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**An Investigation into the Use of Strategies and EFL Students Writing Achievement:
The Case of First Year Licence Students at Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia
University, Jijel.**

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in didactics of foreign languages

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Declaration

I hereby declare that the dissertation entitled “An Investigation into the Use of Writing Strategies and EFL Students Writing Achievement” is our own work and all the sources we have used 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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Dedication

I would like to express my appreciation to:

*My dear parents for their endless love, patience, and support which
guided me all the way to success.*

*My beloved sister Assia who always encouraged me and pushed
me forward.*

*I thank myself for the hard work and efforts I made for pursuing
my academic goals*

*To my lovely friend and binominal Chayma
with whom I shared unforgettable moments.*

Aicha Yacef

Dedication

Praise to Allah, who gave me the strength and perseverance I needed during my years of study.

*With deep profound love, I dedicate this humble work,
To my dear grand parents may their souls rest in peace.*

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Abstract

Writing is considered as a crucial skill and an essential element of the teaching/learning process. The present descriptive study purports to investigate the relationship between writing strategy use and first year licence English as a foreign language (EFL) students' writing achievement. More precisely, the aim of this study is to determine which writing strategies are used by skilled writers and less-skilled writers in their writing tasks. The study is directed by the hypothesis that first year licence EFL students with high levels of achievement in writing are aware of the different writing strategies and use them when writing more than students with low levels of achievement in writing. With relevance to the present descriptive study aims, and in order to answer the research questions, two data gathering tools were used: a writing test and a questionnaire designed and addressed to 60 out of 241 first year licence students at the department of English, Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia University, Jijel. The findings revealed that most students used writing strategies, but with differences in type and frequency. The results also showed that skilled writers reported a high frequent use of metacognitive strategies, whereas less-skilled writers indicated that they mostly used cognitive strategies. Another finding revealed that the students who employed writing strategies in their test scored higher than those students who avoided the use of these strategies in their writing process. Based on the above study findings, some pedagogical recommendations are suggested.

Key words: Writing, writing strategies, skilled writers, less-skilled writers, EFL, writing achievement.

List of Abbreviations

EFL: English as Foreign Language

ELL: English Language Learning

FL: Foreign language

L1: First Language

L2: Second language

LLSs: Language Learning Strategies

TL: Target Language

LMD: License/ Master/ Doctorate

N: Number

Q: Question

%: Percentage

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- 2. Statement of the Problem**
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General Introduction

1. Background of the Study

Writing plays a crucial role in foreign language teaching and learning. It is commonly considered as the most important skill that any EFL student needs to develop. Moreover, it allows language learners to put their thoughts on paper, construct ideas, express their opinions and knowledge to the readership, and draw conclusions about different topics. In fact, engaging in the writing act provides opportunities for students to practice what they have learnt in the classroom. Notwithstanding, success in the writing act has, by and large, been accompanied by high levels of achievement in using the target language and achieving success in communication. More importantly, the use of writing strategies has always shown effective to make progress in academia in general and writing per se. The role of writing strategies in the process of writing has become increasingly important and the differences between more and less proficient learners have been found in the number and range of strategies used, in how the strategies are applied to the writing tasks, and in appropriateness of the strategies for the tasks (Chien, 2010; Hu & Chen, 2007; Mu & Carrington, 2007; Ridhuan & Abdullah, 2009).

Recently, writing in English has become big challenge whether performed in the mother tongue or in a second or foreign language. Several Researches have been generally conducted on the effectiveness of using writing strategies to enhance learners writing achievement. Thus, writing strategy instruction has been found effective, especially for adolescents who have writing difficulty, and it is also a powerful technique for adolescents in general (Graham & Perin , 2006).

In addition, there are previous studies about writing strategies used by university students. Raofi et al. (2014) found that more successful EFL students in Malaysia disclosed to employ more metacognitive strategies than less successful students. Again,

Abdullah et al. (2011) showed that advanced ESL students use the same strategies as weaker ones. The significant difference between the two groups was that the skilled writers used strategies more frequently than their lower proficiency peers.

Another study proved that there is a close relationship between motivation and language learning strategies. Schmidt and Watanabe (2001) investigated motivation and strategy use among 2089 learners of five different foreign languages at the University of Hawaii. The finding revealed that the use of cognitive and metacognitive strategies was influenced by motivation. Similarly, Mustafa Fuzi Elshawish (2014) investigated the writing strategies of fourth year Libyan University Students of English. His study aimed at examining the writing strategies of EFL students at a university level context. The main focus was to compare the strategies of good and poor writers of English. Therefore, one major finding of his work related to the fact that some factors such as second language proficiency, motivation and past learning experience have a significant influence on writing in a second language. These factors are responsible for the differences in strategy use between the two groups of participants. Furthermore, Lim et al. (2011) examined the writing strategies of Malaysian ESL undergraduate engineer learners. This empirical study reported that the two groups of learners (good and poor writers) shared common writing strategies mostly cognitive strategies to generate ideas for their writing, metacognitive and social strategies for seeking to correct words or expressions.

On the whole, the aforementioned studies proved that writing strategies have a positive effect on the quality of student's writing achievement. Accordingly, the better students improve their writing ability, the more they reach higher achievement in writing. The present study comes as an attempt to investigate the students' writing achievement and its possible relationship to the type and frequency of writing strategy use but in the Algerian context.

2. Statement of the Problem

Many researchers have argued on the importance of writing as one of the essential skills in the educational system. Zamel (1982) highlighted the importance of writing in that it represents the process of discovering our own thoughts and learning from the act of writing itself what are these thoughts (p. 195). In addition to being important for second/foreign language mastery, writing has always been regarded as one of the hardest and complex skills in English language learning and teaching because it requires mobilizing higher order skills on the part of learners, who are supposed to combine, generate, and select ideas that are appropriate to the writing task. At the department of the English language in Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia University, students have, at different occasions, complained about the difficulty of the writing module, and expressed their dissatisfaction with the marks they recorded in such a module. Moreover, such records were confirmed through informal discussions with the teachers of the module, who acknowledged the students' difficulties to cope with the demands of the module and the existence of two different categories of student writers, those with high achievement level and others with limited writing abilities. Furthermore, the teachers reported the students disregard for using any techniques or refinement skills all along the writing act. All such realities nurtured the need to investigate the existence of any relationship between students' writing achievement and the type and frequency of writing strategy use by the two categories of students, high achievers and low achievers in writing.

3. Aims of the Study

The present study is mainly carried out to investigate the use of writing strategies and first year licence EFL students writing achievement at the English Department of Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia University. More particularly, the study attempts to find out

which writing strategies are commonly employed by high achievers and which ones are mostly used by low achievers in the writing tasks.

4. Research Questions and Hypothesis

With relevance to the study delineation and in order to explore the objectives of the present research, the following questions are asked:

1. Do first year licence EFL students at the department of English at Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia University use writing strategies while writing in English?
2. Are first year licence students aware of the use of strategies when writing?
3. What are the writing strategies that skilled and less-skilled writers use when writing?
4. What is the relationship between the use of writing strategies and students' writing achievement?

In order to answer the above research questions, the following hypothesis can be advanced:

First year licence EFL students with high levels of achievement in writing are aware of the different writing strategies and use them when writing more than students with low levels of achievement in writing.

6. Research Methodology

According to Kothari (2004), research methodology is a method to systematically explain the research problem. It may be described as a science of analysis how research is done meticulously. The present study is purely descriptive and uses quantitative research methods for data collection purposes, namely, a writing test in order to categorise students into skilled writers and less-skilled writers, on the basis of the scores gotten in the test, and a questionnaire containing an adapted inventory that investigates the use of the different writing strategies by the two groups and the frequency of such a practice. The writing test

is part of the second semester written expression examination. It was carried out with 60 out of 241 randomly chosen first year licence students at the Department of English at Mohammed Seddik ben Yahia University, Jijel, during the academic year 2021/2022. In addition to the test, a questionnaire was administered to the same students, whose exam papers and questionnaire copies have attributed the same code for each student in order to be able to match each student writing performance with his/her answers in the questionnaire and hopefully establish some kind of relationship between the students writing achievement and their use of writing strategies. The choice of the target population was based on the consideration that students have recently initiated studying English as a field of specialty and are supposed to be introduced, both in the writing and the study skills modules, to how to implement strategies for study purposes and on how to make their academic performances geared towards high achievement. Hence, the target population choice is likely to best fit the aims of this study. The questionnaire and the writing test, then, complete each other and aim to establish some kind of relationship between students' writing achievement and their strategy use.

7. Structure of the Study

The dissertation is structured in the form of two chapters. It also includes a general introduction, which introduces the research paradigm and perspectives. The first chapter is a review of the literature; it discusses the theoretical framework and is organized into two sections. The first section elucidates the main points related to writing and writing development in the EFL context, whereas the second section deals with language learning strategies, with focus on writing strategies. Then, the second chapter is the practical part of the study. It discusses the methodology of the research which outlines the research procedures and the instruments used for collecting the relevant data. This chapter ends with the main research findings, the limitations, and some pedagogical recommendations.

Chapter One: Literature Review

Introduction

Writing is an effective skill in foreign language learning as it helps people to express their thoughts through words in a meaningful form. Thus, writing is a basic skill for learning any language. Indeed, students have to make an effort to gain a good level of writing that would enable them to communicate their thoughts and ideas in a successful way. The present chapter is divided into two sections. The first section is concerned with writing and writing development. It discusses the definition of writing, its importance, and the different instructional approaches; it as well discusses the elements of an effective piece of writing. The second section is mainly concerned with writing strategies and students' writing achievements.

Section One: Writing and Writing Development

1.1. Definition of Writing

Writing is the most crucial skill that learners need to master. It concerns the individual's ability to build ideas, express thoughts, and deliver messages to accomplish their goal and achieve their academic purposes. Different views on how writing could be defined have been reported by various researchers and authors. In fact, writing is regarded as a communication tool that enables students to control their thinking and to increase their ability to use language properly. As Longo and Kmiec (2017, p. 8) stated, "Writing is a visual form of communication. It relies on the manipulation of symbols into patterns and the patterns into units of written communication texts that are recognizable and accessible to someone in a shared language community". Furthermore, writing is a type of integrative skill as well as a productive, creative, and complex process. Emig (1977) claimed that writing is the most challenging task since it employs "originating and creating a unique

verbal product that is graphically recorded.” (p. 127). In this respect, writing is a complex skill to master which requires efforts, fostering skills, and lots of practice.

On the other hand, writing was also considered as a visual representation of speech or a graphic system used to produce clear and appropriate writing in English language. Byrne (1979) declared that writing is the act of forming graphic symbols. That is to say, writing involves the arrangements of letters into words, and words into ideas to form coherent whole. Moreover, writing can be defined as a manner and a creative process of sharing and transmitting knowledge by using correct grammatical and lexical structures of the language. Brown (2004) noted that “writing was primarily a convention for recording speech and for reinforcing grammatical and lexical features of language” (p.218). Academic writing requires using formal vocabulary and more complex grammar by supporting the work with clear evidence and logical expression of ideas.

1.2. Definition of Writing Achievement

Writing achievement is the students’ success in attaining a task of writing or performance through a particular learning process. In this respect, Heaton (1975, p. 163) defined achievement as the students mastery of a certain syllabus or the material taught in the classroom. Along the same line, Webster (1981) describes achievement as the performance by a student in a course, quality, and quantity of a student’s work during a given period (p. 16). To be more specific, writing achievement indicates that the student has succeeded in accomplishing the expected outcomes that may be measured with grades.

1.3. General Perspective on the Importance of the Writing Skill

Writing is regarded as a domain of privileged and well educated people. It becomes an important tool for people of all walks of life in today's global community. Thus, writing plays a vital role in English language teaching since it is the most common act used to make learners understand their courses. In this context, Bacha (2002) declared that writing

is important in students' academic course since most examinations, reports and research works depend on it. Writing provides several benefits for EFL learners since it helps them to explore their cognitive capacities, foster communication, and develop critical thinking. In fact, many studies in the field of teaching and learning share the idea that writing plays such an essential role to stimulate the student's way of thinking. White and Arndt (1991, p. 41) argue that "writing is not only a simple matter of transcribing language into written symbols but also a thinking process in its own right". As a result, writing a well-structured essay teaches students how to think and learn more efficiently using clear expression of ideas. In addition, writing has a unique position in language teaching; it helps to know about and practice other three language skills such as listening, reading and speaking. Rao (2019) claimed that if the learners were successful in writing, they would be successful in the other three English skills as well.

1.4. Elements of Writing

In academic writing, EFL learners should develop knowledge about some aspects, with the purpose of achieving a high quality performance in writing. Indeed, a competent writer tends to follow every small detail concerning both language structure and content. To convey a particular meaning appropriately, students need to operate some components that an effective piece of writing should contain.

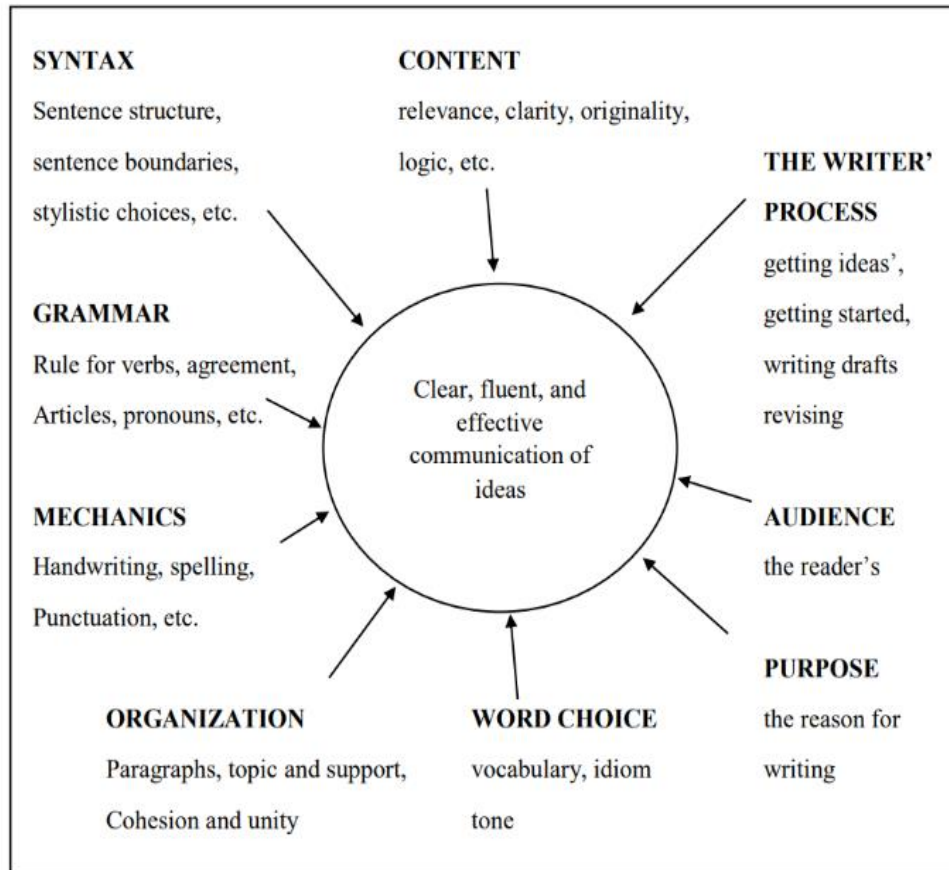


Figure 1: Producing a piece of writing (Raimes, 1983, p. 6)

1.4.1. Grammar

Grammar plays a central role in language learning. It basically entails a set of rules which govern how to use language and construct patterns by providing correct tenses, forms of words, usage of nouns, adjectives, and other parts of speech. Grudzina (2008, p. 23) stated that “with a clear understanding of grammar, you will be able to express yourself using the written word”. In other words, it is highly essential to learn English with grammar rules because it allows students to understand meaningful sentences.

1.4.2 Coherence

Coherence means establishing a relationship between sentences or paragraphs in which ideas hold together to create a relevant and meaningful piece. Halliday and Hasan (1976) defined coherence as “the way to relate a group of clauses or sentences to the context.” (p.23). It brings about a rationale in the order of ideas. To put it another way, the

movement of utterances from one sentence to another should be smooth and logical. Coherence can be achieved by arranging sentences in a systematic order, repeating key terms, using transitional signals, and using consistent pronouns and reference words.

1.4.3. Cohesion

Halliday and Hassan (1976) pointed out that “Cohesion expresses the continuity that exists between one part of the text and another.” (p.299). This mainly contributes to the ties that exist within texts and connections of ideas at the sentence level. Furthermore, cohesion has a vital role in creating the unity of a text. A paragraph has unity when all the sentences support a single main idea.

1.4.4. Mechanics

Mechanics refer to the rules that govern the aspects of writing. These conventions include the following:

- ✓ *Spelling*: It is one of the basic elements of successful writers. Indeed, EFL students must be familiar with combining letters together to form correct words. Harmer (2007) believed that “although incorrect spelling does not often prevent the understanding of a written message, it can adversely affect the reader’s judgement.” (p.324). That is, readers can develop a negative attitude towards the writers with a lack of spelling knowledge. As a result, poor writers are more likely to be neglected by readers who may easily lose interest in completing process. To conclude, EFL students must enhance their spelling capacity by memorizing words through repetition and reading articles, books, and stories.
- ✓ *Punctuation*: It refers to a set of conventions that aid learners to follow the range of thoughts. It is basically a sign of a well-structured composition. In contrast, any misplaced punctuation can ruin meaning and cause confusion. Johnson (1995) argued that incorrect punctuation can lead to negative feelings.

- ✓ *Capitalization*: Capitalization is writing a word with its first letter in uppercase and the remaining letters in lowercase. Errors in the use of capitalization distract readers from focusing on meaning.

1.4.5. Style

It encompasses how the individual chooses to express oneself. It includes the personal techniques people use to reflect their particular skills as writers. Lichtenberger, Mather, and Kaufman (2004) have clarified that style is a key feature when composing the notions clearly. In fact, individuals shift from one style to another according to the situation or subject that fits their unique purpose of writing. For instance, if a person wants to write an educational report or article, he will certainly use a formal and clear language. Therefore, he can easily achieve the desired aim.

1.4.6. Fluency

It is a basic component of writing skill development. Fluency is the ability to formulate written texts in the language naturally, smoothly, and effortlessly. Students who do not write sentences fluently can find writing cognitively demanding (Gillespie & Graham, 2014). Interestingly, it allows writers to think of the writing task and control their train of thought in a creative way.

1.4.7. Accuracy

Accuracy is the ability to produce correct sentences using correct grammar and choice of words with few mistakes. It focuses more on language structures rather than the flow of ideas. Additionally, it seeks for adequate linguistic knowledge and larger repertoire of utterances so that writers can successfully deliver their intended messages.

1.4.8. Vocabulary

Vocabulary is one of the language components which have to be mastered by EFL students to develop the four language skills. According to Sutiono (1993, p. 37), “Words

are the basic unit of language form. Without a sufficient vocabulary, we cannot communicate effectively”. Therefore, vocabulary mastery is the student’s ability to understand the meaning of words in context, the suitable of word choice for every situation, and the appropriate of its usage.

1.4.9. Organization

Organization is the way you present and arrange ideas. The written form should be in a logical order, clear, well organized way and it should be related to the main idea.

1.5. Approaches to Teaching Writing

The teaching of academic writing has undergone a shift in interest and focus reflected in the set of approaches. Each approach describes this skill from a different perspective. According to the available literature on writing instruction, these approaches relate to the product approach, the process approach, and the genre approach.

1.5.1. The Product / Text-oriented Approach

The product approach is viewed as the oldest approach. In the product approach, teachers usually give learners a model text to simulate and build their own texts. Escholz (1980) found that the product approach attends a traditional way of teaching writing because it requires learners to focus on the model, the form and the duplication of the teacher’s text as much as possible. This approach Model comprises four stages (Steele, 2004)

- **Stage one:** Using a model text to help students learn and deal with new and unfamiliar genres. For instance, if a student reads a story, the focus is on techniques used to make the story interesting, and the learner concentrates on where and how the author uses these techniques.

- **Stage two:** It consists of controlled practice of the highlighted features of text separately. For example, if a student is reading a formal letter, he may be asked to apply the language used to make formal requests and official applications.
- **Stage three:** It is essential step in which ideas are organized. Those who favor this approach believe that the organization of thoughts is more important than the thoughts themselves.
- **Stage four:** This is the last step, students choose from the choice of comparable writing tasks to appearance that they can be competent users of the language.

1.5.2. The Process Approach

In the mid-1970s, the process approach started to replace the product approach. The process-oriented approach relates to a teaching approach that focuses on the process a writer engages in when constructing meaning. In this approach, learners are not expected to produce and provide perfect and polished responses to their writing, without going through multiple stages. Hence, this approach model contains different stages (Steele, 2004):

- ✓ **Brainstorming:** it involves generating ideas by students.
- ✓ **Planning:** when students brainstorm, research, gather and take notes.
- ✓ **Mind mapping:** It is concerned with organizing ideas. This stage helps learners with the structure of their texts.
- ✓ **Writing the first draft:** students start writing all what they come to their minds of ideas in the first draft, this is done in the classroom.
- ✓ **Peer feedback:** drafts are exchanged between students.
- ✓ **Editing:** drafts are returned and improvements are made based upon peer feedback.
- ✓ **Final draft:** learners write their final draft.

- ✓ **Evaluation and teachers' feedback:** learners' writing is evaluated and teachers give feedback on it.

1.5.3. The Genre Approach

The genre approach appeared as a result criticizing the two previously mentioned approaches. The fundamental principle of this approach is that language is functional. That is to say, through language students can achieve certain goals. Swales (1990) mentioned that a genre is primarily recognized by its communicative purpose, which shapes how a text is realized.

1.6. Steps of the Writing Process

Writing process can be a more efficient method of teaching writing skill. Harmer (1998) acknowledges the paramount importance of the writing process in teaching and learning the English language. Since it assists students to focus on the process of establishing a paragraph, text, and essay. On the twentieth century, models of the writing process steps have been developed by many scholars and researchers. According to Oshima and Hogue (2007) “writing is never one-step action; it is an ongoing creative act”. Similarly, Zemach and Rumisek (2005) claim that when we write, we do more than just put words together to make sentences. Hence, the idealistic model of the writing process identifies five steps: planning, drafting, revising, editing and publishing.

- **The Planning Stage:**

The pre-writing stage literally means before writing. Williams (2003) states that prewriting is “the thinking and reflecting” (p. 108) of what good writers implement before they begin writing. Pre-writing is the most major phase in the writing process. It involves activities that should be done to get a good style of writing. Thus, before the writer actually begins in writing an essay, he determines on a number of points such as: choosing a topic,

gathering ideas, taking notes and organizing them by making an outline. Therefore, the focus in this stage is on content, purpose, and audience. Richards and Renandya (2001) described the pre-writing step as an activity in the classroom that motivates learners to write. In other words, it stimulates thoughts to engage in generating ideas. Indeed, the pre-writing stage advances learners away from having gaps towards generating conclusive ideas and collecting information for writing.

- **The Drafting Stage:**

This is the second fundamental stage that occurs after the completion of the pre-writing activities (Williams, 2003; King & Chapman, 2003; Tribble, 1996, 2003). Drafting means writing a preliminary written version from the outline. An outline is a basic plan to write an essay and aid writers to make the process of writing much easier. Raimes (2005) states that at this stage learners can change, combine, delete and reorganize the paper. Consequently, the major and primary concern of the drafting stage is thinking and writing without paying much attention to the grammatical and spelling errors because they can correct them later. Finally, Harris (1993:55) defines drafting as “a point at which the writer begins to translate plans and ideas into provisional text”.

- **The Revising Stage:**

Revising is a central component to effective document. It is the stage of making changes to the final version or the final draft. Trimmer (2004) explains the aim of revision as an examining and reviewing all pieces that have been written. In addition, Harris (1993) suggested that students are expected to correct or modify the linguistic accuracy of their pieces of writing through correcting grammar, spelling, and punctuation mistakes. Thus, changes can be implemented to content and organization by adding or deleting some ideas, improving style, unity, and word choice. In this phase, writers focus on the general

characteristics and the most common issues of writing to improve structure, content and organization of their writings.

- **The Editing Stage:**

The editing stage is a rough and demanding part of writing. It takes place after revision of content. The purpose is to give a professional work. At this point, the writer corrects the English convention mistakes such as: grammar, punctuation, and spelling mistakes. Another point to consider is that learners should check their document to make sure they have fixed their final sheet.

- **The Publishing Stage:**

Publishing is the last phase which indicates presenting the final production. Donohue concluded that “The final stage of writing process includes sharing, reflection, and assessment of the students’ writing” (p.14). It is highly vital to make sure that you have corrected your errors and maintain strong evidence on your writing before submission.

Harmer (2004) indicated that the model of writing is recursive (p. 5)



Figure 2: The process wheel, (Harmer 2004, p. 6)

1.7. Categories of Writers

In EFL writing, learners can be classified into skilled writers and less-skilled writers:

1.7.1. Skilled Writers

ESL/EFL writers who are professional at producing a good composition are identified as skilled writers. They have the ability to monitor their thinking, generate thoughts, and arrange information in their minds. Thus, expert writers can easily keep track of their main ideas and attain the desired outcomes of their writing and improve the quality of final composition. Planning and organizing are critical skills for expert writers (Graham,

2002). Additionally, skilled writers are aware of the higher order processes, such as revising and writing strategies that help them present a well-structured written document. Azizi et al. (2017) stated that students who are greatly familiar with the strategies they use in the writing task are considered as successful writers.

1.7.2. Less Skilled Writers

Lower proficiency students are individuals who are unaware of employing the process of writing. Richards (1990) defined a less-skilled writer as an individual that uses unsuitable writing behaviours and process. That is, less-skilled writers are rarely exposed to planning and revising because they ignore their effectiveness. Baker (2010) reported that poor writers focus more on the form. To clarify, poor writers pay more attention to the writing's surface such as grammar, vocabulary, spelling and other structures rather than the writing's content in terms of generating ideas and monitoring thoughts.

1.8. EFL Students' Difficulties in Writing

Writing is the most difficult and challenging area in learning a TL. A myriad of studies have shown that EFL and ESL students encounter a variety of difficulties which hinder their writing ability. The following are the major challenges faced by students that prevent them from being competent writers.

Fareed et al (2016) investigated some problems faced by learners including insufficient linguistic proficiency (grammar, syntax, and vocabulary), mechanics, and weak structures organization. In fact, many students are unable to form grammatical correct sentences. They often struggle with issues like subject verb agreement, incorrect usage of pronouns, articles, and tenses. Also, they misunderstand how sentences work and the rules behind language structures. Another issue to be mentioned is that students have limited exposures to English vocabularies. Thus, when they translate their thoughts into the motion of writing, they fail in using appropriate words to communicate their ideas. In

addition, Learners have poor mastery of spelling containing punctuation and capitalization due to the lack of education or interest. In brief, without applying appropriate structures, the content of writing will be ambiguous and unappreciated.

Clifford (1987) suggested that students of English have several problems in their writing related to thoughts and the way of exploring ideas in order to reach a communicative purpose with others. Supporting this argument, learners do not usually learn control over the content of their text, i.e. they commit errors when constructing and supporting their ideas. As it is pointed out by Furneaux (1999, p. 60) who stated that “writing is ultimately judged by content, not process, teaching students to express their ideas is important”. In short, students of English should focus more on constructing rich ideas with meaningful details, transmitting consistent messages, and developing the content clearly.

Research has shown that critical thinking and academic writing are among the difficulties faced by either students in their learning process or teachers in their teaching process. Siegel (1988) asserted that for being considered educated, you have to be a critical thinker. In fact, many students of English cannot think of an idea or argument on their own, they just copy others’ ideas. Also, they struggle on defending or rejecting a claim with evidence. Besides critical thinking, the challenges of academic writing are another concern that has been noticeably considered by scholars. Academic writing is a complex skill that requires analysis, formality, and creativity especially in a second language. Mohan and Lo (1985) confirmed that a lot of ESL learners find academic writing problematic especially for non-native speakers of the language. Accordingly, it is a demanding requirement that critical thinking awareness have to be developed by integrating it in academic writing. Browne and Litwin (1987) approved that the teaching of critical thinking and writing succeeds only when it is taught across the curriculum. The

interference of the mother tongue can be another issue that causes poor written productions to EFL students. Friedlander (1997, p. 109) stated that “writers do any of their work in their first language”. It is apparent that the impact of the first language leads students to produce incorrect structures because they apply first language structure when writing in English.

1.9. Evaluation and Assessment in EFL Writing

Assessment is a fundamental process required to promote writing achievements. “Assessment is the gathering of information on students’ language learning attainments to inform instructional decisions” (Gardener, 2006). Indeed, teachers collect information about students’ performance to measure specific responses, skills, and behaviors about particular subjects. On the one hand, teachers are able to measure the degree of students’ progress in written discourse and determine the level of proficiency in producing language use. Teachers therefore could make substantial contributions to provide clear insights into the education context and propose areas to be considered in learning and teaching.

On the other hand, assessment offers an opportunity for students to promote an active role in the classroom, gain higher grades, and produce better work. To support this argument, Carroll (1968, p. 46; as cited in Bachman, 1990, p. 18) stated that “a psychological or educational test is a procedure designed to elicit certain behavior from which one can make inferences about certain characteristics of an individual”. Generally, teachers evaluate their learners by selecting tasks or activities based on learning outcomes. A task usually contains writing paragraphs, essays, stories, and other written descriptions. To this end, it is of paramount importance to provide the foreign language classroom with the practice needed in the writing session.

1.10. Practical Issues Affecting Students Writing Assessment

There are some factors that can affect the students' performance when doing a writing task.

- **Motivation:** Motivation is a vital component when achieving one's objectives in assessing second language (L2) writing ability. Interestingly, motivation assists learners to engage in the writing task and thus, they have the potential to obtain a higher quality writing and increase the level of satisfaction after completing the task.
- **Time:** Time is a considerable factor for a successful writing academic performance. Raimes (1994) believed that writing is planned and it requires learners to take time when producing it. In this respect, learners should be provided with adequate time because the input of students' writing can be effective if the time allotted is sufficient. In addition, the latter allows learners to think and organize ideas appropriately without pressure to complete certain tasks, gain higher grades, and take more control of their learning. Finally, in writing a paragraph or an essay with short time can kill learners' creativity and limit how well writing achievement can be assessed.
- **Practice:** Practice is a core element to handle and improve writing. Nowadays, many learners have a low understanding and application of the writing rules and conventions due to the lack of practice. Weigle (2002) mentions that writing is a set of skills gained from much practice and experience. Indeed, learners should put into practice what they have learned, be exposed to reading, and solve various activities inside and outside the classroom. Accordingly, practice leads learners to boost their understanding, improve their writing techniques, expand their vocabulary, and avoid making errors.

Section Two: Writing Strategies

2.1. Definition of Learning Strategies

A strategy is a general plan that contains a set of ideas and objectives to achieve one or more goals under some specific conditions and rules. However, in the domain of

education the term “strategy” has been known and applied as "learning strategies". Many researchers and linguists defined learning strategies in several ways. Learning strategies are techniques, approaches, or deliberate actions that students take in order to facilitate the learning and recall of both linguistic and content area information. (Chamot 1987, p. 71). Thus, learning strategies are tools and techniques that learners develop as they learn a second or foreign language. A further definition was stated by Oxford (1990, p. 8), who mentioned that the term refers to specific actions taken by the student to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective and more transferable to new situations. In this manner, these learning strategies refer to a set of methods, tools, behavioral processes, and cognitive operations that students use to learn which in turn should be encouraged by pedagogical designs to facilitate the acquisition of certain knowledge and the achievement of objectives. Therefore, the use of learning strategies improves language abilities and optimizes the process of obtaining and storing information.

2.2. Definition of Writing Strategies

Writing strategies play a basic role in the development of second and foreign language writing. Congjun Mu (2007) defined writing strategies as methods the writer consciously uses to generate ideas, plan, draft, organize, revise, and reduce anxiety during the writing process. Similarly, Riduan and Lim (2009) suggested that “the key to producing good writing or essays relies on the types and amount of strategies used, and on the regulation of the strategies for generating ideas or for revising what has been written” (ibid, p.47). In this respect, writing strategies are the sequence of activities elaborated more into various phases. The latter covers generating and revising ideas, in addition to reducing stress to minimize errors made by students in their writing. Furthermore, it is essential to mention that many researchers in the field of education noted that the use of writing strategies differs from one learner to another because it depends primarily on the learner’s

competence, learning stage, style, and purpose. Finally, the previous definitions indicate that writing strategies are tools and mental processes which enable learners to take control of their writing tasks which in turn lead to the increase of learners' confidence, self-regulation and writing achievement.

2.3. Advantages of Writing Strategies Use in the Writing Classroom

Writing strategies are general plans that help students progress in their academic settings. The use of writing strategies aids students to perform better in doing their assignments in the writing classroom or other learning situations. Westwood (2008, p.75) claimed that applying writing strategies gains some advantages in writing sections. Firstly, writing strategies make learners think critically and productively before writing because in the first step, learners need to write their first ideas and thoughts to be generated later. Secondly, employing writing strategies makes learners active participants in learning as they can easily select their main points, avoid weak ideas, and add relevant details. Thus, they can organize them effectively for their audience. Thirdly, the use of writing strategies attracts learners to revise and enhance the quality of their final composition. Moreover, Lan, Hung & Hsu (2011, p. 2) mentioned that writing strategies develop and formulate abstract ideas as well as use proper tools to help in successive tasks. In short, writing strategies help students to manage their time while writing, improve their style of writing, and facilitate the way of learning and mastering writing skills in the classroom.

2.4. Learning Strategies Classifications

Writing strategies have been classified by many scholars. In response to the major developments in the field of writing skill, a growing number of researchers have focused on students' writing strategies and the operations they use to write effectively. Interestingly, Oxford has presented a classification for language learning strategies (LLSs) that is more 'comprehensive and 'developed than the other proposed division models

(Jones, 1998; as cited in Liu, 2010, p. 101). Oxford (1990) developed a strategy categorization (model), which was highly influential. This model is called strategy inventory of language learning (SILL), which is used by a number of researchers who have supposed that the implementation of LLSs has a great impact on students' 'linguistic' and 'communicative' competence. According to the taxonomy suggested by Oxford, LLSs are divided into two main classes: direct and indirect strategies.

2.4.1. Direct Strategies

According to Oxford (1990, p. 37) "all direct strategies require mental processing of the language, but the three groups of direct strategies: (memory, cognitive, and compensation) this processing differently and for different purposes".

2.4.1.1. Memory Strategies

Memory or mnemonics strategies are used for aiding students to store and remember information into long-term memory, and retrieve it when necessary to provide written descriptions. Oxford mentioned that memory strategies fall into four steps:

- ***Creating mental linkage*** involves grouping, associating/ elaborating, and placing words into a context. First, 'grouping' means classifying the learned knowledge into meaningful units, to make it mentally easy to recall. For instance, grouping can be based on the type of words (nouns and verbs), synonyms (aiding / helping), opposite (short/ long), and so on. Second, 'associating' is to link new information to concepts previously presented in memory. Third, placing new words into a context means putting a word or phrase in a meaningful sentence in order to remember it.
- ***Applying images and sounds*** contains four strategies which are using imagery, keywords, semantic mapping and representing sounds in memory. All of these includes to create and remember visual images and sounds in one's mind.

- **Reviewing well** includes just one strategy which is structured reviewing. According Oxford (1990, pp. 42-43), “reviewing in carefully spaced intervals, at first close together and then more widely spaced apart”.
- **Employing actions** means using physical response or sensation and using mechanical techniques to a new expression or input.

2.4.1.2 Cognitive strategies

Cognitive strategies are mental processes that help learners to understand and produce a new language in order to build and make the processing more effective in their minds. Oxford (1990) claimed that there exist four sets of cognitive strategies which are practicing strategies, receiving and sending messages, analyzing and reasoning, in addition to creating structure for input and output.

- **Practicing strategies** involve (1) repeating (saying or doing something over and over) (2) Formally practicing with sounds and writing systems (practicing sounds or the new writing system of the L2). (3) Recognizing and using patterns means knowing the use of routine formulas. (4) Recombining is Combine known components in a new manner to make a longer sequence.(5) Practicing naturalistically means practicing the new language naturally, for example writing a paragraph in the new language.
- **Receiving and sending messages** involves two strategies getting the idea quickly and using resources for receiving and sending messages.
- **Analyzing and reasoning** contain five steps such as reasoning deductively, analyzing expressions, analyzing contrastively, translating, and transferring.
- **Creating structure** for *input and output* is the way to create structures for the new language. It is divided into 3 steps: taking notes, summarizing and highlighting.

2.4.1.3. Compensation strategies

Compensation strategies assist learners to overcome knowledge gaps or limitations in learning. These strategies allow students to produce written and spoken expressions in the target language despite of their limited knowledge. These strategies contain the use of mimes and gestures in speaking skills. Also, they can be used to compensate the lack of grammatical and vocabulary knowledge.

2.4.2 Indirect Strategies

Indirect strategies have gained a considerable growth in language learning since they allow students to manage and control their written output without directly involving the target language (TL). These strategies are useful in virtually all language learning situations and they work in combination with the direct strategies described earlier (Oxford, 1990, p. 135). Oxford divided indirect strategies into 3 types: metacognitive, affective, and social.

2.4.2.1. Metacognitive strategies

Metacognitive strategies have proved to be the most beneficial and the most frequently used strategies by learners as the means to manage, monitor, and evaluate the overall learning process. According to Oxford (1990), metacognitive strategies are “actions which go beyond purely cognitive devices, and which provide a way for learners to coordinate their own learning process.” (p.136). To put it simply, metacognitive writing strategies comprise mental activities, processes, and skills that learners use to control and regulate their own cognition. Interestingly, the term “*metacognition*” often refers to “*thinking about thinking*” (Flavell, 1979). That is, the ability and awareness to self-monitor and reflect one’s own thinking, understanding, and performance in the writing context appropriately to meet the demands of certain language tasks undertaken. Consequently, a plethora of research has highlighted the crucial and critical role of metacognitive writing

strategies in promoting active engagement in learning, attaining higher-order skills, and achieving academic success.

Oxford (1990) grouped metacognitive strategies into 3 strategy sets:

- ✓ ***Centering Your Learning:*** It involves overviewing and relating key concepts of an upcoming language activity to what is already known, paying attention to language learning tasks, and developing listening skills before the production of speech.
- ***Arranging and Planning Your Learning:*** In this phase, learners generate and organize the main ideas, set their goals and purpose of the writing task.
- ***Evaluating Your Learning:*** it includes testing the quality of your own work after the completion of task.

2.4.2.2. Affective strategies

The term *affective* refers to “emotions, attitudes, motivations, and values” (Oxford, 1990, p. 140). Affective writing strategies have a greater impact on the learners' writing productions. They direct students towards controlling and exploring their own emotional skills. That is to say, this kind of strategies requires learners to employ a series of processes such as pushing, encouraging and motivating themselves to increase their abilities that influence language learning activities. In other words, they relate to the extent to which language learners strive to accomplish a specific goal and promote a positive attitude toward the subject matter. Consequently, learners will feel free and comfortable to express their thoughts. Affective strategies can be related to three areas:

- ***Lowering your anxiety:*** It is helpful that the learner relax from what distracts him, take a deep breath, and talk about his feeling to release the negative energy.
- ***Encouraging yourself:*** It is important for learners to boost their self-confidence, trust their abilities, and reward themselves for good work as they can feel proud or satisfied about their success.

- ***Taking your emotional temperature:*** This involves paying attention to your body reflection such as: fear or happiness. Also, it is concerned with using written descriptions related to specific language tasks and interacting with others or expressing feelings about language learning.

2.4.2.3. Social strategies

Applying social strategies emphasizes on the importance of collaborative learning in the classroom in which learners receive feedback and benefit from each other. In this respect, Oxford (1990) noted that “language is a form of social behavior; it is communication, and communication occurs between and among people” (p. 144). Accordingly, interaction will solve language related problems and consolidate learning and practice well using the target language. Oxford identified three basic models of affective strategies:

- ***Asking questions:*** This comprises asking teachers or a more knowledgeable other (MKO) to explain ambiguous or misunderstood elements in writing and to correct their errors.
- ***Cooperating with others:*** It involves working or having conversations with peers or professional users of the language for the sake of improving learning skills.
- ***Empathizing with others:*** It highlights the importance of exploring and incorporating others' culture and to be aware of their behaviors.

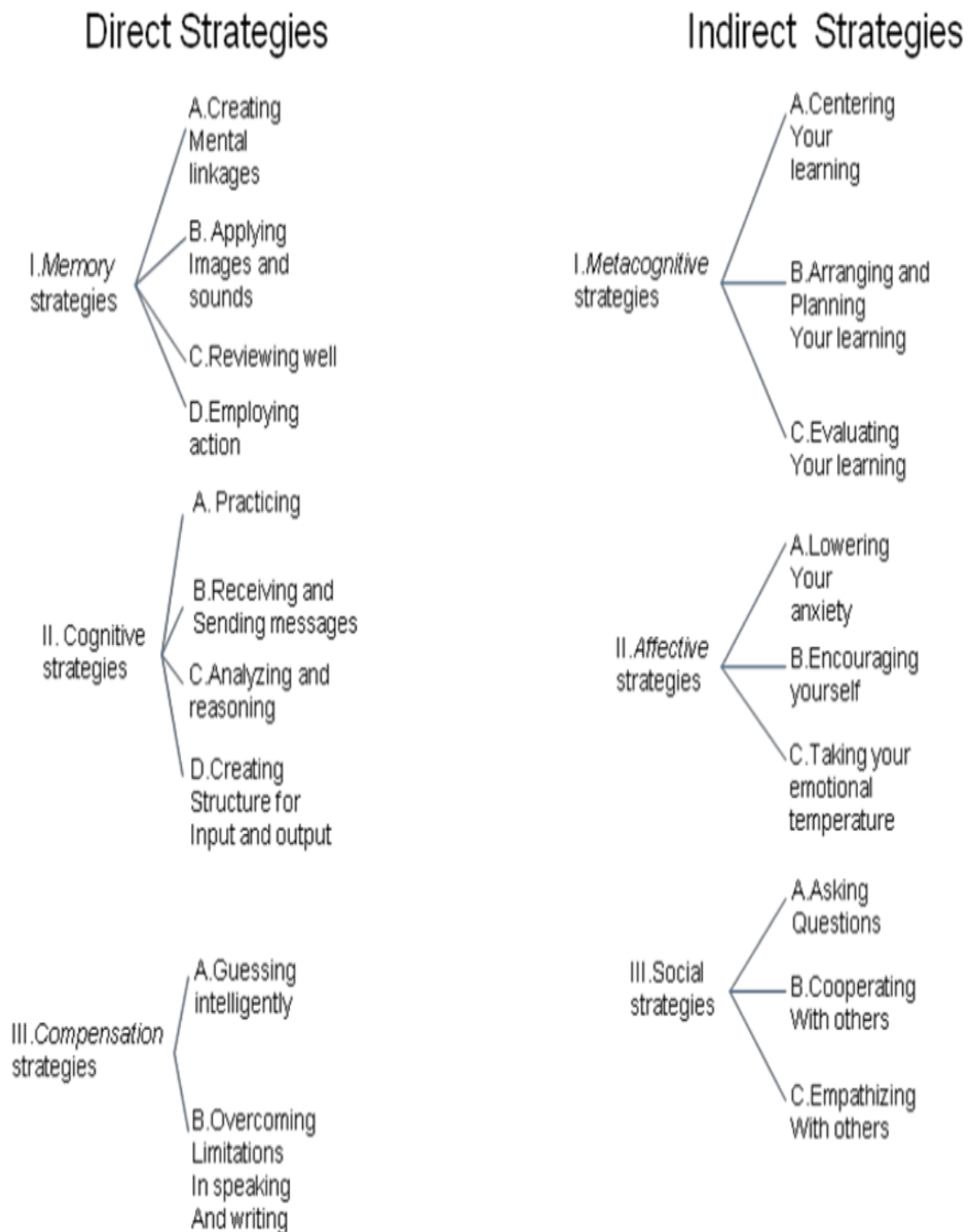


Figure 3: Oxford's Classification of Language Learning Strategies (1990, p. 58-136)

2.5. A Taxonomy of Writing Strategies

Experts dealing with the classification of writing strategies have been explored from different perspectives. The following taxonomies will discuss some of the category of writing strategies explained briefly by O'Malley and Chamot (1990), Petric and Czarl (2003), and Mu (2005).

2.5.1. Taxonomy of Writing Strategies (O'Malley and Chamot, 1990)

O'Malley and Chamot (1990: 44-5) divide writing strategies into three main categories: cognitive, metacognitive, and social/ affective. Cognitive strategies work directly on processing information to manipulate the learning outcomes such as note taking and organizing. Metacognitive strategies involve executive skills, for instance planning, organizing, and evaluating. Finally, social and affective strategies help the learner to work and interact with other people or regulate their emotions.

2.5.2. Petric and Czarl's Writing Strategies Taxonomy (2003)

In their taxonomy, they classify writing strategies into three main types, including before writing, when writing, and after writing. Each strategy falls into some more specific activities.

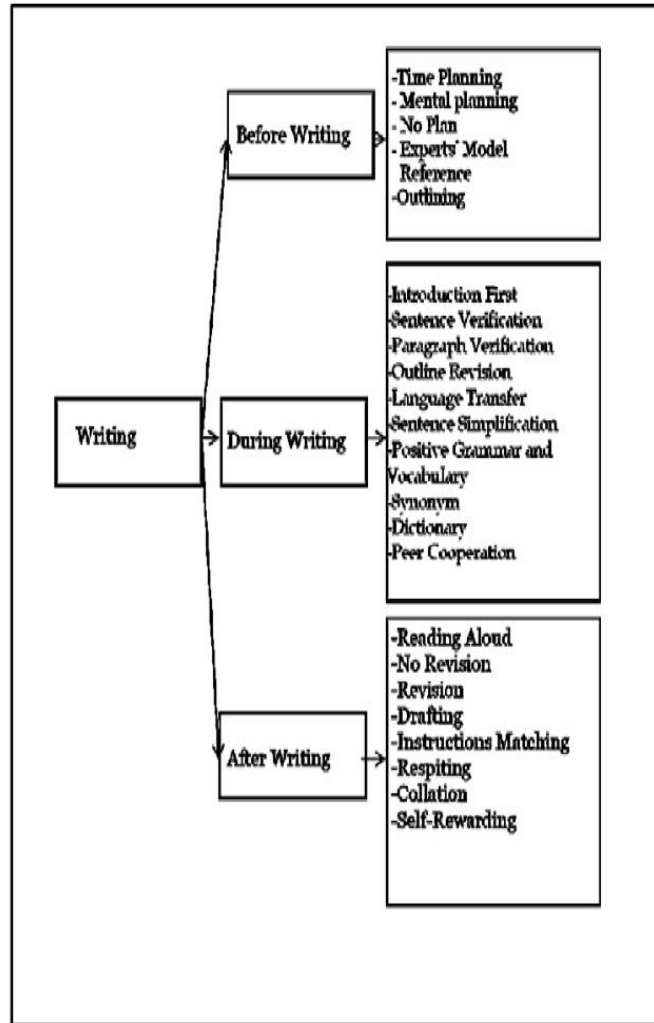


Figure 4: Writing Strategies Taxonomy based on Petric and Czarl (2003)

2.5.3. Taxonomy of Writing Strategies (Mu, 2005)

Mu (2005) pioneered a taxonomy of ESL writing strategies which converted to be an influential model for other researchers. He mentioned five different groups of writing strategies:

- **Rhetorical strategies:** They focus on organizing and expressing their thoughts in writing compositions acceptable to native speakers of the language.
- **Metacognitive strategies:** These strategies enable students to control and regulate their writing process.

- **Cognitive strategies:** The strategies which the students employ to adjust the actual writing actions, including generating ideas, elaborating, and summarizing.
- **Communicative strategies:** In this taxonomy, the writer expresses ideas in a more effective way, such as anticipating readers' response.
- **Social/ affective strategies:** They refer to interaction with individuals by asking for clarification of ambiguous items and to regulate feelings, motivation, and attitudes in their writing by getting feedback and using dictionaries (Mu, 2005, p. 9).

2.6. Examples of Writing Strategies

Writing strategies are widely used in the educational context because of their great importance and efficacy in fostering the learning process. Mu (2005) directs his attention towards studying the various writing strategies because they make the EFL learning process more successful. He distinguishes lists of language learning strategies which have been divided or categorized into different ways.

Table 1: Types of Writing Strategies in ESL Writing (Mu, 2005)

Writing strategies	Sub-strategies
Rhetorical Strategies	Organization Use of L1 Formatting/Modelling Comparing
Meta-cognitive strategies	Planning Monitoring Evaluating
Cognitive strategies	Generating ideas Revising Elaborating Clarification Retrieval Rehearsing Summarizing
Communicative strategies	Avoidance Reduction Sense of readers
Social/affective strategies	Resourcing Getting feedback Assigning goals Rest/deferral

Metacognitive Writing Strategies

- Having a clear goal to reach before writing.
- Preparing and arranging ideas before writing.
- Making an outline which contains a list of key components to include in writing paragraphs or essays.
- Controlling the writing process by checking structure, content, and language.
- Evaluating the quality of writing to produce a better document.

Cognitive Writing Strategies

- Brainstorming is important because it enables writers to generate more ideas beyond their current range of thinking.
- Students can summarize information simply by reducing texts.
- Storing knowledge and skills to apply them easily in the future.
- Retrieval of information relevant to the test from memory.
- Connecting ideas that are related to the topic and organizing them in a coherent manner.

Social Writing Strategies

- In order to generate ideas for a task, it is beneficial to discuss the writing topic with a friend or classmate.
- Getting feedback from the instructor to help students move from lower to higher level thinking skills.
- Students can solve problems and the teacher can isolate problems' areas for revision.
- Doing tasks collaboratively in the classroom.
- When students do not understand a question, they ask the teacher to explain it.

Affective Writing Strategies

- A student encourages himself to write in English even when he is afraid of making mistakes.
- Engaging and motivating oneself to succeed in the composition.
- After revising and editing my essay thoroughly, I ask a friend or a classmate to read and comment on it.
- Trying to write a paragraph in the classroom with confidence and ease.
- Putting the best efforts in completing writing tasks.

Rhetorical Writing Strategies

- Thinking in one's native language.

- Comparing different rhetorical techniques to ESL conventions as cause and effect, comparison and contrast.
- Organizing ideas of a text.

Communication Writing Strategies

- Reviewing what has been written down to check if the written task is delivered in a coherent way.
- Guessing the meaning of difficult words.
- Participating in conversations to be more exposed to the FL.
- Adjusting expressions to the readers.
- Avoiding problems

2.7. Factors Influencing Language Learning Strategies Use

There is a number factors that may affect the learners' choice and use of language learning strategies. Oxford (2003) believed that age, motivation, and gender are the main factors which can affect strategy use.

- **Age:** It plays an essential role on the influence of the learning strategies .Many scholars such as Moyer (2004), Singleton (1999), and Ervin-Tripp (1994) suggested that elder learners have more ability to master and learn a language than younger learners.
- **Motivation:** The key component in learning writing skills is motivation. It helps students develop their interest toward the application of different strategies and enroll them in language classes. Accordingly, students with high levels of motivation take more active role in their learning, while students who are less motivated to perform, may have difficulty in using strategies and cannot achieve long-term goals in the classroom (Otoshi & Heffernan, 2011).
- **Gender:** It is an aspect that has a principal impact on the writing strategy use. Many studies reveal that the females are more able to write in L2 than males.

2.8. Writing Strategies and Students' Achievement

Writing strategies are crucial in mediating academic success and increasing efficient writing experiences, namely, memory strategy, cognitive strategy, compensation strategy, metacognitive strategy, affective strategy, and social strategy. Writing strategies play a key role in the development of second/foreign language writing and influencing students' learning outcomes. According to Fedderholdt (1997), a language learner who is aware of using a wide variety of language learning strategies appropriately can improve his language skills in a better way. To be more specific, the use of language learning strategies enables students to efficiently enhance the quality of their writing and ultimately become more independent and autonomous writers. Meanwhile, a study conducted by Budiharso (2014) revealed that high achievers EFL undergraduate students use writing strategies more frequently and put more effort into every writing stage than their low achievers peers. In its simplest form, writing strategies work as a controller that guides students to produce good texts and achieve higher quality compositions. Indeed, the employment of appropriate strategies helps students to become more analytical, expand their understanding and foster their learning capacity.

Conclusion

Writing has long been established as a powerful tool of communication in educational and academic settings. Writing helps EFL students to impart knowledge, measure what they are learning, and indicate areas requiring further research and practice. Indeed, students of English should be aware of the basic characteristics of written language and determine which phases are worth developing. However, having a good piece of writing has been a challenge for students since it requires acquiring a large number of skills such as grammar, vocabulary, spelling, reading, and practice...etc. Indeed, in mastering writing, students need to practice and seek for assistance from teachers

whenever they encounter breakdowns. One of the key factors which affect writing is the use of writing strategies given the fact that they manage text production in an effective way and improve students' writing achievement. Therefore, teachers should train and contribute students to the use of appropriate strategies by practicing language learning tasks and go through the difficulties in the process of learning. To sum up, by employing writing strategies, students will be able to overcome problems related to language learning activities and increase students' writing achievement.

Chapter two: The Field work

Introduction

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2.1.1. Research Method

2.1.2. Research Setting and Participants

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Chapter Two: Field Work

Introduction

This chapter is devoted to discuss the methodology and the research design used in this study. It covers the research design of the study, the techniques implemented for data collection purposes, the population and sampling procedures, and the data analysis and interpretation. The research design is divided into two parts. The first part is a description of the research methods adopted, information regarding research participants, instruments, and data collection. The second part, on the other hand, deals with the analysis of the obtained data and the discussion of the findings, and ends with suggestions and recommendations for further research.

2.1. Research Design

The present study aims at investigating the relationship between writing strategy use and first year licence EFL students' writing achievement. Given the aims of the study, the dissertation in hand, then, adheres to descriptive research design. In this chapter, different procedures were adopted to collect data. To achieve this goal, certain methodological decisions were made concerning the selection of relevant participants and research tools in order to answer the research questions and confirm or refute the hypothesis.

2.1.1. Research Instruments

This study has employed quantitative data collection techniques. The quantitative method allows for abundant data collection in a short time, which will be, afterward, analyzed using descriptive statistical methods. Therefore, for the aim of this study, a descriptive research was used to compare the use of writing strategies by skilled and less-skilled writers, through using a writing achievement test and surveying the writing strategies used by the participants, through a questionnaire designed for students, with particular focus on what strategies skilled and less skilled writers both use. The use of

a questionnaire is the most suitable tool as it helps in collecting a large amount of data from a large audience in short time. As Wilson et al. (1994: 1) pointed out: “The questionnaire is a widely used and useful instrument for collecting information, providing structured, often numerical data, being able to be administered without the presence of the researcher, and often being comparatively straightforward to analyze”.

2.1.2. Research Setting and Participants

The population of this study consists of first year licence EFL students majoring in English at Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia University during the academic year 2021/2022. The choice of the target population was based on the consideration that students have initiated studying English as a field of specialty at university and are, supposedly, required to be instructed, both in the writing and the study skills modules, on how to implement strategies for study purposes and on how to make them geared towards high achievement. Hence, 60 out of 241 students were randomly selected and involved in the study.

2.1.3. Description of the Writing Test

The aim of the writing test is to determine students’ writing level. The latter was based on their paragraph writing test scores. The teacher of the module was responsible for correcting the students’ paragraphs. The students were ranked based on their test marks from the highest to the lowest mark. Students who got the average and more were classified as high achievers (skilled writers) while those who did not succeed to achieve the average were considered as low achievers (less-skilled writers). As part of the second semester examination, the students were asked to write a paragraph in the written expression module, which they were supposed to describe a memorable event or a memorable experience. The writing paragraph test was administered to first year university students majoring in English. The paragraph was aimed at measuring students’ writing abilities. The students’ productions were scored taking into account the different writing

elements needed for producing a good piece of writing, namely, vocabulary, ideas, and support (2.5 points), good format and layout (0.5 point), good topic sentence and concluding sentence (1 point), unity (1 point), coherence (1 point), punctuation and capitalization (1 point), in addition to grammar (1 point). The total score of the test is out of 8 points. Students were divided into two groups, based on their writing test scores (from the highest to the lowest). Students who got marks ranging from 4 to 8 points were considered as good writers whereas those who scored under 4 points were regarded as less-skilled writers.

2.1.4. Description of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire designed for students intends to investigate the participant students' views on the writing skill and its centrality to learning EFL. Additionally, the final part of the questionnaire was devoted to surveying the employed writing strategies and the frequency of such a practice. As Brown (2001, p. 6) put it, "Questionnaires are any written instruments that present respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they are to react either by writing out their answers or selecting from among existing answers". The questionnaire is composed of thirty two (32) questions. The students are mainly required to answer a series of close-ended (yes or no) questions; they were also required, in some questions, to provide a justification for the choice they made. Some other questions were open-ended questions, and others were multiple choice questions. The questionnaire is organized in the form of three sections: The first section is designed to get background information about the informants. It comprises two questions. The first question relates to the students' study experience in English whereas the second question investigates the students' estimations of their level in English writing. The second section investigates the participant students' views on the writing skill. It contains six questions, ranging from question 3 to 8. Question 3 seeks to identify the frequency of students'

writing in English. Question 4 is concerned with their views on the importance of writing skill. Question 5 relates to the writing elements that make an effective piece of writing. The following question asks students whether or not they encounter difficulties in the writing module, and in the affirmative, they are given the opportunity to justify their answer. Questions 7 and 8 deal with the students focus during the act of writing and with whether or not the teacher encourages the students to follow a process of steps, respectively, which will, in turn, translate information about the adopted writing methodology and strategies implemented in the writing class.

The third section deals with writing strategies. It was adopted from Hwang & Lee, Development and validation of the English writing strategy inventory (2017), a study aiming to develop and validate an English writing strategy inventory (EWSI) that measures English writing strategies at the tertiary level. The inventory was slightly adapted given the fact that it was addressed to Korean EFL students. Three tables address the entire writing process (before writing, while writing, and after writing). The fourth table involves some strategies that help students improve their writing skill.

The questionnaire was handed immediately after finishing the test to the same 56 participants. Each one got the same code he had in the test.

2.2. Analysis of the Results

2.2.1. Analysis of the Students Writing Test

As mentioned above, the students were asked to write a paragraph to describe a memorable event or a memorable experience. It is worth noting is that from 60 students, 56 were involved in the study as their written products were corrected in the written test given the fact that these were the students who filled out the questionnaire. The four remaining students did not return their questionnaire copies, so their written paragraphs marks were not considered. The data gotten from the writing test are presented in the table below:

Table 2: The Students Performance in the Writing Test (See appendix III)

Students	Number of Students	Percentage %
Good writers (4-8 points)	30	53.58%
Poor writers (1-3.75 points)	26	46.42%
Total	56	100%

This question aims at identifying the students' level according to their scores in the writing test. The data gathered showed that more than half of the students (53.58%) were regarded as good writers. 46.42% of them were viewed as poor writers. This indicates that most of the students are able to regulate and present information to the target audience in writing. A competent writer also reflects a smooth and logical flow of ideas that enable language learners to communicate their ideas freely. This may indicate that the students are aware of and do implement some techniques and strategies needed for the writing activity to take place. Investigating the use of such strategies is to be confirmed through the upcoming analysis of the questionnaire.

2.2.2. Analysis of the Students' Questionnaire

Part One: Background Information

Q1. How long have you been studying English?

Table3: Number of the Years of Studying English.

Answers	Frequency	Percentage %
7 years	25	41.66%
8 years	22	36.66%

9 years	13	21.66%
Total	60	100%

The purpose of this question was to discover the number of years students received instruction in English as part of the school curriculum. The majority of students studied English for 7 years (41.66%) or 8 years (36.66%). On the other hand, 13 students (21.66%) studied English for 9 years. That is, most of the students were somehow familiar with using English and were already introduced to the basics of writing in the target language, which may, in turn, point to the fact that they may be again ware of what strategies to use in the writing activity.

Q2. How would you estimate your level in English writing?

Table 4: Students Estimations of their Writing Abilities in English

Options	Number	Percentage %
Excellent	2	3.33%
Good	36	60%
Average	20	33.33%
Poor	2	3.33%
Total	60	100%

This question was posed in order to determine the participant students' views on how good they may be in writing. There are different views about students' level in English. Through the table above, it can be noticed that most students (60%) believed that they had a good level in English, while 33.33% thought they had an average level, 3.33% students with an excellent level in English, and the rest (3.33%) assumed that their level of English was poor. This reveals that the majority of students have mastered the basic rules of the target language and attained certain learning skills that make them understand the

language and progress in their instruction. On the other hand, poor learners need to make great efforts and practice the language as much as they can to improve their level of English.

Part Two: Students' Views on the Writing Skill

Q3. How often do you write in English?

Table 5: The Students' Frequency of the Writing Activity in English.

Options	Frequency	Percentage %
Always	10	16.66%
Usually	15	25%
Sometimes	33	55%
Never	2	3.33%
Total	60	100%

The aim behind this question was to determine how often students wrote in English. Most of the students (55%) answered “sometimes”. This implies that they are somewhat familiar with writing in English. The second category of students opted for “usually” (25%) and always (16.66%). These results show that some students are interested in writing, and they consider it important in developing their language. However, only (3.33%) replied that they did not write in English. Such results may indicate that these students do not like to write, or that they are not able to do it appropriately, so they avoid doing it.

Q4. Do you consider writing as an essential skill to mastering English as a foreign language?

If yes, please justify.

Table 6: Students' Views on the Centrality of Writing to Foreign Language Mastery.

Options	Number	Percentage
Yes	53	88.33%
No	7	11.66%

This question was addressed to identify whether or not the students considered the writing skill important to master the target language and become competent. The majority (88.33%) answered “yes”. This means that the students are aware of the importance of the writing skill to foreign language mastery. However, only 11.66% argued that writing was not an essential skill to master English as a foreign language. From the above data, it is clear that the students are aware of the importance of the writing skill to improve their level in English. Some of the learners, however, are not aware about such prominent role writing as a skill plays in learning EFL.

In this question, the students were also asked to justify their answers. Students who said ‘yes’ justified that writing is important because it helped them to get a good level in vocabulary and in learning new words; they also claimed that writing played an essential role in developing their spelling abilities. On the other hand, students who declared writing as a non-essential skill to master a language explained that speaking and oral communication were more important than writing to improve their level in English. That is, they believed that interaction is the main focus to acquire the language, neglecting the fact that they are assessed in all subjects through the motion of writing. This, again, comes to confirm the results gotten from question 4, stating that that not all of them view writing as central to the mastering EFL.

Q5. What are the writing elements that make your writing effective? Order the elements according to their importance (1: most important 7: least important)

Table 7: Elements of Writing.

Elements	Number	Percentage
Grammar	12	20%
Vocabulary	30	50%
Mechanics	5	8.33%
Style	2	3.33%
Coherence	3	5%
Unity	3	5%
Organization	5	8.33%

The aim of the present study was to know which aspect was the most important for students in their writing process. As shown in table (6), the majority of students (50%) mentioned that vocabulary was the most essential element for effective writing. On the one hand, 20% of the informants claimed that grammar was the most important component for them. 8.33% of the participants indicated that mechanics and organization (8.33%) were the most useful elements in their writing. Also, 5 % went for both coherence and unity, and 3.33% pointed out style. These results reveal that students give importance to these components to improve their writing skills, and demonstrated that they were in need of practicing the aspects of writing with more focus on vocabulary and grammar. On the other

hand, only a percentage of 3.33% opted for style, which, in turn, means that most learners do not care about it in their academic writing. Accordingly, the students arranged these components as follows: 1/ vocabulary, 2/ grammar, 3/ mechanics and organization, 4/ coherence and unity, 5/ style. The above findings confirm the fact that the students are aware of the different writing elements making a good piece of writing, but with varying focus attributed for each.

Q6. Do you encounter difficulties in the writing subject?

If yes, what are these difficulties?

Table 8: The Students’ Perspectives on the Difficulty of the Writing Subject

Option	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	35	58.33%
No	25	41.66%
Total	60	100%

This question investigated the learners’ views on the difficulty of the module of “written expression”, and whether they faced difficulties or not. A considerable number of students (58.33%) acknowledged they met difficulties when doing a writing task, while 41.66% of the students denied the fact that they faced problems in producing a piece of writing. It is clear that writing is viewed as the most complex task to be learned since it involves many elements and required skills. This goes in line with Tribble’s thoughts, as he confirmed the fact that writing was a difficult skill to acquire (p. 65). Indeed, writing is a demanding skill that requires effort, endurance, and practice. Students have indicated that

they have limited vocabulary. Therefore, they struggle in finding the right word for each situation depending on the context.

Q7. Choose the statement that best describes your perspective when writing?

Table 9: Students' Views on the Written Product and Process

Options	Frequency	Percentage
a. I write with more focus on the final written product.	23	38.33%
b. I write with more focus on thinking processes, writing steps (planning, drafting, editing, and revising) and strategies used to write.	37	61.66%
Total	60	100%

As displayed in table 8, it can be noticed that a large portion of students (61.66%) focused on the thinking processes, writing steps, and writing strategies, which help them communicate their ideas more effectively and paves the way for revising and editing to take place. They also viewed writing as a variety of activities which entail a series of stages and strategies that regulate the recursive process of composing, rather than focusing on the final text. As for the remaining 38.33%, they claimed they focused on the final form more than content and the writing strategies. In fact, those students tried to make the final written product as accurately as possible. This means that they strived to develop a clear and comprehensive content, produce grammatically correct sentences, and use appropriate vocabulary. Hence, the results suggest again that the students consider the writing act as crucial to developing the EFL competence and are aware of the different writing strategies implemented for effective practice of writing.

Q8. Does your teacher encourage you to write following a process of steps?

Table 10: Teacher Encouragement for Process Writing.

Options	Frequency	Percentage %
Yes	50	83.33%
No	10	16,66%
Total	60	100%

This question sheds light on the importance of the teachers' encouragement and motivation of the students to following writing steps such as planning, drafting, editing, and revising when they compose paragraphs. The results indicate that a high proportion of students (83.33%) claimed that the teacher encouraged them to follow steps in writing, whereas a minority of students (16.66%) said that the teacher did not motivate them to apply steps when they did so. Owing to the above findings, it is obvious that most teachers encourage their learners to use a variety of stages by setting up tasks and activities to help them follow an organized way of writing. Therefore, it can be concluded that teachers provide students with guided instruction about the different stages of writing and how they can apply them to improve their own learning. This clearly indicates the teachers' awareness and conviction of the importance of using writing strategies for effective practice.

Part Three: Writing Strategies

Before writing

Table11: The Students' Use of Writing Strategies before Writing

Options		Never true	Usually not true	Somewhat true	Usually true	Always true	Total
Statements	Group	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	60 100%
1) I consider what will be assessed in my writing. (Metacognitive)	Skilled writers	3 10%	5 16.66%	6 20%	10 33.33%	6 20%	30 100%
	Less-skilled writers	2 7.69%	8 30.76%	6 23.07%	8 30.76%	2 7.69%	26 100%
2) I consider what the requirements of the writing task are. (Metacognitive)	Skilled writers	2 6.66%	3 10%	7 23.33%	8 26.66%	10 33.33%	30 100%
	Less-skilled writers	2 7.69%	6 23.07%	7 26.92%	7 26.92%	4 15.38%	26 100%
3) I make the purpose of my writing clear. (Metacognitive)	Skilled writers	0 0%	3 10%	6 20%	7 23.33%	14 46.66%	30 100%
	Less-skilled writers	1 3.84%	5 19.23%	6 23.07%	11 42.3%	3 11.53%	26 100%
4) When generating ideas, I write down ideas that come to mind in Arabic. (Cognitive)	Skilled writers	10 33.33%	8 26.66%	5 16.66%	5 16.66%	2 2.66%	30 100%
	Less-skilled writers	2 7.69%	5 19.23%	6 23.07%	8 30.76%	5 19.23%	26 100%
5) When generating ideas, I write down ideas that come to mind in English. (Cognitive)	Skilled writers	0 0%	5 16.66%	5 16.66%	4 13.33%	16 53.33%	30 100%
	Less-skilled writers	3 11.53%	7 26.92%	8 30.76%	5 19.23%	3 11.53%	26 100%
6) I make an outline in English. (Metacognitive)	Skilled writers	3 10%	3 10%	8 26.66%	9 30%	7 23.33%	30 100%
	Less-skilled writers	3 11.53%	7 26.92%	9 34.61%	5 19.23%	2 7.69%	26 100%
7) To generate	Skilled	2	8	7	10	3	30

ideas, I refer to a variety of reading materials. (Cognitive)	writers	6.66%	26.66%	23.33%	33.33%	10%	100%
	Less-skilled writers	1 3.84%	4 15.38%	13 50%	5 19.23%	3 11.53%	26 100%
8) I make an outline in Arabic. (Metacognitive)	Skilled writers	11 36.66%	7 23.33%	6 20%	4 15.38%	3 10%	30 100%
	Less-skilled writers	10 42.30%	6 23.07%	2 7.69%	5 19.23%	3 11.53%	26 100%

The purpose behind inserting this table is to identify which strategies skilled and less-skilled writers used before the writing process. The results tabulated above reveal that the majority of skilled writers 53.33% (33.33% + 20%) considered what will be assessed in their writing, while most of less-skilled writers ignored it (61.52%). Furthermore, almost 60% of skilled writers claimed that the requirements of the writing task were highly taken into consideration before the writing process, whereas a larger part of less-skilled writers (57.68%) showed the opposite. It is also remarked that both high achievers and low achievers had a clear goal to reach (70% and 53.86%). Moreover, a great number of skilled writers (80.68%) were not familiar with using Arabic when generating ideas. In contrast, half of less-skilled writers generated ideas using the mother tongue. In addition, good writers (66.66%) used English when generating ideas, while poor writers (69.21%) did not use the target language when writing down their ideas. Both groups (59.65% and 69.22%) shared the same view with regards to a variety of reading materials when constructing thoughts. On the one hand, high achievers reported to make an outline in English (53.33%), but not in Arabic (74.62%). On the other hand, low achievers did not rely on using an outline both in English and Arabic (73.06%).

As mentioned above, it is clear that almost all skilled writers are aware of using meta-cognitive and cognitive strategies before the writing process. In this respect, they are

able to regulate their writing by constructing a meaningful piece of text through the application of planning, outlining, evaluating, and generating ideas, whereas the majority of less-skilled writers are unconscious about employing meta-cognitive strategies and are partially aware of using cognitive strategies such as referring to a variety of reading materials when generating information and writing down ideas in Arabic.

While writing

Table 12: The Students' Use of Writing Strategies While Writing

Options		Never true	Usually not true	Somewhat true	Usually true	Always true	Total
Statements	Group	N %	N %	N %	N %	N %	60 100%
1) I reread the relationship between sentences repeatedly to check the logical flow. (Cognitive)	Skilled writers	2 2.66%	3 10%	6 20%	7 23.33%	12 40%	30 100%
	Less-skilled writers	5 19.23%	4 15.38%	4 15.38%	10 38.46%	3 11.53%	26 100%
2) I read repeatedly through paragraphs to check the logical flow. (Cognitive)	Skilled writers	1 3.33%	3 10%	8 26.66%	8 26.66%	10 33.33%	30 100%
	Less-skilled writers	1 3.84%	5 19.23%	7 26.92%	11 42.3%	2 7.69%	26 100%
3) To clarify the purpose of the writing, I identify the expected readers. (Communicative)	Skilled writers	3 10%	7 23.33%	4 13.33%	13 43.33%	3 10%	30 100%
	Less-skilled writers	0 0%	8 30.76%	9 34.61%	6 23.07%	3 11.53%	26 100%
4) If I have trouble writing in English, I write what I want to express in Arabic first and then translate it into English. (Cognitive)	Skilled writers	4 13.33%	1 3.33%	8 26.66%	9 30%	8 26.66%	30 100%
	Less-skilled writers	5 19.23%	2 7.69%	4 15.38%	7 26.92%	8 30.76%	26 100%
5) I ask the teacher/a friend about English expressions that I	Skilled writers	2 6.66%	2 6.66%	4 13.33%	14 46.66%	8 26.66%	30 100%
	Less-	1	6	8	5	6	26

do not know or that I want to use. (Social)	skilled writers	3.84%	23.07%	30.76%	19.23%	23.07%	100%
6) To seek additional ideas on a writing topic, I refer to reading materials. (cognitive)	Skilled writers	4 13.33%	5 16.66%	3 10%	10 33.33%	8 26.66%	30 100%
	Less-skilled writers	2 7.69%	4 15.38%	10 38.46%	7 26.92%	3 15.35%	26 100%

This table aims to find out the different strategies used by good writers and poor writers. As demonstrated by the table above, skilled writers read repeatedly to check the logical flow of sentences (63.33%) and paragraphs (60%). Similarly, half of less-skilled writers read sentences and paragraphs to check the logical flow. Good writers (53.33%) identified the expected readers to clarify the purpose of their writing, while poor writers did not (65.37%). The participants of the two groups shared agreement concerning the expression of thoughts in Arabic first, and then translated them into English when they faced difficulties in writing (56.66% and 57.68%). Moreover, the majority of high achievers (73.32%) asked the teacher or a friend when they had insufficient knowledge about English expressions, whereas low achievers (57.67%) neglected the importance of social learning. Finally, skilled writers (60%) referred to reading materials when they sought additional ideas on a writing topic. On the contrary, less-skilled writers (61.53%) disagreed with the use of this strategy.

The obtained results showed that good writers employed cognitive, communicative, and social strategies; which implies that they are responsible for arranging and communicating ideas clearly and asked for assistance when necessary from a more knowledgeable other to ameliorate their performance in writing tests or exams.

After writing

Table 13: The Students' Use of Writing Strategies after Writing

Options		Never true	Usually not true	Somewhat true	Usually true	Always true	Total
Statements	Group	N	N	N	N	N	60
		%	%	%	%	%	100%
1) I read the final draft thoroughly from beginning to end to look for any errors. (Meta-cognitive)	Skilled writers	3 10%	4 13.33%	3 10%	9 30%	11 36.66%	30 100%
	Less-skilled writers	6 23.07%	4 15.38%	7 26.92%	6 23.07%	3 11.53%	26 100%
2) I assess my writing by myself in terms of whether the topic and its supporting ideas are effectively connected. (Meta-cognitive)	Skilled writers	1 3.33%	2 6.66%	5 16.66%	14 46.66%	8 26.66%	30 100%
	Less-skilled writers	2 7.69%	4 15.38%	6 23.07%	11 42.30%	3 11.53%	26 100%
3) I use an English dictionary to correct spellings. (Affective)	Skilled writers	3 10%	5 16.66%	7 23.33%	7 23.33%	8 26.66%	30 100%
	Less-skilled writers	1 3.84%	4 15.38%	7 26.92%	8 30.76%	6 23.07%	26 100%
4) I review my work to look for and correct typing errors. (Meta-cognitive)	Skilled writers	2 6.66%	1 3.33%	5 16.66%	10 33.33%	12 40%	30 100%
	Less-skilled writers	3 11.53%	3 3.84%	7 26.92%	7 26.92%	6 23.07%	26 100%
5) I review my work to look for and correct grammatical errors. (Meta-cognitive)	Skilled writers	1 3.33%	4 13.33%	5 16.66%	8 26.66%	13 43.33%	30 100%
	Less-skilled writers	3 11.53%	3 11.53%	8 30.76%	7 26.92%	5 19.23%	26 100%
6) I seek feedback from the teacher/a friend. (Social)	Skilled writers	1 3.33%	2 6.66%	11 36.66%	10 33.33%	6 20%	30 100%
	Less-skilled writers	4 15.38%	3 11.53%	9 34.61%	4 15.38%	6 23.07%	26 100%

The purpose of the table above is to describe the strategies employed by students with high and low writing ability after the writing performance. It appears that skilled writers (66.66%) read the final draft thoroughly to look for any errors, whereas less-skilled writers (65.37%) did not show interest to correcting errors. The whole population agreed on the assessment of writing by themselves in terms of whether the topic and its supporting ideas were effectively connected (73.32% and 53.83%). Also, it can be noticed that there is a similarity in the use of an English dictionary between good writers (50%) and poor writers (53.83%) to correct spelling. Moreover, both skilled and unskilled writers (73.33% and 69.99%) reviewed their paper to search for and correct typing errors. A high proportion of good writers (70%) stated that they mostly checked their work to correct the grammatical errors, while poor writers (53.82%) indicated the opposite. Finally, (53.33%) high achievers asked the teacher or a friend to see their feedback on their writing process, whereas low achievers (61.52 %) neglected this option in their academic writing.

To conclude, the results showed that both skilled and unskilled writers are similar in terms of the assessment writing by themselves and the revising of their work to correct typing errors. However, with the rest of strategies, the results of skilled and less-skilled writers are totally contradictory.

To improve English writing skills more generally

Table 14: The Students' Use of Writing Strategies for Improvement

Writing strategy	Never true	Usually not true	Somewhat true	Usually true	Always true	Total
1) I try to memorize useful English expressions when reading English books.	11 18.33%	10 16.66%	7 11.66%	15 25%	17 28.33%	60 100%
2) I try to memorize useful English expressions when watching English soap operas or movies.	5 8.33%	10 16.66%	11 18.33%	15 25%	19 31.66%	60 100%
3) I try to memorize	5	8	15	21	11	60

formulaic English expressions.	8.33%	13.33%	25%	35%	18.33%	100%
4) I read numerous English books to become familiar with English expressions.	6	10	14	17	13	60
	10%	16.66%	23.33%	28.33%	21.66%	100%

The target behind addressing this question is to identify which steps or techniques students used to improve their writing skills. As depicted in table (13) above, the highest percentage (53.33%) agreed on memorizing useful English expressions when reading English books, while 46.67% of students disagreed with this idea. In addition, 56.66 % of learners assumed that they tried to memorize beneficial English expressions when watching English soap operas or films, but a percentage of 43.34% of the students denied this idea. Therefore, the majority of student (53.33%) indicated that they try to learn and store formulaic English expressions, whereas (46.67%) ignored the use of such a strategy of learning. Lastly, half of students (50%) claimed to have read numerous English books to become familiar with useful English expressions and the other half (50%) showed the opposite.

The results revealed that most students read English books and watch English movies in order to memorize and store useful English expressions by using them in to enhance the quality of their writing.

2.3. Discussion of the Findings

The present research was meant to shed light on the writing strategies used in a group of EFL students at Jijel University. This section discusses the relationship of students' writing achievement and the type of strategies used. The present section is devoted to the discussion of the results gathered from the writing test and the questionnaire handed to first year LMD students at the department of English. The analysis of the findings helps translate the final conclusions of the study about the different writing strategies used by skilled writers and less-skilled writers will be advanced.

2.3.1. Discussion of the Writing Test Results

In order to evaluate the students' writing achievement, all participants were required to produce a written text in the form of a paragraph. Based on their scores in the test, students were classified into skilled writers and less-skilled writers. The number of the latter was nearly the same as the former. The findings demonstrated that good writers have the potential to produce a well-organized written texts. More particularly, they applied appropriate structures and strategies to maintain a reader's interest. Oxford (1990) claimed that in meta-cognitive strategies, the students have the capacity to identify the purpose of a language task. In relation to our study, the students were asked to perform a writing task. Consequently, they had to set the goal of writing a paragraph so that the audience can easily understand the message conveyed through their writing output. In contrast, poor writers had a low writing ability, which was clearly reflected in their papers. It was also noticed that they had limited goals and insufficient repertoire of writing strategies.

2.3.2. Discussion of the Students Questionnaire Results

From the analysis of students' responses of the questionnaire, it is obvious that the participants have been studying English for a considerable number of years. Since the educational system in Algeria taught EFL, students then have had the opportunity to experience instruction in English in middle and secondary schools. This helped them develop a background knowledge about basic rules of English. The obtained results revealed that most of the participants estimated their level as being good. To clarify, they have a great potential to enhance their ability in performing a writing task. This study showed that obtaining a good level in English writing helps learners to master the core components of writing, for instance, correct use of grammar, sufficient knowledge of vocabulary, clear connection between sentences, completeness of ideas, and mechanics. Notably, these elements play a central role in producing paragraphs successfully at

university level. If students experience a lack of interest or ignore the effectiveness of employing writing components, they will clearly face difficulties in completing the writing task. Another point worth noting is that when EFL students enter higher education studies, they are likely to better understand the significance of writing as it enables them to share their thoughts and improve their communicative skills. Particularly, the assessment of students' academic achievement is more closely linked with competence in the writing skill because instructors evaluate their students through the motion of writing. In this respect, the teacher has a fundamental role in encouraging students to follow and implement a variety of cognitive processes strategies. The teacher is also responsible for training the learners on how to become competent enough to be able to regulate his/her own learning and become autonomous.

It is evident that skilled students and less-skilled students used writing strategies, but with variance in type and frequency. The result disclosed the fact that a great number of students employed more planning, revising, and evaluating strategies than unsuccessful writers. This demonstrates that meta-cognitive strategies are the major contributor to the target language writing skill progress. In fact, the development and interpretation of ideas have to complement the aim of learners' composition. On a similar vein, Saddler and Graham (2007) asserted that skilled writers are more purposeful in their writing and more aware of the writing benefits. Using meta-cognitive strategies is considered as the potential factor for ultimate success because they assist EFL learners to develop their analytical thinking and their existing, hidden multifaceted competencies. In contrast, less-skilled writers do not have an understanding of the meaning of meta-cognitive writing strategies such as revising content and overall organization, which may result from their lack of critical self-awareness of strategy use. It was found that both groups of participants were aware of the use of cognitive writing strategies because they are based on the

understanding of the internal processes of the mind. Cognitive strategies enable students to generate ideas, put sentences together into a coherent paragraph, and manipulate the reading materials.

One cannot deny the fact that good writers give more importance to social strategies as they want to benefit writing instruction by asking for clarification of an ambiguous point or even asking for assistance from a teacher or peers, so they can add or delete sentences and correct spelling and grammatical mistakes. However, poor writers are not exposed to feedback and guidance from instructors because they believe they are a sign of their weakness in writing. As a result, they do not fix their writing in terms of structural rules. Furthermore, the results revealed that the two groups of respondents draw attention to communicative and affective writing strategies because they consider the use of tools (English dictionary) in addition to identifying the expected readers as a driving force to avoid gaps when writing in the target language. Students rely on some techniques to improve writing skills such as reading articles and books as well as watching films and videos to memorize useful words and expressions in order to employ them in their writing.

To sum up, writing strategies play an essential role in influencing students' learning outcomes. The findings of the present study propose that there is substantial correlation between the use of writing strategies and writing achievement. That is to say, students who use strategies more often are able to get higher scores, and vice versa. Skilled writers have greater ability and flexibility to employ all writing strategies with differences in frequency. The dominant strategy used by good writers was meta-cognitive strategy because they possess command of high order thinking skills. On the other hand, less-skilled writers mostly use cognitive, affective, and communicative strategies.

2.4. Limitations of the Study

Any academic research work may be subject to many obstacles and weaknesses that need to be acknowledged either in content or in methodology. Indeed, the following limitations, mainly practical ones, can be outlined:

- ✓ Given the lack and unavailability of original resources, especially electronic books, reviewing the relevant literature caused troubles for the researchers.
- ✓ Only sixteen participants were involved in the investigation; thus, the results are not likely to be generalized to the whole population.
- ✓ Many participants were not cooperative enough because they skipped some parts of the questionnaire, especially questions with justifications.
- ✓ The present study took place in a limited time span, and this prevented us from opting for more elaborated statistical considerations of correlation studies.

2.5. Pedagogical Recommendations

Throughout the present research work, we attempted to investigate the effectiveness of using writing strategies in enhancing the students' writing achievement. Likewise, the findings revealed how the implementation of writing strategies can affect the development of the writing abilities of students. As such, we would like to recommend the following:

- Extra class hours should be allotted to teach writing as a skill in order to multiply opportunities for practice.
- The adoption of process-oriented approaches and the writing strategies at university level when teaching writing has always shown effective and is highly desirable.
- Strategy training is highly recommended. Specific sessions devoted to instructing students on how to use writing strategies should be scheduled right from the beginning of the composition sessions.

- Teachers should encourage students to use writing strategies because motivation changes their learning style as they become active learners in the classroom and improve their level in academic writing.
- The students should read more books and watch films and videos to ameliorate their writing performance.
- Teachers should provide students with constructive feedback so that they can identify their areas of strengths and weaknesses.

2.6. Suggestions for Further Research

From the discussion of the study findings and the limitation that were identified in the design of the current study, possible recommended research topics might include:

1. Generalizability of the findings is limited because of the study's small size (N=60). In order to extend the findings of this study, a wider range of students should be studied. This would give more information on how to deal with and assist students' writing strategies.
2. The researcher of this study focused on first-year undergraduate students. Other researchers can investigate the type of writing strategies used by different level of EFL student writers.
3. Research could take the study for longer duration in future studies to enrich the effects of writing strategies on student's writing achievements.
4. The present study did not include the use of class observations, which may be more effective to elicit information about the problematic areas of writing faced by the students and which writing strategies they employ to achieve their academic purposes.
5. The current study did not consider gender as a key variable. Furthermore, more research is needed to investigate to what extent gender affects the EFL students' writing processes and strategies.

Conclusion

This chapter has been devoted to discuss and interpret the findings obtained from the analysis of both the students' questionnaire and writing test. The main findings of the undertaken analysis showed that writing strategies are effective in the writing process. The results revealed that the majority of first year students use language learning strategies in their writing. According to the students' scores in the written test and their responses in the questionnaire, it can be said that most of them consider planning, drafting, editing, and revising as essential strategies to write a good paragraph. That is to say, many of the learners have good writing abilities. In addition, the study also disclosed how students with high writing ability differ from those with poor writing ability. Thus, the study hypothesis is confirmed. Finally, some recommendations for both students and teachers have been suggested in order to raise their awareness concerning the significance of the previously presented strategies.

General Conclusion

Writing is a productive and communicative skill as well as a complex process in foreign language learning that students need to master to achieve their academic goals. Nowadays, many students are not able to achieve good results in writing using the target language. They need to operate some writing strategies to attain intended learning outcomes and solve some language related problems. Writing strategies are a set of plans, tools, techniques, and processes that help learners compose a written message. Writing strategies are operated deliberately by an individual writer to solve problems or achieve goals during the writing process. The purpose of this research is to investigate the relationship between the use of writing strategies and students' writing achievement. Put differently, the present study intended to figure out the strategies that are mostly used by skilled writers and less-skilled writers.

This dissertation consists of a general introduction followed by two main chapters and a general conclusion. The first chapter is a review of the literature which tackles the major concepts related to our study variables and an overall theoretical framework. The second chapter is about the research design and methodology. It presents the procedures of data collection, data analysis, and discussion of the findings. Finally, a general conclusion that provides a summary of the outcomes gained from the research, as well as the limitations of the study and the recommendations proposed that may help future language learners.

It is a matter of fact that writing strategies are vital in the process of writing, namely, meta-cognitive strategies, cognitive strategies, affective strategies, and social and communicative strategies. These strategies can influence the learners' writing performances. That is, skilled writers who got good scores in the writing test achievement proved to employ more strategies than their lower proficient peers. Results also revealed that both groups of participants used writing strategies, but with different number and type. The students with poor writing abilities used cognitive strategy as a dominant strategy, while students having good writing performance used all writing strategies, but especially meta-cognitive strategies. The results of the present study showed that there is a positive correlation between LLSs and writing achievement. This indicated that more successful achievement in writing may be predicted the use of LLSs or simply the more strategies students employ, the higher their writing achievement.

In conclusion, learners need to be aware of the importance of strategy use and its role in enhancing their writing skills. This means devoting much more time, effort, and expertise, on the part of learners and teachers alike, to revisiting the dynamics of the writing classroom and its specificities, with the intent to render instruction more effective, learner-centered, and geared towards learner autonomy and successful teaching and learning of writing.

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Appendices

Appendix I: The Students Questionnaire

Appendix II: The Writing Achievement Test

Appendix III: Students' Scores of the Paragraph Writing Test

Appendix IV: Samples of Skilled Writers' paragraphs

Appendix V: Samples of Less-Skilled Writers' Paragraphs

Appendix I:

Questionnaire for Students

Dear students,

This questionnaire is part of a research work aiming at investigating the use of writing strategies and EFL students' writing proficiency at the English department of Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia University. Please read the following questions carefully, tick (✓) in the appropriate box (es), or write comments when necessary.

Part One: Background Information

1. How long have you been studying English?

.....

2. How would you estimate your level in English writing?

a. Excellent

c. Average

b. Good

d. Poor

Part Two: Students' Views on the Writing Skill

3. How often do you write in English?

a. Always

c. Sometimes

b. Usually

d. Never

4. Do you consider writing as an essential skill to mastering English as a foreign language?

a. Yes

b. No

• Please justify.....

5. What is the writing element that makes your writing effective? Order the elements according to their importance (1: most important → 7: least important)

Grammar	
Vocabulary	
Mechanics (spelling, punctuation, and capitalization).	
Style	
Coherence	
Unity	
Organization	

6. Do you encounter difficulties in the writing subject?

- a. Yes
- b. No

• If yes, what are these difficulties?

7. Choose the statement that best describes your perspective when writing :

- a. I write with more focus on the final written product
- b. I write with more focus on the thinking processes, writing steps (planning, drafting, editing, and revising) and strategies used to write

8. Does your teacher encourage you to write following a process of steps?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Part Three: Writing Strategies

The survey addresses the entire writing process (**before writing, while writing, and after writing**). After reading each statement, please indicate how **true** the statement is for you.

- **Table A1**

Before writing

Writing strategy	Never true	Usually not true	Somewhat true	Usually true	Always true
9. I consider what will be assessed in my writing.					
10. I consider what the requirements of the writing task are.					
11. I make the purpose of my writing clear.					
12. When generating ideas, I write down ideas that come to mind in Arabic.					
13. When generating ideas, I write down ideas that come to mind in English.					
14. I make an outline in English.					
15. To generate ideas, I refer					

to a variety of reading materials.					
16. I make an outline in Arabic.					

- **Table A2**

When writing

Writing strategy	Never true	Usually not true	Somewhat true	Usually true	Always true
17. I reread the relationship between sentences repeatedly to check the logical flow.					
18. I read repeatedly through paragraphs to check the logical flow.					
19. To clarify the purpose of the writing, I identify the expected readers.					
20. If I have trouble writing in English, I write what I want to express in Arabic first and then translate it into English.					
21. I ask the teacher/a friend about English expressions that I do not know or that I want to use.					

22. To seek additional ideas on a writing topic, I refer to reading materials.					
--	--	--	--	--	--

- **Table A3**

After writing

Writing strategy	Never true	Usually not true	Somewhat true	Usually true	Always true
23. I read the final draft thoroughly from beginning to end to look for any errors.					
24. I assess my writing by myself in terms of whether the topic and its supporting ideas are effectively connected.					
25. I use an English dictionary to correct spellings.					
26. I review my work to look for and correct typing errors.					
27. I review my work to look for and correct grammatical errors.					
28. I seek feedback from the teacher/a friend.					

- **Table A4**

To improve English writing skills more generally.

Writing strategy	Never true	Usually not true	Somewhat true	Usually true	Always true
29. I try to memorize useful English expressions when reading English books.					
30. I try to memorize useful English expressions when watching English soap operas or movies.					
31. I try to memorize formulaic English expressions.					
32. I read numerous English books to become familiar with useful English expressions.					

Thank you for your cooperation



Appendix III

N	Students' Scores of the Paragraph Writing Test
1	4
2	7
3	4.75
4	2.5
5	3.3
6	7
7	1
8	4
9	3.5
10	3
11	5.5
12	4.5
13	2.5
14	4.25
15	3
16	3.5
17	6
18	5.5
19	5
20	4
21	3.5

22	4.5
23	2.5
24	4.5
25	4
26	3.5
27	3
28	3
29	3.25
30	2.75
31	3.75
32	4
33	5.5
34	7
35	3.5
36	4
37	3.5
38	3
39	5
40	5
41	3.5
42	3.25
43	5
44	4.75
45	4

46	4.75
47	3.25
48	5.5
49	7.75
50	3
51	3.5
52	3.5
53	1.25
54	4
55	4.25
56	4

Appendix IV

Samples of Skilled Writers' paragraphs

Sample 1

...easily. People who exercise have a healthier heart, too. Finally, exercise reduces stress and helps you have a clear mind. Too much stress can cause you to worry a lot, and that is not good for your health. ...to can elude it... all, exercising can be a life savor for ~~some~~ people.

Exercise 5: Write a paragraph about a memorable event or a memorable experience in your life. Underline your topic sentence. Make sure you use transition signals and correct punctuation. (7 pts)

↪ One of the unforgettable memories in my life is my 19th birthday party. It was a usual day for me. I wake up and headed straight to work, I remember I had a lot of things to do that day, thus, it was very tiring and disappointing. After a long day of cleaning and organizing shelves, the sun sat down and I get to finally go back home. It took me a 10 minute walk to arrive, which wasn't that bad to be honest. I got home and opened the door to find, to my surprise, all of my family members waiting for me, my sister had prepared me a cake while my little sibling decorated the room. I was really surprised, I didn't see it coming. We sat on the table and ate the cake while laughing on my dad's old jokes which he tells us every single time we gather together but they get funnier and funnier with time. It was a really heartwarming moment for me, I felt appreciated, loved and welcomed. I am forever thankful for that day, even if it may not seem like a big deal for others, but for me, it was worth a mountain of gold. Best of luck! ☺

2 6/17 7 34

There are many excellent reasons for exercising several times each week. First, people who exercise look better. Exercise is important to keep our bodies in good shape. In addition, people who exercise have more energy. For example, a person who exercises can walk up stairs or climb hills more easily. People who exercise have a healthier heart, too. Finally, exercise reduces stress and helps you have a clear mind. Too much stress can cause you to worry a lot, and that is not good for your health. In short, exercising has many benefits.

Exercise 5: Write a paragraph about a memorable event or a memorable experience in your life. Underline your topic sentence. Make sure you use transition signals and correct punctuation. (7 pts)

A memorable event I had and I will always remember was the day of the basketball results. I spent all the day, stressed and scary, waiting the hour the link works in. When I put my information to see my result, my hands were moving, and my main and siblings were around me. Then, the result appeared on the screen, it was fifteen. In fact, the happiness I saw on my mother's eyes made me more proud. After that, my grandfather and my aunt came to celebrate my success with us, and they gave me some gifts. Next, we went together to my second aunt's house because her daughter succeeded too. We sang, celebrated, and had dinner there with other family members that followed us to my aunt's house. Finally, we went back home happily at night with my eldest brother. Indeed, I will never forget that day.

Best of luck! ☺

There are many excellent reasons for exercising several times each week. First, people who exercise look better. Exercise is important to keep our bodies in good shape. In addition, people who exercise have more energy. For example, a person who exercises can walk up stairs or climb hills more easily. People who exercise have a healthier heart, too. Finally, exercise reduces stress and helps you have a clear mind. Too much stress can cause you to worry a lot, and that is not good for your health. *Exercising several times a week is a lot of advantages & experiences. An overall good body health.*

Exercise 5: Write a paragraph about a memorable event or a memorable experience in your life. Underline your topic sentence. Make sure you use transition signals and correct punctuation. (7 pts)

My Bac Exam is the memorable experience in my life. Because of many reasons, first, it was the most important part of my life. I had a lot of changes in my life. From this exam, I was in a difficult situation and I can't stand of myself because I made it. More over, it was the first experience that makes me do all my best to get the best mark.

My Bac Exam result makes my parents very happy and proud of me; that's why I will never forget this unforgettable experience. Finally, when I remember that I am in the university and I get good marks in Bac Exam, I feel like a baby when she gets gets shoes for her birthday. After she can be doing well.

Appendix V

Samples of Less-Skilled Writers' Paragraphs

Sample 1

many excellent reasons for exercising several times each week. First, people who exercise look better. Exercise is important to keep our bodies in good shape. In addition, people who exercise have more energy. For example, a person who exercises can walk up stairs or climb hills more easily. People who exercise have a healthier heart, too. Finally, exercise reduces stress and helps you have a clear mind. Too much stress can cause you to worry a lot, and that is not good for your health.

The benefits of exercise are many. So every one should exercise.

Exercise 5: Write a paragraph about a memorable event or a memorable experience in your life. Underline your topic sentence. Make sure you use transition signals and correct punctuation. (7 pts)

going on a trip to Oregon was the best experience in my life, and the best beach course. First, I was always down learning to go to Oregon. Second, I really like the city. That is so beautiful and special for a lot of places to visit. Then, the people there are very kind and they made a really nice car food, plus, I find there a lot of Oregon on celebration and for the first time of my life I see them making a film. I also like that is a awarded city, and the people can go out in the night. Then I can go to Oregon in a really great event. Finally, I hope that it will go there for an other time.

This is not the topic you were asked for develop!

2

Best of luck! ☺

There are many excellent reasons for exercising several times each week. First, people who exercise look better. Exercise is important to keep our bodies in good shape. In addition, people who exercise have more energy. For example, a person who exercises can walk up stairs or climb hills more easily. People who exercise have a healthier heart, too. Finally, exercise reduces stress and helps you have a clear mind. Too much stress can cause you to worry a lot, and that is not good for your health. To conclude, exercise is essential for our health.

Exercise 5: Write a paragraph about a memorable event or a memorable experience in your life. Underline your topic sentence. Make sure you use transition signals and correct punctuation. (7 pts)

A memorable experience in my life is the Race exam. First of all, I initially had a hard and difficult year for me. Moreover, I struggled to get good grades and made my parents happy. Further more, I got very stressed. I found some difficulties in math's but I tried to make all my efforts. Also, to save all the selfish people that you can do it. To conclude, my Race exam is hard and difficult experience but it still is an amazing experience; it can't forget it.

9/5

Sample 3

Exercise 5: Write a paragraph about a memorable event or a memorable experience in your life. Underline your topic sentence. Make sure you use transition signals and correct punctuation. (7 pts)

My 11th birthday is the most memorable day of my life. It is a day I can never forget and I consider it to be the best birthday yet the day started just like any other normal day. However, as it kept progressing a lot exciting things began to happen.

I woke up very early on my birthday because I had to dress in casual clothes for school. The day before, all my candies were ready that I would distribute in the classroom.

My mother prepared my favorite breakfast and gave me a big chocolate bar for lunch as well. I went to school and the whole class sang for me and congratulated me. I was the first to distribute sweets. Best of luck! ☺

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Résumé

L'écriture est considérée comme une compétence cruciale et un élément essentiel dans le processus de l'enseignement et de l'apprentissage. L'étude descriptive actuelle vise à étudier la relation entre l'utilisation de la stratégie d'écriture et la réussite en écriture des étudiants de première année de licence LMD EFL. Plus précisément, l'objectif de cette étude est de déterminer quelles stratégies d'écriture sont utilisées par les écrivains expérimentés et celles utilisées par les écrivains moins expérimentés dans leurs tâches d'écriture. L'étude est dirigée par l'hypothèse que les étudiants de première année de licence EFL avec des niveaux élevés de réussite en écriture sont conscients des différentes stratégies d'écriture et les utilisent lors de l'écriture plus que les étudiants avec de faibles niveaux en écriture. En rapport avec les objectifs de l'étude descriptive actuelle, et afin de répondre aux questions de recherche, deux outils de collecte de données ont été utilisés : un test d'écriture et un questionnaire conçu et adressé à 60 des 241 étudiants de première année de licence au département d'anglais, Mohammed Université Seddik Ben Yahia, Jijel. Les résultats ont révélé que la plupart des élèves utilisaient des stratégies d'écriture, mais avec différents types et fréquences. Les résultats ont également montré que les écrivains qualifiés rapportaient une utilisation fréquente des stratégies métacognitives, tandis que les écrivains moins qualifiés indiquaient qu'ils utilisaient principalement des stratégies cognitives. Une autre constatation a révélé que les élèves qui ont utilisé des stratégies d'écriture dans leur test ont obtenu de meilleurs résultats que ceux qui ne les ont pas utilisées. Sur la base des résultats de l'étude ci-dessus, quelques recommandations pédagogiques sont suggérées.

ملخص

تعتبر الكتابة مهارة وعنصر اساسي في عملية التدريس والتعلم. تهدف الدراسة التحليلية الحالية الى التحقق من العلاقة الموجودة بين استخدام استراتيجيات الكتابة وتطور الإنجاز الكتابي لطلاب السنة الاولى قسم لغة انجليزية. بتعبير أدق، الهدف من هذه الدراسة هو تحديد استراتيجيات الكتابة التي يستخدمها كل من الطلاب ذوو القدرات الكتابية الجيدة والمنخفضة في مهامهم الكتابية. تم توجيه الدراسة من خلال الفرضية القائلة بأن طلاب السنة الأولى من كلية اللغة الإنجليزية ذوي المستويات العالية من التحصيل الكتابي على دراية باستراتيجيات الكتابة المختلفة ويستخدمونها عند الكتابة أكثر من الطلاب ذوي المستويات المنخفضة من التحصيل الكتابي. وعليه، من أجل الإجابة على أسئلة البحث، تم استخدام أداتين لجمع البيانات تم تصميم اختبار كتابي واستبيان وتوزيعهما على 60 طالبًا من أصل 241 طالبًا من طلاب السنة الاولى قسم اللغة الإنجليزية لجامعة محمد الصديق بن يحيى بولاية جيجل. كشفت نتائج الدراسة أن معظم الطلاب استخدموا استراتيجيات الكتابة، ولكن مع وجود اختلافات في نوع الاستراتيجيات المستخدمة ومدى استعمالها خلال فترة الكتابة. وعلاوة على ذلك، فقد كشفت هذه النتائج أن الكتاب ذو المستوى الجيد أبلغوا عن استخدام متكرر لاستراتيجيات ما وراء المعرفية، بينما أشار الكتاب ذوو المستوى الأقل إلى أنهم استخدموا في الغالب الاستراتيجيات المعرفية. ومن النتائج الملاحظة ايضا ان الطلبة الذين استخدموا استراتيجيات الكتابة في اختبارهم سجلوا درجات أعلى من الطلاب الذين تجنبوا استخدام هذه الاستراتيجيات في عملية الكتابة الخاصة بهم. وبناء على النتائج المحصلة، تم اقتراح بعض التوصيات التربوية