



**People's Democratic Republic of Algeria**

**Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research**



**University of Chadli Benjedid – El Tarf**

**Faculty of Letters and Languages**

**Department of English**

**Investigating EFL Learners' Use of the Compensation Strategies to Overcome  
their Limitations in Essay Writing.**

**Case study of Third Year EFL students at Chadli Bendjedid University El-Tarf**

**Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the  
Master Degree in  
Didactics of English**

**Presented By:**

**Dekra Menadjlia**

**Ilhem Bouguerra**

**Narimen Kawter Nedjoui**

**Supervised By:**

**Mrs. Sana Bouras**

**Board of Examiners**

<b>Chairwoman:</b>	<b>Ms. Asia Berzan</b>	<b>M.A.A</b>	<b>Chadli Benjedid University</b>
<b>Supervisor:</b>	<b>Mrs. Sana Bouras</b>	<b>M.A.A</b>	<b>Chadli Benjedid University</b>
<b>Examiner:</b>	<b>Mr. Abd. El Wahab Ferache</b>	<b>M.A.A</b>	<b>Chadli Benjedid University</b>

**Academic Year**

**2021-2022**





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**Academic Year**

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### **Statement of Original Authorship**

We here certify that this research work entitled “EFL Learners’ Use of the Compensation Strategies to Overcome their Limitations in Essay Writing” supervised by Mrs. Sana Bouras in the academic year (2021-2022) is submitted to the Department of English at Chadli Benjedid University El-Tarf for the requirement of Master Degree. The information reported in the current dissertation contain no material previously published or written by any person. Hence, it is our own work, and any information used properly cited in the reference list to avoid any act of plagiarism.

**Dekra Menadjlia**

**Bouguerra Ilhem**

**Narimen Kawter Nedjouda**

## **Acknowledgements**

All praise goes to Allah the most Merciful for giving us the strength and capacity to complete this work.

We would like to announce special thanks to our dearest supervisor, Mrs. Sana Bouras for being kind enough to accept directing this work with all her academic engagements. We would like to thank her for the accurate advice she put forward and for her patience and her endless guidance with us throughout the stages of the research.

We would also like to thank the jury members Ms. Berzan and Mr. Ferache for accepting to read this work and for any remarks; they would make to refine it. In particular, we should express gratitude to all who have been our teachers for their valuable advice.

## **Dedication 1**

First and foremost, I would like to dedicate this work to my parents for their support: my father “Samir” and my mother “Souraya”. Thanks for your great support and continuous care and for being always there for me.

To my soul mates sisters: “Boutheina”, “Hadil”, “Wissal” and “Dorssaf”. Thanks for helping and supporting.

To my beloved Fiancé “Rami”, you have been my inspiration, thanks for supporting me all the time.

To my partners “Ilhem” and “Dekra” my friends “Khaoula” and “Darine”.

Last but not least, to all my relatives and colleagues.

**Thank you**  
**Narimen Kawter Nedjou**

## Dedication 2

This work is dedicated to my father's soul "Mohamed" the one who taught me patience and perseverance.

I owe a great deal of gratitude to my family: my mother; "Fatima Zohra", my sisters: "Naziha", "Radja" and "Zeineb", my brothers: "Tayeb" and "Bilel" without forgetting my uncle: Ahmed, my brother-in-law: Karim and my little angels, my son: "Med Ali", also my precious: "Adem" who enlighten our life. To my relatives especially my cousin "Hamouda".

I am sincerely thankful to my partners "Narimen" and "Dekra" for their encouragement and patience and all my friends especially the Inspector of English Mr. "Ada Abbou Aouad" who was and still whenever I need him, and my pretty "Chaima" and all my colleagues (Teachers of English).

**Thank you**  
**Ilhem Bouguerra**

### Dedication 3

**“In the Name of Allah, The most gracious, the most merciful”**

Primarily, I dedicate this work to my sweet and loving parents “Kamel” and “Dalila”, may Allah bless them for what I become today, thanks for your support and continuous motivation and for being always there for me.

A special thank to my one and only brother: “Nabil” and soulmate sisters: “Imene”, “Leila”, “Sameh”, “Yasmine” and my little aunt “Fatiha”, without forgetting my lovely cutie “Meryouma” thanks for your undying support, and encouragement, you have been always my inspiration mates.

I owe special feelings of gratitude to my source of inspiration who wants to be anonymous thanks for all your guidance and being always with me.

A special thank also goes for my dear partners “Narimen” and “Ilhem” for their patience and perseverance. My lovely friends “Amani”, “Khouloud” and “Dhikra”.

Finally, I am sincerely thankful for me for believing in me and not giving up, for all my hard work, in the past years. For being strong enough to achieve all my goals.

Unfortunately, we cannot thank everyone by name, because it would take a lifetime, but we just want you all to know that you count so much for me.

**Thank you**

**Dekra Menadjlia**

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## List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

**CSs:** Compensation Strategies.

**EFL:** English Foreign Language.

**FL:** Foreign Language.

**H:** Hypothesis.

**LLS:** Language Learning Strategies.

**Q:** Question.

**SL:** Second Language.

### Abstract

The current study aims at exploring third year students' difficulties and struggles encountered when using Compensation strategies in writing EFL essay at the Department of English, Chadli Benjedid University, El-Tarf. A descriptive analytical method is employed, a questionnaire has been administered for teachers and students' essays were analyzed to validate the gathered results. The obtained findings have confirmed and proved the out hypotheses, which stipulate that EFL learners have difficulties in producing a well-formed essay. In addition, if third year EFL students at Chadli Benjedid University use CSs then they will overcome their limitations with essay writing. In the light of these results, implications demonstrated that learners are unaware of such strategies although they use some of them indirectly and implicitly in their essay, writing as well as recommendations and future suggestions are presented. The results also recommend further studies to investigate students' use of CSs to overcome EFL learners' difficulties with essay writing.

**Key words:** writing, compensation strategies, essay writing, EFL learners

## ملخص

يهدف هذا البحث إلى استكشاف مشكلات طلاب السنة الثالثة والصراعات التي يواجهونها عند كتابة مقال باللغة الانجليزية كلغة أجنبية في قسم اللغة الانجليزية جامعة الشاذلي بن جديد الطارف. حيث اعتمد هذا البحث على المنهج الوصفي التحليلي وتم استخدام استبيان تم إجراؤه للأساتذة بالإضافة إلى تحليل مقالات الطلاب للتحقق من النتائج التي تم الحصول عليها. على هذا الأساس أكدت النتائج التي تم الحصول عليها فرضياتنا التي تنص على إن متعلمي اللغة الانجليزية كلغة أجنبية يعانون من عدة مشاكل أثناء كتابة مقال. بالإضافة إلى استعمال متعلمي اللغة الانجليزية للأليات المساعدة على تعلم اللغة ستساعدهم على التقليل من الصعوبات التي يواجهونها خلال كتابة مقال باللغة الانجليزية. تحت ضوء هذه النتائج أثبتت الدراسة أن المتعلمين ليسوا على دراية بالأليات المساعدة على تعلم اللغة وان بعضهم استخدم هاته الأليات من غير قصد وهذا ما خلف معاناتهم من العديد من المشاكل في كتابة مقال. قدمت الدراسة العديد من التوصيات والاقتراحات المستقبلية كما أوصت النتائج بإجراء مزيد من الدراسات للتحقيق في استعمال الأليات المساعدة على تعلم اللغة الانجليزية كلغة أجنبية.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** الكتابة، آليات مساعدة، متعلمي اللغة الانجليزية.



## *Chapter One*

### *Introductory Chapter to the Research Problem*

#### **Introduction**

This chapter is an introductory chapter to the research study that examines the importance of language learning strategies namely (CSs) that are considered as vital elements in producing a well-formed essay, and which present challenges for many (EFL) students asserting that they meet problems and limitations during producing essays. Accordingly, this chapter highlights the statement of the problem, which opens the door to the demand and the aims behind conducting the research. In addition, it casts an eye on the research problems, along with the hypotheses, research methodology and the structure of the present study.

#### **Statement of the Problem**

Writing is considered as a complex skill that needs special attention and specific strategies to be acquired. In fact, third year students having problems and difficulties in producing effective essays. Even, they are third year and they have practice writing for the past two years, they still suffer in producing well-formed essays, that are full of linguistic problems (diction, spelling);cognitive problems (essays layout, topic interpreting, ideas organisation); and language accuracy and appropriacy (grammar, choice of words)...etc. Therefore, this research is attempting to raise the awareness of students towards CSs, which are considered as a key technique in overcoming aforementioned difficulties.

## Objectives of the Study

The main aim behind this research is basically to investigate, identify and analyze the main problems that most EFL students face with the writing strategies in producing essays. This study will open their eyes to the wide range of LLS. Likewise, to raise the EFL learners awareness about the CSs. In addition, to use them effectively to overcome the limitations that they face during producing essay.

## Research Questions

Our research attempts to answer the following questions:

**Q.1:** Do EFL students have difficulties with essay writing?

**Q.2:** Are third year EFL students of Chadli Benjedid University aware of CSs?

**Q.3:** Do third year students of Chadli Benjedid University use CSs to overcome their difficulties with essay writing?

## The Research Hypotheses

Based on the research questions, we hypothesize the following:

**H.1:** EFL learners have difficulties in producing a well-formed essay and are unaware of CSs.

**H.2:** If third year EFL students at Chadli Benjedid use CSs, then they will overcome their limitations with essay writing.

## Research Background

Research about LLS began in the 1960s. Particularly developments in cognitive psychology influenced with much of research done on LLS (Williams and Burden 1997). In most of the research, the primary concern has been on identifying what good language learners report they do to learn a Second language (SL) or Foreign language (FL) (Wenden and Rubin 1987). In addition, Naiman ET all, (1987) and Rubin (1975) pointed that learners who use certain strategies are more successful than others at learning a SL or FL despite exposure to the same methods and learning environment. Wenden (1987) said that, "learning strategies are the various operations that learners use in order to make sense of their language."(pp.7-8).

## Research Tools and Methodology

### Research Design

In order to check the above hypotheses and to answer the research questions we are going to use a mixed method; the descriptive method is demonstrated through a questionnaire addressed to teachers of English of Chadli Benjedid University; el-Tarf. In order to collect data about their comprehension concerning third year students in using CSs to overcome their difficulties with essay writing.

The analytical approach is going to be used through analyzing students' essays that helps in identifying the students' difficulties with essay writing, and how they use CSs to write a structured essay.

### Participants

To prove the hypotheses of the current study, the researchers analyzed tests of group composed of twenty (20) students that are assigned among third year students at the Department

of English at Chadli Benjedid University El Tarf. The other sample are teachers who taught or are teaching third year students, at the same department.

### **Data Gathering Tools**

In this study, the researchers choose the appropriate tools to collect the needed information; the first instrument is a document analysis of a test introduced by the teacher to the participants. It includes writing an essay, which is going to be analyzed by the researchers according to rubrics (see **figure 02 chapter 02**).

The second collection instrument is a questionnaire addressed to teachers to have their perception and viewpoints about the students' use of CSs in their writing production.

### **Structure of the Dissertation**

The present dissertation comprises of five main chapters: the first chapter is an introductory chapter to the research, which highlights the introduction, statement of the problem, research questions, the hypotheses, background information, aim of the study, methodology, and structure of the dissertation.

The second chapter is a theoretical part; it includes literature review related to the following elements: LLS, CSs, writing and the problems that students may face during writing essays.

The third chapter, which presents the practical part, provides a detailed description of the research methodology applied throughout the research process. Starting from the method, approach, research design and tools used for collecting data.

The fourth chapter works on analyzing data and results according to which research questions answered.

Finally, the last chapter presents the pedagogical implication and the discussion of the questionnaire and essay analysis results. Also some suggestions and recommendations to help the students to overcome their problems with essay writing using the CSs.

### **Conclusion**

LLS play a dominant role in writing skill, especially for EFL Learners who have problems with essay writing. Previous researchers have suggested that CSs considered as a key concept that helps the students to face less problems in producing a well-formed essay. So, it provided a detailed plan about the research hypotheses and questions. Also, it talked about the objectives and the research methodology adopted.



*Chapter Two*  
*Literature Review about Compensation Strategies and Essay Writing in*  
*Foreign Language.*

**Introduction**

This chapter presents few theoretical concepts implied in this study; it as well highlights previous works about the subject discussed and suggests a powerful background for the practical section of this research work. The chapter is divided into two principal sections; the first part discusses LLS types; and mainly focuses on CSs. The second part provides writing's definition as well as its importance with problems that EFL learners face when writing.

**Part One: Language-Learning Strategies (Compensation Strategies)**

**Definition of Language-Learning Strategies**

Many theorists and researchers have tried to define LLS in different ways and views. Rubin (1975, p.43) defined LLS as “the techniques or devices, which a learner may use to acquire knowledge”. Then, he in (1987, p.23) indicated that LLS are “strategies, which contribute to the development of language system that the learner constructs and affects learning directly”.

A similar view was held by Weinstein and Mayer (1986,p.315 ) who claimed that “language learning strategies are behaviors and thoughts that learners engages in during learning which are intended to influence the learners encoding process”.

More specifically, Chamot (1987, p.71) defined LLS as “techniques, approaches or deliberate actions that students take in order to facilitate the learning and recall of both linguistic and content area information”.

Additionally and mainly, Oxford (1990, p.08) provided a more specific definition of LLS when she stated: “learning strategies are specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective and more transferable to new situations”. Based on the previous definition LLS are certain techniques or steps, which help learner to get an easy access to the learning process of the target language. Oxford confirmed that appropriate LLS could help learners gain self-confidence and improve proficiency.

### **Classifications of Language Learning Strategies**

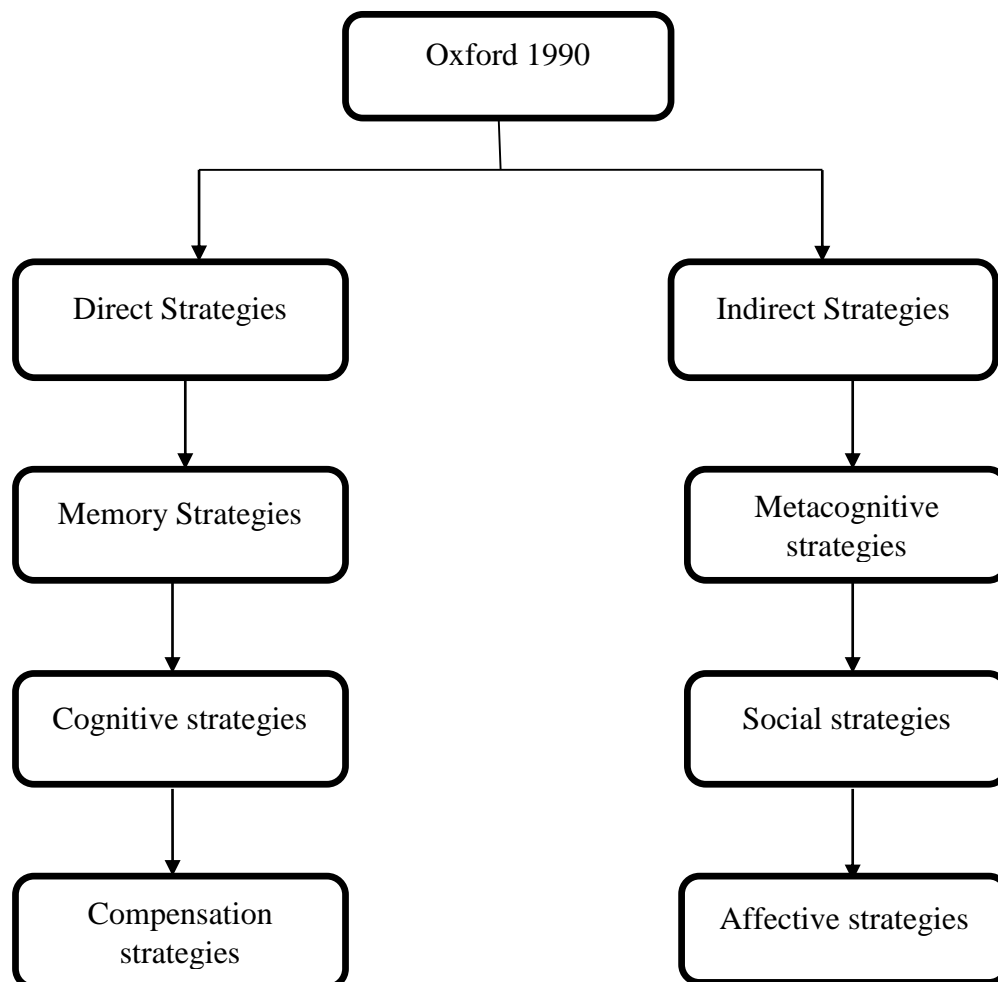
LLS have been classified by many scholars such as O'Malley and Chamot (1990), Oxford (1990) and Rubin (1987).

O'Malley and Chamot (1990, pp.43-55) categorized the LLS into three categories, which are metacognitive, cognitive strategies and social / affective strategies. First, According to them metacognitive strategies considered as a cognitive skills, which require planning, monitoring and evaluating for learning. Second, cognitive strategies are often specific learning activities and tasks, which involve interacting with the material to be learnt. Finally, Social/Affective strategies involve interaction with others in many ways such as: collaborative work with colleagues to solve some problems or getting feedback.

Oxford (1990) proposed another classification of LLS in which they are divided into two main categories known as direct and indirect strategies. She pointed that LLS, that directly involve the target language, are called “direct strategies”. These strategies include memory strategies, cognitive strategies, and compensation strategies.

On the other hand, indirect strategies are “metacognitive, affective strategies, social strategies”. Those elements provide indirect support of language learning through: focusing, planning, evaluating, seeking opportunities, controlling anxiety, increasing cooperation and empathy and other means” (Oxford, 1990, p.151).

According to Rubin (1987), there are three types of strategies used by learners that contribute directly or indirectly to language learning. Which are learning strategies, communication strategies and social strategies.



**Figure 2.1: Classifications of Language Learning Strategies from (Oxford 1990).**

### **Categories of Language Learning Strategies**

Oxford (1990) considered that LLS are oriented towards the development of communicative competence. So, these strategies are divided into two main groups, indirect and direct strategies, which in their turn are subdivided into six main categories.

## Indirect Strategies

### Metacognitive strategies

During the early 1970s, the term metacognition came up and it has been associated much more with the American psychologist “John Flavell”. According to Flavell (1976), it is “the knowledge concerning one’s own cognitive processes and products or anything related to them” (p.232). It enables the learners to control their own cognition by using different strategies. An example of metacognitive strategies is “I pay attention when someone is speaking English”. Centering learning, arranging and planning one’s learning and evaluating learning are the three subsets strategies within metacognitive strategies.

### Affective Strategies

These strategies involve some psychological factors such as emotions, attitudes, motivation and values. Oxford (1990) suggested that through the affective strategies language learners can gain control over the above factors. She also suggested that good language learners are often the ones who know how to control their attitudes and emotions towards learning. A good example of affective strategies. “I encourage myself to speak English even when I am afraid of making mistake” (Oxford, 1990, p.296). Lowering one’s anxiety encourages oneself, and taking ones emotional temperature are the subsets of this strategies.

### Social Strategies

The last category of indirect strategies is social strategies, which seek to prepare learners to communicate effectively in social context. For example asking questions to get verification, asking for clarification of a confusing point, exploring cultural and social norms. They also refer to learner’s communication with people who use the target language. An example of this strategy is “I try to learn about cultures of English speakers” (Oxford, 1990, p.296). There are

mainly three subsets of the latter strategy, which are as following asking questions, cooperating with others, and emphasizing with others.

## **Direct Strategies**

### **Memory Strategies**

This type of strategies helps the learner to retrieve the information they need via many techniques like “acronyms”, “rhyming”, “images”, etc. An example of memory strategy is “I use new English words in a sentence so I can remember them” (Oxford, 1990, p.294). Under this element, there are four sets, which are creating mental linkages, applying images and sounds, reviewing well and employing action. Each set have some specific strategies that the learner use to overcome the problems they may face during learning.

### **Cognitive Strategies**

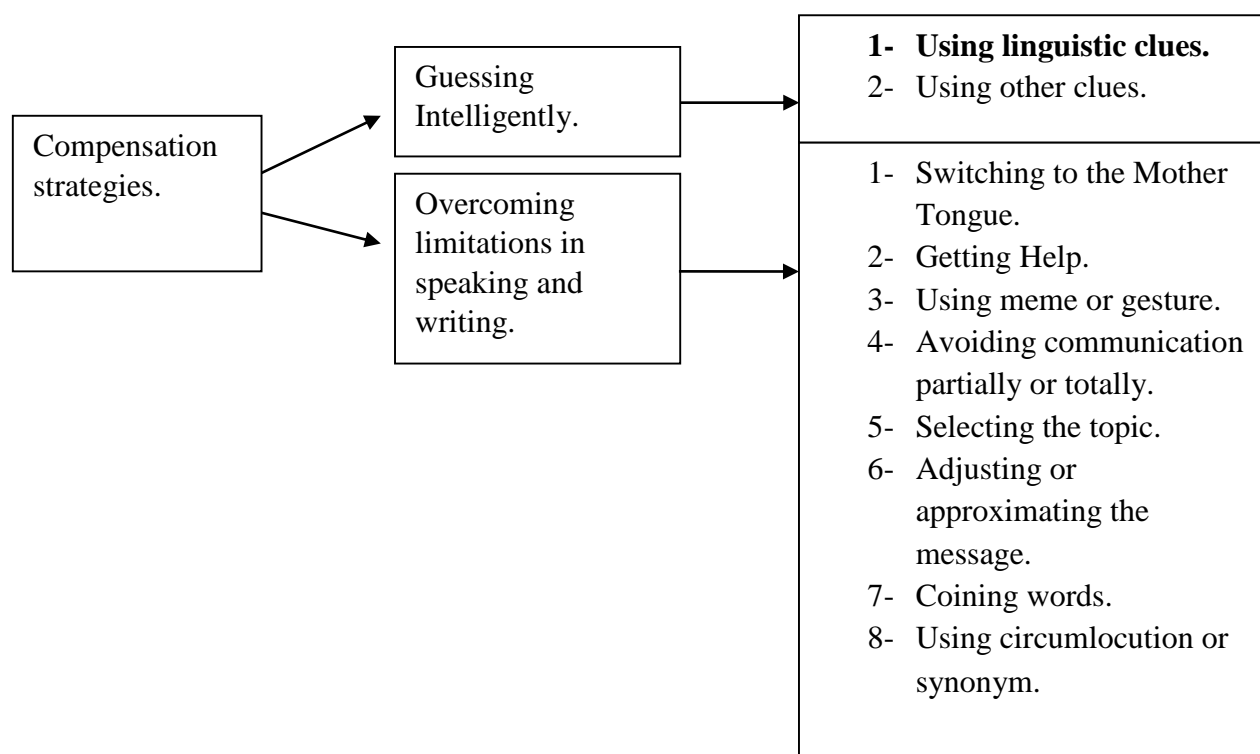
These strategies applied for understanding and producing language. They enable the learner to manipulate the language material in direct ways through reasoning, analysis, note-taking, summarizing, reorganising information to develop stronger schemas (Knowledge structure). A good example of cognitive strategies “I try to talk like native speakers” (Oxford, 1990, p.295). The cognitive strategies fall into four groups: practicing, receiving and sending messages, analyzing and reasoning, and creating structure for input and output.

### **Compensation Strategies**

Many theorists and researchers have defined CSs from different perspectives. These strategies are related to what learners do to compensate their limited knowledge in the language by making guesses or finding connotative ideas (Ramzan Khan, 2012). A very similar view was held by Zare (2012) who confirmed that CSs enable learners to use language in speaking or writing although there are gaps in knowledge.

Furthermore, Oxford (1990, p.90) affirmed that “compensation strategies are direct strategies used by learners to overcome knowledge limitations in all four skills in learning and producing new language” .More specifically, “compensation strategies enable learners to use the new language for either comprehension or production despite limitation in knowledge” (Oxford, 1990, p.46).

Based on the above definitions, CSs also called cover or coping strategies that are used by learners to overcome knowledge gaps to continue the communication in the target language. These strategies involve guessing intelligently and overcoming limitations in speaking and writing.



**Figure 2.2: Oxford's Compensation Learning Strategies from (Oxford, 1990).**

### *Guessing Intelligently*

Guessing intelligently strategy has a dominant role in reading and listening since it helps the learners to understand easily the word's meaning without retaining into details for example

to understand unfamiliar English word, learners make guesses. Another good example of guessing intelligently is when students cannot think of a word during a conversation in English, they may use gestures. When students do not understand the meaning of a word, they will read the sentences before and after the difficult word and then they guess. It is good to know this because the subjects have already been practicing one of the CSs. (Oxford, 1990). This strategy may be applied by using linguistic clues or other clues (nonlinguistic clues) or the language context.

### *Using Linguistic Clues*

According to Oxford (1990, p.90) learners, use “linguistic knowledge of suffixes, prefixes, and word order to guess meaning”. That is to say, linguistic clues may be derived from the learner’s knowledge of the target language, his mother tongue or other foreign languages he may be familiar with. It helps learners to use the target language for either comprehension or production in spite of the limitations in knowledge. It aims to make up for a limited repertoire of grammar, and particularly vocabulary by deducing the meaning of words through giving linguistic clues in order to pave the way to interpret correctly. For instance the lexical field: school (teacher, headmaster, pupil), hospital (doctors, nurse, emergency).

### *Using Non-Linguistic Clues*

The use of non-linguistic clues besides the linguistic clues is very useful in both reading and listening in the target language. The nonlinguistic clues was defined by (Oxford, 1990,p.49) “speaking and using clues that are not language based in order to guess the meaning of what is heard or read in the target language and includes knowledge of context, situation text structure, personal relationship, topic, or general world knowledge.”

In other words, other clues refer to forms of address and social relationships, to nonverbal behavior, including tone of voice, facial expressions emphasis, body language. The

previous elements help learners to understand or guess the meaning of what is being said or heard.

### *Overcoming Limitations in Speaking and Writing*

Previous researchers proved that being able to overcome limitations in speaking and writing is an essential feature of a good language learner. Since it helps learners to keep interacting or writing, despite their limited knowledge of language. It is divided into the following CSs:

#### *Switching to the Mother Tongue*

In this strategy, students used a word or an expression without translating it. This idea is supported by (Oxford 1990 p.94), when she referred to the strategy of switching back to the mother tongue as “using the mother tongue for an expression without translating it in speaking”. Moreover, she illustrated that CSs are used when learner faces difficulties while speaking in SL.

#### *Getting Help*

The getting help strategy was defined by Oxford (1990) as “asking someone for help in a conversation by hesitating or explicitly asking for the missing expression” (p.95). i.e. the students wants others to come with the word or expression he does not know, without explaining or clarifying it. A good example for this strategy is learners might signal when the teacher is explaining the lesson that they need help by saying only the beginning of the sentence that the teacher was saying or by asking him / her kindly to repeat what was said, or another possibility is to ask directly the teacher “what does this expression mean”. Getting Help strategy can be applied with teacher or during a cooperative work with class partners.

### *Using Meme or Gesture*

Using meme or gesture strategy is defined as “using physical motions, such as meme or gesture, in place of an expression during a conversation to indicate the meaning” (Oxford, 1990, p.95).

Therefore, learners in this strategy tend to use meme or gesture during a conversation in order to illustrate the meaning of an unknown expression. For example, in order to express approval one may simply nod and say “yes”, while for saying “he is over there” one may point to that place.

Using meme and gesture strategy is one of the most used by students to overcome their limitations especially in face-to-face interactions.

### *Avoiding Communication Partially or Totally*

This strategy was first suggested by Oxford (1989) for speaking and oral communication. Then in (1990), she explained avoiding the communication partially or totally as “avoiding communication when difficulties are anticipated or encountered” (p.95)

Accordingly, students use this strategy if problems are expected or encountered. So, learners may avoid a certain topic or even a situation because they are not certain of, or they do not know the word, the constructions, the concepts, or the grammatical structure associated with it. For example when a learner spoke about a difficult word and complex English sentence structures, she simply said that she prefers not to talk about difficult things.

### *Selecting the Topic*

In this strategy, learners select the topic in both speaking and writing when they are sure they master the vocabulary and structures that might prove necessary. However, students in this strategy will direct the conversation to a particular topic, if they enjoy and they are good in it.

Students during their academic career are supposed to choose some topics out of suggested ones during tests or exams. Their choice relies on their familiarity with the topic and previous knowledge.

### *Adjusting and Approximating the Message*

Adjusting and approximating the message was explained by Oxford (1990) as “Altering the message by omitting some items of information making the ideas simpler or less precise or saying something slightly different with similar meanings (p.96). Thus this element entails speaking as well as writing dynamics.

It refers to the situations in which the message is altered by making the ideas simpler or less precise or by saying something different but similar in meaning. Moreover, when it comes to writing, students use the above strategy to make the writing process easier via using their own style and simple words. For instance, learners might use the word tree for speaking about an Oak or he might say, “I did not buy that car because I did not have money”. Instead of the more complex sentence “I would have liked to have bought that car, but I could not do it because I lacked the necessary money”.

### *Coining Words*

In recent years, coining words strategy was widely used by EFL learners who mainly have a limited vocabulary background. Oxford (1990) defined it as “making up new words to communicate the desired idea” (p.50). Based on the above Oxford’s definition, students in a particular context try to create a new word that does not exist before to communicate something for which the learner has not the right expression, such as: learner might create the word eye doctor if he does not know the word “ophthalmologist”. Also they may create the word the table in the kitchen instead of “Bench”.

### *Using Circumlocution or Synonyms*

This element is one of the subsets of CSs that is used by learners when they want to convey a particular message. Learners tend to use the circumlocution of suitcase when the speakers or writers do not know the appropriate words.

In addition, learners may use different synonyms for unknown words such as drink for juice, fruit for plum, table for beside table...etc.

## **Part Two: Writing Skill**

### **Definition of Writing**

Writing is one of the four language skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking. Writing and speaking are productive skills. That means that they involve producing language than receiving it, it involves communicating a message by making signs on a page.

Some scholars variously defined writing like Rivers (1986) "the act of putting in conventional graphic what has been spoken" (p.242) referring to writing as the spoken language production activity in symbols so the action by which the spoken language is transformed into written graphics.

Also, Byrne (1991) stated that writing is "the organisation of our sentences into a text into a coherent whole, which is as explicit as possible and complete in itself, that we are able or hope to be able to communicate successfully with our readers" (p.2). Byrne regarded writing as graphic letters arrangement following certain conventions to obtain words, which also have to be associated to form sentences to gain a coherent text enabling the writer to reach the successful interaction with audience. Which means that writing involves gathering a set of symbols following certain conventions to have words constructing sentences to have coherent texts for readers.

Besides, Widdowson (2001) reported, “writing is the visual medium to manifest the graphic logical and grammatical system of the language, that is to say writing is one sense in the production of sentences or instances of usage “(p.62). Therefore, to form well-organised sentences with logical ideas, students must have a full mastery of language structure. Very simply, we can say that writing involves communicating a message by making signs on a page. To write; we need to have a purpose, and usually audience. We also need to be able to form letters and words, to join these together to make sentences or series of sentences that link together and convey the message successfully.

Respecting all previous ideas, many researchers described writing as complicated and complex activity. Nunan (1989) affirmed “it is easier to learn to speak than to write no matter if it is first or a second language, since writing is a complex skill that engage the writer in physical as well as mental effort”(p.12) .i.e. the writing skill requires more activities to be accomplished that is the reason behind its complexity.

Besides, Myers (2005) viewed that “writing is an action a process of discovering and organising your ideas, putting them on a paper and respecting them” (p.02) which confirms that writing is the procedure by which ideas are generated, classified, used to produce drafts, revised to make necessary changes before publication Writing.

## **The Importance of Writing**

When trying to learn English, it is important to master the writing system, but EFL learners at any level are clueless about how this is helpful to faster their learning because they are not capable to write well and still unable to overcome their writing deficiencies. This functional skill has many advantages as it can be used to communicate effectively with others (Spratt, Pulverness & Williams, 2011)

Hyland (2003) viewed writing among the essential ways to develop coherent, social, real environment to interact with others. Besides, learners express themselves freely through such system to the surrounding world. Confirming that such skill stands as an integrated system that supports students to learn and use a language fluently.

Harmer (2007) stated: “writing can be used as an integral part of a larger activity, where the focus is on something else such as language practice acting out or speaking” (p.31). It means that can be seen as a part from the whole activity to teach languages. Therefore, this productive skill can be used to support and check other language skills. Grauberg (1998) who confirmed that writing “can be used to obtain proficiency when learning the language” means, “consolidates and reinforces language learned orally” (p.213). As such, teachers can consider writing means to get to a recognizable assessment because their learners’ oral proficiency is hard to be evaluated with large classes and limited time. Writing encourages learner creating by enhancing his imagination that is obvious in poems, novels...etc.

### **Writing an Essay: what is an Essay?**

Zemach (2005) stated: “an essay is a group of paragraphs written about single topic and central main idea. It must have at least three paragraphs, but a five paragraphs essay is a common length for academic writing” (p.56).

Oshima & Hogue (2008) affirmed that:

An essay is a piece of writing several paragraphs long instead of just one or two paragraphs. It is written about one topic, just as a paragraph is. However, the topic of an essay is too complex to discuss in one paragraph. Therefore, you must divide the topic into several paragraphs, one for each major point. Then you must tie all of the separate paragraphs together by adding an introduction and a conclusion.  
(p.100)

Based on Oshima & Hogue definition an essay is a written passage that includes several paragraphs. It is long because it discusses a complex topic in more than one paragraph. These paragraphs are related by adding an introduction and a conclusion as well.

According to the British Council (2013), essays are a short or long piece of writing which aim at outlining the perspective of the author about a specific topic. They can be formal or informal in nature. The formal essay is academic and deals with serious topics most often. Whereas informal essay deals with humorous elements and it is more personal in nature. Essays are writer's organised collection of ideas about literary texts, which is nicely written and presented, and to convey ideas supporting evidence must be given to persuade audience to come over to writer's side of argument. Essays are used to assess writer's understanding of specific ideas and his ability to explain them in his own words. They bring together ideas, evidence and arguments to address a specific problem or question.

### **Importance of Writing an Essay**

Depending on Editorial Staff and Fitzgerald(2021) essay is considered as an important tool for both professors and students for different reasons that are listed in the following points:

- Sharpening writing skill, creative thinking and thoughts flow.

- It develops understanding as it is useful in the learning process to explain and extract ideas and information for critical analysis.
- It strengthens the writing skills such as the ability to construct an argument and the capacity to write well.
- It encourages the assessment which provides a helpful feedback for progress.
- Essay writing strengthens the students' creativity to move from dry passive academic essays into creative well-structured essays.
- Essay writing is useful for future career in terms of planning and respecting submission date.
- Essay writing makes student smarter because the more student reads from different sources the more he becomes smarter, which widens his general knowledge and makes him more interesting person.
- Essay writing prepares student for more complex task. Whenever student writes with complex structure, few dozens of sources and annotated bibliography, he will be well-prepared to produce better essays.
- Essays writing can be fun even for academic writing students still can produce impressive and interesting essays depending on the topic and their attitudes to find their own ways to make writing more engaging.

### **Essay Outline Format**

According to Rolls & Wignell (2013), the essay format is devoted to three main parts, introduction, body, and a conclusion.

## Introduction

The introduction or an introductory paragraph should attract the reader's attention. It gave the reader a clear idea of the main topics of discussion. It is mainly divided into two parts:

- First, the writer gives background information in several general sentences then he specifies the main topic.
- The introductory paragraph should contain a thesis statement that points the main subdivision i.e. each paragraph discusses an idea.

## Body

This element includes at least three or more paragraphs; each paragraph discusses one of the subdivided topics. Every idea in the thesis statement should be explained or defended separately.

## Conclusion

A concluding paragraph restates or rewards the ideas the writer has said in different words. It summarizes the main ideas and gives the writer's final comment about the topic.

## Requirements to Write a Good Essay

According to British council (2013),to write a good essay, student should respect the following requirements:

- Student must have a clear thesis statement.
- The essay must be well organised, using accurate elements of the essay.
- Remember that you must write a coherent, well-analyzed and well-developed essay. Listening and answering questions is not enough. Your essay must demonstrate that you have learned the skills you claim and can argue and write clearly and effectively.

- Students must remember certain things when using university essay samples: ensure not to copy any sentence from the sample essays, and must use the sample essays as per rules and regulations specified without any plagiarism.

### **Problems that EFL Learners Face when Writing**

EFL writers face many deficiencies as any FL learners. Such problems can frequently hinder their production during writing. These difficulties can be classified according to Yahia and Hashim (2013) as follows:

- **Comprehension and connection of ideas:** when students do not fully understand what they were asked to do in the writing task, which can cause their frustration and hamper the writing process.
- **Composition:** it might be hard for students to organise their ideas during writing. Composition limitation is not only in terms of ideas but also in terms of accuracy.
- **Language accuracy and appropriacy:** when the set of conventions such as: punctuation, grammar, spelling...etc is lacking.
- **Lexis:** it refers to the un-sufficient amount of words selected by students and it is among the linguistic features that cause learners' suffering.
- **Time limitation:** the time allocated which students spend during planning, drafting, editing and revising

Moreover, Byrne (1929) listed three principal difficulties, which are

- **Psychological problems:** the activity of writing itself lacks the process of communication between writers and audience.
- **Linguistic problems:** which can be seen in the basic mechanism: accuracy, diction, spelling ...etc

- **Cognitive problems:** the way in which ideas are arranged and organised logically.

Therefore, being engaged in a writing task requires a skillful requisite learner as Ur (2012) pointed out that every writer must be acquainted with some harmonious skills summarized as following:

- ❖ Writers have to have clear readable handwriting.
- ❖ Writers must be aware of choosing their diction and vocabulary.
- ❖ Writers have to use correct spelling.

In addition, the production of good writing requires specific basis. Therefore, being skillful enough in terms of such aspects: correct grammar, range of vocabulary, accurate punctuation, correct layout, accurate spelling, good range of sentences structure, linking words, imagination, planning, drafting and pre-reading and communication (Madylus, 2015)

Accordingly, writers must pay attention to the content, the audience to whom they write the rationale behind their writing, diction, style and structure. Hereby, to communicate effectively and efficiently, a writer has to be competent to communicate his ideas in a clear and fluent way (Raimes, 1983).

## Conclusion

This chapter has recycled the multiple literatures which have relation with our topic or research. We start with LLS that pave learner's way to produce of piece of writing mainly CSs that our research is devoted to discuss .The second one is about the writing procedure itself and its importance as a productive skill, difficulties which face EFL learners when writing. In addition to essay's definition, categories and tips to write a good essay.



## *Chapter Three*

### *Method*

#### **Introduction**

This chapter covers the steps and methods used throughout our work. It started first by the research design of the adopted method. In addition, it discusses the choice of methodology and strategy to describe the research. The next point is about the population of the study with sampling strategy that we have adopted. Additionally, we shed light on the research instruments with which we have collected our data and the reasons behind such choice and procedures.

#### **Research Design**

##### **The Method**

The objective of the approach in the present study is to help third year EFL students at Chadli Benjedid University, El-Tarf to become aware of CSs. Moreover, it enables them use the effective CSs to overcome their limitations in essay writing.

“Research is a systematic process of discovery and advancement of human knowledge” (Gratton & Jones, 2009, p.4). In addition, Saunders et al. (2007) pointed that people engage in research to learn more about things in systematic fashion, so expanding their knowledge. The descriptive analytical method is used in this work, which is known as a kind of data analysis that helps to describe, presents or summaries data points in constructive way as that patterns might emerge which fulfill every condition of the data. The descriptive analytical method is defined as “descriptive analysis deals with describing phenomena that how we think something is. It attempts to examine the situations in order to describe the norm” (Waliman, 2010, p.10).

##### **The Participants**

The actual research searches the CSs used by sample of third year students at the Department of English at Chadli Benjedid University, El-Tarf. The sample consists of twenty (N = 20) students of the whole population who have been randomly chosen. The choice of such

sample is based on the belief that learners are exposed to study written expression module that they have reached a noticeable level in the written proficiency as mentioned before. In addition, the participants have the needed knowledge in terms of essay writing and they are considered with the writing techniques.

Another sample includes seven teachers of English at the same department. In fact, we have chosen only this sample because teachers are actually teaching this module in this department or they have taught such module the others did not / have not yet.

### **Data Gathering Instruments and Procedures**

To carry this study, first teachers were provided with questionnaire as a suitable tool and second a document analysis, which is a test, provided to students to be analyzed to reach the wanted data and to achieve the validity of intended results.

#### **Document Analysis**

Since our study focuses on the descriptive analytical method, we asked the teacher of third year students to give us a sample of students written essays in order to analyze them, the reason is that third year EFL students have been required to write essays before. This means they have previous knowledge about how to develop a clear organised essay. Also, they are able to produce appropriate and effective essays. Thus, their instructor after equipping her learners, she selected three topics from the whole syllabus (**see appendix D**) as a test instructing them to produce an essay taking into consideration all the aspects of a well-organised essay.

When the students completed their essays in the class, the teacher gathered their papers and she gave us a sample of students essay (**see appendix B**) in order to analyze them through two check lists with different rubrics, the first one detected learners' problems in writing essay and the second one investigated learners' use of the CSs in their production. (**See appendix C**)

### *Teacher's Questionnaire*

The second tool used in the current investigation is a questionnaire, which has been administered to seven (N=07) teachers at the Department of English Chadli Benjedid University El-Tarf during the second semester in the Academic year 2021/2022. In order to know whether third year students are aware of CSs, and how they use them to overcome the main difficulties they face during writing their production. In addition, to obtain the best efforts in maintaining the use of CSs in learners' writing process.

According to McLeod (2018), a questionnaire is a search instrument composed of a set of questions about collecting the desired information from the respondents. This instrument is a low-cost, rapid, and effective approach to collect significant amounts of data from a big number of people.

The questionnaire is made up of fourteen (14) questions, which are close-ended, and open-ended questions. (See **appendix A**). The close-ended questions target the respondents to select and tick the appropriate answers. Whereas, in the open-ended questions, the respondents are free to answer and give their own justifications and points of view. In this type, the participants are asked to tick from multiple choices list the appropriate answer provided by an explanation or brief statement where it is needed.

This structured questionnaire is divided into two sections: the first section deals with the writing skill concerning the evaluation of students' level, teachers perceptions about teaching writing, the difficulty of mastering the writing skill, the main difficulties that third year students face during the writing process, and the most time consuming step in writing. On the other hand, the section two deals with the use of CSs in writing essays. The questions used turn around the following lines:

- The importance of using LLS in improving EFL learners writing level.

- The awareness of Third Year students about CSs.
- The use of CSs in overcoming students' problems during writing their production.
- The most CSs used by third year students to overcome their limitations in writing essays.

### **Data Analysis**

All the data were analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively since we are using tables and graphs in addition to the provided interpretation by the researchers. After all the essays have been gathered of the writing tests, the researchers analyzed them appropriately. In analyzing the data for this research, the researchers tried to count the number of errors in each variable, then tried to code, and describe them.

Thus, the essays were reviewed using the checklist. In addition, the checklist was attached to each single essay, which the description of their production was carried out to show to what extent they employed CSs in generating essays. Also, it intends to find out which ones are the most and less frequent strategies used in the students' essay.

Also, after we collected the teachers' answers about the questionnaire, the obtained results were analyzed by the use of tables and figures as well for closed questions and for open-ended ones. Therefore, these instruments are the suitable approach that help researchers to elucidate the data easily and properly to respond to the above stated research questions and hypotheses proof.

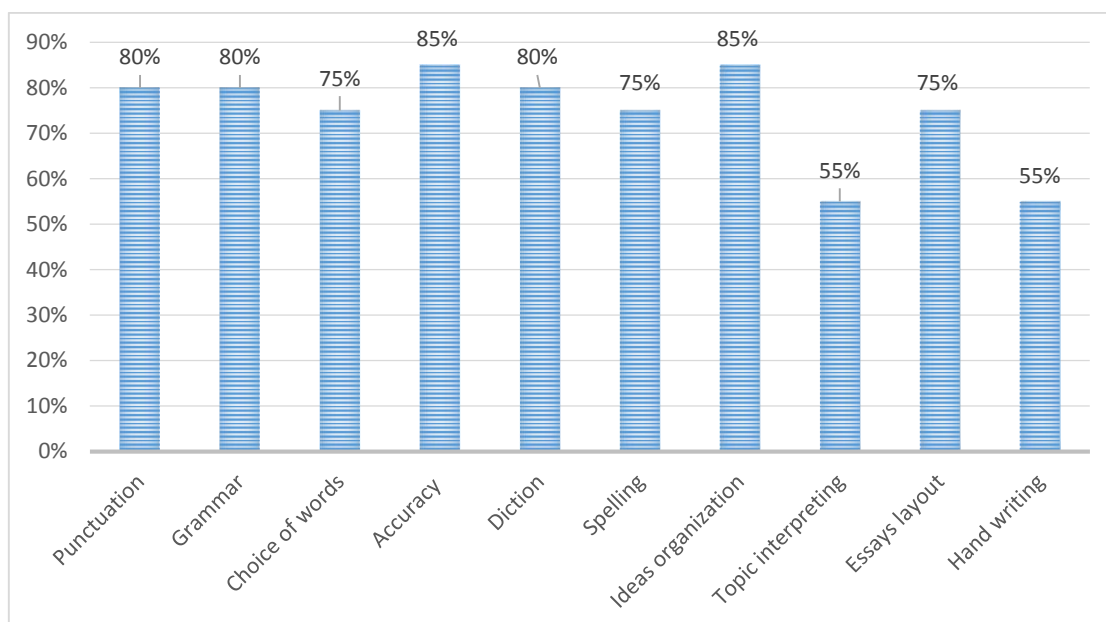
### **Conclusion**

To sum up, as it is explained the chapter highlights the appropriate practical methods and tools the researchers applied to accomplish the goal and reliability of the study. Therefore, the validity of data gathered will be discussed and analyzed in the next section.





07	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
08	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
09	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
10	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
11	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
12			✓	✓						
13	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
14										
15										
16	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
17	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
18	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
19		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
20	✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Total</b>	<b>16/2</b>	<b>16/2</b>	<b>15/2</b>	<b>17/2</b>	<b>16/2</b>	<b>15/2</b>	<b>17/2</b>	<b>11/2</b>	<b>15/2</b>	<b>11/2</b>
	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>85%</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>85%</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>55%</b>



**Figure 4.1. Students Essays' Criteria Results**

After analyzing students' essays, we noticed that the high percentage 85% goes for both accuracy and ideas organisation. Next, 80% of students' difficulties are for grammar, diction and punctuation. Mainly they are the most repeated problems in the students' essays. Then, 75% goes to choice of words, spelling and essay layout. Whereas, 55% of students have difficulties with topic interpreting and essay layout.

We may deduce that third year students are suffering from all the aspects and the most important characteristics of essay writing: accuracy, ideas organisation, diction, grammar, punctuation, choice of words, spelling, essay layout, topic interpreting and handwriting are the main principles to the well essay writing.

Depending on the outcome of results, we can find out that the most tackled problems are the following:

To begin with, students from (1-11), (16-18) and (20) have problems with punctuation and grammar, they do not know how to supply the right punctuation in compound/ complex sentences, and they do not use the appropriate verb tense.

Secondly, students from (2-6), (8-13) and (16-19) have problems with the choice of words since they have limited vocabulary/ lexis about the topic they are writing about.

Adding to, students from (1-13) and (16-19) suffer from the following difficulties: accuracy, diction, and ideas organisation because even if students have enough ideas about the topic, they cannot produce well-structured sentences to deliver their message or opinion correctly.

Also, students who have problems with spelling are from (2-4), (6-11), (13) and (16-20). These problems can cause misunderstanding because they mislead the reader from interpreting well the writer's point of view. Besides, they are among the interference signs.

Moreover, students (3, 6, 7, 10, 11, 13) and from (16-20) are having problems with topic interpreting as they do not grasp the task instruction or they got it incorrectly.

In addition, students encounter difficulties with essays layout are those (1, 2, 4, 5) and from (7-11) as well as (13) and from (16-20). They cannot distinguish between paragraph and essay structure and even their productions lack the transition elements to show their ideas construction and thoughts flow.

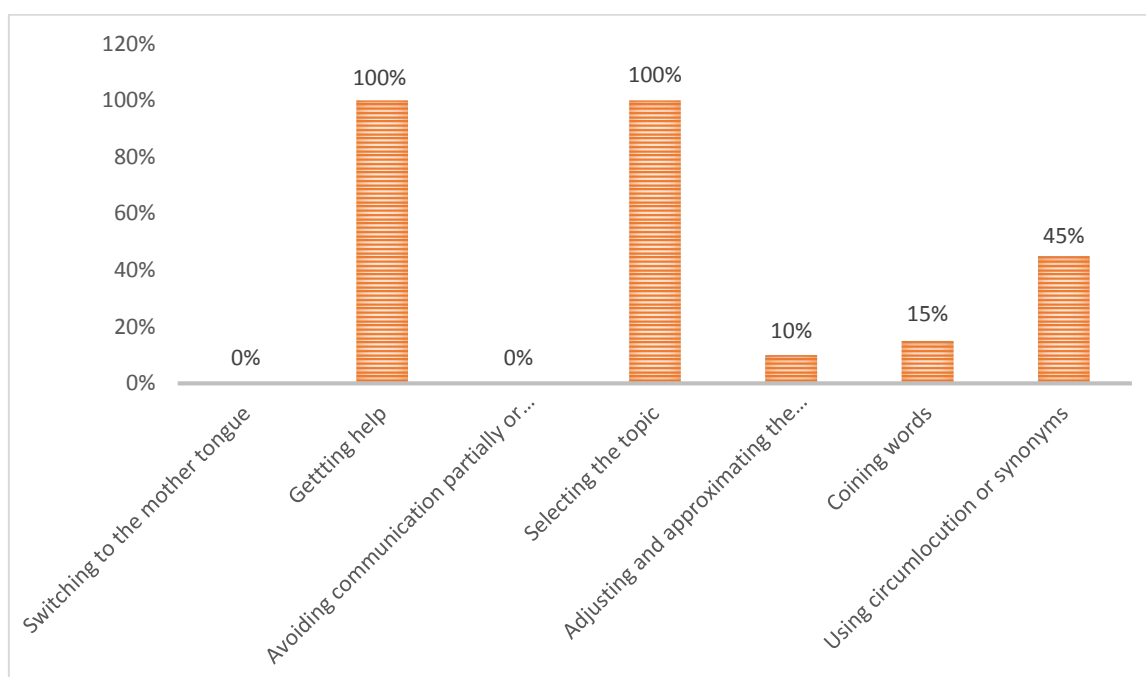
Furthermore, students (2, 6, 7), from (9-11), (13) and (16, 17, 19, 20) have unreadable penmanship which makes their writing production exhausting and is so difficult to decode and understand.

Although we detected all those problems with the majority of students, we found two students who are (14,15) showing great deal of creativity, subjectivity and mastering a linguistic competence that made their touches obvious and their style impressive and that what qualified them as excellent students. They have no difficulties concerning punctuation, grammar usage. Their ideas are organised and writing are accurate.

Table 4.2. Students Use of Compensation Strategies

Compensation strategies Essay Number	Switching to the mother tongue	Getting help	Avoiding communication partially or totally	Selecting the topic	Adjusting and approximating the message	Coining words	Using circumlocution or synonyms
01		✓		✓			✓
02		✓		✓			
03		✓		✓			✓
04		✓		✓			
05		✓		✓			
06		✓		✓			
07		✓		✓			
08		✓		✓			
09		✓		✓			✓
10		✓		✓			
11		✓		✓		✓	✓
12		✓		✓			
13		✓		✓			✓
14		✓		✓		✓	✓
15		✓		✓			✓
16		✓		✓			
17		✓		✓			
18		✓		✓	✓		✓

19		✓		✓			
20		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Total</b>	<b>00/20</b>	<b>20/20</b>	<b>00/20</b>	<b>20/20</b>	<b>02/20</b>	<b>03/20</b>	<b>09/20</b>
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>45%</b>



**Figure 4.2. Students Use of Compensation Strategies**

As shown in the Bar-chart shown above, we consider the following strategies as the most useful and helpful ones in producing essays:

First, selecting the topic scored 100%, which means that all the students applied it (see **appendix D**) because they chose their topics out of three samples suggested by the teacher as a test task. Despite of the fact that most of them selected similar topics, still some of them picked different others. The most selected topic, which was topic number 02: “Discuss in which manner Theodore Dreiser’s *Sister Carrie* embody naturalist work students” by nine students. Since the students are familiar with the topic and have enough needed information to discuss it

easily, followed by the first topic which was “Clarify in which manner Mark Twain’s the adventures of Huckleberry Finn represent a regionalist and realist work of literature” by seven students. The last topic was “Explain how Muckrakers reflect the injustices of American society through their literary works?” only by three students.

Then, the strategy of getting help voted 100% drove the students to select a topic of their choice which was considered as a sign of help from the teacher as well as taking notes and lessons during previous sessions and develop them to discuss the chosen topic.

Also, some students 45% applied circumlocution or synonyms to give equivalents or explain some concepts or notions found in their essays. For example student 13<sup>th</sup> used equivalent “emphasis = focus”, student 11<sup>th</sup> “corruption = wrong doing”, and student 18<sup>th</sup> “misery = poverty”.

In addition, few students 15% implied coining words strategy to show their creativity and deliver their message appropriately in the used context. Such as student 20<sup>th</sup> used “factual extracted from fact” coining an adjective using suffix. Student 14<sup>th</sup> used “without any decoration” to describe the dry fact.

Moreover, the strategy of adjusting and approximating the message scored 10% who tried to explain some ideas in a very simple way for more clarification. Like student 18<sup>th</sup> tried to simplify the meaning and explain the notion of “determinism” is the opposite of the notion “free will, people do not control over their destiny”.

On the other hand, we noticed that students did not use avoiding communication partially or totally because such strategy needs oral interaction and communication whereas students are involved in a written task. Besides, this strategy was not used by Third Year students in their written production, which is the test because students are involved in a guided written task about a topic, which they have previous knowledge about. Which means they do not need to think in

their mother tongue and translate it into target language to express themselves freely (topic of their choice).

## Part Two: Results of Teachers' Questionnaire.

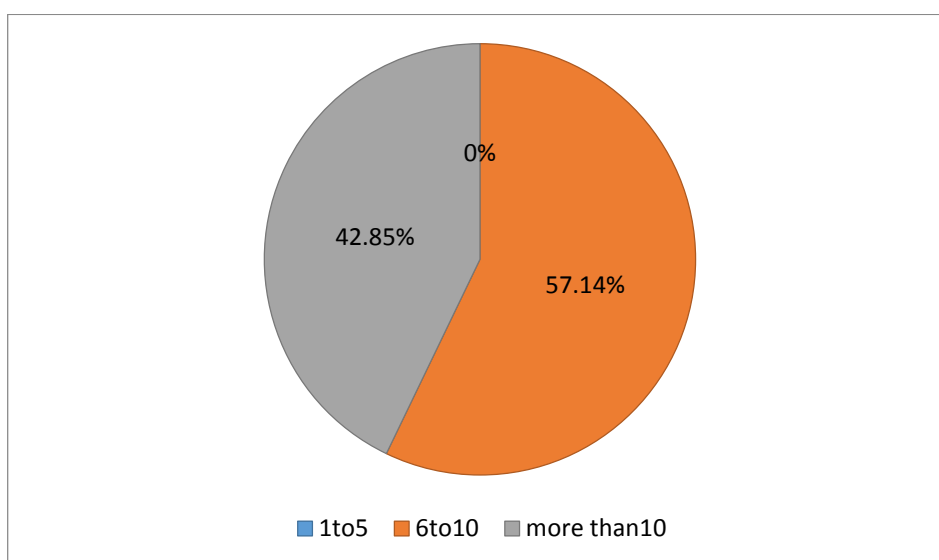
The questionnaire was administrated to seven teachers who have or are teaching writing at Chadli Benjedid University. It provided prompts that helped to identify the difficulties that Third Year EFL students face during writing an essay, and the use of CSs to overcome those difficulties. The questionnaire questions and responses are as follow:

### *Section One: Writing Skill*

**Question 01: How long have you been teaching English at University?**

**Table 4.3. Teachers Experience in Teaching English at University**

Options	Numbers	Percentage
From one to 05 years	00	00%
From 6 to 10 years	04	57.14%
More than 10 years	03	42.85%
<b>Total</b>	<b>07</b>	<b>100%</b>



**Figure 4.3. Teachers Experience in Teaching English at University**

As it shown above, the majority of teachers 57.14% have been teaching English at university from six to ten years, while; 42.85% have been teaching English for more than ten

years. As such, we are in position to claim that all the teachers have a pretty good experience in teaching writing, and their answers are so valid in assessing the third year students.

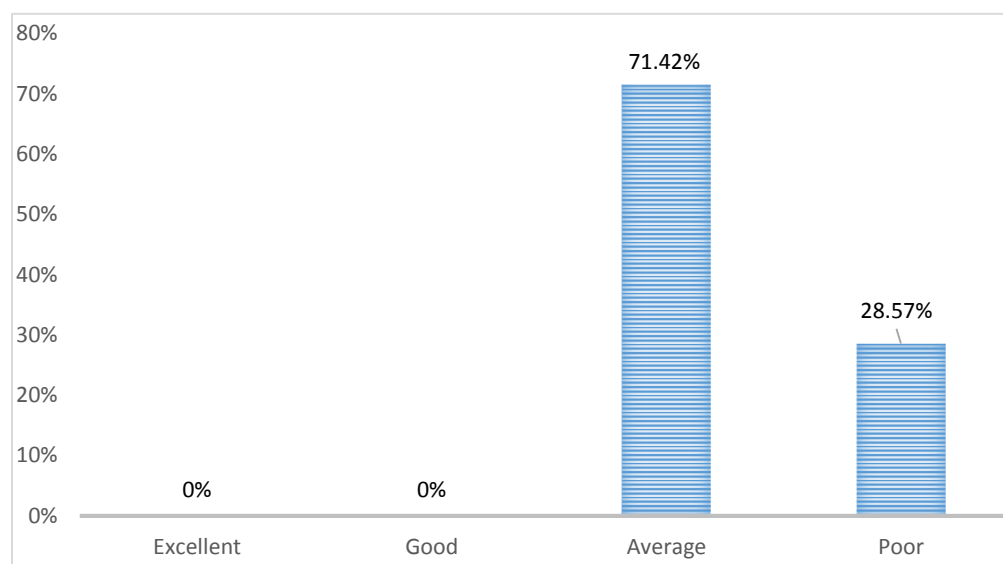
### Question 02: Have you ever taught writing / or are you teaching writing?

According to the answers of the participants, they all confirmed that they have taught the writing expression module in the past years at the University. So, their response considered as valid and reliable answers.

### Question 03: According to your experience, how do you evaluate your students writing proficiency?

**Table 4.4. Evaluation of Students Writing Proficiency**

Options	Numbers	Percentage
Excellent	0	00%
Good	0	00%
Average	05	71.42%
Poor	02	28.57%
<b>Total</b>	<b>07</b>	<b>100%</b>



**Figure 4.4. Evaluation of Students Writing Proficiency**

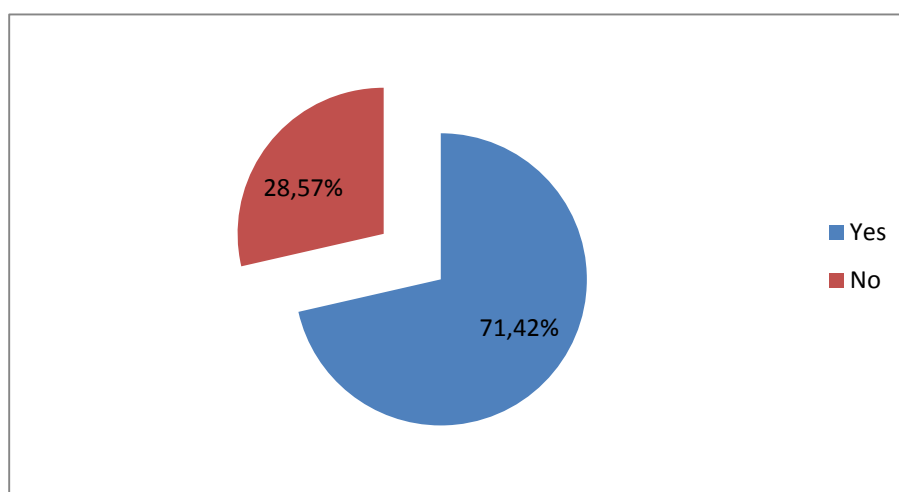
According to the results, all the teachers confirmed that no third year student could be qualified as a good or excellent student, i.e. all the students are under level. Moreover, some teachers said that there are no excellent students but there are poor students. In addition, most

of the majority of students' are judged to be average, it means that all the students share the same level which is acceptable proficiency.

**Question 04: Do you think that it is difficult to teach writing skill?**

**Table 4.5. The Degree of Difficulty to Teach Writing**

Answer	Number	Percentage
Yes	05	71.42%
No	02	28.57%
<b>Total</b>	<b>07</b>	<b>100%</b>



**Figure 4.5. The Degree of Difficulty to Teach Writing**

From the presented results, we noticed that the majority of teachers 71, 42% approved that it is difficult to teach writing because such productive skill needs much time to practice and master with variety of topics. However, 28, 57% of them believed that it is not hard to teach this skill. Students are not novice writers since they have previous background about the language and they are familiar with writing techniques.

Teachers who agreed have justified their answers by saying that:

- It is the most complex skill that learners fear.
- It is among the four skills of teaching learning languages.
- It is a difficult task to teach because it needs competent teacher who knows different

approaches and methods, also writing need a lot of practice inside and outside the classroom. In addition, in order to make students successful writers needs devotion from the part of the teacher as well as the learner.

- Students lack the writing style that made them write appropriately.
- Teaching such skill is time-consuming. Besides, the time allocated is not enough for practice.

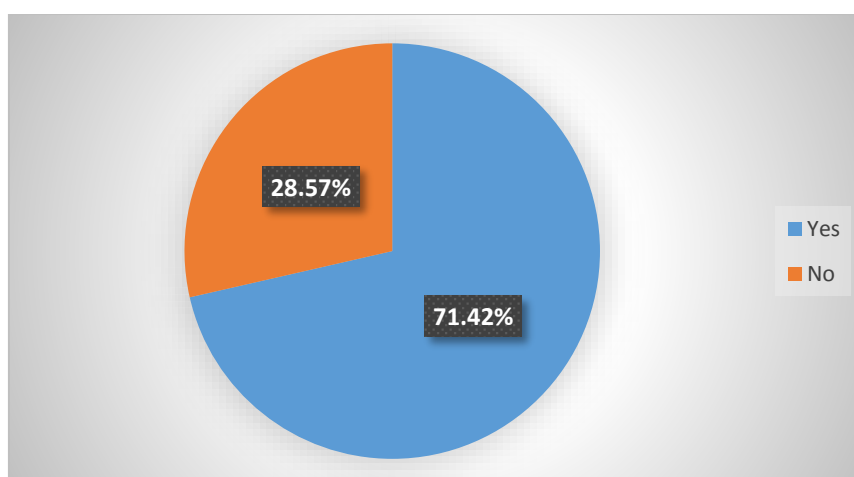
Teachers who disagreed, their explanation listed as follow:

- It is a learner centered- skill, in which the teacher plays a monitor role.
- Since university students have experienced writing in their past years (middle/secondary school), it is not a brand new for them. The teacher is dealing with learners who have previous knowledge, background and experience in the writing skill.

**Question 05: Do you think that it is difficult for Students to master the writing skill?**

**Table 4.6. Students Difficulty in Mastering the Writing Skill**

Answer	Number	Percentage
Yes	05	71,42%
No	02	28,57%
<b>Total</b>	<b>07</b>	<b>100%</b>



#### Figure 4.6. Students Difficulty in Mastering the Writing Skill

As it is manifested, we found that most of the teachers 71,42% believed that it is difficult for students to master this skill as writing is regarded as a complex skill that needs a lot of efforts to achieve its tasks. Whereas, the others 28, 57% opposed the previous view that writing is not difficult for students to master as students are familiar with the language, in which they express themselves freely.

Teachers who confirmed their explanations listed in the following points:

- Attaining a good level in writing requires the mastering of the strategies of writing production as planning, editing, drafting alongside coherence and cohesion and punctuation and spelling.
- For learners, writing needs complex cognitive process where they process information brainstorm it, then organise the ideas in a certain way, at the end they edit these information. Well, it is a long process that needs time and strategies that are appropriate to each situation and context.
- Because they may face many obstacles since writing is a complex process.
- It is difficult to master grammar structure, it is difficult to use vocabulary appropriately, and it is difficult to balance between the content and the process of writing as for the product.
- Because writing is a complex skill, which needs to pass through different steps, which are planning, drafting, editing, and revising.
- To master writing means to master word choice, punctuation, structure, and the relationships between ideas ...etc. It is important to know all these in addition to grammar correctness.

Teachers who disconfirmed their clarification as follow:

- If they devote considerable efforts related to developing such skill like reading

subjects of different context and practice frequently.

- It is not difficult for learners to master the writing skill if they write for some reasons like self-pleasure such as writing diaries, poems... etc.

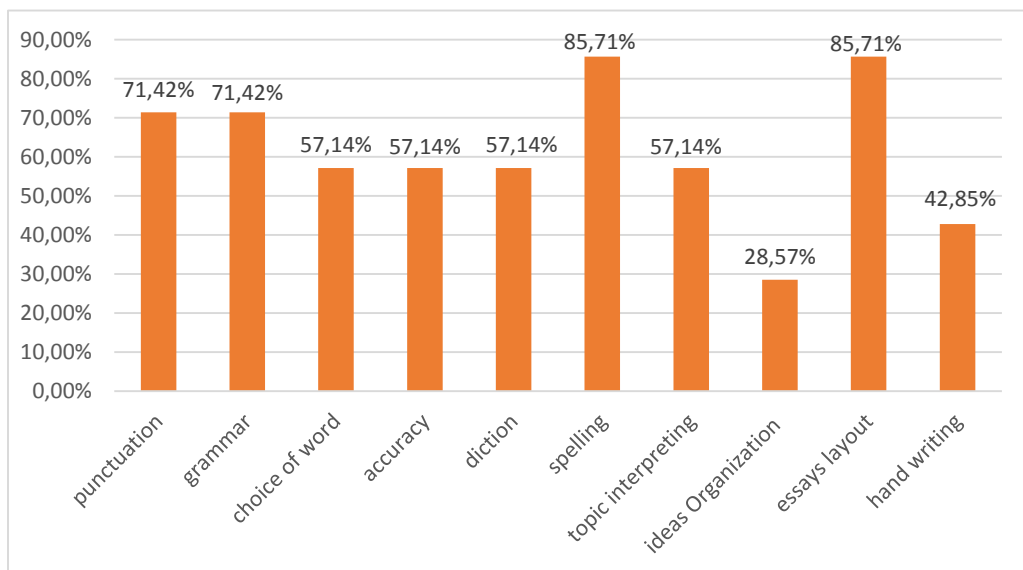
**Question 06: In your opinion, the time allocated for writing expression is enough for practice.**

No teacher agreed that the time allocated for writing expression is enough for practice. On the contrary, they all share the same point of view that is the time allocated for this module is not enough to practice, since writing is considered as a complex skill that needs a lot of time to practice.

**Question 07: Which from the following are the main problems that your students face while writing essays (you may tick more than one).**

**Table 4.7. Problems that EFL Students Face While Writing Essays**

Problems		Numbers	Percentage
Language accuracy and appropriacy	Punctuation	05	71.42%
	Grammar	05	71.42%
	Choice of words	04	57.14%
Linguistic problems	Accuracy	04	57.14%
	Diction	04	57.14%
	Spelling	06	85.71%
Cognitive problems	Topic interpreting	04	57.14%
	Ideas organisation	02	28.57%
	Essays layout	06	85.71%
	Hand writing	03	42.85%



**Figure 4.7. Problems that EFL Students' Face while Writing Essays**

As it is clearly seen, most of the teacher's 85% considered spelling and essays layout as fundamental issues that hamper students from producing good essays.

Whereas, teachers gave 71% for grammar and punctuation. Teachers considered grammar and punctuation as crucial problems that most of the students suffer from during writing an essay.

Accuracy, choice of words, diction and topic interpreting have shared the same percentage 57% as dominant issues learners have problem with.

However, teachers considered hand writing as a big deal and voted for it 42%, the reason behind that is unreadable handwriting can lead to misunderstanding and time consuming in reading their papers which leads to teachers' frustration.

Last but not least, ideas organisation took 28% in which teachers believed that many students still have difficulty with this issue during writing.

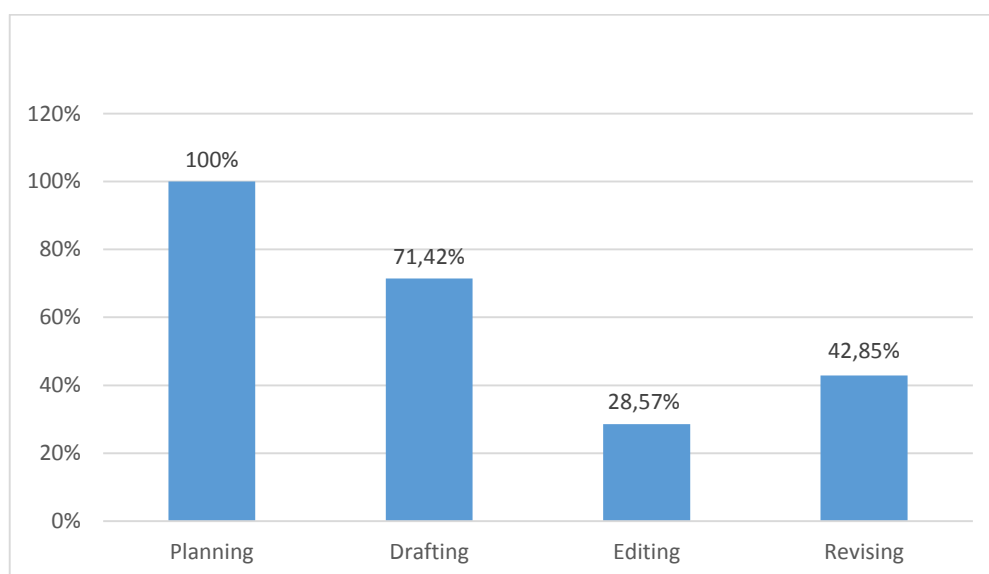
So, this implies that the above-mentioned problems are the backbone of any written production that students face in their essays as well as are the causes, which hamper them from

producing well-formed essays.

**Question 08: which writing step is the most time consuming for Third Year students at Chadli Benjedid University?**

**Table 4.8. The Most Time Consuming Step in Writing**

Answer	Number	Percentage
Planning	07	100%
Drafting	05	71.42%
Editing	02	28.57%
Revising	03	42.85%



**Figure 4.8. The Most Time Consuming Step in Writing**

According to percentage revealed in the chart above, all teachers 100% see eye to eye that planning is the most time consuming step in writing. Because it is regarded as an important step in the writing process, in which students need time to plan and organise their ideas i.e. students setting the goals of their writing and put a plan to achieve this goal.

Equally important, 71, 42 % of the teachers viewed that drafting also is a time consuming step as students write a complete first version of a piece of writing so they need time to draft.

While 42, 85% of the teachers opted revising as complicated step that requires time for making the necessary changes and deciding what will be removed and what will be kept in.

However, some teachers 28, 57% consider editing as a time consuming step in which students need to make sure that it is well-designed piece of writing before publishing it. Thus, the other teachers see that this step does not need too much time compared with the other steps.

The respondents' answers were justified as follow:

- Learners got anxious of what to write in terms of ideas from which they will find that the content that was written is not sustainable.
- All of the stages of writing because the writing process should contain all of them.
- Because students are trained how to plan, brainstorm effectively but they still miss the appropriate words to express their thoughts, they just have good ideas and do not know how to express them.
- Because the students need to be ready for the writing process; how to think and generate ideas and then organise them.
- Planning essay takes time and ideas that should be appropriate to the topic, as well drafting your first draft takes time and needs the learner knows how he organises his ideas and knows what information needed and what is not needed.
- To plan what are you going to write and organise logical ideas and putting

them in coherent and correct pieces of writing is time consuming.

- Students spend much time planning especially when they have so much to write about a topic they are familiar with, also they need time to edit their drafts.

### *Section Two: The Use of Compensation Strategies in Writing Essays?*

#### **Question 09: Do you think that using language-learning strategies is important for EFL learners to improve their writing level?**

In fact, professional teachers have all concur that language-learning strategies are very important to improve learners writing level in which language learners use LLS as a tool to enhance their writing level.

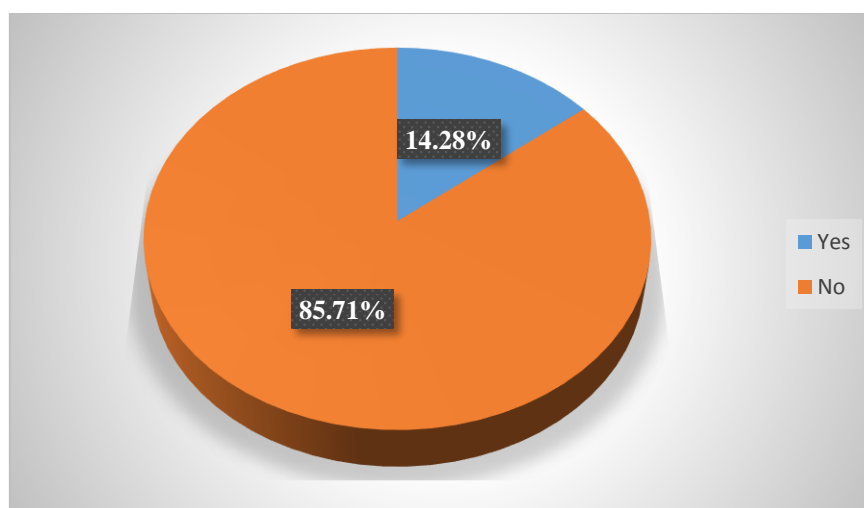
They have justified their agreement by the following explanations:

- Learners should be aware of their LLS to be able to boost their writing skills.
- Because using strategies makes it easy for learners to classify their ideas according to the used approach and topic and as such students would ameliorate their writing style.
- Students should master how to manage their time for doing specific activities. They should excel at writing convenient essays appropriate to their academic level.
- Because they are systematic and tackle all the sides of writing process.
- This is something obvious, because we all use LLS in any skill. We can say to some extent that writing strategies is something rationale.
- Students should rely on the other skills to develop their writing skill for example reading can help students to enrich their linguistic repertoire.
- Such strategies are helpful to make the learner deduce the meaning from context.

**Question 10: Are third year students at Chadli Benjedid University aware about compensation strategies? (Such as coining words, Switching to the mother tongue and using circumlocution).**

**Table 4.9. Students Awareness about Compensation Strategies**

Answer	Number	Percentage
Yes	01	14,28%
No	06	85,71%
<b>Total</b>	<b>07</b>	<b>100%</b>



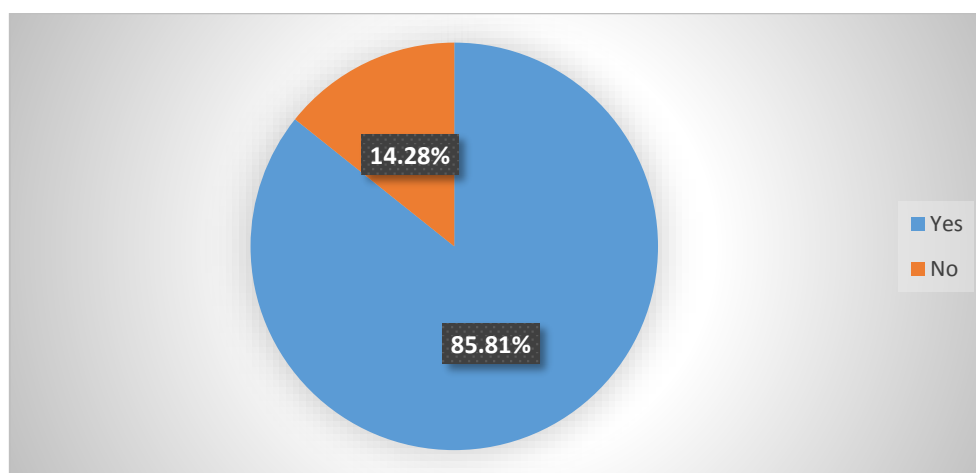
**Figure 4.9. Students Awareness about Compensation Strategies**

In fact, this question is designed to check third year students' awareness about CSs. The results indicate that some teachers 14, 28% noticed that students are aware about CSs. However, the majority of participants 85, 71% approved that students are not aware of such strategies despite of the importance of CSs and its use in overcoming limitations in speaking and writing.

**Question 11: As an instructor of writing expression module, do you think that the use of compensation strategies is helpful to overcome students' problems during writing essays?**

**Table 4.10. The Use of Compensation Strategies in Overcoming Students' Difficulties during Writing Essays.**

Answer	Number	percentage
Yes	06	85,71%
No	01	14,28%
<b>Total</b>	<b>07</b>	<b>100%</b>



**Figure 4.10. The Use of Compensation Strategies in Overcoming Students' Difficulties during Writing Essays**

As shown in the figure above, the majority of the teachers 85, 71% have confirmed that the use of CSs help students to defeat the difficulties during writing essays. Such strategies are considered as a helping technique that used by the students to reduce the main problems that they face during writing their essays. However, the rest 14, 28% have ignored the importance of CSs in developing students essays who have clarified by saying “the use of such strategies will result in erroneous expressive ideas that are not relevant to the needed context”.

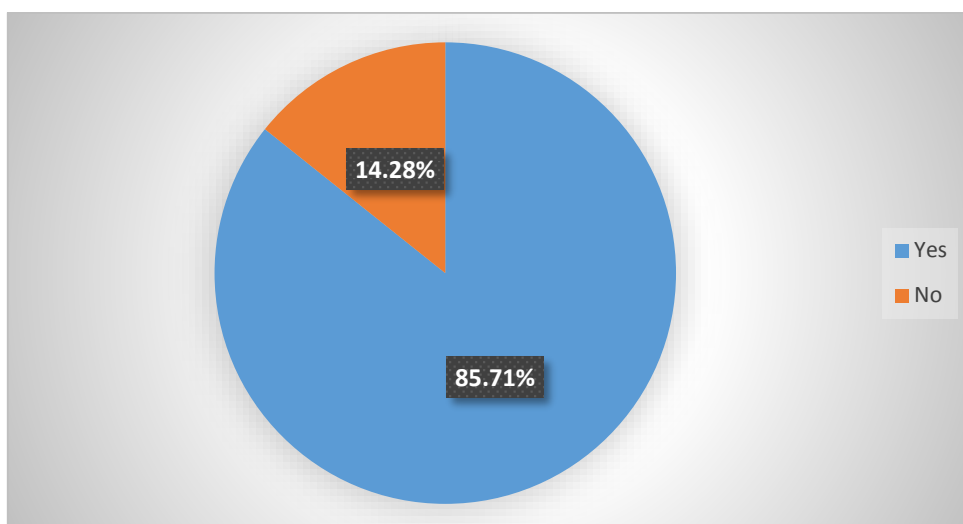
The respondents who consider CSs as an important tool, their explanations are mentioned in the following points:

- It helps the learners at least not to stop until they write because they will be disappointed and frustrated.
- If students know what they have in their register as passive or active vocabulary, their diction would be helpful. For example, if students use synonyms, nouns, words, that means that they possess a bulk of vocabulary. Which is not the case.
- Some CSs are helping the students to find the correct words.
- Some of CSs are helpful like looking for synonyms but I do not think that using the mother tongue can be.
- These strategies are helpful since they lead the learners to recycle their previous knowledge in terms of lexis, ideas, information, and employ/imply them appropriately to serve the topic.
- These strategies are putting the learners on the right path to reformulate right structures expressing their thoughts and working independently about a topic of interest since the teacher is the monitor of the task.

**Question 12: Do your students use the strategy of guessing intelligently when they face new or unknown words?**

**Table 4.11. The Students' Use of Guessing Intelligently Strategy.**

<b>Answer</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	6	85,71%
No	1	14,28%
<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>100%</b>



**Figure 4.11. The Students' Use of Guessing Intelligently Strategy**

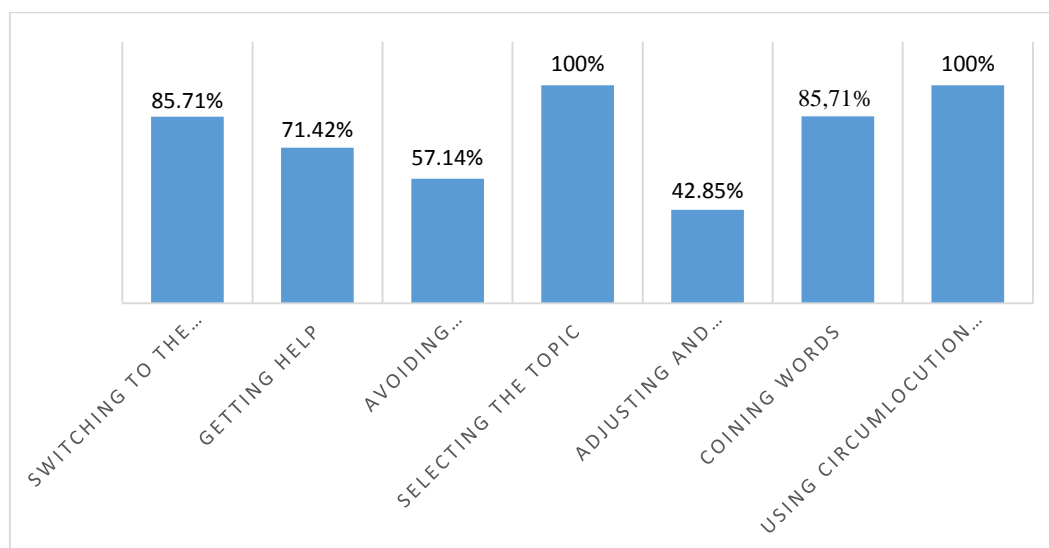
The reported results represent that almost all the participants 85, 71% agreed that their students use the strategy of guessing intelligently when they face new or unknown words during writing their production. However, the others 14, 28% respond that their students do not use such strategy in their academic writing. It can be seen that most of third year students depend on guessing intelligently strategy when they face unknown words.

**Question13: According to your experience which of the following are used by third year student to overcome students' limitations in writing essay (you may tick more than one).**

**Table 4.12 .Compensation Strategies Used by Students**

Options	Number	Percentage
Switching to the mother tongue	06	85.71%
Getting help	05	71.42%
Avoiding communication partially or totally	04	57.14%
Selecting the topic	07	100%
Adjusting and approximating the	03	42.85%

message		
Coining words	06	85.71%
Using circumlocution or synonyms	07	100%



**Figure 4.12. Compensation Strategies Used By Students**

As displayed above, teachers' answers are different in terms of which techniques that students use to overcome their limitations in writing essays. We see that:

“Using circumlocution or synonym” and “selecting the topic” strategies are the prevalent types of CSs, which classified the first 100 % used over the other ones by third year students to defeat the difficulties they face when writing essay. After that, almost all teachers 85, 71% chose “switching to the mother tongue” and “coining words “ strategies have the same frequent use by EFL students in their written productions. Furthermore, 71, 42% hold the view on the getting help as regularly used strategy by students in which they may get the help from different sources. We have “avoiding communication partially or totally” which is classified the fourth 57, 14% predominant used strategy. Then “adjusting and approximating the message” lastly with 42, 85%.

Thus, we suppose that all the strategies are important and students should use them all

accurately and appropriately as helpful techniques to solve students' difficulties with essay writing.

**Question 14: From your point of view, what are the most useful compensation strategies to solve students' problems with essay writing?**

All the teachers who are involved in answering the above question, and according to their experience in teaching the written expression; in order to overcome EFL students' difficulties in writing essays and motivating them to improve their abilities to produce well-structured essays, they provided us with the following recommendations:

- Providing the learners with the choice of topics.
- Frequent practice of essay writing in the classroom.
- Taking a look or making a kind of research of essays of similar subject matter.
- Using the circumlocution or synonyms, adjusting, or approximating the message.
- Selecting the topic.
- Using synonyms and collocations.
- Asking questions.
- Writing similar paragraphs about the same topic.
- Studying the types of essays.
- Brainstorming and planning effectively.
- Reading about many or different topics.
- Enrich students' linguistic repertoires by encouraging them to read.
- Using synonyms is one of the most useful ones because it makes students avoid stagnation in writing and thus they would not be anxious and frustrated.
- Guessing intelligently is another important strategy because students can guess the meaning from the context.

## Conclusion

To sum up, in this chapter we have discussed the results obtained through the analysis of both students productions and teachers questionnaire concerning the use of CSs in students' writing essays which were analyzed by a mixed method, i.e. qualitatively and quantitatively by using different statistical techniques . This Chapter provided us with the needed data to discussed, and prove the stated hypotheses along with the research questions which will be in the next chapter.



## *Chapter Five*

### *Discussion*

#### **Introduction**

The chapter discusses the results of the study that lead to prove or disprove the previously stated hypotheses and to answer the research questions of the current research. Moreover, this chapter presents the pedagogical implications of students' problems with using CSs during producing essays. Consequently, the researchers proposed some recommendations and suggestions paths for future research.

#### **Pedagogical Implications drawn from the Research Findings**

From the accomplished results and previous findings covered by the research study, it is crucial to put forward some practical implications. It is observed that third year EFL students of Chadli Benjedid University El-Tarf face many difficulties during writing essays. Thus, language learning strategies and especially CSs should be taught and designed carefully within the syllabus in order to reduce students' difficulties with essay writing.

The finding of this study suggest that EFL teachers need to provide suitable teaching methods in order to pay students' attention of the use of CSs in their essay writing.

In other words, CSs are better understood if they can be better taught, explicitly or implicitly, either through exercises, classroom instruction, or comments on students' papers to defeat their difficulties they face in their essay writing with the appropriate use of these aspects.

Furthermore, our investigation concurs the importance, the obligation or the improvements of language learners' writing in terms of using such strategies. The researchers' interest was to motivate and encourage teachers to call for teaching these strategies to make learners aware of their validity in writing performance.

Also, to enhance EFL learners to write appropriate, well and organised essays which they will be able to compose a meaningful essay. Moreover, the analysis demonstrates that FL teachers should explain to their students the role of each aspect in the construction of a well-composed essay, and the fact that some aspects substitute for others and how they interact to build it.

### **Discussion of the Research Questions and Hypotheses**

Based on the analysis of students' essay and teachers' questionnaire, we may deduce that third year EFL students at the department of English encounter a variety of problems with the use of CSs in their written production.

To begin with, CSs are important for successful writing. They must be maintained in any written production content, but it is not easy to apply them all by the majority of students in essays' writing. Most students encounter problems with such strategies when producing their essays. These students have problems with punctuation, grammar ...etc. Although they have no problem with topic interpreting they still have difficulties with diction and essay layout though they have teachers' notes and lessons which can be basis and starting point (getting help strategy) to develop their essay about a topic.

Besides, students were in a situation in which they had the opportunity to select a topic out of three choices; the previous mentioned points are considered as getting help strategy. Still they have problems with language accuracy and appropriacy; they do not use the right punctuation and capitalization well in compound/complex sentences. Besides, their choice of words is so limited to the notes they have about the topic. On the other hand, most of them have issues with linguistic problems as they are not accurate, missing diction and spell incorrectly. In addition, they have cognitive problems when it comes to organising their ideas and their thoughts flow when some of their productions are unreadable, repeated...etc.

After collecting and discussing the related data, the first research question is answered, and the first hypotheses that is EFL learners have difficulties in producing a well formed essays is successfully proved.

According to teachers' questionnaire results students are not aware of CSs, as they are unfamiliar to them. So, their ignorance and lack of knowledge in theoretically besides to their lack of practice make them fail creating and developing well-structured essays. Thus, they should pay attention to the use of CSs that help them to well-interpret, guess and find the appropriate linguistic tools, ideas, information and use them accurately developing their essays' topic. On the other hand, EFL teachers have are in need to develop techniques to raise their students' awareness for the importance of applying CSs for the overall quality of the essay. To sum up, all the results above provide an absolute answer to the second question of the research: are Third year EFL students at Chadli Benjedid University aware of CSs, which validate our second hypothesis.

From the findings of the corpus study, we can notice that some CSs appear in students' production. After the analysis of students' writing as well as the designed questionnaire, it is revealed that they employ some CSs though some of them used more frequently than others. This means that, there is always a specific predominant strategy, which helps the researcher to find out what kind of problems do students face during production. Or which CSs better help them to overcome such issues and write well-structured essays about a topic of interest easily.

The previous chapter results uncover students' use of CSs though was not sufficient, which appears in students' produced essays. Students used mainly "circumlocution or synonyms "to explain some words or to simplify their ideas and to make them more comprehensible as well as "adjusting the message and coining words" they usually use these strategies which seem to be simple to understand without looking for other strategies to make their writing better.

Concerning “the topic selection”, students have chosen their essays' question to be solved out of three topics as mentioned before. The essay's production was taken as a test and here they have avoided communication partially or totally. On the other hand, they got help from their notes and lessons to develop their essays. In addition, it was obvious that many EFL students think in their mother tongue and translate, but we did not notice such huge implementation, as the topics were not free but stricted to the syllabus as suggested by the teacher.

By considering all these findings, we can see that students have used some CSs and ignored others. Therefore, they do not have the ability to use them accurately, appropriately and frequently in their production.

Depending on the gathered results, we may deduce that the problems, which were committed by the students, are because of their unawareness and lack of knowledge about CSs to facilitate dealing with a suggested topic. Their limited lexis, lack of practice, the choice of topic although which they are familiar with make their productions similar and their lack of creativity was so obvious.

Consequently, this would answer our research questions that would confirm our hypotheses that Third year Students encountered problems in producing essays and these problems are the result of their lack of knowledge about CSs, which can help them writing well-structured, simple but creative, correctly developed and different essays. In the light of the above findings, the already stated hypothesis that: If Third Year EFL students at Chadli Benjedid University use CSs then they will overcome their limitations in essay writing is confirmed.

### **The Limitations of the Study**

Though the actual present research has accomplished its goals, some obstacles were inevitable because Algeria as many other countries in the world still fight the pandemic illness

“Covid-19”; Corona virus prohibited the researchers from implementing the research tools as it was expected.

Because of the protective restrictions taken to prevent Corona virus spread, adopting another research tool became a necessity, which was a questionnaire instead of a structured interview with teachers. Thus, only few teachers taught or teach written expression module at the University of Chadli Benjedid and they are the ones who replied our questionnaire and that is why we have depend only on seven teachers in our research. Also, Algerian Universities still work with the batch system, which make both teachers and students not available all the time.

Moreover, another obstacle the researchers have faced during the analysis of students essays is that teacher's notes guided the participants during sessions and task instruction during test, which makes their production limited.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the previous mentioned results, a number of recommendations are listed for both students and teachers:

- **Students:**

1. Should be aware of CSs to overcome their difficulties in writing essay.
2. Should think of the writing process as a necessity not only in studying and they should practice it at home in order to reduce their writing problems as grammar, punctuation...etc and enhance their writing style.
3. Should develop their writing skills through being more involved in the writing process by working individually, in pairs or groups to improve their linguistic competence.

4. Should not be afraid of asking any question to the teacher, as he/she is the one that will help them to understand topics and clarify doubt.
5. Must read more to enrich their lexis and widen their knowledge in order to organise their ideas during producing an essay about specific topic.
6. Should be exposed to different topics; this will give them chance to much practice and better mastering of CSs to build up a well structured essay.
7. Should be more serious about the crucial impact of using CSs in their essays properly.
8. Should be taught clearly and explicitly about the CSs, their use and importance as helping techniques in defeating the difficulties faced by students during writing essays.

- **Teachers:**

1. Should explain the writing techniques by using different dynamics; try to use new techniques in written expression module such as coming up with a new word in each session and let the students use the guessing intelligently strategy to find out the exact meaning.
2. Should encourage and motivate students to practice writing different types of essays in order to enhance their level. They should provide them with direct and positive feedback.
3. Extend the amount of time allocated to write which may affect the level of mastery of the writing skill.
4. Help the students to start writing individual sentences, short paragraphs then long essays.

5. Should teach students about CSs and train them how to use those strategies correctly.
6. Should devote more time for students to write essays in order to help them in practicing the writing skill and applying CSs.
7. Written expression teachers should adopt appropriate and relevant approaches or techniques for students needs and level.

### **Suggestions for Further Research**

At the end of the study, and based on the findings, the researchers recommend that:

- More studies concerning teaching essay writing can be conducted in order to improve the students' writing skill.
- Serious need for further researches (action research) to be made to investigate and detect CSs to improve these crucial skills among undergraduate EFL.
- Analyzing students' vocabulary learning strategies and its effect on the development of students' organisational writing skills.
- Investigating teacher feedback practices to understand the factors that hamper good quality teacher feedback on their students writing.
- The effect of reading on the development of student writing performance mainly style.

### **Conclusion**

To accomplish our framework behind the purpose of this study that aims to attract and raise students awareness of the importance of using CSs in EFL essay writing. This chapter covers the discussion of the reported results that we based on achieve the research question

response and to conduct our hypotheses' proof. Besides, it shows the implementation and the limitation that encountered recommendation for future research.

We may conclude by saying that writing is a complex skill and it was a hard task for almost all Third year Students at the Department of English at Chadli Benjedid El-Tarf University. The results concur that they actually encounter difficulties with employing CSs in writing EFL essays, which are the vital keys of our research questions and the opening window of the suggested hypotheses.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A



#### Teachers' Questionnaire

People's Democratic Republic of Algeria

Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research

University of Chadli Bendjedid – El Taref

Faculty of Letters and Languages

Department of English

Dear Teachers,

You are kindly invited to answer the following questionnaire, which serves as a tool to investigate the use of compensation strategies in reducing EFL learners' essay writing problems; therefore, I appreciate if you take some time and energy to carefully tick the right choice.

#### Section one: Writing skill.

1-How long have you been teaching English at university?

- From one to 05 years
- -From 6 to 10 years
- -More than 10 years

2- Have you ever taught writing?

Yes  No

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3- According to your experience, how do you evaluate your students writing proficiency?

Excellent  Good

Poor  Average

4- Do you think that it is difficult to teach writing skill?

Yes  No

Please explain why.

.....

.....

.....

.....

5- Do you think that it is difficult for students to master the writing skill?

Yes  No

Why.

.....

.....

.....

.....

6- In your opinion, the time allocated for writing expression is enough for practice.

Yes  No

7- Which from the following are the main problems that your students face while writing essays? (You may tick more than one)

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- Language accuracy and appropriacy:

- Punctuation.
- Grammar.
- Choice of words.

- Linguistic Problems:

- Accuracy.
- Diction.
- Spelling.

- Cognitive problems:

- Topic interpreting.
- Ideas organisation.
- Essays layout.
- Handwriting.

8- Which writing step is the most time consuming for third year students at Chadli Bendjdid University?

- Planning
- Drafting
- Editing
- Revising

Why.

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### Section Two: The Use of Compensation Strategies in Writing Essays.

9- Do you think that using language-learning strategies is important for EFL students to improve their writing level?

Yes  No

Please explain how.

10- Are third year students at Chadli Bendjdid University aware about compensation strategies? (Such as coining words, Switching to the mother tongue and using circumlocution or synonyms ... etc.)

Yes  No

11- As an instructor of writing expression module, do you think that the use of compensation strategies is helpful to overcome students' problems during writing essays?

Yes  No

If yes, explain how.

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.....  
.....  
12- Do your students use the strategy of guessing intelligently when they face new or unknown words?

Yes  No

13- According to your experience which of the following are used by third year student to overcome students limitations in writing essay. (You may tick more than one)

- Switching to the mother tongue
- Getting help
- Avoiding communication partially or totally
- Selecting the topic
- Adjusting and approximating the message
- Coining words
- Using circumlocution or synonyms

14-From your point of view, what are the most useful compensation strategies to solve students' problems with essay writing?

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

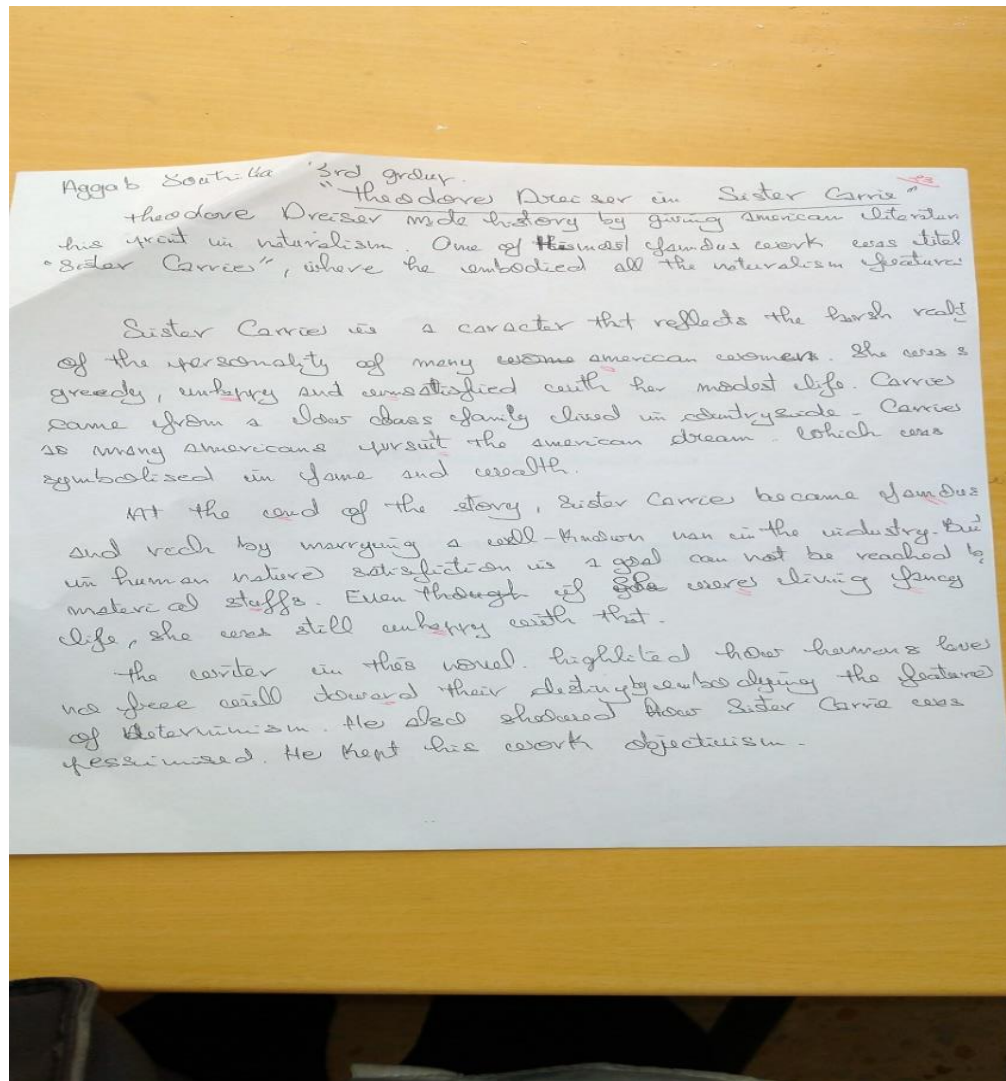
Thanks for cooperation.

## Appendices

### Appendix B

#### Students' Essays Sample

##### Essay One



## Appendices

### Essay Two

Naturalism is a literary movement that appeared in the latter part of the nineteenth century. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the American society witnessed an industrial revolution. So, that revolution paved the way for literature to be developed as well as the other fields.

One of the naturalism novels, *Sister Carrie* that was written by Theodore Dreiser. This novel is talking about an ambitious girl called Carrie that goes to the city to achieve her dream and being a famous actress. In her way of achieving her goals, she got used by men and she also used men in return and all this was done to reach the dream of her life. She met a man who was married already and he ran away with her. This man ended up committing suicide in the hotel room gassing himself. Carrie followed her dreams until she achieved them but at the end, she finds out that money and fame didn't bring her the happiness she was waiting for. ~~and she killed herself too~~

Theodore Dreiser described the reality of the American society and that period of time. People went to cities looking for jobs and trying to achieve their dreams. Theodore used determinism because showing that Carrie was controlled by destiny and fate, using pessimism in showing that even her lover died and at the end of even if she achieved her goals, she was not satisfied and the results she achieved did not bring her the joy that she was expecting to have.

Naturalists tried to show the struggles that people suffered in that period of flourishment, the corrupted part of the society, depression, doing mis deeds just to reach the goal and achieve the dream that people wanted to achieve. And Theodore as a naturalist he succeeded in picturing the facts that were hidden behind the perfect society.

## Appendices

### Essay Three

Good Luck©

Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* represent a realist work of literature. So all the events that happened in the story are real, all the settings and the manners represented in the story take a different way which make the work in real situation. Huckleberry Finn the famous character in this story play a role very important in this story to show and make many change and adventures happened in the past in a real way, the story take

way that there are some differences when we read in the story because the writer takes the big place to make the racism and fear in this story. In this way, Huckleberry Finn run away from his master and slavery. Mark Twain used the realism work in his story to tell us about the realistic stories and the events that happened in the story. Mark Twain used settings and manners to show to the reader that this story tell us about an event happened in the past about us every one to acquire some knowledge about their life. So, all the characters play a different role in this story, also the settings are the most important thing to tell the reader about a realist work. When you see in the story, you can see that this story is written according to a real story that happens in the past. So if we can say the realist work should take a realistic characters and events that the reader can believe them because these are some stories take a different way that their characters are unreal and the events are magical. Mark Twain used realistic characters and each character live a different life. There are who live in a good life and there are who live a bad life and live adventures but in a real way.

Finally, Mark Twain's in his story tell us about a realist work that he is exist in the real life, and this work are different more than the other movements and the writers in literature. Because the realism is a style of writing take a real way that all the real things should exist in the story, and this work are different from the other works as they it is a new form of literature.

## Appendices

### Appendix C

#### Checklist: Essays Rubrics

##### Check List of Students Problems in Essay Writing

Problem		Checked	Not checked
Language Accuracy and Appropriacy	Punctuation		
	Grammar		
	Choice of words		
Linguistic problems	Accuracy		
	Diction		
	Spelling		
Cognitive problems	Ideas organisation		
	Topic interpreting		
	Essays layout		
	Handwriting		



##### Check List of the Use of Compensation Strategies in Writing an Essay

Compensation strategies	Checked	Not checked
Guessing intelligently		
Switching to the mother tongue		
Getting help		
Avoiding communication partially or totally		
Selecting the topic adjusting and approximating the message		
Coining words		
Using circumlocution or synonyms		

## Appendices

### Appendix D

#### Students Test



People's Democratic Republic of Algeria  
Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research  
University of Chadli Bendjedid – El Taref  
Faculty of Letters and Languages  
Department of English

Level: 3<sup>rd</sup> year  
Teacher: Allaoui.S

Date: 08-05-2022  
Time: 1 h

**Test in Comparative Theories of Literature S6**

In an essay form,

- Clarify in which manner **Mark Twain's the adventures of Huckleberry Finn** represent a regionalist and realist work of literature.
- Discuss in which manner **Theodore Dreiser's Sister Carrie** embody naturalist work standards.
- Explain how **Muckrakers** reflected the injustices of American society through their literary works.

**Choose one topic**

**Good luck**