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***The Algerian Middle School Writing Syllabus
and its Implementation: A Case Study of some
Teachers of Tizi-Ouzou.***

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To my family, husband and friends.

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List of Abbreviations

CBA: Competency-Based Approach

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ELT: English Language Teaching

ESL: English as a Foreign Language

FL: Foreign Language

MS1: Middle School Year One

MS2: Middle School Year Two

MS3: Middle School Year Three

MS4: Middle School Year Four

MST: Middle School Textbook

L1: First Language

L2: Second Language

SLA: Second Language Acquisition

TBA: Task-based Approach

Abstract

The following magister dissertation seeks to analyse the instructional writing plan as laid down in the Algerian Middle School syllabuses and as implemented in the textbooks and delivered in the classroom. Accordingly, it has resorted to the evaluation of the writing syllabuses, the four Middle School course books and the teacher practice of the skills. To this end, we have appealed to the process theory of learning writing skills and strategies, textbook evaluation, classroom observation and the questionnaire technique. The aim behind the research is the evaluation of the instructional plan motivated by the rather weak results that brevet students obtained in English in 2007 and 2008. The writing skill being the medium through which students show their real competencies, in these exams, we have tried to examine and evaluate it in order to sort out the weaknesses and strengths in the instructional plan related to this skill. Our dissertation consists of two parts, divided into three parts each. One part is theoretical and the other is practical. In the theoretical part, we made a review of the literature where we have showed that writing theories have gradually moved to the recommendation of teaching writing as a process rather a product. In the second part, we have analysed in this order the syllabuses, the textbooks and the teacher practice. On the whole, we have concluded that the instructional plan related to the writing syllabuses, the textbooks and teacher practice contain positive points, but the idea of process is not sufficiently fleshed out in its three components. The syllabuses and the textbooks are basically task-based, but the tasks are mostly of the pedagogic type; the sequencing of the skills is too systematic and gives primacy to the spoken skills without regard to the students' needs in terms of taking the Brevet Exam. The teacher profile is not taken into account since no teacher development syllabus is included in the syllabuses proper or in the textbooks. The whole impression is that of putting old wine into new bottles.

General Introduction

The present work attempts to shed light on teaching the writing skills in the Algerian Middle School as it is laid down in the recent reform of the educational system. Our study is concerned with teaching writing skills and strategies .It focuses on three aspects that are the syllabuses, the textbooks and their implementation in the classroom. It is stimulated by many factors. Among these is the fact that the ability to express one's ideas in written form in a second or a foreign language with accuracy and coherence is one of the most challenging aspects of second /foreign language learning. Even for the native speakers, the ability to write effectively is something that requires extensive and specialized instruction. Indeed, there is no doubt that writing is the most difficult skill for EFL learners to master, to borrow Richards and Renandya's words (2002:303).Thus, it is generally agreed that learning to write well is a difficult and time consuming process (Atkinson and Ramanathan, 1995, Kaplan 1987, Taylor 1980, Wallace Robinett 1978).And it is performance in writing that largely determines the success and failure in exams.

Writers, especially nonnatives who may feel anxiety and frustration when tackling a writing assignment, need to have enough language and general intellectual skills to generate and organize ideas and put those ideas into coherent, logically ordered, intelligible sentences, paragraphs and essays (Simpson. M. Joellen, 1998:34). The difficulties encountered while writing lie not only in generating and organizing ideas but also in translating these ideas into readable texts. The skills involved in writing are highly complex; L2 writers have to pay attention to higher level skills of planning and organizing as well as to lower level skills of spelling, punctuation, word choice and so on. The complexity becomes more pronounced if their language proficiency is weak. (Richards and Renandya, 2003: 303).

Furthermore, research on EFL writing is quite scarce as *Valdés et al* have noted “*most FL professionals have taken the position that writing is a “secondary” or less crucial skill than listening, speaking and reading. As a result, little attention has been paid to the development of the students’ EFL writing abilities*” (*Valdés et al, 1992:333*). More to the point, Scholars, to mention Krashen among others, claim that there is a shortage of research on second / foreign writing instruction despite the existence of large numbers of published texts on second language writing compared with the substantial body of research on vocabulary learning strategies and reading strategies, relatively little research has been completed on instruction on writing strategies (O’Malley and Chamot, 1991:151).

It is well argued that the development of writing in English as a second/foreign language is very complicated. Angelova(1991) illustrates factors affecting the process and product of ESL writing as language proficiency, L1 writing competence , use of cohesive devices , metacognitive knowledge about the writing task, writing strategies and writers’ personal characteristics. Among these factors, writing strategies seem particularly remarkable because many scholars, Arndt (1987), Beare (2000), Raimes (1985), Victori (1995), Zamel (1982), claim that it is the writing strategies that primarily separate successful from less successful writers. To become effective writers, writing ought to be taught as an ongoing process .That is to say, on top of language accuracy, teachers need to develop students’ writing skills as well. (Altrichter et al 1993.Kolb 1984.Gabrielatos 2002).

It is commonly argued that writing plays an important role in the foreign language teaching/learning process. Raimes (1983) sustains that communicating with each other in writing is not the sole reason to include writing in the EFL syllabuses. Moreover, writing reinforces the grammatical structures, enhances vocabulary acquisition as well as cognitive abilities because of the close relationship between writing and thinking. In this respect,

Wade (1997) argues that “*writing is an essential ingredient in critical thinking instruction since it promotes greater self-reflection*”.

Our motivation to get insight into the way the writing skill as conceived in the official syllabuses, described in the textbooks and realized in the classroom comes from the still poor results of the learners at the *Middle School Brevet* (Brevet d’Enseignement Moyen ‘BEM’). On the basis of the statistics of the Middle School Brevet of the Wilaya of Tizi- Ouzou, June, 2007, the first ‘BEM’ exam after the implementation of the reform of Middle School Education that started in September 2003 which reveal that the national rate of success was much lower than expected. (Only 44.17% in Tizi-Ouzou according to the Ministry of Education) and much lower in the English subject. Furthermore, we have taken randomly a sample of 150 papers of the Middle School Brevet exam papers of the Wilaya of Tizi-Ouzou. We have found that the learners have a very low level of proficiency in writing. In the written expression, they were required to write an interview. Out of 150 papers of the official exam only 50 students understood the question of the writing section and tried to write pertinent interviews with due regard grammar, spelling and punctuation mistakes. They are nearly incapable of constructing one single sentence correctly, and they make numerous mistakes. This proves that the pupils’ writing competence is very low and they have not reached the desired objectives set for the writing skill.

The poor results in the pupils’ proficiency in English in general and the writing skill in particular, urged us to explore this issue in an attempt to sort out the causes of these unsatisfactory results, bearing in mind that the writing skill is given primacy regarding the fact the *Brevet Exam* ‘BEM’ exam is totally of a written mode. The issue that can be raised in this context is: Are the unpleasant/unsatisfactory results in writing English due to the way this skill is conceived in the syllabuses, implemented in the textbooks or the way it is taught in the classrooms, or a combination of all these factors?

Teaching writing strategies is an issue that may be tackled from three angles, taking into account the different variables; the writing program and its implementation in the textbooks, the teachers' practices in the classroom and the learners' writing behaviours. Nevertheless, we are going to limit our enquiry to the first two levels because the issue of the learners' processes of constructing texts are not easily revealed as they involve cognitive and metacognitive processes. In other words, the decisions that writers take while writing are introspective. They may be revealed through think-aloud protocols and retrospective interviews which are beyond the scope of this humble research work.

5-Research Methodology Design

For the sake of tackling the raised issue, our study will address the Algerian Middle School syllabuses, textbooks along their implementation in the classrooms. Our investigation is evaluative in nature as our intention is to evaluate the syllabuses' conception of learning/teaching the writing skill, the nature and role of the textbooks' activities in fostering the learners' writing skills and strategies. Besides, we are going to observe the techniques and practices of teachers in classroom contexts. We are first going to look at the syllabuses' perspective about English language teaching in general and the writing skill in particular. Then, the textbooks' writing activities will be analysed to check whether they are encouraging writing strategies instruction or fulfil other purposes. Last but not least, two research techniques namely a questionnaire and classroom observation will be used to find out about teachers' behaviour in writing classes.

6-The Overview of the Study

The dissertation is divided into two parts besides to the general introduction: a theoretical part and a practical one. The theoretical part in its turn is subdivided into three chapters. The first chapter gives a review the literature on the nature of writing, and the approaches dealing with writing research, the factors influencing L2/FL writers' abilities.

The second deals with the approaches to writing instruction and it is ended with a section about the role of the writing mechanics in giving shape and meaning to writing. The third chapter is devoted to writing strategies instruction.

The practical part also includes three chapters; while the first and the second respectively deal with the Algerian Middle school syllabuses and textbooks, the third one is a case study about some Middle School teachers of Tizi-Ouzou. We devised a questionnaire aiming to gather teachers' views on the new reform of the educational system and the in-use Middle school textbooks and to throw light into their views about writing instruction in general and writing strategies instruction in particular as well. The classroom observation is conducted to depict the teachers' daily practices on writing strategies instruction. Each chapter is ended with a short conclusion as a synthesis of the main results reached. The work is ended with a general conclusion in which we synthesise the answers to the questions raised in the introduction and hopefully we will manage to provide some suggestions for the improvement in the manner of teaching the writing skills.

Part 1: Theoretical Issues on Writing

This part seeks to shed light on the nature of writing, providing a historical background on the evolution of approaches to writing instruction. We have given due emphasis to the process-approach to writing instruction since it simplifies the different stages through which the writer goes to construct a piece of writing. At each stage, the writer employs a set of strategies that will help in the creation of a piece of writing. What is more, the phases are not linear but rather cyclical in nature. Besides, we are going to make reference to the internal and external factors that make L2/FL writing more complex to the learners during the process of writing. The second chapter includes the different approaches to writing instruction. Then, we point out the significance of teaching the mechanics of writing which are not only aesthetic devices of a piece of writing, but a great deal of meaning is conveyed through their appropriate use, while their misuse or non-use lead to meaning deviation of the ideas communicated. The third chapter deals with writing skills and strategies and contains the analytical framework used to categorise the writing strategies suggested in the Algerian Middle School syllabuses.

Chapter One: Literature Review

1. The Nature of Writing

The need for writing in modern literate societies which are marked by pervasive print media is much more extensive than is generally realized (Grabe.W& Kaplan .R. B, 1996:3). Therefore, in their every day lives, people are engaged in many varieties of writing, some of which may be considered as being routine, commonplace or unimportant. However, mastering these varieties represent the ability to control the written medium of language to some extent. This makes us assume that most people, on a typical day, perform some forms of writing such as letters, diaries, messages, shopping lists (Ibid).

Writing and learning to write has always been one of the hardest or complex skills to master. Nunan, D (1989) argues that it is easier to learn to speak than to write no matter if it is first or second language. Native speakers, except those with physiological disabilities, learn to speak and comprehend their language and this process does not require any formal instruction as there is ample time to practise it. But, not all of them learn to read and fewer learn to write fluently and legibly. Whate (1981:2) expresses it as follows:

Writing is not a natural activity. All physically and mentally normal people learn to speak a language .Yet all people have to be taught how to write. This is a crucial difference between the spoken and the written forms of language. There are other important differences as well. Writing, unlike speech is displaced in time. Indeed this must be one reason why writing originally evolved since it makes possible the transmission of a message from place to another .A written message can be received, stored and referred back to at any time. It is permanent with comparison with the ephemeral 'here one minute and gone the next' character of spoken language-even of spoken language that is recorded on tape or disk (Cited in Nunan; 1989:36).

Grabe holds a similar view as Kaplan, B (1996) who says that probably half of the world's population does not know how to write adequately and effectively. Moreover, Tribble (1996) claims that writing is an activity that most people evade since it requires a lot of

abilities and efforts. He goes on to claim that writing is a difficult skill to acquire. Writing abilities are not naturally acquired. They must be culturally, rather than biologically, transmitted in every generation, whether in schools or in other assisting environment. Raimes (2002) points out that students are not alone in experiencing writing anxiety because many of the teachers do not feel entirely comfortable with writing in English, even if it is their native language.(Raimes,2002:306).This makes L2 writing instruction “*a daunting understanding , in spite of being an important if not dominant focus of work on L2 studies*”(Silva and Brice, 2004:70).

Learning to write needs formal instruction and requires efficient practice as it is generally agreed that there is no way to learn writing without writing. Writing causes great problems for students because the skills required do not come naturally, but rather are gained through conscious effort and much practice. Mastering the writing skill was so important as historical facts attest that it was most likely to be used by rulers of church and state only because too much knowledge was not thought to be a good thing for the majority of the working population. But as societies grew larger and more industrialized, the need for citizens to be able to write and read became vital. Thus, by the means of this skill people were and still are, classified into literate and illiterate ones. Chris Tribble says “*to be deprived of the opportunity to learn to write is to be excluded from a wide range of social roles, including those which the majority of people in industrialised societies associate with power and prestige*” (Cited in Harmer.J.2004:3).

Bell and Burnaby (1984) argues that writing is an extremely complex cognitive activity whereby 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, spelling and letter formation. Beyond the sentence, the writer must

be able to structure and integrate information into cohesive and coherent paragraphs and texts.

Hence, it is apparent that learning to write is very different from learning to speak. There are many features that distinguish spoken from written language. One of the most significant differences scholars have pointed out is that writing unlike speaking has to be taught. Raimes (1983) argues that we learn to speak our first language without any instruction while most people are taught how to write in their L1 given the complexity writing represents for them. Besides, it is generally suggested that spoken language is simpler, less structured than written language. Brown and Yule (1983) say that a major difference between spoken and written language is the elaborated and dense pack of information at the structure and text level, i.e. the use of heavy grammar, structures, connectors, syntax, etc.

However, Halliday in Nunan (1991) disagrees with Yule and Brown to some extent. Halliday points out that speech is also structured and complex, but its complexity lies in the way clauses are put together while written language is complex at the clause level. This means, in fact, that the two modes represent two different kinds of complexity. Written texts are lexically dense which refers to the number of lexical or content words per clause.

What is certain as Raimes claims is that speaking is spontaneous and unplanned whereas writing is planned and requires people to take time when producing it. Other differences include the level of formality. Writing is more “formal and compact” (Raimes, 1983) while speaking is more informal, repetitive, and uses phrases such as “you see”, “what I mean”. Besides, speech is more simple in terms of connectors such as “and” and “but” which tend to be used more frequently whereas in writing, the connectors are more complex like “however”, “therefore”, etc.

Another difference highlighted by Nunan (1991) is that writing is decontextualised. That is to say, when communicating a message, writers are usually distant in time and place from the persons they address. Then, they must infer the readers' knowledge in order to decide what to include or omit in their texts. In other words, writers while creating their texts should anticipate or foresee the possible difficulties that readers might have because a direct contact with readers is lacking. While spoken communication operates in the here-and-now world of immediate interaction, writing transcends time and space and does not allow for an ongoing negotiation of meaning through interlocation. Speaking is often transient, whereas writing tends to be more permanent. Spoken words fly away on the wind but written words stay around, sometimes for hundreds or thousands of years. Thus, writing carries with it certain expectations of clarity, precision, quality and durability. Another characteristic of writing is slowness of production and speed of reception; writing is much slower than speaking. On the other hand, we can usually read a piece of text and understand it much faster than we can in the same text if we listen while someone reads it aloud to us. However, the differences listed above are not always found as in some contexts the rules that are said to govern writing apply mostly to speech. For instance, passing notes between participants during a meeting or a lecture is writing but displays many of the characteristics of informal speech. Reading a paper at a conference, a news broadcast, a poetry recitation are instances of speech with many of the characteristics of formal writing. In fact, we included this comparison between written and spoken language for better conceptualisation of L2 writing and to show that writing is not speech written down ;being able to speak well does not imply the ability to write well.

2. Review of Writing Research Approaches

Within the field of second or foreign language teaching, writing instruction research started to assume a central position than it occupied earlier. In the mid twentieth

century, with the dominance of the Audio-lingual Approach, writing was neglected and primacy was given to the spoken language. Therefore, writing was defined as speech written down. Writing first emerged as a distinctive area of scholarship in the 1980s.

Many perspectives have developed or evolved to support teachers' efforts to understand L2 writing and to provide effective instruction to foster the learners' abilities and skills. Four major approaches dealt with the nature of the writing skill, procedures, classroom practices of implementing and teaching it as well as parameters to assess learners' proficiency. They are the product-based, the genre-based and the process-based and process-genre approaches. Each with a focused orientation i.e.: text, writer and reader. Thus, in what follows, we will discuss these approaches to writing and the theories underlying them.

2-1.The Product-Based Approach

First, the product-oriented or the classical rhetorical approach characterized most writing instruction from the 1940s through the 1960s, at the time when structural linguistics and the behaviourist learning theory of second language teaching were dominant (Silva, 1990). In other words, it was rooted in behaviourist theory which claims that *"the learner is not allowed to create in the target language at all...the use of language is the manipulation of fixed patterns. These patterns are learned by imitation and not until they have been learned can originally occur"* (Pincas, 1962:185-6). Language forms and structures underpinning this approach is the behaviourist view, which sees teaching as a process starting with teacher initiated "stimuli" followed by responses by students. The whole writing process is teacher-centred with little freedom granted to students.

Writing was viewed as a coherent arrangement of words, clauses and sentences structured following certain rules (sentence-level structure). Writing was seen as a product and focused only on grammatical features of texts; it was regarded as an extension of

grammar. Instruction typically involves grammar study, error analysis, and practice in combining short sentences into complex ones. At the paragraph level, the focus is on the ways to arrange sentences into paragraphs to fulfil particular functions (types of rhetorical patterns) mainly comparison, contrast, illustration, cause-effect and definition. Generally speaking, the product approach to writing focuses on the end or finished product. A particular feature of this approach is its attention to correctness. Mc Donough and Shaw argue that it is a traditional way to teach writing whose focus is on accuracy and consolidation of grammar. The teacher becomes a “judge” of the finished product.

There is a variety of activities in product-based writing which aim to raise students’ awareness in second language writing from the lower level of language proficiency to the advanced such as model paragraphs/texts, sentence combination and rhetorical pattern exercises. Model texts are used to illustrate all levels of text organization. The teacher provides a model text and highlights its organization in class, and then the students imitate the model structures in their own writing. As far as assessment is concerned, the learners are given short texts and asked to fill in gaps, complete sentences, transform tenses or personal pronouns. Students’ texts are regarded as final products and are judged solely in terms of the correctness of sentential-level. Learners were required to achieve accuracy and avoid errors. This means that learners should produce a good piece of writing which has not many grammar mistakes. In other words, it emphasizes the structural well formedness of students’ writing. Furthermore, this approach sees writing as strictly a solitary activity, an individual task and does not encourage group work which motivates learners and makes them see writing more positively.

In short, this approach emphasizes the linguistic accuracy and tends to give less emphasis to the cognitive and social dimensions of writing. Zamel (1987 cited in Nunan 1991) claims that in classes, in which the product approach is applied, pupils get very few

opportunities to write and, when they do so, there is still a tendency to look at texts as final products for evaluation. Therefore, this might make learners think that the purpose of writing is evaluation rather than communication. What can be noted during the audio-lingualism era is that language classes down played the role of writing since it was seen as a supporting skill. It was believed that mastery of spoken language and its orthographic conventions had to precede the learning of written language because discrepancy between speech sounds and orthography could cause interferences with the proper learning of speech. ESL classes thus only focused on sentence structure as a support for the grammar lessons. It was argued that the product approach was used to highlight form and syntax and the emphasis was on rhetorical drills. (Silva, 1990).

This approach was criticised on the basis that learners can construct accurate sentences but they are unable to produce whole texts that fulfil a certain purpose in a particular context. Besides, it ignores the actual process used by the writers to produce a piece of writing. Instead, it focuses on imitating and churning out a perfect product, though very few people can create a perfect product on the first draft. Another criticism is that this approach requires constant error correction which affects students' motivation and self-esteem. On one hand, Nunan (1991) states that learning by imitating was thought to be appropriate at the sentence-level for structuralist linguists because at the sentence-level structure imitation is somehow relevant. On the other hand, imitation does not match with more recent views of language learning at the discourse level.

2.2.The Process-Approach

Later, after the 1960s, there were changes in foreign language teaching methodology. Attention began to shift from texts to writers. New research indicated that grammar instruction did not directly improve students' writing ability (Braddock, Lloyd .Jones & Schoer, 1960, cited in Ken, Richard, 2000:181).

In the late 1970s and the 1980s, interest began to move from textual features to the writing process itself. It was inspired from cognitive psychology and constructivism which viewed writing as a constructed cognitive act. Process refers to the stages a writer goes through in order to produce something in its final form. (Harmer, J, 2005). The process based- approach introduced by Vivian Samuel (1976)in Kroll,Barbara,2003:21), out looked at writing as a process of developing organization as well as meaning, invention strategies, multiple drafts and feedback from both the peers and the teacher as Murray(1978) explains it:

During the process of internal revision, [writers] gather new information or return to their inventory of information and draw on it .They discover what they have to say by relating pieces of specific information and use words to symbolize and connect the information ...this naturally leads to the discoveries related to form and structure.

(Quoted in Kern, Richard, 2000:182).

Various strategies and suggestions are provided to implement the process paradigm. Flower and Hyes (1981) define writing process as an activity which comprises planning, writing and reviewing. Writing is seen as a non-linear, exploratory and generative process whereby writers discover and reformulate their ideas as they attempt to approximate meaning (Zamel, 1963). At any point the writer can jump forward and backward to any of the steps listed above; they are recursive, interactive not linear since repetition of activities and steps are relevant and necessary. A good writer goes backwards and forwards at whatever stage in composing a text in order to make changes either about style, content or how to appropriately address their intended audience. For instance, the writer can return to library for more data, revise the plan or rewrite the draft. This view is supported by Krashen (1984) who maintains: “*Many good writers employ a recursive, non-linear approach. Writing of a draft may be interrupted by more planning, and revision may lead to reformulation, with a great deal of recycling to earlier stages*” (quoted in Richards et al, 2002:315 by Anthony Seow).

The role of the teacher is to help students to develop strategies for generating, drafting and refining ideas. This is achieved through setting pre-writing activities or brainstorming to generate ideas about content and structure. Writing is no longer seen simply as a way to record thoughts, feelings and ideas, but is a key means to generate and explore new thoughts and ideas (Kern, Richard, 2000:181). Thus, teachers advocating this approach seek to foster students' creativity, guide them to reformulate and refine their writing products and avoid imposing prescribed patterns at the beginning: *"Writing taught as a process of discovery implies that revision becomes the main focus of the course and that the teacher, who traditionally provides feedback after the fact, intervenes to guide students through the process"* (Zamel cited in Nunan 1989:86). Writing as a process is much more learner-centred approach than teacher-based. The focus is placed on the writer as the centre of the writing process engaging in the discovery of meaning through writing.

Process approach to the teaching of writing emphasizes on how a piece of writing is constructed. In this context Hariston (1982 cited in Zamel 1983:165) maintains

We can not teach students to write by looking only at what they have written. we must also understand how that product came into being and why it assumed the form that it did. We have to try to understand what goes on during the act of writing...if we want to affect its outcome, we have to do the hard thing, examine the intangible process, rather than the easy thing, evaluate the tangible product.

It also pays attention to product but at an appropriate stage in the process, not at the beginning of the writing process. Writing as a process is a tool to language learning. Writing is for discovery of learning, not just demonstration of learning as Raimes states: *"if we simply ask students to analyse, manipulate, and imitate given texts, we are not allowing them to grapple for that fit between content and form that all writers need to grapple with"* (Raimes, Ann in Richards. J et al, 2002:309). Many scholars, to name

Graves (1982), Smith (1982), Stratta (1973) and Krashen (1981) advocate the process writing which include the following steps: prewriting, writing and rewriting and some others call the stages of the process: planning, drafting (writing), revising (redrafting) and editing.(See James D.Williams's diagram in appendix .i).

To begin with prewriting which is any activity in the classroom, it may include one or more of the following activities; group/individual brainstorming, clustering, free writing, looping , cubing, outlining, use of pictures to stimulate students and reading .According to D'Aoust (1986) *"prewriting activities generate ideas ; they encourage a free flow of thoughts and help students to discover both what to say and how to say it on paper .In other words, prewriting activities facilitate the planning for both the product and the process"* (English Teaching Forum 1992). Spack (1984) also asserts that prewriting techniques train students to write down quickly in raw form. They increase students' fluency to generate ideas and be able to think and write at the same time. Even the competent writers go through prewriting because it helps to overcome the recurrent difficulty that many writers face by insisting to write a perfect essay at the onset. They stick at a point in the writing process and cannot go on "the writer's block". Prewriting activities stimulate thoughts for getting started. Prewriting aims to motivate students to think about specific topics of personal interests. Students may also be encouraged to talk about favourite activities.

Brainstorming is one of the prewriting activities which involve the use of leading questions to help students think and generate ideas about the topic. The teacher may ask some questions that stimulate students to write whatever comes to their minds (Spontaneously).The teacher allows some minutes to let students think. Then, he can choose students read to the class their responses and reactions about the topic. Individual students can also use this technique to generate materials for their writing. It is important to

remind students to avoid evaluating or clarifying their ideas during the brainstorming stage. In short, brainstorming is a technique to stimulate creative thinking.

Once sufficient ideas are gathered at the planning stage, the students write the first draft where they focus on the fluency of writing and don't preoccupy themselves with grammatical accuracy. In other words, when writing a first draft, the student should focus on clear and sequential expression of content without regard to the mechanical aspects of writing because if the student is overly concerned with spelling, grammar and punctuation at the writing stage, his writing fluency may be inhibited. They should also have in mind a central idea that they want to communicate to a real audience in order to give direction to their writing.

During the writing stage, the students write sentences and paragraphs that expound on their prewriting plan notes. Responding is the next step in the process; it can be done by the teacher and the peers as well. It intervenes between drafting and revising. The teacher at this stage gives his feedback only on the content, provides comments about what is well and ill done in the composition and leaves the emphasis on grammatical accuracy to the second correction. It is important that the teacher never provides any value judgment because if it is a negative one, it will hamper students' creativity. The suggestions and remarks the teacher provides will serve the students while they rewrite their compositions.

Grabe and Kaplan claim that the process approach is usually considered as a positive innovation which enables teachers and pupils to interact more meaningfully and with a purpose in mind when writing. There are, however, other issues and features that make the process approach a suitable way to teach writing. Raimes (1983) says that apart from considering purpose and audience, it is important to make pupils aware of how to get started by encouraging them to start thinking and producing ideas.

There are several procedures to correct students' performances. We can cite a model correction, pair correction, group discussion, circle correction, slide show and conference teaching. The technique of model correction is useful when the whole class has been asked to write on the same topic. The teacher checks some compositions, underlines the mistakes and labels the nature of each by writing the appropriate correction symbols in the margin. For instance, he uses (ww) for a wrong word and (sp) for a spelling mistake instead of marking all the paper with red ink which reduces the work of the students to nothing. Thus, there are some who prefer to let the right half of the page for the teacher to write the comments and others to leave lines. At the beginning of the school year, the teacher distributes copies of the correction code (they contain symbols that indicate the type of the errors) to all the students which they always bring to use them during writing sessions. The students also are asked to keep the correction code handy so they can refer to it when rewriting their compositions.

When the teacher finishes the correction of the selected compositions in details, he tries to identify the most frequent mistakes the whole class has made and designs some remedial activities. In the next class meeting, the teacher asks the students to correct their own compositions, taking into account the remarks made in class. He monitors and walks around the class to help the students and provides feedback.

Another technique to correct students' writing is the pair correction. The students are asked to correct each other's work. Student A corrects student B's, B corrects A's. During this process, the student gains the opportunity to compare his own written work to that of his peers. When he notices his fellow students' mistakes in spelling, punctuation and grammar, he may be aware of his own. Self-correction boosts students' confidence, develops a sense of self-sufficiency and encourages them to change perspective on how they look at errors. They hand the corrected work to the teacher. He corrects them again

because there may be miscorrected or uncorrected mistakes and returns the twice-corrected compositions to the students to know how successful they have been. In the revision stage, students evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the form and content of their writing piece and make changes based on these judgments. Then, they review them and rewrite another composition.

In correcting the second work, the teacher takes into account the grammatical errors and if the students do not progress, they shall rewrite again their compositions until the difference is apparent between the original papers and the rewritten ones. In addition, collaborative group or peer work increases the intellectual and emotional participation or involvement of the students and combines most effectively all aspects of communication in the most integrated, non-threatening and flexible mode of class organization available to the teacher (Bruffee, 1980:77).

Another way to respond to students writing in the classroom is that each student is required to read his own writing clearly and slowly, indicating the beginning and end of each paragraph. He repeats the topic sentence for emphasis. Other students in the group are to listen carefully but not to comment on the writing for the time being. The seemingly simple activity of reading aloud is helpful because it makes one's work public and turns writing into a social activity. The sympathetic response of one's peers turns a group of individuals into a "learning community" and writing workshop. It also helps to develop the writer's critical awareness and helps him write by ear and get rid of "awkwardness and pretentiousness in writing" (Bruffee, 1980:108).

In the process approach, the focus has shifted from the finished product to the whole process of writing: question asking, prewriting preparation, draft writing, editing and rewriting, publication or sharing, and response and feedback from the readers.

The following is a diagram taken from Tribble (1996), illustrating the recursive and unpredictable process of writing:

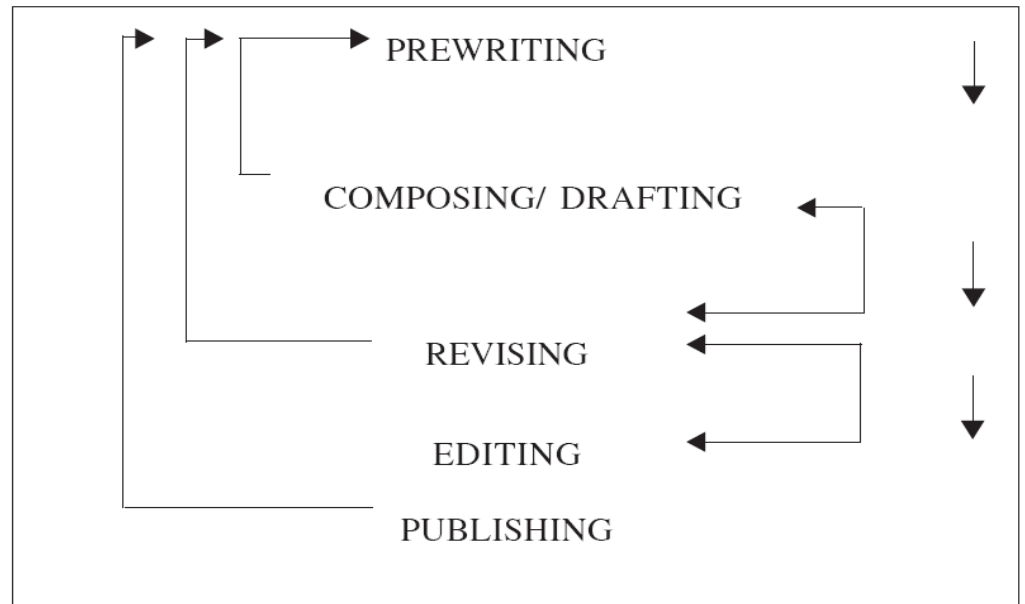


Figure 1: Dynamic and unpredictable model of process writing

The teacher is no longer the centre and the “angry error hunter”; instead, he is rather “humble fellow writer who builds assignments and practice activities from his own “first -hand knowledge of writing problems (Kirby, 1984:23). In turn, the shift of focus and the change in the teacher’s role necessitate greater emphasis on activities such as collaborative group work and peer evaluation.

Researchers to name Sommers and Perl (cited in Zamel, 198:195-209) have studied skilled and unskilled writers in order to find out which strategies seemed to be most successful. Through their observations, they found that there are significant differences between skilled writers and less skilled ones. Less skilled writers view composing as more mechanical and formulaic. They are so inhibited by their concerns with correctness and form that they can not get beyond the surface in order to anticipate the needs and expectations of their readers. The researchers came out with the result that less skilled or unproficient writers revised in the most limited way. They were basically concerned with

lexis and teacher generated rules and rarely modified ideas that had already been written down. Unlike these writers, the more experienced writers viewed their writing from a global perspective. In the process of discovering meaning, these writers changed whole chunks of discourse, and each of these changes represented a reordering of the whole. Cited in (Nunan 1989, 37). Thus, skilled writers are much more aware of writing as a recursive activity involving revisions of successive drafts of one's texts.

Similar findings are reported by Lapp (1994) cited in Nunan (1991). At the prewriting stage, skilled writers spend time planning the task, while unskilled writers spend little time planning and the consequence they are confused when starting writing. At the drafting stage, skilled writers write quickly and fluently. They spend time reviewing what they write and do most of their reviewing at the sentence and paragraph level. Unskilled writers spend little time reviewing what they have written and when they do so, they are concerned with vocabulary and sentence formation. Finally, at the revision stage, skilled writers revise at all levels of lexis, sentence and discourse. They review and revise throughout the composing process and use revisions to clarify meaning. Unlike the skilled writers, unskilled ones do not major revisions. They revise only during the first draft and focus primarily on the mechanics of grammar, spelling, punctuation and vocabulary.

This is a summary of the main stages of the model of writing as a process. The first stage is a pre-writing task in which students collect data or gather information about the subject. They can write an outline. Then, they write the first draft and present it to peers to read and provide feed back on it, this helps them raise their awareness of their own mistakes. After that, the teachers give comments only on content to encourage their fluency and creativity and until the last draft that they emphasize on grammar mistakes (accuracy). Writing as a process, the student is engaged in producing more than one draft, he has the opportunity to revise his writing. In the process of redrafting, students clarify

and enrich their writing .An expert teacher says “*I always think that we need to give students a second chance to do things [...] their initial idea may be odd, but when they think about it again, they’ll sort out the problem and try again [...] this is the merit of process writing*” (Amy .B .M, Tsui, 2003: 22). These operations or stages allow writers to get to the end product more successfully.

Approaching writing as a recursive process contributed significantly to correct many false assumptions about the very nature of writing. In fact, producing effective and interesting written expression is an overwhelming task for many students. The process approach to teaching writing has been demonstrated to be an effective strategy for increasing the overall quality of students’ written expression. The consideration of these stages of the writing process highlights the extent to which awareness about the recursiveness of the writing process is valuable for the production of a good piece of writing which is hardly achieved in one shot.

As a matter of fact, this awareness will remove students’ inhibition towards planning several times, and likewise decrease their reluctance to review their work critically as many times as needed. According to this approach, writing is viewed to be not so much a process through which one reports one’s thought; rather, it is a way in which writers explore and clarify their thoughts and even discover new ideas. Process approach or writer-oriented approach makes the achievement of “good writing” more tangible but breaking down the writing process as a whole into its constituent parts, which is likely to make writing less daunting and more manageable. According to Hyland, writing research from the writer’s point of view, seeks to identify what good writers do when they are confronted with a composing task. (2002:23).

However, the process approach received much criticism. Grabe and Kaplan (1998) state that one of first critiques appeared in the 1980’s claiming that the process approach

lacked a theoretical foundation due to its recent introduction at that time. Nonetheless, throughout time it has developed considerably and offers an extensive review of the evolution of process approaches. A third comment comes from Nunan (1991) who argues that process writing limits learners to learn about other text types such as reports, expositions and arguments academically speaking. While Horowitz (1996) in Nunan (1991:88) claims that process writing fails to prepare students to write examination essays. But the process approach is widely accepted and utilized because it allows students to understand the steps involved in writing.

2.3. The Genre-Oriented Approach

The third orientation or the genre –based approach to writing instruction, emerging in the mid 80s, emphasizes the role that discourse communities plays in shaping written communication. We construct meanings within socially-determined parameters or constraints (Kern, Richard, 2000:183). In other words, writers use particular genres in order to fulfil certain goals within particular social and cultural contexts. Thus, writing in a genre approach is both purposeful and inseparable from the social context in which it occurs. The starting point is the text. Nevertheless, lower level aspects of language are focused on as well.

The genre-based approach is derived from social constructivism; writing is a social act. In this respect, Martin (1992) says that genre is goal oriented and a staged social process. It is a combination of both form and functions. The genre approach to teaching writing focuses , as the terms suggest, on teaching particular genres that students need control in order to succeed in particular settings. This might include a focus on language and discourse features of the texts as well as the context in which the text is produced .Genre means socially recognized ways of using language to achieve some purpose .It means to write in different ways for different purposes; the different ways in organizing

information interact with the purposes of the text. The writer has certain goals and intentions, certain relationships to his reader and certain information to convey. When a set of texts share the same purpose, they will share the structure and thus, they belong to the same genre. The view that underlies the genre-oriented approach is that language is functional; through language that we get things done and we achieve goals. An important aspect of perspective

The genre-based approach to writing instruction falls into three main forms of texts: narrative, descriptive and persuasive. They are respectively sequenced from easy (simple) to difficult (complex). That is to say, the students first learn to tell stories and narrate events. Second, they give detailed descriptions of people and places. Then, they move to persuade or convince people by providing solid arguments. In fact, the genres are presented from the most familiar to the least familiar to the students. For instance, persuasion comes last because it requires high cognitive skills and abilities.

As a matter of fact, each genre is characterized by a specific content, form, organization and appropriate language to fulfil the requirements of that genre's readers: *"The audience and the purpose of writing determine the structure, the organisation, the tone and the choice of words"*. As far as diction or language is concerned, the verbs the learners use in narrative, descriptive and persuasive texts are different. As an illustration, the action verbs used in narratives (sailed, conquered and explored) are not found in descriptions (the commonly used: be and have) and the persuasive texts have a lot of emotion verbs (think, feel and know). Each type of text responds to the readers' needs. While in the descriptive task, students are required to include and organize features that help someone visualize an object without seeing it. They are required to provide detailed, precise descriptions. In the persuasive task, students are asked to defend an argument and generalize reasons to support their standpoint. (Randi, Reppen in Richards and

Renandy.Willy.A, 2002:321-322). Therefore, students must learn to respond to the informational and organizational demands of various settings.

2.4.An Integrated Approach to Writing Teaching

The strengths and weaknesses of each writing approach show that the three approaches complement each other. Various suggestions for combining together features of two approaches or more to create a balanced approach to the teaching of writing are provided. For instance, Dyer (1996) by his so called “process-product hybrid”, he asks writing teachers to use the combination of genre, product and process approaches. The different orientations to writing teaching can be seen more complementing rather than contrasting each other. *Brooks et al* (1990) point out that teaching the writing approaches separately very often results in unbalanced L2 writing performance.

Many writing teachers recognize that we need not rigidly adopt just one approach in the writing classroom. In some cases, combining the approaches results in a new way of thinking about writing. According to Raimes(1993, 268), teachers should always try to provide students with writing assignments that can “*unite form and content, ideas and organisation, syntax, meaning, writing and revising and above all writing and thinking*”. Teachers should start teaching writing with one approach and then adapt it by combining the strengths of other approaches in the writing classroom. Therefore, using the integrated approach in the classroom has the main purpose of enabling student writers to transfer the skills they have gained from each approach naturally from one mode to another and thus to produce their writing tasks efficiently.

Teachers may combine the strengths of product, process and genre approaches together and use the following steps to help students write in a certain genre most successfully. First of all, teachers need to provide a clear model which allows students to identify the purpose of the social context in the first stage of teaching. Next, instructors

should use the techniques of generating ideas such as brainstorming, mind mapping and free writing to help learners think about the appropriate vocabulary, grammar, and organization for writing in a specific genre.

After the stage of generating ideas, students will be allowed to work in groups because collaborative learning will not only lessen students' stress but also promote the skills which are involved in writing development. Another step which will make students' writing effective is redrafting and proofreading as they will help learners develop what they lack in their written products and sense of audience. By learning through the integrated approach, students will have less difficulty in L2 writing since they have enough input to create their writing tasks.

2.4.1. The Process-Genre Approach

A new approach in the area of second language writing is brought about by the combination of essential features of the process-genre approaches. As its name suggests, this paradigm borrows features from both the two orientations. This approach is a synthesis of the process and genre approaches. It allows students to study the relationship between purpose and form of a particular genre as they use the recursive process of prewriting, drafting, revising and editing. Using these steps develops students' awareness of different text types and of the composing process.

In sum, the objective of this literature review is to report on theoretical and pedagogical issues and to evaluate the benefits or the merits and the problems or limitations of the three approaches to teaching writing in English as a second or foreign language. Therefore, the review of four approaches to writing above shows each giving a different emphasis to each of the three aspects considered important in a theory of writing ; product, process and context.

3-Factors Influencing the Development of the Writing Ability

The above literature review drew on theories principally developed from first language research. L2 writing research is, then, relatively new. Empirical studies suggest that there are significant differences between L1 and L2 writing that teachers need to address to ensure the effectiveness of their classroom expectations, teaching practices and assessment procedures. L2 writing is strategically, rhetorically and linguistically different in important ways from L1 writing, to borrow Silva's words. Thus, an understanding of these various cognitive, social, cultural and linguistic factors and exploring their effects enables to draw some implications for the L2 writing instruction.

3-1-Potential L1 and L2 Writer Differences

The most immediately obvious factor that distinguishes many second language writers is that they find difficulties to adequately express themselves in English. First, these writers have a different linguistic knowledge base or background than native English speakers. Therefore, while the native speakers have a vocabulary of several thousands words , L2 writers often carry the burden of learning to write and learning English at the same time.(Key.Hyland,2003:34).

Research frequently finds texts written by L2 students to be less effective than those of their native English speaking peers. Silva (1997) in (Key Hyland, 2003:34). Students themselves identify language difficulties such inadequate grasp of vocabulary or grammar. And they are frustrated as they feel not able to convey their ideas in appropriate and correct English. They feel they have good ideas, but lack the linguistic resources to convey them in writing in a foreign language. Their goal is to approximate a native speaker's performance in writing. The following quote, from a New Zealandan student is representative of many students struggling to make meanings in English. He says:

I have some ideas and I can't, I can make it in my language or in my opinion, sometimes it is English, but I can't write down correctly .Ah ,

my essay always don't be academic. It just tends to write personal writing always. My ideas don't stay one point always. Still quite unskilful and what I want to say is not expressed, is not explained in my essay. (Ibid).

Indeed, linguistic and rhetorical conventions do not always transfer successfully across languages and may actually interfere with writing in the L2. Connor (1996) argues that there are number of salient differences in the writing processes of L1 and L2 writers and their fluency and accuracy of their writing. However, while L1 writers may transfer talk to writing but L2 or FL writers do not have the same exposure and thus proficiency in language. They have to rely more on reading as a source of language input. (Grabe&Kaplan, 1996.Raimes, 1983, 1984).But, as Wolff (2000) argues, L2 writing competence is partly L1 dependent but partly independent. (Wolff, 2000:109).

Different cultural schemata can influence L2 writers since educational practices are shaped by the cultures in which they operate. Western cultures which emphasize the separateness and uniqueness of persons contrast with the many non-Western cultures like the Asian ones which focus on the interdependence of human beings to each other. In the western classroom “good writing” is seen to involve the writer’s individual creativity and critical thinking. Bereiter and Scardamalia characterize mature writing as “knowledge transforming” where writers seek to elaborate and refine available knowledge. On the other hand, collective or independently oriented cultures have a very different perspective that favours conserving and reproducing existing knowledge, following strategies such as memorization and imitation which demonstrate respect for knowledge. This is referred to as “knowledge telling”.

3-2- The Personal Factors

Understanding these differences is important, but before these students are members of social groups. They are first individuals characterised by many personal differences. Therefore, writing development cannot be neutral with respect to the different

personal attributes of the writer. That is to say, needs, objectives, motivation and anxiety are at the top of the personal attributes that are said to influence writing development. According to Cunninsworth (1989) motivation is arguably the most important single factor in success or failure at language learning. A well-motivated student badly taught will probably do better than a poorly-motivated student well taught. Motivation determines the student's level of attention during class, and the assiduity with which he does his homework and revises what has been taught. It certainly has a deep influence on the effectiveness of learning. Ellis (1994) and Skehan (1998 in Key Hyland 2003:32) see that individual learner differences are important reasons for reaching proficiency or not. By individual differences, we refer to social and psychological factors all playing role in a student's successful acquisition of a second language.

No two learners are identical. Thus, their different learning backgrounds and personalities will influence how quickly, and how well, they learn to write in a second language. It is obvious that students bring to L2 writing classes different writing experiences, different aptitudes and levels of motivation. Learners have varying metacognitive knowledge of their L1 and experience in using it, mainly when writing. Students who regard writing (mainly L2 /FL writing) as a highly stressing activity are not rare. Many researches find that this anxiety often prevents the development of writing proficiency as anxious students avoid writing when possible and when forced to write, do so with great anxiety.

Many second language writers never achieve target language proficiency. This is due to the fact that these writers reach a level of competence that allows them to communicate to their own satisfaction or because they fossilize at a certain level. Tsui adopts Li's (in Tsui ,1996) experience and identifies three sources of writing anxiety which are grammatical accuracy, imposed writing topics which are of no interest to the students and

finally the unsupportive environment which include the pressure of the limitation of time. In sum, a person's goals, attitudes, and abilities are likely to be crucial factors in their successful acquisition of writing skills in an L2 alongside the way writing instruction chooses to approach writing and to define it to future writers. In other words, the development of the writing ability, like any other type of development cannot be isolated from the influence of intrinsic or extrinsic factors that may promote or hinder it.

Chapter Two: Approaches to Writing Instruction

Research conducted in the areas of linguistics, psycholinguistics, cognitive psychology and sociolinguistics has helped us to gain a better understanding of how the ability to write is likely to be learned. Writing involves a dynamic interaction among three basic elements that play a part in the writing act, namely the text, the writer and the reader. Thus, writers should take into consideration of all of them in order to write effectively (Silva & Matsuda, 2002). The formal study of L2 writers, writing and writing instruction has relatively short but fruitful history going at least as far as the 1960s (Matsuda, P. Kei, 2003). The complexity of writing has given rise to various approaches to teaching the skill. Raimes (1983) presents six approaches each with a different focus. They are presented as follows: The controlled-to-free approach, the free-writing approach, the paragraph-pattern-approach, the grammar-syntax-organization approach, the communicative approach and the process approach.

1-1-The Controlled to Free Approach

It started in the 1950s and early 1960s when the audio-lingual method dominated second language learning. Most language programs dealing with the teaching of writing by focussing on the development of language skills which were reflected in an emphasis on formal correctness of students' writing.

Instruction typically involved imitation of what were thought to be appropriate sentences as well as their manipulation. That is to say, sentence combination or rework of problematic sentences: "*Controlled composition consisted of combining and substitution exercises that were designed to facilitate the learning of sentence structures with no freedom to make mistakes*" (Pincas, 1982 cited in Kroll, 2003:20). Furthermore, the task of writing was tightly controlled to prevent errors caused by first language interference

(Kroll: 2001). The main role of teacher was to instil notions of accuracy which was expected to arise out of practice with structures.

This method emphasized that speech and writing served to achieve mastery of grammatical and syntactic forms. Thus, teachers developed and used techniques to enable students to achieve this mastery. This approach is sequential in nature. Students are first given sentence exercises then paragraphs to copy or manipulate grammatically by changing questions to statements, present to past or plural to singular. They may be given words to extend to clauses or combine sentences. A written text as pointed by Silva (1990:13) was merely considered as “*A collection of sentence patterns and vocabulary items, a linguistic artefact, a vehicle for language practice*”

With these controlled compositions, it is relatively easy for students to write and yet avoid errors which make error correction easy. Students are not allowed to try some free composition until they reach an intermediate level of proficiency. To sum up, this approach stresses on grammar syntax and mechanics.

1-2-The Free Writing Approach

This approach stresses writing quantity rather than quality. Teachers who use this approach assign vast amounts of free writing on given topics with only minimal correction. The emphasis in this approach is on content and fluency rather than on accuracy and form. That is to say, grammatical accuracy and form follow once ideas are down paper. Accordingly, teachers may begin their classes by asking students to write freely on any topic for some minutes without worrying about grammar and spelling. Those pieces of free writing are not meant to be corrected by teachers. They simply read them and may comment on the ideas the student writer expressed. Alternatively, some students may volunteer to read their own writing aloud to the class. To conclude, the concerns of this approach are audience and content

1-3-The Paragraph Pattern-Approach

Neither accuracy (of grammar) nor fluency (of content) is stressed in this approach. Instead it emphasises on organization. Students copy paragraphs and imitate model passages. They put scrambled sentences into paragraph order .They identify general and specific statements and choose to invent an appropriate topic sentence, they insert or delete sentences.

This approach is based on the principle that in different cultures people construct and organize communication with each other in different ways.

1-4-The Grammar-Syntax-Organization Approach

This approach stresses simultaneous work on more than one composition feature. Teachers who follow this approach maintain that writing can not be seen as composed of separate skills which are learned sequentially. Students be should train to pay attention to organization while they also work on the necessary grammar and syntax. This approach links the purpose of writing to the forms that are needed to convey the message. It is important to point out that these early views of the role of writing in language pedagogy were challenged by many researchers who attempted to explore the very act of composing a written text.

1-5-The Communicative Approach

This approach stresses the purpose of writing and the audience for it. Student writers are encouraged to behave like writers in real life and ask themselves crucial questions about purpose and audience for instance: why am I writing this? And who will read it? Traditionally, the teacher alone has been the audience for student writing. However, some feel that writers do their best when writing is truly a communicative act, with a writer writing for a real reader .As such, the readership may be extended to classmate and pen friends.

1-6-The Process Approach

It is L1 writing research which is responsible for the salutary shift from exclusively product-based research and instruction to a process approach that includes and investigates the process of writing through which the creation of the product is undertaken. In the late 1970's and the 1980's with the development witnessed in both composition studies and second language studies prompted second language writing teachers and researchers to consider factors other than properties of the texts themselves; the interest had began to shift from textual features to the process of writing itself(Matsuda, cited in Kroll, 2003:21). One of the very first researches considering writing as a process was conducted by Emig in 1971 (cited in Krapels, 1990). It constituted a breakthrough in writing research either in L1 and L2 for it suggested that the process of writing is worth investigation not only for research purposes, but also for instructional ones. Recently, the teaching of writing has started to move away from too much attention given to the written product emphasising on the process of writing. Writers ask themselves questions as such how do I write this. How do I get started?

During the writing process, students engage in prewriting, planning, drafting and post writing activities. Since the writing process is recursive in nature, they do not necessarily engage in these activities in a linear order. In this approach, students are trained to generate ideas for writing, think of the purpose and audience, and write multiple drafts in order to present written products that communicate their own ideas. Teachers who use this approach give students time to try ideas and feedback on the content of what they write in their drafts. As such, writing becomes a process of discovery for the students as they discover new ideas and new language forms to express them.

Furthermore, learning to write is seen as a developmental process that helps students to write as professional authors do; choosing their own topics, genres and writing

from their own experiences or observations. A writing process approach requires that teachers give students greater responsibility for ownership of their own learning. What is also important is that collaboration is promoted.

2. Teaching the Mechanics/Sub-skills of Writing

Writing like any other skill has its mechanical components. These are referred to as the conventions of written English as handwriting, spelling, punctuation. In fact, error-free writing requires more than just using good grammar; appropriate /correct mechanics of writing are also required.

2.1. Punctuation

Using punctuation correctly is an important skill. Learners should know how to punctuate correctly to convey ideas and information in such a way that the readers understand each sentence quickly and easily on first reading. Showing how punctuation can improve sentence clarity can help learners recognize that punctuation exists to help writers clarify their meaning and to help readers perceive that meaning. A piece of writing is not judged on only what is written .i.e. the content, the language, and the writer's handwriting but also on the use of communication. Therefore, removing or misusing capital letters, commas, full stops, sentence and paragraph boundaries will not only make a negative impression but can also make a text difficult to understand. (Harmer, 2004:49). Good writers/ learners of English need to be taught how to use punctuation conventions correctly. It is recommended to start teaching the aspects of the system from the very beginning. Different ways to dealing with punctuation are commonly used in classrooms. First, after having explained the symbols used for punctuating such as, the question mark (?) shows that a direct question is being asked and it is also used in requests, learners may be asked to notice how a text is punctuated and explain every choice. Or they are asked to

punctuate a piece of writing. Another effective activity may be designed such as giving an ill-punctuated piece of writing as a home work and asking them to correct only punctuation errors. Marland (1977) recommends that punctuation be taught by function, including:

- The seven ways of marking off a "sense group": the comma, the semicolon, parentheses, the period followed by a space and upper-case letter, the paragraph indentation, the space or signs for section divisions, the chapter- ending space
- The three ways of marking interruptions: a pair of commas, a pair of dashes, a set of parentheses
- The different ways of showing that a word has been borrowed or is being used in a special way: underline, quotation marks, italics, or boldface. Most punctuation marks are written substitutes for intonation-visual symbols that have developed as substitutes.
- **2.2.Handwriting or Calligraphy**

Although a lot of writing is typed on computer keyboards, handwriting is still necessary mainly in exam writing. Handwriting may be difficult for learners using very different scripts such as in Arabic. The difficulties can include producing the shapes of English letters, not only in upper case (capitals) but also in their lower case (non-capital) equivalents. (Harmer, 2003:45).For the sake of teaching the English handwriting, two-stage approach may be followed. The first stage involves the recognition and the second the production of letters.

2.3. Spelling

Spelling plays an important role in communicating through written word. Learners need to realize that spelling errors detract from their overall message and readers are, in general, less tolerant of poor spelling than of any other language problems. It is generally

agreed that English spelling is irregular and thus difficult. One feature of English is the lack of spelling-sound correspondence; the same sounds can be spelt differently. Hence, learners of English need to be aware mainly of how to use different spellings to distinguish between homophones.

Some strategies may be used whenever learners are uncertain about a correct spelling such as checking a word visually, using a dictionary, using a spell-check program on a computer. By far the most effective way for learners to be good spellers is extensive reading (Harmer, 2003:47) and by proofreading their own writing:

- Checking their own and others' writing carefully for spelling
- Analyzing their own spelling problems, grouping them in patterns eg .pneumonia, pneumatic and describing their own spelling rules.
- Noting sound-alikes .e.g. their/there/they're and look-alikes such as then/than and learning them within an appropriate context.
- Developing a way of studying new words: examine, pronounce, make associations, write and check.
- Dictation is a good technique for spelling practice, mainly when it contains words which exemplify certain spelling rules.

2.4.Dictation

It is important to point out that incorporating dictation at the beginning level of learning to write is very useful. Students will simply write down English letters, words, and sentences and paragraphs in order to learn the conventions of the orthographic code. Besides, dictations can serve to teach and test higher-order processing. Dictations may

involve the following steps .First, the teacher reads a short paragraph once or twice at normal speed, then he reads the paragraph in short phrase units, each phrase with three or four words and each unit is followed by a pause. During the pause, write exactly what they hear. The next step is that the teacher reads the whole paragraph once more at normal speed so students can check their writing .When the teacher checks their writing, usually spelling and punctuation errors are not considered as severe as grammatical errors. (Brown, Douglas, 2001:343-344).

Conclusion

Writers are always consciously or unconsciously attending to the mechanics of writing. They are most often focusing on them in the revision stage, particularly during proofreading. Therefore, teaching the mechanics of writing is of great importance given the fact a great deal of meaning is conveyed though the appropriate use of them.

Chapter Three: Writing Skills and Strategies

The concept of strategy is central in the field of learning and educational psychology. In these psychological realms a focus on strategies in an attempt to understand how people tackle different learning/performance tasks as well as why and how such behaviour can be modified through instruction in order to optimize performance (Jones, Palinscar, Ogle and Carr(1987), Nisbet and Schucksmith(1991), Schmek(1988), Weinstein, Goetz and Alexander(1988)). Regarding writing, the study of strategies is first contextualized in the writing process-oriented research. It emerged with the aim of gaining insight into the mental processes writers engage in while composing. Research and pedagogic interest in strategies have also characterized the field of second language acquisition (SLA) with an aim to gain insight into the ‘black box’ of SLA i.e. how second and foreign language learners go about the basic tasks they face. Acquiring knowledge about the L2 and developing the ability to put the acquired knowledge to use when producing and interpreting oral and written messages (Chamot, 2001, Chamot and O’Malley, 1994, Cohen, 1998, Mc Donough, 1995, 1999, O’Malley and Chamot, 1990, Oxford, 1990, Wenden and Rubin, 1987, Willing, 1989).

The cognitively –oriented trend within the process tradition views composition writing as a goal-oriented, cognitively –demanding, problem-solving task (Breiter & Scardamalia, 1987, Flower & Hayes, 1980, 1981). According to them, writing strategies correspond to those actions and procedures employed by the writer to control the on-line management of goals, compensate for the limited capacity of the writers’ cognitive resources and to overcome the problems writers pose to themselves. Therefore, these scholars have endeavoured first to describe the actions L2 writers engage in while they generate, express and refine their ideas and second to discover the writer-internal and writer-external variables influencing their composing behaviour. This enquiry has brought

into view how L2 writers approach the problem-solving task entailed by composing in a non-native language.

However, attention should be drawn to the fact that sometimes the term strategy has been equated with processes, methods, actions and means implemented both to approach and complete writing tasks. In other terms, virtually any observed writing behaviour has been considered a strategy. (Manchon.R.M, 2001, 50).

1-Definition of Writing Strategies and Writing Skills

According to Oxford (1990), foreign or second learning strategies are specific actions, behaviours, steps and techniques learners use-often consciously-to improve their progress in apprehending, internalizing and using the L2.Strategies are generally defined as natural procedures that assist learning and that occasionally can be accompanied by overt activities. Writing strategies are specific actions or techniques that students intentionally use to improve their progress in developing L2 skills. Or writing strategies are deliberate, focused ways of thinking about writing. Writers use strategies all the time to keep their writing going and to make it come out the way they intend.

2-Types of writing strategies

To start with Hsiao and Oxford view (2002), strategies can “*pave the way toward greater proficiency, learner autonomy, and self regulation*”. Therefore, it is necessary to explore explicit classification of ESL writing strategies from theoretic stance so that ESL learners can easily access to and acquire them in order to facilitate their writing. It is important to point out that how the strategies are classified is an issue which is open to debate as it is stated by Hsiao and Oxford.

For the sake of classifying or categorising the different writing strategies, researchers have tried to develop different taxonomies. The earliest investigations of ESL writing strategies are provided by Arndt (1987) who studied the composing activities of six

Chinese postgraduate EFL students as they produced academic written texts in both their first and foreign languages. She adopted eight categories to code the strategies the students used in their writing as follows: planning, global planning, rehearsing, repeating, rereading, questioning, revising, and editing. Wenden (1991) divided them into cognitive and metacognitive strategies. Riazi(1997) classified them into cognitive, metacognitive and social strategies and search strategies. Sazaki (2000) investigated Japanese ESL students' writing strategies which consisted of planning, retrieving, generating ideas, verbalizing, sense of readers evaluating and others. It is worth mentioning that while some researchers have only provided types of writing strategies without categorising them such as Arndt(1987) and Sazaki(2000),others have labelled and categorised them into cognitive, metacognitive among others.

2-1.Cognitive Strategies

For Richards and Renandya(2003) cognitive strategies involve the identification, retention and retrieval of language elements. They are according to Wenden (1991) *“mental operations or steps used by learners to learn new information and apply it to specific learning tasks”*. Said differently, writing strategies refer to the strategies that writers use to implement the actual writing actions. Therefore, the strategies under cognitive strategies may be condensed into seven strategies which include generating ideas, revising and editing, elaborating, clarification, retrieval, rehearsing and summarising.

2-2.Metacognitive strategies

Metacognition means thinking about what one is doing while writing. Accordingly, metacognitive strategies can be defined as strategies that control and guide the writing process. O'Malley and Chanot define them as *“higher order executive skills that may entail planning for, monitoring or evaluating the success of a learning activity”*. Victori

(1995) claims that planning; monitoring and evaluating are “*threefold general classification of metacognitive strategies*”. Wenden (1991) defines metacognitive strategies as mental operations or procedures that learners use to regulate their learning. That is to say, those strategies writers use to control the writing process consciously.

Flavell (1978-1987), Baker and Brown (1984), Gounghy (2001) conceive it as awareness and control of one’s cognition. They focus on the learners’ executive control of cognition which includes:

- The regulatory activities of planning: are strategies by which the writer plans and talk out the coming ideas and stating explicitly his objectives for organisation and procedures.
- Monitoring refers to the strategies the writers use when checking and verifying their process and when identifying oncoming problems.
- Testing.
- Revising.
- Evaluating are strategies undertaken when reconsidering the written text, previous goals, planned thoughts. Besides, the changes undertaken to the text.

In sum, metacognitive skills take as their object the cognitive skills themselves, in that they involve the conscious, planned, informed, deliberate control of how to think and what to think in order to maximize progress and minimise errors.

2-3. Rhetorical Strategies

They are the ones that writers use to organise and to present their ideas in writing conventions that are acceptable to native speakers of that language ‘English in our case’. Organising strategies involves the organisation of the beginning, development and conclusion of an essay. ESL writers may use L1 or L1 knowledge to plan a paragraph. Also comparing is regarded as a rhetorical strategy because ESL writers use it to compare

L1 writing conventions with that of ESL in order to adapt the conventions of the discourse community.

2-4.Social /Affective Strategies

The former refer to the actions that the writers take to interact with users of the language to clarify some questions, to have access to the available resources such as libraries, journals and dictionaries. The latter which are also termed as rest/deferral strategies which means the ability to adjust one's emotions and reduce anxiety, getting feedback from professors and peers, assigning goals as through assigning goals writers can reduce their pressure from the burden of tasks .In other words, affective strategies are those that serve to regulate emotions, motivation and attitudes while writing.

2-5.The Communicative Strategies

They are the strategies the writers may use to express ideas in a more effective way .Avoidance, reduction and sense of readers may be listed under the communicative strategies.

In the present work , we rely on a synthesis of different works investigating the writing strategies ESL learners make use of while they are constructing a piece of written work. The following table sums up the different writing strategies proposed by the researchers Arndt(1987), Wenden (1991), Victori (1995), Riazi (1997), Sasaki(2000).Despite the fact that they use different appellations or categorisations, all of them agree on the most of these strategies and insist that writing strategies are what distinguish skilled from less skilled writers. What is more important is that these strategies can be learned through conscious efforts and most of the time through explicit instruction.

Given the fact that writing strategies instruction are necessary for improved writing proficiency, many programmes in the USA have been launched to teach young adolescent writing strategies. It is found that every year, large numbers of adolescents graduate from

school unable to write at the basic levels required by colleges or employers. In addition, poor writing proficiency should be recognised as an intrinsic part of a national literacy crisis. *“Writing well is not an option for young people; it is a necessity .Writing skill is a predictor of academic success and a basic requirement for participation in civic life and in the global economy”* (Graham. S& Perin .D, 2007:3). As a result, writing instruction included the explicit teaching of writing strategies.

3-Taxonomy of the Writing Strategies

In this dissertation we intend to explore the writing strategies that are aimed to be developed in the Algerian Middle school learners who are being in contact with English as the second foreign language after French. These learners start to learn the English language and cultures from their first year in the second cycle in their educational career. That is to say, the first year Middle School(MS1 to MS4).They bring to a close this cycle with a final *brevet* “BEM” which will give them access to carry on their studies in the secondary school .

The Targeted Strategy	The activities (manifestation).	The type
1-Executive processes used to plan, monitor and evaluate a writing task.	-assigning goals -planning(making and changing outlines) -monitoring -evaluating	Metacognitive
2-Interacting with the materials to be used in writing by manipulating them mentally or physically	-note taking -elaborating (extending the content of writing) -use of mother tongue -knowledge and skill transfer	Cognitive

	from L1 -drafting	
3-Editing	-making changes to the written text in order to correct syntax or spelling	Cognitive
4- Revising	-making changes to the written text in order to clarify meaning	Cognitive
5-Retrieval:getting information from memory.	-rereading aloud or silently what had been written -Rereading the assigned question -self –questioning -summarising what had just been written	Cognitive
6-Rehearsing	-writing till the idea would Come out	Cognitive
7-Organization	-beginning, development and ending	Rhetorical
8-use of L1	-translate generated ideas into ESL	Rhetorical
9-Formatting /modelling	-Genre consideration	Rhetorical
10-Comparing	-rhetorical conventions	Rhetorical
11-Sense of readers	-anticipating the readers response	Communicative
12-Avoidance	-avoiding confusions and what makes the readers ask questions	Communicative

13-Reduction	-paraphrasing difficult sentences	Communicative
14-Explicitness	-to make one's self explicit so as the readers will understand the intended message.	Communicative
15-Interacting with other persons to assist in performing the task or to gain affective control	-appealing for clarifications -getting feedback from professors and peers	social/affective
16-Rest/deferral	-reducing anxiety	Social/affective
17-Using others' writing as a model	-imitating	Social/affective
18-Using guidelines	-Searching and using libraries (books, journals...)	Social/affective

Conclusion

Research supports the effectiveness of using L2 /FL learning strategies and has shown that successful language learners often use strategies in an orchestrated fashion. Actually, the use of appropriate learning strategies often results in improved proficiency or achievement overall or in specific skill areas (Oxford et al, 1993.Thonpson&Rubin, 1993).By implication, writing strategies are of great significance for the learners to use in order to write meaningful, well formed texts fulfilling a purpose in a response to an audience. This is why, it is often reported that the use of appropriate strategies is what distinguishes skilled writers from less skilled ones.

Part Two: The Algerian Middle School Syllabus, Textbooks and Teachers

The present part is divided into three chapters. First, a chapter is devoted to the analysis, classification and assessment of the Algerian Middle school syllabuses in terms of writing strategies instruction. The second chapter aims to check whether the writing activities and tasks suggested in the textbooks are responding to the learners' needs and interests. Most importantly, the focus will be on their degree of focus on writing strategies development. This part will end with a case study targeting a sample of Middle school English teachers whose daily practices and techniques at teaching writing will be observed alongside a questionnaire which reflects their opinions about the new reform of foreign language teaching English in general and most importantly, the Middle school textbooks and their perceptions on writing strategies instruction in particular.

Chapter Four: The Algerian Middle School Syllabuses Designed for the Four Levels

Introduction

This chapter seeks to shed light into the objectives to be reached and the teaching methods applied and the approach followed because generally a syllabus may indicate a preferred methodology or approach and it may also advocate materials. (Ur.Peny, 1996:176).Most essentially, we shall have a glance at the syllabus contents and the way the writing skill is dealt with, i.e. the place of the writing skill among others. The syllabus is organised around three main parts. Before moving to see the components of the Middle School syllabuses, it is worth underlying that our criteria of material evaluation are borrowed from Hutchinson and Waters' checklist (1987:99) emphasising on aim of the material.

1. English Teaching Objectives in the Algerian Middle School

L'importance de plus en plus évidente de la langue Anglaise exige que l'école consacre plus de temps à la communication pour que l'élève acquière des habiletés (activités langagières) lui permettant d'entrer en relation avec ses camarades et les adultes qui l'entourent .Ces habiletés, consolidées à travers l'écoute, la lecture et l'écriture, s'articuleront autour d'objectifs linguistiques, objectifs méthodologiques, objectif culturels et objectifs socioprofessionnels.

(Algerian syllabus of the fourth year middle school, 48-49)

As we can see in the quote above, the general objectives of teaching English in the Algerian Middle School articulate around three major objectives: the linguistic, the methodological and cultural objectives. The linguistic ones consists in developing language so as to help the pupil accomplish his learning cycle and prepare him for the next cycle (secondary school).The methodological objectives insist on learning strategies besides to the reinforcement of working and thinking methods. As for the cultural objectives, they are incorporated in order to help learners develop the open mindedness to diverse civilization contexts and Anglophone cultures.

2. Teaching Approach

It is a commonplace among syllabus designers that school reforms are mostly due to advances in research whether applied or theoretical. The case of the school reform is not different in Algeria. The new Algerian syllabus of the Middle School launched in September 2003 was designed adopting the competency-based approach principles and the constructivist learning theory. The competency-based approach is defined as knowing how to integrate, mobilise a number of abilities and knowledge, and use them efficiently in problem solving situations that have never been met before as it is stated in teachers' book of the Algerian Middle-year three.

The competency-based approach is action oriented in that it gears language learning to the acquisition of know-how embedded in functions and skills. These will allow the learner to become an effective /competent language user in real life situations outside the classroom. It is a problem-solving approach in that it places learners in situations that test/ check their capacity to overcome obstacles and problems. Languages are learned most effectively and lastingly when they are used to solve problems through hypothesis testing. It is social -constructivist in that it regards learning as occurring through social interaction with other people. In other words, learning is not conceived of as the transmission of predetermined knowledge and know-how to be reproduced in vitro, but as a creative construction of newly-constructed knowledge through the process of social interaction with other learners. (Pages 8-9).

The competency-based approach is derived from Constructivism, a learning theory which advocates the focus on the active participation of the learners to construct their knowledge (Lomax & MC Grath, 1993:3). The traditional conceptions about learning/teaching as knowledge absorption are challenged by the new views of active knowledge construction as it is stated by Jonassen (1991) “*constructivism does not preclude the existence of an external reality, it merely claims that each of us constructs our own reality through interpreting perceptual experiences of external world...*” (www.wikipedia.Org). Thus, the learners' knowledge is constructed gradually through this process. Jean Piaget in this context says: “*the first goal of education is to create men who*

are capable of doing new things, not simply of repeating what other generations have done, men who are creative, inventive and discoverers; the second goal of education is to form minds which can be critical, can verify, and can not accept every thing they are offered". (Cited in D.Elkind, S.Staff and al, the Human Encounter, p.388).

In sum, knowledge and the skills that the learners acquire or learn will serve both in and outside classroom. That is to say, to use or remobilize this constructed knowledge in new contexts and problem-solving situations .Therefore, Competency -Based Approach is the most suitable teaching approach to reach the targeted objectives according to the textbook designers .This new teaching/ learning paradigm does not aim only to develop linguistic and communicative competences in the learners but it seeks to build up them interdisciplinary competency and cross-cultural competencies.

Three competencies are focused in the syllabuses:

- Competency 1: Interacting orally in English
- Competency 2: Interpreting oral and written texts
- Competency 3: Producing oral and written texts

3-Analysis of the Algerian Middle School Syllabuses

In this section, we attempt to classify the Algerian Middle School Syllabuses. The aim of the analysis is to find out whether they are in line with the process approach to writing. Most importantly, the focus will be put on the place of the writing skill in the syllabuses. Our readings of the syllabuses reveal that they are organised on a logical way. First, they begin by explaining the objectives of language teaching .Second, they move to present the teaching approach (The competency-based approach) and they end with the methodological hints section which shows how to implement the approach in the classroom. We are going to emphasize in our analysis of the syllabuses on the last section 'Methodological Hints' because our issue is related with teaching.

This section is designed in accordance to task-based principles as the following extracts taken from the syllabuses illustrate:

- “Le programme sera donc centre sur l’élève et sur la construction de son savoir afin de lui faire acquérir, le plus efficacement possible, une connaissance fonctionnelle de l’anglais correspondant à des besoins scolaires et extra scolaires” (MS2 Syllabus : 44) .

Learner-centredness is the core of language teaching/learning aiming to use language outside the classroom context.

- “On s’attache à aider l’élève à jouer un rôle actif dans sa formation, à le rendre responsable de son apprentissage en lui donnant l’occasion de trouver réponses à des questions issues de son expérience quotidienne” (MS2 Syllabus :45). Therefore, authentic and meaningful communication is the goal of classroom activities.

- “ Perçu comme le premier agent de ses apprentissages, l’élève devra s’engager dans une démarche de construction de ses savoirs” (MS1 syllabus : 51). Learning is a process of meaning construction.

- “L’élève est amené progressivement à découvrir les stratégies liées au processus d’écriture” (MS1 Syllabus: 59). The focus is put on the importance of using different writing strategies while constructing a written text.

The sample of quotations above indicates that the recent theories about language learning have inspired the designers. It is the student learner who is put at the centre of the learning process. This implies that the syllabuses seek to cater to the various needs of the learners in terms of the approach, the choice of themes, materials, interests, motivation and so on.

Therefore, the methodology underlying the syllabus design is task-based due to the emphasis given to language functions, strategies and life-coping skills. Task based learning was first developed by N.Prabhu. Prabhu believed that learners may learn more

effectively when their minds are focused on the task, rather than on the language they are using (Prabhu, 1987, cited in Littlewood, 2004). Task-based language learning is an approach of language learning that involves doing performing a task using the language. Said differently, language is used for carrying out tasks. Learners will develop their linguistic skills through the language practice needed to perform the tasks, reactivating their own linguistic resources or searching for new ones when the knowledge available is insufficient.

It is argued through the literature that the task-based approach is the most appropriate to implement the CBA. The task-based syllabus is a syllabus organised around tasks reflecting the shift of focus “*from the linguistic element to the pedagogical, with an emphasis on learning or learner*” (Rabbini.R.2002). Therefore, most often the use of language is a means to an end, but not an end in itself. Within the framework of task-based teaching, language learning tasks are those that require or favour communication through language. Parallel to that, the importance of process (the steps that pave the way to a goal) in tasks is also emphasised, while formal linguistic goals move to a secondary place; That is to say, the process and procedures applied in the fulfilment of the task condition the effective and efficient achievement of the final goal. Besides, task-based teaching promotes goal-oriented activities that put emphasis on interaction, conversation, and language use.

Task-based approach helps to motivate the students and focus the attention of teachers and learners on meaning and authenticity of communication. Such methodology is adequate to writing strategies instruction since task-based syllabuses are the best embodiment of process-oriented syllabuses that give a central role to the learner in constructing meaning.

In addition to selecting the appropriate language elements making up a syllabus, the way in which the items to be covered are organised and presented to the learners is too of paramount importance. A glimpse at the table of contents of the MS textbooks shows that they are cyclical syllabuses in the sense that a new item should not be introduced once and then dropped, but it should be reintroduced in different manifestations at various times in the course to borrow Dubin's and Olshtein's words (1997:55).

Cyclical syllabuses are most often opposed to structural ones. The organising principle of the latter is the sequencing and gradation from the easiest to the most difficult and from the simplest to the most complex. In this respect, Cunnigsworth states that a linear syllabus is a *"syllabus which is organized and ordered on the principle of adding teaching points to each other one at a time"* (Cunnigsworth.A,1984:39). Such a design is beneficial for structural contents where each unit prepares the following one. However, this format is not so useful and appropriate when dealing with functions and notions. Therefore, the cyclical design is more suitable for function or task-based syllabuses than the linear one.

3.1.The Place of the Writing Skill in the Syllabuses

This part is devoted to find out the place of writing and writing instruction within the context of the Algerian Middle School syllabuses. The emphasis will be on the aims of the materials (the syllabuses). We borrow the main criterion from Hutchinson and Waters' checklist of material evaluation (1987:100). The sections of the syllabuses that deal with writing are "mise en oeuvre de la compétence 3: Produire des messages simples oraux et écrits" and "indications méthodologiques/stratégies propres aux activités d'écriture". Writing instruction aims at helping the learners to produce different types of texts responding to different audiences and fulfilling different purposes. According to the syllabus designers, this will not be achieved unless different writing strategies are developed in the learners along with writing sub-skills such as spelling, punctuation and

sentence structures as this quote shows “*l’élève poursuit sa découverte des stratégies liées au processus d’écriture [...], il exprime ses idées, les organise logiquement et chronologiquement, tient compte de la syntaxe, de l’orthographe et de la ponctuation pour produire des messages pertinents et cohérent*” (MS 4 Syllabus, 2005:62).

3. 2: Categorisation of the Writing Strategies Suggested in the Algerian Middle School Syllabuses

Researchers have made distinctions between learning strategies and writing strategies. While learning strategies are specific ways of processing information that enhance comprehension, learning and retention of information, writing strategies denote the specific actions or techniques that students consciously use to improve their writing competence.(Chamot&O’Malley:1996-1).Our concern in this work is writing strategies that are suggested in the syllabuses found in “Indications méthodologiques /stratégies propres aux activités de l’écriture.”

The writing strategies, suggested in the Algerian Middle School Syllabuses are classified in the following table, on the basis of the distinctions made among cognitive, metacognitive, rhetorical, communicative and social affective strategies mentioned in the theoretical part of this dissertation. It is worth mentioning that the ten writing strategies are the same for the four levels.

Strategies as presented in French	Translation	Type
Reconnaissance de l’intention	Setting the purpose	metacognitive
Identification du destinataire	Audience recognising	Rhetorical
Identification du moyen de	Medium of communication	Rhetorical

communication à produire		
Identification du genre de texte à produire	Text types	Rhetorical
Anticipation du contenu	Anticipating the content (outlining, planning and organising).	Metacognitive
Choix des mots, des expressions et des types de phrases	Choice of words, expressions and sentence types.	Cognitive
Adaptation du contenu à l'intention de communiquer	The writer adapts the content according to his/her intended meaning.	Communicative
Vérification de la syntaxe et de l'orthographe	editing	cognitive
Attention à la présentation du texte	Texts format (layout and organisation): introduction, body and conclusion.	Rhetorical
Attention à la calligraphie	developing handwriting	Cognitive

4-Results and Discussion

The analysis done so far shows that the Algerian Middle School syllabuses fall under the cyclical task and project-based categories. In fact, task-based approach attracts attention in the field of syllabus design. It puts the emphasis on learners' involvement, interactions and favours the principle of learning by doing. A task-based approach which favours communicative language learning seems to be the most appropriate type of

language teaching syllabuses in the Algerian context. Bearing in mind that English is the learners' second foreign language after French and therefore learners are not sufficiently exposed to the English language outside the classroom. Accordingly, making of the classroom an authentic milieu for language practice and use will help learners for gaining communicative skills and competencies as Richards and Rodgers suggest "Language learning is facilitated by activities and tasks that include real communication".(cited in Rabbini.R,2002:5).

Both task-based learning and project-based learning are seen as different ways of creating opportunities for language learning through problem solving(Richards.J.and Renandya.W,2002:93).The most salient principle of task-based and project-based learning is the emphasis on problem-solving processes through which the objectives designed by CBA and constructivism may be reached. Nevertheless, it is worth to point out that the problems undertaken through tasks are narrow in scope in comparison with the ones tackled through projects. The former aims at developing the learners' communicative competence, whereas the latter aims at expanding cognitive, social and interdisciplinary competencies.

It is agreed that task-based teaching is mostly the suitable approach to put into practice or interpret the principles of CBA. However, this doesn't suggest that it is the sole appropriate type of syllabuses for CBA implementation. This leads us to assume that the prevailing design of the Algerian Middle School syllabuses is task-based along with some structural items and language functions are put forward in the textbooks' contents. In this respect, Hutchinson and Waters sustain "any teaching material must in reality operate several syllabuses at the same time. One of them will probably be used as the principal organising feature, but the others are still there" (Hutchinson & Waters .A, 1987:89). Besides, they go further to suggest that a syllabus that is framed in only one aspect either

structures, functions or content may fail to develop the acknowledged elements effectively. The same stand point is expressed by Swan (1985) when he *asserts “the real issue is not which syllabus to put first: it is how to integrate eight or so syllabuses [...] into a sensible teaching program”* (cited in Hutchinson and Waters, 1987:89). Therefore, considering the different approaches to syllabus design, course designers agree on the necessity that the different ones are needed and are best combined in an eclectic manner for the sake of reaching good results. (Yalden, 1987:120).

For the sake of promoting or fostering communicative language skills, task-based syllabuses are the best known of process-based syllabuses suggested in the field of language teaching as alternatives for the product-oriented ones. In other words, product-based syllabuses which include the structural /grammatical orientation do not prepare learners to use language for communication. Rather, their aim is presenting and practising language items i.e. to learn the language as the end itself, but not as a means for communicative purposes.

The task-based syllabus is in consistency with the process approach to writing. The latter focuses on the steps and processes undertaken for producing a piece of writing that conveys meaningful messages regardless of grammatical accuracy. What is important is the process not the final product, that is, “the focus is not on what the student will have accomplished on completion of the program, but on the specification of learning tasks and activities that s/he will undertake during the course” (Robbini, R. 2002). Therefore, the syllabus designers seem to support the process approach to writing as the focus is on learners’ involvement to produce meaningful texts. In addition, writing strategies instruction is highly recommended in the four syllabuses as the competency of production is composed of a list of writing strategies.

The categorisation of the latter show that each of the four syllabuses promote the development of ten writing strategies falling into five types: cognitive, metacognitive, rhetorical, communicative and social affective. But, it is found that the same list of strategies is suggested for the four levels. However, the syllabuses do not offer any teaching techniques to help the teachers effectively implement the content in the classroom.

Conclusion

To sum up, we may say the Algerian Middle School syllabuses are cyclical task-based syllabuses. They are promoting the learners' interaction and involvement. This leads us to say that they are in consistency with the formal research on syllabus design sustaining that cyclical task-based syllabuses are the most suitable for CBA implementation in general and the process approach to writing in particular. It worth to point out that the Algerian Middle School syllabuses are not providing suggestions on the types of tasks through which to implement the basic principles of teaching despite the fact that the syllabuses' function is to present to teachers the contents of a course as well as the fundamental principles of teaching. *"A syllabus is the inspiration for the production of texts and exercises and the basis on which proficiency will be evaluated"*.

In the chapter that follows, we are going to see to which extent the principles set in the syllabuses are reflected in the textbooks which are the bedrock of syllabus design and lesson planning. (Krashen, 1988:63).

Chapter Five: The Algerian Middle School Textbooks

Introduction

“To learn a foreign language one needs: first of all a great will, time and perseverance and, of course, an adapted documentation aid within a stimulating environment”. Martin Blanc-Montmayeur (2000)”. In education, the term documentation can be substituted by didactic materials, and the textbook is one of the didactic materials which is an important tool mediating instructional planning and student learning. It is a teaching means embodying the level, the pedagogy and translating an educational programme .The textbook keeps at the same time a relationship between the teacher and his pupils. Authors governed by their own interests or solicited by authorities, have elaborated textbooks to serve as vehicles carrying a message for arriving at a destination. H. Besse (1985) writes that:

The foreign language textbook is a tool placed at the teacher’s and the learner’s disposal to help them in their domain, that is to say, to teach how to learn foreign language and properly acquire it.

According to Penny Ur (1996), a textbook is in principle to be followed systematically by the teachers and the learners as the basis for a language course. Language textbooks are classified into three categories according to the way they are perceived by the users. Sometimes, textbooks are taken for granted and sometimes they are not used at all because teachers use their own programmes and materials but in other cases, a textbook is used selectively and supplemented by other materials. (Ur.P, 1996:183-184).

Textbooks are used by almost all teachers and students given the advantages they display. Among them according to Ur, they provide a clear framework or structure; both teachers and learners know where they are going and what is coming next. In addition, they save time for the teacher who would otherwise have to prepare his own. Furthermore, a textbook is a useful guidance and support for teachers as well as for learners because they

are written by experienced and well qualified people responsible for education. (Cunningsworth, Alan, 1989:2). However, textbooks are only an aid to the language-learning process, which also depends upon individuals, their needs and their relationships in the classroom. Teachers and students find their own ways of using a textbook to suit these circumstances, and to suit their own methods of learning. (Ibid, p: 8). Through our analysis of the textbooks, we are going to see how the textbooks' organisation influence writing strategies development.

1-Description and Analysis of the Four Textbooks

This section is devoted to the description of the four Middle School textbooks together with the analysis of their writing sections. The analysis will be concerned with the writing activities to find out whether they help to foster learners' writing skills and strategies mainly those recommended in the syllabuses. We think it is worth mentioning that the writing activities presented in the rubric 'check' are not dealt with because their objective is evaluating the learners' progress and development and not teaching which is the focus of the present work. The four textbooks "MS1, MS2, MS3 and MS4" are described below and through the analysis of the textbooks' activities, we will see if they are strategy instruction based and if so, what strategies are going to be developed in the learners or which strategies are mostly emphasized by the textbooks designers.

1.1. *Spotlight On English One*

A-Textbook Description

Spotlight on English One is the first official English textbook designed for beginning learners in their first exposure to English. It is based on the 2002 official syllabus for the first year of Middle School. It contains seven files, each of them turning around a general theme. Each file is made up of the following sections:

- Learn the language

- Learn about culture
- Reminder
- Check
- Project

•Learn the language

The part's focal point is teaching language as a means of communication and its grammar, lexis, spelling, and pronunciation as well. It is made of three sequences. Listening and speaking are first introduced before reading and writing. Each sequence contains three rubrics; 'Listen and Speak', 'Practise', and 'Produce'.

'Listen and Speak': It seeks to equip the learners with some vocabulary and structures needed for self expression and communication with the teacher and classmates.

'Practise': It contains numerous tasks aiming to make the learners put into practice the language items they have already learned in *Listen and Speak* rubric through various situations and contexts.

'Produce', it consists mainly of writing activities whose aim is to initiate the learners to written production.

It is worth pointing that at this stage, it is quite normal that the start would be listening and speaking. The approach is a three Ps; Presentation, Practice and Production. The first stage of this traditional approach is Presentation where the focus is generally put on a single grammar point which is presented explicitly or implicitly to ensure that the underlying rule will be understood and internalized. This initial stage is followed by practice activities. During the practice stage, the exercises would be sufficiently straightforward so as not to strain the fragile and developing declarative knowledge system. At the production stage the learner is required to produce language based on the meanings he wants to express. In addition, it embodies the weak version of communicative

language teaching. Learners learn through a wide variety of activities, exercises, texts and tasks with an emphasis on speaking and listening. Learners are first supposed to learn the language system and then communicate with that language and not the contrary .i.e. language is learnt through the attempts made to communicate. The ultimate goal is communicative competence not language competence.

▪Learn about culture

The textbook gives an important space to the cultural aspect of some English speaking countries because language is not separated from culture .i.e. it cannot occur in vacuum. Therefore, language learning goes hand in hand with culture learning. In fact, this section offers activities to help the learners be familiarised mainly with the U.S. and British cultures. It aims at making the learners infer the similarities and differences between their own culture and the cultures that use English as a national or official language. It is intended to raise the learners' intercultural awareness; different cultures provide different values, norms, ways of behaving and interacting. Moreover, it intends to draw the learners' attention to the fact language forms are dependent on socio-cultural contexts.

• Reminder

It is a synthesis of the language elements learnt. It serves the teacher and the learners alike to gauge the amount of knowledge they are supposed to cover all over the file.

▪Check

Its aim is “to make sure that the items introduced in the file have been properly acquired” (ibid: 09).It contains exercises that can be used for remedial work. This leads us to assume that this approach does not follow mastery learning which is based on the three Ts: Teach, Test and Reteach.

▪Project

This part is concerned with the reinvestment of language elements in a visible project. It constitutes the final output of the file. It provides some necessary steps and instructions for the sake of project realisation.

▪Self-assessment

It is a grid that the learners use to assess their acquisitions. Our analysis will deal only with the rubrics containing writing tasks.

B-Analysis of the Writing Activities (See Appendix .p:iv)

Through the analysis of the writing activities suggested in the four textbooks, we will infer the types of writing strategies and skills to be developed. We are going to find out whether different writing strategies are targeted .i.e. the cognitive, metacognitive, rhetorical, communicative and social/affective and which ones are given primacy or most favoured.

The textbook designed for MS1 *Spotlight on English One* contains forty-three (43) writing activities. They are set to develop different strategies and fulfil different purposes. Twenty -seven of the activities are assessed as being designed for writing strategy instruction. Twenty-three (23) of them aim to develop in the learners writers the *rhetorical strategies* required in producing a piece of writing. Ten of these twenty-three activities are designed asking pupils to produce descriptive texts .At least one activity is found in every file except the fourth. Therefore, under the rhetorical strategies, activities are there mainly to raise learners' awareness of different text genres and their respective audiences. For instance, different types of descriptions are to be developed in the learners; describing people, animals, places and processes. The remaining three activities targeting strategy instruction seek to foster the *cognitive strategies* most importantly editing. The seventeen (17) other activities which are not meant for strategy instruction seem to emphasise

different purposes and functions. Three of them are intended for language practice via writing. Six activities are *transfer activities* aiming at helping learners to transfer information from cards, maps, pictures into paragraphs and texts.

It can be noted that the writing activities are more or less consistent with the taxonomy of the writing strategies referred to in the theoretical part of this dissertation. Nevertheless, there is an over emphasis on rhetorical strategies at the expense of other strategies.

1.2. *Spotlight on English Two*

A. Textbook Description

Spotlight on English: Book Two is structured into five files consisting of three sequences each. The same sections will be found in all the sequences which are as follows:

- Listen and Speak
- Discover the Language
- Learn about culture
- Check
- Your project
- Self assessment

▪ Listen and Speak

This section comprises three rubrics:

‘Pronunciation and spelling’: It is intended to introduce the learners to some pronunciation elements.

‘Practise’: Its aim is to involve the learners in practice activities for the new vocabulary, grammar structures and pronunciation they met in the previous rubric.

‘Go forward’: It is a stage for presenting new language in advance.

▪ **Discover the Language**

This section looks for making the learners discover language forms offered in discourse. Its components are:

‘Reading passage’: It is meant to introduce language forms within a communicative context.

‘Practise’: Made up of various activities aiming to make the learners practise the language items encountered in the previous rubric in various settings and situations.

‘Reminder’: It gathers all the new items introduced in the file.

▪ **Learn about Culture**

It includes many texts and authentic documents for the learners to read for the sake of learning about the universal culture. Besides, it offers some games for pleasure and it also asks learners to write some texts. “This section is meant only for pleasure” (MS 2 Teacher’s Guide: 11)

▪ **Check**

The aim of ‘Check’ is to make sure that the items introduced in the file have been properly acquired.

▪ **Project**

This part constitutes the final output of the file. It provides some necessary steps and instructions for the sake of project realisation

B- Analysis of the Writing Activities (See Appendix p: x)

The analysis reveals that this textbook offers only thirteen (13) activities which show a shortage of writing activities in comparison with the other three textbooks. Only four activities are meant for strategy instruction. Two of them are designed to develop the rhetorical strategies which consists of translating sentences to the mother tongue and

developing organizational skills such as imagining an end to a story .One activity is aiming to develop communicative strategies and an other one is set for developing cognitive strategies which consists of note taking and thus integrating writing with listening skills. Two activities are meant for language practice .The remaining five activities are set to fulfil different functions such as describing, copying, and writing instructions and information transfer, reporting speech and explanations.

To sum up, *Spotlight on English Two* lacks writing activities both those designed for strategy instruction and those fulfilling other functions. It is thought that more writing activities will be found or added in comparison with MS1as learners have a linguistic baggage and methodological skills that will permit them to engage in writing with less anxiety and frustration.

1.3. *Spotlight on English Three*

A. Textbook Description

Spotlight on English: Book Three exhibits the new English syllabus as set down in July 2004. It consists of four files entitled respectively: Communications, Travel, Work and Play, and Around the World. All of them follow a broadly similar format which consists of:

- Language Skills: three sequences involving ‘Listen and Speak’, ‘Read and write’ rubrics each
- Snapshots of Culture
- Activate your English
- Project Round-up
- Where do we Stand Now?

▪ **The sequences**

Each sequence is divided into three rubrics

‘Listen and Speak’: This rubric is made up of three sub-rubrics embodying the three stages involved in any teaching / learning session: presentation, practice, and production. (MS3 teacher’s book: 5). They are entitled respectively: ‘listening task’, ‘say it clear’, practise and ‘imagine’.

‘Read and write I’: It contains the following rubrics:

Reading task: Its aim is to help the learners to develop reading strategies and skills.

Your Turn: It aims at encouraging the learners to re-use the language forms and functions encountered earlier in the reading or listening scripts.

Write it out: It consists of a guided writing task.

•**Snapshots of Culture**

‘Snapshots of culture’ section contains texts that offer opportunities for the learners to reflect discuss and write on the similarities and differences between the Algerian and British and American cultures.(MS3 Teacher’s Guide:7).

Activate your English

It is designed to assist learners in to build the vocabulary and expressions related to the topic under study in each file. They are mainly recommended to activate their vocabulary by seeking for the meaning of topic-related words and use them in sentences and paragraphs of their own.

▪ **Project Round-up**

This section consists of a sample of a project task as well as a checklist of procedures for the execution of the project.

▪ **Where Do we Stand Now?**

It provides the learners with a series of activities to check their progress.

B- Analysis of the Writing Activities (See Appendix .p:xii)

This course book provides thirty seven (37) writing activities. Twenty-two activities are targeting writing strategy instruction mainly rhetorical ones as the textbook offers thirteen activities for developing it with seven others designed for cognitive strategies. These latter most importantly recommend learners to do editing and rewriting either individually “self editing” or peer and group editing. In addition, two activities are set to develop the social /affective strategies through imitating given models to help learners gain confidence and guidance as they have reference texts. The non-strategy instruction activities or tasks aim at integrating skills; listen then write or write then read, reinforcing language acquisition through combining pairs of sentences or putting the verbs in the right tense and information transfer.

It is worth mentioning that this textbook integrates several strategies mainly the incorporation of editing and rewriting which are two interrelated crucial steps and skills for producing a well-written piece of writing. Furthermore, they encourage peer and group learning and gradually building learners’ autonomy in writing.

1. 4.On the Move.

A-Textbook Description

On the Move is a textbook designed for the pupils of Middle School Year four. It represents the final step ending English teaching/learning in the Algerian Middle School. The learners will end the school year by taking the *brevet exam*. It complies with the Ministry of National Education Syllabus as laid down in April 2005. The course book takes up from *Spotlight on English Book Three* while developing features of its own. One of its innovations is the clear-cut distinction between the receptive phase and the productive phase of the learning-teaching process. This means that a division is made between language learning and skills building.

The textbook comprises six files to be covered in a school year. They are entitled respectively: *It's my Treat*, *You Can Do It*, *Great Expectations*, *Then and Now*, *Dreams*, *Dreams...*, and *Fact and Fiction*. They are organised following the same structure; all the files follow a consistent pattern). Each file is divided into six sections. Moreover, each file is introduced by a 'Preview' and 'Food for Thought'. While the *preview* serves the learners as a pedagogical roadmap of the file, *Food for Thought* is a warm-up and brainstorming section consisting of pictures. It stands for getting learners anticipating the vocabulary, functions, structures and skills of the file.

-Language Learning

- Take a Break
- Skills Building
- Project Round up
- Where Do we Stand Now?
- Time for...

Language Learning:

This section corresponds to the receptive stage of the teaching /learning procedure. It is concerned with teaching grammar in context. The latter is achieved indirectly through listening and reading activities. Thus, this section is divided into three rubrics:

'Listen and Consider': It aims to get the learners exposed to grammar items of the file. It is made up of a listening task, grammar window, and practise.

'Read and Consider' It introduce grammar elements of the file. This sub-rubric is in its turn subdivided into:

- *A reading task*: it aims at discovering language forms.

- *Grammar window*: It guides the learners in the study of those language forms.
- *Practise*: Its aim is to practise the language forms studied in the grammar window.
- *‘Words and Sounds’*: the aim of this sub-rubric is to help the learners get familiar with spelling-sound correspondences.

▪ **Take a Break**

As its title suggests, it is the moment where learners relax and have fun in order to prepare the next phase. It includes songs, puzzles, tongue twisters and cartoons.

Skills Building

This section encompasses three rubrics:

‘Research and report’: Its overall aim is to get the learners to learn more about English-speaking countries (The USA, India, Australia...). (MS4 Teacher’s Guide: 74). This rubric consists of several reading and writing activities to be carried out by the learners at home and reported in the classroom. They may be carried out individually or in groups.

‘Listening and Speaking’: it consists of exercises whose aim is to foster listening and speaking skills taking into account the appropriate use of English according to the social situations.

‘Reading and Writing’: This one aims at helping the learners develop primary reading/writing skills as well as social skills. Therefore, the focus is not on language teaching but on skills development.

▪ **Project Round up**

This section consists of a sample of a project task as well as a checklist of procedures for the execution of the project.

•Where Do we Stand Now?

This section is meant for evaluation. It comprises two rubrics:

‘Progress Check’: It deal consists of some activities designed for formative evaluation of learners all over the file.

‘The Learning log’: It contains self-assessment activities.

Time for...

It is made up of poems, songs, cartoons or proverbs having a thematic or grammatical link with the file as a whole. This section is meant to end the file on a happy note.

In sum, the activities provided in the first section “Language Learning” aim at the reinvestment of language elements and the rubrics of the second section “Skills Building” focuses on skills development.

B- Analysis of the Writing Activities (See Appendix .p:xvii)

On the Move suggests forty two writing activities. A total of thirty four activities are meant for strategy instruction .Twenty nine writing activities are set for developing the rhetorical strategies which comprise mainly activities for genre awareness, organization etc. The strategy of recognizing the genre is highly developed through asking learners to pay attention to the different texts to be produced such as letters for apology, invitation and agony, emails, newspapers articles, reports, diaries, autobiographies and stories. We find three activities aiming to raise learners’ awareness and the use of cognitive strategies which are of paramount importance to learn and foster learners’ skills and competences in writing. Besides, two other activities are designed to promote social/affective strategies in the learners mainly following models which serve a source of support and guidance. The remaining eight writing activities are introduced for the sake of grammar practice.

We notice that this textbook is full of writing activities in general and for strategy instruction in particular. However, as it is the case with the other three textbooks (MS1,

MS2 and MS3), there is an overemphasis on the rhetorical strategies at the expense of other strategies. It is worth pointing out that the activities that encourage peer and group work are not promoted in this textbook in comparison with the previous ones mainly that of the third year (MS3). It may be because of the individual aspect of the brevet exam). Finally, we have found that some writing activities intend to develop more than one strategy. For instance, the third activity found in page 151, aims at developing both the strategy of editing and expanding notes which is a cognitive strategy alongside genre recognizing which is categorized under the rhetorical strategies.

2-Discussion

In this section, we are going to discuss the results of the textbooks analysis. The discussion is done eclectically with some focus on each textbook whenever necessary. The teaching paradigm, the nature of the writing activities, writing as a process, grammar in writing, authenticity and motivating activities and guided and free writing activities are aspects selected for discussion. It is worth pointing that the analysis of the writing sections of the four Middle School textbooks shows that each of them displays some strengths and shortcomings.

2-1.The Teaching Paradigm

As a starting point, we notice that the teaching paradigm implemented in *Spotlight on English One* is the traditional method of organizing language teaching; the three Ps. They refer to ‘Presentation, Practice and Production’. Presentation is reflected through ‘Listen and Speak’ rubrics focusing on vocabulary, structure and pronunciation. Language items are clearly presented to learners through contexts for a better understanding of their meaning. “*This would essentially aim at the development of declarative knowledge*”. (Skehan, Peter, 1998:93). The Practice stage aims at practicing the language items presented in Presentation phase through various writing and reading activities. These

activities are designed to automatize the newly grasped rule and to convert declarative to procedural knowledge. As for the third stage 'Production', learners are required to produce more language spontaneously through writing and reading activities. At this stage, the degree of control and support would be reduced. (Ibid).

The popularity of this approach may be explained by its simplicity and straightforwardness, by the logical sequence of clearly defined steps that seems to lead to language acquisition. Such a methodology is form-based; an approach to language teaching that rests on the assumption that language should be introduced and presented to learners item by item as a formal system. Once they have understood how a particular linguistic form is structured and used then they can begin to use it for communication.

This traditional paradigm, at this stage, is quite logical where learners learn first the language and then communicate with it which in turn reflects the weak version of communicative teaching. However, the learners may give the impression that they can produce language accurately in the classroom, but in fact, they will soon forget it because it was guided communication (Willis, J. 1998). Besides, this paradigm gives primacy to the oral skills 'listening and speaking' at the expense of the writing skill and the purpose of writing is to reinforce oral patterns of language; Writing is a service activity.

This procedure is not consistent with the Competency-Based Approach because research suggests that task-based approach to language instruction as an alternative to the three Ps approach. (Skeham, P, 1998). The Algerian Middle School Syllabuses are consistent with task-based approach. Yet, it seems that the textbook designers have failed to implement faithfully the syllabus principles in *Spotlight on English One*. We may point to the fact that in MS1 and MS2, importance is given to the oral skills reflecting the natural order of language acquisition; we learn first to speak and listen before learning to read and write. These beliefs have characterized the audiolingual methods claiming that beginning

learners are not able construct written texts until they reach certain language proficiency and after they have developed the oral skills. Writing is believed to be speech written down. Yet, research has shown that writing should be taught from the start. Learners start developing good habits if taught from the start. Developing competency in writing at the beginning levels will bear productive results at advanced levels. However, it should be pointed that the three Ps approach has not been adopted systematically in the three other textbooks ; *Spotlight on English Two*, *Spotlight on English Three* and *on the Move*.

2-2.The Nature of the Writing Activities

The four Middle School textbooks contain a lot of writing activities aiming at writing strategies development. In terms of quantity they are quite sufficient. Nevertheless, the strategies should be varied and not focusing on certain ones at the expense of others .Teachers too should possess a repertoire of adequate techniques to exploit them fruitfully through involving and motivating the learners. Some writing activities are accompanied by illustrations which serve learners as models or as prewriting activities in the writing process. They are helpful in brainstorming or idea gathering and in raising awareness of the external properties of texts or genres. It is necessary to mention that in the syllabuses underlying these textbooks, different writing strategies are targeted. However, it seems that these strategies are not reflected faithfully in the textbooks.

Writing is a complex-recursive process whereby a writer makes use of different skills and strategies and goes back and forth in the writing stages to produce a readable piece of writing which conveys meaning and fulfils a purpose in a given context targeting a specific audience. Thus, the writer uses varied strategies because they are interdependent. The neglect of one will likely to engender the misuse of another or the message will not be received as it is intended. Although the syllabuses provide a set of ten important writing strategies to be developed equally in the learners, it is found through the analysis of the

four Middle School Textbooks that the rhetorical strategies are the ‘favoured’ ones. For the sake of illustration, *On the Move* provides thirty-four strategies, twenty nine are rhetorical and *Spotlight on English Three* too offers seventeen rhetorical strategies out of twenty-two.

2-3. Writing as a Process

The writing strategies instruction literature suggests that unlike traditional grammar accuracy activities whose aim is testing rather than teaching, writing strategies instruction has the aim of teaching per se. In the sense that the learners’ writings are not in essence produced to practise language and grammar or to show the mastery of the latter. But, to develop in learners the different writing skills and strategies they need to solve writing problems that hinder them to express themselves well.

We notice that the Algerian Middle School textbooks do not include a lot of activities that implement the process pedagogy .i.e. writing through stages .Therefore, *Spotlight on English Three* is the only textbook in which the process model is more or less implemented. For example, the activity 1, page 30, in Write it Out rubric:

1-Imagine you spent last summer working on Konny’s farm .This year, your partner intends to go and work there .Write a letter of recommendation to support her/his letter of application. Use the cues provided to you.

2-Correct your mistakes and pass your draft letter to your partner for further correction. Then rewrite it and hand it to your teacher.

Though this activity does not start with the prewriting stage which is an important phase for brainstorming ideas about the assignment or the topic to write about, it is interesting because it first encourages self-editing and exchanging drafts with classmates. Then, rewriting them before handing them to the teacher for final correction. What is missing in this activity is the focus on the prewriting stage where most writing occurs and ideas develop. A phase where learners feel free to write whatever ideas come to their minds without assessing them. Evaluating ideas during brainstorming can be intimidating,

and can have a negative effect, limiting the creativity the process is designed to promote. (Andrew, P.J, 2008:191). Yet, we find that some cues are provided which may be used as raw material for gathering data. As far as revising is concerned, it is emphasized by the textbooks designers as the focus is put on editing. Revising concerns the refining of ideas as well as organisation, whereas editing is limited to checking surface errors of syntax, spelling and punctuation. Moreover, reading others' writings is incorporated for its value as learners write for real readers who will provide feedback for subsequent drafts.

We wonder why the process model is slightly implemented only in MS3 textbook. We expected to find it more expanded in the MS4 textbook. Unfortunately, it was neither introduced to MS1 and MS2 learners nor to the fourth year ones despite the fact that formal research sustains that learners can write no matter the level of proficiency. In other words, the process approach may be implemented even with beginners because as Nunan (2001) states the primary goal of process writing is not an error-free coherent-text but rather it *"allows for the fact that no text can be perfect, but a writer will get closer to perfection by producing, reflecting on, discussing and rewriting successive drafts"*.

2-4. Grammar in Writing

The four Algerian Middle School textbooks display an important number of writing activities which are designed to practise grammar items. For the sake of illustration, the Middle School textbook destined for the fourth year learners' *On the Move* alone offers eight writing activities for the sake of grammar practice in comparison with four activities in *Spotlight on English Three*, two in *Spotlight on English Two* and other three in *Spotlight on English One*. However, this does not suggest that linguistic proficiency is not of paramount importance in writing instruction because well-formed sentences contribute greatly to convey meaning. But, linguistic proficiency is just one element among others that contribute to produce a good piece of writing and through writing language is

mastered. It may happen that a learner reaches language proficiency but a little writing competency. Thus, it is not recommended to wait until learners reach a high degree of language accuracy in order to teach them how to write. If we take the MS4 textbook to illustrate, we point out that the writing activities both those suggested in the rubrics *Write it up*, *Write it out* and *Research and Report*, *Reading and Writing*, are grammar-based. In the sense that through each writing activity learners are required to produce some writing by practising a grammar item. The following two activities are taken from MS4 textbook .They belong to different rubrics; the first activity is taken from *File Four*, the rubric *Research and Report*. Activity number six, page 102:

*Write a short biography about Harun al-Rachid making the best use of the information in exercises 4 and 5 above. Use the semi-modal **used to** and **relative pronouns** when writing the biography.*

Another activity is the one found in *File Two*, rubric *Reading and Writing* .Number three on page 62:

*Write a letter of apology to a friend of yours including an explanation on why you weren't able to attend her/his wedding, birthday party, house warming party...Use **could/couldn't/can /cannot** and **able to**.*

In contrast to MS4, MS3, MS2, MS1 does not overemphasise grammar practice through writing. Only some activities ask learners to practise grammar items dealt with in the file. For instance, MS1 provides forty-three writing activities in which only three are set to teach grammar via writing. Certainly, grammar accuracy is required for producing well-formed , meaningful sentences as Cunningswoth points out “*Grammar is immensely important , being the system of rules for the formation of correct sentences and it is essential that learners are able to both understand and use the rules of grammar*”.(Cunningsworth, 1984:18). Being a controversial issue, many studies have been

undertaken to unveil the effects of explicit grammar teaching on writing. For the sake of illustration, we mention Tsang and Wong (2000) study. Though they found no significant improvement, they claim that there were indications of students' greater readiness to write and use mature syntax.

Therefore, the presentation and the emphasis on grammar is a prevalent criticism of EL textbooks. Specialists, to mention Bragger and Rice (2000) and Askin(2003) ,claim that traditional grammatical considerations continue to take over the organization of textbooks. This leads us to assume that grammar-centeredness is not a feature characterizing only the Algerian Middle School textbooks. Such a stance does not seem appropriate to many scholars, to include Parry (2000) and Tomlinson (2003) who sustain “...*Textbook content continues to support erroneous assumptions about FL learners including the ideas that beginning-level learners have vocabulary and structural knowledge for expressing themselves*”. However, writing is used as a support skill in which the goal is to practise and acquire a particular language item is suggested by scholars to be useful for beginning levels. The core of each file should be the communicative point. The grammatical point should not be the main focus of the lesson because, in normal speech, grammar is a means to achieve communication.

On the whole, the explicit teaching of grammar owes a lot of emphasis on grammar elements in the textbooks. One can expect a textbook based on competency not to detail the language forms, but to specify the functions and skills to be learnt. Doing otherwise can lead, as is the case in the Middle school textbooks to an emphasis on grammar.

2-5.Authenticity and Motivating Activities

Writing instruction aims at communicating and reinvesting the acquired and constructed knowledge in a range of situations related to real life. Different writing skills

and strategies are needed for succeeding in exams in particular and for everyday life in general.

Many writing specialists point to the fact that learning to write is easier if students are engaged in authentic writing activities. Activities in which students are asked to express their thoughts, share their ideas, or describe things from their lives or experience. The topics, then, should be attractive and interesting. They should interest the learners, challenge both their intelligence and their language ability and contribute to their linguistic and cognitive development. Hence, authentic writing comes from within the students.

The reader needs to find the subject matter of a piece of writing interesting, but before that, the writer needs to be interested in the task. (Raimes.A, 1983:16).It needs a purpose other than just “language practice”. Personal topics including autobiographies, family biography, pastimes, preferences and problems, always permit real information to be conveyed. When topics move away from personal narrative, learners will find it necessary to specify a communicative purpose for each piece of writing. (Ibid).Therefore, a meaningful assignment that communicates the learners’ own interests and opinions will make them put more effort and thought than rote, uninvolved assignment as Raimes (1983) puts it: “*The subject matter of the topics should, as far as possible, involve writers and readers in the communication of real meaning*”. (Ibid: 17). However, communicative activities in the classroom do not have to be totally authentic, indeed any training or learning situation is to some extent artificially contrived, but they must be representative of and modelled on the processes that take place in real life use. If the activities have some appeal for the learners, they will engage them in the writing process. One way of achieving this is to give them choices instead of giving them just one topic.

When students' writing is based solely on external prompts, the motivation also becomes external. Their writing does not come from a natural desire to express or say what they want to say. This makes writing and learning to write much harder for students.

The four English Middle School textbooks display a great number of interesting, motivating writing activities adequate to the adolescent learners' interests as "*Motivation comes from knowing that language activities in the classroom are at all times meaningful and aimed at real-life communication*" (Cunningsworth. A, 1995:16).

2-6.Guided and Free Writing Activities

Our analysis of the four Algerian Middle School textbooks, highlight the weight given to guided writing activities all along the four levels. We have found plenty of activities in which introductory sentences are proposed. They may be helpful given the fact that the learners are beginners. However, this technique seems counterproductive as it makes learners feel obliged to adhere to such a beginning; as if their creativity and imagination is restricted. For instance, write a paragraph beginning with the sentence x. As an illustration, the activity suggested in the *Write It Out* rubric, page 97 in the MS3 textbook falls under the category of guided writing activities: *Write a short report to speak about the negative changes that have taken place recently. Emphasise the cause and effect of these changes. Use the information in the boxes that follow. Start like this: I think that many negative changes have taken place in our world recently.* In *Write It Out* rubric of the same textbook, page 146, another activity is suggested: Imagine you're a tourist guide. Choose a monument and prepare a short talk to tell tourists about it. Start like this: '**Ladies and gentlemen, we're now standing in front of...**'

It is generally regarded that beginning foreign learners are better helped by providing guided writing assignments. They are offered cues/words upon which the learners construct paragraphs. The hints may be used as an input for learners to generate

sentences. However, we think that third and fourth learners will benefit more of free writing activities given the fact they have developed some linguistic luggage.

Conclusion

The analysis carried out so far, has revealed that the textbooks show some weaknesses besides the strong points they display. To start with the positive sides, the textbooks offer an array of appealing activities intended to develop learners' writing strategies. Many text types are suggested; the learners are exposed to a large repertoire of text types (formats): writing formal and informal letters, e-mails, reports, biographies, recipes, dialogues, advertisements, instructions, newspapers articles, postcards, diaries, notices, reports etc. Besides, they revolve around attractive themes relevant to the learners' age and needs.

As for the shortcomings, we may say that there is an overemphasis on developing some strategies at the detriment of others. In fact, the rhetorical strategies are more emphasised in the four textbooks. In addition, *Spotlight on English Two* lacks writing tasks, it offers only fifteen activities both those targeting strategies instruction and those set for fulfilling other purposes.

To conclude, we may assert that the textbook remains a fundamental component on which FL teaching and learning are based (Roberts, 1988:375). They serve as a basis for what is learned and the order in which it is learned (Graves, 2000). Furthermore, what is more important is the way in which the textbooks are exploited by teachers.

No coursebook will be totally suited to particular teaching situation. The teacher will have to find his own way of using it and adapt it if necessary. So we should not be looking for the perfect coursebook which meets all our requirement, but rather for the best possible fit between what the coursebook offers and what we as teachers and students need. (Cunningsworth, 1984:89).

This leads us to say that the textbook should be used as a support for language teaching and it is up to the teachers to make the best use of it. The next chapter will show how the

Algerian Middle School teachers make use of the textbooks at teaching writing and to what extent they rely on them to carry out their daily teaching practices.

Chapter Six: The Algerian Middle School Teachers: A Case Study of some Teachers of Tizi-Ouzou.

Introduction

Needless to say that well-framed syllabuses as well as well-designed textbooks are crucial factors leading to successful teaching/learning. However, it is of paramount importance to have competent teachers who will interpret them in the classrooms. Expressed in different terms, teachers' roles and behaviours need to be emphasized because it is the teachers who are in direct contact with the learners.

The teacher's role is significant in facilitating the learning process. It is important to point out that a judicious use of the textbooks is the teachers' responsibility. That is to say, teachers' tasks, after all, are to make the best use of the materials to involve the learners in the writing process. Therefore, in this chapter, we are going to explore teachers' techniques and practices in teaching writing in the Algerian Middle School classroom. We shall look at the writing techniques teachers utilise to help their learners 'put pen into paper' and most importantly to help them develop efficient writing strategies that they need whenever they produce a piece of writing. For the sake of gathering the appropriate data needed for our study and find out what teaching techniques are used in writing classes, we have relied on two research techniques; a questionnaire and classroom observation.

1-The Sample

The subjects targeted through the present study are 15 Middle School English teachers working in schools situated in the town of Tizi-Ouzou and attached communes of the wilaya. They are divided into two categories; PEM teachers (Professeur d'Enseignement Moyen) who have received a two-year training course in the 1980s, and a new generation of teachers who graduated from universities. They are referred to as PCEF

teachers (Professeur Certifié de l'Enseignement Fondamental). Our sample is composed of 12 PEM teachers and only 3 PCEF teachers.

The teachers involved in this case study belong to 12 different Middle schools. Ten of them are females and five males. All the subjects may be described as experienced teachers; their teaching experiences range from seven (7) to thirty-seven (37) years. It is worth mentioning that all the teachers were cooperative and showed their interest as well as enthusiasm to participate in the observations, fill the questionnaire and discuss the observations.

2-Data Collection

Questionnaire and classroom observations are used as instruments for collecting data. The observations are the primary research tool used to carry out this study. It is supplemented by a descriptive survey research technique "questionnaire". We thought that the best way for depicting the teachers' daily practices is to observe those teachers in action. While the information we get from questionnaires are generally introspective reflecting the subjects' views and beliefs. The observations are meant to have a close view of teachers' practices in writing classes. The questionnaire has the purpose of gathering the teachers' opinions and attitudes towards the new reform in English language learning/teaching in the Algerian Middle Schools in general and the textbooks' activities set to teach the writing skill in particular.

3-Classroom Observation

This technique was chosen in order to observe what actually happens in the Algerian Middle School classrooms. It is designed to show teachers' daily practices vis-à-vis writing strategies instruction. No specific criteria were considered in choosing the teachers apart from their readiness and willingness to cooperate. The observations started from March and ended by the mid May 2010. Twenty-two writing classes were observed, including the

four levels (MS1, MS2, MS3 and MS4). After each observation, a discussion with the teacher observed takes place, in which their choices are clarified and justified. Some of the observations were videotaped, but most of them were recorded through written notes because the teachers showed their reluctance to be filmed. We put emphasis on teachers' techniques at writing strategies instruction and their adherence to the stages of the writing process; prewriting, drafting, and rewriting. Many writing studies support this three-phase course of action of writing instruction; prewriting, drafting and rewriting which may be used as a teaching practice of an alternative approach to writing.

4. Results and Discussion of Classroom Observation

This section is devoted to present the findings of the classroom observations together with a discussion of some issues related to writing strategies instruction. Yet, the observations allowed us to uncover what the questionnaire could not supply as the questionnaire's function is generally limited to opinions and perceptions gathering. This is due to the fact of not having a possibility to check whether what the respondents think is identical to what they do in the classroom. The subjects selected for discussion in the present part are: neglect of writing strategies instruction, explicit versus implicit writing strategies teaching and teacher training and development.

4.1 Neglect of writing strategies instruction

To teach writing, instructors require a large repertoire of techniques employed to build up learners' writing strategies. By implication, Raimes (1983) states "*Choosing classroom techniques is the day-to-day business of every writing teacher. Any decision we make- such as whether to provide students with a sentence or not, or whether to mark all errors or only a selected few -is a decision about a teaching technique*" (Raimes, A, 1983:12).

The observations have demonstrated that the teachers of the Algerian Middle School make little use not to say no use of writing teaching techniques. What attracted our attention is the heavy emphasis on teaching grammar. Some teachers equate writing teaching with practicing grammar items. With these prevalent practices, writing is not taught as a skill on its own but is still in the service of language practice namely, building grammar structures and vocabulary. Thus, writing is not an end in itself but rather a means for language mastery. It seems that most of the writing strategies suggested in the official syllabuses are not being developed in the learners.

Teaching writing strategies require teachers to help their learners to set goals for, plan their writing, monitor the writing process, revise their writing, seek help or assistance from peers, purpose and audience consideration. Through our observation, we noticed that most of the teachers are assigning too much importance to grammar acquisition and neglect writing strategies instruction mainly with first and second years arguing that they are beginners and have to possess first some vocabulary and grammar structures to express themselves in writing.

In addition to the fact that writing strategies instruction was nearly neglected by teachers, some teachers do not assign writing assignments or tasks in the classroom. Those teachers are claiming that the most challenging obstacle that hinders them to assign writing activities in the classroom is the shortage of time. Therefore, most often, they assign writing activities as homework. Sometimes, they do some prewriting activities to gather some ideas and vocabulary related to the subject matter. In other instances, they just ask them to do the writing activity on page x or write the instruction on the board when the activity is created by the teacher. Consequently, the learners either copy from other sources or have the work or task done for them by their parents or friends. The learners may hand in good written texts which are not reflecting their actual capacities and levels. Some

others do not submit anything except when the teachers promise them to get a mark. After two or three days, they take the papers and correct them at home, give a mark. Sometimes, the teacher asks the pupil that has written a good paragraph and write on the board and the others copy it on their copy books. We have noticed that some teachers equate the writing strategies with teaching the mechanics of writing; they emphasise some elements of punctuation marks, indentation, capitals.

However, through our observations, we noticed that there are some enthusiastic teachers who teach the writing skill in a way to involve the learners. They design some activities and make use of some writing teaching techniques that stimulate learners and give them a reason why to write. The following is an example taken from a writing lesson given by one of the teachers in our sample:

Class: MS2. File: three

Lesson: Read and Write

Teacher: Good morning

Ps: Good morning

The teacher draws two pictures on the board.

T: What do these pictures refer to?

Ps: A ball and a foot.

T: Match the name of picture one and picture two to get a name of sport.

Ps: Football

T: It is a sport. List all the sports you know.

Ps: Handball, basket-ball, tennis, swimming, boxing, skate board, ski-in, judo....

T: Good. Then, she asks one pupil about his favourite sport.

P1: I like basketball and the teacher says: I like or I love basketball. She asks most of the learners about their favourite sports

The teacher shows two pictures of two footballers: Zidane and Ziani

The teacher: Who is your favourite champion? Write a paragraph about this champion (Name, age, nationality, sport and name of the club).

T: Choose your favourite champion, the one you like best.

The pupils were very interested and involved.

The teacher has given them 15 minutes to write about the topic.

While they were busy writing, the teacher was sticking photos on the board. They represent flags of some countries: Algeria, Spain, and Germany.....After that, he checks pupils' writing and helps them with vocabulary

The teacher asks the pupils who finished to revise their drafts.

When the fifteen minutes ended, some seven pupils have read their paragraphs. After that, the teacher asked one pupil to write his paragraph on the board. "Nadir Belhaj is sportman and handsome. He is algerian but hi lave portsmot hi as 26 He is football".

T: Well, we are going to correct your friend's paragraph altogether.

P1: I correct the spelling mistake in the word Belhaj.

P2: It is better to write another introductory sentence.

P3: Writes the third sentence in this way "Age twinti six"

P4: Corrects the sentence. He writes "He is twenty six years old".

T: Good

P5: Suggests a sentence "He practises football"

P6: writes "His club is Portsmouth". Pourtsmouth, "p" was not written in capital letter.

P7: correct the mistake and the teacher complete the sentence "in Great Britain".

This is the final version of the paragraph:

My favourite champion is Nadir Belhadj. He is Algerian. He is twenty six years old. He practises Football. His club is Portsmouth in Great Britain.

The teacher asks to write down the paragraph on their copy books.

Despite the fact that the teacher works in an overcrowded class, she makes considerable efforts to make the writing task interesting, involving and most importantly she has made use of some writing techniques that lead to writing strategies development in the learners. First, the selected topic is attractive as it is related to the learners' real life. The topic is accessible and familiar to the learners. This is why, they were not inhibited or reluctant and approached the writing task with enthusiasm and high motivation. This is a characteristic of Task-Based Language Teaching which suggests "real" communicative activities that carry out "meaningful" tasks and stresses the importance of targeting these tasks to the individual student as much as possible.(Willis, 1996).In the same context, Llona (1991) adds "*The desire on the part of the writer to communicate something is very important , because if it is already difficult to function in a foreign language, it is much more difficult for students to write if they are required to write about something they have no interest in...*".(Llona.L, 1991:172 cited in Kral.T,1999).

The text type is descriptive; the one recommended for foreign beginner learners. It relies on concrete, visual things. In addition, the teacher started with the prewriting stage. She made use of pictures (authentic objects), drawings and brainstorming through questioning. These techniques permitted the eliciting of some vocabulary and ideas and raised their awareness of the text type to be produced (despite the fact that it is done implicitly). Moreover, the teacher was intervening during the process of writing which made the task less daunting and stressful. In this way, the learners are not going to perceive writing as a testing activity. "*The teacher, helping in the process by reading and commenting on drafts and not correcting errors until a predetermined point in the process, as distinct from the teacher as a test-giver and evaluator, judging and marking the final product*" (Raimes.A, 1983:17). It is worth pointing that the learners managed to practise

speaking, reading, listening and writing in an integrated way. As for feedback, the teacher has chosen a whole class correction.

However, the teacher did not ask the learners to rewrite their own papers because as she says “we have not time for rewriting; I can not come back to this activity. I have to finish the syllabus”. In this respect Raimes states:

A good topic is seldom explored beyond the one composition that students write[...].The longer students grapple with a subject , the more their command of the necessary vocabulary and idiom develops ; the more they read on the topic , the more they learn about organizational structure and sentence structure ; the more they discuss a topic, the more ideas they develop. (Raimes .A, 1983:14).

What is also noticed in this class that the learners are well motivated, involved and willing to work. An atmosphere that was absent in most of the classes we attended.

4.2. Explicit versus Implicit Writing Strategies Teaching

Many works in the formal research confirm the usefulness of an explicit writing strategies teaching. Sengupata(2000) carried a research work with secondary school students , describing the effect of giving instruction in revising strategies to writers of English as a second language. She came to the conclusion that explicit teaching of those strategies led to a considerable effects on the quality of the students’ final draft. As for Cresswell(2000) he investigated the effects of students learning to self-monitor their writing and to pay attention to the process and organization of their writing. He reported improvement in the students’ ability to pay attention to content and organizations of their writing. As for Ferris (1997), he studied the effect of different types of feedback on student writing. He found that changes made by students in response to teacher comments did have a positive impact on the overall quality of their papers. Therefore, focusing teaching activities on aspects of writing can effectively change the balance of the student’s overall

profile. These researchers have investigated how certain aspects of instruction may affect the overall quality of students' writing.

In our case, most of the informants, who teach writing strategies, do not teach them explicitly to the learners. For instruction to have its positive effects, the learners first of all have to know what the strategy is and how and where and when to apply it. In order to be strategic learners, according to *Paris et al* (1983), learners need to demonstrate these three kinds of knowledge; declarative knowledge of what the cognitive strategies are, procedural knowledge of how to use the strategies and conditional knowledge of when and why to use the strategies. These types of knowledge are not declared to the students.

Instruction on writing strategies should necessarily include modelling, scaffolding, guided practice and independent use of strategies. Learners need to develop the ability to select and implement appropriate strategies independently and to monitor and regulate their use. The first stage in strategy teaching is to explain what the strategy consists of, why it is important and when to use it. The next stage consists of providing models illustrating the strategies in actual context. The final stage will supply guidance for an independent use of the strategy.

We can explain the lack of explicit teaching of strategies of writing by referring to many factors. The most important is arguably cultural in the sense that strategies are transferable from L1 learning to L2 learning of writing. If writing strategies are not taught in L1, the students can't be expected to use them in L2 learning of writing. For example in a school system which emphasizes neatness at the expense of effectiveness in writing, we can't blame students for not writing drafts and revising them individually or in pairs and/or groups before writing a neat paper. Similarly, students can't be expected to be effective critical thinkers and by extension critical writers when the education culture from which they are issued is basically based on the regurgitation of what is learned. Teachers

themselves are inheritors his educational culture. So instead of providing an explicit teaching of strategies, they just teach implicitly through model writing.

The other factor is the textbooks. The latter do not provide for an explicit teaching of writing strategies. The only exception is *On the Move*. But then, the coping strategy boxes come in the form of reminder boxes. It is only after students have used the strategies that they are reminded of them. The style of teaching is mostly inductive type. We shall argue that a deductive style of learning is more suitable for an explicit acquisition of strategies especially the ones concerned with writing.

4.3. Teacher Training and Development

For an efficient teaching of writing strategies, teachers are supposed to be equipped with theoretical background knowledge about the writing process alongside some practical clues about writing instruction. In fact, the classroom observations indicate that those teachers have not been sufficiently prepared or trained to implement the new reform effectively. The inadequacy of teacher training and development, among other factors, has greatly contributed to teachers' inability for good performances in the writing class. These teachers have not yet been professionally prepared to embrace the new programmes and the teaching approach that they are expected to implement.

Most of the teachers observed complain that they lack training sessions and when they take place, they are too much devoted to theory rather than practice, an issue that I noticed when I attended one of the conferences about teaching and evaluating writing. The inspector charged with the conference dealt only with theoretical, descriptive issues about writing. The conference ended without referring to some pedagogical literature in the field; how to translate the theoretical principles into practical ones in the classroom was skipped. As a matter of fact, some teachers still equate writing teaching with grammar practice and

language mastery. They sometimes emphasise coherence, cohesion and the mechanics of writing like capitalisation and punctuation.

Research indicates the significance of teacher development. As it is stated by Lange (1989) *“Teacher development is a process of continual, intellectual, experiential and attitudinal growth. It is more encompassing and allowing for continued growth both prior to and throughout a career”*. It is worth drawing the distinction made by scholars between training and development. The former is much less important than the latter because it is essentially theory driven and top down. Teachers are seen as passive recipient of information and skills passed to them by experts. What is compulsory is the teachers’ commitment and desire to undertake research and to adjust some of their old ‘fashioned’, ineffective behaviours so as to suit the requirements of the new approach to language learning / teaching. The latter is much more learner centred; aiming at developing in them a set of skills and competencies adequate to the classroom and to real life as well. As Kroll (1990) put it:

for those engaged in teaching second language [writers], what is needed is both a firm grounding in the theoretical issues of first and second language writing and an understanding of a broad range of pedagogical issues that shape classroom writing instruction.

The same observations can be made about teacher development as the ones we have already formulated with reference to the implicit teaching of writing strategies. Cultural education in Algeria is of the type that does not encourage teacher development. The ‘notorious fiche pédagogique’ which one generation of teachers passes to another without tension is a perfect example to illustrate the lack of initiative for development as teachers. Most teachers reproduce what their elders have done without trying to do the small type of research known as classroom research in order to improve what they receive from their

elders. We can say, therefore, that in the Algerian context of education, “plus ça change, plus c’est la même chose”.

The second factor which can account for the reproduction of the old habits of teaching is the lack of a teacher development syllabus and its implementation in the textbooks. A look at the recent commercial textbooks reveals that most of them cater to the needs of teachers in terms of development. The major obstacle for the implementation of the reform is the inadequacy of the teachers’ profiles with instruction plan. This is especially the case of the writing syllabuses that find a corresponding teacher development syllabuses neither in the statements of the instructional plans nor in the textbooks. So teachers take it for granted that writing must be taught in the old ways, emphasizing modelling and written outcomes instead of process.

Conclusion

The classroom observations have shown what actually take place in the Algerian Middle schools and how writing instruction is undertaken and mainly the constraints that hinder the good implementation of writing strategies instruction. In fact, teaching writing skills to non-native learners is a very challenging task for teachers because developing them takes a long time. Raimes (1998) sustains that writing is a complex act and that the proficiencies to be developed by the novice writer can be viewed from a number of directions. Writing is at once thought and communication, cognitive and social, content and ideas. Effective writing teachers address these complexities by offering informative coaching on challenging writing tasks and extensive opportunities to practise multiple types of writing.

Productive writing activities take into account the different demands of different types of written language and the fact that students must learn to write in a variety of ways, for a variety of purposes, and for a variety of audiences.

Much practice is needed because when learners write, they engage with words and ideas and explore new meanings. Learners will benefit from writing in getting the grammar right, having a range of vocabulary, punctuating meaningfully, using the conventions of layout correctly, spelling correctly, using a range of sentence structures, linking ideas and information across sentences to develop a topic. Our study reveals that teachers do not give much importance to the writing skills; it is the last skill practised in the classroom. Teachers often complain about deadlines. The overcrowded classes do not favour peer or group work which render the writing assignment easier and less frustrating. Through observations of the writing classes, we found out that only a small proportion of students accomplish the writing assignments because these activities are more related to language usage than language use. Language usage emphasises language analysis not language for communication. This tendency to favour language usage at the expense of language use is largely due to the inclusion of a great number of pedagogic tasks in the textbooks. The teachers whose background in learning English is language analysis find the pedagogic tasks easier to implement in class than the authentic tasks which demand the departure from tradition.

A better way to involve learners is by making them aware that writing occurs in a social context and situation and that a piece of writing has to achieve a purpose. The teachers should develop learners' writing competence by providing appropriate input of knowledge and skills in the writing procedure.

A combination of different approaches to writing teaching with regards to learners' specific writing needs and their developmental level may be proper in our country as an EFL context. After the learners have been exposed to the organisation, structure and language used in the texts, they will go through a process of multiple drafts instead of turning in a finished product right away. Instead of relying on only one technique, teachers

should offer learners a range of feedback types. The feedback can be defined as input from the readers to the writer, which often gives rise to further revision.

5-The Questionnaire

Apart from classroom observation, we addressed a questionnaire. The aim of the questionnaire is to gather teachers' standpoints on the recent reform in general, and to elicit their attitudes towards the writing activities suggested in the four Algerian Middle School textbooks in particular. A questionnaire is useful to gather the subjects' views and beliefs. Wallace .J.M (1998) sustains that a questionnaire contains the respondents' beliefs and views. Thus, it is usually classified as an "introspective" means of getting or having access to information. The questionnaire includes questions about the writing techniques the teachers make use in their writing classes.

The questionnaire was first handed before attending the writing lessons. It was done on purpose because what teachers think or see is not always what they do in the classrooms. The answers we got from the subjects are recorded so to use them for subsequent reflection and analysis. The great advantage of the questionnaire is that it can save time. As Wallace states it "*The greater the number of informants, the more economical of time it is to use a questionnaire*" (Wallace.J.M,1998:124,130). Furthermore, it is expected that data collected from the questionnaires are more uniform, accurate and standard. Nunan (1986) writes "*A questionnaire is an instrument for the collection of data, usually in written form, consisting of open / or closed questions and other probes requiring a response from subject*" (Nunan, D, 1986:231).

5-1. Questionnaire Description

The questionnaire addressed to teachers consists of three parts. In the first part, we addressed questions related to their views about the reform and their personal opinions about the textbooks and the way the writing syllabuses are fleshed out in these course books. The second

part contains questions to find out teachers' ways of teaching writing. In the third part, we addressed questions related to their ways of responding to learners' writings.

The questionnaire is distributed to fifteen teachers from twelve Middle Schools in the wilaya of Tizi –ouzou. It contains thirteen questions varying from multiple choice questions, yes or no questions and open questions. Five (5) open questions meant to give the respondents freedom to express their views and opinions. It also comprises four (4) other yes /no questions. And there are six (6) multiple choice questions. It is worth pointing to the fact that the questionnaire was piloted to make sure that the questions are clear, and to find out if some of them are irrelevant or irritating. It is done in order to avoid any confusion.

5-2. Discussion of the Results Obtained from the Questionnaire

In this section, we present the findings and the interpretations of the questionnaire. The yes / no and multiple choice questions are presented in pie-charts and bar-charts. The graphs are clarified and explained by commentaries and remarks.

Section 1: Teachers' Views on the New Reform and Textbooks

Q1- What would you say about the new reform of the Algerian Middle School?

73% of the teachers involved in this study show positive attitudes towards the new reform in English learning /teaching. They sustain that the objectives in the news syllabuses and textbooks are ambitious and motivating. However, 27 % of them claim that the design of the latter is done without the involvement of the teachers being the first agent in the operation of learning. They are in direct contact with learners.

Q2-Do you find the writing activities assigned in the four textbooks helpful in developing the pupils' writing skills and strategies?

A-Yes

B-No

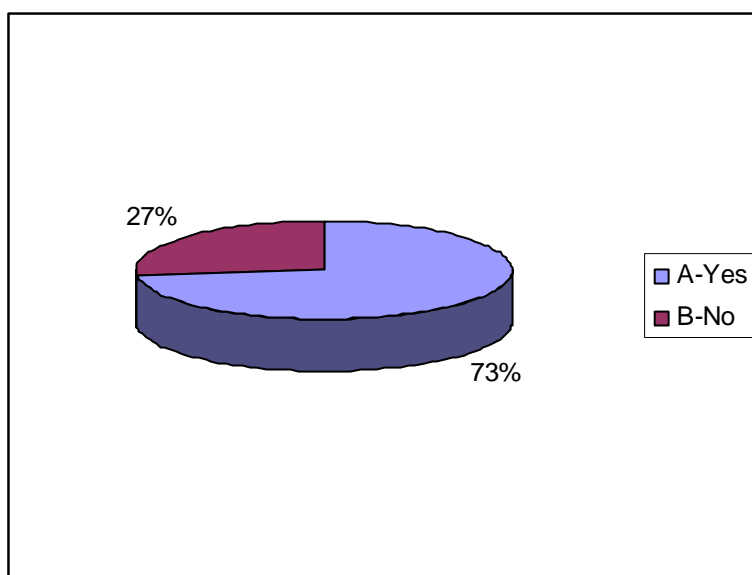


Figure1: The Importance of the Writing Activities Presented in the Textbooks

Most of the teachers (73 %) find the writing activities ambitious and adequate to the level of the pupils and they contribute to develop the learners' composition skills.

Q3-How do you use the writing activities suggested in the textbooks?

A-Use the writing activities as they are described in the textbook.

B- Adjust them.

C- Omit them completely.

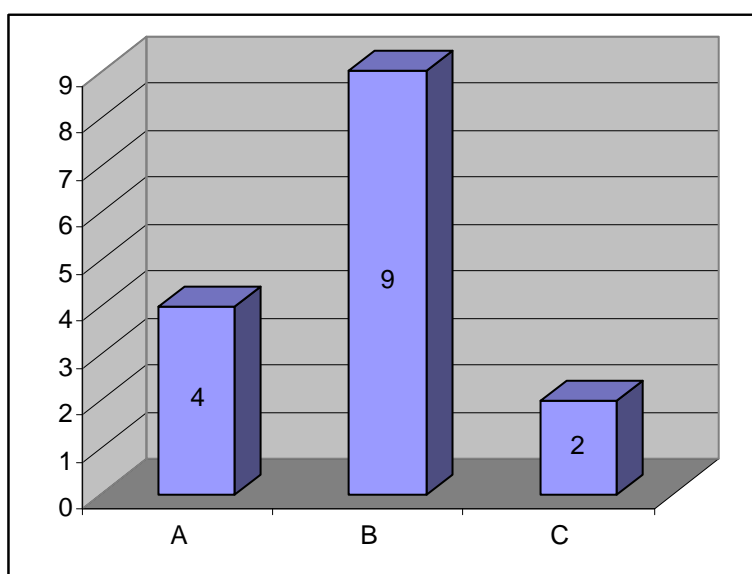


Figure 2: The Extent to which Teachers Rely on the Textbooks to Teach Writing

This table shows most teachers do not rely only on the activities of the textbook. They use other materials than the official coursebook. They use other activities to suit pupils' needs .i.e. when they find more attractive, less boring and appropriate activities as it is expressed by one teacher. The common activities used are bringing real objects, pictures or photos, cues, drawings, dictation, summarising, articles from the internet. One respondent says *"I sometimes use pictures, cues, activities taken from other books and I sometimes improvise tasks"*. Concerning those who don't use other activities except the official course book, they say that the pupils' book is the only material used because it contains miscellaneous activities which are very helpful for both teachers and pupils. Besides, others don't follow the textbooks at all as they use their own materials by providing activities which they think will fit the learners' needs and interests. One respondent says *"I use activities out of the official school manual"*. However, some teachers think that the textbooks activities are enough to help developing pupils' writing skills.

The teachers who rely on other materials whenever they find it necessary are using the course book selectively. They don't limit themselves to the activities suggested in the textbooks. This is what language teachers are supposed to do as they try to build their lessons relying on the school books and other resources in order to make something they think more appropriate. Others use only the activities assigned in the text books, they are taking them for granted as it is stated by one teacher *"those in the textbook are sufficient"*.

Q4- *In your opinion, what text types should be introduced to beginners?*

A- Narrative

B-Descriptive

C-Expository

D- Argumentative

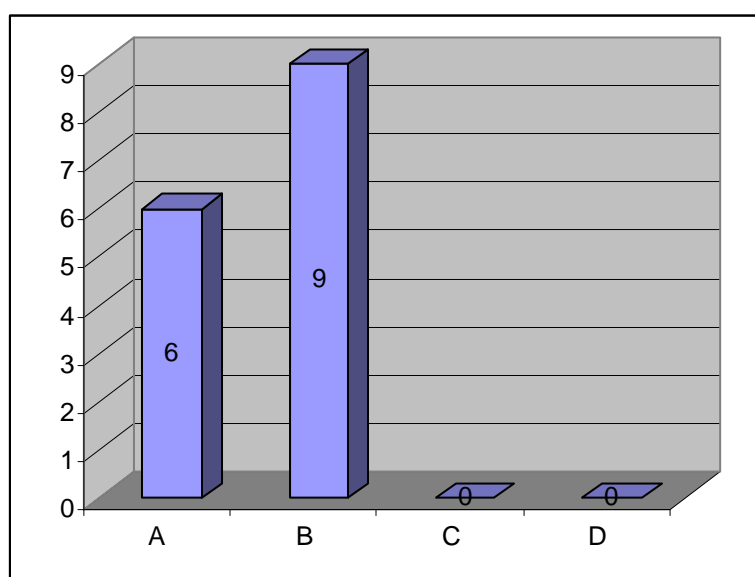


Figure3: The Text Types Adequate to Beginners.

This bar-chart reveals that the teachers advocate the introduction of descriptive and narrative texts. They think that the expository and the argumentative ones are far beyond the reach of beginning learners. Research suggests that it is appropriate to start teaching learners to produce descriptive and narrative texts. Then, learners will gradually be initiated to produce expository texts. As for the argumentative, they are recommended for the advanced.

Section 2. Teachers' Ways of Teaching Writing

Q-5. Do you teach the language skills?

A- Integratively

B- Separately

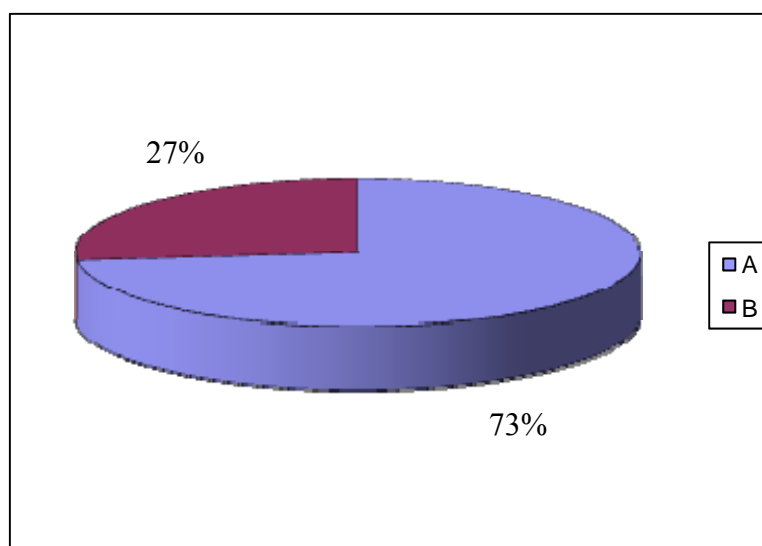


Figure 4: Integrating or Separating the Teaching of the Language Skills.

As this pie-chart shows, (73%) of the teachers teach the language skills integratively. Integration is very important because teaching each skill separately very often results in an unbalanced second or foreign language performance as it is stated by Brooks and Gundy:

The purpose of an integrated approach in the classroom is to enable learners to transfer naturally between one mode and another, so that they do not end up like student “A” who passes the written exam but can not ask for a sandwich, or student “B” who talks fluently but whose reading and writing skills are so limited that written messages have to be read aloud in order to be understood.

(Brooks .A & P.Gundy. 1991:8).

Indeed, learners can become aware of the nature of written texts by reading. They learn to write by carefully observing what has been already written. By reading and studying a variety of relevant types of texts, learners can gain important insights both about how they should write and about subject matter that may become the topic of their writing. They can be helped to develop their awareness by focussing their attention on significant features of the text. In actual language use we rarely use one skill in isolation. Numerous communicative situations in real life involve integrating two or more of the four skills. For instances, taking a message over the telephone , taking part in any sort of conversation , filling in a form , taking notes from a talk or lecture. In all these

situations, the user of the language exercises his abilities in two or more skills, either simultaneously or in close succession. (Cunningsworth, Alan, 1989:46).

In order to achieve a degree of communicative ability, the learner needs practice in coping with communicative situations involving the realistic integration of language skills. Teaching the language skills integratively is of a great significance because this permits the development of the learners' competences simultaneously without granting emphasis or primacy to one particular skill at the expense of the others. The learners' skills will be developed steadily and gradually as it is expressed in the fourth year English program of the Middle School (p: 47-48):

Ces compétences sont interdépendantes et évolutives. Un degré de développement insuffisant de l'une d'entre elles peut entraver le développement des autres .Dans le programme, toutes les compétences visées ont été et continueront d'être intégrées afin d'éviter toutes formes d'inhibition en situations concrète.

Q6-Do you provide model texts for students? If yes, for what purposes?

A-Yes

B-No

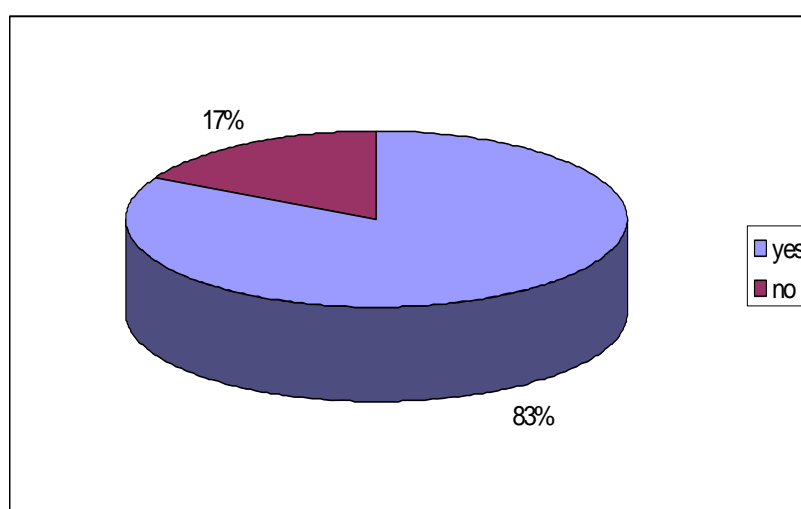


Figure 5: Teachers' Introduction of Model Texts.

The majority of the teachers (83%) use model texts. They claim that learning takes place through imitation and exploration of different kinds of models. One respondent says

that learners must be guided otherwise the pupils will write about things they are not asked to. For instance, if you ask them to write an-email in which they invite your friends, they will write a conversation instead. Another teacher goes further by claiming that when we follow a model, the task becomes easier until we find our style. We always learn something new by imitating others. Some teachers add that presenting model texts is always accompanied with analysing the writers' choice of diction, organisation (cohesion and coherence).

Q-7.What steps of any do you consider necessary for the pupils to go through when writing a composition?

The teachers have supplied us with different phases that they consider important to follow in the process of writing .Some teachers just point to the three parts that constitute a paragraph which are starting with an introduction, then the body of the composition or the development and ending with a conclusion. Approaching writing this way is like the traditional approach to writing instruction where students are either given timed in-class compositions to write from beginning and to finish within a class hour, or they are given a homework assignment. Both the options give no opportunity for systematic drafting. (Brown.H.Douglas, 2001:334).

However, some of them propose a set of procedures. First, the teacher starts with brainstorming through leading questions about a given theme. Pupils answer and provide suggestions. Brainstorming is a useful technique in writing because it permits to approach a topic with an open mind .It also allows the writer to not judge the ideas as they emerge. The writer frees himself/herself to come up with ideas that he/she might not even know he/she had. (Brown.H.Douglas, 2001:349). In brainstorming, students write compositions based on maps, pictures, or personal experiences.

The next stage is the selection and organization of ideas in group to prepare the writing phase (introduction, development and conclusion). Then, the individual work starts; each pupil write sentences using the notes respecting cohesion and coherence. When they finish, pupils compare/ exchange their works. The last phase is that each pupil writes the different parts of the text taking in consideration grammar, spelling, punctuation and capitalisation marks. One teacher suggests the following steps: to have a model and discuss the strategies used in the text model and then write their own paragraph.

Q-8 *Do you ask your learners to write?*

A- Individually.

B- In pairs.

C- In small groups.

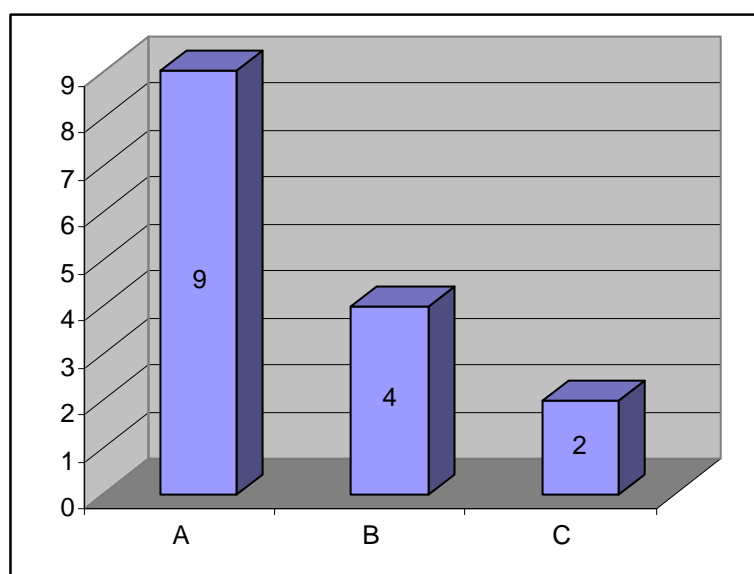


Figure 6: Classroom Writing Organisation.

Most of the teachers (9) found that the best way for pupils to learn writing is by doing it individually. A few of them said that writing in pairs is also advantageous as they help each other at least to find the suitable vocabulary. It is worth mentioning that four (4) others support writing in small groups. Writing in pairs or small groups removes the fear or the inhibition of learners to tackle the writing task. Facing individually a blank page is a

stressful activity which hinders many writers/learners to get started or put down ideas. On the contrary, working in groups is an effective way to generate ideas. Sharing the brainstormed ideas with the rest of the group members, each student will have an opportunity to further expand the ideas. Besides, collaborative group or peer work increases the intellectual and emotional involvement of students in non-threatening flexible mode of class.

Section3.Teachers' Practices on Getting Feedback

Q-9.*Do you encourage your students to exchange their writing with peers to give and get feedback?*

A-Yes

B-No

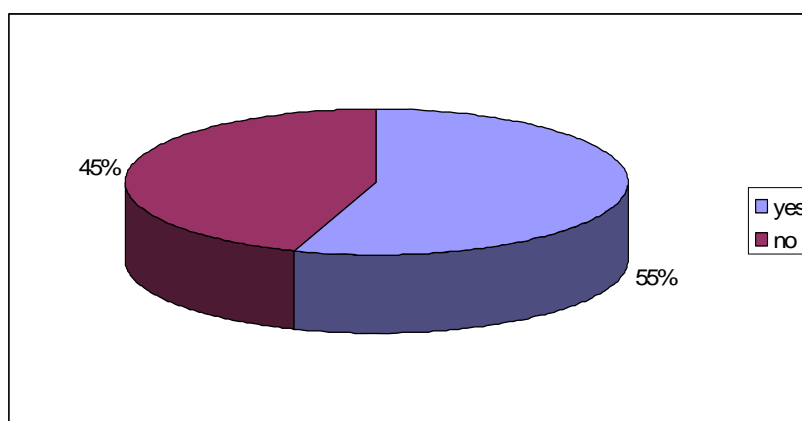


Figure 7: Peer feedback

As it is shown in this pie-chart, there is a slight difference between the teachers who encourage feedback from the peers and those who rely only on their own feedback. Correcting a written work is very time-consuming, particularly with large classes. One possible solution to let students correct and edit each other's writing. They may not be able to see or define all the good qualities or shortcomings of a piece of written work, but they will detect at least some of them.

Peer correction is a time-saving and useful technique. It can be a substitute for first draft reading by the teacher since learners can work together on their first drafts, giving each other feedback on content, language and organization. They then rewrite and give in the final version to the teacher to re-correct it. Peer feedback helps to raise the learners' consciousness of their own mistakes. However, students sometimes feel uncomfortable correcting or being corrected by their peers and do not easily accept criticism from each other. This depends on the general classroom climate which in its turn is created by the attitudes of both learners and teachers. Teachers need to explain to learners the aim of and importance of giving feed to their co-learners. By doing so they gain awareness of mistakes, learn new vocabulary. They can also gain marks if they correct well and try to point to their classmates' limitations at all levels at least the language mistakes.

Rewards are reinforcements for learners, especially when the young learners involved. In this respect, Villanil & de Guerrero (1998) investigated the impact of peer revision on L2 and found that it had a positive effect on the quality of the final draft. Similar findings were reported by Berg (1999) in how to give effective peer response to writing. She found that this training had a positive effect on the students' revision types and on the quality of their texts. Sommers (1982) observed that providing written commentary on student papers consume the largest proportion of time. Yet, commenting on student writing is the most widely used method for responding to student writing. It is also the least understood (1982:148). Feedback should be a blend of praise and criticism.

Q10-Do you encourage your students to rewrite their papers after giving feedback on them?

A-No

B-Yes

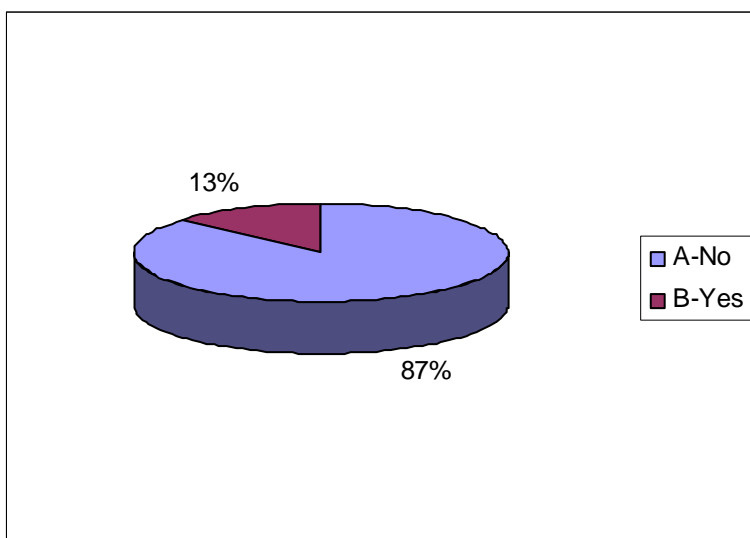


Figure 8: Teachers 'Views on Rewriting.

This graph shows that the majority of the teachers (87%) do not ask the pupils to write another version after giving feedback on it. Some of them justify their practices by the fact that they are hindered by time limits. One teacher says “*There is no time*”. Another teacher points out that he rewrites the whole sentences in a correct way which shows that he does not give the pupils the opportunity to rewrite by themselves. However, rewriting is very important because it is an integral part of the writing process as a whole. When students are asked to rewrite, they expect their works to be reread by the teacher. It makes sense to see the first version as provisional and to regard the rewritten, final version as the assignment, the one that is substituted for formal assessment. This will motivate learners to rewrite and appreciate the value of doing so. (Penny.Ur,1996:171). Rewriting compositions consists of incorporating suggestions for improvements, a fact which many learners ignore and conceive of it as a tedious activity and many do not like doing it. While initially students may be reluctant to spend time rewriting a composition, they might prefer to simply put away in a book and forget about it. Later they come to see the benefits gained from rewriting and improving their written work. This occurs when students look at their original papers and the rewritten ones, they see how they improved and so, they feel proud

of the progress they made. Rewriting is a necessary step in the process of writing because a piece of writing is hardly achieved in one attempt.

Q11-What must a good paragraph contain?

A- Grammatically correct sentences

B- Information and ideas

C- Organisation

D-Other

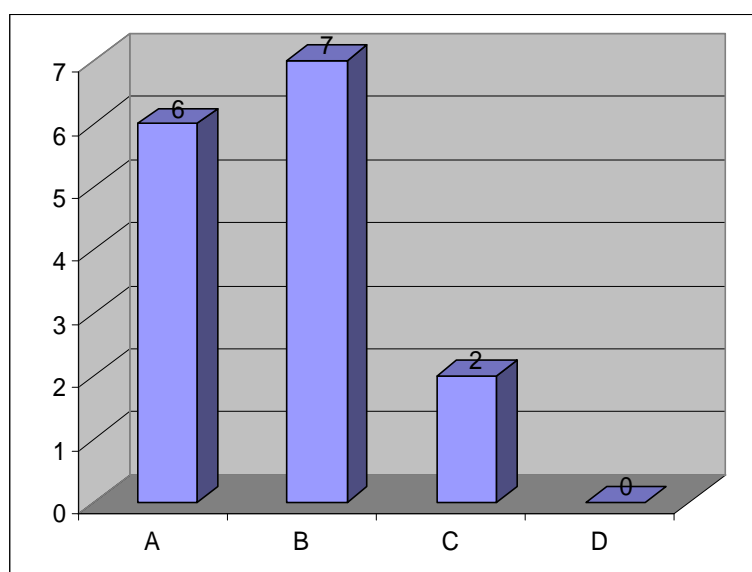


Figure 9: The Features of a Good Paragraph.

It appears that the teachers have different parameters for evaluating a written work. Six of them consider correctness of grammar sentences as a feature of a good paragraph. And seven of them give much importance to the ideas or the way they are organised.

The purpose of writing, in principle, is the expression of ideas, the conveying of a message to a reader. The ideas themselves should arguably be seen as the most important aspect of writing. Yet, the writer needs also to pay attention to formal aspects which comprises neat hand writing, correct spelling, punctuation, acceptable grammar and careful selection of vocabulary. (Penny.Ur, 1996:163). Because if capitalisation; commas, full stops, sentence and paragraph boundaries are not used correctly, this can not only make a

negative impression but render a text difficult to understand. Thus, punctuation conventions have to be taught correctly to help students to be good writers in English. Higher standards of language are demanded in writing than in speech. Careful constructions, more precise and varied vocabulary and more correctness of expression are also needed. In addition, the slow and reflective nature of the process of writing in itself enables the writer to devote more time and attention to formal aspects during the process of production which is difficult to demand in the course of the real-time flow of speech.

Many teachers are aware that content and organization are very important features of a written text. Nevertheless, they find themselves over-emphasising language forms in their feedback. This tendency is due to the fact that mistakes in spelling and grammar catch the eye and seem to demand to be corrected. So, they are difficult to ignore. More importantly, language mistakes are more easily and quickly diagnosed and corrected than the ones related to content and organisation. Moreover, learners want their language mistakes to be corrected. Some kind of compromise is called for. It would seem reasonable to say that language mistakes should be ignored if there is a danger that correcting them would hinder learning more than helping it. For Penny Ur (1996), we might correct only mistakes that actually affect meaning or the basic mistakes which might lead to misunderstanding or confusion on the part of the reader.

Q12-How do you usually correct your pupils' writing?

A-You use the correction symbols.

B -You correct every grammar mistake.

C-You just give a mark

D-Others

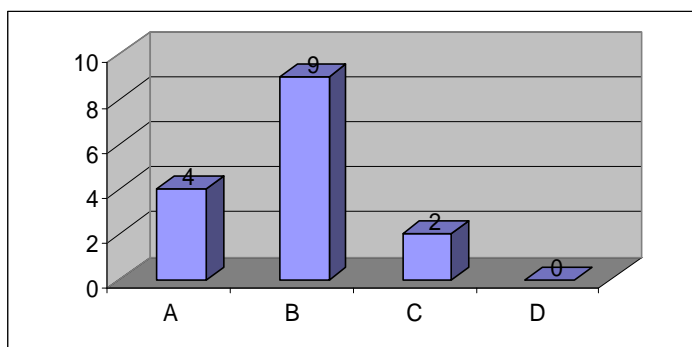


Figure10:Teachers’Methods of Correcting Students’ Writing.

The above graph reveals that most teachers (9) take the burden of correcting every grammar mistake. “I correct every spelling mistake, grammar mistake and the coherence of ideas and give a mark which justifies how a good work must be done”. Some teachers maintain that the reason which let them do so is the fact that pupils don’t understand the remarks. But, if the teachers simply make the corrections for learners, they will learn little or nothing and will make the same errors again. By doing so, they reduce the chances for learners to discover by themselves their mistakes, because involvement make learning meaningful and last for a long time. Few other teachers (4) use correction symbols showing the type of the error made. They simply point to the error made. For instance, to indicate a spelling mistake, the teacher just writes SP on the margin of the paper. Then the learners make the corrections individually, in pairs or small groups. The use of a correction code to guide learners on correcting their own errors makes writing more of a learning activity. (See appendices xxiv and xxv where two samples of correction code are provided). It is true that initially correcting does take more time for students to correct their work, as they must be acquainted with the correction code and get accustomed to figuring out how to correct their errors on their own.

Contrary to the traditional method of marking student compositions by going through the papers with a red pen circling, drawing arrows and scribbling hasty comments such as awkward or simply marking through and rewriting portions of a student’s work.

One new marking system is proposed which is called Red, Green and Blue system which means the use of three different colour code when giving feedback to students' writing. When reading for the first time the composition, the teacher makes no marks on it at all. He reads through the pages to get an overall impression and writes some comments in complete sentences concerning content and the effectiveness of writing at the end using a blue pen. They may be in the form of questions such as, "Could you give some examples of ...?", "I don't think ...part of your paper is clear" or "I would like to know more about". Then a second reading is done more carefully. The teacher marks in red the parts that communicate well and notes with a green pen those aspects that need revision. When reading the first draft, there is no need to mark all the minor grammatical and mechanical errors. Minor errors comprise misuse of punctuation and spelling. The teacher focuses on a few major errors that hinder effective communication such as vocabulary confusion, violation of syntactic rules that obscure meaning and irrelevant, incorrect or missing information. Fine polishing and proof reading are reserved for the final-draft stage.

This new technique for marking the good parts of the paper with a red pen is done in order to free the red colour from its old negative connotations in the writing class. It has traditionally been used to point out to the student all his 'shameful' errors. The basic premise of this idea is to reward students for their success instead of penalizing them for their failure. That is to say, to give them a positive instead of a negative feedback. Donald Knapp, who claims this method, advocates making no negative marks at all on students' papers. Rather, he makes use of a checklist, giving a check for something well done. Following his system, the teacher brackets with red pen any word, sentence or passage that he thinks has successfully accomplished its communicative goal. When he finds something that he considers well done, he writes supportive comments such as "That is a good way to say it" , " That is an excellent choice of words" or " That is an interesting idea". Therefore,

students will strive to have more red ink on their papers. So, there is more to praise than to criticize in students' writing. It may be that students will remember the praise longer and ultimately be more motivated to learn than if they receive only negative comments.

Q13-How far do you think it is important to teach writing? Why do you think so?

From the responses, we find that teachers view the teaching of writing skills as important but they differ in defining its significance. Some teachers see its importance lying in the fact that the pupils are tested more on writing in the exams. This quotation from one respondent illustrates the point "*we ask our pupils to write at the exams not to speak*". Besides, writing is a way for learners to integrate what they have learned; learners reuse what they have acquired at school; the linguistic store (vocabulary and grammar). Writing is helpful for the shy pupils as they express things better by writing and allow quieter learners to show their strengths. Further, some teachers see writing important because the learners should be able to express or communicate their needs in a clear way through writing. Many things are done in writing in every day life. Therefore, they must know how to write because learners will need it in their daily lives for social purposes. For example, if the learner writes an application for a job, he must know how to write it well. One teacher claims that if the pupils don't master writing they will remain as illiterate.

Conclusion

The questionnaire distributed to teachers, as we have mentioned earlier, is intended to gather teachers' stand points on the new reform and to gather data on their practices at writing teaching. On the whole, the teachers' stances vis-à-vis the textbooks are positive. Most importantly, they claim that they implement the process approach stages while teaching writing. This means that learners are taught to make use of certain strategies at each phase of writing cycle. As for the importance they give to the teaching of writing

skill, the informants give it a priority given the fact that the learners are tested on writing and reading not on speaking and listening skills.

General Conclusion

The analysis of the writing instructional plan, i.e. Middle school writing syllabuses, their corresponding textbooks and the way they are implemented in the classroom leads us to draw a mitigated balance sheet. On the positive side, we note that the syllabuses accorded an important place to writing skills and strategies. It is a task-based syllabus which emphasizes process as an important dimension of learning to write. The syllabuses specify the nomenclature of authentic and pedagogic tasks that students should be able to do at the end of each stage, with a special emphasis on the process of learning strategies and skills.

It is the inventory of skills which holds the paramount importance even if it is followed by other inventories linked to grammar and functions. The balance weighs in favour of skills, but for the sake of organisation an inventory of themes is added. Indeed, the thematic orientation helps students to develop topics over a quite long period of time, thus, generating ideas for the practice of skills including that of writing.

On the negative side, we note that the inventory of skills always starts with listening and speaking regardless of the year of study. We argue that this gives the impression that reading and writing skills are just appendages. The sequencing can be carried according to the year of study. It is all good that first and second year syllabuses begin with a checklist of skills related to listening and speaking because students need to familiarize themselves with the spoken English as respecting in this the natural process of learning a language, but the third and fourth year syllabuses can start with an inventory of skills linked to reading and writing. The rationale of this sequencing has much to do with the fact that the Brevet exam is of the written mode. Placing the inventory of reading and writing skills in the first position will be a way of affirming their centrality for both

students who will take their exam and move to the lycée and those who will leave school for the professional world.

Apart from the systematic ordering without due regard to learners' needs, we have mentioned that the syllabuses do not include a teacher development section wherein the teacher's competencies needed to carry out the instructional plan are detailed. The roles that teachers need to play in the classroom and outside the precincts of the school are not checklisted either the syllabuses, therefore, read as if they are issued from a mere cosmetic reform. It is logically that if the learners are asked to play new roles in the classroom and outside of it, teachers too need to recycle themselves to fit in the new instructional plan.

The strengths and weaknesses of the syllabuses are reflected in the textbooks and teacher's practice in the classroom. So while we note that the textbooks are informed by the idea of process, this idea is not extended to the teaching of the writing skills and strategies. The latter appear mostly at the end of the rubrics devoted to the other skills as writing is there just to register what the students have learned in terms of grammar items and functions. The writing questions are often given in the form of simple instructions without any roadmap to follow. Model writing is supposed to be the panacea. Psychologically, students have reached the age of abstract thinking, and yet the activities appeal to concrete thinking through the appeal of mode's pedagogic type is also so great that one gets the impression that the books are grammar-oriented. Furthermore, the sequencing of the units in terms of skills as mechanical as the syllabus, it does not allow for the importance of writing to be foregrounded.

This evaluative study of the instructional plan related to writing in the Middle school has led us to the following conclusions. The writing syllabuses are influenced by theories of learning, and theories of writing that advocated process as an important dimension of cognition and social interaction. Indeed, the socio-constructivist approach

demands interaction as an ideal route to learning to communicate and interact. In the first part of the study , we have shown that process has come to shape all theories of learning to write , whether process is associated with top-down or bottom-up approaches to learning linked with the ideas of strategies, virtually no theory of learning escapes its influence. The idea of process writing fits in well with the socio-constructivist approach and the humanist orientation of the syllabuses. In their shared preamble, the latter reject the merely utilitarian dimension of learning English as an additional language to Arabic, Berber and French.

However, the claims to the idea of process invoked by the philosophy of education, the theories of learning and the inventory of skills seem to have remained a pious wish because of the way the writing syllabuses are organised, the way they overlook the role of teachers, the importance place they give to the pedagogic tasks over authentic tasks, the ignorance of the role that evaluation or assessment can play in enhancing the process dimension of learning. So we have tried to show that the sequencing of the inventories in terms of content (grammar, functions, etc) and skills is too mechanical. Writing always comes last in the list of items, no matter the year of study and context of learning.

Teacher development is altogether absent as if we need new learners without caring if the teachers can take them in charge. The syllabus is task-based, but the type is basically pedagogic. Evaluation and assessment criteria are more related to content and text than to the process. We know well that exams come last in the learning process, but they give to students as to what is important to learn to be successful. So if assessment and evaluation emphasise product rather than process, it is natural that students and the other pedagogic partner will pay more attention to the items that are tested. The other items whether they consist of writing skills and strategies will remain peripheral.

We have also found out that the textbooks suffer from the same flaws. It is logical since textbook evaluators demand that textbook writers stick to the syllabuses. So on the whole the textbooks comprise two sections in each of the thematic units that constitute them. In the first section, the focus is on the language components and the second is devoted to the skills. It has to be observed that the order of the inventories of items is reversed. This seems to be dictated by the need of organising the process of learning and providing the students with the language items needed to undertake the tasks and the projects. We have argued that while this holds true for the first two years, the third and fourth years do not demand such an organisation. As regards the writing skills, it always comes last in the different rubrics as these skills do not need to be taught for themselves.

Model writing remains the dominant type of tasks assigned to the students. Students are presented with models in the reading and speaking rubrics. They are expected to reproduce the same texts. Modelling is also supported by paragraph patterns. Students are provided with topic sentence which they are supposed to flesh out with some cues that are sometimes presented to them. We have suggested this type of writing correspond to concrete thinking not the abstract thinking stage of teenage students.

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APPENDICES

It is taken from James. D.Williams' book (1998:54).

Stages of Writing:

Writing process	Definition	description
Prewriting	Generating ideas, strategies and information for a given writing task.	Prewriting activities that take place before starting on the first draft of a paper. They include discussing, outlining, freewriting, journals and talk–write etc.
Planning	Reflecting on the material produced during prewriting to develop a plan to achieve the aim of the paper.	Planning involves considering the rhetorical stance, rhetorical purpose, and the aim of the text, how these factors are connected to the information generated during prewriting. Planning also involves selecting support for a claim and blocking out at least a rough organizational structure.
Drafting	Producing words on a computer or on paper that matches (more or less) the	Writing occurs over time .Good writers seldom try to produce an entire text in one

	initial plan for the work.	sitting or even in one day.
Pausing	Moments when writing does not occur. Instead writers are reflecting on good they have produced and how well it matches their plans .Usually includes reading.	Pausing occurs among good and poor writers, but they use it in different ways. Writers consider global factors .How well the text matches the plan, how well it is meeting audience needs and overall organization.
Reading	Moments during pausing when writers read what they have written and compare it to their plans.	Reading and writing are interrelated activities. Good readers are good writers and vice versa. The reading that takes place during writing is crucial to the reflection process during pausing.
Revising	Literally“re-seeing” the text with the goal of making large-scale changes so that text and plan match.	Revising occurs after the first draft is finished.It involves making changes that enhance the match between plan, text .Factors to consider usually are the same as those considered during planning:rhetorical stance, rhetorical purpose and so on

		.Serious revising almost always includes getting suggestions from friends or colleagues on how to improve the writing.
Editing	Focusing on sentence level concerns such as punctuation, sentence length and spelling, agreement between subject and verb and style.	Editing occurs after revising. The goal is to give the paper a professional appearance.
Publishing	Sharing the finished text with its intended audience.	Publishing is not limited to getting a text printed in a journal .It includes turning a paper in to a teacher for example.

APPENDIX:1

I-Spotlight on English One:

File	Rubric	Activity	Type	Aim/Strategy
File one: Hello	Sequence one :produce	Act b.p:23	Adding the remaining letters of the alphabet	Mastering the graphics of the English writing system (alphabet).
		Act c.p:23	Ordering sentences to get a conversation	Helping learners to understand the chronological sequence of a text. (rhetorical)
	Sequence two: produce	Act d.p:27	Writing an e-mail to a pen friend	Raising awareness of genre and description (rhetorical).
File two: Family	Sequence one :produce	Act c.p:46	Describing a friend	Raising awareness

and Friends				of text type (rhetorical).
	Sequence two :produce	Act c.p:50	Describing one's self	Description (rhetorical).
	Sequence three: produce	Act d.p:54	Writing a postcard to a pen pal to tell him about one's self	Genre and audience recognising, description, register (rhetorical/c ognitive).
		Act e.p:54	Reading a model then writing about someone in one's own family	Information transfer
File three: Sports	Sequence one: produce	Act c.p:66	Writing about a favourite star	Describing people (rhetorical).
		Act f.p:66	Translate words into first language	Translation (rhetorical)
	Sequence two: produce	Act b.p:70	Ordering sentences to get a conversation	Helping learners to understand the chronologic al sequence of a text

				(rhetorical).
		Act c.p:70	Describing a place	Imitating a model and describing a place (social and rhetorical).
		Act d.p:70	Drawing a plan of a school then describing it	Information transfer
	Sequence three: produce	Act c.p:73	Writing about a sportsman' day.	Describing daily activities, developing chronological awareness (rhetorical).
		Act d.p:73	Writing a paragraph after answering questions	Integrating skills
File four: In And Out	Sequence one: produce	Act b.p:86	Looking at photos and writing what people are doing .list of necessary vocabulary are suggested	Information transfer and describing people's activities (describing

				processes) (rhetorical).
		Act c.p:86	Sending a post card to a friend describing a place you have visited	Genre consideration, describing places, people and activities (rhetorical).
	Sequence two: produce	Act c.p:90	Making a poster of a favourite animal and writing about it.	Drawing and describing (cognitive and rhetorical).
	Sequence three: produce	Act d.p:93	Translating sentences into first language	Rhetorical strategy
	Learn about culture	Act d.p:96	Comparing one's own school with the British school	Text function raising cultural awareness.

		Act e.p:96	Writing about one's own school	Description (rhetorical).
File five:	Sequence one:	Act b.p:105	Writing a shopping list	Informal writing
Food	produce			
	Sequence two: produce	Act c.p:109	Writing instructions for a recipe.	Using writing for acting.
	Sequence three: produce	Act c.p:113	Making a menu for Mawlid Ennabawi	Cultural awareness
	Learn about culture	Act g.p:116	Rewriting a paragraph with the right punctuation	Editing (cognitive).
		Act h.p:116	Ordering dominos to get a proverb	Developing sentence structure (rhetorical).
		Act i.p:117	Writing proverbs about food in first language	Translating (rhetorical).
		Act k.p:117	Making menu for dishes of Eid El Fitr and Elmawlid Ennabawi	Cultural awareness.
File six:	Sequence one:	Act a:126	Looking at pictures and writing sentences	Writing from a prompt (information transfer)
Inventions and Discoveries	produce			
		Act b.p:126	Completing a puzzle and	Language

			writing past forms of verbs	practice
		Act d.p:127	Rewriting an e-mail to correct the misprints	Editing (cognitive)
		Act e.p:127	Replying to an e-mail telling of a last week-end	Reporting experience
	Sequence two: produce	Act c.p:131	Writing questions to the answers.	rhetorical
		Act d.p:131	Writing a paragraph about a person.	Expanding notes (rhetorical).
		Act e.p:131	Writing a paragraph taking information from a card	Information transfer
	Sequence three: produce	Act c.p:135	Writing about teenagers in 1960	Narrating (rhetorical).
		Act d.p:135	Translating expressions into the first language	rhetorical
File seven :Environment	Sequence one: produce	Act e.p:148	Looking at a map and writing.	Information transfer
	Sequence two: produce	Act b.p:152	Reordering letters to find the right word	Developing vocabulary
		Act c.p:153	Writing names of animals in each box.	classifying
		Act d.p:153	Describing an animal	rhetorical
	Sequence three: produce	Act b.p:156	Write your duties when living in a country side	Description (rhetorical)

		Act d.p:157	Filling a table	Listing
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I-Spotlight on English Two:

File	Rubric	Activity	Type	Aim/Strategy
File one: A person's Profile	Sequence one: practice	Act 1.p:9	Note taking and using them with a partner to construct a text	Integrating listening with writing (cognitive)
	Sequence two: listen and speak	Act 1.p:12	Copying a form in an exercise book.	Developing hand writing
		Act 4.p:13	Translating words into Arabic, French or Tamazight	Developing vocabulary (rhetorical).
File two: Language Games	Sequence three: Go Forward	Act 1.p:37	Drawing a plan of a town and writing five sentences about places on the map	Information transfer
File three: Health	Sequence one:Go Forward	Act 2.p:52	Writing remedies for some health problems	Writing instructions
		Act 3.p:53	Interpreting signs	Information transfer
		Act 5.p:54	Prescribing the use of a medicine	Describing a process.
	Sequence two:practice	Act 4.p:56	Giving answers and reporting to the class	Reporting speech

	Sequence three:practice	Act 1.p:63	Rewriting a paragraph using the passive voice	Grammar practice
	Learn about culture	Act p:65	Writing about home remedies	Explanation
File four: Cartoons	Sequence three: practice	Act 2.p:86	Rewriting a conversation without using the word “watch”	communicative
File five: Theatre	Sequence one: practice	Act 5.p:100	Writing a questionnaire to suggested items.	Information transfer.
	Sequence three: Go Forward	Act 3.p:107	Writing an end to a story	Rhetorical
		Act 4.p:108	Rewriting a paragraph in the present tense	Language practice (grammar).

III-Spotlight on English Three:

File	Rubric	Activity	Type	Aim/Strategy
File one: Communications	Sequence one: read and write	Act b.p:21	Filling blanks with information from an e-mail	Information transfer
	Write it out	Act .p:22	Writing an application letter using “but, and, because”.	Identifying genre (rhetorical).
	Listen and speak	Act 3.p:24	Listening then filling a message slip	Integrating skills: listening and writing
	Sequence two: write it out	Act1.p:30	Use cues to write a letter of recommendations	Genre awareness.
		Act 2.p:30	Correcting the mistakes of the letter ,passing it to an other peer then rewriting it and hand it to teacher	Editing, collaborating and providing several drafts
	Sequence three: read and write	Act p:36	Writing a TV programme with a partner following a model.	Cooperative writing
		Act 4.p:39	Writing a paragraph about the Algerian Republican Guards	Describing objects

File two:Travel	Sequence one:write it out.	Act.p:60	Writing about holidays plans.write a reply of about 8 lines giving information	Writing a letter (rhetorical).
	Sequence two:read andwrite	Act 2.p:67	Putting the verbs into the correct tense	Grammar practice
		Act 1.p:68	Writing a press release for journalists	Genre consideration “rhetorical”.
		Act 2.p:68	Correcting the mistakes and exchanging drafts with peers and rewriting a final version then handing it to a teacher	Self and peer editing(proofreading) and rewriting. “cognitive”.
	Sequence three:Imagine	Act 1.p:73	Writing a programme for English –speaking tourists in form of notes	Writing notes
		Act 2.p:73	Using the notes to write a paragraph	Expanding notes
		Act 3.p:73	Self correcting mistakes and exchanging drafts with a partner for error checking	Self and peer editing “cognitive”.
		Act 2.p:75	Putting the verbs between brackets into the present simple or will-future	Grammar practice
	Write it out.	Act 1.p:76	Writing a horoscope	

			according to star signs following a model	
		Act 2.p:76	Exchanging the horoscopes for error checking	Peer editing “cognitive”
		Act 3.p:78	Writing sentences about the road signs	Interpreting non verbal language or information transfer
	Reading and writing	Act 1.p:97	Joining two pairs of sentences	Developing sentence structure “cognitive”
	Write it out	Act.p:97	Writing a report using provided information	Genre consideration “rhetorical”
	Sequence two :have you ever	Act 3.p:101	Turning rules into pieces of advice	Information transfer
		Act 5.p:102	Writing sentences expressing obligation , prohibition and absence of obligation	Grammar practice “rhetorical”
	Write it out	Act 1.p:102	Writing a note of obligations	Writing notes
	Sequence	Act 1.p:108	Combining sentences	Grammar

	three:read and write I			practice
		Act 2.p:108	Relating events	Reporting events “text types”
		Act 3.p:108	Writing a short report relating events	Reporting events and incidents
		Act 4.p:108	Completing articles	rhetorical
	Write it out	Act .p:108	Choosing a headline and writing an article	Rhetorical “writing from a prompt”
	Read and write II	Act 3.p:110	writing a report	Report writing
File four:Around the World	Sequence one	Act 4.p:131	Acting a dialogue then writing it down	Integrating speaking with writing skills.

	Read and write I	Act.p:132	Writing a letter for the international Olympic committee	Genre consideration
	Read and write	Act 2.p:134	Writing a comparison paragraph	Comparison “text types”

		Act 2.p:137	Writing a talk using superlative adjectives then reading it	Integrating writing and reading
	Sequence two:read andwrite	Act .p:140	Writing a short representation of home town following a model.	Description “text types”. Rhetorical.
	Sequence three	Act 2.p:145	Writing a paragraph about monuments using information then reading it to the class	Text types and integrating reading with writing.
	Read and write	Act .p:146	Writing a talk about a monument	Genre consideration “rhetorical”
		Act 3.p:148	Writing a paragraph about the different languages of Algeria	Describing a situation. “rhetorical”

II.4.On the Move:

File	Rubric	Activity	Type	Aim/Strategy
File one: It's My Treat	practice	Act.1.p:20	Writing tag questions	Language practice
	Write it up	Act 1.p:20	Classifying	classifying
		Act 3.p:20	Writing a dialogue with tag questions	Grammar practice???
	practice	Act 1.p:23	Rewriting using the imperative	Grammar practice
	Write it out	Act.p:23	Writing a recipe for success using the imperative and sequencers	Writing instructions
	Research and Report	Act 2.p:27	Write a short report to sum up findings	Summary
		Act 4.p:28	Writing a letter to a British friend to inform him about the Algerian	Genre consideration "rhetorical"

			mealtimes	
	Write it up	Act .p:31	Describing a dish using prompts	Describing a process “rhetorical”
	Write it out	Act 2.p:34	Fill in the invitation card	Form-filling
		Act 3.p:34	Writing a letter of invitation using the information in the invitation card	Writing personal letters “genre consideration”
File two: You Can Do It!	Write it up	Act.p:45	Writing a small school report then reading it	Report writing
	Write it out	Act p:49	Writing notes in a diary using information	Writing a diary
	Research and Report	Act 4.p:53	Writing a report about an animal using information	Report writing “Genre consideration”
		Act 5.p:53	Writing a ten-rule charter to protect wild animals using	Writing instructions

			modals	
	Write it up	Act.p:56	Writing a dialogue using so and neither drawing inspiration from a listening script and then acting it out.	Dialogue writing
	Write it out	Act 3.p:59	Writing a newspaper article using ideas suggested	Writing a newspaper article “genre consideration” Rhetorical.
		Act 3.p:62	Writing a letter of apology using modals	Writing personal letters “genre consideration”
File three: Great Expectations	Write it up	Act 1.p:69	Reordering the words in the scrambled sentences	Developing sentence order
		Act 2.p:69	Rearranging the reordered sentences using sequencers	Developing sentence structure

	Writing it out	Act.p:72	Writing a paragraph using some ideas and following a model	Paragraph writing
	Research and Report	Act2.p:77	Replying an American pen – friend including a diagram	Genre consideration
	Write it up	Act.p:81	Playing the role of a tourist guide using a post card and script as modals	
	Write it out	Act .p:84	Writing contingency plans	
File four: Then and Now	Write it up	Act 1.p:94	Writing about reminiscences using modals	Personal writing
	Write it out	Act.p:98	Writing a short note by linking sentence with appropriate	Grammar Practice

			relative pronouns	
		Act 6.p:102	Writing a biography using information , semi modal and relative pronouns	Writing a biography: genre consideration “rhetorical”
	Write it up	Act 3.p:106	Rewriting a story by putting sentences together	Organisation “rhetorical”
	Write it out	Act 1.p:109	Writing a biography using some strategies	Writing biography
		Act 2.p:110	Writing a letter of opinion following a model	Presenting opinions
		Act 10.p:114	Writing an autobiographical about childhood	Writing a biography
File five: Dreams, Dreams	Write it up	Act.p:121	Presenting one’s self on TV	Genre consideration “social

				context”
	Write it our	Act.p:125	Writing an e-mail to a friend to inform him about holiday plans .following a modal	Genre consideration
	Write it up	Act p:132	Writing an e-mail to suggest solutions	e-mail writing
	Write it out	Act 1.p:135	Matching headings to paragraphs	Organisation “rhetorical”
		Act 2p:135	Writing a letter seeking advice from the “agony aunt”	Genre consideration “rhetorical”
	Reading and Writing	Act 2.p:138	Writing a story chain	Organisation “rhetorical”.
File six: Fact and Fiction	Write it up	Act p:145	Writing about an unlucky day	Text type
	Write it out	Act .p:148	Writing a newspaper report about an accident	Genre consideration
	Research and	Act 3p:151	Writing an end	Extending facts

	Report		to a story paying attention to punctuation and capitalisation	and editing “cognitive and rhetorical”
	Write it up	Act p:155		Organisation and genre consideration
	Write it out	Act 1.p:158	Developing clues to set a scene for a fairy tale using simple past or past continuous.	Text types
		Act 2.p:158	Transforming a scenario to a narrative using simple past and past continuous and making complex sentences	Genre consideration and grammar practice

Appendix n 6.page

This correction sheet is proposed by GwinThomas.

1 -Format:

- poor handwriting.
- wrong side of the paper.
- title
- leave margins
- do not start sentence on a different line
- leave space between words
- do not divide word
- do not abbreviate

4-Nouns and Pronouns:

- Should be singular
- Should be plural
- Uncountable(no a,an or s)
- Possessive(s' or of+noun)

7- Prepositions(in ,on, at etc):

- Use a preposition here
- Use a different preposition
- No preposition here

9-Adjectives and adverbs:

- Use comparative form(er, more+...)
- Use superlative form(est, most+...)
- Use adj form
 - Use adv form

2-Punctuation:

- use punctuation
- use different punctuation
- do not use punctuation

3-Verbs:

- wrong tense
- wrong verb form
- wrong voice(passive/active)
- wrong or missing helping verb
- omit verb
- use a different verb

5-Spelling

6-Articles(a, an and the):

- use an article here
- Use a different article
- No article here

8-Coordinators(and,but, or):

- a coordinator is needed
- Omit coordinator

10-Sentences:

fragment (subject, verb or object missing)

- fused (make two sentences)
- begin a new sentence

- Incorrect word order

- Omit adj or adv

12-Vocabulary Corrections:

- Word missing
- Use a different word(s)
- Omit word
- Use a different form of the same word

13-Capitalization

14-Clauses:

- Subject missing
- Verb missing
- Omit relative pronoun(which, who,that)
- Relative pronoun needed • Incorrectly placed clause

11-Paragraphs(¶):

- Indent paragraph
- Missing topic sentence
- Begin new paragraph
- No new paragraph
- Transition needed
- No transition needed

Appendix n 7.page 94

Symbol	Type of Error
Cap	capitalization
P	punctuation
Sp	spelling
x	Omit this
^	Add a word
()	optional
¶	Paragraph
#	Number (singular or plural)
Sv	subject-verb agreement
Vt	verb tense
Vf	verb form (gerund, participle etc)
Wc	word choice
Wf	word form (noun, verb, adj ,etc)
Wo	word order
Frag	sentence fragment
Ro	run-on sentence
—	connect this
?	unclear

It is proposed by Wood, M.Nancy 1993, 38).

Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
Faculty of Letters and Humanities
Mouloud MAMMERI University of Tizi-Ouzou
Questionnaire prepared by DAOUD Kahina
Supervised by Pr Riche Bouteldja

Teachers' Questionnaire

This questionnaire is part of a Master's Degree project I am carrying out about the teaching of the writing skill in the Algerian Middle School .You are kindly requested to answer the following questions as honestly as possible by ticking off the appropriate answer (you can choose more than one) or by providing comments wherever necessary.

Thank you for your precious collaboration.

1-What would you say on the new reform of the Algerian Middle school?

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

2-Do you find the writing activities assigned in the four text books helpful in developing the pupils' writing skills and strategies?

A-Yes

B-No

3-How do you Use the Writing Activities Suggested in the Textbooks?

A- Use the writing activities as they are described in the textbook.

B- Adjust them.

C- Omit them completely.

4-In your opinion, what text types should be introduced to beginners?

A- Narrative

B-Descriptive

C-Expository

D- Argumentative

5-Do you teach the language skills (speaking, listening, reading and writing)?

A- Separately

B-Integratively

6-Do you provide model texts for students? If yes, for what purposes?

A-Yes

B-No

If yes, why?

.....

.....

.....

7-What steps if any do you consider necessary for the pupils to go through when writing a composition?

.....

.....

.....

.....

8-Do you ask your learners to write ?

A- Individually.

B- In pairs

C- Small groups

9-Do you encourage your students to exchange their writing with peers for correction?

A-Yes

B-No

10-Do you ask your students to rewrite their papers after giving feedback on them?

A- Yes

B- No

11- What must a good paragraph contain?

Rank from the most important to the least important.

A- Grammatically correct sentences

B- Content

C- Organisation

D- Others

.....

.....

.....

12- How do you usually correct your pupils' writings?

A- You use the correction symbols.

B- You correct every grammar mistake.

C- You give a mark.

D- Others.....

.....

13- Why is it important to teach writing?

.....

.....

.....

Résumé

Le présent travail vise à analyser l'habilité langagière de l'écriture comme est rapportée dans les programmes scolaires du cycle moyen et appliquée dans les manuels scolaires et dans la classe. Nous avons évalué les programmes, les manuels et les méthodes utilisées par les enseignants concernant l'écriture. A cet effet, on s'est basé sur la théorie du processus pour l'enseignement de l'écriture, l'évaluation des manuels scolaires, l'observation des enseignants au cours de leur enseignement en classe, et un questionnaire destiné à ces derniers. Cette étude vise à évaluer le plan d'instruction motivée par les résultats plutôt faibles que les élèves de la 4AM ont obtenus en 2007 et en 2008. Nous avons essayé de trouver les points forts et les faiblesses dans le plan d'enseignement lié à cette habilité langagière de l'écriture. Notre travail se divise en deux parties ; l'une théorique et l'autre pratique. Chacune contient trois chapitres. Dans la partie théorique, on s'est référé aux théories de l'enseignement de l'écriture qui favorisent de plus en plus le processus au produit. Dans la partie pratique, nous avons analysé, par ordre, les programmes, les manuels scolaires et la façon dont ils sont utilisés par les enseignants en classe. Nous sommes arrivés à la conclusion que ces derniers contiennent des points positifs, mais l'idée du processus n'est pas suffisamment reflétée. Les programmes et les manuels sont principalement basés sur des tâches (tasks) qui sont, en général pédagogiques ; la succession des habilités langagières est systématique et la priorité est attribuée aux habilités orales (l'écoute et le parler) sans prendre en considération les besoins des élèves en termes de l'examen final (Brevet). Le profil de l'enseignant n'est pas pris en compte car aucun programme de développement professionnel des enseignants n'est inclus dans les programmes ou dans les manuels.

ملخص

تهدف هذه الرسالة الى تحليل الخطة التعليمية لمهارة الكتابة على النحو المنصوص عليه في المنهج المدرسي للتعليم المتوسط و الكتب المدرسية و ممارسات الاساتذة في الاقسام و تحقيقا لهذه الغاية اعتمدنا نظرية علمية تعلم مهارات الكتابة و استراتيجياتها كما لجانا الى تقييم المناهج و الكتب المدرسية الاربعة و متابعة ممارسات الاساتذة و استخدمنا الاستبيان كوسيلة للحصول على اراء المعلمين حول الاصلاح التربوي عامة و الكتب المدرسية في طريق معالجتها للكتاب و الدافع من وراء هذا البحث هو النتائج الضعيفة التي تم الحصول عليها في شهادة التعليم المتوسط في اللغة الانجليزية عامي 2007-2008 كون مهارة الكتابة هي الوسيلة التي تظهر الكفاءات الحقيقية للتلاميذ في هذه الامتحانات و قد ادى بنا هذا الى محاولة افراز نقاط الضعف و القوة في الخطة التعليمية المتعلقة بهذه المهارة. هذه الرسالة تتكون من جزئين جزء نظري و اخر تطبيق و كل جزء ينقسم الى ثلاثة فصول في الجزء النظري قمنا بدراسة نظريات الكتابة التي انتقلت تدريجيا الى تدريس الكتابة كعملية و ليس كمنتوج اما في الجزء التطبيقي قمنا بتحليل هذه النظريات في المناهج و الكتب المدرسية و ممارسات المعلمين و في الاخير استنتجنا ان هذه المستويات تشمل سلبيات و ايجابيات و هذا راجع الى نقص الاولوية لتعليم تقنيات و استراتيجيات الكتابة و عدم توفر منهج لتنمية قدرات المعلمين.