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**Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research**

**Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra**

**Faculty of Letters and Languages**

**Department of Foreign Languages**

**Section of English**



## **The Main Psychological Factors Affecting EFL Learners'**

### **Academic Writing**

**A Case of study of Master One Students at Biskra University**

**Dissertation submitted to the Department of Foreign Languages as partial fulfilment  
of the Master's Degree in Sciences of Languages**

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## **Dedication**

### **This work is dedicated:**

To my beloved parents and sister

To my dear brother-in-law, beloved niece and nephews

To my dear Taky (.)

To my dear family and friends

To everyone who supported and encouraged me

To all those who prayed for me

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My sister “Samira”, brother-in law “Zoubir”, my nephews “Talha, Mohammed Riadh, and Omar”and my adorable niece “Zahia Nour El Houda”

To all my true friends without names because you know yourselves

To all people whom I love

To all people who believed in me

Thank you

## Abstract

Writing is a challenging skill in English language even for natives due to its nature as a productive skill. Academic writing represents the most eloquent way of communication; its sophisticated nature makes all EFL learners encounter many difficulties in undertaking an academic writing task. Algerian EFL learners are not an exception; they find difficulty to master all the aspects of academic writing and to produce an adequate piece of writing. This research attempted to investigate the main psychological factors; namely, attitude, motivation, and anxiety affecting the academic writing of *Master One* students of English in the Department of Foreign languages at Biskra University. In order to confirm or refute our hypothesis which puts forward that these psychological factors have an effect on students' academic writing; a research instrument was used. Two questionnaires were distributed, one for the teachers of written expression (N=10) and the other one for a representative sample of *Master One* students (N=50). As a result, the findings obtained in this research revealed that students' academic writing level is weak. Their attitude towards academic writing is positive but does not affect their writing while the lack of motivation towards academic writing and their feeling of writing anxiety have negative effects on their academic writing level.

## **List of Abbreviations:**

**CA:** Communicative Apprehension

**EFL:** English as Foreign Language

**ESL:** English as a Second Language

**FL:** Foreign Language

**FLL:** Foreign Language Learner

**L1:** First Language

**L2:** Second Language

**SL:** Second Language

**TL:** Target Language

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## **General Introduction**

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## **General Introduction**

### **1. Statement of the Problem**

Academic writing in English for advanced levels is a challenge even for most native English speakers. One of the fundamentals of Higher Education is the mastery of academic writing especially for first year master students of English who are on their way to prepare their dissertations. It was noticed that most of EFL students confront serious difficulties when they intend to write academically since they have to make the best use of the materials and the skills they have learnt. Academic writing is the means by which learners demonstrate and prove their linguistic and communicative competence.

Psychology of the learner plays a major role on education in general. It became an essential branch in most educational fields as an affective factor on the learning/teaching process. As a result of being writing a mental and cognitive process, psychology has decisive effects on undertaking the different writing tasks.

Academic writing productions are addressed to a specific highly educated audience who usually will assess the product. Thus, it would put the students under the pressure of producing an appropriate piece of writing since it is the main reflection of their academic level. The majority of EFL learners suffer from many difficulties through the process of tackling an academic writing task. Most of those problems in writing could be the result of psychological factors (attitude, motivation, anxiety) which would affect the students. These psychological factors may differ from one EFL learner to another.

### **2. Significance of the Study**

This study emphasizes the importance of academic writing as a main requisite in high education. It aims to highlight the significance of the psychological factors (attitude, motivation, anxiety) in writing and how they could affect EFL learners' academic writing.

It would give insights to both teachers and students about the most influential factor, and how these psychological factors could be overcome.

### **3. Aims of the Study**

We intend in this research study to:

- 1- Define academic writing and provide an overview of its types, features, process, and importance.
- 2- Explain the relation between EFL learners' difficulties in academic writing and their psychology.
- 3- Investigate the main psychological factors which would affect EFL learners' academic writing and the nature of this effect.
- 4- Identify how attitude, motivation, and anxiety could affect EFL learners' academic writing.
- 5- Propose solutions for both teachers and students to overcome these psychological factors.

### **4. Research Questions**

This study seeks to answer the following questions:

- 1- Do EFL learners have a positive or negative attitude towards academic writing?
- 2- Does attitude affect EFL learners' academic writing?
- 3- Does motivation affect EFL learners' academic writing?
  - 3-1 which type of motivation is the most effective on EFL learners' academic writing?
- 4- Does anxiety affect EFL learners' academic writing?
  - 4-1 which component of anxiety is the most influential on EFL learners' academic writing?

5- What is the most influential factor on EFL learners' academic writing?

## **5. Hypothesis**

As an attempt to answer the former research questions, we hypothesise that:

- 1- H1: Psychological factors have effects on EFL learners' academic writing.
- 2- H0: Psychological factors have no effect at all on EFL learner's academic writing.

## **6. Research Methodology**

In order to undertake this study, a qualitative research was adopted. A descriptive method would be the most convenient according to the nature of the investigation. It permits to describe the psychological factors that could affect EFL learners' academic writing.

## **7. Population and Sample**

The population chosen in this research was limited to *Master One* EFL students and written expression teachers of the different levels at the Department of Foreign Languages at Mohamed Kheider University of Biskra. *Master One* students were chosen as a population because they have already studied writing for three years and they are on their way to prepare their dissertations in the next year. Therefore, they had more experience with academic writing and its difficulties. Ten teachers were chosen as a sample for this study. Representative sample of 50 *Master One* students was chosen from the whole population of 280 students.

## **8. Data Gathering Tools**

In order to test our hypothesis, the research tool used is:

A semi-structured questionnaire administered to *Master One* English students at Biskra University to probe the problems and difficulties they face in academic writing. The second one was directed to written expression teachers in Department of Foreign

Languages at Biskra University to investigate their point of view about academic writing problems faced by students and the role of psychological factors as a cause of these difficulties.

## **9. Structure of the Dissertation**

The dissertation is divided into three chapters. The first two chapters are devoted to the theoretical background of the study (literature review) while the third one to the field work and analysis of the gathered data, ending with evaluation of the results and some implications and recommendations.

The first chapter is a literature review of the nature of writing skill, definition of academic writing and some differences between the academic writing and the other types of writing. It includes an explanation for the rhetoric situation in academic writing and academic writing features. Furthermore, it sheds light on the relation between academic writing and plagiarism. This is followed by the description of different types of academic writing, its process, and its importance.

The second chapter is a literature review regarding the main psychological factors affecting EFL learners' academic writing. The chapter discusses three main psychological factors: attitude, motivation, and anxiety. It begins with attitude definitions, its theory, types, functions as well as language attitude and writing attitude. Moreover, it includes motivation definitions, its types besides the psychological, cultural, and social factors of motivation and writing motivation. Finally, this chapter exposes anxiety definitions, its role in language learning process, its types, and components plus writing apprehension (writing anxiety).

The third chapter represents the methodology used to investigate the theme of the dissertation. This chapter attempts to discover if psychological factors (attitude, motivation, and anxiety) affect EFL learners' academic writing. This would be realised

through the analysis and discussion of students' and teachers' questionnaires. Finally, a general conclusion, some implications, and suggestions for further research are provided.

# **Chapter One**

## **Academic Writing**

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## **Introduction**

The writing skill is the core of any language and the ability to write effectively in a second or foreign language became widely recognized as an important skill for success. To reach success in college or university, academic writing is a requisite since it reflects the academic level through assignments, exams, and dissertations. This chapter presents a literature review of academic writing; it begins with identifying the nature of the writing skill in general followed by a presentation of some definitions of academic writing. It highlights the differences between the academic writing and the other types of writing as well as explaining the meaning of the rhetoric situation in writing and the features of academic writing. The relationship between the concept of plagiarism and academic writing is discussed, in addition to, the types of academic writing, academic writing process, and the importance of academic writing.

### **1.1. Nature of writing**

For many years, writing was regarded as a secondary skill and neglected in comparison to speaking. In the twentieth century, the spoken language was emphasized as the only focus of language study while written one was seen as the written form of the spoken language. From de Saussure through to Chomsky many linguists ignored the written mode and concentrated on the one. This contributed in making writing a neglected area in language teaching for a long time (Brooks & Grundy, 2001). (Byrne, 1979, 1993) believes that writing is simply the use of graphic symbols that represents letters or combinations of letters associated with the sounds produced in speaking, although writing is considered as the primary means of recording speech, it was recognised as a secondary medium of communication. Furthermore, Harmer (2007) states two reasons for regarding writing as a minor skill. First, the spoken language is acquired naturally through the

continuous exposure to the language, whereas writing is consciously learnt skill. Second, writing in the past few centuries was exclusively restricted to church and state rulers and was not desirable for the other population.

Through time and as a result of the world's revolution and the scientific progress, writing has shifted to its new recent position as a significant means of communication. Many researchers investigated the sophisticated nature of writing which still debatable. Browne (1999, p. 1) states, "when thinking about writing it is helpful to make a distinction between writing as an activity and writing as a set of symbols and conventions", hence writing could be identified from different perspectives: as a set of symbols which represent the linguistic perspective and as an activity i.e. in terms of its functions and purposes.

Hyland (2003) views writing as signs and marks on a page or screen which manifest a coherent arrangement of words to form clauses, and clauses to form sentences...etc. They are organised and structured according to a system of rules that are linguistically determined. Crystal (1999, p. 214) argues, "Writing is not a merely mechanical task, a simple matter of putting speech down on paper. It is an exploration in the use of the graphic potential of a language a creative process an act of discovery". Accordingly, writing is not limited to be the act of marking graphic symbols and signs. Crystal extended its definition to be the entire process of exploring how language could be manifested in terms of visual graphics and a process of inventing meanings i.e. it is a means of communication as well. Other scholars like White and Arndt (1991) considers that writing stands for a thinking process which requires conscious intellectual efforts, retrieved from (Quintero, 2008). Flower and Hayes (1981) state that writing is a set of distinct, coordinated and organised thinking processes during the act of composing. Therefore, writing is a mental process since it demands conscious and deliberate efforts from the individual. Zamel (1992) confirms the cognitive nature of writing by describing it

as a combination of various cognitive operations which are consciously produced, revised, adapted, and corrected. Writing generates meaning, it can be defined as a meaning making-activity that covers individual and social purposes, plus being socially and culturally outlined, notes (Sperling, 1996).

Writing was defined by many scholars, it is not regarded as the mere operation of transcribing graphic symbols in a paper, writing is an individual cognitive process which expresses individual's thought, ideas, and reflects his personality. It is not restricted to be individual; it extends to be a social act governed by the rules of the cultural context which differ from one culture to another. However; writing is directed to particular audience and encompasses certain communicative purposes to accomplish.

## **1.2. Definition of Academic Writing**

The term "writing" is general to all types of writing, but "academic writing" is considered to be specific to the types of accurate writing tackled in college or university assignments. Nordquist (2014) argues "The forms of expository and argumentative prose used by university students and researchers to convey a body of information about a particular subject is called academic writing". Thus, it is strongly associated with university and college contexts. Bailey (2003) believes that academic writing is intended only for students or for individuals who are planning to study English in colleges and universities since they must write formal compositions as a part of the daily courses or other assignments for exams.

Bailey's definition sheds light on the nature of the people who are concerned with academic writing. It is a special type of writing concerns only particular individuals, often they are students in college or university, instructors, scholars...etc. To sum up, academic writing is limited to a certain users and recipients (audience) for specific purposes. He

stresses the uniqueness of academic writing in terms of audience because it has special purposes to achieve. According to him, these purposes could be summarized in: reporting a piece of research the writer has conducted, answering a question the writer has been given or chosen, discussing a subject of common interest and give the writer's view or synthesizing a research done by others on a topic. Oshima and Hogue (1998) emphasize the differences between academic writing as the main type of writing required in college and the other types of writing such as journalistic, business writing or personal writing. Those differences could be presented in terms of its special tone, audience, and purposes.

Coffin, Curry, Goodman, Hewings, Lillis and Swann (2003) affirm that learners have to produce essays, laboratory reports, research papers, articles or written examinations in order to attest their proficiency and mastery of disciplinary course content. All these written productions require special conventions of style, vocabulary, structure, and content to be followed. Whitaker (2009) claims that learners view writing formal essays and academic writing in general as extremely difficult, and they would describe it as being a torture because of its complexity. Academic writing requires a certain level of intellectual abilities and particular form, organization, structure, conventions and mechanics which some learners lack, thus they would be unable to handle their writing assignments and fail in producing a good piece of writing.

Gillett, Hammond, and Martala (2009) state that academic writing varies from the other sorts of writing; this variation is based on the "reader" for whom it is intended. In the case of university students, the audience concerned is the teacher or classmates. These written productions will be assessed and judged based on particular criteria which would evaluate how did the writer apply academic writing conventions (form, style, choice of vocabulary, tone....etc.). Moreover, (Elbow, 2000) spotlights the importance of the audience and asserts, "We write for audience who have authority over us", as a result

learners are asked to present a high level of linguistic competency and to select the language properly and accurately in their writings. Monippally and Pawar (2010) give a good comparison to highlight the significance of the language used in academic writing. They state “words are like clothes” (p.73); hence the writer should know how to impress his readers by the perfect use of the appropriate tone as well as expressing the ideas and information in a striking manner because the suitable language for the writing is vital and its choice is determined by the purpose and the context.

According to (Klein,1965 as cited in, Monippally & Pawar,2010) academic writing is an intellectual process which demonstrates the writer’s thought and point of views orderly and in a coherent structure. He has to be selective in presenting the data which will be analyzed. In addition, the writer should be able to differentiate the important detail which has to be implied in his piece of writing from the mere detail that has to be neglected. Academic writer should possess the capacity to analyze data and balance significance and length.

Finally, academic writing is a recycling of what the learner has heard or read by his own or in a particular lecture. It expresses the incorporation of the learner’s experiences and the facts which he had obtained during his education in a new accurate consisted formula. This new formula is constrained by particular conventions, structure, style, with specific purpose and transmitted to particular audience.

### **1.3. Some Differences Between Academic Writing and Other Writing Contexts**

Obviously, academic writing is totally different from other sorts of writing because when the individual write to express personal thoughts is totally different from writing to his teacher in order to report a course or to conduct an examination assignment.

Bowker (2007) points out that academic writing differs from personal writing in terms of the required structure. In personal writing, people can express themselves, feelings, desires, daily events in short paragraphs not in terms of an article or an essay with an introduction, body and conclusion. All these essentials are eliminated in personal writing while they represent the primary base of any successful convenient academic writing.

David and Liss (2006) declare any piece of academic writing needs to include four elements: the knowledge and the overall understanding of the topic being discussed, critical thinking skills, high formal vocabulary, and the correct grammar and punctuation. In the other hand, personal writing such as in literal compositions, novels, and stories are not concerned with the focus on critical thinking or on the high formality and the technique vocabulary. Personal writing tends to be simple and plain in vocabulary and in some cases the use of informal vocabulary is accepted. Moreover, Jordon (1999) as well confirms that the form and the focus on grammar, punctuation, and vocabulary are the major differences between the academic and the personal writing.

Another difference is stated by Bowker (2007) which is the nature of the topics. Academic writing covers ambiguous abstracts and concepts which require the reader to look beneath the surface and activates his thinking to analyze, investigate and explore the potential interpretations of these concepts and theories. The other types of writing are less sophisticated, their topics are straightforward, and thus it is easy to be understood.

Despite the fact that technical writing is considered as a type of academic writing, it is necessary to underline the distinction between the two. (Smith- Worthington & Jefferson, 2010) clarify that academic and technical writing has some similarities as well as some differences. They are similar in terms of coherence, style, unity, and organization whereas they differ in terms of structure, use and purpose. Academic writing is used in

educational fields in order to achieve educational purposes. For instance, it is used to explore different perspectives on particular topic, investigate certain historical events. It is utilized as a means of exploring, defining, examining and discussing the various phenomena and topics which would be involved in the educational process. While technical writing is more complicated, it would include boldface characters, headings, graphics and lists besides it employs more sophisticated and technical vocabularies and expressions which could be comprehended only by the few people (audience) who belong to the so called field.

#### **1.4. Rhetoric Situation**

The rhetorical situation is pivotal concept in academic writing which writers should take into consideration. If the writer is not able to understand this concept, he will not be capable to undertake an academic writing task. (Vandermeij, Meyer, Rys, & Sebranek, 2012) make an illustration to explain the term “rhetoric”, the painter draws a piece of work using a set of tools to convey a certain message which presents his point of view to other people about a particular concept, object...etc. The public are asked to understand the message behind the painter’s artwork. While in writing, the writer depends on certain conventions to convey his views in a particular context. The sender (writer), message, medium, receiver (target audience), and context are the basics of the “rhetoric situation”. Written texts travel through time and place, thus the reader is not always in the same context of the writer to grasp his message.

The approaches to understand what to write and the meaning of others’ writings are limited to issues which Bazerman (2013) calls, the code (spelling, vocabulary, grammar, syntax, and style). Bazerman views rhetoric as a practical reflection and art of strategic utterance in context, from both points of view, of the writer and of the reader. The

rhetoric assists in interpreting the use of the words effectively and to understand what others endeavor to do by their words. The rhetoric is a language art that depends on the needs, purposes and possibilities of the participants (writer and reader). Johnson-Sheehan and Pain (2012, p. 12) state, “Before you start writing any text, you should first gain an understanding of your rhetorical situation”. In other words, the comprehension of the rhetorical situation makes the writer more conscious and aware of his audience needs, the necessary materials and conventions to obtain the best delivery of the intended message and the knowledge of how to limit his work to the academic setting.

## **1.5. Features of Academic Writing**

Being college students imposes the use of academic writing in all aspects and stages of education. Academic writing is a distinctive type of writing which explores, investigates, questions, analyzes, explains and interprets the collected findings. To write academically, there are some conventions which the learner should be committed to; these conventions represent the main features which characterize the academic writing from other types of writing.

### **1.5.1 Logical Organization**

The organization is vital in any written production especially in academic writing since it reflects to which extent the piece of writing is systematic. Whitaker (2009) asserts that students who are committed to the logical structure and organization (introduction, body, and conclusion) produce well shaped assignments which influence the level of the reader’s expectations on the writing production, because a well-organized assignment would indicate a good writing quality. In addition to the organization of the structure, the ideas, thoughts, and facts presented in the assignment should be ordered and organized as

well. Davis (2005) confirms “Organization and development are concepts that cannot be separated. It may be that a second point in your text will not be understood until the first point is developed.” (p.26). Therefore, ambiguity should be eliminated as possible in academic writing and the ideas must be ordered logically. Davis suggests that the successful academic writer is the one who set specific questions to be answered in his writing such as who did this?, how did he do it? , what does he mean?..... A logical and well- organized piece of writing would be the result of these continuous various questions.

### **1.5.2 Concise and Precise (Brief)**

Academic writing states facts which are confirmed and accurate, the article *How to improve your academic writing* (2014) emphasizes the importance of being concise and precise by using the most appropriate vocabularies and terminology, however; avoiding redundancy which accompanies the use of ambiguous and sophisticated terms such the use of synonyms, opposites and additional explanations would contribute in producing a consistent piece of writing. Long essays and wordiness had never been a sign of academic writing whereas it has triggered by being “straightforward to the point”.

### **1.5.3 Formality**

Academic writing language is a language of persuasion and eloquence where formality is the key feature of it. While writing academically, learners are not expected to use the most formal language only but to avoid abbreviations, colloquialisms and slang expressions as well. Accordingly, Tylor (2009) points out “Academic language does not need to be stuffy. Even so, the colloquialisms of conversation and the informalities of advertising copy and of certain newspapers and magazines are best avoided “(p. 232). Tylor notes the importance of eliminating three major elements. First, the use of personal

pronouns such as “I, you, or we” should be eliminated because it contradicts with the objective nature of the academic writing. Second, the abbreviation should not be used except after mentioning or identifying the full name of the term it stands for i.e. after writing the name out in full, its abbreviation should follow it in parentheses. Then, it could be used instead of the full name of the term. Third, the use of contractions like didn’t, he’s, don’t, she’ll etc....is totally prohibited in academic writing.

#### **1.5.4 Clarity and Relevance**

Barrass (2005) declares that each sentence should be a complete and cautiously selected and assembled without any ambiguity, and it has to be appropriate and relevant to the context so there will be no misunderstanding probability. The effective academic writer recognizes the significance of making his writing as clear as possible in order to grasp the readers’ intention. Furthermore, in academic writing, ideas and thoughts discussed should be carefully selected and extremely coherent and relevant to each other and to the main topic. The information, the facts and the ideas discussed in an academic piece of writing need to be appropriate and logically relevant to each other simultaneously with being submitted in a smooth and clear way in order to obtain academic writing main goal which is persuading and convincing its readers.

#### **1.5.5 Objectivity**

The focus of the academic writing is on the fact and the argument rather than personal point of views. Scholars such as Fulwiler (2002), assumes that the learner have the right to express and demonstrate their personal point of views and judgments simply in certain disciplines that are interpretive one such as philosophy, history and literature. In the other hand, quantitative disciplines such as concrete sciences physics, chemistry, and

mathematics and social sciences require the objectivity of the writer. Hence, the academic writer in the previous disciplines should confirm his writing by accurate and convincing evidences, statistics, and documents....etc. Gillet, Hammond & Martala (2009) affirm that the audience of the academic writing aim to discover what had the writer studied and learnt and how could this led him to the interpretations and conclusions he had offered. The beliefs and thoughts presented have to be supported by books, lectures, reading, discussions, and research to be valuable. In the discipline of foreign language learning, student are required to convey their personal point of views and include their thoughts and judgement about the topic but as a secondary requisite after presenting their topic supported by arguments and evidences. In FL classes, learners are asked to write academically and objectively as well as giving their opinions about the topic to reflect their understanding and comprehension of it.

### **1.5.6 Correct Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling**

In any written product, the correct and good grammar, punctuation and spelling are vital conventions which learner should master and use properly. It indicates the proficiency and expertise of the writer. In this context, Murphy (2009) focuses on the effect of the incorrect grammar and punctuation which result in a negative evaluation of the piece of writing. When the reader notices many mistakes in grammar, punctuation or spelling unconsciously he would undervalue the piece of writing and make judgments that the writer is not capable and proficient to handle with the assignment. In contrast, the accurate and good use of grammar, punctuation and spelling give a good image about the writer and his level and would help in overrating the piece of writing. Therefore, the writer should focus on improving his grammar, punctuation and spelling in order to produce an appropriate and valuable piece of writing.

## **1.6. Plagiarism and Academic Writing**

Historically, the term “plagiarism” has always been associated with immorality. One of the most well-known definitions of plagiarism in writing was given by Ragen (1987) “To take a piece of writing without acknowledging the creator is plain theft” (p.A39), the metaphor of “plagiarism is a theft” had been widely used as a general identification of plagiarism. While Pecorari (2010), considers plagiarism as being the result of the rejection to engage in the writing process in a right and legitimate way. However, when learners are not able to write or when they fail to be competent and could not handle the writing task, they tend to use plagiarism as an easy solution to produce a good piece of writing without expanding any efforts. In academic writing, the mental property of ideas and writings is strongly appreciated and plagiarism is firmly unaccepted.

Plagiarism is not about borrowing from other authors’ writings and compositions; it is about concealing the source of the idea or information mentioned in the composition. Another definition of plagiarism by Pecorari (2010), “The use of words and/or ideas from another source, without appropriate attribution, and with the intention to deceive writing...” (p.04). Accordingly, plagiarism is associated with the intention as well; the person plagiarizes when he deliberately uses words or expressions of another person with the will to hide the original source of these expressions and imputes them to himself.

Gillett, Hammond, and Martala (2009), spotlight the importance of referring to the authentic source or original author of any borrowed ideas, terms or expressions in order to eliminate plagiarism and save the mental property. Academic writing sanctifies the authenticity and originality and extremely refuses all types of plagiarism because it stands for academic cheating, thus the academic writing imposes the use of references, which is considered as a sub-skill in academic writing, to cite the original sources of any idea or word.

## **1.7. Types of Academic Writing**

Any academic piece of writing serves for specific purposes which Murray and Hughes called “patterns”, these patterns organize the text and direct the reader to understand the conveyed message of the writer. These patterns are definition, argumentation, description, classification, cause and effect, comparison and contrast. More than one pattern could be combined and used in the same work such as in dissertations. These patterns are the tool which the writer exploits to reach specific set of objectives in his writing.

### **1.7.1 Definition**

One of the most significant functions that academic writing would serve is defining. Vandermeij and others declare, “Writers compose definitions for a number of reasons—to correctly define a misunderstood term, to deepen or re-direct its meaning, to plumb a term’s history, or to entertain readers.” (2012, p. 232). Generally, this type of writing has three main functions. First, it reveals the writers point of view and perception of the concepts. Second, it represents an effective technique in writing process progression. Finally, it aids in clarifying the ideas and concepts discussed and structuring the piece of writing. Definition pattern is essential in improving the writing clarity and coherence. Without definitions, the reader would lose the interest because of the ambiguity of concepts. Therefore, terminology should be clear, precise and concise in order to maintain reader’s interest in the piece of writing.

### **1.7.2 Argumentation**

It is a type of compositions in which the writer defends his own point of view; the writer believes he is right hence he attempts to prove the fault of the people whose

opposite point of view, states Wyldek (2008). This type of writing aims to persuade and convince the reader to adopt a particular point of view which is approved by the writer. It involves the integration of strong logical evidences, facts, statistics, and demonstrations presented through a good and proper language i.e. the vocabularies should be efficiently selected in order to gain the readers' support. The successful argumentation in academic writing requires the blend of both content (strong evidence) and terminology (the good use of language).

### **1.7.3 Description**

Academic writing deals with complicated terms in comparison with other kinds of writing. In order to produce a good and clear piece of writing, learners are asked to exhibit accurate explanations. Description is one of the best ways to simplify the intended meanings especially when dealing with an object with its component parts, a system (sequence of events), or process, (Gillett, Hammond & Martala,2009). Firstly, for an object it is required to explain the elements, or the components of an object, as well as describing the functions of each element. Whereas in the case of sequence of elements, a chronological order should be used in order to produce an organized piece of writing. In this type of description, linking words such as: first, second, before, after, subsequently, earlier, until, during...etc. are necessary. In describing a process, certain steps should be taken into consideration. For instance, when describing the term "research", the academic writer would present its main steps that are: identifying a problem, reviewing literature, stating hypothesis, collecting and analyzing data, then generalizing the findings.

### **1.7.4 Classification**

Classification is a very important type of academic writing, it is an organizational strategy that assists writers to simplify and make sense of large or sophisticated set of objects, the academic writer needs to exploit this classification strategy effectively in dividing the topic into individual items or parts which could be easily arranged into clearly discernible categories or groups (Vandermeijer et al. 2012). The division and classification make the text more organized and facilitate for the reader the comprehension of the different parts of the topic.

### **1.7.5 Cause and effect**

Generally academic writers consider cause and effect as useful strategy which they tend to exploit in their writing. It is used when the writer is discussing the reasons behind the occurrence of certain event or phenomena or when he is asked to explain the negative or positive results a thing (object, phenomenon, event...etc.) has on something else. In this context, Vandermeijer and others cite "In a cause and effect essay, the writer develops the thesis through cause and effect reasoning. That is, she or he analyzes and explains the causes, the effects, or both the causes and the effects of a phenomenon."(2010,p.163). In other words, there are two main organizations in writing a cause and effect essay. First the block, in which the writer starts by mentioning all the causes together in a form of one or multiple trailed paragraphs, then he discusses the effects in another block of paragraphs. The second is the chain organization. In this type of organization the writer points out each cause and its followed effect in the same paragraph.

### **1.7.6 Comparison and Contrast**

Comparison and contrast essays are used to explore and understand the differences and similarities of the discussed subjects because identifying them would approximate the intended meaning to the reader, Vandermeij et al (2012). Moreover, the same like cause and effect essays, comparison and contrast would be structured in a block form by dealing with the whole subject at once then moving to the next one. The second organizational form is the chain in which the writer deals with the subject in terms of points; the writer compares and contrasts a single feature or trait in both subjects at once then he moves to the next feature.

## **1.8. Academic Writing Process**

Academic writing is not an easy task because it is the reformulation of the previous knowledge about the topic integrated with linguistic competence the learner already has, presented in a form of new production. Thus, the difficulty of writing tasks necessitates tackling it in stages. According to Richards and Schmidt (2002) “writing is viewed as a result of complex process of planning, drafting, reviewing and revising” (p.552)

### **1.8.1 Prewriting**

Prewriting or planning is the initial stage and as the name implies it occurs before the real act of writing start. Elbow (1998) highlights that prewriting is without doubt acts like a gate, in which students write down any idea comes to their minds despite the quality and the accuracy of their writing. In this stage, writing is focused on the quantity and not on the quality. It represents an overview generated by the student before the real act of writing starts. During this stage, students attempt to simplify and clarify the assignment by themselves by asking some questions such as: what do I know about this topic?, why I have to write about it?

, who will read my writing?, and what shall I talk about? (Roberts, 2004). As mentioned in Brandon & Brandon (2011) brainstorming, free writing, and gathering information strategies are all viewed to be included in prewriting stage.

### **1.8.2 Drafting**

The second stage is drafting, in this stage the student collects, organizes, and transforms his ideas and thoughts from abstract into concrete piece of writing on the paper. Harmer (2007) asserts, it is the primary attempt to transform thoughts into words onto the paper where there is no need to focus on grammar, spelling, punctuation or select the appropriate vocabularies. Brown & Hood (1989), state that the student needs to draft even few lines or paragraphs; consequently, he would continue and commit himself to finish his writing. Hence, the drafting stage could be called a “trigger” for the writing since this stage pushes the student to put his ideas onto the paper and permits the flow of ideas to be registered.

### **1.8.3 Revising**

Revising as Richards and Miller (2005) define it as being “the heart of writing” (p.127). In this stage students revise the rhetoric situation by checking if their writing is good enough to be submitted in terms of the clarity of the content and the purpose so that the reader can grasp the conveyed message in particular situation. Brief, in this stage students are required to check the writing conventions; grammar, spelling, punctuation as well as modifying and reorganizing the whole piece of writing in general (Bown & Hood, 1989).

### **1.8.4 Editing**

Fulwiler (2002) states, “Editing is polishing to make paragraphs, the sentences and the individual words communicate carefully, accurately, correctly with clarity, style, and grace” (p. 178). It is the final stage in writing process, in which the writer adjusts his writing with the aim of the complete improvement. Editing is the refinement of the piece of writing to obtain clearance as a final step before the submission for the intended reader.

## **1.8. Importance of Academic Writing**

Academic writing is delineated as an exceptional type of writing distinct from other types such as creative writing or journalism. According to Altiwal (2012), developing a good academic writing ability is not only about achieving a high grades in college, but it fosters and improves the communicative skills as well. In other words, the practice of academic writing enables EFL learners to clearly explain and discuss ambiguous concepts and convey messages through their writings in precise, smooth and simple language. These developed communication skills through academic writing would privilege them in choosing the suitable profession.

Academic writing develops EFL learner’s critical thinking because it requires them to make the best use of the materials they have. They search, discuss, analyze and reformulate other’s thoughts and views as well as conceptualize their own thoughts and new inductions.

Furthermore, one of the most significant features of academic writing is the objectivity. Thus, it makes the EFL learners committed to objectivity by stating facts which support their own perspectives.

## **Conclusion**

EFL learners' success depends on their proficiency and language skills mastery and academic writing represents the main standard to evaluate their success. This chapter has involved an attempt to review the construct of academic writing in terms of the exact definitions and how it is distinct from other types of writing. Moreover, it highlighted the most significant concepts and features associated with academic writing, its types, process, and importance. The aim was to clarify the notion of academic writing from all its aspects.

# **Chapter Two**

**The Main Psychological Factors  
affecting EFL Learners' academic  
Writing**

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## **Introduction**

The learner's psychology is a pivotal contributor to the success of a foreign language learning/teaching process. Attitudes, motivation, and anxiety all these psychological factors would assist the success or lead to unconsciously built barriers that end with an evident failure in acquiring the necessary skills to achieve competence and proficiency in English language. In this chapter, the aim is to direct the attention to these factors in terms of definitions, types, how they can affect EFL learner during the language learning process in general and writing in particular.

### **2.1. Attitude**

Attitude is a learnt predisposition which stimulates the individual to reveal certain behaviours and responses against certain objects, conditions, or people; attitudes are often sustained for quite a while and represent a preparatory state for behaviour (Demirel, 2001). Almost all of the scholars admit that how successful people are in their lives is directly influenced by what they think, how they feel and how they evaluate objects and people surrounding them because they behave accordingly.

#### **2.1.1 Attitude theory and Definition**

Social psychology has long been described as the scientific study of attitudes. Most researchers assumed that human behaviour is principally guided by social attitudes. Gordon Allport was one of the first scholars who defined the term "attitude"; however, the first definitions were quite broad. Allport (1935) states that attitude is "a mental and neural state of readiness, organized through experience, exerting a directive and dynamic influence upon the individual's responses to all objects and situations with which it is related" (p.810). Equally, cognition, behaviour, motivation, and effectiveness components are included in this definition. Other psychologists (e.g., Campbell, 1950) and sociologists

(e.g., Fuson, 1942) define attitudes simply as that the individual in a specified situation would demonstrate a specified behaviour, thus individual's behaviour is a reaction to his/her environment. Allport (1967) claims that to construct a definition which encompasses adequately the various types of attitudinal determination recognized by psychologists today in one hand, and narrow enough to eliminate other types of determination which are not typically referred to as attitudes to as attitudes, on the other, is very complicated task. During time, the concept of "attitude" became more restricted and confined. Eagly and Chaiken (1993) explain attitude in terms of "favour and disfavour"; an evaluation of specific entity with a degree of like or dislike which states a psychological tendency. The previous definition with the notion suggested by Wilson (1998) in which he indicates that multiple attitudes could be held by one individual about a single object, highlights the fact that individual's attitude towards a single object or concept can vary according to the stimulus given by his/her social environment. However; the new attitude could dominate and influence individual's behaviour but it may not replace or eliminate the old attitude completely.

Attitude is a theoretical construct, formulated by researchers to describe a phenomenon that could not be directly discerned, therefore, it is deduced from individuals' self-reports and behaviours (Schwarz & Bohner, 2001). The concept of attitude could be explained on the bases of two distinct approaches, the behavioural, and the mentalist approach. According to Fasold (1984), under the behaviourist perspective; attitudes are simply individuals' reactions to social situations. Further, he notes that this view facilitates undertaking the research on attitudes, because it requires no indirect inferences or self-reports which may not be valid since some people contradict themselves by saying something and acting in a different way. All what it is needed is the observation, the tabulate, and finally the analysis of the explicit behaviour. However, some researchers

notify that this kind of attitudes would not be interesting, because they cannot be used to predict other behaviours. On the other hand, the mentalist perspective, which is the most adopted in language attitudes researches, regards attitudes as an internal, mental state, which would produce certain forms of behaviour. It could be outlined as an intervening variable between a stimulus affecting a person and that person's response (Appel & Muysken, 1987).

To summarize, attitude is not a behaviour people do, it is a factor that determines the quality and the intensity of the individual's reaction to the stimuli i.e. it derives the behaviour to a certain extent. Generally, it differs from one individual to another, thus, it could be conceptualized as individual difference.

### **2.1.2 Components of Attitude**

Generally, in all the reviewed attitude definitions, it is accepted that attitude stands for the negative or positive mental and neural readiness towards an individual, place, social community, a language, an object, or event. It comprises three components:

- Affective Component (Neural) (Feeling/ Emotion)
- Behavioural Component (Readiness) (Response/ Action)
- Cognitive Component (Mental) (Belief/ Evaluation)

The affective component is the person's emotional reaction (liking/disliking) towards an attitude object. Emphasis is placed on the importance of affective components in the majority of researches. Attitude towards an object could not be established on the bases of the mere identification of the individual's beliefs about it because feelings and emotions function simultaneously with the cognitive process about an attitude object. Agarwal and Malhotra (2005) utter that researches which investigate the attitude (evaluative judgement depending on

particular beliefs) and researches which examine the affect (feelings and emotions) are combined to suggest an integrated model of attitude and choice. Hence, feeling and emotions are the consequence of an evaluative judgement governed by certain beliefs i.e. attitudes affect emotions and may produce them as well.

The behavioural component is the individual's explicit (verbal) or implicit (nonverbal) behavioural tendency which incorporates apparent reactions or actions that are the result of an attitude object, (Wicker 1969). It implicates person's response (favourable/unfavourable) to do something concerning attitude object. Attitudinal responses are more or less reliable. That is, a series of responses toward a given attitudinal stimulus is expected to reveal some degree of organizational structure, or predictability (Defleur & Westie 1963). In brief, it is associated with how the attitude can influence the behaviour and how it can assist in realizing it from an abstract tendency to an action in reality.

Finally, the cognitive component, it is an evaluation of the entity that establishes individual's views, ideas and opinions (belief/disbelief) about the object. Cognition indicates individual's beliefs and thoughts about an attitude object. Fishbein & Ajzen (1975) explain the belief as information a person has about an object. Moreover, the cognitive component functions as a storage section in which the individual organizes this information (beliefs). Furthermore, the cognitive component of attitude which can be called "informational component" represents the idea and the image perceived by the individual about any type of attitudinal objects (person, event, thing...etc).

The three attitude components could be ranged from extremely positive to extremely negative according to their perceived meaning and value by the person. A positive perception and cognitions towards the object (cognitive component)

would impel positive reactions (effective component) and consequently, produce a positive behaviour (behavioural component).

### **2.1.3 Types of Attitudes**

Attitude obtained a major focus in the social and behavioural sciences theories and studies. Recent studies in social psychology exposed three main types of attitude.

First type is the explicit attitude, Bordens and Horowitz (2002) assert that it is “an attitude operating in a controlled processing about which are aware of its existence, its cognitive underpinning, and how it relates to behaviour” (p.181). Accordingly, it is conscious and governed process in which the individual is completely cognizant of his beliefs and emotions and could clearly and accurately self-report them, therefore his behaviours tend to be consistent with his self-report.

Second type is the implicit attitude, it is defined as an individual’s involuntary and unconscious evaluative response to an attitudinal object. It is an uncontrolled, instant, and spontaneous like /dislike reaction to the object. It mirrors how the individual judge the target objects at a subconscious level, (Breckler, Olson & Wiggins, 2006). Since, the implicit attitude is processed as an unconscious response, the individual himself may not be aware of his implicit attitude. As a result he/she may not present a satisfactory self-report about it.

Our attitudes and our social environment are influenced by each other. These interactions, however, would result in a conflict between the individual’s attitude and behaviour. This inconstancy and conflict is referred to as the cognitive dissonance, which represents the third type of attitude. Any inconsistency perceived and experienced by the person between two or more of one’s attitudes or between one’s behaviour and attitudes is a cognitive dissonance. Festinger (1957) confirms that any form of inconsistency that is

uncomfortable for the person and confuses his cognitive stability will motivate the person to reduce the conflict (dissonance).

#### **2.1.4 Attitude Functions**

According to Katz (1960), the person can exploit attitudes in order to fulfil certain functions. In his organizational behaviourist point of view attitude serves four functions:

The adaptive function (social-identity function) in which the individual's attitude mediates between him and his social environment by exposing socially accepted attitudes, it aims to gain social approval and integration. While the ego-defence function refers to the attitudes which protect the person's self-image and self-esteem, it provides justifications for actions and behaviours that would make the person feel guilty. On the other hand, there's the utilitarian function which intend to minimize what is thought to be punishments and maximize rewards as possible because the individual's decision is based on his satisfaction. Finally the knowledge function, attitude provides the individual with the needed standards, values, and references to realize his surrounding world. The knowledge function of the attitude helps in organizing individual's life experiences and improves his predictability. The main point of attitude functions is that the attitude serves in mediating between the individual and himself as well as between him and his social environment through manifesting different functions.

#### **2.1.5 Language Learning Attitudes and Writing Attitudes**

Learners' attitude is reported to be one of the most vital factors for success. Language is not only neutral, social and objective device for communication and transmission of meaning, but it has strong connections with the individual and his social identity as well. Richards and Schmidt (2010) define language attitude as the positive or

negative feelings the learner has towards the language itself as a linguistic system or towards the native speakers of the TL or its social community and culture in general. Krashen (1985) argues that attitude can operate as bridge or a barrier in SLL process. Positive attitudes towards L2, for instance, are more probable to reinforce the enjoyment of the course and the excitement to learn more while negative attitudes would lead to the feeling of boredom and unwillingness to learn.

Writing attitudes include affective dispositions concerning how the effect of the act of writing on the writer's feelings, ranging from happy to unhappy (Graham, Berninger, & Fan, 2007). Moreover, learners who have positive attitude towards writing in general and their own writing level in specific are motivated to engage in writing tasks and to expand additional effort to learn and enhance their writing skills.

## **2.2. Motivation**

Conventionally, motivation is regarded as an independent variable in language-teaching/learning setting. The social psychologists Wallace Lambert, and Robert Gardner were the pioneers of L2 motivation research; they considered motivation as one of the most significant predictors of L2 performance. According to Dornyei (1998), the degree of success or failure of L2 learning is affected by motivation. The learning process tend to be long and boring, thus motivation is the vital force to initiate L2 learning and to maintain the learning process. Whenever the motivation exists, an excellent achievements and a high performance in L2 are expected.

### **2.2.1 Definition of Motivation**

Though motivation is extremely frequent term in the fields of academic research and education, scholars still do not have a unified definition of it. In education, motivation

is connected directly to learners' psychology in terms of personal, affective and cognitive factors.

Starting with its origins, the word motivation derives from the Latin verb “*movere*” that means ‘to move’. Consequently, it stands for the reason which makes an individual move to make certain choices, to perform an action, to expend effort or persist in action (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). In other words, it is the logical and psychological interpretation of why an individual takes particular decision willingly to accomplish a specific task and to devote as much as possible efforts to reach this goal. Lightbrown and Spada, (2001) describe motivation in L2 learning/acquisition as an intricate phenomenon that would be identified in terms of two factors: communicative needs of the learners and their attitudes towards L2 community. In their opinion, when learners are convinced that they need to communicate using L2 or reach and achieve specific and dedicated desires and goals, they will be encouraged and inspired to obtain expertise and skill in it. Among many perspectives to define motivation, (Dembo, 2004) views motivation as the internal processes that provide the behaviour with its necessary power and direct it. The individual's expectations, beliefs, perceptions, and goals are all included in these internal processes. For instance, when the person insists on doing a task is often related to how competent he believes he is to complete the task. A more precise definition is provided by Richards and Schmidt (2010):

In general, the driving force in any situation that leads to action. In the field of language learning a distinction is sometimes made between an orientation, a class of reasons for learning a language, and motivation itself, which refers to a combination of the learner's attitudes, desires, and willingness to expend effort in order to learn the second language (.....).(p.377)

This definition distinguishes between two key concepts that are deeply interrelated; “*motivation*” which encompasses how the learner feels, thinks, and behaves towards learning L2, and for which degree he/she is ready and prepared to expend time and effort

and even money with the purpose of learning the target language. The second concept is “*orientation*” which refers to the incentives that make the individual desire to learn a language. “Orientation” was a name given by Gardner to entitle motivation types.

## **2.2.2 Types of Motivation**

Principally, motivation is conceptualized as goal-directed, refers to reasons that trigger the behaviour which is characterized by willingness and volition. It is divided into two main dichotomies (intrinsic-extrinsic motivation) and (integrative- instrumental motivation).

### **2.2.2.1 Intrinsic Motivation vs. Extrinsic Motivation**

Motivation as a psychological factor has two taxonomies. The first dichotomy is according to the source of motivation. Intrinsic motivation that derives from inner factors related to the learner himself animated by his personal pleasure and enjoyment. It can be viewed as a mental satisfaction that is extremely conflicted because it could be achieved through a mere praise simultaneously with being very demanding to be obtained as well. Ames and Archer (1988) state that the learner who has an internal reinforcement by feeling or desire and his aim is to sustain a given experience or to participate in the learning process is an intrinsically motivated learner. Intrinsically motivated learners are inclined to gain and expand their knowledge from analysing and correcting their mistakes and errors and to solve intricate and complicated issues due to their competitive nature (Walker, Greene, & Mansell, 2006). Whereas the extrinsic motivation derives from external factors often related to the educational environment and teaching/learning process and basically stimulated by pragmatic gains such as rewards or fear of punishment. Brown (2000) explains “(...) and those who pursue a goal only to receive an external reward from

someone else are extrinsically motivated” (p.162). Extrinsic motivation is a drive to do something because of an external reward wanted to be obtained, while intrinsic motivation is demonstrated when we do something because the activity itself stands for an enough reward.

### **2.2.2.2 Integrative Motivation vs. Instrumental Motivation**

The second dichotomy is according to the reason for which the learner is studying the L2 which may be integrative motivation or instrumental motivation. Integrative motivation is based on an admiration for the L2 and its culture. The learner’s interest in L2 is genuine; she/he has the desire to learn in order to integrate with native speakers of the TL and to get involved in its culture. Instrumental motivation is more practical, it refers to the desire to learn a language in order to achieve goals such as academic or occupational success, McGroarty (1996). Ellis (1994) made a comparison between these two types of motivation, depending on his point of view; the perfect and the best motivation is the integrative motivation. He believes that integrative motivation is more competent and well-organized.

learners who lack integrative or instrumental motivation often will have difficulties and problems in obtaining knowledge and acquiring the SL in the classroom, and learning the language in general would be difficult for them (Cook, 2000). Discussing Cook’s (2000) point of view that considers integrative and instrumental motivation more valuable than the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation would yield to the fact that the latter types of motivation has a temporary and changing nature while the former types has more durable, constant and concrete nature. Intrinsic motivation is affected by the learner’s mood, attitudes, desires, and feelings that can shift from positive to negative and vice versa at any moment, as well as the extrinsic motivation which can terminate at the moment of getting

the reward or when the punishment is cancelled or evaded. In the other hand, instrumental and integrative motivation has long-term goals to be achieved and since the learner did not achieve them, he would maintain motivation.

Moreover, both integrative motivation and instrumental motivation are properly viewed as subtypes of extrinsic motivation, since both are concerned with external goals or outcomes.

### **2.2.3 Psychological, Cultural and Social Factors of Motivation**

The nature of motivation as a multi-dimensioned concept requires the investigation of the variety of factors which frequently predetermine it.

#### **2.2.3.1 Psychological Factors of Motivation**

In the study of Locke and Latham (1984) on the impact of goal-setting theory; which suggests that goals (described as what the individual is aiming to achieve) and values are a behaviour cognitive determinants, found that the behaviour of individuals is mainly influenced by a single factor: the acceptance of difficult yet achievable goals. These goals must be specific, difficult but achievable, and followed by a feedback. A supporting theory for goal-setting theory was proposed by Csikszentmihalyi (1991).The latter claims that motivation and excitement would be in their highest level if the challenging task is equivalent to the individual's capacities and skills. In cases when the task is very difficult, majority of learners tend to experience debilitating anxiety which results in a loss of motivation, whereas the low challenge of the task may cause boredom and lack motivation. Thus, in SLL classes, activities and tasks need to be carefully selected according to learners' capacities so that he/she become motivated and reach satisfaction by completing them. Consequently, the learner feels more motivated to get involved in more

activities. Briefly, the amount of skill required and efforts invested in the task as well the degree of its challenge perceived by a person are considered to be determiners for the person's psychological state (motivated/ demotivated).

### **2.2.3.2 Cultural and Social Factors of Motivation**

Many researches were conducted to investigate the fact that motivation is not merely individually established but there would be some cultural and social factors which could be effective in reinforcing certain types of motivation as demonstrated in Wen (1997) and Chen, Warden, and Chang (2005). In some cultures learners tend to be driven extrinsically while in others learners are motivated intrinsically, and the same for the integrative and instrumental motivation distinction. An illustration was given by Schmidt, Boraie, and Kassabgy (1996) about Egyptian EFLs, integrative motivation in this case was not effective for those learners because they found the cultural norms and social values of TL community very different in comparison to their own ones. In the other hand, learners in like-minded communities are more likely to be influenced by integrative motivation in order to be more accepted in TL community and to make their involvement in TL culture easier and smoother. Finally, the type of motivation influencing the learners is not only individually but also culturally and socially conditioned.

### **2.2.4. Writing Motivation**

Writing is a cognitive process blended with emotions claimed by (McLeod, 1987). The individual's will of producing a piece of writing activates his thinking about what he should write, for whom (audience), and how to undertake the writing task simultaneously with his emotions towards the whole process. Since motivation is a driving force which manipulates the action, Deci and Ryan (1985) declare that extrinsic motivation makes

learners tend to choose easy writing tasks that would save energy and time like writing about a topic they had already tackled in previous courses. They do not have the ambition to explore new topics, they are satisfied with what they write and do not seek new adventures in writing or take risks. In contrast, intrinsically motivated learner attempt to tackle challenging and unfamiliar writing tasks and take risks.

(Albin, Benton, & Khramtsova, 1996) allege that learners' writing performance can be affected by their motivation towards writing itself and towards the environment and the conditions in which the writing task is tackled. This effect could be positive if they are interested in the subject and motivated to write while it could be negative if they are demotivated. Boscolo and Gelati (2007) assume that learners' self-confidence about their writing level correlates with the level of their motivation to write. Accordingly, motivated learners tend to be self-confident and to exploit writing as an influential means of communication.

Motivation plays a crucial role in writing and in the whole LL process. Writing motivation can operate as a hindrance or serve as a support in undertaking any writing task. First, writing in an educational setting, is not an activity which introduces the learner as a human being or expresses his own ideas, perspectives, or knowledge; simply it is not about his own power (Oldfather et al., 1991). However, academic writing tasks are constrained by a certain types of topics which typically include objective concepts and must be presented in an objective manner, hence; learners are demotivated because they are not permitted to convey their own personal views and style in the majority of writing tasks. In addition to the nature of topics, the climate that highlights the correct answers and the proper form and organization As well as seeking the appropriate relevant meaning limits the learners and makes them less motivated to write (Graves, 1999). In other words, learners feel themselves restrained by certain rules and conventions which are the core of

any written production in English. Most EFL learners lack the mastery of these conventions and their focus on them and on how to apply them correctly lead to a lack of motivation to write because they do not have self-confidence and do not trust their capacities in producing a good piece of writing. Even learners who are intrinsically motivated to write fail in maintaining motivation, it is a human nature to reject constraints therefore most EFL learners consider writing as an imposed activity which they are not motivated to tackle it willingly.

### **2.3. Anxiety**

Anxiety has become universal human experience in the second part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century ; it pervades every corner of human life. Anxiety had been researched from many perspectives like anthropology, psychology and education. Generally, the notion “anxiety” concerns the danger and fear for the person’s psychological or physical safety and well-being. One of the early notions of anxiety was claimed by Darwin (1872); he defines it as an emotional reaction of a human being excited by the feeling of a physical threat. Over the last several decades, psychological studies and researches had been integrated into all educational fields especially SL learning. As an effective psychological factor, anxiety has stimulated a particular interest in the field of SL acquisition and learning. Anxiety emotions that are induced by specific environmental stimuli are increasing each day while the nature of those stimuli has changed remarkably over time (Gaudry & Spielberger, 1971).

#### **2.3.1. Definition of Anxiety**

Anxiety is an emotional variable; its nature makes it a complex task to be defined. It originates from the anticipation of a physical threat or a loss as suggested by Rholes,

Riskind, and Neville (1985). It is an emotional response to some expected threats which could be physical that may menace the person's life or psychological. "Anxiety is a psychological construct, commonly described by psychologists as a state of apprehension, an indistinct fear that is only indirectly associated with an object" (Hilgard, Atkinson, & Atkinson, 1971 cited in Scovel, 1991.p.18). Accordingly, anxiety is not a constant feeling i.e. it is related to certain conditions and events and it would cease when these conditions are overcome by the individual. Moreover, it is allied implicitly to the entity causing it and this relation may not be consciously recognized resulting in uncomfortable subjective state of confusion, nervousness, and worry. Furthermore, anxiety is thought to comprise both "emotionality and worry". Emotionality involves the individual's perception of the physiological-affective constituents of anxiety experience that are signs of unpleasant feelings which have an autonomic arousal, such as hesitation and pauses while speaking, sweating, and pale face, and so forth of physical signs. However, worry includes the cognitive aspects such as the cognitive concerns about oneself, the evaluation of the current situation, the negative expectations, and the potential outcomes (Morris, Davis, & Hutchings, 1981).

### **2.3.2. Anxiety in the Language Learning Theory**

Language learning is a controlled conscious process occurs in academic setting (e.g. classroom) that aims to study the explicit rules of the TL. During this process, the progression of learners' performance is regularly assessed through different types of tests and evaluations. In the other hand, language acquisition refers to learning the language unconsciously and naturally through comprehensible input exposure. Focusing on learning, the input must have certain features to be successfully learnt. Richards and Rodgers (2004) assert that the input has to be comprehensible, pertinent, quantity sufficient, and presented

in comfortable environment where anxiety is in its lowest degrees. Throughout language learning process, anxiety plays detrimental role, consequently, it should be reduced to the minimum because it acts as an affective filter that hinders learners' ability to perceive the input as Onwuegbuzie, Bailey and Daley (1999) utter. Consequently, this leads them to lack confidence in using the comprehensible input they received. Finally, this results in losing their motivation to learn the L2 or communicate it.

During language learning process, anxiety impede in different points. Anxiety may hamper the process at three stages: (a) at the input stage, (b) at the processing stage, and (c) at the output stage, Tobias (1986). In the input stage, anxiety would cause an interruption which hinders taking new materials. At the processing stage, anxiety affects the memory, through constraining the well-organized order and materials storage. Finally, in the output stage, anxiety would block the adequate recovery of studied materials.

Anxiety which is described as the most affective factor influencing foreign language learning tends to be the main cause of what Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) call a "mental block" which prevents second language learners from engaging in language tasks.

### **2.3.3. Types of Anxiety**

Anxiety is a phenomenon that is completely associated with individual's psychology, it does not occur as an isolated issue rather than it is always linked to internal or external factors which activate the individual's feeling of anxiety. Psychologists such as Horwitz and Young (1991) distinguish between three types of anxiety: Trait Anxiety, State Anxiety, and Situation-specific anxiety.

According to Spielberger, Charles, Sarason, and Irwin (2005) trait anxiety is a universal and common feature of the individual's personality. It is described as being

practically long-term, permanent and an inborn personality characteristic i.e. a constant personality attribute. Since each individual has his own independent personality, each one would experience trait anxiety but with variant intensity and duration as a result of different situations. People who experience trait anxiety tend to be more able to worry and become stressful and easily stimulated to react by broader range of situations and objects than most people.

The second type is recognized as state anxiety; this type is temporal interruption of the individual's emotional balance. It could be identified as a temporary anxiety that is provoked by a particular impermanent phenomenon, and as a response to a particular anxiety-inducing stimulus such as an important test (Spielberger, 1983 cited in Aydin, 2009). State anxiety causes an unpleasant feeling which can seriously disturb the individual's ability to react positively to any situation in a certain environment. The case of being in a final test is good illustration of state anxiety, during the period of the test the individual's feeling of nervousness and uneasiness will raise to a certain degree which is related and determined by his trait anxiety degree, this type of anxiety disappear automatically after exceeding its cause. In other words, directly after the test termination, the individual will get relaxed and relieved.

The third type, situation-specific anxiety, is defined by Ellis (1994) as a constant and complicated nature of some anxieties which is aroused by a distinct type of situation, time or event such as public speaking, participation in class or examinations. Furthermore, L2 anxiety is highly affected by situation-specific anxiety. It is reported as connected with the contexts and the situations where the language is learnt such as classrooms, so it is generally identified as a FL classroom anxiety. Relatively, researchers such as (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986), point out that FL classroom anxiety is not recognized as a trait anxiety but as situation specific. They define language as a distinctive complex beliefs,

emotions, self-perceptions, behaviours, and feeling connected to language learning classroom developed from the uniqueness of the language learning process (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986). Psychologists separate people who are generally anxious in a variety of situations from those who are anxious only in specific situations by using the term specific anxiety reaction.

Anxiety could be positive as well as negative due to its debilitating and facilitative forms. The facilitative form of anxiety (beneficial anxiety) motivates and alerts the learner to engage in the new learning tasks willingly. This type is an assistant factor for the learner to improve his performance and to attain the required level of language competency. In contrast, the debilitating anxiety (inhibitory anxiety) makes the learner creates an avoidance strategy which hinders the learning process. MacIntyre, Noels, and Clement (1997) reveal that anxiety could make learners underestimate themselves and their competences while relaxed learners overestimate their competence. Scovel (1991) claims that debilitating anxiety makes the learner “flee” new learning tasks whilst the facilitative one makes him “fight” new learning tasks. (p.22). Anxiety is not always that depressive irritating confusion and uneasiness; it could be an inner alert which grabs the learner’s attention to the goals that should be accomplished and derives him/her to struggle what would prevent the success of the learning process.

#### **2.3.4. Components of Anxiety**

Foreign language anxiety is associated with three interrelated performance anxieties that are seen as components of anxiety: communication apprehension (CA), test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986).

Nowadays, many studies were tackled in the field of speech communication focusing on why some people tend to avoid and even fear communicating orally (Daly,

1991). Communication apprehension is an anxiety or fear in the individual's level related to either an expected future communication or a real communication situation with another individual or individuals "(McCroskey, 1984 cited in Barraclough, Christophel, & McCroskey, 1988). (McCroskey 1980; Bond 1984) found seven causes that would create a quiet child (same explanation would be presented about adult CA); (1) low intellectual skills, (2) speech skill deficiencies, (3) voluntary social introversion, (4) social alienation, (5) communication anxiety, (6) low social self-esteem, (7) ethnic/cultural divergence in communication norms. Clearly, communication apprehension is one of these factors, but the others can lead to communication apprehension as well. Their presence should not necessarily be interpreted as CA. This type of anxiety is linked to communicative situations, oral presentations, for instance; in which most learners experience apprehension, fear, uncomfortable and unwilling to speak because learners who are depicted to have CA lack vocabulary items (Onwuegbuzie, Bailey, & Daley. 1999), which are essential for them to communicate in such situations in which they are obliged to speak. In order to overcome this anxiety, learners should improve their self-perceptions like self-confidence and attempt to strengthen their amount of vocabulary items, so they can engage in interpersonal talks.

Test anxiety is an affective variable that embraces crucial correlations with language learning process which overwhelmingly negative. It attached with apprehension, fear, unreleased feelings towards academic evaluation, being evaluated by grades, all that is built on the concern of failure (Horwitz & Young, 1991). The idea of being evaluated by grades that could make the learner succeeds or fails in his/her school or college would make him/her frightened of tests. Generally, learners suffer from test anxiety during the productive skills like writing and speaking tests as well as reading, in which anxiety inhibits the success of conveying the appropriate communicative message and information.

Neely and Shaughnessy (1984) point out six factors associated with test anxiety such as inappropriate content, different types of measures, language rules and the tester, inaccurate samples of measures, unfair social judgments, and different types of validity. Young (2007) reports other reasons such as limits, length of the test, format, techniques and the degree of clarity of instructions. Moreover, Aydin (2009) demonstrates other factors that encourage test anxiety such as the situational and the environmental variables of the test, for example, classroom size, and the relaxing arrangement of the seating play a major role in test anxiety levels. As an illustration, having an exam in a large room with comfortable seating arrangements is an aid for students to achieve high marks because the surrounding environment helps them to relax and calm down, thus their concentration will be in the highest level because there would be nothing disturbing their attention.

The third component of language anxiety is the fear of negative evaluation. It can be introduced as an extension of test anxiety, except that the former occurs in social evaluative situations (for example, speaking or reading your writings in SL class in front of the teacher and classmates) while the latter is limited in taking tests. The fear of negative evaluation has a broader sense because it concerns both the teacher's evaluation of the students and the perceived reaction of other students as well (Shamas, 2006). Both components (test anxiety and fear of negative evaluation) share the same nature since individuals go through the feelings of tension, pressure, nervousness, worry, uncertainty about others' assessment, and the lack of self-confidence. Fear of negative evaluation is not constrained to tests' circumstances; rather it can occur in other social and daily situations (Tanveer, 2007), such as interviews for jobs, sport races, introducing programs on TV.

### **2.3.5. Writing Apprehension (Writing Anxiety)**

Writing is a skill that serves individuals' communication needs as well as their learning progression, the emphasis on writing as fundamental skill in L2 learning lead to further research on writing in parallel with speaking. The term "writing apprehension" was first coined by Daly and Miller (1975) as an analogy to "communication apprehension". It is a description of an individual difference which is characterized by a general evading of writing and avoidance of any situation requires writing and might be followed by an evaluation. These situations are thought to be more punishing than rewarding for apprehensive individuals, as consequence, it is avoided. Writing apprehension was identified as a fear of the writing process which compensates the predicted advantages of writing ability (Thompson, 1980).

Daly (1978) defines writing apprehension as a "situation and subject-specific individual difference" (p. 10), hence it is an innate individual trait that depends and varies in its degrees on the subject and on the situation which the individual is going through. Writing apprehension which is writing situations avoidance was deemed by Daly (1985) to be one of the dispositional feelings; refers to the somehow regular constant feelings such as writing outcome expectancy (the importance and value of writing recognized) and attitude towards writing. For apprehensive learners, writing tasks are fear-provoking, frustrating and cause worry. They expect to be negatively rated on their writings and, as a result they tend to avoid it when it is possible because they have low self-perceptions and believe that they would fail in writing.

As stated in (Pajares & Valiante, 1997), writing apprehension is probably a result of lack of confidence in one's capacity to write or learn to write, this capacity is identified as writing self-efficacy. To conclude, writing apprehension represents a filter (a barrier) that prevents the learner from manipulating his/her prior knowledge about the writing task

and exploiting the necessary skills to successfully tackle it, this barrier is called a writer's block which is defined as an incapability to initiate or maintain a writing task for reasons other than a lack of basic skill or commitment. It affects the motivation to write, attitudes towards writing and towards oneself level of writing skill and academic performance.

## **Conclusion**

Psychology is perceived as an interdisciplinary field that has influential contributions in the discernment of education in general and language learning in particular. This chapter has clearly demonstrated the significance of attitudes, motivation, and anxiety as crucial interrelated psychological factors affecting the second language learning/teaching process and writing skill. Attitude which represents the inner tendencies, feeling and cognitive images the individual has about a certain object (in this context the object is L2 learning and writing skill in specific) could be positive or negative. Negative attitudes towards specific learning task might be the cause or the result of anxiety which is outlined as a feeling of apprehension and fear of that task. Positive attitudes lead to high level of motivation to improve the learner's language proficiency and to enhance writing skills. This chapter offered an overview of attitude, motivation, and anxiety and how they would affect EFL learners' writing in academic setting.

# **Chapter Three**

## **Data Analysis**

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## **Introduction**

This study relies on the collection of data from *Master One* students and teachers of written expression at the Department of Foreign Languages, English language Division at Biskra University. The present chapter is devoted to the description and analysis of both teachers and students questionnaires as well as discussing the findings and providing some recommendations.

### **3.1. Aims of the Questionnaires**

The use of questionnaires is an aid to determine the following:

1. Students' perceptions of academic writing, their academic writing proficiency, and their difficulties and weaknesses in academic writing.
2. Student's attitude towards academic writing, motivation and anxiety during academic writing tasks.
3. Which type of motivation is the most effective on students' academic writing.
4. Which component of anxiety is the most effective on students' academic writing.
5. Teachers' experience, perceptions of their students' academic writing proficiency, and their students' weaknesses.
6. Teachers' perception of psychological factors (attitude, motivation, anxiety) affecting their students' academic writing.

### **3.2. Description of the Questionnaires**

Students and teachers' questionnaires are described as the following:

#### **3.2.1 Students' Questionnaire**

The students' questionnaire exploited in this research is semi-structured, clear, simple and straight forward to be understood by all students of all levels. All the questions used in this questionnaire are closed-ended questions, and open-ended questions were eliminated

because such questions are usually left unanswered especially by weak students. The questionnaire is divided into three (3) sections which contain eighteen (18) questions. The First section contains two questions. The first question is about their gender while in the second question, participants were asked whether they like studying the English language or not. The second section is consisted of eight questions. It explores students' perception of academic writing, their level, weaknesses and difficulties they confront in academic writing, in addition to their suggestions to overcome these difficulties. The last section includes eight questions in which some questions were indirectly repeated to confirm the existence of the investigated psychological factors. It is the core of the whole questionnaire since it contains questions that investigate students' attitude towards academic writing, motivation and anxiety during academic writing tasks.

### **3.2.2 Teachers' Questionnaire**

Teachers' questionnaire used in this research is semi-structured, simple and straight forward to be understood by everyone. The most frequent questions used in this questionnaire are closed-ended questions, only few questions are open-ended because such questions take more time to be answered. It is divided into three (3) sections and consisted of eighteen (18) questions. The first one includes three questions; its aim is to identify teachers' experience and qualification. The second section contains eight questions. It investigates teachers' perception of students' academic writing, their students' level, and difficulties encountered by their students during the academic writing and their weaknesses, as well as their suggestions to improve their students' academic writing. The third section contains seven questions. It represents the most important part of the questionnaire because it investigates teachers' perceptions of the psychological factors (attitude, motivation, anxiety) which affect their students' academic writing, in addition to their suggestions to overcome these psychological factors.

### **3.3. Students' Perception of Academic Writing and Psychological Factors Affecting Academic Writing**

It is necessary to present the population and the sample selected before analyzing the data collected

#### **3.3.1 The population**

The intended population of this questionnaire is *Master One* students at the Department of Foreign Languages, Section of English at Biskra University. The entire population was about 280 students. *Master One* students were chosen as a population due to the fact that they have already studied three years at university and they would be already asked to develop their academic writing to be ready to prepare their dissertations in the next year.

#### **3.3.2 The sample**

As it is impossible to deal with the whole population, 50 students out of the total number of students participated in this questionnaire. These informants have been selected randomly to participate in this study. They are from different socio-economic background and from different geographical regions in Algeria, but have the same educational background.

#### **3.3.3 Questionnaire Analysis**

##### **Section One: Background Information**

##### **Question One: What is Your Gender**

<b>Options</b>	<b>Informants</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Female</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>94%</b>
<b>Male</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 3.1: Students' Gender**

The table reveals that female students outnumber males. Only three (3) male students out of total fifty (6 %), while the rest are females, that is forty seven (94%) are female participants. This adds nothing to the research except that the findings and results generated from this study would represent only female EFL learners in Department of Foreign Languages at English Language Division.

**Question Two: Do You Like Studying English**

<b>Options</b>	<b>Informants</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Yes</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>No</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 3.2: Students' Satisfaction on Studying English**

The students' attitude towards studying the English language in general could be described as positive. Questionnaire's results revealed that all participants (100% of students) are interested in studying the English language. Depending on their justifications, this positive attitude is due to the fact that they consider the English language as a universal and global language that is required to communicate with the entire world.

**Section Two: Learners’ Perception of Academic Writing**

**Question One: Do You Consider Writing as an Important Language Skill?**

<b>Options</b>	<b>Informants</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Yes</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>No</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 3.3: Importance of Writing**

The whole sample (100%) considered writing as an important language skill. Majority of students commented that they regard writing as an important skill because it is a necessary way of communication and expressing their thoughts. Moreover, they highlighted that they need to master it because it is the primary skill required to undertake their assignments and that good marks in exams require a good writing level. In addition, most of them stressed their need to the accurate language and structure.

**Question Two: How Often Do You Write?**

<b>Options</b>	<b>Informant</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>More than once a week</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>14%</b>
<b>Once a week</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>22%</b>
<b>Less than one a week</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>64%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 3.4: Frequency of Writing Practice**

Majority of informants (64%) reported that they write less than once a week, 22% of them write regularly once a week and only 14% who are committed to write more than

once a week. From the questionnaire’s feedback, we can deduce that students do not write unless they are asked to. They demonstrated no interest in writing even though they expressed an awareness of its importance as a fundamental language skill.

**Question Three: Could You Distinguish Between Academic and Non-Academic Writing?**

<b>Option</b>	<b>Informants</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Yes</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>82%</b>
<b>No</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>18%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 3.5: Distinguishing between Academic and Non-Academic Writing**

The majority of informants (82%) claimed that they can distinguish between academic and non-academic writing, whereas 18% confessed their ignorance of the differences between the two types of writing. In their comments, they stated the differences they know between the academic and non-academic writing. Most of them reported that academic writing has formal style, special vocabulary, correct grammar, and abbreviations are not recommended. While only one informant mentioned the special nature of academic writing audience and another one mentioned the accurate punctuation as a distinction between the academic and the non-academic writing. This could be the result of written expression module syllabus which does not include teaching academic writing conventions in a thorough manner till the level of Master Two.

**Question Four: Do You Believe That Academic Writing is:**

<b>Options</b>	<b>Informants</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Very easy</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2%</b>
<b>Easy</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>14%</b>
<b>Difficult</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>78%</b>
<b>Very difficult</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 3.6: Evaluation of academic writing difficulty**

Most of the students (78%) considered academic writing as difficult, 6% as very difficult, 7% as easy, and only 2% as very easy. Taking into account the answer of the majority, their justification was that academic writing is constrained by specific types of topics and by various rules such as grammar, academic vocabulary, special form, and punctuation. As a result, the students view academic writing as difficult due to the nature of its topics and their weakness in academic writing conventions.

**Question Five: Do You Know What The Academic Writing Features Are?**

<b>Options</b>	<b>Informants</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Yes</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>40%</b>
<b>No</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>60%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 3.7: Knowledge of Academic Writing Features**

This question was asked as a confirmation for the answers obtained from “Question Three”. The feedback from the two questions is contradicted, in “Question Three”, 82% of students claimed that they know the difference between academic and non-academic writing.

Whereas, in response to this question, the majority of them (60%) stated that they do not know academic writing features. The rest of informant (40%) who claimed that they know academic writing features, stated grammar, spelling, coherence, cohesion, and the form as features. Clearly, their knowledge of the academic writing is superficial, and as mentioned previously this would be the result of the syllabus of written expression module.

**Question Six: How Would You Evaluate Your Level in Academic Writing?**

<b>Options</b>	<b>Informants</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Highly proficient</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>Proficient</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5%</b>
<b>Adequate</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>54%</b>
<b>Weak</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>30%</b>
<b>Very weak</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 3.8: Evaluation of Students’ Academic Writing Level**

The way students evaluate their level in writing correlates with the data they have provided about their evaluation of academic writing difficulty. As most of them have found that writing effectively and accurately is difficult, it is obvious that a large number of students (54%) consider their level in academic writing as adequate. They expressed a deep disappointment particularly because they still have problems at this advanced level. Only 5% view themselves as proficient in English academic writing. This reveals that students at this level are facing serious difficulties in academic writing which have to be overcome before they pass to Master Two level, in which they will be obliged to prepare their dissertations.

**Question Seven: Point out the Difficulty You Face in Academic Writing**

<b>Options</b>	<b>Informants</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Grammar</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>42%</b>
<b>Vocabulary</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>40%</b>
<b>Organization and the form</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2%</b>
<b>Nature of the topic</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4%</b>
<b>Allocated time</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>8%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 3.9: Identifying the Difficulties Faced in academic Writing**

Most of students find themselves unable to write accurately. As the table shows, the majority of *Master One* students (42%) have difficulties in the first place in grammar because they do not master the grammatical rules, while 40% reported that they also have difficulties in vocabulary which means they cannot find the appropriate words to express themselves in a given topic because of their poor linguistic background. This is mainly the result of various factors, primarily the lack of reading because writing and reading are complementary skills and the development of one skill certainly leads to the development of the other. Student would improve their academic writing by fostering their reading skills. Furthermore, through reading students reinforce their knowledge of vocabulary, rhetoric features of academic texts, and grammatical structures. It was obvious that students are aware of their academic writing difficulties.

**Question Eight: What Do You Suggest To Overcome These Difficulties**

<b>Options</b>	<b>Informants</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>a. Doing more practice</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>56%</b>
<b>b. Seeking teacher's help</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>8%</b>
<b>c. Both of them</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>36%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 3.10: Suggestions to Overcome Difficulties Faced in Academic Writing**

56% of the informants stated that the solution to overcome their academic writing difficulties is doing more practice. While 36% of them suggested that they need both, more practice and the teacher's help as well. We can realize that students are aware of their difficulties in writing and the reasons behind them. Therefore, they revealed a strong will to enhance their level in academic writing.

### **Section Three: Students' Perceptions of the Psychological Factors Affecting Academic Writing**

#### **Question One: Do You Like Writing Formal Compositions?**

<b>Options</b>	<b>Informants</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Yes</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>80%</b>
<b>No</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 3.11: Students' Attitudes towards Formal Compositions**

The results were very close, 80% of informants showed a positive attitude towards formal compositions. Their justification was that they like to express their thoughts in a good and a formal way. Thus, we can notice that they admire the prestigious nature of formal

compositions and how it conveys their messages in an attractive style. Others spotlighted the importance of formal compositions in exams; they noted that they like them because they represent a good practice which would help in improving their marks. In the other hand, 20% of informants have a negative attitude towards formal composition. They complained that it includes many constraints in terms of the nature of topics, and it requires following various rules while they prefer to express their thoughts freely. Therefore, based on the answer of the majority, students' attitude towards academic writing tends to be positive depending on their writing purposes and the nature of topics. To conclude, most students' attitudes towards academic writing itself is positive, but the nature of the topics does not interest them.

**Question Two: Do You Participate in Writing Tasks Willingly**

<b>Option</b>	<b>Informants</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Always</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>22%</b>
<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>74%</b>
<b>Never</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 3.12: Students Participation in Writing Tasks**

As displayed in the table above, only 22% of students declared that they participate in writing tasks willingly. All of those informants stated that they like to participate in order to improve their writing skills through discussing their writings; hence they can correct their mistakes so they can get better marks in their exams. Whereas, the majority of them (74%) noted that they participate willingly just sometimes. As expected, they all justified their answer by claiming that the topics are not interesting and whenever the topic is interested they participate. In addition, they said that they do not participate when they do not have knowledge about the topic. To illustrate, some students have the will to participate in order to

improve their writing level because they consider it as a chance to practice for exams and get good marks, thus they are extrinsically motivated to write. While other students participate in writing tasks willingly only when they are motivated by the given topic and have background knowledge about it i.e. they are intrinsically motivated because they participate just when the topic is enjoyable for them. As a result, we can deduce that both extrinsic and intrinsic motivation affects EFL learners' participation in academic writing tasks.

**Question Three: Do You Feel Self-Confident about Your Essays Level?**

<b>Options</b>	<b>Informants</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Yes</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>16%</b>
<b>No</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>32%</b>
<b>Depends on the situation</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>52%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 3.13: Students' Self-Confidence about Their Essays Level**

Minority of informants (16%) answered that they feel self-confident about essays level, 32% said that they do not feel self-confident about their essays level, and the majority (52%) claimed that it depends on the situation. Focusing on the majority, they commented that when they lack knowledge about the given topic, feel the topic is boring, or lack vocabulary concerning the topic, they tend to lose self-confidence; also some of them claimed that they suffer from grammatical mistakes which prevent them from being self-confident. Noticeably, when the students lack the prior knowledge about the topic or lack the required linguistic competence they lose self-confidence as well as motivation to write. They revealed a conscious vision about the problems they suffer from, and some of them stated that they need more reading to obtain linguistic competence to become capable to express their ideas in a proficient way and become more self-confident about their essays level.

**Question Four: Where Do You Prefer to Do Your Writing Tasks?**

<b>Options</b>	<b>Informants</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Classroom</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>26%</b>
<b>Home</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>74%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 3.14: Place of Doing Writing Tasks**

Majority of informant (74%) stated that they prefer to write at home and 26% at classroom. They reported that they feel at ease and more comfortable at home because it is not crowded like the classroom, they have more time to think about the task, do some researches to enrich their ideas, in addition to check and correct their mistakes. Students, who preferred classroom, said that they feel lazy at home while in classroom they are limited to time and obliged to do the task. Thus, crowded classrooms affect the productivity of the students negatively, in other words, crowded classrooms increase students anxiety and worry so they become demotivated to write.

**Question Five: Do You Feel Worried or Nervous During Writing a Formal Essay?**

<b>Option</b>	<b>Informants</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Yes</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>58%</b>
<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>36%</b>
<b>No</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>6%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 3.15: Students' Feelings of Worry and Nervousness**

54% of informants indicated that they feel worry and nervousness during the writing of formal essays, 36% answered that they feel it sometimes and only 3 informants (6%) replied by "no". They reported that they feel worried when they do not have knowledge about

the given topic, and lack vocabulary to express their ideas. As a result they feel their minds blank and take long time thinking without writing a word. As deduction, majority of students experience writing anxiety (writing apprehension) when they deal with formal essays “academic writing”, this is due to their poor knowledge which is typically the consequence of lack of reading.

**Question Six: Do You Think Your Problem in Academic Writing is Due to**

- a. Simply you do not like it and feel it boring**
- b. You do not have trust in your writings**
- c. You do not like the teacher**
- d. Fear of negative comments**
- e. Nature of topics does not motivate you**

<b>Option</b>	<b>Informants</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>a</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>12%</b>
<b>b</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>16%</b>
<b>c</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>d</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>e</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>52%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 3.16: Students’ Problems in Academic Writing**

The majority of informants (52%) noted that their problems in academic writing are due the nature of the topics which does not motivate them. They explained that the nature of academic writing topics are difficult, and requires a good background knowledge in different fields and a high level vocabularies which they lack. Consequently, they feel themselves incapable of tackling this type of tasks and feel anxious; hence they attempt to avoid it as

possible. 20% referred their difficulties to the fear of negative comments and 16% claimed that they lack self-confidence in their writings, and only 12% said that they do not like writing and feel it bored. It is important to mention that all the three male informants choose “a” hence, male students tend to have a negative attitude towards academic writing even though a sample of three student is not sufficient to deduce. As consequence of their anxiety and fear of negative comments, they try to avoid academic writing as possible. Therefore, we can infer that anxiety has a negative effect and could be considered as the most effective factor on EFL learners’ academic writing.

**Question Seven: What is the First Thing You Do After Receiving Your Work From The Teacher?**

<b>Option</b>	<b>Informants</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Look at the mark</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>54%</b>
<b>Read teachers’ comments</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>38%</b>
<b>Analyse your mistakes</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>8%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 3.17: Students’ Reaction to Their Corrected Work**

According to the table above, 54% of students look at the mark first after receiving their corrected work, 38% read teachers’ comments and only 8% analyse their mistakes. Accordingly, we can sum up by highlighting that students are motivated by marks i.e. extrinsic motivation while they are affected by the teacher’s judgements and comments. In other words, students are affected by anxiety and motivation; they are mainly motivated extrinsically by the marks.

### **3.4. Teachers' Perception of Academic Writing and Psychological Factors Affecting Academic Writing**

It is necessary to present the population and the sample selected before analyzing the data collected

#### **3.4.1 The population**

The intended population of this questionnaire is teachers of written expression at the Department of Foreign Languages, English Language Division at Biskra University. The total number of teachers' population is about 20. This population was selected due to the long experience of these teachers in the field of teaching writing which can assist in obtaining useful and appropriate information for the study.

#### **3.4.2 The sample**

As it is impossible to deal with the whole population, the sample used in this questionnaire consisted of ten teachers of written expression. The teachers' experience in teaching written expression is between four to fifteen years. Four of them are teachers holding a doctorate degree in applied linguistics, while the rest hold a 'magister' degree and are preparing a doctorate. All of them participated positively and provided useful information for the study.

#### **3.4.3 Questionnaire Analysis**

##### **Section one: Background Information**

##### **Item one: Teachers' Experience and Qualification**

A list of questions (1, 2 and 3) was asked to identify teachers' experience and qualification. Teachers' experience in teaching written expression varies from four to fifteen years as it is displayed in table 3.18. However, the experience of those teachers teaching *Master One* students varies from one to seven years. Four of them hold a Doctorate degree in

applied linguistics, while the rest hold a ‘Magister’ degree and are preparing a Doctorate in applied linguistics. These data presume that all the participants can provide the researcher with the necessary information required in this research work.

<b>Informants</b>	<b>Degree</b>	<b>Experience in teaching written expression</b>	<b>Experience in teaching master one students</b>
<b>01</b>	<b>PhD</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>07</b>
<b>02</b>	<b>PhD</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>03</b>
<b>03</b>	<b>PhD</b>	<b>09</b>	<b>04</b>
<b>04</b>	<b>PhD</b>	<b>05</b>	<b>05</b>
<b>05</b>	<b>Magister</b>	<b>05</b>	<b>01</b>
<b>06</b>	<b>Magister</b>	<b>06</b>	<b>06</b>
<b>07</b>	<b>Magister</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>03</b>
<b>08</b>	<b>Magister</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>02</b>
<b>09</b>	<b>Magister</b>	<b>07</b>	<b>03</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>Magister</b>	<b>05</b>	<b>00</b>

**Table 3.18: Teachers’ Experience and Qualifications**

**Section Two: Teachers’ Perception of Academic Writing**

**Question One: How Would You Evaluate Your Students’ Level in Academic Writing?**

<b>Options</b>	<b>Informants</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Very good</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>Good</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>Average</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>40%</b>
<b>Weak</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>60%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 3.19: Students' Academic Writing Level**

The majority of informants (60%) noted that *Master One* students have a weak level in academic writing while 40% indicated that they have an average level. They justified by saying that most students lack fluency, background knowledge, accurate structure, vocabulary, correct grammar, coherence, and cohesion. In other words, they lack the mastery of the linguistic competence.

**Question Two: What Are The Reasons Behind Your Students' Weakness?**

Teachers' opinions about the reasons behind their students' weaknesses were almost the same. They stated that writing is difficult skill in nature and students lack practice and training as well as the noticeable lack of reading among students. Lack of reading made the students influent and poor of vocabulary. Reading would build a good base of linguistic competence for students and practice assist in strengthening and develop this competence.

**Question Three: Which Writing Convention They Lack the Most?**

<b>Options</b>	<b>Informants</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Grammar</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>Spelling</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>Form and organization</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>Punctuation</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>Vocabulary</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>All of them</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>80%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 3.20: Writing Conventions the Students Lack**

80% of teachers reported that students lack all of the academic writing conventions, 10% answered that they lack grammar only, and 10% emphasized form and organization as a convention lacked by students. These conventions are strongly interrelated and affect each other so that the weakness in one of them would cause the lack of the other convention. For instance, if the student is weak in grammar, automatically he will have incorrect spelling and punctuation which lead to mistakes the form and so on. Generally, students lack academic writing conventions as a result of the same reasons mentioned to answer the previous question (lack of reading and practice).

**Question Four: Which Approach Are You Using to Teach Writing?**

<b>Options</b>	<b>Informants</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Product</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>Process</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>40%</b>
<b>Genre</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>All of them</b>	<b>03</b>	<b>30%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 3.21: Approaches Used in Teaching Writing**

Majority of teachers indicated that they use process approach (40%), they justified that using the process approach would improve the linguistic skills through the different stages of the process: planning, revising and editing. However, they complained that the over-crowded classes hindered them from implementing this approach properly. 10% of teachers use product approach and 30% of them use a combination of the three approaches because they believe that none of these approaches can stand alone to make students' writing proficient. As a result, it is obvious that each teacher uses a different approach; they lack a unified writing teaching approach, this could be because of the differences of conditions and their students' needs.

**Question Five: Do Your Students Follow Writing Stages?**

<b>Options</b>	<b>Informants</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Yes</b>	<b>05</b>	<b>50%</b>
<b>No</b>	<b>03</b>	<b>30%</b>
<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 3.22: Students' Following Writing Stages**

Majority (50%) commented that students follow writing stages, but only when the teacher emphasizes following them during a writing task. 30% of teachers reported that students do not respect writing stages while 20% said that students follow writing stages only sometimes. They claimed even students who follow these stages likely miss revision stage. As a conclusion, students are not aware of the importance of following writing stages in presenting a polished piece of writing, hence majority of them do not follow writing stages properly. Therefore, teachers need to focus on writing stages in their teaching to help student to recognize the significance of these stages and to specify a time for practicing them so that students get accustomed to following them.

**Question Six: How Do Your Students Write?**

<b>Options</b>	<b>Informants</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Individually</b>	<b>07</b>	<b>70%</b>
<b>In pairs</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>00%</b>
<b>In groups</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>00%</b>
<b>All of them</b>	<b>03</b>	<b>30%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 3.23: The Way Students Write**

As noticed in the table above, 70 % of teachers claimed that their students write individually. Their justification was that writing is difficult task which need focus and calm and individual work provides these conditions. Moreover, they stressed the importance of freedom of choice in writing, hence writing individually permits the student to choose what to write and to select the points he considers them as important to be mentioned and discussed. Furthermore, writing individually facilitates monitoring and evaluating students' progress and giving the appropriate feedback for each student. The other informants 30% said their students write individually, in pairs and in groups according to the situation. While all of the

teachers stated that they prefer individual work. Writing individually is the most appropriate form of tackling a writing task and this is confirmed by teachers since it allows students to express their own thoughts and it reveals the true level of each individual. While working in groups would make some students especially the introverted one keep silent and eliminates them from participation in the task. Other students such as weak student would tend to depend on excellent student to undertake the writing task. Consequently, not all the students contribute in the work and the teacher cannot monitor or assess them appropriately.

**Question Seven: How Often Do You Give Your Students Homework?**

<b>Options</b>	<b>Informants</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Always</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>03</b>	<b>30%</b>
<b>Rarely</b>	<b>05</b>	<b>50%</b>
<b>Never</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 3.24: Frequency of Giving Homework for Students**

Surprisingly, 50% of informants claimed that they rarely give their students homework, 30% of them give student homework from time to time and, only 20% are committed to give students homework regularly. Teachers, who give regularly homework, commented that they do so to guarantee the practice and the best assimilation of the principles, structures, and techniques taught in the course. While teachers who do not give homework, reported that students are already burdened by teachers of other modules and complained of the overcrowded classes which prevent correcting and giving the appropriate feedback. All this, explains the weak level of students in academic writing.

**Question Eight: Do You Have Any Suggestions to Improve Students’ Academic Writing?**

Teachers' suggestions could be summarized into three main proposals. First, they emphasized the necessity of additional sessions devoted to teach written expression module in order to focus more on practice rather than teaching only the theoretical parts and the practice is almost absent. Second, teachers express a deep disappointment concerning the huge number of student in each class. All teachers suggested decreasing the number of student in each group in order to facilitate teaching process, undertaking writing tasks, doing more practice, monitoring and evaluating students' progression, and giving the appropriate feedback for each student. Finally, they highlighted that students' reading competence should be prompted. Reading is a "raw material" for writing, through reading; students would absorb all academic writing conventions and obtain the essential linguistic competence and knowledge to write effectively.

### **Section Three: Teachers' Perceptions of Psychological Factors Affecting the Academic Writing (Attitude, Motivation, and Anxiety)**

**Question One: Do You Believe That the Learner's Psychology Can Affect His writing Level?**

<b>Options</b>	<b>Informants</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>03</b>	<b>30%</b>
<b>Agree</b>	<b>07</b>	<b>70%</b>
<b>Disagree</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>00%</b>
<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 3.25: Teachers' Opinion about the Effect of Learner's Psychology on His Writing Level**

The whole sample agreed that the psychology of the learner affects his writing level. The teachers revealed a significant consciousness of the importance of learners' psychology and their writing level. They commented that the psychological readiness of students to write influence their engagement in writing tasks and the level of the writing they present.

**Question Two: How Can You Describe Your Students' Attitudes towards Academic Writing in General?**

<b>Options</b>	<b>Informants</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Positive</b>	<b>06</b>	<b>60%</b>
<b>Negative</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>Neutral</b>	<b>03</b>	<b>30%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 3.26: Teachers' Description of Students' Attitude towards Academic Writing in General**

Majority of teachers (60%) described students' attitude towards academic writing as positive, 30% said it is neutral and 10% described it as negative. From these results, we can deduce that attitude factor does not affect EFL learners' academic writing since their attitude is positive but they still have a weak level and do not like to undertake academic writing tasks as claimed by students themselves previously in this chapter.

**Question Three: Do You Think Your Students Are Motivated to Write?**

<b>Options</b>	<b>Informants</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Yes</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>No</b>	<b>08</b>	<b>80%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 3.27: Teachers' Opinion about Students' Motivation towards Writing**

80% of teachers said that students are not motivated to write and only 20% of them said that students are motivated to write. They justified students' demotivation by the lack of linguistic competence which makes students afraid of being criticized and negatively evaluated. In addition, teachers mentioned that students could be motivated only by marks. To sum up, the deficiency of students linguistic competence leads them to feel anxious of being criticized and negatively evaluated by the teacher or their classmates, as a reaction, they become demotivated to write unless they are extrinsically motivated by the teacher through marks.

**Question Four: Which of the Following You Believe It Is the Reason behind Their Motivation**

- a. To improve their academic writing level**
- b. To get good marks in the exam**
- c. To get extra marks from the teacher**
- d. They like writing**

<b>Options</b>	<b>Informants</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>A</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>B</b>	<b>06</b>	<b>60%</b>
<b>C</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>D</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 3.28: Teachers' Description of Reasons of Students' Motivation of Writing**

The table above reveals that majority of teachers (60%) believed that students are motivated to write in order to get good marks in the exams. 20% of them considered that the extra marks given by the teacher are the reason behind students' motivation to write. While only 10% said that students are motivated to write because they like writing, and 10% claimed that students are motivated to write due to their will to improve their academic writing level. Accordingly, we came to the conclusion that students are not motivated to write academically unless they are extrinsically motivated by good marks in exams and extra marks given by teachers. Therefore, depending on the results above, the most effective type of motivation in our case of study is the extrinsic motivation.

**Question Five: Do They Participate Willingly in Writing Tasks, Sometimes, or They Try to avoid them? Why?**

<b>Options</b>	<b>Informants</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Participate willingly</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>02</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Try to avoid it</b>	<b>07</b>	<b>70%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 3.29: Teachers' Description of Students' Participation**

As presented in the table above, most teachers (70%) claimed that students try to avoid writing tasks. 10% said that students participate willingly in writing tasks, and 20% said that they participate willingly sometimes. Teachers commented that students most times lack linguistic competence, mastery of writing skill conventions and general knowledge about academic topics so they tend to avoid writing tasks as much as possible. Due to their weaknesses, the majority of students encounter writing anxiety because they are afraid of being negatively evaluated and criticized, thus they develop avoidance strategies.

**Question Six: Do they feel Nervous or Anxious during Formal Essays Writing?**

<b>Options</b>	<b>Informants</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Yes</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>No</b>	<b>00</b>	<b>00%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 3.30: Teachers’ Description of Student’s Anxiety during Formal Essays Writing**

All the informants (100%) answered that students feel anxious during the writing of formal essays. Significantly , all the teachers inferred students’ feeling of anxiety to students poor linguistic competence that prevent them from being self-confident about their writings and make them afraid of failure and negative evaluation, as a result students exhibit a high level of anxiety during formal essays writing.

**Question Seven: Do You Have any Suggestions to Overcome These Psychological Factors?**

First, teachers emphasized the significance of initiating writing gradually i.e. the students need to be exposed to the language as possible to get prepared to write before undertaking any writing task. The second suggestion was providing a relaxed atmosphere

which could be realized only in less crowded classes. As well as endeavouring to motivate them by presenting an interesting topics to write about. In addition, teachers need to reinforce students' exposure to English language by encouraging them to read extensively. Moreover, the teacher should demonstrate tolerance to his students and provide positive feedback to reduce anxiety and fear of negative evaluation. Finally, more practice and training is required in order to enhance students' academic writing, because more practice promotes and fosters their experience in academic writing, consequently, they would get over their anxiety feeling and obtain self-confidence.

### **3.5 Discussion of the Findings**

This research work proved that psychological factors (motivation and anxiety) affect EFL learners' academic writing while it was deduced that attitude has no effect on EFL learners' academic writing. This is based on the data collected from students' and teachers' questionnaires whose findings will be discussed thoroughly.

#### **3.5.1 Students' Questionnaire**

Students' questionnaire results revealed that students found academic writing extremely difficult due to the special nature of its topics, being constrained by specific conventions and rules, and the prerequisite of high linguistic competence, concentration and patience. They claimed their appreciation for the importance of academic writing and stated that they encounter many difficulties in it, primarily in grammar and vocabulary and that they do not discern academic writing features. These results could be referred to a number of causes including lack of reading and practice on their part. They expressed their consciousness of their difficulties in academic writing and suggested doing more practice as a solution to improve their academic writing level. Furthermore, reading was emphasized as a solution to reinforce their knowledge of vocabulary, rhetoric features of academic texts, and grammatical structures.

Concerning the psychological factors affecting their academic writing, findings revealed that they have a positive attitude towards writing formal essays and academic writing in general but they are not interested in the nature of topics involved in academic writing tasks. In other words, their attitude towards academic writing does not influence their writing whereas the nature of the topics demotivates them and as a consequence; they do not like to participate in academic writing tasks. Furthermore, students asserted that they do not have self-confidence about their academic writing level due to the lack of linguistic competence, inaccurate grammar, and the poor knowledge about the given topics in academic writing tasks. All these reasons make them experience anxiety during academic writing tasks (writing apprehension), as they confirmed. Moreover, students declared that tackling academic writing tasks in classroom is not comfortable due to the crowded classrooms and the limitation of time which make them feel anxious. Finally, they reported that they are interested primarily in the marks given to them for their pieces of writing, and identified their problems in academic writing to be the result of the nature of the topics which does not motivate them and to their fear of negative comments. Therefore, anxiety and extrinsic motivation have strong effect on EFL learners' academic writing.

### **3.5.2 Teachers' Questionnaire**

Results derived from teachers' questionnaire revealed that teachers consider students' level in academic writing as weak because students lack linguistic competence; teachers inferred this to the lack of reading and practice since reading would build a good base of linguistic competence for students whereas practice assists in strengthening and developing this competence. The same reasons were stated by teacher as response to the reasons behind students' weaknesses in all academic writing conventions. Teachers reported that they do not use unified approach in teaching writing, as well as, they notified that the majority of students do not follow writing stages properly and most of them neglect the revision stage. Therefore,

teachers need to focus on writing stages in their teaching to help student to recognize the significance of these stages and to specify a time for practicing them so that students get accustomed to following them which would result in ameliorating their writing level. Moreover, they asserted that asking students to tackle writing tasks individually is the best way to provide them with some freedom to express their own thoughts and it is the most effective way to monitor students' progression and evaluate them. In addition, they complained that they rarely give students homework because of the large number of students and overcrowded classes which impede its correction.

Majority of teachers agreed on the importance of learners' psychology and that it affects their academic writing level, teachers view the psychological readiness of students to write as an initiative for their engagement in writing tasks and the level of the writing productions they would present. They described students' attitude towards academic writing as positive in general. Despite students' positive attitude towards academic writing, they have a weak writing level and still do not like to write, thus attitude is not an affective factor in our case of study. Moreover, teachers declared that the deficiency of students' linguistic competence leads them to feel anxious and fear being criticized and negatively evaluated by the teacher or classmates, as a reaction they become demotivated to write unless they are extrinsically motivated by the teacher through getting good marks in exam or extra marks as a reward of undertaking writing tasks. As a final point, they stated that students develop avoidance strategies concerning participation in academic writing tasks. This is due to their weaknesses since the majority of students experience writing anxiety because they are afraid of failing and of being negatively evaluated and criticized, thus they lack self-confidence about their writing level.

## Conclusion

The data gathered from students' and teacher's questionnaires revealed that students have a weak academic writing level. They are not aware of academic writing features and they still encounter various difficulties in academic writing concerning the accurate use of its conventions mainly in terms of grammar, vocabulary, form and organization, in which they have serious deficits. Moreover, the study ensured the effects of psychological factors (attitude, motivation and anxiety) on EFL learners' academic writing; in the case of *Master One* students in Foreign Languages Department, English language Division. Students indicated that their attitude towards academic writing is positive and does not affect their writing level, whereas they asserted that the nature of topics affects their motivation towards academic writing tasks and this results in losing motivation to write, thus a poor level of academic writing. Moreover, they stated that they feel anxious during academic writing tasks and afraid of the negative comments of the teacher. Consequently, they tend to not participate in academic writing tasks and to develop avoidance strategies. On the other hand, teachers inferred students' weaknesses to the lack of reading which resulted in lack of fluency and poor linguistic competence. Finally, teachers confirmed that psychological factors have a noticeable affects on students' academic writing especially extrinsic motivation and writing apprehension (anxiety) which is exhibited through students' fear of negative evaluation. Attitude was viewed as neutral factor that has no effect on our case of study, in contrast with the fear of negative evaluation that is a component of anxiety which has a negative effect on students' academic writing and the extrinsic motivation which functions as a positive factor. Finally, both students and teachers highlighted the significance of doing more practice and more exposure to language through extensive reading.

## **General Conclusion**

Writing plays a major role in English as Foreign language especially in the academic context. Academic writing is a requisite in all stages of education because it reflects learners' progression through essays, examinations, and dissertations. The majority of EFL learners face difficulties in tackling an academic writing task due to a variety of causes. Investigating the main psychological factors that might affect EFL learners' academic writing would help both teachers and learners in overcoming learners' writing difficulties and improve EFL learners' academic writing level.

Thus, the first step was to review the literature. This latter provided details about the nature of writing skill in general. Then, it focused on the definition of academic writing in order to explore the exact meaning of it, as well as investigating the differences between the academic writing and the other types of writing. The concept of rhetoric situation was explained with highlighting its role in academic writing, in an addition to the description of academic writing features and its types and how it is distinguished from other types of writing. The writing process represents an essential aspect of academic writing, accordingly, to have a good piece of writing, it is necessary to follow its process rigorously. Academic writing is not like other types of writing, it has its own importance in the educational and professional fields. Hence, a glance was given about its importance in this review of literature.

Psychology has become a main contributor in most educational fields, and EFL learning/ teaching is not an exception. The nature of writing as a mental and cognitive process which could be produced as a social endeavour to communicate makes writing psychology under the quest. This work, attempted to investigate the main psychological factors affecting EFL learners academic writing; namely, attitude, motivation and anxiety. Each factor was

presented in terms of definitions, types, components, and its contribution and effects on SLL process in general and academic writing in specific.

This work explored the perceptions of both teachers and EFL learners (*Master One* students in this case) of EFL academic writing and the psychological factors (attitude, motivation, anxiety) affecting it. The findings indicated that *Master One* students encounter many difficulties in academic writing which made their level evaluated as weak. These difficulties are primarily the result of the lack of reading and practice and the poor linguistic competence. In addition, the study revealed that students' attitude is positive towards academic writing but this did not help in improving their level in writing, thus, attitude was neglected as an effective factor on the students' academic writing. On the other hand, it was proved that the lack of motivation and anxiety in general and its specific component "the fear of negative evaluation" have a negative effect on EFL learners' academic writing, whereas extrinsic motivation especially through "marks" has an evident positive effect on their academic writing.

At the end of this study, some significant solutions to overcome the psychological factors effects were suggested by both teachers and students themselves. These solutions could be described as being basic since they handle with the primarily source of EFL learners difficulties, which is the poor linguistic knowledge and the lack of practice. In brief, more exposure to language through extensive reading and more practice would assist in prompting students' fluency and linguistic competence. Consequently, this would lead to overcome their feeling of lack of self-confidence which intervenes in losing motivation to write as well as their feeling of writing apprehension (writing anxiety) during tackling academic writing tasks.

## Recommendations

The research findings and discussions have several significant implications. Learners' psychology plays a major role in their learning process. The research has found that the psychological factors affecting EFL learners' academic writing are negatively effective only in case of lack of linguistic competence and poor vocabulary that are the result of the lack of reading and lack of practice. Therefore, to overcome the psychological factors, students' linguistic competence should be reinforced and boosted.

First, during this research, *Master One* students' level of academic writing was evaluated by written expression teachers as weak even though they are at an advanced level in the educational stream. Thus, syllabus designers can have some insights in teaching the academic writing conventions and features starting from the *Second Year* level rather than the *Third Year* level or *Master One* level.

Second, the majority of teachers and students claimed that students face difficulties in grammar. Therefore, it is recommended to teach grammar module in English Division for three or four years instead of only two years, since the period of teaching grammar has been proved as being insufficient for EFL learners to master grammar rules.

Third, both teachers and students complained the crowded classroom. Crowded classes hamper teachers from providing the necessary feedback and increase students' anxiety. Thus, minimizing the number of student in each group, and providing larger classrooms would be effective to provide the needed relaxing atmosphere in which anxiety would be in the minimum and to overcome the stressful environment in which most EFL learners are undertaking their written expression assignments.

Forth, reading was suggested by all teachers as a solution for the poor linguistic competence of EFL learners which intervene in demotivating them and increasing their anxiety during academic writing tasks. Hence, we suggest adding a reading *module* in which

EFL learners read and discuss about free or given materials. This module would be the same like other modules in terms of evaluation and exams in order to obtain students' motivation which was discussed earlier in this research that it can be best achieved through marks. Furthermore, there should be collaboration between the teachers of reading module and teachers of written expression module. To illustrate, written expression teachers should design tests to identify students' weaknesses. Then, the results of these tests should be reported to the teachers of reading module so they can select the convenient materials which include the appropriate structures that students need to foster and reinforce their fluency and eliminate their weakness. Reading is "*the raw material*" for writing; it reinforces students' linguistic competence and provides them with a good background about different topics, thus they would become more self-confident about their writing, less anxious, and more motivated to write.

Fifth, design and produce a weekly or monthly magazine that publishes students articles, compositions, stories, novels...etc. This magazine should be managed and supervised by a teacher with the assistance of some students. A major concern of its content should be referencing, any article published should be examined to check its authenticity. As well as planning competition for the best writings, however, these activities would motivate EFL learners to practice academic writing with new interesting visions.

Sixth, teachers have a crucial role in alleviating and reducing student's anxiety. They should behave in friendly way with their students and clarify for them that making mistakes is natural and a part of the learning process. Moreover, teachers need to choose the appropriate feedback which would be effective and not frustrating for the students in the same time.

Seventh, teachers should be aware of the importance of the learners' psychology and how it can affect their productivity and the entire learning/teaching process. In this context, professional seminars and conferences should be organized for teachers of written expression.

These meetings would enrich teachers' knowledge and update them on the latest progress in the field of written expression teaching and how to overcome the psychological factors that may affect their students.

### **Limitations of the Study**

This study has some limitations. The first one is time constraints. It was conducted over a period of one semester. This is not sufficient to allow the researcher to use different tools and instruments or deal with larger sample of students and teachers. The second limitation is the sample, in this research male students were not cooperative, and only three male ones participated in answering the administered questionnaire from an entire sample of fifty students. The Third limitation is that this study is restricted to students of English at Biskra University. Therefore, the findings of this study may not be generalized to all students of Algeria or elsewhere.

### **Suggestions for Further Research**

The following suggestions are presented for those who are willing to contribute the present study:

- 1- The majority of this research's sample was females. It can be fruitful to conduct the same study using a sample of equal number of male and female students.
- 2- This research was conducted to investigate the psychological factors affecting EFL learners' academic writing in university. It could be a beneficial if it is conducted in pre-university level as well.
- 3- This study involved the affect of the three main psychological factors: attitude, motivation, and anxiety. It could be a good idea to conduct a study that focuses only on one factor for more consistent and generable findings.
- 4- This research focused on academic writing, it could be conducted to investigate the psychological factors affecting listening skill, reading or speaking.

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# Appendices

# Appendix 1

## Students' Questionnaire

Dear master one students,

You are kindly invited to fill in the following questionnaire which represents a data collection tool for a master degree in applied linguistics. This questionnaire is designed to investigate the main psychological factors affecting your academic writing. Please, tick the appropriate answer, or give your own answer and justify it whenever it is possible.

We extremely appreciate your collaboration

Master Researcher

### Section I: Background Information

1. What is your gender?

a. Male

b. Female

2. Do you like studying the English language?

a. Yes

b. No

Say why, please:

.....  
.....

### Section II: Learners' perception of Academic Writing

1. Do you consider writing as an important language skill?

a. Yes

b. No

Say why, please:

.....  
.....

2. How often do you write?

a. More than once a week

b. Once a week

c. Less than one a week

3. Could you distinguish between academic and non academic writing?

a. Yes

b. No

If yes, say how/ if no, say why:.....

.....  
.....

4. Do you believe that academic writing is:

a. Very easy

b. Easy

c. Difficult

d. Very difficult

Say why, please

.....  
.....

5. Do you know what academic writing conventions are?

a. Yes

b. No

If yes, say what they are: .....

.....  
6. How would you evaluate your level in academic writing?

- a. Highly proficient
- b. Proficient
- c. Adequate
- d. Weak
- e. Very weak

7. Please, point out the difficulties you face in academic writing in order by placing the numbers on the boxes (from 1 to 6)

- a. Grammar
- b. Vocabulary
- c. Organization and the form
- d. Flow of ideas
- e. Nature of the topic
- f. Allocated time is not sufficient

8. What do you suggest to overcome these difficulties?

- a. Doing more practice
- b. Seeking teacher's help
- c. Both of them

Others?.....  
.....  
.....

**Section III: Students' Perceptions of the Psychological Factors Affecting their Academic Writing:**

1. Do you like writing formal compositions?

a. Yes

b. No

Say why, please.....

.....

2. Do you participate in writing tasks willingly?

a. Always

b. Sometimes

c. Never

d. Please, say why:.....

.....

3. Do you feel self-confident about your essays level?

a. Yes

b. No

Say why, please: .....

.....

4. Where do you prefer to do your writing tasks?

a. Classroom

b. Home

Why?.....

.....

5. Do you feel worried or nervous during the writing of formal essay?

a. Always

b. Sometimes

c. No

6. Do think your problem in academic writing is due to:

a. Simply you do not like it and feel it boring

b. You do not have trust in your writings

c. You do not like the teacher

d. Fear of negative comments

e. Nature of topics does not motivate you

Please, explain:.....

.....  
.....

7. What is the first thing you do after receiving your work from the teacher?

a. Look at the mark

b. Read teacher's comments

c. Analyse your mistakes

Others? .....

.....

8. If you have any comments or suggestions concerning academic writing, please do:

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

Thank you for your cooperation

## Appendix 2

### Teachers' Questionnaire

Dear teachers,

You are kindly invited to fill in the following questionnaire which represents a data collection tool for a master degree in applied linguistics. This questionnaire is designed to investigate the main psychological factors affecting EFL learners' academic writing. Please, tick the appropriate answer, or give your own answer whenever it is required.

Your collaboration is extremely appreciated

BADRI Nadjette

#### Section one: General Information

1. Degree: .....
2. Experience in teaching written expression:
3. Experience in teaching master one students

#### Section two: Teachers' Perceptions of Academic Writing

1. How would you evaluate your student's level of academic writing?
  - a. Very good
  - b. Good
  - c. Average
  - d. Weak

Why :.....  
.....  
.....
2. What are the reasons behind their weakness? .....  
.....  
.....  
.....
3. Which writing convention they miss the most?
  - a. Grammar
  - b. Spelling
  - c. Form and organization
  - d. Punctuation
  - e. Vocabulary

f. All of them   
Others? .....

4. Which approach are you using to teach writing?

- a. Product
- b. Process
- c. Genre
- d. All of them

5. Do your students follow writing stages?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Sometimes

Why? .....

6. How do your students write?

- a. Individually
- b. In pairs
- c. In groups
- d. All of them

Which you prefer most and why? .....

7. How often do you give them homework? And why?

- a. Always
- b. Sometimes
- c. Rarely
- d. Never

Why? .....

8. Do you have any suggestions to improve students' academic writing? .....

.....

**Section three: Teachers' Perceptions of Psychological Factors Affecting the Academic Writing :( Attitude , Motivation , Anxiety)**

1. Do you believe that the learner's psychology can affect his writing level?

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Agree
- c. Disagree
- d. Strongly disagree

Say why, please: .....

.....

.....

2. How can you describe your students' attitudes towards academic writing in general?

- a. Positive
- b. Negative
- c. Neutral

3. Do you think your students are motivated to write?

- a. Yes
- b. No

Say why ,please : .....

.....

4. Which of the following you believe it is the reason behind their motivation

- a. To improve their academic writing level
- b. To get good marks in the exam
- c. To get extra marks from the teacher
- d. They like writing

Others? .....

5. Do they participate willingly in writing tasks , sometimes ,or they try to avoid them?

Why?

.....

.....

.....

6. Do they feel nervous or anxious during formal essays writing?

a. Yes

b. No

In your opinion why? .....

.....

.....

7. Do you have any suggestions to overcome these psychological factors?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Thank you very much for your cooperation

## Abstract in Arabic

### الملخص

تمثل مهارة الكتابة تحدياً في اللغة الإنجليزية حتى بالنسبة لمتكلمي اللغة الأصليين، وهذا راجع لطبيعة مهارة الكتابة كونها مهارة إنتاجية. الكتابة تمثل أرقى أساليب التعبير و التواصل، و طبيعتها المعقدة تجعل كل متعلمي اللغة الأجنبية يواجهون عدة مصاعب في إنجاز واجب في الكتابة الأكاديمية. طلبة اللغة الأجنبية في الجزائر لا يشكلون استثناء لما سبق، هم يعانون من مصاعب في إتقان أوجه الكتابة الأكاديمية و إنتاج قطعة أدبية مقبولة. هذا البحث عبارة عن محاولة لاستقصاء العوامل النفسية الأساسية (الموقف، التحفيز، والموقف) المؤثرة على الكتابة الأكاديمية لطلبة اللغة الإنجليزية أولى ماستر في كلية اللغات الأجنبية، جامعة بسكرة. بغرض إثبات أو تفنيد فرضيتنا التي تنص على أن هذه العوامل لديها تأثير على الكتابة الأكاديمية للطلبة، تم استعمال وسيلة بحث هي نموذج استطلاع. الأول لأساتذة التعبير الكتابي ( 10 ) و الثاني لمجموعة من طلبة سنة أولى ماستر و عددهم 50 طالبا. النتائج المتحصل عليها في هذا البحث كشفت أن مستوى الكتابة الأكاديمية للطلاب ضعيف. أما فيما يخص موقفهم اتجاه الكتابة الأكاديمية فهو إيجابي و لكنه غير مؤثر. بينما نقص التحفيز للكتابة و شعورهم بالتوتر اتجاه الكتابة فله تأثير سلبي على مستوى كتابتهم الأكاديمية.