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Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master in English
Title:

The Effective Role of Rewards in Motivating Students to Avoid Spelling Errors in the Department of English at Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi Ouzou: *The Case of First-Year Students*

Presented by: **Supervised by:**

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Dedications

We dedicate this modest work to our families and to everyone who contributed to it.

"Linda and Imane"

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Abstract

The present study is designed to determine whether the use of rewards has an effective role in motivating students to avoid spelling errors and improve their writing abilities in English language classes. In order to carry out this study, we opted for the use of a descriptive survey method by means of two questionnaires. Indeed, two questionnaires were administrated to sixty-five (65) first year students and five (5) writing teachers. The use of a quantitative method allows us to gather a big amount of data which is then analyzed by descriptive statistical method which that of the rule of three. This research is based on Skinner's Behavioural Learning Theory. The results of the study confirmed the hypothesis that both teachers and students hold a positive attitude towards the use of rewards to motivate students to avoid spelling errors and enhance their writing skills in the department of English at Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi Ouzou.

Key terms: rewards, motivation, attitudes, spelling errors.

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ESL: English as a Second Language

FL: Foreign Language

L1: First Language

L2: Second Language

LMD: License, Master, Doctorate

ML: Mother Tongue

TL: Target Language

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General Introduction

Statement of the Problem

Teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) includes the teaching of the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) and language elements (grammar and vocabulary). The question is not whether to teach writing in language classrooms or not, because spelling is considered as vital in the learning process. Teachers of English often wonder about the reasons that make writing lessons less lively and consequently the students less motivated to learn it. The major questions here are: How do we make students more motivated to take spelling lessons and what is the proper strategy of motivation which may raise their enthusiasm for learning spelling and avoid spelling errors?

One of the main tasks teachers have is correcting students' productions. They look for errors and correct them in order to help their students progress in their English language. Successful English spelling performance involves the processes of segmenting the spoken word into its phonemic components and then selecting the appropriate graphemes to represent the phonemes (Venhagen, *et al*. 1997). In addition, it entails learning a large number of letter combination rules (orthography) and many exceptions due to affixation, assimilation, and the inflow of new words (morphology) to the language (Ibid).

Having no clear reason and no obvious purpose to learn other spelling rules of the foreign language, students become less motivated, and therefore they are likely to fail in the acquisition of second language spelling rules and make a lot of spelling errors. Such students are unlikely to make what is expected from them in terms of effort. For this reason, teachers and researchers should focus on students' interests, social backgrounds, individual characteristics, and most importantly their motivation. So, more researches should be done to discover the different elements which are involved in learners' motivation. However, researchers on motivation in language learning have revealed that

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there is no single model that accounts for all cases of language learning; consequently, there is no universal prescription for improving students' and teachers' attitudes or increasing students' motivation (Oxford and Shearin, 1994).Yet, one should believe that there exists a possible way to increase students' motivation to learn spelling and avoid spelling errors; and perhaps the best way is the administration of rewards by the teacher in written sessions. In fact, reward is one of the most powerful factors in human behavior in relation to second language acquisition. It is not only a means of increasing motivation, but it is also considered as being one aspect of motivation.

Aims and Significance of the Study

This research aims at identifying the effect of rewards in motivating students to avoid spelling errors and develop their writing skill. First, it clarifies the effective role of rewards in increasing first-year students' motivation and what type of rewards (scores, gifts, and praises) teachers can administrate in writing sessions in order to help students avoid spelling errors. This work also highlights the usefulness of rewards for students on their mastery of spelling and also demonstrates to what extent the use of rewards is related to motivation.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

This study tries to answer the following questions:

1.   What areteachers' and students' opinionabout the effectiveness of the use of rewards in motivating students to avoid spelling errors at MMUTO?

2.   To what extent is the use of rewards effective in encouraging students to minimize and avoid spelling errors?

In order to answer the above research questions, the following hypotheses are put forward:

1.   Teachers and students at MMUTO hold positive opinions about the use of rewards in motivating students to avoid spelling errors.

2.   Motivating first-year students of the department of English at MouloudMammeri University through the administration of rewards is effective in helping them avoid spelling errors and develop their writing skill.

Research Methodology

To conduct our research, we will follow a descriptive survey method where there are two questionnaires: one for the first-year English language students and one for their teachers of written expression at the department of English at MouloudMammeri University in Tizi-Ouzou. The use of a quantitative method will allow us to gather a big amount of data that will be analysed using the rule of three to get reliable results. This method is used in order to collect datathat will be interpreted in tables and diagrams showing the usefulness of the rewarding strategy in motivating students to avoid spelling errors. The whole research is based on Skinner's model of learning.

Structure of the Research

As regards the structure of this work, it consists of a general introduction followed by four chapters. The first chapter is called 'review of literature'; it reviews concepts and approaches related to our subject of investigation. It includes motivation, rewards, errors in general and spelling errors in particular. Chapter two entitled 'research design'; presents the research methodology used in this work which is that of the quantitative approach. Chapter three called 'presentation of the findings' presents the obtained results using tables, pie charts, and diagrams. The final chapter is devoted to the discussion and

interpretation of the findings and it is through this chapter that we will either confirm or

refute our hypotheses and provide answers to the research questions.

Introduction

This chapter is theoretical. It undertakes the concepts related to our research and explains the theory underlying our work. It is divided into three sections. The first section proceeds withmotivation and the rewarding strategy. The second one deals with errors in general and spelling errors in particular. Finally, the third section explains the behavioural learning theory of B.F. Skinner with its origins and its application in the field of education.

I.1- Motivation and the Rewarding Strategy

I.1.1- Motivation

Motivation, in general, isthe reason which stimulates someone to do something and gets him/her involved in it.It has been defined by different researchers based on different domains, such as psychology. In the domain of education, Child (2004, p.33) defines motivation in his book entitled _Psychology and the Teacher_as _"the internal processes and external incentives which work together to satisfy some need.''_ That is to say, it is a mixture of different influences; some of them come from the inside and others from outside the learner.These influences help the student to achieve his goal. In the same context, he adds that the importance of motivating students does not only aim at engaging them in academic activities but at determining how much students will learn from the different tasks they perform and from the information provided to them.Moreover, motivation, as defined by Gardner (1997), is a combination of effort, desire, and positive attitudes towards the learning of the second/foreign language. It is related to satisfaction and positive thinking about the target language.

I.1.2-Sources of Motivation

To know the different sides and types of motivation, we first need to know the main sources of motivation; ''_without knowing where the roots of motivation_

lie, how teachers can water those roots'' (Oxford and Shearin, 1994, p. 3). This makes clear that the fact of knowing the source of motivation is important for teachers to know how to make their students motivated and which procedures to adopt.

According to Fischer (1990), there are three main sources of motivation in learning as what educational psychologist said:

- The learner's natural interest: intrinsic satisfaction.

- The teacher/Institution/Employment: extrinsic reward.

- Success in the task: combining satisfaction and reward.

The simple fact of success and the effect on our behaviour is the draw between the first two sources of motivation, while the third is under-exploited in language teaching by the teachers and school systems. A person loves what he does, and likes to repeat it again. This means, in classroom, if students have an idea of 'Not good at English', they will not succeed but it will increase their feelings of failure. This also will lead to a downward spiral of a self-perception of low ability, low effort, low achievement, and low motivation and so on (Ibid).

I.1.3- The Importance of Motivation in Enhancing Second/Foreign Language Learning

The importance of motivation in enhancing second/foreign language learning is undeniable. For this reason, Brown (2000, p. 160) says''*it is easy in second language learning to claim that a learner will be successful with the proper motivation.*'' Gardner (1997, p. 241) shares a similar view claiming that''*students with higher levels of motivation will do better than students with lower levels.*'' He further adds that motivation stimulates students to engage in different tasks and show willingness to achieve their goal and enjoy the language learning process in general (Ibid). According

to them, motivation is what strengthens students to overcome barriers to achieve their goals and perform better in the language learning process.

Moreover, Lifrieri (2005, p. 4) points out that *"when asked about the factors which influence individual levels of success in any activity such as language learning, most people would certainly mention motivation among them."*This indicates that motivation is the force driving students to successfully learn the language.

I.1.4- Rewards

Reward is an essential strategy used by teachers in order to prompt students' motivation in the learning process, to increase its effectiveness and efficiency, to encourage an appropriate behaviour and to prevent the encouragement of inappropriate behavior. In supporting that, Burton *et. al*. (2003, p. 242) say that, ''*reward refers to anything that promotes a behaviour being repeated in the future*''. Therefore, a reward is an incentive that stimulates students to engage in a particular task.

Furthermore, Deci (1972) asserts that in language classes, a reward is a gift, money, something concrete or something inconcrete given to a student in recognition of his achievement or the effort he provides in the classroom. Rewards can increase the possibility of the occurrence of positive behaviour in the classroom. To support this, Wilson (2006, p.6) defines rewards stating that''*a reward can be defined as an external agent administrated when a desired act or task is performed, that has controlling and informational properties.*''Therefore, rewards are incentives coming from outside reinforcing the students when they engage in different tasks and encouraging them to keep showing good performance in the future.

I.1.5- Rewards in the Classroom

Rewards play an important role in the classroom. In this regard, Willingham (2008, p. 160) states that ''*rewards can motivate students to attend class, to*

behave well, or to produce better work." This means that, the students once rewarded by the teacher tend to develop good behaviour, show more interest, and perform in a better way than before.

The type of rewards given to the students in the classroom should be selected in a careful manner. In this framework, Willingham (2008, p.160) says, *"if you are not careful in choosing what you reward, they can prompt students to produce shoddy work, and worse, they can cause students to actually like school subject less."* Hence, rewards when they are destined to inappropriate behaviours, they mislead students and stimulate them to show negative behaviours but, when they are used for appropriate behaviours, they lead students to show good behaviour and like the learning process.Willingham (2008, p. 16) maintains:

> When I was in fourth grade, my class was offered a small prize for each book we read. Many of us quickly developed a love for short books with large print, certainly not the teacher's intent. In the same way, if you reward people to come up with ideas, but don't stipulate that they must be good ideas, people will generate lots of ideas in order to gain lots of rewards, but the ideas may not be especially good.

Rewards then may devalue learning when they are inappropriately used. They can have a negative effect upon the students' initiative and performance if the teacher does not insist on the effectiveness of the results.

I.1.6- The Effects of Rewards on Students' Motivation

In the classroom, when the student benefits from one of the forms of rewards (verbal praise, teacher's approval, and the rewarding attendance), s/he will certainly gain a strong feeling of confidence. Thus, s/he will be more motivated to engage in the learning experience, s/he is more likely to answer a new question or to take part in a given activity. Classroom rewards have proved to be an effective way to

encourage learners' positive behavior and to maintain motivation in the class. In this regards, Deci, *et al.* (1991) assert that:

> Rewards such as prizes and money are often used in homes and schools as a means of motivating desired behaviours … The use of promised rewards or threatened punishment is ananubiquitous motivational strategy.

The teacher's praise may act as an effective reinforcer particularly for students who made an effort in doing something difficult and complicated. In the 1970s, Maslow carried out several studies which dealt with the issue of motivation in terms of needs. The maintenance of positive self-esteem is one of these basic needs thatstudents must satisfy in order to attain their goals. In learning situation, positive self-esteem indeed, is enhanced by some form of reward. When students do well in an activity, they want to be compensated for their efforts and they feel that they deserve a reward especially if they believe that success is a result of their own efforts and abilities.

In some particular cases, rewards become very necessary. For instance, shy and introvert students keep silent in the class and they always wait for encouragement and reinforcement by the teacher. The teacher here may repeat some urging expressions that have reinforcing value. In this regard, Al-Mutawa and Kailani (1989, p. 146) say that:

> Some pupils are evasive, or afraid to ask or speak for fear of making errors. The teacher's duty is to encourage such pupils to talk in English and to praise their performance and progress, no matter how limited it maybe. This encouraging attitude will create a pleasant atmosphere and make English classes lively and enjoyable.

I.2- Spelling Errors

I.2.1- Spelling

In order to understand what spelling errors are, it is vital first to understand the concept of spelling. Spelling is the student's ability to write a word correctly. It is defined as the process of encoding or rendering spoken words into written symbols (Hannon, 1995). This means that spelling is a process of matching the sounds of the language with their appropriate letters in order to convey a meaningful message. In supporting that, Hodges (1984, p. 66) defines spelling as "*a process of*

converting oral language to visual forms by placing graphic symbols on some writing forms." Spelling is then the act of translating what is heard into letters or words. It is an active and productive skill that requires being flexible for the purpose of developing students' productive language skills (Katchen, 2003).

I.2.2- Importance of Spelling

Spelling is a language element whereby sounds (phonemes) are represented by letters (graphemes) which constitute the smallest building blocks of written language. The structure and texture of written language begins with spelling. Most researchers, past and present, highlight the importance of spelling in writing (Abdulmoneim, 2013). Al-Hassan (2006), Smedley (1983), Cronnell (1979), for example, stress the fact that good spelling is key to efficient written communication. According to Malatesha, *et al.* (2008-2009, p. 6), *"good spelling is critical for literacy and it makes writing much easier – allowing the writer to focus on the ideas to be conveyed, not the letters needed to put those ideas on paper."*

Researchers (e.g., Waller, 2002) agree that English spelling is problematic because it is not phonetic, that is, there is no sound-letter correspondence. Knowing the pronunciation of a word does not presuppose knowing its spelling (Tavosanis, 2007), for instance in the word 'knight' we do not pronounce the letter 'k'. Conversely, as William (2008, p. 5) says, *"you can never tell what sound a letter is going to make. Sometimes a letter doesn't make any sound at all,"* This indicates that students should be aware of the linguistic structure of the target language they are about to study.

I.2.3- Errors

The field of analysis of students' errors has been discussed and defined differently in several disciplines such as Pedagogy, Psychology, and Neurology (Corder, 1981). Therefore, the field of research on students' errors is of a strong importance. An error enrobes a multiplicity of definitions; each researcher tailors it

according to his understanding. According to Garza (1980), an error is a deviation from the norms of the target language. Errors are systematic and emerge from many causes such as psychological causes or imperfect knowledge of the rules of the TL. Supporting this idea, Corder (1981, p. 65) says that *"errors arise because there has not been enough effort on the part of the learner or enough explanation or practice on the part of the teacher."* He adds (1973, p. 259) that *"errors are also regarded as flawed side of the learner's speech or writing."* That means that errors show the imperfect side of the learners' language and his weaknesses.

Another definition is proposed by the *Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics* (1992). An error is the use of a linguistic item in a way that a native speaker of the language regards it incorrect or incomplete. Thus, it occurs because the student does not know what is correct and therefore cannot correct it. In addition, Bell (1990, p. 189) defines the term 'error' as *"a sure sign that the learner has not mastered the code of the target language."* This means that, if the students do not have a good knowledge of the rules of the TL they will make lot of errors. Thus, errors provide an insight into the learners' language learning since they provide evidence of progress to the teacher, they provide evidence to researchers of how language is learned, and they are a device by which learners learn.

I.2.4- Sources of Errors

Within the field of error analysis, it has been understood that learners' erroneous sentences are due to different sources and that finding out these sources will help the teacher or researcher to understand them (Corder, 1981). One of the basic sources of students' errors is the mother tongue interference. Dulay, *et al.* (1974, para. 3) define interference as *"the automatic transfer, due to habit, of the*

surface structure of the first language onto the surface of the target language." Corder (1967) adds that, most incorrect sentences formed by second language students are caused by language transfer. This indicates that students tend to transfer rules and even words from their mother language and use them in the structures of the TL and that is, of course, an error.

Many other reasons are believed to be behind the existence of errors, these sources of errors can be categorized within two domains: interlingual and intralingual transfer (Ellis, 1997).

First, interlingual errors are defined by the *Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics* (1992) as being the result of the language transfer which is caused by the mother language of the learners. They are considered as signs that the learner is incorporating and investigating the system of the new language he is exposed to. Richards (1971, p. 205) also defines interlingual errors as "*errors caused by the interference of the learners' mother tongue.*" During the beginning stages of learning a L2, interlingual errors occur, because the mother tongue is the only linguistic system learners can refer to. In contrast to that, intralingual errors, which are also called developmental errors, are independent from the learners' mother tongue, which means that they do not derive from contrasts with another language, and occur frequently during the learning process of the TL. So, these errors occur as a result of learners' attempt to compose concepts and hypotheses about the TL from their limited experience with it.

Another source of errors is that of overgeneralization. Overgeneralization means the fact that a certain L2 rule is learned and applied to other phenomena where the rule does not apply. The majority of intralingual errors are examples of the same

process of overgeneralization. It covers instances where the learner creates a deviant structure on the basic of his experience of the structure in the TL. Overgeneralization is then the use of previously available strategies in new situations, some of these strategies will prove to be helpful but others may be misleading and inapplicable (Richards, 1974). In fact, previous learning experiences may influence the actual learning situations. For this reason, students do not look for the rules of the TL, but they tend to over-generalize their previous learned rules because their experience with the language is limited and incomplete to provide them with complex rules.

Another author who dealt with the sources and causes of errors is Al-Khasawneh. He (2010) argues that *"the main sources of these errors are mainly due to lack of motivation"* (Cited in Dana Adas. AydaBakir. pp. 213); i.e. when a student is not motivated to learn a language he/she is not going to make any effort to learn or progress to avoid errors.

I.2.5- Significance of Students' Errors

In general, when learning a new language there are mainly four skills that the students have to master inparallel during the learning process. These basic skills are listening, writing, reading, and speaking. Hence, the first step in learning a new language is to befamiliar with the alphabet where the learner should be able to write and spell the characters flawlessly. Oncelearners have successfully fulfilled this prerequisite, the journey of mastering why the letter 'k' in "knee" issilent begins (Henderson,1985).

The significance of students' errors in the process of learning English as a foreign language has been widely discussed in the field of second language acquisition. In fact, students' errors may be significant for the teacher since they, somehow, tell something about the students. According to Corder (1981), students' errors are

significant in three ways. First, they are significant for the teacher because they may inform him how far the student has progressed and, consequently, what remains for him to learn. In other words, errors inform the teacher about the level and progress of his students. Second, to the researchers, in that they provide evidence to the researchers of how language is learnt and acquired. In other words, thanks to the errors students commit, researchers can know if a certain language is taught correctly or not. Third, to the student himself since errors are considered as a device to learn. In fact, when a student who made errors is corrected by his/her teacher is likely going to avoid such errors in the future. Thus, these errors help to understand the process of second language acquisition (Ibid).

I.2.6- Correcting Students' Errors

In foreign language learning classes, responding to students' errors has always been a thorny issue. Many teachers believe that errors must be corrected otherwise the learning process would be fossilized. Moreover, students cannot learn if they do not know what their mistakes are (Willis, 1996).

In recent EFL methodology, teachers' opinion about the mistakes made by the students have changed. Errors are no longer considered as being problematic in the learning process. In this context, Dubin and Olshtain(1986, p.74) say:

> Another important shift in current thinking about language learning theory is the attitude towards learner' errors. If in the 1960s errors had to be avoided at all costs, today errors are viewed as an integral part of the language-learning process from which we can gain very significant insights.This means that, the students' errors could be very significant for the teachers since they provide him with a deep insight into the student's learning process.

For some kind of students, correcting errors every time may be seen as an obstacle to the learning experience and it may also hinder their participation and decreases their motivation. Willis (1996, p.7) explains to teachers why focusing on students' errors is often disagreeable. He claims that:

If you actually tried to correct every error, including those of stress and pronunciation, the lesson would become demotivated. Many students say they won't risk speaking in or out of class because they are afraid of making mistakes or being corrected in public.

In agreement with this, Al-Mutawa and Kailani (1989, p 147) also claim that "*the teacher should not correct mistakes in English made during the activity. Correcting errors may discourage or inhibit pupils in their attempts to use the language freely.*" In addition, it is very disapproving for learners if they talk and then they are interrupted by the teacher to receive correction of some mistakes they have done because it would disturb their ideas and influence their concentration. In the same context, they add that "*nothing is less encouraging than constant correction of mistakes when the pupil is concentrating on his ideas.*" (ibid.)

I.2.7- Spelling Errors

According to Al-Jarf (2008) and Mifflin (2007), a spelling error is a sequence of letters that represents the non-correct spelling of another word. This means that, any incorrect word, incorrect grapheme, within a word is regarded as an error, and any word that does not match the target word in part or in full is marked as misspelling. These spelling errors may occur because of the subject's lack of linguistic rules knowledge of the target language he/she is writing in. These spelling violations happen at the level of the orthographic norms of the language, such as omission, substitution, transposition, and insertion. Thus, spelling is regarded as a subject area that must be included in the curriculum of learners (DuBois *et al.*, 2007).

I.2.8-Types of Spelling Errors

Writing well is really a big challenge for both the native and non-native students of English. In general, it is much bigger with the students of English as a foreign language (Muslim, 2014). Based on an analysis of errors in the writing of students of English from a range of countries, Cook (1999) concluded that English

spelling errors can be classified into four main types; namely, omission, substitution, transposition, and insertion errors.

First, spelling errors of omission happen when students write '*coffe*' instead of '*coffee*' or '*pleas*' instead of '*please*'. EFL students may associate and manipulate a variety of consonants and vowels combinations while forming words. The early stage of spelling and writing for beginners depends on their "*phonemic awareness and orthographic spelling knowledge*" (Kelman and Apel, 2004, p. 57). In other words, these errors are mainly due to the poor phonological awareness of students.

Second, spelling errors of substitution is when a student replaces a letter with another one in a word, for instance he/she writes '*deer*' for '*dear*' and '*tryed*' for '*tried*'. Sterling (1983, p. 359) underlines such errors as "*not incorrect spelling of the correct sounds but rather correct spelling of incorrect sounds.*"

Third, spelling errors of transposition or miss ordering take place when a student misplaces the letters in a word. So, he/she writes '*freind*' instead of '*friend*' or '*recieve*' instead of '*receive*'. These errors may emerge from the failure to use phonetic rules correctly. This type of errors is classified by Carney (1994, p.84) as analogy errors that students commit because of "*confusion between elements of words.*"

Fourth, spelling errors of insertion is when a student adds one letter to a word, such as in '*phictures*' for '*pictures*'. This type of errors mainly appears because of extra letters in a word. These errors are a result of the lack of knowledge as English is not a phonetic language. For instance, students tend to write words the way they say them, such as: '*whay*' for '*why*' and '*earley*' for '*early*'.

I.2.9- Strategies to Help Students Reduce Spelling Errors

For students as well as for teachers, it is unavoidable and of great importance to cope with errors in order to improve students' language skills. Since teachers are

responsible for the development of their students' English language, it is necessary to apply some strategies to help them do so. One important strategy to help reduce students' spelling errors is by teaching students spelling. Gentry (1982) claims that teaching spelling as part of the curriculum will help students become effective in their writings. This means that, more importance should be given to spelling since it is an important skill when learning a foreign language, therefore it should be implemented in the curriculum.

I.3- The Behavioural Learning Theory

I.3.1- Origins and Definition

Operant Conditioning is the term used by B.F. Skinner to describe the effects of the consequences of a particular behaviour on the future occurrence of that behaviour. In the 1930's, B. F. Skinner built a "box" in which an animal could get a pellet of food if it learned to press a bar or to peck a light. Thousands of research studies have been done on animals in the Skinner Box. Therefore, the most common textbook examples of operant conditioning are a rat pressing a bar in a Skinner Box or a pigeon learning to pick a light to get food. In real life, common examples of operant conditioning would be working for a weekly pay check and disciplining a child to change his/her behavior (Wilkins, 1972). People attempt to use their past experiences to produce some result, some payoff, usually some change in the environment. For instance, a person acts nice to get someone to like him/her. The essential assumption under this theory is that rewards and reinforcers are beneficial in the learning process. This belief is constructed on the basis that rewarded actions will be reproduced (Slavin, 1990).

I.3.2- Educational Applications

The application of the reward systems in the educational endeavor has its roots in Skinner's theories. In fact, the American Psychologist Skinner (1904-1990) was one

of the first psychologists who has investigated the process of language acquisition in terms of language behaviour. Among the various theories of language acquisition and language learning, the theory of operant conditioning remains one of the most influential principles in language teaching methodology (Slavin, 1990).

Skinner and other behaviourists carried out several investigations concerning learning. In his theory, Skinner distinguishes three main stages that are involved in the learning process: the stimulus or situation (S), the behaviour (B), and the reinforcement (R). Stimulus is the situation in which the learner's performance will take place (Wilkins, 1972). Behaviour is the performance itself. An utterance may be considered as behaviour (Wilkins, 1972).

According to Fontana (1995), reinforcement refers to any reaction from the part of the teacher towards the learner's behaviors. He (1995, p 162) explains this stage saying that:

> Such reinforcement can best be thought of the teacher as the results that follow on from B. Obviously these results can either be favourable to the learner (R+), or they can be unfavourable (R-). R+ increases the likelihood of the learner producing the same piece of behaviour again in the future, while R- decreases the likelihood.

Like a child, the learner who performs different activities in the class needs to be reinforced; otherwise, the possibility of having further performances decreases. Wilkins (1972, p. 162) deals with this topic and emphasizes the importance of reinforcement in a learning situation when saying: "*if such reinforcement does not take place ... the piece of language, the response, is not learned.*"

The main principles underlying Skinner's operant conditioning or S-B-R theory are illustrated in the following diagram.
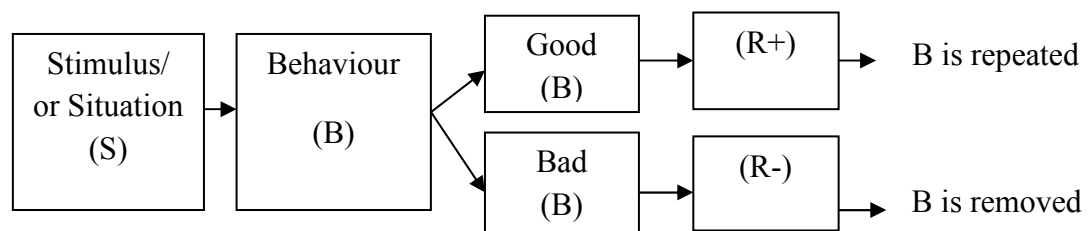
Figure 1: Skinner's S-B-R Model of Learning (Wilkins, 1972, p. 162)

The above figure shows clearly that, the student who gives correct answers and performs different tasks and then receives positive reinforcement (R+) is more likely to answer correctly and perform other tasks. However, the student who gives incorrect answers with a low performance will receive a negative reinforcement (R-) in order to correct his answers in the future and be more careful. For more explanation, Fontana (1995, p. 144) provides us with this straightforward example:

▪ A boy is asked by the teacher to give the present participle of the French verb "avoir". (S)

▪ The boy answers: "ayant". (B).

▪ The teacher says: "correct". (R) In this case it is (R+).

According to Fontana (1995), the likelihood of giving the same correct answer increases because the learner has received (R+); whereas, the learner who would receive (R-) would not offer the same answer again.

Conclusion

To conclude, this chapter has tackled some issues and concepts that are related to the theoretical backgrounds of the research study. It is divided into three sections and each section is devoted to the definition of important concepts. In the first section, we shed light on important concepts upon which our research is based, such as motivation and other concepts related to motivation including rewards which are important tools that help to raise the motivation of students to avoid spelling errors in EFL classes. The second section, on the other hand, was devoted to the explanation of the concepts of errors and spelling errors which students commit in their writings. Finally, the third section was devoted to the explanation of the behavioural learning theory by B.F. Skinner upon which our research is based.

Introduction

This chapter is methodological; it describes the instruments and procedures of data collection and data analysis used in investigating the research topic. It consists of four sections. The first section deals mainly with the research method undertaken to carry out the present research. The second section entails the description of the participants and the setting. The third section deals with the sample of the research study. The fourth one in turn deals with the explanation of the data collection, instruments, and procedures. Finally, the fifth and last section provides detailed information about the procedures used to analyze the data.

II.1- Research Methods

In order to carry out our research, we opted for the use of a descriptive survey method by means of two questionnaires. The use of a quantitative method allows us to gather a large amount of data which is then analyzed by descriptive statistical method. It is quantitative in terms of the procedures used in counting and quantifying the results by means of numbers and percentages displayed on tables and graphs. This research finds quantitative research design to be appropriate because it is statistical and reliable and allows results to be analyzed and compared with similar studies (Kruger, 2003). Therefore, in order to get these reliable results, the rule of three is opted for to calculate the percentages.

II.2- Setting and Participants

The investigation is carried out in the Department of English at MMUTO. The participants of our research are both the teachers and the students. The first category of the participants involved is teachers of first-year students of written expression which are total of five (5). The second category of the participants involves the first-year students. The number of the first-year students is of six hundred and sixty-one students (661).

II.3- The Sample

Our sample is derived from first-year 'LMD' students at the department of English at Mouloud Mammeri University in Tizi Ouzou. We attempted to select a representative sample in an objective and random way. The participants were sixty-five (65) students from a population of six hundred and sixty-one (661) students, i.e. ten percent (10%) of the population. It is worth mentioning that the students' anonymity is taken into consideration. The second sample is derived from the teachers of writing at the department of English at UMMTO. The participants were five (5) teachers selected in an objective and random way.

II.4- Procedures of Data Collection

In order to collect data related to our research, we have used two questionnaires; one for the teachers of first-year of written expression and another one for first-year students.

II.4.1- Teachers' Questionnaire

A questionnaire is a data collection tool that researchers use to collect information about a given subject from a number of participants. Wallace (2009) defines a questionnaire as a written research instrument consisting of a set of questions and statements intended to capture responses from respondents. These responses can either be by using their own words or by selecting answers from those provided to them. This tool is used in our research because it facilitates data collection.

The questionnaire we have designed contains fourteen (13) questions, and it is divided into two (2) sections. The first section is about teachers' opinions about rewards and their effects on spelling errors. This part includes six (6) questions. The second section deals with teachers' opinions about spelling errors, and it is composed of seven (7) questions. The questions used in the whole questionnaire are closed-ended questions because they are

easier to answer. The questionnaires were administrated on May the 20th, 21st, 23rd 2018, and were collected on May the 20th, 21st, and 23rd 2018.

II.4.2- Students' Questionnaire

The questionnaire designed for students contains fourteen (14) questions, and it is divided into three (3) sections. The first section is about the background information of students in terms of their choice to study the English language. The second section is concerned with the students' opinions about the use of rewards and it contains seven (7) questions. Finally, the last and third section is devoted to the students' opinion about spelling errors, and it includes six (6) questions. This questionnaire includes only closed-ended questions because they are much easier to answer and they are not time consuming. The questionnaires were distributed on May 20th, 21st, 22nd, 23rd, and 27th 2018, and were collected on May the 20th, 21st, 22nd, and 27th 2018.

II.5- Procedures of Data Analysis

As mentioned above, the quantitative method will be used in order to analyze the data. Close-ended questions will generate numerical data and will explore teachers' and students' answers. These data are calculated with the help of the rule of three in order to get reliable descriptive and statistical results and it is applied as follows:

- X represents the calculated percentage
- Y represents the percentage of answers
- Z represents the population

$$X = \frac{Y \times 100}{Z}$$

Conclusion

This chapter has laid out the research design used in our study. It has explained the methods that we opted for in conducting our research. It has also explained the setting, the participants and the sample as well as the procedures of data collection means which consist

of two questionnaires; one administrated to teachers and a second one for students. Then, it has outlined the method used for the analysis of the gathered data. In fact, the rule of three is used as a statistical technique to provide a percentage of the data obtained through the questionnaires. The following chapter, named 'Presentation of the Findings' is devoted to portray the results reached from the questionnaires.

Introduction

The present chapter is empirical. It aims at presenting the results obtained from the research tool which is the two questionnaires; teachers' questionnaire and students' questionnaire. The findings are presented in percentages and displayed in histograms, pie charts, and tables. This chapter is divided into two sections. The first one is devoted to the presentation of the findings of the teachers' questionnaire, and the second one presents the findings of the students' questionnaire.

I- Results of the Teachers' Questionnaire

I.1- Section One: Teachers' Opinions about Reward and its Effects on Spelling Errors

Q1: During your teaching experience, did you adopt specific strategies to motivate your students to enhance their writing skill?
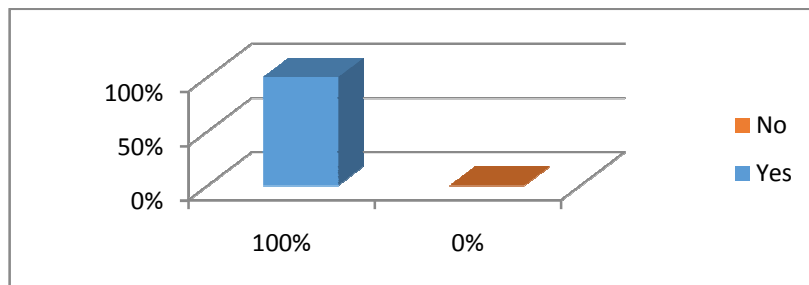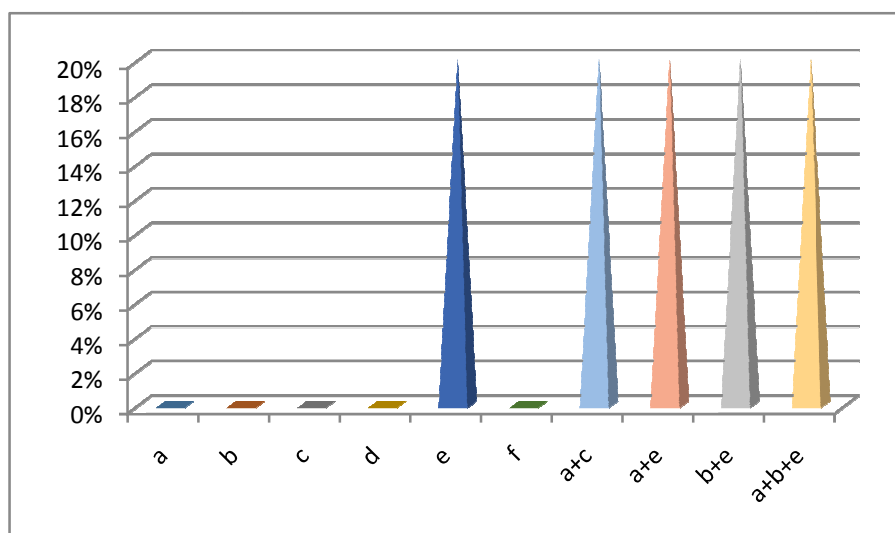

Diagram (01): Teachers' Use of Strategies to Motivate Students

This diagram shows that all the respondents (100%) use specific motivational strategies to arouse the writing capacities of their students.

Q2: If yes, which of these strategies do you use?

a)-Free writing   b)-Avoidance of punishment   c)-Entertainment

 d)-Play-acting   e)-Rewards   f)-All of them

Diagram (02): Motivational Strategies Used by Teachers of Writing

Diagram (02) reveals that the strategies used in the classroom differ from one teacher to another. 20% of the teachers prefer to use rewards; some of them (20%) use both of rewards and free writing. The same percentage of teachers of written expression (20%) opts for free writing, avoidance of punishing the learners by neglecting some of their writing mistakes and rewards. Some others (20%) use free writing and entertainment. The rest (20%) use rewards and avoid punishing learners by neglecting some of their writing mistakes.

Q3: If yes, in which way do you find them beneficial for the students?

Options	N	%
You notice that the writing errors have been reduced	00	00
Students get more motivated to produce more pieces of writing	02	40
Both of them	03	60
Total	05	100

Table (01): The Way Students Benefit from the Motivational Strategies

This table indicates that the majority of the respondents (60%) find that the strategies they use are beneficial for the students in both reducing the writing errors and getting their students more motivated to produce more pieces of writing. Only (40%) of them find that they are only beneficial in getting their students motivated to produce more pieces of writing.

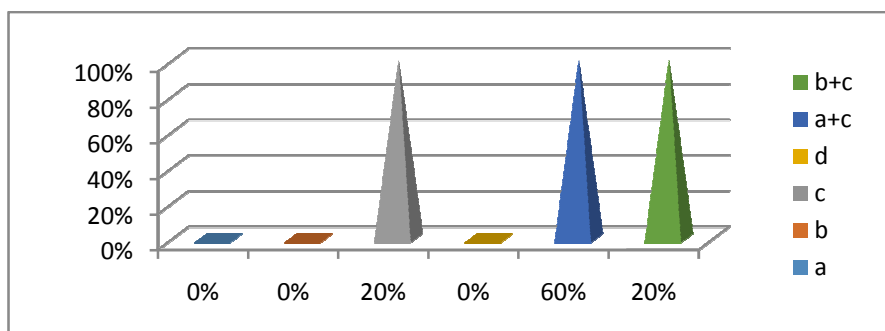**Q4: How often do you use rewards?**
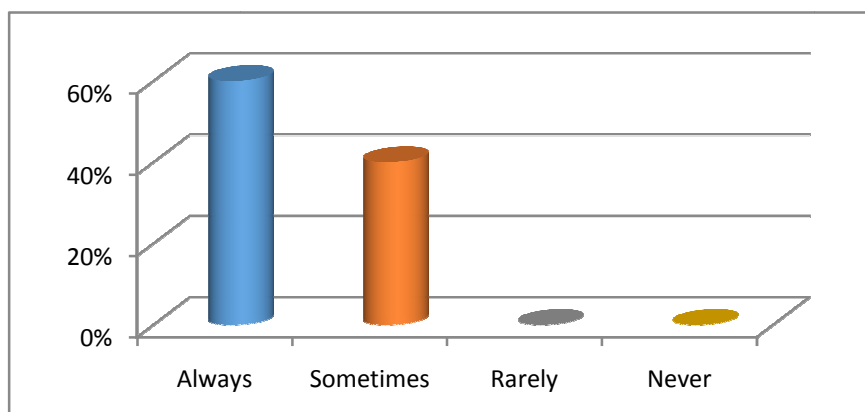
Diagram (03): Frequency of Using Rewards

This diagram shows that most of the teachers (60%) always use the rewarding strategy and less than a half of them (40%) say they adopt it sometimes.

Q5: Which type of rewards do you use?

a)-Short-term rewards (scores).   b)-Long-term rewards (gifts).

c)-Verbal rewards (praises).   d)-All of them.

Diagram (04): Types of Rewards Used by Teachers of Writing

This diagram indicates that short-term and verbal rewards are the most frequently used rewards by the teachers of writing (60%). 20% of the participants use only verbal rewards, and the other 20% use long-term rewards. This reveals that each teacher prefers a specific type of reward to use with his students.

Q6: How do you consider the effectiveness of the rewarding strategy in motivating your students to avoid spelling errors?

Options	N	%
Very effective	00	00
Effective	05	100
Little effective	00	00
Not effective	00	00
Total	05	100

Table (02): Degree of the Effectiveness of the Rewarding Strategy in Motivating the Students to Avoid Spelling Errors

As shown in this table, all of the respondents (100%) consider the rewarding strategy as effective in motivating the learners to avoid spelling errors.

I.2- Section Two: Teachers' Opinions about Spelling Errors

Q7: How do you consider the writing accuracy of your students?
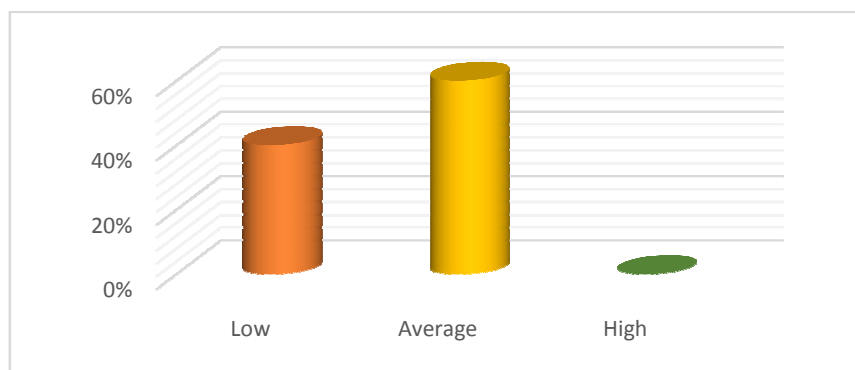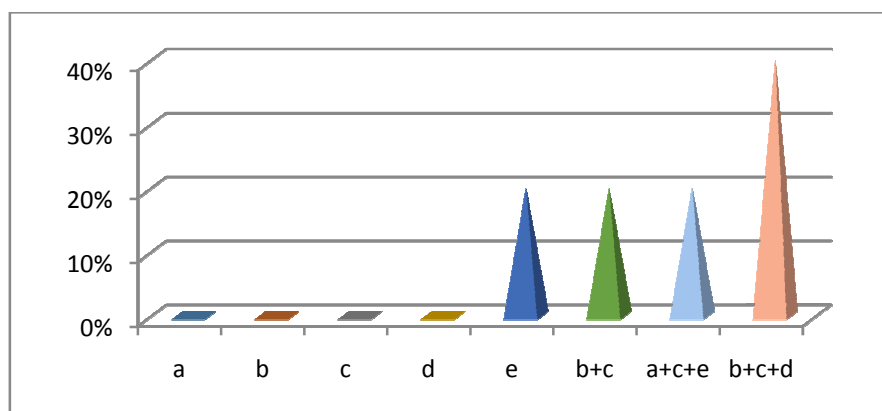

Diagram (05): Writing Accuracy of Students

This diagram shows that most of the teachers (60%) consider that the writing accuracy of their learners as being average and (40%) of them consider it as being low.

**Q8: Which of the following problems do your students mostly suffer from?**

a)-Content errors   b)-Grammatical errors   c)-Spelling errors

d)-Mechanical errors   e)-All of them

Diagram (06): Types of Problems that the Students Suffer from in Writing

This diagram indicates that nearly half the teachers state that their students suffer from grammatical, spelling and mechanical errors. 20% of them declare that they suffer only from grammatical and spelling errors, whereas the same number of teachers (20%) state that their students commit content, spelling and grammatical errors. 20% say that they make all types of spelling errors.

Q9: How often do your students commit spelling errors?
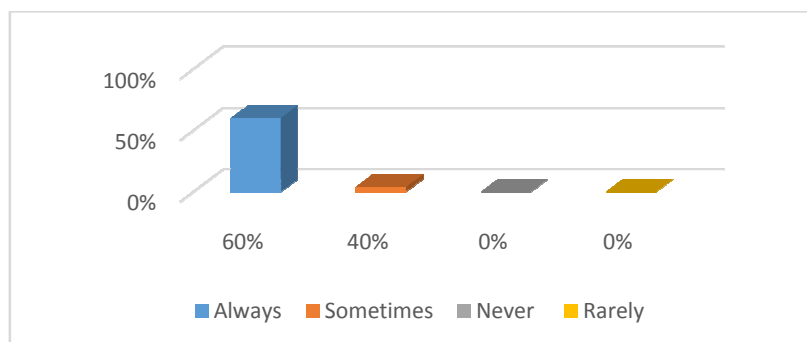

Diagram (07): Teachers' Opinion about the Frequency of Making Spelling Errors by the Students

Diagram (07) indicates that more than half (60%) of the teachers declare that their students *always* make spelling errors. (40%) of them state that they *sometimes* make them. However, no one stated that they *never* or *rarely* make these errors.

Q10: Which types of spelling errors do your students mostly commit?

a)-Addition　　　　b)-Omission　　　　c)-Substitution

d)-Transposition　　e)-All of them
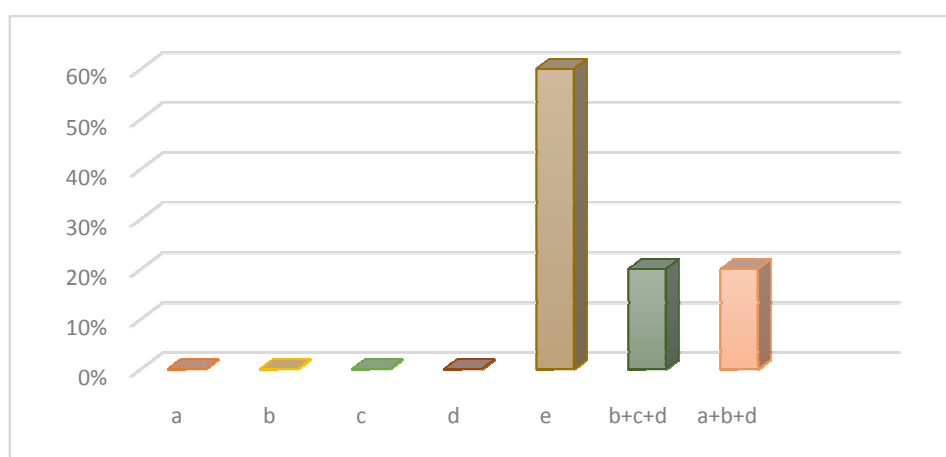
Diagram (08): Types of Spelling Errors Committed by Students

This diagram reveals that the majority (60%) of the respondents say that their students suffer from all types of spelling errors. Only one of them (20%) states that his students suffer from spelling errors of omission, transposition and substitution. Another one (20%) responds that they make spelling errors of addition, omission and transposition. These results show that the types of errors differ from one student to another.

Q11: What is, in your opinion, the cause of students committing spelling errors?

a)-Lack of motivation　　　　　　　b)-Lack of practice

c)-Lack of feedback　　　　　　　　d)-They focus on the other skills
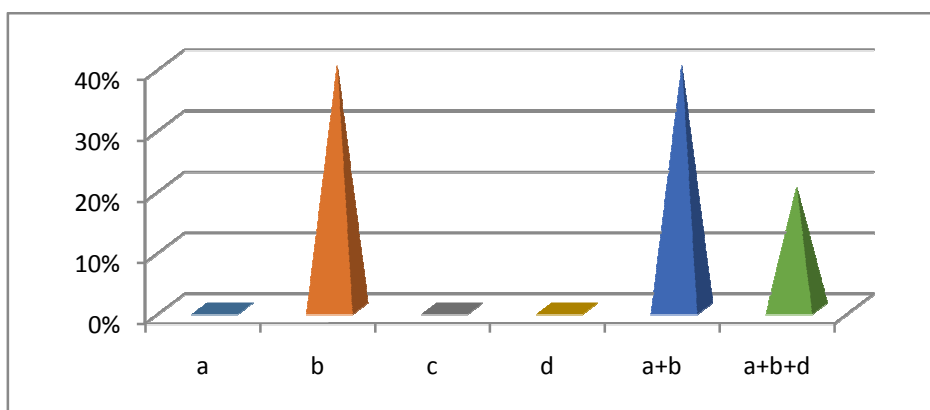
Diagram (09): Causes of Students' Spelling Errors

As shown in the above diagram, the causes of spelling errors differ from one student to another according to what has been said by teachers of written expression. 40% of them said that it is due to the lack of practice, and the same percentage of the respondents (40%) state that it is due to lack of practice and motivation. Only one teacher (20%) said that it is due to the focus on the other skills, lack of motivation and lack of practice at the same time.

Q12: Do you use specific strategies to encourage your students to avoid spelling errors?

Options	N	%
Yes	05	100
No	00	00
Total	05	100

Table (03): Use of Strategies Encouraging Students to Avoid Spelling Errors

This table shows that all the respondents (100%) use specific strategies in order to encourage their students to avoid making spelling errors**.**
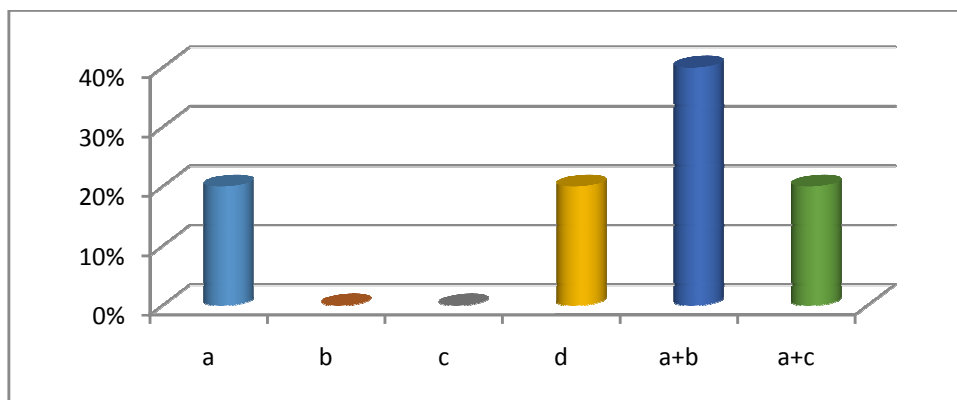
Q13: If yes, which of the following do you find more useful?

a)- Reading   b)-Rewards

c)- Working in groups   d)-All of them

Diagram (10): Useful Strategies Used by Teachers to Encourage Students to Avoid Spelling Errors

The obtained results reveal that (40%) of the teachers find that reading and rewards are the most useful strategies that help students avoid spelling errors. (20%) of the teachers think that all of these strategies are beneficial and useful. (20%) of them view that reading and working in groups are better. (20%) of the teachers find that the most useful strategy is reading. It means that teachers' opinion about the most useful strategies to encourage students to avoid spelling errors differs from one teacher to another.

II-   Results of the Students' Questionnaire

II.1- Section One: Background Information

Q1: Your choice to study English is:

Option	N	%
Personal	44	67.69%
Imposed by administration	20	30.76%
Imposed by parents	1	1.53%
Total	65	100%

Table (04): Students' Choice to Study English

As table (04) shows, 67.69% of the students personally chose to study English; whereas, only 20 (30.76%) of the students were compelled to study English by the administration. The minority (1.53%) left have been compelled to study English by their parents.

Section Two: Students' Opinions about the Use of Rewards

Q2: I am motivated to learn the writing skill:
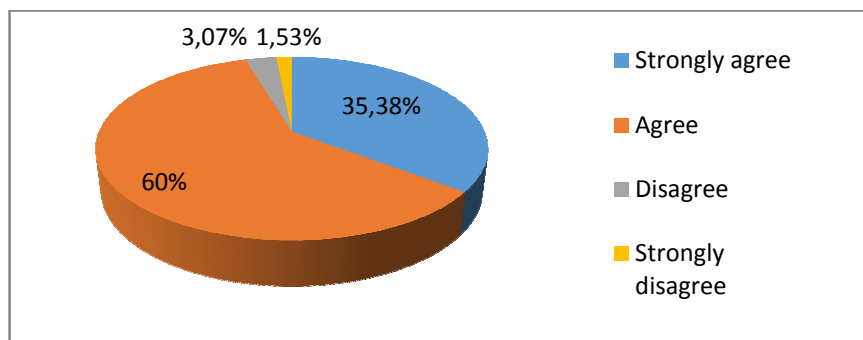
Diagram(11): Students' Motivation to Develop the Writing Skills

Diagram (11) shows that the majority of the students (60%) agree that they are motivated to learn the writing skill. Lot of students (35.38%) also claim that they strongly agree with this statement. The rest of the students is divided between those who disagree (3.07%) and those who strongly disagree (1.53%) with this statement.

Q3: You study the writing skill because:
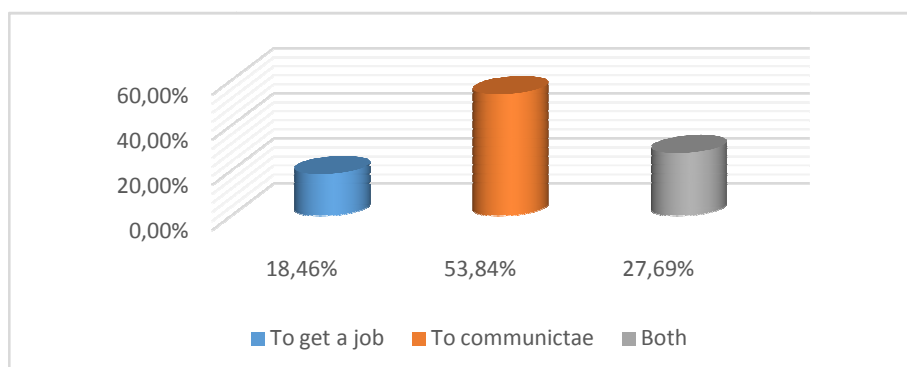
Diagram (12): Students' Reasons for Studying Writing

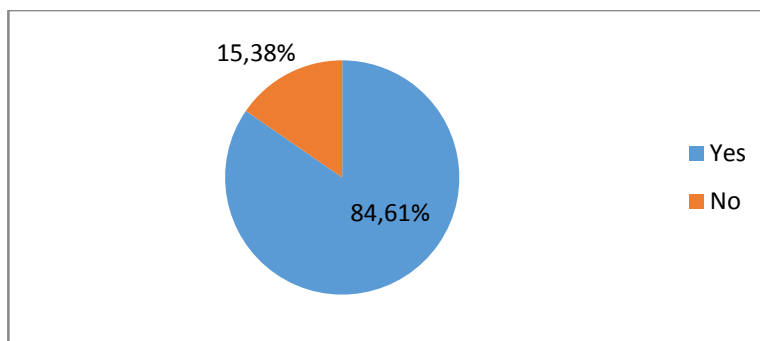As diagram (12) shows, the majority of the students (53.84%) answered that they study the writing skill in order to be able to communicate with people of the English culture, whereas, only 18.46% of the students said they study the writing skill because they will need it for practical goals. Other students (27.69%) answered by both propositions.

Q4: Does your teacher of writing use specific strategies to motivate you improve your writing skill?

Diagram (13): Teachers Occurrence of Using Strategies to Motivate Students Improve their Writing Skills

From this diagram, we can see that the majority of the students (84.61%) said that their teachers of writing use specific strategies to motivate them improve their writing skill. Only 10 students (15.38%) answered by 'no'.

Q5: If yes, does he/she uses:

a)-Free writing   b)-Avoidance of punishment   c)-Entertainment

d)-Play-acting   e)-All of them   f)-None of them
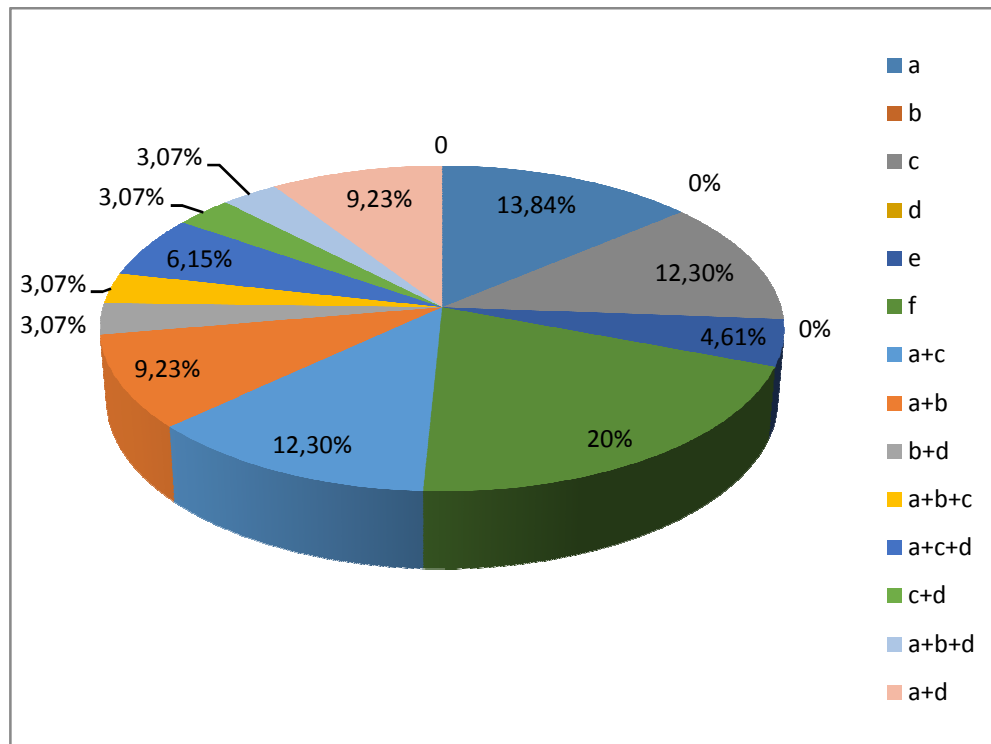
Diagram (14):Strategies Used by Teachers to Motivate their Students

The above diagram shows that teachers of writing rely on different strategies to motivate their students. In fact, 13.84% of the students answered by 'free writing', and 12.30% answered by 'entertainment'. Other students ticked different answers, and 4.61% indicated that their teachers make use of all of the above mentioned strategies. However, the majority (20%) said that their teachers do not use any of the mentioned strategies.

Q6: Do you benefit from these strategies in developing your writing abilities?
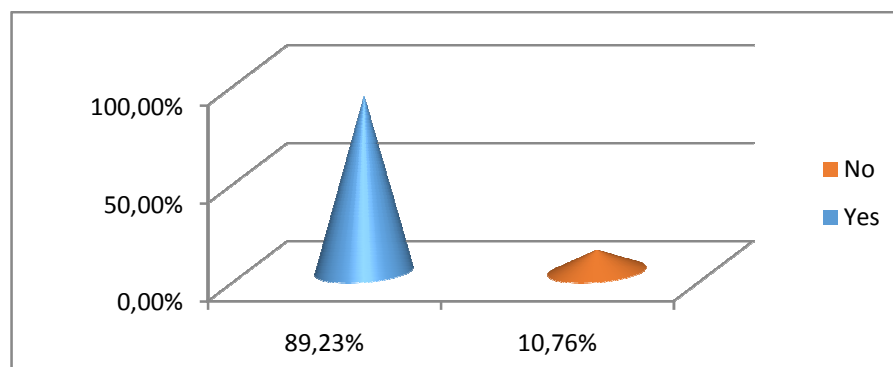
Diagram (15): Students' Benefit from Motivational Strategies Used by their Teachers

As diagram (15) shows, the big majority of the students (89.23%) benefit from these strategies used by their teachers to develop their writing skill. However, only 10.76% of the students answered by 'no'.

Q7: Does your teacher of writing use rewarding strategies as motivators in the classroom?
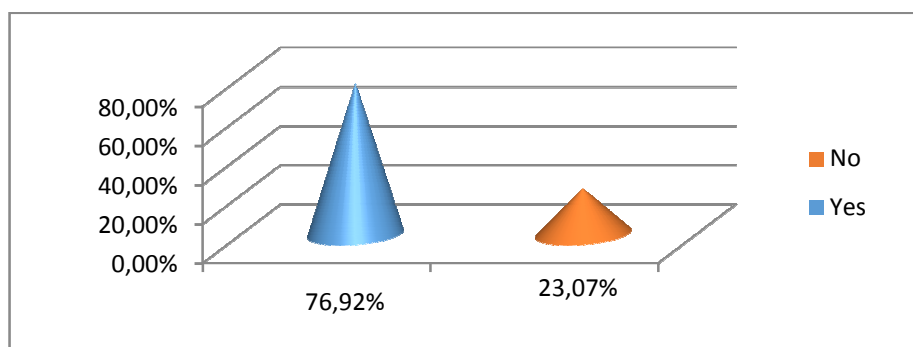
Diagram (16): Frequency of Teachers' Use of Rewards in Classrooms

The aim of this question is to know whether teachers of writing use rewards as motivators in the classroom. Fifty students (76.92%) answered by *yes*, whereas fifteen students (23.07%) answered by *no*.

Q8: Which of the following rewarding strategies do you prefer more?

a)- Scores   b)- Gifts   c)- Praises

Diagram (17): Types of Rewarding Strategies Students Prefer

The data gathered reveals that, the majority of the students (52.30%) prefer when their teachers use praises as rewards. Others (3.07%) answered by scores, and 1.53% answered that they prefer gifts. Others ticked different answers at once and the majority (35.38%) prefer both scores and praises.
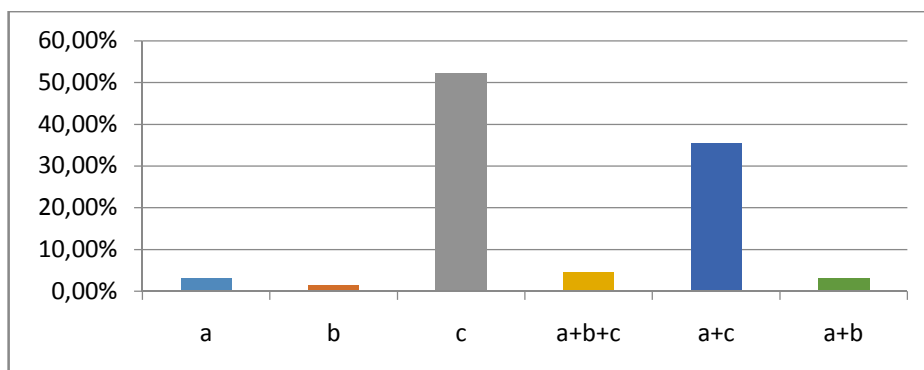
Section Three: Students' Opinions about Spelling Errors

Q9: How important is the writing skill in studying English?
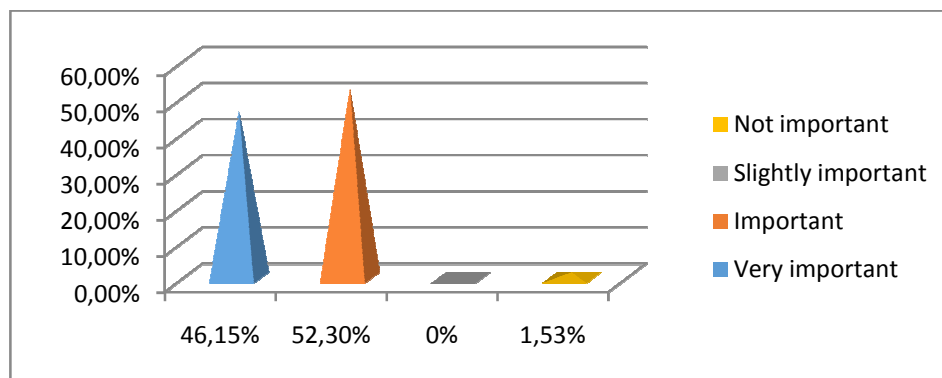
Diagram (18): Importance of the Writing Skill in Studying English

Diagram (18) indicates that, 52.30% of the students argue that the writing skill is important in studying English. Thirty students (46.15%) consider the writing skill as very important; few of them (1.53%) see it as not important.

Q10: Which of these problems do you suffer from in your writing?

a)-Content error   b)- Grammatical errors   c)-Spelling errors

d)- Mechanical errors   e)- All of them
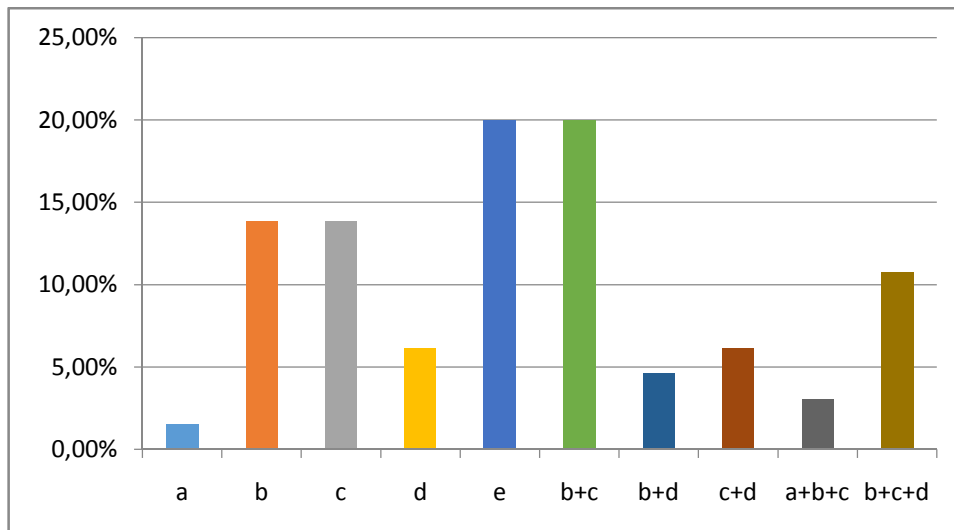
Diagram (19): Problems that Students Suffer from in their Writing

The aim of this question is to discover what kind of problems students suffer from in their writing. From the data gathered, we can see that 20% of the students assume that they commit both grammatical errors and spelling errors. 13.84% said they commit lot of grammatical errors, and 13.84% of the students claimed that they make many spelling errors. A minority of the students (1.53%) stated that they make content errors, and only 3.07% make content errors, grammatical, and spelling errors. Also only 6.15% of the students make mechanical errors. Few students (4.61%) make both grammatical and mechanical errors. 10.76% of the students said they generally commit grammatical, spelling, and mechanical errors. Finally, 20% of the students said that they commit all the errors mentioned above.

Q11: How often do you make spelling errors?
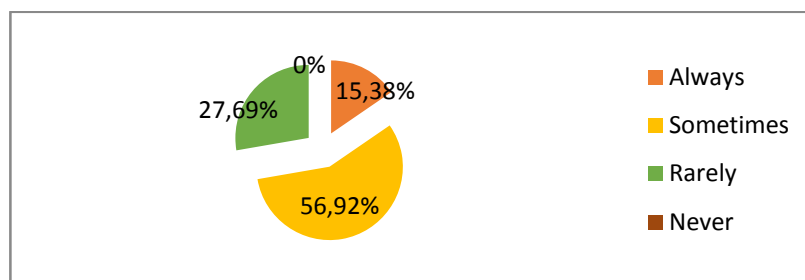
Diagram (20): Frequency of Spelling Errors Occurrence

From the data gathered, we can see that the majority of the students (56.92%) answered that they *sometimes* make spelling errors. Eighteen (27.69%) said that they *rarely* make spelling errors. Only ten of them (15.38%) answered that they *always* do. No one has mentioned the fourth proposition which is *never*.

Q12: Which type of spelling errors do you mostly commit?

a)-Omission   b)-Addition   c)-Substitution

d)-Change place of letters in words   e)-All of them
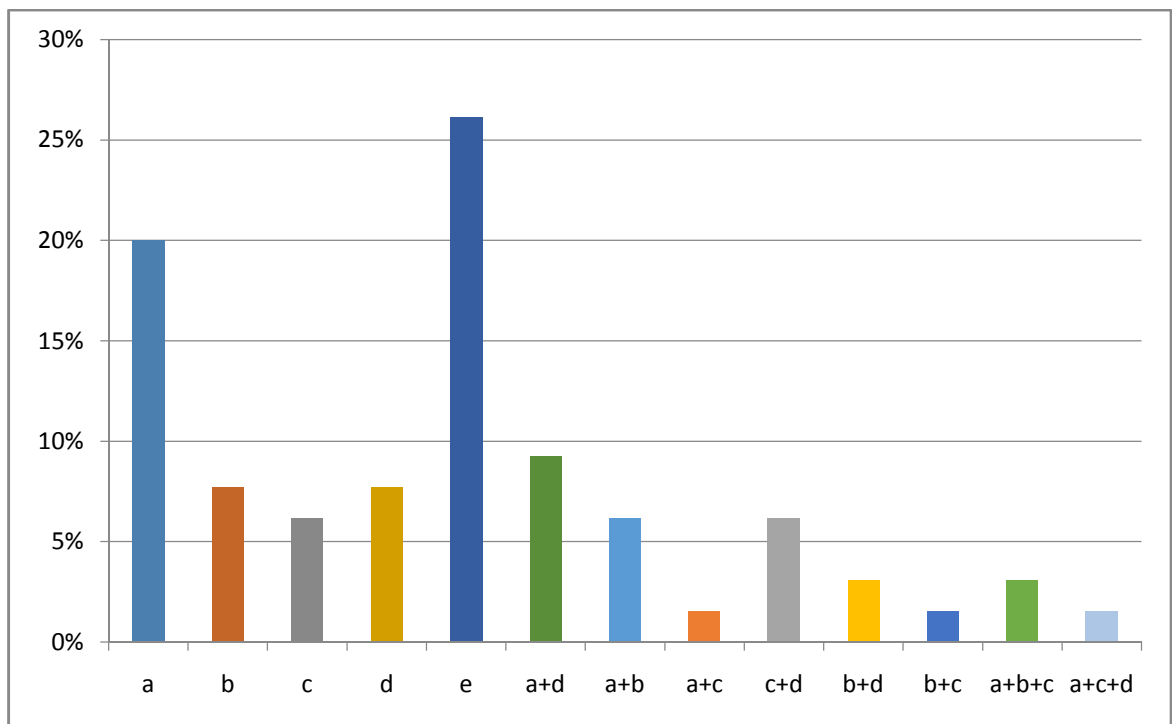
Diagram (21): Types of Spelling Errors Students Mostly Commit

The aim of this question is to know what types of spelling errors students mostly commit. As shown in the following diagram, lot of students (20%) mostly make errors of omission, and the majority of them (26.15%) said that they make all the errors mentioned and that includes errors of addition (7.69%), errors of substitution (6.15%), and errors of transposition (7.69%).

Q13: If you do not write English correctly and you make spelling errors, it is due to:

a)-Lack of motivation   b)-Lack of practice

c)-You focus on the other skill   d)-Effect of your mother tongue
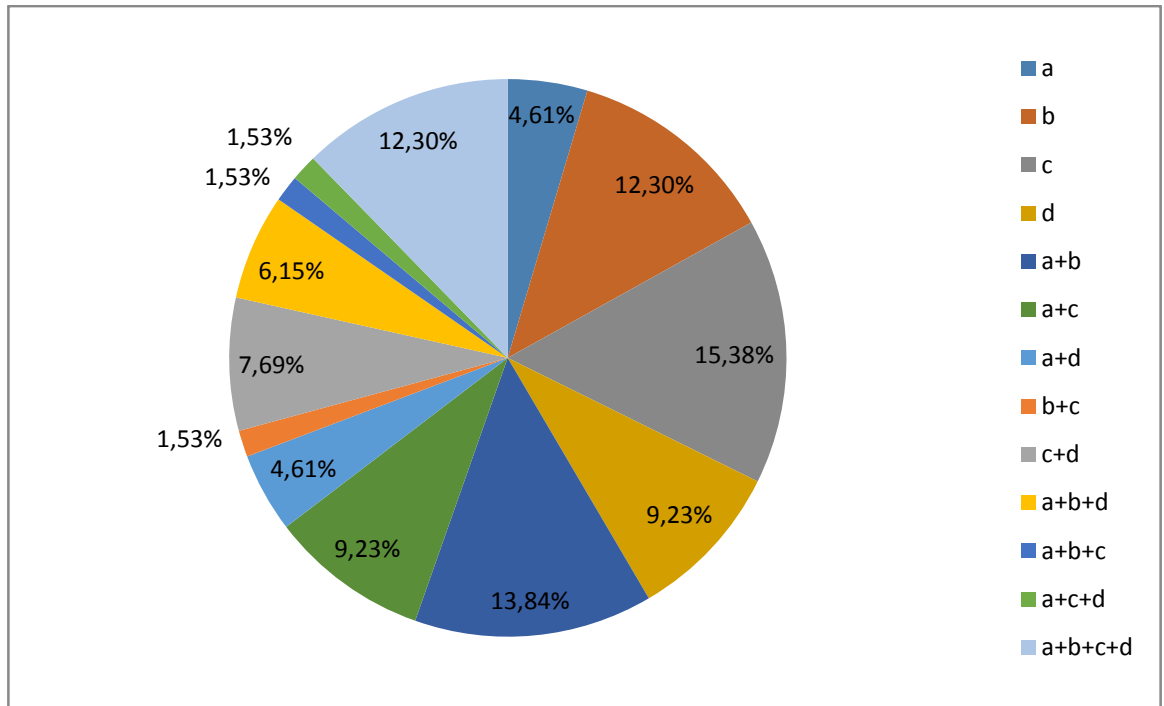
Diagram (22): Reasons why Students Make Spelling Errors

This diagram shows the reasons behind students spelling errors. Ten students (15.38%) claimed that their errors are due to their focus on the other skills. Eight (12.30%) said that they are due to lack of practice. Six (9.23%) answered that their errors are due to the effect of their mother tongue, and three (4.61%) said it is due to lack of motivation.

Q14: Do you think that your spelling errors could be avoided by:

a)- Reading   b)-Working in groups

c)- Rewards   d)-All of them
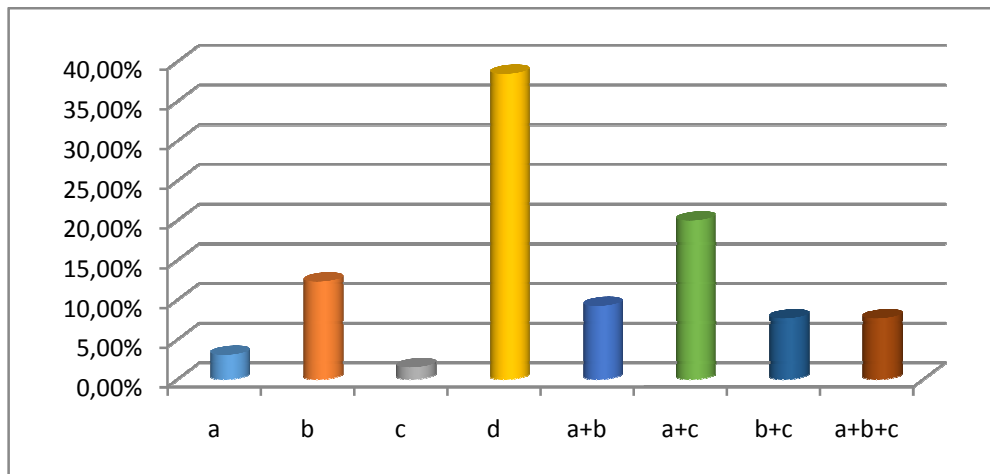
Diagram (23): Techniques Used by Students to Avoid Spelling Errors

On the basis of the gathered data, the majority of the students (38.46%) think that the three propositions can help them avoid spelling errors. Other students (12.30%) think that working in groups is the best solution. 3.07% of the students answered by reading, and only one student (1.53%) thinks that rewards can help him avoid spelling errors. However, many other students chose multiple answers and the majority (20%) said that reading and rewards can help them avoid spelling errors.

Conclusion

This chapter has presented the findings obtained from the two questionnaires that we have used, which are; the questionnaire addressed for teachers and the second questionnaire addressed for students. The results were displayed in tables, histograms, and pie charts. The data collection tool that we used permitted us to gather a considerable amount of data that will be discussed in the next chapter.

Introduction

The present chapter is devoted to the discussion and interpretation of the findings of our research obtained from the teachers' and students' questionnaires. This chapter is divided into two main sections; the first one deals with the discussion of the teachers' questionnaire; whereas, the second one is devoted to discussing the students' questionnaire.

I- **Discussion of the Results of the Teachers' Questionnaire**

I.1- Section One: Teachers' Opinions about Reward and its Effects on Spelling Errors

This section discusses the opinions of teachers about the use of rewards and the impact of the rewarding strategies on spelling errors.

The results of the first question reveal that the totality of the participants (100%) claim that they use specific strategies in order to motivate students to arouse their capacities in the writing skills. The strategies include: free writing, avoidance of punishing the learners by neglecting some of their writing mistakes, and rewards. Based on the results of diagram (02) Q2, reward is the most used strategy. In relation to these results, It is noticeable that teachers of Written Expression are aware of the importance of motivation to arouse students' writing abilities, in this context, Gardner (1997, p .241), argues that ''*students with higher levels of motivation will do better than students with lower levels.*''

As shown in table (01), some of the teachers find that the motivating strategies are beneficial in getting students more motivated to produce more pieces of writing; while, more than a half of them (60%) find that these strategies are also helpful in reducing writing errors (Q3). This shows the important role that motivation plays in the development of the writing skill and reduction of spelling errors. In this context, Brown

(2000, p.160) says ''*it is easy in second language learning to claim that a learner will be successful with the proper motivation.*''

The obtained results from the fourth question were that the majority (60%) of Writing Expression teachers claim that they always use rewards, and less than a half of them say that they use them sometimes. Indeed, teachers are aware of the significance of rewards in enhancing their students to improve their writing capacity.

Concerning the type of rewards that teachers tend to use mostly, the results show that some of the respondents assert that they use both long-term and verbal rewards, hence, the majority of them claim that they use short-term and verbal rewards much more than the other types (Q5). These results indicate that teachers prefer to use short-term and verbal rewards because they are more beneficial in influencing the students to show a good performance; when a reward happens just after a correct answer or good performance, it reinforces the learner in a better way. The above result is likely to confirm Wilkins' (1972, p. 166) claim which says ''*reinforcement, to be effective, should follow the response as quickly as possible.*''

Willingham (2008) asserts that rewards can motivate students to attend class, to behave well, or to produce better work. That is to say, rewards are important in the teaching and learning process. Indeed, the results of (Q6) demonstrate that the totality of the respondents agree on the significance of rewards and see them as effective in motivating students to avoid spelling errors. This implies that rewards are fruitful and bring remarkable results in teaching and learning second/foreign language including the writing skills. Students, once rewarded, are motivated to achieve and conform to appropriate behaviors in relation to the purpose for which that reward was made.

I.2- Section Two: Teachers' Opinions towards Spelling Errors

Based on results of (Q7), the students' writing accuracy goes from low to average which means that students find difficulties in the writing skills. In fact, as indicated in diagram 05, first-year 'LMD' students mostly suffer from the problem of spelling and grammatical errors (Q8). Besides, more than half of the teachers (60%) claim that their students always commit spelling errors while the others claim that they make them only sometimes (Q9). These results indicate clearly that students have poor knowledge about the code of the target language and do not master its phonological rules.

As concerns the types of spelling errors students mostly commit,the results of diagram (08) indicate that more than a half (60%) of the teachers say that their students make all types of spelling errors: spelling errors of addition, omission, substitution and transposition. This diagram also shows that spelling errors of omission and transposition are the most committed ones. Thus, errors can be considered important for the teacher in showing the students' level and competency which help the teacher to know how to proceed with this problem. In this regard, Corder (1981) claims that students' errors are significant for the teacher because they may inform him how far the student has progressed and, consequently, what remains for him to learn.

Concerning the cause of students' committing of spelling errors, (40%) of the respondents stress that it is due to lack of practice, the same number of the respondents view that it is caused because of lack of practice and motivation; whereas, the rest find that it is due to the focus on the other skills, lack of practice, and lack of motivation. These results indicate that lack of motivation is the main source of students' committing of errors. This implies thatlack of motivation influences directly the students' willingness to produce better and make effort to minimize errors. In this context, Al-Khasawneh (2010,

p.213)argues that ''*the main sources of these errors are mainly due to lack of motivation.''* The results of (Q12) as shown in table (03) indicate that all the respondents say that they use specific strategies to encourage their students to avoid spelling errors. This means that they find them beneficial. Finally, diagram (10) reveals that teachers differ in their points of view concerning the following strategies: reading, rewards, working in groups. In fact, (40%) of them assert that they find rewards and reading as the most useful strategies to encourage students to avoid spelling errors, others' points of view are divided into three different opinions. (20%) of them find reading and working in group as the more useful, others (20%) view that reading is enough to reduce spelling errors. The rest reveals that all of the above strategies are fruitful (Q13).

It is noticeable from these results that all these techniques are important but, reading and rewards are widely used by teachers. With regard to what is asserted above, classroom rewards are effective in enhancing learners' behavior; they may stimulate learners to face their weaknesses. Deci, *et al.* (1991, p. 335) say that ''*rewards such as prizes and money are often used in homes and schools as a means of motivating desired behaviours….*''.

II- Discussion of the Results of the Students' Questionnaire

Section One: Background Information

This section consists of only one question which seeks to gather information about the participants. This question (Q1) asks about the students' choice to study the English language. On the basis of the gathered data, it is clear that most of the first-year students have personally chosen to study English.

Section Two: Students' Opinions about the Use of Rewards

This section consists of seven (07) questions, from Q2 to Q8. It aims at investigating students' motivation and their opinions about the effectiveness of the use of rewards in the writing sessions. The obtained findings reveal that a large number of students (60%) are motivated to learn the writing skill.

The findings of the third (3th) question demonstrate that many students (53.84%) study the writing skill in order to be able to communicate with people of the English culture. However, other answers (18.46%) show that some students need the writing skill for practical goals such as getting a job. A lot of students (27.69%) answered by both propositions, and that means that they think that this skill will help them in their everyday life.

The obtained findings reveal very positive results concerning the fourth (4th) and fifth (5th) questions. In fact, the majority of the students (84.61%) answered by *yes*, saying that their teachers of writing use specific strategies to motivate them improve their writing skill. Only few (15.38%) answered by *no.* These strategies included, *free writing* (13.84%), *avoidance of punishment* (0%), *entertainment* (12.30%), and *play acting* (0%). These results show that teachers of writing rely more on *free writing* and *entertainment* to motivate their students improve their writing skill. Indeed, Khouni (2007) argues that the above-mentioned strategies are very helpful in arousing students' interest and motivation in classrooms. Wilkins (1972) emphasizes the importance of reinforcers in learning situations claiming that the learner who performs different activities in the class needs to be reinforced; otherwise, the possibility of having further performances decreases.

More than 80% of the respondents benefit from these above-mentioned strategies (Q6) in developing their writing abilities, but only few (10.76%) said they don't benefit

from these strategies. In fact, rewards and reinforcers are beneficial in the learning process since rewarded actions are likely to be reproduced again in the future (Slavin, 1991, p14).

As concerns the rewards teachers of writing use in the classroom to motivate their students, the majority of the participants said that their teachers tend to use more praises than any other strategy (Q8). Indeed, more than 50% of the students revealed that their teachers of writing use reinforcing expressions such as good, perfect, excellent…etc. to motivate them avoid spelling errors. From these results, it is noticeable that teachers of writing tend to use verbal rewards more than any other type of rewards because they are more beneficial for students in that they feel encouraged and more likely to become more active in the learning process (Wilson, 2006). Rehu*et al*. (2005) explain that the more reward a person gets, the higher the value of the reward for the person and the higher the motivation to get the reward.

Section Three: Students' Opinions about Spelling Errors

Writing is important in that it is a key to efficient written communication (Al-Hassan, 2006). Lot of students agree with this statement in Q9. Indeed, the majority of the informants (52.30%) said that they consider the writing skill as being important in the learning process.

Based on the results of Q10, first-year students of English suffer from a lot of errors in their writing. In fact, lot of students suffer from grammatical errors (13.84%) and spelling errors (13.84%). These deviations from the norms of the target language are a sign that the students have not mastered the code of the TL (Bell, 1982). Other students also suffer from content and mechanical errors in their writing and these errors emerge from students' imperfect knowledge of the linguistic norms of the English language (Corder, 1981).

Corder (1973, p. 277) groups errors into; "*omission of some required elements, addition of some unnecessary or incorrect elements, and misordering of elements.*" Based on the results of diagram (21) on types of spelling errors mostly committed by students, students commit the all above mentioned spelling errors. The results also show that omission errors are the most committed ones, and this is due to the poor phonological awareness of students. Ellis (1997) claims that, these errors can help us diagnose students' learning problems at any stage of their development, i.e. teachers can, through these errors, know the level of their students and then know how to help them overcome their writing problems.

As regards the origins of these spelling errors, diagram (22) shows that there are four (4) main reasons behind students' errors. In fact, (15.38%) of the respondents claim that their errors are due to "*their focus on the other skills*", (12.30%) said it is due to "*lack of practice*", (9.23%) claimed that it is due to the "*effect of their mother tongue*", and only (4.61%) said that it is due to "*lack of motivation*". According to these results, *students' focus on the other skills* is an important factor that prevents students from writing correctly. The interaction between listening, speaking, reading and writing empowers the student's written production. However, the results obtained from Q13 are a clear indication that students cannot manage to make a good balance with all the four skills.

Additionally, lack of motivation is also an important factor to consider. In fact, motivation orients the student to try to acquire elements of the second language and arouses the desire he has for achieving a goal (Gardner, 1979). Furthermore, Krashen (1985) stresses the importance of motivation, claiming that students with high motivation are better ready to acquire a second language.

Finally, diagram (23) shows the techniques that could help students avoid spelling errors. As the results showed, most of the informants (12.30%) said that working in groups can help them reduce spelling errors. 3.07% said that reading can reduce their spelling errors, and only 1.53% answered by rewards. Other students answered by ticking more than one proposition, and the majority of those who did (20%), claim that combining reading and rewards could be the best solution to avoid spelling errors. These results clearly indicate the importance of reading, group work, and most importantly, rewards. In fact, reward is a motivational strategy that can increase the possibility of the occurrence of positive behavior in the classroom (Witzel and Mercer, 2003).

Conclusion

This empirical chapter has discussed the results of both teachers' and students' questionnaires used in the research concerning their opinions about the effective use of rewards to motivate students avoid spelling errors. After discussing the results, we have confirmed two hypotheses. Thus, the first hypothesis stating that teachers and students hold positive attitudes towards the use of rewards in motivating students to avoid spelling errors is confirmed. In addition, the second hypothesis which states that motivating first-year students at the department of English at MouloudMammeri University through the administration of rewards is effective in helping them avoid spelling errors and develop their writing skill is confirmed.

General Conclusion

The present study was designed to determine whether the use of rewards has an effective role in motivating students to avoid spelling errors and improve their writing abilities. This study was conducted with first-year 'LMD' students and their teachers of writing at the level of the department of English at Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi Ouzou.

Our research was carried out using a questionnaire for both teachers and students. The participants consist of five (5) teachers of writing, and sixty-five (65) first-year students. The study adopted a quantitative approach in collecting and analyzing data for the sake of answering the research questions asked in the general introduction and to confirm or refute the advanced hypotheses. This study was based on Skinner's behavioural learning theory.

The obtained results of this study support the hypothesis that the rewarding strategy has an effective role in motivating students to avoid spelling errors and this confirms the two hypotheses advanced in the general introduction. Thus, the rewarding strategy is very important in the learning process. However, we cannot generalize the findings to the whole population because the sample is very small.

Finally, the data obtained offer a notable support to language teachers to adopt the use of rewards in the future. Therefore, it is recommended to apply rewards as an effective strategy in teaching writing in EFL classes. Teaching writing is a subtle area which should be given more focus and attention. It should also be mentioned that students' errors are true evidence of how a foreign language is learned and thus find out strategies to enhance and develop the procedures employed in the teaching and learning process.

Therefore, the rewarding strategies are effective motivators which need to be valued by foreign language researchers who are expected to direct their attention on more profound studies about the implementation and impact of these motivators in the classroom environment. Moreover, they are invited to test the influence of such motivators on reading, listening, and speaking.

Hopefully, our modest research will contribute to the field of didactics in a way that will open new perspectives for further investigations in the field of rewards in classrooms.

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Appendices

Appendix I

Teachers' Questionnaire

This research aims at studying the effective role of rewards in motivating students to avoid spelling errors. Your answers will be helpful and will guarantee the success of this research. Please tick the appropriate box or boxes.

Section One: Teachers' Opinions about Reward and its Effects on Spelling Errors

A reward is a tool that teachers use to try to reinforce a desired behaviour, it is a type of motivational strategy designed to encourage students to complete a task efficiently (Witzel& Mercer, 2003).

1.During your teaching experience, did you adopt specific strategies to motivate your students to enhance their writing skill?

☐ Yes ☐ No

2.If yes, which of these strategies did you use?

☐ Free writing (you let the students write about any topic they like).

A ☐ Instead of punishing the students by neglecting some of their writing mistakes.

☐ Entertainment (ask the students to write a short story and read it to their classmates).

☐ Play acting (ask the student to imagine he's another person and write about it).

☐ Rewards.

☐ All of them.

3.If yes, in which way do you find them beneficial for the students?

☐ You notice that the writing errors have been reduced.

☐ Students get more motivated to produce more pieces of writing.

☐ Both of them.

4.How often do you use rewards?

☐ Always ☐ Rarely

☐ Sometimes ☐ Never

5.Which type of rewards do you use?

☐ Short-term rewards (any form of positive encouragement the student would receive directly after a correct answer or a good performance like scores).

☐ Long-term rewards (organization of some semester parties where excellent students are offered gifts or achievement papers in recognition of their efforts).

☐ Verbal rewards or praises (eg. good, excellent, perfect…etc.).

☐ All of them.

6. How do you consider the effectiveness of the rewarding strategy in motivating your students to avoid spelling errors?

☐ Very effective   ☐ Little effective

☐ Effective   ☐ Not effective

Section two: Teachers' Opinions about Spelling Errors

7. How do you consider the writing accuracy of your students?

Low ☐   Average ☐   High ☐

8. Which of the following problems do your students mostly suffer from?
☐ Content errors.

☐ Grammatical errors.

☐ Spelling errors.

☐ Mechanical errors (punctuation…etc).

☐ All of them.

9. How often do your students commit spelling errors?

☐ Always   ☐ Rarely

☐ Sometimes   ☐ Never

10. Which type of spelling errors do your students mostly commit?
☐ Spelling errors of addition.

☐ Spelling errors of omission.

☐ Spelling errors of substitution ('dey' for 'they').

☐ Spelling errors of transposition ('recieve' for 'receive').

☐ All of them.

11. What is, in your opinion, the cause of students committing spelling errors?

☐ Lack of motivation.

☐ Lack of practice.

☐ Lack of feedback.

☐   They focus more on the other skills (listening, speaking, reading).

12. Do you have specific strategies to encourage your students to avoid spelling errors?

☐   Yes   ☐   No

13. If yes, which of the following do you find more useful?

☐   Reading   ☐   Working in group

☐   Rewards   ☐   All of them

Appendix II

Students' Questionnaire

Dear students,

     This questionnaire is part of a research work that aims at showing the effective role of rewards in motivating the students to avoid spelling errors and enhance their writing skill. It would be pleasant if you answer the following questions.Please tick the appropriate box or boxes. Your answers will be kept anonymous.

<div align="right">We thank you in advance</div>

Section One: Background Information

1. Your choice to study English is:

    ☐ Personal

    ☐ Imposed by administration

    ☐ Imposed by parents

Section Two: Students' Opinions about the Use of Rewards

A reward is a tool that teachers use to try to reinforce a desired behaviour, it is a type of motivational strategy designed to encourage students to complete a task efficiently (Witzel& Mercer, 2003).

2. I am motivated to learn the writing skill:

    ☐ Strongly agree   ☐ Agree

    ☐ Disagree   ☐ Strongly disagree

3. You study the writing skill because:

    ☐ You will need it for practical goals such as getting a job.

    ☐ You need it in order to communicate with people of the English culture.

4.Does your teacher of writing use specific strategies to motivate you improve your writing skill?

    ☐ Yes   ☐ No

5. If yes, does he/she uses:

☐ Free writing (you chose any topic that may interest you and write about it).

☐ Avoidance of punishment (they neglect some mistakes in your writing papers).

☐ Entertainment (they ask you to write a short story and read it out loud).

☐ Play-acting (ask you to imagine that you are another person and write about it).

☐ All of them.

☐ Neither of them.

6.Do you benefit from these strategies in developing your writing abilities?

☐ Yes   ☐ No

7. Does your teacher of writing use rewards as motivators in the classroom?

☐ Yes   ☐No

8. Which of the following rewarding strategies do you prefer more?

☐ Scores

☐ Gifts

☐ Saying expressions that have reinforcing value (good, perfect, excellent…etc).

Section Three: Students' Opinions about Spelling Errors

Spelling is the act of forming words correctly from individual letters (Hornby, 2000).

9.How important is the writing skill in studying English?

☐ Very important   ☐Important

☐ Slightly important   ☐Not important

10. Which of these problems do you suffer from in your writing?

☐ Content errors.

☐ Grammatical errors.

☐ Spelling errors.

☐ Mechanical errors (punctuation…etc).

☐ All of them.

11. How often do you make spelling errors?

- [ ] Always
- [ ] Sometimes

- [ ] Rarely
- [ ] Never

12. Which type of spelling errors do you mostly commit?

- [ ] You omit (leave out) letters in words.
- [ ] You add letters in words.
- [ ] You substitute (replace) one letter for another (eg. as in *s* for *c* in celebrate).
- [ ] You change the place of letters in words (eg. write 'recieve' for 'receive').
- [ ] All of them.

13. If you do not write English correctly and you make spelling errors, is it due to:

- [ ] Lack (absence) of motivation.
- [ ] Lack of practice.
- [ ] Your focus on the other skills (listening, speaking, and reading).
- [ ] Effect of your mother tongue.

14. Do you think that your spelling errors could be avoided by:

- [ ] Reading
- [ ] Working in groups
- [ ] Rewards
- [ ] All of them