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**Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia University-Jijel**  
**Faculty of Letters and Languages**  
**Department of Letters and English**



**Investigating Correspondences between the Informal Features in Teacher  
Talk and Students' Academic Essay Writing**

**Case Study: Third Year Students of English at Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia University,  
Jijel**

**Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfilment for the Requirements of the Degree of  
Master in Foreign Languages Didactics**

**Submitted by:**

**Fatima HARROUCHE**

**Khadija BOUDEBOUDA**

**Supervised by:**

**Redouane NAILI**

**Board of Examiners:**

**Supervisor: Redouane NAILI**

**Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia University**

**Examiner: Samia AZIEB**

**Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia University**

**President: Mohammed BOUKEZZOULA**

**Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia University**

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**DEDICATION**

*“In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.”*

*Compassionate, all the praise is due to Allah*

*I would like to dedicate this humble work:*

*To the most precious people to my heart: my dear mother and  
beloved father for their endless support, encouragement, tenderness,*

*and understanding, may Allah bless them.*

*To my beloved sisters and brothers*

*To all my lovely friends and colleagues*

*To my lovely work partner: ‘Khadidja’*

*To all my teachers for their support and compliments; mainly, teachers of English.*

***Fatima***

## **DEDICATION**

*I dedicate this work:*

*To my beloved father **Abdul-Aziz** and my precious mother **Saliha***

*To my brothers **Mourad** and **Sid-Ahmed***

*To my sisters: **Karima**, **Afaf**, and **Nesrine***

*My princesses **Maiss** and **Sidra***

*My little boy **Souhib***

***Khadidja***

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### **Abstract**

The present study aims at investigating the correspondences between the informal features in teacher talk and in students' academic essay writing. It has been hypothesized that if the teacher uses formal language when lecturing, students' essays will contain few or no informalities and vice versa. To test this hypothesis, a descriptive analysis has been conducted on 80 exam essays of third year students of English at Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia University, Jijel. The exam essays have been selected randomly from two content modules, namely, Didactics and Cognitive Psychology. In addition, a questionnaire was administered to eight teachers who teach third year content modules and require the essay as the form of answering in examinations. The results obtained from both research instruments have shown that third year students of English at Jijel university were not competent enough to produce an essay that meets the standards of academic writing in their examinations. The respondents attributed that to the lack of practice, lack of exposure to academic texts, and students' habits of copying and memorizing teacher talk as it is presented in the lectures. Moreover, some informal features in teacher talk were found to correspond with those in students' examination essays, other were not. Students used many informalities particularly at discourse level in which some correspondence is established between teacher talk and students' essay writing basically in the use of reference pronouns, casual spoken language, and sentence initial conjunctions 'and' and 'but'. A slight correspondence is noticed in the use of grammatical and syntactical features which revealed that students are, to some extent, competent grammatically and syntactically. However, little correspondences were established between teacher talk and students' essay writing in terms of lexis.

*Keywords:* Teacher talk, academic essay writing, informalities.

### **List of Abbreviations**

- CP:** Cognitive Psychology
- EFL:** English as a Foreign Language
- ESL:** English as a Second Language
- FL:** Foreign Language
- FT:** Foreigner Talk
- L1:** First Language
- L2:** Second Language
- NNSs:** Non-Native Speakers
- NSs:** Native Speakers
- SLA:** Second Language Acquisition
- TEFL:** Teaching English as a Foreign Language
- TL:** Target Language
- TT:** Teacher Talk
- TTR:** Type Token Ratio
- Wpm:** Word per min



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## **General Introduction**

### Introduction

1. Review of Previous Research
2. Statement of the Problem
3. Aim and Significance of the Study
4. Research Questions
5. Research Hypotheses
6. Means of Research
7. Structure of the Study



## **Introduction**

English as foreign language teachers generally act as language facilitators through considering many linguistic adjustments in their talk when they deliver the lecture's materials. However, learners need to develop their ability to linguistically interpret the formality in teacher talk so that to keep the formal features and avoid using the informal ones when producing an academic written text. Students, then, are required to make the significant transition from the teachers' spoken input that is arranged on an unstable scale of formality to a formal academic written output.

### **1. Review of Previous Research**

Teacher talk (TT) is an essential aspect of classroom discourse that affects the processes of teaching and learning. Recently, several research studies investigated the linguistic modifications in TT when addressing English as Foreign Language (EFL) learners as a vital attribute to reach a comprehensible input (Cervantes & Gainer, 1992; Li, Wang, & Xu, 2005; Dodu, 2013; Samburskiy, 2017). Few studies, however, have examined the correspondences that exist between the informal features of TT and the learners' written output production in the classroom.

The features of TT directed to language learners in the classroom were investigated in a study by Samburskiy (2017). The transcripts of the native-speaker (NS) teachers and the non-native speaker (NNS) students' interactions in the course revealed that instructors often repeat and rephrase their statements, expand on their utterances and ask genuine questions. In addition, instructors use personal pronouns to identify with or detach themselves from their students. Hence, the teachers modify the input until it fits into the students' zone of comprehension.

Some linguistic characteristics and adjustments in TT were selected by Dodu (2013) for determining how they are used, namely, disfluencies, self-repetitions, contractions, rate of

delivery, three types of relative clauses, questions, type-token ratio, nouns and verbs, present tense verbs, and “to be” as a linking verb and an auxiliary verb. The findings indicated that the talk of the observed teachers had low frequency of self-repetitions, the use of contracted forms and disfluencies, and a low type-token ratio, yet a high frequency of questions with a prevalence of yes/no questions over other types of questions. When compared to Long’s (1980) language descriptions of conversational talk, Dodu (2013) found similar results in terms of relying on the use of present tenses, self-repetition, and the use of questions. The participating teachers gave the following reasons for the linguistic modifications they make: 1) ensure comprehensibility of input, 2) expose students to authentic language, 3) avoid confusion, 3) be informal but grammatical, and 4) elicit information or encourage students’ participation.

The comprehensibility resulting from syntactic simplification and from repetition by TT was investigated by means of two experiments conducted by Cervantes and Gainer (1992). The first experiment involved 76 students of English varying in their levels of proficiency. They listened to two versions of a lecture which differed in the number of the subordinate clauses they contained. The results showed that those who had listened to the syntactically simpler version scored higher on comprehensibility. The results of the second experiment, which involved 85 students to listen to three versions of a lecture, revealed that version 1 (syntactically modified) and version 3 (contained more repetition) were both easier than version 2 (no simplification or repetition).

At the level of written texts, Li, Wang, and Xu (2005) compared the effects of language simplification and elaboration on second language (L2) learners’ reading comprehension. They presented three English simplified and elaborated reading passages. Simplified passages involve reduced vocabulary and less complex sentence structures while elaborated passages involve more complicated sentence structure, and the over use of adjectives. To measure the

participants' reading comprehension, the students were asked to answer three types of comprehension questions: general, specific and inferential. Both modified texts were more comprehensible than the unmodified written input, and results indicated that simplified passages were easier to comprehend than elaborated passages.

Concerning academic writing which is used as a pedagogical tool to both consolidate and test EFL students' understanding of the subject knowledge of a particular content module, it has been the subject of various investigations (Hyland & Jiang, 2017; Pramiatih, Kwary, & Ardaniah, 2018; & Akhtar & Riaz, 2019). Those studies indicated that the formality in academic writing "gradually shifted away from standard detached and impersonal styles of writing to ones that allow more personal comment, narration and stylistic variation" (Hyland & Jiang, 2017, p. 40). In other words, there is a shift from formality to informality in the students' academic writing. Adopting the informal features suggested by Chang and Swales (1999), Hyland and Jiang (2017) found a slight increase of informality in the EFL students' essays, namely the use of first person pronouns, unattended anaphoric pronouns, conjunctive adverbs, sentence final prepositions, listing expressions, second person pronouns, contractions, direct questions and exclamations. This observation has been confirmed by Pramiatih, Kwary, and Ardaniah (2018) who conducted a research about the informality features that may be included in a thesis, which is regarded as a formal academic writing genre. Thesis abstracts contained eight types of informality features: first-person pronouns, second-person pronouns, sentence-initial conjunctions/conjunctive adverbs, sentence-final prepositions, run-on sentences/expressions, sentence fragments, contractions, and direct questions.

Essays written by undergraduate EFL learners were investigated by Akhtar and Riaz (2019) to determine the extent to which they are formal or informal. The results showed that the essays created by undergraduate students in Government Postgraduate College for Women

in Faisalabad, Pakistan are formal in nature. Besides, researchers also observed many errors while analyzing the essays, which also show lack of linguistic competence. The reasons behind minimal use of informal features may involve the culture of cramming from text books, the academic nature of English learnt by the undergraduate students in Pakistan, and little exposure to colloquial forms or expressions of spoken English. Thus, the findings of this study are of a great importance to our study since they point out to the correspondences between teacher talk and students' essay writing in higher educational settings.

## **2. Statement of the Problem**

One of the most serious challenges for English as a foreign language learner is the need to write an effective academic essay. When it comes to answering exam questions in the content modules, students usually fail to transmit their input in an accurate and appropriate way. This usually leads to a high degree of failure in those modules as it is noticed in the scores of students in the two examinations that have been selected for investigation in this study, namely, the module of didactics and the module of psychology. Equally important is the students' need to recognize, define and understand their own writing style because their writing in content modules examinations does not demonstrate adherence to a particular level of formality. This problem may be exacerbated by the degree to which informal features are present in teacher talk as they risk being picked up by students when they write academically.

## **3. Aim and Significance of the Study**

This study attempts to shed light on the relationship between the informal features in teacher talk and third year EFL students' academic essay writing. More specifically, it aims at investigating the problems that prevent third year students of English from producing good academic essays in their content modules examinations. Additionally, it seeks to make students aware about the informal features that are present in teacher talk at different language levels.

The current research could be significant for EFL teachers, learners, and syllabus designers. It might contribute to the teachers' professional development by helping them become more analytical of their own instructional practices. Moreover, it could be useful and effective for EFL learners who are often judged on the appropriateness of their writing style, particularly in exams. With regard to syllabus/textbook designers, features of both speech and writing styles could be integrated into language teaching/learning syllabuses and textbooks.

#### **4. Research Questions**

Within the context of the department of English at the University of Jijel, and targeting third year LMD students of English and their teachers of content modules, the overall focus of this study is to answer the following questions:

- Are EFL students able to distinguish between the features of both spoken and written discourse? In other words, are third year students of English competent enough to produce good academic essays with few or no informalities?
- Is there any correspondence between the informal features in teacher talk and students' essay writing?

#### **5. Research Hypotheses**

Based on the research questions stated above, we hypothesize the following:

- If the teacher uses formal language, students' texts (essays) will contain few or no informalities.
- If the teacher uses informal language, students' texts (essays) will contain many informalities.

#### **6. Means of Research**

In order to obtain the necessary data to answer the research questions and to reach the purpose of the study, quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis are used.

Precisely, two research tools are adopted to conduct this study: a questionnaire for teachers of content modules and third year students' exams copies.

The teacher questionnaire is administered to eight teachers who teach third year content modules and require the essay as the form of answering in examinations. As for the exam copies, a sample of eighty written essays is chosen randomly from two hundred and thirty-eight exam papers (which constitute the whole population) to be analyzed in two content modules which are: teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) and cognitive psychology (CP). However, the corpus of this study is primarily based on the analysis of the first one hundred words from each essay, resulting in 4000 words in each examination.

## **7. Structure of the Study**

The current study is organized around three major chapters: the first two chapters constitute a review of the literature while the third chapter is devoted to the field work, in addition to a general introduction which presents an overview about the topic, and a general conclusion which summarizes the whole work.

The literature review consists of two chapters. The first chapter is entitled "Characteristics of Academic Essays in Learning and Teaching English as a Foreign Language". It focuses on defining the concept of 'academic essay' and distinguishes the features of academic and non-academic writing, then it turns to explain the most common types of academic essay. Moreover, this chapter sheds light on the formal features that control the writing of academic essays. These features are discussed in relation to three language aspects which are lexis, syntax, and discourse. The final section of the chapter discusses guidelines for learning and teaching academic writing in higher educational settings.

The second chapter is entitled "Aspects of Teacher Talk in English as a Second/ Foreign Language Lectures". It provides the different definitions of 'teacher talk' as stated by a number of scholars and researchers, and explores its similar concepts: caretaker speech and

foreigner talk. Further, it gives a closer look on the linguistic adjustments that are present in teacher talk at different language levels which make the target language (TL) input more comprehensible for EFL learners.

As far as the third “Field Work” chapter is concerned, it describes the methodology followed in the research. It starts by presenting the population and the sample, describing the research instruments, then analyzing and discussing the results obtained.

# **Chapter One: Characteristics of Academic Essays in Learning and Teaching English as a Foreign Language**

## **Introduction**

- 1.1. Definitions of an Academic Essay
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- 1.3. Types of Academic Essay
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- 1.5. Learning and Teaching Academic Writing
  - 1.5.1. Rivers' Model of writing Activities in the Education Field
  - 1.5.2. The Need of Instructions to Learn Academic Writing

## **Conclusion**



## **Chapter One: Characteristics of Academic Essays in Learning and Teaching English as a Foreign Language**

### **Introduction**

Writing in an academic way is one of the basic tasks in the process of teaching and learning a foreign language, yet it is one that proves difficult to be developed. This chapter starts with some definitions of the concept of academic essay, then it provides a distinction between academic and non-academic writing. Moreover, it presents four types of academic essay namely narrative, descriptive, expository, and argumentative essays. Furthermore, this chapter explores and discusses in details the most salient formal features of academic essays at three linguistic levels which are: lexical, syntactic and discourse features. Finally, it deals with some guidelines of learning and teaching academic writing in higher educational settings.

### **1.1. Definitions of an Academic Essay**

Academic essay is the most popular type of academic texts or writing genres that learners may encounter during their studies at university. Zemach and Rumisek (2003) defined the term academic essay as “a group of paragraphs written about a single topic and a central main idea. It must have at least three paragraphs, but a five-paragraph essay is a common length for academic writing” (p. 56). In addition, Oshima and Hogue (1999) described it as an essay which consists of different paragraphs developing one idea supported by arguments and evidences. The most important constituent in an academic essay is the thesis statement because it introduces the main point or ideas of the essay and clearly expresses what the writer is going to say about his/her topic.

Although academic essays have different content and purpose, they share the same structure that is “a structure with an introduction, middle, and an end. The introduction states

your case, the middle justifies it, and the end reflects on the beginning and the middle” (Taylor, 2009, p. 93). According to Oshima and Hogue (2006), an essay should have three main parts. Firstly, the introduction serves to attract the reader’s attention by providing background information on the topic and explaining what aspects will be covered in the essay. Secondly, the development section of an essay develops the writer’s ideas in more than one paragraph. Each paragraph deals with one aspect of the topic. Hence, the paragraphs of the body of an essay play the role of supporting sentences in writing a single paragraph. With regard to this point, Gillet, Hammond, and Martala (2009) stated that the development section of an essay has the purpose of arguing a particular point, presenting a position, and defending it by relying on evidences and logical arguments. Thirdly, a conclusion restates or summarizes the main points discussed in the body; it may include the writer’s attitudes towards the discussed topic.

To sum up, an academic essay is basically a structured form of writing that serves the purpose of presenting new ideas and information, or applying already existing knowledge in order to communicate a message. It is a piece of writing that discusses particular topic or subject on three main parts which are: an introduction, a body, and a conclusion.

### **1.2.Differences between Academic and Non-Academic Writing**

Academic writing differs from other types of writing in its own style and rules. Different disciplines share common features which make academic written discourse distinct from non-academic writing. In other words, writing in formal contexts differs from writing in informal settings.

Firstly, non-academic writing includes personal judgments and emotive expressions; for example, *good, bad, sure*, etc. In addition, it is acceptable in non-academic writing to use slangs, abbreviations, casual expressions, and contracted forms such as *don’t, can’t, dad, by*

*the way, kids*. According to Bowker (2007), writing in personal settings is informal, so there is no need to follow a particular structure or to adhere to grammar and punctuation rules.

Secondly, non-academic writing addresses friends and family which is not the case in academic writing. This means that academic writing usually addresses a particular audience which belongs to the academic or intellectual community such as teachers and scholars, because the audience affects strongly the content of the paper. As Gillet, Hammond, and Martala (2009) put it, “one of the main ways that academic writing is different from other forms of writing is in its relationship with its audience- that is to say the reader” (p. 2).

Irvin (2010) stated that “academic writing is always a form of evaluation that asks you to demonstrate knowledge and show proficiency with certain disciplinary skills of thinking, interpreting and presenting” (p. 8). To put it differently, students in college and high schools are asked to generate academic texts, whether in regular assignments or in examinations as a means of evaluation, which requires students to demonstrate their knowledge, show their proficiency through thinking, interpreting and presenting.

Unlike non-academic writing, writing in formal contexts involves following a specific structure. This structure of ‘introduction, body, and conclusion’ is typical of an essay, as well as the different written assignments that students are required to produce at the college level. This “structure of the writing will vary according to the particular type (genre); for example, essay, report, thesis, etc.” (Jordan, 1999, p. 88). On the other hand, in personal writing, people can express their events and personal feelings in terms of short paragraphs without being obliged to respect a predefined structure.

Moreover, academic writing uses specialized and appropriate vocabulary taking into account the different types of academic discourse. This means that each genre uses its own appropriate vocabulary. For example, words that are used in legal texts are not the ones used in literary or political texts.

The special genre of academic writing aims at presenting ideas and information in a reasonable, clear, and objective way i.e., it is characterized by its objective and impersonal tone. The impersonal style in academic writing is achieved by using the impersonal pronoun 'it' and avoiding personal pronouns like 'I', 'we', and 'you'.

Another distinguishing feature of academic writing is the use of other authors' ideas. It contains references to other writers' publications. Citing the other writers' work is central and very crucial to academic writing since it demonstrates that the writer has read the required literature and integrated these issues into the written assignment (Bowker, 2007). As a result, citing the other authors' ideas supports the opinion of the writer by linking it to what he has written about a particular issue.

In short, academic writing is a unique genre that adheres to the conventions and rules of punctuation, grammar, spelling, vocabulary, syntax and discourse and provides arguments, explanations and citations for any discussed issue. These main characteristics that distinguish academic writing from non-academic writing are summarized in the following table:

**Table 1.1.**

*The Main Differences between Academic and Non-academic Writing*

	<b>Academic</b>	<b>Non-academic</b>
Reader	Academics	Family and friends
Content	Serious thought	Conversational
Style (Sentence Construction)	Complex sentences showing considerable variety in construction	Mostly simple and compound sentences joined by conjunctions such as <i>and</i> or <i>but</i>
Organization	Clear and well-planned	Likely to be as clear as organized
Grammar	Likely to be error free	May not always use complete sentences
Vocabulary	Technical and academic language used accurately	Use of short forms, idioms and slang

### **1.3.Types of Academic Essay**

According to Murray and Hughes (2008), the reader of any piece of academic writing will notice a number of clearly distinguishable types for organizing the text. The use of these different types indicates that the writer has particular objectives or functions s/he is trying to achieve such as: narrating a story, describing and providing information, or trying to convince others. Yet, the writer might blend those types in longer works such as a research report. This section focuses on four main types of essay writing that third year students are usually asked to write in the content modules. According to Jeffrey (2016), these types are namely narrative, descriptive, expository, and argumentative essays.

#### ***1.3.1.Narrative Essay***

According to McWhorter (2011), a narrative essay relates a series of real or imaginary events in an organized sequence. It is also described as a story or an experiment where the “logical arrangement of ideas and sentences (...) is chronological according to time and order” (Smalley, Ruetten, & Kozytev, 2001, p. 61). A narrative essay can be written for different purposes such as: providing entertainment, sparking the reader’s curiosity, and approaching the reader to the storyteller. It can be characterized into two different forms. The first is fiction narrative writing, which refers to imaginative stories and events that are not real and the other is non-fiction narrative writing, which is based on real facts and stories such as newspapers, reports, and biographies. Regarding narratives based on real-life experiences of the author/writer, Wyldeck (2013) insisted that they often describe situations in which a lesson has been learnt about life.

#### ***1.3.2.Descriptive Essay***

Descriptive essay aims to identify the characteristics of a person, a place, or an object in order to attract the reader’s attention. Thus, the fundamental purpose of writing a descriptive essay is not just to describe, but also to indicate the writers’ attitude toward the subject

through their choice of words and details which makes the process of description livelier and more interesting. In this sense, Wyldeck (2013) stated that a descriptive essay provides the reader with the opportunity to focus in detail on what is being described whether it is an object, a character, an event, or a feeling that a writer wants to highlight. For Kane (2000), descriptive writing can be either objective or subjective. In objective description, the writer puts aside all the personal aspects and views related to him and focuses only on what he perceives. This includes describing an experiment which requires clear details without self-interference. On the other hand, in subjective description, the writer tends to include his personal feelings and express his point of view. In other words, objective description is related to facts while subjective description is more about describing feelings and emotions. A descriptive essay is often used as a sole process to develop a subject, but it can be also accompanied with another pattern such as narration.

### *1.3.3.Expository Essay*

“An expository essay is a subject-oriented writing style, in which the writer tells about a given subject and leaves out his personal opinions. It provides the reader with relevant facts, figures, examples, explanations and definitions. This common type of essay is usually used in textbooks, articles, reports and research papers. It can take different forms. It may be written to describe the processes of how to do something and it may serve to analyse events, ideas, or written works. Its purpose is to present the information provided by scientists, researchers and authors.” (Benmostafa, Adder, & Drici, 2018, p. 5). Further, an expository essay can be developed by definition, classification, comparison and contrast, and cause and effect as follows:

- **Definition**, the type of exposing which explains the meaning of a term, often used by students in their fields of study such as in linguistics, psychology and literature.
- **Classification**, the arrangement of elements into groups, classes, or types.

- **Comparison/ Contrast**, pointing out the similarities existing between two persons, two ideas, two books etc. or by drawing the reader’s attention on the differences existing between two persons, two things, two ideas etc.
- **Cause and effect**, exposing the reasons and results or consequences of something.

(Benmostafa, Adder, & Drici, 2018, p. 5)

**1.3.4. Argumentative/ Persuasive Essay**

An argumentative essay is an essay in which the writer agrees or disagrees with an issue, using reasons to support his point of view in order to convince the reader that their opinion is right. In this sense, Wyldeck (2013) argued that the writers’ job is to argue well enough to persuade the readers that they are right. Thus, what makes an argumentative essay unique is that the writer does not only give reasons to support his point of view, but he has also to discuss the cons (opposing ideas) and then rebut them. Moreover, an argumentative essay should follow the persuasive style of writing which is organized using a block pattern or a point-by-point one as demonstrated in the following table:

**Table 1.2.**

*Organization of Argumentative Essay*

<b>Block pattern</b>	<b>Point-by-point pattern</b>
<p><b>1. Introduction</b> Explanation of the issue Thesis statement</p> <p><b>2. Body</b> Block 1 <b>a.</b> summary of other side`s arguments <b>b.</b> rebuttal to the first argument <b>c.</b> rebuttal to second argument <b>d.</b> rebuttal to the third argument. Block 2 <b>e.</b> your first argument <b>f.</b> your second argument <b>g.</b> your third argument</p>	<p><b>1. Introduction</b> Explanation of the issue, including a summary of the other side's arguments Thesis statement</p> <p><b>2. Body</b> <b>a.</b> Statement of the other side's first argument and rebuttal with your own counterargument <b>b.</b> Statement of the other side's second argument and rebuttal with your own counterargument <b>c.</b> Statement of the other side's third argument and rebuttal with your own counterargument.</p>

<b>3.</b> Conclusion may include a summary of your point of view.	<b>3.</b> Conclusion-may include a summary of your point of view
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(Lyons & Heasley, 2006, p. 17)

#### **1.4. Formal Features of Academic Essays**

In order to achieve effective writing skills in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) academic context, students are required to follow some conventions and rules. These conventions govern students' writing and help in making their academic essays clear and understandable. However, students lack knowledge about the nature of academic writing, and this could be attributed to the lack of exposure to these conventions or to the absence of pure academic writing courses in students' curriculum. Williams (2003) asserted that "the conventions that govern academic writing are relatively unknown to [students]" (p. 179). As a solution, Devitt (2004) suggested that there should be particular kinds of explicit instruction about academic writing so that the learners will notice the linguistic features that govern their writing at lexical, grammatical, and discourse levels.

##### ***1.4.1. Formal Lexical Features***

The main formal conventions that govern the writing of academic essays at the lexical level include the use of impersonal forms and academic vocabulary. These are used to achieve objectivity and appropriateness.

**1.4.1.1. Use of Impersonal Forms.** Academic writing attempts to be precise, formal, impersonal, and objective. This can be achieved through the use of impersonal pronouns such as (it seems, it appears that), the use of impersonal expressions such as "it is worthwhile to consider...", "the data indicates that..." (Gillett, et al., 2009, p. 95), and the avoidance of judgmental words such as emotive adjectives; great, terrible, good. Hinkel (2002) stated that: "In academic and scientific writing in English, the use of 'it' is conventionalized to a large extent and marks the text for a relatively formal register" (p. 89). In addition, the writer's objectivity should appear in academic writing through the avoidance of personal pronouns



like 'I', 'we', 'you' since they clearly indicate that the writer takes part in the context. In this sense, Lagerholm (2008) claimed that "expressions related to personal and subjective impressions are informal features, connected to spoken language. These should be avoided when performing a formal written work" (p. 186). The following guidelines show the elements that should be avoided in order to achieve the writer's objectivity and formality in academic essays:

- 1) Idiomatic and colloquial vocabulary. For example, instead of using *kids, boss*, we use *children, manager* (Bailey, 2011).
- 2) Contracted forms are not appropriate in academic writing. Gillet et al. (2009) contended that "contracted words such as 'don't', 'can't', 'shouldn't' are informal and should normally not be used when writing in an academic context (unless they are quotations which cannot be changed)" (p. 96).
- 3) Adverbs and adjectives that show personal attitude. For example, *surprisingly, best, personally, etc.*, interjections and hesitation (conversation fillers) such as: *um, well, you know* are not common in academic writing. (Mechitoua & Labeled, 2018, p. 44)

**1.4.1.2. Academic Vocabulary.** Academic writing is characterized by its dense use of academic vocabulary that distinguishes such writing from other types of writing. Thus, to write an effective academic essay, "students need to be familiar with the rather formal vocabulary used in this area" (Bailey, 2011, p. 179). Moreover, it is important to note that words found in academic contexts are distinct from those found in daily interactions. For example, words like *observe, illustrate, therefore, although*, may often be preferable in academic writing to their casual counterparts: *see, show, so, but* (Murray & Hughes, 2008).

Having a repertoire of vocabulary is very essential in writing, because it provides the learner/ writer with the ability to use lexical items appropriately. In addition to this, learners

must be aware of the different linguistic relations such as: synonymy, antonymy and hyponymy, described in Table 1.3.

**Table 1.3.**

*Example of Linguistic Relations and their Common Use*

<b>Linguistic Relations</b>	<b>Common Use</b>	<b>Example</b>
Synonymy	When a word is exchanged for or substituted by another, without changing the meaning of the sentence.	Gorgeous- beautiful Agreement- arrangement Take place- happen
Antonymy	When a word carries an opposite meaning.	Private- public Success- failure Amuse- bore
Hyponymy	The hierarchy that exists between words in terms: general and specific words	Flower- rose Meal- lunch Computer- keyboard

(adopted from Hedge, 2000, as cited in Bouakoub, 2012, p. 53)

As mentioned above, academic vocabulary needs to be explicitly taught, most probably through constant exposure to appropriate-level academic texts, as these latter may be considered one of the crucial factors that contribute in the success of learning academic vocabulary (Hinkel, 2002).

#### **1.4.2. Formal Syntactic Features**

The majority of EFL learners are required to be aware of the grammatical writing conventions that enable them to write effective essays and help them to avoid grammatical mistakes. At this linguistic level, discussions generally focus on two important features of academic writing which are complexity and the use of mechanics.

**1.4.2.1. Complexity.** Rezgui (2018) stated that: “The complexity in academic writing is studied and discussed from the linguistic angle of the grammatical structure” (p. 34).

Throughout the process of language development, ideas and thoughts are first expressed through coordination in a simple manner. Then, “the more language competence is developed,

the more complex ideas by means of subordination are expressed” (Rezghi, 2018, p. 34). In other words, written language becomes grammatically more complex, because of using more subordinate clauses, more "that/to" complement clauses, more long sequences of prepositional phrases, more attributive adjectives and more passives than spoken language. According to Ortega (2003), the advanced level of language use is actually characterized by complex phrases, along with higher lexical density, instead of complex sentences (as cited in Pietila, 2017, p. 111). Biber and Gray (2016) considered the grammatical complexity and the elaboration of dependent clauses as stereotypical concepts with great deal of subordination of the academic writing. Similarly, it is believed that academic writing is explicit and clear, with logical relations between ideas overtly expressed. Actually, English academic writing is both concise, with heavy reliance on phrasal structures, and inexplicit because the relations between grammatical constituents are often unspecified.

**1.4.2.2. Mechanics.** Kane (2000) defined the word mechanics as “the appearance of words, how they are spelled and arranged on paper” (p. 15). Academic writing makes use of a wide range of writing mechanical conventions: grammar, spelling, punctuation and capitalization. Thus, students need to be made aware of the importance of these conventions since they are very significant in producing a good piece of writing. Brooks and Penn (1970) stated that “For one thing, in writing, we must understand the structure of the language, what the parts of speech do, how the words relate to one another, what individual words mean, the rules of grammar and punctuation” (p. 20).

- 1) “Grammar is an essential element in writing. The learner must be knowledgeable of the rules of grammar and how to manipulate them in order to be skilled in the writing process, such as: pronouns, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, etc.” (Hali, 2013, p. 33)
- 2) Spelling is “a conscious, deliberate process which requires awareness of the linguistic structure of words with a good visual memory. One of the reasons spelling is difficult for

students is the absence of complete correspondence between the sound of a word and the way it is spelt i.e. the absence of correlation between phonemes and graphemes. The word *sheep*, for example, has really one possible pronunciation /ʃi:p/ whereas this form could be written in at least three different ways: *sheep*, *sheap*, *shepe*” (Bouyakoub, 2012, p. 58). In addition, one of the most common spelling mistakes is the confusion between words that have the same pronunciation, but different spelling and different meaning (homophones); for instance, *principal/principle*, *there/their*, *two/to*, *practise/practice*. Students need to overcome such difficulties in the English spelling mistakes. Thus, there is a need to have both a phonological awareness and a good visual awareness to satisfy the reader’s need and expectations of clear and legible writing.

- 3) Punctuation is a necessary part in English academic writing. Students need to learn how to use punctuation conventions in an accurate and consistent way. According to Starkey (2004), the writing process will be more polished and technically correct, and the message will be conveyed more directly with the use of proper punctuation marks. Moreover, Murray and Hughes (2008) stated that punctuation indicates pauses and sentence boundaries also help the reader to understand what is written.
- 4) Capitalization is necessary both for specific words and to start sentences and quotes (Starkey, 2004). The learners should be restricted to the rules of capitalizing and be careful of using them in the right way particularly when writing in an academic context.

#### ***1.4.3. Formal Discourse Features***

Discourse features refer to the structural organization of a piece of writing in terms of coherence and unity, paragraph structure, and cohesion, which is the surface relations that link pieces of texts together in specific ways. The main discourse features that EFL students should consider when writing their academic essays are organization, coherence and unity and cohesion.

**1.4.3.1. Organization.** It is a necessity that organization takes place before engaging into the production of any written text. According to Starkey (2004), organization is determined through some important techniques that precede the actual act of writing basically known as free writing and brainstorming. These techniques help the students in planning their work effectively and pave the way to administer the writing process efficiently. Supporting this view, Chesla (2006) declared that “The most effective technique for focusing and shaping your thoughts is brainstorming—allowing yourself some time to make connections with your subject, noting everything and anything that comes to mind” (p. 32). The same researcher, further, asserted that “free writing is probably the best-known prewriting technique. It works well when you have some thoughts on a topic” (ibid, 2006). Moreover, Starkey (2004) said that “Free writing might better be called “flow writing”, because the most important aspect to this prewriting technique is the flow, or the momentum, that comes when you stay with it” (p. 10). In other words, the two techniques i.e., brainstorming and free writing are approximately similar in the sense that they are timed and share the same kind of activities which focus on eliciting thoughts and ideas on a particular topic.

**1.4.3.2. Coherence and Unity.** In addition to organization, it is necessary for an academic essay to be coherent and unified. Oshima and Hogue (1999) considered unity and coherence as important elements in the writing process. Hence, they defined a unified paragraph as one that “discusses one and only one main idea from beginning to end” (p. 18). Moreover, they claimed that in order to achieve coherence in writing, “the sentences must hold together, that is, the movement from one sentence to the next must be logical and smooth. There must be no sudden jumps. Each sentence should flow into the next one” (p. 18); or it is what “refers to the ways in which your ideas connect together” (Murray, 2012, p. 17). In this sense, Murray and Hughes (2008) pointed out,

A good writer ‘sticks’ their ideas together so that they act as links in a chain, each link connecting the one before it with the one after. If any links are missing, the connections become unclear and the argument structure breaks down. (p. 45)

Consequently, coherence can be achieved in academic writing through organizing the ideas in a logical order, using transitional markers or expressions such as *furthermore*, *however*, *firstly*, *moreover* to guide the reader through the text, as well as using repetitive structures (Cleary, 2008).

**1.4.3.3. Cohesion.** Cohesion is another important discourse aspect that effects the quality of students’ writing. Pollard (2008) referred to cohesion as “how ideas are linked; this is commonly achieved by the use of reference words (e.g. the latter) and linkers (e.g. on the other hand, alternatively)” (p. 50). In addition, Connor (1984) defined cohesion as the use of explicit cohesive devices that signal relations among sentences and parts of a text. These devices are known as cohesive ties and they can be either words or phrases used by the writer to link ideas or information together. Halliday and Hasan (1976) identified five cohesive devices that EFL learners are required to adopt in order to produce coherent essays. These are reference, substitution, ellipsis, lexical cohesion, and most importantly the appropriate use of conjunctions.

Reference denotes the use of pronouns and demonstratives to show the relation between parts of a sentence. For example, “*students* prepare *their* Master dissertation. *They* should finish it before the end of the year”. In this sentence, there is a cohesive tie of reference between the pronoun ‘*they*’ and the word ‘*students*’ as well as between the expression ‘*Master dissertation*’ and the pronoun ‘*it*’. Moreover, these pronouns (they, it) in the example above have back or anaphoric reference to “students, dissertation”. However, the opposite order marks an onward/cataphoric reference (e.g. They speak English fluently, son and daughter).

Substitution means replacing an item (word or phrase) by another one. Halliday and Hassan (1976) identified three kinds of substitution. These are nominal (one, ones, same), verbal (do), and clausal (so, much, not). For example, in the sentence “There are two mediums of **discourse**: the spoken discourse and the written **one**”, the item ‘one’ substitutes or replaces the word ‘discourse’ in the first part of the sentence.

Ellipsis involves the total omission of an item in a sentence. For instance, “the children will carry the small boxes, the adults the large ones” (McCarthy, 1991, p. 43). In this example, the omitted expression is ‘will carry’. Another example which illustrates ellipsis is “Penny was introduced to a famous author, but even before she was, she had recognized him” (Harmer, 2007, p. 36). The second clause omits the unnecessary expression ‘introduced to a famous author’, yet the meaning is still clear.

Lexical cohesion is achieved by the use of different techniques as repetition and synonymy. Repetition is when key words in a text are repeated, because they reinforce key ideas and new words. For example, ‘Students will submit their dissertations at the end of the year. These dissertations should meet the required conventions of an academic paper’. The word ‘dissertations’ is repeated in the sentence, and the meaning of ‘these dissertations’ is still related with the word ‘dissertation’ in the first sentence. Second, the writer can use synonymy or terms that have exactly the same meaning in a given context. For example, ‘there are different drawbacks of using social media. The first disadvantage is that the accounts could be pirated and all the personal details will be known for all users.’ In this example, the words ‘drawbacks’ and ‘disadvantage’ are synonyms because they have the same meanings.

Conjunctions “are linking words and phrases which establish the logical relationship between ideas within a sentence or between sentences. [...], logical connectors are thus guideposts for readers that help them to better flow the text” (Yakhontova, 2003, p. 38). In English, conjunctions have four functions. There are additive conjunctions (e.g. and, or,

likewise, also, add to this, similarly), adversatives (e.g. but, yet, however, nevertheless, while, unless, apart from this), causatives (because, since, so, therefore, if, so that, consequently), and temporal conjunctions (e.g. when, after, then, before, till, first, second).

### **1.5. Learning and Teaching Academic Writing**

Under this section, the five major writing activities suggested by Rivers (1968) are explored in order to help EFL students to improve their writing skills and produce accurate and appropriate academic essays. Moreover, it is stated that students need to follow the instructions listed below by different scholars to achieve the standards of academic writing.

#### ***1.5.1. Rivers' Model of Writing Activities in the Educational Field***

The writing skill, like any other systematic process, has to be taught to EFL students through following some steps. Rivers (1968) viewed that “to be able to write in the FL, the pupil must be trained systematically through five stages of development” (p. 245). Therefore, in order to learn how to express oneself comprehensively and clearly, foreign language writing learners need to go through five stages in order to improve their writing. These stages are: copying, reproducing, recombination and adaptation, guided writing, and finally composition.

**1.5.1.1. Copying.** Copying is also called ‘transcription’. It means writing down what students of English as a second or foreign language have in their minds from the previous knowledge which is mostly learned inside the classroom. Brookes and Grundy (1998) revealed that copying “is as much about using writing to support language learning as about teaching writing itself” (p. 22). That is to say, copying is very important in acquainting learners with the written script of the second or foreign language. It definitely helps in learning the right spelling of words, the right association of words and sounds and even improves their handwriting. For this reason, Rivers (1968) recommended the accurate copying at early stages of language learning because bad writing habits, for her, will be difficult to



eradicate at later stages. Similarly, Harmer (2006) recognized the importance of copying as an important stage in the development of the writing skill, and considered it as an activity that helps learners gain a basic mechanical competence. At this stage of writing, Rivers (1968) argued that teachers need to ask their students to copy parts of the work already learned orally and read it to them. As the students are copying, they should repeat what they are writing because this repetition will deepen the sounds/symbols relationship in their minds. After that, they should have a further repetition practice of basic dialogue or pattern sentences.

**1.5.1.2. Reproduction.** According to Rivers (1968), reproduction involves the repetition of what has been copied or learned orally in the first stage, then reproducing pieces of writing without any reference to the original copy. However, the material to be reproduced has to be practiced orally and read to the teacher before being reproduced. In this way, students will be able to write successfully if they have been trained in habits of accuracy in the copying stage. Furthermore, it is necessary to know that training in accurate copying will be beneficial for EFL learners at this stage.

**1.5.1.3. Recombination and Adaptation.** In the third stage of writing development, that is recombination and adaptation, EFL learners are provided training in an accurate construction of sentences along with focusing on an intelligible transmission of messages. They are engaged in the reproduction of a learned work with minor adaptations that vary from substitution and transformation to expansion and contraction of sentences. In Bader's words, learners can "substitute or replace nouns with pronouns, transform or turn sentences from the active to the passive form, turn direct speech into indirect speech, or change words from singular to plural" (2007, p. 12). Furthermore, they can expand sentences by adding adjectives, adverbs, or conjunctions. For that reason, Rivers (1968) argued that recombination is relegated after the reproduction stage where firm grounds are established in substitution, transformation, expansion, and contraction.

**1.5.1.4. Guided Writing.** Guided writing is the stage where the students are required to write following certain directions. Rivers (1968) stated that the student, in the guided writing stage, will be given some freedom in the selection of lexical items and structural patterns for his written exercise, but with a framework which retains him from attempting to compose at a level beyond his state of knowledge. Writing at this stage is still under supervision. Students are given a limited freedom in lexical and grammatical choices i.e., changing some elements without exceeding their level of knowledge; for instance, they can summarize a text or paraphrase it. In other words, they are considered neither controlled nor totally free. Kroll, Long, and Richards (1990) stated that a good example of guided writing is “the production of a short text by answering direct and open-ended questions” (p. 250).

**1.5.1.5. Composition.** In comparison to the previous stages, the composition stage entails some freedom on the learners’ part which consists in the selection of words and structures. That is to say, students will be able to think and write creatively in the foreign languages. Thus, Heaton (1975, as cited in Bader, 2007) claimed that the writing of a composition is a task which involves the students in manipulating words in grammatically correct sentences and in linking to those sentences to form a piece of continuous writing which successfully conveys the writer’s thoughts and ideas on a certain topic. At this stage, students will be able to master the language form which is highly required at this level.

### ***1.5.2. The Need of Instruction to Learn Academic Writing***

Hedge (2000) claimed that “writing is a complex activity which is neither easy nor spontaneous” (p. 302). For this reason, it is important to mention that in order to learn academic writing, students need much exposure and explicit instruction particularly with regard to the conventions used. This helps them to be aware of the main differences between academic writing and other writing genres.

Thonney (2011) suggested some techniques that may facilitate students' understanding of the conventions of academic writing. Firstly, students should read authentic academic texts, i.e., texts which are written by native writers that illustrate the conventions of academic writing, and avoid overreliance on secondary sources. Secondly, teachers should help students notice how academic writing varies by comparing resources written in different disciplines. Thirdly, teachers could provide the students with explicit instruction about the formal features of academic writing and teach them how to express their ideas appropriately. In this vein, Hyland (2006) pointed out that "raising students' awareness of such features helps them see how academic fields are broadly linked and how language (...) helps construct features of its context" (p. 14).

The difficulty of the task of writing does not only reside in organizing the ideas, but it extends to the way of transferring ideas into coherent written forms. Supporting this claim, Richard and Renandya (2002) argued that "there is no doubt that writing is the most difficult skill to master, the difficulty lies in translating ideas into readable texts. The skills involved in writing are highly complex" (p. 303). Moreover, Heaton (1975, p. 138) listed the four skills involved in writing as follows:

- a. Grammatical skill: The ability to write correct sentences.
- b. Stylistic skill: The ability to manipulate sentences and use language effectively.
- c. Mechanical skill: The ability to use correctly those conventions peculiar to the written language such as punctuation and spelling.
- d. Judgment skill: The ability to write in an appropriate manner for a particular purpose with the ability to select, and organize relevant information.

To sum up, writing is a very important skill that all EFL students should master in order to produce effective and sufficient pieces of work. Thus, developing writing proficiency in an

EFL context is widely recognized as an essential skill for it is as a productive skill which allows students to achieve their academic success.

### **Conclusion**

Different researchers, who approached the term ‘Academic Essay’ differently, seem to agree on the definition that an academic essay is a well-structured piece of writing which aims at presenting information for educational and professional purposes. Academic writing has been distinguished from non-academic writing in terms of the formality of its context, its specific audience, composed primarily of academics, the complexity style and other language aspects such as organization, grammar and vocabulary. Academic essays fall within four types which are: narrative essays, aiming at telling stories, descriptive, seeking to attract the readers’ attention toward the subject through the specific choice of words and details which makes the process of description livelier, expository essays, serving to present the information about a given subject along with the writer’s personal opinions, and argumentative essays, which are based on providing arguments in order to convince the reader. Most importantly, academic writing requires the use of formal lexical, grammatical and discourse features that make students’ writing essays clear and understandable. Hence, it is highly valued to use impersonal forms, academic vocabulary, complex structures, cohesive, coherent as well as well-organised and accurate texts. To improve the quality of their writing, students need much exposure and explicit instruction particularly with regard to the conventions that control academic writing and make it different from other kinds of writing.

## **Chapter Two: Aspects of Teacher Talk in English as a Second/Foreign Language**

### **Lectures**

#### Introduction

#### 2.1. What Is Teacher Talk?

#### 2.2. Teacher Talk and Related Concepts

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#### 2.4. The Linguistic Adjustments in Teacher Talk

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##### 2.4.4. Discourse Adjustments

###### 2.4.4.1. Repetition

###### 2.4.4.2. Omission, Expansion, and Prompting

###### 2.4.4.3. Interactional Modification

#### Conclusion

## **Chapter Two: Aspects of Teacher Talk in English as a Second/Foreign Language Lectures**

### **Introduction**

Teacher talk in English as foreign language classrooms is considered an essential aspect that consists of both the knowledge and the teachers' personal and interactional skills when delivering a particular lecture's input. Hence, what counts as effective teaching is the teachers' ability to not only provide quality input materials but also to manipulate the language that is necessary for the presentation of a particular area of content as well as the learners' output production. The present chapter introduces some key definitions of teacher talk. Next, it discusses concepts that share similar characteristics with teacher talk, namely, caretaker speech and foreigner talk. The chapter ends the discussion by exploring the contributions of teacher talk in making the language input comprehensible for English second/foreign language learners through employing different linguistic adjustments or simplifications at different language levels.

### **2.1. What is Teacher Talk?**

As an entry in Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics, teacher talk (TT) is defined as "the variety of language sometimes used by teachers when they are in the process of teaching" (Richards, 1992, p. 471). In English foreign language (EFL) classrooms, TT is a vital tool for the implementation of a teaching plan, and a substantial source of the target input that EFL students are likely to receive (Nunan, 1991).

TT exists as the formula of the language input knowledge as well as the language of directing classrooms' behaviour. Allwright and Bailey (1991) explained that TT is used for transmitting information to learners, and "it is one of the primary means of controlling learners' behavior" (p. 139). It is the language of directly addressing learners by providing

directions, explaining activities and verifying the students' comprehension of the lesson being taught and learned (Sinclair & Brazil, 1982, as cited in Yanfen & Yuqin, 2010, p. 77).

Language teachers carefully orchestrate their talk striving towards a better understanding of the lessons' components to enable students to accomplish a particular learning task. In this respect, Walsh (2002) argued that TT is potentially constructive through a controlled use of the language features being utilized. It is not only designed to demonstrate the richness of the lectures' input for the learners, but it also influences the way students fulfill their classroom tasks. In Gebhard's (2006) terms, in order to reach a purposeful and productive teacher talk, English should be used selectively and designedly to ameliorate the students' attainments (p. 81). i.e. TT can be beneficial for learners only by providing the appropriate language that aids learners to successfully use the target language (TL) in its spoken and written modes.

## **2.2. Teacher Talk and Related Concepts**

When teachers engage in the process of teaching, they mostly resort to their talk as a speech style that aims at upgrading the learners' level of proficiency in the TL. Hence, TT involves special features shared with other types of talk used by caregivers, namely, baby talk/motherese in first language (L1) acquisition and foreigner talk in second language (L2) acquisition.

### **2.2.1. Caretaker Speech**

Baby talk, Maternal speech, or what Gleitman and Newport called motherese (as cited in Brodsky et al., 2007, p. 833) are the variety of language used by parents or adults when addressing young children. Thus, it is undeniable that the way caretakers talk affects children's L1 acquisition, because the language they hear is the source of their learning.

According to the Motherese Hypothesis (Gleitman, Newport, & Gleitman, 1984), mothers as caretakers are predisposed to adjust their language when addressing their children to

promote L1 acquisition. Gleitman, Newport, and Gleitman (1984) claimed that “properties of caretaker speech play a causal role in acquisition” (p. 45). Further, they assumed that “The crucial component of the Motherese Hypothesis is that the child learns best from the simplest data” (p. 67) i.e. mothers are restricted to select intelligible and simple utterances usually consisting of a single clause, clearly enunciated, and they almost never contain a true grammatical error. However, without frequently addressing infants with a simplified language input, such input would not be efficient to foster their language accomplishment.

The simplicity in adults’ speech when addressing infants appears as a solution for the L1 acquisition problems. Ferguson (1977) declared that baby talk is a simplified speech used to clarify, show expressiveness, and emphasize identification of infant as addressee (As cited in Heath, 1978, p. 7). In this regard, Ochs and Schieffelin (2011) stated “caregivers when communicating with infants and very young children as full addressees expected to comprehend and reply, they consistently use extensively a simplified speech and other modifications” (p. 5). Thus, the simplified spoken styles appear due to the difficulties that the child encounters in how to handle the language that they are exposed to as full addressees as well as the utterances and the contents of language that are allowed to be produced at particular stage of competency. In this regard, Gleitman, Newport, and Gleitman (1984) said that “the more the caretaker restricts the sentence types and contents of the language, the faster and less error-laden the learning will be” (p. 45).

Essentially, as mothers/caregivers do when addressing infants, teachers tend to modify their speech into a kind of simplified language input when addressing learners who lack full competence in the TL. TT includes similar linguistic adjustments (basic vocabulary and less complex sentence structures) and tunes the level of speech difficulty to match the level of language proficiency of the students.



### ***2.2.2. Foreigner Talk***

As far as speech modification is concerned, the phenomenon of foreigner talk (FT) represents another simplified delivery that supports Second Language Acquisition (SLA). The term was first initiated by Fishman, Ferguson, and Dasgupta (1968) saying that it is the varieties of simplified form of speech used by native speakers while talking to foreigners. However, it is not only imparted by native speakers (NSs) but also, in some cases, by competent non-native speakers (NNSs) while addressing less than competent NNSs whose knowledge of the L2 is substandard.

Since the phenomenon acknowledges participants who do not have equal competency in the TL, the demand for an alternative speech style from the competent speakers is needed. According to Dodu (2013), FT modifications positively influence SLA, by making the target input easier and simpler to be understood. Ivanova (2011) stated that “FT by no means represents a uniform type of speech accommodation” (p. 6). Thus, two major types of adjustments were identified in FT, namely, the linguistic adjustments and the conversational adjustments. The linguistic adjustments occur at the level of the speaker’s phonology, lexicon, morphology and syntax of utterances. However, the conversational adjustments are the modifications made with regard to the interaction and content of the utterance.

Teachers often simplify their speech, giving it many of the characteristics of FT when addressing language learners (Richards, 1992, p. 471). Chaudron (1988) and Henzl (1979) confirmed that the terms TT and FT are used interchangeably to name the kind of speech used in L2 classrooms. Moreover, Tulung (2008) said that FT is common in the classroom context, and it is considered an important source of L2 input development. However, Stanley and Stevenson (2017) noted that only the grammatical characteristics of FT are used in classrooms while the ungrammatical ones are rare. Similarly, Ferguson (1971) considered TT

as the grammatical FT used in the language classrooms, with the aim of making input comprehensible (Tulung, 2008, p. 15).

In view of the fact that teacher talk, foreigner talk, and maternal speech share the same characteristics when they are delivered. They can all be used to refer to what is known as a simplified delivery that aims at facilitating the TL for less proficient recipients.

### **2.3. Teacher Talk as Comprehensible Input**

Teachers adjust their speech into a kind of simplified code to provide a maximum "comprehensible input" and to make themselves intelligible for ESL/EFL learners (Wang, 2014, p. 1172). Krashen (1981, 1982) hypothesized that learning takes place only by means of a learner's access to a comprehensible input as the major contributory variable in SLA and that learners should understand what is being said to them by the teacher in order to progress and learn the language easily. Hence, comprehensible input is considered to be crucial to all of acquisition and to have ample implications for the classroom (Samburskiy, 2017, p 119).

#### ***2.3.1. Input Hypothesis***

Krashen's theory (1985) is a collection of five hypotheses which effectively contribute to SLA. This collection of hypotheses includes the acquisition and learning hypothesis, the monitor model hypothesis, the natural order hypothesis, the affective filter hypothesis, and the input hypothesis.

The acquisition learning hypothesis indicates that acquisition is a sub-conscious process while learning is a conscious one, i.e. acquisition appears without realizing that certain language elements are being acquired; it goes below consciousness as in the case of the child's exposure or acquisition to the L1. However, learning means to consciously obtain the rules of a language; for example, at school, it is learned that the subject and the verb must agree.

The second hypothesis is the monitor model hypothesis. This monitor scans the output correctness, i.e. it checks the output, edits it, and corrects it. However, several conditions must be taken into account to successfully use the monitor. It must have sufficient time, focus on form, and the performer should be aware about the rules of language (Krashen, 1981, p. 3).

According to the natural order hypothesis, learning proceeds in a natural way following a natural order. i.e. certain language elements are naturally acquired before others. For instance, in English classes children acquire progressive -ing, plural -s, and active sentences before they acquire third person -s on verbs, or passive sentences.

The affective filter hypothesis shows that the number of learners' acquisition of comprehensive input is affected by affective filter, including motivation, self-confidence and anxiety, etc. In other words, the emotional factors of language learners profoundly influence the effect of their acquisition (Krashen, 1982). Schmidt and Richards (2010) stated that successful L2 acquisition depends on the learner's feelings. Negative attitudes (including a lack of motivation or self-confidence and anxiety) are said to act as a filter, preventing the learner from making use of input, and thus hindering success in language learning (p. 16).

The "comprehensible input" in Krashen's terms is formulated as  $(i+1)$ . In this  $(i+1)$  construct, 'i' represents the learner's current level of the linguistic competence, while '1' symbolizes the language beyond their level of competence. That is, 'i + 1' is the next immediate step along the development continuum. For instance, an acquirer is at stage 'i' in acquisition of syntax, he can progress to stage  $i + 1$  by understanding the input at that level of complexity (Krashen, 1981, p. 103).

Learning proceeds when new language structures are only just beyond the learner's level. Consequently, the language structures that learners understand completely have no impact on acquisition. However, if the input has some unfamiliar elements, but is still overall

understandable, it triggers the learner's acquisition device and turns into comprehensible input (Samburskiy, 2017, p. 119).

Krashen (1985) summarized the five hypotheses with a single claim saying that, "people acquire second language only if they obtain comprehensible input and if their affective filters are low enough to allow the input in" (p. 82). Based on this claim, it can be assumed that the input hypothesis is the most important attribute among Krashen's five acquisition hypotheses. By the same token, Krashen (1985) said that "humans acquire language in only one way by understanding messages or by receiving comprehensible input" (p. 82). Thus, SLA operates only when a comprehensible input is provided.

### ***2.3.2. Teachers' Comprehensible Input***

Krashen (1982) said that "the defining characteristic of a good teacher is someone who can make input comprehensible to a non-native speaker." (p. 64). Accordingly, teachers through their talk, in ESL/EFL classrooms, should be eager to provide an unambiguous and coherent presentation of the lecture materials as well as an explanation which is comprehensible enough to aid the learners' development in the TL and their output performance.

Harmer (2007) included a whole chapter describing the teacher, and identified the teacher as a "language model and provider of a comprehensible input" (p. 57). However, the teachers' input should not only contain the already known structures to be considered as comprehensible; rather, it should be designed to combine the already known items with new linguistic data so that students can gradually acquire new language knowledge while understanding the information. Therefore, it is pivotal to provide the students with "i+1" comprehensible input as it was formulated by Krashen (1982, 1985).

## **2.4.The Linguistic Adjustments in Teacher Talk**

TT attempts to grapple with the difficulties that EFL students encounter with the target language input, by grading their verbalization complexity to realize intelligible language that matches the learners' level of competence. Long (1983) discussed in depth how input can be made comprehensible for learners through linguistic modifications that are adapted in some way to the level of the addressee. Hence, the language adjustments in TT appear at four different linguistic levels, namely, the phonological, lexical, syntactic, and discourse levels.

### ***2.4.1.Phonological Adjustments***

Teachers' phonological adjustments are imperative to achieve an intelligible TT. Accordingly, instructors have to speak in a rational speed and constantly consider pauses. Moreover, the lucid articulation of words' segments, the alert pronunciation should occur to manage a successful input comprehension.

**2.4.1.1. Rate of Speech.** Rate of speech/utterances is the speed at which a person speaks (Schmidt & Richards, 2010, p. 480). As far as TT is concerned, the rate of teacher speech refers to the speed with which language tutors speak in the classroom. The rate of talk can be calculated through estimating the total number of words per minute (wpm); it is slow if the rate of speech is less than 110 wpm and it is fast when it is 160 to 200 wpm, and between 110 wpm and 160 it is average ("What Is Your Speech Rate", 2019).

Teachers are inclined to regulate their speech rate when it is intended for ESL/EFL learners. Several research findings (Steyaert, 1977; Mannon, 1986; Chaudron, 1988; Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991; Xiao-yan, 2006; Ivanova, 2011) revealed that the speed of teachers' vocalization when transmitting information to ESL/EFL learners is apparently slower than the ordinary speech speed. Teachers introduce the language knowledge for learners in a proper speed with which the input delivered can be more understood.

Different audiences, NSs and NNSs, have dissimilar abilities to comprehend the talk presented in a high-speed rate, and accordingly teachers make an effort to draw a parallel between the rate of the delivery and the students' progression on the comprehensibility of the information. Equivalently, Henzl (1979) noted that teachers decrease their speech rate when telling stories to less proficient listeners of the TL.

**2.4.1.2. Pauses.** Pauses are commonly a feature of ordinary speech in which gaps or hesitations appear throughout the production of utterances (Schmidt & Richards, 2010, p. 424). Pertaining to TT, pauses or wait time is regarded as attributes of teachers' verbal language addressed to EFL students. Rowe (1986) has defined a pause as the short period of time provided by teachers after giving information, or asking a question, or when it is needed. Although pauses are occasionally viewed as a sub-component that affects the rate of speech, they may separately aid L2 learners' comprehension and processing of the target linguistic elements i.e. pauses may provide EFL learners with time for more successful cognitive processing of the teachers' delivery. In this regard, Chaudron stated that pauses appeared in TT as a result of:

- a) A more careful articulation of speech.
  - b) Teachers' planning on how to paraphrase their speech for students to connect their competence and needs.
  - c) As a comprehension aid, giving students more time to process the input from TT.
- (1988, pp. 69-70)

Teachers' propensity for making short instances of silence when teaching or lecturing had been explored by many scholars. Henzl (1979) and Downes (1981) considered pauses as a component of the teachers' phonological language structuring for both NNS and NS students. The results of their studies confirmed that teachers' speech included more extended pauses directed to NNSs learners compared to NSs. Moreover, Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991),

and Xiao-yan (2006) maintained the proposal of breaking the speech, during the process of teaching, into concise pauses. They remarked that teachers' verbal behaviour in the classroom contained frequent and long pauses between utterances. Their findings of the previously mentioned studies shed light on the necessity of inserting pauses or wait time as a TT feature in increasing the students' attention and learning opportunities.

Pauses that are deliberately made by teachers, also known as "pedagogical pauses", occur in TT at critical moments of the development of utterances to facilitate comprehension. They usually exist in the middle of the utterance not at the end. Chaudron presented some evidence for more conscious use of pauses as an endeavor to reach comprehensibility in ESL high school and university classrooms. He noted that teachers segmented their speech with slightly longer pauses surrounding difficult words e.g. 'One of the...symbols...or emblems...of Canada' (Chaudron, 1988, p. 70).

**2.4.1.3. Articulation of Segments.** The articulation of speech segments is intrinsically related to the teachers' simplification of language for EFL learners. Teachers have to be conscious about their enunciation so as not to cause ambiguity for learners' comprehensibility of the input (Zahin, 2015, p. 4). In such a case, TT adjustments in the area of phonology are typically realized through separating words or syllable articulation, using more careful pronunciation of words particularly for final stops and contractions.

Teachers tend to create a clear pronunciation as an endeavor to manage the comprehension of the lesson components for EFL learners. Mannon (1986, as cited in Chaudron, 1988) observed more careful enunciation and considerably fewer contractions in the speech directed to NNSs. Furthermore, Downes' (1981) findings confirmed that teachers used more exaggerated articulation in EFL classrooms. As stated by Long (1983) clear pronunciation was found to contribute to the comprehensibility of a message (p. 186).

Teachers opted for the use of full forms instead of contractions with auxiliary verbs (e.g. “you are” instead of “you’re”, be going to instead of “gonna”, and I’ll is replaced by I will). As regards final stops, they were fully released or voiced, and some glottal stops were used before words beginning with vowels (Hatch, 1983, p. 183) i.e. teachers articulate all the speech subdivisions so that students’ reception would be done successfully. Chaudron (1988) assumed that the overall slower, accentuated speech is likely to enhance the learners’ comprehension (p. 71).

So far, it can be maintained that teachers’ adjustments, at the phonological aspects of language, aid the EFL learners to process the pieces of information given by their tutors more comfortably. As it was greatly assumed from the previously obtained review of literature, learners’ comprehension proceeds when teacher talk is distributed in a reasonable rate in conjunction with considering long pauses between utterances, as well as clearer articulation of language sound segments.

#### ***2.4.2. Lexical Adjustments***

Owen (1996) pointed out that modifications made by teachers to their talk may be reflected in the vocabulary they use (p. 34). Similarly, Xiao-yan (2006) stated that vocabulary is more restricted to the students’ level of proficiency (p. 14). Investigations on the lexical complexity in teacher’s speech can be conducted on the kind of vocabulary being delivered, and by measuring the lexical diversity or type-token ratios (TTR).

**2.4.2.1. Basic Vocabulary.** Teachers’ lexical simplification in ESL/EFL classrooms is demonstrated through the kind of vocabulary employed in their talk. Potentially, teachers tend to address L2 learners using a far more basic and highly frequent vocabulary items (e.g., “house” instead of “mansion”, “show” instead of “depict”) (as cited in Ivanova, 2011, p. 17). Henzl (1979) noted that the teachers’ lexical simplification included fewer idioms, more proper and concrete nouns, and fewer indefinite pronouns. Furthermore, colloquial lexical



elements are less employed in comparison with the regular occurrence of standard forms. As a result, Chaudron (1982) depicted the teachers' evident awareness of the need to simplify speech to NNSs, citing downshift to more basic vocabulary. However, new and difficult lexis are neglected.

**2.4.2.2. Lexical Diversity.** The lexical richness of teachers' spoken language is measured by calculating different words', or types, divided by the total number of words being evoked, or tokens (Irmayani & Rachmajanti, 2017, p. 64). This measure, which is known as type-token ratio (TTR), indicates the lexical variety used in a text or a speech i.e. whether TT is lexically rich or not, and whether it is able to fill the gap of an insufficient L2 input using a variety of lexis. TTR is normally expressed as a percentage as it is illustrated in the following formula (Schmidt & Richards, 2010, p. 614):

$$\text{TTR} = \frac{\text{Number of separate words}}{\text{Total number of words in the text}} \times 100$$

The examination of the complexity of vocabulary would have to consider the frequency and complexity of all the semantic elements. Hence, teachers attempt at making the target lexical input comprehensible by adjusting their talk using more restricted and familiar vocabulary to match the EFL learners' level of proficiency.

Based on the discussion of the lexical adjustments above, it can be stated that the comprehensibility of the vocabulary employed in TT requires the regular occurrence of words that are basic and familiar for learners. As for diversity,

### ***2.4.3. Syntactical Adjustments***

Syntactical modification is one of the TT adjustments made to simplify the linguistic processing of the information. In a research done by Chaudron (1988) on TT when addressing NNS learners, he has found that teachers make different adjustments at the level of syntax

such as the inclusion of short utterances instead of long ones, the varied distribution of sentence type, the use of less marked linguistic structures, and the amount of grammaticality of utterances as well as the use of subordination.

**2.4.3.1. Length of Utterances.** The length of teachers' utterances when talking to learners is affected by the syntactical modification that takes place in EFL classrooms. It is measured by the number of words that constitute an utterance or a sentence. Hence, EFL teachers tend to use shorter utterances to reduce the syntactical complexity of the TL. Mizon (1981) and Henzl (1979) found that the subjects of their studies used shorter sentences in their speech directed to L2 learners.

Teachers' length of utterances is tuned downward for less competent learners and it gradually increases as learners advance in the language. This claim was proved by Henzl (1979) who demonstrated that the length of sentences addressed to beginners was 5.8 words while to advanced learners, it was 10.1 words per sentence. Similarly, at periods of 5 weeks and on the basis of a T-unit measurement, Hakansson (1986, as cited in Ivanova, 2011) found that the mean words per sentence for each teacher increased over time.

**2.4.3.2. Distribution of Sentence Type.** The type of sentences that is distributed to EFL students, such as declaratives/statements, interrogatives, and imperatives, has its impacts on TT simplification. Early (1985) found that the distribution of sentence types is significantly different between NS and NNS learners (as cited in Ivanova, 2011, p. 14). Chaudron (1988) assumed that teachers used more declarative forms rather than the other two forms, interrogatives and imperatives. Furthermore, Mizon (1981) demonstrated a significantly higher proportion of interrogatives in TT oriented towards NNSs, suggesting that they may reflect teachers' efforts to check learners' comprehension or understanding of the topic being discussed.

**2.4.3.3. Markedness.** The use of less marked linguistic structures is another modification made by teachers at the level of syntax. Chaudron (1988) stated that teachers adapted their speech to less proficient learners to some extent by using less marked structures (p.79). Markedness has sometimes been invoked as a direction of difficulty in ESL/EFL teaching assuming that in some languages the linguistic items are seen to be unmarked, simple, core, and prototypical, while others are considered to be marked i.e. complex, peripheral, or exceptional (SchmidtRichards, 2010, p. 352). EFL teachers tend to use less marked constructions as an endeavour to simplify the learning of the English language.

This simplification comprises an extensive use of verbs in the simple present tense instead of the non-present tenses (future and past) in speech directed to EFL learners e.g. the root verb "work" is unmarked, and the past-tense of the verb is "worked," which is marked by having the suffix *-ed* attached to it to indicate that it is the past tense. In addition, Henzl (1979) observed that teachers used less inflectional complexity, the lack of passive construction, as well as the avoidance of conditionals in the speech directed to NNSs.

**2.4.3.4. Grammaticality of Utterances.** Despite the fact that teachers generally use a well-formed grammatical language in ESL/EFL classrooms, ungrammaticality of utterances and sentence fragment occur in TT as a result of simplification of the TL.

The ungrammatical utterances typically involve omissions of function words, copula, subject or object pronouns, and articles. Kliefgen (1985) reported that about 24% of utterances in teachers' speech contain omission. In addition, sentence fragments are incomplete sentences; they can be either phrases or subordinate clauses. The following example shows a sentence fragment and its correction

Incorrect: Someone who wants to regain the championship title. (noun with subordinate clause but no predicate)

Correct: Someone who want to regain the championship title fights harder than persons who do not have that goal.

One reason that could motivate the use of these ungrammatical utterances could be teachers' adaptation to the learners' low level of proficiency, with the tendency of these ungrammatical forms to disappear with learners' increase of language competence.

**2.4.3.5. Subordinations.** The controlled use of subordination is one of the modifications made by teachers in order to reduce the complexity of their syntactical structures. Chaudron (1988) assumed that teachers adjust the complexity of their speech downward when speaking to L2 learners or less proficient learners (p. 78).i.e. the level of complexity in the speech directed to low level EFL students is significantly low and contains less subordinate clauses than the speech given to higher levels, depending on the already built competence in the TL.

Gaise (1977) and Henzl's (1979) analysis of the syntactical features in the ESL/EFL classrooms showed that TT in the classrooms was modified to reflect their learners' level of proficiency. Henzl (1979) analyzed the frequency of subordination clauses in the native and non-native classes using a storytelling procedure. His results showed that there was a tendency towards fewer subordinate clauses in NNS classes. Gaise (1977) noted that teachers' speech included different patterns of subordination as the level of students increased.

Based on the preceding discussion a conclusion can be drawn on the fact that teachers adjust their talk at the level of syntax in a manner-related to the FL learner's level of proficiency in the TL. Hence, the syntactical adjustments in TT occur when teachers' speech is based on the use of shorter and less complex utterances as well as featuring the ungrammaticality of utterances. Moreover, the careful distribution of sentence types and the inclusion of less marked sentences are used to earn TT intelligibility and comprehensibility.

#### ***2.4.4. Discourse Adjustments***

In EFL teaching classrooms, teachers simplify or elaborate the discourse patterns of their talk to ensure that the language input comprehensibility and intelligibility gradually proceed to match the students' level of competency in the TL. This level of adjustment involves the teachers' use of repetition, omission, expansion, prompting language, as well as the use of the communicative devices, namely, confirmation checks, comprehension checks, and the clarification requests.

**2.4.4.1. Repetition.** One of the features that characterize TT is the act of repeating or paraphrasing previously stated utterances. Repetition is the re-saying of previously mentioned elements of speech produced by teachers for the aim of providing learners with more opportunities to successfully interpret the provided information (Chaudron, 1988, p. 84).

Teachers' repetitions are an attempt to give the students extra chances to recuperate the elements they miss during the lecture presentation, Merrit (1994) has shown that "repetition facilitates rhythm and provides "catch up" time, allowing longer periods of time for information to be processed" (p. 28). It is also an attempt to facilitate the process of understanding and storing language items, Lyster (2002) and O'Connor (1988) said that repetition is a means of fostering conceptual understanding.

Several researchers have tackled the analysis of teachers' repetition (Hamayan & Tucker, 1980; Wesche & Ready, 1985; Early, 1985 as cited in Chaudron, 1988, p. 84; Ellis, 1985). Hamayan and Tucker (1980) observed that the frequency of repetitions in the French teachers' statements of the lessons directed to L2 classes was slightly lower in comparison with L1 French classes. However, studies that were conducted by Wesche and Ready (1985) and Early (1985) found that ESL teachers used more repetitions in their speech directed to L2 learners, compared with teachers speaking to NSs. Furthermore, Ellis (1985) analyzed the occurrence

of self-repetition in ESL teacher's speech to adolescent L2 students and found that the frequency of repetition decreased as the language learners' competence increased.

**2.4.4.2. Omission, Expansion, and Prompting.** ESL/EFL learning requires teachers to provide accurate models for learners to imitate (Schmidt & Richards, 2010, p. 370). However, teachers potentially adjust their classroom discourse into a kind of ungrammatical use of the language in an endeavour to acknowledge the low level of EFL learners, and to boost their understanding of the target input. The ungrammaticality in teachers' discourse is the product of three main processes, namely, expansion, omission, and prompting.

In expansion, the teacher repeats part of what the learner has said, and expands it. The expansion usually contains the addition of grammatical words which the L2 learner did not produce in their utterances. When teachers exhibit their expansion, learners can possibly develop their knowledge of the rules of a language. For example:

Student: what ambiguous mean?

Teacher: you are asking what does ambiguous mean.

In the example above, the teacher repeated parts of the student's statement (what ambiguous mean?) and expanded it by adding grammatical words '*does*' so that the learner can get the correct structure of questions. However, expansions can be ungrammatically produced as claimed by Long (1983) that it is one of the ungrammatical processes used in caretaker talk. An example of the ungrammatical expansion is the addition of unanalyzed tags to questions, for instance, 'You have understood, yes? /no? /okay?', as well as, the insertion of subject pronoun 'you' in imperatives for example, "You go out".

Prompting language refers to stating a sentence in a different way by rearranging its structure in a way that corresponds to the learner's level of understanding (Schmidt & Richards, 2010, p. 370). However, this process sometimes leads to an ungrammatical or informal use of language. For example, teachers may change their talk to say 'you mean

what?’ when receiving no answer from their learners after asking ‘what do you mean?’ Yet, replacing the order of words in a statement in such a simple form can serve to aid the learners’ comprehension of the message at the expense of acquiring the correct structure of the utterances. Other instances of replacement and rearrangement is through forming negatives with ‘no’ plus the negated item ‘Me no like’, replacing subject with object pronouns ‘Me go’ instead of ‘I go’, or using noun-plus-object pronoun constructions “sister me” instead of possessive pronoun-plus-noun constructions “my sister”(Long, 1983, p. 178).

Non-standard use of language, such as omission, has long been interpreted as a consequence of discourse simplification processes of EFL/ESL teachers’ speech that approximates the learners’ channel of understanding capacities. In Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics (2010) omission or deletion appears when speakers leave out a sound, morpheme, or a word from what he/she is saying. For example, in casual or rapid speech, speakers of English often delete the final consonant sounds in some unstressed words; instead of saying ‘a friend of mine’ it becomes ‘a friend o’ mine’ (p. 160). Long (1983) said that omission typically involves deletion of articles, copula, prepositions, inflectional morphology, conjunctions and subject pronouns (p. 178). For example, “He lived three years in Japan” is substituted by “He live three-year Japan”. This exemplification marks the omission of the preposition and two inflectional morphemes (“ed” for tenses and “s” of the plural). Moreover, copula deletion can be defined as the omission of forms of the copular verb ‘be’ between the subject and the predicate of a sentence; for instance, you good at playing the guitar (Leuckert & Neumaier, 2016, pp. 88-89).

**2.4.4.3. Interactional Modification.** Modifications should not only be made at the level of input, in this respect, Hatch (1977) revealed that:

It is not enough to look at input and look at frequency; the important thing is to look at the corpus as a whole and examine the interaction that takes place within conversation

to see how that interaction, itself, determines frequency of forms and how it shows language functions evolving (Hatch, 1977, p. 403).

Accordingly, Long (1983) stated that there must be other ways in which input is made comprehensible than modifying the input itself. One way is through modifying the interactional structure between teachers and students through confirmation and comprehension checks and clarification requests (p. 100).

Comprehension checks are used when the teacher attempts to discover if his/her student understood the provided lesson's materials, e.g. Teacher (T): do you understand? Is that point clear? Confirmation checks are when teachers tend to repeat what a student conveys to confirm that the meaning is understood, for instant, "T: Oh, so you are saying that....?" (Allwright et al.,1991). Clarification requests are used when the teacher aims at assisting the students understanding of some elements of the lesson, e.g. T: What do you mean?

Long (1983) found that ESL/EFL teachers used a significantly greater number of comprehension checks, in comparison with the use of confirmation checks and clarification requests (p. 109). In this case, what counts as highly important is the students' comprehension of their teachers' delivery in order to make the input clear; as a result, comprehension checks will be more frequent when the major flow of information is from teacher to student (Long, 1983, p. 111).

Based on the preceding discussion, EFL teachers choose among the alternatives that are allowed in the target language and the ones that guarantee an intelligible flow of the information being transmitted. Hence, they deliberately engage at applying an informal use of language.

The characteristics of a simplified speech have been identified at various levels of language. It includes varied features such as clear enunciation, slower rate of speech, more



concrete lexicon, and less complex syntactic structures (Hatch 1983, as cited in Milk, 1990, p. 3). The speech modifications that are employed in TT at the level of discourse, syntax, vocabulary, and phonology are an attempt to provide a comprehensible input and intelligible speech for ESL/EFL learners. The following table summarizes the modifications that are employed in TT at different levels of language.

**Table 2.1.**

*The Linguistic Adjustments in Teacher Talk*

Discourse	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Frequent use of repetition</li> <li>2. Ungrammatical structures are evoked</li> <li>3. The inclusion of analyzed tags to questions</li> </ol>
Syntax	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. less complex and shorter utterances with fewer words per utterance</li> <li>2. More verbal marked for present/fewer for non-present (past/perfect)</li> <li>3. More questions</li> <li>4. More yes-no and intonation questions/fewer wh-questions</li> <li>5. The degree of subordination is low.</li> <li>6. Unmarked words and structures are used</li> <li>7. The use of imperatives.</li> <li>8. Declaratives and statements are used more often than questions.</li> </ol>
Lexis	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. More use of basic vocabulary</li> <li>2. The inclusion of high frequency words</li> <li>3. Lower type-token ratio</li> <li>4. Fewer idiomatic expressions and phrasal verbs</li> <li>5. Greater preference for full noun phrase over pronouns</li> <li>6. Use of concrete verbs over dummy verbs, like do</li> </ol>
Phonology	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Slow rate of speech</li> <li>2. Frequent and long pauses between utterances</li> <li>3. Articulation is clear, deliberate, exaggerated, and more simplified</li> <li>4. More use of full forms/avoidance of contracted forms</li> <li>5. Release final stops</li> </ol>

**Conclusion**

Teacher talk, which is a vital source of the target language input, plays a major role in achieving effective teaching. It has different characteristics shared with caretaker speech and foreigner talk in that they all represent a kind of simplified talk. As a main source of

comprehensible input, teacher talk aims at developing the learners' level through providing knowledge that is slightly beyond their current level of development, or 'i+1' input. This 'i+1' input reinforces the already learnt knowledge and guarantees the successful interpretation of the new provided knowledge. For the input to be made comprehensible, teacher talk needs to include some linguistic adjustments at the levels of lexis, phonology, syntax and discourse. At the level of lexis, comprehensible TT makes use of less diverse and highly frequent vocabulary. At the level of syntax, it contains short and simple utterances, less marked and ungrammatical structures as well as little subordinations. At the level of phonology, teachers talk in a rational speed, constantly consider pauses, and clearly articulate the speech segments. Finally, at the discourse level, teachers frequently use repetition and deliberately use the ungrammatical forms of speech. In addition to modifying their speech at the linguistic level, teachers also tend to modify the way they interact with their learners to make their speech more comprehensible by means of comprehension checks, confirmation checks, and clarification requests.

## **Chapter Three: Field Work**

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## **Introduction**

After reviewing the literature in the previous two chapters, the present chapter is devoted to the practical part which attempts to find out the relationship between the informal features that are present in teacher talk when lecturing and students' academic essay writing. Thus, the chapter at hand describes the research methodology followed in the collection of data starting with a description of the research tools used in the dissertation as well as the population and the sample. Then, it presents the description and administration of each research tool alone, followed by an analysis, discussion and interpretation of the results. In addition to answering the main research questions, this chapter provides pedagogical recommendations, states the limitations of the study and sets some suggestions for further research.

### **3.1.Data Collection Procedures**

The present study is based on both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis in order to explore and investigate the correspondences between informal features in teacher talk and students' essay writing. Two research instruments are considered appropriate to be used to gather the adequate data. First, a questionnaire was designed for third year teachers of content modules. Second, the exam copies of third-year students of English have been selected to be analyzed in order to illustrate their use of the informal features that are present in their TT when lecturing. The purpose behind using more than one research instrument is to gather information from diverse sources and to enable comparison between the results obtained from the teacher questionnaire and those provided by exam papers in order to heighten the validity of the research findings.

### **3.2.Population and Sampling**

The population targeted by this study is that of third year students, enrolled at the department of English at Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia University, Jijel, and their teachers of

content modules. Eighty (80) written essays by third year license students are chosen randomly from two content modules (TEFL and Cognitive Psychology) to be the sample of this research. The selection of the population level is based on the fact that third year students are expected to write academically and answer in the form of essay in their examinations.

Concerning the teacher questionnaire, it was addressed to eight teachers teaching third year content modules and require the essay as the form of answering in examinations. The sample is selected on the basis of convenience sampling and is made up of eight teachers who answered the online questionnaire.

### **3.3.Methodology of the Study**

The framework of the present study consists of selecting nine linguistic features which provide a clear picture on how informality appears in the academic context. These features, which are illustrated in Table 3.01 below, are type-token ratio, high frequency words, subordinations, fragments, contractions, copular 'be', lack of reference pronouns, casual spoken language, and sentence initial conjunctions. They were adapted from Chang and Swales (1999) and Hyland and Jiang (2017) who used them in the analyses of informal features in writing. The frequencies of using the selected informal features are counted in both the teacher questionnaire and students' exam papers in order to measure the correspondences between their use in TT and in students' written essays.

#### **Table 3.1.**

*The Selected Informal Features in Writing*

<b>Lexical Features</b>	<b>a) Type-token ratio /Word Type</b>	Type-token ratio (TTR) refers to the different categories of words a text may contain such as nouns, verbs, pronouns, adverbs, and adjectives. Word variation is measured by counting the proportion of the types (the total number of different words) occurring in a text by its tokens (the total number of words). The online website <a href="http://textinspector.com/">http://textinspector.com/</a> has been used for quick counting. A high TTR indicates a high degree of lexical variation while a low TTR indicates low degree of lexical variation.
	<b>b) High frequency words</b>	Frequent vocabulary refers to the words that occur frequently in a corpus of spoken or written texts. The calculation of the number of high frequency words and academic vocabulary is taken from the online website <a href="http://longmandictionariesusa.com/vocabulary_checker">http://longmandictionariesusa.com/vocabulary_checker</a> . The use of high frequency words will be compared to the use of <b>academic words</b> later in the discussion of the results.
<b>Syntactic Features</b>	<b>c) Contractions</b>	A contraction is a reduction of a linguistic form and it is often combined with another form. I shall/will __ I'll They are/were __ they're Did not __ didn't Do not __ don't Does not __ doesn't I would/had __ I'd
	<b>d) Omission of Copular 'be'</b>	The deliberate omission of forms of the copular verb 'be' between the subject and the predicate of a sentence, e.g. <i>you good at mathematics</i>

<b>Grammatical Features</b>	<b>e) Subordination</b>	<p>A subordinate clause is a clause that cannot stand alone as a complete sentence; it is dependent on another independent clause. Typically, it is introduced by a conjunction. Using fewer sentences that contain a subordinate clause lower the formality degree of an academic text. The ratio of subordinations is calculated as follows:</p> $\text{Ratio of subordinations in a text} = \frac{\text{Number of subordinations per sentence}}{\text{Total number of sentences in the text}}$
	<b>f) Fragments</b>	<p>A sentence fragment is an incomplete sentence that cannot stand on its own to represent a complete thought. Fragments include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dependent clauses by themselves</li> <li>• Descriptive phrases that do not have subject and/or verbs</li> <li>• Clauses with only part of a verb phrase</li> </ul> <p>The ratio of fragments is calculated as follows:</p> $\text{Ratio of fragments in a text} = \frac{\text{Number of fragments per sentence}}{\text{Total number of sentences in the text}}$
<b>Discourse Features</b>	<b>g) Inappropriate use of reference</b>	<p>Reference denotes the repetition of words or phrases in writing that can be indicated by reference pronouns (it, they, this, that, these, and those).</p>
	<b>h) Casual spoken language</b>	<p>Features of non-academic language which are akin of casual and spoken language include slangs, colloquial expressions, figures of speech, copular ‘be’, and contractions.</p> <p>The ratio of instances of non-academic language is calculated as follows:</p> $\text{Ratio of casual spoken language} = \frac{\text{Number of non-academic language}}{\text{Total number of words in the text}}$
	<b>i) Sentence initial conjunctions (and, but)</b>	$\text{Ratio of sentence initial conjunctions in a text} = \frac{\text{Number of Ands \& Buts per sentence}}{\text{Total number of sentences in the text}}$

### **3.4. Teacher Questionnaire**

As far as the teacher questionnaire is concerned, it contains a short description of the questionnaire along with the targeted population to whom it was administered. Then, a detailed analysis of the results is presented through a set of tables, followed by the discussion and interpretation of the main results obtained from this research instrument.

#### ***3.4.1. Description and Administration of Teacher Questionnaire***

The teacher questionnaire was addressed to eight teachers teaching third year content modules and working at the department of English at Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia university. It aims at investigating the correspondences between informal features in teacher talk and students' academic essays. The questionnaire is made up of fifteen (15) closed questions, open ended questions and multiple-choice questions. These questions are structured in three sections as follows:

**Section One: Teacher Talk in Teaching English at University (Q1-Q10).** Q1 elicits the teachers' opinions about the reliability of teacher talk as a source of comprehensible input. Q2 attempts to describe the language used by teachers when lecturing in terms of complexity. Q3 and Q4 ask about the frequency of TT modifications when lecturing to identify the language aspects that are necessary to be simplified in TT. Q5 aims to identify the part of the lesson in which teachers deliberately tend to employ the ungrammatical structures of the language. Q6 seeks to determine the frequency of using the informal features of the language in TT. More precisely, teachers are asked about the type (s) of deletion they usually use when they talk to students in Q7. Q8 aims to determine the most frequent type of sentences used by teachers when lecturing. Q9 and Q10 are designed to demonstrate the kind of vocabulary used in teacher talk in terms of formality, frequency, and diversity.

**Section Two: Teachers' Perceptions of Students' Academic Writing (Q11-Q15).** Starting with Q11, teachers are asked to estimate their students' level of academic writing



proficiency. Q12 is concerned with the teachers’ opinions towards students’ awareness about the differences between formal and informal writing. The aspects that students mostly fail in writing essays are raised to be identified in Q13. Q14 aims to reveal the main reason(s) that lead(s) students to shift into informality in their academic essays. In the last question (Q15), teachers are requested to explain how teacher talk may affect students’ essay writing.

**3.4.2. Analysis of the Teacher Questionnaire Results**

**Section One: Teacher Talk in Teaching English at University**

**Q1. Teacher talk is the most beneficial source of comprehensible input for your students.**  
 Strongly agree      Strongly disagree

**Table 3.2.**

*Teachers’ Opinions about Teacher Talk as the Most Beneficial Source of Comprehensible Input*

<u>Option</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
Strongly agree	0	0
Agree	4	50
Neutral	2	25
Disagree	2	25
Strongly disagree	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>100</b>

The results displayed in the table above show that 50% of the respondents agreed that TT is the most beneficial source of comprehensible input for students. On the contrary, 25% of the respondents believed that teacher talk is not the only beneficial source of comprehensible input.

**Q2. How would you describe the language you usually use when presenting your lectures?**  
 Very simple      Very complex

The results of this question reveal that all teachers (100%) use an average difficulty language in order to present the lectures to their students.

**Q3. How often do you tend to modify your talk into a less complex or simplified delivery?**  
 Always      Never

**Table 3.3.**

*Teachers' Modification of their Talk when Lecturing*

<u>Option</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
Always	0	0
Often	4	50
Sometimes	2	25
Rarely	2	25
Never	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>100</b>

All teachers simplify their talk when lecturing, but they differ in terms of frequency. The great majority of them (75%) often and sometimes tend to modify their talk into a less complex delivery whereas two teachers rarely simplify their talk.

**Q4. Which aspect(s) of the language do you think is/are necessary to simplify when you talk to students?**

- a. Syntax
- b. Lexis
- c. Phonology
- d. Discourse
- e. None

**Table 3.4.**

*Teachers' Modifications of the Language Aspects*

<u>Option</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
b.	3	37.5
b. + d.	4	50
a. + b. + d.	1	12.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>100</b>

All teachers chose lexis as the major language aspect to be modified when addressing their students [b=8: (b:3) + (b+d: 4)+ (a+b+d:1) ; 100%], while five of them (62.5%) chose discourse as a necessary language aspect that has to be modified when addressing the language learners [d=5: (b+d:4)+ (a+b+d:1) ; 62.5%]. Only one teacher opted for syntax, lexis, and discourse.

**Q5. In which part of the lesson, if any, do you deliberately use the ungrammatical structures of the language?**

- a. When explaining the newly provided elements
- b. To respond to students' clarification requests
- c. When giving directions and instructions
- d. Never

**Table 3.5.**

*Teachers' Use of Ungrammatical Structures of the Language*

<u>Option</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
a.	0	0
b.	1	12.5
c.	1	12.5
d.	6	75
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>100</b>

The results of this question reveal that the majority of the teachers of content modules (75%) do not use the ungrammatical structures of the language. Only one teacher deliberately uses ungrammatical structures to respond to the students' clarification requests and another teacher uses them to give directions and provide instructions.

**Q6. Please, rate the following questions according to your point of view:**

How often do you	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
a. use informal features of the language when lecturing?					
b. use contracted forms and unarticulated segments?					
c. add unanalysed tags such as 'Have you understood, yes?/ no?/ okay?' to check your students' comprehension?					
d. speak in sentence fragments?					
e. use split-infinitives?					
f. insert the pronoun 'You' in the imperative form when communicating with your students?					
g. rearrange the structure of a sentence to make it more comprehensible?					

**Table 3.6.**

*The Frequency of Teachers' Use of Informal Features of the Language when Lecturing*

Informal Features	Always		Often		Sometimes		Rarely		Never		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
a.	0	0	1	12.5	2	25	3	37.5	2	25	<b>8</b>	<b>100</b>
b.	0	0	2	25	4	50	1	12.5	1	12.5	<b>8</b>	<b>100</b>
c.	3	37.5	2	25	3	37.5	0	0	0	0	<b>8</b>	<b>100</b>
d.	0	0	2	25	3	37.5	1	12.5	2	25	<b>8</b>	<b>100</b>
e.	0	0	1	12.5	3	37.5	3	37.5	1	12.5	<b>8</b>	<b>100</b>
f.	0	0	4	50	2	25	1	12.5	1	12.5	<b>8</b>	<b>100</b>
g.	0	0	4	50	4	50	0	0	0	0	<b>8</b>	<b>100</b>

75% of the informants reported using language informalities when lecturing albeit not too often. Moreover, all teachers add unanalysed tags to check the students’ comprehension and rearranged the structure of their speech to make it more comprehensible. 87.5% of them opted for the use of contracted forms and unarticulated segments. Moreover, more than half the teachers insert the pronoun ‘you’ in the imperative form when communicating with their students, speak in sentence fragments, and use split infinitives.

**Q7. What type (s) of deletion do you usually use when you talk to students?**

- a. Deletion of final consonant sounds in unstressed words
- b. Deletion of articles and prepositions
- c. Omission of forms of the copular verb ‘be’ between subject and predicate
- d. Omission of suffixes that assign a particular grammatical property to a word (tenses, number, possession, and comparison)
- e. Deletion of conjunctions and subject pronouns
- f. None of the above
- g. Others, please, mention them

**Table 3.7.**

*Types of Deletion in Teacher Talk*

<u>Option</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
a.	3	37.5
b.	1	12.5
c.	0	0
d.	0	0
e.	1	12.5
f.	2	25
g.	0	0
b. + e.	1	12.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>100</b>

37.5% chose the deletion of final consonant sounds in unstressed words as the most type of deletion they usually use when talking to students. While 50% of the respondents opted for

the deletion of conjunctions and subject pronouns, and the deletion of articles and prepositions [b=2: (b:1)+( b+e:1) ; 25%] , [ e=2: (e:1)+(b+e:1); 25%].

**Q8. Which type of sentences do you use more frequently when you talk to your students?**

- a. Simple sentence
- b. Compound sentences
- c. Complex sentences

**Table 3.8.**

*The Most Frequent Type(s) of Sentences Used in Teacher Talk*

<b>Option</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
a.	4	50
b.	2	25
c.	0	0
a. + b.	1	12.5
b. + c.	1	12.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>100</b>

The majority of the informants usually use simple sentences [a=5: (a:4) +( a+b:1); 62.5%] and compound sentences [b=4:(b:2) +( a+b:1) +(b+c:1); 50%] when lecturing.

**Q9. Which type of vocabulary do you usually use in teaching your module?**

- a. Very formal
- b. Formal
- c. Informal

The results show that all the respondents (100%) usually use formal vocabulary when lecturing.

**Q10. In your opinion, the teachers' lexical delivery should be based mainly on:**

- a) Lower frequency vocabulary
- b) Higher frequency vocabulary
- c) Less diverse vocabulary
- d) More diverse vocabulary

**Table 3.9.**

*Teachers' Views about the Use of Frequent and Diverse Vocabulary*

<u>Option</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
a)	0	0
b)	1	12.5
c)	0	0
d)	2	25
a) + b) + d)	1	12.5
a) + d)	1	12.5
b) + d)	3	37.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>100</b>

87.5% of the teachers viewed that their lexical delivery should be mainly based on the use of more diverse vocabulary [d]=7:(**d**):2) + (a)+b) +**d**):1) +(a) +**d**):1) + (b)+**d**) :3); 87.5%]. The use of higher frequency vocabulary was confirmed by 62.5% of the participants [b=5:(**b**):1) +( a) +**b**) +d):1) + (**b**) +d) :3); 62.5%]. Only two teachers opted for the use of lower frequency vocabulary.

**Section Two: Teachers’ Perceptions of Students’ Academic Writing**

**Q11. How do you estimate your third-year students’ writing proficiency?**

- a. Above standards
- b. Meets standards
- c. Below standards

**Table 3.10.**

*Teachers’ Evaluation of Students’ Level of Writing Proficiency*

<u>Option</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
a.	0	0
b.	1	12.5
c.	7	87.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>100</b>

The majority of teachers (87.5%) declared that third-year students’ writing proficiency level is below standards. Only one informant believed that his students’ writing level meets the standards, and none of them considers the level of the students in writing above the standards.

**Q12. Third year students are aware enough about the differences between formal and informal writing.**

- Strongly agree ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ Strongly disagree

**Table 3.11.**

*Teachers’ Agreement on the Students’ Awareness about the Differences between Formal and Informal Writing*

<b><u>Option</u></b>	<b><u>N</u></b>	<b><u>%</u></b>
Strongly agree	0	0
Agree	1	12.5
Neutral	2	25
Disagree	5	62.5
Strongly disagree	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>100</b>

Most of the respondents (62.5%) disagreed with the fact that third year students are aware enough about the differences between formal and informal writing. However, two teachers opted for the option ‘neutral’ and only one teacher believed that his students are aware about the differences between formal and informal writing.

**Q13. In writing essays in your module, students fail mostly in:**

- a. Organization of ideas
- b. Grammar
- c. Objectivity
- d. Formal vocabulary
- e. Relevant content
- f. Correct mechanics (spelling, punctuation, capitalization...)
- g. All of the above
- h. Others, please, mention them

**Table 3.12.**

*The Major Aspects of Written Texts that Students Lack in their Essay Writing*

<b><u>Option</u></b>	<b><u>N</u></b>	<b><u>%</u></b>
g. (a+b+c+d+e+f)	4	50
a. + b. + e. + f.	1	12.5
a. + c. + d. + f.	1	12.5
a. + e.	1	12.5
a. + b. + d.	1	12.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>100</b>

All teachers replied that organization of ideas is the major aspect that most students lack in their academic essays [a =8: (a+b+c+d+e+f:4)+(a+b+e+f:1) +( a+c+d+f:1)+(a+e:1) + (a+b+d :1); 100%]. Grammar, formal vocabulary, and correct mechanics are each identified

by most teachers (75%) as problems that most students fail in when writing academically.

Last, 62.5% of the teachers consider objectivity as a problem that leads to students' failure in writing [c =5: (a+b+c+d+e+f:4) + (a+c+d+f:1); 62.5%].

**Q14. When students shift to informality in their academic essays, is it because of:**

- a. Lack of explicit instruction about formality
- b. Lack of practice
- c. Copying teacher speech as it is
- d. Lack of exposure to academic texts
- e. Inability of expressing their ideas appropriately
- f. Negative transfer from other languages
- g. Others, please, mention them

**Table 3.13.**

*The Reason (s) behind Students' Shift to Informality in their Academic Essays*

<u>Option</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>
a. + f.	1	12.5
b. + d.	3	37.5
b. + c. + e.	1	12.5
b. + d. + e.	1	12.5
b. + d. + e. + f.	1	12.5
c. + d. + e.	1	12.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>100</b>

The majority of the respondents (75%) claimed that the lack of practice and the lack of exposure to academic texts are the main reasons of shifting into informality in academic essays [b=6:(b+d:3)+(b+c+e:1) + (b+d+e:1)+(b+d+e+f:1); 75%];

[d=6:(b+d:3)+(b+d+e:1)+(b+d+e+f:1)+(c+d+e:1); 75%]. Two participants (25%) assumed that copying teacher speech is one of the reasons of shifting into informality in students' writing [c=2: (c+d+e:1) +(b+c+e:1); 25%].

**Q15. Please, explain to us how teacher talk may affect students' essay writing, if at all.**

Four informants out of eight (50%) answered this question by providing the following explanations:



1. One teacher claimed that “the quality of the teacher's talk can affect the student's essay positively or negatively. But this remains relative, either way, if the student is exposed enough to academic texts and goes through regular practice.”
2. Another teacher said: “I don't think teacher talk considerably affects the students' essay writing as there are other sources to which the students are probably exposed, be they written or spoken sources.”
3. One more teacher had the same view as the second answer. He said: “I honestly do not see the link. Teacher's talk may be inadequate to be put in a written form which is the case for any speaker focusing on the content of what to lecture.”
4. Another teacher explained his/her view as follows: “The teacher talk may affect the students' comprehension and note-taking which in turn may affect their essay writing. Some students may not be aware of the differences between academic speaking and academic prose. Academic talks such as lectures often exhibit features of conversations and may involve for example, short sentences and simple vocabulary. The lecture while being highly informative is influenced by the circumstances of online production. However, many students tend to write then memorize the teachers' talk word by word. It seems that they are unable to adopt what has been said through the medium of spoken language to meet the requirement of academic writing.”

#### ***3.4.3. Discussion and Interpretation of the Teacher Questionnaire Results***

Q1 revealed that most third-year English teachers of content modules at the University of Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia consider TT as the most beneficial source of the comprehensible input students are likely to receive. That is to say, teachers think that students are following their example because they consider TT as the target language model and the source of transmitting the information. Q2 demonstrated that teachers use an average language difficulty through the use of high frequency words, simple sentences, and sentence

rearrangement. Moreover, Q3 and Q4 show that the majority of teachers simplify their delivery across different language levels particularly at the lexical and discourse levels. The results of Q5 and Q6 reveal that teachers are aware about the deliberate use of the informal features of the language in the academic context. This means that teachers act as caregivers and deliberately include the informal features in their talk. Q7 highlights the different types of ungrammatical deletion used in TT, namely, the deletion of final consonant sounds in unstressed words, the deletion of conjunctions and subject pronouns, and the deletion of articles and prepositions. This indicates that teachers give much importance to the learners' comprehension of the lessons at the expense of the accurate language production. Q8 indicates that simple and compound sentences are frequently used by teachers to ensure the students' comprehensibility. With regard to the academic talk, Q9 and Q10 show that TT contains formal, high frequency, diverse vocabulary. Thus, it is concluded that TT is somehow formal, or semi-formal, in its nature, characterized by lexical variation, and contains high frequency words.

The findings obtained from the analysis of the second part of the questionnaire demonstrated that the majority of teachers considered that third year students' essay writing does not meet the standards of academic writing, as stated in Q11. This indicates that students are not aware enough about the formal characteristics of academic writing. Moreover, in Q12, it has been proved that students are not aware about the differences between formal and informal style of writing. Further, third year students fail in producing coherent essays because of the inability to organize their ideas as it was stated by teachers in Q13. The lack of practice and the lack of exposure to academic texts are chosen in Q14 as the main reasons behind students' shift into informality in their writing.

### 3.5.The Exam Essays

With regard to the exam papers, it is used as a second research instrument in this study in order to validate the results that have been obtained from the teacher questionnaire. First, a detailed description of the exam papers is provided through mentioning the sample, the target modules, the time of these exam modules, the questions of the exams, and the definitions of the linguistic features that are going to be analyzed. Second, the analysis of the exam papers illustrates the framework followed in order to measure the frequency of those features in the students' exam essays. Finally, the results are interpreted and discussed.

#### 3.5.1.Description of the Students' Exam Essays of Content Modules

It is worthy to mention that the exam papers that are analyzed belong to the first semester examination of TEFL and Cognitive Psychology modules. The exam of Psychology took place on January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2020 while the exam of TEFL took place in January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2020. Each exam paper contains a question that requires the students to answer in the form of an essay. Furthermore, the selected sample of exam papers includes eighty essays. Each student wrote one essay in both the modules. The corpus of this study is made up of the first one hundred words from each essay, resulting in 4000 words in each examination.

#### Exam Questions:

- **Exam Question of Psychology:** “Contemporary psychology does not believe in one exclusive way to study how people think or behave; thus, divergent viewpoints characterize this scientific discipline.”

Show, in a coherent essay, to what extent this statement can be accurate.

- **Exam Question of TEFL:** Language teaching methodologies have shifted their orientations from teacher-centeredness to learner-centeredness.

Discuss the issue with reference to GTM, ALM and CLT.

### 3.5.2. Analysis of the Students' Exam Papers of Content Modules

As mentioned in section 3.3. the following features are analysed:

- Lexical Features: **a)** Type-token ratio /Word Type **b)** High frequency words
- Grammatical Features: **c)** Subordination **d)** Fragments
- Syntactic Features: **e)** Contractions **f)** Omission of Copular 'be'
- Discourse Features: **g)** Inappropriate use of reference **h)** Casual spoken language **i)** Sentence initial conjunctions (and, but)

**Table 3.14.**

*Informal Linguistic Aspects in Didactics Exam Essays*

	Lexical Features		Grammatical Features		Syntactic Features		Discourse Features		
	a)	b)	c)	d)	e)	f)	g)	h)	i)
S1	0.60	87	2/5	0/5	1	-	2	1	1/5
S2	0.66	85	0/7	2/7	-	1	-	-	2/7
S3	0.67	78	1/6	0/6	-	-	-	-	1/6
S4	0.61	90	2/5	0/5	-	1	3	-	0/5
S5	0.62	85	0/9	0/9	1	-	-	-	0/9
S6	0.60	85	2/6	0/6	-	-	3	-	2/6
S7	0.66	72	1/7	1/7	-	1	-	-	0/7
S8	0.59	95	2/5	0/5	-	-	2	-	0/5
S9	0.63	81	2/8	0/8	1	-	3	-	0/8
S10	0.64	77	2/5	1/5	-	-	1	-	1/5
S11	0.68	80	1/5	0/5	-	-	3	-	0/5
S12	0.66	79	1/6	0/6	-	-	1	1	0/6
S13	0.63	85	3/8	0/8	-	1	-	-	0/8
S14	0.66	82	0/6	0/6	-	-	1	-	0/6
S15	0.54	91	1/5	0/5	-	-	7	-	0/5
S16	0.67	85	1/8	1/8	-	-	1	3	0/8
S17	0.55	77	3/5	0/5	-	-	6	-	0/5
S18	0.61	86	4/6	0/6	-	-	1	-	2/6
S19	0.68	79	2/5	1/5	-	-	4	1	0/5
S20	0.62	80	1/7	0/7	-	2	-	-	2/7
S21	0.62	86	1/9	0/9	1	-	3	1	1/9
S22	0.69	88	2/5	1/5	-	1	2	-	0/5
S23	0.64	82	2/5	0/5	-	-	1	1	0/5
S24	0.59	85	3/6	1/6	-	1	1	-	0/6
S25	0.53	83	2/7	1/7	-	1	8	-	2/7
S26	0.59	91	2/5	0/5	-	-	3	-	1/5
S27	0.63	87	3/7	0/7	-	2	3	-	0/7

S28	0.70	86	1/6	0/6	-	-	3	-	0/6
S29	0.64	91	2/7	0/7	-	-	1	-	0/7
S30	0.65	85	3/6	0/6	-	-	2	-	0/6
S31	0.67	81	2/9	1/9	-	-	1	-	2/9
S32	0.64	80	2/8	1/8	1	-	-	-	1/8
S33	0.61	82	2/6	0/6	-	-	2	-	1/6
S34	0.60	89	2/7	0/7	-	-	2	-	0/7
S35	0.61	73	2/5	0/5	-	1	2	-	0/5
S36	0.60	84	1/5	1/5	1	2	3	-	1/5
S37	0.59	88	1/8	2/8	-	1	-	-	2/8
S38	0.57	83	3/6	1/6	-	-	3	-	1/6
S39	0.64	77	1/6	0/6	-	-	5	-	1/6
S40	0.67	77	1/6	0/6	-	1	2	-	1/6
$\sum$ %	<b>0.65</b> =65%	<b>3337/4000</b> =83.43%	<b>69/253</b> =27.27%	<b>15/253</b> =5.93%	<b>6/86</b> =6.97%	<b>16/204</b> =7.84%	<b>85/212</b> =40.09%	<b>8/4000+</b> <b>6/86+</b> <b>16/204</b> =15.01%	<b>25/253</b> =9.88%

The results of exam papers analysis of the TEFL module show average type token ratio (0.65), and an overuse of high frequency words, which account for about 83.43% of all the words in the essays. At the level of grammar, the students' essays include few sentences that contain a subordinate clause (27.27%) and few fragments were inserted in the students' essay examinations (5.93%). A number of ill-structured forms that affect the syntactical correctness appeared in the exam papers, namely, the use of six contractions on 6.97% of the total positions where contracted forms can be used, and the omission of copular 'be' on 7.84% of the possible occurrences of to be. The table also shows that 40% of the words that can be substituted by reference pronouns were repeatedly used by students. Moreover, casual spoken language accounts for 15.01% of the total essays. In addition, sentence initials 'Ands' and 'Buts' appeared in about one tenth the students' sentences.

**Table 3.15.**

*Informal Linguistic Aspects in Psychology Exam Papers*

	<b>Lexical Features</b>		<b>Grammatical Features</b>		<b>Syntactic Features</b>		<b>Discourse Features</b>		
	<b>a)</b>	<b>b)</b>	<b>c)</b>	<b>d)</b>	<b>e)</b>	<b>f)</b>	<b>g)</b>	<b>h)</b>	<b>i)</b>
S1	0.64	83	1/6	0/6	-	-	3	-	0/6
S2	0.59	80	0/5	0/5	-	1	3	-	0/5
S3	0.8	75	0/5	1/5	1	1	-	-	0/5

S4	0.68	87	0/6	1/6	-	1	1	-	2/6
S5	0.64	86	0/5	2/5	-	1	2	-	0/5
S6	0.67	63	0/6	0/6	-	2	1	-	0/6
S7	0.66	87	1/4	1/4	-	1	-	-	0/4
S8	0.72	75	0/4	1/4	-	1	2	-	0/4
S9	0.72	71	0/5	1/5	-	3	-	-	0/5
S10	0.65	79	0/6	2/6	2	-	3	-	0/6
S11	0.69	78	0/6	2/6	-	1	1	-	0/6
S12	0.63	74	2/4	2/4	-	2	1	1	0/4
S13	0.71	78	0/6	1/6	-	-	1	1	0/6
S14	0.57	90	1/4	0/4	-	1	3	-	0/4
S15	0.67	85	1/6	0/6	1	1	1	-	0/6
S16	0.72	82	1/5	1/5	1	1	-	-	0/5
S17	0.62	90	2/5	3/5	1	3	1	-	0/5
S18	0.66	81	1/7	0/7	-	-	-	-	0/7
S19	0.72	81	0/4	¾	-	2	-	-	0/4
S20	0.7	81	1/7	0/7	-	1	1	-	0/7
S21	0.67	79	0/3	1/3	-	1	2	-	0/3
S22	0.66	79	2/8	0/8	-	2	1	-	0/8
S23	0.62	77	0/5	2/5	-	1	1	-	0/5
S24	0.62	75	1/6	1/6	-	-	-	-	0/6
S25	0.61	76	0/6	0/6	-	1	1	-	0/6
S26	0.66	75	1/8	1/8	-	-	-	-	1/8
S27	0.77	68	1/9	2/9	1	2	-	-	0/9
S28	0.77	74	0/5	0/5	-	1	1	-	0/5
S29	0.66	69	2/5	1/5	2	-	-	1	0/5
S30	0.66	75	2/5	0/5	-	-	-	-	1/5
S31	0.72	67	0/7	3/7	1	2	-	-	0/7
S32	0.62	86	1/5	0/5	-	-	-	-	0/5
S33	0.63	76	0/7	0/7	-	1	-	-	0/7
S34	0.73	78	1/5	0/5	-	2	-	-	1/5
S35	0.71	68	1/6	0/6	-	1	1	-	0/6
S36	0.6	87	2/6	0/6	-	-	2	-	0/6
S37	0.69	79	1/7	1/7	1	1	-	-	0/7
S38	0.58	86	1/5	0/5	-	-	-	-	1/5
S39	0.62	87	2/6	0/6	-	1	2	-	0/6
S40	0.6	75	0/4	2/4	-	1	1	1	0/4
∑ %	<b>0.66</b> =66%	<b>3216/4000</b> =80.4%	<b>29/224</b> =12.95%	<b>35/224</b> =15.63%	<b>11/101</b> =10.89%	<b>40/236</b> =16.94%	<b>36/135</b> =26.66%	<b>4/4000+</b> <b>11/101+</b> <b>40/236</b> =27.94%	<b>6/224</b> =2.68%

The analysis of the informal features in the Cognitive Psychology module examination revealed an average type token ratio (0.66), an overuse of high frequency words, which account for 80.4% of the words used. At the level of grammar, 12.95% of the sentences contain a subordinate clause while 15.63% of the sentences are fragments. A number of ill

structured forms that affect the syntactical correctness appeared in the exam papers, namely, the use of contractions on 10.89% of the possible occasions and the omission of copular ‘be’ on 16.94% of the times it was possible to include it. The table also shows that 26.66% of the words that can be substituted by reference pronouns were repeatedly used by students.

Moreover, 27.94% of the essay are based on the use of casual spoken words. In addition, sentence initial conjunctions ‘Ands’ and ‘Buts’ appeared in 2.68% of the students’ sentences.

**3.5.3. Discussion and Interpretation of the Exam Papers Results**

**Table 3.16.**

*Comparison between the Frequency of Informalities in Didactics and Psychology Examinations*

<b>Informal Features</b>	<b>Didactics</b>	<b>Cognitive Psychology</b>
<b>TTR</b>	65%	66%
<b>High frequency words</b>	83.43%	80.4%
<b>Subordinations</b>	27.27%	12.95%
<b>Fragments</b>	5.93%	15.63%
<b>Contractions</b>	6.97%	10.89%
<b>Omission of Copular ‘be’</b>	7.84%	16.94%
<b>Inappropriate use of reference</b>	40.09%	26.66%
<b>Casual spoken language</b>	27.94%	15.01%
<b>Sentence initial conjunctions</b>	9.88%	2.68%

The informal features that appear in each module are compared in the table above, which shows the following:

- Lexical Features

The results show that type-token ratios in both modules are average or above-average (TEFL: 0.65; CP: 0.66), which means that students’ exam papers contain somewhat diverse vocabulary.

Furthermore, another measure was designed to show the frequency of academic words and compare them with high frequency words (already measured in **table 3.14** and **table 3.15**) in exam essays.

**Table 3.17.**

*Frequency of Academic Words in Exam Papers*

Students	Number of Academic words		Students	Number of Academic words	
	TEFL	CP		TEFL	CP
S1	8	10	S21	14	13
S2	10	19	S22	10	12
S3	17	11	S23	14	11
S4	14	6	S24	13	8
S5	9	10	S25	17	11
S6	11	18	S26	18	20
S7	12	17	S27	9	17
S8	7	8	S28	6	17
S9	18	16	S29	6	20
S10	12	15	S30	16	15
S11	8	14	S31	18	20
S12	16	13	S32	8	14
S13	17	11	S33	11	20
S14	13	9	S34	13	15
S15	18	14	S35	13	22
S16	14	15	S36	8	6
S17	18	12	S37	8	11
S18	11	13	S38	19	9
S19	11	13	S39	14	15
S20	15	13	S40	6	11
<b>∑ TEFL Academic Words: 500/4000= 12.5%</b>					
<b>∑ CP Academic Words: 544/4000= 13.6%</b>					

The results indicate excessive use of frequent words (TEFL: 83.43%; CP: 80.4%) at the expense of the use of academic words (TEFL: 12.5%; CP: 13.6%), which contributes to decreasing the formality of academic writing. As far as these lexical features are concerned, a consistency seems to exist in the use of the informality indicators in the two modules where CP papers are a little more formal in that they contain less high frequency words, slightly



higher TTR and twenty four (24) of students used more academic words compared to the TEFL essays in which sixteen (16) student inserted them more often.

- Grammatical Features

The inadequate use of the sentences that contain a subordinate clause and the inclusion of fragments, which are another ungrammatical feature, decrease the formality degree of an academic text. This has been illustrated in the results obtained from students' two exam essays; however, a tendency towards using more subordinate clauses (27.27%) and fewer sentence fragments (5.93%) has been found in the TEFL essays compared with CP papers which include fewer subordinate clauses (12.95%) and more sentence fragments (15.63%). This means that TEFL examinations essays appeared to be more formal in terms of the use of grammatical features.

- Syntactical Features

Academic writing prohibits the use of ill-structured forms such as contractions and the unnecessary omission of copular 'be'. A propensity of inserting those structures has been shown in the students' examination papers; however, CP papers contain more omissions of copular 'be' (16.94%) and more contracted forms (10.89%) in comparison with TEFL papers which contain 6.97% of the contracted forms and omission of copular 'be' on 7.84% of its possible occurrence. Hence, it can be concluded that the CP essays contain more informalities with regard to the syntactical features.

- Discourse Features

The repetition of words that can be substituted by reference pronouns occurred frequently in students' exam essays. The lack of reference pronouns was higher in didactics (40.09%) in comparison to psychology (26.66%) suggesting that CP essays are more formal in this regard. T

The use of casual spoken language such as slangs, colloquial expressions, figures of speech, contractions, and omission of copular ‘be’ are inappropriate in academic writing; however, a significant number of these forms have been found in the students’ essays in both didactics and psychology (TEFL:15.01%; CP:27.94%). The results demonstrate that the CP are less formal than TEFL papers in that include more forms of casual spoken language.

With regard to the last discourse informality indicator, sentence initial conjunctions (the coordinating conjunction ‘and’ and the adversative conjunction ‘but’), TEFL essays contain more of them (9.88%) than CP essays (2.68%), which indicates that the essays of psychology are slightly more formal in this respect.

The analysis of the discourse features stated above revealed that the essays of TEFL are less formal than the essays of CP regarding the discourse informality features of reference and sentence initial ‘and’ and ‘but’; However, students have been more formal in TEFL by using less casual language than in CP.

### 3.6. Comparison of the Results of the Teacher Questionnaire and Exam Papers

**Table 3.18.**

*Comparison between the Frequency of Informalities in Exam Papers and Teacher Talk*

<b>Informal Features</b>	<b>Written Essays Results</b>	<b>Questionnaire Results about Teacher Talk</b>
<b>TTR</b>	65.5%	87.5%
<b>High frequency words</b>	81.92%	62.5%
<b>Subordinations</b>	20.11%	25%
<b>Fragments</b>	10.78%	62.5%
<b>Contractions</b>	17.86%	75%
<b>Copular ‘be’</b>	24.78%	0%
<b>Inappropriate use of reference</b>	66.75%	25%
<b>Casual spoken language</b>	42.94%	43.75%
<b>Sentence initial conjunctions</b>	6.28%	25%

In terms of informal lexical features, it is clearly indicated that the exam papers of third year students of English at Jijel university are lexically less varied in terms of vocabulary (65.5%) than teacher talk (87.5%). A tendency towards using high frequency words appeared more in students' exam papers (81.92%) than in TT (62.5%). It was also found that students' exam papers contain fewer academic words (26.1%) although all teachers (100%) opted for the use of formal vocabulary. Thus, teachers' talk depends on higher use of lexical variation in order to expose the learners to the academic language that is intended to be used in a particular module. Moreover, this means that students are not aware about the type of vocabulary that should be used in writing in formal settings.

Concerning informal grammatical features, the use of subordinate clauses in the exam papers (20.11%) is somehow similar to their use in TT (25%). In addition, fragments mostly appeared in TT (62.5%) than in students' essays (10.78%) which means that most students are aware about the grammaticality of sentences.

With regard to the informal syntactical features, the findings obtained from both the teachers' responses and students' exam papers displayed that the majority of teachers use contracted forms (75%) when lecturing, while some use of those forms is marked in the exam papers (17.86%) which means that some students do not distinguish between the spoken discourse which is characterized by the use reduced forms and the written discourse which involves complex and longer forms. This was also confirmed by the teachers' comments on how TT may affect the students' essay writing. Although the teachers' responses in the questionnaire stated that the omission of copular 'be' was not among the various types of deletion used in TT, the results obtained from the analysis of students' exam papers revealed that copular 'be' is sometimes omitted in students' essay examinations (24.78%) which indicates that there is no correspondence between the teachers' insertion of the forms of copular 'be' and the students' omission of those forms.

In terms of informal discourse features, the findings also showed that third year students fail at using reference pronouns in their writing (66.75%) which corresponds with teachers' repetition of utterances in their talk (25%). This means that students are not aware about the appropriate use of reference pronouns in writing. Both teachers' talk and students' exam papers contain an equal degree of casual spoken language (TT: 43.75%, Exam Papers: 42.94%) basically the use of slangs, colloquial expressions, figures of speech, contractions and copular 'be'. This indicates that there is a correspondence between TT and students' writing with regard to the use of this feature. Students' exam papers showed a considerable use of sentence initial conjunctions (6.28%) which corresponds to the insertion of conjunctions in TT (25%), as it was revealed in the responses to Q7.

### **3.7. Interpretation of Overall Results**

The comparison of data obtained from the analysis of the use of the informal features in teacher talk and in students' exam essays allows for answering the research questions set at the initial phase of the study, which are:

- Are EFL students able to distinguish between the features of both spoken and written discourse? In other words, are third year students of English competent enough to produce good academic essays with few or no informalities?
- Is there any correspondence between the informal features in teacher talk and students' writing essays?

#### **3.7.1. The ability to distinguish between the features of both spoken and written discourse/ The students' competence to write academically with few or no informalities.**

Third year students at the department of English are not competent enough to produce good academic essays in their examinations. They tend to write in a less formal style. According to the teachers' responses, this is due to the lack of practice, lack of exposure to academic texts, and the students' habits of copying and memorizing TT as it is presented in

the lectures; thus , the results obtained from the analysis of students' essay examinations demonstrated that students' inability to distinguish between the spoken TT and academic writing. The students' written essays are marked by an overuse of contracted forms, a lack of lexical variation, and the insertion of sentence fragments which decreased the formality of their writing and made it appear less formal than is required.

### **3.7.2. The correspondence between the informal features in TT and students' academic essay writing.**

While some informal features in TT are found to correspond with those in students' writing essays, others do not because of the students' awareness about the inappropriate use of those features. TT is designed around the use high frequency words, formal vocabulary and highly diverse vocabulary. However, the results obtained from the analysis of the examination essays revealed that students are not aware about the kind of vocabulary that should be used in formal writing in that their essays appeared to be less diverse and include higher use of frequent words at the expense of academic words. At the level of grammar, some students appeared to be aware about the formal grammatical features that should be used in academic writing. The results show that although TT include more sentence fragments compared to sentences that contain a subordinate clause, some students' essays comprise more subordinations than fragments. However, some students' essays correspond to the TT average use of subordinations and the insertion of sentence fragments. In terms of syntax, it is concluded that some students do not distinguish between spoken and written discourse since there essays somewhat contain contracted forms that are significantly overused in TT. No correspondence was noticed between teachers' insertion of the forms of copular 'be' and students' omission of those forms in their essays. This indicates that students are not aware about the fact that copular 'be' should not be omitted in academic writing. At the level of discourse, the results demonstrate that there is a correspondence between TT and students'

essays basically in the use of reference pronouns, casual spoken language, and sentence initials 'Ands' and 'Buts'. This indicates that students are unaware about the appropriate use of reference pronouns, the inappropriate use of non-academic language and sentence initials.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter presented the results obtained from the analysis of the informal features of language in teacher talk and their correspondent occurrence in students' examination essays. The information was gathered through three steps; the first step is the analysis of teacher questionnaire which was answered by eight teachers. The second step lies in the analysis of eighty essays written by third year students in the examinations of didactics and cognitive psychology. In the third step, a comparison was done on the frequencies of occurrence of the analyzed informal features in both TT and the exams essays.

The immediate conclusion that can be made after the analysis and evaluation of the teacher questionnaire and the students' written essays is that the majority of teachers' answers on the questionnaire agree that teacher talk is formal in its nature; however, teachers tend to deliberately insert the informal features of the language in their talk with the aim of simplifying the input and making it more comprehensible. They also assumed that the students' style of writing is below the standards of academic writing and that students tend to shift in the formality of their writing to use fewer formal varieties. Furthermore, students' essay examinations appeared to be minimally formal partly because students unintentionally inserted the informal features included in TT at different language levels without being aware about the kind of language they are using. This means that there is a slight correspondence between the informal features employed in teacher talk and the decreased level of formality in students' essays.

## **General Conclusion**

1. Putting it Altogether
2. Pedagogical Recommendations
3. Limitations of the Study
4. Suggestions for Further Research

## **1. Putting it Altogether**

Teacher talk is a fundamental source of the language input that is directed to English foreign language learners. The essence of the current study is to shed light on the correspondences between the informal features of language used in teacher talk when lecturing and the students' style in writing academic essays. In this vein, the present study is composed of two parts: a theoretical and a practical part. The former includes two chapters, while the latter is based on one chapter.

The first chapter presented some definitions of the academic essay as a well-structured piece of writing which aims at presenting information for educational and professional purposes. Academic and non-academic writing are distinguished in terms of the formality of context, the specificity of audience, composed primarily of academics, the complexity style and other language aspects such as organization, grammar and vocabulary. Moreover, the chapter present different types of academic essay namely, narrative, descriptive, expository, and argumentative essays. With regard to organizing academic texts, according to their type, the function and the objective of each type have been mentioned. This chapter discussed the most salient formal features of academic essays at three linguistic levels: lexis, syntax and discourse. Those features, which are the use impersonal forms, academic vocabulary, complex structure, coherence and cohesion, as well as well-organised and accurate texts, guarantee the clarity and the intelligibility of students' essays. Finally, the chapter explored the stages of writing which are considered essential contributors in improving the learning and teaching of academic writing in higher educational settings.

The second chapter covered the term teacher talk, which is a major aspect of the classroom discourse that realises an effective teaching of the target language. As far as TT simplification is concerned, the concepts of caretaker speech and foreigner talk, which are related types of simplified delivery, are explored in this chapter in order to highlight the



shared characteristics of TT and those concepts. Further, the chapter took a closer look on teacher talk as being a comprehensible input contributor through providing knowledge that is slightly beyond the students' current level of development, or 'i+1' input, that aids the students to progress to the next level of competence. The linguistic adjustments employed in teacher talk at the level of phonology, lexis, syntax and discourse and their importance in making the language input comprehensible were discussed at the end of this chapter.

The third chapter shed light on the practical side of this work in terms of the results obtained from the data collected using teachers' questionnaires and the analysis of written essays. The questionnaire is designed for eight third year teachers of English content modules at Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia University. The analysis of the essays was conducted on eighty examination papers of two content modules, namely, didactics and cognitive psychology.

The findings from the teacher questionnaire revealed the use of a considerable amount of informalities in teacher talk, which may have contributed to decreasing the formality level in students' written essays. Also, the majority of teachers confirmed that the students' essays are below the standards of writing an academic text. They also assumed that varied reasons contribute to students' failure at producing good academic essay, including students' tendency to copy their teachers' speech, which includes some informal features of language, in their writing. A comparison was also conducted between the results obtained from the analysis of teacher questionnaire and the students' essays which revealed that there was a correspondence between the use informal features of teacher talk and the low level of formality in students' essays.

## **2. Pedagogical Recommendations**

In the light of the results obtained, the following recommendations are drawn:

- Written language is not merely an oral language written down. Thus, teachers are asked to explicitly identify the informal features that they employ in their talk, because those features decrease the formality level in EFL students' academic writing when they unintentionally use them.
- EFL learners should be helped to denote the appropriateness of the writing style they use when accomplishing a particular academic written assignment.
- Teachers of written expression module should raise the students' awareness to the characteristics of academic writing by identifying the differences between formal and informal prose.
- As an attempt to improve students' writing skills, teachers should regularly assign activities that involve students to write in an academic style.
- It is important for students to know the basics of formality in English, because its rules are numerous and complex and this hinders them from writing effective academic essays.
- Students should consider that the use of formal academic writing style is the key of success in the content areas.
- Having enough exposure to academic texts and going through regular practice in writing are very important since they help students to be aware enough about the differences between spoken and written discourse and achieve high scores in the content modules.

## **3. Limitations of the Study**

As in the case of the majority of Master research papers in English language teaching, a number of limitations of this research can be pinpointed. The most important ones are presented here for the sake of guiding future research.

The first limitation that faced the researchers when doing this study is the limited number of previous studies that have investigated the topic of the correspondences between informal features in teacher talk and students' academic essay writing. Therefore, the results of this study would not be possible to be compared or linked to the results set in the initial phase of the review. Moreover, it was very difficult to explore the topic of this study using a precise methodology because the studies that have investigated the topic of informalities in teacher talk and/ or academic prose did not establish a credible framework in which a detailed analysis could be provided on measuring the informalities. Furthermore, no strong link could be established between teacher talk and students' essay writing since it was impossible to observe the teachers' instructions in the lectures during the pandemic situation. The results obtained from the descriptive analysis in some studies are found to have less credibility since the researchers relied only on interpreting their speculations.

The issue of sample representativeness was another constraint that affects the interpretation of results from this study. The results obtained from the analysis of both research instruments, teacher questionnaire and exam essays, cannot be overgeneralized to establish with confidence the existence of a certain correspondence between informalities in teacher talk and students' exam essays since the results were concluded from only eight teachers' responses to the online questionnaire and eighty exam essays were selected from two content modules to be analysed. Furthermore, the choice of stratified sampling in the selection of students' exam essays was not possible because it was impossible to have the same range between the possible strata.

#### **4. Suggestions for Further Research**

Despite the possible limitations stated above, this study may hopefully pave the way for further research. Since the present research was restricted with the constraint of limited sources, future researchers can dig deeper into the subject of this study to bring about new

insights and improvements. Future researchers are recommended to investigate the impact of teacher talk adjustments on the students' essay writing involving an experimental design or a classroom observation in order to obtain more valid and reliable data from the teachers and students as well. An experimental study should be conducted through making a comparison between two classes; one class that is taught explicitly in the aspects of formality while the other class is not taught so.

Classroom observation would provide more precise results if the teacher talk would be recorded, transcribed, then analysed to accurately estimate the frequency of informalities at different linguistic aspects and determine which aspects of the language TT correspond to students' essay writing.

Moreover, further research can be conducted by expanding the analysis of the exam essays to involve all content modules where students are required to write essays so as to allow for patterns of correspondence across the different modules to emerge more clearly.

As a final suggestion, future research would be made accurate and clearer if it focused on studying a single aspect of language informalities at a time so as to allow comprehensive discussion. The accumulation of studies on single aspects of informality would allow drawing clearer correspondences between teacher talk and students' writing.

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# Appendix

## Teacher Questionnaire

Dear teacher,

This questionnaire is part of a research work which aims at investigating the correspondences between informal features in teacher talk and students' academic essays. We will be very grateful if you devote some of your precious time to fill in the questionnaire. Your answers are of a crucial importance for the completion of this work. They will remain strictly confidential and will be reported in the dissertation anonymously.

Ms. Fatima Harouche

Ms. Khadidja Boudebouda

Supervised by: Mr. Redouane Naili

Faculty of Letters and Languages

Tassousst University- Jijel

Instructions: Please tick (√) the appropriate box (es), select the option that corresponds with your convictions, and give full answer (s) whenever necessary.

### Section One: Teacher Talk in Teaching English at University

1. Teacher talk is the most beneficial source of comprehensible input for your students.

Strongly agree      Strongly disagree

2. How would you describe the language you usually use when presenting your lectures?

Very simple      Very complex

3. How often do you tend to modify your talk into a less complex or simplified delivery?

Always      Never

4. Which aspect(s) of the language do you think is/are necessary to simplify when you talk to students?



- a. Syntax
- b. Lexis
- c. Phonology
- d. Discourse
- e. None

5. In which part of the lesson, if any, do you deliberately use the ungrammatical structures of the language?

- a. When explaining the newly provided elements
- b. To respond to students' clarification requests
- c. When giving directions and instructions
- d. Never

6. Please, rate the following questions according to your point of view:

How often do you	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
<b>a.</b> use informal features of the language when lecturing?					
<b>b.</b> use contracted forms and unarticulated segments?					
<b>c.</b> add unanalysed tags such as ' <i>Have you understood, yes?/ no?/ okay?</i> ' to check your students' comprehension?					
<b>d.</b> speak in sentence fragments?					
<b>e.</b> use split-infinitives?					
<b>f.</b> insert the pronoun 'You' in the imperative form when communicating with your students?					
<b>g.</b> rearrange the structure of a sentence to make it more comprehensible?					

7. What type (s) of deletion do you usually use when you talk to students?

- a. Deletion of final consonant sounds in unstressed words
- b. Deletion of articles and prepositions
- c. Omission of forms of the copular verb 'be' between subject and predicate
- d. Omission of suffixes that assign a particular grammatical property to a word (tenses, number, possession, and comparison)
- e. Deletion of conjunctions and subject pronouns
- f. None of the above

g. Others, please, mention them

.....

8. Which type of sentences do you use more frequently when you talk to your students?

a. Simple sentences

b. Compound sentences

c. Complex sentences

9. Which type of vocabulary do you usually use in teaching your module?

a. Very formal

b. Formal

c. Informal

10. In your opinion, the teachers' lexical delivery should be based mainly on:

a) Lower frequency vocabulary

b) Higher frequency vocabulary

c) Less diverse vocabulary

d) More diverse vocabulary

## Section Two: Teachers' Perceptions of Students' Academic Writing

11. How do you estimate your third-year students' writing proficiency?

a. Above standards

b. Meets standards

c. Below standards

12. Third year students are aware enough about the differences between formal and informal writing.

Strongly agree ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ Strongly disagree

13. In writing essays in your module, students fail mostly in:

a. Organization of ideas

b. Grammar

c. Objectivity

d. Formal vocabulary

e. Relevant content

- f. Correct mechanics (spelling, punctuation, capitalization...)
  - g. All of the above
  - i. Others, please, mention them.
- .....

14. When students shift to informality in their academic essays, is it because of:

- a. Lack of explicit instruction about formality
- b. Lack of practice
- c. Copying teacher speech as it is
- d. Lack of exposure to academic texts
- e. Inability of expressing their ideas appropriately
- f. Negative transfer from other languages
- g. Others, please, mention them.

15. Please, explain to us how teacher talk may affect students' essay writing, if at all.

.....

.....

.....

*Thank you for your cooperation*

## Résumé

L'étude suivante a pour but d'étudier les correspondances entre les caractéristiques informelles du discours de l'enseignant et la rédaction des essais scolaires des étudiants. On a émis l'hypothèse que si l'enseignant utilise un langage formel lors de ses cours, les essais des élèves contiendront peu ou pas d'informalités et vice versa. Pour tester cette hypothèse, une analyse descriptive a été menée sur 80 essais d'examens d'étudiants de troisième année d'anglais à l'Université Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia de Jijel. Les essais d'examen ont été sélectionnés au hasard parmi deux modules différents, à savoir la didactique et la psychologie cognitive. De plus, un questionnaire a été administré à huit enseignants qui enseignent des modules de troisième année et exigent la dissertation comme forme de réponse aux examens. Les résultats obtenus à partir des deux recherches ont montré que les étudiants de troisième année d'anglais à l'université de Jijel n'étaient pas assez compétents pour produire un essai qui répond aux normes de rédaction académique dans leurs examens. Cela est essentiellement dû au manque de pratique, au manque de contact avec les textes académiques et aux habitudes des étudiants à copier et à mémoriser les discours des enseignants tels qu'ils sont présentés dans les cours. Les deux chercheurs en ont attribué la raison au manque de recherche scientifique et aux habitudes des étudiants de mémoriser et de copier les paroles de l'enseignant telles que présentées dans les conférences. Les élèves ont utilisé de nombreuses informalités, en particulier au niveau du discours, dans lequel une certaine correspondance est établie entre le discours de l'enseignant et la rédaction de dissertations des étudiants en utilisant des pronoms de référence, un langage parlé occasionnel et des conjonction de coordination «et» et «mais». Une légère correspondance est notée dans l'utilisation des caractéristiques grammaticales et syntaxiques qui ont prouvé que les étudiants sont, dans une certaine mesure, compétents sur les plans grammatical et syntaxique. Cependant, peu de correspondances ont été établies entre les discours des enseignants et la rédaction des essais des étudiants en termes de lexique.

Mots clés: discours de l'enseignant, articles académiques, caractéristiques linguistiques informelles.

## ملخص

تهدف الدراسة الحالية إلى التحقق من احتمال وجود تطابق بين الخصائص غير الرسمية في حديث المعلم ووجودها في مقالات الطلاب الأكاديمية. لقد تم الافتراض أنه إذا استخدم المعلم لغة رسمية عند إلقاء المحاضرة، فإن مقالات الطلاب ستتضمن القليل من العناصر غير الرسمية كما قد لا تحتوي على أي منها والعكس صحيح. ولاختبار صحة هذه الفرضية، تم إجراء دراسة وصفية على 80 ورقة امتحان لطلبة السنة الثالثة لغة إنجليزية بجامعة محمد الصديق بن يحيى بجيجل. اختيار أوراق الامتحان تم بشكل عشوائي من مادتين أساسيتين هما: منهجية تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية وعلم النفس المعرفي. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، تم تقديم استبيان إلى ثمانية معلمين يدرسون المواد الأساسية للسنة الثالثة ويختارون المقال أن يكون هيكل الإجابة على أسئلة الامتحانات. أظهرت النتائج التي تم الحصول عليها من كلا أداتي البحث أن طلاب السنة الثالثة لغة إنجليزية في جامعة جيجل ليسوا مؤهلين بما يكفي لكتابة مقال يناسب معايير الكتابة الأكاديمية في امتحاناتهم. وقد أرجحت الباحثتان السبب في ذلك إلى قلة الممارسة، قلة الاطلاع على النصوص الأكاديمية، وعادات الطلاب في حفظ ونسخ كلام المعلم كما يتم عرضه في المحاضرات. علاوة على ذلك، وجد أن مقالات امتحان الطلاب في المواد الأساسية قد انحرفت عن معايير الكتابة الأكاديمية الرسمية لتصبح أقل رسمية في مختلف الجوانب اللغوية خاصة في الجانب التعبيري حيث كان هناك تطابق كبير بين حديث المعلم ومقالات الطلاب. تمت ملاحظة هذا التطابق بشكل أساسي في استخدام الضمائر المرجعية واللغة المنطوقة غير الرسمية واستخدام الضميرين 'و' و 'الكن' في بداية الجمل. كما لوحظ وجود تطابق بسيط في استخدام السمات النحوية والصرفية التي بينت أن الطلاب مؤهلين إلى حد ما في هذين الجانبين. في حين وجد تطابق قليل بين حديث المعلم ومقالات الطلاب من حيث استعمال المفردات اللغوية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: حديث المعلم، المقالات الأكاديمية، الخصائص اللغوية غير الرسمية.