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**A Comparative Study of TEFL Exam-Taking Strategies Used by More
Able and Less Able Students in Content Module Written Exams**

The Case of Master One Students at the Department of English,
Mohammed Saddik Ben Yahia University, Jijel.

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

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Declaration

We hereby declare that the submission entitled “a Comparative Study of TEFL Exam-taking Strategies used by More able and Less able Students in Content Module Written Exams” is our own work and all sources we have used have been acknowledge by means of references. We also certify that we have not copied or plagiarized the work of other students or researchers partially or fully. In case any material is not documented. We shall be responsible for the consequences.

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16/09/2021

Dedication

In all modesty, I would like to dedicate this master dissertation to the most splendid creatures on earth, to my parents, for their unwavering support, unfailing love and enthusiastic encouragement.

Also to,

My lovely sisters, my kindest brothers, and my precious friends I dedicate this piece of research work.

Sana.

Dedication

I dedicate this modest work:

To the most precious persons to my heart, my mother and my father.

To my lovely sisters and my dear brother

To my entire family

To my entire friends and all those who were for me and supported me.

Selma.

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Abstract

The purpose of the current study is to shed light on the most commonly used exam-taking strategies of ungraduated learners at the department of English at Mohammed Saddik Ben Yahia University, especially those used in TEFL content module written exams. Additionally, this research work attempts to figure out whether the strategies of more able and less able learners are significantly different. To achieve the study's aims, a five-point Likert questionnaire was administered to 50 students alongside with a semi-structured interview with 6 students. The investigation's findings disclosed that more able learners make a great use, with more frequency, of cognitive, metacognitive, compensation, and social strategies; while less able learners have been found that they attach great importance to use frequently, memory and affective strategies. Consequently, the study ends up with conclusive, but not absolute, inferences. It reveals that, as far as, the lack of exam-taking strategies induces writing deficiencies, it could be successfully remedied by intensive training of those strategies. Therefore, the study firmly recommends syllabus designers and educators to frame rigorous programs that make learners immersed in the practice of these strategies and not just being cognate of them.

Key words: Exam-taking strategies, TEFL content module written exams.

List of Abbreviation

ETSs: Exam-taking strategies

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

TOFEL: Test of English as a Foreign Language

IELTS: International English Language Testing System

TW: Test-wiseness

RAFT: Role of the writer, Audience, Format of writing, and Tense.

STOP: Suspending judgment, Taking a stance, Organizing ideas, Planning more

DARE: Developing a topic sentence, Adding supporting ideas, Rejecting and Elaborating on main ideas

STAR: Substitution, Taking things out, Adding new information, and Rearranging

N: Never

R: Rarely

S: Sometimes

O: Often

A: Always

ST.D: Standard deviation

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Introduction

Tests and examinations are key parts of the educational systems in all parts of the world. They are mainly used to measure student's learning, level of growth, and academic achievements. Nowadays, the importance of exams has significantly increased due to their tremendous impact on the life of test takers in the sense that decisive decisions are made depending on exam scores. As an example, they can determine the path that students will go through in the future (e.g.; Baccalaureate exam). For these reasons, exams have become a major source of anxiety and achieving acceptable and high scores is the major concern of many students especially those who wish to study abroad or get the job of their dreams.

Moreover, exam scores can serve as a powerful tool for the sake of distinguishing between students with different proficiency levels. Students are classified into different categories depending on their exam scores. One of those categories is the abler students and less able students. A lot of factors contribute and may have a huge impact on exam scores. One of these factors which may possibly have a direct impact on student's performance in exams and scores is exam- taking strategies. That is to say, achieving high or poor scores may stem from applying specific strategies in a certain way while dealing with a testing situation.

Hence, in order to set up a clear view of the exam taking strategies used by abler students and less able students, an investigation of more able students and less able students exam taking strategies is carried out in this study. The research aims at exploring the exam taking strategies of both more able students in written content module at Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia University.

1. Background of the Study

The relationship between test taking strategies and test performance or scores has been investigated by different scholars (Anderson et al, 1991; Amer, 1992 ; Nevo , 1989) .They all agree that there is a significant relationship between test taking strategies and test performance. Recently a growing body of literature was interested in investigating the exam taking strategies used by students with different proficiency level.

A Korean study by Haam (2006) examined the exam-taking strategies utilized by students with different proficiency levels in reading comprehension test; to accomplish this, a questionnaire was filled out in order to elicit the required data. The results obtained from the questionnaire showed that high English reading proficiency students are more accustomed to using test taking strategies than low proficiency level students do.

Phatiki (2003) investigated the relationship of test takers use of cognitive and metacognitive strategies to the EFL learners (English as a foreign language) learners reading performance. In doing so, the researcher used both quantitative and qualitative methods. The participants in this study took an 85-items, multiple choice reading comprehension achievement test, followed by a questionnaire in order to elicit data about the test – taking strategies they employed. In addition, 4 highly successful students and 4 unsuccessful students were chosen for answering an interview. The results obtained revealed that there is a positive impact of the use of cognitive and metacognitive strategies and that highly successful students reported significantly higher metacognitive strategy use than less successful counterparts.

In another recent study, Yousofi, Pursiah and Ahmed nejad (2015) conducted an investigation on test taking strategies employed by low and high proficiency EFL female students in completing multiple -choice vocabulary and structure tests. In this study, the researchers aimed at exploring the test taking strategies used by students with different language

proficiency levels. After collecting and analyzing data, the results yielded that low proficiency participants employed mnemonic strategies more frequently than high proficiency counterparts in completing both tests. In completing structure tests, high proficiency participants employed mnemonic strategies more than cognitive and metacognitive strategies. In completing vocabulary items, they used equally cognitive, metacognitive, and mnemonic strategies.

In another study by Chang (2009) which investigated the impact of language proficiency on the use of test-taking strategies in listening comprehension test. The participants were Taiwanese college students in their third year of a mandatory three EFL course. After completing a listening test, students were given a questionnaire and responded to a checklist on their own test taking strategies. The results revealed that there were significant differences between high ability students and low ability students in how they used test-taking strategies.

Although there are several studies comparing between more able students and less able students with regard to different types of exams of reading (e.g. ,cloze , reading comprehension and multiple choice) and listening exams, comparative study that aimed at exploring the exam taking strategies used by more able students and less able students in terms of writing still in its infancy. Therefore, this comparative study is an attempt to fill in this gap by exploring exam – taking strategies used by more able and less able students in written content module. Indeed, the literature review revealed that the number of studies conducted concerning exam-taking strategies is not enough compared with those addressing learning strategies, though testing is an integral part of learning. For this reason, more studies should address this area.

2. Statement of the Problem

Unlike language learning strategies, exam /test taking strategies have not got the appropriate attention by researchers. This study aims at exploring the exam taking strategies

used by more able students and less able students and to examine whether test taking strategies are one of the features that high proficiency students use to achieve high scores.

3. Research Questions

1. How often do more able students use exam-taking strategies?
2. How often do less able students use exam-taking strategies?
3. Do more able and less able students use different exam-taking strategies?

4. Aims and Significance

The aim of the current study is to shed light on the exam taking strategies used by more able students and less able students at Mohammed Saddik Ben Yahia University of Jijel. Since this study investigates the exam taking strategies used by more able students and less able students, the obtained results will probably be significant to fill the gap in the current literature. Furthermore, findings of the study will unveil how more and less able students differ in their strategy use and identify the most frequently used strategies by both of them and possibly lead to more studies regarding different areas of exam -taking strategies. Finally, such insights on test taking strategies will also provide valuable information for curriculum designers and teachers to be incorporated into their classrooms and teaching activities.

5. Hypotheses

The current study is primarily based on the following research hypotheses:

H0: There are no significant differences in using exam-taking strategies between more able and less able students of master one in content modules written exams.

H1: There are significant differences in using exam-taking strategies between more able and less able students of master one in content modules written exams.

6. Research Methodology

In order to collect the required data, a questionnaire is designed and addressed to 50 Master one EFL at the university of Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia of Jijel students to elicit information about the exam taking strategies they use while taking their written exams. In addition, 3 more able students and 3 less able students were interviewed to get more information and a deep understanding of the topic under investigation.

7. Structure of the Study

The current research is organized around two major chapters: the first chapter is devoted for the theoretical part while the second chapter is devoted for the field work. The first chapter will cover two theoretical sections. As far as the second chapter is concerned, it represents the practical part; it consists of the methodology, data analysis and data interpretation and pedagogical recommendations.

Chapter One: Literature review

Section One: Exam-taking Strategies

Introduction

1.1. Definition of Exam

2.1. Exam Types

2.1.1. Achievement Exams

2.1.2. Proficiency Exams

2.1.3. Placement Exams

2.1.4. Aptitude Exams

3.1. Essay exam

4.1. Global and Norman Criteria in grading exam essay.

5.1. Definition of Exam taking strategies

6.1. Exam-Taking strategies and test-wiseness

7.1.2. Language learning strategies classification

7.1.3. Oxford's (1990) learning strategies classification

9.1.4.1. Direct strategies of language learning

- ❖ Memory Learning Strategies
- ❖ Cognitive Learning Strategies
- ❖ Composition Learning strategies

7.1.4.2. Indirect strategies of language learning

- ❖ Metacognitive learning strategies
- ❖ Affective Learning strategies
- ❖ Social learning strategies.

7.1. Variables Influencing the Use of Exam-taking Strategies

- ❖ Age
- ❖ Gender
- ❖ Motivation
- ❖ Learning style

9.1. The pedagogy of Teaching Exam-taking strategies

Conclusion

Introduction

Teachers at the Department of English Mohammed Saddik Ben Yahia, declared that although EFL learners are reported to be linguistically competent, they show little proficiency in their written works. They, with no generalization, fail to express themselves clearly whenever being asked to compose an essay. Undeniably, the writing process requires learners not only being linguistically competent but also being strategically competent. Hence, learners' writing deficiency, as the research work postulates, emanates either from the absolute lack of strategic competence or inherent in the misuse of those strategies.

Since exam-taking strategies are the major concern here, this section, then, tries to cover many elements in relation to them. Chiefly, it provides a brief definition of exam, its types and the well-known methods in grading exam content. Subsequently, it moves to define exam-taking strategies as it presents its correlation with test-wiseness. In addition, it takes up the model of learning strategies that is optimally provided by Oxford (1990) and discusses it thoroughly. Then, it exposes some potential factors that may affect learners' choice of exam-taking strategies. Finally, it concludes with pedagogical instructions on the importance of teaching exam-taking strategies.

1.1 Definition of Exam

The terms " Exam" and/or "Test" will be presented interchangeably throughout this research work for the reason that they both imply that notion of measurement. Originally, exam is an instrument that comprises a set of questions; it is usually designed at a fixed period of time for the sake of measuring the learners' overall competence and performance. Whatever exam's type can be; it might be delivered either in written form or spoken form. Nonetheless, Oxford dictionary (2004) defined exam as a group of activities set up for learners in order to examine their capacities (P. 1342). Similarly, Brown (1994) pointed out that exam as a means of

measurement is commonly used to estimate learners' ability or knowledge at a given domain (p.252).

Thus far, it can be said that the aforementioned test definitions have been firmly associated with the exam's headmost function, namely measuring learners' ability. However, Hughes (2003) contended that the exam's role is multifold. According to him they are indispensable within the teaching and learning process because teachers mostly do resort to them in order to resolve many issues like, course progress, learners' advancement, and teaching method effectiveness. For example, when learners' exam papers include incoherent responses, teacher infers that efforts should be made to improve learners' use of the meta-cognitive strategy. All in all, exams are crucial and the research at hand sees them as "those measurement tools that are purposefully administered to evaluate the learners' skills in written and/or oral tasks".

2.1. Types of Exam

In the same stream of language testing, exams are generally categorized into four eminent types, namely, achievement exam, proficiency exam, placement exam and aptitude exam. However, when the designer opts for a particular type to be administered, he/she needs first to be determined with the test's form and purpose.

Achievement exam is among the most essential exam types in language testing, because it tries to ensure that an overarching learning aim has been successfully accomplished (Kaplan & Saccuzzo, 2001, p. 166). If the aim, for instance, is to make a learner able to follow the writing steps (i.e., planning, drafting, and polishing), then the exam will be designed upon that basis to check whether the learner really had mastered this skill or he/she needs for more simplification.

Proficiency exam type tends to measure the examinees' abilities away from any course content. In eloquent words, the learners are tested solely about their abilities to use language

appropriately. In this vein, Heaton (1988) stated that “the proficiency test looks forward, defining a student's language proficiency with reference to a particular task which he or she will be required to perform” (p.172). The best examples that might illustrate this kind of testing could be TOFEL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) and IELTS (International English Language Testing System) tests.

Placement exam aims at determining the learners’ overall level and then rank them into distinct groups of levels before the semester’s entry (Hughes, 2003, p. 13). Therefore, the assessment’s process in a placement test is confined to examine test-takers’ previous knowledge and experiences.

Aptitude exam is another pivotal type in language testing; it is usually designed to know about the learners’ readiness to learn. According to Kaplan & Saccuzzo (2001) aptitude tests try to "evaluate a student’s potential for learning rather than how much a student has already learned” (p. 309).

3.1. Essay Exam

Essay test is a classical type of assessment; it is generally used to collect data about the learner’s writing competence and proficiency. Responses to an essay question are supposed to be presented in a written composition of three paragraphs; more than five paragraphs are regarded as the length of an academic essay. However, researchers, in this token, distinguish between two kinds of essay response questions: restricted-response essay question and extended-response essay questions. restricted-response essay question, constrains the participant’s content and form, so key words like compare, argue or explain in extended essay question are always used. On the other hand, the extended-response essay question gives the exam-taker more freedom to organize and analyze ideas the way he/she likes. One example of that type can be as: how did you spend your time during lockdown? (Kolanchery, 2015)

4.1. Global and Norman Criteria

The rater or teacher may resort to distribute essays' grades following two different ways; norman method or global method.

Norman method is known as analytical or point-score method. In this method the subtotal-points of the general mark is devoted to assess different aspects of the essay. For instance, the distribution could be done this way: two out of two for marking language and vocabulary appropriateness, two out of two for the development of ideas in the essay and logical use of the information, and so forth. The grader after the correction gathers sub-points to give the final essay mark. This way of grading is regarded much suitable for scoring the restricted-response essay questions (Weigle, 2002, p. 113).

Global method also called holistic or impressionistic method. In this style of scoring, the teacher reads first the entire essay answer carefully, then grants the final mark as a reaction to the learner's overall performance. This method is more appropriate to assess extended-response essay questions (Weigle, 2002, p. 114).

5.1. Definition of Exam-Taking Strategies

Despite extensive research investigating ETSs, still no apparent unanimity to one definition. This disagreement, basically, is by dint of the flexible nature of the term; in which, the latter differs according to the type of learning task, exam task, or skill.

To begin with, the term "strategy" is traced back to the Greek word "Strategia" which means taking certain procedures to triumph on the battlefield (Oxford, 2001, p 362). Yet, in pedagogical settings, the notion strategy denotes the two adherent processes: formulating and applying. The former generally has to do with the process of developing policies and plans While the latter deals with the application of these policies to attain a definite objective (Oxford, 1990, p. 7 & Mintzberg and Brain, 1996). In the same vein, Pike (1978) reached out that any

skill, rule, technique, procedure, tactic or method used by respondents to resolve an exam task typically falls within the meaning of exam-taking strategies.

Furthermore, Scrugges and Mustropieri (1992) went on to define exam-taking strategies as cognitive and metacognitive processes that give the examinees' the privilege to show what they know successfully in an exam situation. According to him, such strategies, to the highest degree, facilitate retrieval of information, as well as ensure the proper use of them. Yet, Ellis and Ryan (2003) and Hong et. al. (2006) commented that the exam taking strategies also entail time management strategies and organizational strategies; which in return, assist to arrange both time and knowledge.

In the same line, Dodeen (2015) maintained that exam-taking strategies are factors that could serve to lower the extreme exam's anxiety level and hence achieve high marks. Finally, Cohen (1994) reported that the strategies used in the assessment's period are characterized by being transferable (p. 119). That is, once these strategies are acquired first they can be easily applied later to a variety of exams, in different settings and under different conditions (MClellan & Graig, 1989).

In brief, the literature of ETSS offers a plethora and diverse array of definitions and each of which is based on specific insight. However, it can be said that the majority regard them as executive plans that are applied to achieve success in a particular task.

6.1. Exam-taking Strategies and Test-wiseness

In many pertinent researches about exam-taking strategies, a big confusion is seen between ETSS and test-wisness. In fact, albeit ETSS grew out of TW, they are utterly remaining different from each other.

First and foremost, Dolly and William (1986) argued that TW has nothing to do with the examinees' knowledge; but rather, with teste's knowledge on how to process the exam. In

clearer words, a test-wiseness' participant does not go through neither linguistic process nor cognitive process to complete the exam task; he/ she depends only on the peripheral information of exam and/or exam situation (Millman, Bishop & Eble, 1965, p. 707) Whereas users of ETSSs, have both knowledge and abilities to process the exam (Erickson 1972, p. 142).

Secondly, Stenlund, Eklof & Lyren (2017) established another distinction between the two terms. He assumed that TW strategies are confined to be employed only with exams that require less-thinking order such multiple choice tests. For instance, an examinee may depend on Intelligent guessing to fulfill the task whereas ETSSs might be applied with different and variant types of exams (e.g., essay, multiple choice, filling the gaps).

It is worth mentioning here that in order to know the learners' true abilities teachers need to construct the exam tasks with utmost accuracy. Besides, they are obliged to introduce learners with exam-taking strategies in order to make them avoid using undesirable strategies.

7.1. Language Learning Strategies

In order to internalize the learners' exam-taking strategies, it is important to orient attention to the theoretical background of language learning strategies. Basically, LLSs have been defined and classified distinctively by many scholars (e.g. O'Malley 1987; O'Malley & Chamot 1990; Oxford, 1990; Rubin, 1981; & Stern 1975, 1992). However, they are deemed to be those series of behaviors that are used by learners in order to arrange and regulate the process of learning (Wenden & Rubin, 1987, p. 6).

1.7.1. Language Learning Strategies Classification

1.7.2. Oxford's (1990) Classification

The taxonomy proposed by Oxford (1990) is regarded as the most detailed, inclusive and comprehensive LLSs model (Ellis, 1994). In her model she demarcated LLSs into two fundamental groups direct and indirect; each of the two groups are further subdivided into three

categories. Direct group which includes: memory, cognitive and composition and indirect group which encompasses metacognitive, affective and social strategies.

1.7.2.1. Direct Learning Strategies

Direct learning strategies encompasses memory, cognitive and composition

Memory strategies are those mental procedures of storing, restoring and retrieving information. This constituent is of high importance since it deals with the information that learners need in the exam situation. Hence, grouping, associating words, writing down symbols and acronyms, or mind maps; could strikingly support the summoning of information.

Cognitive strategies are the manipulation of the newly incoming information and the operation of activating the old ones in the way that assists to make learning processes sustainable (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990, p .44). Strategies of that kind relatively have a direct link to the task being completed, and among strategies that can be used in cognitive strategies are: summarizing, elaborating, writing keywords, contextualizing and inferencing.

Compensation strategies are techniques whereby learners mostly use to overcome potential linguistic and grammatical limitations in their spoken or written interaction (Oxford, 1990). In fact, using strategies like, substituting weak terms, ambiguous expressions, complex tenses with more strong words, clear expressions and simple tenses, would promote learners to practice language, and hence convert their knowledge from being declarative knowledge to be procedural knowledge.

1.7.2.2. Indirect learning Strategies

Indirect learning strategies includes metacognitive strategies, affective strategies and social strategies (Oxford, 1990, p. 12).

Metacognitive strategies play an executive function in governing the use of cognitive strategies (Baker & Brown, 1984). They typically include those strategies of planning, thinking, checking one's production and comprehension, correcting and evaluating learning task (Artzt and Armour- Thomas 1992). Yet, O'Malley & Chamot's (1990) refers metacognitive strategies to the three sub-processes of self-managing, self-monitoring, and self-evaluating. These skills are, indeed, primordial in writing because they give sense to the written production and make it vacant from language errors, arbitrary ideas, and language fragmentations.

Affective strategies are skills that promote participants to regulate their emotions, attitudes, feelings and motivational states (Hsiao & Oxford 2002, P. 731). Controlling one's emotions throughout self-encouragements, self-enthusiasm, relaxing, tensing muscles, breathing profoundly, unwinding, taking a break and strolling nearby the exam classroom may enable learners to deactivate their awareness to the test's difficulties, and hence, boost their writing (Kesselman-Turkel & Peterson, 2003).

Social strategies are activities that facilitate the learning process. For instance, trying to arrange the environment through choosing seats that are far away from windows and doors distractions', sitting next to familiar mates, asking for the examiner's clarification are all assist learners to accomplish his/her task successfully (Dembo, 2004 & Kesslman-Turkel & Peterson, 2003). These kinds of strategies are attributed by being observable; therefore, examiners are required to encourage their learners to use them whenever they need help.

8.1. Variables Influencing the Use of Exam-taking Strategies

Factors such as age, gender, motivation, and learning style exert a big influence on learners' decisions when attempting to select the appropriate strategies to react to essay exams.

Age: Oxford's and Nikos study (1989) demonstrated that advanced learners in age are characterized by the frequent use of different strategies while novice young learners tend to use affective and social strategies only (Devlina, 1996; & Lee & Oxford, 2008).

Gender: tremendous studies carried out about the impact of gender on the choices of ETSSs revealed that females are able to generate ETSSs more than males (Politzer, 1983).

Motivation: more motivated learners do usually like to cope with difficulties and challenge them in whatever way. Thus, unlike less motivated learners, they fortify themselves from negative thoughts or feelings by using miscellaneous of strategies (Oxford and Nyikos, 1989).

Learning style: is another strong factor that influences the learners' choice of ETSSs (Schmeck, 1988). If an auditory learner, for instance, is about to complete written task and chooses auditory ETSSs, then it would not be surprising, that his/her answer will full of spelling and grammatical mistakes.

9.1. The pedagogy of Teaching Exam-taking Strategies

Notwithstanding efforts throughout literature which acclaimed in turn the significance of instructing exam-taking strategies on attaining quality in written works, still lack an explanation on how they would be taught. This research work, however, will set out a brief explanation to the whole process of instructing them by including four mnemonic clusters namely, RAFT (role of the writer, audience, format of writing, and tense), STOP (suspending judgment, taking a stance, organizing ideas, planning more) DARE (developing a topic sentence, adding supporting ideas, reject details and elaborating on main ideas) and STAR (substitution, taking things out, adding new information, and rearranging) (TESL, 2020, P. 10).

Chiefly, RAFT strategies have been set out to decide about learners' role, audience, form and tense. For instance, accomplished writers determine who are they as writers (e.g. an arguer, a narrator); to whom do they write (audience: teacher, senator, friend); on which format ideas

have to be moulded (e.g. an article, a narrative short story); and which tense would be appropriate to be used to complete the task (present, past, future).

Subsequently, stop strategies are typically those that are involved in the prewriting phase. First, learners try to suspend judgment and summon ideas to be written with no restrictions. Then, take a stance or side, i.e. learners should determine about the strong or important ideas that need to be included. Finally, managing to organize more. That is, presenting ideas by following certain methods like point by point method or block by block method.

Third, dare strategies are those that are involved in the while-writing. Herein, learners try to develop and reword topic sentences that support the thesis statement. Then, they try to re-elaborate and add the supporting sentences, however, at this step any ideas that are considered unnecessary to be included should be rejected and removed from the body. Eventually, conclude with ending sentences.

Last but not the least, STAR strategies are those strategies that are included in the post-writing phase. At first, learners substitute all ambiguous words, misspelled words, incorrect verbs, with clear, correct and appropriate ones. Also, irrelevant information could be taken out and eliminated. Finally, when the learner feels that the composition is unorganized, dint of the constant adjustments, then ideas and sentence structure have to be re-ranged to attain a completed work.

To conclude, using the aforementioned strategies promote learners to ameliorate their way of writing. They enable learners to internalize the process of writing, e.g. know how to set goals, select and compress and finally revise and refine them. However, to guarantee that they are utilized effectively, teachers should be caution to several facts like style of learning, learners' character, setting and conditions differences (classroom setting that differs from an

exam setting decreases the learners' opportunities to involve effective and social strategies), and finally the genre where strategies should be used with respect to genre of writing.

Conclusion

Overall, this section has reviewed all issues which are germane and crucial to exam taking-strategies. First, it presented various definitions of exam, its type, and ways of scoring essay exam. Additionally, it has defined exam-taking strategies along with underlying its relationship with test-wiseness. Also, it has casted light to an exclusive classifications of learning strategies. More significantly, it presented different factors that impact on the use of exam-taking strategies. Ultimately, it wrapped up with highlighting the importance of training exam-taking strategies in an instructional setting.

Section Two: Academic Writing

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Introduction

Writing is one of the most fundamental language skills that language learners need to develop. It is considered a central element in learning and teaching in higher education. This section is devoted to present academic writing. First, it deals with a general overview of academic writing through presenting its definition, types, approaches, and importance of teaching writing to EFL learners. Then, it discusses the components of effective writing and the different stages of the process of writing. It concludes with providing some definitions for academic essay, which are regarded the main tool for evaluating students level at university.

1.1. Definition of Academic Writing

In pedagogical settings, academic writing is considered as one of the most important skills required in higher education. It is, thus, a crucial element in language teaching and learning and the basis of academic performance.

The concept of academic writing was defined by different scholars. Gyte (2013, p. 9) pointed out that academic writing is the type of writing done by scholars (students or academics) for other scholars to read. It can be a journal, article, dissertations, project groups, and essays. Similarly, Bailey (2006) stated that “academic writing is designed for anybody who is studying or (planning to study) at English medium –colleges and universities and had to write essays and other assignments for exams or course work” (p. 1). According to Oshima and Hogue (2006, p. 3) academic writing is the type of writing which is used in college, classes and height schools, it is differs from personal and creative writing. In the same vein, kemp (2007, P.9) defined academic writing as the style of writing found in academic and scholarly journals in education, dissertations and master thesis and other professional publications in education”. Further, Irvin (2010, p. 8) claimed that academic writing is always a kind of evaluation that asks you to demonstrate knowledge and show proficiency with certain disciplinary skills of thinking,

interpreting and presenting. This means that academic writing is used as a tool for evaluating students' skills and abilities.

The central idea we draw from these definitions is that academic writing is a type of writing which is of paramount importance in the field of education. Thus, students should try to develop their academic writing and teachers should give it the appropriate attention as well.

2.1. Types OF Academic Writing

Academic writing is used to write academic reports, papers, dissertations and different types of academic essays in academic settings. Bailey (2011, p .4) identified the most common types of academic writing which are produced for different reasons:

- a) Notes: a written record of the main points of text or lecture, for students' personal use.
- b) Report: a description of something a student has done (e.g.; conducting a survey).
- c) Project: a piece of research, either individual or group work, with the topic chosen by the student (s).
- d) Essays: the most common type of written work, with the title given by the teacher, normally 1000 words.
- e) Dissertation/ thesis: the longest piece of writing normally done by a student (20, 000 +words) often for a higher degree, on a topic chosen by the student.
- f) paper: a general term for any academic essay, report, presentation or article.

3.1. Importance of Teaching Writing

Academic writing is one of the most important elements in English language teaching. The ability to write in English effectively has become crucial in our community; it holds a great importance for native, second and foreign language learners.

Writing is among the most important skills that language learners need to develop. Harmer (2004, p. 3) argued that writing is different from the spoken language, which is a result of being exposed to it. The ability to write has to be consciously learned. He provided more

reasons to teach writing which include: reinforcement, language development, learning style and more importantly writing skill. Harmer (1998, p .79) illustrates the four reasons for teaching writing as followed:

- a)** Reinforcement: some learners acquire language in a purely oral / aural way, but most of them benefit greatly from seeing the language written down.
- b)** Language development: the mental activity learners go through in order to construct proper written text is all part of the ongoing experience. Students often find it beneficial to write sentences using new language after they have studied it.
- c)** Learning style: for many learners, producing language in a slower way is something they appreciate. Writing provides time and ease for learners more than face –to- face interaction does.
- d)** writing as a skill: learners need to know how to write letters, how to put written reports together, and how reply to advertisements. In addition, they need to know some of writing basic conventions (for example punctuation, paragraph construction) just as they need to know how to pronounce language appropriately.

Writing has a great importance in the student’s academic course of study because most examinations, reports and research work rely on it. Most importantly, the writing process helps to develop the students’ cognitive skills in acquiring some basic strategies such as: analysis and synthesis (Bacha, 2002, P. 164). Moreover, writing is a significant skill for many academic professions. Barras (2005) stated that “writing is important in studying all the subjects and in all professions, only by writing well, you can give a good account of yourself as a student or when applying for a job or in your career when writing emails, memoranda, letters instructions and reports; it is by your writing that may people judge you” (p .1). That is to say, effective writing is a crucial factor that can increase the opportunities of success in any career.

To sum up, writing is one most fundamental language skills which has to be given a special attention by both students and teachers. It is very important in student's educational and professional lives.

4.1. Approaches of Teaching Writing

Different approaches in the last few decades were utilized for the aim of teaching writing. Each approach differs from the other in many areas such as: the focus, the way of viewing language. The two main approaches used to teach writing are: the process and the product approach.

4.1.1. The Product Approach

In the product approach, the focus is on the final product of writing. It is mainly based on activities which require from the learner to imitate and transform model texts. The product oriented approach as its title indicates focuses on the end results of the learning process, what is expected from the learner to do as a fluent user of language (Nunan, 1991, p. 86) In other words, the main focus of this approach is the final product of writing rather than the process of writing.

The main concern of the product approach is how well the writer knows the structures of language, and writing is only limited to the imitation of texts given by teacher (Badger and White, 2000, p. 154). In this approach, students are provided with a model text to transform or imitate and learners' development is considered the output of imitating these model texts provided by the teacher. This approach mainly aims at making students aware of the test features by focusing on studying the model text. The stages in teaching writing using this approach are as follows: familiarization, controlled writing, guided writing, and free writing (Hyland, 2003, pp.3-4).

4.1.2. The Process Approach

The process approach shifted the attention from the traditional view of considering writing as a product to the focus on the process of writing. This approach is defined as “an approach to the teaching of writing which stresses the creativity of an individual writer, and which pays attention to the development of good writing practices rather than the imitation of models” (Tribble, 1996, as cited in Alhasani, 2008, p. 23). To elaborate, the process approach is different from the traditional approaches, in that the teacher presents a model text and asks learners to imitate it. Writing in the process approach is mainly concerned with the linguistic skills such as planning and drafting; there is little focus on the linguistic knowledge (Badger and White, 2000, p. 155). To put it differently, the process approach considers writing as the exercise of linguistic skills and the writing development is seen as a process that occurs throughout the exercise of writing skills. This approach is also known as “cyclical approach”. Students are needed to move back and forth while going from one stage to another. Similarly, to the process of writing which is recursive. That is say, the writer may go back to previous stages of writing if he:she needs to so (Harmer, 2004, p.5).

5.1. Components of Effective Writing

Learning to write in English is deemed one of the most difficult and complex tasks to achieve. An effective piece of writing according to Starkey (2004) should include: organization, clarity, coherence and accurate language, and word choice.

1) Organization

Organization is considered the first thing to do; it is very useful to start organizing ideas in order to form a plan about the entire text or paragraph. In this regard, Starkey (2004) stated that “the direction and purpose you get from organization helps your reader to believe what you are saying and willingly follow your lead” (p.2).

2) Clarity

Clarity is a pivotal element in the writing process. The purpose behind writing a text or any piece of writing is to convey a clear message to the readers; thus, the learner should be clear and make his information easy to understand. Murray & Hughes, (2008, P. 86) argued that clarity is an essential element in academic writing. It can make the writing easy to be read. Starkey (2004, PP. 11-17) mentioned four elements which can make writing easy and accurate.

- ✓ Eliminate ambiguity: the learner should avoid using words or phrases that can possibly have more than one interpretation.
- ✓ Use powerful, precise adjectives and adverbs: using powerful, and specific adjectives and adverbs is an effective way to achieve clarity. In addition, the use of powerful adjectives and adverbs can have a great impact on the readers' points of view; thus, the writer should be careful when selecting the adjective, adverbs and words to be used.
- ✓ Be concise: this means avoiding worthless repetition or wordiness; there are two equally important approaches to more concise writing: eliminating unnecessary words or phrases, using the active (as opposed to passive) voice whenever possible (Starkey, 2004, p. 15).
- ✓ Avoid unnecessary repetition: repetition of words, information and ideas can sometimes destroy the clarity of the piece of writing.

Clarity is a pivotal element of writing; the learner needs to master in order to make his piece of writing easy to read and guarantee that the reader understand exactly the intended meaning.

3) Coherence

Coherence is an important element in any kind of writing .It is particularly crucial in academic writing, where success or failure of any of the piece of writing may depend on how clearly the writer managed to communicate his ideas to the reader .No matter how original and

brilliant those ideas , if they are not presented in a coherent and logical way , their meaning and value will be lost (Murray and Hughes , 2008, P. 45).That is to say , presenting ideas and information in a logical way can add value and credit to any piece of writing .

4) Word choice

Choosing the words attentively is the best way for the learner to convey his ideas in writing. According to Starkey (2004), there are two aspects the learner should consider while choosing the words to be used namely: denotation and connotation. Denotation is the literal meaning of the word. Learners should make sure of the correctness of his words in order to avoid confusion that may occur due to the words that sound or look similar, but they have different meanings. Connotation “is a words implied meaning which involves emotions, cultural assumptions and suggestions” (Starkey, 2004, p .21). The writer should be selective when choosing the words, because any mistake can lead to a misunderstanding. Moreover, the learner should take into consideration whether he/she used words that might be confusing for the readers. This can be done by avoiding informal language, cliché, and slang words (Starkey, 2004, p. 30).

5) Mechanics

The term “mechanics” refers to the appearance of words, how they are spelled and arranged on paper. The rules gathered under the heading of mechanics attempt to make writing consistent and clear (Kane, 2000, p .15). The writing mechanics include: grammar, capitalization, punctuation and spelling.

- ✓ Grammar: the learner should be aware about the grammatical rules and have a good knowledge about the parts of speech such as pronouns, adjectives, adverbs and prepositions.
- ✓ Punctuation and capitalization are crucial in academic writing; Proper punctuation will give any piece of writing credit. Murray and Hughes (2008) stated that “they

indicate pauses and eliminate ambiguity. A well punctuated and capitalized piece of writing should make the work easier to read and understand and will therefore help it make more favorable impression on your readers” (p. 185).

- ✓ Spelling is one factor that learners should take into consideration when writing.

6.1. The Process of writing

Academic writing is a process which is composed of a series of stages. According to Oshima & Hogue (2006, p. 15) the process of academic writing involves at least four distinct steps: creating, planning, writing and polishing to reach the final product.

- **Creating**

The first step in the writing process is to choose a topic and collect information about it. It is also called prewriting because the writer starts with this step before the actual process of writing (Oshima & Hogue, 2006, P .16). Before getting started to write, it is always helpful that the learner takes a moment and thinks about what he knows about the topic. In this stage, the writer collects and generates information using some techniques such as brainstorming, free writing and listing. Whitaker (2009, p 36) argued that brainstorming is a useful step in the prewriting stage because it helps the writer to think well and find ideas to include them in his topic. In addition, Robitaille and Connelly (2007, p 36) mentioned that free writing is a way the writer uses to generate ideas. In this stage, the writer should write freely without restriction to his ideas, vocabulary choice, or words and expressions he uses.

- **Planning**

The second step of the writing process is the planning stage. Oshima and Hogue (2006, p. 17) stated that the third step is in planning step in which students organize their ideas into a simple outline. In the same token, Hyland (2003) stated that “outlines vary in detail and formality, but they help learners to set out a structure for their text and consider the rhetorical patterns they will need to effectively express the ideas they have generated” (p.131). In

emphasizing the importance of planning, Zemach & Rumisek (2003, p. 63) claimed that the importance of an outline is similar to the importance of skeleton in body. That is to say, as the skeleton is able to support your body, the outline will support your writing by providing it structure. From what it mentioned before, outline holds a great importance in the process of writing and helps learners to organize their ideas that they want to express in their piece of writing.

- **Writing**

The third step in the writing process is drafting. Drafting means to start writing by transforming the ideas planned before into sentences and paragraphs. While doing so, the writer should jot down his ideas quickly and without worrying about grammar, spelling or punctuation errors (Oshima & Hogue, 2006, p .18). In the same token, drafting is defined as the act of writing a rough or stretch, form of the paper. It is time when writer focus on the main ideas that he wants to express in his paper (Galko, 2002, p. 49). According to Murray & Hughes (2008, p .111) drafting means writing the first rough copy of any piece of writing, which will be edited and refined before submission to the examiner or tutor. The drafting stage should be repeated until reaching a final satisfying product.

- **Polishing**

The last step in the writing process is polishing. Oshima & Hogue (2006, p. 18) pointed out that polishing is the final step in the writing process. The step of polishing is more effective when it is divided into two stages. First, there is the revising stage in which the writer focuses on the content and organization only; he can add or change what he or she has already written to make his piece of writing better. The second stage is editing or proofreading in which the writer gives attention and corrects his paper from errors related to grammar, structure, spelling and punctuation. In this regard, Whitaker (2009, p. 18) argued that editing is a crucial stage because it makes the writing more precise and clear. During this stage, the writer should

examine each sentence and make sure whether it is complete, clear and concise. In the same token, Bailey (2003, p. 49) argued that proof-reading is the vital final part of the writing process; the major aim of this step is to prevent confusion and misunderstanding of any piece of writing. This means that the steps of revising and proof-reading are essential steps in the process of writing because they can guarantee an effectiveness of writing.

7.1. Academic Essay

An academic essay is one form of academic writing. It is one of the most common types of academic genres that learners face during their period of studying at university or college.

Many researchers and scholars have defined academic essay in different ways. Zemach & Rumisek (2005, p. 56) defined an essay as a group of paragraphs written about a single topic and central idea. It must have at least three paragraphs, but a five –paragraph essay is a common length for academic writing. Similarly, academic essay is defined as a document that has a defined structure, an introduction, a body and a conclusion. It is a specific genre that functions within a set of norms, rules and conventions (Pablo & Candy, 2018, P .47). In other words, an academic essay can be defined as a structured piece of writing composed of an introduction, a body and a conclusion. Besides that, the writer should follow specific rules of language when writing an academic essay.

Oshima & Hogue (2006) stated that “an essay is a piece of writing several paragraphs long. It is about one topic, just a paragraph is. However, because the topic of an essay is too complex to discuss in one paragraph, you need to divide it into several paragraphs, one for each major point. Then, you need to tie the paragraphs together by adding an introduction and a conclusion” (p56). Moreover, Geyte (2013, p.9) pointed out that essays are written by students and are likely to be read by their tutor. An essay can be a set of coursework assignment to measure a student’s understanding of a module or as an exam question. This means that an

essay is a way of evaluating student's abilities and capacities in exams. It is done by students and evaluated by their teacher.

In a nutshell, an academic essay is a structured form of writing that students encounter in school, college and university. It is mainly used to evaluate student's knowledge.

Conclusion

This section has dealt with the concept of academic writing; also, it shed the light on it different types, different approaches to teaching writing and the importance of teaching writing to EFL learners. In addition, it tackled the components of effective writing and the process of writing. Besides that, it has provided different definitions for the concept of academic essay which is regarded the most common type of academic writing students face at university.

Chapter Two: Fieldwork

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ملخص

Résumé

Chapter Two: Research Method and Data Analysis

Introduction

This part of research was designed to investigate different exam-taking strategies that proficient and less proficient master-one learners at Mohammed Saddike Ben Yahia University might employ. However, that line of research focuses much more on comparing the strategies of the two distinct groups and deciding whether they have been utilized disparately or similarly.

This chapter covers the research methodology that was followed. It, chiefly, highlights the research paradigm. Next, it provides detailed information on the participants partook in this study; in other words, who the representative population were and how they were sampled. Likewise, it provides the description of research instruments administered in gathering data, as well as, it describes the process used to obtain data. Last and not the least, it presents data analysis and interpretation and concludes with limitations of the study along with suggestions for future research.

1.1. Research Paradigm

To accomplish the purpose of the current study, a mixed approach was adopted for the sake of collecting valid data. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used in gathering the data. The quantitative data was obtained from the questionnaire and the qualitative data were driven from an interview conducted with more able and less able students. The qualitative method is used as support to the quantitative one and to have a deep understanding of the topic under investigation. The mixed approach is regarded as the most suitable approach to achieve the purpose of answering the research questions.

2.1. Research Population and Sampling

The population targeted in this study is Master one learners in the English language department at Mohammed Saddik Ben Yahia, Jijel. Its sample that comprises Fifty (50) EFL learners were randomly selected to represent the whole population. The reason for choosing master one level to be studied over other levels is due to the fact that the learners of master one are regarded as expert learners, so they are expected to possess a fair number of exam-taking strategies that allow them to control their writing during the exam situation. Moreover, they are always required to fulfill their exams, assignments, classroom presentations and research in the form of an essay, so they are used to applying them in order to submit a good work.

3.1. Setting

The current study was conducted within the Algerian context. More specifically, it was carried out at the university of Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia. This study is an attempt to identify the different strategies employed by more able students and less able students, furthermore it aims at identifying the most frequently used strategies by students.

4.1. Research Instruments

In the pursuit of obtaining valid and reliable data the current research is based on a convergent parallel mixed method design to gauge learners' exam-taking strategies. Creswell (2014) posited that the method which would combine quantitative and qualitative data does make the researcher able to gain a robust understanding about the research being under study. Accordingly, the current research, first, opts for administering a Likert scale questionnaire to gather possible data from a wide range of master one learners; second, implements a semi-structured interview. Immediately after, learners take the TEFL exam, to explore other germane issues to the research topic.

4.1.1. Description of the Questionnaire

A questionnaire is regarded among the most useful tool in gathering research data. According to Richard (2005, P. 60)

Questionnaires are one of the most common instruments used. They are relatively easy to prepare, they can be used with large numbers of subjects and they obtain information that is relatively easy to tabulate and analyze. They can also be used to elicit information about many different kinds of issues, such as language use, communication difficulties, preferred learning styles, preferred classroom activities and attitudes and beliefs.

In our study, the exam-taking strategies questionnaire that had been designed is based on the model propounded by Oxford. The prime reason behind taking up the latter model to be the optimum model for our study can refer to the fact that the model itself is typified throughout literature as the most exclusive model that could investigate various strategies. Nonetheless, the current research's questionnaire which comprises twenty-four (24) items are arranged into three sections.

The first section pertained to participants' background information wherein the question "Could you state your overall average, please?" aims to categorize them into two distinguished groups (more able and less able). The benchmark followed by the study to segregate them were ten out twenty 10/20.

The second section consists of twenty-two strategies categorized into six groups. Part "A" represents memory exam-taking strategies (From strategy 1 to strategy 2), part "B" represents cognitive exam-taking strategies (from strategy 3 to strategy 6), part "C" represents compensation exam-taking strategies (from the strategy 7 to strategy 10), part "D" represents metacognitive exam-taking strategies (from the strategy 11 to strategy 16), part "E" represents affective exam-taking strategies (from strategy 17 to strategy 18), part "F" for social exam-

taking strategies (from strategy 19 to strategy 22). In this section the learners were asked to indicate how often they tend to use those strategies on the five- point Likert scale: 1=never; 2=rarely; 3=sometimes; 4=often; 5=always.

The final section contains the sole open-ended question “If you know further (other) strategies, please mention them”. This open-ended question was designed to explore whether learners use further exam-taking strategies in an exam situation.

5.1. Preliminary Work and Pilot of the Study

The main purpose of conducting a pilot study is to examine the feasibility of the approach that is going to be used by researchers. Therefore, the step of interviewing the students after distribution of questionnaire was of paramount importance to identify the difficulties that students faced while responding to the questions. Some modifications were made such as: modifying or delaying others for the sake of achieving feasibility and effectiveness of the questionnaire.

6.1. Data Collection Procedures

In order to explore the different exam-taking strategies used by students with different proficiency levels, certain steps have been followed. A pilot study has been conducted before the distribution of the questionnaire to check whether the questionnaire is appropriate or not. The student’s questionnaire has been handed out to Master students of Mohamed Seddik Ben Yahia University of Jijel, where they were requested to answer the questionnaire after finishing their TEFL exam in order to get the required data about the exam- taking strategies they employed during the exam. As far as the interview is concerned, it has been conducted after collecting data from the questionnaire. The aim of the interview is to get further insights about exam-taking strategies utilized by students while taking their written exams.

7.1. Data Analysis and Presentation

To scrutinize the responses of the returned questionnaire, IBM Statistical Package of the Social Science (SPSS) for windows version 23 was used. Then, the data obtained were entered in the program and processed by using different statistical tools such as mean; frequencies; standard deviations; and independent samples of t-test. Results of descriptive statistics demonstrated the frequency of the Likert-scaled statements as well as determined the extent to which the two groups disperse from each other.

7.1.1. Analyses of Exam-taking Strategies Questionnaire

In order to present and gauge the results adequately, the research opted for the following method of mean distribution of findings.

- ✓ Class length = $\frac{\text{interval width (highest point – lowest point)}}{\text{The greatest value of the scale}}$
- ✓ $C.L = \frac{5 - 1}{5} = 0.80$
- ✓ Then 0.80 is the class length that will be added to all the five scale points' values:

- From 1 to 1.80 represents “Never”
- From 1.80 to 2.60 represents “Rarely”
- From 2.60 to 3.40 represents “Sometimes”
- From 3. 40 to 4.20 represents “Often”
- From 4. 20 to 5 represents “Always”

Table 1. *The frequency of memory exam-taking strategies employed by able and less able learners.*

ETSs	<u>More able students</u>							<u>Less able students</u>						
	<u>N</u>	<u>R</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>O</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>ST.D</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>R</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>O</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>ST.D</u>
Str 1	13	5	2	1	4	1.12	1.509	0	1	1	3	20	3.68	0.748
Str 2	11	4	4	0	6	1.20	1.258	0	2	2	7	14	3.32	0.945

The overall results	1.16	1.384	The overall results	3.50	0.847
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The data that was collected from the two distinguished groups of master one yielded to a conclusive result regarding memory strategies. While descriptive statistics indicate that the more able learners do “never” involve such type of exam-taking strategies at any initiatives to compose a well written exam response (overall mean=1.16, and standard deviation=1.384), less able participants seem to “often” make use of memory strategies to react to their essay exam question by an overall mean= 3.50 and standard deviation= 0.847.

Table 2. *The frequency of cognitive exam-taking strategies employed by able and less able learners.*

ETSs	<u>More able students</u>							<u>Less able students</u>							
	<u>N</u>	<u>R</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>O</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>ST.D</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>R</u>	<u>S</u>	<u>O</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>ST.D</u>	
STr 3	0	1	3	6	15	3.40	0.866	10	6	5	1	3	1.24	1.363	
STr 4	0	2	4	6	13	3.08	0.997	12	7	2	2	2	1.00	1.291	
Str 5	0	3	2	10	10	3.28	1.061	9	8	2	4	2	1.28	1.339	
Str 6	1	1	2	7	14	3.04	1.098	11	3	5	0	6	1.48	1.636	
The overall results						3.20	1.005	The overall results						1.25	1.407

The results obtained from the exam-taking strategies questionnaire are set out in table 2. Interestingly, statistical results show that the study’s sample that had been subdivided into more able and less able learners do report different frequency in using cognitive strategies in an exam situation. In this context, more able students stated they “sometimes” include cognitive strategies when they engage in writing an essay exam by an overall mean= 3.20 and standard deviation= 1.005. However, less able students showed a very poor use to this category by an

overall mean= 1.25 and standard deviation= 1.407. In a non-number language, less proficient learners “never” support their writing with these cognitive strategies.

Table 3. *The frequency of compensation exam-taking strategies employed by able and less able learners.*

<u>ETSs</u>	<u>More able students</u>							<u>Less able students</u>							
	N	R	S	O	A	Mean	ST.D	N	R	S	O	A	Mean	ST.D	
Str 7	1	1	5	7	11	3.04	1.098	12	8	4	0	1	0.80	1.000	
Str 8	0	2	4	10	9	3.04	0.935	10	5	5	2	3	1.32	1.406	
Str 9	1	2	2	5	15	3.24	1.165	13	4	1	1	6	1.32	1.701	
Str10	1	1	1	9	13	3.28	1.021	9	8	2	2	4	1.36	1.469	
The overall results						3.15	1.05	The overall results						1.20	1.39

As it can be seen from the table above, the more able learners group reported a more frequent use of compensation strategies in comparison to less able learners because the statistical means of the strategy (7, 8,9,10) concerning skillful learners are rated from 3.04 to 3.28. this means that they are good users of compensation strategies; besides, the overall standard deviation (= 1.05) indicates that they provide consistent responses. In contrast, statistical findings elicited from less skillful students indicate that they are bad users of compensation strategies; infect, they approximately never use them in written exams (overall mean=1.20 and standard deviation= 1.39).

Table 4. *The frequency of metacognitive exam-taking strategies employed by able and less able learners.*

<u>ETSs</u>	<u>More able students</u>							<u>Less able students</u>						
	N	R	S	O	A	Mean	ST.D	N	R	S	O	A	Mean	ST.D

Str11	0	2	3	4	16	3.36	0.995	14	1	7	1	2	1.04	1.338	
Str12	1	1	5	8	10	3.00	1.080	16	1	1	3	4	1.08	1.656	
Str13	0	2	3	8	12	3.20	0.957	9	7	1	1	7	1.60	1.683	
Str14	1	3	5	6	10	2.84	1.214	8	7	4	5	1	1.36	1.245	
Str15	0	2	3	8	12	3.20	0.957	7	7	5	3	3	1.52	1.358	
Str16	1	1	1	7	15	3.36	0.036	15	2	3	4	1	0.96	1.338	
The overall results						3.16	0.87	The overall results						1.26	1.43

What is interesting in the data recorded in table number 4, is that the more able students expressed again a more frequent use of metacognitive strategies than less able students did. It is apparent that the first group do “sometimes” prefer to use those strategies in order to control their writing by an approximate overall mean of 3.16 and standard deviation of 0.87 whereas less able learners expressed unwillingness to use these strategies. Statistics, hence, claimed that they do “never” employ them by an overall mean=1.26 and standard deviation=1.43.

Table 5. *The frequency of affective exam-taking strategies employed by able and less able learners.*

ETSs	More able students							Less able students							
	N	R	S	O	A	Mean	ST.D	N	R	S	O	A	Mean	ST.D	
Str17	13	4	3	0	5	1.20	1.581	0	1	1	4	19	3.64	1.757	
Str18	19	4	1	1	0	0.36	0.757	3	2	2	0	18	3.12	1.509	
The overall results						0.78	1.169	The overall results						3.38	1.633

As seen in the table above, more able learners prefer much more to make the development of their written exam be done without using affective strategies. Their responses, moreover are statistically proved that they “never” did utilize them to perform their exams by

an overall mean= 0.78 and standard deviation= 1.169. In contrast, less able students likely help themselves while processing written exams throughout generating effective strategies. According to them, these strategies are mostly encouraging them to overcome problems that they do encounter. In numerical words, they “often” use those strategies by an overall mean= 3.38 and standard deviation=1.633.

Table 6. *The frequency of social exam-taking strategies employed by able and less able learners.*

ETSs	<u>More able students</u>							<u>Less able students</u>							
	N	R	S	O	A	Mean	ST.D	N	R	S	O	A	Mean	ST.D	
Str19	0	4	5	7	9	2.84	1.106	8	6	4	4	3	1.52	1.418	
Str20	3	4	3	7	8	2.52	1.418	11	7	0	2	5	1.32	1.600	
Str21	0	2	5	7	11	3.08	0.997	9	7	1	5	3	1.44	1.474	
Str22	0	5	9	10	1	2.28	0.843	10	4	5	3	3	1.40	1.443	
The overall results						2.68	1.09	The overall results						1.42	1.48

The table above had been designed in order to investigate social exam-taking strategies. Results revealed that more skillful learners are interested in using such strategies within exam situations by an overall mean=2.68 and standard deviation= 1.09. They, in other words, “sometimes” they tend to include them when processing their exams. On the other hand, the same category received less attention to be used by non-skilled learners. In statistical language, non-skilled learners reported that they do never use them whenever take exams by an overall mean= 1.42 and standard deviation=1.48.

Table 7. *The results of the independent- samples of t-test of memory strategies used by more able students (N= 25) and less able students (N= 25)*

Strategies	Sig	df	t	Sig. (two-tailed)	Mean difference	95% confidence interval		Eta squared
						Lower	Upper	
Stra 1.	0.001	35.133	-7.600	0.000	-2.560	-3.244	-1.876	0.62

Stra 2.	0.021	44.543	-6.736	0.000	-2.120	-2.2754	-1.486	0.40
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An independent t-test was conducted in order to explore differences between more able students and less able students of master one EFL learners in using memory strategies while taking written exams. As Alpha of 0.05 was used; statistical results of table above disclose that there was no similarity found concerning the strategy number (1) since (t.(df)= 35.133. p< 0.001). Furthermore, the significant difference of the first strategy was approved between the two groups wherein it is (t=-7.600). The magnitude of the differences is large since eta squared=0.62. Accordingly, the means (mean difference= -2.560. 95% CI=-3.244 to -1.876) is significant. In the same manner, descriptive statistics of table 7 also indicates that there was a significant difference between the two groups in using the second strategy as alpha is less than 0.05. and (t(df)= 44.543. p<0.021). The magnitude of the differences in using this strategy is large since eta squared=0.40. Put it vividly, the mean (mean difference=-2.120. 95% CI=-2.2754 to -1.486) is significant.

Table 8. *The results of the independent- samples of t-test of cognitive strategies used by more able students (N= 25) and less able students (N= 25)*

Strategies	Sig	df	t	Sig. (two-tailed)	Mean difference	95% confidence interval		Eta squared
						Lower	Upper	
Stra 3.	0.034	4.670	6.689	0.000	2.160	1.508	2.812	0.52
Stra 4.	0.447	48	6.647	0.000	2.160	1.508	2.812	0.47
Stra 5.	0.006	39.014	2.968	0.005	1.160	0.369	1.951	0.18
Stra 6.	0.004	41.163	4.615	0.000	1.800	1.012	2.588	0.34

The independent t-test was used again in order to analyze the cognitive strategies more able students and less able students do use whenever they respond to their written exams. As Alpha of 0.05 was utilized; findings of table 8 revealed that the users of cognitive strategies do apply this category differently. The results of the strategy 3 (t.(df)= 40.670, p< 0.034) 5(t.(df)= 39.014, p< 0.006) and 6 (t.(df)= 41.163, p< 0.004) highly emphasized the differences existed

between proficient and less proficient learners in the use of cognitive strategies. The significant difference was evident between them wherein strategy 3 ($t=6.689$), strategy 5 ($t=2.968$) and strategy 6 ($t=4.615$). The magnitude of the differences is large since eta squared of the strategy 3=0.52, strategy 5=0.18 and strategy 6=0.34. That is, the mean differences of the strategy 3 = 2.160, 95% CI=1.508 to 2.812, the strategy 5 = 1.160, 95% CI= 0.369 to 1.951, and the strategy 6 =1.800, 95% CI=1.012 to 2.588 are significant. Unlike other strategies the strategy number 4 shows no statistical significant differences because p-value is greater than 0.05; ($t.(df)= 48, p< 0.447$).

Table 9. *The results of the independent- samples of t-test of compensation strategies used by more able students (N= 25) and less able students (N= 25)*

Strategies	Sig	df	t	Sig (two-tailed)	Mean difference	95% confidence interval		Eta Squared
						Lower	Upper	
Stra 7.	0.679	48	7.540	0.000	2.240	1.643	2.837	0.54
Stra 8.	0.012	41.744	5.094	0.000	1.720	1.038	2.402	0.38
Stra 9.	0.010	42.817	4.657	0.000	1.920	1.088	2.752	0.33
Stra 10.	0.032	42.817	5.367	0.000	1.920	1.198	2.752	0.40

Table 9 presents the results of the comparisons of proficient and less proficient learners in the use of compensation strategies. It shows that the two groups did differ in the use of compensation strategies since the majority of strategies' p-value are less ($p< 0.05$). The statistical findings illustrate that the strategy 8 ($t.(df)= 48, p< 0.012$), the strategy 9 ($t.(df)= 42.817, p< 0.010$), and the strategy 10 ($t.(df)= 42.817, p< 0,032$). Yet, the significant difference between the two groups was also approved where the strategy 8 ($t=5,094$), the strategy 9 ($t=0,010$), and the strategy 10 ($t=0,032$). The magnitude's differences of the strategies are considered large because eta squared of the strategy 8 = 0.38, the strategy 9= 0.33 and the strategy 10= 0.40. It means that, the strategy 8 with mean difference= 1.720, 95% CI=1.038 to 2.402, the strategy 9 with mean difference= 1.920, 95% CI=1.088 to 2.752, and the strategy 10

with mean difference=1.920, 95% CI=1.198 to 2.752 are significant. However, the sole strategy that was used with no significant difference is the strategy number 7 ($t(df)= 42.817, p< 0,032$).

Table 10. *The results of the independent- samples of t-test of metacognitive strategies used by more able students (N= 25) and less able students (N= 25)*

Strategies	Sig	df	t	Sig. (two-tailed)	Mean difference	95% confidence interval		Eta squared
						Lower	Upper	
Stra 11.	0.037	44.329	6.957	0.000	2.320	1.648	2.992	0.52
Stra 12.	0.003	41.507	4.784	0.000	1.880	1.087	2.334	0.35
Stra 13.	0.000	38.058	4.131	0.000	1.600	0.816	2.384	0.30
Stra 14.	0.708	48	4.240	0.000	1.480	0.778	2.182	0.27
Stra 15.	0.040	43.137	5.056	0.000	1.680	1.010	2.350	0.37
Stra 16.	0.450	45.170	7.092	0.000	2.400	1.718	3.082	0.52

The independent t-test was computed to calculate if there are significant differences between more able and less able students in the use of metacognitive strategies. Results revealed again that both groups utilize the metacognitive strategies differently (except the strategies number 14 and 16) as p-value less than 0.05. Strategy 11. ($t(df)= 44.329, p< 0.037$), strategy 12. ($t(df)= 41.507, p<0.003$), strategy 13. ($t(df)= 38.058, p< 0.000$) and strategy 15. ($t(df)= 43.137, p< 0.040$). The significant difference between the two groups was also proved where the strategy 11. ($t=6.957$), strategy 12. ($t=4.784$), strategy 13. ($t=4.131$) and strategy 15. ($t=5.056$). The magnitude's differences of the strategies are larger since the eta squared of the strategy 11 =0.52, the strategy 12=0.35, the strategy 13= 0.30 and the strategy 15=0.37. Put it differently, the strategy 11 with mean difference= 2.320, 95% CI=1.648 to 2.992, the strategy 12 with mean difference= 1.880, 95% CI=1.087 to 2.334, the strategy 13 with mean difference=1.600, 95% CI=0.816 to 2.384 and the strategy 15 with mean difference=1.680, 95% CI=1.010 to 2.350 are significant.

Table 11. *The results of the independent- samples of t-test of affective strategies used by more able students (N= 25) and less able students (N= 25)*

Strategies	Sig	df	t	Sig. (two-tailed)	Mean difference	95% confidence interval		Eta squared
						Lower	Upper	
Stra 17.	0.000	34.458	- 6.959	0.000	-2.440	- 3.145	-1.735	0.33
Stra 18.	0.000	35.367	- 8.174	0.000	-2.760	- 0.445	-2.075	0.21

The descriptive statistics reported in table 11 illustrate that both more able and less able learners do not use similar affective strategies while responding written exams because at alpha 0.05 level results are significant. They show that, the strategy 17 (t.(df)= 34.458, p< 0.000) and strategy 18 (t.(df)= 35.367, p<0.000). Also, the significant of difference between the two groups is also proved where the strategy 17 (t=- 6.959), and strategy 18 (t= - 8.174). The magnitude of difference of the strategies is regarded large since the eta squared of the strategy 17 =0.33, the strategy 18=0.21. That is to say, the strategy 17 with mean difference=-2.440, 95% CI=- 3.145 to-1.735, and the strategy 18 with mean difference=-2.760, 95% CI=- 0.445 to -2.075 are significant.

Table 12. *The results of the independent- samples of t-test of social strategies used by more able students (N= 25) and less able students (N= 25)*

Strategies	Sig	df	t	Sig. (two-tailed)	Mean difference	95% confidence interval		Eta squared
						Lower	Upper	
Stra 19.	0.100	48	3.670	0.001	0.320	0.579	2.043	0.21
Stra 20.	0.565	48	2.807	0.007	1.200	0.340	2.060	0.14
Stra 21.	0.010	42.148	4.608	0.000	1.640	0.922	2.357	0.33
Stra 22.	0.002	38.656	2.633	0.012	0.880	0.204	1.556	0.15

The table 12 that featured the statistical analysis of social strategies that are used by more able students and less able students. Findings of the first cluster in social strategies category denotes to no significant different since alpha of the two strategies (19 and 20) are greater than 0.05 strategy. That is, the strategy 19 (t.(df)= 48, p> 0.100) and strategy 20 (t.(df)= 48, p> 0.565). However, the second cluster of the same category (21 and 22) are used disparately as P-value less than 0.05. In other words, strategy 21(t.(df)= 42.148, p<0.010) and (t.(df)= 38.656, p< 0.002). Besides, the significant difference of the second cluster is proved

between the two groups wherein strategy 21 ($t= 4.608$) and strategy 22 ($t=2.633$). The magnitude of the differences is large since eta squared of strategy 21=0.33 and strategy 22=0.15. Put it vividly, the means (mean difference of the strategy 21= 1.640. 95% CI=0.922 to 2.357 and mean difference of the strategy 22=0.880. 95% CI= 0.204 to 1.556) are significant.

Table 13. *Students' exam-taking strategies used in written exams.*

strategies	More able learners	Less able learners
Strategy 1-	When I feel the task is a bit harder to fulfill, I try to break down the essay answer into small ideas then I choose the easiest one to be written down. For instance, I start with an introduction and conclusion then move to write body paragraphs.	On the day of the exam, I do try to memorize the main points of the whole lesson at once, because the more I am under pressure the more my memorization abilities increase.
Strategy 2-	I usually tend to write the entire answer on the rough paper and only devote fifteen minutes in order to re-write it on the exam paper. By doing so, my exam paper will remain clean and easy to read.	I most of the time try to close my eyes in order to not only feel comfortable but also to invoke my imagination.
Strategy 3-	I think that my thoughts precede the process of writing. So whenever I write, I try to write the new ideas directly about the following paragraph asides first then return back to complete the answer that I have started with. Indeed, following this way would completely make me invulnerable to forget essential or detailed information.	After reading the essay question, I write the linking words aside and use them whenever I need them. This strategy makes me able to use the linking words appropriately.
Strategy 4-	I do prefer to sit in first tables, because cheaters distract me and disturbed me.	I do usually write the expected model that I have prepared

Strategy 5-	I do usually write down only the central idea because other ideas will be automatically controlled.	before, this make me finish the task quickly and effectively.
Strategy 6-	Whenever I write the essay answer, I intentionally repeat the key words throughout my essay several times. In fact, this strategy increases my chances to get a good mark.	
Strategy 7-	When I finish writing the exam essay, I try to evaluate it as if I am not the one who wrote it. This strategy makes me able to detect and correct existing mistakes.	
Strategy 8-	Whenever I feel confused concerning how a word or a sentence structure should be written correctly, I do leave space to refill it later.	
Strategy 9-	I always try to be subjective in my written work by including personal ideas, personal inferences, and personal arguments. This strategy shows to the teacher my level of understanding as well my abilities to think critically.	

The answers yielded from the open-ended question indicate that able learners do use a fair range of exam-taking strategies in comparison to less able learners. As proficient learners suggest, they use those types of strategies that belong to time- management category, ideas organization category, task-analysis category, meta-cognitive and social strategies category. They considered them as helpful tools to cope with the process of writing during exams.

Whereas, less proficient students didn't report new strategies they, somehow, use the same strategies alluded earlier by them in the analysis namely, memory strategies and affective strategies. According to them, they are the optimum strategies that should be used when trying to cope with exam challenges.

7.1.2. Interpretation of Exam-taking strategies questionnaire

All six exam-taking strategies categories in the questionnaire, namely, memory strategies, cognitive strategies, metacognitive strategies, compensation strategies, affective strategies and social strategies, have been examined by t-test statistical mean, frequency mean, and standard deviation mean. The findings of the t-test survey, surprisingly, reject the null hypothesis that says that there are no significant differences in using exam-taking strategies between more able and less able students of master one in content modules written exams.

To start with, the strategies of memory category, such as writing down sentences, summaries, and models immediately after receiving the exam question, is used by both groups (more able and less able) differently since results score less than P-value 0.05. Additionally, results turn out that low achievers use memory strategies more often than high achievers do. These statistical outcomes, however, probably could be accounted for by learners' responses on the open ended question. It seems that the tendency of less able learners to concentrate only on using memory strategies without orchestrating them with other strategies, e.g. metacognitive strategies, refers to the fact that they hope to finish the task quickly with less effort; unlike more able learners who prefer to retrieve just basic stored knowledge to be treated according to the test requirement.

Second, the strategies of cognitive category of, like underlying key words, re-formulating ideas in well-formed topic sentences, and organizing ideas using clear connection words, are also performed by the two distinct groups namely, more able and less able disparately, because

strategies results were found to be less than alpha 0.05. Besides, skillful learners reported a high frequent use of cognitive strategies in comparison to less skillful learners when composing. Then, it's possible to say that the learners' eagerness to hit the core of the question is the main reason that drive them to use cognitive strategies frequently. whereas, less able learners who state that they don't like to waste time to reorganized their ideas the way that suit the question demands explain well why start writing their responses at the minute they read the exam question.

Third, utilizing clear alternative terms, simple tenses and ideas' tactics basically go under the category of compensation strategies. The latter strategies that have been used divergently by the more able and less able learners indicate significant results since the means of the strategies are not greater than 0.05. Vividly, more able learners were reported as the most frequent users to the compensation strategies in written essay exams. Potentially, and unlike less able learners, more able learners internalize how the language system works, they may be aware that well-structured, meaningful written productions have to be far from ambiguity and complexity. Whereas, prevailing thinking by less able learners is that any sophisticated and appealing work is inherently consequent from complexity.

Fourth, Metacognitive strategies, such as planning for the task, making amendments, revising and evaluating, are reported by both two groups differently because results were significant at the P-value 0.05. Likewise, they illustrate that skillful learners give high attention to metacognitive strategies, therefore, they reported them with a high frequent use compared to less able learners. These frequent use of metacognitive strategies by more able learners might be due to the intensive practice of writing at home or to their high sense of responsibility towards learning. On the other hand, less able learners seem to have less understanding concerning how to use them; therefore, they have most time been not included in their writing process.

Fifth, the category of affective strategies concerns much more with how to control one's emotions. Thus, being at the exam setting before distribution of the exam questions, and making a self-talk are main affective strategies that are used by more able and less able learners differently as the findings obtained are significant at the P-value; i.e. mean score less than alpha 0.05. Moreover, results that have been recorded show that less achievers outperformed high achievers in the high frequent use to those strategies. Yet, possible explanations for this outcome might be due to the fact that less able learners are more prone to be influenced by external factors like chaos or by internal factors like anxiety.

Sixth, statistical differences in using social strategies (e.g. sitting far away from any source of distractions, sitting next to familiar classmates, arranging school items on the table, and seeking teacher's assistance or clarification) were found between more able learners group and less able learners group. In other words, the results were significant because the majority of affective strategies' means score less than P-value 0.05. Furthermore, these strategies are reported to be used more frequently by skillful learners in comparison to less skilled learners. Nevertheless, it can be said that the main cause of the high frequency to the affective strategies could be due to the fact that more able learners prefer to create conducive conditions that promote them to be fully concentrated on how to resolve the task successfully.

Last but not least, the findings of the learners' responses on the open-ended question, surprisingly demonstrate that learners do apply new strategies. On the one hand, more able learners have listed strategies that go under categories of time-management, task analysis, and organization category. On the other hand, less able learners did include the same memory and affective strategies. However, it should be noticed here that the overuse of memory strategies and affective strategies may be due either the learners' unfamiliarity to the existence of other variants, or to the high influence of the cultural background determinism. That is to say, if

learners used to utilize only rote learning strategies or memorization strategies, as it is prevalent in Egyptian culture, they will not be expected to use further strategies.

Summing up, findings above have shown successfully that the strategies are applied disparately by more and less able learners. However, it should be mentioned that those strategies used by more able learners are not hereditary or genetic cognitive; as far as they could be taught and learned. On the other hand, teachers are required to draw attention to teach them to those less able learners and equip them with strategies that are regarded effective as those ones used by more able learners before exam occasions.

7.1.3. The Analysis of the Semi-interview

Q1) How do you consider the process of writing in exams?

This question was posed in order to know the students' attitudes towards writing in exams. One student who belong to the category of more able students declared "well, writing is an easy task for me, I always practice writing and I try to be well prepared before my exams". Another student stated "I find it an easy process and I am constantly working hard to improve my writing". The remaining student shires the same opinion and he mentioned that he does not find difficulties with writing. Correspondingly, the group of less able student stated they find writing a challenging task and they find difficulties in stating their ideas clearly. One student said "it is a challenging task and mostly I find difficulties in stating my ideas clearly". Another one said "well, writing is a difficult task and I struggle to write coherent and correct sentences in the exam". The remaining student have the same view and he faces also a lot of difficulties while writing during the exam.

Q2) Do you try to plan your writing by writing an outline before writing your essay before answering the exam question?

The purpose of this question is to determine whether students use the metacognitive strategy of planning and to identify the category of students who employ this metacognitive strategy. According to their replies, more able students used the metacognitive strategy of planning by making an outline for the essay before writing. The category of more able students justified using this strategy by saying that the use of this strategy is helpful for them and it is a key to successful essay. One student said “I wrote an outline on the draft because it helps me to make my essay well organized”. Another student said “yes, I wrote an outline in which I planned the essay structure before I started writing. The outline included a summary of the main points and ideas that I wanted to include in my essay”.

On the other hand, less able students did not use the metacognitive strategy of planning by writing an outline. They stated that they just write directly what they have memorized without wasting time by writing an outline. One student said “No, I did not write an outline for my essay on the draft paper. I just wrote what I have memorized on my answer paper in order to not waste a lot of time”. The other students have similar answers and they declared that they just write quickly what they have memorized.

Q3) Do you ask for further clarifications from your teacher when you face difficulties from your teacher when you face difficulties while answering the exam question?

This question was posed to know whether students used the social strategy of asking for further clarifications from the teacher whenever they faced difficulties while completing the exam question. Generally, the student’s answers were varied. More able students used the social strategy of asking for further clarifications from the teacher while answering the exam question. One student answered this question saying “yes, I asked for further clarifications from my teacher in order to have a better understanding of requirement of the exam question. Another declared “I managed to understand the exam question by myself, but I asked the teacher for further clarifications about the number of body paragraphs that I should write”. The remaining

student reported the same answer. As far as for the less able students, they did not make use of the social strategy of asking for further clarifications. One student said “No, I managed to understand the exam question by myself without asking the teacher”. Another student stated “I did not ask for further clarifications because I avoid talking to teachers whom I do not know”.

Q4) Do you try to get a deep breath and relax when you face difficulties in completing the exam answer?

The aim of this question is to find out whether students rely on the affective strategy of trying to relax by taking a deep breath while facing difficulties with the exam question. More able students reported that they did not use this strategy because they did not experience stress during the exam and they study hard before the exam. One student declared “no, I did not apply this relaxation strategy because I did not feel anxious during the exam and I prepared myself very well to take my exam”. Another student said “I do not feel with any stress during exams because I study a lot and I faced many exams throughout my life”. The remaining student said that he did not employ this strategy since he approached the exam with confidence.

Concerning the category of less able students, they reported that they use this strategy in order to control their stress and negative emotions. One student who belongs to the category of less able students stated that “Yes, I used this relaxation strategy by taking a deep breath, closing my eyes, and trying to gather my ideas and information that I have memorized”.

Q5) Do you rely on your background knowledge and general facts to complete your exam when you don't have enough information?

This question seeks to explore whether more able and less able students use the compensation strategy of relying on the background knowledge and general facts to complete the essay when students do not find enough information. More able students responded that they used this strategy during the exam. One student stated “I relied on my background

knowledge and information that I know about the topic”. Another one declared that “I tried to use all the information that I know about the topic and to write them in my own words because I hate to learn everything by hearth”. The remaining student also relied on his background knowledge. He argued that this strategy is helpful, especially when he forgets what he has memorized from the handout.

Correspondingly, less able students reported that they did not make use of the compensation strategy of relying on the background knowledge. They justified that by saying that that rely only on memorization from the handout. one of them stated that “No, I used only the information that I have memorized from the handouts”

Q6) Do you try to write a summary, sentences, maps that you have memorized on your draft paper before answering your exam question in order to use them later.

According to their replies. More able students did not use the memory strategy of writing summary, sentences that they have memorized on the draft paper in order to use it later. one student said “no, I did not write any summary or sentences on the draft paper”

Correspondingly, less able students reported that they use this memory strategy because it helps them during the exam to not forget the basic information. “yes, I wrote a summary and sentences that I have memorized directly on the draft paper to use them later in my essay”

Q7) Do you try to write a strong and well-formed thesis statement for your essay exam?

The aim of this question is to find out whether more and less able students use the cognitive strategy of trying to write a well formed and strong thesis statement. According to their replies the category of more able students used this type of cognitive strategy because they give special attention to the thesis statement which is regarded one of the most special parts in the essay. One student said “yes, the thesis statement is a very important element in the essay, so, I tried to write a well formed and clear thesis statement. Another one declared “of course I did, I tried

to produce a well and strong thesis statement. The remaining student did the same thing and spent a lot of time on writing a coherent thesis statement. Correspondingly, less able students did not make use of the cognitive strategy of trying to make a good and well-formed thesis statement. These category of students rely on memorization only and they just rewrite what they have memorized.

Q8) Do you think that training exam-taking strategies would upgrade your writing performance?

This question seeks to know student's attitudes towards training exam -taking strategies. According to their responses both the categories of more able and less able students agree that training exam-taking strategies can be a helpful to improve students' performance in exams. One student stated "no doubt, since those strategies aims to regulate the learner's way of writing". The remaining students share the same opinion.

7.1.5. Interpretation of the Interview

The analysis of the interview which was conducted with Master one EFL students at the department of English , Mohhamed Saddik Ben Yahia , discloses the following notes:

- ✓ More able students and less able students differ in the types of exam – taking strategies that they employ in their written exam.
- ✓ According to more able students, writing is regarded as an easy task and they do not face difficulties while completing/ answering their written exams.
- ✓ According to less able students, writing is considered as a hard and difficult task and they struggle to state their ideas and information clearly during exams.
- ✓ More able students employ cognitive, metacognitive, social, and compensation strategies while taking written exam.

- ✓ Less able students employ memory and affective strategies while completing their written exam.
- ✓ All students agree that training exam-taking strategies can be helpful to upgrade their writing performance.

7.1.5. Overall Discussion

The current research work which have catered for investigating the use of exam-taking strategies by less able and more able learners reach out that the findings obtained from the questionnaire are strikingly congruent with the findings of the semi-structured interview; as well as it has been found that the study results are in consistent with many other promising findings that investigated differences according to learners proficiency.

To begin with, the first harmony was in the frequent inclusion of numerous exam-taking strategies in written exams by successful learners, notably those that come under the category of cognitive, metacognitive, compensation, and social strategies. They confirmed that they prefer to engage in the process and take the maximum actions to solve the task the way they regarded things are right instead of spending much time on recalling information from their memories. Moreover, they admitted that following memory strategies make them somewhat less interested in what they write, therefore they refuse to depend on them.

The second harmony is registered in the strong satisfaction expressed by low achievers towards the use of memory, and affective strategies to accomplish their exams. They agreed that they are effective as they get used to taking their exams following those strategies. According to them they are helpful to the extent that they do not neither feel the need to ask clarifying questions from impatient teachers nor feel anxious. Furthermore, they reported that even if they encounter challenges like forgetting important information, they will not be reluctant to use affective strategies like closing eyes to imagine the learning situation.

On the other hand, the findings of the study conducted by Green and Oxford (1995) were in accordance with the formally claims of the current study. They found that successful learners apply a diversity with great frequency language learning strategies more than less successful learners do.

To sum up, the comparative study that has been carried out with master one learners confirms that more able learners utilize more exam-taking strategies. Hence, it would be beneficial if teachers shift their attention teaching the strategies that have been identified by able learners to those less able learners and provide them with ample opportunities to use them in combination while training session.

Conclusion

This chapter was devoted to the practical part, it is concerned with discussing the research methodology. It provided data collection tools, detailed analysis of the questionnaire and interview and it presented the interpretation and discussion as well. The results obtained in this have led to the conclusion that more able students are accustomed to using cognitive, metacognitive, social and compensation strategies. Correspondingly, less able students tend to rely on memory and affective strategies in their written exam.

General conclusion

1. Putting it Together
2. Pedagogical Recommendations
3. Limitation of the Study

References

Appendices

ملخص

Résumé

General Conclusion

1. Putting it together

Testing is an integral and essential part in the process of teaching and learning. Therefore, it is of paramount importance investigate the exam – taking strategies that EFL learners employ in completing their(written) exams. This research work is induced by the attention to explore /identify the exam – taking strategies that Master one EFL learners employed while taking their TEFL written exam. This study was comparative in nature in which a comparison was made between two categories of students namely, more able students and the other category is less able students. Through the field work the researchers sought to answer the following questions:

Q1) what are the exam –taking strategies used by more able students in TEFL written exam?

Q2) what are the exam – taking strategies used by less able students in TEFL written exam?

The study is composed of two main chapters. The first chapter was devoted for the theoretical part and contains two sections. The first section provides a brief definition of exam / test and the well-known methods of grading content. Subsequently, it moves to define the concept of exam – taking strategies. In addition; it takes up two models of learning strategies and exposes some potential factors that may affect learner’s choice of exam – taking strategies. Finally, it concludes with pedagogical instructions on the importance of teaching – exam taking strategies. On the other hand, the second section, is devoted to present academic writing. First, it deals with a general overview of academic writing by presenting its definition, types, approaches, and importance of teaching writing to EFL learners. furthermore, it discusses the components of effective writing and the different stages of the process of writing. It concludes with providing some definitions for academic essay.

As far as the second chapter is concerned, it deals with the field of investigation. The data was gathered through the means of a questionnaire and an interview. The questionnaire was

administered to Master one students at the department of English of Mohammed Seddik Ben Yahia University, Jijel to gather basic information about exam taking strategies. In addition to that an interview was conducted with more able students and less able students to get further insights about the topic. This was followed by an analysis and interpretation of the obtained results.

The results obtained from the questionnaire and the interview revealed that the two categories of students use those exam – taking strategies differently while processing the written exam. First, the category of more able students are more accustomed to using exam – taking strategies. Second, the category of more able students and less able students rely on cognitive, metacognitive, social, and compensation strategies. On the other hand, the category of less able students rely on memory and affective strategies. All in all, the results of this study confirm the hypotheses which suggests that more able students employ exam taking strategies more frequently and they differ in the type of exam taking strategies they employ.

2. Pedagogical Recommendations

Based on the aforementioned results, this study suggests the following recommendations:

Language EFL teachers should try to use appropriate techniques and methods to raise student's awareness towards the use of exam – taking strategies. Teachers should teach the students about the different exam – taking strategies and the importance of each strategy .Teachers and curriculum developers should include exam taking strategy training in order to help those who do not use exam- taking strategies .Teachers have to motivate the students to practice writing and to use cognitive and metacognitive strategies while taking their written exams .Teachers can use think aloud protocols to discover the exam – taking strategies that more able students apply during their written exams and to train less able students to use effective exam –taking strategies.

3. Limitations of the study

Although the study has successfully demonstrated that exam-taking strategies are used differently by learners of master one, the research topic and its findings were heavily circumscribed and subjected to certain limitations. First, resources that provide deep insights on the use of exam taking strategies are scarce, especially those that concern written tasks. On the other hand, the health protocols that had been imposed due to the repercussions of Covid-19 impeded us as researchers to meet, discuss and carry out the research topic. Furthermore, researchers sought for an experimental research, but owing to the fact that university follows the distant learning system then it was more wisely establish a descriptive study instead. Finally, the online questionnaire that had been devoted for only the master one was answered by other students of different levels. Hence, it was investable to redistribute it in the hard version.

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Students' questionnaire

Dear student,

We would be very grateful if you could respond to the following questionnaire which is a part of our research work. It aims at investigating different Exam-Taking strategies used by students of master one in content module written exams. Information you provide will be strictly confidential and anonymous; it will be used only for statistical purposes. Therefore, your responses are highly important for the completion of this study. Please, tick (X) to react the appropriate answer.

I. Background Information

Could you state your overall average, please?

Above average

below average

	Exam-taking strategies	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
Part "A"	1. I try to write sentences, charts, maps, and small summaries quickly in order not to forget what I have memorized.					
	2. When the essay question is compatible with the model that I have expected, I try to write it down quickly.					
Part "B"	3. I try to read the essay question carefully, and underline key words.					
	4. I try to write a strong and a well formed thesis statement.					
	5. I try to write a well topic sentence for each paragraph when processing the exam.					
	6. I organize the essay ideas using appropriate linking words.					
Part "C"	7. I try to use simple words to avoid spelling mistakes.					
	8. When I feel unable to use complex tense, I use simple tenses instead.					
	9. When I have no answer, I rely on general facts and background knowledge.					
	10. When I am about to write the conclusion, I do restate briefly the main points of the content.					
Part "D"	11. After reading the essay question, I try to write down an outline to my essay answer.					
	12. I try to allot exam time appropriately for all essay parts.					

	13. While I am writing the essay, I stop and go back to check what I have written in order to avoid mistakes.					
	14. Whenever I write the essay, I check whether I used the punctuation appropriately.					
	15. I re-read the question of the essay and what I have written to confirm that I have answered on the tests' requirements.					
	16. Before submitting the answer, I do revise the entire essay's content; as well as, the format.					
Part "E"	17. I try to arrive to the exam room before the exam starts.					
	18. When I find essay question difficult to be dealt with, I do try to calm down and encourage myself.					
Part "F"	19. I try to sit far away from source of distractions (e.g. window and door).					
	20. I try to sit next to familiar classmates.					
	21. I arrange school items on the table so that never waste time looking for them later.					
	22. I ask for the teacher's clarification, When I do not understand the exam question.					

23. If you know further (other) strategies, please mention them.

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Thank you for your cooperation.

I. Students

		Frequency	Percent	Valid	Cumulative Percent
Valid	More able S	25	50.0	50.0	50.0
	Less able S	25	5.0	50.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	

1.I try to write sentences, charts, maps, and small summaries quickly in order not to forget what I have memorized.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	13	26.0	26.0	26.0
	Rarely	5	10.0	10.0	36.0
	Sometimes	2	4.0	4.0	40.0
	Often	1	2.0	2.0	42.0
	Always	4	8.0	8.0	50.0
	Total	25	50.0	50.0	

2. When the essay question is compatible with the model that I have expected, I try to write it down quickly.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	11	22.0	22.0	22.0
	Rarely	4	8.0	8.0	30.0
	Sometimes	4	8.0	8.0	38.0
	Often	0	0.0	0.0	38.0
	Always	6	12.0	12.0	50.0
	Total	25	50.0	50.0	

3. I try to read the essay question carefully, and underline key words.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Rarely	1	2.0	2.0	2.0
	Sometimes	3	6.0	6.0	8.0
	Often	6	12.0	12.0	20.0
	Always	15	30.0	30.0	50.0
	Total	25	50.0	50.0	

4. I try to write a strong and a well formed thesis statement.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Rarely	2	4.0	4.0	4.0
	Sometimes	4	8.0	8.0	12.0
	Often	6	12.0	12.0	24.0
	Always	13	26.0	26.0	50.0
	Total	25	50.0	50.0	

5. I try to write a well topic sentence for each paragraph when processing the exam.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Rarely	3	6.0	6.0	6.0
	Sometimes	2	4.0	4.0	10.0
	Often	10	20.0	20.0	30.0
	Always	10	20.0	20.0	50.0
	Total	25	50.0	50.0	

6. I organize the essay ideas using appropriate linking words.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	1	2.0	2.0	2.0
	Rarely	1	2.0	2.0	4.0
	Sometimes	2	4.0	4.0	8.0
	Often	7	14.0	14.0	22.0
	Always	14	28.0	28.0	50.0
	Total	25	50.0	50.0	

7. I try to use simple words to avoid spelling mistakes.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	1	2.0	2.0	2.0
	Rarely	1	2.0	2.0	4.0
	Sometimes	5	10.0	10.0	14.0
	Often	7	14.0	14.0	24.0
	Always	11	22.0	22.0	50.0
	Total	25	50.0	50.0	

8. When I feel unable to use complex tense, I use simple tenses instead.

Cumulative		Frequency	Percent	Valid	Percent
Valid	Never	0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Rarely	2	4.0	4.0	4.0
	Sometimes	2	4.0	4.0	8.0
	Often	5	10.0	10.0	18.0
	Always	15	30.0	30.0	50.0
	Total	25	50.0	50.0	

9. When I have no answer, I rely on general facts and background knowledge.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	1	2.0	2.0	2.0
	Rarely	2	4.0	4.0	6.0
	Sometimes	2	4.0	4.0	10.0
	Often	5	10.0	10.0	20.0
	Always	15	30.0	30.0	50.0
	Total	25	50.0	50.0	

10. When I am about to write the conclusion, I do restate briefly the main points of the content.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	1	2.0	2.0	2.0
	Rarely	1	2.0	2.0	4.0
	Sometimes	1	2.0	2.0	6.0
	Often	9	18.0	18.0	24.0
	Always	13	26.0	26.0	50.0
	Total	25	50.0	50.0	

11. After reading the essay question, I try to write down an outline to my essay answer.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Rarely	2	4.0	4.0	4.0
	Sometimes	3	6.0	6.0	10.0
	Often	4	8.0	8.0	18.0

Always	16	32.0	32.0	50.0
Total	25	50.0	50.0	

12. I try to allot exam time appropriately for all essay parts.

				Cumulative	
		Frequency	Percent	Valid	Percent
Valid	Never	1	2.0	2.0	2.0
	Rarely	1	2.0	2.0	4.0
	Sometimes	5	10.0	10.0	14.0
	Often	8	16.0	16.0	30.0
	Always	10	20.0	20.0	50.0
Total	25	50.0	50.0		

13. While I am writing the essay, I stop and go back to check what I have written in order to avoid mistakes.

				Cumulative	
		Frequency	Percent	Valid	Percent
Valid	Never	0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Rarely	2	4.0	4.0	4.0
	Sometimes	3	6.0	6.0	10.0
	Often	8	16.0	16.0	26.0
	Always	12	0.24	24.0	50.0
Total	25	50.0	50.0	50.0	

14. Whenever I write the essay, I check whether I used the punctuation appropriately.

Cumulative					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid	Percent
Valid	Never	1	2.0	2.0	2.0
	Rarely	3	6.0	6.0	8.0
	Sometimes	5	10.0	10.0	18.0
	Often	6	12.0	12.0	30.0
	Always	10	20.0	20.0	50.0
Total	25	50.0	50.0	50.0	

15. I re-read the question of the essay and what I have written to confirm that I have answered on the tests' requirements.

				Cumulative	
		Frequency	Percent	Valid	Percent

Valid	Never	0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Rarely	2	4.0	4.0	4.0
	Sometimes	3	6.0	6.0	10.0
	Often	8	16.0	16.0	26.0
	Always	12	24.0	24.0	50.0
	Total	25	50.0	50.0	

16. Before submitting the answer, I do revise the entire essay's content; as well as, the format.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	1	2.0	2.0	2.0
	Rarely	1	2.0	2.0	4.0
	Sometimes	1	2.0	2.0	6.0
	Often	7	14.0	14.0	20.0
	Always	15	30.0	30.0	50.0
	Total	25	50.0	50.0	

17. I try to arrive to the exam room before the exam starts.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	13	26.0	26.0	26.0
	Rarely	4	8.0	8.0	34.0
	Sometimes	3	6.0	6.0	40.0
	Often	0	0.0	0.0	40.0
	Always	5	10.0	10.0	50.0
	Total	25	50.0	50.0	

18. When I find essay question difficult to be dealt with, I do try to calm down and encourage myself.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	19	38.0	38.0	38.0
	Rarely	4	8.0	8.0	46.0
	Sometimes	1	2.0	2.0	48.0
	Often	1	2.0	2.0	50.0
	Always	0	0.0	0.0	50.0
	Total	25	50.0	50.0	

19. I try to sit far away from source of distractions (e.g. window and door).

		Frequency	Percent	Valid	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Rarely	4	8.0	8.0	8.0
	Sometimes	5	10.0	10.0	18.0
	Often	7	14.0	14.0	32.0
	Always	9	18.0	18.0	50.0
	Total	25	50.0	50.0	

20. I try to sit next to familiar classmates.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	3	6.0	6.0	6.0
	Rarely	4	8.0	8.0	14.0
	Sometimes	3	6.0	6.0	20.0
	Often	7	14.0	14.0	34.0
	Always	8	16.0	16.0	50.0
	Total	25	50.0	50.0	

21. I arrange school items on the table so that never waste time looking for them later.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Rarely	2	4.0	4.0	4.0
	Sometimes	5	10.0	10.0	14.0
	Often	7	14.0	14.0	28.0
	Always	11	22.0	22.0	50.0
	Total	25	50.0	50.0	

22. I ask for the teacher's clarification, When I do not understand the exam question.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Rarely	5	10.0	10.0	10.0
	Sometimes	9	18.0	18.0	28.0
	Often	10	20.0	20.0	48.0
	Always	1	2.0	2.0	50.0

Total 25 50.0 50.0

1. I try to write sentences, charts, maps, and small summaries quickly in order not to forget what I have memorized.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Rarely	1	2.0	2.0	2.0
	Sometimes	1	2.0	2.0	4.0
	Often	3	6.0	6.0	10.0
	Always	20	40.0	40.0	50.0
Total		25	50.0	50.0	

2. When the essay question is compatible with the model that I have expected, I try to write it down quickly.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Rarely	2	4.0	4.0	4.0
	Sometimes	2	4.0	4.0	8.0
	Often	7	14.0	14.0	22.0
	Always	14	28.0	28.0	50.0
Total		25	50.0	50.0	

3. I try to read the essay question carefully, and underline key words.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	10	20.0	20.0	20.0
	Rarely	6	12.0	12.0	32.0
	Sometimes	5	10.0	10.0	42.0
	Often	1	2.0	2.0	44.0
	Always	3	6.0	6.0	50.0
Total		25	50.0	50.0	

4. I try to write a strong and a well formed thesis statement.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	12	24.0	24.0	24.0
	Rarely	7	14.0	14.0	38.0

Sometimes	2	4.0	4.0	42.0
Often	2	4.0	4.0	46.0
Always	2	4.0	4.0	50.0
Total	25	50.0	50.0	

5. I try to write a well topic sentence for each paragraph when processing the exam.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	9	18.0	18.0	18.0
	Rarely	8	16.0	16.0	34.0
	Sometimes	2	4.0	4.0	38.0
	Often	4	8.0	8.0	46.0
	Always	2	4.0	4.0	50.0
	Total	25	50.0	50.0	

6. I organize the essay ideas using appropriate linking words.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	11	22.0	22.0	22.0
	Rarely	3	6.0	6.0	28.0
	Sometimes	5	10.0	10.0	38.0
	Often	0	0.0	0.0	38.0
	Always	6	12.0	12.0	50.0
	Total	25	50.0	50.0	

7. I try to use simple words to avoid spelling mistakes.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	12	24.0	24.0	24.0
	Rarely	8	16.0	16.0	40.0
	Sometimes	4	8.0	8.0	48.0
	Often	0	0.0	0.0	48.0
	Always	1	2.0	2.0	50.0
	Total	25	50.0	50.0	

8. When I feel unable to use complex tense, I use simple tenses instead.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	10	20.0	20.0	20.0

Rarely	5	10.0	10.0	30.0
Sometimes	5	10.0	10.0	40.0
Often	2	4.0	4.0	44.0
Always	3	6.0	6.0	50.0
Total	25	50.0	50.0	

9. When I have no answer, I rely on general facts and background knowledge.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	13	26.0	26.0	26.0
	Rarely	4	8.0	8.0	34.0
	Sometimes	1	2.0	2.0	36.0
	Often	1	2.0	2.0	38.0
	Always	6	12.0	12.0	50.0
	Total	25	50.0	50.0	

10. When I am about to write the conclusion, I do restate briefly the main points of the content.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	9	18.0	18.0	18.0
	Rarely	8	16.0	16.0	34.0
	Sometimes	2	4.0	4.0	38.0
	Often	2	4.0	4.0	42.0
	Always	4	8.0	8.0	50.0
	Total	25	50.0	50.0	

11. After reading the essay question, I try to write down an outline to my essay answer.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	14	28.0	28.0	28.0
	Rarely	1	2.0	2.0	30.0
	Sometimes	7	14.0	14.0	44.0
	Often	1	2.0	2.0	46.0
	Always	2	4.0	4.0	50.0
	Total	25	50.0	50.0	

12. I try to allot exam time appropriately for all essay parts.

Cumulative

		Frequency	Percent	Valid	Percent
Valid	Never	16	32.0	32.0	32.0
	Rarely	1	2.0	2.0	34.0
	Sometimes	1	2.0	2.0	36.0
	Often	3	6.0	6.0	42.0
	Always	4	8.0	8.0	50.0
	Total	25	50.0	50.0	

13. While I am writing the essay, I stop and go back to check what I have written in order to avoid mistakes.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	9	18.0	18.0	18.0
	Rarely	7	14.0	14.0	32.0
	Sometimes	1	2.0	2.0	34.0
	Often	1	2.0	2.0	36.0
	Always	7	14.0	14.0	50.0
	Total	25	50.0	50.0	

14. Whenever I write the essay, I check whether I used the punctuation appropriately.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	8	16.0	16.0	16.0
	Rarely	7	14.0	14.0	30.0
	Sometimes	4	8.0	8.0	38.0
	Often	5	10.0	10.0	48.0
	Always	1	2.0	2.0	50.0
	Total	25	50.0	50.0	

15. I re-read the question of the essay and what I have written to confirm that I have answered on the tests' requirements.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	7	14.0	14.0	14.0
	Rarely	7	14.0	14.0	28.0
	Sometimes	5	10.0	10.0	38.0
	Often	3	6.0	6.0	44.0
	Always	3	6.0	6.0	50.0
	Total	25	50.0	50.0	

16. Before submitting the answer, I do revise the entire essay's content; as well as, the format.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	15	30.0	30.0	30.0
	Rarely	2	4.0	4.0	34.0
	Sometimes	3	6.0	6.0	40.0
	Often	4	8.0	8.0	48.0
	Always	1	2.0	2.0	50.0
	Total	25	50.0	50.0	

17. I try to arrive to the exam room before the exam starts.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Rarely	1	2.0	2.0	2.0
	Sometimes	1	2.0	2.0	4.0
	Often	4	8.0	8.0	12.0
	Always	19	38.0	38.0	50.0
	Total	25	50.0	50.0	

18. When I find essay question difficult to be dealt with, I do try to calm down and encourage myself.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	3	6.0	6.0	6.0
	Rarely	2	4.0	4.0	10.0
	Sometimes	2	4.0	4.0	14.0
	Often	0	0.0	0.0	14.0
	Always	18	36.0	36.0	50.0
	Total	25	50.0	50.0	

19. I try to sit far away from source of distractions (e.g. window and door).

		Frequency	Percent	Valid	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	8	16.0	16.0	16.0
	Rarely	6	12.0	12.0	28.0
	Sometimes	4	8.0	8.0	36.0

Often	4	8.0	8.0	44.0
Always	3	6.0	6.0	50.0
Total	25	50.0	50.0	

20. I try to sit next to familiar classmates.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	11	22.0	22.0	22.0
	Rarely	7	14.0	14.0	36.0
	Sometimes	0	0.0	0.0	36.0
	Often	2	4.0	4.0	40.0
	Always	5	10.0	10.0	50.0
	Total	25	50.0	50.0	

21. I arrange school items on the table so that never waste time looking for them later.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	9	18.0	18.0	18.0
	Rarely	7	14.0	14.0	30.0
	Sometimes	1	2.0	2.0	32.0
	Often	5	10.0	10.0	42.0
	Always	3	6.0	6.0	50.0
	Total	25	50.0	50.0	

22. I ask for the teacher's clarification, When I do not understand the exam question.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Never	10	20.0	20.0	20.0
	Rarely	4	8.0	8.0	28.0
	Sometimes	5	10.0	10.0	38.0
	Often	3	6.0	6.0	44.0
	Always	3	6.0	6.0	50.0
	Total	25	50.0	50.0	

Group Statistics

	Students	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error mean
I try to write sentences, charts, maps, and small	More able S	25	1,12	1,501	,302

summaries quickly in order not to forget what I have memorized.	Less able S	25	3,68	,748	,150
When the essay question is compatible with the model that I have expected, I try to write it down quickly.	More able S	25	1,20	1,258	,252
	Less able S	25	3,32	0,945	,189
I try to read the essay question carefully, and underline key words.	More able S	25	3,40	0,866	,173
	Less able S	25	1,24	1,363	,273
I try to write a strong and a well formed thesis statement.	More able S	25	3,16	0,987	,197
	Less able S	25	1,00	1,291	,258
I try to write a well topic sentence for each paragraph when processing the exam.	More able S	25	3,08	0,997	,199
	Less able S	25	1,92	1,681	,336
I organize the essay ideas using appropriate linking words.	More able S	25	3,28	1,061	,212
	Less able S	25	1,48	1,636	,327
I try to use simple words to avoid spelling mistakes.	More able S	25	1,04	0,098	,220
	Less able S	25	,80	1,000	,200
When I feel unable to use complex tense, I use simple tenses instead.	More able S	25	3,04	0,935	,187
	Less able S	25	1,32	1,406	,281
When I have no answer, I rely on general facts and background knowledge.	More able S	25	3,24	1,165	,233
	Less able S	25	1,32	1,701	,340
When I am about to write the conclusion, I do restate briefly the main points of the content.	More able S	25	3,24	1,021	,204
	Less able S	25	1,36	1,469	,294
After reading the essay question, I try to write down an outline to my essay answer.	More able S	25	3,36	,995	,199
	Less able S	25	1,04	1,338	,268
I try to allot exam time appropriately for all essay parts.	More able S	25	3,00	1,080	,216
	Less able S	25	1,12	1,641	,328
While I am writing the essay, I stop and go back to check what I have written in order to avoid mistakes.	More able S	25	3,20	,957	,191
	Less able S	25	1,60	1,683	,337
Whenever I write the essay, I check whether I used the punctuation appropriately.	More able S	25	2,84	1,214	,243
	Less able S	25	1,36	1,254	,251
I re-read the question of the essay and what I have written to confirm that I	More able S	25	3,20	,957	,191

have answered on the tests' requirements.	Less able S	25	1,52	1,358	,272
Before submitting the answer, I do revise the entire essay's content; as well as, the format.	More able S	25	3,36	1,036	,207
	Less able S	25	,96	1,338	,268
I try to arrive to the exam room before the exam starts.	More able S	25	1,20	1,581	,316
	Less able S	25	3,64	1,757	,151
When I find essay question difficult to be dealt with, I do try to calm down and encourage myself.	More able S	25	0,36	0,757	,151
	Less able S	25	3,12	1,509	,302
I try to sit far away from source of distractions (e. g. window and door).	More able S	25	1,106	2,84	,221
	Less able S	25	1,418	1,52	,284
I try to sit next to familiar classmates.	More able S	25	1,418	2,52	,284
	Less able S	25	1,600	1,32	,340
I arrange school items on the table so that never waste time looking for them later.	More able S	25	,997	3,08	,199
	Less able S	25	1,474	1,44	,295
I ask for the teacher's clarification, When I do not understand the exam question.	More able S	25	,843	2,28	,169
	Less able S	25	1,443	1,40	,289

Table 7.

Strategies	Sig	df	t	Sig. (two-tailed)	Mean difference	95% confidence interval		Eta squared
						Lower	Upper	
Stra 1.	0.001	35.133	-7.600	0.000	-2.560	-3.244	-1.876	0.62
Stra 2.	0.021	44.543	-6.736	0.000	-2.120	-2.2754	-1.486	0.40

Table 8.

Strategies	Sig	df	t	Sig. (two-tailed)	Mean difference	95% confidence interval		Eta squared
						Lower	Upper	
Stra 3.	0.034	40.670	6.689	0.000	2.160	1.508	2.812	0.52
Stra 4.	0.447	48	6.647	0.000	2.160	1.508	2.812	0.47
Stra 5.	0.006	39.014	2.968	0.005	1.160	0.369	1.951	0.18
Stra 6.	0.004	41.163	4.615	0.000	1.800	1.012	2.588	0.34

Table 9.

Strategies	Sig	df	t	Sig. (two-tailed)	Mean difference	95% confidence interval		Eta squared
						Lower	Upper	
Stra 7.	0.679	48	7.540	0.000	2.240	1.643	2.837	0.54
Stra 8.	0.012	41.744	5.094	0.000	1.720	1.038	2.402	0.38
Stra 9.	0.010	42.817	4.657	0.000	1.920	1.088	2.752	0.33

Stra 10.	0.032	42.817	5.367	0.000	1.920	1.198	2.752	0.40
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Table10.

Strategies	Sig	df	t	Sig. (two-tailed)	Mean difference	95% confidence interval		Eta squared
						Lower	Upper	
Stra 11.	0.037	44.329	6.957	0.000	2.320	1.648	2.992	0.52
Stra 12.	0.003	41.507	4.784	0.000	1.880	1.087	2.334	0.35
Stra13.	0.000	38.058	48	0.000	1.600	0.816	2.384	0.30
Stra14.	0.708	48	4.240	0.000	1.480	0.778	2.182	0.27
Stra 15.	0.040	43.137	5.056	0.000	1.680	1.010	2.350	0.37
Stra 16.	0.45	45.170	7.092	0.000	2.400	1.718	3.082	0.52

Table 11.

Strategies	Sig	df	t	Sig. (two-tailed)	Mean difference	95% confidence interval		Eta squared
						Lower	Upper	
Stra 17.	0.000	34.458	- 6.959	0.000	-2.440	- 3.145	-1.735	0.33
Stra 18.	0.000	35.367	- 8.174	0.000	-2.760	-3.445	- 2.075	0.21

Table 12.

Strategies	Sig	df	t	Sig. (two-tailed)	Mean difference	95% confidence interval		Eta squared
						Lower	Upper	
Stra 19.	0.100	48	3.670	0.001	0.320	0.579	2.043	0.21
Stra 20.	0.565	48	2.807	0.007	1.200	0.340	2.060	0.14
Stra 21.	0.010	42.148	4.608	0.000	1.640	0.922	2.357	0.33
Stra 22.	0.002	38.656	2.633	0.012	0.880	0.204	1.556	0.15

ملخص

الغرض من هذه الدراسة هو تسليط الضوء على إستراتيجيات أداء الإختبار الأكثر استخداما تحديدا تلك المستخدمة في الإختبارات الكتابية لمقياس تافل من قبل المتعلمين غير متخرجين في قسم اللغة الانجليزية بجامعة محمد الصديق بن يحيى. بالاضافة الى ذلك، يحاول هذا العمل البحثي معرفة درجة التفاوت في الإستراتيجيات المتعلمين الأكثر و الأقل قدرة. لتحقيق الأهداف المرجو من الدراسة تم إجراء إستبيان سلم ليكرت خمس نقاط على 50 طالبا إلى جانب مقابلة شبه منظمة مع ست طلاب. تكشف نتائج البحث أن المتعلمين الأكثر قدرة يستخدمون بشكل كبير و تكرار أكثر كل من الإستراتيجيات المعرفية و ماوراء المعرفية و التعويضات و الاستراتيجيات الإجتماعية؛ في حين وجد أن المتعلمين الأقل قدرة يولون أهمية أكبر لإستخدام إستراتيجيات الذاكرة و العاطفة بشكل متكرر. و بالتالي، تنتهي هذه الدراسة البحثية إلى إستنتاجات حاسمة و لكن ليست بمطلقة، اذ يكشف انه بقدر ما تؤدي عدم وجود إستراتيجيات أداء الإختبار إلى إحداث قصور في الكتابة، يمكن معالجتها بفعالية من خلال التدريب المكثف على تلك الإستراتيجيات. لذلك، توصي الدراسة المصممين و المعلمين بوضع اطار برامج صارمة تسمح لمتعلمين بممارسة هذه الإستراتيجيات و ليس مجرد التعرف عليها

Résumé

L'objectif de cette étude consiste à mettre la lumière sur la stratégies d'examen les plus couramment utilisées par les apprenants non diplômés du département d'anglais de l'anglais de l'Université Mohammed Saddik Ben Yahia, en particulier celles utilisées dans les examens écrits du module de contenu TEFL. De plus, ce travail de recherche tente de déterminer si les stratégies des étudiants plus capables sont significativement différentes. Pour atteindre les objectifs de l'étude, un questionnaire a été administré à 50 étudiants ainsi qu'un entretien semi-structuré avec 6 étudiants. Les résultats de l'enquête révèlent que les apprenants les plus capables font un grand usage, avec plus fréquence, des stratégies cognitives, métacognitives, de compensation et social ; tandis que les apprenants moins doués ont été trouvés qu'ils attachant une grande importance à utilisation fréquent, de la mémoire et des stratégies affectives. Par conséquent, l'étude aboutit à des inférences concluantes, mais non absolues il révèle que, dans la mesure ou le manque de stratégies de passage aux examens induit des déficiences en rédaction, il pourrait être résolu avec succès par un entraînement intensif de de ces stratégies. Par conséquent, l'étude recommande fermement aux concepteurs de programmes et aux éducateurs de concevoir des programmes rigoureux qui permettent aux apprenants de s'immerger dans la pratique ces stratégies et pas seulement d'en être familiers.