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**Investigating Learners Writing Strategies : the case of Second-Year
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Dedications

To my dear parents who supported me all along my life.

To my sisters & brothers and their kids.

To my best friend, sister, binominal Liza

with whom I shared unforgettable moments.

Sadjia

To my beloved parents,

whose love, care, and support always strengthen my will.

To my sisters & brothers

To my best friend, sister, binominal Sadjia

with whom I shared unforgettable moments.

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List of Abbreviations

- **BMD:** Bachelor, Master, Doctorate
- **EFL:** English as a Foreign Language
- **ESL:** English as a Second Language
- **FL:** Foreign Language
- **MMUTO:** Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi-Ouzou
- **QCA:** Qualitative Content Analysis
- **SLA:** Second Language Acquisition
- **SPSS:** Statistical Package for Social Sciences
- **SRSD:** Self Regulated Strategy Development
- **%:** percentage

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Abstract

The present study is concerned with investigating the writing strategies of the second-year BMD students in the department of English at Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi-Ouzou. It aims at identifying the most frequent strategies used by students as well as the role of the teacher in enhancing students' writing to overcome their difficulties. This study is based mainly on the framework of Steve Graham and Dolores Perin (2007). The research tools that are used for collecting data are the questionnaire, the interview and the written productions of second-year students of the English department. For the analysis of data the mixed method research is used, the study combines the quantitative and the qualitative methods. It uses the statistical method to elicit statistical data, then, adopts Qualitative Content Analysis for the interpretation and explanation of the results. The gathered data are analyzed by using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The results obtained show that second-year students of the English department use most of the strategies provided by Steve Graham and Dolores Perin in their writing and to prepare their compositions. Moreover, they have also revealed that the teacher plays an important role in developing students' writing abilities.

General introduction

- **Statement of the problem**

Writing is commonly considered as the most important skill that EFL students need to develop, because learning to write has always been a means of practicing, sustaining and reinforcing other skills. It is a basic skill that needs to be mastered by all students. It plays a major role in expressing one's ideas, thoughts, opinions and attitudes. Through writing, people are able to share ideas, feelings, persuade and convince others. All in all, writing is seen as a process whereby writers discover and reformulate ideas as they attempt to create meaning.

All along our experience as FL students at Tizi-Ouzou University, we have noticed that the process of writing is not an easy matter than we thought. It presents a great challenge whether when writing in the foreign language or in the mother tongue. Despite their learning of English for many years, many students remain postulate in the English language, especially in writing. According to Nunan (1999) the most difficult task to do in language is to produce a coherent, fluent, extended piece of writing. However the latter requires a great amount of attention and consideration, since academic writing should apply many rules of vocabulary, lexis, grammar, organization, coherence and cohesion of the ideas. This is why writing skills is a complex process to acquire when learning a given language either second or foreign. Therefore, writing is a complex cognitive activity comprising a number of processes and strategies. The use of strategies in the writing process is crucial to successful writing. The key to producing good writing or essay relies on the types and number of strategies used and on the regulation of the strategies for generating ideas or for revising what has been written (Riduan and Lim, 2009).

A brief glance at the previous studies reveals that the issue of students' writing strategies has been the concern of many researchers from different perspectives around the world. In this respect, works conducted by Gebhardt and Rodrigues (1989), Harris and Graham (1996), Collins(1998), Graham, Karen and Harris (2005), Deborah Dean(2006), Jennifer serravallo (2017) consider writing strategies as an important factor that can affect second and foreign writing process.

For these reasons, in the context of EFL settings, we will attempt to investigate second-year students' writing strategies of the English department on the basis of the strategies provided by S. Graham and D. Perin in the book entitled *Writing Next: Effective Writing Strategies to Improve Writing of Adolescents in Middle and High Schools*. We try to focus our study on the way how to improve students' writing skills and this would be via following these strategies.

It is worth mentioning that in the Algerian context the study of students' writing strategies at the level of the university has received little attention. The significance of this investigation lies in the fact that it is the first exploratory research in UMMTO context that addresses the most frequent writing strategies that students use in their writing. The key findings may give students insight on the problems that they face in their writing. Thus, they can make changes and modifications to their writing quality.

- **Aims and significance of the study**

The present work is designed for the purpose of investigating students' writing strategies on the basis of the strategies provided by Steve Graham and Dolores Perin at Mouloud Mammeri university of Tizi-Ouzou. In order to explore such an issue, our study is conducted with second-year students at the department of English. Moreover, in this study we intend to reach three main objectives. The first one is to see whether second-year students face

difficulties in their writing or not. The second one is to know whether teachers play an important role in enhancing students' writing quality. The third one is to evaluate the effectiveness of second-year students' writing strategies. Thus, it is essential to show the importance of writing strategies for students to be effective writers. More importantly, the significance of this investigation lies in the fact that it is the first exploratory research at the level of the department of English MMUTO. It will help us to have a deeper understanding of the extent to which writing strategies are crucial in developing writing skills. Lastly, the key findings of this study will contribute to the existing research on this topic, providing students with effective insights on how to improve their writing abilities by using such strategies.

• **Research Questions and Hypotheses**

Considering students' writing strategies as an important factor that can affect foreign students in improving their writing quality, the present study is based on three research questions:

1. Do second- year students face difficulties in their writing?
2. Do teachers play an important role in enhancing students' writing abilities?
3. What are the most frequent writing strategies used by second-year students?

In an attempt to answer these research questions, we have set a number of hypotheses which are as follows:

1. Second-year students face difficulties in their writing.
2. Second-year students do not face difficulties in their writing.
3. Teachers play an important role in enhancing students' writing abilities.
4. Teachers do not play an important role in enhancing students' writing abilities.

5. The most frequent strategies that second-year students use in their writing are: writing strategies, summarization, collaborative writing, specific product goals, sentence combining, pre- writing, study of models.
6. Second-year students do not use such strategies in their writing.

- **Research Technique and Methodology:**

For the sake of investigating our research, we opt for a mixed-research method. The research combines qualitative and quantitative methods for data collection and data analysis. It intends to investigate students' writing strategies on the basis of the strategies provided by S. Graham and D. Perin as well as the role of the teacher in enhancing students to overcome their difficulties, the research data are collected by means of a questionnaire administered to eighty 80 students and an interview held with fifteen 15 of them in the English department at MMUTO we have also analyzed forty 40 essays written by the same participants. This will provide us with information to better apprehend the issue and to know which strategies are used by second-year students and to evaluate the effectiveness of these strategies in improving students' writing abilities. The data gathered from the questionnaire are analyzed and interpreted as follow: the Quantitative data are analyzed by using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences).While the qualitative data are interpreted by using QCA (Qualitative Content Analysis).

- **The structure of the dissertation:**

The structure of this dissertation follows the traditional complex model. It consists of a general introduction followed by four chapters and a general conclusion. Chapter one is named "Review of the Literature" reviews all the concepts that are related to our subject of investigation. Chapter two is entitled "Research Design and Methodology" presents the procedures used for data collection and data analysis. Chapter three is called "Presentation of

the Findings”. It deals with the results which are figured out using diagrams. As for the Forth Chapter, it is labeled “Discussion of the Findings” which endeavors to discuss the findings of the study as well as confirm or refute our hypotheses. Finally, the “General Conclusion”, it provides a summary of the general outcomes gained from the study.

Introduction

The present chapter deals with the review of the literature; it is a study that seeks to explore the effectiveness of EFL students’ writing strategies, more precisely in the English department at UMMTO .It comprises three sections. The first one starts with various definitions of writing from different perspectives. It is then an account for the basic rules of writing. We will try to present the importance of writing then, the major problems that learners face in their writing, and the causes of these problems. Lastly, we present the role of teachers in developing students’ writing skills. In the second section, we attempt to define strategy. After that, we move to define writing strategies to give the reader a clear idea about our field of study. Then we move to explain how writing strategies may benefit students’ writing proficiency. In the -last section, we clarify the theoretical framework upon which this work is based.

Section one

I-Writing

I.1. Defining writing

Different authors at different times have attempted to define the concept of writing. One of the definitions of writing is “*Writing is a flexible tool that can be used to meet a variety of goal*” (Diamonds, 1999; Graham, 2006B). That is, writing has not one specific

purpose, but it includes different goals to be transmitted to the reader, mainly to communicate ideas, to learn something new, etc.

Zamel (1983) describes writing as a process through which students can explore and discover their thoughts and ideas, constructing meaning and evaluating it. The same attention is paid first to content, meaning, and then the form.

Davidson (2007: 11) states that writing is a time when students produce their own texts which are established on their previously acquired knowledge and skills.

As for Conley (1995) he claims that writing makes our thoughts and experiences vivid, long lasting and helps us to learn different things in every subject area "*In many ways ,writing is the way we make sense of our world*". Interestingly, Dyson (1995) writing is not only an individual activity but a process which requires social interaction. Peters (1986:169) defines writing as a "*curiously solitary form of communication, addressed to an absent and often unknown reader*". It means that writing is a single process specific to the writer through which he or she is going to communicate an idea, a message to an unknown or an absent reader.

I.2. Basic rules of writing

Good and successful writing involves certain criteria such as: clarity, coherence, simplicity and brevity. These rules are central in any piece of writing to communicate and convey ideas in an appropriate way.

I.2.1. Clarity

Clarity is found to be a key element in any piece of writing; it is a useful tool that focuses on avoiding ambiguity of words and sentences. This means that students should avoid

long sentences that have several explanations. According to Starkey (2004: 12-19) learners should follow certain rules to achieve clarity.

1-To eliminate ambiguity writers should not use words or sentences that have different interpretation.

2- Use powerful specific adjectives and adverbs, is an effective method to achieve clarity.

3-Students should avoid needless words and phrases, but rather they should be brief in their explanation.

4-Word choice, according to Starkey (2004) and Kome (2000) Writers have to take into consideration two aspects while choosing words, denotation which is the first understanding of the word and connotation which is the hidden meaning of the word.

I.2.2. Coherence

According to Mury and Haghes (2008:45), a good writer is the one who is able to link ideas together, each link connecting the one previous with the one following because unclear structure can break down and blur the meaning.

I.2.3. Brevity and simplicity

Brevity and simplicity are two essential elements that writers should use to transmit ideas and information with few words. Brevity help the writer to communicate successfully because, using ambiguous words is unnecessary as the reader may encounter difficulties to grasp the meaning. Since every piece of writing objective is to transmit ideas and to convey meaning. That is to say, the written text has to be clear and not ambiguous.

In addition to these above mentioned criteria that, we find other convention of writing the writer has to be aware of, capitalization, punctuation and grammar. Starkey (2004).

I.3. Importance of Writing

Writing is one of the main language skills. It plays an important in expressing someone's thoughts, ideas, attitudes and opinions. People can share ideas and feelings and persuade and convince others through writing. They may write for personal purposes or for some other purposes. They may address one person or more, this person can be known or unknown .For example, taking notes for study purposes is writing for one's self. Letter to a friend is an example of known audience. For instance, blogging publicity which addresses to an unknown audience. Reimes (1993) states that writing is an aid for learners to learn, it helps them to adventure with language and to go further by what they have learned.

Barras (2005) says that, there are some reasons that make the ability of writing important.

I.3.1. Writing and Thinking

Writing could help learners to think. For example, when they are planning in the middle of writing a composition, they can make a note of useful thoughts as they come to mind, because thoughts could be any time.

I.3.2. Writing and Memory

Writing can help learners to remember or it is an aid for remembering. They can make information safe by taking notes. So they can have access to their information any time without being afraid of being lost (information).

I.3.3. Writing and Communication

In the past, people communicated through writing out of earshot. Now there are devices that make communication possible orally with people in distance, such as the telephone, the radio, the internet, etc yet the importance of writing is still there. Sometimes, it is impossible to use these devices, particularly when two people communicating are removed, not only by distance, but also by time. The importance of writing can also be seen from the point of view of the future of the students', in their world of work. They need job; they also have to keep their living in society. So, they need to be able to write an application letter.

I.4. Students' Writing Problems

Hedge (1988:5) argues that the writer should be careful of the organization, vocabulary and the way of applying grammatical devices, grammatical problems, and problems of diction, So that, to compensate the absence of the prosodic features. These are the major problems that prevent students' to be effective writers.

I.4.1. Grammatical Problems

The majority of students face many problems in their writing when writing in foreign language, for instance, the use of verbs (Tyner, 1987) states that verbs form problems for students in their writing, because verbs take different forms depending on the subject and the tense, closely to Kharma (1987) in Melese (2007:12) argue that connectors, references, pronoun, subject and verb agreements are the most frequent problems that students' face in their writing.

I.4.2. Problems of Sentence Structure

According to (West 1966, in Tsegaye 2006:16), incompetent students use fragmented and incorrect sentences. Similarly, Kharma (1986) claims that most of the students who are

not able to produce longer sentences including subordination and coordination are those who have problems of writing. The same view is shared by Zamel (1983:22) who states that cohesive devices are indispensable in any piece of writing because, they link sentences with each other.

I.4.3. Problem of Word Choice

According to Norish, (1983) and Almirew (2005), a varied range of vocabularies and varied range of sentences have an essential role in forming good writing. For instance, White (1980) remarks that students use different techniques, big words in their writing to persuade the reader or their teachers and this leads to a problem of diction.

I.4.4. Punctuation Problems

According to Carol and Wilson (1995:191), students have problems in punctuation when they write because there are no universal fixed rules of punctuation; As a result, it is a problematic issue. Sharing the same view, Byrne (1988:16) believes that punctuation has never been standard; therefore, it is a problematic issue for the majority of students.

I.4.5. Capitalization Problems

According to (Kroll, 1991) capital letters are indispensable mainly in the beginning of important words, topics, etc. Yet, there are reasons behind students' failure in using appropriate capitalization in their writing. Sharing the same views, Gowere (1995) argues that "*the rules of capitalization are not universal and classifying nouns as proper and common nouns is difficult for students*". This means that as it has been

highlighted before; students face this kind of problems because there are no universal fixed rules for capitalization.

I.4.6. Spelling Problems

According to Gower, (1995) there are many reasons behind the complexity of English spelling system for students', which are variant pronunciation, the influence of other languages and many other historical reasons.

I.4.7. Content Problems

Clifford (1987) thinks that Students of English either as a second or as a foreign language have various problems in their writing related to thought and the way of exploring ideas in order to interact with others. Leki (1991) regards that these problems are the result of the traditional methods used by teachers to teach writing. They focus on punctuation, spelling and mastering grammar. This is why Clifford (1987) suggests that teachers should use other new methods where they ask students to focus more on the message, and ideas in order to transmit the message or the idea clearly, instead of grammar, spelling and punctuation.

I.4.8. Problem of Organization

Raimes (1983) states that, among the frequent problems that students face in their writing, is the difficulty in supporting ideas generalization and differentiating a topic. In addition, Pincas (1982) argues that the reason for learner's failure to write a cohesive paragraph is the failure to use cohesive devices properly.

I.5. Causes of Learners' Writing Difficulties

I.5.1. Lack of Motivation

According to Davies (1988:25), learners will be interested to write if the writing activities are interesting. These activities motivate them and keep them active and interested. The same view Leki (1991:9) who states that student writing should carry something to communicate, because writing something without a purpose or without interest make the writing task more difficult for them. Similarly, Byrne (1988:2) believes that if learners are forced about a topic that they don't want to write about, as a result their writing is less successful. Thomson (2003) argues that it is very important to ask students to choose their topic freely and to make decisions about their topics. As a result, their writing will be better and more successful.

I.5.2. Inadequate time

According to Hedge (1988:11), writing is the activity which needs time, because of the writing activities that have different stages in which learners need time, such as gathering data, organizing their ideas, drafting, proof reading, and re-writing similarly to White and Arndt (1991) in Italo (1999:47) who believes that *"time is needed to incubate, sift, and shape ideas of all the skills, writing is one which most benefits from time"* that is to say, the quality of students' writing can be successful if the time devoted is sufficient. In addition, Kroll (1990:140) states that the majority of students and teachers say that writing is a complex activity that cannot be done without enough time, because this leads learners to produce pieces of writing which do not represent their capacities.

I.5.3. Lack of Practice

According to Grabe and Kaplan (1996:6), writing is gained through many efforts and practice. He adds that practice is the basic element to learn any language skill, mainly writing. Besides, Hedge (1988:11) claims that *"my own experience tells me that in order to become a good writer; a student needs to write a lot"*. This means that students need to write a lot and

get more practice to be successful in writing. In addition, Kaplan (1996:6) argues that writing does not come naturally, but it is achieved through a large amount of practice and effort.

I.5.4. Teachers' Feedback

Teachers can help their students to become good writers. If they look at what students have succeed in doing rather than at what they have failed to attain in their writing. Byrne (1988:29). In the same ground Zamel (1985:79) believes that teachers feedback plays a significant role if they respond to their learners writing as readers rather than evaluators and judges. Additionally Ferris (1995:49) argues that teachers should not abandon criticism, but they should replace it by comments of praise and encouragement to their students when they write. The idea is that, the teachers' feedback should be used in the right way to affect on the students' writing and to encourage them to become proficient and successful writers.

I.6. The role of the teachers in the process of writing

Harmer gives five roles of the teacher before and during and after writing (Harmer.2004:41).

I.6.1.Demonstrating

The teacher should be aware about conventions like punctuation, spelling, capitalization, dictating, grammar, correct broken sentences and usage, these help students learning how to write better, and help them to know about the language rules to be good writers.

I.6.2. Motivating and Provoking

The role of the teacher is to guide and help students through giving them guidelines how to start writing and how to relate their ideas to every targeted topic. Teacher's role is to end the student's anxieties and fears, this will make them motivated and to convince them that they are able to be good writers.

I.6.3. Supporting

The role of the teacher is to support students. He/ she should help them when they are doing their tasks by suggesting ideas and ways of analyzing their own thinking. This encourages and helps them to be better writers.

I.6.4. Responding

It is the reaction of the teacher to students' piece of writing. Teachers give suggestions and comments about content and form; they give comments on the errors that are made by students.

I.6.5. Evaluating

One of the most important tool used by the teacher to know whether students benefit from the teaching practices is by evaluation of students. He/she evaluates students in tests by focusing on their writing mistakes and gives them marks to improve their writing skill. He will consider himself as a reader not as a grader.

SECTION TWO: Writing strategies

II.1. Definition of strategies

According to Brown (2007 :119) strategies as the *“specific methods of approaching a problem or task, modes of operation for achieving a particular end, planned designs for controlling and manipulating certain information”*. In other words strategies are the methods used by writers to solve some problems, to reach a particular end, and to manipulate certain information.

II.2. Definition of writing strategies

Writing can be difficult and time consuming for students, but it can be easier if they have the right tools. One of these tools is combined in a set of writing strategies.

Writing strategy is defined by Torrance as the sequence in which the writer engages in planning, composing, revising and other related activities (Torrance et al. 2000 :182).

Dean says that strategies all serve to solve problems in writing, these problems mean the questions or challenges that can occur during the writing process (Dean 2010).

Researchers categorize three kinds of strategies: Cognitive learning strategies, writing strategies, self-regulatory strategies.

-1- Cognitive learning strategies, encourage learning in general, but also aid learning.

-2-Writing strategies, connect specifically to writing skills.

-3-Self-regulatory strategies, help learners stay with a task and find ways to be successful with it.

II.3. The Role of Writing Strategies in Improving Students' Writing Skills

There are many factors that can affect second and foreign writing process. Writing strategies is one of these factors, it seem to be the most important factor because if language teaching based on what learners do while learning a language, it would be effective and if less successful learners are helped by their teachers to acquire the strategy employed by their successful peers. To be a successful learner this needs the use of a number of strategies and use them in combination with other strategies. If writers have a variety of writing strategies and skills, this can help them to complete their writing task successfully (Gebhardt and Rodrigues 1989).

Deborah Dean (2010) asserts that many benefits result from teaching students to use strategies in writing. First, when we contribute in any purposeful and goal-directed activity, mainly writing, the employment of strategies can help us achieving our objectives more efficiently.

Strategy instruction can also *“increase knowledge about the characteristics of good writing and form positive attitudes about writing and students’ writing capabilities”* (Graham, Harris, and Trio 1998).

According to Dean (2010) students need more, they need strategies and instruction in strategies offers the necessary extra element for developing writers by moving them beyond putting words on paper to considering the cognitive processes involved and tools that will support them address those processes. Strategies help students acquire several methods for resolving a variety of problems they may face in all kind of writing situations, not just the kind of writing they do for school. Helping students learn and practice strategies, as well as the regulatory practices that will help them apply those strategies effectively in a variety of future situations, is the heart of strategy instruction.

Writing strategies facilitate the process of writing, prewriting is one of the writing strategies, and it allows the writer to think more concretely about his/her topic. It increases efficiency by helping the writer map, plan, or brainstorm about their writing before beginning a first draft. Prewriting strategies helps the writer process the order of those thoughts so they can organize them effectively.

Other studies indicate that SRSD approach can be used with students with learning disabilities to improve students’ attitudes toward writing. It has also been shown to increase the quality of written productions, the knowledge about writing, the time taken to plan a

composition and the length of compositions (Graham and Harris, 1989; Harris, Graham, and Mason, 2006; Reid and Lienemann, 2006; as cited in Sndmel et al., 2009).

Section Three: Theoretical framework

Most of our analytic categories are borrowed from the theory suggested by Steve Graham and Dolores Perin *Writing Next Effective writing strategies to improve writing of adolescent in middle and high schools*. In their book they suggest eleven strategies to be used by teachers to help students improve their writing skill. These strategies are suggested by the authors to solve learners' writing problems. Though these eleven elements in their origins are labeled as elements, in our context we intend to use them as strategies. The authors identify eleven elements of current writing instruction found to be effective for helping adolescent students to use writing as a tool for learning and to be successful writers. We apply them for university students since they are EFL learner's precisely second- year students in the English department at MMUTO. These strategies are applicable to both teachers and students.

In our research we have selected only eight of them because the three ones are specific to teachers. *Writing Next* provides the first large-scale review of writing instruction since Hillock's report in 1986 and a lot about writing and writing instruction has changed in those twenty-plus years. Graham and Perin use meta-analysis, "*a large-scale statistical review of research*", to determine what teachers can depend on as research proven elements of effective instruction. Through their analysis, the authors found eleven such elements (Deborah Dean 2010). Writing strategies, summarization, collaborative writing, specific product goals, word processors, sentences combining, prewriting, inquiry activities, and process writing approach, study of models and writing for content learning.

1- Strategy Instruction:

It is an approach to teaching that has an effect on the quality of students writing. It involves explicitly and systematically steps for planning, revising and/or editing a text. Writing strategy instruction has been found especially effective for adolescents who have difficulty writing, but it is also a powerful technique for adolescents in general. Planning and revising become more sophisticated with age and schooling. More skilled writers use more sophisticated planning and revising strategies than less skilled ones. How much planning and the type of revising students engage in is related to writing performance, and teaching planning and revising improves how well students' write.(Graham,2007: 15).

2- Summarization

It is a strategy that has a strong positive effect on students' ability to write good summaries, using summarization strategy enhances students writing quality by progressively fading models of good summary. Summarization is useful in many types of writing and at different points in the writing process. Besides, the benefit of summarizing lies in showing "the big picture" which allows the reader to contextualize what students are saying. In addition to the advantages of summarizing for the reader, as a writer we can gain better sense of where students are going with their writing. (Graham: 16)

3- Collaborative Writing:

Collaborative writing involves developing instructional arrangements whereby adolescents work together to plan, draft, revise, and edit their compositions. It shows a strong impact on improving the quality of students' writing.(ibid:16) students work as partners on a writing task they help each other with meaning, organization, spelling, punctuation, generating ideas, creating a draft, rereading essays, editing essays, choosing the best copy, and evaluating the final product. Throughout the intervention, the teacher's role is to monitor, prompt, praise the students, and address their concerns. (Yarrow and Topping, 2001).

4- Specific Product Goals

Setting product goal involves assigning students specific, reachable goals for the writing they are to complete. It includes identifying the purpose of the assignment (e.g., to persuade) as well as characteristic of the final product for example, students may be instructed to take a position and write a persuasive letter design to lead an audience to agree with them. Provide students with objectives to focus on particular aspects had a strong impact on writing quality. (ibid: 17).

5-Word Processing

The use of word-processing can be particularly helpful for low-achieving writers, in this type of instruction, students might work collaboratively on writing assignments using personal laptop computers, or they might learn to word-process a composition under teacher guidance. Typing text on the computer with word-processing software produces a neat and legible script. It allows the writer to add, delete, and move text easily. Compared with composing by hand, the effect of word-processing instruction has consistently positive impact on writing quality. (ibid: 16).

6- Sentence Combining

It is better for students to use more complex and sophisticated sentences through exercises in which two or more basic sentences are combined into a single sentence. Students' use of complex sentences in this way enhances the quality of their writing (Graham, 2007:16). According to (Graham and Perin 2005) the analysis of sentence combining indicates this focus of instruction has moderate impact on improving the quality of the writing of adolescents in general.

7- Pre-Writing

Prewriting it is a strategy that can be used by both teachers and students, it is to engage students activities that help them generate or organize ideas for their composition.

Engaging students in such activities before they write a first draft improves the quality of their writing. Prewriting activities includes gathering possible information for a paper through reading or developing a visual representation of their ideas before setting down to write. This means that if students use such activities this will help or encourage them to improve their writing quality. (Graham 2007: 18).

8- Study of Models/ Writing by Imitation:

Models of good writing essays, it is a strategy that can be used by both teachers and students; it has positive effects on students writing quality. Teachers can provide their students with good models for each type of writing; they are encouraged to analyze these examples and to emulate the critical elements, patterns and forms embodied in the models in their own writing. This strategy is beneficial for students to write good essays. (Graham: 20).

Conclusion:

Writing strategies are an essential constituent in language teaching and learning, as it is demonstrated in this review of literature. This chapter shows the main difficulties that students face in their writing. As it highlights the major roles that teachers play to develop students' writing abilities, as well as to overcome their difficulties. In addition, we attempt to emphasize the importance of writing strategies in enhancing students writing quality. Last, this chapter reviews the framework provided by Graham and perin (2007) writing strategies that are at the disposition of any language learner. In the center of all these points in this review, we try to investigate second-year students' writing strategies.

Introduction

The present chapter is devoted to methodology. It describes the techniques used to answer the research questions asked in the General Introduction. It is divided into two sections. The first one deals with procedures of data collection which consists of a questionnaire designed to second- year students of English department at Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi-Ouzou (MMUTO). In addition, to an interview conducted with the same participants. The second section is named procedures of data analysis a qualitative content is used in order to analyze the open-ended questions and a computer program called Social Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to analyze the closed-ended questions.

I.1.Procedures of Data collection

I.1.1.Context of Investigation and Sample Population

The present research took place in the department of English at MMUTO, and the participants under investigation are BMD second- year students. In fact, it was difficult to deal with all the second- year students and we dealt only 80 students. However; we collected only 60 questionnaires and this was between 19th and 29th of June 2017. Then, in order to gather more useful data concerning the analysis of students writing strategies we conducted a structured interview between 17th and 21st September of the same year with 15 second-year students, in addition to 40 samples for the same participants to their writing exam to check whether students use complex sentences in their essays or not . The participants involved in the research are chosen in a random way and the results of the study therefore are generalized to represent the whole second year students of MMUTO.

I.1.2. Description of the Students' Questionnaire

A questionnaire as one of the most useful data collection tools since it is easy, fast and less time consuming. Brown (2006:6) defines questionnaire as: *“Any Written instruments that present respondents with series of questions or statements to which they are to react either by writing out their answers or selecting from among existing answers”*. The questionnaire is designed as a tool in our study to the target participants who are second year students in the English department at MMUTO. The participants are insured that their answers will be anonymous to get effective data. The students' questionnaire includes fifteen items both open-ended and close-ended. Besides, the questionnaire is divided into three sections. The first one is concerned with student's attitudes towards writing. The second one deals with students and writing. The last one is about students and writing strategies.

I.1.3. Description of Students' Interview

In addition to the questionnaire, an interview is conducted in order to complete the results gathered through first data collection tools. According to Kvale (2006:484) an interview is: *“an instruments for providing the interviewer with descriptions, narratives, and texts which the researcher then interprets and reports according to his or her research interests”*. The interview as research tool which aims at gathering in depths answers for this reason an interview is undertaken in this study. The interview conducted in this research contains nine items, done with 15 students by using record for their answers each interview take between 15 to 25 minutes depending on the students interviewed.

I.1.4. Piloting of the Questionnaire and the Interview Addressed to Students

At the beginning of our data collection phase, we have designed and piloted the questionnaire and the interview addressed to the students, this stage took place in juin14th2017 for the

questionnaire, as for the interview in September 12th 2017. We have distributed seven (07) questionnaires and five (05) interviews for second- year students in the aim of checking the clarity and the understanding of the different question items. This piloting allowed us to modify and clarify some questions and items in the questionnaire and the interview so as to make it more comprehensible and easy to answer by the students.

II. Sample of the Study

In this study, we have selected a representative sample of the population under study. These samples are chosen randomly, the size of the sample is 40 papers of second year students of the English department in Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi-Ouzou in the academic year 2016/ 2017 to see whether second year students use complex sentences in their writing exams.

II.1.Procedures of data analysis

II.1.1.The Theoretical Framework of Students' Writing Strategies

As far as the data analysis is concerned, we have relied on Steve Graham and Dolores Perin theoretical framework (2006). It summarized some strategies to improve students' writing skills in the book entitled *Writing Next (Effective Writing Strategies to Improve Writing of Adolescent in Middle and high Schools)*.

II.1.2. Qualitative Content Analysis

Qualitative content analysis (QCA) is a method adopted to analyze both the open ended questions and the interview of this research. Among the different authors who are interested with QCA, Philip Mayring who define it as:“ *a mixed method approach assignment of categories to text as quantitative step, working through many text passages and analysis of frequencies of categories as a quantitative step*”.(2014:10). QCA is viewed by Hsieh and

Shannan (2005:2) as “a research method for subjective interpretation of the content of the text data through systematic process of coding and identifying themes or patterns”. In this study the analysis of the open ended questions of the questionnaire and interview is by using qualitative content analysis since it is the appropriate tool to interpret the results gathered.

II.1.3. Descriptive Statistical Method

As it has already stated, that both qualitative and quantitative methods are used in this study. The findings of the close ended which will generate numerical data concerning the writing strategies used by second year students at the department of English. These gathered data are calculated with the use of computer program called the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS). In this work the analysis of the closed ended questions of the students' questionnaires will be based on (SPSS) since it is the relevant tool to make the data gathered visible in form of diagrams.

Conclusion

The present chapter has laid out the research design used in this investigation. It introduces the procedures of data collection and data analysis. Then, it describes the different research tools used in this study: a questionnaire and an interview submitted to second-year students and some essays written by the same participants. Additionally, it presents the framework that we have adopted for the interpretation of the data. It clarifies the different writing strategies that students should follow to develop their writing quality. Finally, the research design is selected for the explanation of the methods of data collection and data analysis.

Chapter three: Presentation of the Findings

Introduction

The present chapter is experiential. It deals with the presentation of the findings reached from the questionnaire administered to second-year students at the English department of MMUTO, the findings of the students' interview as well as the writing samples. First, the research uses the statistical analysis of the closed ended questions. Then, it accounts for the qualitative content analysis for the interpretation of the open-ended questions in both questionnaire and the interview. The outcomes are represented in percentages and displayed in diagrams. This chapter is divided into three sections. The first one consists of the presentation of the results of the questionnaire, the second one covers the results gained from the interview and the third one consists of some sample essays of second-year students. It aims at evaluating students' writing strategies.

3.1. Presentation of the Questionnaire' Results

The results of the questionnaire are presented in percentages, showed in diagrams for the sake of visibility and readability.

3.1.1. Results of the Students' Questionnaire

This section presents the results obtained from the questionnaires addressed to students.

Section One: Students' Attitudes towards writing

Question one: Order the following skills according to their importance to you?

Reading Writing Listening Speaking

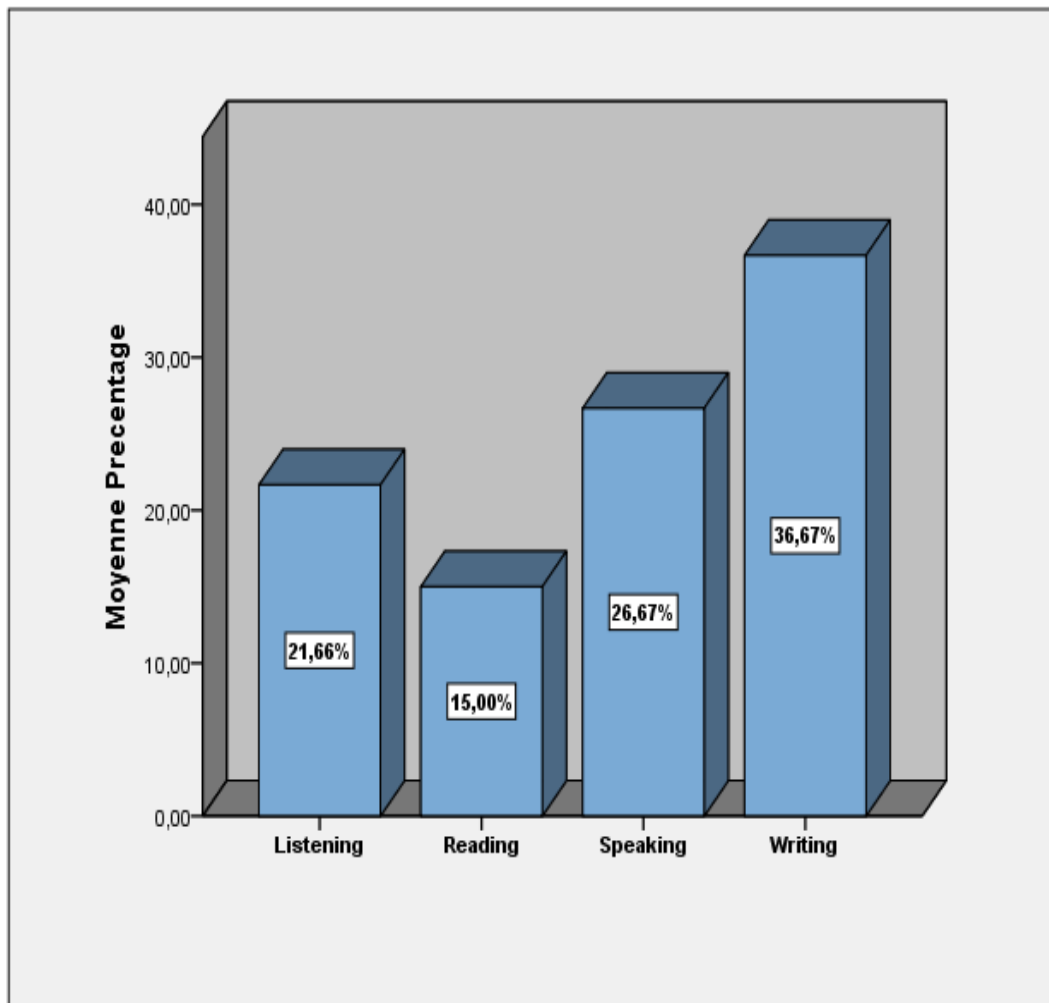


Diagram 01: The importance of writing to students

The results show that twenty two students choose Writing as their favorite skill with the percentage of (36.67%). Sixteen students (26.67%) put the Speaking skill as their first choice. Thirteen students (21.66%) put Listening as their first choice and nine students (15%) selected the Reading skill.

Question two: Do you find the writing subject interesting?

A. Yes

B. No

Justify?

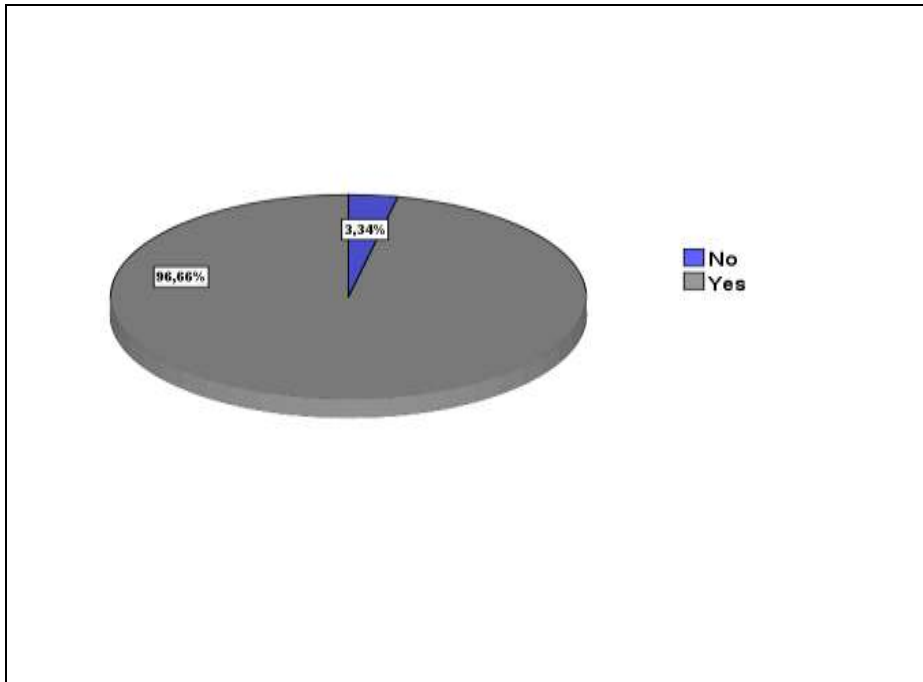


Diagram 02: The importance of writing module to second-year students.

The results indicate that almost the totality of students (96.66%) have a positive view towards the writing subject; they justify their answer by saying that it is an opportunity to improve their writing. Only two students 3.34% show a lack of interest towards writing because it does not fit their needs.

Question three: Do you think that the number of sessions per week devoted to writing are sufficient?

A. Yes

B. No

Justify?

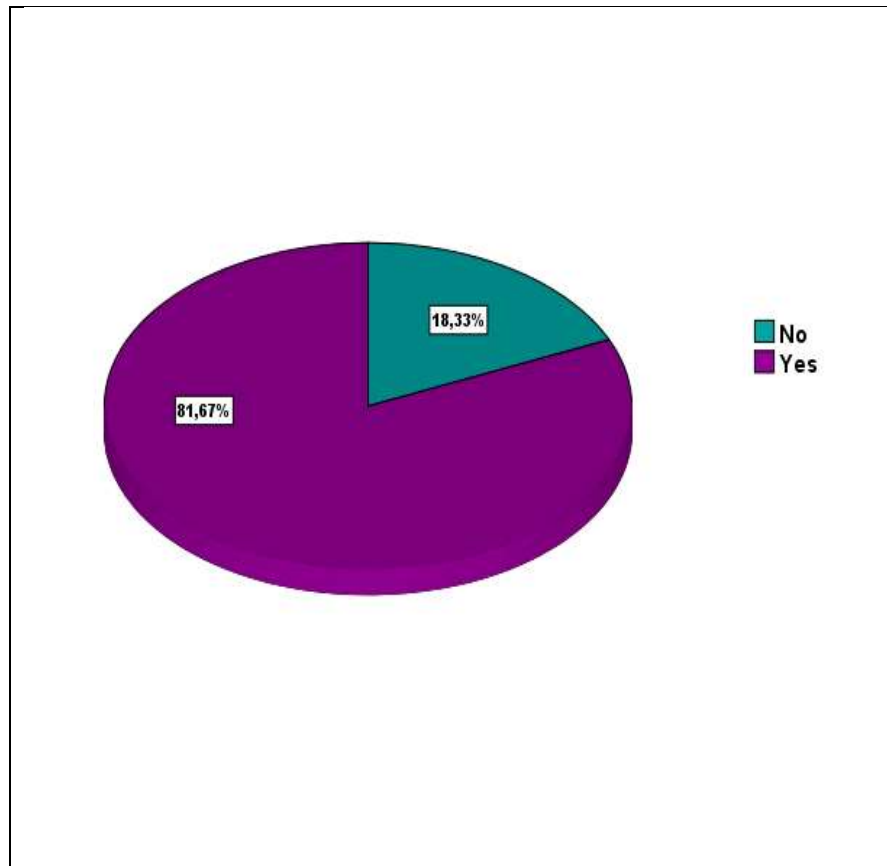


Diagram 3: Students attitudes towards the number of writing sessions.

The results indicate that forty nine students (81.67%) consider that the number of writing sessions per a week is not sufficient; they need more sessions because the writing module is very important; they said that if they do not master this module well they cannot master the other ones. Since in each module they should write dissertations. Twelve of students (18.33%) said that they are sufficient because all modules should have equal importance.

Question four: Writing is a/an.....skill of language learning.

- A. Very easy B. Easy C. Very difficult D. Difficult
- E. Extremely difficult

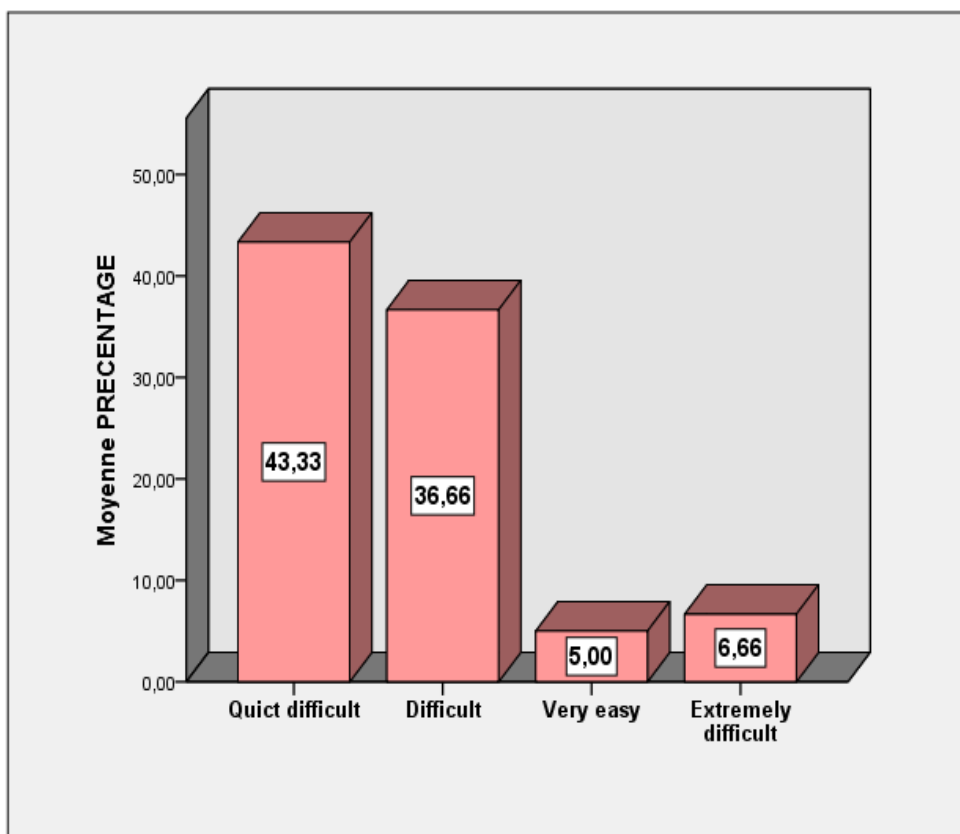


Diagram 04: Degree of Difficulty in the Writing Skill.

The results indicate that twenty six of students (44.82%) said that writing skills is very difficult. Twenty two of students (34.82%) choose the answer D that writing skills is difficult. However small proportions selected the answers A B E with percentage of 3(%5.17), 5(8.62), and 4(6.90) respectively.

Question five: How satisfied are you with your level in writing module?

- A. Very satisfied B. Satisfied C. Unsatisfied

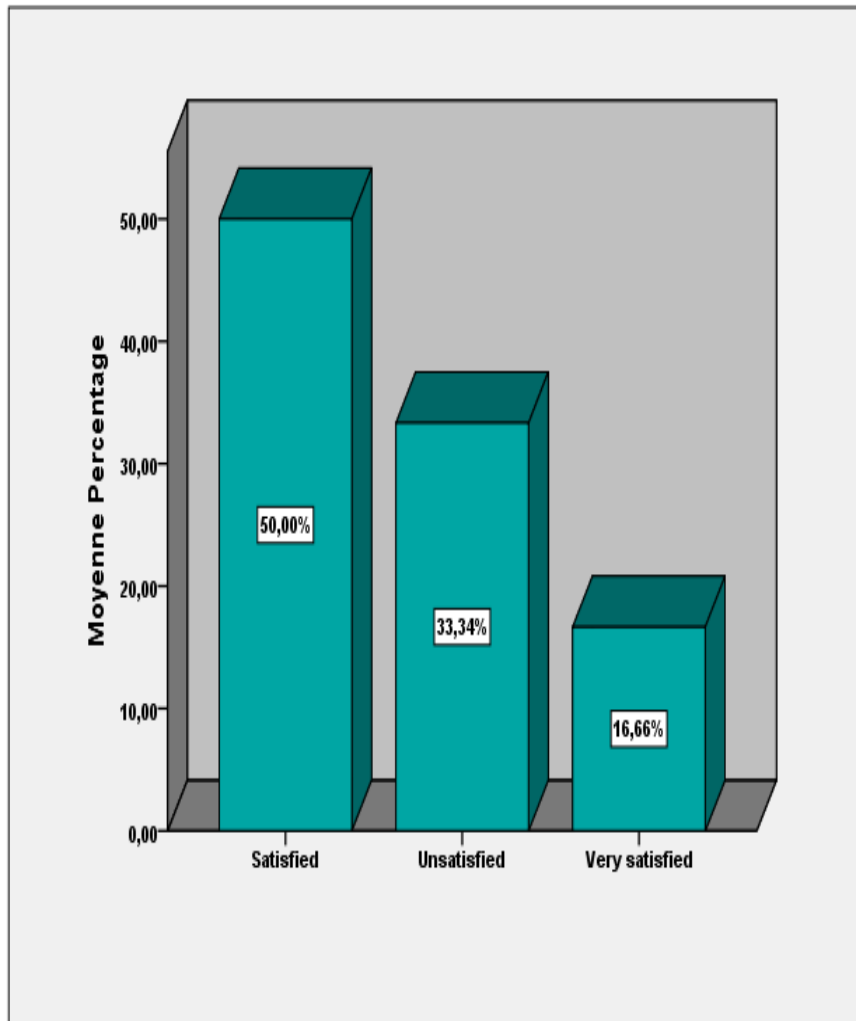


Diagram 05: Level of satisfaction with the writing subject

Half of respondents 50% answered that they are satisfied with their writing whereas twenty (33.34%) are unsatisfied. Comparatively, ten of informants (16.66%) declared that they are very satisfied with their level.

Section Two: Students' difficulties in writing

Question six: What are the main difficulties that you face in your writings?

- a. Vocabulary
- b. Grammar
- c. Word choice
- d. Coherence and cohesion

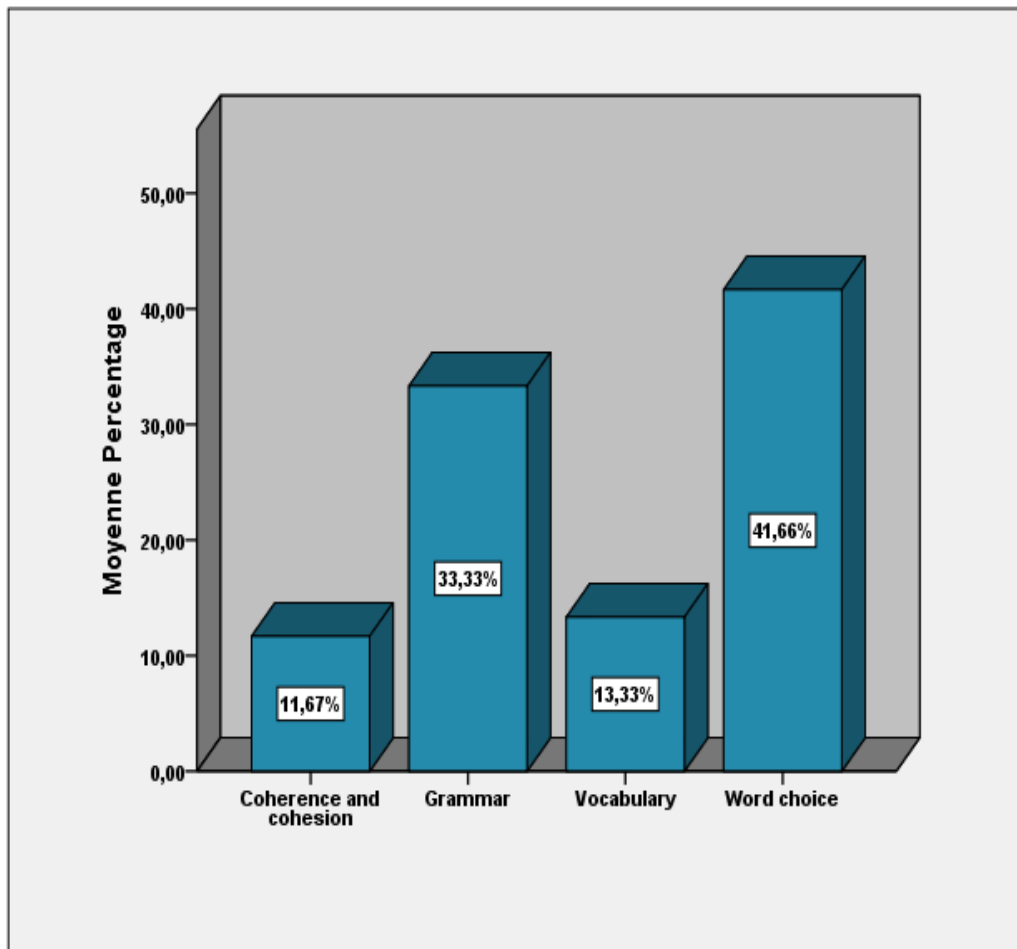


Diagram 06: Students' difficulties in writing

A higher frequency of students (41.66%) chooses answer(c) that they find difficulties in word choice. Twenty of students (33.33) selected the answer (B) that they find difficulties in grammar. Eight students (13.33) affirmed that they find difficulties in vocabulary and only seven of them (11.67%) opted for the answer (d) that they find difficulties in coherence and cohesion.

Question Seven: What are the factors that prevent you from participating during your writing lessons?

- a. Teaching method
- b. Shyness
- c. Fear of making mistakes
- d. Anxiety
- e. Others

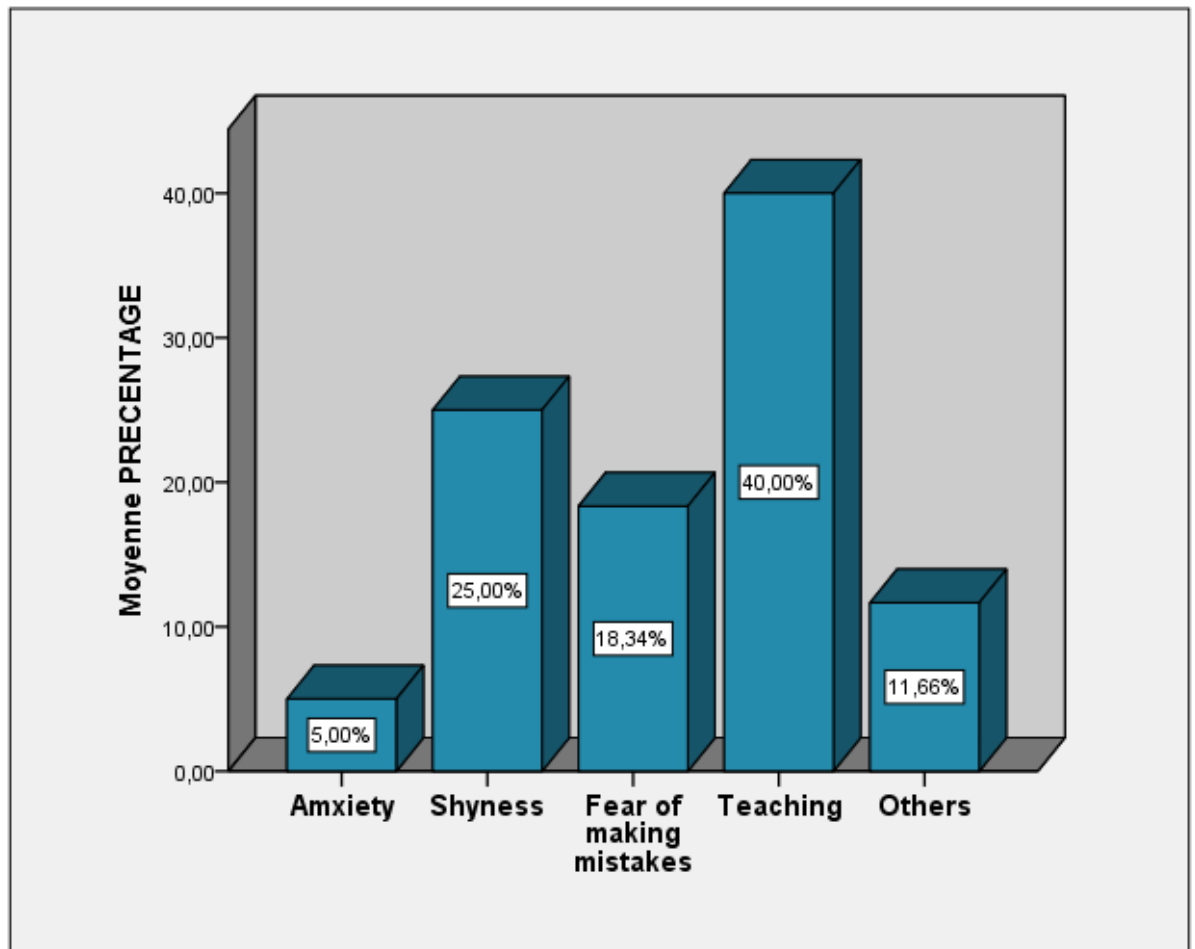


Diagram 07: Factors that prevent students from participating

The results indicate that a high frequency of students (40%) opted for the answer (a) that they are unable to participate because of the teaching method. Fifteen students (25%) claimed that shyness is the reason that prevents them from participating. Eleven of the students (18.34%) answered with(c) that they are unable to participate because of their fear of making mistakes. 5% of the students assert that anxiety prevents them from participating. Seven students (11.66%) claim that there are other reasons that make students unable to participate. For example, one student claim that it is because some teachers give them marks according to their answers and this provokes.

Question Eight: How often your teachers motivate you?

- A. Always B. Often C. Sometimes D. Rarely E. Never

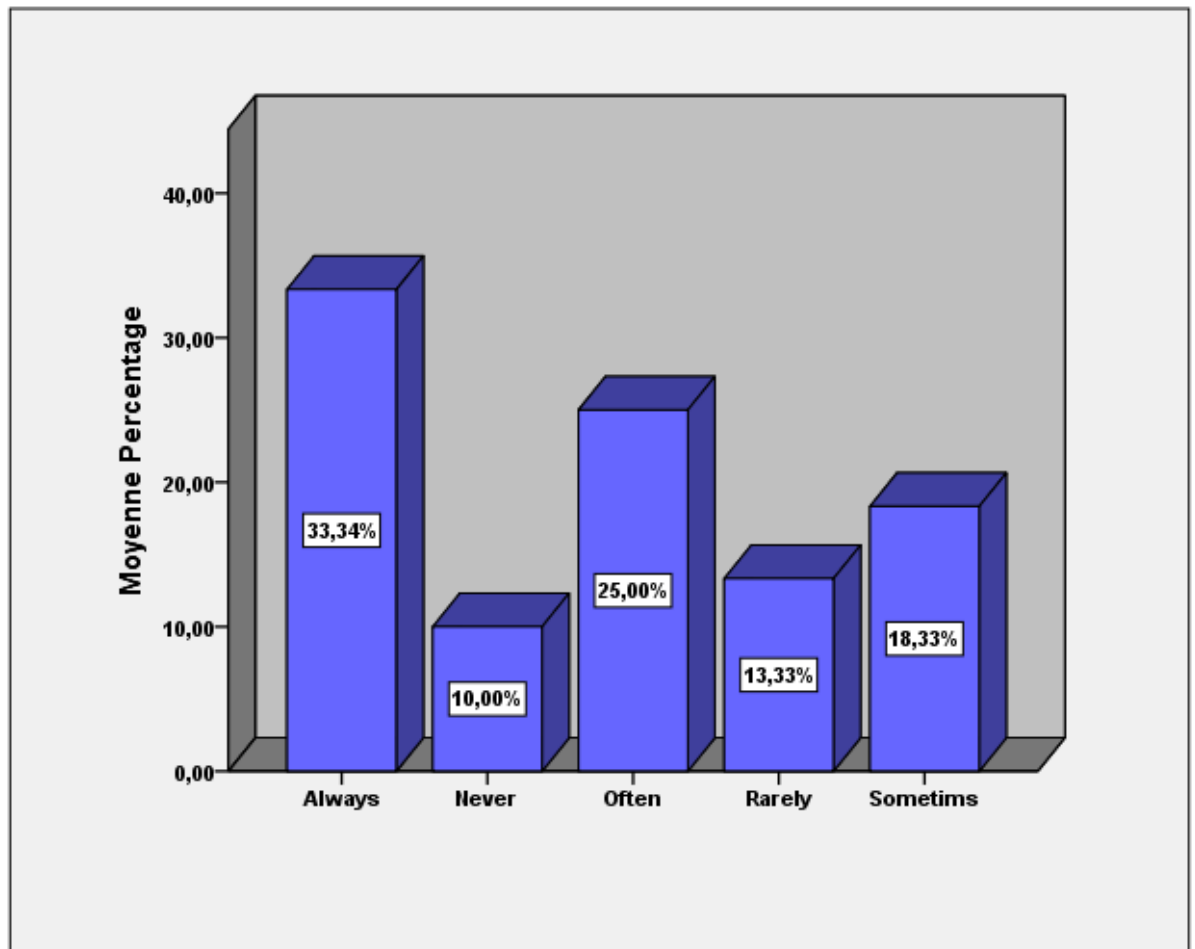


Diagram 08: Frequency of Teachers' motivation of students

The majority of students (33.34%) choose the answer (a) which is students are “always” motivated by their teachers. Fifteen students (25%) opted for the answer (b) that they are “Often” motivated by their teachers. Eleven students (18.33%) affirmed that they are “Sometimes” motivated by their teachers. Eight students (13.33) selected the answer (d) that they are “rarely” motivated by their teachers. Six students (10%) answer that they are “Never” motivated by their teachers.

Question Nine: In which way do your teachers motivate you in writing?

Students give different answers to this question. Some of them say that their teachers give them activities to do at home like dissertations to improve their writing and some of them claim that their teachers give them advices and tell them about the importance of writing.

Section three: Students' Writing Strategies

Question Ten: Do you use different writing strategies such as revising, planning and editing to prepare your compositions?

A. Yes

B. No

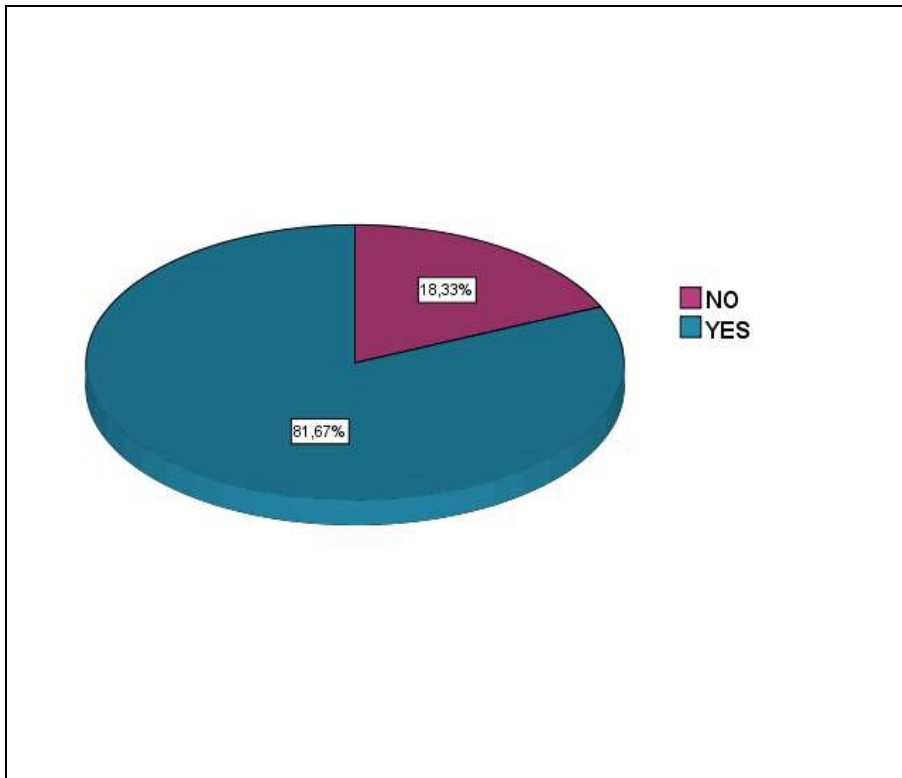


Diagram 09: Students' writing strategies

The majority of students (81.67%) answer “Yes” that they use writing strategies when they prepare their compositions. Only (11) students (18.33) choose the answer “No” that they do not use writing strategies when they prepare their composition.

Question Eleven: Do you use different techniques to summarize your texts?

Yes

No

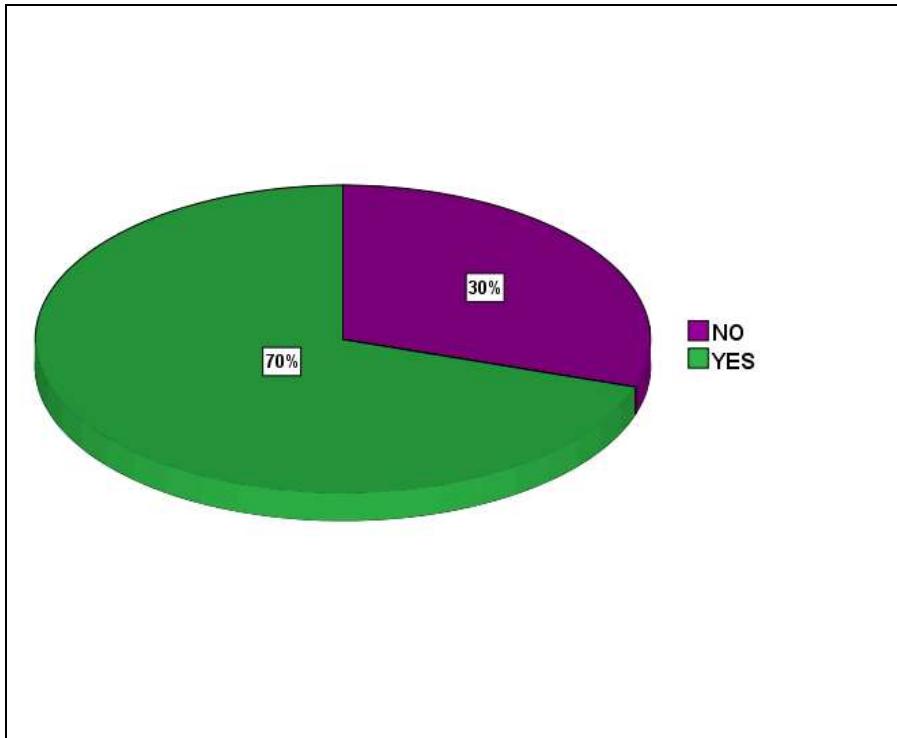


Diagram 10: Different techniques of summarization

Forty two of students (70%) opted for the answer “Yes” that they use different techniques to summarize their texts and eighteen students (30%) choose the answer “No” that they don’t use different techniques to summarize their texts.

Question Twelve: Do you prefer to work in pairs groups to plan, draft, revise and edit for your compositions?

- a. Always
- b. Often
- c. Sometimes
- d. Rarely
- d. Never

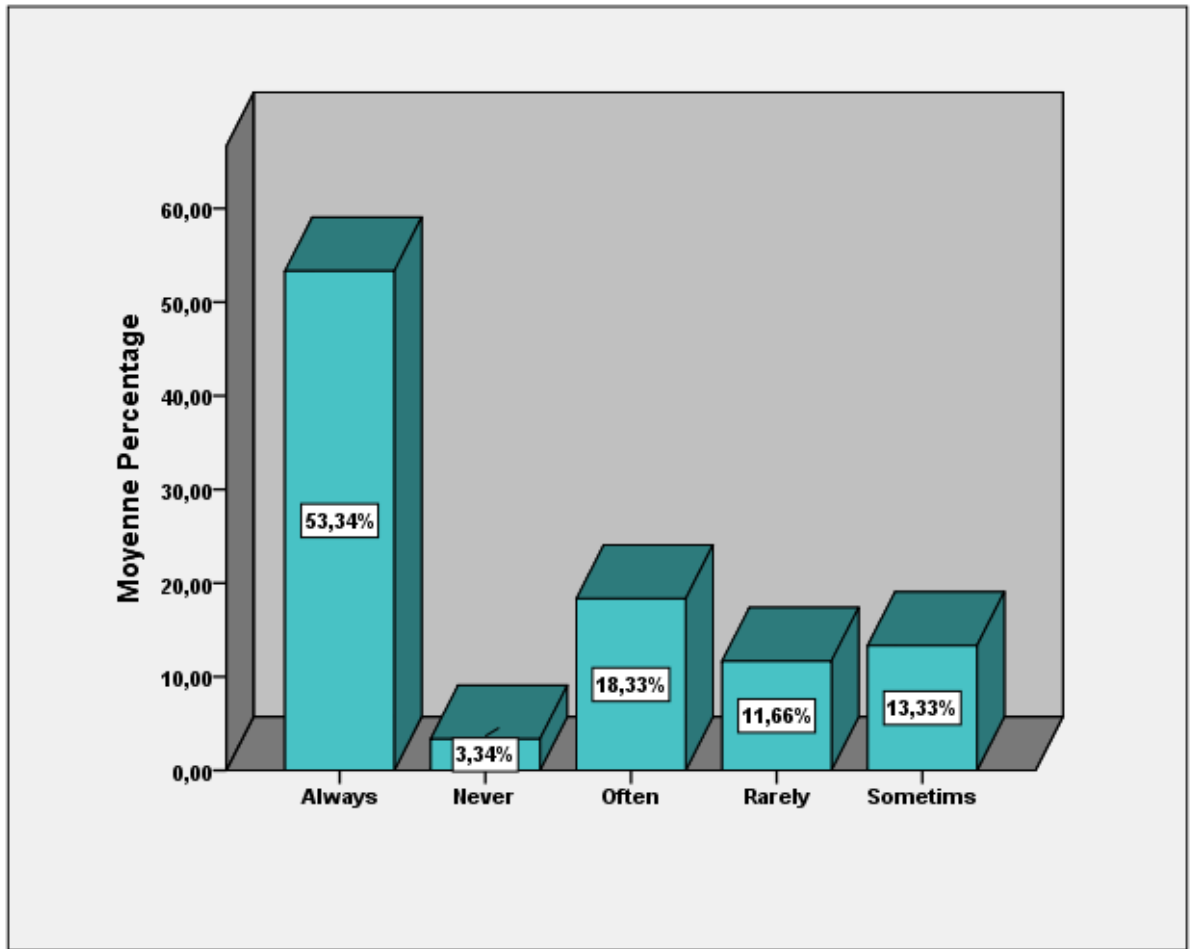


Diagram 11: Students’ favorite work

The majority of students (53.34%) choose the answer “Always” that they always work in pairs. Eleven students (18.33%) choose the answer “Often” that they often work in pairs or groups. Eight students (13.33%) choose the answer “Sometimes”. Seven students (11.66%) Opted for answer “Rarely”, and only two students (3.34%) asserted that they “Never” work in groups.

Question Thirteen: When you write, do you have specific objectives or purposes to reach when you write?

- A. Yes
- B. No

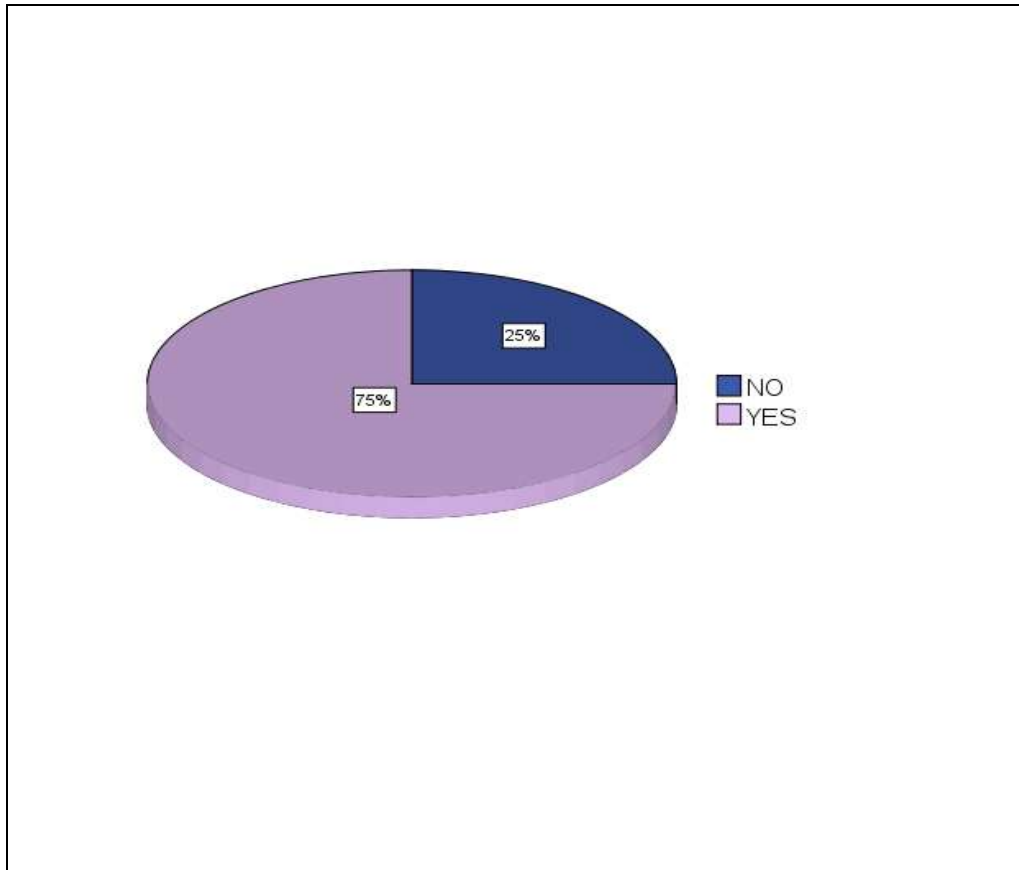


Diagram 12: Students’ writing objectives

The results indicate that (75%) opted for the answer “Yes” that they have specific objectives to reach when they write. Fifteen students (25%) answer “No” that they have not specific objectives when they write.

Question fourteen: Do you use word processing to write, correct and revise your lessons?

- a. Always
- b. Often
- d. Sometimes
- c. Rarely
- e. Never

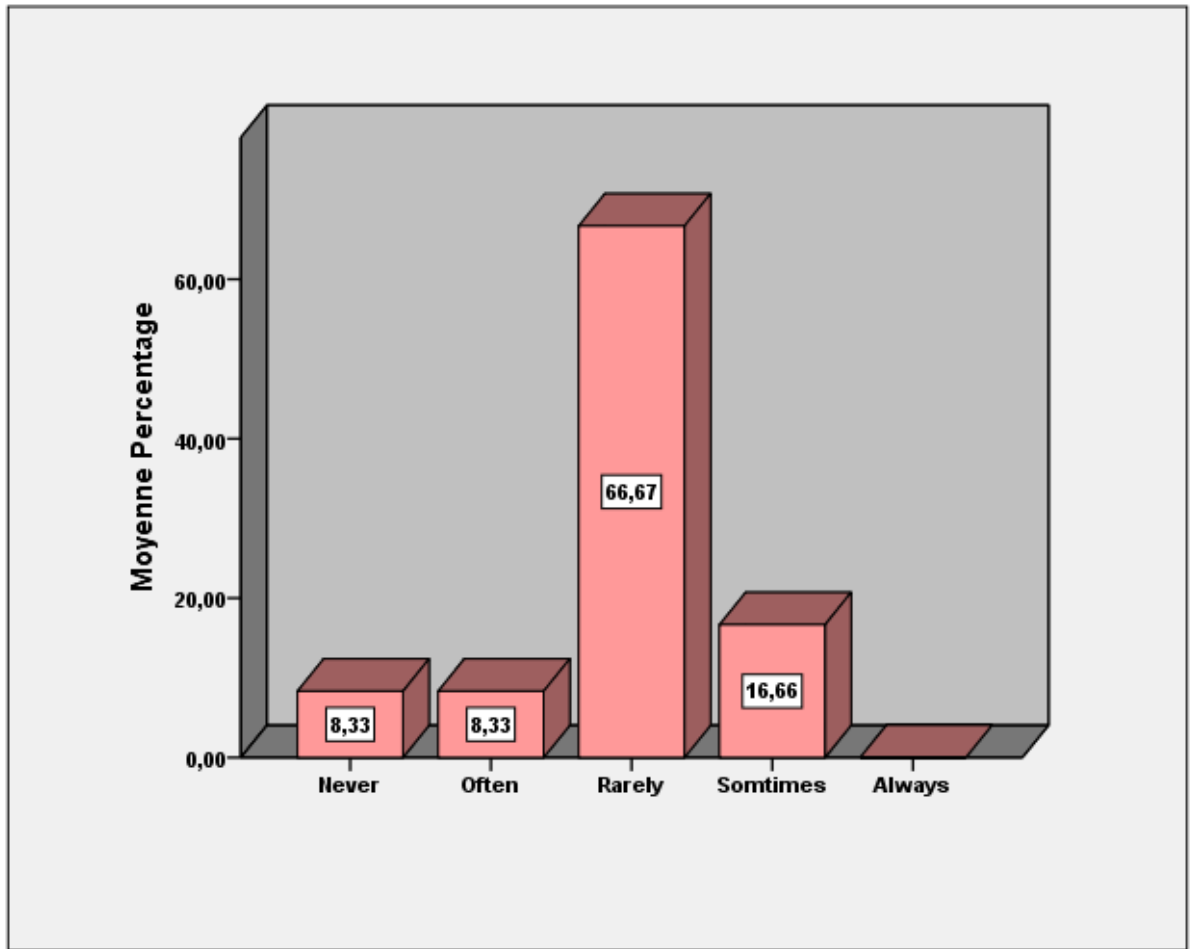


Diagram 13: Students' use of word processing

The results indicate that the majority of students (66.67%) chose the answer “d”, they rarely use word processing. Ten of students (16.66%) opted for the answer “c” that they sometimes use word processing. Five (8.33%) select each of the answers (b) and (e). Finally, the number of students who answered for “Never” is (0%).

Question Fifteen: Do you use complex sentences in your writing?

- a. Always b. Often c. Sometimes d. Rarely e. Never

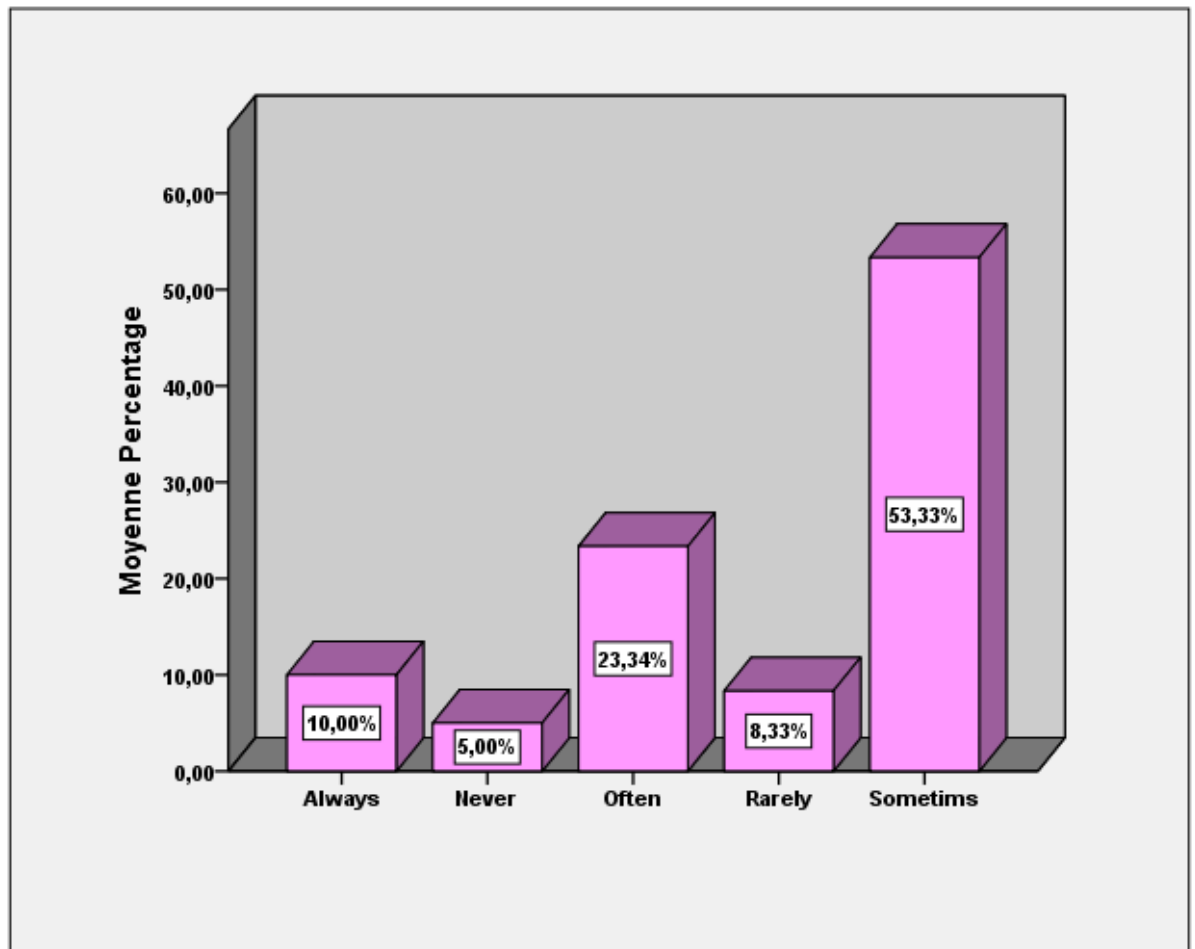


Diagram 14: Students' use of Sentence Combining

The results indicate that the majority of students (53.33%) answered that they sometimes use complex sentences. Fourteen students (23.34) opted for the answer “b” that they often use complex sentences. Six students (10%) choose the answer “a” that they always use complex sentences in their writings. Five students (8.33%) choose the answer “d” that they use rarely complex sentences. Only three students (5%) opted for the answer “b” that they never use complex sentences in their writings.

Question Sixteen: Do you generate or organize activities for your composition?

- A. Yes B. No

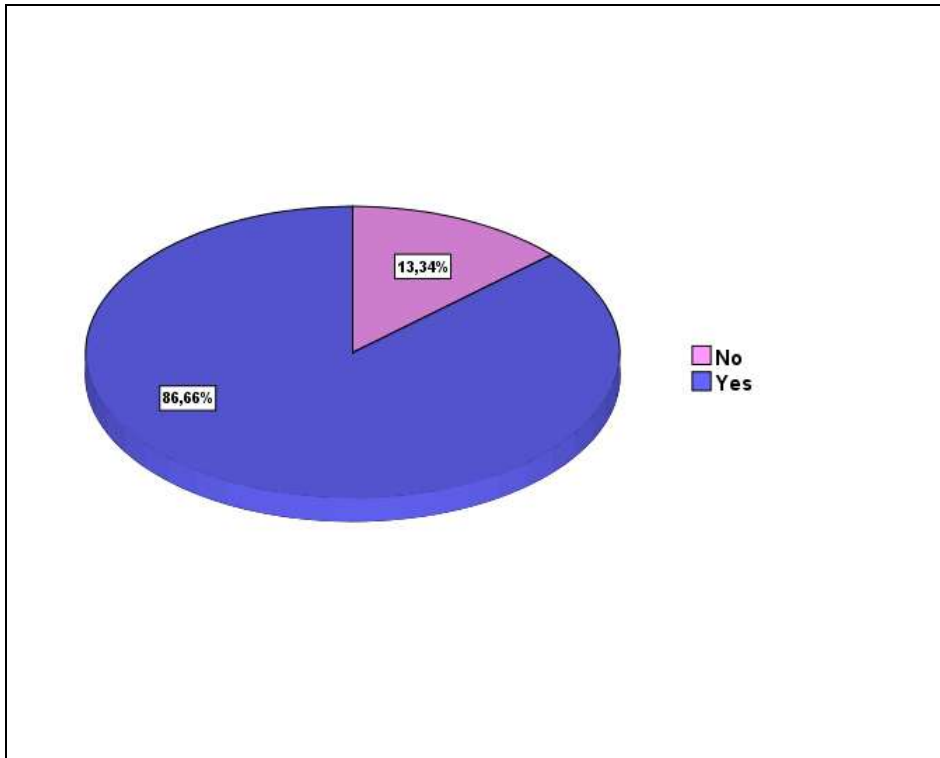


Diagram 15: Students' Prewriting

The results show that eight students (13.34%) opted for the answer “No” and the majority of them (86.66%) answer “Yes” they do not generate or organize ideas for their composition.

Question Seventeen: Do you imitate models of good writing skills?

Yes

No

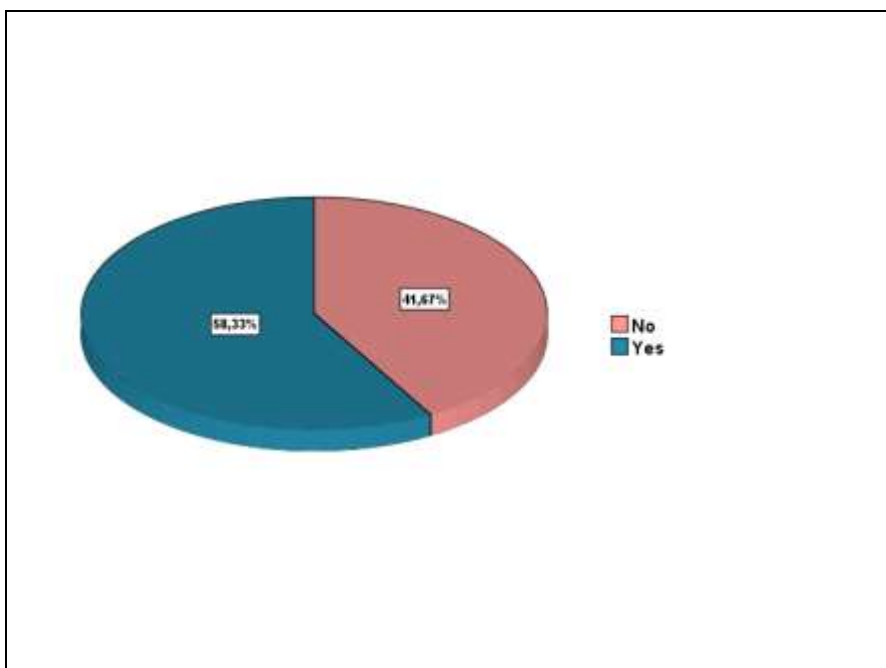


Diagram 16: Students' imitation of models of good writing

The results indicate that the number of students that opted for the answer “Yes” they imitate models of good writing skills is twenty five (58.33). Thirty five (41.67%) of them chose the answer “No” they do not imitate models of good writing skills.

Presentation of the Results of the Student' Interview

Question One: Do you like writing module? Justify?

This question was asked in order to know whether students like writing module or not. The majority of them answered by “yes”, that they like studying writing module. Therefore, they justify their answers by saying that the module of writing is important to learn any language. The idea is that through writing students can express themselves freely and it help them to improve their writing skills. Only one student advocated: “*I do not like writing because I find it boring*”.

Question Two: What kind of difficulties that you face in writing?

This question intends to know the major difficulties that students face in their writing. All of them have difficulties when they write; these difficulties vary from one student to another. The majority of students have difficulties related to grammar, vocabulary and word choice. Other students claimed that they find difficulties in coherence and cohesion, equivalence of words in the target language and punctuation.

Question Three: Do you use different writing strategies such as planning, revising, and editing your composition?

This question was asked in order to get informed about the students' use of different writing strategies to prepare their exams. The majority of them use such strategies, and the most frequent one is planning; they do a kind of plan to their courses before they start revision to their exams. The idea is that they use these strategies to get ready for their exams. Only two students who answered that they do not use such strategies. The first one claimed that *"No, I just express my thoughts without using these strategies"*. The second he/she simply replied that *"no, I do not use such strategies"*.

Question Four: Do you know how to summarize different types of texts? Explain?

This question seeks to know whether students know how to summarize different types of texts. All of them answered by "yes" that they know how to summarize texts they explain the way in which they do summarization to these texts; by selecting the main ideas, omitting all the details and keeping only the most important ideas. This shows that students use summarization strategy when they write.

Question Five: How do you prefer to work, alone, in pairs or in groups? Justify?

In this question the majority of students answered that they prefer to work in groups. Therefore they explained their choice by highlighting the importance of working in groups

mainly in writing, working in groups helps them to exchange and get new ideas from others as it facilitates students understanding. Only two students answered that they prefer to work alone because of the lack of concentration and noise. The first student said that “*personally, I like to work alone since I cannot concentrate in group work*” the second answered that “*I prefer to work alone for not being disturbed*”.

Question Six: Do you have some specific objectives to reach in you writing? Justify?

The answers to this question differ from one student to another. Most of them argued that they write for specific objectives, they justify their answers by saying that they write to attract the reader’s attention and to persuade him to read his or her work. Whereas, other students answered that most of the time they write without any objective, they write only because they should write or they are asked to write.

Question Seven: Do you use computers and word processors as an instructional supports for your writing? Justify?

The answers to this question differ from one student to another. The majority of them answered that they rarely use computers and word processors when they write. The reason is the lack of materials. One student said “*No, I do not use computers and word processors because I do not have materials*” another one said that “*I do not use word processors I like to write by pen*” Only four students who answered that they use word processors in their writing. One of them said “*yes, I like using my computer while writing*”.

Question Eight: What kind of sentences do you use in your writing? Why?

This question was asked in order to know whether second year students use complex sentences. The majority of students argued that they use complex sentences in their writing because they like varying in the use of sentence. One student claimed that I use complex

sentences “to express clear and structured ideas”. Another one said “I prefer to use complex sentences rather than simple ones to combine ideas”.

Question Nine: Do you work with activities designed to help you generate or organize ideas for your compositions? Justify?

In this question the majority of students answered “Yes” they work with such activities to prepare their writing exams to succeed in their compositions. One student said that “I work with such activities to prepare myself for the exams”. Only two students who opted for the answer “No” that they do not work with such activities they justify their answer by saying that when they work with these activities they become stressed and anxious before their compositions.

Question Ten: According to you, do you imitate models of good writing to improve your writing skills?

The answer to this question differs from one student to another. Some of them answered that they imitate models of excellent and good writing because this kind of models help them to learn new things, get new ideas and it enhances their abilities to be effective writers. One of them claimed” *we learn by imitation*». Only two of them said that they do not imitate models of good writing because imitating is not helpful since it kills the creativity of students.

Presentation of the Findings from Sample Essays:

From the analysis of students’ essays we found that the majority of second-year students use complex sentences in their writing (See appendix 3).

Conclusion:

This chapter has presented the results obtained from the questionnaire, the interview and sample essays. The questionnaire administered to students of second-year in the department of English, Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi-ouzou. Moreover, it has presented the results obtained from the interview conducted with fifteen students from the same department. From the results obtained, it is clear that the majority of second-year students in the department of English at MMUTO use strategies in their writing. In addition, teachers play an important role in enhancing students and they help them to overcome the difficulties that they face in their writing. These results are going to be discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

Introduction

This chapter aims at discussing and interpreting the results obtained from the questionnaire and the interview handed to second-year students in the English department at MMUTO. The results of the two instruments are discussed simultaneously as they are complimentary. The findings are, in fact, interpreted and discussed in relation to the literature presented in the first chapter, and they aim at answering the research questions and checking the hypotheses set in the general introduction.

IV.1. Discussion of Students' Questionnaire and Interview:

IV.1.1. Students' Attitudes towards Writing:

The results of the first part of the questionnaire show important facts about students' attitudes toward writing, more particularly the writing subject. From the analysis of the first question relating to the importance of the writing skill to students, it revealed that 36.67% (see diagram1) choose writing as their favorite skill over the other skills. This means that the majority of second-year students like writing; they have an interest in studying it because it is an opportunity to improve their language. This goes with the findings reached by Reimes (1993) who states that writing is an aid for learners to learn, and it helps them to adventure with the language, to go further by what they have learned.

The results also show that almost the majority of students (96.66%) have a positive view towards their writing module (see diagram2). According to Barras (2005) "*There are some reasons that make the ability of writing important*". Writing helps to think, writing helps to remember and it helps to communicate. The findings of the interview section show the same results, students say that writing is an important skill in learning any language. The idea is that through writing students can express themselves freely and it helps them to

develop their language. For instance, one student said “*yes, I like the writing subject because it improves our writing skills*”. Another one stated, “*Yes, because it is through writing that we can express our thoughts, feelings and ideas*”. In line with this, S. Graham and D. Perin (2007) say:

In the school setting writing plays two distinct but, complementary roles First, it is a skill that draws on the use of strategies (such as, planning, evaluating and revising texts) to accomplish a variety of goals, such as writing a report or expressing an opinion with the support of evidence, Second, writing is a means of extending and deepening students’ knowledge, it acts as a tool for learning subject matter.

As regards the dissatisfaction of the writing sessions, the majority of students affirm that writing sessions are not sufficient with the percentage of 81.67% that is, students need more sessions to study this module. One student confirms that writing sessions that they study per week are not sufficient because of the importance of writing (see diagram 3). Besides, studying two sessions per week does not allow the learners to master this module in an appropriate way. This also will influence other modules since even in each module they should write dissertations, mainly in their examinations. Another view is shared by second year students is that; the time allowed to study writing is not enough to practice and acquire knowledge and basic skills of writing. Only 18.33% of students said that studying two sessions per week is sufficient, they justify their answer by the fact that all modules have a great deal of importance so, they should be given equal value. The idea is that, even other modules help students to write and be creative in their writing.

The findings of this part show that the majority of students affirm that writing is a very difficult skill to learn with the percentage of 44.49% when we compare to students who consider writing as a very easy task 5.17% (See diagram4). This shows the degree of the difficulty of writing the skill. Also, it may be related to the teaching methods and techniques that do not fit their level. This shows that the writing skill is a complex skill to acquire when learning a given language either second or foreign. Nunan (1999) claims that the most

difficult task to do in language is to produce a coherent, fluent, extended piece of writing. Students who consider writing as an easy skill 8.62% this can be explained in that they may easily learn new things which motivate them to progress quickly in their learning, and they may write a lot, this helpsthem to avoid their difficulties in writing.

Furthermore, as regarding the level of satisfaction of students in the writing subject, the results show that 50% of the respondents are satisfied with their level in writing (See diagram5), in contrast to 34. 33% who are unsatisfied. Therefore, those who are satisfied with their level in writing may have higher degrees of self-confidence and self-esteem than those who are not unsatisfied. This level of satisfaction about one's abilities may determine their like of this module.

IV.2.Students Writing Difficulties

As for the results obtained from the second part of the questionnaire, they show that the majority of second year students find difficulties in their writing, these difficulties vary from one student to another (vocabulary, grammar, word choice, coherence and cohesion). According to Hyland (2003):

Learning how to write (...) is one of the most challenging aspects of second language learning. Perhaps this is not surprising in view of the fact that even for those who speak English as a first language, the ability to write effectively is something that requires an extensive and specialized instruction (...).

The results illustrated in (diagram 6) demonstrate that a higher frequency of students 41.66% confirm that they find difficulties to choose the appropriate words in their writing, and 33.33% of them find difficulties in grammar comparing to students who find difficulties in vocabulary, coherence and cohesion with percentage of 13.33% and 11.67% from the results we notice that, the major difficulties that students face are word choice and grammar. According to Norish (1983) and White (1980) students use different techniques big words to

influence the reader or their teachers this leads to a problem of diction. As for Kharma (1987) in Melese (2007:12) argue that connectors references, pronoun, subject and verb agreements are the most frequent problems of students writing. These difficulties hinder the students ability to be creative in their writing, For example one students said “ *yes I find difficulties while writing such as the equivalence of words*” another student said “ *yes all the time, I find difficulties especially in grammar and sentences order*”.

This confirms our hypothesis about the major difficulties that second year students face in their writing.

As far as, the factors that prevent students from participating in the classroom are concerned, the big problem that prevents them from participation seems to be the teaching methods with the percentage of 40% this make them unmotivated in the classroom (See diagram7), this also doesn't facilitate the writing task. It may be the way their teachers evaluate their works or activities, also there is the problem of their shyness which comes in the second position with the percentage of 25% flowed by fear of making mistakes. Shyness keeps students silent even if they know the answer, they cannot answer may be they do not want their mates laugh at them if they make mistakes. Anxiety may make students lose their concentration in learning and get worried and feel nervous.

Teachers also play an important role in the process of writing; they can help their students to overcome the difficulties that they face in their writing. Harmer (2004) gives five roles of the teacher before, during and after writing which are demonstrating, motivating, provoking, supporting, responding and evaluating. In this context, the results relating to teachers' motivation of their students show that a higher frequency of students 33. 34% have opted for the answer “Always” and 10% opted for the answer “Never” (See diagram8). This indicates that teachers care for motivating of their students through different techniques and

strategies they use in the classroom. Thus strategies can be advice, feedback, comments through giving them guidelines how to start writing and how to relate their ideas, it can be also by showing them the importance of writing in their life. Teachers can also provide their students with extra explanations and activities to develop their writing quality. Thus, this will make them motivated and convinced that they are able to be good writers. Indeed, one student said *“our teachers give us advice and feedback”* and another one announced *“teachers provide us with extra activities and home work”*.

IV.1.3 Students’ Writing Strategies

In the final part of the students’ questionnaire, we investigated seven important strategies that students should follow to improve their writing quality. Writing strategies help students to learn how to organize effectively their writing.

Actually, our findings displayed in (diagram9) show that the majority of students (81.67%) use different writing strategies such as revising, planning and editing to prepare their examinations, this may be by making some changes to their piece of writing to facilitate the meaning to the readers. In the light of this, we can understand that second year students know how to prepare their examinations; this leads them to improve their way of writing. This idea was confirmed by Grenville (2001:153):

As you revise you will be looking for changes that will help readers understand the information better or be more convinced by your arguments. Once you have found that places that need fixing you have to decide whether to cut, add or move.

Nunan (1992)in this stage the competent writer revise different levels of lexis, sentence and discourse through revision to make the meaning clear.Planning also has a significant role in the process of writing; it helps students to be skilled writers. Zamel (1982cited in Nunan, 1995) argues that skilled writers spend more time in planning but unskilled ones do not follow this stage.

Similarly, editing make the piece of writing clear and easy to read. According to Smith (1982:145) *“The aim of editing is not change the text but to make what is there optimally readable”*.

The findings of the interview show the same results, almost the majority of students said that they use such strategies. For example, one student answered that *“yes I use such strategies; I do a kind of plan to my courses before I start my revision”*. According to Steve Graham and Dolores Perin, these strategies improve students’ writing, and this also helps them to succeed in their compositions. This confirm our hypothesis that second year students of the English department use writing strategies to prepare their compositions, and refute

The results obtained from the study showed that 70% of second-year students of the department of English use other writing strategies, like summarization, while writing (see diagram10). According to Buckley (2004) defines summarizing as reducing to one- third or one-quarter its original size clearly articulating the author’s and retaining main ideas. Summarizing is useful in many types of writing and at different points in the writing process. It helps students to discuss the most important ideas in a text, how to ignore irrelevant information and how to integrate the central ideas in a meaningful way, it enables students to take a large selection of text and reduce it to the main points for more concise understanding.

Similarly to the results of the interview, all the students answer that they know how to summarize their texts. for instance, one interviewee said that *“yes, I do to summarize a text I read carefully the text then I keep the main ideas and the key words and reformulate them in my own words”*. Another one answered *“I try to make the text shorter by keeping just essential points with omitting examples and explanations”*. From the above, we can induce that when students use such strategies this will help them to improve their writing. This

confirms our hypothesis that second-year students use writing strategies which is summarization strategy.

The results obtained from the questionnaire reveal that 53.34% of students always prefer to work in groups and 18.33% of them are often prefer to work in groups (see diagram 11). In contrast 11.66% of students said that they rarely prefer to work in group to prepare their examination, and only 3.34% who said that they prefer to work alone. This means that almost the majority of students prefer to work in groups. Pair and group works are beneficial because they facilitate learners understanding and comprehension to prepare their compositions. That is group work help students to exchange ideas and opinions. According to Steve Graham and Dolores Perin (2007):

Collaborative Writing involves developing instructional arrangement whereby adolescents work together to plan, draft, and revise and edit their compositions. It shows a strong impact or improves the quality of students' writing.

This means that, through collaborative work students can increase the quality of their writing. Harmer (2002:116) argue that students who work in pairs have the ability to read a text and answer reading comprehension questions deal with different activities, fill in the gaps compare their note taking on what they listened to and practice a language together. In fact collaborative writing has a strong effect on enhancing students writing because it gives the opportunity to students to make decisions without the presence of their teachers.

Similarly to the results of the interview the majority of students answered that they prefer to work in pairs or in groups, for instance one student said "*I prefer to work in groups because in groups I can exchange ideas and learn new things*". Another one affirms that "*I prefer to work in groups because friends help me to revise and test myself*" from the above results we can conclude that collaborative work plays a significant role in enhancing students' writing. These findings confirm the third hypothesis set in the general introduction.

The results of the question dealing with students' specific objectives reveal that most learners have specific objectives to reach when they write (See diagram 12). So, students' interest in writing are due to a number of goals they want to attain from their writing. According to S.Graham and D.Perin (2006) students should have specific goals to reach in their writing, this will help them to develop their writing. This demonstrates that those students do not write just to write, but they have some goals to achieve, they may write to attract the reader, to convince him/her or to give solution to specific problems. One interviewee answered "*yes, my writing is to move the reader*" another one said "*yes, I have objectives to attract the reader to understand my writing*". Thus, the study reflected that such strategies are proved to be used and to be efficient because it help students to go far by their writing.

The results obtained from the study reveal that most of the second-year students answer that they rarely use it (See diagram 13), and a few of them say that they sometimes use word processing in their writing. The minority of them chose both "always" and "often", they state that they do not use their computers when they write, that is, their writing is limited they just write down all what they learn or their taking notes on papers. The results of the interview show that the majority of students do not use word processing. For instance one student answered that "*No, I like to write by pen and paper*" another one said "*No, because of the lack of materials*". According to Steve Graham and Dolores Perin (2006) the use of word processing equipment can help low achieving writers. The use of computers and word processing allow the writer to add, delete and move text easily. So word processing has a positive influence on the writing quality. That is, students should use their computers or word processing because it is an effective support for their writing and this will help them to improve their writing.

The use of complex sentences is one of the most important writing strategies that can help students to develop their writing. A complex sentence is a sentence that has at least one independent clause (a group of words that can stand alone as a simple sentence) and one dependent clause (Azar, 1999; Rubin, 1983). In this regard, our results show that 10% (see diagram 14) of second year students always use complex sentences in their writing and 23.34% affirm that they often use complex sentences, and 53.33% of students answer that they sometimes use complex sentences when they write. This shows that most of the learners 86.67% as a whole prefer to use complex sentences; this may provide a support for their writing. In second language acquisition (SLA) theories, it has been believed that maturity in writing is shown by the learners' ability to produce complex sentences (Dulay, Burt and Krashen, 1982; Krashen and Terrel, 1983). Complex sentences can enhance the reader to focus on one part of a sentence rather than another part of a sentence. Numerous studies show that the use of sentence combining is an effective technique for improving students' writing (Mellon, 1969; O'ttare, 1973; Cooper, 1975; Shanghnessy, 1977; Hillocks, 1986, Strong, 1986). The value of sentence combining is most evident as students recognize the effect of sentence variety in their writing. Research also shows that sentence combining is more effective than free writing in enhancing the quality of student writing (Hillocks, 1986).

The same results obtained from the interview, the majority of second year students prefer to use complex sentences rather than simple ones, according to them varying in the use of sentences may help them to develop their ideas, this may also prove their abilities in writing.

From the analysis of students' samples, we have found that the number of complex sentences is moderately connected with the number of sentences in students' essays and this is not in all essays but the majority of them. It is important to note that students use complex sentences in their writing, and this can have a positive effect on their writing.

Prewriting is a successful technique to develop the learners' ideas. The results of the question dealing with students' use of prewriting strategy show that 86.66% of second-year students make use of prewriting (See diagram15). In contrast, only 13.34% of students do not use this strategy. This means that almost the majority of second year students use prewriting they do a kind of activities before their examinations or when their teachers give them some topics to write about. They use their note taking in the classroom or notes that they take from different sources; this will make them productive in their writing. According to Gallo, (2001) there are several helpful strategies integrated in prewriting that make the learner approach his writing and develop his ideas such as; brainstorming, free writing, asking questions, mapping, journaling and listing. Prewriting is an essential stage as (Parson, 1985:115) says:

Students who are encouraged to engage in an array of prewriting experiences have a greater chance for writing achievement than those enjoyed to “get to work” on their writing without this kind of preparation.

In writing classrooms, it is important for teachers to make their students aware of the value of the prewriting stage. Before they start to write, learners should select their topics by using prewriting activities including brainstorming reading, drawing, talking, note taking and clustering. It could be practiced in groups or with the whole class.

The findings of the interview also show that almost all students use prewriting strategy and they prefer to this in groups, since each one has a new idea. This may help them to share their information and construct good writing essays and to prepare well their compositions. One student said *“Yes, by taking notes”*. Another one said *“Yes of course, before I start writing my lessons, I use my notes that I take in the classroom”*.

The findings of the last question revealed that the highest percentage of students (58.33%) (See diagram 15) imitate models of good writing. Undoubtedly, models of good writing are very important for helping students to improve their writing. According to S.

Graham and D. Perin (2007), students have to read, analyze and emulate models of good writing. More importantly, in the case of second year students at MMUTO, following some models of good writing may allow them to have ideas about new topics and avoid mistakes and then get new information. So imitation of models of good writing is one of the most important strategies that students should follow to write better. The same results found in the interview, that students like to answer their classmates to help them or show them their essays when their teachers tell to them that their writing is the best. Students also answered that they also use models on the Net, to do their essays or exercises. For example one student said “*yes, I do, because I can learn from this model how to organize and units correctly my composition*”.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter included the discussion of the findings that have resulted from the questionnaire and the interview and some sample essays. This chapter provides clear answers to the research questions of the study. In addition, some hypotheses stated in the general introduction are confirmed whereas others are refuted. Relying on the whole findings, we come to the conclusion that the majority of second year students of English at MMUTO adapt some strategies in their writing, such as writing strategies, summarizing, collaborative writing, specific product, word processing, sentence combining, prewriting and study of models. Yet; there is one strategy that is not used by the totality of students and this is due to some reasons like the lack of equipment, students’ preference to use pen and papers.

General Conclusion:

This dissertation has investigated students' writing strategies on the basis of the strategies provided by Steve Graham and Dolores Perin in the English department at Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi ousou. Conducting such an investigation and dealing with such topic is important, as its ultimate aim is to show the importance of writing strategies as a driving force to improve students' writing to be effective writers.

The study has attempted to shed light on the strategies that second-year students' use in their writing. The results of the study have showed that students use most of the strategies when they write, and when they prepare their writing compositions.

This dissertation has targeted two main objectives. The first objective we meant to analyze the effectiveness of second-year students writing strategies in the department of English at Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi ousou on the basis of the strategies provided by the two authors Steve Graham and Dolores Perin. The second objective aimed at exploring and showing the major difficulties that most of the students face in their writing and the role of the teachers in enhancing students writing.

Due to the complexity of investigating EFL students writing strategies as well as novelty of this research in the context of Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi Ouzou, our study has adopted Steve Graham and Dolores Perin (2006) theoretical framework of writing strategies. This framework has provided us with essential strategies that students should follow in their writing and when they prepare their writing compositions.

As we have hypothesized before, the majority of second year students use writing strategies. Although, sometimes they face some problems that make them feel tired and anxious like, teaching methods, shyness and fear of making mistakes. Additionally, they also face some difficulties in their writing such as, word choice, grammar, vocabulary, coherence

and cohesion. In addition, our findings indicated that teachers also play an important role in the writing process, they facilitate them this process, they guide them and they show their students the importance of the writing process in learning any language mainly English.

Our study has confirmed the fifth hypothesis stating that the majority of second year teachers help their students to write well and has disconfirmed the hypothesis six that second-year teachers of the English department at MMUTO do not help their students.

Interestingly, we have figured out in our study that writing strategies used by students in their writing influence students positively. Therefore the conclusion that can be drawn from the investigation is that writing strategies plays an important role in the teaching writing process as they help students to develop their writing abilities, as it enhances the students' self-confidence and guide them to success.

It is a hope that the findings of this study as a first exploratory research at the level of the department of English at MMUTO shed light on the issue of students' writing. Furthermore, we hope that it will provide students with insights on how to improve their writing.

The present study is a case study; it involves second-year students of English, at Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi-ouzou. Therefore it cannot be generalized to other EFL learners. However furthermore research can investigate to what extent these results obtained can be applied to other EFL learners.

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Appendix 01

Students' questionnaire

Dear students,

This questionnaire is designed for the second year EFL students at the English department of MMUTO, it seeks to gather data to evaluate the effectiveness of the students' writing strategies. You are kindly requested to fill in this questionnaire to provide us with your views and opinions about the writing strategies that you use. We promise that your answers will be used only for educational purposes.

Please you tick (✓) to indicate your chosen answer, and use your own statements where required.

Thank you very much for your contribution.

Section one: Students' attitudes towards writing

1-Order the following language skills according to their importance to you?

Reading writing speaking listening

2-Do you find the writing subject interesting? Justify your answer.

Yes No

3-Do you think that the number of sessions per week devoted to writing are sufficient?

Yes No

4-Writing is a/an.....skill of language learning?

Very easy easy quite difficult very difficult
Extremely difficult

5- How satisfied are you with your level in writing?

Very satisfied satisfied unsatisfied

Section two: Students and writing difficulties

6-What are the areas in which you face difficulties in the writing subject?

Vocabulary Grammar Word choice coherence

7-What are the factors that prevent you from participating during the writing classes?

Teaching style shyness Fear of making mistakes anxiety
Others

Specify.....
.....
.....

8-How often do your teachers motivate you in writing?

Always Often Sometimes Rarely Never

9-In which way do your teachers motivate you in writing?

.....
.....

Section three: Students and writing strategies

10- How often do you use different writing strategies, such as revising, planning and editing, to prepare your composition?

Always Often Sometimes Rarely Never

11- How often do you use different techniques to summarize your texts?

Yes No

12-Do you work in pairs or in groups to plan, draft, revise, and edit your compositions?

Always Often Sometimes Rarely Never

13-When you write, do you have specific objectives or purposes to reach?

Always Often Sometimes Rarely Never

14-Do you use word processing to write, correct revise your piece of writing?

Yes No

15- How often do you use complex sentences in your writing?

Always Often Sometimes Rarely Never

16- How often do you generate or organize ideas for your composition?

Always Often Sometimes Rarely Never

17-Do you think that reading, analyzing, emulating models of good writing can help you to improve your writing skills?

Yes No

Thank you for answering!

Appendix 02

Students' Interview

This interview is part of our research entitled *Second-Year Students' Writing Strategies, at MouloudMammeri University of Tizi-Ouzou*. The results of this interview will be used for academic purposes. Thank you in advance for your collaboration.

- 1-Do you like the writing subject? Justify
- 2- What kind of difficulties do you face in your writing?
- 3- Do you use different writing strategies, such as planning, revising, and editing?
- 4- Do you know how to summarize texts? Explain
- 5- How do you prefer to work: alone, in pairs or in groups? Justify
- 6- Do you have any specific objectives to reach when you write?
- 7- Do you use computers and Word Processing in your writing?
- 8- What type of sentences do you prefer to use in your writing? Why?
- 9- Do you work with activities designed to help you generate or organize ideas for your compositions? Explain?
- 10- Do you imitate models of good writing to improve your writing skills?