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The Impact of Reading on Learners' Essay Writing Improvement

A Case Study of Third Year LMD Students of English at Mohamed Kheider
University of Biskra

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfilment for the Requirements of the Master's Degree in
Sciences of language

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Dedication

*To the most precious persons to my heart, to the ones who gave birth and meaning to my life,
to the persons who gave me strength and hope*

*To my dear father “**Mohamed**” and to my beloved mother “**Akila**” I dedicate this work.*

*To my grandparents “**Amar, Oum elkhir, Lakhdar, Oum essad**” for their precious prayers.*

*To my sisters: **Fatima and Djamila**.*

*To my brother: **Amar Nassir**.*

*To my fiancé **Fouzi** for his encouragement and care, and to his family “**MIZAB**”.*

*To all my family “**BEN DIB**” and “**CHEBLI**”.*

To all my friends.

To all those who know me, I dedicate this work.

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Abstract

This study aims at highlighting the impact of reading on students' essay writing improvement for Third year students of English at Mohamed Khieder University of Biskra. The basic problem of this study sets out that third year students have the lack of reading. In addition, for conducting this research we have opted for the descriptive method for describing the two variables: reading and essay writing. Furthermore, this study aims to draw students' attention to the most significant benefits and importance of the reading skill. It seeks to find out the effects of the reading skill on essay writing. it investigates the students' and the teachers' awareness of the reading skill. In addition, to reach such aims, we have administered two questionnaires. Furthermore, we hypothesize that if third year students are aware of the benefits of reading skill, they will be able to improve their essay writing style. The obtained results reveal that reading has a great impact on students' essay writing improvement, and the results also confirms our hypothesis.

List of Abbreviations

EFL: English as a Foreign Language.

ER: Extensive Reading.

FL: Foreign Language.

IR: Intensive Reading.

L1: First Language/Mother Tongue.

L2: Second Language.

LMD: License Master Doctorate.

N: Number of Teachers/Students.

%: Percentage.

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Writing is one of the four macroskills which has different formats, the essay is one of them. Essay writing is a skill which need special attention, especially in foreign language classes, because learning to write an essay is a task that entails other skills to reach an acceptable level of writing. Many scholars have suggested different ways for students to develop their essay writing. For instance, reading skill is one of them. Reading is another foreign language skill which provides a range of information that help students to develop their abilities to produce good essays.

1. Statement of the Problem

Essay writing is a skill that needs a considerable practice and to master it in a foreign language is not an easy task. What makes essay writing a very complicated task for English as Foreign Language (EFL) students is the fact that it requires more than the aspects of writing either in vocabulary, grammar or in paragraphing. It also needs the reading skill, which is unfortunately ignored by EFL students, in other words, the problem is that they have the lack of reading. That is why, when it comes to writing an essay, it seems a troublesome activity. Therefore, in this study, we try to investigate the effects of reading on essay writing skills and to use reading as a method in order to improve the students' essay writing.

2. Aims of the Study

Reading is very important in learning a foreign language, as it is one of the basic language skills. This study aims to draw students' attention to the most significant benefits and importance of the reading skill. Specifically, this study is designed to provide the reading skill as a workable method to enable EFL poor writers to overcome such problem and ultimately to enhance their essay writing. Moreover, the present study is designed to determine the effects of

reading skill on essay writing and it attempts to find out the ways in which reading can help students in writing an essay.

3. Research Questions

The present study is designed to answer the following questions:

1. What are the effects of the reading skill on essay writing?
2. Are the students and the teachers aware of the positive impact of reading skill on essay writing skill?
3. Is the reading skill sufficient for third year EFL students at Mohamed Khieder University of Biskra to improve their essay writing?

4. Hypothesis

- If Third year EFL students at Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra are aware of the benefits of reading skill, they will be able to improve their essay writing style.

5. Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is to make students of Third Year LMD at Mohamed Khieder University of Biskra aware that reading skill helps them in writing an essay. In other words, to provide them with the benefits of reading skill and how it can improve their essay writing performance. Therefore, they acknowledge that there is a connection between reading skill and essay writing. Furthermore, to have a good piece of writing is not something that can only be learned explicitly but also through reading habits. Furthermore, this study is significant for teachers too; it helps them to diagnose the problems that face their students while writing essays.

6. Research Methodology and Research Tools

6.1 The Choice of Method

The present study relies on the descriptive method in order to highlight the impact of reading on students' essay writing improvement.

The choice of this method seems to be the suitable one because it is based on the appropriate tools for conducting this research.

6.2 Research Tools

This study utilizes the descriptive method, the main instrument used for data collection are two questionnaires. Questionnaires for both teachers and students, teachers to know the difficulties and the problems that face students while writing an essay, and students to know how they deal with reading and essay writing skills.

6.3 Population and Sample of the Study

6.3.1 Population

In this study, we explore the impact of reading on students' essay writing improvement. Both students of third year LMD and teachers of written expression of the Branch of English at Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra are involved in this study.

6.3.2 Sampling

6.3.2.1 Students Sampling

This work is concerned with Third year English Foreign Language students at Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra during the academic year 2015/2016. This population includes 10 groups consist of 413 students is specifically selected for this research, because the written expression programme of first year deals with the types of sentences, punctuation, and transitional signals, and the second year programme concerns with how to write a paragraph.

For this reason, the population of third year is the best for this study since the problem of the lack of reading and the need of this activity for better improvement in essay writing appears more in this case. The sample concerns 100 students, 10 from each group that are selected randomly.

6.3.2.2 Teachers Sampling

This study deals with six teachers of written expression module at Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra who can provide an insight into the impact of reading on students' essay writing improvement.

7. Limitations of the Study

Some expected limitations would affect this research. The use of questionnaires for both teachers and students as tools for conducting this research cannot be answered or handed back in the adequate time.

8. Structure of the Study

The present study consists of three chapters. Two chapters are devoted to the literature review while the last chapter is the practical part of the study.

The first chapter is devoted to the skill of reading. It comprise a description of reading, a historical background of how scholars have viewed reading. In addition, to this the importance, the nature, the process and the product of reading, also the most influential models and types of reading, and finally reading in a second language.

The second chapter shed light on some definitions of the writing skill and its importance. This is followed by a review of the different writing approaches to teaching writing and writing in second language. In addition, we define the essay writing and to explore its major types and ending with the relationship between reading and writing skills.

Finally, the last chapter of the proposed research is mainly ends with the analysis of the collected data from the two questionnaires, teachers' and students' a questionnaires.

CHAPTER ONE: THE READING SKILL

Introduction

Reading as a receptive language skill, it is very important in improving language proficiency. As it is the most eminent skill for students, since it enables them to expand their knowledge of language through the process of interaction between the reader and the text. The first chapter introduce the term reading by stating different definitions by different scholars, in addition to this; the nature, the process and the product of reading. Throughout this chapter, we also illustrate the reading models namely: the bottom-up, the top-down, and the interactive models. Besides, the most influential types and importance of reading, and finally, we end up this chapter by looking at reading in a second language L2.

1.1 Definition of Reading

Because it gives access to knowledge, an essential and an important skill in learning any subject matter. Many theorists and researchers have attempted to define reading; this reflects the fact that the study of reading is both theoretically interesting and practically important. Unfortunately, constructing a clear, straightforward definition of reading is not an easy task.

Baudoin. Bober, E. S., Clarke, M. A., Dobson, B. K., & Silberstein, S. (1994) explained reading by acknowledging the complexity of this skill and distancing between “word recognition” and “comprehension” (P.1). They defines reading as follows: “Reading is a complex activity that involves both word recognition, the process of perceiving how written symbols correspond to one’s spoken language; and comprehension, the process of making sense of words, sentences and connected paragraphs.” That is, the reader starts the process of reading by performing a visual activity. First, the reader recognizes the language is reading in. Then, the brain processes the information and gives it logical significance.

In the same line, Dechant (1991, as cited in Macceca, 2014) outlined reading as follows:

Reading as a visual process that begins with one's ability to use one's vision to interpret graphic symbols. Reading requires great visual acuity. To read, one must be able to visually distinguish each letter, identify each letter, have a visual memory for each letter, and recode those letters so that one can recreate the letters, pronounce the letters, or associate sound with the letters. (P.5)

This means, reading is an exercise controlled by the eyes and the brain that is the centre responsible of giving corresponding meanings to the messages, the eyes receive the information and the brain tries to interpret it.

In addition to this, Marinak, B. A.; Moore, J. C.; Henk, W.A.; & Keepers, M. (1997:2) describe reading as being “a dynamic process in which the reader interacts with the text to construct meaning. Inherent in constructing meaning is the reader’s ability to activate prior knowledge, use reading strategies and adapt to the reading situation”. In other words, to reach an effective comprehension of the passage, the reader requires the use of the previous knowledge, not only the information from the passage.

Furthermore; Goodman(1973) agreed that reading cannot be simply a word by word deciphering until meaning is reached ,they emphasis upon text comprehension through using knowledge of the world during the process of reading . Goodman (1973:20) asserted that:

As readers use cues from the linguistic text, they bring their knowledge and benefits about the world to bear on making sense they guess what’s coming, making predictions and inferences; they are selective about use of text cues and they monitor their guesses for contradictory cues.

Effective reading, then, is not accurate word recognition; it is getting to meaning and efficient reading is using just enough of the available cues, giving what a reader brings to the reading, to make sense of the text.

From Goodman's definition we can say that for reaching an effective comprehension of the passage. The reader needs to use not only the information from the passage being read, but also the knowledge about the world, because reading is a process that implies to achieve a successful comprehension, the reader should go through steps and levels that start as soon as the reader looks at the written material.

In conclusion, from the above stated definitions, we can deduce that reading is the activity of decoding ideas and meanings that the writer have encoded. A process whose ultimate goals of the reading activity, the reader should go through a series of steps and levels that start as soon as the reader looks at the written material.

1.2 The Importance of Reading

Most researchers pointed out that reading is a process shared by a number of items: the text, the readers' background and the situation in which reading occurs. Because reading a text does not involve finding information on text itself, it is a process of working with the text. In fact, reading a text includes the recreation of meaning of the text by the reader. This mean, the reader negotiate the meaning with the author by applying the prior knowledge. All these items gives reading a great importance, as claimed by Eric (2004: 32), the significance of reading is:

- Reading enable students to interact and to form their own thoughts to have critical thinking skills.
- Reading develops students by making them better writers, since they may face different rules of grammar, which will help them later in developing a sense for structures of the language and grammar and increase their vocabulary.
- It is important in helping students to understand the context which support them to perceive the background, the environment, and the circumstances in which the author wrote the text.
- Reading is a trigger for imagination, the foundation for future learning.

- Reading can enhance empathy and lead to greater understanding of people who are different from ourselves. It increases our emotional intelligence and helps us to appreciate other points of view.

From the previous mentioned points, we can deduce that reading is a powerful skill which gives the reader the opportunity to experience and interact with different texts, words, and thoughts.

1.3 Nature of Reading

The study of the nature of reading had faced various troublesome from different scholars and researchers. Alderson (2000: 1) announced, “I am not the first person to say that an overview of the study of the nature of reading is impossible.” In fact, giving an outright definition of reading is not an easy task, because each theory of reading is based on different research purposes. According to the linguistic point of view, reading is considered as a process of getting information from printed words (Widdowson, 1979, as cited in Liu, 2010).

Unfortunately, the exaggeration of the linguistic information fitted out by the text has ignored the issue of meaning in the process of reading. Thus, had emerged a new trend which gives more interest to the core of reading, this trail is the comprehensible view of reading. It believes that a more comprehensible reading requires a cognitive process of meaning making through print. As Day and Bamford (1998:12) affirmed, “Reading is the construction of meaning from a printed or written message.” In addition to take up the role of meaning, the linguistic form of the language has taken a part of interest in the cognitive view. From newly research, reading is considered as an interactive process. Wallace pointed out that the reading process is interactive since because of the reaction between the reader and the text (Wallace, 1992, 2001, 2003, as cited in Houria, 2012: 8).

To sum up, the process of reading is a complex and a constraint process that contributes to meaning recognition from a printed message.

1.4 Process of Reading

Alderson (2000) described the process of reading by viewing it as several activities occur during the act of reading, from the time the eyes get the visual information until it is concerned into meaning. In other words, reading is a way of interaction between the reader and the text, a process of decoding the printed marks on the pages, deriving meaning from those marks a

nd thinking about what the reader is reading in order to understand the relationship between them. In this scope, Harmer (2001) pointed out that when the reader engages in the act of reading in order to understand the intended meaning of the writer, he needs a variety of high mental actions. An exercise dominated by the eyes and the brain, the eyes receive and the brain analyse these messages.

1.5 Product of Reading

As claimed by Alderson, (2000) the product of reading or the alternative approach mean the examination and the outcomes of the reading process, the understanding of the written message by the reader, the product and the process of reading are two interrelated aspects of reading. They differ for the same reader on the same text at a different time and with different purposes in reading, because the text has no fixed meaning to be discovered, and the construction of the text meaning is affected by the readers' background and strategies in reading. Alderson (2000) suggested that achieving successful understanding depends on three interrelated elements: the reader, the text and the activity.

- a) **The reader** constructs different representation of the text, which are important for comprehension and rejects irrelevant information that may impair comprehension.

b) A **text** may be easy or difficult, depending on its genre, its content, the kind of vocabulary used and its linguistic and discourse structure.

c) Concerning **the activity**, it is performed to achieve a particular purpose that is influenced by many factors such as interest and motivation. (Emphasis added)

From those reasons, we can say that the comprehension of a text may vary from one reader to another.

1.6 Models of Reading

In an attempt to explain the process by which readers approach the text meaning, many researchers have tried to explain reading mechanisms and, therefore, established certain processes through which reading happens; they called them models. Reading models are just frameworks about which aspects of the reading process are most important (Rayner and Pollatsek, 1989). They differ simply in the emphasis each model makes on particular aspects and their role in the process of reading.

Broadly speaking, there are three influential models of the reading process: the bottom-up, the top-down and the interactive models. In other words, relying on the decomposition of reading, theorists argued over bottom-up (letter to semantic) versus top-down (semantic to letter) models to reading. Some of their theories are concerned primarily with decoding of print. Other theories are more involved with comprehension or reader-text interaction (Rummelhart, 1985).

Before we start discussing the different models of reading process, we first need to introduce the concept of a model. Davies (1995: 57) defined the word "model" by stating: "a formalized, usually visually represented theory of what goes on in the eyes and the mind when readers are comprehending (or miscomprehending) text". This means, the process that happen on the level of perception by the eyes and analysis by the brain during the process of reading.

1.6.1 The Bottom-up Model

According to the bottom-up view of reading is a matter of decoding a series of written symbols into their aural equivalents in the quest for making sense of the text. Referring to the bottom-up principles, a text is organized in a form of a hierarchy from the smallest linguistic units to the higher units in this order of levels: the grapho-phonic, phonemic, syllabic, morphemic, word and sentence levels. To understand the text, the reader processes the smallest units and, bit by bit, builds up these units to decode the higher ones (Dechant, 1991).

Stanovich (1980, in Samuels and Kamil, 2002: 212) stated that bottom-up models tend to describe information flow in the form of distinct stages. Each stage changes the input and sends it to a higher stage for further transformations. Davies points out that Gough, being the outstanding figure of the bottom up model, characterizes reading as a letter-by-letter sequence through text (Gough, 1972; as cited in Samuels and Kamil, 2002: 187).

By advocating the sequential processing of a bottom-up model of reading, the Gough's model (1972) focuses on how the text is processed from the time the eyes perceive the printed word to the moment where meaning is derived from this visual input. In her description to Gough's model, Davies (1995: 50) pointed out how this model perceives the reading process: "Gough characterizes reading as a letter by letter progression through the text; with letter identification followed by the identification of sounds of the letter until words, their syntactic features and then meaning are finally accessed." This means, the reader combines smaller units into larger clusters. Starting with letters into words, words into phrases and sentences, sentences into paragraphs and paragraphs into idea units and text as a whole.

In fact, the emphasis on word recognition as basis for reading to occur, and ignoring the concept of understanding the written text considered as the basic weakness of the bottom up model. Smith (1985: 50) has criticised the importance this model gives to phonics by drawing attention to "the fallacy of phonics". He argues that spelling-to-sound correspondences are not

"one-to-one" but rather "too complex" and thus not easy neither to teach nor to learn, which makes of decoding one means for a further goal: comprehension. The exaggeration to this model has given the way for the emergence of a model to correct the pitfalls of the bottom-up model and to account for these new assumptions. This model is the top-down model of the reading process.

1.6.2 The Top-down Model

The Top-down model is another theory that explains the processing of information during the reading task. It is a completely challenging description of the traditional bottom-up model, it comes to reflect the psycholinguistic view of information processing. What makes this psycholinguistic model different is Goodman's emphasis on the central directing role of readers' predictions and background knowledge that makes them attribute the name "psycholinguistic guessing game" to reading (Alderson, 2000). The top-down model is designed on the readers' predictions and background knowledge from which the reading activity is carried out in steps in a successive way. According to (Alderson, 2000), the reader arrives at meaning essentially by going through a set of cognitive processes that make up the overall cognitive process of reading.

Dechant (1991) defended the top-down model by focusing on the fact that the processing of print begins in the mind of the readers by generating hypotheses about the text. In this way, readers engage in lower processes; that is to say, identifying letters and words only to confirm these hypotheses about the meaning of the print.

In this model, the stages involved in the reading process are higher up and the success of this process does not depend on the reader's ability to identify words, but rather on his/her ability to get the meaning of words from what can be predicted and inferred from them in relation to the reader's prior knowledge. This model places minimal attention to word recognition skill and focuses on what is called "higher order" source of information" (Davies,

1995). For Smith (1994: 2), reading is extracting meaning from script and not a passive mechanical activity in which the readers matches written symbols to sounds; reading is rather “purposeful and rational, dependent on the prior knowledge and expectations of the reader (or learner)”. This means that the process of reading also needs the prior knowledge.

Investigating each model apart, researchers have found out a number of weaknesses that make any of them fail to explain what reading really is. Thus, they have come up with a realistic conclusion “You cannot have one without the other” (Persson, 1994: 09). For this reason, they have suggested a third alternative: the interactive model.

1.6.3 The Interactive Model

The interactive model is a compromise model between the bottom-up and the top-down models, and the reading process is based on the interaction and the balance between the two previous models. It is a model that is proposed by Rumelhart (1977) to account for both bottom-up and top-down processing.

According to Rumelhart, the interactive model was introduced in attempt to present a model that would make clear how readers use information from various sources at the same time during the reading process. For him, the process of reading starts by taking up cues to meaning from the page by the eyes and ends with the construction of meaning. He viewed the skilled readers as being able to use both sensory and semantic information. The latter interacts in many ways during the process of reading to construct meaning. In addition, for Rumelhart reading should be regarded as a simultaneously “perceptual” and “cognitive” process, and insists on the fact that interaction between the diverse sources of information is needed for the reader to achieve successful comprehension(Rumelhart, 1977; as cited in Davies, 1995).

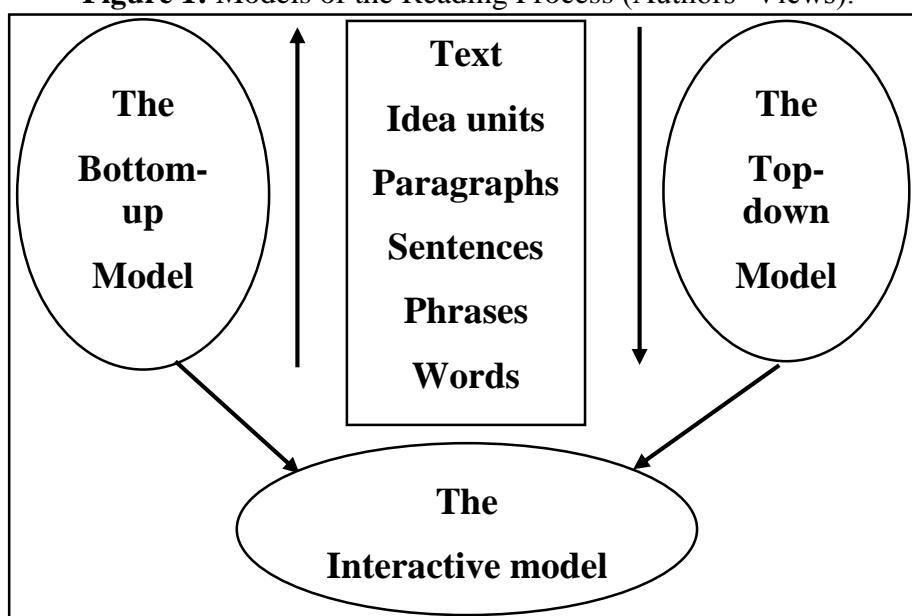
Furthermore, both higher-level and lower-level processes simultaneously help each other. Stanovich (1980, as cited in Samuels and Kamil, 2002: 212) suggests that “interactive models of reading appear to provide a more accurate conceptualization of reading performance

than do strictly top-down or bottom-up models". In this way, the interactive model is involved to give more clarification about reading performance, without paying attention either to top-down model or to bottom-up model. It is a sort of combination between the two. To ensure the rapid processing of information bottom-up and top-down processes have to work together in most situations. This implies the rapid processing of information during the reading task is by product of both top-down and bottom-up processing.

In this model, the reading process begins at the level of perceiving written symbols on the page, and goes through stages where information from all sources (orthographic, syntactic, lexical and semantic) at the same time until the most likely meaning is retrieved. As it was stated by Stanovich (1980) that: "the top-down and bottom-up models provide a better account of the existing data on the use of orthographic structure and sentence context by poor and good readers". That is the interactive model is a model which has accommodated the deficiencies of both the bottom-up, and the top-down models (P.15).

In conclusion, from the proposed definitions and from the scholars' views (Dechant 1991, Stanovich 1980, Davies 1995, Alderson 2000, Smith 1994, and Rumelhart 1977), we have concluded that the process of reading is based on three models (namely the bottom-up, the top-down, and the interactive or the interaction between the bottom-up and the top down models which can be summed up in the following figure:

Figure 1: Models of the Reading Process (Authors' Views).



1.7 The Types of Reading

There are different types of reading for the reader to obtain the purposes of this skill. Reading types are assorted behaviors haymaking by the reader through the reading activity. They are labeled according to the speed and concentration that, in their turn, are dictated by the definite purpose the person has in mind when approaching a piece of writing (Davies, 1995). Commonly speaking, there are four types of reading that are clarified in the literature: scanning, skimming, intensive and extensive reading.

1.7.1 Scanning

Scanning is a quickly reading mechanism used when you want to find special information. Deciding exactly what information we are looking for and the form it would take, deciding where we would find this information, moving our eyes quickly over the page to locate it and whenever the information is found, we read it carefully and we stop reading Baudoin, *et. al.*, (1997). They suggested some steps when scanning a text for a specific piece of information:

- The reader limits the targeted datum clearly, before starting looking for it,
- he uses an appropriate source.
- He lets his eyes run over the print skipping all unnecessary words, and he stops only at the information needed and picks it up without going beyond.

In addition, Grellet (1981) proposed a process for scanning in reading a text:

When scanning, we only try to locate specific information and often we do not even follow the linearity of the passage to do so. We simply let our eyes wander over the text until we find what we are looking for, whether it be a name, a date, or a less specific piece of information (P.17).

This means, scanning is reading a text with paying particular attention and purpose, and memorizing what is needed. It is retrieving what information is relevant to our purpose. The exercises suggested to practice scanning also try to put the students in an authentic situation where they would naturally scan the text rather than read it.

1.7.2 Skimming

Skimming is a quick reading that allows the reader to get the gist (or general understanding) of a selection. Here the reader try to find out what the text is about, by selecting few parts to read from the page. Either from the beginnings or the endings of the passages where the main items are mostly summarised. Skimming is the technique of allowing your eyes to travel rapidly over a page, stopping here and there to register the main idea, requires an overall view of the text and implies a definite reading competence (Grellet, 1981). There are some procedures that facilitate the type of skimming, these steps are:

- Read the title.
- Note the writer's name.
- Note the date and place of publication.
- Read the first paragraph completely.
- Read sub-headings and first sentences of remaining paragraphs.

As you read, pick up main ideas, key words that tell you (who, what, when, where, how many, and how much), and transitional markers (words like ‘however’, ‘additionally’, ‘alternatively’...etc.), which suggest the direction of ideas in the text. In other words, skimming is a rapid technique of reading for getting an overall view about what we reading by paying attention to the key and transitional words.

1.7.3 Extensive Reading

Extensive Reading (ER) also named Reading for entertainment is performed for pleasure in a comfortable manner for the students to reach their deliverance; it is also allowance their exposition to the language. It is very useful for the advancement of the reader's vocabulary stock, automatic word identification and knowledge of the language and world in general. (Harmer, 1991).

As also asserted by Davies (1995), ER means a slowly and neatly reading of long selections like books or novels for global comprehension and this reading differs according to students' impulse and school resources. When reading extensively, learners read outside classroom to get pleasure or to learn general information. This kind of reading is done voluntarily and plays a very important role in improving students' abilities; it is inside or outside the classroom and independently from any control and The texts included in an extensive reading program are materials such as short stories, novels, poems, plays, texts, magazines and journals.

1.7.4 Intensive Reading

As claimed by For Nuttal (1982), intensive reading (IR) requires "the student to pay great attention to the text. The aim of intensive reading is to arrive at a profound and detailed understanding of the text." This means that it is intensified and less relaxed manner and it aims at making the reader on his own attempts to look for the hidden meaning of the text's words, in other words; the reader should read between the lines.

Moreover, IR refers to the type of reading in which readers deal with relatively short texts and activities about linguistic content -new vocabulary and expressions, pronunciation, functions, grammar and style- and cultural content as well, in order to achieve full understanding of the material, and the teacher in the classroom controls this type of reading.

In conclusion, from the types maintained above, researchers argued that the four reading types could be practiced commonly at the same time, through the same act of reading. Likewise, a reader may laminate a magazine for an article, scans the article for a given item, and then decides to read it all intensively with deepen rumination.

1.8 Reading in a Second Language

Because of its role in language proficiency, researchers on reading and second or foreign language (L2 or FL) have agreed on the importance of the reading skill in achieving academic success. They considered reading as an interactive process that involves the reader with the use of two processes, an interchangeable use of the bottom-up and the top-down processes. So, the reading process in a second language involves a complex cognitive ability, because L2 readers do not have the same cultural, social background and the same language resources that first language (L1) readers have in constructing the meaning of a text (Grabe, 1991). Moreover, due to the influence of L1 research and its use as the ground of most researchers in conducting L2 or FL reading contexts, the viewpoint of the reading process in L2 or FL has been changed as an interactive process.

Understanding the reading process in L2 is related to the examination of the differences between L1 and L2 in reading. Various features make reading in FL different from reading in a mother language, and these features and differences are focused on readers more than the reading process in itself, which makes the reading process in L2 or FL more complex than in L1. Because successful readers are more aware of the strategies they use and the various reading strategies that involve both bottom-up and top-down processes, or the interactive process. As described by Grabe and Stoller (2001), “good readers read rapidly for comprehension, recognize words rapidly automatically, integrate text information with their own knowledge, and shift purpose to read strategically.”

Carrell and Grabe (2002) categorized the differences between L1 and L2 reading under three major items: individual and experiential differences, socio-cultural and institutional differences and linguistic and processing differences. At first, readers who start reading in an L2 or FL have already experienced reading in their native language; they have acquired cognitive skills higher than those beginner readers who start reading in their FL, which enables them to make consistent deductions from the reading material based on their background knowledge. Second, varying linguistic differences between languages, differing of lexical, grammatical and discourse knowledge in L1 and L2 reading. For example, language proficiency plays an important role in helping readers to read in another language other than their L1. Grabe (1991) asserted that there is a distinction between L2 or FL readers' linguistic understanding in their native language and their linguistic understanding in the target language. Readers who start reading in their L1 have an amount of linguistic knowledge in their L1 they have acquired spontaneously, but in contrary readers who start to read in L2 or FL do not acquire this linguistic knowledge until further experience with the L2 or FL language.

Finally, differing socio-cultural backgrounds of L2 readers, and differing expectations of educational institutions in L1 and L2 settings. The way L2 or FL readers consider reading uses and their expectation may also have an impact on their performance in reading in L2 or FL. Different beliefs about reading and the use of texts in different social context may result in problems in academic reading comprehension (Grabe, 1991).

In addition, Nuttal, (1982) claimed that there is also a difference between L1 readers and L2 or FL readers in terms of reading purpose. Mainly in L2 or FL settings, reading is used as a means to learn a language or to learn to read in that language, while reading in L1 is to learn facts and to get the idea of a text or as part of a class assignment. Reading is taught to students at different stages to enable them to read and understand rapidly and with a maximum of efficiency. In the absence of other sufficient materials for learning a language, reading seems

to be an excellent alternative as it provides learners with authentic materials and settings for learning a L2 or FL. Furthermore, Nuttal adds that pleasure and entertainment are aspects of the difference between L1 and L2 or FL readers. Usually those two notions are used by teachers for motivating learners to read in the target language, which leads L2 or FL readers to read not for the sake of learning a language, but understanding the author's message in the text and get some pleasure.

Conclusion

As seen in this chapter, we have provided theoretical background of the reading skill and as a synthesis of all that has been introduced before; reading is an interaction between the reader and the text, both the reader's background knowledge and the printed text are very important to reach the meaning of reading. That is, the reader first perceives the written symbols on the text and then makes sense of them by using the background knowledge.

CHAPTER TWO: ESSAY WRITING

Introduction

Writing is a complex process that covers different formats; the essay is one of these formats. More precisely, scholars viewed the essay as a piece of writing that develops a main idea in a number of paragraphs. Throughout this chapter, we present some definitions of the writing skill, the importance of writing, the approaches to teaching writing (namely the product approach, the process approach, and the genre approach), and second language writing. Then, we deal with the definition of essay writing, the major types of essays (namely the argumentative essay, the descriptive essay, the comparison and contrast essay, the cause and effect essay, the narrative essay, and the process essay). Finally, we end with the relationship between reading and writing skills.

2. 1 Definition of Writing

Writing in a foreign language is one of the most difficult skills for almost all learners. Because of this difficulty, it seems a problem for scholars to give an intelligible definition for this skill. Writing, in general, intents a shape of human communication by means of a set of visual signs that are related to some particular structural level of language (Writing, 2012).

Writing has been defined in different ways; Weigle (2002) explains writing as follows:

This is not a simple task, since, as researchers in both first- and second-language writing have pointed out, the uses to which writing is put by different people in different situations are so varied that no single definition can cover all situations. (P.3)

Weigle argues that writing is a difficult activity and the use of this skill depends on the persons' situations. Therefore, this definition suggests that writing is a variable term and constructing one single view of writing which can be used in various tasks is something hard.

Moreover, Hyland (2003:3) accounts writing as “marks on a page or a screen, a coherent arrangement of words, clauses, and sentences, structured according to a system of rules”. Hyland also views it as “an extension of grammar – a means of reinforcing language patterns through habit formation and testing learners’ ability to produce well-formed sentences”. Whereas, Silva (1990) sees writing as a matter of arrangement, of combining sentences and paragraphs into prescribed patterns. Then, learning to write abides becoming skilled in realizing, internalizing, and accomplishing these patterns.

Therefore, the idea we can draw from the previous definitions is that writing is a complex and a difficult task. It is the activity of being able to communicate with language through a graphic representation of thoughts.

2.2 The Importance of Writing

According to recent scholars and theorists of language teaching and learning, writing has a great importance in the achievement of language proficiency. The following points are some of them:

- On the national and international levels, writing is one of the most significant cultural accomplishments of human beings. It gives the opportunity to record and to transit information and stories beyond the immediate moment. In other words, it carries human thinking products among sequential generations; it protects knowledge from being forgotten.
- It is a mean of supplementing our own memories, we can record much longer texts than we could ever hope to memorize.
- With written records and manuals, we can create a much more complex society.
- Writing creates not only a more complicated society, but also a more just society. For instance, when information can be readily written down, printed, and distributed, there is less chance for it to be manipulated by people.

- Writing is a skill that designs on the use of techniques (such as planning, evaluating, and revising text) to achieve various aims, such as writing a report or expressing an opinion with the support of evidence.
- Writing is a mean of extending and deepening students' knowledge, it works as a mean for learning subject matter. (Rogers 2005)

Overall, all these points indicate that writing, as a productive skill receives an important and special attention, because it has an important role in recording, building, and protecting the knowledge from being forgotten in different domains.

2. 3 Approaches of Writing

There are number of different approaches to the practice of writing skills. This interest in writing as a skill leads to the emergence of different conflicting views of the best way to teach writing. Teaching writing can take different orientations; three approaches seem to be the prevailing ones in teaching writing: the product, process, and genre-based approaches.

2. 3. 1 The Product Approach

The product approach, as the title indicates, is concerned with the final result of the writing process. It is essentially based on the belief that writing is an act of imitating and adopting models of texts. According to White (1988:5) the model based approach is:

Study the model → manipulate elements → produce a parallel text

The starting point is the model text which is studied and analyzed from different points of view. For example: content, structure of grammar, sentence, organization, and rhetorical patterns. After manipulating the different elements that the students take from the model text, finally, the students are given a new topic and are asked to produce a parallel text.

Richards (2003:3-4) has proposed another description of the product approach. He argued that since the focus is on the study of model text in order to make students aware of text features. In this writing approach, writing has four stages:

1. Familiarization: this stage aims to make learners aware of certain elements of particular text.

2. Controlled writing: Learners practice fixed patterns, often from substitution tables.

3. Guided writing: Learners imitate model texts.

4. Free writing: learners use the written skill as part of genuine activities for instance an essay, a story, a letter, etc. (Emphasis added)

2. 3. 2 The Process Approach

The process approach comes as a reaction to the dissatisfaction within the product approach. This new approach has a noticeable effect on the teaching of writing; it places more emphasis on the stages of the writing process than on the final product. In other words, the process approach to writing stresses the creativity of individual writer and sees writing as a highly complex activity. This orientation gives more attention to the development of good writing rather than the imitation of model texts.

According to scholars, the process approach may include identified stages of the writing process such as: pre-writing, writing and rewriting. As asserted by Murray (1992):

The process approach refers to a teaching approach that focuses on the process a writer engages in when constructing meaning. This teaching approach concludes with editing as a final stage in text creation, rather than an initial one as a product approach. The process approach may include identified stages of the writing process such as: pre-writing, writing and re-writing. Once the rough draft has been created, it is polished into subsequent drafts with the assistance of peer and teacher conferencing. (P.16)

In other words, Murray focused on the different stages that the writer goes through in order to create a final product, and on writing as an activity that is composed of a variety of

activities, this approach also depends on giving time to what we want to write. In addition, the teacher in the process approach becomes a facilitator.

In the same point of view, Silva (1990:13) claimed, “the main role of the teacher is to promote students' creativity and to guide them in the process of drafting, revising and editing by giving feedback on their writing.” This means, the process approach to the teaching of writing claim for the priority of the stages writers go through, in relation to the final product which is controlled by the teacher.

In addition, the process approach is viewed as a way to think about writing in terms of what the writer does planning, revising, and editing instead of what the final product looks like: patterns of organization, spelling, grammar (Applebbe 1986, cited in Kroll, 1991: 247).

Once more, the neglecting of the linguistic knowledge such as knowledge about grammar and text structure, and giving more interest to the linguistic skills for example: planning, revising and editing caused a disfavour in this approach.

2. 3. 3 The Genre Approach

The genre approach is a new approach to teaching writing which sees writing as an attempt to communicate with the reader, not only focuses on form and textual conventions, but more importantly on the rhetorical purposes of that text and every element of the text that contributes to the fulfillment of that process. Likewise, Richards (2003:18) pointed out that “the central belief here is that we do not just write, we write something to achieve some purposes: it is a way of getting something done.” That is, Richards views the genre approach as a social action that responds to a recurring situation. Another description of the genre approach proposed by Swales (1990: 58) who defined genre as:

A genre comprises a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes. These purposes are recognised by the expert members of the parent discourse community, and there by

constitute the rationale for genre. This rationale shapes the schematic structure of the discourse and influence constrains choice of content and style.

In other words, Swales' definition of genre entails that this approach has specific characteristics for example: communicative purposes, the channel of communication, the schematic structure of the discourse and the audience type...etc. In addition, the focus of the genre approach is on texts, but not on grammar, rather is on social purposes and choices that are used when writing.

2. 4 Second Language Writing

Second language (L2) writing has always been a difficult area for second language learners and for second language scholars and researchers. The field of L2 writing has taken in various views. Weigle (2002:1) suggests that: "In language classes writing functions primarily to support and reinforce patterns of oral language use, grammar, and vocabulary, is being supplanted by the notion that writing in a second language is a worthwhile enterprise in and of itself." That is, in the context of classroom and in some teaching situation, writing in SL is a tool that has an equal basis with other skills like reading, grammar, and vocabulary, and it reinforces the learning process with these skills.

Furthermore, Manchon (2011) proposes that writing in SL has two elements "writing to learn" and "learning to write". The concept "writing to learn" means learning how to write by using SL, whereas "learning to write" entails the use of writing as a means of learning something else. In line with what Manchon claimed, Weigle (2002: 5) asserts, "at university level in particular, writing is not just as a standardized system of communication but also as an essential tool for learning". In other words, writing to learn aims to develop students' knowledge about other subject courses.

In addition, Weigle (2002: 35) explains the dimension of "learning to write" as follows: "SL writers use many of the same writing processes in their SL as in their in L1 and expertise

in writing can transfer from the L1 to SL, given at least a certain level of proficiency". Weigle also adds that in order to get a clear understanding of SL writing, it is important to know the differences and similarities between L1 and L2 writing. For example, L1 writing ability and L2 writing ability are two separate tasks, so writing in L2 was a language specific phenomenon, not a writing problem. Therefore, L2 writing may not necessarily have been helped by or transferred from L1 writing. However, Silva (1993, cited in weigle, 2002) states in a review of differences between L1 and L2 writing that: writing in a L2 is more difficult and less effective than writing in a first language. Despite the fact that L2 and L1 have differences. L2 and L1 also have similarities; both L1 and L2 have difficulties retentions about using exotic discourse of academic English. Both L1 and L2 readers must devote cognitive resources to diverse activities simultaneously.

2. 5 Definition of Essay Writing

Writers and researchers have proposed different definitions about what an essay is, how it takes place. Nourse (2001:16) states: "An essay is an analytic or interpretive literary composition usually dealing with its subject from a limited or personal point of view." Whereas, Anker (2010: 38-39) suggests the following definition:

An essay is a piece of writing that examines a topic in more depth than a paragraph. A short essay may have four or five paragraphs, totaling three hundred to six hundred words. A long essay is six paragraphs or more, depending on what the essay needs to accomplish-persuading someone to do something, using research to make a point, or explaining a complex concept.

In other words, an essay is a combination between paragraphs that deals with a topic and this essay can be short or long one. A short essay has four to five paragraphs and a long

essay has more paragraphs. In addition, Anker adds that an essay has three necessary parts: the introduction, the body, and the conclusion.

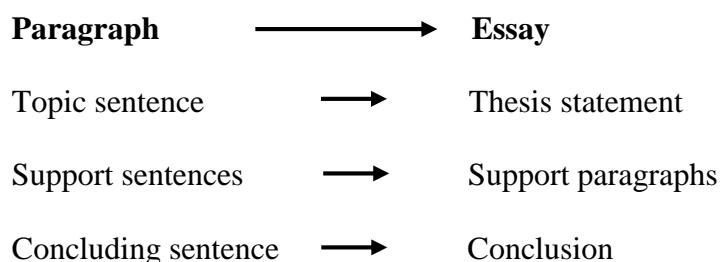
The introduction: presents the main point, or thesis, generally in a single, strong statement.

The introduction may be a single paragraph or multiple paragraphs.

The body: explains the main point. It generally has at least three **support paragraphs**, each containing facts, details and a **topic sentence** that supports the thesis statement.

The conclusion: provides an appropriate ending. It may summarise the support and relate back to the main point of the essay. (Emphasis added)

Also Anker (2010) argues that there is a relation between paragraph and essay. She explains this relation as follows:



With the same point of view, Folse K. S, Vokoun, A.M. & Solomon, E.V (2010) see essay as a collection of paragraphs that illustrates facts, opinions and ideas on a topic. An essay can be a short or a long piece of writing, the first one contains three or four paragraphs and the second has five or six paragraphs.

To sum up; an essay is a short piece of writing which contains a number of paragraphs that discusses, describes or analyzes a topic with common purpose which express a writers' opinion on a particular subject.

2. 6 The Major Types of Essay

There are several different kinds of essays; the following are some of the most common ones: the descriptive essay, the argumentative essay, the narrative essay, the comparison and contrast essay and the process essay.

2. 6. 1 The Argumentative Essay

According to Evans (1998), an argumentative essay or as also known a persuasive essay is a formal piece of writing which deals with opposing points of view “for and against”. This type of essay tries to convince the reader to the writer’s point of view. A good essay of this type consists of: **an introductory paragraph** in which you clearly state the topic to be discussed without giving your opinion, and **a main body** in which the points for and against along with your reasons, justifications or examples are offered in separate paragraphs. **A closing paragraph** in which you give a balanced consideration of the topic or illustrate your viewpoint.

(Emphasis added)

2. 6. 2 The Descriptive Essay

The descriptive essay is one of the kinds of writing in which a writer uses details to tell how a subject looks, smells, tastes, sounds, or makes one feel. This kind of essay has to be written in a way that readers can create images in their minds about what the essay is talking about and getting a good description relies on the effective use of specific detail. The more specific the writer can be, the more the readers can create images in their minds about what the essay is talking (Connelly, 2013).

Evans (1998) suggests that a descriptive composition about an event consist of: **an introduction** in which the writer mentions the name/type, time/date, place and reason for celebrating the event. **A main body** in which the writer describes the preparation for the event and the event itself, for example the use of concrete and specific nouns, verbs, descriptive

adjectives and adverbs make the description more vivid. A **conclusion** in which the writer gives final opinion about the description. (Emphasis added)

2. 6. 3 The Comparison and Contrast Essay

As asserted by Hamilton (2011), a comparison-contrast essay “so named to suggest that it covers both similarities-comparison-and differences-contrast”, that is, in this kind of essay the writer examines similarities and differences. Comparison and contrast essay can be used independently, just focus on similarities or differences, or in combination both similarities and differences. In other words, there are three correct ways to write a comparison and contrast essay: focusing only on similarities, focusing only on differences, or writing about both. For example, in a comparison essay the writer discusses the similarities between two things, while in a contrast essay, the writer deals with the differences. In addition, the use of appropriate phrases such as on the other hand, likewise, similarly and but...etc. are indicators for similarities or differences.

2. 6. 4 The Cause and Effect Essay

The interest of the cause and effect type of essay is different from the previous ones, a cause and effect essay focuses on two important purposes. On the one hand, it examines the effects of a thing or an event; on the other hand, it shows the causes of a thing or an event. This type of essay, explains why or how things happen and what their results or consequences are, it deals with an action/result relationship. In other words, it focuses on why things happen, the cause, and what happens as a result, the effects. Like the comparison and contrast essay, the cause and effect essay could also study both causes and effects, or it could simply discuss one or the other. A cause essay suggests the reasons why something happen, and an affect essay addresses what happens after a specific event or thing (Robitaille and Connelly, 2007).

2. 6. 5 The Narrative Essay

Generally, the narrative essay is a conversational style, tells a story and presents a connected series of events, either imaginary or based on the writer's own experience in a vivid description style. It may be written in the first person point of view or third person (he/she...etc.) point of view. In its widest sense, narration involves history, biography, personal experience and any writing that lays out the events of a story in a dramatic and climactic order.

The narrative essay entails also an introduction that engages the reader's interest, a body that develops details about the main event or action in the story, and a conclusion that completes the story and describes the outcome. (Davis and Liss, 2006)

2. 6. 6 The Process Essay

The last type of essays is the process essay, in this type of essay the writer shows the necessary steps to complete an event, an operation or a procedure. It describes any writing that proposes systematic instructions on how something happened or how something is done. According to Anker (2010), there are four basic steps of good process analysis:

1. It tells readers what process you want them to know about and makes a point about it.
2. It presents the essential steps in the process.
3. It explains the steps in detail.
4. It presents the steps in a logical order (usually time order).

2. 7 Reading and Writing Relationship

Reading and writing are two language skills. The former is receptive and the latter is productive. Despite the different characterizations and the dissimilarity between these two skills, they have a connection and a relation between them. The reading-writing relation has given a considerable interest from researchers and theorists.

According to Shanahan (2006: 177), “reading to writing or writing to reading learning is possible, but that instruction targeting skills in one or the other tends to be most effective at improving that dimension”. The combination of reading and writing in an instructional activity, with a great regard to the kind of reading and writing tasks assigned, may be an efficient means to develop performance in both skills.

The connection between reading and writing has often been viewed in straightforward terms: those who read well write well. As Johnson (2008) explains the connection between the preceding skills is that reading helps students become better writers. Through reading, students have the opportunity to contact with the rules of grammar, develop their vocabulary and increase a sense for the structure of the language. Krashen (1982) expended this belief in his “reading input hypothesis” which is related to his “comprehensive input hypothesis”. Krashens’ “reading input hypothesis” affirms that the extensive self-directed pleasure reading in the target language influences writing proficiency and the improvement of writing style, writing proficiency is acquired through reading instead of writing. This hypothesis implies that good readers have an important skill that can help them become good writers.

Similarly, Stotsky also supports the idea that there is an existing connection between reading and writing. This relationship result of the correlational study:

- There are correlations between reading achievement and writing ability. Good writers tend to be good readers.
- There are correlations between writing quality and reading experience. Good writers read more than poorer writers.
- There seem to be correlations between reading ability and measures of syntactic complexity in writing. Good readers tend to produce more syntactically mature writing than poorer readers. (Stoky, 1983)

Therefore, good writers are good and more readers than poor writers. Reading results in good writing, and good writing is the findings of exposure to many readings.

Conclusion

In conclusion to this chapter, it can be said that essay writing is an important skill which has different objectives and types. Nevertheless, the structure of these types is nearly the same, because each type has three basic elements: an introduction, body, and a concluding paragraph that should be followed. However, developing a good essay is not an easy task for EFL students; it needs great background and clear understanding of the structure.

CHAPTER THREE: FIELD WORK

Introduction

So far, we have presented a literature review about reading and essay writing skills. The present chapter is a full analysis and discussion of the data generated by teachers' and students' questionnaires. More precisely, this chapter is devoted to two sections, in the first one, we analyse the teachers' questionnaire and in the second section, we deal with the students' questionnaire. The collected data and the obtained results enable us to diagnose the impact of reading on the students' essay writing, and to suggest the appropriate solutions to the existing problems faced by students when they write their essays. In addition, the participation of the teachers is very helpful because they are the most important source for gathering information about the students abilities and the reading and writing skills.

3.1 The Teachers' Questionnaire

3.1.1 Aim of the Questionnaire

The main purpose of the teachers' questionnaire is to obtain information that ascertains the impact of reading on students' essay writing. In addition, it aims to collect data about reading and essay writing skills and to find out the teachers' opinion about those two skills. Furthermore, this questionnaire intends to gather information about the relation between reading and essay writing.

3.1.2 Administration of the Questionnaire

The teachers who responded to the questionnaires are all teachers of written expression module of Third Year LMD students at the Branch of English, Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra.

The questionnaires were handed directly to six (6) teachers of written expression on 14th February 2016, unexpectedly not all the teachers have handed back their questionnaires, one of them did not handed back his questionnaire for unknown reasons.

3.1.3 Description of the Questionnaire

The teachers' questionnaire consists of twenty-five (25) questions grouped in four sections. We have mainly used closed and open-ended questions; the teachers are requested to answer by (yes/no) or to tick the appropriate answers from a set of options, or to fill in the blank for further explanations or suggestions.

3.1.3.1 Section One: Background Information (Q1- Q3)

This section provides general questions about teachers of written expression, their gender (Q1), their qualifications (Q2), and their teaching career at the university (Q3).

3.1.3.2 Section Two: Reading Skill (Q4- Q9)

The second section deals with the reading skill itself. In (Q4) the respondents are requested to indicate the role of reading in language development, (Q5) focuses on the importance of reading among the other skills (Q6- Q7). In addition, it seeks which process of reading they adopt (Q8), and how they encourage their students to read (Q9).

3.1.3.3 Section Three: Essay Writing (Q10- Q19)

This section is composed of questions seeking information about the teachers' views about the essay writing skill. The importance of the writing skill for EFL students in (Q10), (Q11- Q12) deal with the teachers' opinion about the task of writing for third year university students. However, in (Q13- Q14) the respondents are asked to indicate whether they discuss the topic with their students before they start writing or not, and which approach they follow in teaching writing for third year students (Q15- 16). The last three questions in this section are closed-ended questions; it aims at knowing the aspects of writing that the students have problems with in (Q17), the way that can help the students to improve their essay writing in (Q18), and finally the reasons beyond the students' failure to write a good essay in (Q19).

3.1.3.4 Section Four: Reading and Essay Writing Relation (Q20- 25)

Reading and essay writing relation is the last section of this questionnaire. It is concerned with the teachers' opinion about the relation between reading and essay writing (Q20- 21); (Q22) gives an interest to what extent the teacher support the relation between reading and essay writing during the written expression course. However, in (Q23) the respondents are asked to indicate whether the awareness of third year EFL students of reading is essential in essay writing or not (Q23- Q24). The last question (Q25) deals with the teachers' suggestions to their students' to help them improve their essay writing skill.

3.1.4 Results of the Questionnaire

3.1.4.1 Section One: Background Information

Q1: Gender

Table 1: Teachers' Gender

Gender	Number	Percentage
Male	1	20
Female	4	80
Total	5	100

Figure 2: Teachers' Gender

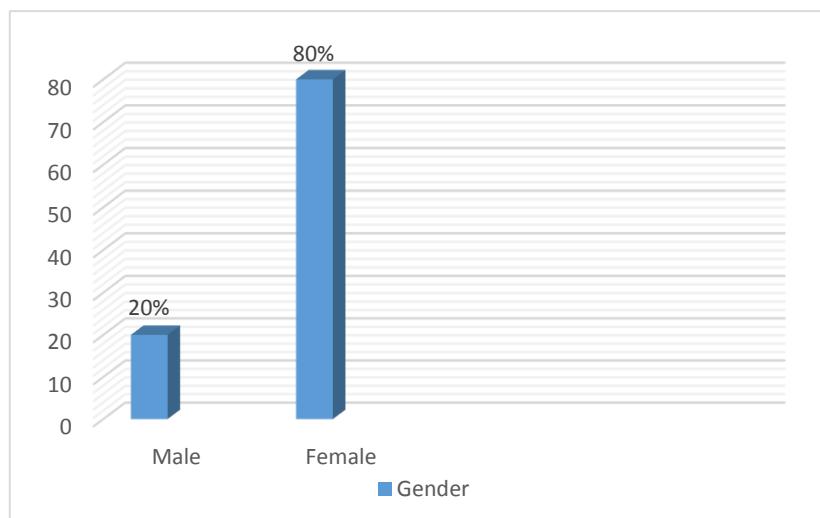


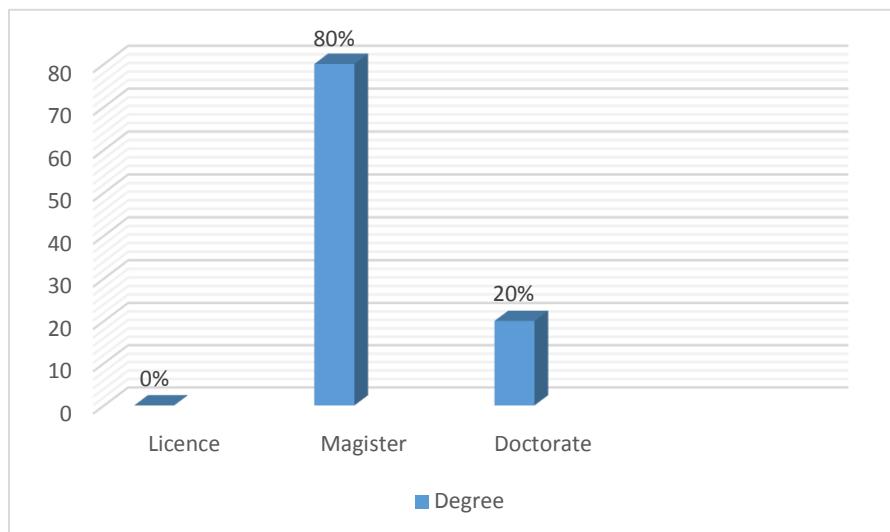
Table 1 shows that the majority of the surveyed teachers are (4) females and only one male. This indicates that most of the teachers of written expression module in the Branch of English are females.

Q2: Degree (s) held

Table 2: Teachers' Gradation

Degree	Number	Percentage
License		
Magister	4	80
Doctorate	1	20
Total	5	100

Figure 3: Teachers' Gradation



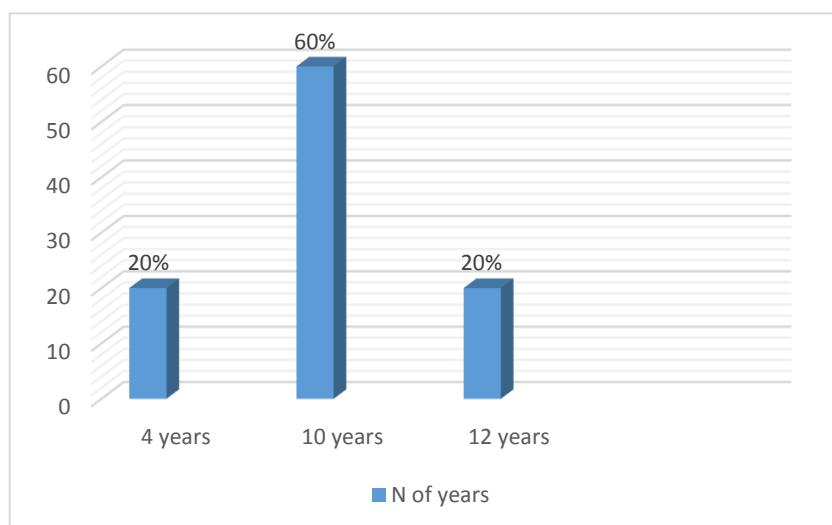
As illustrated in table 2, our sample consists of teachers who have magister degree (80%), while about (20%) have doctorate degree. These results indicates that the majority of third year teachers of written expression have a considerable degree in teaching.

Q3: How long have you been teaching at university?

Table 3: Teachers' Teaching Experience

Number of years	Number	Percentage
4	1	20
10	3	60
12	1	20
Total	5	100

Figure 4: Teachers' Teaching Experience



Concerning the teaching experience, (60%) of the total number of the teachers have been teaching at university for 10 years, while 20% of them have been teaching for 4 to 12 years. From these results, we can say that the teachers have a considerable teaching experience at the university.

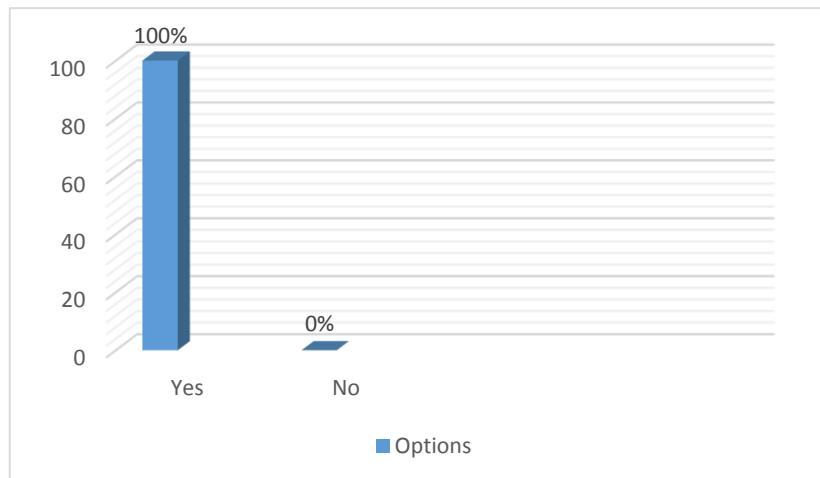
3.1.4.2 Section Two: Reading Skill

Q4. Does reading play a crucial part in language development?

Table 4: Reading Importance in Language Development

Options	Number	Percentage
Yes	5	100
No		
Total	5	100

Figure 5: Reading Importance in Language Development



According to the results obtained, we noticed that all the teachers (100 %) have the same point of view and they approved that reading plays a crucial part in language development.

Q5. If yes, explain why?

This question illustrates the teachers' explanations as follows:

"A good reader is a good English user".

"Reading is a receptive skill through which students find input to use in those productive skills".

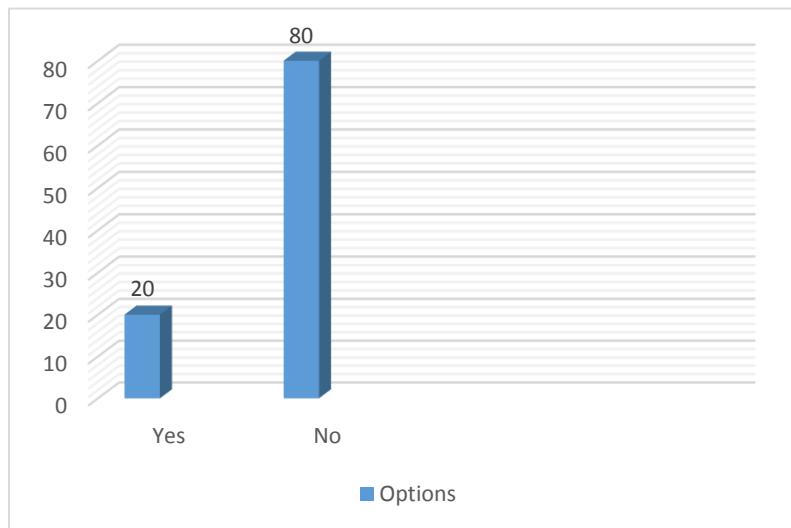
“Reading makes the students more involved with sentence patterns in English and enables them to acquire new vocabulary and knowledge about the culture of the language, which also helps them in expressing themselves in a foreign language”.

Q6. Do you think that reading skill is more important than the other skills?

Table 5: The Importance of Reading

Options	Number	Percentage
Yes	1	20
No	4	80
Total	90	100

Figure 6: The Importance of Reading



Most of the respondents (80%) agreed that reading is not more important than the other skills, whereas only one respondent (20%) reported that reading is more important.

Q7. In both cases, say why?

The provided explanations were as follows:

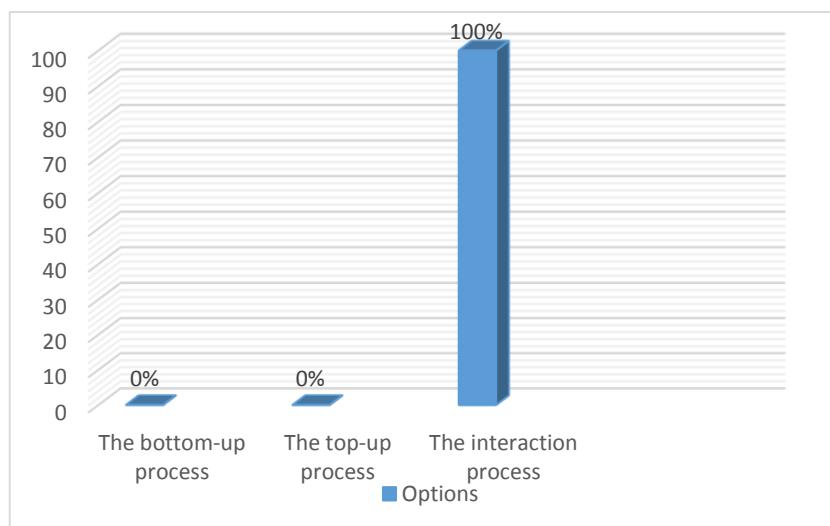
- (80%) claimed “*No, the language skills are of an equal importance, they are complementary and mastering all of them is essential to have a language proficient learner and to achieve linguistic and communicative competence*”.
- (20%) said “*Yes, but to some extend each skill has its own importance*”.

Q8. In your own view, the process of reading is a:

Table 6: Teachers’ Opinion about the Reading Process

Options	Number	Percentage
a. Bottom up process		
b. Top down process		
c. An interaction process	5	100
Total	5	100

Figure 7: Teachers’ Opinion about the Reading Process



From table 6, we can see that all teachers (100%) claimed that the process of reading is an interaction process. This means that the reading process is an interaction between the bottom up and the top down processes, an interaction between the text and the readers’ pre-existing knowledge.

Q9. How often do you encourage your students to read?

Table 7: Teachers' Encouragement for Students to Read

Options	Number	Percentage
Always	3	60
Often	1	20
Sometimes		
Rarely	1	20
Never		
Total	5	100

Figure 8: Teachers' Encouragement for Students to Read

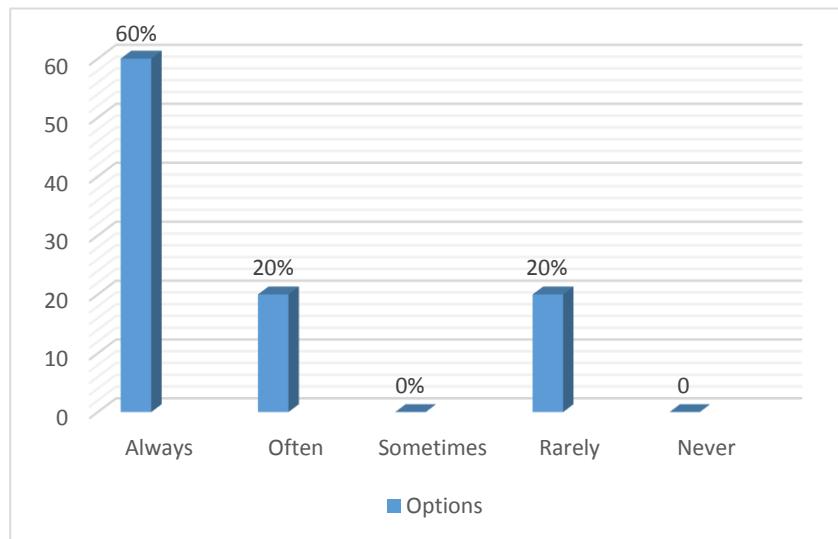


Table 7 illustrates that most of the teachers (60%) said that they always encourage their students to read; however, only two teachers with the same frequency of encouragement (20%) stated that they often and rarely encourage their students to read. That is, the teacher play a great role in pushing and encouraging the students to read.

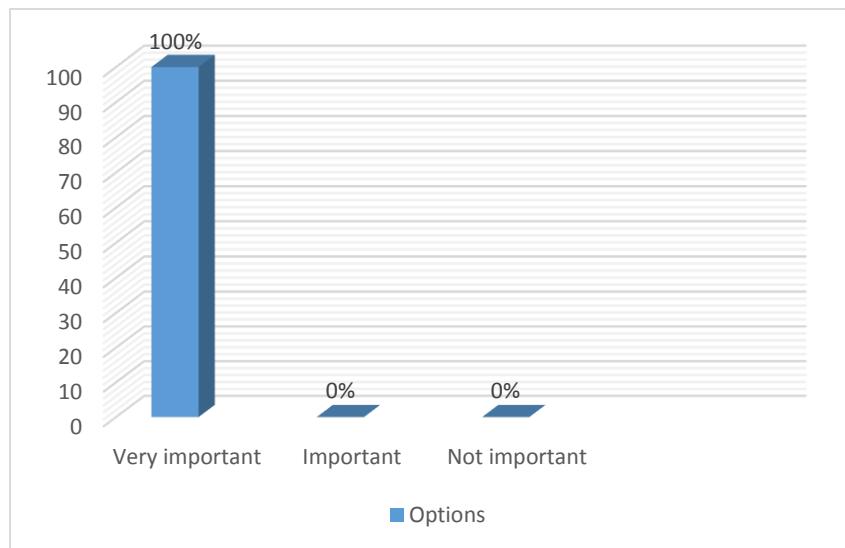
3.1.4.3 Section Three: Essay Writing Skill

Q10. How much do you consider writing as an important skill for EFL students?

Table 8: The Importance of the Writing Skill

Options	Number	Percentage
a. Very important	5	100
b. Important		
c. Not important		
Total	5	100

Figure 9: The Importance of the Writing Skill



The results obtained from table 8 indicate that all the teachers (100 %) answered that the writing skill is a very important skill for EFL students. The results indicates that the teachers of written expression are aware of the importance of writing for EFL students.

Q11. Is writing an easy task for third year university students?

Table 9: Teachers' Opinion about the Writing Difficulty

Options	Number	Percentage
Yes	1	20
No	4	80
Total	5	100

Figure 10: Teachers' Opinion about the Writing Difficulty

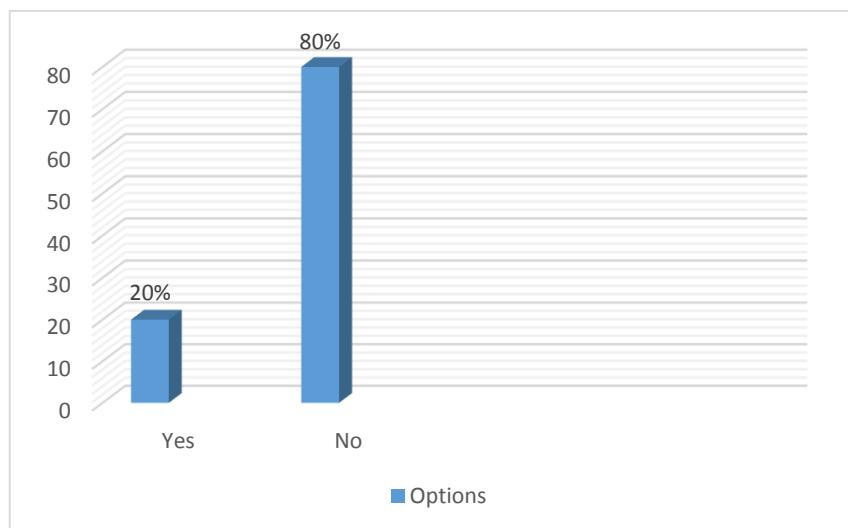


Table 9 reveals that most of the teachers (80%) view that writing is not an easy task for third year university students and only (20%) of them said that it is an easy task.

Q12. Please, justify.

In this question, the teachers were asked to provide their justifications about the Q11. Those justifications were as follows:

"Writing requires a lot of skills and prerequisite tools to write well".

"It is a heavy burden".

“The lack of practice”.

“The students encounter a lot of difficulties because of many deficiencies in their language use, vocabulary, grammar, and background knowledge”.

However, only one teacher reported that writing is an easy task, she provided the following justification for her answer:

“One productive skill needed at all levels and writing reflects the students’ mastery of the foreign language”.

Q13. Do you discuss the topic with your students before they start writing?

Table 10: Teachers’ Writing Method

Options	Number	Percentage
Yes	5	100
No	00	00
Total	5	100

Figure 11: Teachers’ Writing Method

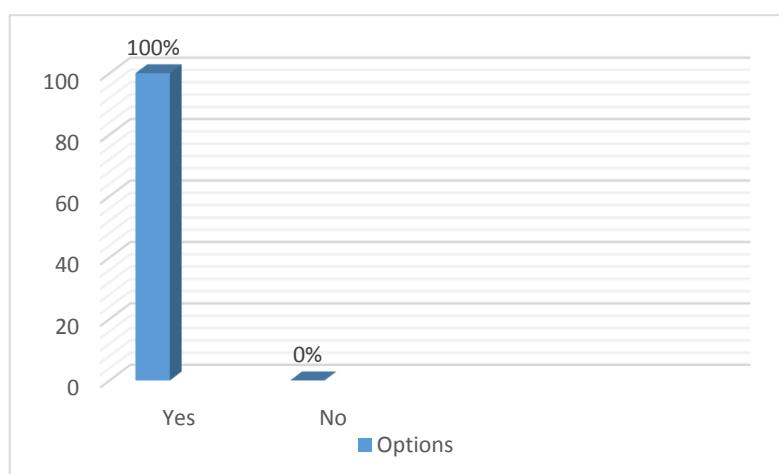


Table 10 shows that all the teachers (100%) follow the stages when teaching writing. The results obtained mean that the discussion of the topic or the brainstorming with the students is very important in the process of teaching writing.

Q14. Please, explain why?

The teachers' explanations are listed below:

“Brainstorming helps to choose and narrow the topic and making a good start”.

“To give the students ideas about what they are supposed to write and to make the task of writing enjoyable”.

“Discussing the topic with the students is a kind of brainstorming about the topic to provide them with some ideas which they can develop further”.

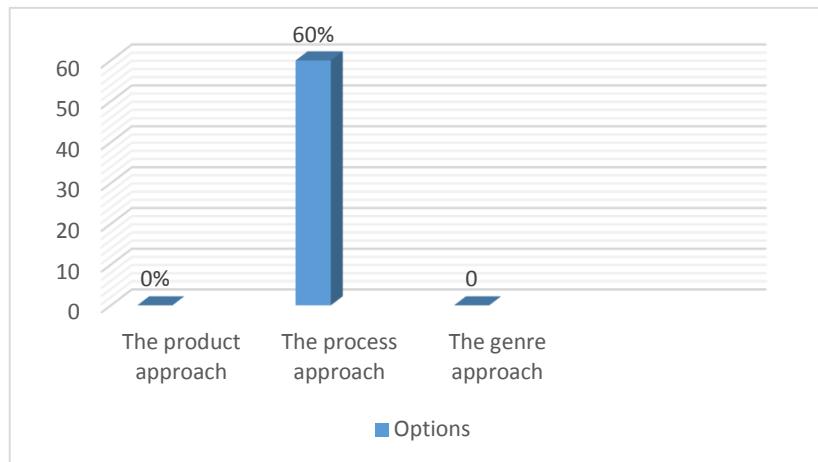
“To help the students get an overview about what to write about, to make the analytical process easy for them, so they can write about”.

Q15. Which of the following approaches do you follow in teaching writing for third year EFL students?

Table 11: Teachers' Approach to Teaching Writing

Options	Number	Percentage
a. The product approach		
b. The process approach	3	60
c. The genre approach		
Total	5	100

Figure 12: Teachers' Approach to Teaching Writing



The answers provided by the respondents, as shown in table 11, indicates that the process approach is the one which is used by the majority of the teachers (60%) in teaching writing for third year EFL students.

Q16. Please, explain your reasons behind your choice.

The teachers' explanations were the following:

“The process approach is workable with the situation of our students”.

“Writing is a process that consists of different steps and these steps help the students to write successfully”

However, in this question two teachers have proposed other different explanations:

“I use an eclectic approach”.

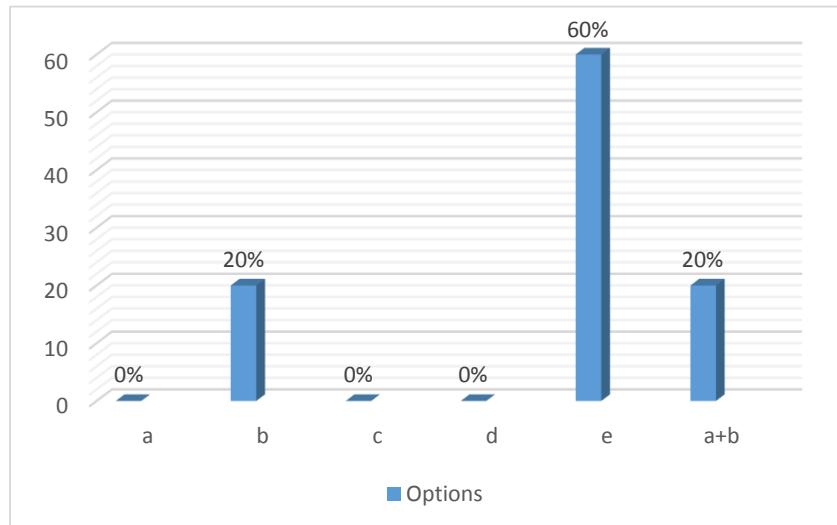
“The choice of the approach depends on the main objective set behind the writing activity”.

Q17. What are the aspects of writing that your students have problems with:

Table 12: Students Writing Problems

Options	Number	Percentage
a. Ideas organisation		
b. Conventions of writing (spelling, punctuation, capitalization...etc.)	1	20
c. Paragraph writing		
d. Essay writing		
e. All of them	3	60
a + b	1	20
Total	5	100

Figure 13: Students Writing Problems



From the obtained results, most of the respondents (60%) claim that their students have problems with all the previously mentioned aspects, and (20%) of them state that their students have problems in conventions of writing (spelling, punctuation, capitalization...etc.). Whereas, (20%) of them report that their students have problems with two aspects, problems with ideas organisation and conventions of writing (spelling, punctuation, capitalization...etc.). Through

the provided answers we can say that the majority of third year students have different problems while writing.

Q18. According to you, how can your students improve their essay writing skill?

Table 13: Teachers' Opinions about Improving Essay Writing Skill

Options	Number	Percentage
a. Practicing writing		
b. Getting constant feedback on their writings		
c. Reading in foreign language		
d. All of them	5	100
e. None of them		
Total	5	100

Figure 14: Teachers' Opinions about Improving Essay Writing Skill

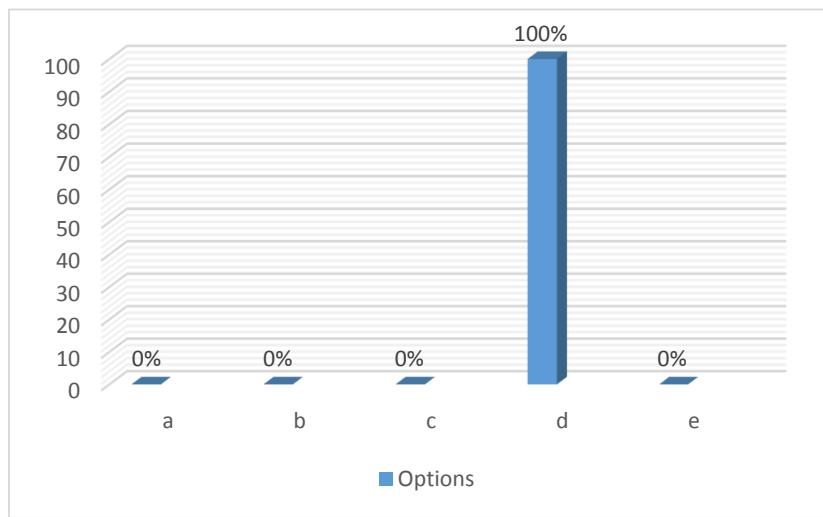


Table 13 demonstrates that all the teachers (100 %) have the same opinion; they commented that the best way for the students to improve their essay writing skill is through

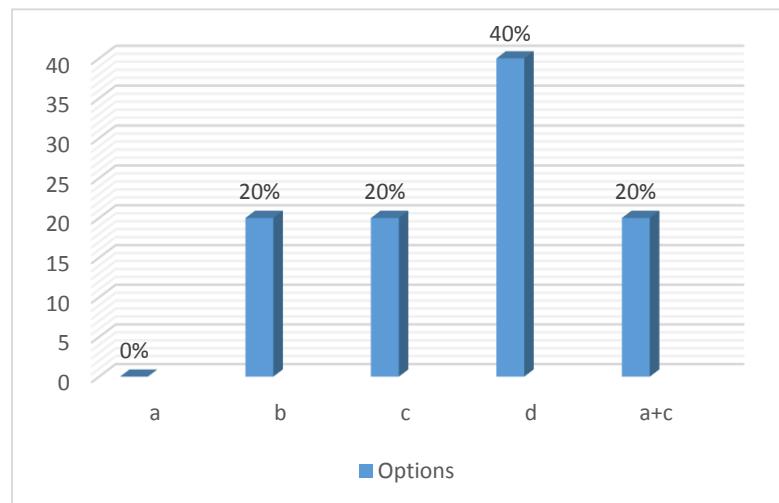
practicing writing, getting constant feedback on their writings, and reading in the foreign language. That is, producing a good essay entails a collection of aspects not just one aspect.

Q19. Do you think that the reason beyond the students' failure to write good essay is:

Table 14: Reasons of Students' Failure to Write Good Essay

Options	Number	Percentage
a. The lack of having rich vocabulary		
b. The fear of writing	1	20
c. The lack of reading	1	20
d. All of them	2	40
a+c	1	20
Total	5	100

Figure15: Reasons of Students' Failure to Write Good Essay



From table 14, we see that the majority of teachers (40%) opted to all the reasons, only (20%) claimed that the fear of writing is the reason beyond the students' failure to write a good essay, and only (20%) stated the reason of the lack of reading. However, (20%) of them reported that the lack of having rich vocabulary and the lack of reading are the most important reasons

for the students' failure to write a good essay. The results obtained denote that there are different reasons that face students to write a good essay.

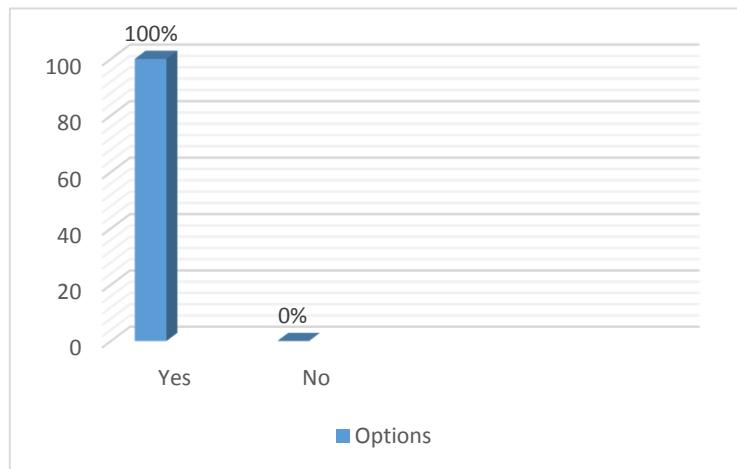
3.1.4.4 Section Four: Reading and Essay Writing Relation

Q20. Is there any relation between reading and essay writing?

Table 15: Reading and Essay Writing Relationship

Options	Number	Percentage
Yes	5	100
No		
Total	5	100

Figure16: Reading and Essay Writing Relationship



According to table 15, all the respondents (100%) claimed that there is a relation between reading and essay writing.

Q21. In both cases, explain how?

The respondents illustrated their answers as follows:

"Reading a lot enriches the students' knowledge and makes them able to write better".

“A good reader is a good speaker and a good writer”.

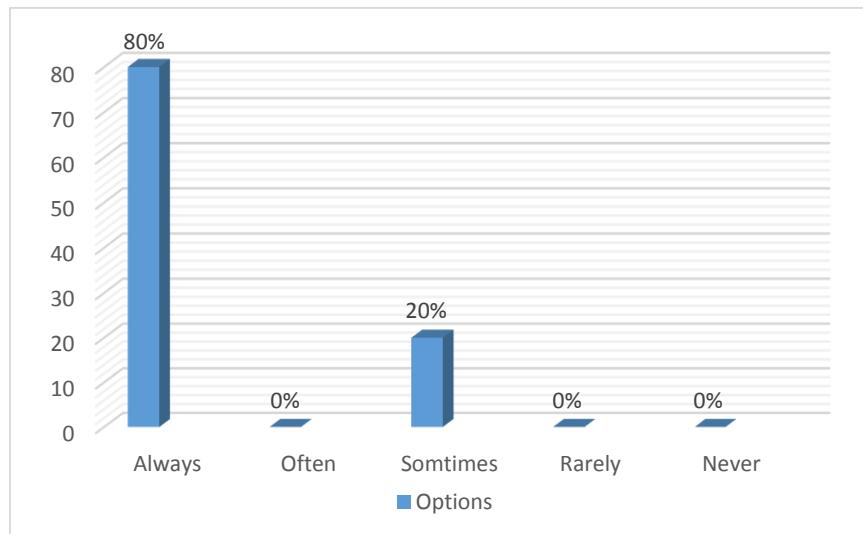
“Reading enriches the students’ vocabulary and gives a good feedback”.

Q22. How often do you support the relation between reading and essay writing during the written expression course?

Table 16: Frequency of Supporting Reading and Essay Writing Relationship

Options	Number	Percentage
Always	4	80
Often		
Sometimes	1	20
Rarely		
Never		
Total	5	100

Figure17: Frequency of Supporting Reading and Essay Writing Relationship



From table 16, we can see that the vast population of teachers (80 %) always support the relation between reading and essay writing. Whereas, (20%) answered that they sometimes support this relation during the written expression course. However, no respondents selected

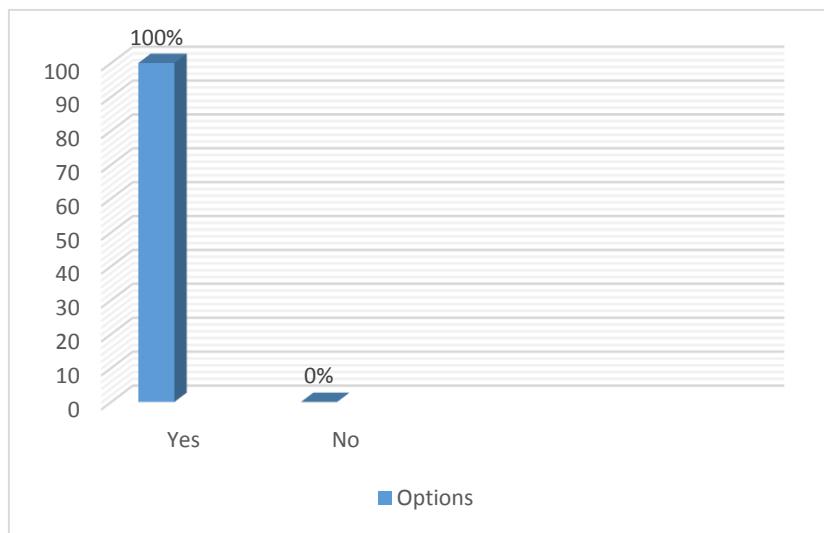
the options “often”, “rarely” or “never”. The results reveals that the majority of teachers are aware of the relation between reading and essay writing.

23. Do you think that making third year EFL students aware of reading is essential in essay writing?

Table 17: Students’ Awareness about Reading

Options	Number	Percentage
Yes	5	100
No		
Total	5	100

Figure 18: Students’ Awareness about Reading



From the obtained results, we have recorded that all the respondents’ answers to Q23 were “yes”, the table 17 reveals also a total agreement among teachers about the importance of awareness in essay writing.

Q24. Please, explain why

The respondents explained their answers as follows:

“Without reading the students would not have enough ideas, vocabularies and feedback. They should learn how to read so that they can write well”.

“They acquire the mastery of the language”

“Through reading they become well versed in a number of topics”.

Q25. What would you suggest to your students to help them improve their essay writing skill?

In the last question of the questionnaire, the teachers were asked to provide their students with some suggestions to help them improve their essay writing skill, their answers can be summed up in the following:

“First, they have to become a bookworm and start writing very simple things. Also, they have to learn certain writing techniques and strategies...etc.”

“To practice writing a lot because as it is said practice makes perfect”.

“Read more, write more, listen more and speak more”.

“To read in foreign language”.

3.1.5 Interpretation of the Results

The analysis of the teachers' questionnaire shows a consensus among teachers about reading and essay writing skills, furthermore, the relation between reading and essay writing as two important skills.

In the first section of this questionnaire, we have dealt with general information, the findings show that the majority of teachers (80%) are females and only one male, with magister and doctorate degree. In addition, they have different teaching experience at the university (from 4 to 12 years).

The section of reading illustrates that all teachers (100%) agreed that reading play a crucial part in language development but they elicit that this is not important more than the other skills. Furthermore, most of the teachers (60%) always encourage their students to read and all of them use an interaction process for this encouragement.

However, in the third section which is concerned with the essay writing skill, the obtained results reveal that all the teachers answered that writing is a very important skill but not an easy task for third year university students. In addition, because of its' effectiveness in developing students' composing abilities, most of the teachers (60%) have opted for the process approach to teach writing.

The last section, reading and essay writing, shows that teachers admit that there is relation between reading and essay writing (Q20, Q21). Moreover, from the analysis of this questionnaire, we can say that most of the teachers always support this relation during written expression course; they also agree that making students aware of reading is essential to produce better essays.

3.2 The Students' Questionnaire

3.2.1 Aim of the Questionnaire

The main purpose of this questionnaire is to collect data about the students' opinions and beliefs about reading and essay writing skills. Furthermore, it aims to point out the habits and abilities of students in those two skills, and to know their awareness of the relation between reading and essay writing. The questionnaire also seeks to find out the impact of reading on improving the students' essay writing.

3.2.2 Administration of the Questionnaire

The students who responded to the questionnaire were chosen randomly among the total number of the Third Year LMD students' population of the English Branch at Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra, this population includes 10 groups consisting of 413 students. 100 questionnaires were given to 10 students from each group randomly, out of 100, 90 questionnaires were handed back and the questionnaire was administered on 14th February 2016.

3.2.3 Description of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire involves twenty-five (25) questions organized in four sections. it includes closed-ended questions, respondents had to answer with (yes/no), tick the appropriate answer (s) from a series of options, or rank the options from 1 to 4 following a scale of decreasing order of priority, ending with some open-ended questions where the respondents were asked to provide some explanations or justifications.

3.2.3.1 Section One: Background Information (Q1- Q3)

This section aims at getting background information of the respondents. They are asked to indicate their sex (Q1), their experience in learning English (Q2), and to rank the language skills from 1 to 4 in terms of importance (Q3).

3.2.3.2 Section Two: Reading Skill (Q4- Q12)

The objective of this section is to generate information about the reading skill. The questionnaire starts with questions related to students' general experience with reading, their habits in reading, the practice of reading and frequency of reading in English (Q4- Q10). It also attempts to identify whether they are encouraged by their teachers to read or not (Q11), the last question in this section; (Q12) the respondents were asked to classify some reasons for reading according to their importance.

3.2.3.3 Section Three: Essay Writing (Q13- 20)

Section three seeks information about some aspects of the writing skill. First students were asked to explain their opinions about the written expression module (Q13- Q14), whether they find it an easy task to learn or not (Q15- Q16), the appropriate process they follow when writing an essay (Q17- Q18); it also identifies what is considered good essay writing in the respondents' view (Q19- Q20).

3.2.3.4 Section Four: Reading and Essay Writing Relation (Q21- Q25)

The last section of the questionnaire is about the relation between reading and essay writing, which skill is related to reading (Q21), whether the respondents read before they write an assignment or not (Q22- Q23). Furthermore, it aims at knowing the respondents' point of view about the impact of reading on essay writing development (Q24- 25).

3.2.4 Results of the Questionnaire

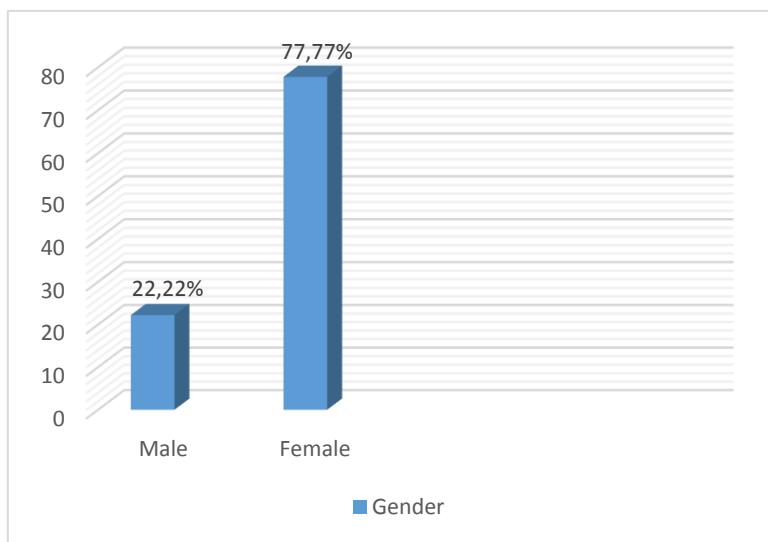
3.2.4.1 Section One: Background Information

Q1: Gender

Table 18: The Students' Gender

Gender	Number	Percentage
Male	20	22,22
Female	70	77,77
Total	90	100

Figure 19: The Students' Gender



Among 90 respondents, only 20 are male and 70 are female. That is (22, 22%) of the sample are male respondents while the rest (77, 77%) of the sample are females. This reveals that the number of girls is more than the number of the boys.

Q2: How many years have you have been learning English?

Table 19: Students' English Learning Experience

Number of years	Number	Percentage
3	27	30
7	8	8,88
8	5	5,55
9	14	15,55
10	32	35,55
11	4	4,44
Total	90	100

Figure 20: Students' English Learning Experience

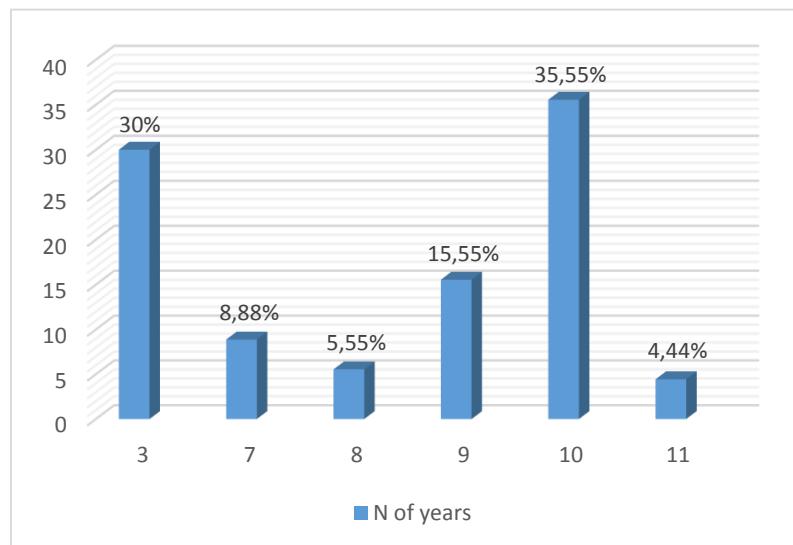


Table 19 shows that most respondents have been studying English for three or ten years.

However, these findings reveal that some respondents have misunderstood this question because they have only counted the years of learning English at the university.

Q3: Classify the following skills in terms of importance. (Rank them in order from 1 to 4)

Table 20: The Importance of Language Skills

Priority	Number	Percentage
1. Listening	20	22,22
2. Speaking	24	26,66
3. Reading	19	21,11
4. Writing	27	30
Total	90	100

Figure 21: The Importance of Language Skills

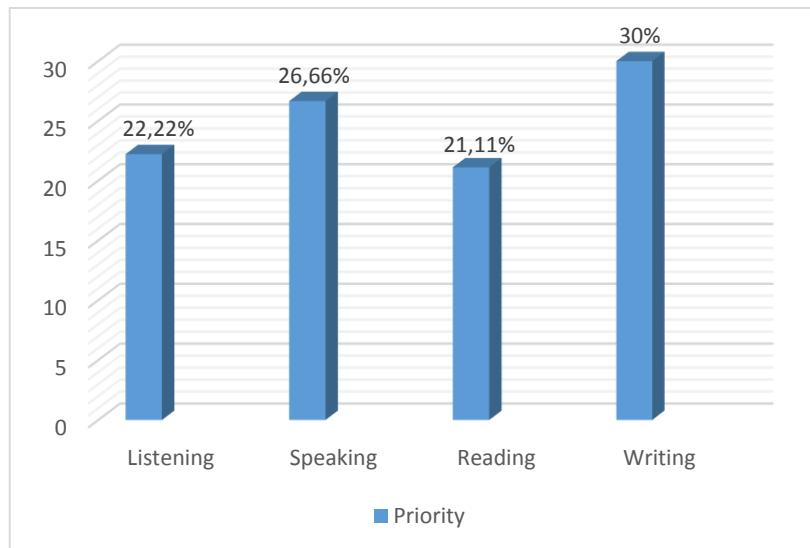


Table 20 illustrates that the majority of the respondents (30%) reported that writing and speaking (26, 66%) are the two most important skills. (22, 22%) said listening, and only (21, 11 %) of the students answered that reading has the last position in terms of importance. This means that the students consider writing and speaking as difficult skills that is why they gave them more importance, or may be because those two skills are productive one's so they pay more attention to them.

3.2.4.2 Section Two: Reading Skill

Q4: Do you enjoy reading?

Table 21: Students' Enjoyment of Reading

Options	Number	Percentage
1. A lot	35	38,88
2. A little	47	52,22
3. Not at all	8	8,88
Total	90	100

Figure 22: Students' Enjoyment of Reading

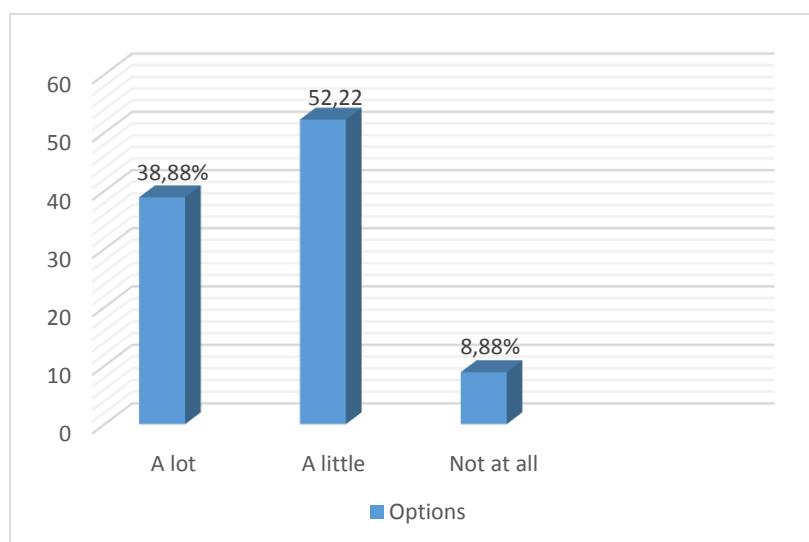


Table 21 shows that the majority of the students (52, 22%) choose the answer “2” that is they do not enjoy reading so much (only a little), whereas thirty-five respondents (38, 88%) answer that they enjoy reading a lot, and eight (8, 88%) report that they do not enjoy it at all.

Q5: Please, state your reasons.

This question is a follow-up question, where the students are asked to state their reasons for reading. The results obtained were as follows:

Out of 90 respondents, only 60 of them have proposed the following answers

A lot

“Reading improves my imagination which help me in writing”. (7 students)

“It is a tool for breaking the routine”. (3 students)

“The most important source of information for building a reach vocabulary”. (5 students)

“Reading improves my pronunciation and my speaking skill”. (6 students)

“It is my hobby”. (2 students)

“Reading a lot make me knowing a lot”. (5 students)

A little

“The lack of having good pronunciation”. (6 students)

“I am a visual student and I prefer to watch and listen”. (4 students)

“The difficulty of words while reading make it boring for me”. (2 students)

“I do not have time to read a lot”. (8 students)

“We enjoy speaking more than reading”. (4 students)

Not at all

“It is boring”. (3 students)

“We do not like reading”. (5 students)

- 30 students did not gave any reasons.

Q6: How often do you read?

Table 22: Students' Frequency of Reading

Options	Number	Percentage
Always	5	5,55
Often	12	13,33
Sometimes	52	57,77
Rarely	15	16,66
Never	6	6,66
Total	90	100

Figure 23: Students' Frequency of Reading

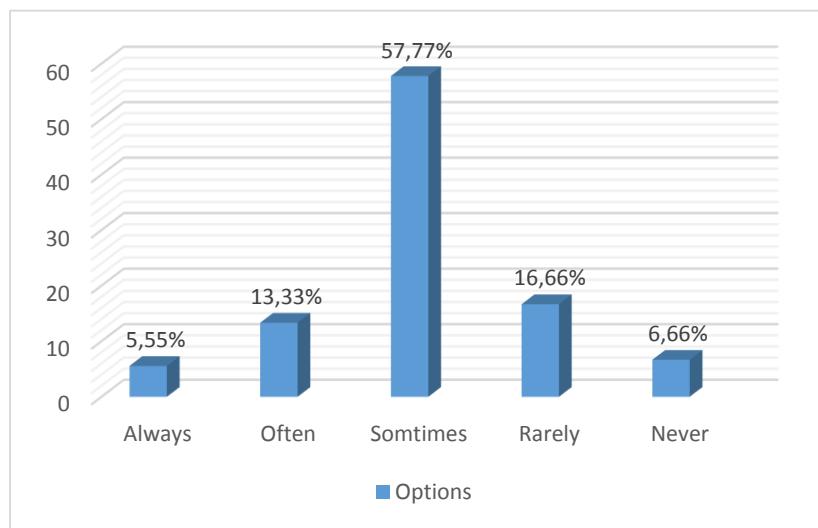


Table 22 indicates that (57, 77%) of the total population reported that they sometimes read, and (16, 66%) claim that they rarely practice reading. However, (13, 33%) answered that they often read, but unfortunately only (5, 55%) said they always read and (6, 66%) asserted that they never read. From these results, we deduce that there is a lack of reading among the students.

Q7: Please, explain why

53 out of 90 respondents who gave their explanations. It can be summed up in the following points:

Always

“I am interesting in improving my reading skill”. (2 students)

“Reading is my hobby”. (2 students)

Often

“Reading helps me to know more about what I am learning”. (4 students)

“It improves the writing skill (spelling, word order, vocabulary, and punctuation)”. (6 students)

Sometimes

“I do not manage my time well”. (11 students)

“We do not have enough libraries in which we can read because the library is the best place to read”. (14 students)

Rarely

“It is not my hobby and I read just when I am obliged to do it”. (11 students)

Never

“I do not like it at all”. (1 students)

“There is no motivation”. (2 students)

- (37) Students did not give any explanation.

Q8: How often do you read in English?

Table 23: Students' Frequency of Reading in English

Options	Number	Percentage
Always	4	4,44
Often	10	11,11
Sometimes	54	60
Rarely	15	16,66
Never	7	7,77
Total	90	100

Figure 24: Students' Frequency of Reading in English

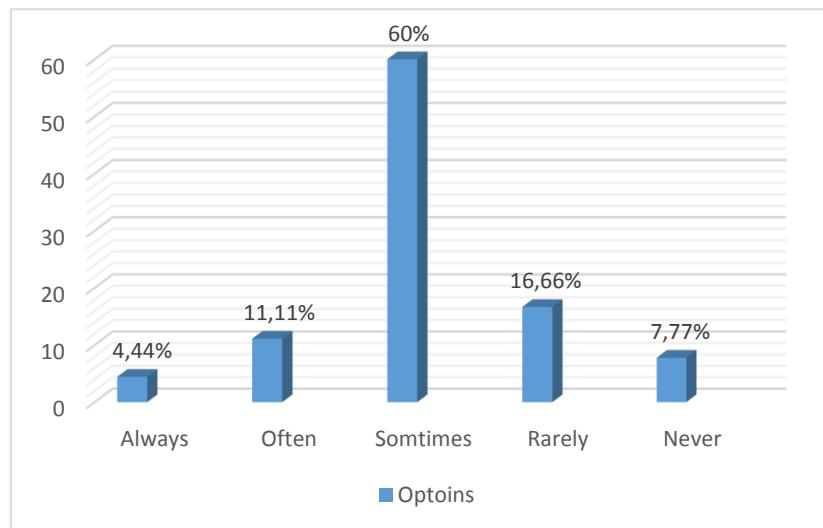


Table 23 illustrates that the majority of the respondents (60%) answered that they sometimes read in English, (16, 66%) said they rarely read, and (11, 11%) reported that they often read. However, only (4, 44%) asserted that they always read, and the rest (7, 77%) affirmed that they never read. These answers indicate that the respondents have a misunderstanding of the importance of the English language and the benefits of reading in this language.

Q9. Please, justify your answer.

Out of 90 students, 43 of them did not give any justification, while the 47 proposed their justifications as follows:

Always

“It is my favourite language”. (1 students)

“I want to improve my vocabulary and my level in this language”. (2 students)

Sometimes

“I am not a good reader in English”. (16 students)

“The lack of having a reach vocabulary hinder my understanding while I am reading”. (12 students)

Rarely

“I listen more”. (4 students)

“I like reading in Arabic or French not in English”. (7 students)

Never

“I feel boring”. (2 students)

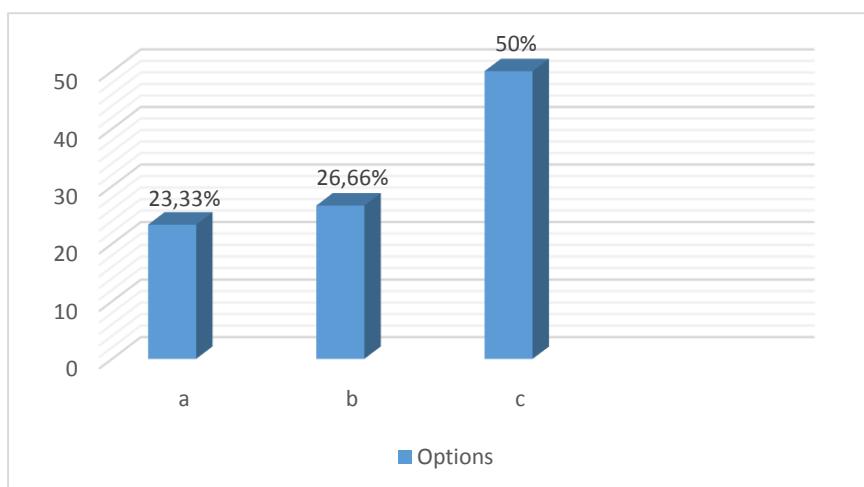
“The lack of the culture of reading”. (3 students)

Q10: When do you read?

Table 24: Students' Habits in Reading

Options	Number	Percentage
a. Only when the teacher ask you to read	21	23,33
b. Only during weekends and holidays	24	26,66
c. Whenever you have time	45	50
Total	90	100

Figure 25: Students' Habits in Reading



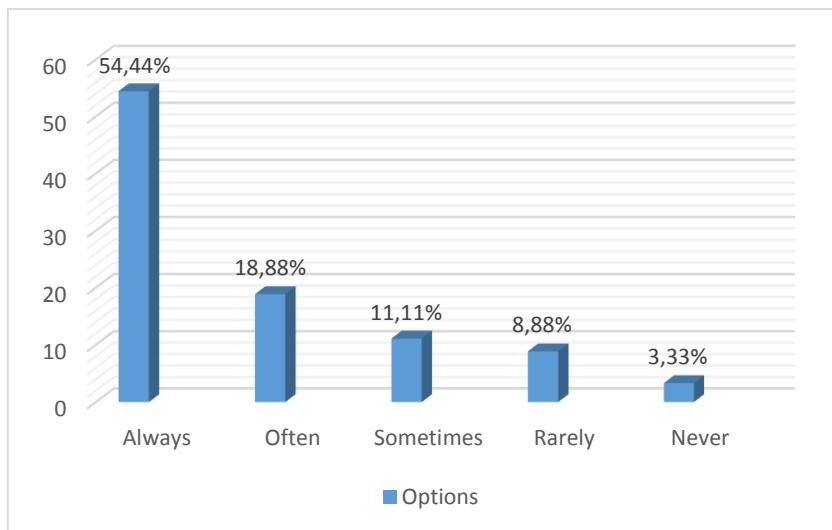
Concerning the habits in reading, (50%) of the total number of the respondents argued that they practice reading whenever they have time to do so, and 26, 66% informed that they read only during weekends and holidays. However, only (23, 33%) said that they read only when the teacher ask them to read. This is, third year students are not constant readers; they read only when they have time.

Q11: How often does your teacher encourage you to read?

Table 25: Teachers' Encouragement for Students to Read

Options	Number	Percentage
Always	49	54,44
Often	17	18,88
Sometimes	10	11,11
Rarely	8	8,88
Never	3	3,33
Total	90	100

Figure 26: Teachers' Encouragement for Students to Read



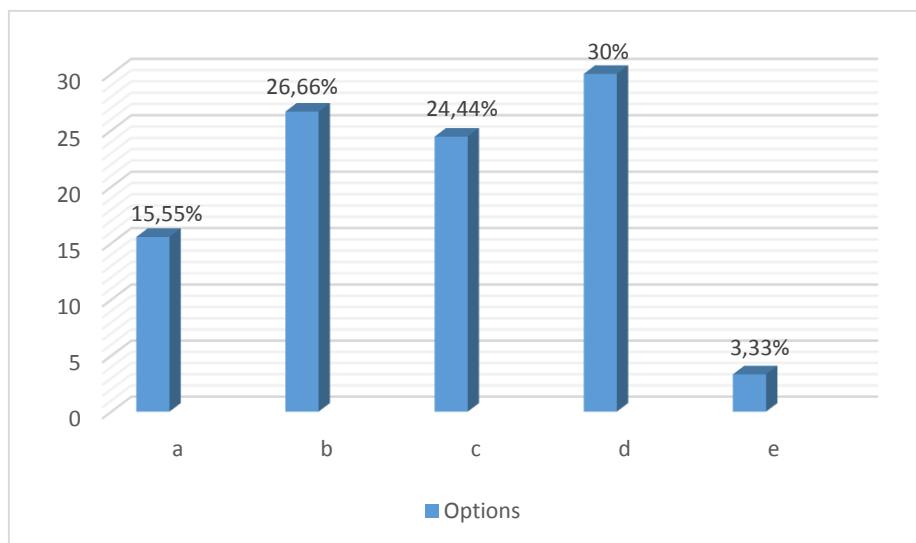
As shown in table 25, more than half of the respondents (54, 44%) claimed that the teacher always encourages them to practice reading, (18, 88%) reported that the teacher often encourages them to read, and only (11, 11%) said that the teacher sometimes encourages them to read. Also, (8, 88%) answered that the teacher rarely encourages them to read, while (3, 33%) reported that the teacher never does. These results indicates that the three first groups of respondents perceive the teacher as encouraging them to read and the two last groups see the teacher as obliging them to read.

Q12: How would you classify the following reasons for reading? Order them according to their importance for you.

Table 26: Students' Order of Reasons of Reading

Options	Number	Percentage
a. The teacher ask you	14	15,55
b. You want to learn new words	24	26,66
c. You want to acquire knowledge	22	24,44
d. You want to expose yourself to the language	27	30
e. For pleasure	3	3,33
Total	90	100

Figure 27: Students' Order of Reasons of Reading



From table 26, we notice that the respondents' order of the reasons for reading are based on giving more importance to building their language skills as the first and the most interesting reason , 30% said that they want to expose themselves to the language and 26, 66% chose wanting to learn new words. However, 24, 44% put wanting to acquire knowledge as the second reason and (15, 55%) reported that they read when the teacher ask them. Only 3, 33% answer

that they read for pleasure. That is, the students are interested on exposing themselves to language, to make a contact with language in order to build a background knowledge.

3.2.4.3 Section Three: Essay Writing

Q13: How do you find the module of “written expression?”

Table 27: Students’ Attitudes towards Written Expression

Options	Number	Percentage
d. Very interesting	44	55,55
e. Interesting	39	36,66
f. Not special	7	7,77
Total	90	100

Figure 28: Students’ Attitudes towards Written Expression

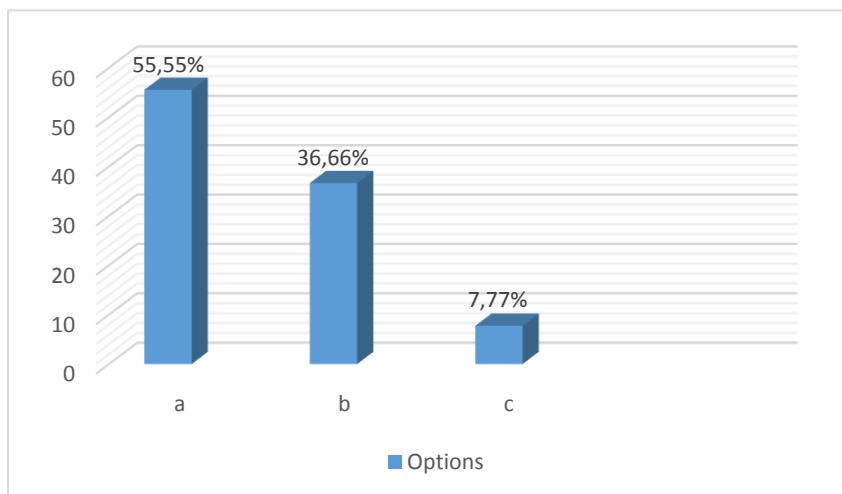


Table 27 reveals that (55, 55%) of the students find the module of “written expression” very interesting and (36, 66%) answered that they consider it as an interesting module. However, only seven respondents (7, 77%) reported that “written expression” is not interesting. These results indicate that the majority of students are aware of the importance of writing while the rest are not motivated to write or they are not interested to learn how to write.

Q14. Please, explain why.

This question is a follow-up to Q13, where the students are asked to explain their attitudes towards the written expression module. They explained their answers as follows:

Very interesting

- (15, 25%) of the students answered that the writing skill allows them to express their ideas effectively.
- (8, 47%) explained that through writing, “I can test what I have learned”, and (11, 86%) said that is a skill that we need in all modules.
- However (5, 08%) claimed that writing is the guidance of rules which helps us, and (10, 16%) clarified that this skill plays a great role in enhancing the other competencies

Interesting

- (25, 42%) of the students said that writing develops their levels in English and their styles through practice.
- (16, 95%) stated that writing provides them with the necessities of their professional life.

Not really special

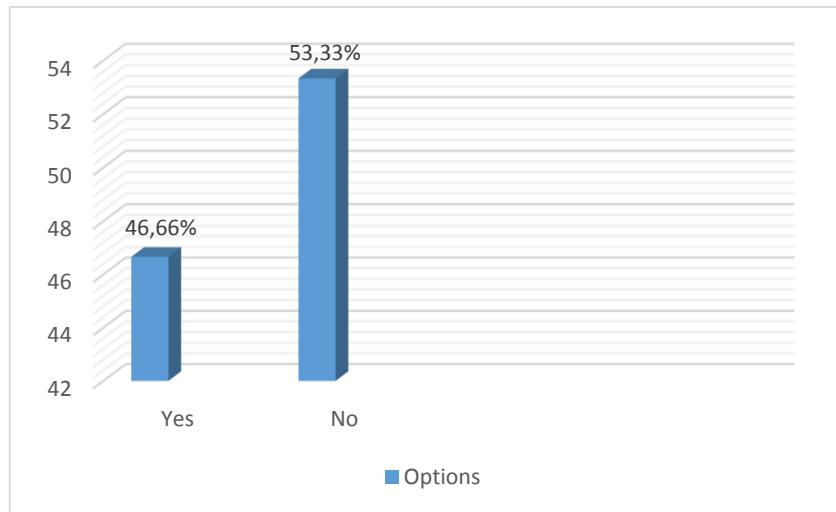
- (6, 77%) claimed that it is a difficult module and they do not like it.

Q15. Is writing an easy task to learn?

Table 28: Students’ Opinions about Writing Difficulty

Options	Number	Percentage
Yes	42	46,66
No	48	53,33
Total	90	100

Figure 29: Students' Opinions about Writing Difficulty



Responses to the question asking the students if writing is an easy task to learn or not show that (53, 33%) of the participants consider learning to write as a difficult task, and (46, 66%) think it is an easy task.

Q16. If no, please explain why?

Out of 48 respondents, 15 students did not give any explanations, whereas 33 gave explanations that can be summarized in the following:

- 30, 30% of the students said that writing is not an easy task because it needs a good vocabulary and a good background in grammar.
- (21, 21%) explained that it is a skill that needs practice in order to master it.
- (15, 15%) claimed that writing deals with diversity of rules.
- (9, 10%) of them answered that it is a skill that needs hard work.
- (24, 24%) of the students reported that writing is time consuming.

Q17. When you write an essay, do you:

Table 29: Students' Writing Method

Options	Number	Percentage
a. Start immediately to write and try to make everything perfect from the beginning	7	7,77
b. Take a moment and think of ideas	40	44,44
c. Write with non-stop then you revise and improve your writing	10	11,11
d. Following: prewriting, drafting, revising and editing stages	33	36,66
Total	90	100

Figure 30: Students' Writing Method

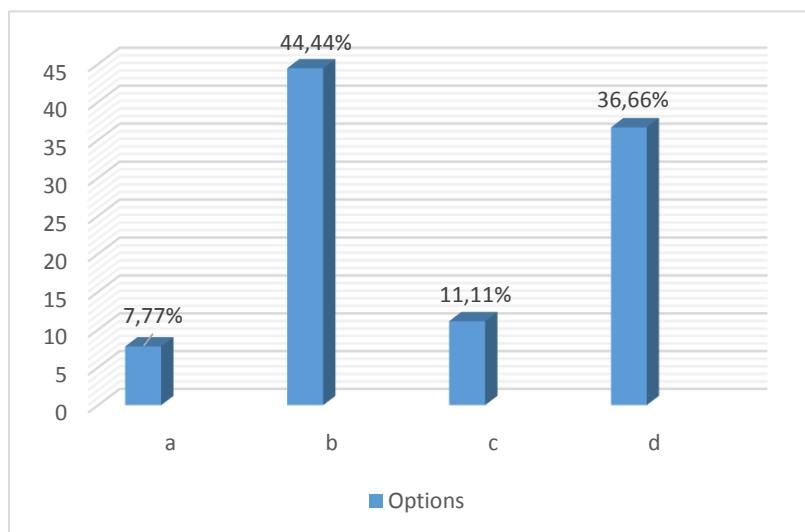


Table 29 shows that the great majority of the students (44, 44%) take a moment and think of ideas, whereas (36, 66%) of them think it is important to follow the stages of writing: prewriting, drafting, revising and editing. Only (10) choose to write with non-stop then they revise and improve their writing, also only (7, 77%) answered that they prefer to start immediately to write and try to make everything perfect from the beginning. These results denote that the most important aspect for the students is to take a moment and think of ideas.

Q18. Please, justify your choice.

This question completes Q17, where the students are asked to justify their choices about which method they use while they write. Out of 90 respondents, only 55 of them provided the justifications listed below:

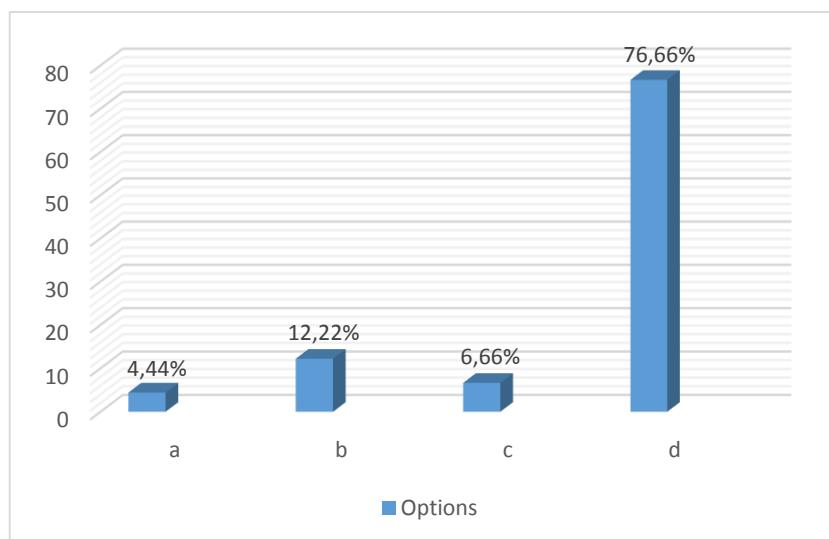
- (7, 27%) said that starting immediately to write and try to make everything perfect from the beginning because this method is the best which they always use, it helps them also to gain time during exams.
- In the second option, (18, 18%) of the students claimed that take a moment and think of ideas give them the opportunity to gather and organize their ideas that are related with what they are going to write. (20%) explained that they have problems with the writing stages, so they prefer to take time then they write. However, (9, 09%) said that writing needs time and thinking.
- (12, 72%) reported that they write with non-stop then they revise and improve their writing because “*the ideas comes in my mind quickly so I write with non-stop then I improve my essay*”.
- However, in the last option following prewriting, drafting, revising and editing stages the students proposed different justifications, (12, 72%) said that the writing stages help us to come up with a good and an organized essay. (23, 63%) argued that those steps help them in following their works, finding and correcting their mistakes while writing.

Q19. Good essay writing entails:

Table 30: Components of Good Essay Writing

Options	Number	Percentage
a. Correct grammar	4	4,44
b. Rich vocabulary	11	12,22
c. Good ideas	6	6,66
d. All of them	69	76,66
Total	90	100

Figure 31: Components of Good Essay Writing



From table 30, we conclude that the solid majority of the respondents (76, 66%) believe that good essay writing entails: correct grammar, rich vocabulary, and good ideas. (12, 22%) indicated that rich vocabulary is most important for writing good essay. However, (6, 66%) of them said that it entails good ideas and only (4, 44%) went for correct grammar.

Q20. Others, please specify.

Out of 90 students, only 31 of them suggest the following elements:

-Proper punctuation.

-Simplicity.

-Good style.

-Clear and good handwriting.

-Coherent and coherence writing.

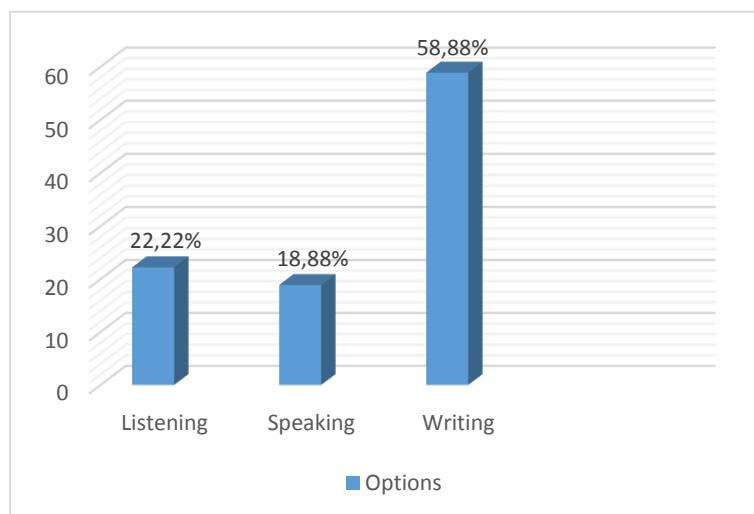
3.2.4.4 Section Four: Reading and Essay Writing Relation

Q21. Which of the following skills you think is related to reading?

Table 31: Students' Opinion about Writing and other Skills

Options	Number	Percentage
Listening	20	22,22
Speaking	17	18,88
Writing	53	58,88
Total	90	100

Figure 32: Students' Opinion about Writing and other Skills



As shown in table 31, the majority of the students (58, 88%) reported that writing is the skill that is related to reading and (22, 22%) said listening, while (18, 88%) claimed that

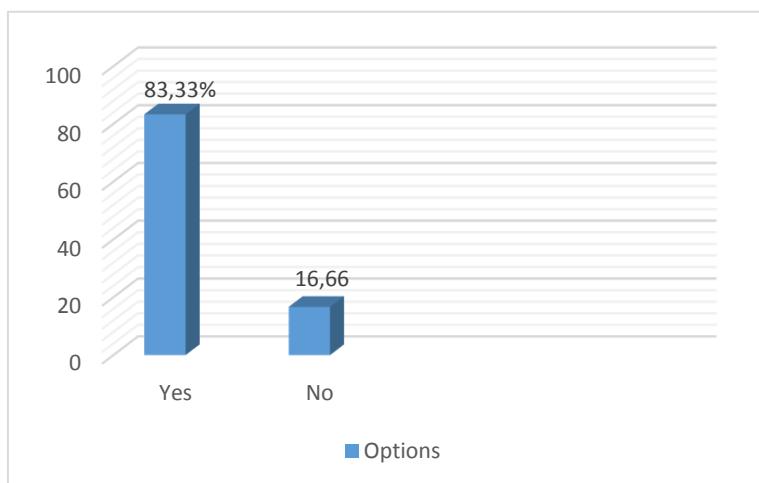
speaking is the skill which is related to reading. These results mean that most of the students support the relation between reading and writing.

Q22. Before writing your assignment, do you read about that topic?

Table 32: Students' Reading and Writing Assignments

Options	Number	Percentage
Yes	75	83,33
No	15	16,66
Total	90	100

Figure 33: Students' Reading and Writing Assignments



From the answers in table 32, we notice that most of the students (83, 33 %) asserted that they read before writing their assignments whereas the rest of the respondents do not read.

Q23. In both cases, explain why?

Q23 is a follow-up to Q22, where the majority of the respondents (83, 33%) said "yes".

Only 55 of them explained their answers as follows:

"We read to get more understanding about the topic that we have to write about it". (13 students)

“Reading help me to know the most important words that are related to the subject I am going to write about it”. (15 students)

“I read before writing in order to simplify and to specify what types of writing I am supposed to produce”. (16 students)

“Reading develops our thoughts about the assignment”. (11 students)

While the rest 15 respondents who answered “no” did not any explanations.

Q24. Do you think that reading has an impact on essay writing development?

Table 33: The Impact of Reading on Essay Writing Development

Options	Number	Percentage
Yes	88	97,77
No	2	2,22
Total	90	100

Figure 34: The Impact of Reading on Essay Writing Development

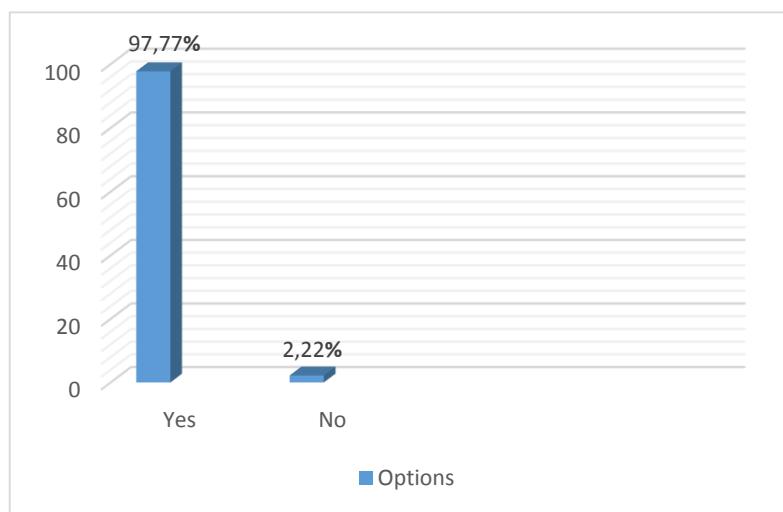


Table 33 denotes that the great majority (97, 77%) of the students are fully aware about the impact of reading on essay writing, while only two respondents (2, 22%) claimed that reading has no impact on essay writing development.

Q25. In both cases, explain how?

Out of 88 students who said “yes”, only 65 of them reported that reading has an impact on essay writing development. They provided the following explanations:

“*Reading helps me in understanding the different systems of writing*”. (8 students)

“*Reading is a way of avoiding and minimizing our errors and spelling mistakes which may occur in our essay writing*”. (5 students)

“*Reading develops the students’ knowledge and vocabulary by knowing new ideas, expressions and new words*”. (10 students)

“*By reading we have the chance to expose to different patterns and types of texts*”. (8 students)

“*Refreshing our memory by learning new items that help us in essay writing*”. (7 students)

“*Reading different books and texts serve students with different opinions and viewpoints that may help them while writing their essays*”. (11 students)

“*Reach our vocabulary to get good style*”. (6 students)

“*Good reading make good essay writing*”. (4 students)

“*Reading is the best guidance for writing*”. (6 students)

The two students who answered “no” explained their answers as follows:

“*Reading has a great impact on other skills like listening and speaking more than on essay writing*”. (2 students)

3.2.5 Interpretation of the Results

The analysis of the students’ questionnaire show many facts about our sample which consist of 90 questionnaires.

The section about general information reveals that the number of females (77, 77%) studying at the Branch of English is more than the number of males (22, 22%). They have different experiences in studying English, this is illustrated in (15, 55%) and (35, 55%) of the students have studied English for nine and ten years, this means that they are knowledgeable with some aspects of this language. This section also demonstrates that the majority of the respondents are interested in improving their writing (30%) and speaking (26, 66%) skills.

The analysis of the second section, the reading skill, indicates that the majority of the students have a lack in this skill, most of them (52, 22%) do not enjoy reading so much (only a little) and they sometimes read (Q6, Q8). Despite the fact, they have answered that their teachers always encourage them to read.

However, the results obtained from the analysis of the third section reveal that most of the students (55, 55%) find the written expression a very interesting module but not an easy task (Q15, Q16). From their responses, we can see that the majority of them use two methods while writing their essays, (44, 44%) prefer to take a moment and think of ideas, whereas (36, 66%) of them follow prewriting, drafting, revising and editing stages.

In the last section of the questionnaire, reading and essay writing, we find that the students have provided unexpected answers. (58, 88%) of them asserted that writing is the skill that has relation with reading. In addition, most of the respondents (83, 33%) reported that they read before writing their assignments, whereas in the last question of this questionnaire the great majority (97, 77%) claimed that reading has positive impact on essay writing. From these results, we can notice that the students are aware about the relation between reading and writing, and they know that reading has a great impact on improving their essays.

Conclusion

The analysis of the two questionnaires reveal that the students and the teachers have positive attitudes towards the reading and essay writing skills. For the students, they are important skills, however, for the teachers they are beneficial and will facilitate their work in teaching. In addition, the students and the teachers have supported the relation between reading and essay writing, and they have proved that reading has an impact on the improvement on essay writing. Overall, for both teachers and students, reading is the framework on which essay writing is constructed.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

The present dissertation attempts to study the impact of reading on students' essay writing improvement. It aims to illustrate the effects of the reading skill on essay writing. It also seeks to find out the teachers' and the students' opinions towards the impact of reading on essay writing, and to know whether reading is sufficient for students to improve their essay writing. In addition, for conducting this research we hypothesized: if third year EFL students at Mohamed Khieder university of Biskra are aware of the benefits of reading skill, they will be able to improve their essay writing style.

The first chapter of this study introduces theoretical background about the reading skill. It comprises a description of reading, a historical background of scholars' views about this skill. Furthermore, the chapter also shows the importance, the nature, the process, and the product of reading, and the most influential models (namely the bottom-up, the top-down, the interactive models). Then, it illustrates the types of reading (namely scanning, skimming, extensive and intensive reading). Finally, the chapter ends with reading in a second language.

The second chapter of the present study is devoted to essay writing skill. It begins by identifying some definitions of the writing skill and its importance, the approaches to teaching writing (namely the product, the process, the genre approaches), and second language writing. This is followed by the definition of essay writing, the major types of essay (namely the argumentative, the descriptive, the comparison and contrast, the cause and effect, the narrative, the process essays). However, the end of this chapter discusses reading and writing relationship.

The third chapter is the practical part of this investigation: the aim of this chapter is to test the research hypothesis through an analysis of two administered questionnaires, teachers' and students' questionnaires. The aim of this tool is to gather information from the teachers' and the students' opinions about two skills reading and essay writing.

The results obtained from this study indicates that there is a relation between reading and essay writing, and this relation is supported by both teachers and students, teachers during the written expression courses and students by given writing the opportunity to be the related skill to reading. In addition, the results demonstrate that the students' essay writing is really affected by reading from different angles for instance vocabulary, writing style, punctuation...etc., and the results of the two questionnaires reveal that the students and the teachers are aware of the impact of reading on essay writing improvement. Moreover, both teachers' and students' results indicate that in addition to the reading skill, a good essay writing entails: good style, coherent and coherence writing, more practice...etc. Furthermore, the solid majority of the population argued that reading is not sufficient to improve essay writing; they suggested other elements: good style, coherent and coherence writing, more practice, proper punctuation, simplicity, and clear handwriting...etc.

The results of the present study confirm that reading has an influence on improving the students' essay writing. Moreover, the results of the questionnaires also confirms our hypothesis that the students' awareness of the importance of reading will lead to better compositions. Consequently, from this study we can say that reading plays a crucial role in improving the students' essay writing.

Summary of the Findings

The results of the present study indicates that reading can help third year English students to improve their essay writing. The analysis of the teachers' and the students' questionnaires illustrated that there is a connection between reading and essay writing. Teachers support this relation during the written expression courses; however, the students' questionnaire report a considerable support to this relation by claiming that writing is the related skill to reading. In addition, the questionnaires' results revealed the effects of reading on developing essay writing, both teachers and students admitted that reading offers different contributions for instance: through reading we develop our vocabulary, writing style, punctuation, word order, pronunciation...etc. Furthermore, both teachers' and students' questionnaire results elicit the awareness towards the importance of reading skill and essay writing. They also argued that reading is not sufficient to improve essay writing; they suggested other elements: good style, coherent and coherence writing, more practice, proper punctuation, simplicity, and clear handwriting...etc. These findings reveal that the awareness of reading skill improves the students' level to produce good essay writing.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, and the effectiveness of reading in improving essay writing skill, the following recommendations can be summed as follows:

- ✓ One need to consider the importance of including fluency instructions within reading curriculum programs, in other words to include reading as an independent module.
- ✓ To support the relation between reading and essay writing in other modules.
- ✓ To give more practice to the writing stages during writing essays, because the majority of students avoid dealing with those stages especially during exams because of time.

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APPENDIX A

Teachers' Questionnaire

Dear teacher,

You are kindly requested to fill in this questionnaire which aims at gathering information about the impact of reading on learners' essay writing improvement.

Please, tick (✓) the appropriate box (es) or give full answer(s) whenever it is necessary.

May I thank you in advance for your cooperation and for the time devoted to answer the questionnaire.

Section one: Background Information

Q1. Gender:

Male Female

Q2. Degree (s) held:

License

Master/Magister

Doctorate

Q3. How long have you been teaching at university?

.....year(s)

Section Two: Reading Skill

Q4. Does reading play a crucial part in language development?

Yes No

Q5. If yes, explain why?

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

Q6. Do you think that the reading skill is more important than the other skills?

Yes No

Q7. In both cases, say why.

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

Q. In your own view, the process of reading is a:

- A. Bottom-up process
- B. Top-down process
- C. An interaction process

Q9. How often do you encourage your students to read?

- Always Often
Sometimes Rarely
Never

Section Three: Essay Writing Skill

Q10. How much do you consider writing as an important skill for EFL students?

- a. Very important
- b. Important
- c. Not important

Q11. Is writing an easy task for third year university students?

Yes No

Q12. Please, justify.

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

Q13. Do you discuss the topic with your students before they start writing?

Yes No

Q14. Please, explain why?

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

Q15. Which of the following approaches do you follow in teaching writing for third year EFL students?

- a. The product approach
- b. The process approach
- c. The genre approach

Q16. Please, explain your reasons behind your choice.

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

Q17. What are the aspects of writing that your students have problems with:

- a. Ideas organisation
- b. Conventions of writing (spelling, punctuation, capitalizationetc.)
- c. Paragraph writing
- d. Essay writing
- e. All of them

Q18. According to you, how can your students improve their essay writing skill?

- a. Practicing writing
- b. Getting constant feedback on their writings
- c. Reading in the foreign language
- d. All of them
- e. None of them

Q19. Do you think that the reason beyond the students' failure to write a good essay is:

The lack of having rich vocabulary

The fear of writing

The lack of reading

All of them

Section Four: Reading and Essay Writing Relation

Q20. Is there any relation between reading and essay writing?

Yes No

Q21. In both cases, explain how?

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

Q22. How often do you support the relation between reading and essay writing during the written expression course?

Always Often

Sometimes Rarely

Never

Q23. Do you think that making third year EFL students aware of reading is essential in essay writing?

Yes No

Q24. Please, explain why.

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

Q25. What would you suggest to your students to help them improve their essay writing skill?

.....

.....

.....

Thank you

APPENDIX B

Students' Questionnaire

Dear Students,

We would be very grateful if you accept to fill in the questionnaire.

The information you will provide us with serve a study about the impact of reading on learners' essay writing improvement.

Please, put a tick (✓) the appropriate box (es) or give full answer(s) whenever it is necessary.

Section One: Background Information

Q1.gender

Male female

Q2. How many years have you been learning English?

.....years

Q3. Classify the following skills in terms of importance. (Rank them in order from 1 to 4)

Listening Speaking
Reading Writing

Section Two: Reading Skill

Q4. Do you enjoy reading?

- a. a lot
- b. a little
- c. not at all

Q5. Please, state your reasons.

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

Q6. How often do you read?

Always Often

Sometimes Rarely

Never

Q7. Please, explain why?

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

Q8. How often do you read in English?

Always Often

Sometimes Rarely

Never

Q9. Please, justify your answer.

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

Q10. When do you read?

a. Only when the teacher asks you to read.

b. Only during weekends and holidays.

c. Whenever you have time.

Q11. How often does your teacher encourage you to read?

Always Often

Sometimes Rarely

Never

Q12. How would classify the following reasons for reading? Order them according to their importance for you.

- a. The teacher asks you.
- b. You want to learn new words.
- c. You want to acquire knowledge.
- d. You want to expose yourself to the language.
- e. For pleasure.

Section Three: Essay Writing

Q13. How do you find the module of “written expression”?

- a. Very Interesting
- b. Interesting
- c. Not really special

Q14. Please, explain why.

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

Q15. Is writing an easy task to learn?

Yes No

Q16. In no, please explain why?

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

Q17. When you write an essay, do you:

Start immediately to write and try to make everything perfect from the beginning.

Take a moment and think of ideas.

Write with non-stop and then you revise and improve your writing.

Follow: prewriting, drafting, revising and editing stages.

Q18. Please, justify your choice.

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

Q19. Good essay writing entails:

Correct grammar

Rich vocabulary

Good ideas

All of them

Q20. Others, please specify.

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

Section Four: Reading and Essay Writing Relation

Q21. Which of the following skills you think is related to reading?

Listening Writing

Speaking

Q22. Before writing your assignment do you read about that topic?

Yes No

Q23. In both cases, explain why?

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

Q24. Do you think that reading has an impact on essay writing development?

Yes No

Q25. In both cases, explain how?

.....

.....

.....

Thank you

ملخص

تهدف هذه الدراسة للتعرف على أثر القراءة في تحسين كتابة مقال لدى طلبة السنة الثالثة لشعبة اللغة الإنجليزية بجامعة محمد خيضر بسكرة. حيث تحاول هذه الدراسة البحث عن معرفة الآثار المترتبة عن مهارة القراءة في كتابة المقال، بالإضافة إلى البحث عن مدى وعي كل من الأساتذة والطلاب لمهارة القراءة. حيث نفترض كلما زاد وعي الطلبة لمهارة القراءة، أدى ذلك إلى تحسين كتابة المقال لديهم. ولتحقيق نتائج هذه الدراسة اعتمدنا على استبيان لكل من الطلبة والأساتذة، استبيان لمئة طالب للسنة الثالثة، واستبيان لستة أساتذة لمادة التعبير الكتابي في جامعة محمد خيضر بسكرة للعام الدراسي 2015/2016. حيث أظهرت النتائج أن مهارة القراءة لها دور فعال في تطوير كتابة مقال.