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**Exploring the Role of Journal Writing as a Supportive Language Learning Tool in
Developing EFL students' Writing Performance**

The case of Third Year students at the department of English at

Biskra University

A Thesis submitted to the Department of Foreign Languages in partial fulfillment of
the Requirements for the degree of Masters in Sciences of the Language

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Declaration

I, Ben Abderrahmane Amel, do hereby declare that this submitted work is my original work and has not previously been submitted for any institution or university for a degree. I also declare that a list of references is provided forward indicating all the sources of the cited and quoted information. This work was certified and completed at Mohammed Kheider University of Biskra.

Algeria

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Dedication

I would like to thank first and foremost Allah the Almighty for his never ending grace and granting me the willingness to accomplish this research work.

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My brother Yahia my backbone

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Abstract

The importance of writing skill is undeniable since it has become an essential element in the human's social transactions. A successful foreign language learning depends on mastering writing abilities; however, third year students at the department of English at Biskra University have deficiencies in producing an effective piece of writing. For this purpose, this exploratory research highlights the role of journal writing as a supportive language learning tool in developing EFL students' writing performance, attempting to explore the students' main encountered problems in writing assignments, the reasons beyond these problems, in addition to the teachers and students' perceptions towards the significance of this technique in fostering L2 writing competence. In light of the research questions, the researcher opted for a quantitative approach to analyze data statistically. Two data collection instruments were used; a semi-structured questionnaire was submitted randomly to 53 third year English students at Biskra University, and a semi-structured interview was addressed to six teachers of written expression module at the English department at the same University. Consequently, the gained results indicated the strong connection between recording journals and the improvement of writing skill. Hence, journal writing is an extensive activity to boost the learners' writing tasks, to alleviate writing difficulties, and to promote learners autonomy. In a nutshell, the respondents, who experience journaling, and the interviewees showed positive attitudes towards the strengths of this valuable method in improving language learning in context.

Key words: EFL students, foreign language learning, journal writing, writing performance.

List of abbreviations

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ESL: English as a Second Language

L1: First Language

L2: Second Language

TL: Target Language

ELLS: English Language Learners

E: Electronic

Q: Question

SILL: Strategy Inventory for Language Learning

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CHAPTER I

GENERAL

INTRODUCTION

Chapter I : General Introduction

Introduction

The foreign language acquisition process, learners encounter numerous hurdles to master the four major receptive and productive skills: reading, listening, speaking, and writing. In the writing process, students attempt to express, construct, and structure their ideas and concepts freely following the tutor instructions. However; it is considered as the most challenging skill for the learners to be achieved because it requires considerable effort and practice to reach a higher level. In addition, writing plays a massive role in every student's life, since nowadays everything is based on papers. The learners are asked to write a well-produced piece of writing such as: essays, research work, dissertation, and any other creative writing tasks.

A well-produced piece of writing requires accurate, cohesive, and coherent structure of ideas. Whereas, most of English as a Foreign Language Learners are still struggling in poor writing skill to produce an adequate composition due to plenty of reasons.

In this light, the introductory chapter includes seven segments, starting with study background following by statement of the problem, then research aims and research questions, methodology of the study, significance of the study, and finally the structure of the dissertation.

1.1 Study background

Writing is the process of producing and transferring thoughts into meaningful words .The term" writing" took various definitions according to many scholars. Palmer (1993, p.5) claimed that writing is a task where the words are combined to become a sentence, or

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a process in which an idea that exists in our mind is turned into written text. Moreover, Crystal (2006, p. 257) defined writing as a means of communication that involves a series of visual marks.

Writing skill is regarded as the most complex task in language learning process whether in mother tongue or foreign language. Nunan (1999) stated that producing a cohesive, fluent, lengthy piece of writing is the trickiest challenge in language learning, and it is significantly more difficult for second language learners.

Writing journals is a supportive technique in which students investigate diverse writing abilities, strategies, and making experiences through the useful knowledge that it provides (Genesse & Upshur, 1999). In the same way, Castellanos (2008) cited that journaling technique is not recording merely the personal thoughts; yet, it is about writing summaries, solving problems, and expressing opinions attempting to boost the self-writing achievements into a higher level. A relevant feature of journal writing is free-writing. As such it is widely defined as writing about a particular subject without stopping or editing, it has been regarded as a strong effective tool for improving students' writing in a variety of educational contexts. In addition, free writing technique inspires students to write more and more compositions not only for school purposes, but also for personal purposes (Elbow, 1973).

The importance of writing lies in its wide use in several fields. Writing supplies students many possibilities to look for contemporary ways to express their own ideas and thoughts in a foreign language (Rao, 2017). Furthermore, Deane (2018) stated the writing significant as the greatest advancement in human history. It is a method of interchanging knowledge, information, ideas, and opinions to future generations with other nations

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around the world. According to Sarwat et al. (2021), writing skill has a powerful impact in the educational system because it is the first source of knowledge, and it is considered as a compulsory skill for successful language development

Most students challenge numerous difficulties when it comes to writing assignments. These writing disabilities obstruct them to produce well-effective writing pieces. Andrew (2019) viewed that students face countless hurdles at different levels of their study; these difficulties can be classified into cognitive, psychological, linguistic and pedagogical problems (Byrne, 1988). Some of these difficulties for instance: The misuse of grammatical rules affects on students' writing texts. Adams & Keene (2000) stated that students effectively bargain their educational needs by using good and grammatically correct English. Moreover, it is believed that punctuations are crucial in academic writing. Punctuations play an important function in clarifying the written materials' meaning; they guide the audience to not get confused while reading the text (Hajar, 2019). D. A. I. Ahmed (2017) also, mentioned another obstacle which is spelling; he said Spelling issues are also thought to be one of the biggest obstacles to write. Spelling exercises help in learning how to read and write properly. The majority of students struggle to use appropriate terms in their writing because of the lack size of vocabulary they own, which slows down their academic writing learning. (Z.A. A. Ahmed, 2018).

As previously stated, writing as a productive skill is a complex mechanism that must be disassembled into its most basic components in order to be understood, taught, and learned. However, EFL students must keep in mind that understanding the pivotal elements of writing is very essential; in order to select the most appropriate techniques and approaches. Raimes (1983) have explained a set of approaches in teaching and learning writing skills.

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The Controlled to Free Approach, it was introduced as a sequential approach in writing; it contains copying, manipulating or changing texts. Students first start practicing by words, phrases, and sentences, then they move to write paragraphs and long compositions. The Grammar-Syntax Approach, said that grammar, syntax, and organization should be concurrent to get a successful writing. In addition, The Free Writing Approach, Byrne argues that “many students write badly because they do not write enough” (Byrne, 1988, p. 22). This approach focuses on the quantity of the writing productions in which students should generate and vast their compositions.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Writing has historically been overlooked in foreign language teaching. But recently, it has become a crucial component of the communication dyad (Brookes and Grundy, 1998). Because writing is more demanding in human needs, this makes it the most crucial skill in the educational contexts. The skill in its nature is sophisticated to be either taught or learned in the first language. However, when it comes to the target language the challenge becomes greater. As a productive skill, writing entails different processes to be successfully mastered such as analyzing, thinking critically, as well as, combining the words to form a meaningful written composition.

Writing is considered to be a fundamental students’ need because it is related to their educational career. As a result, writing as a craft coexists with human life since individuals require it to complete their various transactions (McArthur, 1992). However, most teachers do not provide students with opportunities to practice writing in the communicative context where they need to feel confident and creative in their writing abilities; therefore, writing skill still sounds challenging for foreign learners to produce a significant text because

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ELLs generally do not have the same background knowledge in foreign language; they often encounter difficulties in writing achievements. In order to develop their writing competency, students should be encouraged to write freely without fear of making mistakes. For this reason, this study attempts to check out the role of writing journals in enhancing EFL students writing skills.

1.3 Research aims

This study tries to shed light on the difficulties that students challenge in learning foreign languages. These difficulties may create an obstacle for them to produce good writing assignments, and also attempts to help students to overcome these hurdles. The general objectives are:

- Identifying the essential aspects behind students' poor writing achievements.
- Determining the major causes of writing hurdles.
- Exploring the role of writing journals technique in refining the students' written paragraphs.

1.4 Research questions

The recent study seeks to explore the utility of journal writing in improving writing abilities. The specific objectives of this research can be narrowed in these three main questions:

RQ1: What are the main difficulties that obstruct students to write effective writing texts?

RQ2: What are the reasons behind these difficulties?

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RQ3: How can free writing journals technique help students to develop their writing level?

1.5 Methodology of the study

To check out the credibility of the investigation, the study used a quantitative approach to answer the research questions.

Furthermore, the first data collection method is submitting a questionnaire to 53 third year students of English at Biskra University, in which they are asked to fill in the questions with truthful responses about the hindrances that prevent EL learners to write creative writing productions. The fundamental objective of the study is to see the students' perceptions about writing skill. The second qualitative method that is used to collect data is a semi-structured interview is addressed to six university teachers of written expression at the English Department at Biskra University. The main aim of using such method is to benefit from their experience in the subject under investigation.

1.6 Significance of the study

The study at hand has been conducted purposely because a lot of students do not know how to write effectively, and how to construct their ideas. Therefore; in this study the aim is focusing on identifying the difficulty of the language components that the students face while writing, the causes beyond those difficulties and exploring the role of journaling as a supportive material to overcome writing difficulties.

1.7 Structure of the dissertation

This current research consists of three basic chapters.

Chapter I : General Introduction

Chapter one is entitled as general introduction, it represents the general idea of the whole research. It includes the study background, statement of the problem, following by research objectives and research questions, methodology of study, significance of the study, and finally the structure of the dissertation.

Chapter two reviews the literature. It is divided into two parts. Part one introduces the overview of writing skill, its definitions, the importance of writing, writing difficulties, stages of developing writing, challenges faced by students in writing skill, reasons of poor writing, and approaches to teach writing. The second part presents the definitions of journal writing, its benefits, purposes, types, and importance, the objectives of journaling process, writing journals formats, journals as a written interaction between learners and teachers, the effective implementation of journal writing, the advantages and disadvantages of the technique, Kolb's experiential learning cycle, and lastly the effects of journal writing on EFL/ESL writers.

Chapter three deals with the practical part; it describes the set of methodological aspects that the researcher opted to answer the research questions. Along with the data collection tools, procedures, population and the description of data analysis, it also seeks to analyze and interpret the quantitative findings to make inferences and draw conclusions.

CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW

Chapter II: Literature review

PART I: The writing process

2 Introduction

English is recognized as the most common language in the world. It is used as lingua-franca between non-native speakers in order to exchange information. Therefore, the Algerian students are taught English as a foreign language since their middle school; however, they still confront considerable barriers in writing in English when they attempt to express their ideas and perspectives in the form of paragraphs.

This section represents some concepts related to writing process. It outlines an overview of writing including its nature, its importance, its difficulties, stages of writing process, the challenges of writing skill, the reasons of these challenges, and finally the approaches of teaching writing.

2.1 Nature of writing

2.1.1 Writing in general

Generally, writing is viewed as an important task because it is used for communication. Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (1996) defined writing as the capacity to construct linear series of graphemes. Nadler et al. (2005, p.128) advocated that writing is the use of appropriate letters and symbols according to the standard usage of a given language; means that writing is gathering and setting down the information in a form of letters or symbols, then produce them in a meaningful way for the easy interpretation by the reader. Likewise, Hutchinson (2005, p.5) claimed that writing is just another form of expression; it is concerned by putting words, and processing thoughts on a paper.

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2.1.2 Writing as a skill

Writing is the fundamental and the most challenging skill among other skills. Through writing students are able to produce language in order to express thoughts and convey meaning. Moreover, Nunan (2003, p.88) claimed that writing is a cognitive process of creating ideas through thinking to express them in a good way. Students are supposed to organize those ideas into sentences or paragraphs that would be clear to the audience.

Writing can be also defined in two terms, writing as process and writing as product. According to Wallace et al. (2004, p.15), writing is the final product after they learn several stages of writing separately before. Writing as process refers to the stages that should be done while teaching writing. Students must be aware of the writing stages that are planning, drafting, revising, and editing, to get effective writing pieces as a final product. Nevertheless, writing as a product, students focus more on the aim of writing and the final product. In other word, writing is a complex task that requires mastering the writing stages to have an acceptable writing production. Furthermore, to be a good writer, the student has to make writing as a daily exercise; he/she trains himself/herself to write a well-produced paragraph through practicing writing occasionally. Harmer (2004, p.31) believed that writing leads to language learning because it reinforces the use of target language; and also gives the learners time and opportunity to think about the language rules. In its simplest form, teachers often give their students tasks about writing a paragraph, for instance, a descriptive, narrative, or argumentative text. In this case, writing is used for a specific purpose that is to reinforce TL use in the grammatical, semantic, and syntactic aspects.

Based on all the mentioned definitions, writing can be defined as a cognitive process that involves the mind to think and express ideas, opinions, and feelings in a written form.

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Thus, sharing the ideas should be produced in a good paragraph with a clear content. However, writing is not an easy task to be learned; it requires passing through many stages to master.

2.2 Importance of writing

In the context of language learning, all the four skills are important. Seeking to learn the skills integrately leads to a prosperous mastering of language. Despite that every skill has its freaked use, but, writing remains the most vigorous one due its wide use in all aspects of life.

In higher education, writing is crucial in students' educational life. If students do not know the basis of writing they will not be able to interact with their instructors or colleagues. According to Fareed, Ashraf and Bilal (2016b), the role of writing skill is very crucial in language learning progress; its significance stretches to the vast utilization of English language in the international communication and comprehension of the needed knowledge.

Kern (2000) proclaimed that writing serves to: (a) Reinforce language use, (b) Assist the students to create meaning; (c) Develop the students' capacity to think, express thoughts, and to organize ideas; (d) Improve the learner's learning strategies through individual or collaborative works; (e) Promote the grammatical accuracy while writing; (f) Develop the cognitive abilities, since writing requires thinking and brainstorming, (g) Help in decision making and problem solving.

The National Commission on Writing in America's Schools and Colleges (2003, p.3) claimed that indeed the different writing tasks promote the students' creativity and thinking abilities as it is also beneficial for intellectual vitality. As it is regarded as a communication

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tool in which students convey the required information; writing skill supports the learners to analyze, convey, understand, and think critically.

In summary, recently, writing significance is undeniable. Writing becomes a basic element in everybody's life that assists them to fulfill personal, academic, occupational, and even emotional objectives. It is a means of communication between interlocutors in written forms. Hence, writing skill promotes the writer creativity and thinking; as it improves the mental abilities to plan, outline, and structure ideas effectively.

2.3 Difficulties of writing

Obviously, writing seems difficult task for non-native speakers, as well as native speakers. EFL learners consider writing as the most complex skill among other skills because it requires the process of transforming thoughts into written texts, Byrne (1988) presented the major difficulties of writing that are shaped in three problems.

2.3.1 Psychological problems

Interaction, performance and feedback between the writer and the reader are absent, writing here is based on the writer own work.

2.3.2 Linguistic problems

In writing language users have to express our ideas in a very planned and structured way to compensate the absence of oral interaction features like: intonation, stress, and facial expressions.

2.3.3 Cognitive problems

Unlike speech discourse, writer should master the language structure and organization of ideas effectively to be well understood.

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According to Raimes (1983, p.6), what makes writing a sophisticated activity is that it requires the ability to master a set of components as revealed by the content, organization, grammar rules, purpose, audience, syntax, mechanisms, word choice, and writing process, as it is highlighted in the figure below.

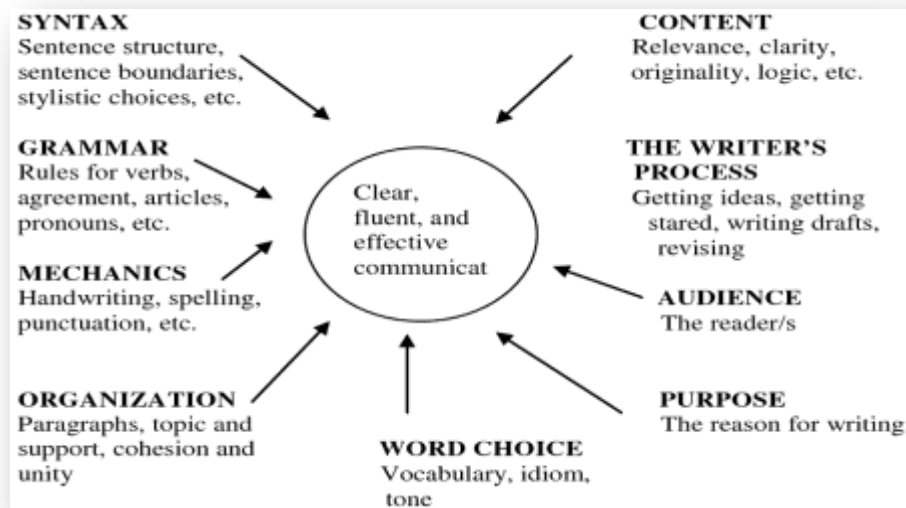


Figure 1: Producing a piece of writing (Raimes, 1988, p.6)

2.4 Stages of developing writing

When a writer decides to write about something, the preliminary step is the plan of what should be included and how to produce it before start writing. Writing is done; the author reads the production frequently in order to modify and to correct mistakes if needed. Next, he edits and revises again and again until he gets the satisfied final product that expresses the exact meaning. Writing as a multi-step action requires four stages to be done in the right manner. The first is collecting ideas. The second is organizing those ideas. The third is a rough draft. And the final is about editing and revising processes (Oshima & Hogue, 2007, p.15).

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The next part discussed the fundamental steps in enhancing writing as it has been posited by Harmer (2004); Oshima and Hogue (2007); and Марчишина (2010).

2.4.1 Planning stage

Before getting started typing, the writer prepares the topic of what he is going to say. It may include details or it could be just few jotted words. However, some writers' decision of writing takes place in their mind, they are conscious of what should be written down without prewriting the supporting ideas

While planning, three main issues have to be taken into consideration. The purpose of writing takes the first place, since it will influence not only the written production type, but also, the included ideas and language used. The second factor is the audience who read the written piece and who will be influenced by the formal language and text structure. The final is the content structure in terms of connecting ideally the relevant arguments, thoughts and facts.

2.4.2 Organizing stage

The writer sets up the supporting sentences from the list and arranges them regularly according to the main topic, to formulate ideas and information that give more explanations about the topic. The organization of ideas into an outline makes writing process much structured and facilitates drafting.

2.4.3 Drafting stage

In this stage, the writer relies on the outline as a guide; whereas, during writing he unintentionally adds extra ideas that do not exist in the outline. The author writes down the information without making pauses and ignoring the grammar rules, mechanisms, and

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spelling mistakes. Committing mistake in this stage is natural and acceptable since it is the initial draft and errors will be corrected later.

In the first rough draft, emphasizing on the language style will retard writing progress. Therefore, the focus has to be on the paragraph content and structure. Once the writer finishes with writing, he takes a while to revise and evaluate what has been produced to develop.

2.4.4 Revising and Editing stage

The unstructured language, confusion and ambiguity of ideas, ungrammatical accuracy, spelling mistakes, misuse of punctuation and capitalization, and poor vocabulary, all of these issues must be revised appropriately after producing the draft to ensure if the assignment makes sense. Subsequently, the writer suggests or comments on what was written by editing and correcting errors to get an effective written piece.

Peer-Editing and Self-Editing are successful techniques to revise and edit the text. Thus, the self-editor is the writer himself who suggests some detachments; nevertheless, peer editor is a classmate who reads and evaluates your draft to improve only the content and organization, yet, the grammar and punctuations are checked by the instructor himself.

The writer may leave the writing achievement for few days in order to revise and proofread it. This could help him to examine and make modifications where needed. Checking paragraphing, word order, word choice, and also confirming that citation is correctly used and included in the list of references are a must for the author.

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2.4.5 Final version stage

Eventually, the writing process is done, and the final product is available to be submitted or published. Therefore, the production is ready once the writer has planned, edited the draft, and made the modifications to what should be mainly changed.

The process of writing is basically covers the five developing stages. Whereas, these latter can be a recursive procedure where the writer plans, drafts, and edits, then he re-plans, re-drafts, and re-edits for the second time due to the stream of consciousness that comes gradually as a series of those repetitive stages.

Harmer (2004) had represented the writing's process aspects through The Process Wheel in which the writers' directions during writing are clearly introduced.



Figure 2: The Process Wheel (Harmer, 2004)

The writer direction keeps turning around this wheel, going up or down until he reaches the climax coming up with the final product.

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2.5 Challenges faced by students in writing skill

Learning mother language and learning a foreign language are quietly distinguished. Students come to learn the target language with different backgrounds knowledge; some students find it easy process to engage with a new language; meanwhile, others encounter countless problems that create an obstacle prevents learners to competently acquire the TL.

Some factors contribute in making writing more difficult for EFL learners that are

2.5.1 Handwriting

Students brought up utilizing characters and scripts in their mother tongue that are different from English language, for this reason, handwriting is considered as a challenging task for EFLs who get used to write in their mother language. Besides, the direction of writing usually is not the same for most languages; some begin from the right side while some from the left. Subsequently, bad handwriting influences negatively on the students' grades and the reader as well. (Harmer, 2001).

2.5.2 Spelling

Spelling is defined as the correct structure of letters to form words; though, the confusion of using letters leads to producing wrong words and blurs the conveyed message, which itself impacts on the quality of the text.

Presently, English language spelling is characterized as an irregular and difficult component in writing context especially for English language learners. It is true that English spelling is challenging since English adopts two major spellings British and American, yet it is not random; it consists of clear defined rules with some exceptions. For this purpose, learners generate those rules on all the words for instance, the words involve ie (believe), always the i comes before e, only one case is not concerned, when they are

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preceded by c (conceive); nevertheless, in species the i is before e like in the early rule. By the same token, the awareness of the different usage of spelling in homophones decreases the confusion in writing. Homophones are words that are pronounced in the same manner, but are spelt differently such as: son and sun; sew and so (Harmer, 2004).

2.5.3 Mechanics

Basically, contains punctuations and capitalization. The skill of using mechanics while producing a text is left out for most students. Punctuations aid the readers to follow and comprehend the content in a written text (Raimes, 2004). If students do not know when to use capital letters and where to put comma, semi colon, and full stop to determine the paragraph limits, the achievement will become a chaos and misunderstood with a negative impression on the audience (Harmer, 2004).

2.5.4 Vocabulary

Apparently, English language learners suffer from the small size of lexis they own, this limited amount of vocabulary threatens the learners' written productions.

According to Ghazal (2007), lexicography is the pillar of language learning, the words serve as the foundation of language. Thus without words people cannot communicate and express meaning.

Typically, vocabulary is a series of words that belong to one language; those words support the variation and diversity of the linguistic system. Unlike the grammar, lexicography is an unrestrained system. It extremely opens the windows for language to form synonyms, antonyms, meaning, as well as the proper use of lexis in writing beautifies the discourse and makes it mostly perfect (Azam, 2014).

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To overcome the issue of insufficient knowledge of vocabulary, researchers have suggested a number of strategies for EFL learners to remember the new information and use it later, as Oxford introduced (SILL) that comprises many strategies such as: memory strategies, cognitive strategies and compensation strategies, meta-cognitive strategies, affective strategies and social strategies. Nayan and Krishnasamy (2015) advocated that language learning strategies are used to help the learners to absorb and store new words. They are like unintentional behavior to analyze and regulate the learned materials for the better comprehension. Additionally, these strategies determine the quality of understanding of what they have learned, and whether the application of more steps is required to improve their comprehension.

2.5.5 Grammar

Grammar is the set of rules that we use in our daily communication to express wants and needs. Grammar rules sound tricky for advanced EFL learners because they are not sure of using the appropriate tense that matches with the context.

Fromkin et al. (1999) have defined the grammar as the speaker's potential of producing the rules of phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantic of his language. According to Al-Salman and Al-Shehabi (2011) the key component of language learning and language development is the grammatical precision. A learner's capacity to effectively attain other language-related skills like speaking and writing is demonstrated by their grammatical knowledge.

A language's grammar serves as a guide. It guides and reroutes a language's structure and meaning. Grammar rules are parameters that encourage a language's propriety, they effectively strike a balance between the various linguistic objects, for

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example: the relation between subject and predicate and subject verb agreement (Azam,2014).

The acknowledgment of the importance of grammar in second and foreign language learning is addressed all over the world, despite of its bounded system. Although, the opinions have been conflicted concerning the importance of grammar instructions in L2 teaching and learning language processes. Some researchers admitted the great significance of language structure in L2 syllabuses; on the other hand, others gave it a less importance or deemphasized on it (Sogutlu, 2016).

2.5.6 Objectivity

Learning how to write in English could be defiance for learners, they confront considerable impediments to share their opinions and perspectives without being biased mostly in argumentative essays.

Acting objectively means acting in a way that is not about us, but rather about the world as a whole. In some situations, objectivity refers to being fair and accepting of all viewpoints. In other situations, objectivity refers to the process by which we gather knowledge; one example of such a process is an objective test. In everyday speech, seeing things as they are or having an objective perspective means accepting them as they are (Eisner, 1992, p.9).

Fang (2021) cited “Objectivity is that you do not want to sound biased, instead you need to reason through evidence in order to put forth a claim or arrive at a conclusion” (p.29). Emotions are frequently downplayed in academic writing, i.e the writer should avert being sentimental since academic writing builds arguments through logical reasoning

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and supporting claims, not through emotional appeals. Therefore, the writer's directions should not be linked to personal feelings and biases.

2.5.7 Formality

Formality makes the research unbiased, objective and accurate, in the opposite, informality is less precise and informative (Heylighen & Dewaele, 1999, p.33).

According to Harris and Dlit (2015) students frequently use informal style of language or make mistakes as a result of the influence of using social media in their communications; consequently, they shift from formality to informality in academic works.

The informal features are derived from the social interactions; students use the colloquialism and short forms in their daily life as well as in digital media in order to communicate. Subsequently, the overuse of slang language impacts negatively on their academic research, and reduces the value of written performance's creativity.

2.5.8 Providing argumentations

Looking for strong convincing arguments sounds challenging for foreign language learners to support their point of views and persuade the audience. Because of their Basic English language, students find it difficult to judge and defend the perspectives they believe reasonable. Lee and Deakin (2016, p.21) ratified that establishing and supporting a viewpoint, appealing to a reader's logic and emotions, foreseeing and rebutting a reader's reactions, and siding with or separating oneself from mentioned sources are all examples of effective argumentation.

Generally, persuasion procedure is based on the Greek philosopher Aristotle's three appeals: Ethos, Logos, and Pathos, where the author relies on credibility and authority in Ethos, logic and reasoning in Logos, and finally, emotions and feelings in Pathos to make

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the reader influenced by the writer's arguments. Wingate (2012) in her model of argument, pointed out that understanding the subject matter, logic, coherence, and defending one's stand and belief are essential factors contribute in building up strong argumentations.

2.5.9 L1 interference

Nunan (2001) claimed that the errors are committed because of the interference of L1 in L2, if the two languages have different rules. Further, he stated that similarities and differences between the two languages determine the amount of committed errors. The more they are similar; the learning process becomes easier with fewer errors (positive transfer). The more they are different; learning second language sounds challenging with a high amount of mistakes (negative transfer). Therefore, students apply the rules they are familiar with in their first language, which increases the occurrence of errors. Along the same lines, Brown (2007) absolutely confirmed that the mother-tongue negatively affects on learning the target language due to the overgeneralization of rules that are applied improperly in learning the second language.

2.5.10 Literal translation

Since it is uncommon for a translator to be a native speaker of the target language, he must be enough knowledgeable and aware of the linguistic aspects of the chosen language (Greiss, 2000). Students are not proficient translators, they translate L2 discourse word by word to grasp or produce meaning. Idiomatic expressions are the biggest obstacle for them to overshoot; hence, the translation of idioms with literal meaning makes no sense. According to Stamenkoska (2017, p.90), idioms are words or expressions that have completely different meaning from the used words in the sentence. She added, the translation issue is surly concerned with EFL learners since they have insufficient exposure to language.

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2.6 Reasons of writing challenges

Commonly EFL students encounter difficulties in writing assignments due to plenty of reasons. The following part describes the most common ones.

2.6.1 Lack of reading

There is a positive relationship between reading and writing. The more students read, the more they get a successful academic writing as Esmaeili (2002) pointed out.

Plakans and Gebril (2012) mentioned the significant effects of reading on writing. The first, reading aids students develop their understanding of the topic. Second, it helps to judge and discuss the topic in their point of view. Finally, the texts can be an evidence and language support.

According to Harl (2013), through reading comprehension students can have an idea about how writing skill should be done. Likewise, reading materials stimulate the neurons of the brain to produce a masterful piece of writing supported by the prior knowledge (Rachel & Maslawati, 2019). In fact, reading plays a major role in enhancing the academic writing achievements. Whenever the learners read from different sources, they will get familiar with the vocabulary, grammar rules, generating ideas, and paragraph organization.

2.6.2 Lack of motivation

Motivation factor is fundamental in acquiring a new language. If the students are not interested in the language, they may not master it competently. Lo and Hyland (2007) investigated the high correlation between motivation and the development of writing. They found out that the students' writing achievements, particularly the low achievers, are

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improved by motivation demonstrated by the students' interest in the issues being written about.

Indeed, motivation is an important factor to determine the learning success. The absence of this element may lead to learning failure in general, and weak writing achievements in specific.

2.6.3 Lack of practice

Learning the language efficiently means practicing writing continuously, the problem is that EFL learners do not write in their free time, they do not use writing as a daily practice to train themselves and get adapted with the linguistic forms of the acquired language. Grabe and Kaplan (1996) held the opinion that writing takes effort and practice and never comes naturally. Students become more adept at a skill when they practice it.

According to Budjalemba and Listyani (2020) writing required students to practice their acquired languages, much like other language skills do. Knowledge is useless if students merely acquire the skill without practicing it. Moreover, students have to pursue writing everyday to improve the level of writing proficiency.

2.6.4 Teacher's feedback

The feedback of the teacher has a significant role in motivating or demoralizing the students. Regardless the error correction that it provides, feedback also concerned with the effectiveness of writing. As Chitravelu et al. (1995) claimed, providing feedback not only corrects the students' errors, but also, it analyzes the text quality and works as a stimulus to motivate the students in improving their writing performance.

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Kumar and Stracke (2007) believed that feedback can be useful for the writer. Thus, it opens new horizons and perceptions for the writer to develop his production and discover his weaknesses.

2.6.5 Inadequate time

It is common that writing process takes time to draft edit and revise the text. However, EFL learners are allowed by a limited time to achieve their productions. According to Quantum and Chakraverty (2002) one of the most crucial aspects of learning a language is writing, which necessitates enough time to choose the topic. As a result, students become anxious about the time limitation, they do not care much about writing features just to finish the work on time. Hence, negative impacts are appeared on their disastrous paragraphs.

2.7 Teaching writing approaches

The approaches have been suggested to make the teaching writing process easier. Raimes in her book “Techniques in teaching writing” (1983) had mentioned six developing approaches.

2.7.1 The Controlled – to –Free Approach

The approach focuses on accuracy rather than fluency; it has three main features that are grammar, syntax, and mechanics. The approach’s main idea lies in the writing’s sequential that the students move towards to perform adequate writing texts. Hence, students are given sentence tasks and asked to manipulate grammar rules; for example: to change the verb tenses, the plural into singular, combine sentences. After reaching a higher level, the task becomes harder where students express freely their thoughts in a written composition. This method is an opportunity for teacher to discover the students’ mistakes to correct them.

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2.7.2 The Free-Writing Approach

This approach gives much importance to fluency and content ignoring the grammatical and spelling mistakes, “ ... approached the teaching of writing by assigning vast amount of free writing on given topics, with only minimal correction of errors.” (Raimes, 1983, p.7)

Teachers ask students to write in any topic they are interested in for few minutes without giving attention to spelling, grammar rules, and also the form of the paragraph. At the beginning, some students find the free writing is a challenging task, since they have no idea of what they should write or even think about. In contrast, some find it an easy task and are able to put words down to express ideas freely and fluently. Eventually, the teacher collects the free writing expressions, simply trying to read and check out the students’ ideas without taking into account the linguistic and structural errors.

2.7.3 The Paragraph-Pattern Approach

Unlike the Free-Writing Approach, The Paragraph-Pattern Approach emphasizes on other feature, which is the paragraph organization. Students are supposed to solve many organization exercises to effectively structure their ideas. These practices are concerned with copying, analyzing and imitating written passages, in addition to ordering sentences to get a coherent paragraph, choosing a topic sentence for a given text, deleting or adding sentence, and specifying the generalized statements. This approach supports the principle of organization because people attempt to construct and structure ideas for better communication.

2.7.4 The Grammar-Syntax-Organization Approach

This approach is based on language structure in terms of grammar rules, sentence structure, and organization of ideas. Using appropriate vocabulary, correct grammar rules,

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and organization of ideas are the fundamental features that should be reviewed as the first step before start writing, in order to produce an acceptable writing piece. The purpose is to help students to make connection between what they endeavor to write to what they are supposed to write.

2.7.5 The Communicative Approach

The approach highlights the objectives of writing such productions and the indirect communication between the writer and the reader. In other word, students concentrate on the purpose and audience. Students act like real writers and ask themselves couple of questions:

- Why am I writing this?
- Who will read it?

Writing in this approach is a communicative tool where the teacher is the audience and even the students themselves may be the readers of each other as Raimes (1983) stated” Real classroom readers can be brought into these assignments too, if students role play, exchange letters, and write back to each other, asking questioning and making comments” (p.9). However, the communicative approach could take another form of either responding, summarizing, rewriting, or commenting on a given text.

2.7.6 Process Approach

Currently, the focus on writing as a process becomes more important than writing as a product. Writers ask the questions: How do I write this? How do I start?

Writers have to be proficient in writing process stages, they begin to brainstorm ideas related to the topic, then start to draft writing, after the given feedback from the

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teacher or classmates, the student discovers and re-constructs ideas, enriches vocabulary. Next he/she drafts for the second time, revises, and edits as the final product.

Writing here is not bonded by time or error correction, but it is to explore new ideas and to promote the skill of writing using the developing stages based on classroom feedback.

Conclusion

Writing skill is not an easy task to be learned, it requires sufficient time and effort to reach the proficiency to express and produce meaning. Due to the several features it entails, EFL learners view it as a complex activity. Nevertheless, it is recognized to be the most essential skill among other skills because writing assignments, research papers, and CV serve the human needs in all aspects of life.

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PART II: Journal writing

Introduction

The effectiveness of writing journals strategy in enhancing second language writing has been the subject of numerous research. In fact, EFL students frequently struggle with poor written works for a variety of reasons, but the practice is the most important and least considered one. The current section reviews the literature on the inclusive conceptions about journal writing method and its effects on developing the students' writing performance.

2.8 Definitions of journal writing

Journal writing technique is a practical tool that gives the students the opportunity to enrich vocabulary and learn the language forms while producing writing pieces. Students can make journals as a daily task; they could allocate a separated notebook to write down about any interesting topics. Dymont and O'Connell (2003) advocated that journal writing is a way of recording daily activities, introspective thoughts, environmental concerns, and reaction to experiences. This technique develops the individual's critical thinking through personal beliefs (Priest & Sturgess, 2005, p.2).

In addition, journal technique promotes the students' self-esteem; they will be more comfortable and confident when they are asked to write an academic assignment. Students have the opportunity, that journal writing provides, to interact with the teacher in a confident and motivated way (Park, 2003).

A study was conducted by The Learning Centre of The University of New South Wales (2008), they defined journal writing as:

- Your response to experiences, opinions, events or new information.

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- Your response to thoughts and feelings.
- A way of thinking to explore your learning.
- An opportunity to gain self-knowledge.
- A chance to develop and reinforce writing skills.

2.9 The benefits of writing journals technique

Teachers and learners have found that journal writing as a useful tool to reflect learning and to offer freedom of expression to students. The technique allows the opening of new forms of dialogues between the instructor and his students (Harmer, 2004).

This method has been regarded as an efficient and successful way to spark writing interest while also fostering fluency of expression. Students benefit from understanding of how they communicate their views and coming to see writing as both a form of personal expression and a way to have a written conversation with the reader (White & Arndt, 1991, p.67). According to Ngoh (2002, p.27) students who keep journals have good possibilities to both record their ideas and feelings and to individually develop their writing skills. Creative writing activities has a great impact not only on altering the students' perspectives on writing, but also, on themselves and the society they live in, reducing anxiety, developing accuracy and personalities as Tin (2004, p. 6) corroborated.

Harmer (2004) had discussed four major advantages of writing journals.

2.9.1 The value of reflection

Reflection enables the students to understand what and how they are learning, and to reflect what they think and feel. This introspection not merely affects on students' learning progress, but also on their memory, in which if the students take the time to carefully

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consider what they have done, they are more likely to remember it than if they immediately forget an experience.

2.9.2 Freedom of expression

Since journals are not allocated by time and topic, students have the liberty to express what they want spontaneously and to be more opened. Students' journals are not accessible to others, yet, they belong to their privacy. Therefore, the learner himself is the audience; he could use his own distinctive style in writing.

2.9.3 Developing writing skills

When learners get used to write at home, they feel at ease when they are asked to express a certain topic. Accordingly, writing journals contributes in developing the learners' writing skills in terms of successful encouragement, motivation, and promotion of the learner's autonomy.

2.9.4 Student-teacher dialogue

It is a kind of dialogue that draws a channel of communication between the teacher and his students. The interaction simplifies the connection between the two parts; hence, the teacher asks the students to write about any topic or they can talk about the individual concerns and needs. The students' expressions will be kept anonymous, that reduces their anxiety towards their written productions. This method extremely promotes the relationship between the teachers and students, also, enables the instructor to be aware about his learners' needs and concerns to make the necessary changes.

2.10 The purposes of journal writing

According to Csanave (2011), writing journals has reflections on both learning and teaching approaches, in terms of personal, cognitive and social functions.

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First, at the personal level, journals ameliorate the fluency of students to attain a certain level that matches their language proficiency. The strategy provides the writers with the freedom to play with the ideas and emotions; it is like an access to risk-free expression of emotions.

Second, at the cognitive level, journal writing encourages language learners' autonomy. It has the potential to improve the students' awareness of linguistic and conceptual analysis as well as to foster the personal development.

Eventually, at the social level, journals as a communication tool between the teacher and the student or among the classmates as a peer connection to know more about ones another's personalities. Besides, it is an opportunity for shy students to share ideas and viewpoints without feel embarrassed in public.

2.11 Types of journal writing

Tompkins (1994) explained the five types of journals.

2.11.1 Personal journal

Students are allowed to keep private journals in which they can reflect on their life and write about whatever they like.

2.11.2 Dialogue journals

Writing between students and their teachers serves as a private forum for discussion. The teacher either gives a feedback or responds to the students' casual letters about topics that interest them or raise their concerns.

2.11.3 Reading logs

Throughout literature focus units and readers' workshop, students record their reading in reading logs about the stories and other books they are reading. Also, students

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can make a glossary of new terms, record memorable phrases, and make notes on the characters, narrative, and other aspects of the story. Also, the main goal of this journal is for students to reflect on the text, draw parallels between it and their own life, and create original interpretations.

2.11.4 Learning logs

To record or respond to what students are learning in various fields, they tend to use learning logs. They use this kind of journals to reflect on their learning, identify knowledge gaps, and investigate connections between what they are learning and their prior experiences.

2.11.5 Simulated journal

Students take on a different persona and write from that perspective. Students can act out historical figures as they read biographies or learn about social studies topics. They can take on the role of a character in a story while they read it. Students develop understanding of historical events and other people's lives in this way.

2.12 The importance of journal writing

Many researchers have acknowledged the great significance of writing journals on students' writing progress. Personal journals improve people's writing skills and awareness; it also increases the interpersonal knowledge, which will improve the capacity to interact to others (Artof , 1992).

The technique is supposed to be a kind of creative writing in brainstorming the ideas accurately. According to Lagan (2000), "journal writing can show you how ideas can be discovered in the process of writing" (p.14). In the same context, Tin (2004,p.6) asserted that the activities which encourage creative writing can help students develop their

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writing skills, accuracy, and personalities as well as their perspectives on writing about themselves and the world they live in. They can also help students feel less anxious.

Looking upon the dialogue journals that promote the relationship between the students and teachers, Ngoh (2002, p.27) viewed that through journal writing, the distance between the teacher and the student becomes shorter, and the mutual trust increases. Thus, a supportive learning environment will develop the students' motivation and make them engage in their formal writing as well. Since the students keep journals to and for themselves, they can reflect and introspect while writing process (Harmer, 2004, p.125). According to Hamp and Heasley (2006, p.5), writing is the most straightforward task to assist oneself in improving as a writer. The advice that is strongly given, that students keep their own journal in addition to completing the assignments. They can get a notebook and attempt to jot down thoughts every day about whatever concerns them in English.

2.13 The objectives of journaling process

Genessee and Upshur (1996, p.121) summarized the main objectives of journal writing.

- Supply useful data for individualizing instruction like: achieving goals, personal experiences, writing process.
- Create a good rapport between the students and teachers through functional communication.
- Journals are able to provide students the opportunity to use language for individualized reading.
- Boost the learners' autonomy in language learning.
- Allow the teachers to get close to their students and discover their needs, concerns, and preferences.

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2.14 Writing journals formats

Recording information in journaling technique could be expressed in various formats. Hiemstra (2001) illustrated the major formats in terms of learning journals, diaries, dream book, autobiographies, life stories, and memoirs, spiritual journals, professional journals, interactive reading log, theory log, and electronic journaling.

2.14.1 Learning journals

Many students find that keeping a journal encourages them to become more organized and focused on their areas of study. Although the act of writing aids in the clarity of thoughts, ideas, and feelings, there is frequently some personal clarification that occurs. Maintaining a journal supports the students to write down their thoughts, opinions, feelings, reflections and even weaknesses that take place in their educational life. Subsequently, this method helps in reduction the students' stressfulness and makes them feel comfortable in noting down the information.

2.14.2 Diaries

According to Progoff (1975, p.87), writing diaries is associated with recording of previous events that occurred in someone's life. The students use this kind of journals to react on or to note the fears they have faced in learning activities.

2.14.3 Dream book or log

Dream book is usually a notebook of recording the future dreams; likewise, it brings about new thoughts and perspectives. Further analysis of such dreams showed the interpretation of how the subconscious may be controlling or having another effect on the conscious. Rubin (2003) claimed that successful learners who are using diaries in the learning process to determine certain goals attempting to attain them, and also, to discover their mistakes and correct them.

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2.14.4 Autobiographies, life stories, and Memoirs

The three approaches are used to understand or get information about a particular topic. They are such a self-assessment of somebody's personal life; typically they serve as developing one's experience, in addition, to promoting critical self-reflection and personal progress. Autobiographies and sharing life stories not only encourage the critical thinking, but also, develop the solitary experiences (Hiemstra, 2001, p.22).

Further, Mendelowitz (2005) in her study asserted that memoir writing can improve writing skills and boost comprehension of important literary devices by combining personal and reflective learning methods. Additionally, she demonstrated how the process of memoirs writing can lead to important questions about how personal narratives are constructed, questions that are relevant to obtain knowledge in different contexts, and questions concern shifting perspectives and selecting ideas.

2.14.5 Spiritual Journals

A spiritual journal is quite different from writing diaries. It is often concerned with writing personal religious issues. This kind of journals may not fit some students' concerns or needs. Nonetheless, a student with strong religious beliefs will find the method to be a helpful addition to other study tasks, as well as, it can be an alternative to improve self-understanding.

2.14.6 Professional journals

This approach focuses on tracking students' growth as learners. For instance, when students attend conferences or seminars, they maintain a professional journal to record all the material that can enhance learning. As a result, it was transformed into a part of the student's professional portfolio.

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2.14.7 Interactive reading logs

Interactive reading logs enable students to think critically in the materials being read. The strategy raises the critical reflection on newly information by making the students' response or react on the reading elements.

2.14.8 Theory log

The idea behind this activity is that each graduate student will need to learn how to critically evaluate and reflect on terminology, theory, and knowledge. In learning experience, students who go for theory logs are required to write about what they believe to be theoretical concepts, pivotal elements, facts, bridges to known theory, ideas to be tested, and knowledge gaps.

Indeed, in this method learners are urged to reflect on what they have read by posing epistemological, experiential, communicative, or political questions. Thus the final product is a theory or an outline that best demonstrates the student's understanding of the subject and serves as the basis for the course material.

2.14.9 Electronic journals

Because of the advancement of technology students become more interested in writing their issues in electronic forms like social media. E-journals play a significant role in the efficacy of teachers and students, as well as in the enhancement of academic performance, scientific and technological research, and the acceleration of the learning process (Shionkar, 2018). The use of electronic journals is growing in popularity worldwide and has many advantages to students' educational experiences. But, this does not mean that it has not any adverse effects. Shionkar (2018) mentioned the strengths and weaknesses of E-journals.

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Strengths	Weaknesses
The easy access in anytime and anywhere	Archiving
Access to archive publications	Authenticity
Provides security	Ignoring PDF –files
Ease of downloading	Technical problems

Table 1: Strengths and weaknesses of E-journals (Shionkar, 2018)

2.15 Journals as a written interaction between learners and teachers

Writing journals seems to be a written interaction between both learners and teachers. The following paragraphs demonstrate the characteristics of this technique (Staton, 1987b; Peyton & Reed, 1990; Peyton & Staton, 1992).

2.15.1 Journal is a separated task from other assignments

By journal writing, teachers and students can establish an open line of contact and learn to know one another. Typically, it is stored in a notebook or file to keep communication separated from the other classroom tasks.

2.15.2 Writing is done regularly

Students should recurrently write in their journals throughout the academic year to make writing as a daily practice in order to improve fluency.

2.15.3 Writing is the students' output

Journals provide the students an opportunity to free express and record such topics they are interested in or deem it necessary. If students are unable to think of their own topics, the teacher may also offer some. Students have the option to choose one of the

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suggested topics or come up with their own, what matters is that all the students have something to write about.

2.15.4 Writing is functional

Students have the ability to communicate their experiences and emotions with other people through journal writing. In addition, they can ask for more information, complaining about particular issue, and even share their perspectives.

2.15.5 Writing displays the characteristics of oral conversation and written text

Writing journals is like having an oral conversation since it asks questions, gets replies, and asks for extra information when necessary. The teacher is more interested in encouraging students to write and fostering conversation than in correcting their errors. Otherwise, in journal writing the writer is required to use merely words to convey himself avoiding the non-verbal cues.

2.15.6 Writing is varied in terms of topic and genre

Usually the students' journals involve personal issues; however, they are allowed to select any topic concerns them that being written in any genre they desire. For instance, they can respond in writing to any curriculum-related concerns or some newspaper materials they have read.

2.16 Effective implementation of journal writing

The following steps should be taken into account for the best implementation of journal writing technique (Peyton, 1993; Montgomery, 2001; Cooper & Kiger, 2003).

- i. The concept of writing journals should be elucidated clearly by the teacher.
- ii. The teacher is supposed to give an example or write an introduction to show how the process is done.

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- iii. The teacher decides the frequency with which the students should write in their journals and turn them in, so that he can read and give his feedback.
- iv. The students have the chance to choose any topic.
- v. In order to assess how the process is going and talk about the advantages and disadvantages of journal writing, teachers should schedule some group processing sessions during the early phases of journal writing. Teacher also ought to assist pupils in resolving issues that arise during the writing process.

2.17 Advantages of journal writing

Journal writing is a useful strategy to develop the relationship between the teacher and the student. It creates an atmosphere of mutual trust between the two parties. Through journals, teachers have the occasion to interact with students more frequently, and they are able to access the data that could help with lesson preparation and teaching. Students also strongly benefit from writing journals. Their language development is facilitated by recording journals when the instructor provides feedback of their present proficiency level. Also, it gives students the chance to communicate honestly through writing and gives them another chance to read (Staton, 1987a; Peyton & Reed, 1990; Peyton, 1993; Peyton, 2000). Journal writing can help all the categories of people, whether they are students, teachers or researchers to reflect ideas, overshoot superficial information, deepen thinking, and develop fluency. This tool serves as an outlet for writers to overcome their fears and talk about events or issues they face (Casanave, 2011).

Many researchers as (Carter, 1998; Francis, 1995; McMahon, 1997; Yost, Sentner, & Forlenza-Bailey, 2000) have approved the significance of writing journals technique in reflecting the students' thinking and developing fluency. Tuan (2010) also believed that the longer the activity lasts, the more focused and accurate the thinking becomes.

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Mettaningrum et al. (2013) stated that a journal can help people become accustomed to writing and also provide constant source of ideas. Journal writing, which emphasizes the writing process, is frequently used in writing classes to help students become more proficient writers and to advance their literacy skills. It is the students' escape to pour their thoughts in.

Further, Brady and Sky (2003) implied the psychological benefits of journals. Firstly, journal writing gives students a place to work through relationship problems while coping with the problems of daily living. Second, journaling enables students to experience the delight of self-discovery via observation and reflection. Third, journaling cultivates students' voices and strength, which in turn gives them the self-assurance to share their opinions. In the same context, Haraways' results (2003) showed the positive impacts of writing journals on reducing the students' anxiety.

In addition, the continual use of recording journals refines the students' attitudes towards writing skill when they attempt to express thoughts or convey meaning (Dickerson, 1987). Gardner (1999) cited that developing writing abilities of incompetent writers depends upon using writing journals to produce narrative paragraphs in expressing ideas.

Moreover, writing journals works as a stimulus to make students engage in any topic. The given feedback by the teacher raises their motivation towards writing as Staton (1987b) revealed. In the same token, Marhaeni (2005) claimed that students that are highly motivated will make the most of feedback to increase their performance and accomplish their good learning goals.

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Journal writing helps the learners to understand, interpret and analyze what they are learning. A study conducted by Uzoğlu and Gürbüz (2013, p.505-506) advocated that using journals has a four benefits: a) Support the removal of misconception, the improvement of communication, and the development of skills; b) Help in forming their opinions and assist students in acquiring fairly consistent and solid knowledge; c) Make learning persistent and encourage the reinforcement of recently learned information; d) Facilitate learning of difficult items and encourage the use of background knowledge.

Raimes (1984) believed that keeping journals supports the students to develop ideas and fluency in writing. In the same way, Staton and Peyton (1991) noticed that journaling helps EFL students in mastering writing process. Students can gradually become engaged in the process by writing regularly in their journals, in which they get motivated to write more long paragraphs.

2.18 Disadvantages of journal writing

Indeed, writing journals as a pedagogical task improves the students' written texts; on the other hand, it has some negative impacts. Peyton (1993) stated that writing journals takes time for the teacher to correct the written achievements. The instructor should concentrate in reading what they have recorded in order to provide the suitable comments. A crowded class means the teacher needs to spend more time to give feedback. The effects of this strategy in enhancing the learners' writing progress are undeniable; however it becomes a complex task for the teacher if he has so many other tasks to carry out.

2.19 Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle

According to Kolb (1984), learners create their knowledge by transforming experiences while learning. He believed that a successful learning requires passing through

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four main stages: Concrete experience, observation, forming abstract concepts, and experimentation.

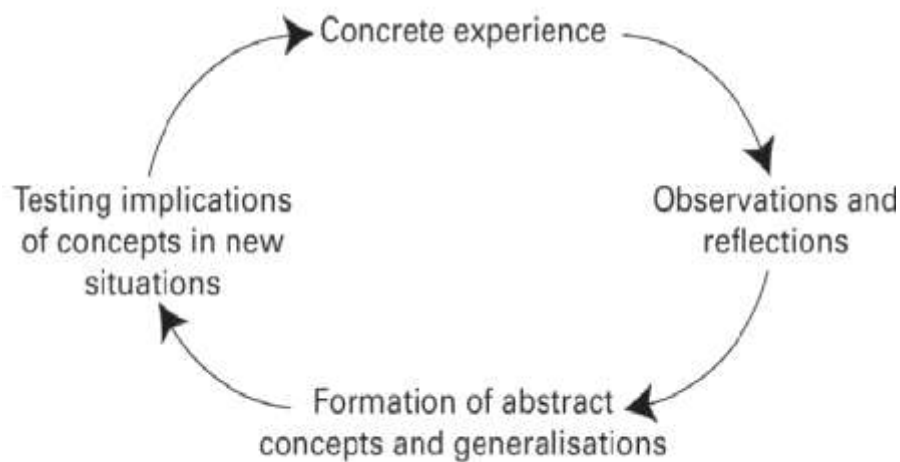


Figure 3: Kolb's experiential learning cycle (1984)

Journal writing technique enables students to develop their writing through Kolb's four stages. The first stage, students use their journals to write about a certain experience. The second stage, they reflect on their personal experience. The third, students build new concepts and generate ideas through reflection. In the last stage, they relate the new acquired information to their prior knowledge to solve problems, construct ideas, and express viewpoints.

2.20 The effects of writing journals on EFL/ESL writers

Several studies have been conducted for the sake of investigating the positive impacts of writing journals technique in developing the process of writing.

A study had been conducted by Castellanos (2008) about Journal writing and its benefits in an upper intermediate EFL class. This research was conducted at University of Distrital Francisco José de Caldas, Colombia. The participants were nine pre-service students (three females and six males) of the Philology and Languages.

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The study used a pedagogical intervention to solve the problem of writing difficulties that the class was encountering. The first two weeks, the researcher observed the whole class; afterwards he used three instruments for the data collection. The first was collecting weekly students' journals entries over ten weeks to be analyzed later on. The second, field notes from the poster session, in which he gathered the students' perceptions about the advantages and disadvantages of writing journals. The last instrument was a questionnaire to all students. It involved eight questions to get information about the students' perspectives towards writing journal technique, and if it was successful tool. The output pointed out that journal writing is beneficial for students to promote learning autonomy, to imply exploration of a topic, to develop self-reflection, and to help students interact with their teachers via journals.

Moreover, Tuan (2010) conducted a study where he aimed at investigating the role of writing journals in enhancing writing skill. The participants were 85 second year students, who have the same level of proficiency in writing, at the Faculty of English Linguistics and Literature of the University of Social Sciences and Humanities in Ho Chi Minh City. The participants were divided into experimental and control group. The experimental group was treated by writing activities inside classroom and writing journal entries in addition to take home writing assignments outside classroom as a pre-test, which were the mere tasks the students in the control group were asked to fulfill. After thirteen weeks practice of journal writing, they were given a post test to measure their writing proficiency level. The findings showed that journal writing has a great impact on the students' performance in writing for those in the experimental group. Fluency, accuracy and motivation are the essential elements that have been developed through the thirteen week practice.

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In addition, Mettaningrum et al. (2013) found out the effect of journal writing technique and students' achievement motivation toward writing achievement. The research was conducted at fourth semester students of English Education Department of Ganesh University of Education Singaraja. The study was designed to an experimental design using merely a posttest. The research used two groups. The first is experimental group that received a treatment, and the other is control group with no treatment. The posttest was writing an essay (focusing on three types of essays: descriptive, narrative and cause-effect with the emphasis on the five features that are grammar, vocabulary, mechanics, content, and organization) to get informed about the students' proficiency level in terms of fluency and accuracy. The results highlighted the role of journals in developing writing proficiency. The students in the experimental group were more spontaneous in writing and felt less stressed in presenting their opinions and ideas.

Likewise, Masdianti et al. (2021) used a pre-experimental design with only one pre-test and one posttest through the case study of third grade students of SMP Negeri 18 Makassar. The participants were 30 students that have been selected by cluster random sampling technique. The study aimed at finding out whether writing skill could be improved by journal writing.

The instruments of the study were a pre-test. It lasts for 60 minutes in which the students were asked to choose one of the two themes in order to gather data about their prior knowledge. The pre-test focused on the five aspects of language (content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics). After giving the treatment that took one month with six meetings to explain the technique of journal writing, they were assigned with a posttest as same as the pre-test to check if the students' writing had been developed through treatment. The findings showed that the students' scores were better in

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posttest than in pre-test i.e. journal writing as a daily practice used as a brainstorming tool to improve the students' writing achievements.

To sum up, numerous studies have proved the significance of writing journals as a pedagogical practice to promote self-reflection, generate ideas, and develop the students' autonomy. The implementation of this strategy either inside or outside the classroom supports the students to come up with an advanced level of writing proficiency.

Conclusion

Journal writing is a subtle technique that greatly improves the students' writing progress and helps in reducing writing complexity. It brings about advantages for the learners to be proficient writers. Journaling is a great way for students to write about intriguing topics, engage their imagination, and make connections between new materials and what they already know (Farrah, 2012).

CHAPTER III

**DATA ANALYSIS AND
INTERPRETATION**

Chapter III: Data Analysis and Interpretation

3 Introduction

This chapter describes the research methodology that is used in the current study. As it was mentioned, the study at hand aims at exploring the students and teachers' perceptions towards the effectiveness of journal writing as an academic strategy in developing writing context. For that reason, the study used a questionnaire and an interview for both students and teachers. This part of research was devoted to describe the research instruments, population, and sampling that are used in the study. Moreover, it analyzes and interprets data statistically, at the end the study results were elucidated then discussed.

3.1 Research design

Since the objectives of the study are to investigate the role of writing journals as a powerful technique to improve the students' writing performance and attempts to reduce the writing problems; the research opted for a quantitative approach to understand the phenomenon under investigation. The present research used a questionnaire for third year English students at Biskra University and a semi- structured interview is addressed to University teachers of written expression to survey their viewpoints about the validation of journaling in students' academic career. Thus, in the quantitative approach, the researcher seeks to explain the studied phenomenon by collecting and analyzing data using statistical methods to confirm or refute knowledge claims (Williams, 2011).

3.2 Population

In order to collect the compatible data, the study selected a random sample of 53 third year English students from the total number of 260 students at Mohamed Khider University of Biskra to answer the questionnaire endeavoring to explore their attitudes towards the impacts of writing journals on writing process. The aim of choosing third year

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students as a sample is that they were taught precisely how to write a paragraph and essay with the different types. Therefore, they are aware of the writing stages and strategies, which enable them to produce a meaningful piece of writing.

Additionally, a semi-structured interview was addressed to six university teachers of written expression at the department of English at Biskra University. The interview aimed at exploring their opinions about the use of journal writing as a pedagogical method to develop EFL students' writing achievements and help in reducing the major writing problems.

3.3 Sampling

The study was carried out with a randomization process. Because of the purpose of the study that was investigating the students' recording diaries, the researcher selected randomly the participants; the selection is based on the relevant answers to the research questions. So, the study was conducted with a sample of EFL students at the department of English at Biskra University, in which we call a probability sampling approach to obtain the required and suitable responses.

3.4 Data collection tools

Two data collection tools were used to fulfill the required research. The study starts with, a semi-structured questionnaire that was submitted to third year English students at Mohamed Khider University of Biskra in order to enquire their viewpoints about recording daily journals either inside or outside classroom for the sake of enhancing writing skills.

On the other hand, a semi-structured interview was addressed to six teachers of written expression at Biskra University. Yet, the interviews were conducted orally with the

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teachers. The objective of the interview is to address the knowledgeable teachers for their opinions and experiences concerning the use of journaling in promoting writing productions.

After collecting data, the questionnaire was analyzed and interpreted through statistical methods, and the teachers' answers were analyzed by the thematic analysis.

3.5 Students' questionnaire

3.5.1 Questionnaire description

The questionnaire is based on four main sections containing of 20 questions as the total number. Both close-ended and open-ended questions were included to provide specific and detailed data. The purpose is to collect the pertinent data from the respondents and their views concerning the usage of journaling to promote their writing.

The questionnaire was headed by a brief introduction that explains the subject matter. The researcher kindly asked third year participants to fill in the questionnaire that was designed for the accomplishment of a master Project in sciences of the language. The study is conducted to explore the role of journal writing technique in developing EFL students' writing performance. The participants' responses will be used for academic purposes and will be kept anonymous and confidential.

To begin with, General background section was proposed to enquire about the students' age and the difficult skill they face. It involves two questions (item 1 and 2).

The second section highlights the students' personal experiences with writing skill. It contains of six items (from item 1 to 6) aiming at having a better understand about the students' views towards writing difficulty, the factors that affect on their writing and the major reasons behind these factors.

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The following section dealt with writing journals technique to explore whether this method may impact positively on the students' written achievements. The section involves six items (from item 1 to 6). The purpose is to investigate their interest in practicing writing occasionally, and if they consider it as an effective process.

Finally, section four shed light on the core subject of our research, which is the impact of journal writing in improving EFL learners' writing performance. The aim is to discover the students' attitudes concerning keeping journals as a practice in order to attain a higher level in writing. The question is in the form of likert scale that comprised six different items to explore the correlation between recording daily or weekly journals and EFL students' writing pieces.

3.5.2 Administration of the students' questionnaire

The questionnaire was submitted online in April, 2023 through Google Forms survey software, and was posted on Facebook and Messenger groups of Third year in order to gain time in collecting the needed data.

3.5.3 Validating and Piloting the students' questionnaire

To check the validity of the questionnaire, it was addressed to a sample size of English students of third year at Biskra University from the population being studied to alter some obscure questions before the implementation. After testing the questionnaire, there was a slight modification for the questions; then the researcher fixed the problem to make the questions quietly clear and feasible. Next, the questionnaire was submitted online via Email, Facebook and Messenger groups. It took a fortnight to collect the required data.

3.5.4 The analysis of the students' questionnaire

Section one: General background

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Item 01. Your age

Age	Number	Percentage
18-21	27	51%
22-26	22	41%
More than 26	4	8%
Total	53	100%

Table 2: Students' age

The results are illustrated in the following figure

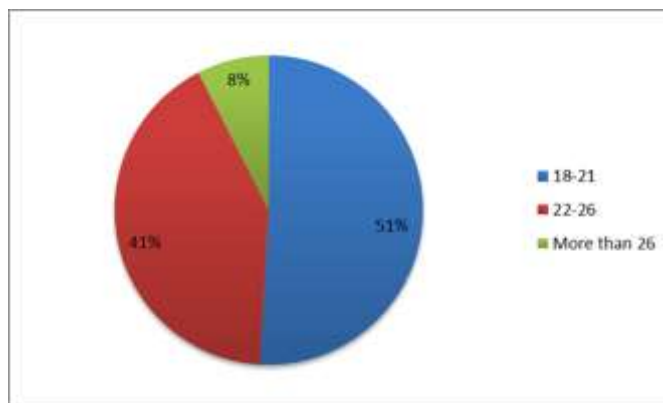


Figure 4: Students' age

The age of the participants is represented in the table above. The largest category of the students is between 18 to 21 years old that represents almost half of the whole sample size (51%). The age was expected because it is the right pedagogical age for third year students. This is followed by the category of 22 to 26 years old (41%) which is the second prospective age due to the iteration of academic years or the registration postponement. The lowest category is concerned by the students whose age is more than 26 which represents only (8%).

Item 02: Which skill do you find the most difficult?

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Skill	Number	Percentage
Writing	29	55%
Reading	1	2%
Speaking	17	32%
Listening	6	11%
Total	53	100%

Table 3: Students the most difficult skill in English

The results are illustrated in the following figure

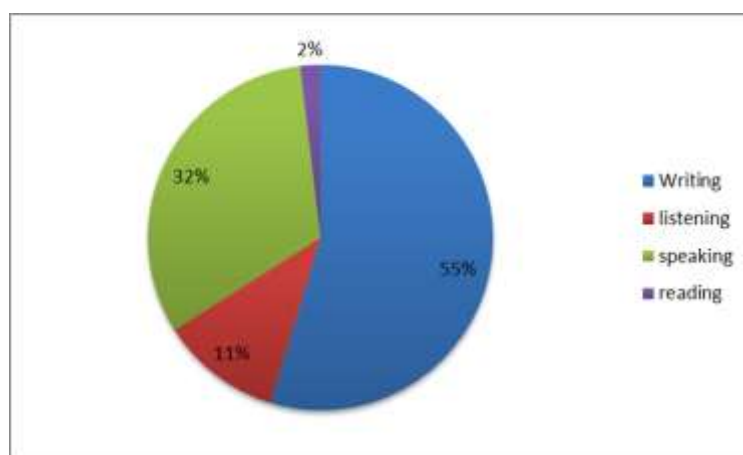


Figure 5: Students the most difficult skill in English

From the above results, all the students face difficulties with the four skills. To begin with, writing is the most complex for the majority of students, it represents (55%) from the entire sample size. As it was formerly claimed by Raimes (1983), writing is an intricate activity because it necessitates the perfect mastering of writing strain. Speaking is the following skill that most students encounter during language learning with the percentage of (32%). The third challenging skill is listening that represents (11%). Finally, reading skill, which is the less difficult one for EFL students with (2%).

Section two: Writing skill

Item 01. How do you evaluate your level in writing assignments?

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Level	Number	Percentage
Excellent	1	2%
Very good	9	17%
Good	31	58%
Average	10	19%
Poor	2	4%
Total	53	100%

Table 4: Students' level in writing

The results are illustrated in the following figure

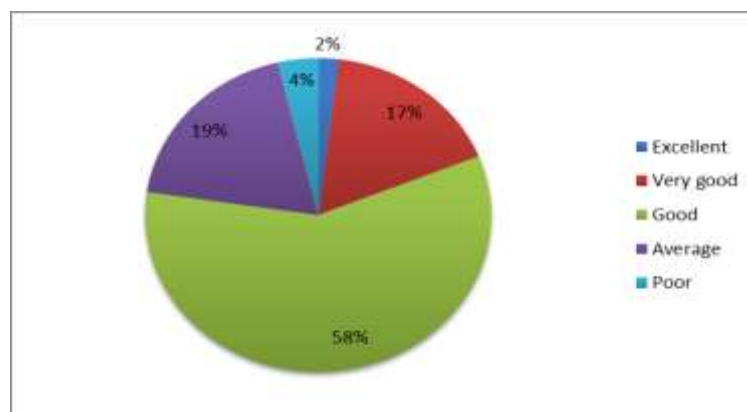


Figure 6: Students' level in writing

The above results reveal that the students' have different backgrounds in writing performance. Their ability in writing is noticeably at average to good level because English language, in the last decades, becomes the most used common language in the quotidian transactions. Therefore, the students undoubtedly contact and chat with friends using the language, which assists them to get qualified pieces of writing. Merely (2%) from the whole sample has an excellent level in writing. 17% are very good students in producing valid paragraphs. Most of them who represent (58%) have an acceptable level in writing skill. The posterior category represents (19%) of the intermediate students are average in writing with the target language. The latter percentage of (4%) of weak level students who

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produce poor written productions, that's because the lack knowledge of writing stages that should be done properly in attempting to write down any kind of creative writing as Wellace.et al.(2004) proclaimed.

Item 02. Do you consider writing as a difficult skill? Why?

Option	Number	Percentage
Yes	39	74%
No	14	26%
Total	53	100%

Table 5: Students' perceptions towards writing difficulty

The results are presented in the below figure

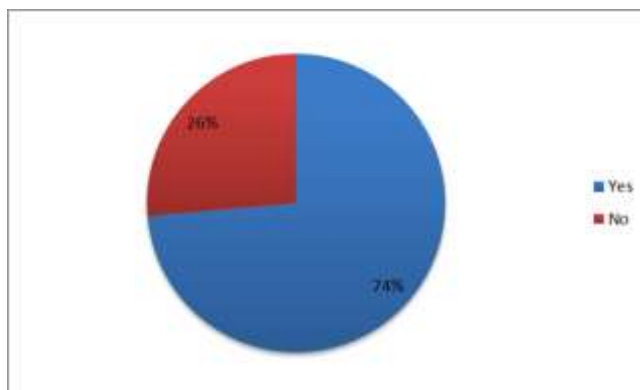


Figure 7: Students' perceptions towards writing difficulty

From the presented results above, it seems that the vast of students still suffer from writing skill. 74% agreed that writing is deemed to be a challenging task for them, as stated by Byrne (1988) that most students find writing as a difficult skill because of the psychological, linguistics, and cognitive factors it entails. While (26%) consider it as any other required task, it is neither complicated, nor easy.

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Students' justifications

Students who answered writing is a difficult skill, suggested some factors that strongly affect their written productions, we mention:

Difficulty	Number	Percentage
Limited vocabulary	13	33%
Sentence structure	2	5%
Text organization	5	13%
More practice	4	10%
Mastering writing stages	2	5%
Grammar and spelling	4	10%
writing academically	3	8%
Lack of knowledge	6	15%
Total	39	100%

Table 6: Reasons of writing complexity

The above elements are the obstacles that hamper the students' writing proficiency. Commonly known, EFL students encounter problems with the small amount of vocabulary they possess. Therefore, most students (33%) do not have a wide range of words to produce language; they mostly struggle with poor writing to develop their texts. Z.A.A. Ahmed (2018) stated that choosing properly the specific words related to the written context is one of the main issues that the students face because of the little lexical background.

The second difficulty is lack of knowledge (15%) because the students do not use extensive reading as a prosperous technique to generate ideas and concepts; they barely collect the convenient ideas relevant to the chosen topic. In addition, text organization

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representing (13%) in terms of coherence and cohesion is also considered as an encountered problem; thus, it prevents the students to achieve a well-piece of writing, since some students prefer to feel free while writing, but not being cuffed by rules.

Furthermore, two supplemental factors representing an equal percentage (10%); students reckon them as a big barrier to develop writing skill, namely, grammar and spelling. Grammar rules guide the writer to balance the sentences structure to clearly create meaning (Azam, 2014). According to Harmer (2004), the confusion in writing English words correctly is due to the diversity of the two English accents British and American. For this reason students combine both of them to get a mixture accent text. Also, practising writing adequately is the missing factor in language learning. For practice makes perfect, students need to make more efforts to reinforce themselves with writing. Grabe and Kaplan (1996) believed that writing does not come innately, the more students write, the more they become familiar with writing.

Academic writing is the formal style used in the schools and colleges to express thoughts in a systematic manner. It is the objectively-presented ideas on a particular topic; whereas, students are greatly impacted by the social media, which influences their writing by using colloquial and short forms of words. The findings above showed that 8% of students said that academic writing is challenging to produce a well-formed paragraph. Besides, some students (5%) find writing skill difficult in terms of sentence structure and mastering the five stages of writing (planning, organizing, drafting, editing, and revising). Writing is a multi-step process that requires passing through the essential stages to perfectly produce a creative writing (Oshima & Hogue, 2007).

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Students, who never consider writing as a complicated activity, declared that writing is slightly difficult for those who always practice writing. Subsequently, practising is the key, as long as, students write in English periodically, even for entertainment not necessarily when they are obliged to. In fact, writing becomes easier by time; hence, recording personal thoughts as well as reading books from time to time enriches the amount of vocabulary, aside from text consistency and harmony that the writer acquires.

Item 03. According to you, to what extent is writing skill difficult?

Option	Number	Percentage
Extremely difficult	2	4%
Quite difficult	13	24%
Moderate	25	47%
Slightly difficult	10	19%
Not difficult	3	6%
Total	53	100%

Table 7: The frequency of writing difficulty

The responses are presented in the following figure

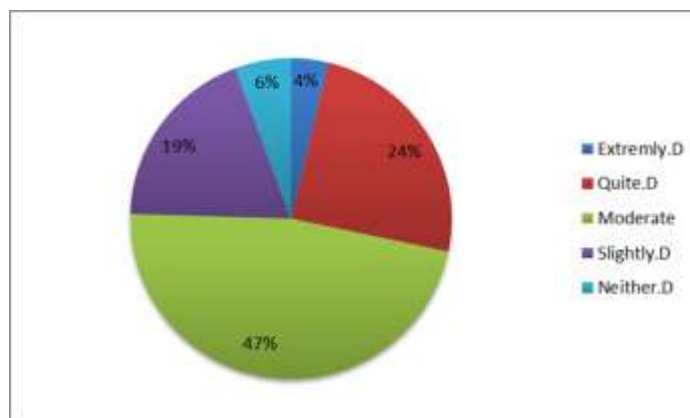


Figure 8: The frequency of writing difficulty

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The obtained results demonstrated the students' evaluations of writing difficulty. 47% of students believe that writing is not hard to be mastered as it is widespread. The act of writing can be defined as an average task, which has been required from the primary years of school. The second category (24%) sees writing as a quite difficult skill. In the context of foreign language writing, students are in demand to learn the grammatical constructs, terminology, sentence structure and other elements that help in creating meaning. For that reason, EFL students probably have less experience to attain comprehensible writing achievements. In this context, Nunan (1999) claimed that writing generally is a complex task, especially when it is learned as a second language. On the other hand, some students (19%) recognized that writing is slightly difficult since they have an acceptable level in that skill. 6% of students do never face difficulties in writing; they consider it as a very simple practice. Perhaps they are capable of conveying thoughts in a meaningful and proper manner due to the repetitive practice. The last category of students represents (4%) have shortcomings in writing that makes it a very complicated skill.

Item 04. Which aspects of writing do you think the more complex?

Option	Number	Percentage
Vocabulary	20	38%
Grammar	12	23%
Spelling	5	9%
Organization	9	17%
Punctuation	3	6%
Other	4	7%
Total	53	100%

Table 8: The most complex aspects of writing

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The above results are represented in the figure below

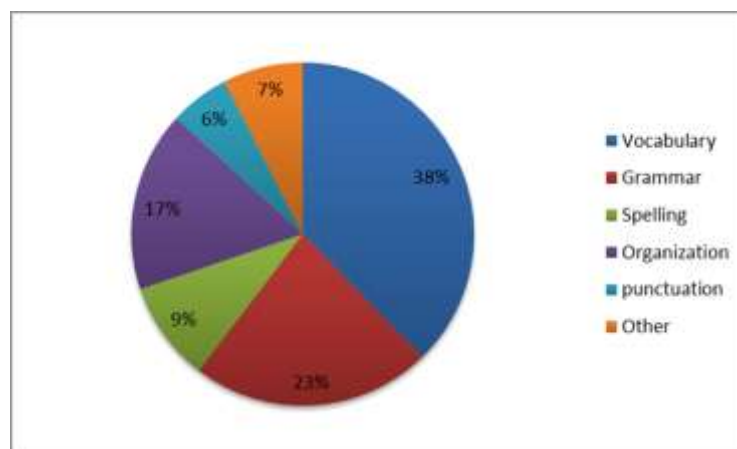


Figure 9: The most complex aspects of writing

According to the previous table results, the suggested factors greatly influence on the students' creativity in writing. Those obstacles have already been pointed out by students in the previous question (item two). Vocabulary comes at the front representing (38%). According to Ghazal (2007), lexicography is the basic element in language learning, without vocabulary students cannot produce meaning, following by the misuse of grammar rules with (23%). Text organization including the chronological order of ideas, coherence, unity, and so on took the third place, it is represented by (17%). Spelling mistakes (9%) which students still struggle with, impact on the overall text quality. 6% of students face problem with punctuation; thus, without using punctuation the written paragraph becomes chaotic. Comma, semi colon, and full stop determine the sentences boundaries as Harmer (2004) stated. Then, punctuation helps in following the text content in a very smooth way (Raimes, 2004); in addition to a set of elements representing (8%) that are worth mentioning such as: creativity, sentence structure, and formality.

Item 05. How can these difficulties influence your writing?

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The qualitative answers of students provide a better explanation of the foremost impacts of writing difficulties on their pieces of writing. The answers can be summarized in:

- Spelling mistakes can lead the reader to misunderstanding the exact point.
- With incorrect grammar rules, the student is not able to formulate an accurate and meaningful sentence.
- When the student attempts to produce a piece of writing he should pay more attention to language aspects, otherwise, the paragraph will be chaotic and meaningless.
- If the students are not familiar writing basics, writing sounds more difficult.
- Punctuations and capitalization may affect on the text content.
- One student stated “Writing is like building so you need to have a good stones to do it. Moreover, you must be perfect architecture to get a charming design”. Writing is presented as a building process and the linguistic aspects are the stones that we need to construct the written achievements. Without the adequate language components, students will never produce a well- structured paragraph.
- Vocabulary and organization can greatly impact writing style. A varied vocabulary can make writing more engaging and precise, while effective organization can create clear and compelling content. Poor vocabulary and organization can make writing feel flat and confusing, which can lead to disinterest from readers. By improving vocabulary and organization, writers can enhance the effectiveness of their writing.

Item 06. In your opinion, what are the causes of poor writing?

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Option	Number	Percentage
Lack of practice	29	55%
Lack of motivation	3	6%
Lack of reading	21	39%
Total	53	100%

Table 9: Causes of poor writing

The figure below illustrates the results

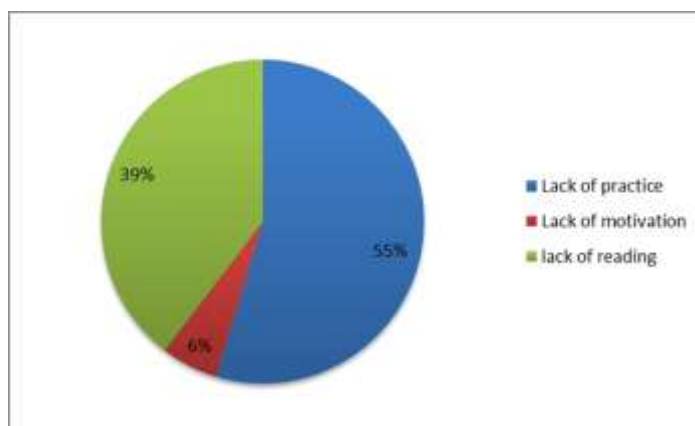


Figure 10: Causes of poor writing

Through the findings of the table, the majority of comments, representing (55%) stated that the main source of having a bad writing production is lack of practice. Grabe and Kaplan (1996) believed that the more students practice the more they become competent in the skill. However, (39%) of them believed that reading is one of the obstacles that prevent students to write a paragraph in a fulfill manner. Reading, particularly extensive reading is an alternative solution to enlarge the students' amount of words and enriches by new ideas. The students understand the foundations of writing process through reading comprehension as Harl (2013) claimed. Whereas, few students (6%) observed that the deficiency of motivation factor leads to poor writing.

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Section three: Journal writing

Item 01. Do you write at home?

Option	Number	Percentage
Yes	31	58%
No	22	42%
Total	53	100%

Table 10: Students' familiarity with free writing

The findings are presented in the next figure

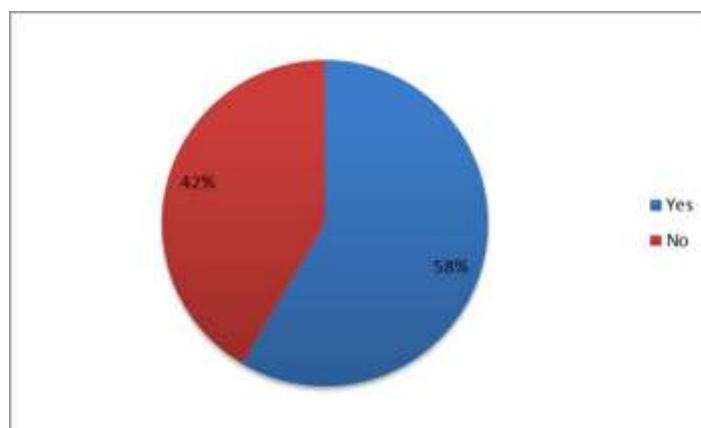


Figure 11: Students' familiarity with free writing

Apparently, students have different experiences with home writing. The overall rate of students who practice writing on occasions is 31 students out of the total number 53, which represents (58%). However, 22 students representing (42%) do not use writing as a daily habit to train themselves by writing.

Item 02. If so, how often do you write?

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Option	Number	Percentage
Always	3	6%
Often	2	4%
Usually	3	6%
Sometimes	20	38%
Rarely	25	47%
Total	53	100%

Table 11: The frequency of writing at home

The results can be defined in the below figure

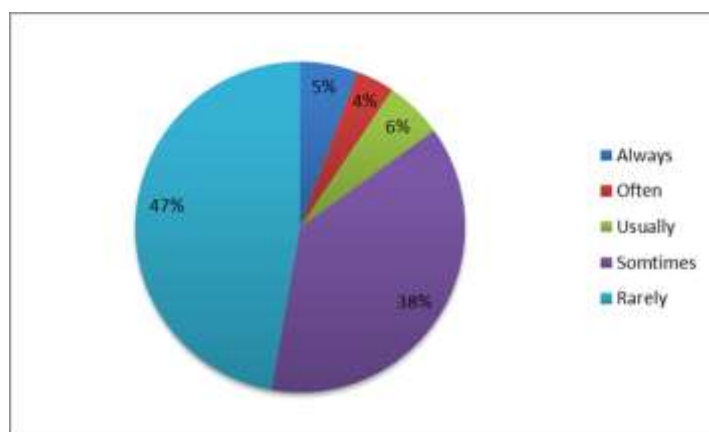


Figure 12: The frequency of writing at home

Almost half of the students (47%) have seldom experience with writing. Probably, they are interested in recording thoughts once in a blue moon. 38% of students write when the opportunity is available. Students who represent (4% to 6%) are used to keep daily journals as a frequently drill.

Item 03. How do you find writing journals as a strategy?

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Option	Number	Percentage
Interesting	42	79%
Not interesting	11	21%
Total	53	100%

Table 12: Students' viewpoints about journal writing

The above figure represents the table results

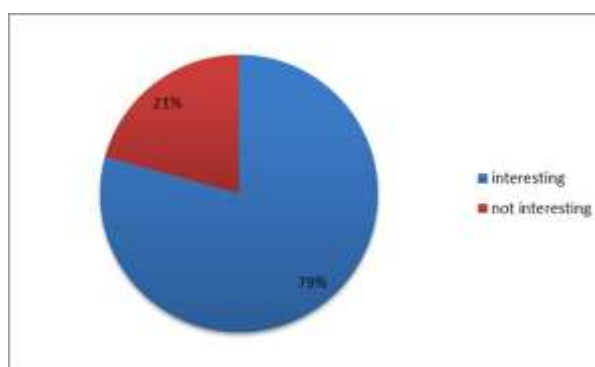


Figure 13: Students' viewpoints about journal writing

As it is indicated through the students' responses, a considerable number of 42 participants out of 53 that represent (79%) agree that writing journal as a practical strategy is interesting. Whereas, 11 participants (21%) consider it as a non-interesting technique.

Item 04. What kinds of journals do you write?

Option	Number	Percentage
Gratitude	4	7%
Free-style	30	57%
Experience	7	13%
Goal-planning	10	19%
None	2	4%
Total	53	100%

Table 13: Kinds of journals

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The results are represented in the following figure

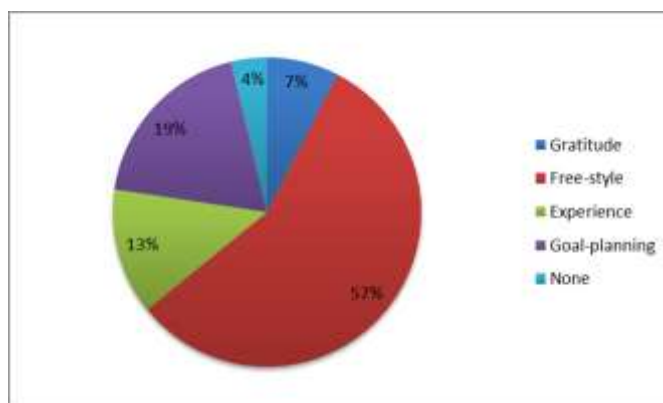


Figure 14: Kinds of journals

The majority of students (57%) preferred to have a free style to express thoughts; they would like to free write rather than having a specific topic. 19% of students out of the total percentage tended to record their goals and future dreams. Moreover, (13%) opted to write about individuals' experiences in their entire life or a particular period of time. just (7%) of students think and write down the moments or things that they are grateful for. The last few students (4%) are not adapted with recording journals.

Item 05. When you free write, do you pay attention to language aspects (eg: grammar, spelling, punctuation... etc)?

Option	Number	Percentage
Yes	27	51%
No	26	49%
Total	53	100%

Table 14: Students' attention to language aspects while free writing

The results are shown in the figure below

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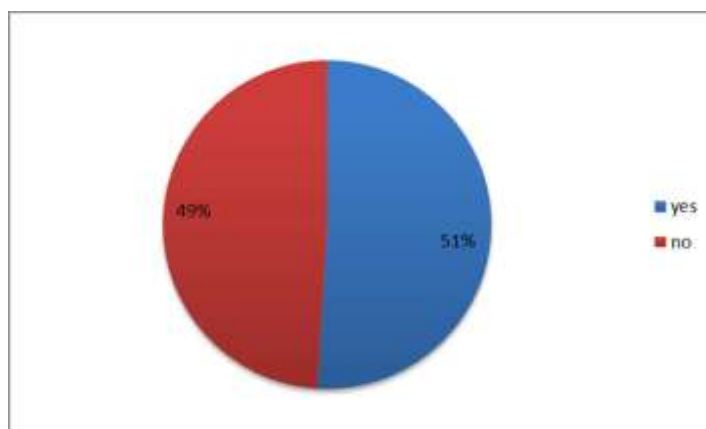


Figure 15: Students' attentions to the linguistic aspects while free writing

The table 14 demonstrated the students' responses regarding their concerns of using the linguistic aspects during free writing. The results seem equal, yet one answer made the difference. 27 participants representing (51%) are careful of using language features in terms of language structure, orthography, lexis to become familiar with academic writing. Nevertheless, 26 participants that represent (49%) do not pay attention to the linguistic fundamentals.

Item 06. Do you think that making writing journals as a daily practice to promote writing could be? Justify your answer.

Option	Number	Percentage
Effective	47	89%
Not effective	6	11%
Total	53	100%

Table 15: the effectiveness of journal writing

The results are demonstrated in the figure bellow

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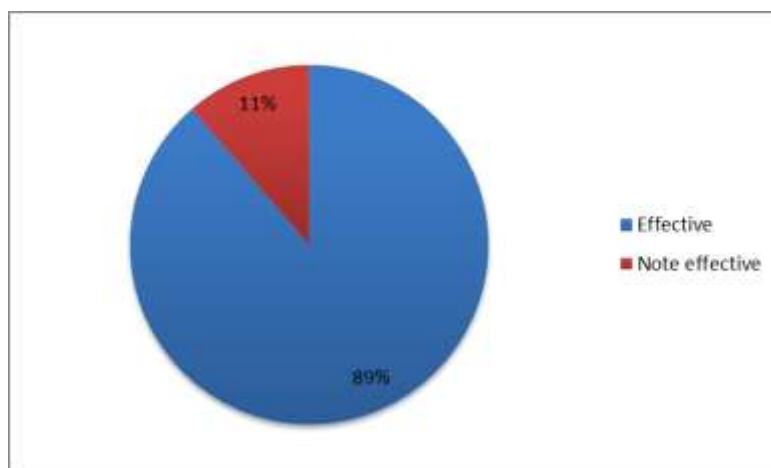


Figure 16: The effectiveness of journal writing

As it is pointed out, almost all the students representing (89%) recognized the practicality of journaling as a powerful technique. Except for (11%) admitted that journal writing is not effective strategy

Students' justifications

Writing journals allows individuals to put their knowledge into a practice. It is a part of practising the language, which at the end we come up with new writing styles.

Journaling is a very helpful method to improve writing skills; thus, writing regularly helps in flowing the ideas smoothly and quickly, getting familiar with various topics to write on, and expressing the self without being anxious. Similarly, the tool provides a space for writers to explore their thoughts and ideas without the pressure of audience or deadline. This can help writers to develop their writing skills and build confidence in their abilities. Further, the more students write journals, the more they memorize new words. The strategy contributes in learning and storing the recent acquired information to be used later on, and aids in enlarging the lexical items. Another benefit of writing journals is that it encourages the writer to find out writing mistakes. The correction of spelling, grammar

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and punctuation errors is very essential to have a meaningful written achievement. Finally, this tool may have a great impact on text's organization and generating ideas. The writer sets down the sequent of ideas in a very soft way to be clearly understood for the audience.

On the contrary, 6 students out of the whole sample 53 believed that writing journals is a non-pedagogical strategy to enhance writing, since it has negative effects on the academic writing. Once journals are written for something personal, they cannot be considered as an effective method to improve writing skill. The language which is used in writing journals is not purely academic. It is full of subjectivity without forgetting the increase of informality style and abbreviations that are used in the text. It is worth noting that journals may fix the spelling mistakes or build up vocabularies, but, quitely sure it will not help in fixing other issues. Besides, some students do not have the motive to write down what they have on mind to release the accumulation of thoughts. Instead, they settle for concealing their private feelings or ideas.

Section four: The impacts of writing journals on writing skill

Item. Please tick in the provided space

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Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Writing journals does not play a role in developing writing performance	9%	13%	23%	28%	26%
Writing journals may improve your communication skills	25%	49%	19%	8%	0%
When you usually write at home, you get familiar with various topics	28%	57%	11%	2%	2%
Recording journals disrupt the writer's flow of ideas	13%	26%	40%	19%	2%
Good writers are those who make journals as a daily practice	21%	43%	25%	9%	2%
Writing journals usually increases the informality styles	19%	42%	17%	17%	6%

Table 16: Students' opinion towards the role of journal writing in enhancing writing skill

The findings are illustrated in the figure below

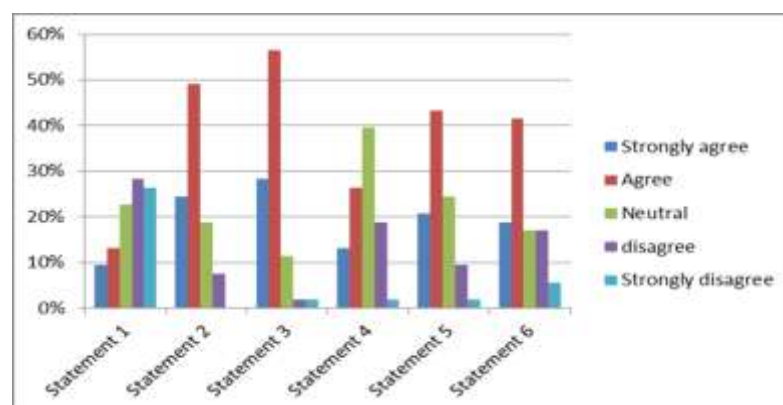


Figure 17: Students' opinions towards the role of journal writing in enhancing writing skill

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The ultimate question of the questionnaire aims at discovering the participants' perceptions concerning practising journals as a home exercise to promote writing abilities. The above table revealed the opted results to what extent did students agree or disagree on the role of journal writing with a group of statements related to the study context.

Statement 01: the statement sought to explore the students' viewpoints regarding the non-functionality of writing journals in developing the students' skills in the context of writing. The displayed statistics denoted that most students (28%) disagreed on the failure of this procedure in achieving better level in writing. 26% of students strongly disagreed on the same mentioned idea. While 23% went for neutral answer, means that they neither agree nor disagree. Yet, the remaining percentages of (13%) and (9%) agreed and strongly agreed respectively, on the inutility of journals in students' academic career.

Statement 02: As for the second statement, the objective was to check out the role of writing journals in the field of communication. The exhibited outcomes pointed out nearly half of answers (49%) agreed on the communicative potential that the procedure provides. Upon the same idea (25%) of participants strongly agreed on the proposed item. However, (19%) stated as neutral responses. In the opposite, a small proportion of (8%) disagreed on the progressive communicative environment this strategy supplies. None of the respondents strongly disagree.

Statement 03: The following statement's intent was to examine students' endeavor to write at home and its impacts on their openness to different themes. The highest percentage of (57%) came into agreement for the usefulness of this technique in fitting out the students by several visualizations. Alongside to 28% of answers confirmed their strongly agreement on the practicality of the technique in generating ideas. Thus, a lower

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percentage (11%) went for neutral students who did not select a response. Nonetheless, 2% of participants chose to go between disagree and strongly disagree.

Statement 04: The statement attempted to inquire about the students' accordance or rejection to the belief that writing journals dampen the writer's generating ideas. The shown results explained that the dominant percentage of (40%) chose to be neutral as a response for this statement. 26% of answers were confirmed upon the same ideas, and 13% of students strongly agreed. On the other hand, (19%) refused the notion of the disadvantages of this tool in producing new conceptualizations. Then, 2% strongly disagreed on the mentioned statement.

Statement 05: the statement aimed at proving that effective writers are students who keep journals as a persistent drill. The consequences implied the approval of the method's significance on the practitioners, which represent 43% of agreement. Moreover, 25% stated as neutral participants. Meanwhile, 21% strongly agreed on the current claim. Whereas, a small rate of (9%) and (2%) of the opinions about the statement's content is split between disagree and strongly disagree respectively.

Statement 06: the purpose of the statement focused on supporting the casual style by the journals. The collected data demonstrated that 42% advocated the sentence claim. 19% strongly agreed on the theory of journals may boost the informal style in students' written achievements. Yet, the same rate of (17%) was neutral and disagreed upon the statement. Lastly, solely (6%) of responses contradicted the idea.

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3.6 Teachers' interview

3.6.1 Interview description

A semi-structured interview was addressed to six teachers who have different experiences of teaching in written expression module at Biskra University to benefit from their individual experiences and knowledge towards keeping journals as an educational tool in teaching and learning writing skill, also to get the tutors' reactions about how this technique works in the classroom environment and what are its consequences. The main goal is to cover the research objectives, and for instance, describing writing' problems that EFL students confront, the causes of making writing a challenging skill, finally, seeking to identify the role of writing journals in practicing writing. To do so, the interview consisted of ten open-ended questions to freely express the instructors' responses without being bounded by the multiple options.

The first question was about their teaching career of written expression module at Biskra University. The second was concerned with the method(s) that the teachers rely on in teaching writing. The third shed light on their opinions regarding the students' level of proficiency in writing. The fourth question dealt with the main linguistic aspects that the teachers emphasize on the most while giving feedback on the students' written productions. The fifth sought to hand about the difficulty of writing among other skills. The sixth question focused on mentioning the obstacles of students' writing and the reasons behind these hindrances. Starting from the seventh questions, the researcher attempted to discover the teachers' viewpoints and interests about writing journals for students to promote their learning autonomy, as well as, to reach a proficient level in writing. The questions were (a) to understand if the teachers ask their students to free write whenever the chance was given (b) to explore their perceptions concerning the

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effectiveness of writing journals, and to what extent does it impact on the students' performance; (c) to ensure if writing journals is seen as a significant pedagogical practice to reinforce the students to write. (d) last but not least, to realize how do the tutors support their students to improve writing.

3.6.2 Administration of the teachers' interview

As it was previously mentioned, the interview was done orally with six teachers of the department of English at Biskra University in March, 2023. It took approximately 20 minutes for each interview, and the data was collected in one week.

3.6.3 Validating and Piloting the teachers' interview

The interview was piloted with one teacher. It was written on a paper and was submitted to him to check its validity through the interviewee's responses. The teacher asked for more revision and edition of some questions. After the correction, the interview was done face to face in the department of English at Biskra University, and the researcher recorded the answers with the teachers' permission.

3.6.4 The analysis of the teachers' interview

The data was collected with the objective of exploring the instructors' stand point regarding the usage of writing journals inside or outside classroom in facilitating learning writing skills. The data was analyzed using quantitative approach through the thematic analysis. The interviewees' responses were organized and analyzed to accurately draw the conclusion.

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Question one

This question is concerned with the duration of teaching written expression at Biskra University.

The results of this question showed that the teachers have different experiences in teaching writing. Four teachers (66%) have been teaching written expression module for the duration between eight and eleven years. Also, there is a teacher (17%) who has an adequate experience with teaching writing for four years. However, the last teacher (17%) had the opportunity to teach writing only for one single year.

The obtained results enable the researcher to gather information about the teachers' experiences and familiarity with teaching writing.

Question two

The question attempts to discover which method(s) does teaching writing process is based on.

The outputs imply that three teachers out of six (50%) share the same method which is teaching writing through process approach. Two teachers (33%) stated that teaching writing depends on the course's objectives or the students' needs, once writing has been taught as a theoretical process, once it has been taught as a practical method for more assimilation of writing process. The last teacher (17%) said that he uses various methods to teach writing in order to fully absorb and master the process by the students. He uses modeled, shared, guided, collaborative, and independent methods.

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Question three

Exploring the teachers' opinions about their students' proficiency in writing, and if it fits their present level.

Most teachers agreed on one answer merely one teacher. The answer was that the level of students in writing does not match with their current level. They argued that their writing is generally too simple and is not effective to convey their message to the audience. It is characterized by informal vocabulary, weak sentence structure and poor ideas. Therefore, they need much practice to develop their paragraphs. The exceptional answer was that the students who are interested in training themselves by writing, they could have an average or even an excellent level of proficiency, whereas the demotivated students have usually produced weak pieces of writing.

From the above findings, we deduce that practicing writing occasionally encourages the student to openly express and generate ideas and opens new horizons to describe personal thoughts and conceptualization.

Question four

This question highlights the main language aspects that the teachers focus on the most in correcting and providing feedback on the students' paragraphs.

Based on the interviewees' responses, three teachers (50%) claimed that feedback has to be informational. Thus, all the aspects of writing are necessary to be taken into account to fairly evaluate the written work. Two others (33%) stated that generating ideas, organization, coherence and cohesion are the main linguistic aspects that should be included in the students' written texts because writing is mainly associated with the

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creation of ideas and critical thinking. One teacher (17%) gave more details about the consideration of the language aspects; she asserted that at the primary level, she focuses on ideas, organization, coherence and grammar. After this, she prioritizes the technical issues such as spelling and mechanics.

Question five

The current question's aim is to investigate the teacher's opinions about the difficulty of writing among other skills.

All the teachers (100%) believed that writing is the most difficult one, and this is noticeable from the students' poor written productions. Most learners are able to listen, speak and read, but when it comes to writing, they find lots of difficulties to produce a nice piece of writing. Therefore, writing in the first language is challenging, but, when it comes to foreign language the challenge becomes greater.

The difficulty is due to the requirements that writing skill entails. First of all, it needs mastering the linguistic competencies. Second, practicing and making more efforts for the improvement of writing. Then, the manifold domains where writing is very demanding. Lastly, it is governed by strict rules that should be respected.

Question six

The aim of this item was mentioning the obstacles that the students face in writing, and the intended reasons of these difficulties.

The answers were contrasted relating to the faced problems, but the reasons kept the same. They observed a great number of challenges the students encounter during writing. Incorrect grammar, limited size of vocabulary, organizing and generating

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ideas, elaborating, misuse of mechanics, word choice, coherence, sentence structure, spelling mistakes are the major ones. However, the causes behind the poor written productions were lack of practice and reading, L1 interference and poor knowledge of the FL rules, next to the wrong profiteering of technology.

Question seven

It is linked to the tutors' recommendations about free-writing to enhance writing achievements.

Generally, they all (100%) come to an agreement that asking the students to write in classroom or at home is an absolute task. This method supports the students to come out with an acceptable piece of writing.

Question eight

The question attempts to explore the teachers' opinions about the extent of the effectiveness of journal writing on students' performance.

The findings demonstrated the practicality of journal writing as a daily habit to train the students' familiarity with writing. Thus, the technique forces the students to develop a consistent writing practice, yet, the performance improves by time. Therefore, practice makes perfect. The more they write the more they improve their fluency and writing competencies. Indeed, keeping a journal can improve and foster learners' writing productivity. They can keep a journal about knowledge they acquired when reading and making research. Moreover, when keeping a journal, they store information which they may use when writing any piece of research paper.

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Question nine

This question is based on the significance of writing journals as a powerful strategy in enhancing writing skill.

The interviewees' responses were corresponding in the positive impacts that it brings about because the strategy is deemed to be valuable to develop self-centered and self-autonomy. Also, it is accessory to reinforce the students on reflection, critical thinking, generating ideas, and providing strong argumentations. Subsequently, by writing on a journal regularly and permanently, the students can develop their writing skills and demystify the process through practice.

Question ten

The last question tackled with the tips that the instructors encourage their students to develop writing skill. They agreed on the following recommendations

Reading is the key to find out how writing academically must be done. Moreover, self and peer assessments could be contributory in providing feedback. Another advice which is writing summaries and paraphrasing texts is salutary for the functional structure of ideas, or the students are able to choose any model of text to imitate. Further, Practicing writing occasionally in classroom or at home in terms of writing an essay each week is useful for students to foster their language, and the writing achievements will be evaluated in pairs.

3.7 Discussion of the findings

The foresaid section was devoted to achieve the research objectives as well as to answer the research raised questions. The data analysis process was done through two main

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instruments that are a semi-structured questionnaire and a semi-structured interview for a better understanding of the studied phenomenon. The data collection tools were purposely designed to attain the research aims of the current work. Hence, this part helped the researcher to clearly state the research problem and lately draw the conclusion.

The principle of this research work was to investigate the significant role of recording daily journals and its impacts on EFL students' written productions. To do so, the questionnaire was used as the suitable data collection instrument to gather the compatible students' answers related to the study issue. The researcher investigated the recurrent English writing disabilities, since writing is a prolific activity, and most EFL learners are incapable to come out with a meaningful language production; in addition to examining the practicality of journals method in writing.

Writing as a multi-step process has been deemed a tricky challenge for EFL learners. The obtained results implied that both teachers and students come to an agreement of the difficulty of writing in English in language learning approach. They stated that this complexity is due to the several components that it entails.

Given the large proportion of students in the sample, it was denoted that more than half of the students admitted the effectiveness of journals in developing their competence in writing. Most students experience journaling strategy periodically, for instance in recording individual experiences, gratitude, goal planning, and self-reflection that support their good levels they achieve regardless writing problems they face.

Furthermore, the students' responses showed that the majority of them while practising journaling technique; they pay attention to the linguistic aspects which

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characterize the academic writing. The awareness of involving the objectivity, specialized vocabulary, and grammatical structures supports them to produce a formal writing style.

The foremost objective of the present research was to identify the fundamental problems that EFL students face in producing any type of writing. Based on the gained results, it was indicated that EFL educators suffer from different writing difficulties and the most reciprocal ones are limited vocabulary, incorrect grammar, spelling mistakes, and text organization, in addition to other deficiencies. Probably, these encountered problems are because of the lack experience of journal writing to rehearse written productions; or, the limited knowledge that they may develop through reading different types of texts.

Thereafter, they were asked to list some reasons beyond those hurdles. It can be deduced that writing disabilities might spring from more than one source; some students explained the potential of practicing writing in context in narrowing down the problems involved in students' writing performance. Others acknowledged the value of both extensive and intensive reading in developing L2 writing process. While, the eventual aim was to prove the implementation of journal writing in English and its significance in reinforcing written abilities. It was noticeable that the majority of students, who experience journaling, prefer to express their thoughts and opinions using free style journals; thus, this kind serves as a means of self-discovery and self-reflection. Additionally, they recognized the great impacts of journal writing as a developmental activity to improve communication skill, generate ideas, and being acquainted to diverse topics. As a result, the positive attitudes were received from the students' answers. Their experience with journal writing contributed to develop their writing into a higher level of proficiency.

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Regarding the second data collection tool, an interview was addressed to teachers of written expression module to explore their perspectives towards the implementation of this technique inside classroom sessions to encourage the students express themselves and try to convey message in a meaningful way. The teachers' responses provided us with the needed and useful data for the research. At the beginning, the interviewed teachers were asked about their teaching writing career. Almost all teachers have enough experiences with teaching writing skill. However, their methods in teaching writing in an effective manner differ from one another; some believed that writing should be taught as a process; meanwhile, some reckon on teaching writing as a product in terms of writing essays and summaries. Besides, teachers as a key variable in teaching process showed their dissatisfaction of the students' writing level of proficiency because they are not adequately competent in writing due to the deficiency of practice.

Moreover, the survey findings demonstrated the most essential language components that the teachers focus on while providing feedback. The interviewees emphasized on many aspects and the most common ones are organization, coherence, and cohesion.

The instructors also introduced the most shared difficulties that students face while writing, which are the same that were pointed out earlier by the students. In addition, they discussed the prime reasons that make writing more challenging such as lack of practice, lack of reading, and the insufficient knowledge of L2 rules. It was understandable that the interviewees' supported the idea of recording journals in assisting the students to acquire a sufficient knowledge in writing process, and considered it as a successful material in promoting individual learning. Consequently, they asserted their interests in stimulating

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practicing writing in EFL classrooms, and they already gave it a try in asking the students to free writing about any topic, and the positive impacts were noticeable from the students' level of progression.

Finally, the teachers listed some tips that enable the students to improve their writing achievements. They recognized the high value of practice because a good writer needs to write more and more. Reading also has a powerful impact on students' creative writing. They may discover different writing strategies through reading various texts. Summarizing and paraphrasing also are tools to achieve the desired proficiency level of students.

To sum up, despite the fact that journal writing encourages the students' informal style and short forms, but undoubtedly, it is a vivid method that can be relied on for both the betterment of writing skill in providing the ability to engage in learning writing, and strengthening the relationships between the students and their instructors.

Conclusion

To conclude, the immediate chapter presented the fieldwork of the study. The obtained data was collected and analyzed statistically for both the students' questionnaire and the teachers' interview to pave the way for the researcher to draw the conclusion about the main issue under investigation, which is the influence of writing journals as a valid material in boosting EFL students' written performance in the academic context. Wherefore, the interpretation and discussion of the findings were provided to properly answer the research questions. Thus, the findings displayed to the fulfillment of the research objectives and questions, which were formulated at the beginning of the study

3.8 Summary of the main results

This exploratory research was devoted to explore the utility of journal writing activity and whether EFL learners can overcome writing complexity by experiencing this technique. In order to fulfill the research goal, the study conducted two data instruments. A questionnaire was submitted to a random sample of 53 third year English students, and an interview with six teachers of written expression at Biskra University.

The data was collected and analyzed statistically to check out the vigorous role of journal writing style in ameliorating EFL students' writing abilities. The responses given by the participants helped in answering the research questions. Noteworthy, journals are functional means to develop the writing proficiency in the context of fostering the language components, regarding its small drawback in increasing the colloquialism while writing. Thus, few students stated the negative effects that it returns on the academic writing. Whereas, the students who accepted to promote their writing by recording daily journals, they asserted its power in overcoming the language major problems for instance the small amount of vocabulary, spelling mistakes, and organization. Based on the outcomes, many students demonstrated their positive motives towards the effectiveness of keeping journal writing in the sake of boosting their language proficiency; particularly, the category who stated that recording daily journal assisted them to practise and develop language. In line with the students' perceptions, the teachers as well showed their interests in adopting this strategy in classroom sessions in order to give their learners' the opportunity to express and convey knowledge, also, to establish an intimate rapport between teachers and learners.

3.9 Limitations of the study

The study at hand sought to explore the effectiveness of journal writing in developing writing performance. Nevertheless, limitations are a part and parcel of any investigation that the researcher face to fulfill the research work. At first, the deficiency of the credible and relevant sources related to the second variable. Second, the collection of data was slightly difficult because of the time limitation. Hence, because of the teachers' availability, it was not easy to arrange a face to face interview with the teachers due to the loaded programs they have. Another issue was in collecting the questionnaire responses. Although, the questionnaire was done through Google Forms to gain more time, thus, it was posted on Facebook and Messenger groups looking forward to receive the responses as soon as possible. But, it was challenging to collect the needed data in the required time. Despite of all the mentioned difficulties, the obtained data helped the researcher to reach the research objectives and answer the main research questions.

3.10 Recommendations

In the light of the results reached, the study offers a list of tips to be taken into account for both students and teachers in order to improve the quality of writing abilities.

For students

- ✓ Students should make a thorough reading, so that they develop an eye for what effective writing looks like.
- ✓ It is highly recommended for students to experience journals whenever it is possible to progress their writing performance.
- ✓ Students can get feedback on their performance from the others to evaluate writing level.

- ✓ Students are advised to use online resources to help with grammar, spelling mistakes, and rich vocabulary.
- ✓ Students can avail of practising writing in terms of summarizing and paraphrasing to become familiar with writing academically.
- ✓ Since writing is the most important skill, students need to be aware of its significance because of the various fields it serves.

For teachers

- ✓ Teachers of written expression could make writing composition as a crucial activity in every examination or test to promote writing.
- ✓ Teachers should provide regular opportunities for students to practice writing.
- ✓ Teachers should focus not only on teaching writing as a process, but also as a product to ensure that the students completely absorb the acquired skill.
- ✓ Teachers must encourage students to read a variety of texts.
- ✓ Teachers should use prompts to help students engage in writing.
- ✓ Teachers also may allocate a specific time from 15min to 20 min in each session to ask the students to draft any topic related to their interests.
- ✓ Teachers should give their feedback on their students' writing achievements.

3.11 Suggestions for further research

Along with the gained results, the study provides some suggestions for further research.

1. This study recruited a small sample of participants due to the time limitations; future research is needed to recruit a larger sample in order to make the findings more generalizable.
2. This study was limited to an EFL college context. Future research may investigate the effect of journal writing on written performance among middle school and high school students.
3. This study was conducted on a random selected sample of students. Further research can investigate the effect of journal writing on mainly the students who constantly practice journaling.
4. This study was conducted using a questionnaire for the participants. Further research may use an experiment and testing to determine if the experimentation makes a difference.
5. This study supports the positive impacts of journal writing in promoting writing skill. Future research may explore the negative effects of this technique on written productions.

3.12 conclusion

In language acquisition, writing is a crucial component to be either taught or learned for its paramount status that sweeps through various areas of life. Writing in its sense tends to be the trickiest pedagogical task in the mother tongue. Accordingly, when it comes to writing in second language, the challenge takes a hard level for EFL learners, even for university students who are supposed to have a more advanced level.

It is observable among Algerian University learners that after taking courses in English from their middle school, they still unable to engage fully in writing abilities especially their failure in using the lexical and structural accuracy, which hamper them to come out with meaningful writing achievements. Therefore, the study was motivated by

the deficiency of writing competence that most EFL students encounter in the department of English at Biskra University. The research endeavored in investigating whether journal writing as a successful material contributes in fostering the L2 written performance. The revealed results in the previous chapter indicated that writing is the biggest fear of many students; particularly it necessitates mastering the language components to be proficient in. Subsequently, writing abilities can be enhanced by making the journals as a communicative practice to produce language dully.

The research work was proposed to join the prior research that supported the acknowledgeable advantages of journal writing in improving foreign language writing performance. It further proved that practising journals continuously works to reduce writing difficulties. In addition, to the psychological remedies it provides, for instance promoting the self-confidence, reducing the anxiety and fear of expression, and raising the intrinsic motivation to fully engage in writing. The technique provides the opportunity for students to exercise the autonomy of selecting the topic they explored. Besides, students may develop a reflective tone towards the topic been chosen. Another advantage is experiencing journals not only helps learners to learn English in context, but also, to observe writing process.

Along with the students' perceptions, teachers also assume the challenge of integrating journal writing technique as a new teaching practice in the pedagogical programs to relieve the complexity of writing in the educational system. The supportive strategy as a link between students and teachers enables the tutors to hear the students' voices, to look forward to their concerns, and to engage in individual dialogues with the students as a substitute method to the traditional classroom interaction.

As an addition, the study tackled with the essential reasons stand behind creating the obstacles for students in attaining qualified pieces of writing. Thus, the students mentioned the most common cause which is lack of practice. The absence of this factor may greatly impact on students' pedagogical activities and structural accuracy when they are asked to prepare any type of academic writing.

The obtained findings assisted in drawing the conclusion about the role of journal writing as an integral language learning tool in developing EFL students' writing skill. The respondents and interviewees clearly showed their interests to the strategy, and stated its substantial benefits that can bring forth change in ameliorating students' writing in the approach of foreign language learning. Accordingly, it can be deduced that journal writing has the power to shift the practitioners' written performance from a poor to an acceptable level.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Students' Questionnaire

Dear students,

You are kindly asked to fill in the questionnaire which is a part of the research. It is designed as a data collection tool for the accomplishment of a master Project in sciences of the language. The study is conducted to investigate the role of journal writing as a subtle technique in developing EFL students' writing performance. The case study of third year English students at Biskra University.

As such, we hope that you will give us your full attention and interest, and be sure that your answers will be used for academic purposes and will remain anonymous and confidential.

Please tick (✓) in the appropriate answer and give complete answers when needed.

Section one: General background

Q1: What is your age?

.....

Q2: Which skill do you find the most difficult?

Reading

Listening

Speaking

Writing

Section two: Writing skill

Q1: How do you evaluate your level in writing assignments?

Excellent

- Very good
- Good
- Average
- Poor

Q2: Do you consider writing as a difficult skill?

- Yes No

Please say why?

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

Q3: According to you, to what extent is writing difficult?

- Extremely difficult
- Quite difficult
- Moderate
- Slightly difficult
- Neither difficult

Q4: Which aspect of writing do you think is more complex?

- Vocabulary
- Grammar
- Spelling
- Organization

Others:.....
.....

Q5: How can these difficulties influence your writing?

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

Q6: In your opinion, what are the reasons of poor writing?

Lack of practice

Lack of motivation

Lack of reading

Section three: Journal writing

Q1: Do you write at home?

Yes

No

Q2: If so, how often do you write?

Always

Often

Usually

Sometimes

Rarely

Q3: How do you find writing journals?

Interesting

Not interesting

Q4: What kind of journals do you write?

Gratitude

Free style

Experience

Self-reflection

Goal planning

Q5: When you free write do you pay attention to the language aspects (grammar, spelling, punctuation...etc)?

Yes

No

Q6: Do you think that making journal writing as a daily practice to promote writing could be

Effective

Not effective

Justify?.....

Section four: the impacts of journal writing on writing skill

Q16: Tick in the appropriate space.

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
writing journals does not play a role in developing your writing performance					
writing journals may improve your communication skill					
When you usually write at home, you get familiar with various topics					
recording journals disrupt the writer's flow of ideas					
Good writers are those who make journals as a daily practice					
writing journals usually increases the informality styles					

Thank you for your collaboration

Appendix B*Teachers' interview*

Dear teachers,

You are kindly asked to answer the interview that is designed as a data collection tool for the accomplishment of our research. The study is conducted to investigate the role of writing journals technique in developing EFL students' writing skill. The case study of third year English students at Biskra

Q1: How long have you been teaching written expression module at Biskra University?

Q2: Which method (s) do you use in teaching writing skill?

Q3: Do you think that your students' proficiency in writing fits their current level?

Q4: While giving feedback on students' written productions, which aspect do you emphasize on the most? (eg: grammar, coherence, mechanics...etc). Why?

Q5: Do you agree that writing is the most difficult skill for EFL learners? Why?

Q6: What are the obstacles that your students face in writing? And what are the reasons behind these difficulties?

Q7: Do you recommend your students to practice free writing?

Q8: In your opinion, does writing journals affect on the students' performance? And to what extent?

Q9: Do you consider this technique as a significant tool to enhance writing skill? Why?

Q10: How do you encourage your students to develop their writing skill?

Appendix C

The teachers' interview script

Q 01: How long have you been teaching written expression module at Biskra University?

Teacher 1	Eight years	Teacher 4	Nine years
Teacher 2	One year	Teacher 5	Ten years
Teacher 3	Four years	Teacher 6	Eleven years

Q 02: Which method (s) do you use in teaching writing skill?

Teacher 1	Process	Teacher 4	Collaborative/ independent
Teacher 2	Theory/ practice	Teacher 5	Process
Teacher 3	Process	Teacher 6	Depends on the course objectives

Q 03: Do you think that your students' proficiency in writing fits their current level?

Teacher 1	No	Teacher 4	Some students are average
Teacher 2	There are average levels	Teacher 5	No
Teacher 3	No	Teacher 6	For those who are interested in writing have a good level, while others their language do not match their educational level

Q 04: While giving feedback on students' written productions, which aspect do you emphasize on the most? (eg: grammar, coherence, mechanics...etc). Why?

Teacher 1	All aspects	Teacher 4	All aspects
Teacher 2	Grammar, punctuation, cohesion, organization	Teacher 5	All aspects
Teacher 3	Coherence/cohesion, organization, generating ideas	Teacher 6	First, grammar, coherence, organization. Then, spelling and punctuation

The teachers focus on all aspects because all the linguistic components have an equal importance in language learning. Giving each element its full right enables the teacher to fairly evaluate the written production.

Q 05: Do you agree that writing is the most difficult skill for EFL learners? Why?

For the six teachers stated that writing is truly the most difficult skill for EFL students in the context of foreign language learning; thus, it requires mastering the language components. Whereas, EFL students do not make enough effort to practice writing in order to progress their proficiency level.

Q 06: What are the obstacles that your students face in writing? And what are the reasons behind these difficulties?

Teacher1	Mechanics/ vocabulary/ generating ideas	Lack of practice	Teacher4	Organization/generatin g ideas	L1 interference
Teacher2	Organization/ spelling/punctuatio n	Lack of practice and reading	Teacher5	Word choice/ sentence structure	The inadequate knowledge of L2 rules
Teacher3	Sentence structure/ vocabulary/ grammar	Misuse of technolog y	Teacher6	Coherence/ spelling/Organization	Lackof practice

Q 07: Do you recommend your students to practice free writing?

Teacher 1	Yes, I do	Teacher 4	Yes, during classroom session
Teacher 2	Absolute thing	Teacher 5	Yes, I do recommend them to practice writing either in classroom or at home
Teacher 3	Of course, actually I make it as a task	Teacher 6	Yes, of course

Q 08: In your opinion, does writing journals affect on the students' performance? And to what extent?

Teacher 1	It does, it helps in generating the students' ideas	Teacher 4	Actually, the technique is useful in fostering learners' writing productivity.
Teacher 2	Yes, it is practical tool to practice writing	Teacher 5	Of course it does, journaling forces the students development in writing performance by time
Teacher 3	Yes, it positively affects on their paragraphs in terms of organization	Teacher 6	Yes, it increases the motivation in writing

Q 09: Do you consider this technique as a significant tool to enhance writing skill? Why?

Teacher 1	It is based on developing self-centered and learner autonomy	Teacher 4	It is a daily regular practice to improve writing skill
Teacher 2	It enhances self-reflection and critical thinking	Teacher 5	Encourages the students to train themselves by writing
Teacher 3	It helps in express freely the feelings and providing arguments	Teacher 6	Students can demystify the process of writing by practice.

Q 10: How do you encourage your students to develop their writing skill?

Teacher 1	Extensive reading to have an idea about what is creative writing	Teacher 4	Practice writing inside classroom and provide feedback
Teacher 2	Each week, they have to write an essay which is generally evaluated in pairs or individually	Teacher 5	Asking them to write and provide the self and peer assessment
Teacher 3	Motivate them by providing a positive feedback because it is essential in encouraging the students to fully engage in writing	Teacher 6	Summarize and imitate some models

الملخص

تعتبر مهارة الكتابة عنصراً فعالاً في المجال التعليمي للطالب، حيث يعتمد تعلم اللغة الأجنبية الناجح على إتقان قدرات الكتابة؛ ومع ذلك، معظم طلاب السنة الثالثة في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية بجامعة بسكرة يواجهون عدة عوائق أثناء إنتاج أي فقرة كتابية. لهذا الغرض، تسلط الدراسة الحالية الضوء على دور كتابة اليوميات كاستراتيجية داعمة في تطوير أداء كتابة اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، في محاولة لاستكشاف تصورات كل من المعلمين والطلاب حول أهمية هذه التقنية في تعزيز كفاءة الكتابة في اللغة الثانية. تماشياً مع أسئلة البحث، تم استخدام أداتين لجمع البيانات وهما استبيان إلى طلبة السنة الثالثة تخصص لغة إنجليزية في جامعة بسكرة، ومقابلة مع مدرسي وحدة التعبير الكتابي في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية في نفس الجامعة. وبالتالي، أشارت النتائج المكتسبة إلى العلاقة القوية بين تسجيل اليوميات وتحسين مهارة الكتابة حيث أظهر المشاركون في الدراسة والمحاورون انطباعات إيجابية تجاه تطبيق أسلوب كتابة اليوميات في تعزيز تعلم اللغة الأجنبية وكذلك في تقليل صعوبات الكتابة.