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**Department of English**

**Investigating the Difficulties in Writing and  
Enhancing Them Via Dictation**  
**Case study: 2<sup>nd</sup>-year LMD Students of English at Chadli Bendjedid  
University El-Tarf**

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

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**Abstract**

Second-year English students at Chadli Bendjedid University currently face a significant gap at the level of the writing skill. It is well noticed that these students are having writing difficulties in all several aspects of the language; grammar, vocabulary, spelling, and punctuation which are needed to be boosted. For that reason, teachers eagerly looked for a technique to be adopted for the sake of overcoming all the weaknesses just like dictation. This study aims at describing the writing skill and the uncountable techniques to improve it, stating the importance of dictation as an effective tool to improve writing, and investigating the main aspects in writing that dictation improves mostly. To ascertain dictation as an effective tool for improving writing, it is necessary to pose questions like: which aspects of language does a student find it difficult in writing? And what does dictation mostly improves in writing?. In this case, we have adopted a descriptive method; we have used one type of data gathering tools; the questionnaire for both teachers and students. The teachers' questionnaire was submitted to several teachers who teach at El Chadli Bendjedid University El-Tarf department of English; whereas, the students' questionnaire was administrated to 2nd-year English students. This instrument was devoted intensively to get basic information about the extent of dictation upon overcoming writing difficulties. The findings have confirmed our hypothesis. Both teachers and students' questionnaires have strongly emphasized our hypothesis by considering dictation as one of the most effective techniques in enhancing several aspects of the language. This research can open the scope for brand new further researches like improving listening skills via dictation, or adopting other tools like brainstorming or mind mapping to improve both writing and listening.

**Key Words:** The Writing Skills, Difficulties in Writing, Aspects of Language, Techniques to Improve Writing, Dictation as an Enhancement Tool for Writing.

**Résumé**

Les étudiants de deuxième année d'anglais à l'université Chadli Bendjedid sont actuellement confrontés à un écart important au niveau de la compétence rédactionnelle. On constate que ces étudiants éprouvent des difficultés à écrire dans tous les aspects de la langue : grammaire, vocabulaire, orthographe et ponctuation, qui doivent être améliorés. C'est pourquoi les enseignants ont cherché avec impatience une technique à adopter pour surmonter toutes les faiblesses, tout comme la dictée. Cette étude a pour but de décrire les compétences en matière d'écriture et les innombrables techniques permettant de les améliorer, de souligner l'importance de la dictée en tant qu'outil efficace pour améliorer l'écriture, et d'étudier les principaux aspects de l'écriture que la dictée améliore le plus. Pour déterminer si la dictée est un outil efficace pour améliorer l'écriture, il est nécessaire de poser des questions telles que : quels sont les aspects de la langue qu'un étudiant trouve difficile à écrire ? Et qu'est-ce que la dictée améliore le plus dans l'écriture ? Dans ce cas, nous avons adopté une méthode descriptive ; nous avons utilisé un type d'outils de collecte de données, le questionnaire destiné aux enseignants et aux étudiants. Le questionnaire pour les enseignants a été soumis à plusieurs professeurs qui enseignent au département d'anglais de l'université El Chadli Bendjedid El-Tarf ; tandis que le questionnaire pour les étudiants a été administré aux étudiants de 2e année d'anglais. Cet instrument a été consacré intensivement à l'obtention d'informations de base sur l'ampleur de la dictée lorsque les difficultés d'écriture sont surmontées. Les résultats ont confirmé notre hypothèse. Les questionnaires des enseignants et des étudiants ont fortement souligné notre hypothèse en considérant la dictée comme l'une des techniques les plus efficaces pour améliorer plusieurs aspects de la langue. Cette recherche peut ouvrir la voie à de nouvelles recherches

comme l'amélioration des compétences d'écoute par la dictée, ou l'adoption d'autres outils comme le brainstorming ou le mind mapping pour améliorer à la fois l'écriture et l'écoute.

**Mots clés :** Les compétences en matière d'écriture, les difficultés d'écriture, les aspects du langage, les techniques pour améliorer l'écriture, la dictée comme outil d'amélioration de l'écriture.

## ملخص

يواجه طلاب السنة الثانية في اللغة الإنجليزية في جامعة الشاذلي بن جديد فجوة كبيرة في إتقان الكتابة. وجد هؤلاء الطلاب صعوبة في الكتابة في جميع جوانب اللغة: القواعد والمفردات والهجاء وعلامات الترقيم والتي تحتاج إلى تحسين. لهذا السبب بحث المعلمون بشغف عن أسلوب لاعتماده للتغلب على أي نقاط ضعف تمامًا مثل الإملاء. الغرض من هذه الدراسة هو وصف مهارات الكتابة والتقنيات التي لا تعد ولا تحصى لتحسينها، وإبراز أهمية الإملاء كأداة فعالة لتحسين الكتابة، ودراسة الجوانب الرئيسية من الكتابة أن الإملاء يتحسن أكثر. لتحديد ما إذا كان الإملاء أداة فعالة لتحسين الكتابة، من الضروري طرح أسئلة مثل: ما هي جوانب اللغة التي يجد الطالب صعوبة في كتابتها؟ وما الذي يتحسن الإملاء أكثر في الكتابة؟ في هذه الحالة، اعتمدنا طريقة وصفية؛ استخدمنا نوعًا واحدًا من أدوات جمع البيانات، الاستبيان للمعلمين والطلاب. تم تقديم الاستبيان للمعلمين إلى عدد من الأساتذة الذين يقومون بالتدريس بقسم اللغة الإنجليزية بجامعة الشاذلي بن جديد الطارف. بينما تم إرسال استبيان الطالب إلى طلاب السنة الثانية في اللغة الإنجليزية. تم تخصيص هذه الأداة على نطاق واسع للحصول على معلومات أساسية حول مدى الإملاء عند التغلب على صعوبات الكتابة. أكدت النتائج فرضيتنا. أكدت استبيانات المعلمين والطلاب بشدة على فرضيتنا من خلال اعتبار الإملاء أحد أكثر الأساليب فعالية لتحسين العديد من جوانب اللغة. قد يمهد هذا البحث الطريق لبحث جديد مثل تحسين مهارات الاستماع من خلال الإملاء، أو اعتماد أدوات أخرى مثل العصف الذهني أو رسم الخرائط الذهنية لتحسين كل من الكتابة والاستماع

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** مهارات الكتابة، صعوبات الكتابة، الجوانب اللغوية، تقنيات تحسين الكتابة، الإملاء كأداة لتحسين

الكتابة

**Dedication**

**In the name of Allah, the beneficent, the merciful.**

**All the Praise is Due to Allah the Sustainer of the Worlds.**

Above all, this thesis is especially dedicated to Allah, the most gracious for the wisdom, strength, and understanding he has given us.

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**Key to Abbreviations and Acronyms:**

**EFL:** English as a Foreign Language.

**LMD:** License, Master, Doctorate.

**Q:** Question

**Introductory Chapter to the Research Problem**

**Introduction:**

This chapter covers the statement of the problem along with the aims of the study. Also, it covers the hypothesis, the research questions, and the method used (It consists of the research design, the participants, and the data collecting instruments and procedures).

**Statement of the Problem:**

Mastering writing from all sides of the language seemed challenging for EFL students especially for 2<sup>nd</sup>-year English students who were their concern. They were and still facing problems at the levels of vocabulary, grammar, punctuation, and spelling. For that reason, it was necessary to look for some appropriate methods to overcome such difficulties such as dictation; it is considered one of the effective tools used by both teachers and students to enhance writing for students.

**Objectives of the Study:**

This study aims at:

- Describing the writing skill and the several techniques to improve it.
- Stating the importance of dictation as an effective tool to improve writing.
- Investigating the main aspects in writing that dictation improves mostly.

**Research Questions:**

Shedding light on second-year English students' weaknesses in writing and how to boost them via the dictation method requires us to ask the following questions:

.Which kind of language aspects does a student find it difficult in writing?

.What does dictation mostly improve in writing?

**Research Hypothesis:**

This study is designed to figure out EFL students' weaknesses in writing, then to adopt the suitable tools to overcome those difficulties at the level of vocabulary, grammar, punctuation, and spelling. Also, it would show the role of dictation tool in boosting their writing to proficiency.

**Research Design:**

To achieve our goal that is figuring out the role of writing in improving writing we had to apply the descriptive method that allows us to collect both qualitative and quantitative data via using questionnaires. We have made up two questionnaires; one for the teachers and another for the students to collect the needed data.

**Data Gathering Tools:**

To gather the data needed for this research paper, we have chosen the questionnaire as a tool. It has designed for 2nd year EFL students of Chadli Bendjedid University El-Tarf to gather data about the writing skill, the dictation method enhance it and its effectiveness on improving it. Also, we have designed a

teachers' questionnaire for collecting more data about the topic from the perspective of teachers who used to teach writing.

### **Participants:**

To investigate the writing skill, and the role of dictation in improving it, the current inquiry was conducted with second-year English students in the department of English language at Chadli Bendjedid University El Tarf. Twenty-one among almost eighty students were involved in this research and were chosen randomly from a group of Facebook because we could not have the opportunity to meet face to face due to the current situation we are living.

### **Structure of the Dissertation:**

This study has been divided into five main chapters. The first one is an introductory chapter to the study composed of the statement of the problem, the aims of the study, research questions, the hypothesis, and the method used.

The second chapter gives an overview of the writing, the difficulties faced by students while writing, and the suitable techniques to be used to enhance it. The first part consists of the definition of writing, its importance, its difficulties, and techniques used in enhancing it. The second part is about the definition of dictation, its types, its advantages, its importance, and its use in the classroom.

The third chapter represents the research method including the approach used in the study, the participants along with the instruments and procedures used in gathering data.

Also, the fourth and the fifth ones present the practical part; the fourth section analyzes the gathered data by using the questionnaire as an instrument for both teachers and students.

The final section is devoted to providing a deep discussion of the results.

### **Conclusion:**

In general, this chapter is dealing with all the aspects of research proposal, starting from the statement of the problem to research questions. It also covers up the method has been used in this paper.

**Literature Review about the Writing Skill and the Dictation Tool****Introduction:**

In this chapter, we are going to shed light on the writing as the hardest skill, its importance, improvement. Also tackling the several difficulties that students face while taking the step to improve it as well as mentioning the techniques that would allow them to overcome those difficulties. Moving on to the second part of the chapter, it covers dictation as a tool among other tools that students are using as a method to enhance their writing skills. Starting with the definition of dictation, its importance, the types, advantages, and ending with the use of dictation in the classroom.

**Part One: The Writing Skill****Definition of Writing:**

According to Harmer (2007), “writing is a way to produce language and express an idea, feeling and opinion” (p.31).

In the sense of what has been stated by Hornby (2007) which considered writing as a practice of producing numbers and letters on paper using either a pencil or a pen. Furthermore, another meaning of a given quote said that writing is about creating an understandable and comprehended text by combining words (Celce-Murcia, and Olshtain, 2000).

For Rivers (1968), writing referred to “the expression of ideas in a systematic way to organize the graphic conventions of the language; the ultimate aim of a writer at this stage is to be able to express him in a polished literary form which

requires the utilization of special vocabulary and certain refinement structure” (p.243).

Linse stated that: “writing is a combination of process and product. The process refers to the act of gathering ideas and working with them until they are presented in a manner that is polished and comprehensible to readers” (2006).

Another definition by Linse (2005), “Writing is a combination of a process and product. The process refers to the act of gathering ideas and working with them until they are presented in manner that is polished and comprehensible to readers” (p.98).

### **Importance of Writing:**

Diamond (1999) declared: “Writing also makes it possible to gather, preserve, and transmit information with accuracy and detail “.

Graham (2006) emphasized: “In many societies, writing is an essential tool for communication, learning, and self-expression. Through writing individuals are able to maintain personal links with friends, family, and colleagues from a distance”.

Another declaration by Dar (2015) in which he said “Learning how to write has gained considerable importance for the last two decades due to two factors: its use as a tool for effective communication of ideas, and the extensive research work carried out in this area to examine various issues faced by L2 writers”.

Similarly, Walsh (2010) said: “Writing is important because it’s used extensively in higher education and in the workplace. If students don’t know how to express themselves in writing, they won’t be able to communicate well with professors, employers, peers, or just about anyone else. Much of professional communication is done in writing: proposals, memos, reports, applications,

preliminary interviews, e-mails, and more are part of the daily life of a college student or successful graduate”.

### **Difficulties in Writing:**

Learners' Writing Problems Byrne (1988) thinks that because of the absence of the prosodic features in writing, the writer has to compensate these features by keeping the channel of communication open through his/her own efforts by selecting appropriate structures and by using appropriate connecting devices so that the text can be (p.4).

Similarly, Hedge (1988) thinks that so as the writer to compensate the absence of the prosodic features in writing, he/ she has to write with high degree of organization, careful choice of vocabulary and using complex grammatical devices. Grammatical problems, mechanical problems, sentence structure problems and problems of diction are linguistic problems that hamper students' effective writing in English (p.5).

### **Grammatical Problems**

Learners have a number of problems in their attempts to write in the second language. “As verbs take different forms depending on tense and subjects they are used with, they create problems for second language writing students” (Tyner, 1987).

### **Problems of Sentence Structure**

Sentences reflect various syntactic structures (Reid, 1983).

### **Problem of Word Choice**

A good writing or composition should consist of appropriate and varied range of vocabularies used along with proper grammar and varied range of sentence structures (Norish, 1983; Alamirew, 2005).

According to Reid (1983) in Melese (2007), when the writer practices the choice of vocabulary that would reflect a concern for the reader and the purpose of writing, the composition written by the student would become sensible to his/her reader. However, writing in a second language using the appropriate words in the appropriate place is a problem for students (p.13).

For example, White (1980) states that usually students use 'big words' in their essays to impress the reader, their teacher. The effort to impress the reader leads to a problem of diction.

### **Cognitive Problems**

The cognitive problems that students face include problems of punctuation, capitalization, spelling, content and organization.

#### **a. Punctuation Problems**

- b.** According to Byrne (1988), the fact that punctuation has never been standard to the extent as spelling, makes it is problematic (p.16).

Similarly, Carrol and Wilson (1995) state "students' writing encounter punctuation problems as there are no universal rules of punctuation" (p.191).

#### **c. Capitalization**

- d.** Problems Capital letters are useful for sentence initials, the beginning of important words, in topics, headings, etc (Kroll, 1991).

However, learners have problems in using capitalization properly. There are reasons for students' problems in using proper capitalization. "The rules of capitalization are not universal and classifying nouns as proper and common nouns are difficult for students" (Gowere et al., 1995).

**e. Spelling**

Problem Due to the influence of other languages, variant pronunciations and other historical reasons, the English spelling system which has become inconsistent is complex for students (Gowere et al, 1995).

**Techniques in Improving Writing:****Brainstorming:**

Ghaith (2002), in his article, states that brainstorming is similar to free writing in that you write down everything you can think of without considering whether it is valid, good or usable. Brainstorming Technique shows that brainstorming technique is free writing takes on a format that looks something like a paragraph, while brainstorming usually result in a list of words and phrases.

Seow (in Richards and Renandya 2002) declared that in planning (prewriting) stage, teachers can help students generate ideas through such activities as brainstorming, clustering, and rapid free writing (p.304).

**Mind Mapping:**

Hayes (1992) stated that through mind mapping students turns random thoughts into patterns that can be written down and developed. Students become

increasingly motivated to complete a writing task as their ideas emerge unorganized forms (p.203).

Also, Hedge (1998) states that making a mind map is a strategy for note-making before writing; in other words, scribbling down ideas about a topic and developing those ideas as the mind makes associations. Therefore, it can be said that mind mapping can give students a way to begin writing assignments (p.30).

## **Part Two: The Dictation Tool**

### **The Definition of Dictation:**

In 1900 Edward Joynes waxed rhapsodic about the pedagogical merits of dictation: In dictation we have the most perfect combination of faculties and functions. There is the accurate tongue, speaking to the listening and discriminating ear; there is the reproductive hand, bringing back to the intelligent and critical eye that which the mind has heard by ear --all the faculties of perception, conception, and expression are alert and in harmonious cooperation (Joynes as cited by Sawyer and Silver, 1961: 40).

Jafarpur and Yamini (1993) claimed that, "Dictation allows the language learner to both comprehend and produce the language in the context of meaningful discourse". Accordingly, they call dictation "dual access processing" because "in taking dictation the subject alters and harmonizes his perception, conception, and expression." (P.359-369).

Also Davis and Rinvoluceri (2002) define dictation as "Decoding the sounds of [English] and recoding them in writing is a major learning task" (p.5).

Nation (2009) considers dictation a valuable language-focused teaching and learning technique. The most common advantages are: dictation can help students to

diagnose and correct grammatical errors; it ensures attentive listening and trains students to distinguish sounds; it helps to learn punctuation and develop aural comprehension.

### **Types of Dictation:**

Almost every single component in education and especially in writing has his own types; these types can differ from a scholar to another. As Sawyer & Silver (1972) identifies types of dictation as follows:

**2.7.1** Phonemic item dictation, involving presentation of individual sounds,

**2.7.2** Phonemic text dictation, whereby learners phonetically transcribe a short text,

**2.7.3** Orthographic item dictation, the dictating of individual words used for testing spelling, and

**2.7.4** Orthographic text dictation, using short texts rather than individual words. (P.223-229).

### **Advantages of Dictation:**

Montalvan (1990) has earlier remarked that there are at least twenty advantages of dictation but the most important are:

1. Dictation can help develop all four-language skills in an integrated way.

2. It can help learn grammar.

3. It helps to develop short-term memory.

4. Practice in careful listening to a speaker will be useful to learners in future in the note-taking activities for instance listening to lectures.

5. Dictation fosters unconscious thinking in the new language.

6. Correction can be done by the students peers correction of written dictation leads to oral communication.

Besides Montalvan, Patel and Jain (2008) classify some advantages of dictation which are:

- a. It trains students to reproduce in writing what they listen
- b. It gives good aural practice to the students. It develops the habit of listening attentively in students.
- c. It enables students to understand the part of each sentence and word phrases.
- d. It enables student to write at good reasonably speed.
- e. It enables students to understand spelling and punctuation.
- f. It enables student to write- to use capital letters.
- g. It enables students to develop the habit of listening spoken language and getting used to the sound of system of the English language.

#### **Importance of Dictation:**

Stansfield (1985) reports that “more than 50 studies of dictation were conducted in the 1970s, and these findings were invariably favorable” (p. 26).

Takeuchi (1997) did an experiment of dictating on 207 English language learners in Japan. Learners were given the dialogues in movies for more than 13 weeks. Finally, he observed the big change in writing of those students. Takeuchi concluded that his experiment “proves that dictation is effective in foreign language teaching” (p. 62).

Oller (1979) believes that the reason for considering dictation as a successful controlled writing is that in dictation, learners can show what they really know about the L2 and how they use it in their real life. Oller also emphasized that dictation is successful because listeners understand what they hear and then combine that with their own idea, and finally they produce a piece of writing; they do it by recalling the previous knowledge in their mind.

In the task of taking down a reading given orally, Fisher (2001) stated that, “Dictation incorporates the skills of listening comprehension, writing, and the understanding of grammar and structure, eliciting from the students all of these” (p. 62).

### **The Use of Dictation in the Classroom:**

Research has shown that dictation can help students improve different aspects of their language proficiency. Davis and Rinvoluceri (2002) explained that: Dictation contains a wealth of new technique to extend the traditional language learning activity of dictation. The activities range from the traditional focus on spelling and punctuation problems to exercises that emphasize personal attitude and opinions of both teachers and students. Dictation provides activities suitable for a wide range of levels and ages, example texts for many activities, opportunities for students to create their own texts, and a variety of suggested correction techniques.

Alkire (2002) opined that dictation with broadcast learning possibilities is orthographic text dictation in which students transcribe a unified passage. This is a classic dictation exercise which, besides reinforcing the spelling and sound correlation of English, uncovers comprehension and grammatical weakness in learners for the teacher to analyze and address in future lessons.

Other researchers such as Myint and Jafarpur and Amini have continued to believe that dictation can be used as a teaching technique due to amount of input it provides for the learner.

Jafarpur and Amini (1993) observed that, “Dictation allows the language learner to both comprehend and produce the language in the context of meaningful discourse” (p.359-369).

Myint (1998) further stressed that though dictation has always been a controversial activity in the language classroom, it is still a teaching device at some stages of language teaching because it gives the badly needed practice in listening comprehension.

### **Conclusion:**

Dictation as a tool of improvement, according to writers and scholars it is effective for enhancing students' writing skills and nobody would deny its importance and what offers to students in order to enable them to write a piece of writing that is correct and technically perfect from all the aspects of the language.

**Chapter Three****Methodology****Introduction:**

This research section is the method chapter; it covers detailed information about the way we designed our research and the method used along with the study we have chosen. It also includes the data gathering instruments and procedures which were used we collect the needed data to confirm or disconfirm the suggested hypothesis.

**Research Design:**

For appraising the role of dictation in improving the writing skill, a descriptive method was used in this research. It provides a questionnaire for second-year students of English at Chadli Bendjedid University.

To estimate the difficulties of the writing skill and the appropriate techniques to enhance it, a descriptive method was the one used in this research paper. It involves using a questionnaire that capitulates both qualitative and quantitative data.

**Participants:**

This research paper was conducted for second-year students who were selected from the department of English at El Chadli Bendjedid University to reach our purpose that is gathering information about the writing skill, its difficulties, and its improvement via using dictation.

Particularly, we have chosen twenty-one students; fourteen are females, whereas seven are males from both groups. We have asked these participants to

answer our questionnaire via a Facebook group and Email because of the conditions we are living in at the current time.

We have prepared two questionnaires for both students and teachers for collecting the needed data.

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

The ultimate goal of this research paper is to confirm the hypothesis. To reach our goal, we needed instructions to collect data. By choosing the most appropriate instrument that suits the conditions we are in at this hard time which is the questionnaire. The first one was administrated to second-year English students at El Chadli Bendjedid University whereas the second one was submitted to writing teachers of the same University via social media (Facebook and Email) during the quarantine period.

The first questionnaire (students' Questionnaire) was composed of 13 questions divided into two parts. The first part is about the writing skill, the difficulties faced by students, and the techniques used to overcome them. Part two contains questions about dictation as one of the tools used for writing, its types, its importance, and its use in the classroom.

Teachers' Questionnaire was submitted via Email to English teachers who teach writing that we tried to ask some questions about them as background information. It also contains 13 questions divided into two main sections. All that is about writing, the weaknesses of the students what comes to the aspects of language, and the techniques used by teachers in the classroom to help their students are found in section one. Besides, section two is about dictation, and the type used. Besides that, its importance, it's used in the classroom along with its advantages.

Both questionnaires are sharing common questions' content. They compose of Yes/No questions, open-ended questions, and some of the other questions required asking for justification.

**Conclusion:**

As a synopsis, the method chapter was a prerequisite section for deciding about the quality, validity, and credibility of our work. It includes the main practical instrument used to bringing value to the study to be interpreted and analyzed in the discussion section.

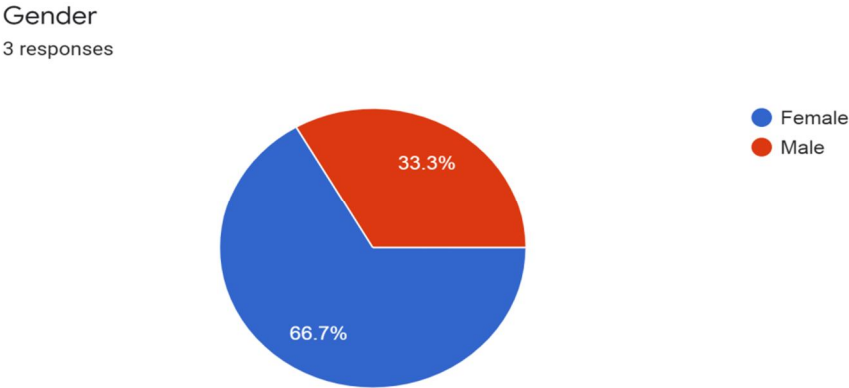
**Chapter Four  
Results****Introduction:**

This section is devoted to present the fieldwork which investigates whether the dictation method is effective at improving writing difficulties and if it can boost their level to reach proficiency. So, this sheds light on the obtained results collected utilizing an instrument namely a questionnaire.

**Part One:****Teachers' Questionnaire Results:**

Teachers' Questionnaire, however, was conducted with teachers of writing at Chadli Bendjedid University via Email. We tried to reach as many teachers as we can but we got lucky to contact only three of them. It was also designed to collect the needed data about the difficulties in writing and improving them via dictation. It was so helpful in providing us with the required data to be analyzed and interpreted to build further validity to this study.

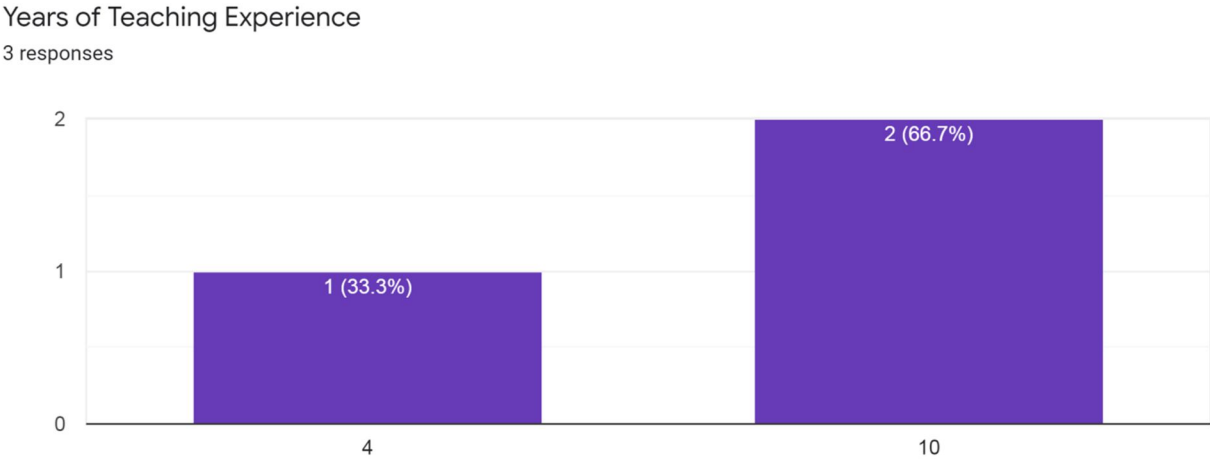
**Q1: Gender**



**Figure 1: Gender**

As revealed in the above figure, the number of female students is mainly about **66.7%** more than the male number of students which is over **33.3%**.

**Q2: Years of Teaching Experience**



**Figure 2: Years of Teaching Experience**

Figure five shows that **66.7%** of the teachers have got ten years of teaching experience but **33.3%** of them have got only four years of experience.

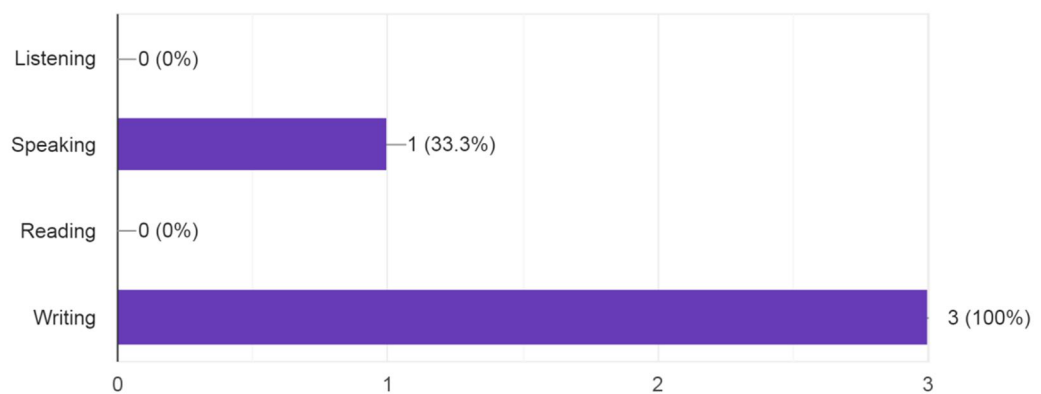
**Q3: Years of Teaching Writing**

As it has been revealed in teachers' answers, years of teaching writing started with one semester to four years until nine years.

**Q4: What is the skill that most students are interested in?**

What is the skill that most of students are interested at?

3 responses



**Figure 3: Students' Most Interesting Skill**

Seeing the answers of the teachers, all of them **100%** agreed that writing is an interesting skill for the students. Whereas, only **33.3%** admitted that speaking is the skill being interesting to the students.

**Q5: From your viewpoint, how do students view writing? A skill that can be:**

According to the results, **100%** of the teachers admitted that writing is a skill that is hard to be improved.

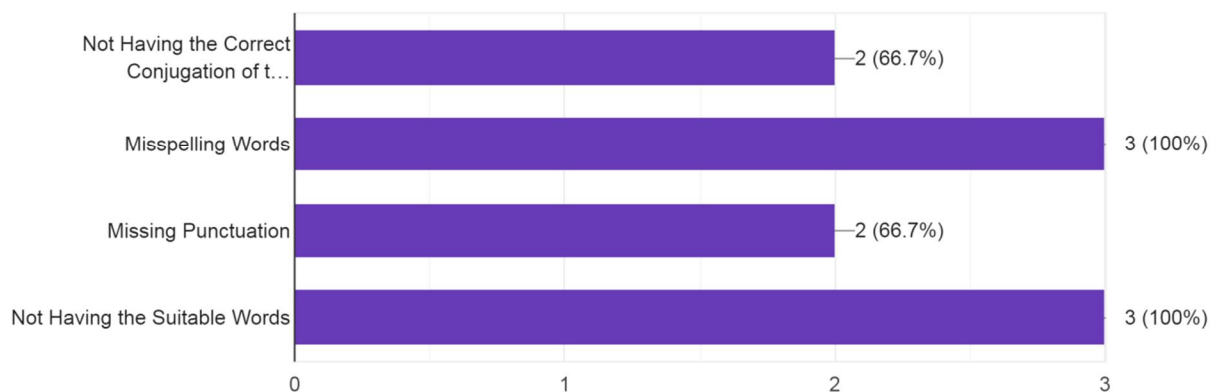
**Q6: Why does writing have such importance that every single student is working on enhancing it?**

From the teachers of writing perspective, writing has importance to students because in all examinations are taken in writing and whenever students want to pass any competition abroad they pass a writing test. Also, learning a language means learning how to write to communicate. Additionally, students should enhance their writing skills because they pass written tests so they need a good writing style. Every skill is equally important to reach a higher level of proficiency in the target language, but, in general, EFL students need to enhance their writing mainly for academic achievements.

**Q7: According to you, what makes writing as the hardest skill among the other three skills (Listening, Speaking, and Reading)?**

According to you, what does make writing as the hardest skill among the others three skills (Listening, Speaking, and Reading)?

3 responses



**Figure 4: Reasons behind Complexity of Writing**

Figure five showed that **100%** of teachers agreed that both misspelling and not having the suitable words are the reasons behind writing' complexity; whereas,

about **66.7%** of them confirmed that not having the correct conjugation of the verbs and missing punctuation what make writing hard to students.

**Q8: Which aspects do you depend on to assess your students' writing?**

Which aspects you depend on to assess your students' writing?

3 responses



**Figure 5: Aspects of Assessment**

Seeing the answers of figure number six, all **100%** of the teachers agreed that their assessment of students writing depends on all the aspects of language; grammar, spelling, punctuation, and vocabulary equally.

**Q9: What are the weaknesses you notice while correcting your students' piece of writing?**

What are the weaknesses you notice while correcting you students' piece of writing?

3 responses



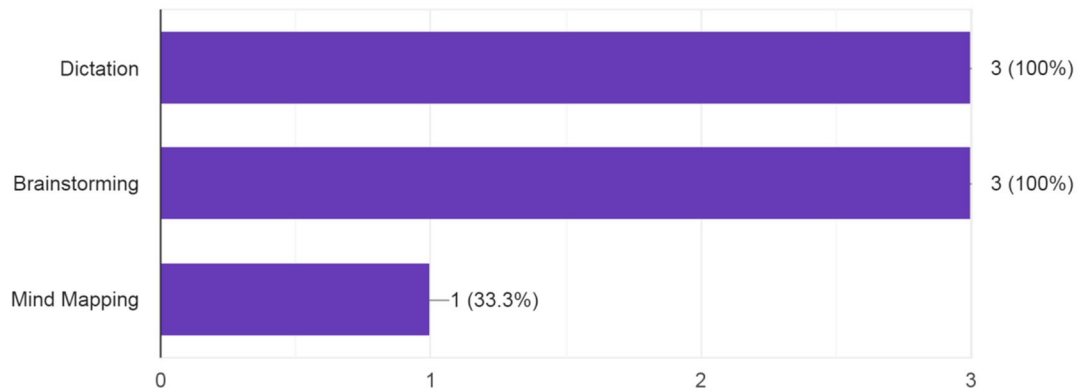
**Figure 6: Weaknesses Appeared in Students' Writing**

The answers in this figure presented that both grammatical mistakes and lack of vocabulary have been confirmed by **100%** of teachers are the common weaknesses noticed in students' pieces of writing. On the other hand, we have got the two weaknesses which are spelling mistakes and problem of word choice that have been agreed by **66.7%** of the teachers.

**Q10: To overcome your students' difficulties in writing, which kind of techniques and methods would you use?**

To overcome your students' difficulties in writing, which kind of techniques and methods you would use?

3 responses



**Figure 7: Techniques in Improving Writing**

Figure number eight revealed that both dictation and brainstorming has been adopted by **100%** of teachers to overcome writing' difficulties, but mind mapping has been used by only **33.3%** of them.

**If there are others, please mention**

Teachers tend to use other techniques to help their students in overcoming writing difficulties such as group work in terms of collaborative writing, Motivating students to use the free writing approach, and freewriting outside the class in which students would have the freedom to write about anything they are interested in like writing personal journals, blogs, diaries ...etc.

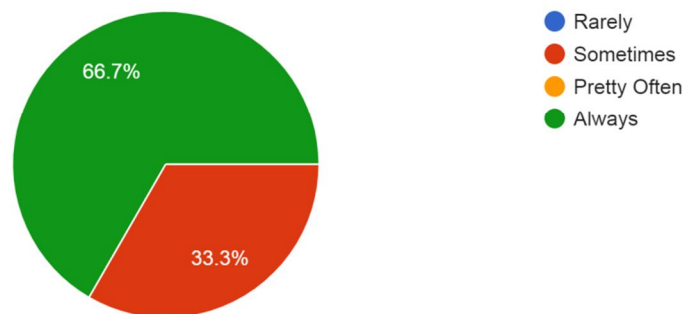
**Q11: Since you use dictation, can we say it is an effective tool for improving writing?**

The questionnaire results revealed that **100%** of teachers claimed that dictation is an effective tool in improving writing.

**Q12: How often does dictation use in your sessions?**

How often does dictation use in your sessions?

3 responses



**Figure 8: The Use of Dictation in the Classroom**

Figure ten showed that **66.7%** of teachers were using dictation always; whereas, **33.3%** of them used it sometimes.

**Q13: Which kind of dictation do you use?**

According to the answers, paragraphs' dictation was the kind used by **100%** of teachers in the classroom.

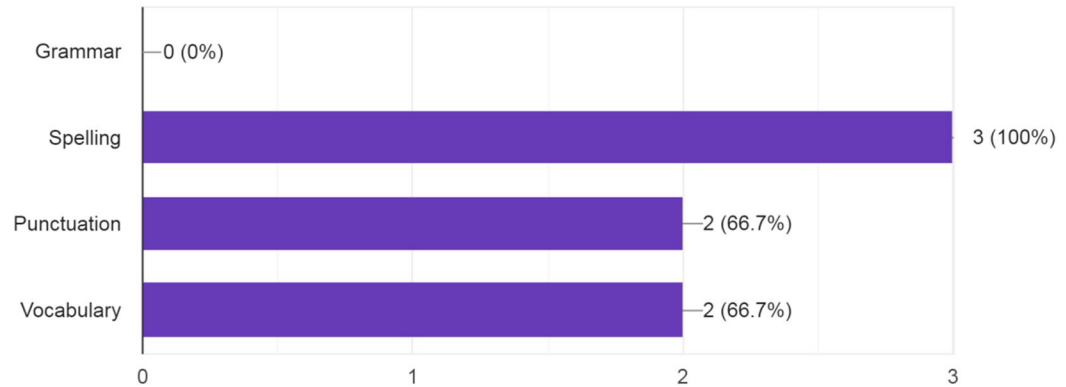
**Q14: After using dictation, did you notice any progress in students' writing?**

The results show that **100%** of teachers admitted that they have noticed progress in students' writing after the use of dictation.

**Q15: If YES, what aspects of language have improved?**

If YES, what are the aspects of language have improved?

3 responses



**Figure 9: Aspects Improved After Using Dictation**

This last figure revealed that spelling is the most improved skill after using dictation by **100%** of the teachers then punctuation and vocabulary come next by **66.7%** of them.

**Q16: Besides all of this, what would be other advantages that dictation would offer for students?**

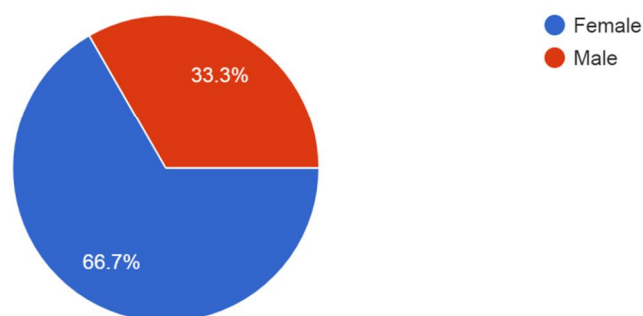
Dictation has a lot of advantages besides improving several aspects of language. It would let students be autonomous writers; it helps learners to be autonomous as they become all the time ready to write. Additionally, learners will be more motivated and interested to write / learners will learn new vocabulary items, grammar rules, and punctuation as they are exposed to dictation and it would enhance their listening comprehension, reasoning, and critical thinking skills.

**Part Two:****Students' Questionnaire Results:**

Students' Questionnaire Results is concerned with writing and the appropriate tools such as dictation to enhance them. Indeed, it was submitted to 2nd-year English students in the department of English at Chadli Bendjedid University, so they know how to perceive dictation and which the exact aspects it improved are.

**Q1: Gender**

Gender  
21 responses



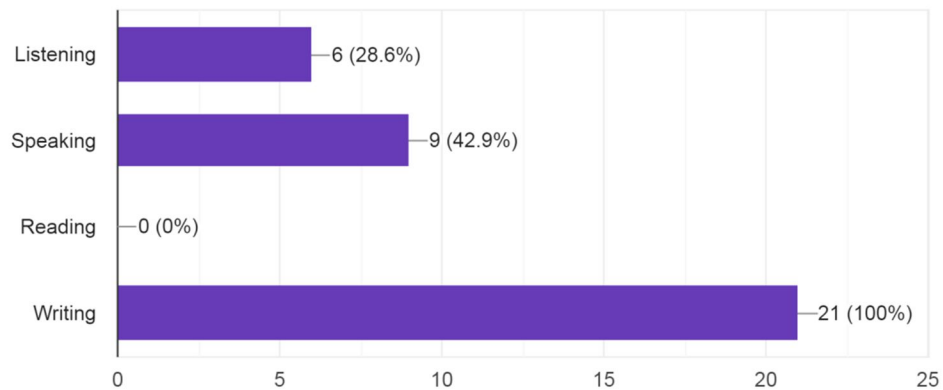
**Figure 10: Gender**

Figure fourteen revealed that over **66.7%** of the participants were females, unlike the males who were only about **33.3%**.

**Q2: What skills are you interested in the most?**

What skills you are interested at the most?

21 responses



**Figure 11: Students' Most Interesting Skill**

According to the above figure, **100%** of students admitted that writing is the most interesting skill. Besides that, speaking gained a large percentage of over **42.9%** of students who were interested in it but a small portion of them went with listening about **28.6%**.

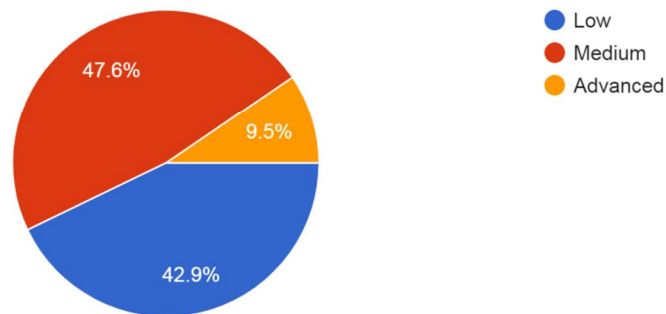
**Q3: Dealing with writing, what is the reason behind your interest in it?**

According to students' answers, there are a lot of reasons behind their interest in writing. Some of them agreed that they are in need to improve it because they look forward to being famous writers. Others want to enhance writing to be able to write in a clear correct way in tests and examinations to get full grades (they need it for success).

**Q4: How do you assess your level in writing?**

How do you assess your level in writing?

21 responses



**Figure 12: Students' Level in Writing**

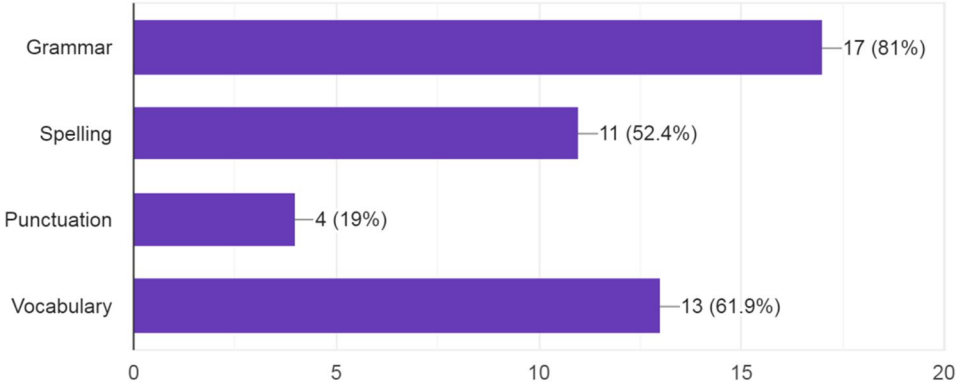
According to the answers, **47.6%** of students admitted that their level is medium what comes to writing; whereas, **42.9%** had a low level in the same skill. A small percentage of about **9.5%** confirmed that their writing level is advanced.

**Q5: Are you interested in improving your writing skill?**

Students' questionnaire results confirmed that all **100%** of students are interested in improving their writing skills.

**Q6: In your writing improvement journey, what kind of difficulties do you face?**

Q5: In your writing improvement journey, what kind of difficulties you face?  
21 responses

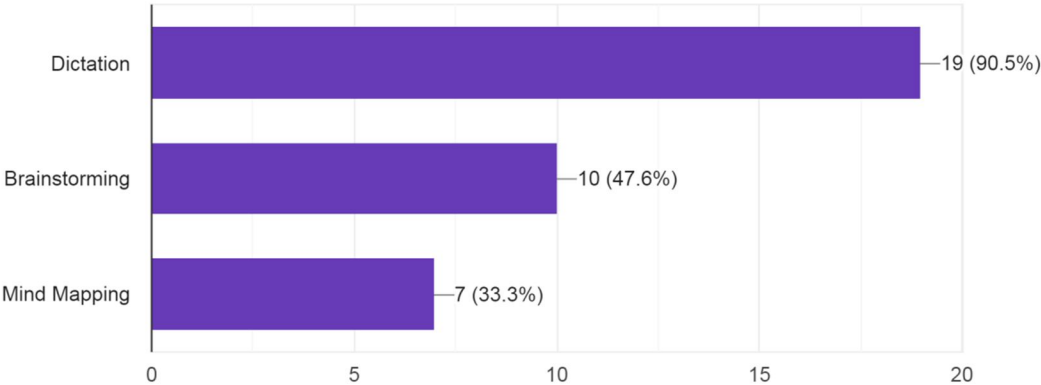


**Figure 13: Difficulties in Writing**

According to this figure, different portions of students faced several kinds of difficulties, just like grammar that has been faced by **81%** of students. Next, we have got vocabulary by **61.9%** of them. Last but not least, students admitted that they have difficulties in spelling by **52.4%** and in punctuation by **19%**.

**Q7: Which technique from these you adopt to overcome the difficulties?**

Which technique from these you adopt to overcome the difficulties?  
21 responses



**Figure 14: Techniques in Improving Writing**

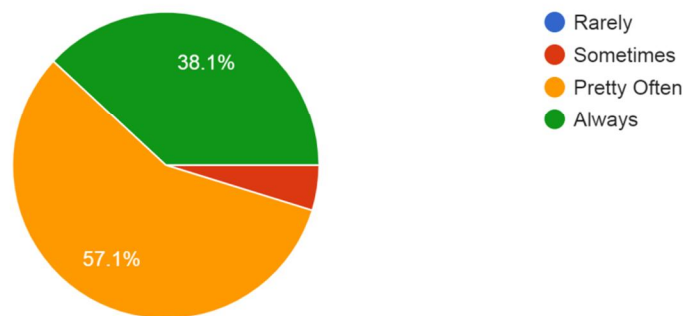
As the above figure showed, dictation has been adopted by **90.5%** of students to overcome difficulties. Along with dictation, brainstorming and mind mapping also have been used; the first by **47.6%** and the last by **33.3%**.

### If there are others, mention

Besides students' use of dictation, brainstorming, and mind mapping, they are depending on other tools such as summarizing different books and novels, using freewriting, think pair share technique, and playing games about creating sentences.

### Q8: How often do you use dictation in the classroom?

How often do you use dictation in the classroom?  
21 responses



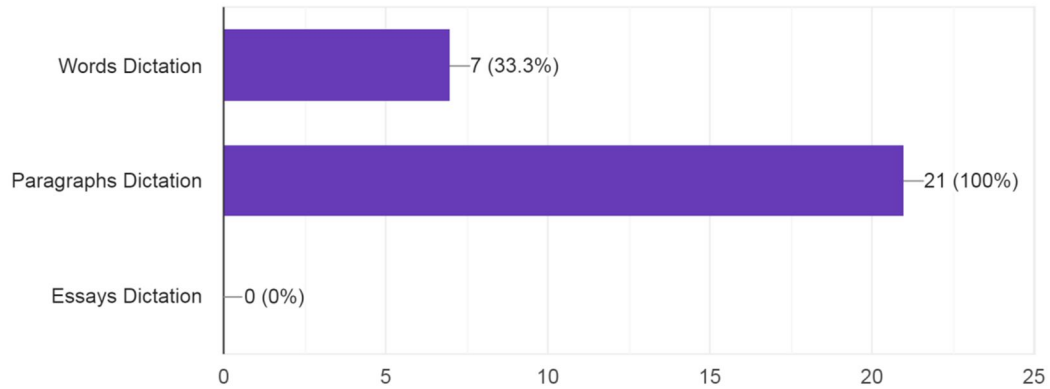
**Figure 15: Amount of Using Dictation**

The figure above showed that more than the half about **57.1%** of students were using dictation pretty often; whereas, **38.1%** of them used it frequently always. A very small portion of students about **4.8%** were using dictation sometimes in the classroom.

**Q9: Which type of dictation do you prefer?**

Which type of dictation you prefer?

21 responses

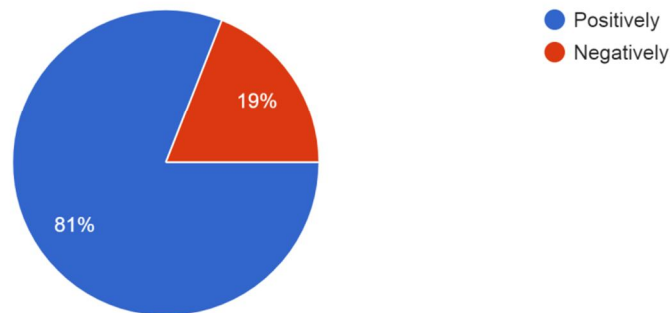
**Figure 16: Types of Dictation**

This figure has revealed that all students **100%** prefer paragraphs' dictation, unlike essay dictation which had **0%**. Also, about **33.3** of them prefer to use words dictation.

**Q10: How would you react to overusing dictation by your teacher?**

How would you react over using dictation by your teacher?

21 responses



**Figure 17: Reaction over Using Dictation in the Classroom**

Figure twenty-two showed that a very large percentage of students react positively about using dictation by the teacher about **81%** comparing to those who react negatively about using it only **19%**.

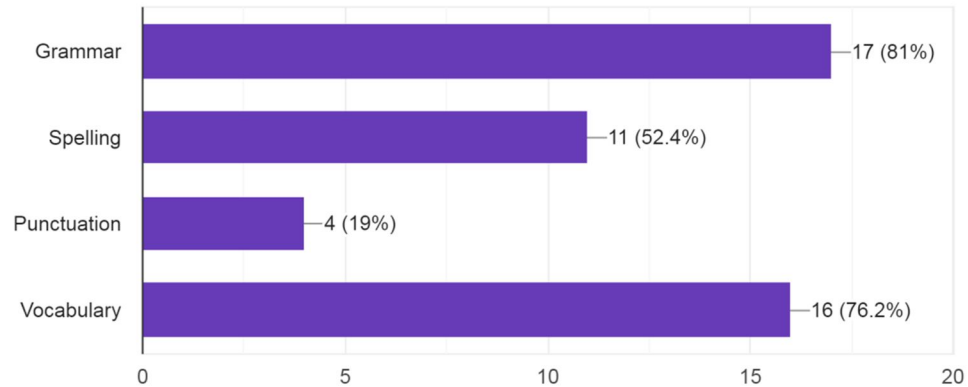
**Q11: Do you see it as effective in improving your writing?**

The results showed that all of the students **100%** admitted that dictation is an effective tool for writing improvement.

**Q12: If YES, which aspects of the language does dictation improve the most?**

If YES, which aspects of the language does dictation improve the most?

21 responses



**Figure 18: Aspects Improved After Using Dictation**

This last figure revealed that dictation has improved all aspects of language. Starting with grammar that has been admitted by **81%** of the students as an aspect has been enhanced by dictation with the highest rate. Vocabulary comes next with **76.2%** to be boosted. Furthermore, with 52.4% of students, spelling has agreed on. Finishing with punctuation which has been taken the smallest percentage of the least aspect has been improved by **19%**.

**Conclusion:**

All in all, this chapter has dealt with the analysis of both teachers' and students' questionnaires. This instrument has been used in collecting the necessary data to prove or disprove the hypothesis suggested and whether to answer the research questions or not.

**Chapter Five****Discussions****Introduction:**

This final chapter is concerned with making a deep discussion of the obtained results from both questionnaires. In this section, both questionnaires have been interpreted to confirm or disconfirm the stated hypothesis. It contains some limitations of the study and also some proposed suggestions for further research.

**Implication of Research Findings:**

This research work is concerned with shedding light on the weaknesses faced by students at the level of writing and finding a suitable tool to enhance them. The above data analysis has revealed that such weaknesses are affecting students' written production. Moreover, both teachers and students are aware enough of such difficulties mostly the ones which appear at the level of language aspects.

Though out the inquiry, it was apparent a problem that all students face in their writing which is the lack in one or more aspects of the language (grammar, vocabulary, punctuation, and spelling). The questionnaires were very helpful and feasible in figuring out all the weaknesses which increased due to the use of some inappropriate methods.

Accordingly, throughout the answers, it has been noticed that all students are interested in improving their writing for several reasons and fully aware of the

weaknesses they are facing which hinder them from creating a healthy piece of writing.

Logically, dictation is the most appropriate method for students to be able to write accurately. It allowed them to create a paragraph or essay or any kind of writing without a lack of any aspect of language.

Conclusively, according to the achieved results, we can deduce that overcoming the difficulties of writing is not easy as it seems to be unless we would adopt an effective tool just like dictation to avoid hindering students from creating a clear production of writing.

#### **Discussion of the hypothesis and the research questions:**

The obtained results from both questionnaires which were conducted with two; 2nd-year students in the department of English at Chadli Bendjedid University and writing teachers at the same department and University, have revealed that students are facing a lot of difficulties what comes to writing; they have problems at the level of grammar, vocabulary, punctuation, and spelling which hinder them from creating a clear correct written production. Besides, teachers and students were eager and concentrated to figure out the most effective tool or method that allows them to jump with these difficulties and find a way to reach proficiency in writing because they are extremely aware of the importance that writing has.

On the whole, the questions have posed along with the hypothesis have stated we effectively answered and confirmed to give a certain value to the study. With such results, we have arrived at a clear answer to our research questions and confirmed our suggested hypothesis which stipulates that " If EFL students are not aware of their weaknesses they face in writing, they will not be able to adopt the

suitable tools to overcome those difficulties at the level of vocabulary, grammar, punctuation, and spelling. Also, they cannot boost their writing to proficiency".

### **The Limitation of the Study:**

During this long journey of preparing and gathering the needed data for our research paper, we faced some obstacles. The Covid-19 crisis was the biggest limitation; we could not make any classroom observation for more valid data. Also, questionnaires were submitted via Facebook and Email to students, we could reach a small number of participants, not the number we were planning before the crisis. It decreased to half. Some of the students were incorporated and disrespectful towards us.

### **Suggestions for Further Research:**

The current research work is carried to investigate the writing skill and its difficulties at the level of language' aspects and Improving it via dictation.

This study can open the scope for many brand new and further researches such as: Improving Writing via brainstorming or mind mapping or improving listening via dictation

### **Conclusion:**

In general, the chapter has deeply interpreted the obtained results for both teachers' and students' questionnaires which have successfully confirmed our hypothesis. Also, it includes the limitations faced by this inquiry along with some recommendations to develop further research.

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**Appendices****Appendix A****Teachers' Questionnaire**

This questionnaire has designed for teachers of writing in El Chadli Bendjedid University El-Tarf to gather some data about 2<sup>nd</sup>-year English students' writing skills, their weaknesses, and the methods used by the teachers to boost students' writing ability. Besides, we shed light on dictation whether it is effective in improving writing. We do appreciate your precious help. Thank you very much.

**Part One:****Background Information:**

**Gender:**            Male                       Female

**Years of Teaching Experience...**

**Years of Teaching Writing...**

**Part Two:****Writing Skill and Its Difficulties:**

**Q1:** What is the skill that most students are interested in?

-Listening       -Speaking       -Reading       -Writing

**Q2:** From your viewpoint, how do students view writing? A skill that can be:

- Improved Hardly
- Improved Easily

**Q3:** Why does writing have such importance that every single student is working on enhancing it?

.....

.....

.....

**Q4:** According to you, what does make writing as the hardest skill among the other three skills (Listening, Speaking, and Reading)?

-Not Having the Correct Conjugation of the Verbs

-Misspelling Words

-Missing Punctuation

-Not Having Suitable Words

**Q5:** Which aspects you depend on to assess your students' writing?

- Grammar
- Spelling
- Punctuation
- Vocabulary

**Q6:** What are the weaknesses you notice while correcting your students' piece of writing?

- Grammatical Mistakes
- Spelling Mistakes
- Problem of Word Choice
  
- Lack of Vocabulary

**Q7:** To overcome your students' difficulties in writing, which kind of techniques and methods you would use?

- Dictation
- Brainstorming
- Mind Mapping

If there are others, please mention

.....

.....

.....

**Part Three:**

**The Dictation Tool for Enhancing Aspects of Language in Writing:**

**Q8:** Since you use dictation, can we say it is an effective tool for improving writing?

- Yes
- No

**Q9:** How often does dictation use in your sessions?

- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Pretty Often
- Always

**Q10:** Which kind of dictation you use?

- Words Dictation
- Paragraphs Dictation
- Essays Dictation

**Q11:** After using dictation, did you notice any progress in students' writing?

- Yes
- No

**Q12:** If YES, what are the aspects of language that have improved?

- Grammar
- Spelling
- Punctuation
- Vocabulary

**Q13:** Besides all of this, what would be other advantages that dictation would offer for students?

.....

.....

.....

**Thank You for Your Precious Help**



**Q4:** Are you interested in improving your writing skill?

-Yes

-No

**Q5:** In your writing improvement journey, what kind of difficulties you face?

-Vocabulary

-Grammar

- Spelling

-Punctuation

**Q6:** Which technique from these you adopt to overcome the difficulties?

-Dictation

-Brainstorming

-Mind Mapping

If there are others, mention

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

**Part Two:**

**The Dictation Tool for Enhancing Aspects of Language in Writing:**

**Q7:** How often do you use dictation in the classroom?

-Rarely

-Sometimes

-Pretty Often

-Always

**Q8:** Which type of dictation you prefer?

-Words Dictation

-Paragraphs Dictation

-Essays Dictation

**Q9:** How would you react to overusing dictation by your teacher?

-Positively

-Negatively

**Q10:** Do you see it as effective in improving your writing?

-Yes

-No

**Q11:** If YES, which aspects of the language does dictation improve the most?

-Vocabulary

-Grammar

- Spelling

-Punctuation

**Q12:** Besides dictation, what are the other techniques you use to improve your writing skill?

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

**Thank You for Your Collaboration**