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**First year English Students’ writing level of English:
between the Predicted level and Real level ,case study
:Student at Adrar University**

**Dissertation Submitted to the Department of English in partial Fulfilment of the
Requirement of Master Degree in linguistics and Didactics**

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Dedication

**I dedicate this work to my dear
Parents ,and all the members of my family and to
my dearest friends
To the soul of my nephew Rabeh Abdelchakour
Allah blesses his soul.**

Abstract

Learning a language is based on mastering its four skills. Writing is one of those skills; it is defined as translating one's ideas and thoughts into a written language using language symbols. Scholars agreed that learning to write is not an easy task, but rather a difficult challenge because it is a complex process governed by a number of rules and conditions such as using proper punctuation, using appropriate language, and adhering to grammatical rules. Learning writing skills is done in stages with students at each level learning some specific writing rules based on their mental abilities in order to reach a certain level toward mastering the writing skill completely. So, before they begin to teach, teachers must create a course plan that includes a predicted level that they hope to achieve with their students. The current study is based on the hypothesis that the real writing level of English first year students is significantly lower than the predicted level. The goal of this research is to investigate the true level of students. For this purpose, we will first investigate the Algerian English educational curriculum of students in their final year of secondary school. In order to get an idea of their writing predicted level, this is an important step in our research because students in their final year of secondary school are those who will be first year university students. In order to know their writing level during secondary school will help us to examine their present level at university and compare between what is real and what is predicted. To make this study, two basic research instruments were used. First, the questionnaire was handed in to students of English first year to collect information about their written production. Second, the students' exam papers assessment, in which we get a clear idea about the students' writing errors and performance.

The identification of the students' real level of writing can help teachers to develop their ways in teaching the writing skill inside classrooms. It also helps at raising the quality of the written production.

KEY WORDS: language , writing , grammar, English.

ملخص:

يعتمد تعلم اللغة على إتقان مهاراتها الأربع. الكتابة هي إحدى تلك المهارات. يتم تعريفه على أنه ترجمة الأفكار والأفكار إلى لغة مكتوبة باستخدام رموز اللغة. اتفق العلماء على أن تعلم الكتابة ليس بالمهمة السهلة ، ولكنه بالأحرى تحد صعب لأنه عملية معقدة يحكمها عدد من القواعد والشروط مثل استخدام علامات الترقيم المناسبة ، واستخدام اللغة المناسبة ، والالتزام بالقواعد النحوية. يتم تعلم مهارات الكتابة على مراحل مع تعلم الطلاب في كل مستوى بعض قواعد الكتابة المحددة بناءً على قدراتهم العقلية من أجل الوصول إلى مستوى الستارة نحو إتقان مهارة الكتابة تمامًا. لذلك ، قبل البدء في التدريس ، يجب على المعلمين إنشاء خطة دورة تتضمن مستوى متوقعًا يأملون في تحقيقه مع طلابهم. تعتمد الدراسة الحالية على فرضية أن مستوى الكتابة الحقيقي لطلاب السنة الأولى باللغة الإنجليزية أقل بكثير من المستوى المتوقع ، والهدف من هذا البحث هو التحقق من المستوى الحقيقي للطلاب. لهذا الغرض ، سنبحث أولاً في المناهج التعليمية الجزائرية للغة الإنجليزية للطلاب في السنة الأخيرة من المدرسة الثانوية. من أجل الحصول على فكرة عن المستوى المتوقع لكتابتهم ، فهذه خطوة مهمة في بحثنا لأن الطلاب في السنة الأخيرة من المدرسة الثانوية هم من سيكونون طلاب السنة الأولى بالجامعة. من أجل معرفة مستوى كتابتهم خلال المرحلة الثانوية سوف يساعدنا في فحص مستواهم الحالي في الجامعة والمقارنة بين ما هو حقيقي وما هو متوقع. ولإجراء هذه الدراسة ، تم استخدام أداتين أساسيتين للبحث: أولاً ، تم تسليم الاستبيان لطلاب السنة الأولى في اللغة الإنجليزية لجمع المعلومات حول إنتاجهم الكتابي. ثانيًا ، تقييم أوراق امتحان الطلاب ، حيث نحصل على فكرة واضحة عن الأخطاء الكتابية للطلاب وأدائهم.

يمكن أن يساعد تحديد المستوى الحقيقي للكتابة لدى الطلاب المعلمين على تطوير طرقهم في تدريس مهارة الكتابة داخل الفصول الدراسية. كما أنه يساعد في رفع جودة الإنتاج المكتوب.

الكلمات المفتاحية: اللغة ، الكتابة ، القواعد ، اللغة الإنجليزية .

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General Introduction

General Introduction

General Introduction

Statement of the problem:

Learning writing skill can be seen as a complex process, especially when it is taught in a foreign language like English. English has become a world communication symbol between different people with different nationalities despite its hardness. Teachers of foreign languages have their ways of teaching writing skill to EFL students since writing is the important step throughout mastering any language. so they follow the curricula map that are been translated inside scholar books toward guiding students to reach the predicted writing level, the level which is expected from them after they go by all the textbook lessons and exercises. In the other hand, students also have a responsibility on their writing level, they have to respond to their teachers' instructions to achieve the goals behind teaching such lessons of writing, indeed; the aims of writing tasks are mentioned at the English textbook. Moreover; the goals show us the writing abilities that students should master through learning. However, writing is such a hard task for learners. Bell and Burnaby (1984) cited in Nunan (1989: 36) write the following passage concerning the difficulty of writing: 'Writing is an extremely complex cognitive activity in which the writer is required to demonstrate control of a number of variables simultaneously. At the sentence level these include control of content, format, sentence structure, vocabulary, punctuation and letter for action. Beyond the sentence, the writer must be able to structure and integrate information into cohesive and coherent paragraphs and texts' (Dr.Ibrahim Mohamed Alfaki.2015.p6). Thus; they always face difficulties and commit several errors. Basically; their weaknesses are due to different causes. During this research we are going to investigate the writing level of English first year students to find some answers to our research questions.

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Research aims:

This research aims at investigating the writing level of students, and showing whether their real writing level reflect the predicted level or no; It also aims at exploring the students' weaknesses at academic writing and looks for the causes of it.

Research questions:

The study answers the following questions:

- Does the real writing level of first year English students reflect the predicted level?
- What are the different writing weaknesses of first year students?

Research Hypothesis

This study is based on a hypothesis that the writing level of students does not reflect the predicted level; because they keep doing unacceptable mistakes at their writing papers, for that reason we have to investigate all the writing problems of students to develop their writing skill, and this certainly will increase their academic achievements.

Research Methodology

In the study of our research we have chosen the mixed-method which gather between the quantitative and qualitative methods; we have collected data by doing a survey research and checking the students' exams papers to know what are the different writing weaknesses and mistakes that they have; in collecting those information we have used the quantitative method which help us to come up with some ideas about students' writing level, and we have explained and tested our results to know the reasons behind it.

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Means of research

The data are collected through an analysis of English first year students' questionnaire and the assessment of their corrected exam papers of Anglo-Saxon subject. The questionnaire is given to the students to identify their attitudes towards the writing skill, and to know their weaknesses in academic writing, also, to discover their plans in developing their written production. Whereas the exam paper assessment aims to appraise the real writing level of students and go deeper in examining the errors types that they have.

Structure of study:

Our study consists of three chapters. The first two chapters are the literature review, while the third chapter includes the empirical part of the study.

Chapter one is titled 'Algerian educational system and curricula', it deals with the status of English language teaching in the Algerian educational system during the past and at the present. Moreover; it focuses on the English language curricula of third year secondary school through mentioning different over views, the over views that our educational system focuses on at teaching English in school such as: the way the language is been thought to pupils; the main points that teachers take into consideration while teaching English specially in teaching writing process; the time allowed to teach English at school; the textbook's content and units' organisation; and finally the goals of each unit specifically the goals that are related to writing. In addition; this chapter provides us with a number of definitions from various perspectives concerning the concepts of education, curricula, and syllabus. The purpose behind discussing such concepts is to figure out the expected writing level that every pupil of the final year of secondary school should master.

Chapter two is titled 'First year English students' committed mistakes in writing'; it gives some discussions of the basic elements of writing process, and gives explanations of the main problems and difficulties that students face while

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writing. By the end of the chapter; we investigate the students' committed mistakes in writing and the reasons behind it.

Chapter three is the final part in our research. It is the only practical part which is devoted to the investigation of the obtained results. By means of a questionnaire addressed to first year English students as well as it dealt with the description of the questionnaire and the population of the study, in addition to the questionnaire; this chapter devoted the analysis of students' exam papers' assessment in which we examined the students' papers carefully, in order to get a clear idea about their real level of writing, and to collect data about the students' major committed mistakes in writing.

Chapter 01 :

Algerian educational system and curricula

Introduction

1. Definition of Education
2. The rule of the educational system in Algeria
3. The world status of English
4. The status of English in Algeria
5. The curriculum
 - 5.1. Definition of curriculum
 - 5.2. Definition of syllabus
 - 5.3. Difference between syllabus and curriculum
 - 5.4. English in the curriculum
6. The English textbook of third year secondary school
 - 6.1. Definition of textbook
 - 6.2. The advantages and limitations of textbooks
 - 6.3. Third year Secondary school Textbook content
 - 6.4. Third year Textbook unit organization
 - 6.5. Third year Secondary school textbook's units goals in writing skill.

Introduction:

In Algeria, education is one of the main priorities. The Algerian government counts education as its first issue which needs double care and needs development. Education is compulsory in Algeria from the age of six. Like all countries, Algeria aims to develop its educational system by preparing appropriate curricula and design good textbooks which cover all needs of students in their different levels. However, it does not give English learning much importance as the other countries. Indeed, English in Algeria is considered as the second foreign language although it has a high status in the world.

This first chapter is titled “Algerian educational system and curricula” aims to investigate the status of English in the Algerian curricula , and examine the content , unites , and the organization of English third year secondary school textbook ,and states what are the goals of its units ,and finally to get an idea about the predicted writing level which is required from third year students of secondary school after studying textbook’s units .

1. Definition of education :

It is originally a latin word (educatio) that means the act of receiving or imparting systematic instruction, and acquiring knowledge. According to John Dewey (1978) education is a process that last along the human being life, it is everything along with growth; education itself has no final destination behind him. According to John education is not just a process of receiving knowledge inside classrooms, but it is much more than that, education is getting new knowledge about the whole life. It can take place inside and outside the classrooms.

The rule of educational system in Algeria:

From independence till now our government have been working hardly on education since it is the first step through development, The reform of educational system in Algeria came as a result of various complaints about the worse productivity in national education .As a result, the reform was started with the aim of increasing the system's productivity and adapting to the demands of modern society. There were two big projects launched one of them was The competency- *based* approach (Arab Sabrina.2017), this approach was first emerged in the united states in the 1970s; it focuses on teaching real life skills, moreover; it focuses on the outcome of learning rather than the process (Slimane BOUKHENTACHE.2020.p115). In addition; the pupil is taught to participate in the learning process by acting and creating knowledge on his own in this method. Its goal is to make learning more concrete and practical, with an emphasis on societal and daily integration.

2. The status of English in the world:

Foreign communication has become the global language in the world. It is the language of science, medicine, economic, and a key to technological development. About 400 million people have English as their first language. In this sense David Crystal states in his book *English as a global language*:

' it is inevitable that a global language will eventually come to be used by more people than any other language. English has already reached this stage. About a quarter of the world's population is already fluent or competent in English, and this figure is steadily growing''.

This means that English as a language being a necessity in this new world. Furthermore, English is nowadays taught as a second language in most countries. In other expression English is becoming the global language of this world (David Crystal. 1997.p.6).

3. The status of English in Algeria:

Algeria is a terrific country. However, most Algerians do not properly speak English in despite of its world status because the government requires them to learn the old colonial French. Indeed; they use French in different sides of life like in higher education; medicine; even in official documents. In the other hand, English has no chance inside the Algerian people daily life, in addition; they learn it just like a simple subject at school. As a result, Algeria is so far behind in English use in comparing with other countries in the world, especially, the countries of Africa. Due to the fact that Algerians are forced to speak French, there are few work chances in front of any English learner (Salem Zmali.5/18/2021/22:41).

4. The curriculum

From the educational perspective, the educational authorities conduct massive reforms in terms of syllabi and curricula

4.1. Definition of curriculum :

The word "curriculum" has a number of different meanings. Simply; it is the educational program of the school. It is also considered as '*the master plan for choosing a lesson design*' (David g Armstrong. 1989). Accordingly, B.Othanel smith (1957) states that '*curriculum is a sequence of potential experiences is set up in the school for the purpose of disciplining children and youth in group ways of thinking and acting*'; according to him curricula is taking too much effort and time to be created due to its importance in raising the quality of the learning outcome

4.2. Definition of syllabus:

Syllabus is the number of the topics that will be studied in a course. Hutchinson and Waters (1987:80) define syllabus as follows: '*At its simplest level a syllabus can be described as a statement of what is to be learnt. It reflects of language and linguistic performance*'. So, syllabus is like a lesson map that shows teachers what to be learned. Accordingly, Widdowson (1984) points out that '*The syllabus is simply a framework within which activities can be carried out: a teaching device to facilitate learning. In addition; It only becomes a threat to pedagogy when it is regarded as absolute rules for determining what is to be learned rather than points of reference from which bearings can be taken*'; which is the same idea with Hutchinson and Waters idea. (Mr.Toufik BOUAKEL.2017.P47).

4.3. Different between syllabus and curriculum :

Generally; Curriculum and syllabus are two of the most essential documents in the educational phase, they are two necessary elements in the teaching process. The ultimate aim of both is to coordinate and establish the proper relationship

between professors and students, as well as the roles and expectation of both parties. In a nutshell, the two documents are formal written outlines of the learning units: a curriculum for the overall program or course and a syllabus for smaller scales such as a particular topic. Easily understanding the curriculum and syllabus structure is critical if you intend to be interested in the educational process as a professor or a student. These two terms are usually referred to as very similar or sometimes the same at the amateur level (Emily Galstyan.2020). In distinguishing between the syllabus and the curriculum designs Nunan (1988:08) states that **“curriculum is concerned with the planning, implementation, evaluation, management and administration of education of programmes. Syllabus, on the other hand, focuses more narrowly on the selection and grading content”**. The two terms are not the same however the two deal with teaching and learning (Mr.Toufik BOUAKEL.2017.P47). The table below expresses the main differences between curriculum and syllabus:

Table 1: The differences between curriculum and syllabus (Emily Galstyan.2020)

	Curriculum	Syllabus
Purpose	Define the content plan and methodology of the whole study program or course .	Define specific instructions, activities and scheduling for a particular subject .
Scope	Wide	Narrow
Nature	Prescriptive	Descriptive
Created by	Government or university's higher management	Subject professor
Term	Long-term	Until the specific subject term is finished
Flexibility	Almost no place for alterations	Highly flexible
Available for students	By request	Always

5.4. English in the curriculum :

In the time prior to and after independence, English as a subject had a different status. Firstly; English was taught as a first foreign language during the French colonization. Later on, English was still taught as the first foreign language during the first years of independence; but not in the first but in the third year of the intermediate cycle. The students must have learned English at the end of the secondary period for five years (two years in the intermediate cycle and three years in the secondary cycle), much as five years in the intermediate cycle, until the new reform of 2004, that was still the case. In fact, the big difference is that the first foreign language is no longer known to be English but rather the second after French language. Nowadays, English is taught in the intermediate cycle, starting in grade one, students would have learned English for seven years by the time they enter the final grade of the secondary cycle. (KARIMA LAKEHAL-AYAT – BENMATI.2008.p224-241). Recently; in 2019 the Algerian government studied the suggestion of including teaching English in the primary school, and considering this foreign language as the first foreign language in school instead of French language; unfortunately since we are ruled by a Francophile government that is remotely dominated by the old imperial France, our children can never learn English in primary schools.(Salem Zmali.2017) details of teaching English in Algeria through time are shown in the table below:

Table02: status of English at school.(English as a 1^{er} foreign language or as a 2nd foreign language). (KARIMA LAKEHAL-AYAT – BENMATI.2008.p225)

	-1962	1962-1975	1975-1993	1993-2004	1993-2003	2003-
English FL1	Intermediate cycle(4years) + secondary cycle (3years)				Primary cycle(3years) +intermediate Cycle(3years) +secondary cycle(3years)	
English FL2		Intermediate cycle(2years) + secondary cycle (3years)	Intermediate cycle(2years) + secondary cycle (3years)	Intermediate cycle(2years) + secondary cycle (3years)		Intermediate cycle(4years) + secondary cycle (3years)
Total	7 years	5 years	5 years	5 years	9 years	7 years

The English textbook of third year secondary school

Basically, the educational authorities embark on new syllabuses and introduce new textbooks including all the taught subjects.

5.1.Definition of textbook:

Textbooks are the most common used material inside education classrooms. A textbook is a book used in schools or colleges for the formal study of a subject.

5.2.The advantages of textbooks :

Textbook is a key component in most language programs. It is considered as an important material that is needed inside classroom. This material

helps to carry out the course. The textbook is used by students and teachers. However, sometimes they don't use it when they have an activity which is not available in the textbook. In order to be benefited from textbook, it is necessary to learn how to use and adapt textbooks. This is, hence, an important part of a teacher's professional knowledge. (*Jack C. Richards.2001.p1*). The following are some of the most important advantages:

- They provide structure and a syllabus for a program
- They help standardize instruction
- They maintain quality
- They guide the lesson structure.
- They provide a variety of learning resources
- They are efficient
- They provide effective language models and input
- They train teachers
- They are visually appealing (*Jack C. Richards.2001.p1-2*).

5.3. Secondary school Third year Textbook content :

The English third year textbook is joining between all the baccalaureat streams literary, scientific, management, and technical stream; it contains a comprehensive collection of content in a field of study that meet the needs of educators, in order to study and explain the whole content during the year scholar (third year secondary school textbook.2002) .

New Prospects content contains:

- ✓ Foreword (p4)
- ✓ Book map (p8)
- ✓ six units from (p15) to (p195) ;each unit is divided into two parts , the first part is titled **Language outcomes** this part contain three elements : listen and consider ;reading and consider; and taking a break through reading a funny caricature . The second part of the unit is titled **Skills and strategies outcomes** , this part is divided

into several elements :research and report ; listening and speaking ; reading and writing ; project outcome; assessment ; and finally a time for reading poems

- ✓ listening scripts (p196)
- ✓ grammar reference(p206)
- ✓ Resources portfolio (p239).
- ✓ Acknowledgements (p271).

(third year secondary school textbook.2002)

5.4.English Third year textbook Unit organization :

In this organization we focused on the awareness and the practice of primary writing skill which aimed at getting the students to eventually concretise in the writing development, each unit is organized as follow:

1. Unit one: This unit is entitled ‘Exploring the Past’, and its main topic is ‘Ancient Civilizations’. In this unit the student is going to learn some writing skills such as summarizing and writing expository essay , in order to achieve this skills the learners have to study one of the four texts proposed in the ‘Resources Portfolio’. The texts are set as follows: ‘The Spread of Civilization in the Maghrib and its Impact on Western Civilization’, ‘Did the West Begin on the Banks of the Nile’, ‘How Societies Choose to Fail or survive’; ‘Lest We Forget History’.

❖ **Unit two:** Under the title of ‘Gotten Gains Never Prosper’, unit two’s main topic is ethics in business: fighting fraud and corruption. In this unit, learners are going to learn how to Writing a policy statement; Writing an opinion article and how writing the description of an ideal school. Moreover; four texts are given to learners in this unit in order to help the in learning writing skills, the texts are ‘Anti- Corruption Education’; ‘Threats on UK E- Trade’; ‘It’s a Moral Issue’; and ‘ Bribe-Taking is Wrong’

3. Unit three: Under the title ‘Schools: Different and Alike’, unit three deals specifically with the educational system in Algeria, Britain and America learners in this unit are going to learn writing comparative texts, Writing a policy

statement and writing an opinion article. The texts in this unit are: ‘Recommendation Concerning Education for International understanding, Co-operation and Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms’ ; ‘How not to Educate Children’; and ‘Computers vs Books’.

4. Unit four: This unit is called ‘Safety First’. It addresses human health and more specifically cautions to avoid obesity. In reading and writing, we have several texts which are ordered from one to four they are titled as follow: ‘The Story behind Supermarket’; The functions of Advertising’; ‘ Manipulative and Cynical...how the Food Industry poisons our Children’; ‘The Basics of Consumer Behaviour’ through reading they are going to learn how writing writing a descriptive essay; writing an expository article; and finally writing a letter of complaint.

5. Unit Five: This unit is entitled ‘It’s a Giant leap for mankind’. It deals with Astronomy and The Solar System, so it is completely scientific. In Reading and Writing sequence, students are going to read several texts such as ‘The Benefits of Space Exploration’, ‘Mission to Venus or to Hell’, ‘The Satellite Era’, The Satellite Era, Remote Sensing and ‘The Martian Are Coming’ in order to learn writing skills such as Writing an advertisement ; Writing an expository article; and Writing an argumentative essay.

6. Unit Six: The last unit is called ‘We Are A Family’. It deals with different topics such feelings, human and emotions. At this unit students learn about Writing a letter of advice, Writing newspaper article, and Writing a book/ film review article. Like all units, unit six consists of different texts that facilitate the learning process these texts are organized as follow: letter to my nephew, Why We Laugh, Sport and Friendship Among peoples, ‘ Sport and Friendship Among peoples’, ‘A National Religion’, ‘ April fool’ and ‘Meeting one’s partner’ (third year secondary school textbook.2002)

5.5.Units goals of writing skill :

After the student go by each unit he will be able to master writing skills and do different writing tasks such as:

- ❖ Summarizing
- ❖ Writing an expository essay
- ❖ Writing a story
- ❖ Writing a policy statement
- ❖ Writing an opinion article
- ❖ Writing the description of an ideal school
- ❖ Writing a descriptive essay
- ❖ Writing an expository article
- ❖ Writing a letter of complaint
- ❖ Writing an advertisement
- ❖ Writing an expository article
- ❖ Writing an argumentative essay
- ❖ Writing a letter of advice
- ❖ Writing newspaper article
- ❖ Writing a book/ film review article

Conclusion:

Through this chapter, we describe the status of English in Algeria and in Algerian educational system curricula, and also describe the content of the third year secondary school textbook in order to discover the predicted writing level of students. We have to say that, English has a specific part in the curricula; it been taught before and after the independence, during this long period English have passed by several changes, to finally it takes its present status in the curricula; but it doesn't have a strange position in education; actually English needs more carefulness; in addition, the students are not studying all what they need, textbook content is not enough since the government does not consider it as the first foreign language like all other countries around the world .

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Chapter 02 :First year English students' committed mistakes in writing

Introduction

- 5. Definition of writing**
- 6. Academic Writing**
 - 6.1.The activities charactering the writing process**
 - 6.1.1. Prewriting as brainstorming**
 - 6.1.2. Drafting as putting ideas on paper**
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Introduction

Linguistically, writing is one of the essential factors of language. There are several forms of writing; such as academic (formal) writing and non academic (informal) writings. The first form is the one used among scholars for a professional purposes, it has a professional and official tone. The second form is used by any person for any personal reason it has a personal and friendly tone. Certainly, the academic style is very essential to every learner who aims to achieve a certain levels in his journey. Thus, it is important for every student to better his written production and improve his writing skill. However, there are some difficulties makes the writing process more complex for students.

During this chapter, we are going to discuss the writing difficulties that students face during writing. Moreover, investigate the mistakes committed by learners and the reasons behind these committed errors.

1. Definition of writing:

Writing is at the core of teaching in higher education; it is a very important skill that EFL learners have to deal with. In defining writing, (Hamzaoui.2006, p.12) states: *“Writing has been defined as the activity of transforming thought into language .This makes it a difficult skill because it requires both mental and physical efforts on the part of the writer.”* Transforming ideas from our minds to outside as a written understandable language; in this way people can express anything they think about. (Karima Benmaamar.2016.p7)

2. Academic Writing :

Academic writing is distinct in that it is straightforward, succinct, focused, organized, and backed up by evidence. It has a formal tone and style, but it is overly formal, and it does not necessitate the use of long sentences or a large vocabulary .Academic writing has some characteristics such as:

- Planned and limited focus: it always focuses on the question and the subject that it deals with, also every knowledge about that subject
- Structured: it is well ordered starting by the introduction till the conclusion; each paragraph is, logically written, and all paragraphs are related and have similar points and content.
- Evidenced: evidence are the most important elements in academic writing, it gives supporting to the written content; so the research paper have to contain correctly references sources and evidence.
- Formal in tone and style: since it is the writing style of scholars, it have to use acceptable language and tenses and avoids any kind of emotional inflammatory.(<https://www.thoughtco.com/what-is-academic-writing1689052>)olivia valdes.june6 2019.America).
:(<https://academicwritingpro.com/blog/academicwriting-types-characteristics>)

1.1. The activities characterising the writing process

With no doubt, the writing process is a so difficult process in teaching English as a foreign language ; Bell and Burnaby (1984) cited in Nunan (1989: 36) *‘Writing is an extremely complex cognitive activity in which the writer is required to demonstrate control of a number of variables simultaneously. At the sentence level these include control of content, format, sentence structure, vocabulary, punctuation and letter for action. Beyond the sentence, the writer must be able to structure and integrate information into cohesive and coherent paragraphs and texts’*. (Dr.Ibrahim Mohamed Alfaki.2015.p45); it requires respecting the writing rules which led to write a good piece of writing, those activities such as prewriting, drafting, revising , editing, and finally publishing:

1.1.1. Prewriting (brainstorming):

Prewriting or brainstorming is the first step before writing anything, it is done by thinking and making first ideas about what you are going to write about, then you can easily write down all the ideas that come to your mind. Indeed; any simple idea that comes to mind is important; because later on it will be needed at start putting the ideas on the first draft. (Karima Benmaamar.2016.p8)

1.1.2. Drafting (putting ideas on paper):

After gathering ideas and drawing a direction to go by, it is necessary to select the helpful ideas that you need and omit those ones that you don't need. When students are ready to start writing the first draft, they can use their pre-writes to guide them .In coherence. (Karima Benmaamar.2016.p8)

1.1.3. Revising:

In this stage, the writer makes a re-see, or he rereads_what it has been written and he may undertake some changes based on feedback from the teacher during course; so he may change the order of information or omit inappropriate ideas.

Chapter 02 : First year English students' committed mistakes in writing

Accordingly, Noskin(200) views that revising is considered the heart of the writing process. When someone writes a research, he certainly commits mistakes; so revising what you have written is the only way to discover and correct the mistakes that you have made. (Karima Benmaamar.2016.p8)

1.1.4. Editing :

Within this step, the writer clarifies the content to the reader enabling him/her to understand those ideas. While editing; the following criteria should be checked: grammar, sentence structure, cohesion and coherence, word choice, punctuation, capitalisation and spelling; it may also seen as a kind of revision. (Microsoft word.the writing process.doc(qifs.africa))

1.1.5. Publishing :

After revising and editing carefully, the students can publish their works to share it with other people, there are different ways for publishing students' writings such as read it in classroom or using the classroom magazines, newspapers, or classroom wall.

3. Writing difficulties:

First year students of English underwent many obstacles in the writing process, they may have mistakes of punctuation; spelling; grammar; or even words orders and sentence structure. As a result; these errors in writing reduce the quality of the students' written production. Seely(1998) claims that, EfL learners could face several problems in writing such as the difficulties which belong to vocabulary, grammar, punctuation, and spelling. (Zayneb Kendouci.2019.p19).

3.1.Spelling Mistakes:

Spelling mistakes affected negatively the students' performance while writing. It is considered as carelessness from the writer as long as it involves a negative impression on the reader because, if they misspell words, the meaning will be certainly affected or changed; and this can lead to problems in comprehension. (Gowere et, al 1995) claim that because of the influence of other languages, variant pronunciation and some other reasons. The English spelling is so complex for students. In addition, Harmer (2001) claims that the correspondence between the sound of a word and the way it is spelt is not always clear, and a single sound may have different spellings, so these are reasons that make spelling difficult for students of English. (Dr.Ibrahim Mohamed Alfaki.2015.p45)

Table 3: examples of students' common spelling mistakes.

Mistake	Correction
thier	Their
nowlege	Knowledge
Peopel	People
Studing	Studying
Inorder	In order

3.2.Punctuation mistakes:

Students at first year have a worse punctuation. This problem is linked to several causes. Byrne (1988:16) claims that the fact that punctuation has never been standard to the extent as spelling makes it is problematic (Dr.Ibrahim Mohamed Alfaki.2015.p45). Sometimes students have punctuation mistakes mostly because they do not understand the meaning of the sentences and sometimes they used more complex and compound sentences. So students should have some knowledge about using punctuation marks in order to write in a clear way and they need to know that punctuation marks are not used without purpose.

(Grellet ,1996,p.8) described the punctuation role as : *'to make the text you write clear and easy to read .Defective punctuation can make a text very difficult to understand ,and even lead to misunderstanding'* . In a different expression; punctuation marks are the key of understanding the meanings of any written work. (Feryal choukria.2016.p42)

3.3.Grammatical mistakes:

Grammar is the key of using and understanding the language. Seely (1998) defines grammar as *'a group of rules that determines how language works, and describes things in practical way. It can be classified into two: syntax and morphology'* (pp. 159- 160). , (Zeyneb kendouci.2019.p20) .the right use of any language is respecting its grammatical rules. However, learners have several mistakes in the use of L2 grammatical rules (Tyner, 1987) states *'As verbs take different forms depending on tense and the subject they are used with, they create problems for second language writing students'* (Dr.Ibrahim Mohamed Alfaki.2015.45). Basically; grammar errors can be considered as a main problem that students may commit in writing.

3.4. Sentence structure :

Sentence structure refers to the shape of a sentence, specifically its physical shape in which their linguistics elements are ordered and used, words choices is also taken into consideration. Being unable to control the sentences structures and choices may led students to fall into committing wrong sentences such as sentence fragment and run-on sentence. As a result, they may not achieve the cohesion and coherence in their written performance. (Walden University.2020).

4. Causes of writing problems :

Students stems from a lot of factors which make writing skill so hard for them , these factors including overgeneralization of language rules, insufficient practice, first language interference, non understanding English punctuation, and finally fossilization .

4.1.Over-generalisation :

It is generalising a given grammatical rule on all items even the items that are excluded from it. As an example, when dealing with past simple tense of regular verbs we add (ed) at the end of the verb, but this rule is not correct with irregular verbs.

4.2.Insufficient practice :

Students do not practice writing very often in classroom and their teachers never give them writing tasks every time , in addition , most of the students do not write at home ; so , when they try to write something they will certainly find uncountable numbers of writing problems and done lot of writing mistakes .

(Grabe and Kaplan .1996.P6) believes that writing does not come naturally but rather gained through continuous effort and much practice. In addition, Hedge (1988:11) states that “my own experience tells me that in order to become a good writer, a student needs to write a lot” (Dr. Ibrahim Mohamed Alfaki.2015.p48).

4.3.Non understanding English punctuation :

Simply, punctuation marks are not understandable for all learners. Furthermore, it is not easy to select a punctuation mark to put in your sentence. Since punctuation marks are not standard, this means that punctuating is a hard task for students due to its universal rules which are not true at all times and all places with all cases. (Byrne 1988.P 16)

4.4.First language interference :

Students of English can be influenced by their first language when they write in the target language, they may reorder a sentence elements of the L2 as they do in their 1L, or using some expressions as the expressions that they usually use in 1L specially when they find difficulties in learning L2; so they overcome their limitations in L2 by using L1 .Mohamed and Zuoaooui (2014) stat that the level of difficulty is significantly higher when a foreign language is involved.

4.5.Fossilization :

Students keep repeating the same mistakes even with the continuous correction of the teacher, fossilization is the process of internalizing and storing an erroneous linguistic structure by the learner that is seen as an incurable disease as metaphorically termed by (Brown .2000.P231).(Noria Ghezzou.2015.p19).

Conclusion :

In conclusion, academic writing is an essential language skill. However, it is a complex process for students who face several difficulties, and commit too much mistakes in their writing works, those students have lot of reasons behind making writing mistakes; so this is why they need to have strong writing skills and feedback which may rise their writing and enhance their chances for success.

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Chapter 03:

Field work Practical part

Introduction

- 1. The students' questionnaire**
 - 1.1. The sample**
 - 1.2. Description of the questionnaire**
 - 1.3. Analysis of the questionnaire**
- 2. The students' exam papers assessment**
 - 2.1. Description of the assessment**
 - 2.2. Analysis of the assessment**
- 3. Conclusion**

Introduction

In the first two chapters; we dealt with the theoretical side in which we tackled the Algerian educational system, curricula, the writing difficulties, and the reasons behind them. In the present chapter, we are going to provide the practical framework of our study, this chapter comprise two parts: the first part is **‘the students’ questionnaire’** it based on a questionnaire that was posed to first year English students; It is often perceived as a partly valid research instrument to elicit available information from informants. The questionnaire have been distributed with a view to investigating writing performance and difficulties that learners encounter when writing in English. The second part is **‘students’ exam papers assessment’** in this part we have collected some data about the different writing mistakes that are faced by students, we have also explored the real writing level of learners by examining their exam papers of Anglo-Saxon module. Indeed, both students’ questionnaire and students’ exam papers assessment are considered as a source for gathering reliable data for this research work.

Part one : students' questionnaire

The sample :

In general, we are examining the writing level of first year students. So, we have randomly selected 30 students from first year LMD at the English department; each member of the population was asked to answer a questionnaire that consists 7 questions. The questions are about the students' writing performance and writing mistakes they face.

Because the questioned students are expected to have gotten their baccalaureate in recent past time, they are supposed to master all writing skills they have learned during secondary education. In addition, their performances have to reflect all the units' goals of writing which have been mentioned in the English textbook of third year secondary school.

Description of questionnaire :

Our study is based on a questionnaire that is intended for students. When designing the questions, we tried to pay attention to every single informant by simplifying the questions as much as we can in order to avoid complexity and confusion. In more details, this questionnaire is consisted of 7 organized questions; respectively yes/no questions; and also, we have former questions which are the ones that students answer it through picking out from the given answers. Other questions are the questions that are answered through choosing from the given options and the students' opinion is included at the last question. Moreover, all the questions aim to get an idea about first year LMD students' writing performance and mistakes while writing academically.

Analysis of the results

1. Question One: What do you think about writing in English, is it: Easy or difficult?

This question aims to investigate how students evaluate writing in English. The results show that most of the students (56,7%) find that writing in English is an easy task whereas (43,3%) find that writing in English is a difficult task. The two percentages are approximate; both of the following graph and table illustrate the findings above.

Table 01: Students' Evaluation of Writing in English.

Answer	Number of Students	Percentage %
Easy	17	56,7 %
Difficult	13	43,3 %
Total	30	100 %

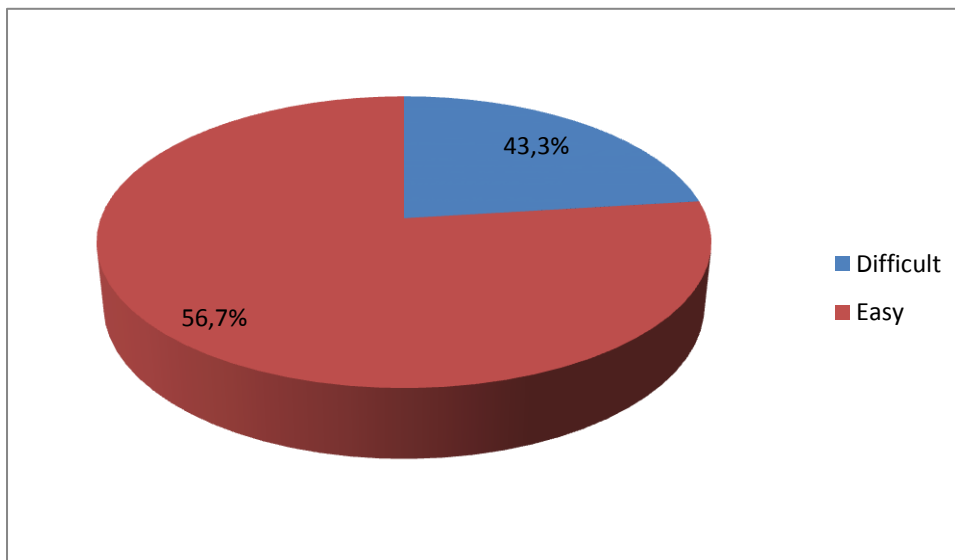


Figure 2: Students' Evaluation of Writing in English.

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2. Question Two: Do you use dictionary while writing in English?

We know that rich vocabulary is something necessary at writing, this question is to investigate the quality of the vocabulary used by students in writing. Using dictionary challenge their selves to get new vocabulary, and learn hard words not only common easy ones. The obtained results show that (80%) of students announced that they usually use dictionary to help them in writing. So, these students have effective strong and rich amount of English vocabulary which help them in raising their writing level. The results also show that only (20%) of students announced that they do not usually use dictionary. Those students may have poor vocabulary since they do not help their selves by dictionary. This may also mean that they use common easy words at writing.

Table 02: students who use dictionary

Answer	Number of Students	Percentage (%)
Yes	24	80 %
No	6	20 %
Total	30	100 %

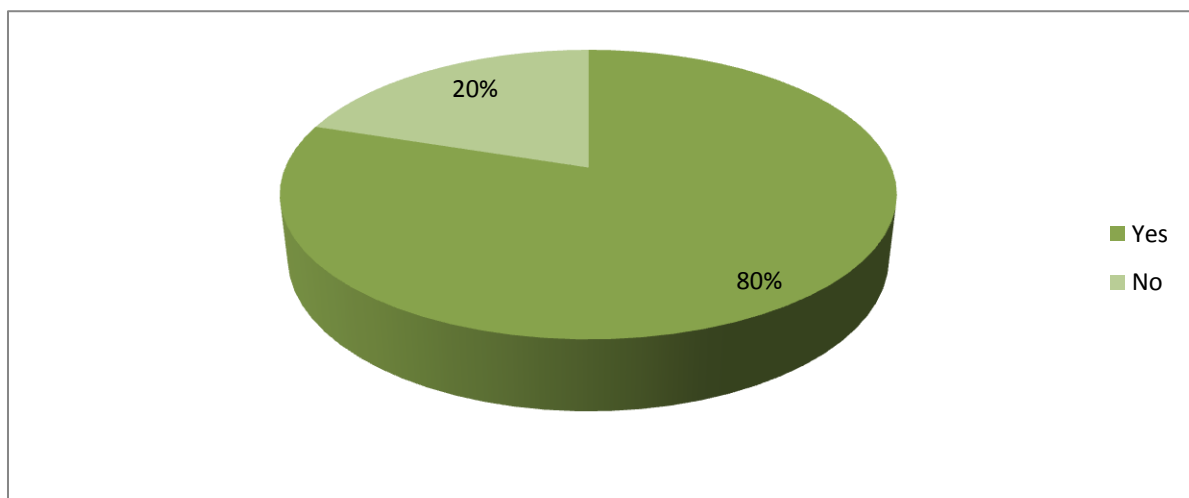


Figure 2: students who use dictionary

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3. Question Three: Do you practice writing in English at home?

This question is to know whether students are working on their writing skills or no; it was so happy to know that more than half of the informants (66,7%) practice English writing tasks at home, this is considered as a positive point at students writing performance, the more they practice the more they become professional at writing. In the other hand; practicing more leads to improving the writing level. Whereas (33,3%) of students never write in English at home , this is what leads to facing problems and disabilities in writing correct written expressions in English . These students have to work more on practicing writing at home because only classroom tasks are not enough; teachers can help their learners to improve their writing level by motivating them to write inside and outside classroom, and also, by giving them more tasks and exercises about writing .

Table 03: Writing English at Home

Answer	N	%
Yes	20	66,7%
No	10	33,3%
Total	30	100%

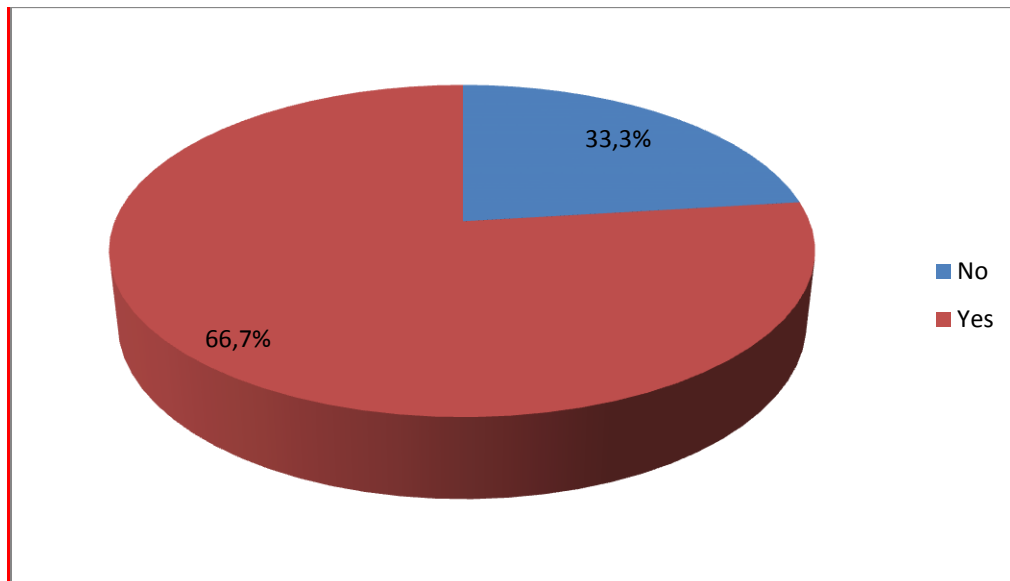


Figure 03: Writing English at Home.

4. Question Four: If yes, how often?

The students who practice writing at home were asked in the fourth question about how often they practice writing. (75%) of them state that they always do some writing tasks at home whereas only (25%) of them answered that they sometimes practice writing at home. The two percentages are satisfying; It is better than non-trying and non-working on raising the level.

Table 04:Students' Frequency of Practicing English at Home.

Answer	N	%
Always	5	25%
Sometimes	15	75%
Total	20	100%

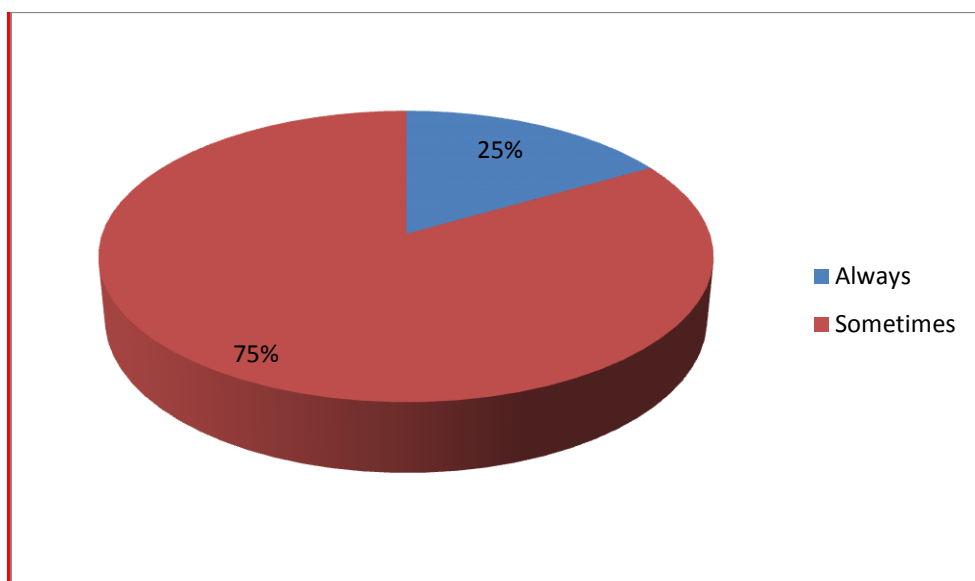


Figure 04: Students' Frequency of Practicing English at home.

5. Question five Do you make mistakes in writing in English?

As it was expected, the majority of students (96%) commit writing mistakes when they write in English. Without a doubt, beginners of first year face some difficulties and do writing mistakes while writing in target language. Since writing is a complex process, those learners who have writing problems can easily work on themselves in order to exceed these problems. While we have only (3, 3%) of students claimed that they never do writing mistakes.

Table 05: Committing Writing Errors by Students

Answer	N	%
Yes	29	96,7%
No	1	3,3%
Total	30	100%

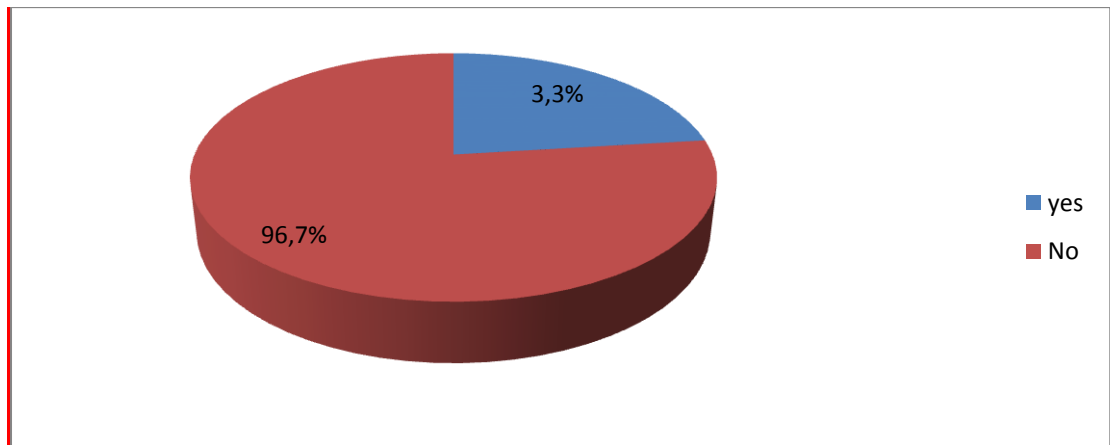


Figure 05: Committing Writing Errors by Students.

6. Question Six: Which kind of writing problems do you face?

The purpose of this question is to get more details about mistakes' kinds that are usually produced by students. The results show that the big percentage of learners (39%) commits grammatical errors. Then (25%) of learners commit punctuation mistakes. Furthermore; there are (21, 4%) of learners face problems with spelling; and finally only (14,3%) of students have more difficulties with sentence structure. All this skills are essential for writing English; and the majority of learners have disabilities in this skills, this is why they are not able to produce excellent written papers.

Table 06: Skill's Difficulties

Answer	N	%
Sentence structure	4	14,3%
Spelling	6	21,4%
Grammar	11	39,3%
Punctuation	7	25%
Total	28	100%

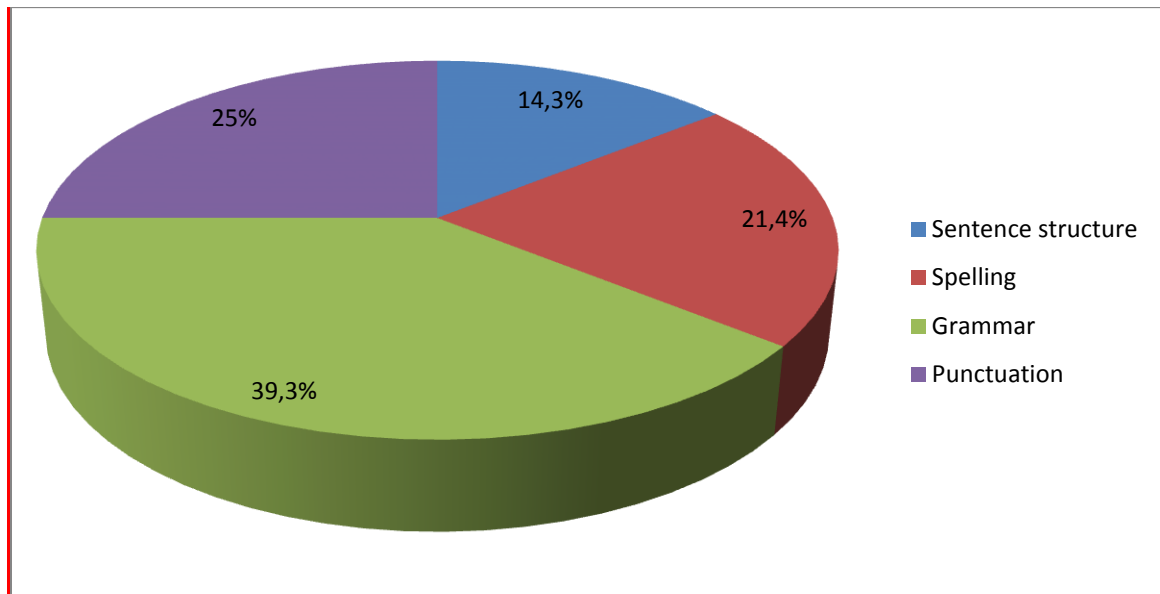


Figure 3: Skill's Difficulties



7. Question seven: What do you do in order to raise your writing level?

For raising the writing level; students suggest the following points:

- ✚ Practice English always.
- ✚ I just write.
- ✚ Keep writing.
- ✚ Using the dictionary and reading books; listening to native speakers; and write stories.
- ✚ Both writing and reading (comics and short stories).
- ✚ I read and write a lot and watch some parts of short videos.
- ✚ Always writing.
- ✚ I read more.
- ✚ Practice writing more.
- ✚ Read different texts.
- ✚ Watch TV.
- ✚ I read novels.
- ✚ I read journal articles.
- ✚ Sometimes I write topics and I watch English channels like BBC

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news.

-  Write my daily report.
-  Reading books to get new vocabulary.

All the previous points were suggested by first year students; by these suggestions are obviously aimed to improve their writing skills. Furthermore, they consider writing as the first challenge that they have to master at learning a foreign language.

Part Two: Students' Exam papers Assessment

Description of The Assessment :

It was necessary to take a look on first year LMD students' exam papers and examine them to see how is their real writing level, and how far they respect the language roles and constructions. Therefore, we have studied 20 corrected exam paper written by first year LMD students at English department of Adrar. We have randomly chosen 20 corrected sheets of first year first term exam in Anglo-Saxon module, then we checked them one by one to assess the students' writing level and to figure out the writing mistakes and weaknesses that students face. As a result, twenty exam papers of first year LMD students were evaluated.

When we did our investigation we focused on writing errors. So, we subdivided the students' writing mistakes into five groups: grammar, spelling, punctuation, and sentence structure. Then we count all mistakes by doing statistical analysis. The mistakes were organized as the table below :

Table 5:Types of Writing Mistakes

	Categories of Mistake			
	Grammar	Punctuation	Spelling	Sentence structure
Types of mistake	Wrong use of :{affixes ,articles , tense , subject prepositions ,verb agreement }	Capitalization Indentation Wrong use of punctuation marks Non using punctuation marks	Omitting a letter Adding a letter	Words order Run-on sentence Fragment

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In analyzing the students' exam papers; we have founded out that they do a lot of writing mistakes in their exams' papers. However, we should mention that the papers that been investigated are the papers of the first term exam, i.e. that was the first try of students as beginners in writing an academic paper at high education. Certainly; their level is going to developed by the time.

The analysis of students' exam papers assessment

The analysis of students' corrected exam papers revealed the following results :

Table 6: Types of Students' Mistakes of Writing

Type of mistake	N	%
Grammar	88	22%
Punctuation	92	24%
Spelling	173	44%
Sentence structure	39	10%
Total	392	100%

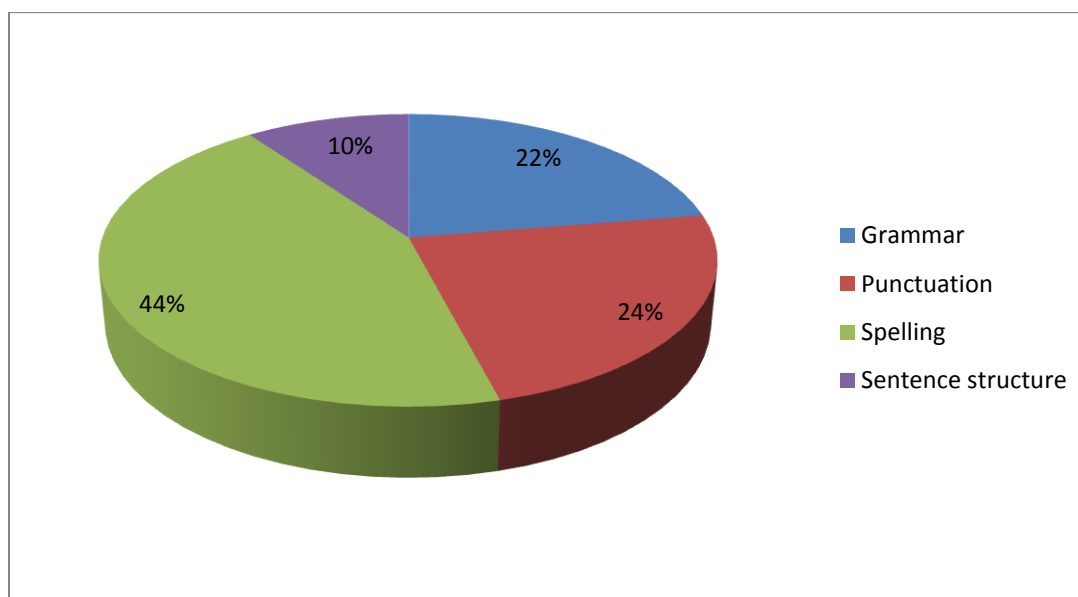


Figure 6: Types of Students' Writing Mistakes

As it is clearly noticed; the majority of students' mistakes are spelling mistakes (44%) then punctuation mistakes (24%) ; then grammatical mistakes (23%); and finally sentence structure mistakes which has only (10%) of the whole mistakes.

The analysis of students' exam papers shows that spelling mistakes are the first problem that students face while writing in TL. When we have observed the papers we have founded that there are some similar spelling mistakes between students, i.e. sometimes they make the same mistake. As an example, in 4 papers, we have founded that the 4 students wrote the word” which” in the same way they wrote it “whitch“. Not only this word but also some other words such as government, between, beginning, theiretc. As we see, those are very simple words. However, students make mistakes at writing them and this may be due to the exams stress and confusion, or may be due to non-revising the exam paper before giving it to teachers. After spelling mistakes, we have punctuation mistakes which classified the second type of mistakes that students face at academic writing. Specifically, students always forget to punctuate a sentence as a result they write

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too much fragments and run-on sentences. In addition, they misuse punctuation marks between independent and dependent clauses. Not only punctuation but also capitalization. At most of the times, they forget to capitalize the titles or names of famous events that they were writing about such as Magna Carta, War of Roses, and Anglo-Saxonsect. They also forget to capitalize the first word after at the beginning of a new sentence. All these punctuation mistakes are the result of: non-understanding punctuation marks, mixing between punctuation marks roles, and finally because punctuation marks are complex due to their universal rules.

Grammar mistakes come thirdly (22%); students make mistakes in tenses, they start a paragraph using a tense; but later on they change it randomly. They make errors not only on tenses but also in articles, subjects, nouns, plural, and conjugating some irregular verbs. After grammatical mistakes, we have finally sentence structure mistakes (10%), which contained run-on sentence, fragment, and disordering the sentence elements. Because of these sentence structure mistakes, at most of the times corrector cannot get the idea that the student wants to say in his exam paper. As a result, he may give him a low mark. Although the students have too much writing mistakes in their exam papers, they have other positive things like the good hand writing.

In analysing the students' papers we have observed that writing is probably the most challenging part of learning foreign languages. It does not only demand a tremendous amount of time and great deal of intellectual activity; it also affects to a large extent how students feel about their ability to write. Unfortunately, most of students have insufficient abilities in writing. This is why, they do not perform well in the writing tasks.

Conclusion

The analysis of the questionnaire and the exam papers provide a significant data about the students' writing background, level and performances concerning what and how to provide a feedback. Furthermore, the students classified the writing skill as being their first priority in learning English; they do not deny its importance. In addition, they keep trying to run over the writing process and do their best in order to go beyond the weaknesses and the limitations that make the writing process more difficult for them. The research results reported the students' willingness of improving their writing skill. Moreover, the analysis of students' exam papers assessment translates the disabilities of learners in writing. Thus, the EFL teachers should pay attention to their ways of teaching students writing skills. More specifically, they should give them more writing tasks and motivate them to better their writing performance.

General conclusion

General conclusion

The current study investigate the quality of the English first year students predicted writing level, and makes an examination of the real level of the same students. Our information are collected by doing a questionnaire and do an assessment to the students' exams papers of Anglo-Saxon in order to confirm what we have found through the questionnaire.

The only questionnaire that was given to students shows that as it was expected most of students have different weaknesses in writing, which reduce their predicted level of writing. So instead of reaching the highest point of the predicted level students, unfortunately, still suffering at less levels due to different factors such as the mistakes of grammar punctuation and other kinds of mistakes – as we have explained before. Moreover, the questionnaire shows as that students are interested in fixing their weaknesses and avoid mistakes and errors during writing any academic paper. In addition, they have different plans to develop their writing performance whereas the examination of the students' exams papers shows us the same results as the questionnaire – students commit different writing errors. Therefore, they give some suggestions at the end about how they help their selves to improve their written production. In comparing between the results of the questionnaire and the exam papers' assessment, we can say that both results are very close to each other, they led us to the same points as follow:

1. The writing process is complex for students.
2. Students of English fall into committing writing errors which affect negatively their writing level.
3. There are several reasons behind the mistakes that are committed by students.

General conclusion

4. Students have the attitude of developing their writing level; so they need teachers' motivating inside classroom.
5. Teachers need to follow specific methods to teach writing skills to their students since writing is a hard process.

Finally, we can say that the real writing level of students is different from their predicted level. However, their real level is not totally worse; they only need practice and other effective ways of learning writing.

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Student's Questionnaire

Dear students

This questionnaire is required for collecting information needed basically for the completion of a master dissertation.

Please answer the following questions by putting a mark into the box that best expresses your opinions.

3. What do you think about writing in English, is it :
Easy ☐ difficult ☐
4. Do you use dictionary while writing in English?
Yes ☐ No ☐
5. Do you practice writing in English at home?
Yes ☐ No ☐
6. If yes, how often?
always ☐ sometimes ☐ never ☐
7. Do you make mistakes in writing in English?
Yes ☐ No ☐
8. Which kind of writing mistakes do you face? sentence structure ☐
Spelling ☐ grammatical ☐ punctuation ☐
9. What do you do in order to rise your writing level?
.....
.....

Thank you so much for your cooperation.