein,
Kroll, & Kuehan, (1990) concluded that “the acquisition of L2 literacy skills by adults already literate in their first language is a complex phenomenon involving multiple variables“ (p. 110). Another opposite view is held by Blanchard and Root (2004) who argue that:

It is like driving a car, if you have ever driven in another country, you know that some of the rules of the road may be different. Just as the rules of driving differ from country to another, the conventions of writing may change from language to another. (p. 1)

This means that writing conventions differ from one language to another. In any way, not any person is a naturally gifted writer. Writing is a skill that can be learned, practiced, and mastered. Writing remains the most difficult skill to be mastered even for native speakers. According to the findings of students’ preliminary questionnaire (see Appendix 03) reveal that they feel relaxed when writing as it is reported by Byrne (1991, p. 10) “Some learners feel secure if they are allowed to write. For such students, writing is likely to be an aid to retention, if only because they feel more at ease and relaxed”.

However, they claim that writing is the most difficult to master. This fact is supported by Numan (1989) who pointed out that “writing is an extremely complex, cognitive activity for all which the writer is required to demonstrate control of a number of variables simultaneously”. Also Brooks and Grundy (2009) investigated this issue claiming that "It must be worth asking precisely what is difficult about writing and, especially, about writing in a second language” (p.10).
Furthermore, in terms of complexity and difficulty many surveys proved that language production is difficult. “There are a number of reasons why students find language production difficult” (Harmer, 2006a, p. 251). Writing and learning to write has always been one of the most complex language skills. Nunan (1989) agreed that "it is easier to learn to speak than to write no matter if it is a first or second language” (p.12).

Grabe and Kaplan (1996, p. 87) said that "probably half of the world’s population does not know how to write adequately and effectively." Concerning its difficulty as a productive skill, Tribble (1997, p.65) claimed that “writing is a difficult skill to acquire”. This complexity resides in the stages of the process we go through when writing, the lack of knowledge in the subject matter, etc. Moreover, it can be related also to psychological, linguistic, and cognitive factors; this applies to writing L1, L2, and FL.

Bell and Burnaby (1984, as cited in Nunan 1989, p. 23) had a similar point to Tribble (1997). They pointed out that:

Writing is a very complex cognitive activity in which writers must show control over content, format, sentence, structure, vocabulary, punctuation, spelling and letter formation, i.e., control at the sentence level. Besides, writers must be able to structure and integrate information cohesively and coherently within paragraphs and texts. (Bell & Burnaby, 1984, as cited in Nunan 1989, p. 23)
In sum, we can say that the factors behind students’ poor performances are endless. But we’ve limited ourselves to the major ones. Our students are not interested in reading which is the most appropriate input to improve their writing; they are not motivated to write, and even if they are engaged in writing, their purpose, in doing so, is just to get good marks. They also suffer from language transfer; they usually use their L₁ in thinking or writing in English. Now, we have an insight about these factors, but is it possible to remedy or at least to minimize them? Is it possible to improve students’ level of writing? If we can do so, how? The answer will be reached after analyzing and interpreting the research findings in the next chapters.
CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

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As mentioned in the Introduction, this study deals with some factors that hamper students' achievement in writing. Hence, the aim is to identify and analyze them. Then we will suggest ways that may help solve this problem and improve students' writing. This chapter, then, is devoted to explaining the method used to carry out this study; it defines the population, the sample, the tools used to collect data. Then, it describes the piloting stage, and finally, a detailed description of first and second year teachers’ questionnaires.

**IV.1 Research Design and Methodology**

**IV.1.1 Choice of a Research Method**

To fulfill our objective, we need to rely on a method. Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2005) defined methods as “range of approaches used in educational research to gather data which are to be used as a basis for inference and interpretation, for explanation and prediction.” (p. 44). In other words, methods are techniques and procedures used to gather data. Since our purpose is to analyze and analyzing presupposes identification, we opted for the descriptive method. Burns and Grove (2001, p. 248) stated that "descriptive design helps to identify problem in a current practice with a view to improve outcomes”.

We need a research strategy to identify, analyze and interpret the problem under study. Biggam (2008, p. 82) described a research strategy as the one "Where you describe how you intend implementing your own research study, i.e., the strategy that you intend adopting to complete your empirical study ". The purpose of descriptive research is to explore the real-life situation and to provide
information of the elements as they occur. Also, the descriptive method describes a current situation; so that, one develops appropriate guidelines for future use. In our case, the existing situation is third year university students of English. By using this method, we may develop future guidelines for helping solve or reduce the problem mentioned before.

IV.1.2 Population

Population is defined by Polit (2001, p. 233) as “The entire aggregation of cases that meet a specified set of criteria”. To obtain the necessary information regarding the problem of 3rd year students in the writing skill at the Department of English, Batna University, we have worked with the following:

IV.1.2.a Pre-questionnaire Population

The population of students for this study is 09 groups the equivalent of 500 third year students of English at Batna University. The population is extended also to 15 other third year teachers of Linguistics, American Civilization, American Literature, British Civilization, British Literature and Third World Literature for the reason that written expression problems from their students.

IV.1.2.b Questionnaire Population

The population of teachers for this study equals 15 teachers, all of them teach written expression first and second year.
IV.1.3 Sample

Polit (2001, p. 235) stated that:

Sampling involves selecting a group of people, events; behaviors or other elements with which to conduct a study. When elements are persons, they are known as subjects . . . selected from the delineated target population in a way that the individuals in the sample represent as nearly as possible.

IV.1.3.a Pre-questionnaire Sample

Under the normal conditions, it is neither possible nor desirable to study the whole population. For instance, dealing with 500 students of the same department needs a lot of financial means, energy, and much time. Thus, randomization is the appropriate strategy to be used to choose the sample. According to Brown (2001, p.72), "each individual in the population must have an equal chance of being selected “, which reduces the effect of bias and enhances objectivity. Hence, we will use a random sampling corresponding to \( \frac{1}{5} \)th of the population. In this respect, we’ll work with 100 students. Also, the sample is enlarged to include 15 third year teachers of Linguistics, American Civilization, American Literature, British Civilization, British Literature and Third World Literature for the reason that written expression problems from their students.

IV.1.3.b Questionnaire Sample

The sample of teachers for this study equals 15 teachers who teach written expression first and second year.
IV.1.4 Data Collection Procedure

To collect the necessary information for our research, a pilot study in the form of two preliminary questionnaires is initiated to know whether other teachers share some views about written expression problems, thus confirming the real existence of such a pedagogic handicap. Obviously, the second preliminary questionnaire is administered to the 100 students to confirm the existence of written expression problems. Besides, we have relied on the Centre Archive of the Department of English, Batna University-by observing and analyzing 100 (1/5 randomly) different copies belonging to third year students having marks oscillating 00.00 and 09.75 in the different modules with special look at paragraph and essay writing (see Appendix 04). Once the confirmation of the existing problem, we need a deep diagnosis of the reasons behind this. Another questionnaire then has been administered to written expression teachers (first and second year) for this purpose.

IV.1.4.1 Definition of Questionnaire

The questionnaire might be the only instrument that can serve as a means of collecting a considerable amount of data with a minimum of time and effort. It is not only easy to administer, but provides also a general view of the investigated problem which is difficult to obtain by other means of investigation. Questionnaire as pointed out by Anderson (1990, p. 207), “Allow the gathering of reliable and valid data, relatively, in a short time”. It is an instrument which includes a number of questions that require a complete answer or selecting one among the existing answers as it is reported by Brown (2001, p. 6) who claimed that “Questionnaires
are any written instruments that present respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they are to react either by writing out their answers or selecting from among existing answer”.

**IV.1.4.2 Advantages of Questionnaire**

Questionnaires have many advantages; the main attraction of questionnaires is their unprecedented efficiency. It requires less time less effort, energy, and financial resources. By administering a questionnaire to a group of people, one can collect a huge amount of information in less than an hour, and the personal investment required will be a fraction of what would have been needed for, say, interviewing the same number of people. Furthermore, if the questionnaire is well constructed, processing the data can also be fast and relatively straightforward, especially by using some modern computer software. These cost benefit considerations are very important.

Questionnaires are also very versatile, which means that they can be used successfully with a variety of people in a variety of situations targeting a variety of topics (Gillham, 2000, as cited in Dornyei, 2003, p. 9). Also, according to Wallace (2000, p. 13):

> [A] questionnaire can also save time. The greater the number of informants, the more economical of time it is to take . . .to interview 60 people for only ten minutes will take ten hours, and probably much more once travelling, etc, is taken into consideration. With such number, a questionnaire may be the only sensible choice.
Other advantages are summarized by Beiske (2003, p.16) in the following points:

- The majority of people are familiar with questionnaires, and know how to complete them.
- The respondents’ opinions are not influenced by the researcher’s point of views.
- The respondents can fill the questionnaire at their own place.
- Questionnaires are easy to analyze.

**IV.1.4.3 Limitations of Questionnaire**

The virtues of questionnaires might suggest that they are perfect research instruments, this is not quite so. Questionnaires have some serious limitations; we can summarize them as follow:

- Written questionnaires lack some helping features like gestures and other visual clues, and personal contact which can affect the respondents.
- Sometimes questionnaires are not completed by the person we want.
- Some respondents may not give questionnaire back (Beiske, 2003, p.17).

**IV.1.4.4 Questionnaire Design**

When designing the questionnaires, meticulous attention has to be paid to ensure that individual questions are relevant, appropriate, intelligible, precise, and unbiased. It is impossible even for experts to get it right the first time round. Thus, many drafts of our questionnaires have written before achieving the final version. They consist of close and open questions: The former is a restricted type which
includes questions or statements where the respondents should select one or more choices such as “Yes” or “No”. They are easy and quick to fill in; however, they usually take a longer time to devise than needed for open questions, which are easier to design, but difficult to analyze and anticipate the range of responses (Wallace, 2000, p.135).

### IV.1.4.5 Piloting

Concerning piloting, Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2005, p.260) Stated “a pilot has several functions, principally to increase the reliability, validity and practicability of the questionnaire”. Therefore, before administering the questionnaires, we have piloted them by following this check list:

- Were the instructions clear and easy to follow?
- Were the questions clear?
- Do our informants find any of the questions:
  1. Embarrassing?
  2. Irrelevant?
  3. Patronising?
  4. Irritating?
- How long does the questionnaire take to complete? (Wallace,2000, p.133)

The aim of piloting the questionnaire is that:

[Questionnaire] should be piloted to see whether they work as planned ;even if [we] are going to distribute only a small number of questionnaire , it might be worth [ pilot ] them out on one or two people beforehand. (Wallace, 2000, p. 132)
The students’ preliminary questionnaire was not piloted, because it was directly administered to them and the instructions were clearly explained. Students were also encouraged to answer for they were ensured that information contained in the questionnaire will remain anonymous. However, the two other teachers’ questionnaires (preliminary and ordinary) were piloted with 2 teachers and no change in the formulation happened. The resulted questionnaire will be described in detail in the following point:

IV.1.4.6 Description of Teachers’ Questionnaire

This questionnaire is a whole of 25 items divided into three sections.

Section One: Writing Skill (Q1 - Q14)

The first section is made up of 14 items; it aims at shedding light on the writing skill relying on the teachers’ experiences. This section seeks the prerequisites for writing (Q1), teachers’ opinions about students’ level of writing, i.e., is it satisfactory or not (Q2), and the assimilation of written expression during first year (Q3), especially in out-numbered classes (Q4). Then the other questions (5, 6, and 7) seek for understand what good writing is? Questions (8, 9, and 10) are designed to see which approach is used to teach writing? With respect to the stages of the one has been chosen. After that, our informants are asked about the allotted time to them (teaching/practicing writing). (Q11) is designed to see whether or not the teachers are satisfied with their students’ level of writing at second year level. It is followed by an explanation to the negative answer, if any, (Q12). Question (13) is designed to identify whether or not the teaching of written expression during two
academic years is sufficient; followed by the extension of this module to third or third and fourth years. Then, in (Q14), the respondents are asked about the teaching of writing before at third year level, followed by stating the reason(s) behind its omission from third year program.

**Section Two: Factors behind Students’ Poor Writing Productions (Q15-Q21)**

This section is designed to explore and determine the difficulties students encounter when writing in English by asking our informants whether or not their students find difficulties in writing in English (Q15). Then, questions (16, 17, and 18) are designed to identify the obstacles that hinder students to write correctly. After that, we designed questions (19 and 20) to see whether these obstacles are at the level of the sentence, the paragraph, or the essay, and whether or not teachers give assignments to the students. Finally, the teachers are about asked the problems they face when teaching the writing skill (Q21).

**Section Three: Teachers’ Evaluation of Writing Difficulties (Q22-Q25)**

This section is the most important one; it is devoted to see whether or not teachers attempt to overcome these writing difficulties (Q22). This question is followed by two others requiring two explanations: One for the positive answer (Q23), and the other for the negative answer (Q24). Finally, (Q25) is designed to give more freedom and space to our respondents where they can add any information or comments that best fits our study.
In short, this chapter has clarified the research design in terms of the means used, and the participants involved in our study, and then a detailed description of teachers’ questionnaire, the next chapter involves a deep analysis of teachers’ questionnaire to prepare a series of recommendations when justified.
CHAPTER FIVE
DATA ANALYSES AND INTERPRETATION

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This chapter deals with the analysis and interpretation of the teachers’ questionnaire. This latter includes three sections, each one of them collects information on a particular aspect. The first section entitled “Writing Skill“, aims at investigating teachers’ opinions on some practical aspects of this skill. Whereas, the second section entitled “Factors behind Students’ Poor Writing Productions”; seeks to identify and explore the difficulties students encounter when writing in English, i.e., the obstacles that hinder them to write correctly. Finally, section three is entirely devoted to a general evaluation of writing difficulties.

1. Analysis of Teachers’ Questionnaire

1.1 Section One: Writing Skill

1. What are the prerequisites for writing?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prerequisites</th>
<th>Teachers out of 15</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Motivation and Reading</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar</td>
<td>07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td>06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing skills</td>
<td>05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.1. Classification of Writing Prerequisites

Diagram 5.1. Classification of Writing Prerequisites
This item is meant to know the teachers’ opinions regarding the prerequisites that should be mastered by learners to write well. Moreover, our intention is to see if what is being done in practice matches with what was planned for in theory.

At first glance, 11 of the informants think motivation and reading to be the first two main requirements for writing. For them, motivation is essential for success and achievements. As most researchers found that “[Motivation] is one thing to initially whet the student’s appetite with appropriate motivational techniques” (Dornyei, 2005, p. 72). Thus, it is extremely necessary for students to be motivated in order to carry out their writing tasks and achieve a satisfactory level in writing in English.

As far as reading is concerned, the same category of teachers argued that reading is a necessary input for writing. And the two skills are strongly interconnected, i.e., reading is at the service of writing. That’s why, they claimed, our task is to encourage our students to read. They added that we should use reading as a technique to teach writing. This technique is devised by Raimes (1994) who stated that “reading can do far more in teaching of writing. . .” (p. 60). Also, it is reported by Fowler (2006, p. 2) that “good writing depends on extensive reading, not only previous reading of other works, but also frequent scans of your own piece, the one you’re working on”. He goes on to claim that “To write, you need first to read; writing is an offshoot of reading . . .” (p. 6).

Grammar appears in the second position. According to seven (07) teachers, students who can construct grammatically correct sentence can generate a correct
paragraph and essay. In this respect, Carroll (1990) claimed that “Students should know (1) how to properly construct a sentence ;( 2) subjects and verbs must agree in number…” (p. 1)

For (06) teachers, vocabulary is ranked as the third requirement. This category of teachers recommended strongly the following opinion “The more lexical items students have, the better they write” (Teachers’ Questionnaire, see Appendix 11).

Whereas 05 teachers assume that the writing skills as the prerequisite for writing. These sub-skills are: spelling, punctuation, capitalization, etc., this issue is confirmed by Carroll (1990) who goes on to claim that “Correct spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and language usage are required” (p.2).

In sum, our informants neglect the fact that writing prerequisites should be integrated to constitute a good piece of writing. That is why their responses varied which means that they lack a unified way to teach writing. All the aspects mentioned in Table 5.1 are demanded to produce an effective final version.

Q2. Do your learners achieve a satisfactory, level in writing with the syllabus of first and second year?

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>Subjects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>No</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.2. Students’ Achievement in Writing (First and Second Years)
Table 5.2. Students’ Achievement in Writing (First and Second Years)

The data in Table 5.2 show that all the respondents (100%) seem not satisfied with the syllabus of both levels as far as the writing skill is concerned. This reality means that the writing problems can be derived, in addition to the teacher and the learner, from the syllabus. But, we cannot ignore the fact that written expression teachers often rely on their experiences, by adding elements that fit students’ needs or omitting what can obstruct students’ performances, rather than applying the official syllabus as far as first and second years are concerned.

*Whatever your answer, please explain.*

This dissatisfaction, according to our informants, is due to the following reasons:

1. “Students need to be motivated by creating a healthy atmosphere and good teacher / student relationship”.

2. “It is partly because of deficiencies in the basics of English (lack of the previous prerequisites), and partly due to insufficient practice in writing and the number of students in each group”.

3. “Students are disinterested in reading; therefore, the product is weak”.
4. “Not much time allotted to practice writing”.

This conclusion displays that the writing skill extends the previous prerequisites (see Table 5.1, p. 93); it demands also other aspects to be integrated such as motivation, practice, time, small groups, etc.

**Q3. Do your learners easily assimilate the writing skill during their first year?**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Subjects</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>No</td>
<td>00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.3. Written Expression Assimilation (First Year)

![Diagram](image)

**Diagram 5.3. Written Expression Assimilation (First Year)**

All of the respondents (100%) declared that their students do not easily assimilate the writing skill during their first year written expression courses. This is due to the fact that writing skill is the most difficult and complex skill to be learned. “There are a number of reasons why students find language production [writing] difficult” (Harmer, 2007b, p. 251). Tribble (1997) also confirmed the fact that “writing is a difficult skill to acquire” (p. 65); the next question clarifies better the teachers’ opinions.
If “No”, please explain.

The teachers explain this fact by providing the following reasons:

“First year students are in a transition stage from secondary school to university. Hence enough time is needed to let them acquainted with the new situation”.

1. “Students come to the Department of English from different streams”.

2. “Lack of interest, concentration, and practice”.

3. “Lack of vocabulary which is so limited and poor”.

4. “Students come with the idea that writing is just applying grammar rules as it is reported by Leki (1997)”Their only sense of security comes from what they have learned about grammar” (p.34). It means that the key for good writing is mastering grammar rules”.

5. “There is no link and no clarity between first and second year syllabuses”.

We can draw the following conclusion; written expression assimilation is not the students’ task rather it is mainly the mission of the teachers to make it an interesting and enjoyable module by explaining the importance of writing in learning English

Q4. Do out-numbered classes affect the learners’ written performances?

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.4. Effects of Out-numbered Classes on Learners’ Written performances
Table 5.4. Effects of Out-numbered Classes on Learners’ Written Performances

All the respondents (100%) declare that out-numbered classes affect the learners’ written performances. In this respect, out-numbered classes are another factor that hinder student to write well. As it is said in our theoretical part (chapter two),”In big classes, it is difficult for the teacher to make contact with the student at the back and it is difficult for the student to ask for and receive immediate attention . . .” (Harmer, 2007a, p. 128).

-Whatever your answer, please explain how?

They argue that the working conditions are very important parameters that should be taken into consideration in the teaching/learning process. They go on to claim that a class of more than (50) learners is not a place where good teaching/learning process can occur. Teachers make, instead of teaching, great efforts and much energy to calm down the learners and behave correctly, i.e., all these efforts and energies are may be spent in vain. We daresay that this problem is mainly linked to the administration whose role to reduce the students’ group and prepare a good atmosphere where the teaching of writing will happen. Hence teachers’ tasks are to teach not think about solutions to this problem.
Q5. Good writing means :( you can tick more than one box).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>Subjects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Good Ideas</td>
<td>00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Specific Vocabulary</td>
<td>00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Spelling/ Punctuation</td>
<td>00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Clarity, coherence, and focus</td>
<td>00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. All of them</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Others</td>
<td>00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f + g</td>
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<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.5. Teachers’ Opinions about What is Good Writing

Diagram 5.5. Teachers’ Opinions about What is Good Writing

The majority of teachers (66.66%) opted equally for f 1 and g 2 (see Appendix 12). That is they admit that good writing means correct grammar, good ideas, specific vocabulary, spelling, punctuation, clarity, coherence, and focus. According to them, all these aspects integrated to constitute a good piece of writing. These aspects can not work separately; they must be integrated. However, the other teachers (33.33%) added, in addition to these aspects, that good writing means:
1. “Willingness to write”.
2. “At this level, third year, advanced vocabulary is required”.
3. “Good thinking”.
4. “Issues and ideas that are interesting and worthy developing”.

This is an indication that our informants are aware about the different meanings of writing, but it is important to know how they can exploit them to help the students improve their writing. Importantly, our informants do not provide us with the most essential aspect that really affects writing either positive/negative.

**Q6. Do you exploit reading techniques in teaching the writing skills?**

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<tbody>
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<td>No</td>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.6. Use of Reading Technique in Teaching the Writing Skill

**Diagram 5.6. Use of Reading Technique in Teaching the Writing Skill**

The findings, in Table 5.6, reveal that all the respondents (100%) affirmed the use of the reading techniques in teaching writing. The question here is that poses itself do our teachers aware about how and when they use it. Moreover, this
result contradicts with what has been written in students’ exams papers which are full of mistakes and repetition.

- If “Yes”, please explain why?

The teachers provided us with several persuasive arguments in terms of the process and reasons behind using it:

a. “A model is studied in close first, and then students are asked to produce something similar”.

b. Exposing learners to different styles and different registers through texts and studying the different rhetorical devices.

c. Reading helps identify learners’ mistakes.

d. Simply because language skills are complementary.

e. Reading provides students with opportunities to see different texts and different sentences structures.

Q7. Which approach do you use to teach writing?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>Subjects</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Product Approach</td>
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<tr>
<td>b. Process Approach</td>
<td>01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Both</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Others</td>
<td>00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.7. Approaches Used to Teach Writing
To teach writing the skill, various approaches are used: the process and the product approaches. Their use either separately or combined depends on the teaching conditions, situations and needs. Accordingly, the analysis of the results reveals that the majority of the respondents (86.66%) favor the use of both approaches. However, one teacher claims the use of the product approach since students are usually judged according to their final product in exams. This idea is supported by Furneaux (1999) who claimed that “writing is ultimately judged by content not process …” (p. 65).

The other teacher considers that the process approach to be useful when teaching writing. This reveals that our teachers are aware of the different approaches to teach writing. But the question remains posed regarding the conditions of their use when, how, and to whom they are used.
Q8. When your students compose, do you, as a teacher, strictly oblige them to comply with the stages of the approach you have chosen?

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<th>Subjects</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>No</td>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>15</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.8. Students’ Compliance to the Stages of the Chosen Approach

As shown in Table 5.8, all the respondents (100%) reported that they strictly oblige their students to respect the various stages of the chosen approach. These stages are very important; they allow students to get a successful end product. Tribbe (1994) claims that “learners who move on into composing immediately are likely to produce badly when writing” (p.55). However, these stages require much time which is a real problem.

Q9. If “yes”, do you think that the time allotted to them is enough?

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<th>Options</th>
<th>Subjects</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.9. Allotted Time to the Stages of the Chosen Approach
All of the teachers (100%) say that they have not enough time to do this task successfully. Regarding the data obtained in Table 5.9, teachers are satisfied with the time allotted to the stages of the approach you have chosen. But, how we can explain their answers in (Q10).

Q10. The time allocated to written expression is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Very Sufficient</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Sufficient</td>
<td>00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Insufficient</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.10. Allocated Time to Written Expression
It is clear that all the teachers (100%) select the negative answer. All of them believe that the time is not sufficient to practice writing in class.

Q11. Is second year students’ level of writing satisfactory?

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<tr>
<th>Options</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>No</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.11. Teachers’ Satisfaction of Students’ Levels of Writing

Diagram 5.11. Teachers’ Satisfaction of Students’ Levels of Writing

The answers, we collected, reveal that all of the informants (100%) are not satisfied with the second year students’ levels of writing. Here, we can explain this fact by claiming that the students are not well prepared in their first year written expression. Hence, if the start is wrong what comes after will be wrong.

Q12. If “No”, please explain why?

Reasons for their unsatisfaction are reported below:

1. “Lack of practice and motivation”.
2. “Students don’t apply what they have learnt”.
3. “When the first start is wrong all what comes after is wrong too”.
4. “The number of hours per week is not satisfactory to fulfill the objective of the program”.

5. “Students still don’t respect the different norms and writing techniques”.

6. “Because the program has been modified and the aim is not sufficient”.

7. “Students don’t read enough; don’t write well”.

This indicate that motivation is lacking; practice, enough time, the syllabus do not fit students’ needs in writing, and reading. Therefore, they cannot help to achieve a satisfactory level in writing.

Q13. Is teaching written expression during two academic years sufficient to train your students in the writing skill?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>Subjects</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>01</td>
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<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.12. Teaching Written Expression during Two Academic Years

Diagram 5.12. Teaching Written Expression during Two Academic Years

Almost all the respondents (93.33%) find it insufficient to teach written expression during two academic years; however, one teacher opted for the positive
answer “Yes”. It is true, when we compare this situation to what should normally be done (see Appendix10).

-If “No”, do you want to extend teaching writing to?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
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<tbody>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Third and Fourth Years</td>
<td>06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. No answer</td>
<td>01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.13. Extension of Teaching Written Expression to the Third year or Third and Fourth Year(s)

Diagram 5.13. Extension of Teaching Written Expression to the Third year or Third and Fourth Year(s)

The majority of the teachers (53.33%) want to extend the teaching of written expression to third year and the rest of our respondents (40%) suggest its extension to both third and fourth years. However, one teacher provides us with no answer. The data provided by our teachers indicate that extending this module is an urgent need especially with the existence of third year written expression program (see Appendix 11).
Q14. Is written expression taught in the third year level by the program?

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<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.14. Teaching Written Expression at Third Year Level by the Program

Diagram 5.14. Teaching Written Expression at Third Year Level by the Program

The above analysis reveals that almost teachers (66.66%) answered “Yes”. This means that they had taught along time in our department. However, those who answered “No” (33.33%) or No answer are new teachers. Even if they are permanent teachers, they have not experienced the teaching of writing to third year students.

- If “Yes”, why is it omitted from third year program?

For the teachers who answered “Yes”, they argue that the reasons behind its omission are the following:

1. “Lack of teachers”.

2. “Huge number of students”.

3. “Lack of classrooms”.

114
4. “Absence of a good administrative policy to make courses compatible with their timing”.

If we take these reasons into consideration, we daresay. Because in the second year, written expression is the same situation. That’s way we have suggested some useful implications.

Section Two: Factors behind Students' Poor Writing Productions

Q15. Do your students find difficulties when writing in English?

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<tr>
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<th>Subjects</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.15. Students’ Difficulties in Writing in English

Diagram 5.15. Students’ Difficulties in Writing in English

Indeed, 100% of the respondents declare the fact that their students find difficulties when writing in English. It is true when we checked their exam papers; be it in terms of content, and form. And this reality is closely matches what was done in the theoretical part (chapter one). Grabe and Kaplan (1996) argued that “probably half of world’s population does not know how to write adequately and
affectively “(p.87). This means that not only our students suffer from doing it correctly but may be all people even in their L1.

**Q16. These difficulties are due to:**

a. Teacher  

b. Syllabus  

c. Learner  

d. Others

<table>
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<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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</tr>
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<td>a+c+d</td>
<td>01</td>
</tr>
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<td>c+d</td>
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<tr>
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</table>

**Table 5.16. Reasons behind Students’ Poor Writing Productions**

We notice that teachers’ choices are integrative, combining two to four options. Moreover, there’s a frequent repetition of option (c), which represents “learner “, in each choice. Hence, the learner is classified in the first place; Then it comes (a) which represents “teacher” which is an about the importance of these two elements behind writing difficulties regardless to the other factors (“b” and “d”). It seems that these results match the theoretical part. The analysis of our
findings reveals the following statistics: The majority of the respondents (53.33%) claim that the reasons of students’ deficiency in writing are due to the teacher, the learner, and the syllabus. The other category of the teachers (20%) think that the problem to be related to the following reasons:

1. “Lack of serious training at the level of primary schooling”.
2. “Lack of interest and willingness to write in English”.
3. “Students don’t read enough (extensive reading”).

The 13.33% category link the writing difficulties to the learner himself; they added that “students’ difficulties in writing have their roots in their background education (middle and secondary schools), the home, and of course, incompetent teacher”. However, one teacher claims that these factors are mainly due to the “teacher” and the “learner”. Indeed, the two elements are the core of our investigation.

The last category 6.66% adds that besides the teacher and learner, “students are strongly related to their mother tongue which hinders the learning of the target language especially writing”. This means that L1 can be another factor that affects students’ performances in writing. It is true; this issue has been fully discussed in the theoretical part (chapter three). In this respect, Friedlander (1997) argued that “writers do any of their work in their first language “(p, 109). It means that this way of writing inhibit acquisition of English due to transfer of structures and vocabulary from L1 in an incorrect way. The two next questions (17-18) will clarify the difficulties that are mentioned in (Q16).
Q17. If the teacher is the source of students' poor writing, is it due to:

a. Lack of an appropriate approach to teach writing.
b. Lack of an appropriate technique to teach writing.
c. Lack of teacher’s adequate corrective feedback and reinforcement.
d. Lack of trained teachers in the writing skill.
e. Teacher's response to students’ written productions.
f. The teacher as a source of demotivation.
g. Others

<table>
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<td>01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d</td>
<td>01</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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</table>

Table 5.17. Teacher as a Source of Students’ Poor Writing Productions

According to the data displayed in Table 5.17, the teachers seldom justify with one aspect the writing difficulties. Hence, what is important in this analysis is
that, the majority of the respondents (40%) emphasis that the reasons behind this handicap can be related to the lack of following elements: The appropriate technique used to teach writing, teachers’ reaction (correction and response) to students’ productions, and finally the teacher’s motivation, i.e., motivated teacher can produce motivated learners (writers). All these results are clearly interpret what was done in theory (chapter two).

**Q18. If the learner is the source of the writing difficulties, is it related to?**

a. Lack of reading

b. Lack of background knowledge in the subject

c. Lack of motivation to write

d. Learners write without a purpose in mind

e. Influence of L₁ on writing on English

f. Others

<table>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Table 5.18. Learner as a Source of the Writing Difficulties**

**Diagram 5.18. Learner as a Source of the Writing Difficulties**
The results of Table 5.18 indicate that the majority of the informants (46.66%) agree with all the factors developed in Chapter three which are: reading, motivation, background knowledge, influence of L1. Other factors have also been added:

1. “Writing is a life-time project”.

2. “Most of the activities done in classroom lack the writing process (focus is on the oral aspect of language)”

3. “Motivation is the elementary aspect that hampers students from better writing”.

4. “Lack of guidance from the part of teacher”.

**Q19. Are these difficulties at the level of:**


<table>
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<tbody>
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</table>

**Table 5.19. Students’ Difficulties in the Structural Aspects of Language**
For the structural difficulties faced by the students, i.e., the sentence, the paragraph, and the essay, the majority of the teachers (66.66%) affirm that their students find obstacles at all levels mentioned above. This means that when the beginning is wrong what comes after will be wrong too. If the learner is not able to construct a correct sentence, this will negatively impact on what follows (paragraph/essay) for a paragraph is a combination of sentences, and an essay is a combination of a number of paragraphs. The same teachers add that students have problems with words spelling, word order, usage and so on.

20. Do you give assignments to your students?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>Subjects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.20. Assignments Frequency
Table 5.20 displays that all the teachers (100%) affirm that they give assignments to their students. Giving assignments frequently will help improve students’ levels of writing. But there are other obstacles that hinder the teaching of written expression as it is claimed in (Q21) below.

**Q21. What problems do you face in teaching writing skill?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>15 Teachers</th>
<th>Types of problems</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>05 Teachers out of 15</td>
<td>Time and practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04 Teachers out of 15</td>
<td>Out-numbered classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04 Teachers out of 15</td>
<td>Vocabulary and interest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02 Teachers out of 15</td>
<td>How to teach writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04 Teachers out of 15</td>
<td>Transition from first to second year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03 Teachers out of 15</td>
<td>Assessment of writing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.21. Teachers’ Problems in Teaching the Writing Skill
Through this question, we want to know if there are other problems that hamper the teachers of written expression besides to the known ones. Indeed, we have received a great number of responses and explanations. What is noticed is that all the respondents talk about the same problems? And all these problems equally affect the process of teaching and learning written expression.

As far as time and practice are concerned, 30.33% of the teachers think that it is insufficient for them to carry out the job successfully. They prove to be insufficient to practice the writing skill that is why all teachers (Questions 12-13) agreed extend the teaching of written expression to third and/or fourth year. Concerning out-numbered classes, it is the major problem that faces our teachers as an obstacle for achieving their goals as far as teaching writing is concerned. They also refer to the problem to devote time and effort equally to each learner.

Diagram 5.21. Teachers’ Problems in Teaching the Writing Skill
Moreover, our informants (26.66%) add vocabulary and interest as two real problems. Our learners’ repertoire (lexicon) is very poor and limited. Thus, in order not to give their copies empty, they feel obliged to translate what they think in “French” or “Arabic”. Lack of interest is another difficulty teachers face reporting that students write without any purpose in mind. Furthermore, 26.66% of the respondents claim that transition from first to second years is another obstacle stating the following “receiving new other students from different groups, who were taught by different teachers in first year, makes us unable to complete what they have started in first year”.

Another problem that hinders the teachers to do their job successfully is that the students don’t associate different writing situations suggested by the teachers for the simplest reason that the learners are familiarized with “spoon-feeding” learning and they don’t conceive the idea of research. Concerning the way of teaching writing, 13.33% of the informants declare that the way of teaching the writing skill is another problem. One teacher favor freedom in teaching writing since there is no single way of teaching writing. Teachers should be let free to make their own discussions and not stick only to the syllabus, or at least bring some modifications or update it. However, another teacher expresses a different opinion when claiming the lack of a common “manual” or “Course book” for teaching writing. Leaving teachers free to choose the method they like to teach may lead to inconveniences and sometimes to contradictions. This may be explained by the lack of trained teacher in teaching the writing skill.
Finally, regarding the assessment of writing, 20% of the teachers maintain the following: “Assessment of writing as a product or as a process”. Indeed, students are often judged by their final product in the different areas of writing (Literature, Linguistic, Civilization, etc.).

Section Three: Teachers’ Evaluation of Writing Difficulties

Q22. Is it possible to overcome these difficulties?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>Subjects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.22. Opportunities to Overcome Writing Difficulties

Diagram 5.22. Opportunities to Overcome Writing Difficulties

The data display that the majority of the teachers (93.33%), report that it is possible to overcome the difficulties behind students’ poor performances in writing; however, the remaining one, representing (6.66%), declares “No” which means that he does not face any problem. Of course, there is no problem without a solution. There should be collaboration between all the teachers, the students, and
the administration to find suitable remedies to reduce the problem of writing among third year students.

**Q23. If yes, explain how?**

The teachers, who answer “yes”, propose some useful solutions to reduce and minimize the problem which are summarized as follows:

1. “Reducing the number of students in each group”.
2. “Written expression should be taught by well-trained and qualified teachers”.
3. “Enough time should be devoted to written expression”.
4. “Teachers of written expression should adapt the appropriate approach and technique that are relevant to students’ needs and levels”.
5. “Adaptation of adequate technique in correcting students’ written products to foster good productions”.
6. “The problem of time can be solved by extending written expression to third year”.
7. “Good strategies, concerning the teaching of the writing skill have to be devised”.
8. “Insisting on accuracy and the simplest ways of composing”.
9. “Focus should be on motivation as an essential aspect of the teaching and learning process (by selecting interesting topics)”.
10. “Collaborative teaching of written expression means that there should be collaboration between all the teachers (all modules). Because, in fact, teachers of
written expression are supposed to endow their students with the different conventions, techniques, and rules, that govern the writing skill, so that they may use them in answering questions that require paragraph/essay and related to their field of study (different modules). Hence, besides the role of the teacher of written expression, much of the work is supposed to be done by the other teachers also of (Civilization, Literature, Linguistics, Oral Expression, etc.)”. They argued that “this collaboration lies in the fact that all formal/informal tests can take place only by writing”. For instance, oral ability can not often be tested through the oral skill as it is impossible to do it with a large number of students and the time allotted.

11. Furthermore,” the teaching of the writing skill should be integrated with the other skills speaking/writing, listening/writing, and reading/writing”. In this respect, Byrne (1991, p. 69) claimed that “One effective way of providing this kind of context for writing is through the integration of all four skills, so that the use one leads naturally to the use of another”.

12. “Unifying program of written expression as well as grammar at both levels first and second year, i.e., common and unified program leads to common objectives”.

Q24. If No, please explain

The one who answered “No” admitted that students write only to have good marks during exams. They do not want to learn the writing skills in order to be good writers in the future. What matters for them is to pass examinations only. Moreover, teachers are not well trained to teach this complex skill.
Q25. Please, feel free to add any comments.

This question is meant to give the informants freedom to add any comments that may foster and serve our investigation. All the respondents (15) share the same ideas about the remedial solutions of the writing skill. Hence, they report that writing is very essential to be taught, and ignoring it means ignoring its contribution towards the development of the other skills.

They add that written expression is a very difficult process that needs more practice. Students should be made aware of the fact that writing is a combination of different elements such as mastery of grammar, rich vocabulary, mastery of writing techniques and conventions, and a high motivation to write. The complexity and difficulty of the skill require well-quantified and trained teachers. In other words, pre-service training of teachers is a very important step. Teachers need to have an adequate training before starting to teach because how can a teacher help his/ her students’ to write if he/she has poor writing? Furthermore, they admit that teachers should help their students to be strategic in their writing and autonomous. In addition, students should be strategic readers (different reading strategies) for good readers will be good writers. As it is reported by Eisterhold (1993, as cited in Sadek, 2007, p. 202):

There are correlations between reading achievement and writing ability:

Better writers tend to be better readers. There are correlations between writing quality and reading experience: Better writers read more than poorer writers. There are correlations between reading ability and measures of syntactic
complexity in writing: Better readers tend to produce more syntactically mature writing than poorer readers.

Finally, they conclude that universities need to adopt an efficient policy and apply severe measures that might lead to a true revival of interest in learning a foreign language and its skills, in our case the writing skill.

From the analysis and interpretation of the teachers’ questionnaire (see Appendix 11), the results reveal many facts about the writing skill as the most complex and difficult skill. Our conclusion is that all the teachers of written expression (first and second years) are not satisfied by their students’ levels of writing. They assume that willingness to write and reading are the appropriate inputs that foster their students to write correctly and assimilate written expression courses easily, especially first year. Both teachers and students face many difficulties in doing their tasks. All the teacher agree that good writing should include many aspects that are linked to form and content, which must be integrated to have a good piece of writing.

In teaching written expression, the majority of teachers used the two approaches: The product and the process ones which are associated by the use of the reading technique to support their teaching; however, the use of reading technique only does not foster students’ writing. That is why the teachers’ task is to motivate and encourage students to read outside the classroom. Since time allotted to written expression is not sufficient, all teacher favor the extension of
written expression teaching to the third year and even to the fourth year if it is possible because teaching writing should be systematic at university.

As concerns the difficulties that hamper the students to write correctly, the majority of the teachers assume that it is true that students face real problem when writing in English. The syllabus has also been reporting as another hindering element.

Concerning the learner, the finding reveal that the majority of the teachers assume that the effects of L1, lack of reading, motivation, and practice result in students’ poor performances in writing. They added that these difficulties occur at all discourse levels (the sentence, the paragraph, and the essay).

However, the findings indicate also that it is possible to remedy or at least minimize these difficulties in writing. This can happen only if the teachers adapt an appropriate approach and technique, good strategies, and most important by an extension of written expression teaching to the third year. Teaching written expression should be a collaborative task, i.e., involving teachers of all modules.
CHAPTER SIX
PEDAGOGICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

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Writing is the most complex and difficult skill; it attracts the interest of many researchers, educators, and teachers to find ways to teach it efficiently to overcome the difficulties that hamper students to write correctly. It is obvious that there is no miracle to eradicate the difficulties that our students encounter in writing. Thus, we would like to make suggestions that are derived from the analysis of teachers’ questionnaire, relevant to many important points that must be revisited once again.

VI.1 Increasing Motivation to Write

As we said previously, motivation is extremely necessary for students to do their writing tasks. Thus, teachers should find ways to develop it. We believe that, among the various ways, writing topics should be interesting in the sense that they should match students’ needs; levels, etc. Moreover, creating a good learning atmosphere can be of major benefit to the learners. Therefore, they would feel secured and comfortable when learning and be encouraged to write even if their English is not that good. Another thing is that talking to students about the importance of writing skill can help a lot to push them to try writing especially during that the first year.

Finally, writing requires special attention to motivational conditions. Four clusters of conditions must be used as keys to developing motivation: Nurturing functional beliefs about writing, fostering engagement using authentic writing tasks, providing supportive context for writing, and creating a positive emotional environment. Teachers' own conceptions of writing are seen as crucial
to establishing these conditions in most writing contexts (Bruning & Horn, 2000, p. 25).

VI.2 Extension of Written Expression to Third Year Level

As concerns the time allotted to written expression by the program, it proves to be insufficient to train students adequately. Therefore, the finding indicates that extending the teaching of writing to the third year is an urgent need; it will give more opportunities to practice writing. Since a written expression program for third year students and was taught before in our Department (see Appendix 10); we suggest its exploitation once again.

Moreover, all language skills can be integrated together, so written expression is an extended skill to oral expression, i.e., listening/writing and speaking/writing. The current dispatched time for written expression, in the Department of English -Batna University- is three hours per week either for first or second years. It means that students have no time to practice the writing skill especially in out-numbered classes.

However, when we checked “English Licence Program” (see Appendix 07), we have noticed that the real allotted time to written expression at first and second years is six hours per week to the first and three hours per week to the second respectively. Therefore, we suggest two or three hours per week to be allotted.

More importantly, about five hours are not taught if we comply with the program (see Appendix 11). Other requirements to produce skilful students
(writers) are needed such as the approach and the techniques used in teaching writing. This will be the next suggestion or way to improve students’ writing skill.

VI.3 Which Approach to Teach Writing at University Level?

The next suggestion addresses the approach used by our teachers, especially at university level. We believe that the useful approach to teach writing is the product approach for students are supposed to be already prepared and accustomed with the different stages of the writing process at middle and secondary levels. Thus, when coming to university, they are potentially ready to produce a good piece of writing.

However, considerations pertaining to the Algerian context prevent such an aim to happen. We suggest then that the use of the process approach be limited only for the first year level. Then during second and third year levels the product approach should be introduced and practiced among second and third year students.

One reason to suggest this is that students are usually judged by their final products either in exams or writing assignments. When correcting students’ works, teachers usually, ignore the various processes that are followed to reach the end product as the task is considered to be time consuming. Harmer (2006a) “there are times when process writing is simply not appropriate because classroom time is limited” (p.258). They correct only the two main elements of writing: “content” and “form “, and the two have no link with the process approach.
In this respect, Kraples (1993, as cited in Sadek, 2007, p. 234) argued that “a process oriented ignores certain types of important academic writing tasks particularly exams”. The process approach does not seem to be adapted to university level. We daresay that it is more suitable for novice students. The use of the product approach especially for second and third year students seems to be more appropriate as we already know the kind of the problem the students face. Particularly, the need to be trained in text typology for which the product approach is much adapted students need to be trained to write reports, exposition, arguments, letters, term projects, etc., academically speaking. Horowitz (1986, as cited in Sadek, 2007, p. 234) argued that “the process approach give false impression of how university writing will be evaluated outside of the language”.

VI.4 Effective Use of Feedback

After having observed students’ exams papers, we noticed a lacked of teachers’ “feedback” (see Appendix 05). Hence, Teachers of all levels and modules should be aware about the advantages of feedback and the ways it is used. It is true that the students are interested in marks and nothing else, but feedback-comments reinforce students to improve their writing level. Feedback-comments are meant to highlight weaknesses and/or strengths. According to Chaudron (1988, p. 144, as cited in Keskes, p. 105), “numerous other researchers have proposed different sets of categories of feedback types”.

Surely, students will profit from these remarks and comments addressed to them. Teachers should use a standard set of clear and direct comments and
questions to indicate place and type of feedback. In giving feedback to students, the teacher may use different kinds of correction techniques. Firstly, the teacher puts certain marks or symbols (see Appendix 09) on the free margin that can be understood clearly by the students. Secondly, the students are given oral explanation and asked to study their errors or given some information about the errors they make to facilitate connection.

However, in their preliminary questionnaire (see Appendix 01), teachers said that written feedback-comments to 50 students in each group is time consuming. That’s why, we believe, that out-numbered classes constitute another problem that handicap teachers to systematically react through written feedback-comments to all students.

VI.5 Effective Use of Selective Correction

Moreover, one way to improve students’ writing is the use of what Harmer (2007a) calls” selective correction”. This technique is a good learning tool used in order to avoid the overuse of red ink all over the students’ writing productions (see Appendix 09). ‘Selective Correction’, requires teachers not to focus on all the aspects of writing. If they employ a ‘selective approach’, students should know about it, i.e., teachers should tell them about the aspects to be focus upon in their correction such as punctuation, word order, spelling, tenses, etc. To be used effectively, teachers should discuss with their students to make them aware about it. Also they should use correction symbols, especially when dealing with paragraph and essay writing. It encourages students to think the mistake, to be able
to correct it by themselves (self-correction). A best frequently used symbols is suggested by (Harmer, 2007a, pp.110-111) (see Appendix 07).

**VI.6 Effective Use of Technology**

The use of technology such as Computer, Internet and Web Logs (blogs) can provide impetus to get students understand that there is an audience for them, and that their communication through words needs to be effective because their peers and the world viewers are reading. In the other hand, educators and teachers should recognize that the key to conscientious writing is that students need to be a more active part of the educational community. Communal web communities/blogs can remedy student disengagement with the writing skill.

As computers and internet connections have become more common in schools and classrooms, students have gained opportunities to use computers, not only as a medium with which they can practice skills, but also as a tool for doing research and preparing other classroom assignments. Using technology as a tool for learning can help students increase their capabilities to solve and better their writing skills through improving their higher-order thinking skills. Today, computers are used both to deliver discrete instruction and as tools for research and other school assignments. So, the use of Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) is an urgent need especially at university level. In this respect, Beatty (2003, as cited in Graham and Perin, 2007, p.36) offers the following definition: “...a definition of CALL that accommodates its changing nature is any process in which a learner uses a computer and, as a result, improves his or her language”.

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VI.7 Collaborative Teaching of the Writing Skill

Collaborative teaching of written expression means that there should be collaboration between all the teachers of all modules. Because, in fact, teachers of written expression are supposed to endow their students with the different conventions, techniques, and rules, that govern the writing skill, which are essential for paragraph/essay related to their fields of study. Hence, besides to the role of the teacher of written expression, teachers of Civilization, Literature, Linguistics, Oral Expression, etc., should feel concerned with writing problems. This collaboration is unavoidable as all tests are done by writing”.

We can summarize the basic requirements needed to help improve the writing skill in the following points, which must be taken into consideration by all teachers:

1. Teachers of written expression should be well trained.

2. Reducing the number of students in each group. Hence, with small groups, both teachers and learners will feel at ease when teaching/learning the writing skill.

3. The use of product-oriented approach and reading technique at university level when teaching writing.

4. Encouraging students to read. Reading is the appropriate input to improve writing inside/outside the classroom.

5. Enough time should be devoted to written expression for mastering the writing skill.
6. Extension of written expression to the third year level is an urgent need.

7. The use of technology such as Computer, Internet and Web Logs (blogs).

8. Building the writing habit, i.e., to help unwilling, uncomfortable, and unsecured students to write and get rid of all these negative feelings.

9. Collaborative teaching of writing is the task of all teachers at all levels and all modules not restricted only to the teacher of written expression.
GENERAL CONCLUSION

Undoubtedly, the most important invention in human history is writing. It provides a relatively permanent record of information, opinions, beliefs, feelings, arguments, explanations, theories, etc. Writing allows us to share our communication not only with our contemporaries, but also with future generations. It permits people from the near and far distant past to speak to us.

Why then, given all of the beauty and benefits of writing, do so many students face difficulties to reach a satisfactory level of writing? Students very often fail to appreciate writing as a skill; therefore, how to be a skilful writer or how to write a correct sentence, paragraph, and essay? Students really face many problems in expressing themselves systematically and logically either in their mother tongue, second language, or foreign language.

In this respect, writing well is a process that must be learned and practiced. This means, taking time over writing, doing a lot of readings, practicing it... are absolutely essential parts of writing. This latter is a complex skill and entails a series of difficulties. Learning to write accurately is something our students, in different academic settings, never manage. They find it very difficult to master and; therefore, fail to produce acceptable texts: paragraphs and essays. After two academic years of training, students are expected, when reaching third and even fourth year at university, to have a good writing level which is unfortunately not the case. We believe that there is not a miraculous panacea to overcome this. However, we can not sit back, relax and wait for top-bottom decisions. It is high
time for classroom teachers to launch initiatives to raise awareness about the problems they face and challenge to answer these questions. This will help not only learners, but also to teachers to call for their potentialities and try to better their teaching and learning environment to develop the skill of writing. Therefore, this study has investigated the causes to these poor results that hamper our students' performances in writing as well as two other which are essential factors: the teacher and the learner potential source of writing problems.

As far as the teacher is concerned, the results show that the majority of the teachers associate these difficulties to the lack of an appropriate approach and technique to teach writing, lack of an adequate teachers’ reaction (correction and response) to students productions, and last, teachers’ low motivation create low motivated learners. Concerning the learner, the findings revealed that the majority of the teachers assume that the effects of L1, lack of reading, motivation, and practice result in students’ poor performances in writing. They added that these difficulties occur at all levels (the sentence, the paragraph, and the essay).

However, the findings indicate that it is possible to remedy or at least minimize these difficulties in writing. This can happen only if the teachers adapt appropriate approach and technique, good strategies, and the most important things are the extension of written expression to third year, and the teaching of written expression should be a collaborative task, i.e., it is not the task only of the teacher of written expression, but of all the teachers of all modules. Accordingly, to improve the situation, we have already suggested on pages 123-129 some useful
pedagogical implications that will serve both teachers and learners in the future. These suggestions should be taken into consideration and not followed blindly.

Finally, we believe this work to be equally beneficial to teachers of all modules and more specifically written expression to improve their ways in teaching and learning writing skill. We hope also that it will pave new ways for investigating other aspects related writing problems.
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APPENDIX 01

Teachers’ Preliminary Questionnaire

Dear colleague:

My magister dissertation deals with some factors that hinder students' achievement in writing. Hence, the aim is to identify and analyze them. Then we will suggest ways that may help us solve this problem and improve students' writing. As a first step, we opted for a preliminary questionnaire as a part of a research work directed towards detecting some factors behind students' poor writing productions. We aim at getting a close view about the main heading points that will guide us to the right direction. Answering this preliminary questionnaire would be of great help.

Please tick (✓) the corresponding box or give a complete answer when needed.

Thank you for cooperation

Miss GHODBANE Nacira  
Department of English  
Faculty of Letters and Social Sciences  
University of Sétif- Ferhat Abbas
1: Indicate which of the following four skills is the most difficult?
   a-Listening ☐           b-Speaking ☐
   c-Reading ☐            d-Writing ☐

2: Which of the following skills your students prefer to use?
   a. Speaking ☐
   b. Writing ☐

3: Do writing and reading skills converge?
   a. Yes ☐
   b. No ☐
   -If Yes, in what ways?

4: Is the writing level of third year students:
   a.V. good ☐           b.Good ☐
   c.Average ☐           d.Bad ☐

5: Do your students find difficulties when composing?
   a. Yes ☐
   b. No ☐

6: If “Yes”, are these difficulties due to:
   a. Teacher ☐
   a. Learner ☐
   b. Syllabus ☐
   c. Lack of reading ☐
   d. Lack of background knowledge in the subject ☐
   e. Lack of practice/time ☐
   f. Others, please specify .................................................................

7: Are these difficulties at the level of:
   a. Sentence ☐
   b. Paragraph ☐
   c. Essay ☐
   d. Others, please specify .................................................................

8: Do you encourage your students to write at home?
   a. Yes ☐
   b. No ☐
-If “Yes “, do they write about?
  a. Linguistic matters ☐
  b. literary topics ☐
  c. Civilization subjects ☐
  d. Everyday activities ☐
  e. Their diaries ☐
  f. Other topics...................................................................................................................

9: When assessing your students’ performances in writing your focus is:
  a. The products-oriented approach ☐
  b. The process-oriented approach ☐

a-If it is the product-oriented, which of the following aspects requires more attention.
  a. Content ☐
  b. Form ☐

10: In your opinion, what is the role of the teacher’s corrective feedback and reinforcement?
..........................................................................................................................................................

11: What correction techniques are likely improve your students level writing of?
  a. Over-correction ☐
  b. Selective correction ☐

Why?..........................................................................................................................................................

12: Do you write any comments on your students’ exam papers?
  a. Yes ☐
  b. No ☐

-If « Yes », why ?
..........................................................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................................................

13: As a teacher, how can you help your students improve their writing skill?
..........................................................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................................................

14: Please, feel free to add any comments.
..........................................................................................................................................................
..........................................................................................................................................................

Thank you for cooperation
APPENDIX 02
Contents of First Year Written Expression Program

First Year Level

Generating a paragraph.

a) Revision of grammar; tenses, mood, simple, complex and compound sentences.

b) Concentration on production of correct English sentences.

c) Use of tenses and punctuation in the construction of clauses.

d) Presentation of work (margin, indentation, etc…).

e) Paragraph writing (organizing a paragraph), plan and device.
APPENDIX 03

Contents of Written Expression Program

Second Year Level

- Developing (planning and organising) an essay. Writing techniques.
- How to write a paper
- Polishing up style.
- Getting rid of redundancies, faux amis
- Abolishing wordiness.
- Revision of perpetual weaknesses.
- Stress the avoidance of slogans “clichés”
- Emphasize Personal thinking.
- Term project: students will produce an essay on a topic
- That interests them personally
Dear Student,

This dissertation deals with some factors that hinder students' achievement in writing. Hence, the aim is to identify and analyze them. Then we will suggest ways that may help us solve this problem and improve students' writing. As a first step, we opted for a preliminary questionnaire as a part of a research work directed towards detecting some demands behind students' poor writing productions. We aim at getting a close view about the main heading points that will guide us to the right direction. Answering this preliminary questionnaire would be of great help.

Please tick (❍) the corresponding box or give a complete answer.

Thank you for cooperation.

Miss GHODBANE Nacira
Department of English
Faculty of Letters and Social Sciences
University of Sétif- Ferhat Abbas-
1: How would you classify the following four skills in terms of importance?
   a-Listening  b-Speaking  c-Reading  d-Writing

2: Indicate which of the following four skills is the most difficult one?
   a-Listening  b-Speaking  c-Reading  d-Writing

3: Which of the following skills you prefer to use?
   a-Speaking  b-Writing

4: Do you feel relaxed when expressing your ideas and thoughts in writing?
   a. Yes  b. No

5: How often do you practise writing?
   a. Everyday  b. Sometimes  c. Not at all

6: Do you find difficulties when writing in English?
   a. Yes
   b. No

7: If “yes, are those difficulties due to your inadequate mastery of:
   a. Vocabulary  b. Grammar  c. Style  d. Content  e. Coherence/ cohesion  f. Punctuation/ spelling g. Other, please specify

8: Where do you find difficulties when writing in English? At the level of:
   a. Sentence  b. Paragraph  c. Essay

9: Your weaknesses in writing are due to the
   a. Teachers  b. Learners
c. Lack of practice

d. Lack of motivation in writing

e. Lack of good approach to teaching writing

f. Lack of reading

g. Language transfer (Arabic/English) or (French/English)

- Please add any obstacles that hinder you from writing correctly.

10: Do you write outside the class?

a. Yes

b. No

a- If “yes”, what do you like to write?

b- If “No”, please explain why.

11: When reaching third year, how do you qualify your writing level?

a. Good

b. Average

c. Poor

d. Satisfactory

e. I do not know

9: In which of the following modules, paragraph/essay writing is difficult?

a. Linguistics

b. Literature

c. Civilization

d. Other, please specify

12: Is teaching written expression during two academic years sufficient to train you in the writing skill?

a. Yes

□
b. No

-If “No”, do you want to extend teaching writing to:

  a. Third Year  
  b. Third and Fourth Year  

APPENDIX 05

Sample of Students' Exams Papers

Academic year 2009/2010
University of Batna
Department of English

Full name
Mark:

Level: third year
All the groups.

Time: 1h30,

First Examination in British literature:

Discuss the following quotes on the light of what you have studied before.

1. "An hour, once it lodges in the queer element of the human spirit, may be stretched to fifty or hundred times its clock length; on the other hand, an hour may be accurately represented on the timepiece of the mind by one second. This extraordinary discrepancy between time on the clock and time in the mind is less known that it should be and deserves fuller investigation .... When man has reached the age of thirty ..... Time when he is thinking becomes inordinately long, time when he is doing becomes inordinately short ...." - Orlanda, 1928 Virginia Woolf.

Time, this small word they have a big meaning and important mean in our life but we are don't respect time because we don't know his important where is it the peoples who want to live a good life, take a good program, and get at the time their spirit. Thousands life completed them ..... The writer gave an examples the man feels! about his age like seconds and loved him in some seconds.

2. "...Art is the nearest thing to life; it is a mode of amplifying experience and extending our contact with our fellow men beyond the bounds of our personal lot. All the more sacred is the task of artist when he undertakes to paint the real life of people...." - George Eliot, The Natural History of German Life.

In our life there are many things and professions.
The normal life is just one way of life.

And I think, as the population grows, so will the responsible, according to the number of victims. I have not been alright; I have used the only vehicle I possess.

Do not try to make a politician of me, even in Ireland. I shall never think that.

My horror at the cruelty of governments grows greater; they are all responsible according to the number of victims. I have not been alright; I have used the only vehicle I possess.

We can do it, although we can do it. But this is not complacency.

You can't understand it, but that's where we come in.

The experience is often a lot more important to develop the knowledge what the majority of people don't understand.
FIRST EXAM IN AFRICAN LITERATURE

Choose only one topic of the following (DO NOT GO BEYOND THE SPACE PROVIDED)

1. Account for the detailed description and the length of the first part of the novel?

2. What is the use of folktales and songs in the first part of the novel?

Things Fall Apart is the most famous work of Chinua Achebe (a great writer from Nigeria). The novel takes place in the village of Umofia in Nigeria in 1900. It was published in 1958 just before the independence. Achebe divided his novel into parts, anything can notice that the first part is the longer. 

In fact, he tried to give us a general picture of the way of life in Africa, especially in Nigeria, before the coming of the white men, by showing the effects of losing one culture. He chose Umofia as the place and Okonkwo as the hero. He describes the way of living (marriage, death, feast ...); people at that time were farmers; they spent the time of their life (years = property). To succeed in agriculture, they must think about the Earth God, in the form of images. They believed in religion as a magic as a means of wealth and health, which made the right thoughts for them. For example, when the moon was full, and there were no false images of the nature, they danced, and when they quivered about to be fearless, they took the moon of peace when they beat his wife wife. Another customs was the wrestling match which is very important to know the strongest men in the clan, and every two was very lucky because brought to these matches he would fit or unfit.

Chinua Achebe was using intelligent when he wrote his novel, because we when you read it you can have a clear image about the life in Africa in that time (living in tribal society in families, or customs and culture, and they were farmers). We know that it is not because this love he wrote this novel to show his own wisdom.
First Examination in American Literature

Discuss ONE of the following quotations:

1/ "If you who own the things people must have could understand this, you might preserve yourself. If you could separate causes from results, you might survive. But the quality of owning freezes you for ever into "I" and cuts you off forever from the "We".

2/ "To California or any place—every one a drum major leading a parade of hurts, marching with our bitterness. And someday the armies of bitterness will all be going the same way. And they'll all walk together, and there'll be a dead terror from it."

During the 18th century, the people sociability was changing from a small-minded, narrow-minded society to a broader, more diverse and tolerant one. The element of life in America was very different.

The migration from Ohio to California, due to the module of the 19th century,

The people came to the land and system in search of freedom and opportunity. They faced many problems and challenges, but they persevered. The people of California were pioneers of the age of colonization and the era. In a place now a part of the United States of America, the people sociology changed when thinking about the living and the way because they were free from the bonds of the past to California. The major leading a parade of hurts, marching with our bitterness. And someday the armies of bitterness will all be going the same way. And they'll all walk together, and there'll be a dead terror from it.

The people society of California, like in Ohio, on any place, in any corner, building in complexity and the size and size of the knowledge and security, and the free is the length and power of life among them.
What is the difference between “linguistic competence and communicative competence”? Which of this two rules syntactic relate to? How?

Linguistic competence is one of the two distinctions of chemistry, performance competence, to chemistry, linguistic competence in the study of language grammatically correct, whereas Collings see that communicative competence in social product

Linguistic competence in chemistry view must be grammatically understood, it must contain subject properties, and very often in more than one of his distinguished (long - pad)

The difference based on that linguistic competence focuses on grammatical rules whereas the communicative performance competence on society language.
Dell Hymes observed that linguistic competence is a larger part from communicative competence and related to four main categories: Social linguistic, performance, strategic, and communicative.

1. Social linguistic: the fact that language produced by a society e.g. the child in his interactions.
2. Performance: the ability of using language and
3. Communicative: the relationship between the speaker and hearer.
4. Strategic: using language in daily life between a group of people.

In Chomsky approach, "linguistic competence" defined the grammar rules and syntax, morphology, phonetic and only to be understood.

Are subject remain prosperity in sentence? Correct grammar with meaning?
Communicative competence as vital, effective and includes linguistic competence as a branch.

E.g., some words come alone with meaning.

"Abolige, promise, and the communicative take effect the numbers of society without using anything such as, baby record, without even using words but could be understood. So the communicative language with people, must contain the ability of speaker to send a clear message to hearer.

* You have serious problems with English!
* Wordiness / Silly spelling and grammatical mistakes! Incorrect construction
* You copy incorrect notes!

You reached third year magically!!
before the american civil war, the U.S.A had been quiet a stable country with states under one rule. But at that time, we find the states divided into two parties or two groups. On the American's inhabitants showed into two manners of thinking.

The north and the south, everyone feels the inhabitants under the rule is different for the other. The north government for the the south government) he was call special statement and laws.

This issue led to the civil war in U.S.

but what the different governments appeared at that time and why. The native inhabitants in the U.S. didn't make good and selected government. To answer this question in the first stage, for 30 years, the other differences. Washington and different colonies. The main difference is using the slaves and exported them from Africa. the south government deals with slave exercising with in the food instead the slaves, this government called plantation. All
The south produced more products than the north didn't produce. Instead, the south exchanged between the two and the economy was not exchanging by area.

The north's major thing that used in industry, the manufacturer. But the south's major thing is agriculture.

The north, it's grown that based by slaves, but the north by the products exchanging.

So, the north own the rich men by the south.

Both north states are richer tapped from south.
Answers:

Toqueville wrote a book in which he says: “Yet all visitors quickly found that two Americas really existed: that of the north and that of the south.” He meant by this people who were moving from place to place looking for good conditions of life. On all sides, the visitors who wanted to America, when they heard about the good life there, soon found big differences between the North and the South. There were a strong North which, in some terms, was industrialized; it was the main centre of commerce and manufacturing. Also rich in raw materials, all of that made the North totally opposite to the poor South that was agricultural one; only poor people lived there. They were mostly slaves and farmers (poor once). They were living in bad conditions: no education, no sanitation, lack of work.)

The products of the South were transported to the North as they wanted it by the rich Northerners (who) trade rich owners of slaves from North, fought against abolishing slavery, the same as the Southern people; they voted against slavery, they wanted their freedom to build their own lives. The Northerners made many acts just to keep wealthy and slaves for them, that the Southerners had no representation in assemblies, they were also obliged to pay heavy taxes for the North. In the same time, North was growing in industry and commerce by making more aggressive laws and act that the Southerners could obey.
Things Fall Apart written by Chimamanda Achebe

The novel is concerned (talk about) certain people living in peace with simple life, ruled by some complicated family clans.

The first part in the novel described it's full of details, because, the narrator took close part in the first one since he narrate about the customs and traditions of these clan, he try to put it on the reader with a detailed picture by describing the big and smallest detailed about these category of people, and how did they create their own way to live together and have unified customs traditions and respecting their primary clans.

The narrator try also to get inside (involve a character) Okonkwo's own life.

The main characters in the story try describing the smallest
details his childhood, personality, his way of thinking, courage, his family, duties, his place in clan and the sudden sad events that happened with him. 

Some stories happened with other clans (neighborhood) may be more detailed than the ones...
APPENDIX 06

Different Forms of Writing (Harmer, 2007a, p.4)
### APPENDIX 07

**English License Program**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Year</th>
<th>Modules</th>
<th>Annual Charge</th>
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<td>Introduction to linguistics</td>
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<tr>
<td>American civilization</td>
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<td>British literature</td>
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### Third Year

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### Fourth Year

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<tr>
<td>Civilisation Seminar</td>
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<tr>
<td>Linguistics Seminar</td>
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<tr>
<td>Didactics</td>
<td>2h</td>
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<tr>
<td>Psycho pedagogy</td>
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<td>Training</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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APPENDIX 08

Students’ Questionnaire “Lack of Reading “

This questionnaire is part of a research work directed toward detecting some causes behind our students reading carrences. Your collaboration will be of great help. Please, tick the appropriate box.

Full name: ……………………………………………………………………………………

1/Give your streaming:
   a- Literacy  ○
   b- Scientific ○
   c- Technical ○

2/Your parental education is:
   a- High ○
   b- Average ○
   c- Low ○

3/Do you like reading books?
   a- Yes ○
   b- No ○

4/If attracted by a given book, are you going:
   a- To read it all ○
   b- Read just its summary ○
   c- Read just its first few pages and never finish it ○

5/In which areas of reading do you find difficulties?
   a- Yes ○
   b- No ○

6/Do your parents read at home?
   a- yes ○
   b- No ○

7/Do your parents encourage you to read?
   a- Yes ○
   b- No ○

8/Do your parents offer you books?
9/ If yes, is it?
   a- Often
   b- From time to time
   c- Rarely

10/ Do you have a library at home?
   a- Yes
   b- No

11/ In your childhood, have you ever been initiated to read books?
   a- Yes
   b- No

12/ If yes, by whom?
   a- Teacher at school
   b- Parents at home

13/ In the primary school classes, did you have reading session?
   a- Yes
   b- No

14/ If yes, did you enjoy it?
   a- Yes
   b- No

15/ How were these reading sessions?
   a- Interesting
   b- Boring

16/ Did you have a library primary school?
   a- Yes
   b- No

17/ How do you spend the majority of your free time?
   a- Watching television
   b- Listening to music
   c- Chatting or surfing on the net

18/ Do you prefer?
   a- reading a novel
   b- watching its cinematographic version

19/ Why?....................................................................................................................
20/ How often do you read books?
   a- Always
   b- From time to time
   c- Occasionally

21/ What is important reason for you to read?
   a- Pleasure
   b- To better your knowledge
   c- Scholar obligation

22/ When your teacher asks you to read a book?
   a- you read it all
   b- you read just its summary
   c- you read just the first pages

23/ How do you feel about getting a book as a present?
   a- Happy
   b- Prefer to have an other present
   c- indifferent
## APPENDIX 09

### Correction Symbols

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<tr>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Example error</th>
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<td>$S$</td>
<td>A spelling error</td>
<td>The answer is obvius.</td>
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<tr>
<td>$WO$</td>
<td>A mistake in word order</td>
<td>I like very much it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$G$</td>
<td>A grammar mistake</td>
<td>I am going to buy some furnitures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$T$</td>
<td>Wrong verb tense</td>
<td>I have seen him yesterday.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$C$</td>
<td>Concord mistake (e.g. subject and verb agreement)</td>
<td>People is angry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$&lt;$</td>
<td>Something has been left out.</td>
<td>He told $&lt;$ that he was sorry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$WW$</td>
<td>Wrong word</td>
<td>I am interested on jazz music.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>${}{}$</td>
<td>Something is not necessary.</td>
<td>He was not {too}strong enough</td>
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<tr>
<td>$?M$</td>
<td>The meaning is unclear.</td>
<td>That is a very excited photograph.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$P$</td>
<td>A punctuation mistake</td>
<td>Do you like London.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$F/ I$</td>
<td>Too formal or informal</td>
<td>Hi Mr Franklin, Thank you for your letter...</td>
</tr>
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**Correction Symbols (Harmer, 2007a, p.111)**
APPENDIX 10

Contents of Written Expression Program

Third Year Level

Methodology of research and an introduction to creative writing.

- Practice in writing essays on academic, scientific or topical subjects.
- Using both primary and secondary materials.
- Teach the use of quotations and foot notes.
- How to write a bibliography.
- Introduction to creative writing, particularly the short story. (This should complement the simultaneous fiction module in literature).
- Term project: students will produce a research article which will incorporate secondary as well as primary sources. For example: quoting from issues of newspapers, critics of Algerian novelists, etc, or they may write a short story of their own.
- Comparison of different writing styles.
- Styles of texts (journalism, reports, adverts, football reports, government publications, analysis of charts and statics)
- Letter writing (including business letters).
- Term project: each student analyses a text from newspapers, novels, essays, etc, from the stylistic point of view.
APPENDIX 11

Teachers’ Questionnaire

Dear Colleague:

This dissertation deals with some factors that hinder students' achievement in writing. Hence, the aim is to identify and analyze them. Then, we will suggest ways that may help solve this problem and improve students' writing. This questionnaire is administered to all teachers who teach first and second years written expression. Answering it would be of great help.

Please tick (☐) the corresponding box or give a complete answer.

Thank you for cooperation

Miss GHODBANE Nacira
Department of English
Faculty of Letters and Social Sciences
University of Sétif -Ferhat Abbas-
SECTION ONE: WRITING SKILL

1: What are the prerequisites for writing?
...........................................................................................................................................................
...........................................................................................................................................................

2: Do your learners achieve a satisfactory level in writing with the syllabus of first and second year?
   a. Yes □
   b. No □
-Whatever your answer, please explain.
...........................................................................................................................................................
...........................................................................................................................................................

3: Do your learners easily assimilate the writing skill during their first year?
   a. Yes □
   b. No □
   a. If “YES”, what do they enjoy to write?
...........................................................................................................................................................
...........................................................................................................................................................
   b. If “No”, please explain why?
...........................................................................................................................................................
...........................................................................................................................................................

4: Do out-numbered classes affect the learners’ written performances?
   a. Yes □
   b. No □
-Whatever your answer, please explain how.
...........................................................................................................................................................
...........................................................................................................................................................

5: Good writing means: (you can tick more than one box)
   a. Correct Grammar □
b. Good Ideas □
c. Specific Vocabulary □
d. Spelling/ Punctuation □
e. Clarity, coherence, and focus □
f. All of them □
g. Others, please specify ........................................................................................................

6: Do you exploit reading techniques in teaching the writing skills?
   a. Yes □
   b. No □
   - If “Yes”, please explain how ....................................................................................................

7: Which approach do you use to teach writing?
   a. The product approach □
   b. The process approach □
   c. Both □
   d. Others, please specify ........................................................................................................

8: When your students compose in class, do you, as a teacher, strictly oblige them to comply with the stages of the approach you have chosen?
   a. Yes □
   b. No □

9: If “yes”, do you think that the time allotted to them is enough?
   a. Yes □
   b. No □

10: The time allocated to written expression is:
   a. Very Sufficient □  b. Sufficient □  c. Insufficient □

11: Is second year students’ levels of writing satisfactory?
   a. Yes □
   b. No □

12: If “No”, please explain why.
13: Is teaching written expression during two academic years sufficient to train your students in the writing skill?
   a. Yes ☐
   b. No ☐

- If “No”, do you want to extend the teaching of writing to:
   a. Third Year ☐
   b. Third and Fourth Year ☐

14: Is written expression taught in third year by the program?
   a. Yes ☐
   b. No ☐

- If “Yes”, why is it omitted from third year program?

SECTION TWO

FACTORS BEHIND STUDENTS' POOR WRITING PRODUCTIONS

15: Do your students find difficulties when writing in English?
   a. Yes ☐
   b. No ☐

16: These difficulties are due to:
   a. Teacher ☐
   b. Syllabus ☐
   c. Learner ☐
   d. Others, please explain ....................................................................................................................

17: If the teacher is the source of students' poor writing, is it due to:

   (You can tick more than one box)
   a. Lack of an appropriate approach to teach writing. ☐
   b. Lack of an appropriate technique to teach writing. ☐
c. Lack of teacher’s adequate corrective feedback and reinforcement.  

18: If the learner is the source of the writing difficulties, is it related to?

a. Lack of reading  

b. Lack of background knowledge in the subject  

c. Lack of motivation to writing  

d. Learners write without a purpose in mind  

e. Influence of L1 in writing in English  

f. Others, please specify.........................................................................................................................................................

19: Are these difficulties at the level of:
(You can tick more than one box)

a. Sentence  

b. Paragraph  

c. Essay  

d. Others, please specify ............................................................................................................................................................

20: Do you give assignments to your students?

a. Yes  

b. No  

21: What problems do you face in teaching writing skill?

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

SECTION THREE

TEACHERS’ EVALUATION OF WRITING DIFFICULTIES

22: Is it possible to overcome these difficulties?

a. Yes  

184
b. No □

23: If “Yes”, please explain how.
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24: If “No”, explain why.
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25: Please, feel free to add any comments.
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Thank you for cooperation
APPENDIX 12

Footnotes

1 All of them, i.e., correct grammar, good ideas, specific vocabulary, spelling, punctuation, clarity, coherence and focus. ................................................................. 105

2 Others, i.e., willingness, advanced vocabulary, good thinking, etc........................ 105
La majorité des étudiants d’anglais au niveau de département de langues étrangères à l’Université de Batna, affichent une incapacité criarde à produire de l’écrit de qualité acceptable. Les lacunes si situant particulièrement aux niveaux des paragraphes et des essais qu’ils sont amenés à produire lors de leurs examens dans les différentes disciplines. Ainsi plusieurs questions méritent d’être posées : pourquoi nos étudiants produisent un écrit de qualité médiocre voire pauvre en tous points de vue et ce dans leur troisième année de licence? Que faire pour améliorer la situation? Pour mener à bien notre recherche, deux questionnaires préliminaires ont été confectionnés pour identifier et s’assurer de l’existence de cette problématique pédagogique. Les deux questionnaires ont été adressés aux enseignants de troisième année ainsi qu’aux étudiants. Une fois l’identification du problème avéré, l’administration d’un autre questionnaire exclusivement destiné aux enseignants de l’écrit de troisième année, s’impose et s’appuie sur une série de questions élaborées sur la base de justifications théoriques développés dans notre travail de recherche. L’analyse et l’interprétation des données obtenues révèlent que les étudiants de troisième année font vraiment face à un grand déficit aux niveaux de leurs habilités dans la production du discours écrit. Ceci est grande partie lié au manque d’intérêt de la part des étudiants à aller vers l’écriture, à la lecture, à l’influence de la langue maternelle sur l’apprentissage de la langue étrangère ainsi qu’à l’inexistence d’une approche ou méthode appropriée, adaptée à l’enseignement de l’écrit à l’université. Pour ce faire et pallier à ce déficit une série de recommandations ont été avancées aux enseignants pour améliorer leurs façons de prendre en charge l’enseignement de l’écrit et partant, l’amélioration des performances des étudiants à l’écrit.
معظم الطلاب يواجهون مجموعة من الصعوبات التي تنتج عنها ضعف كبير في إنتاج نصوص مقبولة مثل كتابة فقرة أو مقالة، وقد أكدت العديد من الأبحاث والدراسات أن مهارة الكتابة جد مهمة إلا أنها معقدة وصعبة. الهدف من هذه الدراسة في المقام الأول هو معرفة بعض العوامل التي تعيق بشكل ملحوظ قدرة طلبة السنة الثالثة جامعي جامعة بانثة "لغة إنجليزية" الكتابة بشكل صحيح ومقبول ومن ثم ترجمة وتحليل نتائج هذه الدراسة، وفي المقام الثاني يجع جميع الأساتذة (أساتذة التعبير الكتابي أو مقاييس آخر) على علم بما يعرف فاه مهارة الطلبة في الكتابة فلماذا هذا القصور في مهارة الكتابة خاصة مستوى الثالثة جامعي؟ وما الذي يتوجب فعله لتحسين الوضع؟ من أجل إنجاز هذه الدراسة اعتمدنا ثلاث استبيانات، اثنان منها وجهاً إلى أساتذة السنة الثالثة و إلى طلبة السنة الثالثة جامعي أيضاً، و الهدف المشتراع من هذه العملية هو جسر النبض للتؤكد من المشكلة، أما الاستبيان الثالث فقد وجه إلى جميع الأساتذة الذين يدرسون التعبير الكتابي (السنة الأولى والثانية) قسم الإنجليزية بجامعة بانثة للتخصص العميق والدقيق للأسباب التي وراء عدم استطاعة الطلبة على كتابة قصص أو مقالات ذات جودة مقبولة، و عليه فالنتائج المتحصل عليها تؤكد على صحة الأسئلة المطروحة و تكشف عن قصور شديد في مهارة الكتابة (التعبير الكتابي) لدى الطلبة والسبب يرجع حسب نتائج الاستبيان الثالث إلى الأستاذ والطالب على حد سواء، و نخص بعضها منها في ما يلي: عدم وجود الرغبة في الكتابة، نقص في مهارة القراءة، عدم توفر مناهج وتقنيات مناسبة لتدريب التعبير الكتابي في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية جامعة بانثة، وأخيرا تأثير اللغة الأم على مهارة الكتابة باللغة الإنجليزية. بناءً على النتائج المتحصل عليها ارتياحًا تزويد الأساتذة باقتراحات ربما تساهم في تحسين مستوى التعبير الكتابي لدى الطلبة و كيف ينبغي أن يدرس في المستقبل.
IDENTIFICATION AND ANALYSIS OF SOME FACTORS BEHIND STUDENTS’ POOR WRITING PRODUCTIONS

THE CASE STUDY OF 3rd YEAR STUDENTS AT THE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT-BATNA UNIVERSITY-

RESUME

La majorité des étudiants d’anglais au niveau de département de langues étrangères à l’Université de Batna, affichent une incapacité criarde à produire de l’écrit de qualité acceptable. Les lacunes si situant particulièrement aux niveaux des paragraphes et des essais qu’ils sont amenés à produire lors de leurs examens dans les différentes disciplines. Ainsi plusieurs questions méritent d’être posées : pourquoi nos étudiants produisent un écrit de qualité médiocre voire pauvre en tous points de vue et ce dans leur troisième année de licence? Que faire pour améliorer la situation? Pour mener à bien notre recherche, deux questionnaires préliminaires ont été confectionnés pour identifier et s’assurer de l’existence de cette problématique pédagogique. Les deux questionnaires ont été adressés aux enseignants de troisième année ainsi qu’aux étudiants. Une fois l’identification du problème avéré, l’administration d’un autre questionnaire exclusivement destiné aux enseignants de l’écrit de troisième année, s’impose et s’appuie sur une série de questions élaborées sur la base de justifications théoriques développés dans notre travail de recherche. L’analyse et l’interprétation des données obtenues révèlent que les étudiants de troisième année font vraiment face à un grand déficit aux niveaux de leurs habilités dans la production du discours écrit.

Ceci est grande partie lié au manque d’intérêt de la part des étudiants à aller vers l’écriture, à la lecture, à l’influence de la langue maternelle sur l’apprentissage de la langue étrangère ainsi qu’à l’inexistence d’une approche ou méthode appropriée, adaptée à l’enseignement de l’écrit à l’université. Pour ce faire et pallier à ce déficit une série de recommandations ont été avancées aux enseignants pour améliorer leurs façons de prendre en charge l’enseignement de l’écrit et parant, l’amélioration des performances des étudiants à l’écrit.

ملخص

معظم الطلاب يواجهون مجموعة من الصعوبات التي تنتج عنها ضعف كبير في إنتاج نصوص مقولة مثل كتابة قصيرة أو مقالة. وقد أكدت العديد من الأبحاث والدراسات أن مهارة الكتابة أحد أهم مهارات اللغة المهنة من هذه الدراسة في المقام الأول هو معرفة بعض العوامل التي تغيّق بشكل ملحوظ قدرة طلبة السنة الثالثة جامعي جامعة باتنة "لغة الإنجليزية" الكتابة بشكل صحيح ومقبول ومن ثم ترجيح وتقييم نتائج هذه الدراسة، و في السنة الثالثة جعل جميع الأساتذة (أساتذة التدريس الكتابي أو مساعدين آخر) على علم بما يعترف به/opérer sur la base de justifications théoriques développées dans notre travail de recherche. L’analyse et l’interprétation des données obtenues révèlent que les étudiants de troisième année font vraiment face à un grand déficit aux niveaux de leurs habilités dans la production du discours écrit.

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