An Ethnographic Study of the Difficulties Faced by

Secondary School Students while Writing in English

The case of third year students in Bouhrine Echerrif and

Mati Ahcen secondary schools.

Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for Master degree in
Language Sciences

Submitted by: **Supervised by:**

Nadjma Boulhidja   Malika Nouri

Noussaiba Boufris

Board of Examiners:

Supervisor: Malika Nouri   Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia University-Jijel

Examiner: Loubna Kouira   Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia University-Jijel

Chair Person: Messaouda Arzim   Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia University-Jijel

2016

An Ethnographic Study of the Difficulties Faced by Secondary School Students While

Writing in English

Nadjma Boulhidja

Noussaiba Boufris

Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia University-Jijel

Dedications

To my precious mother;

To my beloved father;

To my dearest sisters: Meriem, Hadjer, Bessma;

To my lovely brothers: Hassen, Hocine, Haroun;

To my dearest husband Mouhamed;

To my best friends: Ilham, Luiza, Noussaiba, Sara, Amina, khadidja, Radia;

To my extended family;

I dedicate this work.

Nadjma Boulhidja

Dedications

To the dearest persons to my heart: My parents

To my brothers: Sohaib, Ishak, Abdessamia, and Youness;

To my sisters: Amina and Nesrine;

To all my friends especially: Hala, Nora, and Selma;

To the kindest friend with whom I made this work: Nadjma;

To my relatives;

I dedicate this work.

Boufris Noussaiba

Acknowledgements

Abstract

The current study aimed at investigating the different writing difficulties that are faced by third year secondary school students while writing in English in Mati Ahcen and Bouhrine Cherrif secondary schools, during the academic year 2015-2016. Three research tools were used: a questionnaire, classroom observation, and analysis of students' papers. The questionnaire was administered to 80 third year secondary school students in order to figure out their opinions about the writing skill and its main aspects that present challenging areas for them. The classroom observation was conducted for about two months, the process of learning to write in English was observed naturally. We, also, analysed the students' papers to figure out the main aspects of writing that secondary school students make errors in. The results obtained revealed that third year secondary school students face many difficulties while writing in English and that grammar, organization, mechanics are the most challenging aspects of writing encountered by the students. This confirms the pre-mentioned hypotheses.

List of Abbreviations and Symbols

%: Percentage

N°: Number of subjects

BAC: The Baccalaureate Exam

CA: Communicative Approach

CBLT: Competency-Based Language Teaching

CV: Curriculum Vita

EAK: El-Amir Abd-el-kader

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ESL: English as a Second Language

FL: Foreign Language

GTM: Grammar Translation Method

L1: First Language

L2: Second Language

Q: Question

SL: Second Language

USA: The United States of America

List of tables

List of figures

Table of contents

Chapter One: The Writing Skill

General Introduction

1. Background of the study

2. Statement of the problem

3. Aims of the study

4. Research questions/ hypothesis

5. Means of research

6. Structure of the study

An Ethnographic Study of the Difficulties Faced by Secondary School Students while Writing

in English

1. Background of the Study

Learning any SL or FL is largely based on the acquisition of the four skills: speaking, reading, listening and writing. This letter was neglected for many centuries as many historical accounts have shown; writing has always been of secondary concern, it was a mean either of practicing or sustaining and reinforcing other skills.

Through time, ESL researchers recognized the great importance that writing occupies in developing the learning process. It has been found that writing is the last language skill to be acquired, despite this; it is of paramount influence on the learners' level of proficiency. Hence, writing is considered, by EFL learners, as a very demanding task to achieve. Richard and Renandya (2002, p.303) argued that "there is no doubt that writing is the most difficult skill for L2 to master". So, writing is regarded as one of the main obstacles, faced by EFL learners in order to develop their language.

The difficulty of the writing skill is a matter of considerable concern not only for EFL students, but also for teachers who believe that teaching the writing skill is more difficult than teaching other communicative skills. Although EFL learners try hard to produce good pieces of writing, they still face many difficulties to achieve the purpose because of the complexity of the writing skill; which becomes more complex with the advance of writing genres and its use in other different fields. The main difficulties faced by EFL learners are related to both structure and content. EFL learners usually have problems in producing accurate works in terms of: grammar, vocabulary, spelling, punctuation and capitalization.

In addition, they may lack the ideas that may illustrate the topic or sometimes, they may bring irrelevant ones which hinder their writing proficiency.

2. Statement of the Problem

English is taught as a foreign language in Algeria. Secondary school students are known of their weak performance at foreign languages, in general, and writing specifically. During their writing process, secondary school students encounter many difficulties which prevent them from enhancing their writing works. The common difficulties are related to complex grammatical structures, poor vocabulary, incorrect spelling, and ignorance of conventions. These reasons may lead to an inappropriate work full of errors reflecting a low-level of language proficiency.

3. Aims of the Study

This study aims at figuring out the difficulties that are encontered by secondary school students while writing in English. It sheds light on the different aspects of writing that students' errors are related to.

4. Research Questions/Hypothesis

This study seeks to answer the following research questions:

• Do secondary school students face difficulties while writing in English?

• Which aspects of writing do secondary school students have problems with?

• What are the main difficulties that affect the writing performance of secondary school students?

In the light of what has been previously said, the hypothesis which the present study revolved around runs as follow: secondary school students have many difficulties while writing in English.

5. Means of Research

Beiske (2002, p.1) claimed that "while factors such as time and costs certainly play an important part in deciding how to approach a particular research problem, the subject of the research itself should ultimately determine the methods used". Because each researcher should opt for the right method that suit his/her own research topic, we have used both qualitative and quantitative means of research. We have used a questionnaire, classroom observation, and analysis of student's works since they are appropriate with the nature of our study and meets the research aforementioned aims; all these research tools are applied with the same students in Bouhrine Echerrif and Mati Ahcen secondary schools.

A questionnaire was administered in order to collect numerical data. The questionnaire is directed to 80 secondary school students (third year) of letters and foreign languages stream. They have been chosen because English is an important subject in their stream, and they have an acceptable background in English language. We have, also, used classroom observation and analysis of students' works as qualitative methods. The classroom observation is conducted to obtain realistic data from the learning environment. The analysis of students' works is used to identify the different aspects of writing that secondary school students face difficulties in.

6. Structure of the Study

The current study is divided into two chapters. The first chapter is devoted to the theoretical background of the study, in which we provide the definition of writing, its importance, types and stages…etc. In addition, we discuss the different aspects of writing that present an obstacle for the learners like: grammar, vocabulary, cohesion, coherence…etc. The second chapter is concerned with the empirical part of the study. It deals with the analysis and interpretation of the results obtained through the different adopted research tools.

Chapter one: The writing skill

Introduction

1. The writing skill

    1.1. Definition of writing

    1.2. Writing through the major teaching approaches

        1.2.1. Grammar Translation Method

        1.2.2. Audiolingualism

        1.2.3. Communicative Approach

        1.2.4. Competency- Based Language Teaching

    1.3. Types of writing

        1.3.1. Exposition

        1.3.2. Description

        1.3.3. Narrative

        1.3.4. Argumentative

        1.3.5. Compare and contrast

    1.4. Stages of writing

        1.4.1. Pre- writing

1.8. Difficulties faced by EFL learners while writing

1.8.1. Grammar

1.8.2. Vocabulary

1.8.3. Mechanics

1.8.4. Organization

1.8.5. Coherence and cohesion

1.8.6. Content

1.9. Feedback and error correction

1.9.1. Types of feedback

1.9.1.1. Explicit/Implicit feedback

1.9.1.2. Positive/Negative feedback

1.9.1.3. Surface/Content feedback

1.9.2. Characteristics of constructive feedback

1.9.3. The importance of feedback

1.10.   The importance of writing in an EFL classroom

1.11.   Writing in the third year secondary school syllabus

Conclusion

Chapter One: The Writing Skill

Introduction

One of the main problems for EFL learners, is the fact that many of them cannot develop their writing skill since they believe that writing is the most difficult and sophisticated skill compared to other skills.

This chapter provides a theoretical background about the writing skill. First, it begins with a general definition of writing with a historical background regarding writing through the major teaching approaches. Then, it moves to a more detailed description of the writing skill by giving its types, stages, and different approaches to teach it. In addition to that, it includes the types of the writing tasks, its importance, and the various characteristics of effective writing. Some ways of assessing the writing skill are also discussed, in addition to the major writing difficulties that secondary school students may face while writing in English. Last but not least, the chapter presents the aspects of the writing skill that are included in the third year secondary school syllabus

1.1. Definition of Writing

Writing, as well as speaking, are the two main means of communication between people. Writing has existed from the early beginnings of primitive life through signs, symbols, and graphs. Graham and Perin wrote "from the cave paintings in Lascaux, France, which may be 25000 years old, to the images left behind by the lost Pueblo cultures of the American Southwest, to the ancient aboriginal art of Australia, the most common pictographs are rock paintings in the human hand" (2007, p.1).

The concept of writing has developed from being a presentation of signs and graphic symbols to a complex cognitive process. Weigle claimed that no one can give a full understanding of the writing skill because it has different uses by different people in different situations (2002, p.3). But, the writing skill is distinguished from other skills. Most of the definitions of writing have dealt with only one of its characteristics; as a result, they are classified according to the characteristics of writing: complexity, reflection, and sociability. First, it is a complex activity which involves the use of different cognitive abilities. White and Arndt (1991) stated that:

> Writing is a form of problem- solving which involves such
>
> process as generating ideas, discovering voice with which to
>
> write, planning, goal setting, monitoring and evaluating what is
>
> going to be written, and searching with language with which to
>
> express exact meanings (p.3).

Second, EFL learners use writing as a reflection of what they master of the target language as Clark pointed out "writing is a reflection to what can occur only after the main ideas are in place" (2003,p.8). Also, Chakraverty and Gautum supported the same idea when they say"writing is a reflective activity that requires enough time to think about the specific topic and to analyse and classify any background knowledge" (2000, p.38). Third, the writing skill, now, is considered as a social activity that has a specific communicative purpose, and not just an individual work. Hyland (2003, p.27) claimed that "While every act of writing is in a sense both personal and individual, it is also international and social, expressing a culturally organized purpose, reflecting particular kind of relationship and acknowledging an engagement in a given community".

While the learners are writing, they are affected by their ideology and personal opinions. Shokrpoor and Fallahzadeh (2007) summarize the key features of writing in the following definition "writing is a complex activity, a social act which reflects the writer's communicative skills which is difficult to develop and learn, especially in an EFL context".

1.2. Writing in the Major Teaching Approaches

Writing has been approached in different ways by the major teaching approaches. Each approach has a specific view towards writing, and focuses on one of its aspects. We may divide the history of second language writing to three major approaches: Grammar Translation Method (GTM), Audiolingualism, and the Communicative Approach (CA).

1.2.1. Grammar translation method (GTM)

GMT was one of the most traditional methods used to teach a foreign language. It was used to teach classical languages such as Latin and Greek. Originally, this method was based on translation from the target language with the aim of enabling learners to read and to appreciate the target language literature. Richards and Rodgers pointed out that "the goal of foreign language study is to learn a language in order to read its literature or in order to benefit from the mental disciplines"(1986, p.5). Under this method, the language is learned through learning its grammar rules. Again, Richards and Rodgers stated that:

> Grammar Translation is a way of studying a language that
> approaches the language first through detailed analysis of its
> grammar rules, followed by application of this knowledge to the
> task of translating sentences and texts into and out of the target
> language (1986,p.5).

 Hence, writing is seen as a back up to grammar and it was limited to translation of texts from L1 to L2 or vice versa; it was just a process of copying ideas and forms. Writing was in margin and used as a by-product of literature.

1.2.2. Audiolingualism

Audiolingualism, which started in USA before the 1950s, focused on the oral form of language by stressing pronunciation and intonation to sound like native speakers. In this method, language is speech and oral skills are of primary importance. Teaching writing is delayed because the early introduction of the written form was regarded as a threat to master the target language sound system. According to Rivers, if written skills take precedence over oral skills at an early stage of language learning, the development of a near-native accent will be hindered, because foreign language written symbols have associations with native language pronunciation. Writing under this method is imitative; the learners write only the models that have been introduced. Writing is used to realize the drills, introduced to learners, to help them in their memorization.

1.2.3. Communicative approach (CA)

Within the coming of Communicative Approach in the early 1970s, writing was highly focus. It was recognized as the bulk of learning any foreign language. CA brought new insight in the way we process writing. Even though, writing is still a means of supporting other skills, it is considered as a whole skill with components, principles, and techniques. Furthermore, writing in CA is communicative in nature; it is where learners express their ideas and opinions to an audience. Raimes viewed that "some feel that writers do their best when writing is truly a communicative act with the writer writing to a real reader" (1983, p.9). In addition, Pincas said that writing in its communicative dimension can be grouped under three main headings. The first one involves communicative skills, in which writing is functional. The second one involves organization skills, where it is a question of coordinating ideas, building paragraphs,

and employing linking words. The third and the last one relates to stylistics skills, in which the four main styles have to be handled: narrative, descriptive, expository, and argumentative. (1984). Moreover, writing is error-free; i.e. learners are not obliged to focus on accuracy as much as they should focus on meaningful communication. Ur pointed out that "correction does not involve all the mistakes, focus is on the mistakes that interfere with the conveying of meaningful messages" (1991, p.171).

1.2.4. Competency-based language teaching (CBLT)

CBLT was an educational movement which emerged in the USA in the 1970s. It came with the focus on the output of learning, which can be defined in the competencies. CBLT is a learner-centred approach; it put emphasis on the learner's social and personal development. Consequently, writing was seen as a social activity. The learners reinvest the acquired competences outside the classroom in real life situations. So, writing is held as a useful activity for learners in which they explore their knowledge inside and outside classroom.

1.3. Types of Writing

Writers while writing have different purposes and different audiences; some of them may write in order to inform or explain a given idea while others may write to express their feelings and emotions. These different forms of writing are known as types of writing. The most common ones are:

1.3.1. Exposition

This type of writing involves the writer in presenting facts, data, and information about a given subject instead of personal opinions, or viewpoints. That is, the writer does not try to defend or support an opinion. This is what was supported by Dornan (2007, p.124) "expository writing concentrates, or sets forth, information, ideas, and analysis…its main

purpose is to inform a reader". The writer can produce an excellent expository writing if s/he achieves the final goal.

1.3.2. Description

As the name suggests, descriptive writing involves describing a given person, place or thing. The writer tries to create the real picture or situation in the mind of the reader. The writer might use the five senses to present his description in more effective ways, as Zemach and Rumisek stated "effective description makes the general more specific by engaging the senses" (2003, p.25). A good descriptive writing incorporates the assertion of specific details, the use of metaphors similes, and symbols.

1.3.3. Narrative

The narrative type of writing is all about storytelling which could be fact or fiction "narrative writing conveys experience, either real or imaginary, and uses time as its deep structure" (Common Core State Standards Initiative, p.23). It is considered to be the easiest type of writing since it conveys what exactly happened. Its main aim is to entertain the readers. It usually follows a given structure consisting of five elements: the setting, characters, problem, events, and resolution.

1.3.4. Argumentative

Dornan (2007, p.142) claimed that "argumentative writing attempts to change or reinforce someone's opinion or to convince someone to take action". Hence, the writer states his opinion and attempts to persuade and influence the reader. That is to say, the writer tries to get the reader see things from his/her way, through utilizing the power of words. The argumentative writing includes debate and negotiation to reach a mutually acceptable conclusion.

1.3.5. Compare and contrast

In this type of writing, the writer should include both the similarities and the differences in one piece of writing to enable the reader to have a clearer picture. For Zemach and Rumisek (2003, p.40) "to compare means to discuss how two peoples, places, or things are similar…to contrast means to discuss how two people, places, or things are different". It helps the reader to know the advantages and disadvantages in order to make his decision. It involves opposing two different concepts, ideas… to highlight their similarities and differences.

1.4. Stages of Writing

As mentioned in the early definition, writing is not a simple activity, but a complex process. It consists of five basic stages, even though, these stages are just a routine and they are done unconsciously, they help EFL learners to be conscious of their writing.

1.4.1. Pre-writing

The key feature for a good writing piece is the planning. It presents a warm-up to the writing activity, according to Peha (2002, p.3) "it gets your mind loose and limbers so that by the time you are ready to start drafting". EFL learners, in this stage, need to figure out what they are going to write about and to whom. Hedge (2003, pp.52-53) viewed that before writing, a good writer should consider two important points: what is the purpose of this piece of writing and to whom am I writing for. This can help to give a shape to the piece of writing. First of all, EFL learners should specify their topic by answering the; who, what, where, when, and how of the topic. Then, they start collecting ideas and information using many helpful techniques like:

- Brainstorming   - Making lists of ideas

- Free-writing   - Using outlines

- Drawing diagrams

1.4.2. Drafting

In this stage, the learners have the plan and are ready to start. It is time to put the ideas in paragraph form. Drafting is like free-writing method, but with more direction. In this stage, the learners focus on the content and neglect language and mechanics. According to Brown and Hood (1989, p.14) "this is not the time to worry about spelling, grammar, punctuation or best wording". While writing, learners keep referring back to the notes and to the outline that is determined in the pre-writing stage, but they can change it when it is necessary.

1.4.3. Revising

It is the most important stage in the writing process. In this stage, the learners try to accomplish the purpose of their writing; they have to answer the two following questions: Do I say what I wanted to say? Do I say it in a clear and in an appropriate way? It is also where the learners revise their content by checking some points like: if the ideas are presented logically, is the form of writing correct is the information enough and appropriate for the reader. Modifying may take many forms: adding, rearranging, removing, and replacing. The revision stage may take place while drafting or after finishing a draft. In order to make their revision effective, learners should see the work from the reader's point of view.

1.4.4. Editing

It is also called "proof-reading". In this stage, learners go over their work with a magnifying glass to remove every single small error that may spoil the piece of writing. They edit and correct errors to improve their style and clarity. In the revision stage, learners focus on appropriate content. Now, the turn is for the conventions; they should make sure of

grammar, sentence structure, word-choice, capitalization, punctuation, spelling, and word-order. Actually, the work is considered as a final draft.

1.4.5. Publishing

EFL learners write in order to communicate their ideas and opinions in English. So, they should share their writings through publishing. This latter makes the writing activity meaningful for the learners. For example, in an EFL class the main reason for a learner to write is to impress the teacher. There are many ways of publishing written works in an EFL class like turning in a paper to the teacher and writing for the school newspaper. Writing is already a hard and complex work. The breaking down of this process into manageable stages helps the EFL learners in making the task easier and more successful.

1.5. Approaches to Teach Writing

Many approaches emerged with different insights about how the writing process should be taught. Each approach has a specific focus; it can be on the product of writing, its process, creative writing, or it can be on the study of different genres. According to Hyland (2003,p.2), no approach can replace the other; instead, they should be viewed as complementary. In other words, the teacher draws on the different approaches.

The following diagram shows what writers have to deal with as they produce a piece of writing (Raimes, 1983, p. 6)
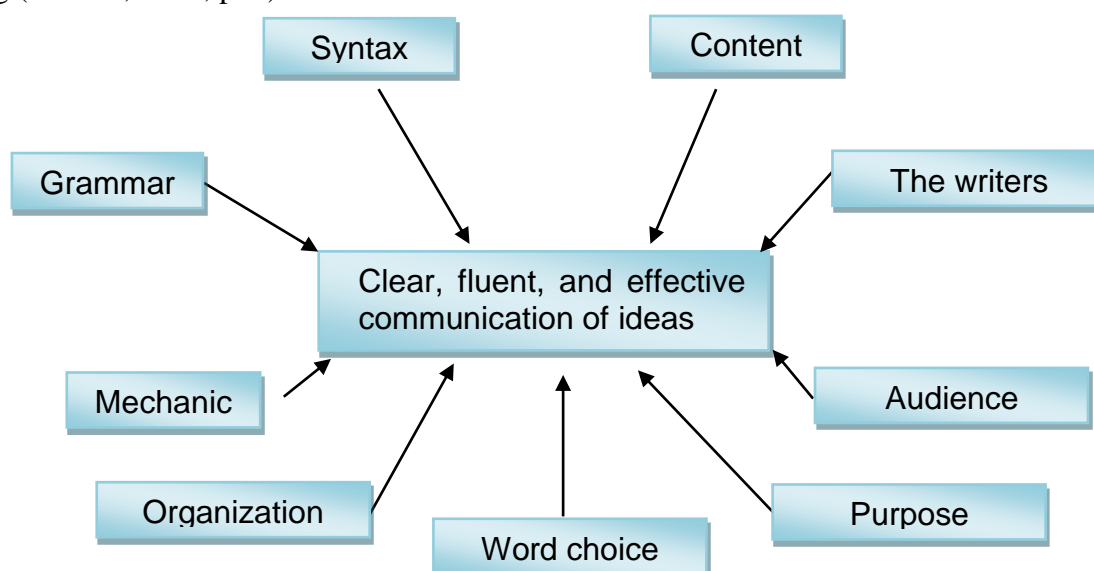
Figure 01 Producing a piece of writing.

1.5.1.   The controlled- to- free approach

According to Raimes,"the controlled- to- free approach in writing is sequential : students are first given sentence exercises, then paragraphs to copy or manipulate grammatically by, for instance, changing questions to statements, present to past, or plural to singular" (1983, p.6). As a result of the implementation of these types of exercises, EFL learners will be able to avoid errors in their writing and to achieve a high level of accuracy. This approach stresses three features of the diagram above, grammar, syntax, and mechanics. This approach is made of four main stages:

 1- Familiarization: Learners are taught certain grammar and vocabulary, usually through a text.

2- Controlled writing: Learners manipulate fixed patterns, often from substitution tables.

 3- Guided writing: Learners imitate model texts.

 4- Free writing: Learners use the patterns they have developed to write an essay, letter, and so forth. (Hyland, 2003, pp.3-4)

The role of the teacher decreases gradually from controlled writing to free writing and EFL learners are allowed to try some free compositions only when they reach an intermediate level of proficiency.

1.5.2.   The free- writing approach

This approach is mainly based on the assumption that students' ability to write develops when they write frequently about interesting topics. Thus, EFL learners are encouraged to write as much as they can with only minimal correction of errors. "the emphasis in this approach is that intermediate- level students should put content on page, grammatical accuracy, organization and the rest will gradually follow" (Raimes, 1983, p.7).

The role of the teacher in this approach is restricted to helping students to realize their meanings through writing. Also, the teacher emphasizes fluency by asking students to write about something of interest for them without worrying about grammatical and spelling mistakes. In brief, the teacher does not correct the short pieces of writing of the students; rather, each student has to read aloud his writing. In this way, the focus is put on the audience and content which are considered as the chief parameters in this approach (Raimes, 1983, p.7).

1.5.3. The product approach

As the name indicates, the product approach focuses mainly on the aim of a task and on the end product. As Nunan claimed "the product approach to writing focuses on the end result of the act of composition, i.e. the letter, essay, story and so on" (1989, p.36).

Learning writing following this approach requires EFL learners to, first, study the model text and the highlighted features of the genre. Second, practice the highlighted features in isolation. Third, organize the ideas. Finally, produce a comparable text. (Steele, 2004; as cited in Kamrul Hasan and Moniruzzaman, 2010, p.79).

In this respect, Nemouchi stated that:

> The model text is always viewed as the starting point. It is studied
>
> and analyzed from all points of view: grammatical structure,

sentence organization and rhetorical features. After being able to use these items skillfully, students are given a new topic and asked to produce a parallel task. (Nemouchi, 2008; as cited in Chaouch 2011, p.20).

In the product approach, the process of writing is totally ignored. That is, the first model itself is a final product of someone else. Nemouchi argued that:

Not only does the model come first in the teaching sequence, it also shows a finished text. In other words, the focus right from the start is on the product, which is, of course, someone else's writing. What the model does not demonstrate is how the original writer arrived at that particular? In other words, it gives no indication of process. (Nemouchi; as cited in Chaouch, 2011, p.21).

1.5.4. The process approach

As opposed to the product approach, the process approach is mainly based on the identification of all stages that the writer follows to produce effective writings. Also, it is more concerned with fluency. According to the principles of this approach as Raimes stated "learning to write is seen as a developmental process that helps students write as professional authors do, choosing their own topics and genres and writing from their experiences or observation" (1983,p.78)

The major aim of this approach is to make the stages of writing clear to students which are, as demonstrated by Steele, brainstorming, planning/ structuring, mind mapping, writing the first draft, peer feedback, editing, final draft, evaluation and teacher's feedback.(Steele, 2004 ; as cited in Hasan and Moniruzzaman, 2010, p.79).

The process approach is a cyclical approach; EFL learners receive feedback on their draft and revise their evolving text before producing the final draft.
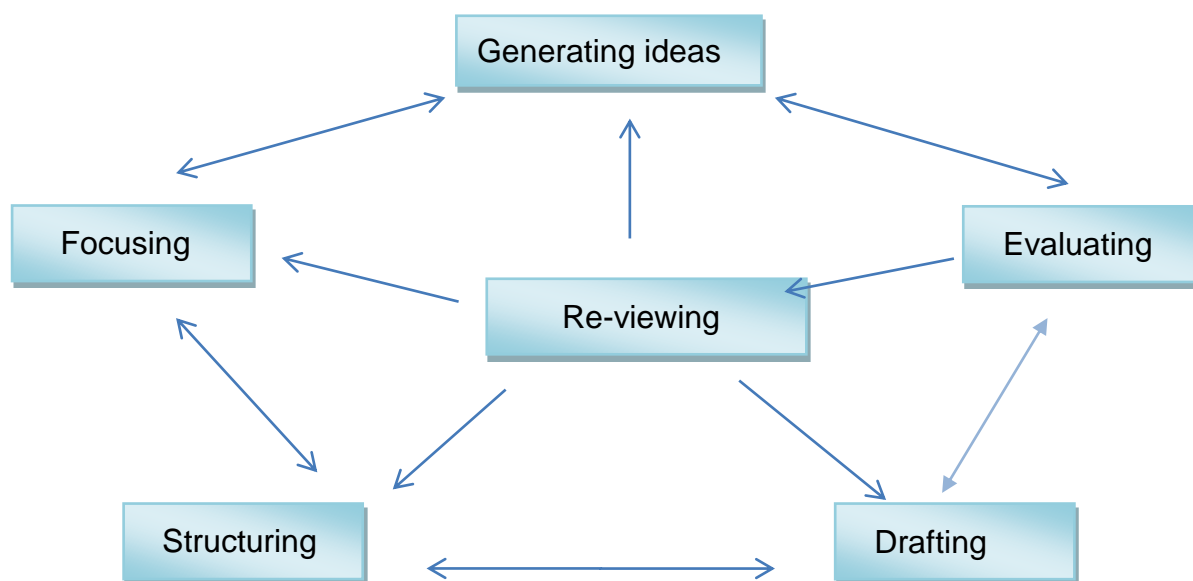
Figure 2. A model of writing (White and Arndt's (1991, 43) diagram of process writing)

White and Arndt's diagram (1991) offers teachers a framework which tries to capture the recursive, not linear, nature of writing.

The following table provides a summary of the major differences between the product and the process approaches:

Table 01

Product and process writing: A comparison (Steele, 2004, p.1)

Process writing	Product writing
Text as a resource for comparison	Imitate model text
Ideas as starting point	Organization of ideas are more important than
More than one draft	ideas themselves
More global, focused on purpose, theme text	One draft
type i.e. reader is emphasized	Features highlighted including controlled

Collaborative	Practice of those features
Emphasis on creative process	Individual
	Emphasis on end product

The process and the product approaches to writing are the most common and the most applied ones by teachers. Both of them could be of great benefit for the learners, but, their use depends on the objective of the writing course.

1.5.5. The genre approach

The genre orientation to the writing instruction sees writing as a social and cultural practice. Its main focus is the language and discourse features of a particular text and the context in which the text is used. EFL learners are first provided with a text then they analyse its lexical and grammatical features and practice them extensively. Later, they have to imitate a certain genre in order to produce their owns.

Hyland claimed that "the writer is seen as having certain goals and intention, certain relationships to his order, and certain information to convey and the forms of a text are resources to accomplish these" (2003, p.18), That is to say, the genre approach focuses more on the reader and on particular conventions which are related to different text- types.

Halliday developed a Systemic Functional Linguistic theory, during the 1970's, in which he made a relation between the language form and its social functions. This means that texts with the same structure have the same purposes, thus, they belong to the same genre. (as cited in Hyland, 2003, p.19)

Genres are goal- oriented and staged in that writing instruction begins with the purposes for communication then moves to the stages of a text which can express these purposes. (Martin, 1992; as cited in Hyland, 2003, p.19)

Table 02

A comparison of genre and process orientations (Hyland, 2003, p.24)

Attribute	Process	Genre
Main idea	Writing is a thinking process Concerned with the act of writing	Writing is a social activity Concerned with the final product
Teaching focus	Emphasis on creative writer How to produce and link ideas	Emphasis on reader expectations and product How to express social purposes effectively
Advantages	Makes process of writing transparent Provides basis for teaching	Makes textual conventions transparent Contextualizes writing for audience and purpose
Disadvantages	Assumes L1 and L2 writing similar Overlooks L2 language difficulties. Insufficient attention to product Assumes all writing uses same processes	Requires rhetorical understanding of texts. Can result in prescriptive teaching of Texts Can lead to over attention to written products Undervalue skills needed to produce texts.

The process and the genre approach to writing are different in that, they have different

insight about writing, their main focus is also different…etc.

1.6. Types of writing tasks

In second language writing, there are two types of tasks. They are authentic tasks in

which the students replicate challenges faced in the real world such as writing an application

latter or CV…etc. The second type of tasks are known as the pedagogical tasks ; they are

designed to develop the genre knowledge and composing skills, such as improving learners

punctuation, developing pre-writing abilities, or increasing an understanding of rhetorical forms.

Second language learners should first start with pedagogical tasks in order to build the competence required to accomplish real word objectives at a later stage (Hyland, 2003, p.113).

In general, classrooms writing tasks can be devised into two major categories which are controlled and guided writing. In controlled writing tasks, the outcome is predictable, either right or wrong. The most known controlled writing tasks are:

Jigsaw sentences: the student matches the halves of several sentences and write them out.

Copying with correction: the class writes a paragraph, changing incorrect details.

Find and copy: this is a vocabulary expanding exercise. The writing can be of words, phrases or of whole sentences.

Sentence combining: the class is given a passage written in short sentences; they combine these sentences, using appropriate connectives, which are scrambled, with extra ones as distracters.

Sentence reduction: the class copies a passage, taking out all unnecessary words, making only minor necessary changes to the original structures.

Dictogloss: this is essentially a note taking exercise.

On the contrary of the controlled tasks, the guided tasks give more opportunity for the learners to explore the language. These are the major guided writing tasks:

Picture description: students compose a few questions about the picture they answer in writing in the form of a description.

Formal practice: a grammar point can become the basis of a guided paragraph to practice for example the passive voice.

Summary: after a passage has been read intensively, it can be rewritten in a summary focusing on the major points of content.

Replying to letters: the students reply to a stimulus letter, writing in a natural way, but answering a certain number of requests from information to shape the response.

Newspaper clippings: newspaper headlines can be given as a starter of students' writing activity, creating the full article.

Story completion: it consists in building up a story, with the writers responding to what others have written.   (Bouchair, 2013)

1.7. Characteristics of Effective Writing

Foreign language writing is considered as one of the most difficult and challenging skills in the learning process. Many researchers such as Richard (1990), Hedge (1990), Starkey (2004), Brown and Hood (2008) and Beverly (2011) identify the essential elements of good writing differently. The main elements of effective writing which are discussed by these researchers comprise grammar, vocabulary, mechanics, organization, coherence and cohesion.

1.7.1. Grammar

There is no doubt that grammar takes a big role in any language and that the connection between grammar and writing is of great importance. According to Beverly (2011, p.1), "grammar is a way of describing how a language works to make meaning". For a piece of writing to be considered good, it has to follow the rules of grammar. In this respect, Nunan (1989, p.37) asserted that successful writing involves the use of grammatical system to

convey one's intended meaning. Learning the rules of grammar and their uses helps the reader to understand the message from a piece of writing. Also, it can help them to avoid making errors. Researchers who stress the essential role of grammar in writing argue that writing cannot be assessed as good without accuracy.

1.7.2. Vocabulary

The writing process is basically linked to the reading process, and the reading process is heavily dependent upon   vocabulary. In other words, effective writing involves the use of adequate vocabulary. Hedge asserted that "effective writing requires a number of strong things: ...a careful choice of vocabulary, grammar patterns, and sentence structures to create a style which is appropriate to the subject matter and the eventual readers" (1990, p.7).

Having a large stock of words can help the learners to say what they mean. Also, it helps them to convince, clarify, and make their written text interesting. Good vocabulary use refers to the appropriate selection of words rather than having a large amount of words. Pikulski and Templeton stated that:

> It seems almost impossible to overstate the power of words; they
>
> literally having changed and will continue to change the course of
>
> world history. Perhaps the greatest tools we can give students for
>
> succeeding, not only in their education, but more generally in life,
>
> is a large, rich vocabulary and the skills for using those words
>
> (2004, p.1).

1.7.3. Mechanics

Mechanics is a critical component of writing that addresses its technical aspects. This includes spelling, punctuation and capitalization. Brown and Hood considered spelling and punctuation as writing sub-skills (1998, p.26). Having these items in a reading material allows

it to be properly understood. Starkey claimed that "The majority of grammar, punctuation, and capitalization mistakes are just a few dozen common ones. If you learn these   common errors and how to avoid or correct them, your writing will greatly improve" (2004, p.39).

1.7.4. Organization

Organization is an important criterion in effective writing. It is simply the logical progression and completeness of ideas in a text. It typically refers to the flow of details and information. If the writer chooses a clear, recognizable pattern, he will find it easier to select details and choose transitions. In this way, readers can discover the relationships that connect things. In the same account, Starkey claimed that "by following one of the organizational methods … you will guide your first to last sentence. S/he will be able to see how the various points you make in your essay work together and how they support your thesis" (2004, p.2).

In addition, a well-organized piece of writing supports readers by making it easy for them to follow, while a poorly organized piece disconfirms the expectations of the readers. Having good organization means writing well in general.

1.7.5. Coherence

Broadly speaking, coherence refers to the logical connection of ideas in a paragraph or composition. In other words, it refers to the unity created between the ideas, sentences, paragraphs, and sections of a piece of writing. Richard defined coherence as "the notion of coherence is used to refer to the overall semantic structure and unity of a text. Coherence is a fundamental requirement of written discourse" (1990, p.104)   .

According to Canale, for a text to have coherence the following conditions must be met:

1- Development: presentation of ideas must be ordered and convey a sense of direction.

2- Continuity: there must be consistency of facts, opinions, and writer perspective, as well as reference to previously mentioned ideas.

3- Balance: A relative emphasis (main or supportive) must be accorded each idea.

4- Completeness: the ideas presented must provide a sufficiently thorough discourse.

          (Canale, 1982; as cited in Richard, 1990, p.104)

1.7.6. Cohesion

Cohesion means the connection of ideas at the sentence level or at the paragraph level. According to Halliday and Hassan, "the concept of cohesion is a semantic one; it refers to relations of meaning that exist within the text and that define it as a text" (1976, p.4).

Thus, cohesion refers to the linking relationships that are explicitly expressed in the surface of the text. It focuses on the "lexical" and "grammatical" aspects of writing. To achieve cohesion, the link of one sentence to the next, the writer uses some techniques like transitional words, such as therefore, for instance. Also, he may repeat the key words, use synonyms and antonyms...etc.

For Halliday and Hassan, there are five types of cohesive ties: reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunctions and lexical.

1- Reference: the children did not come because *they* wanted to stay inside.

2- Substitution: we wanted to buy some glasses and finally bought some French *ones*.

3- Ellipsis: "would you like to hear another verse? I know twelve *(verses)* more."

4- Conjunction: "I was not informed. *Otherwise* I would have taken some action"

5- Lexical: Henry presented her with his own portrait. As it happened she had always wanted a portrait of Henry.

1.8. Difficulties Faced by EFL Learners while Writing

Despite the importance of writing in EFL classes, it presents a difficult complex task. Consequently, the learners faced many difficulties in different areas of writing. Kroll (1990, p.140) supported this view when he states" writing is frequently a difficult skill for any language user, which is to say that writing presents a fairly challenging task for both native and non-native speakers. For English as a second language, ESL students, it seems fair to say that writing academic papers is particularly difficult". There are many areas in which EFL learners face difficulties, but the most common ones are:

1.8.1   Grammar

Having good knowledge of grammar enables the learners to master the major portion of the foreign language. Grammar presents the core of any foreign language. Unfortunately EFL learners still have difficulties in grammar; some of them are related to L1 interference and others to L2 interference itself. These latters are called developmental errors, which are signs of learners' progress of mastering English language. These errors are caused by overgeneralization or incomplete application of grammatical rules. English, itself, has many grammatical points which are difficult to learn such as: complex structures, the use of tenses, and appreciation of the form "it"…etc. Most grammatical errors fall in the following categories: subject-verb agreement, verb tense and form, the use of negative form, run on sentences, prepositions, word order, articles, and plurality.

1.8.2   Vocabulary

Among the difficulties faced by EFL learners while writing is poor vocabulary. EFL learners face problems related to vocabulary which hinder their writing proficiency. As Shelby (2016, p3) put it "vocabulary is one of the most comprehensive and difficult aspects of English for a foreign learner to master thoroughly". Having a good repertoire helps the learners to generate more ways for expressing their ideas. Yet, the English language has large

vocabulary which makes the writing task very demanding for the EFL learners. Also, English contains a lot of homophones that trick the learners and lead them to confusion and misunderstanding of words and ideas. Furthermore, thinking in the mother tongue and writing in English presents a cause for poor vocabulary. EFL learners use limited vocabulary because they do not find the equivalent of words in English. Again, they are obliged to use the same vocabulary words without any extension to more words and hence more ideas.

1.8.3   Mechanics

Mechanics are also called "conventions", these are features of writing that specify the way of writing in any language. Mastering the three mechanics spelling, punctuation, and capitalization ensures a well written work. Unfortunately, many EFL learners find it difficult to achieve them. For the learners, spelling is the most challenging task because it is difficult to guess how to spell a word in English based on how it sounds because English is full of these tricky spellings. Saddler (2006), Thomson and Snow (2002) supported the same idea when they report that learning to spell in a language like English is not an easy task, many students find difficulties to generate the correct spelling of the words they want to use in their writing (as cited in Westwood, 2008). For example "pronounce (verb)" and "pronunciation (Noun)", the learners cannot expect such difference between the two words. EFL learners consider punctuation as an unimportant aspect of good writing. It is very demanding because there is a significant difference between pauses in writing and pauses in speaking. Also Brown and Hood (1998, pp.26-34) believed that spelling and punctuation are writing sub-skills. Therefore, they provide many strategies to avoid committing mistakes that generally cause confusion. Consequently the misuse of a punctuation mark may lead to confusion in meaning, for example:

a- The passengers, who travelled early, were killed in the accident (it means all the passengers).

b- The passengers who travelled early were killed in the accident (it means only some).

Furthermore, capitalization seems to have a negative effect on learners' writings. It misleads the learners, and hence, affects their writing negatively.

1.8.4   Organization

Organization presents a serious problem to EFL learners in that the organization patterns differ according to genre; from writing an essay to a letter, from a speech to an article, from an invitation to an e-mail…etc. Also, they differ according to the type of discourse (argumentative, narrative, descriptive…). Many EFL learners lack the knowledge of organizing a cause / effect task or selecting the model which is appropriate to their topic and level. They fail to organize the sentences and paragraphs systematically and arrange them logically. Mkude (1980, p.62) pointed out that "they often fail to appreciate the value of organizing linguistic material strategically so to secure the maximal impact. A gain, this weakness can be seen within and across sentences". Poor organizing may lead to misunderstanding of ideas, hence, the failure to communicate the purpose of writing.

1.8.5   Coherence and Cohesion

By the appearance of communicative competence and mainly discourse competence, the great focus shifts towards coherence and cohesion. Discourse competence is based mainly on producing a sequence of sentences that are linked with cohesive devices (cohesion) and ordered in a logical way (coherence). Consequently, the learners, to produce meaningful texts, need more than grammar. Many EFL learners face various difficulties in achieving coherence and cohesion. Learners, while trying to produce cohesive texts, commit a lot of errors. On one hand, some of them are related to L1 interference. The sameness of some cohesive devices in the general meaning, but the difference in the use misleads the learners. On the other hand, some other errors result from L2 itself. In English, there are many cohesive devices which

have multiple uses, and sometimes they overlap with each other. In addition to this, coherence seems more difficult to be achieved than cohesion. Maintaining the same point of discussion or providing a logical order of ideas in a written work is a hard task for EFL leaners because their problem is in the recognition of coherence ; organizing from the simplest to the most difficult, from less important to more important, …etc.

Coherence and cohesion present a big challenge for EFL learners who need to master them in order to ensure the effectiveness of their writing.

1.8.6   Content

In addition to the previous problems like: lack of grammar rules, deficient vocabulary, and poor organization, EFL learners face another difficulty which is poor content. The knowledge presented in the writing task should be interesting and beneficial for the learners; nevertheless, it all depends on their willingness to perceive this knowledge. Hence, the learners want to write about topics that interest them and fall under their field of knowledge; they can write about topics that they have information and ideas to develop them. But unfortunately, most of times, the learners are obliged to write about pre-selected topics. This may lead them to deal with some topics that they do not have enough ideas to build effective illustration. According to Davies (1993) "…interest in the subject matter, perception of its usefulness, general desire to achieve,…" (p.3).Hence, the topics of the writing activities should be of great interest and clear enough for the learners to help them produce good pieces of writing, however, most EFL learners fail to achieve this purpose.

1.9. Feedback and Error Correction

1.9.1.   Types of feedback

It is a matter of fact that EFL learners commit different types of errors in their writing; consequently, they receive different types of feedback. The teacher provides his/her learners

with the type of feedback that is likely to be appropriate to the kind of error. There are many criteria to classify the types of feedback, but the most common dichotomies are:

Explicit/implicit feedback

Positive/Negative feedback

Surface/Content feedback

1.9.1.1. Explicit/Implicit feedback

Explicit feedback, also called "direct feedback", happens when the teacher makes a direct comment on the learners' errors. He says directly that there is an error and it should be corrected. It was defined By Carrol and Swain (1993) as the feedback that "overtly states that a learner s output was not a part of the language to be learned". The teacher may use the following expressions to indicate the error: "that is wrong", "no, you should say"…. In this type of feedback, the teacher may cross out the error, identify the type of error, and provide the correct form. According to Ellis, Loewen, and Erlam (2009, p.303), explicit feedback can take two forms:

a- A clear indication of the learner's errors with explicit correction, for example:

not taked $\longrightarrow$ Took

b- Metalinguistic feedback which is related to the well-formed utterances of the learners. For example, you need the present tense.

Implicit feedback or indirect feedback, on the ot her hand, occurs when the teacher indicates the location of the error or its type without giving the correct form. This type of feedback motivates the learners to search for the error and try to correct it. EFL learners are led by implicit feedback to self-correction. This latter maximizes their opportunity to internalize the correct form. Unfortunately, this type of feedback does not ensure that the

learners, after receiving the feedback, can provide the correct answer. At first glance, it seems relevant to the learners to correct themselves, but in fact, their correction itself may be wrong because of the ignorance of the rule or because of any other reasons.

Thus, a combination of explicit and implicit feedback helps the teacher to build up an effective feedback that can be received differently by the learners.

1.9.1.2. Positive/Negative feedback

Positive feedback, according to Dekeyser (2007, p.112), consists of "information that the process is successful". This is provided by the teacher when the learner makes an acceptable output .He either praises or compliments his learners for the correctness and relevance of performance. Senior summarized the previous explanation saying "when the student says an utterance which is free of stuttering, the teacher immediately follows with a reinforcement comment that praises the child' s speech" (2006,p.47). Positive feedback helps EFL learners to develop a positive attitude towards writing and encourages them to be involved in the learning process. It is evident that when the teacher shows his satisfaction of the correct answer and his support to his learners, he fosters motivation for students to continue learning and for classroom to be more active.

On the other hand, negative feedback was defined by Dekeyser (2007, p.112) as "information that certain utterances or types of utterances are impossible in the language being learned". It is occurred when an unacceptable or wrong output is performed; it presents a criticism to the learners. Similarly, Hyland defined criticism as "an expression of dissatisfaction or negative comment on any written assignment" (2004, p.44). On the contrary of positive feedback, negative feedback is considered as an unpreferable comment by the learners, because it presents a threat to their progress and painful when it occurs in front of classmates. Even though the negative feedback leads the learners to feel anxious about their

progress, it plays a crucial role in raising their awareness of their errors and the importance to give more focus to their works.

1.9.1.3. Surface/ Content Feedback

When EFL learners write, they focus on two major aspects of their written works: the form which is related to the type of genre, and the content which is generally specified by instructions and learners opinions. Consequently, the learners receive two types of feedback which are: surface (form) and content feedback. Williams (2003) differentiated between form and content feedback when he states that form feedback is concerned much with surface errors, either by indicating the place and type of error with correction or just indicating the error. However, content feedback consists of comments which figure out the problem and provides suggestions. This latter should be used by the learners to correct their drafts. Some researchers, in EFL field, see that content feedback is more important than form feedback, in that, it helps the learners in the organization of their ideas, and so, a successful piece of writing can be submitted. Nevertheless, other researchers argue that content feedback without form feedback can lead to a disaster; correcting grammar errors is more preferable and effective than giving comments on the content.

1.9.2. Characteristics of constructive feedback

Feedback, now, is considered as a major aspect of language pedagogy. Its crucial role led to the emergence of many investigations concerning its types, time of occurrence, and effectiveness. Teachers are not anxious about providing feedback or not, but about which type is relevant and how to make it more effective and beneficial for the learners. An effective feedback should help the learners to construct their progress. So, Nicol (2003, p.3) suggested a table containing the main features of constructive feedback to help the teachers to be aware of their feedback.

Table 03

Ten principles of good assessment and feedback practices

Good assessment and feedback practices should:

1. Help clarify what good performance is (goals, criteria, standards)

To what extent do students in your course have opportunities to engage actively with goals, criteria and standards, before, during and after an assessment tasks?

2. Encourage "time and effort" on challenging learning tasks.

To what extent do your assessment tasks encourage regular study in and out of class and deep rather than surface learning?

3. Deliver high quality feedback information that helps learners self-correct.

What kind of teacher feedback do you provide-in what ways does it help students self-assess and self-correct?

4. Encourage positive motivational beliefs and self-esteem.

To what extent do your assessments and feedback processes activate your students' motivation to learn and be successful?

5. Encourage interaction and dialogue around learning (peer and teacher-student).

What opportunities are there for feedback dialogue (peer and/or tutor-student) around assessments tasks in your course?

6. Facilitate the development of self-assessment and reflection in learning.

   To what extent are there formal opportunities for reflection, self-assessment or peer assessment in your course?

7. Give learners choice in assessment-content and processes.

   To what extent do students have choice in topics, methods, criteria, weighting and/or timing of learning and assessment tasks in your course?

8. Involve students in decision-making about assessment policy and practice.

   To what extent are your students in your course kept informed or engaged in consultations regarding assessment decision?

9. Support the development of learning communities.

   To what extent do your assessments and feedback processes support the development of learning communities?

10. Help teachers adapt teaching to student needs.

   To what extent do your assessment and feedback processes help inform and shape your teaching.

Teachers, to ensure the achievement of their learning objectives, may vary between the types of feedback. Also, they can use different strategies to provide their learners with all possible feedback that can help them to recognize their errors and raise their awareness. A major strategy that can be used in written feedback is the "editing code". Many researchers

establish different kinds of editing codes, but the most common is the one provided by Hedge

(2005, p.140):

Table 04

The writing codes

WF	Wrong form
WW	Wrong word
T	Wrong tense
^	Something is missing
Sp	Wrong spelling
WO	Wrong word order
P	Wrong punctuation
V	Wrong verb form
//	New paragraph is needed
Ø	Not necessary
⌐⌐	Do not need new sentence
?	Do not understand what you are trying to say
∿∿∿	Is not right. You need clearer expression. The teacher provides one.
[ ]	This part needs to be rearranged or reworded.
!!	You really should know what is wrong here because we have just done it in class.

teachers for ensuring a good learning environment, they focus on providing effective

feedback; this can be done through varying its types and trying to tackle the majority of the

EFL learners.

1.9.3. The importance of feedback

The importance of feedback is widely acknowledged by many researchers. However, this importance varies from one researcher to another. For some of them, feedback has a critical effect on the learning process. Feedback can be used as a motivating tool in order to involve the learners in the writing task, as Wlodkowski and Ginsberg (2010, p.141) stated:

> Feedback occurs to enhance the motivation of learners to evaluate their progress, locate their performance within a framework of understanding, maintain their efforts towards realistic goals, self-assess; correct their errors efficiently, self-adjust, and receive encouragement from their instructors and peers.

Another role of feedback is that it is a sign of the learners' progress. When the learners receive feedback, they can locate their level and try hard to improve it.

1.10. The Importance of Writing in an EFL Classroom

Writing, in general, is one of the most important skills in learning a foreign language which needs great investment from the learners. Bacon stated that "in English learning classroom, the teacher aims at developing four skills of his/her learner: ability to understand, to speak, to read, and to write. The ability to write occupies the last place in this order, but it does not mean that it is least important" (as cited in Mandal 2009). Writing presents one of the main tools of communication between people. It is used to express ideas and transmit thoughts. In an EFL class, writing is not just a way of communication, but a means used by learners to develop their learning process. Writing, in an EFL class, helps the learner to acquire the system of the language as Raimes (1983, p.3)supported this idea saying "but the fact that people frequently have to communicate with each other in writing is not the only reason to include writing as a part of second language-syllabus. There is an additional and very important reason: writing helps our students learn. How? First, writing reinforces the

grammatical structures, idioms, and vocabulary that we have been teaching our students".
Furthermore, writing is used by EFL learners to develop their self-expression, especially for
shy learners to show their strengths of mastering the FL. Again, Raimes added "when our
students write, they also have the chance to be adventurous with the language, to go beyond
what they have just learned to say, to take risks…when they write, they necessarily become
very involved with the new language; the effort to express ideas and the constant use of eye,
hand, and brain in a unique way to reinforce learning" (1983, p.3). Besides that, practicing
writing skill helps EFL learners to be familiar with the different types of writing such as
letters, reports, CVs…etc. Finally, a learner's written work may be exploited by the teacher to
identify the learner's progress and level of proficiency.

1.11.   Writing in the Third Year Secondary school Text book

The syllabus of third year students "new prospect" is based on competency-based
language teaching. It contains six units, but foreign language students are only concerned with
four units. Each unit deals with a specific theme.

Unit 1: exploring the past

Unit 2: ill-gotten gains never prosper

Unit 3: schools: different and alike

Unit 4: keep cool

Table 05

The main writing tasks in the third year secondary school syllabus(New prospects)

	Think, pair, share	**Say it in writing**	**Writing development**
Unit1	-Expository essay (challenges faced by modern civilization) -Short talk (modern civilization has kept changing at a fat paste!)	-Short historical account (The development of western civilization)	-Organization of pictures (narrative) -Ancient Greek (myth of Ulysses)
Unit2	-Short public statement (fight corruption) -Opinion article/argumentative (fight counterfeiting)	-Argumentative essay (ethics in business)	-Policy statement (Ethical investment)
Unit3	-Poems (wish poems) -Letter(describing your school) -Recommendations for the BAC examination	-Description (ideal school)	-Expository article (causes and effects of examination stress on students)
Unit4	-Replying to a letter -Newspaper article (feelings and emotions expected from Algerian women and men)	-Speech(eradicate violence in sports)	-Review article of a film or a book (comedy, tragedy, love story)

The writing component in this syllabus is presented effectively; the writing tasks are varied in term of: topic, aim, function, and structure. In addition to individual work, this syllabus varies the way of carrying out the writing tasks by engaging students either in pair or group work. Hence, this latter helps in raising students' awareness of their writing errors through peer correction. The writing tasks are facilitated by splitting up the instructions in order to ensure that students are following gradually the writing stages. Also, they are illustrated by many tools such as: timelines, pictures, and spider maps to help the student to brainstorm and select more relevant ideas. In order to enhance students writing skill, this

syllabus, while presenting the writing tasks, takes into account the main characteristics of effective writing (grammar, vocabulary, mechanics, organization, coherence, cohesion). Students are encouraged in their writing to use the grammar points and vocabulary words that they have been taught in the related unit. Besides, some writing tasks are provided with useful language (pp. 58, 64, 70). There are some instructions that raise students' awareness about spelling (p.40) and organization like giving the structure of the essay (p. 29). The syllabus has shown the importance of coherence and cohesion in writing by putting emphasis on developing the ideas in a coherent way (p.41) and using appropriate linking words to move from one sentence to another and from one paragraph to another (pp : 52- 58).

In general, most writing tasks are controlled such as replying to letters, writing summaries and newspaper clippings. But unfortunately, they don't present real life situations, because the topics of writing tasks (development of civilization, poems, fighting counterfeiting…) may not be useful for students.

Conclusion

In conclusion, for EFL learners to write in an effective and successful manner using the English language, they should have sufficient background about the writing skill in general. That is, EFL learners need to be aware of the importance of writing in their learning process, its different types, approaches, and stages. Despite this, they have to put this declarative knowledge into practice in order to develop and reach a higher level in writing.

Chapter two: Research Methodology and Data Analysis

Introduction

1. Students' Questionnaire

    1.1. The Subjects

    1.2. Description of the Students' Questionnaire

    1.3. Analysis of the Students Questionnaire

    1.4. Results and Discussion

2. Classroom Observation

    2.1. Description of the Classroom Observation

    2.2. Analysis of the Classroom Observation

        2.2.1.   Analysis of the Writing Sessions

        2.2.2.   Results and Discussion

        2.2.3.   Analysis of the Correction Sessions

        2.2.4.   Results and Discussion

3. Analysis of the Students Papers

    3.1. Data Analysis

    3.2. Investigation of Students Errors

    3.3. Results and Discussions

    Conclusion

Chapter two: Research Methodology and Data Analysis

Introduction

  This chapter constitutes the practical part of the present study which aims at identifying and investigating the major writing difficulties faced by secondary school students. It includes three sections; in each section we present a research tool with its generated results and discussion. The questionnaire is analysed in the first section, the classroom observation in the second, and the third one is devoted to the analysis of the students' papers. At last, the collected data and the obtained results will enable us to diagnose the problem, reach a conclusion, and come up with possible solutions.

1. The Students' Questionnaire

1.1. The Subjects

The whole population of the study consists of eighty third year secondary school students. Our population is divided into two classes of letters and foreign languages stream. The two classes are from two different secondary schools. The first one is Mati Ahcen secondary school in El-Amir Abd-el-Kader (EAK), the second one is Bouhrine Cherif secondary school in Chekfa. The research takes place during the academic year 2015-2016.

1.2. Description of the Students' Questionnaire

The questionnaire is one of the most useful tools that are adopted by the researchers to collect data from a population. Jenn (2006, p.32) defined the questionnaire as "a very convened way of collecting information from a large number of people within a period of time." For that, we adopted a questionnaire in this study because it is the best tool to obtain quantitative data. Also, Nunan (1992, p.143) defined a questionnaire as follows: "a questionnaire is an instrument for the collection of data usually in written form consisting of open and/or closed questions and other probes requiring a response from subjects". Because of the advantages of the questionnaire, many researchers use it as a basic tool to conduct their researches. These advantages can be summarized as follows: easy to administer and to analyse, it deals with large population, and it is no time consuming. Furthermore, the anonymity of the questionnaire helps the participants to express their ideas and preferences freely which makes the data valid and reliable, as well as, more objective.

The questionnaire was administrated on Tuesday 15th, March 2016. It was distributed to the students in the classroom. They had one hour to answer it. And at the end of the session, they gave it back.

The questionnaire was divided into three sections; the first section is about the background information in which the participants were asked to mention their gender and the period of studding English. The second section, entitled "writing skill", consists of eleven questions (Q3 - Q13). It aims at identifying the students' opinions and information about the writing skill, in general. Most of the questions in this section are multiple-choice questions. The third section consists of eleven questions. They are mixed of yes / no questions and multiple-choice questions. This section targets the main difficulties that the participants face while writing in English.

1.3. Analysis of Students' Questionnaire

Section one: Background Information

Q1: Gender

Table06

The gender of the participants

Options	Number of subjects (N°)	Percentage (%)
Male	19	23, 75
Female	61	76, 75
Total	80	100

As it is shown in the table above, the majority of the participants are females with the percentage of 76,25 % while males occupy 23,75 % of the whole participants. Despite these results, the sex of the participants doesn't affect directly the results of this study.

Q2: How many years have you been studying English?

Table 07

Period of studying English

Period	N°	%
7 years	65	81.25
8 years	15	18.75
Total	80	100

This table shows that 81,25% of participants have studied English for 7 years, while the others 18,75% have studied English for 8 years. These results indicate that students normally have a background in the English languages, consequently, having good knowledge and abilities to write in English.

Section Two: Writing Skill

Q3: For you, writing is.

Table 08

The importance of writing to students

Period	N°	%
Very important	55	68.75
Important	18	22.5
Less important	5	6.25
Not Important	2	2.5
Total	80	100

According to the table above, 68,75% of the participants considered that writing is very important, 22,5% of participants saw that writing is important. While the others considered it as a less important skill (6,25 %), or having no importance (2,5 %). from these results, we conclude that the majority of students are aware of the importance of the writing skill. They know the crucial role that it plays in learning a foreign language.

* Why?

The students suggested many functions for the writing skill while learning English.

The functions provided are:

- Avoiding mistakes.

- Building vocabulary.

- Developing information.

- Expressing Ideas.

- Developing the reading skill.

- The best method to learn a foreign language.

- Useful in life.

- Writing is art.

From the reasons mentioned by the students, we conclude that they are aware of the different roles of writing. The students know that writing is a crucial element in learning English.

Q4: In your opinion, writing in English is?

Table 09

The difficulty of the writing skill for students

Options	N°	%
A difficult task	36	45
An easy task	44	55
Total	80	100

As the table shows, 55 % of the participants perceived writing in English as an easy task, and 45 % of the participants perceived it as a difficult task. Surprisingly, these results contradict with what has been mentioned in the theoretical part as well as in different research works. The only justification for these results is that the students don't feel afraid of making mistakes in their writings because they are not aware of the negative impact of the different mistakes on the effectiveness of their writings.

Q5: Do you feel afraid to write in English?

Table 10

 The feeling towards writing in English

Options	N°	%
Yes	27	33.75
No	53	66.25
Total	80	100

It is clear from the table10 that 66, 25 % of participants don't feel afraid to write in English, while the others (33, 75 %) do. These results prove the answer of the question number four. The majority of the students, who feel afraid to write in English, are those who are weak in English; they have problems with grammar, vocabulary, and even with the content. Those students who feel afraid to write in English have different reasons to do so. These reasons are classified as follows:

1- Fear of making grammatical mistakes.

2- Having deficient vocabulary.

3- Lack of ideas.

4- Lack of confidence.

Q6: When the teacher gives you writing tasks, how often do you do them?

Table11

The rate of doing writing tasks

Options	N°	%
Always	33	41.25
Sometimes	34	42.5
Rarely	10	12.5
Never	3	3.75
Total	80	100

The finding shows that 41, 25 % of participants always do their writing tasks, 42,5 % do not do their tasks regularly, 12,5 % do them rarely, and 3,75 % don't do them at all. The majority of students prove that they want to improve their level in writing English.

Q 7: In addition to the teacher's assignments, in what other domains do you write in English?

Table12

The use of English language outside classroom

Options	N°	%
Writing stories	9	11.25
Writing diaries	17	21.25
Chatting on Facebook	54	67.5
Total	80	100

The table above shows the different uses of English by students outside the classroom, 66,66 % of students use English to chat on facebook. This proves that English is a global language because of the social network. The latter are used by students either to improve their level in English, or to build relationships. Others use English to write stories or their diaries in order to express their ideas and describe their experiences.

Q 8: what do you think about the time of learning to write in classroom?

Table 13

Time for learning writing

Options	N°	%
It is too long	7	8.75
It is enough	38	47.5
It is too short	35	43.75
Total	80	100

The results of this table have one signification; the students have the willingness to write, express in English. They want more time to write, and may be more various topics that motivate them to explore their knowledge of the language and of the word.

Q9: when you are given a writing task, do you prefer?

Table14

Students' preferable ways of doing writing tasks

Options	N°	%
Working individually	17	21.25
Working in pairs	29	36.25
Working in groups	34	42.5
Total	80	100

As the table shows, 42,5 % of students prefer to work in groups, 36,25 % prefer work in pairs, while 21,25 % of them prefer work individually. Most students choose to work in groups or in pairs because the two ways provide them with more opportunities to learn with each other, the students can discuss the relevance of the ideas, the corrections of grammar forms. During the work, the students receive peer-feedback; this helps shy students to engage in the negotiation which is considered one of the best ways to internalize language items.

Q 10: Where do you prefer to do your writing tasks?

Table 15

Students' preferable places where doing writing tasks

Options	N°	%
In the classroom	29	36.25
At home	51	63.75
Total	80	100

As shown in the table above, the majority of the students (63,75 %) preferred to do writing tasks at home where they can get more resources for their written works. Also, they may use the internet to get more ideas or to ask for help from a more knowledgeable person. The students, at home, have enough time to prepare their works. However, 36,25 % of students prefer to do their writing tasks in the classroom where the teacher is available for any possible guidance.

Q 11: What do you do before starting to write?

Table 16

Pre-writing strategies used by students

Options	N°	%
List and choose the main ideas	21	26.25
Discuss with your friends	25	31.25
Get information from the internet or book	25	31.25
Do nothing, just write naturally	9	11.25
Total	80	100

According to the results in table 11, the great majority of students use some pre-strategies that help them to build a general idea about the topic and to organize their information. But,

other students (11,25%) take the writing process smoothly. The most common pre-writing

strategies that are used by students are brainstorming, using free-writing, and a spider map.

Q12: Do you usually make a draft before writing the final work?

Table 17

The rate of making draft before writing

Options	N°	%
Yes	35	43.75
No	45	56.25
Total	80	100

It is clear from the table that 56,25% of students do not use draft before writing their final

work because they do most of their writing tasks in classroom, where there is a limited time to

finish them. 43,75% of students use drafts in order to make sure their papers clean and

appropriate with no mistakes.

Q 13: Before writing the final draft, do you revise your written work?

Table 18

The rate of revising written works

Options	N°	%
Yes	67	83.75
No	13	16.25
Total	80	100

This table shows that 83,75% of the students revise their written works before writing the

final draft. 16,25% of students do not revise them. They pay more attention to the writing

task, trying to produce a free-error and effective writing paper.

• If yes, do you focus more on?

Table 19

Students' focus while revising the written works

Options	N°	%
Relevance of ideas	22	32.84
Corrections of the form	45	67.16
Total	67	100

From the table 14, 67.16% of the students focus on the correctness of the form while revising their written works, while 32,84% of the students focus on relevance of ideas. The correctness of the written work seems to be the main concern of students because they believe that grammar is the bulk of learning English language.

Section Three: Writing Difficulties.

Q 14: In your opinion, what is the most difficult aspect of writing?

Table 20

Students' attitudes towards the most difficult aspects of writing

Options	N°	%
Grammar	31	38.75
Vocabulary	23	28.75
Use of the linking words	8	10
Organization of ideas	9	11.25
Bringing enough ideas	9	11.25
Total	80	100

The table 19 indicates that the most difficult aspects of writing according to students are grammar (38.75 %) and vocabulary (28.75 %), so the students find difficulties in the language itself and not in the nature of topics, because few of them face less challenging in the collection and organization of ideas.

Q 15: what are the most challenging aspects of grammar?

Table 21

The most challenging aspects of grammar

Options	N°	%
Tenses	40	50
Articles	6	7.5
Prepositions	7	8.75
Plurality	2	2.5
Negative form of verb	10	12.5
Word order	15	18.75
Total	80	100

It is obvious from the table above that half (50%) of the students considered tenses as the most demanding aspect of grammar. Verbs in English are difficult for the students because of their irregular forms and their different uses.

Q 16: Do you think learning and using English vocabulary is?

Table 22

The difficulty and easiness of learning and using English vocabulary

Options	N°	%
Easy	52	65
Difficult	28	35
Total	80	100

Surprisingly, 65 % of the students see that English vocabulary is easy to learn. This result contradicts with what is known about the English vocabulary.

- If it is difficult, it is because of:

Table 23

 Reasons of vocabulary difficulty

Options	N°	%
Unexpected spelling	17	60.71
Strict word choice	11	39.28
Total	28	100

According to the table above, 60,71 % of the students see that the failure in having good

English vocabulary is due to unexpected spelling. This results from the great difference

between the written form and the spoken form of English vocabulary. From the large number

of words, strict words choice, to difficult spelling of most words.

Q 17: While writing, do you pay attention to punctuation?

Table 24

 Students' awareness of the importance of punctuation

Options	N°	%
Yes	43	53.75
No	37	46.25
Total	80	100

This question aimed to investigate the students' awareness of the importance of using

punctuation marks in their writing. The results show that 53,75 % of them take punctuation

into consideration. While the others 46,25 % do not do. They don't consider that punctuation

is important in writing a correct and meaningful work.

Q 18: Do you think that capitalization affect your writing?

Table 25

Students' use of capitalization

Options	N°	%
Yes	66	82.5
No	14	46.25
Total	80	100

As it is shown in table 20, 52,5 % of the students use capitalization while writing, so they know that it affects positively the written work, if it is respected. 17,5 % of the students do not use capitalization because of their ignorance of its importance.

Q 19: Are you familiar with the organizational patterns of the following types of writing?

Table 26

Students' awareness of the types of writing

Options	Yes		No		Total
	N°	%	N°	%	
Descriptive	65	81.25	15	18.75	80
Narrative	50	62.5	30	18.75	80
Argumentative	54	67.5	26	32.5	80
Compare and contrast	42	52.5	38	47.5	80
Exposition	52	65	28	35	80

From this table, it is clear that most students are aware of the different types of writing because all the organizational patterns are taught for the students in the previous years.

Q 20: Do you find any difficulties in the application of the organizational patterns?

Table 27

Students' difficulties with the use of organizational patterns

Options	N°	%
Yes	42	52.5
No	38	47.5
Total	80	100

According to the table 27, 52,5 % of the students face difficulties in the application of these organizational patterns. This may be because of their ignorance or lack of information about them, or because of some patterns which are demanding to achieve. However, 47,5 % of students find the organizational patterns easy to be applied.

Q 21: Do you face challenges related to the use of linking words?

Table 28

The students' challenges concerning the use of linking words

Options	N°	%
Yes	41	51.25
No	39	48.75
Total	80	100

The results in the table show that 51,25% of students face difficulties in using linking words, however, 48,75% of students can use the linking words easily.

If yes, what are they?

Table 29

Reasons of students' difficulties in using linking words

Options	N°	%
Lack of knowledge	21	51.22
Ignorance of their use	20	48.78
Total	41	100

According to the results in the table29, we conclude that most students are facing

difficulties in using linking words because of the lack of knowledge or the ignorance of their

use.

Q 22: Do you think that the topics of writing in your text-book are?

Table 30

Students' interest in text-book topics

Options	N°	%
Very interesting	23	28.75
Interesting	43	53.75
Boring	14	17.75
Total	80	100

As table 26 shows, surprisingly, the great majority of students 82,75% see that the topics

included in the text-book are interesting. This is, may be because of the topics of some units

(Education in Britain, Feelings and Emotions) which motivate the students to express their

ideas and to write about their experiences.

Q 23: Do you think that these topics are useful in your real life?

Table 31

The usefulness of the text-book topics in real life

Options	N°	%
Yes	66	82.5
No	14	17.5
Total	80	100

The results of this table are not expected, in the sense that 82,5% of students see that text-book topics will be useful in their real life. However such topics ; writing about old civilizations, writing an opinion article about fighting corruption, or even writing poems will not be of great help in their future life. The answers of the students show that they do not know in what ways they may use English in their future real life.

Q24: Can you suggest some topics that you are interested in?

Some students mentioned the topics that already exist in the text-book such as: the Educational system, corruption, ethics, feelings and emotions, and food poisoning. However, many students suggested new topics, which are:

• Writing novels, poems, and stories (romantic, action, science).

• Social problems (personal, family).

• Freedom and human rights.

• Sports.

• Politics.

• Art and travel.

1.4 Results and Discussion

The results of the questionnaire show that most secondary school students are interested in writing. They consider it as an important skill and a crucial element in learning English, because it helps the students to avoid grammatical mistakes by giving them the opportunity to employ the grammatical rules correctly and to build vocabulary, as well as, it presents a good means to express ideas and opinions. In addition, from the students' perspective, writing is used to develop other skills. Furthermore, the majority of the students find writing an easy task since they do their writing tasks frequently. As a result to the students' ignorance and their little attention of making mistakes, they do not feel afraid to write in English, and consider writing as a less demanding task to achieve.

In order to improve their level in English, generally, and in writing, specifically, secondary school students try to use English to write in other domains, outside the classroom. With the current technological development the students find new ways, like social networks, in which they can write in English freely. Besides, the students use English to write stories and their diaries. These ways are used by the students to overcome the limited time devoted to writing in the classroom.

Some students prefer to do their writing tasks in the classroom, in groups or in pairs, in order to have the chance to discuss the topic with their classmates using some pre-writing strategies. Others like to do their writing tasks at home for the purpose of gathering more information from the internet or books. Most students revise their pieces of writing before submitting the final work, for this, they use many drafts to have the opportunity to correct their errors.

The findings of the questionnaire show that grammar is considered as the most difficult aspect of writing to be dealt with. Students claim that they face difficulties with the irregular

and negative forms of verbs, assertion of the appropriate article or preposition, and maintaining a correct word order. Vocabulary, also, presents a big challenge for the students because of their strict word choice and the unexpected spelling of some words which lead them to confusion. For students and in regard to grammar and vocabulary, punctuation and capitalization are less challenging aspects. Although the students are familiar with the organizational patterns of the different types of writing, they still face difficulties in applying them. Another aspect of writing which students are anxious about is coherence; they still face challenges in producing a cohesive work because of the lack of knowledge of linking words and the ignorance of their use. In addition to all these difficulties, content, also, prevents the students from making a good piece of writing since they cannot bring enough ideas to illustrate the topic of writing.

The topics of writing in the textbook, according to the students, are interesting to some extent; they find them useful in their real lives. To satisfy their needs, the students suggest some other topics they want to write about, like: writing stories, freedom and human rights, sports and social problems…etc.

2. Classroom Observation

2.1. Description of the Classroom Observation

Classroom observation is the act of observing the teaching process while it is taking place in a classroom or any other learning environment.

For the purpose of investigating the difficulties third year secondary school students face while writing in English, a classroom observation was conducted. Our classroom observation was conducted in Mati Ahcen and Bouhrine Echerrif Secondary schools with third year students of letters and foreign languages stream. It takes place from 04/ 02/ 2016   to   03/ 04/ 2016. In addition to writing sessions, we attended other sessions in order to make the students familiar with us and less distracted as Cohen states " … if the observer … is present during several lessons, students may become accustomed and consequently revert back to their normal classroom behaviours" (1998, p. 33).The number of the students of the class under investigation was 41, but not all of them attended the class regularly, during the observation. To ensure the observation of all what was happening in the classroom, we sat at the back. Data collection was merely based on taking notes and filling the checklist. We have tried to notice the writing aspects that the students face difficulties in, and to gather as much examples of those difficulties as possible.

The writing skill, in each unit, is presented three times under the following titles: think-pair- share, say it in writing, and writing development. The teacher devotes two sessions for each writing activity. In the first session "the writing session", the teacher follows the instruction of the writing activity to explain it to the students. She discusses the ideas with the students, then she asks them to start writing in the classroom, simultaneously, she walks around for any possible help. The students complete their works at home and they bring them to the next session. After she corrects the papers, the teacher starts with a general feedback which deals with the most committed errors. Then, some students read their works while the

teacher provides her feedback and tries to comment on their classmates papers. Finally, the teacher writes a model on the board and the students write it down.

2.2. Analysis of the Classroom Observation

2.2.1. Analysis of the writing sessions

Table 32

Analysis of the writing sessions

	Think, pair, share	**Say it in writing**	**Writing development**
Topics of the writing tasks	Giving advice	Describing your ideal school	Causes and effects of examination stress on students
Warm- up	The teacher introduces and explains the key words of the activity	The teacher introduces and explains the key words of the activity	The teacher elicitates the students' feelings during the examination period
The teacher raises students' awareness of the writing form	Yes	No	Yes
The teacher explains the content	Yes	Yes	Yes
The students reaction	Participate	Participate	Participate
The teacher explains the stages of writing	No	No	No
The teacher follows the stages of writing	Yes	Yes	Yes
The students implement the stages of writing	Yes	Yes	Yes
The teacher makes sure that students follow the stages of writing	Yes	Yes	Yes
Types of feedback	Positive, negative, formative	Positive, negative, formative	Positive , formative

When feedback is provided	Immediately	Immediately	Immediately
Is the type of feedback appropriate to all students	Yes	Yes	Yes
The main focus of feedback	Grammar, vocabulary	Grammar, vocabulary,	Vocabulary, organization
The teacher comments on the relevance of ideas	Yes	Yes	Yes
Feedback is direct	Correct form with explanation	Correct form with explanation	Correct form
Feedback is indirect	Peer-correction	Peer-correction	Peer-correction
The student take the teachers' feedback in consideration	In future works	Immediately/ no consideration	In future works
The teacher's feedback focus on	Form, content	Content	Form, content
All students have the opportunity to receive the teacher's feedback	Yes	Yes	Yes

2.2.2. Results and discussion

• In the writing sessions, the teacher always starts with a warm-up in which she introduces and explains the key words of the activity; she tries to make the students familiar with the words by explaining their meanings, for example: agony aunt, ideal, …etc. or she elicitates opinions about the topic of the activity by asking them about their experiences in order to pave the way towards the topic.

• The teacher, during the writing sessions, tries to raise the students' awareness of the different writing types that they will use in the activities (expository, description…). The different organizational patterns are presented and explained by the teacher, such as: the letter form, cause and effect…etc.

• While explaining the content of the writing activity, the teacher explains the instructions in detail. Also, she tries to engage the students in the discussion of the topic in order to generate more points of views. Simultaneously, the students react to the teachers' explanation by giving their opinions and commenting on that of their classmates.

• Generally, there is no explicit explanation of the writing stages by the teacher, but the instructions of the writing activity lead the students to follow the writing stages unconsciously. Hence, the teacher focuses on the application of the instructions to make sure that all the students are following the stages of the writing process.

• Generally, when the students make mistakes, the teacher corrects them immediately by giving the correct form and the explanation when it is needed such as those which are related to grammatical rules. The teacher varies between the types of feedback from positive to negative in order to tackle the majority of the students. She focuses on the formative feedback because the students, in this year, do not care about marks; rather, they focus on the baccalaureate exam .In the writing sessions, the teacher's feedback takes place during the discussion of the topic and when the students start writing. The teacher, when giving feedback, focuses on: grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and organization. Concerning grammar, the teacher corrects the wrong forms and provides the correct ones with the grammatical rule that should be applied, for example: to give advice, the students should use: should/ must/ need to + stem. However, vocabulary is treated in another way; the teacher explains the meaning of the ambiguous words that are in the writing activity such as: agony aunt, ideal, underdog, interfere. Furthermore, she provides her students with the new words they ask for, such as: spare no time, full of, passion, irritable…etc.

2.2.3. Analysis of the correction sessions

Table 33

Analysis of the correction sessions

	Think, pair, share	Say it in writing	Writing development
Topics of the writing tasks	Giving advice	Describing your ideal school	Causes and effects of examination stress on students
Warm- up	The teacher asks the students to remind her of what they have done in the last session	The teacher asks the students to remind her of what they have done in the last session	The teacher asks the students to remind her of what they have done in the last session
The teacher raises students awareness of the writing form	No	No	no
The teacher explains the content	Yes	Yes	Yes
The students reaction	Comment	Comment	comment
The teacher explains the stages of writing	No	No	No
The teacher follows the stages of writing	Yes	Yes	Yes
The students implement the stages of writing	Yes	Yes	yes
The teacher makes sure that students follow the stages of writing	Yes	Yes	Yes
Types of feedback	Negative, formative	Negative, formative	Negative, formative
When feedback is provided	At the beginning of the lesson, immediately	At the beginning of the lesson, immediately	At the beginning of the lesson, immediately
Is the type of feedback appropriate to all students	No	No	No
The main focus of feedback	Organization, spelling, punctuation, grammar	Word choice, punctuation, spelling	Punctuation, spelling, vocabulary
The teacher comments on the relevance of ideas	Yes	Yes	Yes
Feedback is direct	Correct form with explanation	Correct form with explanation	Correct form with explanation
Feedback is indirect	Peer- correction	Peer- correction	Peer-correction
The students take the	Immediately, no	Immediately, no	Immediately, no

teacher's feedback into consideration	consideration	consideration	consideration
The teacher's feedback focus on	Form, content	Content	Form, content
The students have the opportunity to receive the teacher's feedback	No	NO	NO

2.2.4. Results and discussion

• In the correction sessions of the writing activities, the uses the same way to start the lesson; she always asks the students about the topic of the writing activity, the instructions that they should have followed, and the main ideas that they should have included in their writings.

• Generally, the teacher provides feedback at the beginning of the lesson; she selects the most frequent errors that are committed by the students for example: the spelling of the word "canteen", the plural form of "advice" which is "some advice" and not "advices", the word "information" which is a collective noun, it does not take an "s" to form the plural. Also, she comments on the students' errors while they are reading their works.

• The teacher usually uses the negative feedback because she focuses on the students' errors. She picks up the errors, corrects them, and provides the necessary explanation. She rarely uses the positive feedback to comment on the new ideas that are brought by some students. As usual, the feedback is formative. Unfortunately, not all the students have the opportunity to receive the teacher's feedback, because the limited time of the session restricts the number of students that may read their works.

• The aspects of writing that the teacher focuses on while providing feedback in the writing correction sessions are: organization, spelling, punctuation, word choice, grammar, and vocabulary. The main focus of the teacher goes directly to mechanics (spelling, punctuation) which represent two difficult aspects to be perceived by the students. The

students usually mistaken the spelling of some words like: leisure, succeed, laboratories, firstly…etc. Consequently the teacher spells the word for her students, writes it on the board, or asks them to check the correct spelling in the dictionary. Concerning punctuation, the teacher raises the students' awareness of its importance, she tries to provide them with the most common ones like the use of a comma before for, and, nor, but, or, yet, and so. The teacher makes sure that the students implement the organizational patterns correctly. Vocabulary is always corrected through giving the word meaning and the word choice. Grammar rules are explained again to avoid any confusion in the future works.

• Most of the time, the teacher, before giving the correction, ask the students to correct the errors of their classmates. The majority of the students take notes and make the correction immediately on their papers, but some others do not take correction into consideration.

3. The Analysis of the Students' Papers

3.1. Data Analysis

Data analysis is a means of research in which the researcher collects and interprets the information based on the topic under investigation. In our research, we try to figure out the main difficulties that secondary school students face while writing in English. According to Ellis "at first sight, it may seem rather odd to focus on what learners get wrong rather than on what they get right. However, there are good reasons for focusing on errors" (1997, p.15). Consequently, our main focus is on the analysis of the students' errors, because they are a clear indication of the presence of the difficulties.

Ellis puts three main steps to analyse an error, which are:

❖   Identifying errors

❖   Describing errors

❖   Explaining errors

In this study, we analyse the students' works in the following activities:

1. **Think, pair, and share**: suppose you are an "agony aunt" keeping an advice column in a magazine for teenagers. Use the plan below to replay to this letter (p.172).

2. **Saying it in writing**: imagine that you could plan an ideal school. Decide what sort of school it would be. Then, describe it in details (p.95).

3. **Writing development:** write an expository article for a school magazine analysing the causes and effects of examination stress on students (p.101).

Concerning the number of the papers, it differs from one writing activity to another, because not all the students did it regularly.

3.2. Investigation of the Students' Errors

a) Grammatical errors

Verbs

Error classification	Error identification	Error correction
Wrong tense	They always *prepared* to answer our questions. It *be* different from a person to another.	They are always prepared to answer our questions. It is different from one person to another.
Omission of the verb	It very large and big. …a restaurant, but it doesn't a lot of places.	It is very large and big. …a restaurant, but it doesn't have a lot of places.
Wrong form	I'd like to be *teached* by robots. We *fond* trees.	I'd like to be taught by robots We found trees.

From the analysis of the students' papers, we find that they face a great difficulty in using verbs. The students, sometimes, use the wrong tense, and other times, they do not use it at all. In addition, they use the wrong forms of the verbs, especially, the irregular forms of the verbs

in the past. This latter happens because of the overgeneralization of the rule"ed "or because the students find it hard to memorize all the irregular forms.

Articles

error classification	error identification	Error correction
Articles	It causes stress to boy. In our school, we have _a_ good and _a_ successful teachers.	It causes stress to the boy. In our school, we have good and successful teachers.

The students misuse the articles in that they do not use them when they are needed, because may be they do not pay attention and do not consider that in English the noun should be preceded by a definite or an indefinite article, and that the articles a/an are used only before singular nouns.

Prepositions

Error classification	Error identification	Error correction
Prepositions	There are 20 rooms _on_ the school. …starting at 9 o'clock and finishing _for_ 12 o'clock.	There are 20 rooms in the school. …starting at 9 o'clock and finishing at 12 o'clock.

The use of the prepositions represents a serious challenge to students since there are various prepositions in English which may have the same function, while, on the other hand, a single preposition may have many functions. For example, "at" is used to express time and place; for instance:

- I am waiting at the bus station. ⟶ Place

- She is coming at 10 o'clock. ⟶ Time

Plurality

Error classification	Error identification	Error correction
Plurality	…and use technological *device* like computers.	…and use technological devices like computers.
	In our school, we find *differents* system.	In our school, we find different systems.
	I'd like to give you some *advices*.	I'd like to give you some advice.

The students misuse the plural form of words since their formations are based on the general rule (plurality in English is marked with an ending "s"). Usually, they do not pay attention to words that have different plural forms.

b) Vocabulary errors

Error classification	Error identification	Error correction
Spelling	We are preparing for two exams, this is *enafe*.	We are preparing for two exams, this is enough.
	I think that all of them are *ecual*.	I think that all of them are equal.
	He has many *thicniks*…	He has many techniques…
Word choice	There are no courses, just activities such as: sports, trips; and *plays*.	There are no courses, just activities such as: sports, trips, and games.
	We can *listen to* the different sounds.	We can hear different sounds.
Literal translation	*Time is like a knife, if you don't cut it, it will cut you.*	

For students, spelling is the most difficult aspect of vocabulary. They face many problems when trying to write the words correctly because they write them as they are pronounced. English vocabulary has a strict word choice which confuses the students in choosing the right

word. The main reason behind this difficulty is the intuitive nature of the task; the students do

not find any rule that helps them to select the right word. Furthermore, they translate the

idiom, from Arabic, literally because they do not know that each language has its specific

c) Mechanics errors

Error classification	Error identification	Error correction
Punctuation	First the courses begin at 8 o'clock. It's been a long time since I wrote a letter for you I hope you are doing well	First, the courses begin at 8 o'clock. It's been a long time since I wrote a letter for you. I hope you are doing well.
Capitalization	_we_ have strict laws in our school. We want to learn only foreign languages like: _english_, _french,_ and _dutch_.	We have strict laws in our school. We want to learn only foreign languages like: English, French, and Dutch.

Mechanics are always neglected by the students, they are not considered as important in

their writings. Sometimes, the students write a whole paragraph without using any

punctuation mark. They, sometimes, use the capitalization at the beginning of the sentence but

most of times, they neglect it at all at the middle; they forget to capitalize the proper noun

such as: names of countries, names of persons…etc.

3.3. Results and Discussion

From the analysis of the students' papers we conclude that they face many difficulties

concerning all aspects of writing. They find it hard to write accurate pieces of writing;

concerning grammar, they face problems in using verbs, articles, and prepositions

appropriately and forming correct plural forms. Furthermore, the students have a big

challenge with vocabulary because they cannot spell the words correctly and choose the right

ones. The students' papers show a great ignorance of the mechanics rules, in that; they do not

pay attention to punctuation, capitalization, the indentation of the first line of the paragraph. Also, organization is absent in the majority of the students' works, they usually write in a form of one lengthy paragraph, neglecting the different organizational patterns. In addition to that, some students' papers have poor content and lack unity, as well as, cohesive devices.

Conclusion

All in all, the results obtained from the research tools confirmed our hypothesis which states that secondary school students face many difficulties while writing in English, and the most figured ones are: grammar, vocabulary, organization, coherence and cohesion, and content. This is a clear indication that secondary school students have a serious problem in writing in English, so they should work on avoiding these difficulties by having sufficient knowledge about the writing skill and enough practice to produce a good piece of writing.

General conclusion

This study was undertaken to determine the main difficulties encountered by secondary school students while writing in English. It tackled third year secondary school students, who are studying in letters and foreign languages stream is Mati Ahcen and Bouhrine Cherrif secondary schools. The main hypotheses on which this study was based were whether secondary school students face difficulties while writing in English or not and what are the main writing aspects in which students face difficulties. It consisted of two chapters; the first one was devoted to the theoretical framework, however, the second one dealt with the practical part of the study.

The first chapter presented the theoretical background of the writing skill. It provided the basic information about it w based mainly on different researchers' works. Many definitions of the writing skill were provided regarding different researchers' perspectives along with its most common types. How writing is seen by major teaching approaches, its stages, types of writing activities, and the different approaches to teach it are also included. In addition to that, the chapter shed light on the characteristics of effective writing, the possible difficulties faced by EFL learners to reach this effectiveness, and how this process is assessed. Finally, the crucial role that writing plays in an EFL class was also shown along with its aspects that are included in the syllabus of the third year secondary school.

The second chapter was the one that answered the majority of the questions that have been proposed at the beginning of the study through adopting three main research means. It was divided into three main sections; the questionnaire was presented in the first section. It was delivered for 80 secondary school students in order to give the students the opportunity to express their ideas and identify the most challenging aspects of writing according to them. The classroom observation was presented in the second section. It was conducted with regard

to a pre-prepared checklist, this letter comprised of the main elements that may affect the students writing performance in the classroom. The last section was devoted to the analysis of the students' papers. Through gathering realistic data, this section put more emphasis on the difficulties that are faced by secondary school students in their writing by analysing their errors. Each section ended with the discussion of the obtained results from each research tool.

Through the development of this study, and according to information gathered from students and some background information, the following conclusions are made:

- Secondary school students showed that they have many problems when writing in English, most of these problems are pedagogical in nature.
- The most common aspects of writing that secondary school students face difficulties in are: grammar, vocabulary, organization, mechanics, coherence, cohesion, and content.
- The students use grammar rules to sustain effective writing, hence, they focus more on producing accurate papers.
- Grammar, mechanics and organization are the most challenging aspects of the writing skill for the students since they misuse the grammatical rules and pay little attention to mechanics and organization.
- The students are aware of the importance of the writing skill in developing their learning process; hence, they try hard to improve their level through using it in other domains.

From the obtained results and the generated conclusions, our hypotheses were confirmed in that secondary school students face many difficulties while composing papers in English and the major aspects that affect their writing performance are: grammar, mechanics, and organization.

Pedagogical Recommendations

In the light of the obtained results, we suggest the following recommendations:

- Teachers should be aware of their students writing difficulties.

- Teachers should make the students aware of their difficulties as the first step to overcome these weaknesses.

- Students have to know that following the writing stages is not a waste of time; because each stage contributes in producing effective writing.

- The students must revise their papers before submitting them for diminishing some committed mistakes.

- The students have to pay more attention to writing conventions while producing their papers.

- Since writing is an intricate and complex task, the students need more regular practice for reducing the effects of writing difficulties.

- Asking teachers for more explanation and clarification should be a daily habit in the students' educational life.

Finally, this study remains open for further researches interested in the area of the writing skill through investigating the students' attitudes towards the writing difficulties. It is worth mentioning that conducting a cross-sectional study in which a comparison between the students' levels should be made in order to figure out the possible reasons that lie behind the writing skill difficulties. Also, an evaluation of the strategies and techniques used by the teachers and the students to confront the writing difficulties will be of great help in the research field.

Limitations of the study

During the time of conducting our research, some problems have been arisen and caused difficulties for us. These limitations are as follows:

- The classroom observation took a lot of time because we had to attend other sessions, besides to the writing sessions, in order to avoid the effects of the observer's paradox on the students' behaviors. Furthermore, the teaching of the writing skill into two sessions maximizes the amount of time that we should spend on classroom observation.

- Since we conducted our study with the third year secondary school students, we were obliged to distribute the questionnaire early because they make a lot of absences in the third trimester.

- We were not able to gather enough number of the students' papers because not all the students did the writing tasks regularly.

List of references

Beiske, B. (2002*). Research methods, uses and limitations of questionnaires, interviews, and case studies*. Seminar paper (November 2002).

Beverly, D. (2011). *A new grammar companion for teachers*. Primarily English Teaching association.

Bouchair, Z. (2013). *Writing skill: Types of writing tasks*.

Brown, K. & Hood, S. (1989). *Writing matters: Writing skills and strategies for students of English*. Cambridge: CUP.

Carrol, S. & Swain, M.(1993). Explicit and Implicit Negative Feedback. *SSLA*, *15,* 357-386.

Chakraverty, A., & Gautum, K.(2000*).* Dynamics of writing. *Forum, 38*(3).

Chaouch, M. (2011-2012). *The Student awareness of writing skill: the case study third year at Biskra University*. Published MA thesis.

Clark, I.L. (2003). *Concepts in composition: Theory and practice in the teaching of writing*. New Jersey: Lawrance Erlbaum Associates.

Cohen, A.D. (2014). Strategies in learning and using second language.(2ed). NY: Routlege.

Common Core State Standards Initiative.Writing types and examplars

Davies, S. (1993). *The Essential guide to teaching*. Great Britain: Pearson Education Limited.

Dekeyser, R.M. (2007). *Practice in a second language: Prospectives from applied linguistics and cognitive psychology*. NY:

Dornan, E.A.(2007). *The brief English handbook*. Pearson Education.

Ellis, R. (1997). *Second language acquisition*. Oxford: OUP.

Ellis, R., Loewen, S., Elder, C., Erlam, R., Philip, J., & Reinders,H.(2009). Implicit and explicit knowledge in second language learning, testing, and teaching. In R. Ellis, S. Loewen, & R. Erlam(eds*). Implicit and Explicit Corrective Feedback and the Acquisition of L2 Grammar*. Great Britain: Short Run Press.

Graham, S. & Perin, D. (2007). *Writing next: Effective strategies to improve writing of adolescent in middle and high schools.* NY: Carnegie Corporation of NY.

Halliday, M.A.K. & Hasan, R. (1976*). Cohesion in English*. Longman Group. Hong Kong: Sheck Wah Tong Printed Press.

Hasan, M.K. & Moniruzzaman, A. (2010). Approaches in Writing in EFL/ ESL Context: Balancing Product and Process in Writing Class at Teretiary Level. *Journal of NELTA.Vol, 15*. No, 1-2. December 2010.

Hedge, T. (2005). *Writing.* Oxford: OUP.

Hyland, F. & Hyland, K. Sugaring the Pill: Praise and Criticism in Written Feedback. (2003). *Journal of Second Language Writing. 10*. 185-212. Pergamon.

Hyland, K. (2003). *Second language writing*. Cambridge: CUP.

Jenn, R.(2006, January). Review of digital libraries: Policy, planning, and practice. In Andrew, J. *Technical Services 50*, no. 1: 75-76.

Kroll, B. (1990). *Second language writing: Research insights for the classroom.* Cambridge: CUP.

Mandal, R.R. (2009). Coopertive Learning Strategies to Enhance Writing Skill. *The Modern Journal of Applied Linguistics.* Vol 1:2.

Mkude, D.J. (1980). *Matching education with communicative skills in Kiswahili.* In: Changing language media ,Trapps- Lomax et al. (eds). University of Dar es Salaam.

Nicol, D. (2007). *Principles of good assessment and feedback: Theory and practice.* From the REAP International Online Conference on Assessment Design for Learner Responsibility, 29-31 May; 2007. Available at http://ewds-strath.ac.uk/REAP07.

Nunan, D. (1989). *Designing tasks for the communicative classroom.* Oxford: OUP.

Nunan, D. (1992). *Research methods in language learning.* Cambridge: CUP.

Peha,S. (2003). *The writing process notebook.* Teaching That Makes Sense, Inc.

Pikulski, J. & Templeton, S. (2004*). Teaching and developing vocabulary: Key term to long-term reading success.* USA: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Pincas, A. (1983). *Writing in English.* London: Mac Millan.

Raimes, A. (1983). *Techniques in teaching writiqng.* Oxford: OUP.

Richards, J. (1990). *The language teaching matrix.*USA: CUP.

Richards, J.C. & Renandya, W.A. (2002). Methodology in language teaching: An anthology of current practice. USA: CUP.

Richards, J. & Rodgers, T.S., (1986). *Approaches and methods in language teaching: a Description and analysis*. Cambridge: CUP.

Rivers, W.M. & Temperly, M.S., (1978). *A practical guide to the teaching of English as a SL or a FL*. Oxford: OUP.

Senior, R.M. (2006). *The experience of language teaching*. Cambridge: CUP.

Shelby, M. (2016). *Difficulties and problems in learning English.* Retrieved on March 14. From http://www.teach-this.com/ideas/problems-learning-english.

Westwood, P. (2002). *What teachers need to know about reading and writing difficulties?*. Australia: Australian Council for Educational Research.

White, R. & Arndt, V. (1991). *Process writing*. Harlow: Longman.

Williams, J. G. (2003). Providing Feedback on ESL Students' Writing Assignments. *The Internet ESL Journal. Vol, 9.* No, 10. October 2003.

Wlodkowski, R.J. & Ginsberg, M.B. (2010).Teaching intensive and accelerated courses: Instruction that motivates learning. San Francisco: Josey Bass.

Zemach, D.E., & Rumisek, L. A.(2003). Academic writing from paragraph to essay. Macmillan Publishers Limited.

Appendix A

The Students' Questionnaire

The main purpose of this questionnaire is to collect data about the common difficulties faced by third year secondary school students while writing in English.

We would appreciate your collaboration if you could answer these questions. Be sure that your answers are very important and will be of great help for carrying out our research paper.

Please tick (x) the appropriate answer.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Section One: Background Information

1. Gender: **a**. male   ☐   **b**. female   ☐

2.How many years have you been studying English:………… years.

Section Two: Writing Skill

3. For you, writing is:

      a. very important   ☐

      b. important   ☐

      c. less important   ☐

      d. not important   ☐

   Why?

………………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………………

4. In your opinion, writing in English is:

      a. a difficult task   ☐

b. an easy task ☐

5. Do you feel afraid to write in English?

a. yes ☐   **b.** no ☐

If yes, it is because of:

a. Fear of making grammatical mistakes ☐
b. Having deficient vocabulary ☐
c. Fear of the teacher's negative feedback ☐
d. Lack of confidence ☐
e. Lack of ideas ☐

6. When the teacher gives you writing tasks, how often do you do them?

a. always ☐

b. sometimes ☐

c. rarely ☐

d. never ☐

7. In addition to the teacher's assignments, in what other domains do you write in English?

a. writing stories ☐

b. writing diaries ☐

c. chatting on facebook ☐

8. What do you think about the time of learning to write in classroom?

a. it is too long ☐

b. it is enough ☐

c. it is too short ☐

9. When you are given a writing task, do you prefer?

a. working individually ☐

b. working in pairs ☐

c. working in groups ☐

10. Where do you prefer to do your writing tasks?

a. in the classroom ☐

b. at home ☐

11. What do you do before starting to write?

a. list and choose the main ideas ☐

b. discuss with your friends ☐

c. get information from the internet or books ☐

d. do nothing, just write naturally ☐

12. Do you usually make a draft before writing the final work?

a. yes ☐   **b**. no ☐

13. Before writing the final draft, do you revise your written work?

a. yes ☐   **b.** no ☐

If yes, do you focus more on?

a. relevance of ideas ☐

b. correctness of the form ☐

Section Three: Writing Difficulties

14. In your opinion, what is the most difficult aspect of writing?

a. *grammar* ☐

b. vocabulary ☐

c. use of linking words ☐

d. organization of ideas ☐

e. Bringing enough ideas ☐

15. For you, what are the most challenging aspects of grammar?

a. tenses ☐

b. articles ☐

c. prepositions ☐

d. plurality ☐

e. negative form of verbs ☐

f. word order ☐

16. Do you think that English vocabulary is?

a. easy ☐

b. difficult ☐

If it is difficult, it is because of:

a. unexpected spelling ☐

b. strict word choice ☐

17. While writing, do you pay attention to punctuation?

a. yes ☐   **b**. no ☐

18. Do you think that capitalization affects your writing?

a. yes ☐   **b**. no ☐

THE DIFFICULTIES FACED BY STUDENTS WHILE WRITING IN ENGLISH

19. Are you familiar with the organizational patterns of the following types of writing?

	Yes	no
a. descriptive	☐	☐
b. narrative	☐	☐
c. argumentative	☐	☐
d. compare and contrast	☐	☐
e. exposition	☐	☐

20. Do you find any difficulties in the application of these organizational patterns?

    a. yes ☐   **b**. no ☐

21. Are there any challenges you face concerning the use of linking words?

    a. yes ☐   **b**. no ☐

    If yes, what are they?

    a. lack of knowledge ☐

    b. ignorance of their use ☐

22. Do you think that the topics of writing in your text-book are?

    a. very interesting ☐

    b. interesting ☐

    c. boring ☐

23. Do you think that these topics are useful in your real life?

    a. yes ☐   **b.** no ☐

24. Can you suggest some topics that you are interested in?

…………………………………………………………………………………………

THE DIFFICULTIES FACED BY STUDENTS WHILE WRITING IN ENGLISH

………

………

Thank you for your cooperation

Appendix B

Checklist

1. Warm-up

2. Types of writing

➢ Teacher raises students' of the writing form. How ?

➢ Teacher explains the content and the major points that should be included.

➢ Students' reaction.

3. Stages of writing

➢ Teacher explains the stages to students.

➢ Teacher follows writing stages

➢ Students' awareness of the writing stages

➢ Students implement the writing stages

➢ Teacher makes sure that students follow the writing process.

4. Feedback

➢ Types of feedback used :   summative   Formative

➢ When feedback is provided

➢ Type of feedback :   Positive   Negative

➢ Is the type of feedback appropriate to all students?

➢ The main focus of feedback is on :

Grammar   Vocabulary

Word choice   Spelling

Punctuation   Organization

Pronunciation   Word order

THE DIFFICULTIES FACED BY STUDENTS WHILE WRITING IN ENGLISH

➢ Teacher comments on students' relevance of ideas

➢ Feedback is direct :

  Correct form   correct form with explanation

➢ Feedback is indirect :

  Peer- correction   Self- correction

➢ Students take the teacher's feedback in consideration :

  Immediately   In future works   No consideration

➢ Teacher's feedback focuses on : Form   Content

➢ The majority of the students have the opportunity to receive teacher

  feedback :

  Yes   No

Appendix C

The causes of stress:

According to

From the students, the examination considered an important period, which represents the success whether the failure, so this level it's difficult and cruel. In brief, there are many causes of stress. First, the students don't have time to revise their lessons which make them nervous. Another reasons for stress in exams is to be afraid of having low marks in some difficult subjects. The students keep thinking again and again in having good marks. If he doesn't have these marks, he will be under stress and will be upset.

Stress is usually associated with negative result. Students; if they are stressful they will not perform good and not have good marks, however, they forget what they revise in exams and loose the year.

repeat the year.

lack of details

pay attention to punctuation

good Keep trying

Appendix D

pay attention ts punctuation
& spelling
good work.

Dear Miserable

I hope that you are doing well I feel sorry to hear that such a young lady like you has lost the desire of being alive. A teenage like you should have the passion of life. I hope that this letter will be a ausrty for your questions or a solution for your problems.

well, as starter, you are about to pass a final examination and I know that feeling of fear mixed with anxsity because I was a teenage once. well there is nothing to be afraid of, it's just an exam like the other exams. You should prepos your self very well and leave the rest for the God 's willing. The fear of failure is the ghost goest that chose the succes of students. you ought to be sure about your self and never let the fear destroys your dreams and the joy of life. You should engage in activities with friends, do some sport, eat reguraly, and do not keep thinking about the future and just live the moment and be sure that nothing is more important than living the moment.

As a Conclusion, I hope that you take my piece of advice advices into consideration and wish you all the best. take a good care for your self.

Aunt Hillary

Appendix E

good work
just check:
- ~~pronunciation~~
- conjunctions / punctuation
keep trying !!

4 _ 2 _ 2016

My school is an ideal school of course, but we need and prefer to change our system of education. Firstly, we want to change the programme of study because it is very full *crowded* and we want ~~to~~ switch ~~to the~~ study *in to* the morning and starting at 9 o'clock and ~~ended~~ *finishing* ~~for~~ *at* 12 o'clock in the afternoon. We prefer practise some activities like arts, and music. Moreover we hope to study just foreign languages and no more, ~~of~~ then ~~let~~ me say *my idea* about examination, *we want to* and do 2 exams in the *per* year, it's better and we want ~~to~~ study in ~~freely~~ or confortable with few students in class no more *than* of 20 students and using technological devices like computer for ~~any~~ *every* one. and ~~let's~~ talke about our techers, we need a good teaching methodology

Résumé

Le but de cette étude est de recenser les diverses difficultés rencontrées par les étudiants de la troisième année secondaire dans l'expression écrite en anglais, Quatre-vingt élèves du lycée de Mati Ahcen et Bouhrine Cherif ont fait l'objet de cette étude qui s'est déroulée au cours de l'année scolaire 2015-2016. Et afin de recueillir des informations et donner de la crédibilité à cette étude ; trois méthodes différentes de recherche ont été employées, à savoir: le questionnaire, l'observation, et l'analyse des copies des élèves. Le questionnaire concernant l'expression écrite a été distribué aux élèves afin de déterminer leurs opinions personnels et connaître des éléments les plus importants qui constituent des défis auxquels ils font face. L'observation a été faite pendant près de deux mois ce qui nous a permis de recueillir directement des informations sur le processus d'expression écrite. En plus, nous avons analysé les copies des élèves afin de déterminer les éléments les plus importants de l'expression écrite là où les élèves font plus d'erreurs. Les résultats obtenus suite à l'utilisation des méthodes de recherche susdites montrent que les élèves rencontrent plus de difficultés lors de la réalisation de l'expression écrite en Anglais au niveau de trois domaines; la grammaire, la pertinence de la production, et la ponctuation, ce qui valide les hypothèses mentionnées précédemment.

الملخص

إن الهدف من هذه الدراسة هو الوقوف على مختلف الصعوبات التي يواجهها تلاميذ السنة الثالثة ثانوي في التعبير الكتابي، حيث تمت هذه الدراسة في كل من ثانويتي "ماطي أحسن" و "بوهرين الشريف" خلال السنة الدراسية 2015-2016. ومن أجل جمع المعلومات وإعطاء مصداقية لهذه الدراسة، تم توظيف ثلاثة أساليب بحث مختلفة وهي: الاستمارة، الملاحظة وتحليل أوراق التلاميذ، وقد تم توزيع الاستمارة على ثمانين تلميذا من السنة الثالثة ثانوي وذلك من أجل جمع آرائهم الشخصية المتعلقة بالتعبير الكتابي ومعرفة أهم العناصر التي تشكل تحديا لهم، أما الملاحظة فقد تمت في مدة زمنية تقارب الشهرين مما مكننا من جمع معلومات حية حول سيرورة حصص التعبير الكتابي. بالإضافة إلى هذا، استعملنا تحليل أوراق التلاميذ لمعرفة أهم عناصر التعبير الكتابي التي ترتكب فيها الأخطاء. وقد أظهرت النتائج المستقاة من تطبيق أساليب البحث المذكورة سابقا أن تلاميذ السنة الثالثة ثانوي يواجهون صعوبات أثناء إنجاز تعبيرهم الكتابي بالإنجليزية على مستوى: القواعد، التنظيم المنهجي، و علامات الترقيم و تعد هذه الأخيرة من أكثر العناصر التي يصادف فيها التلاميذ صعوبات وهذا ما يثبت صحة الفرضيات المذكورة سابقا.