

Illustration of the Writing Techniques and the Writing Process According to Nation

Dr MAHIEDDINE Rachid¹

LAKHRIF Halima

الملخص:

من خلال هذ العمل سنبين أن فيه اربع عمليات سهلة لتعليم الكتابة الصحيحة لطلبة اللغة الانجليزية (التركيز على مداخل اللغة كالقراءة، التركيز على مخارج اللغة كالكتابة، التركيز على التعلم العمدي لكتابة اللغة كالحفظ العمدي للكلمات والقواعد الصعبة، و التركيز على المهارة في كتابة اللغة)، و خاصة تلك الطرق المتعلقة بالكتابة كأسلوب متسلسل و مكون من سبع حلقات (تعريف أهداف أو غاية الكاتب، تعريف القارئ، جمع المعلومات، تنظيمها، تحويلها الى نص مكتوب، المراجعة، و النشر)، و كذا تقييمها. فمن جمعنا خمس و عشرون ورقة إمتحان لطلبة الإنجليزية لمستويات و مواد مختلفة و دراستها من أجل معرفة إلى أي حد وفقوا أو أخفقوا في كتاباتهم و إتباعهم للأسلوب المقترح من طرف الكاتب. علما أنه تم إتباع الطريقة المزدوجة لتقييمهم (الكيفية والكمية أو الحسابية).

Abstract

Throughout these papers we intend to highlight some writing techniques especially those that are integrated in Nation's book Teaching ESL/EFL Reading and Writing: spelling and meaning-focused input, spelling and meaning-focused output, spelling and language-focused learning, and spelling and fluency development. These are proposed as a programme that might enhance the learners' writing skill. Practically, we have limited our study to Nation's view of writing as a process. Taking into account the latter, we have analysed the students' exam papers that are randomly collected. We have mostly adopted a quantitative method of research, in which our sample consists of twenty-five (25) papers; we have included fifteen (15) criteria that enable us to assess to what extent students succeed or fail in implementing the steps of the writing process. Though five criteria are qualitative, they may be interpreted quantitatively.

Introduction:

I.S.P. Nation in his book Teaching ESL/EFL Reading and Writing (2009) proposes some easily applicable techniques to teach both spelling and the writing process to students. He advances, especially, the idea of the spelling-focused programme which is based on including the four strands: spelling and meaning-focused input, spelling and meaning-focused output, spelling and language-focused learning, and spelling and fluency development to improve the students' writing skill. In addition, he adopts some techniques of teaching writing as a process besides clues to assess it. By selecting this topic, we aim to tackle to what extent students implement the steps of the writing process. Though we aimed to test some techniques of the spelling programme, we have not enough time to do so.

¹ University of Ahmed Draia - Adrar Faculty of Letters and languages Department of English

In this paper, we have two sections: theoretical and practical. The former includes mainly definitions and descriptions of both the spelling-focused programme and the writing process. The practical part consists of methodology, and the assessment of twenty-five (25) exam papers. These are followed by the conclusion and the suggestions.

At the end, we should mention that in this work we based on the assessment that is described by Nation in his book. What enables us to choose the criteria that are suitable to evaluate the writing process.

Literature Review

Learning to Spell

Spelling, as Nation defines, “is a very limited and clearly defined area, involving only 26 letters and a definable set of combinations of letters.” (Nation, 2009: 15).

The English spelling is difficult because it is based on both regular and irregular rules. According to Nation (2009), four strands should be dealt with to improve spelling: meaning-focused input, meaning-focused output, language-focused learning and fluency development.

Spelling and Meaning-focused Input: Reading as a receptive skill helps to better spelling. Accordingly, constant exposure to written words enhances the written skill throughout time. (Nation, 2009: 18).

Spelling and Meaning-focused Output: Having the habit to write uncovers the gaps in the learners’ spelling knowledge. Activities designed for improving writing are: copying, delayed copying: read and write from memory, dictation, the different forms of guided writing, the use of dictionary, and free writing (diaries, poems, etc); yet excessive remarks about spelling might lead to avoidance strategies such as preference to use familiar words only. (Nation, 2009: 18-19).

Spelling and Language-focused Learning: Deliberate attention to spelling can be undertaken with adoption of multiple techniques amongst: the deliberate memorisation of the spelling of individual words and the deliberate study of regular correspondences and rules. (Nation, 2009: 19).

The Deliberate Memorisation of the Spelling of Individual Words: There are six techniques that can be dealt with:

Cover and Retrieve: To list words according to their one or two initial letters in order to remember them, e.g., anaemia a or an.

Using Analogies: The teacher, and/or learners in pairs or groups think about a set of words that shares spelling features with the learners’ difficult words. For example, achieve are words look like retrieve.

Using Word Parts: Advanced learners break down difficult words into syllables (prefixes, roots, and affixes) and compare their roots to familiar words, which can help them to spell those words correctly e.g., root: part, se par ate not seperate.

Pronouncing the Word in the Way it is Spelled: Taking as example, the letter /t/ of the word often can be pronounced, or intentionally to mispronounce the silent /d/in standard in order to spell it accurately.

Visualising: The learner carefully observes the spelling of the difficult word or just its difficult part, which may be coloured in red for emphasis, closes eyes and visualises it in his/her mind.

Tests: The techniques described above can be used to motivate learners enhancing their spelling such as dictation, retrieve, etc. (Nation, 2009: 19-20).

The Deliberate Study of Regular Correspondences and Rules

Three main techniques may be described as follows:

Noticing Patterns: It is to classify together the words that share the same sound-spelling correspondences, so that learners distinguish between lists of varied correspondences. (Nation, 2009: 20).

Studying Rules: Intentional learning of some complicated rules is very helpful for an accurate spelling especially with advanced learners. For instance, the rule of free (long) and checked (short) vowels explains when should or should not double a consonant if a suffix (ing, ed) is added to stressed syllables but there are exceptions. In fact, a free vowel (f v) occurs before a consonant (c) that is followed by a vowel (v), i.e. f v + c + v such as face. While checked vowels (chv) apply two patterns: (a) chv + c, e.g., set; and (b) chv + c + c + (c) + v, e.g., lengthen. (Nation, 2009: 20-21).

Strategy Training: Some well-practised strategies, amongst the strategies stated below, should be familiar to learners in order to: 1) memorise a newly met word's spelling, 2) accurately spell words while writing, and 3) correctly pronounce new words.

A Strategy for Memorising Spellings: It includes all techniques dealt with in (1.3.1) that the learners should be aware of their application, whether singly or in a sequence.

A Strategy for Finding the Spelling of a Word: Herein, the learners, when missed the spelling of a word while writing, have to infer how it is spelled by making reference to similar sounded-words before referring to a dictionary. In other words, to try to find out the rule if possible.

A Strategy for deciding how to pronounce a Written Form: The learners may refer to similar sound-spelling words, break words and apply stress rules, and use dictionary or ask someone else for the right pronunciation. (Nation, 2009: 21-22).

Spelling and Fluency Development

Both writing and reading a lot lead to fluency, besides maintaining a regular fluency activity that is ten minute writing, which is repeated thrice a week and about an easy topic. The teacher gives remarks about the content rather than or grammatical or spelling errors. Speed of writing of words per minute can be illustrated by each learner with a graph that increases. (Nation, 2009: 22).

Designing a Focused Spelling Programme

If learners suffer from spelling deficiencies, a balanced programme is needed. The latter consists of affective, cognitive, and social perspectives. From the affective perspective, motivation is at the core, and has to be sought through different elements (rewards, completion, using attractive aids, doing mastery test, etc). “[A] mastery testing involves repeated learning and testing until learners gain near perfect scores in what they have to learn.” The cognitive side requires all the elements dealt with in learning to spell (part 1). And taking into consideration the social factor, peer support and autonomy are emphasised. (Nation, 2009: 22-23).

The Parts (sub processes) of the Writing Process

From the many ways of the writing process, Nation introduces the following subdivision, noting that the order is not compulsory; rather it is continuous as a cycle and depending on the writer:

Defining the goals for writing (the purposes)

Identifying the audience (which model to be adopted)

Collecting ideas (information)

Organising them

Transforming them into a written piece

Reviewing

Editing (Nation, 2009: 113-114).

Defining the goals for writing and Identifying the audience: while writing, the writer has a defined purpose (to convey/signal, inform, convince, persuade, entertain, etc) to write a piece (friendly/formal letter, academic/ journal writing [assignment, thesis], argument, résumé, narrative, etc) for a particular audience (self, specified person, group, classmates, public, etc) to seek a given feedback (immediate, new information, etc) and to play different roles (writing as yourself or as someone else). For practice, the learners should have occasions to write adopting different purposes and for various types of audience. Many techniques are used amongst:

Writing for Immediate Feedback: The writer and reader are sitting one next to the other. The latter gives not only feedbacks on each sentence/paragraph that the former writes, but also both of them discuss what has already written and what should come next.

The Teacher writes for Students: herein, the teacher writes about his/her personal issues giving each student a letter that provides new bits of information, and has to be replied.

Situational Composition: the learners are asked to write about different situations (answering a letter, writing a journal report, etc).

The Learners write for each other: They (or from one classroom to another) write different types of letters (friendly/formal) for performing varied purposes (seeking appointment, looking for information, etc).

Academic Assignments: Forms of assignments and conventions for quoting and referencing must be known by learners. Hence, a marking schedule, which is consisted of the elements to be evaluated such as handwriting, spelling, grammar, coherence, referencing, etc, is very helpful for students before undertaking their tasks. (Nation, 2009: 115-117).

Collecting of ideas (information): Leibman-Kleine (1987, 2: 104-111) classified techniques for gathering ideas into three groups:

Open-ended, free activities: learners base on their mind (ideas) while collecting information. Examples of these activities are brainstorming and quickwriting that can be preceded by relaxation activities like exploration of a topic.

Systematic searching procedures: questioning (who, when, where, why, how, etc) and filling in an information transfer diagram are examples of such procedures.

Tree diagram, concept diagram, or maps: are techniques used for both gathering and organising ideas simultaneously. They help to arrange ideas according to their relationships (importance, level of generality, etc).

However, lack of ideas hinders writing. Techniques to cover this shortage are:

Group brainstorming: Each learner advances any related idea that comes to his/her mind while one of them records them all. Rejecting and criticising ideas is at first denied, for they may offer hints to other useful ideas.

List making: Each learners lists ideas about the subject, then tries to organise them; while doing this, additional ideas may be included.

Looping: during about five (05) minutes, each student quickly writes on the topic, then learners read, think, and summary what they have written in a single sentence. Repetition of this technique is allowed.

Cubing: is to tackle the subject from six angles: describing it, comparing it, associating it, analysing it, applying it, arguing for and against it. After that, learners should decide which part (s) is worth to be included while writing. Another technique is to ask these questions: who, when, where, why, what, how, then organise the obtained ideas to write the task.

Topic type grids: adopting an information transfer diagram that relies on topic types (e.g. process, instruction, etc) is workable before writing.

Reading like a writer: while reading, the learner tries to ask the questions that a writer might ask to write a topic such as what does attract readers to this topic? What was already written about it? etc. Afterwards, organising answers in a concept diagram or an information tree facilitates writing.

Adding details: the teacher offers the main ideas of a story then students use each idea and add extra information (descriptions, explanations, examples, details, etc) to write a paragraph, and so on.

Quick writing (speed writing): It includes three conditions: write without stopping for a given time; neglect mistakes, errors, and the choice of words; and make emphasis on the content. For assessing the learners' improvement, they may record their speed of writing (number of words per minute) in a graph.

Expanding writing: the learners leave blank lines (one or two) when write the topic, and then count the written words. After that, they rewrite and add details with a coloured pen using the first blank line, and then again account words. Next, they do so including more details and using another coloured pen. Finally, the teacher consults their writing and allows them to write the final version. (quoted in Nation, 2009: 117-118).

Organising Ideas: While writing assignments or responding exams, the way of organising ideas views not only the learner's print but also his/her uniqueness of organising ideas. Academic writing can be organised according to a given criterion or classifying them into groups. In fact, sub-headings are a clue to assess organisation. (Nation, 2009: 119).

Transforming Ideas into a Written Piece: Some learners find a difficulty to transform ideas into a written text, or lack fluency to do so. Two causes are possible: the difference between the writing systems of the first language of the learner and that of the language of writing (Arabic verses English), and lack of practice in writing. The teacher's task is to discover that difficulty and find solution to it. (Nation, 2009: 119).

Reviewing: The writer must check what has been written through looking to the following elements: ideas, coherence, flow of writing, and errors. Checklists or scales are useful tools to review the writing piece and improve writing. By adopting peer feedback, learners review their partial or complete, written versions before the teacher views them. (Nation: 2009: 119/120).

Editing: It is to look for and undertake changes to the written piece by considering its organisation, style, grammatical and lexical correctness, and appropriateness. It, as all previous parts of the writing process, may be occurs at any stage of writing. The use of a marking sheet that is consists of the elements to be checked (handwriting, presentation and organisation, coverage of the relevant aspects of curriculum design, integration of experience and linking of the aspects, and possible improvements and overall impression) is a way to edit writing. (Nation, 2009: 120).

Practical Study

Methodology

Sampling: We randomly picked up ten (10) papers from different exams, and then checked the presence of paragraphs or essays and the inclusion questions in order to assess the writing purpose. As a result, twenty-five exam papers belong to different levels were evaluated (ten (10) from 1st Year Anglo-Saxon , ten (10) from 3rd Year Pragma-linguistics, and five (05) last exam sheets were taken from the 1ST Year Master Contemporary USA). In fact, they are

respectively ordered from student one (S1) to student twenty-five (S25). Therefore, the whole sample consists of twenty-five (25) students' exam sheets.

Criteria: Because of time constraints, we could not assess Nation's techniques; however, we included fifteen (15) elements that enable us to assess the students' writing process. Indeed, an interesting introduction, this means that the student is able to write the topic sentence and introduce his subject. The writing purpose shows that the communicative purpose is achieved and even the style is consistent (the relationship: writer- reader). While mechanics (handwriting, spelling, grammar, punctuation, register, cohesion, and coherence) help us to check whether the students have a control on how they connect their piece of writing or they do not. Moreover, the criterion 'content' provides a view about gathering ideas (if having enough to write about and within the students' print). Furthermore, the ability to communicate easily, organisation and presentation afford a hint about the organisation of ideas, their relevance, and probable edition too. Finally, editing was in fact evaluated through all those criteria especially by the presence of repeated errors. Despite of including length, we did not assess it because it was not mentioned in the exam papers. Note that we were based on the assessment of Nation to denote the function of each criterion. (Nation, 2009: 123-126)

Methods: generally, we adopted a mixed method (quantitative and qualitative) though the quantitative method was dominant. Accordingly, we have eight (08) pure, quantitative criteria (spelling, grammar, punctuation, register, repeated errors, organisation/presentation, cohesion, and coherence). Effective introduction, writing purpose and effective conclusion are qualitative variables despite that they seem quantitative in character; and they are quantitatively interpreted. The four (04) remaining elements: handwriting, content, ability to communicate, and length are qualitative, yet their interpretation is quantitative too.

The Assessment of Papers of Exams: n: not mentioned

| | S 1 | S 2 | S 3 | S 4 | S 5 | S 6 | S 7 | S 8 | S 9 | S1 0 | S1 1 | S1 2 | S1 3 | S1 4 | S1 5 | Tot al |
|--|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|-----------|
| Interesting & effective introduction that states the main idea | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 9S 6F |
| writing discourse (purpose) | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 8S 7F |
| handwriting | A | 1 | 1 | G | G | A | G | A | A | A | 1 | G | A | A | 1 | 4IL |
| Spelling | 1 3 | 2 5 | 1 3 | 6 | 8 | 1 7 | 4 | 8 | 1 0 | 6 | 42 | 8 | 3 | 11 | 6 | 18 0 |
| Grammar | 2 6 | 2 1 | 1 1 | 7 | 5 | 3 3 | 6 | 1 5 | 1 3 | 29 | 19 | 7 | 6 | 11 | 7 | 21 6 |
| Punctuation | 2 2 | 1 4 | 8 | 3 | 3 | 1 2 | 9 | 7 | 1 | 4 | 8 | 11 | 2 | 5 | 6 | 11 5 |
| Register | 3 | 7 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 9 | 1 | 10 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 49 |
| repeated | 1 | 7 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 8 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 8 | 15 | 11 | 2 | 7 | 4 | 81 |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|----|----|----|----|----------------|
| errors/referencing /careless errors | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| organisation/presentation | 1 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 9 | 6 | 2 | 4 | 4 | 55 |
| Sentence and paragraph structure: Cohesion | 7 | 10 | 5 | 5 | 11 | 6 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 11 | 8 | 3 | 6 | 8 | 98 |
| Logical sequencing of ideas: Coherence | 3 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 4 | 7 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 40 |
| Interesting & effective conclusion | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 5S 10 F |
| Content (originality, depth of thought, relevance & appropriateness) | P | P | P | A | G | P | A | P | A | P | A | G | G | G | P | 7P 4A 4G |
| Ability to communicate easily (clear and understood) | F | F | F | S | S | F | S | F | S | F | F | S | S | S | F | 8F 7S |
| length | n | n | n | n | n | n | n | n | n | n | n | n | n | n | n | n |
| Total | 78 | 93 | 57 | 26 | 39 | 90 | 31 | 49 | 53 | 68 | 125 | 54 | 19 | 52 | 42 | 876 |

The Assessment of Papers of Exams:

| | S16 | S17 | S18 | S19 | S20 | S21 | S22 | S23 | S24 | S25 | Total |
|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|----------|
| Interesting & effective introduction that states the main idea | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 9S 1F |
| writing discourse (purpose) | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 8S 2F |
| handwriting | G | A | A | A | 1 | A | A | A | G | G | 1IL |
| Spelling | 6 | 2 | 7 | 9 | 8 | 17 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 58 |
| Grammar | 15 | 4 | 9 | 11 | 10 | 6 | 2 | 4 | 5 | 0 | 66 |




| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----------------|
| | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Punctuation | 3 | 4 | 3 | 7 | 5 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 26 |
| Register | 14 | 6 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 5 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 42 |
| repeated errors/referencing/careless errors | 7 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 5 | 7 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 36 |
| organisation/presentation | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 4 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 9 |
| Sentence and paragraph structure: Cohesion | 5 | 8 | 6 | 6 | 8 | 4 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 44 |
| Logical sequencing of ideas: Coherence | 0 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 10 |
| Interesting & effective conclusion | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 8S 2F |
| Content (originality, depth of thought, relevance & appropriateness) | G | G | A | A | A | A | G | G | G | G | 0P 4A 6G |
| Ability to communicate easily (clear and understood) | S | S | F | F | F | S | S | S | S | S | 3F 7S |
| length | n | n | n | n | n | n | n | n | n | n | n |
| Total | 50 | 29 | 39 | 47 | 50 | 46 | 10 | 11 | 14 | 04 | 300 |

Findings

The total of mistakes made by twenty-five (25) students in their writing during three exams (Anglo-saxon, Prgma-lingustics, and Contemporary USA) is 1176 mistakes with an average of 47 mistakes for each student in a given exam. Taking into consideration exams that require answering through using brief paragraphs, 47 mistakes is too much; especially, a student has for instance made 125 mistakes in a short essay. In fact, this can be mainly interpreted that most students do not respect the writing process, i.e., they do not edit nor review their writing. In order to have a clear vision, we summarise both preceded tables into the following one:

| | Total: 25 students | | |
|--|--------------------|-------------------|--------|
| Interesting & effective introduction that states the main idea | 18S 7F | 72% 28% | 0.59% |
| writing discourse (purpose) | 16S 9F | 64% 36% | 0.76% |
| handwriting | 5IL 20 L | 20% 80% | 0.42% |
| Spelling | 238 | | 20.22% |
| Grammar | 282 | | 24% |
| Punctuation | 141 | | 12% |
| Register | 91 | | 7.73% |
| repeated errors/referencing/careless errors | 117 | | 10% |
| organisation/presentation | 64 | | 5.44% |
| Sentence and paragraph structure: Cohesion | 142 | | 12% |
| Logical sequencing of ideas: Coherence | 50 | | 4.25% |
| Interesting & effective conclusion | 13S 12F | 52% 48% | 1% |
| Content (originality, depth of thought, relevance & appropriateness) | 7P 8A 10G | 28% 32% 40% | 0.59% |
| Ability to communicate easily (clear and understood)/organisation | 14S 11F | 56% 44% | 1% |
| length | n | | 0% |
| Total | 1176 | | 100% |

S: succeed, F: fail, A: accepted, G: good, P: poor, L: legible, IL: illegible, n: not mentioned.

| | |
|---|---|
| Qualitative variable |  |
| Quantitative variable (mechanics) |  |
| Calculated according to number of students (25) |  |

Interpretation: We have mainly based on the assessment, which is described by Nation (2009: 123-126).

The variable ‘Interesting and effective introduction’ that states the main idea shows that only 28% of the students failed in writing the introduction (opposed to 72% who succeeded), which is not significant, but also not negligible. This means that some students really find it difficult to introduce their topic, as the total absence of the key words in the introduction.

On the other hand, many of them find difficulties to meet the discourse purpose 36% (opposed to 64%). In other words, they wrote in inconsistent style (informal) such as the use of the reduced form in formal exams [don’t, it’s], sometimes, they were out of subject, and other times, they missed the writing skill (topic types: theory, process), i.e., lack of the cohesive purpose. For example, the question was “In what ways has Britain’s island position shaped its history and the identity of the people?” which may be initially answered by describing the physical structure or characteristics, many students spoke directly about the process of invasion (the successive conquerors).

Mechanics (handwriting, grammar, spelling, repeated errors, register, cohesion and coherence) were excessively found while assessing the exam papers. In fact, they were the most committed mistakes [96.06%] where grammar took a lead in classifying them [24%], which was followed by spelling [20.22%], then cohesion and punctuation [12% each], and then repeated errors [10%] and register [7.73%], and finally organisation/presentation [5.44%], coherence [4.25] and handwriting [0.42%]. For instance, we found the following mistakes and errors: cans, cant not, to agreed, the Magna Carta it is, the use of adjective instead of noun: French rather than France, certain rules, omission of or inclusion of unnecessary words “...are many verbs / we can perform language....” “...performing / act /from/ which came....” repetition of the same error: ‘generale x 8’, ‘to mislinding x 3’, the use of inappropriate register like ‘thefts’ instead of ‘conquerors’, and misuse of punctuation: “...was signed in 1215. between Aristocracy and king John.” the misapplication of the structure: like to consider a sentence as a paragraph, etc. To sum up, there were many varied errors, no connection of some pieces, and some were poorly presented and organised; this means that most students did not edit nor review their writing. Furthermore, we may deduce that they failed to transform their ideas to a written text too.

Despite the fact that coherence gives us a view about the organisation of the ideas, we deliberately assessed it in isolation through both variables ‘organisation/presentation’[5.44%] and ‘the ability to communicate easily’[44%] that mean that many students still did not handle this step of the writing process. A 1st year student’s paper was impossible to comprehend:

“ The Britain it’s a group of island position from each one we have many relationship between them the shaped many project because it is in the centre of earth it’s like & one people they have the same history...they born in same planate a observe the same air.”

This so-called paragraph has no punctuation; in fact, it is a sentence, but even its structure is wrong. Could anyone tell what the idea of all that is? Herein, the student could not transform his/her ideas to a well written piece.

Handwriting [20%] was also a problem since it is the only medium for communicating in a written exam. Accordingly, one student was writing between the lines, under them, or even upper side with an illegible script.

The variable ‘content’ refers to shortage in mater of ideas [28%]. Some students wrote too brief essays because of lack of ideas, i.e., not having enough to say shortage at the level of gathering ideas.

The absence of conclusion or the failure in how to write it properly has a considerable rate [48%]. This means that nearly the half of our sample did not well organise their timing. For that, they neither finished their writing, nor edited or reviewed it. Indeed, there are a lot of repeated errors [10%], redundancy: “William I introduced Feudalism which the name of the system of government W I introduced it to England....”

Referencing was totally absent though some quotations and indirect speeches were included. In other words, students were neglectful in mentioning the sources.

The variable ‘length’ was not evaluated because it was not referred to in the studied exam papers.

By referring to table 1 and 2, we notice that the rate of errors is reducing moving from student one to student twenty-five. Accordingly, we have classified them starting from 1st year students (10), passing by those of 3rd year (10), and ending by 1st year, master students (05). That is, 1st year students committed higher numbers of mistakes (e.g. 93) than those of the master (04).

Conclusion

From studying the writing process of twenty-five (25) students during exams, we conclude that:

Mechanics were the most committed mistakes [96.06%]. This means that most students do not properly know how to organise their ideas while writing. In addition, they do not frequently edit and review their piece of writing. Sometimes, they find difficulties in transforming their ideas into a well-organised text. For that they could not communicate easily [44%].

On the other hand, a considerable number of students does not have enough to say, i.e., they do not gather sufficient ideas or fail to retrieve them. Therefore, 28% of students performed brief and/or poor contents, which is not to be neglected though it is a tiny rate in comparison with the other occurring mistakes [0.59%].

In addition, many students fail to manage their timing of exams. Accordingly, 48% of them do not conclude or write a poor conclusion. By behaving as such, they do not edit nor review too.

Furthermore, some students do not focus on the writing purpose. Indeed, 36% of them wrote in an inconsistent style (informal), did not consider the topic type (process, state situation, characteristics, etc), and lack the cohesive purpose (describe, analyse, etc).

Moreover, stating the main idea in the topic sentence and relating it with its supporting ideas was not easy for all students. 28% of them have deficiently introduced their subject.

Though its score is not significant [20%], handwriting was a barrier to assess the written piece since it is the only medium in a written exam. On the other hand, length could not be evaluated because teachers do not restrict the number of words that should be included in their exam papers.

Despite of the inclusion of some quotations and others' views and definitions, there was no reference to the sources. This is a clue to the absence of edition of writing. It must be a methodological mistake too.

Finally, we conclude that the different steps (sub-processes) of the writing process, which were described in Nation's book (2009), were mostly not respected by our informants. Consequently, shortage was found at the level of considering the goals of the writer (cohesive purpose), having a model of the reader (the formal style), gathering ideas, organising them, turning them to a written text, reviewing what has been written, and editing. The committed mistakes were decreasing while moving from one level to a higher one (from 1st year to 3rd year to 1st year master). This may be explained by the advantages of introducing the module of methodology to the 3rd year and master students. However, other modules such as grammar and written expression are important in enhancing the students' performance too. Despite of that, some students were brilliantly performing good pieces.

References

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