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EFL University Students' Spelling Abilities and their Spelling Learning Strategies

Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillments of the requirements for the degree of Master in didactics of foreign languages

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Declaration

I hereby declare that the dissertation entitled "**EFL University Students' Spelling Ability and their Spelling Learning Strategies**" is our own work and all the sources wehaveused have been acknowledged by means of references. We also certify that we have not copied or plagiarized the work of other students or researchers partially or fully. In case any material is not documented, we shall be responsible for the consequences.

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In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

With deep profound love, I dedicate this humble work

*To my precious **parents** who have taught me the value of work and honesty.*

I am deeply grateful to them for their sacrifices, continued support, endless love and faith in me.

To the candles of my family, who stand by me when things look bleak: my adorable sisters and brothers

To my dear grandmother for her precious prayers.

*To the symbol of love and giving, my wonderful friends **Zahra, Feyrouze, Soumia,Nesrine**and **kawtar** for their constant encouragement.*

*To my precious partner **Soumia** for her moral support and help.*

To all my Relatives, teachers and colleagues and everyone who sees the good in me and believes in me

Thank you all!

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Dedication

In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful,

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*My wonderful **parents**, who have raised me to be the person I am today. I thank you for all the unconditional love, guidance, and support that you have always given me.*

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To my dearest brothers.

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Abstract

Spelling, as a basic language skill, has become a serious challenge for many EFL learners, includingeven advanced ones. The current study aimed at exploring the spelling abilities of EFL university students majoring in English and their use of spelling learning strategies. More specifically, it aimed at investigating the levels of the students' spelling abilities, their awareness of their spelling abilities, the importance assigned to spelling/spelling practice and their use of spelling learning strategies. In order to achieve these aims and collect the needed data, a dictation test and a questionnaire were designed and administrated to 60 students out of 274 second year students at the department of English, Mohamed Seddik Ben Yahia, Jijel University. The findings of the study revealed that the students are experiencing difficulties in spelling English words to a large extent as most of the students' performance in the test was poor or very poor. The findings also indicated that despite the fact that most of the students are aware of their spelling ability, a significant number of poor spellers overestimated their ability. Another striking finding is that the students with the different levels of spelling ability have positive perceptions of spelling and shared most of the spelling practices. Most importantly, the results revealed differences in strategy use among the students: those who are better spellers use less but more effective strategies than poor spellers. Based on the results of the study, some pedagogical recommendations for teachers and students were suggested.

Key words: Spelling, spelling ability, spelling learning strategies, EFL university students

List of Abbreviations

AE: American English

BE: British English

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

Q: Question

N: Number

%:Percentage

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1. Background of the Study

Spelling accuracy or the ability to spell words easily and correctly is considered as one of the most indispensable components of written language. Morton (1996) argued that "In order to participate fully in today's information - based society, students need to develop effective writing skills and this requires accurate spelling" (p.1).

Nowadays, English spelling had become a struggle for native and nonnative learners for it causes a lot of problems in their writing proficiency. There are arguments from different parts of the world that the learners spelling standards are declining and that their spelling achievement needs to be improved. According to Westwood (2014), surveys in the US, Britain and Canada report concern about falling standards of spelling among children. This alarming situation and the amplified necessity to enhance literacy and writing skills led researchers and practitioners to reconsider the emphasis given to spelling in the curricula: how it should be taught, how it should be assessed, what strategies should be used and so forth. Westwood (2014) claimed that "education policy-makers in Britain, Australia and the US are now promoting the more effective teaching of spelling skills to students of all ages". (p.14-15) and Matchan (2012, cited in Westwood, 2014) observed "Spelling, which suffered a precipitous drop in status during the last few years, has become popular again" (p.21).

Drawing on the available research data on teaching spelling and the spelling problems experienced by EFL learners, one of the main reasons of poor spelling include the inadequate or ineffective use of spelling learning strategies. Different studies investigated the spelling learning strategies used by EFL learners.Some studies shed light on the difference between the strategies used by young children and those of adults, others

focused on the effectiveness of particular strategies, and some others investigated the strategies used by skilled and less-skilled spellers.

Holmes and Malone (2004) investigated how adult English speakers, who are good readers but who differ in spelling ability, remember word-specific spelling information. The findings provide new insight into the types of strategies that advanced learners use spontaneously to memorize arbitrary letter sequences, as well as revealing how effective these strategies are. Furthermore, the obtained results demonstrated that same strategies were used by the less skilled and the skilled spellers, but the less skilled spellers were not able to make some strategies work as effectively.

Additionally, Logvinenko (2018) attempted to discover the possible impacts of L1 orthography on the choice of spelling strategies of Chinese, Arabic, and French speaking learners.This empirical study provides evidence that regardless of a native language, the same strategies were used most of the time by all participants.

Another study was conducted by Al Bulushi & Al Seyabi (2016), investigated the spelling strategies used by EFL students in Oman. Their study aimed at identifying the frequency of spelling learning strategies that grades four and ten learners use to learn English spelling as well as the differences in the use of specific spelling strategies, with regard to gender differences and achievement levels. The results revealed that there is a statistically significant differences among Omani EFL students in the use of the strategies with respect to gender and achievement levels.

In the Algerian context, the study conducted by Hechiche and Belibel (2016) investigated the spelling problems and identified the commonest types and causes of spelling errors among second year students at the department of English, university of Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia, Jijel. Besides, the study attempted to shed light on the spelling strategies used by the students and exploring both students' and teachers'

perceptions of the spelling problems that they frequently encounter. The findings of the study revealed that the students face serious difficulties in spelling because they are not aware of their spelling problems and they use limited strategies to improve their spelling. Other causes behind students' poor spelling performance were found to be the irregularity of English spelling system, the complexity of rules and exceptions and confusing words, students' carelessness as well as their lack of interest to learn spelling.

2. Statement of the Problem

In foreign language learning, writing is a major language skill that learners seek to ameliorate. Hence, learners need to improve other aspects of language such as grammar, punctuationand spelling. Many researchers have argued the importance of spelling, as one of the main components of any writing system. For example,Graham and Santangelo (2014) noticed that considerable attention to spelling may intervene with successful completion of writing stages, such as brainstorming or revision.

Despite its importance, spelling especially in the English language, constitutes an area of difficulty for many EFL learners at all levels of education. Research has shown that even advanced EFL learners have spelling problems. The situation at the department of English at Mohammed Saddik Ben Yahia University is no exception. In fact, English spelling performance of EFL university students majoring in English has recently been declining and has increasingly become a very problematic concern. According to some studiesmade by Hechiche and Belibel (2016) and Mohdeb (2017), it has been noticed that many learners have considerable difficulties in remembering word-specific spelling information, and have problems in performing writing tasks without conspicuous spelling errors. Because these learners are required to develop and improve their spelling skills autonomously, one of the main reasons of poor spelling at the university might be the type of spelling strategies the learners use or they have been trained to use and some other

related factors such as their awareness of their spelling ability levels and the importance they assign to spelling and spelling practice.

A review of related literature discloses that few studies have tackled spelling learning strategies among good spellers and poor spellers, and to our knowledge no studies have investigated this in the Algerian EFL context. Therefore, there is a serious need to explore the spelling learning strategies used by good spellers and poor spellers.

3. Aims of the Study

The present study explores spelling ability levels of EFL university learners'. The main goal of the current study is to investigate these advanced learners' spelling learning strategies and to to compare the use of these strategies in good and average spellers with those of poor spellers. Because the use of strategies depend on other factors such as the students' awareness of their spelling ability and their perceptions and practices of spelling, the study also aims at highlighting the perceptions of the students with different levels of spelling ability regarding the importance assigned to spelling and spelling practice.

4. Research Questions

The present study is conducted in order to provide reasonable answers to the following research questions:

1) To what extent do second year students experience spelling difficulties?

2) Are the students aware of their spelling abilities?

3) Is there any significant difference between the perceptions of the students with different levels of spelling ability regarding the importance assigned to spelling/spelling practice?

4) Is there any significant difference between the use of spelling strategies by the students with different spelling ability levels?

7. Research Methodology

Polit et al. (2001, p.223) stated that "research methodology stands for the techniques used to arrange a study and to gather and analyze data all along the research process".To answer theresearch questions, the present study follows the descriptive method. Moreover, data were collected through the use of both quantitative and qualitative research approaches. More specifically, two research tools will be used: a dictation test to find outthe spelling ability levelsof EFL learners at the department of English at Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia University and a student questionnaire to make inquiries about their perceptions of spelling, spelling practices as well as their use of spelling learning/correcting strategies.

8. Structure of the Study

The current research consists of a general introduction, twomain chapters and a general conclusion. The first chapter,which constitutes a review of the literature, is divided into two sections. The first section highlights the main concepts related to spelling, focusing on English spelling, while the second one deals with students' spelling learning strategies. The second chapter, the field work, deals with the practical framework of the study. It discusses the methodology applied in conducting the research work as it recounts reasonable grounds for following certain procedures. Then, it displays the core of the study as it provides scrupulous interpretations and analysis of the data gathered through the dictation test and the questionnaire; and outlines the major findings. The chapter ends with the main research findings, the limitations of the study and some pedagogical recommendations are suggested.

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Chapter One: Literature Review

Introduction

Spelling, as an essential component of written language, is one of the language aspects that EFL learners need to work on. The current chapter is divided into two sections. The first section is devoted to defining the major concepts related to spelling in general and English spelling in particular, its importance for EFL learners. It also shed lights on the main differences between British and American spelling and the most important causes of misspelled words and the main problems that learners face with English spelling.The second section is mainly concerned with spelling learning strategies. It provides clear definitions of the term strategy and the spelling strategies and focuses on several classifications of the spelling learning strategies that learners usually use and their different applications in language learning.

Section One: Spelling and Spelling Development

1.1. Definition of Spelling

Several writers and books provided various definitions for the term spelling. For example, Webster dictionary (1993) defined spelling as the process of writing words by using letters depending on accepted usage of their formation. Thus, letters must appear in a correct sequence to be meaningful. Furthermore, Al Saedi (1989) tried to give a more detailed definition in which spelling is putting letters in the correct sequenced order to form a meaningful word, or it is the ability to write words correctly depending on the memory. In other words, spelling is related to the ability to retrieve knowledge of lexis (words) from memory. Moreover, the National Council of Teachers of English (1996, p. 51) defined spelling as "the process of representing language by means of writing system". Besides, Perfetti (1997, p. 22) introduced spelling as "the encoding of linguistic forms into written form". That is, spelling is the attempt to transcribe the sounds of the

language into alphabetic letters. Another definition was introduced by Savage (2007), in which he claimed that spelling is a written language skill which involves the visual representation of spoken sounds by written symbols and letters. Thus, spelling is a visual skill that requires transforming sounds into symbols and letters.

Although the above mentioned definitions are from distinct theoretical backgrounds, they share the same idea concerning the meaning of spelling; it is the process of gathering letters in a correct order to form correct wards. Nevertheless, spelling is not close only to the aspect of writing, but rather it is related to other aspects of language including phonological, morphological, semantic, and orthographic skills.

1.2. Importance of Spelling

The importance of spelling has been questioned in the process of learning. Some researchers claimed that it does not matter if the learner spells correctly or not because spell checkers can correct their errors anyway. However, other researchers argued that spelling plays a crucial role in the process of learning and the disability to spell correctly can be regarded as a sign of learning failure. In addition to that spell-checkers may not always understand the context and as a result they cannot get the correct spelling of the word.

Al-Khaffaji and Al-Shayib (1987, p. 7)stated that "to spell correctly makes written communication easier while misspelling might lead to interruption of communication and misunderstanding" . In his quote he explained that good spelling conveys the correct meaning of the text,while bad spelling hinders the reader's comprehension of the written product. Moreover, good spelling increases learners' confidence in communicating with others in written forms and allow them to share their ideas freely while people with poor spelling proficiency usually feel embarrassed about allowing others to see what they have written. Pratley (1980)asserted that "those who do not have proper spelling accuracy tend

to make their writing simple and very short because they are not familiar or ensure of how some words are spelled and this prevent them from expressing their thoughts and ideas accurately and academically"(as cited in Al Harrasi, 2012, p.97). That is to say, writers who are not proficient at spelling often limit themselves to words that they know their spelling as a result they lose the expressive power of words.

In addition to the relationship between spelling writing, spelling is closely related to reading. Spelling representations are built in memory as graphic forms and they can be retrieved automatically when they are encountered in reading. As Ehri (2005) stated that when the connection between well-formed spelling representations and corresponding phonological and semantic forms is tightly established, word recognition fluency will emerge. Once the spelling of a word becomes familiar, the graphic form will function much the same as a whole graphic unit.

To sum up, spelling is highly important as when looking for words in dictionaries, writing notes that others may see and writing job applications or jobs that need to communicate in written form. Making any spelling error may affect the written product; therefore, it may lead to communication breakdown.

1.3. Features of English Spelling

Many researchers claimed that the English spelling system is highly predictable while others suggested that English has an irregular spelling system because it is derived from different resources resulting in a spelling system that appears perplexing. The English writing system consists of 26 letters that can be reduced in 44 sounds which are presented in 250 different spellings. "Although English orthography is an alphabetic system, it is not an ideal one and far from it" (Vos Savants, 2000, p.45). That is to say, there is no correspondence between the sound and the letter; the same sound in English may be represented by different letters. Moreover, Hassan (2000) pointed out that English is not a

phonetic language which means that English is not written as it is spoken. In this language a sound can be presented by a letter or different letters. For instance, the /k/ sound can be represented by /k/, /c/, /ck/ or /ch/ depending on its position like in words *"kite, cat, duck and Christmas"*.

However, some scholars claimed that English spelling is more consistent. Hildreth (1962) believed that although the non-phonetic nature of English causes most of the spelling problems, English is not completely non-phonetic. He stated that about eighty five percent of words in English contain regularly sounded elements that consistently occur in English. Similarly, Templeton and Morris (1999) argued that there are frequent patterns in English spelling that provide a level of consistency. In addition, Savants (2000) stated that there are no official spelling rules that can be applied to all words. In each rule there is an exception to it like the rule of the letter "i" before the letter "e" except before the letter "c". For Crystal (2003), English spelling is highly predictable with just a small number of irregular forms causing a disturbance.

Another feature of the English spelling that presents a source of spelling difficulty for EFL learners is that there are differences between the two main varieties of English, namely American English (AE) and British English (BE). As only one variety is adopted in countries where English is taught as a foreign of second language, the inconsistency in spelling may be considered as a spelling error. What makes the difference between the two varieties is that the British variety kept the spelling of words that have been taken from other languages, whereas the American one changed the spelling to make a link between the sounds and the written form. Examples include the words ending in *"our"* in BEusually end in *"or"* in AE (*behaviour* vs *behavior*), words ending with *"ise"* in BE always end with *"ize"* in AE (naturalize vs*naturalize*), words ending with *"ence"*in BE end with *"ense"* in AE (licence vs license), words ending with *"re"* in BE often end with

"er" in AE(centre vs center). Another difference is related to the consonant /l/. The letter / l / in BE is always doubled after one vowel in stressed and unstressed syllables (e.g. *travelled:* unstressed and doubled /*rebelled*: stressed and doubled), but we usually double it in AE only in stressed syllables (e.g. *traveled*: unstressed so it is not doubled/*rebelled*: stressed so it is doubled). Finally, there are some spellings that do not obey any rule and require memorization(*"plough"*in BE is *"plow"* in AE).

1.4. Stages of Spelling Development

In the past, spelling was taught as a separated subject at schools, and people believed that memorization is the key to its mastery. Marten and Graves (2003, p. 35) stated that "A teacher with a traditional approach to teaching spelling sees value in a weekly routine of memorization, repeated drills, and spelling tests, as a way to remember spelling words"(as cited inHechiche and Belibel, 2016, p. 15).

However, during past decades,the late 1970s and early 1980s, many researchers in language such as Charles Read (1971), Henderson and Beers (1977), Ehri & Wilce (1985), and Moats (1995), shed new lights in the process of learning spelling.During that time period, theories of spelling development were made to explain how children learn spelling. They tried to prove that spelling is a complex developmental process and not merely a process of rote memorization (as cited in Westwood, 2008). They describe this process through several series of phases, in which children change the strategies they use to spell words in a regular manner.

Indeed, one popular conception of spelling development is that strategies and skills that are acquired during the process of learning are sequenced in qualitatively distinct stages; in each stage different sources of knowledge are used. According to Masterson and Crede (1999, p. 243), "the development of spelling skills is not random, but rather evolves in stages". The latter pointed that learners go through a series of stages

when acquiring spelling knowledge. According to Weinrich and Fay (2007) "The creation of these stages of spelling development was originally derived from Piagetian theory and the assumption that cognitive development occurs in qualitatively differing stages" (p. 95).

Handson (1990) and Gentry and Guillet (1993)suggested some models of spelling developmental process. Handson, in his model, divided the developmental process into five phases. Each of these phases describes learner's behaviours at a specific period of learning. In his model, the phases are named as follow *pre-phonemic stage*, *letter-name stage*, *within-words-pattern stage*, *syllable-juncture stage*, and finally *derivational-constancy stage*. Likewise, Gentry and Guillet (1993), Ehri (1986) building on Charles Read's (1975) research, described also five stages of spelling development. These stages reflect the learner's gradual development from simple to more complex tasks as their cognitive structures developed.

On the whole, most of researchers agreed on five common stages. To begin with, in the *pre-communicative stage*, *pre-phonemic stage* or *preliterate stage* (usually from age of 2 to 5years), the children writing consists only of drawing, scribbles and some gross features of writing. The second stage is called *semi- phonetic stage* or *early phonetic stage* (usually from age of 5 to 7 years). According to Westwood (2008) children start gradually to understand letter-sound correspondence. They become aware of the phonological structure of words and may use letters to represent some of the phonemes in words.The third stage is called *phonetic stage* or *alphabetic stage* (usually from age of 7 to 9years). At this stage, children develop their knowledge of letter and letter-sound correspondences, gain new experiences with printed texts, and encouraged to write. According to Shea (2011), during this stage, children start to use their visual memory on the way of spelling words and they develop a mental image of how words look in print.

The fourth stage, *the transitional stage* (usually from age of 7 to10 years), indicates a transition from a single reliance on sounds for spelling words to use of visual information and understanding of words (Shea, 2011). Thus, the learner understanding of the structure of words and his phonetic ability is developed;the child no longer relies only on sounds, rather he begins to apply spelling rules. Beers (1980) tried to describe this stage of spelling development as children "moving further away from the idea that pronunciation is the major control on English spelling" (p. 40). At the level of this stage, the learner will be able to spell single-syllable words correctly with a difficulty in double consonants and adding affixes (Lyon & Moore, 2003). Finally, in the last stage, the *correct stage*, or *independence stage,*(usually from age of 9 to 14years*)* children use a wide range of orthographic, phonological and morphological knowledge to spell words. By reaching this final stage, learners fully comprehend the basic rules and patterns of English orthography and they become proficient spellers. They master almost all spelling rules, understand how to deal with complex words, irregular spelling as far as recognize incorrect words using a variety of spelling strategies.

Despite the fact that stage models described the indispensable progressive changes and identified the apparent features in the process of learning spelling, many researchers(Moats, 1995; Teiman, 1998) criticized these models for providing an over simplification of the process, ignoring the important role of instruction, and for rejecting the individual differences and ability among children.

1.5. Causes of Spelling Errors

Spelling errors have been attributed to various causes: developmental factors, the irregularity of English spelling, confusion of English spelling, the effect of the mother tongue, learner's pronunciationand negligence of the spelling rules and lack of motivation.

1.5.1. Developmental Factors

One of the causes of misspelling words is natural and developmental factors asBahloul (2007) explained that some errors have relation with the developmental stage of spelling and it is most committed by children. These spelling errors that are committed by learners are highly similar to those committed by native speakers as a part of their developmental stages as learners move on to the next higher step in language learning, they are supposed to overcome such errors (as cited in Al Jayousi, 2001).

1.5.2.Irregularity of English Spelling

Learners cannot develop their spelling proficiency because there is no correspondence between spelling and pronunciation as explained above. In English one sound can be presented by different letters for example the letter "f"is to be found in the following letters combination: *"ph"* as in *"philosophy"*, *"gh"* as in *"enough"* and one letter can represent more than one sound e.g., *"ough "* like in words *"cough"* and *"through"*. Furthermore, the case when words pronounced the same but spelled differently like the words: *"bee"* and *"be"*. In addition to that, silent letters may cause confusion.

1.5.3. Confusion of English Spelling

Another cause that leads learners to misspell words in English is that it has too many complex rules in addition to exceptions. Hence, the learner may get confused with words or letters. English language is full of homophones. Homophones are words that sound the same but have different spelling and meaning like in the words *"see"* and *"sea"*. In addition, the use of apostrophes in English may result in some difficulties, for example learners confused between *"its"*and *"it's"*.

1.5.4. The Influence of the Mother Tongue

The difference between the mother tongue and the target language may be considered as a source of spelling errors. Cook (1997) stated that Arab learners may write *"bicture"* for

"picture" due to the lack of /p/ sound in Standard Arabic. Another example is In Japanese, there is no /l/, /r/ and /v/ phonemes, therefore speaker of Japanese may misspell *"violin"* as *"biolin"* (Gunion, 2012) (as cited in Narwemon, 2012, p.5).Smith (2008) stated that learners who have a similar writing system to English like Spanish find English writing system easier than those who have a highly far writing system like Arabic and Japanese.

1.5.5. The Influence of Learners' Pronunciation

Another difficulty that is related to learners is the influence of learners' pronunciation. Bancha (2013) affirmed that when learners are unable to differentiate between parallel sounds, this will cause mispronunciation and eventually leading to spell words wrongly. In addition to that Cook (1997) stated that unlike native speakers, learners' lack of knowledge of the actual sound system may lead them to use the wrong letter, especially for /e/ and / i / as in spelling *"beg"* for *"big"*.

1.5.6. Ignorance of Spelling Rules

Learners may misspell words because they lack the ability to apply some of the basic spelling rules of English. It includes errors that attributed to the incomplete application of English spelling rules, or the lack of knowledge of spelling rules and their exceptions such as doubling the last consonant in words that end with CVC combination of letters. Moreover, learners may lack the knowledge when to replace / y / by / i / as in the case of plural forms. Also, learners may omit the final / e / when they add the inflections.

1.5.7. Lack of Motivation and Interest

The lack of motivation and interest may influence the learner's spelling. Harry (1970) pointed out that learners commit spelling errors because of the lack of motivation to learn accurate spelling due to the lack of desire to do that (as cited in Miressa and Dumessa, 2011, p. 106). Then learners need to devote enough time to learn spelling as they should

appreciate it and take it seriously as Shaw (1970) stated "the most important steps in correct spelling are the desire to learn, to devote necessary time to learn; the third is to use all available means to learn" (p. 167). Finally, it is necessary to provide learners with available sources like books that emphasize spelling rules and the teachers should give efficient feedback to the learner in order to encourage them to work on their spelling.

Section Two: Spelling Learning Strategies

2.1. Definition of Learning Strategies

According to Oxford (1990), the word *"strategy"* has Greek origins that are related to the old term *"strategia"* that means to be competent at war or to be familiar with the ships, troop management and crew of aircraft. Moreover, the concept of strategy has been to mean the act or the action of conscious plan in order to achieve specific goals as when used by game players for cooperation, by speakers for communication or by learners to promote their learning.

In the field of education, the term *"strategy"* has followed a new direction, and has been formulated and adapted to be more related to educational setting into *"learning strategies"*. Westwood (2008) stated that a strategy can be defined as "a mental plan or action that enables an individual to approach a particular task in a systematic manner"(p. 25). Regarding foreign language learning, the term "strategy" becomes more related to language as language learning strategies. It was defined in several ways. For example, Oxford (1990, p. 8) reported that the term indicates specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more self-directed, more effective and more transferable to new situations. Cohen (1998, p. 4) in his turn, provided a more precise definition in which these strategies involve: "the processes which are consciously selected by learners, which may result in action taken to enhance or use of second or foreign language, through the storage, retention, recall, and application of information about that language". A further

definition was provided by Brown (2000, p. 122)" as The strategy is a moment-by-moment technique that the learner employs to solve problems caused by second language input or output". To sum up , as an actual definition for language learning strategies, White (2008, p. 9) stated that " It characterizes the relationship between intention and action, it is based on a view of learners as responsible agents who are aware of their needs, preferences, goals and responsibilities".

Despite the fact that there is no conjoined definition for learning strategies, there is a certain agreement on what they refer to, mainly in the sense that they are the techniques, actions or tools that learners may use to improve their language learning abilities.

2.2. Definition of Spelling Learning Strategies

As any language skill, learning spelling requires the application of effective spelling strategies along with adequate spelling instruction. According to Westwood (2014) spelling strategies are mainly cognitive processes or mental plansof action that helpin processing information, thinking, responding, and deliberately applying knowledge or skills for producing correct spelling.He assumed that "The brain is responsible for devising, selecting, and applying these strategies to suit a specific purpose (e.g., learning to spell an irregular word; correcting an error), and then for monitoring the effectiveness of the strategy"(p. 49). Examples of the most common spelling strategies are simultaneous oral spelling,phonetic spelling,spelling by analogy, spelling by applying rules, mnemonics strategy,morphemic strategy,and using dictionary or askingsuperior spellers. It is necessary to mention that using these spelling learning strategies differ from one learner to another and mainly depend on the learners' competence and their style of learning. In short, a spelling learning strategy can be defined as a means that learners rely on to retrieve the stored knowledgethat are related to spelling, or a way that learners

follow to create or provide the spelling of new words from the available information by making relations between speech sounds and written letters.

2.3. Common Spelling Learning Strategies

Taking into account that different terms were used to name spelling strategies, we may agree that the most common types of spelling strategies include sound-based or phonetic strategies, rule-based or orthographic strategies, visual strategies, morphemic strategies, and spelling by analogy.

Initially, one common type of spelling strategies is phonological strategies, phonetic strategies or sound-based strategies. According to Treiman (1993), by using this strategy, learners sound out the words when they spell them, that is, they rely on the relationship between the sounds or phonemes and their corresponding letters or graphemes. In other words, when using this strategy, learners hear the sounds of words and then they try to represent each sound with a single letter or a combination of letters (E.g., using letters of the alphabet *"A"* to *"Z"*, as well as combinations such as *"ck"* for /k / and *"ph"* for / f/). Nonetheless, using only this strategy is insufficient, and in many cases it may not be suitable to achieve correct spelling (Read, 1971). Besides, Anderson (1991) assumed that relying only on the phonological strategy, usually results in poor spellers. Hence, it is important to use a variety of spelling strategies to be successful in spelling. The importance of this strategy can be summarized in Bears words:

Students need hands-on experiences comparing and contrasting words

by sound so that they can categorize similar sounds and associate them

consistently with letters and letter combinations. This process is the

heart of the alphabetic principle (Bear et al., 2004, p. 7).

Another important spelling strategy is rule based or orthographic strategies. This strategy focuses on learning spelling rules and exceptions in order to spell correct words (e.g., rules of silent *"e"*, open and closed syllables, forming plural, floss rules...etc.).

English spelling should be viewed as a system that has regularities and thereby spelling problems can be solved (Hudges and Searl, 1997). Moreover, Davidson (2005) stated that poor spellers usually lack the knowledge of the rules and regularities of the English language and accordingly, once learners understand the spelling rules and their exceptions, they will easily spell words. Hence, learning rules and exceptions is essential for enhancing spelling performance.

In addition to the above mentioned spelling strategies, learners may also use the visual strategy. By using this strategy, learners can spell words by thinking about how words look or about the letter patterns. According to Westwood (2008), using this strategy, learners rely on their visual memory to remember the characteristics of words. Furthermore, Barron (1980) reported that learners retrieve the essential information as a whole by using the visual image of the word which is stored in their memory. Besides, to a significant extent we do learn to spell "by eye", and visual skills are intimately involved in spelling and proofreading (Davis, 2013). Thus, this strategy is considered as very effective strategy for learning how to spell words. It can be improved through extensive reading, daily spelling practices like word banks, wall charts, pattern charts, and text messaging to build their visual memory. Buchanan (1989) said that "Spelling conventions are truly understood and learned when (children) discover the connections themselves" (p. 72).

Moreover, another type is morphological strategies. Such strategies involve using the knowledge of the root word to aid in spelling a related or derived word (Treiman, Cassar, & Zukowski, 1994). In other words, it helps learners to derive the base words, add prefixes and suffixes, form compound word and understand homonyms, homophones and homographs as well. Some researchers in the field (Elbro & Arnbak, 1996; Teaching & Learning research Project, 2006) reported that the most effective way to store words in

memory is by their morphemes rather than by their whole-word forms because morphemic units can be produced easily in some spelling cases (as cited in Westwood, 2008). Bears (2004) added that "Students need hands-on experiences comparing and contrasting words by consistent spelling patterns associated with categories of sound" (p. 8).

Finally, the last strategy is spelling by analogy. English language during its development has borrowed a vast number of words from other languages. The latter can explain the complexity and irregularity of the English orthographic system. Westwood (2008) stated that knowing the correct spelling of a word helps to spell other words that are related by sound or visual patterns.

To sum up, being proficient in only one strategy is not sufficient to produce correct spelling in English. Schmitt (2000) confirms that efficient spellers use a variety of strategies in order to learn spelling in English. In the same way, Davidson (2005) pointed that learning the origin of words, using dictionaries, practicing, proofreading, and making spelling books can be very beneficial for developing students' spelling performance. Therefore, learners are recommended to use various spelling strategies make more efforts and practice spelling tasks in order to develop their spelling skills.

2.4. Classification of Spelling Learning Strategies

Most learners think that the mastery of spelling is relied heavily on rote learning and memorization and through classroom instruction. Nonetheless, success in spellingrequires learners to develop their own spelling strategies and skills by themselves.

Research has shown that there is countless number of strategies that learners may use to enhance their spelling level. Researchers such as James and Klein (1994), Varnhagen (1995), Dalh (2003) and others, have provided different divisions concerning the types of spelling strategies.

2.4.1. James and Klein (1994) Classification

There are three major spelling strategies: using the visual route, using the phonemic route, and using metalinguistic knowledge (James & Klein, 1994, p.31).

The first strategy is using the visual route. In this strategy, learners focus on retrieving parts and chunks of words from what is stored in the visually memory. For example, learners may find it much easier when spelling words like *"sign"* and *"signature"*, *"secret"* and *"secretary"*, *"through"* and *"throughout",* simply because these words are derived from the same visual root.

Secondly, the second strategy is using the phonemic route. When using this strategy, learners usually pronounce the words in order to produce their spelling.Some linguists believe that in order to master spelling in an alphabetic orthography, for example the orthography of English, the most effective strategy to use would be one's auditory skills, namely the usage of the phonemic route (Holmes & Malone, 2004). For example, the word *"car"* is a simple word in which each sound corresponds one single latter. However, using this method is insufficient in some case like in homophones, like *"whether"* and *"weather",* *"hear"* and *"her"*, which are pronounced the same but their spelling is different. Accordingly, it seems difficult to produce correct spelling for all English words, where letter-to-sound correspondences are not clear, by relying exclusively on this strategy.

Finally, the last strategy according to James & Klein (1994) is using the metalinguistic knowledge. Here, learners use their knowledge that they already know about the target language like using rules.

2.4.2. Varnhagen (1995) Classification

According to Varnhagen (1995), spelling strategies can be broadly categorized into mnemonic, phonological, orthographic, and morphological strategies.

The first strategy is mnemonic strategy, which involves retrieving the stored orthographic representations of words from memory. Researchers such as Ehri (2005); Reichel & Perfetti (2003); Rittle-Johnson & Siegler (1999); Treiman, Berch & Weathersten (1993), argued that "with sufficient spelling and reading practice, the orthographic representations of words along with the phonological and semantic representations become stored in long-term-memory and then they can be retrieved rapidly and automatically". In addition to that, retrieval is also necessary for irregular spelling or words that do not follow phonetic, orthographic or morphological regularities. In case when the spellers are not able to readily retrieve the orthographic representations from long-term-memory, they may rely on what is known as backup strategies which help learners to produce correct spelling and capture oral language in writing. Backup strategies such as phonological, orthographic, and morphological strategies consequently are more deliberate and conscious than is retrieval.

The second strategy is phonological strategies. This type of strategies relies on analyzing the word into phonemes and then choosing the appropriate graphemes to represent each sound (Varnhagen, Boechler, & Steffler, 1999). Although, Gentry (1982) believed that phonological strategies are used most often in early spelling, some experts, such as Steffler, Varnhagen, Friesen & Treiman (1998), provided an evidence that this strategy is also used by older children. In fact, using only phonological strategies is not sufficient to reach the conventional spelling of words, so additional knowledge about the orthographic structure are needed.

The third strategy is orthographic strategies. Varnhagen(1995) stated that this type of strategies come into play as children gain experience with print and build up a collection of words in memory. Further, it enables them to make generalizations about the kinds of letter sequences that may and may not occur in a language, for example the use of "ph" to represent the sound "f", capital letters rules, final "ed", plural forms etc… (Goulandris, 1994).

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The last strategy is morphological strategy. In addition to the use of phonological and orthographic knowledge, spellers may use morphological similarities across words as hints to correct spelling. Many studies, Treiman, Cassar & Zukowski (1994), Leybaret &Alegria (1995),Sénéchal (2000) has shown that children in different grades usually use their knowledge of morphological structures in order to spell words and that training in morphological awareness is necessary to improve spelling performance (Nunes, Bryant, &Olsson, 2003).

2.4.3. Dalh (2003) Classification

Dalh et al., (2003), pointed out that in order to undertake difficult words, effective spelling strategies need to be used. They introduced another classification of spelling strategies in which he listed five categories of spelling strategies, each of which serve as an umbrella term that undertakes other strategies.

Firstly, in strategies of visualizing or visual strategies, learners rely on their visual memory of words from print. Visual strategies in fact, consists of several types. The first strategy is remembering words from books or any printed text i.e., learners visualize a word from printed texts in order to spell it. The second strategy is picture words. Here, learners picture a word in their minds and try to spell it latter. The third visual strategy is trying alternatives. In other words, learners write down all the possible spellings they think a word is spelled, and then decide which alternative is the correct one. The last visual strategy is visual images. Good spellers combine words segments with a visual image of the word (Rosencrans, 1998, p. 16).

The second category includes strategies for making connections. Learners here activate their schema and use previously learned knowledge in order to provide words' spelling. There are three main strategies in this type, using word families and analogies (knowledge of word families and rhyming elements to understand new words), starting with known patterns (use of letters combination or group of letters, no matter where it

locates in the word), and building words (using a root of a word and adding on the affixesin order to build a meaningful word).

The third category of strategies is sound- based strategies, comprising three types: sounding out (the spellers sound out letters or pronounce them, and then make a link between the letter and the appropriate sound correspondence in order to hint auditory memory), chunking (learners chunk, divide or decode the word into small and more clear segments in order to spell it) and using phonics (phonemes-graphemes).

The fourth category is reflectingstrategies. In this strategy, learners try to reflect and then edit their writing. This category consists of three main phases. Learners start by verifying or checking their spelling to confirm that words are spelled correctly. Then, they need to correct the errors if any i.e., find the mistakes such as omission, addition, substitution, reversal and then correct them. Finally, learners need to use resources in order to check and correct their spelling. For instance, they may use resources such as dictionaries, word journals, computer spell checker or any other form of valid resources.

Last and not least, the fifth category is strategies for combining information. In these strategies, learners can use a combination of strategies by mixing more than one of the already mentioned strategies to form correct spellings of words.

Overall, each of the above mentioned classifications summarized the most applicable spelling strategies using different terms and descriptions. Strategies like using connections, memory tricks, rule-based, visual, auditory, and chunking may help learners to learn spelling of new words. Other strategies such as sounding out, connections, using a dictionary or other sources, rule-based strategy, analogy, morphological strategy may help learners to provide correct spelling while writing. Still, other strategies including re-readingone's writing to look for spelling errors or taking time to proofread specifically for spelling errors belong to strategies for reflecting.

2.5. Spelling learning strategies and Learners' Ability

Spelling is much more than a purely 'mechanical' skill; it involves the integration of complex perceptual and cognitive (brain-based) processes (Santoro, Coyne and Simmons, 2006).It is assumed that spelling is one of the most complex language skills where learners usually face difficulties. According to Perveen and Akram (2014), despite the fact that learners have received a lot of drilling and training in their schools, they are still producing a lot of spelling errors. Thus, being limited just to spelling instruction provided by teachers is inadequate and students should work hard to enhance their spelling skills by themselves.

One may believe that being a good speller is strongly related to schools' instruction and intelligence. However, in reality, having good spelling skills is a result of personal efforts and successful learning strategies along with good spelling instruction.

In fact, many scholars believed that there is a significant difference between good spellers and poor spellers in terms of spelling strategies' use. There is evidence that good spellers rely on a variety of strategies for solving spelling problems, while poor spellers use a narrow range of strategies (Hughes & Searle, 1997; Davidson, 2005; Westwood, 2008; Baleghizadeh & Dargahi, 2014). Holmes and Malone (2004) conducted a study to investigate how adult English speakers, who are good readers but who di□er in spelling ability, remember words spelling. The results of their study demonstrated that same strategies were used by both poorand good spellers, but the poor spellers were not able to make some strategies work as e□ectively. Similarly, Baleghizadeh and Dargahi (2014) conducted a study in which they examined the use of spelling strategies within EFL children who had distinct spelling abilities. They found that good spellers used a variety of spelling strategies to spell English words, while poor spellers restricted themselves to few strategies. Moreover, Westwood (2008) maintained that when learners apply a variety

of strategies for providing and checking words' spelling in combination, they guarantee to accomplish perfect spelling.

As a result, learners should come across a variety of spelling strategies so as to improve their spelling ability. Additionally, they must improve their reading ability through extensive reading, in order to make these strategies more effective. Westwood (2014)reported that

> Reading helps spelling by exposing the reader to a wide variety of
>
> orthographic patterns, and by building a vocabulary of common
>
> sight words (including irregular words). Reading also provides
>
> opportunities for applying phonic decoding skills that are used
>
> in reverse when encoding words. (p. 55)

In particular, efficient reading abilities are essential for learning, remembering and improving spelling ability and spelling strategies.

Conclusion

The first chapter attempted to offer a review of the literature related to spelling in general with a focus on the English spelling system and to general considerations about spelling strategies.Thefirst section discussed the different definitions of spelling and shed light on its importance in the process of learning, the stages of its development and the major causes that lead to spelling errors. A review of the features of English spelling has made it clear that the English spelling is not arbitrary and random, but it is a complex system due to a complicated history. Moreover, it has pointed out the main features of English spelling and the commonest differences between British and American English spelling.Finally, it lists the major causes that lead to spelling errors. Thesecond section provides a thorough discussion of spelling learning strategies in terms of definition, the most common strategies and their classification.

Chapter Two: The Field Work

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Chapter Two: Field Work

Introduction

This chapter is devoted to the practical part of this research work, which aims at investigating EFL learners' spelling ability and their use of spelling learning strategies. It begins with the identification of the population and sampling of the research work. Then, it provides a detailed description and administration of the instruments used in this study, which are a dictation test and a questionnaire, together with the discussion of the main findings. Finally, the current chapter provides some pedagogical implications and recommendationsas well as some suggestions for further research.

2.1. Research Design

2.1.1. Population and Sampling

The population of the research work consists of second year license students of English as a foreign language at Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia University, Jijel, Algeria during the academic year 2020- 2021. The reason behind choosing this sample is that second year student are expected to be able to comprehend and answer the questions included in the questionnaire because they have already studied at least one year at the university. In addition, to that they studied the module of phonetics for two years that will enable them to be familiar with spelling rules and spelling learning strategies. A sample of sixty participants is selected randomly including both males and females.

2.1.2. Research Instruments

In order to gather credible data and to ensure clear findings, two instruments were used in the current study. The first tool is a dictation test, conducted to describe students' spelling ability and the commonest types of spelling errors they make.The test is followed by a student questionnaire. The latter is considered as a suitable tool to gather information about spelling learning strategies used by learners to learn spelling. According to Nunan

(1992) "the questionnaire is relatively popular means of collecting data. It enables the researcher to collect data in the field of setting, and the data themselves are more amendable to quantification than discursive data'' (p. 142).

2.1.3. Description and Administration of the Test

The researchers prepared the dictation test which consists of 100 words, presented in meaningful sentences (27 sentences). Most of the words are easy and familiar to the learners. For example, the words "*before, it's*, *carrots, autumn, speech, whether, because, ninth*" could be spelled correctly by a secondary school pupil. Despite the fact that some words are chosen randomly, the majority of words in this test are chosen to some specific criteria: words with different types of vowels long and short ones, words with silent letters, words that usually cause difficulty to learners like homophones, words that have a correspondence between their spelling and their pronunciation, words with affixes, and words that differ in BE and American English.

After getting the permission**,** the researchers administered the test with the class teacher in one day. They dictated the sentences to the students, who were cooperative, and explain how to answer the test. It is worthy to mention that the students' paperswere coded to be able to compare the results of the dictation test and those of the questionnaire. The researcher read the sentences word by word with a clear voice. After finishing the test, the participants were given time to revise their answers. All students handed back their papers to the test administers on the spot. The test, which lasted for about 30 minutes, took place at the end of the session.

2.1.4.Description and Administration of theQuestionnaire

The questionnaire comprises fifteen questions of different types: closed questions that require "yes" or "no" answers or to select the appropriate answer(s) from a number of choices and open-ended questions. The questions are divided into four sections. The first

section, entitled "The Students' Perceptions of their Spelling ability", consists of nine questions inquiring about the students' views of learning English spelling. The second section"Importance Assigned to Spelling/Spelling Practice". It consists of two questions and they were intended to see whether students care about improving their spelling ability or not.The third section entitled "The Students' Use of Spelling Learning/CorrectingStrategies". This section encompasses three questions and they aim at investigating the spelling strategies used by learners to learn spelling. The last section entitled, "Further Suggestions". It consists of one question and intended to collect students' additional views and suggestions about the topic in general.

The questionnaire was handed immediately after finishing the test to the same 60 participants. Each one got the same code he had in the test. The administers provided the learners with the appropriate instructions to answer the questionnaire and all of them handed back their questionnaires.

2.2. Analysis of the Results

The current section is devoted to deal with the findings of the study and the analysis of participants spelling scores and errors in the dictation test, along with their answers in the questionnaire. After collecting the test papers, a questionnaire was administrated to students, and each test paper was associated with the questionnaire of the same participant. Afterword, the researchers analysed and correct the participants' answers one by one, recorded each wrong form given by students for each word, and counted the final score for each one. They also counted and classify students' answers in the questionnaire into three groups: poor spellers, average spellers and good spellers. The researchers used numbers and percentages in order to present the results in the same way they were conducted.

2.2.1. Analysis of the Dictation Test

      For each participant, the researchers counted the correct spelling and incorrect spelling of words, as well as the cases where there is no answer. Each faulty form of a word was marked as an error and circled; then, a list of final scores for participants was made (see Appendix III). The results are summarized in the table below:

Table 1.*Students' Performance in the Dictation Test: Focus on Students*

Score	N	%
80-83	03	5
70-79	04	6.67
60-69	07	11.67
50-59	09	15
40-49	19	31.66
30-39	12	20
22-29	06	10
Total	**60**	**100**

The table above illustrates the participants' final scores in the dictation test. What is noticeable is that the participants' scores in the test are varied and no participant succeeds in providing correct spelling for all words. Only three participants (representing 5%) managed to write most of the words correctly (more than eighty correct words. Four students (6.67%), seven students (11.67%) and 9 students (15%) scored 70-79, 60-69 and 50-59, respectively. In addition, the highest percentage of participants (31.66%), achieved a score that range between forty and forty-nine correct words. A considerable number of participants (20% + 10%) achieved the lowest score with less than thirty-nine correct spellings. In brief, the students with low performance in spelling test are far more than those with good spelling performance. This indicates that the majority of second year students have low spelling ability.

Based on these results, the sample was divided into three groups: good spellers (those who scored 80 correct spelling and more), average spellers (those who scored between 60

and 79 correct spelling), and poor spellers (those who scored less than 59 correct spelling).

Table 2. *The Classification of Participants in Terms of Their Spelling Ability*

Category	N	%
Good spellers	03	5
Average spellers	11	18.33
Bad spellers	46	76.67
Total	**60**	**100**

As shown inTable (2) above, only three participants from a total number of sixty participants were considered as good spellers,eleven participants (18.33%) were considered as average spellers and forty-six participants representing the majority (76.67%) were considered as poor spellers. This reveals that the majority of second year students are poor spellers.

In addition to calculating the final score of each participant, the researchers counted the number of correct spelling and incorrect spelling of each word. The total number of words that are calculated is 6000 words. It is the result of the number of the target words multiplied by the number of participants. That is $100 \times 60 = 6000$ words (see Appendix IV). The results are summarised in Table 3 below.

Table 3.*Students' Performancein the Dictation Test: Focus on Words*

Words	N	%
With correct spelling	2858	47.64
With incorrect spelling	2996	49.93
No answer	146	2.43
Total	**6000**	**100**

As it is displayed in Table (3) above, the total number of words that are spelled correctly is 2858 (47.64%) whilst the number of words with incorrect spellings is 2996 (49.93%).Moreover, there is a significant amount of words (146 words) that are not

spelled by participants. It is worth mentioning that most of the cases where there is no answer are the same words that were misspelled by many participants. This can be clarified by learners' avoidance strategy when writing new and difficult words. Hence, these alarming results reveal a clear evidence of the learners' limited spelling ability.

In order to investigate the types of words that were easy to spell and those that were difficult, the researchers classified them according to how many participants provided the correct spelling of a word. The results are summarised in Table 4.

Table 4._The Arrangement of Words From the easiest to the most difficult_

Words spelt correctly	N	%	The words
By 54 and more (90% and more)	05	5	_Speech, which, before, in order, whole._
By 53-45 (75% - less than 90%)	17	17	_Season, communication, because, effects, generally, behaviours, doesn't, difficult, cannot, author, focus, grammar, synchronic, attracts, cinema, it's, finally._
By 44-30 (50% - less than 75 %)	27	27	_Carrots, vegetables, believe, myself, channels, delivered, in spite, medicine, tomorrow, cancer, weather, wedding, Wednesday, quite, doubt, psychology, lose, competition, literature, separate, yourself, writing, listening, syntax, different, nowadays, carrying._
By 29-20 (33%- less than 50%)	16	16	_Received, rough, government, cigarettes, affect, restaurant, neighbour's, prominent, who's, English, failures, foreign, phenomenon, changeable, relief, ninth._
By 19-14 (25% -less than 33%)	12	12	_Autumn, liar, whether, quiet, questionnaire, occasionally, influential, successful, dictionaries, politicians, ranked, excellent;_
By 6-13 (10% - less than 25%)	16	16	_Psychiatrist, forty-five, compliments, cough, throat, fascinating, colleagues, centre, naughty, recommended, secretary, immediately, guarantee, playwright, fulfil, dilemma._
By Less than 6 (Less than 10%)	05	5	_Canoe, anonymous, mispronunciation, embarrassment, committee._
By 0 %	02	2	_Foreordination, conspicuous,_

Table (4) reveals that the easiest words are *speech, which, before, in order, and whole,* followed by*Season, communication, because, effects, generally, behaviours, doesn't, difficult, cannot, author, focus, grammar, synchronic, attracts, cinema, it's, finally"* which are spelled correctly by more than 90% and 75% of the students, respectively. Except for "synchronic", all these words are common English words that learners have acquired from their middle school level usually face in their daily language exposure. The fact that some participants failed in providing the correct spelling of these simple wordsconnotes that some students have serious problems with spelling.

The table also reveals that all the remaining words are problematic for most of the students (more than ¾) and that the most difficult ones include *foreordination* and *conspicuous* (spelled incorrectly by all the students), *canoe, anonymous, mispronunciation, embarrassment, committee*(spelled correctly by less than 10%) and *psychiatrist, forty-five, compliments, cough, throat, fascinating, colleagues, centre, naughty, recommended, secretary, immediately, guarantee, playwright, fulfil, dilemma* (spelled correctly by less than 25%).

An examination of the misspelled words reveals that the students commit errors of omission, either omitting the silent letter or the doubled consonant such as the words:*"carrots, channels,tomorrow,wedding,listening,psychology, doubt,writing, carrying,different, communication, generally, finally, grammar, effects and attracts"*. In addition to omission errors, learners make mistakes with the homonym forms, they wrote the word *"quiet"* instead of*"quite"*and *"whether"* instead of *"weather"*. Another type of errors was word division for example the wordslike *"myself","yourself","nowadays"* which are written in a separated form; whereas the word *"in spite"* which is written by many participants as one word.Furthermore, many participants commit substitution errors in both vowels and consonants. For example, *"sison"* instead of *"season"* and *"becauze"*

instead of *"because", "autor*or*auther"* instead of *"author" dos'nt*or *doesnt"* instead of *"doesn't",* and also the homonym form *"its"* instead of *"it's"*. Additionally, many participants wrote the word "*behaviours*" as "*behaviors*", and this may confirms that they usually mix between British English and American English. In addition, most of learners face problems with reversing the letters in tricky words especially *"ie"* into *"ei"* or vice versa, like in *"received", "foreign", "neighbour's"* and *"relief"*. Another error that learners encountered is with homonym forms, for example, *"effect"* instead of "*affect*" and "*whose*" instead of "*who's*". Moreover, many participants made mistakes with the silent "e" in words that contain suffixes, for example the words "*changeable"* and *"ninth"*. The remaining words "*rough, government, cigarettes, restaurant, prominent, failures, phenomenon"* mainly contains errors of substitution and omission.

It can be deduced that there are other problems that may hinder learners to produce correct spelling, among these problems: the mix between the two spelling varieties (British spelling and American spelling). For instance: they wrote *"center"* in American instead of *"centre"* in British or vice versa.

Overall, the results obtained clearly show that the majority of participants have weak spelling ability and face serious difficulties in English spelling. However, it is difficult to detect a particular cause for these errors, because in some cases one word may consist of more than one error. Arguably,those errors can be due to many factors among them the complexity and irregularity of English spelling, mainly the incompatibility between sounds and letters along with the confusion between British and American spelling, difficulty in spelling homonym forms as well as the influence of the mother tongue rules. Besides, other factors that cause spelling errors are students' disability to apply some of the simplest spelling rules, their weak memorization and lack of vocabulary knowledge, as well as their carelessness concerning learning spelling.

2.2.2. Analysis of the Students' Questionnaire

Section One:The Students' Perceptions of their Spelling Ability

Q1. How would you rate your spelling ability in English overall?

Table 5.*Students' Self Evaluation of their Spelling Ability*

Options	Poor Spellers		Average Spellers		Good Spellers	
	Subjects	**%**	**Subjects**	**%**	**Subjects**	**%**
very good	1	2.17	1	9.09	2	66.67
Good	17	36.96	3	27.27	1	33.33
Average	24	52.17	7	63.64	0	0
Poor	4	8.7	0	0	0	0
very poor	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	**46**	**100**	**11**	**100**	**3**	**100**

The aim behind asking this question is to evaluate students' spelling performance. The results in this table revealed that only one poor speller stated that his spelling level is very good, seventeen students (36.96%) evaluated their level in spelling as being good, slightly more than one half of them (52.17%) reported to have an average level in spelling, and the rest(8.7%) of poor spellers evaluated their spelling as poor.Only one average speller thought that he had a very good spelling ability, (27.27%) of them stated that they are good, and the rest, which represent the majority of average spellers (63.64%) reported that their spelling ability is average.Finally, two participants of good spellers (66.66%) believed to have very good spelling ability; whereas, only one student thought that his/her ability in spelling is good.

It can be concluded from the participants' answers that the majority (consisting of poor and average spellers) believe to have an average spelling level while thegood spellers are very confident in their spelling ability level.

Q2. How difficult do you find learning English spelling?

Table 6. *Students' Perceptions on the Degree of Difficulty of Learning English Spelling*

Options	Poor Spellers		Average Spellers		Good Spellers	
	Subjects	**%**	**Subjects**	**%**	**Subjects**	**%**
Extremely	6	13.04	0	0	0	0
Significantly	14	30.44	2	18.18	0	0
Moderately	23	50	7	63.64	1	33.33
Not at all	3	6.52	2	18.18	2	66.67
Total	46	100	11	100	3	100

The target behind addressing this question is to know about the students' views about their learning of English spelling. The results of the table above indicates that one half of poor spellers (50%) found that learning English spelling is moderately difficult, about one third (30.44%)thought it is significantly difficult, six participants (13.04%) believe it is extremely difficult, and only three students (6.52%) considered learning English spelling as not difficult at all. The majority of average spellers, with a percentage of (63.64%), thought that learning English spelling is moderately difficult, about one fifth (18.18%) of them stated that it is significantly difficult; whereas, the rest of them, only two students, opted for the option"Not at all". For good spellers, the majority (66.67%) believed that learning English spelling is not difficult at all; while, the rest of them (33.33%) assumed that it is moderately difficult. Therefore, the obtained results clearly indicate that most of participants believe that learning English spelling is difficult.

As far as the second part of this question is concerned, students were asked to explain their answers. Forty-four participants gave explanations for their answers: thirty three poor spellers, seven average spellers and two good spellers. The poor spellers claimed that English spelling is difficult and they mainly find difficulties in memorizing the spelling of complex, long and unfamiliar words, words with silent letters and words with unstressed vowels. Additionally, they stated that they find difficulties because of the complexity and irregularity of English spelling mainly the incompatibility between sounds and letters, along with the confusion between British and American spelling as

well as the difference between the English and the mother tongue spelling systems. However, some poor spellers believed that they did not face any difficulties with English spelling because they train themselves and practise spelling. Regarding the average spellers, they regarded their weak memory and lack of vocabulary knowledge, as well as their carelessness to learn spelling are obstacles that make English spelling difficult for them. Finally, good spellers highlighted that words with a Latin or a Greek root also may make spelling difficult to learn.

Q3. How often, do you think, you make spelling errors?

Table 7. *Students' Frequency of Making Spelling Errors*

	Poor Spellers		Average Spellers		Good Spellers	
Options	**Subjects**	**%**	**Subjects**	**%**	**Subjects**	**%**
Frequently	5	10.87	2	18.18	0	0
Sometimes	37	80.43	6	54.55	1	33.33
Rarely	4	8.7	3	27.27	2	66.67
never	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	**46**	**100**	**11**	**100**	**3**	**100**

The target behind addressing this question is to evaluate students' spelling ability.As depicted in Table (7) above,a little more than one eleventh of poor spellers (10.87%) stated that they frequently commit spelling errors, the highest percentage of poor spellers (80.43%) opted for the option"sometimes", while the lowest percentage of them (8.7%) said that they rarely commit errors in spelling. Only two participants of average spellers (18.18%) assumed that they frequently commit spelling errors, the highest proportion of them (54.55%) stated that they sometimes commit spelling errors, and the rest of average spellers (27.27%) indicated that they rarely commit errors in spelling.Finally, only one good speller reported that he/she sometimes commit spelling errors; whereas, two participants (66.66%) chose the "rarely" option.

To conclude, the results show that while most of the good and average students are aware of their spelling ability levels, a significant percentage of the poor students are not.

Q4. Do you frequently misspell the same words?

Table 8. *Students' Frequency of Misspelling the Same Words*

	Poor Spellers		Average Spellers		Good Spellers	
Options	**Subjects**	**%**	**Subjects**	**%**	**Subjects**	**%**
Yes	18	39.13	0	0	0	0
No	9	19.57	5	45.45	1	33.33
I don't know	19	41.3	6	54.55	2	66.67
Total	46	100	11	100	3	100

The aim behind asking this question is to assess students' writing proficiency. Responses to this question show that (39.13%) of poor spellers claimed that they frequently misspell the same words, about a fifth (19.57%) opted for the option "No", and a significant number of students (41.3%)do not know if they misspell the same words or not. The results also show thatfive average spellers (45.45%) stated that they do not misspell the same words; while, more than one half of average spellers (54.55%) claimed that they don't really know if they misspell the same words frequently. It was also found thatthe majority of good spellers (66.67%) stated that they don't know if they misspell the same words each time while one answered negatively. The analysis of this question reveals that many learners do not care about the way they spell words when writing.

Q5. Do you think you can tell if a word you've written or someone else has written doesn't "look right"?

Table 9. *Students' Perceptions of their Ability to Recognize Incorrect Spellings*

	Poor Spellers		Average Spellers		Good Spellers	
Options	**Subjects**	**%**	**Subjects**	**%**	**Subjects**	**%**
Yes	30	65.22	9	81.82	2	66.67
No	9	19.56	0	0	0	0
I don't know	7	15.22	2	18.18	1	33.33
Total	46	100	11	100	3	100

This question aims to find out if learners are conscious about the way words are spelled. A quick glance to the table above shows that a considerable proportion of poor spellers (65.22%) thought they can recognize if a written word doesn't look right, nine students reported that they cannot recognize wrong spelling, while the rest (15.22%) of them chose the option "I don't know".The vast majority of average spellers (81.82%) stated that they can tell if a word doesn't look right, while18.18% opted for "I don't know". Lastly, the majority of good spellers (66.67%) claimed that they can recognize incorrect spelling of words; while, the rest one stated that he/she don't know.The results imply that the majority of the students have the ability to recognize the incorrect spelling, yet the percentages of the poor spellers who do not have this ability cannot be ignored.

Q6. Do you think that there are factors that affect your spelling performance?

Table10.*Students' Perceptions about the Factors that Affect Their Spelling Performance*

	Poor Spellers		**Average Spellers**		**Good Spellers**	
Options	**Subjects**	**%**	**Subjects**	**%**	**Subjects**	**%**
Yes	38	82.6	9	81.82	2	66.67
No	4	8.7	0	0	0	0
I don't know	4	8.7	2	18.18	1	33.33
Total	46	100	11	100	3	100

The target behind asking this question is to see if the learners believe that there are factors that may affect their spelling performance. As can be noticed from Table (10) the vast majority of poor spellers (82.6%) thought that there are factors that affect their spelling performance, the rest of them chose the options "no" and "I don't know" respectively, four students for each option. Moreover, the majority of average and good spellers (81.82% and 66.67%) claimed that there are factors that affect their spelling performances, while the lowest proportion (18.18% and 33.33%) of participants were undecided. These results are a clear indication that the majority of the surveyed students believe that there are factors that may affect their spelling performance.

Q7. If "Yes", what factors affect your spelling performance?

Table 11.*Factors that Affect Students' Spelling Performances*

Factors	Poor Spellers		Average Spellers		Good Spellers	
	Subjects	**%**	**Subjects**	**%**	**Subjects**	**%**
The context	18	39.13	1	9.09	1	33.33
Time limits	17	36.95	6	54.55	1	33.33
Tiredness and boredom	7	15.22	2	18.18	1	33.33
No answer	4	8.7	2	18.18	0	0
Total	46	100	11	100	3	100

This question was addressed to determine the factors that affect students' spelling performances.As it is clearly shown in Table (11), about (39.13%) of poor spellers stated that the context affects their spelling performance, a little more than one third (36.95%) claimed that their spelling ability get affected by time limits, seven participants claimed that their spelling performance get affected by tiredness and boredom, and the rest four students didn't provide any answer for this question. The results also reveal that only one average speller claimed that his/her spelling performance is affected by context, more than half of them (54.55%) stated that time limits affect their spelling, two students chose the factor of tiredness and boredom and the rest (18.18%) didn't answer the question. For good spellers, the same percentage (33.33%) was market for all the factors that affect spelling performance.Thus, these results clearly show that the students agreed that time limitsis a factor that affects the spelling performance of the three categories.

The participants were asked to add other factors that affect their spelling performance. It should be mentioned that only five students provide other factors for this question: four poor spellers (learning other languages, the lack of vocabulary and explanation and stress) and one average speller (pronunciation of the speaker).

Q8. To what extent do you think you are familiar with spelling rules?

Table 12.*Students' Levels of Familiarity with Spelling Rules*

	Poor Spellers		Average Spellers		Good Spellers	
Options	Subjects	%	Subjects	%	Subjects	%
Extremely	1	2.17	1	9.09	0	0
Significantly	13	28.26	3	27.27	1	33.33
Moderately	16	34.78	0	0	0	0
Not at all	16	34.78	7	63.64	2	66.67
Total	**46**	**100**	**11**	**100**	**3**	**100**

The aim behind asking this question is to know if students are familiar with spelling rules or not. It can be read from Table (12) that only one poor speller(2.17%)is extremely familiar with English spelling rules,(28.26%) of them are significantly familiar, slightly more than one third of participants (34.78%) assumed to be moderately familiar with spelling rules, while the rest poor spellers, sixteen students, stated that they are not familiar at all with these rules. Concerning the average spellers, only one participant(9.09%) stated that he/she is extremely familiar with spelling rules, about (27.27%) of them assumed that they are significantly familiar with them, and the highest percentage of them (63.64%)thought that they are not familiar with these rules at all. As for the good spellers, one assumed to be significantly familiar with English spelling rules, while the other two good spellers (66.67%) stated that they are not familiar with these rules at all.On the basis of the results obtained,it is fair to conclude that students lack knowledge of the spelling rules.

As far as the second part of this question is concerned, the students were asked to give examples if their answers are (a), (b) or (c). It is worthy to mention that only eight participants gave examples for this question, seven poor spellers and one good speller. Poor spellers stated that being familiar with spelling rules is very important, and they provided two examples. The first one is that the long / i: / could be presented in a word

like "ie" or "ei", but the "ie" never come after a "c" (e.g. believe and receive). The second one is that theletter "k" at the beginning of a word is not pronounced (e.g. know and knowledge). For the remaining good speller, he/she stated that he/she usually forget most of spelling rules.

Q9. To what extent do you think you are familiar with the differences between British spelling and American spelling?

Table 13.*Participants' Familiarity with the Differences between British Spelling and American Spelling*

	Poor Spellers		Average Spellers		Good Spellers	
Options	**Subjects**	**%**	**Subjects**	**%**	**Subjects**	**%**
Extremely	9	19.56	1	9.09	2	66.67
Significantly	17	36.96	5	45.45	0	0
Moderately	11	23.91	3	27.27	1	33.33
Not at all	9	19.56	2	18.18	0	0
Total	**46**	100	11	100	3	100

The aim behind asking this question is to know whether learners differentiate between British spelling and American spelling. As it is distributed in the Table (13) nine poor spellers are extremely familiar with the differences between British spelling and American spelling, more than one third (36.96%) reported that they are significantly familiar with the two different spellings, eleven students of the total number chose the option "moderately", and only nine poor spellers (19.56%) stated that they are not familiar at all. Concerning the average spellers, only one reported that he/she is extremely familiar; the highest number of them, five students, assumed that they are significantly familiar; more than a quarter of them (27.27%) claimed that they are moderately familiar, and (18.18%) said that they are not familiar at allwith the differences between the two varieties. However, the majority of good spellers (66.66%) assumed that they are extremely familiar with the differences.

The participants who chose (a), (b) or (c) were asked to give examples to confirm their familiarity with the spelling differences between BE and AE. It should be mentioned that twenty seven students gave examples for this questions: nineteen poor spellers, six average spellers and three good spellers. Poor speller stated that there is a difference in the pronunciation of some letters like "r", "t", and the pronunciation of short vowels and long vowels between the two varieties. Moreover, they added that words ending in "re", "ence" in British spelling often end in "er", "ense" in American spelling as centre/ center and licence/license. Average spellers added to the previous examples that words ending in "our" in British spelling usually end in "or" in American spelling as behaviour/behavior, colour/color. Further, the use of double "l" in British spelling while American spelling use only one "l" as travelled/traveled. They also mentioned that there are differences in pronunciation between the two accents. In addition to the previous differences good spellers added that verbs ending in either "ise" or "ize" and in British spelling always end in "ize" in American as naturalise/naturalize.

Section Two: Importance Assigned to Spelling/Spelling Practice

Q10. To what extent do you think it is important for you to spell correctly when you write?

Table 14.*Students'Perceptions of the Important of Spelling Correctly When Writing.*

	Poor Spellers		Average Spellers		Good Spellers	
Options	**Subjects**	**%**	**Subjects**	**%**	**Subjects**	**%**
Extremely	20	43.48	9	81.82	2	66.67
Significantly	19	41.3	2	18.18	1	33.33
Moderately	6	13.05	0	0	0	0
Not at all	1	2.17	0	0	0	0
Total	46	100	11	100	3	100

This question was intended to see whether students care about their spelling when they write. The Table (14) demonstrates that most of poor spellers (43.48%) and (41.3%)

chose the options "extremely" and "significantly" respectively to describe the importance of spelling correctly when writing, six students (13.05%) thought it is moderately important, whereas only one student thought that is not important at all. Furthermore, the vast majority of average spellers (81.82%) believed that is extremely important to spell correctly when they are writing; however, only two participants (18.18%) thought it is significantly important. Finally, more than one half of good spellers (66.67%) assumed that it is extremely important to spell correctly when writing; while, one third of them (33.33%) stated that spelling correctly is significantly important. From the above results, we can conclude that the majority of participants are aware of the importance of correct spelling in writing.

Q11.Please, respond to the following statements and decide whether you strongly agree (SA), agree (A), undecided (U), disagree (D) or strongly disagree (SD)

This question was intended to gather the participants' previous and current perceptions towards learning spelling and its importance, as well as to investigate how much they are interesting in spelling practice in order to improve their spelling ability.

Table 15._The Students' Previous Learning of Spelling_

Options		SA	A	U	D	SD	Total
Statements	Group	N	N	N	N	N	N
		(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
1. I spent time on learning spelling when I was a middle school student.	**Poor Spellers**	12 (26.08)	13 (28.26)	4 (8.7)	9 (19.57)	8 (17.39)	46 (100)
	Average Spellers	1 (9.09)	6 (54.55)	2 (18.18)	0 0	2 (18.18)	11 (100)
	Good Spellers	1 (33.33)	0 0	0 0	2 (66.67)	0 0	3 (100)
2. I spent time on learning spelling when I was a secondary school student.	**Poor Spellers**	4 (8.7)	20 (43.48)	6 (13.04)	12 (26.08)	4 (8.7)	46 (100)
	Average Spellers	1 (9.09)	5 (45.45)	2 (18.18)	1 (9.09)	2 (18.18)	11 (100)
	Good Spellers	1 (33.33)	0 0	0 0	1 (33.33)	1 (33.33)	3 (100)

As it is clearly displayed in Table (15), high percentages of both poor spellers (54.34%) and average spellers (9.09% + 54.55%), agreed that they spend time on learning spelling during their middle school level; whereas, the majority of good spellers (66.67%) assumed that they did not learn spelling in middle school. In the same way, more than one half of both poor spellers (52.18%) and average spellers (54.54%) stated that they spent time on learning spelling in secondary school, while the majority of good spellers (66.67%) stated that they did not.

It can be deduced from the above results that both poor and average spellers have received spelling instruction during their previous years while good spellers did not. Hence, this confirms the fact that spelling instruction alone is not sufficient to enhance students spelling ability.

Table 16.*The Importance Assigned to Learning Spelling at the University*

Options		SA	A	U	D	SD	Total
Statements	Group	N	N	N	N	N	N
		(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
3. As a university student, I spend time on learning the spelling of new words and correcting my misspellings.	**Poor Spellers**	17 (36.96)	18 (39.13)	8 (17.39)	1 (2.17)	2 (4.35)	46 (100)
	Average Spellers	2 (18.18)	6 (54.55)	2 (18.18)	0	1 (9.09)	11 (100)
	Good Spellers	0 0	2 (66.66)	1 (33.33)	0	0	3 (100)
4. I frequently seek opportunities to improve my spelling and so face less difficulty in the future.	**Poor Spellers**	16 (34.78)	21 (45.65)	4 (8.7)	3 (6.52)	2 (4.35)	46 (100)
	Average Spellers	5 (45.45)	5 (45.45)	1 (9.09)	0	0	11 (100)
	Good Spellers	2 (66.67)	1 (33.33)	0	0	0	3 (100)

From the results obtained in Table (16), the majority of poor spellers (76.09%), average spellers (72.72%) and good spellers (66.67%) confirmed that they spend time on learning the spelling of new words at university. Similarly, all the good spellers (66.67%+ 33.33%) and the vast majority of participants in the two remaining groups (80.43%) of

poor spellers and (90.90%) of average spellers agreed that they seek opportunities to improve their spelling and so face less difficulty in the future. The results obtained indicate that most of second year students are interestedin spelling and attempt to improve their spelling ability as much as possible.

Table 17.*The Importance Assigned to Spelling When Writing*

Options		SA	A	U	D	SD	Total
Statements	**Group**	N	N	N	N	N	N
		(%)	**(%)**	**(%)**	**(%)**	**(%)**	**(%)**
5. When I am writing and I come to a word that I don't know how to spell, I write the word the first way that comes into my mind, and I keep going.	**Poor Spellers**	13 (28.26)	14 (30.43)	10 (21.74)	5 (10.87)	4 (8.7)	46 (100)
	Average Spellers	2 (18.18)	2 (18.18)	2 (18.18)	3 (27.27)	2 (18.18)	11 (100)
	Good Spellers	1 (33.33)	0 0	2 (66.67)	0 0	0 0	3 (100)
6. When I am writing, I find it hard to go on writing until I am sure of the spelling	**Poor Spellers**	10 (21.74)	21 (45.65)	6 (13.04)	7 (15.22)	2 (4.35)	46 (100)
	Average Spellers	1 (9.09)	6 (54.55)	1 (9.09)	1 (9.09)	2 (18.18)	11 (100)
	Good Spellers	1 (33.33)	0 0	0 0	1 (33.33)	1 (33.33)	3 (100)

The table above shows that a considerable proportion of poor spellers (58.96%) agreed that they write the word the first way that comes into their minds, while most of average spellers (63.63%) and good spellers (66.67%) assumed that they disagreed and undecided about this statement. And this what confirms why poor spellers provided low performances in the spelling test. Concerning the next statement, the majority of poor spellers (21.74% + 45.65%) and average spellers (9.09% + 54.55%), stated that they need to be sure about their spelling when writing; however, the majority of good spellers (66.67%) assumed that they disagreed.

From these results, we can assume that poor spellers' low performances in the spelling test, unlike average spellers and good spellers, can be attributed to the fact that they write words as they come into their minds without focusing on their correct spelling.

Table 18.*The Importance Assigned to Spelling When Reading*

Options		SA	A	U	D	SD	Total
Statements	**Group**	N	N	N	N	N	N
		(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
7. When I am reading, I notice the spelling of words.	**Poor Spellers**	13 (28.26)	18 (39.13)	10 (21.74)	3 (6.52)	2 (4.35)	46 (100)
	Average Spellers	4 (36.36)	4 (36.36)	2 (18.18)	0 0	1 (9.09)	11 (100)
	Good Spellers	3 (100)	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0	3 (100)
8. When I am reading, I notice when a word is spelled in a way that I wouldn't have expected.	**Poor Spellers**	12 (26.08)	15 (32.61)	12 (26.08)	5 (10.87)	2 (4.35)	46 (100)
	Average Spellers	3 (27.27)	7 (63.64)	0 0	0 0	1 (9.09)	11 (100)
	Good Spellers	2 (66.67)	1 (33.33)	0 0	0 0	0 0	3 (100)
9. When I am reading, I think of a way to remember a spelling that is new to me.	**Poor Spellers**	12 (26.08)	19 (41.3)	12 (26.08)	2 (4.35)	1 (2.17)	46 (100)
	Average Spellers	4 (36.36)	5 (45.45)	1 (9.09)	0 0	1 (9.09)	11 (100)
	Good Spellers	2 (66.67)	**0** **0**	1 (33.33)	0 0	0 0	3 (100)

The results of the table above illustrate thatthe vast majority of participants in the threegroups, (67.39%) of poor spellers, (72.72%) of average spellers, (100%) of good spellers, agreed that they notice the spelling of words when they are reading. Similarly, the majority of poor spellers (58.69%) and average spellers (90.9%), along with all good spellers stated that they notice the unexpected spelling of words while reading. In the last statement, the highest percentages of participants, (26.08% and41.3%) of poor spellers, (81.81%) of average spellers and (66.67%) of good spellers, assumed that when reading they try to find ways to remember new spelling of words.

From the above results we can conclude that the majority of participants are interested in reading practices. Additionally, most of them are able to notice words specific spelling while reading and seek to find ways to remember it.

Generally, the above results show that the participants' answers were varied, yet most of them share some common practices concerning words' spelling. They notice the spelling of words when reading, and look for ways to improve their spelling ability and

correcting their errors. However, good spellers and average spellers were more proficient when writing as they focus on the spelling of words unlike poor spellers who write words without any concentration.

Section Three: The Students' Use of Spelling Learning/Correcting Strategies

Q12. Did you receive any kind of instruction on spelling strategies from your teachers at the middle or secondary school level?

Table 19.*Students' Perceptions Regarding Receiving Instruction on Spelling Strategies at the Middle or Secondary School Level*

	Poor Spellers		Average Spellers		Good Spellers	
Options	Subjects	%	Subjects	%	Subjects	%
Yes	9	19.56	3	27.27	0	0
No	12	26.09	5	45.45	2	66.67
I don't know	25	54.35	3	27.27	1	33.33
Total	46	100	11	100	3	100

The target behind asking this question is to check whether the participants were instructed in spelling at the middle/secondary school levels. A quick look at Table (19) reveals that none of the good spellers and only a minority of poor spellers and average spellers (19.56% and 27.27% respectively) stated that they received instruction on spelling at the middle or secondary school. Noticeable in the table are the significant percentages of the students who chose the option "I don't know", especially the poor students (54.35%).The results show that most of the student do not know if their teachers provide them with feedbacks.

Students who opted for the option "yes" were asked to justify their answer.Apparently, only six participants have provided explanations for their answers: five poor spellers and one average speller. The poor spellers stated that their teachers provide them with new vocabulary and teach them how to pronounce and spell correctly. Also, they added that their teachers used dictation and ask them to listen to broadcasts and

videos to help them improve their spelling. However, some poor spellers assumed that their teachers do not care about teaching spelling. Furthermore, the average spellers, along with the poor spellers, stated that they used to listen broadcasts, and try new videos without subtitles to improve their spelling ability.

Q13. Have you received any kind of instruction on spelling strategies from your teachers at the university?

Table 20.*Students' Perceptions Regarding Receiving Instruction on Spelling Strategies at University Level*

	Poor Spellers		Average Spellers		Good Spellers	
Options	**Subjects**	**%**	**Subjects**	**%**	**Subjects**	**%**
Yes	16	34.78	2	18.18	1	33.33
No	20	43.48	8	72.73	2	66.67
I don't know	10	21.74	1	9.09	0	0
Total	**46**	**100**	**11**	**100**	**3**	**100**

This question was addressed to see whether teachers provide learners with feedbacks on their spelling at university. It is clearly displayed in Table (17) that (34.78%) of poor spellers stated that they receive instruction in spelling strategies during their study at university, twenty students stated that they didnot receive any kind of instruction at university and the rest of them (21.74%) claimed that they don't know. Moreover, about a sixth of average spellers (18.18%) assumed that they receive instruction from their teachers at university, the vast majority of them, with a percentage of 72.73%, stated that they didnot receive any kind of instruction, and the rest of them 27.27% opted for the option" I don't know". In addition, only one good speller assumed that he/she has received spelling instruction at university; whereas, the rest two participants claimed that they didnot.

These results show that most of the surveyed students agreed that they do not receive any kind of feedbacks on their spelling from their teachers. Moreover, it is very important to

mention that corrective feedback provided by teachers is one of the ways that helps learners to improve their spelling.

The Participants who opted for the option"yes" were asked to explain their answers. Eleven participants have provided explanations for their answers, ten poor spellers and one good speller. Poor spellers listed some spelling instructions that are used by their teachers. They stated that their teachers used to dictate sentences and paragraphs in order to help them improve their spelling, as they advise them to listen to native speakers and communicate with them using social media, and also provide them with new vocabulary. In addition to that, phonetics' teachers usually provide them with the differences between British spelling and American spelling and they correct their pronunciations of words since it plays an important role in misspelling words. Additionally, good spellers stated that they received some spelling instruction from their phonetics' teachers.

Q14. Please, respond to the following statements and decide whether you strongly agree (SA), agree (A), undecided (U), disagree (D) or strongly disagree (SD)

The aim of this question is to collect the types of spelling strategies used by learners to learn or to improve their spelling ability when: writing, reading and learning spelling.

1. Strategies for learning the spelling of new words:

Table 21.*The Students' Use of Strategies for Learning the Spelling of New Words*

Options		SA	A	U	D	SD	Total
Statements	**Group**	**N**	**N**	**N**	**N**	**N**	**N**
		(%)	**(%)**	**(%)**	**(%)**	**(%)**	**(%)**
1. When I learn to spell a new word, I use Look, Write, Cover, and Check.(*LWCC*)	**Poor Spellers**	12 (26.08)	19 (41.3)	9 (19.57)	2 (4.35)	4 (8.7)	46 (100)
	Average Spellers	2 (18.18)	3 (27.27)	4 (36.36)	1 (9.09)	1 (9.09)	11 (100)
	Good Spellers	0 0	0 0	2 (66.67)	0 0	1 (33.33)	3 100)

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2. When I learn to spell a new word, I think of other words that look the same (e.g. *thorough* and *through*). *(Connection)*	**Poor Spellers**	14 (30.43)	18 (39.13)	7 (15.22)	3 (6.52)	4 (8.7)	46 (100)
	Average Spellers	5 (45.45)	3 (27.27)	1 (9.09)	1 (9.09)	1 (9.09)	11 (100)
	Good Spellers	2 (66.67)	0 0	0 0	1 (33.33)	0 0	3 (100)
3. When I learn to spell a new word, I think of a way of remembering the tricky part (mnemonic)? E.g. *piece* of *pie.* *(Memory tricks)*	**Poor Spellers**	17 (36.96)	17 (36.96)	7 (15.22)	3 6.52)	2 (4.35)	46 (100)
	Average Spellers	3 (27.27)	3 (27.27)	4 (36.36)	0 0	1 (9.09)	11 (100)
	Good Spellers	1 (33.33)	1 (33.33)	1 (33.33)	0 0	0 0	3 (100)
4. When I learn to spell a new word, I try to learn the spelling rule, if any.*(Rule based)*	**Poor Spellers**	8 (17.39)	11 (23.91)	14 (30.43)	8 (17.39)	5 (10.87)	46 (100)
	Average Spellers	3 (27.27)	5 (45.45)	0 0	2 (18.18)	1 (9.09)	11 (100)
	Good Spellers	1 (33.33)	0 0	1 (33.33)	0 0	1 (33.33)	3 (100)
5. When I learn to spell a new word, I write the word many times. *(Visual: repeated writing)*	**Poor Spellers**	14 (30.43)	14 (30.43)	7 (15.22)	7 (15.22)	4 (8.7)	46 (100)
	Average Spellers	2 (18.18)	3 (27.27)	3 (27.27)	1 (9.09)	2 (18.18)	11 (100)
	Good Spellers	1 (33.33)	0 0	0 0	0 0	2 (66.67)	3 (100)
6. When I learn to spell a new word, I spell the word aloud to someone. *(Auditory)*	**Poor Spellers**	15 (32.61)	8 (17.39)	10 (21.74)	6 (13.04)	7 (15.22)	46 (100)
	Average Spellers	3 (27.27)	4 (36.36)	1 (9.09)	0 0	3 (27.27)	11 (100)
	Good Spellers	0 0	0 0	0 0	1 (33.33)	2 (66.67)	3 (100)
7. When I learn to spell a new word, I stretch out the word and write the letter combinations for the sounds?*(Visual: phonics)*	**Poor Spellers**	8 (17.39)	11 (23.91)	14 (30.43)	10 (21.74)	3 (6.52)	46 (100)
	Average Spellers	0 0	3 (27.27)	4 (36.36)	2 (18.18)	2 (18.18)	11 (100)
	Good Spellers	0 0	1 (33.33)	1 (33.33)	0 0	1 (33.33)	3 (100)
8. When I learn to spell a new word, I use known word parts, e.g. prefixes, suffixes. *(Chunking)*	**Poor Spellers**	7 (15.22)	20 (43.48)	7 (15.22)	9 (19.57)	3 (6.52)	46 (100)
	Average Spellers	0 0	4 (36.36)	3 (27.27)	3 (27.27)	1 (9.09)	11 (100)
	Good Spellers	1 (33.33)	1 (33.33)	1 (33.33)	0 0	0 0	3 (100)

As it is depictedin Table (21), the participants' answers were varied; however, in some cases they shared agreement concerning the use of some strategies. On the one hand, most of participants in the three groups agreed on the use of connections(69.56% of poor spellers, 72.72% of average spellers and 66.67% of good spellers) and memory tricks (73.92%, 54.54% and 66.67%) strategies for spelling new words. On the other hand, more

than half of participants in the three groups (58.69%, 72.72% and 66.67%), disagreed with the use of visual: phonics strategy to spell words. The majority of poor spellers agreed with the use of (LWCC) strategy,with a percentage of (67.38%), and visual: repeated writing strategy (60.86%) for spelling new words, while the majority of average spellers and good spellers, (54.54% and 100% for(LWCC) strategy) and (54.54% and 66.67% for visual: repeated writing strategy) disagreed with using these strategies. Considerable number of average spellers (72.72%) supported the use of rule based strategy; whereas, most of poor spellers (58.69%) and good spellers (66.67%) assumed that they disagreed. Both poor spellers (32.61% + 17.39%) and average spellers (63.63%) assumed that they rely on auditory strategy to spell new words; however, all good spellers disagreed with it. Finally, the majority of poor spellers (15.22% + 43.48%) and good spellers (66.67%) agreed with using chunking strategy, while the majority of average spellers disagreed.

The obtained results reveal that the three groups of participants shared agreement on the use of connections and memory tricks strategies for spelling new words; however, visual phonics strategy recorded the lowest frequency of use. The majority of poor spellers use a variety of spelling strategies mainly (LWCC), visual, auditory, and chunking strategies. Average spellers focus on the use of rule based and auditory strategies while good spellers rely on few strategies and mainly chunking strategy.

Table 22.*The Students' Use of Strategies for Spelling Words When Writing*

Options Statements	Group	SA N (%)	A N (%)	U N (%)	D N (%)	SD N (%)	Total N (%)
9.When I am writing, I try to sound out the words (I spell the words the way I think they sound).(*Auditory: sounding out*)	**Poor Spellers**	16 (34.78)	10 (21.74)	12 (26.08)	4 (8.7)	4 (8.7)	46 (100)
	Average Spellers	2 (18.18)	6 (54.54)	1 (9.09)	2 (18.18)	0 0	11 (100)
	Good Spellers	0 0	3 (100)	0 0	0 0	0 0	3 (100)
10. When I am writing, I form pictures of the	**Poor Spellers**	11 (23.91)	19 (41.3)	8 (17.39)	3 (6.52)	5 (10.87)	46 (100)

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words in my mind.*(Visual)*	**Average Spellers**	4 (36.36)	4 (36.36)	1 (9.09)	1 (9.09)	1 (9.09)	11 (100)
	Good Spellers	1 (33.33)	0 0	2 (66.67)	0 0	0 0	3 (100)
11. When I am writing, I consider the spelling of a related word or a word in the same family. *(Connections)*	**Poor Spellers**	13 (28.26)	15 (32.61)	12 (26.08)	5 (10.87)	1 (2.17)	46 (100)
	Average Spellers	2 (18.18)	7 (63.63)	2 (18.18)	0	0	11 (100)
	Good Spellers	2 (66.67)	0 0	1 (33.33)	0	0	3 (100)
12. When I am writing and I come to a word that I don't know how to spell, I look around the room and at books and word lists trying to find the word. *(Using a dictionary or other sources)*	**Poor Spellers**	10 (21.74)	16 (34.78)	9 (19.57)	6 (13.04)	5 (10.87)	46 (100)
	Average Spellers	2 18.18	4 36.36	3 27.27	2 18.18	0	11 100
	Good Spellers	1 (33.33)	1 (33.33)	0 0	1 (33.33)	0	3 (100)
13. When I am writing and come to a word that I don't know how to spell, I ask someone how to spell it.*(Reference to authority)*	**Poor Spellers**	12 (26.08)	23 (50)	6 (13.04)	5 (10.87)	0	46 (100)
	Average Spellers	2 (18.18)	5 (45.45)	1 (9.09)	2 (18.18)	1 (9.09)	11 (100)
	Good Spellers	1 (33.33)	2 (66.67)	0 0	0	0	3 (100)
14. When I am writing and I come to a word that I don't know how to spell, I try to use rules to help me to spell it. . *(Rule-based strategy)*	**Poor Spellers**	11 (23.91)	15 (32.61)	11 (23.91)	8 (17.39)	1 (2.17)	46 (100)
	Average Spellers	0 0	6 (54.54)	1 (9.09)	2 (18.18)	2 (18.18)	11 (100)
	Good Spellers	0 0	1 (33.33)	2 (66.67)	0	0	3 (100)
15. When I am writing and I come to a word that I don't know how to spell, I spell it like a similar word that I know how to spell.*(Analogy)*	**Poor Spellers**	12 (26.08)	21 (45.65)	7 (15.22)	1 (2.17)	5 (10.87)	46 (100)
	Average Spellers	3 (27.27)	6 (54.54)	2 (18.18)	0	0	11 (100)
	Good Spellers	0 0	2 (66.67)	1 (33.33)	0	0	3 (100)
16. When I am writing and I come to a word that I don't know how to spell, I consider the meaning or structure of theword. *(Morphological)*	**Poor Spellers**	11 (23.91)	16 (34.78)	7 (15.22)	9 (19.57)	3 (6.52)	46 (100)
	Average Spellers	1 (9.09)	6 (54.54)	2 (18.18)	1 (9.09)	1 (9.09)	11 (100)
	Good Spellers	1 (33.33)	2 (66.67)	0 0	0	0	3 (100)

Table 22., illustrates that the majority of participants from the three groups agreed on the use of sounding out (auditory strategy) (56.52% of poor spellers, 72.72% of average spellers and 100% of good spellers), connections (60.87%, 81.81% and 66.67%),using dictionaries or other sources (56.52%, 54.54 and 66.67%), reference to

authority (76.08%, 63.63% and 100%) analogy (71.73%, 81.81% and 66.67%) and morphological strategies (58.69%, 63.63% and 100%) for spelling words when writing. Significant number of participants in both poor spellers' and average spellers' groups supported the use of visual (65.21% of poor spellers and 72.72% of average spellers) and rule-based strategies (56.52% and 54.54%), while the majority of good spellers (66.67%) were undecided about their use.

From the results obtained, we can conclude that most of poor spellers and average spellers and good spellers rely on a variety of strategies for spelling words when writing. Nevertheless, unlike poor spellers and average spellers, good spellers showed less emphasis on visual and rule-based strategies.

Table 23. The *Students' use of Spelling Strategies for Reflecting*

Options		SA	A	U	D	SD	Total
Statements	Group	N	N	N	N	N	N
		(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)
17. When I am writing I often stop to check if the word looks right.	**Poor Spellers**	10 (21.74)	18 (39.13)	11 (23.91)	4 (8.7)	3 (6.52)	46 (100)
	Average Spellers	2 (18.18)	8 (72.73)	0 0	1 (9.09)	0 0	11 (100)
	Good Spellers	2 (66.67)	1 (33.33)	0 0	0 0	0 0	3 (100)
18. I re-read my writing to look for spelling errors.	**Poor Spellers**	11 (23.91)	19 (41.3)	10 (21.74)	2 (4.35)	4 (8.7)	46 (100)
	Average Spellers	4 (36.36)	6 (54.54)	1 (9.09)	0 0	0 0	11 (100)
	Good Spellers	2 (66.67)	0 0	0 0	1 (33.33)	0 0	3 (100)
19. I rewrite the correct spelling of a misspelled word several times.	**Poor Spellers**	7 (15.22)	22 (47.83)	11 (23.91)	4 (8.7)	2 (4.35)	46 (100)
	Average Spellers	0 0	7 (63.63)	1 (9.09)	0 0	3 (27.27)	11 (100)
	Good Spellers	0 0	1 (33.33)	1 (33.33)	0 0	1 (33.33)	3 (100))
20. I usually take time to proofread specifically for spelling errors as I write.	**Poor Spellers**	8 (17.39)	22 (47.83)	10 (21.74)	5 (10.87)	1 (2.17)	46 (100)
	Average Spellers	0 0	6 (54.54)	1 (9.09)	3 (27.27)	1 (9.09)	11 (100)
	Good Spellers	1 (33.33)	0 0	1 (33.33)	1 (33.33)	0 0	3 (100)
21. I take time to proofread specifically for	**Poor Spellers**	3 (6.52)	21 (45.65)	13 (28.26)	6 (13.04)	3 (6.52)	46 (100)

spelling errors as I edit my writing.	**Average Spellers**	3 (27.27)	6 (54.54)	1 (9.09)	1 (9.09)	0 0	11 (100)
	Good Spellers	1 (33.33)	1 (33.33)	0 0	1 (33.33)	0 0	3 (100)
22. I monitor my progress by keeping a list of misspelled words.	**Poor Spellers**	10 (21.74)	14 (30.43)	10 (21.74)	10 (21.74)	2 (4.35)	46 (100)
	Average Spellers	3 (27.27)	0 0	3 (27.27)	2 (18.18)	3 (27.27)	11 (100)
	Good Spellers	0 0	0 0	0 0	1 (33.33)	2 (66.67)	3 (100)

Table 23., displays that most of the participants in the three groups agreed that they often stop to check if a word looks right (60.87% of poor spellers, 90.9% of average spellers and 100% of good spellers), re-read their writing to look for spelling errors (65.21%, 90.9% and 66.67%), and take time to proofread specifically for spelling errors when they edit their writing (52.17%, 81.81% and 66.67%). The majority of poor speller sand average spellers agreed that they rewrite the correct spelling of a misspelled word several times (63.05% and 63.63%), and usually they take time to proofread specifically for spelling errors when they are writing (17.39% and 54.54%); whereas, most of good spellers (66.67%) assumed that they did not focus in these strategies. Finally, more than half of poor spellers (52.17%) stated that they keep a list of misspelled words to improve their spelling ability; however, the majority of average spellers (72.72%) and good spellers (100%) assumed that they did not use lists for remembering spelling.

From these results,we may determine that the majority of poor spellers agreed with the use of all of the above mentioned reflecting strategies. Both average spellers and good spellers disagreed with using lists to remember the spelling of difficult words. And, only good spellers gave less emphasise on re-writing and proofreading strategies.

To put it in nutshell, we can notice that both poor spellers and average spellers usually rely on a variety of strategies to spell new words, to spell words when writing and for reflecting. On the contrary, good spellers use less strategies for spelling words. These results may indicates that using a variety of spelling strategies is not enough to improve

the spelling ability. However, the appropriate use of few strategies, as in the case of good spellers, may help students to spell words correctly and my lead to enhance the spelling ability.

Section Four: Further Suggestions

Q15. Please, add any further comments or suggestions.

In this question participants were asked to give further suggestions and explain their views about the topic in hand. Only twelve participants, from the total number of sixty, answered this question: seven poor spellers, two average spellers and three good speller. The poor spellers commented that this questionnaire is really helpful and agreed that spelling is a very important aspect that they need to improve. They suggested that they should read English books and novels, seek opportunities to learn spelling, and correct their spelling mistakes in order to improve their spelling ability. Additionally, some of them said that they need to have a module for teaching English spelling. Good spellers said that they want from their teachers especially teachers of phonetics to teach them the spelling rules and provide them with the strategies and necessary techniques that help them to improve their spelling.

2.2.3. Discussion of the findings

In the present research, an investigation of EFL university students' levels of spelling ability, their awareness of their spelling abilities, their perceptions of the importance assigned to spelling/spelling practice and most importantly the students use of spelling strategies have been dealt with. The analysis of the students' performance in the dictation tests, along with the analysis of the student's questionnaire brought out a set of results.

The main findings yielded from the analysis of the students' performance in the test indicated that most of the participating students face serious difficulties in English

spelling. The total number of misspelled words that exceeds the total number of correct words and the participants' final scores in the test clearly revealed that only a few participants succeeded in spelling most or even an acceptable number of the words correctly. Accordingly, the sample was divided into three groups according to the participants' performance: poor spellers, average spellers and good spellers. The analysis of the answers showed that it is difficult to detect a single reason for students' difficulties, because in some cases one word may contain than one spelling error. And that the students mainly found difficulties when spelling words with silent letters, words with double consonants, compound words, words with affixes, tricky words and homonym forms. These alarming results provide a clear evidence that second year EFL students at Mohammed Saddik ben Yahia University have serious difficulties in spelling.

From the analysis of the students' answers in the questionnaire, the image become clear concerning students' perceptions of their spelling ability. It was found that most of poor spellers and average spellers believed to have an average spelling ability, while good spellers were sure about their good spelling ability. Moreover, the three groups were able to explain the main areas of difficulties and the main factors that may influence there spelling performances. Additionally, the results obtained confirm the students' limited understanding of spelling rules and thedifferences that exist between British spelling and American spelling. The majority of the students affirmed that they use both British English and American English when they write; since they are not familiar with the differences between the two varieties. In fact, this was obviously shown in their performance in the dictation test in which most of the learners were not reliable in their use of British spelling and American spelling. In short, the results reveals that most of the good and average spellers are aware about their spelling ability while a significant percentage of poor spellers are not.

Concerning the participants' perceptions regarding the importance assigned to spelling/spelling practice, the results show that they share some common practices concerning words' spelling. Initially, it was found except for a minority of both poor and average spellers, all the participants reported that they did not receive a kind of spelling instruction during their pre-university levels. This may indicate that, on the one hand, the spelling instruction in the Algerian middle schools and secondary schools was not effective and produces students with weak and average spelling ability and, on the other hand, it can be deduced that spelling instruction alone is not sufficient; rather, individual efforts, spelling practices together with effective spelling instruction are the key to accelerate the process of learning spelling and enhance learners' spelling ability. Additionally, the results obtained indicate that most of participants are aware of the importance of spelling in writing and the three groups are interested in learning spelling and attempt to find ways to improve their spelling. Furthermore, there was a noticeable variance between the groups when it comes to spelling practices when writing. It was found that unlike poor spellers who write words as they come into their minds, average and good spellers reflect more on their spelling when writing. Moreover, the majority of participants were reported their ability to notice words specific spelling while reading. Dissertation

More importantly, the students' survey revealed that while the students share the use of some spelling strategies, there are significant differences in the use of some other strategies among poor spellers, average spellers and good spellers. It was foundthat the three groups shared agreement in the use of many strategies like connections, memory tricks strategies when learning to spell new words; auditory, using sources, reference to authority, analogy and morphological strategies for spelling words when writing; and re-reading to check the accuracy of spelling as reflecting strategies.Additionally, the findings

revealed that poor spellers relied on a high number of spelling strategies, as they agreed with the majority of the suggested practices, followed by average spellers with less strategies and then with good spellers who use the smallest number. The results demonstrate that students with high spelling ability rely chiefly on effective and complex strategies that require more phonological knowledge and deep analysis of spelling patterns, sounds and words roots (chunking strategy, auditory strategy, using references,morphological strategies, and re-reading to check the spelling of words and correct the misspellings). Therefore, the weak performances of poor and average spellers reject the idea that using a variety of strategies is the key to develop the spelling ability. Instead, it gives more strength to the idea that relying on few effective strategies, as in the case of good spellers, and using them in the appropriate manner may help students to spell words correctly and develop their spelling ability.

In sum, the analyses of the data revealed that most of second year License students have a poor spelling ability. Moreover, the results also indicated that most of the students, except for some poor spellers, are aware of their spelling ability and are interested in improving it. Besides, it illustrated the most apparent differences among participants' perceptions regarding the importance assigned to spelling/spelling practices. Last and not least, the obtained results discovered the mainsimilarities and differences concerning the use of spelling strategies between students with different spelling abilities.

2.3. Limitations of the Study

When conducting this study, the researchers faced a variety of difficulties. The first difficulty that hinders researchers was the lack of primary sources at the library of the English Department University of Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia- Jijel. Second, the number of the participants was restricted only to 60 students, since there was no enough time to deal with a large sample of the students. Therefore, it is difficult to generalize the

findings. Third, the researchers confronted another problem which is time constraints. The practical part was very time consuming especially when it comes to the analysis of the dictation test. Finally, the respondents did not answer all the questions included in the questionnaire especially questions that contains justification.

2.4. Recommendations

The present study may help raise EFL students' and EFL teachers' awareness of the importance of learning/teaching spelling learning strategies as a way to overcome, or at least, to minimize the spelling problem. Based on the research findings discussed above, the researchers would like to suggest some recommendations that may help learners to improve their spelling performance.

To the students

Since the students thought that learning spelling is important, they should work on their spelling to improve themselves. Also, in order to avoid misspellings, learners should develop the habit of looking up for the correct spelling of words in dictionaries. Moreover, learners are asked to improve their pronunciation and differentiate between similar words by memorizing them in meaningful sentences. In addition to that, the use of spelling notebook that includes confusing and difficult words may help them to develop their spelling. Furthermore, learners are asked to proofread their written works before submitting them. Finally, students must take their learning of English spelling rules seriously and should rely on a variety of spelling strategies.

To the teachers

The teachers are asked to encourage their learners to learn spelling and raise their attention to the importance of learning spelling rules. Moreover, spelling strategies should be taught to learners and the teachers should guide their students to adopt such strategies

and use them effectively. Finally, teachers should engage learners in exercises and games that may help them to enhance their spelling.

Conclusion

This chapter dealt with the practical part of the current study. It described the research instruments used in conducting this study, a dictation test and a students' questionnaire. Furthermore, the results of both tools were analyzed and interpreted. The results indicated that most of the learners have poor spelling abilities and confirms that they face serious difficulties with spelling. In addition, it explained how learners with high spelling ability differ from those with average and low spelling ability, regarding the use of spelling strategies. Finally, some limitations of the study were presented along with some pedagogical recommendations for both students and teachers.

General Conclusion

The current study aimed at exploring the spelling ability levels of EFL university learners and the use of spelling learning strategies among good, average and bad spellers. Accordingly, it tackled four main research questions: To what extent do second year students experience spelling difficulties? Are the students aware of their spelling abilities? Is there any significant difference between the perceptions of the students with different levels of spelling ability regarding the importance assigned to spelling/spelling practice? And is there any significant difference between the use of spelling strategies by the students with different spelling ability levels?

This dissertation is composed of two main chapters. The first one, covering the theoretical part, was divided into two sections: one provides an overview about spelling and the other is devoted to a detailed discussion of spelling learning strategies. The second chapter was devoted to the practical part. It represents the field of investigation that is based on the administration of a dictation test and a students' questionnaire.

The findings of the study showed that the students are facing serious spelling difficulties and that most of the good and average students are more aware of their spelling abilities than the students with poor spelling performance. Additionally, they made it clear that almost all the students have positive perceptions of spelling and spelling practices. Concerning the use of spelling strategies, the results indicated that poor and average spellers apply a combination of several strategies whilst the good spellers use less but more effective ones like chunking strategy, auditory strategy andmorphological strategies. Therefore, the obtained results reject the idea that using a collection of strategies is the best way to develop the spelling ability. Yet, relying on few effective strategies together with effective spelling instruction and personal efforts helps students more to develop and improve their spelling ability.

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Appendices

The Students' Questionnaire

Dear students,

The following questionnaire is part of a Master research study. It aims at collecting foreign language students' perceptions of their spelling ability and the importance assigned to spelling and spelling practice. It also aims at investigating the students' use of spelling learning/correcting strategies.

We would be grateful if you could answer the following questionnaire. Please, tick (✓) the appropriate answer(s) or write a full statement where required.

We thank you for your collaboration.

Section One: The Students' Perceptions of their Spelling Ability

1. How would you rate your spelling ability in English overall?

- a. Very good ☐
- b. Good ☐
- c. Average ☐
- d. Poor ☐
- **e.** Very poor ☐

2. How difficult do you find learning English spelling?

- a. Extremely ☐
- b. Significantly ☐
- c. Moderately ☐
- **d.** Not at ☐

Please explain

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3. How often, do you think, you make spelling errors?

- a. Frequently ☐
- b. Sometimes ☐
- c. Rarely ☐
- d. Never ☐

4. Do you frequently misspell the same words?

- Yes ☐

- No ☐

- I don't know ☐

5. Do you think you can tell if a word you've written or someone else has written doesn't "look right"?

- Yes ☐

- No ☐

- I don't know ☐

6. Do you think that there are factors that affect your spelling performance?

- Yes ☐

- No ☐

- I don't know ☐

7. If "yes", what factors affect your spelling performance?

a. The context (examinations, homework assignments, ☐
formal writing, informal writing…etc.)

b. Time limits ☐

c. Tiredness and boredom ☐

Other(s)………………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………………………

8. To what extent do you think you are familiar with spelling rules?

a. Extremely ☐

b. Significantly ☐

c. Moderately ☐

d. Not at all ☐

Please, give examples (if your answer is a, b or c)

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9. To what extent do you think you are familiar with the differences between British spelling and American spelling?

   a. Extremely   ☐

   b. Significantly   ☐

   c. Moderately   ☐

   d. Not at all   ☐

Please, give examples (if your answer is a, b or c)

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Section Two: Importance Assigned to Spelling/Spelling Practice

10. To what extent do you think it is important for you to spell correctly when you write?

   a. Extremely   ☐

   b. Significantly   ☐

   c. Moderately   ☐

   d. Not at   ☐

11. Please, respond to the following statements and decide whether you strongly agree (**SA**), agree (**A**), undecided (**U**), disagree (**D**) or strongly disagree (**SD**)

Statements	SA	A	U	D	SD
1. I spent time on learning spelling when I was a middle school student.					
2. I spent time on learning spelling when I was a secondary school student.					
3. As a university student, I spend time on learning the spelling of new words and correcting my misspellings.					
4. I frequently seek opportunities to improve my spelling and so face less difficulties in the future.					
5.When I am writing and I usually come to a word that I don't know how to spell, I write the word the first way that comes into my mind, and I keep going.					
6.When I am writing, I find it hard to go on writing until I am sure of the spelling.					
7. When I am reading, I notice the spelling of words.					
8. When I am reading, I notice when a word is spelled in a way that I wouldn't have expected.					
9. When I am reading, I think of a way to remember a spelling that is new to me.					

Section Three:The Students' Use of Spelling Learning/Correcting Strategies

12. Did you receive any kind of instruction on spelling strategies from your teachers at the middle or secondary school level?

    - Yes   ☐

    - No   ☐

    - I don't know   ☐

If "yes", please explain

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13. Have you received any kind of instruction on spelling strategies from your teachers at the university?

    - Yes   ☐

    - No   ☐

    - I don't know   ☐

If "yes", please explain

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14. Please, respond to the following statements and decide whether you strongly agree (**SA**), agree (**A**), undecided (**U**), disagree (**D**) or strongly disagree (**SD**).

Statements	SA	A	U	D	SD
1. When I learn to spell a new word, I use Look, Write, Cover, and Check.					
2. When I learn to spell a new word, I think of other words that look the same (e.g. *thorough* and *through*)					
3. When I learn to spell a new word, I think of a way of remembering the tricky part (mnemonic)? e.g. *piece* of *pie*					
4. When I learn to spell a new word, I try to learn the spelling rule, if any.					
5. When I learn to spell a new word, I write the word many times					
6. When I learn to spell a new word, I spell the word aloud to someone.					
7. When I learn to spell a new word, I stretch out the word and write the letter combinations for the sounds?					

8. When I learn to spell a new word, I use known word parts, e.g. prefixes, suffixes,					
9. When I am writing ,I try to sound out the words (I spell the words the way I think they sound)					
10. When I am writing,I form pictures of the words in my mind					
11. When I am writing , I consider the spelling of a related word or a word in the same family					
12. When I am writing and I come to a word that I don't know how to spell,I look around the room and at books and word lists trying to find the word.					
13. When I am writing and come to a word that I don't know how to spell, I ask someone how to spell it.					
14. When I am writing and I come to a word that I don't know how to spell, I try to use rules to help me to spell it					
15. When I am writing and I come to a word that I don't know how to spell, I spell it like a similar word that I know how to spell.					
16. When I am writing and I come to a word that I don't know how to spell, I consider the meaning or structure of the word					
17. When I am writing I often stop to check if the word looks right.					
18.I re-read my writing to look for spelling errors.					
19. I rewrite the correct spelling of a misspelled word several times.					
20. I usually take time to proofread specifically for spelling errors as I write.					
21. I take time to proofread specifically for spelling errors as I edit my writing.					
22. I monitor my progress by keeping a list of misspelled words.					

Section Four: Further Suggestions

15. Please, add any further comments or suggestions.

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Appendix II

Dictation Test

1.Carrots are a type of vegetables, autumn is a season and a canoe is a small boat.

2. I always believe in myself.

3. The psychiatrist, who is forty-five years old, received many compliments in all channels of communicationbecause he delivered a wonderful speech.

4. In spite of the fact that I took some coughmedicine, my throat is still rough.

5.   The   government   will   pass   strict   laws   tomorrow.

6. One of the bad effects of smoking cigarettes is that it leads to lung cancer.

7. Generally, social media affect our behavioursnegatively.

8. She doesn't trust him; he's a big liar.

9. I spent a fascinating time with my colleagues in the restaurantwhich is located in the centre of the city.

10. She asked whether the weather was wet or dry.

11. My neighbor's naughty child was quiet in the wedding party last Wednesday.

12. His reaction was quite funny before dinner.

13. Participants are recommended to answer difficult questions.

14. I took a Foreordination last time from the Secretary.

15. You will answer the questionnaireimmediately after the test. Your answers will be kept anonymous.

16. Without doubt, Skinner is one of the most prominent figures in psychology.

17. Occasionally, mispronunciations cause embarrassment.

18. I cannotguarantee that she will not lose again in the competition.

19. Who'sthe author? Shakespeare, one of the most influentialplaywrights in the Englishliterature.

20. In order to be successful and to fulfil your dreams, you should separateyourself from the failures.

21. When we learn a foreign language, we should focus on vocabulary, grammar,writing, and listening…

22. I looked up the words "conspicuous", "syntax", "phenomenon", "changeable" and "synchronic" in two differentdictionaries.

23. Nowadays, the equality between men and women attracts the attention of the whole society especially politicians.

24. The committee has decided to close the cinema.

25. I am in a dilemma of carrying on my study or getting a job.

26. She ranked the ninth in the list of excellent students at school.   .

27. It's a relief; the work has finished finally.

Appendix III

Students' Performance in the Dictation Test: Focus on Students

Subject	Correct spelling	Incorrect spelling	No answer	Total
1	63	29	8	100
2	44	47	9	100
3	40	44	16	100
4	23	76	1	100
5	30	70	0	100
6	22	78	0	100
7	73	25	2	100
8	42	56	2	100
9	39	53	8	100
10	68	32	0	100
11	45	55	0	100
12	52	48	0	100
13	26	73	1	100
14	60	39	1	100
15	30	64	6	100
16	53	37	10	100
17	41	59	0	100
18	46	54	0	100
19	58	42	0	100
20	35	63	2	100
21	50	50	0	100
22	52	47	1	100
23	48	52	0	100
24	57	43	0	100
25	41	58	1	100
26	43	57	0	100

27	49	49	2	100
28	45	55	0	100
29	51	48	1	100
30	75	25	0	100
31	47	51	2	100
32	31	67	2	100
33	47	50	3	100
34	44	46	10	100
35	80	19	1	100
36	34	50	16	100
37	30	61	9	100
38	36	59	5	100
39	36	59	5	100
40	75	25	0	100
41	23	77	0	100
42	42	58	0	100
43	64	36	0	100
44	39	58	3	100
45	61	35	4	100
46	29	71	0	100
47	68	32	0	100
48	44	56	0	100
49	57	42	1	100
50	41	59	0	100
51	36	64	0	100
52	24	73	3	100
53	41	56	3	100
54	73	26	1	100
55	60	40	0	100
56	39	60	1	100
57	53	46	1	100
58	41	57	2	100
59	80	18	2	100

60	83	17	0	100

Appendix VI

Students' Performance in the Dictation Test: Focus on Words

Word	Correctspelling	Incorrect spelling	No answer	Total
Carrots	39	21	0	60
Vegetables	40	20	0	60
Autumn	17	40	3	60
Season	48	11	1	60
Canoe	3	49	8	60
Believe	37	23	0	60
Myself	31	29	0	60
psychiatrist	12	40	8	60
forty-five	7	53	0	60
Received	20	40	0	60
Compliments	10	50	0	60
Channels	39	21	0	60
Communication	47	13	0	60
Because	53	5	2	60
Delivered	31	29	0	60
Speech	56	4	0	60
In spite	31	28	1	60
Cough	13	46	1	60
Medicine	31	28	1	60
Throat	13	44	3	60
Rough	22	35	3	60
Government	22	37	1	60
Tomorrow	40	19	1	60
Effects	53	7	0	60
Cigarettes	23	37	0	60
Cancer	42	18	0	60
Generally	46	14	0	60
Affect	24	35	1	60
Behaviours	48	12	0	60
Doesn't	53	6	1	60
Liar	17	41	2	60
Fascinating	11	48	1	60
Colleagues	10	45	5	60
Restaurant	26	34	0	60
Which	57	3	0	60

Centre	10	50	0	60
Whether	19	40	1	60
Weather	42	17	1	60
Neighbour's	22	38	0	60
Naughty	10	43	7	60
Quiet	16	44	0	60
Wedding	37	23	0	60
Wednesday	41	19	0	60
Quite	31	28	1	60
Before	54	6	0	60
Recommended	12	48	0	60
Difficult	45	15	0	60
Foreordination	0	59	1	60
Secretary	9	46	5	60
Questionnaire	15	45	0	60
Immediately	9	50	1	60
Anonymous	5	51	4	60
Doubt	31	26	3	60
Prominent	29	30	1	60
Psychology	44	16	0	60
Occasionally	15	40	5	60
Mispronunciation	5	55	0	60
Embarrassment	1	57	2	60
Cannot	52	8	0	60
Guarantee	9	48	3	60
Lose	42	17	1	60
Competition	31	29	0	60
Who's	22	38	0	60
Author	45	15	0	60
Influential	14	46	0	60
Playwrights	8	39	13	60
English	27	31	2	60
Literature	32	25	3	60
In order	54	6	0	60
Successful	17	42	1	60
Fulfil	9	49	2	60
Separate	41	19	0	60
Yourself	35	16	9	60
Failures	27	32	1	60
Foreign	23	37	0	60
Focus	53	7	0	60
Grammar	45	14	1	60
Writing	43	17	0	60

Listening	38	22	0	60
Conspicuous	0	56	4	60
Syntax	41	16	3	60
Phenomenon	24	36	0	60
Changeable	20	39	1	60
Synchronic	49	11	0	60
Different	35	24	1	60
Dictionaries	18	38	4	60
Nowadays	34	26	0	60
Attracts	45	15	0	60
Whole	54	6	0	60
Politicians	17	43	0	60
Committee	4	54	2	60
Cinema	53	7	0	60
Dilemma	6	47	7	60
Carrying	37	20	3	60
Ranked	19	39	2	60
Ninth	24	33	3	60
Excellent	18	40	2	60
It's	45	15	0	60
Relief	26	32	2	60
Finally	48	11	1	60
Total	*2858*	*2996*	*146*	*6000*
Percentage	*47.64%*	*49.93%*	*2.43%*	*100%*

Résumé

L'orthographe, en tant que compétence linguistique de base, est devenue un défi sérieux pour de nombreux apprenants EFL. L'étude actuelle visait à explorer les capacités d'orthographe des étudiants universitaires EFL se spécialisant en anglais et leur utilisation des stratégies d'apprentissage de l'orthographe. Plus précisément, il visait à enquêter sur les niveaux de compétence orthographique des élèves, leur conscience de leurs compétences orthographiques, l'importance accordée à l'orthographe/pratique de l'orthographe et leur utilisation des stratégies d'apprentissage de l'orthographe. Afin d'atteindre ces objectifs et de collecter les données nécessaires, un test de dictée et un questionnaire ont été créés et administrés à 60 étudiants sur 274 étudiants de deuxième année au département d'anglais, Mohamed Seddik Ben Yahia,Université deJijel. Les résultats de l'étude ont révélé que les étudiants expérimentent des difficultés à épeler les mots anglais dans une large mesure, car la plupart des résultats des étudiants au test étaient médiocres ou très médiocres. Les résultats ont également indiqué que malgré le fait que la plupart des étudiants sont conscients de leur capacité d'orthographe, un nombre important de mauvaises orthographes ont surestimé leur capacité. Une autre constatation frappante est que les élèves ayant des niveaux différents de capacité d'orthographe ont des perceptions positives de l'orthographe et partagent la plupart des pratiques d'orthographe. Le plus important, les résultats ont révélé des différences dans l'utilisation des stratégies entre les élèves : ceux qui sont les meilleurs en orthographe utilisent des stratégies moins mais plus efficaces que les mauvais en orthographe. Sur la base des résultats de l'étude, quelques recommandations pédagogiques pour les enseignants et les étudiants ont été suggérées.

ملخص

اصبح الاملاء ، او ما يعرف بالتهجئة ، تحديا بارزا للعديد من طلبة اللغة الانجليزية وحتى المتفوقين منهم، باعتباره مهارة اساسية لتعلم اللغة. تهدف الدراسة الحالية لاكتشاف القدرات الإملائية لطلبة اللغة الإنجليزية ومدى تطبيقهم لاستراتيجيات تعلم الإملاء. ومن منظور ادق ، تسعى هذه الدراسة إلى التحقق من مستويات الكفاءة الإملائية للطلبة ، مدى إدراكهم لقدراتهم في التهجئة ، اهمية الاملاء والتطبيقات الاملائية ، وكذا استعمالهم لاستراتيجيات تعلم الاملاء . بصدد تحقيق الاهداف المسطرة وجمع البيانات اللازمة ، تم تصميم اختبار إملائي واستبيان وتوزيعهما على 60 طالبًا من أصل 274 طالبا من طلاب السنة الثانية قسم اللغة الإنجليزية لجامعة محمد الصديق بن يحيى   بولاية جيجل . كشفت نتائج الدراسة أن الطلبة يواجهون صعوبات كثيرة في تهجئة الكلمات الإنجليزية ، حيث أن درجات اختبار معظم الطلبة تراوحت بين ضعيفة الى ضعيفة جدا.وعلاوة على ذلك ، فقد كشفت هذه النتائج انه وعلى الرغم من حقيقة أن معظم الطلبة على دراية بقدراتهم الإملائية ، الا ان عددا معتبرا من الطلاب ذوي القدرات الاملائية الضعيفة بالغوا في تقدير قدراتهم. ومن النتائج الملاحظة ايضا ان الطلبة ذوي القدرات الاملائية المختلفة لديهم تصورات إيجابية عن التهجئة ويشتركون في معظم التطبيقات الإملائية. والجدير بالذكر ان النتائج اسفرت عن اختلافات في استعمال استراتجيات الاملاء بين الطلبة ، حيث ان الطلبة ذوي القدرات الاملائية العالية يستخدمون استراتيجيات اقل لكن أكثر فعالية من التي يستعين بها الطلبة ذوي القدرات الضعيفة . ويناء على النتائج المحصلة ، تم اقتراح بعض التوصيات التربوية للأساتذة و الطلبة.