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**The Significance of Writing Proficiency in EFL  
Classes**

*A case study: LMD students of English at the University of  
Adrar*

**A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for a Master's  
Degree in Linguistics and Didactics.**

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# Dedication

I dedicate this work to the memory of my father who did not live long enough to see this achievement.

I also dedicate it to the rest of my family and friends for standing beside me all these years.

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I conclude this piece of writing with Henry Adams' quotation:

*"A parent gives life, but as parent gives no more. A murderer takes life, but his deed stops there. A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops."*

## **List of Abbreviations**

**CC:** Communicative Competence

**EFL:** English as Foreign Language

**ELLS:** English Language Learners

**FL:** Foreign Language

**L1:** First Language Learning

**L2:** Second Language Learning

**LMD:** License Master Doctorate

**LT:** Language Teaching

**MT:** Mother Tongue

**N°:** Number of Students and Teachers

**Q:** Question

**SL:** Second Language

**TFL:** Teaching Foreign Language

**TL:** Target Language

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# General Introduction

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## 1. Background of the Study

Teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) is not an easy task, especially when it comes to teaching language various skills. English language learners (ELLs) need to be taught different language skills: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. This latter is basically a quite significant one to be learned. It is thought to be very difficult to master even for native speakers. Teachers should emphasize on it within the language teaching process, because writing takes the lion's share in determining (EFL) learners' academic achievements as it develops their communicative competence.

## 2. Statement of the Problem

Teachers in the department of English at the University of Adrar constantly complain about their students' low writing performance. This latter is reflected on their exams results. Despite the fact that they take "written expression" classes in first and second year, students still face obstacles when it comes to producing accurate writing pieces. The significance of the writing skill is reflected through the fact that the students are mainly judged on their writing competence; there is only one class where they are judged on their oral competence; the rest of the classes require a written exam. When teaching English in Algeria, one has to take into account that classrooms are the sole place where students use the said language. English language learners of LMD system at the University of Adrar face problems when it comes to writing. First, second, and even third year students of English have poor written production. Thus, investigating this problem is an attempt to discover the factors that lead to this deficiency in writing.

## 3- Aim of the study

This study aims at contributing to the improvement of English language learners' poor achievement in writing, by highlighting the points of weakness of these students regarding the writing skill. This research also aims at raising the prominence of the writing skill and investigating the major factors that hinders English language learners from producing good academic written English. It also attempts to find out how English language learners can enhance their writing performance.

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The present research paper aims, also, at:

- Raise English language learners' self-esteem and keep them motivated to write.
- Beam some light on the negative influence of diverse factors (lack of self-esteem, first and second language, anxiety, and so on)
- Draw attention to the strong interrelation between different language skills.
- Translate the research findings into advice and guidance.

### 4. Research Questions

On the basis of the above observations, many questions are raised:

- Why do students of English language learners have a poor written product?
- What hinders students to produce correct academic pieces of writing?
- Why do English language learners feel afraid to write?
- What can be done to enhance the situation?

### 5. Data Collection Procedure

We have administered the questionnaire to LMD students belonging to the department of English at the University of Adrar. Taking diversity of the students makes us, far from being biased. The questionnaire was administered to eighty (80) students chosen haphazardly. Among eighty (80) handed back the questionnaires, sixty two (62) questionnaires were returned. The questionnaire was administered in a friendly and relaxed environment. The questions were clear enough in order to help the students understand and thus provide appropriate answers.

### 5- Organization of the Study

The present research is divided into three main chapters. The first two chapters review the related literature. The last chapter is devoted to the practical framework of the study.

The first chapter provides an introduction to the nature of writing. It also discusses the relationship between writing and other different skills. It, also, outlines some approaches to teaching writing. It also deals with different methods of evaluating and scoring students' compositions. Then, we will demonstrate the importance of writing.

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The second chapter explains various factors behind the students' problems in writing, including different main obstacles and impacts that cause these problems in writing.

The last chapter deals with data analysis. It provides a detailed analysis of both teachers and learners' questionnaires. It will help us see whether the results could answer the questions raised previously or not.

## 1.1 Introduction

This chapter starts with presenting the nature of writing and its significance as a tool of communication; it also shows the distinction between writing and speaking, likewise the relationship between writing and reading as well as their shared cognitive processes. Then, it casts some light on the approaches of teaching writing, the product approach, the process approach and the genre approach and finally explores the scoring models of writing and their reliabilities.

## 1.2 The Nature of Writing

Writing is the way in which we communicate via using graphic symbols, i.e., we unite letters together which symbolize our sounds when we speak. These letters are combined to figure words, and words are also combined to structure phrases and sentences and so on.

Byrne describes writing as “*The act of forming these symbols; making marks on a flat surface of some kind.*” (Byrne p11) Whereas, Crystal states that: “*writing is a way of communicating which uses a system of visual marks made on some kind of surface*” (p257).

According to Bloomfield “*Writing is not language, but merely a way of recording language by means of visible marks.*” (Bloomfield, qtd.in Crystal p178).

Certainly, writing is not characterised as arbitrary graphic symbols. These symbols have to be set according to a certain order and system in order to shape words, then to sentences until we construct a paragraph or a text that corresponds a message and conveys our thoughts and emotions. Teaching how to write is not a simple task. Nevertheless, it is not very complex. It essentially needs aspiration and interest from the learner, so that he/she can express his/her thoughts, emotions or perspectives towards any subject. Furthermore, writing is one among the most essential language skills that have to be taught. “*Writing is not a natural activity*” (White, qtd. in Nunan p36). That is, writing is not an innate capacity that we are born with; i.e., we need to be trained as to how to write; or else, the learner will never be able to write. Moreover, writing requires cognitive and endeavour for the reason that it is a process where the writer needs to consciously regard different features and aspects of writing, such as: the syntactic and grammatical structure of sentences, punctuation, good selection of vocabularies and phrases concurrently.

Rivers and Temperley state that: *“To write so that one is really communicating a message isolated in place and time, is an art that requires consciously directed effort and deliberate choice in language”*. (p 263)

One more important aspect about the nature of writing is that we write for a reader. Hence, there is another element concerned in the writing procedure. That is, we interpret our ideas feelings into written language for the reader who is sometimes absent and or unknown. Therefore, the writer is compelled to be as comprehensive as possible. Furthermore, all what has been written should be clear for any reader without seeking any assistance.

### **1.3 Writing and Other Skills**

#### **1.3.1 Writing Vs Speaking**

When we speak about writing as a language skill, we have to demonstrate its relationships and differences with the other skills; speaking and writing are central for language teaching and learning. Moreover both speaking and writing are similarly prominent productive skills that are highly necessary particularly for communication. On the other hand, writing as contrasting to speaking is a more homogeneous system of communication as well as an important implement of learning. Furthermore, written language is not merely a speech written down on paper; it is more than that.

Written language is permanent, i.e., a written passage or message can be saved and referred back at once; which means, we read the written text whenever we desire *“a written communication may be read as soon as it is written or months, years, or centuries later.”* (Rivers , Temerley p 263).

In the contrary, speaking is impermanent; i.e., it does not last for a long time, because words disappear at once at the moment they are produced. In addition, using speaking skill as medium of communication operate on instant interaction between the speaker and the listener, and they are often face to face and can see each other. The common context that is between the listener and the speaker in face to face contact makes communication much easier. Nevertheless, the absence of the reader implies more explicitness from the writer. Furthermore, the audience or the reader is most of the time general rather than specific. In this respect, Crystal argues:

*“Speech is time-bound, dynamic, transient-part of an interaction in which, typically, both participants are present, and the speaker has a specific addressee (or group of addressees) in mind. Writing is space-bound, static, permanent-the result of a situation in which, typically, the producer is distant from the recipient-and, often, may not even know who the recipient is (as with most literature)”.* (Crystal p179)

One fundamental distinction between speaking and writing is that children can acquire speaking skill and comprehend their native language with no need of any basic training; this means that, speaking is natural and it does not require necessarily learning how to speak. Moreover speaking is learned before learning reading and writing, even learning how to write need to be basically trained, it is also typically associated to school and classroom learning.

White points out that anyone has the ability to learn how to speak any given language; in contrast, the teacher is required in order to learn how to write. Hence, writing is considered as a very complex process as well as learning how to write. Another major distinction between speaking and writing is the features that each skill uses to express a sense. In speaking, we use what is known by paralinguistic features such as; tones, intonation, stress, gestures, and facial expressions. Whereas in writing we use punctuations indentations, questions, words in italics ...etc. (White qtd. in Nunan p 36)

Speakers and writers go through two diverse processes in communication. In speaking, there is short limited time; i.e., as speakers we express immediately our thought to words. Besides, we have to determine rapidly what to say and modify our speech at once, using various tools such as; paraphrasing and reception. On the other hand, when writing we have sufficient time to structure our written production, using draft, and having an ability to rewrite, modify and correct our mistakes at any point when writing before it get to the reader’s hands. Brown puts it this way *“writers generally have more time to plan, review, and revise their words before they are finalized, while speakers must plan, formulate, and deliver their utterances within a few moments if they are to maintain a conversation”*; (Brown qtd. in Weigle p15)

The nature of both the two productive skills, writing and speaking, explains one more important distinction between the two skills in terms of planning and organization of language used. In speaking, the speaker utilises single words, short phrases or unfinished sentences. Likewise, in speaking, mispronunciation of words and grammatical mistakes are allowable ...etc.

Byrne points out that speakers use sentences that are most of the time incomplete and contain grammatical mistakes. Additionally, speech is often described by repetition and redundancy. Unlike speech, in writing, sentences must be complete, well-developed with regards to the syntactic and grammatical structure of sentences. Also, writing usually should be designed according to certain steps as to be clear and meaningful, starting with topic sentence followed by clarification, illustration or explanation and ending up with a summery, solution, or writer's perspective towards the written topic. In this respect Byrne claims that writing usually contains sentences that are constructed, linked and organized with great attention so that it produces what is called a text that has to convey a meaningful message (p33).

In spite of all the previous discussion, the differences between writing and speaking are not absolute. Sometimes writing and speaking seem to be identical; for instance, a text message has the same qualities of temporary. Messages are very often read immediately and removed straight away. Furthermore, speech construction can be the same as writing process; cautious speakers can plan and produce correct and well-structured spoken language; for example in official and formal situations like meetings, interviews...etc. moreover, in both the productive skills vocabularies and expressions are based on which reader or participant we are addressing. When the speaker or the writer knows the participant very well, for instance a friend or relative, in this case he/she is going to select words with less attention in processes, speaking and writing. However, in the case the addressee is unidentified; the selection of words will be rather done with more care and attention.



### 1.3.2 The Connection between Writing and Reading

Writing and reading are two of the most significant language skills which are closely related. When students read in a very extensive way, they become very good writers, for the reason that reading provides prior knowledge, thoughts and information that aid and facilitate language for the learner, and extend their thoughts and their amount of vocabularies. At an academic level, reading helps writers incorporate stylistic choices, grammatical features, rhetorical strategies, markers of cohesion and coherence, which accordingly enhance students' style of writing.

Thomas claims that: *“a significant relationship existed between writing achievement and the amount and variety of reading experiences.”* (Thomas: qtd. in Flippo, Caverly p15) In addition, Celce-Murcia argues: At the very least, readings provide models of what English language texts look like, and even if not used for the purpose of imitation, they provide input that helps students develop awareness of English language prose style. (p 224)

The relationship between reading and writing is essentially based on communication in that when we write, we are combining our thoughts and opinions together, through the writing skill. Thus, we need to make sure that our message is clear and explicit for the reader. So, as to develop the communicative skill, it implies both skills together writing and reading abilities. *“reading and writing affect how people communicate, what they think is involved in communicating, and what they think is involved in thinking”*. (Farrell, qtd. in Flippo, Caverly p166)

Furthermore, reading and writing are equally important tools to construct the forms and functions of language. i.e., language learners need to noticeably comprehend the functions of the two skills, and to develop their level in the learned language. Both writing and reading are similar processes and complementary to each other, in that they include the same mental processes that are involved in making meaning, generating ideas, planning, drafting, and revising. In their composing reading model Tierney and Pearson claim that: *“reading and writing involve similar, shared, linguistic, and cognitive elements. As readers read and writers compose, both plan, draft, align, revise, and monitor as they read and write”*. (Tierney, Pearson ;qtd.in Flippo and Caverly p151)

If we take into consideration revising which is a mental process and plays quite an essential role in both the writing and the reading skills just as the other cognitive processes have,

revising helps the reader comprehend the author's text by pausing, thinking, reflecting on what he/she is reading. The same for the writer, revising what is written helps identify mistakes and errors, clarifies meaning, reconsider selection of vocabularies and structures...etc. "*During the revising process, readers should re-examine the text. Similarly, the writer reread, re-examine, revise and reflect on the text by carefully selecting words that Convey meaning*". (Flippo, Caverly, p152)

From another point of view, reading is thought to be a significant implement to assess the written production. The writer has to read his/her written text in a critical way, so that he/she detects his/her mistakes in grammar, structures, selection of words, and so on.

In his model of the process approach, Hayes suggests three major types of reading in the composing process. One of these types is reading to evaluate. This type is an important stage in the composing process because it enables the writer to produce a good written performance, since it helps detect mistakes and identify the various problems in his writing. (p26)

Weigle claims that reading for evaluation purposes is the first type of the Hayes reading types, in which the writer read his text critically to detect his mistakes and develop his language. Reading for evaluation needs emphasis and proficiency in the reading skill so that the writer can revise and evaluate the written content, organization, and relevance; and not only focus on detecting surface errors. Thus, the writer here needs to be skilled in reading. (p27)

### **1.4 Approaches to the Teaching of Writing**

Throughout the recent decades, teaching the writing skill has been a fundamental element and major means of education. The significance of writing as a skill led to the appearance of different controversial views of the best way to teach writing. The teaching of writing since 1940s until 1960s was based on the concept of controlled or guided composition. In the 1960s, instructors and researchers in the field began to doubt the efficiency of controlled composition. The result of this doubt was the emergence of, rhetorical function where the emphasis shifted from the sentence level to the discourse level. When focusing on the discourse level, the major interest is the type of development of the discourse such as

narration, argumentation, and expository. Later on, in the 1970s, the process approach which has the furthest effect on the teaching of writing in both the first and the second language has emerged. After the process approach, the field of writing has received a new writing approach which is the genre approach (p18).

### **1.4.1 The Product Approach**

The notion of writing demonstrates the way in which we manipulate words as to form a coherent written language, so that one can compose coherent arrangement of words, sentences and paragraphs that are clear and comprehensive, grammatically correct and comprise different discourse conventions. Our attention to the product approach which has been dominated from the mid 1940s to the mid 1960s, and is still in use. The product approach encourages analysing students' product at the end of the writing process, so that the teacher can recognize their weaknesses and strengths. This orientation has its origins in the tradition of rhetoric and emphasizes the study of model text to make students aware of text features.

When adapting such an approach to writing, one main interest is accuracy. According to the product approach accuracy will be achieved by imitating model texts. So, the first students' task is to be familiarized with the conventions of writing that they take from model texts. In that, there is a close relationship between the model based approach which is about teaching how to produce a text by imitating another and the product approach. In fact, both approaches are final drafts, but the model comes at the beginning and the product comes at the end. White puts it this way:

*“Not only does the model come first in the teaching sequence, it also shows a finished text. In other words, the focus right from the start is on the product, which is, of course, someone else writing. What the model does not demonstrate is how the original writer arrived at that particular product. In other words, it gives no indication of process”.* (White p7)

Richards describes the product approach differently. The initial step in teaching writing using this approach is familiarisation. He also claims that the emphasis is on the study of model text in order to make students aware of:

1. Familiarisation: Learners are taught certain grammar and vocabulary usually through a text.
2. Controlled writing: Learners manipulate fixed patterns, often from substitution tables.
3. Guided writing: Learners imitate model texts.
4. Free writing: Learners use the patterns they have developed to write an essay, letter, and so forth. (Richards, p3-4)

For White the model based approach is;

Study the model → Manipulate elements → Produce a parallel text

Model text is always the first stage which is analysed and studied from different dimensions like the grammatical structure, sentence organization, and content. In the second stage, diverse features that the learners take from the model text are manipulated. As a final stage, the learners are given a subject and asked to produce a parallel written text. This traditional approach that encourages learners to imitate model texts can be outlined in the following way:

First step: Students read the model text and highlighted the specific features of genre in this text. For instance, when analysis an essay organization, students' attention will be aimed at the way the essay in the model text is organized; distribution of paragraphs, items utilised to link these paragraphs, and all different features that contribute in the organization of an ideal essay.

Second step: in this stage, students need a controlled practice of the highlighted features, usually in isolation. So, following the example in the first phase, students here required making practice on linkers between paragraphs, writing introductions, stating thesis statements, writing conclusions and so on.

Third step: This is a highly essential stage, where students are required to organize paragraphs in order to get a coherent essay (introduction, developmental paragraphs, and conclusion). Teachers who use this approach give more awareness to the arrangement of ideas rather than ideas themselves.

Final step: In the final step students are given a topic and asked to develop an essay in the similar way as the model text. (p55)

### 1.4.2 The Process Approach

The process approach comes as a reaction to the product approach which has a remarkable effect on the teaching of writing on a global scale. The process approach focuses the creativity of the individual writer and views writing as a highly complex process. This direct takes attention to the progress writing rather than the imitation of model texts. Hence, the emphasis shifted from the final product itself to the different stages that the writer goes through in order to create this product. The process approach stressed that writing is an activity that is composed of a variety of activities, and that these different activities are typically recursive. The teacher in the process approach becomes a facilitator. He guides and helps his students at each stage of their composing process. Whereas, the students in this orientation are asked to come up with multiple drafts of their work and to be aware that re-writing and revising are integral to writing (p12).

### 1.4.3 The Genre Approach

In recent years, a new approach to teach writing appeared which views writing as medium of communication with the reader. The genre approach focuses more prominently on the rhetorical purposes of that text and every component of the text that contributes to the fulfilment of that process.

*“The central belief here is that we do not just write, we write something to achieve some purposes: it is a way of getting something done.”* (Richards p18) .This point of view characterises genre as a typified social action that responds to a recurring situation. That is when someone writes a letter, a story, a request and so on, he has to respect certain social conventions for the organization of his message, so that the reader realises his/her purpose. In other words, the content, the structure, and the style have to be socially recognized and formed

according to the anticipation of the reader. According to Richards (*ibid*) “*these abstract, socially recognized ways of using language for particular purposes are called genres.*”

The genre approach is proposed in another description by Swales who defines genre as:

*“A genre comprises a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes. These purposes are recognised by the expert members of the parent discourse community, and thereby constitute the rationale for genre. This rationale shapes the schematic structure of the discourse and influence constrains Choice of content and style”.*(Swales p 58)

Furthermore, Swales views that the genre approach’s preliminary point is the notion of discourse community and identifies a range of academic contexts. Swale describes six characteristics for identifying a group of writers and readers as discourse community: “*common goals, participatory mechanisms, information exchange, community specific genres, a highly specialized terminology and a high general level of expertise.*” (Swales p29) common objectives refer to the objectives of the scholars in any community that may include accounts of replicable experimental procedures, the reporting of new knowledge and the examination of students and so on. For writing, the „participatory mechanisms are texts that are associated with a particular discipline, such as; academic journals and text-books.

The genre approach has particular characteristics that influence the use of language. These specific characteristics may include: communicative purposes, associated themes, conventions (rhetorical structures and other textual features), the channel of communication, degree of formality, mode of argumentation, textual structures, and the audience type. It is clear that when such an approach is adopted the focus is on texts, but this focus is not on grammar, rather it is on social constraints and choices that operate when writing in a particular context. That is, students study the style, conventions, structures and organisation, argumentation...etc of texts in the genre they are going to write.

The genre approach is supported by the functional model of language which discusses the association between discourse and the context in which language is used. Richards argues that the importance of genre is that it includes discourse and contextual aspects of language use. The genre approach involves the direct teaching of a range of genres through a cycle that

includes modelling, joint constructed with the teacher and finally, the students independently construct a text. (p18)

## **1.5. Methods of Scoring Students' Compositions**

Teaching/learning of the writing skill is not only a difficult and complex process; rather it is much more difficult particularly when it comes to evaluation or scoring. Moreover, it is nearly impossible to get a reliable and valid mark when scoring students essays because this skill does not lend itself to objective testing. However, there are various methods that are used by teachers to increase the percentage of reliability in this skill. Three of the main important methods are the following.

### **1.5.1 The Analytic Method**

The analytic method views writing as diverse techniques and features such as vocabulary, grammar, notions, structures, creativity and each of which is to be scored individually by the teacher who uses scoring procedures to score his/her students' essays. According to Heaton teachers who apply this method see writing as a demonstration of various separate skills that when scored separately and joined together will come up with a proper assessment of the essay. For instance, the weighting given to mechanics of writing is 4 out of 20, for grammar the teacher gives 2 out of 20 and so on. The distribution of the aspects (features to be scored) and the weighting given to each aspect will be changed according to the teacher. (p136)

Heaton describes the analytic method. *“This method depends on a marking scheme which has been carefully drawn up by the examiner or body of examiners. It consists of an attempt to separate the various features of a composition for scoring purposes”*. (p136)

Despite of the time consumption, the analytic method is a useful method of scoring and evaluation; it makes students aware of their weaknesses in their written performance. As it helps teachers keep in mind all the writing features as they score.

### 1.5.2 The Impression Method

When the teacher uses the impression method, he/she gives the mark according to his/her total impression about the composition as a whole. According to Heaton in this method usually three or four markers score each paper because it is possible for a composition to appeal to one reader and does not for another. Hence, this method is mainly a matter of luck whether the teacher or the examiner likes the students' written product or not. The marks given using this method are impossible to achieve any high degree of reliability since it is based on subjective judgment. (p 135)

### 1.5.3 The Error-count Method

This method is basically a different way of scoring students writing. The teacher bases his/her scoring on the number of errors made by student on each paper. He/she counts up errors and figures out marks from a given mark. *“The procedure consists of counting the errors made by each student and deducing the number from a given total: for instance, a student may lose up to 10 marks for grammatical errors, 5 marks for miss-use of words, 5 for misspelling, etc”*. (Heaton p137)

In addition, the error-count method does not lend itself to objective scoring, since the teacher cannot really make a decision about errors, i.e., which errors that are more important so that the highest weighting deduced from it. Moreover, this method ignores the central purpose of writing, which is communication. Making such stress on errors makes students afraid of mistakes because they find it very hard to get further than the first sentence also they tend to stop after each single sentence to check it for mistakes of different kinds. Raimes claims that:

*“They worry about accuracy; they stop after each sentence and go back and check it for inflection, word order, spelling and punctuation, breathe a sight of relief and go on to attack the looming giant of the next sentence”*. (Raimes; qtd.in Freeman, Richards p102)

## 1.6 Why Writing is Important?

Learning the writing skill is very significant within the process of learning any language. “Writing provides an importance mean to personal self-expression” (Mc Arthurp11). According to walker the importance of writing is described in the following:



- **“Writing improves communication skills;** it provides a vehicle for expression and communication.
- **Writing helps students review and remember recently learned material,** support long-term recall of the key lesson points and help build writing skills all at the same time.
- **Writing helps educators assess student learning.** Writing assignments help teachers see what material students have mastered and where there may be gaps.
- **Writing encourages creativity and exploration.** It can help students use their imaginations
- **Writing is essential for self-understanding”.**(“SherrelleWalker”)

### 1.7 Conclusion

This chapter clarifies the concept of writing by exploring its nature; how it is acquired, where its difficulties and complexities lay and so on. Then, we have explained the differences between the two productive skills writing and speaking. The third section had proved that reading plays an important role in improving the writing skill, as well as, the close relation between the two skills. The fourth section outlines the most important approaches to the teaching of writing. The fifth section gives insights about methods that would help decreasing the percentage of unreliability in scoring students written product. Finally, the last section highlights the Importance of writing.

## **Chapter Two Aspects behind Problems in Written Performance**

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### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter investigates what hinder students to writing correctly particularly at the academic level. Among a number of factors, we will try to draw a general picture of the major and the motivational factors behind the learners' lack of correct writing. And since the learning/teaching process cannot take place only with the presence of the teacher and the learner, this chapter will be completely devoted to talk about the teacher and the learner. We will discuss some essential issues that concern the teacher's approaches, methods and techniques of teaching writing then the way teacher reacting towards the students' writing productions.

### **2.2 The Teacher as a Factor of Poor Written Performance**

The teacher as highly concerned element within the learning/teaching process, he/she could be a potential factor behind luck of EFL students in their written performance.

#### **2.2.1 Lack of an Appropriate Approach to Teach Writing**

Teaching writing to EFL classes has witnessed prominent changes in the last recent years; sturdily influenced by research insights from mother tongue contexts, resulting in pedagogical shifts. Throughout many years, the teaching of writing, in any context, was fundamentally ignored, forever tested but rarely trained. Accordingly, the focus was on what not on how the students produce. Raimes points the importance of how to teach writing not what to teach and also indicated to a number of approaches to teaching writing. for instance ; the Free-Writing Approach, the Controlled-to-Free Approach, the Grammar Syntax-Organization Approach, the Paragraph-Pattern Approach, and the Communicative Approach, ...etc.(p38)

If the question was how to teach writing to (EFL) learners, there would not be just one answer as there are many different teaching styles. This is perhaps because of the fact that writing is a process of exploring one's opinion and learning through the act of writing itself what these thoughts are? (Raimes p49).

## **Chapter Two Aspects behind Problems in Written Performance**

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The writing skill includes various features and aspects such as grammar, and organization of ideas, vocabulary choice, content, regarding various topics and disciplines; teachers have developed various approaches to the teaching of writing. For decades, the writing skill was totally ignored in the English language classes. The initial learning theory was Behaviourism which focuses in the first place on speaking rather than any other skill then comes the writing skill after. However after the 1960's, particularly in the USA, Academic writing became highly important to language learning classes. The most important learning theory, in this time, was Structuralism theory which focused on the prominence of teaching writing skill. Thus, the following approaches are the major ones to teaching writing skill indicated by Raimes.

### **2.2.1.1 Free-Writing Approach**

The idea and grammar are both central in this approach. The learners are recommended focus on the content of their writing. The idea is the most significant. In contrast to the Controlled -to- Free Approach, the role of the teacher is limited to reading the students' written production and sometimes making comments on the expressed ideas. (Raimes p15)

### **2.2.1.2 Grammar-Syntax-Organization Approach**

The teacher should consider teaching writing not as separate skill. As Raimes reported, "*writing cannot be seen as composed of separate skills which are learned one by one*" (p13). The learner has to consider, at once, the structure and syntax and grammar that are significant tasks in writing.

### **2.2.1.3 Paragraph-Pattern Approach**

Basically this approach focuses on the organisation of language instead of the grammatical structure or the content. The supporting ideas, cohesion, and unity are the most important points that are dealt with. Student's main task is to copy and analyse from of the model paragraph, and sometimes, they imitate model passages. Moreover, students can be given scrambled sentences to be ordered into a coherent paragraph, to identify general statements, to find out the topic sentence, or they insert or delete sentences (Raimes p12).

## **Chapter Two Aspects behind Problems in Written Performance**

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### **2.2.1.4 Communicative Approach**

The communicative approach focuses on the aim of writing, so learners know what they are writing for. In this approach, learners are supported and trained to write on purpose as typical writers. i.e., learners will be able to produce pieces of writing that carry a target idea to the reader. (Harris p18)

### **2.2.2 Lack of Adequate Techniques of Teaching Writing**

There are various techniques of teaching writing; yet, teacher has to find the appropriate one. Choosing the suitable technique depends on learner's' levels, in addition to the approach. Therefore, Raimes suggests seven fundamental questions those have to be asked to every teacher:

1. "How can writing help my students learn their second or foreign language?"
2. How can I find enough topics?"
3. How can I help to make the subject matter meaningful?"
4. Who will read what my students write?"
5. How are the students going to work together in the classroom?"
6. How much time should I give my students for their writing?"
7. What do I do about errors?" (p 30)

#### **2.2.2.1 Using Pictures Techniques**

The Pictures could be a quite valuable resource that provides a mutual experience for students in class, a common base that leads to a variety of language activities. Using pictures, after looking at the object, they will instantly need the right vocabulary, phrase, sentence structure, etc. to explain what they observe into written language. Besides, using picture in class catches learners' attention and it. So, it is a helpful resource as stated by Raimes:

- 1." a shared experience in the classroom,
2. a need for common language forms to use in the classroom,
3. a variety of tasks, and a focus of interest for student." (p32)

## **Chapter Two Aspects behind Problems in Written Performance**

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### **2.2.2 Using Reading Techniques**

Teachers must be aware that reading can be a useful tool to improve their students' poor writing. Hence, any piece of writing could be to some extent the same technique as pictures. In addition, reading can provide an information gap; when teachers motivate their students to read, it allows them to acquire new words, expressions, sentence patterns and new knowledge. Raimes claimed that *"the more our students read and the more they become familiar with the vocabulary, idiom, sentence patterns, organizational fowl, and cultural assumptions of the native speakers of the language"* (Raimes p36).

### **2.2.3 Teacher as a Source of Demotivation**

Regarding the fact that teachers do not teach the in same way, they can be demotivators, particularly when they do not attempt to improve their students' level in writing and raise their self-esteem; learners need to be encouraged and motivated to write inside or outside classrooms. Consequently, motivated teachers produce motivated learners and vice versa.

There are various ways to improve learners' level in writing. Learners sometimes feel *"lost for words"* particularly when writing creatively. The teacher here should incite and motivate them. Teachers can help their learners by worth words they need to start with in writing. *"the main task of the teacher is to motivate and provoke his students"* (Harmer p41).

### **2.2.4 Lack of Teacher's Corrective Feedback and Reinforcement**

The teacher's role is to encourage, support and motivate his/her students. In addition to correcting their mistakes or feedback reaction which is quite essential for improving student writing, not just in writing but in the language leaning tasks in general.

Learners are sometimes demotivated by the negative feedback of their teacher, and this depends on the nature teacher/student rapport in class and the teacher's reaction toward every student in classroom. Thus, students will be demotivated to produce better written performance. Teachers' reaction to their students' work can be done in two ways: "correcting" and "responding". (Harmer p108-113)

## **Chapter Two Aspects behind Problems in Written Performance**

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Corrective feedback is very important for the student's learning process especially in writing. The teacher has to correct spelling mistakes, structure, punctuation, and syntax. If the learner receives appositive feedback from the teacher without judging his/her mistakes, it would be so helpful in teaching writing and also improving the learner's level of their written performance.

### **2.3 Learner as a Factor of Poor Written Performance**

Writing is not an easy skill to learn; students have to practice constantly how to produce decent pieces of writing. i.e., the student's effort and interest are very significant in teaching/learning writing process. Generally, most of (EFL) students encounter many different obstacles when writing. Thus, we will demonstrate the learners' role behind different problems in writing performance, in addition to the absence of motivation and self-esteem in classroom.

#### **2.3.1 Lack of Motivation**

Most researches agree that learning or teaching without motivation is workless. Harmer is one among these researches who pointed that: The learner's achievement is highly linked to motivation, besides motivated students make learning/teaching process much easier. Most motivated learners consider writing as pleasurable task (p89). Writing problems are related to three sorts of problems:

- 1- Psychological problems
- 2-linguistic problems
- 3-cognitive problems (Byrne p25)

#### **2.3.2 Lack of reading**

Reading is a quite supportive technique to writing as previously mentioned. Among some researchers who investigated in link between reading and writing, Krachen who demonstrated a simple experiment on two groups, group one more reading less writing, and group two more writing less reading. He could prove eventually that group one has better achievement in writing test than group two i.e., learners who read more can achieve more progress and better performance in writing (p22).

Though writing and reading are two different skills, they effectively complete each

## **Chapter Two Aspects behind Problems in Written Performance**

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other. *“Reading can be the goal in itself and in any case is likely to be a more important one than writing, but the two Skills can and should be developed in close collaboration”*. (Harmer p224). In the same stream Kroll, also pointed that. *“it is reading that gives the writer the feel for the look and texture of reader based prose”* (Kroll p88).

Raims added *“the more our students read, the more they become familiar with the vocabulary, idiom, sentence patterns, organizational flow, and cultural assumptions of native speakers of the language”* (Raimes p66). This means that, constant readers acquire indirectly a considerable knowledge that relatively support and back up their writing skill more over the lack of reading can be a huge obstacle that hinders (EFL) students from achieving an acceptable written production.

### **2.3.3 Influence of First Language on Writing in English**

According to Friedlander who asserts that, *“writers do any of their work in their first language”*(p109) i.e., the impact of the first language (L1) can be another issue. I.e. most (EFL) learners suffer from the impact of the first language in their writing, which also can be a serious problem that translates the learners’ poor written production.

Yet, other researchers claim that the first language (L1) is a useful knowledge that can be transferred to the second language. Friedlander is one among these researcher who claim that *“writers will transfer writing abilities and strategies, whether good or deficient, from their first language to their second or third language”* (Friedlander p109). He added *“writing knowledge transfers across languages”*(p110) i.e. learners’ can depend on their first language knowledge to fulfil the second language.

## Chapter Two Aspects behind Problems in Written Performance

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### 2.3.4 Anxiety

Anxiety is generally defined as “A feeling of *worry*, nervousness, or *unease* about something with an *uncertain outcome*” oxford dictionary 5<sup>th</sup> Edition

Moreover, anxiety is a condition in which the learner may feel nervous to do a given task.

*"You may have felt a certain level of anxiety building within you as you felt the pressure to write an in class essay that would be judged by the teacher, graded, and returned with no chance for your future revision."*Brown added (p336).

Accordingly we deduce that anxiety can be another negative factor that limits the students' outcome in their written performance. Harmer claims that anxiety could be quite dangerous in which it can cause a negative attitude towards the student's writing achievement. Harmful anxiety can have negative effects on learners by "*reducing participation and creating overt avoidance of the language.*"(p89)

In the same stream, Harmer investigates the reasons of why students feel afraid and nervous when they engage in writing. Harmer stated the lack of training about writing, and lack of nothing in mind to write. Finally, the lack of interest in writing task. Harmer (op.cit.)

### 2.4 Conclusion

Finally, we may say that the distinctive factors behind learners' poor written production are endless. Nevertheless in this chapter we have attempted to discuss the most essential ones, either caused by the teacher or the learners. Likewise, we mentioned the lack of motivation, reading and corrective feedback, which are very vital and supportive elements that help enhancing their writing performance, in addition to the impact of the first and the second language. After shedding light on these factors, the next chapter will determine if it is possible to overcome these problems and how to raise the students' level in writing.



**3.1 Introduction**

The precedent chapters demonstrate a theoretical overview of the writing issue that some students encounter in their learning process. As the practical framework of this work, this chapter attempts to answer questions raised in this research: what hinders students to produce correct pieces of writing? And what can be done to enhance the situation?

The case study of this research is the department of English (University of Adrar). The questionnaire is basically designed to obtain teachers' and students' opinion towards the writing skill, since the students and the teachers are the main concerned informants of this study. Their opinions are very significant, and the most appropriate tool to investigate to help us reach a conclusive answer. The teachers' questionnaire is intended to explore the teachers' attitude towards teaching writing. The students' questionnaire seeks to find out learners' perspectives towards the writing skill.

**3.2 Students' Questionnaire****3.3.1 Aim of the Questionnaire**

This questionnaire is given to learners to know their opinions about the writing skill in order to raise their awareness towards it. In addition, this questionnaire helps us collect enough data to fulfill our study. Learners are asked to answer by ' *Yes*' or ' *No*' with brief justification whenever necessary. Sometimes, they choose the right answer from different options.

**3.2.2 Administration of the Questionnaire**

We have administered the questionnaire to LMD students belonging to the department of English at the University of Adrar. Taking diversity of the students makes us, far from being biased. The questionnaire was administered to eighty (**80**) students chosen haphazardly. Among eighty (**80**) handed back the questionnaires, sixty two (**62**) questionnaires were returned. The questionnaire was administered in a friendly and relaxed environment. The questions were clear enough in order to help the students understand and thus provide appropriate answers.

**3.2.3 Description of the Questionnaire**

In designing the present self-completed questionnaire for research purposes, the items required answers with dichotomies (yes/no) questions, or picking up the most appropriate answer from a series of options, or open questions asking the students to give their opinions or to explain their choices.

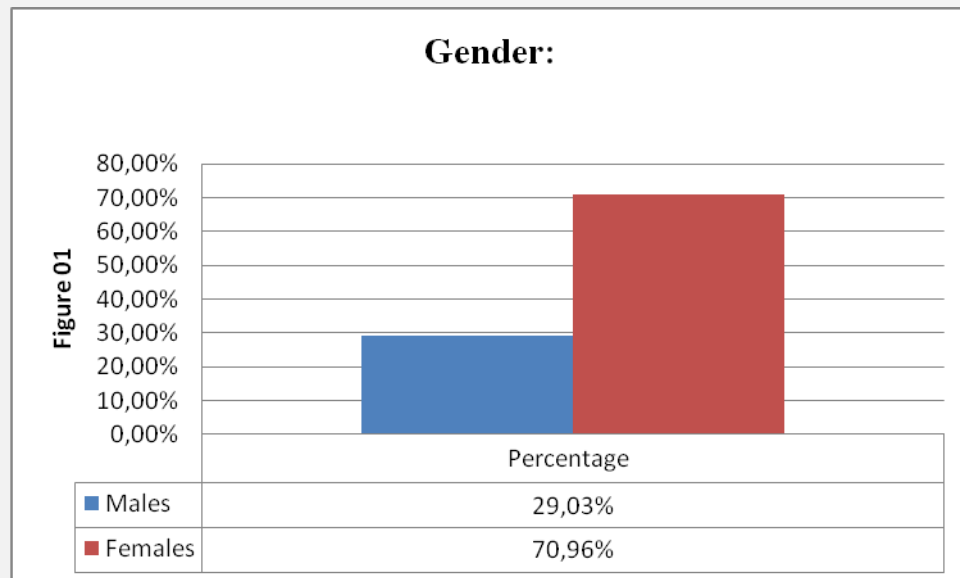
### 3.3 Data Collection & Analysis

#### Section 1: Personal Information.

##### Q 1: Gender

**Table One: Students' Gender**

	Males	Females
Number of Students	18	44



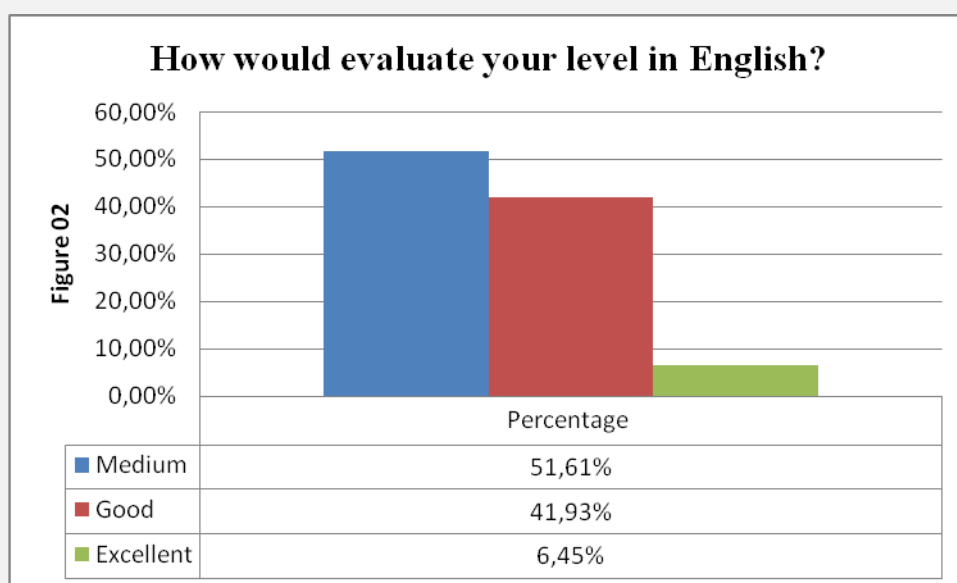
**Figure One: Students' Gender**

A quick glance at this figure will reveal that female students outnumber the males. In fact, we have recorded eighteen male subjects (29.03%) out of a total of eighty, whereas, the rest (70.96%) is of a female sex.

**Q 2: How would evaluate your level in English?**

**Table Two: Evaluation of Students' Level in English**

	Medium	Good	Excellent
Number of Students	32	26	4



**Figure Two: Evaluation of Students' Level in English**

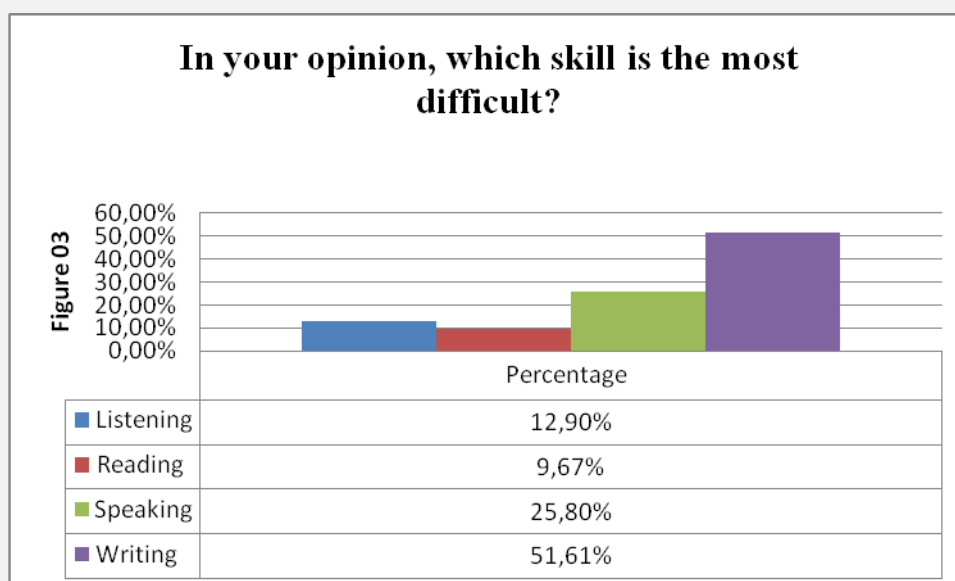
There are different views about students' level in English. Most of learners (51.61%) say that their level in English is medium. Others (41.93%) say that they have a decent level in English, however only (6.45%) who claim that they have excellent level in English.

## Section 2: Students' Perception about the Writing Skill.

**Q 3: In your opinion, which skill is the most difficult?**

**Table Three: Students' Perception about the Writing Skill**

	Listening	Reading	Speaking	Writing
Number of Students	8	6	16	32



**Figure Three: Students' Perception about the Writing Skill**

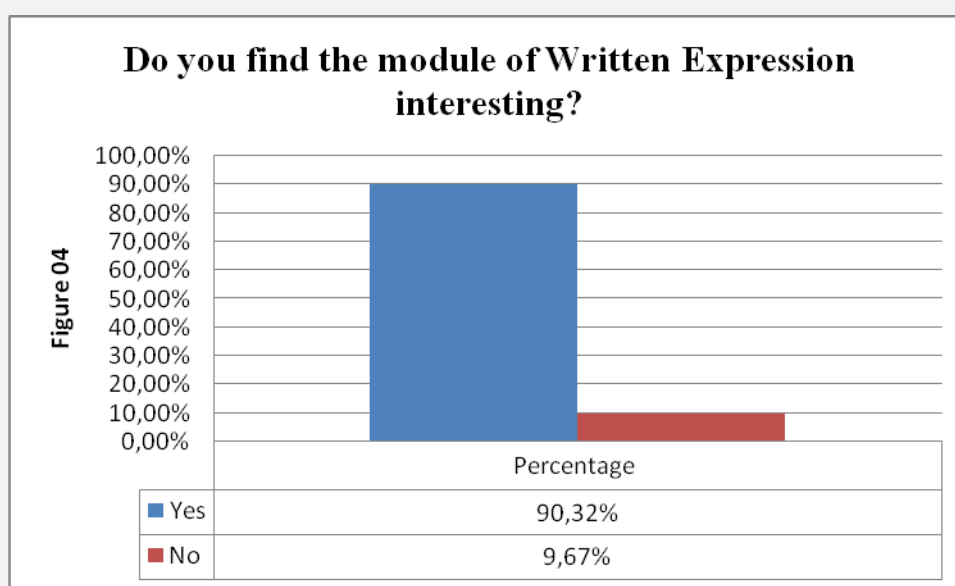
The subjects are asked to say which skill is the most difficult. The majority of respondents about (51.61%) believe that the writing skill is the most difficult, about (25.80%) said that speaking is the most difficult, opposing (12.90%) who find listening difficult and only (9.67%) who find reading the most difficult skill according to them.

The majority of respondents are completely aware of the complexity of learning productive skills, writing and speaking as being difficult to be learned compared to other skills like reading and listening.

**Q 4: Do you find the module of Written Expression interesting?**

**Table Four: Students' Opinion about "Written Expression"**

	Yes	No
Number of Students	56	6



**Figure Four: Students' Opinion about "Written Expression"**

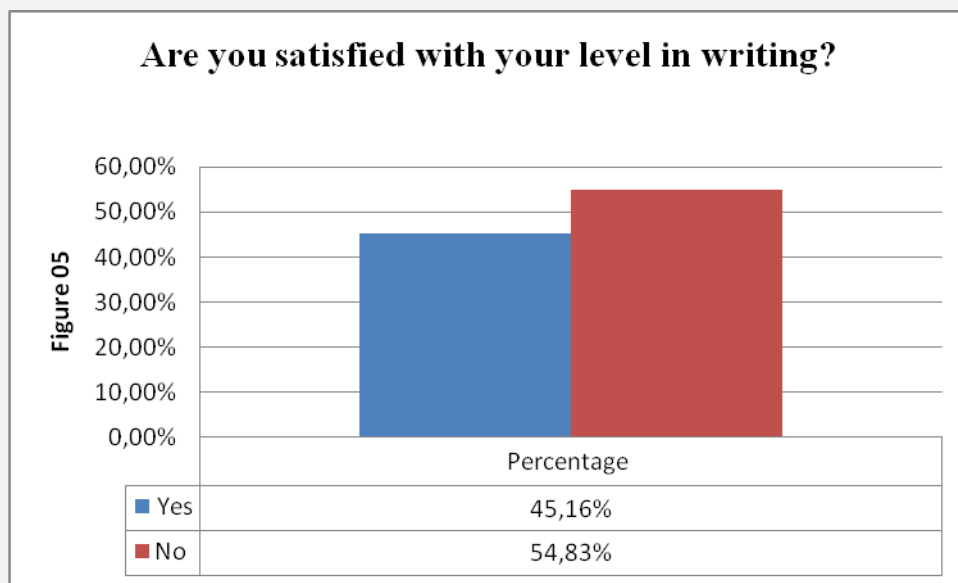
This question investigates learners' opinions about the module of "written expression", whether they find it interesting or not. The figure above shows that the majority of learners (90.32%) respond by "yes". Only (9.67%) respond by choosing "no".

Most students generally view "written expression" as highly significant module because through which they explore the basic techniques and methodology of writing. Moreover, "written expression" is the only space where students can enhance their communicative competence in writing.

**Q 5: Are you satisfied with your level in writing?**

**Table Five: Students’ Satisfaction about their Level in Writing**

	Yes	No
Number of Students	28	34



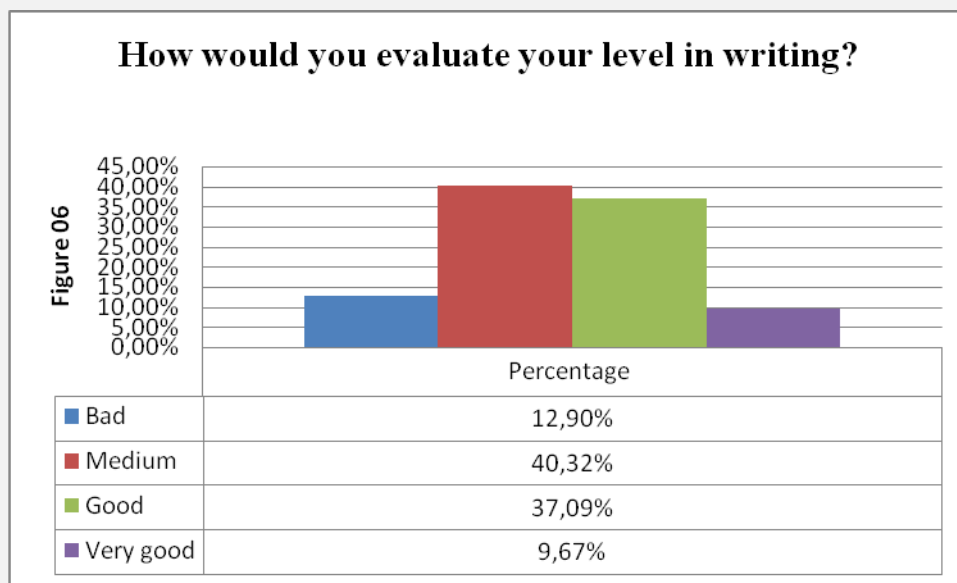
**Figure Five: Students’ Satisfaction about their Level in Writing**

This question aims at investigating whether students are satisfied with their level in writing or not; the majority of learners (54.83%) showed no satisfaction with their level in English. However, about (45.16%) claimed that they are satisfied with their level in writing. The poor results of the subjects in writing translate the dissatisfaction towards their level in writing.

**Q 6: How would you evaluate your level in writing?**

**Table Six: Students' Evaluation of Writing**

	Bad	Medium	Good	Very good
Number of Students	8	25	23	6



**Figure six: Students' Evaluation of Writing**

The subjects are asked to evaluate their level in writing. Answering to this question, they are expected to rank themselves from medium to very good. We have recorded (40.32%) of respondents who have admitted that their level of writing performance is medium. About (37.09%) said that their level is above medium; against about (9.67%) who claimed to have very good level. Nevertheless (12.90%) confess that their level is bad or below medium.



## Q 7: When writing which aspects are difficult for you?

Table Seven: Students' Opinion about Aspects of Writing

	Grammar	Coherence	Punctuation	Spelling	All
Number of Students	18	12	2	20	10

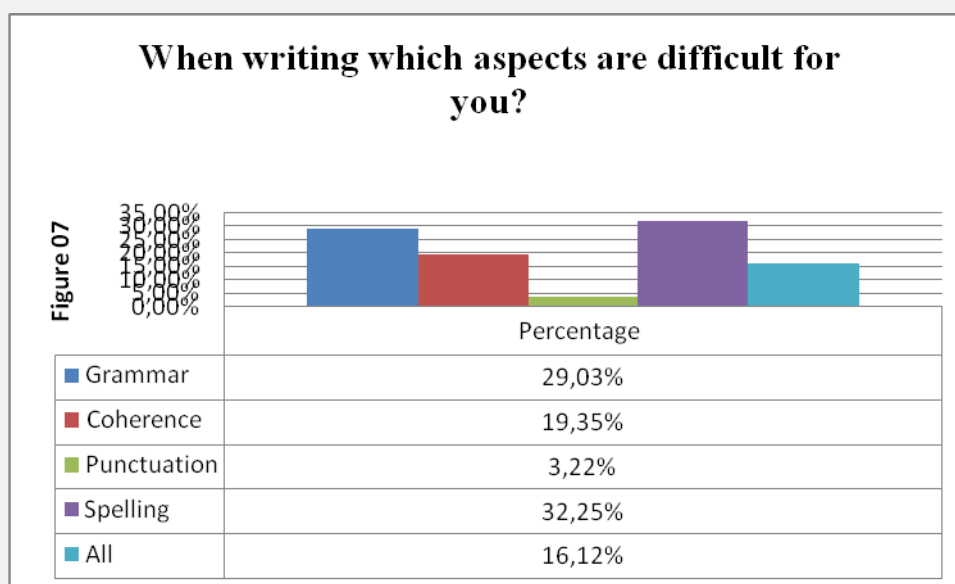


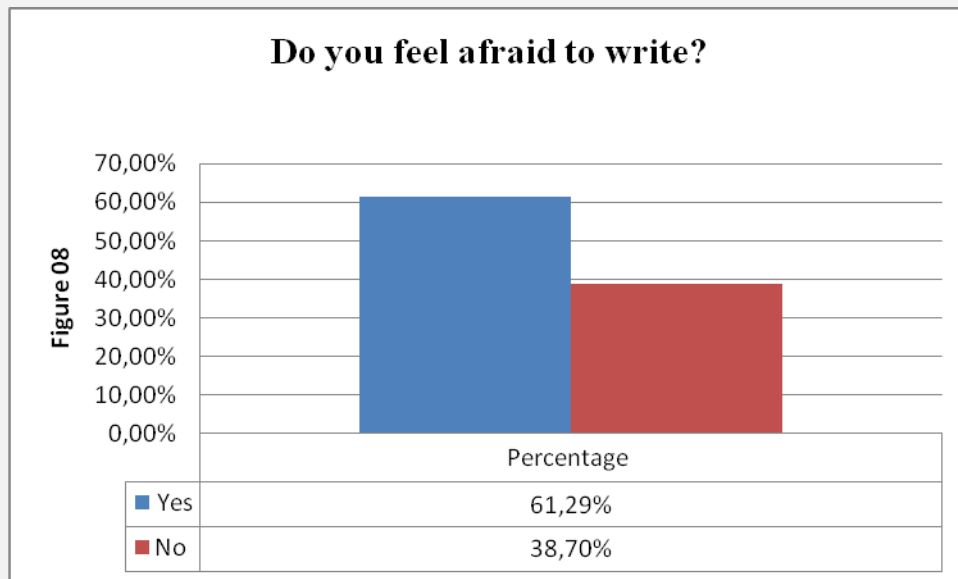
Figure Seven: Students' Opinion about Aspects of Writing

The present item of information is intended to ask the subjects which writing aspects are difficult for them. The table above summarizes the most frequent aspects that usually students find difficult. In the first place comes spelling with (32.25%) followed by grammar with (29.03%). We have recorded (19.35%) with coherence, about (3.22%) with punctuation.(16.12%) who claimed they find difficulties in all of them combined.

**Q 8: Do you feel afraid to write?**

**Table Eight: Students’ Perception about Being Afraid to Write**

	Yes	No
Number of Students	38	24



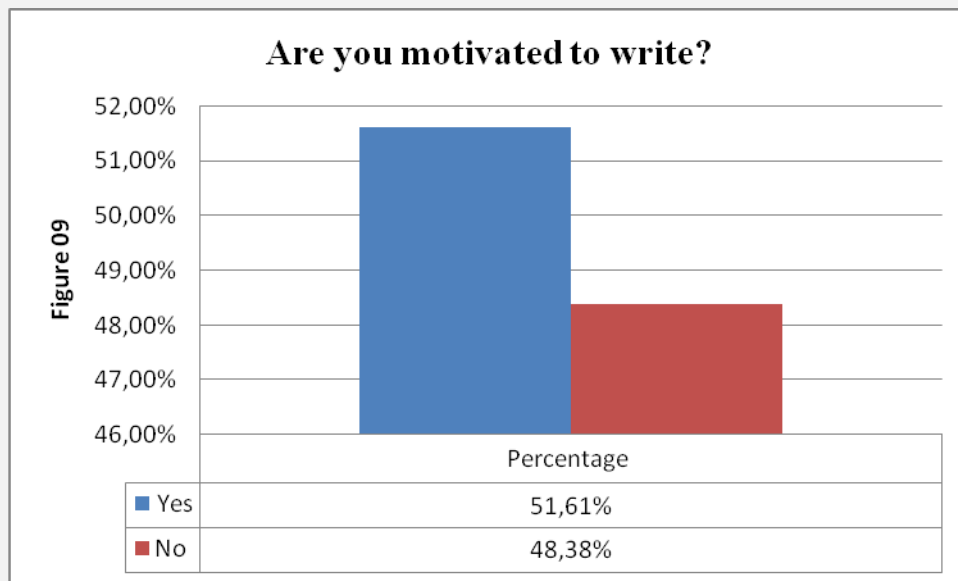
**Figure Eight: Students’ Perception about Being Afraid to Write**

Having discussed the issue of students being afraid to write, it seems wise to see just what hinders students to write. The subjects are, therefore, asked whether they are afraid to write or not, about (38.70%) claim that they are not afraid to write. However, (61.29%) have indicated that they are afraid to write because they are afraid of making grammatical mistakes and closely related to this is the fear of teachers' negative feedback. They also lack self-confidence; this might make them lose their self-esteem.

**Q 9: Are you motivated to write?**

**Table Nine: Students' Motivation**

	yes	No
Number of Students	32	30



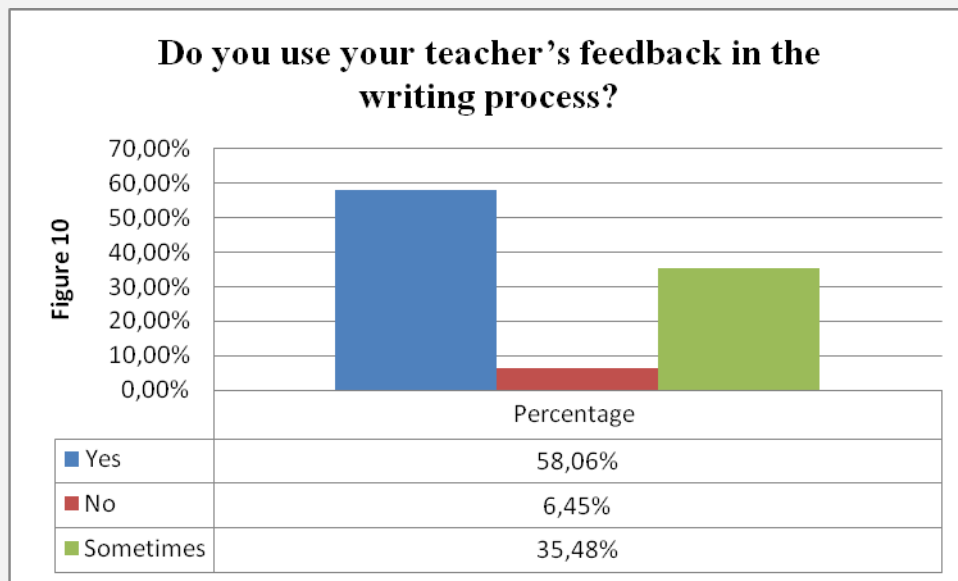
**Figure Nine: Students' Motivation**

The results obtained denote that (51.61%) of students state that they are motivated to write. On the other hand, (48.38%) students say the opposite. The motivated students are those who give more interest to the significance of writing. Moreover, they constantly attempt to develop their writing competence.

**Q 10: Do you use your teacher’s feedback in the writing process?**

**Table Ten: Using Teacher’s Feedback in Writing**

	yes	No	Sometimes
Number of Students	36	4	22



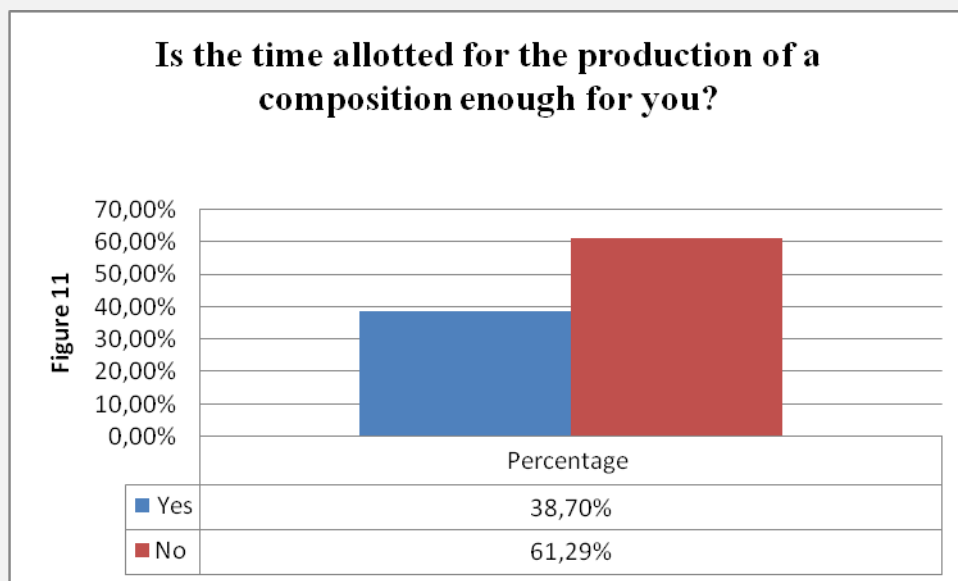
**Table Ten: Using Teacher’s Feedback in Writing**

It is obvious from the graph above that most of the students (58.06%) state that they always use their teacher feedback in writing. However (35.48%) say “sometimes” and, only (6.45%) who say “no”. Teaching/learning process usually implies the teacher’s feedback and majority of our subjects in our study appreciate their teacher’s feedback in learning writing process.

**Q 11: Is the time allotted for the production of a composition enough for you?**

**Table Eleven: Students’ Perception about the Time of composition**

	yes	No
Number of Students	24	38



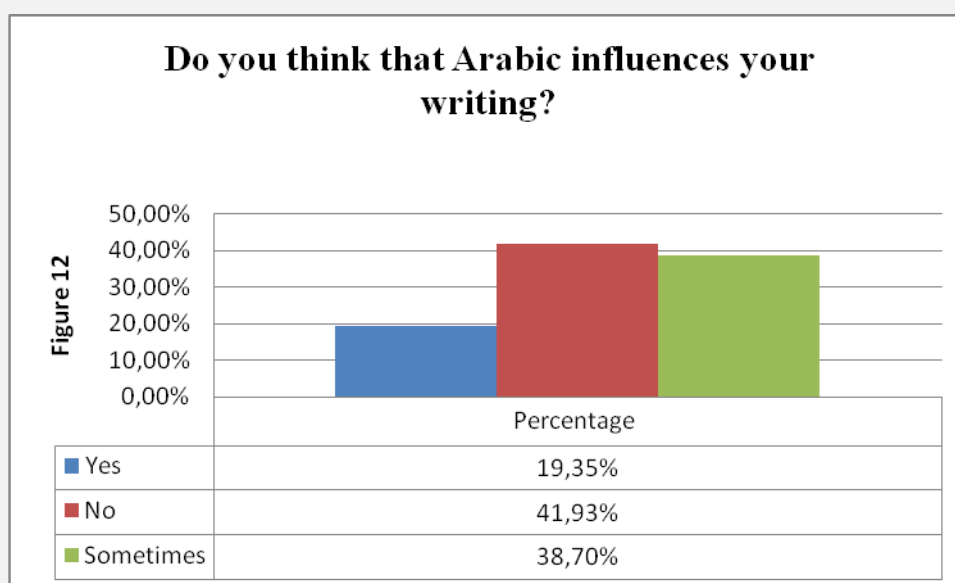
**Figure Eleven: Students’ Perception about the Time of composition**

These items of information come to investigate whether the time allotted for the production of a composition enough for students. A look at the table shows that the majority disagree (61.29%). However (38.70%) say that time allotted is sufficient.

Students suggest extending the time of the composition because; they claim that they would produce better pieces of writing if more adequate time was allotted. They need time to plan their thoughts, produce well-structured language regarding methodology and all different features of writing; grammar punctuation vocabularies and so on, and finally they also need some time to proofread.

**Q 12: Do you think that Arabic influences your writing?****Table Twelve: Impact of the First Language (Arabic)**

	Yes	No	Sometimes
Number of Students	12	26	24

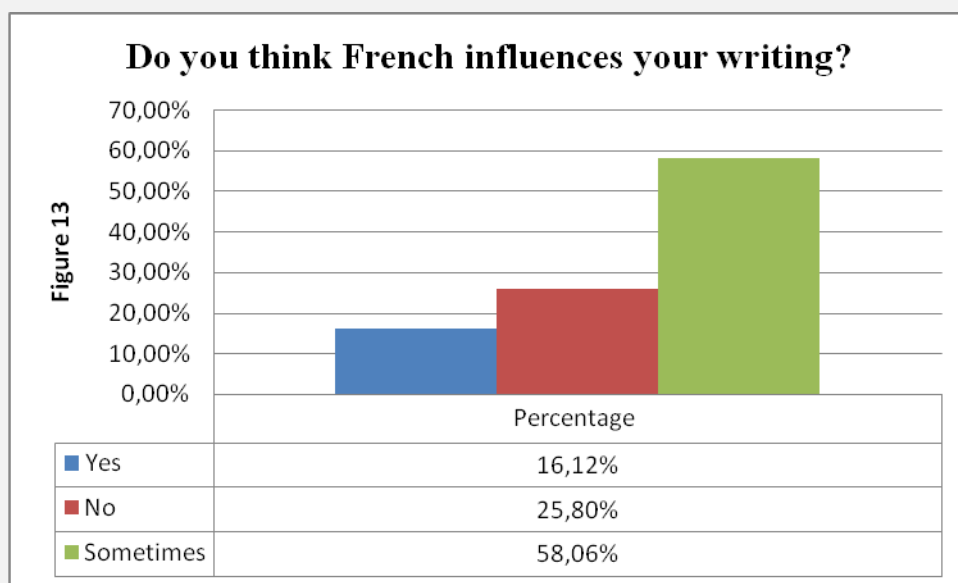
**Figure Twelve: Impact of the First Language (Arabic)**

Regarding students' answers, (41.93%) say that Arabic does not influence their writing in English, while (38.70%) students state that sometimes it does so. The remaining (19.35%) students respond that Arabic influences their writing. The Arabic language which is considered the mother tongue (MT) and the first language (L1) to be acquired seem to have an impact on student writing since, (38.70%) of respondents declared that it effects their writing.

**Q 13: Do you think French influences your writing?**

**Table Thirteen: Impact of the second Language (French)**

	yes	No	Sometimes
Number of Students	10	16	36



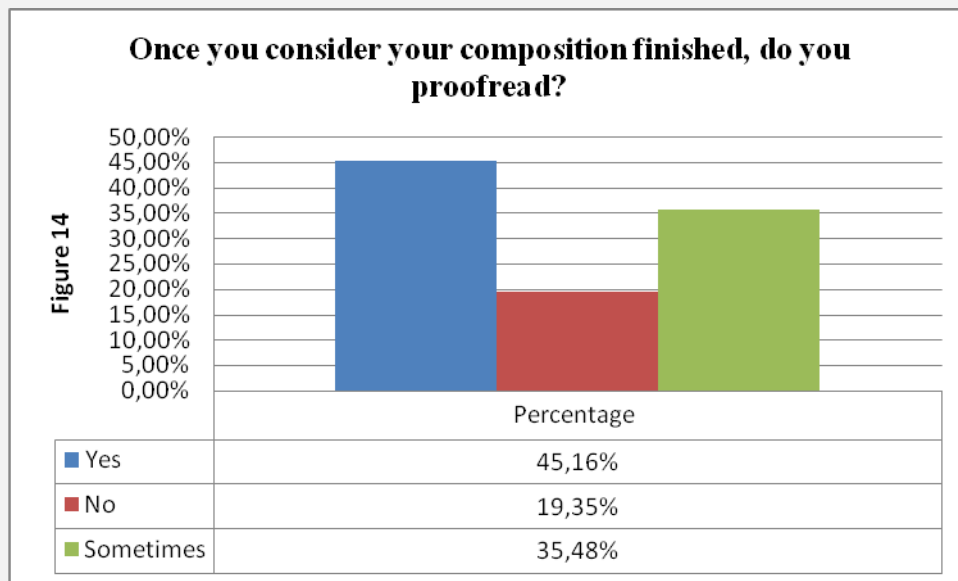
**Figure Thirteen: Impact of the second Language (French)**

As the figure shows, about (58.06%) of the respondents say that “sometimes” French influences their writing. However, (25.80%) of the students say “no”. Only (16.12%) students claim that it affects their writing. French as the second language (L2) has also an influence on students. They claim that sometimes this language unconsciously integrates within their writing in English because of the constant use.

**Q 14: Once you consider your composition finished, do you proofread?**

**Table Fourteen: Proofreading after Finishing Composition**

	yes	No	Sometimes
Number of Students	28	12	22



**Figure Fourteen: Proofreading after Finishing Composition**

According to the table above, we can notice that the highest percentage of students (35.48%) claim that they proofread when they consider their composition finished. Others (45.16%) show that they sometimes do so, and (19.35%) of the students say “never”.

Many students who do not usually proofread, they refer to the lack of enough time allotted for the exam.



**Discussion**

On the basis of the analysis of the students' questionnaire, we note that:

1. According to the findings, the students seem to have serious problems that hinder them from producing a good academic written performance in writing relevant to various factors; lack in methodology, inability to produce correct sentences, lack of time, also lack of reading which is considered to be highly connected to the development of writing skill.
2. The students' questionnaire translates that writing is not an easy task for the respondents compared to other skills; it needs motivation, constant training and the teacher's feedback.
3. Students feel afraid to write as claimed by the majority of respondents because they suffer from a lack of confidence and self-esteem towards writing. Besides, they feel incapable and far from the required level.
4. (EELs) have also a problem of mother tongue (MT) and second language SL affecting their writing. Thus, they need to be aware of it.

### **3.4 Teachers' Questionnaire**

#### **3.4.1 Aim of the Questionnaire**

The aim behind designing this questionnaire, which is oriented to teachers, is to extort and gather sufficient information for the study.

#### **3.4.2 Administration of the Questionnaire**

The target sample of this study consists of all teachers who have taught written expression in the department of English at the University of Adrar. The questionnaire was handed out to fourteen teachers however, only twelve teachers have handed back their questionnaire. Thus, our sample contains a total of twelve teachers. They co-operated with our work and we feel very grateful to their comprehension.

#### **3.4.3 Description of the Questionnaire**

The teachers' questionnaire is made up of fifteen elements. It involves different types of questions: "closed" and "open-ended" questions. Closed questions require the teacher to answer by 'Yes' or 'No' or ticking up the right answers from a set of options and open-ended questions which require from them to give their personal opinions or background information about the intended subject.

3.5 Data Collection & Analysis

Section 1: Personal Information.

Q 1: Degree(s) held:

Table One: Teachers’ Academic Degree

	Licence / B.A	Magister / M.A	Doctorate / Ph.D
Number of teachers	0	7	5

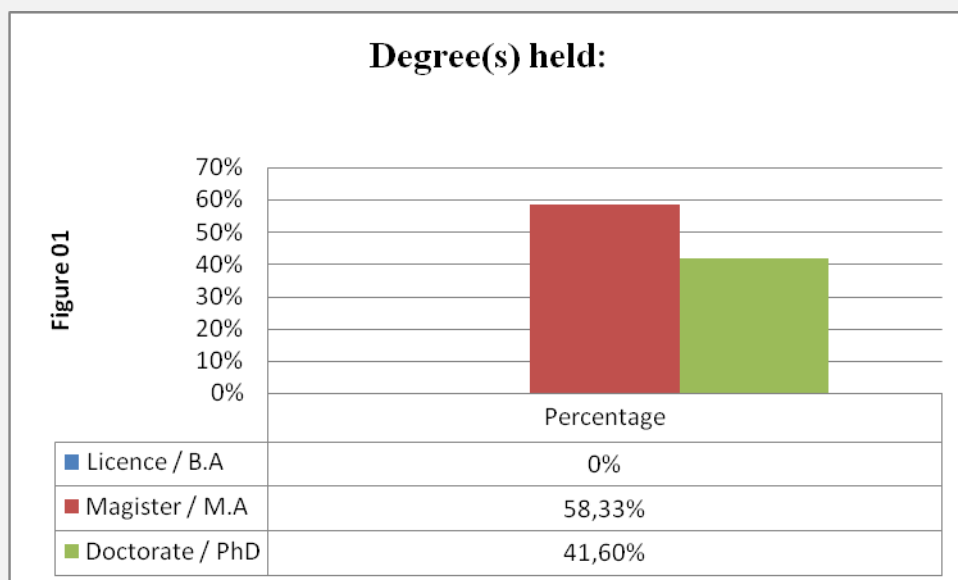


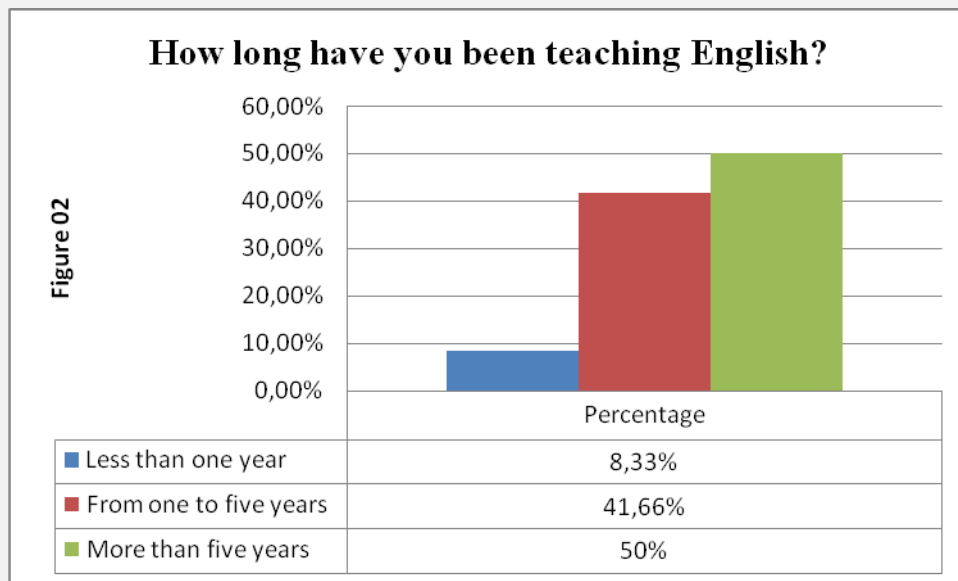
Figure One: Teachers’ Academic Degree

As the figure indicates, the majority of the teachers have got a Magister (58.33%) unlike to those who have a degree of Doctorate (41.6 %). However, no teacher teaches with a BA degree in this department. We believe that our sample is as representative as possible for the population to which it is designed.

**Q 2: How long have you been teaching English?**

**Table Two: Experience in Teaching**

	Less than one year	From one to five years	More than five years
Number of teachers	1	5	6



**Figure two: Experience in Teaching**

As shown in this figure, the most experienced teachers have been teaching written expression for more than five years (50%) which indicates that the sample we have chosen is meaningfully representative.

## Section 2: Teachers' Perception of the Writing Skill.

Q 3: What is a good writing according to teachers?

Table Three: Teachers' Perception about the Writing Skill

	Correct grammar	Correct Spelling	Good idea	All
Number of Teachers	2	0	0	10

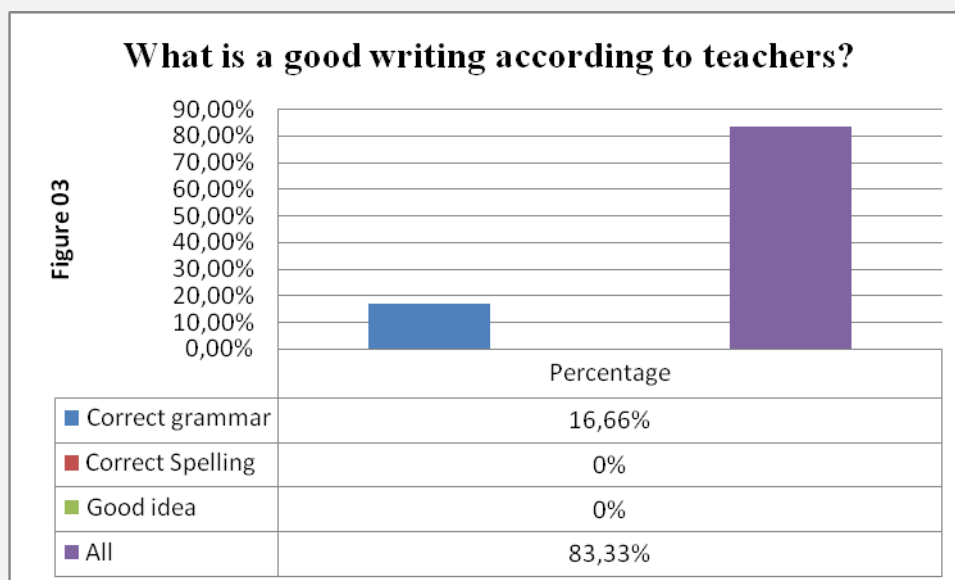


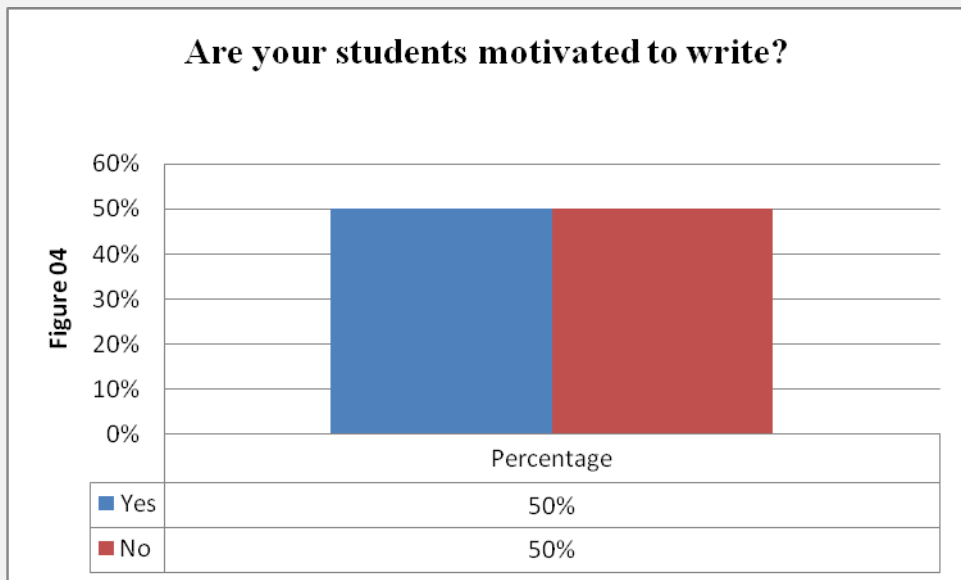
Figure Three: Teachers' Perception about the Writing Skill

According to (83.33%) of teachers, good writing is not only correct grammar or correct spelling or god idea but rather all of the mentioned aspects. Teachers are aware that writing is not one single feature but, rather good academic writing is the combination of many aspects, structure, grammar, punctuation, vocabularies, methodology, and so on.

**Q 4: Are your students motivated to write?**

**Table Four: Students’ Motivation**

	yes	No
Number of Teachers	6	6



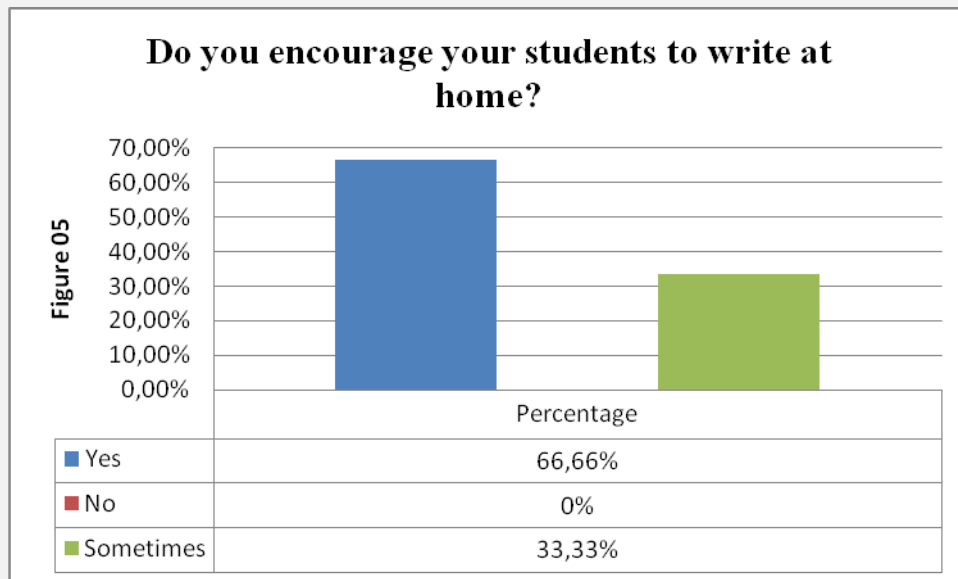
**Figure Four: Students’ Motivation**

This figure translates the opinion of teachers about whether their students are motivated to write or not, translating into (50%) agree that their students are motivated. Nevertheless; the other (50%) of teachers disagree.

**Q 5: Do you encourage your students to write at home?**

**Table Five: Encouragement of Students to Writ at Home**

	yes	No	sometimes
Number of teachers	8	0	4



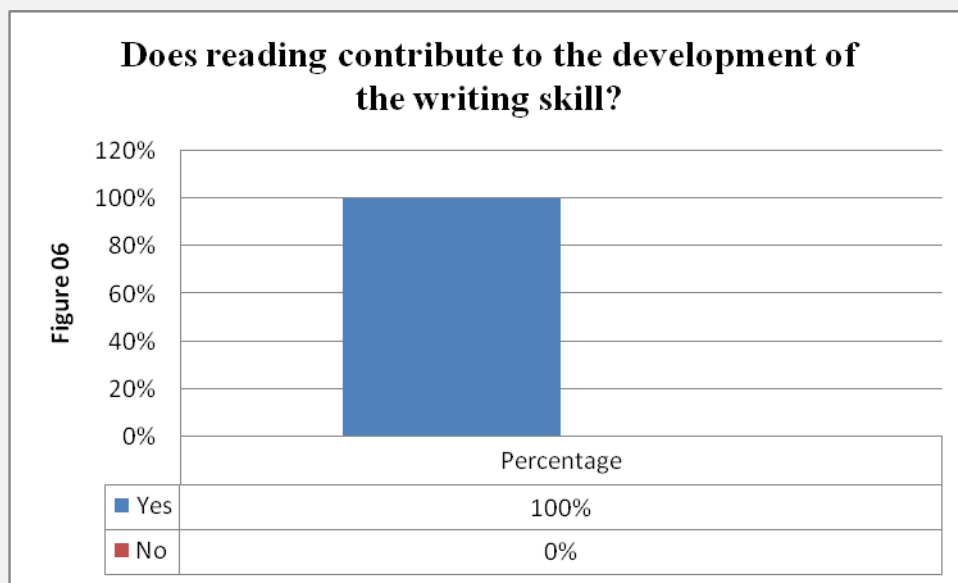
**Figure five: Encouragement of Students to Writ at Home**

According to this figure (66.66%) of teachers encourage their students to write at home, (33.33%) say with sometimes. Most of the respondents claim that they motivate and encourage their students to write as much as possible because they are very much aware that writing implies a constant training.

**Q 6: Does reading contribute to the development of the writing skill?**

**Table Six: Contribution of Reading to Writing**

	yes	No
Number of Teachers	12	0



**Figure Six: Contribution of Reading to Writing**

According to figure eight all teachers (100%) agree that reading contribute to the development of the writing skill, which accordingly confirms the strong connection between writing and reading.

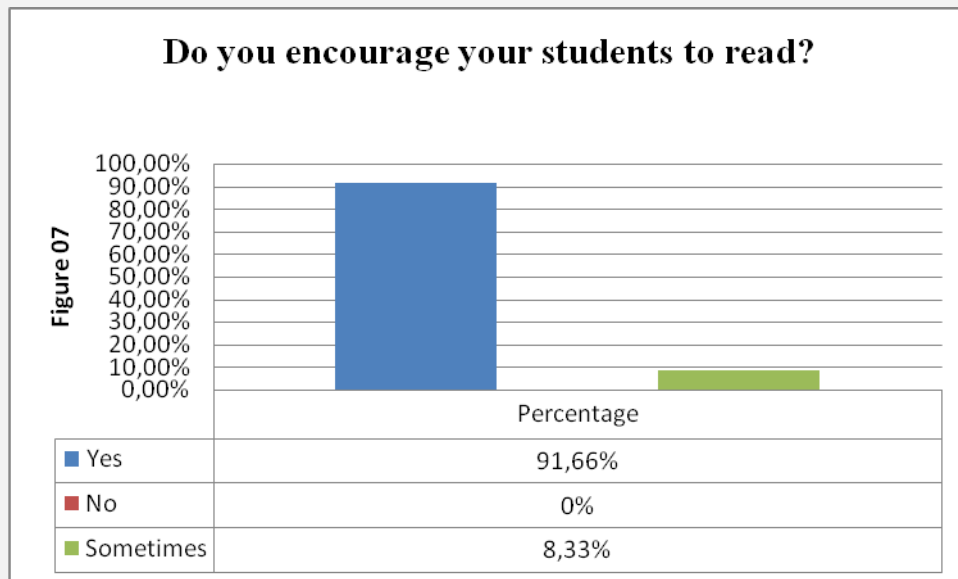
As shown above it is clear that teachers believe reading contribute to the enhancement of the writing skill because constant reading enriches students with more knowledge, more new words, also it gives them more confidence when writing.



**Q 7: Do you encourage your students to read?**

**Table Seven: Encouragement of Student to Read**

	Yes	No	Sometimes
Number of teachers	11	0	1



**Figure Seven: Encouragement of Student to Read**

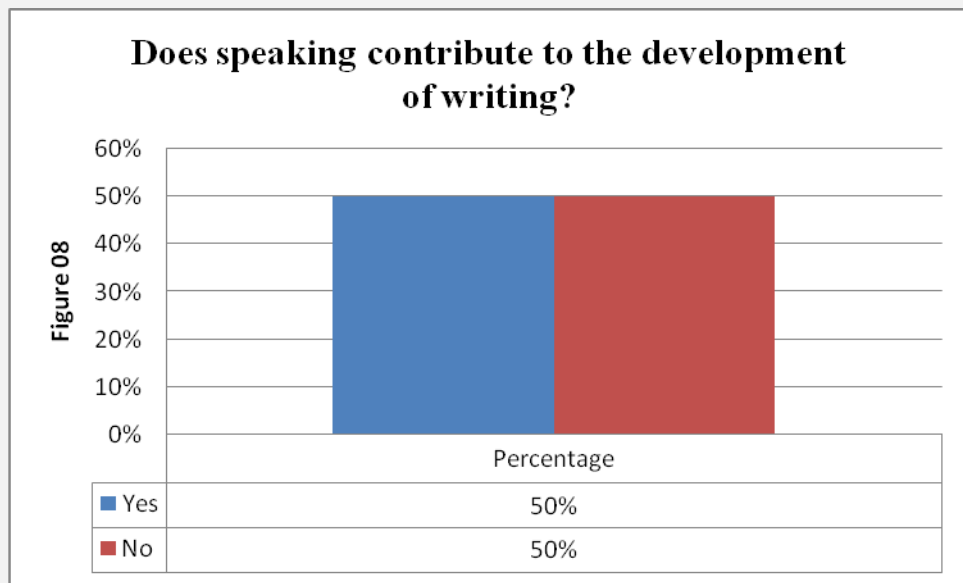
A large number of teachers (91.66%) encourage their students to read at home and only (8.33%) the other teachers who claim sometimes.

Since reading is strongly connected to writing, the majority of our subjects encourage their students to read and read because it builds their writing competence and raise their self-esteem.

**Q 8: Does speaking contribute to the development of writing?:**

**Table Eight: Contribution of Speaking to the Writing Skill**

	Yes	No
Number of Teachers	6	6



**Figure Eight: Contribution of Speaking to the Writing Skill**

Figure ten translates (50%) of teachers agree that speaking contribute to the development of writing skill the others (50%) disagree. The productive skill speaking is not the same as writing. However, some teachers claim that it contributes to the development of writing since speaking includes producing language.

Q 9: Are you satisfied with your students’ level of writing?:

Table Nine: Teachers’ Satisfaction about their Students Level in Writing

	yes	No
Number of Teachers	1	11

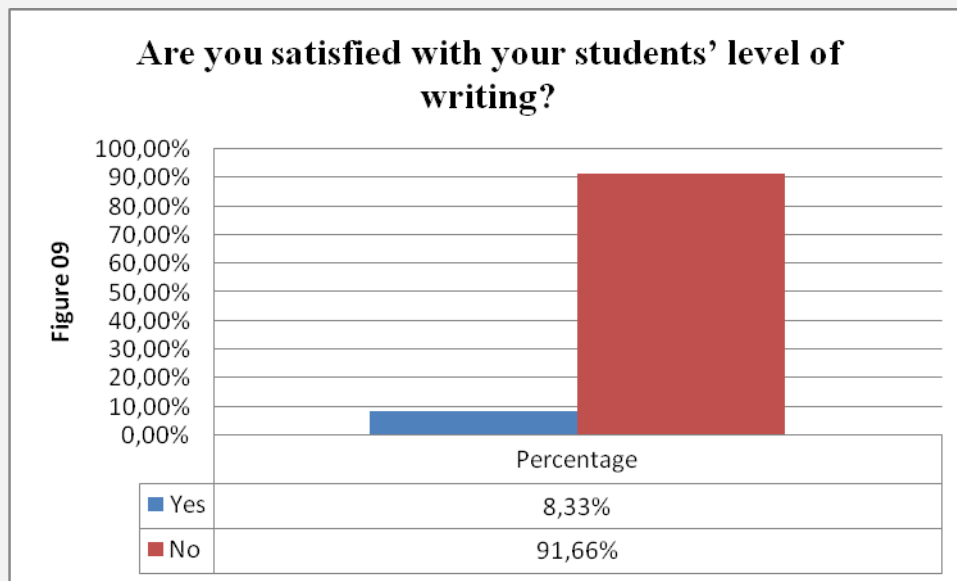


Figure Nine: Teachers’ Satisfaction about their Students Level in Writing

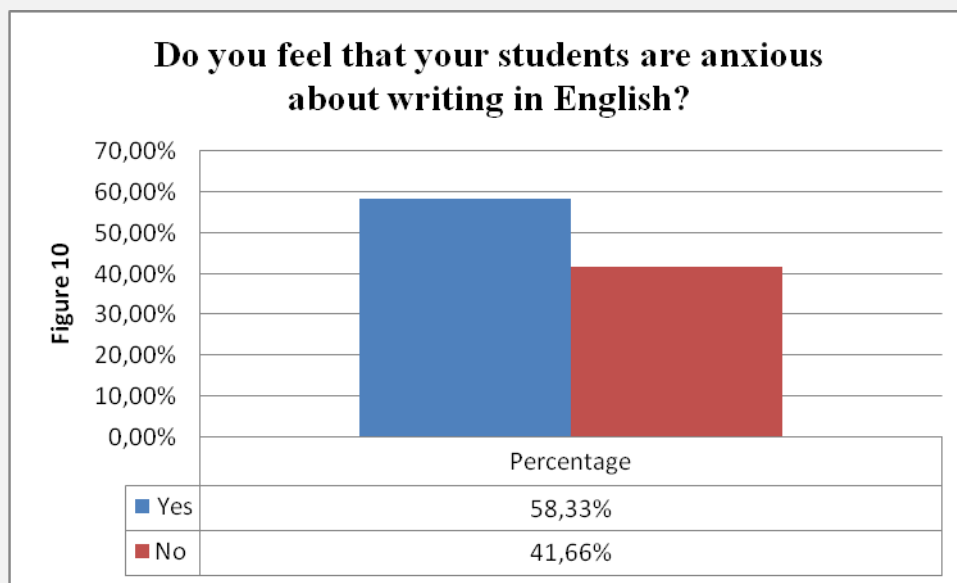
The majority of teachers (91.66%) claim that they are not satisfied with the level of their students in writing. On the other hand, only (8.33%) say the opposite.

Some teachers refer to the low performance of their students to lack of self-esteem and reading, whereas some others refer to lack of training on writing.

**Q 10: Do you feel that your students are anxious about writing in English?**

**Table Ten: Teachers’ Perception about Anxiety in Writing**

	Yes	No
Number of Teachers	7	5



**Figure Ten: Teachers’ Perception about Anxiety in Writing**

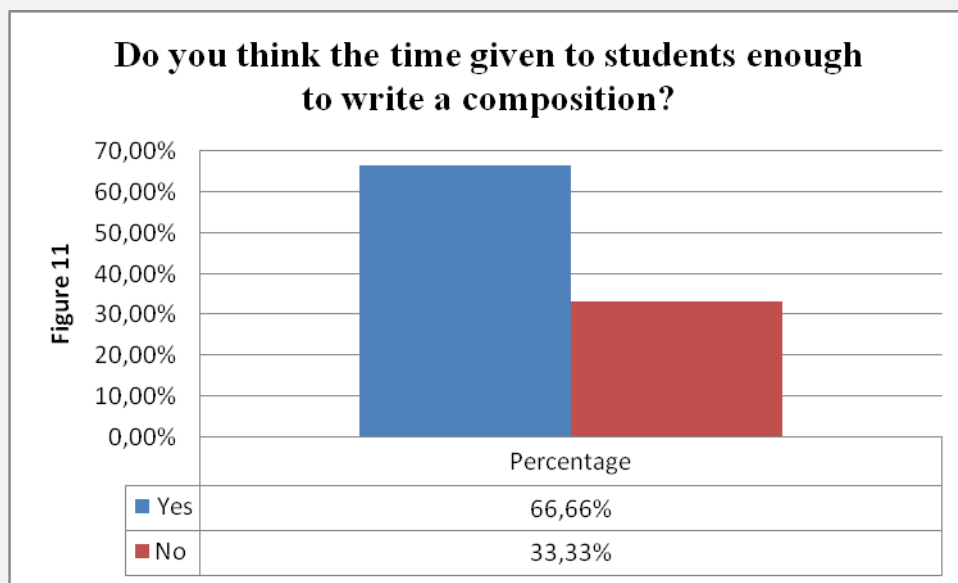
Regarding teachers’ answers, about (58.33%) of teachers claim that their students are anxious to writing in English, however (41.66%) of teachers do not feel that their students have anxiety when writing.

Reasons behind this anxiety are estimated by teachers as lack of self-confidence and self-esteem also students being unable to express themselves in English.

**Q 11: Do you think the time given to students enough to write a composition?:**

**Table Eleven: Teachers' Perception about Time of Composition**

	Yes	No
Number of Teachers	8	4

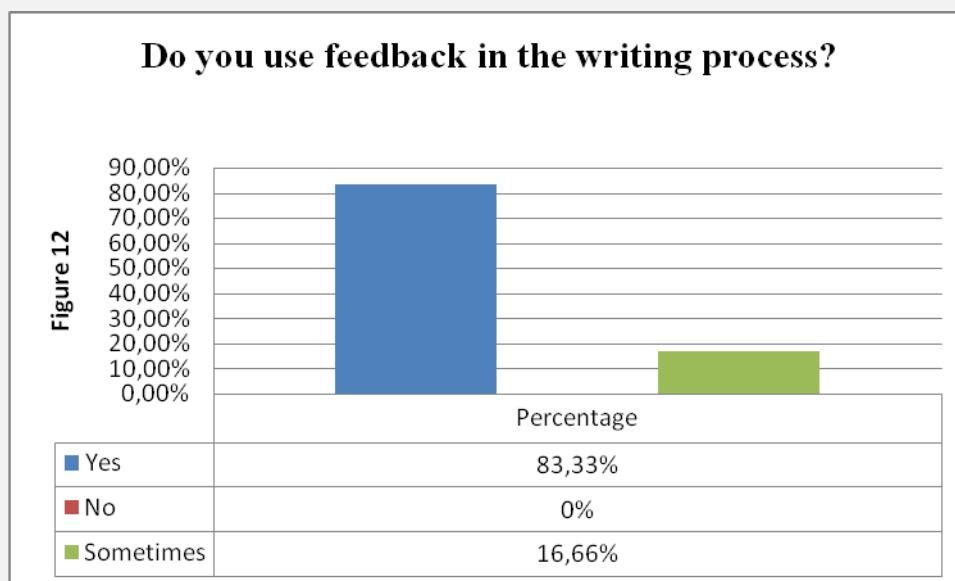


**Figure Eleven: Teachers' Perception about Time of Composition**

Figure thirteen demonstrates teachers' opinion about the time given to students to write a composition. (66.66%) say that it is enough time but (33.33%) of them said the contrary. Most of teachers think that time given to write an academic composition is not enough because students have consider every writing aspect besides they need more adequate time for planning and proofreading their composition.

**Q 12: Do you use feedback in the writing process?****Table Twelve: Using Feedback in Teaching Writing Process**

	Yes	No	Sometimes
Number of teachers	10	0	2

**Figure Twelve: Using Feedback in Teaching Writing Process**

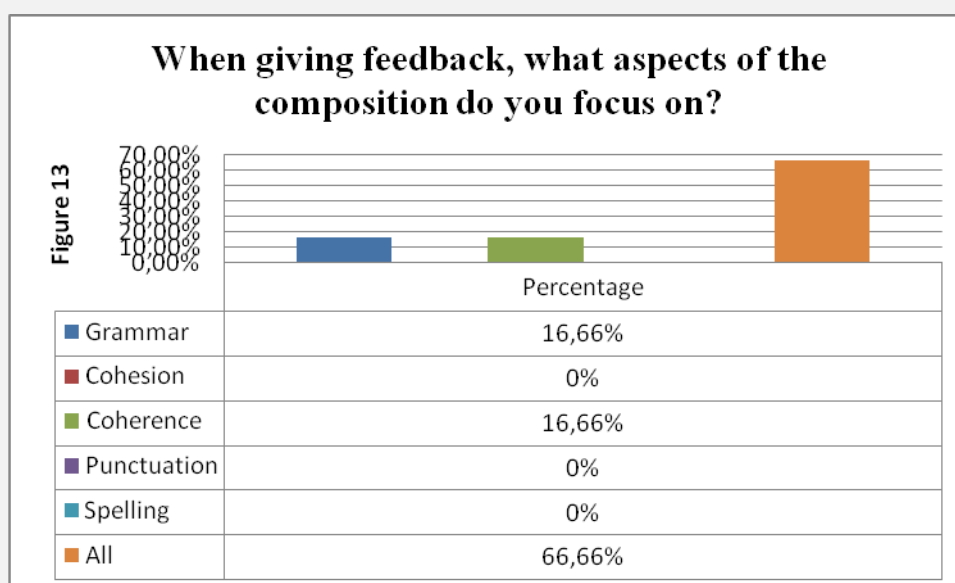
We can notice the highest percentage of teachers (83.33%) use feedback in the writing process, whereas other teachers who claim they give feedbacks sometimes are (16.66%).

The majority of our respondents claim that they often use feedback in class when teaching writing, because it very prominent for learners as they can discover their mistakes and lacks in such when doing feedback.

**Q 13: When giving feedback, what aspects of the composition do you focus on?**

**Table Thirteen: Target Aspects of Writing When Doing Feedback**

	Grammar	Cohesion	Coherence	Punctuation	Spelling	All
Number of Teachers	2	0	2	0	0	8



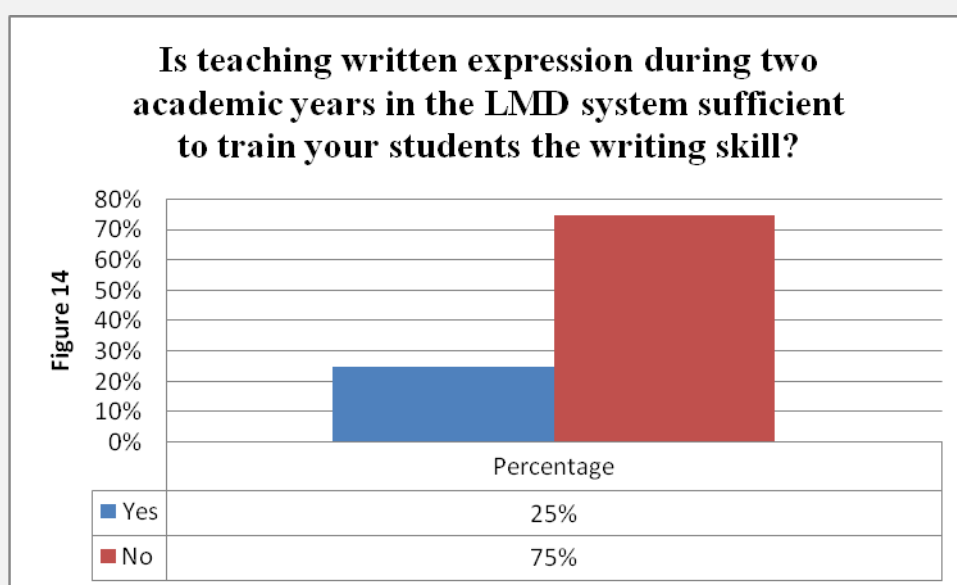
**Figure Thirteen: Target Aspects of Writing When Doing Feedback**

Figure fourteen shows percentage of different writing aspects that teachers focus on when giving feedback. (16.66%) of teachers focus on grammar, (16.66%) focus on the coherence, (66.66%) take all mentioned into consideration. Most teachers consider all different aspects of writing when doing feedback because they all contribute to good academic writing.

**Q 14: Is teaching written expression during two academic years in the LMD system sufficient to train your students the writing skill?**

**Table Fourteen: Teachers’ Perception about Duration of Teaching “Written Expression” in LMD System**

	Yes	No
Number of Teachers	3	9



**Figure Fourteen Teachers’ Perception about Duration of Teaching “Written Expression” in LMD System**

The figure above illustrates that, (75%) most of teachers who were given the questionnaire agree that teaching written expression during two academic years in the (LMD) system is insufficient to train students the writing skill. Nevertheless, (25%) of other teachers disagree.

Some of teachers suggest teaching of writing even to third year and post-graduate students (master classes) as they also seem to have problems as pre-graduate students.



**Discussion**

Analyzing the teachers' questionnaire has revealed many facts on teachers' attitudes towards teaching writing.

1. In fact, approximately all teachers consider the writing skill as a major concern in teaching. This implies that teachers are aware of their students' needs in terms of developing their writing proficiency.
2. Most teachers' state that reading is highly related to writing and it contributes to the enhancement of writing skill.
3. Teachers claim that their students' level in writing is far from the standard required level and the majority of them still struggle with simple sentence structure.
4. Students are afraid to write because they are aware of the fact that they are not up to the standard level; they lack lexis, grammar structure and methodology.
5. Motivation is very important for the learners to make them interested in reading as to encourage them to write.
6. The schedule of written expression is insufficient and should be included in the third year.

**3.6 Conclusion**

All in all, the results revealed in this study concerning the problems of writing in EFL classes are related to both teachers and learners. This means that a teacher can play a significant role in the student's motivation towards writing as well as the otherwise effect. Furthermore, the writing skill requires the other skills to develop like reading and speaking as they are strongly connected.

## General Conclusion

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The present work aimed at inspecting the issues behind the poorly produced written pieces of English (BA) students at the University of Adrar. In order to perform a thorough investigation, questionnaires were handed out to teachers and students alike. The teachers' questionnaire was given to those who have been teaching English for a long time to make sure that their answers were the product of many years of observation and evaluation of learners' need, distresses and hardships, and to examine their opinions about the writing skill. The students' questionnaire, on the other hand, was intended to LMD students of English to gather enough data from the learners since they are highly concerned in our research. We also intended, through students' questionnaire, to explore the students' evaluation of language skills. Furthermore, this questionnaire aimed at examining the awareness of the writing skill.

The results of the questionnaire revealed that, the students clearly struggle with their writing competence. This is due to several factors, among which lack of confidence, anxiety, and mainly demotivation by certain teachers. That, and the teachers' questionnaire results confirmed our hypothesis that English LMD student at the University of Adrar still have not achieved an acceptable level at writing. One major factor is the shortage of the time allotted for the "written expression" class. Some teachers suggested that it should be extended.

This study highlights the significance of the writing skill in language teaching/learning process. Through this research, we believe that teaching the writing skill is essential for promoting (EFL) learners because it determines their academic achievement.

The present study is a total of three chapters. The first and the second chapters are the descriptive part which is the review of related literature. As for the third chapter, we have administered a self-completion questionnaire one for students and another one for teachers.

The first chapter mainly sketches some of the theoretical issues related to the nature of writing. The second chapter reveals the major factors behind the students' poor written performance. The third chapter is concerned with analysis of the obtained data gathered from teachers' and the students' questionnaires.

To sum, the obtained results answered the questions raised previously. The positive findings revealed in this study show that:

## General Conclusion

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(1) Learners need to be aware of the significance of learning the writing skill; (2) teacher's responsibility is to motivate their students to write and help them to enhance their level in written performance; and (3) both teachers and learners should be aware of the necessary skill for effective learning to take place. Overall, this study is useful not only for the learners helping them to improve their written production, but also for teachers to promote the notion that motivation is as essential as delivering a certain lecture.

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## The Teachers' Questionnaire

Dear teachers,

We would be so grateful if you could answer the following questions for the sake of gathering information about a research work on the writing skill. Please, tick (✓) the appropriate box that corresponds to your answer.

Note: More than one answer is sometimes possible.

1)-Degree or qualifications? Licence / B.A  Magister / M.A  Doctorate / Ph.D

2)-How long have you been teaching Written Expression at the university?

a-Less than one year  b-From one to five years  c-More than five years

3)- As far as concerned, Good writing is:

a- Correct grammar  b- Correct Spelling  c- Good idea

4)-Are your students motivated to write? Yes  No

5)-Do you encourage your students to write at home? Yes  No  Sometimes

6)-Does reading contribute to the development of the writing skill? Yes  No

7)-Do you encourage your students to read? Yes  No  Sometimes

8)-Does speaking contribute to the development of writing? Yes  No

9)-Are you satisfied with your students' level of writing? Yes  No

If "No", please, explain why?

.....  
.....  
.....

10)-Do you feel that your students are anxious about writing in English?

Yes  No

If "Yes ", please, explain why?

.....  
.....

.....  
11)-Do you think the time given to students enough to write a composition? Yes  No

12)-Do you use feedback in the writing process? Yes  No  Sometimes

13)-When doing feedback, what aspects of the composition you focus on:

a- Grammm  b- cohesion  c- coherence  d- Punctuation  e- Spelling

14)-Is teaching written expression during two academic years in the LMD system sufficient to train your students the writing skill?

Yes  No

If "No ", please, explain why?

.....  
.....  
.....

15)-Please, add any suggestion(s) you see relevant to the aim of this questionnaire

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**Thank you for your cooperation**

## The Students' Questionnaire

Dear students,

I would be so grateful if you could answer the following questions about your attitudes towards the writing skill. Please, tick (✓) the appropriate box that corresponds to your answer; more than one answer is sometimes possible.

Note: Try to answer the following questions as honestly as possible

1)-Gender: Male  Female

2)-How could you appreciate your level in English?

a-Medium  b-Good  c-Excellent

3)-In your opinion, which skill is the most difficult?

a-Listening  b- Reading  c-Speaking  d- Writing

4)-Do you find the module of "Written Expression" interesting? Yes  No

5)- Are you satisfied with your level in writing? Yes  No

6)- How could you appreciate your level in writing?

a-Bad  b-Medium  c-Good  d-Very good

7)-When writing which aspects are difficult for you?

a - Grammar  -b -Coherence  c -Punctuation  d -Spelling

8)-Do you feel afraid to write? Yes  No

If yes, is it because you:

a-Worry about making grammatical mistakes?

b-Have few or no ideas?

c-Fear teacher's negative feedback?

9)- Are you motivated to write? Yes  No

10)- Do you use your teacher's feedback in the writing process? Yes  No

11)- Is the time allotted for the production of a composition enough for you?

If "No", what do you suggest?



.....  
.....  
.....

12)- Do you think that Arabic influences your writing? Yes  No

13)- Do you think French influences your writing? Yes  No

14)- Once you consider your composition finished, do you proofread? Yes  No

15)-Please, add any suggestion(s) you see relevant to the aim of this  
questionnaire

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**Thank you for your cooperation**