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Investigating Types of Errors in EFL learners' Writing:

The Case Study of Ben Saadoune Ali and Hamidouche Mokhtar Middle Schools.

A dissertation submitted to the Department of English in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the master's degree **in Didactics**

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Dedications

This work is dedicated to my precious and lovely family, my friends and my relatives.

"Fahima"

This study is wholeheartedly dedicated to my beloved family for their continuous support,

help and encouragement. To my colleagues who cheered me up every step of the way.

A special sense of gratitude goes to my dear friend Amira for her immense contribution and constant

uplifting.

"Sihem"

Acknowledgments

Abstract

The focus of the current study is two-fold. Initially, it aims to discover the types of errors found in middle school EFL learners' writings and the factors behind their occurrence. Second, it investigates teachers' perceptions and practices towards these productions. For this, we have analysed learners' writings, which were the result of a summative test assignment. Seeking to identify the frequently occurring productive errors in learners' writings, a predetermined **errors' checklist** has been used. Analysing productions targeted a sample consisting of 124 third year middle school learners from two different middle schools in Bordj Bou Arreridj. The second purpose was accomplished through administering a **questionnaire** including both open and close-ended questions to 27 middle school teachers of English. On the one hand, the analysis of learners' writings revealed that L1 interference is the major source of learners' productive errors. Errors related to writing mechanics and grammatical aspects hinder learners from achieving accurate written productions. Yet, it also displayed that intralingual errors are of primary significance and cannot be dismissed. As a matter of fact, third year learners have limited or no knowledge about some English language conventions such as spelling and sentence fragments. On the other hand, teacher's replies to the questionnaire disclosed that teachers are mostly aware of learners' difficulties towards achieving accurate writing. However, changes at the level of the syllabi and classroom practices are needed to help learners improve their writing skills. To sum up, types of errors were deemed as a two-factor consequence.

Keywords: frequent errors, interlingual errors, intralingual errors, writing skill,

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General Introduction

The development of an effective writing skill is the ultimate aim of EFL learners as well as teachers. It is the ability to communicate clearly, rationally with grammatically correct sentences. In the last few decades, writing has proved to be the most challenging task in the Algerian EFL schools. Despite the bulk of instruction, assignment, feedback and remedial work, there seems to be a gap between Algerian learners' performance and the intended outcome. The usually produced paragraphs encompass a variety of grammatical errors. Errors that are frequently repeated and are found among Algerian EFL learners.

The purpose of this study is to provide educational practitioners with an in-depth understanding of the different types of errors which result in incorrect English sentences, particularly those of Algerian EFL middle school learners. The insights will also inform educators to design suitable strategies and materials to help L2 learners overcome difficulties in writing.

1.   Background of the study

Many national and international studies have examined the existence of errors among EFL and ESL learners. However, they were mostly focusing at investigating errors at the level of university or high schools. Little has been done at the level of middle schools. In fact, these studies have shown that students mostly fail to produce accurate pieces of writing.

Al-Buainain (2006) led a cross-sectional research entitled "students' Writing Errors in EFL". He stated that students' errors are systematic and classifiable. Furthermore, he maintained that no specific methods can serve as remedial procedures for minimizing EFL students' errors. Rather, it is the teacher's mission to create effective ones.

Zawahreh (2012) also conducted another study about the predominant errors in written productions of tenth grade students in Ajloun schools in Jordan as it tackled an important aspect of our current research. The researcher concluded that mother tongue interference and intralingual interference are the main sources of errors in written productions.

Allati (2015) conducted a research study entitled "written errors among E.F.L. learners", which aimed at identifying types of errors committed by third year classes at the level of secondary school and their possible sources. The results showed that most students are committing errors because of the lack of extensive reading, lack of practice and the negative interference of the mother tongue.

Saad (2020) carried out another study under the name "An analysis of middle school pupils' grammatical errors in written productions" at the level of Biskra's university. It intended to investigate the effect of grammatical errors on fourth year pupils writing skill at middle school level. It ended by revealing that despite the positive attitude towards grammar learning, learners commit various grammatical errors in their writings.

Because middle school is a critical period for English language acquisition in Algeria, the current research work tries to view errors from the perspective of Algerian middle school teachers and learners by putting into perspective learners actual performance and teachers perceptions. Moreover, it strives to prove that the lack of guidance and training at an earlier stage of language learning is a major cause of errors at higher levels. It also seeks to investigate the dominant errors in middle school pupils' productions, whether they are grammatical, spelling, punctuation or any other types of errors.

2.   Statement of the Problem

 A learner-centred approach known as the Competency- Based Approach has become the focal poit of the Algerian educational system. The latter focuses on making the learner an

autonomous and competent communicator. This can be achieved by the integrative equipment of learners with the competencies and skills needed in real life. In fact, writing seems to be the most important skill that must be mastered by EFL learners. It is an ability that is needed throughout all areas of life, including schools. However, studies have shown that learners face serious problems with this skill.

Most of the studies related to errors in Algeria are focused on investigating the existence of predetermined errors only at higher levels of education. Very few instances got to research earlier stages of learning; hence, they are of primary importance. The current research focuses on identifying the types of language errors occurring in EFL learners' writings and their frequency. Furthermore, it investigates the factors causing these errors. In addition, it proposes some teaching methods and strategies to help teachers better deal with middle school learners' production.

3.   Research questions

The present study seeks to answer certain questions, which were often triggered. First, what are the most common types of errors found within Algerian middle school learners? And what is their frequency? Second, what are the factors behind such errors? Moreover, how can teachers provide the appropriate feedback needed?

4.   Research aims:

This research intends to investigate an issue that has long been tackled but to be resolved, thus it aims at first, identifying learners' errors and the main factors leading to them. Second, it determines the most recurring errors. Finally, it investigates teachers' attitudes, approaches and strategies when teaching writing or providing feedback.

5.   Methodology:

This research will be primarily conducted using quantitative method, as the main aim is to collect numerical data. A case study based upon observation will be the principal

research tool. The observation is intended to first accumulate then analyse learners' written production with reference to a predetermined errors checklist. As a result, the researchers will focus on designating the most frequent errors and try to trace back to their causes by implementing a questionnaire by further investigating the factors identified in the observation. The latter will gauge teachers' perceptions, views and beliefs when it comes to their practices and approaches to writing as a core language skill.

6.   Population and sampling technique:

The research population targeted in this study is middle school learners in both Ben Saadoune Ali and Hamidouche Mokhtar schools. Since they have acquired the basics of English writing as well as being endowed with a syllabus that provides ample opportunities of practice, the chosen population meets the criteria and needs of the research. The sampling technique underlying this study is convenience sampling simply because the researchers have free access to the population. To reduce the bias, researchers will use it alongside simple random sampling to draw a more accurate estimation.

7.   Structure of the Study:

The present research paper will include two main parts: theoretical and practical. The first part provides a theoretical framework of the study. It is divided into two main chapters. The first chapter helps to define the writing skill, its importance and qualities of a good writing. The second chapter helps grasp the meaning of the concept of "errors", its main categories, its major sources, as well as the process followed in analysing learners' errors.

Part two is devoted to the practical side of the research. It clearly states the research methods, the population, data collection tools, administration of the tools and summary of the main results. Some suggestions and recommendations are provided for middle school teachers to help them in assessing pupils' errors in written productions. Some sample productions that

were used as sources for data collection during the research study will be included at the end of the research paper.

Chapter One: Literature Review

Introduction

Writing as a distinguished language skill, has been at the forefront of multiple investigations. The latter stress both the importance and the intricacies of its instruction. From merely texting a friend to writing a curriculum vitae, essay, dissertation or thesis, EFL learners are bound to produce written representations of their thoughts. However, writing has proved to require several complex processes and sub skills that it has become such a daunting task for both teachers and learners. A task that is time consuming and very often neglected due to the considerable amount of efforts and challenges it evoques.

1.1. Definition of writing

Several attempts have been made to provide an exact definition of writing. In its most basic form, writing is defined as a symbolic depiction of ones' thinking Emig (1977). Emig continues by saying that writing is the production of an oral construct portrayed in graphic forms. By the same token Harmer (2007, p113) states that writing is an act which allows more pondering time compared to spur of the moment conversations; in a sense that it provides plenty of opportunity to process the language. Nonetheless both definitions fail to pin down the different kinds of processes and skills needed to develop the writing ability.

1.2. Definition of writing skill

Often perceived as a second order process, the writing skill is primarily learnt within a formal and systematic instruction. It is both an end and a means with specific learning strategies. Many authors and scholars expressed their agreement on the complex and demanding nature of writing. Nunan (1989) asserts this point when saying that writing is a highly intricate cognitive ability in which the writer is supposed to show mastery of a set of

variables. Especially for language learners whose mother tongue is different from English. According to Sturm and Kopenhaver (2000) composing in writing is integrative whereby it necessitates the coordination of different components.

1.3. Writing subskills

In order to achieve literacy in writing, EFL learners are to exhibit a control over two levels of skills as proposed by Berninger et al (2002) in his simplistic model of writing. The first refers to lower-order transcriptions skills in other words the learners need to have a legible handwriting and certain knowledge of spelling and punctuation within the target language. The second denotes higher order self-regulated cognitive processes. The latter is tightly linked to planning, criticality, sequencing…etc.

1.3.1. Handwriting

Even though most of today's conversations take place via digital gadgets, nearly all learners sit for assignments and exams that require the use of the traditional pen. Therefore, it is quiet dubious for handwriting to become obsolete. Harmer (2015) observes that teachers are to help learners whom first language orthography is quiet distinct from English. These learners need explicit instruction on the directions of writing. Moreover, illegible handwriting often reflects poorly on the student.

1.3.2. Spelling

Harmer (2015) clarifies that spelling mistakes are perceived badly as they denote a lack of knowledge thought they may not distort the intended message. Most spelling difficulties lie in the facts that sound and spelling is not always evident especially for EFL learners.

1.3.3. Punctuation

Harmer (2015) defines punctuation as a set of conventions and rules that are shared among writers of the same language. Hence, learners need to pay attention to these structures. For instance, Arab learners are seen as frequent users of commas, which is frowned upon by many.

1.3.4. Planning

Planning in the writing cycle is a responsive strategy to both task and knowledge. It is the act of adaptive exploring, linguistic manipulation and problem diagnosis, which allows writers to build rhetoric passages (kinneavy 1992).

1.3.5. Criticality

Criticality is the ultimate aim of education it involves the use of high thinking processes. It puts in question the material at hand, analyse it and develop sound arguments on which the writer's stance is built. Thus, it is an aspect that required much time to be fully developed.

1.4. Approaches to Teaching Writing

The teaching of writing has been through different shifts in the last few decades. Practitioners alongside with theorists have argued about the best approach to endowed students and foreign language learners with the skills needed to develop a sound writing perspective. Hence, three major approaches emerged.

1.4.1. Product Approach

Within the product approach, writing is a downplayed skill which main aim is to support the acquisition of new structures, lexis, syntax and form. It merely serves as a vessel carrying out language items. Badger and White (2000) describe this approach as one where

students imitate based on a model text and patterns presented by the teacher. It emphasizes the the product rather than the process of writing by concerning itself with the knowledge of language structures. Arndt (1987) claims that models are quite essential in the product approach not for mere imitation but for analysis and exploration. These texts provide learners with a full exposure to native like written passages. As a result, they help learners minimize errors.

A writing lesson, whose essence stem from a products approach, is initiated through the reading and analysis of a model text. Its purpose revolves around the identification and study of linguistic features (grammar, vocabulary or text organization). Then, students practice the target structure necessary for writing in a controlled setting. After that, they are given opportunity to organise the content and structures that are essential for the final product.

The product approach or the current-traditional rhetoric has got numerous shortcomings that led teachers and researchers to reassess the nature of writing and the ways writing is taught. It is believed that it belittles learners' competence, both linguistically and personally. Since only the final product is graded and read, lack of feedback while writing is a core issue. The outcome of this reconsideration is the writing-as-process movement, resulting in a paradigm shift.

1.4.2. Process Approach

This approach focuses on the different steps that the writer should go through to produce the final version. As noted in Hyland (2003), the process approach sheds the light on the nature of writing and the various skills involved. Research on the field has led to view writing as complex and recursive. In other words, writing does not follow a linear path of planning, drafting, editing and publishing rather it allows a flexibility of alternating between the four phases of the process. Similarly, Harmer (2015) perceives the process approach as an

orbit where there is a permanent need to rewrite, reedit and review more than once. Thus, student can see that any piece of writing does not have to be perfect from the start but can be polished and improved.
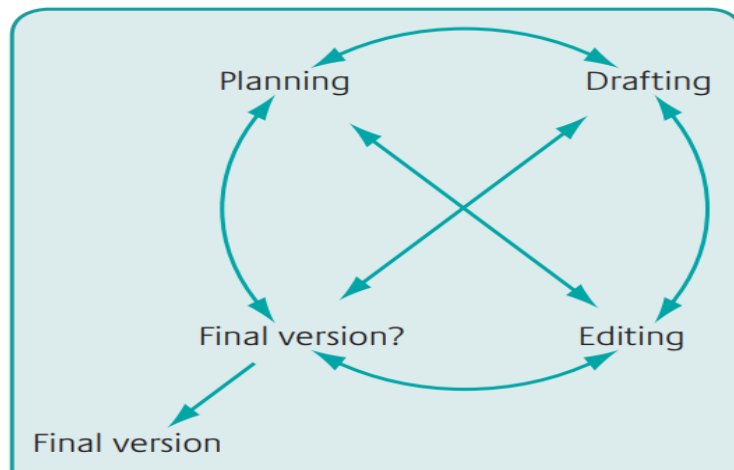
Figure 1: The Writing wheel, Harmer (2015, [P] 364)

The process approach prompts learners to ponder upon the procedure to sort out a good piece of writing. Students have to monitor the following aspects:

Jot down the numerous ideas.

- Determine the most suitable ideas for inclusion.

- Contemplate the details for each paragraph and the sequencing.

- Realise a rough version.

- Check language use (grammar, vocabulary, linkers)

- Inspect the spelling.

- Verify the layout and punctuation.

- Check for redundancy

- Write the final version.

The current approach is best implemented through writers 'workshops, guided writing and shared writing whose purpose is to engage students in interesting and motivating writing

for real purposes, rather than teaching writing through contrived exercises Moreover, it has proved to be meritable for it coaxes learners to review and rewrite the same text repeatedly until a certain level of satisfaction is drawn. it urges them to be responsible and achieve a sense of autonomy as such It simultaneously reduces the role of the teacher to a mere facilitator and motivator (Shohrina & Norisham).

Despite its advantages, the process approach has come under scrutiny due to its time consuming nature. Furthermore, it was developed to meet the needs of native speakers who mastered to a certain degree the basics of writing and were already verbally fluent, they were only required to address the issue of the writing process and as a result, it neglected the linguistic element of written language.

1.4.3. Genre Approach

A genre denotes a type of written text, which allows the grasp of the fine link between the text's social purpose and structure that affect the writer's linguistic choices. Understanding social purposes and settings allows discerning the meaning of the language and specific social acts (Fakhruddin & Hassan, 2018). Many theorists perceive the genre approach as an extension of the product approach which puts an emphasis on the linguistic features of writing. Nevertheless, the genre approach acknowledges that writing vary according to the context it is intended to. Therefore, this type of approach supports the explicit and systematic instruction of language to explain the linguistic characteristics and rhetorical patterns specific to the discourse in which students seek to participate (Hyland, 2004, 2007), thereby teaching the purposes, structures, and language features of genres. Within the genre approach the teachers' role is to scaffold learners' exploitation and analysis of the model at hand (Shahrina & Norhisham)

Like its predecessors, the genre approach has been the subject of criticism. Many believed it downplayed the different types of skills needed in producing content while it overlooked students' self-sufficiency. (Bryam, 2004) the genre approach was deemed to stress the aspects of convention, stylistics and genre feature by downgrading and restricting learners' creativity and critical thinking. A typical genre writing session would have a teacher who spends most of the time explaining and learners acting as passive receivers.

1.5. Assessment of writing

Much scholarship has focused on the importance of student assessment in teaching and learning in higher education. Student assessment is a critical aspect of the teaching and learning process. Whether teaching at the undergraduate or graduate level, it is important for instructors to strategically evaluate the effectiveness of their teaching by measuring the extent to which students in the classroom are learning the course material.

1.5.1. Assessment and Evaluation

Assessment and evaluation are often used interchangeably especially in the field of education and more precisely in EFL context yet they serve different purposes by the use of different instruments.

A- Definition of Evaluation

"Evaluation is the collection, analysis and interpretation of information about any aspect of a programme of education, as part of a recognised process of judging its effectiveness, its efficiency and any other outcomes it may have." Mary Thorpe 1998

B- Definition of Assessment

Assessment is seen a procedure through which data is compiled to draw conclusions about learning (Mindes, 2010). Hyland (2010) states that assessment is a systematic act allowing an effective delivery of information about learner's development, areas of challenges

and probable remedies. It is quite primordial to define the purpose of the assessment before setting the design of the test. Therefore, Bach & Palmer (1996) mention two main aims of language assessment which are to make inferences and to make decisions based on those inferences.

1.5.2. Purpose of Assessment

Hyland (2010) determined five different goals behind writing assessment

- Placement: to allocate learners to the appropriate class or group. They are diagnostic in nature.

- Diagnostic: as a part of a needs' analysis, the main aims is to determine points of strength and weaknesses among students in order to provide adequate remedy.

- Achievement: to draw the line of progress of learners as well as to inform them about their development and make necessary readjustment to the course.

- Performance: to assert with valid data how well can the learner perform in real life situation and how they mitigate the challenges they face.

- Proficiency: to specify the level of accomplishment of the target skill by providing a diploma or a certificate.

1.5.3. Standards of Assessment

The International Reading Association and National council of Teachers of English (2009) identified the following criteria as a must in a sound writing testing tool.

- Assessment must stem from learners interests

- The purpose of testing is to enhance both teaching and learning.

- The assessment ought to be equitable and just.

- It has to be valid and reliable.

1.5.4. Types of Assessment

Formative Assessment

Formative assessment or ongoing assessment is one that is done on the spot and gives learners a chance to reflect upon the feedback. Thus, it provides a margin for self – assessment. The Formative Assessment for Students and Teachers (2016, p2) defined this type of assessment as "a planned, ongoing process used by all students and teachers during learning and teaching to elicit and use evidence of student learning to improve student understanding of intended disciplinary learning outcomes and support students to become self-directed learners"

Summative Assessment

Summative assessment as opposed to its predecessor is any procedure aiming at grading learner's performance in order to rank, moreover it is often administered at the end of period of instruction as a summary of what has been dealt with. (Irons, 2007). This test makes an inventory of learning objectives that have been met however it fails to grant a method for future improvement. Hence, it holds a sense of finality in judgment.

Conclusion

Writing though perceived as a critical and burdensome task in the teaching learning process, remains at the core of current research and investigation. Its challenging nature has propelled theorists as well as practitioners to continuously update the current methods and teaching strategies so as to bridge the gaps among learners.

Part Two: Errors

Introduction

Analysing learners' productive errors is certainly a burdensome and challenging task for any researcher. As a matter of fact, error analysis is a complex and a long term process

that entails not only identifying the unacceptable forms found in writing but also classifying them into categories, investigating their sources and interpreting them. Furthermore, it necessitates suggesting some effective materials and remedial procedures to lessen their negative effect.

2.1. Definition of Error

It is worthy to mention that any efficient research about errors mainly starts with the researcher's trial to understand the concept of error and how it differs from the concept of mistakes.

2.1.1. Error vs. Mistake

Oxford Advanced Learner's dictionary defines the word "error" as: "a mistake, especially one that causes problems or affects the result of something." In its definition, Oxford considers the words error and mistake as synonymous, yet this is not true. Additionally, this is a more general definition that can be used to define different words such as slip, blunder, fault and mistake.

Merriam-Webster online dictionary defines "error" as:

1- An act involving unintentional deviation from truth or accuracy.

2- An act that through ignorance, deficiency, or accident departs from or fails to achieve what should be done.

These two definitions by Merriam-Webster have shown that error occurs undeliberately resulted from different factors, contrarily to a mistake, which is the result of a temporary breakdown or disfigurement when producing a language.

According to James (2013), an error is a case of language, which is with any intention untypical and not self-corrigible by its doer. However, a mistake is deliberately or

undelibrately deviant and can be self-corrected. He insisted on the unintentional and uncorrectable nature of the term "error".

Brown (2007) stated that mistakes are what researchers have referred to as performance errors, in other words the learner knows the structure but fails to utilize it, whereas, errors can be seen as the result of one's systematic competence or the learner's incorrect comprehension of the system.

After reviewing the various literature dealing with the Concept of "error", we can conclude that the already mentioned definitions complete one another to form a more complete and rich explanation of the term "error".

2.2. Significance of Errors

Richards (1974) emphasised the importance of error analysis and detection for teachers. First, it helps teachers in listing the areas of complexity, which learners face in the process of language learning and production. Second, it directs their attention to these areas of complexity. Third, it encourages them to devote particular care to these areas by presenting and applying some effective teaching methods.

2.3. Error Analysis

James (2013) clarified that error analysis is a brunch of applied linguistics since it deals with language description and comparison. It mainly evolved to help teachers describe the learners' version of target language or the so-called "interlanguage". Moreover, it intends to study the erroneous utterances produced by learners. In the 1950s, contrastive analysts were seeking to describe the similar features of mother tongue and target language, and then comparing them in order to highlight any dissimilarities that may cause interference or error. Contrastive Analysis was later replaced by Error Analysis. The latter came to prove that errors

are not necessarily a result of mother tongue interference; however, they can be described regarding only the TL.

2.3.1. Stages of Error Analysis

Analysing learners' errors is a tedious task since it entails going through a number of interrelated steps. These steps were summarised by James (2013) as follow:

2.3.1.1. Error Detection

James (2013) referred to error detection as the act of spotting and being aware of error presence within the learners' language. He maintained that detecting errors in written texts is often a complicated task.

2.3.1.2. Locating Errors

In this step, the analyst tries to spot a non-norm or unacceptable characteristic in the text being analysed. James (2013) clarified that locating errors should be done by referring to the TL, i.e. identifying which specific rule in the TL has been violated.

2.3.1.3. Describing Errors

This procedure aims at identifying which errors are the same and the ones that are different. It mainly attempts at putting all the similar errors under one category based on a certain or various linguistic features such as morphology, phonology, syntax or semantics.

2.3.1.4. Error Classifications

The fourth major step in error analysis is error classification or error categorisation. This step occurs as a result of error description. Different error analysts have introduced a number of classificatory systems. Each one of them has based his categorisation on a set of characteristics. Brown (2007) summarised the main classifications in EA as follow:

A- Corder's Classification of Errors

Corder (1971) was the first error analyst to introduce a classificatory modal for errors. James (2013) stated that Corder's forms of errors are indicated by reference to the real world, which is the larger context of discourse. Thus, Corder (1971) presented two main categories to EA: overt and covert errors. Covert errors are grammatically well formed but cannot be interpreted within the context of communication. However, overt errors are grammatically incorrect.

B- Lee's Classification of Errors

Lee (1990) has classified errors into four different levels: grammatical errors, discourse errors, phonological induced errors and lexical errors.

Grammatical errors: indicate the writer's or speaker's failure to produce language in accordance with the grammatical rules.

Discourse errors: refers to pragma-linguistic deviations found at a discourse level.

Phonological errors: apparent in the wrong articulation of a sound or a word. It mainly appears in pronunciation and intonation.

Lexical errors: refers to the wrong selection of words, which may cause a distortion of meaning in communication.

C- Lennon's Classification of Errors

Lennon (1991) introduced a more general division for errors based on various linguistic features, such as morphology, phonology, syntax and semantics. Lennon's classification mainly involved four categories, which are:

-**Addition:** the appearance of an extraneous item at the sentence level.

-Omission: the deletion of an item that is supposed to be present in the sentence.

-Substitution: the replacement of one item by another item.

-Ordering: a problem in arranging the language units in their original right order.

Lennon also introduced another two categories of errors, which are domain and extent errors.

All these classifications served as a helping tool for researchers to determine the frequency of each type of error and its predominance level.

It is very clear that several researches were conducted to help us in spotting the mostly recurrent types of errors; however, in the present study, Lennon's classification was used as a helping tool in developing an error checklist. The latter will be relied on in determining learners' frequent errors in writing. Lennon's categorisation was more suitable since it mostly covers all the types of errors.

2.3.1.5. Sources of Errors

After describing and classifying errors into categories, the researcher should investigate the fundamental origins of the produced errors. In other words, he should explore the aspects from which the predetermined errors were ultimately derived. James (2013) summarised sources of errors in the following points:

1- Mother-Tongue Influence: Interlingual Errors

Interlingual errors are transfer errors that happen as a result of the negative influence of the mother tongue.

2- Target Language Causes: Intralingual Errors

These types of errors occur due to the learner's ignorance of the target language rules. They are principally the result of overgeneralisation, disregard of rule restriction, incomplete employment of rules and faulty hypothesis of notions. They may also be developed as a result of the strategies used by learners in acquiring a language

3- Communication Strategy-based Errors

These errors may be developed as a result of the strategies used by learners in acquiring a language. James (2013) divided them into two main strategies: holistic and analytic.

4- Induced Errors

Stenson (1983) defined induced errors as "learner errors that result more often from the classroom situation than from either the students' incomplete competence in English grammar or first language interference." (Stenson, 1983: 256)

2.4. Effective Error Correction Techniques

As argued by James (2013), the major intention behind any error analysis is identifying the guiding principles of any effective error correction. However, it is worthy to mention that educators are mostly confused when seeking to define error correction, show its significance and highlight the most effective procedures for error correction.

2.4.1. Definition of Error Correction

James (2013) asserted that error correction is a complex process that embodies giving feedback, correcting error instances as well as remediating learners' weaknesses in writing.

Giving Supportive feedback: providing a positive response and reaction to what students have done or written. Harmer (2015) affirms that in order to give feedback to learners' written works, teachers must first decide whether they are reacting upon the content or the form. He also added that giving feedback may be formative (responding during the writing process), or summative (giving response on a finished product). Ferris (2011) argued that the teacher's feedback benefit learners' writings when it occurs at the process rather than the final stage of the writing activity.

Correcting learners' productive errors: Harmer (2015) clarifies that teachers should aim to treat both errors in form and content. This treatment depends on the primary intention of the

learner. In other words, does the learner's writing intend to spot his capacity to use language accurately or only to communicate ideas? Harmer also stated the following ways to correct learners' written productions:

1- **Using Correction Symbols:** Harmer (2015) showed that one of the best ways of correcting learners' productions is by utilizing a specific correction code. The latter helps the teacher to show that learners are committing errors in their writing. Harmer exemplified with the following common correction code:

Table 1: Correction Symbols (Harmer,2015, P162)

Symbol	Meaning	Example error
S	A spelling error	The <u>asnwer </u>is obvious
WO	A mistake in word order	I like <u>very much it.</u>
G	A grammar mistake	I am going to buy some furniture<u>s</u>.
T	Wrong verb tense	I <u>have seen</u> him yesterday.
C	Concord mistake (e.g. the subject and verb agreement)	People <u>is</u> angry.
λ	Something has been left out	He told λ that he was sorry.
WW	Wrong word	I am interested <u>on</u> jazz music.
{ }	Something is not necessary	He was not {too} strong enough.
?M	The meaning is unclear	That is a very <u>excited photograph.</u>
P	A punctuation mistake	Do you like <u>l</u>ondon<u>.</u>

F/I	Too formal or informal	<u>Hi</u> Mr Franklin, Thank you for your letter…

2- **Using error charts:** Ferris (2011) suggested error charts or logs as another way to help students observe their language accuracy errors.

3- **Colour- coding error patterns:** Ferris (2011) stated that Dan Brown has shared an interesting approach to error correction in the 2010 TESOL convention. Dan Brown suggested that teachers could use highlighters instead of correction codes and verbal rule reminders. He suggested that teachers may use blue for verb errors, yellow for articles, green for word choice…etc.

Remediating learners' errors: James (2013) explained that it is crucial for teachers to provide their learners with information not only about the existence of errors in their writings, but also about the errors' nature, their negative effects on the written product and their mismatches to the TL. This is what he referred to as error remediation.

2.5. Preparing Teachers for error treatment

In his book "Treatment of error in second language student writing", Ferris (2011) suggested a set of principles that can make teachers ready and able to treat their learners' errors. The first one is to let teachers study the problematic aspects of grammar for non-native speakers of English such as punctuation, pronoun reference, lexical errors, verb tense, noun endings and the use of articles. The second principle lies in letting teachers practise error recognition and identification. This can take place in classrooms or during workshops with a more experienced instructor. Furthermore, teachers should build confidentiality with language forms needed for different task types.

Conclusion

In language teaching and acquisition, committing errors is considered as a clear evidence of learning and knowledge development. In fact, educators might be aware that

errors are human and inevitable phenomena because of several reasons. Two major schools of thought were known in the field of Error Analysis. Contrastive Analysis (CA), which was influenced by behaviourism, maintained that errors are resulted from first language interference. Nevertheless, CA was not able to detect all the reasons of errors. Thus, error Analysis (EA), which was a reaction to CA, argued that errors mainly occur because of learners' erroneous inferences of the target language rules. As a matter of fact, teachers should not blame learners for making errors, yet they must help themselves and their students to understand and overcome them through conducting empirical researches on errors. Certainly, analysing learners' errors is a challenging task since it requires teachers to undergo several consecutive procedures. Firstly, they must detect, locate and describe errors. Then, they should categorise them into different types. Finally, they must count their frequency; determine their sources and suggest some techniques for error correction to be implemented in classrooms.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY AND DATA ANLYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Introduction

This chapter is devoted entirely for the empirical part of our investigation. It provides an insight into the most recurring writing errors committed by Algerian third year middle school learners and the factors that stand behind such faulty productions. As every story has two sides, this chapter examines teacher's practices as well. It probes their beliefs and perceptions of learners' writing. The data at hand is amassed through a summative test, observation and a questionnaire. The current section unfolds by first detailing the methodology and tools then describing the target population and the sample. Finally, it brings forth the data its analysis discussion, recommendation and limitations.

Section one: Methodology and Data Collection

II.1. Research Methodology

A quantitative research method was employed in this study to acquire numerical data and statistics about learners' most frequent errors. To obtain this type of data, the investigators used a case study and observation as the main research tools. Learners 'writings were compiled via a summative test to ensure the credibility criteria. The accumulated pieces of writing were then analysed based on an error checklist (see appendix 1) which was adopted from a similar investigation. As a follow up, an online questionnaire (see appendix 3) made up of three main sections gauged teachers views on writing. The first included five questions related the teachers' background. The second section dealt with teachers' perception of writing and consisted of seven questions. The last part tackled teachers' reaction towards

learners' errors in writing. The questionnaire was sent to (number) middle school teachers. It included both open ended and close-ended questions.

II.1.1. Sample

This research targeted middle school learners from the wilaya of Bordj Bou Arrerri. More precisely the study was conducted on third year learners from two different schools Ben Saadoune Ali and Hammidouche Mokhtar. The following level was chosen due to the fact that they have acquired enough training in the writing skill. Besides, they are well acquainted with the writing mechanics. Moreover, third middle school syllabus provided more opportunity to observe and analyse learners' production. From the previously mentioned population, the researchers draw a sample using convenience sampling since the researchers have access to the population and random sampling techniques for reliability purposes.

II.2. Results Analysis

II.2.1. Analysis of Pupils' Written productions

In order to analyse the most common errors in learners' written productions, the researchers asked third year pupils from both Hamidouche Mokhtar and Saadoune Ali middle schools in Bordj Bou Arreridj to produce a short account on famous scientists which highlights the main events of their existence. Pupils at hamidouche Mokhtar middle school were provided a short ID card of Marie Sklodowska Curie to be used as cues while writing. It included information about Marie's full name, date and place of birth, nationality, job, studies, discoveries, awards and date and place of death. By the same token pupils from Ben Saddoune Ali were asked to write a narrative paragraph about Sir Issac Newton. Learners were also aided by an id card to cover the most pertinent details related to this scientist.

II.2.1.1. Analysis Reliability and Validity

Before designing the summative test, several aspects were taken into account including the level of learners, their interests, exit profiles, their different abilities and the knowledge acquired. The tests used were presented to the teachers in charge of the learners being observed to ensure their reliability.

To ensure the test used in this study will give the same results in case it is repeated under similar conditions, the instrument was applied to third year middle school learners at two different schools: Ben Saadoune Ali in Rabta and Hamidhouche Mokhtar in Bordj Bou Arreridj.

II.2.1.2. Results of Productions' Analysis

As explained before, errors can be devided into interlingual and intralingual. As a result, we have used a writing errors checklist to help us in analysing the productions. The analysis revealed the following results:

1-   Frequency of Interlingual Errors

Table 2: Frequency of Grammatical Errors

Type of Error		Frequency	Example

Wrong tense		18	Marie <u>studies</u> at the university of Paris.
			        Studied
			He <u>was writing</u> a lot of books.
			        Wrote

Pronouns	Omission	27	<u>{}</u> studied at the university of Paris in France. **She**
	Addition	02	Marie studied at the university of Paris and <u>who</u> discovered radium and radioactivity.
	Wrong	05	Marie Curie is a famous scientist. <u>He</u> was born on November7, 1876. **She**

	choice		It is most important discoveries: law of gravity. **Its**
Prepositions	Omission	92	She was awarded a Noble prize in physics {}1903. **In** He died{} 31/03/1727 **On**
	Addition	02	Awards are in Noble prize in physics.
	Wrong choice	05	Marie Curie is a Polish physicist who was born in November 7th, 1867 in Warsow. **On** Isaac newton was born in 31/03/1727 On
Articles	Omission	20	She was awarded a Noble prize in physics and {}Noble in chemistry. **A** He{} was physist ad mathematician **A**
	Addition	02	Marie Curie died on July 4th,1934 in France after //a many discoveries for us.
Nouns		07	She lives in the Polish. **Poland**
Adjectives (position)		05	Polish is her nationality. Her nationality is **Polish**.
Subject verb agreement		07	Marie Curie were a super women. **was**

Table 3: Frequency of Lexical Errors

Type of Error	Frequency	Example
Translation	06	She studied at the university of Paris de France. **in**

| Wrong word | 10 | He <u>occupation</u>: mathematician
      Was |
| Redundancy | 06 | Marie Skolodowska was born on November 7th,1867**[**. Marie Sklodowska Curie was born**]** in Warsow, Poland.
Isaac newton **[he]** is a great scientist. |

Table 4: Frequency of Errors in Writing Mechanics

Type of Error	Frequency	Example

Punctuation	39	Marie died on July 4{ }1934 in France{ }
		              , .
		he was born in 31/03/1727 <u>.</u>
		             .

Capitalisation	55	Marie <u>sklodowska</u> <u>curie</u> **S**klodowska **C**urie <u>he</u> was born on31/03/1727. **He**
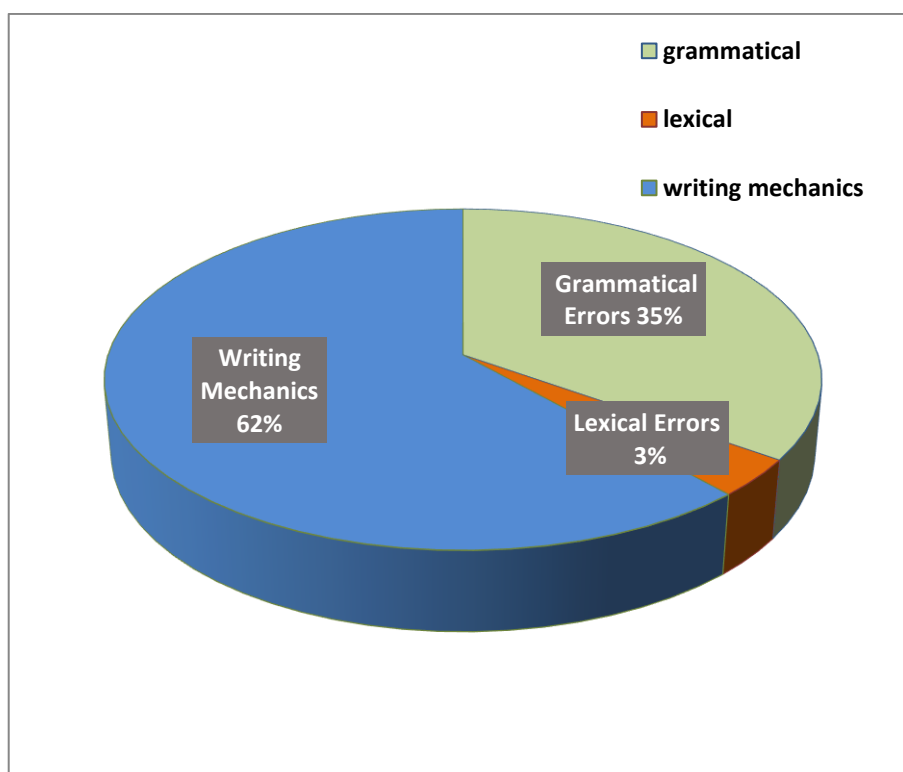
Figure 2: Middle School Learners' Interlingual Errors

The analysed papers showed that most learners had erroneous productions in writing mechanics and grammatical aspects. Writing mechanics (punctuation and capitalisation) marked the highest percentage (62%) In second position come grammatical errors. These errors ranged from wrong tense, prepositions, pronouns, articles to wrong word with a total percentage of 35%. The most noticeable errors were related to prepositions, pronouns and articles. Lexical errors seem to be the least committed type as they hit a record of 3%. This type included wrong words, translation and redundancy.

2-   Frequency of Intralingual Errors

Table 5: Frequency of Grammatical Errors

Type of Error	Frequency	Example
Wrong verb form	29	Her discoveries <u>is</u> the radium and radioactivity. **are** he <u>was died</u> on 31/03/1727 died
Pronouns inappropriate use	04	Marie Sklodowska Curie <u>who</u> was born on November 7th,1867 in Warsow. Isaac newton on31/03/1727 in England u.k,<u>who</u> is mathematician he
Adjective	04	Marie Curie is one of the <u>importance</u> scholars in physics. **most important**
Sentence fragment	70	Marie Curie { }on November 7th, 1976. **was born** He <u>discovery</u> law of gravity. **Discovered**
Run on sentences	17	Marie studied at the university of Paris she discovered radium and radioactivity which led to new therapeutic and diagnostic methods in medicine

Conjunctions	43	She was awarded a Noble prize in physics. Noble prize in chemistry. **and**

Table 6: Frequency of Lexical and Writing Mechanics Errors

Type of Error	Frequency	Example
Word choice	59	Marie Sklodowska was a <u>pupil of</u> the university of Paris. **student at** Issac was <u>England</u> scientist and physist **English**
Spelling	142	<u>Profisere</u> Marie Sklodowska Curie is a physist. **Professor** The inteligent physist **intelligent** Fainaly issac newton is rilly good **Finally** **really**
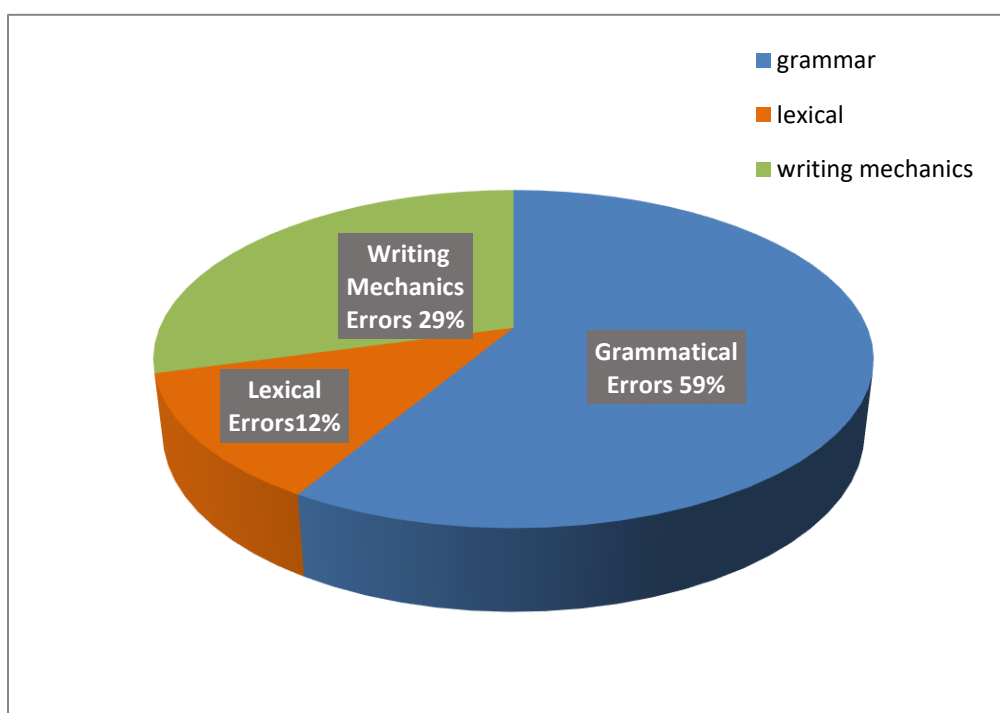
Figure 3: Middle school Learners' Intralingual Errors

As indicated in the chart and the tables above, grammatical errors represent more than half the totality of intralingual errors found in learners papers. It hit the highest score of 59%. The latter comprises sentence fragments, conjunctions and verb form as the most frequent missed attempts. With 29%, writing mechanics such as spelling came second. In last position lexical errors of word choice had a share of 12 %.

1087 errors were detected in 124 analysed productions, among which 602 were interlingual representing (55.38%) and 485 were intralingual which represent (44.62%) of the total number of errors. Those results can be summarised in the following tables:

Table 7: Percentage of Interlingual Errors

Type of Interlingual Error		Number	Percentage
1. Grammatical Errors	Wrong tense	49	8.14%
	pronouns	74	12.29%
	prepositions	130	21.59%
	articles	55	9.13%
	nouns	18	2.99%
	adjectives	07	1.16%
	Subject verb agreement	07	1.16%
Total		**340**	**31.28%**
2. Lexic	translation	06	1%
	Wrong word	10	1.66%
	redundancy	19	3.16%
Total		**35**	**3.22%**
3. Writing	punctuation	91	15.12%
	capitalisation	136	22.60%
	Total	**227**	**20.88%**
Total Number		**602**	**55.38%**

Table 8: Percentage of Intralingual Errors

Type of Intralingual Error		Number	Percentage
1. Grammatical	Wrong Verb Form	39	8.04%
	Pronouns Inappropriate Use	06	1.24%
	Adjective	05	1.03%
	Sentence Fragment	156	32.16%
	Run on Sentences	35	7.22%
	Conjunctions	43	8.87%
Total		**284**	**26.13%**
2. Lexical	Word choice	59	12.16%
Total		**59**	**5.43%**
3. Writing	Spelling	142	29.28%
	Total	**142**	**13.06%**
Total Number		**485**	**44.62%**

Figure 4: Middle School Learners' Interlingual and Intralingual Errors

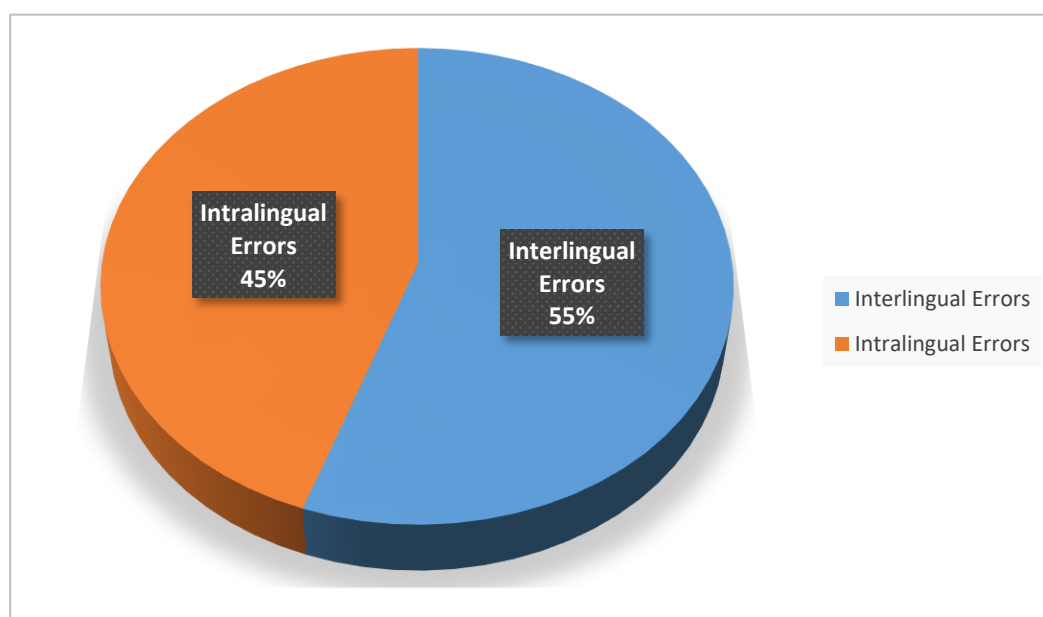As perceived in the tables above and figure1, the main source of errors in the analysed productions are caused by L1interference (55%) which in our case is Arabic. Thus it indicates that learners seem to transfer their knowledge of the rules of their mother tongue and apply it to English. As opposed to that, intralingual errors represent a totality of 45%. It denotes that middle school learners struggle to put into practice the knowledge imparted to them.

II.2.2. Analysis of Teachers' Questionnaire

In order to fully understand the problem at hand, it is quiet essential to probe into teachers' assumptions, practices and beliefs about writing. Thus the following questionnaire was conducted. The latter has revealed some core issues within teaching

II.2.2.1. Description of the questionnaire

The online questionnaire was sent to 40 middle school teachers; however, 27 respondents took part with a success rate of 67, 5%. The administered questionnaire includes 17 questions that require: a yes/no response, multiple choice questions, and open-ended questions for free responses. These questions are divided into three main sections teacher 'background, their own perception of the writing skill and their thoughts on learner's errors in writing.

Section one aims at acquiring general information on the respondent teachers such as their degree (Q1), their teaching experience (Q2) and their ulterior experience in teaching writing (Q3,Q4,Q5).

Section two which involved seven questions intended to probe teachers' conception of writing. The first question was asked to determine the average time allocated for teaching writing within the middle school cycle (Q1). The following question investigates teachers' perception of their learners' writing in terms of quality (Q2). The next question was a multiple

choice one in which the respondents are asked to identify the major factors behind learner's poor writing (Q3). (Q4,Q5) help to discern the current teaching writing practices and pin down the most used teaching approaches for this particular language skill. (Q6) examines teachers' thoughts on the complexity of writing; it concludes with an open ended question (Q7) which further investigates the intricacies of the writing skill.

In section three, an attempt is made to establish the correlation between learners 'poor writing and errors it starts with trying to determine the most encountered errors; thus, (Q1) takes the form of an open ended question to allow teachers to name frequent erroneous aspects. The following questions (Q2, Q3) suggest feedback as a powerful tool to minimise errors. The last question in this section is meant to provide teachers with an opportunity to share their standardised methods and strategies that might have improved their learners' writing and decreased their errors.

II.2.2.2. Reliability and Validity of the questionnaire

The reliability of the questionnaire was analysed using the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient in SPSS 27. Results of the reliability analysis revealed that the 23 items comprised in the questionnaire had an alpha value equal to 0.695. According to (Hair et al, 2003), this Cronbach's Alpha value is acceptable as shown in table 10. The obtained results can be summarised in the following tables:

Table 9: SPSS 27 Questionnaire's Internal Reliability Statistics

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N° of Items
0,695	23

Table 10: Crobach's Alpha Reliability Level (Hair et al., 2003)

Alpha Coefficient Score	Internal Consistency
0.9 >	Excellent

0.8 to < 0.9	Very Good
0.7 to < 0.8	Good
0.6 to < 0.7	Moderate
< 0.6	Poor

To measure whether the questionnaire is valid or no, the researchers used Pearson Product Moment Correlations in SPSS 27. The results of the test showed that all the items of the questionnaire are valid and correlated. That is to say, the respondents perceived most of the questions positively. The values attached with the sign * means that the correlation is significant at the 0.05 level whereas the ones followed with ** are significant at the 0.01 level.

Table 11: SPSS 27 Validity Test Statistics

Descriptive Statistics					
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Pearson Correlation	Significance	N° of participants
Academic qualification	2,52	0,802	0,094	0,642	27
Teaching experience	1,52	0,580	0,145	0,471	27
Experience in teaching writing	1,19	0,396	0,523**	0,005	27
Type of training	1,81	1,145	0,586**	0,001	27
Effectiveness of training	1,22	0,424	0,325	0,098	27
Number of sessions devoted for writing	1,93	0,829	0,273	0,168	27
Learners' writing level	2,26	0,594	0,322	0,102	27
Factors behind leraners' errors	3,74	0,526	0,254	0,201	27
The implemented writing approach	1,07	0,267	0.271	0.172	27
Type of writing approach	1,44	0,892	0.535**	0.04	27
Complexity of writing	1,30	0,465	0.187	0.351	27
Areas of complexity	2,56	1,251	0.700**	<0.01	27
Frequent errors (grammatical)	1,44	0,506	-0.272	0.170	27
Frequent errors (lexical)	1,56	0,506	0.515**	0.006	27

Frequent errors (writing mechanics)	1,41	0,501	0.021	0.915	27
Feedback provision	1,11	0,320	0.448*	0.019	27
Methods of feedback provision	1,48	0,849	0.087	0.665	27
Effectiveness of correction	1,11	0,320	0.448*	0.019	27
Reasons behind the successs of correction	1,44	0,801	0.431*	0.025	27
Suggested strategies (practice)	1,44	0,506	0.405*	0.036	27
Suggested strategies (reading)	1,33	0,480	0.201	0.315	27
Suggested strategies (Increasing N° of sessions)	1,89	0,320	-0.475*	0.012	27

II.2.2.3. Results of the Questionnaire's Analysis

1- Background information

Table 12: Teachers' Academic Qualification

	Number of respondents	Percentage
Licence	5	18,5%
Master	3	11,1%
ENS	19	70,4%
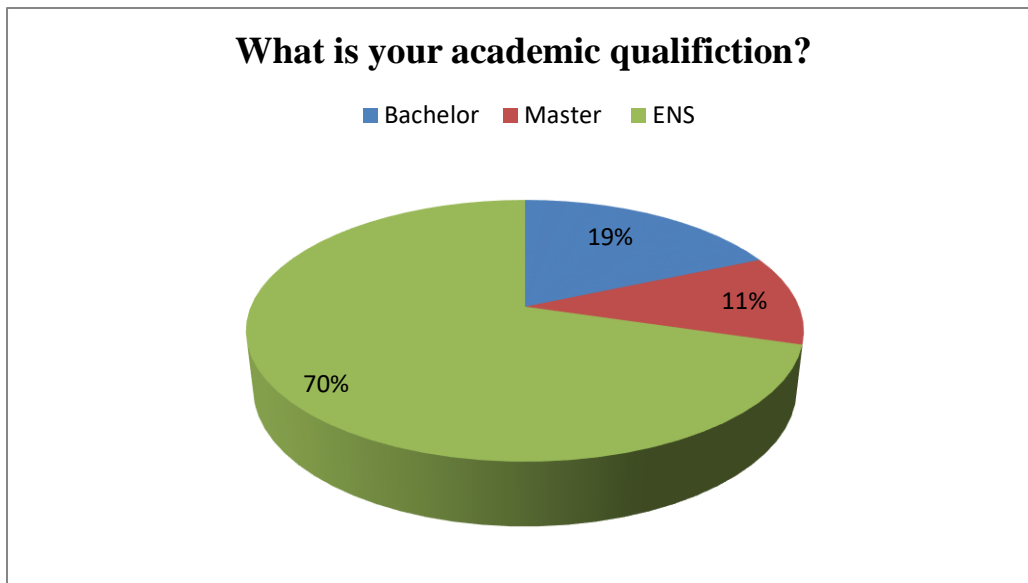
Figure 5: Teachers' Academic Qualification

To sort out the participants' educational level, they were asked to determine their academic qualification. Figure 5 above reveals that the majority of respondents hold an ENS degree (70%) whereas (19%) have a bachelor and (11%) have a master. It is worthy to note that all respondents have the same affiliation that is English.

Table 13: Teachers' Teaching Experience

	Number of respondents	Percentage
1 to 5 years	14	51,9%
5 to 10 years	12	44,4%
More than 10 years	1	3,7%
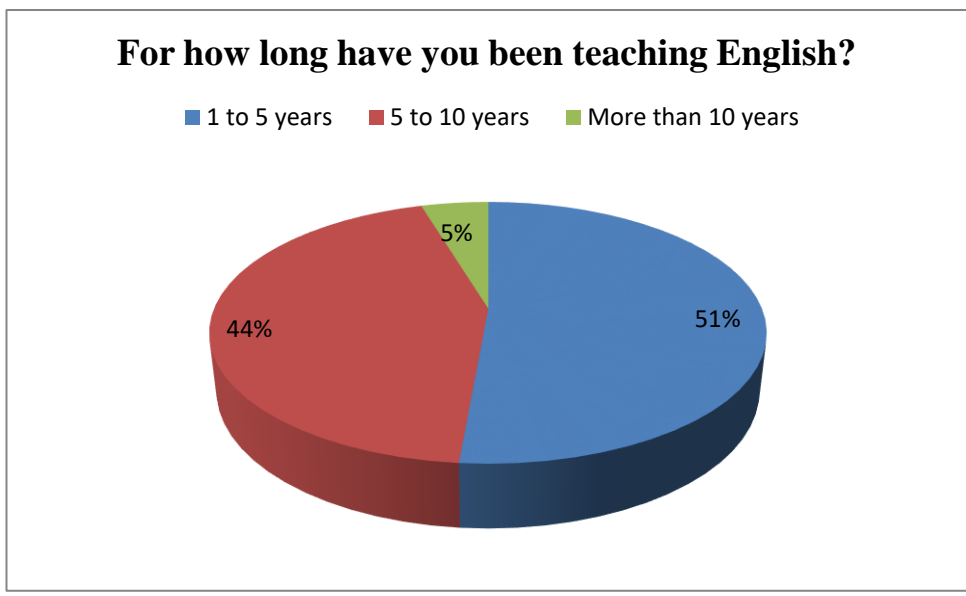
Figure 6: Teachers' Experience in Teaching English

Figure 6 reflects the span of teaching English as a foreign language for the teachers under study. (51%) of them report having taught English from 1to 5 years ; however the vast majority (44%) have been teaching from 5 to 10 years With the exception of (5%) who spent a period of instruction of more than 10years.

Table 14: Teachers' Experience in Teaching Writing

	Number of respondents	Percentage
yes	22	81,5%
No	5	18,5%
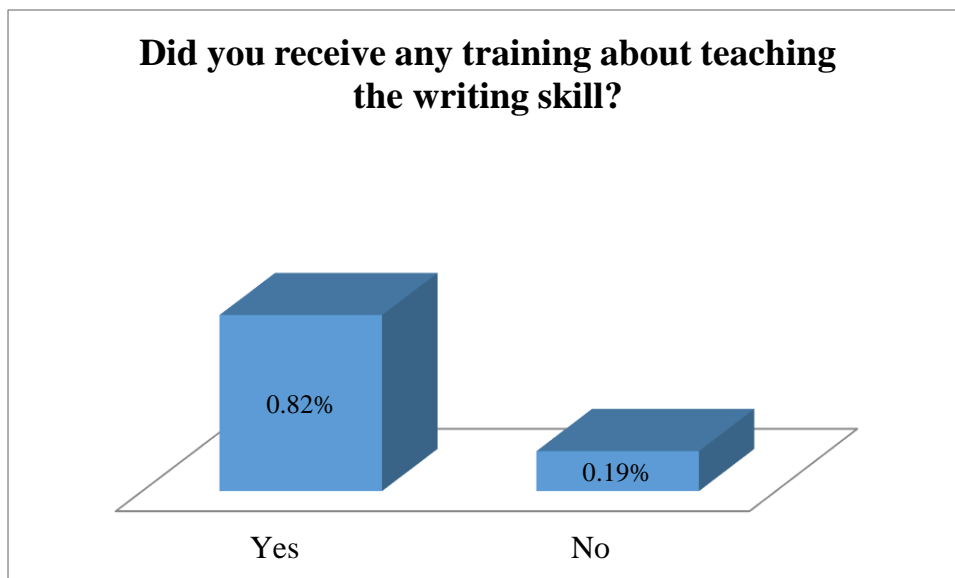
Figure 7: Teachers' Experience in Teaching Writing

When asked about whether they have been granted any sort of training or instruction

in teaching writing (81%) answered with yes and only (19%) replied with no.

Table 15: Type of Teachers' Training in Teaching Writing

	Number of respondents	Percentage
Seminars	14	52,3%
Personal efforts	12	43,8%
ENS instruction	1	3,7%
Conference	0	00%
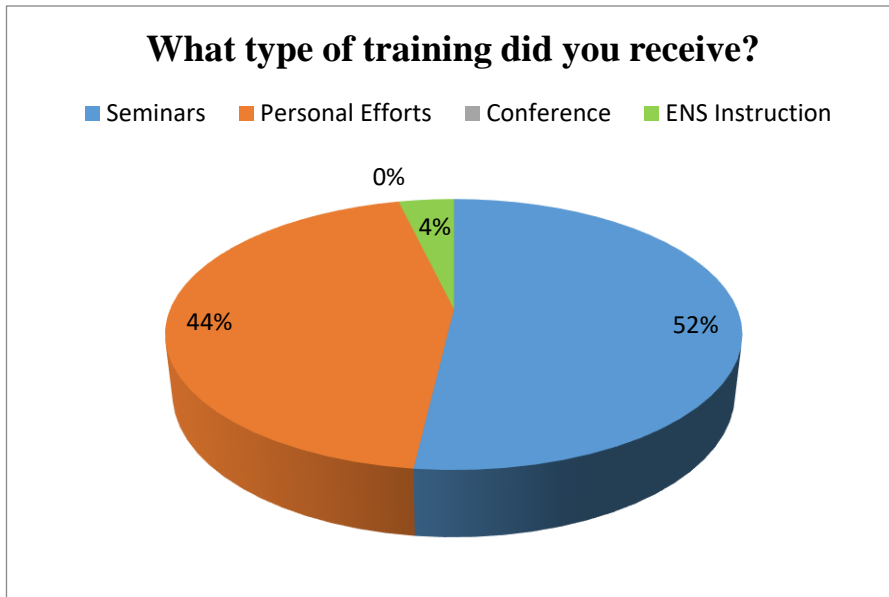
Figure 8: Teachers' Training in Teaching Writing

As figure 8 shows, the respondent in this question split between (52%) who attended seminars targeting the teaching of writing and (44%) others who had to make some research, read books and watch videos for they relied on personal efforts. The remaining (4%) said that they dealt with this as a module in ENS.

Table 16: Effectiveness of the Granted Training

	Number of respondents	Percentage
yes	23	85.2%
No	4	14.8%

Did the training endow you with tools to be able to impart this skill to your learners?
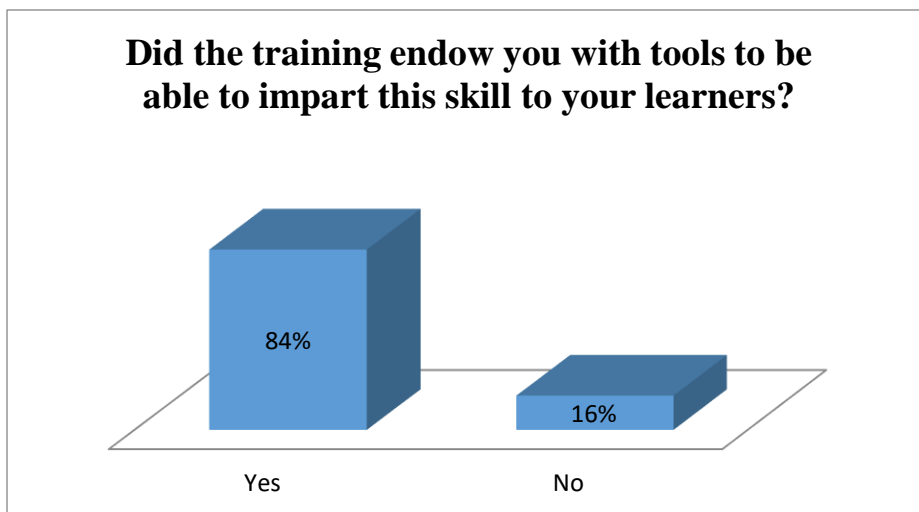
Figure 9: Effectiveness of the Granted Training

In figure 9 participants are asked about the effectiveness of the undertaken training to endow them with the ability to fully master the teaching of writing. As a response (85%) said Yes while (15%) replied with no.

2- Teachers' perceptions about the Writing Skill

Table 17: Time Devoted for Teaching Writing in a Term

	Number of respondents	Percentage
2 sessions	10	37,0%
3 sessions	9	33,3%
4 sessions or more	8	29,6%
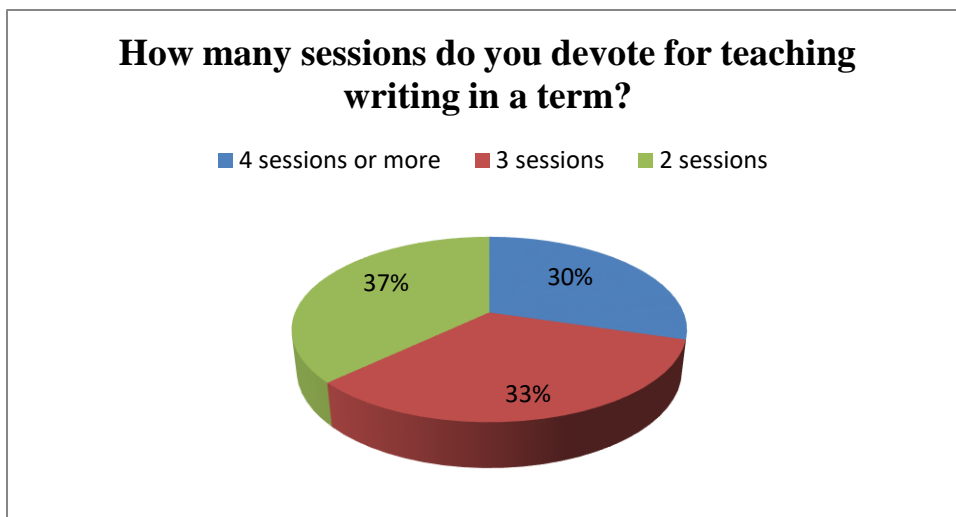
Figure 10: Time Devoted for Teaching Writing in a Term

Figure 10 represents Time devoted for teaching writing in a term. The obtained data indicates that (37%) dedicate only 2 sessions for writing instruction per term, (33%) allow for 3 sessions and (30%) allocate four or more sessions in a semester.

Table 18: Teachers' Perception on Learners' Writing

	Number of respondents	Percentage
Good	2	7,4%
Average	16	59,3%
Below average	9	33,3%
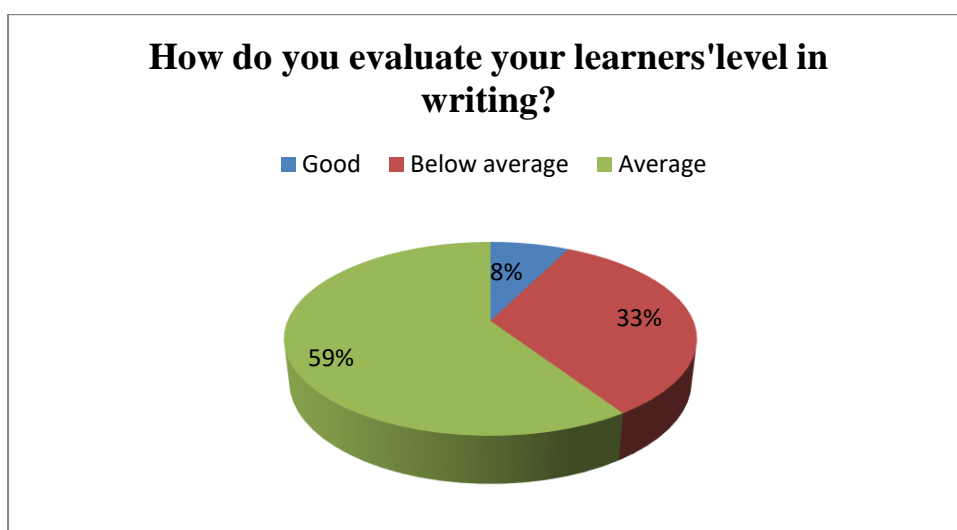
Figure 11: Teachers' Perception on Learners' Writing

In this part, participants are questioned about their perception on their learners' writing quality. Therefore, figure 11 above exhibits that more than half of the respondents (59%) believe that pupils' writing is average and needs further improvement. (33%) deem learners level as below average and weak and only (8%) in totality view it as good and satisfactory.

Table 19: Factors Behind Learners' Errors

	Number of respondents	%
Lack of practice	1	3,7%
Poor vocabulary	5	18,5%
All of them	21	77,8%
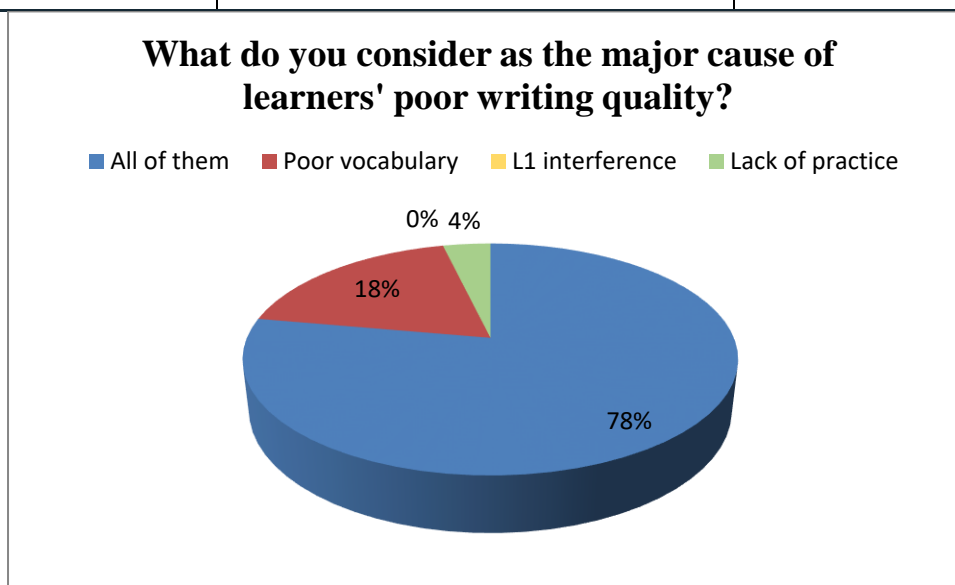
Figure 12: Factors Behind Learners' Errors

Figure 12 represents teachers' assumptions about the main factors that stand behind learners' poor performance in writing. As can be seen above, the majority of teachers (78%) asserted that learners' deficiency was due to lack of practice, poor vocabulary and L1interferenc. On the other hand, (18%) stated that the main challenge for learners was poor vocabulary and an explicit lack of lexical repertoire. According to them, learners are often unable to cater to the different situations they encounter. (4%) expressed that the main concern was with the time allocated hence the lack of practice. None of the participants (0%) suggested L1 as a main cause to learners poor writing.

Table 20: Rate of Writing Approach Implementation

	Number of respondents	Percentage
Yes	25	92,6%
No	2	7,4%
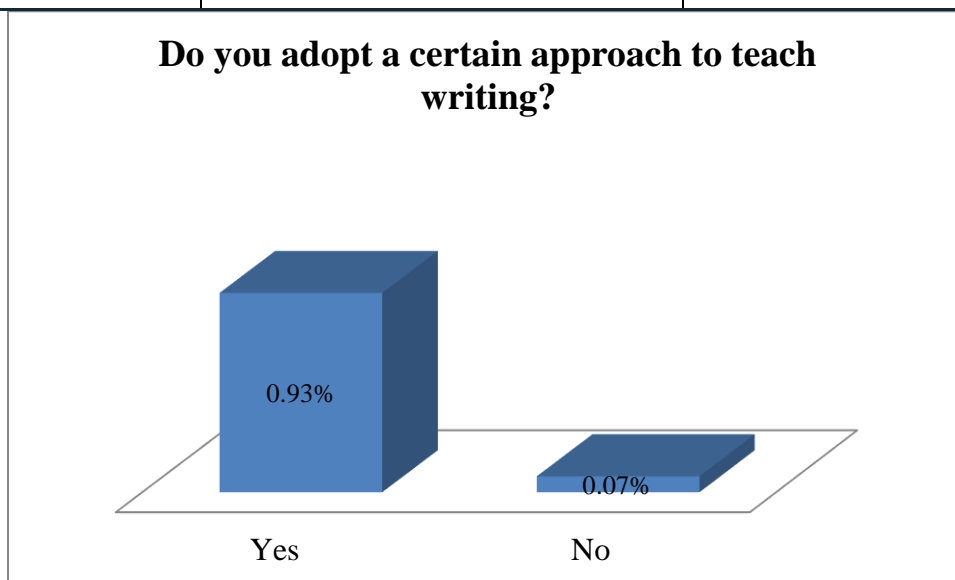
Figure 13: Rate of Writing Approach Implementation

The aim of this question is to investigate teaching practices of writing and whether teachers follow a certain approach when teaching writing or they rely on responsive teaching. Consequently, the amassed data discloses that 93% individuals responded with yes i.e. they adopt a specific method whereas 7% said that they have no particular approach.

Table 21: Type of the Implemented Writing Approach

Writing Approach	Number of respondents	Percentage
Process approach	21	77,8%
Product approach	1	3,7%
Genre approach	4	14,8%
None	1	3,7%
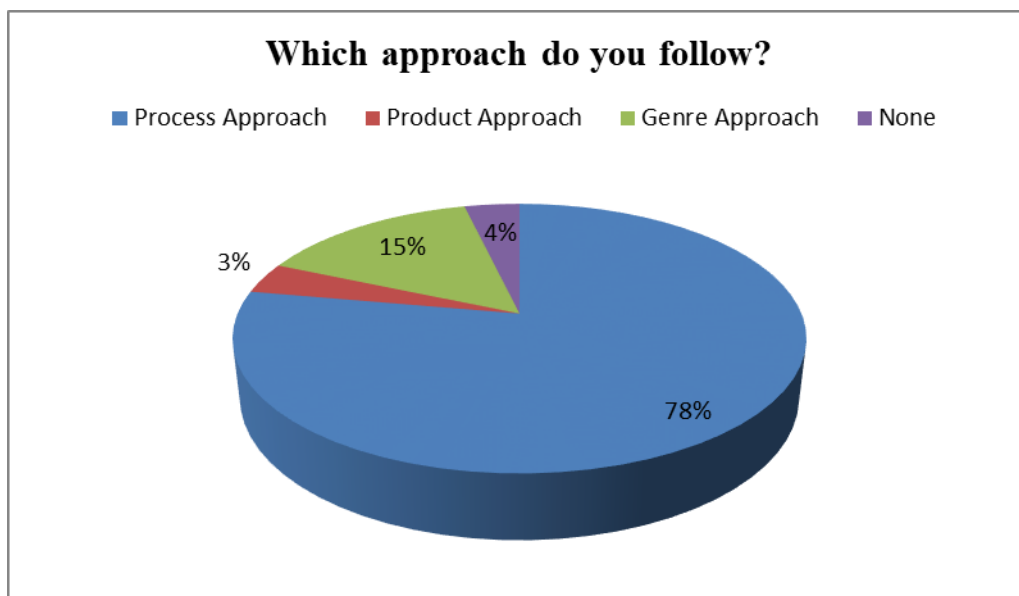
Figure 14: Type of Writing Approach Implemented

This question is highly linked to the previous one, since it prompts respondents who answered in favour of the use of a writing approach to further investigate their practices. As such, (85%) responded stated that they implement the process approach in other words their sessions emphasise on the different steps learners take in order to produce the final piece of writing. (11%) declared their use of a genre approach in which they train the learners to write for different purposes in different settings. (4%) attributed the product approach as their go to method. The latter relies heavily on model texts and final outcome. The remaining (3%) did not opt for any of the previously mentioned options.

Table 22: Teachers' Perceptions on the Complexity of Writing

Writing Complexity	Number of respondents	Percentage
Yes	19	70,4%
No	8	29,6%

Do you consider writing as a complex language skill?

0.70%

0.30%

Yes   No
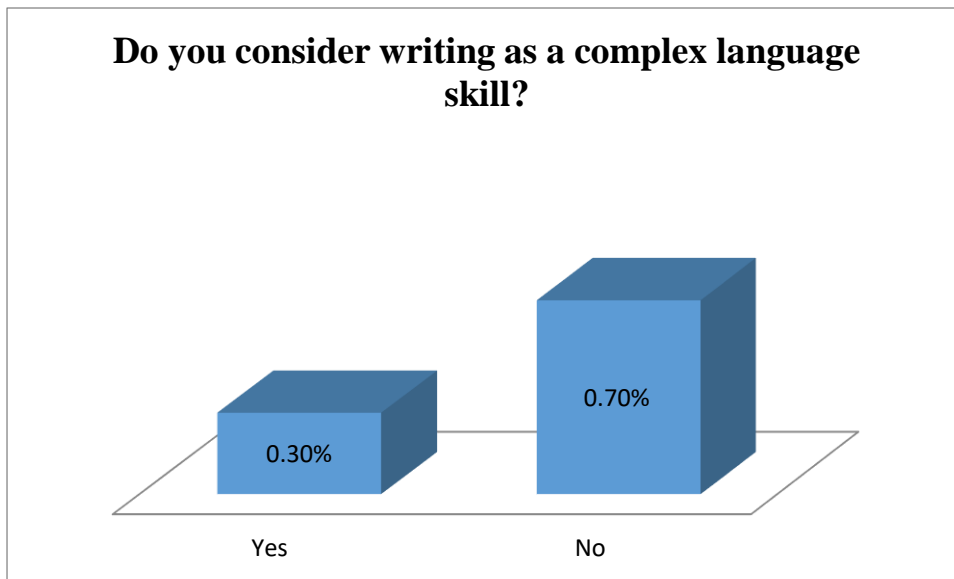
Figure 15: Teachers' Perceptions on the Complexity of Writing

Figure 15 represents teachers' beliefs when it comes to recognizing writing as an intricate language skill. (70%) stated that writing is in fact a challenging and complex language aspect to teach while (30%) said that it is as simple as teaching any other skill.

Table 23: Areas of Complexity for Teachers

Areas of complexity	Number of respondents	Percentage
Lack of Vocabulary	11	40.7%
Lack of knowledge of L2 rules	8	29.6%
Establishing coherent and relevant thoughts	6	22.2%
other	2	7.4%
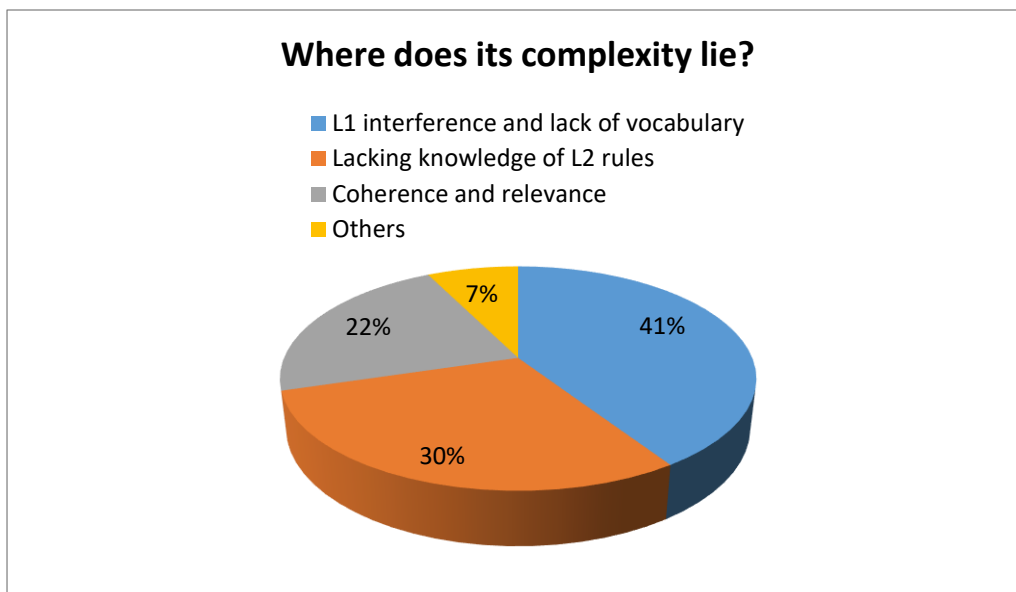
Figure 16: Areas of Complexity for Teachers

To delve deeper into teacher's assumptions those who replied with yes were asked to identify areas of complexity. The above display show that (41%) believe their learners face major problems due to the L1 interference and the lack of vocabulary, 30% reported writing deficiencies due to lack of knowledge in L2 rules. However, (22%) presumed that learners face obstacles in coherence and relevance aspect, which result in out of topic productions and choppy writing style. The last 7% attributed these challenges to other factors.

3- Teachers' perceptions about learners' errors in written productions

In the first question informants were asked to determine the most frequent errors they usually encounter when providing written feedback to learners most answers revolved around:

Table 24: Types of Frequent Errors Faced while Correcting

Types of errors	Frequency of answer	Percentage
Grammatical errors	15	34.88%
Lexical errors	12	27.91%
Writing mechanics errors	16	37.21%

47

What are the major errors you encounter while correcting learners written productions?

■ grammatical errors   ■ lexical errors   ■ writing mechanics
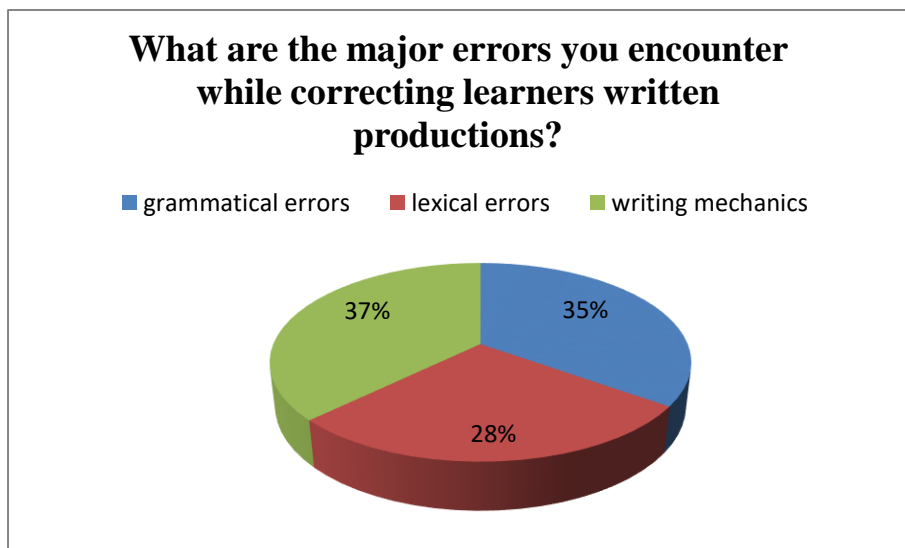
Figure 17: Types of Frequent Errors Faced while Correcting

In the last section, teachers were asked to specify the recurring errors encountered while providing written feedback. Consequently, (28%) identified lexical errors such as spelling and lack of vocabulary as the major share of repeated errors. Whilst, (35%) respondents suggested grammatical errors of wrong tense and fragments. (37 %) declared writing mechanics errors as in punctuation and capitalization.

Table 25: Rate of Feedback Provision

Feedback provision	Number of respondents	Percentage
Yes	26	96,3%
No	1	3,7%

Do you usually correct learners'errors in written productions?

0.96%   Yes
0.04%   No
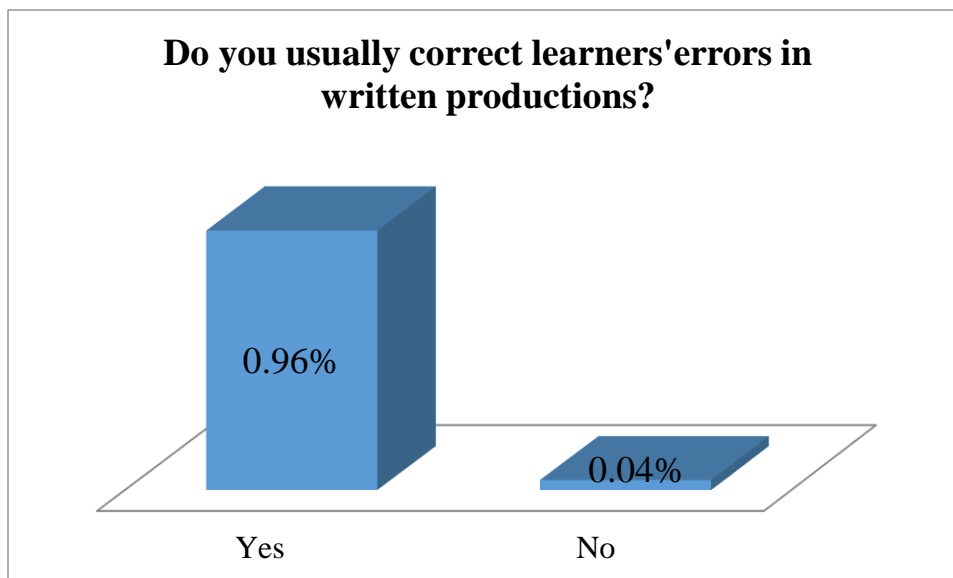
Figure 18: Rate of Feedback Provision

Figure 18 reveals participants' correction rate on learners' writing whereby 96% affirmed that they definitely provide feedback to pupils 'productions and 4% expressed their opposing view to the correction process.

Table 26: Methods of Feedback Provision

Methods of feedback provision	Number of respondents	Percentage
Self, peer and teacher's assessment	19	70,4%
Using rubrics and errors charts	4	14,8%
Use of errors correction code	3	11,1%
Other	1	3,7%
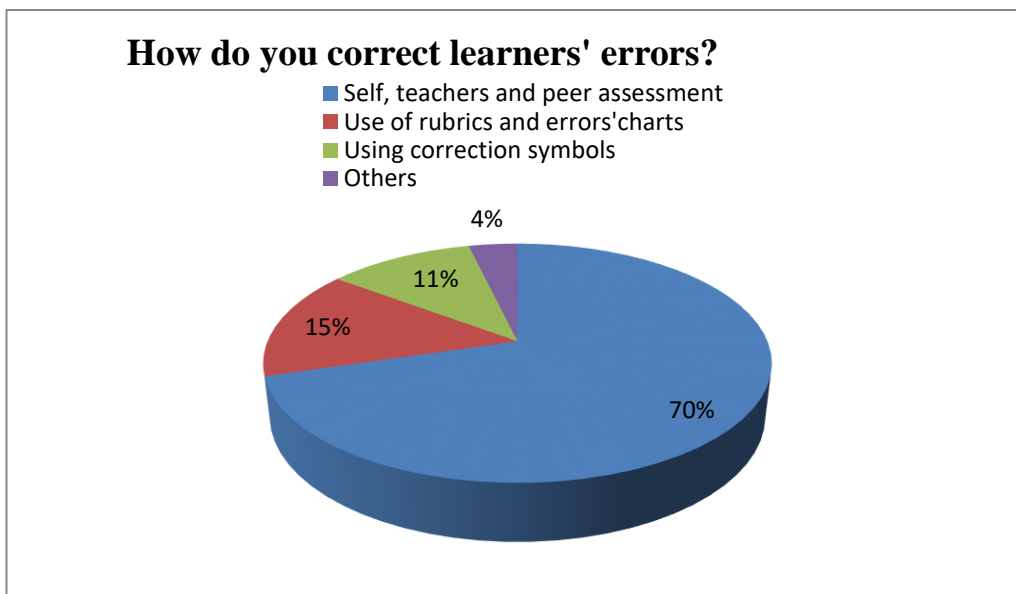
Figure 19: Methods of Feedback Provision

Those who responded for correcting learners writing were asked to assign methods and strategies to give feedback. 70% stated their reliance on self, peer and teachers' assessment through which they could bestow a certain degree of autonomy and responsibility to learners. On the contrary, 15% mentioned the use of rubrics and charts and 11% revealed that they depend on a set of correction symbols to facilitate the correction of papers.

Table 27: Effectiveness of Correction in Minimizing Errors

Effectiveness of correction	Number of respondents	Percentage
Yes	24	88,9%
No	3	11,1%

Is correction an effective way to minimise errors in writing?

0.89%

0.11%

Yes   No
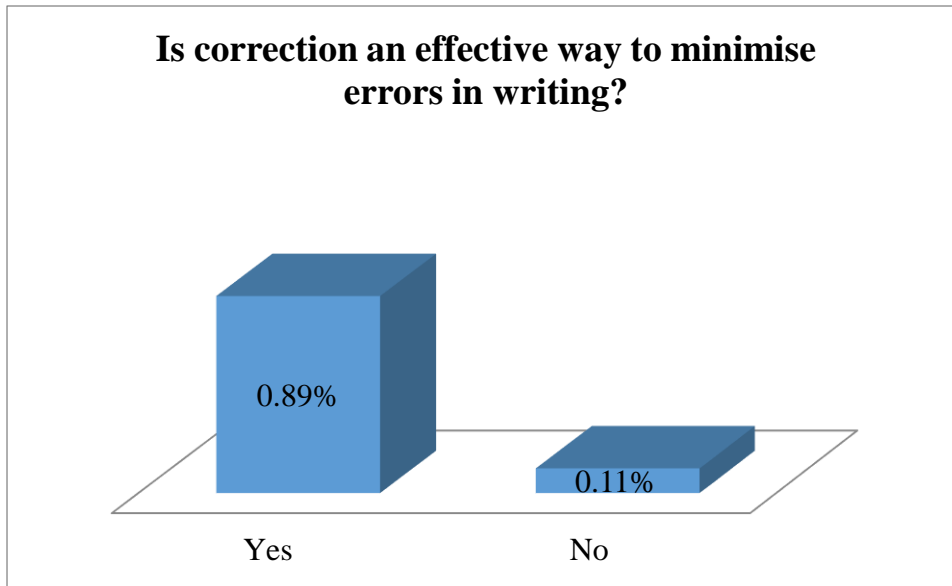
Figure 20: Effectiveness of Correction in Minimizing Errors

The following figure demonstrates whether the teachers under study deem correction as an effective tool to reduce writing errors. 89% reported that written feedback was a fruitful method while 11% disagreed considered correction an insufficient and lacking procedure.

*Table 28:*Reasons Behind the Success of Feedback

Reasons behind the successs of correction	Number of respondents	Percentage
Establishing awareness about erroneous learning	17	63,0%
Achieving accurate English language productions	3	11,1%
Boosting learners' confidence and motivation	6	22,2%
Other	1	3,7%
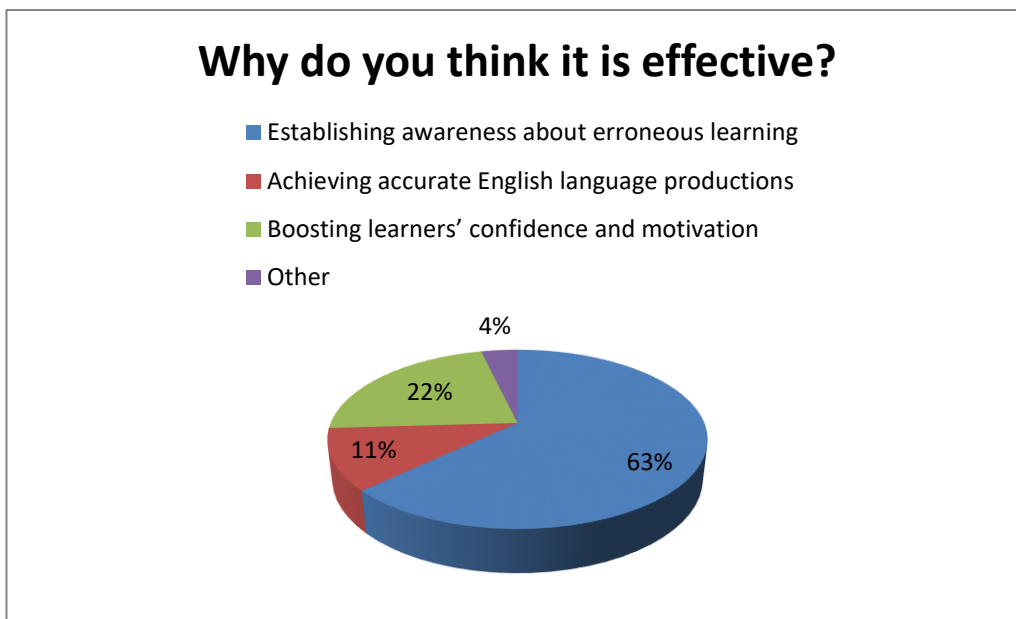
Figure 21: Reasons Behind the Success of Feedback

Respondents who answered with yes in the preceding question were urged to provide arguments to justify their stance. Hence, (82%) argued that it helps in establishing awareness about erroneous learning; (14%) advocated that it achieved accurate English language production.(4%) said it boosts learners' confidence and motivation.

Table 29: Suggested Strategies to Minimize Errors in Writing

Suggested Strategies		
	Frequency of answer	Percentage
Practice	15	41.67%
Reading	18	50.00%
Increasing the number of session	3	08.33%
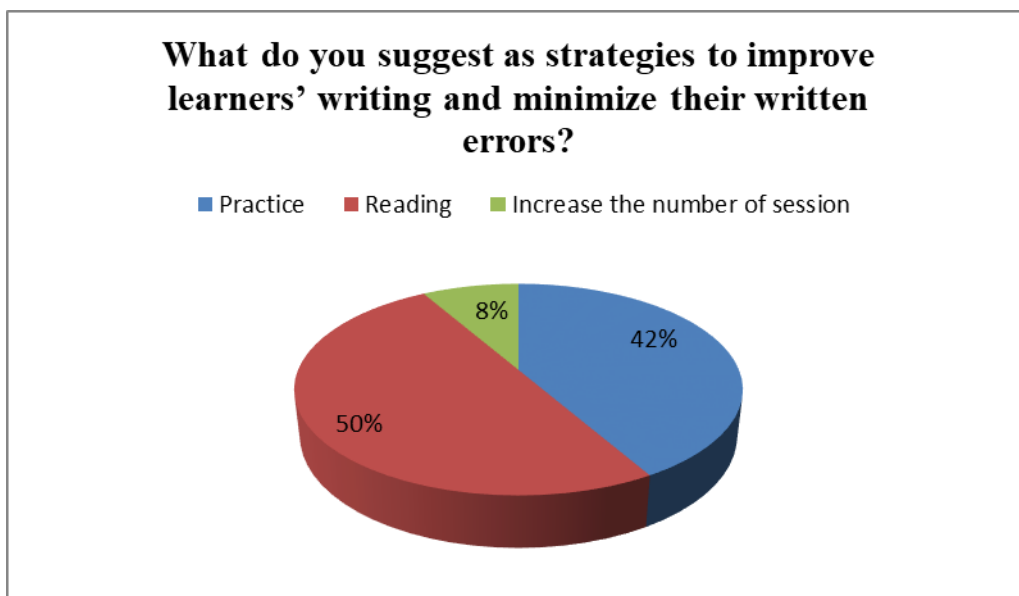
Figure 22: Suggestions to Mnimize Errors in Writing

To resolve learners' poor writing and minimize their errors the majority of participants (46%) suggested prompting pupils to read because good readers are good writers. (42%) proposed to provide pupils with more opportunities to practice and be exposed to different situation, which would allow them to invest their current and previous knowledge. The remaining 12% recommended an increase in the number of session dedicated to writing since they estimated the current time allocation insufficient and inappropriate.

Section two: Results Discussion

Through the collected data, we have found that third year middle school learners lack the very basics of writing. As indicated before, the most persistent types of errors were mostly interlingual which proved the influence of learner's L1 on their writing in English. Though all teachers dismissed Arabic' interference the main reason behind pupils 'poor writing quality, they soon abjured this claim when enumerating the complexities related to this skill. These interlingual errors consisted mainly of: first writing mechanics. The latter refers to misconceptions about punctuation and capitalisation conventions which seem to be quiet

tricky for learners as they are inept to apply them. This writing aspect is problematic due to the inexistence of punctuation and capitalisation rules in learners L1 repertoire. If we take Arabic a language stripped of any capitalisation norms, and compare it to English, a language that possesses a wide range of capitalisation use then we can clearly see where the issue lies. It is one where learners have failed to fully grasp the lesson of mechanics which appears only once in the middle school syllabus at first year level. The second feature consisted of preposition errors and more precisely omission ones. It is apparent that learners lack any understanding of preposition use and the distinction between them. As perceived earlier in the data analysis, learners tended to forgo the prepositions whenever they encountered a date or a place which indicated lack of or inappropriate instruction. In addition to that prepositions are challenging for learners to master because of the sheer number and their polysemous nature. Articles were also found to be a substantial setback for learners especially the indefinite articles since learners are unable to discriminate between the two articles and eventually use them.

With regard to intralingual errors, learners seemed to struggle with various grammatical aspects most of which consisted of sentence fragments. Teachers asserted that pupils have little knowledge about simple sentence structure; thus, they often produce ones lacking either verbs or subjects. According to this study's respondent, a probable reason could be traced back to the lack of practice inside and outside of the classroom. As most teachers stated that they allocated only two sessions per term. The time dedicated to teach such a complex language skill is utterly inappropriate and requires serious pondering and reassessment. Word choice and spelling aspects have also noticeably affected learners 'writing; consequently, the majority of teachers complained about learners being unable to produce relevant sentences. To explain this, the participants admitted that learners had a poor

vocabulary stock which needs further development and expansion. Reading and practice were suggested as possible solutions.

While trying to investigate teachers' practices inside the classroom in order to get a clearer picture on the teaching of writing, the respondents divulged that they rely on the process approach to instruct learners. The aforementioned approach is one which allows learners to polish their pieces of writing until a certain level of satisfaction is drawn. The process approach should have reduced learners' errors as it prompts the re editing and proof reading of the written productions; however, something seems to be amiss. Assuming that the habit of writing and re writing was bestowed upon learners, the analysed paragraphs shouldn't have included this amount of errors. This means either learners haven't been fully instructed or they haven't been fully trained to deal with this approach.

To deal with faulty productions, the participants stated that they urge pupils to rely on self, peer and teacher assessment as effective tools to make pupils aware of their missed attempts. Moreover, this helps them to identify their points of strength and weaknesses. Another alternative approach was the use of rubrics and charts that enable teachers to assess the productions based on a predetermined set of criteria and benchmarks. Therefore, it provides a fair ground to evaluate learners 'writing. These methods were selected by the respondents since they proved to be quite beneficial in establishing awareness about erroneous learning, achieving accurate English productions and boosting learners' confidence.

II.3. Recommendations

The results yielded in this study lead us to believe that certain teaching aspects require urgent reconsideration.

- Teachers should rethink and reassess the time allocated for writing; per 2 sessions a term is insufficient and absurd.

- The previous point prompts us to Bring forth the issue of syllabus design which proved to be a major inconvenience to the practice of writing, therefore it should be re-evaluated.

- Since most teachers asserted the use of the process approach, it should at least be adequately imparted to learners.

- Teachers should provide their learners with detailed feedback about their writing errors along with the solutions needed to overcome them

- Teachers should devote a certain amount of time to teach learners the basics of writing: spelling, punctuation and capitalisation in addition to sentence structures.

II.4. Limitations of the study

The current research has undergone numerous obstacles which hindered its proper flow. Even though the researchers mitigated at best the impediments, certain setbacks were encountered. First, writing as a skill is not often practiced within the Algerian middle school cycle; thus, it was problematic to obtain reliable paragraphs that were produced inside the classroom with no interference of external factors in other word copied from internet.

Second, the online questionnaire was inopportune as it coincided with the period of third semester tests' preparation, Ramadan and Eid El Fitr, the respondent requested a further notice which delayed the analysis of data. The latter was inspected using Cronbach's alpha which gave a reliability result of 0,695 often deemed as moderate and satisfactory but not excellent.

Conclusion

This chapter allowed us to address the most pertinent questions to this research and provided us with reliable answers. It also brought forth logical explanation and interpretations to the findings while attempting to procure possible solutions and practical procedures. As

such, it dealt with some controversial and issues in the field of teaching and more accurately the teaching of writing, one of the most intricate skills of all.

General Conclusion

Our study's aim was to investigate third year middle school learners' writing errors in Bordj Bou Arrerridj to help teacher's better deal with them. It is made up of two main chapters theoretical and practical.

We have tackled vital questions related to the teaching of writing at the level of middle school cycle. The investigation showed that our learners need to be instructed on the very basics of writing mechanics and sentence structures. Furthermore, serious reconsiderations need to be taken with relation to the current teaching practices, time allocation and syllabus design.

This data was accumulated in hopes to aid teachers get a better understanding of where they should start their remediation as writing is the most daunting task which both teachers and learners seem reluctant to take part in.

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Appendices

Appendix 1:Writing Errors checklist

Interlingual	Types	Frequency
	1- Grammatical errors • Wrong tense • Pronouns (omission,addition wrong choice) • Prepositions (omission,addition wrong choice) • Articles • Nouns • Adjectives (position) • Subject verb agreement 2- Lexical errors • Translation • Wrong word • Redundancy 3- Errors in writing mechanics • Punctuation • Capitalization	
Intralingual	Types	Frequency
	1- Grammatical errors • Wrong verb form • Pronouns innapropriate use • Adjective • Sentence fragment • Run on sentence • Conjunctions 2- lexical errors • Word choice 3- Errors in writing mechanics	

	• Spelling	

Appendix 2: Consent Form

<div style="text-align:center; border:1px solid; padding:10px;">

Consent From

</div>

Title of the Study:

Investigating the types of writing errors made by EFL learners

Researchers:

- o Achache Fahima
- o Bouzit Sihem

Department of English

Email: fahimahh19@gmail.com

sihamoubouzit21@gmail.com

Cellular phone: 06-67-13-64-38

06-76-28-63-97

Purpose of the Study:

In order to take part of this research, certain aspects need to be addressed to ensure a crystal clear understanding of the aim of this investigation as well as its entailments. Thus, you are kindly asked to read the following paper carefully:

The current study aims at identifying the main errors encountered in EFL learners writing hoping to trace back their main factors. It also delves into teacher's attitudes, approaches and strategies while teaching writing or providing feedback.

Procedure:

This study is to be conducted through observation to compile learners' errors followed by a questionnaire intended for teachers to provide further understanding of this enquiry.

The consent form ensures that you are fully aware of what's expected from you as such you have to read it attentively and affirm your approval by writing your name and signing at the bottom:

- o   Collect and analyse learners writing
- o   Make a record of learners exam sheets
- o   Answer to an online questionnaire.

Risks and Disadvantages:

We assure you that as a participant you run no risks. Nonetheless if you feel uncomfortable you may withdraw instantly. Every information you provide is to be treated with utmost confidentiality and will be used for academic and research purposes only

Benefits:

This research involves no direct perks or benefits. However, the data we'll accumulate will provide an insight on one of EFL most challenging teaching aspect that is able to help educators and teachers.

Confidentiality:

Please complete the following by ticking yes or no for ach statement:

I have understood the process of the study   Yes ☐   No ☐

I have had the opportunity to discuss with the researchers and ask questions

Yes ☐   No ☐

I have been provided with enough clarification to be able to participate

Yes ☐   No ☐

I am aware that my learners will be analysed   Yes ☐   No ☐

I understand that my identity and responses will be kept anonymous

Yes ☐   No ☐

Name of informant: signature: Date:

Researchers 'signature: Date:

Appendix 3: Teachers' Questionnaire

Teachers' Questionnaire

Dear teachers,

   We kindly invite you to fill this questionnaire, which serves as a research tool for a Master dissertation entitled **"Investigating Frequent Errors in Algerian Middle School Learners' Writing".** We would like to inform you that your answers and personal opinions will remain anonymous and only used for scientific research purposes. Thank you in advance for you cooperation and the time devoted to answer it.

<u>Section One:</u> Teachers' general information

1. What is your academic qualification?

   ☐ License   ☐ Master   ☐ ENS   ☐ Other:…………

2. For how long have you been teaching English?

   ☐ 1 to 5 years   ☐ 5 to 10 years   ☐ More than 10 years

3. Did you receive any training about teaching the writing skill?

   ☐ Yes   ☐ No

4. What type of training did you receive?

   ☐ Seminars   ☐ Personal efforts   ☐ Conferences   ☐ Other: ………

5. Did the training endow you with tools to be able to impart this skill to your learners?

   ☐ Yes   ☐ No

Section Two: Teachers' perceptions about the Writing Skill.

1. How many sessions do you devote for teaching writing in a term?

☐ 2 sessions   ☐ 3 sessions   ☐ 4 sessions or more

2. How do you evaluate your learners' level in writing?

☐ Good   ☐ Average   ☐ Below average

3. What do you consider as the major cause of learners' poor writing quality?

☐ L1 interference   ☐ Lack of practice   ☐ Poor vocabulary   ☐ All of them

4. Do you adopt a certain approach to teach writing?

☐ Yes   ☐ No

5. Which one?

☐ Process approach (focuses on brainstorming, drafting and editing)

☐ Product approach (focuses on the final outcome)

☐ Genre approach   (focuses on writing for different purposes)

☐ Others

6. Do you consider writing as a complex language skill?

☐ Yes   ☐ No

7. Where does its complexity lie?

…………………………………………………………………….…………………

<u>Section Three</u>: Teachers' perceptions about learners' errors in written productions.

1. What are the major errors you encounter while correcting written productions?

……………………………………………………………………………………

2. Do you usually correct learners' errors in written productions? How?

☐ Yes   ☐ No

………………………………………………………………………………….

3. In your opinion, is correction an effective way to minimise errors in writing? Why?

☐ Yes   ☐ No

………………………………………………………………………………..

5. What do you suggest as strategies to improve learners' writing and minimize their written errors?

………………………………………………………………………………….

…………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………

Thanks for your cooperation

Appendix 4: Learners' paragraphs

part two

I the World saintist I Isaac Newton he ~~~~

$ Born in 04/02/1643 on England U.K

he is job on Mathematian and Physicist

He Diccory in law of grallity in 1687 He

is Mathematical Principals of Natural

Phylosphy Famous books in book 1 and 2

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about "Issac Newton".

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England.

ملخص البحث

يهدف هذا البحث الى معرفة اسباب ونوعية الاخطاء المرتكبة من قبل تلاميذ السنة الثالثة متوسط أثناء الكتابة بغرض التكفل بها ومعالجتها من قبل الاساتذة، كما تم التطرق الى وجهة نظر الاساتذة ومدى المامهم بهذا الموضوع.

تحتوي هذه الدراسة على جانبين جزء نظري وأخر تطبيقي الذي اعتمد بدوره على طريقة الملاحظة والاستفسار مبني على37 أستاذ في الاخير توصل البحث إلى أن معظم الأخطاء المدروسة يرجع سببها إلى تأثير اللغة الأم وعدم تكريس وقت كاف لتعليم مهارة الكتابة.

Résume de la Recherche

Cette étude vise à identifier les raisons derrière les nombreuse erreurs commit par les élevés de troisième année moyenne ainsi que leur types afin de les prendre en charge. Cette recherche a inclus aussi la perception des enseignants.

De tell l'étude a été devise en deux parties théoriques et pratiques. La partie pratique a été basée sur une observation à l'aide d'une liste d'étude et un questionnaire pris par 37 enseignants. Les résultats on déterminer que la langue maternelle était la cause la plus pertinent ainsi que l'insuffisance des séances dédier à l'apprentissage de la l'écriture.