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Some Factors Confronting EFL Master Students in Academic Writing

Case Study : Second Year Master Students of English at Abbes Leghrou University, Khenchela

*Dissertation Submitted to the Department of English in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Master in Language and Culture*

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Dedication

I, Mrs **Djebbari Rima**, dedicate this work to the dearest people to my heart, to my mother and father with love, to my little daughter Mayssem. I would like to thank my husband Ahmed and my dear sisters kanza, Asma, Ikram, Hadil especially Imene without forgetting their children, you believed in me and encouraged me all the time. I would like to thank my teacher of primary school Mrs Belghazi Rabiaa, and my previous teacher Mrs Baghzou Sabrina

May Allah bless you.

Dedication

I, Miss Marwa Ghozal dedicate this work :

To my beloved parents, who believed in me and stand behind me in my hardest moments in my life, for thier sacrifice, love, patience and encouragement.

To my sisters and brothers for their support.

To all my lovely friends, Selma, Asma, Ghalia, Souad forbeing by myside to all time.

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Abstract

This study aims to explore some factors confronting graduate students in academic writing at Abbes Leghrou University of KHENCHELA. It attempts to uncover the difficulties facing students of Master degree at the department of English when writing. The objective of this research is to highlight students' problems in academic writing by testing the following hypothesis: "If the major factors influencing the academic writing are discovered, EFL Master students (second year) writing will improve". To confirm the validity of this hypothesis, we used a descriptive method since the nature of the topic demands descriptions. We used a students' questionnaire answered by twenty five (25) students over eighty seven (87) student of second year master degree to gather the data. The results of analysing the data showed that the majority of students have problems in referencing, they need to bring others' ideas using paraphrasing in which they face another problem. Citing and referencing are very difficult for them, these problems cause fear of traps on plagiarism. This research work consists of introductory chapter; first chapter deals with literature review and second chapter contains the analysis of the data.

key words: academic writing, master students, factors, difficulties.

List of Abbreviations

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

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General introduction

General introduction

1.1. Statement of the problem

EFL Master English students at the University of Khenchela are required to master their academic writing skills, and produce good and effective writing. According to the researchers' observations, the students appear not to have the required proficiency in writing. For many students, learning how to write Academic English way has proven to be a difficult and a challenging task. The researchers believe that EFL students' ability to write Academic English may be influenced by many unknown Internal or External factors or both.

Al-Zubaidi (2012, p.47) believes that "... a correct academic English writing style is the one of the most difficult parts of the postgraduate programs facing international students".

On the basis of the above set authors beliefs, the following objectives were made:

1.2. Objectives of the study

Having the ability to write correctly in an academic way is an important skill that should be taught to students during their EFL studies. People can write a letter to their friends or make an update on Facebook, but these practices only represent other forms of writing.

The definition of academic writing is to write for an academic audience. It is the way to present studies and findings. In academic writing even native students often encounter various problems. Many factors could inhibit their capacity of writing academically.

The issue here is to discover these factors which may affect the quality of EFL students' writing at the Postgraduate level. The researchers main objective in this dissertation are :

To discover some but not all the major issues confronting students' academic writing at Postgraduate level.

To attempt to find solutions to improve the situation.

1.3. Hypothesis

Only one Hypothesis has been formulated.

If the major factors influencing the academic writing are discovered, EFL Master's students Year two writing will improve.

1.4. Assumptions

It is supposed that:

EFL students are not competent in producing effective writing.

Many Internal or External factors or both are involved in this process.

1.5. Limitations of the study

Only one limited sample of Master's EFL year two students of (ABBES LAGHROUR UNIVERSITY OF KHENCHELA) has been selected for the following reasons :

Limitations of time, space and finances. Being students with very limited financial provision and without mean of transport, it is an impossible task to distribute the questionnaire to other Algerian EFL students and universities throughout the country.

The unstable political situation that the country is witnessing since 22 February 2019 made this research very difficult in terms of finding the needed teaching and learning personnel to investigate.

It is the researchers' main wish to further this study to develop its important axis and allow more flexibility in terms of its wide range of application.

1.6. Significance and Implications of the study

The investigators assumed that this research will be significant for the following reasons:

To make the students more aware of the factors that influence their Academic writing skills to help improve their deficiencies..

These factors if discovered, could be implied and stressed in teaching not only for Master students, but to all other levels to help students in Academic writing .

1.7. Methodology and Means of the Research

1.7.1. The method

The method that has been used in this research is a descriptive method because this research needs observation and description of the issues (because of the nature of the topic) to describe some internal and external problems confronting Postgraduate students in academic writing.

1.7.2. Population and Sample

The total number of EFL Master English students at ABBES LEGHROUR is eighty seven (87) student. Only twenty five(25) students were chosen randomly,

1.7.3. Data gathering tools

Observation of students' marks.

Questionnaire for a sample of twenty five (25) students.

Chapter one

Literature review

Introduction

Writing is one of the significant parts of education typically and language production specially. Writing well is an art which everyone have to understand or learn so as to achieve success. Writing well refers to transmitting ideas, thoughts, concepts and facts in an easy and clear language. The art of writing is not something which is instructed earnestly in faculties and it could be a complex process, however, to acquire it, is something necessary and crucial so as to be skillful at both proficiency and learning levels. But one question should be asked in individuals' minds are «what is academic writing? ».

2.1. Definition of academic writing

Academic writing is a style of writing used by teachers, learners, researchers to convey ideas, give arguments or to open scholarly conversation. It is any formal written work that is clear, concise, focused and backed up with evidence. Abu Ghararah and Hamza(1998, p.87) describes academic writing as “...*the logical organization and arrangement of the written sentences within a paragraph and paragraphs within the units of discourse...and the expression of the idea* ” .

Academic writing as a term is the type of writing that takes place in the teaching/learning process in educational institutions. It involves the process of composing a new text from multiple sources.

Al Mubarak (2017, p.176) defines academic writing as “*is commonly characterized as scientific writing which is portrayed as organized research practiced and utilized by researchers at higher education level*”.

Also Whitaker (2009, p.2) believes that academic writing is basically, the writing you need to make for your college lectures. There are various names for academic writing assignments that teachers could have including (essay, research paper, argumentative paper, informative essay, position paper, analysis paper, term paper), however, all of those assignments have a similar purpose and principles

According to Burke (2010, p.40-41) academic writing is an ideological and conscious mental process comes from the mind. The image of single person working alone in a calm atmosphere is viewed as a conscious and mental action. Anywise, writing can be understood from the view of society rather than individuals.

Also, Mutimani (2016, p.19) affirms that academic writing is any writing designed to satisfy a demand in an educational putting like school or university. It is conjointly utilized for guides who might be study by means of teachers and researchers or offered at meetings.

To write academically and actively it is about activating the academic vocabulary by avoiding informal and emotive words such as good, terrible, fantastic. Then, good paragraphs usually follow a particular structure: topic sentence, supporting sentences, and then concluding sentences. For the language it must be powerful and strong to convince the different audience with different opinions and tastes as Luke Strongman(2013) said,« Readers of essays are as varied in their taste as is any group of subjective and critical thinkers » by using arguments and giving the evidence. The next activity is the citation skill using source material by quoting or paraphrasing. Evaluation and criticism is someone's attitude towards one subject to agree or disagree with it.

2.2. The difference between academic writing and general writing

Academic writing and general writing are very different in structure, context, and language itself. Academic writing is more formal and structured than the other type of writing. Academic writing needs precise, concise, clear, and direct language used by teachers, learners, professors and cannot be understood by everyone. In contrast, general writing is for the daily language that is used by all members of society and it can be understood by everyone. Another difference is that academic writing is used for a purpose like solving a problems, research projects, dissertations, essays...etc., however, general writing used just for entertainment and expressing emotions using :letters, emails, newspaper articles...etc. The last difference is that in academic writing it is necessary to use referencing and citation to give the evidence.

2.3. The objectives of academic writing

In academic writing writers should be objective as possible as they can, therefore they will use formal language. The main purpose of academic writing is to convey knowledge and new information in an objective and formal way via a review of what is known about a given topic as Klausmeier(2001, p.15) states that writing depends on how the writer transmit knowledge to the readers .Also it is used to describe issues, give opinions, provide solutions and to give facts.

2.4. Types of academic writing

There are four main types, each one of these types has a particular style of language and a specific purpose to fulfill.

2.4.1. Descriptive writing:

It is considered as the simplest type of academic writing ,its main and primary purpose is to “describe”. It can be a phenomenon, event, place, character, or situation in a highly detailed manner by providing a plenty of sensory pictures which can paint the image in the reader’s mind and convey a deeper meaning through this type of writing .

2.4.2. Persuasive writing:

Is one of the most common genres of academic writing and the most demanding one. In persuasive writing. The author takes a stand and tries to convince the audience that his/her idea or opinion on a particular subject is the correct one. You have to collect varied materials from reliable sources, and then support your claim with strong, logical arguments, facts, evidence and examples.

2.4.3. Analytical writing:

The analytical type includes descriptive writing that focuses more on the analysis and organization of the information you describe into groups, categories, relationships and classes. The following methods can be used in the analytical writing including: analyze, compare, contrast, relate, examine. To make your writing more analytical you should:

Plan, brainstorm the facts and classify them into logical categories

Name each category you find, for instance males/females

Use charts, diagrams, tables to clarify your ideas

Build a clear structure to the reader including: topic sentence, introduction, body and the conclusion.

2.4.4. Critical writing:

Is similar to persuasive writing and almost features are in common expect in critical writing you put into consideration other viewpoints.

2.5. Principles of Academic Writing

2.5.1. Cohesion:

Is an important aspect in academic writing which means that all elements are relate to each other , i.e, the grammatical and lexical relationship between different elements of the text are connected together through using articles, pronouns, word families, nouns, synonyms, relative clauses, it must be appropriately structured and interlinked by suitable signposts and linking words. Cohesion also refers to connectivity in the text.

2.5.2. Clarity:

When we talk about clarity we mean writing that enables the writer to convey an idea in the simplest, easiest and precise way. In other words clarity means the reader should not to think hard to understand your ideas, or to read between lines to predict what are you going to say.

2.5.3. Logical organization:

Ideas don't create much sense if they aren't ordered and organized well. Logical organization refers to developing points and information in certain way which may help the reader to focus more on your text. When we talk about organization in academic writing, we really need to focus on a clear introduction, body and conclusion.

2.5.3.1. Introduction:

It catches the reader's attention. Greetham (2001, p.182-202) concentrates on the significance of the introduction, body and conclusion in which they should be easy, simple and coherent. He believes that the introduction is a crucial element, that reflects and gives more details about the title and provide the reader with all essential that is to follow. Greetham (2001, p.184) noticed that an effective introduction is because it

makes the readers mentally prepared to follow your arguments. Like a travel guide, it helps them to identify and realize the main points of importance in your argument.

2.5.3.2. Body:

Supported the thesis statement and answers the reader's questions. Each paragraph discusses one main subject to support the thesis with strong logical argument and evidence.

2.5.3.3. Conclusion:

Links things together and summarizes the main points of the text. Concerning conclusion, Greetham (2001, p.197) mentioned that the opinions that should be concluded must reflect what have been included in the body of the essay.

2.5.4. Consistency:

Be consistent in academic writing means to choose either to use note form or complete sentences.

2.5.5. Unity:

In a given text, all ideas should be connected to a single topic which means that each paragraph has only one main idea. Thus all information that does not directly have relationship to the topic being discussed should be excluded.

2.5.6. Conciseness

Writers often tend to express themselves with weak, complicated and unnecessary words that can be deleted or replaced. Concise writing needs to be conveyed in just a few words but getting across the most important information economically, avoiding unnecessary terms, repetition and needless details.

2.5.6. Variety:

Variety meaning requires connecting and joining ideas using multiple and several techniques including a variety of long and short sentences, also vary sentences structures and openings. Variety makes writing easy to read and to understand, keeps the readers interested and also keeps the emphasis where you want it.

2.6. Characteristics of academic writing:

Academic writing has three major characteristics:

Convaincant content

Clear organisation

Effective use of the English language

These characteristics are clarified in the following points:

Third person approach

the researcher should not use the first person “I”, it is obligatory to use third person to be objective but never been subjective. E.g: the researcher demonstrates to this as... and you finish your idea as if you are not the one who provides this.

Professional verbiage

Beware and remember always that you are writing a professional paper, slang and social expressions are forbidden in academic writing.

Purpose

Writing academically has always an aim, it is not writing for a pleasure there is a purpose behind it which could be exploratory, descriptive or causal depending on your topic.

Referencing

You are asking to cite reference using one of the following referencing styles:

APA: American Psychology Association

MLA: Modern Language Association

Chicago Style

Harvard Referencing Style

According to the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, these are some other characteristics in writing an academic essay (not listed in the following manner):

- Use the past tense or the present-perfect tense;
- Avoid noun strings;
- Try to use short words and short sentences when possible;
- Avoid jargon;
- Avoid wordiness;
- Avoid redundancy;
- Vary sentence length;
- Use specific language;
- Avoid colloquial expressions;
- Avoid pronouns such as, ‘this, that, these and those’;
- Avoid illogical or ambiguous comparisons;
- Avoid third person references when referring to yourself;
- Avoid anthropomorphism;
- Avoid the editorial ‘we’.

2.7. Features of Academic Writing

Many people interrogate how will academic writing be different from the other types of writing? This can be a descent question and also the answer can make things clear out concerning what academic writing is all about. Clearly there are several distinctive characteristics; however, before we get there to, one has got to recognize and understand some rules of academic writing.

Firstly; it is a correct descriptive linguistics, clear organization of written content and correct tutorial writing format. All of these are essential things that students must abide to in this sort of writing

2.7.1. Precision

To gain understanding, the path from the writer to the reader must be straight, clear, and precise if one clouds this path, the writer can state anything to the naivete of the reader .thus a successful academic writing suppose the plenteous use of specific dates figures and information .imprecise and unclear word mixtures like “a lot of people” or “someone said” are not regarded as a good academic writing expressions when you can say “100people”.

2.7.2. Complexity

Of course if you compare our everyday speak with academic writing ,you will simply find that written communication is more complicated .it is more refined from the grammatical viewpoint because it uses more subordinate clauses likewise as more prenominal adjectives . It has more sequences of prepositional phrases and more passives than spoken language

2.7.3. Formality

For many students formality in academic writing means writing unnecessarily long ,complex words and sentences but in fact formality means to be clear, concise, analytical and precise in your use of language.

2.7.4. Objectivity

This may be considered as the hardest demand of academic writing for students .being objective means that you are concerned with the information that you want to give and the argument you want to make not what you think or believe ;thus ,the thoughts and beliefs and information should be based on lectures ,readings, discussions and research. Therefore academic writing has far less emphasis on you and more emphasis on what you want to say.

2.7.5. Accuracy

Academic writing uses vocabulary accurately through using technical language .extra attention should be paid when using words with a specific meaning to make sure that you do not use the wrong terms.

2.7.6. Hedging

An important feature of academic writing is the use of cautious language. Hedging means giving the writer the ability to make decisions about his/her position on a particular subject.

2.7.7. Responsibility

Means take responsibility for what you say, and everything stated should be justified with proofs and evidence for any claim you make. Also references should be mentioned correctly.

2.8. Basics in writing an academic essay:

Students usually feel uncomfortable with new topics when writing, they act as if they don't know anything about the topic. These are some tips that may help them when writing about new topics.

2.8.1. Being realistic

It is about identifying the limits of your knowledge and to talk about your experience with the topic, for instance you can talk about some books you have read in which you get information about that topic; or saying that you get this from teachers friends or any reasonable source of knowledge.

2.8.2. Word choice

To choose the right words and put them in the right context, i.e, your writing must be clear and well organized. It is informal to use characteristics of conversation, for example, informal colloquialisms (ok, maybe...) use (acceptable, perhaps...), also to avoid using slangs.

These tables summarize and clarify the above points:

Table01. Examples of formal and colloquial language

Colloquial	Formal
Contractions	Full forms
don't	do not
Gonna	going to
there're	there are

Table02. Some examples of slangs/ idioms and formal words

Slang/idioms	Formal words
Guy	Person
Kids	Children
stuff, junk	personal items, objects
drives me up a wall	is upsetting/ upsets me

Table03. Some examples of spoken transitions Vs formal transitions

Spoken transitions	Formal transitions
anyway, anyhow	moreover, furthermore

Table04. Avoiding vague expressions by using specific expressions

Vague expressions	Specific expressions
avoid expressions using <i>“thing”</i>	tell who, what, where, when, why, how much/many

Table05. Choosing preferred Vocabulary

Basic Vocabulary	Preferred Vocabulary
Big	enormous, huge, large
Good	effective, suitable

2.9. How to write an academic essay?

In order to write a successful essay, start by reading the instruction carefully and try to understand them, then research your topic in different sources, start writing organize your essay clearly, and support your arguments with strong examples and evidence.

Once your essay is drafted, check your writing and make any necessary edits.

2.9.1. Following the instructions for your assignment

Read the instructions carefully.

Make note of any formatting requirements

Pay attention to citation style requirements

Ask for clarification if you don't understand something

Narrow down your topic

2.9.2. Researching your topic

Take advantage of your school's resources to build your bibliography

Choose appropriate sources

Read your sources critically

Evaluate online sources carefully

2.9.3. Constructing your essay

Create a clear thesis statement.

Organize your essay by dividing it into three main parts (introduction, body and conclusion)

Introduction

Giving an overview about the topic. The introduction prepares the reader to receive the information. A good introduction includes the following :

Presents the topic and explains how it will be developed

Present the supporting ideas in general

Body:

Point one: with supporting evidence

Point two: with supporting evidence

Point three: with supporting evidence

Counter arguments

Conclusion:

Giving the results. The conclusion confirms the readers' understanding of the idea.

Present your argument in detail

Support each statement with examples and evidence

Cite your sources clearly and correctly

2.10. Stages of writing an academic paper

It is organized by using many questions such as the following:

What do I know about the topic?

Can I answer the questions who, what, when, where, why, how?

What do I know about the context of my topic?

What historical or cultural influences do I know about that might be important to my topic?

Does my topic belong to any particular genre or category of topics?

What do I know about this genre?

What seems important to me about this topic?

If I were to summarize what I know about this topic, what points would I focus on?

What points seems less important?

Why do I think so?

How does this topic relate to other things that I know?

What do I know about the topic that might help my reader to understand it in new ways?

Sometimes it is better to use the opposite perspective in thinking about some topics:

What DO NOT I know about my topic?

What do I need to know?

How can I find out more?

What do I think, and why do I think that?

2.11. Choosing an appropriate topic

Make sure your topic meets the assignment requirements

Choose a topic that is interesting to you

Consider the scope of your topic

2.12. Criteria of selecting a topic

To decide on a topic, there are some tips that you will need to do ;

Brainstorm for ideas

Choose a topic that will enable you to read and understand the literature

Ensure that the topic is manageable and that material is available

Make a list of key words

Be flexible

Define your topic as a focused research question

Research and read more about your topic

Formulate a thesis statement.

2.13. How to improve your academic writing?

In higher education, academic writing is a significant skill that all students have to develop because as we know, good writing makes good students. Therefore; here are some tips that will help you to enhance and improve your academic writing if it is something challenging:

2.13.1. Write to the level of the intended audience

To become a good writer in your discipline, you must pay careful attention to your audience. Academic writing is particularly addressed to literate and highly educated people. As Whitaker (2009) who states that academic writing is addressed to a particular readers in mind.

You should not only put into consideration what you want to say but also to consider to whom you are saying it. You have to ask yourself some questions about your readers, what do my readers know about the topic? What do you need to tell them? Are you clear about how to meet the expectations of your audience? Why will your audience read what you write and can you make them keep reading?

2.13.2. Use outlines

Before beginning writing your essay, it is important to create an outline about what you are going to write. An outline provides a map of where to go with the essay. It helps to organize your ideas in a logical order, understanding the basic structure of an essay which includes: an introduction that will entail a thesis statement, the body which supports the thesis and conclusion that connects everything together.

2.13.3. Acquire a solid understanding of grammar, punctuation and style

Grammar, punctuation and style are important aspects in academic writing that contribute to your research to be understood and convey your thoughts in the appropriate way. Grammar is concerned with verbs, subjects and objects agreement, well organized sentences and the correct use of articles and pronouns. Using correct punctuation will make your reader understand what you want to convey and it is absolutely necessary when you know the proper uses of punctuation. Finally; academic writing requires a specific style. It is not just about choosing the right words, but it is how to set your ideas and arguments in a way that gives a sense to the reader. Getting to grips with the style is one of the important first steps in producing a good written paper at university.

2.13.4. Read and write as possible

It may seem difficult at first, but the more you read and write, the better you will achieve as all we know the advantages of reading and writing. Every time you read, you learn something new and come up with ideas that did not exist before.

2.13.5. Use online resources

After finishing drafting and editing, and before submitting the paper for review, it is important to organize the essay and examine the paper in order to avoid errors and check organization, paragraphs, the sequence of ideas between them and sentences (grammar mistakes, spelling, structure, plagiarism, ...). Some famous resources are: Grammarly, Proofread Bot, Online Tool, free Application.

2.13.6. Edit and re-write

When, it comes to academic writing, the process of editing is a crucial and an integral part because it makes you note your mistakes for next time. Editing is a stage in which the writer tries to improve a draft. It involves looking at each sentence carefully by correcting errors, adding new words or deleting others or rearranging them so that to make that each sentence serves its purpose.

2.14. Importance of academic writing

No one can deny that academic writing is important not solely to master English language ,but also to be skillful and achieve success in acquiring other disciplines where English is the center of learning. Academic writing is one of the most dreaded activities that most students inevitably come across. Most of them either lack sufficient writing skills or they fear criticism from their professors. Academic writing is considered as one of the important factors that student to communicate appropriately, express their thoughts in an organized way and convince the reader about their way of thinking. Writing academically will help students analyse, convey understanding, think critically and focus on their writing style. Moreover the process of academic writing enhances intellectual capacity and allows students to look into a problem from various dimensions and come up with the right solutions that are relevant to the situation they are faced with. This section highlights some of the important aspects of academic writing that are helpful to achieve professionalism and gain the appropriate writing skill.

Firstly; academic writing develops your analytical thinking through learning how to shape a knowledgeable opinion or view by observing and searching about the concepts and works of someone else in a way that makes sense to the reader. Instead of merely describing the work of other researchers, students need to think why it was done and the findings can prove useful in the future. This type of writing makes students learn how to classify and analyze information.

Additionally; in higher institutions of learning, it can be troublesome for students to explain and clarify what they know, particularly on complex subjects that have learnt at university, if they struggling with academic writing. The scholarly essays

help students to explain what they have learnt and how to use the correct terminology and style that will make information understood by others.

Moreover; academic writing encourages to think critically and objectively through learning to look and analyze thoughts and research from different dimensions and standpoints, that's why students have not to compose a one-sided paper which leaves no space for argument .then base your statements on your understanding. This process enhances intellectual capacity and enables students to think critically and be objective on a number of problems and issues.

Furthermore; this last has a strong focus on technique and style and how it need to be employed to best pass on ideas and thoughts. Thus students should learn about style and how to compose expositions and essays in their academic career so as they will find it a great deal less difficult to write papers at some stage in university.

2.15. Factors confronting master students in academic writing

Academic writing is a complicated style that requires a specific rules, basics, skills, and conventions that's why it is not surprising for some students that academic writing is not that easy task, for them it is a challenging and a difficult one to do and for these reasons students are facing many problems while writing their academic papers. And this is evident in what Nunan (1999) confirms that for second language learners it is regarded as the most hardest activity to make in order to produce interlinked and good text .This difficulty lies not only in generating and organizing ideas, but also in transmitting those ideas into readable text. Academic writing appears to be one of the most, yet a problematic ability for university students to learn. According to Grami (2010, p.9) "*it is not a simple cognitive activity; rather it is believed to be a complex mental production which requires careful thought, discipline and concentration*". This is particularly the case of EFL master students. Al-zubaidi (2012, p.47) said that "*Academic writing includes essential skills to develop the necessary academic norms to enable international graduate students to deal with new postgraduate requirements and deliver high-quality performance and achievement*". Also Al-mubarak (2017, p.176) argues that writing abilities are a vital part and means of communication for students in the course of their academic life for the reason that, it allows them to set up their sentiments and ideas, additionally; to skip on significance through well-developed

content. Moreover; Musa (2010) stated that writing is regarded as a hard skill to acquire because it consists of numerous elements, for example, using the right vocabulary, understanding grammar, grasp on spellings and punctuation, convenient style that satisfy the reader's expectations.

Academic writing challenges for students begin as soon as they enter the university. Hyland (2002) asserts that most EFL students face problems with producing texts in English when they are simultaneously attempting to achieve the requirements designed by academic writing and make huge efforts to become close their writing style to the conventions of academic writing. Moreover; Al-khasawneh (2010, p.3) believed that students faced various difficulties in English writing, for instance; the absence of data organization since it is something unknown for them. To succeed in foreign language especially in writing, students should surround themselves in language learning atmosphere.

Furthermore; Alsamadani (2010) pointed out that

“the difficulty and complexity of academic writing arise from the fact that writing includes discovering a thesis, developing support for it, organizing, revising and finally editing it to ensure an effective, error-free piece of writing” (as cited in AL-Mubarak (2017, p176).

According to Nofal (2010, p.121)

“It is difficult for students to express themselves adequately in writing. The most discrete characteristics of a good paragraph are virtually absent in the writing of most students. Unity, consistency, order and coherence are obviously lacking; students fail to signal the direction of their thoughts by the use of transitional words such as ‘however’, ‘moreover’, ‘nevertheless’, and phrases like ‘on the other hand’, ‘in fact’, etc...”.

Khan(2011, pp.1253-1254) who conducted a study to investigate the problems of Saudi University students, has listed a number difficulties students face during writing academically in pronunciation, clusters of phonemes, grammar, structure, doubling of subjects, double prepositions, problems in learning vocabulary, capitalization and punctuation.

Various studies have been carried out to discuss factors, problems, causes and challenges that face postgraduate students in academic writing. For instance; KHAN who conducted a study to investigate the problems of Saudi university students, has explained that they face several difficulties in phoneme clusters, spellings, grammar, mistakes due to the first structure, doubling of subjects, language interference, doubling of preposition, articles, tenses, appropriate vocabulary, wrong use of prefixes and suffixes.

Zughoul and Taminian (1984, p.4) found that Jordanian EFL students made mistakes while communicating.

Abbad (1988, p.5) admits the weakness of Yemeni learners of English and he points out that

“ In spite of the low proficiency level in English of most applicants (Yemeni learners), they are accepted into the English department. He also mentions that their problems are due to the inappropriate methods of language teaching and learning environment which some judge are unsuitable for learning a foreign language.”

Also Rabab'ah (2003) emphasized that Arab learners are facing problems in English acquisition of native speakers' instruction.

Sajid and Siddiqui (2015, p.175) who recently conducted a study in which, they discuss the causes effects and remedies of lack of academic writing found that

“All of the previous studies related to EFL students' English language ability, especially, their academic writing skills have revealed a multitude of problems faced at higher education level. Majority students are constrained with the requisite English language capability e.g. Deficiencies in use of tenses, ambiguous or loose sentence construction, unparallel sentence construction, flaws in surface and deep structure-sentences, poor diction (vocabulary) and expression (style of language), lack of transforming or rephrasing texts for synthesizing information as a member of discourse community to reproduce a research work, errors in use of pronouns, articles, punctuations etc”

As they learn academic writing at university, EFL students confront different factors which hinder their writing proficiency. **Grammar** is one of the most common factors that face students in their writing career. Grammar was defined by Fthala Alakeeli (2013, p.80) as a study of principles which guides the use of language, grammar differentiates from one language to another. Grammar is a branch of linguistics. He added (p.83) grammar is a study of sentence structure. It may contain the inflections, syntax and word formation of the language, also pronunciation, meaning and linguistic theory of term.

A more detailed definition was proposed by Harmer (2001, p.12) a description of the ways on how words are changed and interlinked to form sentences in a language. These ways are called the grammar rules that are basic elements in every language which include many rules like, tenses, prepositions, word class, nouns, conjunctions and many others.

Students usually make mistakes in certain grammatical rules. According to Bani Younes and Albalawi (2015, pp.12-16) confirm that

“The most common language problems faced by students are grammatical problems in the field of tenses; prepositions, syntactic, subject-verb agreement, the use of articles, punctuation problems such as missing, additional or miss using of punctuation marks, and spelling problems such as replacing, deleting, missing, adding extra, disordering, breaking or writing non-existing words”.

To make sure that your readers understand what you want to say in your research, you must obey the rules of grammar.

Unclear communication is the biggest issue caused by the incorrect use of grammar when writing and speaking. According to Fthala Alakeeli (2013) who conducted a study in which, he examined the lexical and grammatical difficulties encountered by IRAQI students, emphasized the importance of grammar by defining it as the most essential for the structure and communication because he/she is able to get the social principles which enhance the communication. The grammar weaknesses affect communication, some mistakes can be acceptable but some are not and will lose the meaning; the other speaker will not get you and will ask you about what were you saying.

2.15.1. Punctuation

Is another factor which is one of the most important aspects that is considered a serious fact confronting postgraduate students and presents an obstacle in academic writing.

Awad (2012, p.215) defines punctuation as

“They are little things, but they are as essential to good composition as nails are to a carpenter. Mainly by their aid do we make sense or nonsense of what we write? Without punctuation marks, many sentences are mere jumbles of words.”

Poor punctuation contributes to unorganized writing, confuse readers, interrupt the flow of ideas and change the intended meaning. Al-Qinai (2013, p.3) emphasized that punctuation marks help the reader to understand how phrases, sentences and paragraphs are coherently linked together. It typically informs discourse features like intonation, stress and pauses.

As the famous example of an English professor who asked his/her class to punctuate the following sentence: A woman without her man is nothing. The males punctuated the sentence as:” a woman: without her man, is nothing”. However, the females punctuated it differently:” a woman without her, man is nothing”. This above example explains the importance of punctuation and its power in solving ambiguity. Therefore; students need to pay attention to the way they punctuate, which is in most cases a problem for them because an error in punctuation can convey a completely different meaning to the one that is intended. Awad (2012, p.221) states that *“punctuation marks to the readers, are like the torch for a person walking in the darkness.”*

According to Awad (2012, p.213) punctuation has three main important functions:

2.15.2. Phonetic function:

Punctuation is very important for the reason that it demonstrates the rhythm, pauses and tone. Its absence leads to confusion in meaning and dangerous than grammatical mistakes.

2.15.3. Grammatical function:

Punctuation is used in direct style: to form interrogations; to mark emphatic content; to highlight syntactic elements displaced from their natural positions; and to build the structure of the sentences, complex sentences, paragraphs, documents, etc.

2.15.4. Semantic function:

Punctuation helps learners understand the meaning of particular words/phrases by marking/highlighting them differently than normal text, using italics, underlining, bolds, capitals, etc. In a short apposition, one could use commas to isolate it or no. Long appositions are always isolated by a pair of commas.”

Many students do not know how to place the appropriate punctuation mark in the right place. For example, commas and periods are the most frequently used punctuation marks. the most common mistakes that students make in punctuation is the use of comma, that’s because they think that comma goes wherever there is a pause in a sentence, but that’s wrong, which often results in a run-on sentence. Bani Younes and Albalawi (2015, p.15) summarize the punctuation problems in:

“The absence of the capital letter at the beginning of new sentence, rare capitalization of proper nouns, incorrect usage of semicolon, omission of semicolon, the absence of the exclamation mark where required, run-on sentences, with no stops at the end of sentences, poor or no revision of what is written and not enough spaces between words, lack of question marks, hyphens are hardly used, the omission of comma after introductory elements”.

Therefore, learning the use of punctuation is key important because it brings a big impact to writing meaning.

2.15.5. Vocabulary

Represents one of most important skills necessary in learning a foreign language generally and academic writing particularly because it will be impossible to speak and communicate without using a variety of words. Vocabulary can be defined in various ways and by different researchers. According to Neuman and Dwyer (2009, p.385) According to Neuman and Dwyer (2009, p.385) Vocabulary refers back to the words

we generally use to talk and transmit the oral message successfully: words in speaking (expressive vocabulary) and words in listening (receptive vocabulary).

.Also Michael and Hiebert (2005, p.3) define vocabulary as “*the knowledge of meanings of words*”. Moreover, UR (1995, p.60) states that vocabulary can be defined, roughly, as the words we educate in the foreign language. However, a new object of vocabulary can be more than a single word: for example, post office and mother-in-law, which might be made of two or three phrases but express a single idea. A beneficial convention is to cover all such instances by the way of speaking about vocabulary ‘items’ instead of ‘words’”.

Furthermore, Richards and Renandya (2002, p.255) assert that vocabulary is a center aspect of language mastery that provides lots of the idea for a way properly students learn the four skills; speaking, listening, reading and writing. Without a comprehensive vocabulary and creating new techniques for gaining new one, learners often obtain less than their capacities and may be frustrated from creating use of language mastering possibilities and opportunities around them like paying attention to the radio, listening to native speakers, the use of language in distinct contexts, reading and watching TV.

Vocabulary acquisition plays an important role in mastering a language and academic achievement. It is the basis for developing all other skills: reading, writing, speaking, listening, spelling and pronunciation. Rohmatillah (no date, p.70) emphasized that without enough vocabulary humans being find difficulties in communicating and expressing their emotions in speaking and writing effectively. If people master the vocabulary, then, they can speak, read, listen and write as they want. Thus, the more vocabulary students have at their disposal, the better they learn and achieve.

Certainly, vocabulary is regarded as the most difficult aspect in learning any language; therefore, students seem to have many problems while writing. One major problem is that, they don't know how to place the appropriate words according to their exact meaning, they may have a plenty of ideas, but do not have the words to adequately express these ideas based on the right context. Thus; students must know how to put words-that fits your audience and matches purpose -in their proper form according to what they are doing in the sentence. As a result, according to Annab (2015, p.22) who confirms that the importance of vocabulary may have a huge

influence on the contribution it adds to the value of writing. As a result, students should have a positive attitude towards the acquisition of new vocabulary.

Plagiarism

Another factor that confronts EFL postgraduate students in academic writing.

Plagiarism is becoming an important issue of increasing concern in our societies. It is considered as a moral problem and a serious offense or a sin in the academic world. .

According to H. Chang(no date, p.203) who states that “*plagiarism is taking the words, phrases, sentences, ideas, theories, opinions, or even whole work of another writer , and pretending they are one’s own original work.*

Furthermore, THE OXFORD UNIVERSITY defines it plagiarism is introducing somebody else’s thoughts or concepts as if it is your own work, and this is done with or while not their agreement, by combine and mix it into your work while not full acknowledgement.

Many students, despite the fact that plagiarism is bad and it is regarded as an intellectual crime, they do it as a result of laziness, lack of confidence the ability to understand how to deal with citations, the importance of using the right sources, and poor time management. When given homework, they directly go to the internet, the ease of use of the copy-and-paste functions. It is commonly known that plagiarism has bad impact on students since it affects students’ success, keeps them from learning, which is the reason they are in college, hinders creativity and originality, which are essential elements in the academic world, damages the reputation and undermines trust and confidence of professors, and becomes an obstacle in developing academic writing skills .Sibomana, Ndayambajje and Uwambayinemo (2018, p.20) argue that learners who plagiarize as their method to do things, can’t make a contribution to knowledge, because the only thing they are doing is , to repeat or just copying what other writers have said. Standler (2000, p.5) states that an essential purpose of education is, to provide students, who can examine thoughts –each evaluation and synthesis –and who can produce full-size unique thoughts. Consequently, filing a plagiarized paper – similarly to the wrongful conduct –does no longer reveal the extent of expertise and abilities that an educated man or woman within reason anticipated to have.

Fortunately, there are different steps and procedures so as to avoid plagiarism:

2.15.6. Paraphrase:

Is to express the information that you have found into your own words. According to Spatt (1987, p.12) concerning paraphrasing, he believes that it is the most dependable method to make sense out of a hard textual content. Paraphrasing a sentence or two together with a citation of the writer's name, is regarded as the preferable strategies of imparting any other individual's thoughts within your own essay.

2.15.7. Cite:

Is one of the effective way to avoid plagiarism which means that certain information (ideas, words, figures, images, concepts....etc.) in your research came from another source by following the document formatting guidelines(i.e.; APA, MLA, AMA, Chicago Emehatsion (1998, p.60) explains that "Citation is the manner of indicating different humans's thoughts, phrases or sentences either by inserting them inner quotation marks or through writing them in a fashion distinctive from the text consisting of use of indention and unmarried area.

Citations make one's writing more persuasive and this is evident in what Lampty and Atta-Obeng (2012, p.71) confirms that citation makes one's writing greater persuasive, they are no longer used really to avoid plagiarism, but also they have other important functions. Through, citing the work of a specific writer, you acknowledge and admire the highbrow assets rights of that author. Researchers have the freedom to use thousands and thousands of concepts, thoughts, and arguments published by other writers.

2.15.8. Quoting:

Is an exact reproduction of someone else's words as they were written or spoken

2.15.9. Referencing:

Is used to tell the reader from where the ideas come from, it must include a very specific information about the author, date of publication, title and source.

In sum, it is clearly that plagiarism is becoming a serious and dangerous problem than we realize, and it is seen as an increasing phenomenon which threatening students

skills and capacities in academic writing. Therefore, both instructors and students should help in solving this dishonest behavior.

2.16. Text structure

Moreover, text structure is another factor which threatening EFL postgraduate students. Structure is a significant feature of academic writing. It is very important to give your text a correct structure. Regardless of the academic writing's type, whether it is an article, essay, thesis or report, they all have three main components: introduction, body and conclusion. Greetham (2001, p.182) in " *How to write better essays*", explains that there are a number of students who consider introduction as the foremost troublesome elements of writing an essay. One of the main reasons is due to the fact that we are uncertain about what we will write in the introduction. If we don't recognize or have no idea about why we are doing something, what we are attempting to attain, then, we has not to be shocked to locate that we are not smart at it. However, there is another purpose in the case of not writing a good introduction: we forgot the two steps, interpretation and planning. If we have a little plan what we are attending to write, it's troublesome to do a good process of introducing it. He also emphasizes that " *Often essays fail because they read like a loose list of isolated points each dependent upon itself, and not supported by the context in which it is developed (p.187)*". Greetham (2001, p.197) believes that the conclusion is regarded as a hard task of writing an academic paper, but this is wrong, it should be the easiest part. Consequently, when you understand the structure of a text, it will help you to write one of the best academic papers.

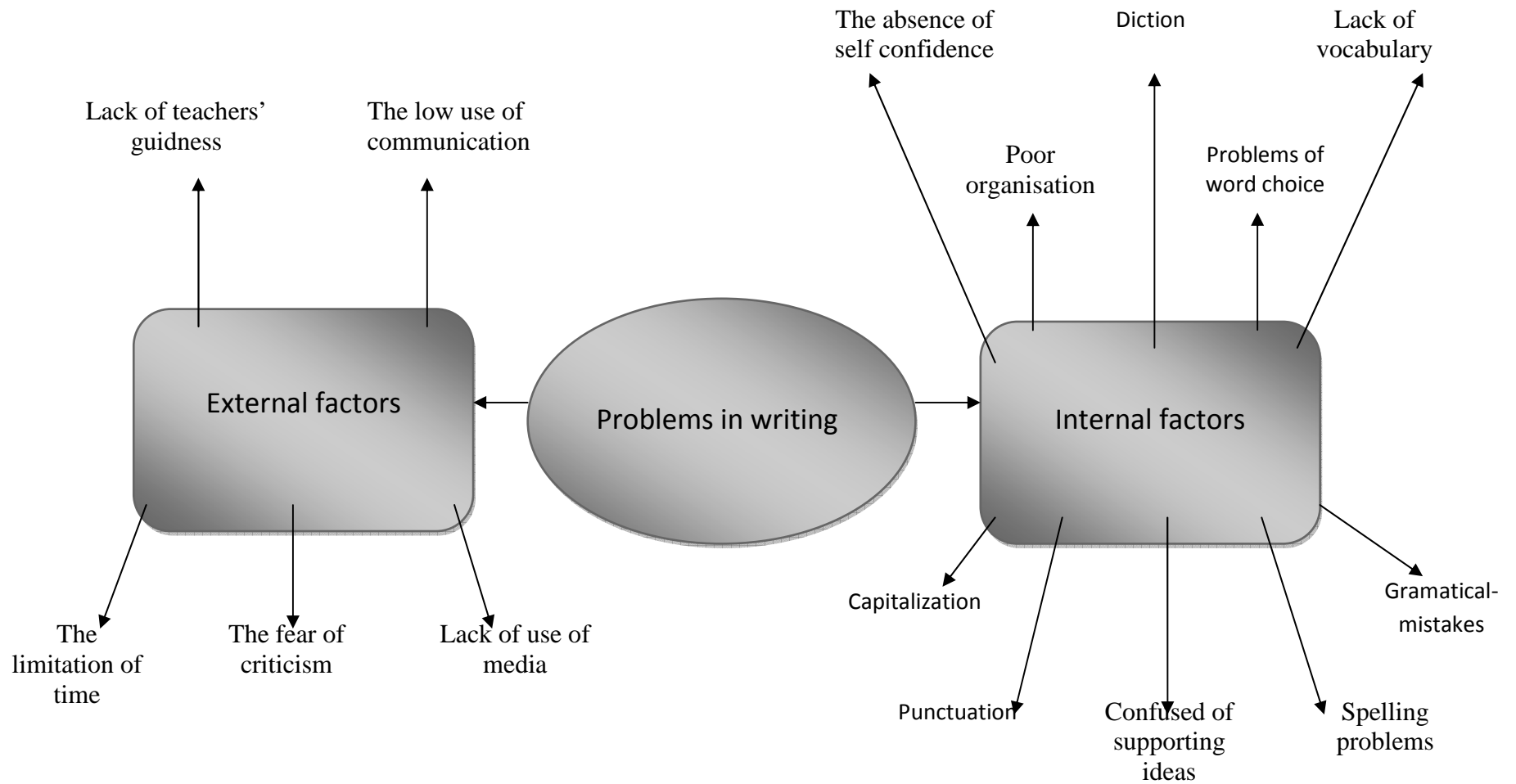


Figure 1 . A summary of student's problems in writing

2.17 How to improve your academic writing?

2.17.1 Write to the level of the intended audience

Academic writing is addressing a well informed, and educated readers, so that it does not need a very detailed explanation. The higher educated individuals have already knowledge and information do not need you to inform them again.

2.17.2 Build on the past

Meant by this relevant researches and publications, it is necessary to go back to others' works to avoid the repetition of the same ideas and to know what is known. And what is unknown?

2.17.3 Get to the point

To go directly to the point you want to reach, no repetition, no exaggeration, no extra information.

2.18 Conclusion

In conclusion, academic writing is indeed a difficult task to achieve, but not an impossible one. It is a tool for success at higher educational levels if mastered perfectly by students. It is very important that the student learns how to write in a best way that will convince the audience, and attracts their attention. The goal of academic writing is to inform an audience about a particular topic in a very professional manner. It is very important that the person is able to present his ideas clearly when writing an academic piece. Each person should organize what to say and know how to get it into paper. Thus, students need to understand the different procedures in which academic writing follows like, creating new strategies, using appropriate disciplines and find solutions for their problems.

Chapter two

Data analysis

Introduction

The method that will be used in this research is the descriptive method which can help us to highlight some internal and external factors confronting master students in academic writing at Abbes Leghrou University of Khenchela.

We use a questionnaire for students to investigate their problems in academic writing. The questionnaire administered to master two English students to investigate their problems in writing. This research is aims to develop students writing skills.

Design and description of the student's questionnaire

The students' questionnaire is designed to master two EFL students at KHENCHELA University.

The questionnaire is composed of twelve (12) questions. It consists of close-ended questions, which contains yes/no questions and multiple choices questions. the questionnaire objective is to give a chance to master two English students to express their thoughts and to give their views about academic writing.

Population

Master two students at the department of English, the university of Khenchela are approximately (87) student. Only (25) students are chosen randomly to be approximately one fourth of the whole number for the lack of time.

Analysis of students' questionnaire

Question01: Your level in English is :

Table06. students' general level in English

Options	Number of students	Percentages
very good	05	20%
good	10	40%
average	08	32%
weak	02	08%
Students' total number	25	100%

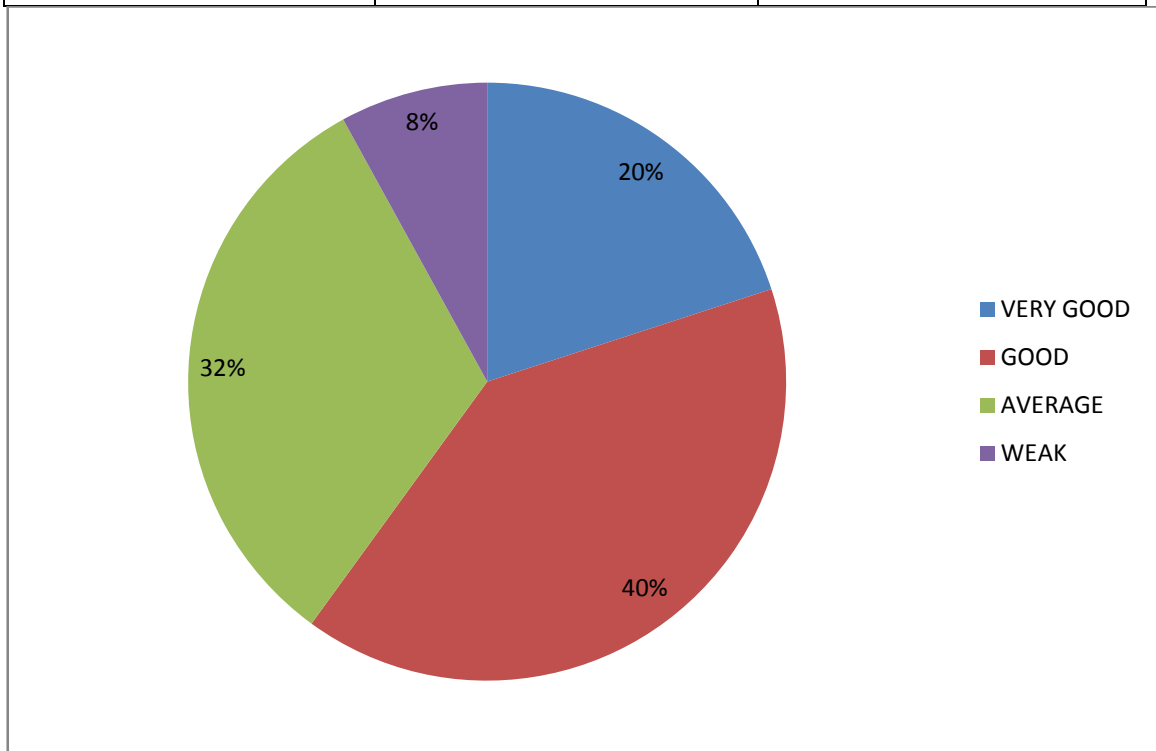


Figure 02. Students' general level in English

This figure shows that the majority of students forty percent (40%) considered themselves as good students in English. Only eight percent (8%) considered themselves as weak students in English; and the rest are between (32%) and (20%) for very good and average.

Question02. Your level in writing is :

Table07. Students' level in writing.

Options	Number of students	Percentages
Very good	03	12%
Good	08	32%
Average	11	44%
Weak	03	12%
Students' total number	25	100%

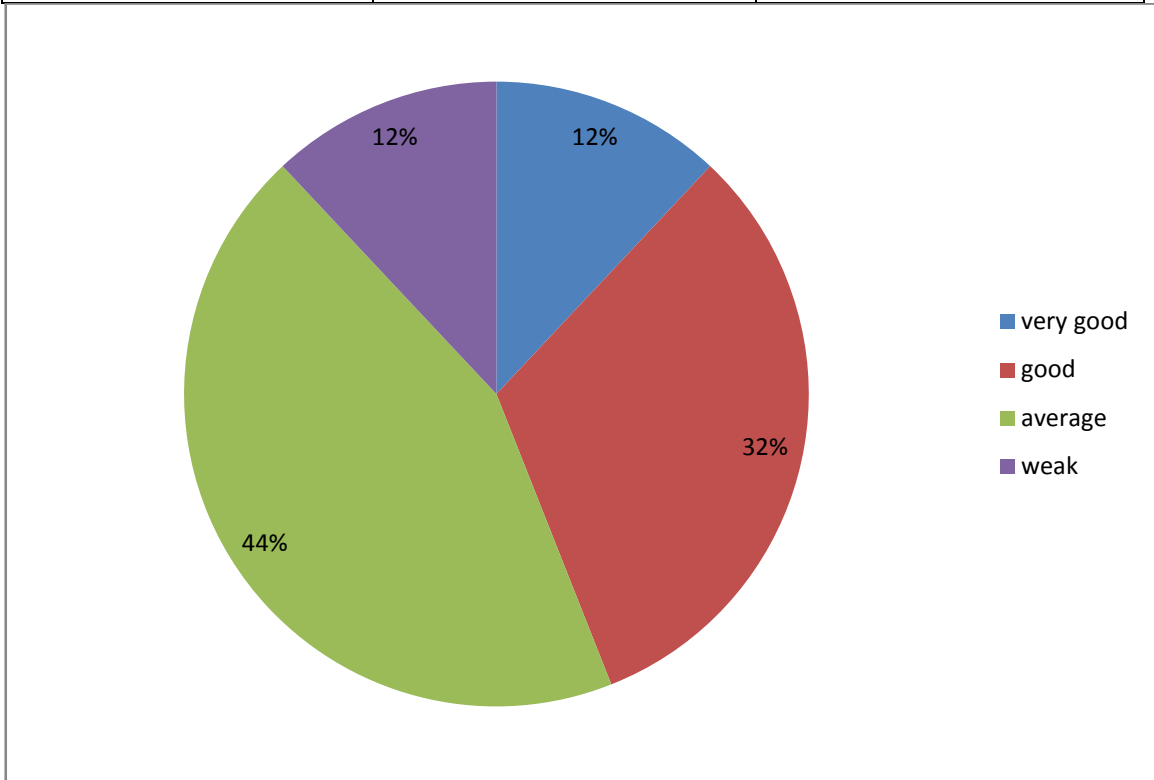


Figure03. Students level in English.

Figure.3 indicates that the majority of students are average in writing forty four percent (44%), the minority of them are very good and weak (12%). The remaining thirty two (32%) are good.

Question03. How often students write for pleasure ?

Tble08. The frequency of students' writing in English for pleasure

Options	Number of students	percentages
Always	05	20%
Often	08	32%
Rarely	11	44%
Never	01	04%
The total number	25	100%

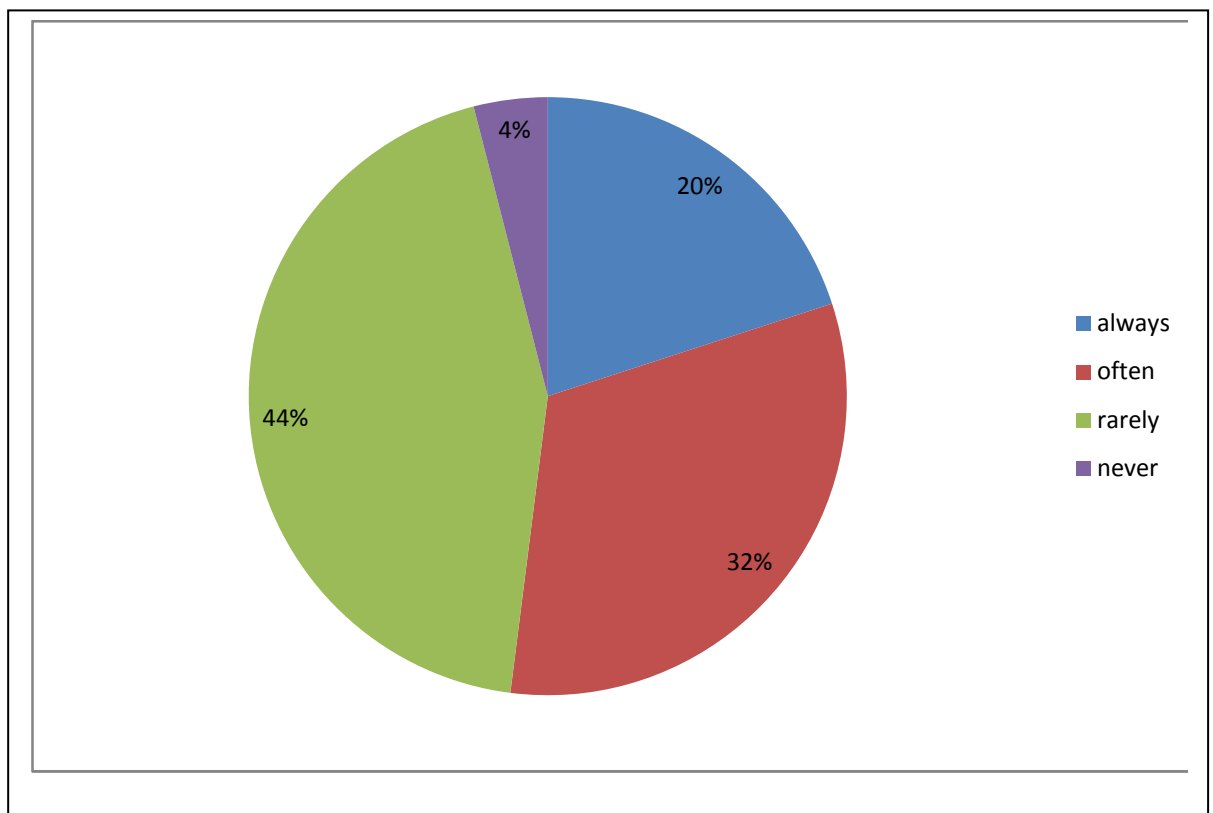


Figure04. The frequency of students' writing in English for pleasure

The above figure presents that it is rarely when the majority of students forty four percent have rarely when they write for pleasure, and the minority of them have never did that. The rest are between always (20%) and often (32%).

Question04. How often do you write in English for academic stuff ?

Table09. The frequency of students' writing for academic writing.

options	Number of students	percentages
Always	15	60%
Often	08	32%
Rarely	02	08%
Never	00	00%
Total number	25	100%

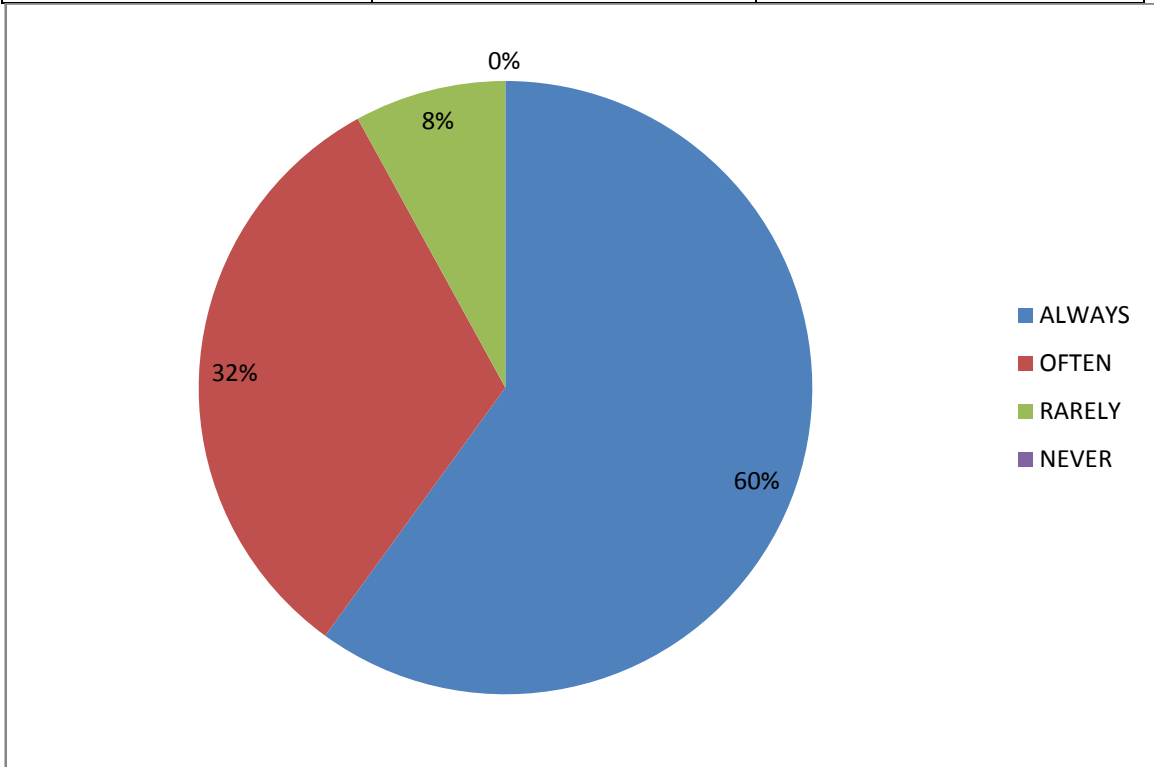


Figure05. The frequency of students' writing for academic writing.

The figure05 displays that more than half of students (60%) are always writing for academic stuff. Then thirty two percent (32%) are often when they write. The other eight percent (8%) rarely when they do.

Question05. Do you enjoy writing?

Table10. Students' enjoyment in writing.

Options	Number of students	Percentages
Yes	14	56%
No	11	44%
Total number	25	100%

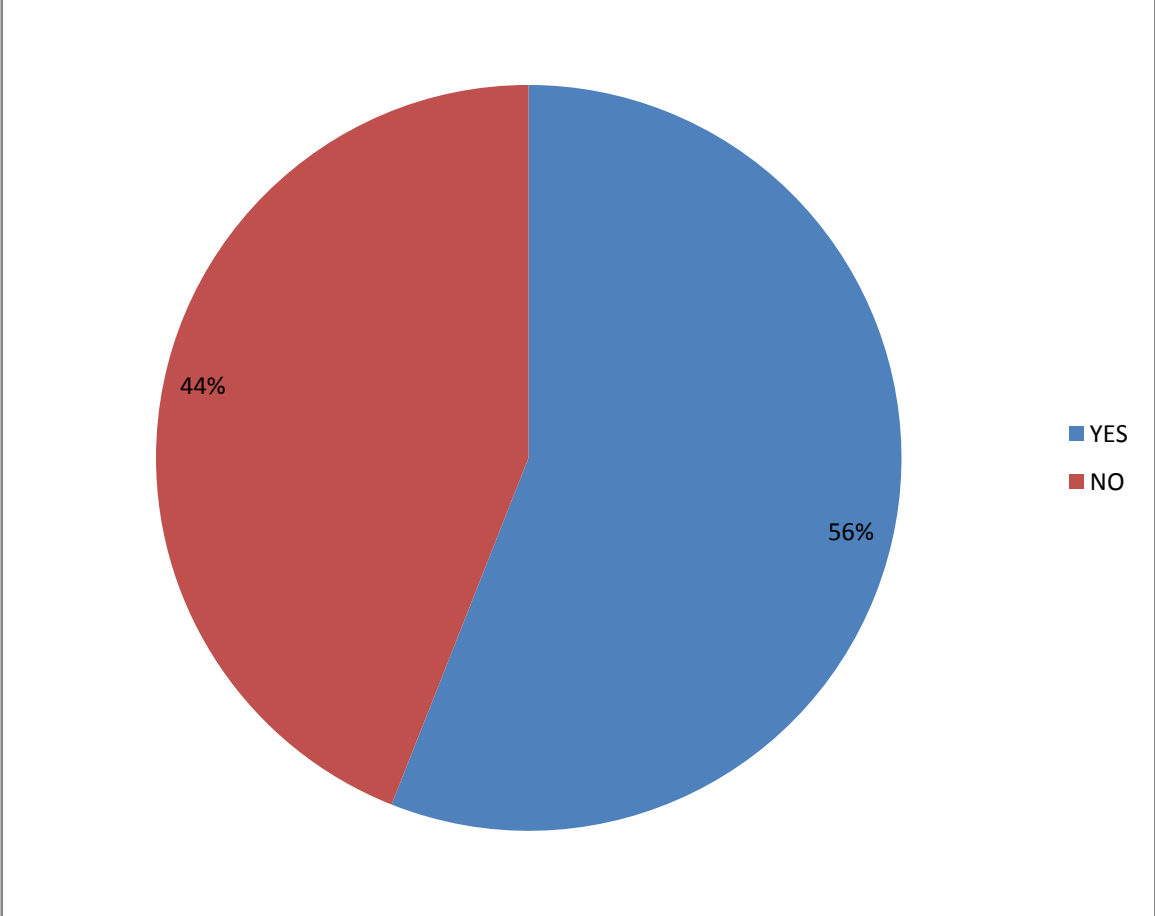


Figure06. Students' enjoyment in writing.

This figure demonstrates that more than the half of students fifty six percent (56%) enjoys writing.

Question06. How do you find academic writing?

Table11. Students' attitude towards academic writing.

Options	Number of students	Percentages
Easy	04	16%
Difficult	08	32%
Very difficult	05	20%
Neither easy nor difficult	08	32%
Total number	25	100%

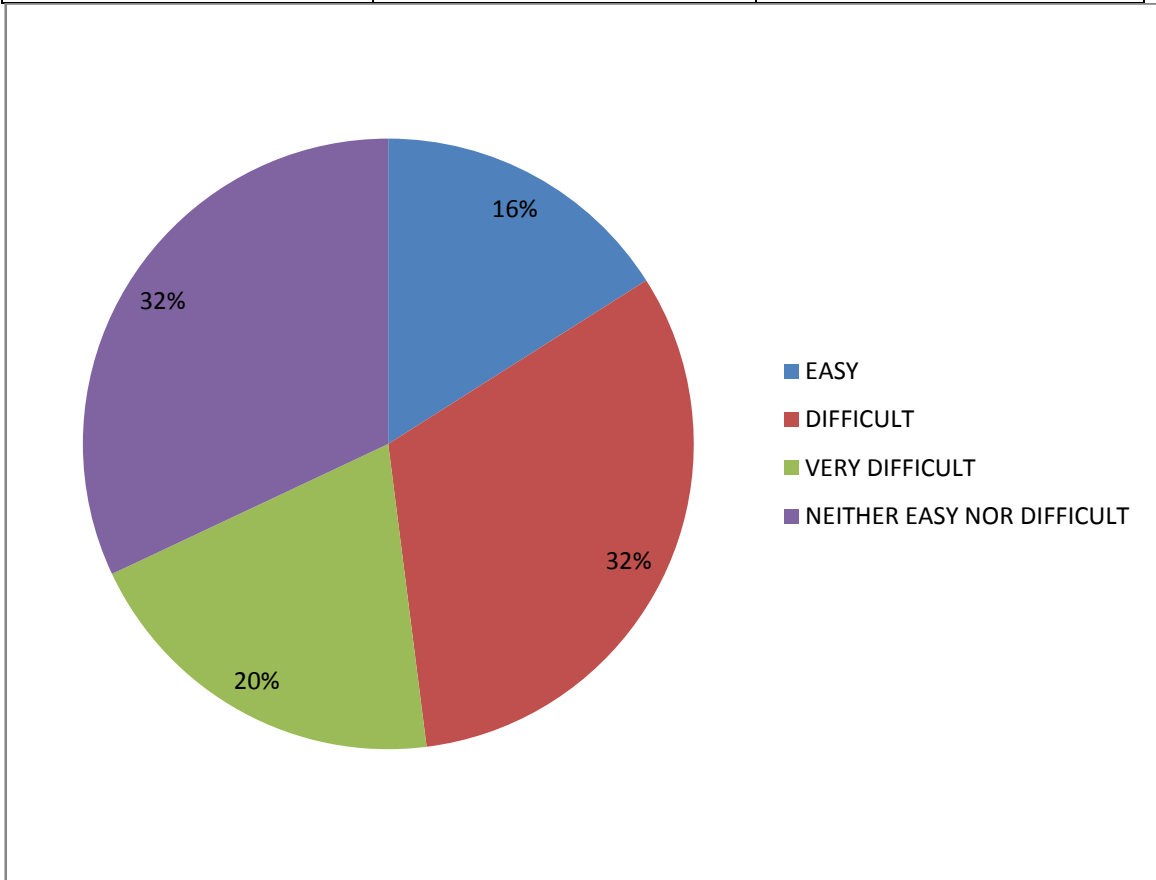


Figure07. Students' attitude towards academic writing.

The above figure presents that thirty two percent (32%) of students believed that writing is difficult; the same number believed it is neither easy nor difficult. Twenty percent(20%) found it very difficult and the rest (16%) believed it is easy

Question07: Choose the most important step you usually start with :

Table12. The most important step students start within their writing.

Options	Number of students	Percentages
Thinking about the topic	04	16%
Reading, re-reading and understanding the structure	14	56%
Brainstorming and choosing ideas	00	00%
Asking the teacher for clarifications	07	28%
Total number	25	100%

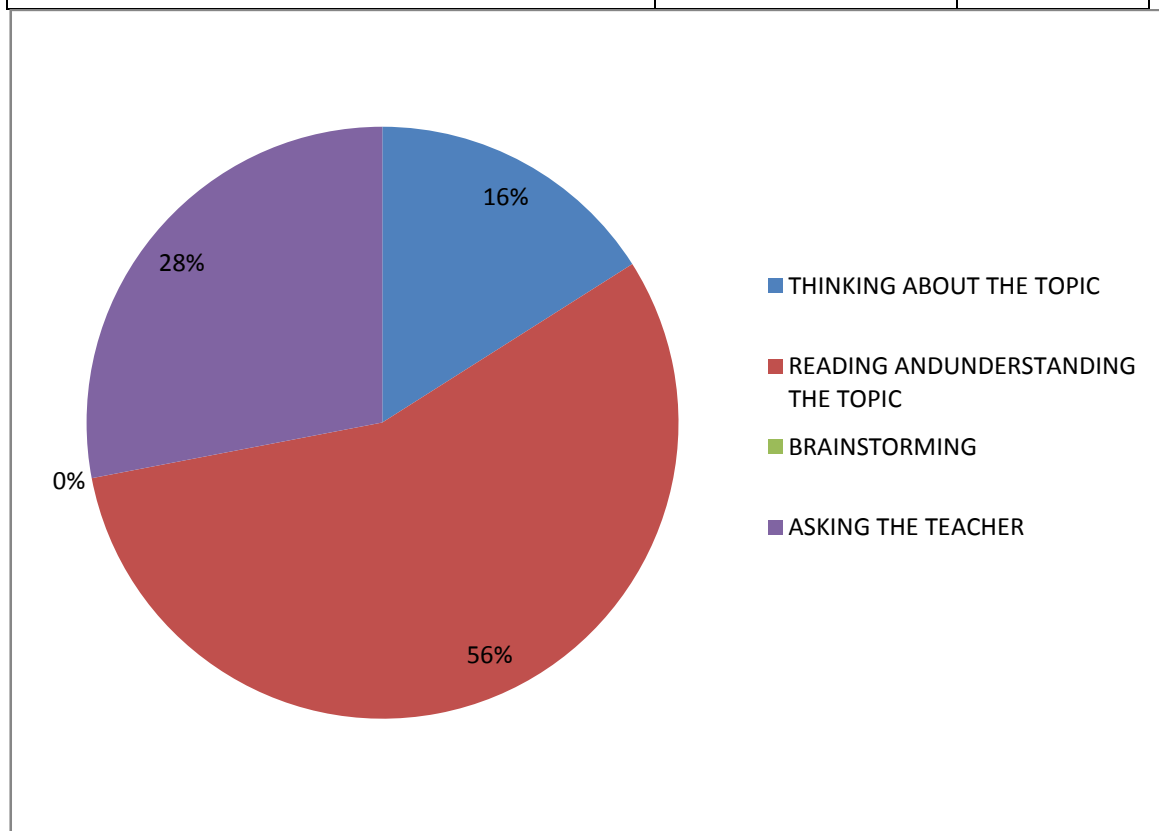


Figure08. The most important step to start writing.

The figure08 shows that the great majority of students (56%) start their writing by reading, re-reading and understanding the structure. Twenty eight percent (28%) of them preferred to start by asking the teacher for clarification, and few ones wanted to start by thinking about the topic.

Question08. How do you prefer working in writing courses?

Table13. Students' preference on the type of working in writing.

Options	Number of students	Percentages
Individual	06	24%
Pair-work	10	40%
Group-work	09	36%
Total number	25	100%

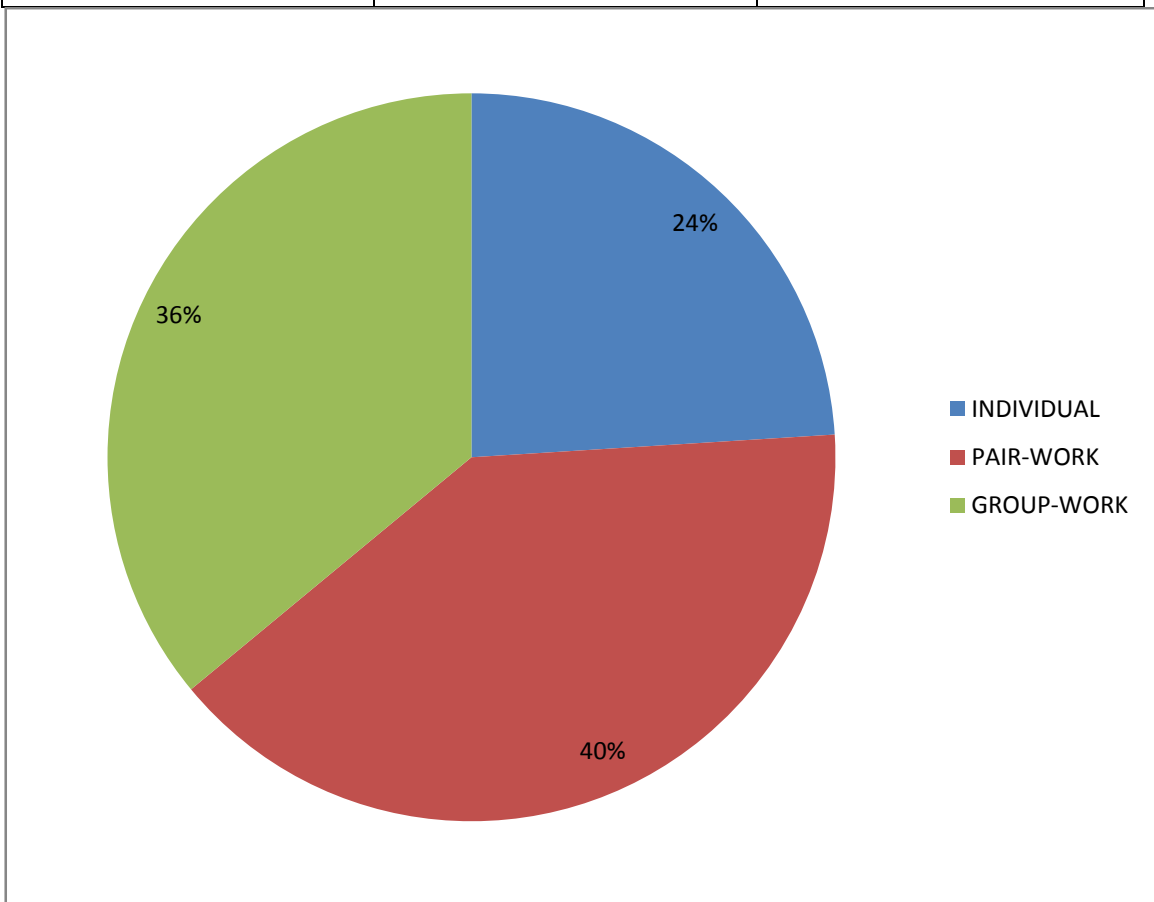


Figure09. Students' preference on the type of working in writing.

Figure08 shows that most students preferred writing in pairs (40%); thirty six percent (36%) working in groups. Few students (24%) liked working individually.

Question09. What are the major difficulties you are facing in your academic writing?

Table14. Major students' problems in academic writing.

Options	Number of students	Percentages
Paraphrasing	08	32%
Summarizing	04	16%
Referencing	10	40%
Language itself	03	12%
Total number	25	100%

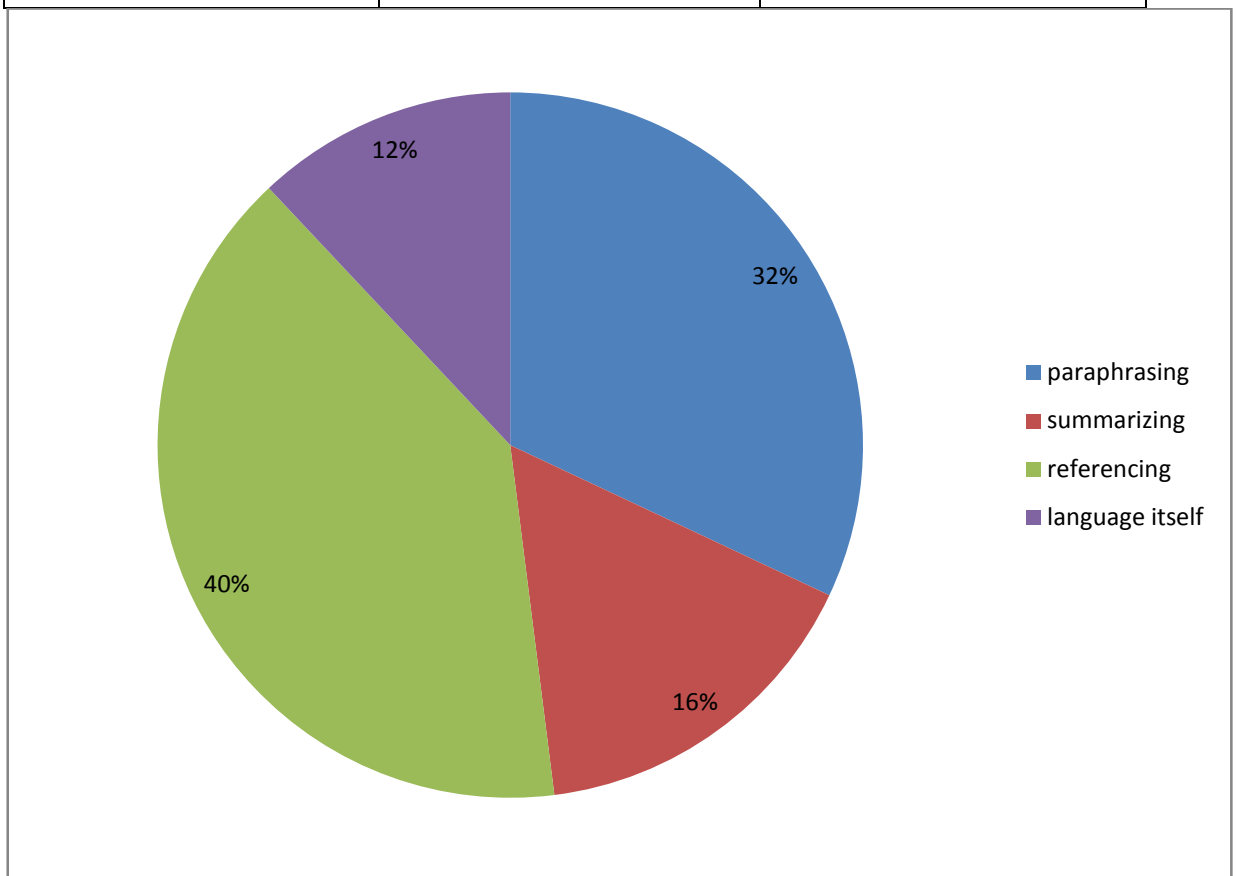


Figure10. The major students' problems in academic writing.

The figure demonstrates that the largest number of students have problems in referencing (40%), than paraphrasing (32%). Sixteen percent (16%) found problems in summarizing, and few ones faced difficulties in language itself (coherence & cohesion)

Question10. What causes these difficulties?

Table15. The causes of students' difficulties.

Options	Number of students	Percentages
Student' level	06	24%
Lack of teachers guidness	10	40%
Both of them	09	36%
Total number	25	100%

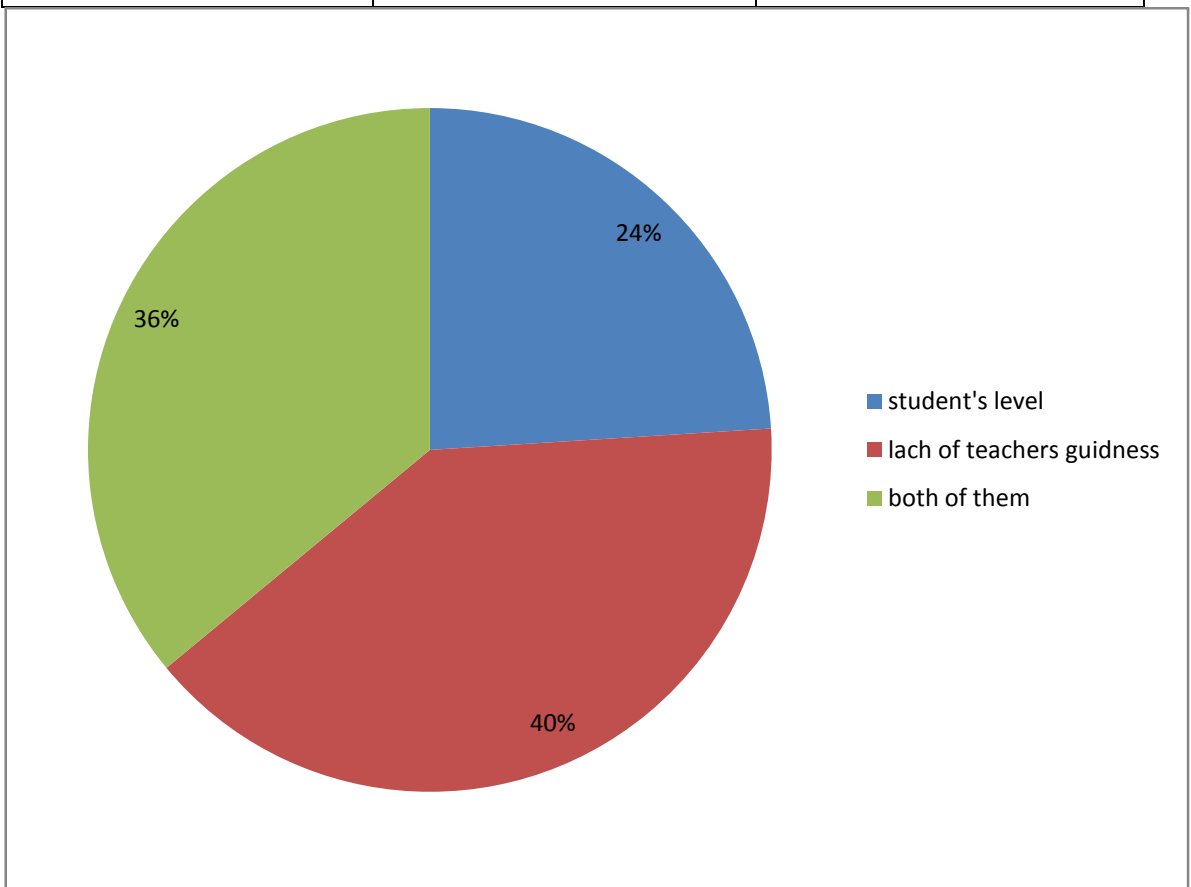


Figure11. The causes of students' difficulties.

Figure10 presents that the major cause of their problems is the lack of teachers' guidness (40%).

Question11. Do you consider target language as a major issue while writing?

Table16. Students' opinions about target language as a major problem.

Options	Number of students	Percentages
Yes	07	28%
No	11	44%
Not sure	07	28%
Total number	25	100%

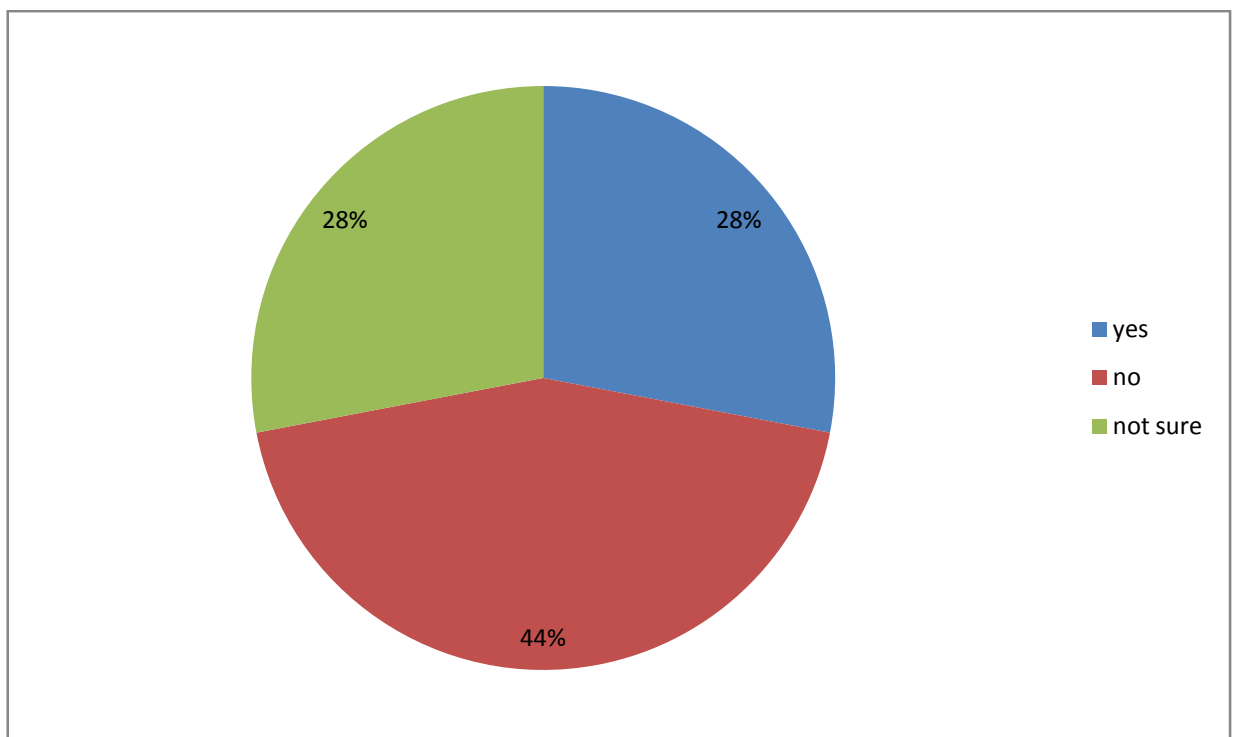


Figure12. Students' opinions about target language as a major problem.

The above figure shows that the majority of students did not consider target language as a major problem in writing. The rest is divided into two equal parts who argued that it is and who were not sure.

Question12. Do you think writing about new topics is:

Table17. How students found writing about new topics.

Options	Number of students	Percentages
Possible	07	28%
Easy	02	08%
Difficult	08	32%
Needs sources to help	08	32%
Total number	25	100%

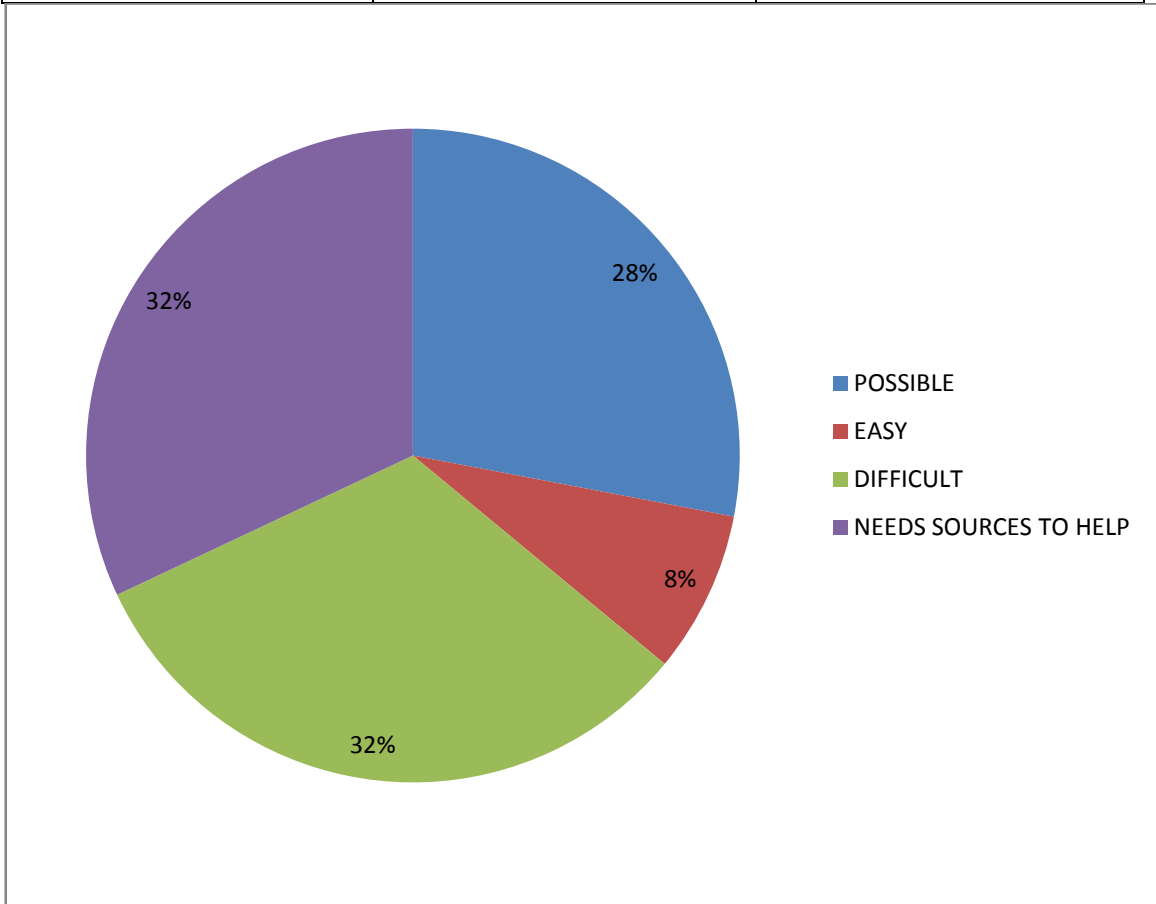


Figure13. How students found writing about new topics.

Figure13 shows that the majority of students believed that writing about new topics is difficult and needs sources to help (32%). Those who believed that it is easy are very few (8%) and it is possible for the rest (28%).

Question13. What can affect your writing?

Table18. The affection of some factors on students' writing.

Options	Number of students	Percentages
Grammar	07	28%
Vocabulary	10	40%
Spelling	05	20%
Syntax	03	12%
Total number	25	100%

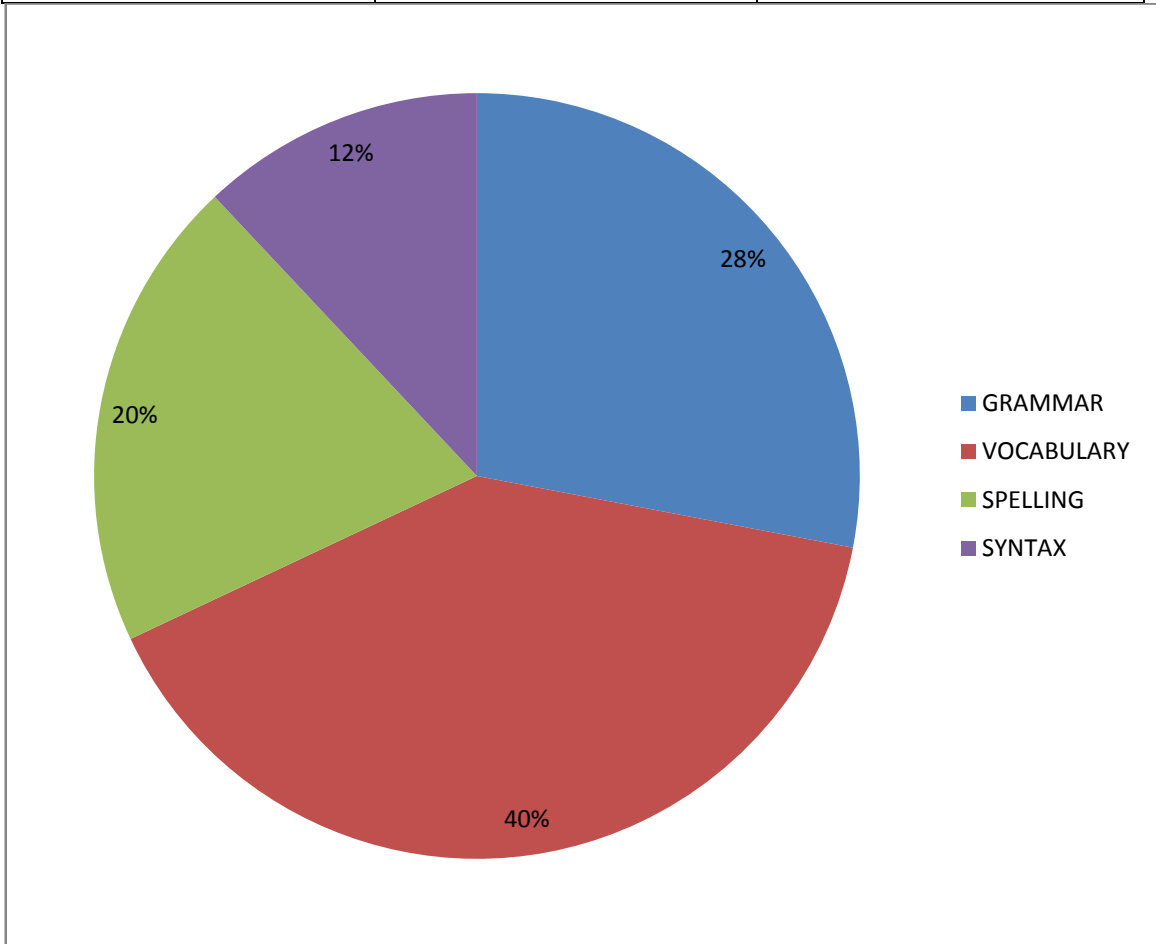


Figure14. The affection of some factors on students' writing.

The above figure illustrates that vocabulary affects the majority of students by forty percent (40%). The minority of them are affected by syntax (12%), whereas, (28%) affected by grammar and the remaining (20%) affected by spelling

Question14. How much time do you spend in writing per week

Table19. The hours students write per week.

Options	Number of students	Percentages
One hour	08	32%
two hours	14	56%
Less than one hour	00	00%
More than two hours	03	12%
Total number	25	100%

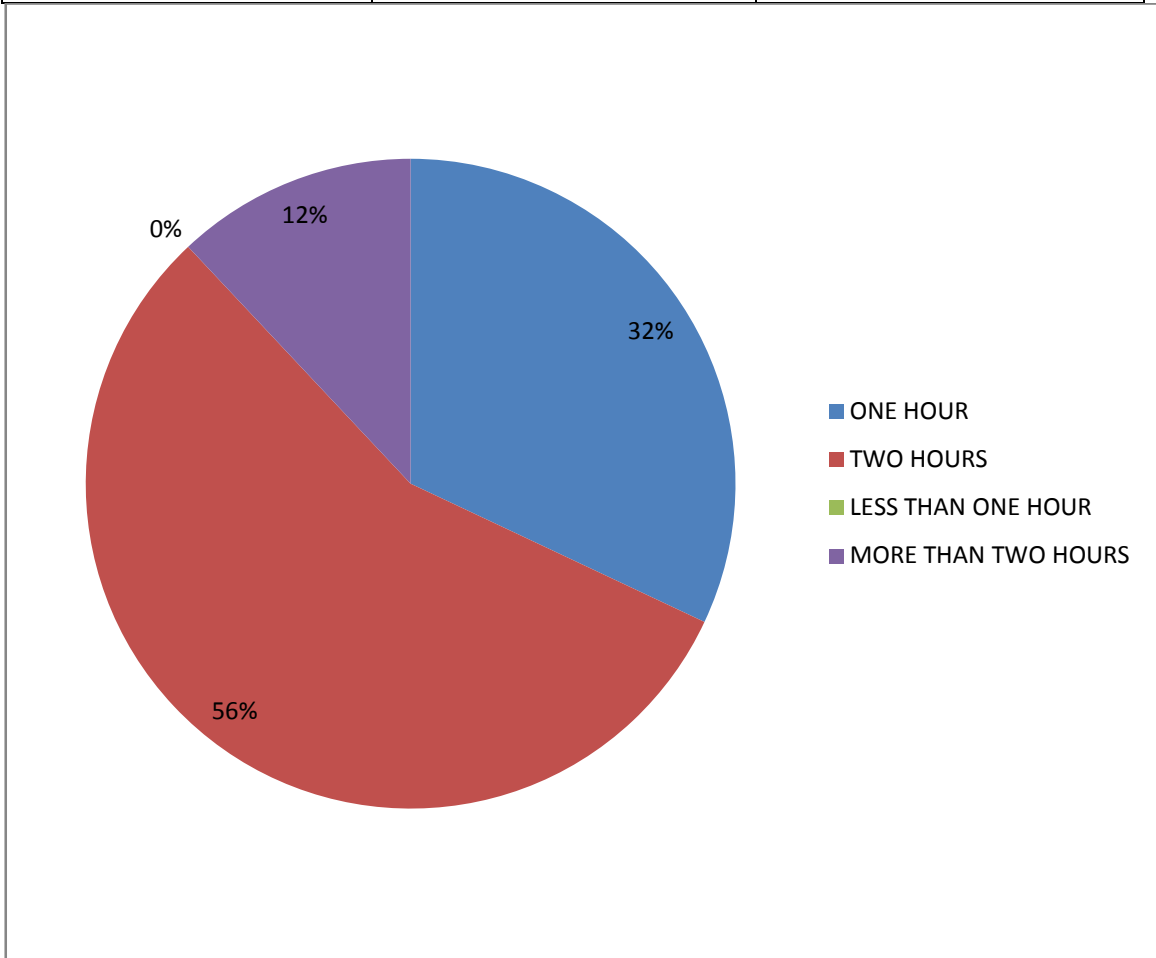


Figure15. The hours students write per week.

This figure shows that the great majority of students (56%) spend two hours in writing. Beside thirty two percent (32%) spend one hour in writing per week, only twelve percent (12%) writing more than two hours, and no one write less than one hour.

Question15. How many courses do you have in writing per week ?

Table20. Times of studying writing per week.

Options	Number of students	Percentages
One course	08	32%
Two courses	10	40%
Three courses	07	28%
More	00	00%
Total number	25	100%

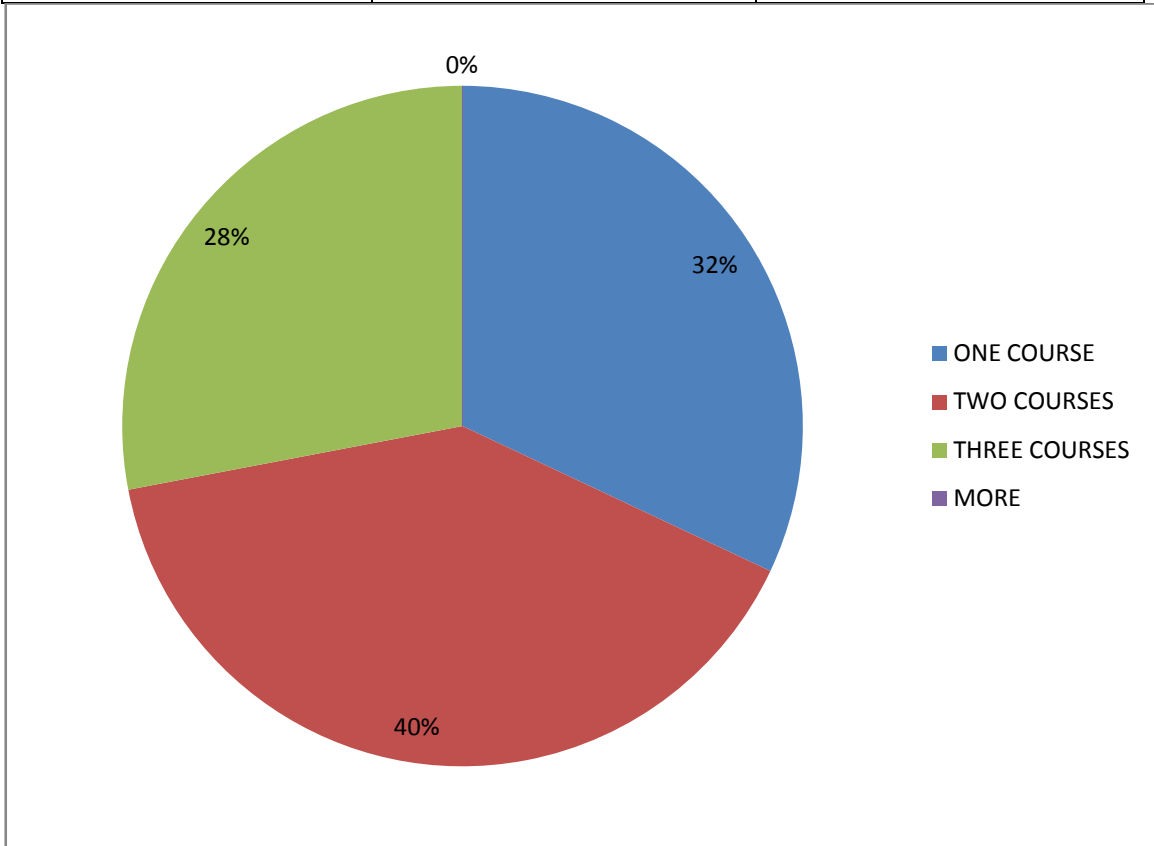


Figure16. The time students studying writing courses per week.

The figure shows that the most students have two courses in writing (40%), the rest is divided into two parts ; one part (32%) is for those who studied one course in writing per week, and the other part (28%) is for those who studied three hours in writing and no more.

Question16. What can you do to improve your writing ?

Table21. Students opinions on the way of enhancing their writing.

Options	Number of students	Percentages
Reading	08	32%
Communicating	12	48%
Using media	05	20%
Total number	25	100%

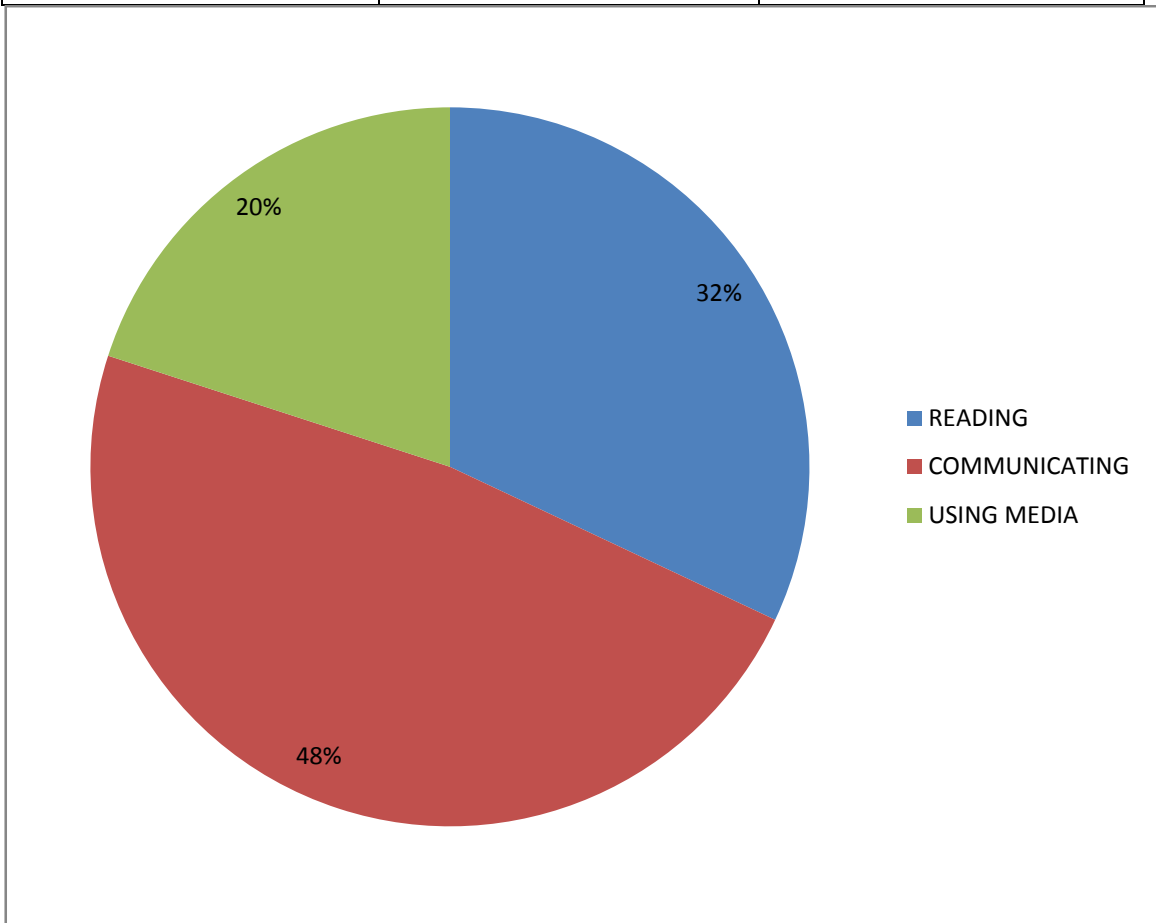


Figure17. Students opinions on the way of enhancing their writing.

The figure17 shows that the majority of students (48%) improve their writing skills by communicating with others, while (32%) reading book, newspapers, articles to do. For the other (20%) they are using media.

Discussion of the findings:

The findings of the data analysis revealed the following:

- ✓ Students' general level is found to be good.
- ✓ Students' level in writing is found to be average.
- ✓ The majority of students rarely when they write for pleasure; they prefer to write for academic stuff.
- ✓ A big number of students enjoy writing.
- ✓ The majority of students find writing difficult, and others find it neither easy nor difficult. It is due to the lack of teachers' guidness and lack of vocabulary. The main difficulties for them are in referencing and paraphrasing.
- ✓ Most students write about two hours and they have two courses per week. As a result, they write just in the courses of writing.
- ✓ The majority of students using communication to enhance their writing.
- ✓ Students prefer working in pairs to exchange information and help one another, because they have few vocabulary.
- ✓ The great majority of students start writing by reading, re-reading and understanding the structure to write easily.

Conclusion

The data we have distributed to master two English students, let us investigate the main problem in student's academic writing. Thus, we can confirm that the findings of the learners' questionnaire are in the direction of our hypothesis; students who are conscious about their problems in writing can find solutions to improve it. The analysis of the questionnaire revealed that building up EFL students' academic writing proficiency is not that simple task; also the mastery of it has a positive influence on the students' achievement in their future life. It develops critical ability; it prepares students for real life challenges and enables them to see problems from different perspectives.

General conclusion

Improving students' academic writing is surely a challenging task especially in the case of foreign language. Academic writing is certainly a vital and essential component in EFL. This case study aims at spotting the light on the factors that confront postgraduate students in academic writing and the common difficulties they found during writing. This is done through a questionnaire administered to Master two English students at the University of Abbes Leghrour University Of Khenchela. EFL learners should be aware of the great importance of academic writing and its significant role to enrich their writing proficiency. Therefore, English students should develop their own strategies and techniques to enhance their writing skills.

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Appendix 1

Students' questionnaire :

I am Djebbari Rima and Ghozal Marwa we create this questionnaire to investigate post-graduate students' problems in academic writing ;make sure that your answers will help us in our research to highlight the difficulties that Second year Master students of English at Abbes Laghrour University in Khenchela are facing. Please pay attention when you put a tick (√) and provide a full answer.

1. Your level in English is :
 - Very good
 - Good
 - Average
 - Weak
2. Your level in writing is :
 - Very good
 - Good
 - Average
 - Weak
3. How often do you write in English for pleasure ?
 - Always
 - Often
 - Rarely
 - Never
4. How often do you write in English for academic stuff ?
 - Always
 - Often
 - Rarely
 - Never
5. Do you enjoy writing ?
 - Yes
 - No
6. How do you find academic writing ?

- Easy
 - Difficult
 - Very difficult
 - Neither easy nor difficult
7. Choose the most important step you usually start with :
- Thinking about the topic
 - Reading, rereading and understanding the structure
 - Brainstorming and choosing ideas
 - Asking the teacher for clarification
8. How do you prefer working in writing ?
- Individual work
 - Pair work
 - Group work
9. What are the major difficulties you are facing in your academic writing?
- Paraphrasing
 - Summarising
 - Referencing
 - Language itself (coherence and cohesion)
10. What causes these difficulties ?
- The level of student
 - The lack of teachers' guidness
 - Both of them
11. Do you consider target language as a major issue while writing ?
- Yes
 - No
 - Not sure
12. Do you think writing about new topics is :
- Possible
 - Easy
 - Difficult
 - Needs sources to help
13. What can affect your writing ?

- Grammar
- Vocabulary
- Spelling
- Syntax

14. How much time do you spend in writing per week?

- One hour
- Two hours
- Less than one hour
- More than two hours

15. How many courses do you have in writing per week ?

- One course
- Two courses
- Three courses
- more

16. what can you do to improve your writing ?

- Reading books, articles, newspapers
- Communicating with others
- Using media (Tvs, vedios, radio...etc)

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP.

المخلص

من خلال ما تطرقنا إليه في هذه الدراسة توصلنا إلى اكتشاف بعض العراقيل و الصعوبات المؤثرة في الكتابة الأكاديمية و التي تواجه طلبة التعليم العالي و البحث العلمي بجامعة عباس لغرور خنشلة، خاصة طلبة الماستر في كلية الآداب و اللغات قسم اللغة الإنجليزية.

انطلقنا في بحثنا هذا من الفرضية اتي مفادها : إذا تم اكتشاف العوامل المؤثرة على الكتابة الأكاديمية سيتم تطوير هذه الأخيرة من طرف طلبة اللغات الأجنبية. و للتأكد من الفرضية السابقة قمنا بدراسة وصفية للنتائج المتحصل عليها من خلال الاستبيان المتشكل من ستة عشر سؤال و الموزع على عينة من الطلبة و المتمثل عددهم في خمس و عشرون طالب من بين خمس و ثمانون طالب.

من خلال نتائج الاستبيان تبين أن معظم طلبة الماستر يواجهون مشاكل في الاقتباس و التهميش إذ أن هذه الصعوبات تؤدي إلى الوقوع في السرقة العلمية.