

وزارة التعليم العالي والبحث العلمي

MINISTÈRE DE L'ENSEIGNEMENT SUPERIEUR ET DE LA RECHERCHE SCIENTIFIQUE

ⵎⵓⵍⵓⵔ ⵎⵎⵎⵔⵉ ⵓⵏ ⵜⵉⵣⵓⵣⵓ

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DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH



جامعة مولود معمري - تيزي وزو

كلية الآداب واللغات

قسم الإنجليزية

Item Number:

Serial Number:

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements

For the degree of Master in English

FIELD: Foreign Languages

SUBJECT: English

SPECIALITY: Language and Communication

Title

EFL Students' Deviation from Academic to Informal Writing:

The Case of Third-year Students in the Department of English at Mouloud

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Cohort: November, 2020.

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Dedications

I dedicate this work to my beloved parents Boussad and Zahia, to whom I owe everything beautiful in life. Without their support, encouragement and unconditional love, I would be unable to achieve anything in my life.

To my lovely sisters Sylia, Yasmine and Djedjiga

My adorable brother Amar.

To my grandmothers Fadhila and Jedjiga, my grandfather Ismail and all my aunts, uncles and cousins.

To my best friend Toufik who is a source of courage, support and confidence.

To my sisters by heart Nawel and Sabrina.

In memory to my uncle "Nassim", my aunt "Nawel" and my dear cousin "Arav" (Rest in Peace).

Lydia

I dedicate this work to my beloved parents Ahmed and Malha, to whom I owe everything beautiful in life. They have always been by my side in failure as in success; words cannot give enough credit to their love, care, support and tenderness.

To my lovely sister Hana.

My adorable brother Nabil.

To my grandmother Fadhma and my uncle Amar.

To my dear Sofiane who is a source of support, courage and love.

To my dear sister by heart Lydia.

To my best friends: Mahdi, Ahmed "Twin", Alaa Eddine and Hafidh.

Sabrina

Acknowledgements

We would like to express our gratitude to our teacher and supervisor Dr. Benaissa Amel. Her guidance, advice and constructive comments were of great benefit in the realisation of this work. It is an immense honour working under her supervision. We also owe special thanks to third-year students who answered the questionnaire of the present study. Our profound thanks go to Mr. Aouine for devoting some of his precious time to help, support and advise us to improve our work whenever needed. We would like to offer our sincere thanks to the board of examiners Pr. Fodil and Dr. Berbar who devoted their time to read and examine our work and provide precious comments. Special thanks to Mr. Cherifi and Ms. Lounes who were a source of help and support. We would also like to extend our gratitude to the head of the department of English Mr. Haddadou for his help and kindness in providing us with the corpus of this work. Finally, we are grateful for everyone who contributed in a way or another in making this work reach its achievement.

Abstract

The present research aims at investigating third-year students' deviation from academic to informal writing in the department of English at Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi-ouzou. Three main objectives have motivated this research. First, it strives to identify the informal features that third-year students use in their academic writing. Second, it intends to identify the major types of errors that students make. As for the third objective, it consists in discovering whether the language used in social networking sites has any impact on students' academic writing. In order to meet the objectives of the study, Chang and Swales (1999) and Abu Sheikha and Inkpen (2010) criteria of informal writing as well as Corder's (1974) Error Analysis theory are adopted as the two analytical frameworks. The data are gathered from the analysis of eighty exam papers written by third-year students in the civilisation module and from an online questionnaire addressed to the same students in order to get more reliable data. A mixed-method research combining both qualitative and quantitative methods is used to analyse the obtained data. The qualitative data are analysed using Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA) while the quantitative data are treated with the Google Forms. The outcomes of this research reveal that the features of informal writing are present in students' essays. Hence, learners constantly deviate from one style to another within the same context. In addition, many errors are extracted from their exam papers which demonstrate their poor mastery of writing mechanics. Accordingly, the results of the questionnaire indicate that the language of social networking sites affects negatively students' academic writing to some extent. Indeed, their answers show that the language of chatting through these online platforms is intended to be informal and that almost all the features they use in their chat messages are present in their essays, including sentence initial conjunctions, abbreviations, vague expressions, contractions, run-on expressions, first person pronouns, broad reference, direct questions and sentence final prepositions as for split infinitives, sentence fragments, exclamations and slangs, they are not used in their essays.

Key terms: Academic writing, Informal writing, Error Analysis, Social Networking Sites.

List of Tables

Table (1): Chang and Swales' (1999) Informal Features	19
Table (2): Abu Sheikha and Inkpen's (2010) Informal Features	20
Table (3): Examples and Frequencies of Informal Features in Students' Exam Papers	30
Table (4): Classification of Article Errors.....	33
Table (5): Classification of Preposition Errors	33
Table (6): Classification of Spelling Errors	34
Table (7): Classification of Verb Tense Errors	34
Table (8): Classification of Punctuation Errors.....	35
Table (9): Classification of Capitalisation Errors	35
Table (10): The Purpose of Students' Use of SNS.....	37
Table (11): The Most Used Informal Features when Texting.....	41
Table (12): Examples of Abbreviations Used by Students and their Explanations	42
Table (13): Students' Use of Chat Language in their Written Assignments or Exam Papers	50

List of Diagrams

Diagram (1): Students' Use of SNS.....	36
Diagram (2): Students' Favourite Social Networking Sites	37
Diagram (3): Students' Average Time Spent on SNS	38
Diagram (4): Students' Way of Communication in SNS	39
Diagram (5): The Type of Language Used by Students When Texting.....	39
Diagram (6): Students' Care about the Language Used in SNS.....	40
Diagram (7): The Type of Words Used in Chatting	40
Diagram (8): Students' Use of Informal Language in Texting.....	41
Diagram (9): Students' Frequency of the Use of Informal Language in Texting.....	42
Diagram (10): Students' Use of Abbreviations	42
Diagram (11): Students' Purpose of Using Abbreviations	43
Diagram (12): Students' Frequency of the Use of Punctuation and Capitalisation.....	43
Diagram (13): Students' Difficulties in Academic Writing.....	44
Diagram (14): Students' Aspects of Difficulties in Academic Writing.....	44
Diagram (15): Students' Use of Informal Features in their Academic Essays.....	45
Diagram (16): Reasons behind Students' Use of Informal Features in their Academic Essays..	46
Diagram (17): SNS Enhancement of Students' Writing Process	46
Diagram (18): The Effect of SNS' Language on Students' Academic Writing	47
Diagram (19): The Effect of Punctuation Ignorance on Students' Marks	48
Diagram (20): The Effect of Informal Features' Use on Students' Marks	48
Diagram (21): Students' Errors Occurrence in their Academic Essays.....	49
Diagram (22): The Impact of SNS' Language on Students' Academic Writing.....	50

List of Abbreviations

EA: Error Analysis.

EFL: English as a Foreign Language.

ESL: English as a Second Language.

L1: First Language.

L2/SL: Second Language.

QCA: Qualitative Content Analysis.

SNS: Social Networking Sites.

TL: Target Language.

FDR: Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

Table of Contents

Dedications.....	I
Acknowledgments.....	II
Abstract.....	III
List of Tables.....	IV
List of Diagrams.....	V
List of Abbreviations.....	VI

General Introduction

Statement of the problem	1
Aims and Significance of the Study	5
Research Questions and Hypotheses	5
Research Techniques and Methodology	6
Structure of the dissertation	6

Chapter One: Review of the Literature

Introduction	8
1. Academic Writing	8
1.1. Academic Writing Definition	8
1.2. Principles of Academic Writing.....	9
1.3. EFL Learners' Difficulties in Academic Writing	11
1.3.1. Difficulties in Grammar	12
1.3.2. Difficulties in Vocabulary	12
1.3.3. Difficulties in Punctuation	13
1.3.4. Difficulties in Formal Style	13
1.4. The main Obstacles to Academic Writing	14
1.4.1. Influence of Technology.....	14
2. Informal Writing	14
2.1. Definition of Informal Writing	14
2.2. Features of Informal Writing	15
3. Writing Styles: Correctness VS Formality	16
4. The Impact of the Language used in Social Networking Sites on Students' Academic Writing	17
5. Analytical Frameworks	18
5.1. Informality features	19

5.1.2. Chang and Swales (1999) Criteria of Informal Writing	19
5.1.3. Abu Sheikha and Inkpen (2010) Criteria of Informal Writing	20
5.2. Error Analysis Theory	20
5.2.1. Error Analysis Definition	20
5.2.2. Errors VS Mistakes	21
5.2.3. Procedures of Error Analysis	21
a. Collection of Data	21
b. Identification of Errors	22
c. Description of Errors	22
• Omission	22
• Addition	22
• Misinformation	22
• Misordering	22
d. Explanation of Errors	22
• Interlingual Errors	23
• Intralingual Errors	23
- Overgeneralisation	23
- Ignorance of Rule Restrictions	23
- Incomplete Application of Rules	23
- False Concept Hypothesised	23
Conclusion	24

Chapter Two: Research Design and Methodology

Introduction	25
1. Research Method	25
2. Participants and Sample of Investigation	26
2.1. Participants	26
2.2. Sample/Corpus	26
3. Procedures of Data Collection	26
3.1. Students' Exam Papers	27
3.2. Learners' Questionnaire	27
3.2.1. Piloting the Questionnaire Addressed to the Learners	28
4. Procedures of Data Analysis	28
4.1. Quantitative Data Analysis	28

4.2. Qualitative Data Analysis.....	29
Conclusion	29

Chapter Three: Presentation of the Findings

Introduction	30
1. Presentation of the Results of the Corpus	30
1.1. Informal Features	30
1.2. Classification of Students’ Major Errors.....	32
1.2.1. Interlingual Errors	33
➤ Articles	33
➤ Prepositions	33
➤ Spelling	34
1.2.2. Intralingual Errors	34
➤ Verb Tense	34
➤ Punctuation	35
➤ Capitalisation	35
2. Presentation of the Students’ Questionnaire Results	36
2.1. Section One: The Use of Social Networking Sites (SNS)	36
2.2. Section Two: The Language of Chatting/Texting in SNS	39
2.3. Section Three: The impact of the Language of SNS on Students’ Academic Writing	44
Conclusion	51

Chapter Four: Discussion of the Findings

Introduction	52
1. Discussion of the Informal Features of Students’ Exam Papers	52
1.1. Students’ use of the First Person Pronouns to refer to the Author(s) (I and We)	52
1.2. The Use of Broad Reference- Anaphoric Pronouns.....	53
1.3. Beginning a Sentence with Conjunctions and Conjunctive Adverb “however	54
1.4. End a Sentence with a Preposition	55
1.5. Run-on Sentences and Expressions	56
1.6. Contractions	56
1.7. Direct Questions	57
1.8. Vague Expressions	58
1.9. Abbreviations	59
1.10. Split Infinitives, Sentence Fragments, Exclamations and Slangs	59

2. Discussion of Students’ main Errors	60
2.1. Interlingual Errors	60
2.1.1. Articles	61
2.1.2. Prepositions	62
2.1.3. Spelling	63
2.2. Intralingual Errors.....	65
2.2.1. Verb Tense	65
2.2.2. Punctuation	66
2.2.3. Capitalisation	68
3. Discussion of the Questionnaire Results	69
3.1. The Use of Social Networking Sites	70
3.2. The Language of Chatting/Texting in SNS	72
3.3. The Impact of the Language of SNS on Students’ Academic Writing	75
Conclusion	80
General Conclusion	82
Bibliography	86
Appendix A: “Third-Year Exam Papers”	
Appendix B: “Students’ Questionnaire”	

Statement of the Problem

English has become the dominant language in today's world. A large proportion of people nowadays are eager to learn this language for the sake of communication, not only with English native speakers but also with the speakers of other languages inside or outside their linguistic community. Therefore, there has been a growing attention to spread this language for educational and professional purposes. The fact that it is frequently taught as a second or a foreign language in a great majority of the non-English speaking countries shows a huge interest of people to learn it.

The purpose of language learning is to improve learners' four skills which are listening, speaking, reading and writing, with the base of a strong vocabulary and a good grammar in order to integrate them to develop real-life communication fluently and accurately. Among these four skills, writing occupies an important place in EFL teaching and learning. It is one of the most challenging skills for almost all learners since they have to be aware of certain rules including sentence structure, grammar, punctuation, vocabulary, organisation, and writing style. Indeed, this seems difficult to produce a fluent and a coherent piece of writing.

Academic writing can be a challenge and a complex process even for the most English native speakers. Nonetheless, it is particularly difficult for EFL or ESL learners. It is given to fulfil the requirement in an academic setting such as college or university and it usually incorporates a more formal style with strong and complete vocabulary. Hence, when writing, students should be familiar with writing processes, elements and features like formality, objectivity and complexity in order to use the language precisely (Abdulkareem, 2013). It involves conscious efforts and much practice in developing and analysing ideas. Therefore,

this type of writing can be seen as a part of students' academic training as they should learn how to write in a more formal style.

Although EFL students at university have a general understanding of some language features like writing mechanics, including correct punctuation, spelling and verb tense, not many are able to write academically at levels expected of them since they have to take into account other issues such as formality, accuracy, authenticity and maintaining objectivity as well. Academic writing with its norms and conventions is expected to be formal in nature; however, many students are still unable to differentiate between writing styles to some degree. Adel (2008), Fairclough (2001) and Foster (2005) declare that academic writing has become less formal within various domains in recent years (cited in Hyland and Jiang, 2017). In the same line of thought, Leedham (2015) states that informality is very present in students' essays nowadays (*ibid.*). This means that students are constantly moving from one style to another within the same context. Such practice of style shifting can be problematic for readers or teachers and it may also affect students' academic performance as well. In the same way, the complexity of the skill makes students face a serious number of difficulties distinguishing between formal and informal writing. This act prevents them from constructing well-developed paragraphs and satisfactory essays through style shifting. Thus, informality may be seen as a deviation from a traditional academic stance of objectivity.

Despite the scarcity of the studies which are conducted to investigate students' style shifting in their academic writing, a deep look at the literature review has shown some interesting works in this field of research. At the international level, a research study conducted by Singh (2015) in Malaysia about the challenges and solutions to students' academic writing. The research findings have shown that students struggle in their writing practices in the instructional setting where English is used as a medium like the use of an appropriate academic style, writing coherent paragraphs and expressing ideas in correct

English. Nevertheless, the study has also given insights on how they face those challenges and employ necessary steps to overcome them. In the local context, an investigation was conducted by Isaad and Mecherouk (2017) in the department of English at MMUTO about the influence of spoken grammar on students' writing. The study aimed to identify the extent to which students were influenced by their oral language. The outcomes of the investigation have shown that learners are affected by spoken grammar and that the features of this latter are partially present in their writings. Results of the two aforementioned studies have revealed that writing academic English is becoming more and more challenging among English learners. In order to contribute this issue, this study adopts Chang and Swales (1999) as well as Abu Sheikha and Inkpen's (2010) features of informal writing as criteria for analysing students' writing.

In the same line of thought, it is inevitable that all learners make mistakes and this is a part of language learning. During the process of learning a foreign language, students seek to write this language, but the difficulty of this skill makes them fail to master some rules which results in plenty of errors in their compositions (Ellis, 2008). Hence errors are seen as a part of language learning and students who make errors seem not to be aware of the rules and skills that are important in academic writing, either in classroom presentations, written home works, assignments or exam papers.

In this regard, one can mention the study conducted by Moula (2018) concerning collocational errors which has aimed at identifying the different types and sources of lexical collocational errors that first-year students make while writing. The findings have revealed that learners cannot put lexical collocational items together correctly, which results in many errors. Making errors is regarded as a device the learner uses in order to learn; thus, Corder's (1974) error analysis theory as cited in Ellis (1994) has been adopted as a second analytical

framework for the study. This latter is an approach that deals with the study of the kinds and typology of learners' errors.

In recent years, students are exposed to and influenced by several technological tools. Social networking sites as a medium of interaction between students have been part of a debate nowadays. They motivate learners to enhance their learning, develop their skills and practise their language; however, the language used in these online platforms can affect students' writing negatively. They may use the style of texting/chatting unconsciously in their academic writing. Therefore, it is worth to mention the study conducted by Alhusban (2016) in Jordan who has investigated the impact of modern technological tools on students' writing. It has examined the relationship of new technologies to writing and its implications. The study has revealed that due to the constant exposure to new forms of language like the use of abbreviated words, combine numbers, letters, and symbols to stand for specific words as well as neglecting the grammatical and syntactic rules of correct English; they are now having difficulties distinguishing between informal and formal writing.

Considering the above-mentioned studies, academic writing faces many challenges nowadays. Students struggle when producing their essays in terms of language and even at the level of writing mechanics. In this line of thought, the inclusion of informal language in EFL students' academic papers is not yet considered; thus, the present study aims to fill this gap by shedding light on students' deviation from academic to informal writing. In addition, it offers an original analysis of various types of errors committed by EFL learners. It is also important to note that recently, the boom of technology has brought many changes in people's ways of writing; this is what inspires the present work to tackle the issue of technological tools as well as their impact on students' academic writing. Accordingly, the study of EFL students' deviation from academic to informal writing is an area worthy of investigation.

Aims and Significance of the Study

The present study aims at investigating third-year students' deviation from academic to informal writing by identifying the informal features and the main types of errors that they make in their exam papers. Hence, it attempts to reach three main objectives. First, this research strives to identify the informal features that third-year students use in their academic writing. Second, it aims to identify the major types of errors that students make. Third, the study goes forward to discover whether the language used in social networks has any impact on students' academic writing.

This research can be beneficial for both teachers and students because it can help teachers identify their students' writing problems that tell them about the effectiveness of their teaching techniques. It enables them to emphasise more on those areas of difficulties, where the frequency is higher and to discover what learners still need to learn. It also helps learners to be aware of their problems to guide them for a better academic writing production.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

For the purpose of reaching the above-mentioned research objectives, the research attempts to answer the following questions:

- 1- What are the informal features that third-year students of English use in their academic writing?
- 2- What are the major types of errors that they make in their academic writing?
- 3- Does the language used in social networking sites have any impact on students' academic writing?

In an attempt to answer these questions, the following hypotheses are advanced:

- H1. The main informal feature that third-year students use is “contractions”.
- H2. The major types of errors that third-year students make are at the level of verb tense and punctuation.
- H3. The language used in social networking sites has a negative impact on students’ academic writing.

Research Techniques and Methodology

In order to achieve the above-mentioned objectives and answer the research questions of the study, a mixed-method approach, which combines both quantitative and qualitative methods for data collection and data analysis is adopted. The research data are collected through a random selection of eighty (80) exam essays written by third-year students in the department of English at MMUTO in the civilisation module during the sixth semester of the academic year 2018/2019. Students’ papers are analysed in order to identify the inclusion of informal features and the major errors. The researchers of this study have selected third-year students because they have studied the different types of essays and they are expected to have certain knowledge about essay structure, norms and rules. In addition, 80 online questionnaires are administered to the same students who are now Master one students during the academic year 2019/2020 in order to confirm whether the language used in social networking sites has any effect on their academic essays. The data gathered from the two research instruments are analysed and interpreted as follows: the quantitative data are analysed by the use of the Google Forms and are defined in form of statistics, while the qualitative data are interpreted by the QCA (Qualitative Content Analysis).

Structure of the Dissertation

The present dissertation follows the simple-traditional model that consists of four chapters along with a general introduction and a general conclusion. The ‘General

Introduction' gives the reader an insight about the content and the topic of this research. The first chapter entitled 'Review of the Literature' clarifies the main concepts, reviews previous works that are related to the topic, and presents the main analytical frameworks. The second chapter 'Research Design and Methodology' describes the methodological procedures the researchers follow. It offers a description of the sample and the participants involved in the study as well as the data collection and data analysis tools. The third chapter named 'Presentation of the Findings' presents the obtained results. The last chapter is 'Discussion of the Findings', deals with the analysis and the interpretation of the results in relation to the analytical frameworks for the sake of answering the research questions and confirming or refuting the working hypotheses. Finally, the 'General Conclusion' summarises the general outcomes of the study and offers suggestions for further research on the topic.

Introduction

The present chapter deals with the review of the literature which is intended to account for the major works that are related to the present study. It aims at exploring some theoretical considerations in relation to the key concepts that are used throughout the research. This chapter is divided into five sections. The first section provides some definitions of academic writing, its principles and the main difficulties as well as the obstacles encountered by learners. The second section is concerned with informal writing, its definition and features. The third section includes a general explanation of correctness versus formality with both styles. The fourth section in its part, deals with the impact of the language used in social networking sites on students' academic writing from different perspectives. The final section is devoted to the analytical frameworks upon which this work is based.

1. Academic Writing

1.1. Academic Writing Definition

Academic writing in a broad sense, is any written assignment that is performed in an academic setting such as essays, books, academic journals, dissertations and theses. It has the objective to make the work clear, well-correct and legible to the reader. Oshima and Hogue (1998) define academic writing as a type of formal writing that is required to use in schools or universities. They clarify that academic style is different from other types of writing such as personal, literary, journalistic, or business writing in terms of audience, tone and purpose. This means that in an academic setting, the audience should comprise researchers, professors and experts in the field. In addition, the tone used to communicate ideas should be clear, concise and must display objectivity. As far as the purpose is concerned, it should be very specific and precise.

Another definition is provided by Irvin (2010:08), in which he claims that '*Academic writing is always a form of evaluation that asks you to demonstrate knowledge and show proficiency with certain disciplinary skills in thinking, interpreting, and presenting*'. From his definition, one can deduce that academic writing does not only require the use of critical thinking, including strong arguments, reasonable ideas, but it also requires the use of the appropriate formal language and structures in order to present coherent, cohesive and acceptable pieces of writing.

Bowker (2007:03) in his turn, states that academic writing is different from other forms of writing because it follows its own set of rules and practices. In terms of readability, this latter necessitates a formal structure of ideas, argumentative and persuasive nature of composition, flawless writing mechanics (grammar, punctuation and spelling), and denotes a writing free from errors, mistakes and inclusion of non-formal styles. This implies that since academic writing is produced for a specialized audience, writing authenticity is often demanded.

1.2. Principles of Academic Writing

Academic writing has certain principles that writers need to obey with a strict set of requirements. Whitaker (2009) has come up with some principles of academic writing. First of all, clear purpose remains necessary for the writer to specify his objective since it provides answers for the question to which he has to answer in his essay. The second principle is concerned with the audience that should be well defined. Therefore, to catch this latter's interest, the choice of the language and style used in academic writing should suit the audience. This means that the formal style is required when addressing a professional audience. In addition, academic writing requires a clear point of view that is a perspective from which an essay is written. In other words, the aim behind being precise and concise in

this context is to show and support one's original idea about the topic. In this vein, it is worthy to note that the writer should maintain objectivity and try not to introduce too much the author's personality so as to let the facts and events speak for themselves.

Additionally, Whitaker (2009) insists on the fact that the writer needs to focus on strengthening their own point of view and support the thesis statement in order to produce a clear piece of writing without confusing the readers with diverse ideas. It must also be noted that in order to produce coherent paragraphs and essays, the writer has to follow a standard organisational pattern (introduction, body and conclusion) by respecting the order of ideas. Whitaker (2009) states that the reader should not think hard to understand the writer's ideas; however, simple and complete explanations are required in order to get the reader's attention and for the content to be clear and precise. Finally, writing style plays an important role in academic writing. Thus, words choice has to be constructive and precise rather than incomplete and shortened. In addition, the writer has to use his own words whenever possible that should be clear, concise and readable. Therefore, learners should be careful and avoid the inclusion of other writing styles like chat or casual language because it makes it less academic and more informal.

From the above mentioned features, it is clear that academic writing requires objectivity, specific language and coherent utterances from the person who writes. In addition, everything should be accompanied by proofs and justifications for a better explanation of ideas; however, Whitaker (2009) does not give much attention to writing mechanics that maintain clarity and avoid ambiguity in expression.

Heady (2007) in her turn, has given much importance to the writing mechanics when mentioning the characteristics of a good academic writing. She has focused on good mechanical skills including grammar, spelling, punctuation and capitalisation because

mastering these rules allows the writers to transmit their ideas in a clear and understandable way. Academic writing should be coherent and unified. In addition, the writer should avoid filler phrases, verbal tics, space-wasters and other casual words to make the writing more academic and less informal.

1.3. EFL Learners' Difficulties in Academic Writing

Academic writing is considered as an integral part of learning English. It is an extremely complex cognitive activity which requires '*careful thought, discipline and concentration*' (Grami, 2010:09 cited in Al Badi, 2015:66). Teachers do their best and devote much time and efforts to improve learners' academic writing, but unfortunately, their writing compositions are not quite satisfying and not good as expected to be. As Yağiz and Yiğiter (2012:1263) argue:

The literature on academic writing strongly suggests that this is not an easy process, and that even the most academic writers encounter difficulties, challenges and obstacles in their efforts to write productively and effectively.

In other words, it is not an easy skill to be learned especially for ESL learners and even for English native speakers because it is difficult to jump from a casual style to a very high standard level. The complexity of this process leads the majority of students to struggle when they write paragraphs and essays; this results in poor language proficiency.

According to Ghabool *et al.* (2012:132), many learners may encounter difficulties which hinder their writing proficiency such as '*proper use of grammar, conventions, punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and some of the basic and initiating aspects of writing*'. This means that at this level, difficulties are seen within the language aspects and that the writer has to take them into consideration to produce coherent paragraphs and essays free from errors and deviations to non-academic styles.

1.3.1. Difficulties in Grammar

Mastering grammar means to have the ability to use the language accurately, meaningfully and appropriately in oral and especially in written expressions. Grammar has been defined by Nunan (2003) as a set of rules that specify the correct order of words in a sentence. It is considered as a basic element for learning a language, and teaches students how to write English correctly (cited in Pratiwi, 2012). Grammar stands as a problem for many learners. Hourani (2008) in his study about the grammatical errors has revealed that the way students compose their essays shows their weak grasp of the basic principles of English grammar. These are limited to eight major errors: passive voice, verb tense and form, subject-verb agreement, word order, prepositions, articles, plurality and auxiliaries. Most of the incorrect grammatical sentences that are found in students' essays were due to intralingual errors.

1.3.2. Difficulties in Vocabulary

Teaching vocabulary in context always shows better results in students' final compositions. Al-Khasawneh (2010) in his study finds that '*a reasonable vocabulary size is needed for students to function effectively in their programs*' (cited in Al-Mukdad, 2019:301). This means that the more active one's vocabulary is, the more choices one has for communicating precisely what they intend to convey. Students' difficulties in this latter usually lay on their failing to remember important words to use or failing to use appropriate words. For this reason, vocabulary may have a great impact on students' academic writing. Therefore, the art of accumulating and using a good stock of vocabulary should not be neglected.

1.3.3. Difficulties in Punctuation

Punctuation is a very crucial part in academic writing since it eliminates ambiguity and makes the work easy to read and understand. Thus, students must be aware of its importance and power in affecting the meaning. Carroll and Wilson (1993) have discussed three main difficulties that are related to punctuation: its rules are not exact, it is complex, and it depends on the writer's style to settle the meaning. Thus, Al Fadda (2012) confirms that learners must be familiar with punctuation marks, counting commas, full stops, semicolon, colon, dash, hyphen, and capitalisation; and know how to apply them (cited in Al-Yaseen, 2018). Moreover, most of the punctuation difficulties faced by EFL learners are due to the L1 interference and the inadequate mastery of the second language (Betham, 2011; Elkilic *et al.* 2009, *ibid.*).

1.3.4. Difficulties in Formal Style

Academic writing requires a formal tone and style which is impersonal, clear, focussed and structured. A recent research conducted by Singh (2015) indicates that the use of the appropriate formal style is the most challenging aspect for students. In fact, it is considered as an aspect of difficulty as it uses more formal vocabulary than everyday speech in addition to the strict use of grammar. Besides, maintaining objectivity is a crucial point that should be adhered when writing academic texts. Moreover, accuracy is of paramount importance when addressing professional audience because students in this context usually fail to produce high standard language, precise terms and complete thoughts; they rather focus only on the content. Indeed, although students are exposed to various informal platforms like social media, they should maintain the formal tone throughout a piece of writing by not jumping from one type to another in the same text.

1.4. The main Obstacles to Academic Writing

Not being capable of writing may be a result of various barriers. Students suffer from many obstacles that hinder their abilities to achieve satisfaction in their academic writing, including lack of motivation, reading and the influence of the first language on writing (Belkhir and Benyelles, 2017). Raja and Nagasubramani (2018) state that technology is also considered as an obstacle that hinders students' academic writing.

1.4.1. Influence of Technology

Technology in education has brought many positives as it offers a new way for learners to interact and engage with course materials. It makes learning more interactive and collaborative due to the variety of services it offers; however, it is sometime seen as a threat that hinders students' performance. Technology influences the learning process, but it probably makes the biggest impact on students' writing in some degree (Raja and Nagasubramani, 2018). Digital communication develops the use of a specific writing style which is too informal with endless terms, phrases and expressions that are completely inappropriate in their classroom writings. As technology encourages its users to write more frequently, students nowadays are all about text messaging that often reduce the quality of their academic writing with its shortened forms. Thus, when it comes to their formal papers, a lot of them struggle when writing concise and well developed ideas. Ultimately, the presence of technology can distract their academic performance if it is used inappropriately.

2. Informal Writing

2.1. Definition of Informal Writing

Informal writing cannot be defined in a clear and simple way. It is either defined in contrast to formal writing or in terms of its features (Hyland and Jiang, 2017). Therefore, it may be affirmed that informal writing is different from academic writing in terms of purpose,

tone and word choice. This type of writing is usually used in informal situations when politeness and exactness are not required. Hasund (2019:13) claims that:

Informal language is described as used in everyday conversations, it is relaxed/casual, unceremonious, friendly and private; it is used in texts that are personal and addressed to people one knows well; it is related to generational differences, being more often used among younger people, and is typical of an oral style.

More precisely, informal writing is similar to spoken conversations where there is less distance between the writer and the reader; it takes a personal tone as if the writer addresses directly his audience. This style of writing is best suited when communicating with friends, family and acquaintances, wherein casual and spontaneous language is used. In addition, it is commonly used by young people and this may be attributed to the fact that it is the easiest and the most comfortable style.

2.2. Features of Informal Writing

Fowler and Aaron (2016) argue that informal writing appears like everyday spoken language '*in its colloquial language, contractions and short, fairly simple sentences*' and '*incomplete sentences, slang, no capital letters and shortened spellings*' are some of the features that are labelled (cited in Hasund, 2019). Therefore, informal writing is a style of writing that is generally used in everyday conversations as well as in social media platforms. Moreover, informal style uses personal pronouns, active voice, contractions, abbreviations, phrasal verbs, vague expressions and slangs. It is also characterised by the use of simple words and sentences, in addition to a subjective style with the expression of opinions and feelings (cited in Abu Sheikha and Inkpen, 2011). This means that informal writing is spontaneous, familiar and easy style of writing which is mainly used in informal situations and various online platforms.

3. Writing Styles: Correctness VS Formality

Many people express themselves in different ways, and the same idea may be written differently when addressing different audiences, using different modalities or tackling different tasks (Bell, 1984 cited in Heylighen and Dewaele, 1999); however, many of them believe that there is one style of writing that is more correct than the others. In fact academic writing and informal writing are two different styles that are used in different situations.

Heylighen and Dewaele (1999) claim that a formal style is characterised by detachment, accuracy, rigidity and heaviness, yet an informal style is more flexible, direct, implicit, and involved, but less informative (cited in Ebrahimi and Fakhri, 2019). That is, the former is rigorous and flawless and prevents ambiguity, while the latter is similar to conversational language as it builds a close relationship with readers. This does not mean that academic writing is more correct than informal one. Hence, *'a better way of looking at things is to say that usage is correct in its place'* (Swan, 2016:315). Swan (2016) also affirms that informal language as *'mostly used in informal situations'*. In other words, it does not mean that informal writing is the wrong one; it just means that it is less appropriate to use in academic writing and it rather depends on their purposes. *'The only forms that are wrong in all contexts are learners' errors'* (*ibid.*). They are considered wrong in both academic and informal contexts.

According to Hyland and Jiang (2017:40) *'there is a gradual shift from standard detached and impersonal styles of writing to ones that allow more personal comment, narration and stylistic variation'*. This means that learners tend to shift from academic to informal writing when producing their written compositions. Alamri (2015) in his study has found that there is a significant increase at the level of informal writing in some academic assignments, and this was due to the impact of social media (cited in Akhtar and Riaz, 2019).

This suggests that these platforms weaken the quality of students' essays. Accordingly, due to the appearance of social media, making errors and mixing the two styles are common in students' papers (Harris and Dlit, 2015 cited in Akhtar and Riaz, 2019).

4. The Impact of the Language used in Social Networking Sites on Students' Academic Writing

Social networking sites are a category of social media that are classified in the summit of the sites visited worldwide, especially by students (Alexa *et al.*, 2012 cited in Hussain *et al.*, 2017). They include: Twitter, Messenger, Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, Snapchat. This category of social media permits users to connect by creating personal profiles, inviting their friends and colleagues to have access to those profiles, and sending messages between each other (Kaplan & Hanlein, 2010 cited in Okundia, 2016). In other words, they are Internet-based tools that permit users to keep in touch with their friends, family and colleagues; they also facilitate communication and give people the chance to interact, using a two-way communication.

Social networking sites (SNS) have become a part of individuals' daily lives, and as stated by Kuss and Griffiths (2011), teenagers and students are the majority of its users compared to the whole population (cited in Sharma and Godiyal, 2016). Besides, Facebook is the most used social media (Habes *et al.*, 2018 cited in Fatokun, 2019).

SNS may have different benefits on students' writing and learning in general when they are used properly and appropriately. Siddiqui and Singh (2016) in their study about the impact of social media platforms on students have cited some positive effects of this latter. First, it can help learners enhance their studies through exchanging information, such as documents, lessons, PDF books or articles and sharing their knowledge with others. In addition, many of the students who do not take an interest consistently in class may feel that they can express

their thoughts easily on social media. Furthermore, teachers may post on social media about class activities, school events, homework assignments which may be very useful for them.

Contrastingly, the majority of students spend their time discussing with their friends via social media platforms and this may definitely have a negative influence on their academic writing. When using SNS, students use a particular type of writing, which is different from the formal one used in their classrooms or academic assignments. It is called “texting/chatting”; it describes the language of text messages (Sutherland, 2002 cited in Kahari, 2014). It has its own style and features, including the use of abbreviations, slang, syntactic reductions, asterics emoting, deleting of part of speech, mainly subjects, pronouns, prepositions, articles, auxiliary or modal verbs and contractions (Ling, 2008; Doring, 2002, *ibid.*).

Chatting produces an abbreviated mind set in students which enables them to write with little detail and represent words by replacing them with shorter and less sophisticated words. Examples of the words and phrases that are used when texting are: “4U” for “for you”, “B4” for “before”, “LOL” for “laughing out loud”, “shud” for “should”, and “Gr8” for “great” (Daisieh, 2011 cited in Alhusban, 2016). In addition students when writing quickly in the sense that this can be more productive results a floating of ideas rather than writing with accurate and exact grammar which may direct them to commit errors. Nonetheless, texting may threaten students’ formal writing since it may lead to non-standard uses and contracted words, as well as the production of misspelled words and some new words that do not exist in the English language.

From the above mentioned studies, one can deduce that SNS can enhance students’ learning performance when they are used appropriately as they can harm their learning when this latter is used inappropriately.

5. Analytical Frameworks

The present study aims at depicting EFL students’ deviation from academic to informal writing. This requires the adoption of two analytical frameworks for the analysis of students’ examination essays. The first is the framework of informal writing features suggested by Chang and Swales (1999) in addition to the features cited in Abu Sheikha and Inkpen (2010) as criteria for analysis. This framework is adopted to this study because it is quite concise and able of drawing a clear picture of what informality is like in academic texts. The second is the error analysis theory suggested by Corder (1974 as cited in Ellis, 1994).

5.1. Informality Features

Hyland and Jiang (2017:43) define informality in academic writing as *‘linguistic features which establish a close relationship with readers by realizing a relatively personal tenor which allows writers to make assumptions about a shared context’*. This definition is used as a starting point for analysing the informal elements used in students’ essays.

5.1.1. Chang and Swales (1999) Criteria of Informal Writing

1. The use of the first person pronouns to refer to the author(s) (I and We).	e.g. I will approach this issue in a roundabout way.
2. Broad reference- anaphoric pronouns that can refer to antecedents of varying length (especially, this, these, that, those, it and which).	e.g. The artist composes, writes, paints just as he dreams seizing whatever swims close to his net. This , not the world seen directly, is his raw material.
3. Split infinitives: an infinitive that has an adverb between “to” and the stem of the verb.	e.g. The president proceeded to sharply admonish the reporters who asked unanswerable questions.
4. Beginning a sentence with conjunctions and conjunctive adverb “however”.	e.g. And I will blame her if she fails in these ways.
5. End a sentence with a preposition.	e.g. A student should not be taught more than he can think about .
6. Run-on sentences and expressions.	e.g. These semiconductors can be used in robots, CD, players, etc .
7. Sentence fragments: sentences which miss an essential element as: subject, verb or object.	e.g. But not for want for trying.
8. Contractions.	e.g. Export figures won’t improve until the

	economy is stronger.
9. Direct questions.	e.g. What can be done to lower costs?.
10. Exclamations.	e.g. So it turns out that the author is telling the readership (for now) to ignore the author's objections rather than any they might have of their own!

Table (1): Chang and Swales' (1999) Informal Features

5.1.2. Abu Sheikha and Inkpen (2010) Criteria of Informal Writing

1. Abbreviations.	e.g. OMG I dropped my <i>iph</i> .
2. Slangs.	e.g. I wanna eat dinner.
3. Vague expressions.	e.g. I need to buy cards and wrapping paper and stuff like that .

Table (2): Abu Sheikha and Inkpen's (2010) Informal Features

Neunerdt *et al.* (2013) in their study assert that informal writing represents the language of social media platforms since all its users posts are written in an informal way. These online tools encourage students to write in a way that reflects speech. Besides, brief messages, contractions and abbreviations are some of the most used features in SNS (Funnell, 2017).

The analysis is made by checking the frequencies of the above mentioned features to examine informality in their academic essays.

5.2. Error Analysis Theory

Studying learners' errors help to predict the difficulties in learning a second or a foreign language. Dealing with errors requires following error analysis (EA) theory which is a branch of applied linguistics, established by Stephen Pit Corder in 1967 and has become a very popular approach for describing second language learners' errors.

5.2.1. Error Analysis Definition

Error analysis is the study of the kind and quantity of errors that are found in either speaking or writing particularly in the field of applied linguistics. As Crystal (2003) declares,

it is a *'technique for identifying, classifying and systematically interpreting unacceptable forms produced by someone learning a foreign language, using any of the principles and procedures provided by linguistics'* (cited in Kotsyuk, 2015:390). From this definition, one can notice that EA plays an important role in second and foreign language teaching as well. It is a device to discover all the types of errors, interpret them and explain their nature and causes.

5.2.2. Errors Vs Mistakes

Errors are *'a systematic deviation, when learner has not learnt something and consistently gets its wrong'* (Norrish, 1987 cited in Ridha, 2012:25). They occur due to the lack of knowledge and they are the result of incomplete learning and linguistic incompetency while a mistake refers to *'a performance error that is either random guess or a slip in that it is a failure to utilize a known system correctly'* (Corder, 1967, *ibid.*). According to Corder, errors are considered "systematic". It means that learners make them repeatedly and do not recognize that they are errors; however, a mistake can be self-corrected, but an error cannot.

5.2.3. Procedures of Error Analysis

To achieve the target goal of this investigation, Corder (1974) as cited in Ellis, (1994:48) has identified a model for error analysis, which involves the following steps:

a. Collection of Data

There are several methods that one can use to collect data for a research. As it is stated in Ellis's book (1994), the limitations of EA are evident in the samples of learners language collected. For instance, either from a 'free' composition by students on a given theme or from examination answers. He points to the importance of gathering well-defined samples of language learners to make clear statements concerning what kind of errors they produce and under which conditions.

b. Identification of Errors

After collecting the corpus of learners' language, the errors have to be identified. According to Corder's model for identifying errors in the utterances of SL/FL learners, '*every sentence is to be regarded as idiosyncratic until shown to be otherwise*' (cited in Al-khresheh, 2016). Therefore, when identifying errors in students' writing compositions, one has to consider its proper application for determining the standard against which a particular item that is considered erroneous.

c. Description of Errors

According to Ellis (1994), the description of learners' errors is made by comparing learners' idiosyncratic utterances and the reconstructed version in the target language. Two types of descriptive taxonomies have been employed. The first type is based on linguistic categories taxonomy, which permits the quantification and a complete description of errors. The second type is surface strategy taxonomy. Dudley et al, (1982, cited in Ellis 1994:56) classifies errors depending on:

- **Omissions:** the absence of items that must appear in a well-formed utterance.
- **Additions:** adding unnecessary elements to another word.
- **Misinformation:** using the wrong form of a structure.
- **Misorderings:** misplacing the item or putting it in the wrong place.

d. Explanation of Errors

This stage is the most important part of EA since it is concerned with explaining the sources of errors accounting for why they are made. Two main sources of errors are mentioned by Brown (2000 as cited in Ridha, 2012) which are:

- **Interlingual (interference) errors:** are caused by the impact of the native language. In other words, it is the use of some elements of the L1 in the target language, including lexical, grammatical, or pragmatic errors.
- **Intralingual errors:** Erdoğan (2005) affirms that *'intralingual errors occur as a result of learners' attempt to build up concepts and hypotheses about the target language from their limited experience with it'* (ibid.:30). This means that these errors are caused by the effect of the TL itself and they are found in the speech of L2 learners. Richards (1971 cited in Ellis, 1994:58) has subdivided intralingual errors into four categories:
 - **Overgeneralisation:** this type of errors happens when learners create deviant structures on the basis of their experience of other structures in the TL.
 - **Ignorance of rule restrictions:** it occurs when learners apply rules in contexts where they are not required. In other words, it results due to the failure of observing the restrictions or the existing structures.
 - **Incomplete application of rules:** takes place when learners fail to completely develop a certain structure which is required to produce correct sentences.
 - **False concept hypothesised:** refers to the errors committed because of the faulty comprehension of distinctions in the TL.

Mingle and Adams (2015) in their study declare that the majority of the students *'experienced negative effects i.e. poor grammar and spelling'* and *'poor academic performance because of too much use of social media networks'* (cited in Mushtaq and Benraghda, 2018). In addition, Neunerdt *et al.* (2013) assert that chatting through these platforms creates numerous errors such as missing texts, sentence structure, missing punctuation marks and especially the absence of capitalisation.

Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed the main theoretical concepts of the present work. In its five sections, it has provided an overview of the main concepts used in the study and has offered pertinent definitions in relation to the topic of investigation. It has also provided a description of the two analytical frameworks that are adopted to reach the aims of this research. Therefore, the next chapter is referred to as ‘Research Design and Methodology’ which is concerned with the research procedures that this study adopts.

Introduction

This chapter is methodological. It is devoted to the research design of the study. The first section presents the research method. The second one provides a description of the participants and the sample of the investigation. The next section explains the two data collection instruments that are used, involving an analysis of learners' exam papers and an online questionnaire, and describes the piloting of students' questionnaire. These two types of data collection were administered and collected respectively from June 17th to July 7th, 2020. The last section provides a depiction of the data analysis procedures. Thus, a mixed methodology is adopted for the collection and analysis of the findings.

1. Research Method

In order to reach the main objectives of the study, the mixed-method approach is employed. According to Dörnyei (2007:163):

A mixed-methods study involves the collection or analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study with some attempts to integrate the two approaches at once or more stages of the research processes.

In other words, a mixed methodology combines both qualitative and quantitative methods for data collection and data analysis. The choice of using a mixed-method approach is not random. The main reason of choosing this approach is that guarantees the credibility of the results and helps to get a better understanding of the research problem unlike the use of only one research method. More precisely, the quantitative method is used to count and quantify the informal writing features and errors, in addition to the answers obtained from the close-ended questions of the questionnaire. Thus, the Google Forms is used in order to get reliable statistical results. The qualitative method is used to describe the informal writing features and errors, and classify the qualitative data gained from the open-ended questions of

the questionnaire. The results are then explained and interpreted by the Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA).

2. Participants and Sample of the Investigation

2.1. Participants

The participants of this study are third-year students in the department of English at MMUTO. The students are selected randomly; it means that no specific criteria are taken into consideration. Students include both males and females. This population is selected because they have already reached a certain level of proficiency and have learned the rules of effective writing.

2.2. Sample/Corpus

The sample design of the present study is random sampling. The researchers have selected eighty (80) exam papers of the module of civilisation to represent the population of third-year students in the department of English at MMUTO. Thus, each student of this level has the same possibility of being selected. The papers to be analysed are taken from the academic year 2018/2019. The two exam questions are about writing a well-structured essay; the first topic concerns the effectiveness of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal and the second one is about how the Roaring Twenties represented social, economic and cultural discord among Americans. Besides, the students are taught by different teachers, and the papers are taken from different groups. In addition, it is worth to mention that students' anonymity is taken into consideration in this work.

3. Procedures of Data Collection

In order to collect data, two main research instruments are used. The first one is a sample of eighty (80) exam papers selected from the sixth semester (2018/2019) of third-year

students in the department of English at MMUTO. The second instrument is an online questionnaire administered to the same students who have written the essays and who are now in Master one (2019/2020). The questionnaire is conducted during the sixth semester via a messenger group destined for third-year students of the department of English.

3.1. Students' Exam Papers

The present work relies on the analysis of 80 learners' examination papers, as it is mentioned before. They are analysed in accordance with the analytical frameworks which take into account the features of informal writing and the major errors made by third-year students in their academic writing. It is done to inspect students' possible areas of difficulties they are likely to encounter.

3.2. Learners' Questionnaire

In order to gather more reliable data, an online questionnaire is designed in accordance with the literature review of the present work. It is used in order to obtain information and opinions about the use of social networking sites by students, and to discover the impact of its language on their academic writing in relation to the analytical frameworks. A questionnaire is considered as a valuable research tool for the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data. It is defined by Brown (2001) as:

Any written instrument that present respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they are to react either by writing out their answers or selecting from among existing answers. (Cited in Dörnyei, 2003:06).

The questionnaire that is designed contains twenty questions mixing open-ended questions and close-ended questions. It is divided into three main sections. The first one is about the use of social networking sites. It aims to determine whether the participants of this study are familiar with the use of SNS and to get a general idea about the platforms that the

students use the most. As for the second section, ‘the language of chatting/ texting in SNS’, it is about the language that students use when chatting. The third section, which is about the impact of the language of SNS on students’ academic writing, intends to discover whether the language of social networks influences the learners’ academic essays positively or negatively.

3.2.1. Piloting the Questionnaire Addressed to the Learners

Before administering the questionnaire to the students, it was first piloted to test the validity and clarity of the questions. This stage took place in June 21st, 2020. The result from the pilot study of the questionnaire has allowed the researchers of this study to make some changes and clarify some questions. For example, question four was asked without suggesting the possible ways of communication. In addition, the informal features suggested in question eight were not separated in single parts, so the students were confused with the “yes/no” question as they could use some but not others. These changes have made the questionnaire more comprehensible and easy to answer by the respondents.

4. Procedures of Data Analysis

As mentioned previously, the research relies on the mixed-method approach, which combines both quantitative and qualitative methods. Thus, in order to analyse the data gathered from the online questionnaire and the exam papers, both statistical analysis and QCA are used.

4.1. Quantitative Data Analysis

The quantitative data analysis tackles the frequencies of informal features and errors made by third-year students in their exam papers, in addition to the close-ended questions of the questionnaire; using statistics and percentages. Dörnyei (2007) argues that a quantitative research demands data collection instruments that result mainly in numerical data, and are then analysed by statistical methods. For a better reliability of the results, several visuals are

used, including tables, pie charts and diagrams. Concerning the calculation of the percentages, the Google Forms is used.

The Google Forms is a cloud-based data device used for designing and developing online questionnaires. Raju and Harinayarana (2016) argue that this tool allows for the analysis and graphical representation of data. Once the questionnaire answers are filled online, the data are automatically recorded in Google spreadsheet in an analysable format and allow for tabulation and graphical representation of data.

4.2. Qualitative Data Analysis

The Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA) is used to analyse the learners' exam papers and the open-ended questions of the questionnaire. Likewise, Dörnyei (2007) confirms that a qualitative research requires data collection tools that result in open-ended and non-numerical data. They are later analysed by non-statistical methods. The QCA is therefore designed for the analysis of content. Accordingly, Hsieh and Shannon (2005:1278) define it as *'a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes of patterns'*.

Conclusion

This chapter has presented a detailed description of the research design and methodology that is followed in this work. It has first presented the sample and the participants of this research. Then, it has explained and justified the data collection and data analysis. The following chapter is concerned with the presentation and analysis of the study findings.

Introduction

This chapter aims at presenting the findings of the research. It reports the results reached after the analysis of eighty (80) exam papers in the civilisation module of third-year students at MMUTO from the academic year 2018/2019 and the results of eighty (80) questionnaires administered to the same students who are now Master one students (2019/2020). For the sake of organisation and clarity, the findings are presented in terms of frequencies and percentages and displayed in tables, diagrams and pie charts. This chapter consists of three sections. The first one is devoted to the presentation of the frequency of informal features from the analysis of the corpus. The second one comprises the presentation of the major errors from the same corpus. The last part covers the presentation of the results of the questionnaire.

1. Presentation of the Results of the Corpus

1.1. Informal Features

Informal features	Number of occurrence of each feature in all the papers	Examples from the essays	Correction
The use of the first person pronouns to refer to the author-(s) (I and We)	28	1-In this essay we will discuss some reasons and consequences of the great depression. 2-To conclude, I think that Roosevelt was a great man who change the life of many American people.	1-This essay will account for the reasons and consequences of the Great Depression. 2-To conclude, Roosevelt was a great man who changed the lives of many American people.
Broad reference	26	1-The word new deal signified the new relationship between the american people and their government. It was a programme introduced by Ferdernald Roosevelt to help the economy and society in general. That had been shaken by the great depression.	1-The word New Deal signified the new relationship between the American people and their government. It was a program introduced by Ferdinand Roosevelt to help the economy and society in general. That program had been shaken by the great

Presentation of the Findings

		2-After the first world war, women got more rights such as the right of vote in the 18 th amendment. This made them change their behaviour and attitude.	depression. 2- After the first world war, women got more rights such as the right to vote in the eighteenth amendment. This advancement made them change their behaviours and attitudes.
Beginning a sentence with conjunctions and conjunctive adverb “however”	70	1- Many farmers made loans from banks to purchase lands and machines. But most of them had no money to pay back the bills. 2-Even if the new deal did not end the great depression, some of its measures are still functioning until now like the social security act. However , some people are not of this view.	1- Many farmers made loans from banks to purchase lands and machines, but most of them had no money to pay back the bills. 2- Even if the New Deal did not end the Great Depression, some of its measures are still functioning until now like the Social Security Act; however , some people are not of this view.
End a sentence with a preposition	8	1-Roosevelt made an engagement to save americans from the miserable situation that they were living in . 2-The jazz music also come to exist as a new type of music which the americans did not know before .	1- Roosevelt made an engagement to save Americans from the miserable situation in which they were living. 2- The jazz music also came to exist as a new type of music that the Americans did not know before the twentieth century.
Run-on sentences and expressions	32	1-Americans were taking credits from banks to buy cars, washing machines, vaccum cleaners... etc. 2-To conclude, the great depression has a negative effect across the entire economy, society, culture, etc.	1- Americans were taking credits from banks to buy cars, washing machines and vacuum cleaners. 2- To conclude, the Great Depression has a negative effect on the entire economy, society and culture.
Contractions	42	1-Furthermore, America was wealthy in 1920s, but the wealth didn’t extend to all segments of society. 2- It’s hard to say what caused this worldwide depression because it’s all based on opinion as opposed to factual data.	1-Furthermore, America was wealthy in 1920s, but the wealth did not extend to all segments of the society. 2- It is hard to say what caused this worldwide depression because it is all based on opinion as opposed to factual data.
Direct questions	11	1-To which extent was FDR’s new deal effective? 2-What are the different	1-The New Deal was effective in improving America’s economy and stopping the depression, and this will be dealt with in the following paragraphs. 2-This essay tackles the

		changes happened in USA during the Roaring Twenties?	different changes happened in USA during the Roaring Twenties.
Vague expressions	50	1-FDR took the presidency and as a president he did everything that he could to make an end to the economic depression. 2-The second new deal was created because of many things of the first new deal that were not getting better.	1-Ferdinand Roosevelt took the presidency and as a president he made huge efforts to put an end to the economic depression. 2-The second New Deal was created to improve the use of national resources, the security, unemployment and to establish national work relief program that the first new deal did not maintain.
Abbreviations	54	1-Even though Roosevelt did much in his 1st N.D , it was not enough. 2-Buying α selling alcohol was banned.	1-Even though Roosevelt did much in his first New Deal , it was not enough. 2-Buying and selling alcohol was banned.
Split infinitives	0	/	/
Sentence fragments	0	/	/
Exclamations	0	/	/
Slangs	0	/	/

Table (3): Examples and Frequencies of Informal Features in Students' Exam Papers

Table (3) shows the frequencies and examples of the informal features used by third-year students in their essays. As it can be seen, the most frequent feature is sentences initial conjunctions with 70 repetitions. While the frequencies of abbreviations, vague expressions, contractions, run on sentences and expressions, the use of the first personal pronoun, broad reference, direct questions and sentences final prepositions are 54, 50, 42, 32, 28, 26, 11 and 8 respectively. As for split infinitives, sentence fragments, exclamations and slangs, they are not used at all.

1.2. Classification of Students' Major Errors

In the analysis of students' exam papers, it was noticed that the majority of them have made several errors when writing. These errors are classified according to Pit Corder's (1974) theory of Error Analysis (as cited in Ellis, 1994).

1.2.1. Interlingual Errors

➤ Articles

Examples	Correction	Surface Structure Description	Frequency of Use
1- The inequality in _ distribution of wealth and the over speculation have led to an economic collapse.	The inequality in the distribution of wealth and the over speculation have led to an economic collapse.	Omission	185
2- At that period, many people go to watch a movies or play games to enjoy their time.	At that period, many people go to watch movies or play games to enjoy their time.	Addition	
3- The New deal embraced the concept of a government.	The New Deal embraced the concept of the government.	Misinformation	

Table (4): Classification of Article Errors

Table (4) contains examples of article errors made by third-year students in their essays. Three categories of errors with articles are found. Omission, when students neglect to write them when they are required. Addition, the articles are used when they are not needed and finally the use of an indefinite article when the definite is needed.

➤ Prepositions

Examples	Correction	Surface Structure Description	Frequency of Use
4- Relief was aimed _ providing help and money for unemployed Americans.	Relief aimed at providing help and money for unemployed Americans.	Omission	125
5- Roosevelt's New deal contained of many successful measures.	Roosevelt's New Deal contained many successful measures.	Addition	
6- On 1930, a new president was elected called Ferdinand Roosevelt.	In 1930, a new president was elected called Ferdinand Roosevelt.	Misinformation	

Table (5): Classification of Preposition Errors

From Table (5), it is noticed that prepositions create certain confusion for most learners. The errors that students make in this category are characterised as absence of

the preposition when it is required, addition of the preposition when it is not needed and the wrong use of prepositions.

➤ **Spelling**

Examples	Correction	Surface Structure Description	Frequency of Use
7- Americans demanded an immediate action.	Americans demanded an immediate action.	Omission	409
8- The Great Depression was the worst economic periode in the American history.	The Great Depression was the worst economic period in the American history.	Addition	
9- This law attempted illegally to prevent employers from using intimidation.	This law attempted illegally to prevent employers from using intimidation.	Misinformation	
10- The great depression was caused by the dramatic crash of stock market on Octobre , 1929.	The Great Depression was caused by the dramatic crash of stock market in October , 1929.	Misorderings	

Table (6): Classification of Spelling Errors

Table (6) demonstrates that English spelling is particularly difficult for third-year students. Some students write words exactly as they pronounce them while others confuse between the English and French spelling, so they tend to write them in French.

1.2.2. Intralingual Errors

➤ **Verb Tense**

Examples	Correction	Frequency of Use	
Wrong use of irregular verbs	11-Ferdinand Roosevelt gived hope for the Americans.	Ferdinand Roosevelt gave hope to the Americans.	169
The use of the present instead of the past and vice versa	12-Roosevelt programs known as the new deal brings many benefits from 1933 to 1939.	Roosevelt's programs known as the New Deal brought many benefits from 1933 to 1939.	
Subject-Verb Agreement	14-The Civil Work Administration consist for providing work for millions of men.	The Civil Work Administration consists of providing work for millions of men.	

Table (7): Classification of Verb Tense Errors

Table (7) shows that verb tense is a problem for third-year students. Three categories of errors are distinguished. The wrong use of irregular verbs is still an issue for learners. They use the present instead of the past and vice versa. Finally, they find difficulties in subject-verb agreement, especially with the “s” of the third person singular.

➤ **Punctuation**

	Examples	Correction	Frequency of Use
Missing a comma	19-The work progress administration was formed to help unemployed workers build different public projects: road airports parks buildings and schools.	The Work Progress Administration was formed to help unemployed Americans build different public projects: roads, airports, parks, buildings, and schools.	349
Unnecessarily commas	20-The roaring Twenties, is a great period of economic, political and social changes.	The Roaring Twenties is a great period of economic, political and social changes.	
Missing a full stop	21-The great depression continued and things were not getting better In 1935 Roosevelt decided a new laws	The Great Depression continued and the situation was not getting better. In 1935, Roosevelt decided to try new laws.	

Table (8): Classification of Punctuation Errors

Table (8) indicates that third-year students do not use punctuation appropriately. Three categories of errors are made. They neglect the use of commas in some sentences and add unnecessary commas in other situations which create some ambiguity. In addition, they omit full stops where necessary.

➤ **Capitalisation**

	Examples	Correction	Frequency of Use
First letter of a sentence	15-on conclusion, This period creat and caused the Great Depression which destroyed USA economie, society and cultur.	In conclusion, this period created and caused the Great Depression which destroyed USA economy, society and culture.	519
Names of people	16-When roosevelt started the new deal, they felt that he was purchased.	When Roosevelt started the New Deal, they felt that he was purchased.	
Names of citizenship	17-The americans choosed Ferdinand Roosevelt as a president for America.	The Americans chose Ferdinand Roosevelt as a president for America.	

Names of historical and political events	18-After the great depression, the president Roosevelt brings the new deal to American's life.	After the Great Depression, the president Roosevelt brought the New Deal to Americans' lives.	
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Table (9): Classification of Capitalisation Errors

From Table (9), it is clear that students confound the use of capitalisation. They sometimes ignore it in the first letter of sentences, names of people and names of citizenship as well. In addition, they do not capitalise names of historical and political events.

2. Presentation of the Students' Questionnaire Results

2.1. Section One: The Use of Social Networking Sites (SNS)

Question 1: Do you use social networking sites?

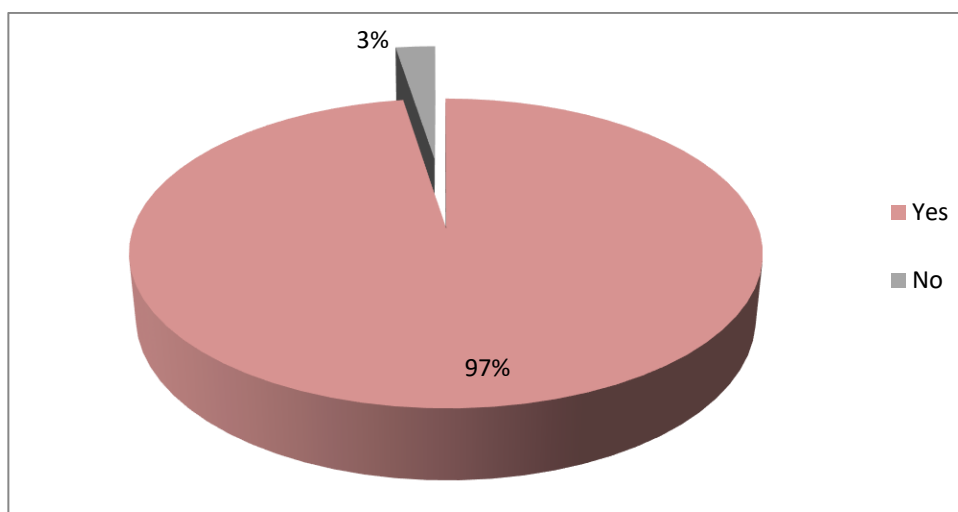


Diagram (1): Students' Use of SNS

Diagram (1) demonstrates that 97% of the participants use social networking sites. In contrast, 3% of them have answered “No”.

- If yes, which one of the following do you use the most? (You can choose more than one answer)

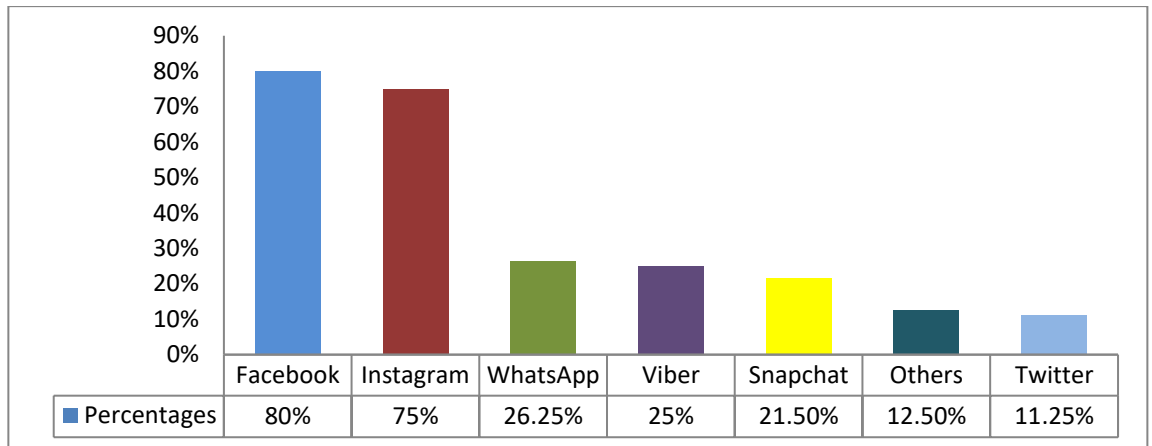


Diagram (2): Students’ Favourite Social Networking Sites

According to the analysis of data, the majority of students have selected more than one choice. Facebook occupies the first place among students with 80% which means that it is the most used social network by students. In addition to Facebook, 75% of the participants use Instagram. 26.25% of the students affirm that they use WhatsApp regularly. As for Viber, 25% of the informants respond that they use this application. Finally, Snapchat and Twitter are also used by the students with 21.5% and 11.25% respectively. Students are also asked to name other social networks they use and most of them have named the following: Messenger, Tiktok, Speaky, Youtube and Wattpad.

Question 2: For which purpose do you use SNS? (You can choose more than one answer)

	Frequency	Percentage
Chat with friends	64	80%
Meet new people	38	47.5%
Share you activities with friends	43	53.75%
Entertainment	52	65%
Learning	29	36.25%
Express your opinion	17	21.25%
Write about different topics	15	18.75%
Attend conferences	1	1.25%

Table (10): The Purpose of Students’ Use of SNS

The results in Table (10) show students’ aim in using SNS. A high rate of students (corresponding to 80%) uses these platforms to chat with friends. 65% of

students use these technological tools for entertainment. Moreover, 53.75% and 47.5% of the informants use SNS for the purpose of sharing their activities with friends and for meeting new people. In addition, 36.25% of students use them for learning. While 21.25% use them to express their opinions and 18.75% of them to write about different topics. Last, 1.25% adds another purpose of using SNS which is to attend conferences.

Question 3: How many hours per day do you spend on these sites?

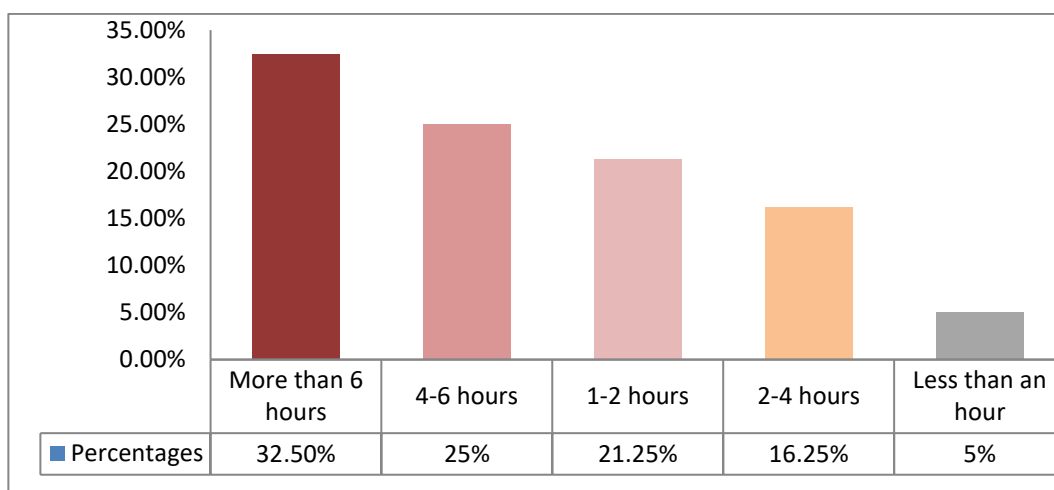


Diagram (3): Students' Average Time Spent on SNS

The results reveal that 32.5% of the participants use social networking sites for more than 6 hours per day. Whereas, 25% of them affirm that they use them from four to six hours. 21.25% of the students use these technological tools from one to two hours while 16.25% of the participants use them from two to four hours. Only 5% of the respondents indicate that they use SNS for less than an hour per day. As a result, social networks are very important in students' daily lives.

Question 4: How do you prefer to communicate in SNS?

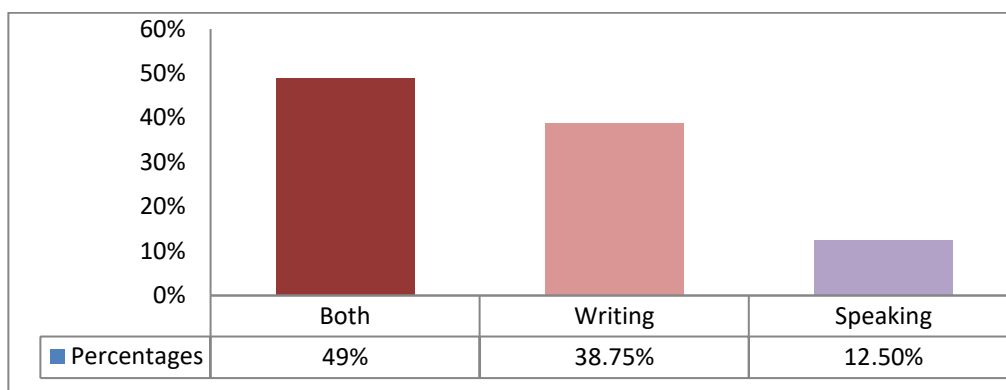


Diagram (4): Students’ Way of Communication in SNS

As it can be seen from Diagram (4), the results display that 12.5% of the participants prefer speaking when communicating in SNS while 38.75% of them prefer writing. Besides, 49% of the students prefer both ways of communication (speaking and writing).

2.2. Section Two: The Language of Chatting/Texting in SNS

Question 5: What kind of language do you use when writing in Social Networking sites (SNS)? Justify your answer.

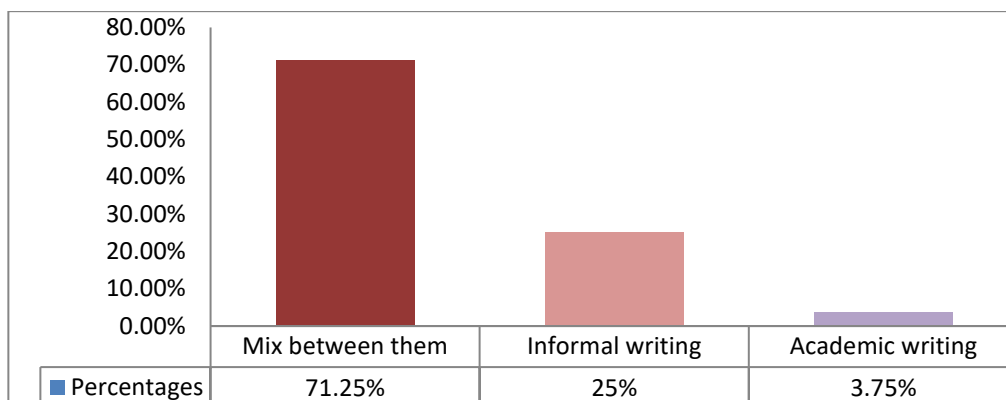


Diagram (5): The Type of Language Used by Students When Texting

From Diagram (5), it is noticed that most of the respondents (71.25%) mix between academic and informal writing when texting in social networking sites. According to them, it depends on the person with whom they are talking. When they communicate with friends and family, they use the informal language; however, when

addressing teachers, old people and strangers they opt for the academic one. 25% of the participants prefer to use the informal writing because it is a space where they feel active, fast and dynamic. Only three students (3.75%) have answered that they communicate in SNS by using academic writing to make their thoughts clear and understandable.

Question 6: Do you pay attention to the kind of language used in your chat messages?

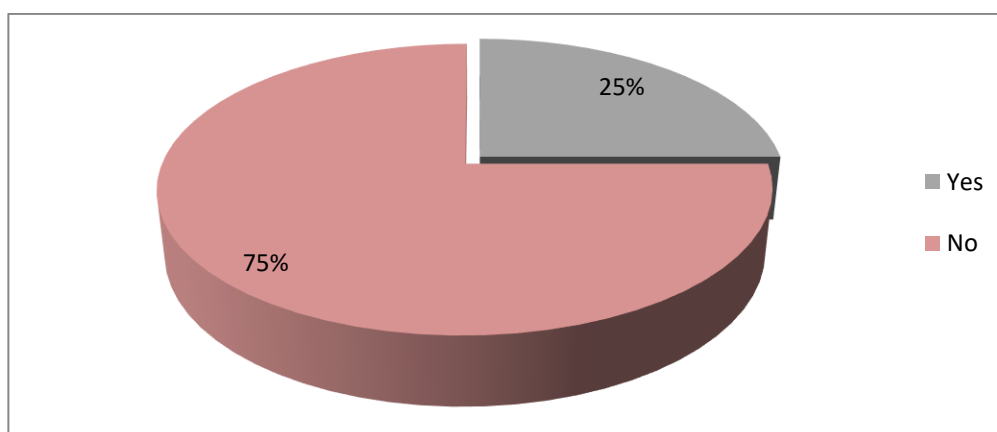


Diagram (6): Students' Care about the Language Used in SNS

As it can be seen from Diagram (6), the results indicate that almost three-fourths of students, corresponding to 75%, do not care about the language they use in their chat messages. Only 25% of the respondents pay attention to the kind of language used in their chat messages.

Question 7: What kind of words do you use in chatting?

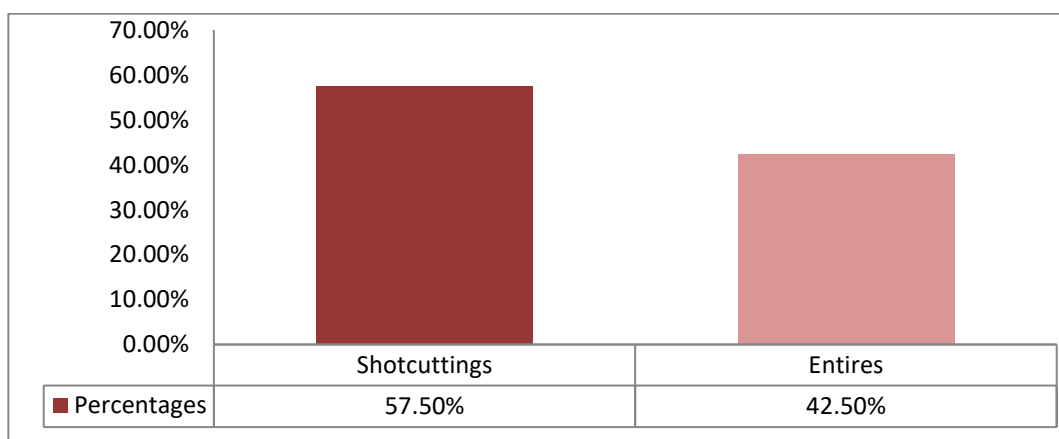


Diagram (7): The Type of Words Used in Chatting

Diagram (7) indicates that most of the students (57.5%) write words in the form of shortcuttings while 42.5% of them prefer to write in the form of entires.

Question 8: Do you use informal language when texting/chatting?

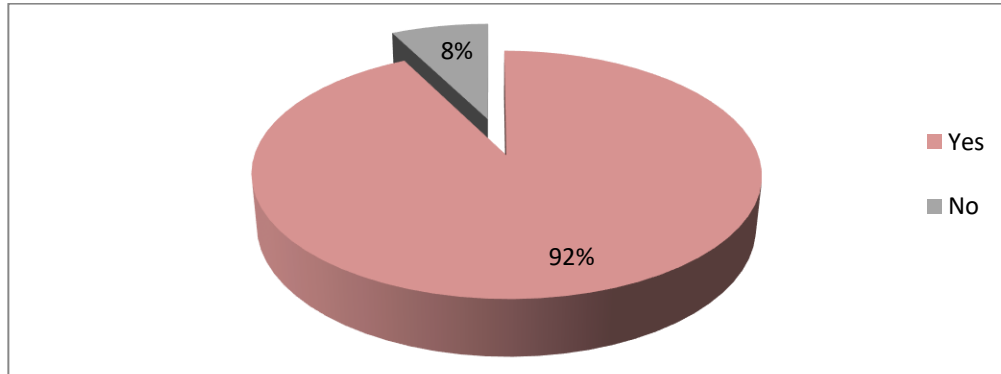


Diagram (8): Students' Use of Informal Language in Texting

From Diagram (8), it can be seen that 92% of the students use informal language when chatting while only 8% of them do not.

- If yes, which feature do you use the most? (You can choose more than one answer)

Informal Features	Percentage
Contractions	67%
Slangs	56.25%
Vague expressions	38.15%
Split infinitives	18.75%
Personal pronouns, Direct questions, exclamations and ending a sentence with a preposition	6.25%

Table (11): The Most Used Informal Features when Texting

Table (11) indicates the most used features by the students when chatting in SNS. Accordingly, “contraction” is ranked at the top of the features used among students with 67% and it is followed by slangs (56.25%). Vague expressions come next with 38.15% and split infinitives with 18.75%; however, other informal features, including personal pronouns, direct questions, exclamations, and ending a sentence with a preposition are rarely used (only 6.25%).

- How often do you use them?

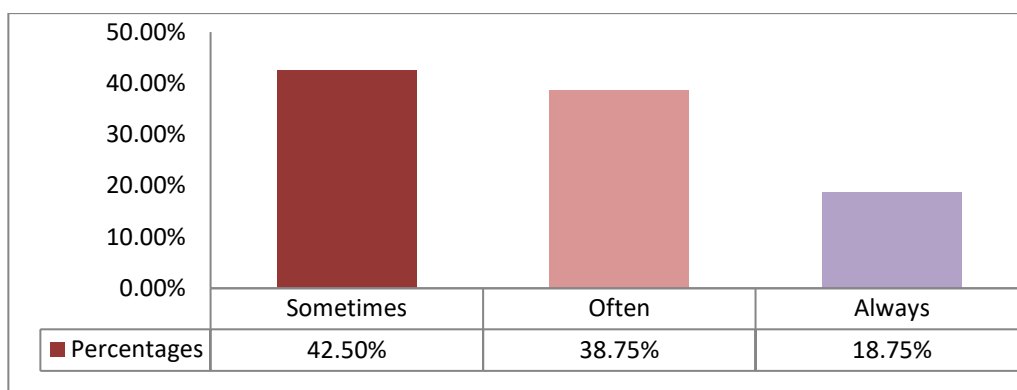


Diagram (9): Students’ Frequency of the Use of Informal Language in Texting

Diagram (9) reveals the regularity of the participants’ use of informal language when communicating through SNS. 42.5% of the students admit that they sometimes use informal features and 38.75% often use them. Contrastingly, only 18.75% of the respondents report that they always use informal features when chatting.

Question 9: Do you use abbreviations when texting/chatting?

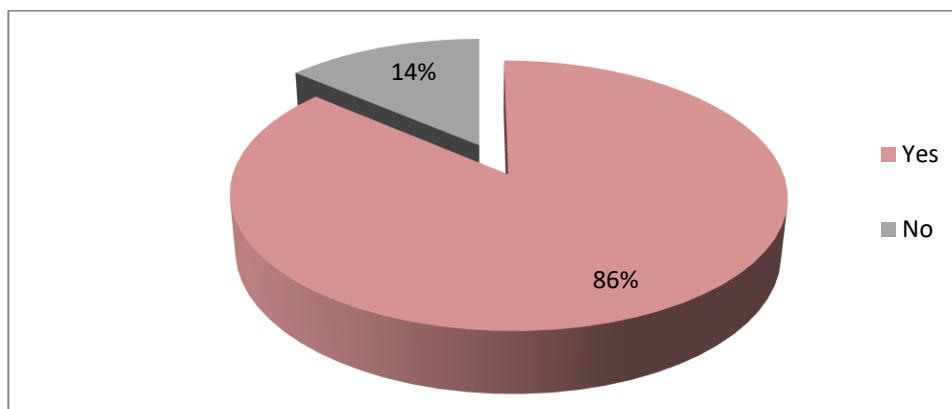


Diagram (10): Students’ Use of Abbreviations

As it is shown in Diagram (10), 86% of the students admit that they use abbreviations when chatting in social networks while the minority of them (14%) argue that they do not use abbreviations at all.

- If yes, give some examples with their explanations.

Abbreviation	Explanation
ASAP	As soon as possible
BRB , K and BTW	Be right back, okay, and by the way
Ur and Luv	Your and love
Wbu?	What about you?

TBH	To be honest and Laughing out loud
IDC, IDK, CU, JK, and Abt	I don't care, I don't know, see you, just kidding, and about
FYI	For your information
Gd, 10x, and Bro	Good, thanks, and brother

Table (11): Examples of Abbreviations Used by Students and their Explanations

Table (11) illustrates some examples of the most common abbreviations used by students when communicating through social networks with their explanations.

Question 10: Why do you use abbreviations?

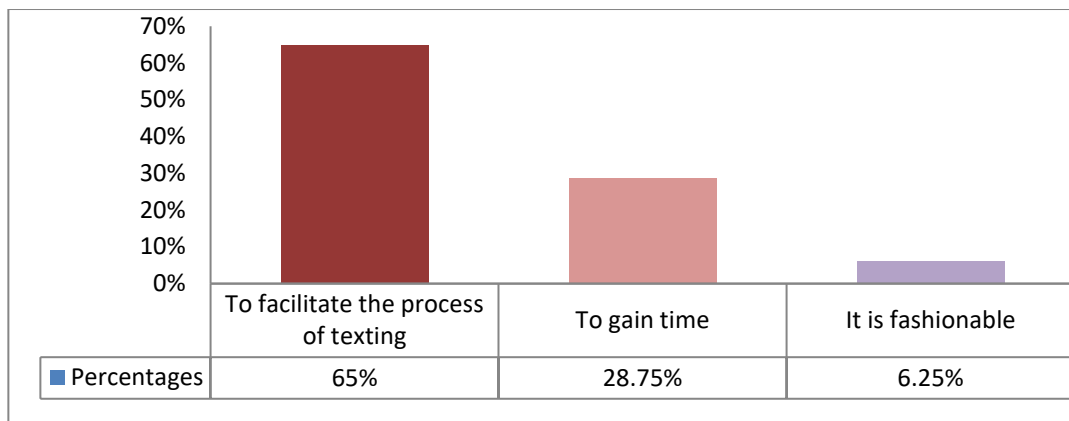


Diagram (11): Students' Purpose of Using Abbreviations

Diagram (11) displays students' purposes behind the use of abbreviations when texting. As it is seen, most of the participants (65%) agree that using abbreviations in their conversations facilitates the process of texting. In contrast, 28.75% of students argue that they use abbreviations to gain time, while only 6.25% of the participants use abbreviations because it is fashionable.

Question 11: Do you respect punctuation and capitalisation when chatting?

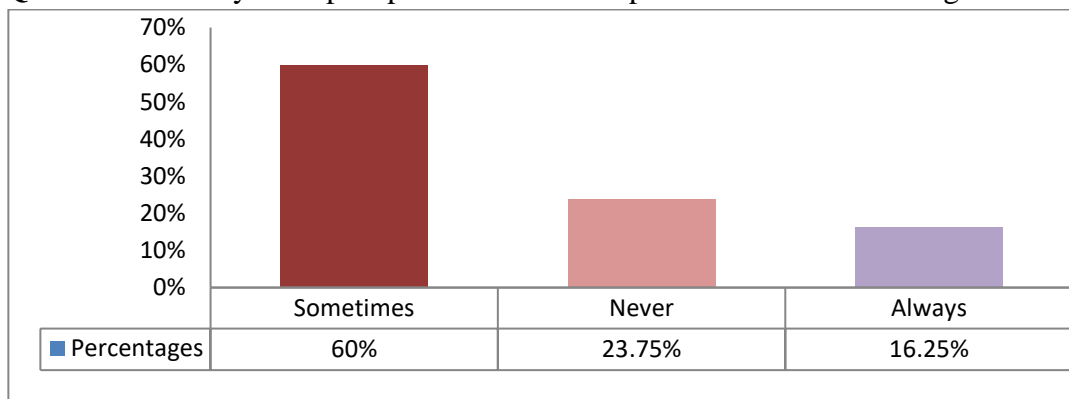


Diagram (12): Students' Frequency of the Use of Punctuation and Capitalisation

The results in Diagram (12) illustrate the frequency of students' use of capitalisation and punctuation. 60% of them claim that they sometimes respect their use when communicating in SNS and 23.75% state that they never use them. Whereas, 16.25% of the participants argue that they always use them.

2.3. Section Three: The impact of the Language of SNS on Students' Academic Writing

Question 12: Do you find difficulties in your academic writing?

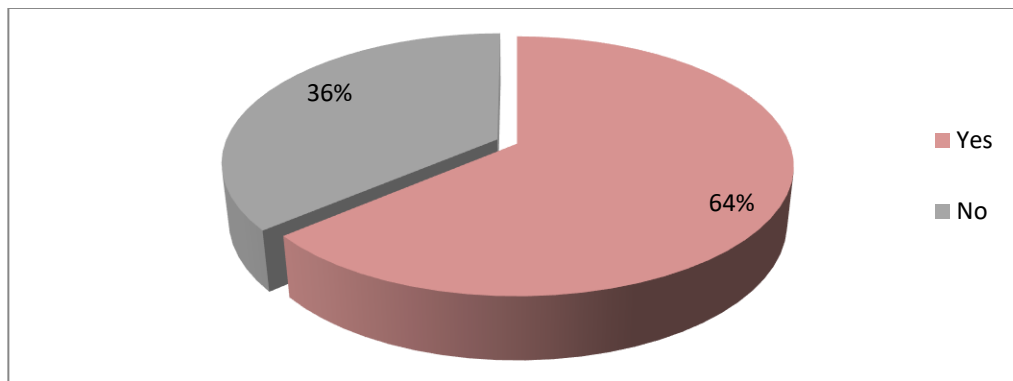


Diagram (13): Students' Difficulties in Academic Writing

It can be concluded from Diagram (13) that the majority of students (64%) find difficulties in academic writing, while 36% of them do not.

- If yes, in which aspect do you find more difficulties?

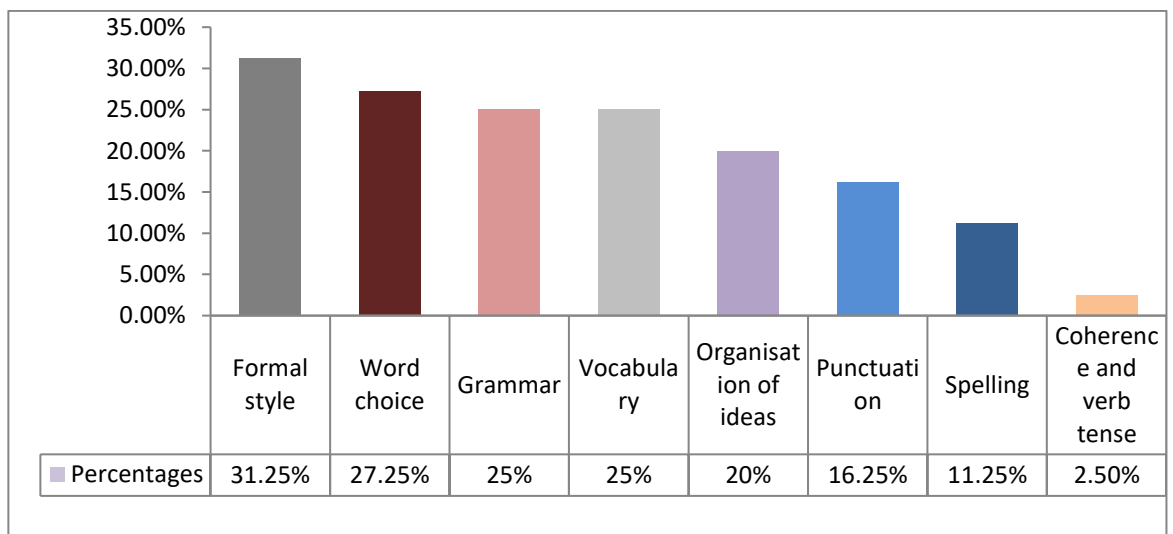


Diagram (14): Students' Aspects of Difficulties in Academic Writing

As revealed from Diagram (14) about students' areas of difficulties, their answers shows that the formal style is the aspect in which they find more difficulties (31.25%); it is followed then by word choice (27.5%), grammar (25%) and vocabulary (25%). Furthermore, organisation of ideas is another aspect of difficulty for learners with 20%, then succeeded by punctuation with 16.25% and spelling with 11.25%. Students were also asked to mention other aspects, thus they have added coherence and verb tense (2.5%); hence, these are the aspects in which they find fewer difficulties.

Question 13: Have you ever faced a situation where you have written one of these abbreviations, slangs, contractions, vague expressions and informal vocabulary in your academic essays? (E.g. in an exam paper)

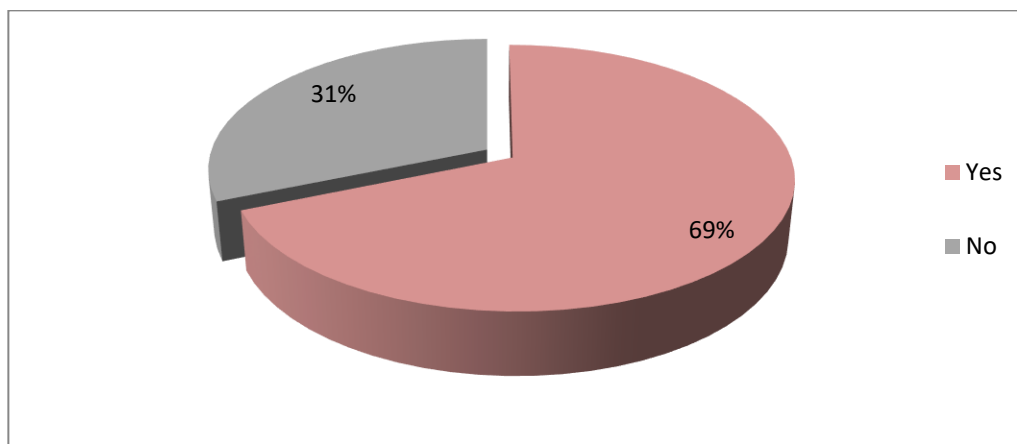


Diagram (15): Students' Use of Informal Features in their Academic Essays

The results in Diagram (15) display that most of students (69%) have already used one or some of the informal features in their academic essays, whereas 31% of them claim that they have never used them.

- If yes, then why?

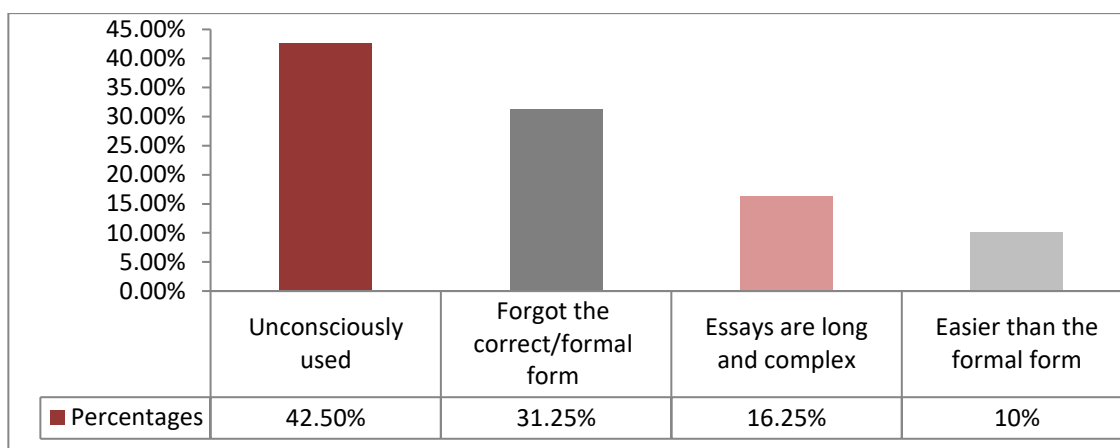


Diagram (16): Reasons behind Students’ Use of Informal Features in their Academic Essays

Diagram (16) demonstrates the different reasons behind students’ use of informal features in their academic writing. 42.5% of the participants argue that they use informal features in their essays unconsciously, while 31.25% use them since they forget the correct/formal form of words. Additionally, 16.25% of the learners state that they use them because essays are long and complex. Only 10% of the participants h claim that they use informal language because it is easier than the formal form.

Question 14: Do you think that Social Networking Sites’ use enhances your writing process?

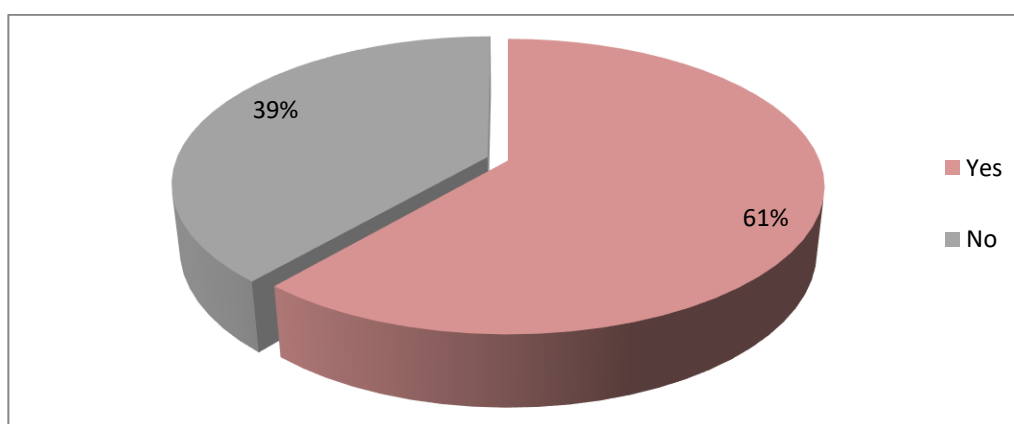


Diagram (17): SNS Enhancement of Students’ Writing Process

Diagram (17) illustrates students' opinions towards whether social networking sites' use enhances their writing process. The majority of the participants (61%) state that SNS enhances their writing, whereas 39% respond by "No".

Question 15: Do you believe that your academic writing can be affected by the language of texting/chatting?

- Justify and provide some concrete examples.

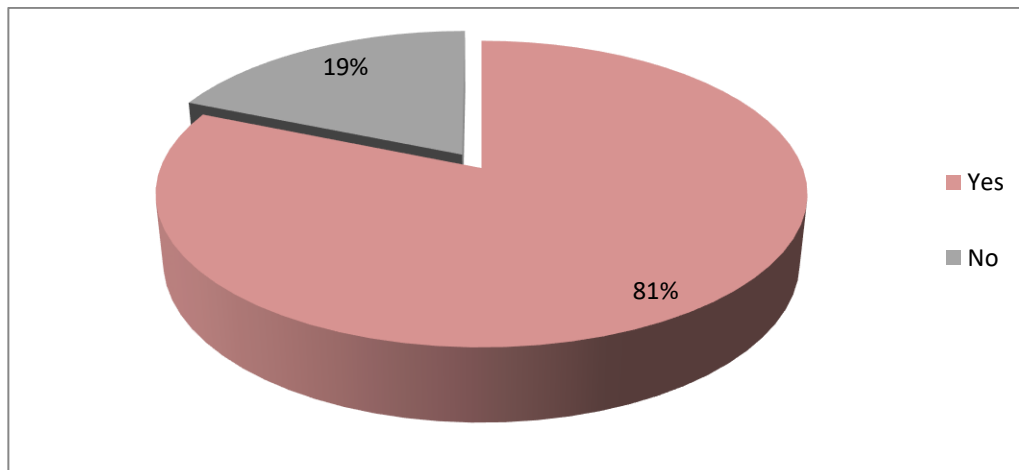


Diagram (18): The Effect of SNS' Language on Students' Academic Writing

The results displayed in Diagram (18) show that the majority of students (81%) believe that academic writing can be affected by the language of chatting. According to them, the daily use of informal language in social networking sites makes them forget the correct form of words in the academic language and confuse it with the informal one. As a matter of example, their abusive use of abbreviations makes them forget the correct spelling of some words. In contrast, 19% of the participants believe that academic writing is not affected by chatting because they have found that it is possible to maintain their academic writing when they have a solid knowledge.

Question 16: Does the ignorance of punctuation when writing essays affect your marks?

- Justify your answer.

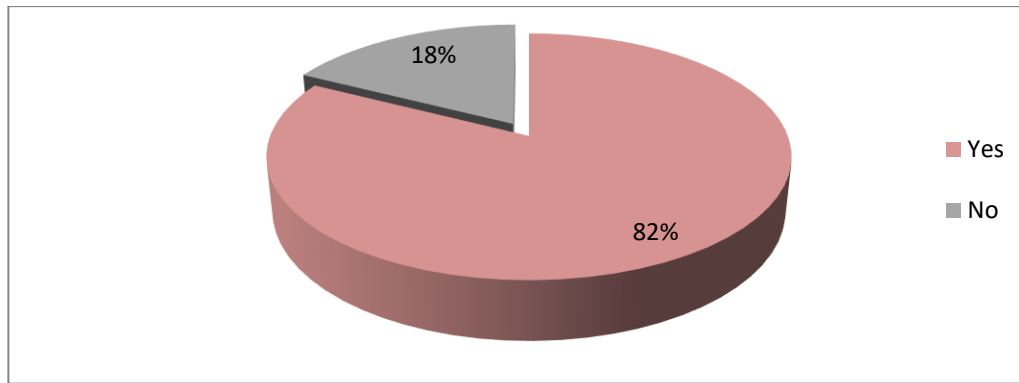


Diagram (19): The Effect of Punctuation Ignorance on Students' Marks

From Diagram (19), it is noticed that the majority of the respondents (82%) agree that ignoring the use of punctuation is the reason why students are losing marks in their exam papers. They are convinced that the ignorance of punctuation changes the meaning of the whole text, and that an idea has no sense without punctuation marks. In addition, the misuse of punctuation leads to intolerable errors and creates ambiguity. In contrast, 18% of the students disagree about this fact. They believe that teachers pay more attention to other criteria like grammar, spelling, and vocabulary rather than punctuation.

Question 17: What about the use of slangs, contractions, vague expressions, split infinitives and other informal features, do you think that they make you lose marks when using them in your academic writing?

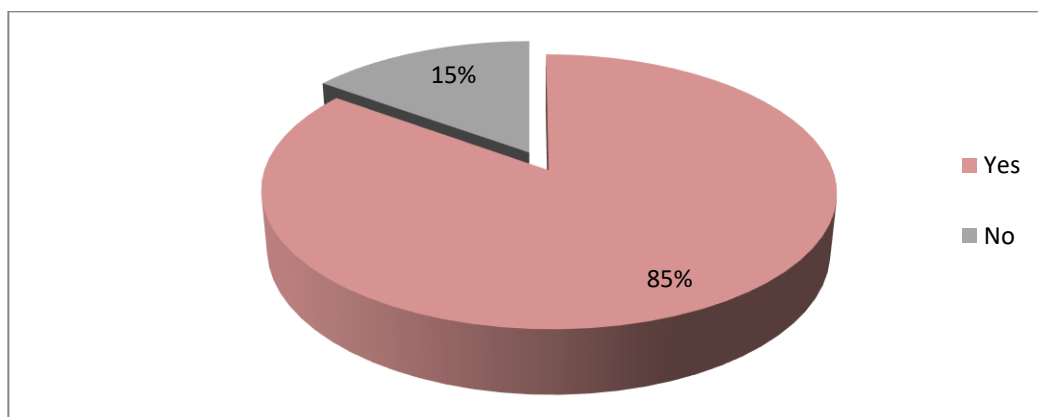


Diagram (20): The Effect of Informal Features' Use on Students' Marks

According to the results displayed in Diagram (20), a great percentage of learners (85%) acknowledge that the use of slangs, contractions, vague expressions, split infinitives and other informal features make them lose marks when including them in their academic writing. Few participants (15%) claim that the use of the above mentioned informal features do not impact their marks.

Question 18: Does it happen to you to make errors like grammatical ones (subject-verb agreement, prepositions, plurality, verb tense and form), spelling, vocabulary in your academic essays?

- If yes, what kind of errors you make the most? (According to the feedback given by your teachers)

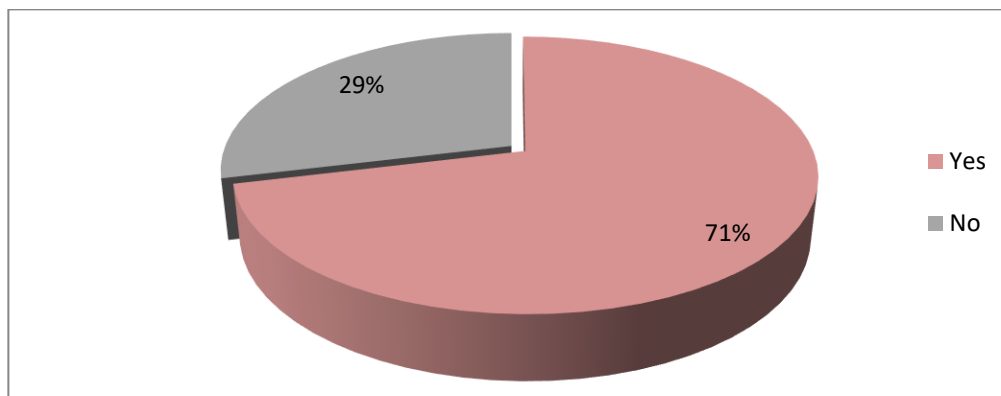


Diagram (21): Students' Errors Occurrence in their Academic Essays

Diagram (21) demonstrates that the majority of students (71%) make errors in their academic essays, while the minority (29%) do not. Furthermore, the participants are asked to mention the type of errors they make the most according to the feedback they receive from their teachers. Therefore, most of them report that their errors are mainly grammatical, involving verb tense, irregular verbs, the “s” of the third person singular and subject-verb agreement. Some others assert that they make errors in vocabulary, spelling, prepositions, plurality, and the overuse of articles. Only few students make errors in punctuation and the use of vocabulary.

Question 19: How do you think the language of social networking sites is affecting your formal/academic writing?

- Why?

This question is the main focus of the present questionnaire. It aims to identify students' perception towards the use of social networks and whether its language helps them improve their academic writing or harm it.

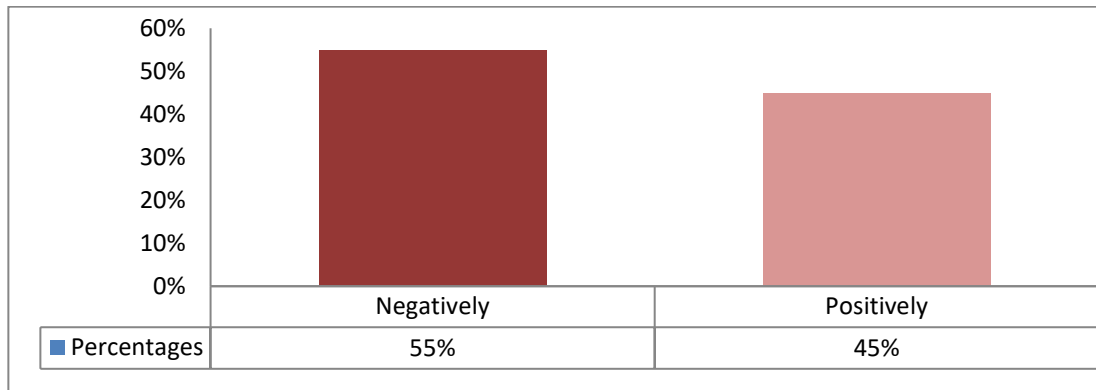


Diagram (22): The Impact of SNS' Language on Students' Academic Writing

The results of this question demonstrate that (55%) of the respondents assume that SNS affect their academic writing negatively. This category of students justifies their view by saying that these technological tools make them forget the academic writing rules in particular and the writing skill in general. In addition, they argue that they do not chat in order to learn, they rather chat for pleasure. On the other hand, 45% of the participants believe that the language of SNS affects their writing positively because these tools enhance their fluency and boost their vocabulary.

Question 20: How do you explain the use of informal language in your written assignments or exam papers? (You can choose more than one answer)

	Frequency	Percentage
Influence of L1	14	17.5%
Influence of media (films, songs...)	35	43.75%
Personal preference	19	23.75%
Influence of SNS	32	40%
Unconscious use	31	38.75%

Table (13): Students' Use of Chat Language in their Written Assignments or Exam Papers

The results in Table (13) show that 17.5% of the participants affirm that the reason behind the use of informal language in their written assignments is due to the influence of L1. 43.75% of them have ticked the option (Influence of media “films, songs”). In addition, 23.75% of the students have chosen personal preference. Moreover, 40% of them classify the influence of SNS as the reason behind the use of informal language. Finally, 38.75% of the respondents use informal language unconsciously.

Conclusion

This chapter has displayed the findings of the present research. First it has presented the results obtained from the analysis of the corpus including the informal features and the main types of errors that are committed by third-year students in their exam papers. Moreover, it has presented and analysed the data gathered from the questionnaires that are administered to third-year students in the department of English at MMUTO. The next chapter attempts to discuss the collected data and tries to confirm the research hypotheses and answers the study questions stated in the “General Introduction”.

Introduction

This chapter is devoted to the discussion and interpretation of the main results obtained from the analysis of third-year students' exam papers and from the questionnaire administered to the same students in the department of English at MMUTO. This chapter is divided into three main parts. The first part is concerned with the discussion of the informal features in students' compositions in the light of Chang and Swales' framework (1999) in addition to the features cited in Abu Sheikha and Inkpen (2010). The second part discusses the main errors from the same corpus adopting Corder's (1974) error analysis theory for describing and explaining errors. As for the last part, it is devoted to the analysis of the data collected from the questionnaire.

1. Discussion of the Informal Features of Students' Exam Papers

Through the analysis of the corpus, it is noticed that students include many informal features when writing. They are classified according to the criteria of informality that are explained in the previous chapter with concrete examples extracted from students' compositions (see Table 3). The discussion of these features focuses on when to use them and more importantly when to avoid them.

1.1. Students' Use of the First Person Pronouns to Refer to the Author(s) (I and We)

The results of the analysis of the students' exam papers reveal that the use of first person pronouns (I and We) to refer to the author(s) are used 28 times in their essays. In fact, *'mentioning self is generally considered orthodoxy of subjectivity and informality in academic discourse'* (Abbas and Shehzad, 2017:72). This means that first-person pronouns are not encouraged in academic writing. They can only be used in argumentative essays in which students are asked to provide their personal opinions about a specific topic. Otherwise, they

are rather used when telling personal experiences, in narrative essays, and writing stories and dialogues. Accordingly, ‘*a dialogic style characterises the communication in social media applications*’ (Neunerdt *et al.*, 2013:144). This means that first person pronouns are very dominant in online platforms.

This is an example taken from one of the students’ essays: “*In this essay we will discuss some reasons and consequences of the great depression*”. This assumes that the focus is on the writer of the essay and not on the topic itself, so it has weakened the credibility of the idea and gives the writer the responsibility of guiding the reader through their essays in a dialogic way. Thus, in formal papers, the student should not address directly the reader. The use of “*I think*” is also noticed in many papers and such an expression removes objectivity and gives the impression that the writer is telling their personal opinion or that the information is unique to the author. To avoid their use, one can replace them by another subject or by using the passive form. For this reason, the use of first-person pronouns to refer to the author is considered as an informal feature that must be avoided in academic essays.

1.2. The Use of Broad Reference- Anaphoric Pronouns

The examination of students’ essays shows that broad reference is employed 26 times. Anaphoric pronouns take place when referring to an entire idea mentioned in previous utterances or even a paragraph. The use of broad reference usually makes the sentence unclear and creates ambiguity and a certain confusion to the readers (Kölln and Turper, 2015; Kolln, 2006 as cited in Galti *et al.*, 2018).

Moreover, the corpus shows that the most used unattended anaphoric pronouns are “this” and “that”. For example “*After the first world war, women got more rights such as the right of vote in the eighteenth amendment. **This** made them change their behaviours and attitudes*”. Here, the learner has mentioned the demonstrative pronoun “this” to refer to the previous clause rather than using a summary word which has created a fuzzy thought.

Accordingly, it can be noticed from the example that the use of these anaphoric pronouns leads to equivocation of the meaning in addition to vague complex ideas and the uncertainty of the reader. The use of “this” in this example may also mark the question of “this what?” Thus, it is better to avoid their use or provide precise terms like the addition of a summary word “this advancement” as it is revealed from its correction to decrease its ambiguity. Therefore, in order to reach such clarity and explicitness, it is preferable to use summary words to refer to the antecedent. As it is stated by Galti *et al.* (2018), ‘*the use of appropriate summary word(s) could reduce ambiguity in writing*’.

1.3. Beginning a Sentence with Conjunctions and Conjunctive Adverb “however”

In the present research, sentence initial conjunctions are identified as the most frequently used feature by third-year students. This feature is used 70 times in their essays. As stated by Kirkpatrick (2017), ‘*A conjunction is a linking word used to join words, word groups or clauses*’ (cited in Unubi, 2016:203). From this definition, the only thing that comes to mind is that the role of conjunctions is to link, join and connect parts of a sentence when writing. From the analysis of students’ papers, it is noticed that most of them put the conjunction at the beginning of sentences. This means that instead of writing one complete sentence, they divide it into two separate clauses which contain one message by putting the conjunction at the beginning of the second clause. To illustrate, “*Many farmers made loans from banks to purchase lands and machines. **But** most of them had no money to pay back the bills*”. Here, the second sentence seems to be incomplete and fuzzy. Separating the two sentences does not emphasise the contrast introduced by “*but*”; however, it is possible to connect the two clauses with a comma.

As for the use of the conjunctive adverb “*however*” at the beginning of a sentence, it is not considered as an incomplete statement, but it is preferable to put a semi-colon before

“however” instead of using a period to show how it relates to the previous statement. This point is also shared by McGee (2018) who denotes that when the word “however” is placed at the beginning, it is intended to mean “but”. Hence, a proper punctuation allows the reader to understand clearly the contrast between two statements in a compound sentence.

1.4. End a Sentence with a Preposition

Ending a sentence with a preposition is the least used informal feature in students’ essays (8 repetitions only). According to Ljung and Ohlander (1992), placing prepositions at the end of a sentence affects its formality; this is also called preposition stranding which should be avoided in academic writing (cited in Dimitiadis, 2007). Prepositions are often used to connect words or a phrase with another part of the sentence; however, it can be clearly seen from this example “*Roosevelt made an engagement to save Americans from the miserable situation they were living in*” that the preposition is employed at the end of the sentence. This hanging preposition has made the meaning seem perplexing and unclear since it does not express the idea in a clear way.

In order to make the previous utterance more explicit and more formal, it is better to rearrange the order of words in the sentence and place the preposition “in” in the middle because it requires staying together with the verb, adjective, or noun with which it is associated. Hence, prepositions must never be employed at the end of a sentence as they are used only in informal discourse or on social networks. To return to an earlier point, the majority of students have not used this feature in their essays. This may be attributed to the fact that these students may be aware that this item affects the formality of their essays since ending a sentence with a preposition sounds more natural, casual and reflects the speaking form.

1.5. Run-on Sentences and Expressions

According to Chang and Swales (1999), the use of run-on sentences and expressions is not permitted in academic papers and it is considered as being informal. From the results displayed in the previous chapter, it appears that some students use run-on expressions when conveying their ideas and it is repeated 32 times. One of the most used expressions in this corpus is “etc”. Students often use it when they give examples and provide lists of possibilities as it is stated in this example: *“Americans were taking credits from banks to buy cars, washing machines, vaccum cleaners... etc.”* This term is usually referred to a particular writing style which is imprecise.

The use of “etc” in this sentence indicates that there are other items in the list besides the ones that are already mentioned. It also implies that the reader knows the rest of the list to which the student is referring. Hence, the student here leaves the reader’s imagination to try to guess the rest of the items. Using this technique in formal papers and professional writings is considered lazy and ignoramus. In addition, the expression “etc” is an abbreviated word of “etcetera” and abbreviations are not allowed in academic essays. Academic writing in its nature is usually very specific and detailed and does not rely on the reader to carry on the ideas from his own. In this line, Shannon (2011) contends that ensuring precise wording and ideas results in a more valuable and readable work.

1.6. Contractions

From the results displayed in the previous chapter, it appears that contractions are used 42 times by third-year students in their exam papers. Swan (2016:337) claims that *‘Contractions are common and correct in informal writing; they represent the pronunciation of informal speech. They are not generally used in a formal style’*. In other words, the use of contractions is limited to speaking and informal writing (personal letters and chat messages).

They are also used in texting and everyday conversations with family and friends in order to sound more natural and make sentences shorter. Most of the contractions found in students' essays are formed from auxiliary verbs, for instance "didn't" and "it's". Here, the learners have omitted some letters and have replaced them with apostrophes. In the first example, the contraction is formed from the verb (to do) and the negative (not), while in the second one the apostrophe is used to make a difference between the contracted form and the possessive pronoun "its". The use of these contractions has weakened the quality of the essays and made them seem casual and spontaneous rather than being formal and having a serious tone. As it is stated by Bilal *et al.* (2013), contractions are very present and common in social media platforms including social networking websites as well as SMS language. For this reason, contractions should be avoided in academic essays which necessitate explicit and clear expressions; they are more appropriate in writing plays and dialogues since they reflect the way in which people actually speak. Thus, it is necessary to write the full word combination "did not" and "it is" as shown in Table 3.

1.7. Direct Questions

The data gathered from the corpus reveal that 11 direct questions are asked in students' exam papers. Direct questions are regarded as features that writers should never use in academic writing since they demand personal involvement (Chang and Swales, 1999). Direct questions are found mainly in learners' essays' introductions, for example "To which extent was FDR's new deal effective?" The introduction should generally draw the readers' attention then expose the paper's topic and preview the structure of the body paragraphs in the last utterance; however, in the previous example, the learner has asked a direct question instead of stating a clear thesis statement. The use of this feature may create a sense of suspense for the reader who is supposed to read clear information. In addition, beginning

essays with questions is inappropriate because it has made the papers look interactive while the reader is not able to answer.

Therefore, in order to avoid the use of direct questions in academic papers, it would be better to change and rephrase them as statements (declarative sentences) as shown in Table 3. Thus, this feature is considered informal because it is used only in informal blogs, diaries, creative writing and social networking sites where they engage the audience to predict answers, in addition to personal messages and everyday conversations.

1.8. Vague Expressions

As regards the students' use of vague expressions in their academic writing, the results show that the participants have used them 50 times in all the essays. Vague language is considered '*as an important grammatical and interpersonal feature of spoken discourse*' (Biber *et al.* 1999 cited in Lin, 2013:70); however, this feature is commonly used in learners' essays and the most used expressions are "everything", "sort of", "kind of", "many things", and "stuff". Students generally use them when they are not sure of the explanation or to make the idea sound less factual as it is stated in this example: "*The second new deal was created because of **many things** of the first new deal that were not getting better*". Here, the student states the general idea and leaves the precise meaning to the reader's interpretation.

The use of "many things" in this example demonstrates the lack of clarity, certainty and specificity. It also makes the writing imprecise and allows the readers to think about the concept they wish to use. To clarify the preceding example, it is better to precise what the second New Deal has created like "the use of national resources, security, job opportunities and the National Work Relief program" instead of using the vague term "many things". Vague expressions are used only in informal English or in everyday conversations. Consequently, it is always required to be as precise as possible when writing. Indeed,

academic writing aims at presenting information in an explicit and precise way (Nordquist, 2011 as cited in Shannon, 2011).

1.9. Abbreviations

According to Hall and Margaret (1998), *'abbreviations are not used in formal English. They give the impression of a style that is chatty and too informal'*. It can be observed that abbreviations are mainly used in informal writing involving social networking sites and personal messages with family and friends in order to be brief and save time; however, it is conveyed from the analysis of students' exam papers that they have utilised this feature 54 times in all the papers. Among the abbreviations that are used: "1st", "2nd", "α", "cause", "pple", "N.D" and "the 20s". The use of these abbreviations weakens their essays and makes them look less formal. In addition, even if the reader is an expert in the topic, he/she may not understand some confusing shortened forms of words. This practice can also be seen as a bad habit that results from texting. Thus, in order to be clear and avoid any confusion, it is better to write the full terms (see Table 3).

Although abbreviations are considered informal, there are some exceptions in academic writing where they are permitted, for example technical writing (sciences and engineering). In addition, they can be used in tables, figures, reference and bibliography entries, and notes; yet, they must be written first as full terms followed by the abbreviation in brackets.

1.10. Split Infinitives, Sentence Fragments, Exclamations and Slangs

Based on the corpus analysis, the results show that split infinitives, sentence fragments, exclamations and slangs are not used in learners' exam papers. This can be attributed to the fact that students are aware that these features are informal and must not be employed in their academic essays; they also believe that the use of such items may not be

understood by the reader. Besides, the aforementioned elements that are not found in students' papers may be due to the limited number of the analysed papers. The results of this section are a little bit similar with those reached by Hasund (2019). Her work examines how English textbooks published for lower secondary school deal with informality in writing. The results have shown that abbreviations and slangs have received very little attention in some textbooks and are not present in other manuals at all. She assumes that it is probably because they are less common among older writers (authors) and they are rather mentioned in the manuals aimed at young learners.

The first section of this chapter has answered the first question of this research which is 'What are the informal features that third-year students use in their academic writing'. In fact, "sentence initial conjunctions" is the most frequent feature in students' papers.

2. Discussion of Students' Main Errors

The current section is devoted to the discussion of students' errors. The most frequent errors that are found in their essays are categorised into six types which are classified in the light of two main sources: interlingual and intralingual errors. The discussion of the present section relies on the framework elaborated by Pit Corder (1974) error analysis with concrete examples taken from the students' exam papers.

2.1. Interlingual Errors

Interlingual errors are created due to the negative influence of the learners' mother tongue on students' production of the target language; however, it is noticed that the majority of the students who survey the research corpus are influenced by their native languages and tend to mix between them. In fact, the differences of these languages are the result of interference errors.

2.1.1. Articles

Articles are considered as one of the most problematic concepts among English language students. This type of errors has occurred 185 times in their essays. Snape (2009) assumes that *'English is a language that uses articles to show that a noun phrase is definite or indefinite'* (cited in Barrett and Chen, 2011:05). In fact, the analysis of the collected data reveals that errors in the use of articles accounted for their omission, addition and misinformation.

As an illustration of omission: *"the inequality in _ distribution of wealth and the over speculation have led to an economic collapse"*. The student in this example is indecisive about whether the use of articles is required or not. He/she has made literal translation from Arabic to English: "أدى عدم المساواة في توزيع الثروة والمضاربة المفرطة إلى انهيار اقتصادي". In fact, "the" is used when the noun is specific and when the reader is familiar with it which is the case of the noun "distribution" that requires the definite article. In addition, this error explains students' incomplete understanding of the definite article rule.

Unnecessary insertion of articles is the second most common error. The students tend to use articles where they are not required. As an illustration, *"At that period, many people go to watch a movies or play games to enjoy their time"*. In fact, the rule states that the indefinite article cannot be used for plural nouns. This error is due to the absence of the indefinite articles in both Arabic and Kabyle languages as well as learners' ignorance of the "zero article" rule. Besides, the failure to understand the use of articles explains students' struggles with this grammatical rule.

In the cases of misinformation, learners fail to distinguish between the definite and indefinite articles. This example can be more demonstrative: *"The New deal embraced the concept of a government"*. In this sentence, The student has put "a" instead of the definite

article “the” due to the interference of the mother tongue (Kabyle) which is characterised by the absence of articles. To clarify this, the word “government” is not a general word or a random object that is ignored by the reader in this context; it is rather definite, specific and familiar, so this word should be accompanied with the definite article “the”. The use of the wrong article may cause some ambiguity, especially when the writer wants to assume the readers’ familiarity with the noun.

2.1.2. Prepositions

Prepositions are also proven to be erroneous in the participants’ written samples. In this regard, Loke and Anthony (2013) argue that mastering prepositions remains one of the most challenging issues for EFL learners (cited in Tunaz *et al.*, 2016). This is due to the fact that there are various prepositions which have different functions and may be used interchangeably, including prepositions of time, place, agent, manner, condition, quantity, and purpose or reason. They are mainly used with nouns, verbs, and adjectives. Thus, it is conveyed that the learners have made 125 errors of prepositions which are divided into three categories (as shown in Table 5 in the previous chapter).

In the case of omission category, an example is taken from students’ essays: “*Relief was aimed _ providing help and money for unemployed Americans*”. Here, instead of writing “*aimed at*”, the learner has omitted the preposition “at”. Thus, the absence of “at” in the previous sentence may be due to the learner’s lack of grammatical knowledge concerning prepositions’ structures in English. To be more precise, some verbs require prepositions, and the verb “to aim” is one of them which cannot be immediately followed by another verb. The neglect of the preposition in the example above maybe also caused by the uncertainty in the selection of the appropriate one.

The unnecessary insertion of prepositions is stated in the following example “*Roosevelt’s New deal contained of many successful measures*”. This reflects the student’s ignorance that prepositions are not allowed after some verbs, as it is the case with the verb “to contain” which necessitates a direct object rather than a prepositional phrase, so the preposition “*of*” must be omitted. The addition of the preposition here is also caused by the learner’s literal translation from Arabic to English “روزفلت الجديدة على العديد من الإجراءات الناجحة” “تحتوي صفقة”. Hence, the reason behind committing such errors is not only due to the linguistic interference, but it is probably linked to students’ limited comprehension of some grammatical rules.

As shown in Table 5, the learner has used the preposition “*on 1930*” rather than using “*in 1930*” which is the correct one. The preposition “on” is mainly used with days of the week, dates, specific days, and names of holidays with “day”. “In” on the other hand, is used to indicate years, months, centuries, decades, seasons, weeks, and parts of days, so it can be said that this error type has resulted from the ignorance of the rules. It is clear that the learner has misused the preposition since one preposition in English can have the meaning of different prepositions in learners’ mother tongue or vice versa. As he/she has not found the equivalent preposition in Arabic, Kabyle or French, he/she has made the error. Additionally, the insertion of the wrong preposition may be due to the insufficient mastery of preposition rules.

2.1.3. Spelling

English spelling is particularly difficult for EFL learners because most English words are not written as they are pronounced. Alsaawi (2015) affirms that students’ unawareness of the English pronunciation may be the result of the wrong letters production (cited in Altamimi and Ab Rashid, 2019). As a result, spelling errors are manifested as the highest frequency

among interlingual errors (409 times). According to the data of this study, the majority of misspelled words can be traced back not only to French origins but also to the lack of phonemic awareness and pronunciation of English.

In omission category, deletion strategy is manifested as reducing double consonants into one consonant that should be spelled out as it can be seen in example (7): “*immediate*”. In this case, the letter “m” is deleted because the learner has written the word exactly as it is pronounced. This shows that the correspondence between the articulation of the term and the way it is spelt is not always obvious. This error can be the result of the irregularity and complexity of the English spelling system.

Contrary to letter omission, an insertion strategy in this corpus is manifested through the insertion of the vowel “e” at the end of the word which includes errors such as “*periode*”. This error is an outcome of the French language interference as students know that French and English language are written with the same letters. This has created certain confusion about the correct form of the word and he has written it totally like French.

As regards to misinformation, it can be originated from the mother tongue or words that do not exist in the target language. It can be seen from this example: “*employers*” that the student has substituted the vowel “e” by the vowel “i” which has lead to the creation of a non-existent word. In this case, the student is unable to distinguish between similar sounds leading to mispronunciation. This shows learners’ unfamiliarity with the English pronunciation and sound distinction leading them to spell words inaccurately.

Misorderings is also a category of spelling errors that has arisen from a linguistic interference. “*Octobre*” is a good example of the interference of the French language; however, the transposition of the letters “e” and “r” in this example is not only the effect of the French language, but it is caused by the learner’s ignorance as well.

Throughout the analysis of the spelling errors, English spelling is regarded as inconsistent for third-year learners and requires more efforts to memorise words.

2.2. Intralingual Errors

In addition to language interference, students also make errors due to the erroneous or partial learning of the rules of the TL which is in this case, English. In this research, intralingual errors are explained in respect of the following factors: overgeneralisation, ignorance of rule restriction, incomplete application of rules, and hypothesis of false concepts.

2.2.1. Verb Tense

Verb tense is a very significant element in the sentence as it determines when the action of the subject takes place. Though, the participants have made 169 verb tense errors that are sorted into three main types: wrong use of irregular verbs, the use of the present instead of the past and subject-verb agreement.

The misuse of irregular verbs occurs when students use the suitable tense but the wrong verb form. An example is taken from a student's paper "*Ferdinand Roosevelt **gived** hope for the Americans*". The use of "-ed" marker in this sentence indicates overgeneralisation; it seems that the learner generalises the use of the past tense marker for all the verbs. In fact, in English, regular verbs are always carried by the ending "ed" while irregular verbs differ and may completely change the form, as it is the case with the previously mentioned verb that must be "**gave**". In fact, irregular verbs are very controversial for EFL learners since they all take distinct forms; therefore, learners are required to learn them by heart.

Another major issue for EFL learners is maintaining tense continuity in their written compositions. According to Noor and Noor (1985), when a tense is used at the beginning of a certain topic, that tense should be kept until the subject with which it is associated is finished;

yet, in this example “*Roosevelt programs known as the new deal **brings** many benefits from 1933 to 1939*”, the learner must not shift from a tense to another unless the timing of the action requires that. Hence, the selection of the wrong tense is the result of the incomplete application of rules. In addition, it is clear that the event is completed at a specific period of time in the past; thus, the preposition of time “from...to” shows the beginning and the end of an action that demands the past simple.

Although subject-verb agreement is the first rule that students learn when they start learning English, it is found to be a problem for third-year students. It can be seen from the following example: “*The Civil Work Administration **consist** for providing work for millions of men*”, the verb should be “*consists of*” since it must agree with its subject which is in this case singular. Due to ignorance of rule restriction, the student has deleted the “s” of the third-person pronoun. This means that the learner has applied the rule of the first and the plural pronouns where the “s” is not required. Hence, the reason for such an error may also be due to the fact that the student has failed to identify the subject of the sentence since it is a noun phrase.

2.2.2. Punctuation

Brown (2000) suggests that punctuation and capitalisation may be attributed to both interlingual and intralingual sources (cited in Salamin *et al*, 2006).

Punctuation marks are essential elements in formal writing. It makes the piece of writing clear, easy to understand, and coherently connected. Nevertheless, it is an aspect that is not taken seriously by EFL students. Hence, 349 punctuation errors are found in the corpus and the most misused marks are divided into three categories: missing commas, unnecessary commas and a missing period.

As it can be seen from example 19 in Table 8, the student has listed a set of items “*The work progress administration was formed to help unemployed workers build different public projects: roads airports parks buildings and schools*” without using any comma. The absence of commas here may create confusion and ambiguity; when citing a list of elements, they must be separated by commas in order to prevent misunderstanding. Another comma function is to separate two complete thoughts in a sentence; each with its own subject and verb. Yet, in this example “*The roaring Twenties, is a great period of economic, political and social changes*”, adding a comma after the subject is viewed as a faulty aspect since the statement is not complete and does not require any punctuation mark. The reader here may be left guessing what the writer is trying to say. These errors result from the incomplete application of rules and also due to the fact that punctuation rules differ from one language to another, as acknowledged by Carroll and Wilson (1995 cited in Alfaki, 2015:45) ‘*Students’ writing encounter punctuation problems as there are no universal rules of punctuation*’.

The participants in this study have also misused the full stop by placing it wherever they want and sometimes by ignoring it. To illustrate, “*The great depression continued and things were not getting better In 1935 Roosevelt decided a new laws*”. The absence of full stops in this sentence has created vagueness and ambiguity, and has contributed to unorganised writing. This error may refer to incomplete application of rules since the learner has respected capitalisation at the beginning of the sentence and has ignored the full stop at the end. Therefore, adding a period after the word “better” has added emphasis and convinces the reader with the meaning of the sentence.

Regarding the above-mentioned examples, punctuation marks appear small but their role in resolving ambiguity is of great importance as they are crucial for successful academic writing.

2.2.3. Capitalisation

The present study reveals that capitalisation is the most frequent error in this study with (519) repetitions. It is clearly neglected in almost all exam papers of third-year students. Two categories of capital letter ignorance are selected for analysis: initial of a sentence and proper nouns.

It is already known that the basic rule of capitalisation is the use of capital letters to begin every sentence; however, many students still neglect the use of capitalisation in their writing. Example (15) from Table 9 indicates the neglect of capital letter at the beginning of the sentence where it is required, and its presence in the middle of the sentence where it is not required. Thus, this example reveals that the main source of this error is due to the ignorance of rule restrictions. It is always important to capitalise the first letter of a sentence because it helps the reader to recognise clearly that the sentence has begun. This is perhaps the most straightforward and easiest rule of capitalisation since there are no exceptions and complications in this point.

There are some exceptions of words that must be always capitalised no matter where they appear in a sentence including proper nouns and their derivatives. These nouns are used to identify unique utterances that can be understood as the names of specific people, countries, religions, and political parties. “roosevelt” “american” “great depression” and “new deal” are among the words that are not capitalised in almost all the corpus of this study. This is considered as an error because these terms are also viewed as proper nouns that must be identified wherever they appear in a sentence. As a result, this category of errors is probably the result of the incomplete application of rules and students’ difficulties in distinguishing between proper and common nouns.

To return to an earlier point, intralingual source is not the only source of punctuation and capitalisation errors; however, the interference of Arabic language is also the result of these errors since this language does not require capitalisation rules.

The findings derived from the analysis of this corpus contradict those reached by Taher (2011). Capitalisation in his study is regarded as the least frequent error while in the corpus of the present research, it is considered as the most frequent one.

The second section of this chapter answers the second question of the investigation which is “What are the major types of errors that third-year students make in their academic writing?” Accordingly, through the discussion of the main types of errors that are found in the corpus of this study, it is concluded that the most frequent type is “capitalisation errors” with 519 occurrences.

Depending on the analytical frameworks, the outcomes reached from the two sections are an indication that the participants write their essays in the same way they represent them in their informal situations involving social networks. Funnell (2017) in his study affirms that these platforms have weakened students’ academic writing. He also points to the fact that the overuse of chatting on these networks is the reason behind students’ incorrect spelling of words, bad grammar, and punctuation including the most fundamental features of writing like the full stop. This means that learners’ academic writing is influenced by the language of chatting.

3. Discussion of the Questionnaire Results

In addition to the findings brought out from students’ exam papers discussed in the first and second sections, an online questionnaire is held with the same students in order to bring more information to the study. This section attempts to discuss the data collected from the questionnaire separately in three subsections. The data obtained are built upon the

research objectives for the sake of shedding light on the impact of chatting language on students' academic writing. The questions are not analysed in sequence, but as they are interrelated.

3.1. The Use of Social Networking Sites

The first question about students' use of SNS reveals that the majority of the students (97%) use these technological tools. The participants have mentioned them according to their preferences; Facebook occupies the first place (80%), then comes Instagram with 75%, WhatsApp (26.25%), Viber (25%), Snapchat (21.5%) and Twitter with 11.25%. From these results, it is noticed that almost all the students are widely familiar with SNS. This view is also supported by Kuss and Griffiths (2011) who claim that learners are the majority of its users comparing to the whole population (cited in Sharma and Godiyal, 2016). Besides, only 3% of the students are not interested in their use.

The results of question two dealing with students' purpose behind the use of SNS reveal different views (see Table 10). The widespread of social networks is gaining more and more popularity among students. Accordingly, the majority of the respondents (80%) affirm that their aim in using SNS is to chat with friends. For them, these tools serve for casual conversations with friends and classmates where they exchange messages with each other in an easy and familiar way. Furthermore, 65% of the learners declare that they use these platforms more for entertainment, 53.75% for sharing their activities with friends and 47.5% in order to meet new people. For this category of students, SNS is a place for having fun. They use these applications only to share their photos and videos to inform people in their networks about their activities and experiences. In addition, they use these tools for pleasure, enjoyment and amusement as well as for getting to know new people. On the other hand 36.25% of students' aim in using online platforms is learning, 21.25% is for expressing their

opinions and 18.75% is for writing about different topics. This category of learners tends to benefit from the positive side of these media platforms. They consider them as a source for education and a supplementary tool where they can improve their skills; yet, only one student (1.25%) uses SNS to attend conferences. From these answers, it is observed that students devote more attention to frivolousness rather than to educational opportunities that these sites offer.

As for the third question about students' average time spent on social networking sites displayed in Diagram 3, it can be noticed that these platforms have become an important part in their daily lives. The majority of the students (32.5%) claim that they use SNS for more than six hours per day and 25% of them use these applications between four to six hours. These results show that the majority of students are addicted to these online platforms since they spend too much time chatting, entertaining and sharing their interests on a daily basis. They have made these sites as their top priority; thus, they cannot stay for two or three hours without checking or updating their profiles on these networks even if they have other activities to do such as studies. Moreover, 16.25% of the participants claim that they utilise SNS from two to four hours and others (21.25%) for one or two hours. This indicates that they still can control their usage, but if they fail to manage it, this may seriously harm their academic, social and personal lives because it leads to obsession. Only 5% of the students spend less than an hour daily. Hence, they are average users and it can be deduced that these students go online only when they need to use these online platforms in their free time.

According to the results obtained from the fourth question, it can be clearly seen that each student uses a different way of communicating through SNS. The minority of the students (12.5%) prefer speaking when communicating in SNS. This can be attributed to the fact that speaking makes them feel better when expressing their ideas and helps them speak spontaneously and fluently. In addition, they probably find writing as a time-consuming task.

Contrastingly, 38.75% of the students claim that they prefer writing since it is an easy process due to its shortened language. Moreover, writing maybe less stressful than speaking. 49% of the participants mix between writing and speaking. That is, they sometimes write when they want to keep their privacy while sometimes, they tend to speak and send voice messages when the recipient cannot understand the message well or in order to save time.

3.2. The Language of Chatting/Texting in SNS

In analysing the results of the fifth question about the kind of language used by students when texting (see Diagram 5), it is observed that the majority of the respondents (71.25%) mix between academic and informal writing in their chat messages. This can be explained by the fact that chat language depends on their recipients. This is noticeable in some respondents' answers. One of them explains *“when I speak with my friends and classmates I use informal language but when I speak with my teachers I use the formal one to respect their status and mine as a student”*. Additionally, 25% of the participants use only informal writing when communicating in SNS. They explain that these platforms are not destined for educational purposes; they are rather intended for casual conversations. What matters for them is that the message is well transmitted and understood by the receiver. Furthermore, it is the easiest style of writing since it takes a personal tone as they are speaking directly to their friends. One of them declares *“we leave formality for formal situations”*. This answer is not totally confirmed after analysing the essays that are meant to belong to formal situations. Conversely, only 3.75% of the students prefer academic writing when chatting arguing that they respect the norms of a good writing even when addressing their friends.

Questions six and seven are interrelated, their aim is to identify students' concern with using correct English when texting. In fact, a high number of learners (75%) assume that they do not pay attention to the language used in their chat messages. This can be attributed to the

fact that they are in a virtual context where their language is not corrected by their peers. Consequently, 57.7% of the students affirm that they use shortcutting words rather than full ones. Accordingly, shortened words are also used in some of their exam papers for instance: “cause” instead of “because” and “1st” instead of “first”. Unintentionally, this practice of language would make students unaware about the actual use of language and may make them forget the correct spelling of words. Conversely, only 25% of the students affirm that they pay attention to what they write in SNS. This goes in line with the 42.5% of the learners who argue that they write full words (entires). This category of students prefers to transmit complete and correct thoughts by taking into account all the aspects that can affect the meaning of the delivered message as well as the norms of a good writing.

As concerns the eighth question, 92% of the students use informal language when chatting. They have also picked up the features they use the most involving contractions (67%), slangs (56.25%), vague expressions (38.15%), split infinitives (18.75%), personal pronouns, direct questions, exclamations, and ending a sentence with a preposition (6.25%). In fact, the majority of these features are also found in their academic essays even though they are intended to be written in a formal style. The use of these informal features can be attributed to the fact that students do not consider these online platforms as a formal academic setting; informal features rather make writing seem more friendly and spontaneous as they reflect how the sender actually speaks. Besides, they help the learners sound more fluent in casual settings. Furthermore, 42.5% of the students claim that they sometimes use informal features and 38.75% often use them. Whereas, 18.75% of the respondents admit that they always use informal features on SNS because this language is mainly used in informal situations. Thus, it is noticeable that most of the learners are familiar with informality and this has created a bad habit because it has affected their academic writing as it is revealed from the

analysis of their exam papers (see Table 3). Conversely, 8% of the respondents do not use these informal features when texting.

In the analysis of questions nine and ten about students' use of abbreviations, it is noticed that the majority of them (86%) use abbreviations when chatting or commenting on social networks. This may be attributed to the fact that students are so careless that they prefer the use of shortened words, numbers or symbols that do not require a lot of efforts. In this vein, Salemah (2013) points out that students use them '*to get a quick and short message across*' (cited in Ne'matullah, 2017:111). She asserts that this practice results in plenty of grammatical errors that may be destructive if they are not controlled. Furthermore, when answering question ten, students explain their purpose behind the use of these shortened forms. 65% of them agree that this practice facilitates the process of texting. 28.75% of the participants use them to gain time. Thus, this practice permits them to speed up conversations, get their answers quickly and type less when they are in a hurry. Furthermore, only 6.25% of them use these forms because it is fashionable.

The respondents have provided some examples of abbreviations that they use in their chat messages. This includes (thnx, 1st, 2nd, pple, U, α, Ur, abt, cause). As expected, this goes in line with the results of the analysed essays. In fact, some of the examples mentioned by the participants are also found in their essays. This fact demonstrates that the abusive use of abbreviations in social networks harms students' academic writing. Ne'matullah (2017) in his study, assumes that the abbreviations used in the essays would have possibly appeared due to the use of WhatsApp by the participants. Contrastingly, the minority of the respondents (14%) argue that they do not use abbreviations when chatting at all. This may be attributed to the fact that they prefer to make their message more explicit without losing understanding.

As regards to question eleven about the frequency of the students' use of punctuation and capitalisation when chatting, their answers reveal that the majority of them (60%) sometimes respect their use. This may depend on the persons with whom they want to clarify their ideas. As an alternative, 23.75% of the students never use them when chatting or commenting. They believe that since they are in a field that does not require formal writing, punctuation and capitalisation are not important enough when chatting. Besides, only 16.25% of the respondents argue that they always respect their usage. This may be stuck to their awareness of the receiver's understanding.

3.3. The Impact of the Language of SNS on Students' Academic Writing

From question twelve, it is noticed that the majority of learners encounter many difficulties. The formal style is the most frequent problem (31.25%); followed by word choice (27.5%), grammar and vocabulary with 25%, organization of ideas (16.25%), spelling (11.25%) and fewer difficulties in terms of coherence and verb tense (2.5%). These results match what is stated in the review of the literature about the difficulties in writing concerning some aspects in addition to the results of the analysed essays where many errors are extracted. In this respect, Lee (2005) insists on the fact that teachers should examine the difficulties from which their students may suffer (cited in Al-Mukdad, 2019). This means that students need teachers' assistance to overcome their difficulties. On the contrary, only 36% of the participants argue that they do not encounter difficulties in their academic writing.

Taking into account the results obtained from question eighteen, it is observed that a great number of students (71%) make errors at the level of grammar, spelling and vocabulary in their academic writing. The results of these questions (twelve and eighteen) go in accordance with the results obtained from the analysis of students' essays. That is, their written assignments are full of the above-mentioned errors. This demonstrates that students

need to improve their writing abilities in addition to stressing practice inside and outside classrooms. Alternatively, if the majority of the students who prefer chatting in SNS without respecting the norms of academic writing have used these platforms appropriately to practice their language, they might not commit such errors in their written assignments. For this reason, students should overcome their difficulties through practice. For instance, they can take the advantages of the sufficient opportunities that SNS offer to practice writing continuously, since it is the era where they spend more time as it is revealed from the answers of question 3. In this context, Krutka and Carpenter (2016) state that social media platforms give the opportunities for students to interact with knowledgeable peers and academics with whom they can get a creative and authentic learning experience; yet, only 29% of the participants admit that they do not make errors in their writing assignments. This can be attributed to the fact that they are aware of the principles of a good writing in and outside the academic settings.

As to the results of question thirteen, the majority of the learners (96%) admit that they use some of the informal features cited in question eight in their essays. In fact, their usage may affect their academic writing since they mix both the formal and informal style in their formal assignments. Furthermore, the findings show that 42.5% of the participants incorporate them in their essays unconsciously. This explains their unawareness towards their writing compositions. In addition, 31.25% of them use informal language in their academic papers because they forget the correct formal forms of words which may be affected by their excessive use of shortened words in SNS as they have argued in question seven.

Additionally, 16.25% of the respondents consider their usage is a result of the complexity and the length of their essays. Only 10% of the students integrate informal language in their essays since it is easier than the formal form. The answers reveal that students not only overuse informality in SNS, but also integrate it in their professional

assignments. As a result, the excessive use of informal features by learners in their chat messages (as discussed in question eight) is also incorporated in their academic essays. This fact is confirmed through the analysis of students' exam papers (see Table 3). Therefore, it is vital that learners' deviations from academic to informal style for the sake of brevity without taking into account the academic consequences should be viewed as being unprofessional. In the same line of thought, Omar and Miah (2012) assert that these various technological tools *'prevent students from delving deeply into writing pieces, expressing more profound ideas, and revising their writing to create a more refined piece'* (cited in Alhusban, 2016:439). This means that their written language has become as direct and spontaneous as their chat messages. In contrast, only 31% of the learners avoid integrating informal language in their exam papers due to their awareness and consciousness toward their academic writing.

Accordingly, the results reported from question twenty reveal that the majority of the students (43.75%) integrate informal language in their academic writing due to the influence of media (films, songs) and 40% due to SNS. Their answers indicate that these online platforms are one of the most harmful elements that are present in students' daily lives if they do not use them appropriately. Their addiction to these tools creates a bad influence on their academic performance. This is also noticeable in their essays that are demonstrated in the manner of their electronic communication. 38.75% of the respondents argue that they include them unconsciously. For this reason, students should check their essays before submitting them to their teachers. In contrast, 23.75% of them integrate informal language with their personal preference. This means that they include them with their own convention knowing that this practice is not destined for academic settings. Finally, 17.5% of the participants confirm that the use of informal language in their essays is due to first language interference. This may be attributed to the fact that some features are formal in students' native language and considered as informal in the English language.

Surprisingly, the results obtained from question fourteen show that the majority of the respondents (61%) affirm that social networking sites enhance their writing process. For them, these online platforms play a very crucial role as they help them connect with each other, share content and improve their writing by exchanging ideas and information with their teachers, classmates and friends. Besides, they enhance learners' acquisition of new vocabulary and support their learning. Unfortunately, this is not the case with the participants of this research. This means that their answers contradict the findings of the corpus analysis. Students have not benefited much from these technological tools since they are influenced by chat language which does not fit their writings. On the other hand, 39% of the respondents assert that SNS does not enhance their writing. This goes hand in hand with the outcomes of the analysis of students' exam papers. That is, their essays are full of vague expressions, contractions and other informal features (see Table 3).

Regarding the sixteenth and the seventeenth questions about the impact of punctuation ignorance and the inclusion of informal features on students' marks, the majority of them (82% and 85%) confirm that these practices are the main reasons for not scoring well in examinations. According to their answers, writing without punctuation marks makes their ideas unclear and misunderstood by their teachers. In addition, including informal language in their essays makes their writings casual and not interesting. This contradicts the results gathered from the corpus analysis. If the students were aware that this practice makes them get bad marks, they would not ignore punctuation and write informally. Contrariwise, the minority of the participants (18% and 15%) do not believe that this fact is the reason for losing marks. For them, teachers pay more attention to other factors like content, grammar and vocabulary while punctuation comes last. Additionally, the inclusion of informality in their essays can be attributed to the fact that they do not know the difference between the two writing styles. This goes in accordance with the results gathered from the analysed essays

since many of the students have ignored these aspects (see Tables 3 and 8). In fact, one of the participants declares that he/she was not aware that some of the aspects mentioned in question eight belong to informal language like contractions and vague expressions when answering question nineteen.

As regards questions fifteen and nineteen, students' responses (displayed in Diagram 22) reveal that the majority of the respondents (55%) claim that texting in these online platforms affects their academic writing negatively. They do not consider SNS as motivational tools because for them, these platforms are not formal settings and if the learners start using them, they may forget their formal English. One of them asserts "*Sometimes I forget how words are spelled since I get used to shortened ones*". Such answer may be explained in relation to the results gained from the analysis of students' papers. Besides, chatters can write in any style they desire since there are no rules to govern their conversations and their writing is neither assessed nor evaluated. To support these views, Dansieh (2011) confirm that texting in SNS could '*heighten the tendency among students to adopt non-standard uses and contracted forms of English words in their class work*' (cited in Alhusban, 2016:439). In contrast, 45% of the students claim that texting in SNS affects their writing positively only if it is used appropriately. Thus, they may improve their vocabulary as in acquiring new words and expressions that can be used in their formal writing. Additionally, they may correct their spelling mistakes by observing the writing of others or by their classmates' feedback. Also one of the participants supports his/her view by stating that "*a daily learner never fall a victim of SNS*"; however, the majority of their essays do not confirm this view.

As a result, one can deduce that texting in SNS is more negative than positive because it distracts students' attention from the norms of good writing. The results of the study conducted by (Begaga and Meddour, 2016) share this view. After analysing both students'

writing productions and their online conversations, they have concluded that students use the signals of informality in their academic writing as they use them in their chatrooms especially abbreviations, shortening words, spelling mistakes and the absence of punctuation marks.

The findings of this section are in line with those reached by Alhusban (2016) who indicates that due to students' exposure to SNS, they are now having difficulties distinguishing between formal and informal writing.

The third part of this chapter answers the third question of this research which is "Does the language used in social networking sites have any impact on students' academic writing?" Accordingly, through the discussion of students' views regarding SNS' effects on formal writing, one can conclude that chatting has a negative impact on students' writing skill to a certain extent. This means that the more students rely on the language of chatting, the greater the decline in their academic writing is; however, even if some informal features are present in students' essays, for instance abbreviations and vague expressions, some of them are not like split infinitives and slangs. In fact, these results do not show that SNS always harm students' academic writing; but for third-year students, these tools are not designated for educational purposes since the majority of them do not use them for good.

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the findings obtained from the two data collection tools of the present study for the sake of providing answers to the research questions set in the general introduction. The first section is devoted to the discussion of the informal features found in students' exam papers in the light of Chang and Swales (1999) and Abu Sheikha and Inkpen (2010) criteria of informality. The second section, for its part, has discussed the main types of errors committed by the learners in addition to their description and explanation in the view of

Corder's (1974) theory of error analysis. As for the third section, it has dealt with the interpretation and analysis of the data gathered from the questionnaire.

General Conclusion

The present dissertation has investigated EFL students' deviation from academic to informal writing. It has attempted to answer three main questions which are at the same time its objectives. The first objective consists in identifying the informal features that third-year students at MMUTO use in their academic writing. As for the second objective, it attempts to identify the major types of errors. The third objective, for its part, intends to find out whether social networking sites have any impact on students' academic writing. To achieve these purposes, this study has opted for Chang and Swales' (1999) framework in addition to the features cited in Abu Sheikha and Inkpen (2010). Also, Pit Corder's (1974) error analysis theory (as cited in Ellis, 1994).

In order to answer the advanced research questions and evaluate the validity of the suggested hypotheses, the study has relied on the mixed-method approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative research methods. For the data collection, two main instruments have been used: a content analysis of 80 third-year students' exam papers for the sake of discovering the informal features and the main types of errors they incorporate when writing their essays in the light of the above mentioned frameworks. Besides, to support and enrich this research with more reliable data, an online questionnaire is addressed to the same participants who are now in Master one. As far as the analysis of the data gathered from these instruments is concerned, the quantitative results obtained from the close-ended questions of the questionnaire are analysed through the Google Forms and the informal features and errors are presented in the form of frequencies and percentages. As for the qualitative data obtained from the corpus analysis and the open-ended questions of the questionnaire, they are analysed through the Qualitative Content Analysis.

As already mentioned in the dissertation, it has been acknowledged that academic writing is not only a matter of students' ability to express their ideas clearly through writing, but it is also the ability to use the language properly and appropriately taking into account the norms of a good writing. Hence, academic writing is destined to be formal in nature and restricted to a set of rules and criteria. Formality is one of the most visible criteria in the writing process that should never be neglected or misused when producing a piece of writing. In addition, the correct use of grammatical, lexical and vocabulary aspects are considered to be more than necessary in order to avoid misunderstanding.

On the basis of the results that are reached in the two previous chapters (results and discussion), it is clearly affirmed that the majority of the students incorporate informal language in their academic writing including sentence initial conjunction, contractions, run on expressions, abbreviations and many other informal features cited in Chang and Swales (1999) in addition to the ones mentioned in Abu Sheikha and Inkpen (2010). Moreover, writing mechanics are not given much importance by third-year students in their essays. This has resulted in a huge number of errors in their exam papers involving articles, prepositions, spelling, verb tense, punctuation, and capitalisation errors.

The results sorted out from the questionnaire administered to third-year students shows the participants' perceptions towards the impact of the language used in social networking sites on their academic writing. Regarding their views, it has been clearly demonstrated that chat language has a negative impact on their formal writing. Accordingly, students chat with each other using the English language without paying attention to the proper use of language style or to the writing mechanics. This impact is clear from the number of informal features and errors that students make in their writing productions and what weakens their writing styles is the unintentional overuse of texting.

Therefore, on the basis of the results reached from the analysis of students' exam papers and the answers of the questionnaire, one can affirm that the majority of third-year students do not distinguish between formal and informal styles in addition to their poor writing skill. The findings also show students' lack of mastery of the English academic writing conventions held by the learners. For this reason, one can conclude that this study reveals that formality, informality and writing mechanics should be given more consideration in the future by designing new syllabuses that promote students' learning as an integral part in the teaching and learning process. In fact, students are not expected to be perfect in English; many native speakers certainly are not, but too many deviations make it difficult for the teachers to assess the content. Thus, it is vital to focus on learners' writing abilities since they are exposed to other forms of language in virtual context.

The first hypothesis suggesting that the main used informal feature in students' writing compositions is "contractions", it is refuted. As for the second hypothesis arguing that the major types of errors are verb tense and punctuation, it is also refuted. Regarding the last hypothesis stating that the language used in social networking sites has a negative impact on students' academic writing, it is partly confirmed.

Notably, the present work can be combined with the previous studies that have shed light on students' poor writing skills and the negative influence of SNS on third-year students' writing skill. Hopefully, it is expected that the outcomes of this modest research may provide significant insights to the field of English learning and teaching and added something new and fruitful about how English is actually learned by third-year students in the department of English at the level of MMUTO and what should be avoided in their academic writing.

One cannot deny the fact that the present study has some limitations. The first limitation is that the study is a corpus based. It has involved only eighty (80) exam papers of

third-year students. Consequently, it may be considered as a limitation because the corpus does not totally represent all the students of the University of Tizi-Ouzou. Hence, as it is corpus based, the outcomes cannot be generalised to the whole population of students. In addition, at the beginning of the research, the researchers of this study wanted to check the teachers' views about students' ways of writing and their attitudes towards the impact of SNS, but at that time they were already on holidays.

Further studies can be conducted on the topic adding interviews with learners to see where and when they use English the most outside the classroom. In addition, instead of analysing students' examination papers, they can take some chapters from students' master dissertations as a corpus for their work. They can also address the issue from a different perspective. For instance, other research can focus on the comparison of students' writing style in academic essays and the styles of social networking sites or phone texts.

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Appendix A: Third-Year Exam Papers

Essay (01)

العلامة NOTE	علامة ع.م. NOTE DE T.D.	العلامة النهائية NOTE DÉFINITIVE 08,5	مع تقدير الذي يقابل الدرجة بالأرقام Appréciation expliquant la note chiffrée	توقيع المصحح Signature du correcteur
يجب أن تحمل كل ورقة تاريخ الإمتحان و توقيع الأستاذ القائم بالمراقبة		206	نصف السنة SEMESTRE	2012
NB: Chaque feuille doit être datée et signée ci-dessus par le professeur surveillant		N° GROUPE T.D.	رقم فوج ع م	
فترة الإمتحان 20 يوم (الصباح أو المساء)		إمتحان المادة		
SEANCE Du 20 (Matin ou Soir)		Examen de :		
الأستاذ Le Professeur		<p>Topic 3 -</p> <p>After the Great Depression, new elections took place. Roosevelt became the president of the U.S.A. not by confidence but as a kind of revenge from Hoover who was guilty of depression and Roosevelt care about Americans and destroyed the American character.</p> <p>March 9th, 1933, Roosevelt called for a special session with the congress to deal with the collapse of the American system and treat economy, depression, unemployment, etc. etc.</p>		

close in June 16th 1933. The period was called the "hundred days" when the legislative and executive branches cooperated, it gave birth to the first New Deal. Its objectives were relief, recovery and reform of the American economy.

Roosevelt closed banks that passed a law to help stabilize banks and bank confidence in banking reform. He made also the security act was to help the crash of the stock market, the public works was noticed during that period. He began large programs of public works administrations (roads, schools, hospitals) which provided many jobs for unemployed people. Also the Civilian Conservation Corps provides jobs for many.

Roosevelt helped farmers by increasing prices to rise farm economy, also controlled all the products, another program was emergency relief to help people that don't work, soup kitchen to help homeless and provide food to schools.

The success of the New Deal was seen in many fields: - Roosevelt avoided works for jobs, people stabilize prices help industry and agriculture, abolish children labor. However, he failed in some points like controlling the Supreme Court for its own interest.

As the court packing when he brought extra judges he was accused of dictatorship.

Despite all the regulations taken by Roosevelt in the 1st New Deal, the great depression continued things were getting worse so he tried to provide some other laws to fix problems known as the 2nd New Deal.

Roosevelt was criticized by both left and right they were not satisfied. The right was the business interest conservatives they didn't accept the change brought by Roosevelt and accused him of bringing socialism. The left which was right of workers accused him that he is not going so far. So, he decided to take some moderation in order to get better results and for better conditions, he made "WPA" (Works Progress Administration) in order to deal with jobless people, higher workers unemployment. Another measure the Social Security Act as a response to the criticism of the left to take care about old people give them pensions. Also the policy of "Share the Wealth" by imposing taxes on wealthy people, he abolished child labor again. However, Roosevelt was criticized by the Supreme Court.

Roosevelt made many good things for the USA; both first and second New Deals were helpful and provided many opportunities for America and Americans. It was effective and successful.

Essay (02)

العلامة NOTE	علامة ت.د. NOTE DE T.D.	العلامة النهائية NOTE DEFINITIVE	مع التقدير الذي يقابل الدرجة بالارقام Appréciation expliquant la note chiffrée	توقيع المصحح Signature du Correcteur
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<p>يجب أن تحمل كل ورقة تاريخ الامتحان و توقيع الأستاذ القائم بالمراقبة.</p> <p>N. B. Chaque feuille doit être datée et signée ci-dessous Par le professeur surveillant</p>			<p>SEMESTRE صفحة</p> <p>N° GROUPE T.D. رقم فوج ع.م.</p>	<p>امتحان المادة</p> <p>Examen de :</p>
<p>فترة الامتحان 20 (الصباح أو المساء)</p> <p>SEANCE du 20 (Matin ou Soir)</p> <p>الاسم</p>			<p>FDR's New Deal</p> <p>The major cause why Roosevelt won the preside in 1932 was because he promised to try and do something to end the economic crises that the country was facing, i.e. the Great Depression, and because Americans felt that H president Herbert Hoover was not doing enough to help. The first thing that FDR said was: "Let me assert my firm belief that the only thing that we have to fear is the fear itself", he promised to act swiftly to ease the</p>	

poor and unemployed people, next he wanted economy recover to its normal levels and finally he hoped to reform financial system so economic depression would not happen again, so Relief Recovery and Reform became known as the '3R's' forming the New Deal. The New Deal is then a series of programs and policies of relief, recovery and reform to counter the effects of the Great Depression during the presidency of FDR. In this essay, I will deal with the different programs of the New Deal to ~~show~~ demonstrate to which extent it was successful.

Before starting, it is worthy to mention that the New Deal was referred to it as two different parts; first New Deal and Second New Deal. The first focuses in restructuring the economy of the US and offer relief to poor and unemployed people. Everything began with what is now known as the 'First Hundred Days' during which the Congress passed an unprecedented amount of legislations, starting with the Banking Holiday; for two days, every bank across the country was shut down and investigated then only the well behaved banks were allowed to reopen and others were put under governmental control. Government was putting restriction on while creating the FDIC - Federal Deposits Insurance Corporation - which act as an insurance for the banking system, in order to restore

to restore confidence was his fireside chats where he used the radio to reach a large number of people, talking to them with a reassuring voice telling them what is going on. He was a powerful and communicator, he inspired Americans with his fearless approach too. More practical was what is known as the "Alphabet Soup Agency" which consists of a number of programs that sprang out with no or to mention some there was: The Public Works Administration (P.W.A.) which payed people to rebuild the roads and improve the infrastructure. The Civilian Conservation Corps which payed young people to plant trees. The Agricultural Adjustment Administration that helped farmers; it gave them money to not farm in order to rise farms prices. Tennessee Valley Authority; rejuvenated the region by bringing hydroelectric dams to rural areas.

Even though there was much that Roosevelt did in his 1st N.D. it was not enough, consequently he strengthened his programs by the second New Deal. It was fundamentally the same as the first but focused on a social reform together with policies to speed up the nation's recovery. So, it had some additional programs first,

The Work Progress Administration which was the nation's biggest employer providing light construction for unskilled workers to build schools, hospitals, libraries, etc. Next, there was the Social Security Act that was an insurance for old and out-of-work people, and also a pension fund for victims of industrial accidents. Lastly, there is the Wagner Act 1935, which created the National Labor Relations Act (N.L.R.A.) that guaranteed and gave workers the right to make unions and defend themselves as workers, such as abolishing child labor and limiting working hours.

Despite all the positive aspects of the New Deal, there were also some negative effects such as the AAA, which destroyed crops and this led to an increase in food prices up to 90%. The international business view saw the N.D. as a mistake, and many Americans still unemployed, since their jobs were temporary.

erm... solutions... For, New Deal was criticized by many business man and intellectuals but had its support from the American citizens.

To conclude, The New Deal had numerous positive effects but failed to end the G.D. The effects of the G.D. began to subside as The U.S. entered the W.W.II (1941) as it was a surge demand for war products like ships, arms, etc. New Deal was later appreciated by Lyndon B. Johnson who created additional programs.

Essay (03)

العلامة NOTE	علامة ع.م. NOTE DE T.D	العلامة النهائية NOTE DÉFINITIVE	مع تقدير الذي يقابل الدرجة بالأرقام Appréciation expliquant la note chiffrée	توقيع المصحح Signature du correcteur
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يجب أن تحمل كل ورقة تاريخ الإمتحان و توقيع الأستاذ القائم بالمراقبة		نصف السنة رقم فوج ع م	Cont. Topic	
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فترة الإمتحان يوم 20 (الصباح أو المساء)		The Great Depression was the economic downturn in the history of industrialized country. Basted from 1929 to 1939 by 1939 when the great depression reached its pints some 15 million Americans were unemployed and approximately half the country's banks failed.		
SEANCE Du 20..... (Matin ou Soir)		1920s was a period of prosperity, a large number of people purchased automobiles, radios and machines, etc. or convincing people that each one could afford these items by borrowing money. As a result the American people didn't have enough money to pay for all what they		
الأستاذ Le Professeur		11		

purchased. In addition to that American farms was at high record during WWI. Dropping after the war and never recovered. With the invention of new machines farmers were growing more crops than ever before. This caused price drop and farmers couldn't make benefit. Also, in the midwest a drought started with no rain fall and the soil turned to dust. As farmers couldn't pay their loans, bills so they lost their farms and properties. Furthermore, America was wealthy in 1920s, but the wealth didn't extend to all segments of society. The vast majority of people were from middle class so they could purchase much to help the economy to continue to flourish. In contrast, the wealthiest American fearing the risk so they curtailed their spending. Moreover, in 1920s the economy was booming. The owners of companies built new factories and hired more workers. Some the companies made more products so they could sell. When the great depression started the companies were laid off workers and halt production. All this leads to negative effect across the entire economy. Also, in the late of 1920s the ordinary people becoming very wealthy thanks of purchasing stock. Some of these people were engaged in speculation that was very risky. Also a buyer purchase shares of stock might allow a buyer to purchase stock for only a percentage as long as stock prices continued to rise.

To conclude, the Great Depression has a negative effect

across the entire economy, society, culture, etc. which made the American president F.D. Roosevelt to provide and make many program known as new Deal to put an end for these problems.

Essay (04)

العلامة NOTE	علامة م.ع. NOTE DE T.D.	العلامة النهائية NOTE DEFINITIVE	مع التقدير الذي يفاضل الدرجة بالأرقام Appréciation expliquant la note chiffrée
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a lot in the way of living. Millions of people were out of a job, and they prefer to kill themselves. Since there was a lack of jobs, so they found difficulties in living. Thus, Franklin D. Roosevelt tried to make and do some federal programs related to relief such as The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC); it is in order to help people especially the poor one with money and to find them jobs. Another Act is The Civil Work Administration (CWA); for Roosevelt all people should get a work, he didn't accept any kind of depression or poverty. There are other programs related to this point which are aiming to smite poverty and make life of people good and to live in safe.

The second step in the New deal is Recovery. It is recovery of the economy back to normal levels. This project was made to protect labor business. It is done during the first New deal. One of his most acts is Wagner Act (WA) in order to protect labor organizing. Another Act is The National Industrial Recovery Act of 1933 (NIRA), its purpose is to prevent self production. This is the kind of industry. Also, there is Recovery in agriculture; one act which include to this is The Social Security Administration (SSA).

They provided support for farmers. The last type of recovery is housing which means everyone have the right to have place where he live in.

The last step in the New Deal is reform for the financial system to prevent a repeat Depression. The New Deal include new constraints on the banking industry and efforts to re-inflate the economy after the prices had fallen. It is done or dealt with the previous banking crisis through the emergency banking Act (EBA) and the 1933 banking act. During this period of time many banks were closed because they didn't pay back their loss. In the New Deal's programs included both laws passed by Congress as well as presidential executive orders during the first term of presidency of Franklin's D. Roosevelt. But all this acts and projects are successful and arrive to make America more convenient or developed country.

In conclusion, we say that New Deal is a set of activities or projects made by Franklin's D. Roosevelt in order to make America the most developed country. It is aimed to remove all kind of Depression and poverty. It is divided to three major steps which are Relief, Recovery and Reform.

But you had to speak about

the effectiveness of the New Deal

Essay (05)

At the end of WWI, America faced a great development and prosperity in different countries. The Roaring Twenties are began on 1920 until the 1929. This period influence to all the americans citizen and also foreign countries especially the european countries, because it's the age of prosperity. However, this period influenced to the americans also in the great depression from (1929 - 1939). So, this period are very important in the history of america. But, how 1920s represented social, economic, and cultural discord among americans? Question

At the roaring twenties, many things are exchange in the social life, there is a new invention such as the television, radio, washing machine, automobiles, vacuum cleaner etc in order to make people lived in comfortable way. This materials are purchased by the americans by installment buying. It means that the companies bought them this materials in debt because the government at that time encourage them to purchase this products in debt by saying "live now, pay tomorrow" also the banks give them a loans to make a private companies and for the farmers, to purchase a coins also they take loans

tractors et to plant their farms and after the harvest they pay back their loans banks loans.

In addition, there is a different group one emerged in this period such as a Flappers "It's a group of women lived like a man, so, they cut their hairs, wearing a short shirts, smoking cigarettes, drink alcohol, etc." This group for him there is not a differences between men and women in the society, another group are emerged in this period is called "The Klux Klan", this group of people wearing a white cloths clothes like they look like a ghost, also there is another group named the red scare in order to kill the american citizens also at that period there is the emergence of "lessez faire".

At the roaring twenties, the economy also known a great development and prosperity, at that period america faced an economic boom, because in the industrial companies are produced a lot of products that used from the americans and brought to another countries, also the farmers have a great harvest because they used industrial materials in plantation, so, at that time, the business of movies is beginning in add of economic boom america also developed the culture, so, the invention of television and radio changed the way of life at this period. At that time we find a lot of writers of novels, plays and so on, at that period also many people go to watch a movies or plays in order pass time, or listen to a radio in order to to have information or listening to the shows, at this period also

we find a lot of actors.

To conclude, the roaring twenties is the age of prosperity and development in such as social, economic, and cultural. This prosperity influenced for all the Americans, but unfortunately, this period ended in 1929 according of the stock market crash and black Thursday and the dust storm so at this period the soil turned to a dust and many farmers find a problem with a banks because they don't have enough money to pay back their loans, and many people died of starvation.

Appendix B

Students' Questionnaire

Dear student,

This questionnaire is part of our research study. One of its aims is to confirm whether the language used in Social Networking Sites (SNS) has any impact on learners' academic writing. Thus, in order to achieve this objective, you are kindly requested to answer the questions below. The information you provide will be valuable for us. Therefore, we promise you to ensure the anonymity and confidentiality of your answers, and they will be used only for an academic purpose.

Please be honest while answering, thank you.

Put a cross to indicate your chosen answers, and use your own statements when necessary.

❖ Section One: The Use of Social Networking Sites (SNS).

Q1. Do you use Social Networking Sites?

Yes No

If yes, which one of the following do you use the most? (You can choose more than one answer)

- Facebook
- Instagram
- Snapchat
- WhatsApp
- Viber
- Twitter

Others,

Q2. For which purpose do you use SNS? (You can choose more than one answer)

- Chat with friends
- Meet new people
- Share your activities with friends
- Entertainment
- Learning
- Express your opinion
- Write about different topics

Others,

Q3. How many hours per day do you spend on these sites?

Less than an hour 4-6 hours
1-2 hours More than 6 hours

2-4 hours

Q4. How do you prefer to communicate in SNS?

- Speaking
- Writing
- Both

❖ **Section Two: The Language of Chatting/Texting in SNS.**

Q5. What kind of language do you use when writing in social networking sites (SNS)?

- Academic writing
- Informal writing
- Mix between them

Justify.

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

Q6. Do you pay attention to the kind of language used in your chat messages?

Yes No

Q7. What kind of words do you use in chatting?

Entires Shortcutting

Q8. Do you use informal language when texting/chatting?

Yes No

If yes, which feature do you use the most? (You can choose more than one answer)

- Examples of slangs: **kids:** children, **hot:** attractive.
- Examples of contractions: **won't:** will not, **haven't:** have not.
- Examples of vague expressions: **a bit, kind of.**
- Examples of split infinitives: my father told me **to carefully drive.**
- Others: direct questions, exclamations, the use of first and second person pronouns (**I, we, you**), ending a sentence with a preposition (I do not think **so**).

- Slangs
- Contractions
- Vague expressions
- Split infinitives

Others,

.....
.....

Others,

.....
.....

Q13. Have you ever faced a situation where you have written one of these abbreviations, slangs, contractions, vague expressions and informal vocabulary in your academic essays? (E.g. in an exam paper)

Yes No

If yes, then why?

- Forgot the correct/formal form
- Essays are long and complex
- Unconsciously used
- Easier than the formal form

Others,

Q14. Do you think that Social Networking Sites' use enhances your writing process?

Yes No

Q15. Do you believe that your academic writing can be affected by the language of texting/chatting?

Yes No

Justify and provide some concrete examples.

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

Q16. Does the ignorance of punctuation when writing essays affect your marks?

Yes No

Justify.

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

Q17. What about the use of slangs, contractions, vague expressions, split infinitives and other informal features, do you think that they make you lose marks when using them in your academic writing?

Yes No

Q18. Does it happen to you to make errors like grammatical ones (subject-verb agreement, prepositions, plurality, verb tense and form), spelling, vocabulary in your academic essays?

Yes

No

If yes, what kind of errors you make the most? (According to the feedback given by your teachers)?

.....
.....

Q19. How do you think the language of Social Networking Sites is affecting your formal/academic writing?

Positively

Negatively

Why?

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

Q20. How do you explain the use of chat language in your written assignments or exam papers? (You can choose more than one answer)

- Influence of L1
- Influence of media (films, songs ...)
- Personal preference
- Influence of SNS
- Unconscious use

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

Others,

.....
.....

Thank you for your time and cooperation.