

**People's Democratic Republic of Algeria**  
**Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research**  
**Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi-Ouzou**  
**Faculty of Letters and Languages**  
**Department of English**



**Domain:** Foreign Languages  
**Branch:** English Languages  
**Specialism:** Language and Communication

**Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements**  
**for the Degree of Master in English**

**Title:**

**The Implementation of Meaningful Learning Strategies  
to Promote Students' Writing Abilities: The Case of Second  
Year Students of English at Mouloud Mammeri University  
Tizi-Ouzou**

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**Academic Year:2017/2018**

***Dedications***

**To all my beloved family**

**My parents**

**My brothers and sisters**

**My brother khaled in memory**

**Special thanks for my friends who helped me**

**To all my friends**

**Nadia**

## **Acknowledgments**

This work would not complete without the encouragement of many individuals. I would like to offer my gratitude for Mr. Cherifi my supervisor for his criticism, guidance, advice and help. We would like to express my appreciation to Mr.Aouine in particular and the teachers of the department of English in general. I would also like to express my gratitude for the board of examiners who accepted to examine this modest work. Finally yet importantly, I would like to thank our friends for their help and support. In addition, special thanks go to the participants who accepted to be part of this work without them this study could not be completed.

## ***Abstract***

*The current study investigates the implementation of meaningful learning strategies to promote students' writing abilities. It attempts to determine the efficiency of the learning of the writing skill through the implementation of meaningful learning strategies. The research is done in the department of English at MMUTO. Under the conditions of learning theory by Robert Gagne (1965), we have opted for the use of the mixed method research. Therefore, a structured interview is conducted with five instructors of the writing module and a questionnaire which is delivered to 85 students. The statistical method is used for the quantitative data analyses while qualitative content analyses are adopted to interpret the results of the interview. According to the results of the research, it is concluded that the implementation of the meaningful learning strategies enhance the learning process of the writing skill to become effective and sufficient. The study revealed that the teachers of writing implement the different meaningful learning strategies to develop the students' motivation and abilities in the writing skill. Therefore, the students claimed that they sometimes face difficulties when they do writing activities. The results in general revealed that the learners receive a competent learning of writing and the instruction of learning are used and applied in the department of English at MMUTO. Finally, the teachers have proposed to their students' extensive reading as a solution to improve their writing style.*

**Key words:** meaningful learning strategies, writing, writing skill, learning, conditions of learning, teachers, students.

## **List of Abbreviations**

**EFL:** English Foreign Language

**HP:** Hypotheses

**MMUTO:** Mouloud Mammeri University Tizi-Ouzou

**QCA:** Quantitative Content Analyses

**S.W:** Speaking and Writing

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## General introduction

Language is the substantial means of communication. Human beings transmit knowledge through language which is considered as the most important element of education and literacy. The use of language in education is recommended with the mastery of receptive and productive skills (Writing, Reading, Listening, and Speaking). Productive skills of language (S.W) are given significance in which ‘**writing**’ is the preferred outcome expected from students. This is generally required at schools where students are asked to master good writing composition.

Learning is defined as, *“a change in human disposition or capability that preexists over a period of time and is not simply ascribable to processes of growth”* (Robert Gagne, 1977:3). That is to say, learning is the process that leads to the change of the human views toward a previous knowledge either negatively or positively. For example, someone has a previous knowledge about a given topic, through the learning process, this fact changes and becomes clearer in his or her mind.

The teaching of the writing skill requires the good learning process which is based on theories and methods of learning. These theories help students to improve their level in learning writing skills. The meaningful learning gives the learners the opportunity to be fully engaged in the learning process. Indeed, it is defined by Yoram Harpaz (n.d:3) as follows, *“meaningful learning is a process in which the learner recognizes his understanding and lays foundation for deeper understanding”*. That is why in teaching foreign languages we look for the achievement of meaningful learning.

With the implementation of the instructional theories that provide the different instructions, the learning process improves and develops. Thus, the use of the learning instructions in the teaching of the writing skill helps the learning of the writing skill to become easier so that the students can reach high results. That is why we have conducted this

research in the Department of English at Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi-Ouzou because the idea is that students generally view the learning of the writing skill as a difficult one and they face difficulties when they practice it.

### ▪ **Statement of the Problem**

When speaking about learning a foreign language, it is generally related to the acquisition of new concepts and elements that give assistance to improve the student's competences in productive and receptive skills. This is done with the implementation of the suitable conditions and instructions of learning in order to build the learners' creativity and motivation and help them to be involved in the learning process; so as to enhance and improve the students' level in the writing module. Students in the Department of English at MMUTO face difficulties when it comes to do any writing assignment. They have the habit of making the same mistakes at the level of coherence and cohesion. This issue may cause a failure in learning the writing skill. In order to reduce or solve the problems faced by learners, the teaching and learning of the writing skill should be effective and meaningful. The learning goals and objectives that make things understandable and in the proximal zone of development of learners should be stressed.

### ▪ **Aims and Significance of the Study**

This research aims at shedding light on the efficient learning of the writing skill through the implementation of meaningful learning strategies. Since Robert Gagne (1965) draws the conditions of learning, the theory has been applied to the design of instruction in all domains (Gagne and Discrol, 1988). The objectives of this study are threefold. The first focuses on identifying whether the students face difficulties in the writing skill. The second objective is based on mentioning and implementing the meaningful learning strategies during the learning of the writing module in the purpose of realizing an effective learning. The third

one is aimed at making sure that the implementation of the meaningful learning strategies come with the good results in developing students' writing skill.

## ▪ **Research Questions and Hypotheses**

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

1. How can the implementation of meaningful learning strategies develop students' writing competences?
2. To what extent the meaningful learning strategies proposed by Gagne are stressed by teachers of writing in the Department of English at MMUTO?
3. Are the students involved in the writing sessions when the meaningful learning strategies are implemented?

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

- **Hp1:** The meaningful learning strategies develop students' competences through feedback and motivation.
- **Hp2:** The teachers of writing in the Department of English at MMUTO give importance on the use of the meaningful learning strategies.
- **Hp3:** The students are involved in the writing sessions when the meaningful learning strategies are implemented.
- **Hp4:** The students are not involved in the writing sessions when the meaningful learning strategies are implemented.

## ▪ **Research Technique and Methodology**

This investigation, which takes place at Mouloud Mammeri University in the Department of English, adopts the mixed method research. That is to say, it integrates both qualitative and quantitative methods that are used in the collection and analysis of data. This

empirical study aims at answering the research questions, test hypotheses and collect the required data for our research. This research opts for two main tools: Students' questionnaire and teachers' interview. The second year students at the Department of English are asked to complete the questionnaire to know their views about the meaningful learning of writing and how the conditions of learning can enhance the learning of the writing skill. Concerning the interview, it is conducted with the teachers of the writing module. It includes questions that can provide our research with information related to the meaningful learning of writing.

#### ▪ **Structure of the Dissertation**

The overall structure of this dissertation follows the complex traditional model. It includes four chapters as well as the general introduction and the general conclusion. The first chapter reviews the main theoretical perspectives and the main concepts in literature. The methodology chapter represents the different procedures that are employed during the investigation to collect data. Then, the presentation of the findings which presents the results in relation to statistical data. The last chapter is the discussion of findings. It discusses results presented in the preceding section and it brings answers to the research questions.

## **Review of literature**

### **Introduction**

This chapter reviews the main literature and the main theoretical frame work to be used in this research. The first part introduces brief definitions of learning and presents the types of learning. Then, it continues with presenting the instructional theory of learning, and it highlights Gagne's conditions of learning and presents meaningful learning. The second part of this chapter illustrates the writing skill as one of the most important skills and the teachers' role in the writing sessions. It shows the different methods that help teaching the writing skill meaningfully, and it includes elements of an effective writing skill and the main parts to enhance the students' abilities of writing skill. Finally, it provides some definitions related to learning as well as to writing by different scholars.

#### **1. Definition of Learning**

Many definitions of learning are given by different theorists with different words. Knud (2018:1) defines learning as,

a basic biological capacity which is far more developed in humans than in any other living being. Hence, humans are created and also doomed to be learners we cannot avoid accumulating an enormous amount of learning throughout our life, furthermore, in contemporary societies, we are also forced to learn.

That is to say, human beings are born with the innate capacity to learn and develop their intellectual abilities through their life in order to become learners. For example, a baby child is born with no previous knowledge, but the social environment and interaction will build the child to acquire first his/her mother tongue until the time when he/ she will go to the school for acquiring the information and learn through his/her life.

Learning is also the process of acquiring new knowledge and concepts. From *The New Social Learning*, we define learning as, "*the transformative process of taking in information that when internalized and mixed with what we have experienced changes what we know and builds on what we do. It's based on input, process and reflection. It is what*



*changes us*” (Tony Bingham and Marcia Conner 2010:19). This means that, learning is considered as the action of acquiring new ideas that are going to be combined with the previous knowledge in order to build new information according to personal experiences. For example learning the use of present continuous in grammar; the new elements that are going to be learned in the lesson will be added to the previous ones and come together with the old concepts. This helps to develop the understanding of the lesson and construct a new knowledge.

### **1.1 Types of Learning**

The leaning style differs from one student to another and this means that the learning is not alike. This pushed theorists to analyze and provide different types of learning strategies. In 1962, Melton organized a “*Symposiumon Psychology of Human Learning*” in which he puts emphasis on “the interrelationship of different categories of human learning”, and then he edited a book entitled *Categories of Human Learning* in 1964.

Melton 1964 suggests that, “*classes of experimental learning tasks and warned that principles that had been derived about one set of tasks could not necessarily be generalized to other classes*” (cited in Smith, Patricia L.; Regan, Tilman 1996:731). Indeed, it is not always possible to generalize a set of principles for all the students, since they do not have the same life experience, way of thinking and learning.

The types of learning are proposed by Robret Gagne in one chapter of the *Categories of Human Learning* as follow, “*the six types of learning [are] response learning, chaining, verbal learning (paired associates), concept learning, principle learning, problem solving*” (Melton, 1964:312). Then he developed these six types after publishing his book *Conditions of learning* 1965 into eight types which are presented in the table below:

<b><i>Type of Learning</i></b>	<b><i>Definition</i></b>
1. <i>Signal learning(Pavlov,1927)</i>	<i>The learner associates an already available response with new stimulus or signal</i>
2. <i>Stimulus response-learning (Thorndik,1898; Skinner, 1938; Kimble,1961)</i>	<i>The learner responds precisely to a discriminate stimulus.</i>
3. <i>Chaining (Skinner,1938; Gilbert,1962)</i>	<i>The learner acquires a connection to a set of individual stimulus-response in a sequence( two or more stimulus response connection equal a chain)</i>
4. <i>Verbal association (underwood, 1964)</i>	<i>The learning acquires a connection to a set of verbal chains.</i>
5. <i>Discrimination learning (postman,1961)</i>	<i>The learner makes different identifying responses to many different and seemingly similar stimulus.</i>
6. <i>Concept learning (Kendler,1964)</i>	<i>The learner becomes capable of making a common response to a class of stimuli.</i>
7. <i>Principle learning (Gagne,1964)</i>	<i>The learner recognizes a chain of two or more concepts</i>
8. <i>Problem solving (Kotana,1940; Maier,1930)</i>	<i>The learner recalls and connects a combination of previously learned rules which can be applied to achieve a solution for a novel situation.</i>

**Table1: Eight Types of Learning with Referencing by Robert Gagne and with definition for each.**

(Gagne, 1965:29).

The table shows the eight types of learning and presents the correspondent definition for each in order to make the types clear and implicit. From the table, we conclude that

learning divided into eight different types but they all have the same objective and way of learning. The learning process is based on presenting a new stimulus or a new content which is always related and linked to previous and old ones.

## **1.2 The Instructional Theory of Learning**

The learning theory is defined as, *“a set of constructs linking observed changes in performance with what is thought to bring about those changes”* (Driscoll, 1994:9). That is to say, learning theory contains a set of instructions to be related to each other in the purpose of carrying out changes in learners behaviours through their participation. Hence, *“the instructional psychology is the study of the facilitation of human learning through instruction and can result in instructional design theories and models”* (Smith, et al., 1996:728). This study focuses on the use of instructions for further theories. The instruction theory is *“an integrated set of principles, based upon learning theory, other relevant theories, and sound replicable research, that permits one to predict the effects of specific instructional conditions on learner’s cognitive processing and the resulting learned capabilities”* (ibid, 1996:728). In other words, the instructional theory follows specific instructions in the purpose of improving the learning process and realizing a high academic achievement.

The components of instructional theory are designed by Snow and Swanson (1992:584) as follows,

- a) description of desired end states or goals of instruction in a domain;
- b) description of goal-relevant initial states of learners prior to instruction;
- c) explication of the transition process from initial to desired states;
- d) specification of instructional conditions that promote this transition;
- e) assessment of performance and instructional effects.

Indeed, these instructions are drawn to improve the learning process and achieve the learning goals. The teacher starts by describing the learning objectives in order to keep the students awareness and motivated. Thus, the teacher keeps and controls the transition from one instruction to another. At last, the teacher assesses the learners’ participation and at the same time she/she evaluates the effectiveness of the instructions and the teaching method.

As an instructional psychologist, Robert Gagne (1985:244) defined the instructional theory as an,

attempt to relate the external events of instruction to the outcomes of learning by showing how these events lead to appropriate support or enhancement of internal learning process [...] The province of an instructional theory is to propose a rationally based relationship between instructional events and, their effects on learning processes, and the learning outcomes that are produced as a result of these processes.

Therefore, the instructional theory works on linking the peripheral conditions with the learning outcomes so as to increase the internal events of learning and enhance the learners' cognitive abilities. It is also based on making a logical relationship between the instructional events and their effects on the learning process which is the achievement of the learning of the writing skill effectively.

## **Theoretical framework**

### **2. Gagne's Conditions of Learning**

The Conditions of Learning is a learning theory suggested by Robert Gagne in 1965.

#### **2.1 The Four Elements that Provide the Conditions of Learning**

Gagne et al., (1992) have proposed four main elements that provide the framework for the conditions of learning theory:

**2.1.1 Conditions of Learning:** They are divided into two main elements; the internal conditions and the external ones as, Gagne, Briggs and Waggoner (1992:8) claim that "*some of these conditions, to be sure pertain to the stimuli that are external to the learner, others are internal conditions to be sought within the individual learner*". In other words, the external conditions are related to what the learners acquire from their environment. For example, the knowledge provided by the teacher is an external condition or the information taken from the books. Whereas, the internal conditions are mainly connected to the inside capacities of the

learners and their learning styles. For instance, some students have capacities to encode and maintain the new knowledge in a rapid way while others do not.

**2.1.2 Association Learning:** That contains four main basic elements: classical conditions, operant conditions, verbal association and chaining association.

**2.1.3 The Five Categories of Learning Outcomes with the Relevant Definitions:**

According to Gagne the only way to make sense of many different varieties of outcomes learning produces is to take them as performance categories. The definitions of these five categories of learning outcomes are given by (Gagne et al.,1992:14) such:

- 1. Intellectual Skill:** This permits to the learner to carry out symbolically controlled procedures.
- 2. Cognitive Strategies:** [It stands for] the means by which learners exercise control over their own learning processes.
- 3. Verbal Information:** [It is] the fact and organized “knowledge for the world” stored on learners’ memory.
- 4. Attitudes:** [It is related to] the internal states that influence the personal action choices a learner makes.
- 5. Motor Skills:** [It is] the movement of skeletal muscles organized to accomplish [the learning process].

Indeed, these learning outcomes are primordial to be implemented in the learning process with their suitable instructions to enhance the learning of the writing skill.

**2.1.4 The Nine Events of Instructions:** Gagne outlines nine major events of instructions to enhance the learning process and develop students’ skills. According to Gagne et al., (1992) these events should suit or offer the needed conditions for learning and give out as the foundation for designing instruction and selecting suitable media.

- 1. Gaining Attention:** It refers to “*a student’s willingness, need, desire and compulsion to participate in, and be successful in the learning process*” (Taylor and Parsons cited in Purwanti Eka et al., n.d.:3). The teacher should make sure that the students are ready to learn and perform in activities by presenting a stimulus to gain their attention. And the best way to gain students’ attention is to start with asking questions or telling interesting facts in order to create curiosity that motivate students to pay attention to what the teacher says.
- 2. Informing the Learners of their Objectives:** It is defined in the teacher and educational development (2005:1) as, “*an outcome statement that captures specifically what knowledge, skills, and attitudes learners should be able to exhibit following instruction*”. Indeed, it is very important to inform the students about the objectives. This helps them to be motivated and to complete the lesson. It is generally presented in such form: at the end of this lesson you will be able to write a coherent argumentative essay.
- 3. Stimulate Recall of Prior Learning:** It helps the students to associate new information with something they already know. It is easier for them to store knowledge when it has a link to their own personal experience. For example, asking questions about the previous experiences of students and their previous understanding of some concepts.
- 4. Eliciting Performance:** The learners are asked to practice new skill or knowledge by letting them do something with the acquired skill or knowledge for example, the teacher asks the students to write paragraphs using the learned expressions. This gives a chance for the learners to confirm their understanding.
- 5. Providing Learner’s Guidance:** Guidance is defined as, “*assistance given to the learner by the instructor in order to facilitate his achievement in the learning process*” (Azuka N and G.Alutu, n.d.:44). In other words, the teacher provides students with strategies and techniques that give them aid in learning new content and reach the desired success in the

learning process. For example, the teacher provides students with the important elements that will be used during a session.

- 6. Presenting the Stimulus (Content):** It is the stage where the new content is presented for the learners. It needs the use of strategies to present the lesson in more effective and sufficient instructions. Organize and chunk the content in a meaningful way to provide explanations before demonstrations. Presenting the content includes: presentation of vocabulary, providing examples, the use of different media and materials, presents the same content in different ways.
- 7. Giving Feedback:** Feedback is defined as, *“providing information to an individual which focuses on their performance or behaviour”* (Cheryl A Jones, 2005:14). When learners practice a new skill, it is important to provide them with a specific and immediate feedback in the purpose of facilitating the learning. For example, the teacher can provide the students with feedback when asking them a question in the class or after giving them back the exam papers.
- 8. Assessing Performance:** *“Assessment is a fundamental process required to promote learning and ultimately achievement”* (ibid: 4). After completing the instructional events, the teachers must test their students to know whether the expected learning outcomes are achieved. The assessment is based on the previously stated objectives.
- 9. Enhancing Retention and Transfer:** This instruction helps the learners to develop expertise, and the obligation to internalize the new knowledge. Bob Lucas (n.d.: 1) claims that, *“learning and retention can only occur when people are interested and engaged in the learning process”*.

Actually, these events are presented by (R.Gagne et al., 1992:191) in a table with their relation to learning process:

<i>Instructional event</i>	<i>Relation</i>
1. <i>Gaining attention</i>	1. <i>Reception of patterns of neural impulses</i>
2. <i>Informing learners of their objective</i>	2. <i>Activating a process of executive control</i>
3. <i>stimulating recall of perquisite learning</i>	3. <i>Retrieval of prior learning to working memory</i>
4. <i>Presenting the stimulus material</i>	4. <i>Emphasizing features for selective perception</i>
5. <i>Providing learning guidance</i>	5. <i>Semantic encoding cues for retrieval</i>
6. <i>Eliciting the performance</i>	6. <i>Activating response organization</i>
7. <i>Providing feedback about performance correctness</i>	7. <i>Establishing reinforcement</i>
8. <i>Assessing the performance</i>	8. <i>Activating retrieval, making reinforcement possible</i>
9. <i>Enhancing retention and transfer</i>	9. <i>Providing cues and strategies for retrieval</i>

**Table 2: Events of Instruction and their Relation to Process of Learning**

(Gagne et al., 1992:191).

According to Gagne et al (1992), this table shows that the events of instruction put emphasis on the restoration of learning in order to motivate the learners and keep their attention according to their desire and the drawn objectives of the lesson.

## **2.2 Principles of Learning**

The principles of learning are drawn to ensure the effectiveness of the learning process and reach high academic results. Gagne and Driscoll (1988:87) chart four main principles of learning:



1. Different instruction is required for different learning outcomes.
2. Events of learning operate on the learner in ways that constitute the condition of learning.
3. The specific operations that constitute instructional events are different for each different type of learning outcome.
4. Learning hierarchies define what intellectual skills are to be learned and a sequence of instruction.

Indeed, the learning process is successful only when it is happened under the appropriate conditions and principles of learning. The instructor should stick to a set of principles that ensure the achievement of learning; for example, to provide the learners with the suitable conditions and to provide them with the instructions of learning and apply them in a good manner.

### **2.3 Meaningful Learning**

Meaningful learning is the achievement of deep understanding of the lesson through linkage of the new information with the previous relevant concepts. According to David Ausubel (1963:149) meaningful learning, *“refers to the process of acquisition, retention, reduction and retrieval of meanings derived from the interaction of concepts in new material learned with relevant enchainning concepts already available in cognitive structure”*. This means that the effective learning is related to the acquirement of new concepts by means of retaining the new knowledge and then reduction. And finally the restoration of the old concepts to be related to the new learned information.

In fact, to achieve the meaningful learning, the learning process should occur in suitable conditions as it is confirmed by Roussaur (1982:26) who argues that, *“the terms used to describe antecedent conditions that maximize the probability of meaningful learning are meaningful learning set, logical meaningfulness, potential meaningfulness, and psychological meaning”*. In other words, in order to achieve an effective learning, it should happen under

appropriate conditions like physical environment and the way the teacher works with the students as well as the psychological significance.

### **3. Writing Skill**

#### **3.1 Definitions**

In the field of language teaching and learning, the writing skill has received much scholarly attention; therefore, many definitions of writing exist to highlight its importance and effectiveness in the learning process.

According to White and Arndt (1993:3) who think that writing is, *“far from being a simple matter of transcribing language into written symbols; it is a thinking process in its own right. It demands conscious intellectual effort which usually has to be sustained over a considerable effort of time”*. That means, writing is not only a subject of putting down the graphic symbols but it is also a cognitive process that needs a full awareness of the writer and great effort in order to convince the reader.

Indeed, the writing skill is also defined as, *“[...]the means of human inter communication through the use of conventionally visible marks”*(Jordan, 1999:41), and *“writing is not only a simple matter of transcribing language into written symbols but also a thinking process in its own right”*(White and Arndt1991:41). That is to say, it is a permanent record, as a form of expression and a means of communication.

From the above citations, writing could be perceived as a complex process that requires many skills like: mental, psychological, theoretical and critical aspects. Writing skill requires different mechanism as capitalization, spelling, punctuation, word form and function. It helps to convey meaning clearly; therefore, writing is an activity to improve our understanding of any subject.

### 3.2 Importance of Teaching the Writing Skill

Writing is one of the most important skills in learning a new language. It is a productive skill. In other words, it is that means of communication which helps to put down the graphic symbols that present language in order to convey meanings and ideas so that the reader can grasp the information that the writer tried to impart. The writing skill is also important for academic purposes which mean it allows the students to show their understating of the content clearly. Through writing, students will be able to establish an argument and make a critical thinking.

### 3.3 Why Teaching the Writing Skill?

Harmer.J (2004:3) argues that, “*spoken language [...] is acquired naturally as a result of being exposed to it, whereas the ability to write has to be consciously learned*”. That means, human beings grow up speaking a language, either the mother tongue or other languages, unconsciously because they are opened to the social environment starting from the small family. In contrast to the written form of the language that is acquired and learned intentionally because writing need the total awareness of the learner. Harmer (1998:79) makes the causes clear as follow:

- **Reinforcement:** Language acquisition differs; some students learn orally and others by graphic form. But most of them benefit from seeing the written form of a language. In addition, students often find it useful to write sentences using new language shortly after they have studied it. As Harmer (2004:32) states, “*writing has always been used as a means of reinforcing a language that has been taught. [...], teachers often ask students to write sentences using recently learnt grammar*”.
- **Language development:** The cognitive activity students go through is all part of ongoing learning experience in order to write a proper and well organized essay. Harmer (1998:79)

claims that *“the writing skill helps students to develop and improve their learning outcomes”*.

- **Learning style:** Students’ learning style is different; there are those who prefer to learn a language by images, videos, and slower way. Through the different learning styles the learning process become easier and quite pleasurable. In addition, writing provides simplicity of the learners’ communication more than face to face exchanges.
- **Writing as a skill:** Students need to learn how to write essays ( acquiring the different techniques of writing), and they are asked to know how the writing system function so as to improve their way of putting down the writing reports and ideas. The students are asked to master the writing skill from the side of punctuation, organization, texture, and word choice in the purpose of attracting the readers’ attentions.

### **3.4 Teachers’ Role in Writing Session**

The teachers have an important and dominant function in the writing classes. As Harmer (2004:41) suggested, teachers should provide their learners with the following components:

- **Demonstrating:** The demonstration contains two forms as Murry Gaad (2017:41) maintains, *“active demonstrating involves the teacher composing a text collaboratively with students; receptive demonstrating involves the teacher instructing from previously created texts”*. Indeed, these forms of demonstrating are very important for teacher to apply them during the classes; the active demonstrating engage the collaboration of students with teacher to produce an essay or a text, thus the receptive demonstrating is adopted by teachers as an aid in their teaching and instruction.
- **Motivating and provoking:** The teachers are asked to create a motivated mood by using the provoking and motivating words in the purpose of engaging the students in the learning process. For example, at the beginning or during the lesson the teacher can say at the end of this lesson you will be able to write a proper journal article like real journalists.

- **Supporting:** The teacher is the person that can give support and help for the learners to achieve the learning of the writing skill, *“students need a lot of help and reassurance once they get going, both with ideas and with the means to carry them out”*(Harmer, 2004:42).
- **Responding:** Responding is related to feedback, it is all the comments and answers given to the students about their writings. Responding can be given to the learners when, *“the student interactions about writing, whether it occurs to one to one, small group or large group contexts, during demonstrating or feedback sessions”* (Murry, 2017:41).
- **Evaluating:** The teachers evaluate or assess the students’ understanding and the achievement of the teachers’ method as well. It is required for a teacher to do a short test regularly to test and check the learning and teaching effectiveness.

### 3.5 The Elements of an Effective Writing

In order to reach an efficient writing, Stephen Welbers suggests five elements of an effective writing:

- **Central Idea:** This element focuses on a comprehensible and manageable ideas, and thesis statement on which the whole passage speak about. Also, it should contain secondary ideas that support the main idea.
- **Organization:** This part of an effective writing stands for the well association and coherence of the elements of the text. In addition, it involves the linkage between the central idea and the secondary ideas with the use of the suitable transitional words in order to make things clear for the reader. Starkey (2004:2) states that *“by following an organized method of writing, you will guide your reader from your first to the last sentence. He or she will be able to see how the various points you make in your piece of writing work together and how they support your thesis”*.

- **Supporting Material:** This part helps the writer to make his or her writing clarified and convinced. It includes the use of examples, statistics, and quotations in the purpose of reinforcing the expressed idea.
- **Expression, Word Choice, and Point of View:** In this element, the learners are asked to give their opinions and critical thinking explicitly with the suitable word choice which is, *“a word’s implied meaning which involves emotions, cultural assumptions and suggestions”* (Starkey, 2004:21). That is to say, the words should fit with the writing theme with the intention of expressing the wanted idea.
- **Spelling, Grammar, and Punctuation:** The students are requested to respect the rules for using correctly the grammatical norms, spelling and punctuation.

These elements are drawn to improve students’ level of writing skill and become able to manipulate the techniques of writing. Guidance on the Teaching of Writing Skills (2010:3) states that,

the really effective writer will reach a stage when the mechanical aspects of writing such as spelling and punctuation, become second nature to them and they are able to give all their attention to experimenting with language and form to engage and inform their readers.

Indeed, the writer should know how to express the ideas and inform the reader in order to attract the readers’ attention as well as the full respect of the stages of a meaningful writing like the professional use of grammar (the choice of the right tense) and punctuation (where necessary) that give for the written text its beauty.

### **3.6 The Characteristics of an Effective Writing**

When the learners stick to the use of the elements of the effective writing, they will show in their writing that they are able to, as it is mentioned in the Guidance on the Teaching of Writing Skills (2010:3),

- **Engage their reader:** Here the learners should write in the purpose of keeping the attention of their teacher for example writing in an interestingly way.

- Use grammatical and stylistic features to ensure clarity: The learners are asked to be expert in the application of the grammatical rules.
- Use range of sentence structure: It is related to the choice of the type of the sentence the writer will use and the keeping of the correct form. So as the reader will feel the coherence of the text.
- Organize their writing: It is very important to keep the ideas linked and related between them with the use of the suitable connectors as a result of having a cohesion and coherent passage.
- Chose and use appropriate vocabulary: It is crucial for the learners to use the appropriate words and terms to express the wanted ideas.
- Use punctuation to clarify meaning: The learners should use the punctuation in the accurate way in order to illuminate and make clear the meaning.

### **3.7 Enhancing Learners' Writing Abilities**

Instructors can provide their students with basic strategies to improve their writing skill. Malouff et al., (2018:3) suggest four strategies that are,

- a) increasing student motivation to have good writing skills[...];
- (b) providing some instruction in writing processes and roles;
- providing writing practice; (c) providing writing practice; and
- (d) giving students constructive feedback about their writing.

Motivation pushes learners to develop their learning process in general, the teacher should provide them with examples of good writing that encourage them to work hard as Malouff et al.,(2018:3)state “ *tell students how good writing benefited you and how you try improve your writing*”. The learners need to have instructions for acquiring enough knowledge to extend their writing abilities. As Mlouff et al., (2018:3) affirm, “*encourage students to complete practical course*”. To write well, learners need to practice different kind of activities to master the learned skill and they need to receive a helpful and productive skill that encourage learners to improve their abilities in the writing skill for example “*toward the*

*end of a class session, ask students to spend five minutes writing a summary of the content of the session”(ibid, 2018:3).*

## **Conclusion**

This chapter reviewed and reported the main theoretical frameworks and the works related to the topic and the main objectives of our investigation that tries to show the meaningful learning of the writing skill. The review of literature provided definitions and types of learning and mentioned the instructional learning theory and clarifications about the meaningful learning and Gagne’s theory. In addition, it provides brief definitions and importance of the writing skill. Finally, it presents the teachers’ role in the writing session as well as different elements of an effective writing and the way to improve the learners’ writing abilities.



## **Research design**

### **Introduction**

This chapter is devoted to the methodology used in this research. The research design is divided into two parts. The first part is the procedure of data collection. It starts with mentioning the research methods and the sample population, then it provides descriptions of the data collection tools used in this investigation. The second part deals with the explanation of the procedure of data analyses.

### **1. Procedure of Data Collection**

In this chapter, we adopted different procedures to collect data; we have selected the relevant participants and research tools in order to get the wanted outcomes.

#### **1.1 Research Methods**

In order to bring out our research to the final results, we have adopted the mixed method research, which is analyzing and integrating both quantitative and qualitative research. By mixing them both, our research gains credibility and goes in depth understanding of the gathered findings. This helps us to clarify the unexpected findings mentioned in the research questions and hypotheses.

The quantitative method is generally concerned with numerical and statistical data, whereas qualitative ones involve the interpretation and explanation of collected data (C.R.Kothari, 2004). The quantitative data allows us to gather from a large number of people in few times and the qualitative one helps to get the information directly from the participants.

#### **1.2 Sample Population**

The participants who were targeted to answer the research tools administered to them were second year students and their teachers of writing at the Department of English at MMUTO. From this population, we have randomly selected 85 students, and five of their

teachers to represent the whole population. This investigation opted for a random sampling in order to obtain more accurate and generalized data.

### **1.2.1 Teacher's Profile**

The participants in this work are the teachers of writing in the Department of English at MMUTO. They are five female and male teachers with different diplomas and degree. These teachers have been selected because they teach the writing module and they have the experience to face the students' problem when writing.

### **1.2.2 Students' Profile**

The learners are second year students whose general number is 410. We have selected randomly 85 of them and they all share the study of the writing module.

## **1.3 Research Tools**

In the purpose of collecting data related to our investigation, we have adopted these two main tools. The first is the questionnaire that is administered to second year students in the Department of English at MMUTO and the second one is the interview that is conducted with their teachers of writing in the same Department.

### **1.3.1 Student's Questionnaire**

Wilson and Me Lean define the questionnaire as, *"a widely used and useful instrument for collecting survey information, providing structured often numerical data being able to be administered without the presence of the research and often being comparatively straight forward to analyse"* (Wilson and Me Lean cited in Cohen et al, 2007:317). It is the common instrument used in the purpose of collecting data with a large number of people without the presence of the researcher. It consists of close ended questions to be answered by the participants. The questionnaire of this study is addressed to 85 second year students of the department of English at UMMTO who are selected randomly. Yet, after gathering the distributed questionnaires we counted only 71 questionnaires from 85.

### 1.3.2 Teacher's Interview

In addition to a questionnaire, we have designed an interview. It was conducted in the Department of English with teachers of writing module. The interview according to Scott is, *“a purposeful exchange of ideas, the answering of questions and communication between two or more persons”* (Scott cited in Geet et al., 2009.340). In other words, face to face exchange in order to get a qualitative data through open ended questions. The administered interview, of the type written structured interview this means that we have kept the same questions for all the teachers and there is no added questions for more explanation, it contains seven open ended questions that are answered by the instructors and helped us to get information that are not available from another way.

## 2. Procedure of data analysis

The data gathered from the research tools are analysed and interpreted by different procedure of data analyses. The quantitative data are being analysed statistically through the application of a mathematical formula called the rule of three whereas the qualitative data are interpreted according to strategies of feedback by using qualitative content analysis (QCA).

### 2.1 Statistical Method (Quantitative Analysis)

The results obtained from the questionnaire are analysed quantitatively (statistically) since they provide us with numerical data that are measurable. To do so, the mathematical formula which is called rule of three is adopted to turn the obtained data into precise percentages. The statistical method is calculated by the application of the following formula:

$$X = \frac{z \times 100}{y}$$
 in which “z” refers to the number of answers, “y” to the sampled population and “X” refers to the obtained percentage. And the outcomes are shown in form of tables, charts, and diagrams.

## **2.2 Qualitative Content Analysis**

It is a procedure of interpreting and analysing the qualitative data gathered from the interview. Qualitative content analysis is, *“a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns”* (Hseih and Shanon, 2005:02). That is to say, it transforms the gathered data into forms of explanation, analyzing, understanding the gathered information and then it involves the categorization process and put the data in type of themes and topics. The QCA serves to interpret all kinds of the communicative information gathered either recorded or written. In this case, we adopted the QCA to interpret all the data collected from the interview by categorizing the data into form of themes.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has put emphasis on the research methodology to investigate the meaningful learning of writing. First, it has presented the research methods adopted in this investigation. Then, it has described the population with whom the research is made (sample population). The third section has shown and described the research instruments (questionnaire and interview) used to collect our data. Next, it has given definitions and it has described the procedures of data analyses used in this work. Finally, it has highlighted the main ethical issues of the study.

## Presentation of the Findings

### Introduction

This chapter is devoted to the presentation of the findings. First, it displays the results obtained from the questionnaire under the form of histograms and tables. In the second part, this chapter provides the interpretation of the data gathered through the interview that are followed by some comments.

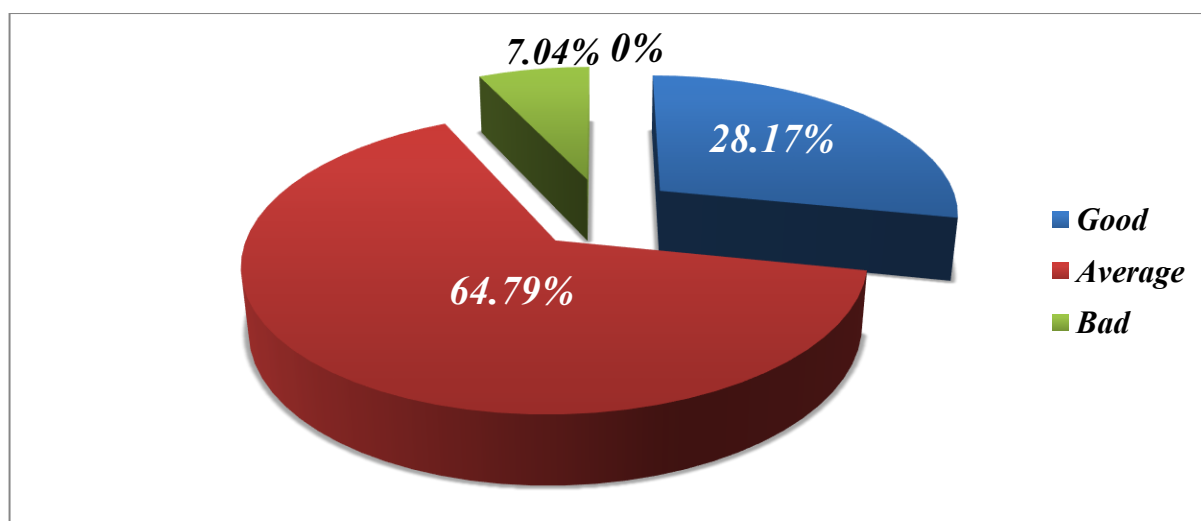
### 1. Presentation of the Questionnaire Findings

#### 1.1 Section One: Background Information

This section is implemented to determine students' profile about their academic level in the writing module and determine their choice of the English after passing their Baccalaureate Exam.

#### 1. Specify your academic level in the writing module?

This question is asked in order to know the students' level in the writing module.

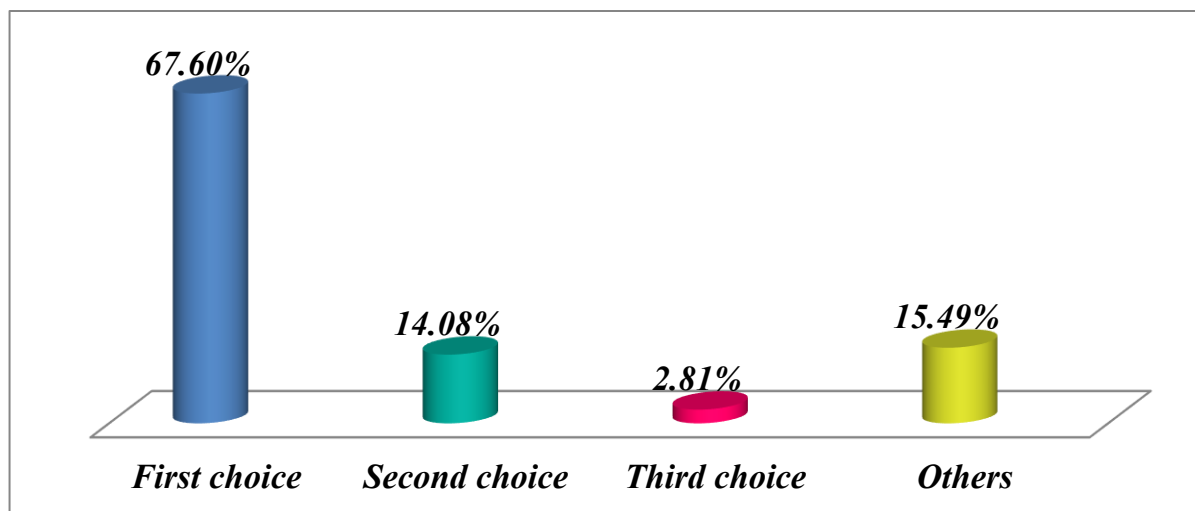


**Diagram1: Students' Academic Level in the Writing Module.**

Diagram one shows that more than fifty percent of the students under study have an average level in the writing module and only seven percent of them have a bad level. Moreover, the rest are good in the writing module.

## 2. After passing your baccalaureate exam, English was your

This question is asked in the purpose of determining the students' choice for English after passing their baccalaureate exam.



**Diagram2: The Participants' Choice for the English after Passing their Baccalaureate Exam.**

The above diagram shows that the majority of the students' first choice was English and around fourty percent was their second choice while only around three percent was their third choice, and the rest of them were other choices.

## 1.2 Section Two: Students' Views toward the Writing Skill

This section is devoted to answer questions related to students' views and opinions about the writing module from different areas, that is to say we have asked different questions about different things related to the writing module.

## 3. Do you think that the amount of time devoted to the writing module is sufficient?

This question is asked to measure students' views about the amount of time devoted for the writing module. That means if it is sufficient or not for the students in order to master the writing module.

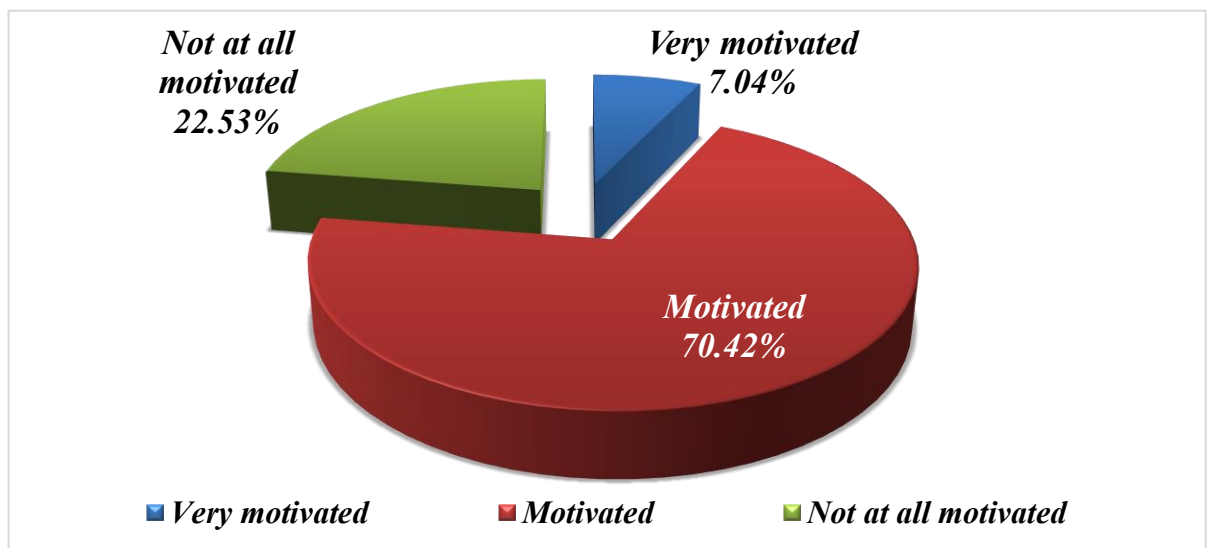
Items	Yes	No
Number of answers	27	44
Percentages(%)	38.02%	61.97%

**Table3: Participants ‘Viewstoward the Devoted Time for the Writing Module.**

This table presents that more than fifty percent of respondents agree that the amount of time devoted for the writing module is not sufficient. And around fourty percent find it sufficient.

#### **4. How do you feel during writing sessions?**

This question is directed at the students to outline the students’ feeling during the writing classes. That is, how they feel when learning the writing skill.

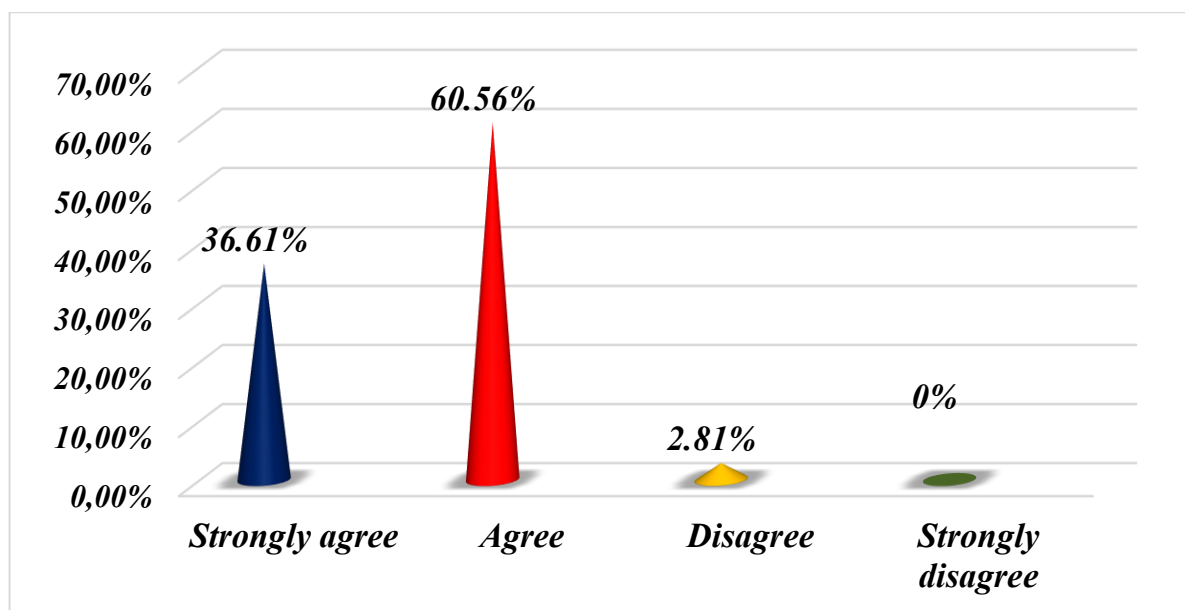


**Diagram3:Students’Feeling during the Writing Sessions.**

This diagram shows that seventy percent of the respondents feel motivated when studying the writing module. However, around twenty percent find themselves not motivated at all, and only seven percent of the studentsare very motivated.

## 5. Learning writing skills as learning other skills enriches my proficiency in English language

This question is asked to know the participants' opinion about learning the writing skill and whether it enriches the students' proficiency in learning the English language like other skills.



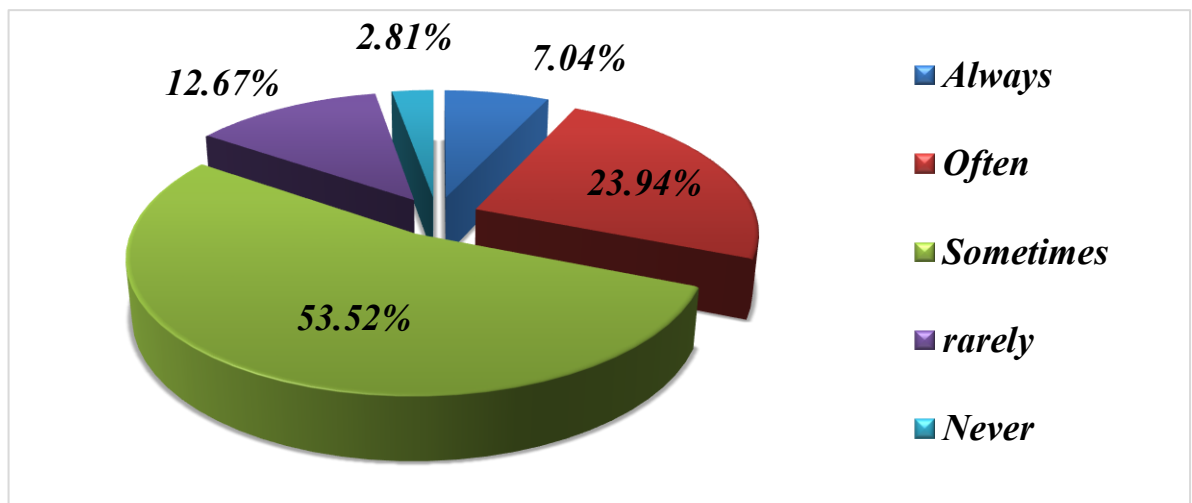
**Diagram4: Participants' Opinion about Learning Writing Skills as Learning other Skills Enriches their Proficiency in English Language.**

The above graph presents the amount of respondents that agree with the asked question and around thirty seven percent strongly agree that learning the writing skills enriches their proficiency in English as learning other skills. In contrast, no students answered with strongly disagree and only around three percent disagree with that expression.

## 6. Do you face difficulties when coming to do a writing activity?

This question is asked to know the exact percentages of the students who face difficulties when they come to do a writing activity or task.



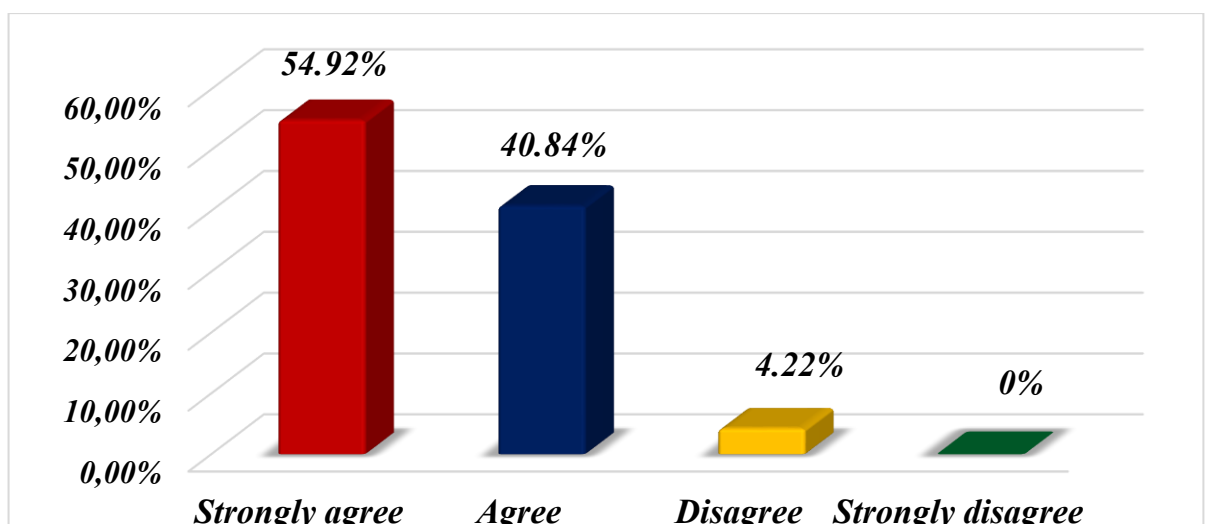


**Diagram5: Students' Frequency of the Difficulties of the Writing Activities.**

This graph shows that more than fifty percent (53.52%) of the respondents sometimes find difficulties and twenty four percents of them often meet difficulties when doing a writing activity. Only around thirteen percent rarely find obstacles to do a writing task. Yet, the minority of them answered with always and never.

#### **7. Do you agree with the fact that to learn language you must write it?**

This question is devoted to get the exact percentages about the opinion of the students related to the fact that to learn a language you must write.



**Diagram6: Students' Views about the Learning of the English Language through Writing Skill.**

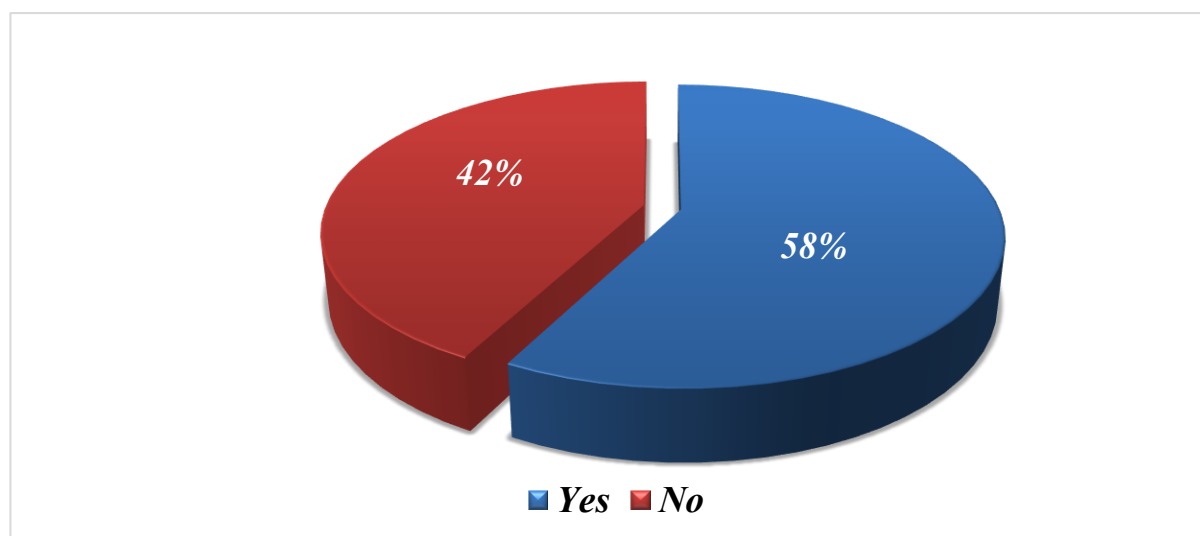
The sixth diagram illustrates that almost fifty five percent of the students strongly agree with the fact that to learn a language you must write it and around forty one percent agree with this fact. But only four percent disagree with this fact and null of them strongly disagree.

### **1.3 Section Three : Students' Engagement in Writing Sessions when the Meaningful Learning Strategies are Implemented**

This section is designed to get data through questions related to students' attitude and perception toward the meaningful learning of writing.

#### **8. In writing sessions, are you asked to apply the recall of prior knowledge /learning?**

We have asked this question to get the exact percentages about whether the students use and apply the recall of prior knowledge during the writing classes in order to improve their level in writing.



**Diagram7: Students' Attitudes toward the recall of Prior Knowledge during the Writing Session.**

The histogram denotes that around sixty percent of the students answered with yes, and the rest of them answered negatively.

### 9. Are you provided with the learning guidance?

This question is asked to know if the students are aware that they are provided with the learning guidance at the beginning of the lesson.

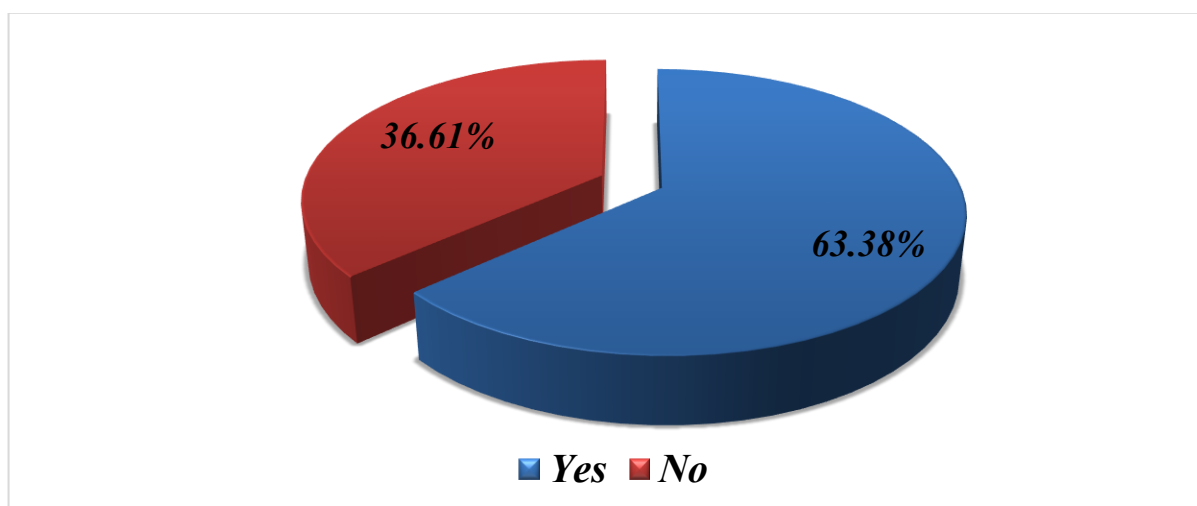
Items	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Number of answers	10	20	29	12	0
Percentages	14.08%	28.17%	40.84%	16.90%	0%

**Table 4: Students' Attitude toward the Use of the Learning Guidance.**

The above table shows that the majority of the students answered with sometimes, and around seventeen percent said rarely. In opposite, twenty eight percent of the participants answered with often and the rest of them said always. And none of the participant mentioned never.

### 10. Are you assessed or evaluated regularly in the writing sessions?

This question is requested to know if the students are assessed or evaluated regularly in the writing classes, and it permits us to get the exact percentages.



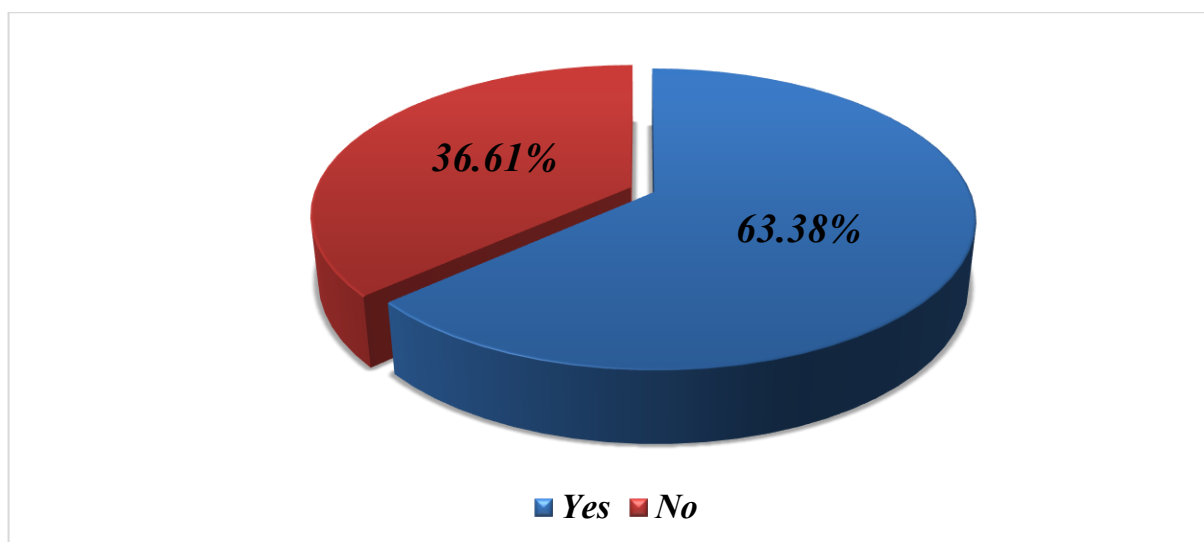
**Diagram 8: Students' Perception toward the Assessment.**

From the above histogram, the majority of the students answered that they are assessed and evaluated on a regular basis whereas the rest of them answered with no.

**11. Feedback can be defined as any form of comment given by a teacher to students as an answer to their performance, attitudes or behaviours.(Scot and Denham, 2005)**

**Are you provided with feedback?**

The above question is asked to know if the students receive feedback and it is meant to permit us to get the appropriate data for the research.



**Diagram9: Participants Perception about the Notion of Feedback.**

In the above graph, the results show that more than half of the students answer that they receive feedback. However, the rest of them answered with no.

**12. If yes, how often?**

This question is directed at the students to complete the above question. It is asked in the aim of knowing how much they are provided with feedback, and gets more precise information.

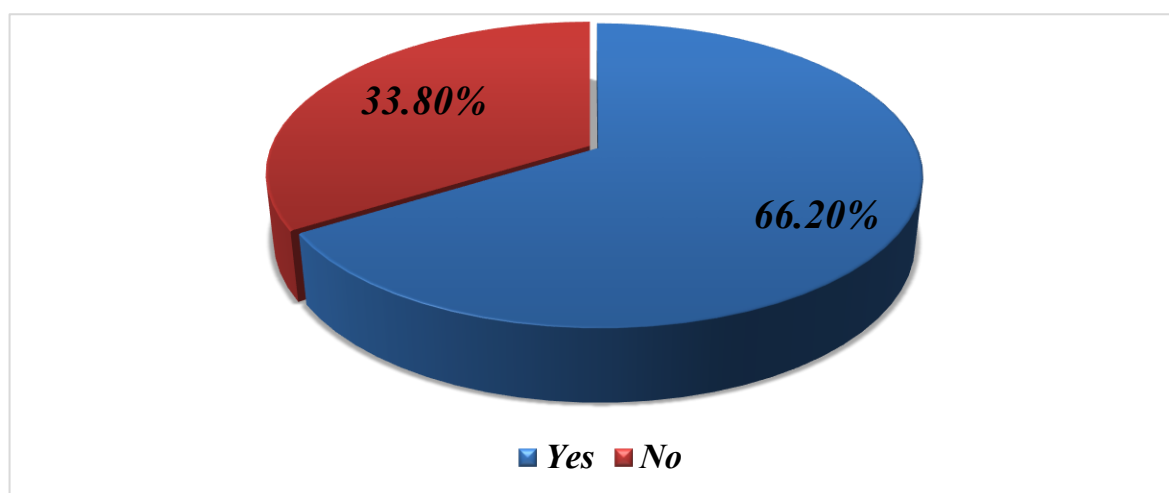
Items	Always	Often	Rarely
Number of answers	12	37	7
percentages	21.42%	66.07%	12.5%

**Table5: Students' Frequency of Feedback.**

The table shows that the majority of the students answered with often and more than twenty one percent said yes, whereas only around thirteen percent answered with rarely.

### 13. In writing classes, do you give a good performance or participation?

This question is asked in the purpose of knowing the quality of students' performance, and it leads to an exact result.



**Diagram10: Students' Attitudes about Their Performance in Writing Classes.**

The above histogram shows that the majority of the students participate in the writing sessions and only around thirty four percent answered with no.

#### **If no, why?**

This question completes the above one. And it is asked in order to know the reason why the students do not participate in the writing classes. In this question, we gave them the floor to answer with their appropriate words.

Most of the students who answered on this part find that the lack of motivation for some reasons like: the lack of materials is the main factor for the absence of their performance in writing classes. And some others claimed that the absence of self confidence and lack of background knowledge (linguistics) as factors of their absence of participations. Another one said that "it is up to the teacher to help students to become good performers", while others find listening to their colleagues is sufficient for them.

#### 14. Which of these activities do you practice more in writing?

This question is asked in the purpose of knowing the preferred activity to be practiced by students in the writing classes.

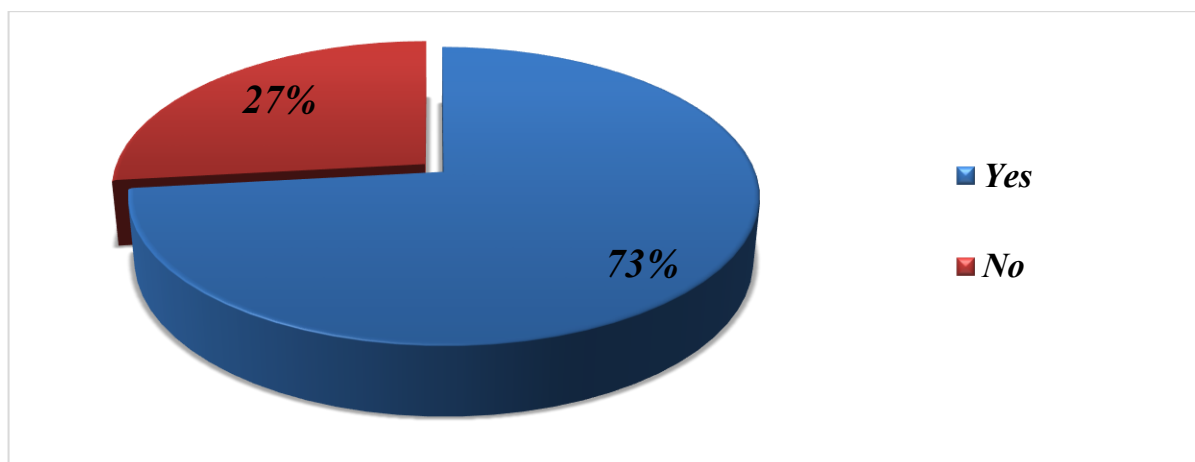
Items	Group work	Pair work	Individual work
Number of participants	10	8	43
Percentages	14.08%	11.26%	60.56%

**Table6: Participants' Perception about their Preferred Activity in the Writing Session.**

The above table demonstrates that a great amount of the students like to practice the individual activity and around eleven percent of them prefer the pair work activity while around fourteen percent prefer to be in group work activity.

#### 15. Do you receive the appropriate instructions of learning the writing skill?

This question is meant to get the exact percentages about whether the students receive the appropriate instructions.

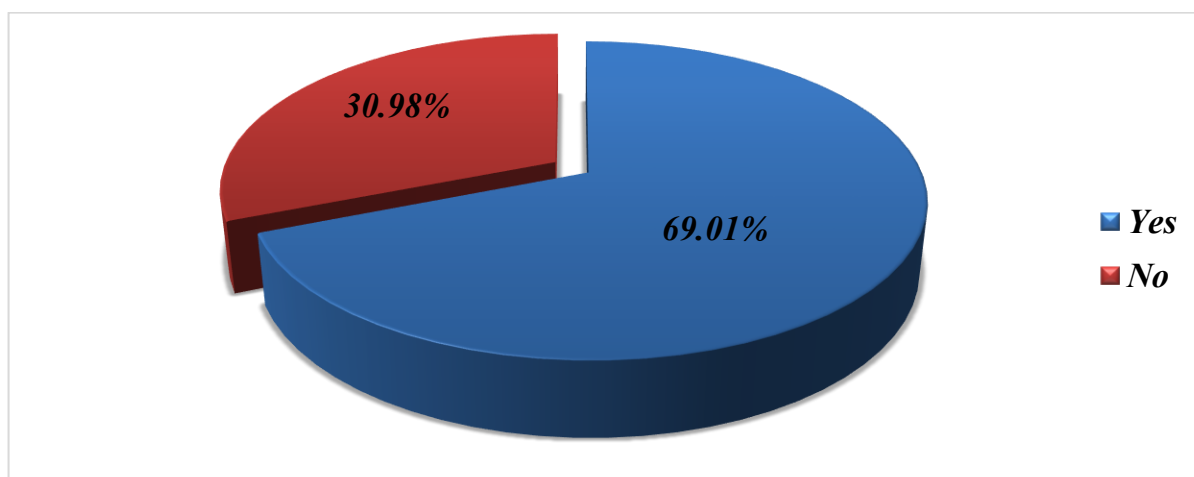


**Diagram11: Participants Attitude toward the Learning Instruction.**

This diagram illustrates that the majority of the students (73%) answered that they obtain the appropriate instructions of learning but the other part (27%) answered that they do not.

**16. Are you provided with sufficient tasks to practice a new skill or knowledge?**

This question aims at answering whether the students are satisfied with the number of activities they practice in the writing session and this question helped us to get precise percentages.



**Diagram12: Students' Perception toward the Number of Tasks they Practice in Writing Classes.**

The above histogram shows that nearly seventy percent of the students are satisfied with the amount of the activities they practice in the writing module, whereas the rest of them answered that they are not sufficient.

**17. Do you receive an effective learning of writing?**

We have asked this question to get the precise answer and percentage if the students receive the meaningful/effective learning of the writing skill.

Items	Yes	No
Number of participants	36	35
percentages	50.70%	49.29%

**Table7: Students attitudestoward the reception of an Effective Learning of Writing.**

This table shows that nearly fifty one percent of the students receive the effective learning of writing whereas the rest do not agree that they get an effective learning of the writing skill.

## **2. Presentation of the Findings of Teachers' Interview**

In this part we present the data gathered from the teachers' interview through the use of qualitative content analyses.

### **1) During the writing classes, do you inform your students about the instructional objectives? If yes, would you explain how?**

All the respondents share the same answer; they all claimed that they inform their students about the instructional objectives.

The way the teachers inform their students about their instructional objectives differ from one teacher to another. One of these teachers claims that he/she informs his students through enumerating these instructional objectives, and another one explains these instructional objectives in the purpose of better understanding the writing module.

### **2) How do you find students performance in writing classes? I mean is it good or not?**

In this question, all the teachers give different views about the students' performance. The first one maintains that the students' participation in the writing module is average. The second claims that their performance is quite acceptable and it is generally related to the activities they practice during the session. Next, he/she finds that the students' participation differs from one student to another "depends on the students" regarding their level, motivation...etc. However, the fourth participant answers that the students lack participation in the writing sessions. And the last informant finds that students need more experience with the writing module in order to become familiar with it.

### **3) As a teacher, would you please tell us how to get your students concentrated and focused?**

In this question, the answers varied between informants. Two teachers agree that the students' concentration is gained through "the explanation and the determination of students' objectives". The next informant claims that, "it is done through going back to what they have



already learned”; in other words they return back to what they have studied in the last sessions or telling them a personal life experience related to the lesson. And the last participant finds that it can be done through keeping eyes on them “looking at them to have their attention” and keeping class atmosphere light.

**4) What are the main difficulties faced by students while doing a writing activity?**

Here, some teachers share some points about the difficulties faced by students when doing a writing activity. Students face difficulties in the way of organizing their work and they face spelling problems because of “the poor mastery of spelling”. One of the informants adds that they have the problem of thinking in their mother tongue that is why they face difficulties in writing activities and for someone else they do not find the right words to express the wanted idea. In addition, one of the respondents finds that the lack of ideas and the teachers’ method is the reason of the birth of these difficulties in students. Finally, this teacher states that the lack of academic style, expressions, and hesitation as the major factors that push students to face difficulties in practicing the writing skill.

**5) Would you tell us about the main strategies you apply in order to provide your students with effective instructions?**

Teachers’ views about this question varied. Two participants share the idea of using examples to clarify a given idea and another states that the extensive reading enhances students’ skills of writing. On the other hand, another teacher claims that time duration, techniques to be followed and a clear purpose of the task or lesson is very important. And the last one maintains that being as clear as possible when explaining is very important and using simple language might get them focused. These are the main strategies for this participant.

**6) What do you suggest in order to improve the writing skill?**

In this question, two informants maintain that more practice help learners to develop their writing skills. And one of them suggests that reformulating knowledge and consolidating

experiences enhance learners and improve the students' writing. The last one informs that providing classroom activities and home works can be the path for the students' good writing, and also the teachers should clarify the techniques and steps of the activities they are going to practice.

**7) Does the implementation of the conditions of learning namely: gaining attention, recall of prior learning and assessing performance helps the learners to improve? If yes, would explain why?**

In this question, all the teachers agree about their implementation of the conditions of learning during the writing classes. The implementation of these conditions of learning help teachers to gain students' attention and this is claimed by two teachers. And for another participants, "they help learners to gain confidence" this means, it develops students' psychological self confidence and awareness that lead learners to give importance for the writing skills.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter presented the research findings obtained in this investigation. It is divided into two parts. In the first part, it displayed the main results obtained from the students' questionnaire in a form of histograms. The second part, presented the data gathered through the teachers' interview in form of interpretation of the words of the participants. The obtained results indicate that the teachers apply the component of the conditions of learning as Robert Gagne refers to them, and the instruction of learning in the writing sessions in the purpose of improving the students' level in this skill and achieve the meaningful learning of the writing skill.

## **Discussion of the findings**

### **Introduction**

This chapter deals mainly with the obtained results. It is devoted to the discussion of the findings gained from the questionnaire and the interview in relation to the research questions. The results are discussed and analyzed in relation to the review of literature presented in the first chapter. The chapter contains two main sections, each part offers answers to the research questions in order to confirm or reject the hypotheses suggested in the general introduction. It first discusses the data gathered from the questionnaire. Then it analyses the results of instructors' interview.

### **1. Students' Questionnaire**

The first data gathering instrument allowed us to accumulate quantitative data. It was done with the students of second year students at the department of English. This questionnaire helped us to obtain more statistics for our study.

#### **1.1 Students' Background Information**

The results of this section demonstrate that the majority of the participants confirm that they had chosen English as their first choice (67.60%); this proves their interest and patience to study the English language, and they can give their high expectation about the study of its modules. For the other question, most of the participants (65%) have the average level in the writing module; this means, they can answer on affordable questions or write a simple model of the academic essays.

#### **1.2 Students' Views about the Writing Skill**

This section was mainly designed to get the students' views toward the writing skill. In the first question of this section, more than sixty one percent of the participants (See table three) are aware that the amount of time devoted for the writing module is not sufficient. From the results, we conclude that the students want to have the habit of studying the writing

module for more time with the purpose of developing their level and mastering the writing skills to communicate their ideas easily and in a way of attracting the readers' attention. And this fits with Casewell, (2008); Ozbell, (2006) and Smith, (2005) claim that the more the students learn the writing process, the more they will be able to express themselves efficiently.

In addition, the respondents feeling in the writing sessions indicate that the big majority of the students (70.42%) (See diagram three) feel motivated when studying the writing module. The interpretation that we can draw from this data is that despite the general view of the students toward the writing skill as a difficult one, they are most of the time motivated in the writing sessions; this is due to their patience first and the teachers' methods, ways and the practiced activities during the sessions; with motivation, learners can develop and increase their abilities in the writing skill and fight all the obstacles they faced. This result is in conformity with what Malouff et.al. (2018:1) state, *"With high motivation, students will find ways to improve their writing and will persist in the effort"*.

From the outcomes shown in the diagram four, it appears that more than half of the participants agree that learning writing skill as learning other skills enriches students' proficiency in English. And based on the results of the seventh question, a significant part (54.92%) of the participants ticked the 'strongly agree' option for the fact that to learn language, you must write it. From these results, we deduce that the learners have a great attention for the writing skill and they are aware of its magnitude for learning the language effectively particularly those who are EFL learners. This awareness may enhance the students' level in the writing and push them to give the writing module more value and importance.

As regard the students' view toward the frequency of difficulties they face when doing a writing activity, the majority of the informants (53.52%) sometimes face difficulties. From the above result, the students show that these difficulties are generally related to the kind of

the activities they practice and also linked to the way the teachers give them the instructions and the degree of their comprehension of the lesson related to these activities.

### **1.3 Students' engagement in Writing sessions when the Meaningful Learning Strategies Are Implemented**

This section is mainly designed to know the students' overall beliefs toward the meaningful learning of writing. The eighth question asked to know whether the students used to practice the recall of prior learning/ knowledge when studying the writing skill. More than a half of the participants (See diagram seven) knew that their teachers apply the recall of prior learning for better understanding of the lesson and improving their writing level. This mainly helps the learners to connect between the prior knowledge and the current one for the purpose of facilitating and ameliorating the memorisation of new concepts. This goes directly with the presented nine events of leaning for (Gagne et al., 1992:191) to reach the evocative learning of the writing module.

In addition, the ninth question is directed to the students in an attempt to know the frequency of suitable learning guidance provided by the instructors. Almost 41% (See table four) of the participants ticked for 'sometimes'. This result shows that the teachers do not apply this instruction regularly; this may lead to discourage and frustrate the learners. This opposes what (Azuka N. and G.Alutu, n.d.:44) and (Gagne et al., 1992:191) suggested for this instruction of learning that is very important in the learning process because it gives an aid for the learners to engage in the learning process of the writing skill.

The tenth question of this questionnaire is asked to know whether the students are provided with assessment or evaluation regularly. The overwhelming portion of the students (63.38%) claimed that their teachers assess their writings repeatedly. This result demonstrates the importance of assessment to evaluate the students understanding of the writing techniques and highlights the weaknesses of the method followed by the teacher; with assessment the

instructor ensures the achievement of learning outcomes. This extremely goes with what is mentioned in the conditions of learning for (Gagne et al., 1992:191) and what (Cheryl A Jones, 2005:04) stated about assessment (see review of literature) and Na Li (2012:15) claims that, *“the teacher needs to continuously measure students’ interests, goal orientation and level of understanding based on which the teacher may plan future lessons and provide differentiated adaptive intervention. It can be part of the formative process to help students learn”*.

Concerning the implementation of the feedback, high rate of the participants (78.87%) affirmed that their teachers supply them with the feedback to reinforce the students’ motivation and improve their abilities in the writing skills. Additionally, we asked a complementary question with the intention to get the frequency of the use of feedback. The majority of the informants (66.07%) replied that their teachers’ often’ give them the feedback. From these results, it is noticeable that the students understand the importance of implementing feedback during the lessons and they generally like to be informed about their weaknesses and strengths so as to develop their abilities; this extremely goes with what Gagne mentioned in the conditions of learning ( Gagneet al., 1992:191) .

For this reason, instructors this primordial instruction of learning should be stressed because of its large effects on ameliorating the learning in general and the learning of writing skill in particular, it is preferable to be included in every session of studying the writing module. These data go with Ur (1996:242) who claim that feedback is, *“an information that is given to the learner about her or his performance of a learning task, usually with the objectives of improving this performance”*. Indeed, this information should not be always given collectively but it is preferable to be given for each individual alone, just for the reason of increasing students’ abilities much better and this go in hand with what is mentioned in the review of literature (Cheryl A Jones, 2005:14).

Hence, the discussed results of these last questions confirm the first hypothesis mentioned in the general introduction, which states that the meaningful learning strategies develop students' competences through feedback, assessment and motivation. With assessing and evaluating the students as well as the teachers method regularly we tend to reach the effective learning, also the feedback that is considered as a motive that help the students to advance. Therefore, they are very important in increasing the achievement of the learning of the writing module.

The thirteenth question invited the contributors know more about their performance and participation in classroom. A big number of the participants (66.2%) responded that they give a good performance in the writing skills. This outcome shows that the students are good performers and this is due to the activities the teacher offers them and their interaction with their instructor who helps them to react in a comfortable way; thus they participate well. This goes hand in hand with Richard (1990) who found that the students' interaction helps them to develop their cognitive skills that involves generating ideas. The performance helps the students to increase their cognitive capacities and develop their learning level. And it fits with what Gagne et al. (1992:191) mentioned in the nine events of instructions, because of the importance of performance on raising the students' abilities, Gagne has stressed this point.

Therefore, we asked an additional question with the aim of knowing why the rest percentage of the participants does not perform in the classroom. The results show that this number of the students face blockage either psychologically or linguistically. Here the instructor should help and encourage this part of learners and provide them with all the appropriate materials and conditions in order to engage them in the learning process as well as to become a good performers.

Concerning the activities the students used to practice in the writing sessions, it appears that a considerable amount of the informants (60.56%) (See table six) asserted that

the individual work is the most practiced in the writing classes. The teachers apply this kind of activities in order to put into practice all the learners so as to evaluate their comprehension of the lessons.

In addition, a great part of the participants (73.24%) are aware that their teachers of writing mention the appropriate instructions of learning. It is very interesting that the learners pay attention to this, and know exactly what their instructors deliver to them. It is very important for teachers to provide their students with the needed instruction in order to achieve an effective learning and high academic attainment.

The sixteenth question asked to the students to identify whether their teachers apply sufficient tasks to practice new skills and knowledge. Almost (70%) of the participants claimed that they practice enough number of tasks in order to master a given technique of the writing skill. From the above result, we deduce that the extensive repetition of practice help the students to progress their level in the writing skill by mastering a given technique. This is compatible with (Oberman and Kapka, 2001) who said that being ability, writing can be improved by learning through repetition [...] and that would also improve the writing abilities of students in education environment.

The last question of this questionnaire attempted to answer whether the students receive an effective learning of the writing module at MMUTO. Almost (51%) of the participants claimed that they receive meaningful learning of the writing skill. We can deduce from this result that the teachers achieve their job and use the different appropriate instructions of learning in the purpose of reaching the wanted results. In brief, this question gave us the floor to substantiate the last research question mentioned above, that is, the students in the department of English MMUTO receive an effective learning of the writing skill.



## **2. Teachers' Interview**

The second data gathering tool allowed us to collect the needed qualitative data. It is done with the teachers of writing module in the Department of English. This interview helped us to get more data for our study. The results of the first question display that the instructors adopt the instruction of informing their learners about the objectives of the current lesson. It is crucial to continue the application of this stage in order to motivate the students and keep them aware of their objectives. This means that the teacher must cite clearly the goals of writing lessons; the learners should know why they are learning this skill. This is exactly found in the nine events mentioned by (Gagne et al., 1992:191) see the review of literature. In addition, the informants assume different ways when informing their students about the instructional objectives, and this is mainly related to the adopted method of teaching and the instruction to be delivered in an attempt to keep the students motivated and increase their learning level.

As it is shown in the previous chapter, the answers vary from one teacher to another. They have provided us with different views about the students' performance in the classroom. The lack of participation is due to different factors like: The practiced activities, the students' level, the linguistics problems and the self confidence. Indeed, the instructors should help and encourage their students and provide them with the appropriate environment to participate like: Allowing them to interact between each other or with the teacher. This might increase their confidence and break all the obstacles in the purpose of improving their level in the writing module. This goes directly with what Richard (1990) claimed about the interaction that helps to develop the learners' cognitive skills and Gagne et al. (1992:191) who mention the performance in the nine events of learning.

Concerning the way the teachers get their students concentrated and focused, the teachers pointed out to different views. The instructors gain the students' attention differently;

it depends on the lessons and the environment where they are delivered. Some other teachers mention the learning goals and they opt to go back to what the students had already learned. Hence, gaining attention is the first and the most important event of instruction as talked about in the conditions of learning (Gagne et al., 1992:191). It is generally done effectively by introducing something in relation to the lesson so as to hook the learners' attention. This event of learning is crucial to keep the students concentrated along the session.

Generally, EFL learners face difficulties when they come to practice writing activities. The instructors presented different difficulties such as: 'the poor mastery of spelling', 'the influence of the mother tongue' and 'the lack of the academic style'. These difficulties can be omitted with the help of teachers by presenting the correspondent techniques, the excessive reading and practice of the writing skill. This may help the students to be creative in their writing and they will be able to express themselves in a good manner.

The obtained results gave a number of different answers. The teachers have different methods and strategies in the purpose of providing the students with the effective instructions. They generally integrate reading and writing for more practice, and they advice their students to adopt the exclusive reading which is the principle key for the mastery of the writing skill. As well as the teachers should use the simple language so as all the students get the information and it is very important to communicate their students in a clear way. Any tip and strategy proposed by the teacher is for the good of the learners and for helping them to improve their writing skills.

In the sixth question, the informants answered according to their professional experience. They suggested different tips to assist students' improvement in the writing skill. The extensive practice of the writing activities is very important to enhance the learners' level in the writing module and develop their English language. As well as teaching them how to reformulate knowledge and consolidate their experiences. The reformulation of knowledge

may aid the learners to evaluate their understandings of the lesson according to their personal experiences.

The last question is asked in this interview aims at knowing whether the teachers of writing in the Department of English at MMUTO implement the conditions of learning. These conditions are used in the purpose of reaching a meaningful learning of the writing module. The recall of prior learning assists the learners to link between the previous learned knowledge and the immediate one. Also assessing performance in the writing sessions through the direct interaction by which the instructor can provide the individual feedback during the deliverance of the lesson, this reinforces the learning process and motivates the learners. Thus, gaining attention is the most important to keep students concentrated, and it is required for the teacher from a moment to another to throw words that should flip the students' attention. These events of instruction are important to improve and develop students' level as they are cited by in (Gagne et al., 1992:191).

Accordingly, these two research tools helped us to answer our research questions. After the analyses of the data, we opt that the teachers of writing emphasize on the use of the meaningful learning strategies that help to develop the students understanding, so the second hypothesis is confirmed. As well as, the students are engaged and involved in the learning of the writing skill particularly with the implementation of the meaningful learning strategies that enhance their understanding and level. Consequently, the third hypothesis suggested in the general introduction is confirmed.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, this chapter has discussed and interpreted the data of the questionnaire and the interview undertook by the second year LMD students in the department of English at MMUTO. The corpus has been analysed in relation to the review of literature and the theoretical framework the conditions of learning, Gagne (1965).

The results of this study show slight differences between the teachers' answers and the students' respondents who answered differently for almost the same questions, for example the students find themselves performers in the writing classes whereas some of their teachers find the opposite. Also both students and teachers agreed on the use of instructional events that are crucial for the motivation and the development of students' writing abilities. This confirms that the EFL learners should learn the language skills under the appropriate conditions and well structured lessons for the reason of mastering the English. Besides, this chapter has discussed the main results of the questionnaire submitted to the students and the teachers' interview which reveal that both instructors implement the meaningful learning strategies, and they do confirm their use in their writing lessons which leads to the effective learning and developing students' level in the writing skill. This chapter has provided evidence that helped us to check our hypotheses stated in the General Introduction.

## **General conclusion**

This study aimed at shedding light on the efficiency of the learning of the writing skill. It consists on implementing the relevant conditions and instructions of learning at Mouloud Mammeri University second year students of English. This research also strived to discover the way the meaningful learning strategies develop and enhance the students' writing skill. It also investigated the students' behaviours and attitudes toward the meaningful learning of writing.

This empirical research has conducted in the light of theoretical framework based on the conditions of learning suggested by Robert Gagne (1965) that is used in different domains particularly learning and teaching. The conditions of learning consists mainly of four elements: conditions of learning, association learning, the five categories of learning outcomes and the nine events of instruction on which our research mainly put emphasize such as (gaining attention, giving feedback, assessing performance...and others). These nine events are included in this research to analyze the obtained data through the research tools in order to achieve the research goal. The corpus contained 85 questionnaires delivered for the second year students in the Department of English at MMUTO and written interviews with their teachers of the writing module.

The mixed method research, which integrates both quantitative and qualitative methods, has been used in the process of data analyses in the purpose of answering the research questions and hypotheses. The quantitative technique was used to interpret the data gathered from the questionnaire while the qualitative method was adopted to analyse the teachers' interview.

The results of the questionnaire revealed that the students receive an effective learning of writing skills, their teachers apply the events of the instruction during the writing classes systematically and they mostly find themselves motivated. On the other hand, their teachers

claimed that they find students' performance and writing composition not good and even they implement the learning instructions, this is led to many factors like: the poor vocabulary, they think in the mother tongue....

Relying on the results, the conclusion that can be drawn from this investigation are the following: the implementation of the meaningful learning strategies enhance and improve the learning of writing skills in the use of English language. In addition, students are involved in the writing sessions when the meaningful learning strategies are implemented; the application of these instructions draws to reach a meaningful learning with a high academic attainment. As a result, the learning instructions are interesting, effective and motivating the learners to learn the writing skill.

Throughout this investigation, the researcher has encountered many obstacles. The main limitation was time. Because of the insufficient amount of the time, we didn't succeed to get more information, which means the researcher couldn't adopt other tools of research like classroom observation to enrich this investigation and the ability of enlarging the sample. Another difficulty faced by the researcher was the refusal of the participants to answer on the questionnaire this resulted reduction of the sample population. If not the case, we got much more views and data. Whereas, all the constrained faced, we hope this work contains all the scientific characteristics.

Moreover, other studies can investigate whether these results can be applied on other EFL learners. Thus, these results raise other questions for future researches to explore the meaningful learning of other language skills like: listening, speaking... As well as the meaningful learning of other disciplines such as: literature, linguistics....And other suggestions like: the obstacles faced by teachers in implementing the meaningful learning strategies and the impact of meaningful learning strategies on enhancing the learning process.

This work ends up with some potential recommendations for reaching effective learning of writing, which are as follow:

- The time devoted for the writing module should be increased;
- The meaningful learning strategies should be implemented regularly and correctly;
- The teachers of writing should motivate their students;
- Provide the students with the suitable conditions of learning.

In hope this study contributes to the field of English language teaching and teaching methodology, it is worth to mention the difficulties it went through, mainly limitation of the time. In addition, it is a case study conducted a sample of second year students in the department of English at MMUTO. Thus, the obtained results can not be generalized for all the English foreign language students.

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## **Teacher's interview**

Dear teachers;

This interview is part of our research that seeks to investigate the meaningful learning of writing under the application of the conditions of learning for Robert Gagne.

1. During the writing classes, do you inform your students about the instructional objectives? If yes, would you explain how?
2. How do you find students performance in writing classes? I mean is it good or not?
3. As a teacher, would you please tell us how to get your students concentrated and focused?
4. What are the main difficulties faced by students while doing a writing activity?
5. Would you tell us about the main strategies you apply in order to provide your students with effective instructions?
6. What do you suggest in order to improve the writing skill?
7. Does the implementation of the conditions of learning, namely: gaining attention, recall of prior knowledge and assessing performance help the learners to improve? If yes, would you explain why?

## Students' questionnaire

This questionnaire is a part of a research which seeks to investigate the meaningful learning of writing skill in second year classes in the department of English at MMUTO. In order to achieve this aim, you are kindly requested to answer to the questions bellow. The information you provide will be objectively used for an academic purpose and will be kept anonymous.

### Section one: background information

1. Specify your academic level in writing module:

Good ☐ average ☐ bad ☐

2. After passing your baccalaureate exam, English was your:

First choice ☐ second choice ☐

Third choice ☐ others ☐

### Section two: students 'views about the writing skill

3. Do you think that the amount of time devoted to the writing module is sufficient?

Yes ☐ No ☐

4. How do you feel during a writing session?

Very motivated ☐ Motivated ☐ Not at all motivated ☐

5. Learning writing skill as learning other skills enriches my proficiency in the English language

Strongly agree ☐ agree ☐ disagree ☐ strongly disagree ☐

6. Do you face difficulties when coming to do a writing activity?

Always ☐ often ☐ sometimes ☐ rarely ☐ never ☐

7. Do you agree with the fact that to learn language you must write it?

Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ disagree ☐ strongly disagree ☐

### **Section Three: students' Engagement in Writing Sessions when the Meaningful learning Strategies Are Implemented**

8. In the writing sessions, are you asked to apply the recall of prior learning?

Yes ☐ No ☐

9. Are you provided with the learning guidance?

Always ☐ often ☐ sometimes ☐ rarely ☐ never ☐

10. Are you assessed or evaluated regularly in the writing sessions?

Yes ☐ No ☐

11. Feedback can be defined as any form of comment given by a teacher to students as an answer to their performance, attitudes or behaviors?(Scot and Denham.2005)

Are you provided with feedback?

Yes ☐ No ☐

12. If yes. How often?

Always ☐ often ☐ rarely ☐ never ☐

13. In writing classes, do you give a good performance or participation?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If No. explain

Why?.....  
.....  
.....

14. Which of these activities do you practice more in writing?

Group work ☐ pair work ☐ individual work ☐

15. Do you receive the appropriate instructions of learning the writing skill?

Yes ☐ No ☐

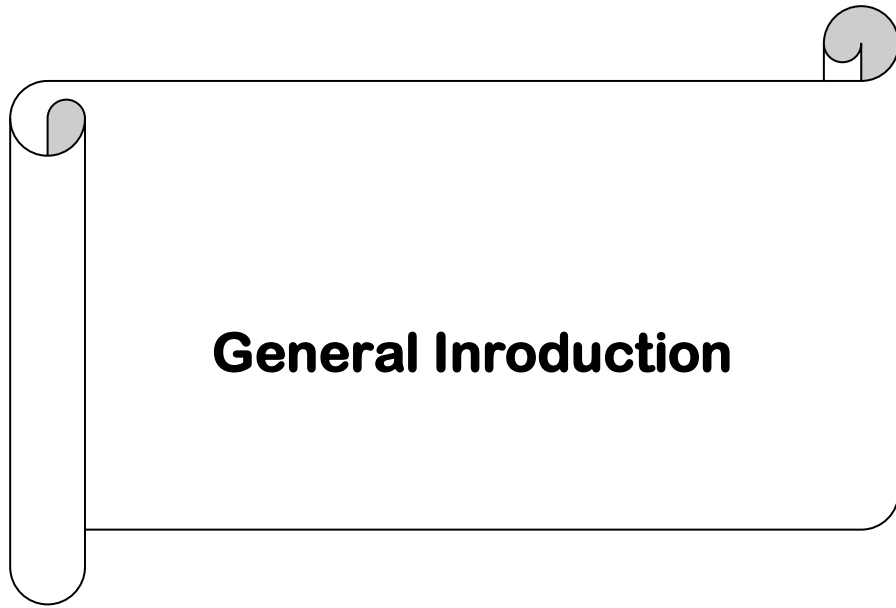
16. Are you provided with sufficient tasks to practice a new skill or knowledge?

☐ ☐  
Yes No

17. Do you receive an effective learning of writing?

Yes ☐ No ☐





## **General Inroduction**





## **Chapter One :**

### **Review of Literature**



## **Chapter Two : Research Design**



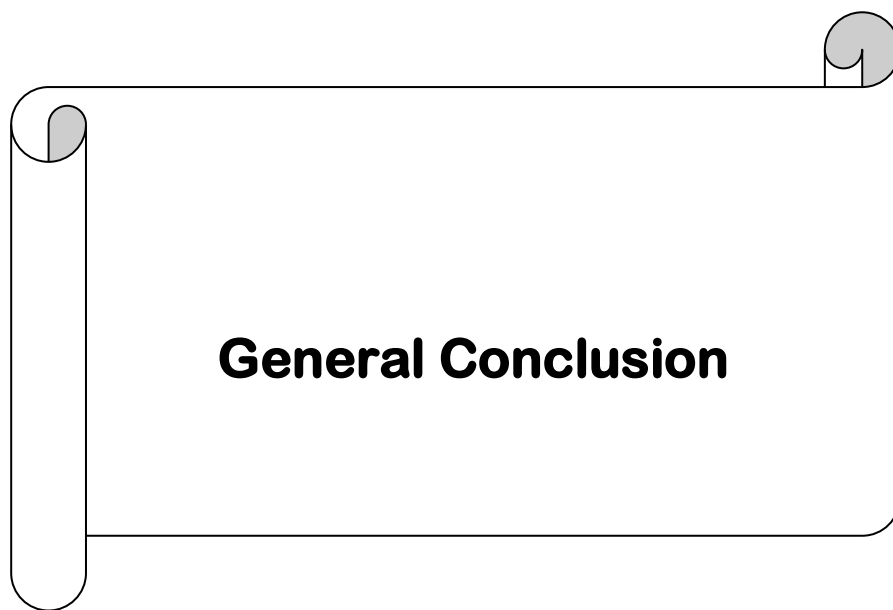
## **Chapter Three :**

### **Presentation of the Findings**



## **Chapter Four :**

### **Discussion of the Findings**



**General Conclusion**



## **Bibliography**

