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The Importance of Proofreading in Reducing Students' Mistakes in Writing

The Case Study of Second Year LMD Students at Jijel University

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master Degree in science of language

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to:

The most important person in my life, my mother

To my father for his love, support, encouragement and advices

To my sisters: Afaf, Nihad, and Nesrine

To all my relatives, friends and colleagues in the university and outside it

To all my family

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Abstract

The present study aims at highlighting the importance of proofreading in reducing and polishing mistakes and errors from student's production. The hypothesis of this research study is if students proofread their writing, they will reduce the amount of mistakes and produce well formed pieces of writing free from mistakes. To confirm this hypothesis, two instruments have been used a teachers' questionnaire and a test for students. After analyzing the results obtained from the first tool (the teachers' questionnaire) we have found that students make many mistakes when writing and that the great m majority of them do not proofread their written materials before submitting them, thus their writing is full of blunders. Then, we have analyzed the results obtained from the test which is designed to second year students at the University of Jijel. Only one group which have been randomly chosen to carry out with this test, so students have pre- tested through essay writing, to check whether they proofread what they write or not, and then they have post- tested again after a treatment period. The results have shown that students can reduce the amount mistakes in their writing by means of proofreading.

List of tables

List of abbreviations and symbols

EFL: English as a foreign language

L1: First language

L2: Second language

N°: Number

%: Percentage

Table of content

Field work

Appendices

General Introduction

Undoubtedly writing is the productive skill in the written mode, it is very complicated and the hardest of the skills even for native speakers of a language since it involves the development and representation of thoughts in a structured way .In other words, it promotes both critical thinking and learning, and requires the ability of thinking rationally to bring dawn ideas in a structured and clearly form.

Students are increasingly expected to express what they know about many different subjects through writing. And like all learning problems, they seem to face difficulties in writing since this last is a complex task and it is considered as one of troublesome skills for students which requires competency and proficiency. So it is obviously clear that making mistakes and errors while writing is the problem of the majority of students in all branches.

Statement of the problem

This study investigates the problem of making mistakes during the writing process, which clearly noticed in every written material of foreign English students. So because making mistakes is one of the students' common problems in writing, the interest of the present study is on proofreading as an important and necessary stage in the writing. Unfortunately this stage is a neglected one, despite its necessity and usefulness. Accordingly, the focus of this research paper is to draw the students' awareness and attention towards the importance of proofreading in writing so as to reduce mistakes and improve their writing style as well as form. Students' weaknesses and problems in writing concerning the form are one of the primary causes that promoted us to deal with this kind of study.

Research questions

In this study we have intended to find answers to the following questions:

1- Are second year students aware of the importance of proofreading stage?

2- Do teachers of written expression teach students to proofread what they write?

3- What are the methods that students should follow when proofreading?

4- What kinds of mistakes students have to correct during the proofreading stage?

Research hypothesis

As the aim of the current study is highlighting the importance of proofreading as process of writing and in according to the above questions the following hypothesis will be suitable:

"If second year students proofread their writing, then they will reduce mistakes and produce well formed pieces of writing."

Significance of the study

It is obviously known that there are certain steps during writing, and proofreading is the last one, and because it is the final step that the majority of students forget or overlook it .So this research shows to the readers the extent to which proofreading is one of the crucial steps in the writing process.

In addition to that it is significant to carry out with this research, because writing is an essential skill in learning and through it students express their thoughts and views; and therefore they should master this skill and develop their capacities to write correctly.

Purposes of the study

The objective behind conducting such research study is investigating about common difficulties in writing, as well as to shed light on the usefulness of

proofreading in reducing' mistakes in writing. And this stems from our observations and our questions about students' bad marks in the module of written expression.

Stated differently, in this research aims at calling the students' attention to the importance of proofreading, and demonstrating its need as a major step that must be taken before a document can be considered complete, and before submitting or printing an academic research paper, essay, paragraph …or any other written document.

Also, the purpose behind this study is to examine mistakes that emerge in their written product by determining its kind and provide the appropriate solutions; As well as explaining and introducing to the readers the methods in which they must go through when proofreading.

Literature review

Chapter one

The writing process

Introduction

Writing is one of the four skills. It is the productive skill that students should master, or at least should be able to write correctly because writing is considered as a basic requirement of the educational purposes. Undoubtedly this skill is not an easy task that is why this chapter discusses the process and steps of writing and the teaching approaches that teachers must follow. As well as, determining the most common problems and difficulties faced by students during writing.

The nature of writing ability

Writing is a way of communication or a system that uses sets of symbols to form words and sentences to represent the sounds of speech, and of course these words and symbols have to be combined according to certain conventions and rules in order for someone to communicate and express his thoughts. According to Harmer: "Both writing and speaking have their own signs, symbols, and devices to make communication more effectively" (2004, p.10). So writing is a specific ability that helps humans to put their own thoughts into words to communicate their feelings in a meaningful form.

This skill (writing) is not an easy task neither a difficult one, because it requires extensive drilling and practices inside and outside the classroom Hedge suggests that: "……students need time for writing in the classroom so that they can build confidence as well as competence"(2005, p.14). Moreover, writing is not a

natural activity or something that we are born with; that is to say, it requires lot of practice otherwise we will never be proficient in writing; it also requires mental efforts because it is a cognitive ability. "Writing is a complex and cognitive demanding activity"(Mertines, 2010).

In addition to that, "the ability to write effectively is becoming increasingly important in our global community, and instruction in writing is thus assuming an increasing in both second-and foreign-language education" (Weigle, 2002, p.1).That is with the advance of the world and ways of communication systems it is important for someone to develop his writing skill for many reasons such as interacting with each other, and more essentially for instrumental reasons. Hedge points out that: "Writing in real life is usually undertaken in response to a demand of some kind"(2005, p.20).This means that, everyone has his own purposes for writing to be achieved.

The role of writing skill

Writing is complex skill that most of the students neglect it and do not consider it as an important skill that should be acquired. In fact, writing is an academic activity that requires more and more basic achievements and trials than any other skills. Tribble states that: "An ability to write appropriately and effectively is, however, something which evades many of us, in our mother tongues or any other languages we wish to learn"(1996, p.1). So writing is not an easy task even for native speakers of a language.

Indeed, one of the reasons why students cannot write effectively is because many of instructions overlook it and do not focus on writing as much as possible. Whereas, it is very important in the educational field again Trribble argues that: "…It

is through the mastery of writing that the individual comes to be fully effective in intellectual organization, not only in the management of everyday affaires, but also in the expression of ideas and arguments"(1996, p.13). This means that writing can help individuals in expressing themselves and their ideas; it is a way of translating thoughts into written form. Harmer states that: "…Writing- for –learning role where students write predominantly to augment their learning of the grammar and vocabulary of the language" (2004, p.31). So writing helps students to improve their level in grammar as well as, improving their vocabulary through the use of various choices of words, expression, and helps in increasing their speed in learning and enhance students' academic success.

Besides, writing is not only a mean to express thoughts, feeling, and arguments it is also a mean to help the person to think critically and solve problems in his life. It is also believed that through writing that someone can improve his capacities and comprehension in reading, and that through the teaching of writing conventions (grammar, spelling, vocabulary….) students will reinforce their competence in reading comprehension. In other words, writing about a text will enhance the student's ability to comprehend through analyzing, interpreting and manipulating key ideas in the text because writing has always seen as a way of applying and reinforcing what has already taught and learned (Harmer, 2004, P.32).

Using writing strategies and structures of politeness effectively in society with individuals such as requests and reports a person will be very respectable and take a place in society, Tribble demonstrates that: "Learning how to write makes it possible for individuals to take on social roles which are denied to those who do not have this skill" (1996, p.14). He also, states that: "by writing you can have control not only of

information but of people" (1996, p.13). Whereas, Hedge sum up all what have been said about the role of writing in the following points arguing that writing has some specific purposes which are:

- For pedagogical purposes, to help students learn the system of language

- For assessment purposes, as a way of establishing a learner's progress

- For real purposes, as a goal of learning, to meet students' need

- For humanistic purposes, to allow quieter students to show their strengths

- For creative purposes, to develop self expression

- For classroom management purposes, as a calm activity which settle Students down.

- For acquisitional purposes, as a careful model of working with language

  Which enable students to express and reflect on language in a conscious way.

- For educational purposes, to contribute to intellectual development and to develop self- esteem and confidence. (Hedge, 2005, p.9)

The difference between written and spoken languages

Writing and speaking are the two productive skill, they are used to achieve communicative goals and to express ideas and feelings. They are different in some features, but they share some common aspects in which both of them are governed by

rules of semantic and syntax. However, written language involves complex and coherent linguistic structures "formal language".

Spoken language is tend to be characterized by paralinguistic features and facial expressions where written one cannot represent these features Tribble argues that:

> Paralinguistic features are not a systematic of the language, but they still add meaning to what we say. These features include the way someone is speaking (for example loudly or softly, shouting or whispering), and the facial expressions and physical gestures they use them to speak. Although hand writing might give us a way of identifying a writer, a transcript of speech loses all of those non-verbal features that identify the speaker as an individual. (Tribble, 1996, p. 17)

Paralinguistic features is a significant difference between writing and speaking, because by using facial expression, rhythm, stress, pauses and intonation can help in conveying the exact meaning and interpretation of utterances and thus to be understood. Whereas, these important features are absent in the written system, so in writing punctuation is used to replace paralinguistic features such a; the use of questions, exclamation, italicized and underlined words which are used to stress meaning.

Speaking form of language is tend to be characterized by short sentences, hesitation, redundancy and abbreviated words; On the contrary, in writing we do not use abbreviation we use full and longer sentences than in speaking (Harmer, p.45). That is to say the task of writing is not an easy one, it is difficult and involves lot of effort because we are engaged in an activity "the act of writing differ from that of

talking in that it is less spontaneous and more permanent" (Broughton et al, 2003, P.116). That is to say, writing is different from speaking in which it involves lot of drilling, practice, and processes. Furthermore, writing is not naturally acquired in other words the act of writing is not a spontaneous one and that is why children acquire or learn to speak better than writing.

Another major difference is that, with writing the audience are usually absent whereas in speaking they are present. In this respect Harmer says that:

> Listeners in conversation are not just passive participants of other's words. We use interjections and other words to indicate support and show that we are listening (e.g., yeah, right).We use echo questions (e.g.San Francisco? You went to San Francisco?) to keep the conversation going or to check that we have understood, and we employ response forms (e.g.Yeah, ok got you, right) to acknowledge requests and points made. (45)

To sum up with, we can say that both writing and speaking are different in some characteristics, but they are similar in some other features; for example, both are important in language teaching and learning. They are also used in communicative purposes in order to represent ideas, feelings, and thoughts. In addition to that, both writing and speaking follow rules of syntax, grammar, and semantics, so while the two skills are essential in education teachers should promote students to enhance their writing and speaking through extensive reading.

Approaches to teach writing

Several approaches were created to teach writing in classroom situation, these approaches were also created to help students to enhance and develop their writing capacities. The teacher is required to use and apply these approaches during the teaching of written expression. There is no best or right approach, it is up to the students and the text type being studied and the system of education being followed. Among all the approaches we will discuss only three of them which are: The product approach, the process approach, and the genre approach.

The product approach

The product approach is the traditional model of teaching writing, in which students are engaged in imitating a model text which has been taught before hand by students given by their teacher to analyze and discuss the techniques and features which are employed in the text. Students in the product approach are asked to practice the structures and language being used in the text in another text parallel to what has been taught. So the product approach aims to develop students competent and fluency in language as a final result (Nunan, 1991, p.86).

A teacher following this approach has to drill students on grammatical and linguistic structures Hyland argues that: "Conceptualizing l2 writing in this way directs attention to writing as a product and encourage a focus on forma text units and grammatical features of texts" (2003, p.3). In other words, in l2 learning to write the focus is on knowing an d acquiring the vocabulary, grammar, syntax, and how to combine sentences in a structured way in order to achieve coherent and cohesion in

the text by following the right order of sentences words and according to the grammatical rules.

Hylland as well as, demonstrates or states that:"Accuracy and clear exposition are considered the main criteria of good writing, while the actual communicative content, the meaning, is left to be dealt with later"(2003, p.4). That is to say, the teacher gives priority and importance to the structures and the correct use of rules rather than meaning, and purposes behind the text.

In the product approach there are sets of stages to be followed by students. In the first stage students read the text means the model text, and then highlight features and structures from this model; For example, students examine how the text is organized and how sentences are related to each other in paragraphs beginning by the topic sentence, and moving to the last sentence, the concluding sentence. In the second stage, students are asked to practice on these features in isolation or independent from the model text. Moving to the third stage, which is a very important one in which students will organize ideas, whereas in the fourth stage students are asked to use the structures and rules which have been taught before to write a text or an essay like the one in the model text.

The product approach of teaching writing to EFL students has been described as a very helpful and useful for them to acquire the basic rules and structures of the language being learned, as well as acquiring the ability to write correctly without mistakes. But unfortunately, it has been strongly criticized later, because it is oriented towards structural features of language and thus neglecting the students' curiosity and creativity, and it is also said to be very boring for them so that, a new approach was

introduced with new dimensions to the teaching of writing which is known as the process approach

The process approach

As opposed to the product approach, the process approach is very effective because it helps students to develop competence in writing and give the chance to their curiosity to emerge and occur rather than depending and focusing on imitating model text. The process approach was defined by Nunan as the following: "Process approach…focuses more on various classroom activities which are believed to promote the development of skilled language use" (1991, p.86). That is to say, writing is a task that is composed of various classroom activities which help students in developing their level in language. Nunan (1991, p. 87) again demonstrates that: "The approach also encourages collaborative group work between learners as a way of enhancing motivation and developing positive attitude towards writing. In addition and more controversially, attention to grammar is played down".

In other words, in this approach students work collaboratively or in small groups; they are asked to do activities in groups in order to discuss and exchange drafts with each other which is a positive way to encourage and motivate students to write. Kroll also, define the process approach as the following:

> This approach calls for providing a positive, encouraging, and collaborative
> Workshop environment within which students with ample time and minimal
> Interference, can work through their composing process. The teacher's role is to
> help students develop various strategies for getting started…for drafting …for
> revising…and for editing. (Kroll, 1990, p.15)

This mean that students work in collaborative environment, and that students go through a series of stages during their writing in order to produce a final product. These stages are: "Getting started", "planning or pre- writing stage" in which the students decide on a topic and bringing ideas. The second is the "drafting stage", students in this stage write their first draft depending on ideas which are generating in the first stage. In the stage of revising students can add new ideas, modify some structures or delete unnecessary or inappropriate one. The final stage which is for editing in which students make sure that the text is correct and free from mistakes before consider it as final. The teacher play a role of assistance in process approach by helping students in every stage of their product.

The genre approach

The genre approach is a recent approach to the teaching of writing. The focus of this approach is on investigating a model text or a text in terms of purposes and objectives of that text. Students in this approach not only examine the forms, structures and rules of grammar presented in a given text, they also have to study the text in terms of its genre; because, each text has its own purposes. For example, business letters have their own genre which is different from the genre presented in other texts.

This approach was introduced as opposed to the traditional approach of writing "the product approach" in the sense that, students should know not only the structures and grammar knowledge, because it is not enough they also have to know how to apply this knowledge for specific purposes and at different context when writing. "If language structures are to be part of a writing course, then we need principled reasons for choosing which patterns to teach and how they can be used effectively"(Hyland,

2003). This means that, each text has its own communicative functions, or the writer when he writes any piece of writing he has to achieve certain purposes or he has to consider certain cultural and social conventions and rules especially when writing for academic objectives. There are various definitions of genre; Swales (1990, p.58) (cited in Tribble, 1996) define it as: "A genre comprises a class of communicative events, the members of which share some sets of communicative purposes" (46).

In the genre approach teachers teach students the various kinds of writing constructions.e.g. The advertisement letters …in order for students to recognize the different kinds of words, structures and characteristics applied in each type of text. In this context Harmer argues that:

> Knowledge of genre (understanding how different purposes are commonly expressed within a discourse community) is only one of the many "knowledge" or "competence" that a reader brings to the task of reading, and which writer assumes the reader will know. (2004, p. 17)

This means, that students should know and recognize the different purposes and objectives behind or within a discourse or a test.

Stages of the writing process

Undoubtedly, there are certain stages or steps for the writer to follow during the writing process. These stages are important for every writer to follow and to achieve good pieces of writing. The writer go through the planning, drafting, revising, and editing and finally publishing in order to produce something in the written form.

Pre- writing stage

Pre-writing is a step happen before writing, when students for example collect data and information, as well as ideas about a particular topic to be ready to write. Pre-writing is an important step in the writing process, where writers generate ideas about the topic being discussed at hand. Sundem demonstrates that: "During pre-writing, the first step of the writing process, authors as well as students will generate ideas and put their thoughts in order"(2007, p. 43). Brainstorming is also a strategy used in the pre-writing stage, which means that writers bring down all ideas that come in their minds whether they are appropriate or not, or whether they are correct and suitable to the topic or not. Writers in the brain storming stage are just writing without stopping, when they finish they select the most interesting and suitable ideas and leave other ideas out; in this context Brown and Hood suggest that when you write: "You storm or search your brain for ideas" (1998, p. 7). Harmer on the other side, points out that:

> The writers have to think about three main issues. In the first place they have to consider the purpose of their writing…Secondly experienced Writers think of the audience they are writing for…Thirdly, writers have to consider the content structure of the piece. (2004, p. 4-6)

That is to say, every writer before writing have or should take into consideration the objectives and purposes behind his writing, and the audience or the readers; as well as, the structure and content of the written text and how facts and ideas are organized and combined to each other.

Drafting stage

This stage is considered as the second stage of writing stages after the pre-writing one. At this stage the writer put down and writes on all his ideas, thoughts, and information developed during pre-writing. "We can refer to the first version of a piece of writing as a draft" (Harmer, 2004, p. 5). The writer produces his first draft, in which he decides how to organize his ideas and information, what should be included and what should not be. Brown and Hood argue that: "The drafting stage is where you really begin writing. The most important thing here is to get words into paper it is not time to worry about spelling, grammar, punctuation or the best wording"(1989, p. 14). In other words the writer in this stage have to concentrate more on ideas and content of the topic rather than correcting mistakes of grammar and spelling, because there is a time of correcting in the revision stage. In this context Hedge states that: "Good writers tend to concentrate on getting the content right first and leave details like correcting spelling, punctuation, and grammar until later"(2005, p. 53).

Revising stage

Revising is the the most important step, in this step the writer should evaluate what he has written in the drafting paper before publishing his work. He should read again what he has written to see if there is a mistake of grammar, syntax…or not, or to see if there is a structure which should be avoided, because it is unnecessary or not, and to look for ambiguous or misunderstood structures to leave them away. The writer also may eliminate or omit a paragraph and write a new one. Brown and Hood states that:

Revising involves checking that your content and purposes are Clear and appropriate for your reader, in the particular writing Situation, it is not just a matter of checking spelling, punctuation and grammar. It involves arranging, changing, adding, leaving out words, and so on… (1989, p. 20)

Editing stage

Editing is considered as the final stage of the writing process it is a part of the revising. In the editing stage the writer has to check that the he make the right choice of words, and he has to proofread to look for mistakes for example mistakes in; spelling, punctuation and grammar…Hopkins and Tribble (1989, p.10) (cited in Tribble, 1996, p.116) suggest the following elementary checklists for the writers:

-First check that your writing makes sense.

-It is correctly organized on the page.

-Is the information presented in a clear, logical order?

-Have you put in all the information your readers need?

-Have you put in unnecessary information?

Common difficulties faced by students during writing

Almost all students make mistakes or errors during the writing process whatever their level of proficiency and this is mainly because of their poor grammar and vocabulary, and also they do not pay enough attention when writing. These errors concern the form, structure and content all together. Also some of these errors can be considered as serious and others are not, students can correct it by themselves.

Indeed the majority of students when writing fail to achieve coherent and cohesion in paragraphs, probably because they do not know how to organize and classify their thoughts and ideas in a structured and well formed paragraphs or essays, or because they have a lack in vocabulary. Students as well commit mistakes such as the wrong word order and choice of words, whereas Fowler demonstrates that: "If you are native speaker, choosing a word order is not usually regarded as a difficult part of writing"(2006, p. 75). Students need or should practice and learn how to organize sentences together in the right order to produce well formed paragraphs or any written text (Harmer, 2004, p. 75).

The majority of students also encounter difficulties with grammar, for example, they do not know how to employ the right verb with the right tense, the plural form, modifiers, adjectives and adverbs. Also mistakes are often appears such as the wrong use of preposition after certain words.

In addition to that, students often make mistakes as such the wrong use of punctuation for instance; when to put commas, capital letters, full stop, and such mistakes make their writing not only incorrect but also ambiguous and difficult to be understood and even awkward (Harmer, 2004, P. 49). So the mastery of punctuation is very necessary and important for native speakers of English language. Besides, learners face some problems during writing with the spelling of certain words they want to use in their writing of English language which is not an easy task, so students avoid employing these words at all. Westwoold claims that: "Written language is perhaps the most difficult of all skills to acquire because its development involves the effective coordination of many different cognitive, linguistic and psycho-motor processes" (2008, p. 56).

Sources of student's errors

It is useful for teachers to know what errors learners make, and what the sources of these errors are, and why students commit such errors. So error analysis is a field which study and pinpoint the different errors produced by students when trying to use a target language other than their mother tongue. Error analysis is a process used by both researchers or linguists and teachers. It requires collecting samples of learners' language and identifying and determining errors, describing and explaining these errors, and then classifying them according to their sources and finally evaluating their seriousness.

There are some errors which are caused by "interference" between the native language and the target language, or errors which are due to influence from the mother tongue called transfer errors. To begin with "interference" was defined by Duly Burt and Krashen as:

> Interference has been used to refer to two very distinct linguistic phenomena, one that is essentially sociolinguistic. The psychology- cal use of the term interference refers to the influence of old habits when new ones are being learned, whereas the sociolinguistic use of interference refers to language interactions, such as linguistic borrowing and language switching, that occur when two languages communities are in contact.(1880,p.98)

That is to say, old habits get in the way of learning new habits in other word the patterns, structures, and rules of learner's mother tongue get in the way of learning the new patterns of the second language. Secondly, transfer which is the act of trying to apply the pronunciation, words order, structures, vocabulary or some expression from the mother tongue to target language being learned. There are also some errors

which are caused by transfer is said to have two different types positive and negative again Duly Burnt and Krashen defines negative transfer as: "Negative transfer refers to those instances of transfer which result in error because old, habitual behavior is different from the new behavior that is being learned"(1882,p. 101).

This means that, when the learner tries to use or apply structures or words from his L1, but such a word or structure does not exist in the L2. By contrast positive transfer occurs when words from the learner's L1 have been used while using the target language and these words expression and structures indeed exist in the target language. However, there are a large number of errors that cannot be considered for as negative transfer, because the forms used does not exist in the L1, and also does not exist in the L2. So the learners create a sort of in between language, they create their own system which is called interlanguage. Corder states that: "Interlanguage systems occur which is different from both the target language and the mother tongue even though these latter resemble each other" (1981, p. 72)

it is believed that interlanguage is an indication that students are learning or that the process of learning develops, because when students learn a foreign language, they do so gradually moving from simple words and grammar construction and proceed to more complex structures; However, students sometimes create or construct their own linguistic system, so by a gradual process of trial and errors and hypothesis testing, students will acquire the structures of their second language.

Also there are some errors which are not due to influence from student's mother tongue, but they are absolute to the target language itself. Such errors are for example when students avoid structures they find difficult, so this student replace the structure he may find difficult by another one. Students as well as commit errors of

omission and overgeneralization which are common in almost all second language learners. Learners have been observed to produce errors like "puted" which is explained as an extension of some general rules to some specific items. Omission on the other hand, means when students leave out or omit an article, pronoun, and the "s" of plural forms…

So students should master the rules of grammar forms to reduce the amount of mistakes while writing, they should as well do not forget or neglect to revise and proofread their writing to make the necessary changes even though there are some errors which cannot be corrected by themselves such errors of interference and negative transfer.

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the nature of writing ability and the role of it in education, as well as the approaches to the teaching of writing, and the stages of the writing process. It also shed some lights on the most common difficulties and mistakes of students in writing which is the major concern of this research study, thus the next chapter will discuss one of the reasons behind such mistakes.

Chapter two

The proofreading process

Introduction

It has been recognized that almost all students submit their written product with plenty of errors and mistakes; even if they are proficient writers this is mainly because they do not revise their written product to check for accuracy and to search for errors. More precisely, the majority of students do not proofread what they write even though proofreading is considered as a final and very essential stage in the writing process, so students should master the proofreading skill which is very crucial in academic writing in order to submit pieces of writing free from mistakes.

Definition of proofreading

Proofreading is a slow and careful reading of any piece of writing on papers or on a computer screen to search for errors and mistakes in order to correct them. So it is a kind of revision of what someone has already written. Anderson states that: "The real secret to proofreading your own copy is reading it slowly and critically as though someone else had written it" (1990, p. 02). That is to say, proofreading is a careful reading to check for accuracy in any written documents. Smith defines proofreading as: "Proofreading is simply careful reading. As you review every word, sentence, paragraph you will find errors" (2003, p. 15). Another definition of proofreading by Smith is the following: "The process of proofreading means that you will be correcting mistakes in your writing and looking for ways to improve and perfect your writing"(2003, p. 170). That is to say, proofreading is the process of polishing your own writing to become correct and clear.

Norstrom also defines the process of proofreading as follow: "Proofreading is the process of reading handwritten, keyed, or printed materials and marking errors to indicate correction. Thus proofreading is essential to ensure the accuracy of your work" (2011, p. 03). This means that, the process of proofreading involve identifying errors and mistakes that must be corrected. Proofreading is mainly concerned with the process of correcting errors which are obvious "the surface errors" such as errors of punctuation and spelling, not with the content and meaning "deeper errors", because it is the final step of correcting and revising a document. It is with editing that the writer change add or delete words and sentences, or adding a point of view or change, for example, a paragraph or a section in his writing like the introduction or the conclusion. So proofreading occurs later on after editing the final draft.

Numerous researchers and writers have distinguished between these two processes "proofreading and editing". Gilad for instance demonstrates that there is a small difference between the role and responsibilities of the editor and the proofreader, according to him the editor pay little attention to grammar, punctuation, and spelling; whereas the proofreader have to concentrate more on those surface or mechanical errors rather than on dealing with the content (2007, p. 14). May Debra as well as distinguishes between the two processes he defines editing as the following:

> Editing is the writing task immediately preceding proofreading that attempts to ensure that the writer's fundamental message comes across as effectively as possible. Editing generally require writing bits and pieces, and perhaps major sections of a document.   (1997, p.24-25)

Proofreading on the other hand, is defined by May as: "Proofreading involves making only minor changes or deletions to a document, but no major rewriting" (1997, p.24-25). That is to say, editing is primarily concerned with the clarity, preciseness, and

clarity of thoughts and ideas, while proofreading is only concerned with the correction of spelling, punctuation, capitalization…errors. Sullivan and Eggleston also make some slight differences between proofreading and editing in stating or suggesting that: "At the level of copy editing, you shape the language a bit more. Here you start to evaluate each sentence using different criteria: Is it wordy? Ambiguous? Repetitions? Appropriate for its audience? Logical? Does the main point stand out?" (2006, p. 88). By contrast, when proofreading: "You're working hard to ensure clarity through correctness and consistency and by watching to be sure the discussion generally makes sense" (2006, p. 88). In other words, both proofreading and editing are kinds of revision which take place after finishing writing to ensure clarity and correctness and preciseness.

Norstrom argues that when the writer proofread his document he searches for mechanical errors and he defines these mechanical errors as: "Mechanical errors are those that can be recognized when looking at the materials without having to reference the meaning. These errors include transposition, capitalization, spacing, punctuation, and spelling errors" (2011, p. 04). So when the writer proofread his writing he will search mainly for surface errors such errors of: grammar capitalization, spelling and so on…. By contrast, when the writer edits his writing he will check for content errors which are defined by him as: "Content errors are of information or facts. They are more difficult to locate than mechanical errors because once information is in print; you tend to think of it as being correct. Content errors cause confusion and misunderstanding" (2011, p. 04). The distinction between editing and proofreading is not really important, because they are almost identical, both of them check for accuracy and clarity of information. And the focus of this study is on those surface and mechanical errors.

The importance of proofreading

Proofreading is a vital step in the writing process, but undoubtedly it is totally neglected by students for many reasons; for instance students usually forget or do not pay attention to the need of this essential step. Or maybe because they have too much self confidence of their writing, or perhaps they find this stage very bring. All in all, proofreading is considered as a very important and a very effective way for students to polish and achieve accuracy in their writing.

Proofreading can be considered as a positive factor for students, because they may learn from their mistakes through checking for words in dictionaries and sentences structures in grammar books to produce good and clear pieces of writing with the right punctuation, proper spelling and appropriate grammar structures. Smith states that: "The process of proofreading means that you will be correcting mistakes in your writing and looking for ways to improve and perfect your writing"(2003, p. 170). So the good writer is the one who try to make his writing as good and as better as he can without careless mistakes. That is to say, when you do the proofreading process "you're working hard to ensure clarity through correctness and consistency" (Eggleston and Sullivan, 2006, p. 88). Nortormas well as states that: "Documents that are error free create favorable impression. Letters that look attractive, contain no misspelled words, and use correct grammar and punctuation indicate to the reader that the sender is a competent person who is concerned about quality" (2011, p. 02).

In other words, a student in classroom situation who submit a good and interesting piece of writing free from mistakes will impress his teacher, and the teacher also will be proud of this students, by contrast, an essay, or a document plenty of errors reflect and express careless and incompetency. The teacher in this case will

be quite angry, because too much errors have been left uncorrected, these errors can lead to misunderstanding and wrong interpretation of meaning such errors are; the wrong use of commas, semicolons, periods...So a correctly and well formed document convey a positive image to the reader, and also give a positive image to the student or writer; whereas, careless errors convey a negative message and reflect bad impression from the reader.

To conclude, proofreading is a very effective step in writing because it is the only way of ensuring correctness in students' writing, and as a result students will get good marks, it is also a way of avoiding costly and embarrassment mistakes.

Proofreading methods

Methods of proofreading according to "Anderson"

Every writer has his own methods to proofread his own documents, because there are many ways of proofreading which was created to help the writers as well as students. These proofreading strategies were created by writers and researchers in the field; for instance, Anderson demonstrates that there are two ways to proofread which are the following: (Anderson, 1990, p. 6-7-8)

Comparing two pieces of writing.

This strategy is used when the writer or the student compare two pieces of writing or two documents to ensure that they are the same. In this way students will check if the new copy of writing seems like the old copy, the original one and share the same characteristics and features in terms of structures and format. The writer here will look for or search errors such as mispronounced words, the wrong usage of words

(inappropriate placements of words) this comparison reading is also subdivided into three ways:

Reading alone.

The writer will compare the original copy "the dead copy" with the new copy "live copy" word by word and sentence by sentence by himself or alone without any help. Anderson suggests that in order to make the comparison easy the writer is advised to bring two rulers one for the original copy and the other one for the new copy. And each time the writer when reading place or move the ruler from one line to the next in order to facilitate the comparison and focusing on every word for the reason of not forgetting any line in the copy, and to ensure that he have read all the copy from the beginning to the end.

Reading with another person.

In this reading the writer give the old copy to another person to read it for him word for word and carefully with a loud voice, whereas the writer proofread the new copy following with the person who read the original copy. The writer here will underline or identify errors to correct them later. When a person or the copy holder read the original copy he must try hard to keep his voice run smoothly and carefully by avoiding needless stops and pauses, and also avoiding unnecessary comments or repetitions and hesitation.

Using a tape recorder.

There are cases where the copy is difficult or too long to be read, so the writer uses a tape recorder to make the task easy by recording the original copy. When recording the writer should read the copy slowly and carefully by paying attention to

everything like spelling, punctuation marks, common words, the format of the paper. After that the writer proofread the new copy by listening to the original copy in the tape record.

No comparison (or dry) reading.

During this way there will be no dead or original copy to compare with. Here the work of the proofreader is a bit difficult, because the writer or the proofreader will work alone without any help and without any tape recorder. The writer has to read aloud his copy to catch every mistakes or error, because reading aloud is much more effective than reading silently.

On –screen or on a printout reading.

Non comparison reading is a dependent reading without relying on comparison with another copy and without any person to read the original copy. The writer for instance will proofread from the screen in the computer or from printout. Proofreading in front of the computer is easier than in handouts, because with the advance of technology and sciences there is a program in the computer to check the spelling and grammar errors. However, it is evidences that proofreading by the program spell checker leads to some troubles and is not always effective, such problems are communicating with messages, or some problems in meaning also the computer spell checker cannot differentiate between homonyms, words which are pronounced alike, but have different meaning and interpretation. So it is preferable to type the copy on papers or use the hand- writing, then after correcting the errors either on- screen or on printout, a final or terminal correct copy must be printed out.

Methods of proofreading according to "Fry"

Furthermore, Fry states that there are some ways for writers to proofread their writing these ways are somehow different from those of "Anderson", but they share some similarities. These ways or strategies according to "Fry" are the following :(2002, p.78-79)

Reading the paper aloud.

When the student or the writer read his copy or his document, he has to read it aloud, he will notice all the missing and mistaken words, because it is more likely easier to hear all little mistakes than to see them so it is much better to read aloud rather than silently, sometimes when reading silently we will be lost and loose our concentration.

Working backward.

In this way the writer is required to read the copy from back to front or from the end to the beginning, starting from the last paragraph to the introduction which is an effective way to oblige the reader to focus on the structure by reading each individual word. That is to say the reader will be forced to read the copy word for word and letter for letter rather than on focusing on the meaning of sentences and forgetting about mistakes and deviant forms and structures. By reading sentences in a reversed order the reader will focus more on correcting mistakes rater than focusing on the flow of ideas.

Using computer's spell-check.

Writers can use the computer speller check to correct errors in spelling; whereas, the spell checker is not always useful, because it cannot correct all the mistakes and it is not concerned with the correction of meaning. It focuses more correcting punctuation and spelling errors (for example; mistakes such as the use of the word "sea" instead of "see" cannot be corrected by the use of the spell checker program).

Having someone else to read the copy.

The writer after finishing writing may select one of his relatives (parents, friends…) to read the paper aloud for him. This can be a very interesting way to hear and detect mistakes because the reader is unfamiliar with the student's writing. The student has to be very careful in his selection of the person who will read his writing.

Preparing the perfect copy.

When the writer proofread the papers several times and types his final and clean copy or document he has to proofread it again and again to ensure every missing and overlooked mistakes and errors, and to ensure that his copy is error- free. When proofreading the writer has to pay attention and to take consideration to the grammar, spelling, punctuation, structure, content, and format of the paper.

Proofreading skills

Proofreading is not an easy task it requires lot of practice and exercises to master it; for instance, the teacher in class should give some exercise to students to learn how to proofread their writing, because not every student know this skill.

Proofreading also requires great concentration and attention to pinpoint all errors. Students as well as should know how to read, because there are certain techniques to be followed during reading, they should also know what to look for, or what kind of errors that need to be corrected later on.

The aptitude for proofreading

Some people have the ability to proofread naturally without studying it, but some other people have to practice much more to learn how to proofread, and how to apply the techniques and steps of the proofreading process during their writing. In this context Debra Hart May demonstrates that: "Anyone can improve his or her proofreading skill. But some people seem to have a natural aptitude for this very demanding work" (1997, p. 22).

Some writers and researchers have found that a student who is good in reading and who know all the strategies of reading undoubtedly, know how to proofread a text; that is to say not everyone know the techniques of proofreading process. Anderson, for instance, states that: "An aptitude for reading is, indeed, a prerequisite to good proofreading. Certainly one who does not like to read will not like to proofread" (1994, p.18). In other words, good readers in facts are good in proofreading.

By contrast, those who do not like to read or who think that reading is very boring certainly they will not enjoy proofreading for many reasons; maybe they find it a very boring task. In this respect Anderson also states that: "Proofreading can be tedious when the copy is not interesting, when it is badly written, and especially when revision of the same copy re-appears" (1994, p. 19). This means that, many students find the task of proofreading very boring and not enjoyable at all, or a waste of time;

whereas many of them consider it as a game and a challenge to find errors. Therefore teachers should give students exercises in the form of games, like sentences which contain errors and ask them to find these errors, these kind of exercises will be enjoyable for students, so students will enjoy the proofreading process as well as becoming familiar with it.

Checking for grammar, spelling, and punctuation mistakes is a step which all students do not enjoy it, so the majority of them forget it (Fry, 2002, p.74). Commonly speaking, proofreading is a very difficult and stressful task because "to be a proofreader, you need a sharp eye. Unfortunately your poor eyes are probably pretty tired by now…" (Fry, 2002, p. 78). In addition to that, "proofreading requires intense, focused concentration. Proofreading requires extreme attention to detail. Proofreading requires persistence to keep focused on information that may not be the most interesting or entertaining…" (May, 1997, p. 22). That is to say, proofreading is a work which requires total concentration, and lot of efforts and attention.

Reading techniques

During the proofreading step writers or students are always advised to read carefully and slowly, because those who read quickly will never succeed to detect mistakes. Students are also required to release anxiety and stress and to read in calm and comfortable areas and places. Besides, they have to read critically and analytically, if necessary they also have to check for spelling of words in dictionaries, and check for grammar books and references. In addition to that, writers can compare their copies with others. (Anderson, 1994, p. 21)

Proofreading checklists

There are many things the student need to look for during proofreading. For instance, he may proofread to check for spelling error or grammar ones. Everyone has his specific checklist. The following list represents the most common errors that every writer can find in his writing during proofreading. Any writer will find at least few errors even he is an expert or proficient in the field of writing the common errors that would occur are:

- Incorrect spelled names.

- reversed numbers in addressers.

- Incorrect dates.

- Incorrect capitalization.

- Doubly typed words or phrases.

- Omission of words or parts of words.

- Incorrect or deleted punctuation.

- No agreement of subject and verb.

- Misspelled words.

- watch for words that are commonly misused or misspelled or sound alike, but have different meanings.

- watch for changes in type face or type size.

- check tittles, subtitles, charts, and page numbers against the table of content and index.

-Check any reference to page number within the text, making sure they correspond to the reference material.

- Errors that recur just could be intentional spelling or usage, so ask before you begin making unnecessary correction. (Anderson, 1994, p. 23-24)

In other words, every writer or student will find some of the errors which are listed above that must be corrected.

Proofreading marks and abbreviations

There are certain marks and abbreviations to be used to indicate errors and mistakes during the proofreading process Gilad defines these symbols as: "Proofreading marks are shorthand symbols and notes to get your point across as clearly and consistently as possible" (2007, p. 119). These symbols are very helpful for students as well as for teachers when correcting students' essays or any other written materials to identify

errors; they are used "to indicate desired changes in writing that's on hard copy" (Sullivan and Eggleston, 2006, p. 23). Proofreading abbreviations and marks can be used to indicate changes, and they are especially used when proofread on papers not on computer screen. To explain more the following tables represent the most common abbreviations and marks:

Symbol	Meaning	Example
℈ or ɤ or ℈	Delete	take it out
◡	close up	print as o ne word
℈	delete and close up	close up
∧ or ˃ or ⅄	Caret	insert here ⎧ something
#	insert a space	put on here
eq#	space evenly	space evenly ∧ where ∧ indicated
stet	let stand	let marked text stand as set
tr	transpose	change order the
/	used to separate two or more marks and often as a concluding stroke at the end of an insertion	
[	set farther to the left	too far to the right
]	set farther to the right	too far to the left
⌢	set as ligature (such as)	encyclopaedia
=	align horizontally	alignment
‖	align vertically	‖ align with surrounding text
✗	broken character	imperfect
▯	indent or insert em quad space	
¶	begin a new paragraph	
⑤⑫	spell out	set 5 lbs. as five pounds
cap	set in CAPITALS	set nato as NATO
sm cap or s.c.	set in SMALL CAPITALS	set signal as SIGNAL
lc	set in lowercase	set South as south
ital	set in *italic*	set oeuvre as *oeuvre*
rom	set in roman	set mensch as mensch

Mark	Meaning	Example
bf	set in **boldface**	set important as **important**
= or -/ or ⌢ or /H/	Hyphen	multi-colored
÷ or en or /N/	en dash	1965–72
÷ or em or /M/	em (or long) dash	Now—at last!—we know.
∨	superscript or superior	as in πr^2
∧	subscript or inferior	as in H_2O
◇ or ✕	Centered	for a centered dot in $p \cdot q$
⌄	Comma	
⌄	apostrophe	
⊙	Period	
; or ;/	semicolon	
: or ⊙	Colon	
⸮⸗ or ⌄⌄	quotation marks	
(/)	parentheses	
[/]	Brackets	
OK/?	query to author: has this been set as intended?	
⊥ or ⊥¹	push down a work-up	an unintended mark
⊙¹	turn over an inverted letter	inverted
wf¹	wrong font	wrong siZe or stylе

Table01: Proofreading marks (Merriam_ Webster online)

Abbreviation	Meaning	Example
Ab	a faulty abbreviation	She had earned a Phd along with her M.D.
Agr **See also P/A**	agreement problem: subject/verb *or*	The piano as well as the guitar need tuning. The student lost their book.

and S/V	pronoun/antecedent	
Awk	awkward expression or construction	The storm had the effect of causing millions of dollars in damage.
Cap	faulty capitalization	We spent the Fall in Southern spain.
CS	comma slicer	Raoul tried his best, this time that wasn't good enough
DICT	faulty diction	Due to the fact that we were wondering as to whether it would rain, we stayed home.
Dgl	dangling construction	Working harder than ever, this job proved to be too much for him to handle.
- ed	problem with final *–ed*	Last summer he walk all the way to Birmingham.
Frag	Fragment	Depending on the amount of snow we get this winter and whether the towns buy new trucks.
||	problem in parallel form	My income is bigger than my wife.
P/A	pronoun/antecedent agreement	A student in accounting would be wise to see their advisor this month.
Pron	problem with pronoun	My aunt and my mother have wrecked her car The committee has lost their chance to change things. You'll have to do this on one's own time.
Rep	unnecessary repetition	The car was blue in color.
R-O	run-on sentence	Raoul tried his best this time that wasn't good enough.
Sp	spelling error	This sentence is flaude with two mispellings.
- s	problem with final *– s*	He wonder what these teacher think of him.
STET	Let it stand	The proofreader uses this Latin term to indicate that proofreading marks calling for a change should be ignored and the text as originally written should be "let stand."

S/V	subject/verb agreement	The problem with these cities are leadership.

Table02: Proofreading abbreviations (Webster_ comment)

The above tables represent the most common marks and abbreviations which are widely used by teachers to indicate and show students their faults and errors in order to correct them. So it is very useful and important for students to recognize these important marks and abbreviations.

Conclusion

To sum up proofreading is a vital skill in academic writing, but unfortunately it is often neglected by the majority of students. So this chapter has discussed the process of proofreading and its importance in writing, and explains the most useful methods for students to use and follow when proofread their writing; as well as providing some important proofreading abbreviations and symbols.

Field work

Methodology

This chapter discusses and analyzes the data generated and obtained from the teachers' questionnaire and the test, which are designed to provide sufficient information needed in this research study. In other words these instruments (or tools) are used to confirm our research questions, as well as our hypothesis. Stated differently, these tools are used to check if students proofread their written materials, and whether teachers of written expression teach their students this important step of writing "proofreading" or not, and what are their opinions towards it.

Research participants

The questionnaire was distributed to all of the teachers of written expression. The number of teachers who teach written expression at the department of English are ten "10" teachers in both branches "Language Sciences and Applied Languages". Concerning the test we have selected one group at random from all the groups of second year. This population is chosen because second year students are normally familiar with writing, they are expected to have good hand writing than the first level. This group consist of twenty "21" students, the majority of them are girls.

Research instruments

As it has said in the introduction, two tools or instruments have been used in this study in order to confirm our hypothesis these instruments are: "a questionnaire for teachers of written expression" and "an in class test for second year students". To begin with the questionnaire consists of twenty (20) questions which are divided into five sections. These questions are based on the basis of theoretical part of this research study. There are two types questions which are used in it: "closed ended questions"

which are the most frequently of questions used in the questionnaire, and "open ended questions" in which the respondents have to answer the questions using their own words to express their ideas and opinions.

As it has mentioned above, this questionnaire is divided into five sections related to our research study that aims at answering some issues described in the theoretical part in order to get necessary results and data. First, we begin by the first section namely "general information" which aims at getting general information or background knowledge. It consists of two questions, in which we have asked teachers about their experience of teaching in university, and more precisely about their experience of teaching the module of written expression. The second section of the questionnaire contains seven questions about the writing skills in EFL classes. It concerns with asking teachers about their students' level in writing, and whether they are motivates to write or not. The third section of this questionnaire is about the approaches used in teaching writing and the reasons for their choice.

Concerning the fourth section, it contains five questions in which we have asked teachers about the writing process, and the students' difficulties in such a process. As well as, the attitudes of teachers towards students mistakes and how they respond to it. The last section concerns our research subject. It consists of four questions in which we have asked the respondents about their attitudes towards proofreading as an important step in reducing mistakes and errors

Concerning the test it is designed to ensure whether students proofread their writing or not, and whether this process can reduce the amount of mistakes or not. Students were asked to write an essay on one hour and a half session. We have given them choices in order to not oblige them to write about something they do not like, or

they do not have enough information about it. Students are asked to write a cause and effect essay, because they are dealing with this kind of essays in this semester. The following topics were given to students:

-What are the causes and effects of divorce?

-Causes of national Algerian team failure in the last African cup 2013.

-The effects of unemployment on society and economic.

The majority of students select the first topic because it is common and it is a recent social issue, which the whole world suffers from it. So students were engaged to write the essays after telling them that it is not a test, and it will not be graded, but it is just a part from a research test.

After the pre-test, comes the treatment period in a session of one hour. During this treatment period, we have introduced to students the following points:

-What is meant by the process of proofreading?

-The necessity and importance of proofreading in paragraph writing

-The strategies and methods used during proofreading

-How proofreading can reduce and polish our writing from errors and mistakes

So the reasons behind this treatment period is to make students aware of this important stage of writing, in order to proofread their essays following some specific strategies before submitting their copies again after the post test in which we have asked students to proofread and revise the essays that have been written before in the pre-test, and then to exchange these essays between each other to proofread them for a

second time, and correcting the mistakes founded in them. After that, students are requested to write the final copies (the correct essays) in new papers.

Data collection

in order to collect data from these too tools (the questionnaire and the test), the questionnaire was handed directly to the teachers of second year written expression, then after that a test was delivered to students in the morning (9:30), we have collected students copies in order to correct them, we have selected only ten (10) copies at random because the time is not sufficient to correct all the copies and it will take a lot of time. We have also collected the same number of students' copies in the post- test which is delivered in the morning in half an hour session as the pre-test

Data analysis

In this section we will analyze the data obtained from the teachers' questionnaire as well as from the test (the pre- test and the post- test) we will begin first by the questionnaire and then we move to the test. The data and results obtained from these two tools were presented in forms of tables.

Analysis of the questionnaire.

Q1 and 2.

How long have you been teaching in this university?

How long have you been teaching written expression?

These questions aim at getting general information about the teachers experience in the field of teaching, and the teaching of the module of written

expression at Jijel University. So it has been noticed that almost all teachers have the experience of teaching which is arranged between two to seven years, the same as the experience of teaching written expression.

Q3: *Do you consider writing as a difficult task for second year students?*

a- Yes ……………… ☐

b- No ………………. ☐

c- Somehow …………. ☐

Options	N° of teachers	Percentage
A	08	80%
B	00	00%
C	02	20%

Table 03: the task of writing for second year students

Q4: *If yes, please explain why?*

This question is about the teachers' opinion about the task of writing for second year students whether it is difficult or no, or whether it is somehow difficult. According to the results which are exposed in the table above, 80% of the teachers see writing as a difficult task for students; where as 20% of the participants said that it is not totally difficult, but somehow. So we assume that the majority of the teachers agree that writing is a difficult task for second year students

Q5: *How can you evaluate your students' level in writing?*

a- Low ………….. ☐

b- Average ……… ☐

c- High …………. ☐

Options	N° of teachers	Percentage
A	06	60%
B	04	40%
C	00	0%

Table 04: The level of students in writing

According to the result obtained in this table, we can assume that the majority of the teachers said that the level of their students in writing is low with a percentage of 60%. On the other hand, some few teachers said that the level of their students in writing is not low, but average with a percentage of 40%. So no one said that the level is high.

Q6: *Are you satisfied with their level?*

a- Yes ……………. ☐

b- No …………….. ☐

Options	N° of teachers	%
A	01	10%
B	09	90%
Total	10	100%

Table05: The evaluation of students' level in writing

Almost all teachers said that they are not satisfied with the students' week level (90% of them); accept one who said that he is satisfied with their level.

Q7: *If no, please, explain why?*

As it is has been mentioned in the table that 90% of the teachers are not satisfied with the students' level in writing. These teachers state that the majority of students are not able to write an essay without making mistakes and errors. Moreover, they cannot understand how to structurize their essays, because they still make very stupid mistakes that they could have eradicated at middle and secondary school. In addition to that, students make many blunders at the level of form and content, and

they don't write clearly, some of them are even unable to form sentences in English. Besides, other teachers have claimed that students do not practice and do not read in order to improve their level in such a skill which is needed in their educational career, because good writing needs extensive drilling and reading.

Q8: *Do you always encourage and motivate students to write?*

Options	Number of teachers	Percentage
Always	09	90%
Sometimes	01	10%
Often	00	0%
Rarely	00	0%
Total	10	100%

Table06: The frequency of motivating students to write

Teachers (90%) claimed that they always encourage their students to write accept one teacher who said that he sometimes encourage them to write and not all the time.

Q9: *How do you usually encourage and motivate students to write?*

The results in the table indicate that 90% of the teachers encourage and motivate students to write. Teachers stated that they encourage students by telling them they have considerable potential and they need to exploit them successfully. Teachers also, usually suggest common topics via they can express their thoughts freely, and prizing their works is a way to build self confidence and become more engaged in the task of writing. Some of the teachers suggest that he always try to choose good and up to date topic, and not old and boring ones.

Teachers also said that they encourage students to write by providing writing tasks and homework (writing essays and exposes) and by examining model pieces of writing and trying to imitate them. There are other respondents who claimed that they

usually encourage students through showing them the importance of writing in learning a language, and through providing them with both oral and written feedback. They will be naturally encouraged to write. So students' lack of motivation to write is one of the major problems that teachers face.

Q10: *What is the approach that you follow while teaching writing?*

a- The product approach ………………. ☐

b- The process approach ………………. ☐

c- The genre approach …………………. ☐

Approaches	N° of teachers	Percentage
A	02	20%
B	06	60%
A+B	02	20%
C	00	0%
Total	10	100%

Table07: approaches used by teachers in teaching writing

The table above exhibits that 60% of the teachers use the process approach in teaching writing, while 20% of them use the product approach. Whereas, 20% of teachers use both the product and process approaches. This means that the majority of teachers prefer to use the process approach in their teaching of written expression.

Q11: *Please, explain the reason for your choice?*

As shown in the table, we can conclude that the process approach is the one which is widely used by teachers who teach written expression for second year students. The reason for their choice is that the process approach is the best and the most successful way to get students involved in the task of writing through collaborative work and peer interaction, because it is through interaction that they can learn better. In other words, working in groups or collaboratively will affect positively

the students' performance, and they can learn from each other and from their mistakes. Some few teachers prefer to use the product approach in the reason that they believe in endings and results and that practice makes perfect. However, other teachers tend to use the product and the process approach arguing that the product approach teaches students both adequacy and accuracy at the level of form and the process approach teaches them to go through the different staged of writing.

Q12: What areas of difficulties do students have problem with?

a- Content ……………. ☐

b- Organization ………. ☐

c- Language use ………. ☐

d- Mechanics …………... ☐

e- Vocabulary ………… ☐

Options	N° of teachers	Percentage
A	04	40%
B	04	40%
C	07	70%
D	08	80%
E	06	60%

Table08: Aspects that students have problems with in writing

As it has indicated in the table, and according to the results obtained, participants stated that students have problems with all of these aspects, but with different rates. For instance, the highest percentage of these aspects goes to "mechanics" with a percentage of 80%, so the great majority of the teachers said that their students have problems with this aspect means "punctuation and spelling". Language use comes under mechanics with a percentage of 70% that is to say; students have problems with grammar and how to apply it correctly in their writing. Content and organization have the same percentage (40%). Concerning vocabulary

60% of the respondents said that their students have problems with this aspect. Accordingly these results support the respondents' answer that writing is concerned as a difficult task for second year students.

Q13: *Do you always find mistakes when correcting students' essays?*

Options	N° of teachers	Percentage
Always	10	100%
Sometimes	00	0%
Often	00	0%
Rarely	00	0%
Total	10	100%

Table09: The frequency of finding mistakes in students' productions

All of the teachers said that they always find mistakes when correcting students' essays and copies (100%). This means that, writing is really a difficult task for students and that writing skill is one of the troublesome skills that require lot of training and practice.

Q14: *How do you respond to students' mistakes when correcting their copies?*

a- Underlining the mistakes ……………….☐

b- Correcting the mistakes ……………….☐

c- Using some symbols …………………….☐

Options	N° of teachers	Percentage
A	05	50%
B	09	90%
C	05	50%

Table10: Ways teachers respond to students mistakes

The table above shows that 90% of the teachers correct mistakes when responding students' essays, but 50% of teachers use only some specific symbols to indicate the mistakes, or just underlining it. According to the results obtained, there are some teachers who use all the techniques together when correcting students'

production. For instance, they underline or use symbols and correct the mistakes at the same time. We believe that students can learn from their mistakes, and when teachers correct students' production, they will be aware of their weaknesses and their mistakes.

Q15: According to you, what is the most difficult stage for students during writing?

a- Brain storming ……………….☐

b- Planning ……………………….☐

c- Drafting ………………………..☐

d- Revising and proofreading …….☐

e- Writing the final draft …………☐

Options	N° of teachers	percentage
A	07	70%
B	04	40%
C	02	20%
D	01	10%
E	03	30%

Table11: Stages of writing which are difficult for students

As exposed in the table 70% of the teachers claim that brain storming is the most difficult stage for students during writing, 40% of teachers see that students have difficulty in planning. Others (30%) claim that some students face some difficulties in writing the final draft, and only 20% and 10% see that students encounter difficulties in drafting, revising and proofreading. According to these results we have noticed that the majority of the teachers said that their students have problems in brain storming.

Q16: *In which stage should students pay attention to grammar and punctuation?*

Teachers (90%) said that students should do so when they reach the fourth step namely revising and proofreading, accept one teacher who suggests that it goes with third step (when writing the draft). Thus we can assume that proofreading and revising is a vital step of writing in which students in that step will polish their production from mistakes.

Q17: *Do you teach students to proofread their writing?*

Options	N° of teachers	Percentage
Yes	09	90%
No	01	10%
Total	10	100%

Table12: Teaching proofreading to students

The table above revealed that 90% of the teachers teach their students this crucial and important step "proofreading process". Unlike one teacher who said that he do not teach students this step of writing.

Q18: *According to you, do students proofread their written material before submitting them?*

a- Only few students …………………….. ☐

b- A large number of students …………... ☐

c- None of them …………………………. ☐

Options	N° of teachers	Percentage
A	10	100%
B	00	0%
C	00	0%

Table13: The number of students who proofread their writing

According the results, all the teachers (100%) agree that only few students proofread their written materials before submitting them and the rest do not. And that is why the majority of students get bad marks in the module of written expression, and their copies are full of red marks and comments.

Q19: *The majority of students do not proofread their writing because?*

a- They find it boring ……………………. ☐

b- It is a neglected stage for them ………. ☐

c- They do not have enough time ……….☐

f-   If you add other reasons please, specify.

Options	N° of teachers	Percentage
A	01	10%
B	07	70%
C	03	30%

Table14: the reasons why students do not proofread their writing

The table indicates that the highest rate of the respondents (70%) agree that students do not proofread their writing because it is a neglected stage for them, that is to say, they are not aware of importance of such stage on which they can discover their mistakes and errors. Others (30%) state that they do not have enough time in the sense that they are unable to manage their time successfully while writing. Few teachers (10%) said that students do not proofread because they find this process boring and a waste of time.

Q20: Is proofreading very important in reducing mistakes?

a- Strongly agree …………………………… ☐

b- Agree ………………………………… ☐

c- Strongly disagree ……………………☐

d- Disagree ……………………………. ☐

Options	N° of teachers	Percentage
A	10	100%
B	00	0%
C	00	0%
D	00	0%

Table15: The attitudes of teachers towards proofreading

The result yield by this question show that all the teachers are (100%) strongly agree that proofreading is very important in reducing the amount of mistakes and errors "such mistakes of punctuation, grammar, and spelling …" from students' productions.

Analysis of the test.

The following table shows the mistakes, that have been found after correcting the students' essays, in grammar, spelling, punctuation, structure (organization of the essay and the ideas), and the thesis statement.

Mistakes students	Spelling	Punctuation	Capitalization	Grammar	Structure	Thesis statement
01	06	05	09	11	-	+
02	04	02	05	06	+	+
03	01	03	08	07	+	+
04	12	09	07	04	-	-
05	07	02	01	02	+	+
06	05	02	02	03	+	+
07	08	04	03	05	+	+
08	09	08	05	10	+	-
09	11	04	06	06	+	-
10	03	07	04	08	+	+

Total	66	46	50	62	224
Percentage	29.46%	20.53%	22.32%	27.67%	100%

Table16: Mistakes of students in the pre- test

The results in the above table reveal that the highest percentage of mistakes done by students goes to spelling mistakes (29.46%), followed by grammar mistakes (27.67%) and capitalization with a percentage of (22.32%), and then finally the punctuation mistakes (20.53%). The results also show that only few students who fail in introducing the thesis statement and in achieving coherence in their writing in the sense that, their essays' structure is not clearly organized.

This table shows the results of the post-test which are clearly different from those of pre-test.

Mistakes students	Spelling	Punctuation	Capitalization	Grammar	Structure	Thesis statement
01	04	03	02	05	-	+
02	01	00	02	02	+	+
03	01	01	03	03	+	+
04	07	04	01	01	-	+
05	02	00	00	01	+	+
06	03	01	00	02	+	+
07	05	02	01	03	+	+
08	06	05	02	07	+	-
09	08	03	03	04	+	+
10	02	01	00	05	+	+
Total	39	20	14	33	106	
percentage	36.79%	18.86%	13.20%	31.13%	100%	

Table17: Mistakes of students in the post- test

As it has exhibited in the table the number of mistakes has decreased by comparison to those mistakes of the pre-test. The highest percentage of mistakes is always given to spelling mistakes (36.79%), following by grammar mistakes (31.13%), and then the punctuation mistakes with a percentage of (18.86%). Concerning capitalization, the number of mistakes is obviously decreased than that of the pre-test (13.20%).

Kind of mistakes	N° of mistakes in the pre-test	N° of mistakes in the post-test
Grammar	62	33
Spelling	66	39
Punctuation	46	20
Capitalization	50	14
Total	224	106

Table18: Comparison between the two tests results

This above table exposes a comparison between the two tests: "the pre-test and the post-test". The number of mistakes in the above aspects (grammar, spelling, punctuation and capitalization) has totally changed and reduced. For instance, the total number of mistakes in the pre-test is "224 mistakes", whereas, in the post-test the total of mistakes is "106" in the post- test.

Results and Discussion

Results and discussion of the questionnaire

The analysis of the questionnaire shows that all of the teachers consider writing as a difficult task for second year students because it involves not only the use of language, but also mobilizing thinking skills; more specifically critical thinking which students lack. Also, students have a lack of knowledge concerning the forms and strategies used in English, and even a lack of writing techniques, structures and how to achieve coherence n their contents. Others as well as, consider writing as difficult arguing that Algerian students are not accustomed to produce. They find it hard to think and explain their ideas through writing. There are also some teachers who said that writing is a difficult task because students, all the time, think using their mother tongue and write using the target language. Teachers also are not satisfied with the students' level because they make many mistakes at the level of form and at the level of content thus they usually encourage them to write in order to improve and develop their level in writing.

The result also, indicates that the majority of teachers use the process approach in teaching writing, because according to them it is the best approach in introducing writing structures and strategies. Concerning the difficulties and problems that faced students during writing, the teachers argue that mechanics (punctuation, spelling, and capitalization), vocabulary and language use are the most difficult aspects in writing for students.

As exposed in the results, all of the teachers agree that they always find mistakes when correcting students' productions and they usually respond to these mistakes by correcting them, using some symbols or underlining them. Teachers also

claim that brain storming is the most difficult stage for students while writing in which students generate ideas and thought to be discussed later on the second and third step of writing.

Last but not least, the questionnaire revealed that all of the teachers of written expression teach students to proofread their writing, but only few of them do so before submitting their written materials. According to the results, the majority of students do not proofread their writing because of many reasons; as such they do not have enough time. In other words, they are unable to manage their time appropriately. Or maybe because they find this process boring and more importantly it is a neglected stage for them, in the sense that they are not aware of this important stage. Moreover, teachers state that they are strongly agree that proofreading is very important in reducing mistakes, and that it is the best stage of writing in which students should pay attention to grammar and punctuation.

Results and discussion of the test

According to the results obtained from the pre-test, we have noticed that students make many blunders in their essays especially at the level of form. In other words, students make a huge number of mistakes which they should have eradicated before. Some of them don't even write clearly, and don't know how to structurize their writing to achieve cohesion and coherence.

As it has indicated in the table, a large number of students (29.46%) make mistakes in spelling. They don't write words correctly. For instance, they usually miss or omit a letter from words like words such: "logically", "finally", they write them with only one "L" like: "logicaly, finaly". Students, as well as make some spelling

mistakes caused by interference from other languages like the French language which is quiet similar to the English language.

Concerning grammar, we have been given notice that the majority of students are weak in introducing grammar rules in their writing. For example, mistakes in referring to plural form (they do not put the "s" of the plural form). Moreover, students frequently fail in applying the appropriate tense verb, (for instance, instead of the past tense, they use the present …). They also, make mistakes in using the right personal pronoun, prepositions, and articles …

The table also indicates that, students commit mistakes of capitalization which are clearly obvious in all students' copies. They do not put the capital letter after beginning a new sentence, probably because they neglect it or they do not pay enough attention to it.

In addition to that, the results reveal that students make mistakes concerning the punctuation, that is to say, they do not master the rules of punctuation (where to put the comma, the period, the semi colon …). For example some students do not put the period when finishing writing. They also forget to put the comma after the transitional words such: "first of all, finally …"

We have also noticed that some students do not succeed in stating the thesis statements, and in organizing their ideas, and organizing the structure of their essays. Therefore, students' mistakes concern both levels: "form, and content", thus students should take enough consideration to these embarrassing mistakes.

Concerning the post- test the table above indicated that students' spelling mistakes has reduced from 66 to 39mistakes. It has been mentioned previously that students face some difficulties with spelling because of many reasons such as;

interference with French language that is why students commit spelling mistakes much more than other aspects like punctuation, capitalization …

Grammar mistakes, as well as, has reduced from "62" in the pre-test to "33" in the post-test. This is mainly because students when they proofread they take enough concentration. So we deduce that the majority of grammar mistakes are mainly careless ones.

The number of punctuation and capitalization mistakes has evidently and clearly decrease. For instance, the number has reduced from "50" to "14" mistakes concerning capitalization, and from "46" to "20" mistakes concerning punctuation. Therefore, students' mistakes in punctuation and capitalization are caused by lack of paying attention and awareness. Thus students could easily find mistakes in these two aspects.

In addition to that, some students by means of proofreading have found that their thesis statement should be restated again, and they succeed in doing so, but few of them do not. So we can infer that proofreading can reduce the amount of surface mistakes (spelling, punctuation, grammar …) as well as, reducing some content mistakes (organization of ideas and structure ….).

The result of this research study indicates that proofreading can reduce mistakes and errors from students' production, and this is clearly evident by comparing the results of the two tests: "pre- test and post- test."

It is obviously clear in accordance with the results obtained from the teachers' questionnaire that all of the teachers agree that this process namely "proofreading" is very essential. But, unfortunately this last is completely neglected by the great

majority of students, and they are not aware of the necessity of proofreading in writing.

Concerning the test, we have reached the hypothesis that students do not proofread their written materials because when correcting their copies (essays given in the pre-test), we have found a large number of blunders in various aspects, and especially in grammar and spelling aspects. Whereas, these huge number of mistakes is evidently decreased after introducing proofreading, its importance and its methods and strategies to students. Thus, in the second test "post-test" students became aware of this process and that is why the total number of students' mistakes has reduced. Therefore, if students write essays without embarrassing and costly mistakes, for surly they will get good marks in the module of written expression.

This chapter has discussed the result obtained from both tools the teachers questionnaire and from the test, and the results have ensured that students do not proofread their writing. Since the results are in the direction of this research study, we may say that proofreading can be considered as an important stage which should not be neglected from students as well as from teachers.

Recommendations

As far as proofreading is concerned we can deduce that this process namely proofreading is a very crucial one in reducing mistakes and errors from students' writing mainly mistakes such spelling, punctuation, grammar, and vocabulary; and thus their writing will be accepted in terms of form and content and will be comprehensible. So in the light of this research study we can suggest some specific recommendations needed for further researches and studies which are as follow:

-Teachers should give more importance to this essential step of writing namely proofreading by giving them exercises to practice on, such us sentences or paragraphs which contain errors and asking them to find these errors and then correct it.

-Teachers as well as, should always remind their students to proofread their writing before giving them back to him.

-Students on the other hand, must use the methods of proofreading; for example they should read their writing carefully and slowly and even critically in order to detect errors. Also they can exchange their copies between each others, because peer correction is a very effective factor for them.

-Students should also manage their time successfully in order to have enough time to proofread their written materials carefully before submitting them.

-Students also should never neglect or forget this crucial step of writing, because it is a very effective way for them to polish and achieve accuracy in their writing. it is also a way of avoiding costly and embarrassing mistakes.

General conclusion

In this research study, we tried to highlight the importance of proofreading as a mean of reducing mistakes, and answering the statement problem: whether second year EFL students proofread their writing or not, and whether this process can clarify their writing or not. To determine our objectives, we have designed three chapters; two theoretical and one practical.

In the first chapter, we have defined the nature of writing ability, and the role of this intrinsic skill in education. Besides, we have discussed the various approaches used by teachers in their teaching of written expression; we have also discussed the stages or steps followed by writers or students in the writing process. In addition to that, we have dealt with some common difficulties faced by students during writing.

Concerning the second chapter, we have tried to introduce the process of proofreading, its importance, and necessity in addition to the methods and strategies used when proofreading. We have also given some proofreading marks and abbreviations, used by teachers when responding to students' writing.

In the last chapter, which is the practical part of our study, two tools of measurements have been used in order to confirm our research hypothesis. First, we have discussed the data obtained from the teachers' questionnaire which ensure that students do not proofread their productions, and that they are not aware of this stage. In other words, proofreading is a neglected stage for them. Then, we have analyzed the results of the pre-test and the post-test, in which we have reached the conclusion that if students proofread their writing, they will reduce the amount of mistakes and errors.

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Appendices

Appendix (A)

Questionnaire for teachers of second year "written expression"

Section one: general information

1-How long have you been teaching in this university?

……Year(s)

2-How long have you been teaching written expression?

…….Year(s)

Section two: The writing skill in EFL classes

3-Do you consider writing as a difficult task for second year students?

☐ -Yes

☐ -No

☐ -Somehow

4-If yes, please, explain why?

………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………

5-how can you evaluate your students' level in writing?

☐ -low

☐ -Average

☐ -high

6-Are you satisfied with their level?

☐ -Yes

☐ -No

7-if "No", please, explain why?

……
……
……
………………………..

8-Do you usually encourage and motivate students to write?

☐-Always

☐-Sometimes

☐-Often

☐-rarely

9-how do you usually encourage students to write?

……
……
……
………………………….

Section three: approaches to teach writing

10- What is the approach that you follow while teaching writing?

☐-The product approach

☐-The process approach

☐-The genre approach

11-please, explain the reason for your choice?

……
……
……
………………………...

Section four: the writing process

12-what areas of difficulties do students have problems with? (You can tick more than one tick)

☐ -content

☐ -organization

☐ -language use

☐ -mechanics

☐ -vocabulary

13-do you always find mistakes when correcting students essays?

☐ -always

☐ -sometimes

☐ -often

☐ -rarely

14-How do you respond to students' mistakes when correcting their copies?

☐ -Underlining the mistakes

☐ -Correcting the mistakes

☐ -Using some symbols

15-According to you, what is the most difficult stage for students during writing?

☐ -Brainstorming

☐ -Planning

☐ Drafting

☐ -Revising and proofreading

☐ -Writing the final draft

16-In which stage of these students should pay attention to grammar and punctuation?

………

………

………………

Section five: proofreading process

17- Do you teach students to proofread their writing?

☐ -Yes

☐ -No

18-According to you, do students proofread their written materials before submitting them?

☐ -Only few students

☐ -A large number of students

☐ -none of them

19-The majority of students do not proofread their writing because

☐ -They find it boring

☐ - It is a neglected stage for them

☐ -They do not have enough time

-if you add other reasons please, specify:

………

…………………………………………………………………………………………………......................

....

20-proofreading is very important in reducing mistakes:

☐ -strongly disagree

☐ -disagree

☐ -strongly agree

☐ -agree

The students' test

Choose one of the following topics and write an essay

- Topic one:

 What are the causes and effects of divorce?

- Topic two:

 Causes of national Algerian team failure in the last African cup 2013.

- Topic three:

The effects of unemployment on society and economic.

Thank you for cooperation.

ملخص البحث

تهدف هذه الدراسة الى تسليط الضوء على مدى اهمية التدقيق اللغوى (اى المراجعة و التصحيح) فى الحد و التقليل من الاخطاء التى يقوم بها التلاميذ اثناء الكتابة. فرضية هذه الدراسة البحثية هي"اذا صحح الطلاب كتاباتهم فسوف يقللون من عدد الاخطاء وبالتالى سيحصلون على كتابة مقبولة نسبيا". ولتأكيد هذه الفرضية تم استخدام وسيلتين هما "استبيان للأساتذة واختبار للطلبة".

بعد تحليل النتائج المتحصل عليها من الوسيلة الاولى وهي الاستبيان الخاص بالأساتذة تبين ان الغالبية العظمى من الطلاب لا يقومون بهذه الخطوة المهمة التي تسمى بالتدقيق اللغوي و بالتالى تكون كتاباتهم مليئة بالأخطاء. بعد ذلك قمنا بتحليل النتائج التي حصلنا عليها من الاختبار الذي خصص لتلاميذ لطلاب السنة الثانية ل.م.د تخصص لغة انجليزية بجامعة جيجل.

لقد تم اختيار مجموعة واحدة (قسم واحد) عشوائيا لأداء هذا الاختبار. فى البداية خضعت هذه المجموعة لاختبار اولى حيث طلب منهم كتابة مقال للتأكد مما اذا كانوا يدققون في كتاباتهم ثم خضعوا لاختبار اخير بعد فترة وجيزة حاولنا خلالها ان نوجه اهتمام الطلبة الى هذه المرحلة الاساسية من الكتابة (التصحيح اللغوى) والتي تعني بمراجعة ما تم كتابته و ادخال التصويبات المناسبة المتعلقة بقواعد الكتابة (النحو و الصرف, كتابة النقاط و الفواصل وغيرها. . .)

و بعد المقارنة و التحليل توصلنا الى ان الطلاب بإمكانهم ان يقللوا من عدد الاخطاء فى كتاباتهم عن طريق استعمالهم لهذه الوسيلة (التدقيق اللغوى) و خلاصة القول ان النتائج قد اكدت فعلا صحة فرضيتنا السالفة الذكر.