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Identifying EFL Learners Essay Writing Difficulties

and Sources: A Move Towards Solution

The Case of Second Year EFL Learners at Tlemcen University

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Abstract

There is a general agreement among scholars that performing coherent and cohesive piece of writing among EFL students is not an easy task. In this regard, the present study aims primary at identifying EFL learners essay writing difficulties and their sources as well as to find out possible solutions towards achieving effectiveness in essay writing. The constitution of diverse research instruments including the questionnaire, the interview and students' essay writing help the investigator to have a broad view about the scope of this study. The collected data reveal that students meet difficulties at the level of coherence and cohesion due to the lack of reading and low writing practice. In hope to remedy and decrease these difficulties, a call for solutions are needed.

Acknowledgements

Dedications

To my beloved parents

To my sisters and my brother.

List of Abbreviations

L1: First Language

L2: Second Language

F L: Foreign Language

TL: Target Language

FLLs: Foreign Language Learners

ELT: English Language Teaching

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

NCW: National Commission on Writing

MT: Mother Tongue

FL1: First Foreign Language

FL2: Second Foreign Language

CWE: Comprehension and Written Expression

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General Introduction

General introduction

Countless of research works have been written about the teaching / learning of English as a foreign language. It is commonly known that to master the language, EFL learners need to be skillful enough at the four language skills namely; listening, speaking, reading and writing. This latter appears to be the most difficult language skill to be acquired by EFL learners and even by native speakers since it requires much time and effort.

It is approached to have particular criteria that should be respected and obeyed to perform adequate writing tasks. In this vein, teaching/ learning how to write plays a crucial role in language teaching/ learning classrooms. Though its importance, many EFL students face a serious number of difficulties that prohibit them from constructing satisfactory essay writing. In this respect, the following research questions are designed:

1- Which difficulties do EFL learners often encounter in essay writing?
2- What are the main sources behind their difficulties in essay writing?
3- How can EFL learners improve their essay writing?

For this reason, the following hypotheses have been set:
1- The difficulties that EFL learners often encounter in essay writing could be in coherence and cohesion.
2- The lack of reading is perhaps the main source behind EFL learners essay writing.
3- EFL learners may improve their essay writing b building their reading and writing habits.

Therefore, the present research work attempts significantly to account for which difficulties EFL learners encounter the most in essay writing, and to which sources are these difficulties related to along with finding out possible solutions to unveil

difficulties in essay writing. With these objectives in mind, the investigator selects three research instruments; students' questionnaire, teachers' semi structured interview, and students' essay writing analysis.

This research work is divided to three chapters. The first one displays the theoretical background of the issue in question. It deals with providing various definitions offered to the concept of writing, its close connectedness to reading, its importance in EFL classrooms. Besides, it discussed some common EFL learners essay writing difficulties and sources.

The second chapter is, however, concerned with a detailed description of the research instruments used to undertake this study, and the chosen sample. The third chapter deals with the analysis of students' questionnaire, their essay writing and teachers' semi-structured interview. Then, it sets some suggestions and recommendations for overcoming essay writing difficulties among these learners with the citation of some recommended activities.

Chapter One: Theoretical Background

1.1.   Introduction

The first chapter deals with one of the four language skills which is writing. This latter is observed to be the most difficult language skill to be learned and acquired by many foreign language learners (FLLs, henceforth). This chapter embodies the diverse definitions offered to the concept of the writing skill, and it also tackles its importance among FLLs. Besides, it investigates the common writing difficulties and their sources that prohibit them from achieving effective pieces of writing.

1.2.   Writing Skill Defined

Writing as being among the four language skills namely; listening, speaking, reading and writing, is considered as a complex language skill that devotes much time and efforts. Its complexity lies on the ability to produce meaningful sentences to carry a message in the language. In this vein, Widows (2001) states "writingis the use of visual medium to manifest the graphologicaland grammatical system of the language. That is to say, writing is the production of sentences as instances of usage" (p. 32)

As stated above, learners need to master the graphic system of the language, its grammar and appropriate vocabulary items related to the subject matter. In the same line of thought, Jim A.P (2010:2) highlightsthe fact that writing skill is complex and difficult to learn, requiring the mastery of not only the grammatical patterns but also the rule of writing such as a high degree of organization in the development of ideas and information, also choosing the appropriate vocabularies and sentence structure to create a style which is suitable to the subject matter. Hence, one my say that the two mentioned definitions hold the same idea.

Whereas, Harmer (2007) regards writing differently in which he states that writing is the fact of going through different stages in which the writer should respect them for the sack of producing a well formed piece of writing. According to him, the writing process covers four main elements; planning, drafting, editing and final draft. In this regard, Harmer (2007) defines writing as follows:

> Writing is the process- that is, the stages the writer goes
> through in order to produce something in its final form. This
> process may, of course, be affected by the content of the
> writing, the type of writing, and the medium it is written. This
> processhas four main elements: planning, drafting, editing and
> final draft. (p. 4)

In regard to the aforesaid, Tribble (1997) claimed that"writing isadifficult skill to acquire"(p. 65). This complexity resides in the stages of the process we go through when writing, the lack of knowledge in the subject matter, etc. Moreover, it can be related to psychological, linguistic and cognitive factors; this applies to writing of the first language (L1), second language (L2), and foreign language (FL).In a similar vein, Bell and Burnaby (1997) pointout that:

> Writing is a very complex cognitive activity in which writers
> must show control over content, format, sentence, structure,
> vocabulary, punctuation, spelling and letter formation, i.e.,
> control at the sentence level. Besides, writers must be able
> structure and integrate information cohesively and coherently
> within paragraphs and texts. (p. 148)

Bell and Burnaby (1997:148) claim that writing is not only a complex language skill but also a cognitive skill that writers are obliged to master sentence structure, appropriate selection of vocabulary items, a careful attention towards spelling and punctuation. They add that learners are required to master the linguistic knowledge and also the ability to integrate information coherently and cohesively in a written discourse. In fact, the definition being stated above fits the objectives behind this research work since the researcher is interested on the ability of FLLs to construct meaningful and correct grammatical sentences, and to integrate them within texts coherently and cohesively.

1.3. The Correlation Between Reading and Writing

It is wiser to record that the reading and the writing skills are said to be two distinct language skills. In other terms, the former is receptive while the latter is productive. Notwithstanding they are different, they are related in the sense that both of them are linked communication and ideas. Indeed, most recent trends in English Language Teaching (ELT) stress the close connection that exists between reading and writing skills.

In this vein and according to Eisterhold (1991) "reading in the writing classroom is understood as the appropriate input for acquisition of the writing skills, because it is generally assumed that reading progress will somehow function as primary models be inferred" (p. 202). Put simply, reading paved the way to writing since it is regarded as an effective way for input acquisition. In this way, learners can acquire the necessary knowledge that is implicitly introduced through the act of reading.

It is safe to say that writing cannot be learned or acquired alone, but usually with the integration of reading. In this regard, Stotsky(1983) pointed out "better writers tend to be betterreaders...better writers tend to read more than poorer writers... andbetter readers tend to produce more syntactically natural writing than poorer readers" (p. 88). Hence, according to him, good writers are better readers and improved readers have the ability to construct syntactically natural writing than poorer readers do.

This means that reading implicitly uncovers how words, phrases and sentences are arranged all together and therefore this fact help the writer to produce syntactically natural writing unlike poorer readers. In this respect, the reading skill is considered as the prominent skill to be mastered since it dictates implicitly the rhetoric of writing. One should note that the writing skill is the most important skill in L1, L2 and FL acquisition /learning for a number of reasons. In this sense, the coming section will tackle the importance of the EFL (English as a Foreign Language) writing skill.

1.4. The Importance of the EFL Writing Skill

Learning a FL entails the learning to write it. Indeed, all most all EFL learners are least proficient in writing since it is a difficult skill to acquire. As it is asserted by the National Commission on Writing (NCW) in America's school and college(2003, p7, as cited in MC Arthur, et.al., 2008,p1) "writing of students in the USA is not what it should be". Actually, a considerable study tackles the writing capabilities among school-age children and youth. This investigation reveals that three out of every 4th-12th grade students demonstrate only partial mastery of the writing skill.

In this respect, a wave of study has increased in this area of research concerning the importance of writing in teaching and learning instruction. Scholars find that the writing performance can provide different learning styles especially for those who find it difficult to learn through the oral skill. For this category of students, writing is likely an aid to retention. In other terms, students feel more secure and relax in writing rather than feeling obliged to deal with immediate communication through oral practice.

In addition, writing provides varieties in FL classrooms through the assigned activities including punctuation, grammar, to name just a few. Through writing, EFL learners can prevail over some grammar, spelling, punctuation difficulties. Nevertheless, some learners of English do not agree with the aforementioned. In this sense, Doff (1995) claims that:

> If we think only of long-term needs, writing is probably the least
> important of the four skills for many students, they are more likely
> to need to listen, to read and speak than to write it. Their need for
> writing is most likely to be for study purposes and also an
> examination skill. (p. 148)

The quotation being mentioned by Doff (1995) highlights the idea that some English students approach the writing skill as the least important requirement in their life. For the simple reason that they need to listen, read and speak English more than to write it. Learners ofEnglish are more likely to write it only to fulfill their

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instrumental needs; academic and educational purposes. In regard to what have been stated by Doff, writing is first and foremost the most significant language skill to be mastered by EFL learners.

In fact, the proficient writer is said to be the one who can adapt his writing flexibly to the context in which it takes place. In the educational context, learners can employ various strategies like planning, evaluating and revising text to accomplish a variety of goals including writing a report or expressing ideas with the support of evidence. Besides, it is a skill that enables learners to overcome and promote some weaknesses in handwriting, vocabulary knowledge, capitalization, grammar, to mention a few.

Therefore, the careful interaction between the aforesaid elements, learners can produce coherently organized essays with pertinent ideas, supporting examples and appropriate details. Yet, EFL learners are subject to encounter some writing difficulties that hinder them from producing good essays. In this respect, the following section will be devoted to consider some writing difficulties among EFL learners.

1.5. Common EFL Learners' Difficulties in Essay Writing

This section reviews a number of writing difficulties in the EFL context. In this area of research, researchers find that EFL learners face many different writing difficulties including; topics of writing, coherence, cohesion, lexical, grammar and mechanical difficulties like; spelling and punctuation.

1.5.1. Topics of Writing

In fact, a handful of studies have examined the effect of writing topics on EFL writing performance. In this regard, Huang (2008) highlights the fact that the difficulty of the essay topic in examination is animportant aspect that can hinder students' ability to write. He finds that the more familiarity the topic is, the more EFL can succeed in their writing. When the writing topic is familiar by the student

writer, s/he will have more opportunity to generate ideas with the support of evidence.

However, when the topic is unfamiliar, there would be a block in the flow of ideas and therefore, it will result in poor writing and sometimes no writing is achieved. In a similar vein, Lee (2008) reaches the conclusion that writing performance is greatly affected by task-related elements including topic familiarity which is perceived differently by each individual writer. It is safe to say that Huang andLee (2008) go onto claim that the writing topic has an effect on the students' writing performance.

Essentially, Gradwohl and Schumacher (1989) stress the fact that learners have significantly more knowledge on the topics they select themselves compared to those teacher-selected ones. This fact is also confirmed by other researchers who find students-selected writing topics will motivate them to write, and building up positive attitudes towards target language writing (TL). Shippen. et.al. (2007) do a survey regarding students' performances of essay writing topics. They conclude that learners prefer writing about contemporary events, teen issues, hobbies, celebrities, to quote a few.

In regard to what have been mentioned above, one may say that in order for EFL learners to improve their writing skill, EFL teachers are required to bring familiar themes that suite the learners' interest. This can be attainedthrough a continuous feedback between students and teachers about writing topics.

1.5.2. Coherence Difficulties

According to Halliday and Hasan (1976), coherence, or texture, is the combination of semantic configuration of two different kinds: register and cohesion. In a more explicit way, coherent is the ability to produce meaningful correct sentences with the appropriate use of vocabulary items. Johns (1986) approaches coherence in written text as "a complex concept, involving a multitude of reader-andtext-based features" (p. 247). In this sense, text-based features refer to cohesion, that is, the liking of sentences and unity, i.e., sticking to the point.

While, reader-based features mean that the reader interacts with the text depending on his prior knowledge. One should note that Halliday and Hasan (1976) view coherence at a sentence level independent from a written discourse. However, Johns (1986) considers it in terms of a sentence within a written discourse.

The issue of coherence among EFL learners is believed to be the most difficult that learners often commit. In this regard, a number of researchers in the Arab world have spotlight students' coherence problems in writing. In this vein, Qaddumi (1995) finds out that Arab students' writings reveal that repetition, parallelism, sentence length, lack of variation and misuse of some cohesive devices are the major sources for their incoherent and textual deviation. In addition, findings in the current study show that Egyptian students of English experience some coherence and cohesion difficulties in their English essay writing.

As far as coherence difficulties is concerned, investigations have disclosed that Egyptian English learners encounter difficulties in writing the introduction, the thesis statement, the topic sentence, the concluding sentence and the writing of the conclusion. Moreover, Arab students of English overuse coordinate sentences and misuse topic sentences which are believed to be the major reasons for their incoherent and unacceptable piece of writing. Taking into account coherent difficulties among EFL learners, diverse studies have acknowledged that cohesion difficulties are also manifested in these learners. In this respect, the coming section will be discussing cohesion problems among EFL learners.

1.5.3. Cohesion Difficulties

As far as cohesion is concerned, many researchers come onto claim that cohesion can be defined from macro and micro level of writing. From the macro level, cohesion is related to the liking of ideas, whereas from the micro level it is concerned with the connection of sentences and phrases. According to Halliday and Hasan (1976) "the concept of cohesion is a semantic one; it refers to relations of meaning that exist within the text, and that define it as a text" (p. 4). Put simply, cohesion is the relation that exists between lexis and grammar, i.e., Endophoricrelation, as well

as how grammar and vocabulary facilitate the understanding of sentence sequences within a text, that is, Exophoric relation.

Recently, Bailey(2003) emphasizes that text cohesion is highly dependent on its clarity and readability through liking all phrases together. He asserts that this could be achieved by using some methods including the use of conjunctions and within text references. In this vein, Halliday and Hasan (1976) identity five cohesive devices which signal coherence in texts that are: ellipsis, i.e., it refers to the omission of a structure in the sentence without affecting the meaning).

Ellipsis is defined by Harmer (2004) as   "(...) words are deliberately left out of a sentence when the meaning is still clear" (p. 24). In the similar ground, Kennedy (2003) "ellipsis is the process by which noun phrase, verb phrase, or clauses are deleted or 'understood' when they are absent" (p. 324). In this sense, ellipsis personifies three kinds; nominal, verbal and clausal. The following examplesput on view the three aforesaid types of ellipsis.

- ➢ **Nominal Ellipsis:** it occurs when a noun/ nouns are omitted with the preservation of the meaning.
  - ▪ e.g., My kids practise an awful lot of sport. Both (x) are incredibly energetic. The omission concerned with *'My kids'*.
- ➢ **Verbal Ellipsis:** it takes place when the verb is elided with perpetuation of the meaning of the sentence.
  - ▪ e.g., A: Have you been working?

    B: Yes, I have (x).

The omission of the verb in the above example is said to be '*been working'*

- ➢ **Clausal Ellipsis:** it functions as a verbal ellipsis, where the omission refers to a clause
  - ▪ e.g., A: why did you only set three places?

    B: Is he. He did not tell him (x).

With this example the omission falls on the 'Paul's *staying for dinner'.*

Substitution, that is, it involves the replacement of a word, a phrase or a group of words by another one without having an effect on the meaning. According to Halliday and Hassan (1976) substitution is the process by which one feature (in a text) substitutes with either one word or an expression. As such, one can substitute nouns, verbs and clauses.

- ➢ **Nominal Substitutions:** nouns and nominal nouns can be replaced by another noun.
  - ▪ e.g., There are some new tennis balls in the baf. **These ones** have lost their bounce.

Tennis Balls is substituted by *These ones*.

- ➢ **Verbal Substitution:** The verb or verbal group is substituted by another item.
  - ▪ e.g., A: Amine says you drink too much

    B: So **do** you?

Drink too much is replaced by *Do.*

- ➢ **Clausal substitution:** where the clause usually substituted by' so' and/or 'not'.
  - ▪ e.g., A: It is going to rain.

    B: I think **so.**

Going to rain is substituted by *So.*

Reference, as a cohesive device,occurs when one item in a text points to another element for its interpretation. In this regard, Halliday and Hassan (1976) point out that reference features that can be interpreted within the text including pronoun reference(He, She, They...), articles (A, An and The), demonstrative (That, This...) and comparative (More, Little...). Lexical cohesion, that is, it denotes the repetition of noun phrases or the use of other noun phrase that bears a relation to the noun phrase mentioned before. In this vein, Halliday and Hassan (1976) claim that lexical cohesion is created for the choice of vocabulary that carries the same role of the former item.

On the other hand, conjunctions cover words that are used to relate or link two sentences, ideas or paragraphs together. To put it differently, conjunctions carries

grammatical relationship between sentences which combine them to have meaningful discourse. Halliday and Hassan (1976) describe this cohesive device as follows:

In describing conjunction as cohesive device, we are

> focusing attention on the semantic relation as such, as realized throughout the grammar of the language, but on one particular aspect of them, namely the function they have of relating to each other linguistic element that occur in succession but are not related by other, structural mean. (p. 227)

Actually, a focused instruction and additional attention should be paid to text cohesion among EFL learners in order for these educators to achieve good writing quality in terms of cohesion. Cohesion difficulties in writing are committed not only by EFL learners, but also by English native speakers. In this vein, Cox et.al. (1990) examined the appropriate use of cohesive devices in the writing 48 university English students in Chicago. They find out that good readers achieve significantly more complex cohesive devices than do poor readers.

Besides, poor readers make inappropriate use of cohesive devices significantly more often than do good readers. This result reveals that students' knowledge of cohesion is highly related to their reading skill. Another study is conducted regarding the issue of cohesion among EFL learners' writings. This study shows that these learners overuse some conjunctions and linkers. In this regard, it was recommended that learners should not be given lists of 'interchangeable' connectors, but instead they should be thought how to use them within different contexts.

In Jordan, Hamdan (1988) investigates the extent to which topic familiarity affects cohesion and coherence in texts written by Jordanian university students of English. In relation to students' competency of cohesive devices use, findings show that cohesion proficiency and the adequate use of cohesive devices are satisfactory since the topic is familiar. He concludes that topic familiarity comes to serve as a useful way to produce pieces of writing which are more fairly coherent and cohesive.

1.5.4. Lexical Difficulties

In fact, vocabulary is an essential prerequisite for writing. However, some research studies find that second language writers encounter some difficulties in lexis. Such a difficulty is often faced by almost all EFL learners. In an attempt to identify the factors behind this difficulty, Hemmati (2002) has interviewed 30 Iranian EFL students' writers regarding vocabulary difficulties in their writing, he finds that these writers have both competence-based and performance-based vocabulary difficulties, and their strategies for coping with these difficulties appear to be pertinent to their writing proficiency.

In the same vein, William (2004) finds that difficulties of lexical choices arise under the lack of some linguistic resources and the misuse of available resources. Nevertheless, other studies reveal that the lack of reading in the TL is the factor behind their failure in writing. The advocate of this idea highlight the fact that reading in TL help EFL learners to acquire some vocabulary knowledge to better their foreign language (FL) writing. The continuous practice of reading, they will implicitly learn how words are carefully selected to convey particular idea in a given context. In this respect, one may say that reading in the TL is a good mediator for EFL learners to overcome some vocabulary difficulties.

1.5.5. Grammatical Difficulties

Crystal (1992:35) defines grammar as "an analysis of the structure of language". Without grammar, there would be individual separate words; this is why it is necessary for English language learners to be aware of grammar rules to build correct grammatical structures so that meaning is going to be shaped and conveyed successfully. According to Rodby and Winterowd (2005)competence of English grammar can aid language learners to use language effectively and think about how language structures are used to get meaning across. However, research reveals that grammar teaching does not necessarily support the development of learners' writing (Wyse, 2007).

In this regard, research studies have acknowledged that EFL learners commit grammar mistakes in their writing. Abdulla (1995) finds out that grammar is thought in a structural manner that is isolated from all language skills. He highlights the idea that in order for these learners to prevail over their grammar difficulties, he calls for integrating grammar and lexis in a piece of discourse as the central unit of learning. In a similar vein, Al-sharah (1997) investigates the writing of 210 Jordanian university students of English. Data reveals that these learners encounter difficulties in rhetorical aspects like the structure of the essay, and some linguistic aspects including vocabulary and grammar.

Mourtaga (2004) conducted a study in which 35 male and 35 female Palestinian students wrote on one of 18 different topics related to their life and culture. Findings reveal that students' errors in verbs, articles and punctuation are most frequent. What is noticeable at this level is the fact that topics of writing do not affect the writing quality as these learners are required to write about their life and culture. Hence, these learners are least proficient in grammar and they find grammar a challenging area while composing a piece of writing.

1.5.6. Punctuation Difficulties

In fact, punctuation is often underestimated as a writing skill among most Arab teachers and learners of English. In this respect, flower (1979) illustrated that lack of punctuation skills leads to incorrect cues about how to divide the sentence. This incorrectly-punctuatedwriting makes it difficult for the reader to follow what they are reading forcing them to stop, reread and reinterpret the sentence. In the same line of thought, Grellet (1996) regards the role of punctuation as follows "to make the text you write clear and easy to read. Defective punctuation can make a text very difficult to understand, and even lead to misunderstanding". Therefore, each punctuation mark has its function.

Punctuation has an important role in EFL writing as it is a major concern for Arab EFL learners. For example, Marcarthur (1999) supported the claim that students who find writing challenging often struggle with the basis transcription process

involved in writing, including spelling, capitalization and punctuation. In the same context, Mourtaga (2004) finds out that Palestinian students have errors in punctuation in both Arabic and English. Al-Hazmi (2006) finds out that punctuation is the least reviewed feature of Saudi students' writing. In this respect, this difficulty needs to be taken into consideration to account for direct instructions and integrated approaches to overcome this difficulty.

1.5.7. Spelling Difficulties

Spelling is one of the basic skills for writing in any language. It is important to master spelling skills because if words are misspelled, they may mean something different leading to problems in comprehension. It is known that Arabic writing conventions and vowel system are enormously different from those of English. This makes it much more difficult for Arabic speaking students to spell English words correctly.

This is confirmed by many researchers, for example Al-Taha and El-Hibir (1992) find out that spelling difficulties are most frequently occur in the writing of Saudi students. It is pointed out by Adbel –Aziz (1993) that Egyptian university students face writing difficulties in general and spelling difficulties in particular. Moreover, Fender test results (2008) indicate that Arab students scored significantly low on the spelling because of the sound system of English. They find out that these learners overgeneralize the spelling rule.

1.6. Sources Affecting Poor EFL Writing

It is wiser to record that writing is a complex language skill to be learned and acquired not only by EFL learners but also by English native speakers. As far as EFL learners are concerned, many researchers have listed some writing difficulties, as being discussed above, that can be encountered in their FL writing. This section will be devoted to call for the sources behind these difficulties including; lack of motivation to write, lack of reading and the influence of L1 into FL writing.

1.6.1. Lack of Motivation to Write

It is safe to say that motivation is crucial and essential in every needed success. As far as language learning is concerned, Harmer (2006a) stresses this point and claims that:

> People involved in language teaching often say that students who really want to learn will succeed whatever circumstances in which they study. They succeeddespite using methods which experts consider unsatisfactory. In the phase of such a phenomenon, it seems reasonable to suggest that the motivation that students bring to class is the biggest simple factor affecting their success. (p. 3)

In other terms, motivation is closely related to achievements, and learners' motivation makes the atmosphere more pleasant and enjoyable for both teachers and learners. However, most EFL learners are not motivated that much to write in the TL for a number of reasons that some teachers often ask themselves questions like; why do students so often not motivated to write? And how can their motivation to write be increased?. In hope to answer these two questions, Harmer goes onto claim that there are many hidden forces that demotivate them to write.

First, fear of failure, that is, fear of not being able to achieve their goals especially in contexts of competence or efficacy. Second, it could be related to the fear from making mistakes. They feel weak and never recover the state of protections and therefore they become haunted by failure. Thirdly, there some learners who are uncertain to show their productions; they intentionally hide their weaknesses and often do not finish on purpose as they feel a beforehand failure.

In this respect, teachers' role is to enhance, encourage and motivate their learners write through making writing stimulating and enjoyable as it is stated by dornyei (2005) who said" it is one thing to initially whet the students' appetite with appropriate motivational techniques". In other words, the teacher is required to attract his learners' interest towards bringing relaxed and pleasurable writing topics so that

students can express their ideas freely. In this vein, Byrne (1991) says that "some learners feel secure if they are allowed to write... for such students, writing is likely to be an aid to retention, if only because they feel more at ease and relaxed" (p. 10).

Furthermore, writing anxiety can lead tonegative thought that distract students from doing their best. Harmer (2006a, p.55) highlights the fact that writing anxieties are very dangerous since they can result in negative attitudes towards writing. He claims that teachers are called to build what we call 'writing habit' among these kinds of learners.

1.6.2. Lack of Reading

Actually, reading appears to be the helpful tool to improve students' writing quality. In this regard, evidences have shown that better readers are better writers and better writers are more likely to language exposure than poorer readers. Besides, reading in the classroom is understood as the appropriate input for the acquisition of writing skills for it is generally assumed that reading passages will somehow function as models for which writing can be learned or at least inferred. Accordingly, Kroll (1997) claims that "it is reading that gives the writer the feel for the look and texture of reader based prose" (p. 48).

That is why Raimes (1994 p. 40) emphasizes the use of reading techniques when teaching writing to the student because "reading can do far more in the teaching of the writing than simply provide subject matter for discussion and for comprehension topics".In this sense, learners are actively engaged with the TL and its culture, in our case it is the English language that most EFL learners have a little chance to speak it in face to face situations. She stresses the point that " the more our students read, the more they become familiar with the vocabulary, idiom, sentence patterns, organizational flow, and cultural assumptions of native speakers ofthe language" (p. 42). Hence, all what have been discussed above combined to make the reading skill a useful way for EFL learners to better their writing.

1.6.3. Influence of the First Language into Target Language Writing

In addition to the lack of interest and reading in the English language, EFL learners encounter another obstacle that hinders them from writing. The majority of them maintain that when composing, they think in Arabic. This fact has inspired some researchers to investigate this dilemma. Generally, foreign language teachers emphasize the need for EFL writers to think and write in English. However, Frieddlander's(1997:109) study indicates that "writers will transfer writing abilities and strategies, whether good or deficient, from their first language to their second, or third language".

Some researchers including Edelsky (1982) indicated that "writing knowledge transfers across languages" (P   145) . In other words, learners can transfer their knowledge acquired by their L1 to aid and help L2 or FL writing. In the same line of thought, Jones and Tetroe (1987) state that "writers transferred both good and weak writing Skill from their first language to English" (p. 46). They added that" weaker writers failure to use writing strategies in English was based on their failure to use these strategies in their first language" (p. 48) . In contrast, many research studies have indicated that, it is not necessary to be good writer in L1 to be so in L2 or FL. In this vein, Carson, Carell, Silberstein, kroll and Kuehan (1990) concluded that "the acquisition of L2 literacy skills by adults already literate in their first language is a complex phenomenon involving multiple variables" (P. 10)

Similarly, Blanchard and Root (2004) argue that:

> It is like driving a car, if you have ever driven in another country, you know that some of the rules of the road may be different. Just as the rules of driving differ from country to another, the conventions of writing may change from   one language to another. (p. 204)

Simply put, writing remains a difficult skill to acquire and each language has its own writing conventions that the writer needs to learn them without interfering with other language or languages.

1.7. Conclusion

This theoretical chapter attempts to bring some notions regarding the writingskill among EFL learners. It highlights some definitions of the writing skill by different researchers. It tries to demonstrate the importance of the writing skill among EFL learners by shading some light on the close connection that exists between writing and reading. It also reveals some common writing difficulties and uncovers the sources of those difficulties.

The following chapter is, however, a case study that deals with a detailed description of the selected sample as well as the research instruments.

Chapter Two: Research design and Procedure

2.1. Introduction

The present chapter is devoted to the description and the identification of some components selected and used for this research work. At the beginning, it overtly identifies the chosen sample whose collaboration contributes in constrcting this research work. Then, it highlights the research instruments chosen for data collection and the procedure of each one. The gathered data is more likely to be analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. Finally, this chapter is finished with a conclusion.

2.2. Sample Profile

In fact, the selected participants taking part in this research work are second year LMD students with their C.W.E (Comprehension of Written Expression) teachers. The following section attempts to provide a detailed description of these two informants.

2.2.1. Teachers' Profile

The teachers taking part in this research work are five teachers ; three males and two females. They have been teaching CWE module for at least four years. They work collabately in the sense that they discuss, plan and organize the syllabus that helps them reach their objectives. It is wiser to record that this year there is a change that occurs at the level of dividing the content of the lesson into two parts namely; the theoretical part and the practical one.

To put it differently, there are teachers who teach the lesson that consists of some guidelines about how different types of essays are structured and framed; whereas, others are encharge of dealing with some activities regarding the type of the essay that students have dealt with. These teachers provide them with some activities ranging from the easier to the harder, that is, from combining sentences and paragraph writing to essay writing. In this way, students have more opportunities for essay writing as much as they can since they have more sessions in practicing writing compared to those devoted to theory.

2.2.2. Learners' Profile

The students taking part in this study are second year university students from Abou Bekr Tlemcen University the department of foreign languages section of English. The researcher has worked with thirty (30) students; fourteen (14) males and sixteen (16) females chosen at random from different groups. These participants are aged between twenty to over than twenty. In their first year, they had C.W.E module that covers lectures about sentence components, tenses, combining sentences, conjunctions, to quote just a few, and activities related to these.

It is safe to mention that their mother tongue (MT) is the western variety of the Algerian Arabic, while their first language (L1), first foreign language (FL1) and second foreign language (FL2) are respectively Arabic, French and English.

2.3. Research Instruments and Data Collection Procedure

The phase of data collection relies primary on information gathered from research informants by means of various research tools, including, the questionnaire, interview, classroom observation to name just a few. Hence, this section embodies the procedure of the selected research instruments employed in this research work.

2.3.1. The Questionnaire

To begin with, the questionnaire is a set of written questions concerning an issue of interest in which it supplies the researcher with the necessary information about the informants' believes attitudes, motivations, preferences and the like. In this line of thought, Brown (2001) states "questionnaires are written instruments that present respondents with a series of questions or statements which they are to react either by writing out their answers or selecting from existing answers' (p. 6).

In this sense, the questionnaire covers three types of questions namely ; close-ended, multiple-choice and open-ended questions. With regard to the first type of questions, it requires from the respondents to choose the appropriate option that meets their interest.

For instance, *do you like reading?*

    Yes   No

As far as the second type of questions is concerned, it involves a set of responses or alternatives that necessitate the informants to select the adequate box. By way of illustration the following example is given :

What are the difficulties that you face when reading?

    a- Difficulties in the pronunciation

    b- Ambiguous words

    c- New words

    d- The meaning of words

The third type of questions asks the participants to provide their view points regarding the issue raised in the question asked. For example, *which solutions do you suggest to overcome reading difficlties among EFL learners ?*

     In fact, the questionnaire is viewed to be the most widely research instrument used among reseachers for various reasons. First, it makes the respondents answer and express their attitudes and opinions at ease. Second, it enables the researcher to collect information from a large population in which the gathered data can be generalized. Nonetheless, the questionnaire has some drawbacks including the fact that the informants may feel board when writing down the answers that drives them not to reveal the information that the researcher wishes to collect.

    Besides, the participants may answer superficially as they sometimes do not understand the question and sometimes the answers are not completed. It should be pointed out that the purpose from using this research tool is to identify the difficulties and their sources in essay writing among second year LMD students. In this vein, the questionnaire is submitted to thirty (30) students who are invited to answer fourteen

(14) questions. The following section attempts to describe explicitly the written questions in students' questionnaire.

2.3.2. The Interview

Actually, in any research work the researcher should not be satisfied with the use of only one research tool since one instrument is not enough to cross-check and provide reliable data regarding any issue of interest. In hope to do so, the interview appears to be another research tool that would enable the researcher to collect data. The interview is, by definition, an oral face-to-face conversation that takes place between the researcher and the participant aiming at discussing and getting various viewpoints concerning the issue in-question. Therefore, interviews are widely used tool to assess people's experiences in their inner perceptions, attitudes and feelings of reality.

Interviews varies in their degree of explicitness and structure ranging from very open interviews to very structured ones (Herbert, 2000).In this concern, the interview embodies at least three types including, the structured, the unstructured and the semi – structured interviews. As far as the first type is concerned, it takes the form of the questionnaire, that is, it requires the respondents to answer the same questions which have the same wording. Thus, it follows the format of the questionnaire, but it is administered orally. In the structured interview, the findings can be analyzed easily as the questions are the same and it does not require the interviewee(s) to add additional pieces of information.

A heavy focus on such a type, however, may prohibit the interviewer from exploring what the interviewees have in mind. In this respect, a call for a semi-structured interview was needed. This latter is, in fact, another type of the interview in which it involves an outline of the topics that will be discussed. Therefore, the interviewer asks questions without following the same wording and order. Actually, questions in this type of interview are more likely to be built within the conversation

allowing both the interviewer gather more data and the interviewee to reveal more knowledge about the topic.

The unstructured interview, on the other hand, takes the form of a general discussion as the researcher explains the topic to the informant and keep the floor in turn taking. Such a type of the interview helps the investigator to generate data with different structures and patterns. Moreover, it is helpful at making the researcher develop a better understanding about the topic in-question as well as at constructing a solid paradigm for conducting it.

With regard to the different types of the interview that may serve, the investigator opts for the semi-structured interview since it gives the researcher the floor to add other questions and to omit redundant ones. Besides, it offers both sides either to deal with all aspects of the raised issue or to keep the communication confined to the subject in-question. The coming section aims to clearly address teachers' semi-structured interview.

2.4. Students' Questionnaire

The questionnaire is administered to second year university students in order to collect data concerning their essay writing difficulties and the sources that affect their writing performance. The purpose from using the questionnaire is to answer the first research question which reads: what are the difficulties that EFL learners often encounter when writing an essay? .In this regard, the questionnaire starts with an introductory paragraph about the topic in-question so that the participants know in advance the content of the questionnaire and what issues need to be solved.

Actually, the investigator enters to the classroom where students are gathered. The researcher distributes the questionnaire to them, then reads, and explains each question and the respondents answer. This process helps to ensure that all questions are understood and answered. The first two questions aim at collecting information about the participants' gender (male/ female) and age. The third question asks the research subjects whether they enjoy writing.

As far as the fourth question is concerned, it seeks knowledge regarding the preferable language that the participants prefer to write. This question requires the respondents to put a cross on their favorite language, as well as to justify the selected one. In the fifth question, they are requested to indicate the frequency of their writing in English in order to see how often the participants write in that language. Whereas, the sixth question is designed to view how the informants evaluate their English writing performance.

With regard to the seventh question, it seeks knowledge concerning the difficulties that they meet when writing an essay. In this question, they are asked pointedly to opt for more than one option. Question eight is intended to ask about the sources behind the selected difficulties. The ninth question is set to see if the teacher corrects his learners' essays. The question that follows tries to bring knowledge about whether students 'do their remedial work. The two questions that follow are concerned with the difficulty still encountered and the source of this difficulty. In these two question, the investigator makes it clear for the respondents to carefully select the most faced difficulty and to what source the encountered one is related to. The thirteenth question seeks information about the participants' opinion regarding the importance of reading in enhancing essay writing. The last question is to see what recommendations are being suggested to unveil difficulties in essay writing.

The researcher makes use of the second research instrument to strengthen this work and to verify what students have answered in the questionnaire and what their teachers have revealed. In this respect, the following section is devoted to provide, first an overview of the interview with its three types along with the designed questions for data collection.

2.5. Teachers' semi-structured interview

Actually, the semi-structured interview is employed for gathering information about essay writing difficulties and their sources among second year LMD university students at the department of English. In this respect, the investigator has interviewed

five teachers; three males and two females whose cooperation contributes at constructing this research work. In this concern, the interviewer has listed the points to be discussed and supplements the interview with audio tapes for those informants who accept their answers to be recorded, and note- taking for those who do not wish their responses to be registered.

It should be pointed out that the collected data is more likely to be summarized either in tables, in figures for statistical (quantitative) information and summarized in paragraphs for qualitative data. In fact, the interviewer has designed eight (08) questions but adds additional questions depending on the interviewees' knowledge and their experience regarding the issue of this research work. The first two questions deal with the interviewees' gender and their experience in teaching CWE module. The third question demonstrates whether these teachers correct their students essay writing within the classroom walls.

The fourth question concerns students' level in essay writing. As far as the fifth question is concerned, it seeks knowlege about the difficulties encountered by their students. The interviewer provides the interviewees with possible difficulties to choose. The question that follows aims at collecting data concerning the sources behind the faced difficulties. The interviewer lists the alternatives concerning the raised question so that the participants can have an idea about them.

The seventh question calls the informants to carefully select from the provided difficulties the most encountered one among their students after the interviewee's correction. The question that follows tries to record knowledge regarding the source behind the selected difficulty. In hope to unveil essay writing difficulties among their students, the interviewer asks the interviewees to provide some classroom activities to better improve their essay writing.

In order to scrutinize students' performance in essay writing, the investigator analyses their essay writing in terms of coherence and cohesion. Consequently, the following section is set for this content.

2.6. Students' Essay Writing Analysis

This section aims fundamentally at describing the process of the students' essay writing analysis. The reseacher has asked the teacher to make the students write an essay within the classroom walls. It should be pointed out that the teacher uses such an activity weekly, and sometimes during each session whenever a misunderstanding occurs. That is, students are often confused between narrative and descriptive essay writing. When they are required to describe a place, person, an event and the like, they use some narration. In order to diminish and lessen such an issue, the teacher uses more training sessions by shedding some light on what characteristics of each type of essay are and what differentiate them from each other.

Such a process implicitly makes the students write essays without checking the internet and the help of the others. Their essay writing performance is based on their prior knowledge as well as puting in practice what they have grasped in their mind as pieces of their teachers' advice. With all what have been mentioned above, the researcher asks kindly the teacher to bring the students 'essay writing to be analyzed. In this vein, the investigator analyses their performance in terms of coherence and cohesion.

In fact, the investigator picks five descriptive essays at random in which three students choose to describe a place that they visit or like and the two others describe a person. As far as students' essay writing coherence analysis is concerned, the researcher attempts to see whether learners have mentioned overtly the following elements :

1-Focus

　*Clear statement of the subject described.

　*Clear statement of the topic sentence.

　*Clear statement of the thesis statement.

　*Clear statement of the concluding sentence.

2- *Organisation*

•*Clear rhetorical*

•Reason.

•General to Specific.

•*Clear rhetorical pattern.*

•Introduction.

•Body paragraphs.

• Conclusion.

3- **Elaboration**

- Specific details.

-The use of some similes, metaphors and analogies.

-Nouns and adjectives related to the described object.

-Clear and relevant development of the central idea.

With regard to the above mentioned, the second components that needs to be analysed in students' essay writing is cohesion. In this sense, the following cohesive ties / devices are going to be mentioned.

1- Reference.

2- Ellipsis.

3- Conjunctions.

4- Sudstitution.

5- Lexical cohesion.

2.7. Data Analysis

The phase of data analysis highlights what has been gathered from the research instruments, that is to say, the questionnaire, the semi-structured interview and the analysis of students' essay writing. The three aforementioned research tools bring data that are more likely to be analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. The following section is going to explain these two types of data analysis.

2.7.1. Quantitative Analysis

In fact, quantitative research generates a mass of numbers that need to be summarized, described and analyzed by drawing tables, graphs, charts, to quote just a few, to make the statistics observable. In this research work, such a type of analysis is helpful in the sense that it enables the investigator to reformulate the answers that are gathered from the questionnaire, semi-structured interview and the students' essay writing analysis. In other words, such a type helps the researcher to record statistical information about the difficulties that second year EFL students often meet in essay writing.

Besides, quantitative data analysis serves as a relevant method that enables the investigator to separate out external factors that increase ambiguity of the issue in question. Taking for example the main objective of this study which attempts significantly to find out the difficulty EFL learners meet when in essay writing and the source behind it. Because of the complex nature of the inter-relationship between the two aspects (difficulty and source) requires some degree of quantification that helps the researcher to determine the validity and the non-validity of the research hypotheses. Nonetheless, the validity and the non-validity of the hypotheses are based on complementary platforms that are quantitative as well as qualitative data analysis. On this basis, the coming section deals with qualitative research method.

2.7.2. Qualitative Analysis

Qualitative analysis is, indeed, designed to reveal a target audience's range of behaviour, attitudes and perceptions that drive it with reference to the studied issue. This type of analysis tries to answer "what", "where" and "how" questions. It is aimed at gaining and collecting a deep understanding of specific issue or topic rather than a surface description. In this sense, it gives the floor to the participants to reveal possible opinions, intention and suggestions.

In this research work, the investigator makes use of such a type in order to indicate the difficulties and their sources in assay writing among second year students. Moreover, it provides the analysis of what viewpoints can be collected regarding the crucial role reading plays. Besides, it is employed to account for what classroom activities are suggested to better improve students' essay writing. One may say that the two types being explained above are complementary in the sense that they help the researcher to analyze whatever question (close-ended, open-ended and multiple-choice) the investigator designs.

2.8. Conclusion

This chapter has dealt with the description of the research design. At first, it provides a description of the sample, the research instruments ; the questionnaire, the semi-structured interview and students' essay writing. Then, it highlights the Procedure of each research instrument in which the questionnaire is addressed to students and the interview is conducted with CWE teachers. The gathered data is to be analysed both qualitatively and quantitatively. In hope to see what difficulties and their sources behind students weak performance in essay writing and what solutions are being suggested, this is the concern of the following chaper.

Chapter Three: Data Analysis, Suggestions and Recommendations

3.1. Introduction

The current chapter strives significantly to provide data gathered from various research instruments that are discussed in the previous chapter. In this concern, this chapter diagnoses the raised issue in these research tools and to come up with findings that enable the investigator to bring possible solutions whenever the faced issue(s) is/ are related to. Therefore, it starts with the analysis of students' questionnaire, teachers' interview and students' essays writing. In fact, the purpose from organizing the analysis in such order is to see what conclusions can be drown from students' questionnaire and teachers' interview, in addition to view what students' essays writing may reveal.

3.2. Students' Questionnaire Analysis

This section is devoted to the analysis of students' questionnaire that reveals many aspects regarding the objectives of this research work.

Question One: *Do you enjoy writing?*

This question is set to see whether the research informants enjoy writing. When this question is asked, the majority of the participants (28) 93% find it an enjoyable activity since it enables them to express their feelings and opinions at ease. Besides, it is approached as the only activity to practice in their free time or when they feel board. Some others claim that they regard it as a source of inspiration for both creativity and imagination.

While, a minority of them (2) 07% do not enjoy writing since they view it as a hard task because it requires much time and effort. In addition, others state that it is the last language skill which they wish to acquire because they like to listen, speak and read.

Question Two: *In which language do you prefer to write?*

The purpose behind asking this question is to see the preferable language to write among the informants. Half of the participants (15), that is, 50% prefer writing in

English for various reasons. They mention that it is the global language and the second foreign language in Algeria that they need to master the most.

Others go onto claim that they have enough vocabulary to express any idea they wish as well as to improve their writing. Whereas, (12), i.e., 40% of the informants choose to write in Arabic claiming that it is their native language that enables them to write without facing any difficulty about any topic they hope to write. They add that as they are students of English, they prefer to write in Arabic so that not to lose the language and their identity. Only (3) 10% of the participants prefer to write in French since they feel more comfortable and relax. The table below shows the gathered results.

Table 3. 1

The Preferable Languages

Preferable Languages	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency
Arabic	12	40%
French	3	10%
English	15	50%
Total Number	30	100%

Question Three: *How often do you write in English?*

As far as the third question is concerned, it seeks knowledge about English writing frequency among the research subjects. Some of them (20) 67% say that they sometimes write in English, while others (5) , i.e., 17% highlight the fact that they rarely write.(4), that is, 13% of the participants very often achieve pieces of writing and only one student (1) ,i.e., 3% never write in English. The following table summarizes these findings.

Table 3. 2

English Writing Frequency

Frequency of Writing in English	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency
Never	1	3%
Rarely	5	17%
Sometimes	20	67%
Very Often	4	13%
Total Number	30	100%

Question Four: *How do you evaluate your writing level in English?*

Regarding this question, the majority of the participants (21) 70% evaluate their English writing level as average. Whereas, (07) 23% of them say it is good, whilst the remaining (2) 7% evaluate their production as weak. The following table displays the obtained results

Table 3.3

Evaluation of Students' Writing

--	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency
Weak	2	7%
Average	21	70%
Good	7	23%
Total Number	30	100%

Question Five: *Where do you usually face difficulties when writing an essay?*

When students were asked about their difficulties in essay writing, varied answers are received. (17), that is, 57% of the participants face difficulties in finding the appropriate vocabulary, while (15), i.e., 50% of them find themselves encountering difficulties in cohesion. Others (14) 47%, (13) 43% and (12) 40% meet difficulties in spelling, coherence and grammar, respectively. Some participants (8) 27% add that they encounter difficulties in putting the appropriate punctuation mark, others state that the topic of writing prohibit them from finding enough ideas to elaborate. The following graph summarizes the above results.

Bare graph 3.1. Essay writing difficulties.

Question Six: *To what sources do you relate these difficulties?*

The purpose behind designing this question is to identify the sources related to the aforementioned essay writing difficulties. The majority of the research informants (24) 80% relate those difficulties to the lack of reading, whilst others (23) 77% consider those difficulties due to the low writing practice. The rest (13) 43% relate those difficulties to the influence of the first language (Arabic) into their second foreign language writing (English). The table below represents the obtained results.

Table 3. 4
Sources Behind Difficulties in Essay Writing

Sources Behind Students' Essay Writing	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency
Lack of reading	24	80%
Low Writing Practice	23	77%
L1 influence into L2	13	43%

Question Seven: *Do you correct your essay writing in the classroom with your teacher?*

The objective behind asking this enquiry is to see if students' essays writing are corrected by their CWE teacher within the classroom. The gathered data reveals that all the research informants, that is, 100% highlight that their productions are corrected.

Question Eight: *Do you do your remedial work after the correction session?*

This question is asked in order to see if the participants do their remedial work after their essay writing correction. The results show that the majority of them (16), that is, 53% do their remedial work while (14) 47, i.e., do not.

Question Nine: *After your teachers' correction and your remedial work, which of the following difficulties do you still encounter the most?*

This question is, in fact, designed purposefully to spot implicitly what is the difficulty still the participants face when in writing an essay. The research findings reveal that 33% of them face a difficulty in coherence, while 27% meet a difficulty in vocabulary. Others, i.e., 23%, 10% and 7% face difficulties in cohesion, grammar and spelling, respectively. The bare graph below summarizes the gathered results.

Bare graph 3. 2. The Difficulty Still Encountered in Essay Writing.

Question Ten: *To what source do you relate this difficulty?*

   This question seeks information regarding the source behind the difficulty still encountered among the participants. The results show that the majority 60% relate the source behind their difficulty to the lack of reading, whereas, 30% consider the low writing practice is the source behind their difficulty in essay writing. Only 10% state that the influence of their L1 into the writing of FL. The table below covers the obtained data.

Table 3.5

The Source Affecting Essay Writing Production

Sources Behind Students' Essay Writing	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency
Lack of Reading	18	60%
Low Writing Practice	9	30%
L1 Influence into L2 Writing	3	10%
Total Number	30	100%

Question Eleven: Do *you think that reading helps you improve your essay writing?*

The purpose behind asking this question is to see whether the research informants regard reading as a requirement for essay writing improvement. All of them 100% agree that reading helps them improving their essay writing and they gave varied reasons. They find reading as the effective way for overcoming spelling mistakes, more than that it makes them aware enough about the words and/ or expressions used to express certain and / or specific ideas. They mentioned that it helps them to learn new vocabulary and prevents them, covertly, from using frequent lexis. Others claim that it enables them to build new vocabulary at the same time building up the reading habit.

Question Twelve: *which solutions do you suggest to improve your essay writing?*

In order for EFL learners to improve their essay writing a handful of suggestions are recommended. The findings show that the majority of students, that is, 57% regard reading as the most essential aspect for effective essay writing. While 43% of them view that practicing essay writing gives better results. Besides, they suggested some activities for their teachers to enhance their essay writing.

They recommended the fact of beginning with combining sentences through the use of the appropriate conjunctions and linkers, organizing random ideas, spotting the mistakes from a given piece of writing then correcting them, that is, mistakes correction in terms of coherence (adding adequate sentences or rejecting odd ones) and finishing the essay with either an introduction or a conclusion. They claim that the previously mentioned activities can be organized in pair and/ or group work allowing students to share and exchange ideas. Some other participants maintain that the teacher needs to devote some time for reading books or short stories that interest his students to build up implicitly the reading habit.

The following section embodies the analysis of teachers' interview that tries to identify essay writing difficulties and sources among their students.

3.3. Teachers' semi-structured interview Analysis

After completing students' questionnaire analysis, the current section is centered with the analysis of teachers' semi-structured interview.

Question One: Teachers' correction of their students essay writing.

This question is set to see if CWE teachers correct their students' essays writing. When asking this question, all the interviewees admitted that they do correct their students' productions.

Question Two: Teachers' comments about students essay writing

The purpose from asking this question is to view whether the participants write comments regarding the mistakes that are committed by their students when writing essays. The results obtained show that all of the interviewees, that is to say, five(5) say that they frequently write down the raised mistakes in their papers as well as in the board. One teacher adds the fact that when a given mistake persists, she projects it in the board so that all students visualize the repeated mistake among them. In this way, students become aware enough about the mistake and to ensure less use of it.

Question Three: Teachers' evaluation concerning students' essay writing.

This question is designed to see how CWE teachers consider their students' production. Two teachers indicate that students' performance is at the beginning (in the first semester) weak, however, it improves enough by the second semester in which they are exposed to deal with different types of essays and have more opportunities to practice than they do in the first semester. Other two teachers point out that students' essay writing level is almost average and one teacher mentions that some students have an excellent level in terms of unity and cohesion, but others do not enjoy with the same efficiency and it is something expected.

Question Four: Students' essay writing difficulties.

This question attempts fundamentally to answer the first research question which seeks information concerning the difficulties students meet in essay writing. When interviewing the informants, various answers were given. In fact, the interviewer recalls the interviewees' mind with some possible difficulties. The result reveals that the five teachers mention all most all students commit grammar mistakes, inappropriate vocabulary use, spelling mistakes, no unity and the misuse of some cohesive devices.

One of these teachers points out that in addition to the abovementioned difficulties, students misapply mechanics, i.e. Punctuation and capitalization also ill sentence structure. Another one adds the idea that students have difficulties even with the structure of the essay. He mentions students cannot adapt themselves to the essay structure meaning that they face difficulties in writing thesis statement, topic sentence and concluding sentence. They find these three elements as trammels to their flew of ideas as they used to write without following essay structure.

Question Five: sources behind students' poor performance in essay writing.

This question is asked to see to what sources do CWE teachers relate the previously stated difficulties. The researcher lists some possible sources and kindly requested from the interviewees to opt for more than one. After gathering data regarding this enquiry, three teachers relate the source (s) behind students' essay writing difficulties to students' L1 interference into their FL writing, lack of reading and low writing practice. However, in the eyes of the remaining two teachers, low writing practice and lack of reading are approached to be the sources behind learners' weak proficiency level in essay writing.

Question Six: The most encountered difficulty among students in essay writing.

As far as the sixth question is concerned, the investigator's interest is to detect which difficulty students face the most. The obtained results indicate that most

interviewees, that is, three teachers observe the most frequent occurring difficulty among learners is coherence. They mention that students lack the rhetoric and the art of writing. Nevertheless, two other teachers view that the most encountered difficulty is cohesion and grammar.

Question seven: the source behind poor performance in essay writing.

The significant role of this enquiry lies on the idea of identifying the main provenance beyond students' poor performance in essay writing. It is wiser to record that the researcher puts an emphasis on the idea that the interviewees need to combine the already stated difficulty in question six with its source. Those who assumed for coherence is the most faced difficulty relate it to students' lack of reading. The remaining teachers who mention cohesion and grammar as the most encountered difficulty relate them to students' L1 influence into FL writing and low writing practice respectively.

Question Eight: encouraging students to read outside the classroom walls.

The purpose from asking this question is to know whether CWE teachers encourage their learners to read out door. The collected data shows that four teachers claim that they most of time strongly spur their learners to read as much as they can.

Their replies were complemented and maintained with various responses. They state that reading enables learners to broaden their knowledge that are not undertaken within the university wall. Another teacher mentions that it helps learners overcome spelling difficulties, to come across new vocabulary, to visualize which words and or terminologies are used to express particular idea (s). Two other teachers highlight the idea that good readers are better writers and poor readers are poor actors in the act of writing.

Another interviewee quotes a citation said by Carvilia: "those who read more are merrier writers. He enlightens that reading increases instinctively the art of writing and writers unconsciously starts to make use of techniques found in a given piece of

writing. One teacher claims that she encourages learners to check dictionaries and to read what is written in this material. She points out that student are instrumentally motivated to read only when exams are in the near future; this is why she insists it is better for students to read dictionaries to perceive how words are spelt and used in different contexts.

Question Nine: possible recommendations for students.

The interviewees have provided practical suggestions that help students improve enough their essay writing. The five teachers emphasize that learners need to read as well as to practice essay writing in addition to take into account teachers' pieces of advice. Furthermore, they need to do the remedial work after each correction session, and to put in practice new learnt vocabulary, i.e., recycle new learnt vocabulary.

Question Ten: suggested activities for successful essay writing.

In order for learners to achieve successful pieces of essay writing, CWE teachers list some activities that help students better their performance in essay writing. Among the advised activities is to make learners practise free writing in which teachers need to fetch topics that meet their desires and interest. Consequently, students begin to uncover their capacities from an infinite angle of creativity. Besides, tasks like combining sentences, using transitional words and checking mistakes in a given piece of writing; add suitable ideas and reject odd ones are recommended by most teachers, that is, four teachers. Another teacher puts forward some techniques and strategies that optimistically help to cope with whatever faced difficulties. These techniques are going to be summarized in the followings:

• Teaching spelling via dicto-comp.

• Teaching grammar through free writing.

• Teaching vocabulary via MCQ exercises.

He mentions that the triangulation process between the above mentioned strategies and of course teaching the essay structure may allow learners to execute a sound essay writing.

The systematic analysis of both student questionnaire and teachers semi-structured interview enlighten this study with insightful information that permit the researcher to take a broad view concerning the issue of this research work. Nonetheless, the researcher makes use of another instrument to cross check the serious situation of essay writing among students.

3.4. Essay Writing Analysis

This section is set to diagnose students' essay writing in terms of coherence and cohesion. In this ground, the communicated pieces of writing are more likely to be scrutinized under the points being previously mentioned in the second chapter.

3.4.1. Coherence Analysis

3.4.1.1. Focus

This aspect endeavors to indicate explicitly the use of some elements that enable the reader clearly understand the content of the essay. In doing so, the investigator identifies five mechanisms that are: clear statement of the subject described, topic sentence, thesis statement and concluding sentences. In this ground, the accumulated data reflect that all the students' writers, that is, five (100%) state evidently the described subject. As for the topic sentence, the majority, i.e., three (60%) mention apparently the topic sentence with respect to its structure.

While, two (40%) accomplish weak topic sentence. Taking into account the thesis statement, the majority of them, i.e., four (80%) state it with its appropriateness in terms of meaning and structure. That is to say, the thesis statement is the last sentence in the introduction and should carry specific idea to be extended in the body paragraphs. Whereas, one student (20%) does not write the thesis statement since his introduction caries only one sentence. In contrast to the gathered data regarding the use

of the thesis statement, only one student (20%) uses the concluding sentence in the end of each paragraph, while four students (80%) do not. The following table reviews the above data.

Table 3.6

Characteristics of Focus in Students' Descriptive Essay

Characteristics of Focus in Students' Descriptive Essay	Absolute Frequency		Relative Frequency
• Clear Statement of the Subject Described	Found	5	100%
• Clear Statement of the Topic Sentence	Found	3	60%
	Not Found	2	40%
• Clear Statement of the Thesis Statement	Found	4	80%
	Not Found	1	20%
• Clear Statement of the Concluding Sentence	Found	1	20%
	Not Found	4	80%

3.4.1.2. Organization

The aspect of organization envelops the rhetoric of descriptive essay writing. It attempts to undertake some elements that are represented under two main headings namely rhetorical and rhetorical patterns.

3.4.1.2.1. Clear rhetorical

This heading enfolds two vital elements including the motive that students strongly wish to describe as well as the deductive organizational pattern, i.e., general-to-specific arrangement. The analysis shows that the majority of student writers, that is, three (60%) point out the reason for deciding to describe the selected entity.

The remaining two compositions, i.e., (40%) reveal no citation of the reason for choosing specific body. The second pattern attempts to identify whether the informants move from general-to-specific. The analysis demonstrates that almost all the compositions, that is, four participants (80%) respect such a pattern, whereas one student (20%) does not do so.

3.4.1.2.2. Clear rhetorical pattern

As for the second heading, it covers the structure of the essay in terms of the introduction, body paragraphs and the conclusion. As far as the introduction writing is concerned, four writing performances (80%) indicate good quality in which student writers show deference to introduction writing as they mention explicitly the necessary elements. However, one student (20%) excludes one element which is the thesis statement that makes his introduction weak. Nonetheless, all of them (100%) expend their ideas with satisfactory body paragraphs. However, for the conclusion writing they all need to affix either one or two sentences in order to have adequate conclusion. The congregated data is going to be summarized in the following table.

Table 3.7

Characteristics of Organization of Students' Descriptive Essay

Characteristics of organization in Students' descriptive essay		Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency
• Clear Rhetorical	Reason	3	60%
	General to Specific	2	40%
Clear Rhetorical Pattern	Inrtoduction	4/1	80%/20%
	Body	5	100%
	Conclusion	0	00%

3.4.3. Elaboration

The concern of this coherent characteristic is to disclose apparently the suitable details according to the subject described with relevant development of the central idea. The chronological arrangement of sentences and/ or paragraphs as well as the relatedness and completeness of ideas need to be mirrored in students descriptive essay. Besides, the careful selection of terms (specific nouns and adjectives related to the described entity) and the use of some analogies, similes and metaphors will enlighten the content of the essay.The collected data signifies that four student writers (80%) used specific details and one student (20%) utilizes some specific details along with the use of irrelevant particulars.

Their writing performances reveal enough control over the employment of relevant development of the central idea. In other terms, three students (60%) execute relevant enlargement of the central idea, whereas, two other students (40%) achieve fruitless development in which they kept elaborating redundant ideas. As far as the transition between sentences is concerned, almost all of them, that is, four (80%) attain logical transition between sentences with a careful selection of some adequate cohesive ties,

and merely one student (20%) does not take into consideration this feature. Similarly, the majority of student writers (80%) achieve logical transition between paragraphs by using linkers among them first, second, finally…, and only one student does not.

As for the characteristic of logical progression, relatedness and completeness of ideas, student writers, i.e., two (40%) of them thrived in using them whilst three (60%) accomplish low use of these elements. The cluster analysis of student writers' descriptive essays uncovers the fact that all of them 100% assign adequate use of associated nouns and adjectives with the described entity. By way of illustration, one of students who selects place of description i.e., home uses related nouns and adjectives including sofa, balcony and small and beautiful flat, to quote just a few.

In fact, the incorporation of some literary devices as similes, metaphors, analogies, to name just a few, empower and strengthen the content of essays. As far as the descriptive essay is concerned, the previously mentioned devices are useful, if not required, for the quality of the essay. In this sense, these literary devices and others need to be engraved in their compositions. The findings seem to point out that only one student (20%) employs one simile and one metaphor within the essay. The remaining four students (80%) write their essay with no use of these devices. The following table reviews the obtained data.

Table 3. 8

Characteristics of Elaboration in Students' Descriptive Essay

Characteristics of Elaboration in Students' Descriptive Essay	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency
Specific Details	4/1	80%/20%
Clear and Relevant development Of the central idea	3/2	60%/40%
Logical transition between sentences	4/1	80%/20%
Logical Transition Between Paragraphs	4/1	80%/20%
Logical Progression, Relatedness and completeness of ideas	2/3	40%/60%
Related Use of Nouns and Adjectives	5	100%

As stated previously, the analysis of student writers' descriptive essay takes another dimension that is cohesion. Thus, the coming section endeavors fundamentally to identify the use of cohesive devices in their essays.

3.4.2. Cohesion Analysis

3.4.2.1. The use of reference

After the analysis of students' compositions, it was reflected that all of them (100%) make use of a variety of reference with its three types namely; personal (I, their, my, its it), demonstrative (this, that, there) and comparative (good, other).

3.4.2.2. The use of conjunctions

This cohesive device is used by all of them (100%) in which they combine the engagement of this tie with its different types. That is, they use additive conjunctions (and, furthermore), adversative (but), causal (because) and temporal (when).

3.4.2.3. The use of substitution

It was reflected that only two student writers (40%) make use of this cohesive device, while three (60%) sometimes do and most of time they elide them where they should be. This could be due to the unawareness of its use.

3.4.2.4. The use of ellipsis

As far as the use of ellipsis is concerned, the findings see; to point out that only two students (40%) succeeded in using this tie, whereas, three of the analyzed compositions (60%) appear to lack knowledge concerning the use of ellipsis.

3.4.2.5. The use of lexical cohesion

Taking into account the use of lexical cohesion in student writers descriptive essay, the analysis indicates that the majority (60%) succeeded in using it. Whilst, two (40%) do not achieve adequate use of this device. The table below reflects the collected data.

Table 3. 9

The Use of Cohesive Devices

Cohesive Devices	Absolute Frequency		Relative Frequency
Reference	Use	5	100%
Conjunction	Use	5	100%
Substitution	Use	2	40%
	Useless	3	60%
Ellipsis	Use	2	40%
	Useless	3	60%
Lexical Cohesion	Use	3	60%
	Useless	2	20%

In fact, the investigator uses three research tools to come up with data to cross check the validity or the none validity of the research hypotheses. This is the concern of the following section.

3.5. The Discussion of the Main Findings

The concern of this section is to state significantly the findings obtained from the research tools that were intended to identify EFL learners essay writing difficulties and sources, and to account for some thinkable resolutions to unveil these difficulties from their essay writing. Regarding these objectives, the researcher's interest is to check whether the research hypotheses are valid or not.

With regard to the first hypothesis which states that EFL learners face difficulties in coherence and cohesion, insightful results were obtained. First, the findings attained

from students' questionnaire reveal that the most encountered difficulty among EFL learners in essay writing is coherence that takes high percentage followed by lexis and cohesion difficulties. Second, the analysis of teachers' semi-structured interview shows that the vast majority of them indicate that these learners run into coherence, with much emphasis, as well as cohesion and grammar.

As for the analysis of students' descriptive essay, it has been noticed that the majority of student writers show enough control over coherence and cohesion, but they still commit them in the sense that they add some redundant ideas and misuse some cohesive ties. The obtained data from the three research instruments combine to confirm the first research hypothesis.

As far as the second research hypothesis is concerned, the researcher hypothesized that the source behind learners' weak performance in essay writing is due to the lack of reading. It was reflected from both students' questionnaire (see question ten in appendix A) and teachers semi-structured interview (see question seven in appendix B) that the majority of these participants regard reading as the main source behind poor essay writing. Therefore, it is safe to mention that the second research hypothesis is confirmed.

In order for EFL learners to overcome difficulties in essay writing, the investigator hypothesized the idea of building learners' reading and writing habits. The collected data from students' questionnaire shows that the majority of them state that reading helps in improving essay writing, and others regard practicing essay writing a necessary activity to better essay writing performance. Similarly, teachers' semi-structured interview indicates that all the interviewees approach reading and practicing essay writing as workable activities for successful essay writing.

These finding pave the way to say that the third research hypothesis is valid. In fact, the interviewees have mentioned some activities that break down difficulties in essay writing. In this respect, the following section attempts basically to bring into

light the necessary activities for enhancing EFL learners' proficiency level in essay writing.

3.6. Suggestions and Recommendations for Effective Essay Writing

The overall findings in the present study calls the investigator to exhibit possible solutions to promote EFL learners essay writing. In this concern, various scholars in this area of research provide a handful of recommendations. It is wiser to record that the researcher selects carefully effective ways, techniques and approaches that help enhancing these learners proficiency level in essay writing, mainly in coherence and cohesion.

The first thing need to be done is to create an environment that boosts learners to disclose thoughts, attitudes, of course, with the present of the instructor. This latter, needs to control students' ideas and their relatedness regarding the topic discussed.

Such an activity is best thaught by engaging them in group and pair work in order to encourage them to work cooperatively. In this vein, Storch (2007) suggests that arranging students in pairs and groups permit them to combine the necessary linguistic resources to come up with new constructed knowledge. In this learning environment, the teacher may use the Process Learning Approach (PLA, henceforth) which focuses on the way ideas are formulated and organized in writing regardless grammar and spelling mistakes that they commit. In order to achieve a sense of creativeness, relatedness and effectiveness of ideas, teachers need to bring topics that help students to generate sufficient ideas (Tribble, 1996). At this level, the instructor's role is to supply language support, if needed, so that the flow of ideas cannot be inhibited. When the task is finished, the teacher designs a spider map on the board and invites them to voice their thought.

The next step is to open debate to calculate which ideas need to be expended and are relevant to the topic. Afterward, the construction of the essay is required and needs to be done within group members. Within the Process Approach, the teacher's emphasis is to make them express their ideas at the same time developing implicitly

coherence in their writing. The continuous use of this approach in groups gives positive results in terms of clarity and unity.

When the teacher realizes that students are competent enough in making their essay writing coherent, he/she needs to integrate the Product Approach which focuses on grammar and spelling. Therefore, the execution of these two approaches to essay writing develop unity and lessen, intuitively, mistakes in grammar and spelling. The following activities are suggested to improve students' essay writing in terms of coherence.

Activity One: read this thesis statement and main body paragraphs. The writer has begun to cross out sentences that do not belong. There is still one large piece of the text that should be removed because it isn't relevant to the thesis. Compare your answer with a partner.

Thesis statement: sign language, the language used by many deaf people, has a 500-years history.

The first sign language for deaf people was developed in Europe in the 1500s. In Spain, a man was named Pedro de Ponce was the first person who to teach deaf children using sign language. Another Spaniard, Juan Pablo de Bonet, was the first person to write a book on teaching sign language to deaf people. Most of his students were from rich families. Another important teacher who influenced the development of sign language was a freshman named Abbé de L'Epée .L'Epée understood that deaf people could communicate without speech. He started to learn the signs used by a group of deaf people in Paris. Using these signs, he develops a more complete French sign used by a group of deaf people. L'Epée also taught religion classes. Another freshman also lived during this time. He invited a system of reading and writing for blind people, using raised bumps that can be felt with the fingers. In Germany, a man named Samuel Heinicke was another important teacher of the deaf during this time. However, he did not use sign language for instruction. Instead, he referred to teach

deaf to understand other people by looking carefully at other people's mouths when they spoke. This id called lip or speech reading.

Speech reading became a popular way of teaching deaf in the United States I nthe mid-188s. Alexander Grahem Bell, who invented the telephone, was one of the strongest supporters of teaching deaf people to do speech reading. Bell became interested in deafness and teaching deaf people. With his interest in helping science and the production of sound, he focuses on ways of helping the deaf to communicate with listening tools and speech reading. He invented a training school for teachers of the deaf.

Not much is known about the use of sign language among deaf people in the United States before the 1800s. The early 1800s were an important period in the development American Sign Language. In 1815, a man named Thomas Gallaunded became interested in teaching in teaching deaf people. He was twenty-seven years old at this time, and he studied at a school for deaf students in Paris for several months. He started the first school for the deaf, and Clerc became the first sign language teacher in the USA. The school, called the American School for the Deaf, still exists in Hartfold, Connecticut. American Sign Language developed from the mixture of signs used by deaf Americans and French Sign Language. Today, it is used by more than 500, 00 deaf people in the United States and Canada. About twenty million people in the United States have hearing problems, and about two million of these are deaf.

(Adopted from Academic Writing from Paragraph to Essay, Dorothy E Zemach& Lisa A Rumisek, p80-81)

Activity Two: write a simple outline of yourself or your life. First, outline only the main body paragraphs. Your main ideas could include physical characteristics, your personality, habits, family, places you have lived, jobs you had things you like or dislike and so on. Then, write an introduction and conclusion for the outline you created, and exchange these with a partner. Make comments on your partner's paragraphs.

(Adopted from Academic Writing from Paragraph to Essay, Dorothy E Zemach& Lisa A Rumisek, p77)

Actually, the assimilation of the two approaches with teaching cohesion play a crucial role in the transition process across sentences and paragraphs to help both parties (the writer and the reader) understand the semantic relations that can be best achieved through the use cohesive devices. In this line of thaught, Zamel (1983) suggests some activities that enable learners connect stretches of sentences with appropriate ties (1983: 25.p6). Such exercises drive students to come to a decision of which cohesive device is suitable for the smooth of ideas within the essay. In order to do so ,the below activities help learners to reach this objective.

Activity Three: read these revised paragraphs from the essay on sign language. Underline examples of transition use, pronoun reference, and repetition of key words.

The first sign language for deaf people was developed in Europe in the 1500s.Three men in particular contributed a lot to the development of sign languages. In Spain, a man was named Pedro de Ponce was the first person who to teach deaf children using sign language. In addition, another Spaniard, Juan Pablo de Bonet, wrote on teaching sign language to deaf at about the same time. Another important teacher who influenced the development of sign language was a freshman named Abbé de L'Epée .L'Epée understood that deaf people could communicate without speech. He started to learn the signs used by a group of deaf people in Paris. Using these signs, he developed a more complete French sign language.

The early 1800s were an important period in the development of American Sign Language. In 19815, a man named Thomas Gallaudet became interested in teaching deaf people, so he traveled to Europe to study ways of communicating with deaf people. He was twenty-seven years old at this time, and he studied at a school for deaf children in Paris for several months. After that, Gallaudet returned to the Unites States, and he brought with him Laurent Clerc, a deaf sign language teacher from Paris. As a result of his experience in Europe, Gallaudet the first school for the deaf,

and Clerc became the first sign language teacher in the USA. American Sign Language developed from the mixture of signs used by deaf Americans and French signs Language. Today, it is used by more than 500,00 deaf people In the United State and Canada.

(Adopted from Academic Writing from Paragraph to Essay, Dorothy E Zemach& Lisa A Rumisek, p85)

Activity Four: these pairs of sentences need to be joined together to form English proverbs. Choose the best transition word or phrases to connect each pair. Compare your answer with a partner, and then discuss the possible meaning of each one.

   a- Don't count your chicken........ they hatch.   (*before/ so / because.*)

   b- .... life gives you lemons, make lemonade.   (*before/ when/ because*)

   c- Time flies....... you're having fun. (*after/ although/ when*)

   d- You can lead a horse to water......you can't make it drink. (*and /but/ or*)

   e- Laugh, ...the world laugh with you. Cry........ you cry alone. *(and, but/ and, and/ but, but)*

   f- You don't know what water is worth....... your well is dry. (*because /after/ until*)

(Adopted from Academic Writing from Paragraph to Essay, Dorothy E Zemach& Lisa A Rumisek, p87)

The next activity can be used to allow learners to construct the essay which covers the instructions of the above tasks.

Activity four: write an outline for an essay on one of the following topics or on a topic of your choice. Then, edit your outline for unity and coherence and write your essay. Exchange the essay you wrote with a partner. After that, look for the use of the cohesive devices you have learned about.

(Adopted from Academic Writing from Paragraph to Essay, Dorothy E Zemach& Lisa A Rumisek, p86)

With these tasks, students happen to reach a satisfactory level in essay writing that enable them, hopefully, to construct whatever piece of writing they wish to establish.

3.7. Conclusion:

Quantitative and qualitative data analysis demonstrate from the research instruments used for this study that EFL learners encounter coherence and cohesion difficulties in essay writing. They regard lack of reading as well as low writing practice as the main sources for their difficulties. So as to decrease these boundaries, a call for possible recommendations is required. It has been suggested for teachers to integrate the Process Approach with the Product Approach to teaching writing to allow learners write coherently with less commitment of grammar and mechanics. Teaching cohesion to these learners is crucial so that the flow of ideas and their connectedness can be felt. In this point, the researcher has adopted some activities to be put into operation within the teaching of CWE module.
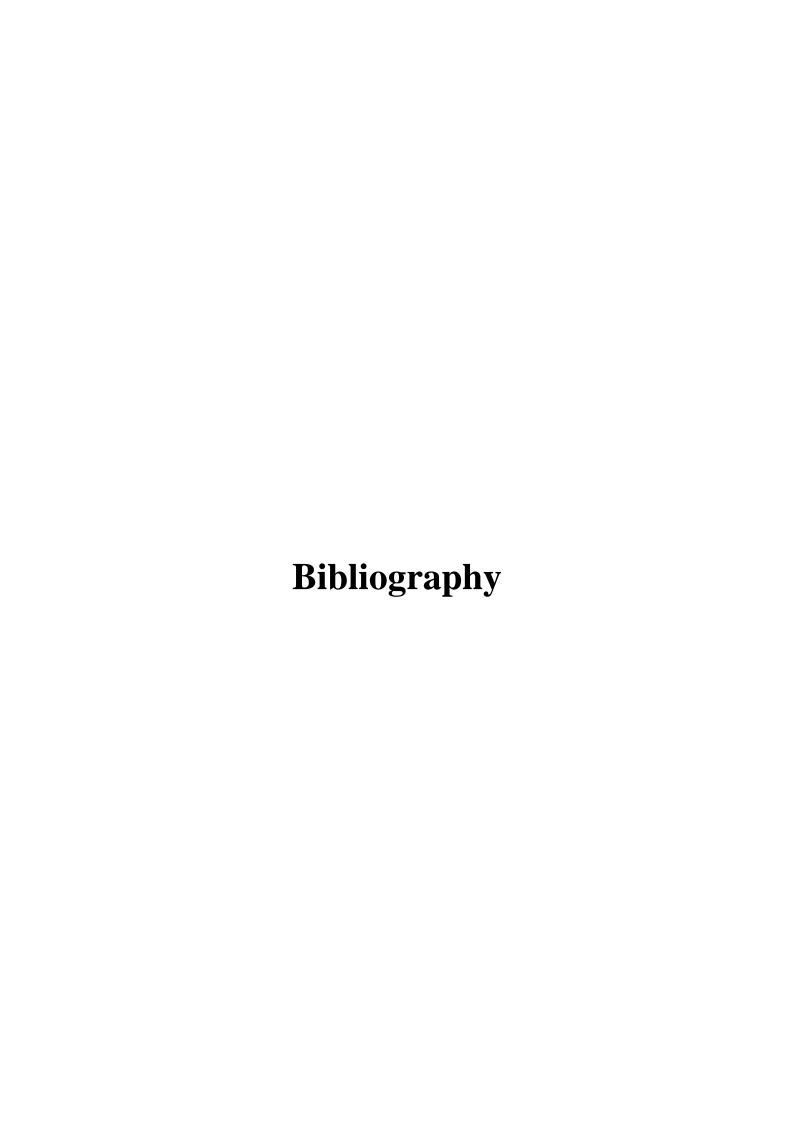
General Conclusion

General Conclusion

Writing as one of the most important language skills needs to be learned at a very early stage due to its complexity. Its complexity resides primary on the ability to write meaningful sentences that carry specific functions and meaning s. For this reason, it is a challenging task for EFL learners and native speakers to achieve a satisfactory level in writing in general and in essay writing in particular. In this regard, the study sheds some light on the difficulties that EFL learners happen to meet in essay writing and to see which sources these difficulties are related to.

In this concern, the first chapter embodies the diverse definitions of the concept of writing as a language skill by various scholars, followed by the correlation between reading and writing since reading help learners especially foreign language learners to acquire new vocabulary as well as to attain a native- like writing. Then, it identifies common essay writing difficulties that maybe encountered by these learners along with sources behind these difficulties.

The second chapter covers the employed research tools that have been selected for the fulfillment of this research work with data. As far as the third chapter is concerned, it represents the quantitative and the qualitative data collected and analyzed by the researcher owing to the research instruments. This chapter exhibited some suggested activities and practical recommendations to boost EFL learners' proficiency level in essay writing.

The findings indicate that the majority of learners face coherence and cohesion difficulties in essay writing. The vast majority among both students and teachers relate these difficulties to the lack of reading and low writing practice. They mention that in order for a better essay writing, one should read and practice essay writing. In this line of taught, the researcher outlines a number of activities to enhance and ensure clarity and relatedness in essay writing.

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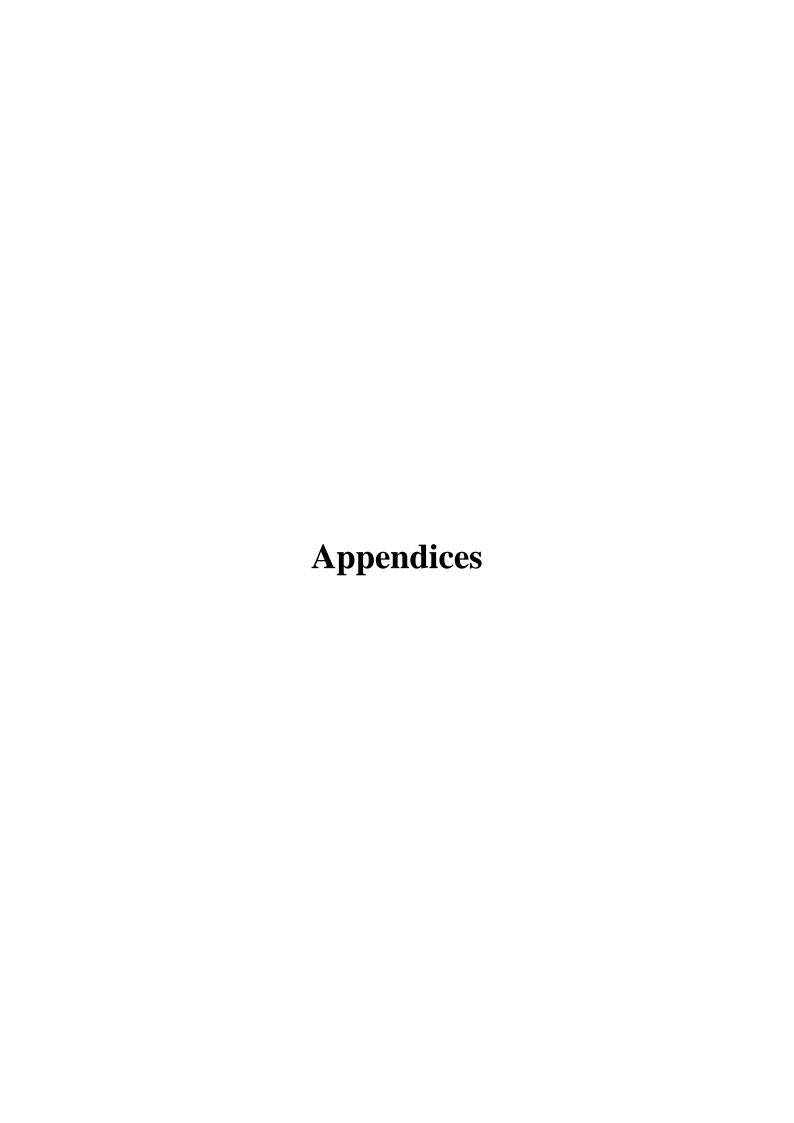*students' lack of reading* (Unpublished Magister Dissertation). Alhadj Lakhder University, Batna.   .

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Appendices

Students 'Questionnaire

The following questionnaire aims at collecting data regarding the difficulties encountered by EFL learners in essay writing and the sources of these difficulties.

You are kindly invited to fill in this questionnaire either by putting a cross (X) next the suitable option or by providing answers.

1. Age:

   20 years-old ☐   Over than 20 years-old ☐

2. Sex:

   Male ☐   Female ☐

3. Do you enjoy writing?

   Yes ☐   No ☐

   Please, justify your answer...

4. In which language do you prefer to write?

   Arabic ☐   French ☐   English ☐

   Please, explain

   ....

5. How often do you write in English?

   Never ☐   Rarely ☐   Sometimes ☐   Very often ☐

6. How do you evaluate your level in writing in English?

   Weak ☐   Average ☐   Good ☐

7. Where do you usually face difficulties when writing an essay? (You can cross more than one)

   a. Coherence (unity of ideas) ☐

   b. Cohesion (link between sentences) ☐

   c. Grammar ☐

   d. Lexis (vocabulary) ☐

   e. Spelling ☐

   f. Others ☐

Please, specify...

8. To what sources do you relate these difficulties? (You can cross more than one)

   a. Lack of reading ☐

   b. Low writing practice ☐

   c. The influence of L1 (the First language) into FL (foreign language) writing ☐

9. Do you correct your essay writing at class with your teacher?

   Yes ☐   No ☐

10. Do you do your remedial work after the correction session?

   Yes ☐   No ☐

11. After your teacher's correction and your remedial work, which of the following difficulties do you still encounter the most? (Cross only one)

   a) Coherence (unity of ideas) ☐

   b) Cohesion(link between sentences) ☐

   c) Grammar ☐

   d) Lexis (vocabulary) ☐

   e) Spelling ☐

12. To what source do you relate this difficulty? (Cross only one)

   a) Lack of reading ☐

   b) Low writing practice ☐

   c) The influence of L1 (the First language) into FL (foreign language) writing ☐

13. Do you think that reading helps you improve your essay writing?

   Yes ☐   No ☐

   Please, justify your answer

   ....

14. Which solutions do you suggest to improve your essay writing?

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

                                                      Thank you for your collaboration

Teachers's Semi-structured Interview

1.   Male   Female

2. How many years have you been teaching C.W.E. module?

3. Do you correct your learners essay writing within the classroom?

      Yes   No

4. How do you evaluate your students' essay writing?

      Weak   Average   Good

5. With regard to your experience in teaching C.W.E module, what are the difficulties that your students encounter when writing an essay?

      Coherence   Cohesion   Lexis   Grammar

      Spelling   Others

       Please, specify

 7. To what sources do you relate these difficulties?

      a- Lack of reading

      b- Low writing practice

      c-The influence of L1 into the writing FL writing

8. After your correction, what is the difficulty that your students still encounter the most?

      Coherence   Cohesion   Lexis   Grammar

      Spelling

9. To what source do you relate this difficulty?

    a- Lack of reading

    b- Low writing practice

    c-The influence of L1 into the writing FL writing

10. Do you encourage your learners to read outdoor?

     Yes   No

     Why?

11. What do you suggest to your students to achieve a good piece of essay writing?

12. As a C.W.E teacher, what do you suggest as classroom activities and assignments to better improve you learners essay writing?