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*Writing Skills Difficulties and Strategies for
Students of English Language .Case Study 1st
Year IMD Students At Dr Tahar Moulay
University .Saida*

*Dissertation Submitted to the Department of English in Fulfillment of
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Didactics*

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to the most precious people in my life, my parents I would like to thank them for their particular supply and encouragement.

To my lovely family of course my brothers Ahmed and Samir and my sister and her husband, Ahmed without forgetting my husband Abdallah.

To the flowers of my life: Abd Nour, Tanssim, Youcef, Rimas and Imane.

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Abstract

Writing in a foreign language is one of the most challenging and complex tasks for language learners. We have chosen this topic because we are noticed that most of students face problems and difficulties concerning their writing skills, concerning this research, we have prepared a questionnaire addressed to first year LMD students at the English department of De.TaharMouley University in Saida. It has been shown from the results achieved in this work that students' law achievement in writing was affected by different aspects like grammar, vocabulary, content and ideas organization as well as the other mechanics of writing, spelling and punctuation, and also lack of coordination between the writing course and the other language skills courses, lack of teaching materials, inadequate timing. This work attempts to reveal the extent to which the above-mentioned variables were involved in students' failure in writing and tried to suggest remedies or alteration needed to improve students writing proficiency.

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***GENERAL
INTRODUCTION***

General Introduction

The use of English is more wide spread because of the business environment revolution. Nowadays, English is used by all the people worldwide because of the ongoing advances in technology such as internet, and other businesses. English also plays an important role in education and students are expected to use it effectively. However, teaching English in the Arab world is challenging. Many students are able to understand the language, but most of the students face the problem of communication their ideas effectively, the problem is the lack of both: the adequate stock of English vocabulary and creativity in writing. It is evident that writing is the biggest challenge for many students. Therefore, many associations escort their effort to improve learning English. Still, it is a very tough mission for teachers to teach English creatively so that students could become independent learners and benefit a lot from the innovative teaching techniques adopted by the teacher.

Students do not write very often and most of what they write is classroom-bound. The most important factor in writing exercises is that students need to be personally involved in order to make the learning experience of great value the writing skill difficulties are one of the most significant problems that affect not only native English speakers, but also hundreds of students that are learning English as a second or foreign language around the world.

The aim of the present study is to explain the most difficult process with the purpose of stating some proposals for improving the methodology applied.

In order to achieve this purpose, questions should be asked such as:

What are the main writing skills difficulties that affect the performance of the English language student?

Related questions:

- Do writing difficulties of English language students depend on the quality of the techniques that teacher apply?

- Do writing skill difficulties of English language students depend on the strategies they apply when writing?

- It is useful for the students to have previous knowledge in writing for the composition requirements at the most appropriate to the level of knowledge of the students?

Basically, the ultimate aim of this dissertation is to uncover the major causes of first-year University students, investigation throughout this work will attempt to provide arguments for the research hypotheses that can be formulated as follows:

1)- The current teaching writing does not provide adequate preparation because of the teaching approach used (product app).

Lock of materials, inadequate timing, lack of coordination between the different modules and lack of the student practice.

2)-The teachers use well-structured learning activities and design appropriate small group tasks, then learners will develop their writing skill and engage productively in classroom activities.

3)-Student difficulties in writing skills might be due to their lack of awareness of the different writing stages

This research work is composed of three chapters .the first chapter defines writing and its basic rules and the teaching of writing in Algeria, concluded by the main problems of writing.

The second chapter deals with analysis and interpretation of the collected data. It contains a questionnaire which is addressed to 1st year LMD students at the department of English at Dr.TM.University. The information provided are analyzed to present a global view about the writing teaching / learning situation. Finally, the main research results are discussed by making reference to the findings and explaining the degree of evidence of the collected data.

The third and the last chapter provide some strategies to assist students with writing difficulties. It is concerned with what might be favorable as pedagogical implication to remedy the target situation.

-The literature review:

General Introduction

The history of writing is the history of how the human being recorded thoughts, events, and feeling. It is the history of civilization itself.

The human beings would never have known their history without drawing, signs and words they have recorded. The first writing instruments dated back to the cave to the took many different forms as sharpened-stone, bones...etc (**cited in Nemouchi, 2008, p16**).

During the 1950, the pedagogy of E.S.L classes was dominated by the audio lingual method which focuses on oral proficiency. Writing on other hand, was marginalized and was only seen as means of reinforcing and consolidating language patterns(**Fujieda, 2006**) by the 1960, the number of international students had rapidly increased allowing language teacher to consider **L2**(second language) pedagogy and practice. It the U.S, a large number of foreign students entered higher education. At this stage, **L1** (first language) composition instructors perceived major differences in writing between L1 and L2 learners.

These differences stimulated interest in teaching writing to non-native speakers; As a result, teaching writing became a significant subfield of second language studies and learner received instruction about the structure of the target language (**Fujieda, 2006**) within the appearance of the communicative approach in 1970s, the real importance of teaching writing as a skill was recognized.

From the 1970s to early 1980s ESL writing witnessed real change with the appearance of the process revolution. The focus was no longer on the written product. For **Zamel (1982, p565 cited in Nemouchi, 2008, p24)** writing was “conceptualized as the process of discovering meaning”.

Cognitive factors influenced on the stages of this process where the writer engages on recursive mental stages identified in three broad stages: planning, formulating and revising.

These features are found in most contemporary E.S.L studies as well as first language teaching. **Elbow (1973,1981) and Zamel (1983)** pointed out:” this process tends toward individual development through self-discovery entirely on adequate writing procedures rather than on complete product.(**fujieda, 2006, p64**).

The central interest of the process approach clearly lies on the cognitive steps that writers go through when they write.

In the 1990s however, there was a new awareness of social aspects of writing. In other words, writers became more conscious of the social conventions that govern a particular genre and realized that writing serve a range of social goals.

Teaching writing to non-English speaking learners should always take into consideration learner global needs as well their linguistic and cultural background.

CHAPTER ONE:

Writing process and difficulties

Introduction

For a long time, writing was a neglected area in language teaching as a result of concentration on spoken language which was seen as important and writing as being of secondary importance. However, writing is now an essential component in language teaching. This chapter intends to examine the nature of writing and its basic rules. It also aims to highlight the relationship between writing and reading. This chapter also includes a presentation of the educational context and the main problems that students face.

1. Definition of writing:

Our center interest in this study is the teaching of writing to first-year EFL students at university level and its elaboration towards better learning. Writing, seen as difficult skill to achieve especially for EFL students deserves its fair share of specific attention in language teaching. Writing in Oxford advanced learner's Dictionary (1996), is explained as **“the activity of writing or the skill of producing linear sequences of graphemes in time”**. Likewise, in the Cambridge Encyclopedia of the English language, writing is seen as a graphic system used for communication as defined in **crystal (1995:257)**:

“Most obviously writing is a way of communication which uses a system of visual marks made on some kind of surface. It is one kind of graphic expression”.

From the above definitions of writing we can describe it as a mechanical activity and we don't take into consideration the mental processes in which the writer is engaged.

In fact, this cognitive aspect, where writing is not nearly seen as making letters or other symbols on paper but as elaborating cognitive processes usually comprising several stages such as:

Generating ideas, planning, drafting, editing, writing, evaluating, and re-writing is highly emphasized nowadays namely in the educational context. In this context **flower and Hays (1981:366)** pointed out:

“Writing is best understood as a set of distinctive thinking processes which writers orchestrate or organize during the act of composing”

In this context the term “writing” is usually used synonymously with the term “composing”.

Writing is a productive skill in the written mode. It is often referred to as the most difficult skill even for nature’s peahens of a language. Writing involves not only the graphic representation of speech, but also the expression and organization of ideas according to the conventions of the language. These conventions concern grammar, vocabulary, handwriting, spelling and punctuation (Harmar, 2001).

Writing enables learners to describe facts, express ideas and impart knowledge to an unseen audience, so writing is a creative process as explained in **Badger and White (2000,157-158)**, “writing, involves knowledge about language, knowledge of the context in which writing happens and especially the purpose and skills in using language”.

To sum up the aforementioned definitions, one may say that writing requires from the writer the mastery of conventional writing mechanics and of organizational devices in order to write effectively. It is then a creative as well as a discovery process since it involves discovering ideas and ways of organizing them to convey

a message to the reader (**White. 1987**). One of the advantages of the writing activity is that it makes thoughts appear on a piece of paper and permits the revision and restatement of these thoughts as explained in **Harris(1993,12)**.

“It is almost as if the act of writing makes thought visible and tangible: this in turn, provides the opportunity for revision and refinement because the thoughts are there on the page to be worked on.

Finally, one may say that it is important to grant greater attention and concern to the development and the social significance of the writing skill as pointed out in **Hamzaoui (2006:12)**.

“The social significance of writing has become increasingly important at all levels of education: from elementary classes where demonstration of writing ability is part of minimum competency exams, to university level where writing is an exit criterion for graduation”.

2. The nature of writing:

Writing is considered as a means of communication between people. It should follow some conventions that are unique of all which relate letters to words and words to sentences which must be well organized to have a coherent whole called “text” (**Bader,2007**). This skill, or means of communication is neither innate

nor natural. It must be done and practiced a lot be learnt and make use of it and its rules, therefore, the writer does not write for himself but he writes for his reader, for that the writer must clearly state ideas to make himself understood.

According to **Al-Mutawa and Taisser(1989)**, writing is a complex cognitive activity which requires the following elements:

- Complete acquisition of the Alphabet.
- Understanding how letters combine to form words and the relationship between the word and its meaning.
- Knowledge of the mechanics of writing speaking, capitalization, punctuation and other writing conventions.
- Mastery of the most frequent rules governing the structure of sentences.
- Ability of combining sentences to build an effective paragraph and combining them to produce essays.
- Formalization with transition to achieve coherence.

In this context, Bell and Burnaby (1984, cited in Nunan, 1989, p36) explain:

“Writing is an extremely complex cognitive activity in which the writer is required to demonstrate control of content, format, sentence structure, vocabulary, punctuation, spelling and letter formation. Beyond the sentence, the writer must be able to structure

and integrate information into cohesive and coherent paragraphs and texts”

In its physical appearance, writing is an individual activity, therefore, it is a social act that fulfills a set of communicative needs, and accomplishes particular as **Hyland(2003, p27)**puts it:

“While every act of writing is in a sense both personal and individual, it is also international and social, expressing a culturally recognized purpose, reflecting particular kind of relationship and acknowledging an engagement in a given community”.

In terms of pedagogy, writing is a central element in the language teaching as students need to write down notes and to take written exams. Yet, over the years it has seemed that writing has been as in a support system for learning grammar and vocabulary rather than a skill in its own right, however, trainers and methodologist have looked again at writing in a foreign language classroom and acknowledge the importance of writing as vital skill for speakers of a foreign language as much as for every one using their first language (**Harmer, 2004**). However, in contract to the natural and spontaneous act of speaking, writing is a difficult activity both in first and second language. Its difficulty descends from many factors classified by **Byrne(1988)** into three categories, psychological, linguistics and cognitive which overlap to some extent.

For the psychological factors, writing is a solitary act as it is done in the absence of the reader to whom the piece of writing is addressed. This means that there is a lack of interaction and feedback between the writer and the reader, the thing which makes writing lacks paralinguistic devices such as stress, intonation, gestures, and facial expressions. This imposes a great necessity for careful and precise completion, organization and connection of sentences.

For the cognitive factors, writing requires formal and laborious instruction: we have to master the written form of language and to learn certain structures. Above all, sometimes the task of writing is imposed on us and this may cause a loss of ideas like in the classroom situation.

So, the idea we draw from the previous definition is that writing is the means to communicate with the language through a graphic representation of ideas. It is also difficult, sophisticated, social activity and an important skill for language learners as native speakers.

3. The basic rules of writing:

Writing is an effective means of communication and self-expression; good writing requires certain criteria like clarity, coherence, simplicity and brevity.

3.1. Clarity:

It is the basic rule in writing and without it communication will be impossible. By clarity is meant to avoid ambiguous words and sentences that may convey more than one meaning or multiple interpretations. The key to achieve clarity is to make sentences short and to the point.

In order to achieve clarity in writing according to the learner should:

- Eliminate ambiguity by avoiding words or phrases that have more than one possible infestation.
- Use powerful, precise adjectives and specific adjectives and adverbs.
- Be concise, the means getting right to the point without unnecessary spinning around, and worthless repetition or wordiness.
- Word choice, the writer should close the right words according to **Starkey(2004)**,there are two aspects the learner should consider while choosing the words to be used denotation which is the literal meaning of the word and connotation which is the implied meaning of the word.
- In this context **starkey (2004:15)** sees that “wordiness is boring and it takes up valuable time and space... there are two equally important approaches to more concise writing by eliminating unnecessary words and phrases and using active voice whoever possible.

3.2. Coherence:

Coherence is an important element in any kind of writing **kane (2008), Geme; and Lea(2008)**among others agree that coherence has a great role in making a good piece of writing according to them, coherence has to do with arranging and linking one's ideas in a way that makes them most easily understood by the learner.

Mury and Haghese**(2008:45)** notice that good writer is the one "who sticks his ideas together as links in chain, each link connecting the one before it with the one after. If any links are missing, the corrections become unclear and the arguments structure breaks down".

3.3. Brevity and simplicity:

It is necessary to convey the maximum information with minimum words, for instance, instead of expressing one idea in five sentences, it is better to state it in one meaningful sentence. All this insists that brevity is an elementary rule because it saves the reader's patience and time, and helps to communicate effectively, in addition, some writers like to show themselves while writing through using pompous words which may not be understandable for the reader since any piece of writing's goal is to express as possible as the saying goes "write to express, not to impress".

In addition to all this basic rules of writing there are some convention of writing the writer should take into consideration, for

instance, the sentence should begin with capital letters and ends with full stop punctuation (period, question mark, exclamation point) and **starkey (2004)** considered writing in terms of grammar, spelling, punctuation and capitalization.

4. The relationship between writing and reading:

For language skills work together to enhance the development of each other, so writing is not an isolated skill. Listening and reading are the receptive skills and the speaking and the writing are the productive skills.

According to **Johnson (2008)**, language skills enhance each others, for example, listening and hearing other people use language enhances one's ability to speak, reading helps students become better writers and writing helps and enhances reading fluency (**Hamadouche, PHD dissertation, 2010**)

Writing and reading are two aspects of literacy. The former involves the encoding of the message while the latter involves its decoding or interpretation, in other words, writing is the productive whereas reading is receptive. But in spite of their different characteristics, the two skills complement each other, to read is to recognize and interpret written language, to write is to plan and produce language so that it can be read. **Stokey (1963, cited in Bader, 2007, p9)** has advanced that "better writers tend to be

better readers... and better readers tend to produce more systematically mature writing than poorer readers”.

Good writers should take into account their readers needs, Knowledge, and expectations so that they can produce readable text **(Heffeman and Lincoln, 1990)** stated that “but all good writers think about their reader, just as good speakers think about their listeners” **(p.50)**.

He **see** emphasizes the importance of reading as a central process in writing and discusses three types of reading that are essential in writing.

The first of these is reading to evaluate, in which the writer reads his or her text critically to detect possible problems and discover potential improvements. The other two kinds of reading are reading source texts and reading an introduction. Since written tasks are frequently based on source texts, there is an obvious relationship between the ability to understand the source text and the ability to use information from the text in one’s writing. Similarly, if writers fail to understand the source text instructions, they may not be able to do the task of writing appropriately **(Weigle, 2002)**.

All this of writing it clear that reading is an important factor in writing because it gives the opportunity to develop and enrich vocabulary, grammatical structures and rhetorical features of texts.

Reading, then, is a pre-condition for writing because it plays an important role in the development of the latter one cannot improve his writing unless he reads a lot. In any case, the two skills go hand in hand, and one can't deal with the first without manipulating the second.

5. Teaching the writing skill at the different levels of education:

Since the focus of the present research is writing, it may be fit to outline and discuss its objectives, teaching practices and learning outcomes.

5.1. Teaching writing in the middle school:

Since the last educational reform of 2003 English the second foreign language is introduced for the first time in the first year middle school (1am) .at this level pupils have some knowledge of Latin graphemes, and writing mechanics as a result of their learning of the French language. This is supposed to help them to learn English .however English foreign language (EFL)learning is not always successful .at the middle school pupils learn basic English. Structures and vocabulary and most of the time they use ill constructed sentences containing grammatical mistakes .at the end of each file (there are about five files for a whole year in the different levels).writing is controlled through one or more writing tasks .these tasks are graded in difficulty: they take the form of fill in the gaps

exercises scrambled sentences matching sentences and sometimes completing dialogues.

During the other years.i.e.(2am.3am,4am,)),pupils are required to answer comprehension questions related to a studied text using the sentence paragraph of six to ten lined on the different modes of discourse such as narrating a story these writing activities are preceded by a pre writing session where teachers and pupils try to establish the writing norms of the discourse type required then elicit ideas provide the necessary vocabulary draw a plan organize ideas draft revise and write. Finally each composition is followed by a correction session.

It should be notes however that the majority of pupils face some difficulties to learn or improve their English writing. This is due to several factors starting from the communicative approach used to teach English and which prevails oral skills over writing. The programs at the different levels is heavy with an average five files a year, where language forms and functions are presented in a linear way. Moreover, being constantly pressed by time constraints requiring them to complete the programmers and achieve the objectives, teachers of English tend to overbook their pupils' real abilities to understand and devote little time to writing practice.

Despite the differences in terms of motivational and methodological aspects in the Middle school level, the vast majority of pupils end the four or more years of EFL instruction with apparent frustrations in trying to craft correct and meaningful sentences into a paragraph, let alone to construct purposeful and coherent discourse. These pupils have had a fair amount of communicative activities and an exposure to a dense vocabulary, but little language practice and fewer writing tasks. Being content-heavy and practice-light-the text books and methodologies tend to confuse the learners and affect somewhat negatively their linguistic, cognitive and learning development. Syllabus designers need to bear in mind four important factors.

The first one is limited language ability and ongoing intellectual growth; the second is unfamiliarity with themes and topics that are commonplace in the foreign language culture; third, the text types may not be accessible to all learners at such an early learning stage and fourth, for the functional-communicative principles to be effectively implemented in foreign language learning-

In conclusion learners in the Middle school educational system are being introduced to so many skills and so much information at the same time. As a result, they accumulate deficiencies and lacunas not only in their writing performance, but also in their performance of other subjects.

5.2. Teaching writing in the Secondary school:

Secondary education lasts three years (1AS, 2AS and 3AS) at the end of which a Baccalaureate examination is held. English foreign language (EFL) is part of the curriculum regardless of pupils' streams and levels with a difference in time load and coefficient.

However, pupils coming from the Middle School, in other words having received four years of formal instruction, and entering the linguistic items and skills acquired in the preceding years. In the first year secondary (1AS), the focus is on grammar, vocabulary and study skills such as how to use dictionaries, cooperate with each other and keep notebooks. The syllabus objectives are to build efficiency in learners through meaningful purpose, spontaneous desire to communicate, correct grammar and reasonable fluency.

In the second year secondary (2AS), the focus is in the development of communicating and language structures, whereas in the third year (3AS), according to the English syllabus (2004:6), the general objective set to the teaching of EFL is that learners should be able to **“communicate efficiently in a normal and/or working situation both orally and in writing”**; and the same time to enable these learners to use language as an investigative tool at university or in the job field. In written expression, it is

presumed from pupils to **“master different writing skill: note taking, organizing and summarizing; so as to be autonomous in written expression when starting from models learnt in class”** (ibid;10) English syllabus/63

Assuming that these pupils have built up a range of necessary communicative skills, some discourse mode and language structures are introduced. However, what is quite evident is that the difficult aspects of some discourse patterns such as the argumentative or the expository are often skipped by teachers. Writing practice is limited to the usual production and reproduction, controlled, guided and free compositions including expanding notes into a text, transforming a paragraph into a dialogue and rewriting a passage without an awareness of the rationale behind such activities. Yet, one striking observation about English language teaching in pre-university education is the difference in skill focus.

While the teachers focus on the development of oral skills in the Middle school and the first years (1AS and 2AS) of secondary school, the writing skill is given due heed only in third year of secondary school which is not enough to prepare pupils for formal examination requirements by the end of secondary education, pupils are supposed to express themselves orally and in writing in fluent, accurate and meaningful English. They are expected to achieve a satisfactory mastery in the four skills:

listening, speaking, reading and writing. They also have to be aware of aspects of culture and civilization of target language societies.

However, reality shows opposite results; the outcome, especially in the Baccalaureate examination, is largely disappointing with most pupils achieving low scores in written expression and displaying an inability to get their message across in clear and well-structured texts.

In fact, the pupils' low performance in writing is due to many factors among them: insufficient teaching time, insufficient writing practices and overloaded programmers, learning them develop negative attitudes towards EFL learning in general and writing in particular and finally the over-ambitious syllabus objectives which do not go in line with pupil's real cognitive and linguistic capacities. It seems that the syllabus designers and textbook writers have a strong faith in the learner's motivation and ability to shift from a lower proficiency level to a higher one.

5.3. Teaching writing at University

The new baccalaureate holders enrolled in the English sections of the foreign language departments spend a period of three years study to graduate and obtain the English "license" degree, à long this period, students are theoretically assisted and

trained to become English teachers in the lower levels of education or to carry on post graduate studies at university.

In the English sections of the foreign language Departments of the faculties of letters and foreign languages In Algeria, English, English is used as a medium of instruction for all subjects except For Arabic which is taught In Arabic Many new entrants to university arrive with serious frustrations and deficiencies in English .in spite of their seven Years or more of pre university English learning ,the new entrants appear, in their majority, to have difficulties In both oral and written skills.

As far as writing is concerned, it is attributed the fourth position in foreign language teaching learning, writing, as a skill, has been neglected For many years mainly after the adoption of the communicative approach to language teaching which claimed the supremacy of the spoken word over the written one .A renewed concern to writing emerged due to examination requirements as already mentioned and the necessity of literate (able to read and write) in English in modern life.

To have a clearer idea about writing performance at university entrance and from a proficiency level investigation carried out in the foreign language department analyzing short texts written by university entrants during the first two weeks of the academic year 1999,2000,ought(2002)distinguished two

Chapter One: Writing Process and Difficulties

distinct levels: low intermediate (nearly 80%) and high intermediate (around 20%) describing the learners' entrants' abilities, weaknesses and needs as follows.

High intermediate (developing) level	Low intermediate (basic) level
<p>Abilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Accurate grasp and use of writing mechanics (fair accuracy in punctuation spelling and capitalization). -correct construction of different sentence patterns, ability write a meaningful text and to convey clear ideas, despite the problem of inadequate vocabulary. -good knowledge of cohesive ties discourse organizing connections. <p>Lacks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Lack of contextual knowledge (Unawareness of readership). -Insufficient composing strategies (drafting and revising). -A tendency to be prolific (free writing) without monitoring one's performance 	<p>Abilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -production of short texts, division of texts into two paragraphs, convey ideas with clear difficulty. <p>Lacks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Lacks control of basic syntactic structures, inadequate knowledge of writing mechanics, limited vocabulary. -Unawareness of useful writing micro-skills and composing strategies.

Table: 5.3: description of student's proficiency levels (ourghi 2002:42)

In class teachers report students' inability to construct appropriate error-free sentences. Likewise when writing they seem to be unaware of the basics of writing such as the conventions and mechanics of writing (e.g. spelling, punctuation, capitalization grammar (e.g. Tenses, subject -verb agreement, use of prepositions, use of pronouns, use of articles) and vocabulary (e.g. Using Anglicized borrowing from French) as a resultants, their compositions are merely a list of ideas lacking cohesion and coherence.

Training learners to write accurately and meaningful demands care and attention on behalf of language teeters since the aim of the written secession course is to prepare EFL students for the class and home assignments they are required to write, the examination they are to sit for in the different modules of their curriculum, the research works they are concerned with during their schooling without losing the objective of preparing a future English teacher.

6 .Common students writing problems

6.1. Top Twenty Specific problems:

- "It's" versus "Its:

(Consistently the 1st problem in student papers).

-It's: A construction, meaning 'it is' (as in "It's time for dinner")

-Its: A possessive (as in "the dog was wagging its tail")(common student writing problems. Paul. R. Hensel, Uni of North Texas)

There's no shortcut; all that can do is memorize the rule. It's with an apostrophe means it is (or, a little less often and a little less formally, it has); without an apostrophe means belonging to it. Analogue might provide a mnemonic: think of "he's" ("he is" gets an apostrophe) and "his" ("belonging to him" doesn't).

What about its' with the apostrophe after the s? –Never, never, never. Wrong, wrong, wrong. Not in this language, you don't. its, "belonging to it"; its, it is. That's all. (from the guide to grammar and Style by Jack Lynch,

- "To", "Too", and "two"

(Usually a close second behind it's-its)

-To: Basic multi-purpose function word (as in "My goal is to die a millionaire)

-Too: Adjective, leaning "very" or "excessively" (as in "the tigers were too inexperienced to challenge the Yankees for the pennant")

-Two the number between one and three (as in «two losses to open a football season is two too many”).

- “who’s” versus “whose”

-who’s: A Contraction, meaning “who is” (as in who’s coming to dinner?)

-whose: A possessive (as in “whose dinner is this?) (Paul. R. Hansel, cannon students writing problems)

- A confusing pair, like its and it’s whose means “of whom” or “belonging to whom”; who’s is a contraction of “who is” or “who has. (<http://andrommedia.rutgers.edu>.From the guide to grammar and style by Jack Lynch).

- “Affect” versus “Effect”

- Affect (verb): ‘To influence’ (as in “President Clinton hoped to affect the outcome of the Russian elections”)

-Effect (verb): ‘To bring about’ (as in “President Clinton hoped to effect a change in Russian policies”)

-Effect (noun): “consequence”, “result” (as in “Every cause should have at least one effect”).

-Affect (noun): Feeling, affection; the conscious subjective aspect of an emotion considered apart from bodily changes

(pronounced AF-fect; this is probably Not the word that you mean to use in international relations)

- **“There”, “Their”, and “They’re”:**

-There: Refers to location (as in “that dog over there”)

- Their: A possessive (as in “They’re going to bring their new car”)

- They’re: A contraction, meaning “they are” (as in “They’re on their way”).

- **“Accept” versus “Except”**

- Accept: Adverb, indicating one’s consent or approval ‘as in “the president accepted his counterpart’s proposal to submit their dispute to arbitration”)

- Except: A preposition, conjunction, or verb, indicating, exclusion or objection. (as in “every country except the united states agreed to accept the conference’s recommendations”)

- **“Have” versus “of”:**

-the correct phrases are “could have”, “should have”, and “would have” –not “could of”, “should of” or “would of”.

- **“Principle” versus “Principal”**

-Principle: A noun, meaning a fundamental law, doctrine, or assumption “or” a rule or code of conduct” (as in “My principles prevented me from cheating on that final exam”)

-principal: An adjective, meaning “most important, consequential, or influential” (as in “the principal problem facing Bolivia’s economy is the country’s lack of a seaport”)

-“Dominate” versus “Dominant”

- Dominate: A verb (as in “Mexico’s soccer team is going to dominate the next world cup competition”)

- Dominant: An adjective (as in “the United States was the dominant economic actor after World War II”)

- “Lead” versus “led”

- Lead (pronounced, “led”): A metallic element (as in “Superman’s X-ray vision cannot penetrate lead-lined walls”)

- Lead (pronounced “lead”): verb, meaning “to guide” or “to direct” (as in “In the business world you must lead, follow, or get out of the way”)

-led: the past form of the verb “to lead” (as in “He led the llama to pasture”)

- “populous” versus “populace”

-Populous: An adjective, meaning “densely populated” (as in “A country’s capital is not necessarily its most populous city”)

- Populace: A noun, referring to a set of people living in a certain area (as in “the entire populace was affected by the radioactive fallout”)

- “Where” versus “were”:-

Where: Refers to a place or location (as in “where do you think you are going?”)

-were: A past form of the verb “to be” (as in “they were going to the store”).

- “Than” versus “Then”:

- Than: used to compare (as in “I would rather receive an A than a B)

- Then: refers to time/chronology (as in “He answered first one question, then another”) or consequences (as in “if both countries are democracies, then they will solve their problems short of war”)

- “Do” versus ‘Due”:

-Do; A verb, meaning “to bring to pass”, “to carryout” or “to accomplish” (as in “what are you trying to do?)

- Due: similar to “attributable to” or “because of” (as in “John’s low grade on the test was due to his failure to study”). Also “something that is owed” (as in a debt or a right)

-“Lose” versus “Loose”:

-Lose: A verb, meaning the opposite of win (as in “It is most painful to Lose to a hated rival”)

- Loose: An adjective, meaning “not securely attached” (as in “the hinge was coming loose”)

- “That”, “which”, and “who”

-That: a defining, or restrictive, pronoun. “That” is used to indicate which object is being discussed, and should not follow a comma (as in “The car that is parked in the garage is red”)

-which: A non-defining or nonrestrictive, pronoun. “which” adds some new detail about a specific object that has already been mentioned, and should follow a comma ‘as in “My new car,, which is red, is parked in the garage”)

-who: A personal pronoun- “who” should be used in place of “that” or “which” in discussing a person (as in “The student who did the most work got an A for the course “or” Bob, who did more work than his classmates, got an A for the course”)

-“e.g”, “i.e.”, “etc.”, “and”, “et al”:

-e.g.: 'For example', 'from the Latin 'example gratia' (as in 'Research on the evolution of interstate rivalry e.g., Hensel1996...')

-i.e. : "that is", "from the Latin" ides "(as in "the goal of this web page i.e., improving your writing skills-is...")

-etc: "And so farth"/"and others of the same kind, "from the latin "et cetera".

-et al: and others, ""from the latin" et alu[max], "et aliae" [Fem], or "et alia" [neutral](as in "singer,et al, found an important difference between the 19thand 20thcentries").

- **"Now" know" No":**

-**"Now"**: refers to the present time (as in "what we need now is a good rainstorm.

-**Know**: A verb, reflecting, recognition or understanding (as in "I Know everything there is to Know about this subject")

-**No**: the opposite of yes (as in "No, you can't eat that last cookie!")

- **"Border" versus "Boarder":**

- **Border**: In international relations, the line on a map that separates two or more geographic units.

- Boarder: “one who boards”, such as someone who is paying for meals and lodging or someone whose job involves going aboard seagoing vessels.

-So the correct international relations term is “border” as in the “Canadian border”. A “Canadian border” refers to someone from the great white North who is renting a room, rather than a line on a map separating Canada from Minnesota or New York.

-“Block” versus “Bloc”:

- Bloc: in international relations, a combination of individuals, groups, or countries united by treaty or sharing a common purpose.

- So the correct international relations term is “Bloc”, as in the “western bloc” and “soviet bloc” in the cold war. A “soviet Block” would be a small cube of wood with a hammer and sickle or pictures of Lenin (making for a very unusual child’s toy).

<http://www.paulhensel.org/teachprob.html> Last updated:5 July 2008.

6.2. Common Errors in students writing:

- The Eleventh Most common Errors in student writing:

Given below are sentences illustrating the most common errors in student writing? The formal name for the problem is stated. In each case, samples of tutor descriptions of the error

have been added; such descriptions can be more helpful for writers at times than names.

1)-John felt badly when he received a low grade on the final examination.

Adjective/ adverb confusion:

- The statement means the mechanism that allows you to feel is broken.

- Feel, smell, taste- the word following these verbs describes the subject (a noun or pronoun), not the verb.

- “Badly” here refers to the verb “felt”, which implies that John’s ability to feel is impaired.

-**Correct version:** John felt bad when he received a low grade on the final examination.

2)-There are no secrets between Mary and I.

- Pronoun case:

Mary and me- me is the object of the propulsion between; propulsions are followed by the object form of pronouns.

-you should be able to take out the words “Mary and “end still be able to read the sentence.

-Cut out the name; would you use I or me?

Correct version: There are no secrets between Mary and me.

3)- One of the many students who come from the scan avian countries are enrolled in my composition class.

- **Subject-verb agreement:**

-One is singular; are plural.

- A singular subject (one) should be followed by a singular verb (is, not are)

-Prepositional phrases (of the many students) are not an important part of the sentence when looking at verb agreements; the main idea (S+V) is one is enrolled.

-**Correct version:** one of the many students who come from the Scandinavian countries is enrolled in my composition class.

4)Trygve can't hardly get out of bed for his 8:00 class.

- **Double negative:**

- Two negative in a row-can't hardly

- "Hardly" is already negative-either he can hardly or he can't.

-The sentence literally (or mathematically) means that Trigger can easily get out of bed; two negatives= a positive.

-**Correct version:** Trigger can hardly get out of bed for his 8:00 class.

5) Entering the bakery, the smell of fresh pastries and coffee overwhelmed her.

- **Dangling construction:**

-It sounds like “the smell of fresh pastries and coffee” is “entering the bakery”

As a reader, I am unclear as to what was entering the bakery

- A woman or a smell?

- The actor of the sentence must be at the beginning of the independent clause.

- **Correct version:** Entering the bakery, she was overwhelmed by the smell of fresh pastries and coffee.

6) - In Strindberg’s *Miss Julie* an aristocratic woman pays a nighttime visit to the servants’ quarters and slept with the family Valet.

- **Verb tense shift:**

- Pick a verb tense and stick with it; present tense is the standard for writing about literature.

-A verb tense changes- The woman pays/The woman sleeps.

- Verb tenses should stay consistent within a sentence.

- **Correct version:** In Strindberg's *Miss Julie* an aristocratic woman pays a nighttime visit to the servants' quarters and sleeps with the family Valent.

7) The senator voted for the health care bill to the delight of the opposition. Although he had to admit that there were certain provisions with which he disagreed.

Sentence fragment:

- Although indicates that the segment following should be joined to the main clause.

Things that sound like afterthoughts or additions are rarely complete sentences.

- These two ideas can be combined to form one complex sentence; otherwise, the second clause is a fragment.

- **Correct version:** The senator voted for the health care bill to the delight of the opposition although he had to admit there were certain provisions with which he disagreed.

8) – Dairy farmers should receive a larger subsidy from the Federal government because of the increased cost of operation.

- Wrong verb from

- This sentence should read “should have” because “of” is a phonetic way of saying “have” in spoken English.

- Should've = should have.

- “of” is a preposition while “should have” is a helping or auxiliary verb.

- **Correct version:** Dairy farmers should have received a larger subsidy from the Federal government because of the increased cost of operation.

9) - Anne rode her bicycle to the meeting in the -40 temperatures; everyone else either drove or stayed home.

-Comma splice

- A comma doesn't correctly join two sentences (or two independent clauses).

- You have two complete sentences here; use a semi- colon or a period rather than a comma.

There is no putting two sentences together with just a comma.

-**Correct version:** Anne rode her bicycle to the meeting in the -40 temperatures; everyone else either drove or stayed home.

10)- Warren and Alice spent at least \$ 5000 on their Hawaiian vacation the trip could have been less expensive if they had stayed at hotels away from the beach.

-Run-on sentence:

-A new subject and a new verb after “vacation” –a new sentence.

-There are two complete sentences here not separated by punctuation.

-This sentence contains two complete throughputs without the necessary punctuation.

-Correct version: warren and Alice spent at least \$ 5000 on their Hawuan vacation; the trip could have been less expensive if they had stayed at hotels away from the beach.

11)- Ellen quit her job not only because of the long commute but also because she did not respect her supervision

-(Lack of) Parallel construction:

-If you want to use not only... but also, the word group following each part (phrase or clause) must be parallel in the construction.

-Because + prepositional phrase is grammatically different from because + S +V

-Match the form of items joined by coordinating conjunctions or phrases.

-**Correct version:** Ellen quit her job only because she had a long commute but also because she did not respect her supervisor.

(from Rich Carr, Director, UAF writing center and computer Laboratory) <https://www.uaf.edu>

Conclusion:

As we have seen, this chapter is general overview of writing, it has been divided into two parts .the first part explored the definition and the nature of writing as a complex cognitive activity it also included the basic rules of writing beside it highlighted the relationship between writing and reading as these skills integrate with one another. The second part of this chapter had tried to provide a description and analysis of the teaching writing in Algeria. It deals deals also with the main problems that students face during their writing.

CHAPTER TWO:
Data Analysis and
Interpretation

Introduction

The present chapter devoted to the analysis of the information's gathered from the student's questionnaire. It also presents an interpretation of the results obtained it seems to give the students an opportunity to express their ideas not only by means of assignments but via questionnaire as well. The questionnaire was given in order to explore and investigate how the first year student confront the task of writing and the way they perceive the writing process in general. In this section we will see the results of the student's questionnaire to check the validity of the research hypothesis.

-1- Administration of the questionnaire:

The target population of this study is first year LMD English students at the University of Dr. Tahar Mouley in Saida. There are **30** students selected randomly. The reason for choosing this population is that students study writing for the first time at the university, therefore, they can give us enough information's about their problems within this module.

On the whole, the participants' ages from **19** to **24** years. It can be said that most of the students are young adults whose differences of ages would certainly not alter the results of this study.

Concerning gender, most participants are Female. There are **25** females and **5** males. It is to be specified that girls are the dominant sex in the field of foreign language learning since many decades.

-2- The description of the questionnaire:

The questionnaire consists of **09** questions. **05** questions are close-ended and **04** questions are open-ended with multiple choices.

The questions are divided into two sections:

-section one: (Q1- 2- 3- 4 5- 6-)General information: It is about how the students view the module of “written expression” interesting or not.

-section two: (Q: 7- 8- 9) the writing skill: about the writing skill. It aims to explore how the students deal with the different aspect of writing skill.

3- Analysis of questionnaire:

- Question one:

Do you find the module of “written Expression” interesting?

-yes

-No

options	N	%
Yes	26	86.66 %
No	04	13.33 %
Total	30	100

Table: 3.1: How students view the module of “written expression”?

Table: 3.1: shows that **86.66 %** of the students find the module of “written expression” interesting. This means that our

students aware of the importance of writing. It is to the teachers to guide them get more motivated.

Surprisingly, only **13.33 %** said that “written expression” is not interesting, a result we did not expect at all.

Question two:

Does your teacher encourage you to write at home?

-Yes

-No

options	N	%
Yes	24	80 %
No	06	20 %
Total	30	100

Table: 3.2: Teachers encouragements in writing.

Most of the students (**80%**) said that their teachers encourage them to write at home. We believe that giving students topics to write about them always active and is a good way to enhance their writing. While (**20%**) of them said that their teachers don't encourage them to write, so we believe that some teachers want to let their students write freely without guiding them.

Question three:

If “yes”, please explain how?

- The explanation of the students can be summed up in the following points:
 - Our teachers encourage us to write at home. S/he often gives us activities (essays, paragraphs) to write and frequently talks about the importance of writing.
 - S/he encourages us to write, and repeatedly says: the more you write, the more you become good writers.
 - S/he insists on the fact that we have to write and write and write again to learn writing.

Question four:

In general do you trust yourself as a person who can find good words and ideas and perceptions?

-Yes

-No

options	N	%
Yes	20	66.66 %
No	10	33.33 %
Total	30	100

Table 03.4: Finding good words and ideas and perceptions.

The results shows that **66.66 %** of the students can find good words and ideas and perceptions which shows us that our students are able to develop their writing abilities through time and they will be good writers. While **33.33%** of the students do not trust themselves as persons who can find good words and ideas and perceptions, this may be due to their lack of reading, and coordination between the different modules, and lack of practice.

Question five:

Do you think of yourself as a writer?

-Yes

-No

options	N	%
Yes	10	33.33 %
No	20	66.66 %
Total	30	100

Table 03- 5: Believing themselves as writers:

The majority of the students (**66.66%**) don't think of themselves as writers because they are not able to write without mistakes.

They can't collect enough ideas, or they are not able to organize themselves. When **33.33%** of the students thinks themselves as writers,

Question six:

On a topic that doesn't much interest you; can you generate lots of ideas and words quickly? -Yes -No

Options	N	%
Yes	13	43.33 %
No	17	56.66 %
Total	30	100

Table 03-06: Generating lots of ideas and words quickly in a topic that doesn't much interest them.

This table (03-06) shows that **56.66%** can't generate lots of ideas and words in topic that doesn't much interest them, because students need to liked the topic before writing. While **43.33%** of the students can generate lots of ideas, that goes back to their desire to write without interest in the subject.

Question 07:

Good writing is (you can tick more than one answer)

a- Correct grammar

b- Good ideas.

c- Precise vocabulary

d- Spelling

e- Other

options	N	%
a	25	83.33
b	21	70
c	12	40
d	4	13
e	1	3

Table 03.07: what is good writing?

From the table 03.07 according to the majority of the students 83.33%, good writing is correct grammar, 70% of the students indicated that good writing is related to good ideas, and 40% of them see that it relation to precise vocabulary, 4% of them see that good writing is spelling, while only one student think that good writing is relation to other aspects.

Question 08:

What is the most difficult step in writing according to you?

F- Pre-writing

g- Writing first draft

h- Revising

e-Editing

options	N	%
F	14	46.66
g	13	43.33
h	1	3.33
i	5	16.66

Table 03.08: The most difficult step in writing process.

From table **03.08** we see that the majority of students (**46.66**) have difficulties with one of the most important stages in the writing process, Pre-writing, **43.33%** of the students said that writing initial drafts is the step in the writing process that gives them crucial in the writing process, they do not seem to cause much difficulty.

Question 09:

When you re-read what you have written, do you make changes concerning: (you can choose more than one answer)

a- Content organization.

b- Vocabulary.

c- Grammar.

d- Punctuation

e- Spelling.

options	N	%
a	13	43.33
b	9	30
c	14	46.33
d	18	60
e	5	16.66

Table 03.09: what students do when they re-read their writing?

It seems from table **03.09** that the category which requires the most changes is punctuation (**60%**) the categories grammar and content organization come next with **46.66%** and **43.33%**.

Finally, **30%** of the students make changes concerning vocabulary and **16.66%** of them concerned with changes in content organization when they read back, this finding is really encouraging since the adopted approach is the process approach where there is a greater focus on the content rather than the form.

4- Discussion of the results of the Questionnaire:

From the questionnaire we can obtain that almost students (**86.60%**) find the module of writing interesting. Such a finding is very encouraging, and the teacher has to get students more motivated and interested.

When speaking about the writing process, we find that **83.33%** of the students see that good writing is correct grammar

then good ideas so when they write they focus almost the time on grammar. 46.66% of the students who answered the questionnaire face most difficulties during the pre-writing stage. This finding is reasonable since pre-writing is an important stage of writing. However, students can overcome this difficulty if they keep in mind that whatever they want to write is not the final product, they prepare themselves to start writing, and achieving an adequate final product. In addition, we can see that punctuation is the most important component according to them, then grammar and content organization. This results accurse that students are aware not only about the ideas, they made aware of the importance of each single stage (grammar, punctuation...) of the process in order to produce a good piece of writing.

Conclusion:

The analysis of student's questionnaire reveals that students have a little difficulty in approaching the writing task. It confirms that writing is a challenging and complex skill because students showed that they have difficulties in dealing with the different aspects like grammar, vocabulary, content and ideas organization as well as the other mechanics of writing, spelling, and punctuation. Furthermore, the results show that students have a little awareness, the writing, process, but they consider pre-writing as a major stage while they view the other stages as minor ones. Students should be made aware of the importance of each single stage, because all the stages of the process contribute to help students produce a good results.

CHAPTER THREE:

Writing Strategies

Introduction:

Perhaps you have dreams of becoming the next great novelist or maybe you just want to be to better express your thoughts and ideas more clearly. Whether you want to improve your writing skills as a creative writer or simply perfect your skills for schoolwork, you can take some steps to learn how to be a better writer. Becoming a great writer or even a good writer-takes practice and knowledge, but with enough hard work perhaps some day will aspire to be the next you!

In this chapter you will find advice on what you can do to develop your writing.

1. Strategies to assist students with writing Difficulties:

Writing involves juggling many things at the same time: grammar, spelling, letter formation, vocabulary, punctuation, capitalization, content, and following the directions of educators. All of these skills must be automatic for writing to be effective. For most of us, this is a big task. However, for many students with learning disabilities (LDs), it is an almost impossible chore.

As a student progresses through school, the challenges relating to writing continue to increase. Students become involved in story writing, editing, and research, not-taking. Text/exam writing, etc. All of these tasks require planning and time.

Students with LDs who have difficulties in writing are often accused of procrastination or lack of effort, and indeed may become discouraged if they do not get help. It is important for educators to recognize where the breakdown in written language occurs, and find creative ways to assist these students. Difficulties can be in Handwriting and/or in written expression.

1.1. Identifying and addressing Difficulties in Handwriting:

The term dysgraphia is sometimes used to describe the specific aspect of fine motor function which affects the speed, fluency and legibility of writing.

- Common forms include

- Motor memory dysfunction, lack of automaticity of letter formation (cannot rapidly remember how to form letters).
- Graph motor production deficits-incorrect pencil grip (perpendicular, too close to tip, excessive pressure).
- Motor feedback problems-trouble keeping track of where the pencil is while writing.

Students with handwriting difficulties often avoid paper pencil tasks and have reduced written output.

1.2. Suggestions for addressing handwriting difficulties:

- For students learning to print/write, teach letter formation in a methodical (ie. Grouping letters which have similar formation), emphasizing the correctness of pencil grip, motor memory for the letter formations, practice for fluency.
- Have the student practice coping for short periods of time and then increasing the time as fluency increase.
- Encourage the use of pencil grips and/or large mechanical pencils.
- Encourage use of alternative paper material (e.g for younger students, paper with raised lines provides a sensory guide for the student to stay within the lines).
- Encourage training for keyboarding skills so that a computer can be used for school assignments.

-

1.3. Identifying and Addressing Difficulties in written Expression:

Frequently, students with LDs demonstrate a significant discrepancy between oral expression and reading ability Vs. their written output. This functional gap is a source of extreme frustration for everyone involved, particularly the student who does not understand why they are unable to write with the same ease as they can understand, think and discuss.

Sources of this breakdown include:

- Lack of skill/expertise with the writing process-i.e. putting thoughts on paper in a organized, sequenced and edited form.
- Not following the necessary writing stages. i.e. prewriting and writing.
- Weak active working memory- i.e. remembering and using all the skills involved in written production: expressing ideas and knowledge, grammar, punctuation, capitalization, proofreading, editing, etc.
- Weak revision and proofreading skills.
- Attention weaknesses-weak sustained attention for difficult tasks, distractibility, loss mental energy, easily fatigued.
- Difficulty recognizing “the big picture”, disorganization.
- Slow processing speed, weak retrieval memory.

1.4. Suggestions for addressing written expression difficulties:

- Assist with the development of a schedule allowing time to complete assignments.
- Work in small time periods rather than spending hours at a time.
- Begin with a brainstorming stage has spelling or graph motor problems, scribe for them or allow use of a computer.
- Help the student organize their ideas from the brainstorming to an organization software such as inspiration, spark-space)
- Encourage the student to elaborate on which ideas need to be included in the assignment within the organizational mode.
- - Begin writing first/rough draft from the model.
- Edit for vocabulary usage, sentencing, grammatical constructions, mechanics of writing (spelling, capitals, punctuation, paragraphing)

1.5. Suggested accommodations for written expression difficulties:

- Additional time for writing assignments.
- Alternative means of assessing knowledge (e.g. oral reports or visual projects)
- Marks for spelling only deducted when spelling is an essential skill requirements for task.
- For students who cannot keep up with note taking from a blackboard, provide a copy or outline.
- Use of organization assistive software.
- Use of a digital recorder to dictate thoughts or answers.

- Use of a scribe or speech-to-text assistive software.
- Use of a word prediction or spellchecker software

[Adapted from an article by Faye E. Hart, Educational Consultant (used with permission), which was based on the following references:

Levine, Mel. Educational care 1994:

Cambridge. Educators publishing Service Ltd: Levine, Mel keeping a Head school 1990: Cambridge. Educators publishing Service Ltd.

2.16 Ways to improve your writing skills:

Writing is intimidating to a lot of people, particularly those who don't write for a living or blog on a regular basis. The good news is that writing doesn't have to be organizing, and almost anybody can hone their writing skills with a little discipline and a willingness to learn. By these 16 ways you can start improving your writing skills right now.

2.1. Brush up on the basics:

Before you can start writing incredible content, you'll need at least an intermediate understanding of the basic principles of writing. This doesn't mean you need to enroll in a prestigious creative writing program at an ivy league university, but you will need to know the basics of grammar and spelling.

Every writer should have a copy of "**The Elements of Style** «by Strunk and White on their books half, as this small but invaluable book

is one of the most comprehensive resources on the correct use of grammar and other helpful topics. For quick and easy online resource, book mark **grammar Girl** and, of course, **Herriam Webster**.

2.2. Write like it's your job:

If you want to get better at something, you have to practice, and writing is no exception. Unfortunately, there are few shortcuts that can transform you into an amazing writer overnight, and even the most talented writers had to learn their craft over a period of many years. It's admittedly even harder to write while considering SEO and how to drive traffic to your post.

If you want to improve your writing skills, writing on a regular basis will not only demise your fear of the blank page, it will also help you develop a unique style. So even if nobody reads it. Keep writing. Practice makes perfect.

2.3 head like it's your job:

Job best writers are also keen readers, and reading on a regular basis is an easy way to start developing your writing skills. I don't just mean blog posts, either-diversify your reading material. Expand your horizons to more challenging material than you typically read and pay attention to sentence structure, word choice, and how the material flows. The more you read the more luckily you are to develop an eye for what makes a piece so effective, and which mistakes to avoid.

2.4. Find a writing partner:

If you work at a reasonably sized company, the chances are pretty good that there is at least one another person who also secretly harbors a desire to become a better writer. Although writing is typically considered a solitary activity, the best writers know when it's time to get much-needed feedback on their work. Talk to your coworkers (or friends) and ask someone if they'd be willing to cat an eye over your work- they may spot mistakes that you overlooked. Finding a writing partner is also a great way to hold yourself accountable and keep going.

2.5. Join a workshop or take a night class:

Most people balk at the idea of standing in front p a room full of strangers and baring their soul to the world, but joining a writing workshop can be immensely beneficial-and a lot of fun(if you manage to find a good one). You don't need to have an unfinished navel hidden away in your desk drawer to join a workshop. These days, content marketing meet-ups and professional development groups are becoming wildly popular. Join one of the many content marketing groups on LinkedIn to meet like-minded writers, or search for writing workshops near you on sites like meet up. Pick a topic, write something, listen to the feedback of the group, and then revise it rinse, repeat.

2.6. Dissect writing that you admire:

Most people read the same blogs or sites on a regular basis because the material appeals to them-but fewer people understand why their favorite blogs are so appealing.

Find a handful of recent blog posts you really like, then print them out. Next, just like your high school English teacher did. Tacked a red pen and highlight things you liked: certain sentences, turns of phrases, even entire paragraphs. Examine why you like these elements, and see if there are any common threads in your favorite reading material. See how writers take one subject and transition into another. Apply these techniques to your own work. Let's take a look at a particularly powerful (and memorable piece) from copy blogger that serves as a great example of this.

Immediately, you're hooked by Morris' opening. You can't not read to see what happen next. The pacing is excellent, it grabs your attention, and best of all, it keep you reading. This piece was first published back in June, and I still remember it read the full post here, and see how Morris masterfully tells the story of a band named Death and how this relates to writing content.

2.7. Imitate writers you admire:

Before we go any further, a disclaimer-imitation is not the same as plagiarism. Don't rip off anyone's work. Ever, just as you probably have a list of blogs you read often, you'll likely also read the same writers on a regular basic. Identify what is you enjoy about their work,

and see if you can use it to improve your writing skills. Does a writer you like use humor to spice up dry topics? Try it. Do they use pop culture references to make their work entertaining and useful? Try that, too.

When I first started writing, I imitated some of my favorite nonfiction writers and essayists, such as Joan Didon, Truman Capote and Bill Bryson. I also attempted (and failed) to imitate writers such as Dave Eggers and Dan Kennedy, but soon realized that I wasn't funny enough and gave it up. Over time, I eventually developed my own style, but reading the works of these writers and seeing how they constructed their essays and books was immensely helpful to me as a writer.

2.8. Remember that outlines are your friend:

The blinking cursor of a blank page is a considerable foe, even for the most experienced writers. Before putting pen to proverbial paper, sketch out an outline of what you plan to write. This will be your battle plan, and it will help you win the war, very few writers sit down to write anything without a solid plan in mind. An outline doesn't have to be complex. A simple framework of which sections should appear in a particular order, along with a few sentences about what each section contains, may be enough. If the topic you're tackling is a little more complex, your outline might have to be, too—but having an outline before you write is like having a roadmap in the glove box of

your car before a road trip. If you start to feel list, refer back to your outline and get back to kicking ass and taking names.

Let's take a look at a real example:

Introduction:

Brief summary of the post.

Section one: what is brand voice?

Paragraph (s) explaining the key principles behind voice (style, tone, and messaging). Examples of each.

Section two: Developing Brand voice with content:

- Explanations of how to develop brand voice using content (written, visual, video).
- Considerations for content producers/marketers to bear in mind when producing content (strategy, goals, overall brand messaging).

Section 03: Examples of content that builds brand voice:

Several examples (three or four) of content that align well with marketing positioning and branding of recognizable brands

Conclusion: Wrap-up

This outline eventually becomes a recent post about brand voice. I deviated from my initial outline slightly, but the overarching structure was always there to keep me on target.

2.9. Edit your work ruthlessly:

So, you're writing every day (or regular, at least) and you're feeling more confident about your work. Awesome! Now you're going to become your own harshest critic.

Editing is a tough skill to learn for beginner writer to learn for beginner writers, because they place immense value on the time and effort they put into writing in the first place.

However, a lot of writing is actually rewriting, and this is where the cold, hard eye of an editor will serve you well.

Develop the discipline it takes to eliminate extraneous words (more on this shortly). Resist the temptation to wax lyrically and get to the point. Not sure if a paragraph works? It probably isn't. Be tough on yourself, and know when to delete or rework something. Your work will be much stronger as a result.

2.10. Accept that first Draft Are Almost Always Crap:

The best writers make it look so easy. After reading a great post. It's tempting to imagine your favorite bloggers effortlessly turning in incredible posts with minimal effort before spending the rest of their day reading obscure books in a quaint corner café' somewhere. Tacked comfort in the knowledge that this isn't how writing works.

First drafts are almost always crap, and that's okay don't beat yourself up if you don't create a masterpiece on your first attempt-

chances are you probably won't, and that's okay, too. Just get your ideas down on paper first, then go back and start cleaning up. Writing is an iterative process, and even the best writers have to spend a lot of time reworking material they were probably too embarrassed to show anybody.

2.11. Find a Good (Patient) Editor:

Whether you're trying to make the case for a content strategy to your manager or want to start guest blogging on your favorite sites, finding and working with a good editor is one of the best things you can do to improve your writing skills. The best are those who show you why something doesn't work, rather than just telling you that it doesn't.

Allowing someone else to read your work can be brutally difficult for some writers, especially when they're just starting out, but it's crucial that you develop good habits from the outset and learn to accept constructive criticism about your work. Remember-writers are desperately need creatures who need to be constantly reassured that they're the creative geniuses they believe themselves to be, but you'll need to develop thick skin if you're serious about your work, and a good editor is invaluable when it comes to toughening up.

2.12. Eliminate unnecessary words:

Another common mistake among beginner writers (and some more experienced writers who should know better) is writing overly complex sentences in an attempt to “sound” more authoritative.

In many cases, shorter sentences can have a greater impact you may have heard of a six-word story that was supposedly written by Ernest Hemingway, which reads, “for sale: Baby shoes, never won” whether Hemingway wrote this or not is irrelevant-the power of these six words shows that brevity can be a powerful tool when used correctly, and not every sentences needs to be overwrought to get your point across.

Whether you’re a newcomer to Ad Words or have been running PPC campaigns since Google launched the platform in 2000 (with a grand total of 350 customers) for years, you’ve probably given a great deal of thought to about which keywords will result in more clicks and higher conversions- not to mention that vacation home in lacketahoe you’ve been dreaming about.

2.13. Take a stroll Down Memory Lane:

Writing should be fun, and along with the thrill of seeing your byline for the first time, seeing how far you’ve progressed is one of the most satisfying parts of being a writer.

Every now and then (but not too often), re-read your earlier work and marvel at how much better you are now than you were then.

Put yourself on the back. You've worked hard, so don't be shy-congratulate yourself.

2.14. Don't be Afraid to say what you think:

Most content on the web is bland and dreadfully boring this is because far too many bloggers focus on regurgitating the same news as everybody else without bothering to add their own opinions. Obviously you don't want to fall afoul of bible laws, but that doesn't mean you can't (or shouldn't) say what you think.

Once you've started to discover your own "voice", don't be shy about sharing your opinions. This makes for more interesting reading. Don't be contrarian for its own sake, and don't set out to purposefully piss anyone off, but make sure there's enough of you in your writing to make it a worth while read for your audience.

2.15. Do your Research:

A side from plagiarizing someone else's work nothing will undermine your credibility faster than failing to do your homework.

In their eagerness to be done with a blog post (or even major newspaper article), many writers try to take shortcuts with the facts. This can range from accidentally fudging a statistic out of haste to being lazy when it comes o sourcing or attribution. Not only can this land you in big trouble with your editor/ content marketing

manager/other boss-type person it also makes you look like an amateur.

Everybody makes mistakes, and you don't need to spend weeks cross-referencing every last statistic, but common sense should prevail here-don't rely exclusively on sites like Wikipedia, and use current, primary sources whenever possible.

2.16. Don't take weeks to finish a post:

You should definitely take the time to write as well as you can, proofread and edit your work thoroughly, and ensure that your piece flows logically from one point to the text next. However, this doesn't mean you should take weeks to write something.

No blog post (or any piece of writing, for that matter) will ever be perfect-you have to know when it's time to let it go. This is especially important in content marketing, because you'll rarely (if ever) have the luxury of crafting agonizingly beautiful blog posts full of poignant sentences and evocative imagery. As you become more confident, the "writing" part of writing will become easier and faster, but never lose sight of the fact that deadlines, or editorial calendars, are just as much your masters as any boss or manager. By danshewan/Mar 6, 2017

-Recommendations:

Since we noticed that both students and teachers faced some problems with the writing skill, this dissertation attempted to propose some strategies and solutions. In the light of the obtained results, we recommend the following:

-The process approach to teaching writing should be generalized and adopted by the teachers of written expression in the department of foreign languages. In other words, teachers should be sufficiently trained till they master the different phases of the writing process.

-Teaching should devote enough time and effort when dealing with the numerous stages of the writing process.

-Teachers should teach the various writing stages as a set of rigid and fixed steps rather, they should bear in mind that these stages are recursive and dynamic.

In other words, students can return to any stage of the writing process several times during the act of composing.

-Students should recognize the importance of using the writing stages, and should be told regularly that the more they go through them, the more they produce better writing.

-Students should also be aware of the fact that each writing task requires different portions to cognitive operations.

-Teachers should encourage students to go through the different stages of the writing process by creating activities that involve

students to make use of these stages. For instance, a teacher may ask his/her students to write journals.

-Teachers should also motivate students to write through the several stages of writing by giving good marks to those students who apply these stages.

-Last but not least, students should be provided with enough time when they writing process.

-Teachers should suggest easy and purposeful activities to enhance learners' understanding and memorization of a big number of vocabulary items.

Examples

Exercise one: link the nouns with the verbs you think are normally used together:

-Lose:	- your patience	-Say:	- a promise
	- Inopportunity		- yes
	- A game		- the truth
	- You temper		- a story
	- Weights		- a lie
	- The bus		- good bye

Conclusion:

This concluding chapter is a sum of suggestions and ways regarding the teaching of writing to first-year university students. It is intended to help writing teachers bring hopefully some positive changes in their methodology with respect to the teaching of writing. Some suggested strategies have been given to enhance students' abilities and help them to improve their writing proficiency level. Some suggested activities have been given to enhance students' autonomy and help students improve their writing proficiency level.

***GENERAL
CONCLUSION***

General conclusion:

In the present study, our objective was to explore and give a clear picture of the current teaching of English writing and its difficulties and hindrances for first year EFL students at the department of English language of Saida University.

It is easily noticeable among Algerian university learners that after many years of English learning (Four years in the middle school and three years in the secondary), they still find themselves unable to use the English language, let alone make an effective use of its writing. As they engage in writing, students find real difficulties to make use of the structures and patterns they have learnt, this is problematic because being lexically and grammatically inaccurate may prevent them from conveying effectively their messages, the situation led the investigation to ask the following questions:

- What are the main writing skills difficulties that affect the performance of the English language students?
- Do writing skill difficulties of English language students depend on the quality of the techniques that teachers apply?
- Do writing skill difficulties of English language students depend on the strategies they apply when writing?
- It is useful for the students to have previous knowledge in writing for the composition requirements at the university?

In order to support the following hypothesis, a data source was used (student's questionnaire,) such as:

1- The current teaching writing does not provide adequate preparation because of the teaching approach used (product approach), lack of materials, inadequate timing, lack of coordination between the different modules and lack of students' practice.

2- If teachers use well-structured learning activities and design appropriate small group tasks, their learners will develop their writing skill and engage productively in classroom activities.

3- Students difficulties in writing skills might be due to their lack of awareness of the different writing stages.

This investigation was divided into three chapters. The first chapter is a through exploration of the writing process in terms of its nature, its basic rules, its problems; we presented the Algerian educational system and explained the development of the teaching of writing to EFL students.

The second chapter of the dissertation is a field investigation which took of form of the questionnaire that has been carried out by first year LMD English students and at the department of Foreign languages, University of Saida. The third and the last chapter tried to present some strategies to assist students with writing and some ways to improve their writing skills.

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Appendices