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**The Effect of Blended Learning on EFL Learners 'Academic Writing Abilities: The  
Case of Third-Year LMD Students, University of Tlemcen**

Dissertation submitted to the Department of English as a partial fulfilment of  
the requirements for Master's degree in Didactics of Foreign Languages

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## **Dedication**

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

This commitment is a reflection of the innumerable hours of effort, encouragement, and direction that have molded my academic career. My accomplishments are largely due to your persistent faith in my skills and your commitment to my development.

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## **Abstract**

Mastering language skills is a key to effective teaching. Consequently, educators keep on looking for new and innovative teaching methods that can enhance the four language skills. Writing is one of the important pillars of language learning and one of the most important interests and interests of teachers and students. Due to the lack of opportunities to write in the classroom, learning how to write is one of the difficult things that most learners of English as a foreign language struggle to acquire. Accordingly, this work suggests blended learning as a teaching approach that can be implemented to facilitate writing and provide more opportunities. Blended learning is classified as the best of worlds, online learning and face-to-face learning. The purpose of this study is to examine the effect of blended learning on EFL learners' academic writing abilities and investigate how students and teachers view its application. The current study hypothesizes that incorporating blended learning into EFL classes enhances students' writing abilities and increase their motivation. At Tlemcen's Abou Bakr Belkaid University, a case study was carried out to investigate this hypothesis. Four teachers were chosen for an interview, and 19 students filled out a questionnaire. There was a combination of qualitative and quantitative analysis. The findings revealed that both teachers and students hold positive attitudes towards the use of blended learning. The questionnaire's results supported students' beliefs that blended learning give them more writing chances, enabling them to study on their own and improving the effectiveness of the learning process. This work emphasizes the effect of blended learning on the educational system and student production.

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## **Key Abbreviations and Acronyms**

BL: Blended Learning

FtF: Face-to-face

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

# General Introduction

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## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Previous years have demonstrated the crucial role that modern technology plays in most people's daily lives, including commerce, education, and communication. Since this course focuses on the latter area, it is essential to teach and learn English as a foreign language (EFL). With a lot of advantages, like online learning platforms, learning and evaluating applications, and other tools. The integration of technology into EFL classrooms has become essential for English teachers to deal with numerous challenges in the classroom and develop successful course materials. Not just for students but also for educators.

The combination of technology and education has given rise to blended learning. Face-to-face learning methods have been around for centuries. In this regard, the presence of technology in the classroom is very important because it enables the immediate availability of information. It has even changed the roles of students and teachers, as the teacher is the primary source of knowledge in the classroom, while the learners are the recipients of information.

Blended learning is an approach that brings together the strengths of both classroom instruction and online learning. For instance, it combines online activities and resources with usual face-to-face teaching. A blended learning program might involve students working through an online course at their own pace outside of class time. Then, in the classroom, they could participate in discussions and activities led by an instructor. For this reason, online learning supports in-person instruction by ensuring everyone has access to the same foundational materials.

The global reach of English makes writing a vital skill for language learners. Clear communication relies on strong writing abilities. To address this, teachers must be equipped to understand the challenges faced by learners and employ a variety of teaching methods to bolster their academic writing. This necessitates ample opportunities for in-class and independent writing practice.

## General Introduction

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In this context, Algerian universities face a challenge: overcrowded classrooms often lead to a passive learning environment, making it difficult for students to actively

improve their writing skills. Traditional teaching methods struggle to address this in large groups. Blended learning offers a potential solution. By strategically combining online learning resources with engaging in-class activities, this approach can re-ignite student motivation and encourage a more active learning style. This shift, in turn, can foster the development of stronger writing abilities.

Therefore, this work aims to explore the impact of blended learning on the academic writing abilities of English as Foreign Language (EFL) learners. It also aims to determine if blended learning enhances or hinders their writing skills. Additionally, this research will identify areas where students struggle with writing and investigate the perspectives of both teachers and students on using blended learning in EFL classrooms.

Consequently, this study has been designed to address the subsequent research questions:

- Q1: Do EFL students have the proficiency to write academically?
- Q2: Is blended learning efficient for EFL students to help them write academically?
- Q3: How can blended learning be efficient for EFL students to be more proficient in their academic writing?

In light of the following research questions, it is hypothesized that:

1. All the EFL students have the desire to write academically.
2. Blended learning is efficient as it offers the students a mixed method of developing their academic writing abilities as well as more opportunities to improve their proficiency in this skill. Besides, it is helpful in motivating them.
3. Blended learning is efficient for EFL students to write academically.

## General Introduction

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To achieve the research objectives outlined previously, this study employs an exploratory case study focusing on third-year LMD students at the University of Tlemcen. A mixed-methods approach will be used, gathering both qualitative and quantitative data. In this study two research instruments will be employed: a questionnaire for students and interviews with teachers.

This study is structured in two chapters: a theoretical one and a practical one. The first chapter (literature review). This last explore the importance of writing skills for learners, particularly within the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). And examine how blended learning can affect students writing abilities. Additionally, it also delves into common writing difficulties faced by EFL learners and establishing the key characteristics of a proficient writer in the first part. Subsequently, the focus will shift to the role of technology in facilitating academic writing instruction. However, the next section dives into blended learning, explaining its meaning, key components, ingredients, characteristics, and the impact it has on both teachers and students. It also weighs the pros and cons of this approach.

The following chapter (research methodology) focuses on the practical application of the research. It examines how blended learning affects the academic writing abilities of EFL learners. This chapter details the research design, including the type of study, the participant sample, and the chosen research tools. To explore the perceptions of both teachers and students about blended learning, this study employed a questionnaire for students and interviews with written expression teachers. Then this chapter delves into the key findings of this data collection.

In conclusion, implementing new teaching methods alongside educational technologies presents a complex picture for the educational system, offering both potential benefits and drawbacks that warrant further exploration.

# **CHAPTER ONE: LITERATURE REVIEW**

**Chapter one: literature review****1.1 Introduction**

This first chapter is concerned with a literature review. It is structured into two parts: the first one is devoted to academic writing, while the second is about BL and its theoretical impact on the learning process.

The importance of writing is initially demonstrated in the first part, along with other ways that blended learning enables students to write more and develop their writing abilities. Moreover, it outlines the characteristics of an effective writer and describes the difficulties in writing that come with learning a foreign language. Additionally, this section defines the qualities of a competent writer. Finally, it examines the potential of technology and blended learning to facilitate the teaching of writing skills for EFL learners.

However, the second part focuses on BL components and draws attention to the diverse definitions offered by various academics. It also covers the context history of BL prerequisite benefits and drawbacks of blended learning and the roles that both teachers and students play.

**1.2. Definition of Writing**

Writing is the act of sharing information, messages, and ideas and expressing emotions in a structured grammar and written form, and writing is also one of the means of communication. Writing is one of the English skills that students must master. As Harmer (2004: 31) points out: « Writing is an approach to creating language and expressing thoughts, feelings and hypotheses. » He also also points to the fact that writing involves organizing what we are going to write Harmer (2001).

Writing is the psychological work of developing thoughts, pondering to communicate them, and sorting out them into articulations and passages that will be obvious to a reader. Additionally, writing is the psychological work of developing ideas, thinking about how to convey them, and organize them passages that will be obvious to the reader. (Nunan, 2003).

It involves the transmission of data or the expression of unique ideas in a new dialect through reciprocal means (Rivers, 1981). It also ensures that writing is a process of argumentation (Brown: 2001). A different importance of writing skills is highlighted by Urquhart and McIver (2005), who argue that writing is a recursive process, meaning that students go through the entire process again, moving from one step to the next from time to time. In this phase, students need to learn about creation and distribution systems, and teachers need to help students create content and figure out why. Additionally, the opinion is expressed that reader, reason, and event characterize all types of writing and that vital writing fulfills the author's intent and satisfies the reader's.

The same authors highlight the importance of writing skills arguing that writing is a recursive process, meaning that students go through the entire process again, moving from one step to the next from time to time. In this phase, students need to learn about creation and distribution systems, and teachers need to help students create content and figure out why.

Based on the above definitions, it can be said that writing is a productive process which, in a sense, is initially about searching and finding ideas, feelings, thoughts and giving them a form through writing. Second, incorrect written errors such as incorrect grammar and sentence order. Writing arises from a text that can be read by the reader and can be useful to him.

### **1.3. Definition of Academic Writing**

Academic writing is a formal understandable written expression of one's evidence-based perspectives on a given topic, question, or subject. Additionally, it is a serious and formal way of writing that is different from creative writing and various other informal and fictional writing, focused, impersonal, open-minded, objective, precise, clear, engaging, thorough, and consistent with convention within its specific discipline (Hyland & Jiang, 2017). Because, among other things, the purpose of academic writing is to convey one's arguments to the reader, and it is crucial to be understood. Therefore, there must be clarity of expression, depth,

and cohesion of the work in the context of the discipline, subject, or topic context. From the above definition, it can be argued that academic writing is a form of formal communication that should present clearly expressed views supported by evidence. It requires that sentences be logically connected and follow the guidelines of the field of study.

#### **1.4 Writing in EFL**

Writing skills are now considered one of the fundamental skills for language learning, according to Harmer (1998), writing skills have been recognized as one of the fundamental skills for language learning. He has also pointed out the reasons behind the essentiality of writing skills and teaching writing skills to EFL students, including reinforcement, language development, learning style, and most importantly, writing as a skill in its own right.

The approach to writing in the 1970s started gaining broad classroom practice and changed the traditional practice to the new methodology. The traditional method focuses on the finished work while in the new methodology, learners are given the experience of going through the writing processes as writers. So, instead of analysis and correction of the final written product (usually) given by the teacher, there comes the process of writing in several activities, processes, or stages.

#### **1.5 Academic Writing and its Importance in EFL**

Academic writing plays a highly prominent role in students' academic purposes: papers, assignments, exercises, and theses for meeting their academic needs (Abunurrahman, Hamied, & Emilia, 2017; Ariyanti, 2016; Soehadi, 2008; Husin&Nurbayani, 2017; Sriwichai&Inpin, 2018; Yasuda, 2014; Gillett, Hammond, & Martala, 2009). These experts agree that academic writing, as a skill required for academic context, significantly impacts the scope of students' written academic papers in a university context to meet their degree.

Bailey (2003) which also elaborates that academic writing is designed to students at English medium colleges and universities for guiding and preparing them to compose academic essays and other written exam assignments with fulfilling conventions in style, referencing and organization of their essay. In an academic setting, written academic works deserve getting priority from practitioners because several students' projects such as research report, essay, examination questions, dissertation thesis to their practical application are commonly requested upon courses.

By mastering the above academic writing skills, individuals can effectively contribute to their field of study, engage in intellectual discourse, and make meaningful contributions to society.

#### **a. Development of Critical Thinking Skills**

Critical thinking is regarded as an important skill that can assist EFL students in achieving academic success. However, (Al-Masoqui & Denman, 2008, p. 218) assert that teachers use approaches to communication and language use in context in real-life situations; they argue that foreign language teachers go beyond training students to memorize vocabulary and grammatical rules. To conclude, using critical thinking in the classroom and develop it in the learners has a great impact on their self-confidence, communicative competence and motivation, as well as their self-esteem and self-assurance.

#### **b. Communication Skills**

Academic writing is essential for every student and can be used to enhance one's communication skills. With it, a student can show how to apply the knowledge acquired so far. This writing happens in a different setting; for instance, you can have academic writing that presents an argument with evidence to support the viewpoint. such as not uncovering important and authentic details and using biased and unreasonable evidence. Outside the classroom, it takes the form of a genre and thus some freedom to indulge the students in logical thinking, providing

them chances to choose right and linking complex ideas in a well-arranged and organized way.

## **1.6 Writing Difficulties in EFL**

Writing is a language skill that serves as an essential means for people to express their thoughts, ideas, attitudes. This is a difficult skill for both native and non-native speakers as they have to consider many aspects when writing, such as purpose, target group, content, organization, vocabulary, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization (Abu Rass, 2015). This study talks about the problems they face. These issues are shared by the students themselves:

### **1.6.1. Spelling Mistakes**

Spelling is the correct formation of words from letters. When students lack word formation skills, they produce poor-quality texts. Additionally, mixing spellings in English languages affects students' writing accuracy as they are sometimes unsure about which spelling of a word to use, be it the American spelling or the British spelling.

Four categories of spelling mistakes that English language learners frequently make are listed by Cook (1999). These are transpositions (reversing the position of letters), omissions (leaving out letters), substitutions (changing letters with the wrong ones), and insertions and additions (adding more letters). Moreover, Kearney and Drabman (1993) think that the use of negative reinforcement has a great impact on improving spelling mistakes. Therefore, teachers should ask their students to practice the missing words five times on the first day, ten times on the second day, and fifteen times on the following day to correct their spelling mistakes. Swan and Smith (2001) found in their study of spelling errors that the linguistic differences between Arabic and English are the cause of spelling problems for Arab students, while other learners from non-Arabic backgrounds, whose languages have more similarities with English, scored low on spelling errors.

Correct spelling is of great importance for good writing. However, Harmer (2007) believes that incorrect spelling does not affect the understanding of the written text, negatively affects the reader's judgment, and incorrect spelling indicates a lack of education or healing. Teachers must therefore motivate their students to read frequently.

### **1.6.2 Grammar Mistakes**

Grammar refers to the rules that structure language. To write a meaningful sentence or paragraph. For example, this sentence has the grammatical meaning of "He writes the article", in contrast to the sentences "His writes the article" or "Writes the article he".

The last two sentences break grammatical rules: the first sentence violates the rule that a pronoun must appear in the subject case when it is the subject of a verb, and the second sentence violates the rule, according to which the conventional order of an English sentence is: subject-verb object.

Moreover, Harmer (2001) thinks that grammar is the rules that organize language, and grammatical rules are not the pronouncements of teachers, editors, or other authorities. It only describes the way of people speak and write, and the rules change when people start to speak and write in different ways.

### **1.6.3 Lack of Confidence**

Successful writing is not attainable if students lack confidence and are unwilling to bare their feelings while writing. In this sense, most students tend to have a negative attitude towards writing. They are not afraid to express their thoughts in writing for fear of typographical errors. In this regard, Erkan and Saban (2011) note that success with writing in a foreign language may be related to attitudes towards writing, apprehension about writing, and self-efficacy in writing. Such students "believe that writing is a natural gift rather than a learned skill" (Langan, 2000:12). In this sense, students may lose motivation towards successful L2 learning in general (Al-Mofti and Hussein, 2019). Moreover, developing a

growth mindset about writing can enhance students' beliefs. Emphasizing and making it clear to students that writing is a skill that will get better with practice and effort. Overall, self-confidence may give the students the internal drive to keep going and take responsibility for their learning process.

#### **1.6.4 Lack of writing opportunities and lack of practice**

Many problems arise in EFL classrooms, which can lead teachers to look for more appropriate ways and solutions to solve them. Teaching writing is considered one of the most difficult tasks because teachers need more time and effort to provide more opportunities to their students and manage writing activities in groups.

According to Harmer (2001), lack of writing opportunities and lack of practice are the main challenges that English learners face in improving their writing skills. He emphasizes the importance of giving students opportunities to practice writing and the need for teachers to encourage students to write as much as possible, even outside the classroom. To this end, teachers are constantly looking for innovative and progressive teaching materials that provide them with better opportunities, spaces and resources for teaching writing skills. Instead of relying on classroom activities, students should practice writing at home using applications that allow them to write and communicate with native speakers, and then develop their writing abilities that may help them develop academic writing.

### **1.7 Characteristics of a Good writer**

There are certain qualities that a good writer will always have, regardless of the niche in which they work. Here are the top qualities a successful professional writer exhibits as stated by Cooper, L. (2019, August 26).

#### **a. Practices Self-Reflection**

A good writer actively tunes in with their thoughts. Often self-reflection is hindered by the chaos and noise all around them, despite the distractions and commotion surrounding them, they manage to filter out the noise and focus on their

ideas. An excellent writer takes every bit of information, fully processes it, and applies it to their lives to create relevant content for their readers.

**b. Strong Vocabulary**

A good writer has a rich vocabulary that can be used at any time. They have words to easily describe and explain each concept. However, they know how to use their vocabulary in a way that suits their audience's understanding. These qualities are essential for an effective writer because they spotlight a certain devotion and openness—both of which are necessary to achieve writing greatness.

**c. A Passion for Writing**

Having a passion for writing is crucial to creating quality content. However, it is important to love writing because it is reflected in one's work and striving toward success. You should strive to have a job that you enjoy doing every day, and your passion for it will show in your writing.

**d. Knowledge of Grammar**

The English language might appear difficult. But, accurate grammar and spelling are the foundation of good writing. Using the appropriate grammar rules and spellings illustrates your expertise. It also makes your text easier to understand. However, if the work is full of grammatical mistakes, the readers are going to have a hard time getting through it. However, nothing is more distracting than being pulled out of a good article because a word is misspelled or a punctuation mark is misplaced.

**e. Motivation**

Motivation is widely regarded as the most important factor that influences English learning performance. It is generally believed that motivation has a positive impact on EFL students' 'writing competencies. It is a multifaceted concept that has been the subject of several studies in different areas, particularly in the English language. It has a crucial role in achieving many goals in students' 'academic life

particularly in the writing process. Therefore, motivation is considered the driving force of the vehicle used by the learner to achieve their educational objective.

### **1.8 Strategies of Improving Academic Writing in EFL**

Academic writing is one of the cornerstones of language learning and one of the senior interests, and concerns of teachers, students, and researchers. According to Graham & Harris (2016), Writing well is not a talent. It is forged by practice, ambition, and other people's support. Teaching writing well can be a key component of this growth. It's a fundamental skill practiced repeatedly; without sufficient practice, students cannot develop their writing skills to a higher level. Students use writing skills to help them think through, clarify, and develop new ideas about how they might respond to the title that been set. Therefore, Students are usually required to write academic papers in various forms, ranging from essays to research papers, and many more. Regardless of the type of work, academic writing requires a range of skills that can be developed over time. Improving EFL student's academic writing skills can make the difference between mediocre and excellent grades. Here are some tips for EFL learners to enhance their academic writing skills, as stated by E. A. (2023, March 23).

#### **a. Read widely**

Reading extensively and critically is an essential step in improving students' academic writing skills. When learners read academic texts from reputable sources in their field of study, they can learn from the best practices of experienced writers. They will be exposed to and familiar with different styles, formats, and techniques used in academic writing. Additionally, reading extensively will help English learners improve their vocabulary, which can help them express their ideas more effectively.

**b. Planning and Organization**

Before learners start writing, it's important to organize and plan the ideas. A well-structured paper should have a clear introduction, body, and conclusion. When learners plan and organize their writing, they can develop a clear roadmap for their paper and avoid getting off track, while also providing themselves a metaphorical "pathway" to follow, in case they find themselves drifting from the topic at hand.

**c. Use Academic Language**

Using the appropriate language is crucial in academic writing. Students should use formal language that is appropriate for their audience and subject matter. This can be achieved by avoiding the use of slang, contractions, and colloquial language. Instead, it is recommended to use technical terms and concepts that are relevant to the field of study. Using academic language will make the writing more precise, clear, and professional. It can also help to avoid ambiguity and misinterpretation.

**d. Practice Writing Regularly**

Improving learner's academic writing skills requires consistent practice. Writing regularly, even if it's just for a few minutes a day is so important in the process of developing writing skills. Practicing in writing different types of papers, such as essays, reports, and research papers Regularly can help EFL learners to develop their writing skills and build their confidence. The more they practice, the better they become at expressing their ideas clearly and effectively. As the famous quote says: "Practice makes perfect," and this could not be truer than in writing.

In conclusion, writing is an essential tool that helps students think, explain, and create new ideas. However, improving EFL learner's academic writing skills requires consistent practice, patience, and attention to detail. By following the tips outlined students can improve their writing skills and advance to a higher level.

## 1.9 Technology in Teaching Writing

It is very important to talk about the implementation of technology in education. Technology in language teaching is not new; it has been used in language teaching for several decades.

According to Teach Thought. (2019, July 3), many methods for teaching writing can make things easier and more convenient for teachers and their students. The one-size-does-not-fit-all rule applies to the way high-tech teaching of writing works. Although not all teaching techniques are going to be the best for every class and every student, there are a variety of them, which means at least one will be suitable. To narrow it down, these are some digital approaches to assist students in essay writing and grammar.

### 1.9.1 Make Use Of Automation

Evaluating the work of a hundred or more students and providing the required remarks and observations can be a challenging task for the teacher. However, there are cutting-edge solutions that can help students get the support they need while ensuring teachers aren't overwhelmed with assessments. Using automation to help with grading is one such method. Nowadays, there are an increasing amount of complex and comprehensive programs available that can identify errors in students' writing and provide feedback during the writing process. This feedback can help students make changes before submitting their papers and can be given in more manageable chunks to avoid feeling overwhelmed. Although these programs are still evolving, they are likely to become a vital resource for educators when it comes to teaching writing in the coming decades.

### 1.9.2. Monitor and Improve Tongue Mechanics

In addition to built-in support like autocorrect, apps and browser extensions like "Grammarly" are incredibly useful for helping students identify errors in language mechanics and grammar usage. Because these tools help students learn the rules (thus improving their ability to use the language long-term) rather than reducing the need to know them, it's hard to not see the benefit of this specific technology in writing.

### **1.9.3. Create Visual Data and Reports**

Writing software is also available to help teachers track their students' progress as they write a paper or complete an assignment. This type of data can enable students to receive help from start to finish, not only from teachers but also in writing every word of an assignment.

### **1.9.4. Combine Media Modules**

Today, there are hundreds of free multimedia tools that teachers can use in the classroom, and many of them pair well with writing activities that stimulate and motivate students. Looking for ideas? Some teachers ask students to combine self-made videos with self-written poems or to write scripts for short films. Others allow students to turn their stories into animations. While running these types of programs requires little investment in technology, many teachers report that students who are creative and use high-tech tools to improve their academic writing skills work harder, repeat a grade more often, and want to be creative. It will be good and not just please the teacher.

### **1.10. Blended Learning**

Since technology is always changing and affecting every part of our life, it is important to learn about and educate ourselves on these new technologies. It's critical to keep in mind that "evolving" means advancing to the next stage without completely destroying the previous one, or utilizing the best aspects of both worlds: the benefits of the new and the advantages of the old. In the case of education, this is known as blended learning.

#### **1.10.1. Definition of Blended Learning**

To define the concept of 'blended learning', it would be better to define the verb 'blend'. "To blend" is defined as "to mix" or "to combine," but more significantly, it can also mean "to become merged into one," "to create harmonious effect or result," or "to mix so that the constituent parts are indistinguishable from one another," according to The American Heritage Dictionary. Therefore, to achieve a balanced teaching experience, BL does not imply a random mixing of

teaching instruments and approaches; rather, equilibrium must be established between its various parts. However, this concept can be confusing because almost all learning experiences, even those based on traditional methods, can be the result of a combination of different teaching techniques and strategies.

Graham (2006) defines blended learning (BL) as instruction that blends traditional classroom and online learning environments. Once more, this definition is not specific in describing which modalities to employ or even how to combine them to create a new method that is exclusive to BL. This is puzzling, especially considering that the majority of teachers use CALL (Computer-Assisted Language Learning) systems.

Furthermore, the recent emphasis on machine learning in the literature highlights the importance of taking an approach to optimal learning that goes beyond simply combining modalities out of habit or convenience. For example, Singh (2003) defines BL as: “optimizing the achievement of learning objectives by using the “right” learning technologies to match the “right” personal learning style and equip students with the “right” skills at the “right” time. The present study focuses on the third definition because the first two seem too broad and refer to any combination of teaching tools, such as the use of a textbook and a video. The emergence of BL reflects the rapid development of information and technology in the 21st century and its impact on the educational institution as an indistinguishable element of the social structure. In other words, it reflects changes in societies. The aim is to offer students the best possible learning conditions, taking into account their needs, interests, and preferences. Blended learning is defined in different ways by several authors. Driscoll (2002) mention four approaches:

- 1) Combining web-based technological patterns to accomplish a learning objective.
- 2) Combining instructional strategies to provide the best possible learning outcomes, whether or not educational technology is used.
- 3) Incorporate face-to-face instruction with all types of instructional technology.

supervised instruction.

4) Using educational technology to integrate teaching and learning activities with real-world employment tasks.

Blended learning courses are a combination of face-to-face teaching and online platforms. In these courses, students and teachers use technology to promote active learning and share their experiences in branded environments. In addition, blended learning increases student productivity not only in the online environment but also in the course content (Bdawi, 2009; Bouilheres et al., 2020).

### **1.10.2. Ingredients of Blended Learning**

Despite the conflicting views of researchers and teachers on the conceptualization of BL, Carman (2005) believes that any BL experience must contain five important elements to be successful. These components are based on the learning theories of Keller, Gagné, Bloom, Merrill, Clark, and Gery (cited in Carman, op. cit.):

These are the five components adopted from these authors:

**1. Live events:** BL must include synchronous events where students and teachers come together at the same time, such as “live virtual events.” For these activities to be effective, Keller's (1987, 3-6) motivation model must be followed:

- Attention: For example, at the beginning of a lesson, ask students a thought-provoking or compelling question.
- Relevance: The content and activities used must be relevant to the learners' needs.
- Confidence: Maintain students' self-confidence by giving them enough time to put what they have learned into practice.
- Satisfaction: Ensure that the overall learning experience meets the learners' expectations.

**2. Independent Learning:** Asynchronous learning activities that learners can complete independently at their own pace without the support of a teacher include self-paced online courses, reading and answering uploaded audio/video files, electronic documents, posted questions, and computer-based activities such as CD-ROM training.

**3. Collaboration:** Based on the principles of constructivism, collaboration is an important part of BL, whether in the form of synchronous (such as online chat) or asynchronous communication (such as email). Brown (1998, cited in Carman, op. cit.) states that: “Humans are social creatures and, as constructivist learning theory posits, they develop new insights and knowledge through social interaction with communities of others”.

**4. Evaluation:** In BL, evaluation can take two forms: formative and summative. Summative assessment assesses a student's knowledge and skills related to a written product based on pre-and post-tests. Formative assessment assesses a student's meta cognition, self-awareness, and critical thinking skills through self- and peer-assessment procedures. To promote self-evaluation, students are asked self-reflection questions such as: “What do you think is effective in your design?” » For what?. What concerns do you still have about your project?» To facilitate peer review, students are asked what they think of their friend's draft. What constructive advice would you suggest?.

**5. Performance Support Materials:** as Gagné explains, using self-paced materials such as printable downloads and online downloads (audio/video files), as well as job aids (graphs, diagrams, summaries) is essential for enhancing learning retention and transfer.

To conclude, Carman found five key things that make blended learning work well. First, live events should motivate students using Keller's model. Next, students need to learn on their own. Also, they should work together in groups - this helps build knowledge. Blended learning needs tests and quizzes to check what students learned. Finally, extra materials are important to help students remember what they

learned, based on Gagné's ideas. Carman said successful blended learning must mix live teaching, solo work, group projects, testing, and supplemental items in this way. However the next section focuses on how blended learning gives students control over the use of the technology at their disposal. According to Michael Horn and Heather Staker, in their 2015 book, they explain that blended learning offers students the opportunity to learn online, which they can do anywhere, anytime. It also allows everyone to learn things differently, at their own pace.

### **1.10.3. Characteristics of Blended Learning**

When it comes to blended learning, there is an important distinction to make: Blended learning is not just technology-intensive instruction or a standalone online course. In their book 'In Blended: Using Disruptive Innovations to Improve Schools', Horn and Staker (2015) explain that a blended learning program provides:

- a. An online component: Online learning with a degree of student control and flexibility in the way they learn, including time, place, pace, and route.
- b. Partially off-site: partially or in combination with a fixed off-site location (face-to-face teaching or on-campus teaching).
- c. Learning Path: a personalized learning path that offers students the opportunity to learn through exercises using different learning modalities.

According to Blended Learning.org (2016), the key point is "student control. "For online learning to be considered blended learning from the standpoint of the student, rather than just the use of digital tools from the classroom teacher's perspective, the technology used for it must shift content and instruction to the control of the student in some way.

Essentially, it defines not the type of technology students' use, but how they use it and how much control they have over it.

This gives students the ability to pause, rewind, or skip forward online content, as well as choose the time and place to learn a new concept and complete coursework or assessments such as homework or exams.

### **1.11. Pros and Cos of Blended Learning**

Blended learning is a teaching approach that amalgamates traditional and modern learning techniques. As with any learning method, it has its unique advantages and disadvantages. It is crucial to take into account both as one contemplates using the BL approach.

#### **1.11.1. Advantages of Blended Learning**

A new approach to transferring information and wisdom to future generations is gradually making its way into the modern classroom. An innovative blended learning approach is replacing conventional methods of instruction in classrooms. By integrating modern technologies into their traditional teaching methods, educators may gain many advantages from this innovative approach. This approach was developed in response to the limitations of online and traditional learning, and it offers numerous benefits for both teachers and students. The following are some of the advantages of blended learning:

##### **a. Optimizing Development Cost and Time:**

Blended learning is a pedagogical approach that combines different methods for a service that simplifies program development by offsetting the associated costs and time. The Internet is an effective online learning tool that supports a wide range of learning styles and accommodates individual learning differences at minimal cost. This virtual medium was specifically developed to support a community of practice. Singh (2003) explained that online learning and self-paced, multimedia educational content on the Internet can be expensive due to the need for multiple resources and skills. However, combining virtual collaboration and coaching sessions with simple, customizable materials such as handouts, case studies, recorded e-learning events, word tasks, and PowerPoint presentations, requiring fewer skills and shorter face-to-face conversations, could make more sense.

##### **b. Offering Efficiency and Flexibility**

Blended learning combines online and offline learning to enable flexible and effective learning. Online learning uses the Internet for educational activities, while

offline learning takes place in a traditional classroom. Students can participate in online teaching sessions via video and telephone conferencing, and learning materials and research resources are easily accessible on the website. The Internet offers applications such as electronic libraries, electronic books, and electronic resources, providing students and teachers with a virtual medium for exploration. Blended learning offers a cost-effective way to expand classroom content while improving the teacher and student experience.

### **1.11.2 Disadvantages of Blended Learning**

Blended learning has been implemented in educational institutions but has also raised many concerns.

Blended learning has a few shortcomings. Firstly, BL is heavily reliant on the motivation and learning capacities of the learners. Students who are unmotivated or who have particular learning problems may be unable to participate in this type of learning. Alternatively, they can favor keeping the conventional methods of instruction and learning (Bouillet et al., 2015). Secondly, a disadvantage has to do with the online and web-based learning infrastructure. This includes, but is not limited to, downed servers, shoddy materials, inadequate support or direction for activities, restricted internet access, and issues with usernames and passwords (Wong, et al. 2014). Thirdly, another disadvantage is that if they are unable to swiftly and readily obtain the necessary information or data, students and learners will soon become bored. They will undoubtedly be tempted to check their emails or watch media. It is simple to become drawn to many non-educational topics when browsing the internet. The absence of excellent tutor-student and student-student interactions is the final and most important disadvantage of BL (Dewey, 1938). Comey (2009) argues that these two types of interactions play a critical role in the learning process and are necessary components of developing a practical learning experience.

### **1.11. The Importance of Blended Learning**

The reason for the growing popularity of blended learning and its introduction into the education sector is its ability to improve teaching methods and

create the best learning environment for learners. The idea of blended learning is to combine the best features of online teaching and face-to-face teaching (traditional teaching methods) in one model.

Furthermore, blended learning also facilitates and helps students learn vocabulary. Learning new vocabulary is essential for mastering the English language. It is the backbone of every language-learning process. As it helps students begin to learn nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, interjections, and more used in written and spoken forms. The reason for this concept is that vocabulary is considered fundamental to language learning. In other words, words are to language what bricks are to a house or villa. The more words or building blocks you have, the more sentences and lines you can add to your wall (Tsaturova et al., 2007). However, the question of how many words you need to learn remains open, and no clear answer has been proposed. This study did not examine how many words English learners need to master the language. Therefore, most universities and higher education institutions have started implementing BL as a supplementary tool to expand learners' vocabulary. This is because teaching new words and vocabulary using BL tools and techniques is more interesting and engaging for both teachers and learners.

### **1.13. Teachers and Learners Role in Blended Learning**

BL changes the teacher's role from information provider to coach and mentor. This change does not mean that teachers have a passive or less important role in educating students. In contrast, blended learning (BL) empowers teachers to facilitate a deeper impact on student learning. While traditional classrooms often relied on a teacher-centered, top-down approach with limited differentiation, BL fosters a more learner-centered environment. This shift allows for the personalization of learning experiences while maintaining a structured framework. This approach emphasizes the advantages of both instructor-led and online instruction by establishing an efficient balance between them. Online elements offer students access to technology-based, interactive learning experiences. They additionally enable personalized pacing and privacy, which may increase students

motivation and engagement. At the same time, the human factor is still essential. Teacher-led teaching adds that special touch of inspiration, empathy, and supportive direction that only educators can offer while also personalizing the learning process.

### **1.13.1. Teachers' Role**

The various functions that educators play in a blended learning setting are listed by Sharma (2019) and include the following:

#### **1) A Classroom Planner and Content Expert**

Teachers of blended learning are required to prepare lessons for a long-term curriculum using properly chosen content resources. Educators need to provide relevant information and become expert at utilizing it in online and classroom environments. To accommodate the various learning styles of their students, teachers ought to offer the material in a variety of media, including podcasts, e-books, videos, tutorials, and online lectures, (Sharma, 2019). Therefore, effective implementation of BL hinges on teachers' deep understanding of diverse learning styles and pedagogical approaches. This knowledge empowers them to tailor instructional methods and techniques to best meet the needs of their students. Classroom designers and content specialists play a key role in ensuring that students receive a quality education that meets their individual learning needs. Teachers must have the necessary skills and knowledge to provide the best possible educational experience for their students.

#### **2) A Mentor and Coach**

Effective BL extends beyond the integration of technology. It also recognizes the crucial role of teacher support in fostering student success. This support encompasses coaching and tutoring, where teachers guide students towards achieving specific learning objectives and unlocking their full potential. According to sharma (2019) he asserts that "a teacher needs to encourage students and celebrate their successes." The previous statement primarily relates to the significance of the psychological support that teachers provide for their learners, as

it has a profound impact on their motivation to succeed and continuously improve their performance.

### **3) A Coordinator**

The teacher's main responsibility in a BL environment is to make knowledge more accessible and aid pupils in comprehending the material covered in class. To encourage active learners in the classroom and maintain their motivation and engagement.

### **4) An Assessor**

A teacher's role as an assessor should include evaluation and feedback to students. In order to improve and fortify the bonds between teachers and students, blended learning promotes teacher-student contact. From this vantage point, the instructor will be more relatable to the students and assist them in seeing the difficulties that they later label as "learner disabilities." Consequently, because both educators and students are important participants in the learning process, their roles are crucial to the effectiveness of both learning and teaching because of how well their respective tasks complement one another. Not only they have specific purposes for efficient use in blended learning contexts, but also in traditional ones.

This innovative learning tool helps both students and teachers. Students acquire skills that enable them to take charge of their education and support their success when they are given permission and chance to be active learners. Blended learning empowers teachers by fostering a more efficient and impactful learning environment. As students work more individually online, teachers are freed to provide individualized instruction and address the diverse needs of larger students. BL offers a comprehensive view of student progress through a combination of online tools and classroom interaction. This, coupled with frequent one-on-one interaction, strengthens the student-teacher bond and builds trust. In summary, This deeper connection allows teachers to identify and address student challenges that might hinder learning, ultimately leading to improved student success.

#### **1.13.2 Students' Role in the BL Environment**

- 1) **Enhance student interest:** Students are more likely to be involved, focused, and passionate about the subjects they are studying when technology is included into classroom instruction.
- 2) **Capture Students' Attention For Longer:** Using computers to look up information and data and access online resources like the internet for research may serve as a huge time-saver. Students can stay focused on the materials for longer lengths of time when they interact with them and engage with them than when they are using books or paper resources. This involvement fosters learning via investigation and study.
- 3) **Offers Students Autonomy:** Using e-learning resources helps students become more capable of determining acceptable learning objectives and managing their education, which builds a skill that can be used in any subject.
- 4) **Build a Self-Advocacy Mindset in Students:** They become self-reliant and self-driven, keeping note of their accomplishments, which helps them learn how to locate resources or receive assistance when they need it, and self-advocating to accomplish their objectives.
- 5) **Encourage Student Ownership:** BL fosters a sense of "student ownership over learning," which has the potential to be a strong force behind learning. This sense of accountability supports the sense of ownership.
- 6) **Enable Immediate Diagnostic Data Collection And Student Feedback:** Quickly assessing, reviewing, and giving feedback on student work allows teachers to more effectively use their time by customizing their instruction and comments to each student.

#### **1.14. Conclusion**

The literature review explored the theoretical foundations of blended learning and writing skills in depth. It highlighted the pivotal influence instructors have on students' self-confidence, as well as the crucial role technology plays in writing education. The review provided a comprehensive understanding of these key elements. The value of writing and how blended learning improves learners'

practice and general progress in writing abilities are highlighted in this chapter of the extended essay. It then explores the difficulties involved with writing in a foreign language and lists the fundamental characteristics of an effective writer. This section also emphasizes the crucial role that technology plays in developing writing abilities, particularly when it comes to modern tools and approaches. Technology is essential in helping to teach writing skills and enhance the learning process. The use of contemporary tools and methods has become increasingly important in improving and refining writing abilities.

However, the second part focuses on blended learning components and draws attention to the diverse definitions offered by various academics. It also covers the context history of BL prerequisite benefits and drawbacks of blended learning and the angles that both teachers and students play.

In conclusion, this chapter has explored the pivotal role of teachers as facilitators within a BL environment. The analysis of existing literature highlights the effectiveness of BL in promoting learner autonomy and personalized learning paces. By strategically integrating technology and fostering a supportive learning environment, BL empowers teachers to support students towards achieving their full potential.

# **Chapter Two: Research Methodology**

**Chapter two: Research Methodology****2.1. Introduction**

This chapter delves into the practical application of the research, specifically investigating the effectiveness of blended learning in enhancing the writing abilities of EFL learners at the University of Abou Bakr Belkaid, Tlemcen. It is divided into two sections. The first addresses research design, which includes the type of research, the methodology, the instruments of research, and the sample population. The results obtained from the collected data are discussed and analyzed in the second section. In order to address the research questions and investigate the suggested hypotheses, The chapter concludes by summarizing the key findings and analysis.

**2.2. Research Design**

It is the investigational plan and approach used to address a research question. A carefully thought-out study design makes it more likely that the researcher's techniques will meet the goals of the investigation and that the appropriate kind of data analysis has been performed. For this reason, data was collected through questionnaires administered to third-year EFL university students and semi-structured interviews conducted with teachers specifically responsible for the writing module.

**2.2.1. Type and Nature of Research**

Research is an organized approach that enables the researcher to identify solutions or resolve issues. The various approaches utilized to carry out research are known as research types. The selection of research methods depends on the timeframe, goals, and desired outcomes of a study. This current investigation utilizes a case study approach, which is well-suited for exploratory research. In this case, the perceptions of teachers and students regarding the use of blended learning in EFL writing teaching at the University of Abou Bakr Belkaid, Tlemcen. However, exploratory research explores and studies an unknown issue. The goal is to provide fresh theoretical viewpoints and/or a deeper understanding of the emerging issues in order to spark original thought and hypothesis.

**2.2.2. Research Approach**

The research approach refers to the theoretical framework that supports a particular study. Certain research approaches influence or are dependent upon other research approaches; some researchers point this out before they start.

This study was carried out using both qualitative and quantitative methods. The mixed-methods approach is the combination of these two techniques to validate results while avoiding the limitations of each. Additionally, the mixed approach was chosen since it is appropriate for this kind of research. Future studies could greatly benefit from this combination, as it eliminates the drawbacks and problems of both methods while combining their advantages of the two methodologies Creswell and Tashakkori (2007).

**2.2.3. Sample Population**

For this investigation, two key participants in the teaching and learning process were required: written expression teachers and third-year English students at the University of Tlemcen.

**2.2.3.1. Teachers Profile**

Four writing module teachers from the English department participated in the interview, three of whom were female and one was male. The selection was based on their extensive qualifications and over 15 years of experience in their fields. It was strongly advised in this study to get instructor input regarding the blended learning approach, as these teachers hold "Doctorate degrees." Furthermore, they have ten to over fifteen years of teaching experience.

**2.2.3.2. Students Profile**

This case study involved nineteen third-year English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students in the Department of English at the University of Abou Bakr Belkaid, Tlemcen. To ensure a representative sample, participants were chosen through random sampling, specifically a simple random sampling technique. This method guarantees that each student has an equal probability of being selected. The

participants' ages ranged from nineteen to twenty-six years old, and all had prior educational experience exceeding twelve years where standard Arabic was the primary language of instruction.

#### **2.2.4. Research Tools**

Data collection is a critical stage in research, demanding adherence to specific principles to ensure the quality of the information gathered. Key principles include reliability, validity, and practicality. This case study emphasized a combination of primary data collection methods. Data was obtained through semi-structured interviews conducted with teachers and questionnaires administered to students.

##### **2.2.4.1. Students' Questionnaire**

A useful instrument for gathering relevant data from respondents in research is a questionnaire. It consists of a series of questions that are typically given in an interview-style setting and can be either orally or in writing. A researcher doesn't need to be present when conducting a questionnaire; it can be done over the phone, in person, on paper, or online. They may consist of open-ended, closed-ended, or a combination of both types of questions and be qualitative, quantitative, or both. While closed questions offer a list of prepared answers, open-ended questions let respondents react on their own terms (Cint, 2022, June 29).

This questionnaire was distributed to third-year students at Abou Bakr Belkaid University of Tlemcen in their final year of the written expression module, capitalizing on their nearly three years of writing experience. The questionnaire aimed to gather information and opinions regarding the participants' experiences and perceptions related to writing, academic writing abilities, blended learning, and online writing tools. The questionnaire aimed investigate EFL learners' experiences and perceptions of blended learning in developing their academic writing skills. It focused on various aspects, including adherence to the program, self-confidence in writing, perceived effectiveness of the approach, challenges encountered, and overall benefits gained.

This questionnaire contained 15 questions, arranged into three sections (see Appendix A). The questionnaire was divided into three distinct sections. The first section focused on gathering "informant profiles," while the second section addressed "background information." Finally, the third section delved into the topic of "blended learning." A more detailed breakdown of these sections is provided below.

**Section One: Informants' Profile**

This section comprising two questions collected general information about students. The first question aimed at collecting information about students' age, and the second question about students' gender.

**Section Two: Background Information**

The following section explored the students' backgrounds. It comprised three questions, with the first one directly inquiring about the students' enjoyment of writing. This question aimed to assess students' degree of motivation, interest, and involvement in the writing process. By understanding their attitudes toward writing. The second question was designed to identify students who may be impacted by psychological challenges such as low self-confidence and self-doubt. Additionally, it provided an avenue for educators to give their targeted guidance, care, and advice to the students, thus enabling them to develop their writing and critical thinking skills. The third question was aimed at facilitating students in gaining insight into their self-assessment abilities and increasing their awareness of their strengths and areas for improvement in their writing skills. This question was tailored to help students cultivate metacognitive skills, fostering critical analysis of their writing and the identification of areas for enhancement in clarity, organization, language use, and overall effectiveness.

**Section Third: Blended Learning**

The final section of the questionnaire delved into the perceived impact of blended learning on students' academic writing skills. This section consisted of nine questions. The first question specifically aimed to ascertain the frequency with which students engaged in blended learning activities, including accessing online resources, completing interactive exercises, participating in virtual writing

conferences, and collaborating with peers through digital platforms. Question 2 was designed to ascertain whether students perceived improvements in their writing skills, such as enhanced organization, clarity, coherence, vocabulary utilization, and overall proficiency, this information enabled educators to evaluate the efficacy of blended learning and implement any requisite modifications to enhance students' learning experiences. Question 3 seeks to ascertain whether students had perceived any positive advancements or developments in their writing abilities due to integrating blended learning into their language learning endeavors. Students' familiarity with online writing tools was the focus of question 4. Teachers could determine their students' proficiency with online writing tools like grammar checkers and collaboration platforms by using this line of inquiry. The primary objective was to assess students' technological proficiency and the ability of online resources to improve academic writing in a blended learning setting. Question 5 aimed to ensure that students felt comfortable in utilizing the technological aspects of blended learning, fostering a positive and effective learning experience. In question 6, students were asked to indicate how motivated they were to learn academic writing in English in a blended learning environment compared to traditional classroom methods. Question 7 aimed to investigate what input teachers could have into students' experiences with blended learning and their perceptions of its benefits or limitations for enhancing academic writing skills in English. Question 8 aimed to uncover specific issues such as technological challenges, lack of access to resources, difficulties adapting to online platforms, or any other obstacles that may have hindered students' progress in improving their academic writing skills. Question 9 required learners' opinions about whether blended learning was a beneficial approach for enhancing EFL learners' academic writing abilities. The goal of this question is to gather diverse perspectives and guide decision-making regarding the use of blended learning approaches to enhance the academic writing abilities of EFL learners.

#### **2.2.4.2 Teachers Interview**

Interviews are a formal and valuable research tool that involve a formal conversation where an interviewer asks questions to gather information from one or more interviewees. Interviews can be structured, semi-structured, or unstructured, depending on the aim of the research.

For the written module teachers at Tlemcen University, a semi-structured interview was developed to gather information and opinions on the implementation of blended learning in the context of teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) writing students (see Appendix B). The interview aims to gain insight into the interviewee's experience and expertise in various aspects of blended learning, including the integration of technology and online resources, specific activities or assignments used to develop academic writing skills, impacts on student knowledge and confidence, assessment and feedback strategies in blended learning, and recommendations or best practices. This interview seeks to collect practical advice and information that other foreign language teachers can use to enhance their teaching practice. It includes six questions related to writing and BL.

### **2.3. Data Analysis**

#### **2.3.1.1 Analysis of Students' Questionnaire**

Section One: Informants' profile

Q1: Age

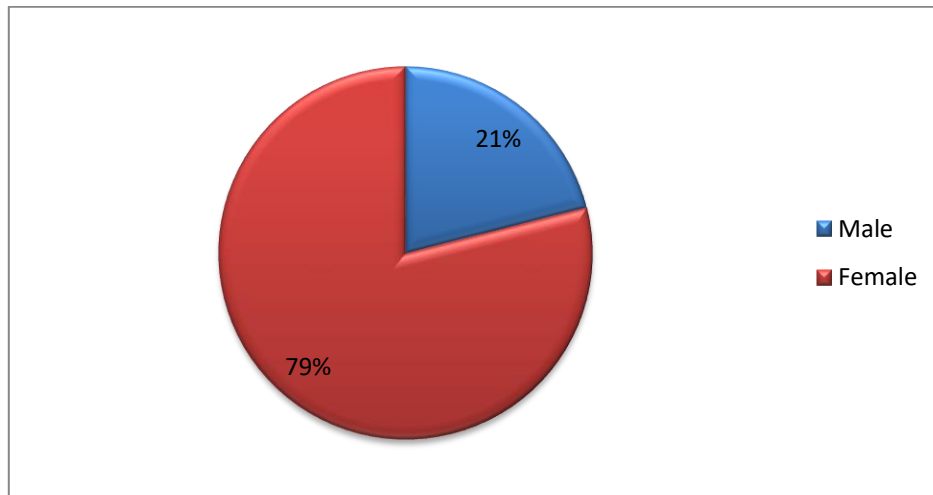
It indicated that most informants were between 19 and 22 years old, representing 74% of the sample, while the age between 23 and 25 represented 16%. This proves that the age of learners over 26 is low, representing 10%. The results are presented in the table below.

| Options        | Number of Students | Percentage |
|----------------|--------------------|------------|
| 19 to 22 years | 14                 | 74%        |
| 23 to 25 years | 3                  | 16%        |
| Over 26 years  | 2                  | 10%        |

**Table 2.1 :Students Age**

Q2 : Gender

The results revealed that the majority of informants were females, representing 79% of the sample, while male learners represented 21%. This proves that female students predominantly favor the field of English language learning. The results are presented in the figure below.

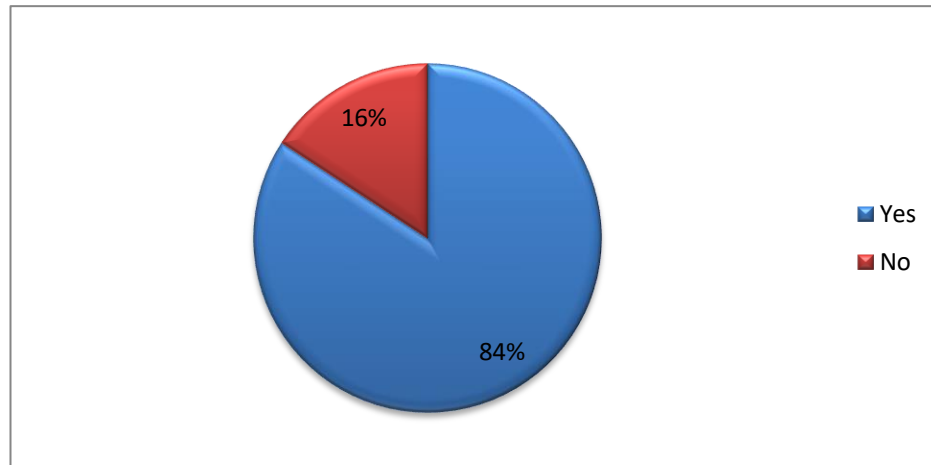


**Figure2. 1 :student gender**

### **Section Two: Background Information**

Q1 : Do you enjoy writing?

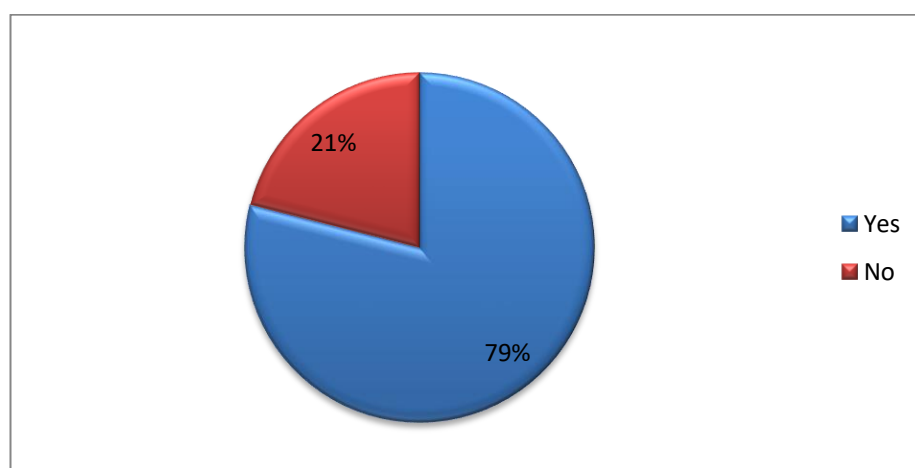
The purpose of this question is to find out students' enjoyment of writing at the University of Abou Baker Belkaid Tlemcen. It revealed that 89% of the students represented "Yes", which means that they enjoy writing, while 11% reported "No", which means they do not enjoy/like writing. The results are presented in the figure below.



**Figure 2.2: students Enjoyment of writing**

Q2: In general, do you trust yourself as a learner or student who can find good words, ideas, and perceptions?

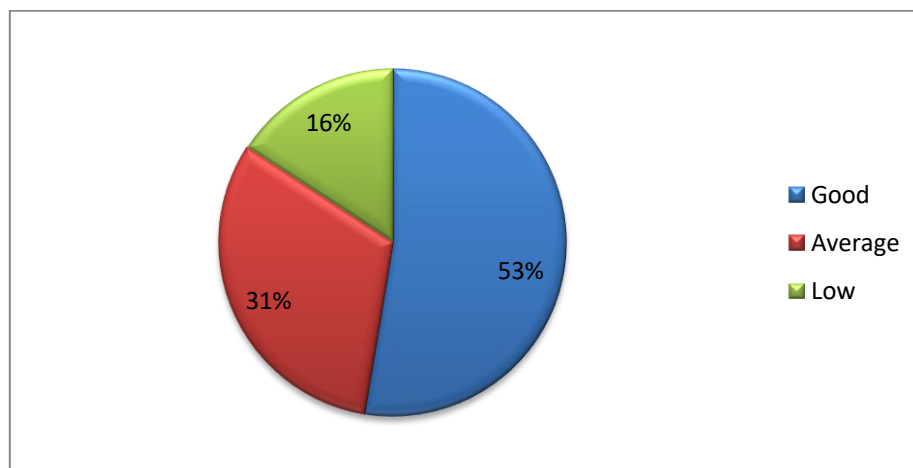
Learners' answers to this question showed that the majority of students, 19 participants (79%), have confidence in themselves to find words and ideas, while only 21 % do not. The main aim of this question was to find out if students can write easily or if they have difficulties. The results are presented in the figure below.



**Figure2. 3 :students confidence In Finding Good Word ,Ideas and Perceptions In Writing**

Q3: How do you evaluate yourself in academic writing?

This question is intended to inquire about how students evaluate themselves in academic writing. The majority of respondents (53%) indicated they possessed good writing skills. An additional 31% of students classified their writing skills as average. The remaining 16% of students reported experiencing low levels of academic writing ability. Obtaining self-evaluation information is an important initial step toward figuring out how pupils' academic writing abilities are currently doing. It can be noticed that the majority of students considered themselves as good writers, but a large portion also recognized the need to enhance their academic writing abilities. Meeting the needs of all learners would be crucial to improving writing outcomes. The results are presented in the figure below.

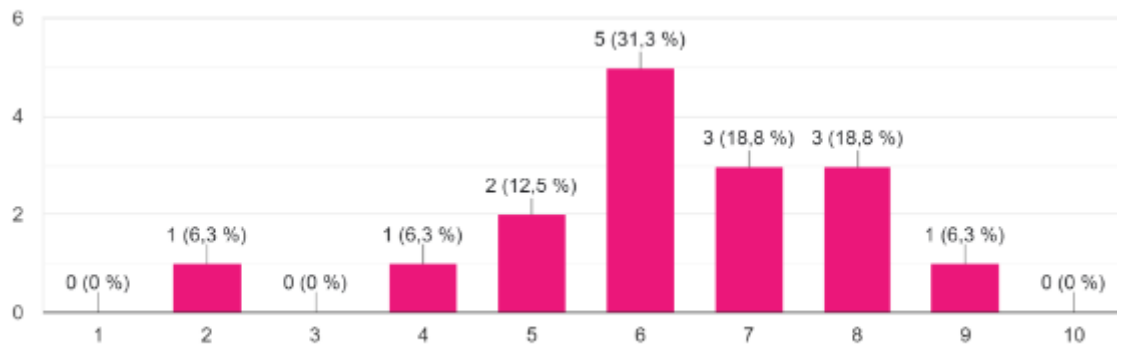


**Figure 2.4 :students Evaluation In Academic Writing**

Q4: On a scale of 1–10, how confident are you in your academic writing abilities (in finding words, ideas, and perceptions)?

It revealed that 6 is the most chosen number on the scale among the students, representing 31.3%, while numbers 7 and 8 were similar (18.8%), 12.5% held number 5, and the remaining percentage of learners (6.3% held numbers 1, 2, and 9). Students avoid choosing numbers 1 and 10. Students may have been reluctant to rate their confidence at the absolute lowest or highest levels, preferring to choose more moderate, mid-range numbers instead. This may indicate a tendency to avoid

overestimating or underestimating their abilities. The results are presented in the figure below.

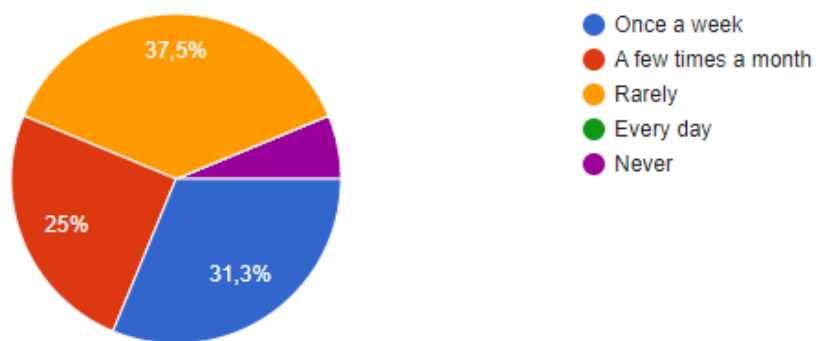


**Figure2.5 :students Confidence In Academic Writing Abilities**

**Section Three: Blended Learning**

Q1: How often do you participate in blended learning activities?

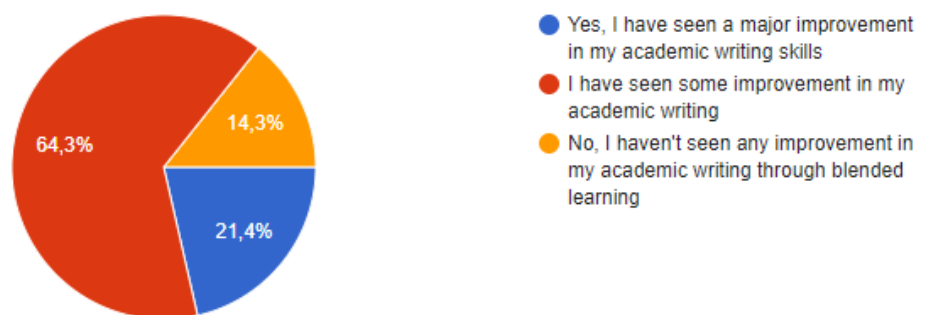
It revealed that the majority of participants 37.5% reported that they participate in BL rarely; 31.3% of them did it once a week; 25% a few times a month; and the last percentage, 6.3%, were never. This question aimed to know how many times students participate in blended learning. The results are presented in the figure below.



**Figure2.6 :Student Participation In Blended Learning**

Q2: If you participate, have you noticed any improvements in your academic writing skills since incorporating blended learning into your language learning journey?

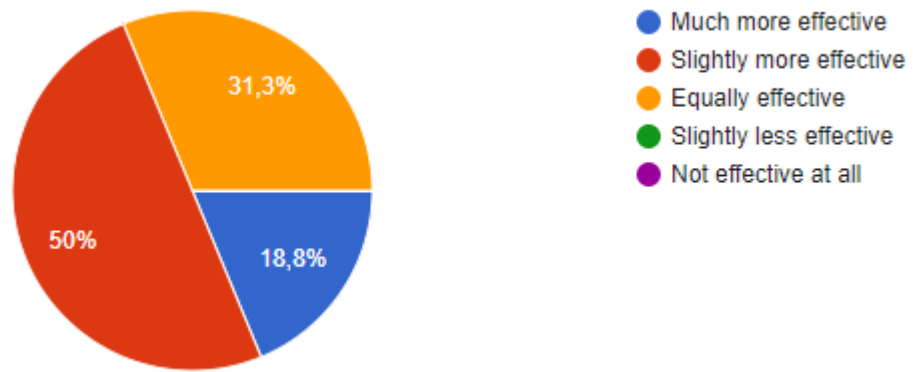
This question sought to explore students' improvements in academic writing about blended learning. 64.3% of respondents declared that they have seen some improvement in their academic writing, while 21.4% reported that they have seen a major improvement in their academic writing, and 14.3% mentioned that they have not seen any improvement. It can be noticed that the incorporation of online and face-to-face elements in the blended format positively impacted students' writing outcomes. The results are presented in the figure below.



**Figure2. 7 :Students Improvements In Academic Writing Since Incorporating Blended Learning**

Q3: How would you rate the effectiveness of blended learning in improving your EFL writing skills compared to traditional learning methods?

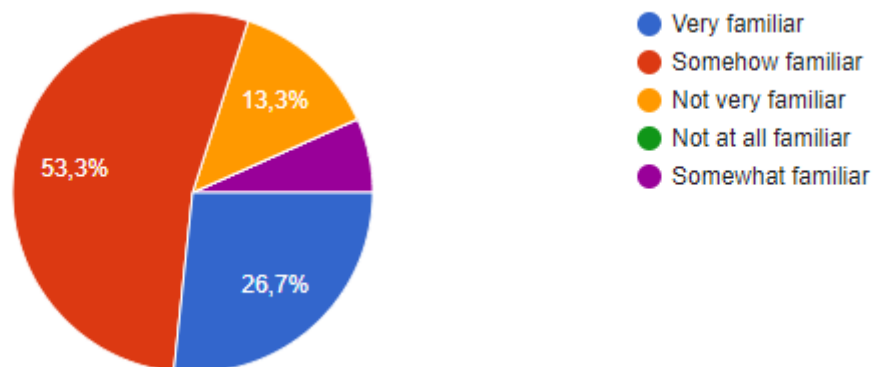
This question sought to find out students' rate of the effectiveness of blended learning in improving their EFL writing skills compared to traditional learning methods. Half, or 50%, of respondents declared that it is slightly more effective, while 31.3% indicated that it is equally effective, and 18.8% said that it is much more effective. This is an encouraging result, as it indicates that students recognize and appreciate the potential advantages that combining online and face-to-face elements can bring to their writing development. The results are presented in the figure below.



**Figure2. 8 :Students Rating Of The Effectiveness Of Blended Learning In Improving Their EFL writing Skills Compared To Traditional Learning Methods**

Q4: How familiar are you with the use of online writing tools in your blended learning experience?

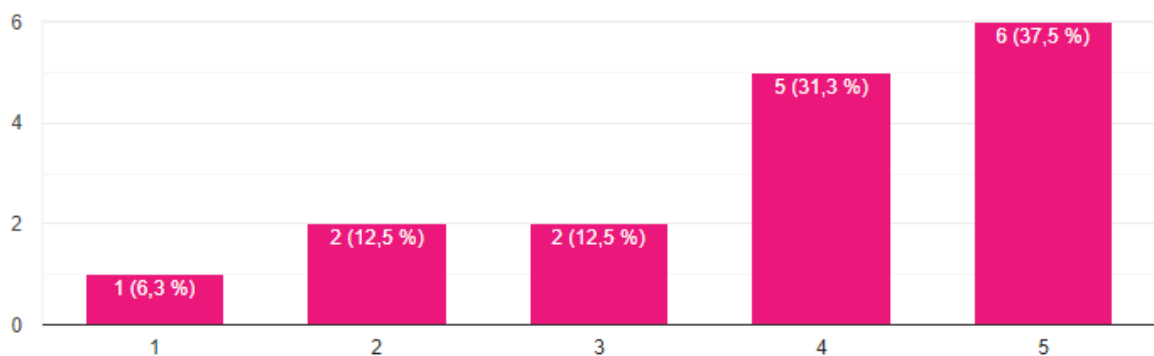
It revealed that 53.3% of the students represent that they are somehow familiar, while 26.7% reported that they are very familiar, 13.3% hold that they are not very familiar, and the remaining percentage of learners, 6.7%, are somewhat familiar. It can be noticed that familiarity with the online tools is low among the students. The results are presented in the figure below.



**Figure2. 9:Students Familiarity With The Use Of Online Writing Tools**

Q5: How comfortable were you with the technology used in the blended learning environment?

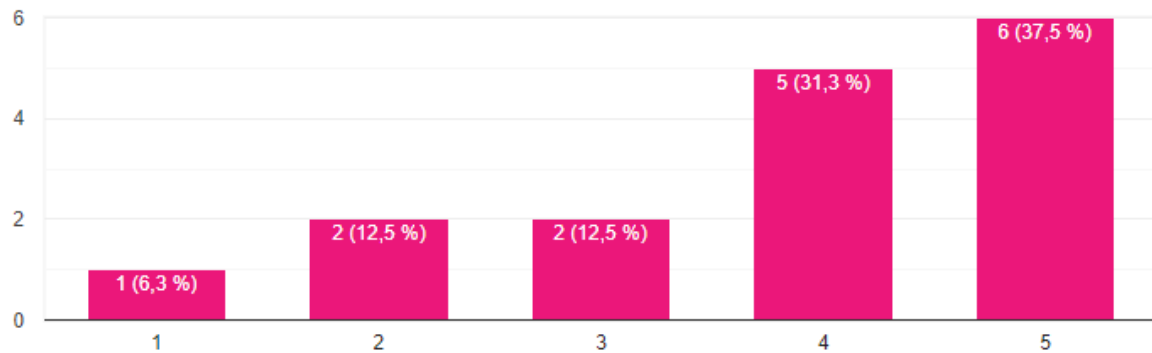
It revealed that 5 is the most chosen number from the students, which means that they feel very comfortable with the use of technology, which represents 37.5%; 31.3% hold number 4, while numbers 3 and 2 are similar (12.5%); and the remaining percentage of learners (6.3% hold number 1). It can be noticed that students are somehow prepared and adapted to the technology integration inherent in blended learning environments. The results are presented in the figure below.



**Figure2. 10 :How Comfortable Students Are With The Use Of Technology In The Blended Learning Environment**

Q6: How motivated were you to learn English academic writing in the blended learning environment compared to traditional classroom methods?

It revealed that 4 is the most chosen number from the students, which represents 31.3%, the data showed that the majority of students had embraced the blended learning approach with relatively high levels of motivation. while numbers 5 and 3 were similar at 25%; 12.5% hold number 1, which means they feel less motivated in comparison to number 5, which means they feel highly motivated, and the remaining percentage of learners, 6.3%, hold number 2. The results are presented in the figure below.



**Figure 2.11 :Students Motivation to Learn English Academic Writing in the Blended Learning Environments**

Q7: Do you think blended learning should be used more widely to teach English academic writing? Why or why not?

The results showed that all participants hold a positive attitude towards the use of BL to teach English academic writing. They believed that blended learning improved their academic writing abilities; especially that it helped them catch mistakes and change the traditional routine. In addition to that, they think that they are in an age that requires the use of technology in teaching, and blended learning is so useful in teaching English in general, but specifically academic writing, as it is a skill that takes more time to teach, so blended learning is a must nowadays. Because it is more effective and has more results. They also think that blended learning should be used more widely for teaching English academic writing because it combines traditional teaching with online resources, offering flexibility, engagement, and diverse learning opportunities for students, leading to improved writing skills. Because practice in the classroom isn't enough and an online community seems to be beneficial.

Q8: Have you faced any challenges in utilizing blended learning to improve your academic writing abilities? If yes, please specify.

Based on students' responses, most did not encounter significant challenges in utilizing blended learning to enhance their academic writing skills. However, a

few students highlighted potential difficulties, such as ensuring consistent access to technology, dealing with technical issues or internet connectivity problems, feeling isolated or disconnected from the learning community due to the lack of regular face-to-face interaction, and experiencing a decreased level of motivation compared to traditional in-person learning. While 30% of the students may encounter obstacles related to technology and motivation, it was found that 70% of the rest see blended learning as an effective method for improving their writing abilities.

Q9: In your opinion, do you think blended learning is a beneficial approach for enhancing EFL learners' academic writing abilities? Why or why not?

Based on students' answers, the majority believe that blended learning is the best way to improve EFL students' skills. They cite various reasons for this; these include the ability to access online resources for continuous practice and improvement, the motivation it provides for learning, the opportunity to enhance creativity in writing, and the need for additional time dedicated to writing beyond the classroom. Blended learning is seen as a method that combines traditional teaching with online resources, providing flexibility, diverse learning opportunities, and motivation for EFL students to become proficient writers. Overall, students find blended learning useful and uniquely support their academic writing progress.

### **2.3.2 Teachers Interview**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the views and experiences of four instructors at the University of Abou Baker Belkaid in Tlemcen with regard to their usage of blended learning strategies in the instruction of EFL academic writing. The study aimed to obtain insights into the teachers' blended learning implementation, its effects on students' writing competency, and their suggestions for best practices through a series of semi-structured interviews

#### **2.3.2.1. Analysis of Students' Interview Results**

Initially, in question number one teachers were asked if they use blended learning in their teaching, and all of the teachers responded positively, indicating their use of the approach in their classroom practices.

In the question number two, teachers were asked to describe their experience with implementing blended learning in the context of teaching EFL learner's academic writing. Most teachers reported that the approach was helpful, useful, and effective, owing to its blended structure of both online and classroom learning. It is not worthy noting that most of the teachers started using blended learning during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Question number three asked for examples of specific blended learning activities or assignments they have used to enhance EFL learners' academic writing abilities and how these activities differ from traditional classroom approaches. The first teacher said that it was by giving the students exercises to do and then correcting them online. Still, it was difficult when it was a free type of writing, but when it was close writing, there was no problem because writing is a process. You should accompany the student during the process, and during blended learning or online learning, we cannot have this arrangement. The second teacher said that she had to set students into groups to discuss what an essay is; the discussion would inform them to develop an awareness of how to structure an essay for the next assignment, and for this reason, it was effective, and she believed that it was effective for 50% of the classroom, but for the rest, you need all the time to run out of them because some students would not know how to write on Microsoft Teams, so students would not know how to revise, so you have to explain sometimes during the session how to use technology rather than how to write an essay. And for the two other teachers, use teams to teach their students' academic writing by sharing incorrect papers and asking them to correct the mistakes, of course without mentioning the name of the paper owner, to avoid embarrassing them instead of teaching them.

In response to the question number four of whether they noticed any changes in EFL learners writing proficiency as a result of using blended learning, The first teacher said that she has noticed some positive changes in her students' writing skills and has started using traditional and online learning. By giving them the chance to practice more through both types of lessons, they were able to improve

their skills significantly. In particular, they are much better at organizing their thoughts and expressing them perfectly. Additionally, the online discussions and shared documents help them develop plans for what to write as well as give feedback to each other. The second teacher reported very noticeable changes due to the feedback process. Each time she gave students feedback, she explained and emphasized their written issues, so they would understand there was an issue with style, vocabulary, and word choice. The third teacher said that she noticed a decrease in proficiency in writing due to the lack of understanding between the teacher and the student. As for the fourth teacher, he said that students were growing more confident and motivated to use blended learning techniques to learn grammar and vocabulary. The practice of using digital quizzes and games has proven more enjoyable and effective than traditional worksheets.

Question number five concerns what recommendations or best practices they would offer to other EFL teachers who are considering implementing blended learning for enhancing academic writing skills. The first teacher believed that the teacher should give enough and adequate comments; she also thought that it was interesting to give assignments and to give feedback on those assignments. Individual feedback for students is very helpful. The second teacher has two recommendations. The first one is collaboration, because collaboration with other colleagues to know how they give instruction online is very helpful. The second one is reflecting on classroom practices, which will produce an effective teaching-learning environment. The third teacher encourages teachers to be ultra-positive in their feedback, as this helps to foster and build a sense of learners' confidence. She also suggested that teachers schedule short sessions better than long ones. The fourth teacher suggested making learning fun and designing activities from the internet that are interesting. Create web-based tasks that push to critical thinking and invite learners to participate. For instance, set up a system where students can give feedback to one another through posting forums and have them work in groups using platforms that support collaborative writing, such as Google Docs or Wikis.

Question number six requires how teachers assess and provide feedback on EFL learners' written work within a blended learning environment. The first teacher said that assessing students individually is time-consuming, mainly when we have an important number of students, so feedback can be formative and also summative. Formative feedback is meant to help students understand their strengths and weaknesses. Summative feedback is intended to assess students' overall performance and accomplishments after a certain assignment or time. The second teacher declared that she uses online writing platforms that allow and help students to submit their written work electronically. These platforms often have built-in features for providing feedback, such as track changes, comments, and highlighting tools. They also make it easier to organize and manage students' work. However, the third teacher expressed a preference for traditional, face-to-face classroom instruction. This preference stemmed from the ability to directly interact with students, assess their learning, and identify areas requiring improvement. The fourth teacher replied that he used multimodal presentations rather than having to write the traditional essay and let the students present their ideas in the form of multimedia. They might come up with video presentations, podcasts, or digital storytelling projects and assess their overall writing skills by the end.

In question number seven of which ways they integrate technology or online resources into their blended learning approach, all the teachers 100% affirmed that they use technology. The first teacher mentioned that she uses YouTube videos, blog posts for reading, and applications like Grammar. And for the second teacher he claimed that Google Meet, zoom, and Teams were the main sources, while the third teacher added that she used writing tutorial videos. Besides, tasks using computers. The last teacher mentioned language labs and online applications. So 100% believed that technological advancements were helpful.

#### **2.4 Interpretation and Discussion of the main findings:**

Recognizing the important role of BL on EFL students' academic writing development and academic achievements. Accordingly, this study aimed to investigate the attitudes of third-year English students at the University of Tlemcen

about the effect of blended learning on EFL learners' academic writing. It suggests the blended learning approach as a suitable one to be tested. Understanding the complexities of students' academic writing contributes to their personal growth and significantly influences their academic success. This dissertation examines the findings from a semi-structured interview and a questionnaire analysis, discussing their implications for research questions and hypotheses.

- **Research question 1:** Do EFL students have the proficiency to write academically?

The data collected from students' questionnaire question number one highlights that most students enjoy writing, which represents 84%. And from question number three, 79% of students evaluate themselves as good at academic writing. The findings revealed that not all EFL students express a desire to write academically. Furthermore, they expressed the belief that integrating technological tools like videos and audio recordings can improve academic writing skills. Additionally, the results indicated that EFL learners require further education on how to effectively use technology. The findings do not support the hypothesis that all EFL students have the desire to write academically. This study extends previous findings by Javid et al. (2013) found that while many EFL students recognize the importance of academic writing, their actual desire to write academically varied based on factors such as their proficiency level, field of study, and personal motivation.

- **Research question 2:** Is blended learning efficient for EFL students to help them write academically?

According to the results obtained from question number 9 of the student questionnaire and based on the students' answers, the majority believe that blended learning is the best way to improve EFL students' academic writing skills. They cite various reasons for this; these include the ability to access online resources for continuous practice and improvement, the motivation it provides for learning, the opportunity to enhance creativity in writing, and the need for additional time dedicated to writing beyond the classroom. Blended learning is seen as a method

that combines traditional teaching with online resources, providing flexibility and diverse learning opportunities. Overall, and based on the results obtained, a positive attitude toward blended learning is prevalent among EFL learners at the University of Tlemcen, as it is useful and uniquely supports their academic writing progress. The findings support the hypothesis that blended learning is efficient, as it offers the students a mixed method of developing their academic writing abilities as well as more opportunities to improve their proficiency in this skill. Besides, it is helpful in motivating them. Additionally, based on the results obtained from question number 4 of the teacher interview, the fourth teacher said that students were growing more confident and motivated to use blended learning techniques to learn grammar and vocabulary. This study builds on earlier research by Al-Jarf (2004), who examined how a blended learning model affected Saudi EFL university students' writing abilities and found that the strategy improved their motivation and writing ability.

- **Research question 3:** How can blended learning be efficient for EFL students to be more proficient in their academic writing?

According to the results obtained from question number seven of the student questionnaire, most of the students believed that blended learning improved their academic writing abilities; especially that it helped them catch mistakes and change the traditional routine. In addition to that, they think that they are in an age that requires teaching via technology, and blended learning is so useful in teaching English in general, but specifically academic writing, as it is a skill that takes more time to teach, so blended learning is a must nowadays. Because it is more effective and has more results. They also think that blended learning should be used more widely for teaching English academic writing because it combines traditional teaching with online resources, offering flexibility, engagement, and diverse learning opportunities for students, leading to improved writing skills because practice in the classroom isn't enough and an online community seems to be beneficial. The hypothesis proposed in this study aligns seamlessly with the research question that suggests that blended learning is efficient for EFL students to write academically. According to the results obtained from question number 5 of the teacher interview, two teachers confirmed that they noticed some positive changes

in their students' writing skills and have started using traditional and online learning. However, findings from Teachers interview number 3 proved that learners need more chances to learn how to deal with technology. One of the teachers confirmed that by saying that they have to explain sometimes during the session how to use technology rather than how to write an essay. A lot of respondents highlighted potential difficulties, such as ensuring consistent access to technology, dealing with technical issues or internet connectivity problems, and feeling isolated or disconnected from the learning community due to the lack of regular face-to-face interaction. This study also extends previous findings by Zaki and Yunus (2015) investigated the use of blended learning in developing the academic writing skills of Malaysian EFL students and reported that the approach was effective in enhancing their writing proficiency.

As conclusion, the data attained from the students' questionnaire and teachers' interviews showed favorable opinions of BL's capability to develop academic writing abilities. It can be inferred that students derive enjoyment from writing and exhibit a desire to enhance their writing abilities through the utilization of technology. Furthermore, learners thought that the BL approach made them learn freely, expressed confidence in its potential, and they thought that it would help them to chive their academic goals.

### **2.5 Limitations of the Study**

There is no ideal or exhaustive work. Every research project has limitations and is open to criticism. Based on this assumption, this study faced some obstacles and difficulties that led to certain limitations.

- The first limitation is that participants may find it more difficult to comprehend and complete the online questionnaire. Since the questionnaire was only available through Google Forms. If the questionnaire were given face-to-face, it would be easy for them to answer.
- The struggle to access the selected teachers to be interviewed was the second limitation. Acknowledging these limitations and taking the necessary steps to

mitigate their impact on future research is essential. This will ensure the validity and reliability of the study's results.

- The third limitation is that it had a narrow reach because only 19 out of all L3 students answered. In addition, this means that the findings cannot be generalized to the entire L3 student population.

### **2. 6 Suggestions for Other Research:**

Based on the limitations revealed by this study, the following recommendations are offered to enhance the implementation of blended learning for EFL learners writing instruction.

- First of all, it would be better for future researchers to use the sampling method or create a large sample size to collect data.
- The researcher can conduct other researches on blended learning, not only in the field of writing as well as in other learning skills such as reading, speaking, or other modules like phonetics and grammar
- Student motivation and cooperation could also be a good study on the use of blended learning in EFL classrooms. .
- Future researchers need to delve deeper into the evolving landscape of technology integration within EFL education. And how the four language skills can be taught with the development of technology.

### **2.7 Conclusion**

This chapter examines the methodology used to carry out this work. To gather data, a questionnaire and interview were conducted with the teachers of the written expression module and third-year English Department students. The tools employed in this study make it simple to collect the information required and to assess how blended learning affects the academic writing skills of EFL learners.

The results presented in Chapter 2 demonstrated the necessity for EFL students to acquire more technological skills. During online writing sessions, there were difficulties for students as well as instructors. According to the findings, the

Majority of Tlemcen University's EFL students had favorable opinions of blended learning. In addition, the majority of writing teachers prefer integrating technology through a blended learning method, according to the analysis of teacher interviews. On the other hand, other educators assert that blended learning works best when the necessary resources are accessible. Thus, it may be concluded that educational institutions ought to give students and instructors resources that make it easier to use BL as a teaching tool for academic writing.

## General conclusion

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### General conclusion

As technology plays an increasingly important role in foreign language learning, students and teachers alike are seeking innovative ways to integrate these tools. This study focuses on blended learning as a potential method to improve academic writing skills for third-year EFL students at the University of Tlemcen. Building on existing research that explored new writing techniques, this work examines how students and teachers perceive the effectiveness of blended learning in this specific context.

The present study is structured in two chapters: a theoretical one (literature review) and a practical one (research methodology). The literature review provides a comprehensive examination of the importance of academic writing and the use of technology to enhance writing skills, as well as an in-depth analysis of blended learning and its implications for education.

In contrast, the research design of the current study was covered in detail in Chapter two, along with the types and purposes of the research, sample selection, and research instruments used for gathering data. The data and findings were then analyzed. This study used a variety of data collection techniques to evaluate research hypotheses and provide answers to research questions. A student questionnaire is the first step, and meeting with teachers is the second. The data were examined, evaluated, and spoken about. Four teachers from the Written Expression module were the target of an interview, and 19 third-year English students completed a questionnaire. They were chosen in order to learn more about blended learning and look at teachers' and students' perspectives.

After conducting an exploratory case study and examining data from student questionnaires and teacher interviews. This analysis confirmed two hypotheses and rejected one. While students valued technology like videos and recordings for writing, not all expressed a strong desire for academic writing itself. The findings suggest a need for EFL learners to develop further skills in using technology effectively to enhance their academic writing (the first hypothesis was rejected).

Blended learning is efficient as it offers the students a mixed method of developing their academic writing abilities as well as more opportunities to improve their proficiency in this skill. Besides, it helps motivate them. EFL teachers

## General conclusion

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Demonstrate awareness of BL and its potential to enhance learners' academic writing. Many teachers actively incorporate strategies that utilize blended learning approaches to motivate students and encourage them to write academically. These strategies likely involve selecting activities and materials that foster the development of strong academic writing skills.

EFL teachers also faced challenges in managing the technology required for its implementation. This inability can be a significant obstacle. Interestingly, teachers expressed the belief that blended learning could enhance their own engagement with students within the written expression module.

The study's findings paint a positive picture of blended learning's impact on EFL learners' writing experiences. Data suggests that students enjoy writing and value technology as a tool for improvement. They reported feeling more independent learners within the blended learning environment and expressed confidence in its potential to significantly enhance their writing abilities. Furthermore, both teacher interviews and student questionnaires revealed a shared positive attitude towards blended learning. This aligns with the confirmation of the second hypothesis: that blended learning can improve academic writing skills in EFL classrooms.

Blended learning is efficient for EFL students to write academically. Based on students' answers, the majority believe that blended learning is the best way to improve EFL students' academic writing skills. They cite various reasons for this; these include the ability to access online resources for continuous practice and improvement, the motivation it provides for learning, the opportunity to enhance creativity in writing, and the need for additional time dedicated to writing beyond the classroom. Blended learning is seen as a method that combines traditional teaching with online resources, providing flexibility and diverse learning opportunities.

EFL learners at the University of Tlemcen demonstrated a positive overall perception of blended learning. As it is useful and uniquely supports their academic writing progress. However, based on teachers' interviews, all of the teachers agree

## General conclusion

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That they noticed some changes and improvements in students' academic writing (this confirmed the third hypothesis).

This study makes the case that utilizing technology and a blended learning strategy will encourage students to actively engage in their studies and contribute on one side. And this study also appears to support the use of blended learning in the educational system as a whole and in the instruction of academic writing skills in particular. Conversely, it would give educators innovative ways to help students become more self-reliant and perform better.

This small-scale experiment to examine the impact of blended learning is still insufficient because the questionnaire was conducted online using Google Forms. The distributed questionnaire was resubmitted; however, the necessary number of replies was not obtained due to the current research study's narrow focus. As a result, the absence of in-person explanations may cause issues for the students. Furthermore, the difficulty in drawing broad conclusions—particularly when the sample group is quite small—raises challenges to the application of case study research.

This research is an experimental case study. Further research is needed, and it is preferable to increase the sample size or collect data through experimental techniques. Furthermore, it is recommended that future students conduct additional research on the application of technology and the use of technological innovations in the instruction of the four language skills. Additional investigation in this field will be valuable.

To conclude, blended Learning (BL) is a modern instructional approach for enhancing academic writing skills among EFL learners. The findings reveal that BL capitalizes on the advantages of both traditional and online learning environments, fostering a more engaging and effective learning process. By strategically integrating technology and promoting learner autonomy, BL empowers students to take a more active role in their academic writing development. Although implementing it successfully can achieve great results.

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# APPENDICES

## Appendix 'A'

### **Surdents' Questionnaire**

The Effect of Blended Learning on EFL Learners' Academic Writing Abilities

Dear students,

This questionnaire aims to investigate the impact of blended learning on EFL learners' academic writing abilities. I would like to gather your opinions and experiences on this topic. Please describe your general thoughts on the use of blended learning methods in improving your writing skills. Your responses will greatly contribute to my understanding of the effect of blended learning on academic writing abilities in the EFL context. Thank you for your collaboration.

Age:

Gender:

1- Do you enjoy writing?

2- In general do you trust yourself as a learner/student who can find good words, ideas and perceptions?

3- How do you evaluate yourself in academic writing?

4- On a scale of 1-10, how confident are you in your academic writing abilities (in finding words, ideas and perceptions)?

1

- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10

5- How often do you participate in blended learning activities?

6- If you participate, have you noticed any improvements in your academic writing skills since incorporating blended learning into your language learning journey?

7- How would you rate the effectiveness of blended learning in improving your EFL writing skills compared to traditional learning methods?

8- How familiar are you with the use of online writing tools in your blended learning experience?

9- How comfortable were you with the technology used in the blended learning environment?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

10- How motivated were you to learn English academic writing in the blended learning environment compared to traditional classroom methods?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

11- Do you think blended learning should be used more widely to teach English academic writing? Why or why not?

12- Have you faced any challenges in utilizing blended learning for improving your academic writing abilities? If yes, please specify

13- In your opinion, do you think blended learning is a beneficial approach for enhancing EFL learners' academic writing abilities? Why or why not?

## **Appendix 'B'**

## **Teachers' Interview**

Here are some semi-structured interview questions for teachers regarding the effect of Blended Learning on EFL learners' academic writing abilities:

**Q.01** Do you use blended learning in your teaching?

**Q.02** Can you describe your experience with implementing blended learning in the context of teaching EFL learners' academic writing?

**Q.03** In what ways do you integrate technology or online resources into your blended learning approach to support EFL learners' academic writing skills?

**Q.04** Could you provide examples of specific blended learning activities or assignments you have used to enhance EFL learners' academic writing abilities? How do these activities differ from traditional classroom approaches?

**Q.05** Have you noticed any changes in EFL learners' writing proficiency or confidence as a result of using blended learning? If so, could you elaborate on those changes?

**Q.06** How do you assess and provide feedback on EFL learners' written work within a blended learning environment? Are there any specific strategies or tools you employ?

**Q.07** Based on your experience, what recommendations or best practices would you offer to other EFL teachers who are considering implementing blended learning for enhancing academic writing skills?