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The obstacles that students face while they write in  
English

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*I dedicate this modest work to:*

- ✓ *My dear parents “ Djamel and Mounia” for their support and encouragement during my school career.*
- ✓ *My dear sisters Maissa and Nada.*
- ✓ *My only brother Abd El Kader.*
- ✓ *My fiance Khalil for his love and support.*
- ✓ *All my family members on the paternal and maternal side.*
- ✓ *My friend and partner Nafissa who helped me to finish this work.*
- ✓ *To all my friends and colleagues.*

***Nadjela***

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- *My dear sisters : Noura , Khadra .*
- *My dear brothers: Djamel and Kamel.*
- *To all my family members in the paternal and maternal side.*
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- *To all my friends and colleagues: Rim , Rokaya , Baya.*

*Nafissa*

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## **List of abbreviations**

1-EFL: English as a Foreign Language

2-LMD: License; Master, Doctorate

3-L1: First language

4- L2: Second language

5-MA: Master, Magister

6-PHD: Doctorate

7-Q: Question

8-%: Percentage

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## **-General introduction**

1-Background information

2-Statement of the problem

3-Aim of the study

4-Research question

5-Research methodology

6-Organization of the study

7-Limitations of the study

## **General introduction:**

### **1-Background information:**

Nowadays, most people use the written language rather than the spoken one in their daily activities, such as e-mail, text-messaging, job request...etc. It is more efficient and more permanent. Because that writing skill is one of the most important skills students need to acquire, because they will need it in their personal and professional life. Writing is one of the four language skills besides listening, speaking and reading and it is a complex skill that involves representing the spoken language in visual form. As Linse states "writing is a combination of process and product. The process refers to the act of gathering ideas and working with them until they are presented in a manner that is polished and comprehensible to readers." (2006, p.98). It means that writing is a way to produce language. However, many researchers noticed that the majority of the students face many difficulties while they write in English language. Hedge said that "adults devote 45% of their energies to listening, 30% to speaking, 16% to reading and 9% to writing" (2000, p.305). It comes at the end because of its complexity even for natives. Richard and Renandya argued that "there is no doubt that writing is the most difficult skill for a second language to master" (2003, p.100). Many researchers categorized the writing difficulties into three categories. The first category is linguistic difficulties in which the students find difficulties in grammar spelling, vocabulary, word choice...etc. The second category is psychological difficulties which includes motivation, attitude, anxiety...etc. The third category is cognitive difficulties where the students face difficulties in attention problems, memory problems, language problems...etc. This study is an exploration to investigate writing difficulties of second year students of English at the University of Chadli Ben Djedid, El Taref, and try to find some solutions that can be helpful for them to improve their writing skill.

### **2-Statement of the problem:**

Generally, writing is a difficult skill for native and non-native students and many second year students at the University of Chadli Ben Djedid find it difficult to write in English. It is noticed that most of the difficulties can be classified into four categories. Firstly, linguistic difficulties which are represented in lack of vocabulary, lack of grammar...etc. The second category includes psychological difficulties such as the problem of anxiety, lack of motivation...etc. Thirdly, cognitive difficulties like facing difficulties in finding a topic, memory problem...etc. The last category is pedagogical difficulties which are about the

educational system such as the curriculum, ways of teaching. We conducted this research to help students know their weaknesses in writing and the reasons behind those difficulties. Also, it is beneficial for the teachers to know those difficulties so they can help their students and work more on the teaching methods. Additionally, to become a good writer students need to focus more on practice to take their writing to a higher level.

### **3-Aims of the study:**

This research deals with the obstacles that students face while they write in English with the purpose:

- 1-To investigate the writing difficulties of second year students of English at the University of Chadli BenDjedid.
- 2- To identify the reasons behind those difficulties.
- 3-To find out some ways and strategies to overcome those difficulties.

### **4-Research question:**

This study is conducted to answer the following questions:

- 1-What are the most common writing problems that second year students face while they write in English at Chadli BenDjedid University?
- 2-What are the reasons of writing difficulties?
- 3-What are the strategies that should be followed by the teachers to help their students to overcome their writing problems?

### **5-Research Methodology:**

The type of this research is a descriptive research in which we use a mixed method (Qualitative and quantitative method) to achieve the objectives of the study. The data collection tool used while conducting this study is a questionnaire because it is the most appropriate tool that works with this type of research and is easy to conduct.

This study took place at Chadli BenDjedid University of El Taref at the department of English with second year students. Thirty second year LMD students among 100 of the whole

population; and five teachers of written Expression will be the sample of our research and answer the questionnaire to make the research rich in information about the topic.

## **6-Organization of the study:**

This research work is composed of four chapters. The first chapter presents the literature review and it is divided into three sections. The first section deals with background information about the writing skill including definition, characteristics, forms of writing, the importance and the relation between writing and others skills. The second section deals with teaching writing in which it includes reasons of teaching writing, key aspects, the approach, the process of writing, and some techniques to teach writing and how to respond to student's writing. The third section presents the common writing problems students face while they write includes linguistics difficulties, psychological difficulties, cognitive difficulties and pedagogical challenges. It also introduces some reasons for students writing problems. The second chapter is the research design and methodology in which introduces the method used in this study to collect and analyze data. It also defines descriptive research, qualitative and quantitative analysis. It includes the definition of the questionnaire and its advantages and describes the population and sample. The third chapter entitled data analysis and discussion and it divided into two parts. The first part deals with the analysis of teachers' questionnaire; it includes the participants, description of the questionnaire and its analysis. The second part deals with students' questionnaire which describes the participants, the description of questionnaire and its analysis. In this chapter we use tables, charts and diagrams to organize information. The fourth chapter represents the implications and recommendations in which we recommend some suggestions to improve the writing skill and some recommendations for both teachers and students.

## **7. Limitations of the study:**

During conducting this research there were many difficulties encountered and the main reason for all those difficulties is covid 19 which necessitated the closure of everything, including universities which caused the problem of obtaining previous references and studies from the library and the problem of contacting teachers and students to answer the questionnaires.

## **-Chapter one: literature review**

### **Introduction**

#### **Section one: overview on writing skill**

-1. Definition of writing

2-Characteristics of writing

3-Forms of writing

4-Kinds of writing

4.1- Writing styles

4.2-The four main writing styles and what they mean

A/Expository

B/ Descriptive writing

C/ Narrative

D/Persuasive

5- Importance of Writing

6- Writing and the other skills

6.1 Writing and speaking

6.2- Writing and reading

6.3- Writing and listening

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1-Teaching writing

1.1- Teaching writing

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2.1-Students' needs

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### **Section three: Writing difficulties**

Introduction

1-Writing difficulties

1.1. Linguistic difficulties

1.1.1-Grammar

1.1.2- Vocabulary

1.1.3- Problem of word choice

1.1.4-Spelling

1.2- Psychological difficulties

1.2.1- Motivation

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1.3- Cognitive difficulties

1. 3.1- Writing continuities

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1.3.3-Language problem

1.4. Pedagogical challenges

2-Causes of students 'difficulties in writing

2.1-The nature of writing process

2.2-Lack of motivation

2.3- Inadequate time

2.4- Lack of practice

2.5- Lack of reading

2.6-Influence of first language

-Conclusion

## **Introduction:**

Students need to acquire the four skills of language which are listening, speaking, reading and writing to communicate easily; because they need them in education, work and in their personal life. The writing skill is seen as the most complex and difficult skill for students. This chapter presents the literature review of the study. It includes three sections. The first section is entitled an overview on writing skill which includes general information about writing such definition, importance and other titles. Section two about teaching writing deals with how to teach writing. Section three entitled writing difficulties which includes some difficulties encountered by students while they are writing and some reasons.

### **Section one: overview on writing skill**

Introduction:

This part presents background information about the writing by dealing with the writing definition and its characteristics. Additionally, it illustrates the forms and kinds of writing. Also, it includes the importance of writing. The final part includes the relation between writing and the other skills.

#### **1. Definition of writing:**

Writing existed for several thousand of years, and nowadays it becomes more important than ever. A large number of authors and researchers defined writing. According to Finochiaro(1974) writing is an act of putting letters in papers for the goal of expressing thoughts and ideas .Nunan (2003, p.88) states that "writing is an intellectual activity of finding the ideas and thinking about the way to express and arrange them into a statement and paragraph that is clear to be understood by the people" . It indicates that the writers are demanded to show the thoughts and organize them into a good composition .In addition, writing presents the writer's concept in understanding an issue which is shown to the public .It requires the integration of ideas systematically written.

According to Rivers (1968) Writing is considered as an active creation of text involving on the one hand lower-order transcription skills such as handwriting punctuation and spelling, and on the other hand higher- order self -regulated thinking processes such as planning, sequencing and expressing the content.

Pincas stated that "Writing is a way of communication that enables students to express their information, feelings and emotions in a visual form to convey a meaning to the readers". (1992, p.125). It means that writing is an activity to express ideas, knowledge...etc in written

form. It was seen as a tool of communication that produced or drew graphic symbols arranged through convention and made words which turned to a form of sentences and those sentences made a piece of writing.

## **2-Characteristics of writing:**

According to Heaton (1975) there are five important steps to make good writing which are as follows: firstly, language use which is the ability to write correctly. Secondly, mechanical skills the students here focus on the right use of writing convention (punctuation, spelling...etc). Thirdly, the treatment of content in which students think creatively and use suitable information. The fourth step is focusing on the stylistic skills and the use of language effectively. The last step is to write in an appropriate manner taking in consideration the purpose and the audience.

According to Ur (1996) there are eight characteristics of writing. Primary, the form of discourse is fixed and can read it in any condition. Secondly, the content must be clear to readers and the writer must know how to organize the form. And, the addressed information can be easily understood by the reader. Also, the writer must have an ability to expect and guess the reaction of the readers. Then, the way of putting ideas together must be clear and this step comes before publishing it to the readers. Moreover, the ideas should be organized in chronological order to help the readers understand the text. In addition, each idea in the text is important and omitting one idea will make it hard for readers to get the whole meaning. Finally, the information should be conveyed clearly and effectively to the reader without mistakes.

## **3-Forms of writing:**

Writing has different forms which are ordered as follows. Summary writing, it is a brief explanation of a text that contains the main important ideas of the text. Essay writing is a short composition about a recent topic that contains paragraphs. Paragraph writing, which is a group of sentences that tell one idea. Journal writing is a form of writing in which you write about a situation or something happened in your life. Poetry writing is an art, in which the writer uses sounds related together to make a rhythm. Letter writing, is a short and meaningful passage that involves a message addressed to the reader. Story writing is a written form in which the writer narrates a story to readers. A good story writer should know how to address his/her message directly. A story includes a theme, characters, place, time, actions, and pictures.

#### **4-Kinds of writing:**

One of the things that can help you as a writer is to learn the four main types of writing styles and use the characteristics of each to further develop your own personal voice as a writer. By learning how to use the different writing styles in your work, you will not only improve your skills as a writer, but also learn ways to better connect with your audience.

#### **4.1- Writing styles:**

Writing styles are basically another way of saying the form or type of written work you are creating. Each writing style has a different purpose and therefore different characteristics are present when you are writing each type of different work.

#### **4.2-The four main writing styles and what they mean:**

The different types of writing are expository, descriptive, narrative, and persuasive.

##### **A/Expository:**

It is about explaining things about a subject. It is also called “information writing” because it gives information about a person, place, thing, relationship or idea.” the exploratory may tell how to make or do something, or report an experience which can take a variety of forms. This type conveys information to the reader in order to facilitate understanding. The purpose related to such a style is to inform about a specific subject or topic, but the students need to be more careful because it is not telling a story rather is a practical kind of writing such as research papers, or a scientific article that explains the reasons behind the problem under study like population.” This type is commonly used in: newspaper and magazine articles, non-fiction books, writing about hobbies and interests, scientific research, manuals and textbooks & educational resources. **(Belhabib, 2014, pp. 20-21).**

##### **B/ Descriptive writing:**

It is a style of writing which focuses on describing a character, event, or a place in details. Terwilliger (2001) in her book “Structuring a Descriptive Essay” mentioned the following techniques. Firstly, select a subject and it is about deciding the topic and what you will describe and the most important thing in description is observation. For example, if you want to describe a person you should see the person or at least have a photo to make your description clear and right. The second technique is using descriptive words by using as much as you can adjectives, adverbs, metaphors and similes. Also, Organize details, here the paragraphs should be structured chronologically (time and order) or from general to specific. Finally, draw a logical conclusion which is the last step of description and it must be logical

and can easily understand it by the reader. We use descriptive writing in Poetry, Diary entries and nature writing.

### **C/ Narrative:**

Narrative writing is the easiest type because it deals with what happened. Its main aim is to tell a story (real or imaginary story); the writer creates the characters and puts them in an environment and a period of time and starts narrating the actions and what happen to each character. Narrative writing includes an introduction, a climax, actions, plot, point of view and a conclusion. At the end of each story there is a message that will be understood by the readers. Narrative writing used in: novels, short stories, novellas, biography and poetry.

**(Meer, 2016).**

### **D/Persuasive:**

Persuasive is a type in which the writer writes something to convince the readers with his /her opinions or to think a certain way. It contains justification, arguments and reasons to make the readers agree with his/her opinion. The writer should have a good knowledge to persuade the reader, and uses a strong argument. This type is generally used in: advertisement, letters of complaint, cover letters and reviews of books/movies/restaurants. **(Sarikas, 2018)**

## **5/ Importance of Writing:**

Writing is the most important skill which has to be mastered by students, because it helps them to develop their thinking. Harmer (2004, pp. 31-33) stated that writing has the following importance. Firstly,

Writing encourages students to focus on the language use because they think as they write. Also, writing is usefully a preparation for other activities, because in writing there is a given time to think. Moreover,

Writing helps students to perform many kinds of activities.

“Writing provides an important means to personal self-expression” (Mc Arthur et al, 2008, p.1). It means that writing is a way for the students to express themselves and how they think during the learning process.

According to Hyland (2003, p. 69) “writing is one of the main ways that we create a coherent social reality through engaging with others”. It means that writing is a way of communication with others and through it the student builds his/her character as a writer.

Chappell (2011) said that writing is an essential skill since it helps to: express one's personality, foster communication, develop thinking skills, Make logical and persuasive arguments, and prepare for school and employment.

Writing is important because it is used in education and in work. If the students haven't the ability to express themselves through writing; they won't be able to communicate well with teachers, especially in exams. Also it aids language development in grammar, vocabulary, spelling and discourse. (Walsh, 2010).

## **6- Writing and the other skills:**

Writing is not an isolated skill, but it's a road that we must take in order to get the necessary knowledge .Four language skills work together, help each other in order to enhance the development of each other : speaking, reading, listening, and writing. Listening and reading are receptive skills (taking information); while speaking and writing are productive skills (giving out information). According to Johnson (2008), language skills enhance each other, i.e. the development of the individual language skills improves the development of others. For example, listening to other peoples use the language which helps you to enhance the ability to speak , reading becomes the way in which it helps the students become better writers , and writing helps students to develop phonic knowledge and enhance reading fluency.

### **6.1 Writing and speaking:**

Both writing and speaking are clearly productive activities in that they create language outcomes just as listening and reading are both passive activities. When, it comes to the communication Tribble (1996, p.12) said speaking and writing are complementary skills and emphasizes that "the person who commands both the forms of writing, and speech is therefore constructed in a fundamentally different way from the person who commands the form of speech alone ".Harmer (2004) stated that there are wide differences between speaking and writing in terms of form and Process. So, writing is not just an expansion of words, but it's relying on the use of graphic symbols. As an extra factor, the variations of spoken language found in dialects, use a lot of intonation, pronunciation and face to face interaction that is found in the conversation.

Brown (1994) summarized some differences between those two skills which are as follows. Firstly, the performance of speaking is temporary and must be used in real time ,

While in writing it is constant and can be read and re-read. Secondly, writers need more time to plan, review and revise their product, while speakers they have not much time to think and order ideas. Thirdly, distance between the writers and the readers, in both time and space eliminates much of the shared context that it presented between the speaker and the listener in face to face contact, and this necessitates greater explicitness from the part of the writer. Fourthly, orthography in writing carries a limited amount of information compared to the richness of devices available to speakers to enhance a message (such as stress, pitch, volume .....etc). Also, complexity: writers tend to use longer clauses and more subordinators. While speakers tend to use shorter clauses connected by coordinators. Additionally, writing tends to be more formal than speaking. Finally, written texts tend to contain a wide variety of words and lower frequency words than oral speech.

## **6.2- Writing and reading:**

Reading and writing form a strong relationship with each other as skills. They are tools for achieving effective written communication. Students need opportunities to develop their reading and writing which require exposing students to gradually challenging reading materials and writing tasks. The aim is to make students read and write effectively.

When looking at the nature of writing and reading, we found that writing is productive, while reading is passive one. Johnson (2008) said that the relationship between those skills is that reading helps the students to become better writers. Through reading, students have casual contact with grammar rules, so they develop the sense of the structure of the language and grammar to increase their vocabulary. Therefore, reading in the writing classroom is understood as the appropriate input for the acquisition of writing skills because it is assumed "that reading passages will somehow function as primary models from which writing skills can be learned or at least inferred" (Eisterhold, 1990, p.88).

The evidence that there is an existing important relationship occurs between those two necessary skills (writing and reading). This relation is the result of the correlation study that was claimed by Stotsky (1983) which came out with the following results. There are correlations between the writing ability and reading achievement. Which it means a better writer tends to be a better reader. There is a correlation between the quality of writing and the reading experience; it means that better writers read more than poorer writers. There are a

correlation between the ability of reading and the measures of syntactic complexity in writing means that better writer tends to produce more syntactically mature writing than poorer reader

### **6.3- Writing and listening:**

Writing is a productive skill whereas listening is a receptive one. So, listening is a skill, in which it can be performed easily. Many students prefer listening rather than to read during revision. When students listen to their own writing as well as to that of their classmates enable student's writers to cultivate a necessary detachment from their own writing and an imaginative attention to the audience. Also, writing plays an essential role in expressing one's ideas, opinions. Through writing, people are capable of sharing those ideas, persuading and convincing others. Nunan (2003) noted that writing is both a physical and mental act. It means that writing is the physical act of communicating words or ideas and writing is the mental work of inventing ideas, thinking about how to express them, and organizing them into statements and paragraphs that will be clear to a reader.

## **Section two: Teaching writing:**

### **Introduction:**

Teaching writing is not an easy task as many think, but it requires a lot of efforts from the teachers and choosing the appropriate techniques. In this section we focused on what is teaching writing and the reasons of teaching writing. The second part of this section is about some aspects of teaching writing that should be used by the teacher to help the students. Also, it introduces the most known approaches used by teachers. Moreover, it describes the writing process in detail, the most common stages in teaching writing and some techniques used to teach writing. The last part in this section is how to respond to students writing and how to deal with errors.

### **1.1- Teaching writing:**

Teaching writing is a complex activity and it needs a lot of effort and a skillful teacher. Harmer writes in his book «teaching writing skill is different from teaching speaking. Because of the nature of the writing process, the need for accuracy in writing and the mental process that a student goes through when writing ” (2004, p. 31). It means that everyone knows how to speak from birth, but when it comes to writing we need to learn how to write.

### **1.2- Reasons of teaching writing:**

According to Harmer (1998) the reasons behind teaching writing are as follows. Reinforcement, some of the learners acquired the language in a purely oral way, whereas most of them need to see the language in written form. Secondly, language development, the mental activity learners go through in order to build proper written texts in all parts of the ongoing learning experience. Thirdly, learning style, every learner has its own style of learning and some learners need more time to think; because of that writing is the best way to acquire the language and it provides more time for learners more than face to face communication. Finally, writing as a skill: learners must know how to write paragraphs, essays, articles; how to put reports together and to operate the writing system (such as, in terms of conventions such as punctuation, paragraph construction) just as they need to know how to pronounce language appropriately.

### **2-Key aspects of teaching writing:**

Apart from many other aspects that influence effectiveness of teaching and learning writing, there are two major factors that play the key roles here which are the teacher and the student.

## **2.1-Students' needs:**

the teacher should attend to the students' needs in order to help them succeed in their learning of writing.

### **2.1.1-Personal involvement:**

According to Harmer (2001) students must get personally involved in the teaching process to make them more attentive during the learning process and be more creative; and choose interesting activities to boost their capacity of learning.

### **2.1.2-Language competence:**

Byrne (1988) holds that one of the primary needs of students is that they need to be taught how to write in L2 and need to acquire the ability to organize sentences into a coherent whole; because before start writing students must have background information about the language that they will use.

### **2.1.3-Guidance and freedom:**

According to Harmer“ Students need the teacher's support and guidance, though at the same time teachers should provoke their intellectual activity by contrasting ideas and concepts that they have to resolve for themselves” (2001, 39). He meant that students need to be free during writing to express their ideas as they want and the teacher guides them to enhance their levels.

## **2.2-Teacher's tasks:**

The teachers play a significant role in the language development of students, because teachers are in control of the teaching. There are some aspects that should be employed during the writing lessons.

### **2.2.1- Good planning:**

According to Raimes(1983, pp.15-22) planning a good writing lesson needs a skillful teacher with other characteristics as follows. Firstly, having a purpose; while choosing the subject the teacher must focus on making all students involved in the writing lesson. Secondly, allowing enough time; while preparing a written task the teacher should take in consideration the time of the activity. Teachers should give their students enough time to

produce a piece of writing. Thirdly, using various patterns of interactions; it is good to make students involved actively in participating in pair/group/class work or discussions. Students with help of the teacher brainstorm their ideas, discuss them, keep notes, contribute, report, and summarize main ideas, this all in various interaction patterns. Such an attitude makes students active and co-responsible in the process, in contrast to the teacher assigning, explaining, directing, correcting and evaluating the work.

### **2.2.2- Supporting role:**

It is argued by Harmer (2001, pp.41-42) that the teacher has a big and important role during the writing process; and he/she has many tasks to perform which are: motivate students when they feel lost for words, provoke them with having ideas, engage students in creative process, get the right balance of writing activities to ensure students' progress, provide a great validity of writing activity types and variety of interaction, be prepared to support students when they need help and reassurance and be sympathetic; expect not proficiency level from students but many problems.

### **3. Approaches to teach writing:**

Writing is particularly a highly-demanding and difficult skill for both native speakers and non native speakers. This is because there are many activities that should be done at the same time .While expressing ideas, students need to think about the appropriate vocabulary, the spelling of the words as the correct structure, as well as the correct structure to be used in arranging good English sentences. The complexity of writing skill makes students' writing performance unsatisfactory. Richard and Renandya claim that "There is no doubt that writing is the most difficult skill to master" .It understands and use becomes largely valued in every discipline, which requires a specific method of teaching. According to Zamel (1985,p.32) "ESL writers who are ready to compose and express their ideas use strategies similar to those of native speakers of English" .This accounts to the fact that the teaching approaches in English dominant countries influenced to large extent pedagogies and teaching approaches in non -English dominant ones (Liwashing, 2000). Johns (1990) argues that in any approach of teaching writing there must be a consideration of four elements central to writing: the writer, the reader, reality and truth like the argumentation. Although, there are three main approaches of writing which are:

### **3.1- Product approach:**

“It is the traditional approach in which students are encouraged to mimic a model text usually is presented and analyzed at an early stage ”(Gabrielatos, 2002, p. 5). And to teach writing process and to teach writing process with this approach to discover the establishment of habit formation and imitation. This approach is also called text focused approach neglecting the role of the writers as the text producer, his ideas and intentions, and the various stages of the writing process. According to Silva (1990) the product approach to teach writing skills highlights form and syntax and it emphasizes rhetorical drills .The product approach mainly focuses on the written product rather than the process that the learner should undergo to produce a good written text.

According to this approach, the teaching of writing focuses on the production of texts by individual students. The focus of the product approach is the form. In this approach, teachers present texts to the students .Errors are considered like something you must be corrected. The teachers just correct those errors .In addition, Jordan (1997) indicates that students are required to focus on a model form, and duplication. In other words, the students study model texts and attempt various exercises that enable them to draw attention to relevant features of texts and then rewrite them in their own writing.

Pincas (1982) sees writing in this approach as primarily about linguistic knowledge. This approach consists of four stages. Firstly, familiarization is a type in which the learner studied model students then the features of genre are highlighted. The second stage is controlled writing which consists of controlled practice of highlighted features, usually in isolation. The third stage is guided writing which is the most important and successful stage where the ideas are organized. The last stage is free writing in which the students are choosing from the choices of the writing tasks to show what they can do to be fluent in using language. And the main pedagogical activities used in this approach was suggested by (Hyland, 2003) are to fill the gaps substitutions and reordering exercises.

### **3. 2- Process approach:**

This approach has shifted the attention from traditional views. In this approach the students only realize what they want to write in the paper , this approach depends on giving the students enough time to write, and it is also known as an umbrella term for many kinds of writing courses.

Process approach focuses much more on the varied classroom activities, which help the development of language use: brainstorming, group discussion and rewriting. (Leki,

1991)claims that the process approach is an approach of teaching writing that places more emphasis on the stages of the writing process than on the final product ." And the major aim of this approach according to (Nemouchi ,2008 )is to help the students in training about how to generate ideas , plan these ideas, draft or redraft according to the final paper.

\* The process approach consists of many stages according to Steele (2004):

The first stage is brainstorming. In this stage the students generate their ideas by using brainstorming and discussion, and he mentions some instructions used by the teacher who uses this approach. Firstly the teacher asks the students to search for written texts, and then ask some students to read texts as a real reader and respond to the content without seeking to correct it. Then, the teacher should give some class time to students to begin brainstorming on a writing topic, after giving them an assignment. Also, the teacher should encourage a variety of prewriting and planning strategies. Moreover, encourage students to ask questions about their writing level and the practice of formative assessment should be used in this stage. The second stage is planning the students change their ideas into notes, then they start to judge the quality of those ideas. The third stage is mind mapping. In this stage the students transform their ideas into a mind map. Mind mapping helps the students to do hierarchical relationships of those ideas which help them in the structure. The fourth stage is writing the first draft in this stage, the students will write the first draft in pairs or in groups. The fifth stage is peer feedback in this stage drafts are exchanged, so the students become the readers of each other's work .By responding as readers, the students develop the awareness of the fact that the writer is producing something to be read by someone else and this will help them to improve their own drafts. The next stage is editing, drafts are returned and the improvements are made based upon peer feedback. The other stage is the final draft. In this stage the students will write the final drafts. The final stage is evaluation and teachers feedback In this stage the teachers will evaluate the students writing and give them their feedback on it.

According to Gocsik (2007) on process approach, the learner should ask a number of questions before plunging into writing activity. Range from what do I write about? To who is my audience? To how do I structure my essay? To what sort of language and voice should be used.

### **3. 3-Genre approach:**

Genre approach considered as a social and cultural practice. The purpose of this approach is included in the language and discourse features of the texts as well as the context in which the text is produced (Nemouchi,2008, pp.33-92) . And is seen as an extension of the product approach (Badger and White,2000). And(Paltridge,2004)explains that the genre

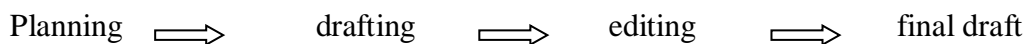
approach in teaching the writing skill, was focused on the teaching of particular genres, such as essays, assignments, and other pieces of writing, that the students needed for later social communication success. The focus would be the language, and discourse features of texts and the main context in where the text is being used.

Genre approach confirmed much on the reader, and on the conventions that the piece of writing need to follow, in order to be successfully accepted by its readership (Munice, 2002). Hence, the idea that any piece of language is meant to be functional and that writers write in certain genres to achieve certain functions are the focal points underlying this approach. In a more detailed point, (Hyland, 2003, p.18) says "The writer is seen as having certain goals and intentions in certain relationships to his/her readers, and certain information to convey and the forms of text are resources used to accomplish these".

#### **4. The writing process:**

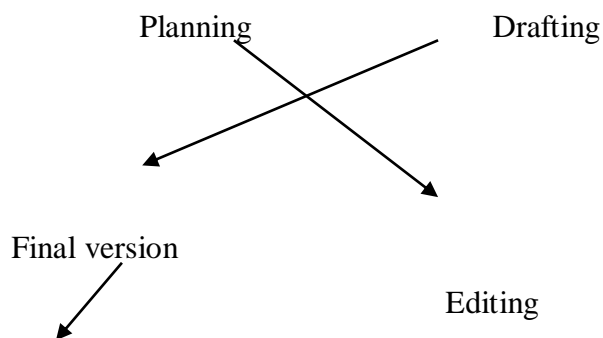
The writing process is a classroom activity. It involves four main steps which are planning, drafting, editing and final version. Each step from those involves sub-steps. According to Hedge (1988, p.20) "the process of composition is not a linear one, moving from planning to composing to revising and editing. It would be more accurate to characterize writing as recursive activity in which the writer moves backwards between drafting and revising with stages of re-planning and between."(1988, p.20).

To explain more of those stages; we will discuss Harmer's figures (2004) of the writing process.



**Figure1: Process of Writing. (Harmer, 2004, p.5)**

According to Harmer, this diagram is not satisfactory." The process of writing is not linear as indicated above, but rather recursive." This means that writers could start with any step and they can re-plan, re-draft and re-edit. Each writer has the freedom in dealing with this process. Because of that, Harmer created another diagram which he calls 'process wheel'.



Final version?

**Figure2: Process Wheel. ( Harmer, 2004, p.6).**

This diagram shows that writers do not follow a neat sequence, but they can start and repeat any step till reaching the final step which is producing a clean piece of writing.

\*There are many scholars and researchers declare that the writing process consists of five stages: prewriting, drafting, revising, editing and publishing.

#### **4.1-Prewriting:**

It is also called the planning stage; which is the key stage of producing a good piece. The writers take their time to put an outline to go through till they reach the final product. During this stage there are some activities and sub-steps the writer should focus on. Firstly, choosing the topic which is the starting point and here the teacher could give the opportunity to students to choose the topic or give them a topic to write about it. According to Laksmi”.....interest is an important aspect that can drive someone in learning something.”(2006, pp.147-148). So, the more students interested in their own topic the more communicative language increases. Brainstorming which is a technique used to gather information about a subject and generating ideas quickly. It is a simple and easy technique for the students in which they use lists. (Spivey, 2006). After that, organizing ideas; According to Cameron (2009) students can follow the next steps to organize their ideas. Firstly, the students check the information and omit all the unnecessary ideas. Then, they try to connect between the related ideas. Finally, the students re-check the ordered ideas and choose the most appropriate ones that can serve their topic. Finally, after the students have enough information about the topic; now it is the time to put an outline. It consists of a conclusion, the body and conclusion part. The outline is the key to get a good piece of writing.

#### **4.2-Drafting**

After students prepare and order their ideas the next stage is drafting, in which the students put their ideas on paper as a first draft. This draft may contain errors and mistakes; and the

purpose during this stage is not to write in an appropriate manner, but just to make their ideas concrete. (Avan et al, 2015).

#### 4.3-Revising:

The word revision literally means” to see again”. That is why students in this stage decided to revise and improve their writing. During this stage the students correct their mistakes such as grammar and vocabulary and also revise the content and the organization of ideas to make their writing clear (Blanchad et al,2003).

#### 4.4-Editing

Tompkins (1994, pp. 88) defined editing as ”putting the piece of writing into its final form”. Editing is the last chance for students to make changes and correct their mistakes before publishing it. Teachers can help their students during this stage and comment on their pieces; or the students use self-editing and check their pieces of writing line by line.

“Basically editing means making your piece as reader-friendly as possible by making the sentences flow in a clear, easy to read way. It also means bringing your piece of writing into line with accepted ways of using English: using the appropriate grammar for the purposes of the piece, appropriate punctuation and spelling; and appropriate paragraphing.” (Johnson, 2008, p.167).

**Table1: Stages of the writing process by many authors. ( Nunan, 2003, 100).**

Richards& Rendaya, (2003, 315)	White and Arndt (1991, 5)	Sadek( 2007, 232)	Tribble(1997,39)
1- Planning(rewriting) 2-Drafting(writing) 3- Revising(redrafting) 4-Editing	1-Drafting 2-structuring 3-reviewing 4-Focusing 5-Evaluating 6-Generating	1Rehearsing (rewriting) 2-Drafting 3-Revising	1-Prewriting 2-Composing (drafting) 3-Revising 4-Editing 5-publishing
Hedge(2000,302-330)	Blanchard and Root (2000,1)		Harmer(2004, 6)
1-Composing 2-Communicating 3-Improving	1-Prewriting 2-Writing 3-Revising and editing		1-Planning 2-Drafting 3-Editing 4-Final draft

## **5- Stages in teaching writing skill:**

In teaching writing, the main goal of the teacher is to present a well organized lesson that can be understood by all the students. There are three main stages to go through which are: the presentation stage, the practice stage and the production stage. The presentation stage is teacher-centered in which he/she provides the students by the new language input. The students at this stage their role is to listen and get the new input to practice it at the coming stages. The practice stage is student-teacher centered; they work together in the classroom. The students at this stage have the opportunity to practice the new inputs they acquire and the teacher helps them by providing a set of activities such as fill in the gaps. The last stage is the production stage which is student-centered; the teacher here gives them a written activity and asks them to write something using their inputs alone. At the end of the stage the students find themselves produced a piece of writing.

## **6-Techniques to teach writing:**

The main important and hardest task for the teachers is to find the appropriate techniques and activity that can serve their students and become good writers. It is really a great challenge for the teacher to always renew the used activities to suit the needs of the students.

### **6.1- Using pictures:**

‘ Pictures can be a resource that provides a shared experience for students in class, a common base that leads 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 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 for another task; also as ranging from fairly mechanical all controlled compositions, sentence commissioning exercises, sequencing of sentences to write dialogues, letters, reports and essays. Finally, pictures are used in the classroom, stimulate student attention and also create a concrete real world in the classroom. (Raimes,1994, pp.31-32).

### **6.2-Using reading techniques:**

Reading is a good and useful tool that can be used by teachers to teach writing and it helps students to enhance their level. The more the teacher encourages their students to read the more they get new language, new vocabulary, and different structures and develop their thoughts. This technique is helpful to overcome student writing difficulties.

### **6.3-Using games:**

Games can be used to teach all the skills and by using games students become more active during the learning process. Games are a fun activity and it makes the students more motivated, so they will find the writing process more interesting and more enjoyable. Games provide a clear short term achievable aim for students and by incorporating games into the learning process that it can help them to overcome writing difficulties such as anxiety. (Wright.1993).

### **7-Responding to students writing:**

It cannot be denied that the integral part of the writing process is the answer to it. According to Raimes (1983),the common procedures composing to : (a)selecting the topic ,(b)prewriting activities,(c)writing ,(d)reviewing ,editing , proofreading and the teacher's marking of the paper has a little influence on the development of the writing skill. Rather, as it has been already promoted. The teachers should be accepting the role of the cordial reader providing continuous feedback during the whole writing process. White and Arndt (1991) claims that the teachers and the students should collaborate not only on the commonality process of writing but also they cooperated on the setting criteria for judging (which means correcting and marking).

Before the teachers correct or evaluate a piece of writing, they should follow up five principles suggested by Raimes(1983) which are as follows. Read without using the pen. Also, look for the strengths points. Then, make sure that the students must know about the editing symbols. Additionally, decide on an error - marking and inform the students of it. Finally, we must remember that the task of the teacher is only for helping even students or the writers to see what they can do for their improvements.

### **7.1- Ways of responding to students writing:**

#### **7.1.1-Written comments:**

The teachers note the praise for what the students did well in their writing leads to the improvement more than correction or brief statement, like "good job". Following the above principles that mentioned by Raimes (1983) ,the teacher first should read the whole paper , note down positive occurrences of the correct language and the form use ( punctuation, spelling, coherent flow of ideas ,use coherent devices.....etc). In order for the strengths to be highlighted, report what needs to be improved in particular. This is done by giving the students some questions to answer them .Which they have the ability to think and came up with another possibility. Harmer (2001, pp.111) ‘suggested that instead of commenting on

the mistakes ,the teacher uses an alternative way of "reformulating "the sentence in other "more suitable "words."

### **7.1.2-Conferencing:**

“ IT is a form of talking about the paper, in which it can be used during the stages of evaluating drafts by all readers until the final feedback that is given by the teacher. But the time it takes for this alternative appears, it is definitely one of the ways to communicate a teacher’s (reader’s) response .A short real discussion can be very productive and motivating for the student as both, the writer and the reader, are engaged in the interaction’’. (Raimes ,1983, pp145-146).

### **7.1.3-Checklists:**

It is used to help the students deal with the mistakes and the opposition that is used in their writing. Both of them are used during the writing process by the students as well as the final evaluation by the teachers. It consists of a list of questions to verify a specific area such as "does your essay have a visible paragraph arrangement?" "Is the trouble with some words checked in the dictionary» (Raimes, 1983 pp.147-148).

### **7.2Dealing with errors:**

There are some indications that Raimes (1983), Byrne (1988)and Harmer (2001) agree and propose to the teachers to regard the topic of correcting mistakes. According to them the teachers are advised. Firstly, the teacher should avoid excessive correction and decide which errors are related with the piece of writing. Because it is not recommended to correct all of them, rather than focus just on grammar areas that are covered in the lessons, punctuation and articles, or any other area that is important for the students in their writing. Secondly, use three or four students with students’ errors anonymously and give them to a group of students to find them and improve the sentences. Also, address the errors seriously and teach the students to consider the errors as friends to them, or perfect steps which explain what needs to be improved. Moreover, use a set of symbols to indicate the errors that best suits your needs. Possible alternative which means either the teachers indicate the mistakes and the students correct it, or the students identify the mistakes and correct it by themselves. Add one or more symbols to the set: the symbols to the tick. The teacher can indicate where the students used a language very well or has made a particularly telling point. Additionally, support the errors correction with curative teaching. Finally, remember that the best results for language

improvement of the students can be obtained when the correction is done if the students are still engaged in the process of writing.

<b>Mark</b>	<b>Error Indicated</b>
^	A word is missing
/	Start a new sentence
//	Start a new paragraph
Gr	Grammar error
Sp	Spelling error
P	punctuation error
Art	Error with articles(a, an)
C/unc	countable/uncountable
error	
Wo	wrong word order
Ww	Wrong word
Wt	Wrong tense
Wf	Wrong form
Irreg	Irregular verb
?	Unclear

**Figure 4: Chart of error-indicating marks. (Source: <http://www.slideshare.net>)**

## **Section three: Writing difficulties:**

### **Introduction:**

The number of students who have writing difficulties is increasing due to several reasons, and these difficulties differ from one student to another. This section describes the difficulties students encounter while writing in foreign language. We mention the main types of difficulties which are linguistic (grammar, spelling, punctuation, word choice.) psychological (anxiety, motivation, attitude) and cognitive difficulties (writing continuities, attention problem, memory problem). Also, it describes the factors that hinder the learner to write correctly including: the nature of the writing process, lack of motivation, lack of reading, inadequate time, the lack of practice and the influence of the first language.

### **1-Writing difficulties:**

Writing is the most complex and difficult language skill, because it requires a lot of mental and physical efforts. Many students face difficulties while they write in English, because it is not their mother tongue and these difficulties hinder students from producing a good piece of writing without errors and mistakes. The term writing difficulties is used when talking about students who do not have the qualification in order to be able to write in the way that is expected of the student. (Omta, 20013). Byrne (1988) classified writing difficulties into three categories which are: linguistic, psychological and cognitive difficulties.

#### **1.1/ Linguistic difficulties:**

When the students are writing in English they frequently face challenges. Among those difficulties are the linguistic ones which are related to vocabulary, spelling, punctuation...etc.

##### **1.1.1-Grammar:**

Grammar is one of the most important difficult stages while mastering the foreign language. It's defined as "the rules that govern how a language's sentences are formed"(Thornbury, 2000, p.1). The English grammar has been spotted traditionally as "a system of syntax that decides the order and patterns in which words are arranged in sentences"(Close, 1982, p.13). According to Ellis (2008, p.418) grammar difficulties can be divided into two main type's challenge. Firstly, the learner has a difficulty in understanding the grammatical characteristics. Secondly, the difficulty that encountered in understanding

grammatical features, so they can use them fluently and spontaneously in communication. He confirmed that the first meaning of grammatical difficulty is concerned with explicit knowledge, while the second is concerned with implicit knowledge.

Furthermore, Shiu (2011) claimed that various researchers have characterized grammatical difficulty in terms of student's correct use of grammatical features that are considered more difficult to learn based on the fact that many of the students have difficulty using the features correctly.

### **1.1.2- Vocabulary:**

Thornbury (2002, p.27) declared that there are many elements that make some of the words difficult like pronunciation is a crucial factor for making vocabulary acquisition difficult, in which the researchers saw that the words that are difficult to pronounce are at the same time difficult to learn. Spelling and embalm sounds are responsible for the errors, whether from the pronunciation or spelling, and they can contribute to the difficulty of words. However, most English spelling is strictly abiding by the law, and there are also some very clear irregularities. Words that comprise silent letters are very problematic such as: listen, honor, light.....etc. The length and complexity of words seems to be difficult to learn from short ones. However, the words of high frequency tend to be short in English, and thus the learners meet a lot of factors that require their learning.

Vocabulary issues are one of the most important points that the students should focus on. Mohammed Fareed (2016) suggested intensive reading as a way to process vocabulary deficiency. Also, he confirmed that the teachers must teach new words to the students, either through incidental learning or intentional learning.

### **1.1.3- Problem of word choice:**

A good writing should consist of a suitable varied set of vocabulary used in conjunction with the correct grammar and variety of sentences structures (Norish, 1983). According to Reid (1983), when the writer was practicing the choice of vocabulary that would be considered an attention for the reader and the purpose of writing, the written composition would become rational by the students to the reader. But, the writing skill used in the suitable place in the second language is a big problem for the students. For example, White (1980) stated that the students use "big words" in their essays to effect impact the reader and their teacher.

#### **1.1.4-Spelling:**

Learning to spell words is the first stage in the learning process and all teachers focus on spelling during teaching. According to Frith (1980, p.496) ‘‘spelling is related to reading and he argues that ‘‘Learning to read should imply learning to spell, and learning to read should imply learning to spell’’. Bancha (2013) adds that writing difficulties of relevance to spelling mainly include the misspelling of words which are a result of the irregularities of the English spelling system and spelling mistakes all the time happens when students are not concentrated or they have not enough time.

#### **1.2-Psychological difficulties:**

The learner’s psychology is an important volunteer for successful writing. All the psychological difficulties will influence the students’ success, and lead them to unconsciously constructed barriers that end in the apparent failure to acquire the skills necessary to achieve proficiency in the English language such as: motivation, attitudes, and anxiety.

##### **1.2.1- Motivation:**

Motivation is seen as an independent variable in language preparation and learning. The social psychologists Wallace Lambert and Robert Gardner were the major in the second language motivation research. They believed that motivation is one of the most important predictors of second language performance. According to Dornyei (1988), scoring that the success or the failure to learn the second language is influenced by motivation.

##### **1.2.2- Attitude:**

An attitude is an acquired willingness that motivated an individual to reveal specific behaviors and responses against certain things, conditions, or people attitudes are tolerated for quite a while and represent the state preparing for the behavior (Demirel, 2001).

Writing situations include emotional behavior regarding how an action affects a book ' feeling, ranging from happy to unhappy ( Graham , Berninger & Fan,2007). Moreover, the learners who have positive attitudes in which their writing was in general, whereas their level of that writing in particular bears which help them to take part in writing and to increase their efforts to enhance their writing skills.

### **1.2.3- Anxiety:**

Anxiety penetrates every corner of human life, and anxiety relates to the risks and fear for a person's psychological or physical integrity. Anxiety is an emotional variable. Its nature makes it a complex task to be identified. It arises from anticipating a physical threat or loss that suggested by (Rholes, Riskind & Nevile, 1985).

According to the learning process, anxiety is hampered at various points. So, anxiety may restrict the process in three stages; the input stage, the processing stage as well as the output stage. In the input stage, anxiety causes interruption, which hinders the taking of new substances. In the processing stage, anxiety affects memory by restricting a well-organized arrangement and storing materials. Finally, at the output stage, anxiety will impede proper recovery of the material studied.

According to Fikri Asih (2017) to solve the psychological difficulties involved in the student writing process, teachers can apply portfolio writing, collaborative writing, and psychological participation by making a type of student writing and can be rewarded for motivation.

### **1. 3- Cognitive difficulties:**

Trainees with a lower writing quality, use a portion of their cognitive ability, to focus on the language that indicates that it is impossible to use other functions related to the organization of writing and discourse at the maximum level. Baoshu and Chuanbi (2015) have demonstrated that working memory has an important influence on grammatical complexity and fluency in student writing. However, no effect was discovered within lexical complexity and accuracy. Additionally, the operational aspect of the writing difficulty students face is that learning to write can be devastating and stressful.

### **3.1- Writing continuities:**

Writing problems rarely occurs in isolation. This progress in writing was in line with the development of other skills that should never relate to writing skills. As a result, a problem develops one of such skill which is reading.

### **3.2- Attention problem:**

Students grapple with the interest that can be inattentive and precipitous, and these problems may be illustrated by: difficulty starting writing assignments, easy to get distracted while writing assignments. In addition, to psychological fatigue during the time of writing and improper organized papers ( Dianna & Nickesha , 2013)

### **3. 6- Language problem:**

The effectiveness depends on the students language abilities and developed overtime. Students may cause linguistic problems with incomplete vocabulary, inappropriate formulation and unusual grammar, poor use of vernacular language, and the problems with the syntax and word order, plus the problem with word sounds, extension and meaning.

### **4. Pedagogical challenges:**

The pedagogical aspect is one of the most important things for all the kinds of the learning process, so it's the science and the art of teaching.

Zamel (1985, p.79) stated that the teacher notes that they can be effective, if the teachers respond to the students who they write as genuine rather than as judges and evaluators.

Likewise, Byrne (1988, p.29) believes that if we are not sure, and perhaps we should not look too much at what the learners have failed to achieve, but rather at what they have actually succeeded in doing. This book may help students appreciate receiving and using the feedback in their reviews.

Maram Alluhaybi (2014) suggested that the teachers must devote enough time to the students to regard their writing difficulties, and give an importance for the necessities to make a written communication.

Muhammad Fareed (2016) also claimed that teachers must be trained not only on the effective teaching practices, but also they know how to provide highly constructive and effective feedback.

## **2. Causes of students 'difficulties in writing:**

The majority of EFL students have difficulty with the writing skill due to many reasons, and those reasons hinder them from writing in appropriate manner which are listed as follows:

### **2.1-The nature of writing process:**

One of the most common causes of writing problems is its nature, because writing is a complex process and this complexity makes it difficult for students to produce a piece of writing. Nunan (1989, p.36) wrote the following passage concerning the writing difficulty: «Writing is an extremely cognitive activity in which the writer is required to demonstrate control of a number of variables simultaneously. At the sentence level these include control of content, format, sentence structure, vocabulary, punctuation and letter for action. Beyond the sentence, the writer must be able to structure and integrate information into cohesive and coherent paragraphs and texts.»

### **2.2-Lack of motivation:**

According to Harmer (2007) motivation is the reason underlying behavior, and it has two main types intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. The first type comes from the individual in which the students have interest to write and motivate themselves alone. The second type is external and here the students need a reason such as passing an exam to motivate themselves. ‘‘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, 2006, p.3).

### **2.3- Inadequate time:**

The writing activities need to be given more time because the writing process has many stages. White and Arndt (1991, p.47) argued that’’ Time is needed to incubate, sift and shape ideas. Of all the skills, writing is one which most benefits from time.’’ Time may also be a key factor in producing a good piece of writing. Time is an essential element in the writing process and it differentiates writing from speaking. Kroll (1990) said that many students feel that writing under time pressure is an unnatural situation and this hinders students from writing well and producing a coherent text.

### **2.4- Lack of practice:**

Practice is one of the most important reasons that contribute to the progress of students in writing and the development of their level. Hedge ( 2005, p.11) states that ‘‘ my own experience tells me that in order to become a good writer, a student needs to write a lot’’. It

means that writing is acquired and students should do their best to learn how to communicate their ideas clearly by practicing all the time. Students who are not practicing writing are more likely to encounter problems during the writing process.

### **2.5- Lack of reading:**

Reading is one of the activities used to teach writing and it is an effective way to improve students' level. Byrne (1991, p. 22) argued that "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." It means that better readers are better writers and better writers always read more than poorer writers. Raimes (1994) advised teachers using reading technique to teach the writing skill because when they read a lot they will have a new language and a great package of information and they become familiar with the English vocabulary.

### **2.6-Influence of first language:**

In addition to all these reasons, there is a major reason that causes students to have writing difficulty due to the influence of L1 on the target one. According to Friedlander (1997, p. 109). "writers will transfer writing abilities and strategies, whether good or deficient, from their first language to their second or third language". It means that whenever the students start writing they think in the mother tongue language and then translate their thoughts and ideas to the target language. Also, many writers declared that there is not necessary to be good writers in L1 to be so in L2.

### **Conclusion:**

The first part of the present study dealt with literature review about the obstacles that students faced while they write in English. An overview about the writing skill was discussed, as well as teaching writing. Also, the problems of writing in English and its reasons which is the important part in the literature review.

## **Chapter two: Research design and Methodology**

### Introduction

#### 1-Data collection method

##### 1.1-Choice of a research method

##### 1.2-Data analysis method

###### 1.2.1-Qualitative Analysis

###### 1.2.2-Quantitative analysis

#### 1.3-Research instrument

##### 1.3.1-Definition of questionnaire

##### 1.3.2-Advantages of questionnaires

#### 1.4-Population

#### 1.5-Sample

## **Introduction:**

This chapter contains research design and methodology. It explains all the used methods to carry out this study. It defines the descriptive research, the data analysis method which includes qualitative and quantitative analysis. Also, it describes the research instrument which is the questionnaire and finally defines the participants.

### **1-Data collection method:**

To achieve our goal, we need to respond to a method. Cohen et al (2005) defined a methods as "range of approaches used in educational research to gather data which are to be used as basis for inference and interpretation, for explanation and prediction "(p,44).In other words ,the methods are those procedures that are used to collect data .

#### **1.1-Choice of a research method:**

The research method used in this research is the descriptive method. Burns and Grove stated that ‘‘descriptive design helps to identify problem in a current practice with a view to improve outcomes’’. (2001, p.248).The purpose of descriptive research is to explore the realities and to provide information about the elements as they occur. Also, the descriptive method is a method that we must use to describe the current situation; therefore, one develops suitable guidelines for future use. In our case, the current situation is the second year of English Language University. So, by using this method, we may establish future guidelines which help to solve or reduce the problem.

#### **1.2-Data analysis method:**

In this research the used method is a mixed method (qualitative and quantitative) to make the research more reliable.

##### **1.2.1-Qualitative Analysis:**

Qualitative is a method used to analyze data; its purpose is to explore, discover facts and draw conclusions about the writing difficulties faced by EFL students. According to Weir and Robert (1994) qualitative methods typically produce a wealth of detailed data about a much smaller number of people and cases. Qualitative data analysis involves organizing, accounting for and explaining the data.

### **1.2.2-Quantitative analysis:**

The quantitative analysis is used to analyze the collected data. In this method the data turned to numerical to facilitate the work. The data translated to different forms such as: tables, charts, bar-graphs...Its aim is to quantify respondents' answers.

### **1.3-Research instrument:**

A research instrument is a tool used to collect data. There are different types of research instruments which are: questionnaire, interviews, tests, observation... Weir and Robert state that:" a combination of data sources is likely to be necessary in most evaluations because often no one source can describe adequately such a diversity of features as is found in educational setting, and because of the need of collaboration of findings by using data from these different sources, collected by different methods and by different people." (1994, p. 137). In this research the used instrument is a questionnaire one for teachers and another for students.

#### **1.3.1-Definition of questionnaire:**

The questionnaire may be the only tool that can be solved as a way to collect a large amount of data with the least amount of time and effort. It is not easy to manage, but it also provides an overview of the hard-to-get problem questionnaires as pointed out by Anderson (1990,p.207) , "Allow the gathering of reliable and valid , relatively , in a short time ". It is considered as the most important tool that is used for gathering information about a specific topic in which it can be used as a set of clear questions that are sent for a specific population. According to Brown (2001) defined the questionnaire is " any written instrument that presents respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they are to react either by writing out their answers or selecting from among existing answers

#### **1.3.2-Advantages of questionnaires:**

The questionnaire is a research instrument consisting of a series of questions for the purpose of gathering information from the respondents. As Richterich and Chancerel (1980, p.59) state that "Questionnaires are structured instruments for the collection of data which translate research hypotheses into questions." So, it has many advantages; the main attraction of questionnaires is their unprecedented efficiency. To administer a questionnaires for group of people, one can gather information in less than an hour, and the personal investment

required will be a fraction of what it would be for, say, interviewing the same number of people. It may be used as a preliminary tool for conducting an in-depth study later on by any other method .And it permits group administration and is adaptable to any objectives .it can cover a large group at the same time. And other advantages were summarized by Beiske (2003, p.16) in some points which are. Firstly, most people are aware of the questionnaires, and know how to complete them. Also, the opinions of the respondents are not affected by the points of views of the researchers. Then, the respondents can fill out the questionnaires in their own place. Additionally, the questionnaires are easy to analyze.

#### **1.4-Population:**

Polit defined population as ‘’ the entire aggregation of cases that meet a specified set of criteria’’ (2001, p. 233). In this research the chosen population is second year English LMD students at Chadli BenDjedid University, El Taref and teachers of written expression at Chadli BenDjedid University to help us from their experience to find some solutions that can be beneficial for EFL students.

#### **1.5-Sample:**

According to Polit (2001) a sample is a group selected from the target population. In this study the sample are thirty second year studying English LMD at Chadli Ben Djedid University, El Taref , and five teachers of written expression at Chadli BenDjedid University.

## **Chapter three: Data Analysis and Discussion**

### Introduction

#### 1-Teachers' questionnaire

##### 1.1-Participants

##### 1.2-Description of the questionnaire

##### 1.3-Analysis of the results

#### 2-Students' questionnaire

##### 2.2-Description of the questionnaire

##### 2.3- Analysis of the results

## **Introduction:**

This chapter presents the practical part of the research under the title of data analysis and discussion. It presents the analysis and the results of students' and teachers' questionnaires. It contains two main parts; the first part is dedicated to teachers' questionnaires and the second one is for students' questionnaires. Tables and charts are used in this chapter to present the results.

### **1. Teachers' questionnaire:**

#### **1.1. Participants:**

The questionnaire was submitted randomly to five teachers of written expression at the department of English at Chadli BenDjedid University EL Taref to give their opinions concerning students' writing difficulties.

#### **1.2. Description of the questionnaire:**

The questionnaire consists of sixteen questions divided into three sections. The first section aims to collect general information which includes three questions about their gender, degree and numbers of years they taught at the university. The second section is entitled the writing skill which contains seven questions which are as follows. The period of time they have been teaching the written expression module, the second question is about if the hours of teaching written expression are enough and it is yes no question. The third question is about how much written expression is beneficial to enhance students' level in writing. The fourth question is about the importance of writing. The fifth question is about ordering the aspects (grammar, vocabulary, mechanics and content) according to their importance during writing activities. The sixth question is about if they help their students during the writing activities and if the answer is yes there are suggestions to choose from them which are: content, vocabulary, grammar and punctuation. The last question is concerning the importance of teacher feedback on students' level. Section three is entitled writing difficulties and consists of six questions. In the first question they were asked about the level of their students' level and they were given four options to choose from (very good, good, average and poor). The next question is about the used technique in teaching writing in the classroom and they have three options to choose from which are individual tasks, group work and class discussion. Question number 13 is about the common difficulties students face while they write in English and they were given options to choose from which are poor ideas, organization of

ideas, grammar rules, vocabulary, spelling, punctuation and interference of mother tongue; in this question they can choose more than one option and they can add other suggestions. Question number 14 is about how they help their students' overcome their writing difficulties. Question number 15 is concerning the reasons behind students' writing difficulties. The last question is to give some suggestions to overcome writing problems.

### 1.3-Analysis of the results:

#### Section one: General introduction

#### Q1: Gender

A/ Male

B/ Female

**Table2: Teachers' gender**

<b>Participants</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Females</b>	04	80%
<b>Males</b>	01	20%
<b>Total</b>	05	100%

The table above shows that 80% of the teachers are females which means 4 of them, whereas, 20% of them are males, which means 1 teacher.

#### Q2: What degree do you hold?

**A- MA( Master, Magister)**

**B- P. H. D ( doctorate)**

**Table3: Teachers' degree.**

<b>Options</b>	<b>Responses</b>
<b>MA</b>	<b>03</b>
<b>PHD</b>	<b>02</b>

The table above shows that three of the teachers have a Master's degree; while two of them have P.H.D (doctorate) degrees. The result of this question reveals that most of the teachers have Master's level.

**Q3: 3//How long have you been teaching English at the department of English?**

The results of this question are about the period of time they have been teaching English. It shows that 60% of the teachers answered that they have been teaching English for 10 to 15 years. 20% of them have been teaching English for 6 to 10 years. 20% of the teachers have been teaching English for 1 -5 years. The obtained results imply that teachers' experience is reliable for the aim of the questionnaires.

**Section two: The writing skill:**

**Q4: How long have you been teaching “written expression” module?**

The results of this question show that just one teacher has a three year experience in teaching a written expression module. The other four teachers taught written expression for one year.

**Q5: Do you think that the hours of teaching written expression are enough?**

- A. Yes
- B. No

**Table04: Teachers ‘opinions about time devoted to written expression module**

Option	Responses	Percentage
Yes	02	40%
No	03	60%
Total	05	100%

The table above shows that three teachers believe that the hours of teaching written expression is not enough to improve student's writing. While, the other two teachers said that it's not enough.

**Q6: How can the written expression module help students to enhance their level in writing?**

The results of this question show that all the five teachers said that the written expression module helps the students to enhance their level in writing. First teacher said that this module is fundamental one in which the students at this level (university) must be taught to identify the features and structures of English sentences and paragraphs for which they can lately know how to transfer the spoken form into written form. So, providing students with the

structure and strategies for constructing appropriate sentences and paragraphs will give them the basic skills necessary to write effectively. Second teacher claimed that the writing skill helps the students by giving them enough time to practice different types of writing and to reflect on them. Third teacher said that written expression helps the students to know the rules of writing to make the language feel more. They will be able to write essays and even memories. Fourth teacher said that written expression helps the students by teaching them the necessary skills and competencies to master writing like how to use the mechanics of writing appropriately. The last teacher said that written expression teaches the students the principles and guidelines of the writing skill as it helps them to identify the grammar items, punctuation, writing techniques, cohesion and coherence.

**Q7: Why do you think writing is an important skill?**

The results of question number seven show that all the five teachers answer that writing is an important skill .The first teacher said that, without writing learners cannot communicate and express themselves or their thoughts. The second teacher said that writing is an important skill because it is the interpretation of what is spoken and even the inner thoughts into a written form to be read by the audience .The third teacher said that , it makes the learners express their ideas into concrete forms of sentences, and to practice grammar with its simple and complex structures .The fourth teacher said , that writing is an important skill because , when learning any language no one can deny the importance and the crucial role of writing skills .Because if you don't know how to write your ideas and express your viewpoints . This means you didn't truly learn a language .The fifth teacher said that it is important because it achieves language proficiency, especially for academic achievement. The findings show that all the teachers consider writing as an important skill.

**Q8: Which of the following aspects do you give great importance in your writing instruction? (Order them according to their importance).**

A/ Grammar

B/ Vocabulary

C/ Content

D/ Mechanics

**Table5: Teachers' perception about the importance of the aspects**

<b>options</b>	<b>cbad</b>	<b>Dbac</b>	<b>dbca</b>	<b>Cadb</b>	<b>dabc</b>
<b>teachers</b>	1	1	1	1	1

The table above shows the order of the aspects according to each teacher. All the five teachers said that the aspects give great importance in the writing instruction, and every teacher ordered them according to him / her opinions. The first teacher ordered them as follows: content, vocabulary, grammar then vocabulary. The second teacher ordered them from mechanics, vocabulary, grammar and content. . The third teacher ordered them from the mechanics, to vocabulary, to content, then grammar. The fourth teacher ordered them from the content, to vocabulary, to grammar, then mechanics. The last teacher ordered them from the mechanics, to vocabulary, to grammar, then the content.

**Q9. Do you help your students when they write?**

A/Yes

B/No

**Table6: Helping students during writing**

<b>Option</b>	<b>Participants</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Yes</b>	05	100%
<b>No</b>	00	00%

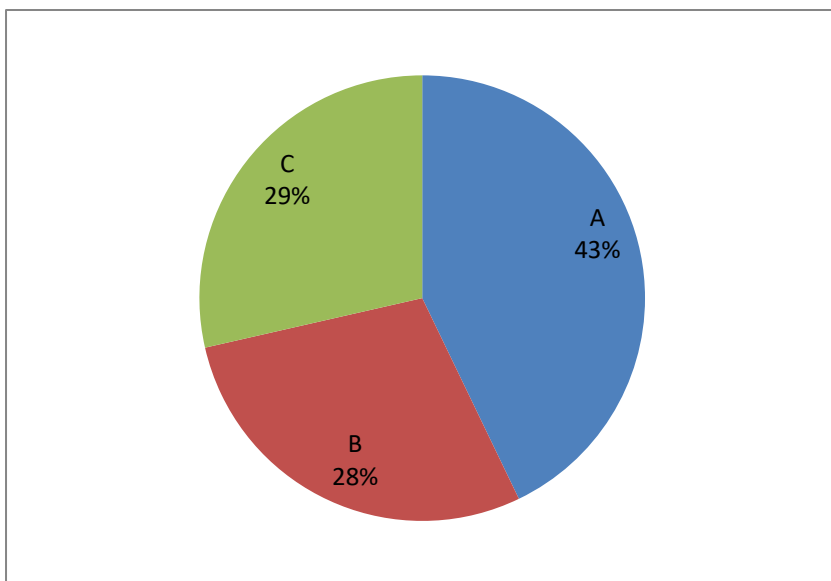
**\*If yes, do you help them in? ( you can choose more than one answer).**

A/ Content

B/ Vocabulary

C/ Grammar

D/Punctuation



**Graph01: Helping students during writing**

This question shows that all the teachers (05) help their students when they write. Walking around and helping students while writing is essential in guiding. The table above revealed that all the teachers help their students edit content with a rate of 41%. 25% of them help students edit punctuation and their number is three teachers. 17% of the teachers help their students edit vocabulary and their number are two teachers and the same percentage goes to teachers who help students editing grammar.

**Q10. How can your feedback improve your student's writing?**

This question is about the effect of teachers' feedback on improving students' writing skill. The first teacher said that the feedback makes the students aware about their mistakes, where they are lacking as far as their writing skill is concerned, and this would help them to focus more on their weaknesses and adjust their writing accordingly. The second teacher said that the feedback helps their students know their mistakes to avoid them later on, and gives them guidance in producing correct and well structured pieces of writing. The third teacher said that the feedback helps the students to motivate them to write more and gain self confidence. The fourth teacher said that a positive feedback can improve students' writing skill, because it guides them to avoid their mistakes and improve their writing. The last teacher said that the feedback improves students' writing by making them avoid the same errors of grammar and vocabulary, improve their style of writing, and write their ideas in a chronological order. The results show that teachers help their students to improve their writing skills.

### Section three: Writing difficulties

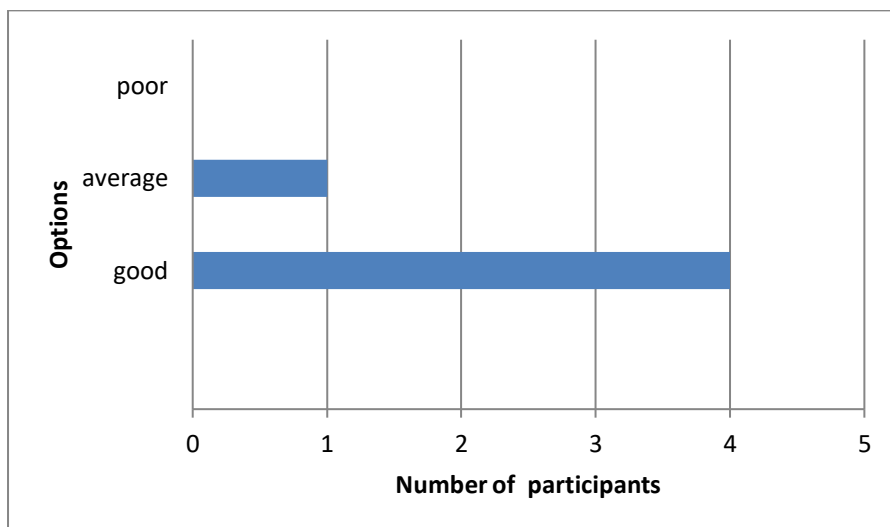
#### Q11. How do you see your students' level in writing?

A/Very good

B/Good

C/ Poor

D/ Average



#### Graph02: Teachers' assessment for their students' level of writing

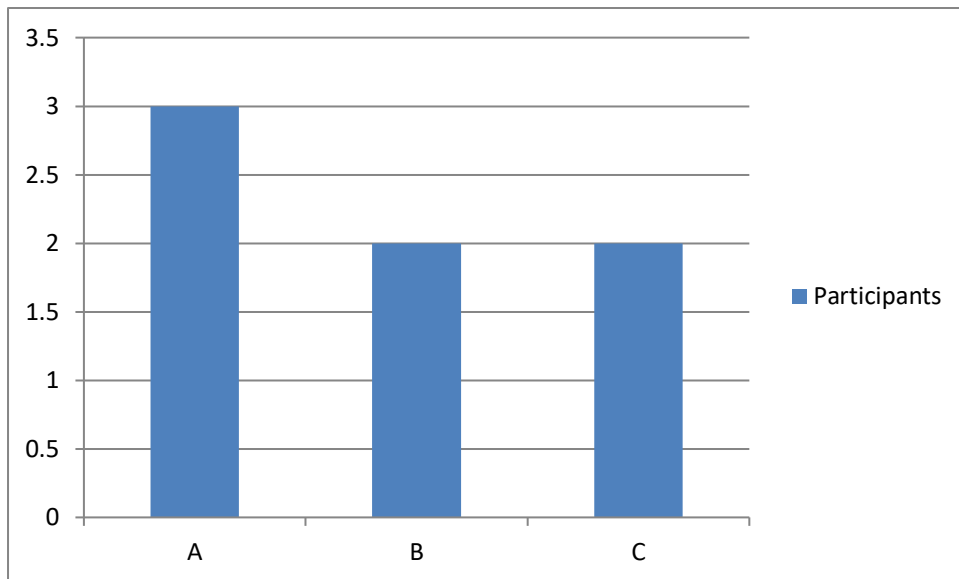
According to the results from the graph above, 80% of the teachers, which means four of them said that their students have an average level in writing, only one teacher claimed that the level of students is good in writing. Except for all these assessments, no teacher could say that his/ her students' level is poor or very good and in general the level of all students is average.

#### Q12. Which technique do you use in teaching writing in class? (You can choose more than one option).

A/ Group work

B/ Class discussion

C/ individual work



**Graph03: Teachers used technique in teaching writing**

The graph above represents the used technique in teaching writing. Three teachers with a 44% rate are using the group work. Two teachers use class discussion as a way to teach writing with a rate of 28%. Two teachers use individual work with a rate of 28%.

**Q13.What are the common difficulties your students face in writing?**

A/ Poor ideas

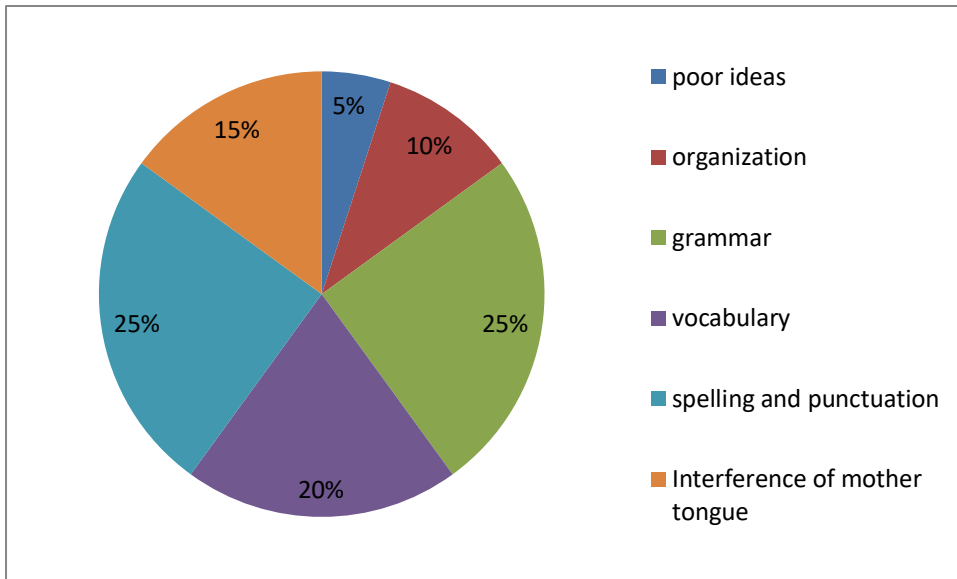
B/ Organization of ideas

C/ Grammar rules

D/ Vocabulary

E/ Spelling and punctuation

F/ Interference of the mother tongue



**Graph04: Most common writing difficulties of students**

The above graph shows that the teachers who participated in this questionnaire were asked to provide the difficulties faced by their students while writing. 25% of teachers assert that spelling and punctuation is the most significant item in the students' production with grammar which also rate 25% as the most common problem rather than the other item .20% of the teachers choose vocabulary as the most frequent problem in writing. 15% of teachers assert that interference of the mother tongue is the most difficult one than the other items. However, 10% of teachers choose organizations of ideas and 5% goes to poor ideas items.

**Q14.How do you help your students to overcome their difficulties?**

The result of this question shows that all the teachers have their own ways to help their students overcome the obstacles that students faced during the writing process. The first one said that she helps her students with more practice, and integrating other skills in EFL writing classroom like reading. The second one said that she helps her students by providing guidance, throughout the writing process by discussing the importance of outlining, making notes , explaining how to select and narrow a topic, and to think without resorting to the mother tongue. The third teacher said that she helps her students with giving them more practice in writing. The fourth one said that she helps her students to overcome their difficulties in writing by giving them feedback, and advice. The last one said he helps his students by motivating them to write and not get frustrated.

### **Q15. In your opinion what are the reasons behind students writing difficulties**

The results of this question show that all the teachers have their own points of view about the reasons behind the writing students' difficulties. So, the first one said that the most important thing is a poor vocabulary, and grammar knowledge that affect their writing to a greater extent. She said that one of the major problems of her students is that they rarely read and hence, they won't have enough ideas while writing. Also, writing in a foreign language may be difficult for EFL students, which makes them always thinking in their mother tongue, causing them to make a lot of language errors. The second one said that there are many reasons behind students' difficulties such as reliance on L1, weak structure organization, few command of grammar, and lack of vocabulary. The third one said that the reason behind her students' difficulties is lack of motivation, and less practice. The fourth one said that the reasons behind her students' difficulties are the lack of practice for writing and the lack of reading. The last one said that the reasons behind his students' difficulties are: fear of failing, not to be able to express what they really want not to allocate, more time to write at home, shortage of readings and relying on the content and syntax more than on the process of writing.

### **Q16 What do you suggest overcoming the writing difficulties?**

This question is shown that all the teachers suggest some solutions to overcome the writing difficulties. The first one said that she mentioned reading and practicing, which help the students to make their writing skill better. The second one said that, to overcome the students writing difficulties, by making many practices, reading in English (books, articles, newspapers) extensively would enhance students' style unintentionally. The third one said that the students can overcome the writing difficulties by using reading, listening, and practice. The fourth one said that, to overcome the writing difficulties, the students should read different types of texts, novels, or books to enrich their vocabulary and widen their ideas and thoughts. They should also practice writing frequently in different topics. They should also learn about the mechanics of writing particularly, how to write an effective paragraph which is the basic startup for longitudinal texts. The last one said that; to overcome the writing difficulties, the students sensitize learners about the importance , and the significance of writing as a skill, to ask them to write more at home ( free writing) , to write in groups ,and exchange their drafts by their peers , and to allocate more time to teach written

expression. As a result, the majority of the teacher presents that to overcome the writing difficulties the most appropriate technique is work on the reading skill.

## **2. Students' questionnaire:**

### **2.1. Participants:**

The questionnaire was submitted randomly to 30 second year LMD students of English at the department of English in Chadli BenDjedid University from 60 students. The aim of this questionnaire is to help students identify their problems and think about solutions to those obstacles.

### **2.2. Description of the questionnaire:**

The questionnaire includes 17 questions devoted into three parts. The first part aims to collect general information and consists of three questions as follows: gender, age and level. The second part is entitled the writing skill and includes six questions. In the first question we asked them about their level in writing and they choose from four options which are: low, average, good and very good. The second question is about how they find the module of written expression very interesting, interesting or not interesting. The next question is which are the most important components according to them are and they can choose more than one choice from grammar, vocabulary, spelling and punctuation. The other question is if they see writing is the best way of expressing ideas and the answer with yes or no. The following question is about how much they practice writing and the given suggestions are always, occasionally, often and never. The last question is giving them some options to choose from about the strategy they follow after having the topic and the options are to directly start to write, make an outline and brainstorming. The third part is entitled writing difficulties and it contains seven questions. This part starts with question number ten which is about if they fill blank while writing in English and the answer with yes or no. In the next question they were asked if their teachers help them during writing or not. Question number 12 is about the most difficult step in the writing process (generating ideas, drafting, revising and editing). Question number 13 is about where they make changes after finishing writing and the suggestions are content, grammar, punctuation, vocabulary or spelling. The next question is to ask them about where exactly finding more problems while choosing the topic and they have given three options to choose from which are a given topic by the teacher, free topic or topic suggested by their colleagues. The following question is about the most common difficulties they face during writing and free to choose more than one answer from the following options. Question number 16 is how their teachers help them overcome their writing difficulties. The last

question is about giving their suggestions to overcome writing difficulties and enhance their skill.

**2.3- Analysis of the results:**

**Section one: General information**

**Q1: Gender**

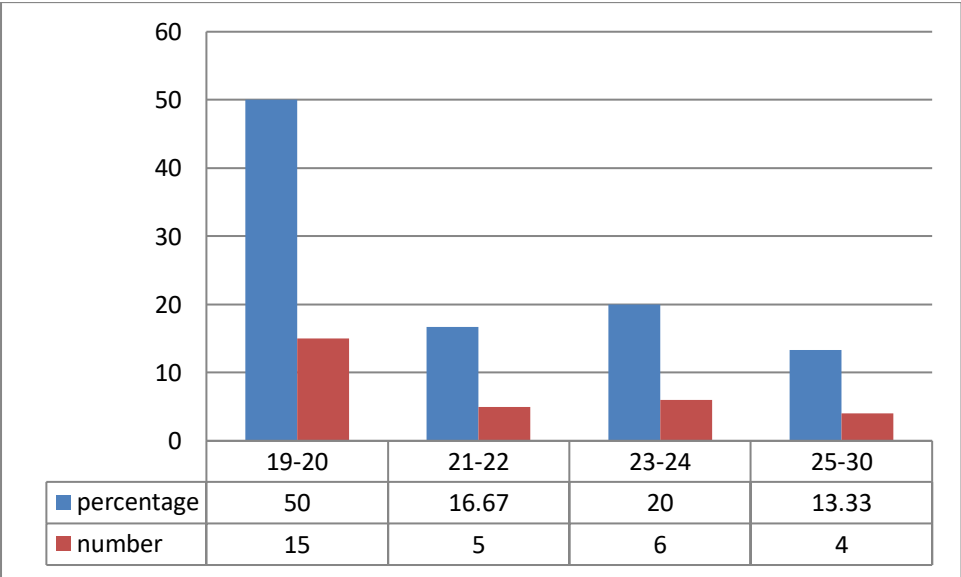
- a- Male
- b- Female

**Table 07: Students’ gender**

Gender	Male	Female
Number	10	20
Percentage	33.33%	66.67%

The above results show that the majority of the participants are females (20 out of 30) with the percentage of 66.67%. On the other hand, 33.33% rate of male was measured meaning that there are only (10 out of 30) males. This result supports the hypothesis that foreign languages best suit females, while males their interest is devoted to science.

**Q2: Age**



**Graph05: Students’ age**

The above graph represents students' age, they are varying from 19 to 30 years old. 50% represents the majority of the students who are between 19 and 20 years with the number of 15 students. The number of students who are aged between 21 and 22 years are five with the percentage of 16.67%. The number of the participants who are between 23 and 24 are six with the percentage of 20%. And the number of the participants between 25 and 30 are four students with the percentage 13.33%.

### Q3: Level

In this study all the participants are second year students from the department of English at Chadli BenDjedid University El Taref.

### Part2: writing skill

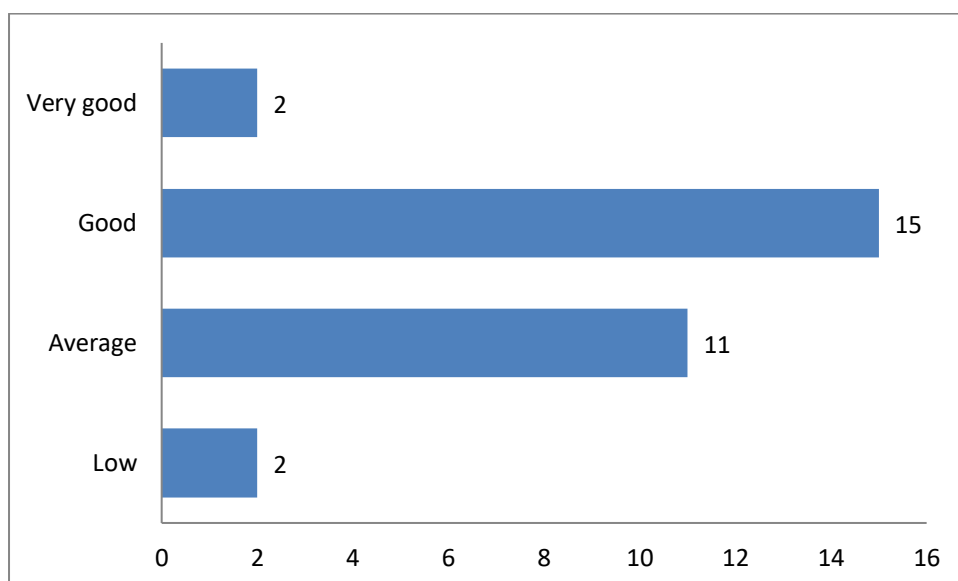
#### Q4: How do you rate your writing performance?

A/Low

B/Average

C/Good

D/Very good



**Graph06: Students' rating to their writing performance**

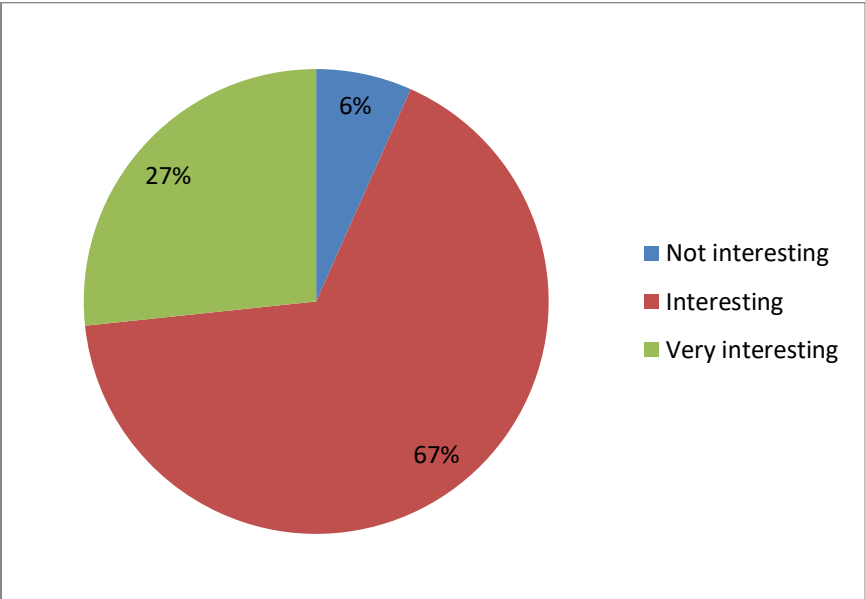
The results above represent students' answers to their rating of their writing level. The graph clarifies that half of the participants have an average writing level (50%). Also, 11 students have a good rate of 36.7% within their writing performance. Two students answered that they have a good level in writing with a percentage of 6.7%. However, 6.7% represents the rate of the two students with low levels. The results show that in general the level of second year students is average.

**Q5: How do you find the module of written expression?**

A/Very interesting

B/Interesting

C/Not interesting



**Graph07: Students' opinions about the interest in the written expression module**

The above graph shows that 20 students find that the written expression module is interesting with a rate of 67%. While, eight students answered that the module is very interesting with a rate of 27%. However, two students find it not interesting with a rate of 6% which makes it hard for them to develop their level because the interest is the starting point of

the success. The obtained results show that the majority of the students have interest in the written expression module.

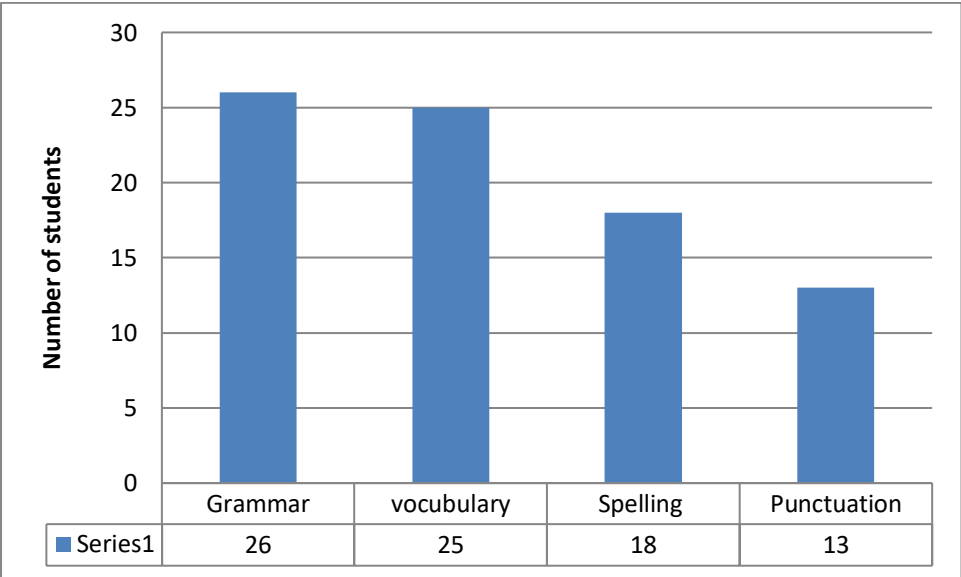
**Q6: What is the most important component according to you? (You can choose more than one answer.)**

A/Grammar

B/Vocabulary

C/Spelling

D/Punctuation



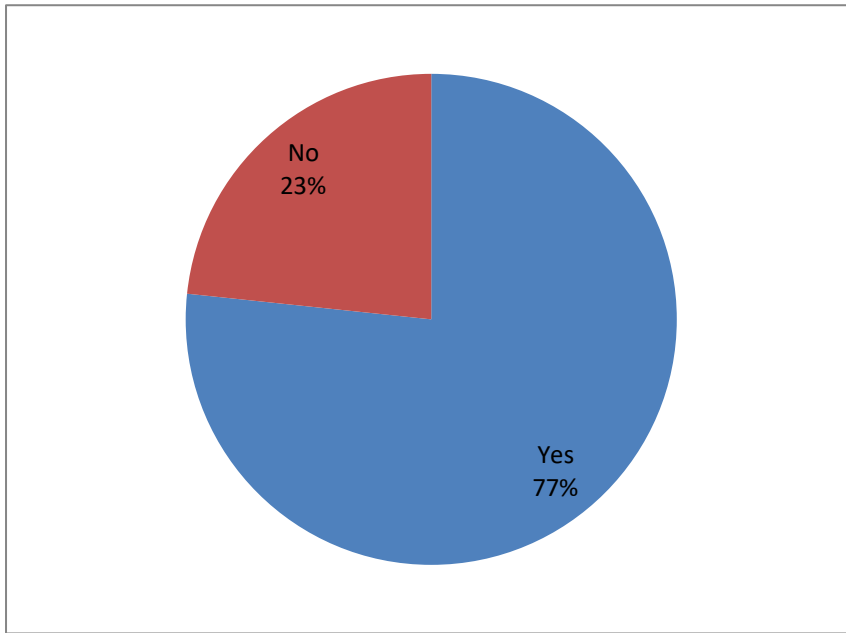
**Graph08: Students’ perception about the most important components**

The graph above shows the most important components to the students in which they can choose more than one option. Twenty six students argued that grammar is the most important aspect with a rate of 32%. Twenty five students declared that vocabulary is the important component for them with a rate of 30%. Also, 18 students chose spelling as the most important component with a rate of 22%. While 13 students answered that punctuation is the most important component to them. The obtained results show that grammar and vocabulary are the most important components for the majority of the students.

**Q7: Do you think writing is the best way of expressing thoughts?**

A/ Yes

B/ No



**Graph09: Students’ opinions about writing as the best way of expressing ideas**

The above graph shows that 23 of the students answered that writing is the best way to express their ideas with a rate of 77%. While seven students their answer was no with a rate of 33%. The results show that the majority of the students find writing the appropriate way of expressing their ideas.

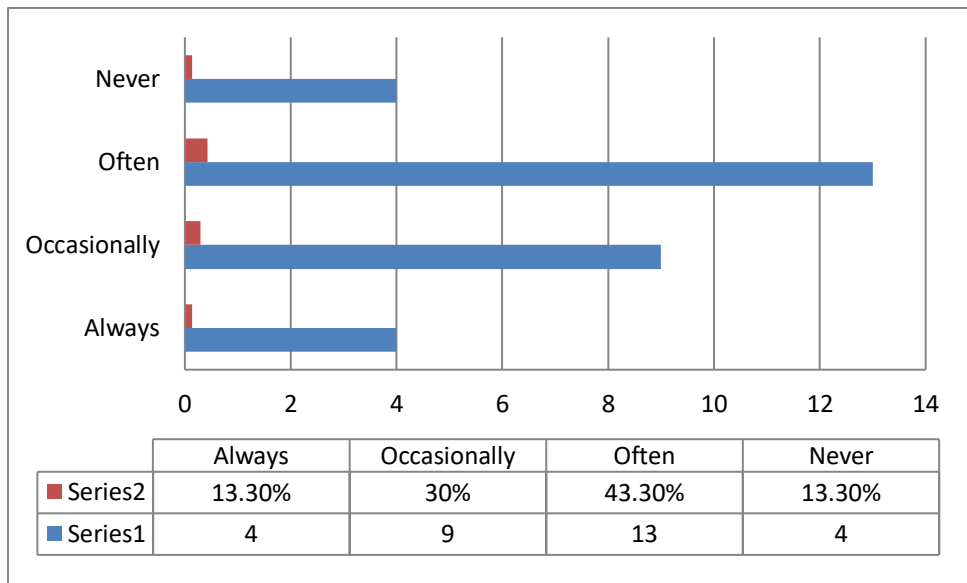
**Q8: How often do you practice writing?**

A/ Always

B/occasionally

C/Often

D/Never



**Graph10: Students’ measurement of their writing practice**

The graph above represents students’ writing practice. It shows that 13.30% argued that they always practice writing and their number was four students. 30% of the participants said that they occasionally practice writing and they were nine students. 43.3% of the participants said that they practice writing often and their number was 13 students. 13.3% declared that they never practice writing and their number was four students. The obtained results show that students did not practice writing as it should and less practice will make them facing a lot of problems.

**Q9: which one of those options you start with after you have the topic?**

A/directly start writing

B/Make an outline

C/Brainstorming

**Table08: Students’ attitudes towards their topics before start writing**

Options	Participants	Percentage
Directly start writing	5	17%
Make an outline	7	23%
Brainstorming	18	60%
Total	30	100%

The table above represents the strategies followed by the students before they start writing. More than the half (60%) of the participants preferred brainstorming as the best technique and their number was 18 students. Seven students make an outline before starting writing with a rate of 23%. While, five students answered that they directly start writing after having the topic with a rate of 17%.

### Part3: writing difficulties

#### Q10: Do you fill blank while write something in English?

A/Yes

B/No

**Table09: Students' perceptions about the difficulty of writing in English**

Options	Participants	Percentage
Yes	16	53.3%
No	14	46.7%

The table above represents the result of question number ten which is about if the students feel blank while writing in English or no. The results show that 53.3% of the students suffer with this problem and their number were 16 students. While, 46.7% of the participants answered no to this question and their number were 14 students.

#### Q11: Does your teacher help you during the writing process?

A/Yes

B/ N

**Table10: Teachers assistantship for their students**

Options	Participants	Percentage
Yes	14	47%
No	16	53%

The above graph represents the findings of question number 11 which is about if teachers help students during the writing process or not. 53% of the participants answered no and their number was 16 students. The number of the students who answered yes to this question was 14 with a rate of 47%. The obtained findings show that every teacher follows an own strategies in helping students.

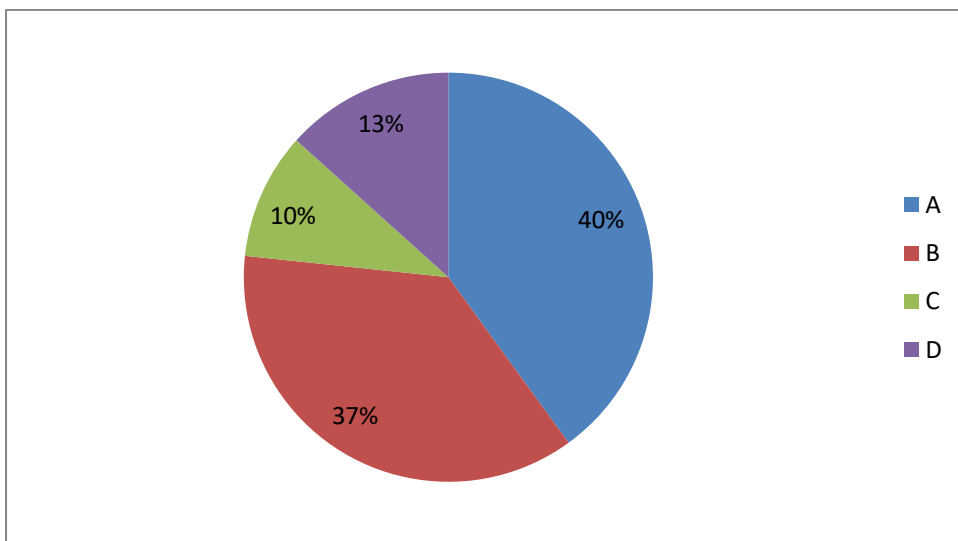
**Q12: what is the most difficult step according to you?**

A/Generating ideas

B/ Writing initial draft

C/ Revising

D/Editing



**Graph11: Most difficult stage of writing for students**

The graph above shows the most difficult stages of writing for the students and their answers were as follows. Twelve students find generating ideas is the most difficult step for them with a rate of 40%. 11 students declared that for them the most difficult step is writing the initial draft with a rate of 13%. Four students chose revising as the most difficult step with a rate of 13%. Three students find editing the most difficult step in writing with a rate of 10%.

**13/When you finish writing, do you check and correct: (you can choose more than one answer).**

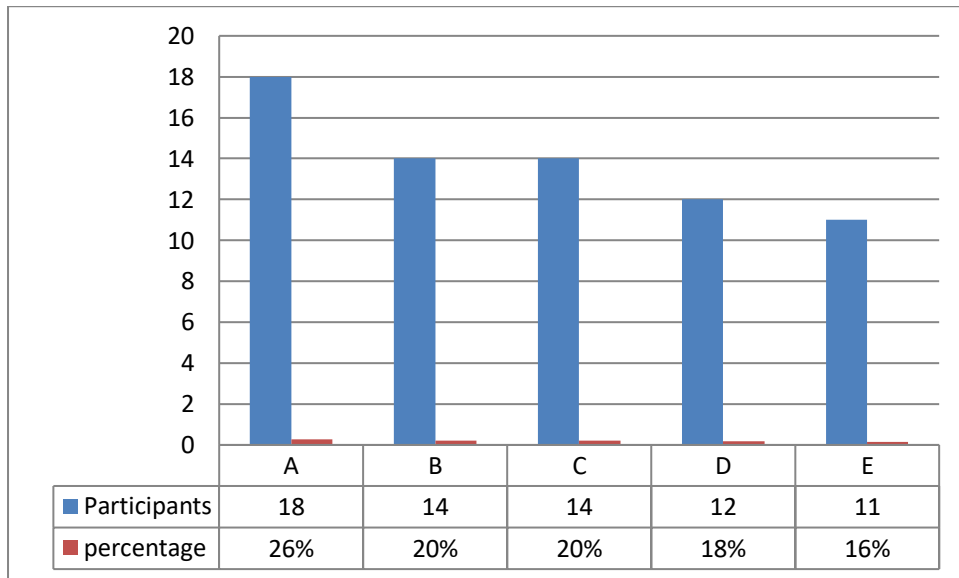
A/Content

B/Vocabulary

C/grammar

D/Punctuation

E/ Spelling



**Graph12: Students’ process when finishing writing**

The graph above is concerning the changes students make after finishing writing. 26% said that they make changes in punctuation and their number is 18 students. 20% is the rate of students who make change in grammar and their number is 14 students. 20% represents the percentage of participants who make changes in vocabulary and their number is 14 students. 18% of the participants make changes in content and their number is 12 students. 16% answered that they make changes in spelling and their number is 11 students. In this question the students could choose more than one option and the findings show that a single student makes different changes after finishing writing.

**Q14: When do you face more problems, when you write with?**

A/A given topic by the teacher

B/Free topic

C/Topic suggested by your colleagues

**Table11: Students’ measurement about the most difficult technique in choosing the topic**

<b>Options</b>	<b>Participants</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>A</b>	20	66.66%
<b>B</b>	5	16.67%
<b>C</b>	5	16.67%
<b>Total</b>	30	100%

The above table represents the findings of question number 14 which are about the technique where they find more problems while choosing the topic. 66.66% of the participants declare that they find more problems when they write with a given topic with the teacher and their number is 20 students. The remaining percentage is divided in half between free topic and topic suggested by their colleagues with a rate of 16.67% for each option; and the number of students is five for each option. The analysis of the results show that students prefer free topics because they choose a topic and have a background about it and also prefer to write with a topic suggested by their colleagues because they are from the same generation and have the same interest.

**Q15: What are the most common difficulties you face during writing? (You can choose more than one option)**

A/ write in a good structure

B/ lack of grammar

C/ lack of vocabulary

D/Fear from negative feedback

E/ dislike the topic

F/ Lack of motivation

G/Language problem

**Table12: Students' rating their writing difficulties**

Options	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Participants	09	08	11	07	23	05	07
Percentage	13%	11%	16%	10%	33%	07%	10%

The table above shows the results of question number 15 which is about writing difficulties. Nine students answered that they find difficulties in writing in a good structure with a percentage of 13%. Eight students answered that they find difficulties in grammar with a rate of 11%. 16% of the students declared that lack of vocabulary is the cause of their writing difficulties and their number are 11 students. Seven students said that they fear negative feedback with a rate of 10%. 33% of students stated that if they dislike the topic they face more difficulties in writing and their number is 23 students. 05% of the students considered lack of motivation the most common writing difficulties for them and their number is five students. 10% of the students considered language problems the most common writing difficulties for them and their number is seven students.

**\*Add suggestion**

Some students add suggestions which are as follows:

- 1- "I feel overwhelmed when writing. I don't know how to start, how to develop my ideas and how to conclude".
- 2- "My biggest problem in writing is not knowing how to write correct English sentences".
- 3- "Not having enough ideas about the topics that my teacher asks us to write about".
- 4- "I feel blank and forgot ideas"
- 5- "I couldn't finish on time"

**Q16: How does your teacher help you to overcome those difficulties?**

In this question the students present the way their teachers help them and their answers were as follows.

- 1- By giving a lot of homework to do and different kinds of exercises.
- 2- By giving the opportunity of choosing the topic to students.
- 3- By giving positive and corrective feedback.
- 4- By showing that teachers do not want a perfect piece of writing from students and they are allowed to make mistakes to learn from them in the future.
- 5- Teachers' advice always is to practice a lot.

- 6- By giving a lot of tasks concerning various writing styles.
- 7- By giving the opportunity to students to correct their mistakes alone.
- 8- Teachers give individual comments, so each student knows his/her weakness areas

**Q17: In your opinion, what are the most appropriate strategies to overcome writing difficulties?**

In this question the students proposed some useful solutions to reduce and overcome writing difficulties which are as follows.

- 1- Reading a lot because it is the best method to improve writing skills.
- 2- Teachers should use creative activities to teach writing.
- 3- Give much time to writing activities.
- 4- Focus should be on motivation as an essential aspect of the teaching and learning.
- 5- Practice writing everyday because practice makes perfect and helps in learning new vocabulary.
- 6- Master the grammar rules.
- 7- Focus on group work so they can exchange thoughts and feel free.
- 8- Use technology to teach writing
- 9- Prepare an outline to work with during writing
- 10- Selecting interesting topics with background about it.
- 11- Give the students the opportunity to correct their mistakes alone.
- 12- Enough time should be devoted to written expression.
- 13- Use adequate technique in correcting students' written products to foster good productions.
- 14- The problem of time can be solved by giving much time to written expression sessions.

## **Chapter four: Practical implications and recommendations**

### Introduction

#### 1- Suggestions for improving students' writing skill

##### 1.1-Providing students with feedback

##### 1.2-The use of technology during writing classes:

##### 1.3- Group work writing

##### 1.4- Integrating language skills

#### 2-Recommendations

##### 2.1-For teachers

##### 2.2-For students

## **Introduction:**

After the analysis of the findings we found that students face many difficulties that affect their development in English writing. The present chapter is entirely devoted to some possible recommendations and suggestions to develop students' writing skill.

## **1-Suggestions for improving students' writing skill:**

### **1.1-Providing students with feedback:**

Teachers should be aware about the effects of feedback and the way it is used. Williams said that "a key to improve students' writing skills does not lie simply having them write. They must write and receive meaningful feedback on work in progress, and then they must use that feedback to revise." (2003, p.14). It means that the purpose of feedback is to reinforce students improving their writing skill and teachers should focus more on the way they addressed the feedback to students.

### **1.2-The use of technology during writing classes:**

Nowadays the use of the internet and computer become common in schools and it is a beneficial technique because students depend a lot on technology in their studies. Using technology as a tool for learning helps them increase and develop their writing skill. Mellouk stated some advantages concerning the use of electronic materials in the classroom which are as follows.: students produce neat texts, they produce to a certain extent more error free texts, they take more initiative, spend more time on the assignments and more time on task, thus they are more involved with assignments and they show more enthusiasm and more positive attitudes. (2008, p.233).

### **1.3- Group work writing:**

Work in groups is considered as the best technique to learn how to write for the majority of students because they feel supported and they are not alone. Group work activities encourage students to give their opinions, exchange information and ideas and students can be actively engaged in the writing activity. The teacher plays the role of the coach in which to put the plan to facilitate the activity and provide them with advice during their writing process. Williams (2003, p.106) adds that teachers need to "Intervene regularly in the learning

process, immediately correcting those things students do wrong and praising those things they do right, giving reinforcement when it is most useful and most beneficial”.

#### **1.4-Integrating language skills:**

Scholars advise not to teach writing in isolation, but it should be integrated and taught in relation with the other language skills (reading, listening and speaking). It means that all the teachers of the modules should work together in collaboration to help students communicate in the target language meaningfully and appropriately. Shih (1986, p.624) states” Students listen, discuss, and read about a topic before writing about it as contrasted to the traditional belief that in a writing course, students should only write”.

#### **2- Recommendations:**

The following recommendations on the basics of the finding and the analysis of the questionnaire for both students and teachers:

-Integrating the four language skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking) since they complete each other.

##### **2.1-For teachers:**

-Teachers of written expression should be well trained.

-The teacher should provide a relaxed atmosphere during the writing sessions.

-Teacher should encourage their students to practice writing a lot during classes and also at home.

-Teachers should push on their students’ motivation by adding extra marks.

-Teachers should help their students during the activities if they missed words.

- Teachers should use different and creative activities to teach writing.

-Teachers should use group work so students could learn from each other and correct each other pieces.

-Teachers should give students homeworks to get used to writing and enhance their levels.

-Encourage students to read a lot because reading is the appropriate technique to enhance students' level.

-Teachers should give enough time to writing activities.

-Teachers should increase the use of technology during classes.

-Teachers should give positive feedback always to their students to make them always motivated to be good writers in the future.

-The teachers should give the students the opportunity to correct their mistakes alone and then give them their comments.

## **2.2-For students:**

-Students must be aware about the importance of the writing skill.

-Students should be given an interesting topic to write about it.

-Students should be motivated during the writing activities to improve their writing ability.

-Students should follow the teachers' instructions and ask if there is something they did not understand.

-Students should practice lot writing outside the classroom.

-Students should focus on reading.

-Students should focus more on learning grammar rules and gain new vocabulary.

## **General conclusion:**

One of the most important inventions in human history is writing which is an essential part of the communication process in any language; it allows sharing our communication with future generations. Writing occupies a centre stage at the university level and knowing how to write effectively is one of the abilities that language learners need to develop. EFL teachers want their students to write correctly and in appropriate manner because writing skill is essential to academic success and a requirement for many occupations and professions. Many students face difficulties to reach a satisfactory level in writing and communicating their ideas in a coherent and organized manner.

The dissertation has investigated the difficulties of the writing skill of EFL second year students at the department of English in Chadli BenDjedid University, El Taref. In addition, the study also attempted to explore solutions that can help students overcome writing difficulties and enhance students' writing ability.

This study has comprised a general introduction and four main chapters. The general introduction gave an overview about the study and introduces the plan and the main steps to conduct the study. The first chapter is the literature review which is the theoretical part of the study; and it has been divided into three sections. The first section of chapter one is an overview on the writing skill. The second section is teaching writing; and the third section is writing difficulties. The second chapter is research design and methodology which introduced the used techniques in conducting this study. Chapter three was devoted to the practical part of the study, it contained two questionnaires one for students, and the other for the teacher. Also, it provided the analysis of the questionnaire and the results of the study. Most of the answers given by the teachers and students showed that the majority of the students have difficulties in writing in English. The fourth chapter is devoted to implications and recommendations and we gave some suggestions to teachers and students that can be beneficial to improve the writing skill.

Finally, we hope that this work can be beneficial for teachers to improve their ways in teaching and for teacher to improve their writing skill. It should be noted that the obtained results are not generalized and further research is needed concerning the topic of students'

writing difficulties in English. By investigating other writing classes and using different tools to collect data.

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**Teachers' questionnaire:**

Teachers, You are kindly requested to fill in this questionnaire about” the obstacles that students faced while they write in English”. Your answers are very important for the validity of the research. Thank you in advance for your collaboration.

Please tick (✓) the appropriate box and provide your own answer Where needed.

**-Part1: General information:**

1/Gender

A/ Male

B/ Female

2//What degree(s) do you hold?

A/ MA (Master, Magister)

B/ PhD (Doctorate)

3//How long have you been teaching English at the department of English?

.....  
.....

**-Part2: writing skill**

4//How long have you been teaching the “written expression” module?

.....  
.....

5//Do you think that the hours of teaching written expression are enough?

A/Yes

B/No

6//How can the written expression module help students to enhance their level in writing?

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

7/Why do you think writing is an important skill?

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

8/ Which of the following aspects do you give great importance in your writing instruction?

(Order them according to their importance).

A/ Grammar

B/ Vocabulary

C/ Content

D/ Mechanics

\*add other suggestion

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

9/Do you help your students when they write?

A/Yes

B/No

\*If yes, do you help them in?

A/ Content

B/ Vocabulary

C/ Grammar

D/ Punctuation

10/How can your feedback improve your student's writing?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

**-Part3: writing difficulties**

11/How do you see your students' level in writing?

A/Very good

B/Good

C/ Poor

D/ Average

12/ Which technique do you use in teaching writing in class?

A/ Group work

B/ Class discussion

C/ individual work

\*Add other suggestion

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

13/What are the common difficulties your students face in writing?

- A/ Poor ideas
- B/ Organization of ideas
- C/ Grammar rules
- D/ Vocabulary
- E/ Spelling and punctuation
- F/ Interference of the mother tongue

\*Add other suggestion

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

14/How do you help your students to overcome their difficulties?

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

15/In your opinion what are the reasons behind students writing difficulties?

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

16/What do you suggest overcoming the writing difficulties?

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

**Students' questionnaire**

Dear students,

You are kindly requested to fill in this questionnaire to express your attitudes concerning “the obstacles that students faced while they write”. Your answers are very important for the validity of the research we are undertaking. As such, we hope that you will give us your attention and interest. Thank you in advance for your collaboration and time devoted to answer the questionnaire.

Please tick (✓) the appropriate box and provide your own answer Where needed.

**-Part1: general information.**

1/Gender

Male

Female

2/Age:

.....  
.....  
3/Level  
.....  
.....

**-Part2: Writing skill**

4/How do you rate your writing performance?

A/Low

B/Average

C/Good

D/Very good

5/How do you find the module of written expression?

A/Very interesting

B/Interesting

C/Not interesting

6/What is the most important component according to you? (you can choose more than one answer.)

A/Grammar

B/Vocabulary

C/Spelling

D/Punctuation

7/Do you think writing is the best way of expressing thoughts?

Yes

No

8/How often do you practice writing?

A/ Always

B/occasionally

C/Often

D/Never

9/ which one from those options you start with after you have the topic?

A/directly start to write

B/Make an outline

C/Brainstorming

**-Part3: writing difficulties**

10/Do you fill blank while write something in English?

A/Yes

B/No

11/Does your teachers help you during the writing process

A/Yes

B/ No

12/ what is the most difficult step according to you?

A/Generating ideas

B/ Writing initial draft

C/ Revising

D/Editing

13/When you re-read what you have been written, do you make changes concerning:

A/Content

B/Vocabulary

C/grammar

D/Punctuation

E/Spelling

14/When do you face more problems, when you write with?

A/A given topic by the teacher

B/Free topic

C/Topic suggested by your colleague

13/When you finish writing, do you check and correct: ( you can choose more than one answer).

A/Write in a good structure

B/Lack of grammar

C/Lack of vocabulary

D/Fear from negative feedback

E/Dislike the topic

F/ Lack of motivation

G/Language problem

\*Add other suggestions

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16/How does your teacher help you to overcome those difficulties?

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17/In your opinion, what are the most appropriate strategies to overcome writing difficulties?

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## Abstract:

Writing in foreign language is one of the most complex and challenging tasks for language learners. This is because writing is a difficult skill that requires a lot of practice, and effort to reach a good acceptable level of writing. The majority of the students have difficulties to produce an adequate piece of writing. In this research work, we tend the various writing obstacles that the second-year students in English. The aim of this study is to get the students to know that developing writing skills includes handling writing as a process which involves different stages, and it's not a result of the careful use of grammar and vocabulary. The students should be familiar with the process of writing through the intensive writing practice, which helps them for the effective use of the writing techniques, in which they can decide how to write, what they want to write, and how to evaluate what they write. Also, get the students to know about many writing, help them to overcome the obstacles that they face during writing and to produce good written texts. Through two questionnaires prepared for both of the teachers and the students from the department of language at Chadli BenJedid Tareef, we validated our hypothesis. The results of this study were conducted by the hypothesis in avoiding problems that the students faced in writing. And effective production can be achieved if the students are made aware of the importance of writing, and the stages involved.

## Résumé :

L'écriture en langue étrangère est l'une des tâches les plus complexes et les plus difficiles pour les apprenants en langues. En effet, l'écriture est une compétence difficile qui nécessite beaucoup de pratique et d'efforts pour atteindre un bon niveau d'écriture acceptable. La majorité des étudiants ont des difficultés à produire un texte adéquat. Dans ce travail de recherche, nous tendons les différents obstacles d'écriture que les étudiants de deuxième année en anglais. Le but de cette étude est de faire comprendre aux des étudiants que le développement des compétences en écriture comprend la gestion de l'écriture comme un processus qui implique différents étapes, et ce n'est pas le résultat d'une utilisation prudente de grammaire et du vocabulaire. Les étudiants doivent se familiariser avec le processus d'écriture grâce à la pratique intensive de l'écriture, qui les aide à utiliser efficacement les techniques d'écriture, dans les quelles ils peuvent décider comment écrire, ce qu'ils veulent écrire et comment évaluer ce qu'ils écrivent. À travers deux questionnaires préparés pour les enseignants et les étudiants du département de langue d'université de Chali Ben Djedid.

## ملخص

تعد الكتابة بلغة أجنبية واحدة من أكثر المهام تعقيد و صعوبة بالنسبة لمتعلمي اللغة. وذلك لان الكتابة مهارة صعبة تتطلب الكثير من الممارسة و الجهد للوصول إلي مستوى جيد في الكتابة. يواجه أغلبية الطلاب صعوبات في إنتاج نص كتابي مناسب. في هذه الدراسة ركزنا على مختلف العوائق التي يواجهها طلاب السنة الثانية لغة انجليزية في الكتابة. الهدف من هذه الدراسة هو تعريف الطلاب بان تطوير مهارات الكتابة يتضمن التعامل مع الكتابة كعملية تتضمن مراحل مختلفة و ليست فقط نتيجة الاستخدام الدقيق للقواعد و المفردات. يجب أن يكون الطلاب على دراية بعملية الكتابة من خلال ممارسة الكتابة المكثفة و التي تساعد على الاستخدام الفعال لتقنيات الكتابة. حيث يمكنهم تحديد كيفية الكتابة، ماذا يريدون كتابته و كيفية تقييم ما يكتبونه. أيضا مساعدتهم على التغلب على العقبات التي يواجهونها أثناء الكتابة و إنتاج النصوص من خلال استبيانين تم إعدادهما لكل من الأساتذة و الطلاب بقسم اللغة الانجليزية في جامعة شادلي بن جديد.